

PREFACE

Each of the twenty counties that are located within the jurisdiction of the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) are required to adopt CAMA Land Use Plans and update them every five years. The City of Southport prepared CAMA Land Use Plans in 1986, 1990, and 1997. While these land use plans included some of the elements normally included in a traditional comprehensive plan, they did not address, or did not adequately address, the following items:

- Thoroughfare Planning Recommendations
- Definition and Discussion of Urban Form
- Housing/Recreation
- Central Business District/Historic District
- Major Streets/Public Services
- Growth/Development Policies
- Comprehensive Plan Map and Discussion
- Zoning Issues and Recommended Actions

Furthermore, NC General Statute 160A-383 requires that a comprehensive plan be prepared to provide the basis for zoning and other land use regulation related ordinances. As a result, the City of Southport elected to prepare a comprehensive plan to sufficiently address the items identified above and to satisfy the requirements of NC General Statute 160A-383. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Board of Aldermen on December 13, 2001.

While the preparation of these plans is mandated by legislation and/or the Coastal Area Management Act, there are broader and more important reasons to engage in the planning process. Basically, planning begins with understanding your community and its people and learning how to care for them. Municipal plans and planning affect people's lives. Tough choices must be made about the natural, manmade, and financial resources in the community. The municipal budget should be compared to the municipal plan to ensure that public money will be spent in accordance with the community's goals and objectives.

The planning process also serves to educate us about ourselves, our attitudes towards others, and our willingness to share a sense of community. Planning is often promoted as a means of community decision-making through public participation. But planning also may involve conflict and friction because it may divide us into opposing groups. Some conflict in the planning process is good. It stimulates us to think and reminds us of the need to understand and tolerate, and even support, the opinions of others.

A local government should not undertake the preparation of a land use plan without understanding that a plan should be:

1. Comprehensive in setting goals and objectives for all aspects of the community.
2. Part of a continuous planning process that is timely and responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
3. The legal basis for land use regulations and a guide for capital improvement plans for city budgeting.

Once the plan is prepared, the city must realize that the plan is not the end of the process. The city must continuously work at accomplishing plan implementation and establishing an effective planning program. The City of Southport must view the preparation of this document as the first step in a continually evolving process.

This plan is organized to adhere to the 15A NCAC 7B requirements. The matrix following the table of contents specifies how/where compliance with 15A NCAC 7B is accomplished. The reader should review Section VII: Tools for Managing Development which begins on page 156.

This is a Core Land Use Plan and is defined as follows:

Core Plan: This plan addresses all of the plan elements in Rule .0702 of Section 7B (Elements of CAMA Core and Advanced Core Land Use Plans) in a complete and thorough manner. This type of plan is the standard CAMA Land Use Plan required for all 20 coastal counties.