

RED OAK, NORTH CAROLINA Land Development Plan

Adopted: 3.5.01



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CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 WHY PLAN

A. "...LOOK BEFORE THE TOWN LEAPS..."

Planning enables the town to look before they leap and avoid costly and embarrassing mistakes. Through planning, the town comes to understand where they are now and what must be done and in the future to achieve goals. Then, the town can put together a plan of action to accomplish tasks on time.

B. "...CARE FOR TOWN, ITS PEOPLE, AND THOSE GENERATIONS YET TO BE BORN..."

Community planning begins with learning to care for the town, its people and those generations yet to be born. It is also learning to develop a respect for the limited world in which the town lives. Community plans and planning affect peoples' lives. Tough choices must be made about the natural, human-made and financial resources in the community. Learning to care means that the town has to adopt an attitude of fairness, that the town listens to the opinions of others and that the town is willing to make compromises to ensure equal treatment.

C. "...SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY..."

Community planning is intended to serve the best interests of the community, which requires striking a balance between being recklessly innovative and stubbornly conservative. It should channel and guide market forces to foster growth and redevelopment in an efficient manner that follows the desires and guidelines of the community.

D. "...MAINTAINING A POSITIVE QUALITY OF LIFE AND REVITALIZING THE COMMUNITY..."

Many small communities are shrinking rather than growing. Planning offers a way of maintaining a positive quality of life and revitalizing the community. The planning process is an opportunity to look at the current positive and negative aspects of the community. What is good about the community should be carefully nurtured and protected; what is bad should be addressed and changed; and what is possible should be sought after and attained.

E. "...EDUCATE US ABOUT OURSELVES..."

The community planning process also helps the town to educate one other, the town's attitude towards others and the willingness to share a sense of community. It stimulates the town to think and be reminded of the need to understand, tolerate and even support, the opinions of others.



F. "...DEPENDS ON LOCAL PEOPLE..."

Successful community planning depends on local people and the key ingredient for small towns is local leadership. This requires both public and private sector leadership. This leadership needs to be pro-active in knowing when to plan and have the will to follow through.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 1.1) EDITOR'S NOTE: THE ABOVE ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE SMALL TOWN PLANNING HANDBOOK, 2ND EDITION, 1995

1.2 THE TOWN'S NEED FOR PLANNING

A. During the past decade, the town has experienced a dramatic increase in population from a very large annexation in 1996 and, subsequently, from new residential construction and in-migration. The massive 1996 annexation (voluntary petitions) increased the population from 280 (1990 Census) to 2,602 and the land area from 1.76 square mile to 18.17 square miles. The overall county residential building permit activity has exceeded 650 new residences each year during the decade of the 1990s and reached 1,000 each year during the last three years of 1997-99. The town has been in the position to receive some of this growth due to its proximity to Rocky Mount.

B. The Town Planning Board and Town Council have been receiving an increasing number of subdivision requests. They became increasingly concerned that the town's land use regulations were not current enough to handle some of the real and potential conflicts. Increased traffic, manufactured homes, residential versus agricultural use, retaining rural character and potential commercial development were some of the land use issues.

C. Both the Planning Board and Town Council recognized the need to update the 1975 Land Development Plan, Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinance and Map. The town's pre-annexation extraterritorial jurisdictional area (one mile beyond town limits) was incorporated entirely into the town by the 1996 annexation; thus, the town does not currently have an extraterritorial jurisdiction.

D. The adoption of Red Oak - 2010, Land Development Plan, will provide development policies and strategies for updating the Zoning Ordinance and Map and Subdivision Regulations. The new policies and strategies will not only guide both public and private decision-making, but will also provide to the town the blueprints for community development initiatives.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 1.2)

1.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE PLAN

A. Red Oak - 2010, Land Development Plan, is designed to provide a guide for the physical development of the town for the next ten years. The plan and the planning process perform several important functions for the local government, private development interests and the general public.

B. THESE FUNCTIONS ARE:

1. INCORPORATES COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



This helped town officials/planners to receive broader perspectives and a consensus on local needs and desires;

2. RECOGNIZES INTERRELATIONSHIPS

The process and plan helps town officials/planners to realize that there is an interrelationship between growth factors, i.e., population, economy and location, and development elements (housing, community facilities, appearance, economic development, natural resources, inter-governmental cooperation and the like);

3. PROVIDES SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The plan will be useful in preparing other studies or projects as well as serving as a consolidated source of community information;

4. SERVES AS GUIDANCE FOR TOWN DECISIONS

The policy statements will guide the decisions and recommendations regarding zoning, subdivision requests, capital improvements, ordinances and other matters; in addition, the strategies and recommendations will serve as an action plan; and

5. COMMUNICATES POLICIES TO OTHERS

The plan provides a preview of the town's development policies and rationale to both the private developers and public agencies.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 1.3)

1.4 DEVELOPING THE PLAN WITH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

A. GENERAL

Community participation was a vital part of developing the plan. Through consensus building, it identified the local issues, needs and desires. The planning process helped to draw people into assisting with shaping policymaking on development issues.

B. LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. In order to expand its representation within the community and broaden its perspective on present and future land development issues, goals and policies, the Planning Board agreed to form the Land Development Plan Advisory Committee. Eight citizens representing various interests, along with three members of the Planning Board and a member of the Town Council, agreed to serve on the Advisory Committee.
2. The Advisory Committee met in a series of meetings over a three-month period. The Committee was given demographic and existing-conditions information prior to the first meeting. During one particularly long work session, it identified the community's strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities to capitalize on community assets and ways to mitigate drawbacks. Priorities were assigned to the items identified within these four categories.



3. In subsequent meetings, these items and priorities were divided into land development elements, then policy statements and implementation strategies were devised. A vision statement highlighting many of the elements was created as the community's overall land development goal. Finally, using the major development tactics for the next ten years, the Committee drafted a conceptual future development strategies map symbolizing major development strategies.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

The Advisory Committee submitted a draft of its recommendations to the Planning Board on 1-22-2001. The Planning Board submitted the final draft of the plan to the Town Council at its meeting held on 2-5-2001. The Council established a public hearing, which was held on 3-5-2001.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 1.4)

1.5 IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

As the Town Council adopts the Red Oak - 2010 as the Town's official Land Development Plan, the Planning Board and Land Development Plan Advisory Committee recommend the following implementation policies be approved with the Plan:

- A. Rescind the Red Oak 1975-1985 Land Development Plan, for any use, by the town's government officials or general public, other than for general reference;
- B. Adopt the Red Oak - 2010 Land Development Plan as the official and primary land use and development policy document for the town;
- C. Begin the implementation of the development strategies within its resources and to monitor as well as evaluate the progress of Red Oak - 2010 Land Development Plan in meeting the goals and policies included in it; and
- D. Assess the need for amendments and updates to Red Oak - 2010 Land Development Plan as necessary resulting from changing conditions.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 1.5)

1.6 COMMUNITY'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A. COMMUNITY'S STRENGTHS

1. The Committee identified the following as strengths or assets of the town's community:

TABLE 1.1: STRENGTHS/ASSETS OF THE TOWN	
VOTES	DESCRIPTION
8	Agriculture/farm community
7	Fire Department
7	Low density development
5	Nice housing developments



TABLE 1.1: STRENGTHS/ASSETS OF THE TOWN

VOTES	DESCRIPTION
5	No town taxes or involvement
4	Community spirit
3	Good schools (reputation)
2	Churches
2	Open spaces
2	Local (owned) businesses
2	Interest in cultural preservation (historic and architectural)
2	Post office
1	Town Hall
1	Community building
0	Activities for all ages
0	Stable population

B. OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE ON STRENGTHS**TABLE 1.2: VOTES FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE ON STRENGTHS**

VOTES	DESCRIPTION
9	Upgrade of post office facility and rural routes
8	Improve/update zoning and subdivision regulations
6	Partner with schools to create recreation and health opportunities
5	Discuss with School Board a change in traffic pattern
5	Town signs at entrances
5	Study and seek water supply for fire protection and drinking
4	Require set aside of land for future parks
3	Assist small local business development
2	Incentives for preservation efforts
1	Additional community events

C. DRAWBACKS/WEAKNESSES

TABLE 1.3: VOTES FOR DRAWBACKS/WEAKNESS

VOTES	DESCRIPTION
9	Dilapidated properties
9	Enforcement/implementation of land use controls and plans/policies
8	Traffic congestion
8	No age limit on manufactured housing being moved into community
3	Solid waste (volume)
3	Junk/abandoned vehicles
2	Lack of water supply
2	Timber cutting up to property lines
1	Lack of sewer system
1	Demand by new residents for urban services

D. WAYS TO MITIGATE THE DRAWBACKS/THREATS/BARRIERS**TABLE 1.4 VOTES FOR WAYS TO MITIGATE THE DRAWBACKS/THREATS/BARRIERS**

VOTES	DESCRIPTION
8	Consideration for existing farming activities from new adjoining developments
8	Review and modernize the Zoning Ordinance for types of businesses allowed and flexibility of development
7	Ordinance (and to encourage in protective covenants) to limit age of manufactured homes moved to the community
7	Communicate town's persona/image (pastoral)
6	Subdivision regulations to require park/recreation area.
2	Ordinance to require buffer at timber cutting sites.
2	Review and update sign ordinance
1	Monitor volume and removal of solid waste at county collection side

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, APP. A)

CHAPTER 2. PLAN SUMMARY

2.1 COMMUNITY, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY PROFILES

A. COMMUNITY PROFILE

1. The town's 1998 estimated population was 2,602, which represents a large increase from the 1990 Census population of 280 due to a sizable annexation in 1996. The primarily agricultural and rural area is becoming increasingly suburban in nature due to the development of residential subdivisions.
2. The town has a Mayor-Town Council form of government with a part-time Town Clerk to perform some of the town's administrative functions. The town does not have any full-time employees. The Town Hall is located on N.C. 43 at the center of the community.
3. Prior to the 1996 annexation, the residences consist of a mix of older farmhouses scattered on large tracts and newer homes constructed along the state roads or in one of two or three subdivisions. With the large area of the annexation and the immigration of new residents, the town has a wide range of housing styles and sizes. Now the majority of the homes were built with the last two decades.
4. The primary economic engine for the community is agriculture. There is considerable evidence of this in the large amount of land devoted to crop production. However, most of the residents commute out of the community to workplaces located elsewhere. There are no industries and very little businesses located in the town.

B. GEOGRAPHY PROFILE

1. The town is located in the north central section of the county approximately five miles west of Rocky Mount and eight miles north of the county seat, Nashville. The county is located on the western edge of the coastal plain in a transitional area between eastern and Piedmont regions of North Carolina.
2. The county is located in the I-95 corridor with the center of the town located three miles from Exit 141 on I-95. N.C. 43, which is the highway into the town from this exit, runs northeast from Rocky Mount to Warrenton. State Road 1003 is the town's other primary thoroughfare traveling north and south crossing N.C. 43 at the center of town.
3. The general topography of the town's area is moderately level with gently rolling terrain in areas around waterways.

C. HISTORY PROFILE

1. The town derived its name from a grove of red oak trees that grew on the site of the former Red Oak High School near the center of town. Even though the town's area was settled during the Colonial period and farmed over the years, it was not until 1962 that the leaders of the community requested incorporation as a town by



the state. On 6-14-1962, the state's General Assembly granted the town its articles of incorporation to be effective 7-1-1961. The charter also stated that John T. Jones would serve as Mayor and W.R. Deans, T.B. Faulkner, W.W. Pitt and A.M. Frazier would serve on the Council. The first election for town elected positions was held in May 1963.

2. The town had defined its boundaries as extending 4,000 linear feet in all directions from the point where the centerlines of N.C. 43 and State Road 1003 meet in the center of town. The town government consists of a Mayor and four Town Council members.
3. In past years, the town was an ideal location for one of the few Farmlife Schools in the state. This institution trained young agriculturalists in crop production techniques and female students in home economics. The Red Oak Farmlife School was self-supporting for years until it closed its doors.
4. In April 1996, the town grew by 829.3% in population to 2,602 and 932% in land area to 18.17 square miles when the Town Council accepted and approved the voluntary annexation petitions from a large number of owners of property surrounding the town.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.1)

2.2 KEY ISSUES

The following is a summary of the major issues faced by the town at the time it began the process of developing this plan.

- A. Update the 1975 Plan and land use regulations. The town leaders had determined that the 1975 Land Development Plan and land use regulations, which were completed in 1981, needed updating to reflect current conditions and aspirations for guiding development over the next ten years. The Land Development Plan Advisory Committee also felt that consistent enforcement of the land use regulations was an important issue in light of the increase of development activities.
- B. Preservation of rural character. The Land Development Plan Advisory Committee identified the farm community as a top asset and the existence of conflicts between the existing agricultural uses and the proximity of new residential developments.
- C. Substandard housing. Although not large in numbers, deteriorating and dilapidated housing units was viewed as one of the top community weaknesses. This concern stems from the sharp contrast created by the condition of these units against the scenic view of the open spaces and newer homes. It also arises from the increase in number and conditions of the older manufactured homes.
- D. Traffic congestion. The amount of rush and school hour traffic in the central core in the morning is a concern for both safety and delay in travel to work.
- E. Community appearance and identity. This issue includes not only the related issues of preservation of rural character and substandard housing described above, but also



other appearance concerns and opportunities and establishing the community identity as rural and low density development.

F. Location of new business development. Due to the lack of public water and sewer lines, the prospect of business development has not been promising; however, the increase in residential growth and traffic count may be viewed by commercial developers as adequate demand to justify the investment into additional developments. The town's concern was where this potential development needs to occur in the best interest of the community. Industrial development is precluded from discussion due to the lack of public water and sewer.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.2)

2.3 VISION STATEMENT

A. "A VISIT TO RED OAK IN 2010"

We are driving on N.C. 43 into the community past the nicely landscaped and designed welcome sign and observe the farmed fields extending from the road to farm residences and buildings nestled in groves of trees. There are a number of homes along the state roads, but the majority of the single-family homes are located off the road within a planned residential subdivision. As we enter a new subdivision, the name of the neighborhood is announced with a landscaped, brick and wooden sign. The paved street leads us by landscaped or wooded lots with newly built homes, a small park with a tot lot centrally located within the neighborhood and clusters of wooded or natural area set aside within the development.

We continue our trip along the road to the center of town traveling past more fields of cotton, a pumpkin patch, wooded open spaces with an occasional pond in an adjacent field, clean streams and several more entrance signs to residential neighborhoods. One of the subdivisions has fenced pastures with horses belonging to residents.

We enter the center of town at the intersection of N.C. 43 and State Road 1003 and notice a change in the mix and increased density of land uses. There are several small businesses interspersed among community service facilities (Town Hall, Volunteer Fire Department, Community Building, Post Office and two schools), churches and residences all of which are surrounded by croplands. We also notice an older architectural style in both residences and commercial buildings. Several of the businesses and residences have been renovated to preserve or to imitate earlier architectural styles. Newly constructed buildings were designed to complement and blend in with the older styles. We observe advertising signs that were designed to be in character with the new architectural theme of the central core.

On the other side of the "central core" of the town, we see an elevated water storage tank near the new post office with the landscaped parking lot. Across the road, parents are entering a driveway leading to a parking lot and waiting lane to pick up their children from school. Adjacent to the waiting lane is a walking trail between the schools as well as connected to the new pedestrian pathways



throughout the central core. We also observe parents and children entering a community park with picnic tables, a pavilion and playground area.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.3)

2.4 COMMUNITY'S MAJOR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The following is a summary of the key community strengths (and opportunities) and weaknesses (and mitigations) as identified by the Land Development Plan Advisory Committee (a detailed listing is shown in Section 1.6 of this Plan):

A. COMMUNITY'S STRENGTHS

1. Agricultural community;
2. Low density development;
3. Good community facilities and services;
4. Nice housing developments;
5. No town taxes and little governmental involvement;
6. Community spirit and faith;
7. Reputation of having good schools;
8. Open spaces;
9. Local owned businesses; and
10. Interest in cultural preservation.

B. OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE ON STRENGTHS

1. Upgrade of post office facility and rural routes;
2. Improve/update zoning and subdivision regulations;
3. Partner with schools to create recreational and health related opportunities;
4. Discuss with School Board a change in traffic pattern (at schools);
5. Town signs at entrances to the community;
6. Study and seek water supply for fire protection and reserve drinking water source;
7. Require set aside of land for future parks;
8. Assist small local business development; and
9. Incentives for preservation efforts.

C. COMMUNITY'S WEAKNESSES

1. Dilapidated properties;
2. Enforcement/implementation of land use controls and plans/policies;



3. Traffic congestion;
4. No age limit on manufactured homes being moved into community;
5. Volume of traffic at solid waste collection site;
6. Abandoned and junk vehicles;
7. Lack of water supply; and
8. Timber cutting up to property lines.

D. WAYS TO MITIGATE THE WEAKNESSES

1. Consideration for existing farming activities from new adjoining residential developments;
2. Modernize Zoning Ordinance for types of businesses allowed and flexibility of development;
3. Land use controls to limit age of manufactured homes moved into the community;
4. Communicate the town's persona and image; and
5. Amend subdivision regulations to require park/recreation area.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.4)

2.5 SUMMARY OF LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The following is a summarized version of the more detailed land development policies listed in the final section of the plan. After a review of current conditions and long and numerous discussions by the Land Development Plan Advisory Committee concerning the community's strengths and weaknesses, the policies were developed based upon the key elements of land development.

A. GENERAL LAND USE

1. Preserve and protect existing agricultural uses, natural resources and open spaces;
2. Maintain low-density development of all types and maintain the community's reputation of having an excellent quality of life; and
3. Minimize land use conflicts and encourage innovation and flexibility.

B. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Maintain low-density residential development and promote long-term health safety (septic systems);
2. Encourage innovative site design;
3. Protect property values by requiring natural buffers; and
4. Allow manufactured homes in certain zoning districts and require appearance standards.



C. COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

1. Encourage sign standards that are aesthetically pleasing and fitting with community's image and establish example through town signs;
2. Pursue volunteer efforts to fix up, clean up and improve aesthetics and investigate county resources in junk/abandoned vehicles;
3. Encourage landscaping in commercial developments and around subdivision entrance signs; and
4. Communicate its small town and pastoral image.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Protect investment in current town facilities, encourage appropriate facilities by other governments, and encourage addition of water supply and recreation facilities; and
2. Communicate availability of services, improve access to town services and encourage additional cultural activities.

E. PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

1. Continue to utilize equal representation throughout the planning area and public participation in developing land development policies;
2. Adopt Red Oak - 2010, ensure that development proposals comply with its policies, provide consistent enforcement of policies and regulations, and implement strategies; and
3. Seek cooperative arrangements with other units of government in planning and services.

F. TRANSPORTATION

1. Coordinate and investigate ways to reduce traffic congestion with the School Board and the state's Department of Transportation;
2. Continue to require the development of public streets in all new subdivisions to comply with State Department of Transportation's street standards;
3. Ensure right-of-way access to interior tracts, street linkages between subdivisions and minimize strip development; and
4. Encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways in central core.

G. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

1. Discourage development in flood hazard areas and wetlands, protect water quality, minimize erosion and sedimentation, and protect natural wildlife habitats; and
2. Encourage preservation of the community's rural and agrarian character.



H. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage small business development compatible with the character of the community within the central core area; and
2. Encourage business planning, assistance and well-planned establishments and locations.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.5)

2.6 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES MAP

The following map is a generalized and visual summary of the town's major development strategies for the next ten years. Special emphasis was placed on the following strategies, which could be symbolized on the map. The location of the symbols was designed to be general to allow for flexibility in actual location in potential developments.

A. CENTRAL CORE EXPANSION

To allow for additional business development within the central core area, a larger area would be considered for rezoning around the periphery of the current business zoning in order to accommodate the large lots needed for septic systems and flexibility of location by some commercial development. In addition, since the central core area already has commercial character, it was felt that most of the new business development should locate there.

B. THOROUGHFARE IMPROVEMENTS

The extension of State Road 1603 as a connector from N.C. 43 to State Road 1524 is recommended to allow traffic to bypass the Red Oak Middle School congestion and to reduce the left turns onto N.C. 43 from State Road 1524. Even though it was not symbolized as a strategy, it is recommended that the state's Department of Transportation be asked to study and pursue possible short-term and long-term solution(s) to the increasingly congested traffic on N.C. 43 through the central core area.

C. RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Most of the new residential development, particularly major subdivisions, should take place south and west of N.C. 43 and south of State Road 1425. Even though not shown on the map, the residential development strategies would also include:

1. Re-evaluating the areas allowing manufactured homes and establishing appearance standards;
2. Re-evaluating the minimum lot area per unit for a mobile home park; and
3. Consider low-density multi-family development with site plan review.



D. COMMUNITY PARK

The town should develop a community park near the central core area to go along with other facilities already in this area and to allow the community another place and reason to gather while developing more of a sense of community.

E. VISUAL

Gateways recognizes the importance of appearance and image message at these entrances as well as a reminder of the importance of appearance throughout the community.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 2.6)



CHAPTER 3. CURRENT CONDITIONS AND GROWTH FACTORS

3.1 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Population analysis and information provides a local government the capability to prepare for the impact on future land use and community facilities by population changes. By observing the past, present, and future population trends and relevant comparisons, one can not only determine the present and future needs of the community, but also gain some insight to a pattern of social, economic and political factors that helped to shape the current conditions.

A. POPULATION CHANGES AND GROWTH

1. Table 3.1 shows the historical trend of population for the town from 1970 to 1998, which includes the population prior to and after annexation. Prior to annexation in 1996, the town was losing population by 12.5% and 11% during the decades from 1970 to 1990. It was not experiencing the same growth that its surrounding township or county had during this time. Table 3.1: Historical Population Changes

JURISDICTION	1970	1980	1990	1998	1990-98 % CHANGE
Red Oak	359	314	280	2602	829.3%
Red Oak Township	1,564	1,743	2,351	N/A	N/A
Nash County	59,122	67,153	76,677	88,112	14.9%

Source: U.S. Census and State Office of State Planning

2. Table 3.2 illustrates the breakdown of the population gain during the period of the annexation. Based on data submitted to the state with the town's annexation records, an estimated 2,336 persons were gained from the annexation while the original town area was still losing population.

1990 POPULATION	1998 POPULATION	TOTAL GROWTH	POP. ANNEXED	URBAN GROWTH
280	2,602	2,322	2,336	-14

Source: State Office of State Planning

3. The population growth of the county has been far greater than originally projected in the early 1990s as shown by Tables 3.3 and 3.4, which compare the state's projections from 1991 and 1998.



TABLE 3.3: NASH COUNTY'S 1991 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

2000	2005	2010
86,627	90,995	95,358
<i>Source: State Office of State Budget and Management 1991</i>		

TABLE 3.4: NASH COUNTY'S 1998 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

2000	2010	2020
90,843	102,743 (+13.1%)	114,211 (+11.2%)
<i>Source: State Office of State Planning, June 1999</i>		

4. As shown in Table 3.1, the county has grown by 14.9% in population from 1990 to the state's 1998 estimate. This estimate has been recently revised to include 1999 data and now shows the county's growth at 15.9% (based on estimated population of 88,867), which is a greater rate of growth than the statewide average of 15.31%. This growth in population comes mostly from in-migration as indicated by the state estimate from the 1999 data that the net migration into the county since 1990 is 10.9%.

B. POPULATION DENSITY

Even though the town increased its population considerably from the 1996 annexation, it also increased its land area from 1.76 square mile to 18.17 square miles. The increase in land area decreased the town's population density from 159 to 143 persons per square mile. Thus, maintaining its rural character. Table 3.5 compares the town's 1990 and 1998 density with other communities of various sizes and with the density of the county.

TABLE 3.5: POPULATION DENSITY

JURISDICTION	1990 POPULATION	1990 LAND AREA	1990 DENSITY	1998 POPULATION	1998 LAND AREA	1998 DENSITY
Red Oak	280	1.76 s.m.	159	2,602	18.17 s.m.	143
Nashville	3,617	2.32 s.m.	1,559	3,965	2.73 s.m.	1452
Dortches	840	7.25 s.m.	116	N/A	N/A	N/A
Stallings	2,152	3.09 s.m.	696	2,664	3.32 s.m.	802
Nash Co.	76,677	542 s.m.	142	88,112	542 s.m.	163
<i>Source: Nash Co. Geographic Information Center; The Wooten Company; NC Office of State Planning</i>						

C. TOWNSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

1. In reviewing the 1990 Census - Summary of Population and Housing Characteristics, the population of the Red Oak Township (2,351) closely resembles the current estimate (2,602) of the town after the 1996 annexation. Since almost all



the town's current town limits is located within the township's boundaries, this study will make several references to 1990 population and housing characteristics of the township as representative of the 16 square miles annexed in 1996.

2. According to the 1990 Census, 73% of the Red Oak Township population is 18 years old or older. The percentage of households that are family (related members of household) versus non-family was 83% in the township. The non-family households consisted of mostly single person households with 37% of those households being 65 years old or older. The race composition for both the township and the town were the same at 86% Caucasian/Hispanic and 14% African American.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.1)

3.2 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

A. INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

1. This study relies on county data as a general indicator of income characteristics for the town.
2. The county's per capita personal income in 1997 was \$21,612, which ranks as the 26th best in the state, but is below the national average of \$25,288. Recent state data shows the county ranked at 19th best in the state with its median family income of \$45,491. The percent of persons below the poverty rate was 14.1% of the population and 20.6% of children under 18 according to the 1995 Census.

B. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Manufacturing sector is the leading employer in the county as it is in the region and the state. In 1998, over 12,000 were employed in manufacturing in the county. Retail trade was the second best employment sector with 8,400 employees followed closely by the service sector with 7,300. Government is fourth with 5,500.
2. The average 24-month unemployment rate for the county is 5.2%, which is the best in the region, but is still below the national average of 4.4%. Plant closings over the last five years have affected the unemployment rate for the entire Rocky Mount area.

C. AGRICULTURE

1. Agriculture is by far the top industry in the town. Cotton, tobacco, peanuts and soybeans are the major cash crops in the town. Cotton and soybeans have been increasing in acreage lately while peanuts have remained the same. Flue-cured tobacco acreage and production has decreased, but still remains number one in total sales and yield. Livestock is also a leader in sales in the town. Poultry and cattle are the primary livestock for the area.
2. Red Oak area production figures are not available; however, countywide figures are available from the county office of the state's Cooperative Extension Service. The total crop related income in 1998 was \$106 million and livestock was \$33 million.



Tobacco had the top sales among the crops with \$41 million and poultry was the top livestock sales producer with \$25.8 million.

3. Major employer. The Nash-Rocky Mount Board of Education is by far the largest employer in the town with 168 employees in the combined staff of both Red Oak Elementary School and Red Oak Middle School. The town's few remaining employers have very few or no employees.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.2)

3.3 HOUSING

A. HOUSING STOCK

1. The following description uses the 1990 Census to show housing characteristics from the recent past for both the Town (original town limits) and the Red Oak Township. Since the population size and location of the new area annexed in 1996 approximately resembles the Red Oak Township, the 1990 township figures are being used to illustrate what that area looked like along with the original town figures. Note: The Red Oak Township also includes a small portion of the Town of Dortches.
2. According to the 1990 Census, Red Oak had 114 housing units and the Red Oak Township had 855 units, which includes the town's units. Nearly 88% of the town's units were single-family detached units where 80% of the township's units were this type.
 - a. The difference in these percentages was due to the greater number of mobile home units in the township (160) versus the town (6). For both jurisdictions the number of multi-family units was eight.
3. A count of the number, types and exterior condition of housing units within the current town jurisdiction is described in detail under the Existing Land Use - 2000 section later in this chapter. See Section 3.6 of this chapter.

B. OCCUPANCY

Approximately 60% of the town's 114 units were owner-occupied while the 76% of the township's 855 units were owner-occupied in the 1990 Census.

C. VACANCY

In 1990, the Census stated that only seven (6.1%) of the town's 114 housing units were vacant while 33 (3.9%) of the township's 855 total units were vacant.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.3)

3.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The following is a review of the key elements of the town's facilities and services, which are interrelated with land use needs and planning. This section is divided into those facilities and services provided by the town and those by other government units.



A. TOWN FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. TOWN ADMINISTRATION AND TOWN HALL

- a.** A Mayor and four Council members govern the town using a paid part-time Town Clerk to administer the Council's minutes and financial recordkeeping. The town uses a part-time volunteer to respond to inquiries on zoning. The Mayor, Council members, appointed board or committee members and others volunteer their time and efforts to carry out town projects and activities.
- b.** The current Town Hall, located on N.C. 43 near its intersection with State Road 1003 in the central core area, was constructed in 1995 after the town government occupied a trailer at this site. The 2,400-square foot building has a meeting room, kitchen, and storage area. Recently, the town purchased over an acre directly behind the Town Hall site in order to drill a well for its water supply and to have space to expand its parking area or add a storage building if needed.

2. COMMUNITY BUILDING

- a.** The Community Building, located on School Street within the central core area near the intersection of N.C. 43 and State Road 1003, was built in 1933 as a Work Project Administration construction project. The logs and stones used in the construction were supplied from the community and the project provided work for local residents. It was originally built for the county, which later donated it to the Red Oak Home Demonstration Club. Because of the difficulty of maintaining an older building, the club donated it to the town in the mid-1980s.
- b.** The town rents the building, which contains a large meeting room, kitchen, and storage room, to any residents or groups located in Red Oak for meetings or social gatherings.

B. OTHER FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. SCHOOLS

The Red Oak Elementary School, located on State Road 1003 in the central core area, has a student enrollment of 435 during the school year 2000-2001. The Red Oak Middle School, located next door facing Battleboro Road or State Road 1524, has a student enrollment of 1,163. With the construction of a new high school (elsewhere within the county) to be completed in the Fall of 2002, redistricting will reduce Red Oak Middle School's population in order to allow for continued growth in its district.

2. RED OAK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The current four-bay, 5,400-square foot fire station, located next to the Town Hall on N.C. 43, was built in the early 1960s. The Fire Department has 52 volunteer members. Its equipment consists of a pumper, mini-pumper and tanker. This station serves a 47-square mile area and 5,200 population. The current fire



insurance rating is nine, which is typical for a rural area with only tanker or the use of ponds for water supply.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.4)

3.5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

A. GENERAL

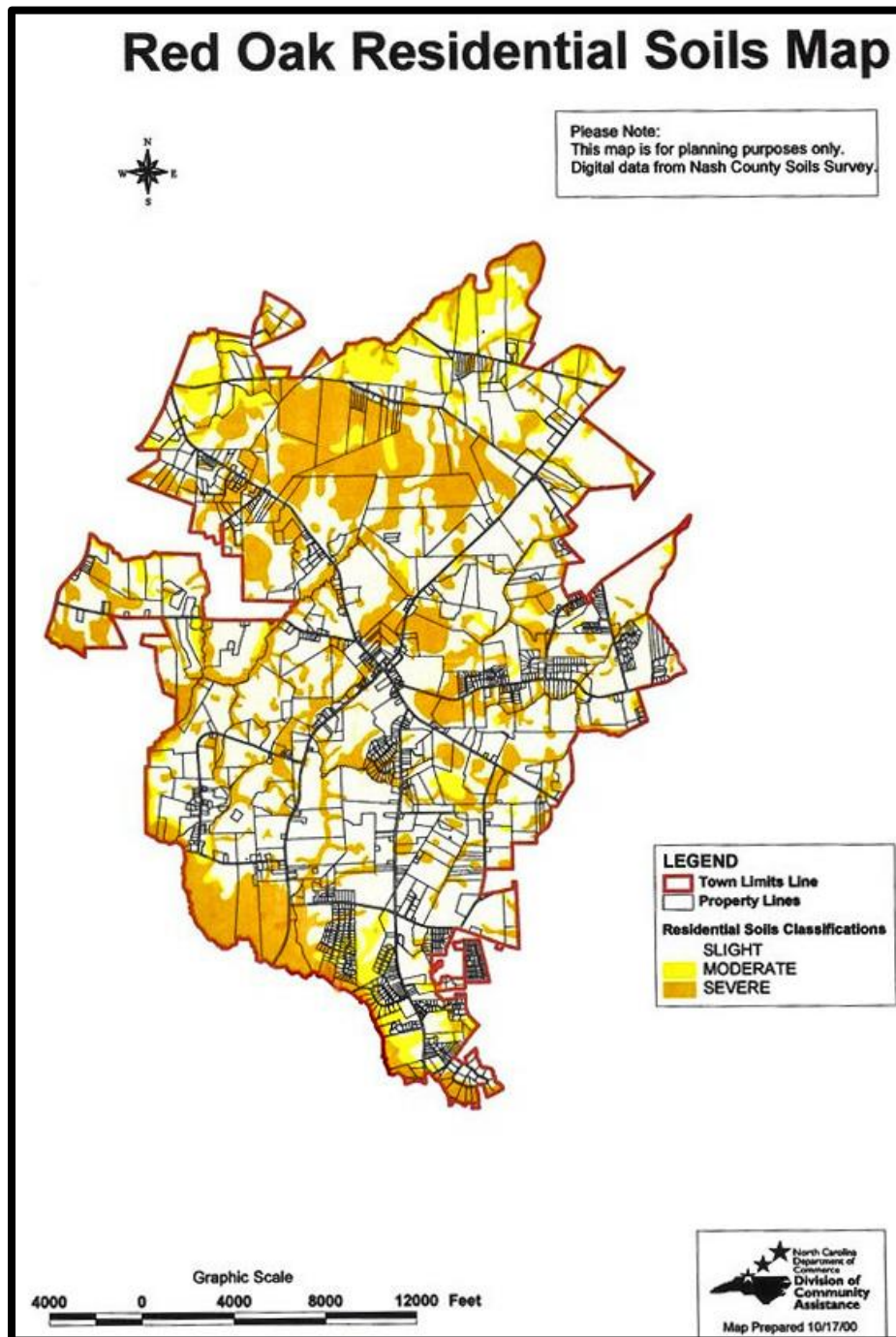
1. Development activities relate to and interact with the physical and historical character of a community. Small communities take a great deal of pride in its rural character, their history and overall community appearance. Even small communities can plan for and implement activities to preserve its visual character without a lot of resources.
2. This section is divided into two parts: natural environment and community preservation. Small communities have limited resources to study, monitor and enforce regulations on environmental resources and need the state and federal agencies to assist in certain fields. However, small communities can plan and implement policies to respect and preserve its natural environment and to influence the preservation of its community character and appearance. The most pressing concerns within both these topics in most small communities will often tend to be:
 - a. The preservation of the rural character;
 - b. The segregation of agricultural uses from residential development;
 - c. Water quality;
 - d. Protection from floods; and
 - e. The preservation of unique sites.

B. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

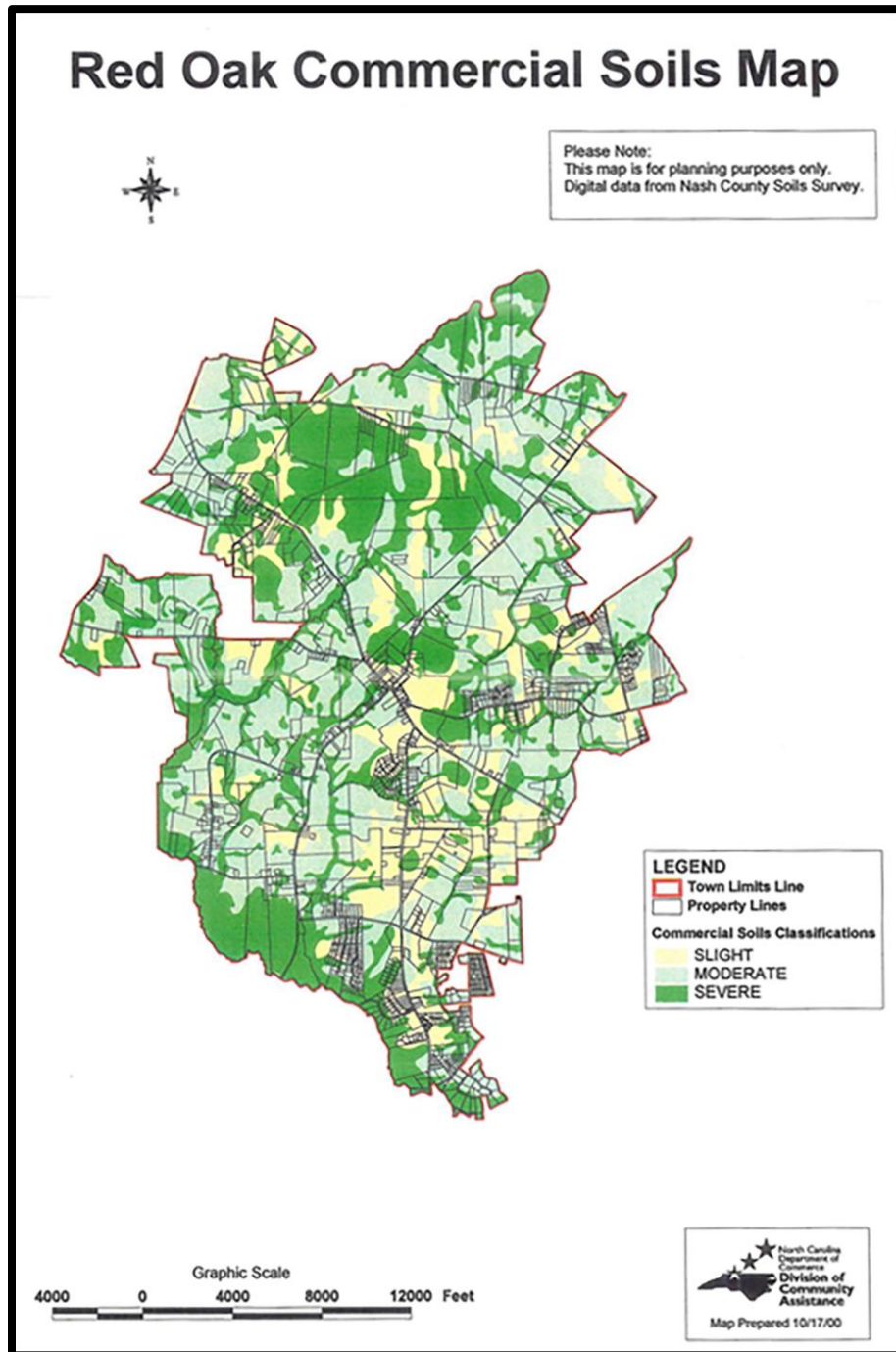
1. A community's land use and development activities are interrelated with its natural environment and resources in a number of ways. The elements (land, water, wildlife, and air) of the natural environment are both resources that need to be protected and factors that need to be respected in the use and development of land. The value of natural resources in a small community is far-reaching and requires a careful balance of needs and understanding of interrelationships.
2. Environmental factors that should be considered in land development decisions are the following:
 - a. **SOILS**



- i. Soil scientists and engineers have rated soil types and soil associations (two or more soil types) for the suitability of their respective characteristics to agricultural and nonagricultural land uses. For nonagricultural developments, the important properties influencing the use of the soils were soil texture, depth, shrink-swell potential, permeability, flood hazard and depth to hard rock or to the water table.
- ii. On the following pages are the Residential Soils and Commercial Soils Maps showing the classifications of suitability to urban development. The classifications are levels of limitations for either residential or commercial construction ranging from slight to severe. The areas of the darker shades of color on both maps generally denote problems with certain soil characteristics.

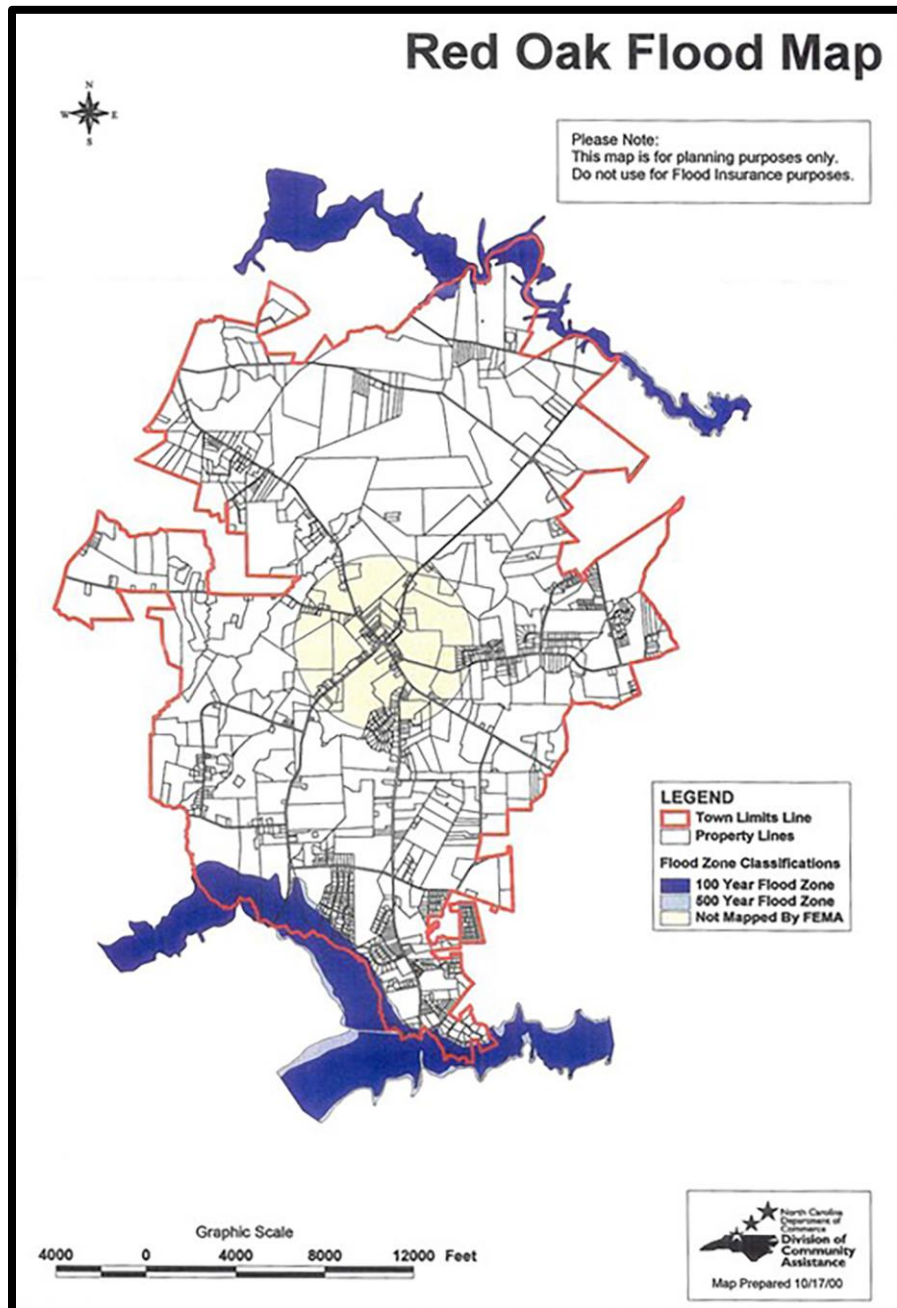


- iii. The two dominant soil groups or associations in the town are the Norfolk-Rains and the Norfolk-Georgeville-Rains associations. The Norfolk-Rains group of soils is primarily located eastern of N.C. 43. The Norfolk-Rains soils can be used for farming, urban development, and forestry. The high-water table in the rains soils will be the primary limitation to most uses.



- iv. The Norfolk-Georgeville-Rains group of soils is located on the western side of N.C. 43. The Norfolk and Georgeville soils are used for row crops and pasture and the Rains soils for pasture and woodland. This group can generally be used for urban development; however, portions of this group have high susceptibility to erosion and the rains soils can have high water table.
- v. The above is a generalized description of the soil types, characteristics, and location. In order to determine whether a particular site has suitable soils for development, one should contact the Soil Conservation Service located in Nashville for the Soil Survey of Nash County, which contains detailed soils analysis.

b. WATER RESOURCES



- i. The flood hazard areas in the town are shown on the Red Oak Flood Map, which follows this page. This map illustrates both the 100- and 500-Year Flood Zones along the Swift Creek on the northern borders and Pig Basket and Stoney Creeks on the southern borders. Both of these creeks are part of the 5,440 square mile Tar-Pamlico River Basin. The area within the previous town limits was not mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Administration as shown in the center of the map. Several town residences along Pig Basket and Stoney Creek suffered damage as a result of the flooding that occurred after Hurricane Floyd in 1999.
- ii. The town is not located in any of the county's water supply watersheds and does not have to adopt or enforce an ordinance related to public water supply watersheds.
- iii. The source of drinking water in the town is underground aquifers, which provides water through individual wells.
- iv. There are no major freshwater wetlands located in the town with the possible exception of any of the area along the northern edge of Stoney Creek. There is likely a number scattered minor instances of marshes, swamps or wet meadows throughout the planning area. These areas are environmentally sensitive as a natural filter and habitat for wildlife. If land-disturbing activities should occur in these areas, then the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must be consulted for a field inspection and analysis.

c. AIR QUALITY

The state's Division of Air Quality monitors various elements or properties of air quality throughout the state using federal standards. The element most closely monitored in recent years is ozone. Ozone in the upper atmosphere protects us from harmful sun rays, but when it forms in the lower atmospheric levels it is harmful to humans, crops and forests. A recent state's Division of Air Quality assessment stated that there are no harmful levels of ozone in the town's area at this time.

d. WILDLIFE

The state's Division of Parks and Recreation maintains an endangered species list through the state's Heritage Program. The list identifies a number of endangered species of vertebrates, invertebrates and vascular plants for the county. Although the locations of the habitats of these species are not specifically defined, their presence in the area should be of concern in major development projects. The state's Division of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife should be contacted before undertaking any major land clearance.

e. COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

i. RURAL CHARACTER

Open space, farming activities and small-scale buildings are the hallmarks of rural character. Sprawling development is beginning to occur and is likely to continue during the next ten years. The town is concerned about maintaining the open spaces it currently enjoys. Sometimes farming activities and non-farm residents do not make good neighbors, particularly at the edge of urban developments. This was a concern expressed by the Land Development Plan Advisory Committee, which stated its support of farming as an important part of the community and proposed policies and strategies to minimize these conflicts.



ii. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Land Development Plan Advisory Committee and the Planning Board recognized the importance of the area's history dating back to early 19th Century. The history of the people, events and structures of a small community are always a source of pride. The historical character of a community is best seen in the architecture of its buildings that still remain from earlier periods. The style, building materials, size, stylistic features and setting on the property all combine to tell a story about the original owner and the period of construction. The nearby Black Jack structure is the only structure currently in the town's vicinity known to be on the National Register of Historical Places; however, there is likely to be other structures within the town worthy of study and nomination.

iii. COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

The visual character of a community leaves a lasting impression on residents and visitors alike. It suggests a quality of life and a community attitude, which may or may not be positive. The town has many positive images shaped by small-scale buildings, low-density development, lots of woodlands, some historical architecture and friendly waves or nods. However, there is also some evidence of negative images (i.e., junk vehicles and dilapidated or deteriorating structures), which stand in contrast of the positive images. The Land Development Plan Advisory Committee was concerned about the negative images and lose of the small town visual character with all the new construction taking place.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.5)

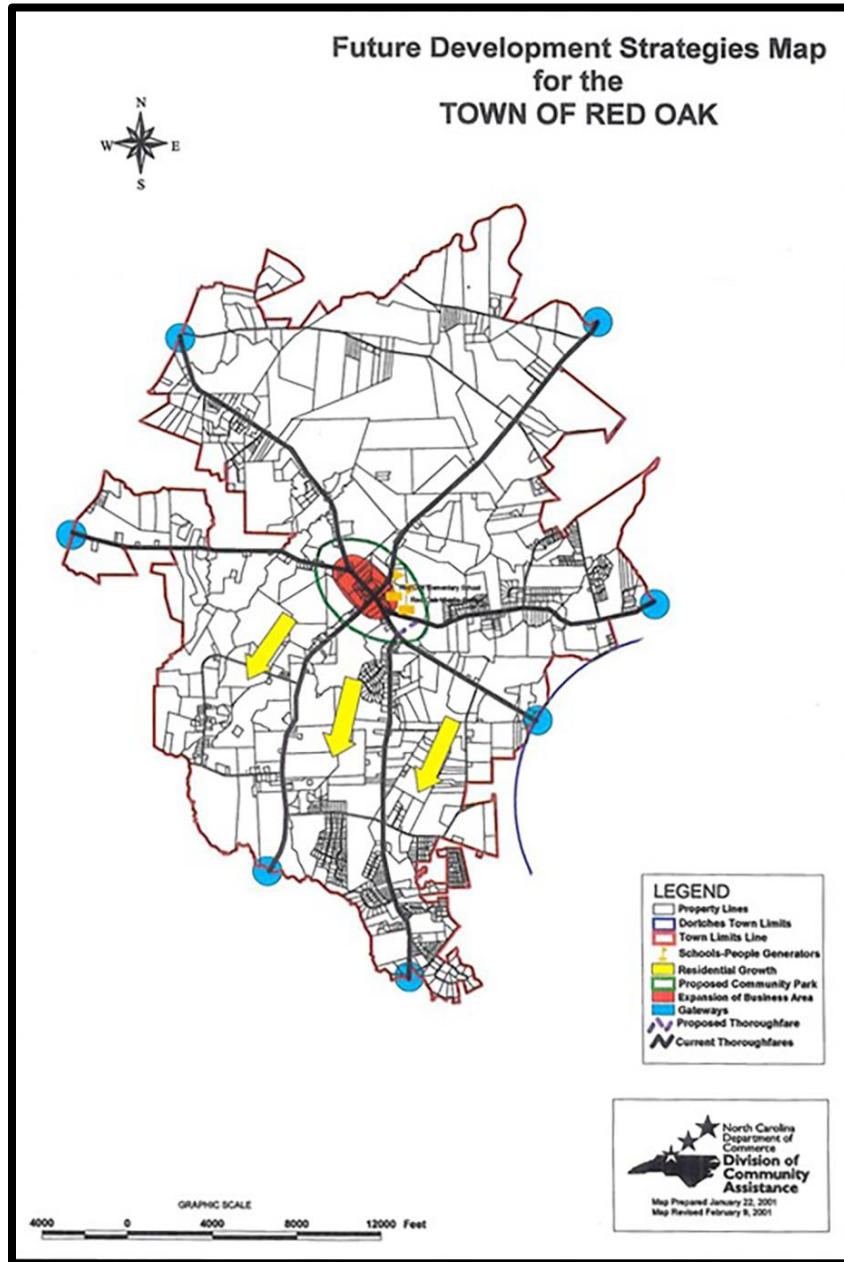
3.6 EXISTING LAND USE - 2000

A. GENERAL

1. Prior to recommending future land development goals and policies, a current inventory of existing patterns of land use was compiled and analyzed. This is where one sees how the town fits together and shaped by the results of past development decisions or non-decisions, public or private. Evaluating the existing land use patterns along with other current conditions and growth factors allows the town planners to establish strategic and realistic future growth patterns. The resulting strategic policies will take into account the current development character of the town (i.e., to favor its rural character and low-density development).
2. The Existing Land Use Map, located following this page, delineates the major land use categories found in the town. The information on this map was gathered by driving down each street and road throughout the jurisdiction. Upon visual inspection of each property, the land use was evaluated and recorded. In the case of residential uses, a structural condition status was also recorded to provide additional housing analysis.
3. Each parcel was categorized and placed into the following major groups of uses, which were based on current development character and issues:
 - a. Agricultural/open space/woodlands;



- b. Residential (single-family);
- c. Manufactured homes;
- d. Multi-family residential;
- e. Commercial; and
- f. Institutional/governmental.



B. AGRICULTURAL, OPEN SPACE AND WOODLANDS

1. Comprise much of the land area within the town. Considerable acreage is cultivated for the production of the dominant cash crops for this area: cotton; peanut; tobacco; soybean; and for livestock production. The large tracts of agricultural land are divided by and surrounded by woodlands or open space areas.
2. These rural areas were once sparsely developed with farm residences, tenant houses, and farm buildings, but now they are increasingly experiencing "ribbon



residential development" along the roads with strip subdivisions being the type that particularly detracts from the rural and agrarian character.

3. The survey also showed that the agricultural areas contained a total of seven locations of active or former intensive agricultural use (i.e., poultry raising/feeding buildings). The majority (four) of these activities were located in the less developed northwest quadrant.

C. SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

1. Single-family residential (site-built) development is the second most prevailing land use in the planning area. The majority of the housing units are located in subdivisions with internal streets, usually one street ending in a cul-de-sac. However, one can also see numerous residences along the state roads, some of which serve as either main thoroughfares or as connectors within the town. Subdivision lot sizes tend to be larger in the central and northern areas of town. Several subdivisions in the very southern portion of town near Stoney Creek contain smaller lots. These subdivisions were platted prior the 1996 annexation and the town's minimum requirement of 30,000 square feet.
2. As shown in Table 3.6, the Southeastern quadrant, bounded by N.C. 43 on the north, State Road 1003 on the west and Stoney Creek on the south, contains the largest number of single-family site-built homes with 51% of the total units for the entire town. The majority of the homes in all the quadrants are in very good condition due to recent construction and maintenance. All of the quadrants have a fair number of fair to good condition units due to the age of construction. The northwestern quadrant (north of N.C. 43 and west of State Road 1003) contained the most dilapidated units.

TABLE 3.6: SINGLE-FAMILY (SITE-BUILT) HOUSING

BY CONDITION	SOUTHWEST	SOUTHEAST	NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	TOTAL
Very Good	95	369	31	123	618
Fair to Good	64	78	22	57	221
Deteriorating	9	7	8	3	27
Dilapidated	4	4	17	3	28
Sub-totals	172	458	78	186	894

Source: Land use survey by Upper Coastal Plain COG, August 2000.

Note: quadrants are defined using the orientation and boundaries of N.C. 43 as the boundary between the northern and southern quadrants and State Road 1003 as the boundary between the eastern and western quadrants.

D. MANUFACTURED HOMES

1. Table 3.7 provides the distribution of manufactured homes by quadrants throughout the town. Southwest and northwest quadrants contain the most units. Most of the units in the northwest quadrant are near the outer edges of the town limits on State Roads 1530 and 1531. The units in the Southwest quadrant are scattered with the largest concentration on the southern end of "Loop Road" or State Road 1438.



2. The majority of the manufactured homes in the town are in the condition category of fair to good. Deteriorating units are the next largest numbers and the southwest quadrant had almost half of these units.

TABLE 3.7: MANUFACTURED HOMES					
BY CONDITION	SOUTHWEST	SOUTHEAST	NORTHWEST	NORTHEAST	TOTALS
Very Good	3	2	7	0	12
Fair to Good	29	8	31	22	89
Deteriorating	11	5	3	5	24
Dilapidated	0	0	1	2	3
Sub-totals	43	15	42	29	128

Source: Land use survey by Upper Coastal Plain COG, August 2000.

E. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The community has only two multi-family structures with a total of six units. They are older structures located in the northwest quadrant in the central core area. The lack of public sewer and market demand has inhibited the construction of multi-family units in the town’s area.

F. COMMERCIAL

The land use survey identified a total of 17 locations that were businesses in operation at the time of the survey or where the structure still remains from a former business use (four). Most of the currently operational businesses are located in the central core area. Most of the businesses in the central core are neighborhood convenience types of commercial uses. The central core has served as the “downtown” area from the community for many years. The few businesses outside the central core were located in various individual locations.

G. INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNMENTAL

The institutional uses include churches and cemeteries in the town. Most of these uses are located in or near the central core, which served as the town center within the original town limits. With the exception of the county’s solid waste collection site on Old Carriage Road or State Road 1603 in the southern part of town, the balance of the governmental uses are also located in or around the center of town. As described in Section 4.5 of this Plan, they include the two schools, Town Hall, Community Building, fire station and post office.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.6)

3.7 CURRENT PLANS AND REGULATIONS AFFECTING LAND DEVELOPMENT

A. The town has prepared and adopted various plans and ordinances to help guide and shape its land use and development. The planning for the future development of the town began in 1975 with the preparation of the 1975-1985 Red Oak Land Development



Plan. The plan recommended the adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations, which the town approved in 1981.

B. The following is a brief description of the plans and ordinances relating to the development of the town.

1. 1975-1985 RED OAK LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This plan was prepared and adopted in 1975 at the same time the county was preparing a similar plan as a joint effort. The plan provided an inventory of current conditions and factors that affected the land uses of the town within its original boundaries. It recommended a series of land use policies and the need for regulations in preparation for future growth.

2. BUILDING CODES

In 1977, the town and the county entered into a joint agreement to authorize the county to perform the building inspection, using the state's Building Codes, within the town's jurisdiction. The codes provided uniform minimum construction standards and certain renovations.

3. PLANNING BOARD

Formed in 1979, the Planning Board was empowered to prepare studies and recommendations to the Town Council regarding land development. Later, after the adoption of regulations, the Planning Board was asked to make recommendations on zoning and subdivision requests.

4. ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP

With the assistance of the state's Division of Community Assistance, the town prepared and adopted the Zoning Ordinance and Map in 1980. This included not only the original town limits, but also a one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction surrounding the town. The ordinance now extends to only the new town limits. The ordinance provides use, dimensional and development standards for all new development activities. It established a total of four zoning or use classifications, including two residential and two business classifications. A Board of Adjustment was also appointed to hear and decide on special appeals on certain zoning matters as outlined in the ordinance.

5. SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

In 1980, the subdivision regulations were adopted to provide basic platting procedures and development standards for the division of land into building lots. This allows the town to coordinate lots and streets layout. The review and approval process was originally shared by the town and the county; however, beginning several years ago, the town has sole responsibility for administering the regulations.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 3.7)



CHAPTER 4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT VISION, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

4.1 PURPOSE, PUBLIC INITIATIVES, CONSISTENCY AND CHANGE

1. In order for the Land Development Plan to be a meaningful tool, the town officials and planners, with citizen input, developed a set of policy statements and implementation strategies to serve as a guide for both public and private development activities during the next ten years. A vision, or goal, statement, which contains examples of projected development principles and values, was also developed from their community strengths and weaknesses discussions. When development proposals come before the Planning Board, this chapter is to be used as a guide, along with its judgment, in its decision-making and recommendations.
2. The following policy statements are also designed to not only guide and shape development, but also to serve as recommendations to the Mayor and Town Council for development initiatives to improve the overall quality of life and economy of the community. These types of recommendations were included because they recognized that the development elements were interrelated and needed both public as well as private initiatives.
3. As statements of local government development principles, the policies should remain relatively constant until the next Land Development Plan update is prepared. Frequent changes will undermine the plan's effectiveness. Thus, the policies are designed to provide a consistent and predictable set of directions for local government decisions and as a notice and guide for private sector decision-making. However, when unanticipated major development activities or factors occur involving conflicts with the plan occur, then amendment(s) to the plan may be warranted after a comprehensive review of their impact on all elements of the plan.

B. THIS CHAPTER WILL CONTAIN

1. Vision Statement: A Visit to Red Oak in 2010;
2. Policy Statements and Implementation Strategies; and
3. Future Development Strategies Map.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, CH. 4, INTRO)

4.2 GENERAL LAND USE

1. The following findings and policy statements were developed within the key components of land development for the town. As stated above, the policy statements were designed to serve as guiding principles for community development and, thus, tend to be general in nature to allow for some flexibility.
2. The Planning Board and Land Development Plan Advisory Committee felt strongly about the need for action and, therefore, recommended implementation strategies in some critical components (i.e., community appearance, community facilities and



services, planning and the like). The recommendations will vary from short-term to long-term and others on an on-going basis. Some are steps to be taken by the Planning Board while updating land use regulations and others were designed as recommendations to the Town Council either as public initiatives or as collaborative efforts:

3. CONTEXT

- a.** In April 1996, Red Oak went from a small circular shaped town of 1.76 square miles to an irregular shaped area totaling 18.17 square miles due to a voluntary petition annexation by large numbers to contiguous property owners. The community maintained its rural open space and agricultural character after the annexation; however, it inherited numerous areas that were preparing to and have since subdivided into single-family lots.
- b.** With the county's future population growth rates projected to exceed the statewide average and the town being located in the eastern portion of the county near the City of Rocky Mount, the trend of increased demand for suburban detached single-family residences will continue even though the town's area does not have public water or sewer systems.
- c.** There is concern that the town will continue to grow rapidly creating conflicts between new residential developments and the agricultural uses, the natural beauty and rural character of the area. Even though the new residences are being developed on at least 30,000 square feet lot area, the sheer number of new subdivisions and lots could create a greater overall community density than was intended.

4. THE TOWN SHALL

- a.** Strive to maintain and preserve the existing agricultural uses, which predated other uses, and shall give due consideration to this principle when conflicts arise from nearby developments;
- b.** Protect natural resources and open spaces, which have recreational, environmental and
- c.** aesthetic value;
- d.** Encourage low-density development of all types, which will be compatible with the nature and character of the community;
- e.** Minimize problems or conflicts caused by potentially incompatible land uses through the use of natural and/or human-made screening;
- f.** Discourage undesirable or unaesthetic land uses in all areas, especially within high visibility areas;
- g.** Maintain the town's reputation as having an excellent quality of life and being a good place to live, raise a family, shop and work;
- h.** Seek to utilize and encourage innovative and flexible land planning and development practices and safeguard natural and cultural resources; and
- i.** Encourage accessory land uses in agricultural areas that compliment the nature and character such areas.



B. UPON ADOPTION OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN, THE PLANNING BOARD AND COUNCIL SHALL REFER THE PLAN AND ITS POLICIES IN MAKING DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance and Map to incorporate provisions, which will implement the above-mentioned principles, including the requirement of a buffer zone between new residential developments and existing agricultural operations;
2. Amend the subdivision regulations to encourage innovative and flexible residential development design, maintain the overall low community density and protect the rural character of the area; and
3. Promote awareness of and highlight the rural and agrarian nature of the area through newsletters and/or brochures on behalf of the community.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.1)

4.3 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. Since the annexation of 1996, most of the housing in the town was built since 1990 (making) most of the housing in excellent condition, as shown on the Land Use Survey Data chart. Most of the new subdivision development and new housing has occurred south of S.R. 1003. Approximately ____ subdivisions have been approved in the town since the 1996 annexation making ____ lots potentially available for development.
2. The number of residential building permits issued in the county has gradually increased countywide since 1990 from 656 to 1,021 in 1999. This increase includes permits issued for manufactured homes, which out-number site-built homes by slightly more than two to one. Although the better manufactured homes are in good condition and maintain their property values, there is a concern that the older manufactured homes placed in the community depreciated in condition and value rapidly detracting from the surrounding neighborhood.
3. There is also concern about the deteriorating and dilapidated housing units throughout the community, but particularly in the northeast quadrant. Most of these units are or were farm tenant housing or regular rental units. A third of the total units in this condition are manufactured units, usually single wide and older in age. Neither the town, nor the county, have minimum housing codes at this time.

B. POLICIES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. THE TOWN SHALL

- a.** Maintain and encourage the low-density, single-family residential character of the town;
- b.** Continue to accommodate county environmental health requirements within the town's subdivision regulations and support septic system and well inspection decisions in promoting long-term health safety;



- c. Encourage innovative site design for new residential development to include amenities, which provide a neighborhood atmosphere;
- d. Assist with preserving and protecting property values by requiring a natural buffer or screening between residential zoned areas and new development of other uses;
- e. Allow manufactured housing in certain zoning districts and require reasonable appearance standards; and
- f. Discourage strip residential development along state or county roads.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. THE TOWN SHALL

- a. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to increase the minimum lot size and related requirements, to require a buffer to other uses, restrict manufactured housing to certain districts and require reasonable appearance standards for manufactured homes;
- b. Amend the subdivision regulations to encourage innovative and flexible design, to incorporate open space conservation and to reduce the amount strip residential development; and
- c. Investigate and pursue any current or future countywide building codes or minimum housing codes remedies for the unsafe and substandard housing units within the town.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.2)

4.4 COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. The Land Development Plan Advisory Committee identified several items, which would be categorized as community appearance issues. The most important item is maintaining the rural and agrarian appearance and character of the community. Entrance signs to the town, subdivision entrance signs, commercial signs, cultural preservation and junk/abandoned vehicles were identified in addition to the already mentioned housing issues.
2. Land use planning and controls will help the town with the rural/agrarian appearance and the commercial signs; however, the town will have to pursue other strategies in order to implement policies on other issues (i.e., town entrance signs, community image marketing, junk/abandoned vehicles and cultural preservation).

B. POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

Sign standards should be reviewed and updated by the town periodically to enhance community identity and to encourage high quality and aesthetically pleasing business images.

1. THE TOWN SHALL

- a. Help promote the town's policy on appearance and project the community's image by setting an example with its own aesthetically pleasing sign;



- b.** Develop ways to periodically communicate its small town and pastoral character and image to residents and prospective residents and businesses as both reassurance and notification;
- c.** Encourage the property owners with junk and abandoned vehicles to remove the vehicles or, in some instances, put up appropriate screening. Utilize any available county resources available if enforcement becomes an issue;
- d.** Encourage property owners to voluntarily fix up and/or clean up unsightly and unsafe properties and, when necessary, use the enforcement of appropriate existing county regulations;
- e.** Encourage the new placement of manufactured homes in certain areas and encourage appearance guidelines with similar characteristics as contained in the average site-built home;
- f.** Encourage the preservation and restoration of structures of historical and architectural significance as a means of enhancing the community's heritage and image;
- g.** Encourage subdivision developers to erect and maintain entrance signs; and
- h.** Encourage commercial developments, both current and proposed, to enhance their site aesthetics with well-maintained landscaping.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Create a community newsletter, brochure and web site in order to project the desired community image as well as to develop a sense of community;
2. Create a community appearance committee or commission to develop, design and implement beautification and appearance projects;
3. Begin the process of designing and establishing town welcome signs at the main entrances into the community and to identify town facilities;
4. Consider the adoption of a junk or abandoned vehicles ordinance after investigating available enforcement resources;
5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to update the sign placement and design standards; to require manufacturing homes to have the same appearance characteristics as the average site-built home; and to include landscaping within site plan standards; and
6. Develop a systematic and tactful approach to requesting voluntary fix up or clean-up of properties or removal of junk vehicles.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.3)

4.5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. Because the town does not levy or collect a property tax, the town offers only a few services and facilities. The town administers land use controls (Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations), installs streetlights, put up Christmas decorations, supports the Fire Department and local youth activities and rents the town's



Community Building out to area groups. The town's other facility is the Town Hall, located on Red Oak Boulevard, N.C. 43.

2. Other public facilities are:
 - a. Red Oak Volunteer Fire Department building located next to the Town Hall;
 - b. U.S. Post Office, which is located on the other side of the Town Hall; and
 - c. Red Oak Elementary School and Red Oak Middle School, located adjacent to each other in the central core area of the town.
3. All of the facilities mentioned above in Section 4.5.A.2 are located within the central core area surrounding the intersection of N.C. 43 and S.R. 1003, which was the center of the original town prior to the 1996 annexation. One other public facility in the town is the county's solid waste collection center located on Old Carriage Road.
4. The County Sheriff's Department provides police protection for the community. There are no public (nor publicly regulated) water or sewer systems within the town.
5. The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee recommended that the town continue its search for community park and recreation opportunities, to investigate the possibility of a future water supply for better fire protection and as a possible source of drinking water for certain neighborhoods; and was concerned about the availability of town employee or volunteer to respond to requests for information and the enforcement/implementation of land use controls and planning policies.

B. POLICIES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Maintain and protect the town's investment in current community facilities;
2. Encourage and support the provision of community services and facilities appropriate to the character of the community by other governmental units;
3. Encourage the creation of community and neighborhood recreational facilities and activities;
4. Encourage cultural activities to take place in appropriate facilities within the town not only as a service for its citizens, but also to build a sense of community;
5. Support any efforts to bring a source of water supply for both fire protection and drinking purposes to the town; and
6. Communicate to its residents the availability of town services and to improve the availability of those services when necessary.

C. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Create community newsletter and web site to communicate town services, facilities, requests for volunteers and events;
2. Hire an employee to be available during weekday work hours to provide information, to take requests or submissions, to assist with newsletter, to type routine correspondences on behalf of boards and committees and the like;



3. Investigate future sources of water supply and seek funding possibilities;
4. Continue to search for and purchase property to be used as a community park and to seek opportunities to utilize school facilities recreation programs; and
5. Consider an amendment to the subdivision regulations to require the dedication of neighborhood level park areas or walking trails within large developments.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.4)

4.6 PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. The town has a nine member Planning Board with the authority and responsibility of performing the initial review and approval recommendation to the Council on rezoning or subdivision development proposals. A part-time Town Clerk or Zoning Administrator handles the day-to-day administration of zoning inquiries, enforcement and permits. The town has hired an urban planner with the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments to assist the Planning Board and Council to develop a new Land Development Plan and to review the 1981 Zoning Ordinance/Map and Subdivision Regulations for updated changes and to provide technical assistance to the Planning Board.
2. Upon approval of the 1996 annexation, the town extended its Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations to the new areas (16 additional square miles). The Planning Board currently has representation from the new annexed areas.

B. POLICIES FOR PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

1. Provide equal representation on the Planning Board from all areas of the town and active public participation in developing land use and development policies and plans;
2. The town shall adopt and maintain progressive and sound land development policies and implementation strategies, which will ensure that all areas of the town will develop fairly, effectively and efficiently;
3. Seek cooperative arrangements with other units of government on planning and development activities and to provide or improve community services;
4. Ensure that zoning and subdivision proposals for development are consistent with the town's adopted Land Development Plan;
5. Provide effective and consistent enforcement of regulations and implementation of Land Development Plan policies; and
6. Periodically update Land Development Plan, land use controls and implementation procedures.



C. STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to seek representation and input from residents of all areas and interests within the community through appointments to the Planning Board and the use of advisory committees and public meetings;
2. The town shall adopt the Red Oak - 2010 Land Development Plan, utilize its development policies as a guide in all development related decisions, pursue implementation strategies where necessary resources are available and update when appropriate;
3. Continue to exchange information and cooperation with the county's Planning and Inspection Department on planning and development matters and to closely coordinate and/or exceed regulatory requirements and development policies;
4. Establish a subdivision review committee consisting of representatives of NCDOT, Environmental Health Department and county street names during the preliminary plat approval stage;
5. Periodically meet as a group with such public facility/service units as representatives from the county's Board of Education, Fire Department, NCDOT and the like to discuss and plan both short and long-term issues;
6. Planning Board should follow and reference the policies of this plan in all of its zoning and subdivision decisions and recommendations to the Council; and
7. Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members as well as the Town Clerk or Zoning Administrator should take advantage of available training workshops whenever possible and share said information with the rest of the Board.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.5)

4.7 TRANSPORTATION

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. All highways, state roads and public streets are controlled (rights-of-way) and maintained by the state's Department of Transportation. N.C. 43 is the main thoroughfare connecting the town with Rocky Mount.
 - a. The average daily traffic count on N.C. 43 has increased 2,000 vehicle trips from 1990 to 1998 just south of S.R. 1003 and 800 vehicle trips just north of S.R. 1003.
 - b. The traffic on S.R. 1003 has also increased.
 - c. Both of these roads go through and intersect in the town's central core area.
2. With both schools located in the central core area, the Planning Board and Land Development Plan Advisory Committee were concerned about the volume and back up of school related traffic in the mornings when other rush hour traffic is traveling through that area.
3. There is a lack of pedestrian paths or bikeways in the central core area, where schools, businesses, churches and public facilities are located.



B. POLICIES OF TRANSPORTATION

1. Coordinate with the state's Department of Transportation and the county's School Board to reduce or minimize traffic congestion and to plan improvements to ensure adequate and safe transportation is provided to and through all developing areas;
2. Continue to require the development of public streets in all new subdivisions, which will be accepted and maintained by the state's Department of Transportation;
3. Encourage and/or require safe driveway and road entrances onto existing and proposed roadways and commercial entrances;
4. Ensure right-of-way access from public roads to developing interior tracts of land whenever possible;
5. Encourage street linkages between adjoining subdivisions when it helps safety and service access and egress;
6. Discourage strip development along county or state roads and promote shared access; and
7. Encourage the development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways within the central core area and within larger subdivisions/neighborhoods.

C. STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Work with the county's Board of Education to develop both short- and long-range plans to lessen the school traffic congestion;
2. Continue to use the state's Department of Transportation in the subdivision street review process and acceptance for maintenance;
3. During preliminary subdivision approval review, encourage or require street linkages between subdivisions and right-of-way access interior properties from state roads or other public streets;
4. Contact and participate in the area's lead transportation organization's transportation planning and efforts and with the county's Planning and Inspection Department in order to place requested improvements into the NCDOT's Transportation Improvement Program (seven-year priority listing);
5. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require site plan review on commercial and other traffic generating proposals; and
6. Develop a pedestrian and bicycle pathway plan within the central core area, possibly using the school grounds as a start, and pursue state and federal funds to implement the plan.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.6)

4.8 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION



A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee felt that the agrarian heritage and current way of life is still very important to the people of this area.
 - a. The rural setting of croplands, woodlands, ponds and open fields go hand-in-hand with the agrarian lifestyle.
 - b. However, the rural character of the area is beginning to change with the increased suburban sprawl taking place in not only the town, but in much of eastern and southern Nash County due to its proximity to Rocky Mount and access to I-95 and U.S. 64 By-pass.
2. The Committee was concerned that new residential development would cause some conflicts for agricultural uses, which pre-dated the new developments. One of the conflicts is the placement of residential wells within 50 feet of farmland requiring the farmer not to be able to use his or her farmland within that radius for fear of contamination of the residential well water.
3. Prime agricultural land and soils consist of the majority of the land area in the town, which is used for cropland, pasture or woodland. Unfortunately, these are the soil types that are most suitable for residential development and, as prime agricultural land is converted to residential use, farm production is forced to use less suitable land and soils. The residential and commercial soils maps show the areas with slight or lesser soil limitations for urban development.
4. The 100- and 500-year flood zones identified by the FEMA are shown on the Red Oak Flood Map elsewhere in the Plan. The Swift Creek borders the town on the north and Stoney Creek borders the town along the southern boundary.
5. Even though there are no state or federal recognized historical structures or sites identified in the town at this time, older structures and architectural features from earlier periods have been observed. There have been individual efforts of property owners to preserve all or parts of some of these structures.

B. POLICIES FOR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PRESERVATION

1. Encourage the preservation of the community's rural and agricultural heritage and current way of life;
2. Encourage the preservation and restoration of historical structures, architectural features or archeological sites of local, state and national significance;
3. Discourage development in identified flood hazard areas and wetlands not only to preserve lives and property, but also to leave these areas in their natural state to preserve their ecological value;
4. Encourage the keeping at a minimum soil erosion, runoff and sedimentation to reduce negative effects on surface and subsurface water quality and private property;
5. Discourage development from infringing into natural areas necessary to protect the quality of water in streams and creeks; and



6. Discourage disruption or fragmentation of identified natural wildlife habitats or any further danger to identified endangered wildlife species.

C. STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Use the Zoning Ordinance and Map to allow agriculture-oriented activities in those areas currently used as or suited for farmland;
2. Review and, if necessary, enhance the home occupation provisions for agricultural districts within the Zoning Ordinance;
3. Support the county in the creation of a historic preservation commission, which will provide preservation recognition and guidance;
4. Require the coordination of review of proposed development requests by the appropriate state or federal agencies where plans indicate that development may disturb fragile or environmentally sensitive areas, such as: wetlands; endangered or threatened habitat; or historical and archaeological sites;
5. Continue to enforce, and when necessary, update the town's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance; and
6. Include provisions from the Tar-Pamlico River Basin water quality protection standards in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.7)

4.9 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A. FINDINGS AND ISSUES

1. The town has very few businesses, most of which are located in the central core area, due to the combination of the rural density and the lack of public sewer system. The increase in population and traffic count will change the density and retail demand, but the expense of land and septic system will continue to be a limiting factor. The businesses in the town tend to be service-oriented with very little retail.
2. The only two business districts shown on the official zoning map, prepared prior to the 1996 annexation, are the General Business District (B-2) surrounding the intersection of N.C. 43 and S.R. 1003 and Rural Business District (B-1) located at the intersection of N.C. 43 and S.R. 1524 (Battleboro Road).
 - a. Businesses located outside these districts are currently considered nonconforming uses.
 - b. Several businesses located in the 1996-annexed area are in this category since the official zoning map was not amended at that time.
 - c. These areas will be considered during the town's updating of the ordinance and map upon the adoption of the Land Development Plan.



B. POLICIES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage the development of small businesses or offices that are compatible with current businesses in the central core and with the character of the community;
2. Support and encourage business planning and assistance for small compatible businesses and encourage well-planned establishments and locations;
3. Discourage commercial developments that are in an unsafe location for vehicular traffic or proposing unsafe locations of its proposed entrance and egress; and
4. Discourage continuous and random strip development.

C. STRATEGIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review and consider the location of business districts in other areas outside of the two current districts on the official zoning map;
2. Review the permitted uses within the business districts for compatibility to current uses and the character of the community and consider for amending the Zoning Ordinance;
3. Consider the use of site plan review for many, if not all, of the business uses in order to encourage and/or require such items as: landscaping, screening and driveway locations; and
4. Encourage all new business owners (start-ups) to seek the business planning assistance of the nearest small business center.

(ORD. PASSED - -2010, SECTION 4.2.8)

4.10 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES MAP

The map shown on one of the following pages is a generalized and visual summary of the town's major development strategies for the next ten years. The narrative statements listed above will provide the details needed on these and other strategies. Special emphasis was placed on the following strategies, which could be symbolized. The location of the symbols was designed to be general to allow for flexibility in actual location in potential developments.

A. CENTRAL CORE EXPANSION

1. To allow for additional business development within the central core area, a larger area would be considered for rezoning around the periphery of the current business zoning in order to accommodate the large lots needed for septic systems and flexibility of location by some commercial development.
2. In addition, since the central core area already has commercial character, it was felt that most of the new business development should locate there.



B. THOROUGHFARE IMPROVEMENTS

1. The extension of S.R. 1603 as a connector from N.C. 43 to S.R. 1524 is recommended to bypass the Red Oak Middle School congestion and to reduce the left turns onto N.C. 43 from S.R. 1524.
2. It is also recommended that the state's Department of Transportation be asked to study and pursue possible short-term and long-term solution(s) to the traffic congestion on N.C. 43 through the central core area.

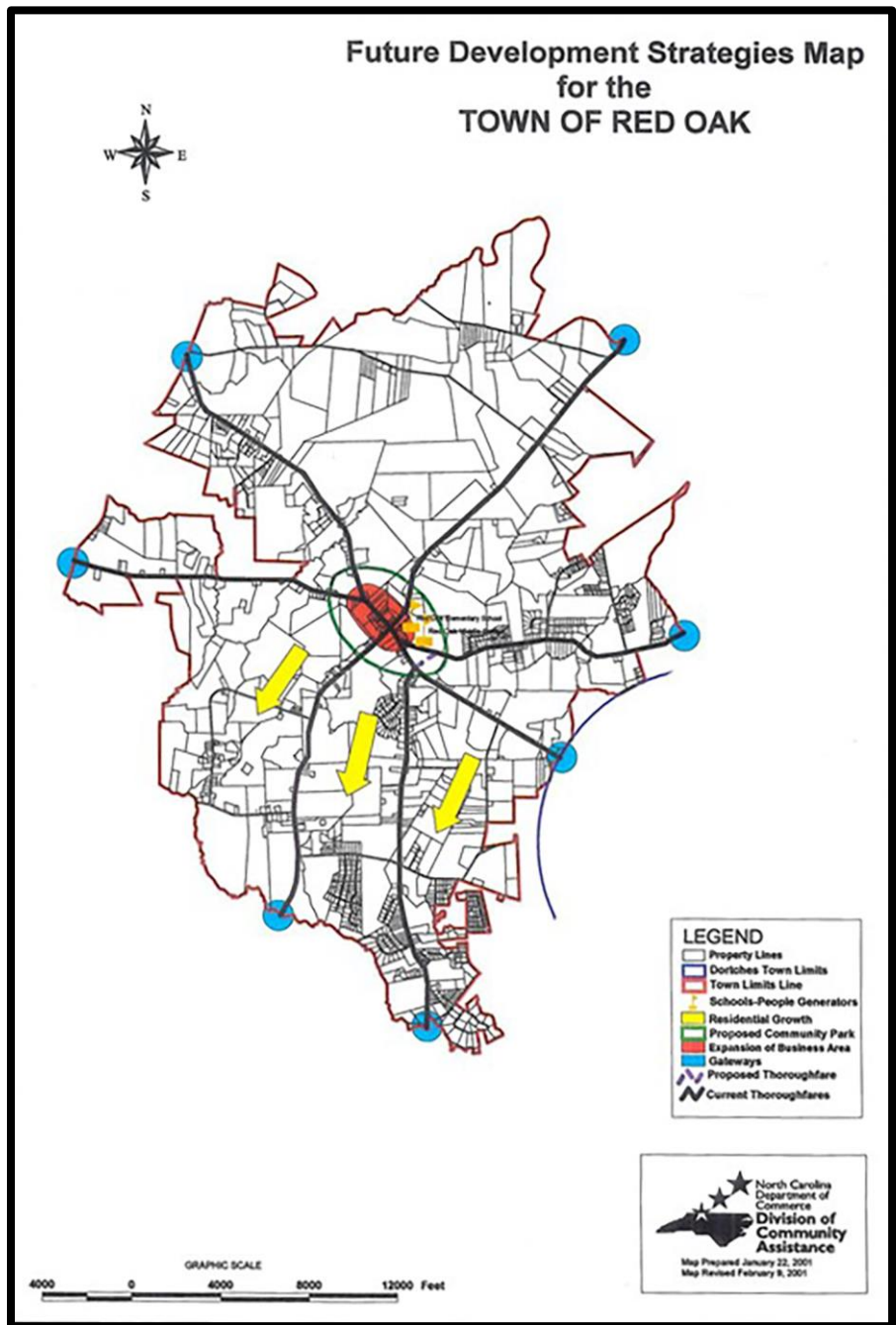
C. RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

1. Most of the new residential development, particularly major subdivisions, should take place south and west of N.C. 43 and south of S.R. 1425.
2. Even though not shown on the map, the residential development strategies would also include:
 - a. Re-evaluating the areas allowing manufactured homes and establishing appearance standards;
 - b. Re-evaluating the minimum lot area per unit for a mobile home park; and
 - c. Consider low-density multi-family development with site plan review.

D. COMMUNITY PARK

The town should develop a community park near the central core area to go along with other facilities already in this area and to allow the community another place and reason to gather while developing more of a sense of community.





E. VISUAL

Gateways recognizes the importance of appearance and image message at these entrances as well as a reminder of the importance of appearance throughout the community.

