



# THE MOREHEAD CITY

PLAN 2032

LOCAL ADOPTION  
AUGUST 8, 2023

CRC Certification  
September 19, 2023

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COUNCIL  
George W. Ballou, Mayor Pro Tem  
David Horton  
William F. Taylor  
Harvey N. Walker, Jr.  
Diane C. Warrender



Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-R-42  
OF THE TOWN OF MOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA  
ADOPTING "THE MOREHEAD CITY PLAN 2032"**

**WHEREAS**, from February 2022 through June 2023, the Town of Morehead City drafted a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Comprehensive Land Use Plan with the assistance of its consultant, Kimley Horn Planning and Design Engineering Consultants, and conducted a series of public workshops and meetings as part of a comprehensive public participation program; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 18, 2023, the Planning Board recommended approval of the adoption of the draft Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Morehead City conducted a duly advertised public hearing on the draft Plan at the Regular Meeting of the City Council on August 8, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, at the Regular Meeting on August 8, 2023, the City Council of the Town of Morehead City, North Carolina found the policies and Future Land Use Map in the draft Plan to be consistent with the desired vision for the future and unanimously approved to adopt the draft Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the adopted Plan will be submitted as required by state law to the District Planner for the Division of Coastal Management under the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and forwarded to the Division Director; and

**WHEREAS**, a review of the adopted Plan by the Coastal Resources Commission will be scheduled; and the CRC will then decide on certification of the locally adopted Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, a certified copy of the Town of Morehead City CAMA Comprehensive Plan "The Morehead City Plan 2032" will be forwarded to the Office for Coastal Management for federal approval.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the City Council for the Town of Morehead City, North Carolina has adopted the draft Plan; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Manager of the Town of Morehead City is hereby authorized to submit the adopted Plan to the State for certification as described above.

**ADOPTED**, this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2023.

Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST

Cathy Campbell, City Clerk



**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION  
CARTERET COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

Town of Morehead City  
Accounts Payable  
1100 Bridges St  
Morehead City NC 28557

**TOWN OF MOREHEAD CITY  
NOTICE OF  
PUBLIC HEARING**

**"The Morehead City Plan  
2032" Comprehensive Plan  
Adoption**

August 8, 2023

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Morehead City will conduct a public hearing on August 8, 2023, at 5:30 PM at City Hall, 1100 Bridges Street, to review and discuss adoption of "The Morehead City Plan 2032", the Town of Morehead City's Comprehensive Plan.

Following the public hearing, the Morehead City Council will consider adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Once adopted, the plan will be submitted to the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) for certification.

Written objections, comments, or statements of support shall be submitted to the Division of Coastal Management's District Planner, Rachel Love-Adrick, 400 Commerce Avenue, Morehead City, NC 28557 no more than 30 calendar days after local adoption of the amendment. Further information can be obtained by contacting the District Planner at (252) 515-5400.

The public is invited to be present at the hearing and comment on the proposal. Copies of the plan are available for review at the following link: as well as in person at the Morehead City Planning and Inspections Office, 1100 Bridges Street, Morehead City, NC 28557.

Jy23,30

Before the undersigned, a notary public of said County and State, duly commissioned, qualified, and authorized by law to administer oaths, personally appeared:

Mona McFerran

first duly sworn, deposes and says that he (she) is:

(Owner, partner, publisher or other officer or employee authorized to make this affidavit)

Clerk of THE CARTERET PUBLISHING CO., INC., engaged in the publication of a newspaper known as CARTERET COUNTY NEWS-TIMES, published, issued, and entered as second class mail in the Town of Morehead City, in Carteret County, North Carolina; that he (she) is authorized to make this affidavit and sworn statement; that the notice or other legal advertisement, a true copy of which is attached here-to, was published the following publication and dates:

Carteret County News-Times: 7/23/2023, 7/30/2023

and that said newspaper in which such notice, paper, document, or legal advertisement was published was, at the time of each and every such publication, a new paper meeting all of the requirements and qualifications of Section 1-597 of the General Statutes of North Carolina and was a qualified newspaper within the meaning of section 1-597 of the General Statutes of North Carolina.

Date: 7/31/2023

(Signature of person making affidavit)

Sworn and subscribed to before me on:  
7/31/2023

Notary Public

My commission expires:  
August 24, 2024

Name	Town of Morehead City
Order Number	12128
Order Date	7/17/2023
Number Issues	2
First Issue	7/23/2023
Last Issue	7/30/2023
Order Price	\$127.80
Publications	Carteret County News-Times





ROY COOPER  
Governor  
ELIZABETH S. BISER  
Secretary  
BRAXTON DAVIS  
Director



September 12, 2023

Mayor Jerry Jones, Jr.  
Town of Morehead City  
1100 Bridges Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED and electronically:  
[mayorjones@moreheadcitync.org](mailto:mayorjones@moreheadcitync.org)

Sandi Watkins, Planning Director  
Town of Morehead City  
1100 Bridges Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557

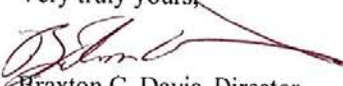
CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED and electronically:  
[mhcpi@moreheadcitync.org](mailto:mhcpi@moreheadcitync.org)

**Re: Certification of the Town of Morehead City CAMA Land Use Plan**

Dear Mayor Jones and Ms. Watkins:

Please find enclosed the written Final Agency Decision granting the Town of Morehead City's request for certification of its CAMA Land Use Plan.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,  
  
Braxton C. Davis, Director  
NC Division of Coastal Management

cc via email: Renee Cahoon, Chair  
Mary L. Lucasse, Commission Counsel  
Michael Christenbury, District Planner  
Rachel Love-Adrick, District Planner



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality | Division of Coastal Management  
Wilmington Office | 127 Cardinal Drive Extension | Wilmington, North Carolina 28405  
910.796.7215

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF CARTERET

COASTAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
DIVISION OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF THE REQUEST  
FOR CERTIFICATION OF THE  
MOREHEAD CITY CAMA LAND USE  
PLAN

**FINAL AGENCY DECISION**

### FACTS

1. This is the Town of Morehead City CAMA Land Use Plan adopted August 8, 2023 by the Town of Morehead City, North Carolina.
2. Morehead City is located within Carteret County, North Carolina near the towns of Atlantic Beach and Beaufort.
3. Morehead City is requesting certification of the CAMA Land Use Plan which can be found on the NC Division of Coastal Management website at:  
<https://www.deq.nc.gov/coastal-management/planning/lup/locally-adopted/morehead-city-plan-2032-draft/download?attachment>
4. Morehead City adopted the Land Use Plan by resolution on August 8, 2023 after a duly advertised public hearing. The public had the opportunity to provide written comments on the plan up to thirty (30) calendar days after local adoption. No comments were received.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Morehead City CAMA Land Use Plan has met the substantive requirements outlined within the Land Use Planning Requirements effective February 1, 2016.
2. There are no conflicts evident in the Morehead City CAMA Land Use Plan with either state or federal law or the State's Coastal Management Program.



3. The elected body of Morehead City made a final decision on the contents of the Morehead City Land Use Plan and provided opportunity for the public to provide written comment following local adoption of the plan, as required by N.C.G.S. § 113A-110 and 15A NCAC 7B .0802 and .0803, and the Morehead City Land Use Plan was submitted to the NC Division of Coastal Management without written objection or comment from the public.

#### DECISION

For the reasons stated herein, Morehead City's request for certification of the Morehead City CAMA Land Use Land Use Plan is GRANTED.

This the 19<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

  
Braxton Davis, Director  
N.C. Division of Coastal Management

#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that I have served a copy of the attached **Final Agency Decision** to Morehead City and the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission by the means specified below:

##### Method of Service

Mayor Jerry Jones, Jr.  
Town of Morehead City  
1100 Bridges Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED and electronically:  
[mayorjones@moreheadcitync.org](mailto:mayorjones@moreheadcitync.org)

Sandi Watkins, Planning Director  
Town of Morehead City  
1100 Bridges Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557

CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT  
REQUESTED and electronically:  
[mhapi@moreheadcitync.org](mailto:mhapi@moreheadcitync.org)

Renee Cahoon, Chair  
Coastal Resources Commission

Electronically: [Renee.Cahoon@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Renee.Cahoon@deq.nc.gov)

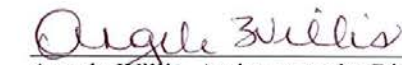
Mary L. Lucasse  
Commission Counsel  
NC Coastal Resources Commission  
PO Box 629  
Raleigh, NC 27602

Electronically: [mlucasse@ncdoj.gov](mailto:mlucasse@ncdoj.gov)

Rachel Love-Adrick, District Planner  
Division of Coastal Management

Electronically: [Rachel.love-adrick@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Rachel.love-adrick@deq.nc.gov)

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023

  
Angela Willis, Assistant to the Director

The Morehead City Plan 2032 was recommended for adoption by the Planning Board on July 18, 2023 and was adopted by the Morehead City Council on August 8, 2023. The plan was certified by the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission on September 19th, 2023. We extend a special thank you to the residents, business owners, and stakeholders who offered their time and perspectives in the creation of the plan. Everyone’s input and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated.

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# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The Town of Morehead City was founded in 1857. Originally envisioned as a port city, Morehead City thrived in the mid-nineteenth century with critical connection by rail and barge. The Town's growth continued until the Civil War where conflict prompted the exodus of people and industry. While much has changed since the inception of the Town, the historic and recreational destinations in Morehead City continue to attract visitors and residents alike.

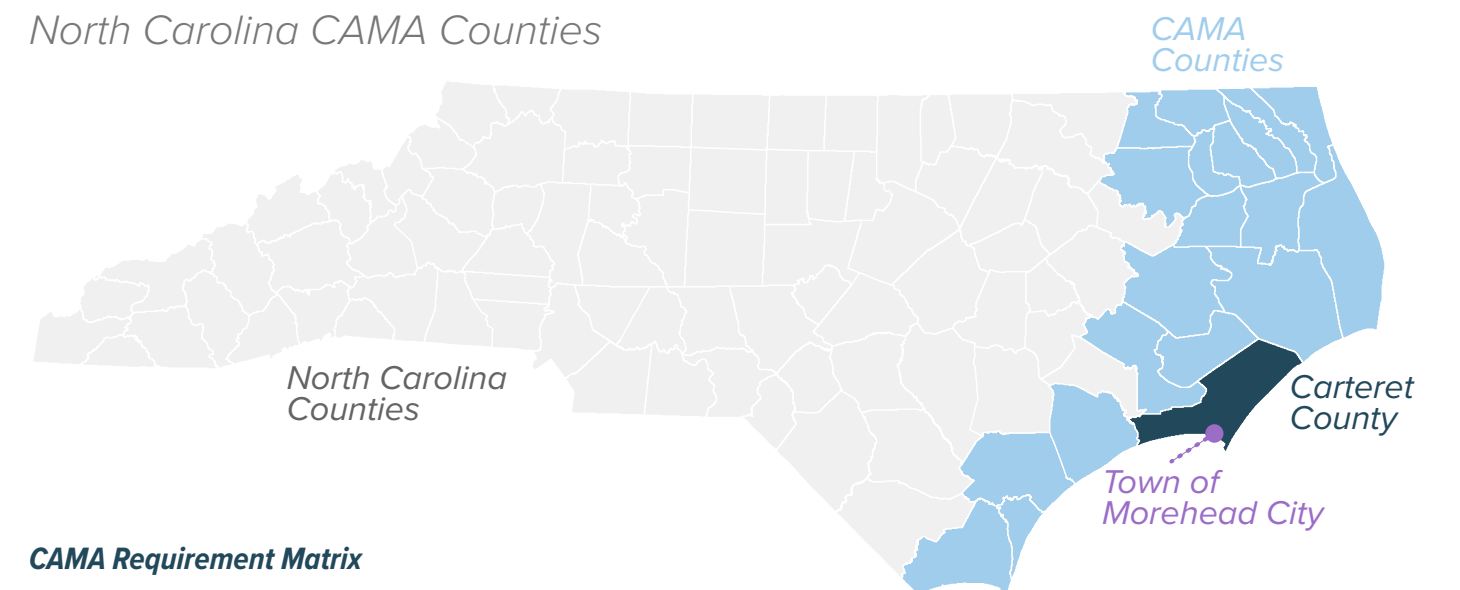
The Morehead City Plan 2032 is the first of its kind in the Town as the only truly comprehensive plan. To celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Morehead City, the Plan's name commemorates this historic milestone. While the horizon year of this plan spans to 2055 and beyond, emphasis is placed on what can be accomplished in the upcoming decade. The plan provides a vision for the future of the community along with the steps needed to make that vision a reality. The foundation of the plan is grounded in intentional community engagement and sound planning. The plan places a strong emphasis on implementation to guide the Town's near- and long-term decision-making and investment.

### Coastal Area Management Act

The Coastal Area Management Act of 1974 (CAMA) requires the twenty coastal counties in North Carolina to prepare a land use plan that outlines the existing conditions and analyzes planned future actions in sensitive coastal areas in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission (CRC). The CRC's guidelines outline the specific environmental considerations that must be analyzed during the development of the land use plan. Under the authority of the CRC, the Division of Coastal Management (DCM) is responsible for enforcing the regulations and reviewing the land use plans to ensure consistency with state and federal guidelines.

Located in Carteret County, Morehead City is subject to the CAMA as a coastal community. Each municipality in a CAMA county may develop their own land use plan or work to prepare a joint land use plan with the county. The Town of Morehead City has elected to develop its own plan. The Morehead City Plan 2032 is responsive to the unique constraints and challenges that the Town faces.

#### North Carolina CAMA Counties



#### CAMA Requirement Matrix

A matrix to track the locations of required CAMA land use plan elements is included at the end of this document. While this matrix records the page number of every requirement, this is also complemented by the use of an icon. If the icon to the right is on a page, this indicates a CAMA element is present.





# The Town of Morehead City

The Crystal Coast is an 85-mile stretch of coastline in eastern North Carolina. It includes numerous beaches and popular historic destination areas in Carteret County. As part of the inland portion of the Crystal Coast, Morehead City provides a unique blend of historic locations, ecotourist opportunities, and a vibrant Downtown area.

The Morehead City Plan 2032 will focus on guiding the vision of Morehead City. In this plan, Morehead City refers to the corporate limits as well as the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction area or ETJ. The ETJ is the expanded boundary beyond the Town's corporate limits for which the Town makes planning and zoning decisions. While state law on comprehensive planning requires the ETJ to be included in municipal plans (§160D-201c), it is also a strategic consideration since

growth impacts are not limited exclusively to the Town boundary.

The figure below shows the Morehead City corporate limits in addition to the ETJ boundary. Also shown are the boundaries for the neighboring municipalities of Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, and Newport as well as Carteret County.

## At A Glance:

The "at a glance" provides an overview of features in the study area.

17.6 • Square Miles\*

Town Proper: 7.3 sq mi • Within ETJ: 10.3 sq mi

157 • Miles of Road

Town Proper: 88 miles • Within ETJ: 69 miles

155.1 • Acres of Park

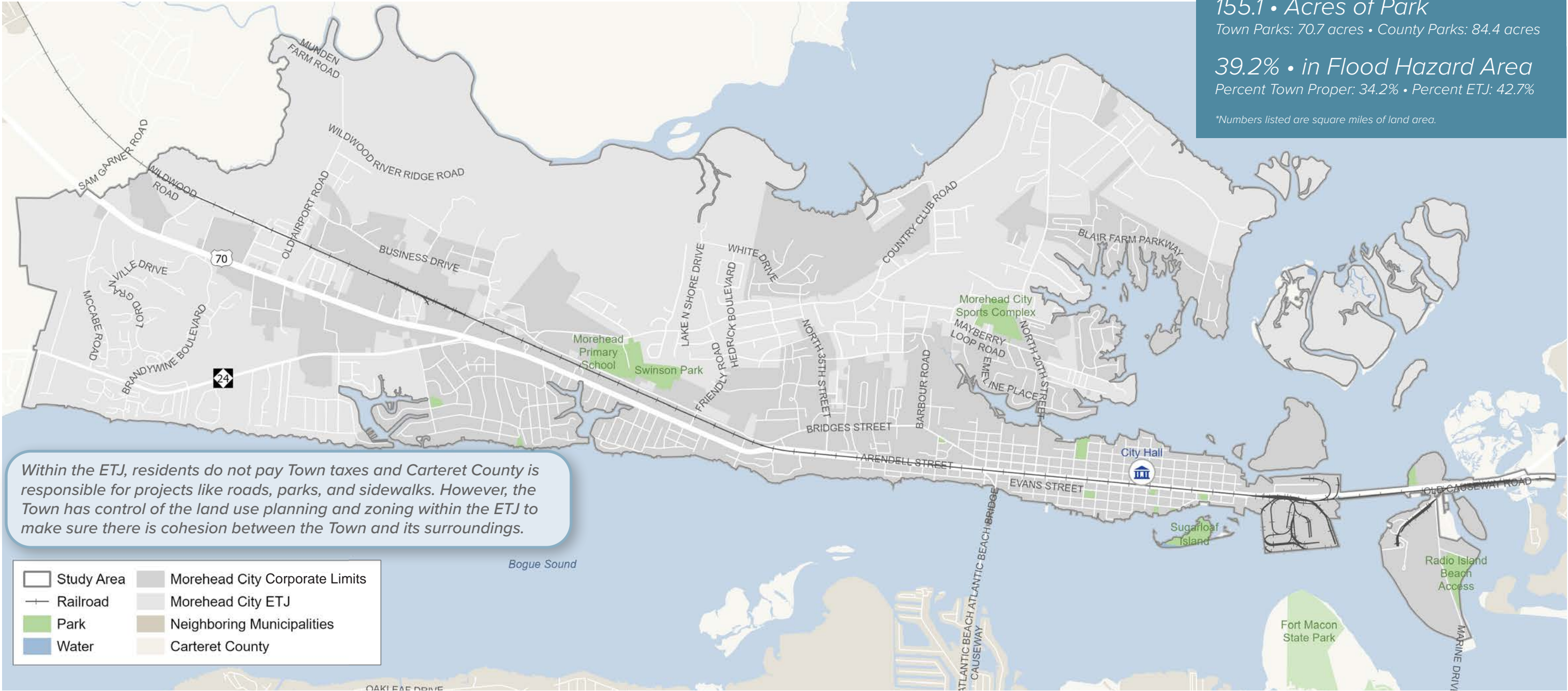
Town Parks: 70.7 acres • County Parks: 84.4 acres

39.2% • in Flood Hazard Area

Percent Town Proper: 34.2% • Percent ETJ: 42.7%

\*Numbers listed are square miles of land area.

## Study Area





# Planning Process

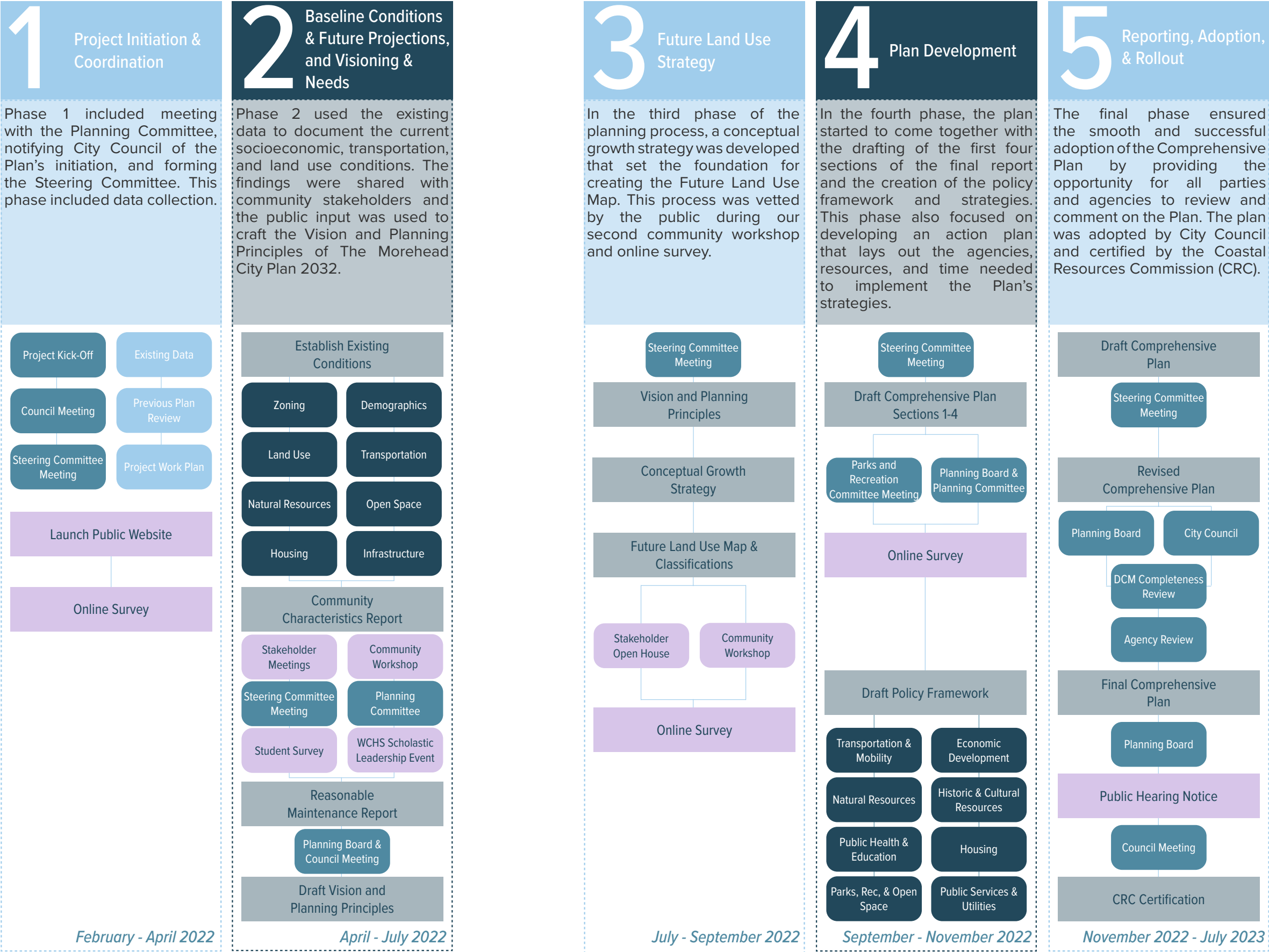
Creating a comprehensive plan takes time. A well-planned document can only be achieved through a deliberate and organized process that balances data and community input to create a plan made for the people it represents. This process lasted 17 months and progressed through the five phases shown in the graphic to the right.

## Direction and Guidance

In addition to a project management team, which was made up of select Town staff and the consultant team, plan development was led by a technical team and a Steering Committee. The technical team was made up of Town staff serving as experts in their respective fields. The Steering Committee was a group of 14 community leaders representing a range of organizations, agencies, and advocacy groups. These two groups worked in concert to direct the outcomes of major milestones to ensure the plan is technically sound and grounded in community values.

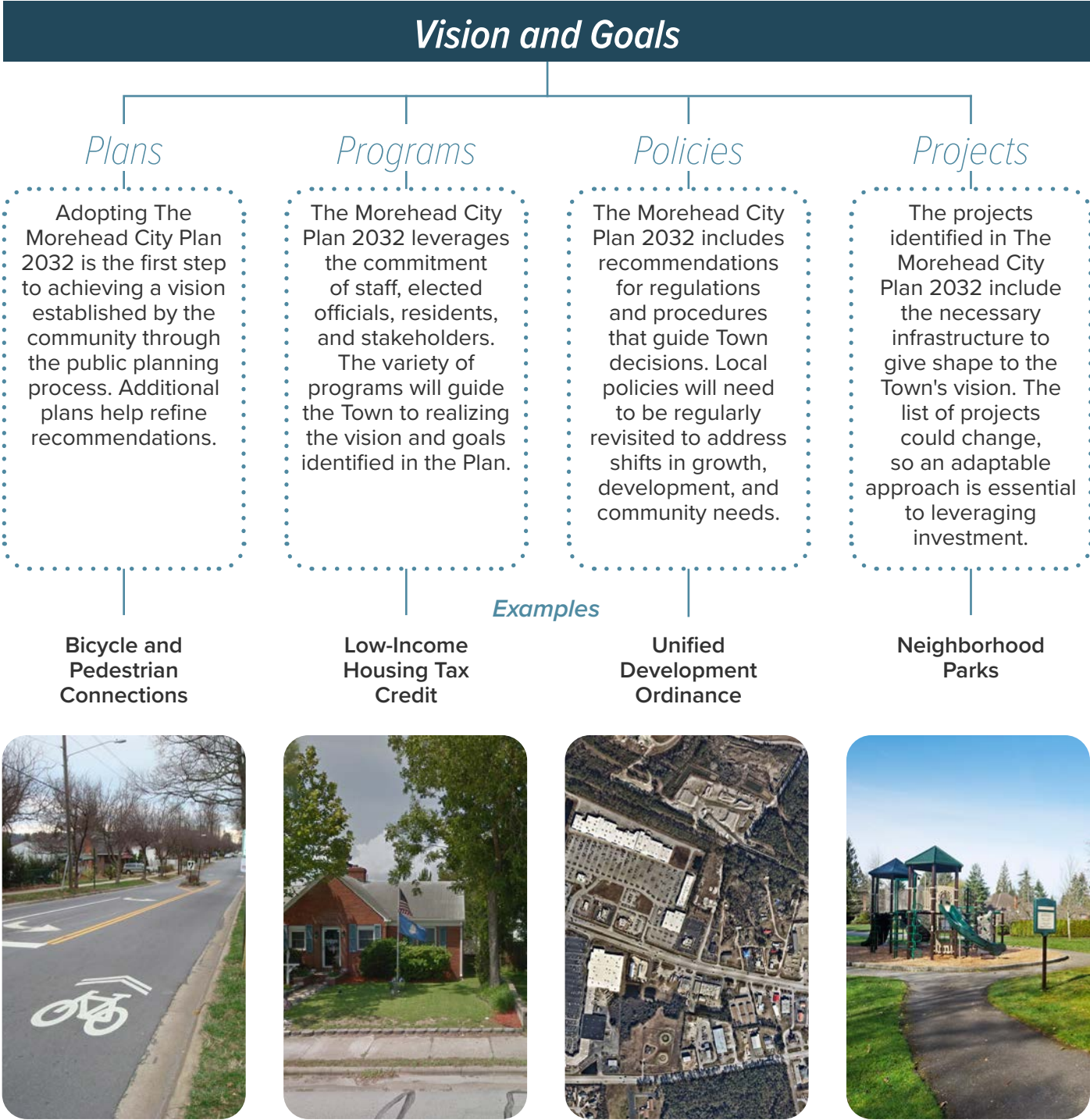
## Community Engagement

The Morehead City Plan 2032 is rooted in community ideals and values. To ensure a community-driven plan, the process involved touch points with key stakeholders and the public through a variety of outreach methods that collected meaningful input at key milestones.



# From Plan to Action

As the Town’s land use plan, The Morehead City Plan 2032 provides guidance on how to navigate growth and challenges including new growth and development, ever-changing population trends, and other challenges specific to Morehead City. The plan identifies the framework to ensure that Morehead City will be an attractive, safe, and resilient place to live and work. The guidance provided in this plan is supportive of the local economy and identifies synergies to the regional economy. Ultimately, the plan identifies trade-offs to address existing and future community needs to prepare for the future. The plans, programs, policies, and projects identified in this plan will guide how Morehead City prioritizes what is important to the community.



# Plan Use and Structure

## How the Town Will Use This Plan

The Morehead City Plan 2032 builds on recommendations from previous Town planning efforts and is a living document that can be amended over time to meet changing Town needs and community feedback.

The plan should be used as a guide for Town staff and elected officials to inform future land use decisions, including in the following ways:

**TOWN STAFF.** To incrementally decide how to fulfill the community’s vision as it pertains to development, resiliency, and growth and to align department policies and financial decisions with the vision.

**CITY COUNCIL.** To guide decisions about growth and development while allowing staff and elected officials to evaluate the economic conditions and community preferences.

**BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.** To promote the community’s vision and encourage consistency throughout the Town as decisions are made.

## How Others Will Use This Plan

The Morehead City Plan 2032 will be used by a variety of groups with different interests in the community. The plan may be used in the following ways by various groups:

**BUSINESSES.** To understand where the Town seeks to focus growth and investment in addition to identifying where more concentrated development may occur.

**RESIDENTS.** To understand the future vision of growth, development, and resiliency in addition to how supportive policies can enhance the quality of life.

**COMMUNITY LEADERS.** To continue work toward common community goals.

**REGIONAL PARTNERS.** To streamline cross-jurisdictional recommendations and policy strategies.

**STATE PARTNERS.** To ensure consistency with state and federal laws. The Division of Coastal Management uses the plan in making Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) permit decisions and federal consistency determinations.

## Plan Structure

The Morehead City Plan 2032 is composed of six sections:

**INTRODUCTION** | Section 1 introduces the Plan, its purpose, and provides guidance for its use.

**COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS** | Section 2 is the existing conditions analysis. This section sets the stage for an integrated approach that weighs a variety of issues together and empowers participants to consider the relationship between land use, transportation, the environment, natural and community resources, and economic vitality.

**VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES** | Section 3 establishes the Plan's Vision and Planning Principles as well as the Neighborhood Objectives that complement the Neighborhood Planning Areas. This section also highlights the community engagement strategy, and summarizes the feedback received throughout the process.

**LAND USE STRATEGY** | Section 4 features the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and the Future Land Use Classifications through an iterative process that starts with the conceptual growth strategy.

**POLICY FRAMEWORK** | Section 5 develops frameworks around the five planning principles to support the FLUM. Policies will be created that should guide future land use decisions.

**IMPLEMENTATION** | Section 6 takes the policies, strategies, and projects identified in the plan and identifies the people, resources, and commitment needed to accomplish them. This section also identifies funding partners and opportunities that will make the plan implementable.



# SECTION 2

## COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

### Introduction

The Community Characteristics chapter is a review of existing conditions to develop an understanding of the current socioeconomic, environmental, transportation, and land use characteristics as well as project estimates and needs for the future. This section is responsive to the guidance outlined by the Coastal Area Management Act for existing conditions analysis.

### The History and Scenery of Morehead City

In the early 1700s, Europeans began to settle the land that is now known as Carteret County. The native inhabitants of the area were people of the Tuscarora Nation. The twenty-ninth Governor of North Carolina—John Morehead—envisioned a large port connected by cross-state railroad, primarily to move goods. Due to its prime location right along the water, the Town of Morehead City was founded in 1857 to fulfill the governor’s vision. The plentiful fish and idyllic shoreline attracted merchants and visitors alike. The future port city was connected by railroad in 1858 to support the vision. In 1861, the port—Pier 1—was built at Shepard Point. The location of Shepard Point was considered to be more advantageous than the state’s other ports because of the depth of the channel.

The street where the railroad connected to the port was named Arendell Street after Bridges Arendell who played a significant role in the growth and development of the Town. Arendell Street later became part of U.S. Highway 70 (US 70). Several other major streets are named after the founders of Morehead City including William Fisher, Peter Evans, David Shepard, and John Shackleford. The streets were organized around the terminus of Shepards Point in a grid pattern. The layout of the Town’s streets has largely remained unchanged.

As a port town, colonizers could send many exports back to Europe, including tobacco, grains, fish, lumber, and oils. The fishing industry would continue to be a crucial component of the Town’s economy for years to come.

The Town continued to grow and flourish until the Civil War. To escape the conflict, many residents left the Town for elsewhere. By the mid-twentieth century, the Downtown area had deteriorated from a lack of investment and new development. In 1996, the Town determined it would be beneficial to create a way to improve businesses around the waterfront area. The Downtown Morehead City Revitalization Association (now Downtown Morehead City, Inc.) was created to promote economic development while preserving the coastal community.

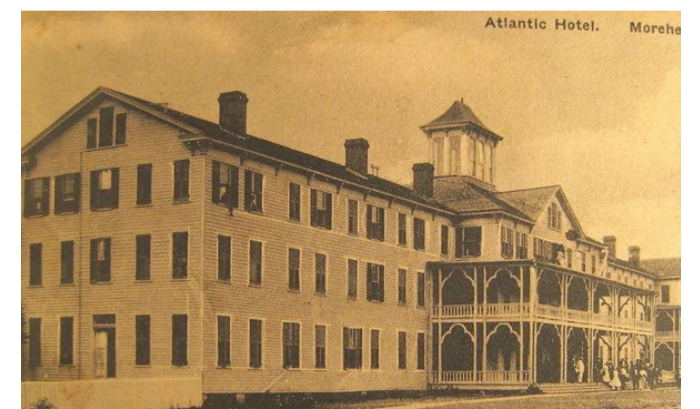
Today, tourism outpaces agriculture and exports in Carteret County. In Morehead City, ecotourism and service-oriented businesses are the largest drivers of the Town’s economy.



Plan of Morehead City, ca. 1857



Bridges Arendell Jr. House, ca. 1858



Atlantic Hotel, ca. 1880





## Managed Areas

Morehead City includes a variety of managed lands within the Town boundary. A managed area is owned and overseen by a federal, state, local, or private entity. There are specific areas managed for certain purposes including dedicated nature preserves, registered heritage areas, conservation easements, and other protected areas. These areas not only provide ecotourist opportunities but also preserve the environmental characteristics unique to Morehead City.

The figure below shows the areas managed by Morehead City. The Town manages a variety of parks, recreation centers, and open spaces. Town-managed park areas include Morehead City Sports Complex (including Rotary Park and Puck O'Neal Field), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, Mitchell Village Park, Piney Park, Shevans Park, and Sugarloaf Island.

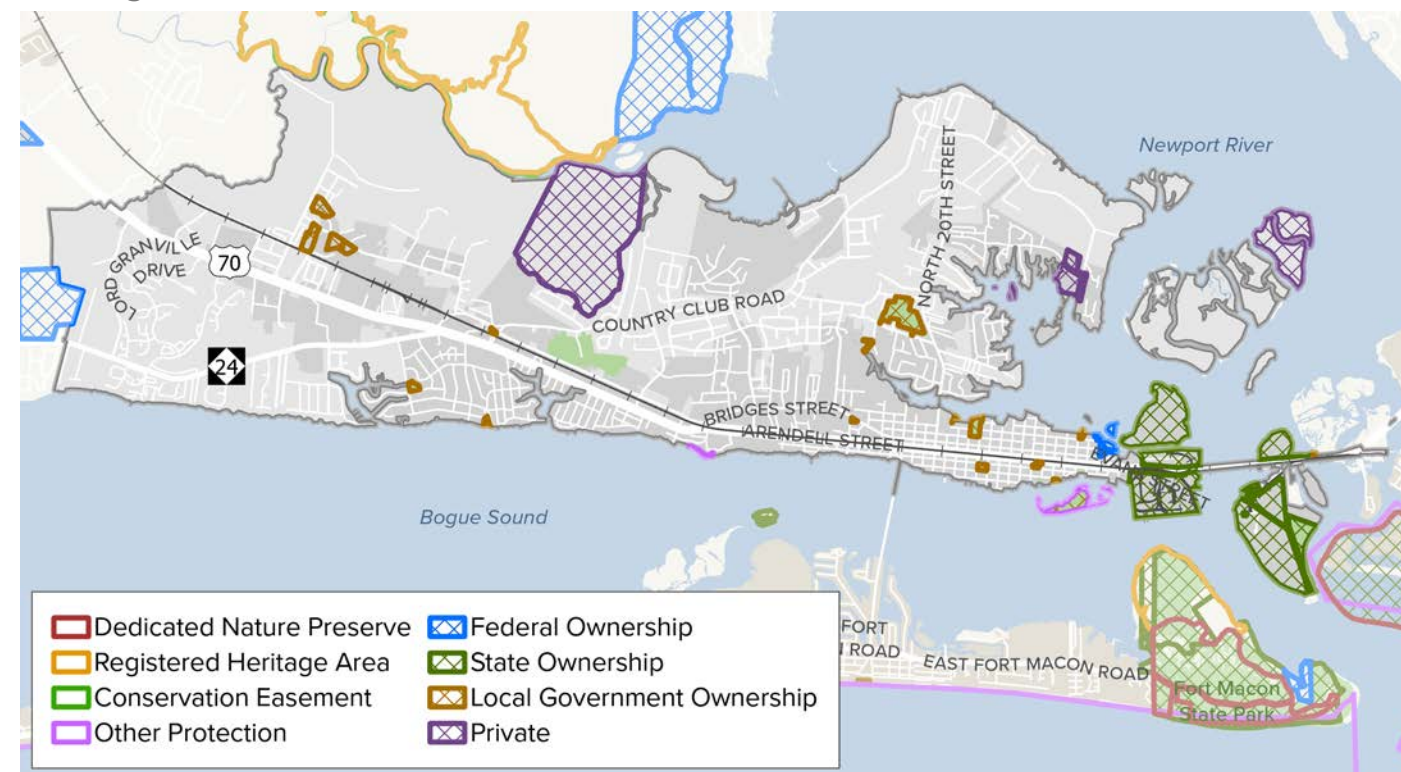
Other open spaces are managed by the County. Three privately managed areas include the Crab Point Audubon Sanctuary, the Haystack Marshes Preserve, and the Newport River Marshes Preserve. Typically, privately held lands are managed by nonprofit organizations.

In the surrounding areas of the Town, the US Forest Service manages the Croatan National Forest, which is approximately 160,000 acres of pine forest, saltwater estuaries, bogs, and pocosins or raised swamps.

The managed lands in Morehead City are an important commitment by federal, state, local, and private partners. By protecting natural and environmental features, the scenic beauty can be enjoyed by generations to come. In addition to the rich history of the built environment, the natural environment provides a variety of recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

*10% of the study area is managed land.*

## Managed and Protected Land



Source: Natural Heritage Program



## Historic Locations

A historic architecture survey was completed for the Town in 2001. The survey provided a glimpse into the rich history of the Town, starting with its founding. The analysis documented the existing and destroyed historic locations and sites in Morehead City. The study also provided recommendations for properties to be considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The figure below shows the status of the historic locations identified by the North Carolina Historic Preservation. The map includes both existing and no longer existing locations. Morehead City has a variety of locations including historic houses, hotels, municipal buildings, the former Town theater, and historic districts. The majority of the historic locations are concentrated along the railroad and US 70. As the first coastal railroad resort, the Town has a unique place in North Carolina history.

The Morehead City Historic District is the oldest part of Downtown with buildings that include notable examples of Colonial Revival style architecture. Notable buildings include the Dudley House, First Methodist Church, Franklin Memorial Methodist Church, the First Baptist Church, the First Freewill

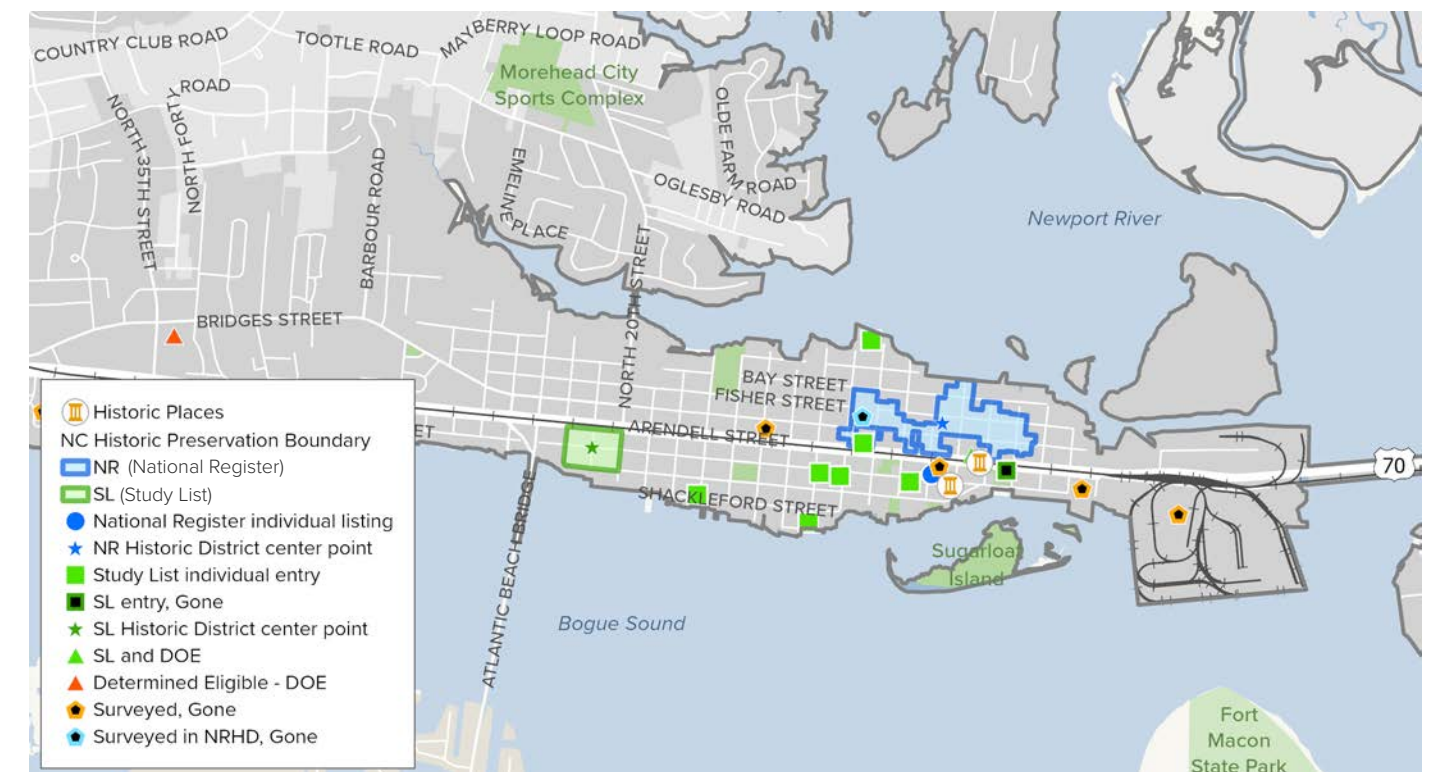
Baptist Church, and the former Morehead City Public School.

In surrounding areas, Beaufort has a wealth of historic locations. The Historic Architecture Survey acknowledges that Beaufort is one of the oldest Towns with a variety of historic architecture. Despite being only three miles away, Morehead City has distinguished itself with a unique architectural heritage. The blend of antebellum, Victorian, and early twentieth-century houses speaks to the evolution of the Town throughout history.

The Town's historic locations contribute to the tourism and charm of Morehead City. As a cornerstone of the Town's character, the conservation and preservation of historic locations is invaluable.

*Morehead City has 16 remaining historic buildings and boundaries.*

## Historic Landmarks, Downtown



Source: Carteret County, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)



# Previous Plan Review

Though The Morehead City Plan 2032 is the first of its kind for the Town, Morehead City has decades of meaningful planning efforts that have guided decision makers along the way. As a truly comprehensive plan, the Morehead City Plan 2032 takes into account these previous plans and policies and uses them as the initial building blocks for creating the land use strategy and accompanying framework elements. The following section provides a brief overview of the relevant planning documents. While not a complete list of plans, the planning process is cognizant of simultaneous planning efforts—including the Carteret County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)—and is setup to build alongside continuous planning efforts for cohesive outcomes.

## Morehead City Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (1999)

The primary objective of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is to inform the decisions made for parks and recreation facilities. The plan evaluates the Town’s existing park system, identifies standards for future development, projects the Town’s needs to the plan’s horizon year, and provides recommendations to fulfill those needs. The master plan acknowledges that the focus in future years should be on enhancing or creating new neighborhood facilities. Outcomes include:

- Focus efforts on creating Neighborhood Parks
- Partner with the Carteret County School Board and Parks & Recreation Department to improve recreation facilities

## Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Shoreline Access Plan Update (2006)

The Carteret County Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies the needs of citizens and tourists throughout the County. The plan identifies strategies to maximize recreational programs and shoreline access over the following 15-year period. The plan highlights the importance of addressing unmet needs identified in the County’s Needs Assessment as well as the 1999 Master Plan. Through partnership, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan aims to leverage existing resources. Key takeaways include:

- Maximize the utilization of existing resources
- Continue to expand and improve waterfront access
- Identify and plan for trails and open space
- Continue to expand the variety of program offerings to broaden target markets

## Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2006)

The vision of the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan is to provide citizens with safe and accessible bicycle facilities. The plan sought to develop convenient bicycle opportunities for current riders while encouraging new riders through enhanced programs and system-wide improvements. The plan focused on both on- and off-road facilities within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Morehead City. The plan evaluated the existing transportation and socioeconomic conditions, reviewed previous planning efforts, and proposed holistic bicycle recommendations. Key takeaways include:

- Consider lowering the posted speed limit between 25-30 miles per hour (mph) along certain corridors
- Install crosswalks, pedestrian count-down signals, and lighting at certain intersections in the heart of the Town
- Develop bicycle facility standards in the Town

## Core Land Use Plan (2007)

An update to the 1999 Plan, the 2007 Core Land Use Plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements outlined in the CAMA and the CRC Land Use Planning Requirements. The plan outlines a summary of existing planning issues, policy statements, future land use projections, and implementation strategies. The detailed demographic and socioeconomic analysis contextualizes the prevalent planning issues identified in the 2007 Plan. Included in the plan is a FLUM that outlines the vision for how growth and development can occur in Morehead City. Listed below are the relevant recommendations that will be reevaluated as part of The Morehead City Plan 2032 process:

- Amend the existing Unified Development Ordinance and continuously review the Land Use Plan and implementation strategies
- Provide adequate opportunities for public access to coastal waters
- Balance growth, development, and conservation and preservation of natural resources
- Promote land use and public infrastructure development that is compatible with land suitability
- Provide a variety of housing opportunities
- Promote diversified economic development

## Pedestrian Plan (2011)

The Pedestrian Plan contains the goals, objectives, and vision for pedestrian projects in Morehead City. The plan documents the pedestrian recommendations in addition to the local plans, policies, and programs to create a more walkable community. Concluding with specific action steps, the plan acknowledges the continuous coordination required to implement the vision of walkability in the Town. Outcomes of the plan include:

- Create regular maintenance schedules for existing sidewalk and crosswalks
- Connect existing parks, trails, and cultural landmarks with gateway treatments, information kiosks, and wayfinding signage to provide better pedestrian access and recognition
- Provide pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, and landscaping along proposed greenway trails and sidewalks
- Formalize a Town-wide 35 mph speed limit, and post related regulatory signs at major gateway entrances into Town
- Leverage a variety of funding sources at the state and federal levels for project implementation

## Economic Development Strategic Plan (2014)

To help guide Morehead City’s economic strategy, the North Carolina Division of Community Assistance (DCA) invited the Town to create an Economic Development Strategic Plan. The efforts included creating small plans for all participating municipalities in addition to Carteret County. The purpose of the plan was to identify opportunities that would allow for job creation and retention, identify sites and facilities that are available for sale or use, identify small business opportunities prime for success to generate more local sales, and create a sense of place. Key takeaways include:

- Continue to recognize and capitalize on the presence of the State Port
- Improve access to and from the State Port
- Provide more opportunities for public transportation, bicycles, and pedestrians
- Provide infrastructure capacity that meets economic development needs

## North Carolina Ports 2018 Economic Impact Study (2018)

The Economic Impact Study builds on previous studies that attempted to quantify the economic contribution of ports in North Carolina over time. The study examined the two publicly-owned and operated deepwater ports in Wilmington and Morehead City. Combined, the two ports move approximately 6.7 million tons of commodities in and out of North Carolina annually. Important takeaways of the plan include:

- Improve infrastructure to attract cargo and increase employment, output, income, and tax collection
- Invest in port-supportive infrastructure including rail and highway
- Create predictable movement of goods through enhanced transportation

## Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan (2021)

The Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan recommended to establish a long-term strategy and program for stormwater management in Morehead City. The two major components of the planning process included a program evaluation followed by a modeling exercise. The plan considers the potential impacts of heavy rainfall events, climate change, groundwater levels, sea level rise, and saltwater intrusion to the health and wellness of the Town. Key recommendations include:

- Establish and maintain a stormwater program budget and funding source that supports improvements to the public stormwater system
- Continue stormwater master planning to support proactive public system management, implement needed system repairs, and create reasonable stormwater regulations
- Establish clear and achievable local stormwater requirements and guidance for new land development and existing or future private systems to prevent future negative impacts from stormwater
- Develop and administer a Morehead City Stormwater Management Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that targets the elimination of stormwater related flooding, the safety of public and private properties, and the protection of quality local water resources

## Housing Needs Assessment (2021)

The Carteret County Economic Development Foundation and Carteret County Association of REALTORS solicited Bowen National Research in 2021 to conduct a Housing Needs Assessment for the county. Given shifting demographics and economic trends, it is imperative for the county to understand the current market conditions and projected changes that will influence the future market. Recommendations of the study include:

- Add a variety of housing types to meet the needs of specific age cohorts
- Create policies to protect renters and owners who are considered housing cost burdened
- Balance housing stock between rentals and permanent rental housing

## Floodplain Management Plan (2022)

The Floodplain Management Plan aims to reduce or eliminate the risk to people and property from flood hazards. Morehead City followed the planning process outlined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with guidance from the Floodplain Management Planning Committee (FMPC). The Floodplain Management Plan was updated in 2022. It identifies activities that can be undertaken to reduce safety hazards, health hazards, and property damage caused by floods. Significant outcomes of the plan include:

- Continue to inform and prepare the public about dos and don'ts, flooding risks, and preparation to reduce vulnerability and exposure to flood hazards and protect the health, safety, and welfare of residents and guests
- Protect natural resources by employing a watershed-based approach that balances environmental, economic, and engineering considerations
- Integrate new greenways and public park improvements into comprehensive and capital improvement planning and coordinate with CAMA Land Use Planning
- Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to promote stormwater management
- Minimize flood damage and protect wetlands and conservation areas through zoning and setback regulations
- Pursue nature-based solutions to address flooding and restore coastline and ecosystems
- Mitigate flooding on key evacuation routes and repetitive loss properties
- Implement pump stations and additional tidal gates in locations with localized stormwater flooding problems and backup generators at critical community facilities





# Population

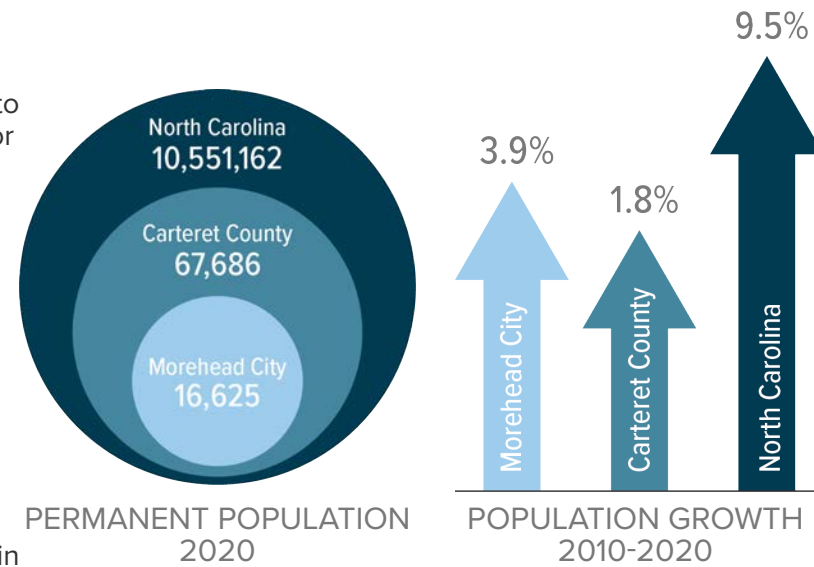
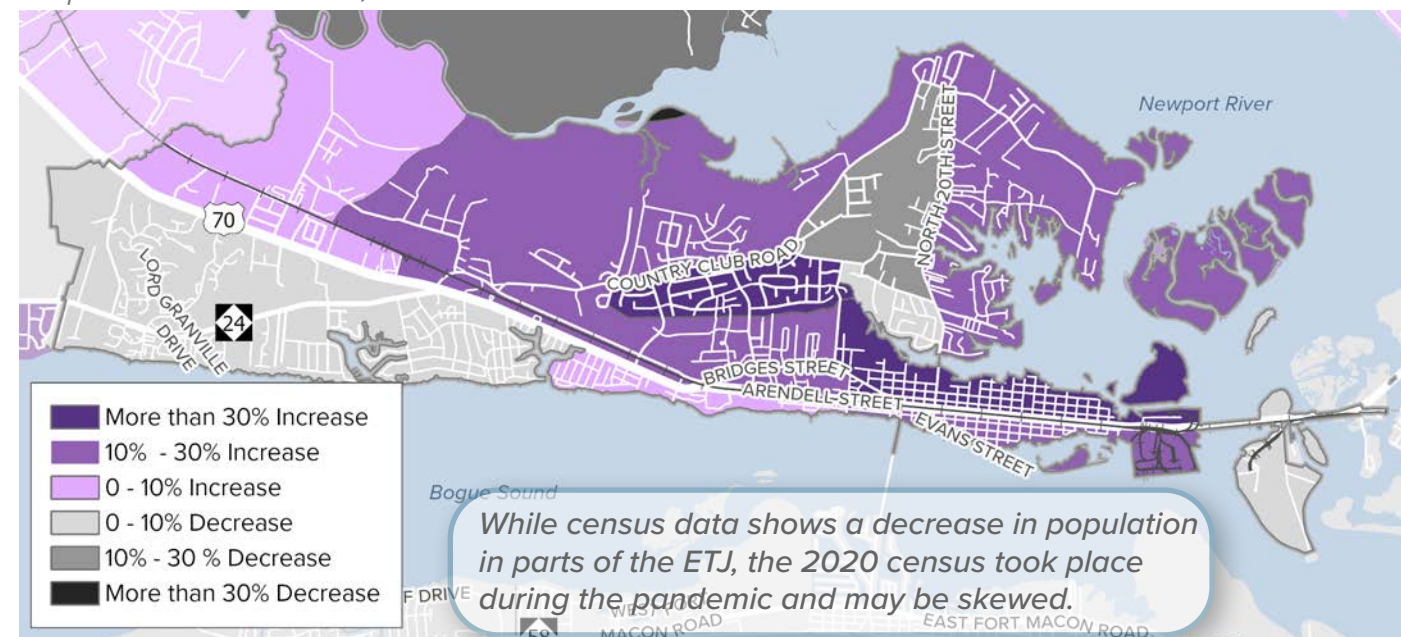
Demographic trends provide a glimpse into Morehead City today and serve as an indicator for future growth and projections. Societal changes are a driver of public policy. The Morehead City Plan 2032 needs to be responsive to those changes in the land use strategy that will support the ultimate vision for the Town. This section analyzes existing conditions, estimates future ones, and compares Morehead City to Carteret County and North Carolina.

## Population Change

The permanent population of Morehead City in 2020 was 16,625. This is about a 4% increase from 2010, when the permanent population was 15,995. Though this percent increase is less than that of the state, it is higher than Carteret County's percent growth, indicating that Morehead City is a destination within the County.

Below is a map of where growth within the Town has occurred. The greatest growth occurred Downtown and in the subdivisions along the western portion of Country Club Road. Most growth occurred in the incorporated limits of Town, whereas some parts of the ETJ experienced decreases in population based upon a comparison of 2010 and 2020 Census tract data.

### Population Growth, 2010-2020



Approximately...

9,556 people live within Morehead City's Corporate limits

7,069 people live in the ETJ

Up to 24,310 people are in Morehead City during the day in the peak season

Source: 2010 Decennial Census; 2020 Decennial Census

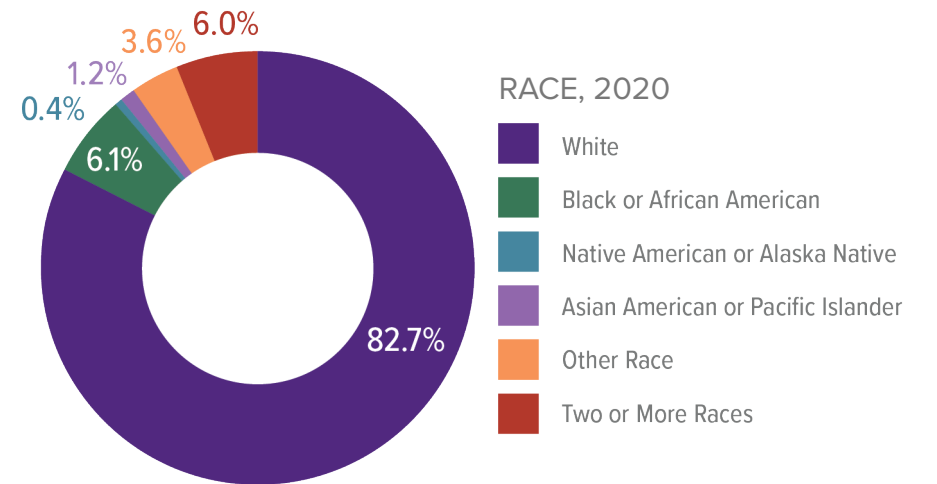


## Race and Ethnicity

Morehead City is predominately white with about an 83% white population. The next largest racial groups are Black and African American and multiracial populations who each make up about 6% of the total population.

### Latinx Community

Stakeholder interviews with local school faculty revealed a trend of increasing enrollment by students who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx. The table below identifies the percent of Latinx students in four Morehead City public schools in 2021. The average Latinx population in these schools is about 14.7%, over double the percent Latinx population that the 2020 ACS survey reported for the study area. While there could be a number of reasons for this discrepancy, including self-underreporting in the ACS by that population, the difference is noteworthy for considering future planning efforts.

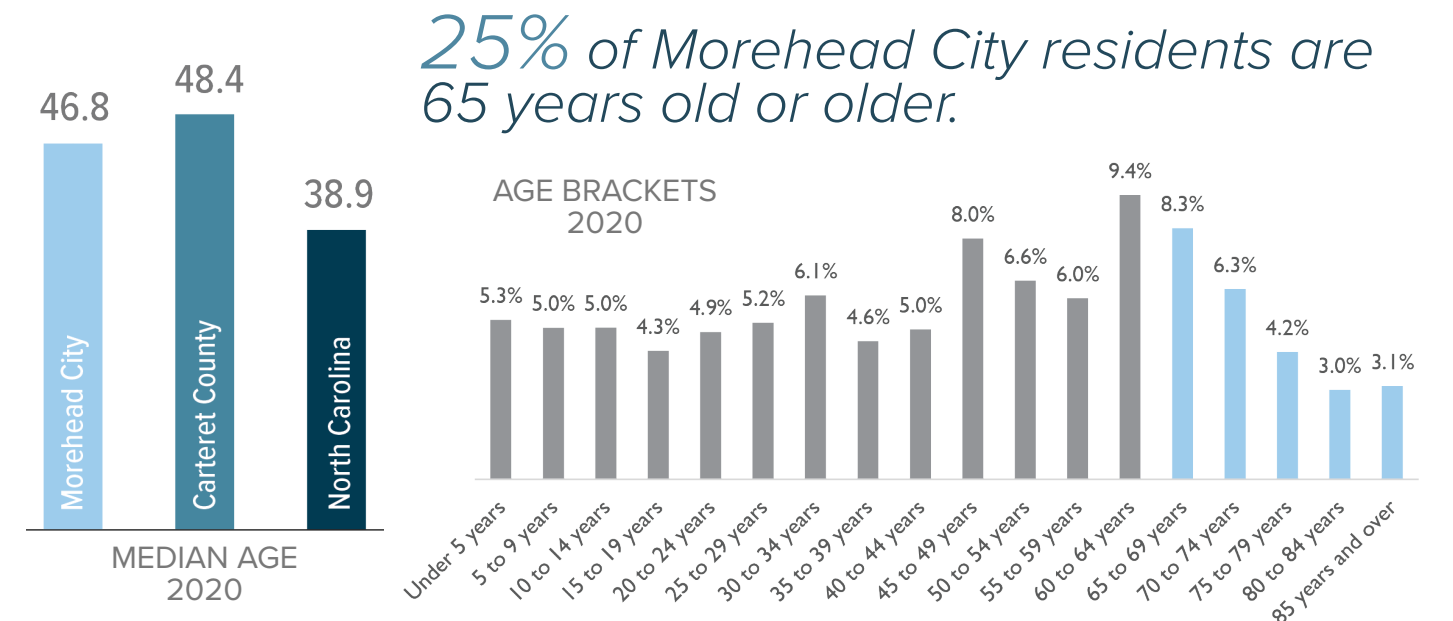


7% of Morehead City's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

School	Percent Hispanic/Latino Students
Morehead City Primary	14.6%
Morehead Elementary at Camp Glenn	16.6%
Morehead City Middle	15.1%
West Carteret High	12.4%

### Elder Population

Morehead City is a destination for many, including people of retirement age. The median age in Morehead City is estimated to be 46.8 years old, which is nearly ten years older than the North Carolina median age of 38.9 years. Morehead City does have a slightly younger population than Carteret County as a whole.



Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates (2020); US News & World Report LP



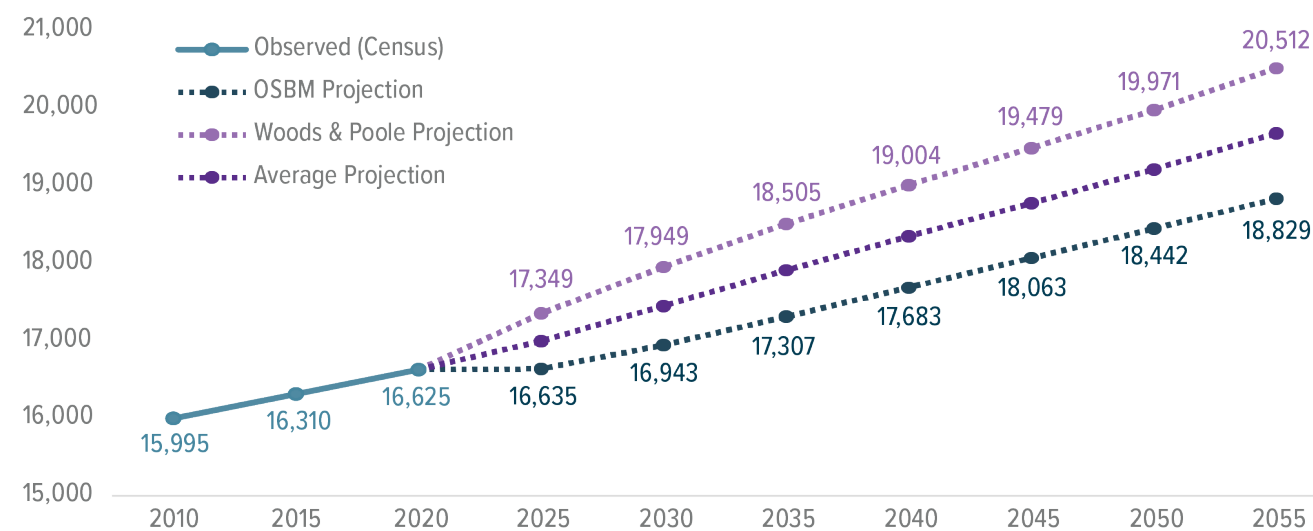


## Projected Permanent Population Growth

Population trends of the past decade are an important determining factor for what potential future population growth could be. The below graph looks at historic trends from 2010-2020 and projects population growth out over 30 years to 2055. The graph shows three projections: the first uses the projected population growth profile for Carteret County as estimated by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM), the second follows the projected population growth for Carteret County as predicted by Woods & Poole, and the third is an average between these two. These population estimates include all residents in Morehead City and its ETJ.

*Around 20,000 permanent residents are expected to live in Morehead City by 2055.*

### Projected Permanent Population Growth

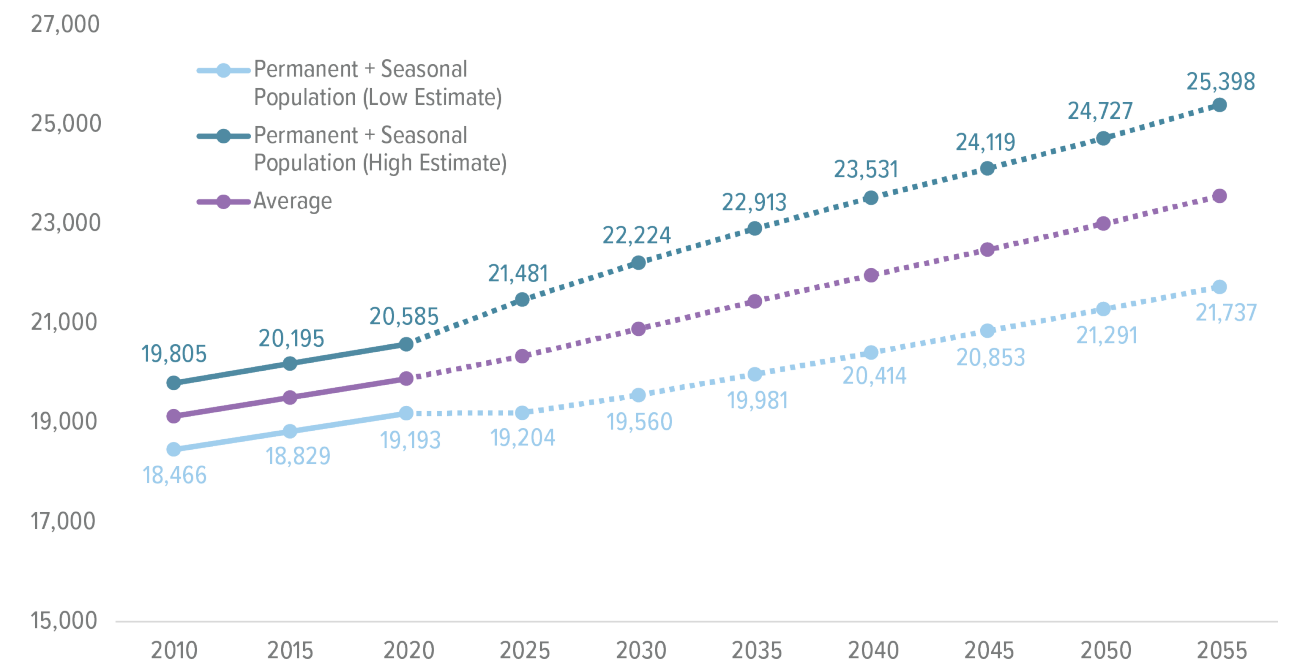


## Projected Seasonal and Permanent Population Growth

The seasonal population of Morehead City is also projected to grow in the next few decades. Estimating seasonal population is important for understanding the peak number of residents in Morehead City. Both seasonal and permanent population were estimated using the 2020 ratio between seasonally- and permanently-occupied housing units, the low and high population projections shown on the previous page, and the estimated seasonal party size between 2.14 and 3.30 people.

*Around 25,000 permanent and seasonal residents are expected in Morehead City during the peak season of 2055.*

### Projected Seasonal + Permanent Population Growth



## Seasonal Population

As a tourist destination, seasonal population is an important consideration in planning for economic fluctuations and infrastructure needs. The number of seasonal residents in Morehead City during the summer months is about 3,200 people, a 20% increase to the total permanent population.

*Approximately, 20,000 permanent and seasonal residents reside in Morehead City during the peak summer months.*

Seasonal population was calculated using the 2020 ratio of seasonally- to permanently-occupied housing units and the 2020 permanent population of Morehead City. The party size for seasonal residents was estimated to be between the average household size (2.14) and the average party size of North Carolina coastal visitors in 2020 as reported by VisitNC (3.3).







## Land Use

Existing land use paints a picture of the intended purpose of different areas in Morehead City today. Understanding how land is currently being used gives us an opportunity to evaluate how these uses support the Town's goals and identify gaps and trends that can be addressed through a revised land use vision and supportive policies.

### *Land Use Descriptions*

The Existing Land Use map on the following pages shows land use in Morehead City today based on the categories below. These use categories are based on surveys conducted for property valuation.

#### ***Agriculture***

Includes all areas used for agricultural purposes, including working farms, grazing land, and forestry.

#### ***Conservation***

Land preserved or protected for non-buildable use. These areas are considered not suitable for further growth or development.

#### ***Industrial***

Land used for manufacturing, warehousing, or transportation and logistics. Primarily includes the North Carolina Port, industrial parks, and portions of Radio Island and Business Drive.

#### ***Institutional***

Includes uses such as government buildings, utilities, schools (public/private), places of worship, and cemeteries.

#### ***Commercial***

Designates land used for retail or wholesale uses, personal services, hotels, restaurants, offices, and other uses. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated along US 70.

#### ***Single-Family Residential***

Land occupied by single-residence homes located one per lot. This designation includes homes occupied seasonally, year-round, or by visitors.

#### ***Multifamily Residential***

These parcels include apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and duplexes but do not include manufactured housing. These units may be used year-round or seasonally.

#### ***Manufactured Housing***

These areas are occupied by mobile homes or other types of manufactured housing.

#### ***Vacant***

This land area currently contains minimal development and is an appropriate location for growth to occur.

#### ***Right-of-Way***

Includes road and railroad rights-of-way, utility easements, and other types of land occupied by public or private utilities.

### *Land Use Influences*

As a coastal community, Morehead City's land use is heavily influenced and determined by soil, environmental features, water quality, and existing infrastructure such as the railroad. These features of the natural and built environment limit the expansion of development and the type of growth that can occur.

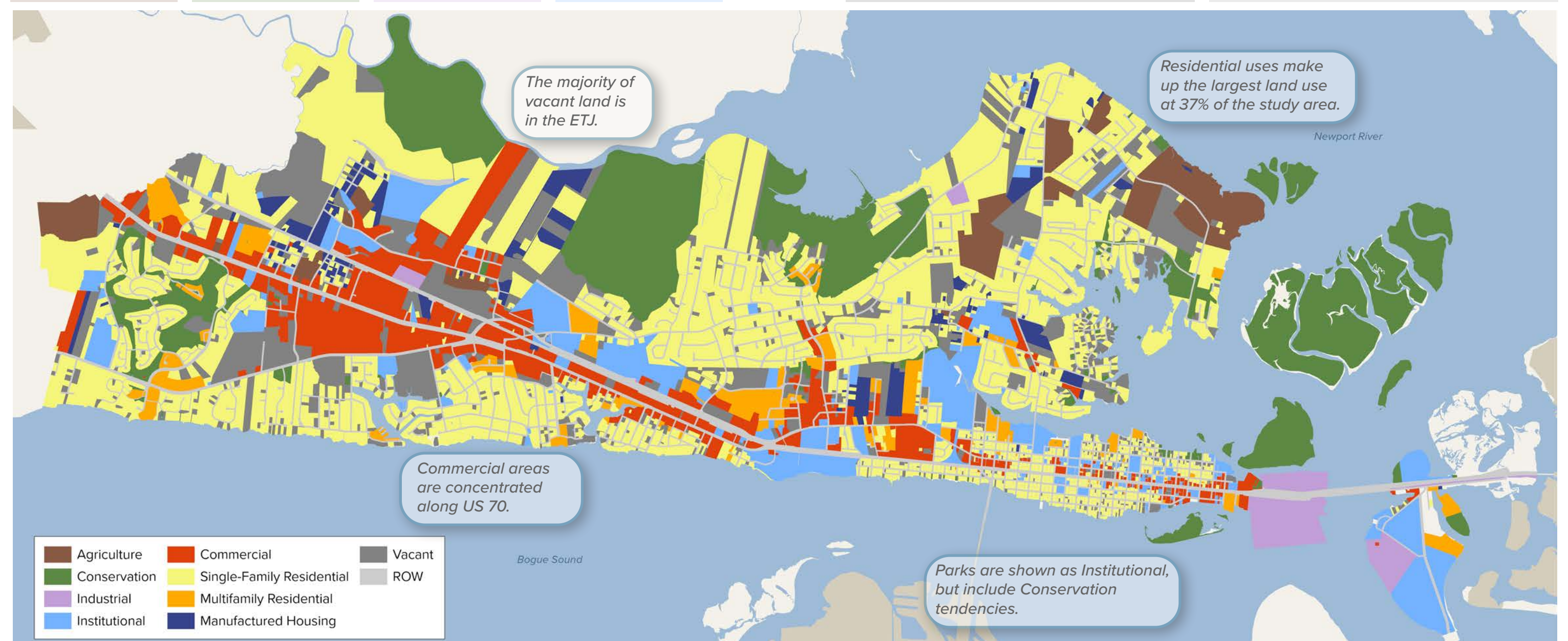
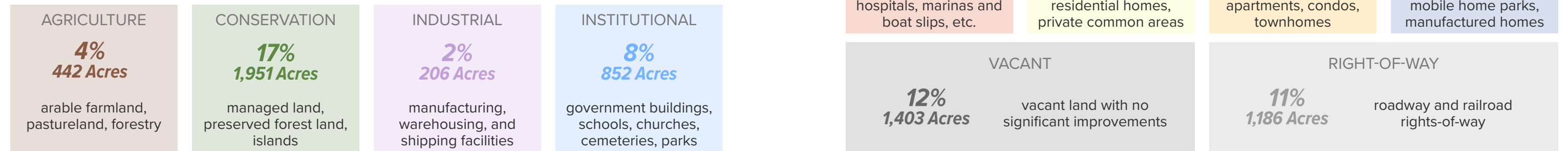






## Existing Land Use

The below map shows the existing land use for each parcel in the study area. Morehead City's land use is concentrated along the main transportation corridor through Town. Commercial development to the west and more retail to the east surround Arendell Street with low-density residential branching out to occupy the majority of the study area. The accompanying graphics indicate the area and percent each land use type occupies.





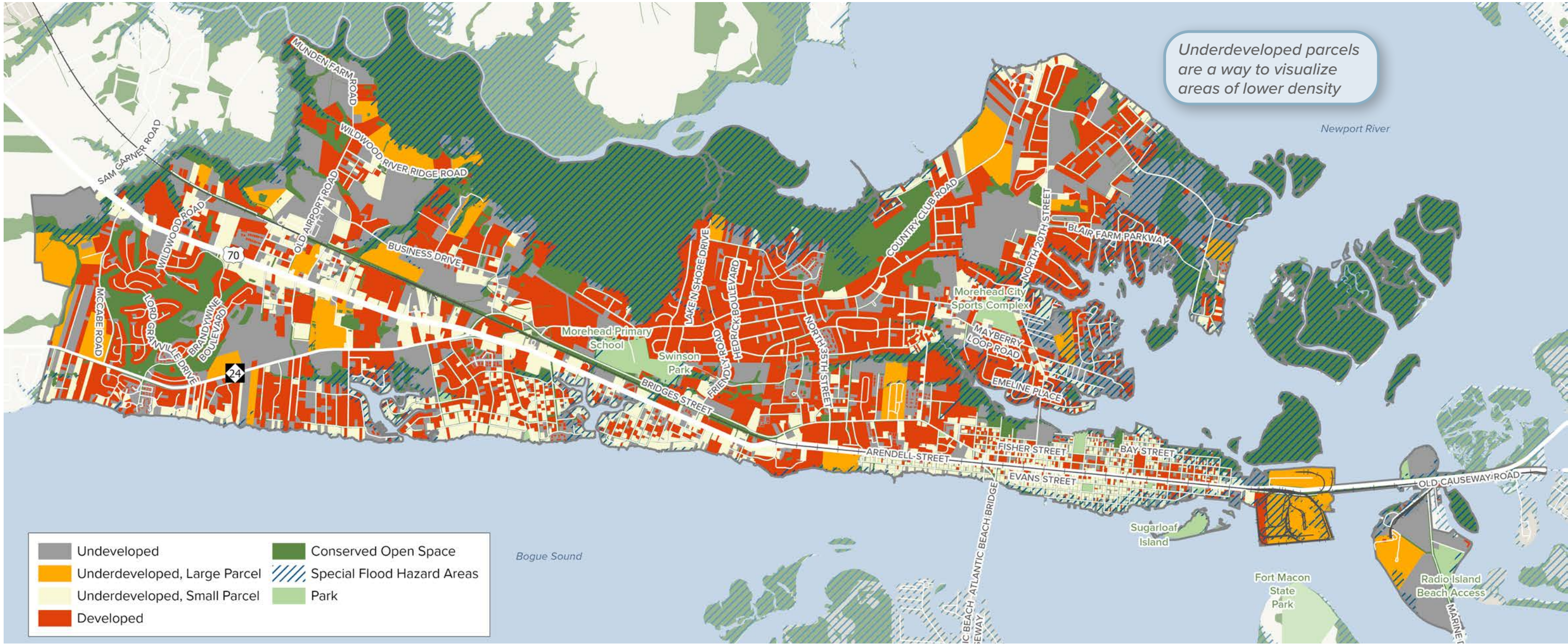


## Development Status

Another way to look at the use of land is through its development status, which shows locations that could theoretically be ready for new development. A quantitative analysis of development status was conducted at the parcel level. Each parcel was assigned a status based on assessed values of the buildings, land, and improvement opportunities, as well as on the size of the parcels. This analysis also takes into consideration the environmental factors at play in the study area, such as conserved lands and wetlands (areas that should not be considered available for growth) and special flood hazard areas (where flooding risk limits potential for widespread growth). The table to the right provides more detail on the categories and shows the breakdown of the study area by acreage and percent of each category. The below map shows the results of this exercise.

Though the northeast and northwest areas of the study area do have greater land availability, the map shows that undeveloped areas are dispersed throughout Town, meaning there is no single concentration of available land. It is important to note that growth can and will occur in locations identified as Developed and that limited construction may occur in special flood hazard areas in accordance with environmental restrictions. As market conditions change, transportation networks evolve, and neighborhoods shift, redevelopment will occur. This map provides a snapshot based on the most recent data.

Name	Description	Area (acres)	Percent
Undeveloped	Parcels with a building value of \$0	2,298	20%
Developed	Building value is greater than land value	3,015	27%
Underdeveloped, Large Parcel	Parcels larger than 10 acres where building value is less than land value but greater than \$0	637	6%
Underdeveloped, Small Parcel	Parcels smaller than 10 acres where building value is less than land value	1,002	9%
Conserved Open Space	Parks, wetlands, open space, conservation/utility buffers, and other areas not available for growth	4,331	38%
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,284</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Special Flood Hazard Areas</b>	AE and VE flood hazard areas where higher risk of flooding limits potential for widespread growth	5,752 (2,221 excluding wetlands)	51% (20% excluding wetlands)



Source: Carteret County





# Transportation

Transportation is integral to the movement of people and goods through Morehead City. It touches almost every aspect of peoples' daily lives from their commute to the errands they run and the places they visit and recreate. The transportation network is made up of the roads, railroads, and multimodal facilities that connect through and within Morehead City. This section looks at Morehead City's existing transportation through various lenses to understand how the Morehead City Plan 2032 can better direct transportation investments.

## Roadway and Railway

The Morehead City roadway network includes major through routes such as US 70, a major north-south arterial route that runs through the heart of Town, and NC 24 which connects to Jacksonville to the west. One hundred fifty-seven (157) miles of road creates the entire street network in Town. These roads are maintained by three primary entities: NCDOT, Morehead City, and NC Port, who are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their roads. Homeowner associations and individual property owners also privately maintain some roads.

NCDOT Maintained Road	Morehead City Maintained Road	Privately Maintained Road	NC Port Maintained Road
60.9 Miles   38.8%	46.6 Miles   29.7%	49.3 Miles   31.4%	0.14 Miles   0.1%

As a port Town, the movement of goods plays a vital role in the development of the Town's transportation network. The North Carolina Railroad Company's (NCRR) rail track runs through the heart of Town, segmenting the two sides of US 70, ending at the Port of Morehead City, located near the eastern limits of Town. Both the railroad and US 70 provide the movement of freight to and from the port.

## Roadway Service

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) is a measure of the average daily traffic passing through a specific location along a roadway. Traffic volumes typically correspond to the function, design, and location of the roadway. AADT helps to identify areas with a high demand for travel (i.e., schools, shopping centers) or highlight roadways with a higher volume of pass-through traffic. Roads with traffic volumes that exceed 80% of their capacity are considered congested.

### Road Volumes



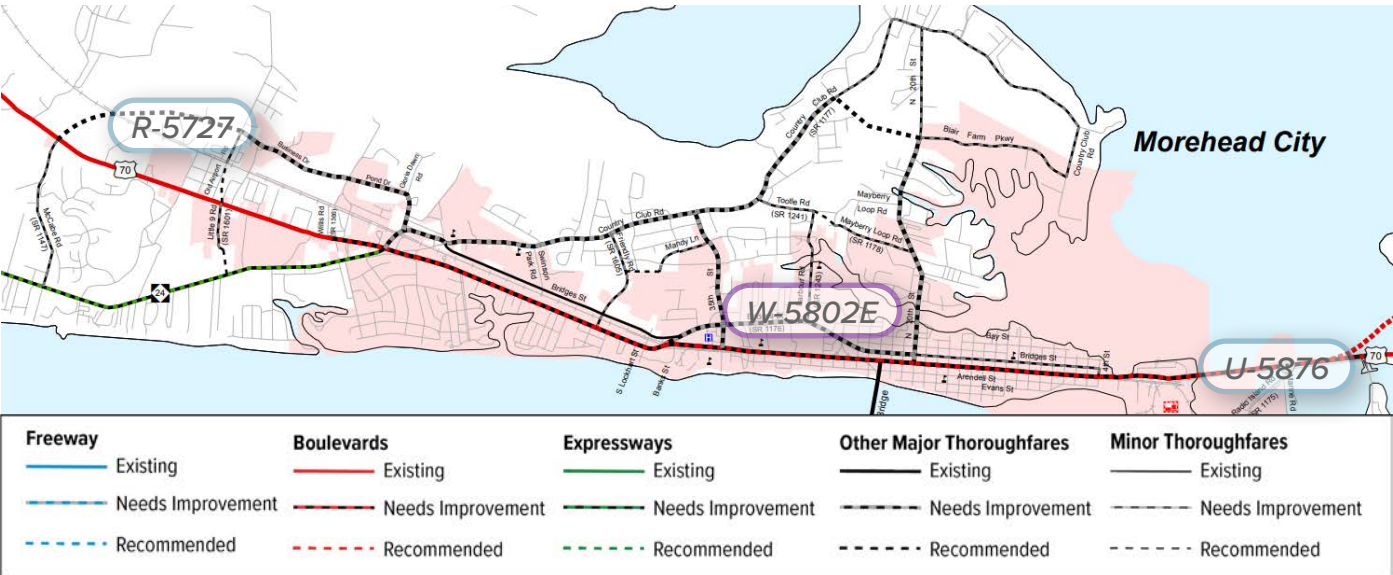
## Roadway Improvements

Roadway improvements for Morehead City are identified in the Carteret County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). CTPs are intended to identify local needs and goals for improving the transportation system. The recommendations from the 2014 CTP are shown on the map below. Some of these recommendations have even progressed in the funding process and are now included in the 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which identifies priorities and assigns funding for the first five years of the defined time period. The projects that are included in the STIP are labeled with their identification number on the map below and described on the table at right.

STIP No.	Type	Construction Year
R-5727	Road	TBD
R-5941	Intersection	TBD
U-5876	Road	2027
W-5802E	Safety	2021

Additional information on the STIP can be found online at: [ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/stip](https://ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/stip)

These projects include construction of new roads to provide alternate routes to US 70, realigning intersections, and widening the Radio Island bridge.



Source: Carteret County CTP (2014). While this map is taken from the CTP, some project alignments have changed since its adoption.

## Transportation and Land Use

Transportation and land use are integrally connected. Context distinctions in land use are important to define so roads are designed to serve the purpose they're intended for. A local street in a small neighborhood should have low speeds, space for parking, and sidewalks for residents while a major thoroughfare intended to move large volumes of traffic has to be built with higher capacities in mind. Foresight in planning allows for the cohesion of transportation and land use planning to ensure that a road fits the context of the area around it.

## Strategic Transportation Corridors

US 70 is identified by NCDOT as one of North Carolina's 25 Strategic Transportation Corridors (STC) which form the core network of the state's multimodal passageways. The STCs are intended to move large volumes of people and freight across the state and to key markets outside of it. Select STCs, including US 70, are also evacuation routes which need to allow motorists to leave threatened areas quickly and safely. US 70 is also programmed to become an interstate, Future I-42, from Raleigh to Morehead City. US 70 as a STC has large implications for Morehead City both for its economic development implications and its potential to alter the character of the Town's main street. The Morehead City Plan 2032 was informed by residents, Carteret County, and NCDOT to envision the future of US 70 through Town.

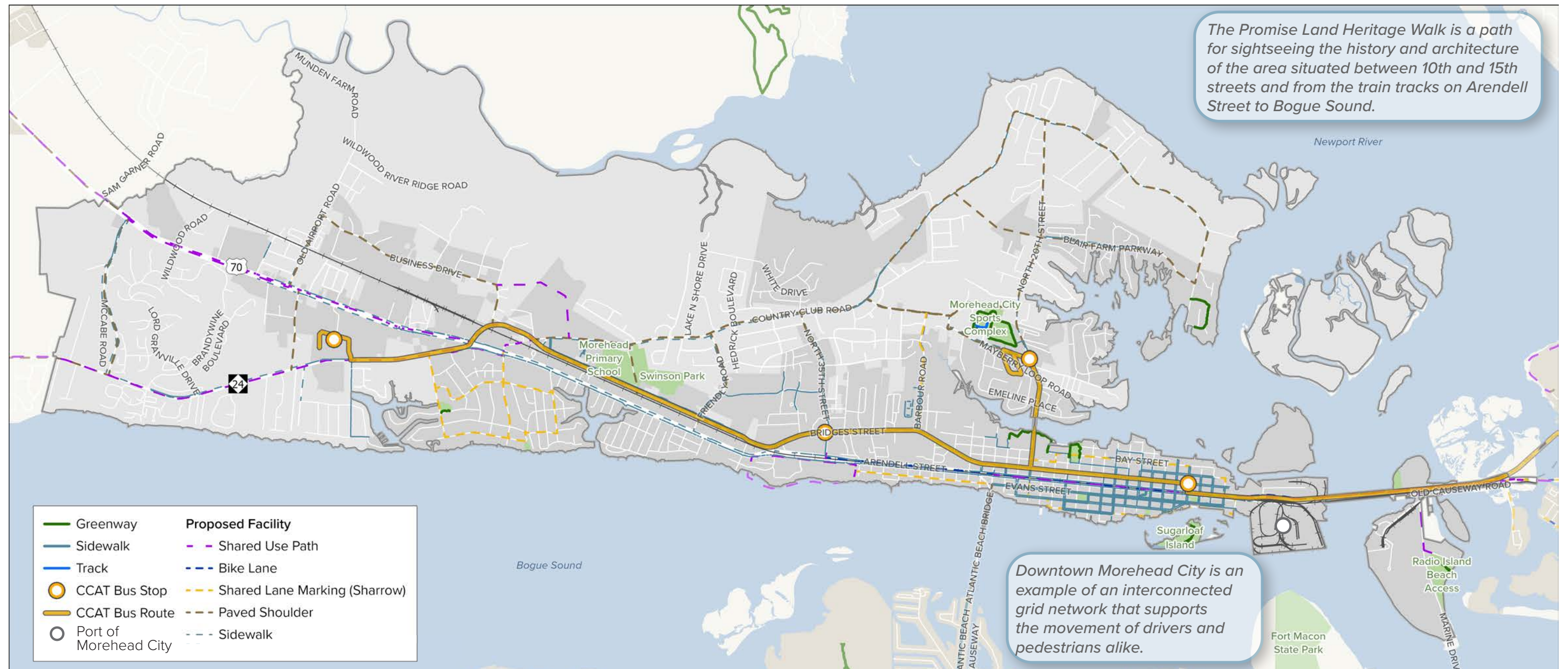




## Active Transportation and Transit

Truly comprehensive transportation networks are multimodal in design, supporting active modes, such as walking and biking, and complimented by a public transportation, or transit, system. The map below shows the existing and planned active transportation and transit facilities in the area. The map also shows the Carteret County Area Transportation System (CCATS) Morehead City to Beaufort route. Having a connective active transportation system that is supported by nearby transit routes and stops encourages additional access to jobs, schools, healthcare, and places of recreation such as parks and waterfront access areas for Morehead City residents and visitors. The Morehead City Plan 2032 will ensure the alignment of both the physical infrastructure and strategic policy that's needed to support a multimodal network that's safe and accessible for all users in Town.

There are about **36 miles** of existing sidewalks and trails within Morehead City including the Promise Land Heritage Walk.



Source: Carteret County; NCDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Network





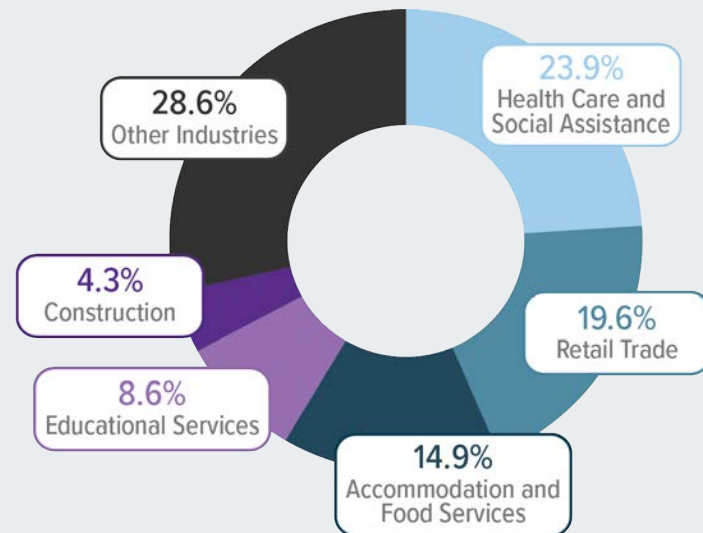
## Economy

Morehead City is a thriving Town with economic vitality fueled by tourism from visitors across the nation. With its plentiful water-based recreation opportunities and proximity to the beaches of the Crystal Coast, Morehead City is an ideal destination for the summer season. An economic base is the baseline for a healthy and self-sustaining community. Understanding existing economic practices and employment trends will help policy makers track and plan investments to accommodate and encourage growth in the area.

### Employment Trends

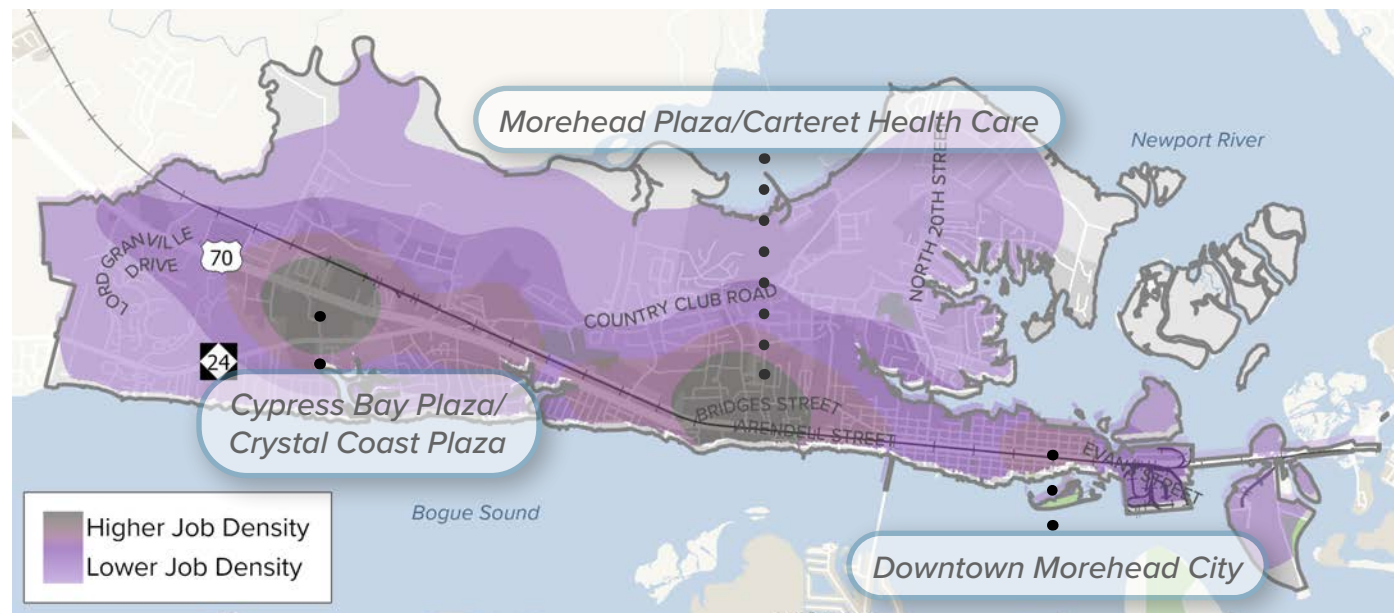
The chart at right breaks down the percentage of jobs across the top five employment industries in the area. Based on data from the US Census, a quarter of the jobs in Morehead City are in health care or social assistance, the largest of which is Carteret Health Care, employing 1,154 people in 2020.

*Morehead City had  
9,756 jobs in 2019.*



### Employment Density

The employment density map below identifies areas of job density. Most jobs are concentrated along US 70, the area's largest through route. Notable areas of employment include shopping centers (Morehead Plaza, Cypress Bay Plaza, and Crystal Coast Plaza) and Downtown. By identifying dense areas of jobs, the Town can make city planning investments such as land use, housing, and transportation to create an inviting place for all workers to flourish and attract future employment opportunities.



Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD (2019); Carteret Health Care

### Commute Patterns

Another metric of economic strength is the pattern of commutes in an area. Morehead City has more workers driving into Town for their daily jobs than leaving to work elsewhere. Of the jobs available in Morehead City, about 79% of workers are commuting into Town to work. This is a strong indicator of the opportunities Morehead City has to offer.



*3.6% of Morehead City's labor force  
over 16 years of age are unemployed.*

### Downtown Morehead City, Inc.

Downtown Morehead City is recognized as the commercial and residential area from 4th Street to 18th Street with northern and southern extents of Calico Creek and the Bogue Sound, respectively. These limits were expanded west from 14th Street in July 2022. Downtown Morehead City, Inc. is a non-profit economic development organization dedicated to fostering a vital Downtown community. Founded in 1997 under a different name, Downtown Morehead City, Inc. has been operating for over 25 years on the mission to foster a healthy Downtown by promoting assets and maximizing economic opportunities all while preserving the coastal lifestyle of the Town.

### Main Street America

In 2021, Downtown Morehead City, Inc. was recognized as a Main Street America™ Accredited program. Receiving accreditation indicates that Downtown Morehead City, Inc. is a leading program of a network of over 1,000 nationally helping to improve local economies and enhance quality of life. This accreditation is recognition of the commitment Downtown Morehead City, Inc. has to creating high-quality places to live, work, and play, and to building stronger communities through economic development.

*Downtown Morehead  
City has 26 retail  
businesses and 24 fine  
dining restaurants.*

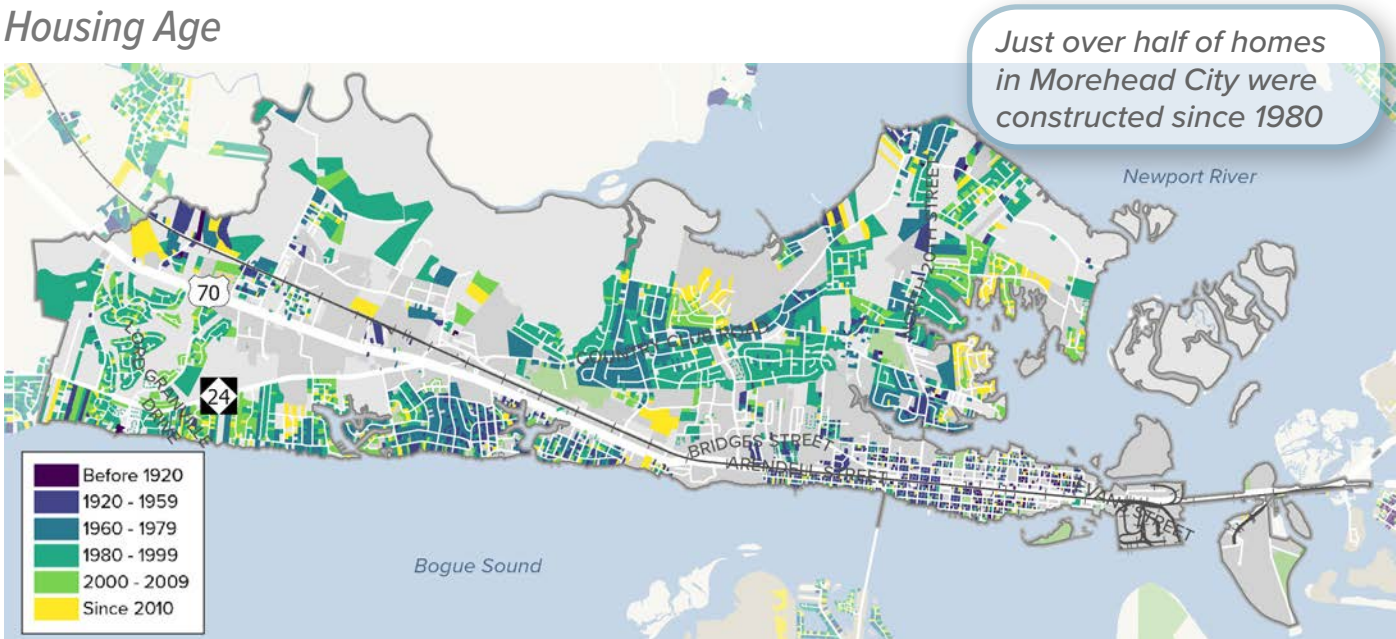
Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap LEHD (2019); Downtown Morehead City, Inc



# Housing

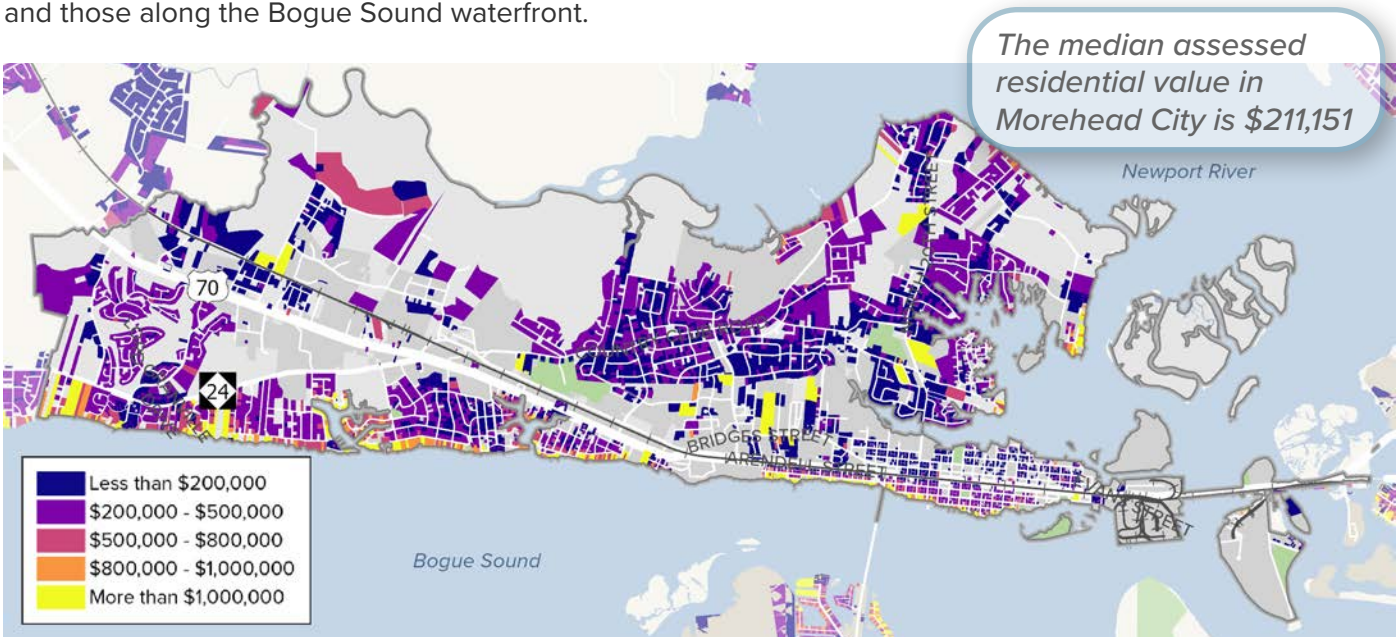
An analysis of the housing supply and market in Morehead City uncovers the conditions and trends that affect current and prospective residents. This information can help guide policy and future land use decisions in a manner that aligns with the Town's desires for housing in the future. The following pages reflect key statistics and characteristics of existing housing in Morehead City. Data is sourced from the 2020 US Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, the Zillow Home Values Index, and Carteret County tax information.

## Housing Age



## Residential Property Value

This below figure shows the relative assessed property value of residences by parcel. The average residential property value is between \$200,000 and \$250,000. The highest property values are multifamily properties and those along the Bogue Sound waterfront.

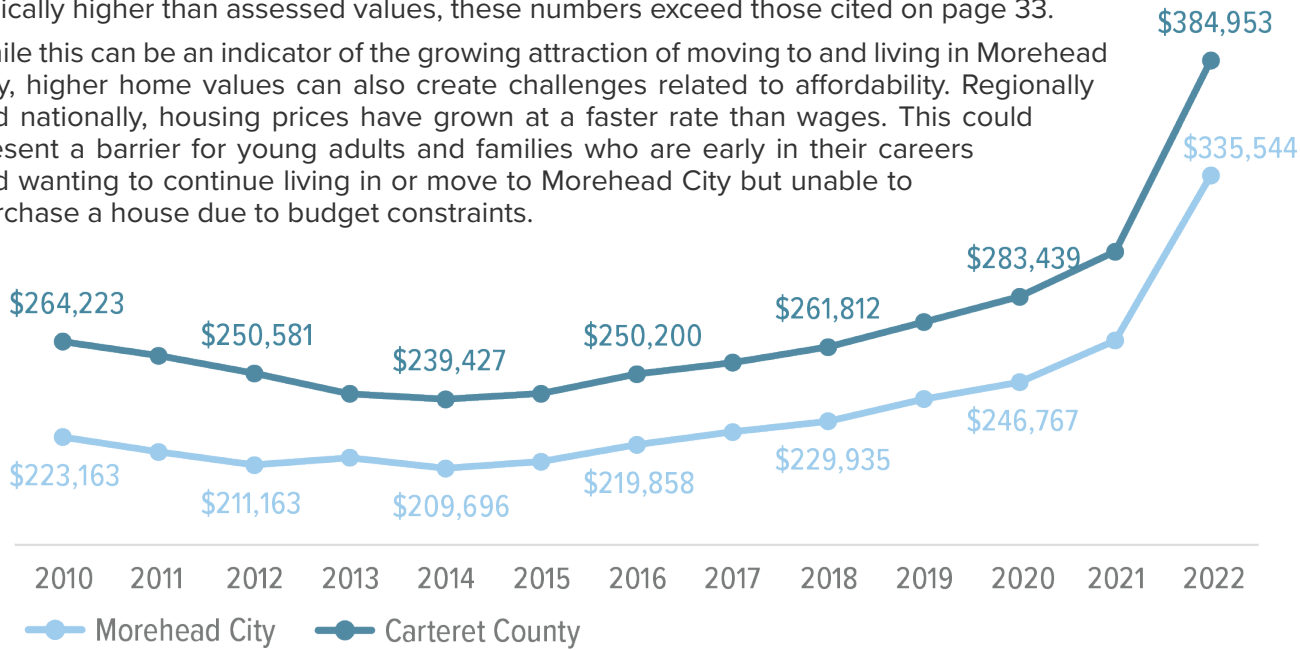


Source: Carteret County

## Home Values

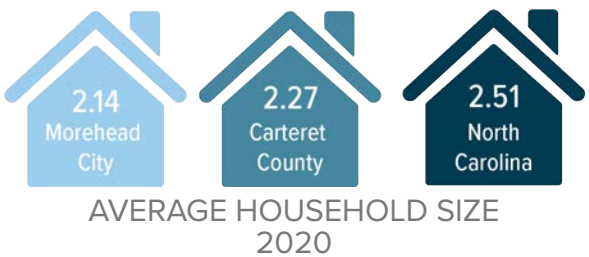
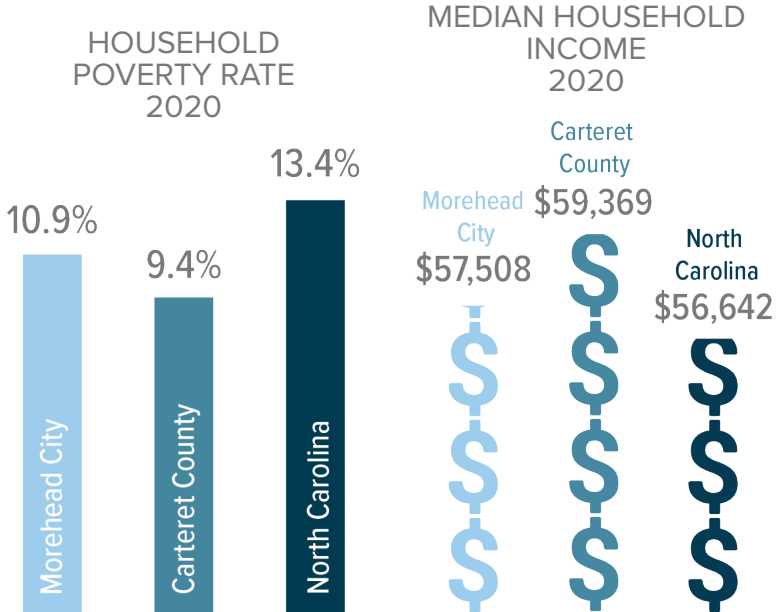
Data from the Zillow Home Value Index was analyzed to capture a picture of the change in home market values over the past decade. During the 12-year period from 2010 to 2022, home market values in Morehead City increased by over 50%. This rise in values has seen the greatest growth in the past five years, increasing by over \$110,000 from \$225,338 in 2017 to \$335,544 in 2022. Because market values are typically higher than assessed values, these numbers exceed those cited on page 33.

While this can be an indicator of the growing attraction of moving to and living in Morehead City, higher home values can also create challenges related to affordability. Regionally and nationally, housing prices have grown at a faster rate than wages. This could present a barrier for young adults and families who are early in their careers and wanting to continue living in or move to Morehead City but unable to purchase a house due to budget constraints.



## Housing Costs

Morehead City's poverty rate and median household income are between the North Carolina and Carteret County measures. 44% of households in Morehead City earn less than \$50,000 per year, compared to 55% in North Carolina. Because Morehead City is a retirement destination, it is also possible that the median income does not reflect the typical socioeconomic status of residents accurately. Morehead City's poverty rate is slightly higher than Carteret County's but significantly lower than the state average.



Morehead City has a higher median income and lower poverty rate than North Carolina as a whole.

Source: Zillow Home Values Index (2022), ACS 5-Year Estimates (2020)

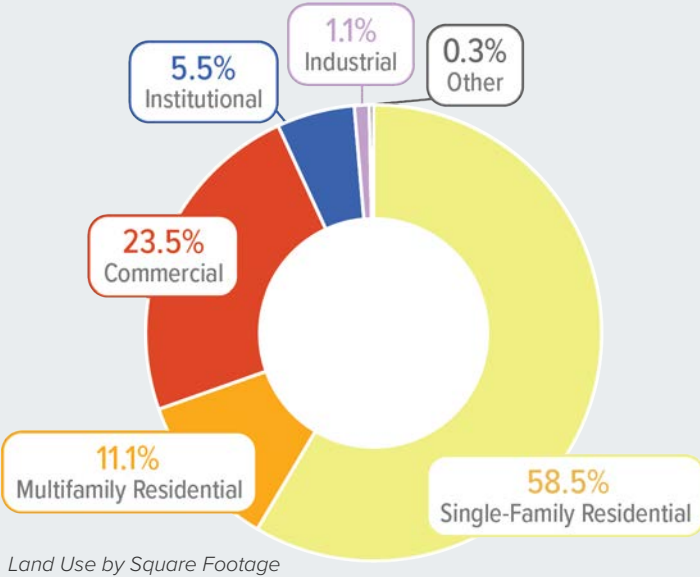




## Housing Stock

Morehead City's housing stock is primarily single-family homes, comprising over 60% of all housing in Town. Approximately 30% of units are in multi-unit buildings, including townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and condominiums. A diversity of housing options is critical to ensuring a welcoming community with options for different budgets and family sizes. Multifamily development must be placed strategically to provide opportunities and maintain neighborhood character.

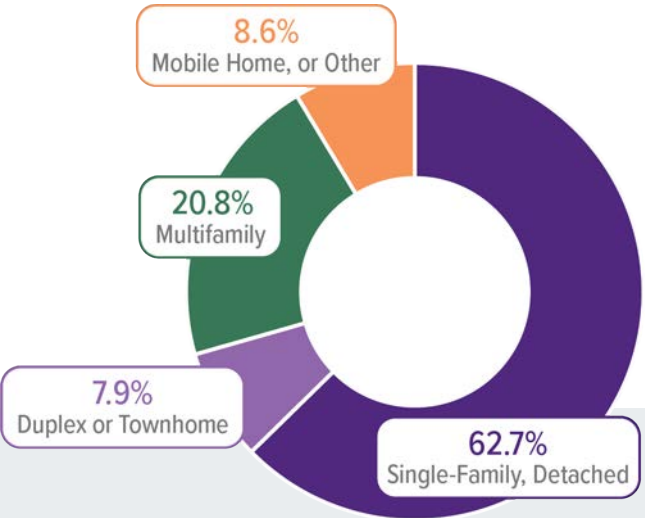
### Square Footage by Land Use



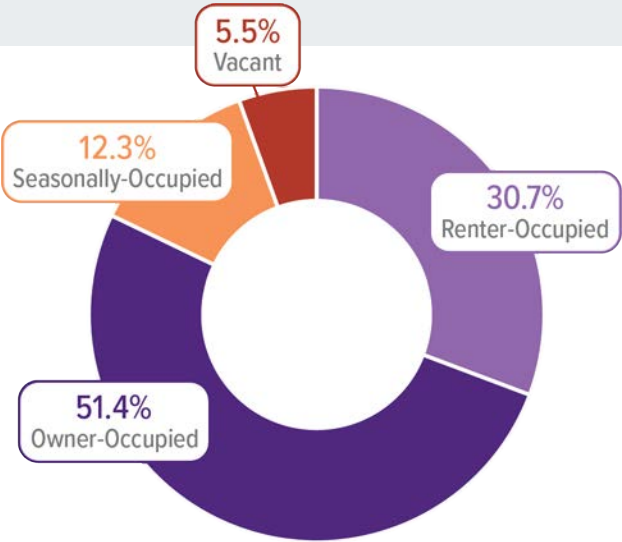
## Housing Tenure and Occupancy

Since Morehead City is a popular destination for tourists and seasonal residents, seasonal housing units are an important measure. Despite the popularity of second homes in the area, over 80% of housing units are occupied year-round in Morehead City. This number has the potential to increase to account for people moving to Town and teleworking, which has increased because of COVID-19. 12.3% of units are occupied seasonally. Morehead City has a greater percentage of year-round residents than Carteret County as a whole. Slightly over half of housing units in Morehead City are owner-occupied.

### SEASONALLY-OCCUPIED HOUSING, 2020



The pie chart to the left breaks down Morehead City's land use by the square-footage of the buildings that serve the use. The greatest portion of Morehead City's square-footage is used for residential purposes. About a quarter is used for commercial use, and the final portion is used for institutional, industrial, or other uses. Although the housing product type graph above shows that nearly 30% of housing units in Morehead City are duplexes, townhomes, or multifamily, the square footage of these only take up about 11.1% of land use square footage, which speaks to the efficiency in size and footprint of multifamily housing when compared to single-family homes.



70% of vacant units are occupied seasonally.

Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates (2020)

## Carteret County Housing Needs Assessment (2021)

The Carteret County Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned in 2021 by the Carteret County Economic Development Foundation and the Carteret County Association of REALTORS. This assessment provided key insight into the current housing market in the County and projected future conditions. The assessment found that household growth is expected to occur among aging millennials and seniors, smaller renter households, and larger owner households.

19.6% of renter households and 8.1% of owner households in Carteret County are considered cost-burdened.\*

Since 2010, the number of seasonal vacation homes has increased by 7.2%, while the permanent rental housing stock has decreased by 12.5%.

\*Cost-burdened refers to households that pay more than 30% of their income toward their rent or mortgage.

## Housing Permits

Tracking building and occupancy permits is one way to measure the growth of the housing stock in recent years. 2021 saw a large increase in the number of new housing permits in Morehead City, especially for single-family detached units. 71 permits for this housing type were issued in 2021, nearly a 40% increase from previous years. Additionally, a record 84 new residential lots/units were approved in 2021.

Housing Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CAMA Permits*	14	15	33	28	26
Single-Family Detached	45	51	51	71	55
Single-Family Attached	8	28	26	39	18
Approved New Residential Lots/Units	57	18	4	84	7
Approved Multifamily Lots	2	0	1	2	0
Approved Rezoning	7	11	5	5	3

\*Issued for land-disturbing activity (homes, grading, fill, decks, etc.) within 75 feet of the water.

The number of new residential lots/units approved in 2021 was nearly 50% higher than in the previous three years.

Source: Carteret County Housing Needs Assessment (2021)



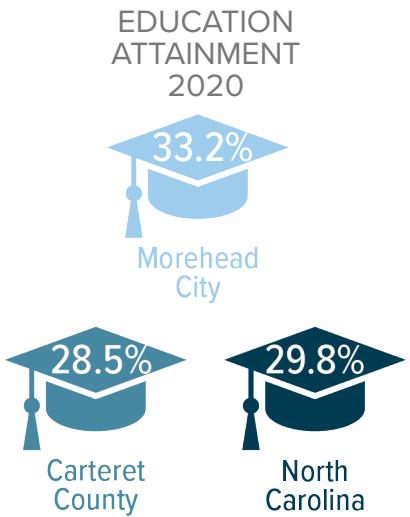
# Community Infrastructure, Public Services, and Utilities

A vital component of daily life is community infrastructure, including public utilities, communication facilities, and bridges. These facilities must be maintained to provide the community with a high-quality of life. Notably, the need for future infrastructure is determined based on project population growth trends. Similar to the built infrastructure, the Town provides other essential services, including police, fire, and emergency management services. These departments promote the safety and protection of all residents. Other types of public services include education and recreation opportunities. A blend of public services promotes the overall well-being of a community and helps its residents thrive.

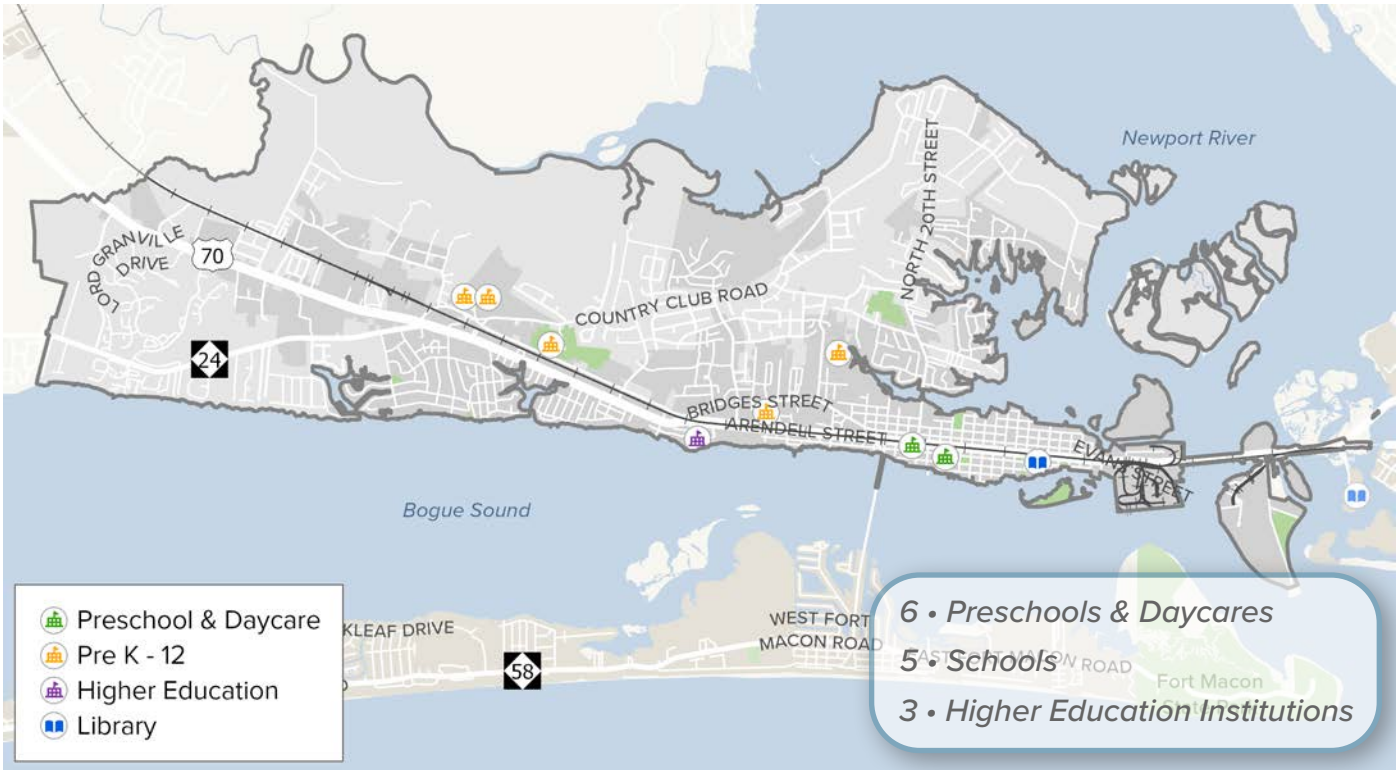
## Education

A cornerstone of a flourishing community is education and educational attainment. The infographic to the right illustrates the percentage of the population over 25-years old in Morehead City, Carteret County, and North Carolina who have a bachelors degree or higher. Morehead City has an educational attainment of at least 3.4% higher than the county and state. Increased educational attainment typically provides individuals with better opportunities to earn better incomes and attain access to better services, including healthcare services and healthier foods.

Morehead City is home to a variety of educational institutions including day cares and preschools, public and private schools for grades K-12, and colleges and universities supporting higher level learning: Carteret Community College, the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences, and North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology (CMAST). The Morehead City Library is the only library in Town, however, in the surrounding area of the Town, there are six additional libraries.



## Community Facilities



Source: US Census ACS 5-Year Estimates (2020); Carteret County

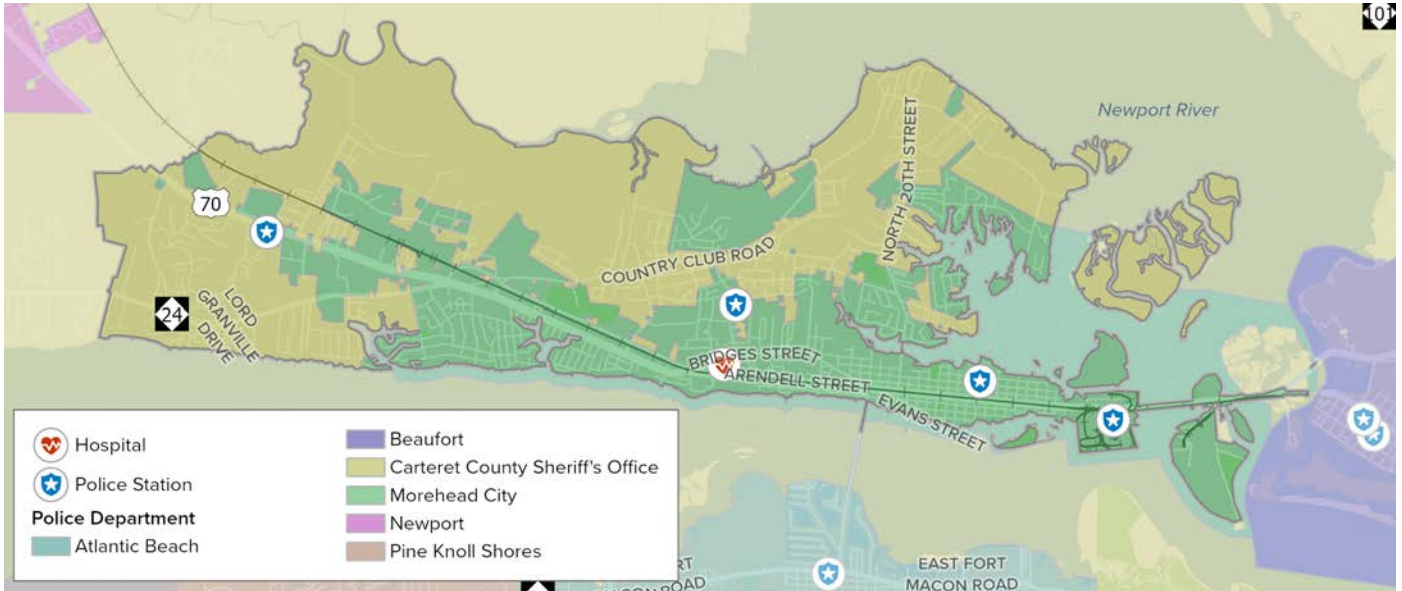
# Law, Fire, and Emergency Services

The public services that promote public safety include police, fire, and emergency services. In Morehead City, fire and emergency medical services (EMS) are in one department that addresses fire prevention, fire suppression, fire investigations, and Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedic transport. The Morehead City Fire Department was established in 1906 as a standalone department. The EMS Department formed in 1958 as the Morehead City Rescue Squad. In 2014, the Morehead City Fire and EMS merged with the Wildwood Fire EMS Department. The two districts serve approximately 28,000 people and cover 23 square miles.

Similar to the Fire & EMS Department, the Morehead City Police Department serves to protect the public. The department aims to establish a strong partnership with the community, be accessible to people in the community, and provide solutions. Public services provided in Morehead City establish trust between the Town and the community. The continuous commitment to building and maintaining existing relationships will only strengthen community ties.

In partnership with the Town's police, fire, and emergency services, Carteret Health Care is located in a centralized location.

## Police Services and Service Areas



## Fire and Emergency Services and Service Areas



Source: Carteret County & Morehead City; North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ)



Public Health and Recreation

As a part of the Crystal Coast, Morehead City has a variety of outdoor recreation locations. These locations include waterfront access points, places to launch a boat, playgrounds, picnic areas, and sports fields and facilities. Due to the coastal nature of the Town, recreational opportunities like water sports, fishing, and swimming create experiences for adults and children alike.

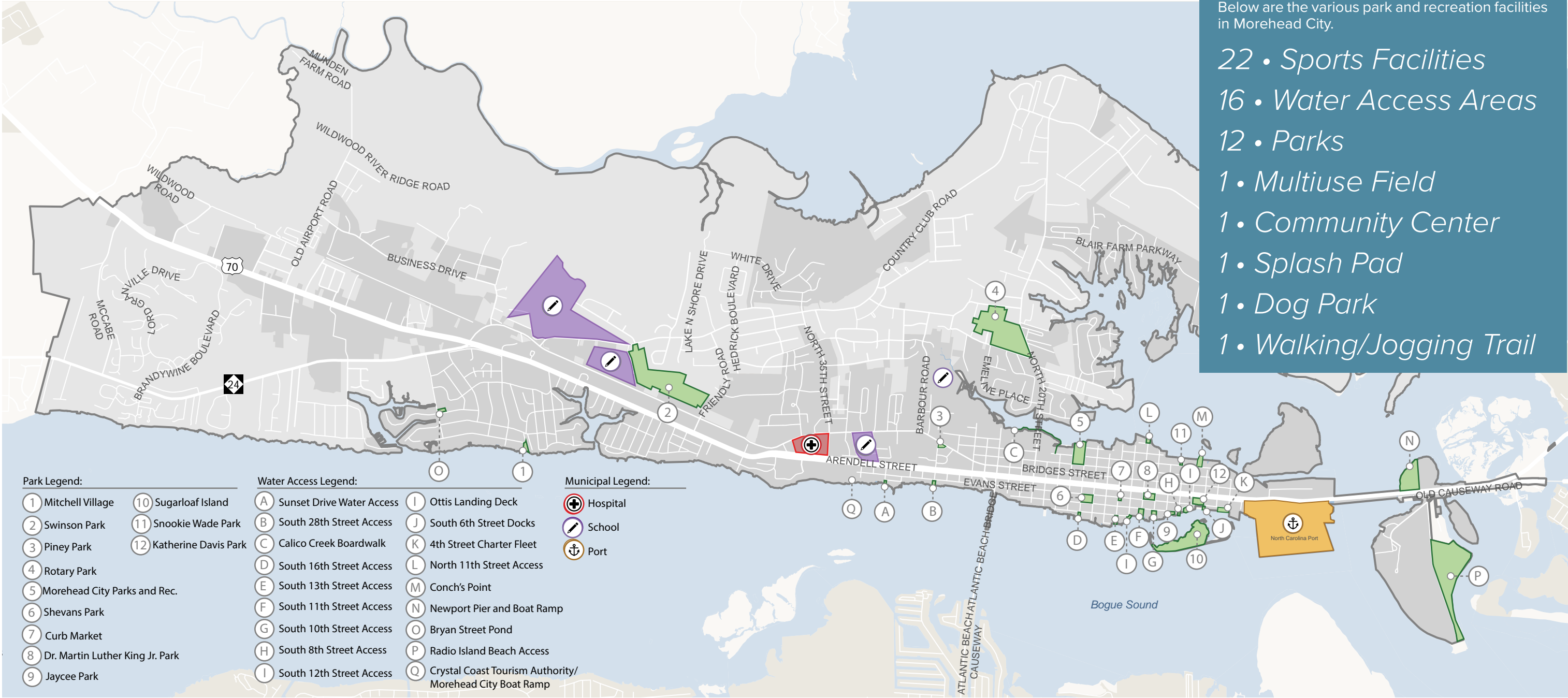
The Town of Morehead City also hosts seasonal, annual events like the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament and the North Carolina Seafood Festival. At these events, residents and visitors alike enjoy the food, culture, and recreation opportunities that Morehead City has to offer.

The rich history of Morehead City paired with its unique natural setting makes the Town an enjoyable place

to live and visit. Through its parks and recreation offerings, the Town blends its history and natural setting to provide essential community services for residents and visitors. These investments help create and maintain the Town's unique sense of place. The diversity of recreational facilities also contributes to the quality of life in Morehead City for a population that has a range of ages, interests, and abilities. The Town and larger region benefit from activities that promote a healthy, active lifestyle.



Recreation Opportunities







## Water and Waste Water

Morehead City's Public Services Department maintains over 80 miles of water and sewer lines. The current service area reaches almost every Town street to deliver water to businesses and residences. Annually, Morehead City uses over half a billion gallons of water. The proposed budget in the Town's 2023 CIP for water and sewer is over \$3.4 million.

Planning for future connections to water and sewer is heavily dependent on population growth and future projections. By understanding the anticipated population growth, utility services—for water and sewer—can be expanded accordingly in high-demand geographic areas. The following sections detail the existing water and waste water connections and addresses how anticipated growth may impact the existing network.

### Water

The Town is located in the Castle Hayne Aquifer. The Castle Hayne Aquifer is the most productive aquifer in North Carolina and services almost the entire coastal areas of the state.

The below map shows the water lines in Morehead City and the well and water tank locations. The three wells in the Town are treated using chlorine. Tanks are located near the Port, off Bridges Street, off Country Club Road, off Arthur Farm Rd, and off Horton Drive.

### Water Infrastructure



Source: Town of Morehead City FY2022 Annual Budget

To track water usage, the Town has meters at each address that is connected to Town water. The meters can indicate potential leaks and notify property owners if a leak is occurring. Ideally, the leak can be identified before serious damage is done. No overflows, bypasses or other problems that would degrade water quality or constitute a threat to public health have been documented for the Town's water supply system.

In 2021, the Town pumped over 1.2 million gallons of water per day (MGD). Based on the year-round permanent population projection the average MGD is estimated to be about 1.4 MGD in 2055.

*Over 1.2 million gallons of water are pumped daily in Morehead City.*

In addition to the Town, Carolina Water Service of North Carolina is a private water and wastewater utilities provider that services Brandywine Bay in the western portion of Morehead City. Carolina Water Service is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina and serves approximately 34,229 water customers and 20,995 sewer customers in North Carolina.



## Waste Water

The Morehead City Public Services Department provides water and sewer utilities to Town residents. In 2018, the Town cleaned and inspected approximately 8.5 miles of sewer line. While there were no reported spills in 2017, most main blockages and overflows are the result of grease contaminating the Town sewer collection system. The grease congeals on sewer pipes and causes blockages or flow-back into homes or businesses. In some cases, it can even flow directly into waterways. Annually, there are more than 15,000 sewer overflows in North Carolina.

Another essential aspect of waste water is the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). At the WWTP, water goes through an extensive cleaning and treatment process. Lift stations are used to transport the massive amount of waste water. In the event of a natural disaster, the lifts can continue to operate without electricity. The disinfected water is discharged into the Calico Creek.

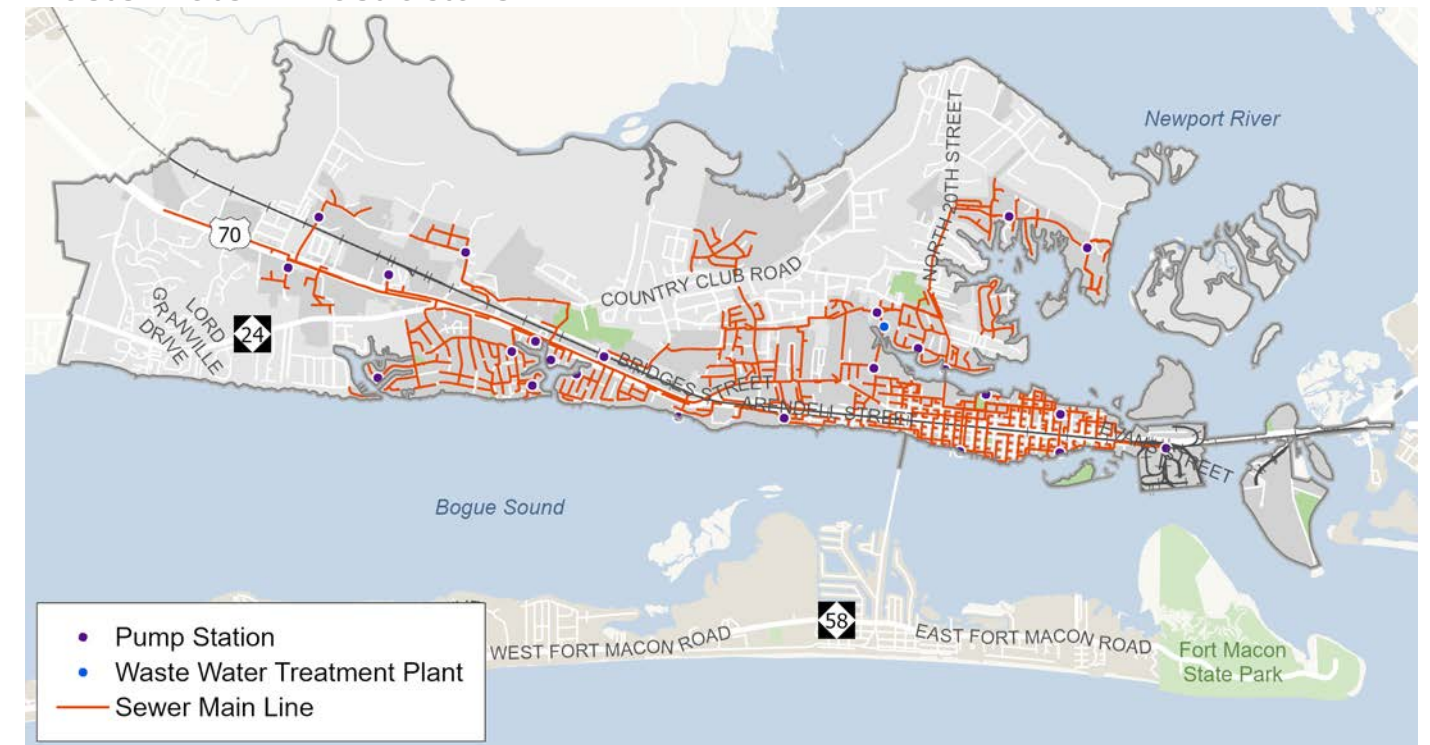
In 2021, up to 1.6-1.7 million gallons of waste water was treated daily. This is at about 66% of the WWTP's 2.5 MGD design capacity. It should be noted, however, that regulated capacity limits is actually at about 85%

of 2.5 MGD. Based on the projected population, by 2055 the average MGD is estimated to be 1.88 with 18,943 people as the year-round population. This is about 75% of the 80-85% capacity. When considering the high estimate of both the permanent and seasonal population by 2055 the daily treatment increases to about 93% of total design capacity.

The Town will need to continuously evaluate the need for facility expansion based on trending demographics and population information.

*1.6-1.7 million gallons of waste water are treated daily in Morehead City.*

### Waste Water Infrastructure



Source: Carteret County





## Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is generated by rain that flows over land or impervious surfaces. Runoff can gather pollutants and contaminate rivers, streams, lakes, and coastal waters. To protect natural resources, stormwater controls or best management practices (BMPs) can filter out harmful pollutants or prevent pollutants from contaminating water by limiting it directly at the source.

In 2021, the Town undertook a pilot study and analysis, the Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan. The plan identified long-term strategies to address stormwater issues in Morehead City. The plan acknowledges that flooding as a result of stormwater runoff has become an increasing issue in Morehead City over the past 10 years. The Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan lists a variety of reasons as to why stormwater runoff continues to be a prevalent issue for the Town, including undersized infrastructure, lot coverage, coastal storm surge, uniform stormwater regulations, etc.

The stormwater analysis within the Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan considered existing and future land use which highlighted the importance of the relationship between land use and stormwater. As part of this process, the Morehead City Plan 2032 considers the unique challenges that the Town faces due to stormwater runoff.



Source: Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan (2021); Floodplain Management Plan (2017)



## Drainage Problems

As a coastal Town, Morehead City faces numerous challenges associated with flooding and runoff. New construction and development contribute to the increased coverage of impervious surfaces as well as increase the vulnerability to flooding. Flooding may occur less frequently when best management practices are implemented.

The Morehead City Floodplain Management Plan and the Morehead City Pilot Study Area Stormwater Master Plan both outline the opportunities and strategies to address existing and future issues related to stormwater runoff and localized flooding.

## Water Quality Issues

Water quality issues can stem from a variety of places. The failure of infrastructure like roadways, bridges, and, especially, dams can contribute to poor water quality and public health concerns.

Addressing stormwater runoff has many benefits, including enhanced water quality. One strategy to mitigate stormwater runoff is by protecting existing natural systems. Preserving natural systems like wetlands can assist in the natural filtration of water to improve water quality while maintaining the natural habitat of a variety of wildlife and plant species.

The built and natural environment can have lasting impacts on one another. In Morehead City, the issues related to stormwater runoff and flooding will be an on-going issue for years to come. With a robust long-term plan, the Town can create adaptive strategies to mitigate the impacts on people, property, and the environment. While a large portion of the work is not in the purview of this planning effort, the Morehead City Plan 2032 provides holistic recommendations to accommodate shifting population and development trends with the natural environment.

## Best Management Practices

A BMP, or best management practice, is a facility designed to reduce stormwater pollutants or mitigate the effect of peak-water volume from a property. BMPs can vary from construction and maintenance costs to open space and building encroachment. There are standard BMPs that can be retrofitted to address the specific constraints or challenges at a certain location.

The following BMPs could be implemented in Morehead City to address and mitigate drainage and water quality issues:

- **Bioretention Area.** A shallow depression filled with vegetation to absorb and filter runoff.
- **Rain Garden.** A small basin that is planted with native plants to slow water and filter runoff.
- **Swale.** An open channel designed to capture stormwater runoff and reduce the speed of moving water
- **Pervious Pavement.** Through porous pavement, the stormwater can filter through to a reservoir where it is temporarily stored.

A good stormwater plan blends a variety of BMPs to achieve success.





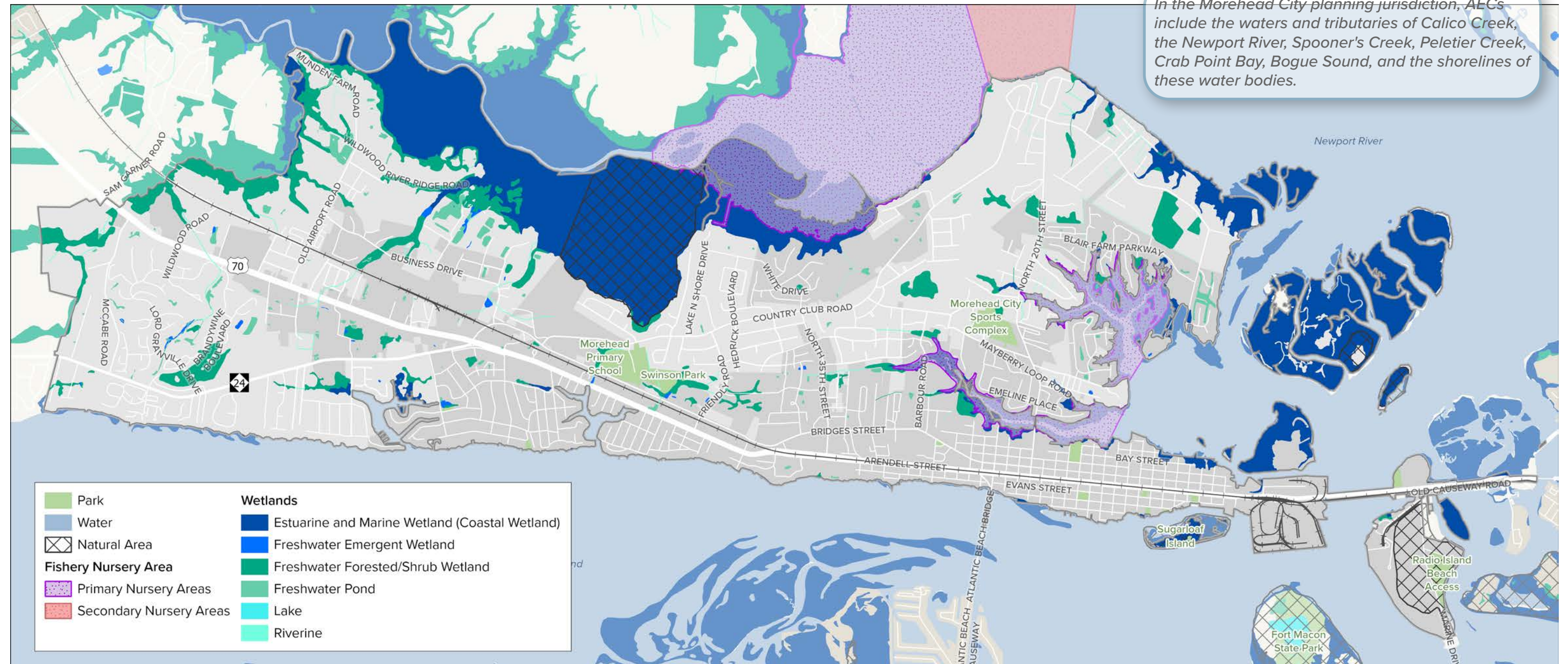
# Environmental Features and Conditions

The final section of the Community Characteristics Report delves into the natural environment of the Town. As a coastal community, Morehead City has the benefits of being surrounded by natural beauty and recreation opportunities. Unfortunately, given their geography, coastal communities are at a greater risk of the implications of climate change. The Morehead City Plan 2032 will be a steward of the Town's environmental features through policies that emphasizes their protection and preservation for both the health and safety of all Morehead City's residents and visitors.

## Natural Systems and Resources

This section first looks at what natural systems and natural resources are located in and around Town.

### Fragile Areas and Areas of Environmental Concern



Source: DCM Inlet Hazard Areas of Environmental Concern (2019); National Wetlands Inventory (NWI); North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF); NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC); Core Land Use Plan (2007)



### Fragile Areas and Areas of Environmental Concern

Areas of Environmental Concern (AECs) are areas of natural importance that may be easily destroyed by erosion or flooding or that have environmental, social, economic, or aesthetic values that make it valuable to North Carolina. The CRC identifies AECs to protect these areas from uncontrolled development which could irreversibly damage property, public health or the environment. CAMA requires permits for development in AECs which cover almost all coastal waters and about 3% of the land in the 20 coastal communities. Fragile areas are not explicitly defined as AECs but are still vulnerable to environmental damage if not managed. The following pages identify and discuss AECs and fragile areas in Morehead City, including estuarine waters and shorelines, public trust areas, coastal and non-coastal wetlands, natural heritage areas, primary nursery areas, and endangered species.





## Estuarine Waters and Shorelines

Estuaries are the transition area between fresh and salt water bodies. They are located along the coast of North Carolina and connect to public trust areas, coastal wetlands, and coastal shorelines. Shorelines are also critical areas protected by CAMA regulations. These features offer substantial benefits as they are essential to North Carolina's commercial and recreational fishing industries and also act as natural buffers for preventing coastal erosion and flooding.

### Public Trust Areas

Often overlapping with estuarine waters, public trust areas include coastal waters and submerged lands that may be used for recreational water activities. Additionally, public trust areas also include many inland fishing waters. Every North Carolinian has the right to use public trust areas. All submerged lands adjacent to Morehead City along the Bogue Sound should be considered public trust areas.

### Coastal and Non-Coastal Wetlands

Wetlands vary greatly depending on soils, topography, climate, hydrology and vegetation. Coastal wetlands are any marsh in the 20 coastal counties that regularly or occasionally flood from tides and include specific types of plant species. Morehead City has both coastal and non-coastal wetlands that provide environmental and economic benefits because they protect against flooding, help maintain water quality, provide habitat to wildlife, and serve as part of the estuarine system.

### Primary Nursery Areas

Primary Nursery Areas are parts of the estuarine system that are vital for the initial post-larval and juvenile development of finfish and crustaceans. Primary Nursery Areas include primary, secondary and special secondary areas. Morehead City has primary and secondary nursery areas along the northern and eastern shoreline of the Town in Harlowe Creek.

### Natural Heritage Areas

Natural heritage areas are typically protected by the government or non-profit organizations from development because of their ecological significance for biodiversity. Protected lands in Morehead City include the Newport River Marshes on the north end of Town (owned by the NC Coastal Land Trust), portions of Radio Island, and nearby Atlantic Beach areas such as Fort Macon State Park.

### Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered species are those that are likely to be or are close to becoming extinct and whose protection is vital to prevent further harm to the species. A few endangered species found in Carteret County include the kemp's ridley and leatherback sea turtles and the shortnose sturgeon. As of April 2022, the Atlantic sturgeon, known to swim in waters surrounding Morehead City, was classified as endangered. A full list of Threatened and Endangered Species is provided as an appendix to this plan.

*The waters of the Bogue Sound are an estuarine water AEC.*



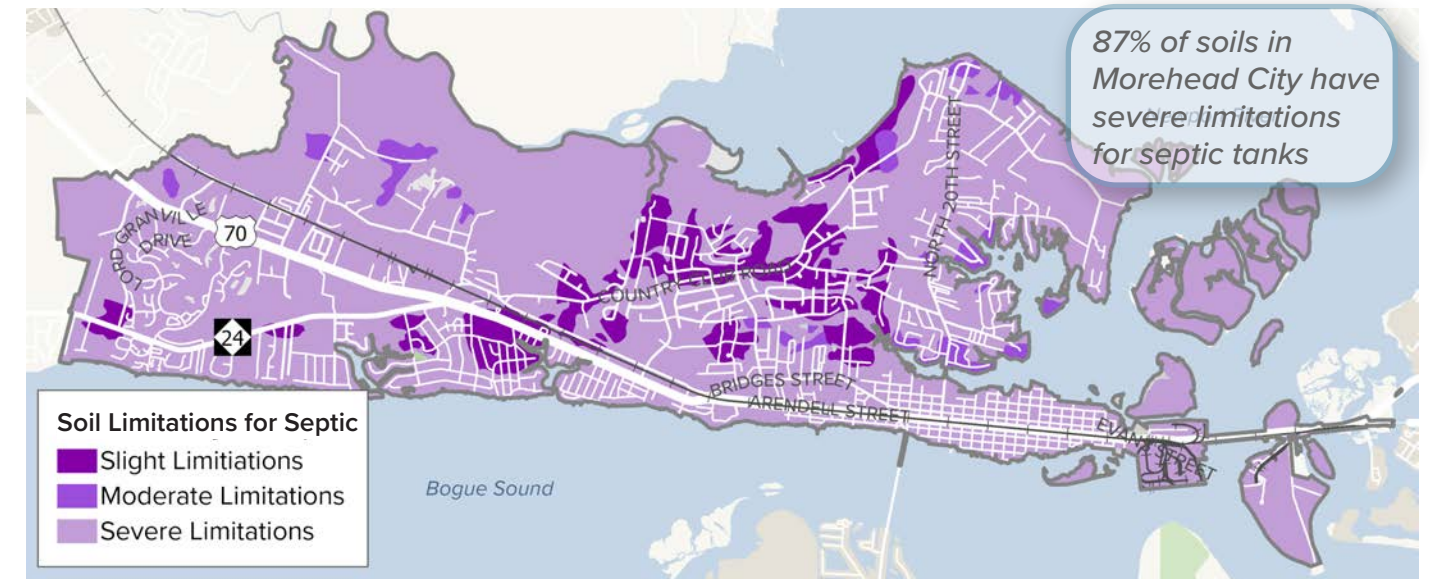
*Carteret County has 21 endangered, threatened, and at-risk animals and plants.*

Source: Core Land Use Plan (2007); United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)



## Soils

Soils can be a limiting factor of development of septic systems. Hydric soils in particular have consistently wet conditions that make the installation of septic systems difficult because of a higher likelihood of flooding. A soil survey completed for Carteret County in 1987 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) indicates 30 different soils types within Morehead City. The map below shows these soil types by their limiting conditions for septic tanks. Limiting conditions include wetness, filter, flooding, ponding, and slope. These limitations are grouped into the three categories shown on the map below.



## Natural Hazards

Natural hazards pose a great threat to coastal communities like Morehead City, which is why this plan and the land use strategy will establish resilient systems. This section provides a brief overview of natural hazards and their impacts. These topics are explored in greater detail in the Floodplain Management Plan and Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### Shoreline Erosion

Shoreline erosion is the loss or long-term removal of land or sediment along a shoreline due to waves, currents, tides, or other storm impacts. Coastal Towns are susceptible to shoreline erosion especially during storm events. The Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan found that the average erosion rate for all coastal communities in the Pamlico Sound region is 2 feet per year.

*Sugarloaf Island lost 8 acres of land in the 22 years between 1993 and 2015.*

### High Winds

High winds are to be expected along the coastal areas of North Carolina. Carteret County is within the highest wind zone category of 150 miles per hour. High winds are typically a symptom of tropical storms, with their speed and negative impacts increasing with the severity of storm. Winds are a hazard that damage trees, utilities, and buildings, causing unsafe conditions during a storm and long-lasting impacts to infrastructure following one.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Survey; Morehead City Floodplain Management Plan (2017)







## Flood Hazard Areas

The land area covered by the floodwaters of the base flood zone is known as the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) maps. The map below shows three different flood areas.

**39.2%** of Morehead City's area is in a flood hazard area.

### Areas of Localized Flooding

#### Heavy Rain

- US 70 near McCabe Rd
- Lowes Home Improvement Entrance on US 70
- Country Club Rd
- N 20th St near Blair Farm Pkwy
- Shep Willis Rd

#### Tidal

- Portion of South Yaupon Terrace
- Bay St and N 9th St Area
- St End Area on Bay at N 6th and N 7th St
- Shepard St between S 8th and S 10th St

#### Heavy Rain or Tidal

- South 15th St



## Storm Surge Areas

Storm surge is the abnormal rise in seawater during a hurricane or storm caused by the storm's wind. Storm surge is one of the largest threats to communities during hurricanes and storms. The North Carolina coastline is highly vulnerable to storm surge. North Carolina is calculated to have hurricane return periods ranging from 5 to 7 years with Carteret County falling in the 6-year range. This means that on average during the previous 100 years, a hurricane passed within 50 nautical miles of the county approximately 17 times. North Carolina has a frequent hurricane return period in comparison to the eastern United States coastline. In the last 20 years, NOAA has tracked 25 storms within a 60 nautical mile radius of Morehead City. The categories of these storms are shown in the table below.

### Storms in Morehead City from 2002-2022

Strength	Number of Storms	Storm Name
Extra Tropical	4	
Tropical Depression	5	
Tropical Storm	9	
Cat 1	3	Ophelia (2005), Irene (2011), Matthew (2016)
Cat 2	5	Isabel (2003), Alex (2004), Arthur (2014), Florence (2018), Dorian (2019)
Cat 3-Cat 5	0	

Source: North Carolina Flood Risk Information System (FRIS); NOAA

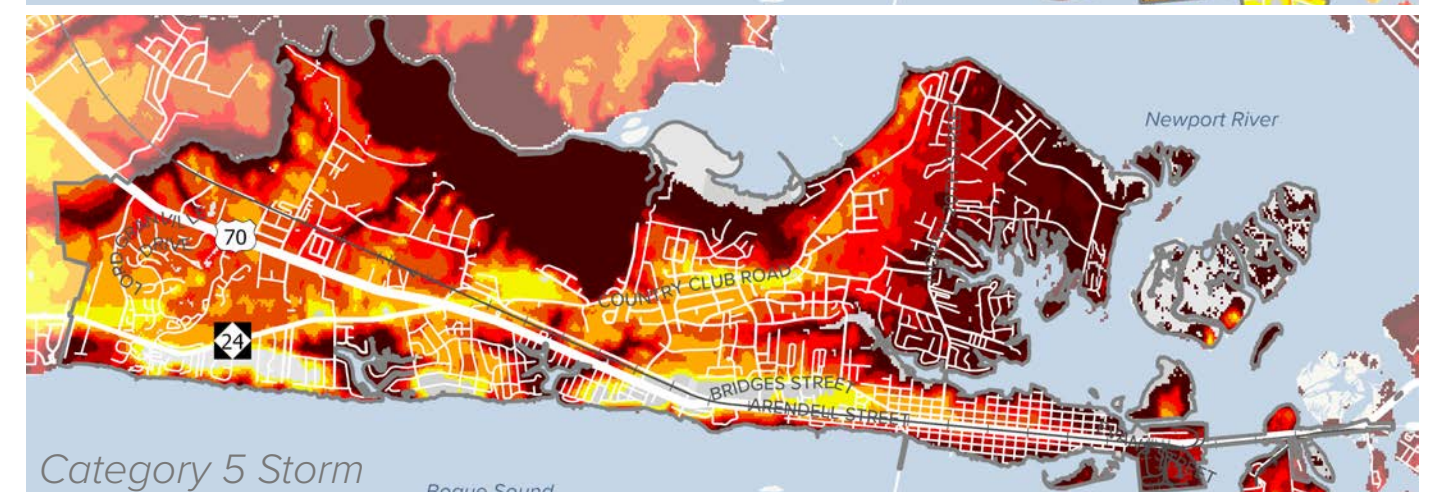
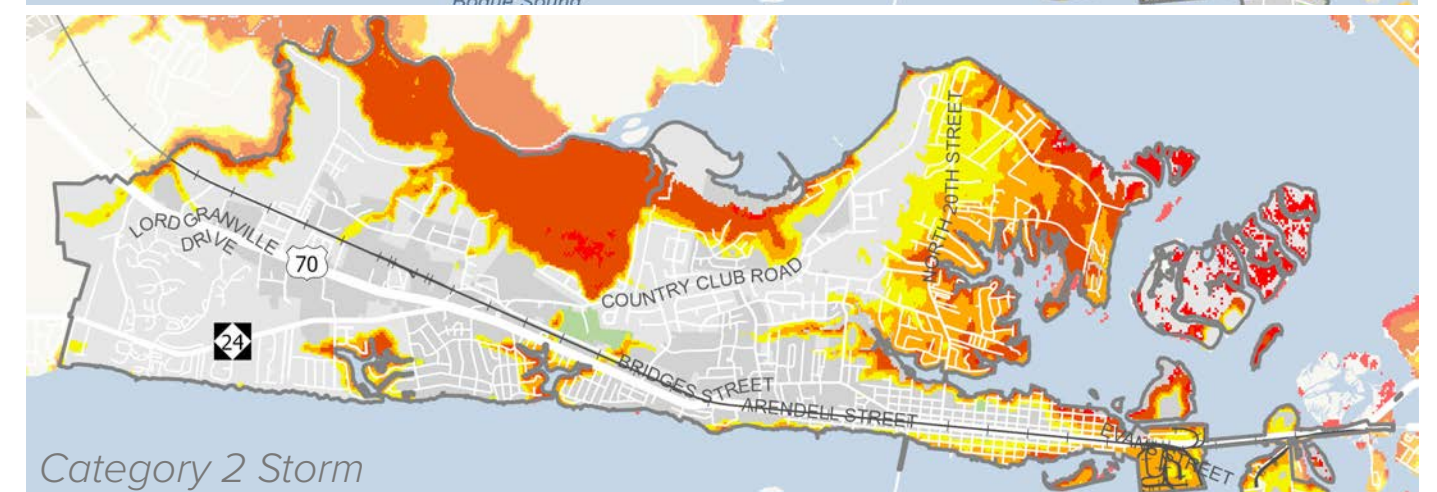
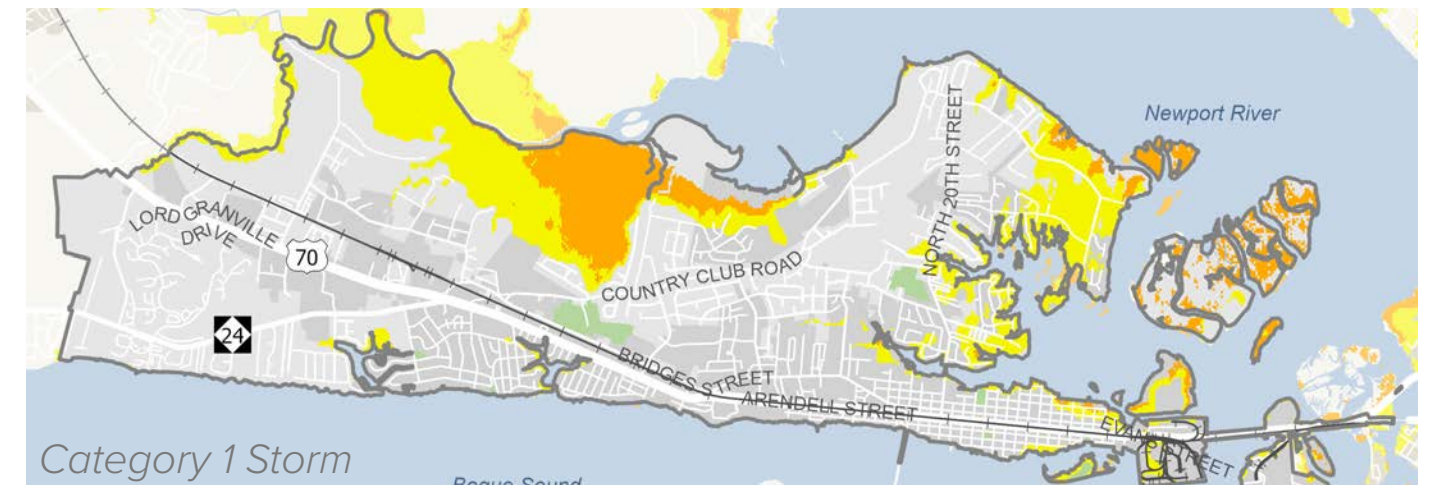


## Storm Surge Hazard Maps

The National Storm Surge Hazard Maps are created by NOAA to evaluate flooding vulnerability as the result of storm surge. The maps are created from the SLOSH (Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges from Hurricanes) MOMs (Maximum of Maximums) model which represent the near worst case scenario of flooding under ideal storm conditions for each category. During a Category 1 Hurricane, low lying areas in Morehead City are projected to experience up to 6 feet of storm surge. During a Category 2 Hurricane, areas within Morehead City experience up to 12 feet of storm surge. During a Category 5 Hurricane, almost all of Morehead City is projected to experience storm surge with the maximum storm surge approximately 21 feet.

**Legend**

- Less than 3 ft
- 3 - 6 ft
- 6 - 9 ft
- 9 - 12 ft
- 12 - 15 ft
- 15 - 18 ft
- 18 - 21 ft



Source: NOAA





## Water Quality

The Town of Morehead City is in the White Oak River Basin, meaning any activity on the land or in the water of that basin area directly impacts the water quality of the White Oak River. Within that basin, the Town is located within three small hydrological units which are boundaries established by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to allow for the assessment of localized conditions and impacts, in regards to water quality. As our most vital resource, the protection of our waters is imperative to the health and wellness of the community.

### Surface Water

Surface waters within North Carolina are designated with a primary classification by the Division of Water Resources (DWR). Surface waters within Morehead City contain the following classifications as shown on the map:

- C (aquatic life, secondary contact recreation, fresh water), SW (swamp waters)
- SA (market shellfishing, tidal salt water)
- HQW (high quality waters)
- SB (primary contact recreation, tidal salt water)
- SC (aquatic life, secondary contact recreation, tidal salt water).

Several surface waters within Morehead City are designated as High Quality Waters (HQW) including Bogue Sound, Calico Creek, Crab Point Bay, Newport River, Spooner's Creek, and Willis Creek. These supplemental classifications are intended to protect waters that have been rated excellent based on biological and physical/chemical characteristics.

### Surface Water Classifications



### 303(d) Impaired Waters

The 303d list of impaired and threatened waters includes all stream/river segments and lakes where pollution has exceeded the water quality standards set forth by the Clean Water Act. Areas of impaired or partially impaired waters near Town include portions of:

- Bogue Sound
- Calico Creek
- Crab Point Bay
- Newport River
- Spooner's Creek
- Willis Creek

### Shellfishing Areas

The North Carolina coast is divided into Growing Areas used to determine which portions of the coast are suitable for shellfish harvest. The growing areas around Morehead City are labeled as E2, E3, and E4. The following areas around Morehead City are permanently closed to shellfishing because of pollution:

- 303(d) Impaired Waters as listed above
- Bogue Sound (around Sugarloaf Island)
- Brandywine Bay Marina
- Calico Bay
- Newport River (around Radio Island and north of Town)
- Peletier Creek

Source: NCDEQ



## Pollution

Pollution is usually recognized from two source types, point and non-point. While both are harmful, non-point is more difficult to trace and mitigate. The Core Land Use Plan indicated that fecal coliform bacterial contamination impaired surrounding waters, likely due to seasonal populations that exceeded the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant. Published in August 2022, the Newport River Watershed Protection Plan catalogs an analysis of area soils, infiltration, closures, water quality, bacteria and turbidity sampling, stormwater, land use changes, and runoff, and makes recommendations for preserving and protecting the quality of our watersheds.

Runoff is a major source of non-point pollution. Due to increased rainfall and changing land use, runoff has increased by 11.5% between 1985 and 2020 in the Newport River watershed. In Morehead City, Calico Bay and nearby waters are listed as a watershed of concern via bacteria sampling.

*While incompatible development has not directly resulted in the loss of natural resources in Morehead City, unregulated growth and development can have cumulative and lasting negative effects on the environment.*





# SECTION 3

## VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

### Introduction

Conversations during the creation of The Morehead City Plan 2032 pointed to the need for the Town to continue to think carefully about how it attracts and absorbs new growth, whether households, restaurants, shops, or jobs. The community dialogue also indicated a strong desire to create positive change through the year 2032 and beyond. Creating a vision and establishing guiding principles is an important step that should not be overlooked. For Morehead City, like most communities, the opportunity to set forth a vision rooted in such a broad and comprehensive engagement effort does not happen often. This section spotlights the early touchpoints with the community and how the input offered guidance to the creation of The Morehead City Plan 2032.

### Engagement Phases

Community engagement occurred in three phases that aligned with the overall planning process.

1 March 2022 to June 2022	2 July 2022 to November 2022	3 Dec 2022 to April 2023
<div>ENVISION</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Educate participants on the plan's purpose and process</li><li>Collect input on community vision and needs</li></ul></div>	<div>PLAN</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Confirm what we have learned in the first phase of the project</li><li>Collect input on the Land Use Strategy</li></ul></div>	<div>FINALIZE</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Present key elements of the Comprehensive Plan</li><li>Collect final input on priorities before writing the report</li></ul></div>
3/10/22 Steering Committee #1	6/21/22 Planning Board	12/6/22 - 12/13/22 Digital Engagement
5/3/22 - 5/5/22 Six Stakeholder Focus Groups	7/12/22 City Council	12/6/22 Steering Committee #5
5/5/22 Public Workshop	7/21/22 Steering Committee #3	1/17/23 Planning Board
5/6/22 Steering Committee #2	8/23/22 Stakeholder & Public Open Houses	2/14/23 City Council
5/20/22 WCHS Event	9/29/22 Steering Committee #4	2/21/23 Parks & Recreation Committee
4/12/22 - 6/19/22 Digital Engagement	10/18/22 Parks & Recreation Committee	Spring/Summer State Review, Local Adoption, & Certification



# Community Voices | Phase 1 Engagement

During the initial phase of The Morehead City Plan 2032 engagement process, the community visited the project website, attended meetings, and completed surveys to identify their wants and needs for the Town. They identified community assets to leverage and suggested ways to make Morehead City a better place in which to live, work, play, and invest. The initial phase of engagement contributed to the creation of the vision and planning principles presented in this section as the Guiding Framework.

## Events

ENVISION   March 2022 to June 2022					
3/10/22	5/3/22 - 5/5/22	5/5/22	5/6/22	5/20/22	4/12/22 - 6/19/22
Steering Committee #1	Stakeholder Focus Groups	Public Workshop	Steering Committee #2	WCHS Event	Digital Engagement

## By The Numbers\* Project Website



## Meetings, Workshops, and Surveys



\*Through phase 1

## Key Takeaways

- Embrace the Town's culture and history
- Protect the small-town feel
- Create a defining identity for Morehead City
- Invest in the arts
- Recognize natural resources as an asset and liability
- Be intentional about growth decisions
- Seek solutions for attainable housing
- Create a safe and multimodal transportation network







# Guiding Framework

The Morehead City Plan 2032 includes a Town-wide vision and supporting planning principles as well as specific objectives for each of the Neighborhood Planning Areas.

## Vision

The Vision reflects what we value in Morehead City. It's how we describe our Town to ourselves, our neighbors in the region, and beyond. The Vision sets up the Planning Principles to guide Morehead City through 2032 and further into the future.

*Morehead City embodies small Town coastal living as a welcoming place for all. Our Town seeks a future that is forward looking, fiscally responsible, thoughtfully designed, and sustainable for future generations.*

## Planning Principles

The **PLANNING PRINCIPLES** come from the many conversations and detailed input collected during the initial phase of The Morehead City Plan 2032. These principles blend the unique strengths and opportunities in Morehead City and represent characteristics experienced by all residents, visitors, and community stakeholders. As comprehensive statements, the principles offer guidance toward achieving the Town's community vision. They also provide a way to organize the **PRIORITY OBJECTIVES** for the seven Neighborhood Planning Areas.

### Grow With Purpose

Morehead City will be thoughtful about where we grow and how that growth looks as we preserve what matters most and anticipate emerging trends.

### Enrich Our Culture

Morehead City will honor and celebrate its history and unique way of life as it supports a thriving arts and culture scene.

### Move With Ease

Morehead City will pursue a connected and multimodal transportation system that makes it safer, easier, and more enjoyable to travel to and around the Town.

The **VISION** reflects community values based on the many conversations and touchpoints from the first phase of engagement.

The **PLANNING PRINCIPLES** offer broad goals that further define the Morehead City community's desired future.

The **PRIORITY OBJECTIVES** for the seven Neighborhood Planning Areas respond to the Vision and relate to the Planning Principles.

### Cultivate New Opportunities

Morehead City will seek ways to provide access to opportunities for everyone through a balanced, year-round economy including housing options tailored to local needs.

### Live With Water

Morehead City will protect its natural areas and shorelines because the coastal environment and our maritime traditions are the Town's greatest asset.

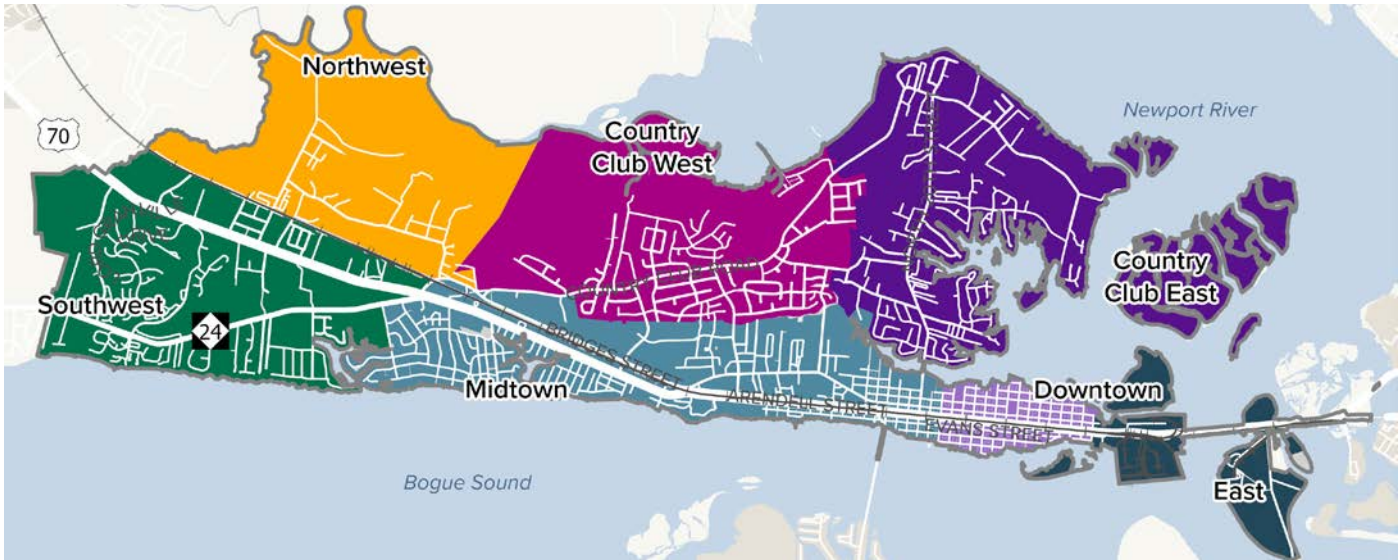




# Neighborhood Planning Areas and Objectives

The Neighborhood Planning Areas from the 2007 Morehead City Core Land Use Plan have been refined for The Morehead City Plan 2032. This change reflects community feedback and the need to identify specific strategies for the Town’s unique subareas. The Morehead City Plan 2032 includes seven planning areas: Downtown, Midtown, Southwest, Northwest, Country Club West, Country Club East, and East. The guiding framework includes objectives for each of these areas organized under the banners of what the Town should **Preserve** and what ideas it should **Promote**. These objectives informed the future land use strategy for each neighborhood planning area as described in Section 4.

Neighborhood Planning Areas



Downtown	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Historic facades</li><li>• Historic buildings</li><li>• Public boardwalk</li><li>• Public access to water via streets/alleys</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing local businesses</li><li>• Single-family appeal of surrounding residences</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New local businesses</li><li>• Ease of getting around</li><li>• Active street fronts</li><li>• Mixed-use development</li><li>• Street trees</li><li>• Landscaping</li><li>• Arts scene</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walkability and bikeability</li><li>• Convenient parking</li><li>• Stormwater solutions</li><li>• Events for locals</li></ul>
Midtown	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing neighborhoods and residential character</li><li>• Mixture of housing types</li><li>• Viability of institutional uses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commercial uses along Arendell and Bridges Streets</li><li>• Public access to water via streets/alleys</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redevelopment potential</li><li>• Revitalization of US 70</li><li>• Walkability and bikeability</li><li>• Mixed-use development</li><li>• Access to parks and the water</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth in business, governmental, educational, and medical uses</li><li>• New life for abandoned properties</li><li>• Mobility along US 70</li></ul>

Southwest	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing neighborhoods and residential character</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traffic flow along US 70</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More creative people-focused uses</li><li>• Mixed-use development where appropriate</li><li>• Multifamily housing where appropriate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New connections between US 70 and NC 24</li><li>• Ways to contribute to the Town's workforce housing supply</li></ul>
Northwest	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Estuaries as an asset to be enjoyed</li><li>• Viability of industrial uses</li><li>• Buffers between residential and non-residential uses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land for long-term development</li><li>• Environmentally sensitive land</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved traffic flow</li><li>• Access to parks and the water</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ways to contribute to the Town's workforce housing supply</li></ul>
Country Club West	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing neighborhoods and residential character</li><li>• Water views</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmentally sensitive land</li><li>• Land for long-term development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connectivity to local amenities</li><li>• Conservation-based neighborhood design</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ways to contribute to the Town's workforce housing supply</li></ul>
Country Club East	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing neighborhoods</li><li>• Water views</li><li>• Vacant land for long-term development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmentally sensitive land</li><li>• Existing neighborhoods and residential character</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More affordable housing options</li><li>• Improvements along 20th Street</li><li>• Conservation-based neighborhood design</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neighborhood-oriented uses</li><li>• Connectivity to local amenities</li></ul>
East	Preserve...		Promote...	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Operations at the port</li><li>• Environmentally sensitive land</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to the Newport River Pier and Boat Ramp</li><li>• Buffers between residential and non-residential uses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considerations for stormwater as development occurs</li><li>• Economic growth related to port activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local desires in the design of the Newport River Bridge replacement</li></ul>



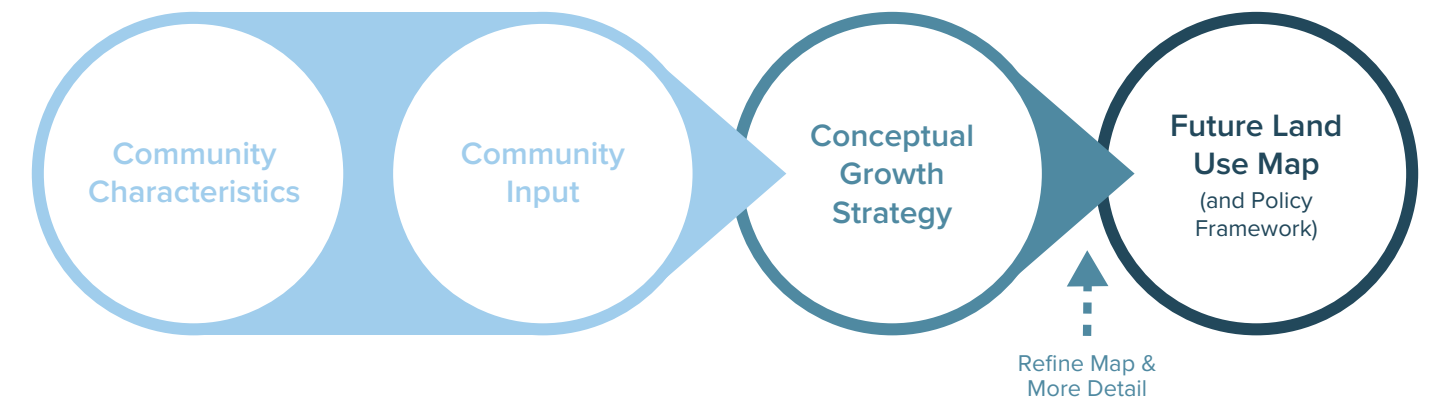
# SECTION 4

## LAND USE STRATEGY

### Introduction

Morehead City's land use strategy positions the Town to direct future growth in a way that makes a positive contribution to the sense of place for those who live, work, and visit Morehead City. This section highlights the path to a new Future Land Use Map for the Town, including a Conceptual Growth Strategy that visualizes the interpretation of existing and projected conditions as well as input received from the community. The Future Land Use Map serves as a foundation for local decision-making and a guide for property owners, developers, and other community stakeholders focused on the future of Morehead City.

### *Path to the Future Land Use Map*



### Implementing the Future Land Use Strategy

The future land use strategy is formalized as the Town's official Future Land Use Map, which illustrates Morehead City's preferred mix of land uses and serves as a guide for staff and elected officials as growth and development decisions are made. The Future Land Use Map is applied using the Town's **Unified Development Ordinance**, or UDO. The UDO regulates land uses by applying zoning districts to specific parcels and describing detailed rules for the development of individual parcels. The future land use strategy will be implemented over time through the land development process.

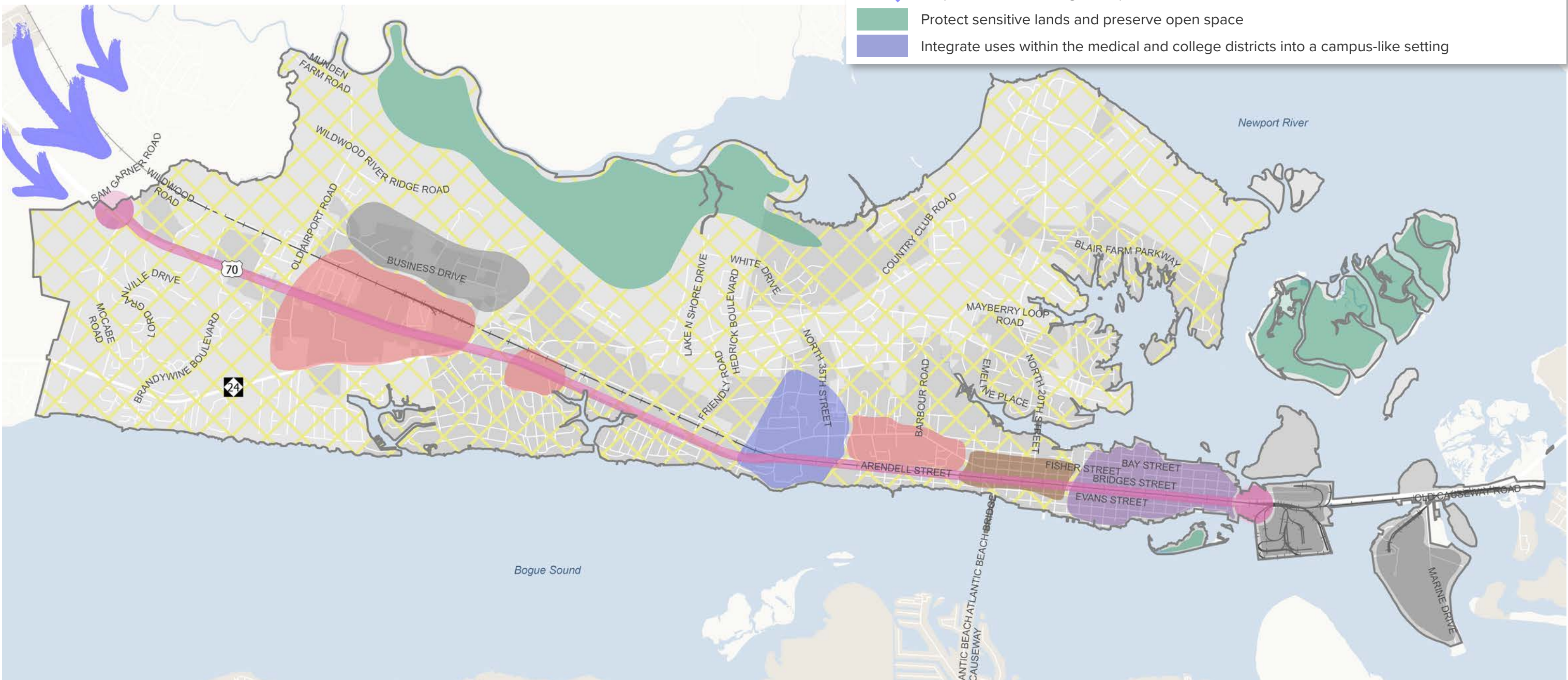
*Effective implementation of the future land use strategy will require the Town to update its UDO and zoning map to better reflect the new Future Land Use Map.*



# Conceptual Growth Strategy

The Morehead City Plan 2032 includes a Conceptual Growth Strategy as one step toward creating the Future Land Use Map for the Town. By design, this map is not as detailed as the more parcel-specific Future Land Use Map. The Conceptual Growth Strategy reflects information from the Community Characteristics Report, significant input from community engagement activities, and the Vision and Planning Principles. The Conceptual Growth Strategy informs the Future Land Use Map and the Town’s approach to land use and development in the years to come.

- Create a more vibrant Downtown with tailored approaches to and better connections between the Downtown core and surrounding residential areas
- Provide a transition to Downtown from the west
- Enhance the US 70 Corridor and create gateways to Morehead City
- Revitalize existing commercial centers with infill development and redevelopment that improves aesthetics and increases the long-term economic viability of the sites
- Improve the character of Morehead City’s residential areas by preserving stable neighborhoods, revitalizing neighborhoods in decline, and integrating new neighborhoods as they are built
- Preserve and enhance the port and existing industrial areas
- Prepare for increased growth pressures that will come with future I-42
- Protect sensitive lands and preserve open space
- Integrate uses within the medical and college districts into a campus-like setting



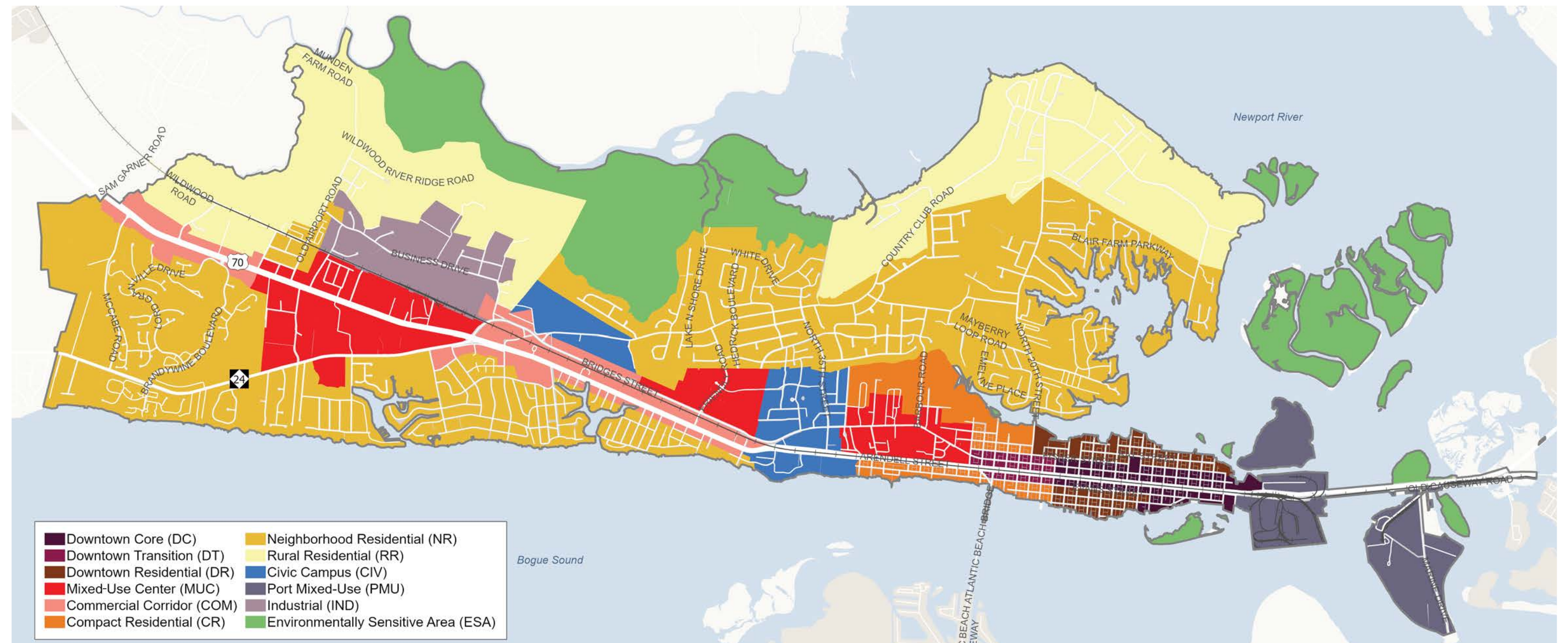




# Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map shows where and how Morehead City is expected to grow in the future. It does so by expressing the suggested land use and desired character with more specific details using 12 future land use classifications. These classifications are defined on the pages that follow.

<b>DOWNTOWN CORE</b> <b>1%</b> <b>120 Acres</b> DC	<b>DOWNTOWN TRANSITION</b> <b>&lt;1%</b> <b>39 Acres</b> DT	<b>DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL</b> <b>1%</b> <b>130 Acres</b> DR	<b>MIXED-USE CENTER</b> <b>7%</b> <b>723 Acres</b> MUC	<b>COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR</b> <b>4%</b> <b>365 Acres</b> COM	<b>COMPACT RESIDENTIAL</b> <b>3%</b> <b>267 Acres</b> CR	<b>NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL</b> <b>36%</b> <b>3,632 Acres</b> NR	<b>RURAL RESIDENTIAL</b> <b>21%</b> <b>2,147 Acres</b> RR
				<b>CIVIC CAMPUS</b> <b>3%</b> <b>345 Acres</b> CIV	<b>PORT MIXED-USE</b> <b>4%</b> <b>441 Acres</b> PMU	<b>INDUSTRIAL</b> <b>3%</b> <b>338 Acres</b> IND	<b>ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREA</b> <b>17%</b> <b>1,669 Acres</b> ESA







# Future Land Use Classifications

The entirety of the Town of Morehead City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction is assigned a future land use classification. Each classification provides a general guide for future development and redevelopment decisions. The resulting map emphasizes existing patterns in some areas and encourages changes to land use or development patterns elsewhere.

- **DOWNTOWN**  
Downtown Core  
Downtown Transition  
Downtown Residential
- **CENTERS AND CORRIDORS**  
Mixed-Use Center  
Commercial Corridor  
Civic Campus  
Port Mixed-Use  
Industrial
- **RESIDENTIAL**  
Compact Residential  
Neighborhood Residential  
Rural Residential
- **CONSERVATION LAND**  
Environmentally Sensitive Area

## Summary Table

The future land use classifications are described in detail on the pages that follow. Each classification includes a description and intent as well as slider bars that indicate the relative appropriateness of different land uses and a variety of characteristics. These details are summarized in the table below.

Future Land Use Classifications		Area		Most Appropriate Land Uses	Characteristics							
		Acres	%		Use Mix	Compact-ness	Use Type	Residential Type	SF Res. Lot Size	Setbacks	Transport-ation	Open Space
Downtown Core	DC	120	1%	Office, Commercial, Multifamily, Institutional	Mixed Use	More Compact	Mostly Non-Residential	MF	Smaller Lots	Smaller Setbacks	Multimodal	Formal Parks
Downtown Transition	DT	39	< 1%	Office, Commercial, Multifamily, Institutional	Mixed Use	More Compact	Balanced	MF	Smaller Lots	Smaller Setbacks	Multimodal	Formal Parks
Downtown Residential	DR	130	1%	Single-Family Residential, Institutional	Balanced	Balanced	Mostly Residential	Mostly SF	Smaller Lots	Smaller Setbacks	Multimodal	Formal Parks
Mixed-Use Center	MUC	723	7%	Office, Commercial, Multifamily, Institutional	Mixed Use	More Compact	Balanced	MF		Smaller Setbacks	Multimodal	Formal Parks
Commercial Corridor	COM	365	4%	Commercial, Office	Mostly Single Use	More Compact	Non-Residential			Balanced	Automobile Focused	Formal Parks
Compact Residential	CR	267	3%	Single-Family Residential, Multifamily, Institutional	Mostly Single Use	More Compact	Mostly Residential	Mostly MF	Smaller Lots	Smaller Setbacks	Balanced	Mostly Formal Parks
Neighborhood Residential	NR	3,632	36%	Single-Family Residential, Multifamily, Institutional	Single Use	Balanced	Mostly Residential	SF	Average Lots	Average Setbacks	Automobile Focused	Mostly Natural Areas
Rural Residential	RR	2,147	21%	Single-Family Residential, Institutional	Single Use	Less Compact	Residential	SF	Larger Lots	Larger Setbacks	Automobile Focused	Mostly Natural Areas
Civic Campus	CIV	345	3%	Institutional, Office, Multifamily	Mostly Mixed Use	More Compact	Mostly Non-Residential	MF		Smaller Setbacks	Balanced	Mostly Formal Parks
Port Mixed-Use	PMU	490	5%	Industrial	Mostly Mixed Use	More Compact	Mostly Non-Residential	Mostly MF		Varies	Automobile Focused	Balanced
Industrial	IND	338	3%	Industrial	Single Use		Non-Residential			Larger Setbacks	Automobile Focused	Mostly Natural Areas
Environmentally Sensitive Area	ESA	1,620	16%	Open Space								Natural Areas

## Summary Table (Continued)

SF = Single-Family  
MF = Multifamily





# Downtown Core

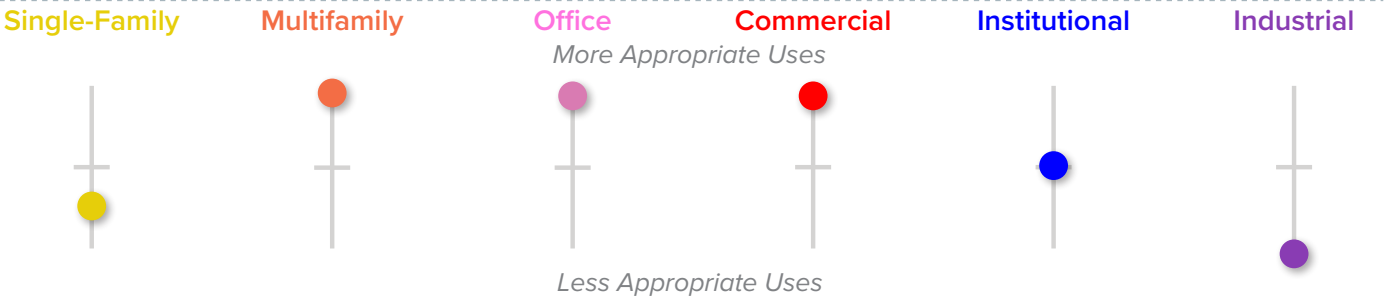
## Description

The Downtown Core is the heart of Morehead City. Stretching from 18th to 4th Street, this area between Fisher and Evans Streets and the working waterfront emphasizes a mix of commercial, employment, entertainment, and residential uses in single- or mixed-use buildings. Urban design should account for new and adaptively reused buildings that frame multimodal streets.

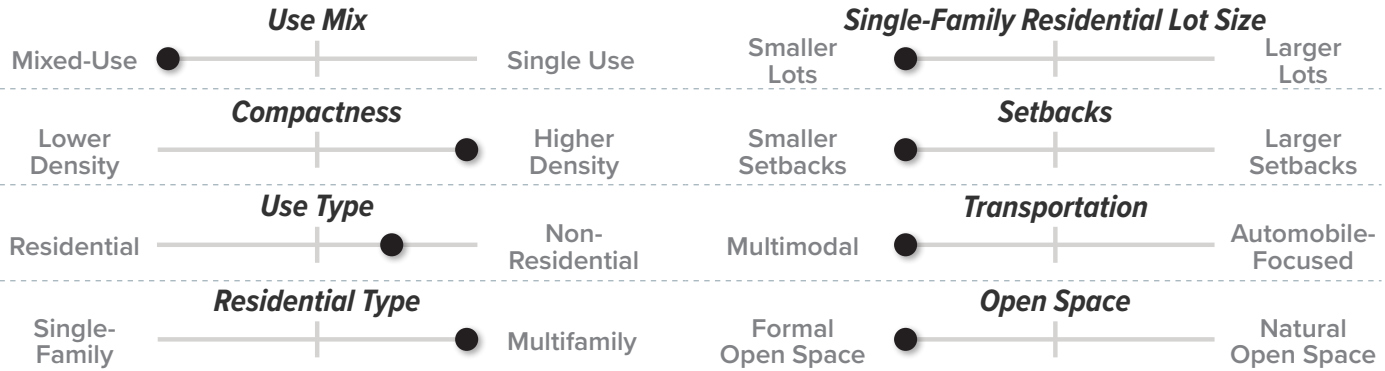
## Intent

- Promote infill development on vacant lots and enhance the character of Downtown through adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Continue to activate Arendell Street while improving connections to and transitions with nearby neighborhoods, especially across Arendell Street and the railroad.
- Provide adequate and convenient parking by encouraging shared parking and making strategic investments in parking facilities.
- Employ best practices for urban design with buildings that orient to the street.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Downtown Transition

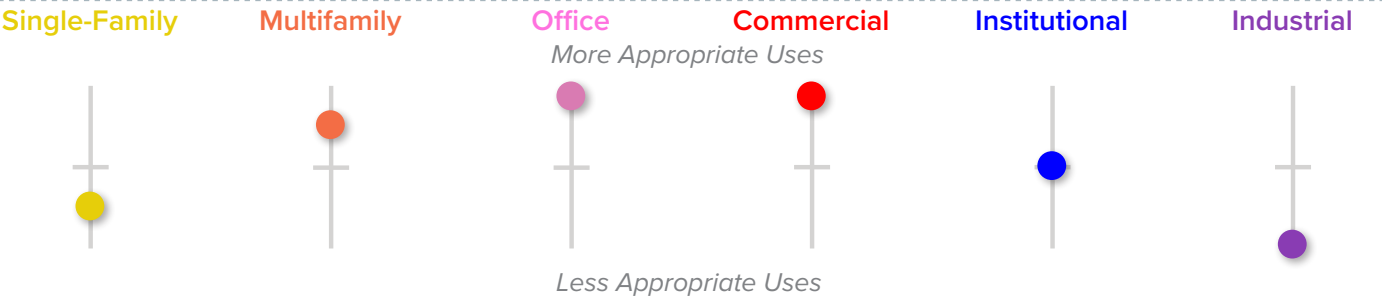
## Description

This classification draws attention to the transition entering the Downtown Core from the west. Bridging the Midtown and the Downtown planning areas, this classification supports small-scale, locally serving commercial, office, and service uses that integrate with established nearby residential uses. As redevelopment occurs, design cues should indicate a gradual arrival to Downtown.

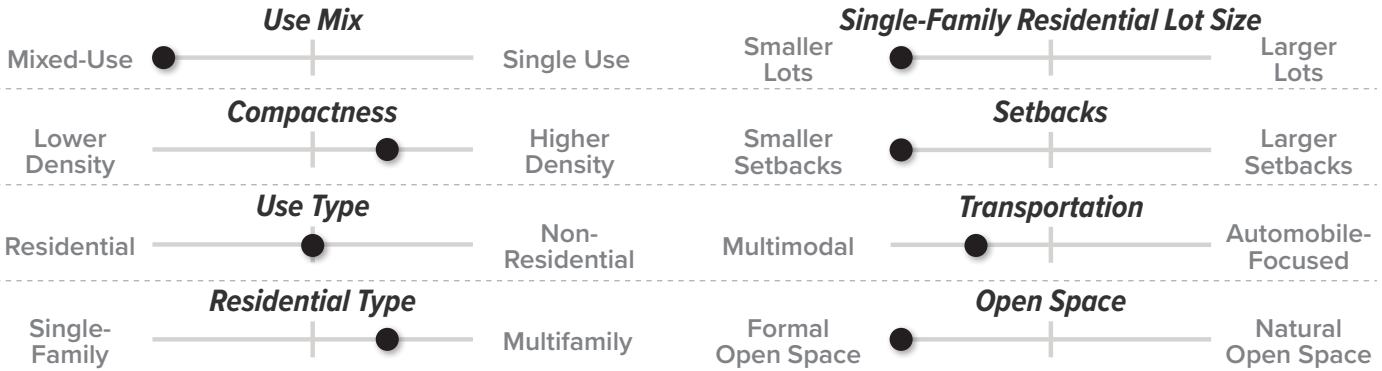
## Intent

- Manage the shift to the slower-paced Downtown Core with development that orients to the street, places less emphasis on parking lots, adds architectural detail, and prioritizes the pedestrian experience.
- Improve connections between Downtown and points west.
- Buffer residential areas to the north and south from the commercial and mixed-use core along Arendell and Bridges Streets.
- Promote pedestrian-oriented development while also accommodating cars, particularly to the Atlantic Beach Bridge.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics







# Downtown Residential

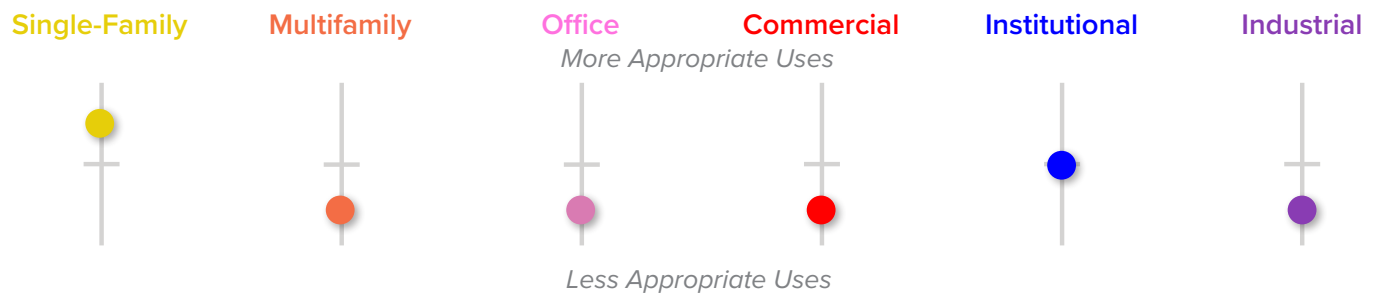
## Description

This area surrounding the Downtown Core is anchored by Morehead City's oldest residences. The Downtown Residential classification includes primarily single-family residences with a mix of house sizes and styles on small lots. The streets form a grid of small blocks lined with sidewalks and street trees. The block structure and types of land uses are expected to remain relatively unchanged within this classification.

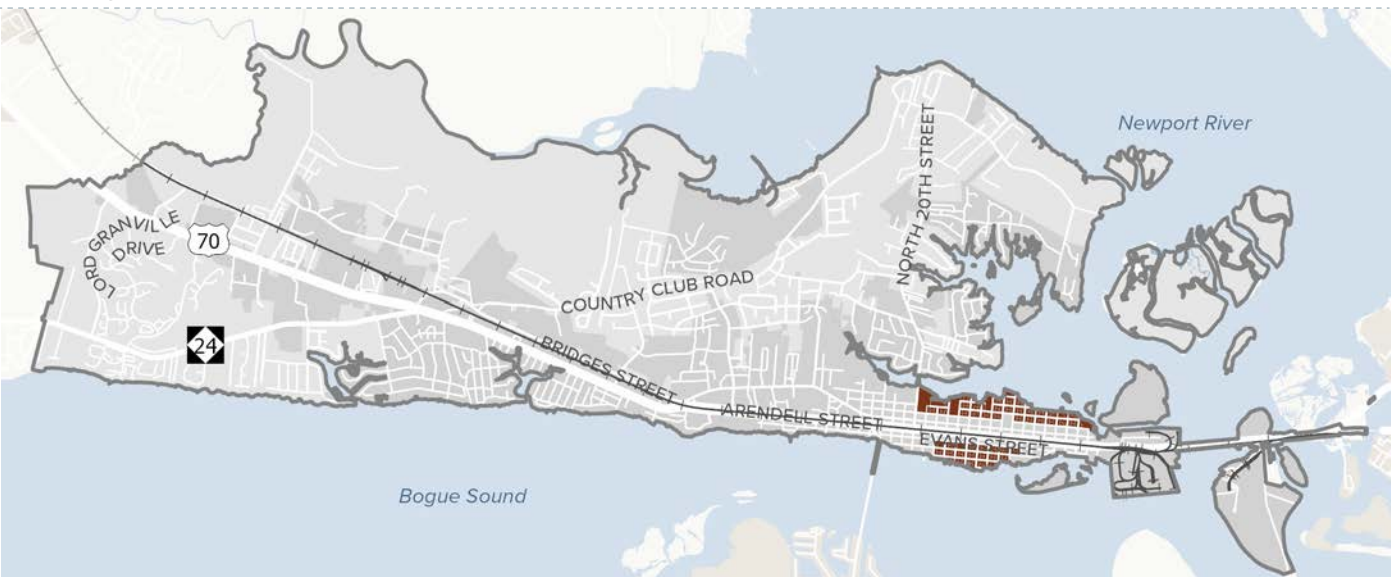
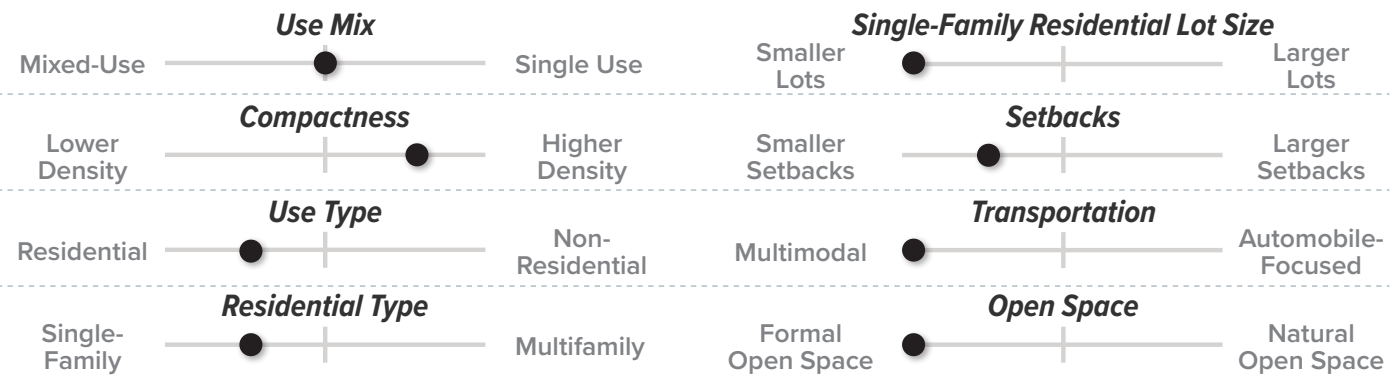
## Intent

- Preserve and enhance the City's oldest, most historic residences.
- Encourage walkability around and to the Downtown area.
- Promote housing that accentuates the natural features and topography of the natural landscape.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Mixed-Use Center

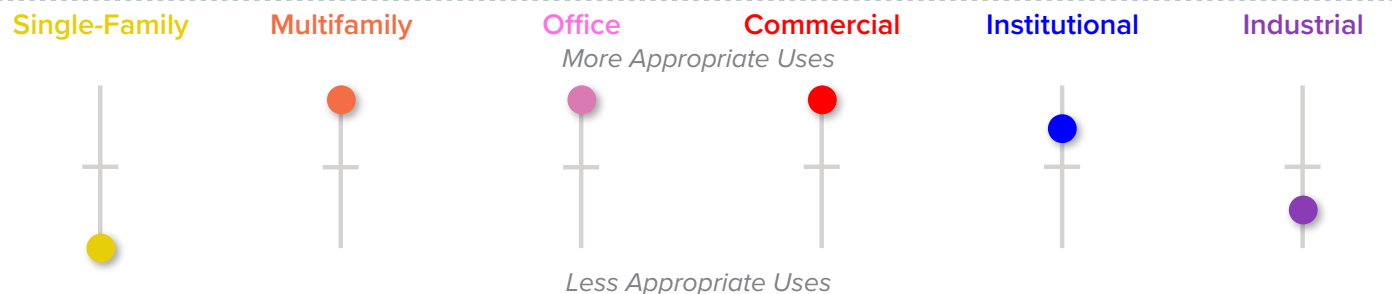
## Description

Mixed-Use Centers blend residential, commercial, office, and retail spaces to create vibrant, livable areas along the Town's primary transportation corridors. These activity centers should continue to be a place to acquire basic needs including food, goods, services, and healthcare. Existing commercial centers should be retrofitted as mixed-use activity hubs over time with higher density residential uses and walkable designs.

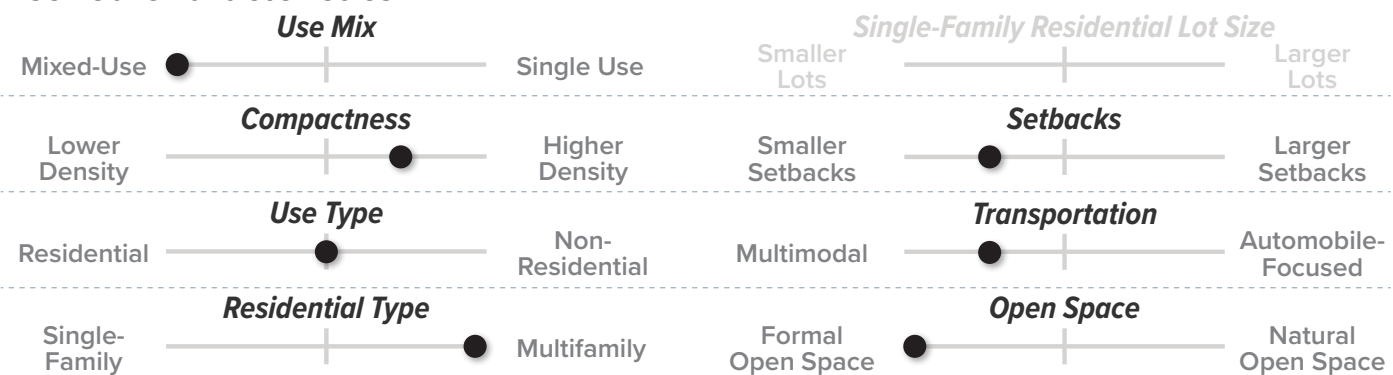
## Intent

- Provide shared parking space opportunities to maximize growth opportunities for businesses.
- Continue to blend a variety of uses, concentrated along US-70 and Arendell Street.
- Encourage infill development of underused or vacant lots.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics







# Commercial Corridor

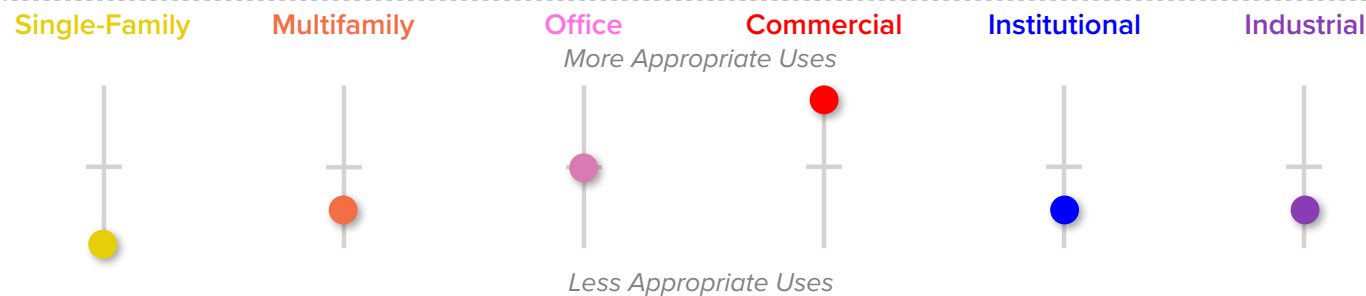
## Description

Commercial Corridors enhance existing commercial development along US 70 and Bridges Street Extension. However, these areas should move away from traditional strip-style development and focus on improving economic viability and visual design. Access management solutions, including limiting the number of driveways on main corridors, should be considered as a part of future development.

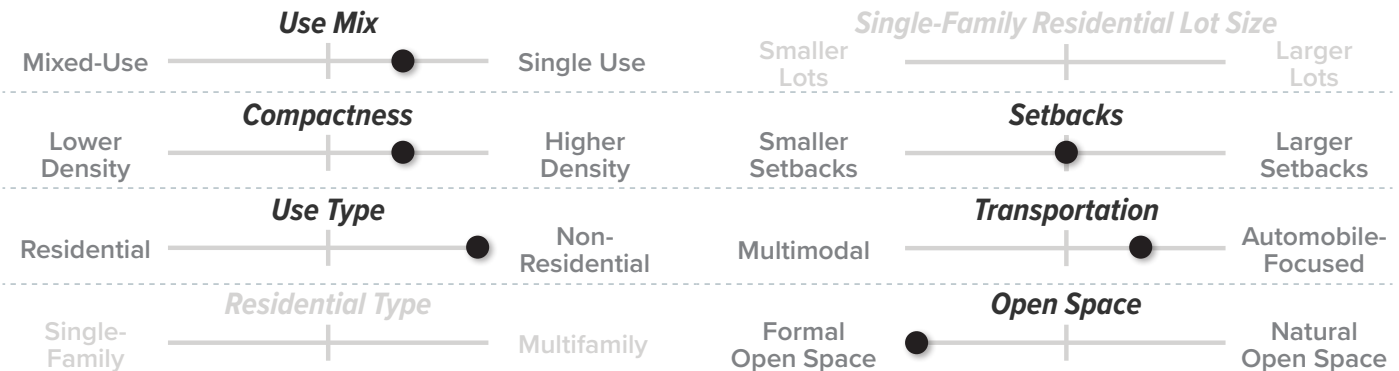
## Intent

- Enhance the look and functionality of corridors while still supporting the commercial needs of the Town.
- Encourage multimodal connectivity to surrounding mixed-use areas.
- Create more intense development near key intersections.
- Limit traditional big box development as part of new construction while encouraging the redevelopment of existing big box developments.
- Cultivate local businesses.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Compact Residential

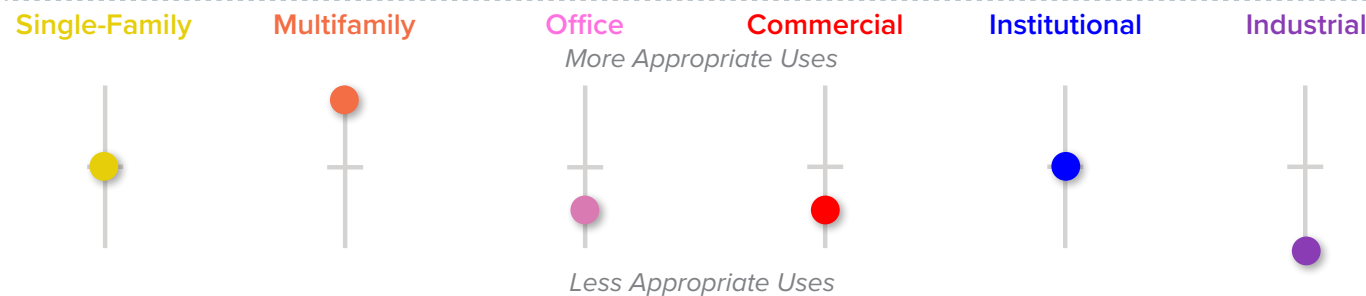
## Description

Compact Residential features higher-density housing primarily located in areas with existing multifamily units and some single-family residences. This classification encourages a variety of housing that differs in design, size, and prices. Compact Residential areas should be pedestrian-friendly, well-connected and integrated with community amenities to act as a transition between the Downtown area and lower-density residential areas.

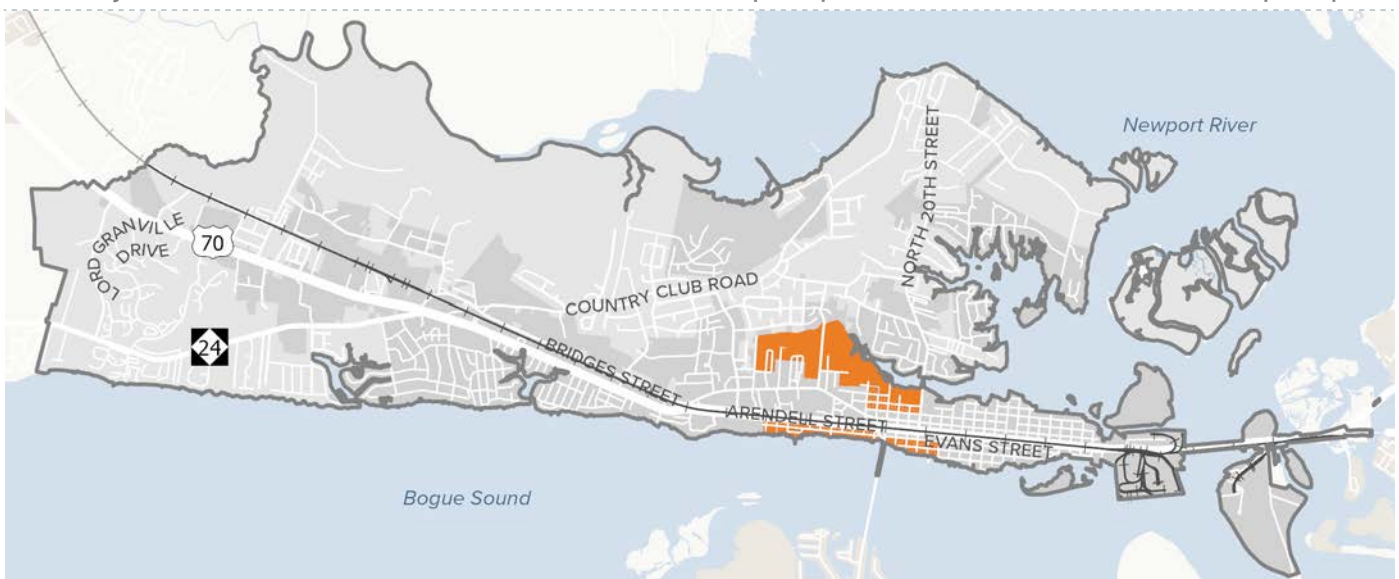
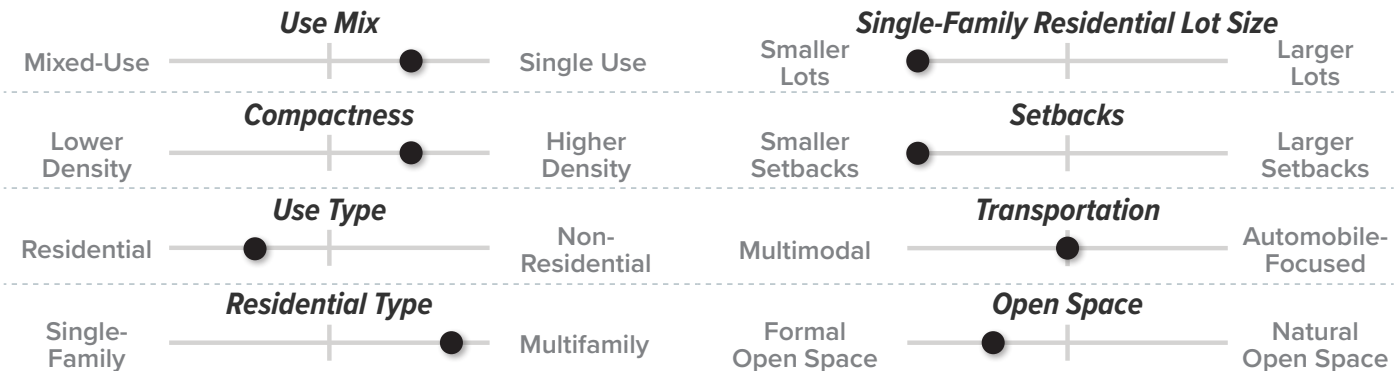
## Intent

- Maintain the unique character of established neighborhoods while supporting appropriate housing type diversification and density increases.
- Distinguish between multifamily types and density through distinct zoning districts, with more intense development near commercial centers or major corridors.
- Allow for diversification of housing, including affordable housing and multifamily units.
- Provide vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between developments.
- Improve streetscape features such as consistent sidewalks, lighting, and street trees.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics







# Neighborhood Residential

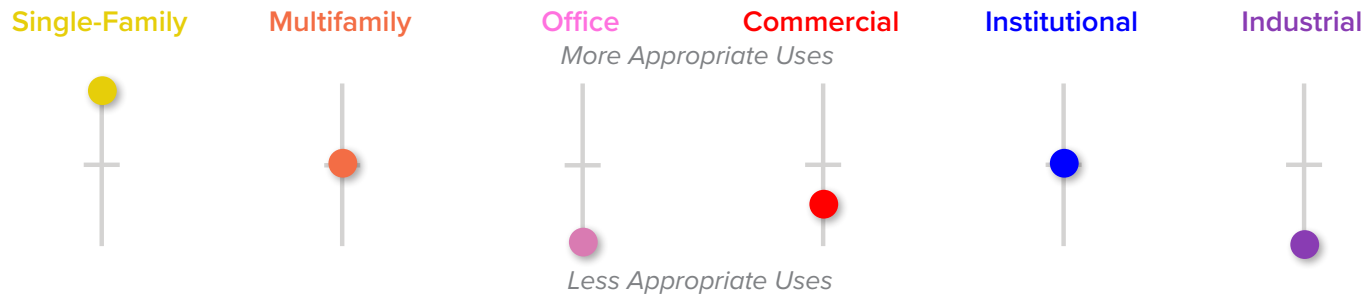
## Description

Neighborhood Residential accounts for more traditional lower-density, suburban-style areas primarily served by sewer. While existing neighborhoods have uniform housing types and can be preserved, new development in this area should promote a mixture of housing variety including size, price, and design where appropriate. Neighborhood-scale commercial is appropriate.

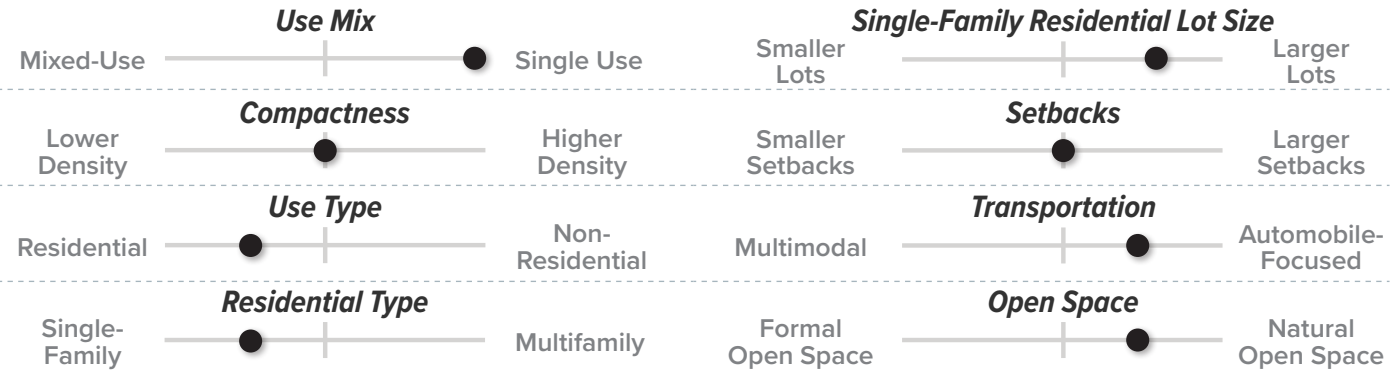
## Intent

- Enhance existing lower-density residential areas with improved connectivity for multimodal options to and from community amenities.
- Help diversify the housing stock to support a variety of community needs.
- Act as a transition to rural or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Promote innovative neighborhood design to limit land consumption and preserve natural areas.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Rural Residential

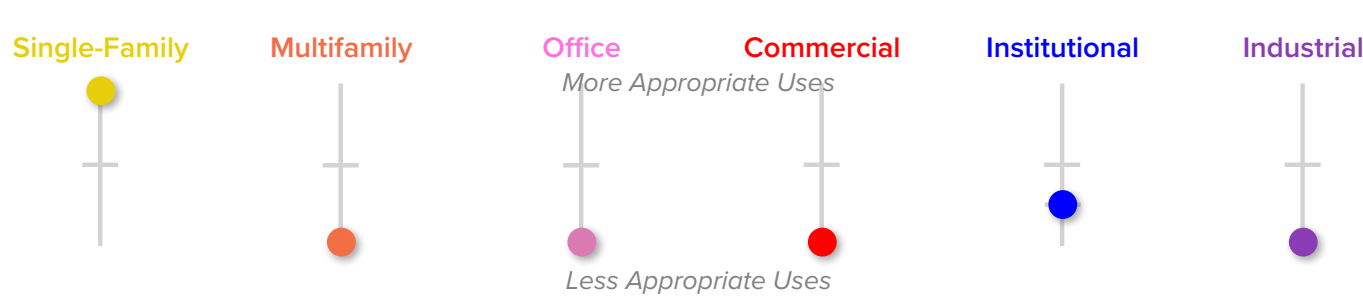
## Description

The Rural Residential area primarily includes large lot residential and open space. Limited access to community infrastructure like utilities and publicly owned streets contribute to the rural character of the area. To minimize environmental impact and disruption of the unique landscape, clustering development to set aside areas for permanent open space might be more desirable especially in areas bordering Environmentally Sensitive Areas. In general, Rural Residential areas will not be served by municipal waste water.

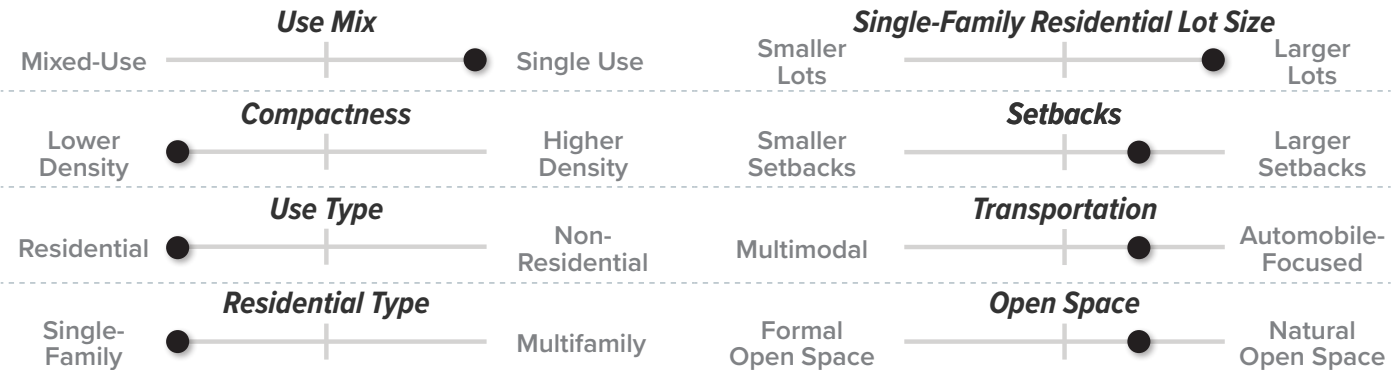
## Intent

- Limit large-scale subdivisions to maintain the existing rural character.
- Encourage the conservation of the natural landscape especially along areas surrounding environmentally sensitive areas.
- Designate areas as permanent open spaces or conversation areas.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics







# Civic Campus

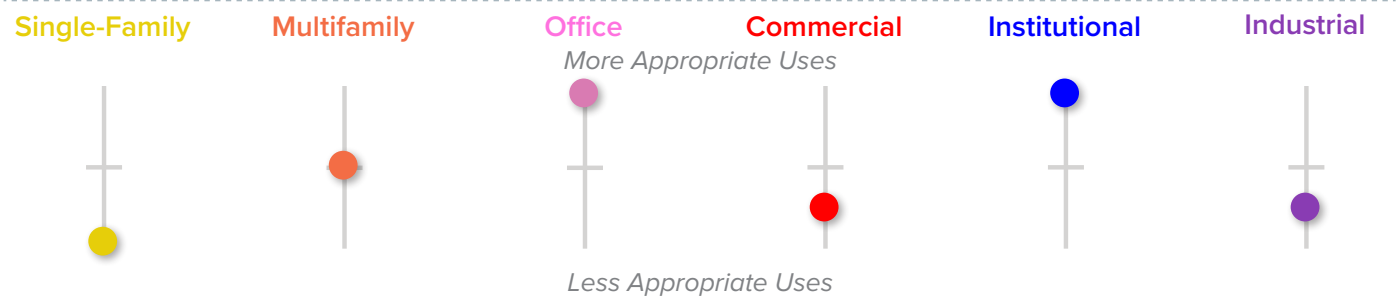
## Description

Civic Campus represents existing locations in Morehead City with medical facilities and educational institutions. These areas include public and private education facilities such as West Carteret High School and Carteret Community College as well as large-scale medical facilities associated with Carteret Health Care and the adjacent medical park. The future development within and adjacent to this area should promote connectivity for all ages and abilities.

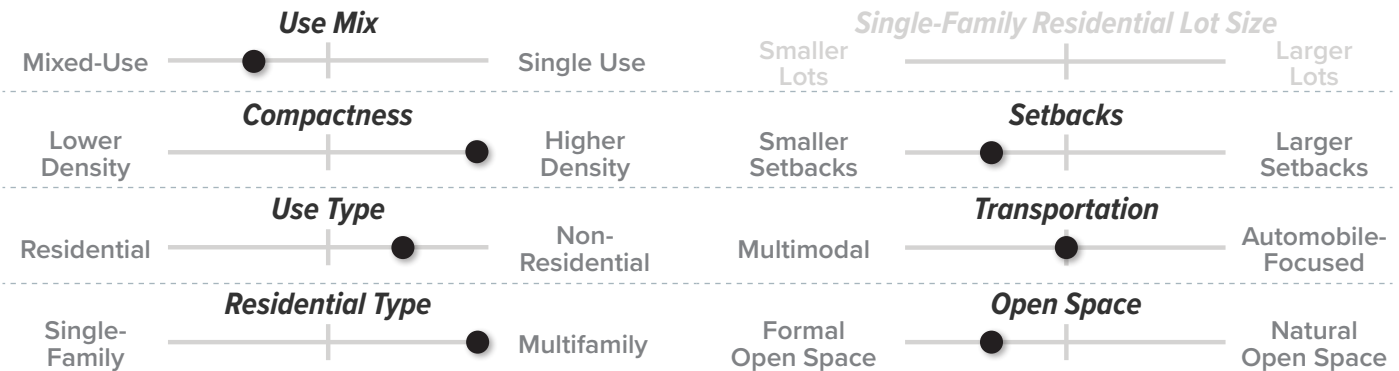
## Intent

- Integrate various civic and institutional uses into a campus-like setting.
- Leverage dedicated areas to promote job growth.
- Leverage educational institutions to promote research opportunities.
- Employ best practices for urban design with buildings that orient to the street.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Port Mixed-Use

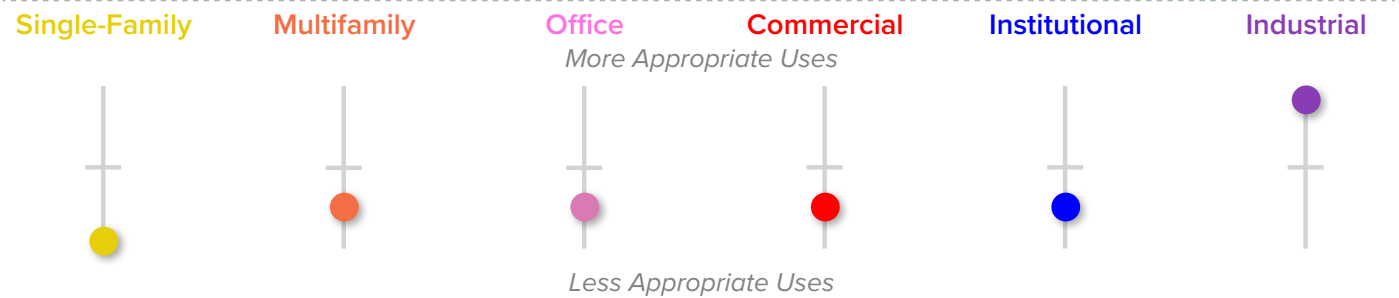
## Description

The Port Mixed-Use area leverages existing infrastructure that supports the Port of Morehead City as well as surrounding properties that may be suitable for multiple land uses, including industrial, commercial, and high density residential. As an economic driver of the local economy, the Port provides employment opportunities within close proximity to Downtown. With Radio Island as a prominent recreational destination, providing multimodal transportation on the island will bolster active and passive recreation opportunities.

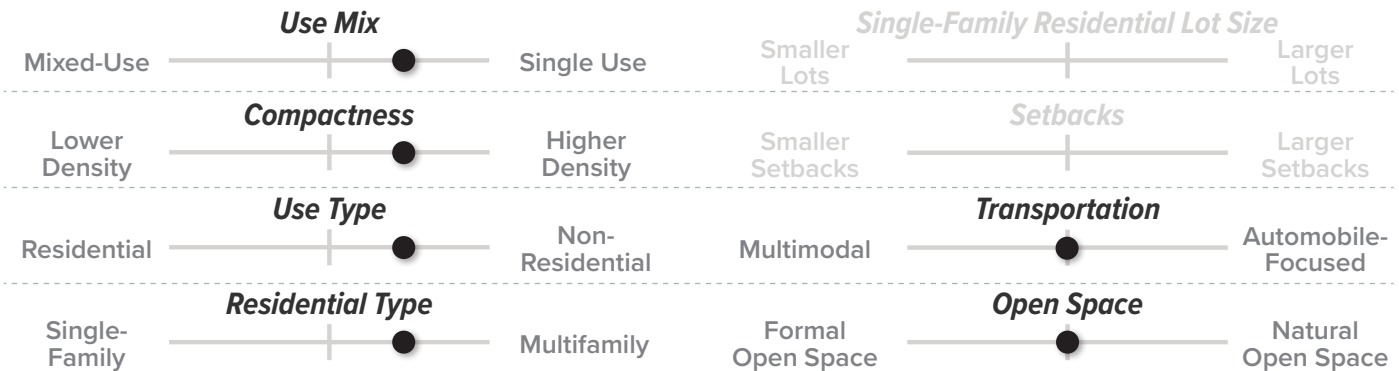
## Intent

- Accommodate the anticipated growth and development of the Port.
- Leverage existing industry to support economic growth in surrounding areas.
- Cultivate a hub of industry around the Port of Morehead City.
- Accommodate future growth and development based on market demand and the provision of necessary support infrastructure (particularly public water and sewer utilities).
- Preserve sensitive environmental features.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics







# Industrial

## Description

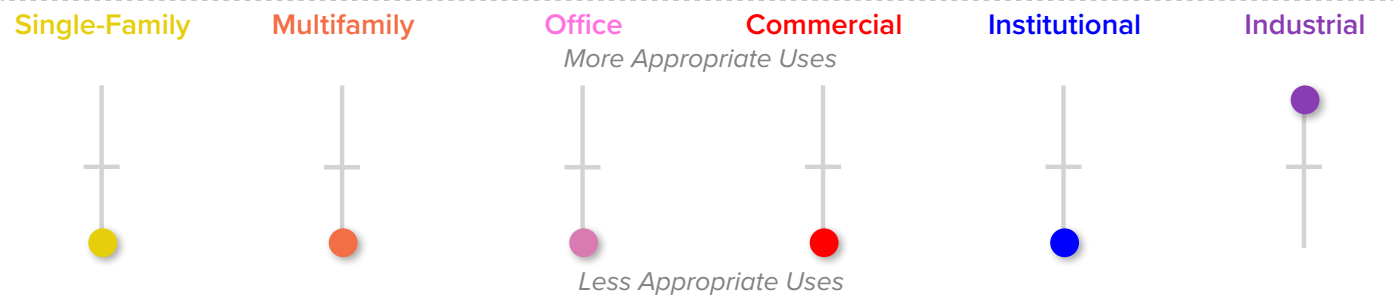
The Industrial area is the existing concentration of industrial uses that supports manufacturing and shipping. This area is located along Business Drive in the western portion of the Town. Due to the proximity of the active rail corridor, this location is equipped to move goods through a variety of modes. Typically, industrial areas leverage transitional areas and natural landscapes to buffer adjacent neighborhood areas. Due to the location of the Industrial area, industrial sites should be clustered to be sensitive to surrounding residential areas. Lighter industrial uses

in the Mixed-Use Center classification can transition into the more heavily concentrated industrial area.

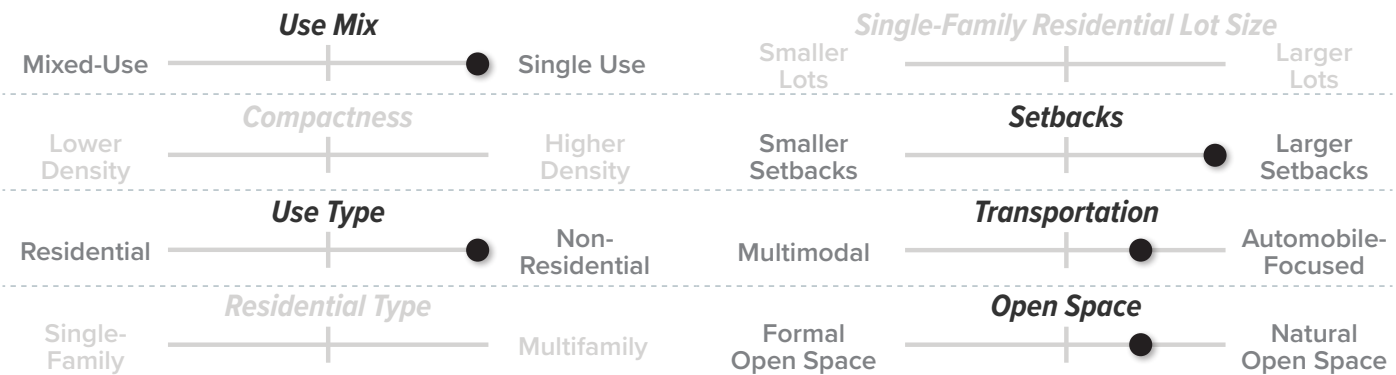
## Intent

- Preserve existing industrial sites to maintain and expand employment opportunities.
- Cluster industrial uses to maximize existing infrastructure.
- Create employment hub to supply jobs in the Town.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics



# Environmentally Sensitive Area

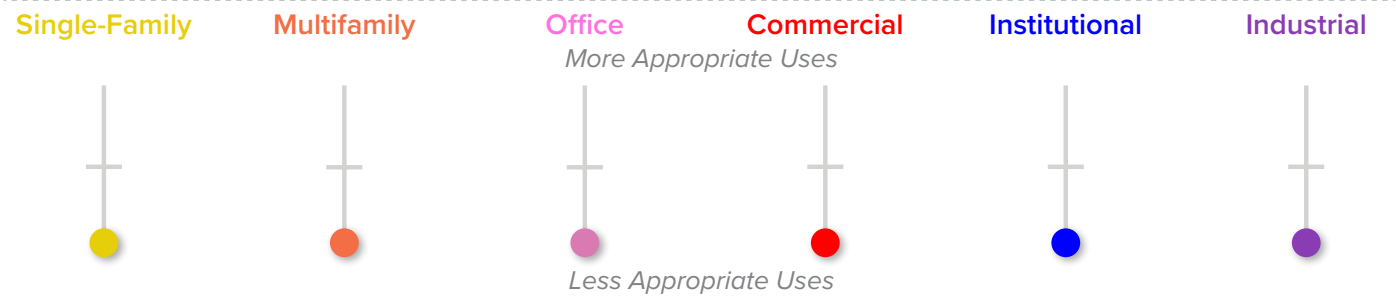
## Description

The Environmentally Sensitive Areas reflect the currently protected open spaces, wetlands, and/or flood zones. The Town should continue to protect these areas to preserve the existing landscape and habitats that make Morehead City unique. The Environmentally Sensitive Areas reflect areas where soil suitability creates development constraints. Additionally, the flood and storm hazard potential make development unsuitable and unattractive. The environmental stewardship of this area should continue to be a high priority for the Town.

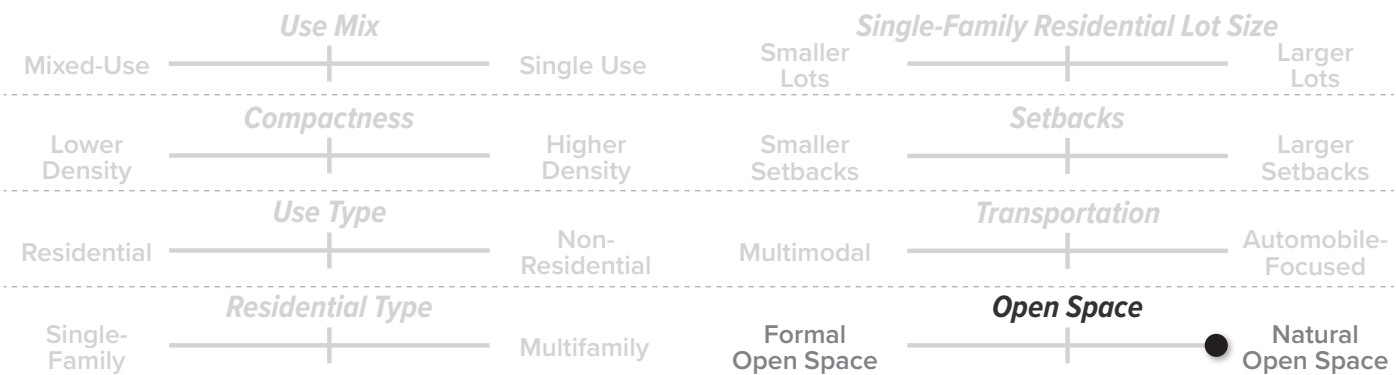
## Intent

- Encourage the passive use of the Town's natural features to connect the community to the environment.
- Preserve the environmentally sensitive lands within wetland areas.
- Limit development to protect the water quality of surface water in Morehead City.

## Appropriate Land Uses



## Desired Characteristics





# Community Voices | Phase 2 Engagement

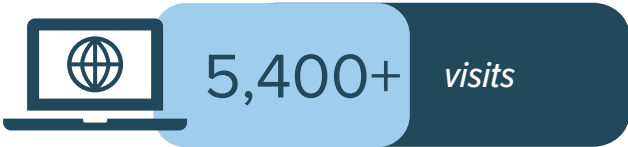
During the second phase of The Morehead City Plan 2032 engagement process, the community reconvened in-person and virtually to see the influence of their participation during the earlier round of engagement activities. Participants were asked to react to the vision and planning principles, provide guidance on the Neighborhood Planning Areas, and review the draft future land use map. In general, participants confirmed that the plan was heading in the right direction even as they requested more detail on how that land use strategy would affect other elements such as transportation.

## Events

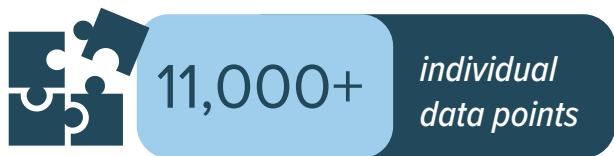
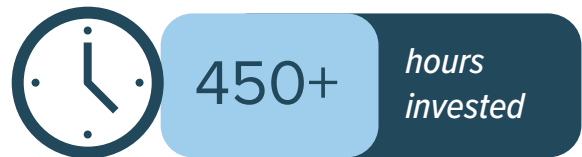
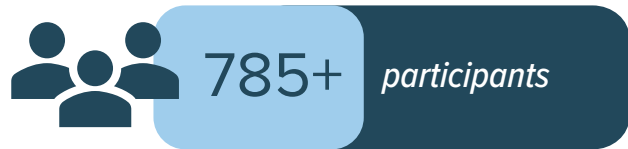
PLAN I July 2022 to November 2022					
6/21/22	7/12/22	7/21/22	8/23/22	9/29/22	10/18/22
Planning Board	City Council	Steering Committee #3	Stakeholder & Public Open Houses	Steering Committee #4	Parks & Recreation Committee

## By The Numbers\*

Project Website



## Meetings, Workshops, and Surveys

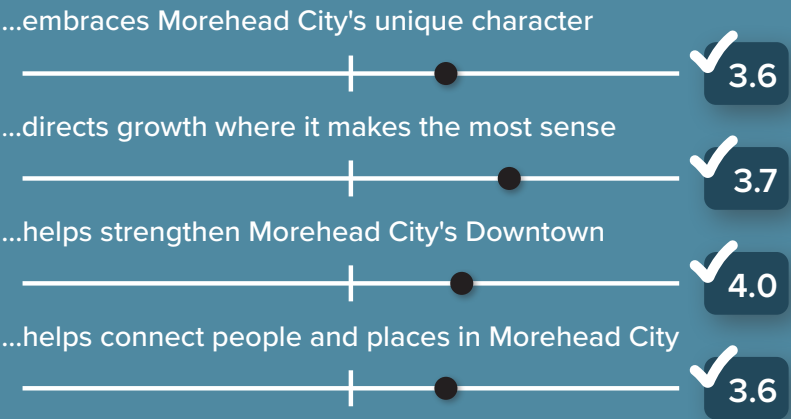


\*Through phase 2

## Key Takeaways

- Most people said the Future Land Use Strategy was heading in the right direction
- The plan needs to include more information on how the strategy achieves the objectives
- The plan needs detail on how to incorporate alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking, transit), especially connecting Downtown to other parts of Morehead City

On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), people agreed that the Future Land Use Strategy:





# SECTION 5

## POLICY FRAMEWORK



### Introduction

The Policy Framework provides additional guidance in support of the Future Land Use Strategy. The section is organized using the five Planning Principles that emerged from community conversations during The Morehead City Plan 2032 process. The principles—which summarize characteristics experienced by the Town’s residents, visitors, and community stakeholders—are uniquely suited to guide future decisions related to growth and development.



Together with the Implementation plan in Section 6, the Policy Framework responds to both the requirements set forth in Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes and CAMA. While land use planning is the foundational purpose of both sets of requirements, it is understood that other supportive policy areas (such as transportation, economic development, and housing) are necessary to achieve the Town’s stated vision for the year 2032 and beyond. This section details the policies that support the vision of The Morehead City Plan 2032 and each of the planning principles.

**Policies** are statements of intent and protocol that the Town of Morehead City should enact to support the community vision. Policies are described in this chapter.

**Actions** are more specific projects or programs that support policies or contribute independently to Morehead City’s goals. Actions are detailed in Section 6.



#### A CLOSER LOOK

Policies with this icon feature more information within this section. Look out for the magnifying glass for a deeper dive into how those policies can take shape!





# Grow With Purpose

Morehead City will be thoughtful about where we grow and how that growth looks as we preserve what matters most and anticipate emerging trends.

## Objective GWP-1: To manage land as a limited resource with special attention to the compatibility of development and redevelopment.

POLICIES	GWP 1.1	Support growth and development that carries forward the characteristics expressed in the Future Land Use Classifications and shown spatially on the Future Land Use Map.
	GWP 1.2	Promote land use and development activities that balance economic development needs with the protection of natural resources and fragile environments.
	GWP 1.3	Consider inclusionary zoning practices and programs that encourage a share of new housing development to include units priced for workforce housing.
	GWP 1.4	Promote infill and mixed-use development to encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands.
	GWP 1.5	Encourage voluntary annexations as a way to promote orderly city growth and utility extensions.
	GWP 1.6	Encourage denser and more pedestrian-friendly development along primary transportation corridors (US-70/Arendell Street, Bridges Street), accompanied by investments in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.

## Objective GWP-2: To consider adequate public facilities when making decisions about development and redevelopment.

POLICIES	GWP 2.1	Prioritize infrastructure investments that promote development patterns in line with the Future Land Use Map.
	GWP 2.2	Focus multifamily and higher density residential development at appropriate density ranges and in locations with adequate water and sewer services and a sufficient street system.
	GWP 2.3	Consider infrastructure expansion and financing based on a rolling ten-year horizon for capital investments.
	GWP 2.4	Encourage low impact development techniques and work with NCDOT to fund green street design to minimize the demand on stormwater infrastructure.

## Objective GWP-3: To promote strong neighborhoods and a diversity of housing types and price points.

POLICIES	GWP 3.1	Pursue a housing strategy that supports the characteristics (lot size, set backs, etc.) of the Future Land Use Map Classifications.	
	GWP 3.2	Encourage housing types that address missing middle housing—such as duplexes, townhomes, and clustered housing—that increase the Town’s housing supply, promote walkable neighborhoods, help diversify the housing stock, support locally-serving retail, and complement existing neighborhoods.	
	GWP 3.3	Consider whether accessory dwelling units can provide increased residential density that is appropriate to their surrounding contexts.	
	GWP 3.4	Consider the applicability of creative tools (e.g., density bonuses, land banking, reduced permit fees, rehabilitation grants, etc.) to address housing affordability.	
	GWP 3.5	Encourage development projects that include a diversity of housing types and price points.	
	GWP 3.6	Use zoning tools to encourage the delivery of needed housing price points.	
	GWP 3.7	Consider policies that encourage developers to set aside a percentage of units/homes in new developments as affordable.	
	GWP 3.8	Encourage, assist, and partner with non-profit organizations that construct, manage, and provide affordable housing and related services.	

## Objective GWP-4: To encourage enhanced community design.

POLICIES	GWP 4.1	Encourage locally appropriate density and mix of uses that avoids creation of excess impervious surfaces and maintains the historic development pattern and character.
	GWP 4.2	Consider development standards related to design and architecture for commercial and multifamily development that support Morehead City's character and encourage a sense of place.
	GWP 4.3	Continue to support programs like the Matching Facade Improvement Grant Program to strengthen the identity and attractiveness of local businesses.



### Typical Housing Characteristics

Nine of the Land Use Classifications encourage residential uses (Industrial, Commercial Corridor, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas do not). However, residential uses look different within each Classification, and can vary on type (single-family or multifamily), lot size, character, and other factors. Expected revisions to the UDO should clarify these residential characteristics.



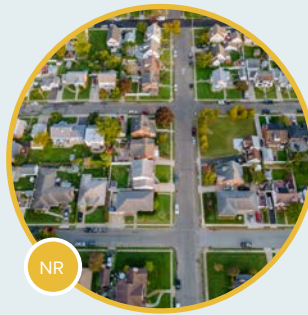
**Mixed-Use Center**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mixed Use
- Land Use Type**  
Balanced
- Residential Type**  
Only Multifamily
- Single-family Lot Size**  
N/A



**Compact Residential**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mostly Single Use
- Land Use Type**  
Mostly Residential
- Residential Type**  
Balanced
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Smaller Lots



**Neighborhood Residential**

- Land Use Mix**  
Single Use
- Land Use Type**  
Only Residential
- Residential Type**  
Mostly Single-Family
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Small to Medium Lots



**Downtown Core**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mixed Use
- Land Use Type**  
Mostly Non-Residential
- Residential Type**  
Mostly Multifamily
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Smaller Lots



**Downtown Transition**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mixed Use
- Land Use Type**  
Balanced
- Residential Type**  
Mostly Multifamily
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Smaller Lots



**Downtown Residential**

- Land Use Mix**  
Balanced
- Land Use Type**  
Mostly Residential
- Residential Type**  
Mostly Single-Family
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Smaller Lots



**Rural Residential**

- Land Use Mix**  
Single Use
- Land Use Type**  
Only Residential
- Residential Type**  
Only Single-family
- Single-family Lot Size**  
Larger Lots



**Civic Campus**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mixed Use
- Land Use Type**  
Mostly Non-Residential
- Residential Type**  
Only Multifamily
- Single-family Lot Size**  
N/A



**Port Mixed-Use**

- Land Use Mix**  
Mixed Use
- Land Use Type**  
Mostly Non-Residential
- Residential Type**  
Only Multifamily
- Single-family Lot Size**  
N/A





# Move With Ease

*Morehead City will pursue a connected and multimodal transportation system that makes it safer, easier, and more enjoyable to travel to and around the Town.*

**Objective MWE-1: To plan for all modes of transportation, emphasizing increased bicycle and pedestrian accessibility and safety.**

POLICIES	MWE 1.1	Require neighborhood street connections between residential developments through stub outs while minimizing negative impacts of cut-through traffic using traffic calming measures. Evaluate the need for new collector streets as subdivision plans are submitted for approval.
	MWE 1.2	Ensure all new pedestrian facilities are ADA compliant and develop a plan to transition existing facilities to compliance.
	MWE 1.3	Encourage the installation of pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths along thoroughfares and city streets in accordance with the Morehead City Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Morehead City Pedestrian Plan.
	MWE 1.4	Work with NCDOT on installing landscaping improvements, pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths from the Crystal Coast Visitor Center to the commercial areas located to the west.
	MWE 1.5	Coordinate with the NCDOT Rail Division to prioritize the safe crossing of the railroad tracks along US 70/Arendell Street.
	MWE 1.6	Evaluate ways to supplement existing transit. Potential options include a privately-funded microtransit service; coordinating with NCRR to use the railroad for a seasonal or event trolley; exploring bus service as an extension of (and proof of concept for) Amtrak service in the future. Ensure transit/microtransit options provide a viable and accessible alternative to reach waterfront and recreation opportunities.
	MWE 1.7	Require new residential developments to construct ADA compliant sidewalks.

**Objective MWE-2: To continue to prioritize US 70 and the railroad as vital transportation corridors by improving the function of the network as a whole.**

POLICIES	MWE 2.1	Coordinate transportation decisions with neighboring municipalities and relevant agencies (Carteret County, Beaufort, Atlantic Beach, Newport, DERPO, NCDOT, NCRR, etc.).
	MWE 2.2	Cooperate with and assist the NCDOT, Norfolk-Southern Railroad, and NCRR in preserving US 70 and the railroad as a vital transportation corridor.
	MWE 2.3	Use transportation projects as opportunities to enhance the Town’s visual character through streetscaping and limit negative environmental consequences. Seek assistance from NCDOT and/or consultants.
	MWE 2.4	Consider a variety of traffic calming measures to reduce speeds and improve safety on Town-maintained roads.
	MWE 2.5	Prepare the transportation system for potential changes resulting from Future I-42 by prioritizing a sufficient east/west alternative (e.g., Bridges Street Extension) and north/south connectors from existing US 70/Arendell Street.
	MWE 2.6	Continue coordinating with NCDOT to identify roadway improvement priorities that improve the function and flow of traffic.
	MWE 2.7	Evaluate the long-term viability of re-establishing passenger rail service to Morehead City.

Section 6, the Action Plan, includes transportation projects as a complement to these policies.



## A CLOSER LOOK

### Microtransit At a Glance

Many conversations during the public process expressed support for more transit options in Morehead City. The Town likely could benefit from enhanced transit to complement the existing CCATS service. Given land use densities, development patterns, and potential ridership, enhanced transit in Morehead City likely can be best achieved using microtransit.

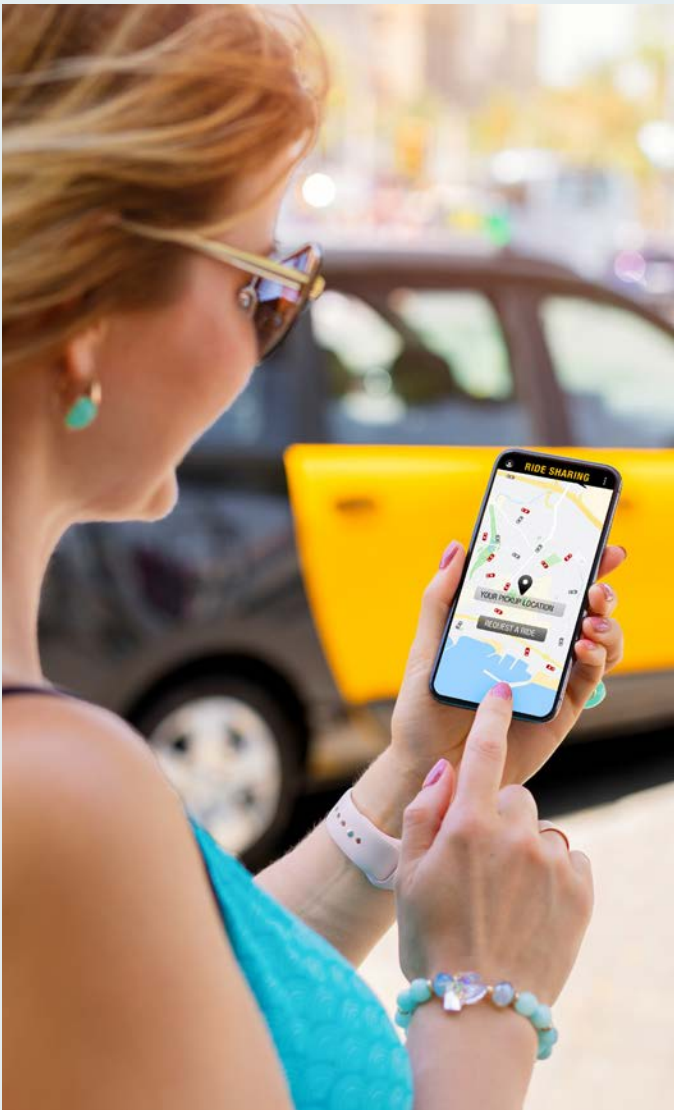
#### Microtransit

Microtransit is a small-scale public transportation service that offers flexible routes and on-demand scheduling. It operates similarly to other rideshare services where the user enters their current location and desired destination within the service area into an app. The vehicle type allows for a more expanded service area than a fixed route. Typical wait times for users can be customized with the vendor and balanced with available funding. The Town could conduct a microtransit pilot project to determine ideal operational characteristics of the service and evaluate how it relates to other travel modes in Morehead City.



#### Pilot Program

The Town could consider ways to launch a pilot program during peak season. In other places, similar pilot projects required minimal investment of local dollars because they were designed and executed by a private vendor that specializes in microtransit. The Town could work with a vendor to establish goals and performance measures to evaluate the success of the pilot program. These performance measures often include metrics such as ridership levels, wait times, and repeat customers. The vendor also could lead marketing efforts to bring awareness to the pilot program.







# Cultivate New Opportunities

Morehead City will seek ways to provide access to opportunities for everyone through a balanced, year-round economy including housing options tailored to local needs.

**Objective CNO-1: To align policy and partnership efforts across the Town in pursuit of economic opportunities that fit local needs and goals.**

POLICIES	CNO 1.1	Pursue ways to create a more prosperous and resilient local economy using different economic development methods and by leveraging the Town's Economic Development Opportunity Areas.	
	CNO 1.2	Coordinate with business and resident groups to balance tourism and economic investment with the needs of residents and local businesses.	
	CNO 1.3	Encourage the redevelopment and restoration of the Downtown Core as a retail, office, and professional services center of the community.	
	CNO 1.4	Encourage mixed-use development in Downtown Core and Downtown Transition areas with an emphasis on the adaptive reuse of buildings.	
	CNO 1.5	Retain land designated for industrial uses for industrial uses and minimize land use conflicts at the edge of industrial areas.	
	CNO 1.6	Provide ample public water access throughout Morehead City and ensure that commercial/ industrial uses on the working waterfront also have adequate water access.	
	CNO 1.7	Continue working in partnership with Downtown Morehead City Inc. and Main Street America to create grants for local businesses, program events, attract businesses, and otherwise support the development of Downtown.	
	CNO 1.8	Consider ways to support existing and new restaurants in the Downtown Core. Potential approaches could include encouraging outdoor dining through streetscape improvements and/or the creation of social district with relaxed alcohol restrictions.	
	CNO 1.9	Continue to host recurring events and seek out new events that are economic drivers for the Town, like the North Carolina Seafood Festival and Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament.	

**Objective CNO-2: To leverage and strengthen local job creation anchors.**

POLICIES	CNO 2.1	Pursue the expansion of services and job opportunities in education, research, and healthcare in partnership with Carteret Health Care and Carteret Community College.
	CNO 2.2	Partner with local and regional companies that can supply skilled jobs, train skilled workers in trades, and position the Town and region as a leader in addressing the supply chain crisis.
	CNO 2.3	Work with Carteret County Schools to offer training and pathways to skilled trade jobs to students. Consider programs that incentivize students to continue to work in Morehead City for an extended period of time.

**Objective CNO-3: To promote development and redevelopment of underdeveloped areas while preserving existing natural areas and residential communities.**

POLICIES	CNO 3.1	Encourage the redevelopment of strip malls, underutilized parking lots, and low density car-oriented commercial into denser, more walkable commercial or mixed-use districts.
	CNO 3.2	Encourage neighborhood-oriented commercial development where such uses are compatible with existing residential and/or located where future residential uses are encouraged and the street system is adequate to accommodate commercial vehicular traffic.
	CNO 3.3	Improve connections and transitions between intensive nonresidential uses and surrounding neighborhoods through consideration of type, scale, and density of uses.



## A CLOSER LOOK

### Economic Development Opportunities

While Morehead City has limited land available for development, existing development and local assets can be used to attract meaningful economic investment. The list below briefly showcases best practices for five types of economic development viable in Morehead City.

<b>DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION</b>	<b>MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>SUBURBAN RETROFIT</b>	<b>INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH</b>
Better positioning Downtown as a destination and economic engine	Creating new communities with live, work, shopping, and entertainment uses	Reimagining suburban commercial to be mixed-use development	Leveraging infrastructure and workforce to attract new businesses and investment	Working with major institutions to create new skilled jobs in the community

#### Downtown Revitalization

A lively Downtown with attractive and walkable streetscapes encourages people to come and spend money within the community.

- Provide a mix of uses such as shopping, restaurants, and entertainment so visitors have a variety of reasons to spend time and money.
- Include housing to help foster a live-work-play style environment and create a more permanent consumer base.
- Use events and tourism initiatives to help attract people to Downtown.
- Attract and support businesses with aid that make adaptive reuse and renovations of old buildings more viable, like Downtown Morehead City's existing Downtown Facade Improvement Program, funded by the Town.
- Apply for tax credits offered by the National Park Service (NPS) and North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (NCHPO) for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

#### Challenges

- Parking minimums and parking needs
- Zoning limitations
- Costs of adaptive reuse of historic buildings

#### Mixed-Use Development

Many of the same principles that make Downtown an attractive and lively community also apply to creating attractive mixed-use communities.

- Allow mixed-use development, whether vertical (different uses within the same building) or horizontal (different uses in adjacent buildings).
- Require site plans to be multimodal and safely accessible.
- Integrate a mix of uses so residents can access services and visitors have reasons to spend time and money.
- Encourage the placement of active uses like shops and restaurants at ground level to activate the street.

#### Challenges

- Parking minimums
- Zoning limitations

#### Suburban Retrofit

Between vacant units, parking lots, car-oriented outparcels, and unused land, suburban commercial often includes a lot of underutilized space. Concentrating new development to retrofit these spaces into mixed-use development can help preserve natural areas and residential communities.

- Modify big box and strip mall buildings to be more pedestrian friendly with uses and entrances engaging the street.
- Replace car-oriented outparcels (e.g., banks) along major roads over time with walkable street-oriented buildings (e.g., Main Streets).
- Set parking behind or beside buildings rather than in front. Repurpose large, underused parking lots and vacant land for new development.

#### Challenges

- Parking minimums
- Zoning limitations
- Accommodating existing commercial tenants





## Industrial Development

New industrial investment tends to cluster where other related companies have seen success and where they know the resources, workforce, and infrastructure can support their business' success.

- Leverage access to infrastructure like the railroad, US-70/Future I-42, and the Port.
- Ensure adequate water, sewer, and electric infrastructure.
- Work with partners in schools and the community college to build a workforce with the skills needed in the industries being sought out.
- Consider tax incentives to attract new companies, but ensure that the cost of such initiatives does not outweigh the economic benefit of the new development.

### Challenges

- Reaching a critical mass of supporting industry and trained workforce
- Providing incentives while balancing economic benefit
- Ensuring workforce and infrastructure supports new development

## Institutional Growth

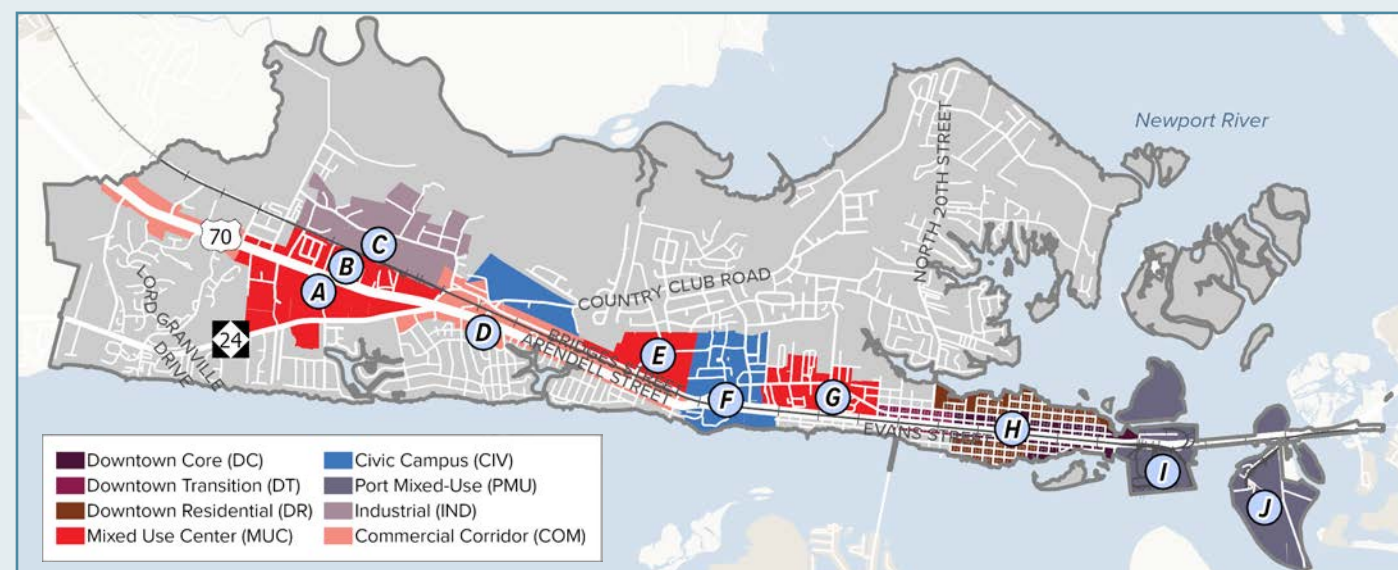
Institutional growth is often phrased as institutions of higher learning (“eds”) and medical facilities (“meds”). Community colleges provide comparably affordable job training and education while local hospitals and healthcare systems provide needed medical services. At the same time, they provide jobs themselves, with Carteret Community College and Carteret Health Care both being among Morehead City’s largest employers but with room to grow physically and institutionally. The Town can work with these institutions to simultaneously grow services, train workforce, and provide additional skilled jobs.

### Challenges

- Institutional growth can be less economically impactful than other skilled sectors
- Technological improvements in telemedicine and online courses may cause institutional development to trend downward
- Overreliance on eds and meds poses economic risks if enrollment/services are reduced

## Economic Development Opportunity Areas

The map below reflects the areas and corridors from the Future Land Use Map designated as key economic development opportunity areas across Morehead City. The map and accompanying list also detail specific opportunities identified throughout the Town, ranging from the central business district and shopping centers ripe for redevelopment to the port and partnerships with job creating institutions. While the Town has limited control within some of the opportunity areas (e.g., Area J), these assets can be leveraged in other places and in ways that are within the Town's oversight.



### A Walmart/Lowe's/Cypress Bay Plaza

Suburban Retrofit

These strip malls all face each other but are disjointed and unwalkable. Underused parking lots and undeveloped parcels in the center can be redeveloped to tie the area together, while low density outparcels along US 70 can be redeveloped into denser walkable street-facing development.

### B Crystal Coast Plaza

Suburban Retrofit

The Crystal Coast Plaza has multiple large vacant lots surrounding it, as well as underutilized parking lots and outparcels closer to US 70 that can be redeveloped. These areas could be filled in to create more of a dense internal main street with walkable commercial and apartments.

### C Undeveloped Industrial Land with Railway Access

Industrial Development

This area is near an existing industrial cluster and has access to both the railway and to the planned Bridges Street Extension, making it a good opportunity to attract larger anchor industrial to the site.

### D Parkway Shopping Center/Former Big Kmart

Suburban Retrofit

The public has suggested activating the rear of the former Kmart to face the natural areas in the south rather than the existing parking lot, which could free up much of the parking for new development while making the natural space more of a public amenity. The Kmart building could either be torn down and replaced or reused and adapted into something like a food hall or market.

### E Undeveloped Land near Denser Residential

Mixed-Use Development (Greenfield)

This area has some of the largest areas of undeveloped land in the Town and is already adjacent to denser housing. Its location along Bridges Street and the adjacent multi-use path also help make it a good opportunity for walkable greenfield mixed-use development.

### F Institutions of Higher Learning and Medical Facilities

Institutional Growth

Carteret Community College, Carteret Health Care, UNC Institute of Marine Sciences, and the NCSU Center for Marine Sciences and Technology are all nationally recognized institutions that provide quality educational, medical, and research jobs and services to the Town and region. These campuses have room to infill and expand as they grow to provide more opportunities and services to the Town and region.

### G Morehead Plaza Shopping Center

Suburban Retrofit

This is another inward facing strip mall with underutilized parking lots and empty spaces and parcels. Reorienting uses outward to face the street would open up much of the central space for additional development while creating walkable streets around the perimeter that could become attractive mixed-use districts for retail, food, and entertainment.

### H Downtown Morehead City

Downtown Revitalization

Downtowns are often economic engines for their Town. Streetscape and facade improvements, preservation and adaptive reuse of older buildings, infill development, and other investments can help further set Downtown apart as an attractive and accessible destination with vibrant local businesses.

### I Port Redevelopment

Industrial Development

The Port of Morehead City is a breakbulk and bulk facility with access to the railway and to US 70. The Town should continue to market the port and, if necessary, work with the state to pursue changes and redevelopment to the port to better meet current shipping needs amidst the supply chain crisis.

### J Port Expansion (Radio Island)

Industrial Development

Radio Island has significant amounts of vacant property owned and controlled by the state port authority. The NC Ports Authority is studying the feasibility of turning much of this land into office space and a terminal for a variety of uses including being a staging area for constructing future offshore wind farms. This would come with substantial investment, new jobs, and help make Morehead City a center for the growing renewable energy sector. However, as this would require paving much of the untouched area, the Town and Ports Authority will need to consider the impact on tourism and the surrounding environment.



Enrich Our Culture

Morehead City will honor and celebrate its history and unique way of life as it supports a thriving arts and culture scene.

Objective EOC-1: To establish and support a formal Arts District.

POLICIES	EOC 1.1	Establish an Arts District to provide a forum for local artists and independent galleries to collaborate and promote their work to residents and visitors. Use the Arts District to promote Morehead City as a regional destination.
	EOC 1.2	Continue to support the The Arts Council of Carteret County's (ACCC) efforts to establish the economic impacts of investment in the arts and use this data to bolster support for the arts in Morehead City.
	EOC 1.3	Build on the existing Fish Walk to establish an Arts Walk in Downtown Morehead City to guide visitors between local galleries and public art installations.

Objective EOC-2: To preserve and promote Morehead City's history and culture, and welcome new residents to celebrate their heritage.

POLICIES	EOC 2.1	Evaluate options for zoning changes that protect and enhance historic sites, locations of cultural significance, and places with defining qualities of Morehead City.
	EOC 2.2	Prioritize the preservation of African American cultural resources on the north side of Downtown to elevate the voices of this community.
	EOC 2.3	Encourage the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, and encourage newly constructed or renovated buildings in the Historic District to follow a high-quality style that fits their surroundings.
	EOC 2.4	Conduct assessment of Morehead City's historic sites.
	EOC 2.5	Encourage owners and developers of income-producing properties to apply for historic preservation tax incentives from the National Park Service and North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.



A CLOSER LOOK

Morehead City Arts District

The proposed Arts District is bounded by Bridges Street, Evans Street, 4th Street, and 18th Street. This area reflects the locations of most of Morehead City's existing galleries and artistic venues.



Arts District Best Practices

Designing a successful arts district will require strategic coordination between the Town, the arts community, local business owners, other jurisdictions, and more. Morehead City could use best practices learned from other communities in the planning and implementation of the new Morehead City Arts District. To create a successful district, Morehead City could:

- Establish specific criteria for the Arts District designation
- Coordinate with relevant tourism and economic development agencies and organizations to promote the Arts District as a great place for artists to live and work and for visitors to shop and spend
- Include general entertainment and festival events, galleries and museums, restaurants and nightlife, arts-oriented shops, and tours/attractions for visitors
- Support the Arts District with a foundational organization focused on **teaching, developing, and showcasing** the arts, which could include:

TEACHING THE ARTS

Collaborate with K-12 schools, colleges, and independent teachers of arts, both traditional (music, theater, visual art) and new forms (audio/video production, web design).  
Strengthen opportunities for young artists to cultivate Morehead City's future as a welcoming place for creative people.

DEVELOPING THE ARTS

Develop a concentration of businesses that serve artists (e.g., musical instrument stores, dance supply stores, rehearsal room rentals).  
Concentrate arts-related businesses at an incubator site that offers low-cost space and shared administration, or offer reduced rents anywhere in the Arts District.

SHOWCASING THE ARTS

Concentrate major performances into one central space (such as the Carteret Community Theater), supplemented by smaller satellite venues and showcase spaces for emerging creators and arts events.

Source: "Speak Out: Designing a Successful Arts District" by Lawrence E. McCullough, PhD. Art Times, 2015





# Live With Water

Morehead City will protect its natural areas and shorelines because the coastal environment and our maritime traditions are the Town’s greatest asset.

**Objective LWW-1: Morehead City will maintain its floodplains, wetlands, and other coastal features for their natural storm protection functions and their value to public health, safety, and welfare.**

POLICIES	LWW 1.1	Morehead City supports North Carolina and federal law regarding land use and development within Areas of Environmental Concern (AECs) and Natural Hazard Areas.
	LWW 1.2	Conserve the natural resources and fragile environments that provide storm protection, economic, recreational, and aesthetic value.
	LWW 1.3	Minimize the threat to life, property, and natural resources that may result from land use and development within or adjacent to identified natural hazard areas.
	LWW 1.4	Support the CAMA development permit process and development standards for estuarine shoreline areas to encourage both shoreline stabilization and facilitation of proper water drainage.
	LWW 1.5	Protect and conserve wetlands (coastal and non-coastal) for their functions that include filtering pollutants and protecting water quality, absorbing flood waters, recharging the ground water table, and providing wildlife habitat.
	LWW 1.6	Coordinate all development within the special flood hazard area with the NC Division of Coastal Management, FEMA, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.
	LWW 1.7	Use federal and state grant funds to acquire other sensitive lands where feasible to protect natural features and maximize resiliency to flooding and storm surges.
	LWW 1.8	Adhere to Morehead City's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, the North Carolina State Building Code, and the recommendations of the 2020 Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and amendments. Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.
	LWW 1.9	Ensure that evacuation plans and needs are addressed as new development proposals are reviewed for approval.
	LWW 1.10	Ensure that critical infrastructure and public facilities are located and designed to mitigate risk. If infrastructure and public facilities are damaged by a storm, consider relocating where feasible.
	LWW 1.11	Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development and limit, where possible, negative impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.

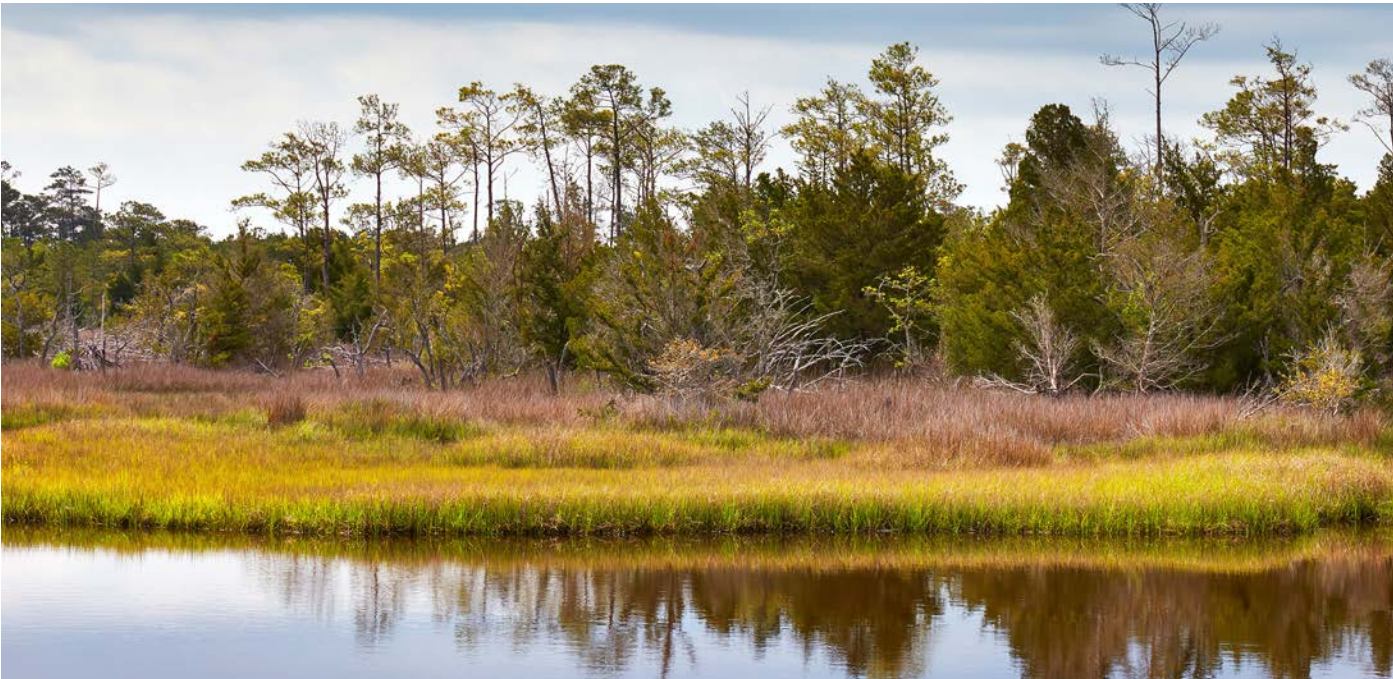


**Objective LWW-2: Morehead City will maintain, protect, and enhance the water quality of its wetlands, rivers, streams, and estuaries.**

POLICIES	LWW 2.1	Continue to support the use of Best Management Practices (BMP) in accordance with State requirements in order to reduce sedimentation and pollution run-off into nearby waterways.
	LWW 2.2	Coordinate the approval of development projects with applicable state agencies to ensure compliance with regulations to prevent or control nonpoint source discharges.
	LWW 2.3	Ensure that new developments and expansions of existing developments comply with State requirements regarding impervious surfaces, mitigating adverse effects on riverine and estuarine water quality and on nursery and fish habitat areas.
	LWW 2.4	Incentivize property owners to use best management practices to limit degradation of water quality from runoff, such as: pervious or semi-pervious pavement; retaining natural vegetation along marshes and shorelines; and providing areas for natural stormwater percolation into the ground.
	LWW 2.5	Prioritize sewer expansion to existing developments, particularly in areas with septic system limitations, within Corporate limits.
	LWW 2.6	Promote runoff water quality best practices that maximize protection of adjoining shell fishing waters and Nursery Areas.

**Objective LWW-3: Support the goals of The Parks and Recreation Plan to improve public access to protected natural areas so they may be enjoyed by all.**

POLICIES	LWW 3.1	Expand public access points and passive recreation opportunities in protected natural areas, appropriately preserving them in their natural state.
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# SECTION 6

## IMPLEMENTATION



### Introduction

Planning for the future by way of The Morehead City Plan 2032 allows for the Town's anticipated growth to be shaped in a positive way while setting a tone for desired community character in the years to come. The plan also addresses numerous questions.

*How will Morehead City embrace changes that will occur over the next 10 years and beyond?*

*What steps should the Town make to protect its sensitive areas?  
To preserve its history and culture?  
To promote a healthy and active lifestyle?*

*What resources are available and what opportunities can we pursue to achieve our vision?*

The Morehead City Plan 2032 views these questions through the lens of a vision statement that emerged from the nearly 800 participants who invested more than 450 hours into the plan's public process. The vision reflects what the Town values and what it wants others to think of when they think of Morehead City. Together with the five planning principles, the vision guides Morehead City through 2032 and further into the future.

*Morehead City embodies small Town coastal living as a welcoming place for all. Our Town seeks a future that is **forward looking, fiscally responsible, thoughtfully designed, and sustainable** for future generations.*

The Morehead City Plan 2032 brings together a complicated planning puzzle that includes land use decisions, investments in community services, and the provision of infrastructure that includes roads, water and sewer lines, and stormwater control. Notably, the comprehensive plan meets the requirements set forth in Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Coastal Area Management Act. But adoption of The Morehead City Plan 2032 is just the first step in a long and winding road toward implementation. This section provides clarity about next steps with the following organization:

**Pillars for Implementation.** Three initial ways the Town can best position itself for success.

**Land Use Management Topics.** A summary of policies organized by five land use management topics outlined in the Coastal Area Management Act.

**Transportation Recommendations.** A deep dive into transportation options for all modes of travel.

**Parks and Recreation Recommendations.** A recap of a more detailed look at parks and recreation in Morehead City.

**Action Plan.** A detailed matrix that outlines what, who, when, and how for key actions.

**Funding Opportunities.** A brief overview of funding streams.

**Conclusion.** A few final thoughts.



# Pillars for Implementation

The Morehead City Plan 2032 outlines incremental steps to achieve the community’s vision. Forces and trends beyond the Town’s control—such as market conditions—will affect the pace of implementation. The effect of these external factors often can be minimized based on a community’s ability to respond to changing dynamics. The pace of implementation also will be determined by the availability of staff time, allocation of funding, and the Town’s ability to collaborate with private interests. The following pillars for implementation provide a framework for achieving the Town’s future vision and goals by simplifying the next steps.

## BRING AWARENESS TO THE PLAN AND ITS DESIRED OUTCOMES.

- Make the plan readily available, including online and in print at locations such as the Morehead City Library, the Recreation Center, or the Visitors Center.
- Identify and engage partners such as neighborhood groups, Carteret County Public Schools, Carteret Community College, Carteret Health Care, and other corporate entities and civic organizations that can assist with implementation.

## ALIGN REGULATIONS AND MONITOR PROGRESS.

- Update regulations, including the Town’s Unified Development Ordinance, to address the plan’s recommendations.
- Create an annual or bi-annual progress update that highlights annual accomplishments and reflects any changes in priorities.

## ALLOCATE TIME AND MONEY BASED ON CURRENT PRIORITIES.

- Prioritize the time of existing staff and increase staffing where necessary to allow ongoing progress and regular review of the plan’s priorities.
- Identify funds (e.g., local and regional dollars, grants, and private investment) for implementation and prioritize funding decisions based on The Morehead City Plan 2032 and any shifts identified during regular progress updates.

# Land Use Management Topics

The Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) identifies five management topics important to supporting the goals of the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). As a CAMA community, Morehead City must address each management topic in its CAMA land use plan. This section pulls key recommendations from the Policy Framework to streamline the understanding and administrative review of the Land Use Management Topics. The **Action Plan and Matrix** (see page 123) provides more details on the implementation of all policies, including those that address the CAMA Land Use Management Topics.

- Public Access to Public Trust Waters
- Land Use Compatibility
- Infrastructure Carrying Capacity
- Natural Hazard Areas
- Water Quality



## PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRUST WATERS

**Management Goal:** Maximize public access to the beaches and the public trust waters of the coastal region.

**Planning Objectives:** The plan shall include policies that address access needs and opportunities, with strategies to develop public access and provisions for all segments of the community, including persons with disabilities. Oceanfront communities shall establish access policies for beach areas targeted for nourishment.

### Supportive Policies

<i><b>MWE 1.2</b></i>	<i><b>MWE 1.6</b></i>	<i><b>CNO 1.6</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 3.1</b></i>
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## LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

**Management Goal:** Ensure that development and use of resources or preservation of land balance protection of natural resources and fragile areas with economic development and avoids risks to public health, safety, and welfare.

**Planning Objectives:** The plan shall include policies that characterize future land use development patterns and establish mitigation criteria and concepts to minimize conflicts.

### Supportive Policies

<i><b>GWP 1.1</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 1.2</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 1.4</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 2.1</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.11</b></i>
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## INFRASTRUCTURE CARRYING CAPACITY

**Management Goal:** Ensure that public infrastructure systems are sized, located, and managed so the quality and productivity of AECs and other fragile areas are protected or restored.

**Planning Objectives:** The plan shall include policies that establish service criteria and ensure improvements minimize impacts to AECs and other fragile areas.

### Supportive Policies

<i><b>GWP 1.5</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 2.2</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 2.3</b></i>	<i><b>GWP 2.4</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.1</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.4</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.5</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.6</b></i>
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## NATURAL HAZARD AREAS

**Management Goal:** Conserve and maintain barrier dunes, beaches, flood plains, and other coastal features for their natural storm protection functions and their natural resources giving recognition to public health, safety, and welfare issues.

**Planning Objectives:** The plan shall include policies that establish mitigation and adaptation concepts and criteria for development and redevelopment, including public facilities, and that minimize threats to life, property, and natural resources resulting from erosion, high winds, storm surge, flooding, or other natural hazards.

### Supportive Policies

<i><b>LWW 1.2</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.3</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.6</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.7</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.8</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.9</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.10</b></i>
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## WATER QUALITY

**Management Goal:** Maintain, protect, and where possible enhance water quality in all coastal wetlands, rivers, streams, and estuaries.

**Planning Objectives:** The plan shall include policies that establish strategies and practices to prevent or control nonpoint source pollution and maintain or improve water quality.

### Supportive Policies

<i><b>GWP 2.4</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.4</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 1.5</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.1</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.2</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.3</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.4</b></i>	<i><b>LWW 2.6</b></i>
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# Transportation Recommendations

Morehead City strives to have a connected, multimodal transportation system that emphasizes safe bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities while prioritizing efficient traffic flow. The Town has unique transportation challenges with limited land, making road widening difficult, and being a tourist destination means the summer peak brings in more people and traffic. The projects detailed in this section are intended to better direct transportation investment decisions as solutions to Morehead City's unique challenges.

## Multimodal Toolkit

The recommended pedestrian and bicycle facilities for Morehead City consist of five different facility types, outlined below. These facility types work together to create a more connected transportation network that provides access and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists while considering the vital role of the automobile.



### Multiuse Paths/Greenways

A multiuse path, sometimes referred to as a sidepath, is a facility that may be used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized users. They are separated from the roadway by an open space or physical barrier. A greenway serves the same function but, instead of running along a road, they are located in more natural or forested areas.



### Bicycle Lanes

Bike lanes allocate an exclusive space for bicyclists with a designated striped lane, pavement markings, and signage to enable bicyclists to ride at their chosen speed without interference from traffic. Conventional bike lanes are located directly adjacent to motor vehicle travel and typically follow the same direction as traffic.



### Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows)

Shared lane markings or “sharrows,” are road markings used to indicate a shared traffic lane for bicycles and automobiles. Sharrows are most beneficial on low volume and low speed roads. Typically, the painted lane markings are accompanied with signage to alert both bicyclists and motorists of bikeway routes.



### Paved Shoulders

A paved shoulder is a part of the road. It is directly adjacent to the regularly traveled portion of the road and more safely accommodates bicycles. Paved shoulders are specifically designed for vehicles to have safe places to pull off from the road, but as an auxiliary function also provide space for cyclists.



### Sidewalks

A sidewalk is a paved pathway for pedestrians, typically on both sides of a road.

## Intersection Toolkit

Including improvements for intersections and interchanges is critical to the success of the future transportation network as they are the nodes of transfer between roadway connections. Needed improvements are most often identified due to safety concerns, operational deficiencies, and public experience and feedback.

The following table includes a list of suggested improvement types or treatments to alleviate concerns at intersections throughout the study area. While some intersection recommendations are specified on the "Future Proposed Roadway Network" map, others remain as “intersection improvement” until further study can determine the best solution.

Improvement	Description
Driveway Consolidation	Curb cuts or driveways that are too close to an intersection should be consolidated or relocated to reduce the number of turning movements or potential crashes.
Realignment	Roadways should be realigned to meet as close to a 90-degree angle as possible. This not only improves visibility but also the turning radius for larger vehicles or trucks.
Restricted Crossing U-Turn Intersection	A restricted crossing U-turn intersection (RCUT) intersection—also known as a super street intersection—restricts left-turn and through movements from the side street approach. This intersection can greatly improve the safety and efficiency of a roadway.
Roundabout	A roundabout can reduce the number of serious crashes at intersections with many conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians while improving traffic flow.
Signalization	Some non-signalized intersections may be eligible for a traffic signal based on a signal warrant analysis. Signals may be warranted based on volumes or crash history.
Improve or Advance Signage	Providing advanced warning signs or installing reflective backplates on traffic signals can reduce crashes related to visibility issues.
Crosswalks	Crosswalks allow pedestrians to comfortably cross intersections by offering protection and visibility against motorists. Crosswalks can be marked simply with parallel lines, they can be decorative or painted, or can be made from different materials.
Pedestrian Refuge Islands	Pedestrian refuge islands allow for protected and comfortable points of rest for pedestrians across large intersections with multiple lanes. These are typically implemented when pedestrians have to cross three or more lanes of oncoming traffic.
Curb Extension	Curb extensions can be used to create a more narrow roadway to decrease pedestrian crossing time and distance. Extensions offer additional pedestrian protection as they increase visibility to drivers, as well as allow for streetscaping.



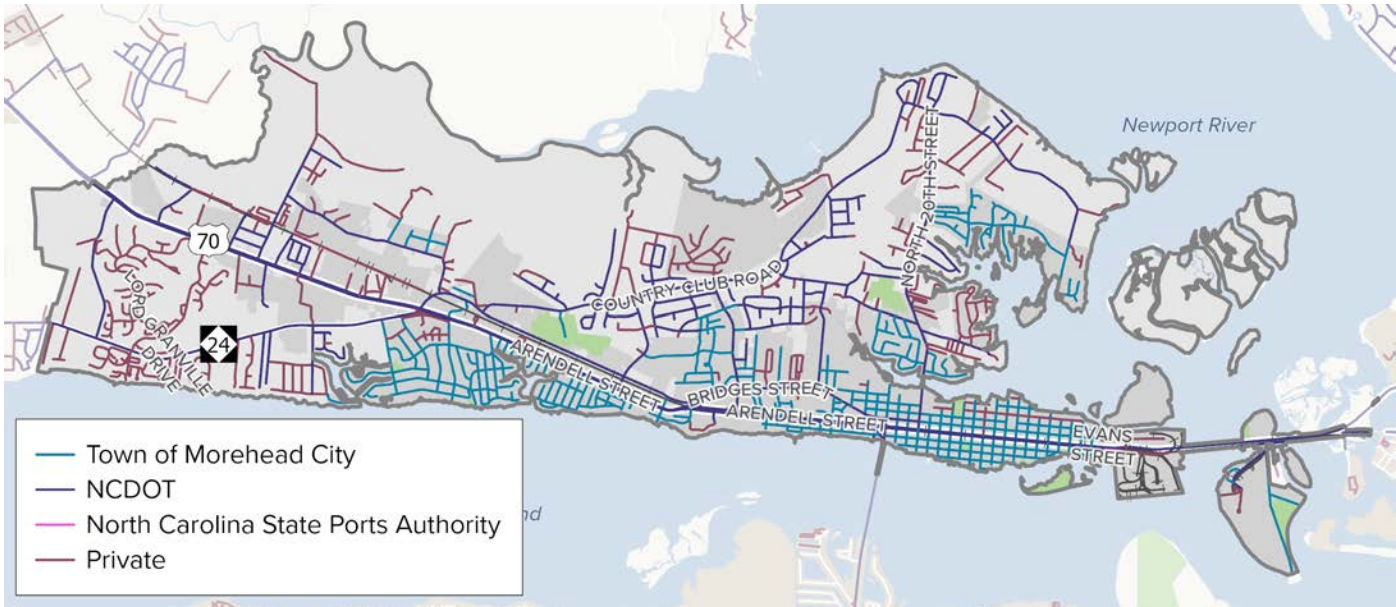
# Transportation Vision

The transportation recommendations shown on pages 107-118 are intended to capture an overall vision for Morehead City's future transportation network based on previous planning efforts, existing projects, and feedback through the planning process for this Plan. Importantly, this does not mean that the Town is committing to building or funding every project shown. Rather, it provides a set of possibilities for Morehead City to choose from when deciding what to invest in and prioritize, and gives the Town and County a plan to point to when pursuing funding or collaborating with Carteret County.

## COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

Making any of the transportation recommendations in this plan a reality will require a collaborative effort. Most of the transportation recommendations in this plan are along roadways that are maintained by NCDOT or some other entity besides the Town. In addition, many recommendations are at least partially within the ETJ, meaning the Town would have to work closely with Carteret County to pursue and implement improvements, secure funding, and enact supportive policies.

# Roadway Maintenance Responsibilities

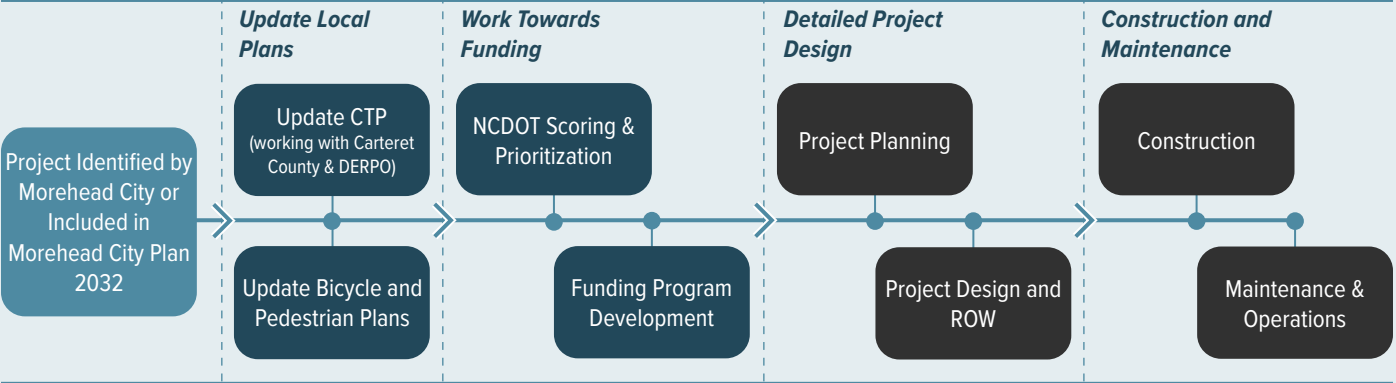


## A CLOSER LOOK

# Transportation Project Implementation

Taking a transportation project from concept to built infrastructure can be a long process. The specifics of funding sources, responsibilities, final design, and construction often emerge further into the process. Since most projects in this plan would need to be implemented in collaboration with NCDOT for right-of-way or funding distribution, the section below briefly explains their process for getting a project funded and constructed.

## How a Project Gets Built



Source: Based on NCDOT's "How a Road Gets Built" and Bike/Ped Project Scoping Guidance.

## NCDOT PRIORITIZATION AND FUNDING PROCESS

In order for projects to be considered for future rounds of state or federal funding, they have to first be included in an adopted local transportation plan. Inclusion of a project in the Morehead City Plan 2032 is just a first step towards getting a project funded and built. To carry new recommendations forward:

- The Town, Carteret County, and the Down East RPO (DERPO) would need to collaborate to update local and regional transportation plans and identify projects for the RPO to submit to NCDOT for prioritization as part of their Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) process.
- Projects that score higher on criteria like safety, congestion, and benefit-cost are prioritized for funding in future rounds of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Funded projects proceed, starting with more detailed public engagement, impact studies, and environmental review, then lead into project design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

STIP funding comes from a variety of sources, some of which require the local government (in this case, the Town or County) to pay a portion of the project cost. Requirements for federal funds and state funds differ, and some funding sources can only be used for certain modes. It will be important for the Town and/or County to understand the requirements specific to any funding sources received.

## IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities can vary from project to project. In some cases NCDOT may plan and implement a project themselves. In other cases, local governments sign an agreement with NCDOT to administer, implement, and help fund a project themselves.

When a locally administered project receives federal and/or state funding, NCDOT is generally responsible for distributing the funds to the local government(s) implementing the project and overseeing how the funds are used. Other responsibilities such as design, construction, and maintenance can vary between projects and would be governed by the project agreement made between NCDOT and the local government(s) involved.

Source: NCDOT Local Programs Management Handbook



Multimodal Recommendations

The following map identifies the recommended bicycle and pedestrian improvements that would work to both establish and expand an active-transportation network. The combination with the Transit Priority Areas and the establishment of microtransit in Town solves the first-mile/last-mile problem that will go a long way to establish a functional, friendly, efficient, and effective way to travel without a car.

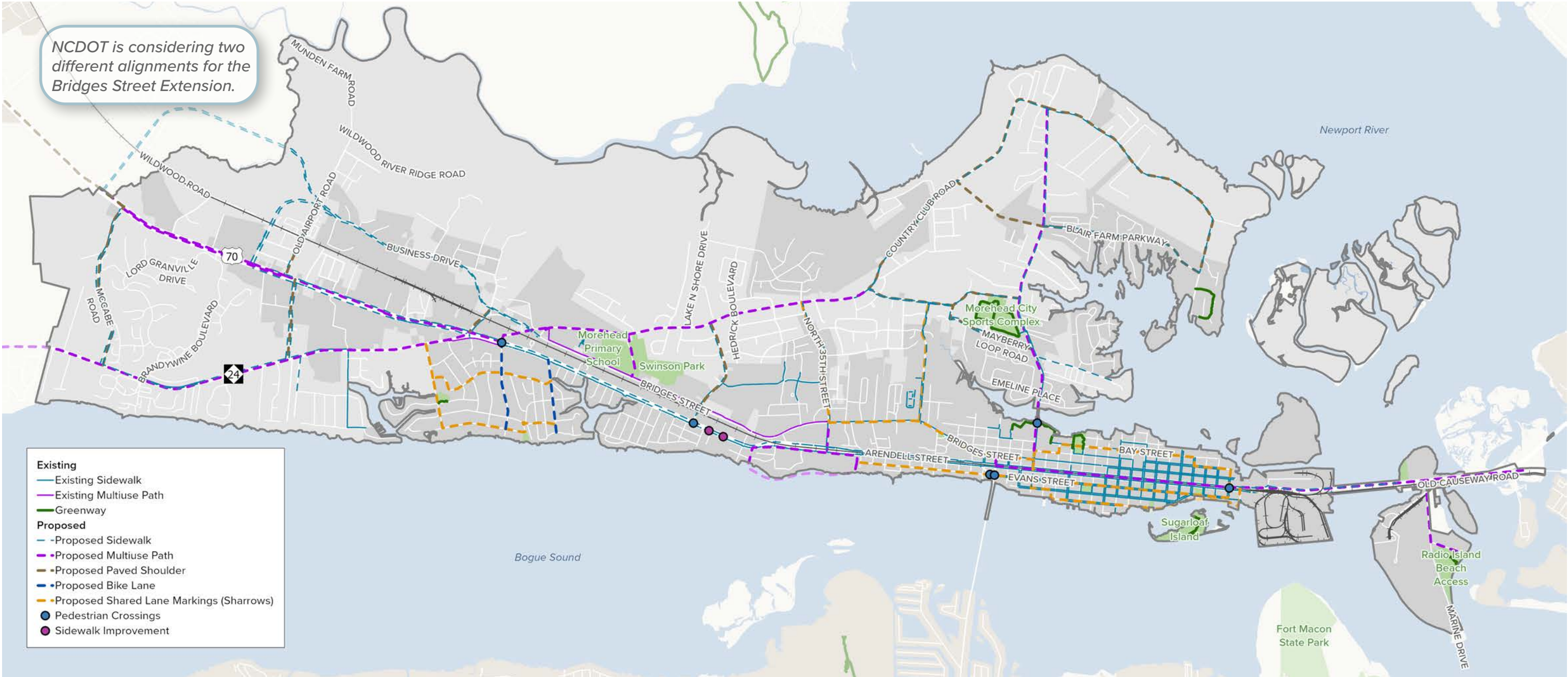
Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements should be pursued with roadway recommendations with the assistance of NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy. Bicycle improvements should also be pursued during roadway maintenance when opportunities for restriping arise.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans**

The Town of Morehead City has an adopted Bicycle Plan (2011) and Pedestrian Plan (2006). The Town should update these plans as part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program administered by NCDOT.

As part of this more detailed planning process, the Multimodal Recommendations presented here should be reevaluated.

Recommended Multimodal Network





Roadway Recommendations

Street recommendations focus on enhancing mobility choices throughout the Planning Jurisdiction within street rights-of-way, making sure the needs of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians are all considered. By making it easier to walk or bike, residents and visitors may become less dependent on personal vehicles and residential areas will be better connected to other areas like Downtown.

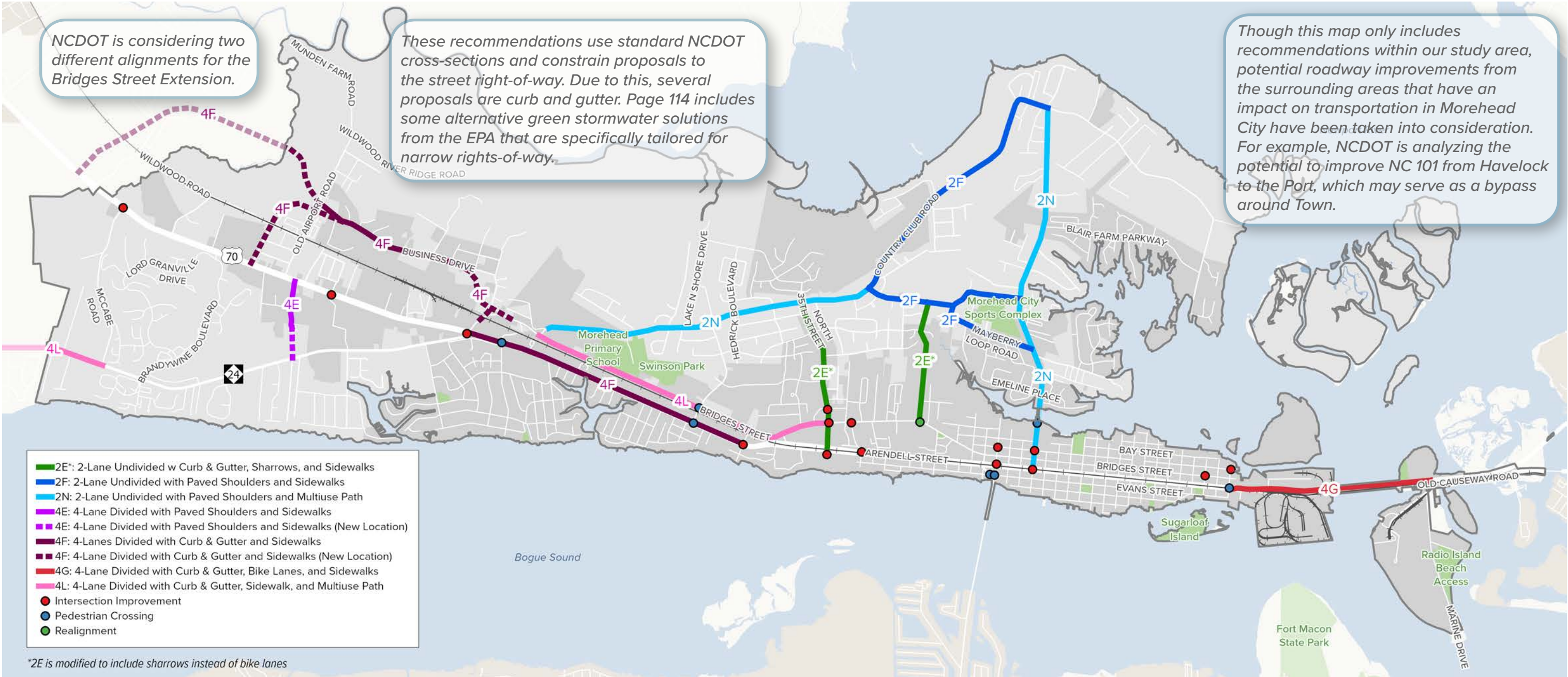
This plan also recommends enhancing access management, consolidating driveways, updating parking provisions, and modifying street grids where appropriate. The transportation recommendations outlined in this framework plan attempt to balance safety, access, and connectivity throughout the Planning Jurisdiction.

This map focuses on roadway improvements while holistically including multimodal facilities as well. While not all multimodal recommendations from the previous map are shown here, these are ones that would be ideal to pursue with roadway capacity or safety improvements.

Project List by NCDOT Cross-Section

The map below uses a letter and number ID to communicate recommendations. This map in combination with the tables on the following pages provide specific project details on the proposed transportation and mobility network. Each table is organized by proposed NCDOT cross-section with an illustrative rendering. The proposed cross-sections provide guidance on how to balance roadway capacity with surrounding land use designations. This information is an important way to show the Town’s preference for the design of streets should they need to be improved by NCDOT or as part of a new development. For more information and a complete guide to the NCDOT cross-sections, see [connect.ncdot.gov/projects/roadway](https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/roadway).

Future Proposed Roadway Network

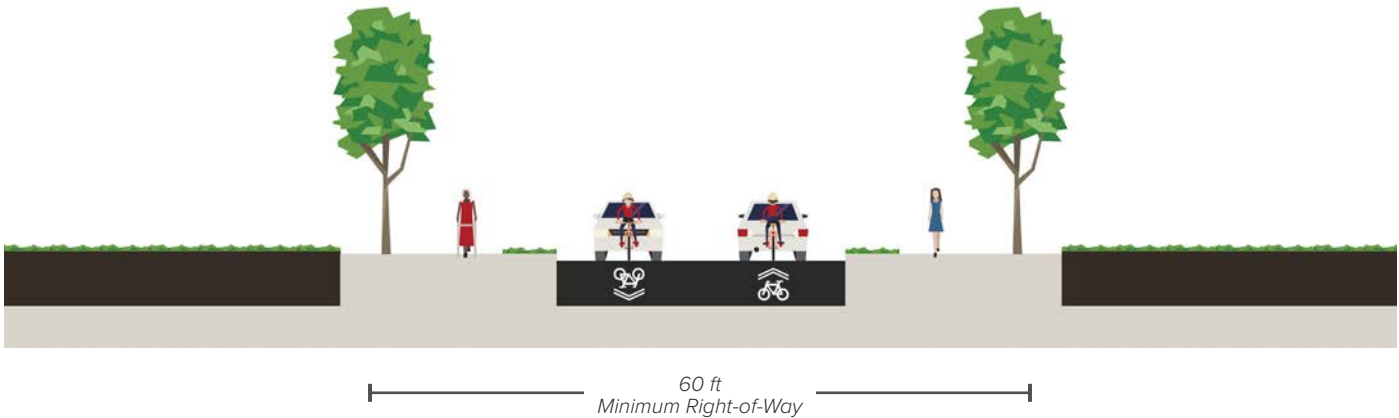




NCDOT Cross-Sections

2E | 2-Lane Undivided with Curb and Gutter, Bike Lanes, and Sidewalks

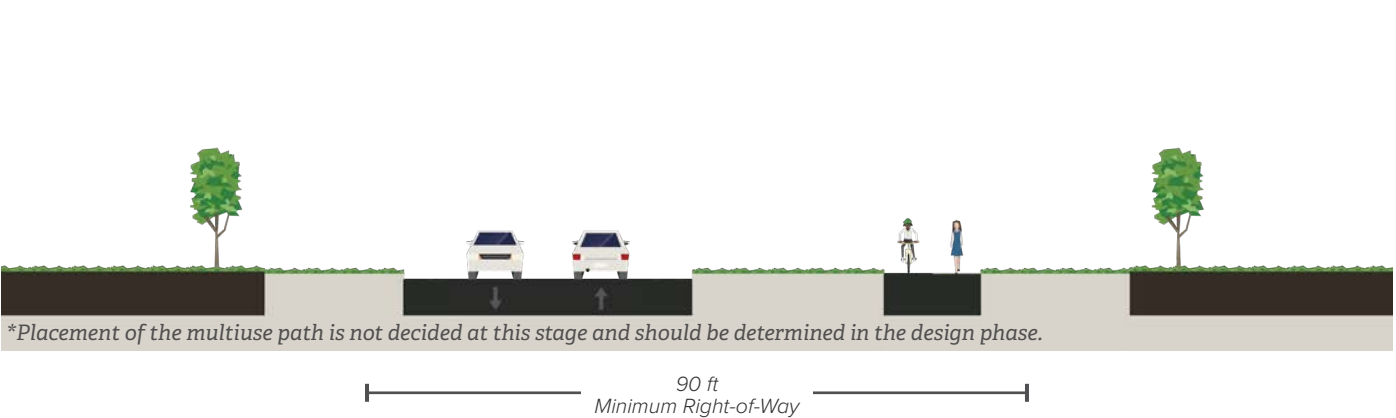
Illustrative rendering of 2-Lane Undivided with Curb and Gutter, Bike Lanes, and Sidewalks



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
North 35th Street	Arendell Street	Country Club Rd	Improve Existing
Barbour Road	Bridges Street	Tootle Road	Improve Existing

2N | 2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Multiuse Path

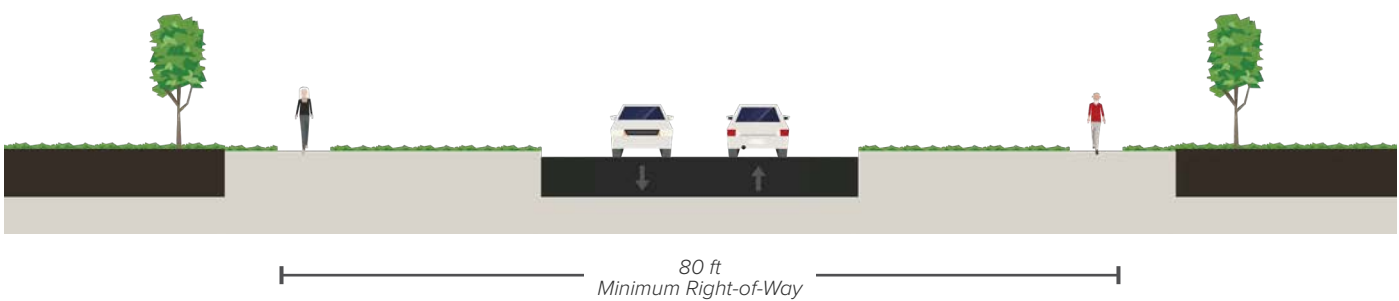
Illustrative rendering of 2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Multiuse Path\*



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
North 20th Street	Arendell Street	Country Club Rd	Improve Existing
Country Club Road	Bridges Street Extension	Tootle Road	Improve Existing

2F | 2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks

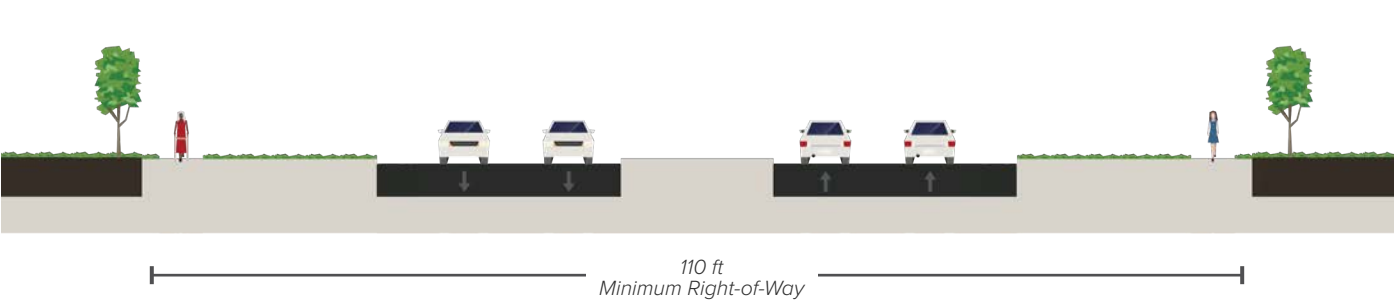
Illustrative rendering of 2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
Country Club Road	Tootle Road	North 20th Street	Improve Existing
Tootle Road	Country Club Road	Mayberry Loop Road	Improve Existing
Mayberry Loop Road	20th Street	North 20th Street	Improve Existing

4E | 4-Lane Divided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks

Illustrative rendering of 4-Lane Divided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks

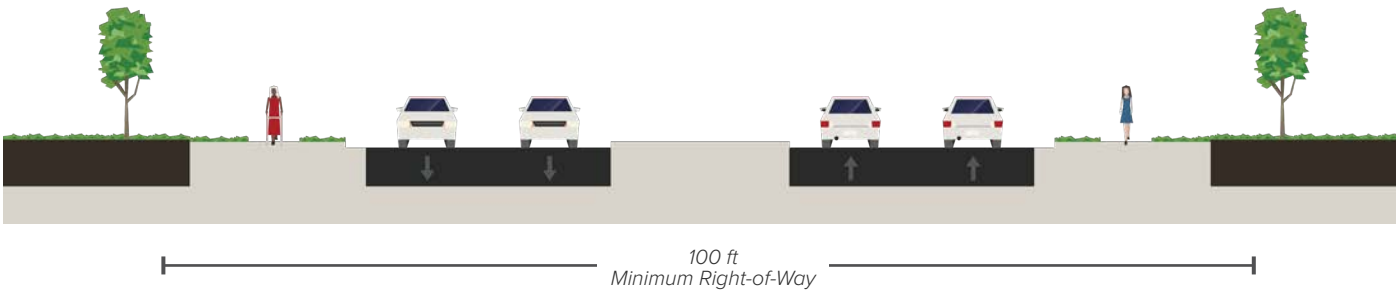


Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
Little Nine Road	Arendell Street	NC 24	Improve Existing & Add New



4F | 4-Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Sidewalks

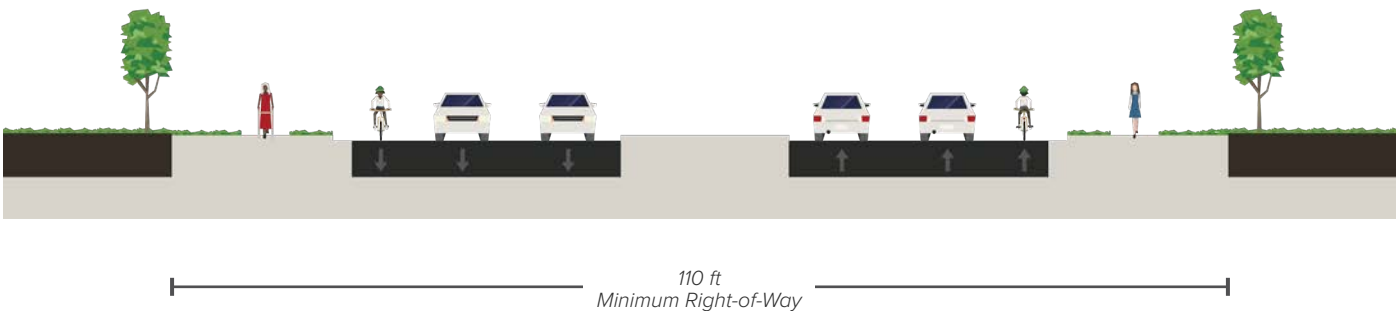
Illustrative rendering of 4-Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Sidewalks



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
Arendell Street	NC 24/Bridges Street Extension	Lockhart Street	Improve Existing
Bridges Street Extension	Old Airport Road	Gloria Dawn Road	Improve Existing & Add New
Bridges Street Extension	Arendell Street	Old Airport Road	Add New

4G | 4-Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Bike Lanes, and Sidewalks

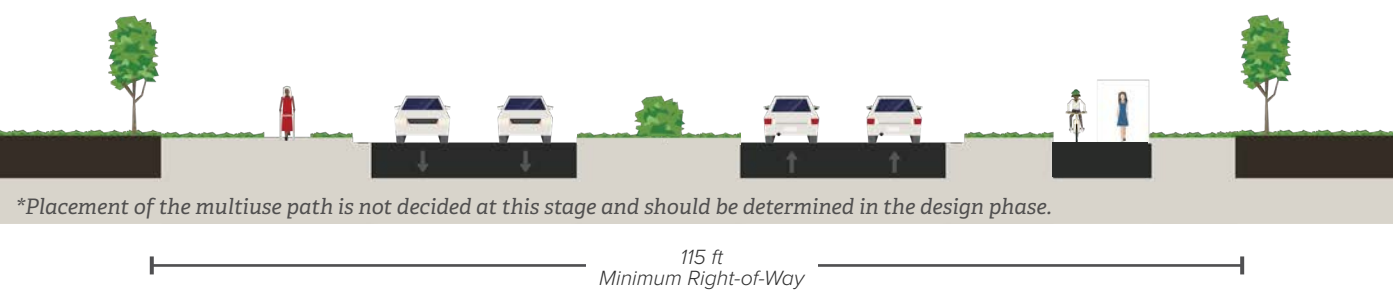
Illustrative rendering of 4 Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Bike Lanes, and Sidewalks



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
Arendell Street/US 70/ Newport River Bridge	4th Street	Radio Island Road	Improve Existing & Add New

4L | 4-Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Sidewalk, and Multiuse Path

Illustrative rendering of 4-Lane Divided with Curb and Gutter, Sidewalk, and Multiuse Path\*



Road Name	From	To	Rec Type
NC 24	McCabe Road	West of ETJ	Improve Existing
Bridges Street Extension	Country Club Road	North 35th Street	Improve Existing

Alternatives to Curb and Gutter Designs

The roadway recommendations in this plan reflect right-of-way constraints, proposed multimodal facilities, and NCDOT cross-sections. Several projects are shown with curb and gutter cross-sections to include sidewalks, bike lanes, or multiuse paths within a narrow right-of-way.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency suggests some greener stormwater management alternatives to curb and gutter designs that can work within limited right-of-way. Since these stormwater measures do not match NCDOT's standard cross-sections, the Town and/ or County would likely need to work closely with NCDOT to implement them, and some designs may require getting an approved design exception.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVES

Where possible, consider green infrastructure alternatives to curb and gutter.

- Curb cuts that drain to small bioretention gardens or tree box filters instead of a gutter can be more fitting in areas with more limited space or higher-density development.
- Vegetated swales tend to be more suitable in low-to-medium-density areas with more space.

REDUCED LANE WIDTHS

Narrowing lanes can open up more space in the right-of-way for green stormwater infrastructure.

- Narrowed lanes can still provide adequate safety to drivers without impacting traffic operations.
- NCDOT's Roadway Design Manual does allow exceptions for narrower lanes when restrictive or special conditions exist.

PERMEABLE PAVEMENT

Using permeable pavement for bike lanes or shoulders can help reduce runoff and use part of the roadway surface itself to absorb and filter stormwater.



A curb cut that drains to green infrastructure instead of to a gutter. Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Source: EPA Stormwater Best Management Practice: Eliminating Curbs and Gutters, NCDOT Roadway Design Manual.



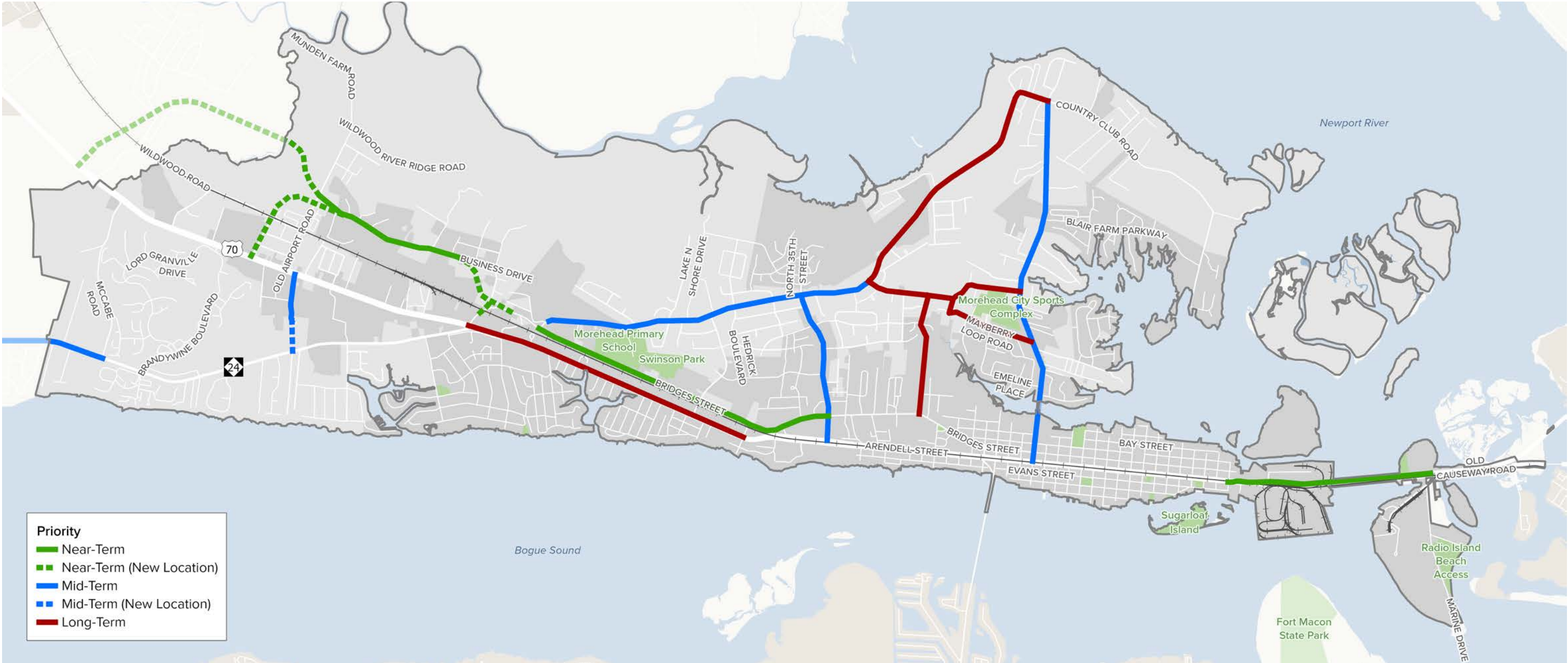
### Project Priorities

Recognizing that our needs for enhanced transportation mobility often exceed the funding available to address them, it is important to identify the most effective projects for advancement. To assist the Town and County with identifying how best to advocate for and allocate future funding, this section includes a prioritization framework for roadway projects that will help guide decision-makers in the pursuit of projects. The projects are prioritized into three tiers:

- Near-Term (0 to 7 years)
- Mid-Term (8 to 20 years)
- Long-Term (20+ years)

These phased tiers are shown both on the map below and on the table on the following page.

### Roadway Prioritization





Project Prioritization Table

The table below includes all proposed roadway projects, organized by implementation phase. The projects and implementation phases are projects and estimates of time that may change as circumstances change.

Priority	Road Name	From	To	Rec Type	Cross Section ID	Cross Section Description	Funding Stage*
Near-Term	Arendell Street/US 70/Newport River Bridge	4th Street	Radio Island Road	Improve Existing and Add New	4G	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter, Bike Lanes, and Sidewalks	STIP (funded for preliminary engineering)
Near-Term	Bridges Street Extension	Old Airport Road	Gloria Dawn Road	Improve Existing and Add New	4F	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter, Sidewalk, and Multiuse Path	STIP (R-5727)
Near-Term	Bridges Street Extension	Arendell Street	Old Airport Road	Add New	4F	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter and Sidewalks	STIP (R-5727)
Near-Term	Bridges Street Extension	Country Club Road	North 35th Street	Improve Existing	4L	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter, Sidewalk, and Multiuse Paths	
Mid-Term	Little Nine Road	Arendell Street	NC 24	Improve Existing and Add New	4E	4-Lane Divided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks	SPOT 6.0
Mid-Term	NC 24	McCabe Road	Outside of Study Area	Improve Existing	4L	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter, Sidewalk, and Multiuse Path	SPOT 6.0
Mid-Term	Country Club Road	Bridges Street Extension	Tootle Road	Improve Existing	2N	2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Multiuse Path	
Mid-Term	North 20th Street	Arendell Street	Country Club Road	Improve Existing	2N	2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Multiuse Path	
Mid-Term	North 35th Street	Arendell Street	Country Club Road	Improve Existing	2E**	2-Lane Undivided with Curb & Gutter, Sharrows, and Sidewalks	
Long-Term	Arendell Street	NC 24/Bridges Street Extension	Lockhart Street	Improve Existing	4F	4-Lane Divided with Curb & Gutter and Sidewalks	
Long-Term	Country Club Road	Tootle Road	North 20th Street	Improve Existing	2F	2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks	
Long-Term	Tootle Road	Country Club Road	Mayberry Loop Road	Improve Existing	2F	2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks	
Long-Term	Mayberry Loop Road	North 20th Street	North 20th Street	Improve Existing	2F	2-Lane Undivided with Paved Shoulders and Sidewalks	
Long-Term	Barbour Road	Bridges Street	Tootle Road	Improve Existing	2E**	2-Lane Undivided with Curb & Gutter, Sharrows, and Sidewalks	

\* The Strategic Transportation Prioritization Process (SPOT) is the methodology that NCDOT uses to develop the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

\*\*2E is modified to include sharrows instead of bike lanes



# Parks and Recreation Recommendations

The Morehead City Plan 2032 is supported by The Parks and Recreation Plan, published alongside this plan. The Parks and Recreation Plan is available under a separate cover with key recommendations summarized here.

The 2023 Parks and Recreation Plan updates the recommendations of the 2006 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan. The updated plan will help guide the Parks and Recreation Department in its goal to promote healthy lifestyles and provide recreation space for the people of Morehead City. It incorporates an analysis of the parks system today and identifies additions and renovations to improve the system as Morehead City continues to grow. It should be noted that potential new parks are recommended in both the Town limits and the ETJ. For any new park located in the ETJ, Carteret County, not the Town, would be responsible for it's implementation and upkeep.

## Recommended Park System





Park Renovations

The Parks and Recreation Plan proposes the following renovations to existing Morehead City parks facilities.

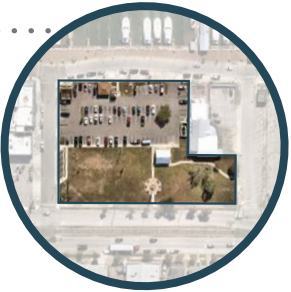
Piney Park

- Install restrooms.
- Dog Park: residents have requested more dog parks in Morehead City. Analyze Piney Park as a potential dog park location due to the centralized location and wooded canopy.



Katherine Davis Park

- Replace dead trees.
- Add enhanced landscaping around the memorial.
- Add picnic tables and shelter.



Mitchell Village Park

- Replace picnic tables.
- Add site furnishings, particularly more seating and trash receptacles.
- Install wooden decking under swings.
- Shift maintenance access off private property.
- Renovate the playground, including new mulch for the play area.
- Renovate and clean the gazebo.
- Add a water station.
- Plant trees and shrubs to provide shade in the park and screening from the adjacent homes.



Shevans Park

- Renovate restrooms.



Sugarloaf Island

- Renovate bathrooms - there are safety concerns with the roof.
- Repair the walking trail.
- Rebuild the island from storm erosion and replant sea grass. This is an ongoing project through the NC Coastal Federation.



Martin Luther King Jr Park

- Repaint parking lot lines.
- Renovate bathrooms.
- Plant enhanced landscaping.
- Add fencing around playground.



Morehead City Rec

- Repair floating dock and fishing pier.
- Replace bike racks.
- Repair basketball courts.



Rotary Park

- Improve existing playgrounds.
- Update landscaping.
- Maintain wooden walking trail.
- Rotary Park has room to add several of the facilities recommended by this plan, including volleyball courts and multi-use courts.



Curb Market

- Plant enhanced landscaping within the landscaping beds at the front entry of the market.



Bryan Street Pond

- Clean picnic tables.
- Install signage.
- Renovate sidewalk to meet ADA requirements.
- Add a gazebo or other shelter near pathway.



Calico Creek Boardwalk

- Establish a maintenance schedule to address routine maintenance.
- Add enhanced landscaping at the entrance of the boardwalk.



Snookie Wade Park

- Replace benches.
- Replace picnic tables.
- Add a playground.



Water Access Areas

- Address drainage issues at Conch's Point.

Jaycee Park

- Fix floating dock.
- Add enhanced landscaping around seating areas.
- Permanent stage: Site layout, including seating and lighting, should be carefully considered when building the stage. The Town should plan to build the stage during the planning period to address community event needs.





# 2032 Action Plan

The Action Plan Matrix offers a way for the Town to track progress and maintain flexibility as circumstances change in the future. The actions in the matrix were developed and included based on feedback received from the public as part of the plan development, and achievability based on available time and resources. It should be noted that the actions do not necessarily reflect the top priorities of City Council. The matrix clarifies the type of action, identifies responsible entities, indicates likely timing, and gives a general sense of the resources (time and money) required for implementation. The matrix should be revisited in the years to come to track progress and allow the Town to modify programs and policies to build on progress or respond to new challenges. The matrix includes the following information:

## TIMEFRAME

**Phasing.** Many factors will affect when an action can or should be implemented. For some actions, funding availability or staff time allocation will dictate when implementation can occur. Other actions may require completing a different plan, program, policy, or project before it can be implemented. The recommended phasing described in the matrix was developed with these considerations. Other factors that contributed to the phasing include relative importance to the vision, opportunity to establish momentum, and ease of implementation. The phasing shown in the matrix is a best guess suggestion and implementation likely will occur outside of the order shown in the matrix. The phases—*Short-term* (0 to 2 years) and *Mid-term* (3 to 10 years) reflect the emphasis the matrix places on activity through the year 2032.

**Duration.** Many of the strategies will be ongoing initiatives, while a few are standalone strategies that will be implemented at a particular time in the future. *Standalone* indicates which strategies are an isolated action. *Ongoing* indicates the implementation of an action will be a continuous process.

## RESPONSIBLE ENTITIES

Implementation of the plan requires close coordination among various groups, including elected officials, Town departments, existing committees, and new groups that can be formed to support implementation. Likewise, private developers will play a role in achieving the vision for Morehead City by actively participating in supportive development practices. The matrix identifies who needs to *Lead* a particular strategy with the understanding that other groups will need to *Support* or actively participate in the effort.

Town Staff and Boards		External Stakeholders	
AD	Administration	ACCC	Arts Council of Carteret County
CC	City Council	CCPS	Carteret County Public Schools
EDC	Morehead City Economic Development Coordinator*	DMC	Downtown Morehead City
PB	Planning Board	PMC	Port of Morehead City
PI	Planning & Inspections	RPO	Down East Rural Planning Organization
PR	Parks & Recreation	CCC	Carteret Community College
PS	Public Services	CHC	Carteret Health Care

\*New position recommended as part of The Morehead City Plan 2032

## RESOURCES

The matrix features possible individual actions. With the understanding that the people tasked with implementation face competing priorities for their time and available funding is limited, the matrix provides a general sense of the resources necessary for each action. Both Time and Cost are indicated as Low, Medium, and High based on the following iconography.

Time		Cost	
Low		Low	
Medium		Medium	
High		High	









## Action Matrix



Action	Timeframe		Responsible Entities*		Resources	
	Phasing	Duration	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
Consider updating the Town's Unified Development Ordinance to modernize local development regulations and codify the future land use map (see page 127 for more details). 	Short-Term	Ongoing	CC, PI	PB, AD		
Establish a process to regularly monitor housing affordability and identify gaps in the housing market.	Short-Term	Ongoing	PI	EDC		
Appoint a Housing Task Force to focus on providing housing to support the local and future workforce.	Mid-Term	Standalone	CC	EDC		
Consider establishing an annexation policy and/or launching outreach efforts to educate ETJ residents about Town services and the cost to serve.	Mid-Term	Standalone	PI	PB, AD		
Update the Morehead City Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan to refine and reinforce recommendations from The Morehead City Plan.	Mid-Term	Standalone	PI	RPO		
Establish a pilot program to operate the Transit Priority Areas during the peak season.	Long-Term	Standalone	AD	RPO		
Create an Economic Development Coordinator (EDC) position within the Town, dedicated to promoting and pursuing economic opportunities across the entire Town.	Short-Term	Standalone	AD	CC		
Conduct ongoing market research to identify new opportunities for investment and business growth in Morehead City.	Mid-Term	Ongoing	EDC			
Create a Downtown Master Plan to explore policies, programs, and physical improvements that can enhance the economic output of the Downtown area, enhance the aesthetics of the streetscape and railroad, and improve connectivity and walkability. 	Mid-Term	Standalone	DMC	EDC		
Create and communicate a clear market position for the Port of Morehead City as a place for continued operation, new investment, and future expansion.	Mid-Term	Standalone	EDC	PMC		
Identify critically important redevelopment and infill sites and designate for intentional marketing, shared development, and/or special programs.	Mid-Term	Standalone	EDC			
Establish an Arts District to formalize efforts by local artists and independent galleries to promote their work to residents and visitors.	Mid-Term	Standalone	ACCC	PI, DMC		
Create an alliance of stakeholders—including representatives from the Arts Council of Carteret County, local artists, local students, the Town—to support and guide the Arts District.	Short-Term	Ongoing	ACCC	PI, CCC		
Develop and maintain a database of historic and cultural sites in Morehead City to help establish partnerships to protect and promote these assets, including installing historic designation markers.	Mid-Term	Ongoing	PI	DMC		
Establish programs to promote Morehead City's cultural heritage to youth in local schools. (e.g., collaboration with the History Museum of Carteret County to collect and distribute oral histories from longtime residents of Morehead City.)	Mid-Term	Ongoing	PI	CCPS, CCC		
Establish a cultural heritage trail that integrates and connects cultural assets in Downtown Morehead City on both sides of Arendell Street, including various sites in the Morehead City Historic District.	Short-Term	Standalone	DMC			
Establish cultural festivals to amplify Latinx and other heritages in Morehead City.	Mid-Term	Ongoing	AD			
Collect and analyze data on the number of attendees at Morehead City's events to help measure economic development and guide future resource allocation.	Short-Term	Ongoing	AD			
Implement water access mini parks in the western part of Town where there is demand for it (see the Parks and Recreation Plan).	Mid-Term	Ongoing	PR	PS		

\*Administration (AD), City Council (CC), Morehead City Economic Development Coordinator\* (EDC), Planning Board (PB), Planning & Inspections (PI), Parks & Recreation (PR), Public Services (PS), Arts Council of Carteret County (ACCC), Carteret County Public Schools (CCPS), Downtown Morehead City (DMC), Port of Morehead City (PMC), Down East Rural Planning Organization (RPO), Carteret Community College (CCC), Carteret Health Care (CHC)





## Update the UDO

A new UDO would be the primary way for the Town to implement the future land use map. In particular, the following potential UDO updates could be considered:

- Update and modernize the zoning districts.
- Specify the allowable uses, residential density, non-residential intensity, lot coverage, lot size, etc. as a way to align the development regulations with the vision of this Plan.
- Allow a larger range of housing types, sizes, and densities (e.g., live/work units, zero-lot-line homes, accessory dwelling units, etc.).
- Rewrite codes related to accessory dwelling units to include considerations for maximum percentage of main structure, maximum and minimum sizes, attached vs. detached, and density calculations.
- Refine standard landscaping and screen requirements.
- Promote “traditional neighborhood features” such as: streets and paths suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles; residences with narrow front setbacks, front porches, and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking; parks, schools, civic buildings, and stores within walking distance of homes; narrower streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures; buildings oriented to the street with parking behind; and in-scale development that fits the local context.



## Downtown Master Plan

A Downtown Master Plan could address the management of public spaces, the enhancement of community character, and the expansion of place-making options. Such a plan should be driven by the community to establish a vision for Downtown Morehead City. It should ultimately be responsive to a growing and changing population, tourism demands, and facilitate local business while enhancing livability. The Downtown Master Plan could explore the following topics:

- The purpose and goals of the Arts District and how to establish it;
- The preservation and celebration of local historic sites;
- The implementation of a trolley along the railroad as a form of transit for seasonal or event needs;
- The aesthetics of the railroad track landscaping;
- The streetscape design guides for Arendell Street;
- The north-south connectivity, particularly across the tracks; and
- The walkability of Downtown.





# Funding Opportunities

Funding needs are associated with many of the physical projects associated with transportation improvements, park construction, and infrastructure. The competition for public resources is intense, and implementation will require Town revenue sources, grant applications, public-private partnerships, and state or federal funds where available. The following list provides a glimpse of potential funding sources.

**Capital Improvement Program.** The Town’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) assigns funding for equipment and facilities for the Town.

**General Fund.** Some actions can be funded through the existing budgets and departmental responsibilities and therefore do not add the operating expenses of the Town.

**Grants.** A variety of grants are available to advance implementation. While some grants will require a local match, positioning the Town to be competitive for funding opportunities is critical. Another consideration is that staff time will be necessary to apply for and administer grants.

**Public-Private Partnerships.** This type of financing uses private financing to build public infrastructure, transportation projects, and public amenities like parks.

**Transportation Funding.** Competitive federal and state funding programs can provide additional funding for transportation improvements and planning processes. The Morehead City Plan 2032 seeks to better align local priorities with the state’s prioritization process for funding transportation projects.

# Conclusion

As Morehead City approaches its 175th anniversary, The Morehead City Plan 2032 continues the path forward for growth, development, and investment in the Town. Building on the Morehead City Core Land Use Plan, the plan provides a blueprint for land use decisions and is an important step in reassessing the rules and regulations expressed in the Town's Unified Development Ordinance. The Morehead City Plan 2032 rests firmly on a foundation built from the significant contribution of time, energy, and ideas from residents, business owners, visitors, staff, and elected officials as well as past planning efforts. This foundation is expressed in a community vision and five planning principles that percolate through the Plan’s understanding of existing conditions and the way it prepares the Town to respond to future trends. As the Town continues to progress through 2032 and beyond, we can look to the vision and principles in this plan to help guide its future.

*Grow With Purpose*

*Enrich Our Culture*

*Move With Ease*

*Cultivate New Opportunities*

*Live With Water*





# APPENDICES

CAMA Requirement Matrix  
Glossary of Terms  
Threatened and Endangered Species  
Engagement Summary

## CAMA Requirement Matrix

Matrix for Land Use Plan Elements | 15A NCAC 7B .0702 Page References

Organization of the Plan	
Matrix that shows the location of the required elements as set forth in this Rule	135-139
Community Concerns and Aspirations	
Description of the dominant growth-related conditions that influence land use, development, water quality, and other environmental concerns in the planning area:	19-22, 25
Description of the land use and development topics most important to the future of the planning area, including:	
• Public Access	89, 91, 97, 102
• Land Use Compatibility	85, 97, 102
• Infrastructure Carrying Capacity	85, 97, 102
• Natural Hazard Areas	97, 102
• Water Quality	85, 97, 102
Community Vision	
Description of the general physical appearance and form that represents the local government’s plan for the future. It shall include objectives to be achieved by the plan and identify changes that may be needed to achieve the planning vision	57
Existing and Emerging Conditions	
Population, Housing, and Economy	
Discussion of the following data and trends:	
• Permanent population growth trends using data from the two most decennial Censuses	17
• Current permanent and seasonal population estimates	17
• Key population characteristics, including age and income	18, 34
• 30-year projections of permanent and seasonal population in five-year increments	19-20
• Estimate of current housing stock, including permanent and seasonal units, tenure, and types of units (single-family, multifamily, and manufactured)	35
• Description of employment by major sectors and community economic activity	31



Natural Systems		
Description of natural features in the planning jurisdiction to include:		
• Areas of Environmental Concern (AECs) as set forth in Subchapter 15A NCAC 07H	46	
• Soil characteristics, including limitations for septic tanks, erodibility, and other factors related to development	48	
• Environmental Management Commission (EMC) water quality classifications and related use support designations	51	
• Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) shellfish growing areas and water quality conditions	51	
• Flood and other natural hazard areas	48-49	
• Storm surge areas	49-50	
• Non-coastal wetlands, including forested wetlands, shrub-scrub wetlands, and freshwater marshes	45, 47	
• Water supply watersheds or wellhead protection areas	51	
• Primary nursery areas	45, 47	
• Environmentally fragile areas, such as wetlands, natural heritage areas, areas containing endangered species, prime wildlife habitats, or maritime forests	45, 47	
• Additional natural features or conditions identified by the local government	48	
Environmental Conditions		
Discussion of environmental conditions within the planning jurisdiction to include an assessment of the following conditions and features:		
• Status and changes of surface water quality, including:		
• Impaired streams from the most recent Division of Water Resources (DWR) Basin Planning Branch Reports	51	
• Clean Water Act 303 (d) List	51	
• Other comparable data	51	
• Current situations and trends on permanent and temporary closures of shellfishing waters as determined by the Report of Sanitary Survey by the Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section of the DMF	51	
• Areas experiencing chronic waste water treatment malfunctions	42	
• Areas with water quality or public health problems related to non-point source pollution	52	
• Areas subject to recurrent flooding, storm surges, and high winds	48-49	
• Areas experiencing significant shoreline erosion as evidenced by the presence of threatened structures or public facilities	48	
• Environmentally fragile areas (as defined in Part (c)(2)(A)(ix) of this Rule) or areas where resource functions are impacted as a result of development	46-47	
• Natural resource areas that are being impacted or lost as a result of incompatible development. These may include, but are not limited to the following: coastal wetlands, protected open space, and agricultural land	52	

Existing Land Use and Development		
MAP of existing land use patterns	23-24	
• Description of the existing land use patterns	21	
• Estimates of the land area allocated to each land use category	23-24	
• Characteristics of each land use category	21	
MAP of historic, cultural, and scenic areas designated by a state or federal agency or by the local government	11-12	
• Descriptions of the historic, cultural, and scenic areas	11-12	
Community Facilities		
Evaluation of existing and planned capacity, location, and adequacy of community facilities to include:		
MAP of existing and planned public and private water supply service areas	41	
• Description of existing public and private water supply systems to include:		
• Existing condition	41	
• Existing capacity	41	
• Documented overflows, bypasses, or other problems that may degrade water quality or constitute a threat to public health as documented by the DWR	41	
• Future water supply needs based on population projections	41	
MAP of existing and planned public and private waste water service areas	42	
• Description of existing public and private waste water systems to include:		
• Existing condition	42	
• Existing capacity	42	
• Documented overflows, bypasses, or other problems that may degrade water quality or constitute a threat to public health as documented by the DWR	42	
• Future wastewater system needs based on population projections	42	
MAP of existing and planned multimodal transportation systems and port and airport facilities	29-30	
• Description of any highway segments deemed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as having unacceptable service as documented in the most recent NCDOT Transportation and/or Thoroughfare Plan	27	
• Description of highway facilities on the current thoroughfare plan or current transportation improvement plan	28	
• Description of the impact of existing transportation facilities on land use patterns	28	
• Description of the existing public stormwater management system	43	
• Identification of existing drainage problems and water quality issues related to point-source discharges of stormwater runoff	44	



Matrix for Land Use Plan Elements   15A NCAC 7B .0702		
Future Land Use		
Policies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Policies that exceed the use standards and permitting requirements found in Subchapter 7H, State Guidelines for Areas of Environmental Concern</li></ul>		N/A
Policies that address the Coastal Resources Commission’s (CRC’s) management topics:		
<b>Public Access Management Goal:</b> <i>Maximize public access to the beaches and the public trust waters of the coastal region.</i>		
The planning objectives for public access are local government plan policies that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Address access needs and opportunities</li></ul>	CNO 1.6	91
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify strategies to develop public access</li></ul>	LWW 3.1	98
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Address provisions for all segments of the community, including persons with disabilities</li></ul>	MWE 1.2; MWE 1.6	89
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>For oceanfront communities, establish access policies for beach areas targeted for nourishment</li></ul>		N/A
<b>Land Use Compatibility Management Goal:</b> <i>Ensure that development and use of resources or preservation of land balance protection of natural resources and fragile areas with economic development, and avoids risks to public health, safety, and welfare.</i>		
The planning objectives for land use compatibility are local government plan policies that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Characterize future land use and development patterns</li></ul>	GWP 1.1; GWP 1.2; GWP 1.4; GWP 2.1	85
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish mitigation criteria and concepts to minimize conflicts</li></ul>	LWW 1.11	97
<b>Infrastructure Carrying Capacity Management Goal:</b> <i>Ensure that public infrastructure systems are sized, located, and managed so the quality and productivity of AECs and other fragile areas are protected or restored.</i>		
The planning objectives for infrastructure carrying capacity are local government plan policies that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish service criteria</li></ul>	GWP 1.5; GWP 2.2; GWP 2.3; GWP 2.4	85
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure improvements minimize impacts to AECs and other fragile areas</li></ul>	LWW 1.1; LWW 1.4; LWW 2.5; LWW 2.6	97-98
<b>Natural Hazard Areas Management Goal:</b> <i>Conserve and maintain barrier dunes, beaches, floodplains, and other coastal features for their natural storm protection functions and their natural resources giving recognition to public health, safety, and welfare issues.</i>		
The planning objectives for natural hazard areas are local government plan policies that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish mitigation and adaptation concepts and criteria for development and redevelopment, including public facilities</li></ul>	LWW 1.10	97
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Minimize threats to life, property and natural resources resulting from erosion, high winds, storm surge, flooding, or other natural hazards</li></ul>	LWW 1.2; LWW 1.3;LWW 1.6; LWW 1.7; LWW 1.8; LWW 1.9;	97

Matrix for Land Use Plan Elements   15A NCAC 7B .0702		
<b>Water Quality Management Goal:</b> <i>Maintain, protect, and, where possible, enhance water quality in all coastal wetlands, rivers, streams, and estuaries.</i>		
The planning objectives for water quality are local government plan policies that:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish strategies and practices to prevent or control nonpoint source pollution</li></ul>	GWP 2.4; LWW 2.1; LWW 2.2; LWW 2.6	98
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish strategies and practices to maintain or improve water quality</li></ul>	LWW 1.4; LWW 1.5; LWW 2.3; LWW 2.4	98
Future Land Use Map		
MAP of future land uses that depicts the policies for growth and development and the desired future patterns of land use and development with consideration given to natural system constraints and infrastructure		65-66
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Descriptions of land uses and development associated with the future land use map designations</li></ul>		67-80
Tools for Managing Development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Description of the role of plan policies, including the future land use map, in local decisions regarding land use and development</li></ul>		84
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Description of the community’s development management program, including local ordinances, codes, and other plans and policies</li></ul>		100
Action Plan and Implementation Schedule		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Description of actions that will be taken by the local government to implement policies that meet the CRC’s management topic goals and objectives, specifying fiscal year(s) in which each action is anticipated to start and finish</li></ul>		101-102
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identification of specific steps the local government plans to take to implement the policies, including adoption and amendment of local ordinances, other plans, and special projects</li></ul>		125-126



# Glossary of Terms

Acronym/ Term	Acronym Definition	Description
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic	A measure of how many vehicles pass through a specific location along a roadway.
ACS	American Community Survey	A demographics survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The ACS is sent to a representative subset of households each year and contains more detailed questions than the Decennial Census, which is held every ten years.
AEC	Area of Environmental Concern	Areas of natural importance that may be easily destroyed by erosion or flooding or that have environmental, social, economic, or aesthetic values that make it valuable to North Carolina.
Breakbulk	N/A	Denoting a system of transporting cargo as separate pieces rather than in containers.
CAMA	Coastal Area Management Act of 1974	A law that requires the 20 coastal counties in North Carolina to prepare a land use plan that outlines the existing conditions and analyzes planned future actions in sensitive coastal areas in accordance with the guidelines outlined by the North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission (CRC).
CCATS	Carteret County Area Transportation System	Carteret County's accessible public transportation service for all residents and guests.
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan	Morehead City adopts this five-year plan along with the municipal budget to improve facilities and systems in the Town, including government and parks facilities as well as water, sewer, sanitation, and stormwater infrastructure.
CRC	North Carolina Coastal Resources Commission	A division of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality created by the CAMA (see above) that establishes policies for the North Carolina Coastal Management Program. The CRC designates AECs (see above), adopts rules and policies for coastal development, and certifies local land use plans like The Morehead City Plan 2032.
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan	CTPs are intended to identify local needs and goals for improving the transportation system. Carteret County's CTP was adopted in 2014. An updated CTP is currently being developed.
ETJ	Extraterritorial Jurisdiction	An area outside a Town or City limits in which the Town or City can regulate land use and zoning. The Morehead City Plan 2032 includes both the Town of Morehead City and the ETJ.
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	An agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security responsible for leading the U.S. to prepare for, protect and mitigate against, respond to, and recover from the impacts of natural disasters, man-made incidents, or terrorist events.
FLUM	Future Land Use Map	A map created as part of The Morehead City Plan 2032 that describes the Town's vision for land use in the year 2032. It classifies each parcel to a Future Land Use and establishes policies to support this vision.
LID	Low-Impact Development	Practices for managing stormwater/runoff that mimic natural systems, helping to protect water quality and habitat. LID methods include rain gardens, green roofs, and pervious pavement.

Acronym/ Term	Acronym Definition	Description
MGD	Million gallons per day	N/A
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation	The North Carolina Department of Transportation is the agency responsible for construction, operation, and maintenance of the State's multimodal transportation system.
NCRR	North Carolina Railroad Company	A private company that owns and manages the 317-mile rail corridor from Charlotte to the Morehead City Port.
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program	A program managed by FEMA (see previous definition) to provide insurance to help reduce the socioeconomic impact of floods.
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	A federal agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce that forecasts weather, monitors oceanic and atmospheric conditions, and manages marine endangered species.
OSBM	Office of State Budget and Management	A North Carolina state agency that oversees the state's budget process and publishes economic and demographic data.
Outparcel	N/A	A building lot separated or separable from a commercial development, the selling of which provides liquidity for the developer.
ROW	Right-of-Way	A right-of-way (ROW) is a type of easement granted or reserved over the land for transportation purposes, such as a highway, public footpath, rail transport, canal, as well as electrical transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines.
SFHA	Special Flood Hazard Area	The area that will be flooded by a flood event that has a 1% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year.
STC	Strategic Transportation Corridors	A network of corridors identified by NCDOT as the state's key multimodal passageways. US 70 is identified as an STC.
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program	A multi-year, statewide intermodal program of transportation projects consistent with statewide transportation planning processes: Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP).
UDO	Unified Development Ordinance	A Unified Development Ordinance is a local policy instrument that combines traditional zoning and subdivision regulations, along with other desired Town regulations, such as design guidelines, sign regulations, and stormwater management into one document.
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture	A U.S. agency responsible for developing and implementing federal laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food. This includes the soil survey shown in this plan.
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant	N/A
Zoning	N/A	Zoning is local governance of the “uses” of land such as residential, commercial, industrial, that lends additional guidance on building sizes, open spaces, and streets.



# Threatened and Endangered Species

The following table contains species that are known to or are believed to occur in Carteret County, based on the species current range, as defined by the USFWS.

Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Where Listed	ESA Listing Status
Birds	Black Rail	Laterallus jamaicensis	Wherever found	Species of Concern
Birds	Eastern Black rail	Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. jamaicensis	Wherever found	Threatened
Birds	Piping Plover	Charadrius melodus	[Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations] - Wherever found, except those areas where listed as endangered.	Threatened
Birds	Piping Plover	Charadrius melodus	[Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations] - Wherever found, except those areas where listed as endangered.	Threatened
Birds	Piping Plover	Charadrius melodus	[Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations] - Wherever found, except those areas where listed as endangered.	Threatened
Birds	Red knot	Calidris canutus rufa	Wherever found	Threatened
Birds	Red-cockaded woodpecker	Picoides borealis	Wherever found	Endangered
Birds	Roseate tern	Sterna dougallii dougallii	U.S.A. (Atlantic Coast south to NC), Canada (Newf., N.S, Que.), Bermuda	Endangered
Flowering Plants	Rough-leaved loosestrife	Lysimachia asperulaefolia	Wherever found	Endangered
Flowering Plants	Seabeach amaranth	Amaranthus pumilus	Wherever found	Threatened
Insects	Monarch butterfly	Danaus plexippus	Wherever found	Candidate
Mammals	Little brown bat	Myotis lucifugus	Wherever found	Under Review
Mammals	Northern Long-Eared Bat	Myotis septentrionalis	Wherever found	Endangered
Mammals	Tricolored bat	Perimyotis subflavus	Wherever found	Proposed Endangered
Mammals	West Indian Manatee	Trichechus manatus	Wherever found	Threatened
Mammals	West Indian Manatee	Trichechus manatus	Wherever found	Threatened

Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Where Listed	ESA Listing Status
Reptiles	American alligator	Alligator mississippiensis	Wherever found	Similarity of Appearance (Threatened)
Reptiles	Green sea turtle	Chelonia mydas	Green sea turtles originating from the North Atlantic Ocean, bounded by the following lines and coordinates: 48 degrees N. Lat. in the north, along the western coasts of Europe and Africa (west of 5.5 degrees W. Long.); north of 19 degrees N. Lat. in the east; bounded by 19 degrees N., 65.1 degrees W. to 14 degrees N., 65.1 degrees W. then 14 degrees N., 77 degrees W. in the south and west; and along the eastern coasts of the Americas (north of 7.5 degrees N., 77 degrees W.)	Threatened
Reptiles	Hawksbill sea turtle	Eretmochelys imbricata	Wherever found	Endangered
Reptiles	Hawksbill sea turtle	Eretmochelys imbricata	Wherever found	Endangered
Reptiles	Kemp's ridley sea turtle	Lepidochelys kempii	Wherever found	Endangered
Reptiles	Leatherback sea turtle	Dermochelys coriacea	Wherever found	Endangered
Reptiles	Leatherback sea turtle	Dermochelys coriacea	Wherever found	Endangered
Reptiles	Loggerhead sea turtle	Caretta caretta	Northwest Atlantic Ocean DPS - Loggerhead sea turtles originating from the Northwest Atlantic Ocean west of 40 degrees W. Long	Threatened



# Engagement Summary

*Steering Committee Meeting #1 Summary*

*Stakeholder Focus Groups Summary*

*Public Workshop #1 Summary*

*Steering Committee Meeting #2 Summary*

*West Carteret High School Event Summary*

*Survey #1 Summary*

*Steering Committee Meeting #3 Summary*

*Engagement Series #2 Summary*

*Steering Committee Meeting #4 Summary*

*Steering Committee Meeting #5 Summary*

*Final Online Survey Summary*



