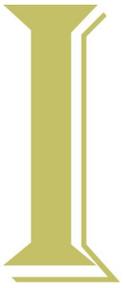


Introduction

**2002 - 2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
THE CITY OF NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA**



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D R A F T

A. Planning Methodology

INTRODUCTION

1. *Purpose and Components of a Comprehensive Plan*

A Comprehensive Plan is a governing body's long-range policy statement outlining its future development. Comprehensive planning is one process available to local governments for addressing future needs and desires. As growth and development occurs and public funds are spent to provide and maintain facilities, coordination is necessary to preserve community values and allocate public funds prudently. It is the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Provide a vision for the future and serve as a general guide in the day-to-day decisions of City government;
- Establish goals and implementation strategies for managing the future growth and development of the City;
- Inventory and analyze existing land use, growth trends, natural resources, population, economic factors, public facilities, housing, environment and natural resources; and
- Make recommendations for the general development of the City.

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for allocating resources among competing needs.

As an official statement of public policy, a Comprehensive Plan serves as a valuable guide for other governmental agencies, the business community, and private citizens.

A Comprehensive Plan assists present and future Boards of Aldermen to make routine decisions, to review development proposals, and to schedule public improvements.

A Comprehensive Plan is a governing body's long-range policy statement outlining its future physical development.

This twenty-year plan is based on existing factors and conditions, and should be viewed as a flexible guide. As time passes, new data and unforeseen developments will necessitate updates to the plan. Ideally, the Planning Board will review the goals and strategies yearly and provide a status report to the Board of Alderman. The Comprehensive Plan should undergo a major review every five years after adoption.

The plan is a journey, not a destination.

2. Role of Planning Board and Steering Committee

The Steering Committee and the Planning Board with the assistance of City staff and consultants guided the development of this plan.

3. Plan Vision

The vision statement developed by the Steering Committee and the Planning Board has two purposes:

- To provide a foundation for identifying issues, defining goals, and developing achievable objectives.
- To help the City and other stakeholders prioritize issues and build consensus on a unified approach for the City's future.

New Bern Vision Statement:

The City of New Bern seeks to maintain its unique historic character, cultural heritage, and excellent quality of life. In doing so, it supports growth and development that is environmentally and economically sustainable, appropriately designed and located.

4. Plan Guiding Principles

The Steering Committee and Planning Board identified the following principles to guide them in the development of the plan's goals and strategies:

- Enhance economic vitality and diversity
- Promote Strong and healthy neighborhoods
- Preserve historical and natural assets
- Broaden appeal to people of all ages and cultures
- Provide public facilities and services to meet the needs of its citizens

- Enhance physical beauty and aesthetic appeal
- Promote itself as a destination for tourism, entertainment, commerce and retirees
- Promote a desired land use pattern and development character
- Assume an increased leadership role in the local community and in eastern North Carolina

5. *Plan Goals and Strategies*

The Comprehensive Plan includes goal statements for a variety of issue areas. These goal statements list the desired outcomes and are the result of analysis and input provided by planning participants. Goals are long-term objectives that, when achieved, make the City a better place to live and work. The City's goals are its vision for the future.

Strategies are actions that the City takes to implement the plan and consist primarily of enforcement, administrative, promotional, and developmental actions that help the City accomplish its goals.

The development of strategies to implement goals is an essential component of this Comprehensive Plan.

6. *Plan Development*

Comprehensive planning factors include:

- Geographic,
- Demographic, and
- Economic

Goal: A desired outcome—a target

Strategy: long-term action plan to achieve a given goal.

A Comprehensive Plan includes the collection and analysis of relevant geographic, demographic, and economic conditions of the study area.

Projections made from available data are used to develop guidelines for the future growth of the City.

Geographic:

Geographic data reveals the various advantages and limitations of the natural environment, including water and other natural resources, topography, and soils. Equally important is the evaluation of the area's growth potential in terms of population the land can support. Factors of size, composition, basic characteristics, and spatial distribution of the population significantly affect future development.

Demographic:

The 2000 Census is the primary source of demographic data.

Economic:

Land use planning requires economic analysis as a basis for projecting potential economic growth.

7. Citizen Participation

Although public hearings are required for plan adoption, the planning effort solicited citizen participation from the beginning of the process.

A Citizen Participation Plan was prepared. (See Appendix 1) The Board of Aldermen appointed a Steering Committee that met regularly throughout 2002 and 2003. In the spring of 2002, 12,000 citizen surveys were distributed and the results analyzed. Public input forums were held and information pamphlets were distributed throughout the process. Prior to the initial public meeting, workshops attended by the Board of Aldermen, Planning Board, Steering Committee, City staff, and consultants were conducted to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. Presentations to civic organizations and Planning Board discussions occurred regularly throughout the planning process.

8. Plan Adoption

Upon completion, the
Comprehensive Plan will

undergo adoption procedures. Citizens will have the opportunity to review and comment on the plan. At least one public hearing will be held before the Planning Board recommends the plan to the Board of Aldermen. Once the Planning Board recommends the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Alderman, the Board of Alderman will vote on its adoption.

Upon adoption, the Board of Aldermen may adopt or amend ordinances to implement the recommended strategies.

9. Plan Implementation

Once the Board of Alderman adopts the plan, it is the responsibility of departments within City Government to implement the plan's strategies and to achieve the stated goals. Programs and Ordinances may be enacted to achieve specific goals.

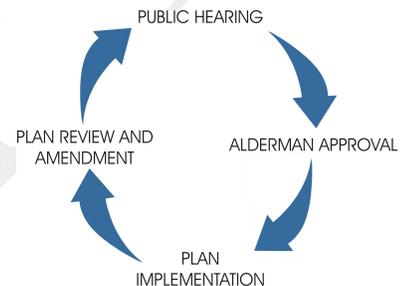
10. Planning in New Bern

The development of a Comprehensive Plan by a locality is not required by the State. New Bern by its own initiative, undertook this planning effort to better position itself for growth and development and to better plan for the allocation of resources and funding of public service programs. City and State funds were used to develop the plan, which meets the requirements of G.S. 160A, Article 19.

In addition to this Comprehensive Plan, New Bern has a long history of planning. Plans, studies, and regulations contributing to the development and subsequent implementation of this Comprehensive Plan include:

- Regional Land Use Plan
- Land use Ordinance
- 2000 Water Quality Report
- Water Supply Management Plan

- Riverstation
Neighborhood
Plan



- The History and Architecture of Long Wharf and Greater Duffyfield
- Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan for New Bern, Trent Woods, Bridgetown, River Bend
- A Walk Through New Bern's African American Heritage
- Preliminary Engineering report; Martin Marietta Quarry Site Water Reclamation Project
- Retail Market Assessment: New Bern Urban Design Plan 2000
- Local Water Supply Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Greater Duffyfield Community Development Strategic Plan
- Historic District Guidelines
- Urban Design Plan 1990 / 2000
- Waterfront Conservation and Development Plan

New Bern employs a professional planning staff to provide planning expertise, administration, and enforcement of ordinances and regulations. The Planning Staff provides support to the Planning Board. Planning in New Bern is proactive and comprehensive in nature.

B. This is New Bern, North Carolina

1. History

New Bern, the second oldest town in North Carolina, was settled in 1710 by German Palatine and Swiss colonists led by Baron Christopher de Graffenried. Named for the City of Bern, Switzerland, the Town was located on the triangle of land at the confluence of the Neuse and Trent Rivers (see **Exhibit I-A**). Baron de Graffenried purchased the land from the Tuscarora Indians who had a small settlement here known as Chattawka, an Indian word said to mean, “where the fish are taken out.”

The original settlers suffered with the climate, a lack of provisions and supplies, diseases, and Indian problems. Christopher de Graffenried and the surveyor, John Lawson, were taken prisoner by the Tuscarora Indians; Lawson was burned at the stake, but de Graffenried was spared. Once the war with the Tuscarora Indians ended, New Bernians looked to the natural resources for their support. Tar, pitch, and turpentine along with other native products loaded down ships bound for England, New England, and the West Indies. The ships would return with rum, molasses, sugar, and manufactured goods.

In 1660, when King Charles II had been restored to the English throne, he issued a “Carolina Charter” granting eight of his loyal supporters (called the Lords Proprietor) wide areas of land in the New World. The area spread from Virginia to the Spanish border of Florida and from the Atlantic Ocean to the “South Seas” or the Pacific Ocean. It was called Carolina from the word, “Carolus,” the Latin word for Charles, in honor of the King. William, Earl of Craven, was one of the original Lords Proprietor, and it is from his family name that Craven County got its name. New Bern became the seat of the Craven Precinct (now County) in 1722.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the river port had grown in size and importance. Because of its

central location, the colonial assembly often met in New Bern. The Colony's first printing press was established in New Bern in 1749 and two years later, the printer, James Davis, published the colony's first newspaper, pamphlet, and book.

The Royal Governor, William Tryon, saw the need for a permanent capital in the growing colony and selected New Bern as the site. Tryon Palace, first colonial and state capitol building of North Carolina, was designed by the English architect, John Hawks. The palace completed in 1770, made New Bern the political center of North Carolina. New Bern became a center of events leading to the American Revolution. The first publicly organized assembly was called here in 1774.

Early in 1777, the first state government under a new constitution was begun under Richard Caswell. In the 1790's the growing population of the western counties caused the General Assembly to move the State Capital to Raleigh, a more central location.

The Federal Era saw New Bern develop fully into a City. The first school to be chartered in North Carolina, the New Bern Academy, along with the Masonic Temple and Theater, the Episcopal Church and other churches built by the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic congregations illustrated educational, civic, and religious sophistication in New Bern.

Union forces captured New Bern early in the Civil War (March 14, 1862). The Northern officers established headquarters in Neuse River mansions while other soldiers moved into other houses throughout the City. The Union forces occupied the City for the rest of the war. For this reason, New Bern survived with less physical damage than many other small southern towns.

After the difficult period of Reconstruction, New Bern entered its third era of development. Before, and well after 1900, fine quality pine, cypress, oak, and other hardwoods kept the lumber mills busy. By

1916, there were sixteen lumber mills in New Bern. New Bern also became a source of seafood.

Seafood that was not bought locally or shipped out was processed in fertilizer plants.

With the coming of World War II, the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) at Cherry Point was opened August 16, 1941, on the Neuse River halfway between New Bern and Morehead City. The many personnel and marines coming to the area helped boost the local economy. Unfortunately, in the years following the war downtown New Bern, like most downtowns across the nation, began to suffer from the strain of businesses moving out to the new suburbs. Buildings became vacant and deteriorated and the tax base declined.

One catalyst for change in the downtown was the reconstruction of Tryon Palace. In the 19th century, George Street had been extended over the original Palace foundations and dozens of houses and businesses were built on either side. A bridge crossed the Trent River at the end of the street.

In 1945, the legislature created the Tryon Palace Commission, a body of 25 persons appointed by the governor, and charged it with the reconstruction of the original Palace from its original plans on its original foundation. As part of its commitment, the state further agreed to maintain and operate the restoration when it opened to the public. The Palace was opened to the public in April 1959, as North Carolina's first great public history project.

Then in 1970, under a federal urban renewal program, the Trent River waterfront was cleared of nearly 40 buildings and three blocks of undeveloped land became available. Planning for present day downtown began in 1977 with the development of the Central Business District Plan. The plan defined the role of the city's historic assets and waterfront could

play to expand tourism, recreation and housing market to attract retirees. A private non-profit grew from a committee of the Chamber of Commerce known today as the Swiss Bear Downtown Development Corporation. Swiss Bear became the facilitator and catalyst for downtown revitalization and development. New Bern was on the first five cities to be selected to participate in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street program.

In 1990, the City of New Bern along with Swiss Bear Downtown Development Corporation developed an Urban Design Plan and initiated many projects including the revitalization of Union Point Park. The Park is located at the confluence of the Neuse and Trent Rivers and is a major focal point for recreation and community activities including the annual 4th of July Celebration. The revitalization of the downtown and waterfront, historic preservation, redevelopment of Union Point Park, streetscape improvements, the construction of New Bern Riverfront Convention Center and development of key public spaces have helped to make New Bern a downtown revitalization success story that is recognized across the state and nation.

2. Governing Structure

New Bern operates under a “Council-Manager” form of government, with a Mayor. The governing body is known as the “Board of Aldermen” rather than the “City Council.”

The City is divided into six voting wards. The Mayor is elected at-large by all eligible voters of the City. Eligible voters elect each of the six Aldermen from the ward in which he or she resides. The Mayor and Aldermen are elected to serve four-year terms.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen determine broad governmental policies and the City Manager carries out these policies.

There are approximately 430 City employees, who work in one of the following departments:

- Administration
- Finance
- Electric / Utilities
- Engineering (Water and Sewer)
- Fire
- Human Resources
- Planning & Inspections
- Police
- Public Works
- Parks & Recreation

Note: New Bern owns its own electrical distribution system, as well as a deep-well water system and sanitary sewer system.

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Exhibit I-A
New Bern, North Carolina
Regional Setting

