

TOWN OF BATH

1981

LAND USE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HD 268.B38T69 1981

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1981

COASTAL ZONE  
INFORMATION CENTER

SYNOPSIS OF THE LAND USE PLAN OF  
HISTORIC BATH: 1980-1990

I. Why Plan for the Town of Bath:

The Town of Bath, incorporated in 1705, is the oldest Town in North Carolina, located at the confluence of Bath Creek and Back Creek in central Beaufort County. Bath has played an important role since English colonists first began to settle in North Carolina. The harbor served as the port of entry for most of the state and it attracted a variety of historical figures, from the first General Assembly to the notorious pirate Blackbeard. Today, that scenic setting and the historic heritage makes Bath a pleasant year-round home for 184 people, and a favorite recreational spot for hundreds of tourists annually. Because of its role in history and its function in today's tourist/recreational economy, the Town of Bath has double incentive to plan seriously for its future.

Analysis of future demand shows potential for reversing the population decline in the Town limits itself. In 1980, the area's 3,514 persons represented an 8.6% increase since 1970. Additionally, the growth immediately adjacent to the current Town limits, the influx of seasonal population in Bayview/Kilby Island, the recent development of second or recreational homes across the Creeks, and the anticipated growth as reflected on the Land Classification Map, render a potentially bright growth period for the Town. The Land Use Plan, ostensibly expresses the realization that the Town must work hard and deliberately to help its chosen development scenario unfold.

II. Background:

In 1977, the Town Planning Board prepared a land use plan which featured a land design map, stipulating desired types of urban development on the Bath landscape and setting forth the foundation upon which the Town's zoning ordinance and historic district ordinance were built. In 1980, the Town Board of Commissioners received a grant under the Coastal Area Management Act for preparation of the Land Use Plan for Historic Bath: 1980-1990. This brief synopsis describes the purposes of that plan, its land classification scheme, the plan's information base, and briefly outlines responsibility for implementation of the Plan.

III. Purposes of the Land Use Plan:

The plan, then is the pivotal statement of policy for use by local, state and federal officials in decisions regarding Bath's development over the next 10 years. Additionally, it is an important piece in the Land Planning efforts of Beaufort County and an important element in the state's plan for rational and coordinated management of coastal resources.

The Coastal Area Management Act upon which this plan is based, works to protect areas of statewide concern within the coastal area. In the Bath planning district, Public Trust Water and Coastal wetlands (marshes) have been designated for such protection. The Act also, through its guidelines for land use planning (15 NCAC 7B), sets forth important principles of land use planning which have been emphasized in the Land Use Plan for Historic Bath:

1. This plan has environmental protection as a priority in its own right, while at the same time, advocates appropriate economic and community development.
2. This plan is based upon real citizen participation in the planning process, through the Bath Planning Board, citizen survey and public meetings.
3. This plan has a strong action orientation. Policies are stated as desired situations toward which the Town Board and Planning Board are willing to work.
4. This plan is a sound basis for continuation of earlier work in Bath to improve the community for those who live and visit there.
5. This plan is designed for continuous improvement as new information becomes available. It is to be updated at least once every five years, and more frequently, if required by the Planning Board.

These purposes and principles are represented in the heart of the Land Use Plan for Historic Bath, Section II, which sets forth explicit policy statements for the future. The goals of each major policy section are briefly listed below, leaving the reader to gain detail, alternatives considered, and implementation strategies from the Land Use Plan itself.\*

#### Resource Protection Goals.

Safeguard and perpetuate the biological, social, economic and aesthetic value of the community's coastal wetlands (salt marshes) and the public trust waters (of Bath and Back Creeks).

Reduce occasional coliform pollution in the community's water system.

Adequately provide water service to residents (and to potential developers).

Improve wastewater treatment in the Town, through initiating steps to install a community, land based wastewater treatment system.

Direct development with proper consideration of soils, pending completion of the detailed soils survey.

Preserve farmland in a manner which accommodates the best mix of other uses inside the Town limits and inside the one-mile area.

Guide development to protect historic properties and perpetuates the historic character and atmosphere of the community.

Rid the Town of man-made hazards, especially dilapidated, vacant structures.

Reduce the rate of erosion of the shores of Bath and Back Creek, especially at Handy's Point and Bonners Point.

\*The Plan may be obtained by contacting Pearson Chrismon, Town Administrator at 946-9253, or Jim Edwards, Planning Board Chairman, at 923-2911.

#### Resource Production Policies:

Use areas designated as prime agricultural land in the most productive manner.

Equip the Town to influence the impact which phosphate mining may have upon its planning area between now and the year 2000.

#### Economic and Community Development Policies:

Achieve levels, types, and patterns of economic and community development which are consistent with the historic character of the Town, raise local employment levels, and otherwise contribute to the economic base, so as to implement the Land Classification Map.

Promote location of light, non-polluting industry to employ local people.

Develop the Town's capacity to provide services to development mindful of impacts upon taxes and developers costs.

Promote development in the pattern stipulated in the 1990 Land Design Map, namely: encourage residential development near the current downtown and across the creeks; direct commercial activity near current commercial area; concentrate institutional and cultural development so as to allow other areas to develop more intensively; concentrate agricultural and forestry uses outside the existing Town limits; undertake redevelopment of the existing Town, especially within the historic district, near the school, in the older business section, and in areas now used for agriculture or which are vacant.

Support selected state and federal programs in the Bath planning area.

Support efforts of the Coast Guard to maintain the channels of Bath and Back Creek.

Prevent the location of large energy facilities within the one-mile planning area.

Accommodate future efforts to develop private or public access to the waters of the Creeks.

#### Continue Citizen Participation Policies:

Achieve meaningful participation in land-use related planning matters.

#### Other Policies:

Achieve better intergovernmental coordination with respect to development policies, budgeting, implementation, particularly with Beaufort County government.

In the Bath Land Use Plan, each of these broad policy directions are prefaced with a narrative which integrates the best available data; results from the citizen survey and field examinations, planning board work-sessions, and interviews with local, regional, and state officials; examination of current plans; and consultant assessment. Under each major section, alternative policies which the Planning Board considered are presented, with the chosen policy and often a more specific statement of intent (objective), and chosen implementation strategies.

As noted in the Plan, the Town has basically six methods of implementing the plan and thereby guiding development in the patterns desired. These options include fiscal policy (taxation), regulation (such as zoning), provision of capital improvements (water extension policy), condemnation (which could be used for purposes of protecting public safety and health and promoting the public good), purchase (which could be used in order to provide public access or increasing recreational land use) and persuasion (such as working with private owners to attract proper development upon voluntary sale).

From among these six options, the Land Use Plan for the Town of Bath relies upon improving its capacity to extend services to development, persuasion to implement its policies, and local ordinances and state and federal regulations, such as CAMA. Taken together, the implementation strategies represent a coordinated effort to stimulate rather than overly regulate development in the community over the next ten years.

#### IV. Land Classification:

The Land Classification Map for the Town of Bath and its one-mile planning jurisdiction designated land within the five standard categories of: developed; transition; community; rural; and conservation, and presents special sub-categories for the transition and rural categories. (see map on pg. 51)

As shown on the Land Classification Map, the already incorporated area is designated "developed" since it is served by public water, recreation facilities, and fire protection, and has an administrator, local zoning, and historic district ordinances.

In order to be most clear about types of development desired, the "transition" categories are sub-divided to promote or stimulate development in areas which were anticipated or recommended for potential extension of public services. "Mixed" uses, "residential", and "industrial" uses are thus promoted in areas outside the current Town limits under the modified "transition" category.

There are no areas designated as "community" within the planning area, since there are no unincorporated clusters of development within the one-mile area that will not require water and sewer services.

Primarily because of the Town's policy of preventing mining activity within the one-mile planning area and its recommendation to the County that no mining be allowed within five miles of the Town on the north side of the River, the rural category was sub-divided to include only agricultural and residential uses within the "rural production" areas of the planning districts.

Finally, the resource protection policies related to the community's salt marshes and public trust waters rendered them to be designated as "conservation", stipulating that no public funds, either direct or indirect, are to be used to encourage development in the waters of Bath and Back Creek or within the salt marshes themselves.

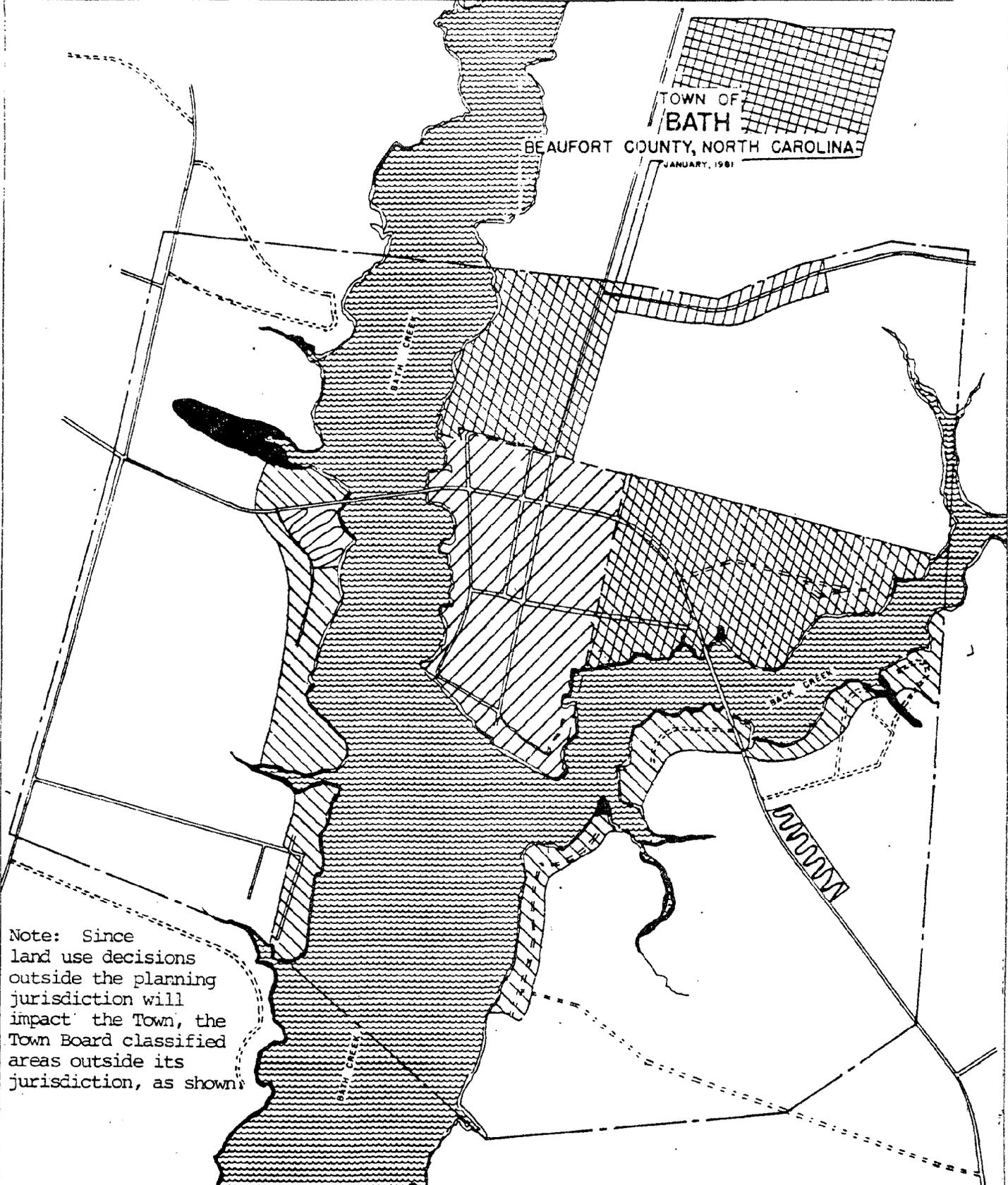
#### V. Information Base:

The remainder of the Bath Land Use Plan provides the information base upon which the aforementioned policy statements and Land Classification Map were developed by the Planning Board. Data and analyses are presented regarding the Town's population and economy; existing land use, current plans, policies, and regulations; constraints to development imposed by the land and by community facilities, and estimates of future demand. The Appendix includes material related to the construction of that information base, notably excerpts from the CAMA regulations and the citizen survey questionnaire.

#### VI. The Bath Land Use Plan and You:

The Bath Land Use Plan, then, provides a sound basis upon which future development, production, and preservation decisions can be made within the context of the total community. It provides a visual pattern of desired development, and contains a comprehensive array of action instruments for carrying out its policies. Beyond that, the Plan is dependent mostly upon the elected officials, as represented through the Planning Board, and ultimately upon the citizens of the planning area to work towards its fulfillment. Additionally, it is the responsibility of private developers and state and federal governmental agencies to consult this plan for Historic Bath as a statement by local citizens of the manner in which they want their community to grow and prosper.

TOWN OF  
**BATH**  
 BEAUFORT COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
 JANUARY, 1981



Note: Since land use decisions outside the planning jurisdiction will impact the Town, the Town Board classified areas outside its jurisdiction, as shown.

**LAND CLASSIFICATION**



SCALE 1" = 1500'



- |  |  |                    |  |
|--|--|--------------------|--|
|  DEVELOPED              |  NONE | COMMUNITY          |  CONSERVATION                                   |
|  TRANSITION-RESIDENTIAL |       | RURAL-AGRICULTURAL |  WATER (ALL SURFACE WATER IS ALSO CONSERVATION) |
|  TRANSITION-MIXED       |       | RURAL-RESIDENTIAL  |  |
|  TRANSITION-INDUSTRIAL  |       | RURAL-COMMERCIAL   |  |

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