



Town of Benson

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Adopted March 9, 2010



Town of Benson

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Acknowledgements

Mayor
William W. Massengill

Board of Commissioners
Frederick D. Nelson, Jr. – Mayor Pro-Tem
Ray G. Smith
Cassandra P. Stack
Will T. Chandler
John R. Bonner
Douglas Van Oglesby

Planning Director
Braston Newton

Land Use Advisory Committee
Elaine Todd
Landis Hall
Jackie McLamb
Larry Massengill
Jeremy Smith
Ben Murphrey
Keith Langdon

Planning Board
Elaine Todd
Landis Hall
Paul Innusa
Keith Curtis
Milliam Max Miller
Tracy McLamb
Johnny Allen Andrews
Prentice A. Tyndall, Jr.

Consultant
The Wooten Company

The development of the Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan was supported by an award from the Clean Water Partners' Infrastructure Program – Planning Grants.

This material is also based upon work supported in whole or part by an award from the Rural Economic Development Center. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Rural Economic Development Center.

Town of Benson

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Table of Contents

Section I – Introduction	1
The Land Use Planning Process.....	1
Plan Purpose	3
Plan Area	4
Key Growth Challenges and Opportunities	5
Section II – Goals and Objectives	6
Vision Statement.....	6
Goals, Objectives (Policies) & Implementation Strategies	6
Goal I - Keep Downtown and the Historic District Viable, Quaint and Thriving.....	6
Goal II - Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown.....	9
Goal III - Increase Quality Economic Development	10
Goal IV - Develop a Safe, Convenient and Efficient Multi-Modal Transportation System	11
Goal V - Create a Water and Sewer System which has the Capacity to Serve Benson’s Long-Term Needs.....	13
Goal VI - Maintain and Enhance the Attractiveness of Benson’s Built Environment	13
Goal VII - Create an Open Space Network Connected by Greenways ...	14
Goal VIII - Protect and Conserve Natural Features and Environmental Resources	15
Goal IX - Ensure Compatible Land Uses and Intergovernmental Cooperation.....	16
Section III – Future Land Use Map	17
Introduction	17
General Planning Area Considerations.....	17
Land Use Classifications.....	18
Activity Centers.....	20
Future Land Use Map	29
Appendix A – Benson Existing Conditions Report	31

SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

The Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan sets forth policies that are intended to influence the timing, type, location and quality of future development over the next 20 years for the Town of Benson’s future planning area. The timeframe for this plan was established at 20 years so that it plans far enough into the future to help inform decisions in the short run, but is not so far out in the future that it is unrealistic. Periodic updates to this plan are expected and necessary to keep the Plan relevant and useful.

The Plan goals are based on the several factors:

- The Town of Benson’s Strategic Plan, drafted 2008, summarized in Section I of this Plan document.
- The Town of Benson’s Vision Statement, adopted in 2006, shown in Section II of this Plan document.
- The Town of Benson Land Use Plan, adopted in 2003, summarized in Section I of this Plan document.
- An Existing Conditions Analysis, which is contained in Appendix A of this Plan Document.
- Key Planning and Growth Concerns and Opportunities, summarized in Section I of this Plan document.
- Planning principles in use by local governments in North Carolina and throughout the United States.

The Land Use Planning Process

The Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan process started in October 2008 when the Town hired The Wooten Company to help it develop its Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

A Land Use Advisory Committee was formed in January 2009 to guide the plan’s development. The Advisory Committee was composed of: Elaine Todd (Planning Board Member), Landis Hall (Planning Board Member), Jackie McLamb (citizen), Larry Massengill (ex Johnston County Planning Board Member, citizen), Jeremy Smith (Town Planning Director), Ben Murphrey (Town Planning Staff), and Keith Langdon (Town Manager).

The first phase in the process included gathering specific issues and concerns particular to the physical and social environment of the Town of Benson through a facilitated process with the Benson Land Use Advisory Committee beginning in January 2009. When the Advisory Committee was replaced by the full Planning

Board in April 2009, this step in the process was continued by the Benson Planning Board and new Planning Director, Braston Newton, through December 2009.

The first phase of the plan also included preparation of maps to show the existing Benson planning jurisdiction (City limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction or ETJ) and the proposed Planning Area. Both the Advisory Committee and the Planning Board agreed to extend the Benson Planning Area into Harnett County to acknowledge and plan for existing and future industrial development, address transportation demands, consider the provision of water and sewer services, and address environmental resources in this growing area between the Towns of Dunn and Benson.

The second phase of the land use planning process involved the development of an Existing Conditions Report, which was an inventory and analysis of historic and projected demographic and economic data and a review of the factors which influence growth and development in Benson. This report and associated maps (see Appendix A) identified existing conditions and plans that affect land use, including existing land use, population, housing, economy, transportation, utilities and natural features, as well as Benson's vision and strategic plan, and the plans of other localities that affect land use in Benson. This analysis also contains the results of interviews conducted in February 2009 with planning, utilities, economic development, emergency management staff members in Johnston and Harnett Counties as well as the Transportation Planner for the Upper Cape Fear Rural Planning Organization. The Existing Conditions Report starts with recent vision and strategy documents adopted in Benson, provides an analysis of existing conditions noted above, including relevant plans and programs, then concludes with key planning issues and concerns.

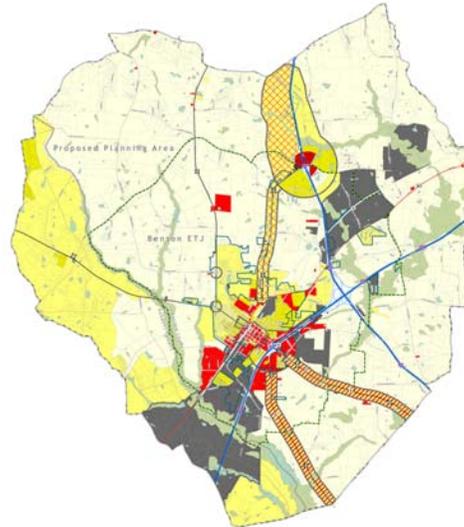
The third phase of the process involved conducting brainstorming sessions with the Planning Board, where they were asked questions regarding their vision for the future, elements to be included in plan, and their recommended planning area and plan timeframe. The Board used the brainstorming sessions to make recommendations on key planning issues and concerns. At the conclusion of this phase, a draft vision statement, specific goals, objectives and implementation strategies to support those objectives were prepared.

The fourth phase of the Plan included the development of a Future Land Use Map (FLUM). At the direction of the Planning Board, the first step in preparing the FLUM was the identification and definition of the activity centers, the primary areas to focus future development. Section III of the Plan discusses the final FLUM in detail, including the resulting land use classifications and details of each Activity Center (**see Future Land Use Map, page 29**).

Overall, in developing the Land Use Plan, the Land Use Advisory Committee met two times – 1/13/09, and 2/17/09 and the Planning Board met five times – 6/2/09, 7/28/09, 10/8/09, 10/15/09 and 10/28/09.

With a Final Draft Comprehensive Land Use Plan and FLUM completed in December, 2009, three public information meetings were held on 12/21/09, 1/14/10 and 1/21/10 to introduce the plan and answer questions.

The Final Draft of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan document was recommended for approval by the Planning Board at a joint session with the Board of Commissioners on February 2, 2010. A public comment period was held between February 2 and March 9. A Public Hearing on the Final Comprehensive Land Use Plan document and FLUM was held at a joint meeting with the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners on March 9, 2010. The Town of Benson Board of Commissioners adopted the plan with no changes on March 9, 2010.



Plan Purpose:

The Clean Water Partners' Infrastructure Program (as implemented by the NC Rural Center) provided the financial assistance for development of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan in order to ensure that, as a result of this plan, the Town implement best management practices, land use controls and development strategies that will serve to protect water quality within Benson's planning jurisdiction. Specifically, the land use plan must assist in addressing water quality protection issues in the portion of the Hannah Creek watershed located within the town's planning jurisdiction (i.e. Hannah Creek from its source to NC Highway 96 is currently classified as an impaired stream on the North Carolina 303(d) List). Although the town is not under an official moratorium, Special Order of Consent, or Judicial Order of Consent, the NC Division of Water Quality has effectively capped the capacity of the town's existing wastewater treatment facility by not allowing an expansion of the wastewater treatment plant due to the discharge location at Hannah Creek. One of the goals of developing the land use plan was to ensure that natural resource protection measures for the Hannah Creek watershed are adopted that will hopefully lead to improved water quality, removal of Hannah Creek from the impaired list, and afford an opportunity to expand the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant.

In addition, the Benson Board of Commissioners has authorized the preparation of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan in order to provide a guide for ensuring the vitality of existing development in the Town and for guiding the growth of developing areas.

Preparation of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan is appropriate because the existing Land Development Plan has not been updated to keep up with the growth of the Town. The previous plan was adopted 2003 but did not contain relevant data, did not give specific guidelines for land use policy and does not have a map.

A Comprehensive Land Use Plan is needed in order to accommodate anticipated population growth. The Town of Benson has had an overall population increase of 17.54% (or 2.5% annual average growth rate) between 2000 and 2007. Benson's population is projected to increase from 3,789 in 2010 to 6,348 by 2030. Using these population projections and assuming a future population density that mirror's that of today (2.24 persons per square miles), the Town will be demanding over 2,828 acres of land by the year 2030. In order to be prepared for this growth, it is appropriate to prepare a Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

A Comprehensive Land Use Plan is also needed to address those community concerns described in detail in Appendix A, covering areas such as housing and urban form, economic development, transportation, and community facilities.

Finally, in its 2009 Strategic Plan, the Town of Benson identified several community improvement goals that could be further addressed through a comprehensive land use plan, including decreasing crime, improving housing standards, improving community appearance especially along highway corridors, encouraging economic development including new technologies, and enhancing community cultural amenities.

Additional information on Benson's history, growth, transportation, natural features, historic properties, community facilities, and planning and growth issues and concerns can be found in Appendix A, Existing Conditions Report.

Plan Area:

The Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan covers the following Planning Area Components:

Benson Town Limits – The Town's incorporated municipal jurisdiction, subject to the full authority of the Town's regulatory powers.

Benson Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) – A jurisdictional area extending approximately 1 mile beyond the Benson Town Limits, which is subject to the Town’s development regulations (such as zoning and subdivision ordinances), but is otherwise subject to the remainder of the County’s regulatory oversight.

Benson Proposed Planning Area – The Benson planning area is composed of the Town’s current municipal boundary and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), which together make up its planning jurisdiction, plus other surrounding lands, the development of which has a direct impact on the Town of Benson. The land area included in the Benson Comprehensive Land Use Plan therefore includes areas within a five-mile radius from the center of Town but not in another municipality’s ETJ or planning area. This area goes beyond areas designated by Johnston County as “Benson Growth Areas” in its Comprehensive Plan, plus it extends into Harnett County to include the developing area at Interchange #77 on I-95 as well as other lands within that radius, splitting the distance between Benson and Dunn. The Town of Benson has determined that it should have influence over land uses that have a direct impact upon Benson, including land in Harnett County that is developing close to the Benson corporate limits. The Town’s influence in Harnett County could include extension of planning jurisdiction and/or joint planning.

Key Growth Challenges and Opportunities:

After reviewing the Town’s 2003 Land Use Plan, 2009 Strategic Plan and the Existing Conditions Report for this Land Use Plan, the following is a summary of the Town’s current planning and growth concerns and opportunities:

Challenges for the Future:

- Highway corridor appearance
- Housing –
 - high percentage of rental-occupied units
 - low median home values
- Quality of life
- Surface water quality / interbasin transfers
- Inflated land sale asking prices
- Adequate public investment



Strengths and Opportunities:

- Compact existing growth pattern
- Optimum location to attract additional growth
- Strong local schools

- Strong downtown
- Large local labor force
- Strong political leadership in keeping and attracting new industries

In summary, the Town of Benson is positioned for increased growth, due to its access to major transportation corridor and proximity to major military bases and the Triangle. And although the Town faces some challenges, it boasts many strengths that can be capitalized on by a well-designed growth plan that attracts the quality development and sustainable new jobs it needs to address its challenges and remain an ideal and friendly small town.

SECTION II – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Goals and Objectives of the Land Use Plan consist of an overall vision statement, nine goals, each with an associated list of objectives (also called policies). Following the objectives is a list of implementation strategies that outline specific actions or mechanisms to be used to achieve the stated objective. In general, the implementation strategies recommend new or revised planning policies, procedures, and land use regulations.

Vision Statement:

“Improve the quality of life and enhance economic opportunities for all citizens. Benson will emphasize our historic past coupled with the progressiveness of a community willing to invest in its economic, cultural, and recreational growth. As a Main Street community at the Crossroads of Commerce, Benson is ideally positioned for the future. It will remain a community where the citizens benefit from friendly small town values that make the ideal place to live, learn, work and play.”

Goals, Objectives (Policies) & Implementation Strategies

Goal I. Keep Downtown and the Historic District Viable, Quaint and Thriving

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Promote the downtown as a unique destination to live, work, and recreate.
2. Promote a walkable downtown that is safe for pedestrians.

3. Promote a mix of residential densities and housing types in downtown, with an emphasis on permanent residences that build and retain a healthy population base to support downtown businesses.
4. Facilitate the development of a downtown that draws people into the core with events and places people want to go to during both daytime and evening hours, such as office and service uses as well as restaurants and entertainment.
5. Maintain and enhance the quality of the Historic District, ensuring that historic buildings that are retained are usable and can be adapted for different uses.



B. Implementation Strategies

1. Develop a Special Area Plan for Downtown Benson that maintains and enhances the quality of Downtown. Elements that should be considered for this plan include –
 - a. location, type, density/intensity of land uses in the future
 - b. general urban design vision including streetscapes, design styles, general site guidelines
 - c. transportation, including roads, transit, sidewalks, bikeways, parking
 - d. housing and neighborhood revitalization/stabilization
 - e. parks and public cultural facilities including parks, greenways, library, cultural facilities
 - f. public infrastructure including water, sewer, storm water management

A good example to consider would be the Town of Cary's Town Center Area Plan -

<http://www.townofcary.org/depts/dsdept/P&Z/tcap/tcapoverview.htm>.

2. Utilize the Small Town Main Street programs and techniques, activities/events and grants to:
 - improve the appearance of buildings and Downtown in general,
 - place remaining above-ground utility lines underground,
 - incorporate urban trees, flowers and other landscaping,
 - encourage residential development on second floors and

- provide pedestrian amenities such as benches, outdoor eating areas, way-finding signs, bike racks, sidewalk improvements and safe street crossings.
3. Encourage a public “town commons” area in downtown, using the Grove for community, recreational, entertainment and business uses. Encourage development around the Grove which would attract people downtown.
 4. Use Planned Unit Developments with small-scale mixed uses to keep downtown thriving.
 5. Encourage locally-owned select small or national businesses (including outlet stores that can meet the other policies of this section) to locate in Downtown, giving people a reason to come Downtown. Investigate what other Towns and outlet malls have done to attract small locally-owned businesses, including national chains where appropriate. Multiple storied buildings can be converted into a pedestrian mall with small businesses.
 6. Discourage certain uses and building designs in Downtown, including big box or large single story buildings, and large areas of paved parking that are the only use on a site. Encourage certain uses and other design elements.
 7. Address the need for parking downtown, and what Benson could do to encourage new development while still providing adequate parking. Include consideration of reduced parking requirements, shared parking, on-street parking and making payments-in-lieu of providing parking. Benson would use the payments to assist in providing public parking.
 8. Keep Downtown as the business and cultural center of Town, with less density moving outwards. Some activity centers can be allowed outside of Downtown, as long as they do not pull businesses or the community’s cultural center from downtown.
 9. Revise Benson’s zoning and development regulations and design guidelines to support high density development in select downtown areas to be composed of vertically mixed uses within multistory buildings and limited structured parking.



Goal II. Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Ensure land use patterns support a strong tax base, with growth and rural areas clearly designated on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map.
2. Ensure development is high quality, tasteful, and compatible with its surroundings.
3. Promote upper-scale housing and high salary employment opportunities.
4. Allow a wide range of uses and densities where development is encouraged.
5. Allow limited future commercial and industrial development to the northeast, utilizing the NC242/I-40 interchange.
6. Guide future residential development to the north and south along the NC 50 corridor.



B. Implementation Strategies

1. Identify activity/growth centers for office, commercial and industrial development on the Future Land Use Plan Map. These activity centers should be located in areas well-served by transportation and utilities. The activity centers should not be located in areas to be protected or in areas that would create or exacerbate traffic congestion.
2. Develop Special Area Plans for the growth and rural areas including their desired location, amount, type and density. The rate, timing and cost to the community of this growth should be acknowledged and managed to the extent possible. There should be no ad-hoc development, especially at the NC 242/I-40 interchange.
3. Encourage development to occur in and near existing developed areas, in order to get maximum benefit from Benson's investment in water and sewer service and reduce traffic congestion on local street network.

4. Identify areas on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for commercial and industrial development in the western part of Benson, into Harnett County and near Dunn
5. Identify areas on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for residential development to the north and south along the NC 50 corridor.
6. Small scale, neighborhood retail and service uses accessible by sidewalks should be encouraged adjacent to concentrated residential areas outside of downtown in order to promote walkable communities and reduce automobile dependence.
7. Invest in amenities, such as parks connected by pedestrian, greenway and bikeway trails as well as community activities and events, in order to attract more developments oriented towards owner-occupants.
8. Implement Town policies and procedures (e.g. rezonings, annexations, utility extensions) that ensure that future land use decisions direct growth to already identified preferred areas.
9. Amend the UDO to require that good land use development standards are met and create a design standards manual that will ensure quality land uses and tasteful development occurs and that upper-scale housing is encouraged.
10. Encourage the use of cluster and conservation subdivisions.



Goal III. Increase Quality Economic Development

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Attract and retain businesses and industries which provide locally desirable goods, services, and employment.
2. Emphasize the reuse of existing buildings and brownfields as well as new construction.



3. Capitalize upon Benson's strong tax base, location (proximity to Fort Bragg and the Raleigh area), quality schools, and interstate and railroad access as positives in recruiting quality industries and businesses.

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Create a Benson Economic Development Committee to promote industrial/commercial sites in Benson.
2. Focus on Benson's potential as a location for distribution of goods, military training sites and spillover growth from Fort Bragg and the Raleigh area.
3. Identify and enhance the marketability of prime business / industrial sites near major transportation nodes. Retain existing and increase the supply of certified industrial sites available.
4. Identify businesses and industries that should be proactively recruited and identify where they should be located.
5. Increase marketing for desired industries, including new or emerging industries, such as wind power, solar power and biofuels.
6. Extend roads, water and sewer service to serve specific growth areas.
7. Pre-zone land to appropriate industrial and business districts to enhance their marketability and to prevent incompatible uses. Prior to pre-zoning any properties, modify existing zoning, subdivision, design and development ordinances to ensure adequate standards and requirements are in place for desired uses and development design.
8. Minimize potential conflicts between business and industrial uses and existing or future non-residential development by implementing appropriate standards and requirements for development, such as minimum buffers and screens between potentially incompatible land uses.

Goal IV. Develop a Safe, Convenient and Efficient Multi-Modal Transportation System

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Evaluate and plan for the transportation improvements needed to successfully implement the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
-

2. Improve transportation planning in Benson's Planning Area through improved coordination with NCDOT, Johnston County, the Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization (UCPRPO), Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), Harnett County and the Mid-Carolina Rural Planning Organization (MCRPO).
3. Create or maintain a pedestrian focus and safe bicycling on all roads and greenways.
4. Minimize conflicts between external I-95 traffic and local traffic

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Actively participate in the Johnston County Comprehensive Transportation Plan process as well as any transportation planning undertaken by the Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization and keep informed of CAMPO and MCROP plans.
2. Update the 1991 Thoroughfare Plan as part of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Johnston County, including measures to address motor vehicle traffic as well as provisions for pedestrian and bicycling improvements along thoroughfares and collector roads. Incorporate its recommendations into the development review process.
3. Create a pedestrian thoroughfare plan, including sidewalks and bicycling facilities along roads as well as greenways for pedestrian and bicycling traffic. (See also VII B.3.)
4. Adopt traffic measures that direct NC 27 and US 301 heavy truck traffic away from Main Street.
5. Ensure that Comprehensive Land Use Plan development patterns do not unnecessarily introduce heavy truck traffic into Downtown Benson.



Goal V. Create a Water and Sewer System which has the Capacity to Serve Benson's Long-Term Needs

A. Objective / Policy

1. Create a long-term plan for water and wastewater service which will address Benson's future needs, considering interbasin transfers.

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Ensure that adequate funding is allocated toward creating a long-term plan for water and wastewater treatment service, including use of reclaimed water.
2. Increase the use of reclaimed water throughout the Town by extending lines to planned industrial areas as well as providing incentives for its use in new and existing developments.
3. Encourage development to occur in and near existing water and sewer service areas, in order to get maximum benefit from Benson's investment.
4. Investigate water pricing plans that discourage usage of polished water in favor of reclaimed water, as well as discourage heavy water usage in general.



Goal VI. Maintain and Enhance the Attractiveness of Benson's Built Environment

A. Objective / Policy

1. Maintain and improve the attractiveness of Benson's built environment.

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Revise sign regulations to limit or prohibit billboards and set appropriate standards for new signs. Consider adopting an amortization provision in

- the sign ordinance to require the removal of non-conforming signs within a reasonable period of time.
2. Review existing landscaping, buffering and screening standards, especially as they apply to the frontage of property, including parking areas, to ensure high quality for all new development.
 3. Enhance landscaping in public rights of way along entranceways into Town.
 4. Continue efforts to remove substandard housing and junked vehicles from private property.
 5. Amend the Town's development ordinances to require that utility lines be placed underground in new developments.
 6. Dedicate capital improvement funding to relocate existing utility lines underground to visually improve the built environment and avoid the negative impacts of downed utility lines.
 7. Ensure good land use development standards that will ensure tasteful development and encourage upper-scale housing.
 8. Invest in amenities, such as parks connected by pedestrian, greenway and bikeway trails in order to visually enhance and beautify the urban landscape.

Goal VII. Create an Open Space Network Connected by Greenways

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Create an open space network along the natural corridors through Town, connecting parks, open spaces and greenways into a "green infrastructure" element on the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map.
2. Provide opportunities for people to get out and exercise relax and get around in an open space setting, improving their quality of life.
3. Protect the quality of Benson's environment, specifically improving the quality of water in the Hannah Creek Watershed.
4. Add to the Town's attractiveness to bring in new industries and high quality developments.

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Partner with the Johnston County Natural Resources Initiative on developing an open space network through Benson.
2. Update and implement the 2007 Benson Community Park Master Plan to enhance and expand upon the parks and greenways system contained in that Plan to ensure that sufficient park and recreation resources are available to serve new growth. This plan should provide an existing and future needs assessment, long range improvement plan, and annual project list that is tied to the Town's Capital Improvement Planning process.
3. Create a pedestrian thoroughfare system linking areas of Town, using natural corridors. (See also IV B. 3)
4. Ensure that significant open spaces, greenways, parks, wetland buffers and stream corridors are maintained in a natural condition by:
 - a. Amending the Town's development ordinances to require dedication or payments in lieu of dedication for open space for new developments,
 - b. Creating an open space and greenway acquisition program and encouraging cluster development to protect sensitive resources.

Goal VIII. Protect and Conserve Natural Features and Environmental Resources

A. Objectives / Policies

1. Meet or exceed water quality requirements and standards throughout Benson's planning jurisdiction.
2. Conserve natural resources through a network of farms, forests and open space.
3. Protect areas with environmental, cultural and community values.

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Coordinate closely with NC DWQ on the Town's status in relation to NPDES Phase II stormwater management requirements (The Town is

- listed in the Draft Neuse River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan as potentially being subject to these rules in 2009).
2. Amend current development ordinances to either a) develop and implement stormwater management programs as required under NPDES Phase II, OR b) adopt best management practices that improve water quality, including designating low intensity land uses and requiring environmentally-sensitive design for areas along stream corridors and adjacent to wetlands.
 3. Require appropriate additional stream buffers and stormwater management controls where needed to address existing and potential future water quality problems, especially the Hannah Creek area.
 4. Work with the Johnston County Soil and Water Conservation District and agricultural land owners to address existing water quality problems from those uses.
 5. Work with the Johnston County Natural Resource Initiative to identify and protect a network of farms, forests and open space in the Benson area.



Goal IX. Ensure Compatible Land Uses and Intergovernmental Cooperation

A. Objective / Policy

1. Ensure that Benson and its neighbors execute a shared vision for land development that affects each other

B. Implementation Strategies

1. Establish intergovernmental planning activities with the City of Dunn, Harnett County and Johnston County, including preparing joint plans and letting each other review and comment upon significant developments in areas of mutual interest.
2. Work with the City of Dunn on travel patterns, utility sharing, commercial/retail and general regionalism.
3. Consider partnerships with area local governments to provide services and achieve common goals at less cost and more effectively than would be true for each Town to do so on its own.

SECTION III – FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Introduction

This section of the Plan discusses how the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) addresses the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as discusses and describes the policies for each of the Land Use Classifications and Activity Centers shown on the FLUM. Finally, the document contains the FLUM, which graphically depicts a general land development pattern that adheres to and seeks to achieve the Land Use Plan goals and objectives shown in other sections of this Plan.

To be effective, this Land Use Plan document and the FLUM must be jointly and consistently consulted when reviewing and evaluating proposed land development plans. The FLUM cannot be interpreted independently from the written land use goals and objectives.

The Benson FLUM is intended to illustrate expected future land use patterns, as well as to provide guidance on the regulation of proposed land use activities. While the map itself is not regulatory, its constituent components (in conjunction with the policies of the written Land Use Plan document) should serve as a primary resource when judging the efficacy of decisions which impact land use and development.

General Planning Area Considerations

The FLUM addresses Goal II, Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown by encouraging master planning for developments,

especially along major thoroughfares and other streets that serve as entryways to Benson. Through these efforts, the Town intends to maintain and enhance the visual quality as well as the traffic-carrying capacity of entryways to Town

The FLUM addresses Goal I, Keep Downtown Viable, Quaint and Thriving and Goal II, Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown by ensuring that new development does not detract from the vitality of Downtown Benson; that “big box” developments are controlled by limits on the square footage of individual buildings and that Benson does not experience the future loss of “big box” tenants, with resulting empty, unusable buildings. To that end, commercial developments shall be located, and where appropriate, uses restricted. In addition, “big box” developments shall be limited to mixed use developments, designed to present a façade appropriate for Benson (such as an articulated façade) , and designed in a way that they can be reused.

The FLUM addresses Goal IV, Develop a Safe, Convenient and Efficient Multi-Modal Transportation System by identifying potential barriers to implementing its pedestrian thoroughfare plan, such as street and highway crossings, and requesting that NCDOT provide accommodations (either underpasses or overpasses) as street and highway improvements are made where these improvements might create a barrier to planned pedestrian facilities.

Land Use Classifications

Conservation Areas- the FLUM addresses Goals VII, Create an Open Space Network Connected by Greenways and VIII, Protect and Conserve Natural Features and Environmental Resources by designating all 100-year flood plains and wetlands as Conservation Areas.

Residential Development- the FLUM addresses Goal II, Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown in its Residential Land Use Classifications. The FLUM classifications include three densities of residential development, including Low, Medium and High densities. These densities were derived from existing Benson, Johnston County and Harnett County zoning on these lands, as outlined below.

Residential Land Use Map Designations

Jurisdiction / Zoning	LDR (Low Density)	MDR (Medium)	HDR (High)
<i>Johnston</i>			
AR	X		
RR		X	
R-MHP		X	
<i>Harnett</i>			
RA-20M			X
RA-20R			X
RA-30		X	
RA-40	X		
<i>Benson</i>			
R-20/AR	X		
R-11		X	
R-6			X
PD-R		X	
R-MH		X	
R-TH			X

Commercial Development- the FLUM also addresses Goal II, Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown and Goal III, Increase Quality Economic Development, in its Commercial Land Use Classifications. The FLUM classifies land for Commercial (C) (which can include general or neighborhood business) or Highway Commercial (HC) uses. These classifications were either derived from existing commercial zoning or were applied to land not zoned for commercial development within Activity Centers. Most of this land is included in or adjacent to Activity Centers, as outlined below, but there are properties that are currently zoned to a Commercial zoning district outside of Activity Centers that are designated to remain commercial.



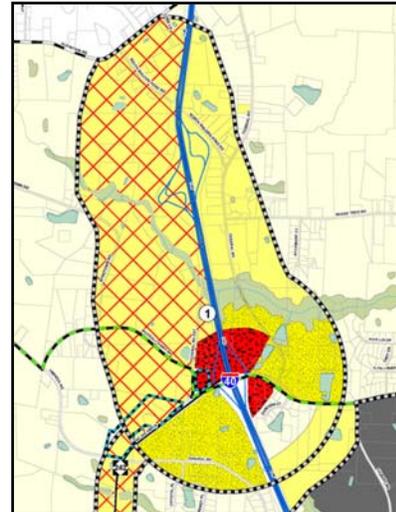
Industrial Development- the FLUM also addresses Goal II, Accommodate Reasonable Land Use Demands Outside of Downtown and Goal III, Increase Quality Economic Development in its Industrial Land Use Classification. These classifications were either derived from existing industrial zoning or were applied to land not zoned for industrial development within Activity Centers for the purpose of attracting industrial

development to specific areas. Most of this land is included in Activity Centers, as outlined below, but there are properties that are currently zoned to an industrial zoning district outside of Activity Centers that are designated to remain industrial.

Activity Centers:

Each of the following activity centers is numbered accordingly on the FLUM:

- 1) 242/40 Activity Center – This activity center parallels both sides of I-40 from Elevation Road to just south of Tarheel Road, including the interchange of I-40 with Woodall Dairy Road (NC 242). This mostly undeveloped area at the northern edge of the Benson Planning Area was chosen to be a major activity center because it is anchored by one of the few interstate interchanges that allows access to surrounding parcels, it has adequate existing water, sewer and reclaimed water infrastructure, and has available transportation capacity that could accommodate higher density residential and non-residential development.



However, this activity center should be developed as a part of one or more master planned communities with a focus on mixed use. This activity center should not become a major or regional commercial center that detracts from downtown businesses. It is meant to provide alternative local neighborhood shopping to those northern residential communities to reduce traffic impacts on local roads.

This Activity Center will be focused on highway commercial, residential, office-residential, neighborhood business, and planned development with mixed residential/commercial uses only. The intent here would be a mix of residential uses with high, medium and low densities, and commercial uses limited to neighborhood grocery stores, small retail and personal service uses. Big box retail is not encouraged in this area.

Specific uses planned for the Activity Center are as follows:

- At the northeast, southeast and northwest quadrants of the interchange of NC242 and I-40, small areas of Highway Commercial (HC) uses are planned. These HC areas are not intended to extend past Federal Rd (Ext) to the northwest, the existing ponds and

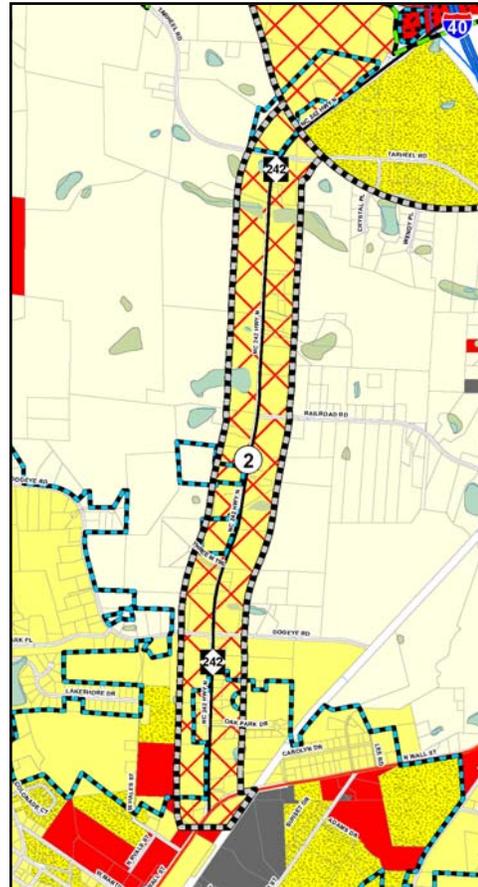
conservation areas to the northeast, and the existing single family subdivision to the southeast. These three quadrants will supply a sufficient quantity of HC uses at this interchange.

- Given the existing streams and ponds on site, the southwest quadrant of this interchange is best suited for HDR uses (and not HC or C uses), to allow protection of these resources within a planned development, as well as allow higher density residential uses access to I-40. LDR is not suitable for this location due to highway noise.
- Surrounding the HC at the northwest side of the activity center, along the western side of I-40, between Elevation Road and NC 242, mixed use development is planned, to consist primarily of mixed use residential commercial (MU-R/C). This area should be master planned with mixed densities of residential and limited, neighborhood commercial.
- Surrounding the HC at the northeast side of the center, along the eastern side of I-40, from the northern end of the Activity Center to the Conservation designated area, HDR and MDR development is planned. HDR is designated around the HC area at the interchange, up to the stream and encompassing several ponds, and MDR is planned from the stream to the northern end of the Activity Center. Maximizing protection of the existing ponds through creative design of one integrated HDR development in this area is encouraged. Widening or expanding Federal Road should be considered in lieu of providing additional stream crossings, and when it is improved, the road should include the addition of pedestrian paths.
- On the southeast side of the Activity Center, low density residential (LDR) is shown surrounding the HC area, in recognition of an existing subdivision. Surrounding the LDR area between I-40 and Woodall Dairy Road, MDR is planned, extending to the edge of the activity center and beyond to the neighboring activity center (I-40 Business Park). This MDR area is to act as a buffer between these neighboring activity centers.

The 242/40 Activity Center is expected to be a major center of development activity, and its impacts are anticipated to encompass the northeastern part of the Planning Area, possibly to NC 50 on the west and including the Planning Area to the north and east. This Activity Center's potential warrants the development of a Small Area Plan for the northeastern part of Benson's Planning Area.

- 2) 242 North Corridor Activity Center – This proposed activity center extends from the 242/40 activity center south, paralleling NC 242 into the developed part of Town.

- The Activity Center is planned as MDR, with mixed use developments incorporating adjacent lands (including lands outside of the activity center) and allowing residential, neighborhood commercial and office uses.
- Developments along and adjacent to this corridor should be approved in a consolidated, comprehensive and coordinated (i.e. master planned) way that avoids strip commercial or other development with multiple driveways, numerous cross streets or congested access points onto NC 242.
- Primary access to NC 242 for all major developments in this activity center should be shared from existing or new major cross streets only. The number, location, traffic controls and design of all new cross streets should be carefully planned to retain full movement and level of service on NC 242 as well as the cross streets, while facilitating access and safety of pedestrians across NC 242 as well as within planned developments.
- Multi-modal transportation options should be included with any improvements to NC 242, to include transit, bicycle and pedestrian.
- Developments along and adjacent to this corridor will only be approved if they allow full vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between neighboring parcels and developments, regardless of land use, to avoid the need for vehicles and pedestrians to access NC 242 to move from development to development along the corridor.
- Single family subdivisions will only be approved with lots having driveways and access off of secondary cross streets and internal subdivision roads (not directly accessing NC 242).



3) Neighborhood Activity Centers – These are Activity Centers which provide limited convenience goods and services to the immediate area. At this time, two Neighborhood Activity Centers are designated – at



the intersection of NC 50 and Benson-Hardee Road and at the intersection of NC 50 and Main Street. These sites were selected based on an estimate of future need for services at these locations. There are existing locations (some at crossroads) with current non-residential zoning in the planning area that have not been designated as Neighborhood Activity Centers, because such a use is not desired at that location in the future.

- 4) Downtown Activity Center – This proposed Activity Center includes the existing National Register Historic District, the current Downtown Plan area, plus “The Grove” and areas to the south around the Benson Elementary School. This area would include land for redevelopment opportunities to higher density uses that would support this area as the “Town Commons”. This center will allow medium and high density residential (including mixed use and planned developments), central business and neighborhood business, office, office-residential, institutional and commercial uses only. Industrial and highway business uses would not be allowed.



- 5) 50/95 Activity Center – This proposed Activity Center includes the I-40 / NC 50 interchange, areas around Dunn Street as well as land adjacent to the Downtown Activity Center. This Activity Center would allow expansion to existing highway business uses that are not appropriate in the Downtown Activity Center.



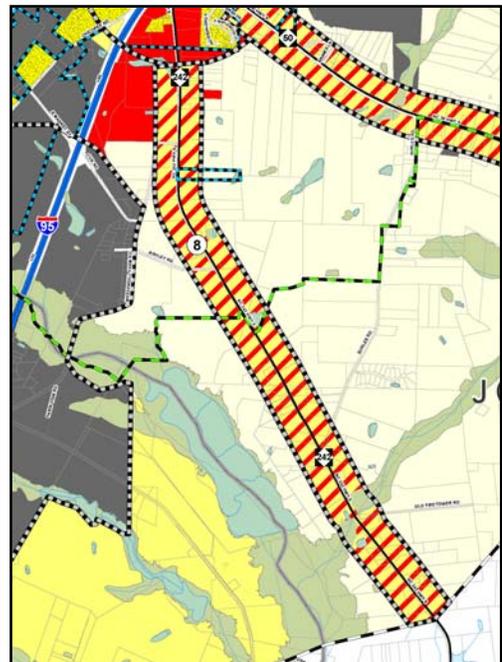
- 6) NC 50 South Activity Center and 8) NC 242 South – These Activity Centers start at the 50/95 and NC 242 South to the end of the Planning Area. The land within and between these Activity Centers is planned to be a major employment and business area for the Town, primarily commercial, but also including office and institutional and mixed density residential development. Industrial development is not allowed.

- The Activity Centers are designated as Mixed Use Commercial and Residential (MU-C/R), with master planned, mixed-use use developments encouraged to incorporate the land between NC 50 South and NC 242 South.

- Developments along and adjacent to this corridor should be approved in a consolidated, comprehensive and coordinated (i.e. master planned) way that avoids strip commercial or other development with multiple driveways, numerous cross streets or congested access points onto NC 50 or 242.



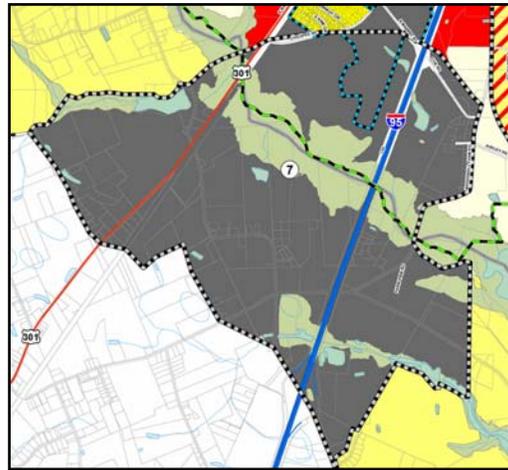
- Primary access to NC 50 or 242 for all major developments in this activity center should be shared from existing or new major cross streets only. The number, location, traffic controls and design of all new cross streets should be carefully planned to retain full movement and level of service on NC 50 or 242 as well as the cross streets, while facilitating access and safety of pedestrians across NC 50 and 242 as well as within planned developments.
- Multi-modal transportation options should be included with any improvements to NC 50 and NC 242, to include transit, bicycle and pedestrian.
- Developments along and adjacent to this corridor will only be approved if they allow full vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between neighboring parcels and developments, regardless of land use, to avoid the need for vehicles



and pedestrians to access NC 50 or 242 to move from development to development along the corridor.

- Single family subdivisions will only be approved with lots having driveways and access off of secondary cross streets and internal subdivision roads (not directly accessing NC 50 or 242).

7) Mingo Industrial Activity Center – This area is southwest of Downtown and includes land along US 301, I-95, the railroad tracks and Mingo Creek into Harnett County. It currently has some scattered industrial development, along with vacant lands and some residential areas (mainly mobile home parks). Harnett County has zoned land in their jurisdiction for industrial development, although some of these areas are vacant. This area is crossed by major conservation areas, does not have an adequate internal street system and is not likely to have reclaimed water service in the future. Although this area can accommodate future heavy industrial uses better than other areas in the planning area (it is more isolated from residential populations and already contains such uses), truck traffic from this area has the potential to affect Downtown Benson, given the limited interchanges available to I-95 (Main Street in downtown Benson is often used inappropriately for such uses).



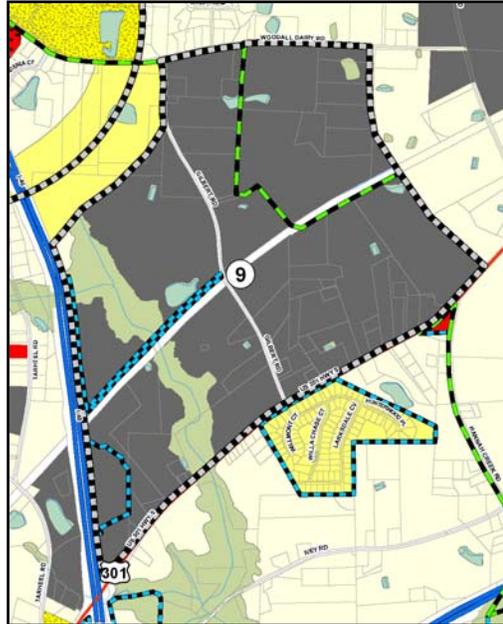
Although this area can accommodate future heavy industrial uses better than other areas in the planning area (it is more isolated from residential populations and already contains such uses), truck traffic from this area has the potential to affect Downtown Benson, given the limited interchanges available to I-95 (Main Street in downtown Benson is often used inappropriately for such uses).

For all these reasons, this Activity Center is planned for expansion and redevelopment of existing industrial uses and new industrial development, especially heavy industrial uses that generate noise or noxious fumes, do not generate large amounts of truck traffic, or which do not require the use of large amounts of water. However, this activity center should not be the primary focus for industrial development in Benson. Uses recommended for this activity center would include heavy and light industrial, highway business, office, institutional, and planned developments (commercial/industrial).

The Conservation designation exists along both sides of Mingo Creek throughout this activity center as a buffer to protect wildlife habitat and water quality from these intense urban uses. Clustering of uses outside of all conservation areas is desired and additional crossings of Mingo Creek are discouraged. Advanced stormwater management and hazardous

waste containment engineering controls are recommended for all new industrial uses in this area.

- 8) See 6), above
- 9) I-40 Business Park – This Activity Center was selected at this location as an alternative to the Mingo Industrial Activity Center, given the improved access to I-40 (and thereby I-95) at the Woodall Dairy Road/I-40 interchange, as well as its access to US 301 and also its access to the CSX Railroad Line. Such alternative transportation options make this a more feasible choice for future industrial and commercial developments than Mingo, especially for those uses that generate high traffic volumes.



Except for an existing residential subdivision to the south, across US 301, the center is currently undeveloped or underdeveloped with large lot residential parcels. To the east is an existing quarry. The area also abuts I-40 (which creates noise impacts for possible low density residential uses) and is very close to the existing reclaimed water line from the town's wastewater treatment plant. The area is also just to the south of the NC 242/40 Activity Center, which proposes a substantial increase in residential uses in the area.

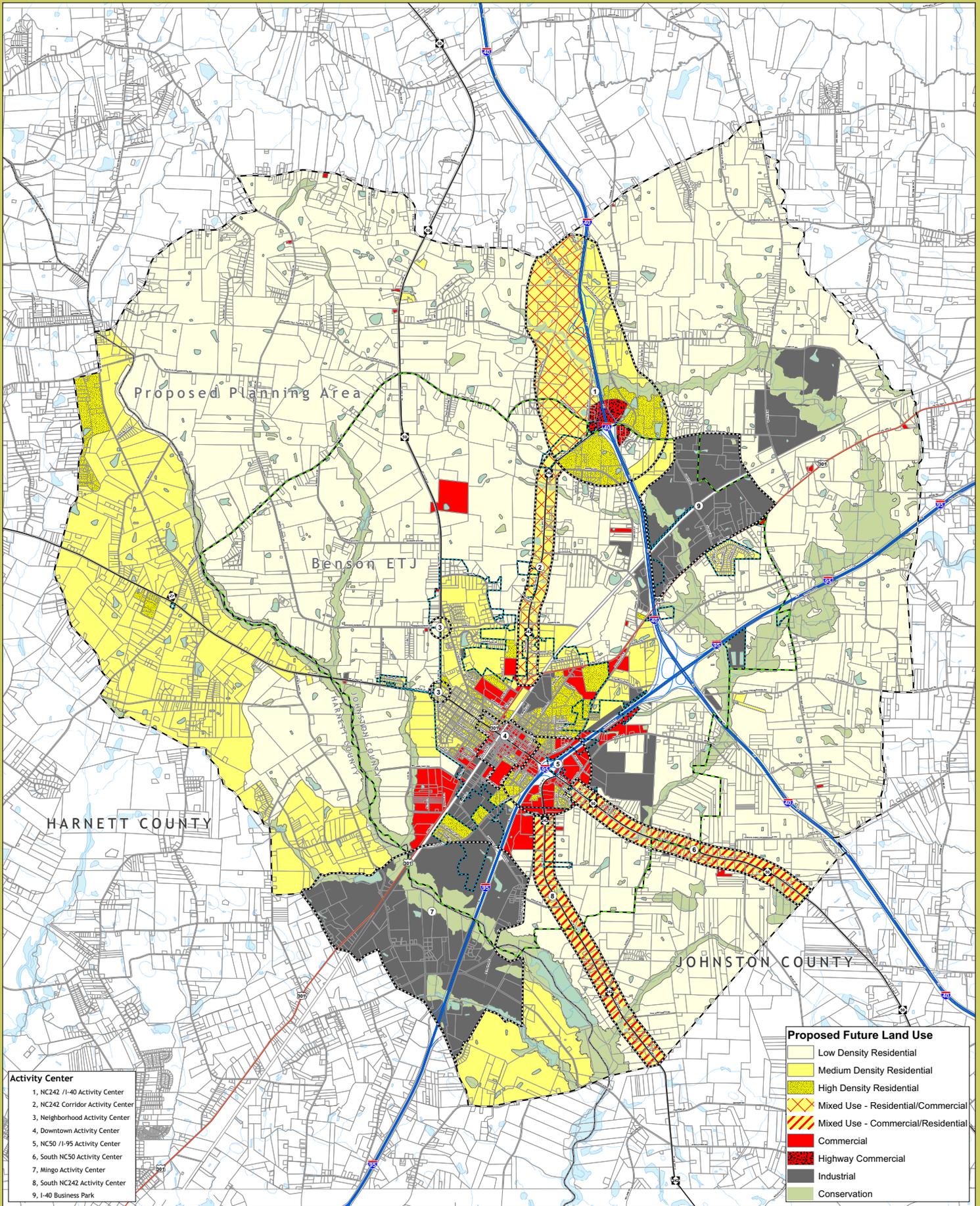
The I-40 Business Park Activity Center provides a very accessible business park area with the potential to attract a wide variety of industrial use with the existing reclaimed water line. However, due to the planned residential uses in the area, the Center's uses should be limited to light and general manufacturing, research and development, warehousing and freight and Planned Development Industrial uses, as defined in Benson's UDO. Heavy industries, especially those that emit noxious emissions and other forms of air pollution, involve hazardous materials, or involve very loud noises (such as blasting), should not be allowed.

Another advantage of the I-40 Business Park Activity Center over Mingo Creek is the reduced presence of sensitive natural areas. The one stream that runs north/south through the center (and its associated Conservation

Land Use Designation) should act as a buffer to protect wildlife habitat and water quality from potential intense urban uses in the center. Clustering of uses outside of this conservation area is recommended, as is limiting the number of stream crossings to a minimum. Advanced stormwater management and waste containment engineering controls are recommended for all new industrial uses in this area.

The Town should work with NCDOT on identifying and funding improvements to Woodall Dairy Road and its interchange with I-40.

For all these reasons, the I-40 Business Park should provide a substantial incentive to attracting new businesses and industries to Benson, especially those that use reclaimed water, including new LEED developments. Increasing use of reclaimed water would provide an additional benefit to the town, allowing it to reduce wastewater effluent discharges to Hannah Creek, thereby improving its water quality.



- Activity Center**
- 1, NC242 /I-40 Activity Center
 - 2, NC242 Corridor Activity Center
 - 3, Neighborhood Activity Center
 - 4, Downtown Activity Center
 - 5, NC50 /I-95 Activity Center
 - 6, South NC50 Activity Center
 - 7, Mingo Activity Center
 - 8, South NC242 Activity Center
 - 9, I-40 Business Park

- Proposed Future Land Use**
- Low Density Residential
 - Medium Density Residential
 - High Density Residential
 - Mixed Use - Residential/Commercial
 - Mixed Use - Commercial/Residential
 - Commercial
 - Highway Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Conservation

- Legend**
- Interstate
 - Interstate Ramp
 - US Federal Highway
 - NC Highway
 - Benson Municipal Limit
 - Benson Existing ETJ
 - Benson Proposed Planning Area
 - County Boundary - NCDOT
 - River or Stream
 - Lake or Pond



1 inch = 1,400 feet



Appendix A

Benson Existing Conditions Report

The purpose of this analysis is to identify existing conditions and plans that affect land use, including existing land use, population, housing, economy, transportation, utilities and natural features, as well as Benson's vision and strategic plan, and the plans of other localities that affect land use in Benson.

This analysis starts with recent vision and strategy documents adopted in Benson, provides an analysis of existing conditions noted above, including relevant plans and programs, then concludes with key planning issues and concerns.

Benson Vision Statement and Strategic Plan

2006 Vision Statement- Improve quality of life and enhance economic opportunities for all citizens. Benson will emphasize our historic past coupled with the progressiveness of a community willing to invest in its economic, cultural, and recreational growth. As a Main Street community at the Crossroads of Commerce, Benson is ideally positioned for the future. It will remain a community where the citizens benefit from friendly small town values that make the ideal place to live, learn, work and play.

Benson Strategic Plan- The Benson Strategic Plan focuses on Crime, Housing, Appearance, including the appearance of Highway Corridors, Economic Development, Technology and Cultural goals and objectives. Of these items, Housing, Appearance, Economic Development and the appearance of Highway Corridors are most relevant to this Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Land Use

2003 Benson Land Use Plan- The Goals and Objectives of the Plan focus on encouraging economic growth, providing services and facilities for that growth, enhancing the livability of the Town, with a focus on the CBD, encouraging new development and creating harmony and a shared vision for the future. This plan does not give specific guidelines for land use policy and does not have a map.

Existing land use- Benson's total land use jurisdiction contains 11,205 acres of land. Of that, 1,744 acres are in the city limits and 9,461 acres are in Benson's

Town of Benson
Comprehensive Land Use Plan
Adopted March 9, 2010

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction outside of the city limits. (See attached: Map #1, Aerial Data- 2005; Map #2, Land Use 2008 and Map #3, Zoning- Town of Benson and surrounding areas.)

Benson has developed in a compact manner, focused on the central area of Town. The downtown area is focused on Main Street, which runs northwest to southeast, and Wall Street, which runs northeast to southwest. The railroad tracks run through the downtown area parallel with Wall Street. The downtown area is vibrant, with a good mix of commercial, office and institutional and residential uses in a compact, walkable area. Zoning in the downtown area is comprised of Business-1, Business-2, Office and Residential districts, R-6, R11 and some Industrial Zoning.

Benson is currently preparing a downtown corridor plan with assistance from the State's Small Town Main Street Program. That plan is scheduled to be completed April 2009.

To the east of downtown on Main Street, is Benson's primary interchange with I-95, (Interchange 79) which has developed with commercial services. The area to the east of I-95 has not developed as much as other areas of town. According to the Johnston County Planning Director, this is true of other Johnston County municipalities with jurisdiction along I-95, with the exception of Kenly. The area to the east of the I-95 interchange and along NC 50 is primarily zoned Business and I-1 near the interchange, and RA in the remainder of Benson's ETJ.

To the north of downtown, Wall Street splits into US 301, which heads northeast, and NC 242, which heads to the north and is linked to I-40 at interchange 325. One subdivision has been developed on the southeast side of US 301 just beyond its overpass over I-40. The area between these two roads is primarily residential and rural. The area is primarily zoned R-11, R-20 and RA. The area south of NC 242's interchange with I-40 has developed with commercial uses, and is considered to be a prime area for development. It is zoned a combination of Industrial 1 and B-3.

To the west of Downtown, Main Street splits into NC 27, which heads west into Harnett County and NC 50 to the north. The area along NC 50 north below Banner Elk Road has developed with residential subdivisions on the east side, in R-11 and R-20 zoning, and the area on the west side of NC 50 is primarily zoned R-20. The area including Banner Elk Drive to the north is zoned RA, with the exception of one B-3 district.

The area to the south of downtown along Wall Street has experienced industrial development. This area served by the railroad line, US 301 and near I-95, is zoned primarily I-2.

Area Plans that could affect Benson Land Use:

The Johnston County Comprehensive Plan encourages growth in and around municipalities and urbanized areas. It designates an area to the north of Benson's ETJ as a Primary Growth Area. (See Map # 4, Johnston County Comprehensive Plan also, attached summary of potentially relevant recommendations from the Plan)

Hazard Mitigation Plan for Johnston County and Benson- recommends that emergency management criteria be included in the Land Use Plan.

The Harnett County Plan (1999) does not directly address the Town of Benson. However, it classifies the area along the I-95/US 301 corridor between Dunn and Benson as a Municipal Growth area. The Harnett County Plan also classifies the area between Coats and Benson as medium density residential. (See map #5- Harnett County Plan)

The Dunn Land Use Plan (2005) Addresses land uses, community appearance, transportation, infrastructure and its attractiveness as a place to live, work, retire, and to visit for history and recreation in a small town atmosphere. On the northeast side of Dunn, the Plan establishes an industrial node along US 301, and three commercial nodes, one at the I-95 interchange with US 421, another at exit 75 on I-95 and a third between interchange 75 and the town of Dunn. The proposed US 421 Bypass would link these and other nodes. (See Map #6- Dunn Land Use Plan)

Population

Note: the Census has not updated demographic information for Benson since 2000. That information was included in the 2003 Land Use Plan. The State Demographer's office makes population projections for jurisdictions with 100,000 people and above. Therefore, State projections are available for Johnston County, but not Benson.

According to the NC Demographer, Benson grew from 2,993 people in April 2000 to 3,518 in 2007, an increase of 17.54%, an annual rate of about 2.5%. During the same period, Benson's population as a percentage of total Johnston County population decreased from 2.46% to 2.24%, largely because the rapid growth that has occurred in northwestern Johnston County has outpaced Benson's growth.

Population and Land Use Projections

Population Projections

The following table projects Benson’s population in the City Limits using two methods:

- Projecting Benson’s population using its past rate of growth, and
- Projecting Benson’s population as a percentage of Johnston County’s population.

The first method gives an idea of how the Town would grow if current trends continue and the results are included in the column “Benson using 00-07 growth rate”. The second method uses Johnston County population projections provided by the State Demographer’s office, and historic data on Benson’s population as a percentage of the County’s and results are included in the column “Benson as % of Johnston County”.

The projections are similar, with projections as a percentage of Johnston County population somewhat higher. These projections could vary, depending on a number of factors, such as the health of the economy and housing market, annexations by Benson and the ratio of people per household.

Benson Population Count, Estimates and Projections			
Year	Johnston County	Benson using 00-07 growth rate	Benson as % of Johnston County
2000	121,900	2,993	(2.46%)
2005	145,900	3,368	(2.31%)
2007	157,296	3,518	(2.24%)
2008	162,609	3,606	3,642
2009	167,849	3,696	3,759
2010	172,857	3,789	3,872
2015	199,109	4,261	4,459
2020	225,194	4,794	5,044
2025	255,232	5,393	5,404
2030	283,401	6,067	6,348
Sources: 2000 data from US Bureau of the Census. 2005 and 2007 estimates and Johnston County projections from the State Demographer’s office. 2008-2030 Benson projections by The Wooten Company.			

According to the US Census, Benson’s population contains about the same proportion of school-aged (5-18 years old) children as Johnston County in 2006, about 19%.

In 2000, Benson had a much larger proportion of its population in the 65+ age group, about 15% as compared to 9.3% for Johnston County. Apparently, a number of new residents have moved to Benson to retire. In 2000, the ratio of women to men was about 55% to 45%, which is consistent with an older population. This may have an impact upon demand for recreation and leisure services oriented toward the elderly.

Land Use Projections

Benson’s corporate limits in 2007 consisted of 1,567 acres, and its population was 3,518. Using the above population projections and assuming the ratio of persons per acre continues, the following demand for land use is projected:

Benson Projected Land Use Demand	
Year	Acres
2007	1,567
2008	1,622
2009	1,674
2010	1,725
2015	1986
2020	2,247
2025	2,407
2030	2,828
Source: The Wooten Company.	

Housing

Benson had 1,364 housing units in 2000. Of these, 1,230 were occupied with 134 vacant.

Benson’s 2000 housing stock had a higher proportion of rental units than was true of Johnston County in 2006, 48% for Benson as compared to 74% for Johnston County. Of the 586 owner-occupied housing units in Benson, 456 (78%) were single-family homes. The median value of homes in Benson in 2000 was \$85,600, as compared to \$108,800 for Johnston County.



Economy

The Town of Benson and Electricities sponsored Benson's *Strategic Economic Development Plan*, prepared by the Sanford Holshouser Business Development Group, in November 2004. Results from that Plan are summarized below.

That report notes that Benson lies at the crossroads of two of America's most economically strategic highways, I-95 and I-40, and within thirty minutes of the Triangle area. The report notes that Benson is ideally situated for economic growth, to attract interstate commerce companies and those that serve four major US Military bases, as well as Triangle Area commuters seeking affordable housing in an attractive town.

Johnston County's labor force has grown steadily; over one-half of them work elsewhere, about 35% in Wake County. These out-commuters represent a potential work force asset for attracting new companies to Benson.

Some Benson strengths include: The Town policy makers are dedicated to assisting the needs of existing industries as well as aggressively going after new development for the Town. Benson area students compete well scholastically, Johnston Community College and the Triangle universities offer high-quality education.

The plan emphasizes the need for product development, defined as site and infrastructure development. The plan also emphasizes the need for a strong proactive program, including active support for existing industry, improving the town's quality of life features and preparing product to show prospective companies.

The Benson Strategic Economic Development Plan indicated that Benson should address the lack of upscale amenities, such as fine restaurants, lodging facilities and high-end retail. Benson's 2009 Strategic Plan supports these recommendations.

The Benson Strategic Economic Development Plan recommends the following industry sectors as primary targets for recruitment:

- Distribution and Logistics
- Retail Development
- Biotechnology
- Housing Development
- Transportation Equipment

In order to attract industries, the Benson Strategic Economic Development Plan recommended that the Town seek certification of industrial sites. In addition, the

Benson Strategic Economic Development Plan recommended a marketing plan. Benson has gone through the certification process for a certified site and has hired a staff member to implement the marketing plan.

Transportation

Major Thoroughfares serving Benson include I-95 and I-40, US 301, NC 50 NC 27 and NC 242. Benson is also served by a railroad line which runs through the downtown area. The downtown area is served by sidewalks.



Benson Thoroughfare Plan

Benson's Thoroughfare Plan was prepared in 1991 (See map #7- Proposed Thoroughfare Plan- Town of Benson). The Plan designates four existing roads as major radial thoroughfares and makes recommendations for their right of way width and cross-section:

- NC 242 is recommended as a four-lane divided highway with a raised grass median on a 100-foot wide right of way from I-40 to Wall Street.
- NC 50 is recommended as either a five-lane urban facility or a four-lane divided highway with a raised grass median on a 100-foot wide right of way between the northern part of the ETJ and Main Street.
- US 301 and NC 27 are recommended as two-lane roads on a 100 foot wide right of way.

The plan also proposes the creation of a loop road to allow direct travel between suburban areas of town by connecting major radial streets. The loop road is proposed as a two-lane road on a 100 feet-wide right of way. The loop road is proposed to be created by expanding the right of way of existing roads where necessary and connecting them with new roads. Apparently, Benson has not adopted this Plan. The attached map –Benson Thoroughfare Plan shows the location of this loop road.

Transportation Planning Organizations in the Area

Benson is in the Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization, along with eastern Johnston and all of Edgecombe, Nash and Wilson Counties. The transportation planner for the UCPRPO indicated that NCDOT will likely initiate a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for all of Johnston County in the near future. This timing is good, in that it will give Benson time to work on its land use concepts, which drive the need for transportation planning.

The area around Clayton, a part of the I-40 corridor and parts of northern Johnston County are in the Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Harnett County is in the Mid-Carolina Rural Planning Organization. The NCDOT and Harnett County are preparing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Harnett County. The recommendations of this Plan should be coordinated with plans in Johnston County

Pedestrian and Biking Facilities

The central part of town is well-connected with sidewalks. The Benson Community Park Master Plan (See map #8- Existing and Proposed Sidewalks, Open Space and Greenways.) includes a number of potential public sidewalks and potential greenways that would link developing areas, existing schools and parks as well as Park Search Areas indicated on the Plan. The Potential Greenways apparently follow streams, power lines and other features. The Potential Greenways would provide off-road trails for pedestrians and cyclists.

Natural Features

Watersheds- The Town of Benson straddles two river basins - the eastern 3/4 of the town is within the Neuse River Basin, while the western 1/4 of the town is within the Cape Fear Basin. There are no state protected water supply watersheds in the project planning area.

The Benson wastewater treatment plant discharges to Hannah Creek (within the Neuse River Basin) on the northeast side of town. The Town purchases water from the City of Dunn with the water source being the Cape Fear River. Because the Town's water source and wastewater discharge locations are in separate basins, an interbasin transfer is occurring that is monitored and permitted by the state. Expansions to either system that would increase the amount of interchange transfer will require increased evaluation and potential limitations from the state.

Surface water quality- The topography of the project area is generally flat, with elevations ranging from 230 to 300 feet above sea level. Major surface waters in the project planning area include the Cape Fear River mainstem and Hannah Creek in the Neuse River Basin. According to the Cape Fear River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan (October 2005), there are no impaired surface waters in the Cape Fear portion of the project planning area. The Draft Neuse River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan (December 2008), however, indicates that Hannah Creek is impaired above and below the Benson WWTP wastewater discharge location due to fecal coliform bacteria (from cattle in the creek above the plant), toxicity problems (unknown, assumed to be the WWTP) and low dissolved oxygen (from agricultural activities and discharges from the

WWTP). Other notable problems leading to degradation of the stream include a need to manage other land uses in the watershed.

Both of these issues (stream impairment and interbasin transfers) could affect future expansions of Benson's wastewater treatment plant as well as the Town of Dunn's freshwater withdrawals from the Cape Fear River.

The Clean Water Partners' Infrastructure Program, which provides financial assistance for development of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan, indicates that this document must result in implementation of best management practices, land use controls and development strategies that will serve to protect water quality within Benson's planning jurisdiction.

Floodplains and wetlands- some land in the 100-year floodplains are not also classified as wetlands. Similarly, not all wetlands are in the 100-year floodplain.

There are 1,687 acres of land in the Benson area that are in the 100-year floodplain. (Of this land, about 805 acres are also classified as wetlands- see discussion below.)

The 100-year floodplain is the area which has a 1% chance of flooding in any year. The floodplain is comprised of the flood fringe and the floodway. The flood fringe is the outer area of the floodplain that, if developed, would raise the base elevation of the 100-year flood by one foot. The floodway is the area inside the flood fringe. Benson's Floodplain Ordinance prohibits development in the floodway and requires flood proofing or elevation of habitable floors in the flood fringe. (See attached map #9- Environmental Features.)

According to data within the National Wetland Inventory (NWI), the Benson planning area contains 1,966 acres of wetlands. It should be noted that not all wetlands are located within floodway or floodway fringe areas. The town does not specifically protect wetlands in its development review process. The state Division of Water Quality permits projects that impact wetlands.

About 2,848 acres in the Benson Planning Area are classified as being in the 100-year floodplain, as a wetland or both.

Endangered species habitat- no endangered species habitats are identified in the Benson area.

One North Carolina Naturally has done an evaluation of open space and conservation lands, biodiversity/wildlife habitat, important forestlands, threatened and viable agricultural land. It also includes a water services assessment. The results of that evaluation for the Benson area are included below:

Open Space and conservation lands- the only lands indicated are parks owned by the Town of Benson.

Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat- The area on both sides of the Cape Fear River and its tributary in Benson south of the Mc Lamb-Tart Road are classified as having a high conservation value. The east side of Hannah Creek from NC 50 beyond Benson's ETJ and Driving Branch downstream of I-40 are classified as a medium conservation value. (See map #10- Biodiversity/Wildlife Habitat)

Viable Farmland- the land immediately surrounding Benson is assessed as having a low viability for agriculture. The area to the northwest, southeast and east of Benson are assessed as having a medium viability for agriculture. The highest viability for agriculture exists on lands to the north and northeast of Benson, with one area to the west of NC 50 across from Dogeye Road also included as having high viability. (See map #11- Viable Farmland)

Important Forestland- important forestlands are concentrated along the Cape Fear River and its tributaries, as well as Hannah Creek and its tributaries. (See map #12- Important Forestland.)

Natural Heritage sites- no Significant Natural Heritage areas are located in or near Benson.

Related Open Space and Working Lands Initiatives-

The Johnston Soil and Water Conservation District Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program allows farmers to request that their land be designated as a VAD. Membership in the VAD requires a voluntary, non-binding Conservation agreement between the county and the landowner that prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of 10 years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations.

Over 8,000 acres are included in VADs in Johnston County as of January 2009. Two parcels near Benson have been designated as VADs. One VAD is in Benson's ETJ, located on US 301 to the west of Raleigh Road and the other is on Kenan Road east of Sandy Road.

The Johnston County Farmland Preservation Program, being created by the Johnston County Cooperative Extension, will provide tools for farmers to stay in farming.

The Johnston County Natural Resource Initiative's goal is to develop and promote strategies for conservation of natural resources through a network of farms, forests, and open space within Johnston County. It is designed to build upon the Mountains-to-Sea Trail Master Plan for Johnston County, the Green Infrastructure initiative, an urban tree canopy analysis for Clayton, Smithfield and Selma, and the Triangle Regional Greenprint prepared by the Triangle "J" Council of Governments. The initiative is being coordinated by the NC Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program, USDA.

Historic Resources

A part of Benson's downtown area is designated as a National Register Historic District. (See map # 13- National Register Historic District and Place.) This Historic District is comprised of the Town's commercial core (primarily the three blocks of Main Street between Wall and Elm Streets and the two blocks adjacent to both sides of the railroad tracks and directly south of Main Street), along with the predominantly residential blocks contiguous to the commercial core. The District also includes approximately 53 acres and includes 143 structures. Of these, 17 are classified as pivotal, 87 are contributing, 23 are not contributing and 16 are intrusive.

Pivotal structures are those which, because of their historical associations and/or architectural characteristics, play a central or primary role in establishing the distinctive qualities of the district. Contributing structures are supportive of, and add to historical associations and/or architectural characteristics. Non-contributing structures do not have a positive or negative impact. Intrusive structures are those whose design and/or materials are totally out of character with the historic fabric of the district, and have a negative impact on the district.

The Hannah's Creek Primitive Baptist Church on US 301 near its intersection with Hannah Creek Road is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Community Facilities Analysis

Benson Water and Wastewater Treatment Service (See map #14, Infrastructure, Town of Benson)

- Water- Benson appears to be in good shape. The Town purchases most of its water (average of 1.135 million gallons per day) from Dunn, and has the ability to purchase sufficient additional water (up to 2 mgd) to provide for growth.
- Wastewater Treatment - Benson has adequate sewer capacity to provide for foreseeable growth. The average daily flow is less than 1 mgd, and the treatment plant has recently been expanded from 1.5 mgd to 1.9 mgd.

As mentioned earlier, water quality issues and interbasin transfer limitations could affect future expansions of Benson's wastewater treatment plant as well as the Town of Dunn's fresh water withdrawals.

Benson Reclaimed Water Transmission Project

Benson is planning a transmission line to transport reclaimed water from the Benson Wastewater Treatment Plant to the CPC Wholesale Nursery. According to the Engineering Report for the Town of Benson, CPC Nursery uses up to 500,000 gallons per day (GPD) during the summer and 150,000 GPD during the winter months. This averages out to 325,000 GPD annually. The transmission line was designed using 325,000 GPD.

The Benson wastewater treatment plant is permitted to treat 1.9 million gallons per day (MGD) and currently treats less than 1MGD of wastewater. By transmitting about 325,000 GPD of reclaimed water instead of discharging it into Hannah Creek, this action could address water quality concerns in that drainage basin.

To the extent that the CPC Nursery and other users are located in the Cape Fear River basin, this action would also reduce Benson's amount of interbasin transfer.

Stormwater Management

Benson does not have significant stormwater runoff problems in the downtown area, but has experienced some nuisance flooding in outer areas of town. The Town does not have a stormwater ordinance, and is not currently required to comply with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System stormwater runoff controls. However, the State Division of Water Quality will be evaluating the Town for expanded Phase II NPDES requirements during 2009.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control

Benson relies on the State of North Carolina to implement State Erosion and Sedimentation requirements. The State inspector responsible for this area lives in Benson, and he often checks on sites during his commute. Benson has not had any significant violations of the E&S requirements in recent years.

Parks and Recreation

Benson has the following Parks and Recreation Facilities:

- Civic Center and Municipal Park, containing a multi-use building and two baseball fields
- Mitchell-Nance Athletic Complex, containing a baseball field and multi-use field used mainly for soccer and football
- Lee St. Gymnasium, which is used for basketball, cheerleading, indoor soccer and volleyball. It also has two ball fields that were once used for baseball and softball, as well as a regulation football field with goal posts.
- Singing Grove, used for special events such as annual festivals, concerts, holiday celebrations and personal rentals.
- Middle School Community Park.
- Municipal Building, which houses Town offices, Chamber of Commerce and Benson Museum, an auditorium, meeting rooms and a new meeting facility.
- Benson Middle School Gym, which is owned by the Town and used for Basketball and Volleyball
- South Johnston High School, which is owned by the Schools. It has Indoor Soccer and a Gym.



Benson's Community Park Master Plan was prepared in 2001 and updated in 2007. It recommended improvements to the various parks and facilities, land acquisition, sidewalk and greenway development.

In the 2007 update, the public indicated a desire to have a community park that is centrally located and can bring several activities together in one location. The Plan outlines improvements to the old Benson Middle School property to accommodate this desire.

The Plan also identifies three Park Search Areas for possible new parks.

Public Safety

Police- The Police Department is located at 303 E. Church Street. The Department has four divisions, Patrol, Investigation, Records and Special Services (Traffic Enforcement and Nuisance Abatement). The Department's mission statement and values are:

The Benson Police Department (BPD) Mission is to improve and enhance the quality of life in the Town of Benson by working with our citizens to preserve the peace, reduce fear, provide a safe environment, and enforce the law.

BPD Values- In partnership with our community:

- We will protect the lives and property of our citizens, and impartially enforce the law.
- We will fight crime by preventing it, and also by aggressively pursuing violators of the law.
- We will maintain much higher standards of integrity than is expected of the public, because so much more is expected of us.
- We will recognize the dignity of each individual, and render our services with courtesy and respect.

Fire- The primary mission of the Town of Benson Fire Department is to provide excellent fire protection during emergency responses, to prevent injury, and to protect property and the environment.



The Benson Fire Department is located at 313 S. Elm Street. The Chief is a full time employee and about 35 volunteers serve the Department. The Fire Department has a new station that was built for the future, and it is centrally located to provide service to the Benson area. Benson's current fire protection rating is a Class 5. The department abuts seven fire districts, and there are mutual aid agreements with them.

In addition to fire protection, the Fire Department provides vehicle extrication to accident victims and public fire education to children and adults.

Emergency medical services- Johnston County provides Emergency Medical Services for Benson. Johnston County has a voluntary subscription program. The cost is \$60 annually per household. The subscription fee covers uninsured, out-of-pocket expenses for emergency calls and is a one-time, annual donation regardless of the number of emergency calls to a house. This program also covers the cost if a subscriber needs an ambulance for an emergency anywhere in Johnston County.

Solid Waste- Benson contracts with Waste Industries for its solid waste collection and disposal. Recycling bins are available at the Benson drop-off site on 208 N. Elm Street, where plastic, newspaper, aluminum and cardboard may be recycled. A manned collection site is available at 500 N. Market Street for household furniture.

Electric Power- Benson is a member of ElectriCities, a not-for-profit government service organization. Benson is in the Eastern Association and gets its power from Duke Energy. Benson owns its electric distribution system and sells the power to its customers.

Johnston County Comprehensive Plan
Potentially relevant recommendations for the Benson Land Use Plan

The Johnston County Comprehensive Plan for 2030 proposes Themes, Goals and Objectives for the plan. Much of the content of the Plan addresses actions that appear to address land use issues within the County's jurisdiction. This analysis will not focus on those actions. Instead, this document will focus on intergovernmental actions and others which, although they are oriented toward land use issues in the County's jurisdiction, appear to be logical for Benson to consider.

Theme 1: Managing Growth and Infrastructure- well-planned growth patterns that are fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible.

Goal 1- Grow in a fiscally efficient, compact manner

Objective 1A- Encourage development within urbanized or urbanizing areas.

- Adopt clear boundaries for ETJ areas and expected annexation areas.
- Adjust county regulations and zoning so as not to encourage growth outside of municipal areas and encourage development in areas that are planned for services.

Objective 1B- Allow for higher densities and a greater mixture of land use patterns in urban areas that make the most efficient use of infrastructure.

Comment: These objectives should be of great interest to the Town of Benson, since they could help to expand Benson's ETJ and guide development into it. Benson should actively pursue discussions with Johnston County to implement these objectives.

Theme 2: Expanding Economic Opportunities- grow and diversify the County's economy in a manner that does not impede the continued vitality of agriculture or the quality of life and community character.

Objective 3A Offer a progressive atmosphere for enterprises that will diversify the local economy, expand the tax base and enhance the quality of life in Johnston County.

Objective 3B- Identify sites best suited for industrial and commercial development and encourage development by land use and infrastructure decisions

Objective 3C- Promote agricultural entrepreneurship by providing information about incentive programs, creating business incubators and training opportunities.

Comment: These objectives appear to be relevant to Benson's Land Use Plan.

Theme 4: Preserving Farmland and Rural Character

Objective 7B Support Local Agriculture through farmers' markets and community support of agriculture.

Comment: This objective appears to be relevant to Benson's Land Use Plan.

Theme 5: Protecting the Environment and Cultural Sites

Objective 10A- Develop community character inventory, including natural, historic and cultural sites.

Comment: This objective appears to be relevant to Benson's Land Use Plan.

Theme 6: Enhancing Mobility

Goal 11: Coordinated thoroughfare planning- revise thoroughfare plan to ensure continuity among various jurisdictions.

Objective 11A: Seek more aggressive transportation planning through the Upper Coastal Plains RPO, to match needs and to better coordinate with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization that works in the western part of the County.

Objective 12C: Develop a greenways and trails plan. This plan could help secure grant funds.

Comment: This objective appears to be relevant to Benson's Land Use Plan. There is also an interest to work with Harnett County on its transportation planning.

Theme 7: Intergovernmental Coordination: Identify areas of common interest and agreement among local governments to develop and pursue initiatives.

Goal 13: Recognize Municipal Interests and Local Plan Objectives

Objective 13A: Coordinate County-level decision making with municipal interests, especially with respect to transportation corridors and protected lands.

Comment: This objective appears to be relevant to Benson's Land Use Plan.

Land Use Plan\existing conditions\existing plans
Johnston County\Comprehensive Plan analysis

Key Planning Issues and Concerns

Land Area to be considered in the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Advisory Committee addressed the area that should be included in the Land Use Plan. The Committee agreed that the Plan should take a long-term view to include areas within a five-mile radius from the center of Town outside of other municipalities' ETJs. This area goes beyond areas designated by Johnston County in its Comprehensive Plan as growth areas, plus it extends into Harnett County to include Interchange #77 on I-95 as well as other lands within that radius, splitting the distance between Benson and Dunn in half. This planning area is noted on the maps included with this report.

Urban Form

Benson has developed in a compact form of development and the central area of Town is in good condition. A challenge will be to maintain this compact form of development instead of a sprawl form of development.

The Benson Land Use Advisory Committee offered these suggestions:

- Keep downtown viable, quaint and thriving, with a good population base. The Committee cited the downtowns of Apex, Fuquay-Varina and Smithfield as good examples of thriving downtowns
 - It should be walkable- a safe place for pedestrians
 - It should draw people into the core
- Keep Downtown as the center, with less density moving outwards
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the Historic District

- Planned Unit Developments with small-scale mixed uses could keep downtown thriving
- The Committee also indicated that they want goals and guidance to help the Town make better land use decisions.
- Planned growth- The Land Use Advisory Committee does not want ad-hoc development, especially at the NC 242 interchange with I-40.
- The Land Use Advisory Committee expressed a desire for tasteful development
- Housing should include upper scale housing
- Land Use patterns should support a strong tax base
- Future commercial and industrial development is more to the west, into Harnett County and Dunn
- Future residential development is more to the north and south along the NC 50 corridor

Economic Development

The Land Use Advisory Committee discussed the following ideas:

How to bring in major businesses?

- Use rezoning to protect areas
- Use water and sewer planning/ extensions to serve specific growth areas
- Benson should build upon its access to major transportation roads and railroad access
- Protect prime industrial sites near major transportation nodes for distribution of goods

The Land Use Advisory Committee discussed impediments to economic growth, including:

- Lack of water and sewer lines and road access to potential industrial sites
- Willingness of property owners to sell at a reasonable price
- The need to have additional certified industrial sites available in the Benson area.

The Committee also discussed the idea of creating its own Economic Development Committee which would be a non-profit organization (501 c 3) to promote industrial/commercial sites in Benson

In addition to the Benson Strategic Economic Development Plan's recommendations, Benson may wish to pursue alternative energy industries, including wind power, solar power and biofuels, especially as these industries are targeted in the Federal economic stimulus program.

Transportation

The Land Use Advisory Committee indicated that the primary traffic problem in Benson is managing I-95 traffic around town.

Major transportation improvements are implemented through the State's Transportation Improvement Plan. The Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization's prioritization list for 2011- 2017 appears to have one project in the Benson area. That project is pavement rehabilitation of I-95 from the Harnett County Line to US 70.

The 1991 Thoroughfare Plan should be updated and its recommendations incorporated into the development review process. In the future, Johnston County governments will prepare a Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Benson needs to make sure its interests are represented in that process. Some issues appear to be providing adequate access along NC 242 to its interchange with I-40, providing adequate access along NC 50 north to new developments, handling traffic from I-95 and providing adequate access to industrial development south and east of Town.

As improvements are planned for area thoroughfares, collectors and local roads, sidewalks and provisions for bicycling should be included.

Community Facilities

Water and Sewer Service- The Land Use Advisory Committee discussed the need to have a long-term plan for water and wastewater service which will address future needs, including consideration of the water quality in Hannah Creek and interbasin transfers.

Fire Protection- the Town appears to be adequately served with the new fire station downtown. The Fire Department can access properties across the railroad tracks, if there was a train on the tracks at the time the fire department was responding to a fire. As Benson develops, it is important to ensure that water line sizing is appropriate for fire hydrants, that street access to properties is adequate, and where roads dead-end, that there are cul-de-sacs, both temporary ones for streets that are to be extended and permanent ones for roads that will not be extended.

Open Space

An open space network which connects parks, schools and other destinations could address a number of issues:

- From an economic development perspective, such an amenity would add to the Town's attractiveness to new industries.

- From a quality of life perspective, it would provide opportunities for people to get out and exercise, relax and get around in an open space setting.
- From a water quality perspective, acquiring and protecting open space also protects the quality of Benson's water.
- The Land Use Advisory Committee indicated that it would like to connect areas of Town with a pedestrian thoroughfare system.

The Land Use Advisory Committee suggested that the following areas should be addressed:

- Parks and open space within subdivisions- create a pedestrian thoroughfare plan
- Natural corridors- bike and pedestrian links
- Pedestrian focus on all roads
- Safe Bicycling on area roads and greenways (Cyclists now ride on Benson-Hardee Rd on Saturdays)

The Benson Community Park Master Plan identifies potential greenways and sidewalk improvements along with additional park search areas. This plan could serve as the blueprint for an open space network. The network would involve open space acquisition, seeking funding from State and Federal governments, regulations to encourage open space dedication and partnerships with other organizations.

If Benson initiates an open space program, the Town would not need to do this on its own. It could seek a partnership with Johnston County, the School system and non-profits such as The Triangle Land Conservancy and the Trust for Public Lands in creating and implementing such an open space program. Working lands could also play a part in this program, involving the Johnston Soil and Water Conservation District and the Johnston County Cooperative Extension.

Natural Features

As noted above, funding for this Land Use plan must result in implementation of best management practices, land use controls and development strategies that will serve to protect water quality within Benson's planning jurisdiction. Best Management Practices could include:

- Continuing Benson's compact form of urban development
- Prohibit development in entire floodplain- the flood plain will expand as impervious surfaces increase. Communities that have implemented such a prohibition have found that areas that have developed under this prohibition have fewer flooding complaints than other parts of the community.
- Open Space program-

- Expand greenways element of Parks and Recreation plan for better specificity.
- Purchase significant open space parcels.
- Require open space subdivisions next to perennial streams.
- Seek grant funding and partnerships.
- Public education
- Stormwater management controls that result in low stormwater impact.
- Erosion and sedimentation controls that encourage minimal land-disturbing activities.
- Implementation of NPDES Phase II standards

Intergovernmental cooperation

The need for intergovernmental cooperation will increase as development increases and as communities grow closer together.

The Land Use Advisory Committee offered the following observations:

- Dunn influences Benson in travel patterns, utility sharing, commercial/retail and general regionalism; large tracts of land are in Dunn.
- Benson has more in common with Harnett County than Johnston County
- Benson is not adequately represented by or promoted by the Johnston County Economic Development Commission.

Appendix A Figures / Exhibits (available separately, by request)

Map #1- Aerial Data 2005- Town of Benson

Map #2- Land Use 2008 Town of Benson.

Map #3- Zoning- Town of Benson and Surrounding Areas

Map #4- Johnston County Comprehensive Plan

Map #5- Land Use Map- Harnett County.

Map#6- Dunn Land Use Plan

Map #7- Proposed Thoroughfare Plan

Map # 8- Existing and Proposed Sidewalks, Open Space and Greenways

Map #9- Environmental Features

Map #10- Benson Biodiversity/ Wildlife Habitat

Map #11- Viable Farmland

Map #12- Forestlands

Map #13- National Register Historic District and Place- Town of Benson

Map #14- Infrastructure- Town of Benson

