

RICHMOND COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA



STRATEGIC LAND USE PLAN

ADOPTED 2022

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Richmond County, North Carolina
Adopted 2022

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Strategic Land Use Plan

Webster's Dictionary defines land use planning as a process of regulating the use of land to promote more desirable social and environmental outcomes as well as more efficient use of resources. But the term "land use plan" means more than simply the definition above, it is a comprehensive look at development trends, population changes, housing needs, and transportation requirements over time. The three basic elements of a strategic land use plan are goals, objectives, and strategies. This land use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.

Vision Statement

To create a clear and concise land use plan for Richmond County, which will aid in guiding the decisions regarding future development patterns and land use changes. While changes are inevitable and often unpredictable, this plan will provide a framework for how to move forward. Emphasis is placed on development trends, population changes, housing needs, and transportation. We will work to: (1) preserve agricultural land, (2) ensure property rights, and (3) attract new economic development.

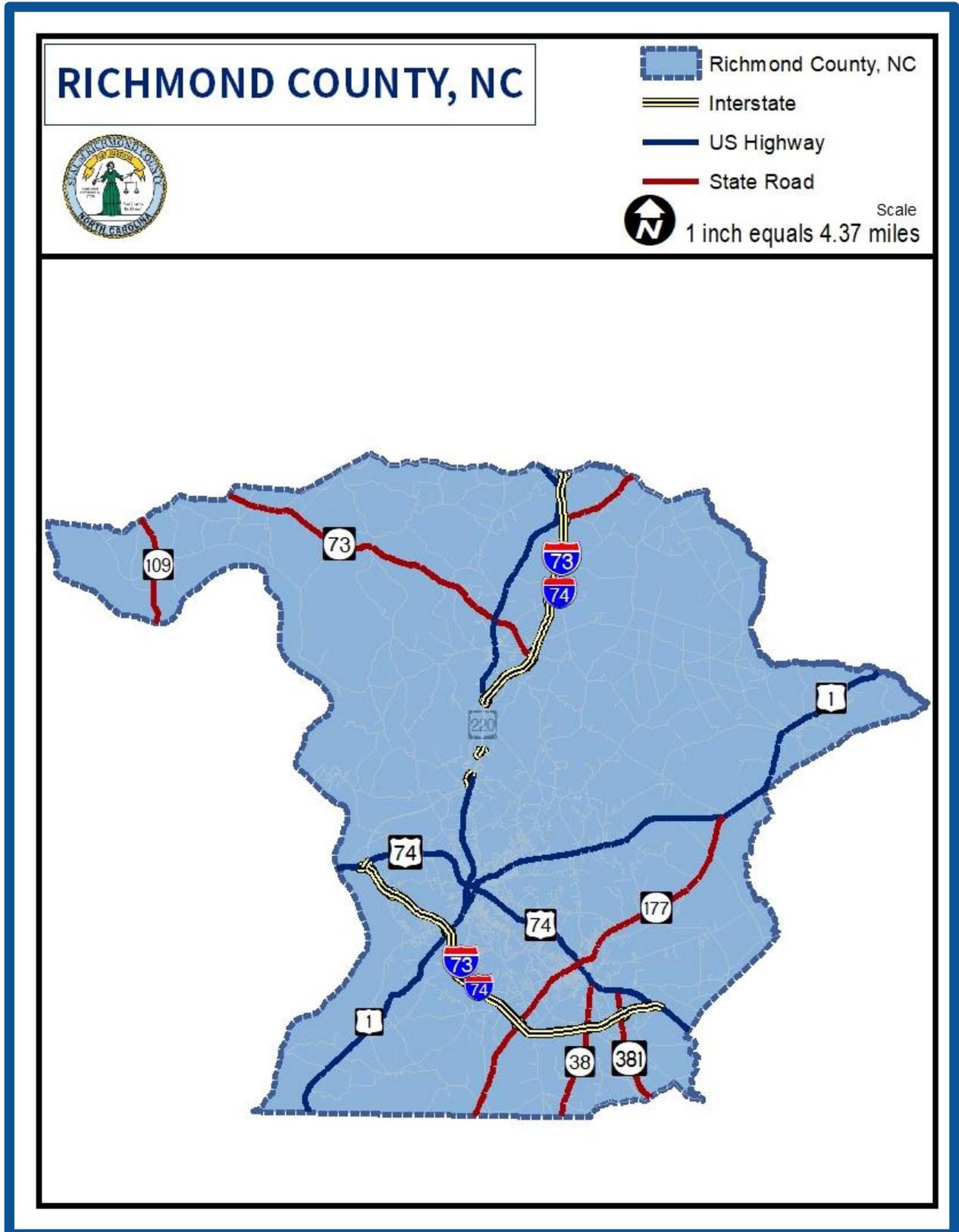
Elements of the Land Use Plan

- The preservation of the small town and rural way of life in Richmond County.
- Conserve and protect the natural resources of Richmond County by encouraging the preservation of the landscape, countryside, and open spaces.
- Promote positive change by continuing the community-input process.
- Preserve the county's agricultural industries for future generations.
- Support a wide range of economic possibilities.
- Follow the legal framework to advance the orderly, safe, and smart growth of all types of land use in Richmond County while encouraging high quality development.
- Ensure development does not outpace public infrastructure and other governmental services.
- Protect property rights while promoting the enhancement of property values to create a better quality of life for future generations.

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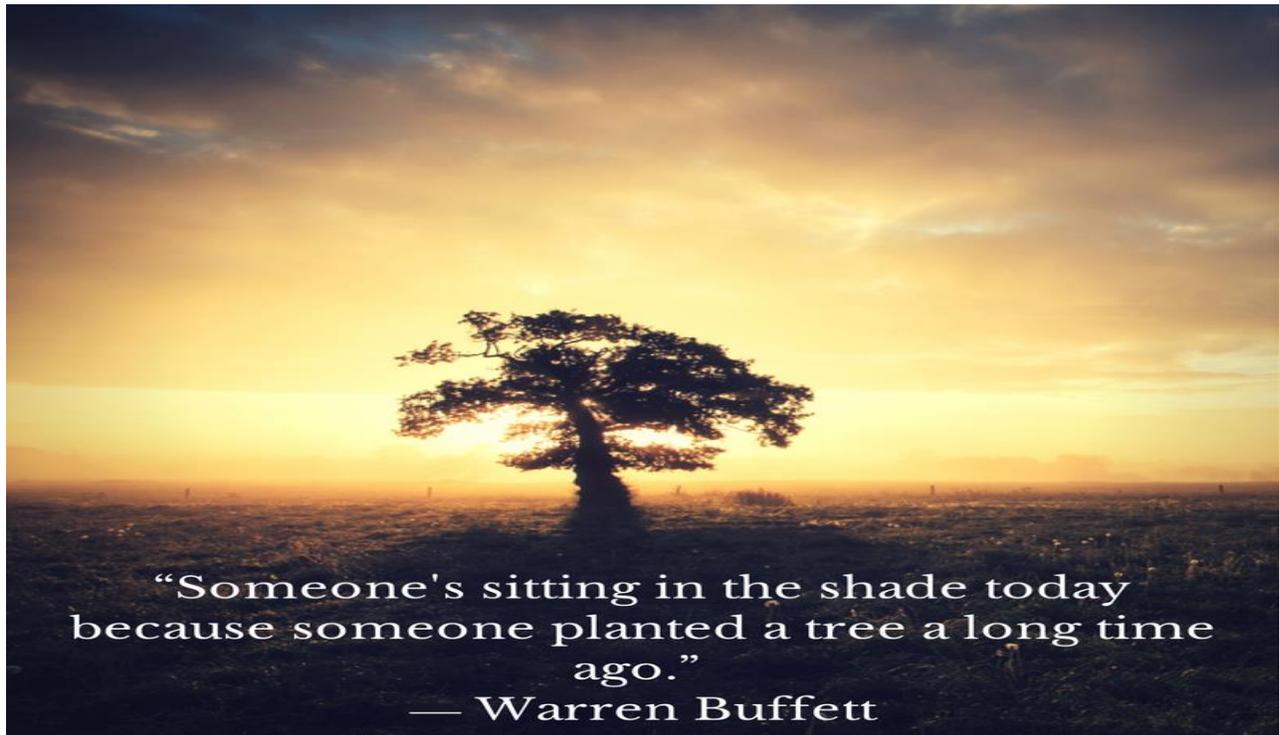
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PLAN OF ACTION



GOALS

*A goal is the ideal we want to
achieve.*



OBJECTIVES

An objective is the result we want.



STRATEGIES

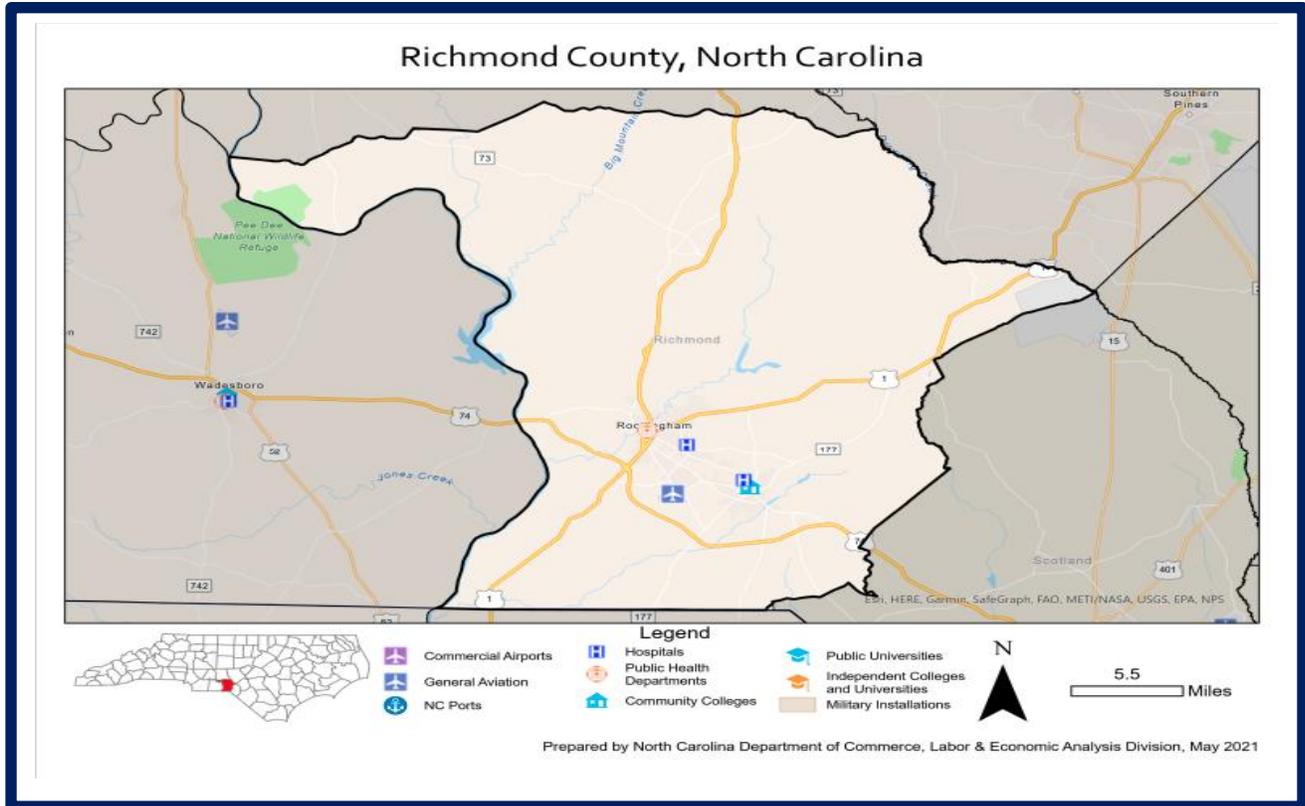
*Strategy tells us how we might get what we
as a community desire.*

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RICHMOND COUNTY, NC FACTS

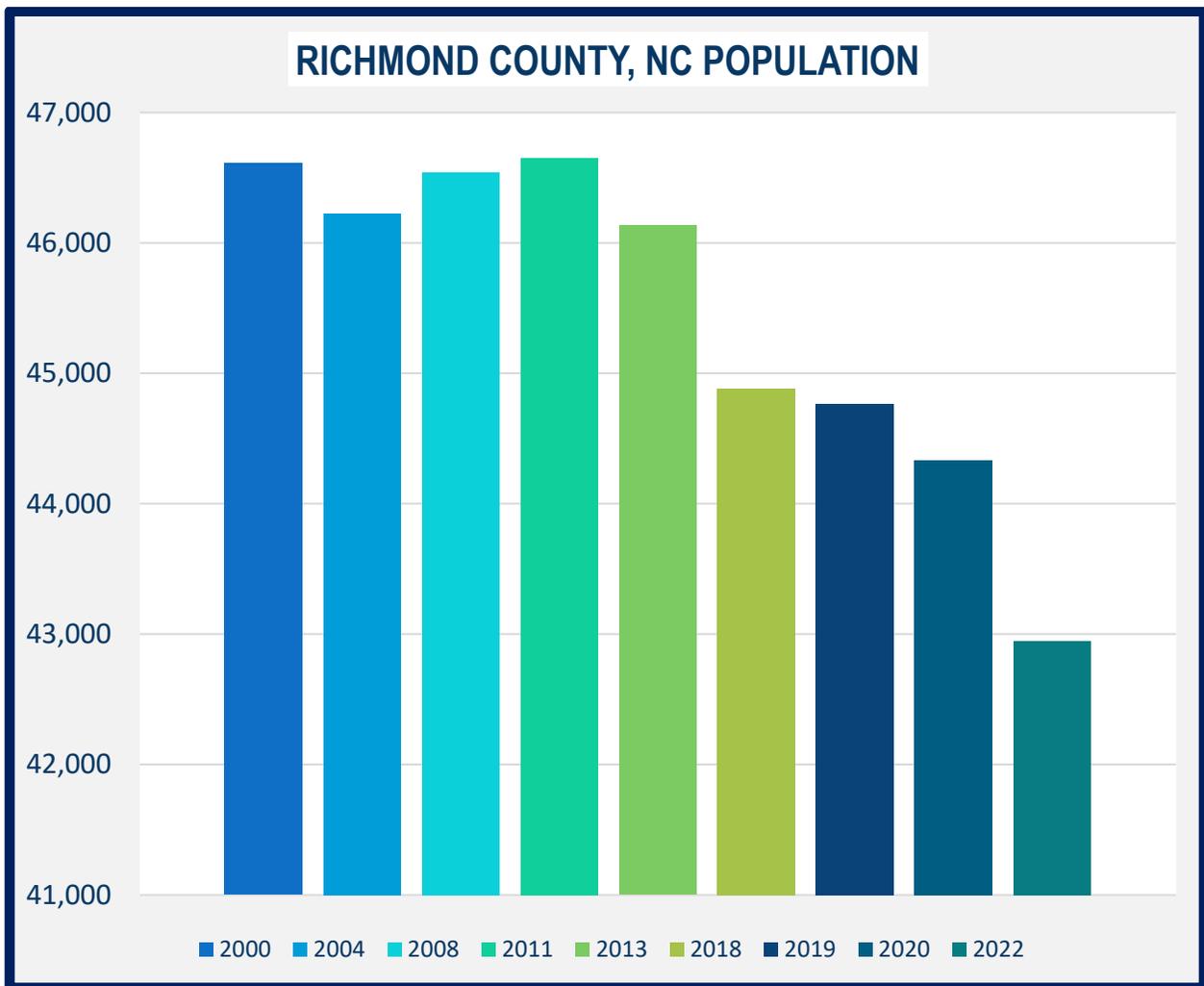
Founded	1779
Area	480 square miles
County Seat	Rockingham
Colleges and Universities	Richmond Community College
Municipalities	Rockingham Hamlet Ellerbe Hoffman Dobbins Heights Norman
Population 2022	42,946



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POPULATION TREND



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Goal 1: To preserve, protect and sustain the rural nature of the county.



Objective 1: To protect the integrity of farming and rural areas.

- Strategy 1: Identify the designated rural areas within each zoning districts. Consider adding additional zoning districts to the map with smaller acreage requirements. The additional zoning district would focus on property closer to infrastructure.
- Strategy 2: Allow only small “minor by definition” subdivisions in designated rural areas.
- Strategy 3: Identify all land uses which can be or could be found in designated rural areas.
- Strategy 4: Create a Rural Growth Boundary, a growth management plan, to direct growth to appropriate areas.
- Strategy 5: Large-scale development and “major by definition” subdivisions should be responsible for buffers against incompatible land uses.
- Strategy 6: Large scale subdivisions should be allowed only where public water is available and /or inside the rural growth boundary.
- Strategy 7: Promote the use of existing private preservation and conservation programs.
- Strategy 8: Develop utilities extension policy to coincide with rural growth boundary.
- Strategy 9: Promote balance of agricultural land with land inclusive of green energy alternatives.
- Strategy 10: Encourage landowner participation in Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program.

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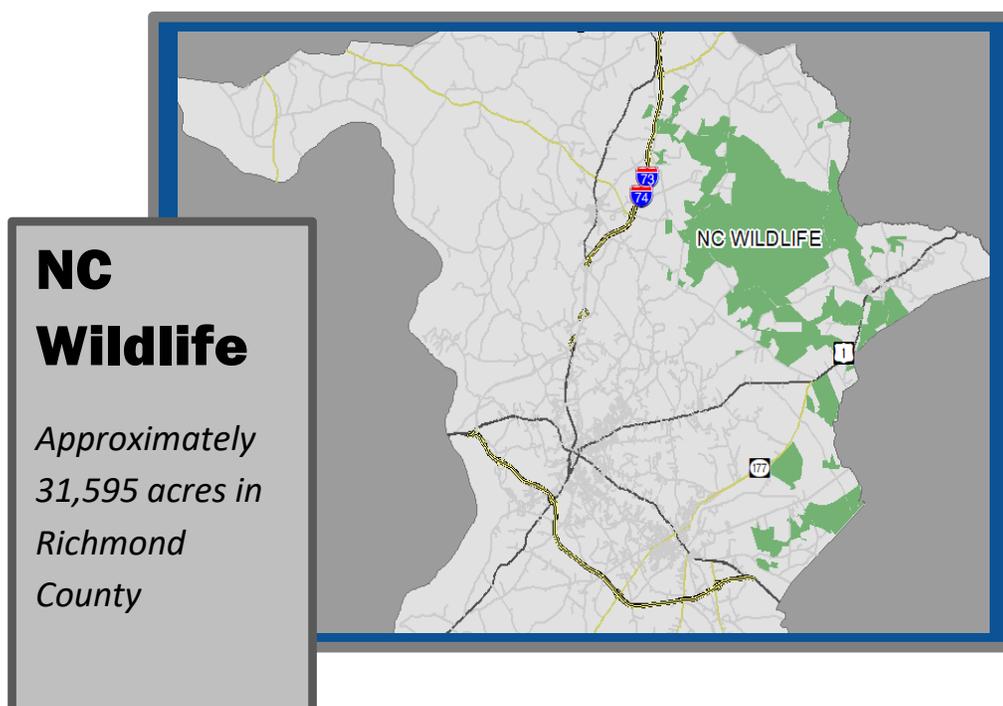
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Objective 2: To promote and preserve small business opportunities in rural areas.

- Strategy 1: Allow home based occupations of commercial or industrial use with the only limitation being minimum lot size.
- Strategy 2: Encourage Rural Business District for use as commercial node area around main intersections.
- Strategy 3: Create no non-conforming uses.

Objective 3: To create a regional marketing system for local farmers.

- Strategy 1: Develop proper road signage in conjunction with NCDOT program.
- Strategy 2: Collect all regional information and support existing projects regarding the development of a farmer's co-op marketing program.
- Strategy 3: Involve farm and farming operation owners in future marketing discussions, and include the Sandhills Ag-Innovation Center, NC Cooperative Extension Service, NC Farm Services, and Richmond County Soil and Water in those future discussions as well.



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Goal 2: The protection, preservation, and conservation of the county's environmental and natural resources, including agricultural resources, mineral resources, water, and air quality.



Objective 1: To encourage good air quality standards.

- Strategy 1: Investigate the State livestock odor rules.
- Strategy 2: Encourage cluster development patterns.
- Strategy 3: Review air quality standards per the leadership of state and federal rules and regulations.
- Strategy 4: Continue to work with DEQ on air quality permits. New development permitted must be in conformity with all applicable Federal, State, County Health and Environmental Quality regulations.

Objective 2: To identify and protect historic sites, neighborhoods, buildings, and areas.

- Strategy 1: Support existing efforts to preserve agricultural land.
- Strategy 2: Work with State Division of Archives on preservation issues.

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Objective 3: To protect the quality of Richmond County's water resources of the Blewett Falls Reservoir and watershed(s).

- Strategy 1: Adopted low-density residential zoning regulation for area surrounding the reservoir.
- Strategy 2: Adopt low impact recreational zoning regulation for area surrounding the reservoir.
- Strategy 3: Implement protections set forth in the ordinance designed to protect drinking water.

Objective 4: To preserve the integrity of all surface and ground water.

- Strategy 1: Review upcoming storm water drainage regulation from State.
- Strategy 2: Review existing County wellhead ordinance and the State's septic tank regulations.
- Strategy 3: Work with Environmental Health and map locations of all wellhead and septic site locations into county's GIS.

Objective 5: Encourage timber harvest practices which do not damage the county's scenic beauty.

- Strategy 1: Promote reforestation of clear-cut land within appropriate time frames.
- Strategy 2: Promote rules and regulations that keep forestland in timber production.
- Strategy 3: Support current present use valuation for land in farm and timber production.

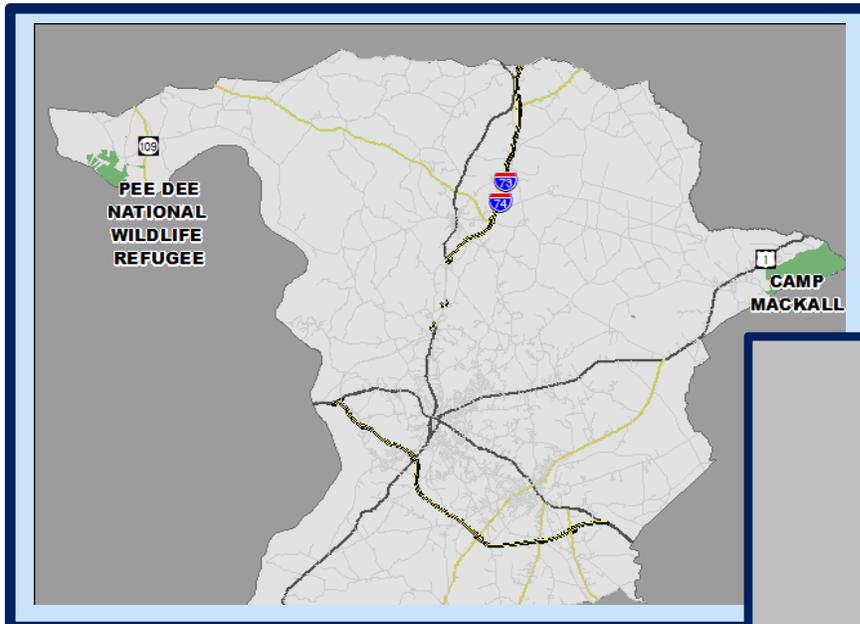


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Objective 6: To promote a clean environment in Richmond County.

- Strategy 1: Support the efforts of keeping Richmond County beautiful. Work in conjunction with the Public Works Department on their county sponsored Spring/Fall Litter Sweeps and Residential Household Waste Collection Day. Assist county residents with making connections with state supported Adopt-A Highway program.
- Strategy 2: Review, update, and enforce the current solid waste ordinance.
- Strategy 3: Maintain the current position of Solid Waste Enforcement Officer.
- Strategy 4: Partner with Richmond County Schools and educate school aged children on the importance of keeping Richmond County beautiful.
- Strategy 5: Continue code enforcement monitoring of nuisance violations.



**UNITED STATES
CAMP MACKALL
and
PEE DEE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE
REFUGE**

*Approximately
3,533 acres in
Richmond
County*

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Goal 3: Support the planning process designed to encourage community and citizen participation.



Objective 1: Ensure opportunities for public involvement in the land use planning and development process.

- Strategy 1: Plan and hold regular public planning meetings on development opportunities for the county.
- Strategy 2: Distribute information about planning development through notifications in published media outlets and social media outlets.
- Strategy 3: Conduct public surveys to gain input from residents, property owners, and business owners to identify goals and create strategies for achieving the County's land use plan vision.
- Strategy 4: Continue to conduct open public meetings with the Planning Board.
- Strategy 5: Coordinate the dissemination of information through the county's website and social media outlets.
- Strategy 6: Continue to utilize the Richmond County Planning Board and the knowledge they have about zoning and development.

*"There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about."
Margaret Wheatley*

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Goal 4: To cultivate an efficient user-friendly permitting and development process.



Objective 1: Create an efficient, coordinated approach to the development permitting process.

- Strategy 1: Work towards a co-location of appropriate county permitting departments.
- Strategy 2: Continue a unified approach to development standards.
- Strategy 3: Develop citizen checklists for the application and permitting process.
- Strategy 4: Develop a computerized central permitting process using commercially available software.
- Strategy 5: Have building inspections, planning, zoning, environmental health, and public works, work together on new implementation process.

Teamwork appears most effective if each individual helps others to succeed, increasing the synergy of that team; ideally, every person will contribute different skills to increase the efficiency of the team and develop its unity.

Andrew Carnegie

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Goal 5: Create an environment which allows for a wide range of appropriate housing opportunities.



Objective 1: Maintain the quality of the county housing stock.

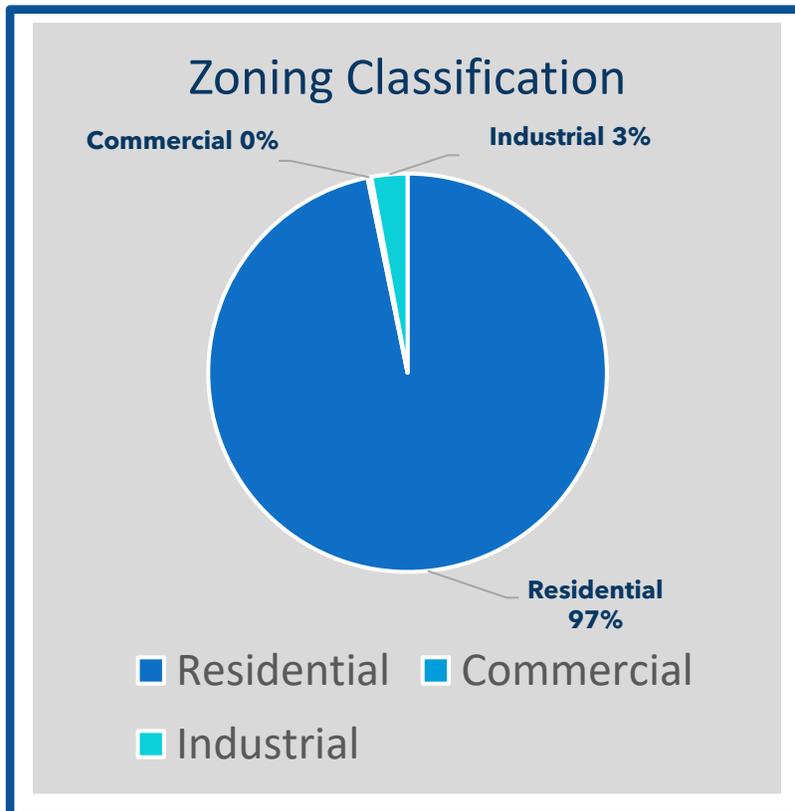
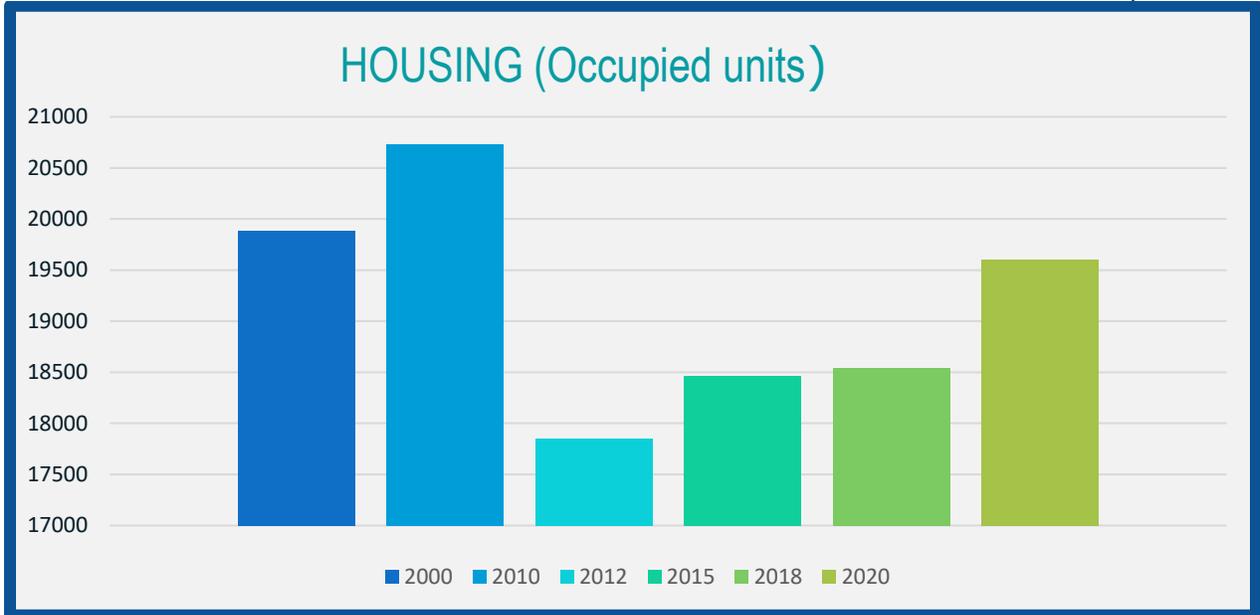
- Strategy 1: Support manufactured home standards that use industry standards as a basis. (NCMHI).
- Strategy 2: Conduct routine housing surveys and consult Census reports to review current housing stock within the county and identify areas of need (i.e., location, price range, amenities, size, etc.).
- Strategy 3: Focus on minimum housing standard with appropriate staff and discuss enforcement controls.
- Strategy 4: Make available the opportunity to construct different types of housing (apartments, duplexes, triplexes) in most residential zoning jurisdictions.

Objective 2: To develop equal standards for all types of housing opportunities.

- Strategy 1: Review land use controls that do not distinguish between manufactured housing, modular, and site-built housing.
- Strategy 2: Encourage affordable housing options.

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ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS

Richmond County Zoning is divided into three (3) different zoning classifications

Residential

Commercial

Industrial

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Goal 6: Promote recreational opportunities and alternatives throughout Richmond County.



Objective 1: To increase utilization of the Sandhill Game Lands and Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge.

- Strategy 1: Continue to update the GIS with roads, lakes, and other items of interest within the Sandhill Game Lands.
- Strategy 2: Communicate and explore opportunities for utilization with the appropriate State Agency (NC Wildlife Commission) or Federal Agency (USFWS).
- Strategy 3: Promote compatible land uses adjacent to the Sandhills Game Land and Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge.

Objective 2: To identify and increase public awareness of the County's natural resources and recreation opportunities.

- Strategy 1: Work with the Richmond County Chamber of Commerce and Richmond County Tourism Authority to increase public awareness of tourism and agritourism opportunities within the county.
- Strategy 2: Support current efforts and recommendations of the Sustainable Tourism in the Sandhills report from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and the North Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management, NCSU.
- Strategy 3: Include information of the county's natural resources and recreation opportunities in the County's newsletter, web pages, and social media.

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Objective 3: To develop more recreational opportunities (public and private).

- Strategy 1: Improve nature-based opportunities around the Blewett Falls Lake area.
- Strategy 2: Support effort in all local municipalities and communities with their development of parks and other recreational opportunities in cooperation with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.
- Strategy 4: Promote existing NCDOT cycling routes within Richmond County.
- Strategy 5: Support efforts of the Rockingham Speedway and Rockingham Dragway to recruit major entertainment events.
- Strategy 6: Keep Richmond County recreational parks and green spaces clear of debris.

Goal 7: Provide and expand infrastructure to support sound development in Richmond County.



Objective 1: To direct growth to appropriate places and away from natural sensitive and/or agriculturally rich lands.

- Strategy 1: Create a Rural Growth Boundary, a growth management plan, to direct growth to appropriate areas.
- Strategy 2: Ensure that public infrastructure and services can support development and expansion of a Rural Growth Boundary.
- Strategy 3: Encourage cooperative practices among infrastructure providers.

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Goal 8: Monitor transportation services to meet current and future needs and demands.



Objective 1: Interlink land planning decisions with current and future transportation improvements.

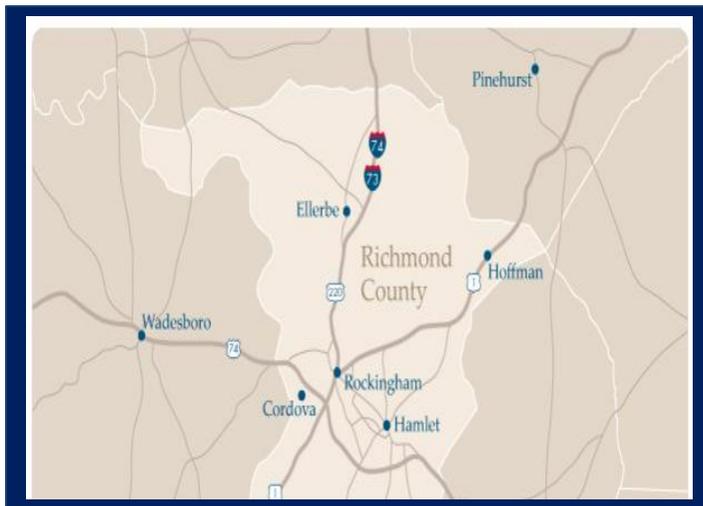
- Strategy 1: Continue to support the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) by having appointed members regularly attend meetings. Have active representation on the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC). Continue open communication with NCDOT.
- Strategy 2: Explore expansion of public transportation among urban areas of the county by working with the Richmond Interagency Transportation (ART).
- Strategy 3: Continue airport services to meet current and future needs and demands.
- Strategy 4: Continue and promote alternative modes of transportation such as the Richmond Interagency Transportation (ART).
- Strategy 5: Support NCDOT efforts to complete, upgrade, or widen roads such as Interstate 73/74 and/or state roads within the county.
- Strategy 6: Continue to work with NCDOT on widening safety projects.
- Strategy 7: Support alternative mode of transportation services such as rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and auto.



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Richmond County is served by Interstate 73/74, 3 US highways (Highway 74, Highway 1, and Highway 220) and multiple NC state highways. In addition to these major highways, Richmond County is also home to CSX transportation. CSX is an international transportation company offering a variety of rail, container-shipping, intermodal, trucking, and contract logistics services.

The Richmond County Airport also provides a full range of services for private aircraft, and charter services are available. Raleigh-Durham International Airport and Charlotte Douglas International Airport are just an hour and half drive away. This central location and easy access to major highways, interstates, rail, and air makes Richmond County perfectly positioned for access to major commercial markets, regional and international airports, and deep-water ports.

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Goal 9: Create an atmosphere that promotes sound economic development principles within the land use planning practices.



Objective 1: To continue and expand the educational and economic development partnership(s).

Strategy 1: Support and partner with Richmond Community College and Richmond County Schools to utilize some of their programs such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) and work-based learning opportunities for their students.

Objective 2: To balance industrial, commercial, and residential growth through diversity to increase the tax base and promote a lower unemployment rate.

Strategy 1: Review and support land use policies to encourage sound industrial, commercial, and residential development.

Objective 3: To create consistency and integrity between the land use plan and economic development activities.

Strategy 1: Conduct periodic meetings as needed between the Planning Department, Planning Board, and Economic Development.

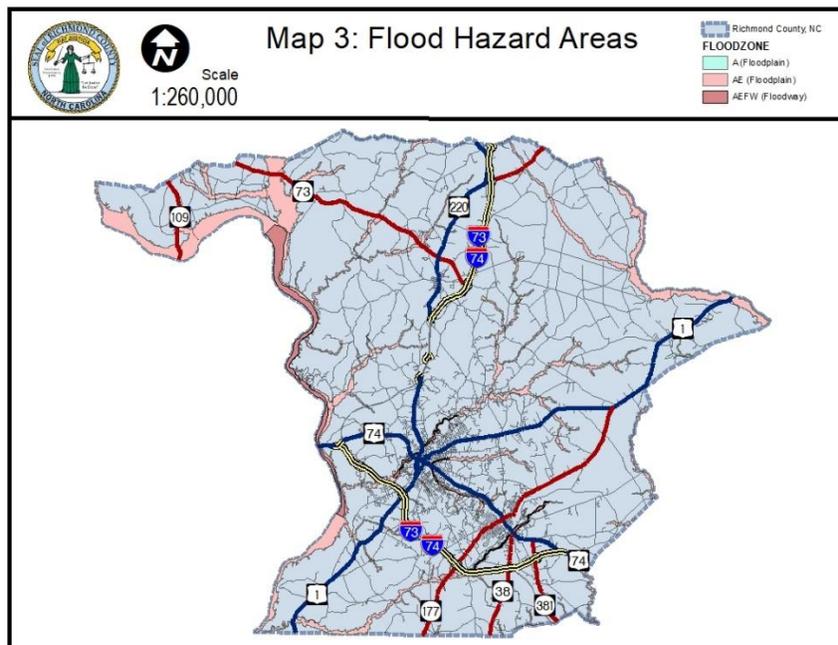
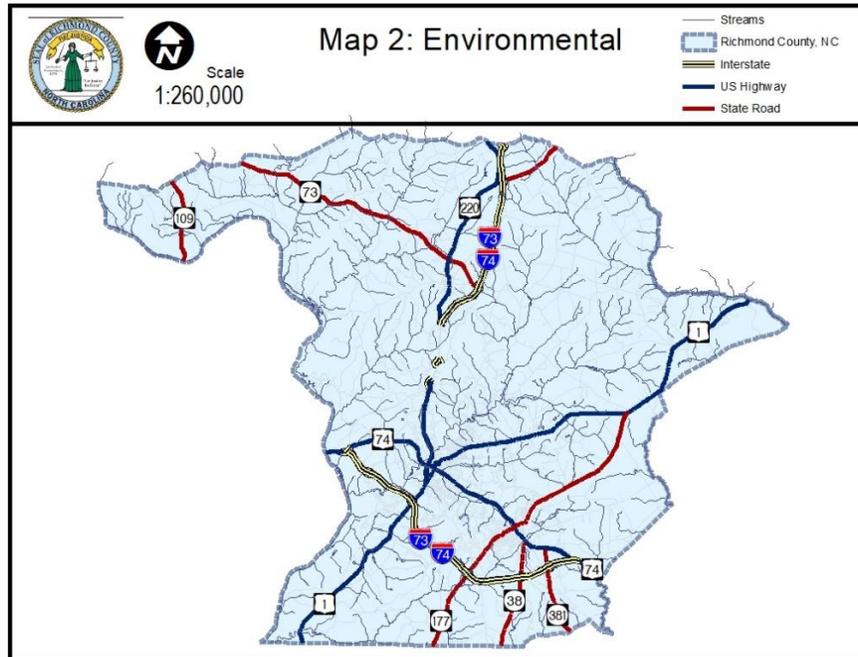
Strategy 2: Allow Richmond County Economic Developer to provide recommendations for proposed commercial and industrial rezoning.

Strategy 3: Examine and assess different types of land use to determine which areas of the county are best suited for industrial and commercial development.

Strategy 4: Ensure adequate amounts of land in desirable locations are available to develop for industrial and commercial use.

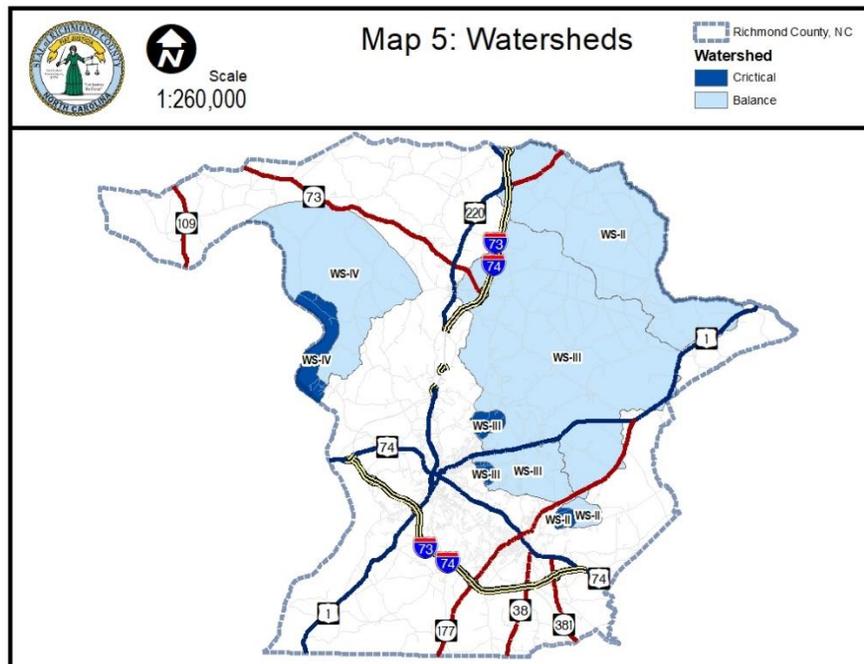
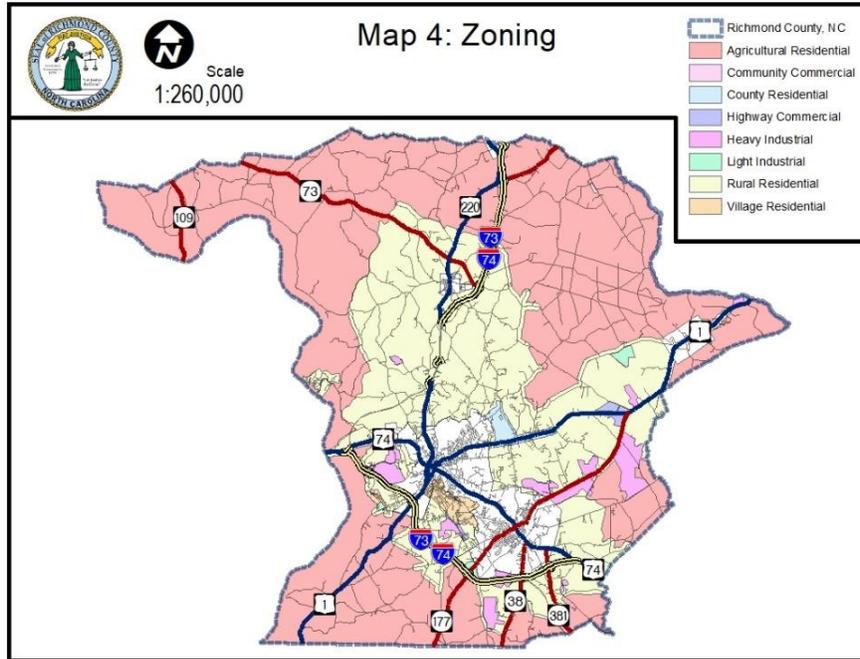
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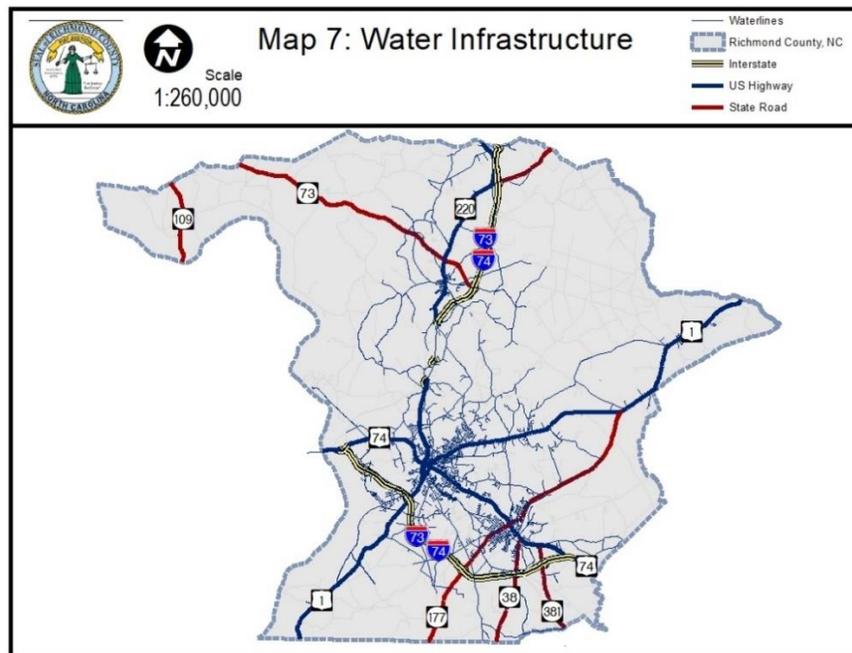
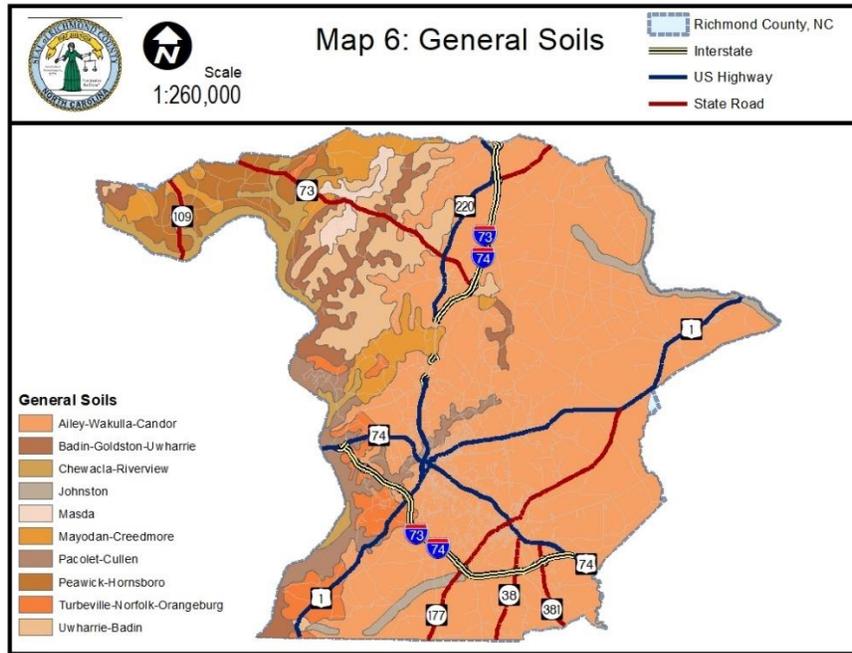
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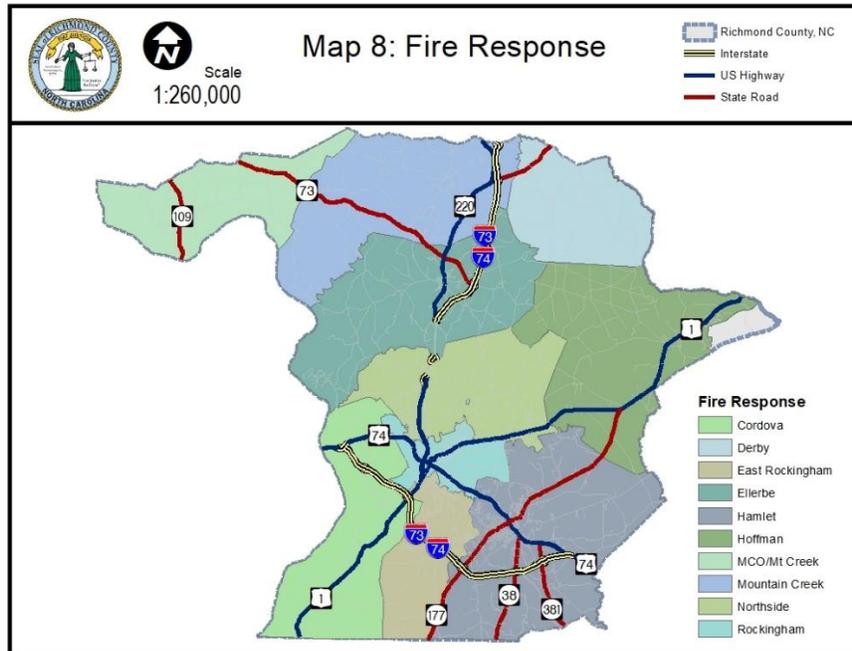
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Maps are essential. Planning a journey without a map is like building a house without drawings.

Mark Jenkins

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Sources

Richmond County GIS
NC Department of Commerce
Census.gov
NCDEQ
Richmond County Land Use Plan 2000

A special thank you to the Planning Board and Planning Department for your time, work, and collaboration on this Strategic Land Use Plan adopted 2022.