



Town of Morehead City Core Land Use Plan Implementation Status Report

This report was prepared on March 7, 2016 and is provided in accordance with 15A NCAC 07B .0804. The report is based on identified implementation actions which meet the CRC's Management Topic goals and objectives, as indicated in the action plan pursuant to Rule 15A NCAC 07B .0702(e)(3).

The Morehead City Core Land Use Plan was adopted on August 14, 2007 and was certified by the Coastal Resources Commission on September 28, 2007. Since its adoption and certification, no issues have arisen which have resulted in any delay of action resulting from the Core Land Use Plan. The annexation of several lots on Radio Island into Morehead City's jurisdiction has resulted in an unforeseen circumstance. However, this has provided an opportunity for staff to review both Carteret County's Land Use Plan and Morehead City's Core Land Use Plan when evaluating consistency of a proposed rezoning or project.

Following is the implementation status of the identified public access, land use compatibility, infrastructure carrying capacity, natural hazard areas, and water quality management goal policies as outlined in 15A NCAC 07B .0702(d)(2).

Public Access:

Policy 1 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to ensure a variety of opportunities for access to public trust waters to all segments of the community, including persons with disabilities.

From 2007 to date, staff has conducted a number of activities in support of providing public access opportunities to all segments of the community. These activities include but were not limited to:

- Continued to require that a waterfront access area (or fee in lieu of to establish or improve a waterfront access area) be provided by developers of all new subdivisions located along the waterfront.
- With North Carolina Public Beach Access funds, acquired property adjacent to the North 7th Street street end, cleaned up the street end and the adjacent acquired property, and constructed a floating dock, gazebo, and parking area.
- North Carolina Public Beach Access funds, installed kayak racks and a parking rack at the South 11th Street street end.
- With North Carolina Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program funds, obtained the "jib" property on the Morehead City waterfront.

- Requested grant funding through the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program to improve property in Blair Farms subdivision with a dock, walking trail, and bathhouse. However, the grant application was not approved and the project did not move forward.
- With North Carolina Coastal Recreational Fishing License Grant funding, constructed a fish pier extension.

Policy 2 – Morehead City supports the state’s shoreline access policies and the goals and recommendations set forth in the town’s Waterfront Access Plan. The town will conform to CAMA and other state and federal environmental regulations affecting the development of estuarine access areas.

- The Town continues to improve and maintain the local and neighborhood public access sites identified in the Waterfront Access Plan.
- The Town continues to operate the City’s Coastal Area Management Local Permitting Office program to include issuance of permits, exemptions, and violations for development activities seventy-five (75) feet landward of the mean high water mark.
- The Town requires major and general CAMA permits and Army Corps of Engineer permits or exclusions be obtained and provided, when applicable, as part of the major subdivision process.

Policy 3 – The town will continue to ensure that existing water access points, including street ends and alleys, are not closed.

- The town continues to maintain existing water access points, including those located at street ends.
- The town maintains its alley closing policy which prohibits the closing of alleys which provide water access.

Land Use Compatibility:

Policy 1 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to ensure that land use and development activities provide a balance between economic development needs and protection of natural resources and fragile environments.

- Morehead City continues to enforce its Coastal Area Management and Flood Damage Prevention ordinances.
- When undertaking zoning and other studies, the Town considers the need to balance economic needs and protection of natural resources and fragile environments as identified in the Core Land Use Plan.

Policy 2 – Morehead City will support growth and development at the densities specified in the Future Land Use Map land classifications as delineated in Section 4.5 of the Morehead City Core Land Use Plan.

- Morehead City evaluates each rezoning and text amendment and provides information to the Planning Board and Council concerning the evaluation. In addition, since 2008 and 2014, respectively, formal resolutions of land use consistency have been adopted along with each Planning Board recommendation and Council action.

Policy 3 – The town will promote the continued low-density residential development character of areas located on the fringes of the extraterritorial jurisdiction and in locations adjacent to identified fragile areas.

- The Morehead City Unified Development Ordinance continues to require larger lot sizes for lots located within the extraterritorial jurisdiction than may otherwise be required based upon the minimum lot size of the zoning classification.
- The Town continues to observe and enforce buffers and maximum impervious surface requirements for the fragile areas which are located within seventy-five (75) feet of the mean high water mark.

Infrastructure Carrying Capacity:

Policy 1 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to coordinate the establishment of service area boundaries for existing and future water and sewer infrastructure with Carteret County, adjoining municipalities, and other utility providers.

- Four utilities provide water/sewer infrastructure in close proximity to the Morehead City corporate limits: Beaufort; Newport; West Carteret Water Corporation and Utilities Incorporated. The Morehead City Public Services Department has established service areas with neighboring providers and is working to establishing interconnectivity so water service is never lost. Newport and Morehead City have interconnected a 12-inch water main along Highway 70.

Policy 2 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to ensure that public infrastructure systems are sized, located, and managed in accordance with the need to protect or restore natural resources and fragile environments.

- In order to avoid parallel utility lines, Morehead City has paid for upgrading utilities (line size, lift stations, etc.) when developers construct projects outside the current service area. This process requires a single disturbance of natural and fragile environments. The City is also retrofitting a sewer force main along North 20th Street which is currently located above Calico Creek. Once the directional bore under Calico Creek is completed, the sewer force main will be relocated underground.

Policy 3 – Public water and sewer will be required for all new development occurring within the town's corporate limits in areas in which municipal sewer service is available or can be made readily available.

- Morehead City prohibits development within the corporate limits without tying into the water/sewer utility system.

Policy 4 – The town supports the use of water conservation practices and groundwater protection measures in order to prevent lowering the water table, to limit the quantity of wastewater generated, and to protect the quality of water.

- Morehead City completed a meter project upgrade which helps locate water loss from customers and allows almost instantaneous notification of the account holder. In addition, a public information program has been established to educate customers on water conservation practices. The City has upgraded and installed three new water plants with up-to-date technology which actively monitors water quantity as well as water quality. It also monitors the amount of water being drawn down from the aquifer.

Policy 5 – Package treatment plants may be permitted in areas in which municipal sewer service is currently unavailable and where the town has determined that the municipal sewer system is not likely to be extended in the future, provided that they conform to state permitting requirements and are designed for compatibility with the Morehead City sewer system in the event of untimely tying into the town's system.

- No package plants have been approved.

Policy 6 – The town will encourage land development in areas that currently have the necessary support infrastructure (water, sewer, streets, etc.) or where these services can readily be made available. Land development will be guided to areas that have public water and sewer services and an adequate street system to accommodate increased land development.

- Since 2007, there have been no subdivision lots to receive final approval without water/sewer support infrastructure; whereas, the number of subdivision lots which received final approval and which were to be supported by water/sewer totaled two hundred and thirty-two (232).

Natural Hazard Areas:

Policy 1 – It is the policy of Morehead City to conserve the natural resources and fragile environments that provide protection from such natural hazards as floods and storm surges.

- In 2009, staff completed its update of the Morehead City Hazard Mitigation Plan. In 2015, the Pamlico Sound Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, in which Morehead City is included, was completed.
- Morehead City continues to enforce and improve its floodplain management program through regulation enforcement and outreach.
- Morehead City is currently working to identify areas in which to maintain or improve its Community Rating System (CRS) classification which enhances the floodplain management program while simultaneously affording floodplain residents a reduction in flood insurance premiums.

Policy 2 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to minimize the threat to life, property, and natural resources that may result from land use and development within or adjacent to identified natural hazard areas.

- Staff provides information on the special flood hazards areas and areas of environmental concern to inquirers when they request property information.
- The Town enforces the building code and conducts two inspections involving the elevation of structures and the number of flood openings.
- The Town enforces CAMA regulations and limits what may be built in the thirty (30) foot buffers and the amount of impervious coverage in the seventy-five (75) foot areas of environmental concern.

Policy 3 – The Town will avoid zoning areas located in V-flood zones for high density residential or intensive nonresidential use.

- Since the adoption of the Morehead City Core Land Use Plan in 2007, no areas within the VE special flood hazard area have been rezoned to high intensity residential or non-residential use.

Policy 4 – The Based upon the availability of federal and state grant funds, land acquisition programs will be utilized in the most hazardous areas to minimize future damage and loss of life.

- In 2009, Morehead City staff submitted an application for federal funding under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to elevate the lift station at South Lockhart Street above the base flood elevation. The grant request was not approved.
- In 2013 and 2014, Morehead City staff submitted an application for federal Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) funding to mitigate repetitive loss properties within its floodplain. Floodplain management staff did not receive notification of funding availability in 2015; however, staff will continue to seek funding in the future.

Policy 5 – If any portion of the Town’s public infrastructure is significantly damaged by a major storm, consideration will be given to the feasibility of relocating or modifying the affected facilities to prevent the reoccurrence of storm damage.

- Since the adoption of the Morehead City Core Land Use Plan in 2007, no major storm damage has impacted the town’s infrastructure.

Water Quality:

Policy 1 – It is the policy of the Town of Morehead City to establish land use and development policies to help ensure that water quality in coastal wetlands, rivers, streams, and estuaries is maintained if not impaired and improved if impaired.

- Morehead City maintains its Flood Damage Prevention and Coastal Area Management ordinances.
- Morehead City evaluates each rezoning and text amendment and provides information to the Planning Board and Council concerning the evaluation. In addition, since 2008 and 2014, respectively, formal resolutions of land use consistency have been adopted along with each Planning Board recommendation and Council action.
- Through a subcommittee of the Planning Board and Council, the Morehead City Unified Development Ordinance open space requirements were revised for multifamily, planned developments, and subdivisions in 2007. A minimum 28% of multifamily developments must be preserved as open space, and developers of major subdivisions are required to provide 1,200 square feet of open space per every subdivision lot or provide a fee in lieu of dedication to fund a new or improved open space area.
- With NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant funding, obtained funding and developed pedestrian and bicycle plans to promote environmentally-sensitive alternative transportation.
- With Safe Routes to School funding, constructed a sidewalk in the vicinity of Morehead Middle School to promote environmentally-sensitive alternative transportation.

Policy 2 – Within the corporate limits, extension of water and sewer to areas in which poor soil conditions create septic field problems shall have the highest priority when the town undertakes system extensions.

- Property within the corporate limits is required to tie into water and sewer. No involuntary annexations have occurred since 2007.

Policy 3 – The town encourages voluntary annexation requests to facilitate adequate wastewater disposal in order to prevent the installation of additional septic systems and to improve environmental conditions, particularly in areas with poor soil conditions for subsurface sewage disposal systems.

- Since 2007, the Morehead City Council has approved a total of forty-two (42) annexations totaling approximately 836 acres.

Policy 4 – Morehead City will promote the use of best available management practices to minimize the degradation of water quality resulting from stormwater runoff; examples of these practices include using pervious or semi-pervious materials for driveways and walks, retaining natural vegetation along marsh and waterfront areas, and allowing stormwater to percolate into the ground rather than discharging it directly to coastal waters.

- Morehead City promotes best management stormwater practices and requires state stormwater and sedimentation and erosion control permits with submittal of applications for major subdivisions, multifamily developments, commercial developments, and other projects for which the development area exceeds one acre or the total built upon area is 10,000 square feet or greater.

Policy 5 – Morehead City will ensure that developments locating adjacent to coastal waters make every effort to mitigate any adverse effects on riverine and estuarine water quality and on primary nursery and fish habitat areas.

- Morehead City operates a CAMA Local Permitting Officer program to ensure protection of riverine and estuarine water quality as well a primary nursery and fish habitat areas. Morehead City requires applicable state and federal permits and encourages developers to adhere to Marine Fisheries restrictions concerning primary nursery and fish habitat areas.

Policy 6 – The Town of Morehead City supports retaining existing vegetation, creating buffers, and limiting impervious surface areas in new commercial developments to assist with managing stormwater runoff.

- In 2008, a landscaping subcommittee of the Planning Board and Council developed a new landscape ordinance which promotes the use of indigenous plants over invasive species; which requires buffers, landscape strips, and interior parking planters be provided in order to limit the total impervious surface area allowed in commercial development; which provides additional credit for retaining old growth trees; and which provides an alternative landscaping mechanism for utilizing existing natural vegetation in lieu of removing vegetation and planting new trees.
- Morehead City requires a state stormwater permit be submitted with application for commercial development if the development area exceeds one acre, if the built upon area exceeds 10,000 square feet, or when a CAMA General Permit is required.