North Carolina. Dept of Natural Resources

# TOWN OF ATKINSON LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

Prepared by the Town Board of
Commissioners with the
Technical Assistance of
Coastal Consultants, Ltd.
1981

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## 1.1 Method of Data Assemblage

This land development plan represents a refinement of information and policies adopted by the Town of Atkinson in their 1976 Land Use Plan prepared under guidelines of the Coastal Resources Commission. The goals of this plan include the assembling and interpreting of information concerning the Town and placing that information into a local (township), regional (county) and State perspective. This information includes population, economy, housing, the environment, land use, services, facilities, growth and the like. This information was collected from various sources, including Local, State and Federal documents, reports and studies, such as reports of the Bureau of the Census, the State Office of Management and Budget, the Soil Conservation Service, the State Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, etc. The sources also reflect information available in the 1976 Pender County Plan and information obtained from the County Planning Department and other County agencies. It is also a culmination of numerous interviews with local personalities and some original research by the consultants. All of this information was brought together in this plan and was used by the Town Board of Commissioners in developing policy alternatives and selecting a course of action to shape future land development.

## 1.2 Major Conclusion of the Plan

The Town of Atkinson arrived at a point in time where an important decision needed to be made concerning the future direction of the Town in terms of growth and development. The Town has in the recent past shown a relative stagnation of development and some decline in population. This has been due primarily to a lack of local job opportunities and lack of a growth attitude on the part of many residents.

Recently, however, the costs of materials and services which the Town provides has continued to increase in cost, while the tax base has not grown. The Town has concluded that the provision of even minimal services will force continued increases in the tax rate over the foreseeable future. Furthermore, a lack of growth would continue to prevent desired amenities and services and additional scatteration of families.

The Town has, therefore, prepared a Land Use Plan in which policies are oriented in a more agressive posture toward growth and development. Key elements in the future direction of the Town include development of a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, development of a public water system, a committee to seek out potential job producing and tax base increasing industrial, commercial and institutional establishments, and facade improvements for existing structures.

It is hoped that active implementation of the policies of the Plan will further growth and development of the community.

# PART I: EXISTING CONDITIONS

## 2.1 Background

The Town of Atkinson was settled in 1882 as a result of the establishment of a railway station on the Cape Fear and Godwin Valley Railroad. The Town was incorporated in 1909.

Agriculture formed the basis of the community, and the Seaboard Coastline Railroad ran regularly through the Town establishing the Town as a center for the marketing and transfer of the area's agricultural products. The railroad no longer runs through Atkinson, and farming is no longer the principal occupation.

Several industries have located in the surrounding area, and many persons commute to their jobs while living in Atkinson. Some of the residents are employed in retail establishments in town, and a few still farm.

Burgaw is the nearest urbanized area where residents of Atkinson often travel for goods and services. Wilmington is the closest large city (about 40 miles).[1]

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[1] Coastal Zone Resources Corporation, Land Use Plan for the Town of Atkinson, 1976.

## 2.2 Present Conditions: Population

The Town of Atkinson, Caswell Township (of which it is a part), Pender County -- all are losing population. The loss of population for the Town, unlike that for the County, was unexpected. In 1970 about 325 people lived in the Town of Atkinson. The North Carolina Office of Budget and Management predicted on the basis of birth, death and migration rates that the 1980 population would pass 376 people. Preliminary information from the 1980 Census indicates that the official population will be about 283 people.

A contrast of population at the Town, Township, County and State levels demonstrates the following:

TABLE I

A. POPULATION CHANGES, 1960-1980[2]

| Year | Town of Atkinson Population | % Growth | Caswell Township Population | % | Pender County Population | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1960 | 302 | ---- | 1171 | ---- | 18,193 | |
| 1970 | 325 | 7.6% | 1023 | -12.6% | 18,149 | -1.9% |
| 1980 | 283 | -14.8% | | | | |

Of particular note, every township in Pender County except Burgaw and Topsoil lost population in the period 1960 to 1970. The fact that Atkinson gained population to 1975, or was expected to gain population to 1980 stands out as significant.

The Town of Atkinson constitutes one of two enumeration districts for the Township of Caswell. For this reason, a more detailed analysis of the race, age, sex, social and economic aspects of the population of

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[2]North Carolina Office of Management and Budget

the Town, as well as a comparison of the Town to the rural area surrounding it, and of the County is possible. According to Census information, the Town of Atkinson is almost totally white, is heavily employed in wholesale and resale trade and public administration, has a significant number of professional, technical, clerical and service workers, has a fairly good average family income, and a lower expected number of families on public assistance.

The details are as follows:

TABLE 2

RACIAL COMPOSITION (By Percent), 1970[3]

| Race | Town | Township | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 100% | 58% | 56% | 75% |
| Black | 0% | 42% | 44% | 23% |

TABLE 3

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME PER FAMILY, 1970[4]

| Atkinson | Caswell Twp. | Pender County | State |
|---|---|---|---|
| $7,800 | $5595 | $6435 | $8872 |

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL,[5] 1970

| Atkinson | Caswell Twp. | Pender County | State |
|---|---|---|---|
| 17.4% | 26.1% | 28.8% | 16.3% |

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[3]Adaptation of Data from North Carolina Office of Budget and Management and Bureau of Census

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

TABLE 5

B. AGE AND SEX PROFILE OF POPULATION, 1970[6]

| Age | No. Males | No. Females | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 10 | 21 | 31 |
| 5-14 | 21 | 16 | 37 |
| 15-24 | 32 | 40 | 72 |
| 25-34 | 27 | 14 | 41 |
| 35-44 | 13 | 21 | 34 |
| 45-54 | 35 | 30 | 65 |
| 55-64 | 14 | 30 | 44 |
| 65+ | 6 | 26 | 32 |
| Total | 158 | 198 | 356 |

The age and sex profile demonstrated that in 1970, the Town had a very small 15 years of age and under population. However, the 0-4 age group has doubled the number of the preceeding 5-year periods. This probably reflects the effects of a large number of women in the 15-24 age group. How will the number of women in the advancing age classifications affect the population and the services? It is not possible to determine this from Town data alone. The data from Caswell Township indicates a very large 5-14 age group, especially females; a very large male 55-64 age group, and approximately 85 persons above 65. This would tend to indicate that given a low mobility rate and a normal amount of intermarriage between the Town and its immediate environs, that the birth rate should remain fairly steady. However, the Town will probably experience a sizeable 65-years and older population during the 1980s.

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[6]Bureau of Census

Atkinson compares favorably with the State, rather than the County, in terms of income and poverty level. From data available at the township level, we note that the median age of Caswell Township is 28.7 years, that 36.9% of the people are under 18 years of age and 11.6% are over 65 (1970 data). The average house size was 3.25 persons per house.[7] This data suggests that the Township is slightly older, but exhibiting the same house size as the State. The large percentage of Blacks in the Township and the high average house size of this group, namely 3.93 persons per house, offset the aging population. The Town of Atkinson, without a high house size but with the aging population of the Township, should have been expected to lose age, unless the migration rate was high. We should note that the median population for Pender County in 1970 was 27.4 years, that 10% of the residents were over 65 years of age and that 36.8% were under 18 years.[8] Looking from the County perspective (anticipating some local movement), we note that one of the largest groupings of population occurs in the 40 to 55 age group (1970), now 50 to 65 age group. Another heavy grouping in the the 5 to 19 age group also bears watching. About 25% of this age group is composed of Black females (the 15-25 year age group of 1980). By way of comparison this group constitutes well under 20% of the 40 to 55 age group in 1970. General prognosis: the Town of Atkinson will probably not share in population gains of the County because it is predominantly white, too removed from Wilmington, without local industry to spur migration, and too old.

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[7] Bureau of Census

[8] Pender County Land Use Plan, 1976; Bureau of Census.

This prognosis of course implies no migration. Migration reflects dissatisfaction with conditions at home--inability to find work, undesirability of the life style, etc.--; it also reflects -- new jobs, better education and more qualified work force, etc.

Although Pender County is below the State average in terms of the percentage of persons who have migrated to the jurisdiction within the past 5 years (1970 statistics), the County experienced significant migration, namely 11.3%.[9] Of those living in the County, 90.5% were born in the State.[10] A very low percentage of the high school age children (compared to State data) were in school; furthermore, the average number of years of school completed in the County was only 9.8 years[11] in 1970. Unless factors shaping migration change, the rate of migration has probably remained about the same. One interesting statistic is the number of persons who worked in a different county (in 1970), namely 52.4%.[12] This is an extremely high number and reflects probably several factors, namely a shift in the local economy from being an agricultural community to a suburban or bedroom community of Wilmington. It also reflects a lack of jobs in the home county. This may also mean that the County's in-migration may reflect a number of persons working outside the county seeking a more traditional lifestyle and setting for raising a family. Atkinson is perhaps too removed to be a favored bedroom community to Wilmington.

A further dimension can be gained on the situation if we examine the employment characteristics of the Town, Township, County and State.

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[9] Bureau of Census

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

TABLE 6

C. EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS (Percentages of persons employed), 1970.[13]

| Type Employment | Atkinson | Rest of Township | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional | 10.4 | 2.6 | 7.4 | 11.0 |
| Managers | 9.4 | 3.7 | 6.3 | 7.5 |
| Sales | 6.1 | 1.9 | 3.7 | 6.0 |
| Clerical | 19.8 | 5.2 | 9.1 | 14.0 |
| Craftsman | 12.7 | 12.6 | 15.2 | 14.5 |
| Operatives | 25.9 | 27.5 | 20.6 | 22.4 |
| Transport Equip. | -- | -- | 4.7 | 3.9 |
| Laborers | -- | 4.8 | 8.3 | 5.0 |
| Farmers | 6.1 | 14.5 | 4.8 | 2.6 |
| Farm Laborers | -- | 13.8 | 7.3 | 2.0 |
| Services | 9.4 | 13.4 | 10.0 | 8.6 |
| Private Hsehld | -- | -- | 2.5 | 2.4 |

Any analysis of the above data shows that Atkinson's attractiveness is for professionals, managers, clerical, and services. The presence of clerical and service jobs probably indicates a higher degree of secondary income for the family from the female sector. Thus, the higher family income. Interestingly enough, the rural township surrounding the Town is very heavily farm and farm laborers indicating a distinct difference in the communities. The 1976 County Land Use Plan noted a sharp decline for the farm community in the County.

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[13]North Carolina Office of Budget and Management.

## Conclusion

The County and Township of Caswell are losing population because they are rural farm oriented at a time when we are experiencing migration from these occupations.

Atkinson's population is aging and showing little reason for increasing as a result of in-migration. Declining birth rates in the white population will probably result in decreasing populations for the near future.

This prospective, unless altered through planning policies, will probably result in higher costs for basic services through a gradually declining economy of scale.

When the fuller analysis is available from the 1980 Census, a more accurate prediction of trends and impacts will be possible.

## 2.3 Present Conditions: Economy

The economic condition of the Town can be judged by a number of factors. These include number of persons in the work force, diversity of labor, income from employment, and the tax benefits created by local industry.

Atkinson does not have any locally based industry. Furthermore, only a few commercial establishments exist.

The profile for Town residents by industry is as follows:

TABLE 7

EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS 14 YEARS AND OLDER BY INDUSTRY, 1970[14]

| Industry | Town Percent of Total Employment | Township Employment |
|---|---|---|
| Construction | 8.5% | 10.0% |
| Manufacturing | 24.5 | 30.5 |
| Transportation | 2.4 | -- |
| Communications | -- | -- |
| Whlsle/Retail Trade | 23.1 | 12.6 |
| Finance | 4.2 | 8.2 |
| Professional | 5.7 | 6.3 |
| Educational | 8.5 | -- |
| Public Administration | 17.0 | -- |
| Other | 6.1 | 32.3 |

## 2.4 Present Conditions: Agriculture, Fishing, Tourism, Forestry, Seasonal Use

### Agriculture

Although a portion of the Town and areas close to the Town are in agriculture use, the importance of this use to the economy of the Town is declining.

### Fishing

The Town has no commercial fisheries. The Town is not connected to important sport fishing facilities.

### Forestry

A limited amount of forestry is occurring within the Town. Litter and truck noise are a problem incompatible with residential uses.

## 2.5 Seasonal Use

The Town does not have any significant seasonal population.

### Tourism

Tourism is not immediately important to the Town's economy.

Those persons who are employed in manufacturing are probably commuting daily to Burgaw or to Wilmington-New Hanover County. The large employment in wholesale/retail trade, education and public administration reflect a mixture of local opportunities and those provided in neighboring towns and cities. According to the 1970 Census 47.6% of the persons who lived in Pender County and worked, worked in another county.

In terms of future attractiveness to industry, the County had (in 1970) low scores in terms of number of school years completed (9.8 years compared to 10.6 Statewide) and in terms of the percentage of persons between 14-17 years of age who were going to school (81.5% compared to

88.9% Statewide.) The County is anticipating improvements to the road network connecting Wilmington with the Piedmont.

## 3.1 Existing Land Use: General Description

The urbanized land uses in the Town (e.g. residential, commercial, recreational, public and institutional land) is found mixed in four quadrants for a distance of about ¼ mile from the central intersection of NC53 and SR1126 which form the crossroads of the Town. Further out from these four quadrants are lands mostly in forest and some agriculture. The commercial use is in strip development along NC53 (See Map A). There is presently no industrial use within the Town.

The following are approximate acreages occupied by categories of land use.

| Land Use | Acres |
|---|---|
| Residential | 82.59 |
| Commercial | 2.78 |
| Institutional | 13.45 |
| Recreation | .30 |
| Agriculture | 167.97 |
| Forest and Open | 372.91 |
| Total | 640 acres |

## 3.2 Significant Land Use Compatibility Problems

Few land use compatibility problems exist in the Town. The limited commercial development along NC53 does not present problems to the few residents who live near to the commercial establishments.

The greatest concern is the movement of traffic through the Town on NC53. Such traffic presents noise problems. Although the speed limit of 25 MPH exists in the Town on NC53, the one-man police force cannot realistically enforce the limit on a regular basis. The Town continues to seek additional assistance from the County Sheriff for speed limit enforcement. Also, the Town is attempting to get the state to place a higher priority on resurfacing of NC53.

Agricultural uses are found mostly in the periphery of the Town and do not cause significant problems to residents.

3.3 Problems from Unplanned Development

Many of the Town's street are dead-end streets, making it difficult for police and fire services to move from one north-south street to another. The dead-end streets could also be a problem should the community decide to construct water and sewer facilities in the future.

Due to the limited budget of the Town, however, the Town has found it necessary to delay the opening of planned street connections until development justifies such action.

Since the railroad tracks were taken up in Town, the streets along the west side of the railroad right-of-way do not connect. Although some ideas have been mentioned for use of the railroad right-of-way, e.g. a part of a state bike trail, no specific actions have occurred regarding the right-of-way. The Homemakers Club of Atkinson is currently in the process of landscaping some areas of the right-of-way.

Surface drainage problems have occurred throughout the Town's history. The Town has no subsurface drainage system, and drainage ditches were never properly designed to take care of runoff. Furthermore, recent

clear-cutting of lands above the Town have caused an increase of runoff through the Town. The Town has approached the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding assistance in taking care of the runoff problem. The Corps has determined, however, that the nature of the problem is not within its scope of assistance. During this fiscal year, the Town will continue to investigate other sources for assistance, as well as work with Town landowners, in working on local drainage problems.

Generally, soils in the area are not suitable for on-lot sewage disposal. Problems with septic tank leachate have occurred due to the density of residences on unsuitable soils.

Not having planned for utilities, such as a water system, has resulted in a situation where little incentive exists to attract an industry, forcing residents of the Town to commute long distances, as well as allowing for a continuing no-growth situation for the Town.

## 3.4 Areas Experiencing or Likely to Experience Changes in Predominant Land Use.

The Town's slow growth rate has resulted in few changes in land use. Commercial development has been slow,meeting only the basic needs of the Town's population. Townspeople have been reluctant to sell off portions of their land for development.

Some of the Town's forest resources, however, have been harvested. It is anticipated that some areas in the southwest portion of the Town could be cleared of forest in the future.

An area (about 4 acres) in the westernmost part of Town, north of NC53, has been cleared of timber and could be developed nonresidentially in the future. Another area (about 5 acres) in the western part of Town between NC53, Main Street, and Pope Street has been indicated as a potential industrial site.

## 3.5 Areas of Environmental Concern

The Town presently has no areas of environmental concern within its jurisdiction. However, some areas within the one-mile estraterritorial jurisdiction of the Town contain public trust waters as well as wetlands. The Town does not intend to exercise estraterritorial zoning or plan annexation within the ten-year planning period.

## 4.1 Current Local Plans and Policies

The Town continues to have a strong interest in planning. The first land use plan for the Town was completed in 1976 with technical assistance

Although new policies have been developed as part of the 1980 Plan update, the new policies are in many ways outgrowths of previous "objectives" and "standards." The Town continues to support the general concepts of the following "objectives" and "standards" and in the update, has more clearly stated policies and has indicated possible implementation strategies.

## OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS OF ATKINSON

Objective: Atkinson will promote the continued gradual development of the Town as a rural, family-oriented community.

Standard:

1) Public services, including police and fire protection, solid waste collection, and medical and recreational facilities will be planned for a population of 375 in 1980, 440 in 1990 and 525 in 2000.
2) The Town will encourage the location of future residential growth within the municipal jurisdiction; public services supported by the Town with the exception of fire protection will be provided only within the existing municipal boundaries.
3) The Town will encourage the location of professional and service businesses within the municipal jurisdiction.
4) The Town will discourage the location of industry within the municipal jurisdiction, but will encourage light industry location in more urbanized areas of Pender County.
5) The Town will cooperate with Pender County, the Cape Fear Council of Governments and the Community Development Committee in order to coordinate planning efforts and facilitate implementation of Town policies.

Objective: The Town of Atkinson will continue to try to eliminate any health problems caused by the physical limitations of the soils and drainage system.

Standards: 1) In order to correct any improperly functioning septic systems, the Town will seek the assistance of County Health Department personnel to determine the cause and extent of ground and surface water pollution.

2) The Town will seek County cooperation in assuring the proper maintenance of the drainage ditch system.

Objective: The Town of Atkinson will attempt to provide public recreation facilities for all its population.

Standards: 1) A recreation committee will be formed in order to survey the recreational needs of the Town and to establish priorities for recreational facility development.

2) The Town will endeavor to establish a Town Center to house recreational, meeting and fund raising activities.

At the request of the Town Board a preliminary engineering report of the feasibility of public water and sewer systems in Atkinson had been prepared by Henry Von Oesen and Associates, Inc. in 1974. The Town has not, however, taken action to implement a public water or sewer system.[15]

## 4.2 Current List of Existing Local Ordinances

There are no zoning or subdivision regulations that apply to land use in Atkinson. The County, however, enforces subdivision regulations and health codes. In the Town's Code of General Ordinances in 1973 are structural, lot size, and building location requirements in the Town.

## 4.3 State and Federal Permits

STATE LICENSES AND PERMITS

| Agency | Licenses and Permits |
|---|---|
| Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Division of Environmental Management | - Permits to discharge to surface waters or operate waste water treatment plants or oil discharge permits; NRDES Permits, (G.S. 143-215).<br>- Permits for septic tanks with a capacity over 3000 gallons/day (G.S. 143-215.3).<br>- Permits for withdrawal of surface or ground waters in capacity use areas (G.S. 143-215.15).<br>- Permits for air pollution abatement facilities and sources (G.S. 143-215.108).<br>- Permits for construction of complex sources; e.g. parking lots, subdivisions, stadiums, etc. (G.S. 143-215.109).<br>- Permits for construction of a well over 100,000 gallons/day (G.S. 87-88). |
| Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Office of Coastal Management | - Permits to dredge and/or fill estuarine waters, tidelands, (G.S. 113-229). |

| | |
|---|---|
| | - Permits to undertake development in Areas of Environmental Concern (G.S. 113A-118). NOTE: Minor development permits are issued by the local government. |
| Department of Natural Resources and Community Development | - Permits to alter or construct a dam (G.S. 143-215.66).<br>- Permits to mine (G.S. 74-51).<br>- Permits to drill an exploratory oil or gas well (G.S. 113-381).<br>- Permits to conduct geophysical exploration (G.S. 113-391).<br>- Sedimentation erosion control plans for any land disturbing activity of over one contiguous acre (G.S. 113A-54). |
| Department of Natural Resources and Community Development Secretary of NRCD | - Permits to construct an oil refinery. |
| Department of Administration | - Easements to fill where lands are proposed to be raised above the normal high water mark of navigable waters by filling (G.S. 146.6(c)). |
| Department of Human Resources | - Approval to operate a solid waste disposal site or facility (G.S. 130-166.16).<br>- Approval for construction of any public water supply facility that furnishes water to 15 or more year-round residences (G.S. 130-160.1) or 25 or more year round residents. |

FEDERAL LICENSES AND PERMITS

| Agency | Licenses and Permits |
|---|---|
| Army Corps of Engineers (Department of Defense) | - Permits required under Sections 9 and 10 of the Rivers and Harbors of 1899; permits to construct in navigable waters.<br>- Permits required under Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972.<br>- Permits required under Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972; permits to undertake dredging and/or filling activities. |
| Coast Guard (Department of Transportation) | - Permits for bridges, causeways, pipelines over navigable waters; required under the General Bridge Act of 1946 and the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.<br>- Deep water port permits. |
| Geological Survey Bureau of Land Management (Department of Interior) | - Permits required for off-shore drilling.<br>- Approvals of OCS pipeline corridor rights-of-way. |
| Nuclear Regulator Commission | - Licenses for siting, construction and operation of nuclear power plants; required under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and Title II of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974. |
| Federal Energy Regulatory Commission | - Permits for construction, operation and maintenance of |

interstate pipelines facilities required under the Natural Gas Act of 1938.

- Orders of interconnection of electric transmission facilities under Section 202(b) of the Federal Power Act.

- Permission required for abandonment of natural gas pipeline and associated facilities under Section 7C (b) of the Natural Gas Act of 1938.

- Licenses for non-federal hyro-electric projects and associated transmission lines under Sections 4 and 15 of the Federal Power Act.[16]

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[16]Lists provided by the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

# PART II. CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

## 5.1 Land Suitability: Physical Limitations to Development

### A. Soils

According to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) "General Soil Map and Interpretations for Pender County," Atkinson is located entirely within the Lumbee-Johns-Kalmia Soil Association. This association is made up predominantly of the Lumbee, Johns, and Kalmia soils each of which has its particular characteristics and suitability for various purposes. The Lumbee soils are poorly drained and have gray or dark gray surfaces over gray friable sandy clay loam subsoils. The Lumbee soils occur chiefly on stream terraces and make up about 40 percent of the association. The Johns soils are moderately well and somewhat poorly drained with gray sandy surfaces over friable sandy clay loam subsoils. Johns soils occur on level uplands and on stream terraces and make up about 30 percent of the association. The Kalmia soils are well drained with light gray sandy loam or loamy sand surface over yellowish brown sandy clay loam subsoils. The Kalmia soils occur on nearly level to gently sloping uplands and stream terraces and make up about 20 percent of the association. The subsoils of all three of these soils are underlain by sandy material at depths generally less than 40 inches.

The Lumbee-Johns Kalmia association includes a dominant portion of the cropland in the country and most of its soils are well suited for both agricultural and woodland uses. The chief limitations for most residential and commercial uses of these soils are wetness and flooding. The Kalmia soils have only slight limitations for septic tank fields, structures, and roads and streets; the Johns soils have moderate to severe limitations for the above uses due to their susceptibility to flooding; the Lumbee soils have severe limitations for all the above

uses plus agriculture, due to their wetness and susceptibility to flooding.[17]

The Town has requested the Pender County Soil Conservation Service to complete a detailed soil survey for the Town so that future planning and density zoning can take soil capabilities into account. The SCS is working on the project, and anticipates completion in 1981 (see letter

B. Slope

The Atkinson area of Pender County is characterized by low rolling hills along water courses, on otherwise nearly level ground; within the Town there is little natural elevation change. Grading of the land surface during development is required only to the extent necessary to facilitate proper water runoff to prevent ponding, and to insure good foundations for structures. There are no steep slopes within the Town, the nearest ones being to the southwest along the Black River and to the east near Ward's Corner. Along parts of NC 53 between the Black River and Atkinson there are scenic areas of elevation change and hardwood stands; a scenic drive can also be found on SR 1201, one and one-half miles northwest of Atkinson.

C. Hazard Areas

In the Town of Atkinson, no man-made hazards exist of any significance. The natural hazard which could occur is the flood hazard area (see Map D). However, the Town is outside the nearest 100-year flood plain (The Black River). The Black River flows approximately four miles from Atkinson and its flood-prone area falls within the 30 ft. msl elevation line in this vicinity. Atkinson is at an average elevation of about 60 ft. msl. Within the Town, however, the water table remains relatively high throughout most of the year and the permeability of some of the soils is low; as a result, temporary ponding of water in

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[17] Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

streets and yards often follows periods of heavy rainfall. The Town maintains a network of drainage ditches which flow into a central canal in the southeastern part of Town. Water from the canal empties into Mill Branch, which enters Moore's Creek southeast of Atkinson. During some periods of heavy rainfall when runoff is extremely high, Moore's Creek is unable to contain all of the water flowing into it; the resultant overload of the creek causes a backup of water in Mill Branch and the drainage canals, causing further ponding in Atkinson.[18]

D. Sources of Water Supply

Ground water comprises the sole source of water supply in Atkinson as in the rest of Pender County.

The county is underlain by a large aquifer system from which potable water can be drawn at various depths in different localities. There are four geologic strata in the aquifer system, two of which are important as sources of water supply in Atkinson.

The Pleistocene and Recent surficial sands cover most of Pender County and constitute a major water source for individual wells in Atkinson. In the surficial sands, water occurs under water table conditions usually within 15 ft. of the land surface. Recharge is accomplished directly by rainfall, subjecting the water to possible contamination from the ground surface. The productivity of this acquifer is limited primarily by its thickness, which varies locally. In most cases, water yields from wells in the surficial sands are sufficient for domestic and farm uses; in periods of drought, however, or when large amounts of water are needed as for fire fighting, yields have sometimes proven inadequate. In places where shallow wells are located too close to septic

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[18]Coastal Zone Resource Corporation, 1976.

tank fields, contamination of this water supply may result.

The Peedee Cretaceous sands, limestone and marine clays occur throughout Pender County and serve as an important source of water supply in many areas west of the Northeast Cape Fear River. Wells in the Peedee vary from 50-200 ft. deep and yield up to 300 gpm. Water quality and yields for specific locations can be determined only on an individual case basis. Sone existing wells in Atkinson yield water with high concentrations of iron and hydrogen sulfide to which residents have become accustomed but which newcomers may find objectionable.

The Peedee formation immediately underlies the surficial sands in the Atkinson area and is recharged directly by rainfall.[19]

## 5.2 Land Suitability: Fragile Areas

The Town has no areas which could be classified as areas of environmental concern (AECS) under North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development guidelines.

Located to the north of the Town are areas of pocosin which are drained by Mill Branch. This area is characterized by wet ground and slow moving water, dense shrubs and low tree vegetation making the area good for wildlife habitat. Throughout the Town the vegetation varies from cropland to pine and hardwood stands, creating conditions favorable to wildlife such as white-tailed deer.

The Town has no significant historic sites or areas of archeological significance.

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[19] Coastal Zone Resource Corporation, 1975.

## 5.3 Land Suitability: Areas with Resource Potential

In the Town, the most valuable resources are agricultural land and trees. The Kalmia soils have the best agricultural potential due to their better drainage. Portions of the area's woodlands are currently being harvested. There are no significant mineral deposits which could offer resource potential.

## 6.1 Capacity of Community Facilities

### A. Water and Sewer Facilities

There are no public water supplies presently in operation in the Town of Atkinson. All of the townspeople rely on individual wells or small private systems (10 connections or less) for their water supplies. Groundwater comprises the sole source of water, with many water table wells drawing water from the surficial sands. Throughout the Town, the shallow wells produce water with a relatively high iron content causing some staining and taste and odor problems. Productivity of the shallow wells varies but is generally adequate for domestic and farm needs. Water from deeper wells, such as those drawing from the Peedee formation, is generally of acceptable quality and quantity.

The Town of Atkinson has been studying the need for and feasibility of a municipal water supply. At this time, however, the townspeople, most of whom are satisfied with the existing supply, question the need for such a system, and have not applied for funds for its construction.

There is no public wastewater disposal facility in Atkinson. All of the people rely on private wastewater disposal systems serving individual residents and using subsurface disposal methods, either septic tanks or privies. Some problems have been encountered in the Town with contamination of shallow wells by sewage; the characteristically high

water table, especially in periods of heavy rains can rise close to the surface and make contact with effluent. Some of the pollution problems are related to the soil conditions; where the impermeability of the soils hinders the flow of effluent downward, lateral flow into the Town's drainage ditches can occur. The drainage of effluent into ditches poses a potential threat to the health of the residents of Atkinson and areas downstream. Some problems, however, are more likely to stem from improper location, installation, or maintenance of the sewage disposal system.[20]

A study of the need for and feasibility of a municipal sewage treatment facility has been conducted for the Town of Atkinson. The Town has determined that a municipal sewer system is not feasible at this time.

B. Roads

Primary roads through Town consist of NC53. Sunset Street intersects with NC53 and continues northwestward to the Town limits becoming SR1218. No major traffic hazards exist, although some complaints are heard regarding traffic on NC53, and damage to local streets from timber operations in some areas of Town.

C. Schools

Public education is operated by the County. Atkinson students attend grades K-5 at West Pender Elementary School, grades 6-9 at Atkinson Junior High School, and grades 10-12 at Pender High School in Burgaw.

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[20] Coastal Zone Resources Corporation, 1976.

D. Medical Services

Under the auspices of the North Carolina Rural Health Service, a medical clinic exists in Atkinson. The clinic provides a full-time family nurse practitioner and two Burgaw doctors on call. Each doctor also spends one-half day each week in the clinic.

The Pender County Memorial Hospital is located in Burgaw and offers major medical services. A volunteer rescue squad serves the area. Calls from throughout the area come to the county dispatcher in Burgaw, who sends out emergency vehicles as needed.

E. Police and Fire

The Town maintains a one-man police force and a 30-member volunteer fire department. The police department has one vehicle. The fire department has two pumpers and a tanker, as well as a 350 gpm pump and a van for small equipment. The fire department serves the Town and the surrounding three-mile area.

F. Solid Waste

Solid waste and disposal is a County function. There is one landfill for the area located on SR1640, four miles west of Burgaw. The Town brings solid waste to four transfer stations located in the periphery of Town.[21]

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[21] Data on facilities provided by the Town of Atkinson.

# PART III. CAPACITY ANALYSIS

## 7.1 Population Projection

The Town has traditionally had a slow growth rate. The annual growth rate is about 1% per year. Projection of this rate would estimate a 1990 population of 396.

## 7.2 Future Land Use Needs

In projecting the future land use need, our projections consider the distribution of existing population, the current structure of the economy, the areas existing and future investments in sewer and water facilities, its transportation system, its community facilities (i.e. schools, medical facilities, public services), and the growth policies of the Town. Since these factors have shaped and attracted land development in the past, they will probably do so in the future. Our approach to develop land use projections has included these considerations and, at the same time, they give an estimation of what our future needs for land will be.

Finally, one word of caution. Projection land use needs is a very inexact science. Such projections are presented to provide decision-makers with more insight than certainty into what is most likely to occur in the future. They should be used as guidelines, not constraints, and should be used as benchmarks in making land development decisions.

A. Land Available for Development

In order to determine land suitable for urbanized uses, we must examine the land already used for such purposes, as well as vacant land which is not constrained. For this analysis, we have removed the following land uses and constraints from the available vacant land for development:

The Town has no areas which would severely limit development. The greatest concerns are areas which have severe limitations for septic tanks. In this analysis of future land use needs, areas with severe limitations for septic tanks were removed from land available for development.

B. Methodology for Land Use Projections

Land use standards were prepared for five urbanized land uses which include residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational uses. Except for residential uses, these standards were derived from land requirements based on standard land use analysis planning models and adjusted for a town the size of Atkinson.

The residential category was treated differently from the other four urban categories due to the difficulty in allocating land requirements by housing type or density. An average land area per unit population is used as a standard to calculate residential land requirements. This area was calculated using the 1980 population and existing residential use. The average is then applied as a constant to the 1990 projections.

The land use requirements were determined using the following equation.

$$L_{90} = (P_{90} - P_{80})\ (K_h + K_c + K_i + K_p + K_r)$$

where $L_{90}$ = land required to accomodate the 1990 population

$P_{90}$ = 1990 population

$P_{80}$ = 1980 population

$K_h$ = standard land requirement for residential use

$K_c$ = standard land requirement for commercial use

$K_i$ = standard land requirement for industrial use

$K_p$ = standard land requirement for institutional use

$K_r$ + standard land requirement for recreational use.

The following are standards applied to the land use needs projection:

| | |
|---|---|
| Standard for Residential Land | = .230 acres |
| Standard for Commercial Land | = .005 acres |
| Standard for Industrial Land | = .010 acres |
| Standard for Institutional Land | = .001 acres |
| Standard for Recreational Land | = .007 acres |

C. Land Use Projection

$L_{90}$ = 37 (.230 + .005 + .% + .010 + .007)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| $L_{90}$ residential | =8.51 | acres |
| $L_{90}$ commercial | = .19 | acres |
| $L_{90}$ industrial | = .37 | acres |
| $L_{90}$ institutional | = .04 | acres |
| $L_{90}$ recreational | = .26 | acres |
| TOTAL | 9.37 | acres |

We may see that through the above analysis, a considerable amount of land is available for urbanized uses within the Town. The point of this exercise is that the Town can, through good planning practices, grow and accomodate development while protecting resources and avoiding hazardous areas.

Assumes institutional needs other than schools, since present school facilities are considered adequate, and school facilities are a County function.

7.3 Community Facilities Demand

The greatest limitation in the Town is the suitability of the soils for on-lot sewage disposal. The Town is working closely with the County Health Department to monitor any problems which might occur. The present growth rate is such that few major problems are anticipated in the planning period.

Water supplies and quality are considered to be adequate throughout the planning period.

Roads, schools, health facilities and fire protection are adquate and no problems are anticipated in these areas throughout the planning period.

The Town feels that an additional policeman is needed in order to provide greater flexibility for police protection.

# PART IV:

## POLICY FORMULATION

This section provides the rationale for and statement of Town policies. Where feasible, implementation plans are included. Policies are grouped according to land use planning categories of

- Resource Protection
- Resource Production and Management
- Economic and Community Development
- Continuing Public Participation

## 8.1 RESOURCE PROTECTION

### A. AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

The term area of Environmental Concern, or AEC, is used in North Carolina's Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) to identify important natural resources, both on land and on water, which could be damaged irreparably if subjected to incompatible development activity.

The Coastal Resource Commission (CRC) has identified thirteen different types of AEC's -- in four general categories -- spelling out the significance and the basic management objectives for each, and has encouraged local governments to recommend those types of development, or use, which they consider appropriate in AEC's within their jurisdiction.

Although the Town of Atkinson is located in Pender County, a coastal county, no AEC's are located within the Town limits. The Town does not have a zoning ordinance or subdivision regulations and does not enforce

extra-territorial jurisdiction. The adoption of a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations continues to be an issue in the Town. Analysis of the one-mile area around the town does not appear to reveal areas which could be classified as AEC's.

POLICY 1. THE TOWN HAS NOT IDENTIFIED ANY AEC's WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES OR WITHIN THE POTENTIAL AREA OF ITS EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION; THEREFORE, NO POLICY IS APPROPRIATE ON AEC's VEGETATION AND OPEN SPACE.

The people of Atkinson are concerned about the destruction of other natural resources, especially vegetation within the Town. Existing vegetation enhances the aesthetic quality of the community and prevents rapid runnoff which could contribute to an already difficult surface drainage problem. The Town believes that some municipal protection is needed to maintain continued vegetative cover. Although a no-action alternative was considered, it was felt that protection of vegetation could best be accomplished through a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulation package where development standards could be included.

POLICY 2. THE TOWN WISHES TO SEE DEVELOPMENT TAKE PLACE IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO DISTURB THE EXISTING PLANT COMMUNITY AND NATURAL TERRAIN AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.

Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations which will include development standards to implement this policy. The Town, through a number of civic groups, has begun a program of tree planting in the Town.

B. WATER QUALITY

An issue of concern to the community is the availability of potable and palatable water for household consumption. Groundwater comprises the

sole source of water supply in Atkinson (see page 24, 25). Since the Town has no public water system, residents rely on individual wells for water. Water quantity does not appear to be a problem. Some existing wells in Atkinson yield water with high concentrations of iron and hydrogen sulfide to which residents have become accustomed but which newcomers may find objectionable.

The greatest danger to the groundwater is from the leachate from on-lot sewage disposal systems. The Town does not have a public sewer system, nor does it anticipate one in the planning period. Although the Town works closely with the County Health Department regarding septic tank permits, problems continue to result from use of septic tanks within the town, where densities and poor soils for on-lot sewage disposal continue to pose potential health hazards. Although the alternative of public water and sewer has been considered in the past, clearly the residents do not wish such systems, nor with present costs would such systems be feasible. A zoning ordinance which would guide future density to the better soils is a consideration.

POLICY 3. THE TOWN DESIRES TO PROTECT THE GROUNDWATER FROM CONTAMINATION

Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning ordinance which will guide growth to the more suitable soils for on-lot sewage disposal. The Town will draft subdivision regulations which will contain development standards to minimize the effect of development on groundwater.

C. OTHER RESOURCES

The Town has not identified any areas of archaeologic significance nor has buildings which are on the National Register of Historic Places. A few structures such as Halls House, Johnson House, the Episcopal Church, and the Caswell Church as well as possibly other structures may have architectural interest. The Town will work with local residents to determine the possibility of a preservation oriented community group, although the Town elects to hold a policy on this matter in abeyance.

D. SOILS

The Town is awaiting a detailed soil survey from the Pender County Soil Conservation Service. As noted in Part II, 5.1 A, the general soil associations indicate somewhat unfavorable soils for septic tanks. Although generally soils are unfavorable, completion of the detailed soils maps may reveal small areas where favorable soils exist. Policy 3 incicates that the desire to direct growth to good soils is clearly desired. If and when a detailed soil map is available, the Town intends to use the information during future development of management tools. Furthermore, as stated in Policy 6, a water system will continue to be an issue of priority should a situation occur in the future where a water system is feasible.

POLICY 4. WHEN DETAILED SOIL ANALYSIS AND MAPPING IS COMPLETED FOR THE TOWN OF ATKINSON BY THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, THE INFORMATION WILL BE USED WHEN THE TOWN CONSIDERS MANAGEMENT TOOLS.

## 8.2 RESOURCE PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT LAND UTILIZATION

The Town's resources are embodied in its residential character as evidenced by historic growth and future desires of the Townspeople. The Town has no known mineral resources, nor is it near water, and therefore has no fisheries. Although tourists often pass through the Town on their way to beach areas, the community has no natural resources which would attract tourists. The Town does have about 167 acres in agricultural use, although the significance of agriculture in the area is declining. Also, a large amount of area is forested (about 370 acres). Recently, activities have taken place to harvest some of this resource.

### A. AGRICULTURE

Although about 167 acres in the Town are in agricultural use, the importance of this use to the economy of the Town is declining. The Town considers this use to be part of the Town's heritage, and with future economic occurrences in the world and the U.S., this use, even at a small scale, would prove to be important. Although few tools are in the hands of Town government to foster the role of agriculture, some consideration has been given to use a management tool such as a zoning ordinance to regulate densities in such a way as to prevent small tracts of land from being sold into residential use in the future. The no-action alternative could see an eventual loss of existing agricultural land.

POLICY 5. THE TOWN CONSIDERS AGRICULTURE TO BE A DESIRABLE LAND USE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND WISHES TO PROTECT IT FROM RESIDENTIAL ENCROACHMENT.

Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning ordinance which will set land use densities so that existing agricultural lands will be of such low density so as to tend to keep them in agricultural use. Other vacant areas

which are potentially viable agricultural land will be analyzed for possible agricultural zoning.

B. FORESTRY

The Town has extensive acres of forested land (about 370 acres). Forested land contributes to the aesthetic quality of the Town and helps prevent rapid storm water runoff from occurring which causes ponding and minor flooding. A limited amount of forestry is occurring within the Town. Litter and truck noise in conjunction with this use are a problem generally incompatible with residential use. Generally, forestry within the Town is not a desirable land use nor one which benefits the Town. Alternatives to controlling this use have been discussed (e.g. severence tax, truck weight limits, ordinance restrictions, no action).

POLICY 6. THE TOWN DOES NOT CONSIDER FORESTRY TO BE A PROPER ACTIVITY IN THE TOWN AND DESIRES TO MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS SUCH OPERATIONS HAVE ON THE COMMUNITY.

Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning ordinance in which the activity of forestry will be regulated by certain minimum standards within the ordinance. Subdivision regulations will be drafted which contain standards regarding vegetation removal and open space.

8.3 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The County of Pender and Township of Caswell are losing population because they are rural farm oriented at a time when we are experiencing migration from these occupations.

The existing population trend in the Town of Atkinson is indicating a decline and showing little reason for increasing as a result of in-migration. Declining birth rates in the white population will probably result in decreasing population for the near future.

This prospective, unless altered through planning policies, will probably result in higher costs for basic services through a gradually declining economy of scale. Although many express a desire for community growth, there are also many who wish the community to remain as it is. Many landowners refuse to sell land for new growth. Although no growth attitudes have been considered, the Town feels that it cannot continue even basic services (police protection, street repair) if the population continues to remain stable and no growth takes place, when taxes are increased substantially. The Town is in a position where it must take action in order to maintain the viability of the community through the 1980's.

The Town does not consider redevelopment to be a significant issue. The small commercial area has, in the past, served only the immediate needs of the local residents. Although some townspeople have indicated the need for new facades on some existing structures, no major redevelopment is anticipated.

Future development in the Town will not involve "redevelopment," but new development of areas which have never been developed - areas which have been empty lots or covered with low natural vegetation.

The Town has indicated a desire for some light industry. It is not possible nor desirable at this time to indicate specific industry types or locations.

Energy facility siting is not a relevant issue to the Town as the Town's location would probably preclude such a use. However, the Town does not wish the location of a major energy facility in or near Town.

POLICY 7. THE TOWN WISHES TO TAKE ACTIONS TO FOSTER COMMUNITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Implementation: The Town, due to its location, recognizes that few incentives exist which could foster growth in the Town. The Town needs to have located in or near the Town an institution, business or industry which could provide some employment and foster a need for residential growth. Incentives the Town could offer are the leasing of land at a nomimal fee, reduced taxes, and provision of public water. The Town will create an active task force to seek out institution, business or industry to locate in the Town, preferably a water intensive one. The Town will seek to develop a public water system in conjunction with finding such an establishment to which sale of water would make the system financially feasible. The establishment of a water system in the Town would further its growth potential.

POLICY 8. THE TOWN DOES NOT ANTICIPATE SIGNIFICANT REDEVELOPMENT. THE COMMUNITY IS CONTINUING, HOWEVER, TO WORK TOWARD IMPROVING BUSINESS FACADES BY DISCUSSING POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES WITH BUSINESS OWNERS.

POLICY 9. THE TOWN WOULD LIKE TO SEE NEW DEVELOPMENT OCCUR WITHIN THE EXISTING TOWN BOUNDARIES AS THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OPEN LAND PARCELS. UNLESS DETAILED SOIL MAPPING REVEALS SUITABLE LAND WITHIN THE TOWN, OTHER LANDS OUTSIDE THE PRESENT BOUNDARIES MAY BE THE ONLY SUITABLE LAND. THE TOWN PRESENTLY HAS NO MANAGEMENT TOOLS. MANAGEMENT OF POTENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS IS NOT YET AN ISSUE ON WHICH POLICY CAN BE DEVELOPED, OTHER THAN THE SUPPORT OF PRESENT COUNTY SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS AND THE DESIRE OF THE TOWN TO IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT TOOLS IN THE FUTURE.

POLICY 10. THE TOWN DESIRES INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS JOB INTENSIVE AND IS A LARGE WATER USER. IT IS HOPED THAT SUCH AN INDUSTRY COULD, ALONG WITH RESIDENTIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL USERS, MAKE A PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM FEASIBLE. THE TOWN CANNOT PINPOINT SPECIFIC LOCATIONS AT THIS TIME.

## A. DEVELOPMENT

Although the community is presently a primarily residential one, the Town sees its potential within the concept of a village atmosphere. That is, the plan for the community is one for mixed use development. The history of the Town shows that such a development pattern has already to a certain extent been established. Institutional uses are mixed with residential, as well as are commercial and agricultural. With appropriate development standards, such mixed uses can have a positive effect on the community by giving efficiency to services, movement between the uses, and aesthetic variation. Although alternatives which would cause further separation of uses was considered, this option was generally not considered in the Town's best interests.

POLICY 11. THE TOWN PLAN IS TO FOSTER A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN TO GIVE THE COMMUNITY A VILLAGE-LIKE ATMOSPHERE. ALL USES WOULD BE CONSIDERED TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY MEET A PACKAGE OF DEVELOPMENT AND USE STANDARDS.
Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning and subdivision regulation in which the main thrust will be the development of use standards rather than separation of uses.

## B. SERVICES

The Town presently provides the following services: local street maintenance including surface drainage, police and fire, and solid waste removal. The Town feels that these basic services are the minimum

responsibility of Town government. Although an increase in some of these services, as well as additional ones such as more police, town parks, more surface drainage work, water, sewer, lighting, has been expressed as desirable by some residents, the majority of residents are in favor of keeping taxes low by providing a minimum of services.

POLICY 12. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE TOWN TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AT LEAST THE MINIMUM SERVICES NEEDED TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY.

Implementation: The Town will draft a zoning ordinance which will attempt to guide growth to occur in the central Town area so that future services can be provided in a more efficient manner. The Town officials will continue to educate the public on the necessity of maintaining services for the good of the community.

C. WATER AND SEWER

Although the Town has investigated the potential for developing a water and sewer system in 1974, no action was taken to attempt to implement the proposals. Most residents appear to be confident that individual wells supply potable water in quantities sufficient for residential use. However, others feel that a public system is needed if the Town wishes to grow. Furthermore, such a system would be needed if sewer uses ever developed in the Town. Some residents have expressed the benefit of a water system in terms of lowering fire insurance rates as well as providing a greater safety measure.

It is well recognized that soils in the Town are not generally suitable for on-lot sewage disposal. Although some residents have indicated that a public sewer system was needed to prevent health and other problems

from occurring, most persons do not wish to undertake the expense of developing such a system.

POLICY 13. THE TOWN BELIEVES THAT EVENTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM IS NECESSARY TO FOSTER GROWTH AND TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE RESIDENTS.

Implementation: The Town will set up a task force to actively seek the location of an institution, firm or firms in the Town which would be water users and help defray the costs of development of a water system. A sewer system could also be feasible under suitable arrangements and use. Although no specific timetable is possible, the Town would only implement a water system under feasible circumstances and community support.

D. RECREATION

The Town presently has a small park which is located next to the Town Hall. Other facilities include those of the Atkinson Junior High School. Due to the population age and makeup in the Town, no additional facilities appear to be needed at this time, although some residents have expressed a desire to have additional equipment in the present facilities.

POLICY 14. DUE TO THE TOWN'S AGE DISTRIBUTION AND PRESENCE OF EXISTING FACILITIES, THE TOWN DOES NOT ANTICIPATE THE ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL FACILITIES.

## PART V: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

9.1 Discussion of Policies

Because the community is small, public participation in the Town or planning issues and Town business often occurs in an informal manner. Town officials are generally well aware of the predominant viewpoints of citizens on various issues. Because of the nature of the community, most policy decisions have taken place only with the almost unanimous approval

of citizens. Few actions are forced upon residents. The Town officials have almost always tried to work in a non-forceful manner with citizens when problems arise, preferring to have citizens carry out Town wishes in a voluntary manner.

POLICY 15. THE TOWN OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC FULLY IN DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THE TOWN AND ITS CITIZENS.

Implementation: In addition to welcoming the public at all board meetings, the Town seeks to place notices and information in the local newspapers when significant issues face the Town. For the land use plan, a public forum was held early in the process to discuss the purpose of the plan and seek input. Copies of all materials produced in the process of writing the land use plan were placed in the Town Hall and made available to all interested persons. The public was asked to write on the documents to suggest ideas, changes, corrections, etc.

A public opinion questionnaire was developed and mailed to each taxpaper to get information on various land use related and demographic topics. The results of the questionnaire were used by the Town Board to help guide the policy selection. The Town will hold a special land use meeting each year to discuss progress of land use plan implementation, to seek public input, and determine needed amendments.

## 9.2 VALUES AND ATTITUDES OF PROPERTY OWNERS IN ATKINSON AS ARRIVED AT THROUGH ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED DURING LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS.

During the 1981 land use planning process, the consultants to the Town distributed to a random sample of property owners a questionnaire designed to elicit local views and attitudes. The mailout was intended to produce a confidence rate of 85%. Due to a significantly lower than usual number of returns, the confidence level does not exceed 70%.

The major conclusions from the questionnaire are as follows: (1) property owners in Atkinson are very satisfied with local services and facilities; (2) they exhibit a strong no growth sentiment; (3) they do not desire to protect environmental features with local regulations and probably oppose state and federal expenditures for these types of goals; (4) they desire lower taxes.

These views, which seem to be clearly the majority view, are not maintained by the persons who have moved into the community within the last five years or by the non-resident property owners. The later identified problems with water, sewer and emergency services; they were willing to pay to improve the services and facilities; they wanted local control to protect environmental features; they wanted industrial growth.

Clearly the greatest problem facing the Town is coping with its future direction. The majority of the residents, represented by the typical 55 year old white male who is a long time resident of the community, is satisfied and resists those changes desired by in-migrants.

In terms of specifics, the average family size of the respondents to the questionnaire was 2.16. 80% of the respondents were male. Although 57% of the workers in the sample drove less than 5 miles to work, 36% drove over 30

miles. (The large size of this latter group may cause future problems if fuel prices continue to climb.) Those services with which the users found least satisfaction include police, town hall and surface drainage. The respondents were unwilling to spend any money to improve any of these deficiencies. The general satisfaction level for all services was very high with most scores averaging between 3.9 and 4.5 on a scale of 5.0. (However, satisfaction level of in-migrants and non-resident property owners is low.) Only 30% of the respondents desire to see the Town grow faster than it has during the past ten years. The majority of the respondents disapprove strongly of multi-family and low income housing; they disapprove and desire to control mobile homes, housing for the elderly and industrial development. Several respondents noted they desired to enact additional local regulations, especially zoning controls.

The respondents showed low responses towards enacting local regulations to protect their drinking water or environmental features. They desired however to protect scenic features. They are opposed to spending local money to buy open space. They are visually satisfied with the appearance of the Town. In all, they like things as they are.

The divergent, conflicting views and attitudes are clearly apparent in the detailed written comments of two respondents to the questionnaire. (Responses are edited.)

Response of life long resident:

The biggest improvement would be to find someone to keep law and order. The people around Atkinson are not going to sell their land or let anyone else come into the area if they can help it. Most of the people here are on fixed incomes and can't afford more government expenditures. Why can't the government give us grants to help repair our houses which are falling apart.

Non-resident property owner:

> I own some wooded property in the town. The town began as a railroad timber shipping station about 1900. The railroad is gone, and so are the lumber mills, veneering plants, cotton gins and sock knitting plants. There is a general attitude in the area to only raise tobacco and timber, and hunt and fish. Some non-polluting industries must be attracted to the area to supply jobs. Hopefully the attitudes will change to allow the town to progress.

In conclusion, the consultants advised the town that the no-growth attitude is very strong among many long-time residents. It should be noted that incoming industry could probably supply the tax base which causes difficulty for the fixed income residents. (In fact this situation, namely of increased taxes, will probably continue to become more of a problem. The lack of a market for property usually brings down property values and hence tax revenues, while the costs of government services continue to rise.) Furthermore, the most inefficient thing about local government is the inefficiency of its size. Government grants have been available in the past to repair rundown buildings; tax incentives for repairs are available for historic structures. We noted, however, that many newer residents and board members believe that a growth attitude is what is necessary to allow the Town to maintain and improve services, as well as to keep the population from declining. Many persons believe that a carefully controlled, balanced growth is what will offer future hope for the Town.

## PART VI:

## LAND CLASSIFICATION

The land classification system has been developed as a means of assistance in the implementation of the Plan. By delineation of land classes, the Town could indicate where growth is expected to occur and where fragile resources could be protected.

The Town of Atkinson is a small (one mile square) community located in an

area relatively free of fragile resources. No AECs are located in or near Town, nor has the Town identified other fragile resources. Soils are a constraint to development, however, and this constraint will be considered when the zoning ordinance is developed. Due to the size of the Town and lack of public water and sewer, and its development as a "crossroads" development in a rural area, the Town has classified itself as Community. This classification is designated for the entire Town, with no other classifications included at this time. Policies of the Land Use Plan are oriented to maintaining this classification for the planning period. During the next planning period, however, the Town hopes to work toward a density and service level which could change the classification to Transition in the future.

CAMA Land Use Planning Regulations define five classes of land classification.

A. Developed: The purpose of the developed class is to provide for continued intensive development and redevelopment of existing cities.

B. Transition: The purpose of the transition class is to provide for future intensive urban development within the ensuing ten years on lands that are most suitable and that will be scheduled for provision of necessary public utilities and services. The transition lands also provide for additional growth when additional lands in the developed class are not available or when they are severely limited for development.

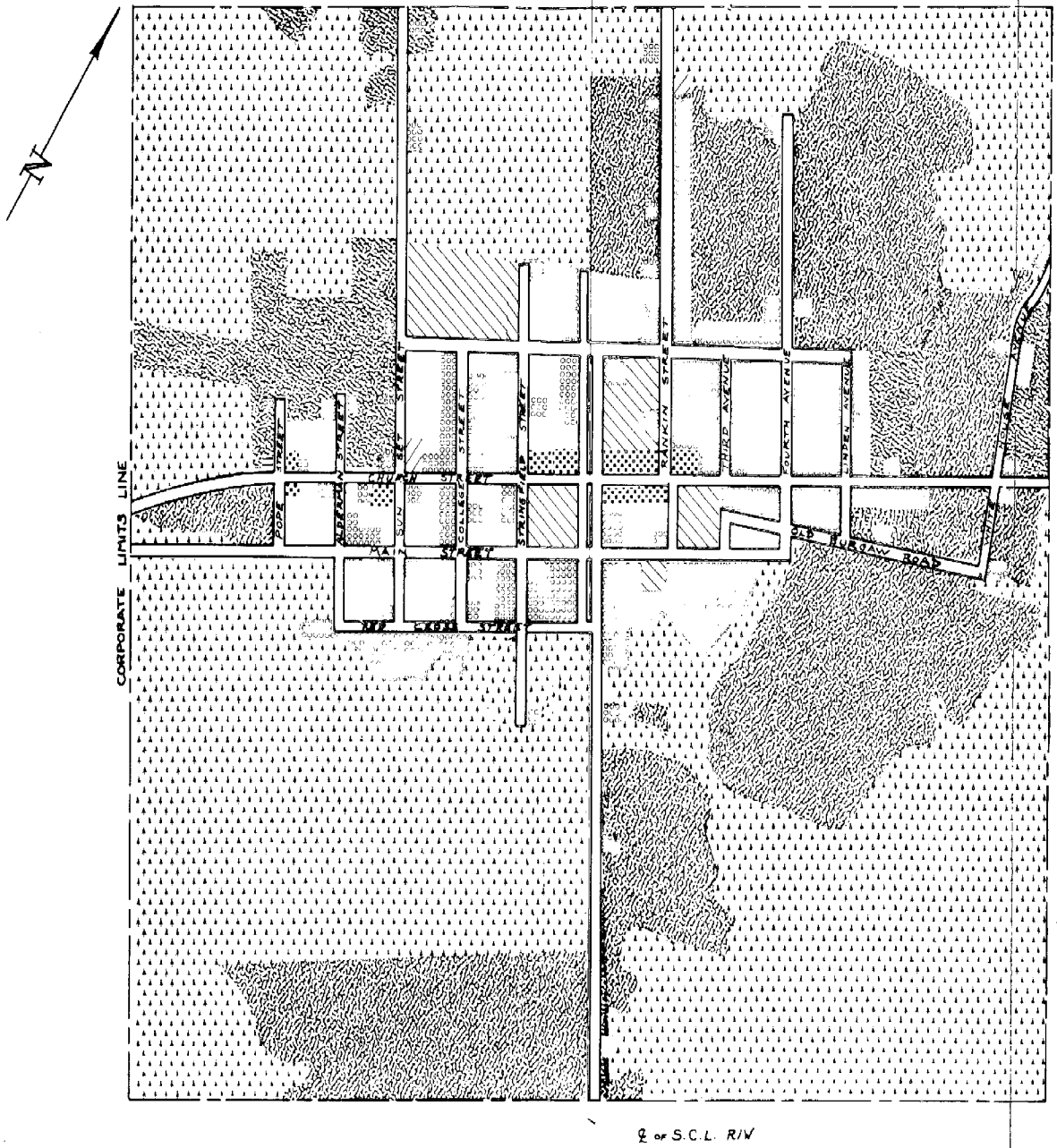
C. Community: The purpose of the community class is to provide for clustered land development to help meet housing, shopping, employment, and public service needs within the rural areas of the County.

D. Rural: The purpose of the rural class is to provide for agriculture, forest management, mineral extraction and other low intensity uses. Residences may be located within rural areas where urban services are not required and where natural resources will not be permanently impaired.

E. Conservation: The purpose of the conservation class is to provide for effective long-term management of significant limited or irreplaceable areas. This management may be needed because of its natural, cultural, recreational, productive, or scenic values. These areas should not be identified as transition lands in the future.

## 9.3 COMMITTMENT TO STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

POLICY 16. THE TOWN CONTINUES TO EXPRESS ITS SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL STATE PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITY (CAMA, POWELL BILL, CETA). THE TOWN EXPECTS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO INSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.




TOWN OF ATKINSON, N. C.

EXISTING LAND USE

- PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL
- AGRICULTURAL LAND
- FOREST LAND
- RESIDENTIAL LAND
- COMMERCIAL & SERVICES
- OPEN

0 400 800 1200 1600

1 INCH = 400 FEET

LAND CLASSIFICATION

COMMUNITY – (ENTIRE TOWN)

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER LIBRARY
3 6668 14101 9341