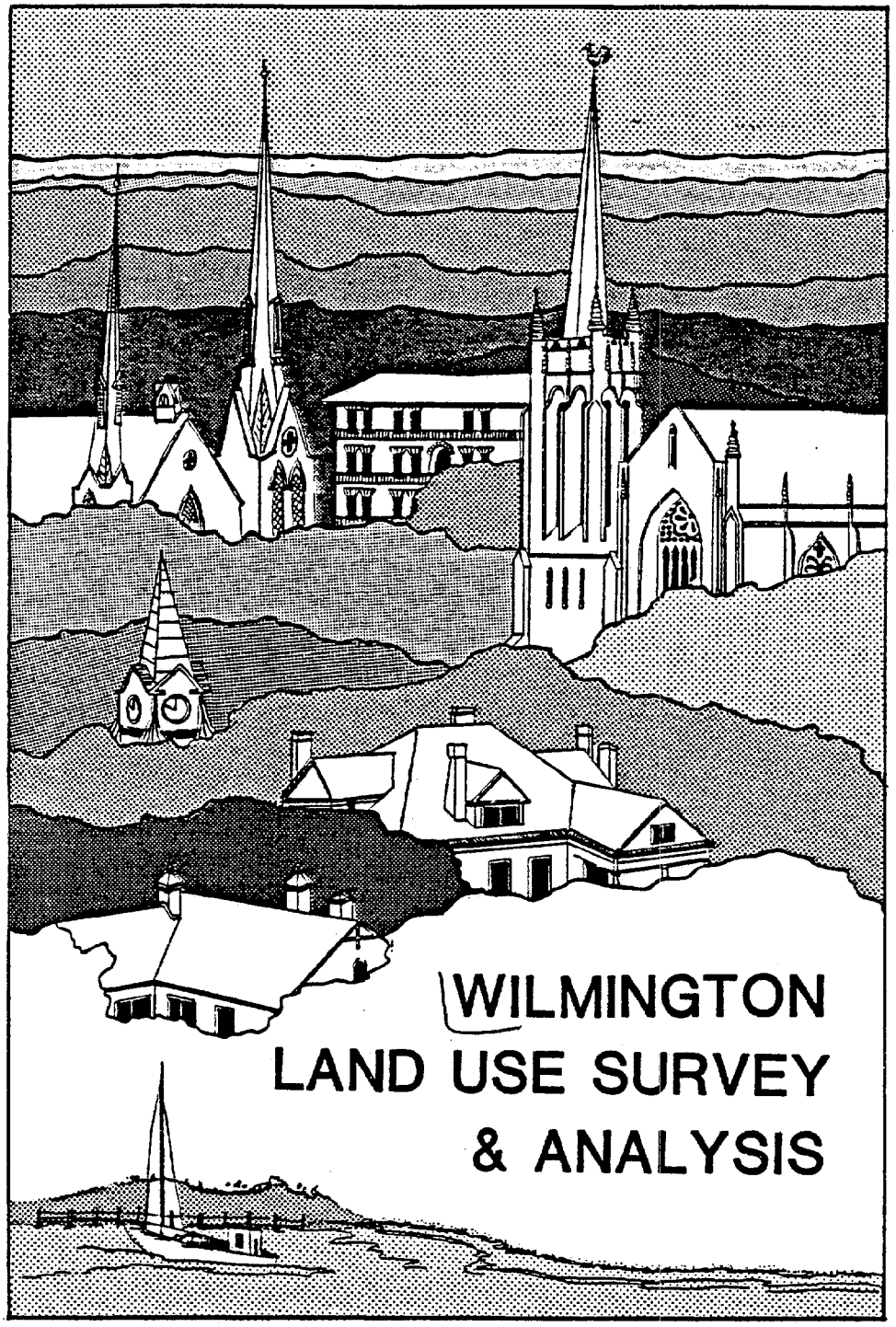

North Carolina Zone Management Program

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CAMA LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

Report No. 3B

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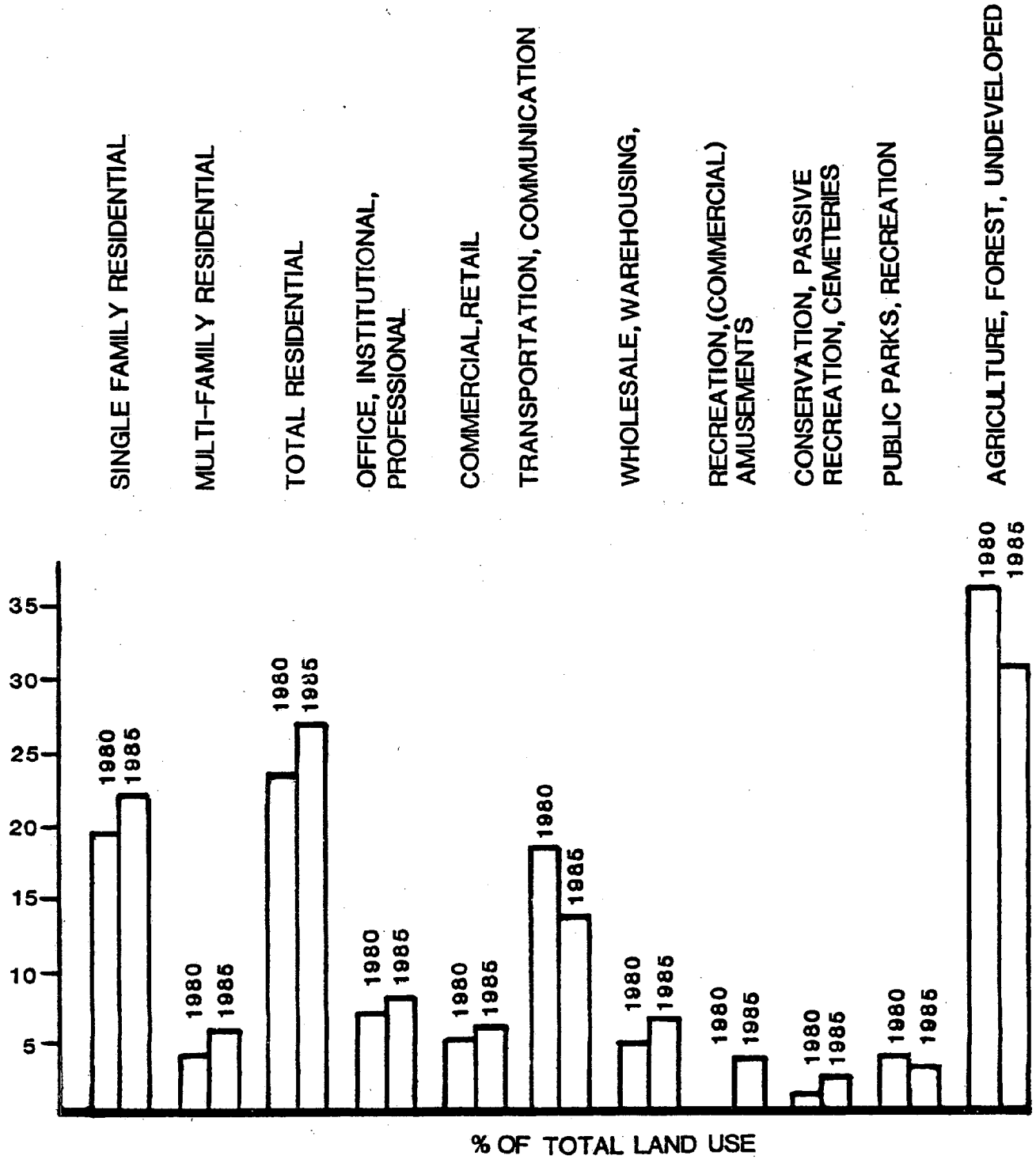
1985 LAND USE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS
WILMINGTON, NC

WILMINGTON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

AUGUST, 1985

Wilmington, NC - 1985 Land Use Survey



WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

1985 LAND USE SURVEY

Introduction

This report consists of three subsections:

1. Major Findings
2. Local Land Use Problems
3. Conclusion

These discussions will present a brief overview of the land use survey and a comparison with the conditions and trends disclosed in the 1980 survey. More detailed data and a description of the methodology used will be found in the appendixes.

Between 1980 and 1985, the total area within the Wilmington corporate limits has increased 31% from 14,068 acres to 20,431 acres. This occurred primarily because of two significant annexations of unincorporated, contiguous, urbanized neighborhoods:

A. Southside and Pine Valley
B. Winter Park

These neighborhoods contain large areas of single family housing, with some commercial, office/institutional, and recreation development. Southside contains the new N. C. Ports Authority terminal and several large industrial concerns.

Major Findings:

1. More than 2,000 acres of single family housing have been added since 1980 due to Annexation A and B, an increase of 66%. It was noticed by researchers that many homes in the Historic District have been returned to single family use from previous use as multi-family dwellings.

2. However, over 400 acres of multi-family housing have been built within Wilmington, an increase of 77% since 1980. The growing popularity of this type of housing indicates the increasing costs of land purchase and construtcion.

3. Office and institutional acreage has increased by 70% since 1980. This indicates the growing importance of the service sector in the local economy. However, its proportion of the total developed land has decreased slightly, possibly owing to large single family acreage added in Annexation Areas A & B.

4. Commercial and retail uses continue to increase, as well as the proportion of developed land which they occupy. Commercial recreation has grown as a category of land use as golf courses, a water slide, skating rink and other such establishments were included in recently annexed areas. But the growth of this commercial activity again reflects the increasing importance of the local service sector.

5. Wholesale, warehousing and industrial development has doubled since 1980. This increase is due to the addition of industrial areas on the Southside near the shipping terminal as well as the growth of industry and distribution along North 23rd Street, near the airport.

6. Parks and Active Recreation declined in percentage owing to the addition of annexation areas without as large a proportion of public parkland as achieved within the city. Public parkland has increased, but not as much as commercial facilities.

7. Total vacant acreage has risen, but its proportion shows an overall decline. This perhaps indicates the extent of existing development in the annexation areas.

8. The increase of acreage in the category of Passive Recreation and Cemeteries has not been explained, since the two large cemeteries are not new. Areas used for passive recreation have generally not been formally protected by fee simple acquisition or zoning, unless made part of the City's park or drainage systems.

Figure 1

CITY OF WILMINGTON, N. C.
1985 SUMMARY OF EXISTING LAND USE

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Area	Percent of Developed Land
Total Residential	5,471	26.8%	39.8%
Single Family	4,484	21.9%	32.7%
Multi-Family	987	4.8%	7.2%
Professional, Office & Institutional	1,417	6.9%	10.3%
Commercial & Retail	1,195	5.8%	8.7%
Utilities, Transportation & Communication	2,691	13.2%	19.6%
Industry, Distribution Warehousing & Wholesale	1,264	6.2%	9.2%
Recreation (total)	1,691	8.3%	12.3%
Recreation (Commercial)	690	3.4%	5.0%
Passive Rec. & Cemeteries*	432	2.1%	3.1%
Parks & Active Rec.*	569	2.8%	4.1%
Agriculture, Undeveloped & Forest *	6,192	30.3%	
Water *	511	2.5%	
Total Area	20,430	100%	
Total Developed Land	13,728	72.2	100%
*Total Open Space (Land & Water)	8,394	41.1%	

LOCAL LAND USE PROBLEMS

During the 1980 survey, two types of local problems were identified in the process: imcompatible development and unplanned development. These still exist in the City to some degree, but gradual improvements in the enforcement of land use controls, including a new zoning ordinance (in effect as of August 1, 1984), have lessened the creation of new problems. This is despite accelerated growth in the Wilmington Area.

Particular problem areas, however, can be noted:

1. Pressure to build multi-family housing on infill sites in existing residential areas can create conflict within these neighborhoods.

   Spirea Drive: This neighborhood, close to the intersection of N.C. Highway 132 and U.S. 74-76, has multi-family development at one end. Pressure for more has resulted in a number of rezoning controversies before the Planning Commission.

   Greenway Avenue: The center of a stable residential superblock, undeveloped and located close to major over loaded traffic arteries, was recently denied multi-family zoning.

2. As less good land is available for development, pressure increases for development on marginally suitable sites such as low-lying or flood prone areas. (A Flood-Plain Overlay District is delineated on all City zoning maps.)

   Chestnut Street: Flood plain land across from a grade school in a prime residential neighborhood was proposed for multi-family development, but denied.

   Kerr and Wilshire Avenues: Near areas of busy commercial activity, a multi-family development is being developed on land that is partly flood-plain. Specific problems on the site are being addressed through the site plan review process.

   Covil and Mercer Avenues: At an intersection of these two streets, owners of low wet land zoned residential, but near a railroad and across from land zoned for light manufacturing, are seeking rezoning for commercial development.

3. In pathways for planned thoroughfares, pressure for development has increased, causing traffic and land management problems for the city, and casting uncertainty on completion of portions of the City's thoroughfare plan.

   Smith Creek Parkway: The route has not been finalized, but has been generally determined. A development group currently wants the route to be changed to accomodate their residential development proposal.

4. Because traffic problems within the City are reaching critical proportions, increasing attention is being given to the land use implications of transportation improvements.

Smith Creek Parkway: New Hanover County Public Schools found itself building a new school close to this major arterial route between new U.S. I-40 and Downtown Wilmington. Much thought is being directed toward the impact of I-40 traffic on thoroughfares and neighborhoods.

I-40 and College Road: According to local realtors, land speculation along N. C. 132 (College Road), has accelerated, owing to the prospect of I-40 being completed by 1989, with traffic pouring onto this existing thoroughfare.

Glen Meade Neighborhood: Seeking to prevent through traffic from winding through this residential area, this neighborhood has mounted a vigorous campaign to persuade City Council and fellow citizens to find a permanent solution to this situation.

Lincoln Forest: Street stub closings were sought to protect this residential neighborhood from through traffic that might be generated by more intense development of adjacent open land.

5. Commercial and office development still tends to spread along major thoroughfares, locally, and has already grown along segments of arteries which were recently annexed by the City. Strong efforts are being made under the 1984 Zoning Ordinance, to restrict such development. The description of the CB district calls for the clustering of small businesses which only require a small land area. Large commercial facilities which serve the region are now restricted to RB districts which are "designed to locate at the intersections of major thoroughfares and occur in clustered patterns." Similarly, all businesses, offices and institutions should be clustered in planned plazas or parks at major intersections, as opposed to dangerous and unsightly strips of such development along each thoroughfare.

Thoroughfares already suffering major traffic problems due to strip development are:

Carolina Beach Road	Oleander Drive
South College Road	Kerr Avenue
Market Street	North 23rd Street
Wrightsville Avenue	Wilshire Boulevard (partially)

CONCLUSION

Land use problems do not appear to be accelerating at a rate equal to the population and economic growth of the area. This can be attributed to strong, more consistent enforcement of development regulations in recent years. New zoning regulations for the City, just put into effect last year, resulted from a three-year effort by City officials, staff, and concerned citizenry. New spot zonings have been virtually eliminated. Requests which would result in commercial encroachments into residential areas have been reduced considerably from earlier years.

Current planning conflicts lie primarily in the area of multi-family infill development and its traffic implications on existing neighborhoods. These problems can be minimized by continued improvements in policies and development regulations, which will be considered as part of the 1985 update to the Land Use Plan and Policies.

APPENDICES

A. METHODOLOGY

The following is a synopsis of the techniques and materials utilized in obtaining and summarizing the land use data contained in this report:

1. Development of land use categories and sub-categories to address local existing land use patterns.

2. Assignment of land use codes used by New Hanover County Tax Office to appropriate land use category and/or sub-category (SEE LISTING IN B. BELOW).

3. Computer printouts obtained for each land parcel in Planning Area by land use code and location. Information transferred to corresponding 1" = 400' scale planning maps which were then color-coded.

4. Information verified by aerial photography, field checks, and telephone surveys.

5. 1" = 400' color-coded maps hand measured for each land use category by individual, 1/16th sections which correspond to County Tax Office 1" = 100' maps.

6. City of Wilmington totals obtained by summing appropriate map area data.

B. LISTING OF LAND USES BY CATEGORY

As indicated in the Methodology, the codes assigned by the County Tax Office served as the basis for determining the existing use of each land parcel in the Planning Area. The following list represents the manner in which these codes were aggregated under the land use categories and sub-categories for the survey and analysis. The numbers shown are those used by the Tax Office for each land use.

Single Family Residential
01 - Family Residential
04 - Season Residential 1 Family
19 - Other Residential

Mobile Homes
10 - Mobile Home
14 - Mobile Home Park

Multi-Family Residential

02 - Family Residential
03 - 3 or more Family Residential
05 - Season Residential 2 + Family

Office and Institutional

61 - Finance & Real Estate
65 - Physicians and Dental Services
65A - Hospital Services
65B - Sanitoriums, Convalescent and Rest Home Services
65D - Other Medical and Health Services
65E - Legal Services
67 - Governmental
68 - Educational
69A - Religious Activities
69B - Religious Activities and Educational School
12 - Group Quarters

Commercial

52 - Retail - Building Materials, Hardware, and Farm
53 - Retail - General Merchandise
54A - Groceries - Retail Convenience Food
54B - Fish and Seafoods - Retail
54C - Other Retail Trade - Food
55 - Retail Auto
55A - Tires, Batteries, and Accessories - Retail
55B - Gasoline Service Stations
55C - Marine Craft and Accessories - Retail
55D - Marina - Marine Craft Docking and Services
55E - Retail Trade Auto, Marine Craft Aircraft, Accesories
56 - Retail Apparel
57 - Retail Home Furnishings
58A - Eating Place - Consumption on Premises
58B - Fast Food Service
58C - Drinking Place (Alcoholic Beverages)
13 - Residential Hotel
6 - Travel Trailer Park
73 - Amusements
84A - Sport Fishing
84B - Commercial Fishing
84C - Other Fishing and Related
62 - Personal Services
63 - Business Services
64 - Repair - Auto Services
66 - Contract Construction
59 - Other Retail
15 - Transient Lodging

Transportation, Communications, Utilities

41 - Rail Transit
42 - Motor Vehicles
43 - Aircraft
44 - Marine Craft
45 - Street Right-of-way
46 - Auto Parking
47 - Communications
48 - Utilities
49 - Other Transportation, Communication and Utility

Wholesale, Warehousing and Distribution

51 - Wholesale Trade

Industrial (Intensive)

21 - Food and Kindred
23 - Apparel and Similar
27 - Printing and Allied
34 - Fabricated Metal
35 - Professional, Scientific and Controlling Instruments
36 - Boat and Ship Construction
39 - Miscellaneous Manufacturing
84 - Fishery

Industrial (Extensive)

22 - Textile Mill
24 - Lumber and Wood
25 - Furniture and Fixtures
26 - Paper and Allied
28 - Chemical and Allied
29 - Petroleum, Refining and Related
31 - Rubber and Plastic
32 - Stone, Clay and Glass
33 - Primary Metal
85 - Mining and Related

Recreation

71 - Cultural or Nature Exhibition
72 - Public Assembly
74 - Recreational Activities
75 - Resorts and Camps
76 - Parks

Undeveloped and Agriculture

81 - Agriculture
82 - Agriculture Related
83 - Forestry and Related
91 - Unused Land
92 - Non-Commercial Forest

Miscellaneous [1/]

89 - Other Resource
69C - Other Services
79 - Other Cultural, Entertainment and Recreation
94 - Vacant Floors
95 - Under Construction

C. RELATED MATERIALS AVAILABLE

Listed below are materials related to this report which are available for inspection and use at the Planning Department Offices:

1. 1" = 400' scale planning maps which encompass the entire City color-coded by land use category.

2. Land use data which correspond to the area within the 1" = 100' scale tax maps and the 1" = 400' scale Planning maps.

[1/] Parcels in the Miscellaneous category were included in the appropriate land use category according to their individual use.

WILMINGTON, N.C. - 1985 LAND USE SURVEY
(All figures in acres.)

LAND USES: / MAP NO.	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	OFFICE, INSTITUTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL	COMMERCIAL & RETAIL	UTILITIES, TRANSPORTAION, COMMUNICATION	WHOLESALE, WAREHOUSING, INDUSTRY	RECREATION (COMMERCIAL) & AMUSEMENTS	CONSERVATION, PSV.RECREATION & CEMETERIES	PARKS & ACTIVE RECREATION	AGRICULTURE, FOREST, UNDEVELOPED	WATER	ACRES/MAP WITHIN CITY OF WILMINGTON
40						1					1	8	11
41	6		6		6	58	23				123	37	253
42	8		8		3	3	6				124	10	153
47		1	1	17	23	69	55			4	14	73	257
48	622	75	697	152	80	435	117		81	92	484	59	2,198
49	251	134	385	69	264	219	14	6		6	932		1,893
50			0								11		11
53	8	7	15	4	8	28	132			1	7	124	320
54	640	306	947	115	88	436	81	178	1	101	268	8	2,223
55	662	195	857	375	192	302	6	15		33	428		2,208
56	33		33	366		6					4		408
59	54	1	55	7	7	47	287				12	22	437
60	559	170	729	99	297	297	33	15	39	90	672	84	2,354
61	762	32	794	163	119	253	43	43	43	199	642		2,296
62	149	1	150	8	25	54		17	10	32	32		327
64			0			40	200				43	84	367
65	327	48	375	12	58	193	258		258	11	1,194		2,360
66	333	11	344	29	19	126		233			625		1,376
70	62	6	68	1	7	115	8	184			500		882
71	7		7			11					77		95
Total acres/ /usage	4,484	987	5,470	1,417	1,195	2,691	1,264	690	432	569	6,192	511	20,431

WILMINGTON, N.C. - 1985 LAND USE SURVEY
(All figures in acres.)

LAND USES: / YEAR	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	OFFICE, INSTITUTIONAL, PROFESSIONAL	COMMERCIAL & RETAIL	UTILITIES, TRANSPORTAION, COMMUNICATION	WHOLESALE, WAREHOUSING, INDUSTRY	RECREATION (COMMERCIAL) & AMUSEMENTS	CONSERVATION, PSV.RECREATION & CEMETERIES	PARKS & ACTIVE RECREATION	AGRICULTURE, FOREST, UNDEVELOPED	WATER	ACRES WITHIN CITY OF WILMINGTON
1980	2,693	559	3,252	833	685	2,529	605	0	137	508	5,052	467	14,068
% OF CITY AREA	19.1%	4.0%	23.1%	5.9%	4.9%	18.0%	4.3%	0.0%	1.0%	3.6%	35.9%	3.3%	100.0%
% OF DEVELP. LAND	31.5%	6.6%	38.0%	9.7%	8.0%	29.6%	7.5%	0.0%	5.9%				
1985	4,484	987	5,470	1,417	1,195	2,691	1,264	690	432	569	6,192	511	20,431
% OF CITY AREA	21.9%	4.8%	26.8%	6.9%	5.8%	13.2%	6.2%	3.4%	2.1%	2.8%	30.3%	2.5%	100.0%
% OF DEVELP. LAND	32.7%	7.2%	39.8%	10.3%	8.7%	19.6%	9.2%	5.0%	3.1%	4.1%			

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