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N.C. COASTAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

TOWN OF RICHLANDS

LAND USE PLAN

Prepared By The

Richlands Town Council

Adopted May 4, 1976

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COASTAL ZONE
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RICHLANDS, NORTH CAROLINA

COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT LAND USE PLAN

PREPARED BY

RICHLANDS TOWN COUNCIL
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N.C. COASTAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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1976

NOTICE TO USERS

All major policy related maps and documents are either included within the text or attached to the back of the plan. However, due to the expense and technical limitations required for reprinting some illustrations may be omitted. Complete copies are available for inspection at the N. C. Coastal Resources Commission offices in Raleigh or at the local government offices.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT COASTAL AREA MANAGEMENT ACT

LAND USE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF RICHLANDS

Whereas, the Town is a community within the jurisdiction of the Coastal Area Management Act and has chosen to prepare its own land use plan as required by the Act, and;

Whereas, the plan has been prepared by the citizens of Richlands, now;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Town Council of the Town of Richlands,

That the Land Use Plan prepared under the Coastal Area Management Act is hereby adopted for submission to the Coastal Resources Commission for their review and approval.

Dan Rand, Mayor
May 4, 1976

Alavia Wyrick, Town Clerk

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I. Introduction

North Carolina's coastal lands and waters are among the state's most valuable resources. The coastal area, and in particular the estuaries, are among the most biologically productive regions of this state and of the nation. The area has an extremely high recreational and esthetic value which should be preserved and enhanced.

Increasing industrial development and population are threatening the beauty and resources of the coastal area as we know them today. The General Assembly, therefore, finds that an immediate and pressing need exists to establish a comprehensive plan for the protection, preservation, orderly development and management of the coastal area of North Carolina.

The Coastal Area Management Act of 1974 came into being as a result of this need to protect North Carolina's coastal lands. The Act is a state law which requires each of the twenty coastal counties to prepare a land use plan which will guide its future growth and reflect the desires, needs, and best judgment of the citizens residing within its boundaries. When completed, each individual plan will be a part of the comprehensive plan for the protection and management of the coastal area for our use and enjoyment and that of future generations. The twenty counties which are included in the Coastal Area Management Act are: Beaufort, Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Tyrrel and Washington.

State level administration and coordination will be handled by the Department of Administration and Department of Natural and Economic Resources. The Act creates two citizen agencies:

Coastal Resources Commission - The Commission is a 15-member body appointed by the Governor. All members are residents of the coast. Twelve were chosen from among nominees made by counties and towns in the coastal area. Three are appointed at the discretion of the

Governor. The Commission is responsible for establishing planning guidelines, approving land use plans and issuing permits for construction when required.

Coastal Resources Advisory Council - The Council is a 45-member body made up of locally appointed representatives from each coastal county, plus representatives from six state government departments. It includes a broad cross section of coastal interests. The Council advises the Commission on those matters before the Commission, and assists local governments.

There are three major land use management tools created by the bills: land use plans, areas of environmental concern and a permit system.

1. Land Use Plans - Each county will prepare a land use plan. The plans will be based on the goals of the people in the county, the resources available in the county, and the most reasonable path for reaching toward those goals with the resources available. After the plans are adopted, use of the land must agree with the plans.

2. Areas of Environmental Concern - These areas and their boundaries will be designated by the Coastal Resources Commission. We know from experience to be cautious when using these areas. They include marshlands, beaches, sand dunes, navigable waters, national and state parks and areas of historical importance. Designation of an area as one of environmental concern does not prohibit use of that area. It is a warning sign to be careful.

3. Permit System - Any development within an area of environmental concern must have a permit. The Act does not require permits for development outside areas of environmental concern. The Act requires the following projects in areas of environmental concern to obtain a permit from the Coastal Resources Commission: those projects currently needing state permits; those of greater than 20 acres in size; those that involve drilling or excavating natural resources on land or underwater; those which involve construction of one or more structures having an area in excess of 60,000 square feet will require a permit from the Coastal Resources Commission. Local governments will establish regulations for what types of

developments in areas of environmental concern will need permits from them.

Richlands is not a beach community, but it is a part of the coastal area where prudent and responsible development must occur. A land development plan has been formulated by the Town based upon the desires expressed by the citizens of Richlands.

II. Present Conditions

A. Population and Economy

Demographic data for the Town of Richlands cannot be compiled through the use of available published information due to the small size of the Town. Therefore, observations by staff and conversations with local people are employed to briefly describe some of the significant qualities of Richlands.

While Onslow County's population has increased 20% in the last ten (10) years, Richlands has lost 13% of its population. This is not really an alarming statistic since Richlands is situated in an agricultural region and the township has gained 3% in the same time period. There is the expected concern, however, about the decrease in the young adult population. For example, there were 254 people in the 5-14 age group in 1960 and in 1970 only 160 are remaining. This is a typical occurrence in small towns due to service in the military and college. Also, the attractions of larger cities and outside employment opportunities drain this age group considerably. Richlands has lost 37% of the people that were 5-14 in 1960. Comparatively, Swansboro, another small community in Onslow County, has lost 25% in this age group while their total population is on the increase.

Richlands Population

1970

	Male	Female
<5	53	30
5-14	105	79
15-24	78	71
25-34	61	66
35-44	59	58
45-54	47	47
55-64	36	48
>65	31	55

Richlands Population (cont.)

	Richlands	Richlands Township
<5	83	779
5-14	184	1699
15-24	149	1499
25-34	127	950
35-44	117	825
45-54	94	748
55-64	84	611
>65	86	463

	1960	1970
<5	137	83
5-14	254	184
15-24	174	160
25-34	155	127
35-44	126	117
45-54	84	94
55-64	83	84
>65	66	86

Richlands is centered in an agricultural region with the predominant crop being tobacco. The existing land use map illustrates the significant amount of agricultural land in and about the Town. This is an important factor to consider for future growth of the Town.

Richlands is predominantly residential with some industry present. Richlands Textile, Inc., which employs about 550 people in the manufacture of ladies' blouses, is the largest civilian employer in the county. Onslow Feed and Grain Company, although not a large employer, is a major land user in the central business district also.

As is typical of smaller towns in the Coastal Area, a sizeable amount of economic activity centers around local retailers and services. This activity is divided between Richlands store owners and the attractive Jacksonville market, however. This may indicate a need for the development of the Richlands market in order to strengthen the economic base of the Town.

B. Existing Land Use

The existing land use map of Richlands has been prepared which shows the development pattern within the town limits. The map was the result of a field survey conducted in May, 1975. Following the survey, the land uses identified in the field were classified into eight basic categories. Listed below are the eight land use categories found in Richlands, its acreage, and percent of the total.

Land Use	Acreage	Percent
Residential	98.4	14.6
Commercial	27.6	4.2
Industrial	7.3	1.1
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	65.91	9.8
Government and Institutional	37.15	5.5
Cultural, Entertainment and Recreation	2.2	.3
Agriculture	90.48	13.5
Undeveloped	342.96	51.0
Total	672	100

The above table indicates that 51% of the total acreage within the town limits of Richlands is undeveloped. The second largest land use is devoted to residential use. There is a total of 98.4 acres of residential land on which 327 dwelling units are located. Richlands has 27.6 acres of commercial land which, relative to the population, is a significant amount. However, many of these commercial services require large tracts of land but serve only one need or are not used by the average citizen very often. Examples are the car and tractor dealerships.

Much commercial activity has shifted from the Richlands Central Business District to strip commercial development which is occurring along the Highway 258 By-Pass. The central business district has been allowed to deteriorate to the point that it is no longer attractive to shoppers or merchants who would possibly open retail stores in the downtown area. Therefore, the shopper and prospective merchant have

focused their attention to the 258 By-Pass area. Not only is this strip development aiding in the continuing deterioration of the central business district, but it is also hindering traffic flow on the intended By-Pass around Richlands.

C. Current Plans, Policies, and Regulations

1. Plans

At the present time, Richlands is involved in a program to revitalize and renovate the central business district. The title of the program is Project PROUD, which stands for Program to Revitalize Our Urban Districts. Local merchants, store owners and town officials have organized to initiate public interest and to decide upon a theme for the renovation project. The cost of renovating the buildings will be the individual store owner's responsibility; however, the entire Town will benefit from the effort. A more attractive central business district will attract both shoppers and new merchants.

A recreation committee composed of area residents was appointed in early 1976. The committee's purpose is to determine the Town's recreational needs, inform and work with the Town Council to reach the desired recreational facilities. The committee's first accomplishment was the acquisition of basketball goals which were erected in a vacant paved lot in the downtown area.

2. Local Regulations

The only local regulation in existence in Richlands is a Zoning Ordinance. The enforcement of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance is the responsibility of the building inspector or any other person designated by the Board of Commissioners. For the past few years, the Zoning Ordinance has not been enforced. However, the Town Council has recently appointed a building inspector and the Town intends to enforce the existing Ordinance.

III. Public Participation Activities

A. Major Land Use Issues

Based upon citizen opinion, the basic problems and issues facing the Town of Richlands have been identified. The following passages state these issues.

Richlands experienced a population decline from 1960 to 1970. The loss of population is attributed to the outmigration of young adults. Employment opportunities for young people in Richlands are few. Consequently, the young Richlands citizen must search outside of his native town for gainful employment. The Jacksonville job market is attractive to the Richlands citizen, for this affords him the opportunity of working in Jacksonville while residing in Richlands. However, employment outside of the Town of Richlands usually results in relocation.

Medical and recreational facilities are inadequate in Richlands. For medical care, one must travel to Jacksonville, which is 16 miles away. The citizens of Richlands would like to see their own town able to provide basic medical services for its inhabitants and surrounding communities. Richlands is very interested in providing recreational facilities for its citizens of all ages. Present recreation and entertainment are limited to a few activities such as a private swimming pool, a downtown pool hall and athletics associated with the public school system. There is no provision within the town for a park-playground area which would be beneficial to all ages.

Retail shopping services do not adequately meet the needs of the Richlands' citizen. Just as medical services must be sought outside of the town, the shopper must also turn to the larger cities in the area for variety in their shopping needs. The central business district, which should be the nucleus of activity in Richlands, has deteriorated over the years to a point where it can no longer compete with larger cities in the area, nor can it attract new business to locate within it.

B. Development Alternatives

The goals and objectives formulated by the Town which will appear in Section C are a result of the Town's desire to grow and prosper. The alternatives considered would be to do nothing. This would result in the Town's continued deterioration.

C. Goals and Objectives

Based upon the wishes expressed by the people of Richlands, a set of goals for the development of the Town have been formulated. Since Richlands is neither a beach community, nor associated with an appreciable amount of environmentally sensitive areas, the goals formulated are developmentally oriented. It is felt that an attack on reaching these goals through a land development plan will encourage orderly and thoughtful development in Richlands.

It is the desire of the people of Richlands for their Town to reach self-sufficiency. In order to attain this desired state, the following goals must be pursued. For clarification, some frequently used terms are defined as follows:

goal----------a desired future condition
objective-----a task or course of action to be performed
policy--------a commitment to action to reach a goal

Goal: Provide convenient, reliable medical care for all the citizens of Richlands

Objective -- organize citizen committee to recruit doctors to locate in Richlands

Goal: Develop potential for industrial development

Objectives -- work with Onslow County Development Commission and the economic developer with the North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources in finding industries interested in locating in the area

-- identify sites available for industrial development

Goal: Increase commercial activity

Objectives -- renovate vacant buildings in downtown area for use as retail stores

-- establish a downtown beautification council composed of citizens, merchants, and town officials to check and correct the deterioration of the central business district

-- small businesses which desire to locate in Richlands or improve

existing facilities should seek aid of Small Business Administration if the necessary money cannot be obtained elsewhere.

Goal: Provide recreation facilities for every age group

Objectives -- a recreation committee should be organized to investigate methods of achieving adequate recreational facilities

-- revitalize use of community building

-- cooperate with local school officials in organizing a summer recreation program and use of school recreation facilities

-- allocate money in Town's budget to acquire land for the establishment of a park and playground

-- apply for Federal grants to assist Town in creating recreational facilities

-- seek assistance of recreation consultant with the Department of Natural and Economic Resources

Goal: Develop vacant land within city limits rather than the fringe areas

Objectives -- provide municipal services to all areas within the corporate limits before furnishing these services outside the limits

-- reexamine the Town's Zoning Ordinance to determine if it encourages growth within the town limits

D. Methods for Securing Public Participation

The goals and objectives formulated for the Town of Richlands were the result of the desires and wishes expressed by the citizens of Richlands. Brochures, newsletters, personal letters, and articles in the Jacksonville newspaper "The Daily News", were employed to inform local citizens about the Coastal Area Management Act program. Major input for formulating the goals and objectives was gathered from the 75 returned questionnaires out of the 473 questionnaires sent to all water users in the Town. A sample questionnaire which was sent to the citizens appears on the following page.

Three public hearings, held July 9, 1975, July 29, 1975, and August 12, 1975, were announced well in advance and an attempt was made to inform all local citizens of the meetings. Actual attendance at these meetings was limited to a few (5 to 6) interested citizens. However, those attending were instrumental in formulating the Town's goals and objectives. Open discussion at the public meetings about the direction the citizens desired the Town to develop, was the basis for determining the goals and objectives. The Town Council and the Mayor of Richlands were involved in the land use plan from the very beginning. The project planner met with the Town Council each month during the time period in which the plan was being prepared. Personal conversations with the Mayor were helpful in the plan preparation. In general, the actual number of people participating in the land use plan was not great, but significant input was received from those who did participate.

CITIZEN OPINION SURVEY

FOR THE

TOWN OF RICHLANDS

Richlands is preparing a land use plan in order to comply with the requirements of the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974. One of the most important aspects of land use planning is that the plan adequately reflect citizen opinions and attitudes toward the use of the community's land --both public and private. The following survey is intended to give each citizen the opportunity to express his opinion on land use problems and issues. Your cooperation in answering the following questions will be appreciated.

1. Are you a permanent resident of Richlands? ( ) yes ( ) no

2. If not, how often do you live in Richlands?

_____ weekends _____ summer months

3. Do you live within the town limits? ( ) yes ( ) no

4. What is your age? _____

5. Do you live in a : ( ) single-family house
( ) duplex
( ) mobile home
( ) apartment

6. During the next five years would you like to see the population of Richlands?

( ) increase greatly
( ) increase slightly
( ) decrease greatly
( ) decrease slightly
( ) stay the same

7. During the next five years would you like to see the corporate limits of the town expanded? ( ) yes ( ) no

8. Which of the following types of development would you like to see more or less of in Richlands?

	More	Less
single-family housing	( )	( )
apartments	( )	( )
mobile homes	( )	( )
commercial	( )	( )
industrial	( )	( )
public open space	( )	( )
public recreation facilities (playgrounds and parks)	( )	( )

other (specify) _____

_____

9. For what reasons did you choose to live in Richlands?

( ) close to work
( ) pleasant surroundings
( ) low taxes
( ) reasonably priced land and house
( ) close to family and friends
( ) other _____

---

10. In which of the following areas do you feel more public funds should be spent?

	More	Less
water and sewer	( )	( )
garbage collection	( )	( )
fire and police protection	( )	( )
schools	( )	( )
parks and recreational facilities and programs	( )	( )
roads or public transit	( )	( )
environmental protection	( )	( )
industrial development	( )	( )
town management	( )	( )

other _____

---

11. What do you like most about Richlands?

12. What do you like least about Richlands?

13. Is there any particular area or type of area within the Town Limits or within one mile of the Town limits that you feel is unique or special and should be preserved or protected in its present state or form?

14. Please use the following space to make any additional comments you would like.

Thank you for your help and cooperation. This questionnaire should be returned to the Town Hall no later than June 11.

IV. Constraints

A. Land Potential

1. Physical Limitations

Physical limitations for development can be defined as areas having conditions that would make development costly or create an undesirable effect if developed. Richlands is homogeneous enough to be able to say that development constraints are almost identical throughout the Town. Although these constraints are not severe or even likely to influence development patterns, they do warrant consideration. Primarily of concern are areas with soil limitations and sources of water supply.

a. Soil Limitations

Richlands is situated entirely in the Rains-Lynchburg-Goldsboro soil association. This association occurs in the broad interstream uplands of the Coastal Plans and the soil series are somewhat poorly drained to poorly drained with moderate permeability. The Goldsboro series has slight limitations for most non-industrial development. However, this would indicate the necessity of spot site tests of all sites expected to be developed to determine the exact restrictions present. Some general characteristics can be illustrated, though, through the use of the chart on the following page.

b. Water Supply Areas

The source of potable water supplies to all users in Richlands is groundwater. Three wells with a total depth of 450 feet provide groundwater to serve a regional population of 2000 and one textile industry.

Potable groundwater occurs in the Post-Miocene Aquifer and in upper zones of the Cretaceous System Aquifer. The Post-Miocene Aquifer is composed of unconsolidated sand which contains groundwater under water table conditions.

Soil Interpretations
General Soil Map
Onslow County, N. C.
June, 1970

Soil Associations	Soils	% in Assoc.	LIMITATIONS FOR Dwellings with Sewerage Systems	Septic Tank Filter Fields	Recreation Camp Sites	Picnic Areas	Intensive Play Areas	Light 1/ Industries	Roads & Streets 2/	SUITABILITY FOR General Agriculture	Woods
RICHLANDS										Fair to	
Rains-Lynchburg-Goldsboro	Rains	25	Sev(Wt)	Sev(Wt)	Sev(Wt,Traf)	Sev(Wt,Traf)	Sev(Traf,Wt)	Sev(Wt,Cor)	Sev(Wt)	Good	Good
15% of County	Lynchburg	20	Mod(Wt)	Sev(Wt)	Mod(Wt,Traf)	Mod(Wt,Traf)	Mod(Traf,Wt)	Mod(Wt,Cor)	Mod(Wt,TSC)	Good	Good
	Goldsboro	20	Slt	Mod(Wt at 2.5')	Slt	Slt	Slt	Mod(Cor)	SLT	Good	Good
			Slopes 10% impose limitations; 10-25%-Mod. 25%+-Sev.	Slopes 10% impose limitations; 10-15%-Mod. 15%+-Sev.	Slopes 6% impose limitations; 6-10%-Mod. 10%+-Sev.	Slopes 10% impose limitations; 10-25%-Mod. 25%+-Sev.	Slopes 6% impose limitations; 6-10%-Mod. 10+-Sev.	Slopes 10% impose sev. limitations	Slopes 25% impose sev. limitations		

Abbreviations for Limiting Factors:

Perc - Percolation rate
Sh-Sw - Shrink-swell potention, R - Rock
ER - Erosion, FL - Flood hazard, Prod - Productivity
Wt - Water Table, Traf - Trafficability,
Cor - Corrosion potention, AWC - Available water capacity, LFA - Low filtering action
TSC - Traffic supporting capacity

Abbreviations for degree of limitations:
Slt. - Slight Mod. - Moderate Sev. - Severe

1/ Structures whose footings are in subsoil

2/ Refers to roads and streets that have subsoil for base

Unconsolidated sand layers within the upper zones of the Cretaceous System Aquifer store groundwater under predominantly artesian conditions.

Brackish groundwater under artesian conditions probably occurs in the middle and lower sand layers within the Cretaceous Aquifer System.

The water-table Post Miocene Aquifer exists from land surface to 30 feet below land surface (BLS). Cretaceous System Aquifers occur below the Post-Miocene Aquifer extending down to a probable depth of 1000 feet where basement is encountered. It is unclear if the Post-Miocene Aquifer is hydraulically connected to the upper portion of the Cretaceous System Aquifer.

The Post-Miocene Aquifer is recharged directly by rainfall infiltration. The upper zone of the Cretaceous System Aquifer receives recharge from the updip area of the aquifer but under favorable hydraulic conditions would receive recharge from the Post-Miocene Aquifer. Any activity of man which diminishes the quantity and quality of groundwater to the Post-Miocene Aquifer should be avoided, therefore, to protect the integrity of the Post-Miocene Aquifer and, perhaps, the upper zone of the Cretaceous System Aquifer.

Three deep wells could provide, theoretically, 936,000 gallons per day capacity without further expansion of the well field.

2. Fragile Areas

a. Historic Sites

There are no areas in Richlands listed in the National Register of Historic Sites, however, there are two sites of historic significance in the Richlands planning area. These two sites are the Koonce House and the J. T. Shackleford Cemetary. The Bryant Shine Koonce House is located one mile east of Richlands on U. S. Highway 258. It is one of the oldest houses in the county and in early 1900 it was used as a school house. At present, it is privately owned and unoccupied. The second historic site is the J. T. Shackleford Cemetary which is

located within the town limits of Richlands. This is the family cemetary of U.S. Senator Shackleford from Onslow County in 1880.

B. Capacity of Community Facilities

1. Water and Sewer System

The exceptional quality of the water in Richlands has earned it the name of "The Town of Perfect Water". This water is supplied by three wells which is then stored in two overhead tanks. The two tanks have a combined storage capacity of 400,000 gallons. As of February 23, 1976, the water system had a maximum operating capacity of 928,000 gallons per day with an average use of 340,000 gallons per day. These figures indicate an excess availability of 588,550 gallons per day which is more than adequate for purposes of growth within the development framework established by the Town. There are no existing plans for expansion of the plant or the service area. Such expansion will be necessary to service any new areas developed for residential or industrial use. However, there is no reason to believe that Richlands can not remain "The Town of Perfect Water" with such a generous availability of water even with a substantial increase in demand.

The water and sewer systems serve the entire town. The sewer system is in adequate condition. There are no problems with infiltration.

2. Wastewater Treatment Plant

Richlands presently operates a satisfactory wastewater treatment facility. Waste load projections indicate the present design capacity of the facility to be adequate until and beyond the year 1980. The plant is a contact stabilization type facility with secondary treatment.

The system serves a population of 950 people and has a design flow of 210,000 gallons per day with an actual flow of 100,000 gallons per day. The plant has an operating efficiency of 90 to 95% and discharges into Mill Swamp, a class "C" stream. The wastewater treatment facility for Richlands is adequate to meet the

needs of the projected population growth of the planning area.

3. Schools and Roads

As is the case in most of Onslow County, Richlands' school children attend county schools. Even though the elementary and the high schools are in the Town of Richlands, they serve people from outside the planning jurisdiction as well as those in it. The overall adequacy of the Richlands schools has been analyzed by the Onslow County Planning Department and is under the jurisdiction of the Onslow County Board of Education, but it should remain apparent in the planning philosophy of Richlands that schools are an integral part of the community facilities network. Therefore, provision within the development plan should be made for improving and expanding the schools in proportion with the expected population increase. Richlands should make efforts to stay in close contact with the Onslow County Superintendent of Schools to advise him of the affect of increased population on the area school facilities.

The construction and maintenance of non-state numbered roads are the Town's responsibility. The quantity and quality of existing streets and roads are adequate for the Town's present needs. In areas designated for future growth in this plan, road construction will be required. The extent of development will determine the precise amount of road construction needed.

V. Estimated Demand

A. Population and Economy

No planning effort can be thought adequate without consideration for possible population changes or desired growths. In Richlands, or in any small town, population projections are difficult to make confidently due to the lack of a substantial base number with which to work. Any number of occurrences, social or economic, would likely invalidate a projection.

For Richlands, a geometric projection method is used which illustrates the population change if Richlands continues to increase its population at its present growth rate. Using every decade between 1910 and 1970 as base data, the population increase has been 14% on the average. The geometric population projection for 1980 using the average 14% increase would be 1066.

If this trend continues, ten, twenty-five and fifty year projections would be 1131, 1328 and 1655.

RICHLAND'S POPULATION

Year	Population	% Increase
1910	445	-
1920	548	+23
1930	503	-9
1940	688	+36
1950	877	+27
1960	1079	+23
1970	935	-13
Average for six decades		14%

GEOMETRIC POPULATION PROJECTION

Year	Population
1980	1066
1985	1131
2000	1328
2025	1655

This population projection would allow Richlands to grow while maintaining the small town atmosphere which the citizens wish to preserve. There are 226 acres of land available for residential development in the Town. Using a 6000 square foot minimum lot size, 226 acres would allow 1650 additional residential lots. This is more than enough land to accommodate the projected population increase.

Seasonal population changes were not considered in Richlands' population projection over the next fifty years. Richlands is located approximately 31 miles from the beach and it is not connected closely enough with the beach area for its population to be affected by summer tourists.

The population projection for Richlands is based upon the assumption that the Town will continue to grow as it has in the past. A major change, such as the location of a large industry within or near the Town, may cause the projection to become invalid.

B. Future Land Needs

Richlands has shown interest in land use control in the past as evidenced by the existence of a Zoning Ordinance. However, if a Zoning Ordinance is to be of any value it must evolve from the goals and objectives established by the Town and from the capability of the land to support various uses.

The Town of Richlands is 50% (by acreage) developed. This affords the Town an excellent opportunity to witness sound development if guided by a land use plan. The Town may employ this undeveloped land to help gain self sufficiency over time, but the guides must be there now if any of the Town's goals are to be met.

Richlands has 98.4 acres developed for residential use with a total of 327 dwelling units. This gives an average residential lot size of .3 acres. Realistically speaking, the Town would reach full development within its town limits by a doubling of the population. The sewerage treatment plant is operating at about an average of 50% capacity; and since the Town is 50% developed by acreage, it is felt that a doubling of the population can occur and still allow the Town to maintain its character. Richlands' average household size is 2.8 persons per unit. Approximately doubling the population to 1800 people would therefore require 336 more units. Three hundred thirty six one-third acre lots would only require 112 acres of the 226 acres available for residential development. It is suggested that the remaining 114 acres be left in an undeveloped category. Residential lot sizes can also be left at a minimum of 12000 square feet in the future. The current six to eight thousand square foot minimum seems to be unwise in light of the potential pollution threat to crowded residential land use. Also, land immediately west of Highway 258 should be designated low density residential in order to discourage any more strip commercial development.

At the present time, Richlands has 27.6 acres of commercial land which, relative to the population, is a significant amount. However, much of this acreage requires large tracts but only serves one need or are not used by the average citizen very

often. Examples are the car and tractor dealerships. Also, the central business district has been allowed to deteriorate to the point that it is no longer attractive to shoppers and prospective merchants. Vacant or dilapidated buildings in the central business district can and should be employed to add the spirit and new life that is needed in order to meet Richlands' development goals. The cooperative effort of merchants, town officials and citizens is required to renovate and revitalize the commercial activity of the central business district.

An industrial development task force should also be created to investigate ways to attract industry to the town. Richlands is environmentally capable of enduring most light industries and since industrial development would assist job creation, there must, at least, be a representative from Richlands regularly in contact with the Onslow County Economic Development Commission. There are presently 7.3 acres of land in town in industrial use while the existing Zoning Ordinance has delegated approximately 60 acres for industry. This is probably an over estimation of land needed for industrial use in town, because most likely, any new industry would locate just out of town to avoid paying municipal taxes. However, there is no reason to expect any harm in delegating that much acreage.

The recreational deficiencies of Richlands would most probably be alleviated through local action and therefore more attention should be given to this problem as soon as possible at regular sessions of the Town Council. The 2.2 acres of recreation land in town now serve only for swimming and tennis leaving the schools as the only opportunity for field sports. It might be manageable to set up sports programs for the town with the schools, but it would probably be more desirable to develop a municipal park with such facilities. Ideally, locating near either the high school or the elementary school should be the best choice. Of course, property values would be a major factor affecting such an undertaking since the land would have to be purchased by the Town. The joint cooperation of the Recreation Committee and the Downtown Revitalization Committee is needed in establishing a mini-park in the central business district that is compatible with the renovation theme.

Richlands should encourage commercial establishments providing recreational and entertainment services. Recreational activities with a profit motive behind them would be easier to manage than Town supported ones because of the vested interest of the proprietor.

C. Community Facilities Demand

The existing community facilities serving the Town of Richlands are considered adequate to meet the needs of the Town's projected growth. Water and sewer lines will need to be extended as development occurs, however, this poses no foreseeable problem. The water system is operating below capacity as is the sewage treatment plant. Street construction will coincide with development of new areas within the Town. The population projection for Richlands is not expected to burden the Town through a sudden demand on community facilities. Growth will be gradual which will allow the Town to expand services as needed, thereby avoiding a sudden financial hardship on the townspeople.

VI. Land Classification

The State guidelines for Local Planning in the Coastal Area under the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974 require that a land classification may be prepared for all planning jurisdictions in the coastal area. There are five classes of land prescribed in the North Carolina Land Classification System:

A. Developed - Land with a minimum density of 2000 people per square mile (3.124/acre) and containing public services able to support the present population. This land must be serviced by water and sewer systems and adequate road and educational systems.

B. Transition - Land where a minimum density of 2000 people per square mile is expected in the future and where minimum services will be required. Areas with severe development limitations or ones of significant special value would not be included in this category.

C. Community - Existing low density land that doesn't require major public services. This class includes all new rural growth of lot sizes of 10 acres or less. Approximately one person per acre should be used as a guide in identifying this land.

D. Rural - Land used for management and utilization of productive resources and where limited public services will be provided. Generally, large tracts of land not expected to develop more intensely than agriculturally would be considered in this category.

E. Conservation - This last class identifies land to be maintained for its natural qualities and least desirable for development. These areas wouldn't be able to withstand development without lose of natural value, have severe limitations for development, or are too valuable to be endangered by it.

Unfortunately, this system cannot be applied in some municipal cases. Richlands is a prime example. The Town is, of course, developed; however, the density is simply not high enough to reach the 3.124 persons per acre required for the developed class.

Richlands' density in developed areas is only 2.1 persons per acre. Consequently, the land classification map is felt inappropriate and has been substituted by a future land use map.

VII. Areas of Environmental Concern

Areas of Environmental Concern include marshlands, beaches, sand dunes, navigable waters, national and state parks and areas of historic importance. None of these areas exist within the Town limits of Richlands.

VIII. Implementation and Review

In order to attain the goals formulated in this land use plan, the Town of Richlands must have a method to follow for implementing recommendations. The following steps indicate such a method:

1. The citizens of Richlands elect a Town Board;
2. The Town Board appoints a Planning Board;
3. The Planning Board is responsible for making recommendations, plans and policies to the Town Board on land use, recreation, housing and community facilities;
4. The Town Board considers the recommendations and plans of the Planning Board for adoption;
5. The recommendations and plans may be implemented through:
    a) ordinances such as:
        -- zoning
        -- subdivision
        -- housing code
        -- building code, and
    b) fiscal policy including:
        -- budgeting
        -- State grants
        -- Federal grants
        -- revenue sharing

The plans and policies implemented by the Town Board need to be kept current. The tools for implementation should be updated periodically. Each year the plan should be re-examined and new recommendations made if needed. A thorough review of the entire plan should be made every five years. Included in the five year review should be new citizen and land use surveys and population projections.

IX. Summary

The data necessary to compile this land use plan came from many sources and through the aid and cooperation of many people. The Mayor of Richlands, Dan Rand, contributed much time and effort towards the plan as did the Town Clerk, Alavia Wyrick. Norwood Baysden, Director of Public Works and Superintendent of Streets, Sanitation, Water and the Sewage Plant, ran a meter check on the Town's water plant to determine exactly how much water was used per day by the Town. Information on the sewage treatment plant was obtained from the Water Quality Section of the Division of Environmental Management, North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources, Wilmington, North Carolina. Mr. Rick Shiver, Regional Hydrologist, North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources, Wilmington, North Carolina supplied the information on the source of the water supply in Richlands. Population data was obtained from Statistical Summary - Onslow County, North Carolina prepared by the Onslow County Planning Department in May, 1972. Soil classification and historic places information came from An Appraisal for Outdoor Recreational Development in Onslow County, North Carolina, published by the Soil and Water Conservation District, May, 1974. Data necessary to prepare the existing land use map for Richlands was obtained from a field survey of the Town. The land use map aided in determining the acreage devoted to each land use category.

X. City-County Coordination

City-County coordination in formulating the land use plans for Richlands and Onslow County was achieved through informal meetings between the planners. A joint city-county public hearing for the Towns of Richlands, Holly Ridge and Swansboro and Onslow County was held in the Superior Court Room of the Onslow County Courthouse on May 13, 1976.

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