

EXCERPTS FROM 2004 CAMA LAND USE PLAN:

- **Our Vision – Emerald Isle in the Future**
- **Land Use Plan – Goals, Policies (by subject area)**

- pattern, street layout, and lot sizes included in the original development plan for Emerald Isle.
- Impact of the noise and over-flight safety associated with operations at Bogue Field.
 - Significance of the Bogue Sound Outstanding Resource Waters and related development and land use protection.
- Continuing overall low density development and limit building heights
 - Guiding redevelopment in manner that is consistent with overall land use and development objectives
 - Concentrating commercial development within existing commercial concentrations and corridors
 - Providing street trees
 - Supporting the current development management program (zoning, vegetation protection, dune protection, and so on)
 - Protecting the rights of property owners
 - Providing community services (police, EMS, recreation, solid waste, drainage) to support future development

Our Vision— Emerald Isle in the Future

The Vision Statement is a direct result of Emerald Isle's citizen participation process. It is a *word picture* that describes what the residents and property owners want the town to be in the future. The vision statement is a consensus of those involved in the planning process. It provides a basis for setting priorities, defining goals, and developing policies to achieve them.

The following is Emerald Isle's Planning Vision:

*People recognize Emerald Isle as a great place to live and visit.
The community is renowned for its natural beauty and the quality*

of its development. Emerald Isle's natural beauty is characterized by the Atlantic Ocean, which is bordered by beautiful broad, accessible beaches, and the clean waters and islands in Bogue Sound. The community maintains a balance between development and the environment. The maritime forests and other native vegetation are protected and enhanced. Native vegetation and magnificent dunes not buildings dominate the skyline. The Cameron Langston Bridge across Bogue Sound, with dramatic vistas of the sound islands in their natural state, and the Emerald Drive Gateway, bordered by preserved maritime forest, announce arrival at an exceptional place.

Emerald Isle retains its small town character and charm and protects its family atmosphere. Use of the land continues with the patterns set by the beauty and vision of the original development. There are few tall buildings. The town has traditional streets, some with trees and sidewalks. The town keeps lighting levels low to support the small town, family atmosphere. The addition of sidewalks and bike paths that connect to important destinations gives residents and visitors a choice of how they get around. New uses in older developed areas are compatible with surrounding land uses and natural features.

Businesses are located in a compact "downtown" area and along the Emerald Drive business corridor, where frontage roads reduce the impacts of traffic. The older downtown area remains vibrant with new and renovated buildings, flourishing businesses, and safe and easy access from surrounding residential areas.

Native trees and shrubs dominate Emerald Isle's landscape. Owners preserve native vegetation on private property; developers preserve and maintain vegetation where possible; and parking lots have no more hard surface than necessary and are softened with many trees and shrubs.

Retail and commercial services support the Emerald Isle's tourism economy, but they have also developed to serve the growing number of year-round residents. The community is careful to avoid over commercialization in order to maintain our image as a family beach. Mostly local people own businesses.

Low density is still the predominant quality of the town's overall development design. Most buildings are no more than 2 or 3 stories; most residences are single-family. Still, there is a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a range of people - permanent residents, visitors, seasonal residents, retirees, and working families.

Retirement and tourism are the center of the local economy. The retail and service sectors are the major employers, and they are diversified to meet the needs of the town's growing permanent population and its visitors. Emerald Isle is home to many families that work in the military, manufacturing, public utilities, and medical services, but these residents travel off the island to their jobs.

The town's ocean beach, Bogue Inlet, the soundfront, and the Outstanding Resource Waters of Bogue Sound provide high quality recreational and aesthetic values to residents and visitors and they are underpinnings for the local economy. The quality of these resources is the result of long-term efforts by the town and its property owners.

Emerald Isle community protects its coastal lifestyle by giving preservation of natural resources and protection of water quality the highest priority. The Town cooperates with state and federal agencies to protect coastal wetlands from harmful development. Important freshwater wetlands are intact and they continue to store, clean water, and provide a rich habitat for a rich diversity of plants and animals. The Town protects surface waters from

degradation by storm water and polluting discharges and they remain clean. Shellfish are plentiful in the sound and they taste great.

Active and passive recreation opportunities are plentiful - for children, teens, adults, and seniors. The Recreation Center is the focal point for the recreation program. Community and neighborhood parks, as well as facilities provided by private developments, provide for an abundance of outdoor activities. Residents and visitors have easy access to the beaches and sound.

Excellent community services support the quality of life offered by Emerald Isle to both year-round and seasonal residents. The Bogue Banks Water Corporation provides quality drinking water to all properties. The Town helps ensure that all private wastewater treatment systems protect the environment and public health. The Town provides high quality solid waste management services that keep unsightly containers from public view.

Emerald Isle is a safe place to live and visit. The Town provides an adequate number of trained police officers to respond quickly to any need. The Fire Department has trained staff and proper equipment to protect the community. EMS personnel are able to provide state-of-the-art advanced life support services.

Emerald Isle values its cooperative spirit. It works with its citizens, property owners, and businesses, and with other local governments in the region to implement programs and to address issues that affect the quality of life. The Town values the opinions of its residents, property owners, and business owners and involves them in decisions regarding the Town and its future. The Town is also mindful that to create the future that it envisions it must protect the interests of its property owners.

Part 3. Land Use Plan— Goals, Policies, and Future Land Use Map

Growth and Development Goals

This section details Emerald Isle's future land use goals. These goals describe the *desired ends* toward which the land use plan and its policies are directed. They also describe the values and general principles that guide the town's development and redevelopment.

The goals are an outgrowth of the key issues and concerns identified by the Land Use Plan Steering Committee; the planning vision; and the technical analysis of existing and emerging trends. They provide a template for developing policies and programs.

Satisfactory access for residents and visitors to the beaches and the Sound for a range of activities

Land uses and land use patterns that are consistent with the capabilities and limitations of Emerald Isle's natural systems

Preserved and reclaimed natural areas, such as Emerald Isle Woods park, that have high biological, economic, and aesthetic values

Mitigation of risks from storms, flooding, beach erosion, and migration of Bogue Inlet

Better traffic flow and safety to accommodate the growing permanent and seasonal population

High quality waters in the ocean and sound that meet water quality standards and are approved for shellfishing

Stormwater that is managed to protect water quality and to prevent neighborhood flooding

Create a "village" type atmosphere in the commercial district that is pedestrian friendly, promotes successful businesses, is aesthetically pleasing and has attractive signage, and fosters a greater sense of community

Emerald Isle’s Future Land Use and Development Policies

Introduction

Emerald Isle’s policies are a consistent set of the principles and decision guidelines, or courses of action that are adopted by the Board of Commissioners to attain its land use and development goals. While the policies are not regulatory, except for the requirements and standards for development and land use in Areas of Environmental Concern, the Town will follow a deliberate process to ensure that its development management ordinances and regulations and future land use and development decisions are consistent with the policies. Part 4 of the plan, Tools for Managing Development, contains a description of the steps that will be taken to address consistency between policies and local development management ordinances.

CAMA planning guidelines specify that local policies must address six *management topics*. These management topics include:

- 1.0 public access
- 2.0 land use compatibility
- 3.0 infrastructure carrying capacity
- 4.0 natural and manmade hazard areas
- 5.0 water quality, and
- 6.0 local concerns (small town atmosphere).

The topic of local concern is a general topic of **maintaining a small town atmosphere**. This topic was mentioned numerous times in the community workshop and Steering Committee meetings.

The policies that address each of these management topics are described below. Applicable CAMA Planning Objective(s) and a brief discussion of the policy background are provided for each management topic. This discussion is intended to provide users of the plan with information about the context of the adopted policies and is not intended to be part of the Town adopted policies.

The policies for development and land use in AECs do not exceed state standards.

The Town’s adopted Land Use and Development Policies are shown in **bold**.

1.0 Public access

PUBLIC ACCESS CAMA PLANNING OBJECTIVE
“Develop comprehensive policies that provide beach and public trust water access for the shorelines in Emerald Isle.”

Discussion

Residents and visitors to Emerald Isle have traditionally enjoyed excellent access to the ocean beach and the estuarine waters of Bogue Sound. It is fortunate that the town’s original design provided for numerous well-located access locations for the beach and included short, dead-end streets on the north that lend themselves to pedestrian access to Bogue Sound. A small number of these potential access locations provided in the town’s original layout are obscured or blocked by private encroachments.

The Town has added several additional access facilities: a universally accessible access point at the east end, two regional beach access locations, and Cedar Street Park that provides formal access to Bogue Sound. The Town is developing Emerald Isle Woods Park, which will provide additional access to the sound. In addition, the Town has recently acquired a sound front access site near Chapel-By-the-Sea.

Policies related to **public access** are directed toward the Town’s ongoing beach renourishment and inlet stabilization projects.

Policies

- 1.1 **The Town will continue to maintain, improve, and reclaim its Public Access Locations to ensure that residents and visitors have satisfactory access to the ocean beach and the sound. The Town will use its *Shoreline Access Plan* as a guide for the location, development, and improvement of ocean and sound access.**
 - 1.1.1 **The Town will seek to provide at least one community access location every 1/2 -mile along the beach and to identify or provide parking spaces within walking distance (1/4 -mile). If possible, the**

- Town will utilize existing access points to provide community access.
- 1.1.2 The Town will seek to provide local access locations every 1/4-mile to provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the beach for surrounding neighborhoods. These local access locations will have minimal facilities. Vehicular parking may not be provided at these facilities.
 - 1.1.3 The Town will undertake, where feasible, development of additional Cedar Street-like facilities to provide satisfactory access to Bogue Sound.
 - 1.1.4 The Town will provide satisfactory access to residents and visitors of all abilities. It will review the community's needs for universal access and take steps to eliminate barriers.
 - 1.1.5 The Town will seek financial assistance from the State and Carteret County for development of additional access facilities.
 - 1.1.6 Where there are currently dedicated but unimproved access locations, the Town will (1) continue its policy of accepting maintenance of properly constructed walkways and cross-overs built by surrounding property owners; and (2) identify walkways and crossovers where private encroachments exist and take steps, where practical, to open these access points to the public.
- 1.2 The Town will consider service to the beach and sound access locations in the design and development of its pedestrian and bicycle systems and facilities.
 - 1.3 In conjunction with the development and implementation of the comprehensive stormwater management program and subject to available funding, the Town will seek to correct conditions at access locations on street-ends to ensure that these facilities do not contribute to impairment of water quality in Bogue Sound.
 - 1.4 The Town will seek to protect public access to the ocean beach and the sound in its review and approval of development and redevelopment plans.
 - 1.5 The Town will review local ordinances regulating the placement and length of piers and make adjustments so that they mirror CAMA standards.
 - 1.6 Boat launching facilities in the Town are currently limited to the private Island Harbor Marina, small private launching facilities, and small unimproved facilities at a few street ends that do not have parking areas and that serve only the nearby neighborhoods. The Town's goal is to provide additional public boat launching facilities, with designated parking areas, for its residents, property owners, and visitors. The Town will

work to identify suitable locations and pursue grant funding for such projects.

2.0 Land Use Compatibility

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY CAMA PLANNING OBJECTIVES

“Adopt and apply local development policies that balance protection of natural resources and fragile areas with economic development.”

“Policies that provide clear direction to assist local decision making and consistency findings for zoning, divisions of land, and public and private projects.”

Discussion

Even though Emerald Isle is approaching full effective development, the Town places high value on protection and conservation of its coastal resources. Residents who have participated in the planning process have expressed concern about coastal wetlands, Bogue Sound, which is designated an *Outstanding Resource Water (ORW)*, the *estuarine shoreline*, non-coastal wetlands, and vegetative cover. The ORW designation means that the waterbody has outstanding scenic, fishery, recreation, wildlife, and ecological values.

Coastal wetlands in Emerald Isle are marshes that are regularly or occasionally flooded by tides. These marshes perform several valuable services. They provide food for fish and shellfish in the sound; they provide wildlife habitat; they help protect against erosion; and they help remove sediment and pollutants from stormwater runoff. These wetlands are unsuited for any development or land use that would alter these natural functions.

Bogue Sound and its tributaries are part of the *estuarine water system* that is an integral part of the coastal lifestyle enjoyed by Emerald Isle residents and visitors. Not only are these waters tremendously valuable scenic resources, they also support the region's valuable commercial and sport fisheries, which include species such as menhaden, flounder, shrimp, crab, clams, and oysters. Bogue Sound is designated an Outstanding Resource Water. Only land uses and development that are compatible with its outstanding scenic, fishery, recreation, wildlife, and ecological values are appropriate.

The *dry land edge*, or estuarine shoreline, that forms the transition between Bogue Sound and upland areas is an important part of the overall system. It extends landward for 575 feet. Development in this area must protect existing barriers to erosion, limit impervious surfaces, and take steps to prevent sedimentation and pollution from runoff.

Non-coastal wetlands are important components of Emerald Isle's natural systems to manage stormwater, protect water quality, and prevent erosion. These important landforms should be protected.

Only small, isolated areas that meet the traditional definition of *maritime forest* remain in Emerald Isle. However, the town still has significant areas that are covered with native vegetation. All of these areas are valuable assets and are worthy of attention and preservation.

The Town's policies provide a set of guidelines that will protect these resources in decisions related to land use and development.

Policies

- 2.1 **Due to the essential role that they play in protecting water quality and providing food and habitat for fish and wildlife, the Town supports protection and conservation of Emerald Isle's coastal wetlands.**
 - 2.1.1 **The Town endorses the CAMA use standards, which may be minimum requirements, and the development permit system as an effective tool for conserving coastal wetlands.**
 - 2.1.2 **Through enforcement of local ordinances, the Town will ensure that land use and development are consistent with conservation of coastal wetlands. The Town will allow only land uses in coastal wetlands that require water access and cannot function elsewhere. Examples of acceptable uses are utility easements, piers, and docks. Where such uses are permitted, the Town will require them to be developed in such a manner that the impact on coastal wetlands is minimized.**
- 2.2 **The Town supports actions by property owners to slow or prevent erosion along Bogue Sound and its tributaries that are consistent with CAMA rules. The Town encourages property owners to use approved erosion prevention methods that are the most effective for preserving and restoring coastal wetlands.**

- 2.3 **The Town recognizes the importance of the 575-foot ORW-estuarine shoreline in protecting water quality in Bogue Sound and supports use standards that preserve natural barriers to erosion, require vegetated buffers, requires on-site retention of stormwater, and keep impervious surfaces to a minimum. The Town will continue to enforce local ordinances that support these objectives in the ORW-estuarine shoreline.**
- 2.4 **The Town will only allow uses in estuarine waters that are compatible with protection and conservation of their biological and community values.**
 - 2.4.1 **Only development associated with water-dependent uses is allowed. Examples of appropriate development may include public access facilities, docks and piers, or erosion control structures.**
 - 2.4.2 **In all cases, the design of facilities or activities will ensure that any negative impacts on estuarine waters are minimized.**
 - 2.4.3 **Development of new marinas or expansion of existing marinas must be consistent with local ordinances.**
 - 2.4.4 **“Floating homes” are not allowed.**
- 2.5 **The Town will require identification and encourage preservation of high-value, non-coastal wetlands on development site plans to protect their biological and stormwater management values.**
- 2.6 **The Town places high value on its native vegetation and encourages flexible site planning and site development that helps preserve this resource.**
- 2.7 **The Town will strongly encourage future development and land uses patterns that are consistent with conservation of its natural systems.**

3.0 Infrastructure Carrying Capacity

<p>INFRASTRUCTURE CARRYING CAPACITY CAMA PLANNING OBJECTIVE “Establish policies to ensure that the location and capacity of public infrastructure is consistent with the Town’s growth and development goals.”</p>
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Discussion

Emerald Isle’s key infrastructure systems include NC 58 and the local street system; the public water system operated by Bogue Banks Water Corporation (BBWC), which is a non-profit corporation; and the drainage system.

NC 58 is “Main Street” but it must also carry large volumes of regional traffic with origins and destinations outside of Emerald Isle. Traffic volumes on this highway are extremely heavy during the vacation season and residents and visitors alike would like to see relief. In addition, the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores will double in size in the near future and increase traffic pressure on NC 58 with visitors traveling from the mainland through Emerald Isle to reach this attraction. It also has the potential for creating a barrier between the sound areas and the ocean areas, making access difficult and dangerous. In addition, some residents are concerned that current highway facilities may not be adequate to handle traffic in times of storms.

The BBWC says that it has sufficient capacity to serve the town’s projected peak population and that its aquifer water resource is not a limiting factor for growth. Nine of BBWC’s 11 wells for the water system are located in Emerald Isle. A third water tower is planned to improve water pressure at the western end of the town. The Town will work with the BBWC to ensure that these wells are protected.

The Town has a drainage plan that was developed in 1988. Several of the recommended projects have been implemented. The Town is currently implementing an innovative stormwater management system to address continuing problems in the Coast Guard Road area.

The *White Oak River Basin Plan* and NC Shellfish Sanitary Survey for area D-3 indicate that bacterial contamination from stormwater runoff is a major source of water pollution in this area of Bogue Sound bordering Emerald Isle. The Town will address this issue through a comprehensive stormwater management program that addresses flooding problems, runoff volume, and sedimentation and pollution from runoff.

While not within the timeframe of this land use plan, the Town will work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, emergency management agencies, and property owners in Emerald Isle to support the highest possible level of response to emergencies. This may involve identification or development of parallel E-W access when NC 58 is not passable and identification of strategically located helicopter landing sites when emergency transport off the island is required.

Policies

- 3.1 The Town supports improving traffic safety and the traffic capacity of the NC 58 corridor on and adjacent to Bogue Banks to better accommodate seasonal peak traffic volumes.**
 - 3.1.1 Two travel lanes with a center turn lane and bicycle lanes is the preferred cross-section for NC 58 through the existing commercial area, from the Coast Guard Road intersection to the vicinity of Mile-post 17. From this area to the city limits the preferred cross-section is 2 travel lanes and 2 standard bicycle lanes.**
 - 3.1.2 The Town strongly supports a corridor design that does not create a barrier between the ocean side and the sound side and that provides for sufficient safe crossings to allow pedestrians and bicyclers to safely cross the highway.**
- 3.2 The Town endorses funding to provide transportation improvements that enhance area access and travel within the region without harming Emerald Isle's "small town atmosphere."**
- 3.3 The Town supports development of the system of pathways and crosswalks as recommended by the Highway 58 Corridor Committee. The Town encourages additional planning to expand the pathway system to major destinations throughout the community.**
- 3.4 The Town will undertake a long range planning process for additional east-west access through the commercial concentration at Bogue Inlet Drive. The plan will focus on relief of traffic congestion at this location and support further development of this area into the Emerald Isle Town Center.**
- 3.5 The Town will seek to form a partnership with other Bogue Banks communities and the NC Department of Transportation to develop a strategy for additional access between the mainland and the island to address seasonal traffic demand and to provide faster and safer access in times of storms. The Town is opposed to widening the existing Langston Bridge or building a parallel bridge as a solution to improved access. The Town supports a mid-island bridge as a preferred solution to congestion on NC 58. A mid-island bridge would tie-in to the NCDOT's regional plan to expand Hibbs Road to 5 lanes from NC 24 to NC 70 and provide an additional evacuation route for people living in the middle of Bogue Banks.**
- 3.6 The Town will ensure that land use and development decisions and management of transportation facilities complement and enhance each other.**

- 3.7 **The Town will continue to provide residents, businesses, and visitors with adequate and safe drinking water through the BBWC system.**
 - 3.7.1 **The Town will continue to consider the impact of land use and development in Emerald Isle on the supply and quality of the island's drinking water.**
 - 3.7.2 **The Town will require developers and property owners to connect to the BBWC system at their own expense.**
 - 3.7.3 **The Town and BBWC will periodically review population growth, development patterns, and water system capacity to ensure balance between the public water supply and population growth and development.**
- 3.8 **The Town will undertake development of a comprehensive stormwater management program. This program will include three components: (1) protection and enhancement of water quality; (2) actions to address flooding in existing neighborhoods; and (3) enforcement of stormwater management ordinances and policies for new development and redevelopment.**
- 3.9 **The Town will continue to rely on septic tanks and private "package treatment plants" for wastewater treatment. The Town will not pursue development of a central sewer system.**

4.0 Natural and Manmade Hazard Areas

HAZARD AREAS CAMA PLANNING OBJECTIVES

"Develop location, density, and intensity criteria for new development and redevelopment so that it can better avoid or withstand hazards"

"Correlate existing and planned development with existing and planned evacuation infrastructure."

Discussion

Coastal storms constitute a significant hazard for residents and properties in Emerald Isle. The Division of Coastal Management places the Town's historical rate of beach erosion at 2 feet per year. Yet after Hurricane Floyd in 1999, the town experienced significant beach recession. After the storm, the Town estimated that 156 single-family structures, and 17 mobile home lots were endangered.

Bogue Inlet is encroaching on the western end of the island. Engineers estimate that the inlet is migrating to the east at a rate of 60 to 90 feet per year.

The Town has identified 86 repetitive flood insurance loss locations. Most of these locations are in the western area.

A significant area of Emerald Isle is subject to “accident potential” and “noise impacts” associated with aircraft operations at Bogue Field. Accident potential zones impact nearly 1,500 parcels. “Some” or “moderate” noise levels impact nearly 2,500 parcels.

The Town's approach is to mitigate the risks associated with these hazards through information, local development guidelines, support of the State's coastal management program, and local nourishment and inlet stabilization projects.

Policies

4.1 Due to the unique risks to life and property that exist within the area designated as the Ocean Hazard System AEC, the Town strongly supports the State policies that regulate the location and intensity of development in these areas. The Town will enforce local policies that bolster the State's programs:

4.1.1 The Town will avoid taking any action or approving any action that materially damages the frontal dune system or that hampers its recovery from storm damage.

4.1.2 Due to the valuable role that vegetative cover plays in stabilizing soil and dune systems and increasing resistance to damage from storms, the Town strongly opposes excessive removal of vegetation for development or redevelopment.

4.1.3 The Town will continue a beach conservation and nourishment program as part of an overall program to mitigate risks from coastal storm events.

4.1.4 The Town supports realignment of Bogue Inlet to address its encroachment on the western shoreline of the island and to protect and restore valuable recreational and environmental resources. To address the increased risks to development in the Bogue Inlet hazard area, the Town strongly discourages inappropriate development by limiting residential and commercial density, structure size, and development intensity. Outdoor recreation

activities, uses that do not require impervious surfaces and public access are examples of uses that are encouraged in this area. The Town will allow no development *west of the western property line of properties currently fronting on the western side of Bogue Ct.*

- 4.2 The Town supports measures to mitigate the aircraft accident potential and elevated noise levels associated with operations at Bogue Field.
 - 4.2.1 The Town believes that safety and noise hazards within the APZ and noise contours must be disclosed to new buyers prior to purchase. Such disclosure is best conducted and controlled by real estate brokers uniformly within the county. The Town will review and adopt a procedure for disclosure after consultation with the NC Real Estate Commission, the Carteret County Board of Realtors, and Carteret County officials.
 - 4.2.2 The Town will not rezone areas within the APZ to a zoning district that allows higher residential densities than the current zoning district. The one exception to this policy is the commercial area identified as Village East, which is specifically targeted for redevelopment in the future and may include a mixture of residential and commercial uses.
 - 4.2.3 Within the areas affected by elevated accident potential and higher noise, the Town encourages property owners and developers to consider compatible land uses and appropriate construction techniques when developing or redeveloping their property. The Town will provide property owners with informational brochures and access to maps that can assist them in evaluating the impact of potential accidents or noise on their property.
- 4.3 The Town allows development and redevelopment within *special flood hazard areas* subject to the provisions and requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program, CAMA regulations and the local zoning ordinance (Flood Damage Prevention). Special flood hazard areas are those areas delineated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) that have a 1-% chance of flooding in any one year.
- 4.4 The Town will adopt and periodically update a Hazard Mitigation Plan that addresses the community's natural hazards and meets the requirements of the NC Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- 4.5 The Town will maintain or improve its Community Rating System (CRS) score to make the community safer from flood risks and to reduce premiums for Federal Flood Insurance.

- 4.6 **The Town will work with the Emerald Isle Fire Department to maintain its #4 Fire Rating.**
- 4.7 **The Town will take steps to improve traffic handling capability and safety of Emerald Isle's streets and roads and will encourage improvement of evacuation routes off Bogue Banks.**

5.0 Water Quality

WATER QUALITY CAMA PLANNING OBJECTIVES

“Policies that help prevent or control non-point source discharges...”

“Establish policies and land use categories aimed at protecting open shellfishing waters and restoring closed or conditionally closed shellfishing waters.”

Discussion

According to the White Oak River Basinwide Plan, overall water quality in the waters adjacent to Emerald Isle is generally good. The waters in Bogue Sound are either fully supporting or partially supporting for all of the dimensions of water quality rated by the Division of Water Quality (DWQ).

Piney Creek and a small area around Island Harbor Marina are the only areas permanently closed to shellfishing. However, DWQ's basinwide plan shows that shellfish stocks are declining throughout Bogue Sound.

According to the NC Shellfish Sanitation Section, fecal coliform that is directly related to stormwater runoff is the major source of pollution in Bogue Sound and its tributaries. Shellfish Sanitation recommends stormwater management and public information and education as the most effective local strategies for protecting water quality.

The Town relies on septic tanks and private “package treatment plants” for wastewater treatment. The Carteret County Health Department indicates that soils in Emerald Isle are generally suited for septic tanks and that existing septic tanks are not a significant water quality issue. Package treatment plants on the other hand have experienced some performance problems. These package plant problems are sometimes linked to a lack of capital to repair and upgrade the system.

Policies

- 5.1 **The Town will undertake a comprehensive stormwater management program that controls the amount and quality of stormwater runoff that is consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality in the Ocean and Bogue Sound and restoring water quality in Piney (Archer's) Creek. The stormwater management program will address the following objectives:**
 - 5.1.1 **Reduction of stormwater runoff to the ocean beaches, Bogue Sound, and the sound's tributaries from all public areas such as streets, parking lots, access areas, and ramps;**
 - 5.1.2 **Application of stormwater ordinances to new private development and significant redevelopment of existing properties;**
 - 5.1.3 **Retention of vegetated buffers along drainage ways where feasible; and**
 - 5.1.4 **Cooperation between the Town and property owners to reduce sedimentation and pollution from local runoff.**
- 5.2 **As part of the comprehensive stormwater program, the Town will investigate the feasibility and cost associated with the restoration of water quality in Piney Creek to the point that the creek may be opened to shellfishing.**
- 5.3 **The Town will ensure that its land use and development policies support the goal of maintaining and enhancing water quality.**
 - 5.3.1 **Maintain "low" density development patterns that are consistent with maintaining and enhancing water quality;**
 - 5.3.2 **Encourage innovative development techniques to reduce impervious surfaces associated with new development or significant redevelopment; and**
 - 5.3.3 **Review current development requirements to identify opportunities to reduce impervious surfaces.**
- 5.4 **The Town recognizes that management of land uses and development in the 575-foot *outstanding resource water* shoreline of Bogue Sound is a major requirement for maintaining and enhancing water quality in the Sound. The Town will ensure that its land use and development regulations are consistent with the proper management of this resource and the applicable state and federal development regulations.**
- 5.5 **The Town supports septic tanks as the primary means of wastewater treatment where soil limitations are not a factor.**

- 5.6 To minimize septic tank problems, the Town will undertake an education program that provides information to property owners on proper maintenance of septic tanks.
- 5.7 Where the use of septic tanks for wastewater treatment is not consistent with public health or environmental quality, the Town supports the use of properly maintained wastewater treatment plants.” Owners and operators of these facilities must have a plan of operation and a financial plan, satisfactory to the Town, that ensure the plant’s continuous operation and its periodic repair, upgrade, and expansion as needed. Like some other NC communities, the Town may require a performance bond, letter of credit, or other financial instrument for the long-term maintenance and upgrade of any package treatment plant to insure that it protects public health and water quality.

6.0 Local Concerns—Small-town Atmosphere

Discussion

Preserving Emerald Isle’s small-town atmosphere is almost universally mentioned as an aim of the Land Use Plan. This generally means maintaining and enhancing the community’s following characteristics:

- An “identifiable” commercial core that serves as a “town center”
- Predominantly lower density residential uses with most single-family and dual-family homes
- Sidewalks and bike paths that connect neighborhoods to the commercial areas, public access points, and other frequent destinations
- Appropriate signage and lighting on commercial structures
- Street trees on public rights-of-way and landscaping on private parking areas

The Town recognizes the potential for developing large hotel complexes in Emerald Isle. Such hotels are characterized by more than 100 rooms. The Town is opposed to this type of development because it conflicts with Emerald Isle’s “small town atmosphere.” The Town is also opposed to the development of a

convention center. However, the Town supports and encourages development or redevelopment of smaller-scale hotels or motels that are consistent with its land use policies, ordinances, and regulations, which will ensure that the development “fits” the community.

Policies

- 6.1 The Town strongly encourages overall land use and development patterns that support retention of the Emerald Isle’s small town character, its existing quality of development, and its family atmosphere.**
 - 6.1.1 The Town strongly encourages development practices that preserve important environmental features, provide a high quality living environment, address transportation needs, and emphasize compatibility with neighboring residential areas.**
 - 6.1.2 The Town will encourage single and dual-family development and redevelopment in areas planned for residential uses. The Town will continue to enforce the density limits of the existing zoning ordinance for new development and significant redevelopment. In areas planned for single and dual-family structures, these limits range from 3.5 dwellings per acre to 5.8 units per acre. In mixed residential areas, density may be up to 8.0 units per acre.**
 - 6.1.3 Single-family and dual-family residential structures are strongly encouraged unless the development incorporates innovative site plan concepts such as clustering, mixed-use development, or “traditional neighborhood design.” In these cases, the effective density cannot exceed 3.5 dwelling units per acre for single-family structures and 5.8 dwelling units per acre for dual-family structures.**
 - 6.1.4 The Town continues to allow multifamily development at a density not to exceed 8.0 dwelling units per acre. Areas for multifamily development are designated on the Future Land Use Map as *mixed residential* and will have the following characteristics:**
 - 6.1.4.1 The Town opposes development of new multifamily residential uses in areas that are currently developed predominantly for single-family and dual-family residences. It will review existing zoning in these areas and consider changes to zoning designations that allow only single-family and dual-family structures.**

- 6.1.4.2 The Town will permit multifamily housing at a maximum density of 8.0 units per acre on parcels of land that are identified on the Land Use Map as mixed residential.
 - 6.1.4.3 The Town will consider any requests to rezone property from commercial to mixed residential or low density residential.
 - 6.1.4.4 The town will maintain its current building height limits.
- 6.2 The Town supports the concept of creating the Emerald Isle Gateway on Emerald Drive, beginning at the Cameron Langston Bridge and extending to the Coast Guard Road intersection. The Gateway will focus on preserving existing vegetation, introduction of complementary native vegetation, and minimizing public and private signage. The Gateway will announce arrival at a special place.
- 6.3 The Town continues to support development of the local retail and support services sector that provide a greater range of goods and services to both year round residents and visitors.
- 6.4 The Town encourages commercial buildings that are consistent with Emerald Isle's small town atmosphere. Important characteristics include size, design, appropriate signage, and modest lighting.
- 6.5 The Town supports development of a more traditional "town center" that builds on development and redevelopment of the existing business areas. The Town will initiate a long-range planning program for the center. The plan will be consistent with our vision of preserving and enhancing our small town atmosphere, and it will include the following components:
 - The town center will encourage mixed uses such as retail services, restaurants, entertainment, and residences. The Town discourages location of new motels and hotels in this area.
 - It will take advantage of the ocean beach and strive to provide easy pedestrian and bike connections to surrounding neighborhoods and the sound.
 - It will encourage interconnections between businesses and shopping centers that minimize the need for trips on NC 58.
- 6.6 The Town supports development of a commercial convenience area on Emerald Drive between Connie and Ocean Drive.
- 6.7 The Town will seek to create a partnership with the NC Department of Transportation, local private organizations, and residents and property owners to develop and implement a landscape and beautification program for public rights-of-way.
- 6.8 The Town recognizes the potential for location of new motels or hotels and encourages location of these developments in the area designated on

the Future Land Use Map as *Village West*. Such a development must comply with the policies of this plan and all applicable local ordinances.

6.9 The Town opposes the construction of a large-scale hotel or motel complex.

6.10 The Town opposes the construction of a convention center.