

AIRLIE ROAD

... a sense of place



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I INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

(A) INTRODUCTION

Since Airlie Road was first constructed in 1885 from oyster shells, the neighborhood along Wrightsville Sound has developed its own distinct character and beauty. The narrow, oak-shaded Airlie Road leading to and along the waterfront near Wrightsville Beach has become a landmark of the Cape Fear Region. An harmonious mixture of old and contemporary residences, and small scale waterfront businesses make up the neighborhood. In addition, the Road, Airlie Gardens and the waterfront have become tourist attractions that strengthen the County economy.

Today, however, the Airlie Road neighborhood is facing increased pressure from larger, more intense development attracted to the valuable waterfront. In response to these pressures and to neighborhood quality of life concerns, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners on September 27, 1982, requested the County Planning Board and County Planning Department to prepare a neighborhood development plan for the Airlie Road.

(B) OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

The plan as presented here is the result of that directive. It represents a major first step in a continuous process of insuring better citizen participation in the planning process and improving public awareness and knowledge of local land use issues. The ultimate purpose of the planning process is to guide future development while maintaining the characteristics that make Airlie Road an attractive and culturally valuable neighborhood. Preparation of this plan was made possible through the cooperation of County residents and neighborhood property owners in a common endeavor. This same commitment will be needed to achieve the plan's purposes.

The major theme of this plan is neighborhood action planning. Neighborhood action planning attempts to link long-range comprehensive planning with local implementation ordinances and plans, such as zoning, subdivision regulations, and the capital facilities improvement program. Neighborhood action planning is one of the best procedures available to insure that County Planning policies are kept up-to-date and truly reflect neighborhood as well as Countywide considerations. Although the major decision to prepare this plan was sparked by a particular development proposal, the major focus of the plan is concerned with the scale, fabric, and character of the entire Airlie Road neighborhood, not just the development implications of one particular piece of property.

Given this framework and a limited time period, a simple work program was designed that integrated the most important neighborhood planning steps into a two month period. The basic work program and planning process consists of four major phases, as shown in Figure 1 of the Airlie Road Planning Process:

- (1) Neighborhood Inventory and Survey
- (2) Neighborhood Meetings
- (3) Plan Development Ordinance Recommendations,
and
- (4) Plan Implementation.

AIRLIE ROAD PLANNING PROCESS

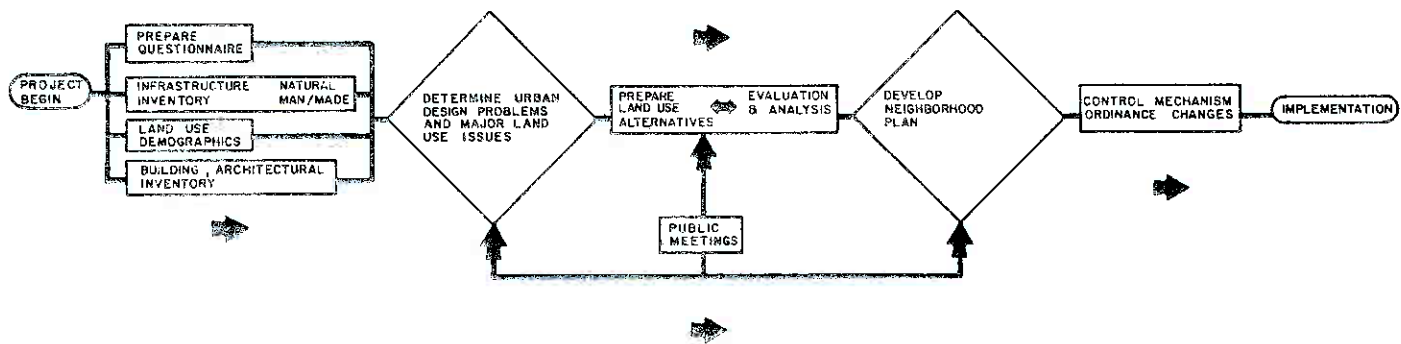
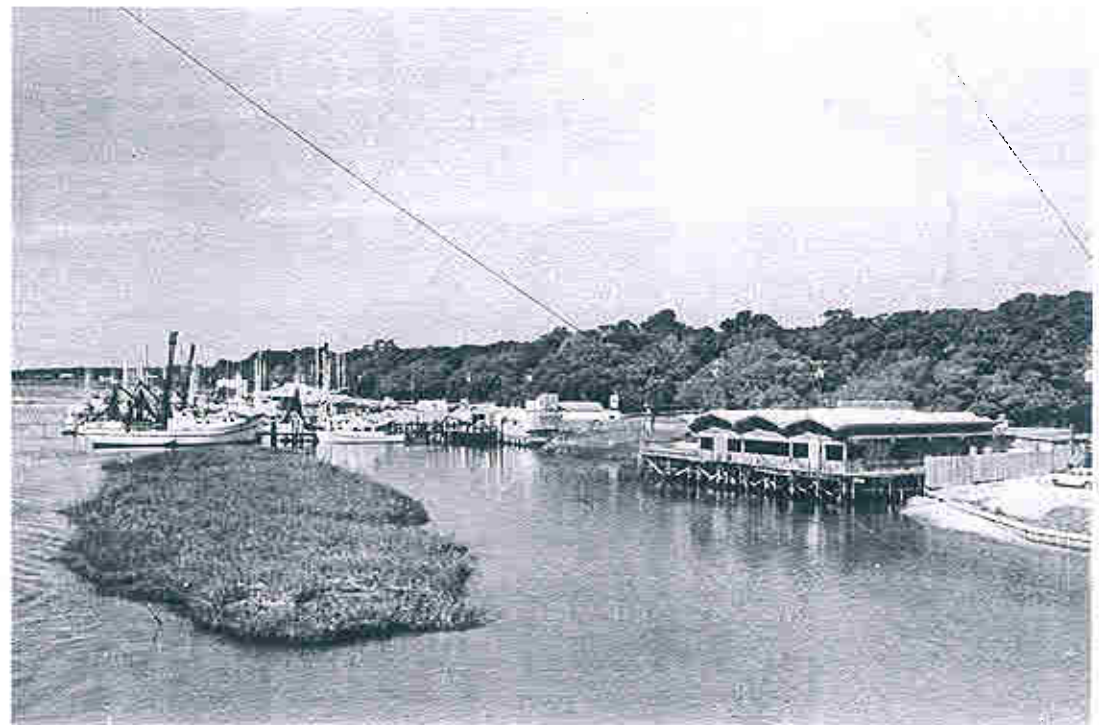


FIGURE 1

The primary objective of the first phase of the process was to collect neighborhood data and to determine the problems and issues residents in the area felt the plan should address. Physical data was collected and mapped at a scale of 1"=400', and a door-to-door survey of property owners in the area was performed. The purpose of the second phase of the process consisted of neighborhood meetings. Three meetings were held to identify issues and problems, and to prepare and evaluate land use alternatives. The third phase of the process involves a synthesis of the results of the neighborhood meetings into a plan outlining specific recommendations.

The last phase involves a review of the plan and the development of a continuous public/private framework for its implementation.

Originally conceived as an urban design/neighborhood plan, the planning process has resulted in the development of a neighborhood oriented action agenda with policy recommendations. These recommendations are described in more detail in the last section of the plan.



ii THE AIRLIE ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

(A) HISTORY

The origin of the neighborhood dates back to the 18th century when George II, King of England, granted the Odgen brothers a considerable amount of property northeast of what today is known as Bradley Creek. In the 19th century, the present Airlie Road neighborhood became known as the Village of Wrightsville, named for the Wright family who owned large tracts of land in the area.

By the 1800's, Wilmingtonians, aware of the pleasures of the waterfront, were flocking to the Village of Wrightsville with enough frequency to create a demand for a hard surface road. In 1874, the Wilmington and Coast Turnpike Company was formed and the following year workers began to build the road that is the present Wrightsville Avenue. In 1885, the present Airlie Road was built as a branch road to the main stem. The materials used in building Airlie Road were marl, shells, and limestone. Oyster shells were used because they contain lime and thus have a built-in cementitious material. In the 1800's, this type of road was ideal for carriages and horses because the shells broke and pulverized under traffic and the lime acted as a cement binding the surface.



The J. O. Hinton house once stood at the present site of the Waterway Motel -photo courtesy of Maybert Lance.

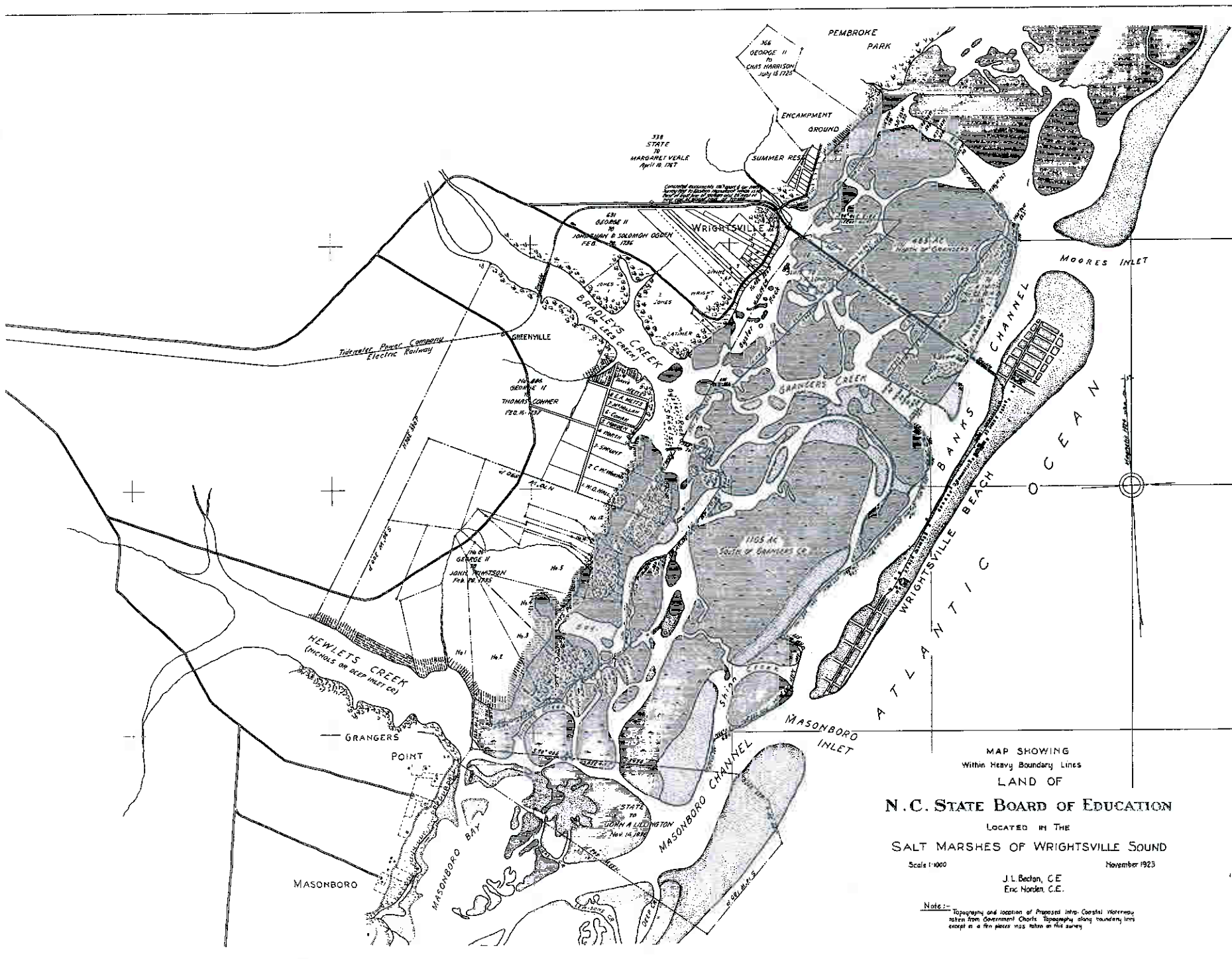
The leisurely ride to the beach on this shell road became quite popular with Wilmingtonians. Purportedly, New Hanover County's bicycle usage started on this road and large numbers of bikers swarmed the road. Today, Airlie Road is designated as a Bike Street in the Wilmington-New Hanover Areawide Bicycle Facilities Plan.

Another novelty on the road was the wagonette - a long, four wheeled, horse-drawn, enclosed vehicle, with a row of windows on each side and two rows of seats facing the center aisle. Passengers boarded or stepped off the wagonette by a door and step at the rear. The wagonette made the waterfront accessible to Wilmingtonians by making several daily runs from the City to the Wrightsville Sound area.

As an ever increasing number of persons used the road, New Hanover County eventually saw the need for a free public access to the beach and successfully negotiated with turnpike officials for property rights to the road. The County, however, relinquished its responsibility for the road in the 1930's when the State became responsible for the County road system.

With the advent of the automobile, the old oyster shell road became outdated. Rubber-tired cars pulled small particles out of the road, creating a white powder that dusted the surroundings. This type of wear not only created a nuisance for travelers and residents but also eroded away the roadbed. Thus, as with other such roads in the area, the old shell road was eventually paved over.

The heyday of the Airlie Road area was in the 19th century when there were many establishments providing lodging, meals and entertainment. In 1884, the Seaside Park Hotel, the first sea-coast hotel in New Hanover County, opened with a formal ball on the northside of Lee's Creek, presently called Bradley Creek.



MAP SHOWING
 Within Heavy Boundary Lines
 LAND OF
N. C. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
 LOCATED IN THE
SALT MARSHES OF WRIGHTSVILLE SOUND
 Scale 1:1000
 J.L. Beaton, C.E.
 Eric Norden, C.E.
 November 1923

Note:— Topography and location of Proposed Intra-Coastal Waterway taken from Government Charts. Topography along boundary lines except in a few places was taken on this survey.

Concerts became deep-seated traditions in the Village. In addition, the Pine Grove House, which stood near the present site of the Waterway Motor Lodge, lured families with delicious seafood and the opportunity to sail to the Banks or the Beach on the sharpie "Mary Anie".

In Wilmington, as in many cities during the 1890's, the railroad played a major part in bringing about development and change. The Wilmington and Sea Coast, the Yadkin Valley, the Onslow, and the Ocean View Railroad established depots in the area, greatly improving the City's commercial life.

The construction of the Wilmington and Sea Coast Railroad from the City of Wilmington to Wrightsville Sound and the Hammocks (now Harbor Island), and the extension of this rail service across Banks Channel and along the beach by the Ocean View Railroad Company, greatly increased the accessibility of the seaside to the public. This increased accessibility further fueled the growth of the Airlie Road area as a resort attraction.

Presently, one of Airlie Road's main tourist attractions is the Airlie Gardens - known as one of the South's finest azalea and camelia gardens. The privately owned Gardens comprise 150 acres of spacious lawns, lakes, rare evergreens, live oaks, and shrubs. At one point, it was estimated the Gardens had over a million azalea plantings and thousands of camellia japonicas. Tourists and interested residents may view the entire Gardens from their automobiles as they drive on the Gardens' shell roads, probably one of the last examples of shell road left in the country.



Airlie Gardens originally were the estate of Pembroke Jones, a wealthy and native Wilmingtonian. There are conflicting reports as to the reason why Jones chose the name Airlie. Some claim the area was named after an English estate; others that it was named after Jones' Scottish ancestors. After Jones died in 1919, his wife, Sadie, hired R. A. Tanel, a professional gardener from Germany, whose landscaping still creates the impression of an enchanted forest. In 1948, Airlie Gardens was sold by Jones' daughter to its present owner, Mr. W. Albert Corbett, a well known planter and industrialist, who opens the Gardens to the public yearly during azalea season.

A visitor to Airlie Gardens also finds the simple but elegant Lebanon Chapel. The Chapel, a one-story, three-by-three bay frame Chapel set on brick piers, is considered to be a historically significant architectural site by the N. C. Department of Cultural Resources. Lebanon Chapel was built in 1835 by communicants of St. James Episcopal Church of Wilmington so that persons living on the Sound during the summer would have a place of worship. In the early 20th century, however, the Chapel fell into disuse and, by the early 1970s, it had been seriously vandalized. When the damage was discovered, a committee from the Episcopal Church of St. Andrew's On-the-Sound restored the Chapel. In April 1974, Lebanon Chapel was rededicated, holding its first baptism in at least half a century.

Another point of interest along Airlie Road is the present Edgewater subdivision. Edgewater once was one of the most important and beautiful estates on Wrightsville Sound. One of the first owners was C. S. Ellis, who, in 1830, built a large house, barn, and stable. The present gateway to the subdivision was erected in the early 20th Century when Mr. Morrison Divine acquired the property.

In 1927, when the original Babies Hospital burned to the ground, the residence was used as a hospital until a new Hospital could be built. In the 1930's, Mr. Boyden Sparks, a free lance writer whose articles appeared in such magazines as the Saturday Evening Post, purchased Edgewater. After Sparks died, the property changed hands several times before being subdivided into the present neighborhood.

In the 1890's, a twelve acre tract of land located north of Edgewater and called Stedman's Park, served as the summer retreat of Mr. Charles Stedman, the one-time Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina. Close to the turn of the century, Mr. Oscar Pearsall bought the property and named it Gray Gables for the abundance of Spanish Moss decorating the oaks. Gray Gables stayed with the descendants of Oscar Pearsall until the 1970's when B. C. Hedgepeth bought the place and transformed it into a restaurant, keeping the name of Gray Gables. A fire in mid-1982 has forced the owner to indefinitely close the restaurant.



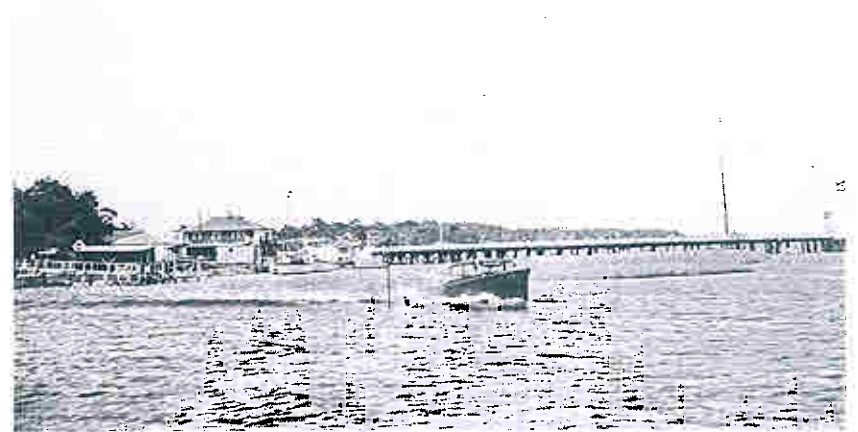
A combination of Greek and Gothic Revival Styles, the Lebanon Chapel has a pedimented, flush-sheathed gable end, Greek Revival molding, and corner blocks around the doors and windows. The windows are made of leaded stained glass diamond panes with Gothic arch transoms, also of stained glass.

The Latimer House, located on the south side of Airlie Road 0.1 mile east of its junction with U. S. 76, is a two-story frame Greek Revival residence built as a summer house sometime before 1855 by the Latimers of Wilmington. The house is also considered to be a significant architectural site by the N. C. Department of Cultural Resources.

As a birthplace of a growing tourist industry, Airlie Road has experienced considerable change and development pressure. In the 1920's, when the old Wrightsville Avenue became inadequate to handle an increasing volume of traffic, the North Carolina Highway Commission built the Wilmington-Wrightsville Speedway, now known as Oleander Drive. This highway provided for increased travel between Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach and encouraged commercial expansion of the Airlie Road area.



- The Latimer House has an unusually deep, one story porch wrapping around all four sides -photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. James C. Fox, Jr.



-photo courtesy of Lorene Johnson

In 1927, the United States Congress authorized the building of the Beaufort-Cape Fear River Section of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. The Waterway presently runs approximately 26 miles from one end of the County to the other, serving as the County's primary avenue for boating commerce and tourism. The economic and recreational potential of the Waterway, however, does not appear to have been fully tapped.

As a result of these improvements in the area and of Airlie Road's proximity to the Sound and Wrightsville Beach, commercial businesses began to establish themselves along the Waterfront. The Gulf Terminal Station, Faircloth's Restaurant, Bio-Medical Lab, and Skippy Wanner's Marina became recognized names. Residential units were also located along the Waterway, but after Hurricane Hazel passed through the area in 1954, many of these homes were destroyed. During that storm, ocean tides increased by nearly ten feet in height along the coastline. Most of the commercial establishments were rebuilt. Today, eight different businesses can be found along the waterfront - the Waterway Motel, Bridge Tender Restaurant, Hieronymous Brothers Seafood, Seacrest Seafood, Gulfstream Marina, Blue Water Marina/Sea Gate Yachts, Airlie Boat Ramp and Terminal, and the Wrightsville Gulf Terminal.

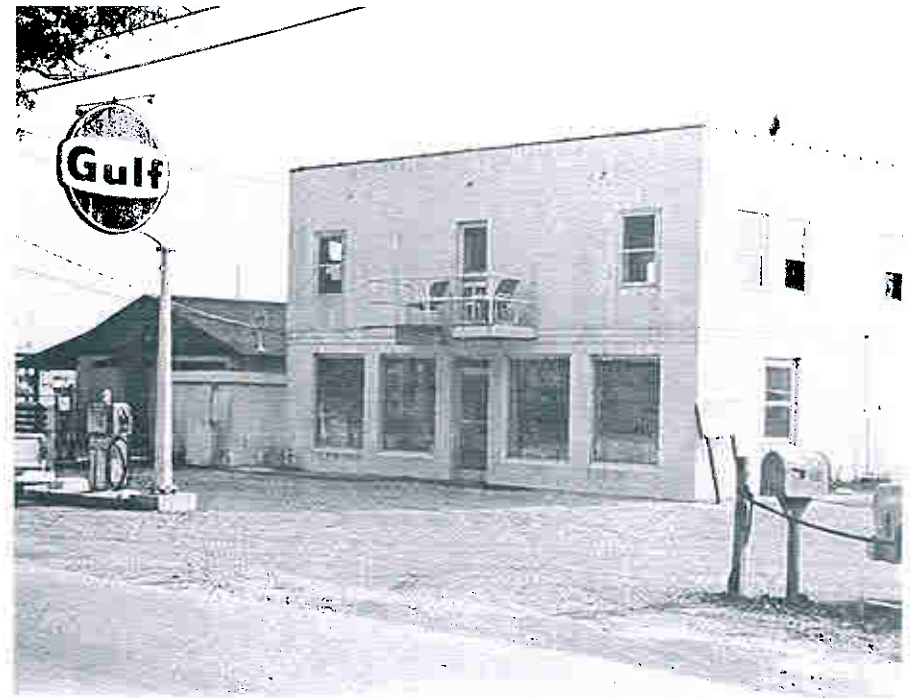


In 1954, Hurricane Hazel caused extensive damage
along Airlie Road -photo courtesy of Maybert Lance.

(B) URBAN GROWTH AND ZONING HISTORY

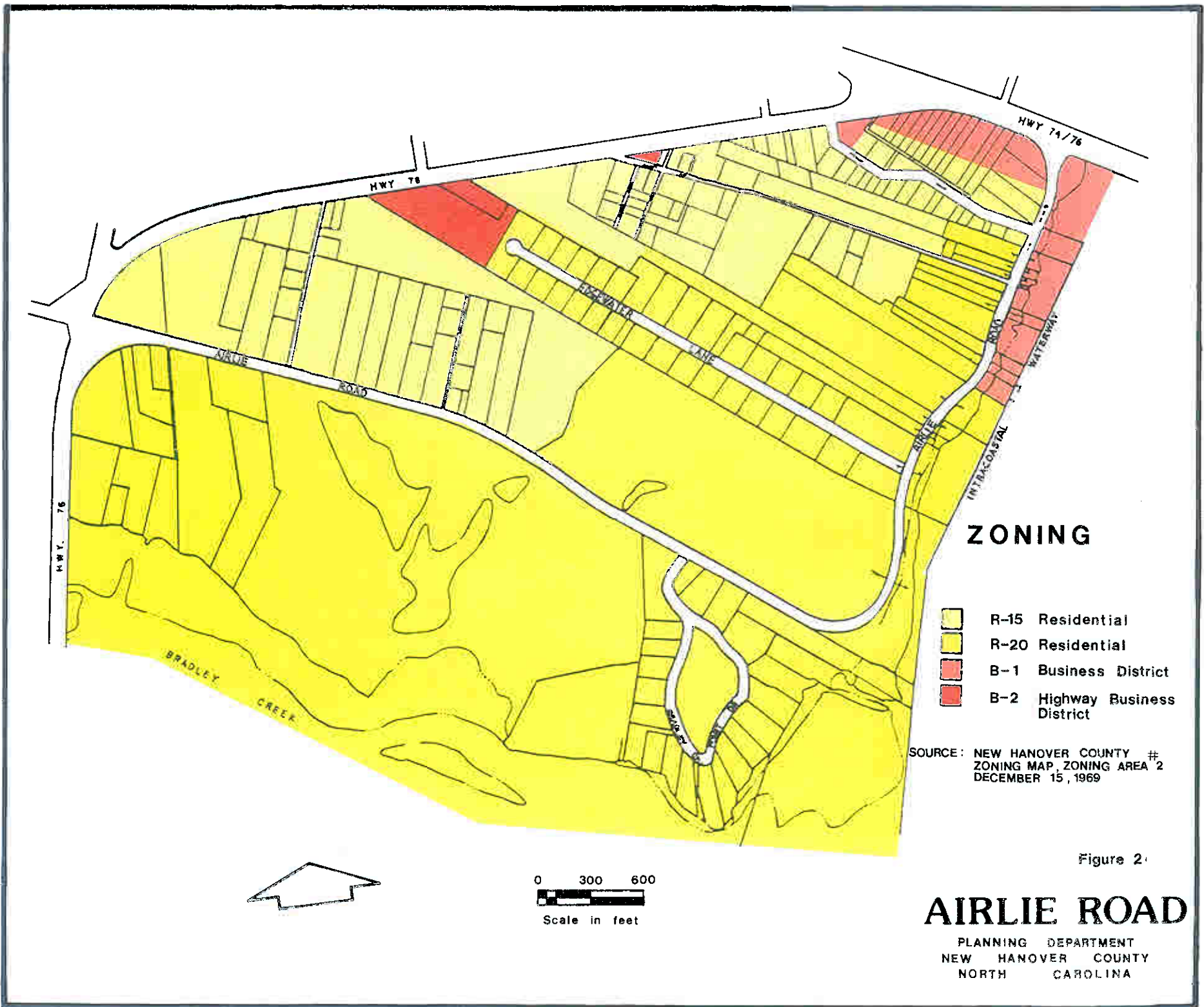
Another event which has impacted on the growth and development of Airlie Road was the establishment of zoning in the area. In December 1961, the New Hanover County Commissioners set-up three original zoning districts: (1) an R-20 residential district, located north of Bradley Creek, west of the Waterway, and south of Airlie Road; (2) an R-15 Residential District, located primarily within the interior of Airlie Road, including property along Edgewater Lane, Allen's Lane, and Stokley Drive; and (3) a B-1 Business district, located along the Waterfront approximately 1400 feet south of the centerline of the U. S. 74/76 drawbridge and also along the south side of U. S. 74 (Eastwood Road), to a depth of 200 feet.

Since the adoption of these zoning districts, the following modifications have been added to the area: (1) a B-2 Highway Business district, located on the southside of U. S. 76, directly northwest of the Edgewater Subdivision; (2) a B-2 Highway Business district, located on the southside of U. S. 76, directly east of Allen's Lane; (3) expansion of the existing B-1 Business District west along U. S. 74/76; and (4) expansion of the R-20 Residential district within the interior of Airlie Road, including Edgewater Subdivision and most of the residential properties fronting along the Road just south of Stokley Drive. No boundary changes have been made to the B-1 Business district located along the Waterfront. However, six different Special Use Permits were issued between 1972 and 1980 for sports fishing, boat ramps and docks, seafood markets, marinas, and marina expansions. The County's original 1969 Zoning Ordinance required that piers for either docking or the operation of commercial or sport fishing vessels, and establishments for the repair, service, sales, rental, and storage of boats and motors must have Special Use Permits



The Wrightsville Gulf Terminal is the oldest existing business on Airlie Road.

to locate in B-1 Business districts. Some of the commercial marinas, docks, and boat ramps, however, were erected prior to County regulations. A number of the associated buildings are non-conforming. Present zoning is shown in Figure 2.



ZONING

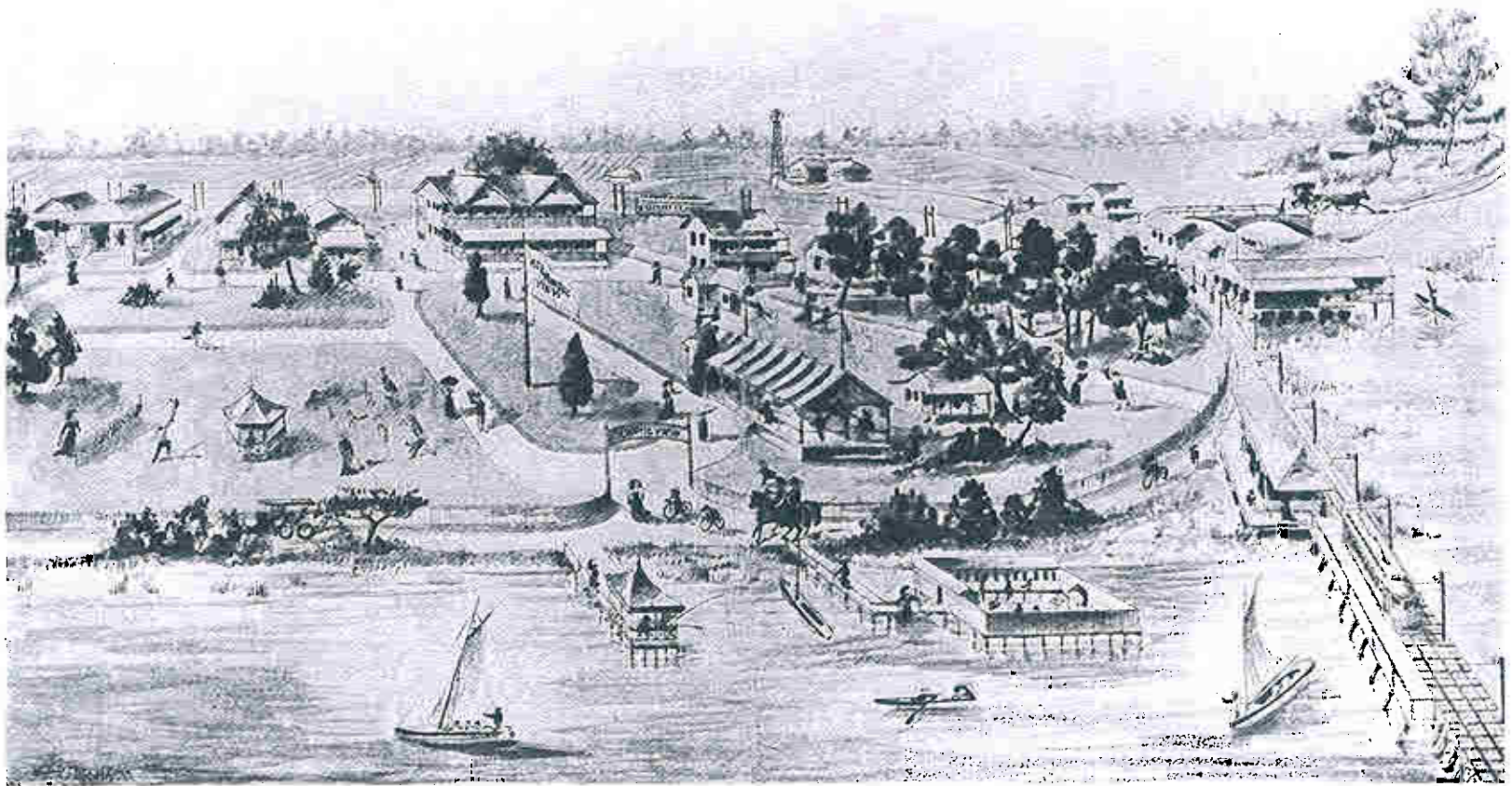
- R-15 Residential
- R-20 Residential
- B-1 Business District
- B-2 Highway Business District

SOURCE: NEW HANOVER COUNTY # ZONING MAP, ZONING AREA 2 DECEMBER 15, 1969

Figure 2:

AIRLIE ROAD

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 NEW HANOVER COUNTY
 NORTH CAROLINA



=====**ATLANTIC VIEW, WRIGHTSVILLE, N. C**=====

The Atlantic View Hotel was a bustling resort area in the late 1800's --photo courtesy of Maybert Lance

III NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

The Airlie Road neighborhood's location near the Intracoastal Waterway and Bradley Creek helps give the neighborhood its sense of identity. The neighborhood's proximity to the waterfront, however, also precipitates severe parking and circulation problems and creates intense pressures for increased development.

To plan for Airlie Road's future, it is first necessary to analyze the following existing conditions in the neighborhood:

- A. Aesthetic and Natural Resources
- B. Land Use and Zoning
- C. Population and Housing
- D. Traffic Circulation and Parking
- E. Community Facilities and Services
- F. Development Opportunities

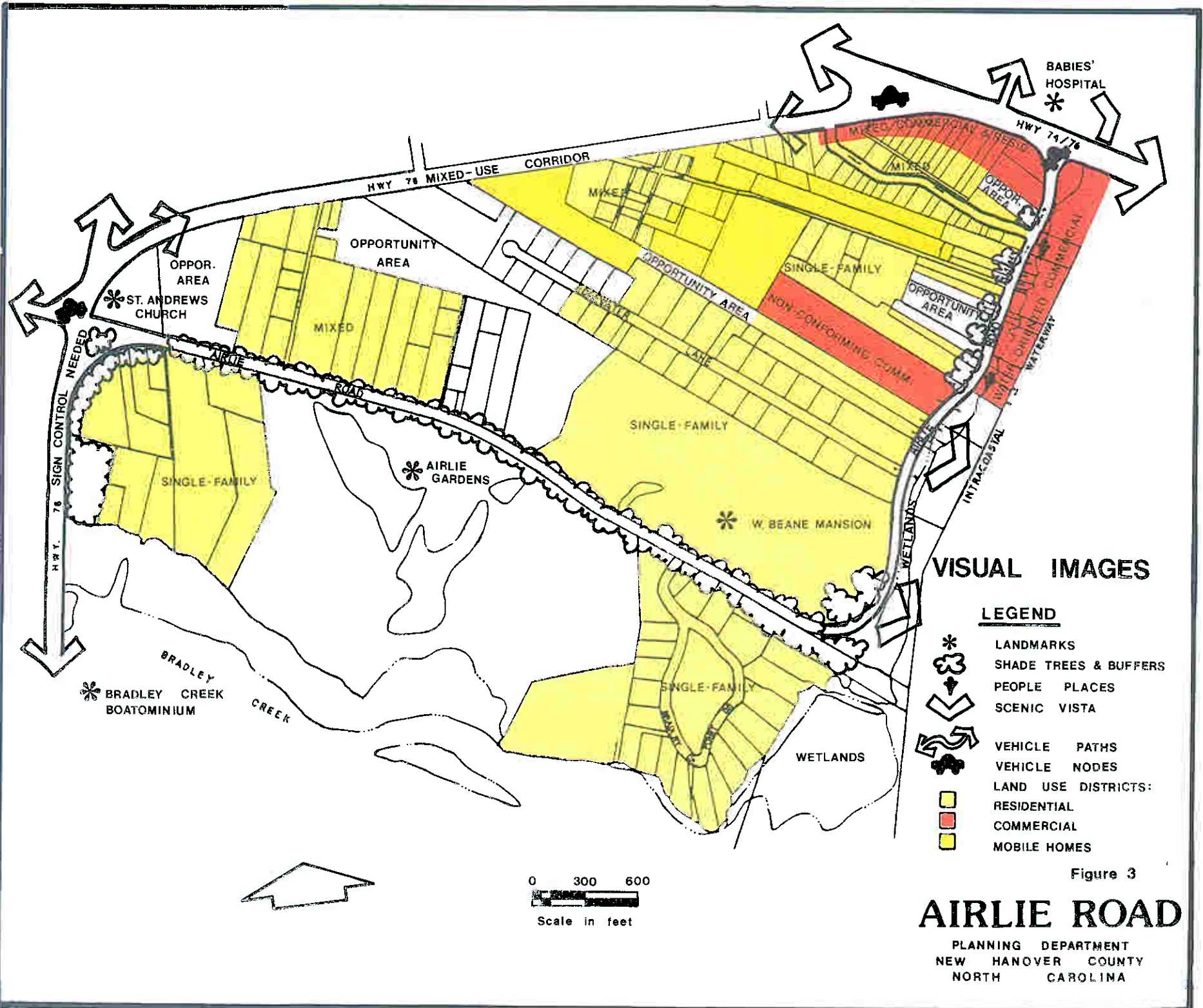
(A) AESTHETIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

As shown in Figure 3, the visual image of the Airlie Road area is composed of a variety of elements. The boundaries of the Airlie Road neighborhood are clearly defined by the Intracoastal Waterway on the east, Bradley Creek to the south, Wrightsville Avenue (U. S. 76) to the west, northwest, and northeast, and Eastwood Road (U. S. 74) to the northeast. These physical boundaries form distinct neighborhood edges which help maintain the present character of the Airlie Road area. Major entry or gateway points are also important elements in the neighborhood's visual image. Entrance to the Airlie Road neighborhood is by two diverse gateways. The western approach at Oleander and Military Cut-off is a scenic approach that recalls memories of the past. However, the entrance at the junction of U. S. 74/76 and Wrightsville Bridge is a bustling commercial contrast to that scenic drive.

When entering the western end of Airlie Road from Wrightsville Avenue, the approach is well buffered and landscaped, following along an abandoned right hand access turn lane. Continuing east towards the Sound, Airlie Road is nicely landscaped by Airlie Gardens and the Beane property until it reaches a sharp turn to the north. At this point, the tree-lined corridor abruptly opens into a broad view of sky and water. Following north along Airlie Road from the view of the water to the U. S. 74/76 intersection, one finds a mixture of water-related businesses and residences located along the Intracoastal Waterway. The human scale of the buildings and the Road itself contribute to an intimate atmosphere and a sense of place. But the streetscape along this section of the Road suffers from a lack of physical improvements. Overhead wires and utility poles, buildings set too close to the road, poor surface drainage, lack of adequate parking, no sidewalks or pedestrian right of ways, and traffic congestion detract appreciably from the quality of the street. The overall visual image of Airlie Road could be greatly improved by removing or improving some of the disruptive elements.

The Airlie Road waterfront area presents a great opportunity for enhancing pedestrian movement and circulation. It already is one of the most active people places in the County. Opportunities for designing a small pedestrian mall or constructing sidewalks and crosswalks are possible. Designs of this nature could reduce traffic congestion in the area and enhance business.

In contrast, outdoor advertising signs and billboards dominate the visual setting along Wrightsville Avenue. Wrightsville Avenue, which bounds the northern edge of the neighborhood, is a mixed use corridor. Vacant and wooded tracts of land, mobile home parks, churches, a shopping center, and scattered residential and business uses create a hodge-podge streetscape.



VISUAL IMAGES

LEGEND

- * LANDMARKS
- ☁ SHADE TREES & BUFFERS
- 🏠 PEOPLE PLACES
- 👁 SCENIC VISTA
- 🚗 VEHICLE PATHS
- 🚗 VEHICLE NODES
- LAND USE DISTRICTS:
- 🟡 RESIDENTIAL
- 🔴 COMMERCIAL
- 🟠 MOBILE HOMES

Figure 3

AIRLIE ROAD

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 NEW HANOVER COUNTY
 NORTH CAROLINA

This mixed-use corridor is presently heavily traveled as an approach to Wrightsville Reach. Continued pressure for commercial development along this section of U. S. 76 should be expected, given the amount of vacant developable land and the access to the Northeast Sewer Interceptor nearby. Mixed commercial and residential development is also located on the southside of U. S. 74/76 near the drawbridge to Wrightsville Beach. Several community landmarks - St. Andrews Church, Airlie Gardens, the E. W. Reane Mansion, Bradley Creek Boatominium, the Babies Hospital site and the historic sites discussed earlier - serve as reference points for the neighborhood and give it a sense of identity.

The topography of the area is more divergent than one would expect. The highest elevation, located within the interior of Airlie Road along Allen's Lane, reaches thirty-four feet. Two major rises can be found along Stokley Drive and Allen's Lane that command views of the waterfront and Sound. The remaining area consists of a gradually sloping grade from the waterfront to these two points. Because of their prominence, these rises are important to the visual image of the neighborhood.

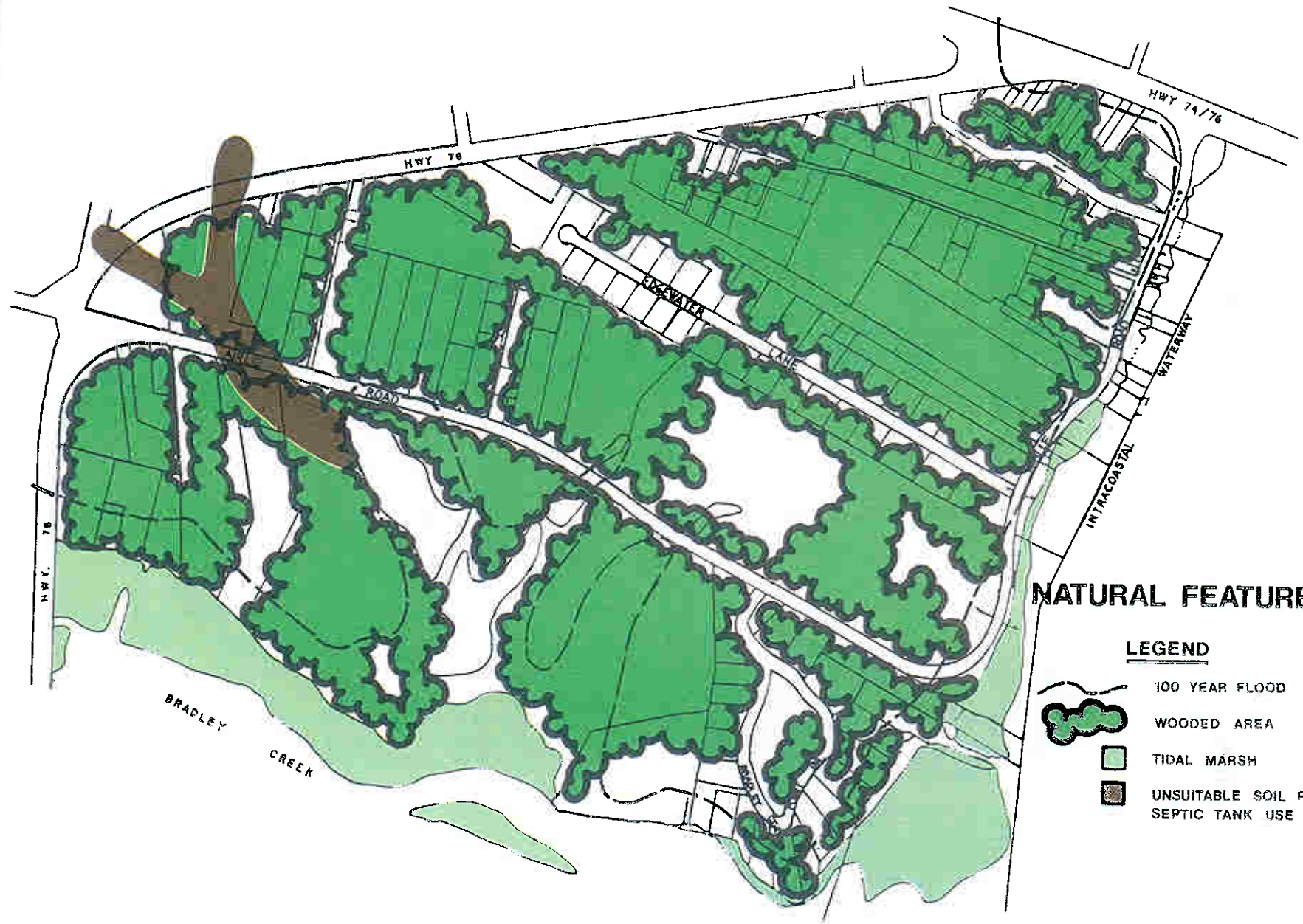
As indicated in Figure 4, the Airlie Road neighborhood is bounded by water along more than one-half of its perimeter. In addition, one-half of its land area is covered either by surface water or by forest. These characteristics have helped establish the identity of the neighborhood as an attractive place to live and visit.

Several natural features, however, constrain future development of the neighborhood. As shown in Figure 4, a strip of land corresponding to the 100 year flood zone is delineated along the Waterfront.

Although a fair amount of development has already occurred in this area, further construction of structures and development of uses vulnerable to flooding should be discouraged. This guideline also would help protect the dwindling estuarine area.

Another constraint is the existence of Class IV soils in the northeastern portion of the neighborhood. Class IV soils, according to the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, are unsuitable for septic tank use, except under the most severely modified conditions. Development of these soils is usually neither economically feasible nor environmentally desirable. Generally, the water table is within one foot or less of the ground surface. This condition, aggravated by the lack of adequate drainage systems in the County, results in poor percolation and the introduction of effluent into the nearby surface waters.





NATURAL FEATURES

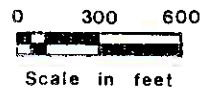
LEGEND

-  100 YEAR FLOOD
-  WOODED AREA
-  TIDAL MARSH
-  UNSUITABLE SOIL FOR SEPTIC TANK USE

Figure 4

AIRLIE ROAD

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 NEW HANOVER COUNTY
 NORTH CAROLINA



As indicated in Figure 5, the neighborhood is predominately a residential enclave with several small-scale, water oriented commercial uses along the Waterway. Of the approximately 350 acres in the neighborhood, the largest land use, 154 acres, is for single-family homes. 84 acres remain vacant, while 68 acres are included in Airlie Gardens. 28 acres are occupied by mobile homes. Commercial and institutional uses occupy 15 acres.

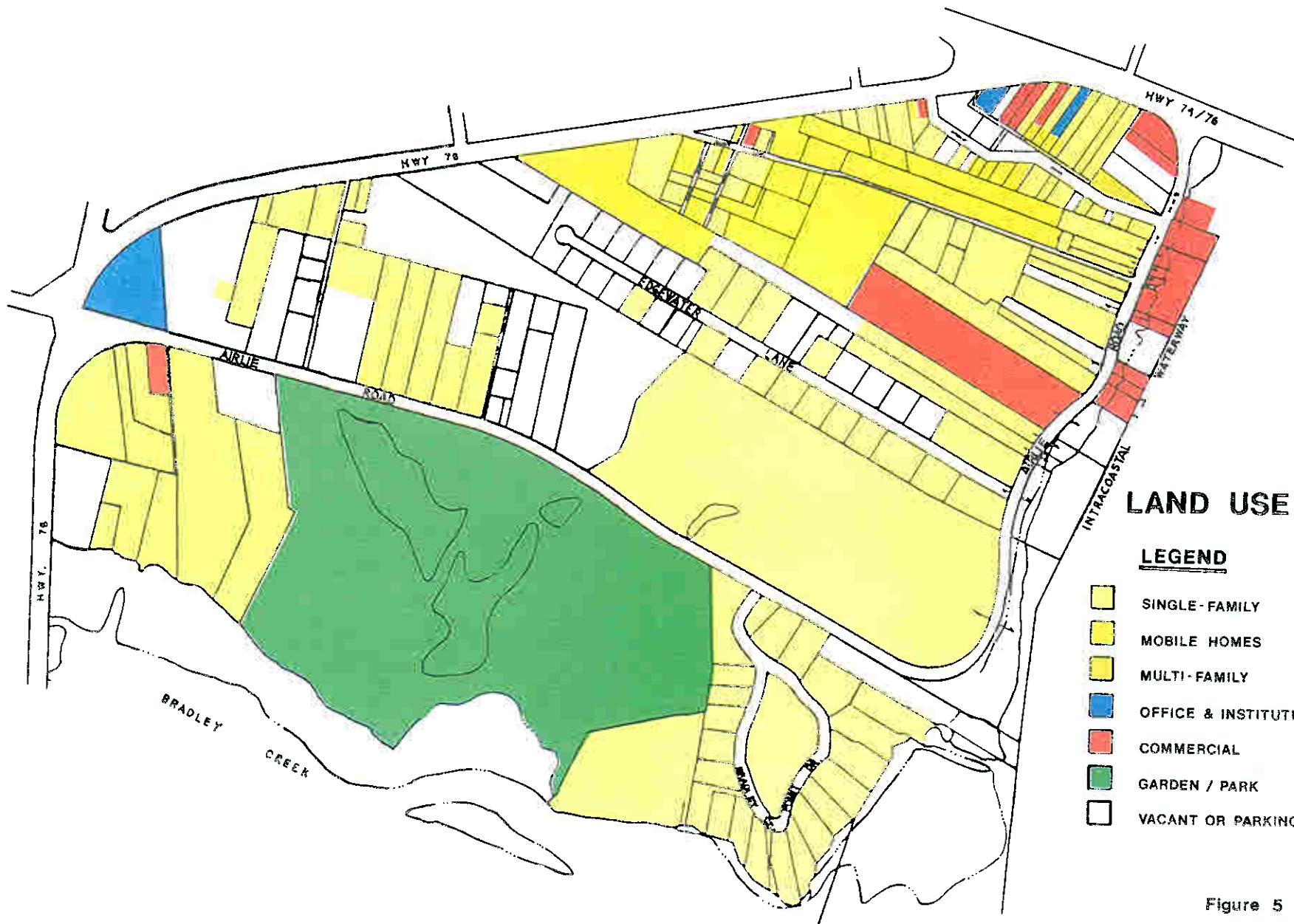
Over the past ten years, two major housing developments, Bradley Creek Point and Edgewater Club, have been built along Airlie Road. Edgewater Subdivision consists of 34 lots, each 20,000 square feet in size or greater and served by individual septic tanks and wells. Edgewater Club Lane is a private road within the subdivision and is maintained by the Edgewater Club Homeowners Association. To date, fifteen lots have single-family residences built on them and the remainder are for sell. Edgewater subdivision also has its own private boating marina on property fronting the Waterway.



Bradley Creek Point is another exclusive subdivision, located at the confluence of the Intracoastal Waterway and Bradley Creek. It contains approximately 26 lots, each 20,000 square feet in size or greater and served by individual septic tanks and wells. The subdivision was recorded in November 1968. To date, almost all of the lots have been sold and have houses constructed on them. Bradley Creek Point Drive is a private road within the subdivision and is maintained by the Homeowner's Association.

Other lots in the neighborhood are located perpendicular to the water's edge. These long narrow tracts of land create access problems, but help maintain residential privacy. The residential character of the Airlie Road area has remained primarily single-family over the years. Some older homes, however, have been converted into apartments and student quarters. In addition, mobile home park development has increased. An increasing number of poorly maintained rental properties have created some blight along Stokley Drive, Allen's Lane, and Wrightsville Avenue.

The most serious threat to Airlie Road, however, is the potential for land use changes along the edges of the neighborhood and within the interior of Airlie Road. Many vacant properties and several large residential estates, including some existing mobile home park areas, are prime land for development. This development potential, as discussed later, must be adequately planned so as not to compound already existing problems.



LAND USE

LEGEND

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- MOBILE HOMES
- MULTI-FAMILY
- OFFICE & INSTITUTIONAL
- COMMERCIAL
- GARDEN / PARK
- VACANT OR PARKING

Figure 5



0 300 600
 Scale in feet

AIRLIE ROAD

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 NEW HANOVER COUNTY
 NORTH CAROLINA

(B) LAND USE AND ZONING

According to the County's present Land Classification Map (Figure 6), the Airlie Road area is designated as Conservation and Rural Services.

The Conservation classification provides for effective long term management of significant, limited, or irreplaceable areas that have significant natural, cultural, recreational, productive, or scenic values. Generally, within the Airlie Road area all marshes and adjacent lands within the 100 year flood plain are considered Conservation, approximately 20 to 30 percent of the total area. Development can occur within the Conservation area provided it is either water-dependent or exceptionally designed and located on relatively high ground where adverse impacts to the estuarine system are negligible.

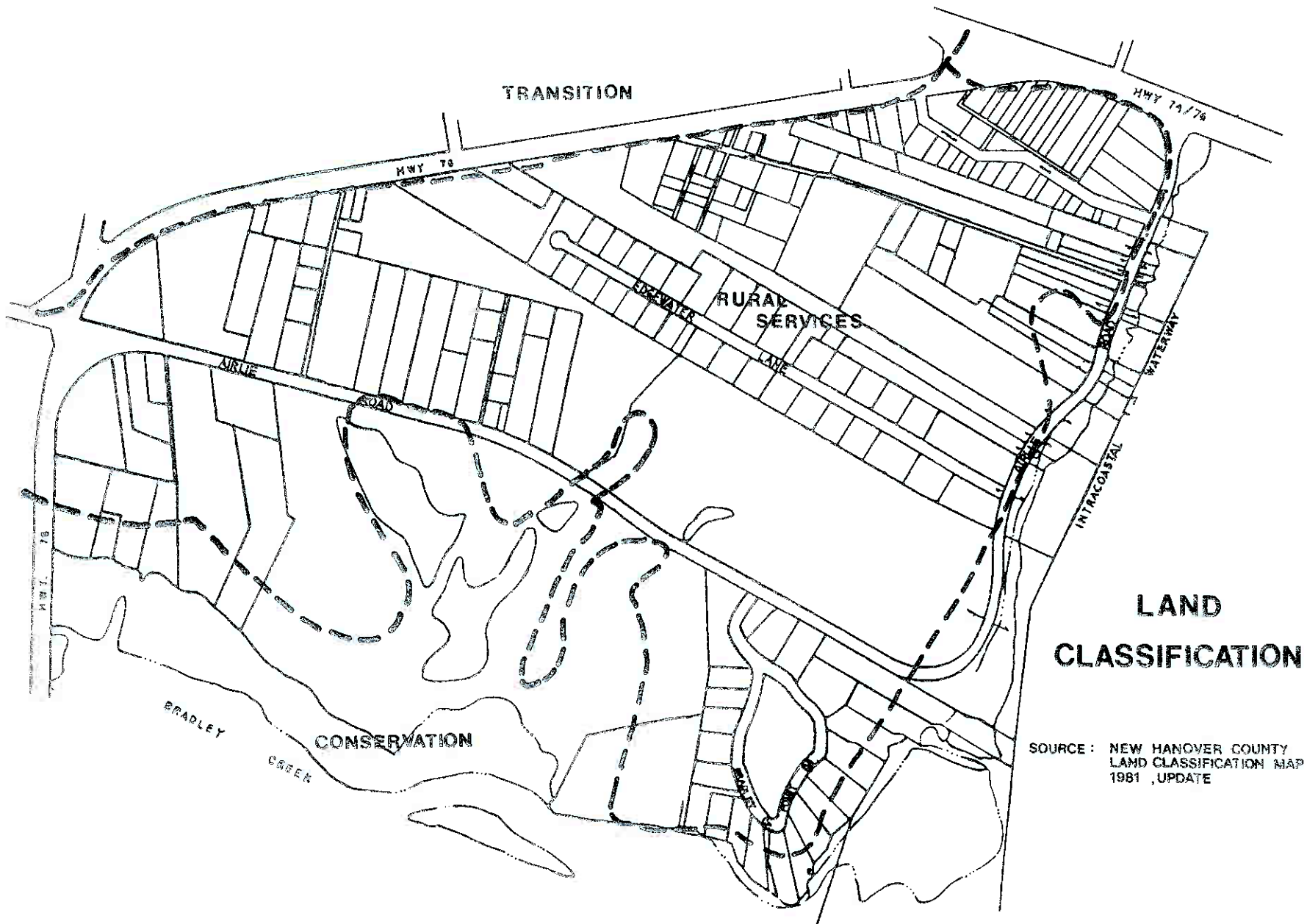
The Rural Services classification is intended for low density rural residential land use where the provision of public water and sewer is planned. This classification is made to preserve and protect a unique or sensitive environment where natural, historical, aesthetic, scenic, wildlife, or recreational resources are valued. Urban density or other incompatible development that would damage the rural lifestyle and environment are discouraged. Both the Conservation and Rural Services land classifications in the Airlie Road area are located outside the Urban Services Area; therefore, high-density development is not permitted.

As shown earlier in Figure 2, most of the Conservation land is zoned R-20 Residential, R-15 Residential, or B-1 Business. Multi-family development in the R-20 areas can be clustered at a density up to 1.9 units per acre and in R-15 areas up to 2.5 units per acre. However, development in these Conservation areas must be either water-dependent or exceptionally designed. Most of the Rural Services area is presently zoned R-20, R-15, or B-2. Development plans for these areas must be consistent with both land use and zoning classifications.

A number of non-residential land uses are presently located in the Airlie Road neighborhood. Several of the businesses, including a nursery, restaurant, and hammock shop are non-conforming. Most of the commercial businesses, including a sailboat store, a motel, a restaurant, two seafood markets, three marinas and a boat ramp terminal are conforming. In connection with the seafood markets, however, wholesaling operations carried out on-site are non-conforming to the B-1 zoning classification, which is designed for neighborhood business purposes. The 1982 assessed values of these commercial uses total approximately \$1.5 million dollars for the County tax base. In addition, these commercial uses, as presently operated, contribute significantly to the character of the neighborhood, particularly along Airlie Road.

Parking requirements have essentially remained unchanged since the B-1 Business district was adopted. The Zoning Ordinance permits parking in commercial zones provided that at least one off-street parking space exists for each 400 square feet of retail gross floor area, except for restaurants which require one parking space for every three seats plus one space for each two employees. Non-residential off-street parking in residential zones requires a Special Use Permit. No Special Use Permits for non-residential off-street parking in the area have been approved to date.





**LAND
CLASSIFICATION**

SOURCE: NEW HANOVER COUNTY
LAND CLASSIFICATION MAP
1981, UPDATE

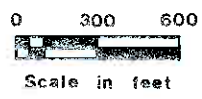


Figure 6

AIRLIE ROAD

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
NEW HANOVER COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

(C) POPULATION AND HOUSING

Airlie Road's estimated 1980 population is composed of three different groups:

1. College students and transients, who are very mobile and usually renters.
2. Elderly, who are long-term residents, and
3. Middle/Upper income families and young professionals, who have been attracted to the neighborhood.

Airlie Road is basically an adult neighborhood with only approximately 20% (79 persons) 18 years or younger and about 12% (48 persons) 65 years or older. Households are generally small with an average 2.2 persons per housing unit, compared to a Countywide average of 2.69. Few black families (43 total persons) live in the neighborhood. Out of a total of 245 units in the neighborhood, approximately 106 housing units (43%) are owner-occupied and 73 (30%) are rental-occupied by permanent residents. Approximately 66 (27%) are either vacant or occupied by non-permanent residents (e. g. students, second home owners). The average mean value of residential property in the area is about \$99,600.00.

The greatest population concentration can be found within the interior of Airlie Road in the Edgewater Club subdivision and along Allen's Lane and Stokley Drive. The fairly high number of owner-occupied housing in the area indicates that the neighborhood is fairly stable. The highest ratio of rental units to owner occupied units is found along Allen's Lane within the interior of Airlie Drive, due to the large number of mobile homes there. Nevertheless, as reflected in the current data and in the trends for increasing development, it is anticipated that future housing development generally will attract the middle/upper income and adult population.

AIRLIE ROAD POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, 1980 (U.S. BUREAU OF CENSUS)

| <u>POPULATION</u> | <u>WHITE</u> | <u>BLACK</u> | <u>PERSONS UNDER 18 YRS. OLD</u> | <u>PERSONS 65 YEARS OR OLDER</u> | <u>YEAR ROUND HOUSING UNITS</u> | <u>OWNER- OCCUPIED UNITS</u> | <u>MEAN VALUE OF OWNER- OCCUPIED UNITS</u> | <u>RENTER- OCCUPIED UNITS</u> | <u>PERSONS PER HOUSING U</u> |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 402 | 359 | 43 | 79 | 48 | 245 | 106 | \$99,600 | 73 | 2.2 |



(D) TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND PARKING

Traffic circulation and parking are critical problems along Airlie Road, especially at the U. S. 74/76 intersection near the drawbridge. Due to the narrow pavement width of Airlie Road and the location of commercial activities along the Waterway, major traffic problems have resulted.

The present concrete width of Airlie Road is only eighteen feet. According to the State Department of Transportation, the State has not acquired any additional right-of-way. The narrow width of the lane contributes to traffic congestion and limits pedestrian activity and parking along the waterway. The lack of right-of-way also limits the potential for roadway widening. The absence of curbing and defined driveways interferes with parking and with ingress and egress maneuvers.

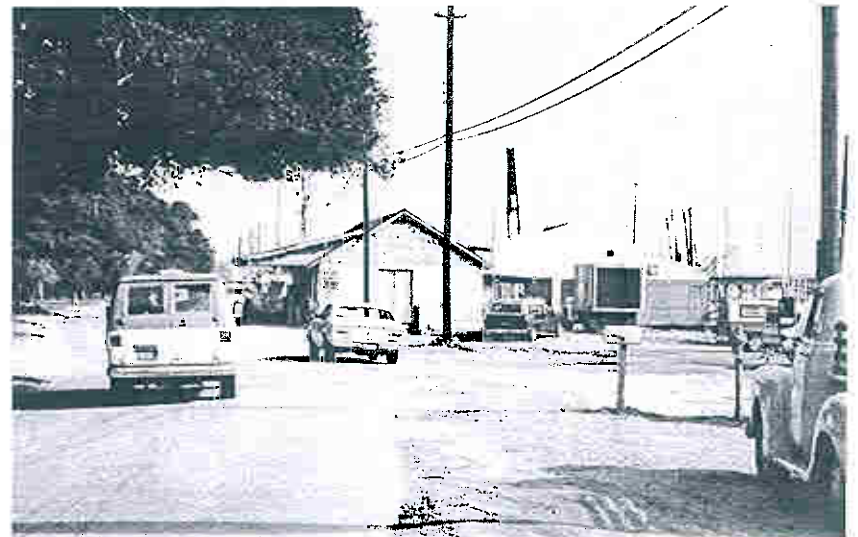
The major traffic problem along Airlie Road occurs at the U. S. 74/76 intersection near the drawbridge. This intersection is dangerous due to the difference in grade between the intersection and the crest of the bridge, and due to the nearby commercial activities along Airlie Road. The average daily traffic volume at the Wilmington Bridge intersection is estimated to be 5,000 cars. Detailed traffic counts are shown on Figure 7. Visibility is limited at this intersection, especially for cars exiting from Airlie Road to westbound U. S. 74/76. Traffic is frequently bottlenecked at this stop sign, especially when the drawbridge is up and the traffic volume is high during the summer peak tourist season. Traffic on Stokley Road may be expected to increase in order to avoid this intersection.

The 1982/83 Transportation Improvement Program for the Wilmington, NC Urbanized Area calls for construction of a left turn lane and the upgrading of the traffic signal at the western end of Airlie Road. Estimated cost is set at \$56,000.

To date, this is the only traffic safety improvement scheduled by the State for Airlie Road. Airlie Road has not been considered a high priority in either the State/Local Transportation Safety Management Program or in the Transportation Improvement Program.

Another major traffic problem exists within the commercial district of Airlie Road. Congestion here is caused by heavy traffic flow, cars backing from angle parking spaces into through traffic lanes, and the lack of adequate front yard setbacks for most of the commercial buildings located along Airlie Road. The major problem is that Airlie Road is too narrow to accommodate two-way traffic and on-street parking simultaneously. This situation is aggravated by heavy circulating traffic caused by retail customers and local residents.

Parking itself is a problem, primarily related to pressures from the existing commercial uses. The impact of this critical parking shortage has been felt mainly by retail customers and by nearby residential property owners. The neighborhoods not only have to absorb the overflow parking from existing non-conforming areas, but also must contend with truck traffic related to the existing commercial uses. Narrow side yards and the close spacing of businesses preclude off-street parking for many neighborhood residents.



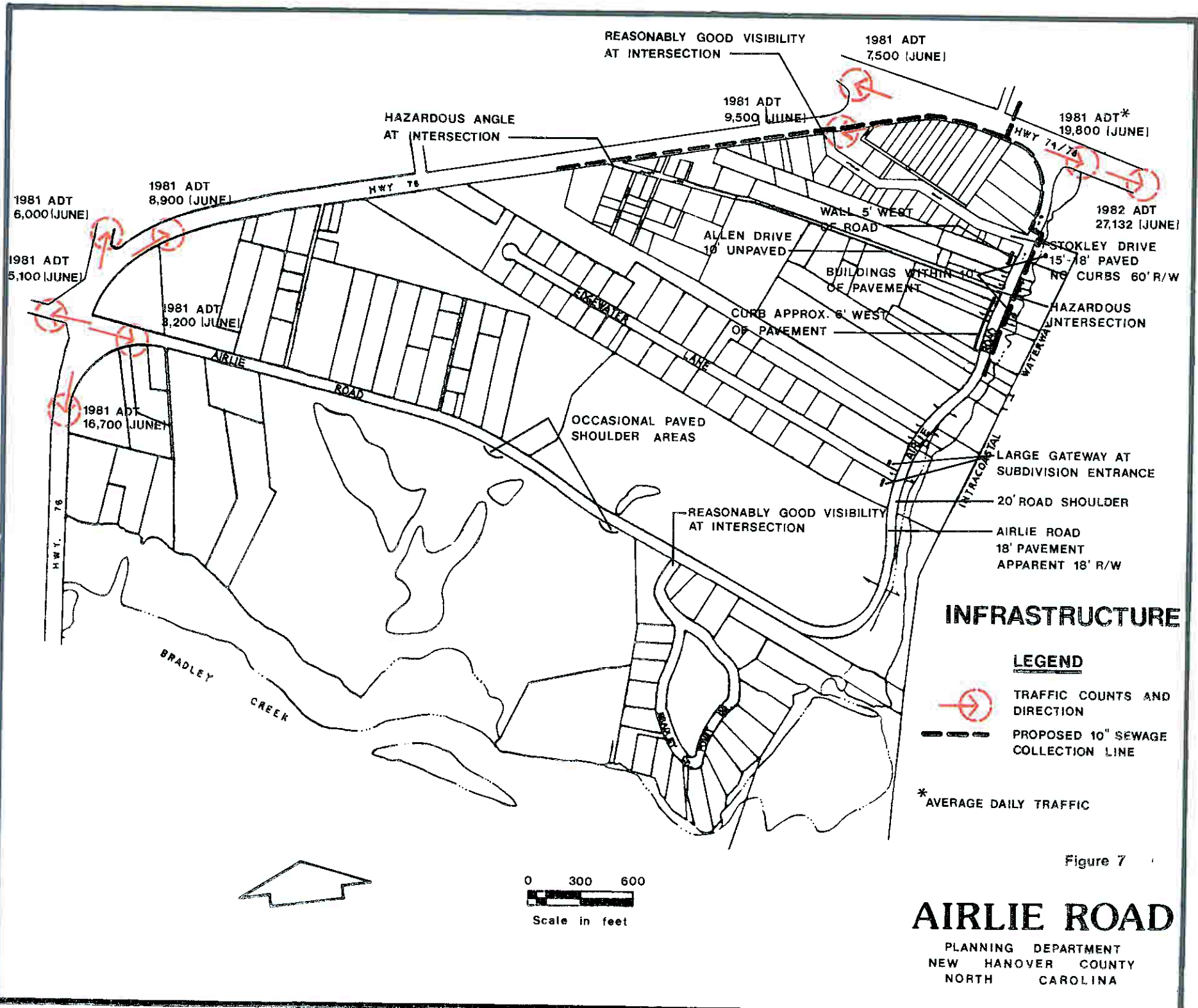


Figure 7

AIRLIE ROAD

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(E) COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Very few public services and facilities are located in the Airlie Road area. No libraries, schools or public parks are located in the neighborhood. Residents of the area generally have access to recreational, boating, cultural and educational facilities at Wrightsville Beach or the City of Wilmington. Fire protection is provided by the Seagate Volunteer Fire Department and police protection by the County Sheriff's Department. The Wilmington Transit Authority provides public transportation from Wilmington to Wrightsville Beach, but the nearest bus stop to Airlie Road is located near the Plaza East Shopping Center along U. S. 76.

No public water, sanitary sewer, nor storm-sewer facilities presently exist within the area. The lack of these infrastructure facilities have contributed to significant storm water problems and pollution of the Waterway. Private on-site water and sewer facilities are individually maintained. Storm water and drainage problems are commonly found along Allen's Lane, which is unpaved and drastically in need of improvement. Public water and sewer facilities are greatly needed.

Construction of the Northeast Interceptor, a force sewer main extending from Wrightsville Beach to the City of Wilmington's Southside Sewage Treatment plant, has almost been completed in the vicinity of Airlie Road. As a result, a group of businessmen have joined together with the County in an attempt to build a collection system in the Airlie Road neighborhood to tie into the Interceptor. Under the provisions of the proposed sewer policy recently adopted by the New Hanover County Commissioners, both the County and the private participants would contribute funds to the project. If implemented, this area will be one of the first in the County where public sewer facilities are provided. An investment of this nature will help to reduce septic tank pollution problems of the Waterway while providing a strong incentive for developers to locate their projects nearby. As a result, land use patterns

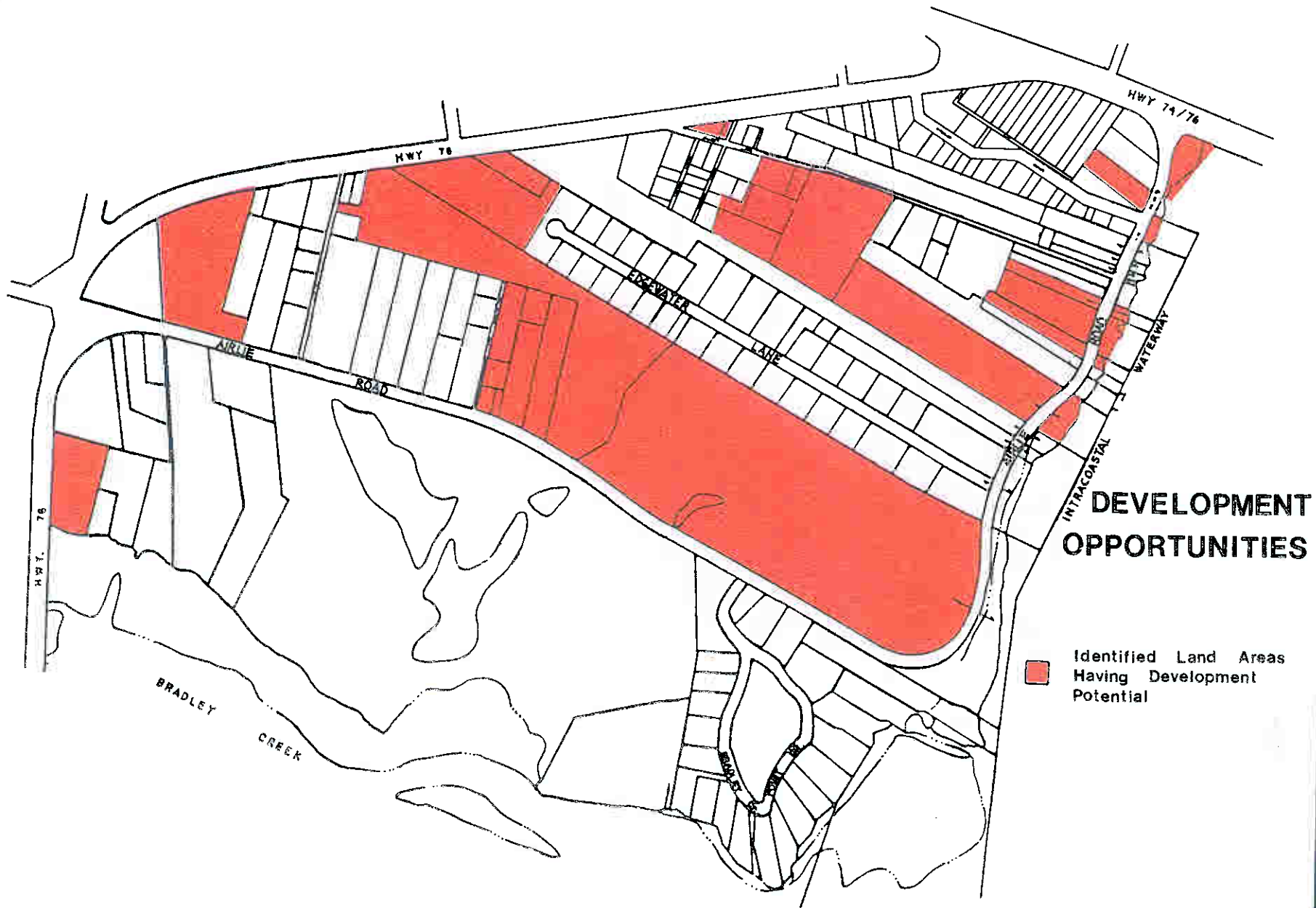
can be expected to intensify as the supply of developable land increases. Although the amount of increase will depend upon the amount of vacant land the sewer will serve and its excess capacity, these changes in land use must be anticipated and planned.

(F) DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Several development opportunity areas exist in the Airlie Road neighborhood. Most of these opportunities consist of vacant or under-utilized land which could be reorganized and more intensely used. Most of the presently built-up land in the neighborhood is along Airlie Road and Wrightsville Avenue. Some vacant lots with roadside frontage still remain, but the bulk of under-utilized property is located within the interior of Airlie Road. These areas are shown on the Visual Survey Map (Figure 3) and the Development Opportunities Map (Figure 8).

The largest tracts of land within the area are Airlie Gardens and the E. W. Beane Mansion. These tracts essentially control development along the east/west axis of Airlie Road. If they are developed for residential use, the present character of Airlie Road would be significantly impacted. Proper planning must be carried out in this area to protect Airlie Road. Since high density multi-family residential development is not permitted, multi-family residential development must conform to either the 1.9 or 2.5 unit per acre standard.


Given this situation, several different possible future land use alternatives can be identified for the neighborhood. These alternatives are described in Section V of the plan.



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Identified Land Areas Having Development Potential

Figure 8

0 300 600

 Scale in feet

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IV NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES AND GOALS

One of the first steps in the planning process was to identify and measure neighborhood issues and goals. Two methods, a Neighborhood Survey and Neighborhood Meetings, were used to accomplish this step.

(A) NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

The first step in the process involved a door-to-door survey of property owners in the neighborhood. Residents were asked open ended questions concerning what they felt were the major issues facing the neighborhood, how these problems should be handled, and what priority the issues should be given.

(B) NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

The second step in the process consisted of three neighborhood meetings. The first meeting was held on Thursday, October 14, 1982, at the Old Babies Hospital located at 7225 Wrightsville Avenue. The second and third meetings were held on Thursday, October 21, and Wednesday, October 27, 1982, at Wrightsville Beach Elementary School. A total of 66 residents participated in the neighborhood meetings. During the course of the meetings, the residents attempted to identify issues and problems, to formulate goals and objectives, and to develop policy actions for the Airlie Road neighborhood.

(C) SURVEY RESULTS

The neighborhood survey resulted in twenty-seven issues being identified and prioritized by area residents. These issues and their priorities are presented below:

| <u>Priority</u> | <u>Issue</u> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Traffic |
| 2 | Parking |
| 3 | Neighborhood & Historic Preservation |
| 4 | Retention of Oak Trees |
| | Bike Paths |
| 5 | Land Use and Zoning |
| 6 | Pedestrian Traffic and Sidewalks |
| 7 | Litter |
| 8 | Density |
| 9 | Pollution |
| 10 | Drainage |
| 11 | Vistas, Street Widths, Noise, Fire Protection |
| 12 | Police Protection |
| 13 | Overhead Wiring/Utility Poles |
| 14 | Streetscape |
| 15 | Sewer System |
| 16 | Crime and Security |
| 17 | Water System, Night Lighting, Condition of Houses & Buildings |
| 18 | Access to Water, Signage |
| 19 | Rescue Services |
| 20 | Trash Collection |

The ten most significant issues are displayed in Figure 9, indicating their considered degree of sensitivity as a major neighborhood problem. As these major issues were identified and discussed, participants at the first and second neighborhood meetings formulated the following initial set of neighborhood objectives and strategies:

(1) Traffic - Very early on, the participants recognized that existing problems would greatly increase as new development continues along Airlie Road. The following list of suggestions and concerns were offered by the residents for consideration in reducing traffic congestion and preserving the area while accommodating future growth.

- Make Airlie Road a one-way street;
- Make Airlie Road an Historic/Scenic Road;
- Accommodate additional local residential, commercial, and through traffic in the area;
- Discourage widening Airlie Road;
- Encourage preservation of Airlie Road's scenic views and oak trees;
- Discourage truck traffic on Stokley Drive;
- Improve Allen's Lane;
- Eliminate congestion near existing seafood markets and restaurants and at the U. S. 74/76 Bridge interchange;
- Provide alternative access routes to Airlie Road.

Any proposals for widening the 18' pavement would certainly result in the loss of oak trees growing near the pavement's edge. Many of the problems associated with the interchange at 74/76 can only be resolved through an increase in major expenditures by DOT, an unlikely possibility in the near future. Some reasonable solutions offered by the residents appear to be the coordination of alternative access routes to serve the future development of interior properties, and to provide better control of ingress and egress points to the commercial uses along the waterfront.

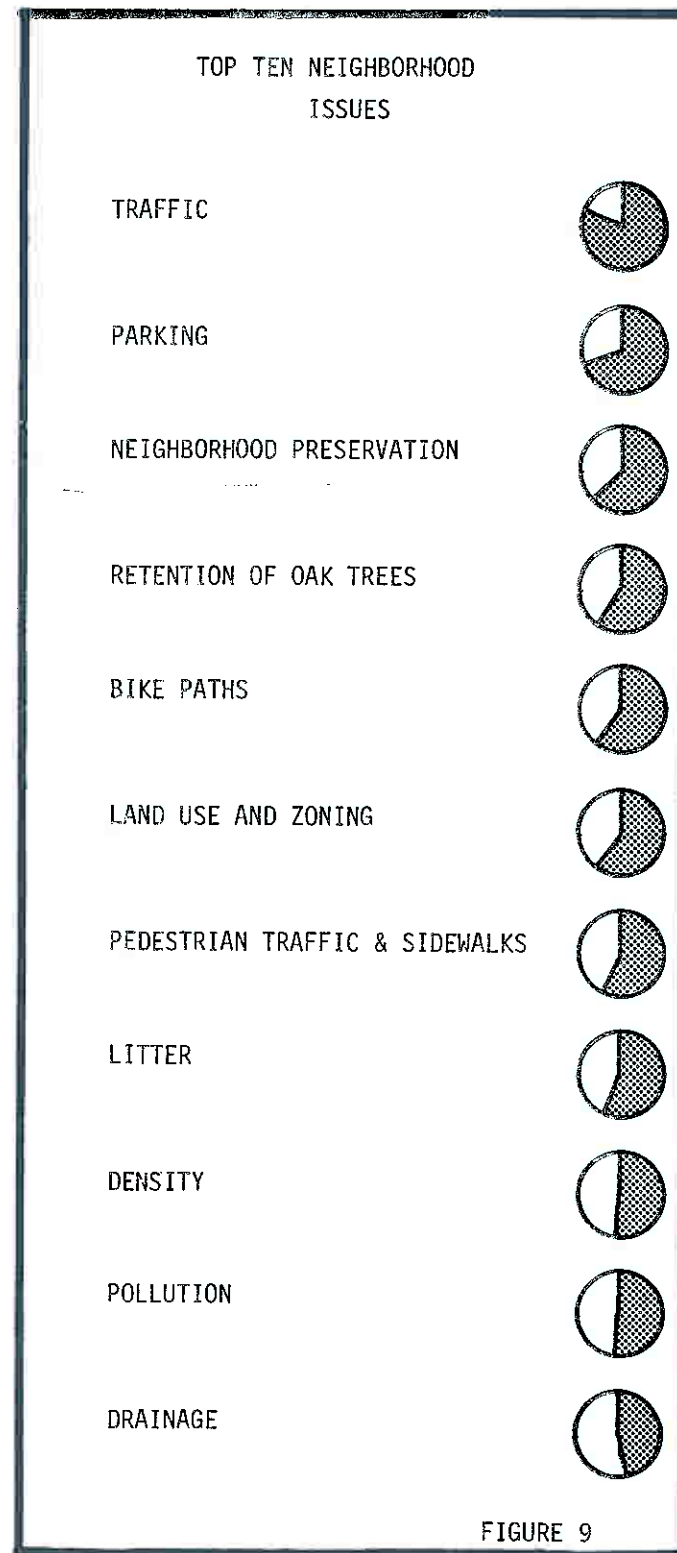


FIGURE 9

(2) Parking - High on the list of neighborhood frustrations is parking. Residents and businesses are continually faced with parking overflows, especially during the summer months. The lack of building setbacks and no right-of-way greatly hinder the movement of cars and people who patronize the restaurants and seafood houses. Expansions to existing business operations would necessitate additional parking requirements. Suggestions for improving the parking situation included:

- Encourage stricter enforcement of the County's parking regulations;
- Encourage commercial parking on commercial lots only;
- Discourage parking along the edge of the pavement;
- Provide a central parking area or facility (no elevated parking);
- Mark and designate individual spaces;
- Construct curbs;
- Control drive entrances;
- Reduce the amount of wholesale truck parking along Airlie Road, particularly along Stokley Drive.

(3) Neighborhood Preservation - Much of the discussion during each meeting centered around the theme of how to maintain the present character of the neighborhood. Faced with the realization of new development proposals, the residents began to acknowledge that change would occur. Although some emphasis was placed on the retention of the older structures along Airlie, State officials noted that only two existing buildings are presently known that have any real architectural or historical significance - Latimer House and Lebanon Chapel.

In total, the residents desired to retain the area as low density residential and to continue the existing types of commercial uses but limit them to the waterfront. Other objectives that were suggested included:

- Make Airlie Road an Historic/Scenic Road;
- Preserve the older residential homes in the area;
- Preserve the existing churches in the area.

(4) Oak Trees - A major asset of Airlie Road are the large live oaks that are located in the neighborhood and line the narrow roadway. Presently all these trees are located on private property. Obviously, any widening of the road would result in the loss of many of these trees. Acquisition of right-of-way or scenic easements or possible donations of conservation areas were discussed as potential ways to preserve the areas of scenic beauty. Other suggestions included:

- Discourage increased traffic along Airlie Road;
- Establish a tree ordinance.

(5) Bike Paths - Another asset of Airlie Road is its attraction for biking. The scenic character of the road for years has encouraged bicycle use. However, due to increased traffic and the limited width of the road, concern about safely accommodating bike traffic received attention. In addition to the road's designation as a Bike Street in the Wilmington-New Hanover Areawide Bicycle Facilities Plan, the following ways to accommodate bike traffic were discussed:

- Encourage the enforcement of traffic laws and speed limits;
- Establish alternative bike paths in the Airlie Road area;
- Establish a three foot wide bike path along either side of the road.

(6) Land Use and Zoning - The critical factors governing the future development of Airlie Road will be the zoning classification and density controls. Generally, the residents were satisfied with the R-20 classification, although there was much support for a change to R-20S to limit new development to single-family detached housing on 20,000 sq. ft. lots. The higher density R-15 district along Wrightsville Avenue and on some of the interior properties received little discussion. Much emphasis, however, was placed on the location of the commercial districts and the lack of controls for density and the size and height of buildings. Since the waterfront is the major attraction for all development along Airlie Road, serious concerns were voiced on methods and ways of protecting that asset for the benefit of all residents.

It was suggested very early that a height limit should be imposed that would restrict buildings to 35 feet and keep them at the same scale as nearby residences. Alternatively, a bulk control method was also proposed that would both limit the size of the building - not necessarily height - and require additional spacing to eliminate the potential for a complete walling-off of the shoreline.

The question of appropriate land uses was also debated at length. Since the R-1 district was intended for neighborhood commercial uses, the residents wanted to ensure that non-neighborhood uses would not be allowed to encroach onto Airlie Road. Other suggestions concerning development included:

- Encourage the retention of the existing zoning mix;
- Eliminate and discourage recreational vehicles from utilizing the area;
- Retain low density development.

(7) Pedestrian Traffic and Sidewalks - Another item high on the priority list of neighborhood concerns is to develop adequate sidewalks, crosswalks and pathways to safely accommodate pedestrian movement. Several ideas on how to correct these problems were suggested:

- Establish jogging paths in the area;
- Establish sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks along Airlie Road;
- Establish pedestrian pathways in conjunction with sewer easements.



(8) Litter, Pollution and Drainage - Other environmental concerns identified by area residents were to reduce litter and pollution of the Waterway. Although not many other solutions were suggested, most residents supported a public sewer policy. The following responses were offered.

- Control pollution of the Intracoastal Waterway;
- Regulate storm water and drainage problems along Allen's Lane;
- Control litter and trash in the neighborhood;
- Reduce noise from commercial activities;
- Extend public sewer services.

(9) Density - Although this item received some individual mention, most discussion concerning this issue was reflected in the discussion on land use and zoning. Concern over the appropriate level of development and population for the neighborhood was recognized as an important planning issue. The following policy statements were recommended and discussed:

- Encourage low density residential development;
- Encourage and maintain single family residential development only;
- Maintain the existing scale and height of development of structures presently located in the area;
- Discourage the expansion of presently commercially developed areas.

V LAND DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

The following three major land use plan options for the Airlie Road area were initially prepared by the Planning Staff and discussed by residents at the neighborhood meetings:

(A) EXISTING LAND USE

Under this land use scenario, existing land-use patterns and zoning districts would remain essentially unchanged. This option is depicted by the Zoning Map (Figure 2) and the Land-Use Map (Figure 5). The practical likelihood of this happening, however, is slight given the development pressures in the area.

(B) LOW DENSITY/RURAL SERVICES

As proposed by area residents, this land use scenario would remain fairly consistent with the County's existing Land Classification Map, except that only low density and single-family residential development would be allowed within the interior area of Airlie Road. Commercial development would also be retained in its present location. This land use option is shown in Figure 10.

(C) HIGH DENSITY/TRANSITIONAL

Under this land use scenario (Figure 11), the existing Conservation and Rural Services land areas would be changed to Transitional to reflect current sewer plans for the area. Some zoning districts would be changed to allow a higher density development.

(D) SELECTED CONCEPT PLAN

Ruling out the first alternative as unrealistic and impractical, the residents attempted to find a balance between the other two competing land use options. The resulting compromise land use plan



option, the Selected Concept Plan (Figure 12), was prepared at the last neighborhood meeting and received favorable approval. Essentially, this Plan encourages low density residential development within the interior of Airlie Road, with higher density residential development along Stokley Drive and Wrightsville Avenue; retention of existing commercial areas; preservation of existing conservation areas; retention of existing land classifications; and designation of the Bradley Creek Point area for single-family residential development only.

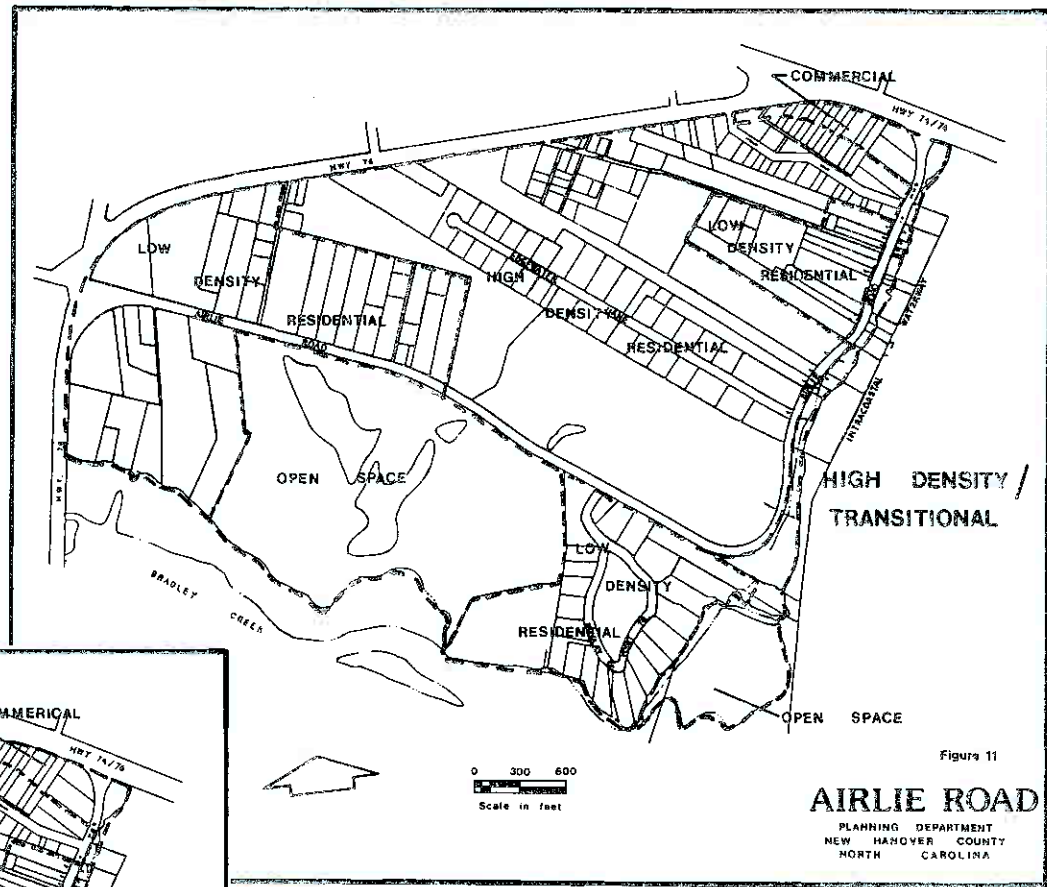


Figure 11

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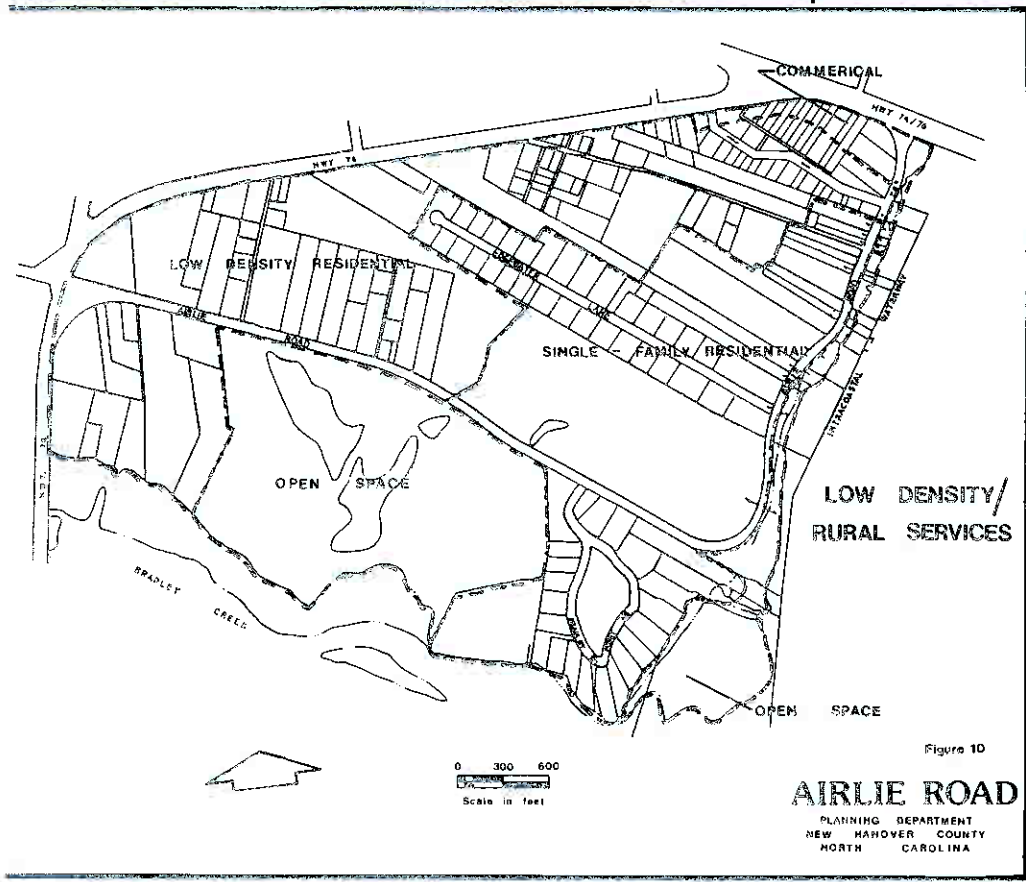
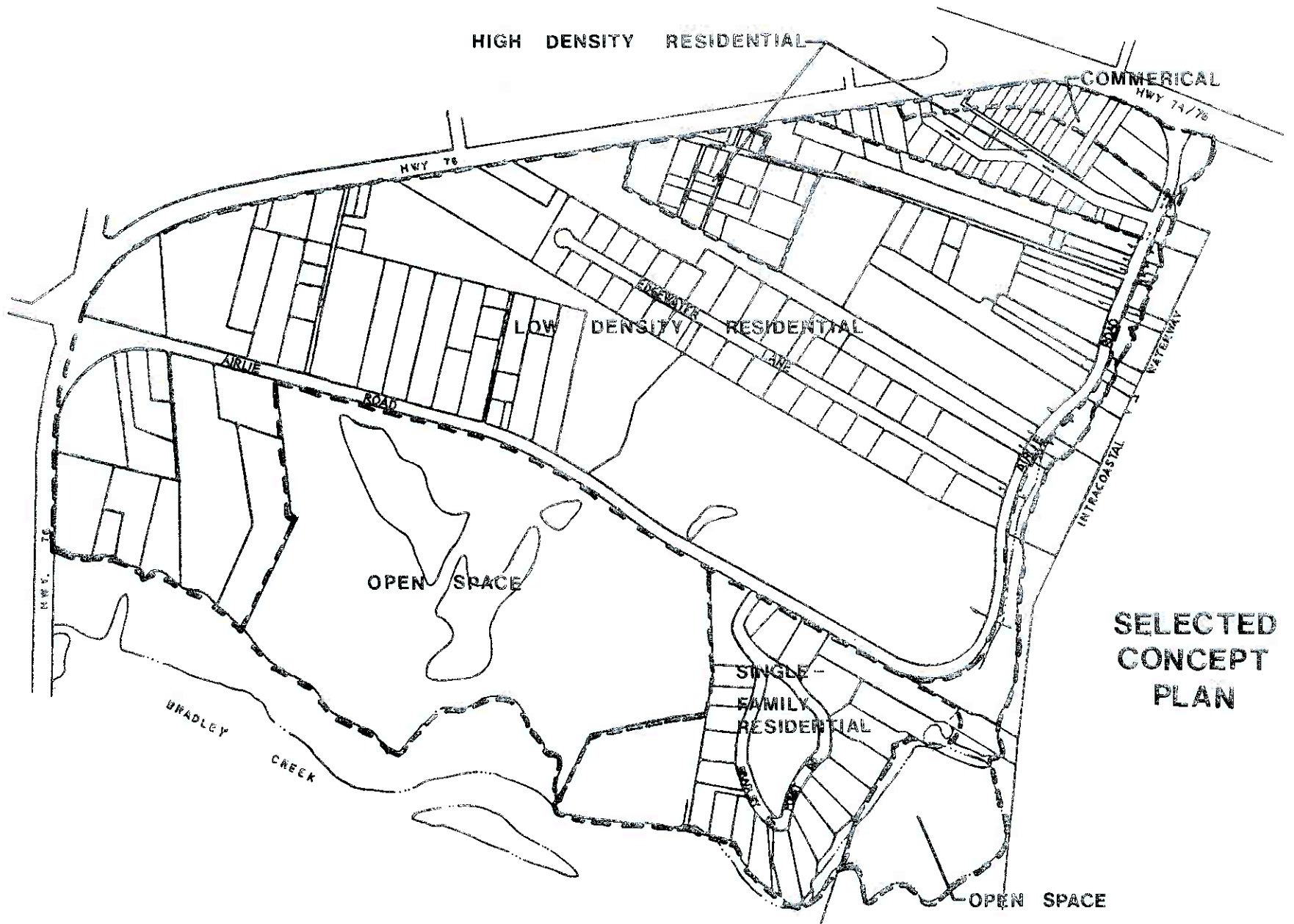


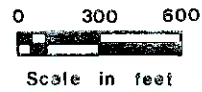
Figure 10

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**SELECTED
CONCEPT
PLAN**

Figure 12



AIRLIE ROAD

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VI POLICY ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overwhelmingly, the residents desire to retain the present character of the neighborhood. More specifically, this desire translates into the continuation of low density residential development and the discouragement of commercial expansion and associated traffic problems. The majority of residents repeatedly voiced their concern that new development should not spoil the tranquil lifestyle of their neighborhood.

The mixture of commercial and residential land uses along Airlie Road is unique. The commercial uses such as restaurants, marinas, and seafood houses not only add to the economic base of the County but also help give the neighborhood its identity. Certainly these uses are as much a part of the area as the newer residential developments that have been established. It is the continued compatibility of both commercial and residential uses that is sought in the development policies presented here. It is important both to maintain the commercial viability of the existing businesses and to protect residential values. Specific policy actions recommended for the planned growth and development included the following:

- Maintain the existing zoning mix of residential and commercial districts.
- Establish an R-20S Residential district.
- Restrict expansion of the existing B-1 Business district.
- Revise Zoning Ordinance:
 - Permit only neighborhood commercial uses in B-1 Business district.
 - Establish a Floor Area Ratio Standard of 0.5 for B-1 districts in order to control bulk and density.
- Make Zoning Ordinance changes consistent with the Conservation and Rural Services Classifications.
- Encourage City/County cooperation regarding annexation, extra-territorial jurisdiction and the provision of utilities.

- Encourage the gradual phasing-out of existing non-conforming wholesale operations in the commercial B-1 district in order to reduce the amount of truck traffic and parking problems.
- Encourage stricter enforcement of the County's parking regulations.
- Make Airlie Road an Historic/Scenic Road by acquiring easements and controlling rights-of-way.
- Preserve the older residential homes and scenic vistas in the area by establishing an Historic Properties Commission.
- Eliminate pollution of Inland Waterway by reducing both the impervious surface area and the number of septic tanks.
- Consolidate ingress and egress points, curb cuts, and driveway entrances in the commercial area along Airlie Road.
- Establish common parking areas on existing commercial vacant land or on State-owned and maintained property.
- Discourage additional traffic and preserve existing shadeoak trees by not widening Airlie Road.
- Discourage tractor-trailer traffic on Stokley Drive by petitioning the State Department of Transportation to close this Drive to truck traffic.
- Improve Allen's Lane by widening the right-of-way and by paving the road to an acceptable width while retaining trees.
- Accommodate additional local residential, commercial, and through traffic by providing alternative access routes to Airlie Road.
- Extend the northern segment of Allen's Lane from Military Cut-off across Wrightsville Avenue to Airlie Road near the vicinity of Airlie Gardens.
- Close-off Airlie Road at the U. S. 76 and Oleander Drive intersection except for an entrance ramp, and install a cul-de-sac.
- Encourage the enforcement of traffic laws by the State for motorists and bicyclists.

- Establish alternative bike paths along Allen's Lane and Airlie Road using acquired sewer easements.
- Establish jogging trails and sidewalks along Airlie Road from U. S. 74/76 intersection to Edgewater Lane Subdivision.
- Establish pedestrian crosswalks.

The following discussion examines and refines these policy actions recommended by the citizens, with regard to the major issues identified earlier:

(A) DENSITY

Over the years the area has been developed in a low density residential fashion. Initially, large homes were built on large acreage tracts. More recently, as land values have increased, larger homes are being constructed on smaller subdivided lots. No high density development exists, except for a few mobile home parks that are located on some interior properties.



The current R-20 zoning is appropriate and should be retained. Although this zoning classification does allow attached development, a maximum density of 1.9 units per acre is certainly in keeping with the preservation of existing densities. Since many development opportunities still exist on some of the larger tracts, this design flexibility should ultimately result in better land use patterns.

(B) COMMERCIAL

Commercial development is restricted to a spit of land extending 1400 feet south of the Bridge and to some frontage property facing Wrightsville Avenue. The B-1 neighborhood business classification should be amended so that the existing blend of commercial and residential land use can be retained. Uses should be limited so that minimal additional amounts of traffic are drawn onto Airlie Road. The height and scale of new structures should be complimentary to the adjoining residential properties with no buildings exceeding the height of residential structures. B-1 Businesses should be suitable for inclusion in neighborhoods.

While many of the existing uses are water-related, no specific zoning proposals presently are recommended to alter the current commercial waterfront development. It may be useful, however, to eventually develop a zoning district for water-dependent and water-related commercial uses, that is different from the existing B-1 district. Adequate provisions

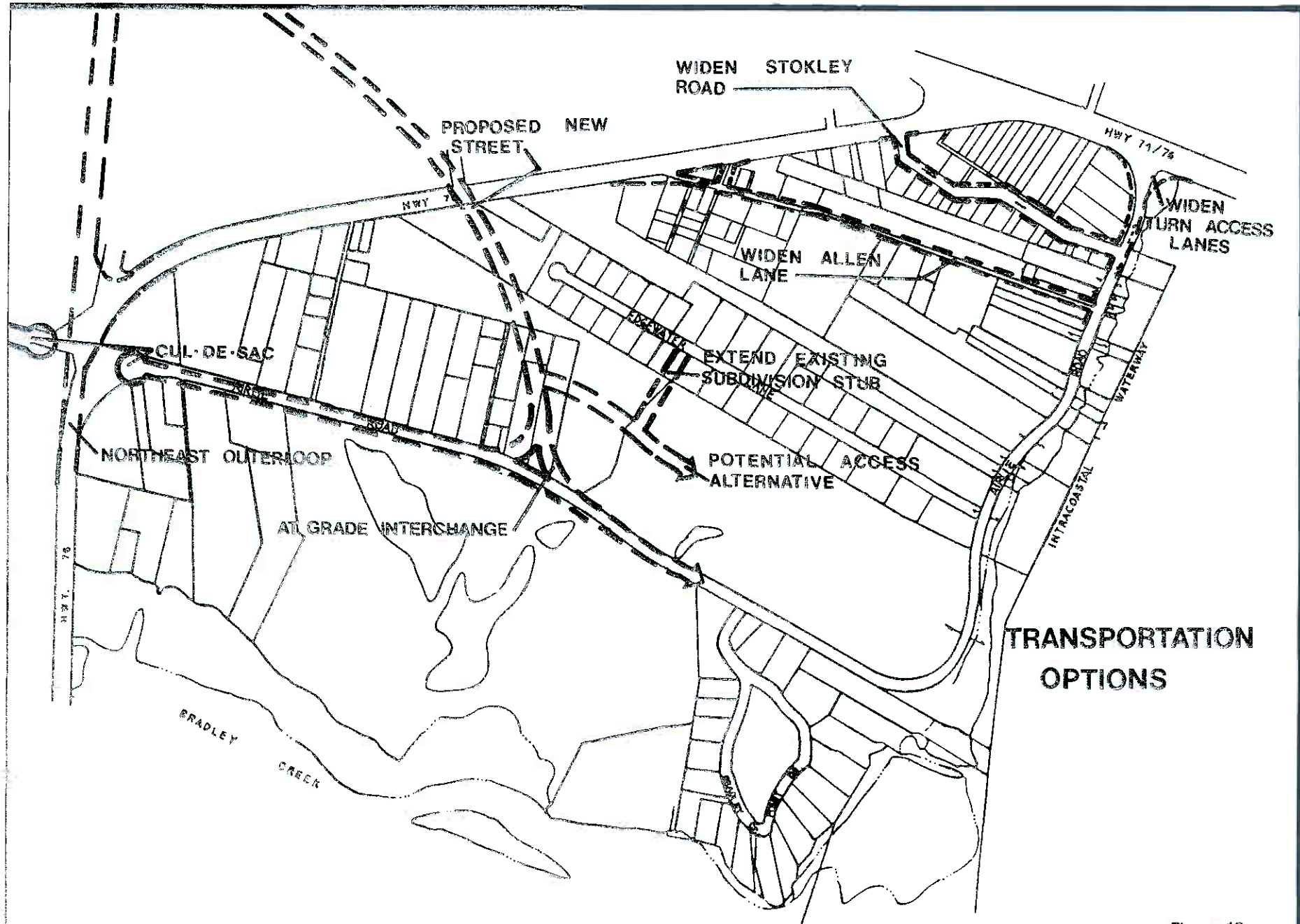
should be made to protect the scenic vistas and views of the water. This can be accomplished with certain spacing or setback requirements and acquisition of scenic easements and development rights of certain waterfront properties. Detailed studies are needed to ascertain the various options available to ensure the public rights to the waterfront.

(C) TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The existing 18' wide Airlie Road with little shoulder and no adjoining right-of-way imposes severe constraints on the future development of the area. What at one time was a premier public highway in the State has slowly been overtaken by high speed thoroughfares such as Oleander Drive. This aging road with its overhanging canopy of live oaks is one of the principal assets of the neighborhood. Future development plans for some of the larger acreage tracts should provide alternative access routes to connect with Wrightsville Avenue. Accommodating additional residential and commercial traffic through alternative access points will discourage widening of Airlie Road and help retain the oak trees. North Carolina Department of Transportation plans currently suggest extending Allen's Lane south across Wrightsville Avenue to Airlie Gardens (Figure 13). This would alleviate much of the traffic that would be generated by development of interior properties. Another plan calls for the termination of Airlie Road at Oleander Drive near the Church, and the installation of a cul-de-sac. This plan, however, would isolate the properties at the western end of Airlie and eliminate a major portion of the scenic drive. A better proposal might be to retain an entrance ramp at Oleander.

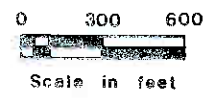


Much of the congestion near Wrightsville Bridge is created by patrons of the restaurant and seafood houses. The lack of setbacks and the encroachments of buildings, parked cars, and pedestrians at the very edge of the paved street create a dangerous mixture of cars and people. Since many of the buildings are non-conforming structures in their present location, little can be done to accommodate increased traffic flow.



**TRANSPORTATION
OPTIONS**

Figure 13



AIRLIE ROAD

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The installation of control access points to the businesses similar to the fencing installed at Gulf Stream Marina, would greatly improve parking and turning maneuvers along the road. Increases in wholesaling operations for seafood is prohibited in commercial zoning along Airlie. Increased truck traffic generated by such operations, including tractor trailers along Stokley Drive, should be discouraged.

The existing unpaved alley known as Allen's Lane should be improved and widened as much as possible. Future redevelopment of some of the mobile park properties should be coordinated with the improvement of that road.

(D) PARKING

The commercial uses squeezed between the Waterway and the pavement's edge out parking spaces at a premium. To date, requests for increased parking to be located on the residential side of Airlie have been denied by the County Commissioners. Obviously, competition for parking spaces greatly increases during the summer.

More control and enforcement of the County's parking regulations are needed so that maximum utilization of the existing parking areas is achieved. Parking along the pavement's edge should be eliminated completely while joint use of certain parking lots between commercial uses should be encouraged. Intrusions and encroachments into residential areas should be severely scrutinized so as to minimize any adverse impacts.

(E) PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE WAYS

Long term plans for bicycle routes linking Wrightsville Beach with the downtown areas utilize Airlie Road.

The scenic qualities of the road make it an attractive route for both riders and joggers. Any acquisition for rights-of-way or easements should take into account these multiple uses so that pedestrians and bicyclists can continue to enjoy this recreational asset.

The mingling of pedestrians and cars during the peak tourist season creates additional problems that presently are not accommodated along Airlie. Pedestrian cross-overs and walkways should be clearly marked and identified in order to caution the driver and to segregate, as much as possible, cars from people.

(F) ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Airlie Road is located along an estuarine shoreline paralleling Bradley Creek and Wrightsville Sound. These waters experience a great deal of pollution due to improperly located or maintained septic tanks and urban runoff from the upper watershed areas. Further development in Class IV soils should be discouraged. Efforts to hasten the installation of a sewage system along developed shorelines such as Airlie should be encouraged. Impervious surfaces should be minimized and the use of porous paving materials should be substituted where possible. The potential for flooding or hurricane damage should be considered in future development.

Because of the close proximity of commercial and residential land uses, extra care is needed to ensure that adequate buffering and screening is provided when new uses are established. Similarly, outside lighting should be directed away from residential areas. Litter sometimes poses a problem that could be eliminated with better use of garbage receptacles and with appropriate fencing and screening of storage areas to minimize wind blown trash.

(G) SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following list summarizes some of the major recommendations for actions:

- Retain the R-20 classification
- Do not expand the commercial areas.
- Amend the B-1 classifications, allowing only neighborhood uses and imposing height or bulk controls on structures.
- Establish means and methods to retain public access and protect waterfront vistas.
- Minimize the adverse impacts of developing the large vacant acreages along Airlie Road.
- Provide better traffic control for access to and from the business areas.
- Restrict further truck traffic associated with wholesaling.
- Enforce parking and traffic regulations.
- Eliminate parking along the shoulders of Airlie Road.
- Develop easements, paths, and crosswalks for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Encourage the provision of a public sewer system.
- Initiate and improve drainage and run-off systems in the neighborhood.



VII REFERENCES AND CREDITS

CREDITS

Among the many officials and citizens who gave generously of their time and knowledge are the following, whose contributions to the Plan are gratefully acknowledged:

PARTICIPANTS:

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Mary Ellis
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Dr. Robert Furr
Buddy Gerald
Jay Gerald
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Getz
Wanda and George Hayden
Laura Head
Mr. & Mrs. Ezra Hester
Bob Heyward
James Jackson
Rev. Wylie C. Lackson
Betty Johnson

Henry & Lorene Johnson
William & Dorothy Jones
Maybert Lance
Estell Lee
Roberta Loughlin
Alma Mallory
Helen McCarl
Martha McTyre
Helen & Judith Morris
Garland Palmer
Jay & Kitty Parker
Horace Pearsall, Jr.
Ray & Trudy Pearson
Elizabeth Roush
Marilyn Roush
A. L. Schomp III
Kay Sebian
Edward & Annie May Southerland
Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Stofford, Jr.
Stella Stone
Mr. & Mrs. H. M. Swayne
Charles Vernon
Gerry & Everett Williamson

...and many more...

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ADDENDUM

SUMMARY OF APPROVED ACTIONS

The following list outlines the major policy actions and recommendations approved by the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners in their adoption of Airlie Road... A Sense of Place:

- Retain the R-20 classification
- Do not expand the commercial areas
- Amend the B-1 classification, allowing only neighborhood uses and imposing height or bulk controls on structures
- Establish means and methods to retain public access and protect waterfront vistas
- Minimize the adverse impacts of developing the large vacant acreages along Airlie Road
- Provide better traffic control for access to and from the business areas
- Improve truck traffic associated with commercial uses
- Enforce parking and traffic regulations
- Eliminate parking along the shoulders of Airlie Road and encourage County Sheriff enforcement
- Develop easements, paths, and crosswalks for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Encourage the provision of a public sewer system
- Initiate and improve drainage and run-off systems in the neighborhood
- Pursue a special zoning district for water-dependent uses
- Reduce the speed limit of Airlie Road to twenty-five miles per hour

Adopted this 2nd day of May, 1983.

Karen E. Gottovi
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

Russell L. Smith
Clerk to the Board

