

# CURRITUCK COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT



## Letter From Planning Department

This past year, 2008, has been productive for our department. Planning staff has overhauled the development review process, created a development review manual, embarked on the Currituck Goes Green Environmental Initiative, and initiated a small area planning effort in the Maple area. These projects are highlighted in the following pages. In 2008, the Planning Board processed 84 cases and many more administrative approvals were given at the staff level. The Planning Department's workload remained steady despite the sluggish economy allowing staff to work on other planning projects and long-range planning efforts.

In the past year the Planning Department welcomed a new Senior Planner, Holly White, and promoted a new Planner I, Jason Litteral. The new senior planner is intended to allow the department to focus more on long-range planning activities. Long-range planning focuses on creating and updating plans and policies with an eye toward the future, as opposed to reviewing and processing development proposals. This places the county in a more proactive position to prepare for growth and mitigate development impacts to the community anticipating an upturn in the economy.

The Currituck County Planning Department does and will continue to be responsive to community needs in the coming year. We strive to look for solutions rather than obstacles when assisting the public. The Planning Department will work diligently toward accomplishing the goals set forth by the Board of Commissioners making Currituck a better place to live, work, and visit. We hope that the information found in this report will be useful and informative to our citizens as we continue to plan for Currituck's future.

## 2008 Planning Board

Forrest Midgette, Chairman  
Robert Bell  
Joe Kovacs  
Elizabeth Turner  
Arthur Winter

Alvin Keel, Vice Chairman  
William Etheridge  
Bren Robbins  
Manly West

## 2008 Board of Adjustment

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Bryan Bass  
Ralph Jones  
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Paul Beaumont, Vice Chairman  
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## 2008 Board of Commissioners

Barry Nelms, Chairman  
Ernie Bowden  
J. Owen Etheridge

Gene Gregory, Vice-Chairman  
Janet Taylor



# DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS



A revised development review process (DRP) was established by the Board of Commissioners in November as a means to expedite and approve development proposals. The process ensures that development is consistent with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and adopted plans.

The purpose of the DRP is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. It allows the county to coordinate development impacts with the provision of services. It also provides for communication and problem solving among developers, engineers, and governmental agencies.

In January 2008 the Board of Commissioners held a retreat at which the existing DRP was discussed. The issues identified at the retreat included:

- Frustration with process among regular users (staff and engineers)
- Local governments need an efficient review process to remain competitive
- Process is dated and fragmented, resulting in conflicting procedures and/or requirements
- Legal issues exist with regard to legal vesting of subdivisions
- Administration of process is cumbersome for staff

Public input was also obtained by mailing surveys to 36 government agencies and to 38 engineers, surveyors, and developers, and by holding a public meeting. Following are some of the issues identified through the public input stage:

- Clarify submittal/review deadlines
- Update checklists, submittal requirements, and applications
- Shorter approval time
- Better communication
- Utilize electronic communication

Based upon all comments received, staff examined the existing DRP and proposed a revised DRP that addressed the concerns listed above. In summary, submission requirements were specified, approval processes were abbreviated, and staff created a Development Review Process Manual. The revised DRP promotes efficiency and allows more staff time and resources to be dedicated to other planning efforts; however, it does not impact the overall integrity of the process. The manual includes information on review processes, submittal procedures, and design requirements. By including detailed information in a manual rather than the UDO, the DRP will remain fluid and reflective of current trends.



## Sketch Plans

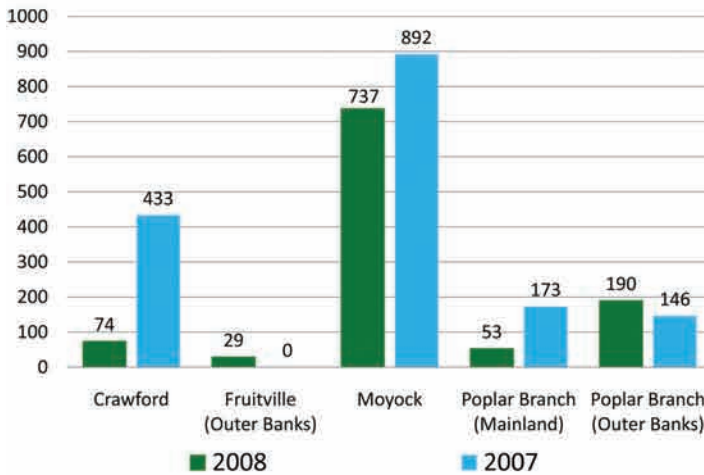


Chart represents the number of lots approved for sketch plan. A sketch plan is a conceptual layout of a subdivision. Approval does not permit any construction activity to occur, this ensures future development is consistent with the availability of county resources.

## Final Plats

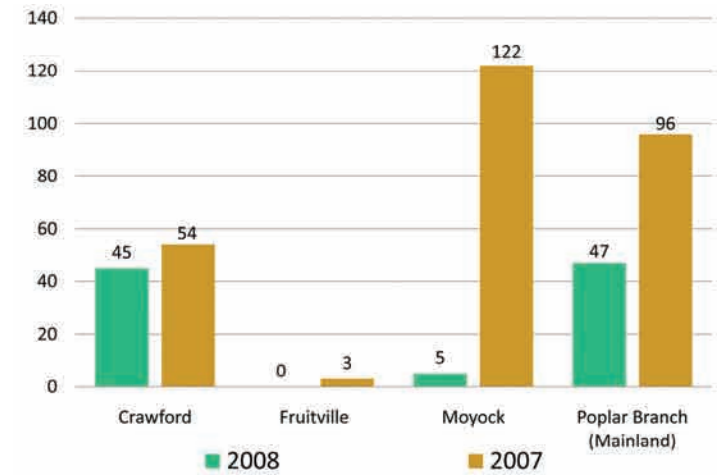
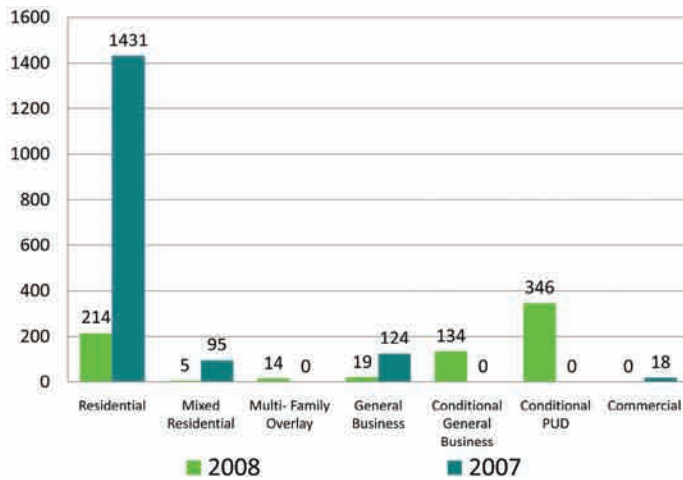


Chart represents the number of lots approved for final plat. A final plat represents the layout of a subdivision and is filed with the Register of Deeds. Approval allows for building permits to be issued.

## Rezoning

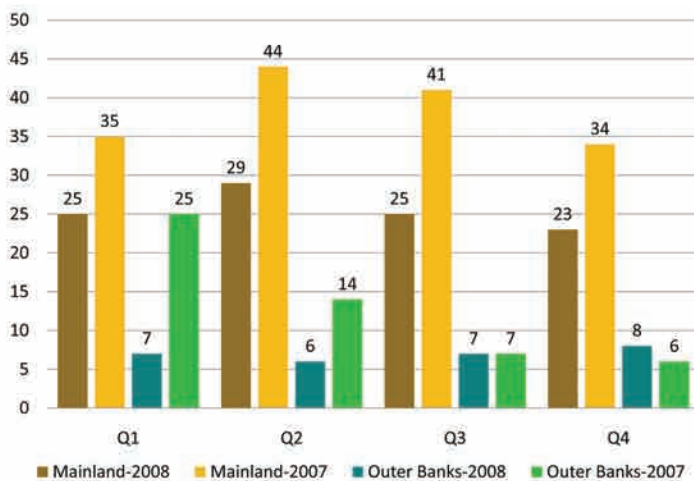


Gross acreage rezoned in 2008 vs. 2007 by zoning district.



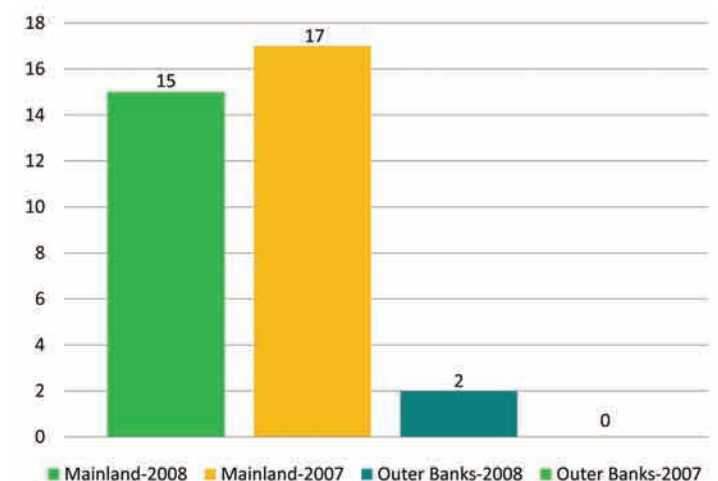
Shingle Landing - Before and After

## Residential Building Permits



The total number of new residential structures permitted in Currituck County during 2008 vs. 2007.

## Commercial Building Permits



The total number of new commercial structures permitted in Currituck County during 2008 vs. 2007.

# SITE PLANS

## TULLS CREEK CENTER

In the Spring 2008 Wheeler Interest, Inc. received site plan approval for the construction of a 5-unit commercial building totaling 8,070 square feet. The proposed development at 100 Currituck Commercial Drive will include 6,070 square feet of retail and a 36-seat restaurant. The site work for the projected development is currently in progress.

## HASTINGS & JERNIGAN, INC.

In the Fall of 2008 Hasting & Jernigan, Inc. received preliminary site plan approval for the construction of 5-unit commercial building totaling 6,000 square feet. The proposed development at 106 Currituck Commercial Drive will include 3,600 square feet of retail and a 2,400 square foot laundromat. The construction of this project has not commenced.

## COROLLA GREENWAY

The Corolla Greenway project encompasses approximately 2.2 acres including a trailhead, 1.06 mile greenway (10' wide, multi-use path), 6,242 square foot pocket park, and two (2) elevated wildlife observation platforms. This project is centrally located in an area considered to be the hub of cultural, historical, and ecological learning opportunities on the Currituck Outer Banks. There are more destinations within close proximity to one another than in any other area of Currituck County. The proposed greenway will also serve five adjacent subdivisions with over 589 residential structures.

There is a true need for multi – use paths in this area. Currently, cyclists and pedestrians in Corolla are using a widened shoulder of NC Highway 12, which lacks sufficient width for multi-modal transportation and fails to provide adequate separation from highway traffic. The Corolla Greenway will be the first County sponsored multi – use path on the Currituck Outer Banks.

## YO HO TOWN

In the Fall of 2008 Yo Ho Town, Inc. received site plan approval for the proposed construction of a 5-unit commercial building totaling 8,448 square feet. The planned development at 102 Rosabelle Court will include 5,610 square feet of retail and a 57-seat restaurant. The construction of this project has not commenced.

## COINJOCK MARINA AND RESTAURANT

In the Spring of 2008 New Coinjock Investors of North Carolina, Inc. received site plan approval for the construction of a 31-seat outdoor dining area. The dining area was an addition to the existing restaurant and bathhouse. The construction of the project is complete.

A survey conducted in conjunction with the preparation of the Currituck County Recreation and Parks Master Plan revealed that 81.2% of applicants believed that constructing additional recreational facilities and services was very important. It also found a strong need for more diverse recreational settings especially resource based parks for picnicking, walking, biking, camping, boat access, etc. The County is committed to providing additional recreational facilities now and for future generations.

The Corolla Greenway Project will serve as the backbone for future recreational projects on the Currituck Outer Banks. The County envisions interconnecting the entire Corolla area - approximately 11.6 miles. The Corolla Greenway is an important step for the County in providing the additional recreational facilities the public demands and is a great opportunity to build a dynamic recreational opportunity that the entire community can enjoy.



# MAJOR PROJECTS

## COINJOCK MEADOWS

Coinjock Meadows, located along Worth Guard Road in Crawford Township, is a 48 unit planned residential development. The 36.68 acre subdivision, developed by Ocean Builders, is marketed as an affordable, workforce housing neighborhood with 36 single family dwelling units and 12 multi-family dwelling units. Coinjock Meadows features such amenities as concrete sidewalks along the streets, a mulched trail, a .72-acre community garden, a .72-acre multipurpose field, a picnic pavilion, a half court basketball court, a playground, and a small pier. Phase 1 of the development consists of 28 single family lots located on an average lot size of 20,973 square feet, and received final plat approval in December 2008.

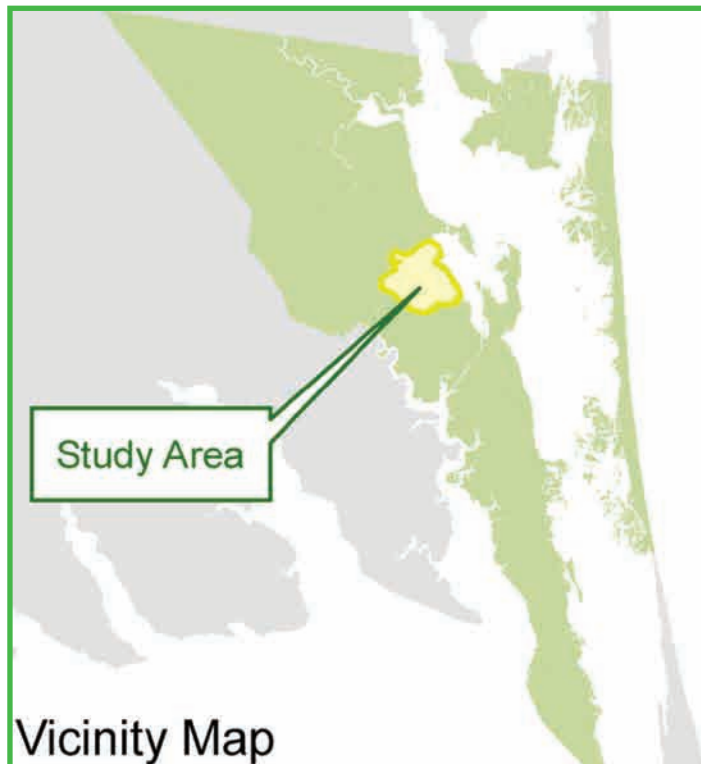


## MAPLE- BARCO SMALL AREA PLAN

In 2008, the Planning Department kicked off its' first small area plan effort in the Maple-Barco vicinity as directed by the Board of Commissioners. A small area plan is specific to a well-defined geographic area and includes considerable detail and specific objectives. Due to the narrow focus, it often encourages greater participation by property owners, residents, and business owners. The plan itself is not a regulatory document, but rather recommends official policies and regulatory actions. Once adopted, the plan represents

the official policy direction of the Board of Commissioners and will guide future growth and development for a specific area of the county.

The primary purpose of the Maple-Barco Small Area Plan is to balance growth and economic expansion with the integrity and character of the existing community. This includes taking into account the growth of the airport facility, protecting county resources such as drinking water, preserving the agrarian heritage of the area, and maintaining a high quality of life for current and future residents. This is done with the guidance of the professional planning staff and input from local residents.



In the Fall of 2008, an advisory committee was organized to assist staff with initial feedback from residents that would represent the interests of the larger community and stakeholders. This advisory committee is comprised of members from the Planning Board, Economic Advisory Board, Tourism Board, Airport Advisory Board, and a citizen at large member. The committee was asked to identify opportunities for positive growth and obstacles that could be a threat to the planning process and positive development of the area. In addition, the group was asked to envision the Maple area in ten years as well as to determine what makes the area unique from other areas of the County. With the help of the advisory committee, Staff has developed a set of draft policy statements. In the upcoming year, Planning Staff will hold a public outreach opportunity for the Maple-Barco communities that provides citizens with the opportunity to review the draft policies and provide feedback. A copy of the draft small area plan will be completed by Summer 2009.

Information about the small area plan can be viewed on the Planning Department website at [www.co.currituck.nc.us/planning.cfm](http://www.co.currituck.nc.us/planning.cfm).

# CURRITUCK GOES GREEN SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

In the Fall 2008, the Planning Department and Cooperative Extension began collaborating on a sustainability initiative. This initiative will provide leadership, education, and opportunities that will help government, citizens, and businesses function in a way that conserves, protects, enhances, and sustains our environment and natural resources now and for future generations. Environmental stewardship was ranked as the number one priority for Currituck County citizens in a recent needs assessment performed by Cooperative Extension. Growing concern for our natural resources continue to rise. Currituck County has experienced a population increase of 31.7% over the last 7 years with a current population of 24,183. This exponential growth can fuel sprawling patterns of land development that could threaten the environment, public health, and quality of life.

## THE COST OF SPRAWL

*Did you know that residential development in North Carolina actually costs local governments more than it contributes in property taxes?*

*Example: Residential development in Alamance County contributes 68 cents to the county for every dollar of public services used. That's a 32 cent average LOSS to the county.*

*On the other hand, farm and forestland in Alamance County contributes \$1.69 to the county for every dollar of services used - That's a 69 cent GAIN!*

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is not an 'environmental' movement, but a community movement. It is the belief that humans are a part of the ecosystem, and we need to learn to integrate our economic and social lives into the environment in ways that maintain and enhance the environment rather than degrade or destroy it. Sustainability is about understanding the connections between and achieving balance among the social, economic, and environmental components of a community. Creating sustainable communities requires that we understand how our needs and desires are intertwined: a healthy economy helps to make housing affordable; environmental quality affects human health; poverty and health affect how well students learn; well educated workers are necessary for a healthy economy. All these different issues and needs are interconnected.



## GREEN BUILDING

by Justin Old, Quality Homes

As a result of the current expenditure rate of natural resources, statistics show that the number of hours families spend at home is increasing while the abundance of natural resources continues to decrease. Therefore, as a local builder, Quality Homes of Currituck feels that they should play their part to balance the equation.

After extensively studying and researching Green Building, Quality Homes of Currituck has earned several certifications through US Green Building Council and has learned through experience that there are countless benefits associated with Green Building.

Green Building offers a healthier, more efficient way of living that can save the home owner thousands of dollars annually. In fact, the Quality Homes' "Green Project" has helped to branch away from traditional building concepts in order to offer the homeowner a more contemporary and mainstream style of construction. Additionally, Quality Homes' "Green Project" home was designed and built using strict guidelines that comply with state and national certification requirements such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), N.C Healthy Built Homes, and Energy Star, making it not only environmental friendly but also a quality design.

