

# Town of River Bend

## COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

2026

DRAFT



## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following members of the Town of River Bend community for their input and participation on the Comprehensive Plan. Your insights and expertise helped guide this plan.

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# Introduction

## Why Plan Our Town?

The purpose of the *Town of River Bend – Comprehensive Land Use Plan* (hereinafter referred to as “Town Plan”) is to provide information and perspective used to plan and prioritize actions to support a resilient, self-sustaining community. The Town Plan must outline goals and strategies to perpetuate and improve upon the livability and desirability of the Town of River Bend. The Town Plan should encourage growth opportunities, while maintaining the character and resources essential to River Bend. Information within the Town Plan should serve as the basis for future development decisions.

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*River Bend – On the river, around the bend.*

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## About Town Planning

Long term planning for the future of a community is vitally important. The Comprehensive Plan is one of two key documents that the Town develops and uses to plan, finance, and implement projects and programs. Our Capital Improvement Plan estimates the costs for specific projects and finances them over a 5-year period. The Comprehensive Plan is structured to provide an overview of a community’s existing conditions and features. The main function of the plan is to serve as a guide to a community’s future development policy. The goals of a comprehensive land use plan are to:

- » develop a long-term vision,
- » address what should be maintained or changed to achieve that vision,
- » identify future land uses in an overall community-wide context,
- » identify and prioritize needed future infrastructure improvement aimed at supporting the vision, and
- » provide implementation guidance as to the private and public investment strategies to realize the vision.

Planning is an ongoing process! Part of the process is monitoring the plan’s progress as a fluid document that should be regularly updated to reflect changing conditions.

## Official State Policy

The State of North Carolina requires local governments in NC General Statute 160D, effective January 1, 2021, to adopt a plan to be eligible for certain funding, powers, and authority. The plan is to be used as an assurance to the public that local decisions are made with a perspective on the future implications of pending decisions, and to affirm that public accountability and fiscal responsibility are considered as part of the decision-making process.

Decisions made about public spending and growth can often appear centered around individuals involved and how they may benefit. When governing board decisions adhere to an adopted plan, those individual interests are balanced with others affected by the outcome of decisions, which include citizens, property owners, and businesses.

## Statutory Reference

*Town of River Bend – Comprehensive Land Use Plan* shall serve as the adopted plan pursuant to §N.C.G.S. 160D in the planning and regulation of development.

# About River Bend

## Vision Statement

The Town of River Bend strives to be a strong community that values its history and neighborhood feel while embracing growth to become a vibrant place that offers a variety of quality opportunities for residents of all ages to live and actively participate in our community.

## Town History

The area now known as the Town of River Bend began as a robust tobacco plantation of 1,200 acres owned by the Odd Fellows – a fraternal group of black tenant farmers collectively working and farming together. During the recession of 1914, this group sold the land to the W.S. Clark Company – a leading supplier and farm supplies and general merchandise at the time. In 1964, Frank Efird moved to New Bern, established the Efird Company, and began looking for large tracts of land to develop with single-family homes. As small tenant farming was declining, the Clark family sold the Odd Fellow farm to the Efird Company in October 1967 for \$486,000.

The first family moved to what was then known as River Bend Plantation in July 1969. As demand for more housing, and new housing options increased, new sections of River Bend Plantation were developed. As the population grew, the need for community services also grew. The still active Rhems Volunteer Fire Department was established entirely by residents, completing all the necessary paperwork, raising money for the original construction, and performing manual labor during the construction.

In 1977, after much discussion, several community members met to discuss the possibility of incorporating River Bend Plantation into a town. The initial vote resulted in the residents deciding against incorporation. The idea was revived in 1980, and this time, with a vote of 298 residents in favor versus 224 opposed, the project to incorporate moved forward. In 1981, the Town of River Bend was officially incorporated and held a festival celebrating the event on July 25, 1981.

Since incorporating, the Town has continued to evolve. In 1986 the Town acquired the land that currently houses the Town Hall and adjacent park. Over the years, additional parks and municipal buildings have been added – most recently a new building that houses meeting spaces for community events and our police department, and a new building for our Public Works department. The Town manages and operates its own water and sewer system. Community volunteers operate and manage the Red Caboose Library and an active Community Watch organization.

In 2001, the Town transitioned to a Council-Manager form of government. A Town Manager was hired to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Town, including supervising the staff, developing and administering the annual budget, and performing a variety of other tasks to carry out the vision of the elected Council.

Through tireless efforts of the residents of the Town, the Town Council, the Advisory Boards, and the Town staff, the Town of River Bend has evolved from a small, residential neighborhood to a dynamic community which offers unique business opportunities while still maintaining a neighborhood feeling.

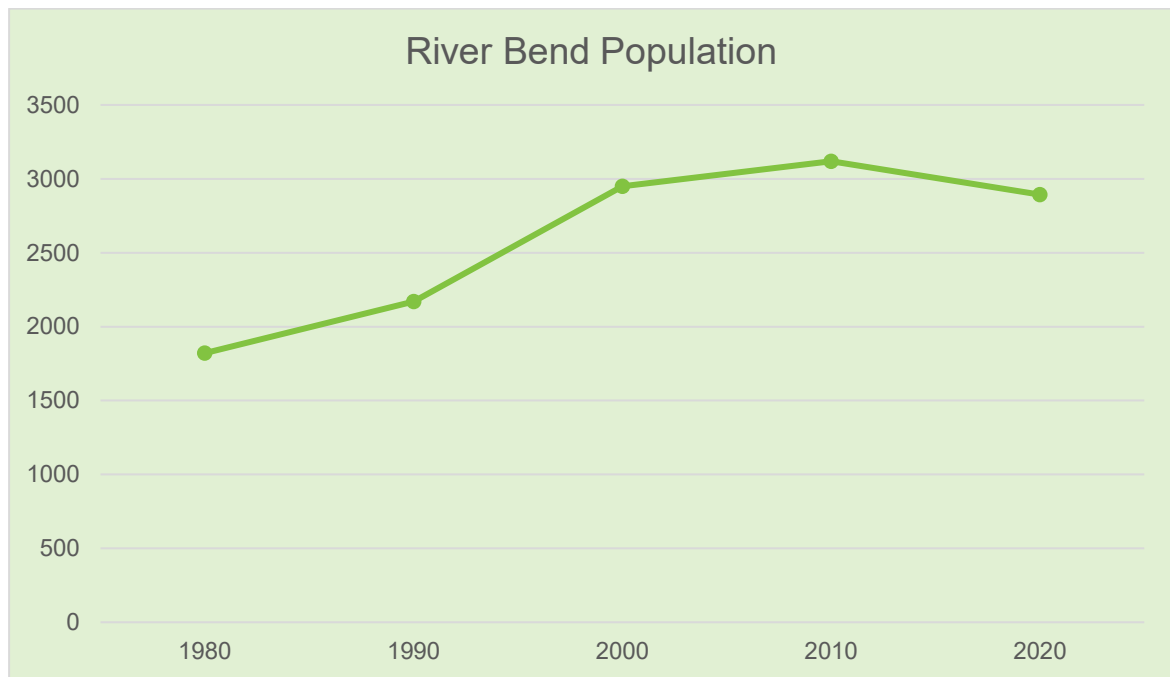
# Community Profile

## Population

### Historic Population Growth

Geographic Area	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
River Bend	1,821	2,170	2,949	3,119	2,894
Craven County	71,285	82,131	91,954	104,180	100,646
North Carolina	5,896,178	6,664,016	8,081,614	9,574,586	10,449,445

### Historic Population Growth Rates (US Census Bureau)



### Population Projections

Geographic Area	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Craven County	100,646	103,334	103,336	103,335	103,335
North Carolina	10,449,445	11,743,841	12,966,080	14,170,486	15,369,596

### Population Projections (NC Office of State Budget & Management)

## Age/Sex/Race/Education

Median age is the age that divides the total age frequency into two equal parts (e.g., half of individuals are older than the median age and half are younger). It is a good indicator to gauge whether a population is getting older. In 2023, the median age of all people in the Town of River Bend was 52.5, about 35% higher than the median age in both Craven County and North Carolina.

Median Age by Sex	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Total Population	52.5	39.0	39.4
Male	53.3	35.5	37.8
Female	51.9	42.7	41.0

### S0101 – Age & Sex (US Census Bureau)

The Town of River Bend skews older – particularly compared with Craven County and North Carolina – with most citizens falling into the 40+ age category.

Population by Age Range	Town of River Bend		Craven County		North Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	2,896		102,391		10,835,491	
0 to 9 years	111	3.8%	11,488	11.2%	1,235,975	11.4%
10 to 19 years	253	8.7%	13,393	13.1%	1,388,048	12.8%
20 to 29 years	242	8.4%	13,538	13.2%	1,424,474	13.1%
30 to 39 years	287	9.9%	13,938	13.6%	1,445,930	13.3%
40 to 49 years	470	16.2%	10,041	9.8%	1,355,073	12.5%
50 to 59 years	420	14.5%	10,587	10.3%	1,375,569	12.7%
60 to 69 years	499	17.2%	14,881	14.5%	1,319,960	12.2%
70 to 79 years	434	15.0%	10,050	9.8%	891,828	8.2%
80 years and over	180	6.2%	4,475	4.4%	398,634	3.7%

### S0101 – Age & Sex (US Census Bureau)

In 2023, 55.8% of River Bend residents were women, which was markedly higher than both Craven County and North Carolina.

Population by Sex	Town of River Bend		Craven County		North Carolina	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	2,896		102,391		10,835,491	
Male	1,280	44.2%	51,272	50.1%	5,312,054	49.0%
Female	1,616	55.8%	51,119	49.9%	5,523,437	51.0%

### S0101 – Age & Sex (US Census Bureau)

In the Town of River Bend, for people reporting one race alone, 83.7% were White; 12.6% were Black or African American; and 0.5% were some other race. An estimated 3.1% of people in River Bend reported two or more races.

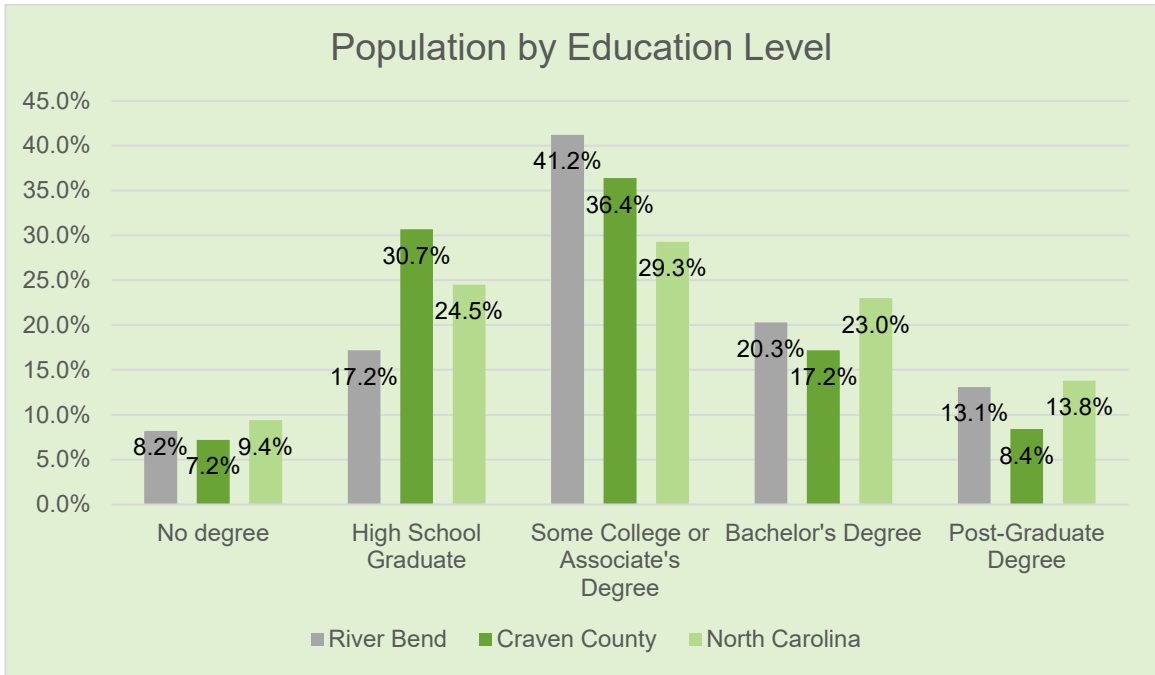
<b>Race &amp; Hispanic or Latino Origin</b>	<b>Town of River Bend</b>	<b>Craven County</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
Total Population	2896	102,391	10,835,491
White	83.7%	65.2%	61.4%
Black or African American	12.6%	17.6%	20.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4%	0.0%	1.0%
Asian	0.0%	3.1%	3.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Some other race	0.0%	3.9%	5.7%
Two or more races	3.1%	10.0%	8.3%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	3.3%	7.8%	11.4%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	80.4%	63.8%	59.8%

#### S0601 – Selected Characteristics (US Census Bureau)

Almost 92% of River Bend residents have a high school degree or higher. Over 33% have a Bachelor's degree or higher.

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Town of River Bend</b>		<b>Craven County</b>		<b>North Carolina</b>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Population 25 years and over	2,348		70,552		7,487,552	
Less than high school graduate	192	8.2%	5,054	7.2%	705,856	9.4%
High school graduate	405	17.2%	21,685	30.7%	1,831,714	24.5%
Some college or associate's degree	967	41.2%	25,709	36.4%	2,195,061	29.3%
Bachelor's degree	477	20.3%	12,168	17.2%	1,718,641	23.0%
Graduate or professional degree	307	13.1%	5,936	8.4%	1,036,280	13.8%

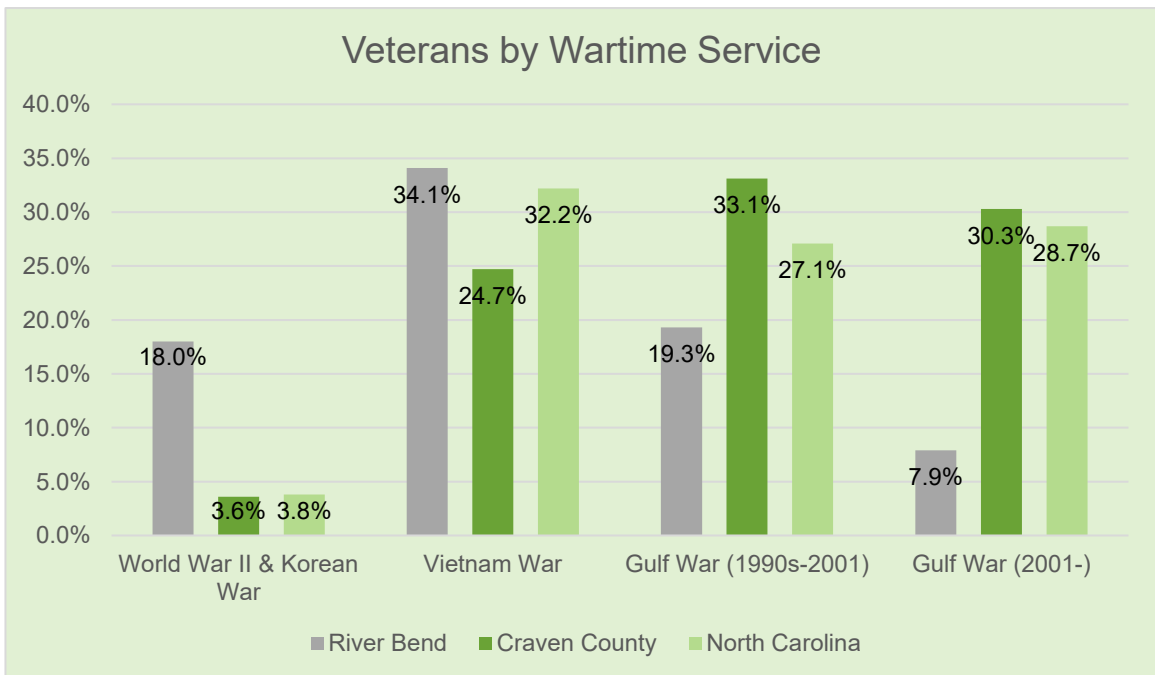
#### S1501 – Educational Attainment (US Census Bureau)



S1501 – Educational Attainment (US Census Bureau)

### Veterans & Military

In 2022, 14.3% of River Bend's population had veteran status; River Bend had 378 total veterans – 294 males and 84 females. A higher share of Craven County's population had veteran status (15.7%); Craven County had 11,506 total veterans – 9,752 males and 1,754 females. River Bend had a significantly higher share of veterans who served in World War II and/or the Korean War (18.0%) than both Craven County (3.6%) and North Carolina (3.8%), and a much lower share of veterans who served in the most recent Gulf War (7.9%) compared to Craven County (30.3%) and North Carolina (28.7%).



S2101 – Veteran Status (US Census Bureau)

**Household Characteristics**

In 2023, the Town of River Bend had 1,345 total households and 875 family households (65.1%). River Bend had an average household size of 2.05 persons, slightly lower than Craven County’s average household size of 2.39 persons and North Carolina’s average household size of 2.40 persons.

Household Size	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Total Households	1,345	41,100	4,392,669
1-Person Household	28.1%	29.7%	29.1%
2-Person Household	50.2%	36.1%	36.2%
3-Person Household	15.6%	16.8%	15.4%
4-or-More-Person Household	6.1%	17.3%	19.3%

**S2501 – Occupancy Characteristics (US Census Bureau)**

Among persons 15 years of age and older, 63.5% of males and 54.0% of females are currently married, which is higher than the percentages in both Craven County and North Carolina. Consequently, the population of persons who have never married in River Bend is lower when compared to Craven County and North Carolina.

Marital Status	Town of River Bend		Craven County		North Carolina	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Population 15 years and over	1,215	1,481	41,461	43,187	4,329,463	4,611,456
Now Married	63.5%	54.0%	47.9%	45.6%	51.6%	47.0%
Widowed	1.2%	14.6%	4.0%	9.1%	2.8%	8.6%
Divorced	15.1%	9.7%	8.4%	12.6%	8.8%	11.9%
Separated	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	2.7%	1.6%	2.2%
Never Married	20.2%	19.9%	37.7%	28.7%	35.2%	30.2%

**S1201 – Marital Status (US Census Bureau)**

## Occupancy & Housing Costs

Vacancy Status	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Total Housing Units	1,627	48,300	4,979,177
Vacant Housing Units	282	7,200	586,508
For Rent	30.1%	12.2%	17.4%
Rented, Unoccupied	0.0%	3.6%	4.0%
For Sale	0.0%	4.5%	6.0%
Sold, Unoccupied	0.0%	4.7%	3.2%
Seasonal/Occasional Use	25.5%	19.7%	32.5%
Other Vacant	44.3%	37.7%	36.6%

### B25004 – Vacancy Status (US Census Bureau)

In 2023, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in the Town of River Bend was \$233,700, which is slightly higher than that of Craven County (\$229,500). Most homes in River Bend fall within the \$200,000-\$299,999 value range.

Value	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,188	28,487	2,913,467
Under \$100,000	3.4%	20.3%	12.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	11.7%	8.0%	7.0%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	23.7%	12.4%	9.5%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	37.1%	26.6%	19.9%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	19.2%	21.6%	29.5%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	5.0%	10.1%	18.4%
\$1,000,000 or More	0.0%	1.1%	3.6%

### DP04 – Selected Housing Characteristics (US Census Bureau)

Homeowners with and without mortgages have ongoing monthly costs. The selected costs used for these estimates include payments for mortgages or other debts on the property, real estate taxes, insurance, utilities, and other related costs. The median Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) in the Town of River Bend were slightly below the median costs in both Craven County and North Carolina.

Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC)	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Housing Units with a Mortgage	680	14,291	1,785,195
Less than \$500	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
\$500 - \$999	7.9%	16.9%	16.1%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	68.1%	39.0%	28.7%

\$1,500 - \$1,999	14.7%	23.6%	22.7%
\$2,000 - \$2,499	4.0%	8.5%	14.0%
\$2,500 - \$2,999	2.9%	8.1%	7.1%
\$3,000 or More	2.4%	3.8%	10.1%
Median SMOC	\$1,332	\$1,424	\$1,578

DP04 – Selected Housing Characteristics (US Census Bureau)

**Economic Characteristics**

In 2023, the per capita income in the Town of River Bend was \$38,496 and the median household income was \$68,314. In Craven County both the per capita income (\$36,111) and median household income (\$59,399) were lower than the Town of River Bend. However, Craven County had a higher percentage of households in the \$150,000+ range (11.9%) compared to the Town of River Bend (9.8%).

Household Income	Town of River Bend	Craven County	North Carolina
Total Households	1,345	41,100	4,392,669
Less than \$10,000	3.4%	6.5%	5.2%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	0.0%	4.4%	3.6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	5.7%	9.7%	7.0%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	11.7%	7.8%	7.5%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13.2%	13.8%	11.9%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21.9%	17.2%	17.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	7.9%	11.8%	13.0%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	26.3%	17.0%	16.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	5.0%	5.3%	7.9%
\$200,000 or More	4.8%	6.6%	9.7%
Median Income	\$68,314	\$59,399	\$70,804
Mean Income	\$82,947	\$86,508	\$98,139

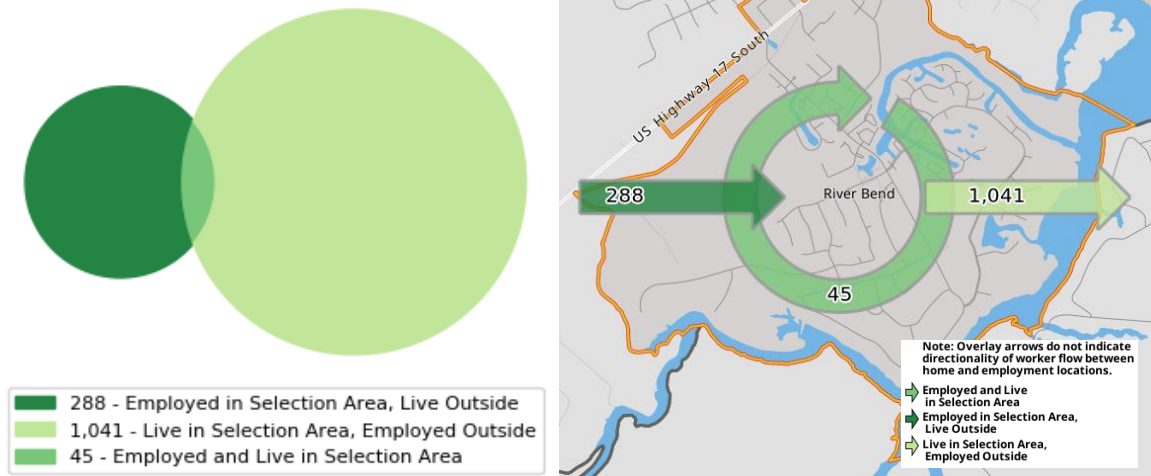
S1901 & B19301 – Income in the Past 12 Months (US Census Bureau)

Only 4.1% of River Bend residents are also employed within the Town of River Bend. 95.9% of residents are employed outside of the Town of River Bend. In Craven County, a significantly higher share of its residents are also employed in Craven County (48.9%); 51.1% of residents live within the county, but are employed elsewhere.

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs)	Town of River Bend		Craven County	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-753		-4,394	
Living in the Area	1,086	100.0%	38,453	100.0%
Living & Employed in the Area	45	4.1%	18,786	48.9%
Living in the Area, Employed Outside	1,041	95.9%	19,667	51.1%
Employed in the Area	333	100%	34,059	100.0%
Employed & Living in the Area	45	13.5%	18,786	55.2%
Employed in the Area, Living Outside	288	86.5%	15,273	44.8%

### Town of River Bend

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2022  
All Workers



LEHD, OnTheMap (US Census Bureau)

# Town Vision

River Bend is a dynamic and uniquely located waterfront and golfing community well prepared to benefit from the area's historical and natural resources. By protecting its assets and actively fostering a diverse multi-aged population, the River Bend community will continue to be a safe, attractive place to live and will be competitively positioned to participate in the broader area's economic and population growth.



## A Vision for the Future Looking Ahead

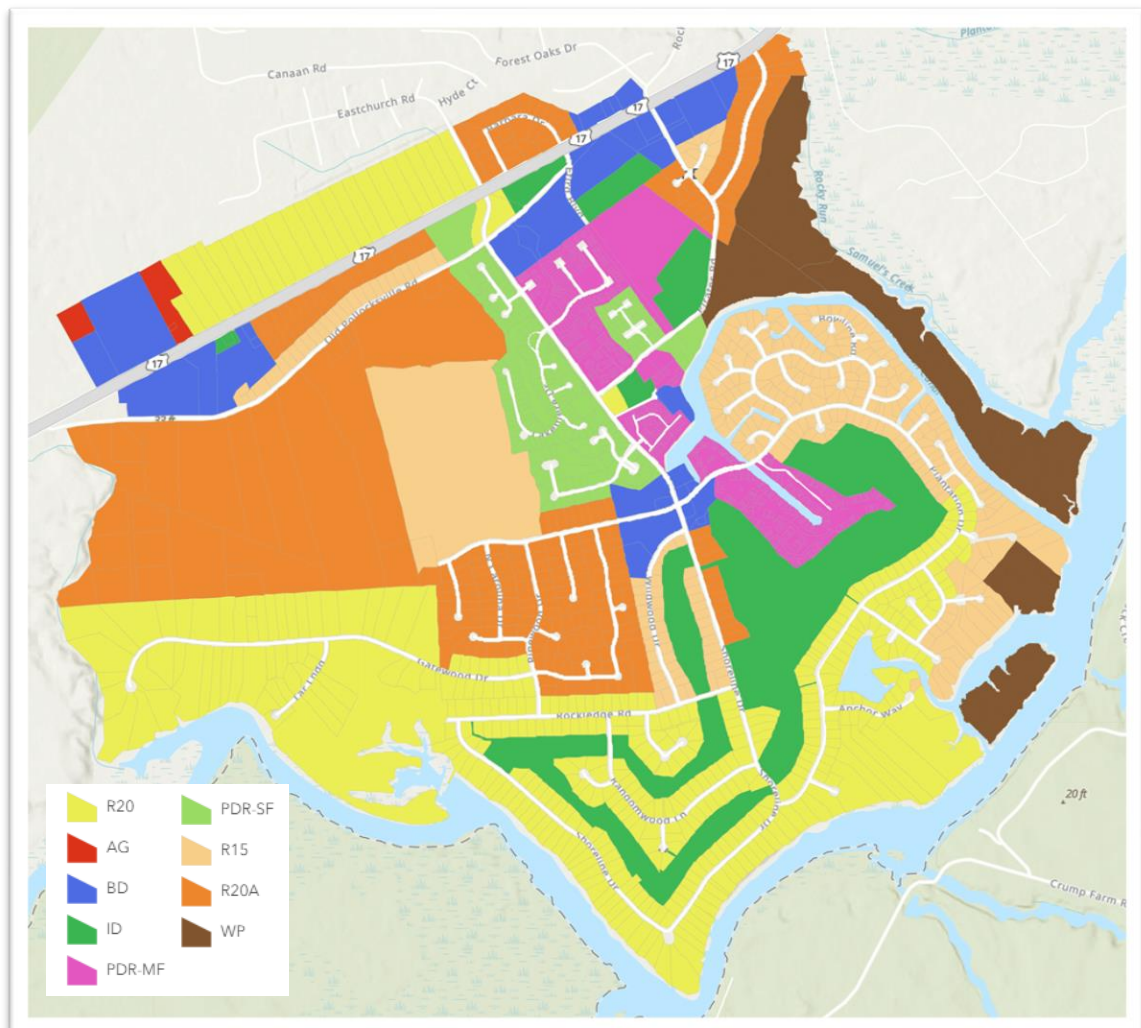
- » **Dynamic waterfront location** – The Town wants to take advantage of its unique location to encourage growth that fully utilizes the waterfront. A public kayak launch is available; considerations for a public boat launch should be made.
- » **A diverse multi-aged population** – The demographics of the Town have changed over the years. While it still trends to an older population, efforts should be made to encourage younger people and families to move to River Bend.
- » **Safe place to live** – The River Bend Police Department provides 24-hour coverage, seven days a week to provide timely response to emergency calls and practice proactive community policing. Our police force is continually looking for ways to improve to keep our citizens safe.
- » **Economic and population growth** – Our business district is relatively small but has seen some growth within recent years. The Town looks to encourage further business development and also new residential developments in the undeveloped areas of Town.

# Land Use Patterns & Community Resources

To better plan for the future of the River Bend community, it is important to understand the existing features of the area, including the existing land use and environmental constraints.

## Existing Land Use & Development

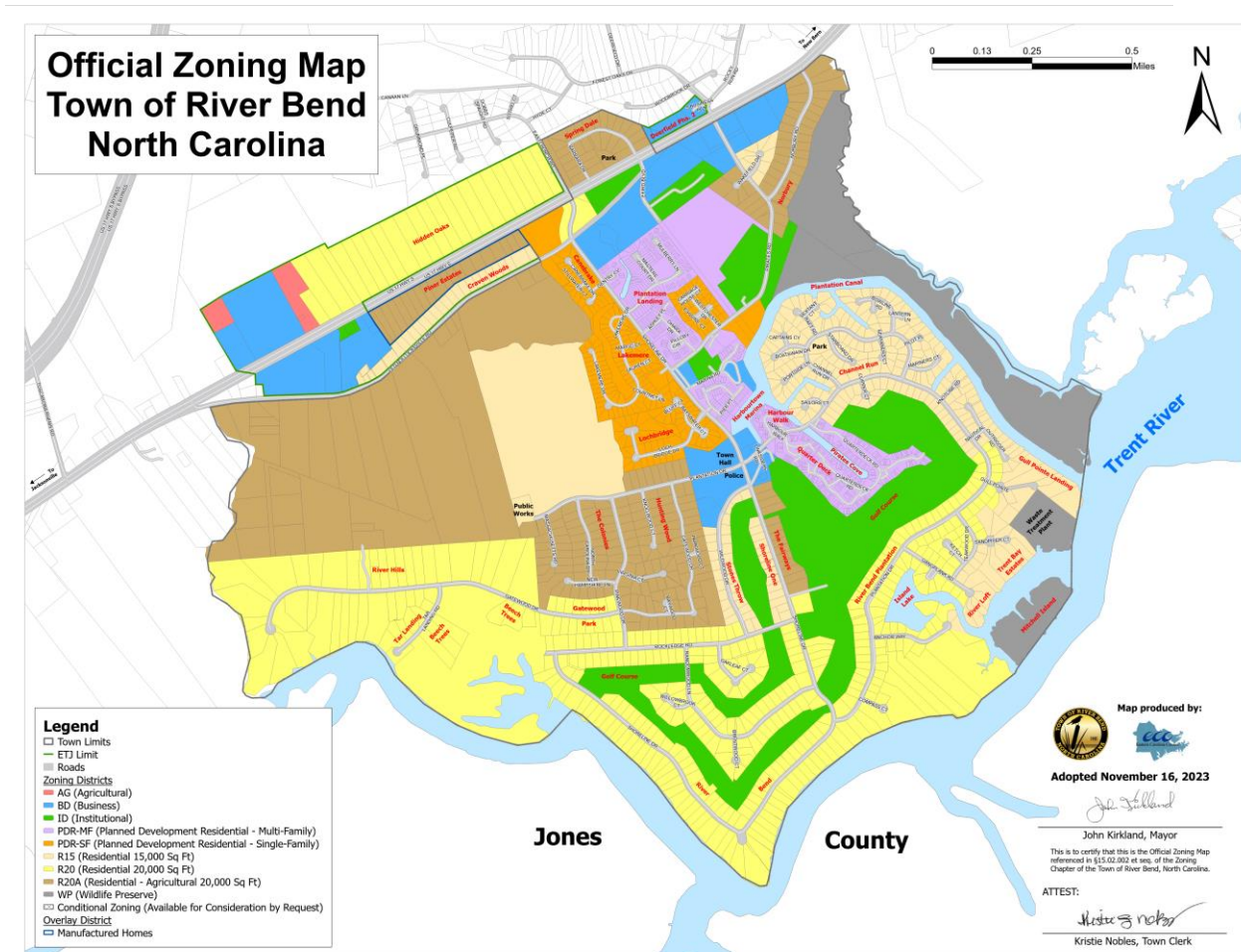
The Town of River Bend began as a residential development centered around an 18-hole golf course, 36-stall riding academy, and a marina. The first family moved into the new development in July 1969. Since then, there have been many residential subdivisions developed with a variety of housing options and a slow, but significant, increase in commercial and institutional development. The Town of River Bend remains primarily a residential community, and the majority of the undeveloped parcels are currently zoned for residential uses.



## Current Zoning (Map)

The following zoning classifications are contained within the Town of River Bend (both within the town limits and the ETJ):

- » AG (Agricultural) – designated as prime farmland
- » BD (Business) – commercial development for retail, office space, etc.
- » ID (Institutional) – established for churches, private clubs, academic facilities, health-related facilities, etc.
- » PDR-MF (Planned Development Residential – Multi-Family) – residential district with 1 and 2 story attached condominiums, apartments, and townhouses with no more than 4 dwelling units in a single building; no more than 6.5 dwellings per acre of land
- » PDR-SF (Planned Development Residential – Single-Family) – residential district for single-family detached dwellings; no more than 4 dwellings per acre of land
- » R15 (Residential) – residential district for single-family detached dwellings; minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet
- » R20 (Residential) – residential district for single-family detached dwellings; minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet
- » R20A (Residential/Agricultural) – designated for both agricultural and residential uses; minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet
- » WP (Wildlife Preserve) – established to protect the wetland habitat



## Current Land Use

These estimates include both property within the town limits and within the extra-territorial jurisdiction.

Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage	Subset
Agricultural	110	6.9%	
Commercial <sup>1</sup>	104	6.5%	
Civic	25		1.6%
Institutional <sup>2</sup>	166	10.4%	
Golf Course	141		8.8%
Residential <sup>3</sup>	1133	70.9%	
Undeveloped/Forested	368		23%
Wildlife Preserve	85	5.3%	
Total	1598 <sup>4</sup>	100%	33.4%

To clarify, the 'residential' category contains 1133 acres total, which represents 70.9% of the Town's land area. Within the residential category, there are 368 acres that are undeveloped and/or forested lands. Thus, that subset of the 'residential' category alone represents 23% of the Town's land area. The same logic applies to the golf course in relation to the 'institutional' category and the civic areas in relation to the 'commercial' category.

<sup>1</sup> Includes 'Civic' category.

<sup>2</sup> Includes 'Golf Course' category.

<sup>3</sup> Includes 'Undeveloped/Forested' category.

<sup>4</sup> Does not include subset areas.

## Community Facilities & Public Infrastructure

### Transportation & Traffic

The roadway network in the Town of River Bend primarily consists of secondary and local roads that connect with the main highway at the entrance of town. US Highway 17.

The Town of River Bend Police Department maintains a Traffic Unit to provide motor vehicle law enforcement combined with educational initiatives and accurate crash scene investigations to enhance the Town's quality of transportation. The team maintains close working relationships with other Town departments, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

### Parks & Recreation

The Town of River Bend has several recreational amenities for the enjoyment of residents of all ages.

- » Two playgrounds, one near Town Hall, and the other in the Springdale subdivision.
- » A skateboard park near Town Hall
- » A basketball court on Wildwood Drive near Public Works
- » A volleyball court on Town Commons
- » Two large "recreation" fields – Town Commons and Ritter Field - include a walking trail and fitness trail
- » A smaller "recreation" field at the corner of Starboard Drive/Channel Run Drive
- » Kayak / Canoe Launch to the Trent River
- » A dog park adjacent to the skateboard park

We also have a small picnic shelter (with restrooms), a gazebo in Town Hall Park, and two docks overlooking Town Hall pond.

## Natural Resources & Environmental Protection

### Water

Our water system withdraws from the Castle Hayne Aquifer through three wells with a combined capacity of 925,000 gallons per day. Two elevated storage tanks with a total capacity of 400,000 gallons ensure a consistent supply and adequate pressure throughout the system.

The water in the Castle Hayne Aquifer, while plentiful, requires treatment to remove iron and manganese. Using pH adjustment, pressure filters and adding chlorine, our operators ensure that clean water is ready for our customers to use.

Water is transmitted to nearly 1500 households through 19 miles of pipe ranging in size from 2 to 8 inches in diameter. In addition to providing water for consumption, our system also stands ready in the event of fire. There are 108 hydrants located throughout the system to give the fire department ample access to water for their work.

The Town of River Bend owns and operates a Wastewater Treatment and Collection system serving approximately 950 households and businesses. Wastewater is collected from our customers and transmitted via approximately 11 miles of gravity and force main pipes. Eight lift stations pressurize portions of the system, so the waste is efficiently moved to our treatment facility on Gull Pointe Drive.

For a three-bedroom home, the state standard for waste treatment usage is 330 gallons per day (110 gallons per bedroom). In theory, that would translate to 313,500 gallons per day of usage for

us. By that standard, we should be using 95% of our permitted capacity. In reality, on average, we only use about 36% of our permitted capacity.

The North Carolina Department of Water Quality (DWQ) administers federal and state regulations designed to protect the quality of the receiving waters. Part of this administration is the issuance of permits for treatment facilities like the one we have here in River Bend. Our treatment plant has a permitted capacity of 330,000 gallons per day and discharges treated effluent to the Trent River. We take weekly samples of our effluent to test chemical and nutrient content to ensure our plant is operating effectively and we are within the limits established by DWQ.

The Town holds three discharge permits, one for the main wastewater plant, and the other two to discharge backwash for our water treatment filters.



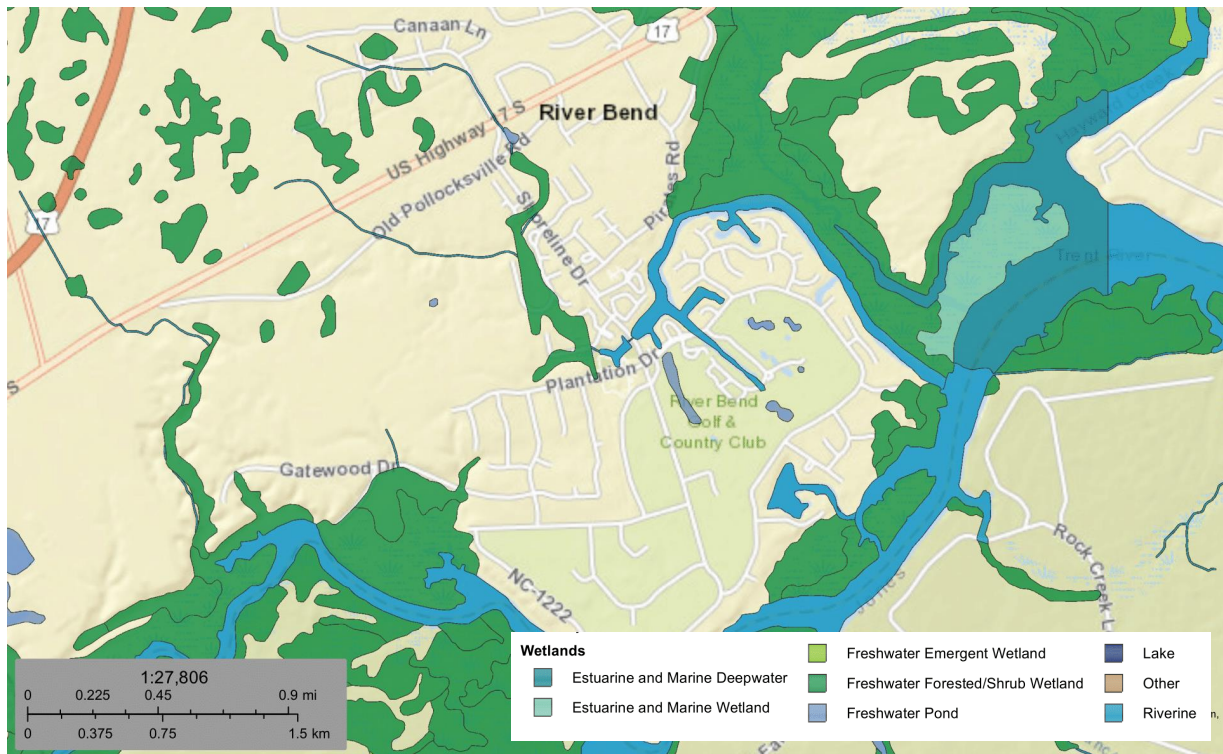
### Neuse River Basin (Map)

#### Wetlands

The wetlands within the Town of River Bend primarily fall into one of two categories:

- » Riverine – The Riverine System includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel, with two exceptions: (1) wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and (2) habitats with water containing ocean-derived salts of 0.5 ppt or greater. The riverine areas within the Town of River Bend are also contained within the tidal subsystem – the gradient is low and water velocity fluctuates under tidal influence.
- » Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland – The Palustrine System includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. It also includes wetlands lacking such vegetation, but with all of the following four characteristics: (1) area less than 8 ha (20 acres); (2) active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline features lacking;

(3) water depth in the deepest part of basin less than 2.5 m (8.2 ft) at low water; and (4) salinity due to ocean-derived salts less than 0.5 ppt. It is also characterized by woody vegetation that is 6 meters tall or taller, majority deciduous, and semi permanently flooded.

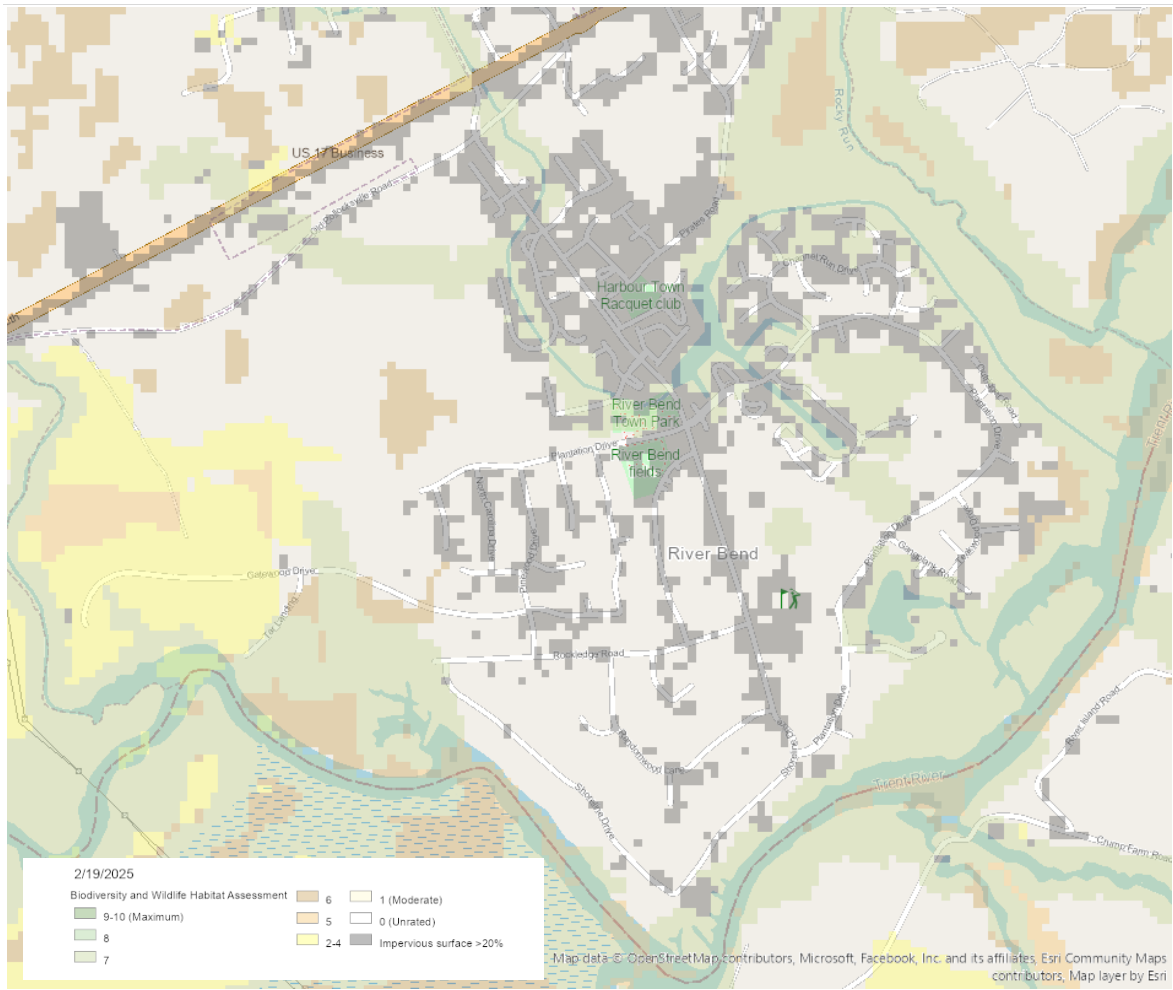


Wetlands (Map)

### Biodiversity & Wildlife Habitats

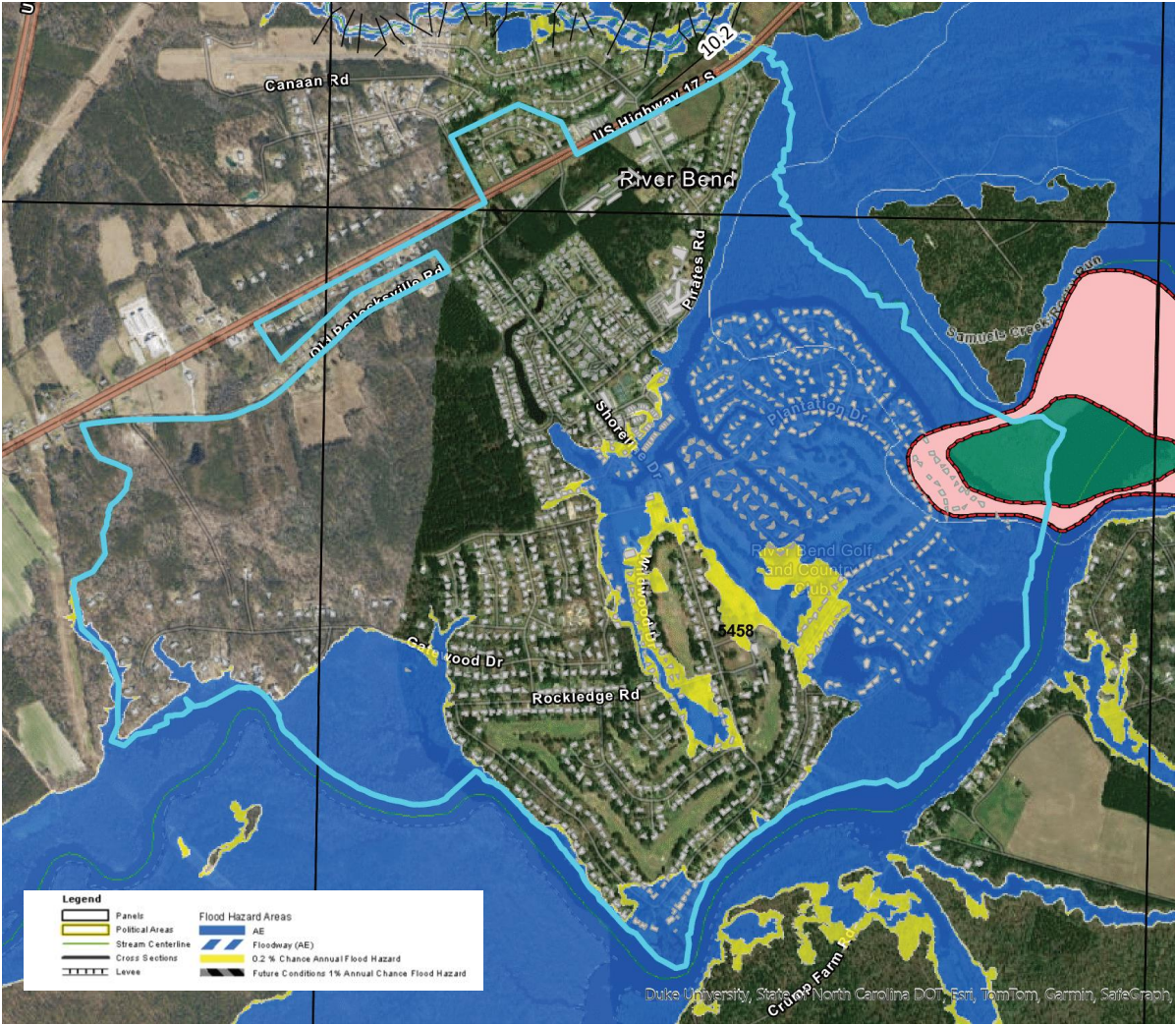
Riverine habitats are important for several wildlife species, especially to herpetofauna that utilize aquatic habitats during part of all of their life cycle, and to a variety of common mammals that are semi-aquatic and/or that have an aquatic food base (e.g., beavers, river otters, certain bats).

The Neuse River Basin, in which the Town of River Bend lies, is home to a variety of species – some rare – including the Neuse River waterdog, an aquatic salamander that is found nowhere else in the world outside the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico river basins.



## Biodiversity Map

# Floodplain



Floodplain Area Map

# Community Vision & Future Planning

## Land Use Goals

In order to provide more detailed guidance to Town leaders as they consider future land use decisions, this Plan identifies a series of goals and objectives for specific topic areas. Goals are statements that identify what should happen, and objectives are statements that identify actions or methods to achieve the goals. Each goal will typically have several objectives related to it.

Preserve and celebrate small-town charm, scale, and community roots	Proactively use regulatory mechanisms such as nuisance, minimum housing, zoning, and junk vehicle ordinances to ensure continued maintenance and upkeep of properties, including the use of condemnation when appropriate.
	Maintain the Town Hall and Municipal Building as the center of the community's civic life through the continued siting of public buildings, parks, and other civic institutions.

Coordinated, intentional, and well-planned growth and development	Discourage development that would disrupt the integrity and cohesiveness of existing neighborhoods.
	Promote development patterns that allow safe and convenient access between residential areas and shopping, services, community amenities, recreation, and public facilities.
	Encourage future development to occur within the existing town limits, or in designated growth areas with access to existing water and sewer services, and other community facilities; encourage infill development.
	Plan for continued growth and development that improves the quality of life within the Town of River Bend—growth that improves the community rather than growth for growth's sake.
	Continued pursuit of plans and funding that would lead to the construction of an additional road connecting the southern half of River Bend with Old Pollocksville Road to create an alternate egress and access route.
	Encourage adherence to the Town's Special Flood Hazard Area Development guidelines either by limiting development in high risk areas or by ensuring that proper flood prevention and reduction methods are followed.

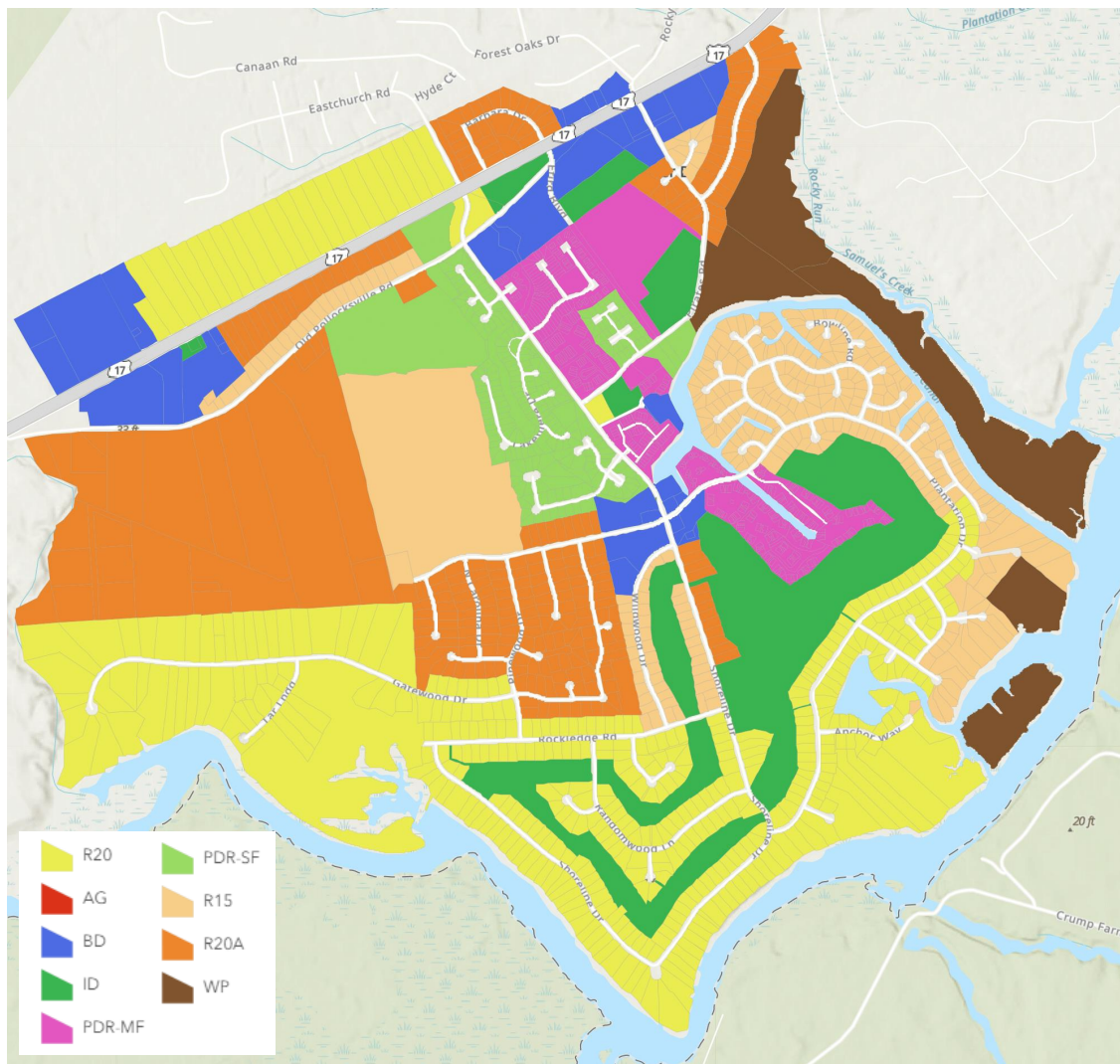
Protection of open space and critical natural features	Encourage and promote the preservation of significant open spaces, wetlands, floodplains, and stream corridors in their natural condition.
	Limit and/or mitigate the negative impacts of development on the environment.
	Balance the need to conserve land while allowing purposeful, quality development in strategic locations to meet the needs of River Bend residents, visitors, and businesses.
Support for business development	Ensure that commercial and industrial development is appropriately buffered from neighboring land uses through buffer and screening requirements.
	Encourage non-residential development that is aesthetically pleasing and meets the market and economic development needs of the community; promote emerging green industries when possible.
High-quality parks and recreational facilities that are accessible to all	Ensure parks, greenways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and community centers/facilities are located conveniently throughout the Town and connected to each other and the surrounding neighborhoods in a way that ensures broad access.
	Provide both passive and active recreational opportunities for River Bend residents by protecting natural resources that have recreational, environmental, or aesthetic value.
Regulations that are consistent with the Town's vision	Amend ordinances as needed to address changes in physical, social, or environmental circumstances that make existing regulations unnecessary, outdated, or obsolete; or to accommodate new uses or situations that arise and are not clearly covered by existing ordinances.
	Modify ordinances to be more understandable and user-friendly when possible.

## Future Land Use

In crafting a vision for the future development patterns of the Town of River Bend, this plan aims to provide a framework this is both descriptive and flexible – descriptive enough to provide the Town’s decision makers with clear information on the intended vision, but flexible enough to allow decision makers latitude in the interpretation of the vision.

The Future Land Use Map found in this chapter should not be interpreted as a regulatory document, such as a zoning map. Instead, it should be viewed as general guidance to help the Town’s decision makers make clear, informed decisions in support of an agreed-upon vision.

As a general guide, most growth is anticipated to occur in and around the existing northwest quadrant of town, as well as limited development in the US Highway 17 corridor.



# Conclusion

Achievement of these goals and objectives will require major effort on the part of the Town Council, the Planning Board, the Board of Adjustment and citizens in the planning area. Existing ordinances and land use control tools and enforcement of these controls are the most efficient method of implementing the Land Use Plan. The zoning ordinance is the most effective tool for implementation as it is concerned with land use, intensity, and placement of buildings. Other tools currently in force in the planning area are building codes and subdivision regulations. These tools, when properly enforced, will ensure implementation of the Land Use Plan.

As the population of Craven County grows, the Town of River Bend needs to be prepared to meet the growth demands. As this growth continues to impact the community, it will be incredibly important for the Town's decision makers to intentionally implement the vision outlined in this plan—a vibrant, active community with a charming hometown character that complements its natural environment, reflects its cultural heritage, and is connected to the larger region.

