

Coats Planning Board Abstract

Meeting of the Coats Planning Board March 6, 2025 6:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

- A. Invocation & Pledge
- B. Approval of Agenda
- C. Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2024, January 2, 2025

II. Future Land Use Plan

Harrison Wenchell will present Draft Goals, Vision, & Policies sections.
Planning Board members will be asked to offer their thoughts, opinions, and any potential issues regarding the goals and policies.

III. Public Forum

(Please limit comments to 3 minutes in order to allow others to speak)

IV. Adjourn

Vision and Goal Categories

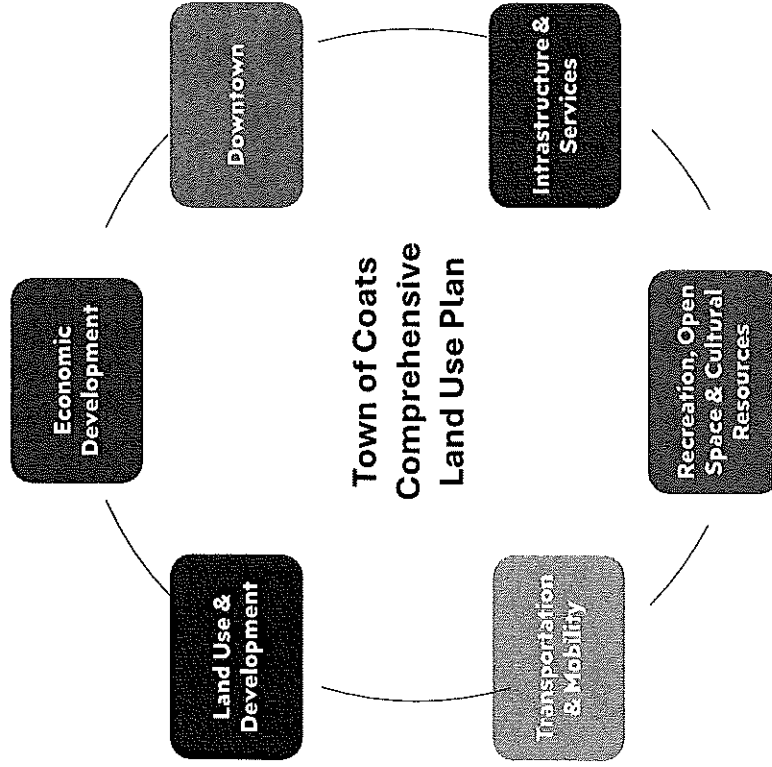
The community survey website was seen by 561 visitors and 80 completed the survey. The first community engagement open house was held on December 5, 2024. Approximately 45 people attended this workshop. Participants provided comments and opinions on preferred development types, desired park types, recreation programs, and general comments on Coats.

The values expressed by citizens through the survey and open house workshop have been organized into the following vision and goal categories:

- 1) Additional **commercial development** is desired. Participants want more choices (restaurants, grocery stores, and shops) locally to keep from traveling to larger urban areas.
- 2) **Improve Main Street** and aim to fill downtown with businesses, restaurants, and gathering spaces. Small-scale mixed-use developments, with shops and restaurants, are welcome in and around downtown. A thriving downtown district is where the town can showcase its local businesses, community spirit, and culture.
- 3) **Investments in infrastructure are critical.** Maintenance of existing roadways, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure require improvements. Ensuring that revenues are sufficient to cover increasing repair and upkeep costs is key.
- 4) There is a concern over the Town's **ability to maintain and expand the road network** to support additional vehicle demand. More transportation choices, particularly sidewalks, greenways, and bikeways are desired.

- 5) **Manage growth strategically** by steering new development to the right areas and preserving open spaces that give Coats its rural character.
- 6) **Improve and expand town parks.** Nature parks and improved recreation programs for all ages are desired. Sidewalk expansion, greenways, and walking paths are a top priority.
- 7) **Protect natural resources** by limiting development impacts on farmland, ecologically sensitive areas, and rural corridors.

Goal Categories:



Economic Development:

Encourage retail and commercial business development by reusing existing buildings and constructing new buildings that meet the CDO's requirements.



Downtown:

Advance appropriately scaled infill development of vacant lots and redevelopment of existing structures while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.



Infrastructure & Services:

Provide efficient and well-maintained infrastructure that will serve current needs while planning to expand services to meet the demands of future growth.



Transportation & Mobility:

Prioritize connectivity through streets, sidewalks, and trails to promote efficient modes of transportation that connect residents and visitors to local amenities and regional employment centers.



Land Use & Development

Encourage well-planned, high-quality residential and commercial development in strategic corridors while preserving existing agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.



Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Resources:

Offer diverse activities and events that promote healthy lifestyles, community involvement, and family-friendly living. Preserve Coats' rural character, farmlands, and access to local farm products for future generations.

Goals, Policies & Implementation Strategies:

Goal Category: Economic Development		
Goal Statement: Encourage retail and commercial business development by reusing existing buildings and constructing new buildings that meet the CDO's requirements.		
Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
ED.1	Identify & promote large tracts of land with highway access for economic development.	- Encourage light industrial, commercial, and office development in areas designated as Employment areas on the Future Land Use Map. - Encourage commercial development to be compatible and scaled with adjacent land uses. - Coordinate with Harnett Regional Water (HRW) on development where large water/sewer infrastructure capacities are required. - Actively work with Harnett County Economic Development to identify possible sites and building inventory.
ED.2	Encourage a diverse tax base through business recruitment and retention.	- Promote proximity to Harnett Regional Jetport, Healthcare, and Campbell University with existing and future businesses. - Work with willing property owners to rezone lands appropriate for industrial development to make it more attractive to developers. - Encourage a retail/business component in mixed-use developments along major highways.
ED.3	Continue to promote the Town as a great place to raise a family.	- Continue to promote Farmers Day Festival, Coats History Museum, and Coats Town Park and welcome a variety of residents to become involved in contributing to their success. - Regularly engage neighborhood leaders to ensure that safety concerns are being addressed. - Provide recreational programs and educational activities for youth.
ED.4	Recruit businesses based on gaps in market analysis (i.e. hardware, banking)	- Consider investment partnerships for public infrastructure upgrades that would allow for growth of targeted businesses. - Identify and market properties that would be ideal for these types of uses.

Goal Category: Downtown

Goal Statement: Advance appropriately scaled infill development of vacant lots and redevelopment of existing structures while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
DT.1	Encourage higher-density development in and near downtown.	- Encourage rezonings to the Main Street (MS) and Main Street Periphery (MSP) zoning districts in the downtown core and downtown support districts to create small-scale mixed-use centers. - Preserve the ground floor level of Main Street buildings for retail and commercial uses, while allowing upper-story residential in and near downtown as appropriate. - Consider improvements such as lighting, street trees, furnishings, and pedestrian crosswalks to signify you are entering the downtown district. - Incorporate public informational signage to notify the public of upcoming events, meetings, and registrations. - Provide tree cover along pedestrian corridors. Select plantings that require low watering and maintenance. - Encourage rezonings in the downtown support to allow private development that fits the character of existing buildings along Main Street. - Consider improvements to Railroad Street, including the addition of sidewalks, street trees, and additional parallel parking. - Encourage outdoor dining in a way that will not restrict sidewalk access. - Ensure that front setbacks place buildings closer to the sidewalk to extend the traditional Main Street “feel” for pedestrians. - Temporary measures can include partnerships with property owners to create a volunteer window display program for vacant buildings downtown. - Recruit new business, offices, shops, and restaurants that can attract customers associated with Campbell University. - Target uses, such as office or retail, that will be compatible to adjacent residential uses.
DT.2	Improve gateways into Downtown.	
DT.3	Extend the pedestrian feel of Main Street outwards with targeted block-by-block improvements.	
DT.4	Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized storefronts.	

DT. 5	Improve Visibility and Access to Main Street Amenities.	▪ Incorporate an attractive wayfinding signage program to help guide travelers on N.C. 55 where to park and support downtown businesses. ▪ Evaluate the need for an additional public parking lot on any block adjacent to Main Street (vacant lot preferred). ▪ Remove sidewalk obstructions, such as signage, electric boxes, and trash receptacles that may impede pedestrian flow. ▪ Minnie St. (internal alleyway) should be preserved, enhanced, and utilized. ▪ Create a pedestrian-friendly gathering space and market events that will bring visitors and customers to the downtown area.
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Goal Category: Infrastructure & Services

Goal Statement: *Provide efficient and well-maintained infrastructure that will serve current needs while planning to expand services to meet the demands of future growth.*

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
IS.1	Encourage infill development in areas where infrastructure is already provided.	▪ Prioritize infrastructure repairs in the downtown and existing neighborhoods. ▪ Prioritize infrastructure improvements that would help facilitate the build out of vacant lots in town limits. (i.e. recently completed S. Ida St. waterline connection).
IS.2	Manage repairs to maintain an efficient utility system.	▪ Guided by professional engineering, re-establish a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan and budget accordingly. ▪ Coordinate with HRW on developing additional sewer capacity for new businesses and residential growth. ▪ Pursue state funding for a regionalization merger feasibility study to understand the possible benefits of merging the Town's water system with a larger utility provider.
IS.3	Monitor, enforce, and improve stormwater management to prevent flooding.	▪ Develop a strategic plan to repair open ditches and restore damaged culverts in areas most impacted throughout town. ▪ Review all stormwater management plans for new development and redevelopment with a critical evaluation of downstream impact on town-maintained infrastructure. ▪ Maintain stormwater regulations that encourage best practices in managing post development stormwater runoff.
IS.4	Maintain adequate police and fire coverage.	▪ Plan for adequate police and fire personnel and response times to ensure adequate coverage as new subdivisions submit requests for annexation. ▪ Hold outreach events to encourage interaction with the Police Department and assist with officer recruitment.

Goal Category: Transportation & Mobility	
Goal Statement: <i>Prioritize connectivity through streets, sidewalks, and trails to promote efficient modes of transportation that connect residents and visitors to local amenities and regional employment centers.</i>	
Policy	Policy Statement
	Implementation Strategy
TM.1	Prioritize walkability downtown and in nearby neighborhoods. - Evaluate locations for priority pedestrian crosswalks at intersection locations. - Address and fill sidewalk gaps between Main Street and other pedestrian destinations. - Inventory existing sidewalks and prioritize repairs to conform to ADA compliance standards. - Continue to pursue grant funding for sidewalks and other pedestrian amenity improvements throughout the downtown core. - Minnie St. (alley) should be preserved and better maintained. - Develop street trees, sidewalk, and parallel parking infrastructure along Railroad Street (Jackson St. to Dooley St.) to extend the downtown.
TM.2	Support adopted Streetscape Improvement Plan - Develop a Transportation Plan to direct investment and preserve carrying capacities of NCDOT routes entering town limits. - Require non-residential development to include cross-access easements and stubs to internally connect parking lots. - Encourage adequate spacing of driveways to reduce vehicular conflicts, increase pedestrian safety, and improve traffic flow. - Require stub streets to adjacent properties to allow for future connection and discourage long cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets in new or expanded developments.
TM.3	Identify and address transportation impacts of commercial development.
TM.4	Encourage interconnection with new development. - Ensure that street patterns of newly developed areas provide access to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and employment areas. - Update CDO to include a requirement for secondary access when developments reach a certain size (i.e. 100 lots).

		▪ Update CDO to establish thresholds for requiring a Traffic Impact Study. Thresholds can be based on a range of daily trip estimates, number of residential units, building area, nearby crash history, or other relevant transportation criteria. ▪ Extend the town's existing street grid network where development occurs along the edge of established neighborhoods.
TM.5	Extend lighting and sidewalks to recreational amenities, schools, and commercial areas.	▪ Consider road widening and sidewalks on Brick Mill Road, connecting Hwy 55 to the Coats Elementary School. Explore possibility of a Safe Routes to School grant or the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). ▪ Add streetlights to critical intersections and neighborhood dark spots where safety issues have been reported
TM.6	Partner with Harnett County to implement results and best practices of North Harnett Transit Feasibility Study.	▪ Regularly coordinate activities in Town with Harnett County for project implementation, funding, and partnerships.

Goal Category: Land Use & Development

Goal Statement: Encourage well-planned, high-quality residential and commercial development in strategic corridors while preserving existing agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
LU.1	Utilize the Future Land Use Map when considering land use decisions.	- Support rezonings that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map. - If a rezoning is inconsistent, then an amendment to the Future Land Use Map should be created with supporting documentation for the change. - Implement the recommendations in this plan during development approvals and in development code updates. - Character Area descriptions and recommendations should influence development design and approval decisions.
LU.2	Regularly review and update the Future Land Use Map.	- The Planning Board & Town Council should review the Future Land Use Map when major rezonings occur that result in a map amendment, and update if needed. - Update the Future Land Use Map every five (5) years or after changes to infrastructure availability or development trends.
LU.3	Encourage contextually appropriate development in areas well served by utilities, transportation, and services.	- Support higher-density residential growth as infill development in areas well-connected and walkable to commercial corridors. (i.e. Main St., S. McKinley St.) - Support business development along N.C. 27 and N.C. 55, as well as throughout the historic Main Street and downtown area. - Encourage high quality, planned residential development where utility and transportation capacity exist. - Support new residential subdivisions that connect to existing neighborhoods and town-maintained streets.
LU.4	Provide opportunities for affordable housing.	- Uphold the Minimum Housing Ordinance when landlords fail to maintain adequate standards on rental properties. - Incentivize older housing stock to stay in good condition to offer affordable options.

		▪ Ensure that allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the CDO is being implemented in a way that is complimentary to neighborhood character. ▪ Consider ways to increase the supply of available housing for seniors in search of residences requiring less maintenance and upkeep. ▪ Encourage site design, appearance codes and other development tools that will promote attractive, contextually driven and useful design. ▪ Analyze and remove barriers hindering redevelopment of vacant buildings, particularly along Main Street. ▪ Consider methods to allow flexibility for unique small-scale commercial development.
LU.5	Encourage well-designed commercial and mixed-use development.	▪ Continue to assess whether the 1.5-acre min. lot size in the Agriculture district is meeting expectations for the Town. ▪ Ensure that current use, setbacks, or lot sizes do not prohibit building of community preferences (i.e. village commercial/mixed use). ▪ Evaluate parking requirements for commercial and attached residential (townhome) development to encourage reuse and infill development. ▪ Consider incentives to attract new restaurants. Evaluate alternatives to target restaurants that have experienced success in similar markets. ▪ Consider partnerships to develop and operate a farmers' market. ▪ Encourage community gardens on underutilized or vacant lots to increase vibrancy.
LU.6	Examine CDO to analyze strengths and weaknesses in zoning and consider amendments to assist in plan implementation.	▪ Discourage higher-density developments in areas without adequate utility services. ▪ Consider appropriate buffering around active agricultural operations and working farms. ▪ Work with developers to provide a variety of open spaces, protecting areas of ecological importance such as floodplains, streams, and wetlands.
LU.7	Encourage new restaurants, stores, and programs that increase access to local food and connect to Coats' history as a farming center.	▪ Incorporate code enforcement efforts into a strategic initiative aimed at revitalizing various neighborhoods.
LU.8	Preserve areas dedicated as Conservation and Open Space on the Future Land Use map.	
LU.9		

	Continue enforcement activities and address abandoned properties.	▪ Continue using existing tools to address abandoned properties that present a safety hazard (inspections, rezoning, condemnation, foreclosure, etc.). ▪ Incorporate code enforcement efforts into a strategic plan helping to revitalize various neighborhoods.
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Goal Category: Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Resources

Goal Statement: Offer diverse activities and events that promote healthy lifestyles, community involvement, and family-friendly living. Preserve Coats' rural character, farmlands, and access to local farm products for future generations.

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
ROC.1	Improve the existing Town Park and build new parks for the future.	- Develop a Park Master Plan for the existing Town Park that establishes a long-range vision for the park, facilities, repairs, and new uses. - Develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide future recreation investments, staffing, and programming. - Identify sites for new parks and predict the best recreational uses for existing town-owned land or land acquired by the Town in the future.
ROC.2	Develop Coats' portion of the greenways planned for in Harnett County's Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Plan.	- Create a conceptual greenway plan to determine the exact placement of greenway trail routes connecting Coats to other points of interest. - Study the feasibility of connecting existing neighborhoods to the Coats Town Park via a greenway walking and biking path.
ROC.3	Prioritize open space.	- Ensure that new residential development provides residents access to common open space that is functional and usable. - The highest quality ecological resources on the site should be preserved for passive recreation. These include wetlands, floodplains, streams, mature existing tree stands, and wildlife corridors. - Clarify in CDO consistent buffer width along named streams and intermittent streams.
ROC.4	Improve cultural program offerings.	- Renovate the historic theater, with public or private investment, to accommodate community events and cultural offerings. - Partner with community groups to create and showcase locally made art throughout town (i.e. barn quilt displays in businesses). - Consider proactive upgrades and repairs to the Coats Library Branch building.
ROC.5	Protect the land base that supports agriculture.	Considerations should be applied to limit development impacts on productive agricultural land when properties are contiguous to each other.

		▪ Preserve Coats' rural character by protecting farms and forests along road frontages in the rural portions of the towns ETJ and adjacent to existing large lot residential (2 acre lots or larger). ▪ Preserve working farms and forests in large contiguous blocks to maintain a "critical mass" of farms and agricultural land.
ROC.6	Encourage the preservation of mature and healthy trees in new development.	▪ The Planning Board should regularly review regulations and policies to consider whether tree preservation is meeting community expectations. ▪ Consider a requirement to show "heritage trees" over a certain diameter or location (i.e. within 200 ft of perimeter or stream) on preliminary plats. ▪ Consider canopy assessments using available lidar data to understand impacts to urban forest. ▪ Consider changes to the CDO that incentivizes the preservation of mature trees with reduced dimensional/setback requirements, increased density, parking reductions, etc.