

Town of Greenevers Comprehensive Plan

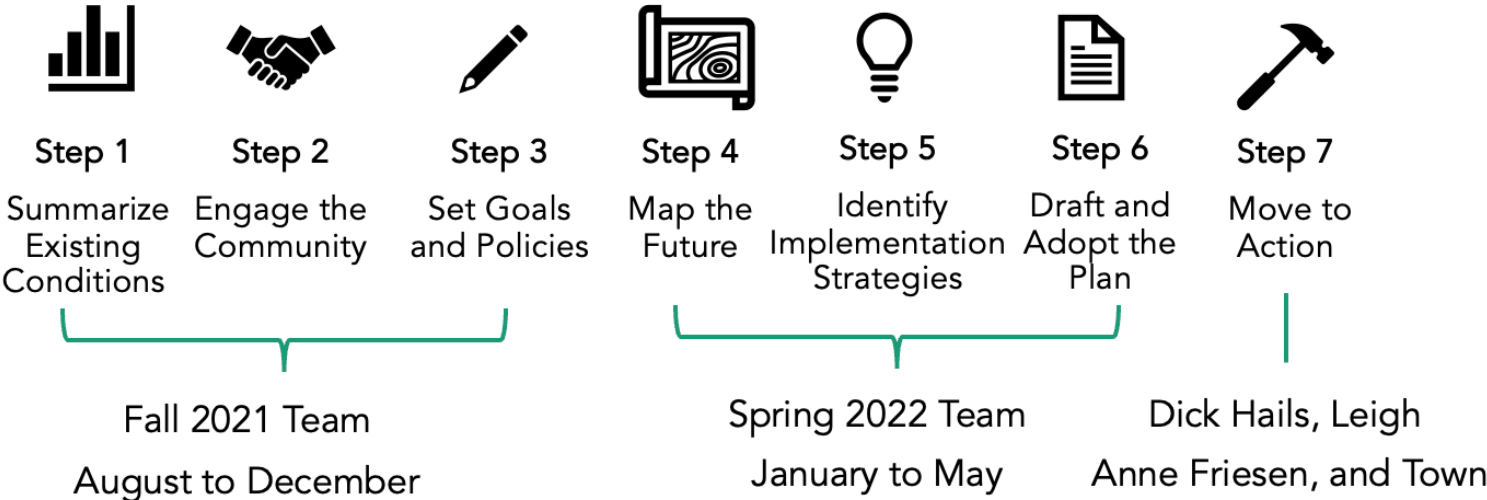


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Executive Summary

This comprehensive plan is intended to help direct Greenevers’ growth and development. Comprehensive plans can cover a wide range of topics from community visions to housing to provision and financing of public services. Members of the Greenevers community shared their thoughts about Greenevers’ present and future which guide the plan's goals and policies, the future land use map, and implementation strategies. The comprehensive planning process is laid out below.

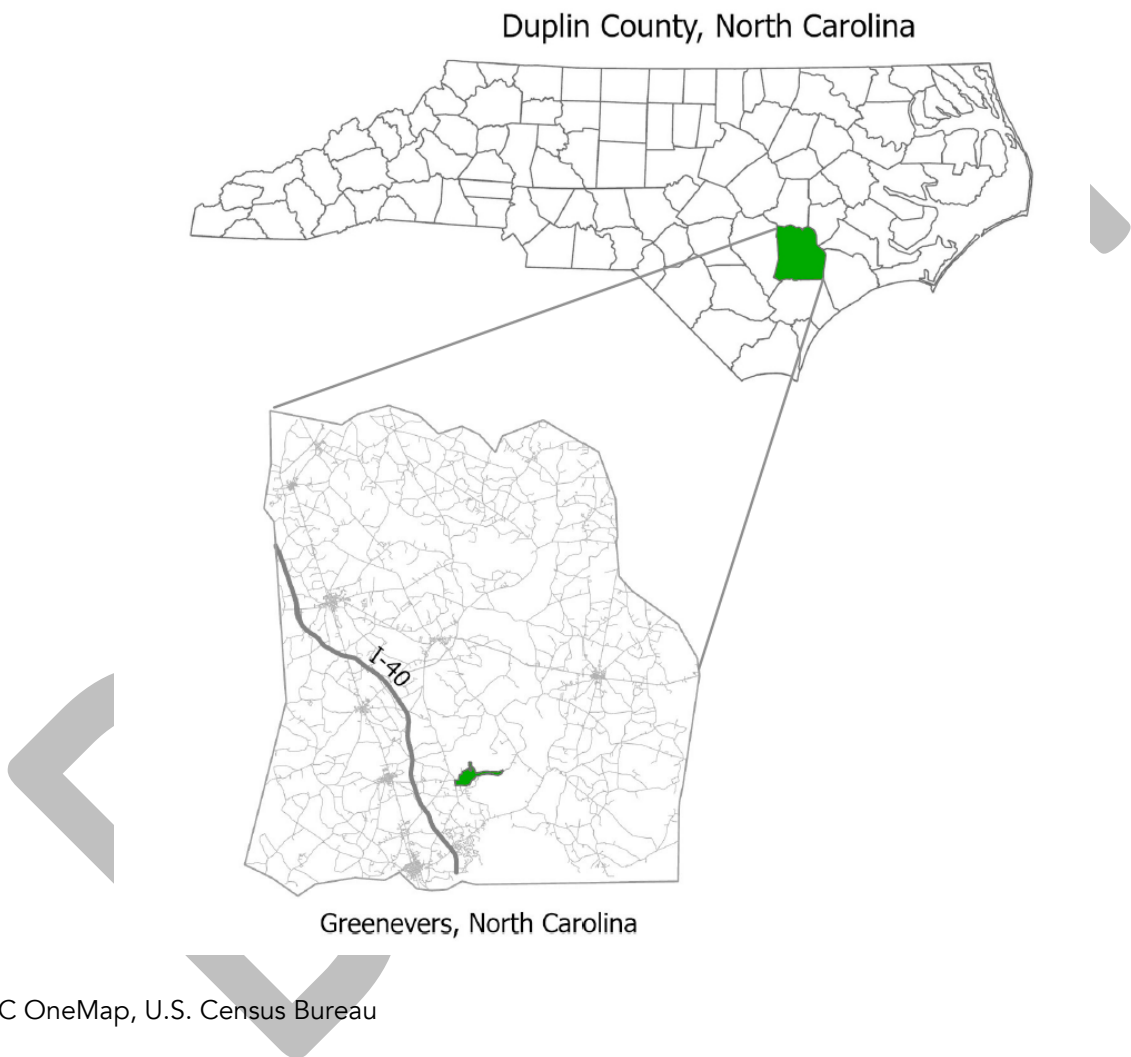


This comprehensive plan was developed with the help of City and Regional Planning students at UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as their professor Richard Hails and their planning advisor Leigh Anne Friesen, AICP. The fall 2021 team included students Florence Dwyer, Tas Lagoo, Lauren Prunkl, and Mira Singhal. The spring 2021 team included students Katie Burket and Marielle Saunders.

Existing Conditions

Introduction

Greenevers is located in southern Duplin County and long existed as a community of farmers before its incorporation by the North Carolina General Assembly on October 15, 1969. After incorporation, Alex Brown was elected Mayor. He was the first African American to become a Mayor in Duplin County. Today, Greenevers' small but dedicated team of public servants works to provide residents a full suite of municipal services and prepare the town for the years ahead.



NC OneMap, U.S. Census Bureau

The existing conditions section of a comprehensive plan provides insights into the state of the community, including its various assets and challenges, and helps to inform decisions about the community's future. The topics addressed in this section include demographics, economy and employment, transportation, and housing.

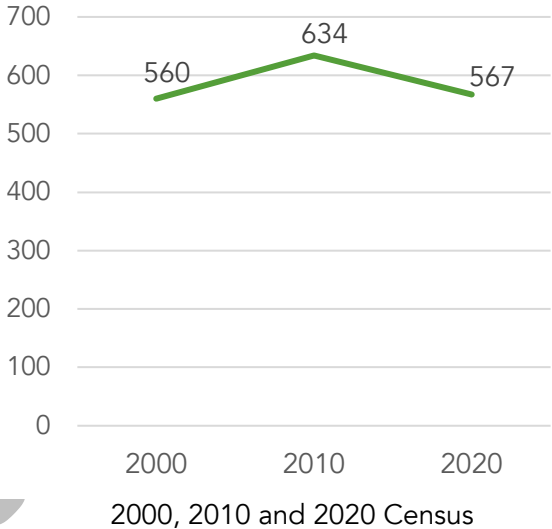
Data Limitations

Data discussed in this section mostly comes from the 2020 American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates. Where 2020 Decennial Census data was available, we also include those figures as a comparison, but most of the official census counts have not been released at the time of drafting this document. The ACS data includes estimates of the figures based on data over the past 5 years, not actual counts. We acknowledge that these figures are subject to change when the actual 2020 Census counts are released. We also include some information from qualitative interviews with key stakeholders.

Demographics

In the last 30 years Greenevers' population experienced an increase in 2010 before falling back to 2000 levels. Between the 2010 and 2020 Census, Greenevers saw approximately a 12% decrease in population. However, Greenevers has lost less of its population in the last ten years than Duplin County, which lost about 20% between 2010 and 2020. Both the town and county have aged significantly since 2000, with Greenevers going from a median age of 29 in 2000 to 39 in 2020 (U.S. Census, 2020).

Greenevers Population Over Time, 2000-2020



In general, the Town of Greenevers follows similar trends as Duplin County. Both saw lower 2020 Census counts for their populations than estimated by the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, which provide an average estimate over time. Both also have similar aging populations, with 13-14% of residents living in poverty. However, Greenevers has a much lower median household income than Duplin County and it is less than half of the state's median household income. Greenevers also has a lower proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree than both the county and state.

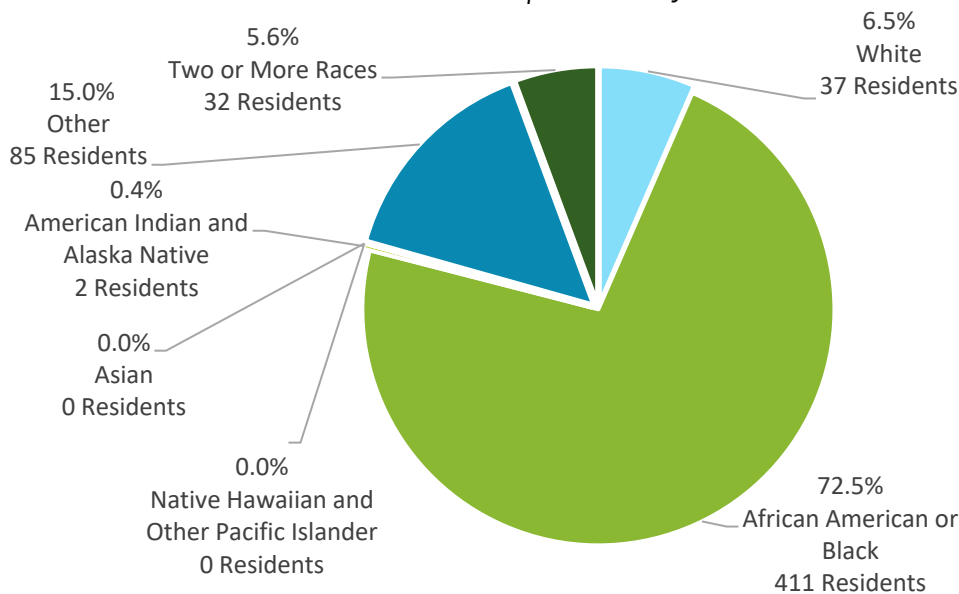
Greenevers' Demographics Compared to the County and State, 2020

| | Greenevers, NC | Duplin County, NC | North Carolina |
|--|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Total Population 2020 Decennial Census | 567* | 48,715* | 10,439,388* |
| Total Population 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates | 901 | 58,965 | 10,386,227 |
| Population Over 65 | 17.2% | 18.6% | 16.2% |
| Median Age | 39.4 | 40.7 | 38.9 |
| Median Household Income | \$27,234 | \$43,422 | \$56,642 |
| Poverty Rate | 13.8% | 13.1% | 10.0% |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Age 25+) | 9.4% | 14.6% | 32.1% |

2020 Census, 2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates (the * indicates numbers from the 2020 Decennial Census)

The Town of Greenevers is primarily made up of African American or Black residents, though the proportion of African American or Black residents has decreased from 85% in 2000 to 73% (U.S. Census, 2000-2020). Part of this change could come from the fact that the Hispanic population has more than doubled over the last 10 years (U.S. Census, 2010-2020). The 2020 Census counted 117 residents who identify as Hispanic, or 20% of the current population. Below is a graphic depicting the population of Greenevers by race.

Greenevers' Population by Race, 2020

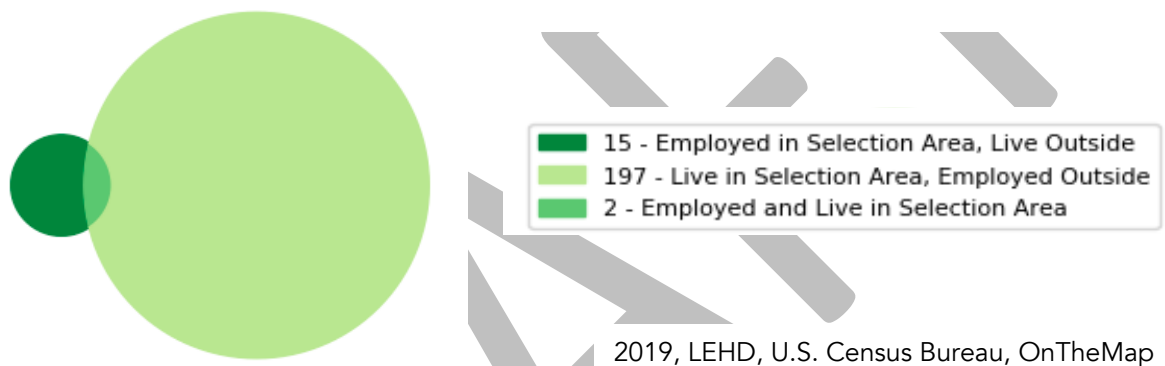


2020 Census

Economy and Employment

As a primarily residential community, there are few employers within Greenevers. The majority of Greenevers residents travel outside of the town for work, with an average commute time of 25 minutes in 2020 (ACS, 2020). Relatively few people living outside Greenevers commute to the town for work. According to 2019 data, the most employed Greenevers residents work in manufacturing (about 18%) and about 16% work in healthcare and social assistance (OnTheMap, 2019). Unemployment is almost twice as high in Greenevers compared to the County, with the latest estimate at 11% (ACS, 2020).

Inflow and Outflow of Employment in Greenevers, 2019



There are several economic challenges that the community faces. Due to its small size, there are only a few spaces for commercial use, and at least one previously commercial building has been vacant for many years. Working from home is currently not feasible for many residents, as broadband internet is unavailable.

Housing

Like the population measures, the housing data for Greenevers from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates is much higher than the count in the 2020 Census. While the 2020 ACS 5-Year estimate was that Greenevers had 409 housing units, the 2020 Census counted 236, a 2% decrease from the 2010 Census. The 2020 Census also counted a higher vacancy rate than estimated, with about 51 vacant units in Greenevers, or 18% of the existing housing stock.

ACS 2020 5-Yr Estimate: **409 housing units**
2020 Census Count: **236 housing units**



Additional housing data comes from the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2020. Given the variation already seen between estimates and decennial Census counts, the numbers below should be viewed with the understanding that the actual count is likely different. However, we do know that Greenevers seems to have lower rent and median home values than the County. Most Greenevers residents own their own home, many of which are single-family homes or mobile homes. Around 149 housing units, or 36% of the housing stock in Greenevers are mobile homes.

Greenevers' Housing Data, 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

| | Greenevers | Duplin County |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Housing Units | 409 | 26,014 |
| Vacant Units | 60 (~15%) | 4,577 (~18%) |
| Mobile Homes | 149 (~36%) | 8,586 (~33%) |
| Homeowners | 250 (~72%) | 15,415 (~72%) |
| Median Gross Rent | \$494 | \$678 |
| Median Home Value | \$81,700 | \$89,500 |
| Homeowners paying at least 30% of income for housing | 147 (~59% of homeowners) | 3,334 (~22% of homeowners) |
| Renters paying at least 30% of income for housing | 37 (~37% of renters) | 2,351 (~39% of renters) |
| Median Year Housing Structure was Built | 1991 | 1983 |

2020 ACS 5 Year Estimates

There is evidence of a need for more affordable housing strategies in Greenevers. Around 59% of homeowners are estimated to pay more than 30% of their income on home ownership expenses. This is a significant cost burden for more than a quarter of the general population (using the 2020 Census population of 537). In town meetings, there was a consistent call to find funding opportunities to repair, and in some cases, replace insufficient housing, especially mobile homes. There is one publicly funded multifamily housing development owned and operated by Greenevers Housing Authority near the center of town, but that does not seem to be subsidized.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement

On November 29, 2021, Greenevers residents attended an Open House in the Greenevers Community Center to share their thoughts about the town and comment on a set of draft goals for this Comprehensive Plan. The Open House was publicized for several weeks on the town’s website and Facebook page and notices were included in all residential water bills. With only eight participants, attendance at the Open House was limited and suggested that additional public engagement will be both challenging and necessary.

To supplement the findings of the Open House, a paper survey was provided to Greenevers residents using the same discussion questions. This was accepted through January 31st, 2022. The survey received 14 responses in addition to the 8 already collected from the Open House.

Discussion Questions

Attendees of the Open House were asked to answer five broad questions regarding the current state of Greenevers and their thoughts regarding the town’s future. The questions as well as residents’ responses are summarized below.

1. If you could describe Greenevers in one word, what would it be?

Open House attendees described Greenevers in largely positive terms that reflect the community’s small-town nature such as: “Potential,” “Peaceful,” “Family,” and “Needed.”

Responses to Question 1 Collected from Greenevers Residents 2021-22



2. What do you like most about living in Greenevers?

Open House attendees and survey respondents voiced an appreciation for Greenevers' quiet atmosphere. Most attendees felt that Greenevers is synonymous with family and most survey respondents mentioned that Greenevers is home for them.

3. What are your biggest concerns about life in Greenevers?

Open House attendees were most concerned with the lack of growth in Greenevers and noted that the town needs both more people and more businesses. The town's ability to attract young families was also of concern. In addition, attendees were concerned with the prevalence of poorly maintained homes and roads in the area and the impact of this neglect on property values.

Survey respondents had similar concerns regarding maintenance and development needs, but also brought up their worry over the future of the youth in town. In addition, prices were mentioned, including expensive water bills.

4. How do you feel about the services and facilities provided by the town? How could they be improved?

Open House attendees were generally satisfied with the quality of existing services provided by the town. However, there was also a desire for expanded services and more support for community-wide activities and programming.

Survey respondents had more mixed responses about services provided by the town – multiple respondents mentioned the prices being too high or not explained well. In general, there were requests for clearer communication.

5. What would you like Greenevers to look like in 10 years?

Open House attendees and survey respondents shared an ambitious vision of Greenevers' future. They expressed a desire for Greenevers to become a larger town with nicer stores, a post office, and more/better housing. Attendees also envisioned a stronger community supported by more people that care about the town as well as good leadership.

Draft Goals

In addition to answering the five questions discussed above, Open House attendees were asked to review a set of five draft goals for the comprehensive plan and provide their feedback. They were then asked whether the draft goal should be included in the Comprehensive Plan and whether/how the draft goal should be amended. The draft goals themselves were based on demographic data as well as preliminary conversations with town staff and members of the Board of Commissioners.

- 1. In Greenevers, residents will have convenient access to basic amenities such as highspeed internet, grocery stores, ATMs, and recreational facilities.**

Open House attendees expressed strong support for this goal. They also noted several additional amenities that should be available in town such as: sidewalks, streetlights, and a post office.

- 2. In Greenevers, all residents will feel safe and secure.**

Open house attendees expressed strong support for this goal.

- 3. In Greenevers, all residents will have access to safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water and sewer services.**

Open House attendees expressed strong support for this goal. Attendees also shared a desire for the town to provide other basic services such as trash collection.

- 4. Homes in Greenevers will be plentiful, affordable, and comfortable.**

Open house attendees expressed strong support for this goal.

- 5. Greenevers will be a model of small-town hospitality and community.**

Open house attendees expressed strong support for this goal.

Goals and Policies

Final Goals and Policies

The goals of this comprehensive plan represent a vision of what Greenevers can be in the future. The policies listed beneath each goal are broad but tangible steps the community can take towards making that vision a reality. As the town's priorities, challenges, and opportunities change over time, these goals and policies should be revisited and changed as needed.

Goal 1: *In Greenevers, residents will have convenient access to basic amenities such as highspeed internet, grocery stores, ATMs, and recreational facilities.*

Potential policies:



Identify suitable sites for future development



Pursue funding opportunities to expand recreational facilities



Pursue funding opportunities to improve Internet access



Explore the viability of partnering with a credit union to provide banking services

Goal 2: *In Greenevers, all residents will feel safe and secure.*

Potential policies:



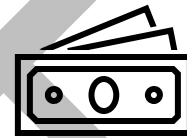
Pursue the creation of a full-time law enforcement position within the town

Goal 3: *In Greenevers, all residents will have access to safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water and sewer services.*

Potential policies:



Assess the long-term needs of the existing water and sewer systems



Determine feasibility/costs of extending water and sewer systems, and identify potential funding sources

Goal 4: *Homes in Greenevers will be plentiful, affordable, and comfortable.*

Potential policies:



Pursue opportunities for developing federally subsidized affordable housing (e.g. Low Income Housing Tax Credit)



Review and update Greenevers' Zoning Ordinance to allow for the construction of accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, and other low-cost housing options



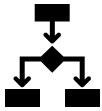
Partner with local non-profit organizations to conduct home repairs and accessibility upgrades to allow seniors to age in place



Identify and pursue state and federal grants (e.g. CDBG – Neighborhood Revitalization to support home repair activities)

Goal 5: *Greenevers will be a model of small-town hospitality and community.*

Potential policies:



Improve transparency of town government's decision-making



Support the formation and continued engagement of public advisory committees



Promote educational opportunities for residents to learn about town processes and how to get involved



Promote community building through community events, educational resources, etc.

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Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Map Process

Future land uses are proposed based on community engagement as well as knowledge of current land uses from tax parcel data collected by Duplin County. It is important to note that current land uses reported for Duplin County included a large number of vacant parcels. This high proportion of vacant land use may point to some opportunity for growth, but also may indicate outdated or incorrect information. It may be helpful to work with Duplin County to better understand their methodology for categorizing land uses for future planning and development purposes.

Ultimately, the current land uses were a starting point to build a future land use map. As part of the process, an attempt was made to gather input on places to preserve, places to enhance, and places to transform in the Town of Greenevers. Based on the conversation that sparked, as well as prior community engagement and the previously mentioned analysis of current land uses, the future land use map was drafted. This map uses 3 place types: mixed use, residential, and rural. Below is a table describing each place type.

| Place Types | Land Uses |
|-------------|--|
| Mixed Use | This can include medium- to high-density residential and commercial uses, as well as institutional (including government buildings and churches) and light industrial uses. This area should continue to encourage diverse housing styles and types. |
| Residential | This focuses primarily on low- and medium-density housing uses, and could in the future include tiny homes and accessory dwelling units. |
| Rural | This can include low-density residential and commercial uses, as well as conservation and agricultural areas. |

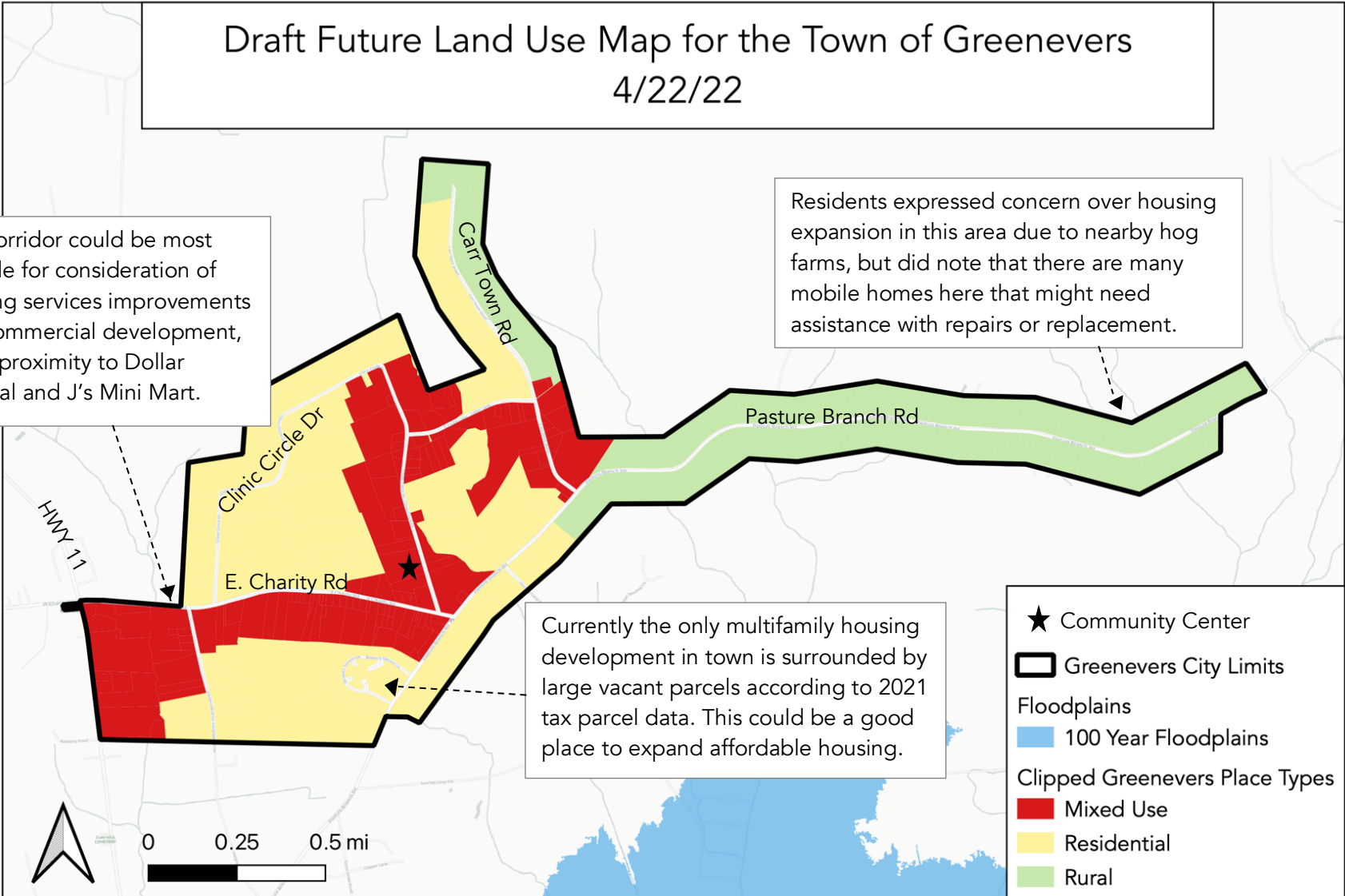
Flyer 1

Draft Future Land Use Map for the Town of Greenevers 4/22/22

This corridor could be most suitable for consideration of banking services improvements and commercial development, given proximity to Dollar General and J's Mini Mart.

Residents expressed concern over housing expansion in this area due to nearby hog farms, but did note that there are many mobile homes here that might need assistance with repairs or replacement.

Currently the only multifamily housing development in town is surrounded by large vacant parcels according to 2021 tax parcel data. This could be a good place to expand affordable housing.



- ★ Community Center
- ▭ Greenevers City Limits
- Floodplains
 - 100 Year Floodplains
- Clipped Greenevers Place Types
 - Mixed Use
 - Residential
 - Rural

Source: 2021 Duplin County Tax Parcel Data, NC OneMap, NC Flood Risk Information System, ESRI

Implementation Strategies

Draft Implementation Strategies for the Town of Greenevers

| Action | Lead Party | Potential Outcomes | Measures of Progress | Next Steps | Potential Partners | Potential Funding |
|--|------------|---|---|--|---|--|
| Goal 1: Access to amenities. | | | | | | |
| Investigate feasible strategies for improving internet access | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine status of current internet needs for residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memo or report on internet needs for community and options to address needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify primary lead for investigating current needs Determine grant writer(s) | FCC, NCDIT Division of Broadband and Digital Equity | ARPA, CDBG ED (from state), other NC or federal grants for broadband |
| Investigate feasible strategies for greater access to banking services | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of getting an ATM to Greenevers (maybe in J's Mini Mart) Consider other banking service programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ATM or branch within or closer to Greenevers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meeting with credit unions Research case studies to expand banking access | State Employees Credit Union, Other banks | ARPA or other sources |
| Goal 2: Safety and Security | | | | | | |
| Explore law enforcement expansion in Greenevers | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek input on law enforcement needs Discuss arrangement with Duplin Sheriff Dept to expand patrol capacity in Greenevers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Greenevers patrol coverage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Duplin County Sheriff Department Discuss potential new position to cover Greenevers | Duplin County Sheriff Department | ARPA or other sources |
| Goal 3: Access to municipal services. | | | | | | |
| Assess the long-term needs of the existing water and sewer systems | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine costs and feasibility of improving or extending water and sewer systems Identify potential funding sources for fixing issues found | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memo or report on long-term needs and possible extensions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact DEQ Research funding sources | NC Department of Environmental Quality, (DEQ) | ARPA, CDBG ED (from state) or other sources |

Draft Implementation Strategies for the Town of Greenevers Continued

| Action | Lead Party | Potential Outcomes | Measures of Progress | Next Steps | Potential Partners | Potential Funding |
|---|------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Goal 4: Ample and Affordable Housing. | | | | | | |
| Develop a home repair or reconstruction working group | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify funding sources for repair ▪ Develop home repair or reconstruction program ▪ Develop senior accessibility program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 1 grant application completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Form the working group ▪ Research funding sources that are right for Greenevers | Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity (self-help loan pool), Hope Comes Home (urgent repair program), NC HFA, Churches | HUD Title 1 Property Improvement Loans, ARPA, CDBG ED (from state) or other sources |
| Explore barriers to development in Greenevers | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gain better understanding of developers ▪ Identify potential development sites ▪ Update Greenevers' Zoning Ordinance to allow construction of accessory dwelling units and other low-cost housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Findings from developer interviews presented ▪ Sites for possible development identified ▪ Zoning ordinance updated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify primary lead to speak with developers ▪ Identify local or nearby developers to interview about what would be needed for more development in Greenevers | Local Developers | Town budget or other sources (could primarily be volunteer led) |
| Goal 5: A well-engaged and tight-knit community. | | | | | | |
| Support civic engagement and community building | Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage the community ▪ Provide clearer information on town processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At least 1 community celebration per year ▪ Host regular 'office hours' on municipal services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify event planning group ▪ Brainstorm strategies to direct more people to the great municipal services resources on the town website; discuss what is needed | Residents (including youth), local businesses | Town budget or other sources (could primarily be volunteer led) |

Plan Adoption and Monitoring

Plan Adoption and Monitoring

The Greenevers Planning Board is responsible for recommending adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to the Town's Board of Commissioners. After the public has had the chance to provide feedback on the plan, the Greenevers Board of Commissioners can vote to adopt the plan. Comprehensive plan adoption is necessary for continued zoning authority under Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes.

After adoption, the Planning Board can then work with the Board of Commissioners on implementation and monitoring of the plan. Tracking progress on implementation strategies is an important part of implementation to evaluate plan effectiveness over time. Through consistent evaluation, adjustments can be made to the plan as needed. It is recommended that the Planning Board provide updates at least once annually to the public and Board of Commissioners on plan implementation.

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Appendix A – Fall 2021 Engagement Materials

Flyer 1

Community Survey & Open House

The Town of Greenevers is working on its first-ever Comprehensive Plan to help guide the town's growth and development. As members of the Greenevers community, your input is one of the most important parts of the Comprehensive Plan!

We will be holding an **Open House** on **November 29** from **4pm - 7pm** at the **Community Center**. Below are some of the questions that will be discussed at the Open House. Please think about them and bring your thoughts, questions, and comments to the Open House.

1. **If you could describe Greenevers in one word, what would it be?**
2. **What do you like most about living in Greenevers?**
3. **What are your biggest concerns about life in Greenevers?**
4. **How do you feel about the services and facilities provided by the town government? How could they be improved?**
5. **What would you like Greenevers to look like in 10 years?**

If you are unable to attend the Open House, please write down your answers on this paper and leave them with the Town Hall front desk or email comments to GreeneversCompPlan@gmail.com

Save the Date! **Open House**

Where: Greenevers Community Center

When: Nov. 29 from 4pm - 7pm

Stop by anytime

Refreshments will be provided

Flyer 2

Welcome to the Open House!

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What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan helps guide a town’s growth and development. Comprehensive plans can cover a wide range of topics. Examples of topics that can be addressed in comprehensive plans include:

- community visions
- patterns of desired growth
- economic development
- provision and financing of public services
- housing
- recreation
- historical preservation
- and natural hazards mitigation, among many others

As members of the Greenevers community, your input is one of the most important parts of the Comprehensive Plan! Please let us know if you have thoughts on any of these topics.

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At this stage, some of the main community challenges have been identified, please give us your feedback/thoughts/concerns related to the following:

1. Broadband internet is unavailable
2. Municipal water and sewer services need updating
3. Housing stock is aging

Thoughts?

- Is there a notable place in or near Greenevers that you would like to point out? Come over to the map and show us!
- Provide your input on the white boards throughout the room.
- Fill out the survey! (This is the best way to share your input!)
- Let us know your thoughts on the attached draft goals.
- Any questions? Please come and ask Mira, Tas, Lauren, or Florence.