

GENERALIZED REGIONAL ZONING PROJECT

September 12, 2007

Purpose

This project has two major goals.

1. To provide planners and others in the region with the ability to compare the types and locations of zoning coverage across jurisdictional boundaries.
2. To enable comparisons between actual zoning in the region to the results shown on the suitability maps.

What is a Generalized Regional Zoning Map?

This map is a visual representation of the results of a crosswalk between the actual zoning assigned by jurisdictions and a ten category zoning scheme created by planners on the Sustainable Sandhills Land Use Team. The detail recorded in a jurisdictions' actual codes are not needed for a regional perspective on zoning policy.

How Does a Crosswalk Work?

A jurisdiction may have three zoning codes for different types of commercial development. The generalized scheme has one category called commercial. The crosswalk is a spreadsheet that lists all the actual codes in a jurisdiction and then what the corresponding code from the ten category scheme is.

How Was the Crosswalk Created?

Two SS Land Use Team planners, Tom King and Cris Armstrong, compiled zoning ordinance information from all eleven counties and seventy-three municipalities. They consulted the ordinance collection at the Southeastern Regional Office of the Division of Community Assistance. They used jurisdictions' websites to download documents. They made personal contact with staff at many small municipalities to obtain material or to clarify material.

Information was organized into two spreadsheets. Every current zoning code for a jurisdiction was recorded. Information on minimum lot sizes, dwelling units per acre, and water and sewer factors were recorded for all relevant codes.

After reviewing the data a ten category scheme was selected as most effectively representing the breadth of development policies represented by local zoning. Each actual code was assigned a code from the ten category scheme.

Zoning is complicated. This project is creating a simplified look at regional zoning. Here are some of the decisions made to assist in developing the crosswalk.

- Overlay information is not included. This includes the more restrictive coding that watershed rules can invoke. To try and reflect all of these local variations would be extremely time consuming, not very accurate, and did not appear relevant to the purpose of this project.
- Special permits and conditional use codes are not included; the first code given for a polygon/parcel is the one used in the crosswalk

- Some jurisdictions code by parcels, some code by zoning polygons. No distinction is made or considered necessary.
- Some jurisdictions code roads and streets, others do not. This difference is visible on the map. No adjustments were made.

How Was the Digital Map Created?

Many jurisdictions have transferred their zoning information into a geographic information system (GIS). These digital files were collected. The data was transferred into a standard table format so that data from all the jurisdictions could be merged together. A new coding category was created for the generalized zoning code. The appropriate general code was filled in. The accompanying table lists the jurisdictions for which files were obtained. There are data “holes” in the map for a variety of reasons.

Data Used in the Map

The accompanying table provides information on zoning and data availability for each of the eleven counties and seventy-three municipalities in the region

“ZONING” column

According to the information gathered 12 of the 73 municipalities do not have zoning at all. Some other jurisdictions do not zone every acre. Areas in light grey on the map are either unzoned or data was unavailable in a useable format from sources consulted.

“DATE OF FILE” column

None available = data in a GIS format was not available from sources consulted; in many small jurisdictions data is maintained on paper
 Specific date = this is the date on the digital file. Data cannot be more up-to-date than the date on this file. The data can be much older than this date.
 Comments = data was obtained from planners, GIS professionals, Council of Government staff, and from the files of the Division of Community Assistance and jurisdiction websites

The Generalized Coding Categories

Under the residential categories you’ll see the same actual code name appearing under several generalized codes. This is not an error. The meaning and interpretation of the code can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. This is one of the reasons that a comparison across jurisdictions using the actual code names is not easy. The information given here is not comprehensive but representative.

Commercial

This category includes: business commercial, highway commercial, neighborhood shopping, office and institutional, planned commercial, general business, local business, downtown business, professional

Industrial

This category includes: industrial, heavy industrial, light industrial, planned light industrial

Open space

This category includes: public conservation, recreation/conservation

Residential, extremely low density

This category includes: agricultural
Lot sizes of 50 acres+ (well/septic)

Residential, very low density

This category includes: rural agriculture, RA 30
Lot sizes of 217,800 (well/septic)

Residential, low density

This category includes: Rural equestrian, agricultural
Lot sizes of 87,120 (well/septic)

Residential, moderately low density

This category includes: R20, R15, rural residential, agricultural
Lot sizes of 40,000+ (well/septic)

Residential, medium density

This category includes: R15, R8, R12, R20, RR, planned unit development,
traditional neighborhood development, residential-agricultural, residential-single
family, rural residential
Lot sizes of 20,000 or 30,000 (well/septic)

Residential, high density

This category includes: R10, R6, R5, manufactured home, planned neighborhood
district,
Lot sizes of 20,000 (well/septic); 10,000 or 6,000 (public water/sewer)

Residential, very high density

This category includes: multi-family, residential mobile home
12 dwelling units per acre

Improving the Product

Planners can improve the accuracy of this tool.

- Update the list of jurisdictions with zoning
- Provide access or contact information to digital GIS versions of a jurisdiction's zoning
- Set up a procedure to provide an updated zoning file annually

Please provide information to Susan Pulsipher, GIS Coordinator, DCA (spulsipher@nccommerce.com or 910-829-6384).