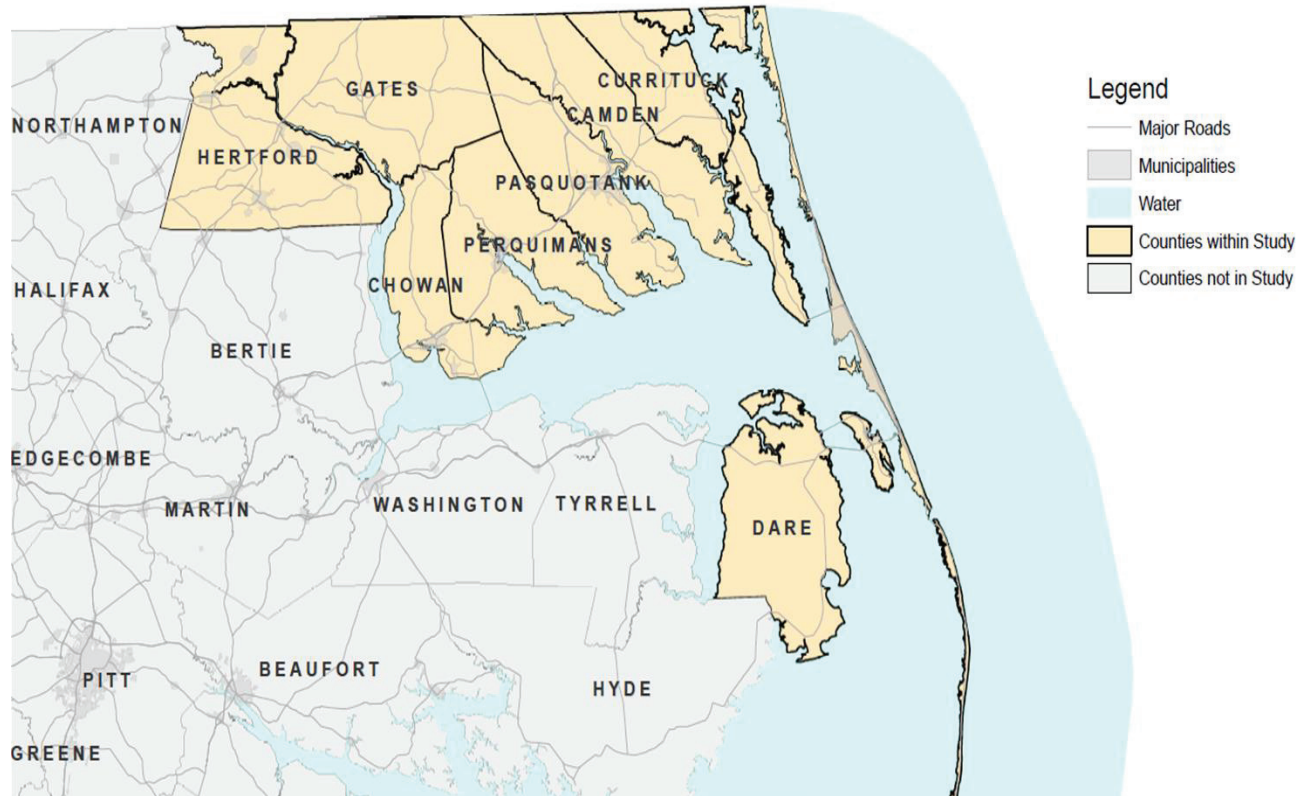


## Section 3: Regional Profile

### 3.1 Geography

The Albemarle Region is located in the Northeast corner of North Carolina. For the purposes of this plan, the Albemarle Region includes Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank and Perquimans Counties. An orientation map is provided as **Figure 3.1**.

**FIGURE 3.1: ALBEMARLE REGION ORIENTATION MAP**



The Albemarle Region is a rural area; however, there are an abundance of attractions that draw visitors to the region each year. Several lighthouses are located throughout the region including the Roanoke River Light in Edenton, the Currituck Beach Light in Corolla, the Roanoke Marshes Light in Manteo, the Bodie Island Light just south of Nags Head, and the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse in Buxton. The region is also home to several National Parks and Wildlife Refuges including the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, The Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, The Great Dismal Swamp, Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge, The Pea Island Wildlife Refuge and the Cape Hatteras National Seashore; which provide fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, biking and boating opportunities. Other regional attractions include Jockey's Ridge State Park, Historic Edenton, Merchants Mill Pond State Park and the Museum of the Albemarle. Lastly, this region boasts some of the best beaches and offshore fishing in the world.

The total land area of each of the participating counties is presented in **Table 3.1**.

**TABLE 3.1: TOTAL LAND AREAS OF PARTICIPATING COUNTIES**

Camden County	240.56 Square Miles
Chowan County	<b>172.47 Square Miles</b>
Currituck County	<b>261.85 Square Miles</b>
Dare County	<b>383.42 Square Miles</b>
Gates County	<b>340.45 Square Miles</b>
Hertford County	<b>353.06 Square Miles</b>
Pasquotank County	<b>226.88 Square Miles</b>
Perquimans County	<b>247.09 Square Miles</b>

Source: US Census Bureau 2010

Camden County is located in northeastern North Carolina and bordered to the north by the state of Virginia, Currituck County to the east, Pasquotank and Gates Counties to the west, and the Albemarle Sound to the south. Although outside the state borders, Camden County's economy draws from the Hampton Roads region (Norfolk, Chesapeake, Virginia Beach). It is a short drive from the North Carolina Outer Banks, Downtown Norfolk, and Chesapeake, Virginia. No formally incorporated municipalities are located in Camden County. In 2006, the County approved an ordinance via referendum to create a unified government that incorporated the former townships of South Mills, Camden, and Shiloh into the County. These townships comprise the three core community areas: South Mills in the north, Camden in the center of the county, and Shiloh Village near the south end. The Great Dismal Swamp, the largest swamp in the nation, covers the northern section of the County.

Currituck County, North Carolina currently has no incorporated municipalities and stands as a single jurisdiction. It was established in 1668 as one of five original ports in North Carolina. Currituck County, named for the Algonquin Indian word for "Land of the Wild Goose," is the northern most County in North Carolina along the outer banks. It is bordered to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the west by Camden County, to the south by Dare County and to the north by Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Virginia. Currituck and geologically, Currituck County lies within the coastal plain. About 40 percent of the county's acreage is wooded, of which nearly 73 percent of that land is privately owned. Currituck County has a total area of 444 square miles, of which approximately 182 square miles is water area.

Dare County, located along the eastern coast of North Carolina, stretches for 85 miles along the Atlantic Ocean. Known as the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Dare County is recognized as a top vacation destination because of our abundant natural and historic resources. The islands that comprise Dare County are surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and numerous estuarine water bodies. Miles of unspoiled beaches and estuarine shorelines, world-class fishing and surfing, and exceptional water quality draw thousands of visitors to our area every year. Dare County is also known as "The Land of Beginnings" in reference to our historic role in the founding of the New World. Another historic event occurred here in 1903 when Orville and Wilbur Wright flew the first man-powered plane from Kill Devil Hill. The County celebrated the 100-year anniversary of this historic first flight in 2003.

Gates County, North Carolina was formed from Chowan, Hertford and Perquimans counties in 1779 and was named after General Horatio Gates, a British soldier who fought with the Americans in the Revolutionary War and commanded the American Army at the Battle of Saratoga. Gates County is located in the coastal plain of northeastern North Carolina and is bordered by Hertford County to the west and southwest, Chowan and Perquimans counties to the south, Pasquotank and Camden counties to the east, and Suffolk County,

Virginia to the north. The center of Gates County is located approximately 25 miles from Suffolk, Virginia; 48 miles from Norfolk, Virginia; 18 miles from Ahoskie, North Carolina; and 23 miles from Murfreesboro, North Carolina. The Town of Gatesville, the county’s only incorporated municipality, is the county seat of Gates County. Gatesville has a total land area of less than one square mile and comprises less than 3 percent of the total county population.

Hertford County is located in the northeastern region of North Carolina, bounded on the north by the Virginia state line. The county lies 55 miles southwest of Norfolk, 105 miles southeast of Richmond, and 120 miles northeast of the state capital of Raleigh. Major highways serving the county include US Routes 13, 158, and 258, and NC Highways 11, 42, 45, 305, 461, and 561. The County has six (6) municipalities including the towns of Ahoskie, Cofield, Como, Harrellsville, Murfreesboro, and Winton.

Pasquotank County is located in the northeastern section of North Carolina and is bordered by Camden County to the north and east, Gates County to the northwest, Perquimans County to the south west, and the Albemarle Sound to the south. The county has always been known for its water passages. The Dismal Swamp canal now forms part of the Intracoastal Waterway which runs along the east coast of the United States. Elizabeth City is the county seat of Pasquotank County.

Perquimans County, located in northeaster North Carolina, is bounded to the north by Gates County, to the east by Pasquotank County, to the south by the Albemarle Sound, and to the west by Chowan County. Hertford is the county’s largest town and is the county seat. Winfall is the county’s other incorporated town. Perquimans County boasts a diverse and impressive natural environment. The Little River flows through the eastern part of the county while the Perquimans River flows through the center. The Yeopin River and the Albemarle Sound make up the southernmost boundaries of the county.

### 3.2 Population and Demographics

Dare County has the largest population of the eight participating counties and Elizabeth City is the largest city located within the planning area. The Region experienced a 13.18% increase in population from 191,263 in 2000 to 216,467 in 2010. Camden County experienced the largest percentage increase of 44.95% (from a 2000 population of 6885 to a 2010 population of 9980) while the Town of Winton experienced the largest percentage decrease with a decrease of 19.56% (from a 2000 population of 956 to a 2010 population of 769). Population counts from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2000, 2010 and 2013(Estimated) for each of the participating counties and jurisdictions are presented in **Table 3.2**.

**Table 3.2: Population Counts for Participating Jurisdictions**

Jurisdiction	2000 Census Population	2010 Census Population	% Change 2000-2010	2013 Estimates
CAMDEN COUNTY	6885	9980	44.95%	10187
CHOWAN COUNTY	14526	14793	1.84%	14726
Town of Edenton	5364	5004	-6.71%	4983
CURRITUCK COUNTY	18190	23547	29.45%	24396
DARE COUNTY	29967	33920	13.19%	35019
Town of Duck	448	369	-17.63%	379
Town of Kill Devil Hills	5878	6683	13.70%	6920

Town of Kitty Hawk	3010	3272	8.70%	3383
Town of Manteo	1182	1434	21.30%	1363
Town of Nags Head	2700	2757	2.11%	2835
Town of Southern Shores	2201	2714	23.31%	2812
GATES COUNTY	10516	12197	15.99%	11650
Town of Gatesville	281	321	14.23%	308
HERTFORD COUNTY	22601	24669	9.15%	24431
Town of Ahoskie	4739	5039	6.33%	5023
Town of Cofield	347	413	19.02%	407
Town of Como	78	91	16.67%	91
City of Harrellsville	102	106	3.92%	107
Town of Murfreesboro	2045	2835	38.63%	2868
Town of Winton	956	769	-19.56%	761
PASQUOTANK COUNTY	34897	40661	16.52%	39981
Elizabeth City	17243	18683	8.35%	18266
PERQUIMANS COUNTY	11368	13453	18.34%	13601
Town of Hertford	2070	2143	3.53%	2176
City of Winfall	554	594	7.22%	608
Region Totals	148,950	173,220	16.3%	173,991

Source: US Census Bureau 2010

Based on the 2010 Census, the median age for residents of the participating counties ranges from 36 to 46 years. The racial characteristics of the participating counties are presented in **Table 3.3**. Generally, whites make up the majority of the population of the Region, accounting for almost 69% of the Region's population.

**Table 3.3: Demographics of Participating Counties**

County	White Persons	Black Persons	Other Race	Persons of Hispanic Origin*
<b>Camden</b>	82.09%	13.19%	4.72%	<b>2.15%</b>
<b>Chowan</b>	62.02%	34.27%	3.71%	<b>3.16%</b>
<b>Currituck</b>	90.32%	5.78%	3.9%	<b>2.99%</b>
<b>Dare</b>	92.31%	2.46%	5.23%	<b>6.52%</b>
<b>Gates</b>	63.69%	33.16%	3.15%	<b>1.42%</b>
<b>Hertford</b>	35.62%	60.53%	3.85%	<b>2.61%</b>
<b>Pasquotank</b>	56.71%	37.76%	5.53%	<b>4.04%</b>
<b>Perquimans</b>	<b>72.06%</b>	<b>24.88%</b>	<b>3.06%</b>	<b>2.13%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

\*Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories.

### 3.3 Housing, Infrastructure and Land Use

#### 3.3.1 Housing

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 99,309 housing units in the Albemarle Region, most of which are single family homes (according to the 2010 census). Housing information for the eight participating counties is presented in **Table 3.4**. As shown in the table, Dare County has the highest number of housing units compared to the other counties. Gates County has the least. In terms of median home value, Dare County has the highest and Hertford County has the lowest.

**Table 3.4: Housing Characteristics**

County	Housing Units (2013)	Median Home Value (2008-2012)
Camden	4098	\$223,300
Chowan	7228	\$133,100
Currituck	14756	\$229,600
Dare	33783	\$307,900
Gates	5179	\$153,800
Hertford	10485	\$83,100
Pasquotank	16802	\$176,100
Perquimans	6978	\$170,000
<b>TOTAL/AVERAGE ALBEMARLE</b>	<b>99,309</b>	<b>\$184,613</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

#### 3.3.2 Infrastructure

Major roads in the planning area include, US 17, US 64, US 158, US 264, NC 11, NC 12, NC 32, NC 42, NC 45, NC 168. The area is also served by several regional airports and is within a few hours of Raleigh Durham International Airport in Raleigh as well as Norfolk International Airport in Norfolk.

Colleges and universities in the planning area include Chowan University in Murfreesboro, College of the Albemarle campuses in Edenton, Elizabeth City and Manteo; The UNC Coastal Studies Institute in Wanchese as well as Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City. There are also several community colleges located throughout the Region.

#### 3.3.3 Land Use

The vast majority of land in Camden County is either in a natural state, used for agricultural purposes, or as low-density single family development on lots that are one acre or greater. Development potential, for the majority of county lands, is limited by the presence of wetlands, floodplains, and other areas of environmental concern. In keeping with existing land use trends, development over the last decade has primarily come in the form of low-density single-family residential homes. As listed shown below, the majority of land in the county is zoned for residential development (94.5%), leaving 5.5% of land to be developed as commercial,

employment, industrial uses under current zoning. Natural features are significant in Camden County, providing a rich green infrastructure system while also limiting development potential. Policy makers should continue thoughtful planning to balance needed growth with the equally important need to protect these natural features.

Development within Chowan County is mainly within the Town of Edenton and along the major road corridors on the outskirts of town. Specifically, the Town of Edenton is experiencing pressure for development along the US 17 and NC 32 corridors. Most property in Chowan County (91%) has severe soil limitations for septic tank drain fields due to the high clay content of the soil and the high water table. Approximately 14 percent of the County's land area is within a 100-year floodplain. Local policies encourage the conservation of natural resources and fragile environments that provide protection from natural hazards.

Currituck County is the northern most county in North Carolina along the outer banks. It is bordered to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the west by Camden County, to the south by Dare County and to the north by Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Virginia. The County has no incorporated municipalities and stands as a single jurisdiction. The primary land use in Currituck County is agricultural with increasing residential and commercial development taking place along the major transportation routes and along the outer banks. Due to the vast differences in geography, development patterns, and economy, the County is divided into three distinct subareas; Mainland, Knotts Island and Outerbank Beaches. The County's Land Use Plan is being used to manage natural resources and enhance growth throughout the county.

The island geography of Dare County greatly influences the land use patterns of unincorporated Dare County and has resulted in the establishment of numerous distinct villages. The narrowness of some areas of the County limits the location of additional transportation routes other than the main transportation corridors. Commercial development is generally found along the main transportation routes. Residential areas are located in other areas and accessed by smaller roads and streets. The predominant land use in each village in unincorporated Dare County is residential, most often single family homes which is reflective of the County's policy of preferred residential development. The large amount of publicly-owned land (80%) in Dare County creates competition for development of the remaining 20% of privately owned lands. All development and infrastructure to address the needs of the year-round population and the seasonal visitors must be located on the privately-owned lands. The geographic location of Dare County along the eastern shoreline of North Carolina and its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean makes it vulnerable to flooding, storm surge, and high winds associated with hurricanes, tropical storms and other coastal storms. The physical setting of Dare County includes many natural features that are environmentally fragile and impacts from development must be managed to protect these fragile areas.

Gates County boasts a diverse and impressive natural environment. Gatesville is the County's only incorporated town. Some residential growth is occurring adjacent to Gatesville, and the villages, but most of the residential development is occurring in more rural areas such as Willeyton area in the northern part of the County. With the exception of the villages noted above which have mixed land uses and town-like characteristics and various crossroads, Gates County is characterized by lands devoted to open spaces, conservation, agriculture, forests, and waters bodies and streams.

The majority of Hertford County's land use is agriculture and forestry operations. Residential, commercial, and industrial land use is largely concentrated in and around the Towns of Ahoskie, Murfreesboro and Winton. The county intends for development to occur in areas that can access current and planned infrastructure and remains committed to protecting its natural resources. Hertford County seeks to ensure that future land use and development minimizes, as much as possible, a negative impact on its waters, wetlands, floodplains and other natural heritage areas.

The majority of the developed land within the Pasquotank County planning jurisdiction is located on the fringe of Elizabeth City and along the major road corridors that radiate from the Elizabeth City urban area. Much of the County's future intensive growth is anticipated along the recently completed Halstead Boulevard Connector and within the general area formed by the US 17 Bypass, US 17 North Business, and the Halstead Boulevard Connector. Most property in Pasquotank County has significant soil limitations for septic tank drain fields due to the high clay content of the soil and the high water table. Approximately 38% of the land area in the County lies within a floodplain.

Land within the unincorporated area of Perquimans County is composed primarily of larger parcels designated for agricultural activities with scattered residential development. Residential subdivisions have consumed waterfront access properties to create resort style communities for mostly higher end housing. A vast majority of the County is zoned rural agricultural. This helps to limit the conversion of lands from agricultural uses to more intensive uses such as residential subdivisions. Perquimans County is characterized by lands devoted to open spaces, conservation, agriculture, forests, and waters bodies and streams. The County's commercial areas are located primarily in the Towns of Hertford and Winfall, and along U.S. 17 as well as at area crossroads communities.

### **3.4 Employment and Industry**

According to the US Census Bureau, in 2012, Camden County had an average annual employment of 4,281 workers. The Education and Health Services industry employed 19.1 percent of the County's workforce followed by Public Administration (13.3%); Retail Trade (13.1%); and Manufacturing (10.3%). From 2008 to 2012, the average annual median household income in Camden County was \$56,315 compared to \$46,450 for the state of North Carolina.

In 2012, Chowan County had an average annual employment of 5,661 workers. The Education and Health Services industry employed the most people, with 25.7 percent of the workforce, followed by Retail Trade (21.3%); Construction (9.5%); and Manufacturing (8.5%). The average annual median household income in Chowan County was \$36,385 from 2008 to 2012.

Currituck County had an average annual employment of 11,063 workers in 2012. According to the US Census Bureau, in 2012, Retail Trade was the largest employment sector with 16.1 percent of the County's workforce. The other leading industries were Education and Health Services (15.4%); Construction (14.8%); and Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental/Leasing (8.5%). From 2008 to 2012, the average annual median household income in Currituck County was \$57,446.

The US Census Bureau reported an annual average employment of 18,127 workers in Dare County for 2012. The top employment industry was Arts, Entertainment and Recreation/Accommodations and Food Services, making up 19.5 percent of total employment. Other major industries were Education and Health Services (14.2%); Retail Trade (11.4%) and Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental/Leasing (11.2%). The County's average annual median household income was \$55,780 from 2008 to 2012.

In 2012, Gates County had an average annual employment of 5,220 workers. The Education and Health Services industry employed the most people, with 25.3 percent of the workforce, followed by Manufacturing (16.2%); Retail Trade (11.6%); and Construction (10.6%). The average annual median household income in Gates County was \$45,136 from 2008 to 2012.

Hertford County had an average annual employment of 8,689 workers in 2012. According to the US Census Bureau, Education and Health Services was the largest employment sector with 31.9 percent of the County's workforce. The other leading industries were Manufacturing (18.8%); Retail Trade (11.3%); and Public Administration (7.9%). From 2008 to 2012, the average annual median household income in Hertford was \$33,412.

The US Census Bureau reported an annual average employment of 17,329 workers in Pasquotank for 2012. The top employment industry was Education and Health Services, making up 28.5 percent of total employment. Other major industries were Retail Trade (12.6%); Arts, Entertainment and Recreation/Accommodations and Food Services (10.1%) and Public Administration (7.12%). The County's average annual median household income was \$46,032 from 2008 to 2012.

Perquimans County had an average annual employment of 5,014 workers in 2012. The Education and Health Services industry employed the most people, with 22.9 percent of the workforce, followed by Retail Trade (11%); Manufacturing (10.4%); and Transportation and Warehousing and Utilities (8.7%). The average annual median household income in Gates County was \$42,400 from 2008 to 2012.