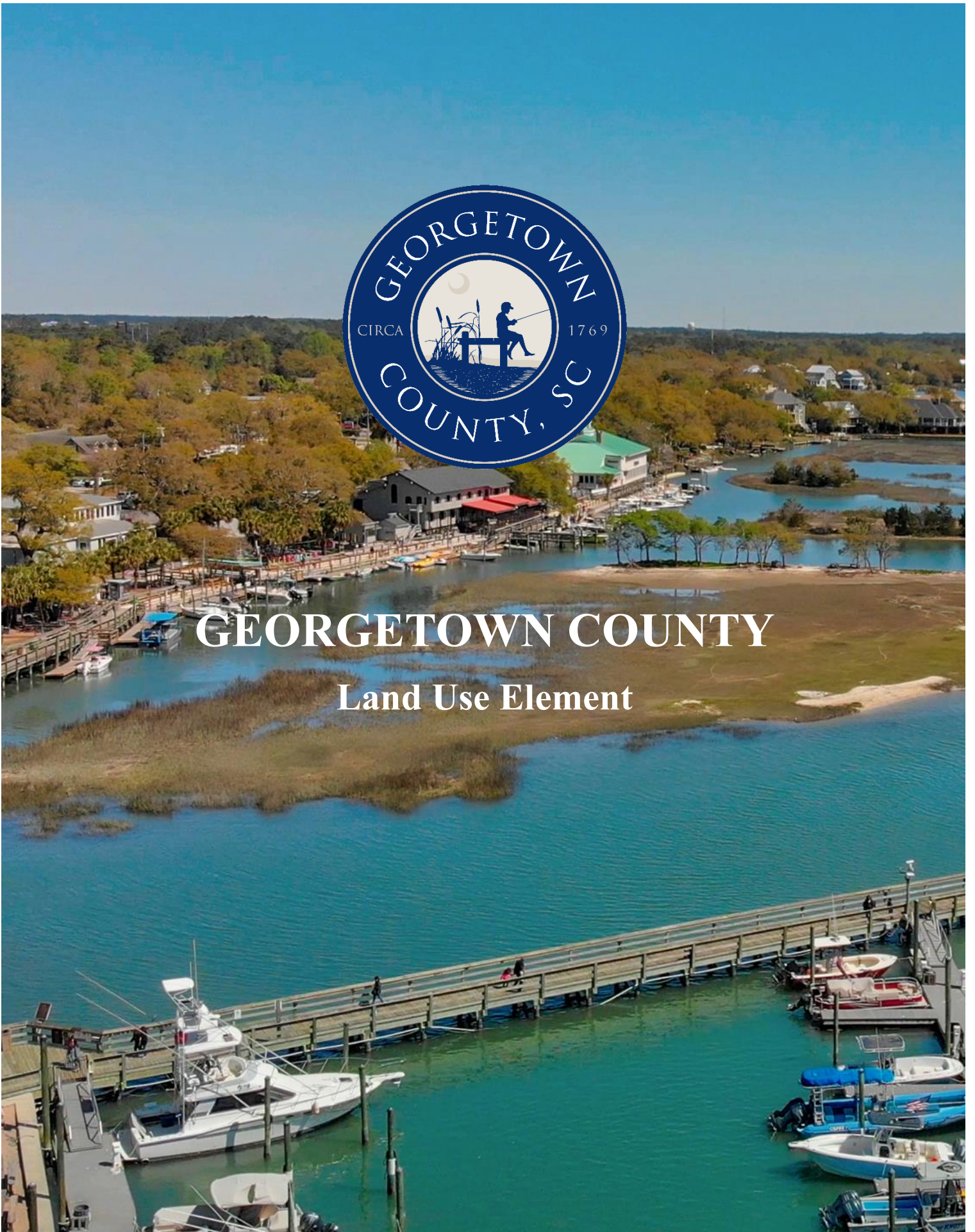




GEORGETOWN COUNTY

Land Use Element





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A special thanks goes out to the numerous residents, business owners and community partners who actively engaged in this process, contributing to the future of Georgetown County.

Prepared by

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Introduction

Georgetown County is one of the most livable and diverse counties in South Carolina with a wide variety of natural features, thriving communities and cultural riches. With a population of 62,992 and encompassing over 800 square miles, the county's development patterns range from the neighborhoods and urbanized development of the Waccamaw Neck to primarily agricultural and conservation uses in the mainland, interspersed with a wide variety of natural features such as rivers, wetlands, estuaries and over 60 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline. In recent history, the county has experienced steady growth, not yet to the extremes of its neighbor to the north along the Grand Strand, yet sufficient to escalate property values and create scarcity of workforce housing. Potential and projected growth places Georgetown County at a critical juncture where a prosperous future requires a balanced and nuanced approach to land use planning to ensure compatible development, preservation of unique places and cultural centers, conservation and preservation of unique natural resources, and a deliberate approach to ensuring housing opportunities for all residents.

Georgetown County initiated zoning in 1974 and adopted its first county-wide land use plan in 1976. Subdivision regulations were added in 1981, and a substantial update to the land use plan was completed in 1985 to address growth pressures on the Waccamaw Neck. In response to South Carolina's 1994 Planning Enabling Act, Georgetown County expanded the scope and substance of the plan in a 1999 update. In 2007, the county completed a holistic update to the plan; and subsequently each element was individually reviewed and updated starting in 2015, including a 2015 update to the Land Use Element.

Since 2015, Georgetown County has taken a systematic approach to updating individually the required elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The following elements are updated and adopted.

- Cultural Resources (2021)
- Housing (2022)
- Transportation (2023)
- Economic Development (2023)
- Community Facilities (2023)
- Resiliency (2023)

Updates to the Natural Resources, and Population elements are ongoing. **The BOUDREAUX team recommends the county return to a holistic approach of updating all required Comprehensive Plan elements simultaneously in 2025 or 2026.**

At the core of the Comprehensive Plan, the Land Use Element serves as the foundation for the use and development of land within Georgetown County's planning jurisdiction. The Land Use Element and FLUM serve as a crucial compass, navigating the intricate challenges posed by regional growth pressures, while maintaining the unique character of established communities and the critical role affordable housing and housing choice play in a prosperous future for the county. With a focus on the preservation of distinctive natural resources and communities and the coordination of infrastructure and development, this element and the FLUM encapsulate the

collective land use vision of the community. Shaped by extensive public input, the land use vision and recommendations stand poised to guide future development through a tailored approach to land use, ensuring the safeguarding of character and culture while propelling the county towards a prosperous future.

This Land Use Element update is focused on aligning the land use decisions with the current and projected growth and development throughout all of Georgetown County. While other elements are updated or will be updated (data and recommendations), modernizing the land use element and FLUM and, thereby, the land use and zoning ordinances are most critical to ensuring the county's vision, guiding principles and goals continue to shape the future of the county, creating a unified, intentional focus for managing future land use and growth.

While the Housing Element was updated in 2022, the county wanted a specific focus on affordable housing relative to land use policies. This Land Use Element update provides an analysis of existing conditions and recommends priority focus areas for the development of affordable, attainable and workforce housing. These focus areas align with the land use vision and guiding principles.

The recommendations, priority investments and future land use map lay the groundwork for improvements to local land use tools, such as zoning and development regulations, while providing a foundation and framework for future land use decisions and policies. This Land Use Element sets the stage for forward-looking planning, deeply rooted in the context of Georgetown County's unique character, rich natural resources and aspirations for the future.

The Land Use Element addresses the development characteristics of the land. It considers existing and future land use by categories including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, mining, public and quasi-public, recreation, parks, open space, and vacant or undeveloped land.

Note: The local government must adopt the land use element before adopting a zoning ordinance. S.C. Code § 6-29-720 (A).

The Roles of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

Comprehensive Plan – Pursuant to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, the Comprehensive Plan provides a framework and guide for future growth and development and is required for a local government to implement regulatory land use tools. The Comprehensive Plan must include a description of existing conditions, a statement of needs and goals, and implementation strategies. The Planning Commission must re-evaluate comprehensive plan elements at least once every five years, and all elements of the plan must be updated at least every 10 years.

Zoning Ordinance – A zoning ordinance is the primary tool available to local governments to regulate land use and direct future growth and development. The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for implementation, and the zoning ordinance is the legislative tool with the authority of local law, used to implement the Comprehensive Plan.



Land Use Vision

A vision statement plays a pivotal role in guiding the Land Use Element by providing a clear and aspirational picture of the county's future. It serves as a foundational declaration that articulates the collective values, goals, aspirations and desired future of the community regarding land use and development. The following vision statement is a guide to ensure land use strategies align with the unique character, needs, and priorities of the community. This is a five-to-ten-year vision, a picture of what the county can be.

Georgetown County is a diverse and resilient eco-system of healthy coastal and river environments, fertile agricultural and forest lands, precious natural resources, unique cultural and historic resources, and established communities, neighborhoods and local businesses and industry.

Georgetown County is an exemplar of planning with infrastructure and development that sustains, protects and restores this diverse eco-system while providing opportunities for economic development and prosperity for all residents.

This growth and development reflect quality design, the unique character of the Pee Dee and the Low Country as well as a county-wide ethic to ensure the land is sustained for generations to come.

This vision for land use sets the course for the guiding principles, presented on the following page, and charts the trajectory for future land use policies.

Guiding Principles

Throughout the public engagement process, six primary guiding principles emerged. These principles informed the land use recommendations and implementation strategies included in this element.

1 The diversity of Georgetown County must be recognized, celebrated, and preserved with land use policies and strategies.

2 Natural resources are sacred and of utmost importance to county residents.

3 Compatible development and redevelopment are critical, particularly with increasingly limited development opportunities on the Waccamaw Neck.

4 A prosperous economic future is dependent on a local workforce and the availability of affordable and workforce housing to support local employment.

5 Infrastructure and development must be coordinated

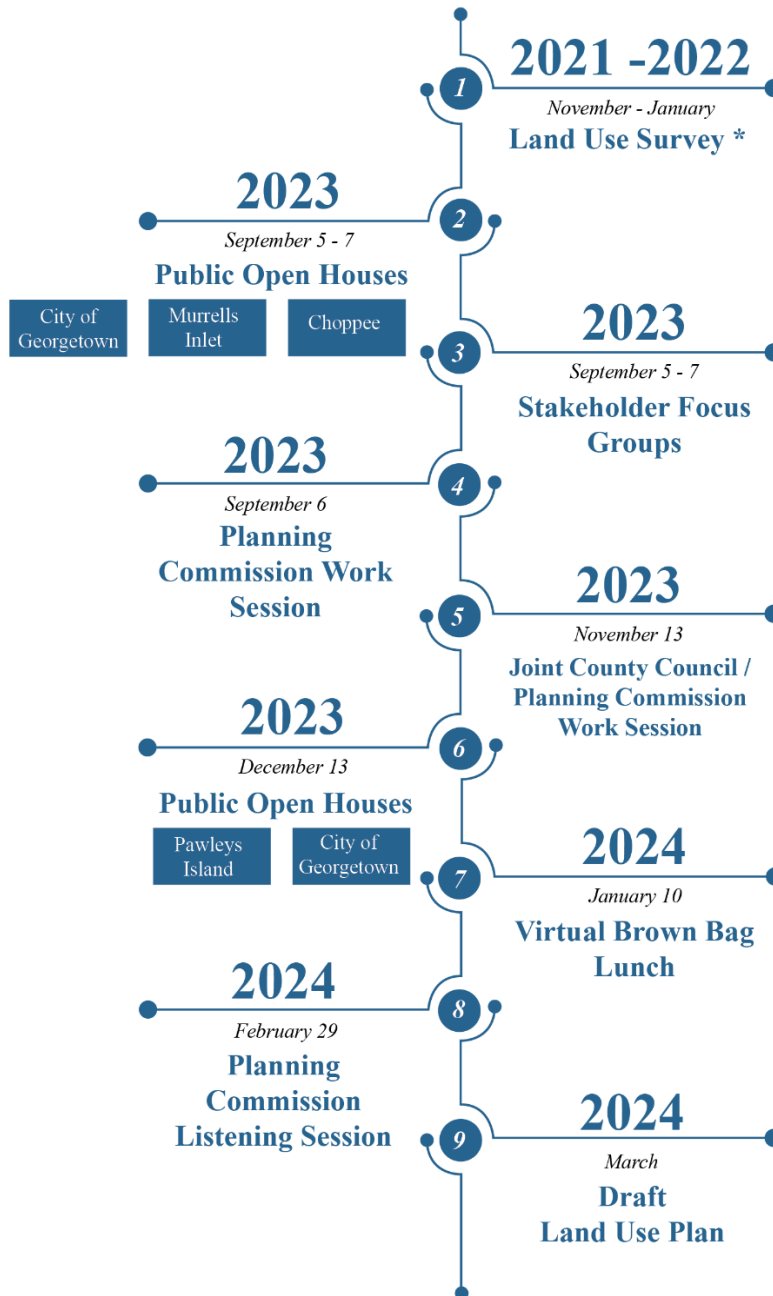
6 Design matters and is a significant factor in ensuring compatible development.

The Vision and the Guiding Principles influenced the recommendations of the Land Use Element update and will be incorporated into future ordinance updates.

Community Engagement

Public participation was a cornerstone of the Land Use Element update. Public engagement activities were intentionally distributed throughout the county, and in multiple phases of the process. A detailed description of these activities can be found in Appendix A.

Public Engagement Timeline



*Survey initiated by Georgetown County staff as a precursor to this Land use Element update

Land Use Survey

The Georgetown County Planning Department conducted a comprehensive land use survey from November 15, 2021, to January 19, 2022, receiving 1,852 responses predominantly through online platforms. The purpose of the survey was to gather insights on residents' perspectives regarding the best use of land in their community and the county, serving as a foundation for the Land Use Element in the Comprehensive Plan.

The survey covered diverse topics, including residents' concerns, preferences for development types and demographic information.

Notable Results from the Land Use Survey

- 96% of respondents consider natural resources are most important to them.
- 63% indicated that the county should give more attention to natural resources.
- 59% indicated that vacant and under-utilized property in developed areas of the county should accommodate future population growth.
- The top 3 concerns for the next 10-20 years included infrastructure, urbanization and land preservation.

Public Open Houses

To facilitate substantive public input, three public open houses were hosted at three locations throughout the County in sequential evenings:

- Howard Auditorium in the City of Georgetown (September 5, 2023),
- Murrells Inlet Community Center (September 6, 2023), and
- Choppee Recreation Center at Northwest Regional Park (September 7, 2023).



Murrells Inlet Open House

These interactive open houses provided a platform for the local community to voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns regarding the future of land use in Georgetown County.

During each evening open house, participants were encouraged to give feedback on six primary questions or activities:

1. What is your vision for the future of land use in Georgetown County?
2. What goals should Georgetown County pursue in the Land Use Element update?
3. Relevance of 2015 Land Use Element goals,

4. Goals participants would like to see included in the Land Use Element update,
5. Visual preferences for single-family, multi-family and commercial or mixed-use development,
6. How can the county be more proactive with affordable housing, and
7. What locations are appropriate for new residential, new commercial and conservation or open space (interactive mapping activity).

Over 300 individuals attended the public meetings during the three-day workshop, and the activities collected over 1,770 individual data points cumulatively from open house activities.

Top 5 Themes from Open House Comments

1. Preservation of community character and promotion of compatible development
2. Preservation of natural resources
3. Coordination between development and infrastructure, and promoting responsible development
4. Pursuing housing choice, and affordable and workforce housing
5. Creating walkable and bikeable communities

Stakeholder Focus Groups

In addition to the public open houses, the September 2023 workshop included five focus group meetings with a variety of local stakeholders. These meetings included representatives from neighborhoods, HOAs, Keep It Green, real estate developers and professionals, affordable housing providers, major employers, environmental and conservation groups, utility providers, emergency response organizations and representatives from the small business community.

The discussion in these focus groups focused on the unique characteristics of Georgetown County, priorities for inclusion in the Land Use Element, and affordable housing.

Themes from Stakeholder Group Input

- Environmental Preservation and Conservation
- Community Identity and Character
- Affordable and Workforce Housing
- Coordination of Development and Infrastructure
- Regulations and Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan
- Community Engagement and Education



Planning Commission work session during the September 2023 Public Workshop

County Council and Planning Commission Input

A Planning Commission work session was held on September 6, 2023 to discuss the commission's issues and priorities in the initial stages of the Land Use Element process. The Planning Commission's Land Use Element priorities included:

- Ensuring new development is compatible with traditional land use and development patterns,
- Managing pressures for increased density on the Waccamaw Neck,
- Preservation and conservation of natural resources and open space,
- The importance of housing choice to promote longevity of residents,
- The importance of housing affordability in maintaining a local workforce,
- Ensuring an economically prosperous future for the county by facilitating business development, and
- Accommodating future needs of recreational opportunities and community facilities.

Additionally, a joint work session of the County Council and Planning Commission was held on November 13, 2023. The meeting included an update of the process and input received, as well as preliminary land use and policy concepts to be included in the Land Use Element.

Additional Opportunities for Public Input

Following the September open houses, Georgetown County Planning Department staff embarked on a series of "public roadshow" meetings to gain additional input in locations throughout the county. These meetings, which followed the format of the September 5-7 open houses took place on the following dates and following locations:

- September 15, 2023 in Choppee,
- October 5, 2023 in Parkersville, and
- November 9, 2023 in Pleasant Hill.

Two additional public open houses, held on December 13, 2023 at the Waccamaw Branch Library in Pawleys Island, and Howard Auditorium in the City of Georgetown provided initial drafts of the land use concepts, maps, and policies associated with this Land Use Element, and included interactive opportunities to provide feedback. Approximately 50 individuals attended these events.

A virtual brown bag lunch presentation on January 10, 2024 provided an alternative opportunity for interested community members unable to attend the open houses. Approximately 30 viewers attended this event. County staff also recorded this presentation and made it available on the Comprehensive Plan web page. Planning Department staff also presented an update to interested residents on January 25, 2024 in Plantersville.

On February 29, 2024, the Planning Commission held a listening session to obtain comments from residents and stakeholders regarding the initial Draft Land Use Element document. Twelve individuals provided comments, which primarily focused on density concerns, preservation of natural resources, stormwater management, and infrastructure on the Waccamaw Neck. In

response to comments, portions of the draft Land Use Element were revised, augmented, or clarified, and an updated Draft Land Use Element was presented to the Planning Commission at a March 28, 2024 work session.

Throughout the process of creating the Land Use Element, county staff established a dedicated webpage and email to provide information and receive comments. The web page included the presentations, interactive boards, and maps used in each open house or meeting throughout the process. Likewise, the Land Use Element update web page included an online form, that allowed for the submission of additional comments. Over 60 additional comments were submitted via email or through the web form. The primary themes from emailed comments closely echoed those of public open house attendees, further reinforcing these themes.



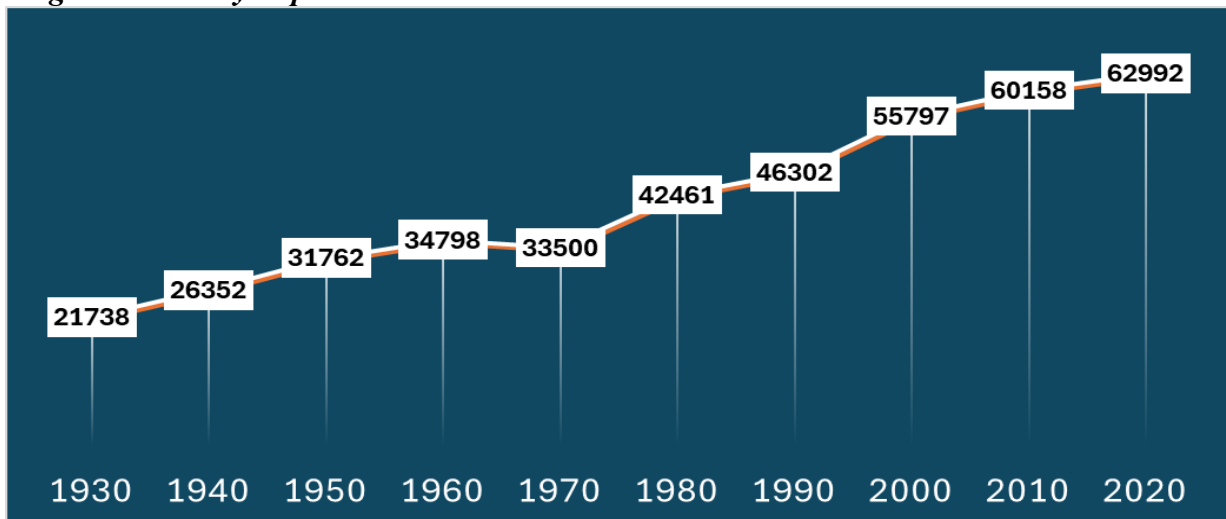
Inventory and Analysis

The recognition and analysis of existing conditions is vital to the land use planning process. This required an analysis of other elements of the Georgetown County Comprehensive Plan, which provided foundational information on population and housing trends, transportation, infrastructure, community facilities, economic development, cultural resources, and resiliency. Additionally, geographic information systems (GIS) data analysis informed the major driving factors for land use such as infrastructure and natural features. Building upon this information, a suitability analysis was performed based on factors such as wetlands, floodplain, projected sea level rise, proximity to infrastructure, and proximity to complimentary uses. This analysis provided a high-level view of the suitability of lands throughout the county for development or conservation. This holistic evaluation of other plan elements is integral to understanding the county's land use landscape.

Population and Housing Trends

Georgetown County has experienced steady but slowing population growth in recent decades. The Comprehensive Plan's 2024 Population Element ([available here](#)) highlights this steady growth, noting a population increase from 60,158 in 2010 to 62,992 in 2020. As described in more detail in the Population Element, Georgetown County's growth rate (4.71%) is significantly less than adjacent Horry and Charleston Counties (28.1% and 26.4% respectively) over that same period. The Waccamaw Neck has been a focal point for this growth with 43% of the county's total population, with the City of Georgetown (located outside of the land use regulatory jurisdiction of Georgetown County) constituting an estimated 14 percent. Despite this growth, the county's population density (77.4 persons per square mile) remains notably lower than neighboring Horry (304.3 persons per square mile) and Charleston (441.1 persons per square mile). In 2020, the median age of Georgetown County residents was 51 years, compared to 40 years statewide.

Georgetown County Population 1930-2020

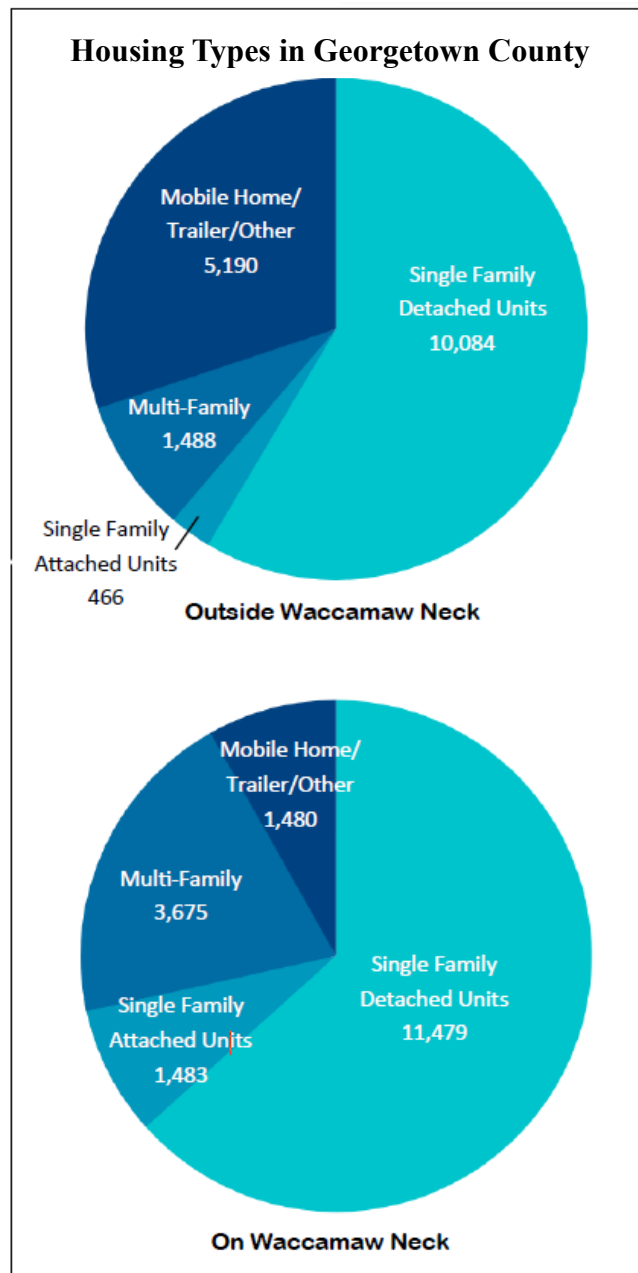


Source: 2024 Georgetown County Population Element, U.S. Census Bureau

Georgetown County's housing landscape is detailed in the 2022 Housing Element ([available here](#)) of the Comprehensive Plan. According to 2019 Census data, 61% of the county's 35,345 total housing units are single-family detached. Of the county's 21,563 single family detached units, over half (11,479 units or 53%) are located on the Waccamaw Neck. Over 72-percent of the county's 7,112 multi-family and single-family attached units also reside on the Waccamaw Neck, while over 78-percent of the county's 6,670 mobile home, trailer, or other housing units exist in the mainland portion of the county. The graphic below provides a detailed breakdown of housing units by type and location.

Most homes were constructed between 1940 and 1989, with 5,462 new housing units built in the last decade, representing 15.5 percent of the total housing. Notably, the average household size has decreased from 3.1 to 2.37 persons since 1980, indicative of a demand for smaller housing units.

Furthermore, the 2022 Housing Element details challenges faced by Georgetown County regarding affordability, particularly for the working class, which is discussed in more detail on page 32. The Coastal Carolinas Association of REALTORS® reported a median sales price of \$365,000 for a single-family home in August 2023. Meanwhile, the county's Housing Needs Assessment compiled by Bowen National Research documents an average monthly rent of \$1,100. With a county-wide median household income of \$48,456 and 26.9 percent of households earning less than \$25,000, affordability is a pressing concern. This challenge underscores the need for strategic initiatives to address housing affordability and ensure a balanced and inclusive housing market in Georgetown County.



*Number of each housing unit type on the Waccamaw Neck and Outside the Waccamaw Neck
Source: 2022 Georgetown County Housing Element*

Relationship to Adopted Plan Elements

Since 2007, Georgetown County has updated each Comprehensive Plan element individually. Staff capacity is a contributing factor influencing this approach. However, this strategy also allows for examination and refinement of each new or revised element.

Ensuring each element harmoniously contributes to the overarching vision of Georgetown County is challenging under this segmented process. Recognizing the interdependence of each element, the Land Use Element plays a pivotal role in integrating essential insights, data and policy from other adopted components of the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, this Land Use Element update should inform updates to remaining elements for consistency and effective implementation. This collaborative approach is fundamental, forging a unified direction for the future of Georgetown County. The following briefly summarizes the relationship of other elements of the Comprehensive Plan to the Land Use Element.

Natural Resources

The pending 2024 Natural Resources Element ([available here](#)) plays a crucial role in tandem with the Land Use Element, influencing sustainable development of the region through a holistic approach. The Natural Resources Element sets forth explicit goals and strategies aimed at protecting and enhancing the county's natural assets, including wetlands, watersheds, flood plains, habitats, and agricultural lands. Natural Resource Element priorities include:

- Prioritizing natural resource preservation and balanced growth,
- The relationship between economic stability and the county's unique resources,
- Sustainable practices to maintain ecological integrity, and
- Finding an equilibrium between development and the environment.



Example of balancing Georgetown County's unique natural environment with development, incorporating an established live oak in new development

Transportation

The interconnectivity of transportation and land use decisions are critical for the future of Georgetown County. The 2023 Transportation Element ([available here](#)) details future road improvements, safety improvements, transit needs, and bicycle and pedestrian projects as part of the county's transportation network. It also outlines five pivotal goals that impact land use and development:

- Addressing transportation infrastructure with development,
- Creating an inviting bicycle and pedestrian network,
- Supporting complete streets,
- Coordinating with partner agencies for long term maintenance, and
- Coordinating with transit providers to increase ridership.



Example of the existing bicycle and pedestrian network in Georgetown County, the Waccamaw Neck Bikeway (Source: South Carolina Trails)

Economic Development

A prosperous and sustainable future for Georgetown County requires a balanced economy. Georgetown County's 2023 Economic Development Element ([available here](#)) outlines impactful goals and strategies, designed to provide long-term economic stability for the county, which must dovetail with land use policy. The Economic Development Element specifically focuses on:

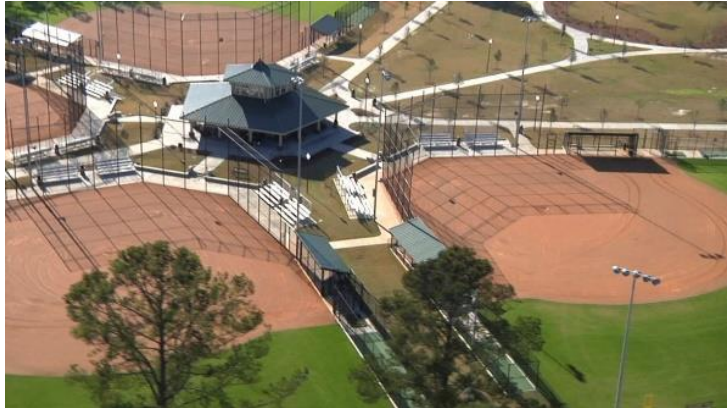
- Continued development of industrial product,
- Redevelopment of the Georgetown Port,
- Workforce housing to support local workers,
- Workforce development,
- Comprehensive marketing, and
- Small business engagement.



The future of the Georgetown Port can be a cornerstone for future economic development. (Source: 2023 Georgetown County Economic Development Element)

Community Facilities

The 2023 Community Facilities Element ([available here](#)) goals and objectives are strategically designed to improve the overall well-being of county residents and functionality of county services and facilities. This element places a strong emphasis on providing and supporting facilities for county government functions and recreation. Key objectives include, fostering cross-departmental coordination, enhancing online capabilities, promoting walkability, promoting county-wide availability of recreational opportunities, and ensuring equitable access to public facilities, particularly within public safety services. Community Facilities goals supported through the Land Use Element include:



8 Oaks Park is an example of a regional recreation facility serving the mainland portion of the county.

- Provide and support facilities to serve the public,
- Promote equitable provision of facilities across the county,
- Explore funding sources for infrastructure and facilities,
- Coordinate the provision of utilities in Georgetown County,
- Support measures for clean water and collection of waste through environmentally responsible practices,
- Coordinate with educational providers regarding facilities and future plans,
- Improve and maintain the quality of parks and recreational opportunities,
- Coordinate capital improvement planning and future land use planning.

Housing

The 2022 Housing Element ([available here](#)) of the Georgetown County Comprehensive Plan should align with the Land Use Element to form a comprehensive strategy. Emphasizing "housing for all," the Housing Element underscores the importance of providing diverse housing types and quantities for present and future populations. Additionally, the Land Use Element supports "affordable and workforce housing" through tools such as regulatory incentives and incentive-based zoning. A detailed analysis of promoting affordability and housing for all is provided on page 32. The Housing goals of the Comprehensive Plan supported in this element include:



Attached residential units, such as townhomes, provide an opportunity for home ownership, often at lower price points than detached single-family residences.

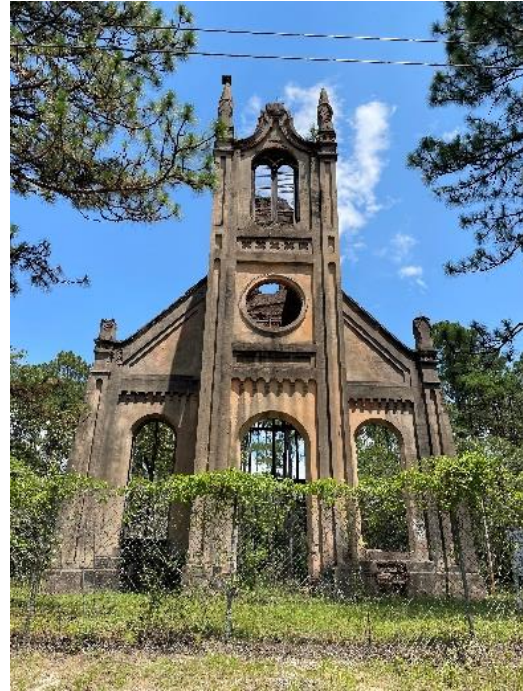
- Providing adequate housing types to support the future population,
- Enhancing home ownership,
- Promoting affordable housing throughout the county,
- Pursuing workforce housing,
- Encouraging stable communities with high quality of life standards,
- Encouraging appropriate housing development with consideration of rural parts of the county,
- Addressing substandard housing, and
- Increasing housing options for all residents.

The chart in Appendix D details how specific Housing Element goals and objectives are supported by the Land Use Element.

Cultural Resources

Georgetown County demonstrates a dedicated commitment to preserving its historical and scenic assets, as outlined in the 2021 Cultural Resource Element of the Georgetown County Comprehensive Plan ([available here](#)). The element details the county's past, recognizing the unique places throughout the county and their importance in carrying community character and identity into the future. Cultural Resource goals supported by the Land Use Element include:

- Identifying buildings, structures, sites and resources that contribute to the county's history,
- Developing policies that encourage preservation of historic and scenic resources, and
- Enhancing public awareness of the county's history and scenic resources.



Example of a Georgetown County historic site, Prince Frederick's Chapel near Plantersville historic site

Resiliency

The 2023 Resiliency Element of the Georgetown County Comprehensive Plan ([available here](#)) outlines a forward-thinking and multi-faceted approach to reducing diverse vulnerabilities throughout the county. The element acknowledges the need for Georgetown County to incorporate resilience efforts into emergency management practices as well as development decisions. Key recommendations from this element to promote resiliency through coordination with this Land Use element include:

- Improving collaboration among community partners,
- Prioritizing protection of socially vulnerable populations in disaster planning,
- Considering a holistic approach in developing resilience projects, plans, and policies,
- Examining economic resilience,
- Enhancing natural resilience through responsible land use and preservation,
- Assessing existing evacuation plans for highly developed areas,
- Identifying vulnerable infrastructure, and
- Promoting sustainable urban development.

Critical Needs

The Land Use Element update evaluates critical needs that were identified through the previously adopted individual Comprehensive Plan elements and public input received through this process. These needs include recognizing and honoring established development patterns, affordable, attainable and workforce housing, conservation of natural resources, infrastructure and community facilities, suitability analysis, and plan implementation. The discussion on plan implementation underscores practical steps to actively realize the land use vision for the future of Georgetown County.

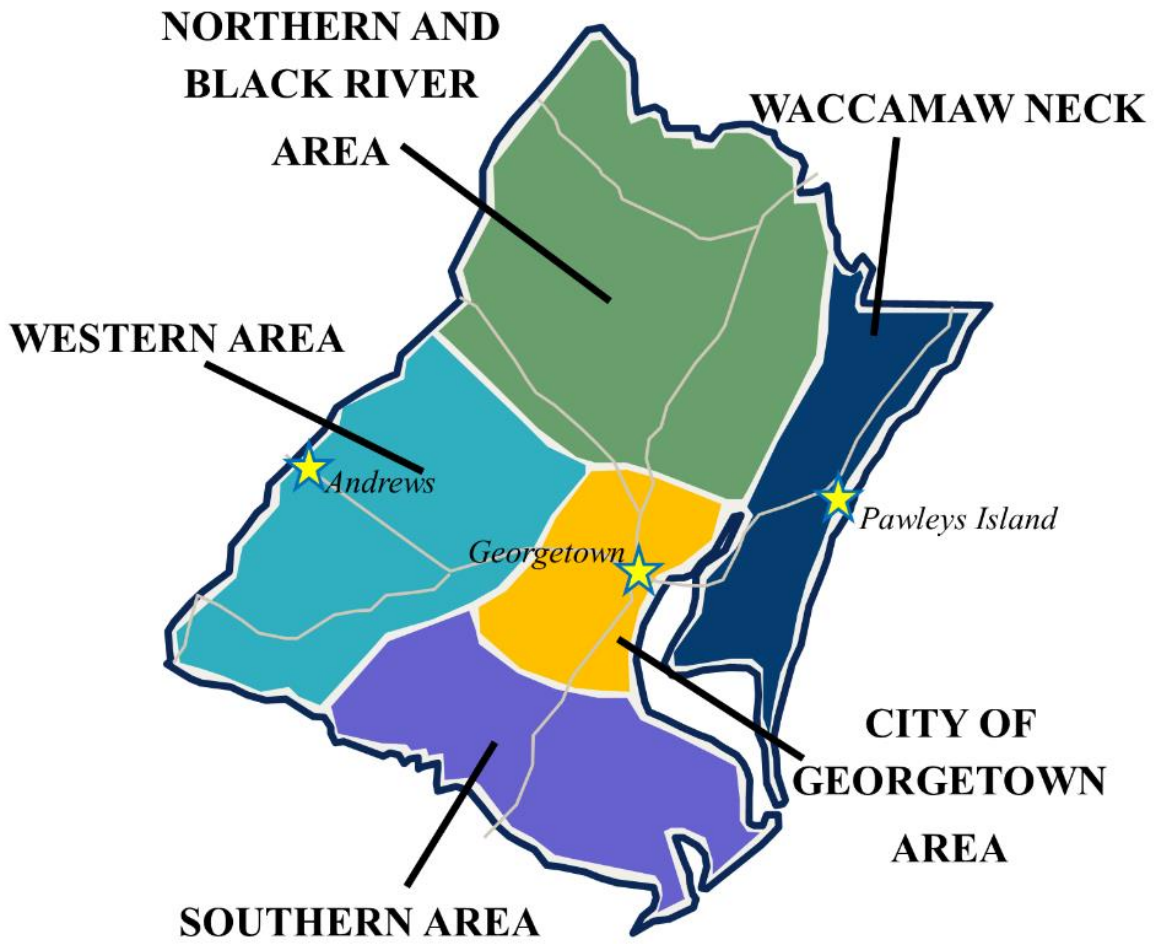
Recognizing and Honoring Established Development Patterns

Acknowledging the diverse geography and established development patterns of Georgetown County is essential for effective land use planning. The county is enriched with distinctive communities, each boasting its own development characteristics. It was clear throughout the public input process merely recognizing these communities was insufficient. Rather, recognizing distinct characteristics, issues, and land use patterns, and establishing comprehensive land use policies to fortify, safeguard and enhance the existing places within the county is imperative.

This plan examines five distinct areas of Georgetown County regarding current land uses and trends: 1) Northern Area and Black River; 2) Western Area; 3) Southern Area; 4) City of Georgetown Area; and 5) Waccamaw Neck, as illustrated below. This examination identified land use patterns and issues specific to each region and included aspects such as parcel density and noteworthy natural features. This holistic approach ensures land use planning is tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of each area within Georgetown County.

The following pages describe land use patterns and considerations for each sub area. This analysis includes maps of existing land use which serve as a foundation for future land use recommendations. Considering current and historical land use patterns throughout the county provide insight on the unique character of these sub areas which combine with suitability analysis (starting on page 42) and public participation results to define future land use place types and patterns depicted on the Future Land Use Map (starting on page 65).

Map of Georgetown County Sub-Areas



Northern and Black River Area



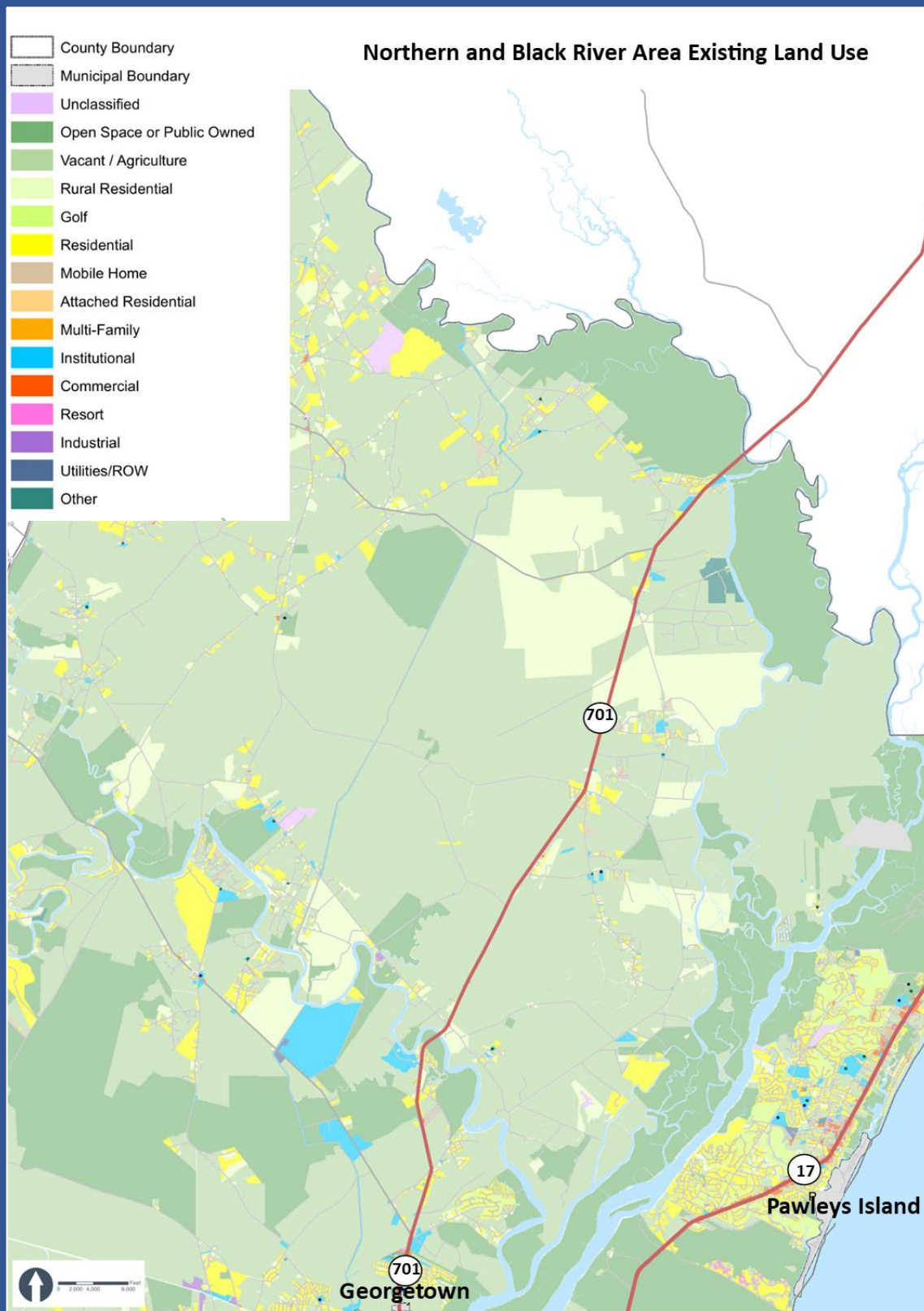
Prince Frederick Chapel, Plantersville



Black River

Land Use Patterns and Issues

- Primarily agricultural and timberland with some rural development
- Major land uses
 - Rural Residential
 - Open Space
 - Single Family Residential
- Large land holdings including timber and rice plantations.
- Future parts of Black River State Park
- Rural villages including Plantersville and Choppee
- Average Single Family Residential Parcel Size is 4.9 acres
- Growth pressure extending south along US 701 from Horry County. Yauhannah Landing, a new subdivision just south of the Great Pee Dee River and the county line is indicative of potential for residential. Lots in this subdivision are roughly 100 x 200 feet or 20,000 square feet in size.
- Utilities
 - Limited sanitary sewer infrastructure along US 701 and in Choppee
 - Water lines along major corridors
- Water and sewer capacity limitations due to size of lines and restrictions on growth due to funds used to construct.



City of Georgetown Area



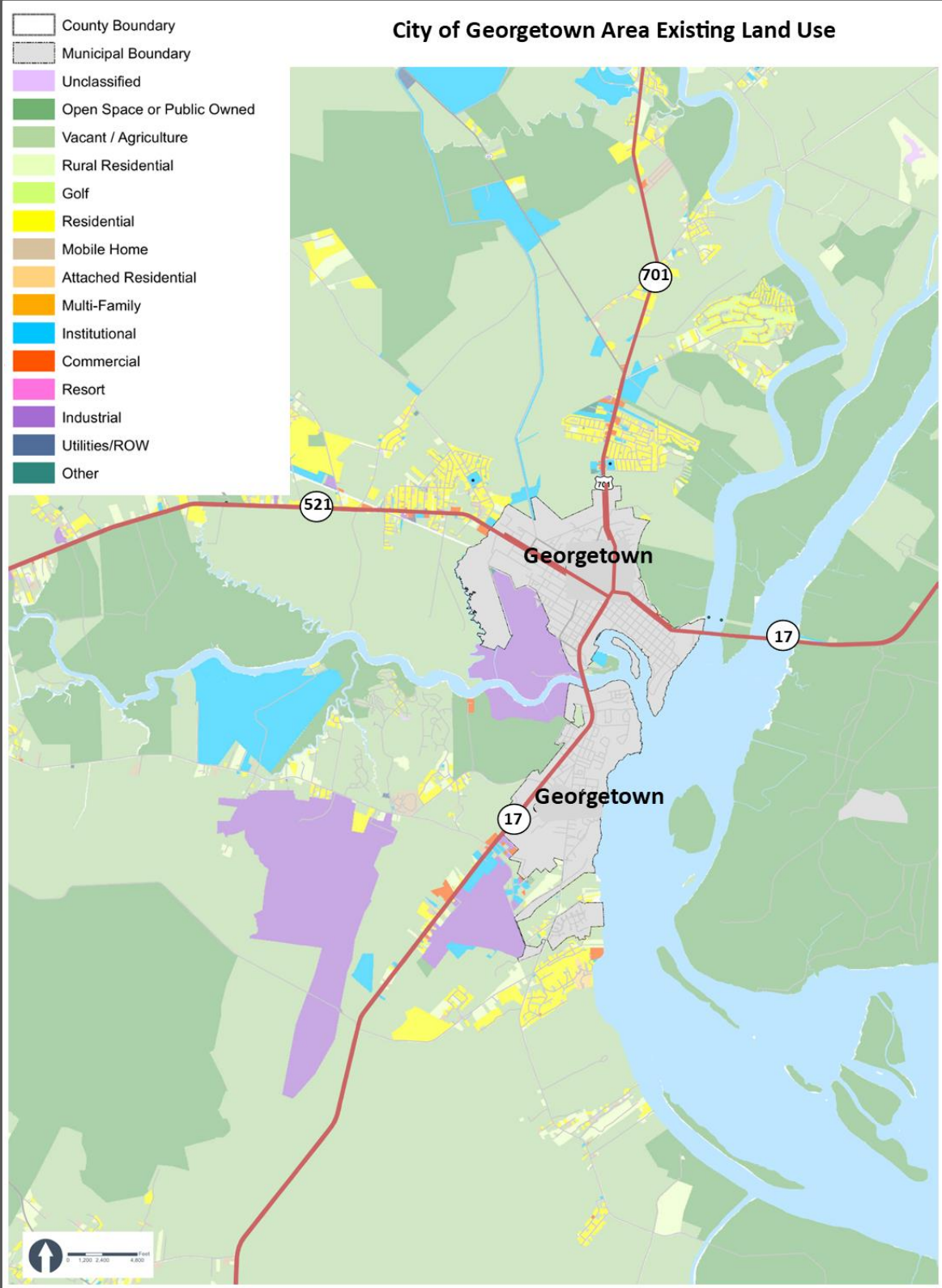
Housing on the periphery of the City of Georgetown



Georgetown Port Property

Land Use Patterns and Issues

- Comparatively diverse land use makeup including residential subdivisions, commercial uses and industrial land uses.
- Major land uses
 - Rural Residential and Open Space
 - Industrial, Institutional, or Commercial (16% of land area)
 - Single family residential (8% of land area).
- Average Single Family Residential Parcel Size is .58 acres (inclusive of undeveloped parcels zoned for single-family residential)
- Some residential growth pressure and potential, especially along the US 701 Corridor north and south of the City of Georgetown and on the west side of City near Brick Chimney Road and US 521 towards Andrews
- Potential for residential and industrial growth along Pennyroyal Road south of the city
- Industrial development on Pennyroyal Road and Georgetown Airport are key features
- Utilities
 - Major corridors are served by water and sewer infrastructure
 - City of Georgetown, Georgetown County Water and Sewer District and the Rural Community Water District of Georgetown County are primary providers in this area
 - A new waterline is planned along Brick Chimney Road Extension to Black River



Waccamaw Neck Area



Mixed use building on the Waccamaw Neck

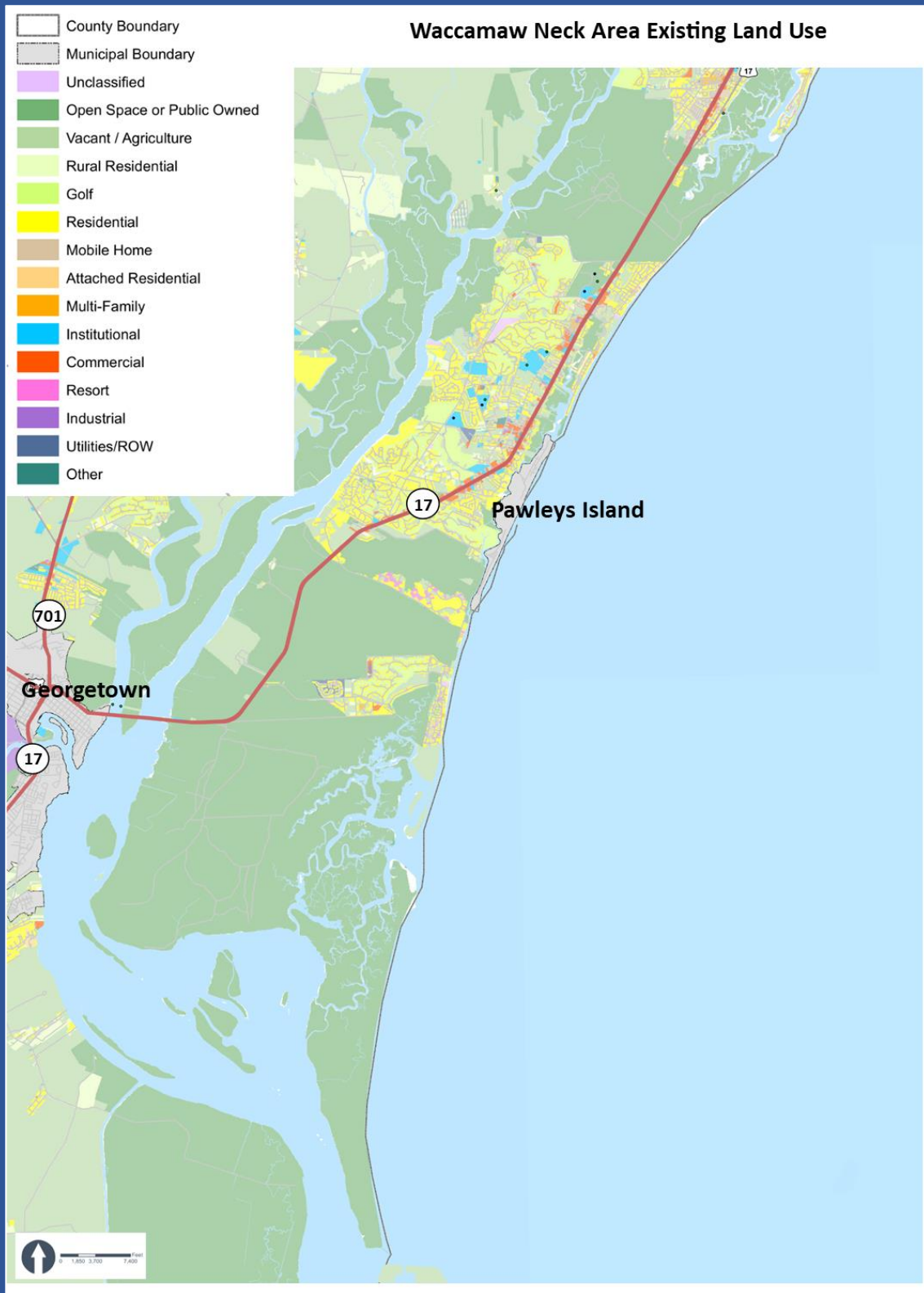


Residential development

Land Use Patterns and Issues

- Large tracts of conserved open space with a mix of residential and non-residential uses
- Highway oriented commercial uses along Highway 17
- Many large, planned developments
- Average Single Family Residential Parcel Size is 0.51 acres*
- Mostly built out with a high demand for available remaining land and increasing pressure for redevelopment
- Major concerns by residents over environmental impacts of new development, including maintaining community character, alleviating stormwater issues, coordinating transportation facilities, the potential impacts of sea level rise and the threat of gentrification with new development or redevelopment.

*Acreage inclusive of all residential parcels, including large undeveloped tracts zoned for residential development in planned developments



Western Area



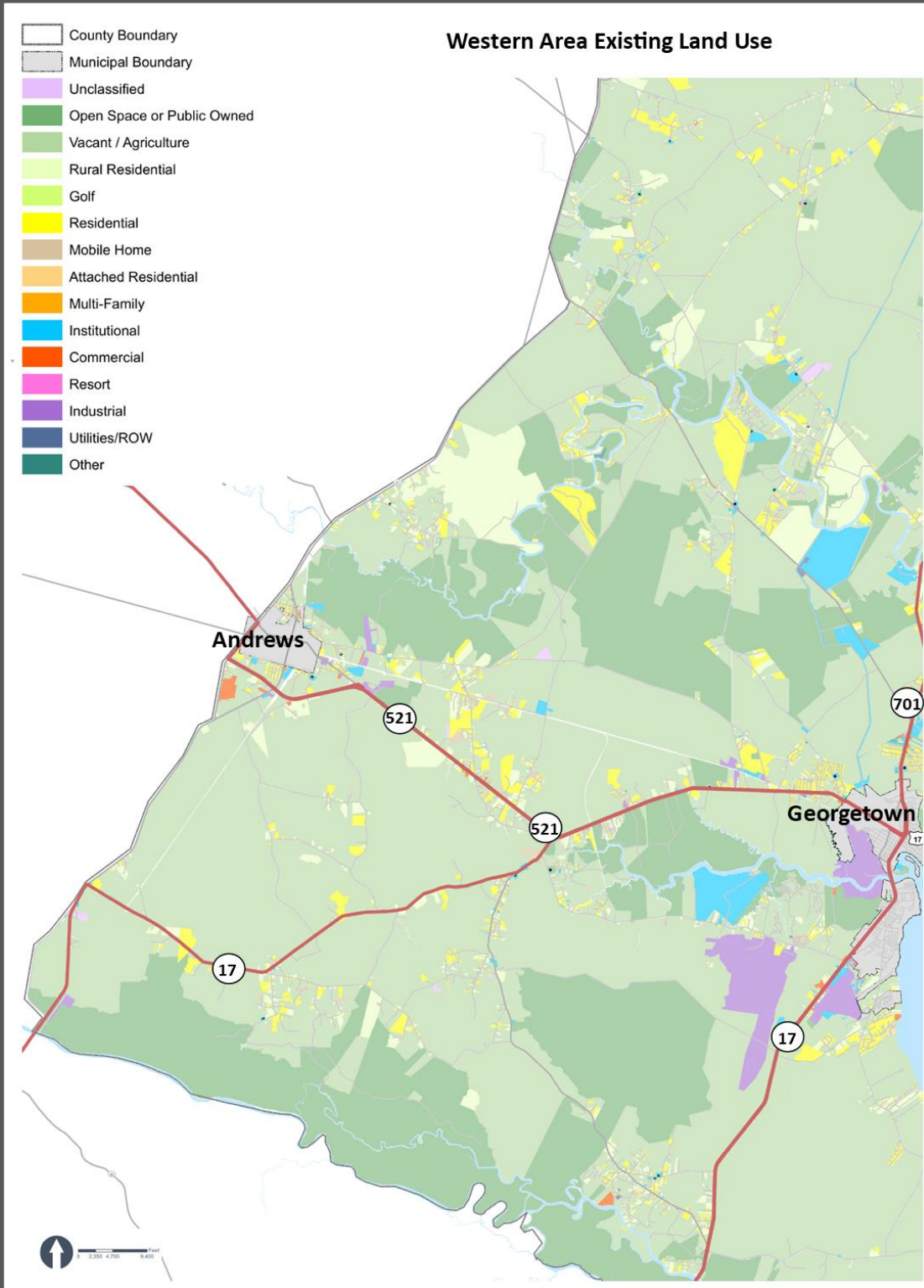
Industrial building, Georgetown County Business Center

Land Use Patterns and Issues

- Large tracts of conserved open space with a mix of residential and non-residential uses
- Pockets of residential, commercial, and industrial development are clustered along major transportation routes
- Average Single Family Residential Parcel Size is 2.37acres
- Concerns regarding the potential conversion of agricultural and forestry uses over time, and recent trends toward solar farm development in the area



Example of rural residential in the Western Area



Southern Area



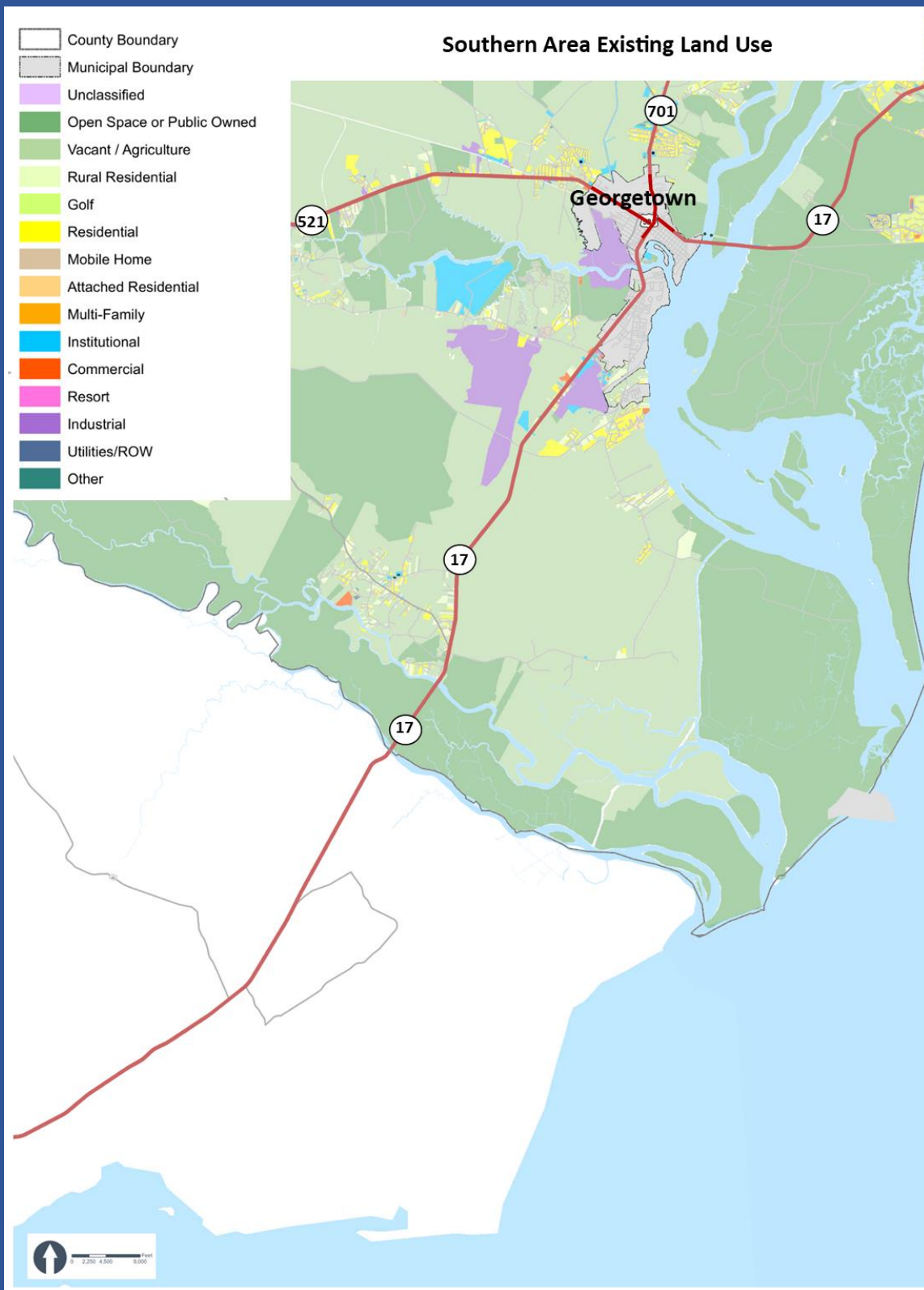
Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center



Example of residential uses in the Southern Area

Trends and Issues

- Predominantly low density residential and undeveloped land
- 55% Open Space
- 43% Rural Residential
- Average Single Family Residential Parcel Size 2.18 acres
- Sea level rise should be taken into account during development design and approval.



Affordable, Attainable, and Workforce Housing

Georgetown County stands at a critical juncture where the pressing need for affordable housing intersects with the imperative of supporting residents and facilitating economic development.

Housing affordability emerged as a key theme through the public participation process and review of the goals and objectives of the

Housing Element, reflecting the collective concern for ensuring the county remains an inclusive and accessible community for all.

Discussions with major employers further validated this concern, emphasizing the indispensable role of affordable housing in attracting and sustaining a vibrant local workforce and, consequently, economic growth.

Projected employment growth across service and manufacturing industries underscores the growing demand for affordable housing. To meet the needs of the workforce, it is imperative that housing options are available and priced within reach of those who contribute to the county's economic vitality.

According to the Housing Needs Assessment for Georgetown County (Bowen National Research 2021), local job growth requires 670 rental units and 2,203 for sale homes by 2025. This emphasis on affordability is particularly vital for essential workers, including teachers, public safety professionals, and healthcare workers, who, on average, earn at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Georgetown County. Enabling essential workers to reside within the communities they serve enhances the quality of life and strengthens community bonds.

Additionally, an aging population in Georgetown County desires to age in place, requiring more services and adequate housing stock. The limited or fixed incomes of aging populations exacerbate the issue of inadequate housing options within the county. To address these critical issues, strategies include assuring land entitlements that allow for density flexibility to increase

Affordable Housing Definitions

Affordable Housing - (Section 4 of the S.C. Priority Investment Act)

1. For sale units: Housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fee, if any, constitute no more than 28 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the area median income, by household size; or
2. Housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the median income, by household size.

Attainable Housing - accessible to individuals earning at or below 120% of the area median income by household size.

Workforce Housing - rent or mortgage and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning within a range of 60% - 120% of the area median income, by household size.

Deeply Affordable Housing - rent or mortgage and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning within a range of less than 40% of the area median income, by household size.

production, encouraging policies and partnerships that incentivize affordability in new housing developments and creating programs that support the rehabilitation of affordable inadequate housing stock. These measures collectively contribute to addressing the immediate demand for affordable housing while also ensuring the long-term sustainability and inclusivity of Georgetown County.

The importance of location in planning for affordable, attainable and workforce housing is paramount. Strategic siting influences the success and sustainability of housing initiatives and profoundly impacts the quality of life for residents. A strategically located development contributes to the economic mobility of its inhabitants by ensuring proximity to jobs, services and cultural amenities. Recognizing this, the matrix and associated map on page 34 evaluate the potential for success in providing affordable housing in areas throughout Georgetown County.

The matrix considers crucial factors such as existing infrastructure, access to employment opportunities and essential services and the ability to utilize State of South Carolina Opportunity Zone incentives. These criteria align with criteria that predict positive resident outcomes and reflect many of the evaluation parameters used for established financial assistance programs such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

Established communities of historic or cultural significance are important assets in Georgetown County, and therefore acknowledged in the matrix of “Potential Housing Special Emphasis Areas.” The Land Use Element supports the creation of regulatory safeguards, such as cultural overlays, to ensure any future development is compatible with the unique development patterns, architectural styles, scale, and other facets of these established communities.

Integrating these considerations into the evaluation process will strategically position affordable housing partners to successfully create inclusive, vibrant communities that cater to the diverse needs of all residents.

Relationship between Natural Resources and Housing

Natural resources provide a significant constraint for all development in Georgetown County, including of housing. The abundance of wetlands, floodplains and other natural resources throughout the county require a site-by-site assessment, rather than an area-wide approach, for determining suitable housing sites.

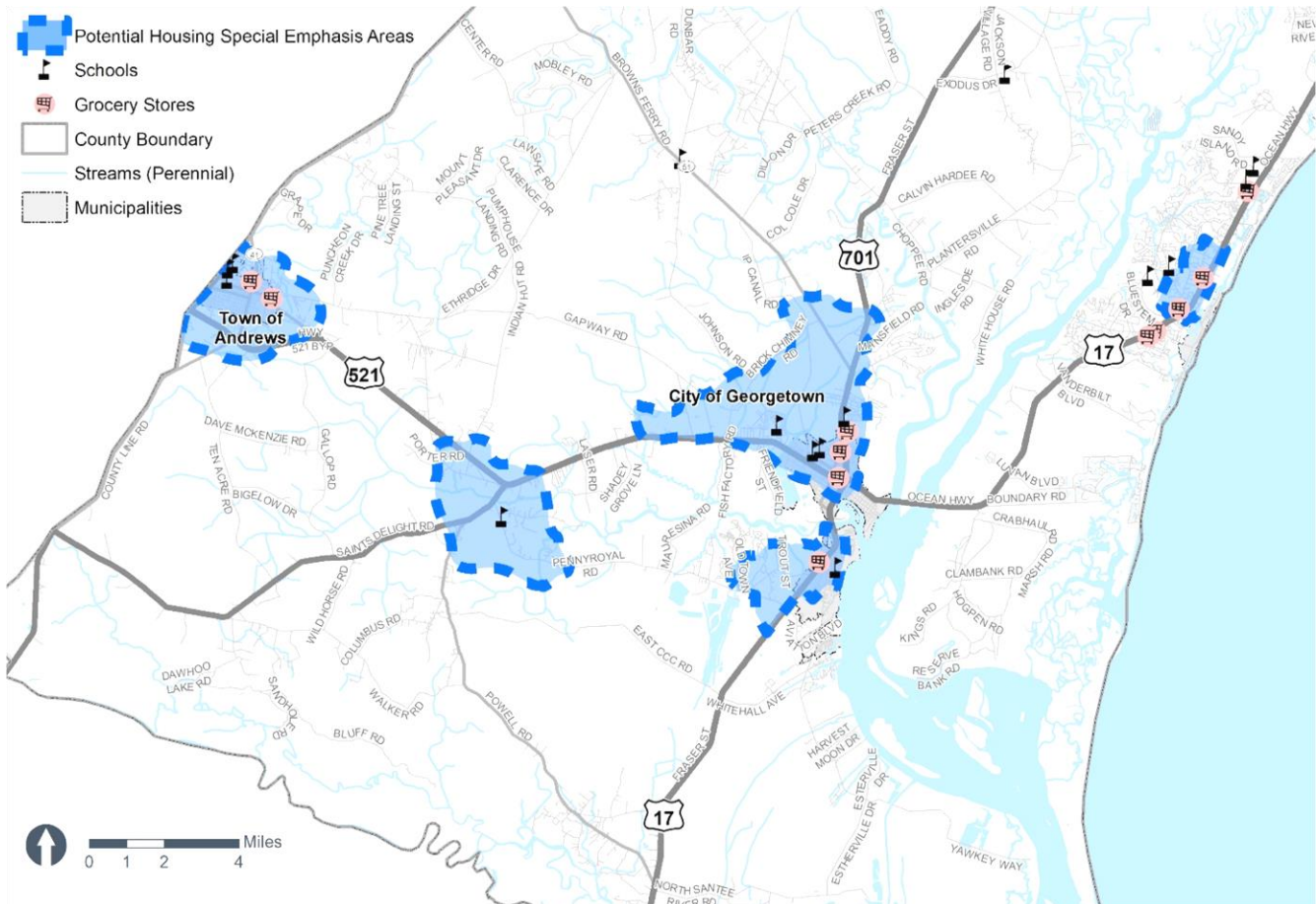
The county’s natural resources provide both a constraint to the development of new housing and an opportunity to recognize, preserve and incorporate natural resources into the development of new affordable units.

Evaluation of Potential Housing Special Emphasis Areas

Potential Housing Special Emphasis Areas	Existing Infrastructure	Access to Jobs, Commercial, and Retail	Established or Historic Cultural Area	Opportunity Zone
Parkersville Area (along Petigru and Hwy 17)	●	●	●	
S Hwy 17 from Maryville to Pennyroyal Road	●	●	●	●
Brick Chimney Road along Hwy 701/Hwy 51 Intersection	●	●	○	
Hwy 521 east of Andrews	○	○	○	●

Exist in the area ● Partially exist in the area ○

Map of Potential Housing Special Emphasis Areas



Creating emphasis areas for affordable, attainable and workforce housing offers a range of benefits essential for effective land use planning. Emphasis areas enable the county to strategically align resources, directing investments and incentives to targeted locations with the greatest opportunities for success. Additionally, by designating priority areas the county can foster collaboration and partnerships with developers, nonprofits and other stakeholders, streamlining efforts to collectively address housing challenges. Finally, prioritization enhances predictability in the entitlement process for both residents and developers, offering a clear framework for development approvals and reducing uncertainties. This not only expedites the development of affordable housing but also facilitates community understanding and support, creating a more inclusive and sustainable urban landscape while fostering collaboration and transparency in the development process.

Conservation of Natural Resources

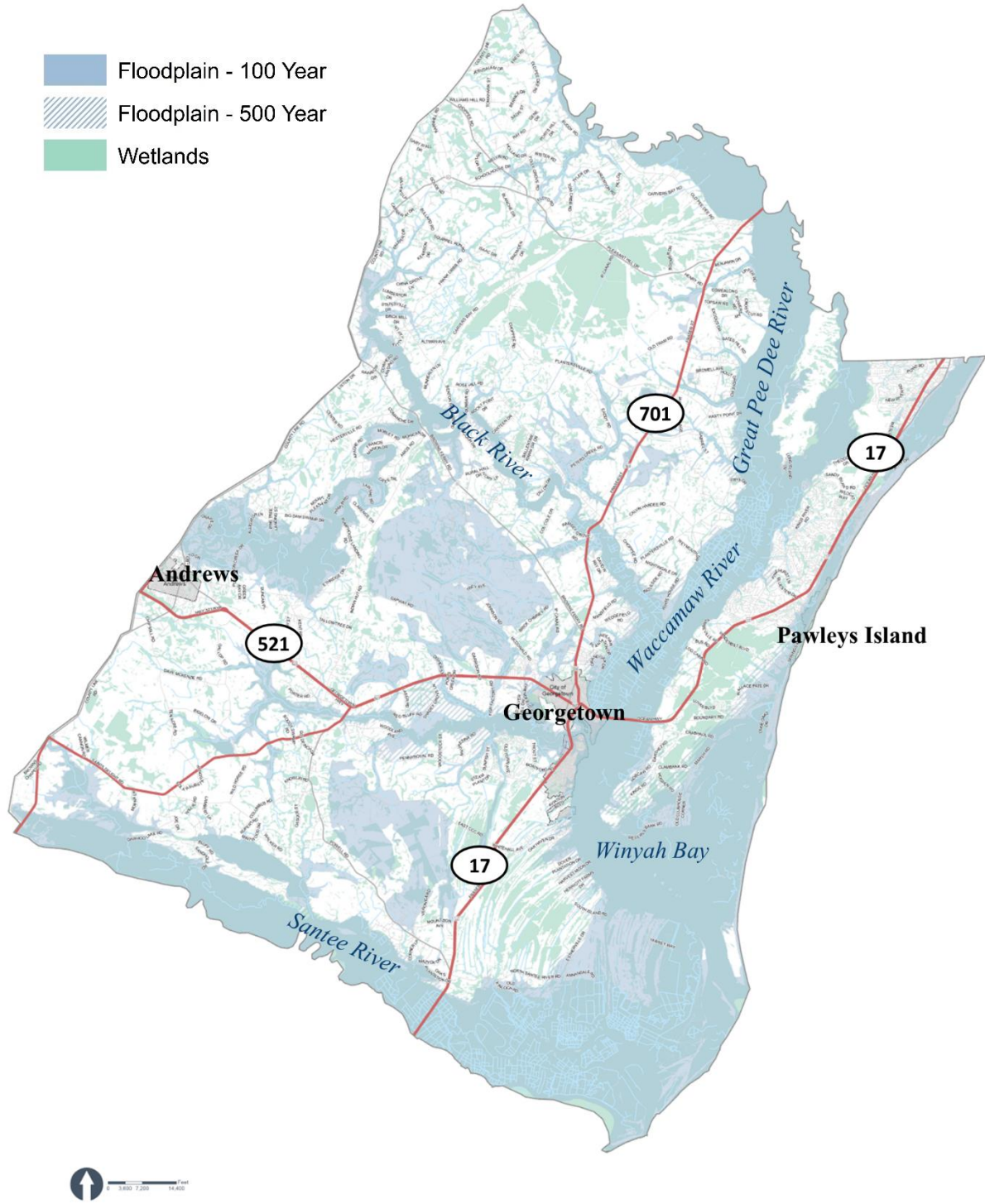
Georgetown County is blessed with a great diversity of natural resources, including forests, wetlands, tidal marshes, floodplains, rivers, bays, and prime agricultural lands. The richness of these resources make them a considerable factor in land use decisions. These assets provide valuable ecological functions, including sustaining wildlife, filtering water, absorbing rainfall, supporting fisheries, agriculture and forestry operations, and providing scenic beauty along with vast recreational opportunities.

The Resiliency Element of the Comprehensive Plan underscores the crucial role of Georgetown County's natural features in addressing coastal flooding, storm surge, and sea level rise. The county's low topography makes it vulnerable to coastal flooding, especially during King Tides, an exceptionally high tide that occurs three to four times a year. Additionally, the county faces the risk of storm surge and associated flooding from tropical cyclones and similar weather events. To mitigate these impacts, the county relies on its wetland habitat, saltmarshes, wetlands, floodplain, and vegetated dunes. These natural features function as buffers, absorbing floodwaters, reducing erosion, and providing essential habitat. Recognizing the projected impacts of sea level rise, the county emphasizes the preservation and restoration of these natural assets as part of its resiliency strategy.

The importance of these natural resources is echoed by survey results and the feedback received during open houses associated with this land use planning effort. The sentiments expressed consistently underscore the importance of safeguarding and preserving the natural environment of the county. By adopting land use policy regulations, such as freshwater wetland buffers and stricter stormwater regulations for point and non-point source pollutants in and near these vital natural resources, the county can continue to preserve these critical resources for future residents. The community's collective voice reinforces the understanding that the integrity of Georgetown County's natural resources is a top priority, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach in land use decisions that respects the ecological integrity while promoting sustainable tourism and development.

The map on page 37 identifies the location of floodplains and wetlands throughout Georgetown County. The distribution of these areas underscores the impact of natural resources in creating land use policy.

Map of Floodplains and Wetlands



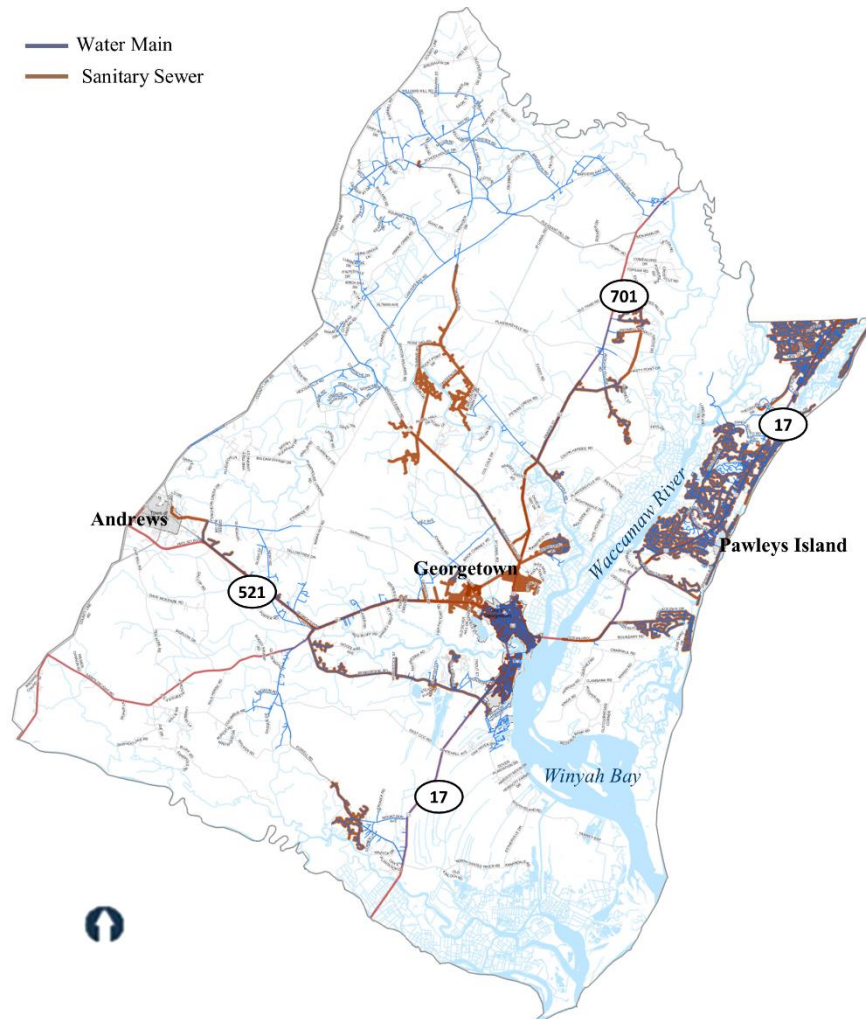
Infrastructure and Community Facilities

The coordination of land use decisions with infrastructure and public facilities is paramount for the sustainable development of Georgetown County. Future land use patterns within the county must be influenced by the availability and distribution of critical infrastructure and community facilities. The availability of these resources and facilities directly impact the potential intensity of development locationally.

Water and Sanitary Sewer

Water and sewer services, predominantly provided by the Georgetown County Water and Sewer District, exhibit noteworthy discrepancies across the county. While the Waccamaw Neck boasts a robust network of water and sewer facilities (see map below), the mainland portion, particularly outside the City of Georgetown and along major transportation corridors, experiences limitations on water and sewer availability, with sewer availability being more restricted than water. Given the long-term limitations on water capacity, strategic decisions regarding water infrastructure are imperative.

Map of Water and Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure



Transportation

The link between land use and transportation is another critical factor in Georgetown County's future. Highway 17 serves as the artery of the Waccamaw Neck. The mainland is well-connected via major road corridors, most notably Highways 521, 701, and 17 south of the City of Georgetown. Anticipated development pressures along the Highway 701 corridor and concerns about increased travel demands on Highway 17 in the Waccamaw Neck require thoughtful planning. Residents voiced apprehension about future development straining these primary roadways, highlighting the need for diversified transportation networks, a well-connected bicycle and pedestrian network, and the need to ensure transportation needs are adequately assessed and accounted for along with new development.

To specifically address issues along the Highway 17 corridor on the Waccamaw Neck, the county commissioned the *US 17 Land Use Corridor Companion Study* (Stantec, 2020). This study advanced prior studies in recommending policies to address transportation, land use and future development on the Waccamaw Neck. The study centered on land uses surrounding the Highway 17 corridor, emphasizing multimodal transportation options, the creation and preservation of distinctive and memorable places through environmental conservation, compact and smart growth principles, and prioritizing spaces for community engagement. Developed through a community-driven process with extensive outreach, the study incorporates guiding principles derived from community input, shaping every key recommendation and informing the Top 10 List for implementation.

The Highway 17 corridor, often regarded as the "Main Street" of the area, serves as a vital artery for daily necessities, community interaction, and storm evacuation routes. Spanning twenty miles with diverse contexts ranging from conservation areas to auto-centric commercial zones, the corridor requires management to ensure safe and efficient

Top 10 Projects and Initiatives Recommended by the 2020 US 17 Land Use Corridor Companion Study

1. Complete the shared use path along Highway 17.
2. Create system-wide multimodal connections to the Highway 17 shared use path.
3. Prioritize key village intersections for high quality improvements that promote pedestrian safety.
4. Update ordinance to preserve beneficial wetlands and floodways and 50% of the remaining land in the Waccamaw neck.
5. Complete a small area land use and parking plan for Business 17 and the historic Murrells Inlet & Marshwalk.
6. Build on previous wayfinding plans and projects to update, enhance, and implement character-driven signage and landscaping in villages.
7. Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the historic McKenzie Beach property.
8. Redirect growth towards previously developed parcels by using a transfer of development rights program to incentivize the protection of valuable conservation areas.
9. Through zoning and other initiatives, encourage a diversity of affordable housing stock throughout the Waccamaw Neck.
10. Update ordinances to enhance tree protection and site development standards with the use of a form-based code that promotes compact, high-quality walkable villages.

traffic flow and to promote multi-modal transportation options that align with the specific character of each area.

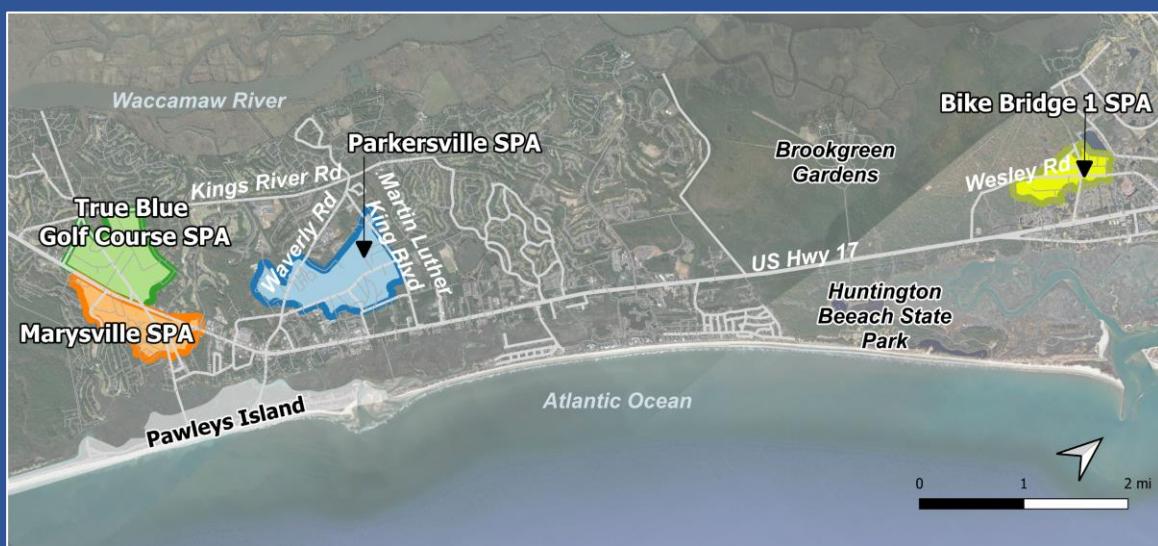
Stormwater Management

Georgetown County's persistent drainage and flooding issues also underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to stormwater management. Stormwater issues in the Waccamaw Neck area prompted the initiation of the *Waccamaw Neck Stormwater Master Plan* (Thomas & Hutton, 2023) ([available here](#)). Addressing challenges stemming from intense rainfall events, high tides, sea level rise, and aging infrastructure, this plan represents a significant effort to mitigate stormwater issues.

Dubbed "Phase 1 – Waccamaw Neck," the plan lays the groundwork for a comprehensive, watershed-based approach to stormwater management, potentially serving as a county-wide model. The effort encompassed creating base maps, conducting hydrological studies, evaluating water quality, and proposing infrastructure improvements with cost estimates. The plan's emphasis on stakeholder engagement and transparency, evidenced by the incorporation of public input and the creation of online platforms for data dissemination, underscores its commitment to community involvement. Recommendations from this plan include a prioritized list of projects and improvements to stormwater facilities, as well as an enhanced regulatory framework which includes identifying and tailoring regulations in areas with documented issues through Special Protection Areas (depicted below).

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

The Waccamaw Neck Stormwater Management Plan recommends creating four SPAs to serve as a regulatory tool to address the Waccamaw Neck's most critical stormwater management issues through enhanced locational stormwater regulations. The recommended SPAs illustrated below, are referenced in the plan as 1) Parkersville, 2) True Blue Golf Course, 3) Marysville, and 4) Bike Bridge 1.



Electricity and Solar

The demand for large-scale solar facilities near major electric infrastructure is an emerging concern, particularly in the mainland of the county. This Land Use Element includes recommendations for the creation of design standards for solar facilities to minimize the impact on existing properties, natural features and wildlife.

Finally, as this Comprehensive Plan element promotes coordination with infrastructure, it must also anticipate and accommodate increasing pressures on community services. Facilities such as parks, schools, fire stations, and libraries, must plan to address the needs of existing and future residents, as well as visitors. By ensuring a strategic alignment between land use decisions and the availability of essential infrastructure and public facilities, Georgetown County can pave the way for a resilient, well-connected, and inclusive community for years to come.

Suitability Analysis

In planning for the future of Georgetown County, it is imperative that any strategic approach to development be evaluated based on land suitability. Weaving together insights derived from existing conditions, the location of natural resources, the existing infrastructure network, and the invaluable input gathered through the public engagement process, this GIS based analysis provides guidance on the suitability of land for development.

Specifically, this multifaceted approach analyzes suitability of different lands for distinct purposes, categorically focusing on conservation, residential development, and commercial ventures. The maps on pages 43-45 detail these analyses. This process can guide and inform policies that align with the county's vision for sustainable growth, harmonizing human activities with the natural environment.

Conservation Suitability

A conservation suitability analysis provides a basis to inform land use recommendations. The GIS-based analysis factored in tree cover, proximity to preserved lands, property size, floodplains, potential sea level rise, riparian areas, and species richness. Sea level rise is based on a 2-foot scenario from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Areas of high value include river and stream corridors, parts of the Waccamaw Neck area and large tracts of uplands with existing forest cover.

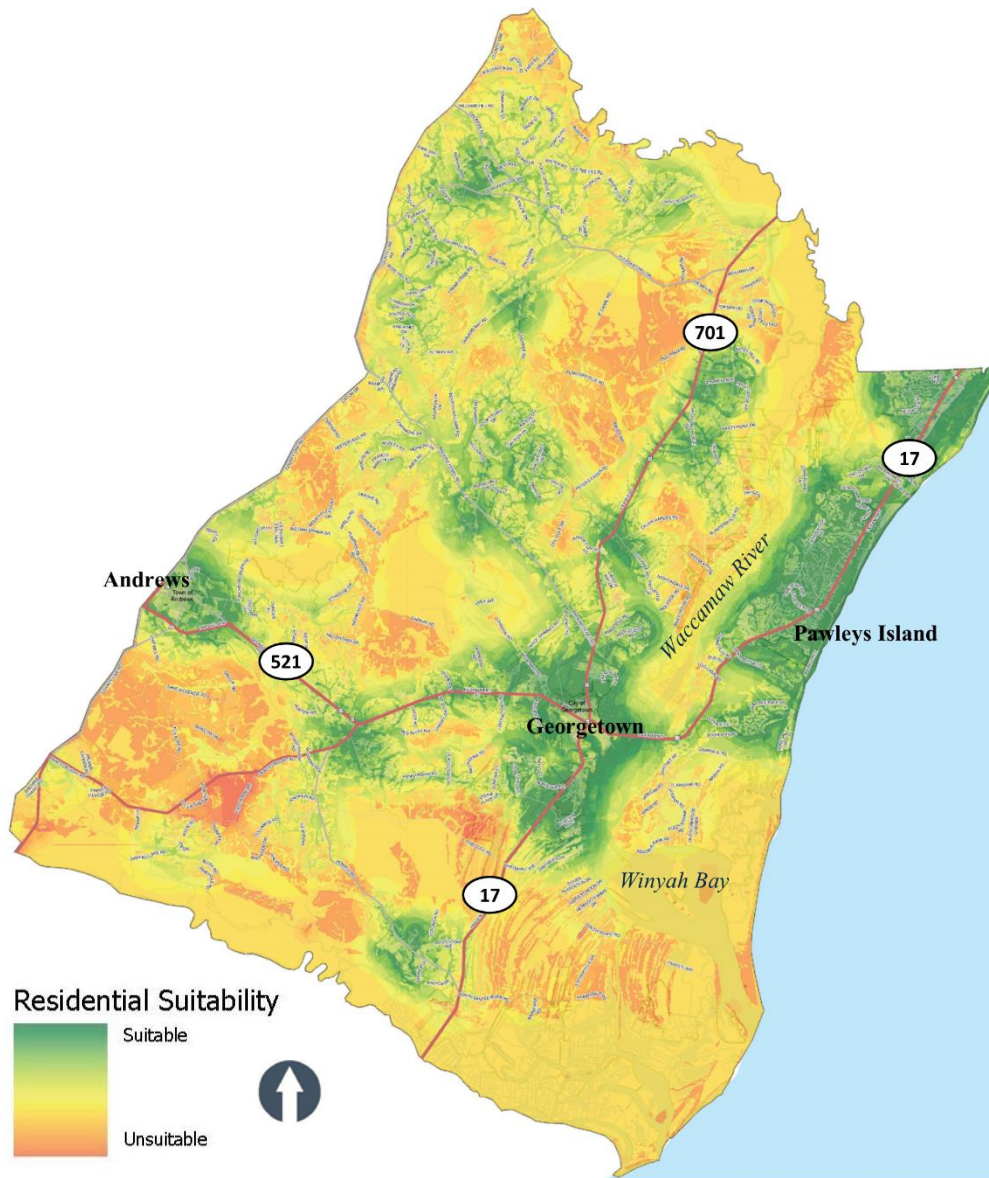
Map Analysis of Land for Conservation



Residential Suitability

The following residential suitability analysis informs land use recommendations regarding residential development. The GIS-based analysis factored in street density, proximity to commercial areas and grocery stores, schools and parks, industrial areas, environmental constraints (including floodplains and wetlands), access to water and sewer infrastructure and property size. Areas most suitable for residential include areas near the City of Georgetown, the US 701 and US 521 corridors, areas near established communities, and parts of the Waccamaw Neck area. The values depicted on the map range from green as the most suitable, to orange as the least suitable.

Map Analysis of Land Suitability for Residential Development

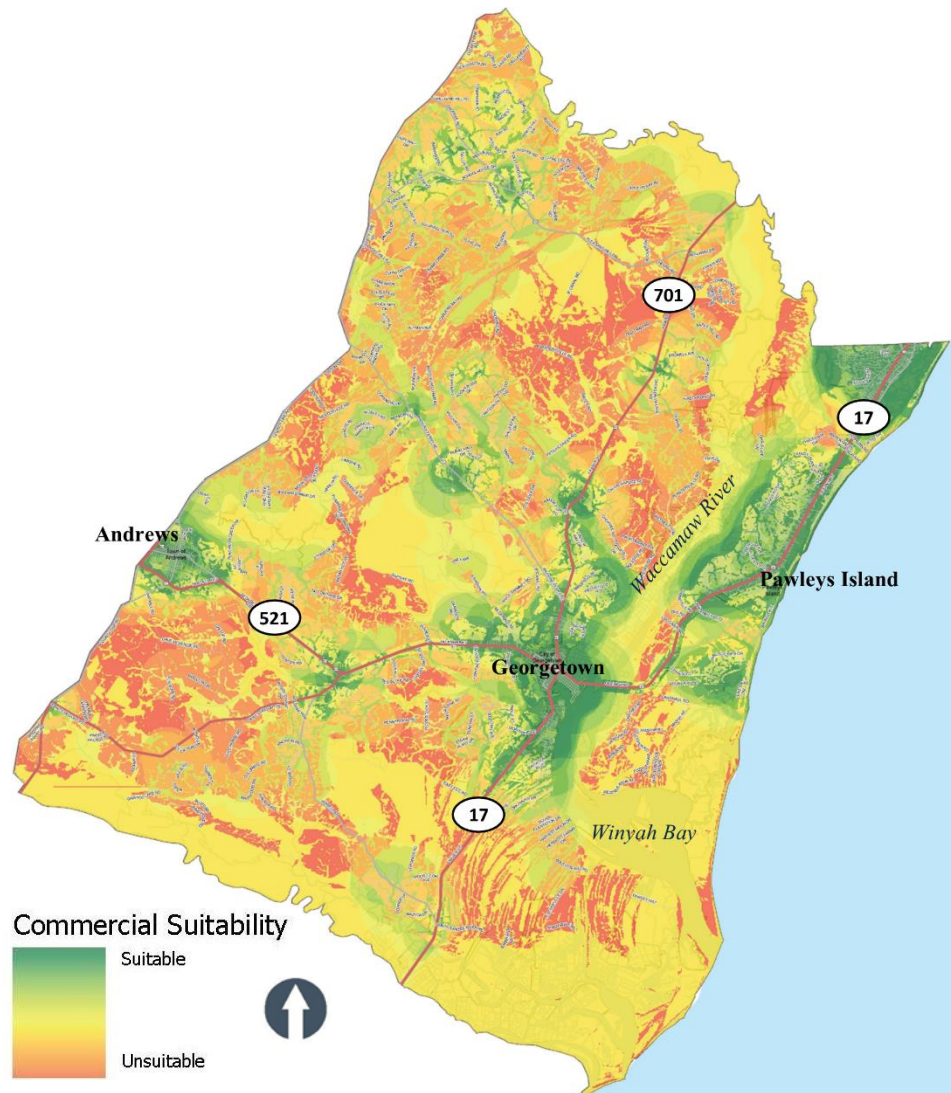


Commercial Suitability

A GIS-based commercial suitability analysis evaluated environmental and economic factors that contribute to the suitability of land for commercial uses. Inputs included areas near concentrations of residential, proximity to existing commercial uses, average daily traffic, exits and major intersections and environmental constraints (including floodplains and wetlands).

Areas most suitable for commercial development include areas near the City of Georgetown, the US 701 and US 521 corridors, areas near established communities, and parts of the Waccamaw Neck area. As conveyed in the Residential Suitability map, green represents the highest level of suitability while orange represents the least suitable.

Map Analysis of Land Suitability for Commercial Development



Plan Implementation

Addressing the concerns raised during public input on the land use element update is integral to fostering effective community planning. One dominant critique pertains to the perceived absence of clear implementation steps to actualize the outlined objectives of the plan. The critique particularly emphasizes two focal areas. First, this planning effort recognizes the need to evaluate adequacy of the county's zoning structure in facilitating the compatibility of development with regard to aspects such as density, height and site design. Second, there is a collective call for a strategic approach in the modification of zoning maps to better reflect the evolving needs of the community.

A notable contention involves the broad application of the General Residential (GR) zone district, criticized for contributing to abrupt transitions between multi-family developments and established lower density neighborhoods, and allowing for the possibility of multi-family development as a prominent feature along the Highway 17 corridor. Likewise, improvements to or consolidation of lower density, rural zoning districts aimed at more effectively promoting the conservation of farmland and natural environments presents additional opportunities. These critiques underscore the imperative for the Land Use Element to advocate a nuanced and localized approach to regulating future land use and ensuring the regulatory infrastructure takes into consideration established patterns and the diverse character of the county. Balancing the need for appropriate use and density transitions and conservation in a targeted manner is critical to a prosperous future in Georgetown County.

Recommendations and Implementation

The Future Land Use Map, along with its associated place types, serves as a comprehensive guide for Georgetown County's desired development patterns over the next 10 years. Its primary objective is to steer land use decisions and shape the overall development design of the county.

These designations are crafted by considering a blend of traditional land use patterns, the strategic positioning and capacity of infrastructure, and the assessment of environmental constraints and suitability as priorities established in this Land Use Element.

Due to the nature of this approach to the FLUM, significant changes to critical factors such as infrastructure availability and capacity will require some periodic reevaluation of the FLUM and associated place types.

What is a Place Type?

Georgetown County is filled with unique geography, environmental features, development styles, and communities. In response, the Future Land Use Map must take a tailored approach to land use. Therefore, this plan uses “place types” to provide guidance for future land use policy. Each place type describes a combination of future land uses, intensity and density, and notable design considerations to locationally inform future land use decisions.

The FLUM, featured in this section, delineates ten distinct character areas or place types, each discussed in detail. These place types function as demarcated regions that share commonalities in land uses, development intensity, and other significant design characteristics. By categorizing areas based on these shared attributes, the map provides an understanding of the diverse development needs and aspirations within Georgetown County. This dynamic tool is designed to adapt to the evolving landscape and remains a vital reference point for stakeholders involved in shaping the county's growth and development.

Based upon the existing and emerging development patterns, and to recognize the diversity of place types within the county, the land use place types have been organized into three primary categories: Rural, Corridors and Gateways, and Neighborhoods.

Residential Density

One descriptive feature of each place type as described in this element is “residential density.” Residential density is a measure of the number of housing units in a given geographic area. This Land Use Element uses *net density* in residential dwelling units per acre (DUA).

Calculating Net Density

Net density is calculated by dividing the number of dwelling units by the net buildable area of the parcel proposed for development, which excludes features such as road rights-of-way, wetlands, stormwater ponds and open space.

Place Types and Public Facilities

All place types may accommodate public and quasi-public facilities depending on intensity, nature, and site requirements of the use. Each place type description in this section provides guidance regarding examples of appropriate public or quasi-public uses. However, these descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive; rather, individual facilities or uses shall be assessed based on the characteristics of the place type and the intensity, nature, and site requirements.

Examples of Residential Density Used in the Land Use Element











<i>Density (Units/Acre)</i>	<i>Aerial Image</i>	<i>Character of Development</i>
<1-3		
1-5		
2-6		
4-8		
8-12		

Image Source: Google Earth

Rural Place Types

Georgetown County has a rich tapestry of rural places and landscapes that contributes to the identity of the county. This element looks both functionally and aspirational at the types of places that can build upon and reinforce established rural development patterns. In this land use element, these place types include Conservation/Agriculture, Rural Residential, Rural Village, and Village Center.

Conservation/Agriculture

The Conservation/Agriculture place type in rural settings is designed to support long term agricultural and forestry activities and protected natural resources, often under long-term conservation easements. This place type may include limited residential and related structures to support activities on the property. Additionally, these areas may also include some limited renewable energy uses near supportive infrastructure conditionally with design and performance standards to promote compatibility with surrounding uses.



Images depicting general character of Conservation/Agriculture Place Type

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Residential units in support of agricultural uses. Some properties may include historic structures. New residential uses at very low densities on a limited portion of overall agricultural or conservation area.
Infrastructure Characteristics	Not dependent on availability of public water or sewer. Low demand on transportation infrastructure.
Other notable characteristics	Limited parking related to use of the property, generally off-street. Parking lots may be needed for recreational and/or eco-tourism or agri-tourism facilities. May be suitable for multi-use trails or bicycles facilities. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, recreation areas, and fire management facilities.
Representative Areas	Properties near or adjacent to the Waccamaw or Black River and floodplains. Large tracts of working timberland or active agriculture. Conservation areas, including the North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Rural Residential

The Rural Residential place type primarily features very low-density housing woven into an agricultural or natural rural context. This place type may also include some limited rural-supporting commercial uses, institutional or community uses, and accessory uses in support of rural activities. Individual property sizes are based on natural features, and specific use of the property. Conservation subdivision design is encouraged which includes reduced lot sizes in exchange for preserved open space (see graphic on page 71). This place type may also include some renewable energy uses near supportive infrastructure conditionally with design and performance standards to promote compatibility with surrounding uses. Residential density in the Rural Residential place type is generally less than 1 dwelling unit per acre (DUA) with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Rural Residential Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Less than 1*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Low dependence on availability of public water or sewer. Low demand on transportation infrastructure.
Other notable characteristics	Limited parking related to use of the property, generally off-street. May include multiple accessory structures related to rural uses of the property. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public facilities include parks, recreation facilities, fire management, recycling centers, and educational facilities.
Representative Areas	Areas on the periphery of established rural villages such as Sampit, Lambertown, and Plantersville.

**See table on page 80*

Rural Village

The Rural Village place type primarily includes small unincorporated communities, or a concentration of primarily residential properties located along rural corridors. This place type may also include some local-serving businesses, institutional or community uses, and other uses in support of rural activities. Residential forms may include a continuation of similar lot sizes, building scales, and/or conservation subdivisions to preserve natural resources while providing the opportunity for housing choice. Residential density is approximately 1-3 DUA with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Rural Village Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Typically 1-3*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Availability of public water and sewer preferred when available and feasible. Low demand on transportation infrastructure.
Other notable characteristics	Limited parking related to use of the property, generally off-street. May be interspersed with rural-serving non-residential uses, including institutional uses. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries, and educational facilities.
Representative areas	Plantersville, Jackson Village, Choppee, Lambertown, North Santee <i>*See table on page 80</i>

Village Center

The Village Center place type, when found in a rural setting, is often located at a node or convergence of transportation routes and serves as community center that includes a mixture of uses that includes community-serving retail, services, institutional uses, alongside some residences. Residential density in rural areas is generally 4-8 DUA, with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Village Center Place Types for rural communities.

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Typically 4-8*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Availability of public water and sewer preferred when available and feasible. Low to moderate demand on transportation infrastructure.
Other notable characteristics	<p>Very limited in geographic area in rural communities.</p> <p>Parking may be available on-street or on the lot.</p> <p>Combination of community serving non-residential and institutional uses.</p> <p>Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, and educational facilities.</p>
Representative areas	Intersection of Hwy 701 and Plantersville Rd (Plantersville), Intersection of Brown's Ferry Rd and Johnson Rd (Brown's Ferry)

**See table on page 80*

Corridor and Gateway Place Types

Georgetown County is also defined by its well-established corridors and gateways. These areas are defined by unique development patterns that provide a face to the county for visitors. These place types exist throughout the community, and the intensity of development is largely related to the availability and capacity of water and sewer infrastructure. This Land Use Element describes five primary place types: Residential Mixed Use, Community Mixed Use, Commercial Corridor, Employment, and the Georgetown Port.

Residential Mixed Use

The Residential Mixed Use place type provides an appropriate transition between highly traveled corridors and existing and planned residential neighborhoods. This category primarily consists of single-family and attached housing along with a mixture of neighborhood-serving or low-impact commercial and institutional uses. Development in this place type includes a high level of design, and walkability with a high level of connectivity. This place type may also provide opportunities for conservation subdivisions (see graphic on page 71) to preserve natural resources while increasing housing choice. Residential density is approximately 4-8 DUA with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Residential Mixed use Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Typically 4-8*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Water and sewer infrastructure required. Suitable for secondary transportation routes.
Other notable characteristics	Shared parking facilities are desirable for non-residential uses. Rear-loaded (alley) parking encouraged for attached residential. Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity available between parcels and to community-wide networks. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries and educational facilities.
Representative Areas	In areas along Highway 17 corridor that provide a transition from commercial to residential uses.

**See table on page 80*

Community Mixed Use

The Community Mixed Use category is primarily located at significant transportation nodes and includes the integration of housing, retail and services uses at medium-high densities. The development in this place type should include a high level of design, fostering walkability and conveying a unique sense of place. Residential density is approximately 8-12 DUA with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Community Mixed Use Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	8-12*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Water and sewer infrastructure required. Suitable for major transportation routes
Other notable characteristics	<p>Shared parking facilities are desirable.</p> <p>Interconnected or vertical mixture of uses is encouraged.</p> <p>Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity available between parcels and to community-wide networks.</p> <p>Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include pocket parks and libraries.</p>
Representative Areas	Major commercial nodes along Hwy 17 corridor

**See table on page 80*

Commercial Corridor

The Commercial Corridor place type is located along major transportation routes and primarily includes community or regional retail or service uses. This place type may also include some attached residential and mixed-use buildings. Development within the Commercial Corridor place type should be developed with a high level of design and must include site design features to ensure compatibility with adjacent and established uses. Residential density is approximately 2-4 DUA for residential neighborhoods, and up to 6 DUA for mixed use development with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Commercial Corridor Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)

Generally 2-4 for residential neighborhoods, but may be up to 6 if incorporated into a mixed-use development*

Infrastructure Characteristics

Water and sewer infrastructure required. Suitable along major transportation routes

Other notable characteristics

Shared parking facilities are desirable.

Rear-loaded (alley) parking for attached residential is encouraged.

Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity available between parcels and to community-wide networks.

Coordinated access is required to minimize turning movements to/from major transportation routes (signalized access is preferred).

Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries and educational facilities.

Representative Areas

Primarily commercial properties along Highway 17 corridor

**See table on page 80*

Employment

The Employment place type includes a concentration of employment uses such as industrial manufacturing, corporate offices, technology, distribution, craft and maker spaces, distilleries, and similar uses. The place is located along major transportation routes and is supported by a concentration of infrastructure and community services. The place type may also include some supportive or complimentary commercial uses and may also conditionally include renewable energy facilities.



Images depicting general character of Employment Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Very limited availability for residential development
Infrastructure Characteristics	Water and sewer infrastructure required. Access to multiple modes of transportation is desirable.
Other notable characteristics	Parcel size and density, and design standards depend on the intensity of the use. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include public safety facilities, airports, and educational facilities.
Representative Areas	Georgetown County Business Center West

Georgetown Port

The Georgetown Port is a unique place type that is envisioned to be a vibrant area with a diverse blend of residential, commercial, employment and community uses, designed to create a unique sense of place that complements historic Downtown Georgetown. This area should have a strong emphasis on walkability and enhancing river access to residents and visitors but may also include components of a working waterfront.



Images depicting general character potential development of the Georgetown Port

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)

To be determined with detailed future planning exercises

Infrastructure Characteristics

Water and sewer infrastructure required. Access to multiple modes of transportation are available.

Other notable characteristics

Development to include high quality pedestrian environment.
Design shall be complimentary to historic Downtown Georgetown

Neighborhood Place Types

Neighborhoods are the third predominant place type that characterizes Georgetown County. Neighborhoods are developed areas where people live and consider home and are therefore highly sacred to county residents. While these place types are the predominant place type for the Waccamaw Neck, there are places throughout the county that are considered neighborhoods. This Land Use Element describes the following neighborhood place types: Conservation/Agriculture, Covenant Community, Residential, and Village Center.

Conservation/Agriculture

The Conservation/Agriculture place type, when applied outside rural areas generally includes conserved lands, state or federally recognized or protected natural resources and wetlands, or other property deemed unsuitable for development based on natural constraints. This place type may also include land critical for the health of watersheds and waterways, public recreational facilities, or specific protected features within neighborhood developments.



Images depicting general character of Conservation/Agriculture Place Type

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	Typically less than 1 and secondary to the conservation, agricultural, or recreational use of the property
Infrastructure Characteristics	Not dependent on availability of public water or sewer. Low demand on transportation infrastructure unless public water access is available.
Other notable characteristics	Limited parking related to use of the property, generally off-street. Parking may be greater for recreational facilities. May be suitable for multi-use trails or bicycles facilities. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks and recreation areas.
Representative Areas	Huntington Beach State Park

Covenant Community

The Covenant Community place types include master planned communities or neighborhoods governed by covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC and Rs). These neighborhoods are typically developed at lower gross densities with a high level of design. They are also walkable with quality pedestrian connectivity. This place type may also include some limited neighborhood-serving retail or service uses as well as schools and religious institutions and community uses. Connectivity to nearby commercial corridors and community uses is highly encouraged. This place type may provide opportunities for conservation subdivisions (see graphic on page 71) to preserve natural resources while providing the opportunity for housing choice.



Images depicting general character of the Covenant Community Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)

Appropriateness dependent on size of development, natural resources, open space, amenities, site design, and site context. Variety in housing types and densities is encouraged.

Infrastructure Characteristics

Requirements for water and sewer infrastructure dependent on availability and context of design. Typically requires connection to established or new secondary (collector) road systems.

Other notable characteristics

Shall include an elevated level of design, including site design and architecturally.

Pedestrian and bicycle improvements shall provide connection within the development and to regional systems.

May include non-residential components as part of overall plan.

Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries and educational facilities.

Representative Areas

Debordieu, Litchfield by the Sea

Residential

The Residential place type consists of low to medium density residential development in traditional neighborhood patterns with a high level of design. This place type may also include institutional uses such as schools and churches and community uses. Lot sizes and configurations may vary based on location, natural features, and open space or natural resources. This place type may provide opportunities for conservation subdivisions to preserve natural resources while increasing housing choice. Residential density is approximately 1-5 DUA with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of Residential Place Types

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre)	1-5*
Infrastructure Characteristics	Water and sewer infrastructure is typically required based on availability, design, and density. Low traffic generator.
Other notable characteristics	Limited parking related to use of the property, generally off-street. Requires pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to nearby uses and developments, and to community-wide networks. Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries and educational facilities.
Representative Areas	Parkersville

**See table on page 80*

Village Center

The Village Center place type, when applied in the neighborhood setting, includes small-scale neighborhood or community serving retail, restaurant, or service uses. These areas include a high level of design and are typically located along secondary transportation routes or key intersections in the vicinity of planned or existing neighborhoods. Residential density for this place type on the Waccamaw Neck is approximately 4-8 DUA with limited exceptions for incorporation of affordable housing.



Images depicting general character of the Village Center Place Type in urbanized areas.

Typical Characteristics

Residential density (dwelling units per acre) 4-8*

Infrastructure Characteristics

Availability of public water and sewer required in urban areas. Generally, rely on secondary (collector) road systems.

Other notable characteristics

Strategically located near or adjacent to planned neighborhoods.

Parking may be available on-street or on property.

Combination of community serving non-residential uses, institutional, and residential.

Examples of appropriate public/quasi-public uses include parks, public safety facilities, libraries and educational facilities.

Representative areas

Murrells Inlet Marsh Walk

**See table on page 80*

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is a pivotal component of the Comprehensive Plan, serving as a guiding document to inform future land use decisions. Unlike zoning, which primarily regulates specific land uses and development standards on a parcel-by-parcel basis, the FLUM provides a broader policy framework that outlines the desired land use patterns and intensities for different areas within the county. Acting as a visionary tool, the FLUM establishes a policy guide for the community, illustrating the intended character and function of various regions over time. By designating land use categories and addressing the predominant use in each place type, the FLUM helps steer growth and development in a manner that aligns with community values and long-term goals. It facilitates a strategic and cohesive approach to land use decisions, allowing for adaptability while maintaining consistency with the overall vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Summary of Density by Place Type

Place Type	Residential Density	Density Description [^]
RR - Rural Residential	< 1 DUA	Very Low
RES - Residential	1-5 DUA	Low-Medium
RMU – Residential Mixed Use	4-8 DUA	Medium-High
RV – Rural Village	1-3 DUA	Low-Medium
VC – Village Center	4-8 DUA	Medium-High
CC- Commercial Corridor	Neighborhood 2-4 DUA Mixed Use 2-6 DUA	Low-Medium Medium-High
CMU-Community Mixed Use	8-12 DUA	High

[^]previously-established density descriptions are 0-2 DUA-“low,” >2-5 DUA – “medium,” >5 DUA – “high”

The Role of the Future Land Use Map in Zoning Decisions

The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map. Rather the FLUM is a guide to be used for policy making and in land use decisions. The FLUM is not an exact representation of future land use patterns, but rather a forecast based on factors such as population growth, housing need, and traditional development patterns, and is one of several factors that influence the zoning (or rezoning) of specific properties.

When assessing changes to zoning, or a new or amended planned development (PD), the following are examples of the types of factors that should inform that decision:

- The land use patterns depicted on the FLUM in the vicinity of the subject property,
- Compatibility of the zone district with zoning and conforming uses of nearby properties,
- The character of the surrounding area,
- Suitability of the property for uses proposed, and
- Availability of sanitary sewer, water, stormwater, and transportation facilities.

Future Land Use Map Highlights

The Future Land Use Map is a critical part of the land use element. It is meant to guide the design and density of new development in the future. It should influence rezoning decisions and future amendments to the zoning code in order to ease the implementation of the plan's big ideas. Highlights of the map include:

Identifying future employment growth areas: Employment areas are identified in blue on the FLUM. Many of these are south of the City of Georgetown, along Penny Royal Road, and along US 521 towards the Town of Andrews. These areas have existing water and sewer infrastructure and could provide areas for local jobs and investment in the county.

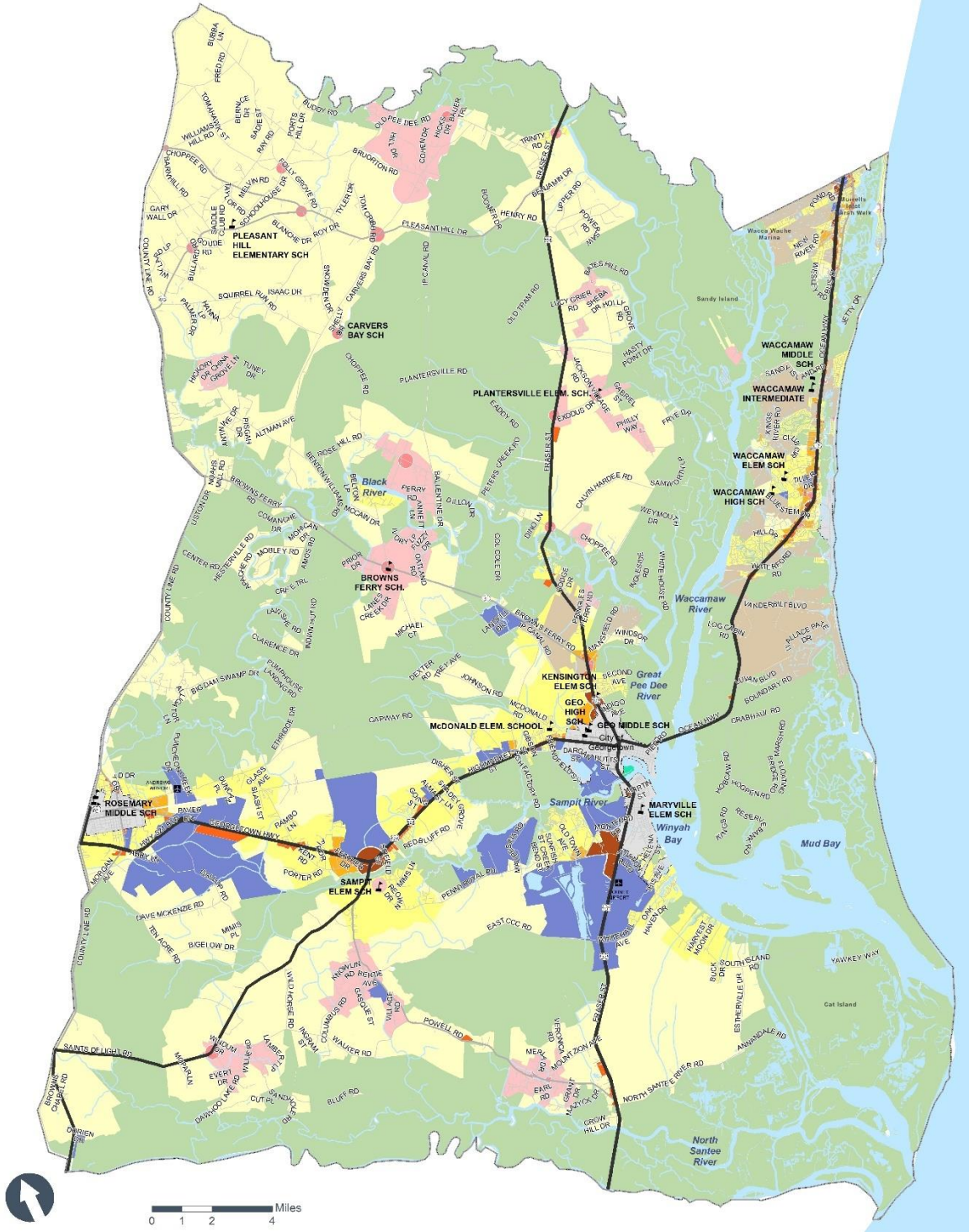
Acknowledging conservation and agricultural areas: Areas of large tracts of working timberlands and areas with significant floodplains, wetlands and other environmental constraints are identified as the Conservation / Agriculture place type on the FLUM.

Identifying and clarifying intended future residential growth patterns: Not all areas in the county are appropriate for the same type, scale, and density of residential growth due to presence or absence of utilities such as water and sewer, the existing character of development and the presence or absence of environmental assets and constraints. The FLUM acknowledges these differences by limiting medium to high densities and mixed-use place types in areas with access to infrastructure and designating lower-density development where there is more limited access to infrastructure and existing environmental constraints.

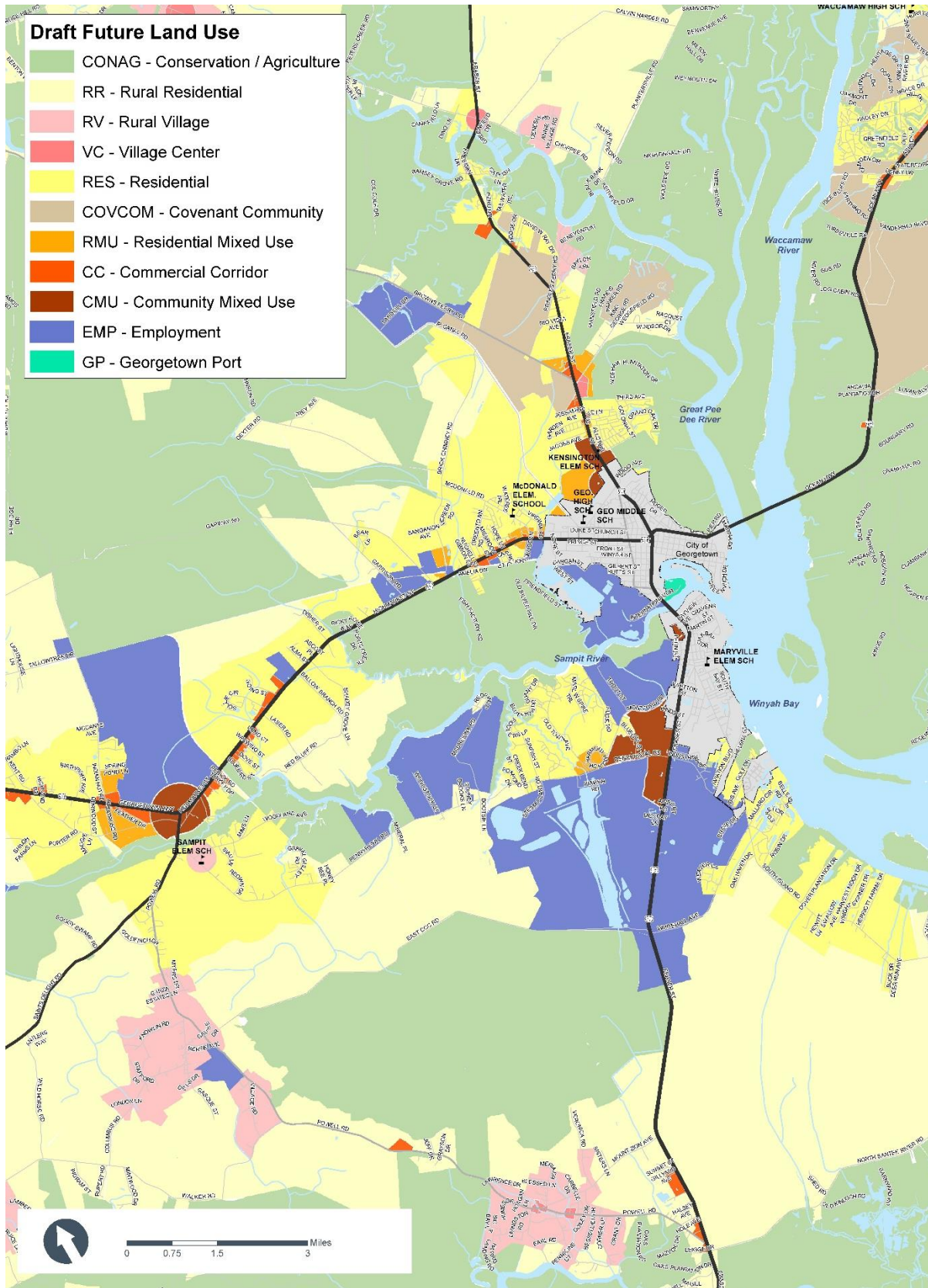
Recognizing unique communities: The FLUM recognizes the unique communities in Georgetown County including the rural villages in the county and the Waccamaw Neck area. Place types in these areas are meant to reinforce the existing character of these areas.

Future Land Use Map

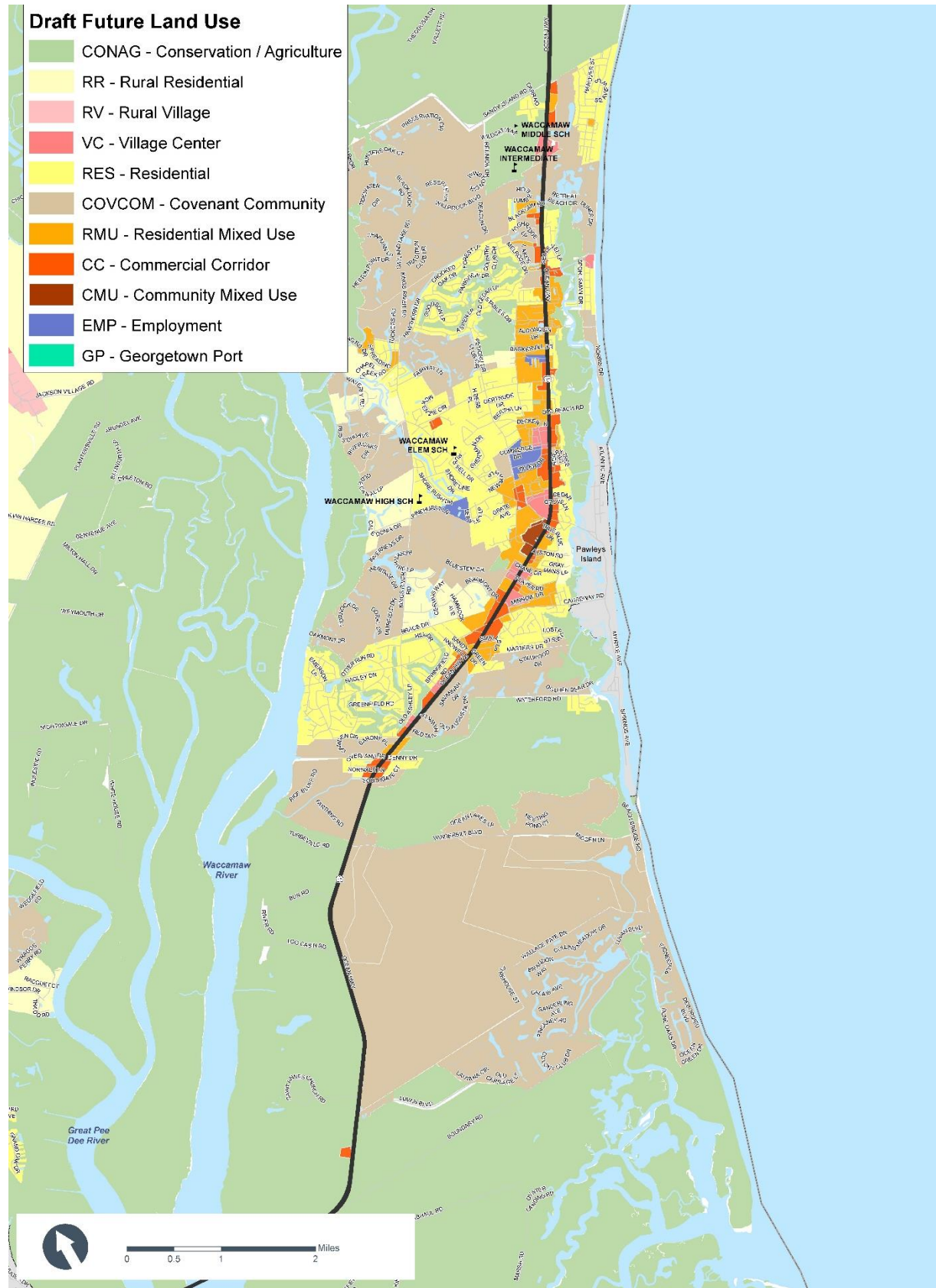
Future Land Use	
CONAG - Conservation / Agriculture	VC - Village Center
RR - Rural Residential	RES - Residential
RV - Rural Village	COVCOM - Covenant Community
	RMU - Residential Mixed Use
	CC - Commercial Corridor
	CMU - Community Mixed Use
	EMP - Employment
	GP - Georgetown Port



Future Land Use – City of Georgetown Area



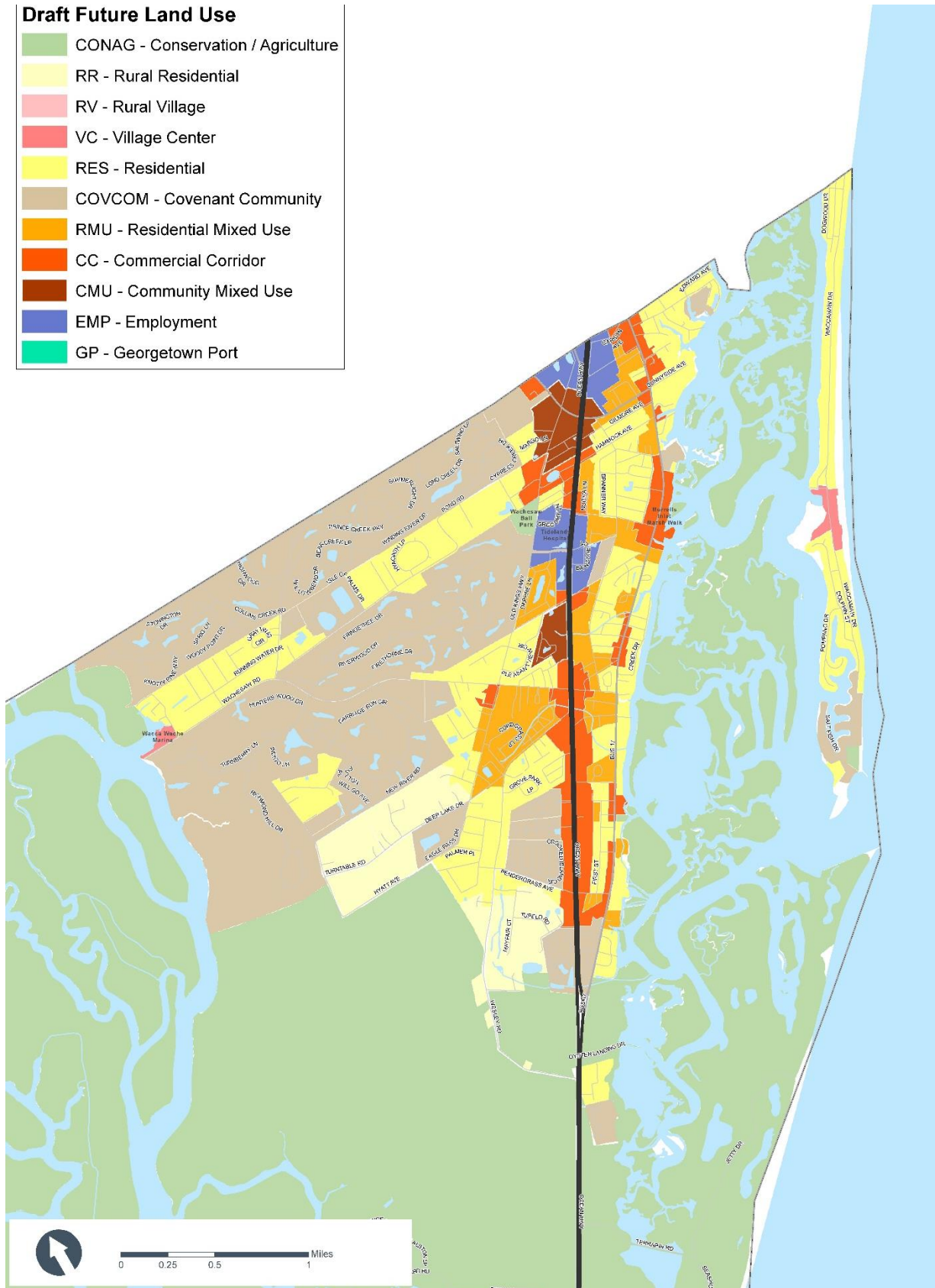
Future Land Use – Pawleys Island Area



Future Land Use – Murrells Inlet and Garden City

Draft Future Land Use

- CONAG - Conservation / Agriculture
- RR - Rural Residential
- RV - Rural Village
- VC - Village Center
- RES - Residential
- COVCOM - Covenant Community
- RMU - Residential Mixed Use
- CC - Commercial Corridor
- CMU - Community Mixed Use
- EMP - Employment
- GP - Georgetown Port



Goals and Objectives

In Georgetown County, it is imperative to guide land use change through targeted policies and meaningful action. As the county evolves, strategic actions will be instrumental to preserving its unique character and cultural heritage while simultaneously fostering positive compatible growth. This policy framework emphasizes "Preserving Character and Culture" through "Sustainable Growth," "Conservation" and "Placemaking" policies, and "Promoting Prosperity" through policies emphasizing "Affordability" and stimulating "the Economy."

PRESERVING CHARACTER AND CULTURE

Preserving Character and Culture: Through Sustainable Growth

Goal 1: Promote Sustainable Growth and Development

Objectives:

1.1. Direct growth and development based on land suitability and infrastructure capacity.

1.1.a Direct commercial, industrial, and residential growth in areas with adequate infrastructure and consistent with the Future Land Use (FLUM) Map.

1.1.b Coordinate with infrastructure service providers to maintain data on infrastructure location and capacity.

1.1.c Perform regular reviews of the Future Land Use Map as significant infrastructure changes, upgrades, or expansion occur.

1.1.d Continue to utilize the Capital Improvement Program to predictably invest in strategic infrastructure expansion based on the Future Land Use Map.

1.1.e Discourage significant development on or near environmentally sensitive areas such as floodplains and wetlands and mitigate the impacts of development on such areas through land use policies such as buffers, setbacks, or mandatory open space.

1.2 Require effective stormwater management to maintain and improve water quality while mitigating off-site stormwater impacts.

1.2.a Implement stormwater regulations that decrease runoff volume to creeks, marshes, wetlands, and water bodies by promoting infiltration, evapotranspiration, stormwater reuse, or by increasing retention time.

1.2.b Pursuant to the goals of the *Waccamaw Neck Stormwater Management Plan*, develop and implement enhanced stormwater design criteria in Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for development with the potential to impact areas with documented stormwater issues.

1.2.c Promote low impact development (LID) through zoning incentives such as tree preservation credits, pervious pavement allowances, density bonuses, or technical assistance.

1.2.d Establish minimum LID requirements for new planned unit developments, commercial developments, and large-scale residential projects, including the incorporation of improvements such as preserving natural open space, infiltration trenches or basins, constructed wetlands, rain gardens, disconnected impervious areas, vegetative swales, or similar improvements as an innovative approach to stormwater management.

1.2.e Identify and coordinate strategic stormwater management solutions in established areas of Georgetown County that were developed prior to the establishment of current stormwater management requirements.

1.2.f Continue to develop area-specific stormwater management plans to identify locational solutions to existing and documented stormwater issues.

What is Low-Impact Development (LID)

LID refers to systems and practices that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product.



Example of using native vegetation to reduce runoff and improve water quality (Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency)

1.3 Encourage the reservation of open space in new developments.

1.3.a Review and revise requirements for common open space in certain types of new developments including residential developments with a density of greater than two dwelling units per acre and commercial or mixed-use developments.

1.3.b Review and revise open space requirements to promote usable open space.

- Currently open space is only required for multi-family and townhome developments and Planned Development Districts (PD). Integrating open space in new development can help preserve natural resources, provide amenities to new residents, and increase compatibility with the existing character in an area.

1.4 Enable and promote the use of conservation subdivisions to promote meaningful open space and conservation areas in neighborhood design through incentives such as density bonuses, flexible lot sizes, reduced setbacks, and/or conditional streamlined approval processes.

1.4.a Amend the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to conditionally allow conservation subdivisions to protect natural resources and sensitive areas.

1.4.b Enable the use of conservation subdivisions near Rural Villages, and within the Covenant Community and Neighborhood place types as an approach to conserving natural resources with new residential development.

1.4.c Foster community engagement and promote awareness and understanding of the relationship between the zoning ordinance and land development regulations and impacts to the local natural environment.

1.5 Amend the zoning ordinance and land development regulations regarding the location and design of renewable energy facilities

1.5.a Limit the development of large-scale solar facilities as a conditional use or as a special exception within the Conservation/Agricultural, Rural Residential, and Employment place types or appropriate zoning districts.

1.5.b Review and revise standards for large scale solar facilities to limit impacts to existing residences and the natural environment. Such conditions may include visual screening, landscape buffers, berms, minimum setbacks, separation requirements, proximity to supportive infrastructure, and/or identification and preservation of critical habitats through wildlife-friendly design practices and incorporating pollinator-friendly vegetation.

Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions (also known as open space subdivisions) are an alternative to conventional subdivision design. This design technique focuses development in the most suitable areas while conserving large portions of the property (typically 40%+) as common open space. Open space can take the form of improved / active areas such as common greens or playgrounds or natural areas such as preserved forests or stream buffers.



Standard subdivision (left) compared to conservation subdivision (right)

- 1.6** Pursue a sustainable approach to land use throughout the county that balances seasonal and year-round populations.
 - 1.6.a** Develop a comprehensive tourism management plan that addresses capacity, environmental impact, and community benefits to ensure sustainable tourism throughout the county.
 - 1.6.b** Evaluate the impact of short-term rentals (STRs) on local housing availability and neighborhood integrity.
 - 1.6.c** Utilize zoning and regulatory tools to promote a mix of commercial land uses that cater to both residents and tourists.
 - 1.6.d** Consider seasonal population fluctuations when planning transportation infrastructure and services to alleviate congestion during peak tourist seasons
 - 1.6.e** Encourage the distribution of tourism activities throughout the county to minimize concentrated impacts and promote positive economic impacts county-wide.

Preserving Character and Culture: Through Conservation

Goal 2: Conserve, protect and enhance natural assets including wetlands, floodplains, trees and habitat as part of development.

Objectives:

- 2.1** Utilize a combination of regulation and educational programs to promote natural vegetation as a part of development throughout Georgetown County.
 - 2.1.a** Continue to develop and refine policies to protect trees and natural vegetation as part of development.
 - 2.1.b** Implement educational programs to raise awareness of tree protection ordinances and policies.
 - 2.1.c** Establish a county-wide tree planting program to augment existing natural vegetation.
- 2.2** Protect significant natural assets through land use policies and decisions.
 - 2.2.a** Establish a regular review process for the performance of regulations for vegetative protection such as the tree preservation ordinance.
 - 2.2.b** Establish and enforce buffer and/or setback requirements for wetlands, floodplain, and areas projected to be impacted by sea level rise as part of new development.
 - 2.2.c** Prioritize wetlands and adjacent forested and/or vegetated uplands as open space with new development.
 - 2.2.d** Pursuant to the *US 17 Land Use Planning Corridor Companion Study*, target preservation or conservation of 50-percent open space for the remaining undeveloped land on the Waccamaw Neck (inclusive of passive open space, wetlands, and

floodplain) using tools such as development regulations, conservation subdivisions, low impact development, conservation easements, and acquisition programs.

2.2.e Evaluate available tools and funding sources for land acquisition and/or easement programs to strategically protect significant natural features.

2.2.f Consider funding for a Resilience Coordinator/Floodplain Manager position to reinforce the recommendations of the Resiliency Element.

Goal 3: Implement a greenbelt preservation program.

Objectives:

3.1 Encourage open space preservation in new developments in areas with high conservation value including areas with floodplains, wetlands, riparian areas, areas projected to be impacted by sea level rise, and uplands with mature native forests and vegetation.

3.2 Create an institutional framework to maintain an accurate inventory of conserved lands.

3.3 Implement policies and programs to increase access to and connectivity to and between public or semi-public owned natural areas and conserved natural resources.

3.4 Consider voluntary land acquisition efforts and/or purchase of development rights in areas vulnerable to hazards associated with sea level rise.

3.5 Develop a comprehensive Greenbelt System Master Plan for preservation and conservation of natural resources, and to provide multimodal transportation and connectivity.

3.6 Coordinate with local or regional land trusts as a vehicle for preserving strategic natural resources.

3.7 Evaluate and pursue funding mechanisms for the preservation and conservation of critical natural resources and features.

Preserving Character and Culture: Through Placemaking

Goal 4: Promote sensible land use and design that promotes compatibility with existing community character.

Objectives:

4.1 Review and revise the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to promote context-sensitive development that reinforces the established development scale and patterns throughout Georgetown County.

- 4.1.a** Consolidate zoning districts and update base standards or incentives related to dimensional requirements, site design, open space requirements and transitional buffers.
- 4.1.b** Review and revise the zoning ordinance and land development regulations to ensure context-appropriate design, including standards for improvements such as building placement, height restrictions, maximum density, landscape and open space requirements, interparcel connectivity, building and facade articulation, and public realm enhancements.
- 4.1.c** Establish design standards for multi-family and attached housing, promoting aspects such as facade articulation, differentiation in materials, and rear-loaded parking.
- 4.1.d** Review and revise the sign ordinance to ensure context-appropriate design, while maintaining effective wayfinding and branding for the business community.
- 4.1.e** Determine appropriate locations, policies, and restrictions for recreational vehicle parks. Develop design standards and/or utilize the Flexible Design District to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.

4.2 Pursue targeted rezoning to reinforce the Land Use Element and preservation of existing neighborhoods.

Design Considerations for New Development

New Residential (urbanized areas)

- Promote development that accommodates the natural environment and topography.
- Promote for open space and recreational opportunities for residents.
- Require connectivity within and outside new subdivisions through sidewalks, bike paths, and multi-use paths.
- Develop design standards for attached residential housing.

New Commercial (urbanized areas)

- Promote concentrations of neighborhood-serving uses that are well-connected with adjacent residential uses.
- Promote concentrated, interconnected automobile-oriented uses to limit trips and to reduce the required footprint of development.
- Require building design features to prevent the appearance of strip commercial development.
- Ensure massing requirements, transitions, buffers, and setbacks to promote compatibility with adjacent uses.

Rural or Suburban Development

- Promote clustering of new residential uses or conservation subdivisions to preserve natural features and promote compatibility with rural land uses.
- Coordinate new collector street infrastructure with urban-adjacent development.
- Promote concentrated areas of commercial, public, and institutional uses throughout rural areas of the county.

- 4.2.a** Utilize the FLUM, Zoning and Land Development Regulations to promote the compatibility of new development with the use patterns, density, and scale of established neighborhoods or communities.
 - 4.2.b** Evaluate and update the zoning ordinance for consistency with the place types described in this Land Use Element.
 - 4.2.c** Consider incentives such as density bonuses within zoning and land development regulations as a means of promoting affordable, low impact development that is compatible with existing communities and neighborhoods. See table on page 80 for more specific recommendations.
 - 4.2.d** Pursue targeted rezoning of properties to implement the FLUM.
- 4.3** Coordinate with local public service and infrastructure providers to ensure coordination of infrastructure and facilities with future land use plans.
- 4.3.a** Coordinate with SCDOT, the City of Georgetown, and local municipalities to promote connectivity, including connector roads, local streets, and associated bicycle and pedestrian facilities in transitional areas between county and municipal jurisdictions.
 - 4.3.b** Coordinate with water and sewer providers regarding the availability and capacity of services.
 - 4.3.c** Coordinate with educational providers to ensure sufficient and appropriately located facilities to accommodate growth throughout the county.
- 4.4** Encourage and prioritize mixed use development around transit nodes to promote walkability and reduce automobile trips on major transportation routes.
- 4.4.a** Encourage connectivity, including pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-use facilities, between adjacent neighborhoods and commercial uses to encourage fewer and shorter vehicle trips.
- 4.5** Continue to protect the aesthetic quality of the Highway 17 corridor and encourage walkability.
- 4.5.a** Continue to implement and enhance the Highway 17 Corridor Overlay to ensure appropriate scale, massing and design, by implementing architectural standards, mandatory 90-foot front setbacks along the majority of the corridor on the Waccamaw Neck, height limitations, and preservation and enhancement of trees and natural features as part of new development.
 - Consider customizing supplemental standards for segments of the Highway 17 Corridor to accomplish goals of the *US 17 Land Use Corridor Companion Study* and encourage development design compatible with place types on the FLUM Map.

Potential Supplemental Standards for Village Center, Community Mixed-Use and Commercial Corridor Place Types along the Highway 17 Corridor



Example of breaking up facade elements of a large-footprint building



Example of prominent architectural feature on corner lot

- Large footprint building facades broken into smaller blocks with offsets and design features.
- Variety in roofline, materials and color.
- Buildings oriented toward pedestrian and automobile corridors.
- Facades constructed of high-quality materials such as brick, decorative block, stone, and stucco.
- Buildings on corner lots include a prominent architectural feature.
- Parking within the Village Center and Community Mixed Use place types located to the side or rear of front facade.
- Loading and service areas screened from view.

4.5.b Continue to implement and improve traffic management regulations to ensure transportation improvements are accurately assessed and improvements implemented to account for travel demands associated with new development.

4.5.c Continue to implement a transportation impact fee program to coordinate long term improvements to the Highway 17 Corridor to address the cumulative impacts of development along the corridor.

4.5.d Utilize available resources such as the Capital Projects Sales Tax to fund and construct transportation improvements to mitigate the cumulative impacts of traffic.

4.5.e Ensure development standards promote the completion of the Highway 17 shared use path and system-wide multimodal connections to the Highway 17 shared use path.

4.6 Continue to plan for new or expanded recreation and community facilities throughout the county.

4.7 Golf courses within the Covenant Community place type are considered open space within that development. Any plan amendment to a golf course property in the Covenant

Community place type, otherwise included in a Planned Unit Development or under a Flexible Design District shall maintain and preserve a significant portion of the property as existing greenspace or utilize a clustered development pattern to reduce impacts to existing residential, watersheds, habitat, and natural features.

4.8 For golf courses that are not part of the Covenant Community place type, ensure any redevelopment or new development of those properties maintain a low overall density that preserves a significant portion of the existing greenspace, and utilize a clustered development pattern to reduce impacts to existing residential, watersheds, habitat, and natural features.

4.9 Identify and support preservation of buildings, structures, sites and other resources that contribute to Georgetown County's history.

4.9.a. Establish a method to categorize local historically significant locations and structures.

4.9.b. Consider application to the National Parks Service Certified Local Government (CLG) Program.

Goal 5: Preserve and protect established places and communities throughout the county.

Objectives:

5.1 Maintain low and medium density residential as the predominant land use on the Waccamaw Neck.

5.2 Maintain existing height limitations for new development. Policy primarily limits are typically height to 35 feet above base flood elevation (BFE). Exceptions may be evaluated on a situational basis for institutional uses or affordable housing uses and the context of such development.

5.3 Maintain and enhance established commercial areas along Highway 17 Business in Murrells Inlet.

5.3.a Preserve commercial and retail uses as the predominant use for existing Highway 17 Business commercial clusters, including the Murrells Inlet Marsh Walk, to maintain the unique coastal village character of the area.

5.3.b Pursue a small area plan for the Murrells Inlet Marsh Walk Area to define a vision and implementation strategy that promotes the long-term viability of the area. The plan shall evaluate and consider aspects such as vehicular and pedestrian circulation and safety, coordinated parking solutions, green stormwater infrastructure, and zoning and regulatory tools such as site development standards, design guidelines, and overlay districts.

5.4 Continue to pursue small area and corridor plans to ensure the preservation and enhancement of established places and communities throughout the county.

5.5 Preserve established communities through regulatory tools and strategic partnerships.

5.5.a Enable the use of cultural overlay zoning to reinforce culturally significant development patterns, designs, and uses.

5.5.b Evaluate the use of policies and partnerships that encourage investment that respects and honors long-term residents.

5.6 Reinforce the unique and diverse development patterns of Georgetown County.

5.6.a Maintain and enhance a zoning implementation framework that recognizes the diversity of development types throughout the county.

What is a Cultural Overlay District?

An overlay zone is a regulatory tool that creates an additional layer of zoning to address specific issues unique to a defined area.

A cultural overlay is a form of zoning overlay district established to protect culturally significant components of land use and design. Such regulations can address features such as architectural requirements, exterior materials, uses, access standards, and similar aspects of development that may be common to a location of cultural significance.

Potential Implementation Tools and Partners for Cultural Preservation

Land Banking – Vehicle to acquire, hold, manage and distribute residential, commercial and industrial properties to meet community needs.

Community Land Trust – a non-profit organization governed by a board of residents and public representative to promote community needs such as housing affordability, sustainability, and mitigating historic inequities through the acquisition and disposition of property.

Technical and Legal Assistance to Address Heirs' Properties – partnering with non-profits, educational providers, and legal entities to assist families with creating marketable title for heirs' property and providing estate planning assistance to mitigate future heirs' properties.

Promoting Prosperity: Through Affordability

Goal 6: Promote equitable housing choice throughout Georgetown County.

Objectives:

- 6.1 Pursue partnerships and create organizational infrastructure and capacity to facilitate the creation and preservation of affordable housing units.
- 6.2 Identify and pursue zoning ordinance amendments to provide for a variety of context-appropriate housing types throughout the county, including the use of density bonuses for the provision of affordable and workforce housing.
- 6.3 Promote the creation of a variety of housing units for every stage of life.
 - 6.3.a Ensure the zoning ordinance and FLUM promote a variety of housing types throughout the county.
- 6.4 Build organizational infrastructure through processes and partnerships to promote and provide affordable housing. The following graphic on page 82 provides potential options for process improvements.

Goal 7: Create a strategic and comprehensive approach to providing affordable housing.

Objectives:

- 7.1 Explore tools such as land banking as a strategic approach to promoting affordable housing.
- 7.2 Align land use policies to maximize opportunity for housing partners to provide affordable housing units.
- 7.3 Leverage Opportunity Zone incentives to encourage long-term private investment in affordable housing and job creating activities in underserved areas.
- 7.4 Pursue partner agencies and entities such as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) and established affordable housing providers.
- 7.5 Establish targeted policies that encourage investment in a manner that respects and honors long-term residents. Potential tools and strategies are described in the “Tools and Strategies for Affordable Housing” graphic on page 81.

- 7.5.a** Promote the preservation and incorporation of natural resources when assessing potential locations for new affordable housing units.
- 7.5.b** Establish design criteria and site design standards for new affordable housing developments to limit environmental impacts and promote compatibility with the character and nature of existing development.
- 7.5.c** Ensure that new affordable housing is sensitive to existing communities of cultural significance and any sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommended Density Bonuses to Promote Affordable Housing

Place Type	Residential Density	AH/WH Bonus/Incentive
RR - Rural Residential	< 1 DUA	2 DUA allowed if 20+% is AH/WH
RES - Residential	1-5 DUA	+2 DUA if 20+% is AH/WH
RMU – Residential Mixed Use	4-8 DUA	+2-4 DUA if 20+% is AH/WH
RV – Rural Village	~1-3 DUA	+2-4 DUA if 20+% is AH/WH
VC – Village Center	4-8 DUA	+2 DUA if 20+% is AH/WH
CC- Commercial Corridor	Neighborhood 2-4 DUA Mixed Use 2-6 DUA	+2 DUA or 10% units if 20+% is AH/WH
CMU-Community Mixed Use	8-12 DUA	+2-4 DUA or 10-20% units if 20+% is AH/WH

7.6 Identify special emphasis areas and support incentives and policies to promote the production of affordable housing in locations with existing infrastructure, supportive services, employment centers, and transportation. Supportive affordable housing production policies, including but not limited to:

- 7.6.a** For projects inclusive of at least 20% affordability (recommend target of 50% AMI for affordable units) provide density bonuses, height bonuses, open space and set-back bonuses, parking bonuses, and infrastructure incentives.
- 7.6.b** Establish special district codes that encourage affordability within primary investment area(s).
- 7.6.c** Provide discounted or eliminate impact fees for new developments with at least 20% affordability as permitted under state law.
- 7.6.d** Fast-track the approval process for proposed developments that incorporate 20% or more of affordability.
- 7.6.e** Encourage affordable and workforce housing using a variety of incentives. See the graphic below for more information on common tools and strategies used to promote affordable and workforce housing.

Tools and Strategies for Affordable Housing

Land Banking - Vehicle to acquire, hold, manage and distribute residential, commercial and industrial properties to meet community needs.

Inclusionary Zoning - Use of zoning law to encourage development of affordable housing alongside market-rate housing.

Zoning Incentives - Land-use regulation strategy that allows property owners to receive certain benefits or exemptions from zoning restrictions in exchange for meeting certain public goals or objectives.

Infrastructure Development - Improvement of the quality of the various components of infrastructure, such as roads, power, water and sanitation.

Special Tax Assessments – a vehicle to incentivize more affordable housing production and preservation through tax exemptions.

Direct Loan Programs – revolving loan programs to incentivize the repair and/or rehabilitation of existing units as affordable housing.

Bridge Loan Programs – utilize a local partner CDFI to acquire and preserve units for affordable housing.

Definition sources: Habitat for Humanity, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Cornell Law

Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability by Project Type

Project Type	Recommendations	Implementation Options	Types of Development Partners
<p>Low intensity development: Neighborhood level stabilization, infill, renovation projects</p>	<p>Allow accessory dwelling units under appropriate use standards on all residential low-intensity neighborhood lots.</p> <p>Allow single-family, duplex, triplex and four-plex housing as conditional uses in most residential areas.</p>	<p>Allow up to 4 units on a low-intensity neighborhood lot (inclusive of accessory dwelling unit)</p> <p>Special tax assessment for owners with income restricted accessory dwelling units</p> <p>Special Tax Assessment Rental property owners who provide affordable housing and are planning to invest in the rehabilitation of a property can apply to have the tax assessed value of their property “frozen” for up to 20 years at the pre-rehab value.</p> <p>Direct loan programs and indirect incentives for repairs & rehab</p> <p>Partner with local CDFI for Bridge Loan programs of Multifamily acquisitions in need of repairs</p> <p>Establish robust Land Bank for Special Emphasis Areas</p> <p>Donate distressed residential property.</p> <p>Partner with nonprofit organization to establish a Community Land Trust</p>	<p>Project targeting up to 80% AMI: Public/Nonprofit Developer</p> <p>Project targeting 80% - 120% AMI: Single Unit Builder</p>

Table: Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability by Project Type (continued)

Project Type	Recommendations	Implementation Options	Types of Development Partners
Missing Middle Typologies within neighborhoods and neighborhood edges and corridors with missing middle needs of <200 units per development project	Encourage mixed-use, mixed-residential, and mixed-income neighborhoods through public-private (P3) partnerships, bonus and incentive programs	For projects inclusive of at least 20% affordability (20% of units are below the AMI) provide density bonuses, height bonuses, open space & set-back bonuses, parking bonuses, and infrastructure incentives.	Small Private and/or Nonprofit Developer
Large/Very Large Multifamily Typology in designated higher density areas with project size needs of 200-500 units per development project	Encourage mixed-use, mixed-residential, and mixed-income neighborhoods through P3 partnerships, bonus and incentive programs	<p>Establish special district codes that encourage affordability within primary investment area(s)</p> <p>Provide discounted or eliminate impact fees for new developments with at least 20% affordability as permitted under state law.</p> <p>Fast-track the approval process for proposed developments that incorporate 20% or more of affordability.</p>	Large private developer

What is Missing Middle Housing?

Missing middle housing is a term used to describe the range of housing types and densities between single-family detached housing and apartments. Missing middle housing typically includes but is not limited to attached residential products such as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes, as well as small-lot detached units and accessory dwelling units.

Promoting Prosperity: Through the Economy

Goal 8: Ensure sufficient capacity for job-generating uses.

Objectives:

8.1 Utilize the Future Land Use Map to direct employment uses throughout the county.

8.1.a Coordinate with local economic development entities to ensure appropriate location and quantity of commercial and employment uses on the FLUM.

8.1.b Coordinate with local infrastructure providers and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to ensure adequate infrastructure at employment centers.

8.1.c Direct commercial development in locations with adequate infrastructure capacity.

Goal 9: Maintain a regulatory framework that supports entrepreneurship throughout the county.

Objectives:

9.1 Ensure that zoning and land development regulations accommodate a variety of commercial business types in context-appropriate locations.

9.2 Promote workforce housing near employment centers through implementation of the FLUM.

Goal 10: Promote economic activity through preserving and enhancing unique assets in Georgetown County

Objectives:

10.1 Encourage redevelopment of the Georgetown Port into a mixture of resident, commercial, employment and community uses as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

10.2 Conserve and preserve unique natural, historic and cultural places as unique county assets that enhance the quality of life for county residents.

Priority Investments

Strategic prioritization of investment based upon the goals and objectives of this Land Use Element is key for the effective implementation. By focusing resources on key areas, we can maximize the impact of our efforts and ensure that development aligns with the overall vision outlined in the plan. This approach not only optimizes the allocation of limited resources but also sets the stage for long-term success. The recommended priority investments, listed below, have been carefully selected to address the most pressing needs and capitalize on opportunities for positive transformation within the identified focus areas.

Summary of Recommended Priority Investments

Coordinate infrastructure to support existing and planned growth areas – This Land Use Element establishes the critical relationship between development and infrastructure in Georgetown County. Through its capital improvement program processes, and proactive coordination with public service providers, the county shall pursue investments in public facilities that pursue the goals of the Land Use and Public Facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Update the Zoning Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan – Georgetown County is a diverse and distinctive geographic area filled with unique places and development types. Since its adoption, the current zoning ordinance has been updated to address needs as they emerge. However, for optimal implementation of this Land Use Element, the county will benefit from holistic improvements to the zoning ordinance to provide the tailored approach to land use regulation prescribed by this planned and desired by county residents.

Align Comprehensive Plan Elements on a Common Schedule – The county’s approach of preparing and adopting Comprehensive Plan elements on an individual basis is unique. While this approach allows for a deliberate analysis of the subject matter of each element, the overall Comprehensive Plan is disjointed. Due to the interconnectivity of the subject matter, the adoption of an element often requires additional updates to related elements. For the purposes of clarity and efficiency, the county as part of the mandated five-year update, shall align the Comprehensive Plan elements on a common cycle and schedule.

Actively Encourage Workforce Housing - The availability of workforce a housing has reached a critical juncture in Georgetown County. In discussions with major employers and economic development partners as part of the development of this Land Use Element, employers are increasingly importing workers from adjacent counties, which will hinder long-term economic development in the county. This plan outlines potential initiatives to encourage workforce housing, requiring a combination of policy, partnerships, and investments. Likewise, information included in this Land Use Element shall inform updates to the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Adopt Open Space Protection Initiatives – Natural resources are paramount in Georgetown County. In developing Land Use and the Natural Resource Elements, residents voiced the desire of the county to take an increasingly active role in conserving and preserving critical open space, with a desire to create publicly accessible open space. The county shall evaluate and pursue partnerships and funding sources for conservation of critical open space and natural resources.



Appendix A:

Detailed Summary of Public Input

The Land Use Element public participation process unfolded in a deliberate sequence to ensure comprehensive community engagement. The process commenced with a land use survey in 2021-2022 aimed at gathering valuable insights from its residents. Subsequently, from September 5th to September 7, 2023, the county hosted a three-day workshop, where the Georgetown County Planning Department staff, in collaboration with consultants from BOUDREAUX, Stewart, and Restoration 52, actively engaged with the community through public open houses, focus groups and work sessions with Planning Commission and County Council.

This workshop marked the initial step in the planning process, providing a dedicated platform for residents to voice their opinions and contribute to shaping future land use recommendations. Building upon this foundation, the County extended its public outreach efforts with three additional open houses hosted by county staff, held throughout the county. Finally, a joint work session of County Council and Planning Commission, two additional open houses on December 13, 2023, and a virtual brown bag lunch on January 10, 2024 provided interested parties with the opportunity to comment on the progress and direction of the plan. These events were strategically designed to seek input on draft Land Use Element concepts and the future land use map, ensuring ongoing collaboration and feedback from the community throughout the planning initiative.

Land Use Survey

Prior to engaging the BOUDREAUX planning team, the Georgetown County Planning Department conducted a comprehensive Land Use Survey from November 15th, 2021, to January 19th, 2022, receiving 1,852 responses primarily through online platforms. The purpose of the survey was to gather insights on residents' perspectives regarding the best use of land in their community and the county, providing a baseline for public input for the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The survey covered diverse topics, including residents' concerns, preferences for development types, and demographic information. Respondents emphasized the importance of natural resources, with 96.03% considering them crucial. Survey respondents identified concerns such as infrastructure, urbanization, and land preservation, providing valuable input for future development decisions. The results underscored a strong emphasis on protecting natural resources, sustainable development, and addressing infrastructure needs.

Additionally, community-specific variations highlighted distinct priorities, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach in the Comprehensive Plan. The survey's demographic insights, particularly the predominance of respondents over 61 years old, owning single-family homes, and not currently employed, indicate a strong involvement of retirees and their influence on future development. The majority of respondents were from the Waccamaw Neck, highlighting

their significant interest in the planning process. The survey results also revealed concerns about gentrification and a desire for more education on the topic. Overall, the survey serves as a healthy starting point for discussions and decision-making processes, aligning community aspirations with the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan.

Open Houses

To facilitate substantive public input, county staff and the consulting team hosted three public open houses at locations throughout the County: Georgetown, Murrells Inlet, and Choppee. These interactive open houses provided a platform for the local community to voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns regarding the future of land use in Georgetown County.

Open house activities encouraged participants were encouraged to give feedback on six primary topics:

1. Their vision for the future of Georgetown County,
2. The relevance of goals that were included in the 2015 Land Use Element,
3. Goals participants would like to see included in the Land Use Element update,
4. Visual preferences for single-family, multi-family, and commercial or mixed-use development,
5. The role of the county in providing affordable housing, and
6. A mapping exercise which allowed participants to identify opportunities for conservation and preservation, new residential, or new commercial development.



Residents voice their opinions at a land use open house (Murrells Inlet Community Center on

Over 300 individuals attended the public meetings over the three-day workshop, generating over 1,770 individual points of data cumulatively from open house activities.

Vision

In an activity designed to gain insight on participants' visions for county land use, participants attached comments to a poster board using post it notes. The activity collected 117 comments over the course of the three open houses.

Comment themes include:

1. Community Character and Compatible Development –Georgetown County affirmed that development must be compatible with established neighborhoods, communities, and development patterns.

2. Preservation and Environmental Consideration – Georgetown County residents assert the importance of preserving and maintaining the county’s environmental features.
3. Walkable and Bikeable Communities – Participants want communities to be accessible by improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
4. Infrastructure and Responsible Development – Participants want to ensure infrastructure is sufficient to support development.
5. Affordable and Attainable housing – Georgetown County residents acknowledge that the cost of housing is a significant issue, citing the inability of a local workforce to live in the County due to housing cost.

However, comments also varied between the location of the open house.

Georgetown Open House

The top three vision themes identified by those attending the open house held in the City of Georgetown are as follows:

1. Preservation of Community Character and Natural Beauty,
2. Infrastructure Planning and Responsible Development, and
3. Affordable Housing and Sustainability.

Murrells Inlet Open House

The top three vision themes offered by participants of the Murrells Inlet open house include the following:

1. Density, Zoning, and Enforcement of Regulations
2. Infrastructure Planning, Transportation Options, and Responsible Development, and
3. Truly attainable housing.



Open house participants’ comments regarding Land Use Element vision

Choppee Open House

The primary themes derived from the open house at the Choppee Community Center include:

1. Cultural Preservation and Tourism,
2. Community Engagement and Support, and
3. Economic Development.

Goals

Participants submitted input regarding Land Use Element goals through two separate activities.

First, attendees identified any goals from the 2015 Land Use Element that remain relevant through a dot-voting exercise. Over the three open houses, this activity received 677 interactions, which accumulated from event to event.

The top three goals from the 2010 element include:

1. Provide for the protection of saltwater and freshwater estuaries of Georgetown County.
2. Promote the preservation of trees and other natural vegetation (excluding managed forest land), and
3. Provide protection from flooding in tidal action.



Open house participants' comments regarding Land Use Element goals

All goals received votes as remaining relevant, and the proportion of votes was consistent across all open house locations.

Additionally, participants submitted new goals using post it notes, attached to a board labeled, “what goals should Georgetown County pursue?” This activity received 130 comments.

Interactions across the three open houses centered on the following themes:

1. Housing and Density – Participants promoted housing available to all while limiting higher densities where either infrastructure cannot support such development, or the development is incompatible with nearby or adjacent established communities.
2. Infrastructure and Planning – A holistic approach to infrastructure is critical, maintaining viable transportation systems and stormwater management.
3. Preservation and Environmental Concerns – Commenters focused on preservation of the existing tree canopy as well as protection of wetlands and water bodies.

4. Economic Development – Participants focused on the need for quality jobs, the relationship between local educational providers and the workforce, and attainable housing for local workers.

When participants’ comments are organized and summarized by open house location, the top themes that emerged were as follows:

Georgetown Open House

1. Preservation of Community Character the Natural Environment,
2. Affordable and Attainable Housing, and
3. Community Engagement and Accountability.

Murrells Inlet Open House

1. Environmental Preservation,
2. Limiting High Density Development, and
3. Infrastructure Planning.

Choppee Open House

4. Cultural Preservation and Tourism Development,
5. Community Support and Job Creation,
6. Attainable, Affordable, and Workforce Housing.

Visual Preference

To better understand and define the desired nature of development, the open houses included an exercise in which participants voted on images that reflected appropriate characteristics of development for the county. This activity displayed three topical boards titled “single-family housing,” “multi-family housing,” and “commercial and mixed-use.” Each board included a variety of 12 images reflecting the topic, and participants voted on their top three most appropriate images for Georgetown County using post it flags. The consulting team counted flags separately for each open house, and votes did not accumulate over the three open houses.

Visual preference boards are found in Appendix B.

Single-Family Housing

The “single-family housing” visual preference board received 230 total interactions. The images receiving the most votes represent a newly constructed custom home in a rural or large-lot setting (32 votes), an established two-story home on a traditional smaller lot neighborhood (30 votes), and an established single-story ranch home (29 votes). All highly rated examples had porches as a prominent feature. The top three choices remained consistent across all three open houses when tabulated independently.



32 (14%) votes



30 (13%) votes



29 (13%) votes

Multi-Family Housing

The “multi-family housing” visual preference board received 173 total interactions across all three open houses. Images receiving the most interest included a two-story duplex with offset façade and porch elements (36 votes), a duplex resembling a single-family home (29 votes), and two-story row home with undulating façade, color as a defining feature, and roofline variation between units (22 votes).



36 (21%) votes



29 (17%) votes



22 (13%) votes

Preferences in multi-family images varied slightly by open house location. Choppee open house participants preferred the same images, but in a different order of preference. Additionally, Murrells Inlet participants voted strongly for a two-story stacked duplex with porch elements as their second choice. This example did not garner noteworthy favor in the Georgetown and Choppee open houses.

Commercial and Mixed-Use

Images of two- and three-story mixed-use buildings with multiple storefronts and upper story uses garnered the most interest. Both images gained 38 of the 212 total votes. The third most popular image (30 votes) depicts a food truck court with economical decorative elements.



38 (18%) votes



38 (18%) votes



30 (14%) votes

The Georgetown and Murrells Inlet open houses resulted in consistent findings; however, an image depicting a small residential-style retail or eating establishment with minimal setback received the highest number of votes from the Choppee open house participants. Overall, Choppee attendees supported smaller commercial establishments.

Affordable Housing

One station discussed affordable housing. The activity provided information on different housing typologies and definitions when discussing affordable housing, posing the question, “how can the County be more proactive with equitable development that takes affordability into account?” The station also allowed participants to vote on desirable affordable housing typologies.

The station garnered 60 total comments over the three open houses. There are 10 major categories of response:

1. General Affordability Concerns – the understanding that housing affordability is a need in Georgetown County, and concern over what price points are truly affordable,
2. Density and Location Considerations – many expressed concerns about overly-dense affordable housing options, and described either locational constraints or the desire for housing to be near services and jobs,
3. Equity and Inclusivity – there must be housing options in Georgetown County available to all,
4. Infrastructure – the need promote housing where sufficient infrastructure already exists, or concerns regarding existing capacity,
5. Community Input and Representation – concern regarding decision making processes and the community’s role,
6. Preservation of Communities – the desire to prevent gentrification and the need for affordable housing to serve local communities where possible,
7. Role of Government – discussion of incentives to create affordable housing, and implementation structure and strategies,
8. Mixed-Use and Alternative Housing Types – comments about potential non-traditional affordable housing,
9. Senior Housing Need – comments about high demand for senior housing overall, and
10. Consideration Inclusionary Zoning – comments about requiring minimum number of affordable units with new development.

Regarding affordable housing typologies, individuals voted on series of images with post it flags or dots to identify typologies of affordable housing that are appropriate for Georgetown County. There were 116 total interactions with this activity. The board utilized during the public open houses is located in Appendix B.

Images of a deeply affordable suburban multi-family concept (40% AMI and below) received the highest interest with 25 votes. A mixed income ownership concept targeting 80% AMI received 18 votes; and an affordable senior housing concept also earned 18 votes.



Regarding the deeply affordable housing concept, a holistic approach which incorporated housing, services, and resources resonated with participants. In discussing the mixed-income concept, participants indicated the desire for affordable units to be compatible with existing residential development in scale, massing, and appearance. Finally, participants recognized the need for affordable senior housing, and preferred a smaller unit developed at low densities and designed to require minimal maintenance.

Locational Mapping Activity

A tabletop interactive mapping activity provided to participants at the open houses facilitated input on the location of commercial and residential uses, as well as conservation opportunities. The activity utilized two large table-top maps, one depicting the entire county and the other showing the Waccamaw Neck. The maps included an aerial photo overlaid with roads and identifying features. Choppee participants interacted with a third map depicting the northeast portion of the county.



Open house participants vote on locational preferences for new residential, now commercial, and preservation/open

Participants placed a green dot on locations for preservation, conservation, or park space, a red dot for locations with commercial potential, and a yellow dot on locations appropriate for new residential construction. The dots accumulated on the map over the three open houses.

The mapping exercise garnered 520 data points through the three open houses. Those data points were digitized into a geodatabase, and analysis performed using geographic information systems (GIS) to create heat maps depicting concentrations of each use type. The mapping activity results are available in Appendix C.

Regarding residential preference, participants noted a total of 113 potential residential locations. Notably, new residential opportunities accumulated north and south of the City of Georgetown, in the Parkersville area and the southern portion of the Waccamaw Neck, along the U.S. Highway 701 corridor, and near existing rural communities on the mainland portion of the county. Multiple comments identified the Parkersville Area as a potential location for affordable housing.

There were 69 locations noting commercial preference noted on the maps during the public workshop. Participants identified opportunities along most major transportation route corridors throughout the county. Notable concentrations also included near the City of Georgetown and the Town of Andrews, the Choppee area, and the southern portion of the Waccamaw Neck.

Participants provided 325 locational points for conservation, preservation, and open space activities. The U.S. Highway 17 corridor received significant concentrations of votes, particularly in the Parkersville, Pawleys Island and Murrells Inlet areas. Choppee and Brown's Ferry Area also received a concentration of interactions.

Other Thoughts and Ideas

Participants could also interact with a board labeled “other thoughts and ideas,” intended to provide an outlet for miscellaneous input. Participants provided comments on a post it note attached directly to the board. Participants submitted 54 total comments.

The most predominant themes were:

1. Improve or maintain infrastructure – Participants expressed the desire for improved connectivity and new bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure,
2. Growth management and density – Comments ranged from recommendations for design and planting buffers, to the desire for more low-density development, and concern for gentrification,
3. Protecting the natural environment – Commenters primarily addressed the desire to keep tree canopy, but also touched on issues of water quality and protection of natural water features,
4. Economic development and job creation – Participants expressed desires for specific uses and the need for affordable housing to support the local workforce.

However, the nature of comments varied by open house location. Comments received at the Georgetown open house focused on tree preservation, maintaining and improving design overlays, and promoting working waterfronts. Participants at the Murrells Inlet event directed comments toward density concerns, as well as maintaining and improving infrastructure. Participants in Choppee advocated for new facilities such as parks and tourism activities, promoting industrial jobs, and providing bike corridors.

Stakeholder Focus Groups

In addition to the public open houses, the workshop included five focus group meetings with a variety of local stakeholders. These meetings included representatives from neighborhoods, HOAs, Keep It Green, real estate developers, REALTORS®, affordable housing providers, major employers, environmental and conservation groups, utility providers, emergency response organizations, and representatives from the small business community.

The discussion in these focus groups focused on the unique characteristics of Georgetown County, priorities for the Land Use Element, and affordable housing.

Major themes that consistently emerged from these small group conversations included:

1. Environmental Preservation and Conservation – Environmental features were discussed as being a uniquely rich component of life in Georgetown County. Comments ranged from the desire to improve water quality, the ability to access and use natural environments, and preservation of tree canopy.
2. Community Identity and Character – Participants described how Georgetown County is comprised of many different and unique communities and neighborhoods, as well as the Gullah Geechee culture and people. The development pattern of the County consists of

primarily single-family neighborhoods and homes on the Waccamaw Neck, and larger rural properties in the western and southern portions of the County. Participants indicated that similar development should be prominent with future development of the county, there may be some locational opportunities for other development types based on location and availability of infrastructure, and that design and development standards play a significant role in contextual design.



Stakeholder focus groups and a Planning Commission work session were held at the Georgetown County Airport on September 5-7, 2023.

3. Affordable Housing and Workforce Housing – Employers and the business community are concerned about the future of employment in the County. Participants indicated that hourly and professional salaried employees alike struggle to find housing in Georgetown County that they can afford, leading to County employers hiring individuals living elsewhere. Providing the opportunity to workforce housing is critical for the future of economic development.
4. Infrastructure and Resources – Infrastructure availability is locational. Overall, water and sewer sufficient to support new development are more readily available on the Waccamaw Neck than in rural areas of the county. Similarly, participants are concerned about long-term transportation capacity on the Waccamaw Neck.
5. Regulations and Planning – Additional regulations and increased capacity to implement policies are critical to future development in the County. Examples ranged from an organization to coordinate affordable housing, zoning implementation of tree preservation and stormwater management standards, and the use of design overlays to ensure coordinated and compatible development.
6. Public Engagement and Education – The purpose and role of the Comprehensive Plan, and the Land Use Element should be clear. Likewise, regulations should be updated in such a way that new developments can be more predictable and desirable.

The extensive outreach and collaboration resulted in invaluable insights from over 325 individuals who actively participated during the open houses and focus group meetings.

Additional Opportunities for Public Input

In addition to the September open houses, county staff embarked on a series of “public roadshow” meetings to gain additional input in locations throughout the county. These meetings followed the same format as the September 5-7 open houses, and were held on the following dates and in the following locations:

- September 15, 2023 in Choppee,
- October 5, 2023 in Parkersville, and
- November 9, 2023 in Pleasant Hill.

A joint County Council and Planning Commission work session convened on November 13, 2023 for the purpose of providing an update on the progress and direction of the Land Use Element. Two additional public open houses followed to present initial Land Use Element concepts, held on December 13, 2023 at the Waccamaw Branch Library in Pawleys and Howard Auditorium in the City of Georgetown. These meetings provided initial drafts of the land use concepts, maps, and policies associated with this Land Use Element, and included interactive opportunities to provide feedback. Approximately 50 individuals attended these open houses.

A brown bag virtual lunch presentation on January 10, 2024 provided an alternative opportunity for interested community members unable to attend the December open houses. Over 30 individuals attended the presentation and a recording made available on the county’s Comprehensive Plan web page. Additionally, Planning Department staff presented an update to interested residents on January 25, 2024 in Plantersville.

On February 29, 2024, the Planning Commission held a listening session to obtain comments from residents and stakeholders regarding the initial Draft Land Use Element document. Twelve individuals provided comments, which primarily focused on density concerns, preservation of natural resources, stormwater management, and infrastructure on the Waccamaw Neck. In response to comments, portions of the draft Land Use Element were revised, augmented, or clarified. The updated draft Land Use Element was presented to the Planning Commission at a March 28, 2024 work session.

Throughout the process of creating this Land Use Element, county staff established a dedicated webpage and email to provide information and receive comments. The web page included the same presentations, interactive boards, and map used in each open house or meeting throughout the process. Likewise, the Land Use Element update web page included an online form for additional comments. Over 60 additional comments were submitted via email or through the web form.

Appendix B:

Visual Preference Boards for September 5-7, 2023 Open Houses

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
LAND USE ELEMENT

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, SC
CIRCA 1769

VISUAL PREFERENCE
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING

BOUDREAUX + STEWART + R | 52 RESTORATION, LLC

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE LAND USE ELEMENT



VISUAL PREFERENCE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE LAND USE ELEMENT



VISUAL PREFERENCE MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE LAND USE ELEMENT



HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

DEEPLY AFFORDABLE SUBURBAN MULTIFAMILY, TOWNHOME, & SINGLE-FAMILY MIX WITH COMMUNITY GARDEN & RESOURCE CENTER - AMI 40% & BELOW



MULTIFAMILY WORKFORCE HOUSING ECO-LOCATION MODEL FOR URBAN AREAS- AMI 50% - 80%



MULTIFAMILY WORKFORCE HOUSING ECO-FRIENDLY MODEL - AMI 60% - 120%



MIXED-INCOME HOME OWNERSHIP - AMI 80% & ABOVE



ATTAINABLE COHOUSING MODELS - AMI 80% & ABOVE



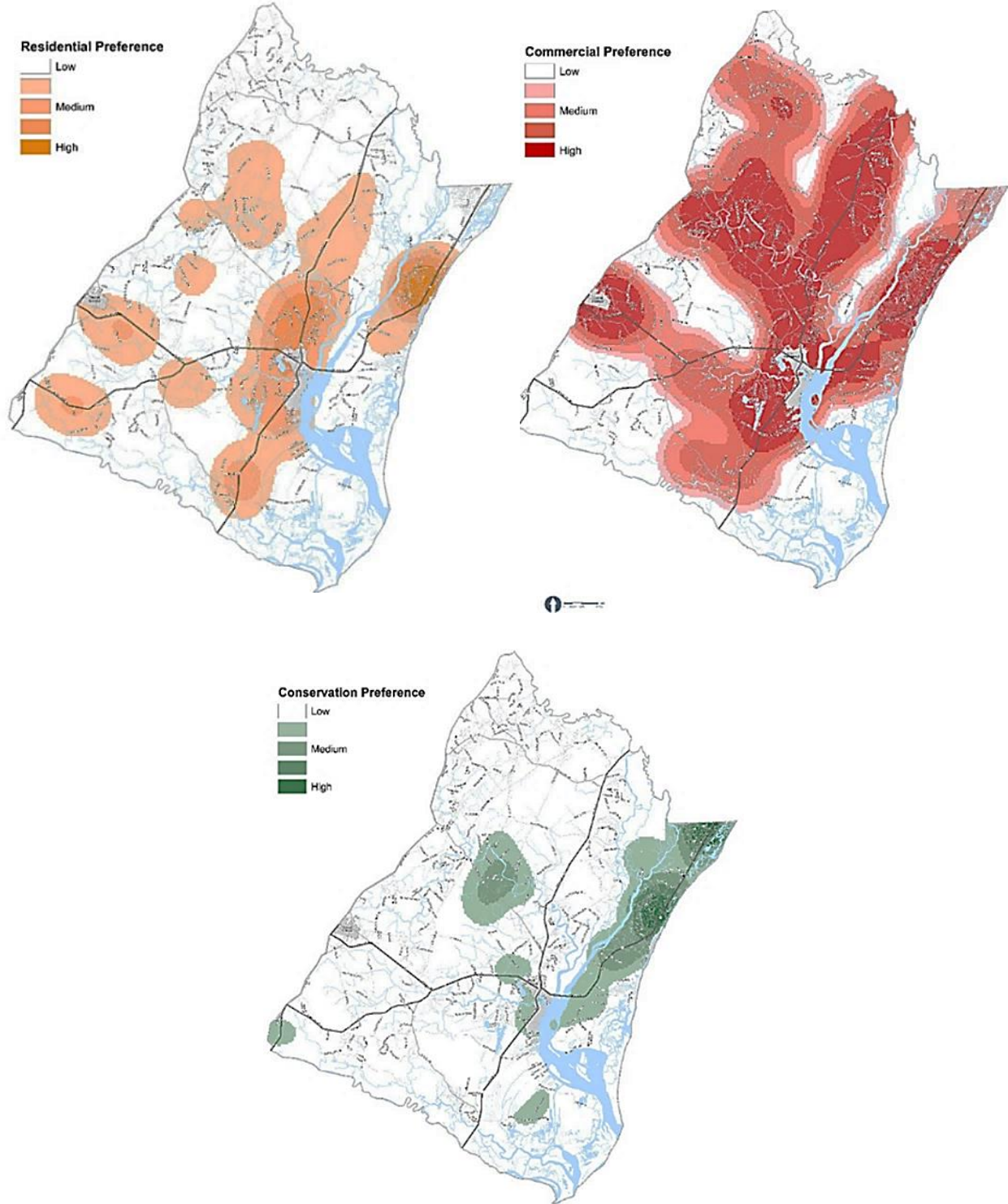
AFFORDABLE SECONDARY DWELLING UNITS



AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING



Appendix C: Open House Interactive Mapping Activity Results





Appendix D:

Aligning Housing Element Goals with the Land Use Element

Housing Element (HE) Goal	Housing Element Objective and Strategy	Alignment to Land Use Elements Prosperity through Affordability
HE Goal No. 1 Provide adequate housing types and quantities for the existing population and future residents of Georgetown County.	<p><i>Objective 1a:</i> Assess the need for various housing types in the different parts of the county.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Housing market analysis/needs assessment.</p>	See Graphic: Tools and Strategies for Affordable Housing (page 81)
HE Goal No. 2: Enhance home ownership in the County.	<p><i>HE Objective 2c:</i> (ongoing) Assist with reducing heirs' property issues and facilitating the use of such property by owners.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Work with non-profit groups to sponsor clinics and promote access to legal assistance.</p> <p><i>HE Objective 2d:</i> (Short-term) Assist property owners of family-inherited property by facilitating the use of such property by owners.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Review LDRs for potential amendments regarding family subdivision.</p>	See Graphic: Potential Implementation Tools and Strategies for Cultural Preservation (page 78)
HE Goal No. 3 Promote affordable housing opportunities in the county.	<p><i>HE Objective 3b:</i> (Short-term) Encourage development of affordable units with regulatory incentives, such as density bonuses, fee waivers and FastTrack permitting.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Consider target areas for encouraging such development. Develop a new incentive-based zoning district to encourage affordable housing.</p>	<p>See Graphics: Special Emphasis Areas (page 34)</p> <p>See Graphic: Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability Project Type - Missing Middle and Large Multifamily (pages 82-83)</p>
HE Goal No. 4 Promote workforce housing opportunities in the county.	<p><i>HE Objective 4c:</i> (Short-term) Assist/encourage an affordable housing development in the county.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Consider donations/reduced sale of county-owned properties. Work to expand infrastructure to reduce development costs.</p> <p><i>HE Objective 4a:</i> (Ongoing) Promote workforce housing in proximity to the workplace.</p> <p><i>Strategy:</i> Examine all plans and regulations to identify areas that inhibit workforce housing.</p>	<p>See Graphics: Special Emphasis Areas (page 34)</p> <p>See Graphic: Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability Project Type - Low Intensity Development, Missing Middle, and Large Multifamily (pages 82-83)</p>

Housing Element (HE) Goal	Housing Element Objective and Strategy	Alignment to Land Use Elements Prosperity through Affordability
<p>HE Goal No. 7 Address substandard housing issues in the county.</p>	<p><i>HE Objective 7c:</i> (Ongoing) Explore opportunities for housing rehabilitation for substandard homes. <i>Strategy:</i> Work with Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and other housing agencies to identify grant/loan programs.</p> <p><i>HE Objective 8b:</i> (Short-term) Encourage further development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). <i>Strategy:</i> Consider reducing or amending restrictions on accessory dwelling units as an affordable housing option.</p>	<p>See Callout Box: Tools and Strategies for Affordable Housing (page 81)</p> <p>See Table: Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability Project Type - Low Intensity Development (pages 82-83)</p>
<p>HE Goal No. 8 Assist in increasing housing options for all county residents.</p>	<p><i>Objective 8b:</i> (Short-term) Encourage further development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). <i>Strategy:</i> Consider reducing or amending restrictions on accessory dwelling units as an affordable housing option.</p>	<p>See Table: Promoting Prosperity Through Affordability Project Type - Low Intensity Development (pages 82-83)</p>

Appendix E:

Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing – defined in Section 4 of the S.C. Priority Investment Act, for sale residential housing units in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance and condominium or association fee, if any, constitute no more than 28 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted by household size, or rental housing unit for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than 80 percent of the median income by household size.

Area Median Income (AMI) - midpoint of household incomes in a specific geographic area, where half of the households earn more and half earn less, commonly used as a reference to determine eligibility for various housing programs and financial assistance.

Attainable Housing – residential dwelling units accessible to individuals earning at or below 120% of the area median income, adjusted by household size

Bridge Loan – a typically short-term loan from a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to facilitate affordable housing by providing immediate financing to cover gaps until longer-term funding is secured.

Certified Local Government (CLG) - a municipal or county government that has been certified by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to have met certain standards for historic preservation and is eligible for federal preservation grants and assistance.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) - a specialized financial entity that provides credit, financial services, and support to underserved communities and individuals to promote economic development and financial inclusion.

Community Land Trust - a non-profit organization governed by a board of residents and public representative to promote community needs such as housing affordability, sustainability, and mitigating historic inequities through the acquisition and disposition of property.

Comprehensive Plan - pursuant to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, a document that provides a framework and guide for future growth and development, required for a local government to implement regulatory land use tools.

Conservation Subdivision – a subdivision design technique used as an alternative to conventional subdivision design, focusing development in the most suitable areas while conserving large portions of the property as common open space.

Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC and R) – legal document detailing rules and guidelines established by a homeowners' association (HOA) or property developer that govern the use, appearance, and maintenance of properties, typically within a residential community.

Cultural Overlay Zone - form of zoning overlay district established to protect culturally significant components of land use and design, including but not limited to architectural

requirements, exterior materials, uses, access standards, and similar aspects of development that may be common to a location of cultural significance.

Deeply Affordable Housing – a residential dwelling unit for which rent or mortgage and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning within a range of less than 40% of the area median income, adjusted by household size.

Direct Loan Program - revolving loan programs to incentivize the repair and/or rehabilitation of existing units as affordable housing.

Dwelling Units per Acre (DUA) – measure of residential density describing residential dwelling units per acre of land in a defined area.

Floodplain – regulated and defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a low-lying area adjacent to a river, stream, or other water body that is prone to flooding during periods of high-water flow or storm events.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) - map used by local governments to guide the long-term development and growth of a community, visually representing future land uses, typically found as a component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - computer-based tool that captures, stores, analyzes, and visualizes spatial and geographic data to help manage and interpret location-based information.

Gross Density – measure of residential density based on the total number of dwelling units per unit of land area, including all land uses such as streets, parks, and non-residential buildings, within a specified boundary.

Heirs' Property – real property that has been passed down informally through generations without a clear title, often resulting in multiple family members owning undivided interests in the property.

Home Owner Association (HOA) - organization in a residential community that enforces rules, manages common areas, and collects dues to maintain shared amenities and services for the benefit of the residents.

Housing Needs Assessment - comprehensive analysis that evaluates the current and projected housing demand, supply, affordability, and conditions within a community to inform planning and policy decisions.

Housing Special Emphasis Area – geographic region identified in the Land Use Element that possesses characteristics conducive to the development of affordable, attainable, and workforce housing.

Inclusionary Zoning - zoning law to encourage or require development of affordable housing alongside market-rate housing.

Land Bank – a public or non-profit entity designed to hold, manage and distribute residential, commercial and industrial properties to meet community needs.

Land Development Regulations (LDR) - rules and standards established by local governments to control the design, and subdivision of land to ensure orderly growth, infrastructure provision, and environmental protection. Land Development Regulations may be combined or separate from the Zoning Ordinance.

Low Impact Development (LID) - systems and practices used to manage stormwater that use or mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality and associated aquatic habitat by employing principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features and minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) - federal tax incentives provided to developers to encourage the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing for low-income households.

Missing Middle Housing - the range of housing types and densities between single-family detached housing and apartments that are often underrepresented in the housing market.

Net Density – a measure of residential density and expressed in dwelling units per acre, calculated by dividing the number of dwelling units by the net buildable area of the parcel proposed for development, excluding features such as road rights-of-way, wetlands, stormwater ponds and open space.

Opportunity Zone – an area designated by the State of South Carolina where investors can receive tax incentives for investing in projects and businesses that spur economic development and job creation in economically distressed communities.

Overlay Zone - special zoning district (see “zoning ordinance”) that is applied as an additional layer to existing zoning to provide additional regulations or incentives for specific areas to address specific issues or concerns.

Place Type – a geographic area depicted on the Future Land Use Map and described in the Land Use Element with a defined combination of future land uses, intensity and density, and design considerations to guide future land use policy.

Planned Development District (PD) - zoning designation that allows for flexible land use and development regulations tailored to specific projects or areas, often incorporating mixed-use development, open space, and other community amenities.

Residential Density - a measure of the number of housing units in a given geographic area, typically in dwelling units per acre.

Short Term Rental (STR) - a residential property available for lease or rent for a period of less than 30 days.

Special Protection Area (SPA) – stormwater management strategy recommended by the Waccamaw Neck Stormwater Management Plan; a defined geographic area designated to serve as a regulatory tool to address stormwater management through enhanced stormwater regulations.

Special Tax Assessment – reduced property tax rate or exemption granted to property owners to incentivize a public good, such as creating and/or maintaining affordable housing.

Stormwater – defined by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) as rainwater, snowmelt, or runoff that flows over land surfaces, impervious areas, or natural ground and may collect pollutants as it moves toward drainage systems or receiving waters.

Waccamaw Neck – the geographic region of Georgetown County situated between the Waccamaw River and the Atlantic Ocean.

Wetland - areas of land that are saturated with moisture seasonally or permanently, including but not limited to swamps, marshes, and bogs.

Workforce Housing – a housing unit where rent or mortgage and utilities constitute no more than 30 percent of the annual household income for a household earning within a range of 60% - 120% of the area median income by household size.

Zoning Ordinance - local law that regulates land use and development by dividing a jurisdiction into different zones and specifying the allowable uses, density, and physical characteristics of buildings within each zone.



