Land Use Element

Amended March 10, 2020

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Introduction

The information received in the public meetings and the on-line survey is the guiding force for this plan. It is vitally important that County leaders, both in and out of government, work to incorporate the vision of the community as closely as possible. This is a community of involved people who will work to see their vision come to fruition.

BACKGROUND

Bryan County has experienced rather rapid growth over the last seventeen years. In 2010 there were 30,233 residents and that number increased to 36,230 in the 2016 estimate from the US Census Bureau. From 2002 through 2014 there were 4,560 single family homes permitted and that included five of the worst years for homebuilding in the last 70 years. The message here is that the county is a popular place to live and the rate of the growth has been significant.

The development pattern in the county has mimicked the same national pattern that has been seen since right after WW II. That pattern involved the suburbanization of America which created housing, office, commercial and industrial developments off main roads with no connectivity to the outside world except by using those main roads. This pattern has been creating problems for traffic and the environment for its entire existence.

Like most places the County has not done a good job of updating the development regulations and the zoning ordinances to guide the development process. There is an effort currently underway to address those shortfalls and help to improve the situation.

GOALS

The goals of the community vary from North to South, which is to be expected, since they are essentially two different communities. However, there was a remarkable degree of consistency on the main goals that we heard. These were:

1- Maintain the small town feel of the area while growth continues to happen.
2- Address the traffic issues with creative solutions
3- Expand the local economy so that the county can become a place to live, work and play.
4- Protect the environment of the county
5- Expand the park system with trails, passive recreation, public gathering spaces with performance venues, libraries, and facilities for senior centers.
6- Grow and maintain the excellent school system.

These Goals can be planned for in the County, however, some of them will require action in the marketplace to bring them to fruition.

Uniqueness of Bryan County

The county is a unique place for three primary reasons:

1- Fort Stewart slices the county into two separate areas North Bryan and South Bryan.
2- North Bryan has experienced none of the fast development found in South Bryan. For that reason, much of the North area is taken up by timber operations and agricultural uses. In the last few years the county has

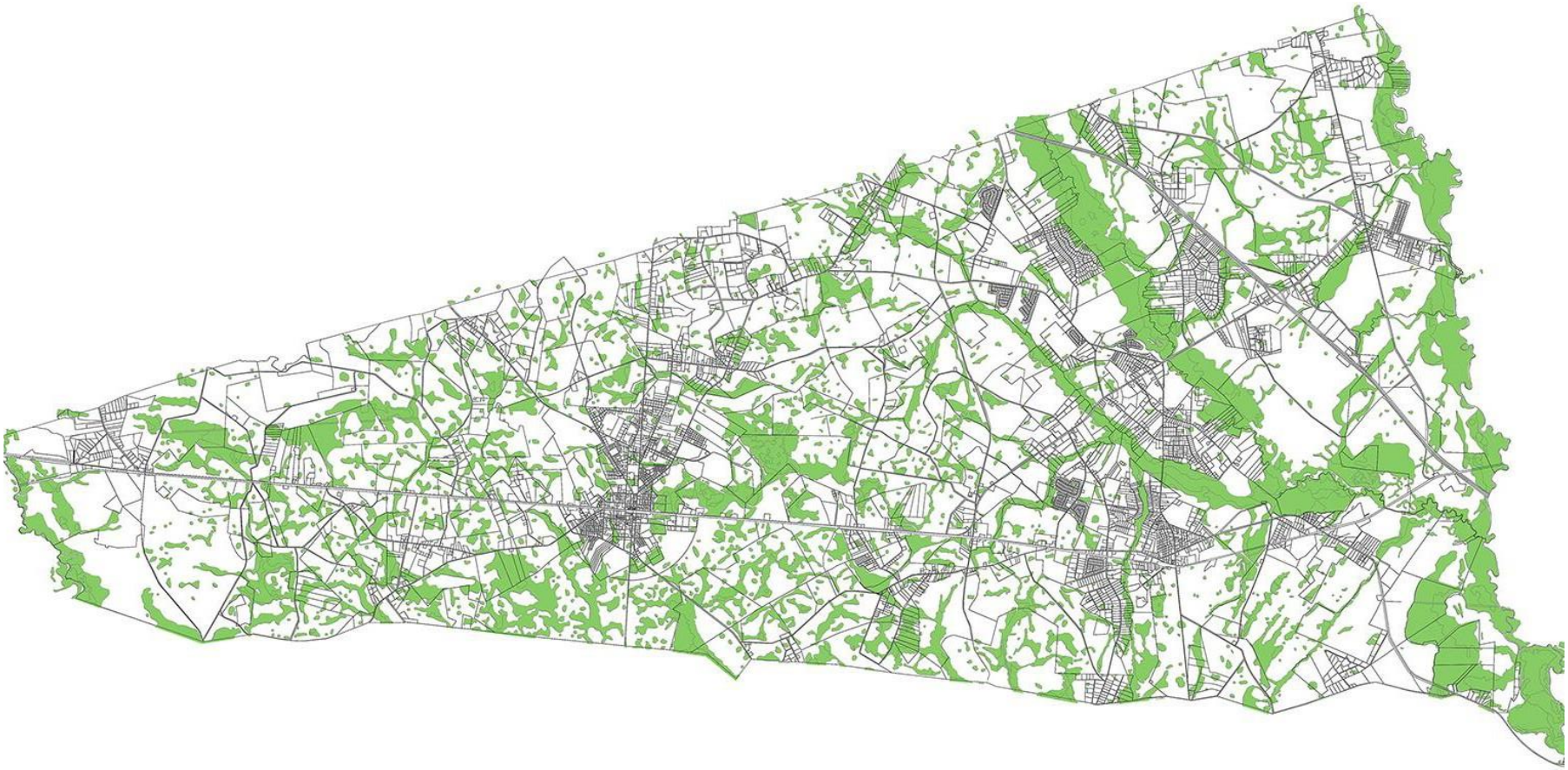
developed the Interstate Centre Industrial Park 1100 acres at the Interchange of GA 280 and I-16. This has brought new opportunity to the area and it continues to grow.

3- South Bryan is crossed by I-95 and US 17. There are currently two interchanges on I-95 with a third scheduled for development soon. This accessibility has made the south a better target for development of housing to serve new residents who value the area for its access to Savannah and the excellent school system.

Bryan is a coastal county and with that location there are several things that can affect development and redevelopment. These are a few of those issues:

1- A large amount of the land area is in a flood zone and/or a protected wetland area. While this will not completely stop development, it does call for more creative regulation in the zoning and development laws of the county.
2- The County derives most of its water supply from the Floridian Aquifer. These withdrawals are strictly managed for impacts to the ground water levels. Recharging the aquifer is a priority to be addressed when developments are planned.
3- The management of storm water becomes an issue in areas like Bryan which are relatively flat and have large amounts of flood plains and wetlands.

There are a series of maps illustrating the wetland and flood plain issues on the following pages. All this information must be considered as we look at the character areas in each part of the county.



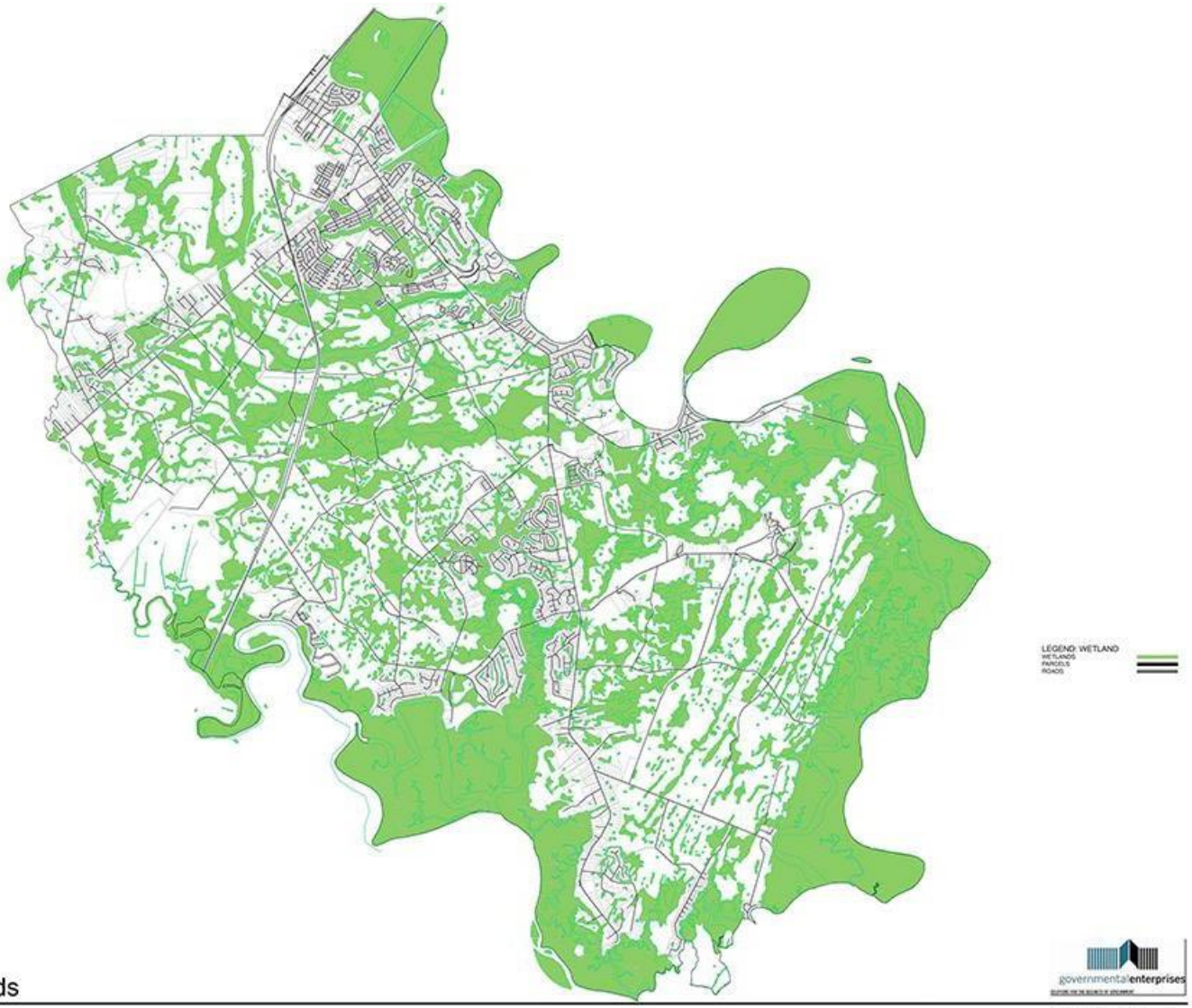
LEGEND: WETLAND
WETLANDS
PARCELS
ROADS

North Bryan - Wetlands

Scale: 1" = 3000'

governmentalenterprises

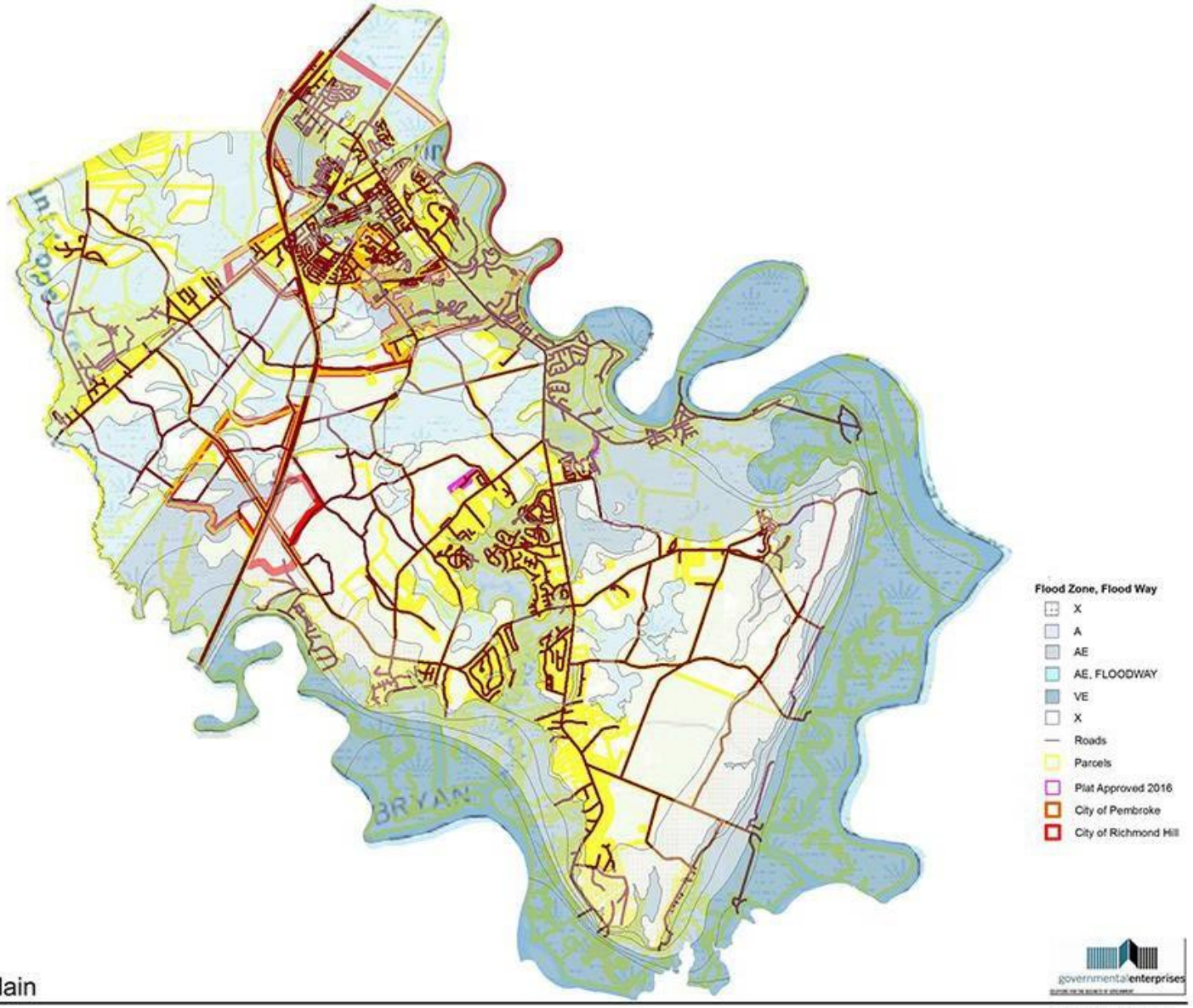
Source: Bryan County GIS



South Bryan - Wetlands

Scale: 1" = 3000'

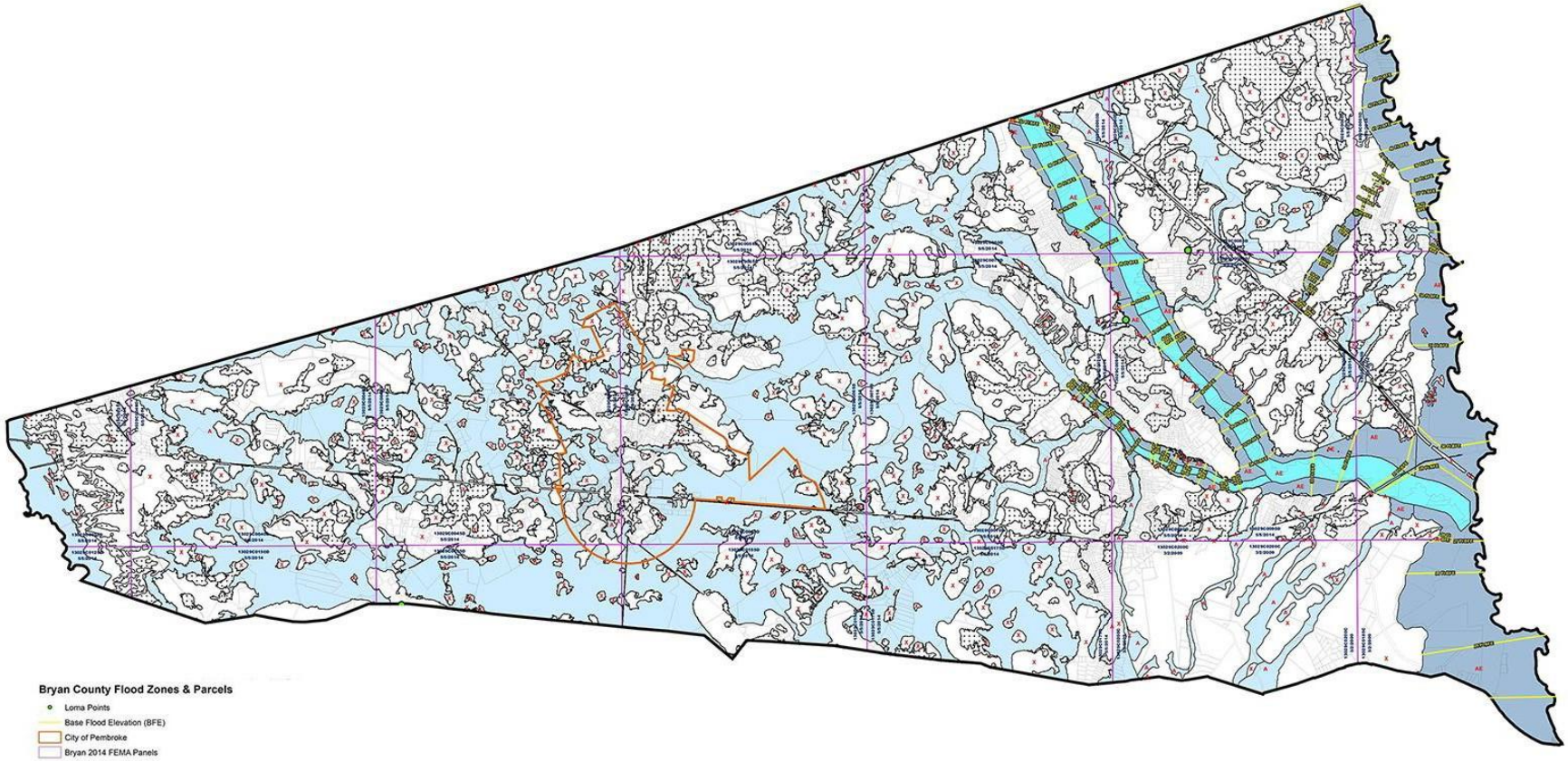
Source: Bryan County GIS



South Bryan - Flood Plain

Scale: 1" = 3000'

Source: Bryan County GIS



Bryan County Flood Zones & Parcels

- Loma Points
- Base Flood Elevation (BFE)
- City of Pembroke
- Bryan 2014 FEMA Panels
- Parcels

Flood Zone, Flood Way

X	*0.2 % Annual Chance 500 Yr Flood*
A	*1% Annual Chance 100 Yr Flood (No BFE Determined)*
AE	*1% Annual Chance 100 Yr Flood (BFE Determined)*
AE, FLOODWAY	*1% Annual Chance 100 Yr Flood (Must be kept Free of Debri)*
X	*Areas Outside .2% Annual Chance 500 Yr Flood*

North Bryan - Flood Plain

governmentalenterprises

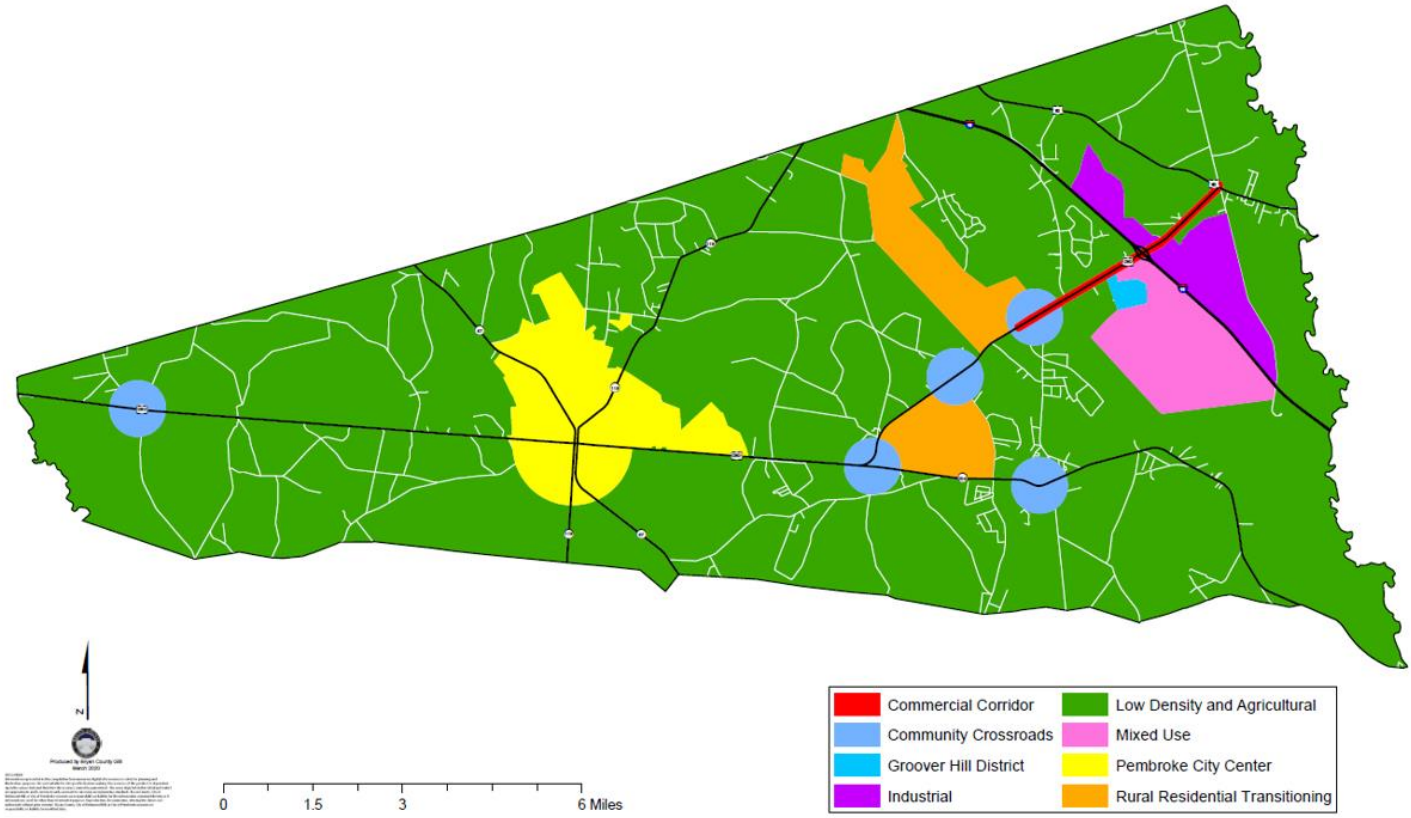
Scale: 1" = 3000'

Source: Bryan County GIS

Character Areas

CHARACTER AREAS-NORTH

The map below shows the character areas/future land use in the north portion of the county.



1- MIXED USE

The North Bryan mixed-use area, shown in pink, is centered around the I-16/280 Interchange which serves the expanding 280/I-16 Corridor and functions as the gateway to North Bryan County.

The mixed-use area envisions a district that will be able to adapt to changing industrial, commercial and residential needs, including:

a- Expansion of the existing industrial space to include industrial parks and service centers for trucking and logistic needs;

b- Development of commercial sites around the main interchange area, which might include a mix of highway oriented projects that complement a mixed-use Town Center, with retail, restaurants, and housing. These housing opportunities may range from units situated above office/retail to stand-alone properties in the town center area.

c- Inter-parcel connectivity will be essential to a successful development in the mixed-use area. New development must break the pattern of stand-alone projects with limited access points to the surrounding highway system. The new development patterns, centered on an internal inter-connected complete street network and multi-use path network enhance mobility, reduce traffic congestion. This type of street network will serve the community, from cyclists and pedestrians to the full range of vehicular traffic.

Recommended Zoning:

C-I – Interchange Commercial Districts;

I-L – Light Industrial Districts;

I-1 – General Industrial Districts;

O – Office Districts;

PUD- Planned Unit Developments, and/or new districts and overlay districts that will promote mixed-use developments.

Implementation Measures:

- Establish new ordinances for a dedicated Mixed-Use category or an Optional Overlay districts control the design standards and the land uses within the Mixed-use areas.
- Ensure adequate buffers to adjoining residential areas
- Ensure the development of complete street systems
- Create the mixed use as a Gateway to Bryan County
- Create signage ordinances to provide a uniform identity for the district
- Initiate a master planning effort for lands within the Southeast quadrant of the Interstate 16 / US 280 Interchange in cooperation with property owners, Development Authority, and residents as a guide for maximizing the development potential for that area.
- Expansion of public water and sewer service to serve the Interstate 16 / US 280 Interchange area including the industrial park and potential commercial areas and possible mixed use development, while protecting and preserving the unique character of adjacent and surrounding residential communities.

2- COMMUNITY CROSSROADS

There are four historic crossroads in the North Bryan area, all recognized in the previous Land Use Element as important features for maintaining the heritage of the area. Each of these crossroads has some sort of small retail component, along with surrounding clusters of single family homes. These community based commercial operators have been the prime local supplier of day-to-day goods and services for the surrounding community. They

are part of the cultural landscape of the north part of the county and continue to serve as hubs of community activities. They should have special development controls, which would allow the current facilities to remain a vital part of the community yet encourage new complimentary development.

Recommended Zoning:

BN – Neighborhood Business Districts;

B-1 – Neighborhood Commercial Districts;

Specialized overlay districts to maintain cultural character.

Implementation Measures:

- Create special Overlay districts in the new Zoning Codes that will allow the character of the Community Crossroads to be maintained

3- PEMBROKE CITY CENTER

Pembroke is the official county seat of Bryan County and it has a central location in north Bryan. The city is the downtown and the commercial center of activity for the area. It has a historical element which anchors it in the community and there are opportunities to redevelop parts of the city with mixed commercial, office and residential uses. While technically the city is not a part of this study we need to recognize the fact that this is the main development center of the area.

As noted above the City is not part of the study or the county zoning regulations. However, it is the commercial center of the North and as such is the central activity point. The City is currently working on a comprehensive

plan to address its situation and needs.

Implementation Measures:

- Work with the City to create land use compatibility in the areas adjacent to, or inside, the city limits
- Coordinate utility expansions for the water and sewer systems
- Coordinate the development of a complete street system for the city and the county-maintained streets. Each group should coordinate efforts when approaching the GA Department of Transportation for complete street options on State maintained highways.

4- LOW DENSITY AND AGRICULTURAL

Low density residential and agriculture has been the traditional character for most of the land area in North Bryan and is projected to remain so for the near future in much of the area. With North Bryan's wetlands and flood plan conditions, most of the area will be limited in its ability to be developed. In fact, the area along the northern boundary of Fort Stewart is included in the U.S. Army's Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. The ACUB forms an essential part of the Department of Defense's strategy to protect land while partnering with local governments, and State Officials to limit land use around active training sites. This buffer promotes the continuation of the traditional agricultural, timbering, and low density residential development of North Bryan, while protecting the nation's defense mission. Without a major expansion of the County's sanitary sewer system there will only be low density (1 unit/acre and less) development for the foreseeable future.

Recommended Zoning:
Under the current county ordinances, the preferred zoning for these areas should remain:

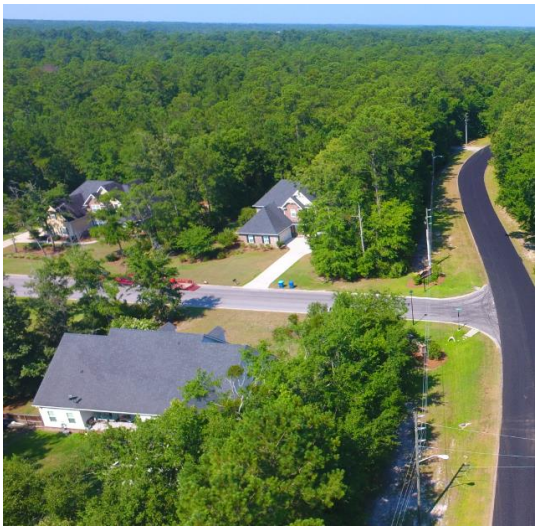
A-5 – Agricultural Districts;
AR-2.5 – Agricultural Residential District;
AR-1.5 – Agricultural Residential District;
A-1.0 – Agricultural Residential District
PUD- Planned Unit Development District

Implementation Measures:

- The County should consider where and how small lot development, such as, PUD - Planned Unit Development, a possible CD – Cluster Development District or Overlay Districts will be provided in the future rewrite of its development ordinances.
- Extend utilities to areas where mixed use development would best function where there are suitable development sites that can be connected in areas not in the flood plains or wetlands

5- RURAL RESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONING

This character area is identified in two areas with primarily agricultural zoned properties, but some properties have recently been rezoned to R-1 to allow for residential subdivisions with ½ acre or smaller lots. Surrounded by primarily rural and sparsely developed land, this area continues to face development pressures for Low Density Suburban residential development. It is envisioned that these transitioning rural areas will afford some residential development opportunities within North Bryan County at densities greater than those typically permitted in the Agricultural Low Density Residential area. The specific location of new development will be governed by the suitability of available land and the availability of drinking water withdrawal permits from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The density of residential development in subdivisions will be governed by the minimum lot size requirements based on the water and sewer utilities provided by developers. It is expected that in subdivisions where water and sewer service is provided on the individual residential lot (well and septic), the minimum lot size requirement will remain 1 acre. Where a private community water system is provided, the minimum lot size requirement may be reduced to ½ acre; and where both a community water and sewer system is provided, the minimum lot requirement may be reduced to ⅓ acre.



New development patterns within this character area should incorporate both rural and suburban features and adhere to the development standards contained in the County's Development Ordinance. The permanent protection of wetland areas located within individual subdivisions by covenants, conservation easements, or dedication to the County is strongly encouraged. Such action could not only lead to the permanent protection of significant wetlands, but could provide connected greenspace for walking and cycling trails in the future and enhance inter-connectivity between these residential subdivisions.

Recommended Zoning:

Under the current county ordinances, the preferred zoning for these areas should include:

- AR-2.5 – Agricultural Residential District;
- AR-1.5 – Agricultural Residential District;
- R-30 Residential District;
- R-1 – Single Family Residential District;

Implementation Measures:

- Where community water and sewerage systems are developed, the County should require that the systems be designed and installed according to county standards and in a manner such that they could be connected to public systems in the future.
- Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development by permitting rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporates and protects significant amounts of open space.
- Encourage the protection of floodways and wetlands vital to drainage of flood prone areas and those areas necessary for aquifer recharge.

6- COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

In order to maintain the rural character of North Bryan County, commercial locations should be carefully selected based on accessibility and existing infrastructure. The best opportunity for significant commercial development is along US 280 near the US 280/Interstate 16 Interchange and the intersection of US 280 and US 80. The County should expand public water and sewer systems in this area in order to encourage significant commercial development. This will provide an appropriate area for more intense commercial uses that can serve the community.

Recommended Zoning:

Under the current county ordinances, the preferred zoning for these areas should include:

- BN
- B-1
- B-2 – General Commercial District;
- C-I – Interchange Commercial District;

Implementation Measures:

- Expand public water and sewer systems to encourage commercial development.

7- INDUSTRIAL

The County's existing Interstate Centre Industrial Park is located in the Northeast and Northwest quadrants of the I-16 /US 280 Interchange and is controlled by the Development Authority. This area is served by public utilities. Additional areas that may be added to the park or developed as a separate industrial site, will likely be served by public utilities. Attracting new industries and employment opportunities to Bryan County is a high priority as currently 70% of Bryan County's labor force out-commutes to

jobs, primarily in Chatham and Liberty Counties. The amount of land designated for industrial use reflects the desire to be able to offer industrial prospects maximum flexibility in locating and defining sites for their proposed facilities.

Recommended Zoning:

Under the current county ordinances, the preferred zoning for these areas should include:

- C-I – Interchange Commercial District;
- I-L – Light Industrial District;
- I-1 – General Industrial District;

Implementation Measures:

- Expand existing public utilities to support industrial development on nearby sites.

8- GROOVER HILL DISTRICT

The Groover Hill District is a historically black community located along Groover Hill Road and surrounding areas. The area is residential mainly comprised of single family homes and includes a church founded in the 1800s, though the building there was constructed c. 1960. The homes are single family and vary widely in age, design, and type. The majority of the roads are paved, though a few smaller roads are dirt. The area is located adjacent to areas planned for future mixed use development, so the district was created to maintain the residential character of the area as well as its history.

The majority of the lots are currently zoned AR-1. County ordinances preclude rezoning to this district. For this reason, it is not included in the recommended zoning. Maintaining the current zoning district is appropriate, but if rezoning is considered, it should be mainly limited to agricultural residential districts. Limited commercial zoning may be considered for appropriate community oriented uses such as churches or community centers. Inappropriate commercial or industrial uses should not be allowed to encroach into the

district.

Recommended Zoning:

Under the current county ordinances, the preferred zoning for these areas should include:

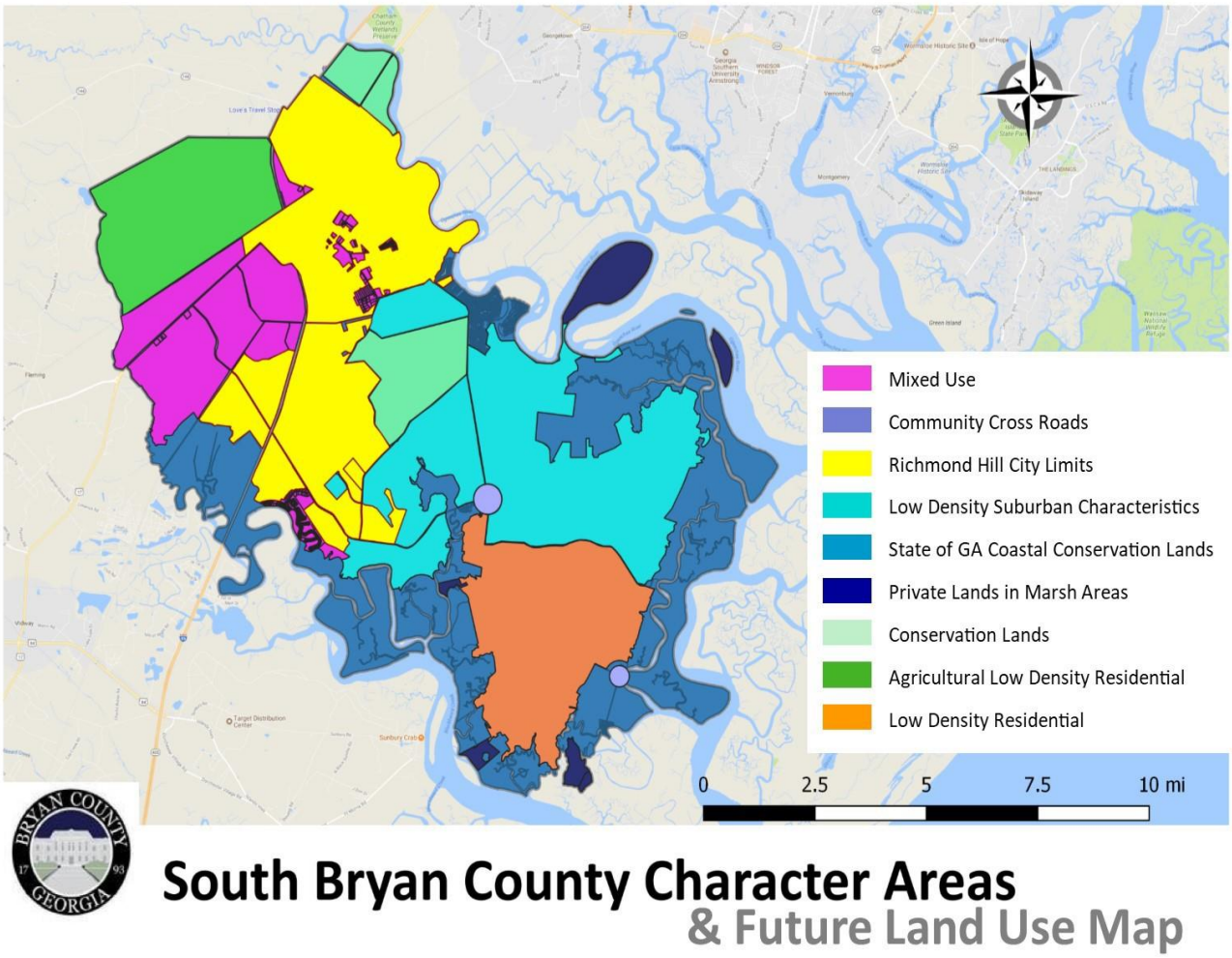
- AR-1.5 – Agricultural Residential District
- AR-2.5 – Agricultural Residential District

Implementation Measures:

- Create standards with the input of the community to maintain the character and history of the district.
- Ensure the area remains largely a rural residential character through zoning.
- Ensure appropriate standards (buffering, setbacks, transportation networks, etc.,), for future adjacent development, provide sufficient transition between this district and future mixed use areas.

CHARACTER AREAS-SOUTH

The map below shows the proposed character areas/future land use for the South Bryan area.



1-MIXED USE

Areas for mixed use have traditionally been located within the Richmond Hill City limits and future growth should be directed adjacent to existing infrastructure. The future Mixed-Use character areas are located near these rapidly growing sections of South Bryan. These areas will require carefully coordinated plans between the City of Richmond Hill and the Bryan County Officials. Development in these areas should include interconnected streets and pathways, which bring together a logical expansion of commercial, office, and residential mixes around regionally accessible attractions.

Recommended Zoning:

C – Commercial Districts;

BN – Neighborhood Business Districts;
B-1 – Neighborhood Commercial Districts;
R- 1, 2 & 3 – Residential Districts

I-L – Light Industrial Districts;

I-1 – General Industrial Districts;

O – Office Districts;

PUD- Planned Unit Developments, and/or new districts and overlay districts that will promote mixed-use developments.

Implementation Measures:

- The recommended zoning categories are a product of the current ordinances. These ordinances are being revised to update them for the current conditions that are faced by the county and it is recommended that all requested rezoning activity be made subject to Article VII of the zoning code which will give the County the ability to provide direction for developers that will allow for the creation of the MXD Use, Conservation Subdivision, and Overlay District standards while the new ordinance is prepared.

2-- COMMUNITY CROSSROADS

There two areas identified as Community Crossroads in South Bryan, located at the intersection of 144 and Belfast Keller Rd. and at Kilkenny Rd. near the river. Given the lack of available services in the area, the limited existing commercial uses should be kept to a minimum, until services can be extended and, existing facilities can be encouraged to be redeveloped in later years.

Recommended Zoning:

BN – Neighborhood Business Districts;

B-1 – Neighborhood Commercial Districts;

Specialized overlay districts to maintain cultural character

Implementation Measures:

- Create special Overlay districts in the new Zoning Codes that will allow the character of the Community Crossroads to be maintained.

3- RICHMOND HILL CITY LIMITS

The incorporated area of the city was not a part of the study, but the city is a critical element in the redevelopment possibilities for future growth. The City of Richmond Hill is the home to most of the commercial facilities for the area and the gateway to the county from I-95 is through the city. The City and the County will need to partner in the future so there is a proposed Mixed-Use area that encompasses the tracts of land bridging the distance down I-95 to the proposed Belfast Keller Rd. interchange. The plan also calls for the various county-controlled islands in the city limits to be mixed use as well.

Richmond Hill is one of the fastest growing areas in the state of Georgia. It will be essential for the County to work closely with the City to foster sustainable and resilient solutions for the full range of land use services, from transportation to housing, to maintain the unique character of South Bryan.

Implementation Measures:

- Work with the City to create land use compatibility in the areas adjacent to, or inside, the city limits
- Coordinate utility expansions for the water and sewer systems

- Coordinate the development of a complete street system for the city and the county-maintained streets. Each group should coordinate efforts when approaching the GA Department of Transportation for complete street options on State maintained highways.

4- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

These areas have significant issues with flood plains, wetland areas, and being nearer to the coast, the expanding influence of coastal storm surges and the increasing threats and intensity of storm events and sea rise. And yet, with the growth of the Savannah area and the expansion of Richmond Hill and its surroundings, this character area is coming under the increased pressures of rapid growth, and sprawling suburban infrastructure demands. Much of the character area currently falls outside the reach of public water and sewer service and yet the County is challenged with increasing pressure to develop this traditionally agricultural and natural resource reach of South Bryan.

Future zoning for these areas must provide flood plain and wetlands protections and will often require five or more acres to obtain a suitable building site. However, there are pockets within this character area that will be able to capitalize on public water and sewer extension. This would allow the use of the existing Planned Unit Development code, or its successor. In that case there would be a specific plan prepared for a property that might have a mix of uses, or at least a mix of housing types.

Recommended Zonings:

A-5 – Agricultural Districts;

PUD - Planned Unit Development

In addition to the existing districts possible new codes are:

CD – Conservation Subdivision or Cluster Development District;
MXD- Mixed Use District:
Specialty Overlay Districts or Form-Based Transects

Implementation Measures:

- The recommended zoning categories are a product of the current ordinances. These ordinances are being revised to update them for the current conditions that are faced by the county and it is recommended that all requested rezoning activity be made subject to Article VII of the zoning code which will give the County the ability to provide direction for developers that will allow for the creation of the MXD Use, Conservation Subdivision, and Overlay District standards while the new ordinance is prepared.

5- LOW DENSITY SUBURBAN

This character area extends from the existing city limits of Richmond Hill along GA 144 south to Bryan Fisherman's Coop Rd. This area has been the central focus for development over the last ten years with the introduction of numerous Planned Unit Developments and Conservation

Subdivisions. These developments are centered along the main roads and only one or two entry points on those main roads. The lack of interconnectivity of these developments is one of the major drivers of the perceived traffic congestion in the South Bryan area since there are only two main roads for traffic to enter and exit the area.

For the foreseeable future the existing Planned Unit Developments will be the source of much of the area's new housing development. However, for the area to be able to handle the on-going growth of the southern section of the county it is essential to have better defined development requirements and zoning ordinances for future developments. These new rules will need to address a myriad of issues such as:

A- Interconnectivity of developments to allow for alternative transportation route options

B- Design guidelines that stress the retention of open space, flood plains and wetlands using public open space and green storm water infrastructure.

C- Allowances for mixed use components in the proposed development structures

Recommended Zoning Categories:

From the existing Zoning Ordinance, the following categories could be allowed:

PUD- Planned Unit Developments

BN- Neighborhood Business

R-1 Single Family Residential

R-2/R-3 Duplex and Multi-family Residential

New Codes to be adopted:

MXD- Mixed Use- Allowing the combination of uses to form community developments

CSO-Conservation Subdivision Ordinance – Allowing the developer to reduce lot sizes for the preservation of open space. Sometimes referred to as Limited Impact Development

Possible adoption of a totally new ordinance to govern specified Overlay Zoning options for sections of the Character Area.

Adoption of a new zoning code which would be based on Transect Coding.

Implementation Measures:

- The recommended zoning categories are a product of the current ordinances. These ordinances are being revised to update them for the current conditions that are faced by the county and it is recommended that all requested rezoning activity be made subject to Article VII of the zoning code which will give the County the ability to provide direction for developers that will allow for the creation of the MXD Use, Conservation Subdivision, and Overlay District standards while the new ordinance is prepared.

6- AGRICULTURAL LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

This character Area is in the north section of South Bryan adjacent to Fort Stewart on the north and the Highway 17 corridor on the south. This area has limited access and public utilities are lacking. There is also a buffer area along the south border of Fort Stewart which regulates the allowed land uses. Because of these conditions the area has been primarily agricultural and large lot residential and for the foreseeable future this area should remain a primarily agricultural area.

Recommended Zoning:

A-5 Agricultural

AR-2.5 Agricultural Residential district

Implementation Measures

Limit the available zoning to the A-5 and AR-2.5 categories which reflects the character areas land use patterns.

7- STATE OWNED COASTAL AREA

This character area, shown in light blue on the map, is one of the most environmentally valuable land areas in the county and for the nation. The marsh lands and barrier islands perform invaluable environmental services for the community and the state of Georgia is blessed with some of the most pristine and productive marshlands and wetlands in the country. In the words of the National Ocean Service of NOAA, in an article on their website, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/saltmarsh.html, the coastal marshlands are vital to region's cultural and economic heritage:

"Salt marshes also protect shorelines from erosion by buffering wave action and trapping sediments. They reduce flooding by slowing and absorbing rainwater and protect water quality by filtering runoff, and by metabolizing excess nutrients."

"These intertidal habitats are essential for healthy fisheries, coastlines, and communities—and they are an integral part of our economy and culture. They also provide essential food, refuge, or nursery habitat for more than 75 percent of fisheries species, including shrimp, blue crab, and many finfish."

Wildlife habitat and recreational opportunity for boating, fishing, and other pursuits abound in these marshlands and their associated creeks and rivers.

These areas should be preserved and protected for the value they bring to the region and adequate zoning measures should be in place to maintain this natural and cultural resource. Programs and policies should be established to encourage natural restoration of damaged marsh areas and provide protections from future damage. Case studies for these type of programs and model ordinances can be found on the USGS web site

(https://water.usgs.gov/nwsum/WSP2425/restoration.html) and at the Society for Ecological Restoration (www.ser.org/)

Recommended Zoning:

DM-1 – Dunes and Marshlands District; Floodplain and Wetlands Buffers and Ordinances to further secure these natural resources.

Implementation Measures:

- Coordinate with State agencies in the continuing struggle to control coastal erosion.
- Acquire additional sensitive properties, not currently in the zone, to place in Conservation/Park space

8- PRIVATELY OWNED COASTAL AREA

There are five privately owned coastal marsh areas, three along the southern boundary and a two along the northern boundary, which provide the same important functions and needs as mentioned above.

Recommended Zoning:

DM-1 – Dunes and Marshlands District; Floodplain and Wetlands Buffers and Ordinances to further secure these natural resources.

Implementation Measures:

- Coordinate with property owners and State agencies in the continuing struggle to control coastal erosion.
- Acquire additional sensitive properties, not currently in the zone, to place in Conservation/Park space

9- CONSERVATION LANDS

The Conservation Lands character areas contain wetlands and floodplain functions and thus, very limited development opportunity. These areas provide natural habitat for wildlife and a rich potential for storage and

treatment of storm water. Passive parks, greenway trails and water-based recreational opportunities may be programmed for these areas, but the hydric soils should limit development:

Recommended Zoning:

DM-1 – Dunes and Marshlands District;

Implementation Measures;

- Develop Floodplain and Wetlands Buffers and Ordinances to further secure these natural resources.
- Work with State and Federal Agencies to enhance conservation efforts.
- Utilize SPLOST funding to acquire property, develop green infrastructure facilities that can jointly serve as parks and recreation areas.

SUMMARY

During the time period that the Land Use Element Update was developed it was obvious there was a consistent desire on the part of the community for the plan to:

1- Provide options for new types of development that would create the opportunity for walkable community centers with entertainment, retail, housing, and public gathering spaces such as community greens.

2- Provide options for housing for a diverse population.

3- Provide for the development of complete streets and encourage connectivity between neighborhoods, communities and regional amenities

4- Increase support for senior centers and libraries

5- Increase the quantity and quality of shopping and entertainment venues in the county

6- Increase the quantity, quality and diversity of employment opportunities in the county

7- Provide for the protection of the natural environment by addressing issues such as climate change in the coastal environment.

The various character areas noted in the plan provide new opportunities for a rich mix of commercial, office, industrial, housing and recreational components. These Character Areas will serve as the guidelines for future land use in all parts of the unincorporated areas of the county. The county's vast natural resources, with large swaths of flood plain, wetland and marshland areas, provide development opportunities that leverage the green infrastructure and environmental services provided ordinances encourage these sustainable and resilient features. For that to happen there will need to be new zoning and development regulations that allow for more creativity, while encouraging higher design and environmental standards.

8- NEXT STEPS

1- A comprehensive revision to the zoning code, based on the community input should encourage connectivity across the region and provide creative and strategic uses of density, with incentives to preserve and protect the county's natural

resources. The revised ordinance should also look at the current parking requirements and bring the required parking into conformance with the number of spaces needed for the various land use types. During the development of the upgraded zoning codes it is recommended that all proposed development in the character areas be subject to Article VII of the County Zoning Code. This article gives the Planning Director the leeway to work with developers to create plans which would reflect the requirements of the Land Use Element in terms of Limited Impact development, increased inter-parcel connectivity

2- Update the existing development codes. A special area to be addressed would be the allowance for green infrastructure to handle storm water and allow better recharge of the aquifers.

3- Update the street standards for the county to achieve complete streets, which provide a full range of transportation options and connectivity across the county.

4- Enhance the cooperation between the cities and the county with emphasis on coordination of zoning and development regulations.

Bryan County can expect increasing development pressures, as more people are drawn to the area, due to its excellent school system, rich cultural heritage and coastal lifestyle. The shopping and dining opportunities that the public is so eager for will likely follow the additional roof tops that will be added, with this growth. This comprehensive plan update provides the structure for the implantation of an orderly and logical process for the future development of the county. It has evolved from the public's input and support and should serve the county well.

PROPOSED 5 Year Work Plan Elements:

1- Zoning Ordinance Revision

The current ordinance needs updating. That ordinance was developed to govern a "greenfield" development regime, where there was very little development occurring at the time and very little projected for the future. The county is in a new era now, with development expanding rapidly across the county, placing historic crossroads, and natural resources under increasing pressure. To address the current environment, it is recommended that the county pursue a new ordinance that is either a Form-Based or Transect-Based Code. Information on each of these can be found at https://www.cnu.org/resources/tools .

12-18 month process for the code development

2- Architectural Standards for Development

Public input, from both the on-line survey and community meetings, expressed a desire for some level of Architectural Standards to support a growing community aesthetic. Architectural codes need to be carefully prepared to assure that they do not lock the community into a single style of architecture but instead, allow new forms that blend-in with the historical background of the community, while promoting sustainable and resilient development. These codes have similar elements, but they need to be crafted by qualified professionals so that they are tailored to the community. An example of a recent code of this type is attached in the appendix, see Norcross GA Draft Code.

6 – 12 month process for the code development

3- Historic Preservation Standards

These types of standards can be addressed in two ways. The community can develop a Historic Preservation District which will have the power to review and approve changes to older buildings and new construction within its district or it can have a code section within the Architectural Standards to cover the historic structures. The basic information on this type of regulation can be found at the State of Georgia Historic Preservation Office http://georgiashpo.org/

A stand-alone Historic Preservation District can take up to 18 months to prepare.

4- Revised Development Standards (emphasize 'green' and 'low-impact' standards)

As part of the revisions to the zoning code it is imperative to address the development regulations of the county at the same time. Attention should be given to the following:

Required Parking reductions by land use type

Establishing 'Green Infrastructure" in the development code as a viable option for development.

Developing standards for "Living Breakwaters" and other coastal improvements to use natural solutions for erosion control along the coastal islands and the salt marshes.

For information on these subjects please go to the following websites.

CNU.org - the Congress of New Urbanism

ASLA.org- The American Society of Landscape Architects

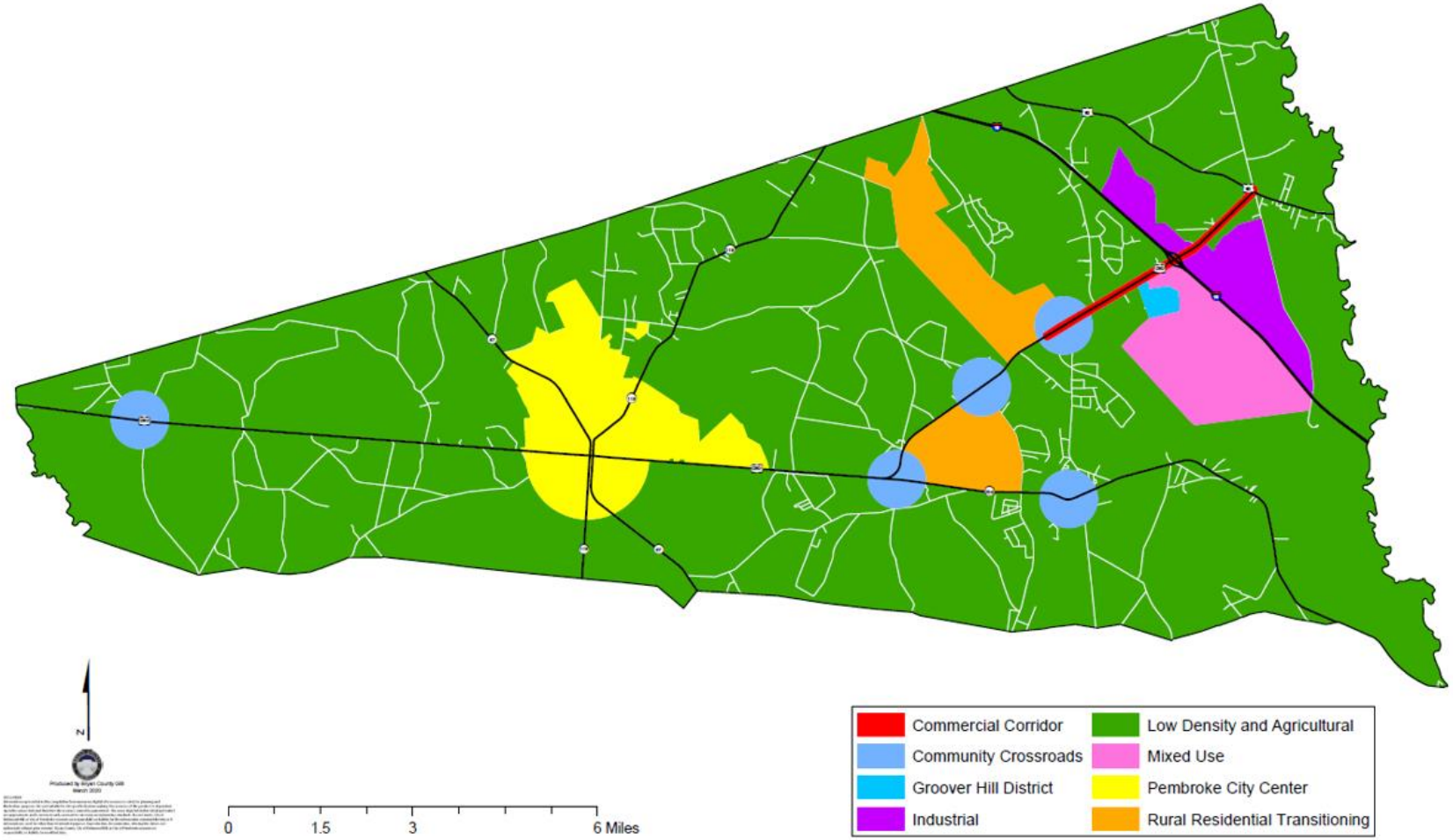
ASCE.org- The American Society of Civil Engineers

5- Increase Publicly Owned Greenspace

This goal can be achieved through the following mechanisms:

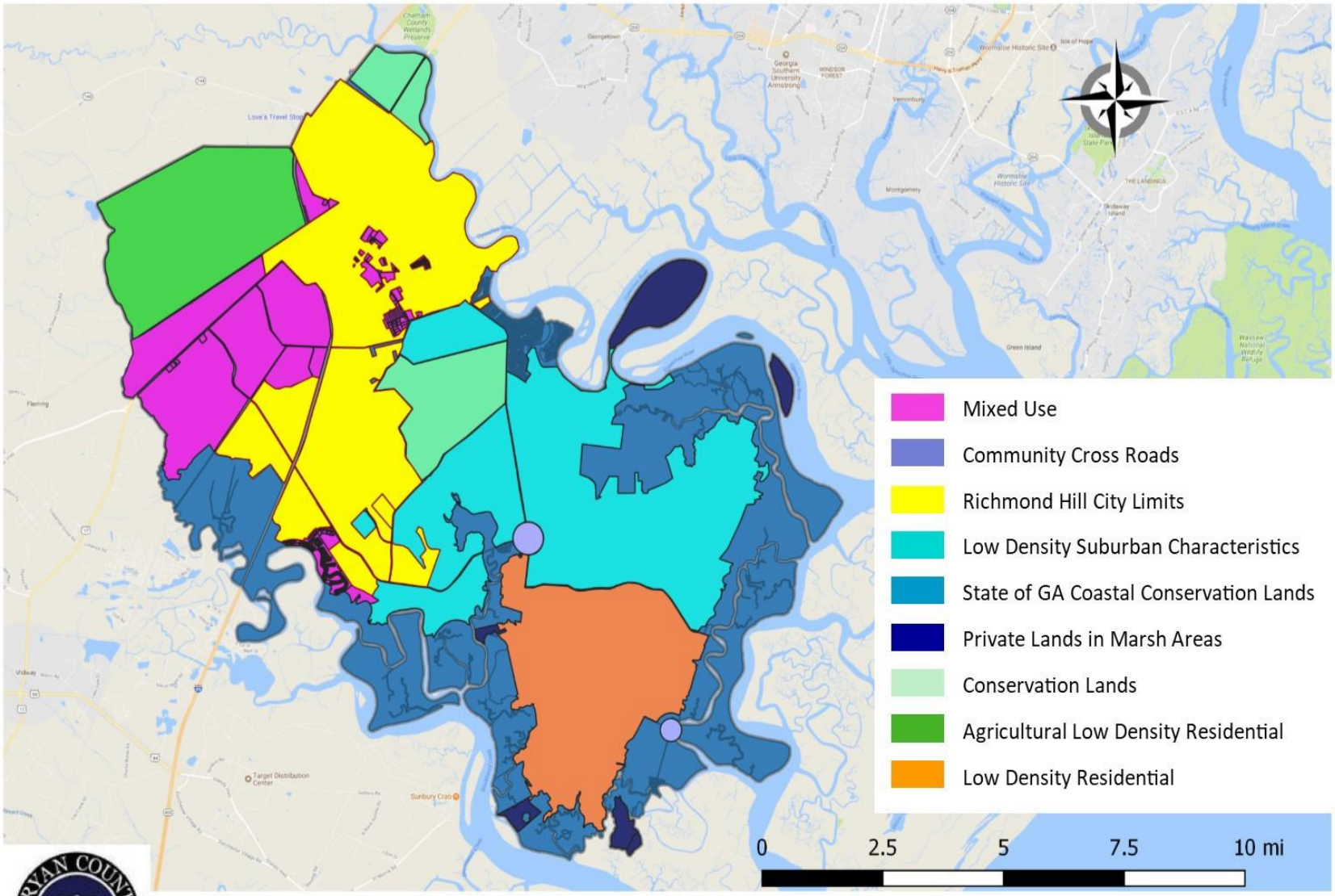
1- Purchase property utilizing Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax programs. These programs must be voted in by the residents in the community. They allow for additional sales tax to be collected for targeted expenditures for green space, parks, and infrastructure. This could be a very good generator of cash flow for the projects envisioned since a large percentage of the sales tax revenue is generated by non-citizens traveling through the county. Other options exist, such as Purchase of Development Rights and Transfer of Development Rights programs that can also benefit the county by providing mechanisms to incentivize conservation areas.

2- As the development and zoning regulations are revised make sure that they include incentive programs for private development operations to include public green space, greenways and connectivity in their plans.



North Bryan County Character Areas

& Future Land Use Map



South Bryan County Character Areas
& Future Land Use Map