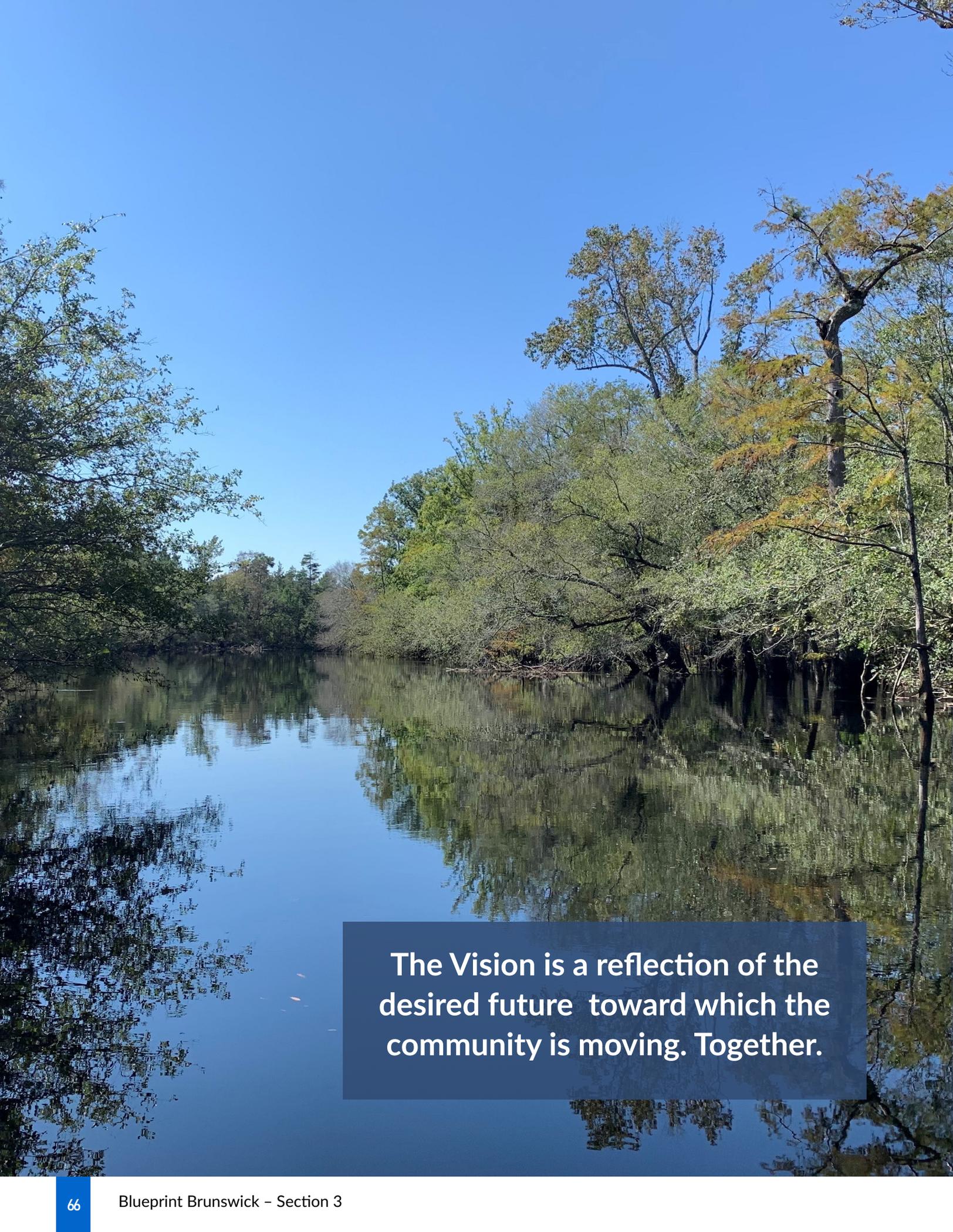


THE VISION

Comprehensive Plan | Section 3





The Vision is a reflection of the desired future toward which the community is moving. Together.

The Vision

With many changes anticipated in the next 20 years, Brunswick County will have many challenges to overcome and opportunities to build upon to imagine a future for the county that benefits current and future generations. The ideas and aspirations of current residents and other stakeholders are expressed as a “Vision,” which is described in more detail in this section. It is a vital and necessary component of the plan. Determining the path forward—the direction and the steps along the way—requires agreement on the destination.

The “Vision” for the future of Brunswick County is expressed in terms of goals and objectives as well as the Future Land Use and Conservation Plan map. In support of the goals and objectives, the map depicts an arrangement of places that are a reflection of the types of development and conservation areas the community desires in the future. The places shown are also described in the subsection that follows the map to further convey the community’s aspirations. All have been established with input from the citizens and other stakeholders of the county and refined with assistance from the Advisory Committee. Together, the various components of the Vision help bring the future into focus.

Goals & Objectives

LAND USE COMPATIBILITY & GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL: Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will direct growth in a manner that ensures activities associated with the development or preservation of land are consistent with the suitability of the land.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION GOAL: Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will ensure that the use of land and resources minimize direct and secondary environmental impacts while avoiding risks to public health, safety, and welfare.

- **NATURAL HAZARD AREAS GOAL:** Brunswick County will protect the public health, safety, and welfare by maintaining its floodplains, shorelines, and other natural features for their storm protection functions.
- **WATER QUALITY GOAL:** The County will maintain, protect, and enhance surface and subsurface water quality throughout the County, including all coastal wetlands, rivers, streams, and estuaries.

INFRASTRUCTURE CARRYING CAPACITY GOAL: Brunswick County will provide an infrastructure system that meets its citizens' present and future needs, supports a vibrant economy, protects the environment, and adds to the overall quality of life.

- **TRANSPORTATION GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will support a safe, connected multi-model system to accommodate future growth and a diverse population in terms of geographic location, age, income levels, and abilities.
- **UTILITIES (WATER & WASTEWATER) GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will provide for continuous and sustainable growth of the water supply, storage and distribution systems, and wastewater collection and treatment systems.
- **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & PROGRAMS GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will seek regional cooperation by all local governments to maximize service delivery while minimizing duplication of facilities and services.
 - **EDUCATION GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will promote quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.
 - **PUBLIC SAFETY GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will ensure the delivery of effective and efficient public safety services.
 - **RECREATION GOAL:** Brunswick County and its participating municipalities will work together to provide a safe, connected system of parks and recreation facilities that meet the needs of a diverse population in terms of age, income levels, abilities, and interests.

The statements of goals and objectives build on those expressed in the plan adopted in 2007. Consistent with the statements prescribed by the Division of Coastal Management, the first five are tailored to respond to the specific needs and desires of The County community. The other five goals are similar to those presented in the earlier plan and have been updated to express more current expectations. Used as guideposts in the formulation of the plan, the goals and objectives will continue to provide direction for the future of the planning area, guiding decisions of The County and its partners as they manage change over the next two decades for the benefit of the community.

PUBLIC ACCESS GOAL: Brunswick County/and its participating municipalities will maximize public access to their shorelines and public trust waters.

HISTORIC, CULTURAL, & SCENIC AREAS GOAL: Brunswick County will encourage efforts to protect cultural and historic resources to preserve their cultural, educational, and aesthetic values and qualities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL: With a focus on job creation, Brunswick County will continue to maintain a diversified local economy, while at the same time protecting the natural and manmade environment and improving the area as a more attractive community in which to work, live, and play.

HOUSING GOAL: Brunswick County and its municipalities will provide opportunities for a broad range of housing types that enable living in the county that is safe, affordable, and consistent with lifestyle and housing preferences given the diversity of residents' ages, abilities, household sizes, and income levels.

DEVELOPMENT QUALITY & PLACEMAKING GOAL: Brunswick County will encourage quality development to improve the sense of place, belonging, and safety while protecting or increasing property values, attracting desired investment, and enhancing the quality of life.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING GOAL: Brunswick County will support the provision of services/programs and facilities that enhance the health, safety, and quality of life for Brunswick County residents.

GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION: Brunswick County will collaborate with all municipalities for more consistent approaches to the management of natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, community facilities, and planning for growth to ensure seamless transitions across jurisdictional boundaries.

The Future Land Use & Conservation Map

The Future Land Use and Conservation Map (Figure 3.1) graphically depicts the future development pattern envisioned by the community. It represents the culmination of ideas and input received throughout the planning process tempered with market realities, the constraints of the environmental conditions and infrastructure availability, and other factors affecting the suitability of land for various uses (refer to Section 2). It is aspirational. It suggests an arrangement of development types that align with the stated goals and objectives. Displaying “Place Types,” which are the land use classifications described in the subsection that follows, the map indicates the preferred locations for future development as well as the type and intensity of such development. The Place Types can generally be grouped into the following categories:

Figure 3.1 Future Land Use and Conservation Map

The map is meant to provide a framework for future land use decisions, and as such, supports written policies and offers additional guidance with respect to the application of land development regulations (i.e., zoning and subdivision), the provision of services, and the prioritization of capital investments in support of the future development pattern. Reflective of citizens’ and stakeholders’ expectations, this proposed pattern will likely evolve over the 20 years following plan adoption as the plan is implemented.

Activity Centers

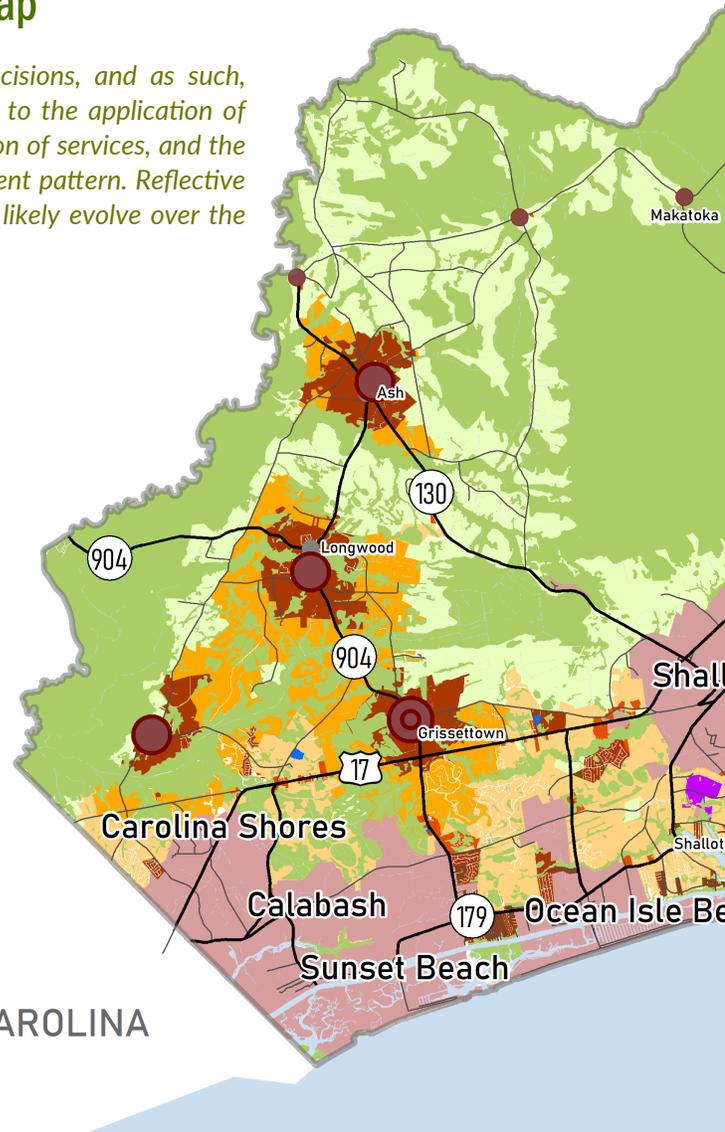
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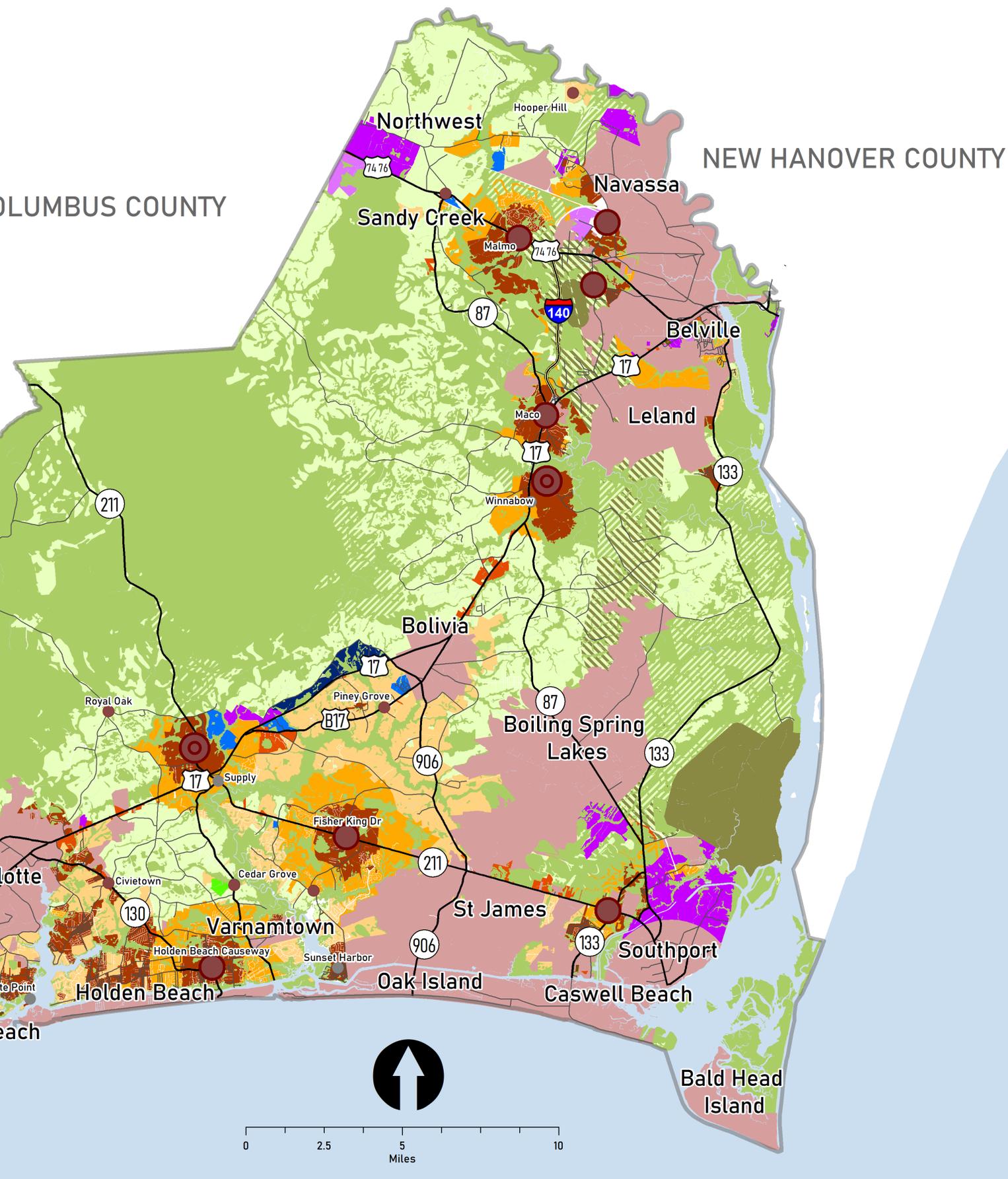
-  Community Centers
-  Neighborhood Centers
-  Crossroads

Place Types

-  Open Space - Conservation 1
-  Open Space - Conservation 2
-  Military Mission Area
-  Open Space - Recreation
-  Rural - Agricultural
-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential - Mixed
-  High Density Residential
-  Commercial
-  Military
-  Institutional
-  Employment Center
-  Industrial - Light
-  Industrial - Intense
-  Town Center - Municipality

SOUTH CAROLINA





Place Types



Areas for Living – A range of residential products as well as various neighborhood types are accommodated in the proposed development pattern. Where infrastructure is available or likely, neighborhoods with more housing density are supported. (Refer to areas designated Medium Density, Medium Density-Mixed, and High Density.) The map also delineates areas adjacent to sensitive areas, such as natural resources and viable farmland, where lower density development would be more compatible and therefore more appropriate. (Refer to areas designated Rural-Agricultural and Low Density.)

Areas for Commerce – Different types of centers are suggested for key locations across the county. A mix of uses, predominantly commercial, service, office, and civic uses, are anticipated. Larger centers may include healthcare, hospitality, and attached residential units, placing residents within a reasonable walking and biking distance of retail uses and services. The scale of and mix of uses within each is dictated by the service or trade area (population served) as well as the availability of infrastructure. Proximity to concentrations of residential and employment uses can ensure convenient access while bolstering the viability of each center. (Refer to areas designated Community Center, Neighborhood Center, Crossroads, and Commercial.)



Areas for Industry, Employment, and Education –

Investments have been made in several locations for a wide variety of industrial, institutional, office, and other employment uses. These areas are situated to take advantage of access to existing and planned infrastructure, particularly the transportation network. With additional investments, these areas will be the locations of a high percentage of the jobs in The County. (Refer to areas designated Institutional, Employment Center, Industrial-Light, Industrial-Intense, and Military.)



Conservation Areas – Outside of areas deemed suitable for most of the future development are areas where little or no development would be supported. By directing growth away from these areas, The County can more effectively conserve land valued for the natural resources and cultural significance, protect the military mission, minimize property damage from flooding, support the continuation of agriculture, expand recreation, and strengthen the tourism economy. The map delineates areas where important open space areas exist and should therefore be the targets of future conservation efforts. (Refer to areas designated Open Space-Conservation 1, Open Space-Conservation 2, Open Space-Recreation, and Military Mission.)

Municipal Areas – The County encompasses 19 municipalities. Each are represented as components of one category to distinguish them from the unincorporated areas. (Refer to areas designated Town Center.)

ABOUT PLACE TYPES

Place Types are classifications of development (and conservation). The use of such classifications instead of land use categories is a modernized approach to describing existing and future development and distinguishing each area from others. In addition to land use, each place type can be described in terms of scale and density of development (lot sizes, building heights, and building setbacks). Street types, connectivity, and resulting block patterns are sometimes noted to describe the circulation networks for various modes of transportation to be supported in each area. Since open space is a key component of any development pattern, the appropriate amount as well as the variety of types defined by purpose, size, typical location, and level of improvement (a formal green versus a natural area) may also be specified.

Open Space — Conservation 1

These areas consist primarily of undisturbed open space: floodways and floodplains, high-risk flood areas, publicly protected lands (e.g., state-maintained sanctuaries), CAMA setbacks, privately protected lands (i.e., conservation easements), NC Natural Heritage Conservation Program areas, and historically or culturally significant areas/properties. Though some development exists in these areas, new development is unlikely. New uses are associated with access to protected open space (i.e., game lands for hunting, nature preserves for education and passive recreation) and natural resource management. Maintaining environmental integrity or historic value are major considerations in land-disturbing activities.





Open Space —

Conservation 2

These areas are developed parcels that, due to natural or cultural value, will not likely support new, more intense uses over time. They consist primarily of passive parks, accessible nature preserves, privately-managed open space, private conservation easements with some development (i.e., Orton Plantation, farms), and federal or state historic districts. Though some new development can be supported in these areas, most is very low-density residential development (<1 unit per acre) or uses associated with access for passive recreation, educational programs, and resource management. Conservation design, which preserves more natural open space in exchange for smaller minimum lot sizes, is encouraged to achieve a higher level of environmental and cultural sensitivity with new development. This may be a preferred approach to conventional residential development, especially if higher gross densities can be achieved.



Open Space — Recreation (Improved, Active)

These areas may be developed as public parks. Though various types of active recreation spaces are suitable uses in other place types, these areas are typically large, publicly-maintained facilities, including community and regional parks, golf courses, arboretums, etc.

Rural / Agricultural

This area is characterized by the relatively undeveloped land and working lands (pastures, crops, timberlands). It is intended to remain rural while allowing residential uses at very low densities. New residential development is sensitively integrated, avoiding encroachment on agricultural operations or valuable natural and cultural features. Agricultural support uses, home-based businesses, and seasonal and temporary uses are part of the mix. Most of the open space is privately maintained. Conservation design, which preserves more natural open space (or agricultural land) in exchange for smaller minimum lot sizes, may be a preferred approach to conventional residential development, provided utilities are available



Low-Density Residential

This area is characterized by low-density residential development. Single-family detached homes on ½-acre lots or larger are common. Smaller lots are accomplished by keeping the gross density of the development. Improved open spaces include golf courses, neighborhood parks and recreational amenities, and greenway trails.





Medium-Density Residential

This area consists of—or can support—single-family detached homes on varying lot sizes. Improved open spaces in the form of neighborhood parks and recreational amenities are interspersed. Greenway trails within provide links to greenway trails in the area. Maximum impervious coverage limitations help preserved green space.



High-Density Residential

This area accommodates attached single-family and multi-family units. It appeals to a variety of age groups and lifestyle preferences. It is intended for locations where access to the transportation network and services is high. Improved open spaces include pocket parks and green spaces that support neighborhood gatherings and some recreational activities. Maximum impervious coverage limitations help preserved green space.

Mixed Residential Living

This area is characterized by moderate-density residential development. It is comprised of predominantly single-family detached homes but may include attached single-family units, such as townhomes and duplexes. The mix of housing types are intended to create intergenerational neighborhoods. Improved open spaces in the form of pocket and neighborhood parks are interspersed, and greenway trails within are located to connect such parks as well as provide links to greenway trails and walkways in neighboring development. Maximum impervious coverage limitations help preserved green space.



Community Center (Activity Center 1)

These areas are intended to be centers of activity that include a mix of retail, restaurant, service, office, and civic and institutional uses (including senior centers, healthcare facilities, etc.) in addition to a variety of residential housing types. Combined, the nonresidential space exceeds 100,000 sf. The mix of uses can be horizontal as well as vertical where a change in use can occur between floors of the same building. Buildings of two or more stories are common, and connected streets include short block lengths and pedestrian facilities. Open space is integrated in the form of community parks, large and small formal greens, plazas, and courtyards. Designed to facilitate access via walking and biking, mixed-use areas should be located where access via the road network, sidewalks, greenways, and/or local shuttle/circulator service is feasible.





Neighborhood Center (Activity Center 2)

This area encourages the blending of complementary commercial, office, and service uses flanked by a mix of residential housing types. These areas typically offer a horizontal mix of uses where changes in use occur between adjacent one- and two-story buildings. With up to 100,000 sf of local-serving uses that are supportive of a neighborhood (i.e., grocery and drug stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners, branch banks, and restaurants), these centers may be located within walking/biking distance of and complement surrounding residential neighborhoods. Open space is in the form of small greens, courtyards, and pedestrian/bike paths.



Crossroads (Activity Center 3)

These areas are the small concentrations of commercial uses in rural areas. Serving a small population across a large geography, they can be found at intersections of state and federal highways. Uses typically include convenience retail, food outlets, restaurants, fuel stations, agriculture support uses (e.g., feed stores), etc. and typically have less than 25,000 sf in nonresidential space.

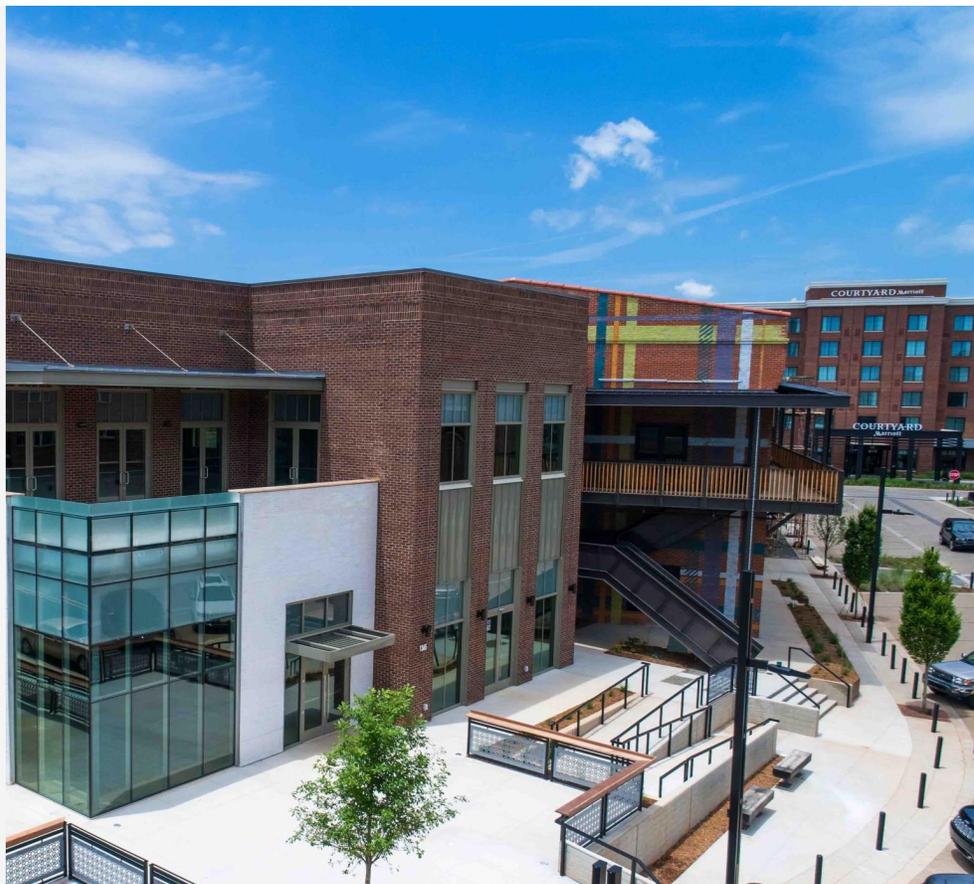
Town

Municipal centers are the established centers of commerce in The County. They are the local -serving areas of economic activity and community-focused gatherings and entertainment. Characterized by the broad range of uses and higher intensity development, these centers are the more urbanized areas of The County.



Employment Center

These mixed-use areas are targeted as a primary location of job-generating uses in settings that meet today's workplace expectations. The mix of uses include light industrial, office, and/or institutional uses. These areas offer traditional workspace and can be supplemented by unconventional, collaborative workspace where innovation and education can intersect. Supporting businesses, retail, restaurants, services, and recreation are also part of the mix. Portions of this area may be suitable for higher density residential uses (i.e., multifamily). Open space, designed to enhance the quality of the setting and to be enjoyed for passive recreation, is in the form of formal and informal parks and green spaces connected by trails. Flexible open space that can be programmed for gatherings of various sizes and purposes are also integrated.





Commercial (Retail & Office)

These areas are devoted to small-scale complexes or individual sites with stand-alone buildings developed for retail, office, or service uses. Open space is integrated in the form of small greens and courtyards. Such establishments are located to take advantage of highway visibility and access, but may include higher density residential uses (i.e., multifamily and upper floor units).



Institutional Campus

Another type of mixed-use center, the collection of buildings in this area houses functionally related and complementary uses. Typically devoted to education (e.g., college campuses) and healthcare (e.g., hospitals, medical centers), these campuses are organized around a system of green spaces linked by a highly connected network of pedestrian paths. Parking is clustered and vehicular access is minimized.

Industrial—Light

This area is intended to support a mix of innovative businesses that can benefit from the collocation of related complementary industries. The mix of uses range from light industrial operations and makerspaces to supporting office, retail, and service uses. The presence of incubator and accelerator spaces, coworking spaces, and educational facilities can expand the mix and foster an environment of collaboration. Open space is comprised mostly of informal green spaces, plazas, trails, and special use areas (e.g., demonstration garden) that can serve as an amenity within the district, a learning space, and/or a buffer to surrounding development. Portions of this area may be suitable for residential uses as well.



Industrial—Intense

This area generally accommodates manufacturing and production uses, including heavy manufacturing, light manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, assembly operations, water and sewer treatment plants, major power plants, and landfills. They are found close to major transportation corridors and are generally buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from adjacent properties. Typically, both parcels and building footprints are large. Most of the open space is on site, privately managed, and intended for use by the building occupants. Most streets are private, designed for truck access, and access is limited by security mechanisms (gates, etc.).





Military

A unique place within The County, this area is devoted to Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU). Primary uses include storage. Access is restricted, though the facility serves to connect various modes for the purposes of transporting supplies and equipment in support of the military mission.

Military Mission Area

The corridor that leads to the transfer facility in Leland to MOTSU is devoted to mostly nonresidential uses. Future residential development is discouraged/prohibited. This place type suggests such restrictions in land use (per the Joint Land Use Study, 2019) though the underlying place types may also apply to the same area.

Development Design Principles

It is important that Brunswick County understands that merely completing the land use plans and illustrating the county's vision for the future does not ensure that its objectives will be met. Brunswick County must continuously work at accomplishing plan implementation and maintaining an effective planning program. Significant changes to Brunswick County's management of growth should occur. In contemporary planning, the most discussed concept is "smart development." In reality, this concept is not a new idea. It is simply the blending of many existing ideas. Where feasible, such as within Planned Developments and subdivisions, the County will aim to incorporate smart growth principles. Additionally, The County has incorporated some of these concepts into the adopted Unified Development Ordinance. Smart development adheres to five basic principles which are described as follows:

Principle 1: Efficient Use of Land Resources

Smart development supports the preservation of land and natural resources. These benefits result from compact building forms, in-fill development, and moderation in street and parking standards. Compact building patterns preserve land for town and neighborhood parks as well as local woods, floodplain, and wetlands. Furthermore, compact development shortens trips, lessening dependence on the automobile and minimizing vehicular traffic, thereby reducing levels of energy consumption and air pollution. It also creates valuable communities in that it accommodates a range of housing options in close proximity to retail, services, and employment, which bolsters economic viability. Finally, a compact development pattern supports more cost-effective infrastructure than does low-density fringe development.

Principle 2: Full Use of Urban Services

The same frugality of land development supports efficient use of public and private infrastructure. Smart development means creating neighborhoods where more people will use existing services like water lines and sewers, roads, emergency services, and schools. Inefficient land use, whether within or outside urban areas, places a financial strain on communities trying to provide for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure needs.

Building compactly does not mean that all areas must be densely developed. Rather, the goal is an average density for the area, at a level that makes full use of urban services. Averaging allows for areas to have a mix of low-, medium-, and high-density development. Mixing densities to encourage efficient use of services also means requiring a high level of building and siting compatibility, encouraging neighborhoods to have both character and privacy.

Careful street sizing and the accommodation of some parking on streets reduces impervious surfaces and efficiently uses urban services by saving on land acquisition, construction, and maintenance costs. In short, streets should be sized for their use: main entry roads to neighborhoods should be larger and accommodate walking and biking; lower density areas that have little through traffic are best served by slower, narrower streets; while major transportation corridors that move countywide traffic need wider travelways that accommodate pedestrians and bikes.

Principle 3: Mix of Uses

Locating stores, offices, residences, schools, medical offices, and recreation spaces within walking distance of each other in compact neighborhoods with pedestrian-oriented streets promotes:

- Independence of movement, especially for the young and the elderly who can conveniently walk, cycle, or ride transit;
- Safety in commercial areas, through around-the-clock presence of people;
- Reduction in auto use, especially for shorter trips;
- Support for those who work at home, through nearby services and parks;
- A variety of housing choices, so that the young and old, singles and families, and those of varying economic ability may find places to live;
- Enhanced sense of community;
- Bike- and pedestrian-friendly destinations; and
- Preservation of undeveloped, agricultural, or environmentally sensitive land elsewhere.

Mixed-use examples include a corner store in a residential area, an apartment near or over a shop, and a lunch counter in an industrial zone. Most codes prohibit the co-location of any residential and commercial buildings. This prohibition is based on the functional and architectural incompatibility of the buildings. Using design standards, in tandem with mixed-use zoning, overcomes incompatibility. Additionally, limitations on commercial functions, such as hours of operation and delivery truck access, may be necessary. More fundamentally, to gain the full benefits of a mix of uses, buildings must be conveniently connected by streets and paths. Otherwise, people will still be inclined or required to use cars, even for the shortest trips.



Principle 4: Transportation Options

Transportation must be safe, convenient, and interesting. These performance factors affect sidewalk and street design, placement of parking, and location of building fronts, doors, and windows. Well-designed bike lanes and sidewalks protect people from vehicle accidents and allow emergency vehicles clear access. Orienting windows and doorways to the sidewalk increases awareness of street activity and the safety of the streetscape.

Convenience begins with a connected network of streets that provides alternative routes with reasonable walking distances between destinations. A properly designed network also promotes neighborhood safety with connectivity, limited cul-de-sacs, and limited driveways on heavily traveled neighborhood roads.

Providing compact, mixed-use development connected by safe, convenient, and interesting networks of streets and paths promotes:

- Walking, cycling, and transit as viable, attractive alternatives to driving;
- Less traffic congestion and air pollution;
- The convenience, density, and variety of uses necessary to support transit;
- A variety of alternative routes, thereby dispersing traffic congestion and providing connectivity; and
- Traffic calming (lower traffic speeds), making neighborhoods safer.

The images reflect the principles of design that contribute to walkable communities, including complete streets, building placement that provides a “street wall” to enclose the public spaces of the street, and site and architectural details that reinforce a human scale in the built environment.



Principle 5: Detailed, Human-Scale Design

Community acceptance of compact, mixed-use development requires compatibility between buildings to ensure privacy, safety, and visual coherency. Similar massing of buildings, orientation of buildings to the street, the presence of windows, doors, porches, and other architectural elements, and effective use of landscaping all contribute to successful compatibility between diverse building types.

Human-scale design is also critical to the success of streets and paths as preferred routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. In general, smart street design prioritizes pedestrians over vehicular traffic, emphasizing the quality of the walking environment. For instance, parallel parking may be considered a hindrance to vehicle flow, but, for pedestrians and shop owners, on-street parking is a benefit because it reduces speeding traffic and protects the sidewalks.

Designing streets that are balanced for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists promotes the development of community through the informal meeting of neighbors. Neighborhood safety is improved, since neighbors can more easily come to know one another and watch over each other's homes.



