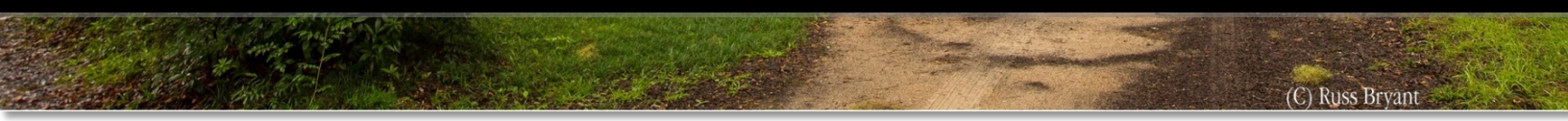
RICHMOND HILL
GEORGIA

2018-2028 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Submitted to the Coastal Regional Commission & Georgia Department of Community Affairs
by the City of Richmond Hill in April 2018

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Background

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the rules and regulations for Comprehensive Planning in the State of Georgia, effective on March 1, 2014. The purpose of these standards is to provide governmental entities a framework for the development, management and implementation of local comprehensive plans because vibrant places are essential to the State of Georgia's overall economic prosperity.

Producing and maintaining a Comprehensive Plan is a way for a local government to understand the relationship between the various issues and opportunities within the community. Understanding these trends gives community leaders a basis for establishing implementation activities and policies. The Comprehensive Plan creates an understanding of the future vision for the community inclusive of businesses, industries, investors, property owners, tax payers, and the general public.

O.C.G.A 50-8-1 established authority for the DCA to define minimum standards and procedures for developing comprehensive plans for local governments in the State of Georgia. These standards and procedures are designed to help the City prepare a plan that identifies immediate needs within community and looks for opportunities to help the City reach its vision for the future. An adopted Comprehensive Plan allows the City to maintain its "qualified local government status," which makes the City eligible for selected state funding and permitting programs.

The City of Richmond Hill addressed the elements required based on the DCA's minimum standards and procedures and exceeded these requirements by conducting additional analysis on other planning elements. The following required elements are included in the City's 2018 Comprehensive Plan:

- Community Goals
- Needs and Opportunities
- Community Work Program

As a community that has adopted a Zoning Ordinance and one that is also a member of a Metropolitan Planning Organization, the City of Richmond Hill Comprehensive Plan is also required to address land use and transportation. In addition, the City has also completed an assessment of housing; economic development; natural, cultural, historic resource preservation; community wellness; and intergovernmental coordination throughout this document.

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Setting the Stage

History of Richmond Hill

On March 3, 1962, the township of Richmond Hill was incorporated through an act of the Georgia Legislature. The population of Richmond Hill when first incorporated was roughly 500 residents. This small town feel and rural community continued to exist until the more consistent growth began in the 1980s. Much of the growth of Richmond Hill is related to the City's proximity to Savannah, which sits roughly 20 miles north-east. However, the small town feel, quality of life, and the sense of place associated with the city make it a unique and desirable place to live.

Ogeechee River

Generations have made their homes along the Great Ogeechee River and surrounding waterways in Richmond Hill. Our first residents, the Guale Indians, created villages along its sandy shoreline. General James Oglethorpe built defenses on it during the earliest days of the Georgia colony. The proximity of the Ogeechee was the salient factor in rice evolving as the primary cash crop here in the 19th century. African slaves worked in the rice fields and help build Fort McAllister on the Ogeechee which was known as the "Guardian of Savannah" during the Civil War. After the war and a series of hurricanes in the late 1800s, Richmond Hill fell into a state economic decline.

Henry Ford

In 1925, our most famous resident, automobile industrialist Henry Ford and his wife Clara, began purchasing upwards of 85,000 acres of land here. They built a winter home and began extensive agricultural research with rubber plants, soybeans, goldenrod and more. In the process, they provided much needed employment, housing, medical care and education for local residents. Over the next 25 years, they restored Fort McAllister, dozens of antebellum plantations and were successful in turning Richmond Hill into a thriving community- their impact still being evident today.

Both commercial and residential development continues to occur in the City. However, the City, through this plan as well as other efforts, is taking steps to steer the City in a direction that ensures the unique identity of the City continues to be preserved.

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People of Richmond Hill

In support of the Comprehensive Plan, a demographic study was performed to identify trends in population, housing, employment, transportation, community health, and other data trends. The full demographic study, which is summarized here, can be found in the Data Assessment Addendum included with this Comprehensive Plan.

Richmond Hill experienced rapid population growth since the decennial census in 2000 as the City grew from a population of roughly 7,000 to nearly 11,000 in 2015. The most tremendous period of growth for the City occurred from 2000-2010 when the population increased 33.4%, which was greater than the growth rate in Bryan County and nearly double the statewide rate of growth during the same period. The State of Georgia experienced slower growth from 2010-2015 with an increase of only 3.3%. Despite this trend, the population of Richmond Hill continued to grow at a significant rate (17.1%). Population growth in Richmond Hill is likely to continue at a fast pace. There are several platted residential subdivision currently being developed as well as the recent annexation of 5,000 acres of undeveloped land that is being platted for a mix of residential, commercial, and community mixed use. This anticipated growth presents many issues related to city services, infrastructure, impacts to community resources, and overall quality of life that must be considered when making future planning decisions.

Table 1 - Population Comparisons

Jurisdiction	2000 (Census)	2010 (Census)	2015 (Estimate)	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2010-2015
Richmond Hill	6,959	9,281	10,872	33.4%	17.1%
Bryan County	23,417	30,233	33,151	29.1%	9.7%
Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,006,693	18.3%	3.3%

In additional to a steady rate of population growth, the City is also seeing an increase in the average household size as well as the number of people between the ages of 20-54. The American Community Survey (ACS) published by the Census Bureau estimates the average household size for the State of Georgia to be 2.73 people. The estimate for Richmond Hill is 2.97, which is consistent with the idea that the City has become and will continue to develop as a community for younger adults with children. the same data also indicates that the City of Richmond Hill has seen decreases in people aged over 62 and 65 despite the fact that the State and County estimates show increases in population for these same age cohorts.

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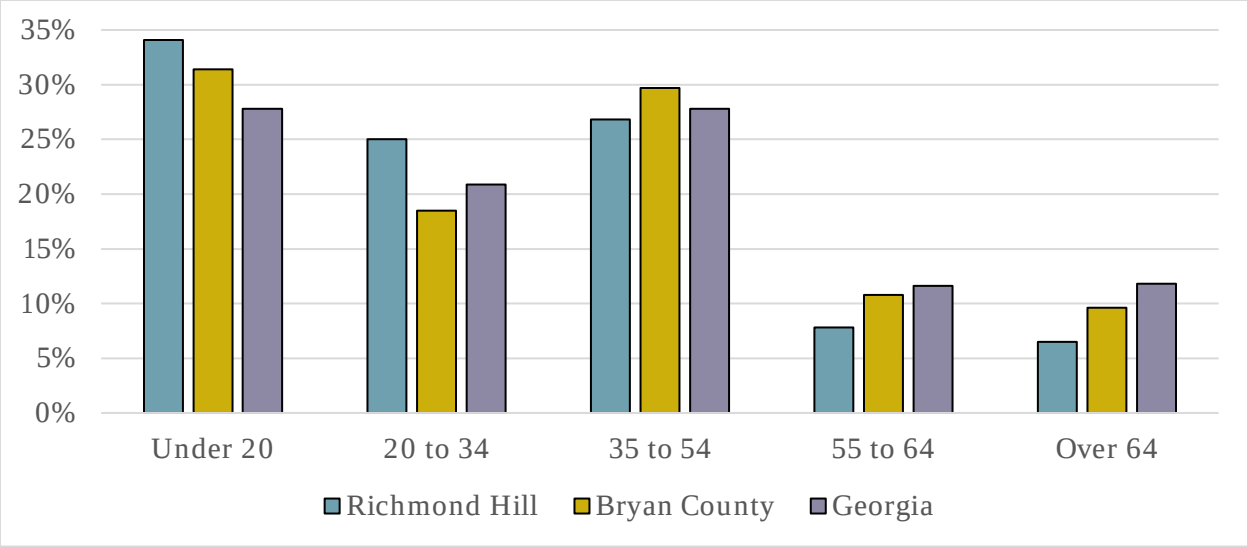

Figure 1 Age Distribution

One metric of household income inequality is defined as the ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that at the 20th percentile. This ratio, calculated with data from 2011-2015, is presented for Bryan County and its neighboring counties. The lower the ratio of the 80th percentile to the 20th percentile of household income, the lower the inequality in household income. The lower the ratio, the higher the County was ranked.

- Bryan County was ranked as one of the best counties in the state at 27th
- Although the County was ranked 27th, two of its neighbors were ranked in the top 10.
- Bryan County's ratio of 4.2 ($114,573 / $27,556) was better than the state average (5.0).
- Overall, Bryan County has less division between the top and bottom ends of the income spectrum compared with the state average and 83% of Georgia's counties.

Table 2 Income Inequality

County	Household Income Inequality Ratio (80th/20th Percentile)	Rank out of 159 Counties in Georgia
Bryan County	**4.2**	**27th**
Bulloch County	6.6	154th
Chatham County	4.9	79th
Effingham County	3.7	6th
Evans County	5.2	99th
Liberty County	3.7	8th
State Average	*5.0*	*N/A*

In looking at household income data specific to Richmond Hill, the City has a larger percentage of groups with incomes between $50,000 and $199,999 than the state distribution. The difference was most pronounced for the group from $75,000 to $99,999 (17.7% versus 11.4%). Richmond Hill has a larger percentage of groups with between $10,000 and $99,999 than the county distribution. Bryan County had

more of the lowest earners (less than $10,000) and the highest earners (more than $100,000). The two groups with the largest differences were $25,000 to $49,999 (City: 24.0%; County 20.8%) and $100,000 to $199,999 (City: 17.9%; County: 22.8%).

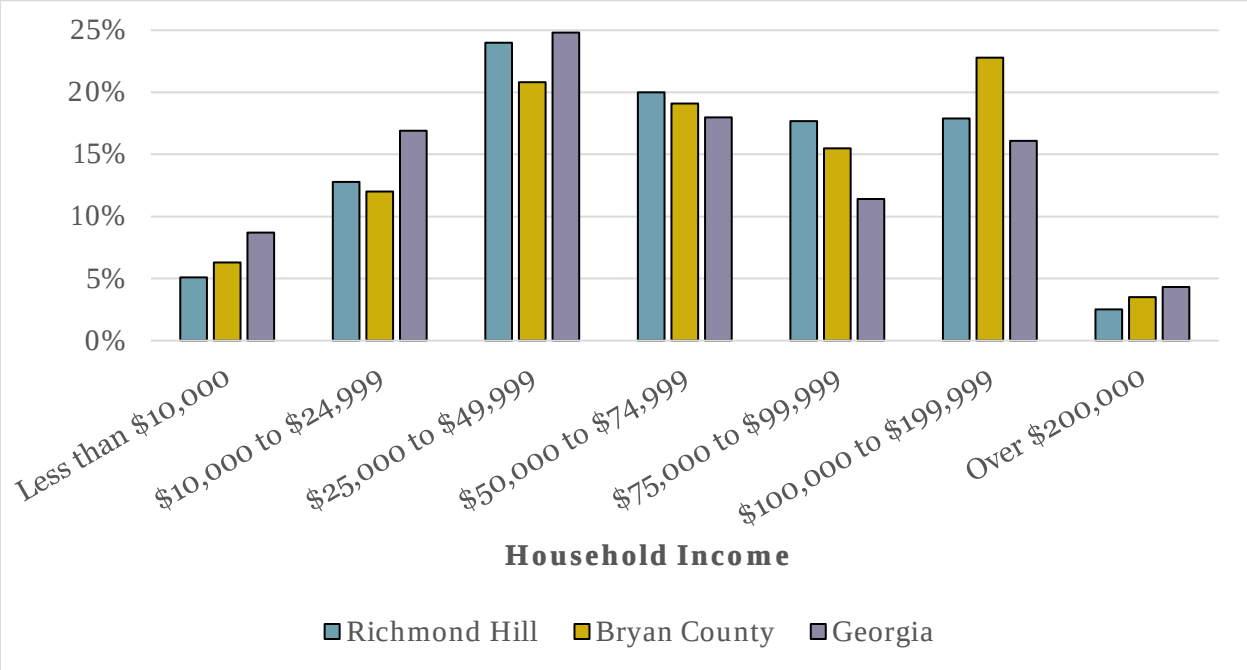

Figure 2 Household Income

Characteristics for a variety of health-related topics are available through the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Program, and rankings are also presented by county. County Health is categorized into two major headings – Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Health Outcomes are a measure of how long people live (Length of Life) and how healthy people feel while alive (Quality of Life). Health Factors represent what influences the health of a county, and they are an estimate of future health. These ranks are based on four types of measures: Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, Social and Economic, and Physical Environment factors. Each of these factors have multiple measures used to calculate the county's health, and a select number of these factors are presented below to show strengths and weaknesses of Bryan County. Results from the two primary categories (Health Outcomes and Health Factors) for Bryan County and neighboring counties displayed in the table below.

Table 3 Health Outcomes

County	Health Outcomes Rank in Georgia's 159 Counties	Health Factors Rank in Georgia's 159 Counties
Bryan County	**20th**	**9th**
Bulloch County	57th	78th
Chatham County	41st	34th
Effingham County	26th	25th
Evans County	117th	88th
Liberty County	47th	49th

As a note, the results presented from this source describe the County as a whole and not necessarily Richmond Hill individually. However, with about one-third of the County's population, Richmond Hill has a considerable impact on the Bryan County results. Also worthy of note is that no neighboring county had a better ranking for either category.

Employment and economic development data have been reviewed and analyzed for the City of Richmond Hill, Bryan County, and the State of Georgia. The City has seen a significant increase in the civilian labor force since 2000, showing an increase of 46%. The major employment categories for the civilian labor force are educational services and health care (29%), manufacturing (12%), arts, entertainment, recreation, and food services (10.7%), and construction (10.3%).

According to the Development Authority of Bryan County, the following are the county's major industrial employers with more than 25 employees (approximate number of employees in parentheses):

- Industrial Conveyor Belt Systems (ICBS), MACS Supply, MACS Waterjet, Custom Quality Scaffolding, Inc (CQS) (*200 employees*) – industrial contracting (MacAljon Affiliates).
- Caesarstone (*196 employees*) – quartz surfaces manufacturer.
- Daniel Defense (186 *employees*) – weapons/components manufacturer.
- Orafol (147 *employees*) – PVC graphic film manufacturer.
- Dorel Home Furnishings (*100 employees*) – furniture distributor.
- Oneida (*82 employees*) – dinnerware/silverware distributor.
- Dillon Transport (*55 employees*) – liquid asphalt distributor.
- Express Packaging (*40 employees*) – corrugated box manufacturer.
- CZM (*32 employees*) – foundation equipment manufacturer.

The majority of the civilian workforce in Richmond Hill fall within the private wage / salary category at just over three fourths of the total workforce. Government workers account for another 20% of the workforce, leaving roughly 5% as self-employed.

Future economic development and diversification of the workforce have been identified as major goals for the future of Richmond Hill. The current demographic trends in terms of population, age distribution, income, and the other intangible factors appear to have set the stage for continued growth and economic prosperity.

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Plan Coordination

Coastal Regional Water Plan

The City understands the water resource challenges in this region; including saltwater intrusion, surface water shortfalls, and water quality challenges. The City also understands that management practices are needed to address these challenges. The City is working to adhere to the goals of the Coastal Regional Water Plan through existing regulations and ongoing activities associated with the City's Water Conservation Program, Watershed Protection Program, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Stormwater Management Program, and the implementation program developed within this report.

NPDES Phase II MS4 SWMP

As a municipality within the Savannah Urbanized Area, the City of Richmond Hill falls under the coverage of the National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit as required by provisions of the Georgia Water Quality Control Act and the Federal Clean Water Act. This permit requires the development of a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP), to address stormwater pollution, maintenance of the drainage system, protect water quality and educate the public on water issues.

Part V Environmental Planning Criteria

The City has adopted the Environmental Planning Standards for Wetlands, which is the only environmental planning measure applicable to the City. None of the city falls within the boundaries of groundwater recharge zones, protected river corridors, or water supply watersheds. Given the City's location in Coastal Georgia, the standards for Mountain Protection are not applicable either.

Future Municipal Complex

The City acquired a 55-acre property along Highway 144 as a potential municipal complex that would include a new City Hall, adjacent commercial uses, and a variety of recreational amenities. A concept plan of the proposed complex is shown in Figure 3 on the next page.

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Figure 3 Municipal Complex Concept Plan

Community Engagement

The DCA minimum standards and procedures require two Public Hearings and the identification and implementation of a participation program that offers various opportunities for community engagement. The following chapter provides a summary of the public involvement opportunities provided throughout this planning process, including public hearings, a Stakeholder Committee, educational handouts, community open house, the web-based Community Opinion Survey, and the interactive mapping applications. Summary materials from public involvement undertaken during this process can be found in Appendix B.

Public Hearings

The Department of Community Affairs minimum planning standards require that two public hearings be held throughout the comprehensive planning process; one at the beginning of the process and one toward the end.

Public Hearing #1. The City of Richmond Hill held a public hearing on August 17, 2017 at a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. The City's consultant delivered a presentation that introduced the comprehensive planning process, the purpose of updating the plan, and what the City hopes to gain by going through this process. The presentation discussed the minimum planning requirements as defined by the DCA, the general benefits of planning, and opportunities the City will use to engage and involve residents and other key players in the community. The presentation also highlighted some of the key issues in Richmond Hill, current development trends, demographics, and how these factors collectively fit into the planning process.

Public Hearing #2. The second public hearing was held on April 3, 2018 at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. A presentation was given to City Council that summarized the activities undertaken during the planning process. Needs, opportunities, and community goals identified by the residents and stakeholders we presented to council and discussed. The future land use map and community workplan were also presented to Council for discussion.

Stakeholder Committee

Meeting 1, October 11, 2017. The first meeting kicked off the Comprehensive Planning process with a presentation on the Comprehensive Planning requirements, the purpose of completing the plan, the benefits of planning, and the role and expectation of the stakeholders throughout the process. This meeting also included a discussion and development of the strategy and schedule for public involvement. Lastly, the schedule was reviewed to highlight some of the milestone dates to help the stakeholder committee better understand the how the City intends to move through the process.

Meeting 2, January 18, 2018. A presentation summarizing the results of the Community Survey was given to the stakeholder committee. Various topics from survey were discussed amongst the group based on how the certain questions were answered and prioritized. The group also identified topic areas where additional analysis of the survey data may be needed. The second part of this meeting consisted of a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis. Lastly, a proposed Future Land Use map was presented to the group and discussed.

Meeting 3, February 8, 2018. The purpose of the third stakeholder meeting was to identify needs, opportunities, and goals as they relate to various planning elements and to associate these the trends

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within the City. The results of the SWOT analysis completed during the second meeting were re-grouped as either a need, and opportunity, or a goal. The stakeholders reviewed these and identified additional items that may have been overlooked.

Meeting 4, March 28, 2018. A final stakeholder meeting was held to review the draft Comprehensive Plan and to provide additional feedback prior to presenting the plan to the Planning Commission and City Council. Comments received from the group at this meeting were incorporated into the document to create the final draft.

Open House

November 16, 2017. The City held a public open house to reach out to the general public as a way to get additional feedback from the community. The Open House was widely advertised using signs, social media, email blasts, and other methods typically used by the City to notify the public. The Open House was held at City Hall and consisted of a series of planning stations to get input on various topics. The following stations were setup at the Open House:

- Land Use
- Demographic Trends
- Needs and opportunities
- SWOT

A general planning presentation was also setup on TVs in the Council Chambers. The presentation cycled through a number of slides that gave background information on comprehensive planning and the process. It also highlighted community goals, issues, opportunities, and land use elements specific to Richmond Hill.

Community Snapshot

The City developed a community snapshot to provide citizens with background information on current trends within the City. The snapshot includes a demographic summary of population, gender, age, and racial composition within the City. It also assesses housing and economic trends including the number of households, household size, housing values, ownership characteristics, earnings, and the distribution of income throughout the City. The existing land use composition of the City was also included in the snapshot to provide some insight when considering future needs and goals.

Community Survey

The City developed a community survey to gain feedback from residents, business owners, and other interested parties. The survey provided opportunities for participants to offer opinions on topics such as land use, economic development, city services, community aesthetics, priorities, housing, quality of life, and other planning related topics. Nearly 1,100 people responded to the community survey, which is an significant number for a City with a population of roughly 10,000 people.

Social Media

The City of Richmond Hill utilized social media to advertise meetings, the community survey, and other opportunities for public involvement in the planning process. The significant response rate on the community survey can be attributed to the social media push made by the City. Public hearings and how the public can review and/or comment on the draft plan were also broadcast using social media outlets.

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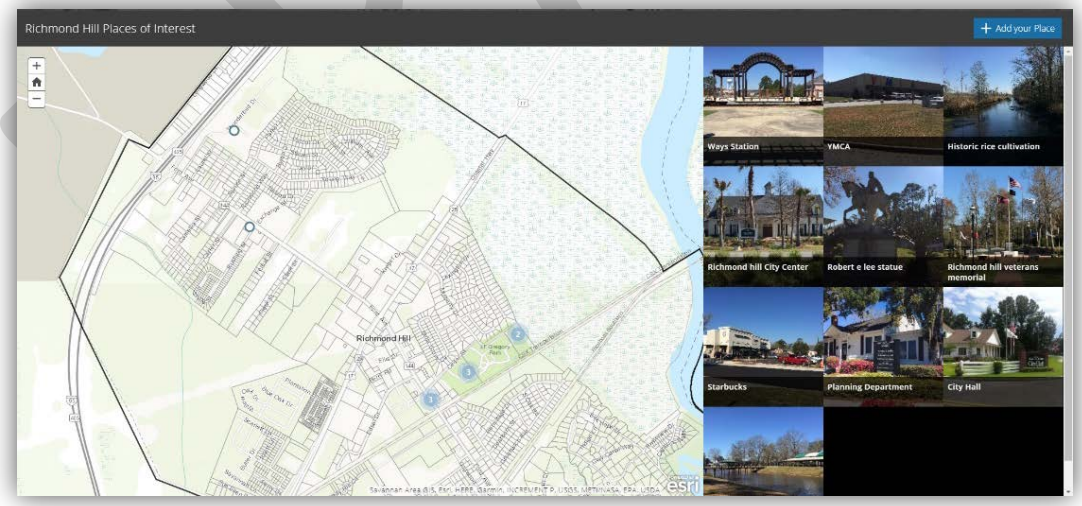
Interactive Mapping App

The City's consultant created a mapping application for hand-held devices that allowed people to take pictures of "places of interest" throughout the City of Richmond Hill. The app included a mapping feature that allowed the user to take a picture, record the location on a map, and to write a short note about what they love about this location or community feature. The app resulted in 20 points of interest being recorded. The points recorded using the points of interest app included historic structures, unique architectural features, parks, landscape scenes, wetlands, and desirable residential and commercial developments.



Richmond Hill Strategic Vision

WE ARE a well-managed, growing community, ideally situated along Georgia's scenic coast, steeped in heritage and local pride, with a commitment to its military neighbors and to maintaining the quality of life for future generations.

General Vision Statement

The City of Richmond Hill developed a community vision through the public involvement process. A group of community stakeholders collectively discussed current trends, community issues, and future needs within the community at a public meeting in February 2018. The group reviewed the vision established during the 2008 comprehensive planning process and crafted a new vision based on changing trends as well as accomplishments within the City. Based on the feedback gathered at this meeting, the following vision was produced:

"Preserve the past, embrace the now, and plan the future."

OUR GOALS

- Promote smart growth practices
- Prepare for economic development opportunities
- Anticipate increases in population
- Preserve sense of community
- Responsible governance, leadership and preservation ethics.

OUR PRIORITIES

- Encouraging livability
- Diversity of housing options for all residents
- Promoting passion for progress and uniqueness of place
- Maintaining a sense of public safety and security
- Balancing the need for economic growth
- Protecting natural and cultural resources
- Providing quality government services

The City's Vision, goals, and priorities recognize how future development patterns will impact the existing character of the community. While growth and development pressure are likely to continue, this section communicates the City's commitment to quality of life, the importance of history, and the need to have a plan for the future.

Community Goals

The purpose of the community goals section is to layout a road map for the community's future based on the results of the various public involvement activities. The goals are arguably the most important part of the plan because they represent the value the community places on various quality of life issues. The

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goals are used to determine the direction the City should pursue based on feedback from people that are most invested in the community. The following major goals have been identified and will be the basis of the recommended policies:

- Economic development
- Expand recreational activities and opportunities
- Address traffic congestion along major corridors
- Smart growth

Quality Community Objectives

The following 10 objectives were adopted by the DCA from generally accepted community development principles to fit the unique quality of communities in Georgia. The list of items was intentionally crafted with significant areas of overlap to recognize the relationships between the various community objectives and the impact one aspect has on others. The DCA goals associated with each element are summarized in italics. The City of Richmond Hill completed a self-assessment based on these quality community objectives.

Objectives	*DCA Goals*	*Richmond Hill Assessment*
Economic Prosperity	*Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community.*	In an effort to facilitate economic prosperity, the City of Richmond Hill is doing the following: • Promoting commercial development along SR144, US 17, and other appropriate corridors • Utilizing architectural standards and overlays to control the aesthetics of development • Supports a mix of housing types in subdivisions throughout the city

Objectives	*DCA Goals*	*Richmond Hill Assessment*
Resource Management	*Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community.*	Richmond Hill does the following to address resource management: • Educates residents about water reduction and how to reduce consumption • Uses gray water for irrigation • Protects natural flood plains • Incorporates open space and recreational amenities in new subdivisions
Efficient Land Use	*Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community.*	The City of Richmond Hill ensures that adequate infrastructure is in place to accommodate future growth and has identified areas of the City where growth is likely to occur
Local Preparedness	*Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve.*	The City has done the following to better prepare for future growth: • Developed a comprehensive plan and future land use map that will be used to assist with land use decisions • Modernized the zoning ordinance • Developed overlays and policies to protect the unique features in the community from unrestricted development

Objectives	DCA Goals	Richmond Hill Assessment
Sense of Place	*Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities.*	Sense of place in the City is achieved by maintaining the family-friendly atmosphere in the City, holding events that have a regional draw, and marketing the city's unique cultural and recreational amenities.
Regional Cooperation	*Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs.*	The City works with neighboring jurisdictions on mutual aid agreements for emergency services and participates with the County on Service Delivery Strategy.
Housing Options	*Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community.*	The City has a well-rounded and diversified housing stock and accommodates the needs of mixed incomes, sizes, and types of housing for residents.

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Objectives	DCA Goals	Richmond Hill Assessment
Transportation Options	*Address transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities of all community residents.*	One of the challenges related to transportation within the City is the need to address congestion along SR144 and US 17. Multi-use trails and connectivity are currently in place, but expansion of these systems is needed.
Educational Opportunities	*Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions.*	Bryan County has great schools. The City is working with the BOE to determine the feasibility of expanding the resources to offer additional adult and continuing education opportunities.
Community Health	*Ensure that all community residents have access to critical goods and service, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities.*	The City supports health food options and does its part to address community health by creating walkable communities and providing various options for recreation within the City.

Land Use Analysis

The City of Richmond Hill analyzed development patterns, land uses, and zoning districts to develop a baseline for development of the Future Land Use Strategy. The existing land use makeup within the City gives a good indication of likely development within various areas of the City. Existing zoning designations reveal what is currently allowed within various areas of the City by right, meaning that a development project is permitted under the existing zoning ordinance without requiring any special review or public hearing. Analyzing development trends will help the City formulate a future land use strategy that is realistic and consistent with the existing demand and trends within the City. Additionally, the future vision for areas may indicate that a zoning ordinance revision or update may be required to achieve that vision.

Existing Land Use

The City created an existing land use map in the Fall of 2017 using desktop GIS practices and field verification via a windshield survey. The table below summarizes the current land use breakdown in the City by percent. A land use map has been created to illustrate the geographic breakdown of land uses within the City (a large version is included in the Appendix). It should be noted that this is a parcel-based analysis with the primary land use being assigned to the entire parcel. Also absent from the analysis are setbacks and other regulations that might impact future development.

Table 4 Existing Land Use Breakdown

Land Use	Total Percent Land Area
Commercial	12.2%
Industrial	0.2%
Parks / Recreation / Conservation	18.9%
Public / Institutional	9.3%
Residential Multi-Family	0.9%
Residential Single-Family	16.6%
Transportation / Communication	0.2%
Undeveloped	41.6%

Since there is a significant percentage of land area currently undeveloped, the breakdown of current land uses by acreage was analyzed by excluding the undeveloped land. The percent developed is depicted in the table below and later illustrated on the chart on the following page.

Table 5 Breakdown of Developed Land

Land Use	Percent of City (excluding undeveloped area)
Commercial	20.9%
Industrial	0.3%
Parks / Recreation / Conservation	32.3%

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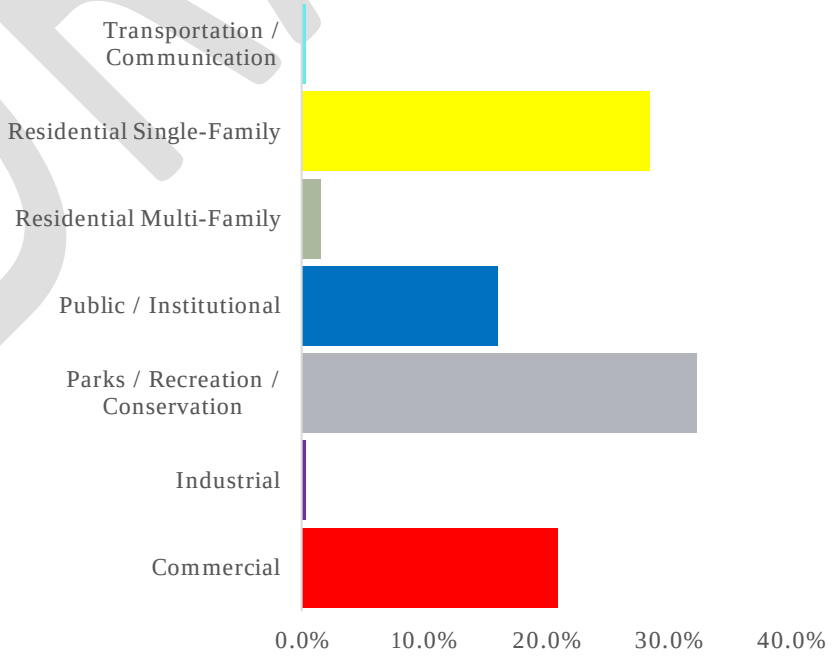
Land Use	Percent of City (excluding undeveloped area)
Public / Institutional	16.0%
Residential Multi-Family	1.6%
Residential Single-Family	28.5%
Transportation / Communication	0.4%

Parks, recreation, and conservation areas account for the largest percentage of developed land area in the City (32.3%). A large portion of this relates to the coastal marshlands along the Ogeechee River. The golf courses at Ford Plantation and Sterling Links also contribute to the land area for parks, recreation, and conservation. Single-family residential accounts for the second largest percentage of developed land within the City. Suburban development has been the largest source of residential growth within the City with neighborhoods scattered throughout the City. The masterplanned area bordered by Timber Trail to the north, SR144 to the east, Port Royal Rd to the south, and Harris Trail Road to the west is forecast to have additional residential units added within the timeframe of this plan. Additional housing and neighborhood development is also likely to take place within the roughly 5000 acres of newly annexed land.

Commercial and public/institutional uses also make up a significant portion of developed land area within the City, accounting for 21% and 16% respectively. Commercial development has been concentrated mostly along major road corridors (Hwy 17 & SR 144), with the highest concentration near the intersection of these two arterials. Additional areas of commercial development fall around the I-95 interchanges. Future commercial development is likely to occur along these same corridors in the form of infill and development of undeveloped land. The Belfast Commerce Area and the new I-95 interchange area also present an opportunity for future commercial development.

Industrial development has been isolated to very few limited locations throughout the City and accounts for a small percent of the developed land area (less than 1%). Limited industrial growth is anticipated, mostly in the Belfast Commerce area, but a large spike in industrial development is highly unlikely in the City of Richmond Hill.



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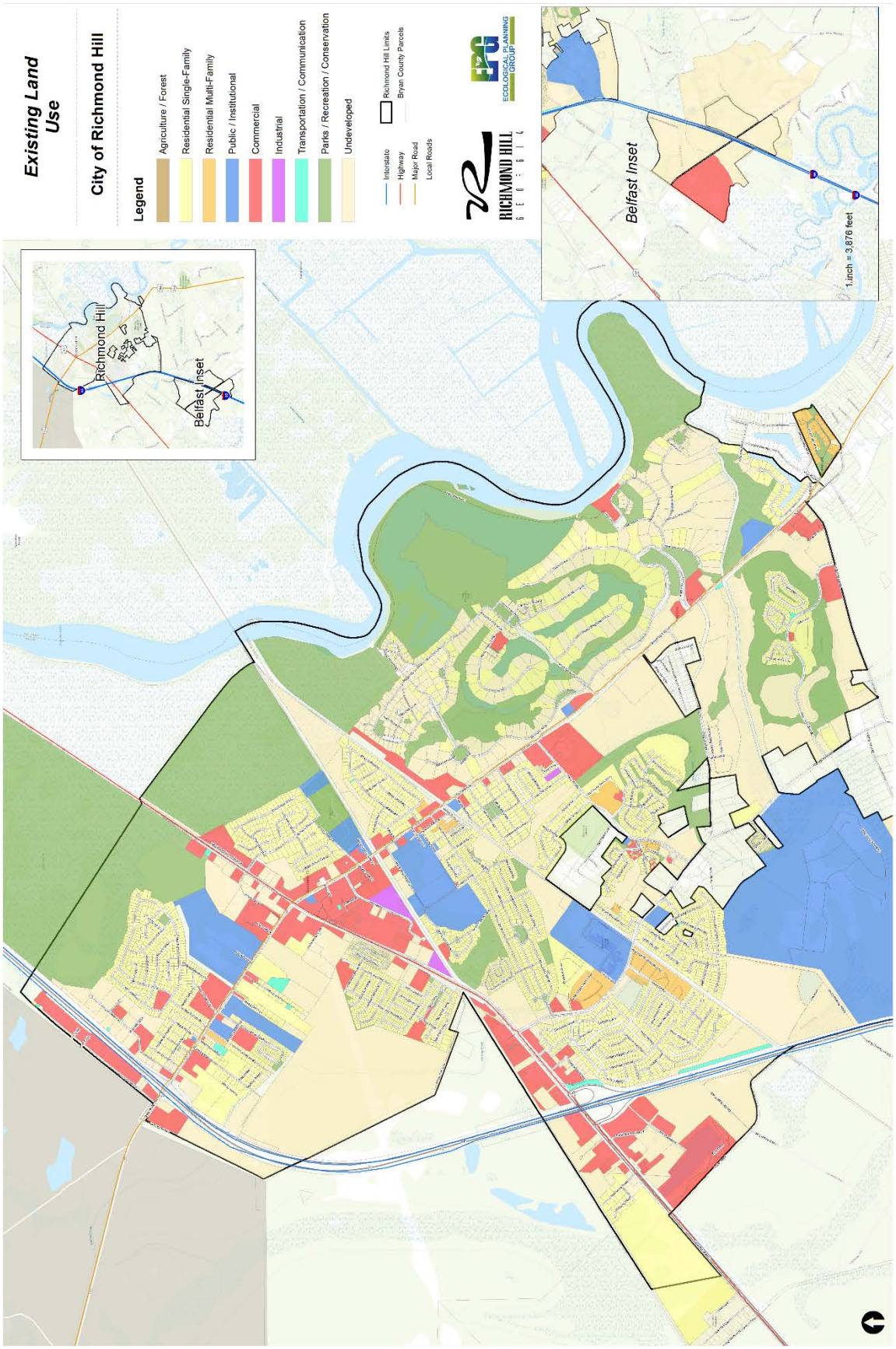
Existing Land Use
City of Richmond Hill
Legend
Agriculture / Forest
Residential Single-Family
Residential Multi-Family
Public / Institutional
Commercial
Industrial
Transportation / Communication
Parks / Recreation / Conservation
Undeveloped
Richmond Hill Limits
Bryan County Parcels
Interstate
Highway
Major Road
Local Roads
ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP
RICHMOND HILL
Belfast Inset
1 inch = 3,876 feet
Richmond Hill
Belfast Inset

Existing Zoning

The City of Richmond Hill recently adopted a Unified Development Ordinance that modernized the previously dated zoning ordinance. The UDO was designed to simplify the development process by making the requirements clearer by grouping overlapping regulations. The UDO also offers for flexibility in design by having less overlap between uses. The table below summarizes the zoning categories defined in the UDO based on the percent area they account for within the City. The table also looks at the percentage currently developed versus undeveloped within each zoning category. For example, two-thirds of the land area currently designated as C1 is already developed, leaving 33% undeveloped for potential future development. As illustrated in the table, the Planned Unit Development (PUD) category accounts for the largest percentage in the City at nearly 55%. The PUD category also has the largest percentage of land area currently undeveloped (75%). The large percentage of PUDs provides the City the opportunity to promote the most efficient use of land through preservation, protection of open space, and flexibility within the design of various developments.

Table 6 Zoning Classifications

Zone Name	Zone Description	Percent of City	Percent Developed	Percent Undeveloped
C1	General Commercial	6.4%	67%	33%
C2	Downtown Commercial	1.7%	88%	12%
C3	Interchange Commercial	4.7%	38%	62%
CP	Conservation Preservation	14.3%	46%	54%
I1	Industrial District	1.1%	92%	8%
PUD	Planned Unit Development	54.5%	25%	75%
R1	Estate Residential	6.8%	37%	63%
R2	Low Density Single Family	8.0%	88%	12%
R3	Moderate Density Residential	2.2%	71%	29%
R4	Manufactured Home Residential	0.2%	91%	9%
MU1	Neighborhood Mixed Use	0.0%	0%	0%
MU2	Community Mixed Use	0.0%	0%	0%

Recognizing the desired future development, the City created two mixed use categories; neighborhood and community. There are no parcels currently zoned to either of these categories, but the City has taken a proactive approach to zoning and future development by defining each of these districts.

The breakdown of commercial zoning districts allows for future development appropriate for interstate related services adjacent to the I-95 interchange areas, but transitions to lower intensity uses as you move away from the interstate.

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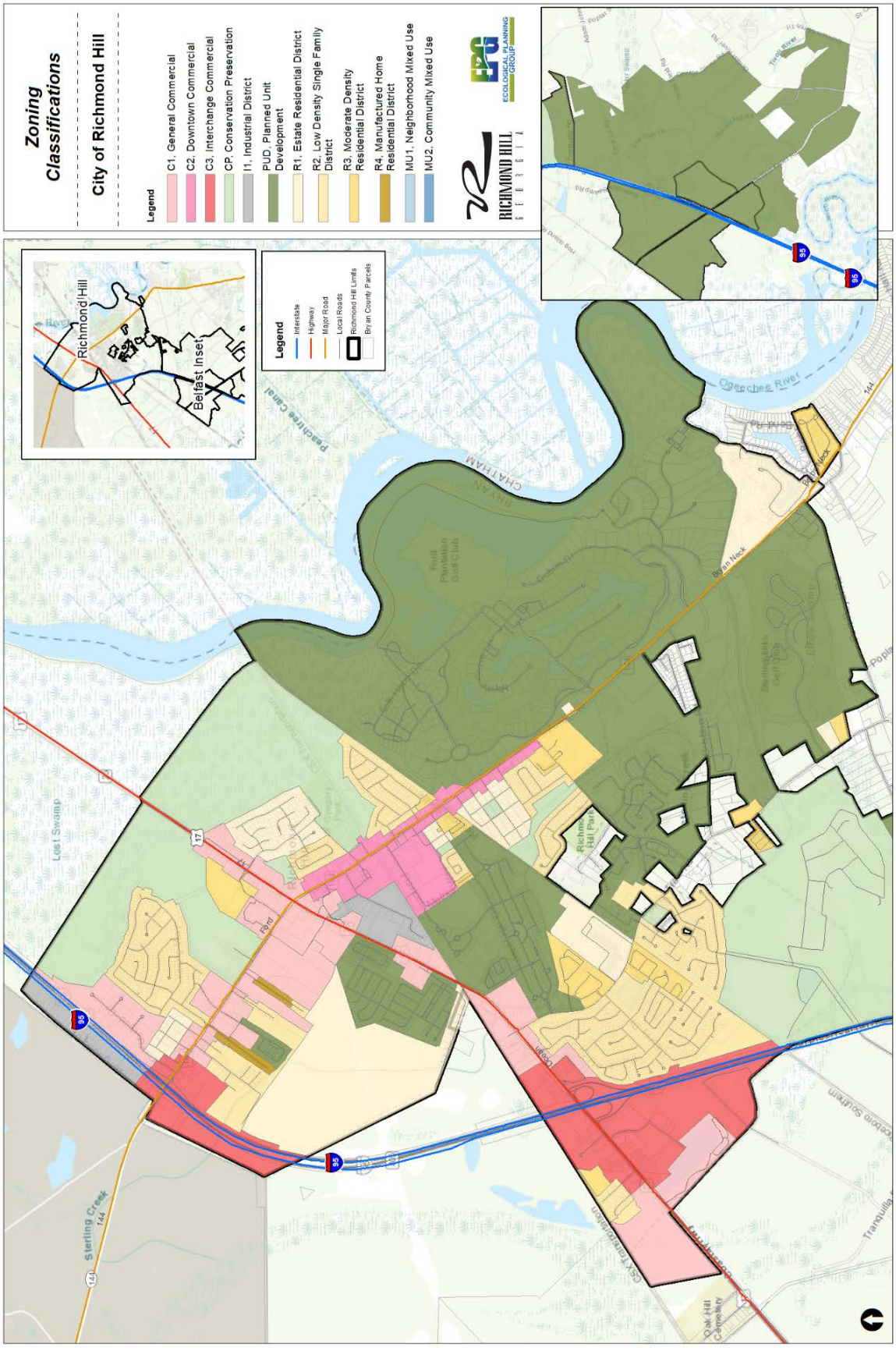
Zoning Classifications
City of Richmond Hill
Legend
C1. General Commercial
C2. Downtown Commercial
C3. Interchange Commercial
CP. Conservation Preservation
I1. Industrial District
PUD. Planned Unit Development
R1. Estate Residential District
R2. Low Density Single Family District
R3. Moderate Density Residential District
R4. Manufactured Home Residential District
MU1. Neighborhood Mixed Use
MU2. Community Mixed Use
RICHMOND HILL
ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP
Legend
Interstate
Highway
Major Road
Local Roads
Richmond Hill Limits
Bryan County Parcels
Richmond Hill
Belfast Inset
Ogeechee River
Peachtree Canal
Bryan Neck
Lost Swamp
Sterling Creek
Oak Hill Cemetery

Future Land Use Strategy

The City of Richmond Hill recently completed a comprehensive planning process that resulted in the development and adoption of a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This ordinance was adopted on June 6, 2017 and has set the framework for how development will be steered in the future. This puts the City in a unique place when compared to other jurisdictions undertaking a comprehensive planning process. For this reason, the City has elected to produce a future land use strategy based on the vision, goals, and policies in the comprehensive plan to support implementation of the UDO. The Future Land Use Strategy includes the following land use categories, which correspond to zoning classifications in the UDO.

Community Activity Center

This area is intended for small scale commercial and recreational uses that are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods. A variety of housing types is encouraged at moderate densities, along with some office, retail and service uses that are in harmony with the predominantly residential character of the area.

Community Mixed Use

This area allows and encourages intense, large-scale development that will support significant population segments of the community and provide meaningful employment opportunities. In addition to a blend of housing types, the district allows for large retail uses, general office buildings and a complementary range of services. Suitable locations for these developments would include parcels adjacent to arterial streets and within reasonable proximity to freeway interchanges.

Low Density Residential

This category includes most of Richmond Hill's single family residential neighborhoods. It also includes areas throughout the City where single family development is likely to occur in the future. Some instances of smaller lots and townhouses may occur within this area, generally as part of a larger planned subdivision with open space being set aside.

Moderate Density Residential

This area was established to provide for a variety of housing types at moderate densities to allow for open space and amenities to be included as part of a new development. Moderate density residential should strive for 10 units per acre and can offer a smooth transition between lower density residential and commercial uses.

Conservation Preservation

This area refers to undeveloped land and environmentally sensitive areas generally not suitable for development. The goal here is to preserve these areas as open space and/or provide passive recreational amenities.

Downtown Commercial

This refers to the central downtown area and is established to promote a mix of commercial uses with the potential for infill residential in the future. The goal of this area is to protect and enhance the traditional, small-town character of Richmond Hill's historic core area. A mix of retail stores, offices, public spaces, residential uses and related activities that are mutually supportive and serve the needs of the community in a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment. Through the use of architectural standards and design requirements, the district establishes a cohesive identity based on the historic traditions of the city.

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General Commercial

The General Commercial area is intended primarily to accommodate a range of retail and service uses serving the broader needs of the community and the motoring public. Large-scale retailers, auto-related businesses and similar uses not generally appropriate for other commercial districts.

Interchange Commercial

This commercial district is designed to provide service related uses related to the I-95 exits that intersect the City. Uses in this area will be auto-oriented when compared to the other commercial areas in the City.

Industrial

This land use category is established to accommodate industrial and related facilities that provide jobs for citizens of the community and surrounding areas, create a sustainable tax base and add value for property owners and the city. The focus is for light industries such as manufacturing or processing of previously refined materials and other industrial uses that, when properly located, can be compatible with the character of the community and immediate vicinity. This district also allows certain commercial uses of an industrial character or that are necessary to provide services to employees within the district.

Annexation Considerations

Annexation is the incorporation of land from an unincorporated county into a City. Georgia State law recognizes the importance of growing cities to the economic health of the state and states that, "municipal corporations are created for the purpose of providing local governmental services and for ensuring health, safety, and welfare of persons and the protection of property. Currently, only about 7% of the State's land area falls within an incorporated City. However, 40% of the population lives within these cities.

The purpose of the annexation considerations category on the City of Richmond Hill's Future Land Use Map is to recognize where unincorporated islands exist within and directly adjacent to the existing City boundary. Annexation is typically driven by property owners that wish to be incorporated to receive the benefits of a heightened level of municipal services provided by the jurisdiction. For this reason, the unincorporated islands have been identified because it makes logical sense for these areas to be part of the City and in many cases, this City already provides many services to these locations.

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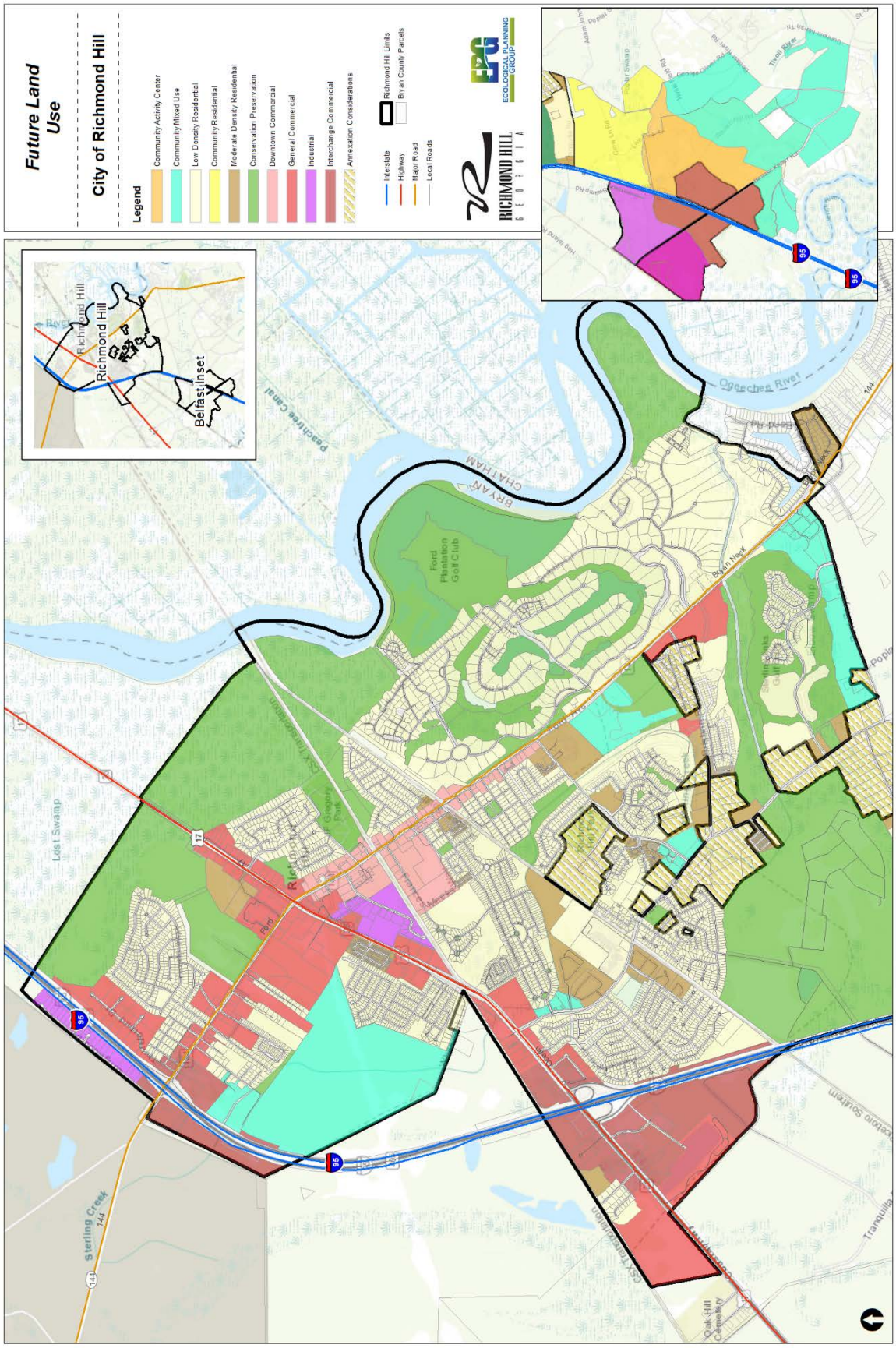
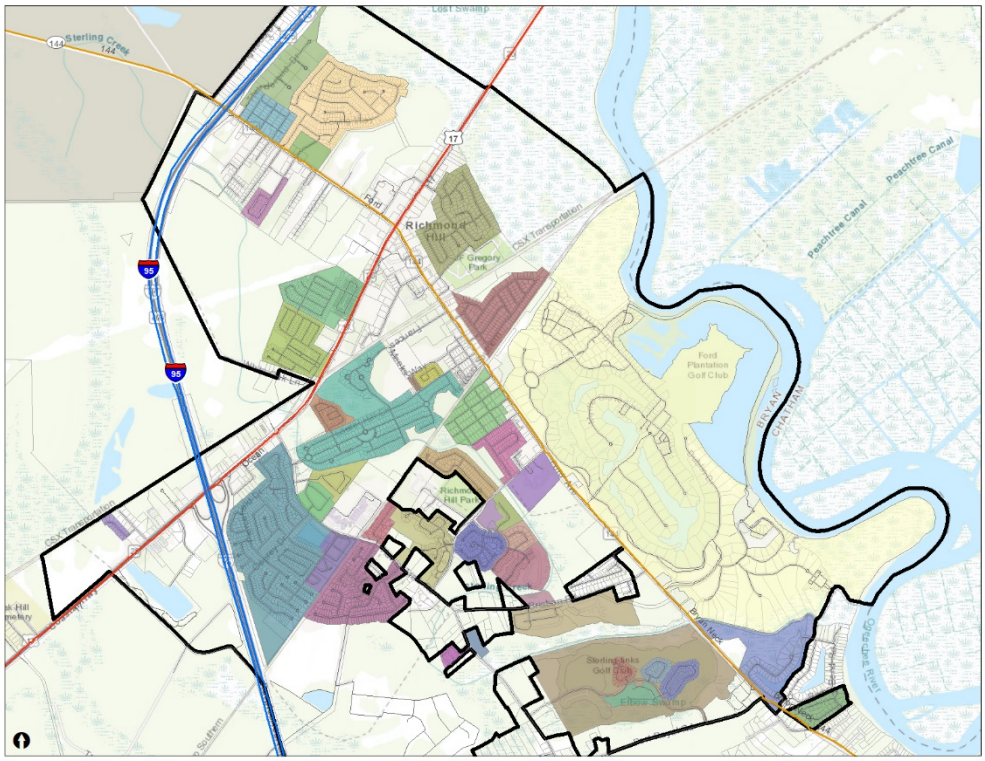

Future Land Use
City of Richmond Hill
Legend
Community Activity Center
Community Mixed Use
Low Density Residential
Community Residential
Moderate Density Residential
Conservation Preservation
Downtown Commercial
General Commercial
Industrial
Interchange Commercial
Annexation Considerations
Richmond Hill Limits
Bryan County Parcels
Interstate
Highway
Major Road
Local Roads
RICHMOND HILL GEORGIA
ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GROUP
Richmond Hill
Belfast Inset
Ogeechee River
Peachtree Canal
Ford Plantation Golf Club
Lost Swamp
Sterling Creek
Oak Hill Cemetery

Housing Developments

The residential population within Richmond Hill is distributed around the City with more than 40 designated neighborhoods and residential clusters. Within these neighborhoods, the City offers a variety of different housing options that include detached single-family, attached single-family, townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and assisted living for elderly residents.

Single-family housing accounts for the majority of all housing types within the City making up roughly 75%. Housing stock within the City is relatively new, with approximately two-thirds of the housing stock built after 1990. The biggest lull in housing development within the City occurred between the years 1960 and 1969. Less than 5% of the total housing stock was built during this time frame. The neighborhood distribution within the City has been mapped and is shown here to illustrate the location of various developments.



The City also offers housing for a wide range of incomes. Nearly 40% of owner-occupied housing units are valued between $200,000 and $299,999. The City also has a significant number of housing units priced between $100,000 and $199,999 (over 40%), which is a good price point for younger families and first-time home buyers. The City also offers high end housing in neighborhoods like the Ford Plantation.

Due to the City's proximity to Fort Stewart, as well as other variables, a significant portion of housing units are renter-occupied.

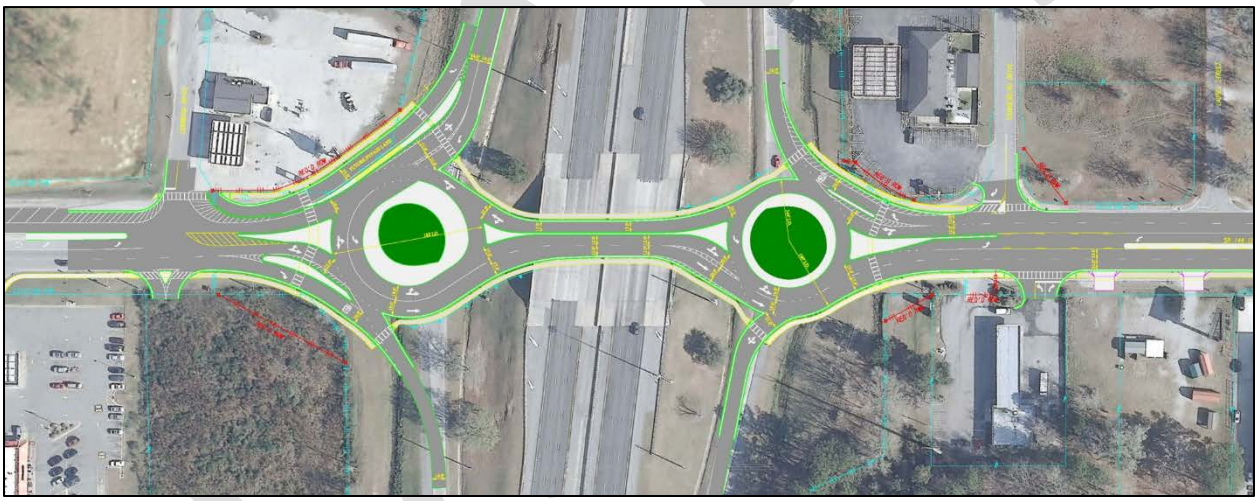
Refer to the Community Assessment section for additional housing related information and trends.

Transportation

Road Network

The City of Richmond Hill contains roughly 105 miles of streets and roadways. The majority of the transportation system in the City is local roads; totaling between 85-90 miles. Major arterials and transportation corridors that bisect the City are State Route 144 and US Highway 17. SR144 stretches roughly 5 miles through the City and is a major connection point to South Bryan County. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) data shows an average daily traffic count on SR144 of 22,200 with nearly 1,800 of that being truck traffic. US Highway 17 is a major north-south corridor with roughly 4 miles intersecting the City. Similar to SR144, GDOT data has daily traffic counts on HWY 17 of approximately 20,000, about 4,000 of which is truck traffic. Interstate 95 also intersects the City and accounts for 10 miles (5 miles for each directionally bound segment). The City currently has two exits off Interstate 95; Exit 90 (Ford Ave), and Exit 87 (Highway 17). A third exit is planned and will provide access to the Belfast Commerce area.

Already in the planning stages are improvements for the I-95-Highway Exit 90 SR144 interchange. Roundabouts are being planned to improve the movement of traffic at this important community gateway.



Alternative Modes

Residents of the City also benefit from having access to the Coastal Regional Coaches system operated by the Coastal Regional Commission. Coastal Regional Coaches is part of the regional rural public transit program that provides general public transit service in the coastal Georgia counties including Bryan County. This service is available to anyone, for any purpose, and to any destination in the coastal region. Fares vary with different itineraries. Coastal Regional Coaches is a demand-response, advance reservation service that operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M.

The City provides opportunities for alternative modes of transportation by maintaining a vast sidewalk system. Currently there are roughly 35 miles of sidewalks within the City, providing pedestrian movement through neighborhoods and along some of the major roadways. Expansion and better

connectivity of this system has been identified as a goal by the City and a preliminary sidewalk inventory has been completed that includes a plan for addressing underserved areas of the City. The City also has a trail system that is well utilized by residents and visitors. A 187-acre site was acquired by the City where a vast multi-modal trail system is being planned.

Parking

The availability of public parking is not perceived to be an issue within the City. The majority of commercial development has occurred along the SR144 and Hwy17 with ample on-site parking. Parking throughout the City is primarily surface parking lots designed to serve the immediate location only.

Railroads, Trucking

The I-95 corridor is the longest north-south Interstate in the country and passes through more states (15) than any other Interstate. The Interstate provides connection for numerous cities along the eastern seaboard. This leads to heavy volumes of truck traffic along the interstate and ultimately along some of the major corridors in Richmond Hill. Highway 17 and State Route 144 host about 10,000 truck trips on a daily basis, according to data from the Department of Transportation. With port expansion and associated industrial development in coastal Georgia on the rise, truck related traffic is likely to increase.

Richmond Hill also contains two major CSX rail lines. The northern line extends from Waycross through the City and provides connection to the CSX yard in Savannah. The southern line, also referred to as the Riceboro Southern line, comes from Riceboro through the City before connecting with the main CSX line.

CORE MPO

The City is a member of the Coastal Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO), which is the designated transportation planning organization for the Savannah urbanized area, a Census designated area that includes the City of Savannah and all surrounding Census Blocks with at least 500 people per square mile. Richmond Hill was brought into this urbanized area following release of the 2010 Decennial Census demographics. Metropolitan planning organizations are governed by Federal law and require that plans and programs be developed through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process. The City is an active member of the technical advisory committee, but ultimately has limited control over how certain projects are identified and prioritized. One major project is identified in the CORE MPO Transportation Improvement Plan that relates to Richmond Hill the widening and reconstruction of SR144 from Timber Trail to Belfast River Road and Capt. Matthew Freeman Rd.

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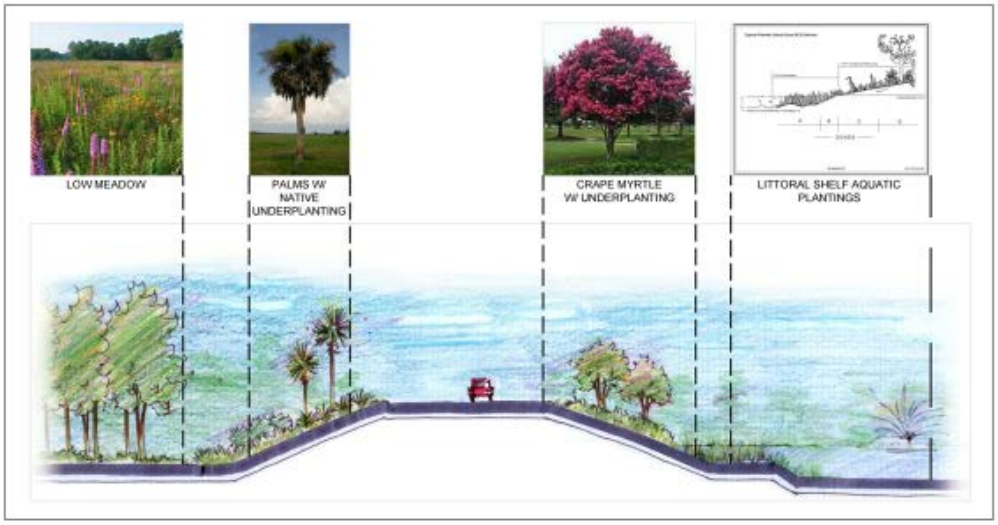
Highway 17 rendering



I-95 & US 17 Interchange – Exit 87 Landscape Improvements

Needs and Opportunities

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was completed by the Richmond Hill Stakeholder Committee. The purpose of this exercise was to engage the stakeholders by facilitating a process where they could provide local knowledge on current issues and trends from the perspective of the community.

S.W.O.T.

The following general trends were identified during the SWOT Analysis

Strengths
Good schools
Housing options
Sense of place
Community pride
Quality Parks
Low crime rate

Weaknesses
Traffic congestion
Lack of employment opportunities

Opportunities
Business growth
Recreational facilities
Potential for tourism
New I-95 Interchange

Threats
Loss of Community Character

The full results of the SWOT analysis have been broken down in to major planning elements and are summarized below based on goals, need and opportunities, and policies. Each element was also analyzed to see which of the DCA's Quality Community Objectives best aligned with the items listed for each element. The information contained within this section will be used to development specific activities for the City's Community Workplan.

Economic Development

Goals:

- Expansion of the labor force
- Increase commercial development
- Attract more tourism
- Expansion of employment options

Needs and Opportunities:

- Diversify the availability of jobs
- Ensure that growth does not occur in a manner that brings unforeseen negative impacts on the City (increased crime, traffic, etc.)
- Better market the area from an economic development perspective (the geographic location alone does not necessarily communicate the commercial potential of the area)
- Change the negative perception associated with blue collar jobs and trades
- New interchange at Belfast has the potential to create a lot of future development, jobs, and employment options
- Explore programs to incentivize façade improvements and redevelopment of older commercial structures
- Develop an economic development program to help draw higher paying jobs to attract a younger skilled workforce
- Expansion of existing commercial corridors
- Explore tax abatement and other programs to assist with economic development initiatives
- Promote a diversified housing stock to create balance within the community as growth occurs

Policies	Quality Community Objectives
• Use incentives to attract and retain businesses and industries • Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing commercial and industrial space • Undertake the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City and areas that currently receive city services • Streamline the development process to make Richmond Hill a desirable place to do business	• Economic Prosperity • Efficient Land Use • Local Preparedness • Sense of Place

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Transportation

Goals:

- Reduce traffic congestion along SR 144 and Hwy 17
- Expand multi-use paths and non-motorized connectivity throughout the City

Needs and Opportunities:

- Develop a better understanding of public transportation options and ridership within, to, and from the City
- Better connectivity between commercial areas and adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Improve existing sidewalks
- Expand sidewalk and trail system
- Explore the use of alternative routes and expansion of the local transportation network as a way to alleviate traffic congestion

Policies

- Improve and maintain the transportation system
- Promote connectivity within the road, sidewalk, and trail network
- Support investment in alternative modes of transportation
- Consider the impact new residential and commercial development has on existing traffic flow
- Support programs and projects that address traffic congestion

Quality Community Objectives

- Transportation Options
- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Community Health
- Regional Cooperation

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Housing

Goals:

- Provide a mix of housing types and price points

Needs and Opportunities:

- Develop a better understanding of the rental market for housing within the City
- Put stronger regulations in place to improve construction
- Factor in tree canopy and open space preservation in new housing developments
- Minimize construction of new housing in flood prone areas
- Better understand the condition of the existing housing stock
- Explore ways to address code enforcement issues in different neighborhoods around the City

Policies

- Encourage development of a range of housing options
- Encourage infill housing development in older established areas of the City
- Support mixed use housing projects

Quality Community Objectives

- Housing Options
- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Resource Management
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of Place

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Land Use

Goals:

- Diversify land use distribution within the City
- Provide a mix of land uses to support the retail, service, and professional needs of residents of the City
- Protect the existing quality of life within the City

Needs and Opportunities:

- Address property maintenance issues throughout the City
- Identify areas for infill commercial and residential development
- Reserve land for future industrial and commercial growth
- Explore innovative uses for the Belfast Commerce area
- Exposure to I-95 provides numerous options for commercial and industrial development

Policies

- Use the new zoning ordinance and future land use map to make land use decisions that are consistent with the vision for this plan

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Resource Management
- Sense of Place

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Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources

Goals:

- Attract more tourism
- Protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources
- Increase the availability of recreational opportunities within the City

Needs and Opportunities:

- Limit development within the floodplains and other hazard areas
- Utilize the Henry Ford history to draw visitors to the City
- Continuing holding festivals and other events that have a regional draw and bring people into the City
- Explore ways to provide public water access
- Develop a regional recreational complex as a venue for hosting tournaments (ie. baseball, soccer, etc.)
- Market the City Center as a location for various events and activities

Policies

- Use incentives to encourage protection of historic resources
- Promote preservation and protection of open space in new developments
- Support partnerships with private property owners to help protect natural, cultural, and historic resources
- Establish partnerships with DNR and/or other groups to find locations for public water access / boat ramps
- Support eco-tourism and other innovative approaches to drawing visitors

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Sense of Place
- Resource Management
- Educational Attainment

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Facilities and Services

Goals:

- Expand and improve water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure
- Provide high quality recreational facilities and activities to residents
- Expand sidewalks and trails

Needs and Opportunities:

- Make improvements to city-maintained infrastructure
- Improve pedestrian crosswalks at busy intersections
- Improve lighting along major corridors
- Provide more youth activities
- Increase public awareness of city facilities and activities
- Improve drainage in flood prone areas
- Develop a plan to expand infrastructure to the newly annexed area of the City
- Improve aesthetics of community gateways

Policies

- Use incentives to attract and retain businesses and industries
- Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing commercial and industrial space
- Undertake the annexation of unincorporated islands within the City and areas that currently receive city services
- Streamline the development process to make Richmond Hill a desirable place to do business

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of Place

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Governance / Intergovernmental Coordination

Goals:

- Transparency
- Coordination with other agencies

Needs and Opportunities:

- Work with other governmental authorities to minimize the duplications of services
- Improve cooperation between the City and County

Policies

- Support the sharing of resources and information between the City and County where appropriate
- Consider an intergovernmental approach to addressing shared concerns and issues
- Leverage the Comp Plan as a guidance document to show other agencies the community vision
- Coordination with County on Service Delivery
- Make a commitment to achieving the goals identified in this plan

Quality Community Objectives

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Resource Management

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Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy demonstrates and defines the action items the City of Richmond Hill will take on to achieve the community vision, addressing the community goals, encouraging compliance with the Future Land Use map, and for addressing each of the needs and opportunities. The Community Work Program identifies specific programs and tasks to be undertaken by the City to implement the Plan. A proposed schedule, responsible party, and potential funding source are outlined within this plan. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that cities complete an implementation plan as well as a report of accomplishments, which is a status update summarizing the previous work plan. Included below are the 2018-2022 Community Work Plan and the 2013-2017 Report of Accomplishment:

Community Work Program

The Community Workplan includes the following information for each listed action item:

- Action Item: Brief description of the activity
- Timeframe: The timeframe for initiating and/or completed each action item s broken into four categories: 1) Ongoing (currently in-progress), 2) Immediate (1-2 years), 3) Short-term (2-5 years), and 4) Long-term (5-10 years). Items identified for immediate and/or short-term should be viewed as having a priority status.
- Priority: With an understanding that the City has limited resources to dedicate to implementation of the CWP, the City has assigned a priority status to each action item in an effort to assist with identification of the most urgent, necessary, and/or desired programs. However, it is important to recognize that all action items included herein relate to needs and opportunities identified in the plan. The four priority levels are: 1) Current/in-Process (C), 2) High (H), 3) Medium (M), 4) Low (L).
- Responsible Party: Parties identified as being responsible for implementation of the action items include city departments, agencies, and authorities. The responsible parties identified within the CWP as listed by the following acronyms:
    - PZ – Planning and Zoning
    - GA – General Administration
    - PW – Public Works
    - PT – Park and Tree
    - FD – Fire Department
    - PD – Police Department
    - DDA – Downtown Development Authority
    - CVB – Visitor's Bureau
    - HPC – Historic Preservation Commission
    - DNR – Department of Natural Resources
    - GDOT – Department of Transportation
- Funding Source: This attempts to identify the potential or recommended funding source. It may be a specific city fund, grant, loan, or other source.

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Richmond Hill Short-term Work Program				
Action Item	*Timeframe*	*Priority*	*Responsible Party*	*Funding Source / Cost*
Economic Development				
Promote, establish, and support industrial and commercial development	Ongoing	C	GA/PZ/DDA/VB	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Attain Tree City designation	Ongoing	L	PT	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Attain All-America City Designation	Ongoing	L	GA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Explore the use of TADs, CIDs, BIDs, and other programs to improve economic development	Short-term	M	GA/PZ/DDA	Various Cost: Staff Time
Develop a better understanding of the City's retail trade area to help market Richmond Hill	Immediate	M	DDA/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Complete an inventory of water usage to help future commercial/industrial businesses better forecast utility costs	Short-term	L	GA/PZ	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: $15,000
Complete a feasibility study for potential development of a regional sports complex in Richmond Hill	Immediate	H	GA/PZ	General Fund Cost: $35,000
Transportation				
Installation of new traffic signal (Cherry Hill @ SR144)	Immediate	M	GA/PZ/GDOT	TSPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $250-$350K
Complete a condition assessment of local roads	Short-term	M	PW/PZ	General Fund Cost: $25,000
Streetscape design and improvements for Ford Avenue	Short-term	M	DDA/PZ/GDOT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $50,000-$75,000
Landscaping project to improve aesthetics along Ford Avenue	Short-term	M	DDA/PZ/GDOT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $250-$500K
Implementation of new signage program	Short-term	L	PZ/DDA/VB/GDOT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $200K
Citywide sidewalk improvements	Long-term	M	GA/PW	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $750K
Obtain sidewalk landscaping and maintenance easements and agreements	Short-term	M	GA/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time

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Richmond Hill Short-term Work Program				
Action Item	*Timeframe*	*Priority*	*Responsible Party*	*Funding Source / Cost*
Coordinate with GDOT, Bryan County, and Rayonier on Belfast Interchange project	Short-term	H	GA/PZ/GDOT	TSPLOST/SPLOST Cost: Staff Time
Develop standards for streetscape elements	Short-term	M	DDA/PZ/GDOT	TSPLOST/SPLOST Cost: Staff Time
Complete signal upgrades and intersection improvements at Rushing Street	Short-term	M	GA/PW/PZ/GDOT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $75,000
Housing				
Complete a feasibility study for development of a rental registry / fee program	Immediate	H	GA/PZ	General Fund Cost: $18,000
Identify target areas for increased code enforcement	Immediate	H	PZ/PD	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Promotion of mix of housing types and options in new developments	Ongoing	C	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Restrict development of housing in flood plains and other vulnerable areas	Ongoing	H	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Offer incentives to promote amenities and open space in new housing developments	Ongoing	H	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Natural & Cultural Resources				
Nominate buildings and sites for historic preservation	Short-term	M	HPC/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Establish bike and walking path along widened Highway 144	Short-term	L	GA/PZ	SPLOST Cost: $100-$200K
Continue to control the location and impacts of development through all available means including the Future Development Map and Zoning Ordinance	Ongoing	H	PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Continue to encourage through development review and other means environmentally-friendly practices, including green growth guidelines, smaller	Ongoing	H	PZ	SW Utility/Gen. Fund Cost: Staff Time

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Richmond Hill Short-term Work Program				
Action Item	*Timeframe*	*Priority*	*Responsible Party*	*Funding Source / Cost*
lot sizes, and open space retention				
Continue to collaborate with state and national natural resource or land conservation programs to preserve environmentally sensitive or significant areas	Ongoing	H	GA/PZ/DNR	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Make JF Gregory Park improvements	Short-term	M	GA/PT	SPLOST Cost: $300K-$500K
Continue on-going collaboration with GDOT, Bryan County, and Rayonier to facilitate a regional approach to road development, improvements, and enhancements	Ongoing	H	GA/PZ/GDOT	TSPLOST/SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: Staff Time
Update Stormwater Management Plan	Ongoing	H	PZ/PW	Stormwater Utility Cost: $12,500
Passive park project on 187 acre site	Short-term	M	GA/PT/PW/PZ	SPLOST/Gen. Fund/Grant Cost: $250K-$550K
Develop and adopt FOG (fats, oils, greases) ordinance	Short-term	M	PW/PZ	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: Staff Time
Establish historic preservation ordinance and commission	Short-term	L	PZ/VB/HPC	General Fund Cost: $15,000
Seek historic district designation	Short-term	L	HPC/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Apply for DNR trail recreation grant	Short-term	L	GA/PT/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Complete flood mitigation project on Sterling Creek	Short-term	M	GA/PZ/PW	SW Utility/General Fund Cost: $100K
Community Facilities and Services				
Build a third fire station to cope with anticipated growth	Long-term	M	GA/FD	SPLOST/General Fund Cost: $750K-$1M
Make GIS available to the general public	Ongoing	L	PZ	General Fund Cost: $6,000 / year
Construct second elevated storage tank	Long-term	M	GA/PW/PZ	Water/Sewer Fund Cost: $750K-$1M
Town Centre Engineering	Short-term	M	GA/PZ/PT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund/WS

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Richmond Hill Short-term Work Program				
Action Item	*Timeframe*	*Priority*	*Responsible Party*	*Funding Source / Cost*
and Construction				Cost: To be determined
Complete drainage project to improve conveyance in Live Oak/White Oak Neighborhood	Short-term	M	PZ/PW	Stormwater Utility Cost: $125K
Rehabilitate the Henry Ford Bakery property for tourist site	Short-term	L	GA/PZ/VB/HPC	Gen. Fund Cost: $500K
Complete irrigation and landscaping project at Town Centre Drive	Short-term	M	GA/PZ	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $45,000
Boles Park water tank landscaping project	Short-term	L	GA/PZ/PT	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $15,000
Explore additional ways to market the City Center beyond meeting and special events	Ongoing	M	GA/VB/DDA	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Study the feasibility of rehabilitation of the Egypt Trail boat ramp area	Short-term	L	PZ/PT/DNR	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Develop signage and landscaping plan to improve the aesthetics of community gateways	Long-term	M	DDA/PZ	SPLOST/Gen. Fund Cost: $20,000
GA Power LED roadway light conversion project	Short-term	L	GA/PZ/PT	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Governance / Intergovernmental Coordination				
Coordinate with County and GA Conservancy on the protection of Lost Swamp property	Long-term	M	GA/PZ/PT	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Coordinate with County on Service Delivery	Short-term	H	GA/PW/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time
Hire a special projects manager	Immediate	H	GA/PZ	General Fund/WS Fund Cost: Staff Time
Coordinate with City, DDA, and CVB for protection and purchase of historic structures (Community House, Commissary, etc.)	Immediate	H	GA/DDA/VB/HPC	Gen. Fund/SPLOST Cost: Staff Time
Coordinate with UGA and DDA on project in Crossroads area	Immediate	M	DDA/PZ	General Fund Cost: Staff Time / $7,000

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Richmond Hill Short-term Work Program				
Action Item	*Timeframe*	*Priority*	*Responsible Party*	*Funding Source / Cost*
Participate in LUCA project with County	Immediate	H	PZ/GA	General Fund Cost: $10,000
Update Short-term work program annually	Ongoing	M	PZ	General Fund Cost: $5,000
Work with DNR to identify location(s) for future public water access	Long-term	M	PZ/PT/DNR	General Fund Cost: Staff Time

Report of Accomplishments

The following report of accomplishments summarizes activities completed since the 2013 Comprehensive Plan Update. Items that are Completed have been finished within the 5-Year reporting period prior to this Comprehensive Plan Update. Items that are Underway/Continuing have been initiated or have had partial progress made and have been carried over into the new Community Workplan. Items that are Postponed are still priorities for the community and have been in the new Community Workplan. Items marked Cancelled are activities no longer prioritized by the City.

Richmond Hill Report of Accomplishments		
Project / Activity	*Status*	*Explanation / Justification*
Economic Development		
Promote, establish, and support industrial park and commercial park	Underway / Continuing	This is something the City is constantly working on.
Update economic resource guide	Completed	This has been completed and is being used as a tool for economic development. The City continues to update this in coordination with the Chamber.
Attend all Fort Stewart and Hunter Amy Airbase Community Showcases	Canceled	These events do not take place anymore, but the City does attend a lot of military based function.
Establish public relations campaign to increate knowledge of the city	Completed	Hired a public relations consultant, utilize social media, and e-blasts to keep people informed.
Attain Tree City designation	Underway / Continuing	Has been attained and the city maintains this designation by re-applying annually.
Attain All-America City Designation	Postponed	The City will learn more about this program and apply during the upcoming report period.
Natural & Cultural Resources		

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Richmond Hill Report of Accomplishments		
Project / Activity	*Status*	*Explanation / Justification*
Nominate buildings and sites for historic preservation	Underway / Continuing	City is currently establishing a historic preservation ordinance to establish a historic preservation commission that will move this process forward.
Obtain historic markers for historic sites in city	Completed	This was done via the Coastal Bryan Heritage trail.
Establish bike and walking path along widened Highway 144	Underway / Continuing	Some of these have been done, but the City stepped it up by doing sidewalk masterplan to address/expand this in other areas of the City as well.
Continue to control the location and impacts of development through all available means including the Future Development Map and Zoning Ordinance	Underway / Continuing	Adopted a new unified development ordinance.
Continue to encourage through development review and other means environmentally-friendly practices, including green growth guidelines, smaller lot sizes, and open space retention	Underway / Continuing	Adopted the CSS and promote low impact development and green infrastructure.
Continue to collaborate with state and national natural resource or land conservation programs to preserve environmentally sensitive or significant areas	Underway / Continuing	Built relationships with GA conservancy, Land Trusts, and DNR, and Rover Keepers.
Create a historic preservation ordinance	Completed	Adopted in 2018
Inventory the city's scenic resources, and consider guidelines and standards to protect significant views and vistas	Canceled	Have established buffer requirements and tree protection measures.
Community Facilities and Services		
Build a third fire station to cope with anticipated growth	Underway / Continuing	Working with Rayonier to acquire property. Fire Station 1 was renovated and expanded to provide a higher level of service until the third station is constructed.
Make GIS available to the general public	Underway / Continuing	To be limited to generally data such as zoning, parcels, streets, aerials.
Complete downtown streetscape plan	Postponed	DDA should take the lead and the City is looking into working with UGA to kick off this process.
Upgrade police communications mobile data terminals	Canceled	Emergency services continue to evolve and keep up with technological advances.
Explore possible development of additional city building to house expanded planning and zoning department, code enforcement, and other city departments	Completed	The City purchased 57 acres for expansion of services and acquired a 187 acres property for future park and trails.
Upgrade wastewater treatment plan	Completed	

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Richmond Hill Report of Accomplishments		
Project / Activity	*Status*	*Explanation / Justification*
Construct second elevated storage tank	Underway / Continuing	Have added a smaller tank to increase pressure, but the elevated tank is still necessary.
Parks and Trees		
Add new exercise and playground equipment to city parks	Completed	This has been added at JF Gregory exercise and playground at Richmond heights.
Make JF Gregory Park improvements	Underway / Continuing	This is a popular park that the city is constantly working to improve.
Purchase additional park space	Completed	Acquired a 187 acres property for future park and trails.
Continue cooperation, communication, and coordination with surrounding municipalities and jurisdictions, citizens, nonprofits, and social service organizations with regard to planning development and potentially collaborate to share information and identify goals and objectives to satisfy common interests and needs	Completed	Elected officials and city staff are involved in multiple boards, committees, groups, etc.
Monitor and evaluate opportunities for regional facilities and services	Completed	The City is now a member of the CORE MPO and involved with the CRC.
Continue on-going collaboration with Georgia DOT to facilitate a regional approach to road development, improvements, and enhancements	Underway / Continuing	The City continually partners with GDOT.
Re-negotiate service delivery strategy with Bryan County as needed.	Completed	City and County have a SDS.

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RICHMOND HILL
GEORGIA

MAYOR
RUSS CARPENTER

MAYOR PRO-TEM
JOHNNY MURPHY

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
JAN BASS
TARA BARANIAK
JOHN FESPERMAN, JR.

CITY MANAGER
CHRIS LOVELL

CITY CLERK
DAWNNE GREENE

April 19, 2018

Mr. Allen Burns, Executive Director
Coastal Georgia Regional Commission
1181 Coastal Drive
Darien, Georgia 31305

RE: 2018 – 2028 Comprehensive Plan
Richmond Hill, Georgia

Dear Mr. Burns,

The City of Richmond Hill has completed an update of its comprehensive plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Coastal Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that appropriate staff and decision-makers have reviewed both the Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8) and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan. These issues are also addressed in the body of the document.

I certify that we have held the required public hearings and have involved the public in development of the plan in a manner appropriate to our community's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal.

We welcome the opportunity to address any questions regarding the enclosed documents. Please contact me at (912) 756-3345 should you have any questions or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

CITY OF RICHMOND HILL, GEORGIA

Russ Carpenter
Mayor

P.O. BOX 250 | RICHMOND HILL, GA 31324
WWW.RICHMONDHILL-GA.GOV | PH: 912-756-3345 | FX: 912-756-3368

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF RICHMOND HILL, GEORGIA ADOPTING THE RICHMOND HILL 2018 - 2028 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Richmond Hill has prepared a 2018 Update to the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of Richmond Hill selected a committee of Stakeholders composed of a cross-section of the community, and

WHEREAS, the Stakeholders Committee met regularly over a 12-month period to establish goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Richmond Hill staff met regularly over the same 12-month period with representatives of other agencies to advise them of the findings of the Committee to solicit their input in preparing the goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the future of the community, and

WHEREAS, Richmond Hill staff assembled the recommendations of community stakeholders and prepared such other documents in the Comprehensive Plan format required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), and

WHEREAS, Chapter 110-12-1 of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Local Planning Requirements requires that the Mayor and Council of Richmond Hill approve the document entitled Richmond Hill 2018 2028 Comprehensive Plan prior to forwarding it to the Coastal Georgia Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and

WHEREAS, the Richmond Hill 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan was prepared according to the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1) effective March 1, 2014, and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, and includes the community's certification that consideration was given to both the Regional Water Plan and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria as provided in Section 110-12-1-.02(3) of the above mentioned Standards and Procedures in preparing the Plan.

WHEREAS, on April 12, 2018, the City transmitted the Plan to the CRC and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review; and,

WHEREAS, the Plan has been found by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to be in compliance with the above-mentioned Minimum Standards and Procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF RICHMOND HILL, GEORGIA, that the Richmond Hill 2018 - 2028 Comprehensive Plan is hereby approved and adopted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City staff be directed to provide a copy of this adoption resolution within seven (7) days of local adoption of the approved Plan to the CRC, and to publicize the availability of the adopted Plan as public information by posting the Plan on the City's website.

ADOPTED this 19th day of June, 2018.

Attest:

Dawnne Greene City Clerk (Seal)

Approved:

Russ Carpenter, Mayor