



McIntosh County Partial Comprehensive Plan Update

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Section I: Quality Community Objectives Assessment
- Section II: An Analysis of Areas Requiring Special Attention
- Section III: Short Term Work Program
- Section IV: Policy Adoption
- Section V: Report of Accomplishments
- Section VI: Transmittal Letter and Public Hearing Requirements

Comprehensive Plan Update: McIntosh County

Boundary and Description

McIntosh is one of Georgia's six ocean-facing counties. The county has a total area of 575 square miles; 433 square miles is upland and 142 square miles (24.56%) is water. McIntosh County was created in 1793 from part of Liberty County and became the state's 17th county. The county was named for the McIntosh clan who pioneered the area. Adjacent counties include Liberty County on its northern border; Glynn County on its southern border; Wayne County on its western corner; and Long County on its northwestern corner.

McIntosh County is rich in historical sites. Fort King George, the first English fort in Georgia, was on the site of Darien. In the late 16th century, Franciscan friars from Spain established a mission on a bluff near Darien. On the same site had been an Indian village of great antiquity. Ruins of a Spanish fort and mission are also found on Sapelo Island.

Vision

The publicly stated vision of this plan is to be prepared for future growth trends by invoking smart, controlled growth strategies. The community desires a balanced plan that promotes business recruitment and affordable housing while at the same time preserving its unique historical heritage and protecting its precious natural resources such as marshes, rivers, islands that enhance the quality of life for all its residents.

Quality Community Objectives

Georgia's comprehensive planning program requires local governments to analyze the consistency of their policies with regard to 15 quality community objectives identified in Chapter 110-12-1-.06, O.C.G.A. That Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives is intended to steer stakeholders towards considering options for improving their community through the pursuit of quality growth practices. This plan represents the analysis of McIntosh County policies with the following Quality Community Objectives:

Development Patterns Objectives

- Traditional Neighborhoods- Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.
- Infill Development- Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.
- Sense of Place- Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use,

pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

- Transportation Alternatives- Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.
- Regional Identity- Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

Resource Conservation Objectives

- Heritage Preservation- The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community’s character.
- Open Space Preservation- New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors.
- Environmental Protection- Air quality and environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development. Environmentally sensitive areas deserve special protection, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

Social and Economic Development Objectives

- Growth Preparedness- Each community should identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These may include housing and infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and telecommunications) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances to direct growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities.
- Appropriate Businesses- The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.
- Employment Options- A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.
- Housing Opportunities- Quality housing and a range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community, to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community.
- Educational Opportunities- Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

Government Relations Objectives

- Regional Solutions- Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.
- Regional Cooperation- Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources.

In a series of public meetings, McIntosh County citizens reviewed their desired vision for the future of the county in respect to each of the above listed Quality Community Objectives. The following report represents their analysis of the county's strengths and issues, balanced with the opportunities and steps necessary to reach a commonly desired vision.

Development Patterns

The analysis of the Objectives for Development Patterns indicates that the current pattern of development in McIntosh County does not support the goals of the community. The county's zoning and land use policies do not achieve a balance between growth and the sense of community. Huge tracts of McIntosh County are owned by the timber industry and, therefore, much of the county is zoned Agriculture/Forestry. Today, large parcels of forest land are being sold for development. Those large parcels are being subdivided and re-sold as small parcels for construction of residential lots and small scale commercial units. That trend has led to widespread spot zoning, which, in turn, impacts many aspects of the Development Patterns objectives, especially those associated with valuing traditional neighborhoods, infill development, and promoting a sense of place.

The Analysis further reveals that the lack of a Capital Improvement Plan has impacted Infill Development objectives. Existing infrastructure has not been maintained to the extent that it would be cost effective to make improvements to existing infrastructure as opposed to replacing it with new infrastructure. An exception to this case is the Industrial Authority area.

A strong desire exists among McIntosh citizens to preserve the unique features of McIntosh County. The rich natural habitats and coastal character, the live oak canopied vistas, and abundant wild life areas contribute to a lifestyle that is enviable to a large portion of the population. One unique characteristic of McIntosh County is a popular feeling that their sense of place determines their lifestyle. Residents relate in terms of their natural habitat. In McIntosh County, for instance, farming and agriculture often relate to harvesting crops from the sea, such as shrimp, fish, and crabs. Preservation of farmland in McIntosh County may well refer to protecting clam, oyster, and mussel beds and growing habitat. Transportation alternatives may imply the need for better boat ramps to access waterways; bike trails to better access the wildlife viewing areas and walking paths to better access the Coastal Birding Trails. The barrier islands of McIntosh County immediately identify the region and bring to mind the peace, tranquility, diverse wildlife, and beautiful vistas that are so important to the wellbeing of the population.

Residents caution that it is those very characteristics that may be lost if current development patterns continue.

Objective Strengths and Issues

The sections that follow discuss first the strength and issue of each objective as revealed in the analysis, followed by the opportunities and the implementation plan that will address the identified factors.

Traditional Neighborhoods

Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

Analysis of this Quality Community Objective reveals several real strengths. First, the county is currently in the process of a wide-scale updating of ordinances and an update to the Planned Unit Development code is under review. In addition, a model tree ordinance is in development for the west side of the county that can be applied to the entire county. Finally, where feasible, sidewalks are being installed in many areas of the county,

Stated issues include: 1) the need for further assessment of development patterns in the county; 2) zoning codes are outdated; and 3) the Planning and Zoning Commission members do not have the tools and the training to address the increasing development pressures and issues facing the county.

In light of these issues, several opportunities are available to the county. One opportunity is to create a joint Planning Commission between the city and the county. This opportunity would provide for coordinated decision making, as many areas in the county planned for development also border the city. A second opportunity is to hire a planner to provide sound land use decision-making advice that adheres to the desire of the community to preserve the sense of place objectives mentioned above. Such a planning position would be expected to advise the Commission before approving any development, and would be a resource for zoning and land use map revisions. The Planning and Zoning Commission members have expressed a desire for training on the current policies for making land use decisions. Another identified opportunity is to seek coordination with the Tax Assessors' office to better reveal development patterns in the county. This opportunity would require an investment in technology that will integrate GIS services. It would, however, lead to the development of up to date land use and zoning maps.

To implement these changes, the county intends to create a joint planning and zoning commission. The county desires to hire a planner to update the zoning codes, create overlay districts to guide future growth and provide guidance to the Planning Commission. The county intends to provide training to Planning and Zoning Commission members. The county further intends to coordinate resources with the tax assessor's office. With an investment in technology, the county expects to refine its land use and

zoning maps based on the development patterns revealed by the coordination with tax assessor maps.

Infill Development

Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

This objective may be more difficult to attain because the lack of capital improvements in the past has created a situation in which it will now require more financial outlay to improve existing infrastructure than to build new infrastructure. Brownfield redevelopment is not an issue in McIntosh County; however, one area of concern is being closely monitored. An abandoned gas station has leaked fuel underground. The county does not have an inventory of vacant or abandoned buildings, which can be viewed as opportunity, but again, the infrastructure requirements would require a cost/benefit analysis.

A County strength for Infill Development objectives is the retail area known locally as the Outlet Mall. The retail area is attractive and is highly visible and easily accessible from Interstate 95. This strength is also considered an issue because a strategy is needed that will restrict highway commercial establishments to intersections. The high visibility of the Outlet Mall is incongruent with the area's sense of place. Developments that detract from the aesthetic values, especially as one enters the county, should be discouraged. Another issue for the county at the Outlet Mall area is the planned changes to the interstate exchange by the Department of Transportation (DOT). **The McIntosh County Board of Commissioners do not support or endorse the DOT's plans of placing a median on Georgia Highway 251 at the Interstate 95 exit 49 interchange.** McIntosh County citizens are concerned that new development will not reflect the unique character of the area, and that commercial development will clutter the corridor into the county. Citizens also consider the need to monitor hazardous waste area to prevent further brownfield areas an issue. Because of limited resources, the county finds it difficult to monitor problems and prosecute those who violate ordinances.

The opportunity exists to update zoning ordinances to restrict commercial growth to certain areas coupled with design guidelines that reflect the unique character of the area, as well as, to ensure that the corridor area to McIntosh County reflects that unique character and remains attractive.

To implement these standards, the county intends to update zoning ordinances to include Planned Urban Development. The update will also include overlay districts with design guidelines and standards. In addition, the county will develop a Corridor Management Plan. Further, the county intends to hire a code enforcement officer to identify and take civil action against zoning infractions. The county will work in close cooperation with the State Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division to monitor the potential brownfield site.

Sense of Place

Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.

McIntosh County is identifiable because of its extensive marshes and tree canopied roads. The character of McIntosh has been dictated by its wetlands, rivers, streams and the sea. A unique strength for the county is its sense of place. Fish and wildlife habitat areas bring thousands of tourists, as do the barrier islands known for their natural beauty throughout the world. The tradition of Blessing the Fishing Fleet is an annual event that highlights the character and culture of the county and emphasizes the importance of the natural bounty from the sea as a unique feature of lifestyle in the area.

The area is rich in history. Darien, the only incorporated city in McIntosh County, is the 2nd oldest city in the state. The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center has identified more than 75 historic sites in the city. In 2006 a new Internet resource was created by Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (NAHRGIS) as an interactive Web-based registry and geographical information system. The link listed 758 sites of historical significance in McIntosh County.

McIntosh is a county steeped in history and bound in tradition. From the beginning, the character of McIntosh has been dictated by its wetlands, river, streams and the sea. The first European settlers in McIntosh were British troops sent to construct and garrison Ft. King George on the Altamaha River in 1721. Three years after the founding of Savannah and the Colony of Georgia in 1733 by British General James Oglethorpe, the town of Darien was established by hardy Scotch Highlanders sent from Savannah by General Oglethorpe to reconstruct the fort on the river. As lands were cleared and crops planted, it was the abundant fishes, clams, mussels and oysters that sustained the early settlers, as they had the Guale and other Native American peoples for a thousand years. The area grew and prospered. Swamplands were drained and impounded and the rising and falling tide water was harnessed to provide for the production of rice crops and as irrigation for indigo and cotton. Large and tremendously profitable plantations dominated the area from after the Revolutionary war to the beginning of the War Between the States. Darien became a major port city as its agricultural commodities were shipped throughout the world. Yellow pine was cut in the Piedmont and moved down the Oconee and Ocmulgee to the Altamaha in huge rafts of floating logs destined for the saw mills in Darien and the surrounding county. Cotton and naval products were also transported down the Altamaha to be shipped with the pine planks and agricultural products to foreign and domestic markets

A strong public will to preserve the traditions and heritage of the area exists in McIntosh County. Contributing to that objective, the county exhibits several strengths: a Corridor Management Plan for the Altamaha Scenic Byway, conservation easements to protect

seafood harvesting areas, and an ordinance to regulate the type, size and placement of signs.

At issue; however, the county ordinances do not require that certain characteristic building materials or architectural designs be used in highly visible areas. The sign ordinance requires revision to ensure design guidelines are required. While the county has delineated areas of historical and cultural significance, stronger protection and preservation requirements in these areas are needed.

McIntosh County needs, and plans to pursue funding for a new courthouse. The location and design of a new courthouse is an opportunity to visually provide a sense of place that represents the unique history and character of the county. In conjunction, the opportunity exists to put polices in place to require building materials and signs to adhere to characteristic design guidelines.

To implement this objective, the county will plan for a new county courthouse under the SPLOST session in the coming year. The county will review policies and guidelines for regulating building materials, signs, and stronger protection of historical resources.

Transportation Alternatives

Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

McIntosh County possesses significant strengths in the area of Transportation. A Public transportation system will be in place by July 1, 2008. The county is participating in a joint DHR/DOT program which provides funding for a "Ridership Program." In addition, several bike paths are nearing completion. McIntosh County received Transportation Enhancement funds in 2006 to begin construction on the proposed "Highlander Trail." The Highlander Trail will be section of the East Coast Greenway, which is a long distance off-road chain of multi-use non-motorized trails passing through 15 states. The Trail extends from the northernmost point in Maine to the southernmost points in Florida. The trail is expected to run from Sapelo Dock Road along GA Highway 99 and connect to the pedestrian/bike trail in Darien.

As a transportation alternative, sidewalks are available in the major population centers. McIntosh County's subdivision ordinance requests that new developments be continuations of adjoining street systems and that access is provided to adjacent property, where feasible.

Given the county's limited resources coupled with the sprawling rural nature of many county residential areas, sidewalk construction would represent an impossible financial burden. One option being considered is to require developers to install sidewalks that provide access to adjoining street systems and adjacent property.

To implement this objective, the county intends to complete its review of subdivision requirements to ensure that transportation alternatives are included.

Regional Identity

Regions should promote and preserve an “identity,” defined in terms of traditional regional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.

McIntosh County’s economy is tied to traditional occupations through its fishing industry and wood products industry. The aesthetics of the area, including, live oak canopies, expansive marshland vistas and barrier islands, create a distinctive atmosphere that defines McIntosh County as a coastal area of substantial natural beauty.

The proximity of two major United States military installations, Fort Stewart Army base in Liberty County, and Kings Bay naval Submarine station in Camden County, contribute to the regional identity. These two installations are valued and supported by the region.

The opportunity exists to promote the regional identity as a coastal environment that contributes to the quality of life and the economy. To implement this objective, the county intends to implement the objectives as stated in the Coastal Comprehensive Plan.

Resource Conservation

The Resource Conservation category includes the Heritage Preservation, Open Space, and Environmental Protection components of the Quality Community Objectives. An analysis of these objectives reveals that while McIntosh County has an abundance of natural resources contributing to open space, sense of place and regional identity, the county lacks adequate resource protection policies and ordinances to protect these unique strengths from encroachment by development.

The sections that follow discuss first the strength of the identified objectives, secondly the issues for the county, followed by the opportunities and finally by the implementation plan to address the analysis.

Heritage Preservation

The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

McIntosh County is fortunate to possess a rich heritage, and the associated public will to preserve that heritage. Contributing to the county’s rich character is a unique history comprised of 500 years of European settlement. A major issue facing McIntosh County is the absence of designated historic districts. Sites of historic and/or cultural significance are not protected by ordinance and are, therefore, vulnerable to incompatible development. The county is fortunate that a group of volunteers has agreed to research threats to historic resources in the area. That group of local residents is currently cataloguing historic sites and formulating recommendations to policy makers for their protection and preservation. In addition, the group is cataloguing area cemeteries in an

effort to protect those assets from encroachment by development. The group is also reviewing methods to preserve the live oak tree canopy prevalent in the county.

The volunteers have requested training, and the county is continuing to support their efforts.

The protection and preservation of historic structures and sites is an opportunity for the county to create a unique environment and feel to the community. Enhancement of cultural and historic resources also helps to strengthen the local economy by promoting tourism and encouraging investment. Moss-draped, evergreen canopied roadways are a coveted asset to most cities in coastal Georgia. McIntosh County residents feel that such aesthetics provide the same appeal for prospective residents and business recruits as the panoramic mountains provide in coastal California, or white beaches in Florida. Maintaining and enhancing the tree canopy along county roads, in the face of increased development pressures, will pay invaluable quality of life dividends for years to come. County officials support the adoption of a tree ordinance similar to that of the City of Tallahassee, Florida. The city has an effective canopy road preservation ordinance that designates five local county roads as Canopy Roads and requires permits for tree cutting within 50 feet of the center line of each of the five roads.

In addition, the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) offers a relatively new context sensitive design program for respecting the integrity of corridors where special resources would be impacted by the imposition of modern highway design standards. Several other opportunities exist for the county, as well. The Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division (HPD) offers technical assistance in archaeological, cemetery preservation, and historic preservation planning, along with limited financial assistance for preservation through its Georgia Heritage and Historic Preservation Fund grant programs.

To implement effective heritage preservation program, the county intends to create and support the efforts of an Architectural Review Board to maintain and promote the historical integrity and existence of significant structures. The county will seek grant funding to provide for assistance in developing overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development, as well as to develop best practices in the development of programs to enhance and to promote cultural and historic resources to the public. The promotion of designated historic sites and natural resources through events, projects, public education, and recognition programs is an important element in maintaining the public will to preserve the area's rich heritage as well as promoting tourism.

The county will continue to pursue financial resources for protection and restoration of historic buildings that will ultimately lead to the designation of historic districts, unique landmarks.

To ensure that new development complements historic development, the county will complete its review of ordinances and will adopt those ordinances that will ensure compatibility, such as those that maintain buffers in natural areas between

roadway and housing or commercial development. This review effort will also lead to the adoption of appropriate aesthetic regulations and "scenic controls" along county roadways. The county intends to develop a Corridor Management Plan to control development and limit development of manufactured housing along scenic corridors.

Open Space Preservation

New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.

McIntosh County has many acres of natural open space provided by state protected salt marshes and the added bonus of permanent conservation provided by Federal in holdings. The county has a Conservation-Preservation (CP) zoning district that preserves and controls development within certain upland, marshland, and water areas of the county. One other tool that assists policymakers with land use decision making is the recently completed "GreenPrint" plan developed by The Trust for Public Land.

Issues include the fact that the county has no formal green space program to provide habitat for sensitive and endangered species, and no plan that will preserve these resources or protect them from negative impacts of development. The county has no process to provide mitigation for impacted areas. Furthermore, citizens have expressed concern that the number of public access points to recreational waters is decreasing. McIntosh County has not adopted a specific conservation subdivision ordinance. The existing conservation subdivision ordinance is part of the general zoning ordinance.

To preserve environmentally important areas in the community, McIntosh County has the opportunity to require developers to: provide habitat for sensitive and endangered species; produce a plan to preserve these resources and protect them from negative impacts where feasible; or provide mitigation as appropriate. The recently completed GreenPrint plan can be consulted to steer development from environmentally sensitive areas.

Working with developers, the county can minimize impacts to those areas by encouraging compact development. These efforts also provide the opportunity to maintain and preserve open space with significant cultural or historical heritage such as old rice dikes and canals, and promote these areas as tourism and recreational destinations.

To implement these objectives, the county intends to adopt ordinances that will preserve scenic vistas and natural local ecological features; maintain and preserve open space with significant historic heritage. The county will also adopt a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development to protect open space in perpetuity.

Environmental Protection

Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

McIntosh County has a wealth of natural resources such as wetlands, coastal marshes, protected rivers, and floodplains, which are located throughout the county. The county's natural resources are host to a variety of threatened and endangered species, such as the American Alligator, Sturgeon, and Wood Stork. According to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, Sapelo Island is the fourth largest Georgia barrier island and one of the most pristine. The reserve is made up of salt marshes, maritime forests and beach dune areas. Blackbeard Island National Wildlife Refuge, Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and Altamaha State Waterfowl Management Area are located within the boundaries of McIntosh County. These Wildlife Refuges are managed by the Fish and Wildlife Services, U.S. Department of Interior, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources respectively.

Steps have been taken to protect natural resources. McIntosh County has adopted a Regional River Corridor Protection Plan for the Altamaha River. In addition, McIntosh County's existing subdivision ordinance advocates for the preservation of trees, and stormwater regulations are required in new developments. Some stormwater protection is inherent in the natural landscape. The rivers and streams in the Coastal Plain of Georgia contain wide floodplains that carry and store floodwaters and tidal storm surges. Most floodplains in McIntosh County consist of swamps, pine and hardwood forests. The Altamaha River floodplain has a diameter greater than 12.43 miles in most areas. In addition, a weighted overlay tool is available to policy makers when making future land use and development decisions. This tool was created according to DNR regulations and recommendations for the Solid Waste Management Plan to protect sensitive areas from generated waste.

McIntosh County does not have a comprehensive survey of its natural resources and has not yet adopted any of the Department of Natural Resources minimum environmental protection ordinances, which protect groundwater recharge areas, wetlands and river corridors. This issue leaves environmentally sensitive areas unprotected from development and in danger of being lost. Due to the high water table, many areas in McIntosh County are susceptible to flooding. Progressive floodplain management, shoreline protection, and streamside vegetated corridors are lacking. McIntosh County does not have a stormwater system, and has limited ability to provide that system in the future.

To protect natural resources, the county has several opportunities. One opportunity is to extend the standards in the Protection Plan for those rivers and streams not impacted by the River Corridor Protection Act. Such action would provide more stringent protection of surface water quality in McIntosh County.

Stormwater management regulations consistent with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) Part V environmental regulations applied to new development can help protect the integrity of wetland areas. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Coastal Resources Division can provide information and assistance with best management practices for low-impact development. The Coastal Comprehensive Plan provides guidance and a potential source of funding to address many of these issues.

To implement strategies to meet this objective, the county intends to adopt stormwater management regulations that are consistent with stormwater management regulations included in the EPD's Part V environmental regulations. The county will consult with the DNR's Coastal Resources Division on best management practices, natural resources inventory, and seek assistance with modifications appropriate for use in McIntosh County. Land use regulations will be designed to address wetland protection, including floodplain, stormwater management, and pollution control ordinances. The county will continue to investigate all opportunities for conservation of protected animal and plant habitats, achievement of water quality standards and management of water resources, conservation of freshwater and saltwater marshlands, and protection of aquifer recharge areas. With that goal in mind, the county will develop and enhance local ordinances which facilitate resource protection.

Social and Economic Development

The Social and Economic Development category includes Growth Preparedness, Appropriate Businesses, Employment Options, Housing Opportunities, and Educational Opportunities objectives. The analysis of these objectives reveals several areas of concern, foremost of which is that the population of McIntosh County is predicted to increase by 72 per cent over the next 20 years. In anticipation of that population growth, the community prefers to attract environmentally friendly businesses and industries that do not require heavy water use. The opportunity exists to capitalize on the unique history and natural resources of the area and build business around tourism. The expected increase in population provides the opportunity to recruit medical service businesses. The analysis revealed a need to focus on the quality of the local workforce to enable the county to attract appropriate business. The analysis also revealed the need to increase the supply of lower income residential and rental units to the housing choices.

The sections that follow discuss first the strength of the identified objectives, secondly the issues for the county, followed by the opportunities and finally by the implementation plan to address the analysis.

Growth Preparedness

Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.

The county has population projections for the next 20 years prepared by Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development. The population in McIntosh County is projected to be 18,626 in the year 2030, a 72 percent increase in population from year 2000. The largest growth rates are expected to occur in the age groups of 55 to 59, 65 to 69, and 80 to 85. Thus, most of the population increase will consist of pre-retirement and retirement age persons. A 45 percent increase in this age group is expected in five years. McIntosh County's building permits have shown a substantial increase, ranging from 41 to 734 annually from 2000 to 2005.

To accommodate this predicted growth trend, the county is fortunate to have available land for development as the timber industry is divesting itself of large tracts of land. In addition, the county is in the final stages of securing a US Department of Agriculture grant/loan for a combined \$9,000,000 for improvements to the public water supply – an effort which will greatly expand and link individual well systems throughout the central part of the county. The program will also include the construction of a treatment facility and an additional well capacity.

The county is in the process of reviewing its regulations and ordinances to comply with the American Planning Associations' Smart Growth Objectives. As the county prepares for the expected population growth, another strength includes the recent work on transportation corridors. Bridges have been raised to accommodate commercial vehicles, and boat ramps have been renovated.

The county is working with the McIntosh County Industrial Authority to attract appropriate business to the area. In addition, a weighted overlay tool is available to policy makers when making future land use and development decisions. This tool was created according to DNR regulations and recommendations for the Solid Waste Management Plan to protect sensitive areas from generated waste.

Several issues are related to the projected growth trends. Increasing land values are prompting timber companies to sell large tracts of land for residential development. These tracts are often in environmentally sensitive areas and lack water and sewer service. In addition, the zoning ordinance update is not complete. Due to lack of funding, the Capital Improvement Plan is not utilized properly to implement the Capital Improvement Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan should reflect the expected increase in services for government and law enforcement and should include plans for a new courthouse, jail, and animal services. Elected officials require better training to understand land development processes. Without design guidelines in place, the growth that occurs may be incompatible with attracting appropriate business to the area.

Balanced against these many issues are many opportunities. The region hosts the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. This center has expanded services and attracts many professionals to the area. One major opportunity for the community is the upgrade of the local community college to a four year campus. Two military installations are located in neighboring counties. These facilities bring families into the area. The county has the

opportunity, before anticipated population explosion, to enact green growth guidelines, conservation subdivisions, and green infrastructure policies. Another opportunity for the county is to apply for the authority to assess impact fees. This ability will allow the county to require developers in subdivision to install street paving, hydrants, street lights, curbing, gutter, and septic systems.

To implement the objectives the county intends to several activities: continue to revise regulations to be consistent with practices as outlined in the Coastal Comprehensive Plan; create overlay districts with design guidelines and standards for commercial and residential use; update regulations to address streetscape design along pedestrian amenities and public rights-of-way; prepare a Capital Improvement Plan to include a new courthouse, upgrade in jail services and animal services; consider a joint planning commission; prepare a good land use map, work with tax assessors' office to provide better mapping to discern patterns of development in the county; and prepare a good zoning map.

Appropriate Businesses

The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

McIntosh County brings several strengths to this objective. The county is situated near and has access to two large ports and three interstate highways.

The McIntosh County Development Authority has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible with the types of businesses already in the community. The Authority owns large tracts of land off the interstate available for industry Workforce Development has been a coordinated effort with the Coastal Georgia Community College Adult Education Department and technical programs, Job Corps Center and McIntosh County School System. This effort can be further refined to train a workforce and attract business to the area. The Outlet Mall Retail area is in a good location to attract appropriate businesses.

One issue for attracting appropriate business to the county is the lack of a skilled workforce. As the county relies on the strength of the region to provide a broad base of employment, there is not a diverse job base in McIntosh County. In addition, the county's traditional industry: shrimping and commercial fishing is in an economic decline. There is concern that unplanned business development could lead to unattractive corridor development into the county. Such development may be incompatible with attracting tourism and heritage businesses.

The county has several opportunities in this area. Workforce development can be easily implemented to attract business. The Outlet Mall area provides a good location for business growth. The opportunity exists to plan for several economic variables, such as an increase in the student and staff population at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the military build-up at the Fort Stewart Army base and Kings Bay naval

submarine base, and the prospect of a four year college campus in an adjacent county. Another appropriate business avenue to explore is that of home based businesses.

The opportunity exists to protect the corridor into the county by reserving the corridors for the highest quality development. The soils in the vicinity of Interstate 95 will not support industrial development. The county has the opportunity to promote areas around highway exits for services and as a gateway to the county; and to limit or zone undesirable uses out of major highway and potential gateway corridors. The opportunity exists to devise a business development strategy and coordinate with the college and adult education services.

To implement this objective the county has several opportunities. All activities will be coordinated with McIntosh County Industrial Authority and the Department of Transportation. Land use and zoning maps will be coordinated with the tax assessors' office to provide policymakers with the necessary decision making tools. The county's business regulations will be reviewed to ensure the requirements remain friendly to home based businesses.

Employment Options

A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

The county relies on the strength of the region to provide a broad base of employment. Locally, the historic resources in McIntosh County can become a recruitment tool to draw people, as studies indicate that economic growth is occurring through tourism and recreation activities. These industries provide added opportunities for small businesses entrepreneurs.

The county has limited professional opportunities and a limited job base at this time, and County resources are too limited to develop an entrepreneurship support program.

Opportunities to address the employment issues are realistic and promising. The impending four year college campus in Glynn County brings opportunities for continuing education, workforce development and cultural activities that may attract retirees to the area. The history and natural environment of the county will tremendously enhance this effort. Increased interest in ecotourism provides another opportunity for employment options.

To implement these goals, the county will seek to coordinate with appropriate organizations to improve workforce training and readiness in support of economic development efforts; continue to work with school board and other agencies to facilitate providing adult education; and coordinate a business development strategy with the McIntosh County Industrial authority.

Housing Choices

A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.

People who work in McIntosh County can also afford to live in McIntosh County. The jobs-housing ratio in McIntosh County in 2000 ranked 1.42 workers to one housing unit. The jobs-housing unit ratio is calculated by dividing the number of jobs by the number of housing units. According to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), 1.3-1.7 to 1 is considered within the ranges of ratios that constitute “balance.” This low ratio indicates that the number of housing units in the community is more than sufficient to meet the housing needs of workers. 52% of housing stock in county is single family units; 44% is manufactured homes, and 3% is multifamily homes. Contributing to the strength of this option is the newly passed Planned Unit Development ordinance in the county. In addition, a sufficient number of upper income single family units exist.

Several issues concerning housing options exist in the county. McIntosh County has a substantial portion of its resident labor force commuting to work outside the county. The high percentage of commuters indicates that the area is serving as a bedroom community for the region rather than a balanced community. Property values are rising, which may eventually make it less affordable for the workforce to live in McIntosh County. There is a lack of diverse housing opportunities and homeownership rates in the county are low. In 2000, 26% of the county’s population was classified as cost burdened (households paying 30% or more of net income on total housing costs). According to the Georgia State of the State’s Housing: Service Delivery Region 12 report produced by the University of Georgia, Housing and Demographics Research Center; there are no public-subsidized housing units in McIntosh County. There are no programs that focus on special needs housing such as for the elderly and disabled.

These issues point to the need for supplementary lower income units, public housing, and also rental units. Lower income units are typically mobile homes which become an issue if homes are not kept up to code. McIntosh County has limited resources for enforcing codes.

There is an opportunity to explore methods for managing the increase in mobile homes through adopting and implementing ordinances to ensure that these units are kept up to codes and remain a safe place to reside.

To implement these goals the county intends several actions. The county will continue to assist prospective developers of low and moderate income housing in getting technical information on site development, financing, and building requirements. The county will continue to review and, as appropriate, upgrade manufactured housing standards. This regulation review will ensure that policies are compatible with the American Planning Association Smart Growth Guidelines to allow for all types of housing in all areas. The county will complete the review of county-wide ordinances; adopt and enforce

appropriate aesthetic regulations and "scenic controls" along county roadways to include restrictions on the age of mobile homes allowed in the county. The county intends to hire a code enforcement officer to monitor compliance with codes.

Governmental Relations

McIntosh County has long relied on the strength of the region and partners with many joint agencies to bring about economic development and environmental solutions for area residents. Development pressures have provided an increased need for the county to think regionally, especially in issues like land use, transportation, and housing; understanding that these go beyond local government borders.

Regional Solutions

Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.

McIntosh County partnered with the Board of Education and the Coastal Georgia Community College to launch a workforce development center. McIntosh County is part of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and related Short Term Work Program. The county participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership. McIntosh County participates in regional economic development and regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues. The county works with other local governments to provide and share appropriate services such as the Three Rivers Library in Glynn County. Efforts are underway on provide Enhanced 911 throughout the county. The city and county completed a joint Community Assessment.

Issues will develop if the county does not join in regional efforts to control growth. Because the county's resources are limited, participation can be a burden to public officials.

The regional cooperation exemplified in the development of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan and the accompanying efforts to assist counties with planning for smart growth is a great opportunity.

The county intends to complete the review of county-wide ordinances to ensure compliance with Coastal Comprehensive Plan.

Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.

The city and county completed a joint Community Assessment and intends future collaborations to effectively serve the citizenry. To deliver drinking water to residents, there are currently 15 active water wells in McIntosh County. Two wells are located in the City of Darien, and six in unincorporated McIntosh County. Six wells are private and

one is state owned and operated well. The county has no water treatment facilities at this time, but is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to secure grants and loans for improvements to the public water system including the construction of a treatment facility and an additional well capacity. McIntosh County and the City of Darien both operate volunteer fire departments.

McIntosh County participates in regional economic development and regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues. The county is anticipating economic stimulus from the Coastal Georgia Greenway, and Southern Passages bike trail initiative.

Issues include again, limited financial resources. McIntosh County is currently experiencing rapid growth in population as well as residential construction. With these increases, the demand for services will also increase proportionally. McIntosh County is currently operating on the 1999 Service Delivery Strategy (SDS).

With the increases in residential construction and the amount of impermeable surfaces within McIntosh County, a stormwater system to mitigate the impacts on important natural resources such as marshlands and shellfish beds should be created. The current inventory of unpaved streets within the county should be made a priority effort in improving the street network within the community. The unlined, 16-acre King Road Municipal Landfill serving both McIntosh County and the City of Darien has an anticipated life expectancy at the current disposal rate of 22 years. With the increase in residential development and population growth, this estimate will likely decrease the life expectancy of the landfill. The ISO rating within McIntosh County and the City of Darien is relatively poor with some areas in the county having no fire protection at all.

These issues provide an opportunity to focus on regional solutions. One solution is to increase collaboration between the county and city to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of both long term planning and service delivery. The Coastal Comprehensive Plan and related Short-Term Work Program will provide the opportunity to discuss solutions on a regional scale. The opportunity exists to improve the ISO rating in the community and thus decrease residents fire insurance rates for their property. The county will implement solutions by continuing to coordinate with regional efforts for E-911, fire, water, and wastewater treatment.

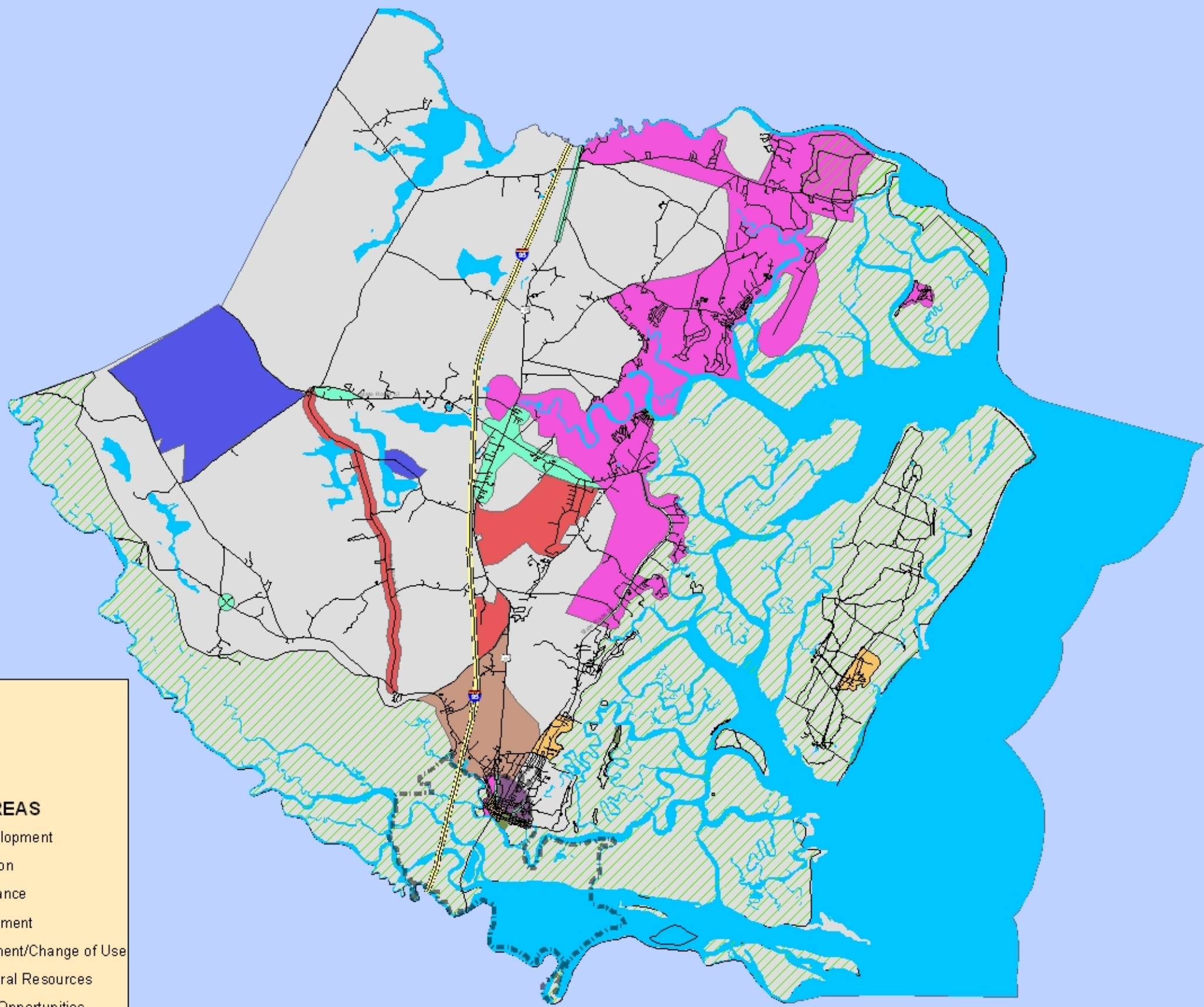
Areas Requiring Special Attention

Description	Area
<p>Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development</p>	<p>Considering its large amount of environmentally sensitive land and floodplain land, there are large areas within the County where development should not be encouraged. However, these areas have their own inherent potential to serve important environmental and recreational functions. Natural resources, particularly water resources, are of special concern as the County experiences population growth and associated housing and commercial development. Greenspace planning and preservation will also be important to preserving natural resources and providing recreation sources and transportation alternatives for residents.</p> <p>Some significant or recognized historic areas and structures will likely be threatened by encroaching development or incompatible land uses at some point in time. Proper land use planning and guidelines are needed to protect viable cultural resources.</p> <p>These areas are marked on the map in hatched green and green and include Sapelo Island, Hog Hammock, Harris Neck Wildlife Refuge, Fort King Georgia, and the Old County Jail.</p>
<p>Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur</p>	<p>The corridor of development is occurring in the northeastern border along significant waterways and along State Road 251. These areas marked on the map in pink contain much of the recent housing development. As development intensifies, careful consideration should be given to the location and types of commercial development that complement residential land use as well as provide opportunities to shorten travel times and provide pedestrian or transportation alternatives.</p>

<p>Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation</p>	<p>The areas surrounding the communities of Cox and Townsend are of concern. Sufficient infrastructure for water and sewer has not been extended. The logistics for EMS, Fire, Police and other public services is of concern.</p>
<p>Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors)</p>	<p>Much of the County's development has occurred along commercial corridors. Such commercial corridors are often unsightly and suffer from poor traffic flow. Over time, these areas can have the additional disadvantage of suffering from disinvestment. The areas of concern are, as above, the communities of Cox and Townsend.</p>
<p>Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated</p>	<p>There are no abandoned structures or sites requiring special attention at this time. One area of potential environmental contamination is the abandoned service station located in the Cox Community.</p>
<p>Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites)</p>	<p>There are scattered vacant sites within the county that pose redevelopment opportunities. Those areas include the Outlet Mall retail area and areas along Highway 251.</p>
<p>Area of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole</p>	<p>There are areas in the communities of Cox and Townsend where the housing stock is in decline and may be prime candidates for redevelopment projects.</p>

MCINTOSH COUNTY

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

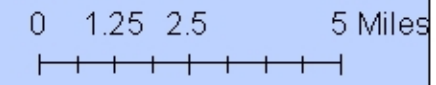


LEGEND

- I_95
- Roads
- City of Darien

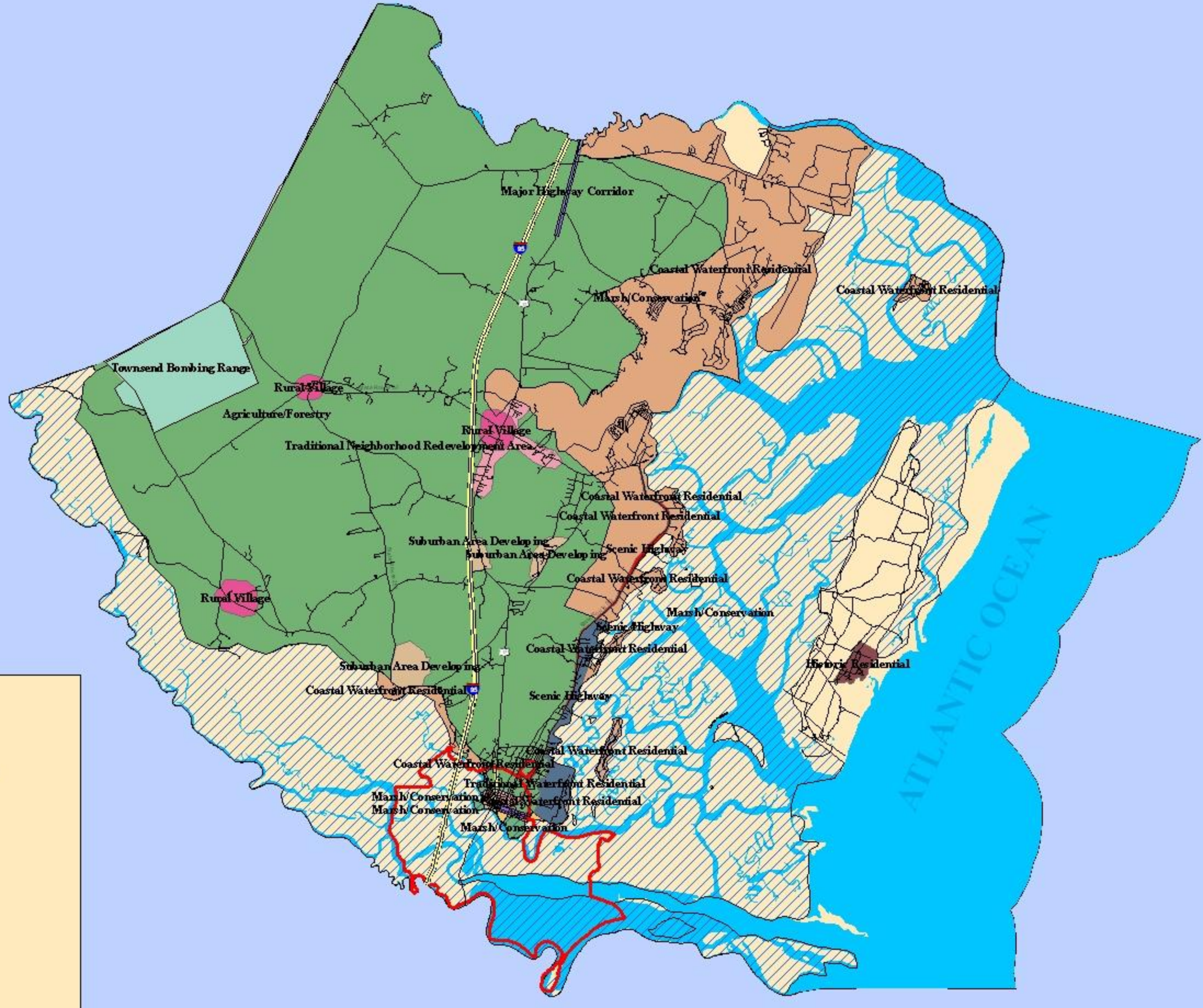
SPECIAL ATTENTION AREAS

- Areas in Need of Redevelopment
- Areas of Future Annexation
- Areas of Historic Significance
- Areas of Limited Development
- Areas of Rapid Development/Change of Use
- Areas of Significant Cultural Resources
- Areas of Significant Infill Opportunities
- Areas of Significant Natural Resources
- Development May Outpace Infrastructure



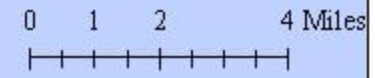
MCINTOSH COUNTY

CHARACTER AREAS



LEGEND

- Darien City Limits
- CHARACTER AREAS**
- Agriculture/Forestry
- Coastal Waterfront Residential
- Highway Commercial
- Historic Residential
- Historic Shopping
- Historic Waterfront
- Major Highway Corridor
- Marsh/Conservation
- Rural Village
- Scenic Highway
- Stable Residential
- Suburban Area Developing
- Townsend Bombing Range
- Traditional Neighborhood Redevelopment Area
- Traditional Waterfront Residential



McIntosh County

Short Term Work Program 2007-2011

Development Patterns	
Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Update ordinances to maintain community character and assets.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Update ordinance to maintain large trees and existing natural vegetation to promote the feel of an already existing neighborhood.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General funds
Develop passive public parks to maximize potential for walking, bicycling, and other recreational activities.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$50,000 Funding Source: Grants, SPLOST, General Funds, Private Organizations
Work with DCA to draft and adopt Highway 17 Cultural and Heritage Tourism ordinance to protect and enhance the corridor.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: SPLOST, Grants, DNR, DCA
Encourage compatible architectural styles that maintain the area's rural character. Avoid "franchise" or "corporate" architecture.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: SPLOST, Grants, University of Georgia, Savannah college of Art and Design

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Continue to develop a marketing program for environmentally sensitive economic development	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Private Organizations
Establish a Planning Commission	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,500 Funding Source: General Funds
Review ordinances and related regulations in light of anticipated growth to encourage preferred types and styles of development.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Limit or zone undesirable uses out of major highway and potential gateway corridors.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General funds; grants
Maintain buffers in natural areas between roadway and housing or commercial development.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Develop Corridor Management Pan	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$25,000 Funding Source: General funds; grants, DCA, DNR, TEA, DOT

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Establish a square for new courthouse; construct new courthouse.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000,000 Funding Source: SPLOST
Continue to support joint DHR/DOT Ridership public transportation program.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$12,000/year Funding Source: General Funds, fees, grants
Update subdivision ordinance to require that new developments be continuations of adjoining street systems and provide access to adjacent property.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Update ordinance to require developers to install sidewalks in new developments.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue to promote nature-based economic development initiatives consistent with natural resource conservation and protection.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Private organizations
Continue to upgrade covenants for industrial park and update zoning standards relating to design standards to apply to the rest of the county that adhere to BMP's of Coastal comprehensive Plan.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants
Hire code enforcement officer	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$35,000 Funding Source: General Funds

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Make PUD part of zoning ordinances	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Revise Land Use map	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue annual monitoring with EPD to prevent brownfield contamination sites	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, EPD Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds, EPD
Prepare Capital Improvement Plan	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Provide training for Planning Commission members	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Support DOT improvements along Hwy 251 at I-95, including road, sidewalk, and landscaping improvements.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$15,000 Funding Source: Private Organizations, Development Authority, General Fund, DOT, TEA

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Develop overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$15,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants
Consider development and implementation of Impact Fees	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds, DCA

McIntosh County

Short Term Work Program 2007-2011

Social and Economic Development	
Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Continue to revise regulations to be consistent with practices as outlined in the Coastal Comprehensive Plan.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Develop proposals for community facility projects and set priorities within project classifications.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General funds
Continue to identify and implement recreation projects as part of the list of potential capital projects.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$50,000 Funding Source: Grants, SPLOST, General Funds
Provide for training for elected officials and planning commission members on principals of smart growth	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,500 Funding Source: General funds
Promote area around exits for services and as a gateway to the county.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, and McIntosh Development Authority Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General funds

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Limit or zone undesirable uses out of major highway and potential gateway corridors.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue to develop and distribute promotional materials in support of history based tourism.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, McIntosh Development Authority Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants
Review ordinances and related regulations in light of anticipated growth to encourage preferred types and styles of development.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Implement a unified economic development program.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, McIntosh Development Authority Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue to coordinate with appropriate organizations to improve workforce training and readiness in support of economic development efforts.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants
Continue to coordinate and cooperate with school board on issue of mutual interest, such as development of infrastructure.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County; Board of Education Cost Estimate: N/A Funding Source: N/A

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Continue to work with school board and other agencies to facilitate providing adult education.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County; Board of Education Cost Estimate: N/A Funding Source: N/A
Coordinate efforts to improve telecommunications services with projects for Capital Improvements.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$50,000 Funding Source: SPLOST
Continue to consider actions to encourage construction of low and moderate income single family housing.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds, grants
Continue to review and, as appropriate, upgrade manufactured housing standards.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds

McIntosh County

Short Term Work Program 2007-2011

Resource Conservation	
Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Develop overlay districts to regulate the aesthetics of development as a regional economic development tool.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$25,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants, SPLOST
Continue to develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General funds
Continue to pursue financial resources for protection and restoration of historic buildings.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$50,000 Funding Source: Grants, SPLOST, General Funds
Provide for training for Historic Preservation Commission members	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,500 Funding Source: General funds
Continue to designate historic districts, unique landmarks, and to protect natural resources following DNR/HPD guidelines.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, Cost Estimate: \$25,000 Funding Source: General funds, Grants, SPLOST

Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Create Architectural Review Board to maintain and promote the historical integrity and existence of significant structures.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$2,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Complete a natural resources inventory	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County, DNR Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds, Grants
Continue to develop and enhance local ordinances which facilitate resource protection	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue to investigate all opportunities for conservation of protected animal and plant habitats, achievement of water quality standards and management of water resources, conservation of freshwater and saltwater marshlands, and protection of aquifer recharge areas.	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$5,000 Funding Source: General funds; grants
Adopt DNR Part V environmental protection ordinances as required.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Continue to pursue adoption and implementation of tree ordinance.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds
Adopt Greenspace Plan	Year: 2010 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General Funds

Governmental Relations	
Description of Activity	Implementation Plan
Complete review of county-wide ordinances to ensure compliance with Coastal Comprehensive Plan.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General funds
Continue to initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	Year: 2009 Responsible Party: McIntosh County Cost Estimate: \$1,000 Funding Source: General funds

McIntosh County

Policy Adoption 2007-2011

1. *Zoning Ordinance:* The Zoning Ordinance will be revised in accordance with the recommendations of the State and standards put forth in the Coastal Comprehensive Plan. In addition to its existing provision, the new ordinance will include a planned unit developments (PUD) and Mix Use Zoning classifications. The Zoning Ordinance will be crafted to provide incentives to encourage low impact development and other ‘smart growth’ development patterns. The Zoning Ordinance may also include overlay districts that include area-specific provisions that guide development adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas, historical features, or archeological sites.
2. *Construction Standards:* The County will develop construction standards to effectively regulate the quality, design, maintenance, appearance of new development and redevelopment within McIntosh County. Existing development may be substandard and could potentially be a maintenance challenge and/or expensive retrofit issue for the County. Proper design and installation should be the developer’s responsibility at the front end of a project rather than the local government’s responsibility in the post construction phase of the project. Standards related to the design of stormwater drainage systems will be coordinated with standards provided in the Coastal Comprehensive Plan, Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, the Green Growth Guidelines and applicable design reference materials. These standards should include maintenance standards and requirements for BMPs.
3. *Subdivision Standards:* The County will develop subdivision regulations that contain minimum standards and outline the process of planning, review, and approval of new development. These standards will be flexible enough to allow for “alternative development” such as conservation subdivisions, new-urbanist developments, and mixed use developments. These regulations will be created in conjunction with the development of the PUD standards. Subdivision standards and PUD standards should be consistent with the Coastal Comprehensive Plan, Green Growth Guidelines, and CWP’s 22 Better Site Design Principles.
4. *Natural Resources Protection Standards:* In order to mitigate the impact of future development on natural resources in the region, the local governments should adopt comprehensive natural resource protection standards that are specific to conditions in the coastal Georgia region. These standards will address the following elements:

- a. *Post Construction Stormwater Runoff Management (Quantity and Quality)*
- b. *Illicit Discharge and Detection*
- c. *Flood Damage Prevention (Newest State Model)*
- d. *Erosion & Sedimentation Control (with a coastal update)*
- e. *Part V Planning Criteria*
 - i. *Groundwater Recharge (if applicable)*
 - ii. *Wetlands*
 - iii. *Protected River Corridor*
- f. *Riparian Buffer Protection*
- g. *Water Conservation*
- h. *Well Head Protection*
- i. *Septic Maintenance and Inspection*

The County will develop GIS layers in conjunction with the development of the Ordinance. A GIS database is an extremely useful tool for regulation land development and helping County staff and elected officials understand how proposed development projects comply with the County regulations. The GIS database that will be developed as part of this project will include, but not be limited to, a new Zoning Map for official adoption by the BOC. Other layers related to natural and cultural resources may be developed depending on the final content of the County ordinances.

McIntosh County

Report of Accomplishments 2002-2006

Economic Development	
Work Program Project	2007 Report of Accomplishments
Continue to upgrade covenants for industrial park and update zoning standards relating to design standards to apply to the rest of the county.	Declaration of Covenants and Restriction in County already in place for Industrial Park. Design standards currently underway. Projected completion 2011.
Continue to develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public as a regional economic development tool.	McIntosh County has a Historic Preservation Committee which is continuing to propose and implement programs and activities designed to promote McIntosh County history.
Continue to develop a marketing program for environmentally sensitive economic development.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to develop and maintain a marketing program for tourism.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to coordinate with appropriate organizations to improve workforce training and readiness in support of economic development efforts.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.

Support the construction by DOT of a new interchange on I-95 at Kings Swamp Road, subject to feasibility and impact studies as required by the Department of Transportation.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Extend water and sewer service from Hwy. 251 along Kings Swamp Road to US 17 and from Darien north along US 17 to facilitate economic development.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Support DOT improvements along Hwy. 251 at I-95, including road, sidewalk, and landscaping improvements. Incorporate fiber optics capability to improve telecommunications service to existing and new development.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Participate in the US 17 Heritage Corridor project by the CGRDC and scenic and heritage byway programs to enhance tourism using natural, cultural, and historic resources. Attract nature-based economic development initiatives consistent with natural resource conservation and protection.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Support increased allocation of nursing home capacity for County and City residents.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to implement a unified economic development program.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Support Investigate innovative methods of improving the quality and diversity of public education such as those set up under the "articulation agreements".	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.

Natural and Historic Resources	2007 Report of Accomplishments
Complete review of county-wide ordinances; adopt and enforce appropriate aesthetic regulations and "scenic controls" along county roadways.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2011.
Continue to develop and enhance natural and historic resource protection measures as appropriate.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2011.
Continue to designate historic districts, unique landmarks, and to protect natural resources following DNR/HPD guidelines.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2011.
Continue to promote designated historic sites and natural resources through events, projects, public education, and recognition programs.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2011.
Continue to work with appropriate agencies on culture-based theme tours and promotion of historic tourism. Support the U.S. 17 Heritage Corridor/Scenic Byway project.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2012.
Continue to develop and enforce aesthetic protection regulations.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued. Projected completion 2012.
Adopt DNR Part V environmental protection ordinances as required.	Projected completion 2009.

Continue to investigate all opportunities for conservation of protected animal and plant habitats, achievement of water quality standards and management of water resources, conservation of freshwater and saltwater marshlands, and protection of aquifer recharge areas.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to develop and enhance local ordinances which facilitate resource protection.	Zoning ordinance revised; however, zoning updates are a continuing process.
Land Use	2007 Report of Accomplishments
Continue to review and revise land use ordinances to be consistent with the Coastal Georgia Regional Plan and the McIntosh County/Darien Joint Comprehensive Plan.	Zoning ordinance revised; however, zoning updates are a continuing process.
Adopt and implement regulations addressing animal control, mosquito control, removal of abandoned vehicles, and removal of abandoned mobile homes.	Zoning ordinance revised; however, zoning updates are a continuing process.
Continue to develop and improve methods for maintaining land use related data.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to develop and improve methods for maintaining data regarding community facilities and facilities management.	This is an ongoing effort and will be continued.
Continue to revise ordinances as needed to ensure compliance with comprehensive plan.	Zoning ordinance revised; however, zoning updates are a continuing process.

Continue to improve design control ordinances. Enact a separate sign ordinance apart from design standards for both Darien and McIntosh County.	Regulations have been updated as part of updating zoning and other ordinances. Further work is necessary
Housing	2007 Report of Accomplishments
Continue to consider actions to encourage construction of low and moderate income single family housing.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Continue support for Habitat for Humanity projects and other such programs that encourage housing structures for elderly and low-income persons.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Continue to review and, as appropriate, upgrade manufactured housing standards.	Regulations have been updated as part of updating zoning and other ordinances. Further work is necessary. Projected completion 2010.
Community Facilities	2007 Report of Accomplishments
Continue to link water systems as funds become available. Continue to improve availability of service through grant-funded projects.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2009.
Continue to improve basic public service standards through grant-funded projects.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Investigate the feasibility of reducing landfill disposal of solid waste, such as by offering recycling opportunities throughout the County.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2011.

Continue to coordinate and cooperate with school board on issue of mutual interest, such as development of infrastructure (see also Economic Development).	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Develop proposals for community facility projects and set priorities within project classifications. Continue to seek grant funding to support individual projects.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process. Projected completion 2010.
Continue to identify and implement recreation projects as part of the list of potential capital projects.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process. Projected completion 2010.
Investigate alternative ways to increase the level of services to elderly residents.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process. Projected completion 2012
Coordinate efforts to improve telecommunications services with projects listed in the Economic Development Element.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Update joint comprehensive plan.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2009.
Continue to meet state EPD requirements for stormwater management.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2009.
Improve 911 services.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2010.

Investigate the development of a community arts center.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2012.
Investigate the feasibility of developing additional community meeting facilities.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2010.
Continue to work in coordination with McIntosh County in an effort to increase allocation of beds in nursing homes.	Currently underway. Projected completion 2012.
Continue to work with school board and other agencies to facilitate providing adult education.	This item has made accomplishments but needs to remain a continuing process.
Install lighting of compatible historical design in parks and on streets.	Accomplished

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION
THE DARIEN NEWS

STATE OF GEORGIA
McINTOSH COUNTY

Personally appeared before me Kathleen W. Russell to me known, who being by me sworn, deposed and said:

That she is the executive editor of THE DARIEN NEWS which is the official legal advertising organ of McIntosh County, Georgia; and

That she is authorized to make affidavits of publication on behalf of THE DARIEN NEWS;

That said newspaper is of general circulation in McIntosh County and in the area adjacent thereto and is the newspaper designed and customarily used by the Sheriff of McIntosh County for the publication of advertisements and by the other official bodies of and in said county for the publication of notices required by law;

That she has reviewed the regular edition of THE DARIEN NEWS published on June 19 and 26, 2008, that the following advertisement, to-wit:

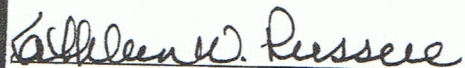
PUBLIC HEARING

The McIntosh County Board of Commissioners invites the public to review McIntosh County's Partial Update to the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Partial Update to the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a document for use as a policy guide for local governments in the interim period between Comprehensive Plan Updates. When implemented, the resulting plan will help the community address critical issues and opportunities and is used to provide stakeholders with a sound framework for making decisions about the future of the community.

The purpose of this public hearing is to brief the community on the identified issues and opportunities and provide the public with an opportunity to comment before transmitting the draft document to the regional development center. The McIntosh County Board of Commissioners will host a meeting to explain details of the Partial Update process to all interested persons. This meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 2, 2008, at 9:00 a.m., at the Commissioners' Meeting Room, 2nd floor, McIntosh County Courthouse, 310 North Way, Darien, Georgia.

For further information or questions, phone (912) 437-6671.

Luther M. Smart
County Manager



Kathleen W. Russell
Executive Editor

McIntosh County Board of Commissioners
Public Hearing
July 2, 2008
9:00AM

A public hearing was held at 9:00AM on Wednesday, July 2, 2008, in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, for the purpose of reviewing the Partial Update to the Comprehensive Plan to be submitted to the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Present: Chairman Boyd Gault; Commissioner Owen Greene and Commissioner Steve Jessup with Commissioner Jordan and Commissioner Grovner absent.

A discussion was held and comments were received concerning short term work plan and need to proceed. Implementation of plan will be a critical tool to assure compliance.

No further comments.

Public Hearing adjourned.

MCINTOSH COUNTY

RESOLUTION OF SUBMITTAL

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes local governments throughout the State to prepare Comprehensive Plans to be used in guiding their future growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners has prepared a draft update to its existing Comprehensive Plan that covers the years 2007 through 2011, and was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning; and

WHEREAS, the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning require that certain minimum public participation and other procedural requirements be met as part of updating local Comprehensive Plans; and

WHEREAS, the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners desires that its draft update of the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners certifies that the minimum public participation and other procedural requirements, as identified in the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, have been met or exceeded in preparing this draft update to the Comprehensive Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the draft update of its Comprehensive Plan to be submitted and reviewed to the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Adopted this 8th day of July, 2008

BY: Boyd L. Gault

ATTEST: Lauretta M. Soms

FAX FROM : 912-437-6671
Boyd Gault, Chairman
Charles Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Nathaniel Grovner
Steve Jessup
Owen Greene

James Coppage, County Attorney
Luther Smart, County Manager
Lauretta M. Sams, County Clerk



McIntosh County Board of Commissioners

P.O. Box 584 • 310 North Way • Darien, Georgia 31305 • 912-437-6671 • FAX 912-437-6416

On the motion of Commissioner Greene seconded by Commissioner Grovner, which carried unanimously the following Resolution was adopted:

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE

WHEREAS, the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners has completed the Partial Update to the County's Update to the County's Comprehensive Plan document as part of the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update.

WHEREAS, this document was prepared according to the Requirements for a Partial Update to the Local Government Comprehensive Plan effective March 2007, as well as the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005 and established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the McIntosh County Board of Commissioners do hereby adopt the Partial Update to the 20-year Comprehensive Plan Update.

This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption

This the 17th day of September, 2008.

BY: Boyd L. Gault
Boyd L. Gault, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lauretta M. Sams
Lauretta M. Sams, Clerk