

FIRST DRAFT 6/29-2023

The City of Brunswick, Georgia
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
AND
5 – YEAR WORK PROGRAM
Updated 2023



Prepared By
The Department of Planning, Development and Codes

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Chapter 1 – Introduction & Overview

Background

The City of Brunswick is a historic Coastal Georgia city with origins dating back to the pre-Revolutionary period. In recent decades, Brunswick has experienced virtually no growth in its economy, population, or socio-economic profile. However, significant growth has occurred outside the city, particularly on the nearby resort islands to the East and in rapidly developing Glynn County to the North and West of the city. Recently, however, the City of Brunswick is starting to see revitalization, particularly in its historic downtown core. Much of this revitalization is attributable to the successful implementation of the 2018 updated Comprehensive Plan Work Program and it will likely continue throughout the implementation of this updated 2023 Comprehensive Plan as well.

Demographics

The City of Brunswick population has remained static at around 15,000 for the past 20 years and continues to be a majority (62%) African American resident city. It has a large concentration of low-and low-middle-income families and non-family households (unrelated persons living together). The Median Family Income (MFI) in Brunswick has remained almost level (factoring inflation) for the past 20 – 30 years and is currently (2021) \$33,500 per year. This compares to the 2021 MFI for Glynn County of just over \$66,000 per year and \$88,000 for The State of Georgia. Within Glynn County, the coastal islands to the east, St. Simons and Jekyll Islands along with Sea Island, have concentrations of upper income families and retirees well above the County and State MFI.

The economy of the area has and continues to be dominated by the tourist industry on the islands. Over 50% of the labor forces that resides in Brunswick is employed in this industry as opposed to other opportunities such as at the Port of Brunswick, Georgia Pacific's wood fiber plant, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and Gulfstream Aviation to name a few. Wages in these industries are considerably higher than that of the tourist and hospitality industry as well as retail services. Because of lack of education, skills training and public transportation connecting the Brunswick labor force to many higher paying job opportunities, family income has not benefitted from these higher wage opportunities.

Economic issues, which are a priority for the City and its residents, not hold the same priority for the larger and growing Glynn County community. However, much of the city's urban area's labor force and regional services such as the Southeast Georgia Medical Center and the Coastal Georgia College are located in Brunswick which helps keep the focus on the city's needs at a regional and expanding urban area level.

Achievements of Goals and Objectives from the 2018 – 2023 Plan and Work Program

- The City of Brunswick, like all cities, was impacted by the outbreak of the COVID virus and the Pandemic that followed. The impact was somewhat more severe due to its coastal location and the predominant economic driver for the area being tourism. Nevertheless, Brunswick weathered the period and made considerable progress in achieving its Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives expressed in its 5 – Year Work Program. A complete review of that Work Plan is shown in Chapter 13 and here are some of the more notable achievements:
- Completion of a complete revision of its 40+ year old Zoning Ordinance including the creation of two new zoning districts to meet current land use and development objectives as expressed in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.
- Creation of a City Managed Stormwater Utility supported by a stormwater utility fee and, completion and approval of a 5 – year stormwater and flood prevention plan. Implementation of the plan began in 2022 using SPLOT funding.
- Completion of the Phase II design of historic Mary Ross Park and award of contract for improvements. Work on Phase II is now underway,
- Completion of a Housing Study and Affordable Housing Plan to guide the city in initiating a program of rehabilitating existing housing and revitalizing neighborhoods. Implementation of the plan with a 20-year goal will begin in 2024 with a five-year initial startup. This program will also seek to create opportunities and incentives for the development of new affordable housing on property cleared of dilapidated and vacant buildings under the plan.
- A return to a city managed parks and recreation program to be fully implemented by the Spring of 2024.
- Approval of a recommended public transportation plan by the City Commission and the beginning of efforts to secure the necessary funding and partnerships with the Glynn County and the private sector to enable the system to begin operation by the Spring of 2024.
- Lastly, the completion of several projects to re-purpose vacant commercial buildings in its downtown historic core for residential and commercial uses.

Major Issues for Focus Over the Next 5 - Years in this Plan Update

Addressing some of Brunswick’s continuing physical, and socio-economic needs as a part of this updated Comprehensive Plan has resulted in a focus in many areas previously identified in need and some new issues as well. Following are listed the most pressing needs of the city:

- **Affordable Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization:** Over half of the city’s families are either living in inadequate housing or are devoting in excess of 30 – 35% of their income for housing expense. Over half of the city’s housing stock requires rehabilitation. Revitalization of neighborhoods throughout the city is badly needed and, if improved,

new affordable housing is likely to be built in the city. Currently, little new housing is being added to the in the city.

- **Flood Control and Drainage:** As a low-lying Coastal Georgia city, Brunswick faces flooding from increasingly strong storms as well as inadequate and failing stormwater drainage facilities. A recently completed Master Plan for drainage and flood protection system improvements has been funded with passage of a recent SPLOST referendum. The recently created stormwater utility has begun construction of several key projects which will begin to correct serious drainage problems and address flooding.
- A recently completed **public transportation** plan and approved option for a recommended system will soon offer residents an opportunity to connect with better and higher paying jobs, needed services and education opportunities.
- A newly restored and revitalized **Parks and Recreation Department** and development of a plan for facilities improvements and additions is needed to adequately serve neighborhood families throughout the city.
- Continuation of the **resurgence of its downtown commercial core** which has seen a number of buildings re-purposed for higher end residential uses. A revitalized Economic Development Authority and Urban Redevelopment Agency is now focused on completing long overdue initiatives like the redevelopment of the Oglethorpe Hotel Block and Liberty Harbor.

Purpose of the Plan

This updated Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) will serve as a decision-making guide for the City Commission and staff as well as community leaders going forward facing these and other issues over the next 5 - years. Based on input from the general public, City Staff, Stakeholders, and a Steering Committee, the Plan identifies consensus needs and opportunities, goals and policies. It includes and is accompanied by a Five-Year Work Program to address and implement the key elements of the updated 2023 – 2028 Comprehensive Plan.

Process

The process used to update the Plan follows the guidance and requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, effective 3/1/2014.

Public Involvement

Public Input, Stakeholder & Steering Committee Meetings for this 2023 Update

The process to update the 2018 Comprehensive Plan began with an announcement by the City Commission at a public hearing. The process to update the Plan would stress input from all areas and interests of the community through a series of community input sessions. A Steering Committee was appointed by the City Commission as well as a Stakeholder Committee to help guide the process. Numerous committee and public gatherings were held to discuss needs,

opportunities, goals, and objectives that would influence the Plan content and implementation. Steering and Stakeholder Committee members along with City Staff attended many of these meetings to answer questions and record comments during this process.

Steering Committee members appointed by the City Commission included members of the Planning and Appeals Commission and consisted of the following:

- Lance Sabbe, Chairman
- David Bowers
- Alyssa Bruce
- Anita Collins
- Grace Greene
- Delores Harrison
- William Kitts

Stakeholder Committee members included participants selected by the City Commission who represented constituencies throughout the community and included the following:

- Ashby Worley, The Nature Conservancy
- Daren Pietsch Torras Properties
- Tyler Jones, Historic Brunswick NPA
- Jason Umfress, College of Coastal Georgia
- Jay Jenkins, Citizen
- Lisa Jordan, Downtown Development Authority
- Michael Torras, Torras Properties
- Semona Holmes, Perry Park Community
- Victoria Mackey, Citizen
- Rhonda Walker, Urbana Perry Park NPA
- Tripp Stephens, Southeast Georgia Health System
- Michael Christianson, Citizen
- Mitch Edwards, Citizen

City Staff included:

- Garrow Alberson – City Engineer
- John Hunter – Director, Planning, Development and Codes
- David Bravo – Director of Neighborhood Services
- Russ Marane – Planner

Record of Meetings and Public Events: Appendix A this Report

Public Survey

Because affordable housing was identified early in the update process by the City Commission and the Planning and Appeals Commission as THE major issue confronting the city, a Housing Needs Survey was created and publicized on the City's Comprehensive Plan web page, at

public events, and on social media. The survey asked participants to identify their current housing needs and preferences regarding type and location. The college and hospital administrations publicized the survey in their employee newsletters and urged them to respond.

From the response of over 200 residents of the city, the following was learned:

INSERT

[A copy of the online survey and tabulation of results can be found in Appendix B this Report](#)

Chapter 2 – Community Goals

General Vision Statement – Updated from 2018 and partially restated as part of this 2023 Plan Update.

- The City of Brunswick will respect, protect and enhance its connections with its natural, historic, and cultural roots through public leadership and engagement with community organizations having the same goals.
- The City of Brunswick will continue to support and incentivize investments in its downtown core area to attract new business and urban living opportunities through the re-purposing of underutilized and vacant structures and development of supporting infrastructure.
- The City of Brunswick will cultivate the growth of its economy and its people, by encouraging entrepreneurship, improving workforce education and development of skills, and connecting its citizens to quality and well-paying jobs through newly developed public transportation services.
- The City of Brunswick recognizing its vulnerability to natural hazards prevalent in coastal areas will continue to apply rigorous and resilient measures and policies to protect its assets and its population. It will implement long range storm drainage and flood protection plan that reflect the issues associated with climate change and sea level rise.
- The City of Brunswick will present a revitalized and rehabilitated image by showcasing its natural and historic beauty and by redeveloping its underutilized area in a manner keeping with its traditional human scale development characteristics.
- The City of Brunswick will re-vitalize its beautiful neighborhoods through housing rehabilitation and investments in public infrastructure with support from the city, the business community, actively involved citizens and an engaged, well-coordinated community and non-profit organizations. It will also strive to create opportunities for

the development of quality new and affordable housing with a priority for creating homeownership.

- By the return of responsibilities for planning, programming, maintenance and improvements to its city parks and recreation programs, the city will expand access for these facilities and programs throughout the city.

Chapter 3 – Needs and Opportunities –

Updated from 2018 and restated as part of the 2023 Plan update.

The following list of needs and opportunities result from significant and meaningful personal contact with citizens of the community as well as the priority concerns of Brunswick’s leadership. Needs and opportunities also were identified through planning activities over the past 5 years as well as from Community Input Sessions and feedback at public forums. These needs and opportunities help to create a clear focus for actions and policy to realize the Brunswick vision.

Roots

- Protect the City’s natural resources, including rivers, marshes, and tree cover.
- Increase connections to key natural resources such as the waterfront.
- Keep Brunswick’s small-town charm and friendly character.
- Protect and preserve the City’s historic buildings and character.

Community

- Act to provide a wide variety of affordable housing through a balance of rehabilitation and new construction.
- Maintain a neighborhood focus by placing resources and services in or near neighborhoods and invest in the quality of neighborhood infrastructure.
- Provide adequate and effective public safety and police presence.
- Find new, innovative, and participatory methods for preventing and reducing crime.
- Increase community involvement and capacity in poor and disenfranchised communities including immigrant communities through the city’s Neighborhood Planning Associations.

Growth

- Encourage the creation of greater employment opportunities and entrepreneurship for citizens throughout workforce development and small business development.
- Address the risks associated with coastal flooding through improved drainage and flood protection facilities and encouraging emergency preparedness for its citizens.

- Achieve the long-standing goals of successfully completing the redevelopment of the Oglethorpe Hotel property and take steps to promote and assist in the planning and development of Liberty Harbor.
- Support mobility of all citizens, especially low-income citizens and senior citizens, by implementing a public transportation option.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout the city linking neighborhoods to the city core and area services.
- Strengthen coordination and communication between city and county governmental entities.

Image

- Continue to improve the appearance of the city's major gateways and program of wayfinding throughout the city.
- Continue to address the City's large inventory of dilapidated, substandard, and vacant buildings throughout the city. Following removal, incentivize the development of new affordable housing.
- Continue to address existing pollution within the community and promote the clean-up and redevelopment of brownfields.
- Continue to invest in the restoration and improvement of facilities in the City's squares and parks.
- Ensure new and infill development is compatible in scale and character with existing neighborhoods.

Chapter 4 – Economic Development –

Updated based on 2022 CEDS and updated plans for other projects.

The Coastal Regional Commission (CRC) serves as the staff consultant for the Economic Development District (EDD) comprised of the region's six coastal counties and four inland counties as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). In accordance with EDA, a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is updated and submitted every five years. This important document sets the regional economic development planning process for 2022 - 2027. The CEDS brings together public and private sectors to create an economic road map to strengthen Coastal Georgia's regional economy. **The City of Brunswick is a party to this plan and contributes and supports efforts toward its implementation.**

The CEDS document provides an analysis of the region's economy which was used as the guide for establishing regional economic goals and objectives, developing and implementing a plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources to meet the area's needs for infrastructure necessary to support desirable economic growth.

Coastal Georgia's eastern shore stretches almost 100 miles from Savannah at its northern tip to St Mary's at its southern tip and is home to historic towns, industries, military installations, major ports, and a thriving tourism trade. Equally important, one finds abundant wildlife, beautiful beaches, and over 2300 miles of tributaries and salt marsh vital to the sustainability of its natural environment.

With a hundred miles of coastline, shipping has always been a unique resource for the region's economy. Georgia's accessible ports remain a major advantage for manufacturing and distribution companies located throughout the region. Georgia's ports combine industry innovation with proven flexibility to create new opportunities along the entire global logistics pipeline, while continuing to meet the market demand. The Port of Brunswick is one of the largest "roll on – roll off" automobile and heavy machinery ports in the Nation and is currently expanding its capacity which will make it the largest such facility on the East Coast.

In addition to Georgia's ports, the presence of military installations has proven to be an asset for the region and a major economic driver. The State of Georgia is currently the sixth largest recipient of defense related funding in the Nation. The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) is located in Glynn County just north of the City of Brunswick and is a major contributor to the region's economic health.

Tourism which is closely tied to coastal resources through our coastal waterways and the natural, historic, and cultural resources is a major driver of Coastal Georgia's economy and certainly to Brunswick which boasts three islands which attract thousands of tourists which contribute greatly to the region's economy.

Although the Georgia Department of Labor’s 2021 profile for the region reports the unemployment rate as significantly lower than the figures during the COVID Pandemic, the Georgia Coast still faces numerous economic challenges. Glynn County, along with the rest of the region, continues to face a loss of working age population in the 35-44- and 45–54-year-old age groups. This can be attributed, in large part, to lower-than-average weekly wages as compared to the rest of the State of Georgia. Recently, the announcement of a new automobile assembly plant to be built in the coastal region should help the labor force retain more workers in these income groups with the prospects of much higher average weekly wages.

Other factors affecting income disparity in the region and specifically Brunswick:

- Education attainment levels in Brunswick are likewise lower than the state and national level despite the presence of a 4 -year state college and two-year technical school.
- Median household income has not kept pace with the rise in living costs, particularly housing costs. Finding decent affordable housing is particularly difficult.
- Approximately 22.3 percent of the primary jobs within the region are held by workers commuting from outside the county or community.
- 22.2 percent of employed Coastal Georgia residents leave the region for employment – a relatively high percentage compared to workforce investment areas around the state.
- In Brunswick, nearly 80 percent of its employed labor force works outside the city despite two heavily concentrated employment centers at the Port AND Medical Center.

The startup of a public transportation system is envisioned as playing a major role in connecting the underemployed in Brunswick to job training and higher paying jobs inside and outside the city.

Workforce development issues also threaten quality economic development in the region and include:

- high poverty rate.
- low rates of educational attainment.
- inferior skill levels for high wage; and
- a poor level of occupational *soft skills*.

These factors present the risk of disinvestment among existing companies in the region. These factors also pose difficulty in recruiting new firms to the area. This is an area of attention for not only Brunswick and Glynn County but the region as a whole.

As a performance-based strategic plan, the 2022-2027 CEDS serves an important role in the region’s efforts to grow the economic base in the face of accelerated growth, economic dislocations, competition, and other events challenging the economic vibrancy of the region.

[The Current 2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\), Appendix E, for the region can be found at this website:](#)

Tax Allocation District #1.

The City of Brunswick adopted a Redevelopment Plan outlining the rationale, boundaries, fiscal data, and potential projects that could result from the formation of the Tax Allocation District (TAD) #1: Historic Core. The TAD #1 consists of 687 parcels totaling 481 acres. The TAD area is comprised of properties within the Downtown Historic Core and the surrounding area with redevelopment/ infill potential that are along the commercial corridors coming into downtown and which the City believes have the potential for future redevelopment.

The opportunity for the City of Brunswick is to leverage private reinvestment through targeted public improvements that will:

- Implement the vision set forth in the 2007-2027 Glynn County Joint Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the City of Brunswick in October 2008
- Help to re-activate the City's historic downtown core, its unique waterfront, and the Gloucester, Norwich and Highway 17 corridors.
- By stimulating investment in the TAD area, offset the decline in property values in the city.

Since the TAD District tax assessment certification in 2021, the district has generated over \$800,000 in funds. to be invested in the district. Consideration is being given to expanding the TAD #1 Boundary and possibly creating a second TAD #2 to help fund housing programs and neighborhood revitalization in other areas of the city.

[The City of Brunswick Tax Allocation District #1: Historic Core Redevelopment Plan, Appendix F, can be found at this website.](#)

Mary Ross Waterfront Park – Downtown Brunswick:

Brunswick's waterfront has served as one of the economic backbones of the City's commerce for more than 200 years. Its deep waterways and shelter from the open sea, have contributed to its success as a thriving seaport. In addition to its international seaport, Brunswick's waterfront was instrumental in World War II as it was a manufacturing facility for the famed Liberty Ships that supplied the U.S. Navy with wartime supplies throughout the war.

Today, the waterfront is predominately industrial with sporadic pockets of private developments and marinas fronting the Brunswick and East Rivers. Mary Ross Waterfront Park resides along the East River and is the terminus for one of Brunswick's prominent streets, Gloucester Street. The waterways surrounding Brunswick are truly one of the environmental gems of the Golden Isles area. Mary Ross Waterfront Park has a front-row seat of this magnificent natural resource but doesn't currently embrace its full potential as a waterfront destination.

Separated by US341 (Bay Street) and many industrial uses, it has an undeniable disconnect from the hub of activity that is occurring in Downtown Brunswick just blocks away. With its waterfront location and close proximity to the downtown core, Mary Ross Waterfront Park stands to be an iconic destination, waterfront gateway to Brunswick, and a much needed physical and cultural connection to downtown. This master plan is the first step in helping the park live up to its full potential. The City of Brunswick was awarded a Coastal Incentive Grant by the Department of Natural Resources which funded this effort.

Mary Ross Waterfront Park should be a regional destination and a local amenity that links downtown Brunswick to the sea at the East River. It should bring the community together and provide places that celebrate the region's history, culture, natural resources, and people.

The Mary Ross Water Park (MRWP) Master Plan looks to the future of the park as a vibrant expression of the region and a valuable asset to the City of Brunswick. A redesigned and upgraded riverfront park will provide both active spaces for entertainment and passive spaces for reflection. It will also become a catalyst for redevelopment in downtown Brunswick.

While there have been various changes and improvements to the park over the years, there has not been a comprehensive master plan to provide direction for the park's future until now.

Phase I of the overall master planning process involved completing a structural study on the major infrastructure within the park to determine their integrity and to establish a preliminary cost for deficient items. The Structural Assessment Report of Mary Ross Waterfront Park was conducted by H+K Engineering Group out of Savannah, Georgia and completed in March of 2014. The report was a separate contract than the MRWP Master Plan but provided a baseline assessment of the park and was referenced through - out the master plan project.

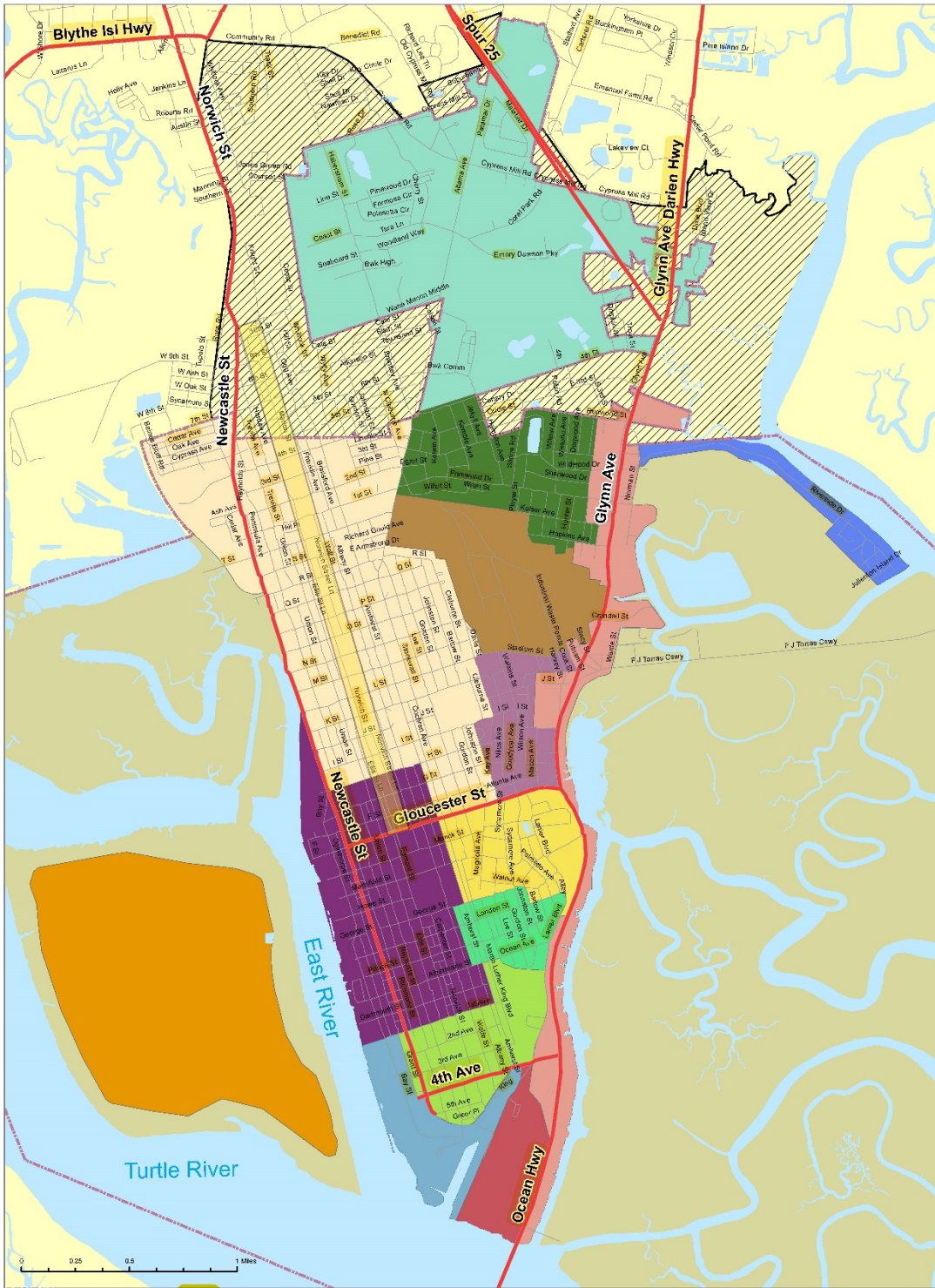
The Mary Ross Waterfront Park Master Plan (Phase II) began months after the completion of Phase I and was the more comprehensive plan of the park as a whole. It defined specific uses, developed concepts around those uses, conducted public outreach, established development priorities, and defined costs and potential sources of revenue for a future revitalized park. The resulting master plan is a comprehensive look at the future of the park as it looks to serve Brunswick, the community, and visitors of the Golden Isles for the next several decades.

Phase II is now under construction. Subsequent phases of improvements in the Master Plan will be included in the 5 – year Work Plan.

Chapter 5 – Land Use (Character Area Plan)

Character Areas Map & Defining Narratives

There have been no changes to the Character Area Map and only minor updates to the narrative for each Character area. Map delineating each Character Area follows.



LEGEND	
Brunswick Boundary	Industrial Waterfront
Water	Liberty Harbor
Character Areas	Marsh
Andrews Island	Medical/Parkwood
Dixville/Habersham Park	Old Town
Hercules Plant	Potential Annexation
New Town/Town Commons	Riverside
North Brunswick	South End Brunswick
US 17 Commercial Corridor	Windsor Park
Urbana/Mayhew	Norwich Street Corridor

City of Brunswick, Georgia
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CHARACTER AREA MAP
AUGUST 2018



The Defining Narrative for each Character area follows, and each define a vision and preferred development patter for each Character Area in the City. The Defining Narratives are both the basis for land use regulation and for implementation projects that address the specific needs of each area of the community. This method works best for the City of Brunswick because it is a historic and established City that is mostly developed with many areas needing re-development.

Character Areas govern future land use by permitting a variety of land uses and generally, where appropriate in core areas of the city, promoting a mixed-use approach to planning. Within Character Areas, issues of scale, massing, building placement, architectural style, and performance issues such as traffic volume and waste handling are just as important as permitted land use categories. Character Areas do, however, restrict land use to those on the list of appropriate uses, and some of these uses may be restricted to certain areas within the Character Areas such as parcels along major roadways.

The Character Areas map was originally developed through an interactive process between the planning team and the community in January 2008. For the Comprehensive Plan Update in 2018, the Character Areas were again discussed and the map and description for each Character Area were further refined through a rigorous community outreach program.

For this 2023 Comprehensive Plan update, similar discussions were held at Stakeholder and Public Meetings to determine if further adjustments in Character Area Boundaries was warranted. Only minor suggested changes in the narratives for several of the Character Areas were suggested. Consideration to modifying the North Brunswick and the Medical Parkwood Character Areas by combining them into an Institutional Character Area. However other factor relating to residential development patterns and large areas being outside the city, were considered and no changes were made.

Character Area: North Brunswick

This northern portion of the city includes an irregularly shaped area primarily centered on Altama Avenue but also with frontage on Community Road/ Cypress Mill Road, and the Spur 25. The development pattern here is very mixed with no one type of development predominating. The campus of the College of Coastal Georgia and Brunswick High School comprise mayor civic uses in this area. Linear, auto-oriented commercial uses with scattered building sites and large parking areas are found along Altama Avenue, Community Road/ Cypress Mill Road, and the Spur 25.

Two newer residential neighborhoods with curvilinear connected street systems, Magnolia Park and College Park, are also part of this area. These neighborhoods have well defined boundaries and consistent single-family development patterns but also offer proximity to nearby commercial and institutional services.

Vision

The vision for the North Brunswick area is multi-layered, reflecting its land use diversity. For the single-family neighborhoods of Magnolia Park and College Park, the vision is to continue to preserve the character and boundaries of these suburban, single-family neighborhoods. For Altama and Community Road/Cypress Mill Road corridors, the vision is for new, mixed-use, urban boulevards with active, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. For Spur 25, the vision is for a continuation of major commercial development. It is also important to the North Brunswick community that it retain its institutional assets – the Coastal Georgia Community College, and Brunswick High School. These institutional assets should be better connected with nearby neighborhoods and knit together with a connected framework of pedestrian and bicycle paths. Commercial redevelopment along Altama is also important to provide goods and services to the college professionals and its students as well as the nearby medical center employing 2700.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Existing single-family residential development within Magnolia Park and College Park
- Community-scale commercial, institutional, multifamily, and mixed-use development along Altama Avenue to support the college, high school and medical complex and traditional commercial with perhaps some mixed residential use along Community Road/ Cypress Mill Road
- Light Industrial development on the western portions of Habersham

Recommended Development Patterns

- Multi-story mixed-use development with retain on the ground floor along major corridors where appropriate and a new building form can logically be introduced.
- Potential housing for college students developed in traditional neighborhood patterns along Altama Avenue.
- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Development that has easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily.
- Single-family residential areas with strong boundaries and consistent massing, setbacks, and front yards.
- Preservation and enhancement of existing major institutions, the high schools and the Coastal College of Georgia.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- New greenways and pedestrian/ bicycle paths to connect residential areas to commercial areas, employment areas and transit stops.

- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
- Parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features such as pervious pavements or detention drainage systems which temporarily store stormwater in basins where inlets are located.
- Locations of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.
- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs
- Driveway consolidation and inter-parcel connections between parking lots
- Garages located to the rear or side of each residence.

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Design a new street section for Altama Avenue that includes a wide pedestrian promenade, street trees, lighting, street furniture, bicycle lanes, travel lanes, (possible) bus shelters, and, if possible, a landscaped median. Ensure that all modes of transportation are adequately planned per the City’s Complete Streets Policy.
- Engage in a comprehensive upgrade of all residential streets in a phased and systematic fashion throughout the character area. Focus infrastructure improvements on drainage, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and streetlights on major streets.
- Stay actively involved in strategic and master planning for the Coastal Georgia Community College. Ensure that the college retains its technical training mission and seek to better integrate the college into the community through joint activities and initiatives.
- As land becomes available for purchase, pursue opportunities for purchase of future parks or nature preserves in this area.

*



Figure 2.1 Mixed-use development helps to activate public streets



Figure 2.2 Single-family ranch home on wooded lot

- Seek to increase recreational opportunities for North Brunswick residents by encouraging public access to recreational areas that are part of the middle school and high school campuses.

- Change the zoning along Altama and Community Road/Cypress Mill Road to permit mixed-use development and require pedestrian streetscapes and street-oriented urban design with parking to the rear.

The Brunswick-Glynn County Archway Partnership identified Planning for Growth as one of the community’s top priorities and created a Growth Task Force (GTF). One area identified by the GTF as ripe for revitalization is the neighborhood along Altama Avenue reference as the Altama Community Transformation (ACT) District. In 2012, a Plan was adopted that created a design for the Altama Avenue Corridor and an implementation plan outlining the strategies and actions necessary to implement the design. Research and analysis of previous planning efforts were conducted as well as extensive stakeholder input and engagement to best inform the development of the corridor design and implementation plan.

The Altama Community Transformation District Corridor Plan, updated most recently in 2018, focuses on:

- Corridor design addressing
 - Zoning and land use issues
 - Streetscape, including street trees, lighting, sense of entry, way-finding signage, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossing.
 - Architectural building design concepts and sample standards (materials, styles, heights, fenestration, etc.)
 - Historic preservation
 - Greenspace and recreation
 - Infill construction (residential and commercial)
 - Right-of-Way design and use (lane layout, access and traffic design, control and calming alternatives)
 - Alternative transportation including pedestrian accessibility and safety, transit, and bicycles.
- Housing
 - Uses, single family and/or multifamily.
 - Condition issues and solutions
- Economic Development
 - Redevelopment opportunities
 - Businesses best suited for the corridor given the traffic flow, College of Coastal Georgia and Southeast Georgia Health System growth, the Brunswick High School campus, and residential areas.

The ACT District Corridor Plan, Appendix G, can be found at [this website](#):

Character Area: Medical/Parkwood

The center of the Medical/ Parkwood Character Area is the Southeast Georgia Health Systems Brunswick Campus, which is surrounded by related medical uses, particularly east of Hampton Avenue. East, west, and south of the hospital are 1960's single-family neighborhoods with regular block patterns and predominantly single-story ranch style homes. These residences benefit from their central location within the City of Brunswick, with easy access to the hospital, the community college, and commercial services. There are also some 1970's era townhouses in this neighborhood south of Kaiser Avenue. The Medical/ Parkwood Character Area is bounded by the US Highway 17 Corridor on the east, the Hercules Plant on the south, and Altama Avenue on the west.

Vision

The Medical/Parkwood Character Area should retain its single-family character while allowing the hospital to serve its important public service mission. In order to balance the competing needs of the neighborhood and the hospital, clear boundaries should be set on the hospital's future expansion to keep it from gradually eroding the stability of surrounding neighborhoods.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential
- Medical related commercial development and parking areas east of Hampton and along parts of Shine Road in the area south of the Hospital and north of Hercules and in the area between the park and the Hospital
- Multifamily development in existing locations of multifamily
- Mixed-use and multifamily development at the intersection of Parkwood Drive and Altama Avenue



Figure 5:3 Medical land uses are an important part of the Parkwood character area.



Figure 5:4 Single family neighborhoods with consistent setbacks for homes

Recommended Development Patterns

- Single-family houses in residential neighborhoods with off-street parking
- Medical-related commercial development and parking areas east of Hampton and along parts of Shrine Road – in the area south of the Hospital and north of Hercules and in the area between the park and the Hospital
- Existing multifamily developments should be permitted to redevelop into configurations that better support Brunswick’s traditional urban forms and block patterns.
- Mixed-use and multifamily development at the intersection of Parkwood Drive and Altama; this is an important intersection for the community and should have a quality appearance.
- Suburban-style single-family residential areas with strong boundaries and consistent massing, setbacks, and front yards
- Clustered high-density development at nodes along major corridors
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs
- Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.
- Parking lots that incorporate on-site storm-water mitigation or retention features such as pervious pavements
- Garages located to the rear or side of each residence.
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Establish clear boundaries in the character area for the expansion of medical uses and parking areas that serve medical uses. Encourage additional medical development to occur along the US 17 or Altama corridors.
- Engage in a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade of all residential streets in a phased and systematic fashion throughout the character area. Focus infrastructure improvements on drainage, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and streetlights on major streets.
- Create a master plan for pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting the neighborhoods with the Southeast Georgia Health Systems Brunswick Campus, the Coastal Georgia Community College, and major commercial corridors.
- Stay actively involved in strategic and master planning for the Southeast Georgia Health Systems Brunswick Campus.
- Consult with the neighborhoods about the potential need for traffic calming to discourage cut-through traffic.

Character Area: Riverside

The Riverside Character Area is a single-family neighborhood located on a peninsula bordered by the Back River and Terry Creek. Homes here tend to have water views and boat docks for accessing the water. The Riverside Character Area is somewhat isolated from other parts of the City of Brunswick and so is less impacted by land use compatibility issues.

Vision

The Riverside Character Area should retain its single-family character and attractive natural surroundings. The Riverside area is distinguished by its location on a peninsula, which provides marsh views and water access to these high-end single-family homes. The goal for this area should be to maintain its current amenities and to protect the character of the existing single-family neighborhood.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential neighborhood

Recommended Development Patterns

- Single-family residential development with off-street parking
- Undeveloped marshland and wetlands
- Preserved views of marshlands and river
- New development should minimize disturbance of marshes and wetlands.
- Development that is compliant with FEMA regulations consistent with established LIMWA zone through residential elevation, etc.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- No recommended transportation patterns for this area

Recommended Implementation Measures

- No recommended transportation patterns for this area



Figure 5:5 Single-family homes in Riverside display a variety of modern coastal styles.

Character Area: US 17/ Glynn Ave Corridor

The US Highway 17 Corridor is one of the two highest-visibility corridors that lead into the city (the other being US 341/Newcastle Street). The US Highway 17 Corridor serves not just as the gateway to the City of Brunswick, but also as the primary gateway to the Golden Isles as well. The northern portion of the US Highway 17 Corridor is primarily comprised of low-density, highway-oriented commercial uses, while the southern portion is characterized by views of open space and marshlands. Some of the commercial areas along US Highway 17 are deteriorating and suffering from disinvestment, but there is new redevelopment activity along the corridor. There is an overlay in the City's zoning code that is intended to help shape the appearance of new development on US Highway 17.

Vision

The US Highway 17 Corridor should be a true gateway to the City of Brunswick and the Golden Isles region. This means the appearance of the corridor is paramount. Preserving views of and access to the marsh front is essential, particularly along the southern, "natural," part of the corridor. The corridor would benefit from reduced visual clutter in terms of billboards, signs, and overhead utility wires. Architectural styles should reflect the native traditions of Brunswick and the Golden Isles, and existing historic structures, such as the visitor center, should be preserved. New and improved wayfinding and the visual definition of gateways are important to the corridor as it is the entrance point for so many visitors. If possible, a new cultural heritage site, for example a site that reflects on the Gullah/Geechee heritage of the area, should be developed along the corridor. The corridor should be truly multimodal with bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities as well as the roadway. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should integrate into the overall vision for the East Coast Greenway where feasible. Development on the corridor should be multi-story, street-oriented, and predominantly mixed-use, with parking and service areas to the rear so that the architecture, the median landscaping, and the marsh form the dominant features of the corridor. Redevelopment along the northern portion of the corridor can help to reshape US 17 from a regional throughway into a new center of activity for the community.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Multi-story mixed use development with commercial uses on the first floor
- Multifamily residential development including senior housing.
- Tourism and cultural facilities
- Hotels and resorts
- Protected greenspace, wetland, and wildlife habitats

Recommended Development Patterns

- Structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near the street front with parking in rear of buildings, making the corridor more attractive and more pedestrian friendly.
- Vertical, multi-story mixed-use development with retail on the ground floor
- Developments that take advantage of marsh-front views such as restaurants or hotels
- Clustering high density development at nodes along major corridors
- Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily.
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Site plans, building design, and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site including topography and views.
- Recognition that FEMA regulations and the LiMWA zone will play a major role in design and use decisions, especially in the area north of the Torras Causeway east of US 17.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Multimodal streetscapes with ample room for pedestrians and amenities to draw people to the corridor.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes.
- Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.
- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
- Parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features such as pervious pavements
- Pedestrian connections between development on the corridor and residential areas behind the corridor
- New greenways and pedestrian/ bicycle paths to connect residential areas to commercial areas, employment areas, and transit stops.
- Facilities for bicycles including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Driveway consolidation and inter-parcel connections between parking lots
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Continue to work with property owners and developers to implement the Glynn Avenue Design Guidelines.
- Examine opportunities for the city to implement TAD#1 funding within the corridor to foster redevelopment.

The Glynn Avenue Corridor Charette Report and Recommendations Appendix H, can be found at this website:



Figure 5:6 Buildings adjacent to the sidewalk enliven a corridor.



Figure 5:7 Wide sidewalks and street trees make a street inviting for pedestrians.

Character Area: Hercules/ Pinova

The Hercules/ Pinova plant, which processes tree stumps into resins and related materials, occupies a large piece of land in the northern sector of the city, highly visible from US Highway 17 and the Torras Causeway. The appearance of the site is typical for a heavy industrial use with large machinery, chain link fences, and a smokestack over the central plant. If the plant closes in the future, environmental constraints may restrict future development on the site. Nearby Brunswick residents complain of air, water, and soil pollution from the Hercules/ Pinova site.

Vision

The city should be prepared in the case of plant closure to conduct an environmental assessment of the site and explore redevelopment possibilities. In the meantime, the city should view the Hercules/ Pinova plant as a valuable source of employment for the community and should continue to monitor and address the environmental impacts of past and present plant operations.

On June 28, 2023 Pinova announced that it will cease operations immediately and over the next 12 – 18 months take the necessary steps to cease all operations and dismantle the plant facilities and equipment. It is possible that some environmental remediation will be involved.

The City will diligently monitor the plant closure and hopefully be involved in determining the appropriate reuse of this prominent site in the community.

News article regarding plant closure may be found in Exhibit C in this Report.

Character Area: New Town/ Town Commons

New Town is the second oldest area of the city. The character area extends northwards from Old Town/F Street up to T Street and east to the Hercules Plant and includes both sides of MLK Boulevard. New Town includes three large public squares that were set aside when it was originally platted. The New Town Character Area is defined by a regular rectangular block pattern which serves to connect diverse land uses in a highly integrated pattern, but also makes it more difficult to identify boundaries between distinct neighborhoods. Land uses in New Town are predominantly single-family, though there are many commercial land uses along Norwich and some churches and schools scattered through the area. There are also several large multifamily Brunswick Housing Authority properties in this character area which tend to stand out from their surroundings.

There are three major corridors that help define the New Town area. MLK Boulevard runs north-south through the New Town area. The MLK area is somewhat underdeveloped. It has a very wide right-of-way in comparison with its traffic volume, and the corridor contains a large median with a tall utility corridor down its center. The Norwich corridor also runs north-south through the New Town area. Land uses along the Norwich corridor tend to be commercial or institutional in nature with some outdoor storage such as automobile sales, and buildings are generally situated directly adjacent to the corridor as characteristic of a 'main street'. Along the western edge of New Town is the Newcastle/US 341 corridor, which functions as a main Gateway to Brunswick (along with US 17). Due to the waterfront and the rail line running adjacent to Newcastle, land uses, and architectural styles are quite diverse, with commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential land uses scattered in an incoherent fashion on the corridor.

Vision

The vision for the New Town/Town Commons area is a revitalized, diverse, urban single-family neighborhood with quality infrastructure. The neighborhood will be improved through a variety of infrastructure investments, including drainage improvements, curb and gutters, streetlights, and sidewalks. Neighborhood parks will be improved by additional amenities such as benches, lighting, walking paths, and playgrounds. Dilapidated housing will be renovated, and new infill housing will be developed on vacant lots. The neighborhood will continue to be mixed-use with schools and churches as part of the neighborhood, and neighborhood-oriented commercial development will occur along Norwich. Newcastle will become a gateway into the city with new, street-oriented redevelopment and an improved streetscape. The City's waterfront will become more accessible to neighborhood residents.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Neighborhood scale commercial development along Norwich St, developed in a *Main Street* fashion with the building fronting the streetscape and parking to the rear.

- Community facilities such as schools, parks, museums, and libraries predominantly located on the major corridors of Norwich St, MLK Jr Blvd, and Newcastle St
- Multifamily development along the MLK Jr Blvd and Newcastle St corridors but compatible in scale with single-family surroundings
- Townhouse development along the Norwich St and Newcastle St corridors
- Mixed-use development along the Newcastle St corridor south of P Street

Recommended Development Patterns

- Houses located near the street with front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.
- New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of the community
- Accessory housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households
- Addition of neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites that serve surrounding neighborhoods.
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front with parking in rear of buildings, making the corridor more pedestrian friendly.
- Emphasizing and protecting views of the river for development along Newcastle St

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Improved streetscaping for Norwich St, MLK Jr Blvd, and Newcastle St with the introduction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other streetscape amenities
- Facilities for bicycles including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Restrictions of the number and size of signs and billboards on MLK Jr Blvd, Newcastle St, and Norwich St

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Develop new design guidelines for the Norwich corridor that guide height and massing, include a build-to line and a pedestrian streetscape.
- Design and implement a new streetscape for Norwich entering downtown.
- Design and implement new street sections for MLK Jr Blvd, Norwich St, and Newcastle St. Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities on all corridors and include transit facilities along MLK Jr Blvd. Include a landscaped median on MLK and Newcastle.
- Conduct an accessory housing study to determine potential configurations for accessory housing units that would leave the neighborhood character intact.
- Ban any new billboards and minimize free standing signs along the Newcastle/ Norwich corridors and require that old billboards be removed as a condition of development/redevelopment permitting.

- Engage the neighborhood in planning charrettes for the public squares in the area in order to plan for park amenities.
- Engage in a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade of all streets in a phased fashion throughout the character area, starting with major streets. Focus infrastructure improvements on drainage, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and streetlights.
- Require the screening and landscaping of commercial outdoor storage areas.
- Engage in a “block-by-block” strategy for reclaiming neighborhoods by phasing in public & private investment and coordinating infrastructure investments with community development and policing initiatives.
- Explore the designation of key structures or districts within the New Town Character Area for eligibility for the National Register.
- Continue to implement the policies and ideas outlined in the Historic Norwich Corridor Development Plan and the Revitalizing Norwich Corridor Study (2018) to foster redevelopment. (Appendix XXX)



Figure 2.10 Single-family houses with porches could provide good infill for New Town



Figure 2.11 Corner stores contribute to a sense of place

Character Area: Urbana/Mayhew

Urbana and Mayhew are post-war subdivisions with predominantly single family housing. A large and recent mixed-income, garden apartment development, Whispering Oaks, is a major land use feature of this neighborhood. The Abbott Andrews Brunswick Housing Authority development is also located in this character area. These neighborhoods are bounded by the US Highway 17 commercial corridor to the east, the Hercules Plant to the north, and the Burroughs-Molette School to the west. Edo Miller Park is on the northern boundary of the neighb

Vision

The Urbana-Mayhew Character Area should retain its predominantly single-family character. A small neighborhood surrounded by commercial and industrial uses; it is important to maintain the physical integrity of this neighborhood's boundaries. There is a significant amount of multifamily development in the character area, and while this is currently compatible with the character area, multifamily development should not be permitted to expand significantly in land area or scale. It is important to restore the connectivity of the street grid or to at least restore pedestrian pathways to the east, west, and north where possible. Increasing connections with the US 17 corridor is of particular value. The neighborhood should continue to benefit from schools and parks that are part of its fabric. As with other Brunswick neighborhoods, there is a crucial need to improve infrastructure, especially drainage infrastructure.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Neighborhood scale commercial, institutional, and mixed-use development along Gloucester St, developed in a *Main Street* fashion with buildings fronting the streetscape and parking in the rear.
- Community facilities such as schools, parks, museums, and libraries built to a neighborhood scale.
- Multifamily residential in existing areas of multifamily development – of compatible scale to the single-family areas surrounding and in traditional regional architectural styles.

Recommended Development Patterns

- Houses located near the street with front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.
- Infill residential development on vacant sites; these sites, with existing infrastructure in place, are to be used for development, matching the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- Accessory housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households and income generation for homeowners to increase affordability.
- Multifamily developments that face the street, broken into a series of smaller masses that mimic single-family development and preserve the historic block structure.
- Structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near the street front with parking in rear of building – making the corridor more attractive and more pedestrian friendly.
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips into mixed-use assets.

- Community facilities such as schools developed in a way that the entire community can share facilities such as meeting rooms, libraries, and playgrounds.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Facilities for bicycles including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Garages located to the rear of each property or on-street parking to be used for residents' automobiles.
- Maximum size for parking lots in neighborhood commercial areas
- Parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features such as pervious pavement

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Promote affordable infill development and accessory housing units along with housing rehabilitation programs in the area.
- Engage in a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade of all streets in a phased and systematic fashion throughout the character area, starting with major streets. Focus infrastructure improvements on drainage, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and streetlights.



Figure 5:11 Typical single-family residential in Urbana/Mayhew Character Area

Character Area: Windsor Park

Windsor Park is a 1930's-1940's subdivision developed on the site of a former City golf course. Windsor Park is distinguished from surrounding neighborhoods by its curvilinear street pattern and its circular (as opposed to rectangular) central park. Single-family homes in Windsor Park include a wide variety of architectural styles and larger lot sizes than are found in most of Brunswick's other neighborhoods. The Windsor Park Character Area also includes Howard Coffin Park. This character area is bounded by Gloucester to the north, US Highway 17 to the east, and Lee Street to the west.

Vision

The Windsor Park Character Area should retain its single-family, relatively low-density character. Howard Coffin Park is a major community amenity, with its swimming pool, gym, tennis courts, and other recreational facilities. The park should continue to respond to evolving community needs and concerns. As with other Brunswick neighborhoods, there is a crucial

need to improve infrastructure, such as the addition of sidewalks, streetlights, and especially drainage infrastructure.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Neighborhood scale commercial, institutional, and mixed-use development along Gloucester Street – developed in a *Main Street* fashion with buildings fronting the streetscape and parking to the rear.
- Community facilities such as parks, museums, and libraries built to a neighborhood scale.

Recommended Development Patterns

- New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of the community
- Open space, environmental protection lands and parks

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Facilities for bicycles including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Garages located to the rear or the side of each residence.

Recommendation Implementation Measures

- Revise the zoning code for Windsor Park to ensure than new single-family development is compatible in scale, massing, and placement with traditional development patterns. The code should ensure that new residences put their ‘face’ to the street, with parking to the side or rear, and that front yards are preserved.



Figure 5:12 Windsor Park, the heart of the Windsor Park Character Area

Character Area: Dixville/ Habersham Park

These historic neighborhoods date back to the period just after the close of the Civil War. Historic and newer single-family homes are mixed in this character area. The neighborhood is predominantly single-family with small parcel sizes and a wide variety of architectural styles. There are scattered commercial and industrial properties along MLK Boulevard as well as some scattered multifamily development. The area is bounded by US Highway 17 on the east, Albany Street on the west, and includes some industrial land uses on its southern end. The new Glynn Middle School is planned for just south of this area.

The Dixville neighborhood was added to the Georgia Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. It is credited for being a largely residential neighborhood developed primarily from c. 1880-1919 as a cohesive African American community. The district is a good example of a planned residential community for Brunswick's working-class, African American population, consisting of a variety of early house types typical for Georgia.

Vision

The Dixville/Habersham Park Character Area should retain its predominantly single-family character. The Dixville/Habersham Park Character Area will see significant infill development and revitalization, as well as improved neighborhood infrastructure. It will remain a tightly knit community with affordable single-family housing and committed longtime residents. Commercial, industrial, and multifamily areas will be redeveloped into neighborhood commercial and low-density multifamily developments that enhance the character and vitality of the neighborhood.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Community facilities such as schools, parks, museums, and libraries built to a neighborhood scale.
- Multifamily redevelopment in existing areas of multifamily development – of compatible scale to the single-family areas surrounding and in traditional regional architectural styles.

Recommended Development Patterns

- Infill development on vacant sites closer to the center of the community; these sites with existing infrastructure in place are to be used for new development – matching the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
- New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of the community

- Houses located near the street with front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.
- Accessory housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households and income generation for homeowners to increase affordability.
- Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density (small scale apartment buildings, multifamily that looks like single residence from the street, etc.)
- Reuse of existing vacant or underutilized structures (commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities.
- Revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points.
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Community facilities such as schools developed in a way that the entire community can share facilities such as meeting rooms, libraries, and playgrounds.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Garages located to the rear of each property or on-street parking to be used for residents' automobiles.
- Facilities for bicycles including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Improved streetscaping for MLK Jr Blvd with the introduction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other streetscape amenities

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Promote affordable infill housing development along with housing rehabilitation programs in the area.
- Engage in a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade of all residential streets in a phased and systematic fashion throughout the character area. Focus infrastructure improvements on drainage, curb, gutter, sidewalks, and streetlights on major streets.
- Revise the zoning code for Dixville/ Habersham to ensure that new single-family development is compatible in scale, massing, and placement with traditional development patterns. The code should ensure that new residences put their 'face' to the street, with parking to the side or rear and front yards preserved.
- Conduct an accessory housing study to determine potential configurations for accessory housing units that would leave the neighborhood character intact.

Character Area: Old Town

Old Town is the oldest part of the City of Brunswick, planned from before the Revolutionary War. Old Town displays a regular block structure with small blocks. Some of its historic squares are still preserved as open space, while others have been disturbed by private development, institutional development, or intervening streets. The Old Town Character Area exhibits the widest mix of land uses of any part of the city, with civic and governmental structures, retail and business establishments, and a variety of historic and modern single-family homes. The downtown area has seen recent revitalization, with restored historic structures, new streetscapes, and a variety of new businesses opening on Newcastle Street. Most of Old Town is covered by the Old Town Historic District, within which new development and renovations are overseen by the City's Historic Preservation Board. Parts of the character area, particularly the Newcastle, Gloucester, Norwich, and MLK corridors, are covered by the Downtown Development Authority and are eligible for its programs.

Vision

The Old Town Character area is the historic, civic, and cultural center of the Brunswick community. Although recent years have seen revitalization of both its commercial and residential areas, much work remains to be done. One of the highest priorities is to reconnect the City with its historic waterfront, with improved public access, commercial activities along the waterfront, a publicly accessible pedestrian riverwalk, increased public spaces and parks, and new mixed-use development along the waterfront to capitalize on this high-value property. Additional streets should serve to better connect the riverfront with downtown and views to the water should be preserved where possible. The Blueprint Brunswick plan provides a detailed urban design strategy for fulfilling this vision for infill development in the waterfront area. In addition, historic squares need to be restored to their original dimensions and filled with community-friendly amenities such as walking paths, lighting, and benches. Neighborhoods in Old Town need to see continued renovation of homes and infill on vacant lots. Glynn Academy needs to be made more pedestrian-friendly, with sidewalk improvements connecting the school with surrounding neighborhoods. Downtown should see a continued revitalization and a wider variety of activities and entertainment for all ages, but particularly for young adults and community youth.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Multifamily development in existing locations of multifamily development
- Community scale commercial, institutional, and mixed-use development along Gloucester St and Newcastle St downtown
- Multi-story mixed development or condominium development along the Newcastle St and Bay St corridors and in the waterfront area with publicly accessible boardwalks along the waterfront

- Hotels, resorts, and hospitality developments in the downtown area and along Newcastle and Bay Streets
- Tourism and cultural facilities in the downtown area and along Newcastle, Gloucester, and Bay Streets
- Protected greenspace, parks, wetlands, and wildlife habitats
- Public marinas and associated uses

Recommended Development Patterns

- Mixed-use or hospitality developments of human scale with retail on the ground floor to activate the waterfront.
- Commercial structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) of human scale located near the street front with parking in the rear of buildings – making the community more attractive and pedestrian friendly.
- Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or underutilized commercial areas to mixed-use assets.
- Major institutions, such as government buildings, churches, and schools, particularly along major corridors
- Houses located near the street with front porches that encourage interaction with neighbors.
- Accessory housing units that provide rental opportunities for small households and income generation for homeowners to increase affordability.
- New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles in the community
- Redevelopment of existing multi-family developments into configurations that better support Brunswick’s traditional urban form and block patterns.
- Prohibition of land uses that have outdoor storage.
- Prohibition of industrial uses in high value areas

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- On-street parking in front of retail development on Norwich St, LMK Jr. Blvd, Gloucester St, Newcastle St, and Bay St
- Small blocks and continued street grid patterns throughout the downtown area
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards on MLK Blvd and Newcastle St
- Maximum size for parking lots in neighborhood commercial areas

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Design a new street section for Gloucester Street that includes sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, bus shelters, bicycle lanes, travel lanes, and if possible, a landscaped

median. Ensure that all modes of transportation are adequately planned for per the City's Complete Streets policy.

- Ban any new billboards and minimize free standing signs along the Newcastle and Norwich corridors and require that old billboards be removed as a condition of development/redevelopment permitting.
- Engage in parking management strategies to make the best use of available parking.
- Require that new development along Brunswick's riverfront dedicate adequate land for continuous public access per the City's waterfront design plans as a condition of development approval.
- Develop a common long-term plan for the City's waterfront with the Georgia Ports Authority.
- Plan for a complete network of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bicycle paths throughout downtown and connecting to other areas of the city.
- Continue to work on sidewalk improvements throughout Old Town, with a focus on the Glynn Academy area.
- Conduct design charrettes for the City's squares and parks to plan for future amenities and increase community stewardship of parks.
- Promote evening entertainment activities for young adults and youth in the Old Town area, such as concerts and movies.



Figure 5:14 Civic uses should have traditional architecture and be pedestrian friendly.

Character Area: South End Brunswick

Though the block pattern for South End Brunswick is a continuation of that of Old Town, the residences in this character area are quite different with a predominantly brick ranch style. This area was developed in the post-World War II era. The South End Brunswick area is almost all single-family with the exception of the Glynn Iron metal scrap yard. South End Brunswick is bounded by mostly industrial uses to the east and south.

Vision

The vision for the future of South End Brunswick is a tree-covered, quiet urban neighborhood convenient to downtown and waterfront parks. Much of this vision is currently true today, except for the desired parks along Brunswick's waterfront. This is a stable, single-family neighborhood with little cut-through traffic, and these are characteristics the area would like to maintain. One issue of concern to the neighborhood is employee parking for the nearby King and Prince facilities, which residents would like to see accommodated with on-site parking. Increased parking enforcement could help to mitigate this issue.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Single-family residential development
- Community facilities such as schools, parks, museums, and libraries built to a neighborhood scale.
- Open space, environmental protection lands, and parks

Recommended Development Patterns

- Houses located near the street with consistent massing, setbacks, and front yards.
- New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles in the community
- Open space, environmental protection lands, and parks

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- New greenways and pedestrian/ bicycle paths to connect residential areas to commercial areas, employment areas, and transit stops.
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways
- Garages located to the rear or the side of each residence.

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Design a new street section for 4th Avenue that includes sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, bus shelters, bicycle lanes, travel lanes, and if possible, a landscaped median. Ensure that all modes of transportation are adequately planned for per the City's Complete Streets policy.



Figure 5:15 Great neighborhood streets have ample tree cover and good sidewalks.



Figure 5:16 Single-family housing typical of South End Brunswick

Character Area: Industrial Waterfront

Industrial land uses line the East River west of Bay Street and south of 4th Avenue. Many of these industrial uses have a lengthy history with the city dating back to when it was a hub for processing timber-related products and seafood. One of the current major industrial operations in this area is King and Prince Seafood, which is to this day a thriving and productive operation. An occasionally active rail line runs along the waterfront and provides rail access to several of these parcels. Many industrial properties have access through Bay Street, but because Bay Street discontinues, some of the southernmost properties have relatively poor access and must rely on Newcastle Street, which is predominantly residential in character.

Vision

The City of Brunswick encourages viable industrial enterprises to remain in the city along its southern waterfront (south of 1st Avenue) and seeks to maintain a collaborative relationship with these employers.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Industrial land uses
- Parking areas
- Open space, environmental protection lands, and parks



Figure 2.23 Industrial waterfront with pier

Recommended Development Patterns

- Industrial land uses with rail, road, and waterfront *Figure 5:17 Industrial Waterfront and pier*
- Parking areas for employees

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Adequate off-street parking to accommodate area employees.
- New greenways and pedestrian/ bicycle paths to connect residential areas to commercial areas, employment areas, and transit stops.
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Collaborate with the Brunswick Glynn County Development Authority to retain industries in this area.
- Develop a plan to manage industrial and truck traffic routes and speed.

Character Area: Liberty Harbor

Liberty Harbor is a master-planned resort community that was began construction at the southern tip of the City of Brunswick near the landing for the Sydney Lanier Bridge. Liberty Harbor was planned to include single-family residences, condominiums, a shopping village, recreational amenities, and a variety of public spaces all connected within a highly walkable framework. Residential development was to include single-family homes, up to 20-story condominiums, and townhouses. Liberty Harbor is master planned in the “New Urbanist” framework with buildings fronting public streets and high-quality streets and public spaces. Liberty Harbor was planned to include a marina and public waterfront access through a pedestrian promenade.

Due to the Great Recession of the late 2000s, the Liberty Harbor development was halted in 2008 and construction has not resumed since. Since the master plan for the Planned Development was developed and approved and much infrastructure has been built, the property has the potential to be developed as originally intended.

Vision

Liberty Harbor is planned to be a high amenity, master planned resort community with views and connections to Brunswick’s waterfront and marshes. A mixed-use master planned community is appropriate for this location.

Appropriate Land Uses

- Land uses in Liberty Harbor are governed by the approved master plan for the development.
- Any deviation from the approved master plan should apply for an updated Planned Development with the City Commission

Recommended Development Patterns

- Development in Liberty Harbor is part of a mixed-use, master planned community with a variety of residential types, recreational community amenities and open space, and some neighborhood retail.

Recommended Transportation Patterns

- Improve connectivity between Liberty Harbor and downtown.
- Continued public access through Liberty Harbor to the riverfront.

Recommended Implementation Measures

- Seek out the right developer to develop the approved master plan or an updated Planned Development at this location.
- Connect Liberty Ship Park with the rest of the city through bicycle and pedestrian paths.



Figure 5:18 Liberty Harbor future development site

Character Area: Andrews Island

Andrews Island is located in the middle of the East River across from the downtown waterfront. The island is currently used as a collection area for the dredged soils which result from harbor deepening. The Georgia Department of Transportation currently has the island under lease. Andrews Island is currently in public sector ownership, with portions owned by the City of Brunswick, the Brunswick- Glynn County Development Authority, and the Georgia Ports Authority.

Vision

Andrews Island was not much discussed during the comprehensive planning process however various suggestions in past planning efforts included creating a hub for port/ industrial development, protecting the island and enhancing access as open space, or utilizing the island as a location for new residences. As the City is seeking to reclaim some of its waterfront from other uses, one suggestion was to reclaim certain port uses from the waterfront to Andrews Island. In any of these scenarios, the city would seek to make use of the island and not leave it as a mere receptacle of dredged soils. The city prefers appropriate land uses that take advantage of the island's location in the middle of the East River and are compatible with the City's vision for its downtown waterfront.

Appropriate Land Uses

- To be determined by future planning processes but potentially industrial, transportation, residential, lodging, and open space land uses are appropriate for Andrews Island.



Figure 5:19 Andrews Island, East River

Character Area: Marsh

The marshes and wetlands surrounding the Brunswick peninsula provide many environmental and economic functions and they are a defining characteristic of our city as well as the region. Without the marshes and wetlands, our area would not be known as the Golden Isles and would certainly be lacking in many elements that make Brunswick significant.

Vision

The marshes and wetlands should be preserved in their natural state to retain as much of their ecological, economic, and storm protection functions as possible. Public views of our marshes and wetlands should be promoted and the connection to our waterways, wetlands, and marshes can be improved without affection these important resources negatively.

Appropriate Land Uses

Conservation Preservation Districts, as described in the City's Zoning Ordinance, were established and maintained to preserve and/ or control development within certain land, marsh, and/or water areas of the City which serve as wildlife refuges; possess great natural beauty or are of historical significance; area utilized for recreational purposes; provide needed open space for the health and general welfare of the City's inhabitants; or are subject to periodic flooding. Regulations apply within this district designed to reserve such areas and to discourage any encroachment by residential, commercial, industrial, or other uses capable of adversely affecting the relatively undeveloped character of the district.



Figure 5:20 View of the Marsh and Tidal Creeks adjacent to US 17 and Overlook Park

Core Area Plans

Following are listed other core area plans completed by the city to guide growth and development within its core area. These plans were designed to function over an extended period of time and are still relevant.

The Brunswick Downtown Development Authority, in collaboration with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government of the University of Georgia assisted the City of Brunswick in a three-step process for downtown Brunswick identifying 1) where are we now; 2) where are we going? and 3) how do we get there? The greatest benefit from the RSVP program is the answer to the question “How do we get there?”. The final report included a work plan made up of step-by-step action items that each assigned to a community member who can assist in the implementation of these items.

Elements of the Plan include:

- Gloucester Street
- Bay Street
- Mary Ross Waterfront Park
- Newcastle Street
- Norwich Street
- Coastal Greenway
- Promotion/ Other

City of Brunswick Urban Redevelopment Plan | 2016

The Brunswick Urban Redevelopment Plan outlines the best practices that will help Brunswick redevelop those areas of the community that have suffered from blight or are otherwise threatened. It underscores Brunswick’s commitment to protect and preserve those things which have always made Brunswick a unique place; to fulfill responsibilities to the environment; to create upward mobility for citizens and enhance their quality of life; to encourage investment; and to realistically plan for inevitable growth.

Components of the Plan include:

- Boundaries of the redevelopment area
- Evidence that the area on the whole has not been subject to growth and development through private enterprise and would not reasonably be anticipated to be developed in the near future without approval of the plan.
- Explanation of proposed uses for urban redevelopment purposes and proposed method of financing any construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation,

repair, demolition, alteration, or remodeling of property for such uses and estimated cost thereof

- Description of proposed construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, demolition, alteration or remodeling of any public works, public housing, or other public facilities, estimates of cost thereof, and explanation of proposed method of financing same
- Description of proposed construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, demolition, alteration, or remodeling of privately owned property, estimates of cost thereof, and explanation of proposed method of financing same
- Description of contracts, agreements and other instruments creating obligations of more than one year which are proposed to be entered into by the City of Brunswick to implement the plan.
- Description of type of relocation payments proposed to be authorized by the plan and estimates of cost thereof.
- Statement of conformity of plan to master plan, zoning ordinances and building codes of the City of Brunswick and exceptions thereto.
- Summary of estimated expenditures from public and private financing sources for each of the first ten years following implementation of this plan
- Historic Property within the redevelopment area that will be sought to be preserved.

The City of Brunswick Urban Redevelopment Plan, Appendix I can be found at this website:

Historic District Parking Plan:

A parking demand assessment for downtown Brunswick was commissioned in 2007. The intent of the study was to assess existing and forecast parking needs within the downtown core. With recently completed projects and an agenda of new development, the downtown is poised to become even more of a vibrant bustling destination for the surrounding area. The primary parking study area is centered along Newcastle Street which is Brunswick's commercial core. A relatively narrow road reflecting the historic nature of the downtown, the relatively low speed of traffic along Newcastle Street contributes to the walkability of the downtown as pedestrians can easily cross the street to destinations on opposite blocks.

The downtown itself is a mixture of financial, retail, office, restaurant, and some public use facilities such as the Glynn County Library and Old City Hall. The building mix is a combination of older historic buildings and new construction. At the time that the Parking Plan was written, and now, the only publicly provided parking supply within the downtown core consists of on-street parking. All off-street parking is privately owned and controlled. The majority of the on-street parking is provided along Newcastle St with some along intersecting cross streets and streets or lanes that parallel Newcastle St. The lanes paralleling Newcastle St between Gloucester and Howe Streets are very narrow.

In completing the analysis, the Parking Plan used surveys of downtown business owners and employees plus actual utilization data of the downtown parking. The Parking Plan was able to accurately assess the needs and reasonably project future parking demand using anticipated growth projects provided by the city for new development projects.

Shortly after the Parking Plan was completed, the US economy dramatically fell in what has been called the Great Recession of 2008. The resulting loss of wealth led to sharp cutbacks in consumer spending and the City of Brunswick felt those cutbacks for many years. Now in 2018, the city seems to have recovered from the Great Recession and is seeing tourism and spending similar to what it was in 2007 when the Parking Plan was written.

In 2007, the current demand analysis showed that overall, there was a surplus of more than 500 parking spaces downtown.

Sidney Lanier Park Improvements Conceptual Master Plan

A conceptual master plan was created to enhance the Sidney Lanier Park located at the south end of the city. Proposed Park features include:

- pier cover.
- park.
- new parking.
- docks.
- terraced seating.
- interpretive signs; and
- kayak launch.

This preliminary study also gave cost estimates for improving the waterfront park.

The Sidney Lanier Park Master Plan, Appendix J, can be found at this website:

Chapter 6 – Transportation

Updated Brunswick Area Transportation Plan (BATS) 2045

The Brunswick Area Transportation Study (BATS) as designated in MAP-21, is the 20-year plan that identifies the vision, goals and objectives, strategies, and projects that promote mobility within and throughout the region of which Brunswick is a part for both people and goods. This long-range plan, which is required to be updated every five years, is focused on addressing the changing conditions and transportation needs of the Metropolitan planning area to a planning horizon year of 2045.

The BATS contains recommendations for various types of surface transportation including streets and roads, transit routes, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It also contains descriptions and assessments of conditions or factors affecting the surface transportation of persons, and the movement of freight.

Another important requirement of the BATS is its ability to demonstrate financial feasibility, by reconciling that anticipated revenues over the designated planning period will be adequate to cover the proposed project costs. The plan is divided into horizon years, or “cost bands,” of either five or ten years. Within each of the cost bands, the project costs and anticipated revenues must be identified by year of expenditure. Cost bands are defined as calendar years, beginning January 1 and ending December 31, and must not be more than 10 years apart. For the BATS 2040 MTP, the cost bands are: ♣ 2015 – 2020; ♣ 2021 – 2030; and ♣ 2031 – 2040.

By conducting a financial analysis, and demonstrating financial feasibility, or fiscal constraint, the BATS plan meets the federal long-range planning standards, and presents a list of proposed projects that can realistically be anticipated over the life of the plan. In addition, those projects for which funding is not anticipated to be available is also captured in an unfunded project list, or Illustrative/Vision Plan.

Public Transportation Study 2018 and Recommended Alternative 2021

After receiving and reviewing a Public Transportation Plan in 2018, The City of Brunswick has received and acted on a recommended Public Transportation Plan Option. The city is currently seeking financial support from Glynn County and the private sectors that will benefit from the implementation of the plan.

The recommended plan essentially links all areas of the city and adjacent Glynn County to Brunswick’s neighborhoods and growth areas in adjoining Glynn County to employment centers and areas where its population can obtain medical and other services.

The Updated Brunswick Area Public Transportation Study and Recommended Alternative, Appendix K, can be found at this website: <https://www.glynncounty.org/303/Metropolitan-Planning-Organization-MPO-a>

Complete Streets

In addition to the Transportation Plan, the City of Brunswick is a Complete Streets Community. Adopted by the city in 2017, the Complete Streets Program is designed to reduce congestion, increase the transportation network capability, and increase consumer choice while decreasing consumer transportation costs and improving air quality and community health. The Program also strives to enhance community aesthetics, augment economic growth, and increase community stability by providing accessible and convenient connections between home, school, work, recreation, and retail destinations.

Complete Streets are Rights-of-Way that are planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in such a way as to enable safe, comfortable, and convenient access by users of all ages and abilities. This includes pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorcyclists, emergency, freight, and vehicle operators.

The City of Brunswick Complete Streets Ordinance, Appendix L, can be found at this website:

Bay Street Corridor Plan

The city, with the assistance of GDOT, completed a corridor study of Bay Street between its intersection with Newcastle in Downtown Brunswick, and 4th Street to the south. One objective was to improve traffic flow at major intersections including installation of round-a-bouts at Newcastle and 4th Streets. Improved pedestrian crossings from downtown to the waterfront area were recommended and two have been stalled.

Implementation of the plan for intersection improvements is to occur in 2024 and 2035 once GDOT approval is obtained.

Bay Street Corridor Plan, Appendix M, can be found at the following website:

Glynn Isles Wayfinding Plan

Navigation from place to place is a fundamental and integral part of everyday life. Wayfinding serves the purpose of informing people of the surrounding areas in the unfamiliar built environment. In a tourist-potential coastal city like Brunswick, it's imperative for visitors and locals to be able to navigate easily.

To improve wayfinding in the City and surrounding Glynn County, a field analysis was completed which included a detailed investigation of existing environmental conditions and streetscape plans. The Plan also inventoried and analyzed existing signage and traffic patterns and developed a summary report.

The analyses resulted in the design of a wayfinding sign system and associated elements that will include directional, identity, entry, and functional signage as well as the design of

associated features such as logos, fonts, color schemes, and other artwork developed in support of the project.

The Wayfinding Plan continues to be implemented each year through funding in the city's annual budget.

Additionally in late 2017, One Hundred Miles, a local organization whose mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance Georgia's 100-mile coast coordinated a Safe Routes to School Walking Audit in a citywide effort to identify barriers that students encounter when walking and biking to school in Brunswick.

An analysis and subsequent recommendations are expected to provide greater walkability and bikability throughout the community.

Trails

The Coastal Georgia Greenway is envisioned as a 155-mile trail system which will connect South Carolina to Florida through Georgia's six coastal counties. This alternative transportation network will link the towns, attractions, recreational sites, historic and cultural sites, waterways, and natural habitats of the coast. A series of trails suitable for bicyclists, joggers, equestrians, canoeists, kayakers, and other non-motorized users will be built. The centerpiece of the Coastal Georgia Greenway is a continuous trail connecting South Carolina to Florida as part of the East Coast Greenway along various north-south routes including the U.S. Highway 17 corridor, abandoned rail corridors, and historic canal corridors, from which visitors can sample coastal imagery.

[Coastal Georgia Greenway Plan, Appendix N](#), can be found at this website:

Chapter 7 – Housing

The city's Department of Planning, Development and Codes was recently tasked with completing and analysis of housing conditions within its neighborhoods as well as the obstacles for the development of affordable housing. Based on the analysis of data collected an Affordable Housing Plan was completed as an element for tis updated Comprehensive Plan.

The Executive Summary of the Housing Study and Affordable Housing Plan follows:

The issue of affordable housing has never been as prominent as it now is across our Nation, partially due the COVID 19 Pandemic which impacted materials cost and labor supply as well as timing and cost issues relating to transportation. The result has been the cost of housing increasing in most areas of the country by 40 – 50%. Since the pandemic abated a year ago, that increase has dropped somewhat but home

construction costs remain higher by as much as 25% in most areas and rent increases of about the same percentage.

From the socio-economic and housing data gathered and analyzed for this report, one can easily see that there are real challenges for families living in the City of Brunswick to find affordable housing opportunities. Yet there are also opportunities for the city to address those needs by providing leadership and public investment in programs that will facilitate the development of affordable housing while revitalizing the community's neighborhood and core city areas. The physical and historic character of the city will benefit from both.

Much of City's population of around 15,000 does not have the financial capacity to either rent or purchase adequate and standard condition housing in today's market. The gap between available income capacity and housing costs is as much as \$10,000 per year for many of the city's Median Family Income family and non-family households. Following are some of the challenges Brunswick's families have in seeking adequate affordable housing:

- As many as 1500 or 45% of the city's family households are currently "housing cost burdened" (spending more than 30% of family income for total housing expense) as well as 1100 non-family households including single elderly persons living alone.
- 64% of all occupied dwelling units are rented and 60% of those units are single family or duplex homes, a high percentage of which require substantial rehabilitation. Few affordable apartment dwellings are available in the city.
- 9% of all single family and duplex housing structures are rated in poor condition requiring substantial rehabilitation or demolition (unfit for human habitation); 40 % are rated in only fair condition indicating a need for modest to major rehabilitation. Another 43 % are rated in only average condition, requiring modest rehabilitation. Only 8% of all single family and duplex housing is in good or excellent condition.
- As many as 2,000 families and individuals are currently living in inadequate, costly, and substandard housing.
- Current sales and rental data indicate that some families and individuals are forced to leave the city because of inadequate housing opportunities. Many are relocating into developing Glynn County or even nearby Brantley or McIntosh Counties.

Most new housing since 1970 has been built outside the city with most of it being multi-family or townhome rental communities. Within the city, only 8 new single family housing units have been added over the past 10 years. In addition, consider the following current market conditions in the City:

- Currently, there are an average of only 35 - 40 homes on the market for sale inside the city with an average list price of \$172,450. These homes normally remain on the market for less than 60 days.
- There are virtually no rental apartments available within the city and those now being developed in the county have rents starting at \$1,250 for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,450 for a two-bedroom unit. Many families and individuals renting these units must devote as much as 40% – 50% of family income for housing expense. 30% - 35% is considered normal.
- New single family “starter homes” are located outside the city now priced at \$175,000 compared to under \$150,000 a few years ago and are beyond the reach of most families.
- Federally subsidized rental housing in the city, including public housing, Section 8 voucher certificates and other tax incentivized affordable housing have waiting lists of well over 1,000 families and individuals.

From this summarized data, it is easily seen that the City of Brunswick, like many communities facing affordable housing needs, has real challenges to overcome.

Yet, there are opportunities for the city to not only begin to address and meet those challenges, but by doing so, begin the transformation of many of its declining neighborhoods through innovative housing programs. Consider these opportunities:

- There is a large supply of older 2- and 3-bedroom homes, in poor condition, which can be rehabilitated and offer opportunities for affordable housing for many families.
- There are numerous incentive programs for development of affordable rental housing using Federal tax incentive programs. Two such projects have been completed in Brunswick during the past 5 years.
- Through aggressive pursuit of tax foreclosed properties using the recently created Land Bank Authority, sites can be made available for both new homeowner single- family, townhome, or duplex housing or for the development of small rental complexes of 8 or more units.
- Expand the use of Federal programs like CDBG, CHIP, and the HOME Program to name a few to help with home repair and rehabilitation as well as the construction of new housing.

By implementing these and other measures, the City of Brunswick can assure that the on-going efforts to revitalize its downtown, historic core area, and its neighborhoods will continue and flourish.

An Affordable Housing Plan which, adopted and implemented, can help assure the success of a revitalized city.

From Stakeholders and community input offered throughout the development of the plan, there is probably no higher priority than the implementation of an Affordable Housing Plan.

The city has an ongoing housing repair program funded by a portion of its CDBG annual entitlement. This program provides around \$10,000 to homeowners for repairs including roof, porch, stairs, handicap access and site improvements and reaches 10 – 12 homes each year. This program is included in the city’s 5 – year Consolidated Plan recently approved in 2022.

[Brunswick’s Affordable Housing Plan dated May 25, 2023, can be found in Appendix D in this Plan.](#)

Chapter 8 – Resiliency, Stormwater, Flood Control and Hazard Mitigation

Resiliency

Brunswick is a low lying urban coastal community area that is impacted by rainfall, tide changes and storms, including tropical storms and hurricanes. In recent years, the effects of climate change and rising sea levels have compounded the challenges the city faces to plan and implement actions that will mitigate the danger to its citizens and damage to their property.

Over the past five years, the city has taken steps to execute plans that will begin to mitigate these impacts through the formation of a stormwater utility and management program, planning improvements that will provide long term mitigation after completion and continuing to manage its resiliency programs for the long term.

Two recently completed studies; South Atlantic Coastal Study – Glynn County Focus Area (Corps of Engineers 2022) and the Shoreline Assessment and Implementation Resiliency Plan (Glynn County 2022) along with earlier studies help provide guidance to the city in its stormwater and flood control facilities planning and design. Factors such as climate change, projections of sea level rise are consistently monitored and included in project development and design.

At the present time Glynn County is in the process of updating the multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan which, when completed will also provide the city with guidance and project selection.

Stormwater Management and Flood Control Program

The city presently owns and operates its stormwater management systems and facilities which have been developed over many years. The future usefulness and operational function of the systems and the additions and improvements thereto, rest with the city. To do so, the city must have both a stormwater management program as well as an adequate and stable funding strategy for its stormwater management program operation and drainage-related capital improvement needs.

In 2018, a Stormwater Utility was established which is responsible for stormwater management services throughout the City, and provides for the management, protection, control, regulation,

use, and enhancement of the City's stormwater management systems and facilities and stormwater management program services. It will also interface with and consider the Regional Water Plan and all Environmental Planning Criteria established for Coastal Georgia as it implements its work plan.

Soon after creation of the Stormwater Utility, the city prepared and adopted a Stormwater and Flood Control Master Plan to guide the design and construction of projects over a 5 – year period. Funding for implementation of the projects came from passage of a SPLOST measure passed in 2021. Four highest priority projects are currently underway. Future projects and plan implementation will also be dependent on the passage and availability of SPLOST funds.

As projects are completed, the Master Plan will be updated to provide plans and priorities for the next five years beginning in 2025. In preparing the new Master Plan, the City will be mindful of recommendations to be contained in the 2023 update of the joint Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) currently being prepared by Glynn County and including all municipalities and participating entities within the County. Likewise, the city will be mindful of new data relating to climate change and sea level rise that will be included in the HMP 2023 – 2028 as well as guidance by FEMA and other State and Federal Agencies.

Storm Water and Flood Prevention Master Plan can be found at this website:

Hazard Mitigation Plan

The City of Brunswick participated in the preparation of the 2018 (2015) Glynn County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Many of the recommendations and Work Plan items contained in the plan for the city were implemented by the preparation and adoption of the 5–year Stormwater and Flood Control Master Plan.

The City has begun an acquisition program of properties subject to frequent and recurring flooding. One such property was just recently acquired, and the city has identified other properties which have experienced frequent flooding for similar action. The city has access to a listing of properties that have had repetitive property damage and losses due to flooding. These properties have and will continue to be mapped by GIS and data maintained for other possible property acquisition and/ or areas determined to be too hazardous for development.

Additionally, the City has created a website of information on areas subject to frequent flooding and its building department has started maintaining a file of Certified Flood elevations of properties for which they issue permits. These are recorded and mapped by GIS.

The Glynn County Hazard Mitigation Plan update for 2023-2028 is currently underway and is expected to be completed in early Fall. The city will implement the actions contained in the plan indicated a being ne.

[The 2918 Stormwater and Flood Control Master Plan, Appendix O](#) can be found at website:
[Information regarding Stormwater Hazards](#) can be found at this website:
[Stormwater Utility Ordinance | 2018](#) can be found at this website.
[Shoreline Assessment and Implementation Resiliency Plan – 2020](#) can be found at this website:
[Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Coastal Study, Glynn County Focus Area – 2022](#) can be found at this website:

Chapter 9 – Parks and Recreation

In 2018, by mutual agreement the city turned over the programming operation, maintenance and improvements of its parks and recreation facilities to Glynn County. In 2022, the city decided to re-take control of its parks and provide the needed programming, operation, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Just recently, the city hired a Director of Parks and Recreation to head the Department of Parks and Recreation and by Spring of 2024 will be in complete control of all city parks. The initial focus of the Department is to assume the responsibilities for programming, operations, and maintenance. As the city begins the full operation of its park program and facilities, a long-range plan for needed facilities improvements and expansion will be undertaken beginning in 2024. This will be included in the city's Short Range Work Program.

Chapter 10 – Urban Redevelopment Plans

Within the structure of city government is the city's Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) whose board is appointed by the City Commission.

The Brunswick Urban Redevelopment Plan adopted by the city in 2018 outlines the best practices that will help Brunswick redevelop those areas of the community that have suffered from blight or are otherwise threatened. It underscores Brunswick's commitment to protect and preserve those things which have always made Brunswick a unique place; to fulfill responsibilities to the environment; to create upward mobility for citizens and enhance their quality of life; to encourage investment; and to realistically plan for inevitable growth.

Components of the Plan include:

- Boundaries of the redevelopment area
- Evidence that the area overall has not been subject to growth and development through private enterprise and would not reasonably be anticipated to be developed soon without approval of the plan.
- Explanation of proposed uses for urban redevelopment purposes and proposed method of financing any construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, demolition, alteration, or remodeling of property for such uses and estimated cost thereof

- Description of proposed construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, demolition, alteration or remodeling of any public works, public housing, or other public facilities, estimates of cost thereof, and explanation of proposed method of financing same
- Description of proposed construction, reconstruction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, repair, demolition, alteration, or remodeling of privately owned property, estimates of cost thereof, and explanation of proposed method of financing same
- Description of contracts, agreements and other instruments creating obligations of more than one year which are proposed to be entered into by the City of Brunswick to implement the plan.
- Description of type of relocation payments proposed to be authorized by the plan and estimates of cost thereof.
- Statement of conformity of plan to master plan, zoning ordinances and building codes of the City of Brunswick and exceptions thereto.
- Summary of estimated expenditures from public and private financing sources for each of the first ten years following implementation of this plan
- Historic Property within the redevelopment area that will be sought to be preserved.

The URA has been tasked by the City Commission to specifically concentrate on the following two redevelopment initiatives that have been on the agenda for many years.

1. **Redevelopment of the Oglethorpe Hotel Block.** This property acquired more than 20 years ago was to have become the site of a long-anticipated convention center and hotel. Largely as the result of expanded similar facilities on the nearby islands, the project lacked economic feasibility and was officially abandoned two years ago.

Numerous proposals for the development of the property were received from developers by the city, however none proved to be viable. The URA has been tasked with determining the appropriate and marketable use(s) for the property and the needed public financial support (if any) for such a development(s) to be successfully completed and become an economic benefit to the city and its downtown core area.

The URA is in the initial stages of selecting professional marketing and development assistance to guide it and prospective developers in successfully developing and marketing the site.

2. **Complete the Development of Liberty Harbor:** Originally conceived as an outgrowth of Blueprint Brunswick in the early 2000's, the project was halted due to the severe housing recession of the period between 2007 through full recovery around 2021. By then, the developer was not able to financial recover and resume marketing and developing the site. The URA has been tasked with determining the appropriate market and development plan for the property and to unravel the diverse property ownership issues so that the prominently located and historic site can be completed.

Chapter 11 – Preparation of Future Plans for Specific Short- and Long-Range Projects: 2023 - 2028

Currently, the Department of Planning, Development and Codes have the following items on their agenda to complete in the coming months and years:

1. Final update of the Zoning Ordinance: The second phase of the city's zoning ordinance update and revisions was just recently completed. A complete review of the Official Zoning Map needs to be undertaken to correct property zoning throughout the city that is no longer appropriate.
2. Annexation Study: There are areas adjacent to the existing City Limits that need to be examined and, working with Glynn County, develop a mutually acceptable annexation of Glynn County property into the city. This is particularly true in the vicinity of the Coastal College of Georgia and the SE Georgia Medical Complex and areas along US 17 south of the GA 25 Spur. This study is particularly important for the successful development of property in the Altama Ave Corridor in uses which can serve the school and hospital facilities and their employees and students in the area.
3. Both the Coastal College and SEGHS are in the process of developing Master Plans to guide their future development. The city has been invited to review and discuss the implications of their future development of public infrastructure and development needs in the vicinity of the institutions to support their growth.
4. As the city begins to implement the housing and neighborhood revitalization plan within various Character Areas within the city, the Department may need to develop Redevelopment Area Strategy Plans to guide the development of new housing or other appropriate uses within housing focus areas as well as preliminary plans for infrastructure development.

Chapter 12 – Report on Status of Work Program for 2018 - 2023

A report of the status of the 2018 Five Year Work Plan is highlighted on following Chart 1.

Chart No. 1

Progress Report for the 2018 - 2023 Work Program

Completed Underway Not Completed - Deferred

ID	Project	Start End		Responsible Entity	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	NOTES
		Date	Date				
Economic Development Projects							
1	Develop a strategy for the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites assessed from 2008-2013.	2018	2020	Brownsfield Task Force/ Comm. Dev./ Fanning	\$30-100K	EPA, CDBG	No Action - Cleanup of Hercules Plant still underway
2	Implement selected projects from the Blueprint Brunswick Master Plan to revitalize and redevelop key catalyst sites throughout the City.	2018	2023	Comm. Dev./ Planning/ DDA/ URA	\$100K	Various	Perry School Completed.
3	Promote minority-owned business enterprises through a study of MBE capacity and by initiating business mentoring programs and business incubators.	2018	2019	SBDC/ DDA/ Comm. Dev.	Staff	City	Implemented Financial Navigator Program
4	Aggressively expand downtown development to the Norwich corridor, through tools such as the CNU Legacy Project, marketing studies, increased parks and public facilities, a unifying streetscape design, and promoting housing redevelopment and infill in adjacent neighborhoods.	2018	2023	DDA/ Comm. Dev./ Planning/ URA	\$100K	City	___ of Grants provided totaling \$ ___, however not many applicants
5	Recruit a neighborhood grocery to the downtown area.	2018		DDA/ Comm. Dev.	Staff	City	Schroeder Market opened 1/23
6	Leverage opportunity zone to promote economic and community development.	2018	2023	Planning/ Comm. Dev./ County/ DDA/ Chamber	Staff	City	___ projects approved
7	Leverage TAD zone to promote economic and community development as outlined in 2017 TAD plan.	2018	2023	City/Econ. Development/Planning/ URA/DDA/EDA	Staff	City	TAD# 1 re-adopted 2021 to establish assessment baseline. \$800,000
8	Utilize URA to complete the redevelopment of the Perry School Site	2018	2021	URA/Planning/Comm. Development/EDA	Staff	City	Project Completed
9	Utilize URA to complete the redevelopment of the Oglethorpe Block for Conference Center and Hotel use	2018	2020	URA/Planning/Comm. Development/EDA	Staff	City	Conference Center abandoned, focus of comm/residential ppp
10	Utilize URA to assist with redevelopment of Glynn Avenue if appropriate.	2018	2023	URA/Planning/Comm. Development/EDA	Staff	City	No redevelopment projects to date. Awaiting cleanup of

Chart No. 1

ID	Project	Date		Responsible Entity	Cost	Funding Sources	NOTES
		2018	2022				
Cultural & Environmental Projects							
8	Support and assist the African American Historical Commission through development of tourism infrastructure recommended in GDED Tourism Study		2022	City/ County	Staff	private	Refer to GDED Glynn County Tourism Study (Appendix G)
9	Work with Tree Board to continue to develop a tree ordinance for the protection of specimen trees.	2018	2019	Planning/ Comm. Dev./ Park & Tree Board	Staff	City	Public Tree Ord. Completed. Private tree ord. being developed
11	Develop a comprehensive inventory of cultural, archaeological and historic properties and resources, as well as important cultural and historical viewsheds, expanding upon the City's existing historic resource inventory.	2018	2020	Comm. Dev./ DDA/ Historic Board/ Planning/ CRC/ Historic Brunswick Foundation	\$30-100K	City	Not started. Move to 2023 WP
12	Pursue the recognition of New Town as a national historic district.	2018	2020	DDA/ Historic Board/ Planning/ City Manager	<\$30K	DDA	Not initiated. Move to 2023 WP

ID	Project	Date		Responsible Entity	Est Cost	Funding Sources	NOTES
		2018	2020				
Housing Projects							
14	Foster partnerships with for-profit and non-profit developers to develop new, affordable infill housing.	2018	2020	Comm. Dev./ Housing Non-Profits/Land Bank	\$30-100K	HUD, DCA, BPHA	Plan Completed. Included in 2023 completed Affordable Housing Plan.
15	Promote development of affordable single family housing in strategic neighborhood revitalization areas by expanding financial assistance to homebuyers and providing incentives to for-profit and non-profit developers.	2018	2020	Comm. Dev./ Planning/Land Bank	Using existing City Comm. Dev. funding sources	City, BPHA, HUD	Plan Completed. Included in 2023 completed Affordable Housing Plan.
16	Design and implement a Community Housing Assistance Plan.	2018	2021	Comm. Dev. /Planning/CHRA/BPHA	Staff	City, BPHA	Plan completed. Included in 2023 completed Affordable Housing Plan.
17	Develop a long range plan for addressing the needs of low- income elderly and handicapped persons.	2018	2020	Coast Georgia Area Agency on Aging/Comm. Dev.	\$30-100K	City, BPHA	Not initiated. Included in 2023 completed Affordable Housing Plan.

Chart No. 1

ID	Project	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Entity	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	NOTES
30	Establish a stormwater utility to fund drainage improvements, starting with a study addressing a drainage needs assessment, the utility's organizational structure, and fee calculation and assessment.	2018	2019	City Manager/ Finance/ Engineer/ Public Works/ Planning	\$100K+	City	Completed
31	Annually update Capital Improvement Program to plan for future capital expenditures and update annually.	2018		City Manager/ Public Works/ Finance	Staff	City	Completed
32	Improve neighborhood infrastructure - drainage, sidewalks, lighting, curb, gutter, etc - as programmed in the Capital Improvement Program.	2018	2023	Comm. Dev./ Engineering/ BPHA/ JWSC/ Non-Profits	\$30-100K	Stormwater Utility/ MOST/ SPOST/ One Georgia Equity Fund/ CDBG	Repairing and sidewalk improvements underway and continuing.
33	Develop a Comprehensive Parks Plan to manage the City's green spaces and recreational needs.	2018	2021	Planning/ Parks	\$30-100K	City	City has taken over Parks and recreation. A plan will be completed in 2024.
34	Conduct a feasibility study with regard to increasing funding for the City's infrastructure needs with MOST.	2018	2020	City Manager/ Finance/ Engineer/ Public Works	\$100K+	City	Deferred to 2023-2024
35	Implement improvements to Mary Ross Waterfront Park as waterfront catalyst project as outlined in Mary Ross Park Master Plan.	2013	2020	Planning/ Engineer/ Public Works/URA/DDA	\$100K+	City	Phase II contract was awarded and work has commenced.
	Prepare an action plan for the promotion of the deployment of broadband services into underserved areas within the jurisdiction	2019	2021	City Manager/ Planning/ Engineering/ Public Works/ Economic Development		City	2 new service providers have entered the market and lines are under construction

ID	Project	Start End		Responsible Entity	Estimated Cost		Funding Sources	NOTES
		Date	Date		Cost	Cost		
36	Encourage and support the establishment of neighborhood organizations and foster active participation in civic issues.	2018		Comm. Dev./ Neigh. Organizations/ Churches/ Schools	Staff	City	Most NPA's are functioning with the support of the city's Dept of Neighborhood Services.	
37	Improve FEMA's Community Rating System's class rating to mitigate flooding risks, increase preparedness for storm flooding events & reduce insurance premiums.	2018		Emerg. Manag./ Engineering/ Public Works/ Planning	\$100K	Stormwater Utility	Improved CRS Score to 5	
38	Construct approved City gateway features, wayfinding signs, and/or public art projects at the north and south entrances of US 17 into the City, at the entrance of US 341 into the City, at Gloucester and US 17, at the end of the Torras Causeway, and in other potential locations.	2013	2020	DDA/ Comm. Dev./ Planning/ Golden Isles Arts/ BGIVB	\$100K+	TEA/ General Funds	Installation of wayfinding signage has begun and remains a city priority.	

Chart No. 1

ID	Project	Start End		Responsible Entity	Cost	Funding Sources	NOTES
		Date	Date				
48	Develop policies for permitting Bed and Breakfasts in residential areas.	2013	2019	Planning/ Legal/ Historic Board	Staff	City	Included in Rev ZO
49	Revise the zoning ordinance to increase flexibility with respect to neighborhood commercial development (potential connection with form-based codes)	2013	2023	Planning/ Legal/ City Commission	Staff	City	Included in Revised ZO
Transportation Projects							
50	Update the Long Range Transportation Plan, and reevaluate the boundaries and projections for future Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs).	2018		BATS/ Planning/ DDA/ Public Works	\$45,000	GDOT/ County/ City	New BATS Plan issued 2022.
51	In cooperation with Glynn County, establish regular transit service per the Glynn County Urban Transit Implementation Plan, connecting residents to employment, shopping, and health care destinations.	2018		BATS/ County	\$230,000 annually	County/ City/ GDOT/ FTA	Transit Plan Complete and Recommended Plan currently in approval and funding stage.
52	Develop a City-wide Street Schematic Design Plan with designations, functional descriptions, and schematic designs for all streets in the City. Ensure that designs for streets include all modes of transportation. Develop specific cross-sections for US 17, US 341, Bay Street, Altama, and MLK Blvd.	2018		Planning/ Engineering/ Public Works	\$35,000	City	Complete Streets Ord. Adopted
53	Develop a City-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with facilities standards for all street types and a phasing strategy for extending pedestrian and bicycle access to the entire City. Place a particular emphasis on access to public schools from residential areas, i.e. "safe routes to school."	2018	2020	Comm. Dev./ City Manager/ Public Works/ CRC/ Schools/ GDOT	\$45,000	Safe Routes to School, GDOT	MLK Bike Corridor Study Completed. Other areas to be planned in conjunction with Neighborhood Revitalization.
54	US 17 Streetscape - Design and construct new streetscapes, on easements or in the public ROW, including new sidewalks, street trees, lights, benches, and a possible median.	2018		Planning/ Engineering/ GDOT	\$8 million	GDOT/ General Funds	To be negotiated with GDOR in 2023 -2028 Plan period.
55	Bay Street Streetscape - Design and construct new streetscapes in the public right-of-way, including new sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, lights, benches, and a possible median.	2018		Planning/ DDA/ Engineering/ GDOT	\$4 million	GDOT/ General Funds	Corridor Study Completed
56	Gloucester Streetscape - Design and construct new streetscapes in the public right-of-way, including new sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, lights, benches, and a possible median.	2018		Planning/ DDA/ Engineering/ GDOT	\$4 million	GDOT/ General Funds	Refer to RSVP Plan (Appendix L)
57	Continue to maintain and improve Historic Sidewalks and Streetscape materials in Old Town Historic District as outlined in 1999 study and 2015 update.	2018		Planning/ DDA/ Engineering/ Public Works	\$100k+	SPLOST/ General Funds	Public Works Continues to continue to implement

Chapter 13 – 2023 – 2028 Short Range Work Program

This element of the Comprehensive Plan lays out the specific activities the City of Brunswick plans to undertake during the next five years to address the priority Needs and Opportunities as well as taking steps toward the Community Goals.

The Work Program that follows also includes items from the previous 5 – year Work Program that were deferred.

The 2023 – 2028 Work Plan follows on Chart 2

**Chart 2
Community Work Program - 2023 - 2028**

ID	Project	Date	End Date	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Source	Notes
Affordable Housing Rehabilitation, Development and Neighborhood Revitalization							
1	Prepare a Management Plan for implementing the Affordable Housing Plan.	9/1/2023	1/1/2024	DHNR, DPDC, CDBG - DR	\$25,000	City of Brunswick	
2	Prepare Policies and Procedures and a Relocation Plan. Initiate preliminary home inspections.	1/1/2024	3/1/2024	DHNR	\$25,000	City of Brunswick	
3	Identify at least 3 target areas for concentrated housing inspections. Solicit applications from homeowners. Initiate and complete initial home inspection.	3/1/2024	6/1/2024	DHNR, DPDC, CDBG - DR	\$25,000	City of Brunswick	
4	Select first "package of 3 - 6 homes for rehabilitation. Complete work write up and bid packages. Award bid(s).	6/1/2024	9/1/2024	DHNR	\$180,000 - 360,000	City of Brunswick and CDBG	
5	Continue Housing Repair Program City Wide			DHNR	\$200,000	City and CDBG	
6	Begin second and succeeding years of program	9/1/2024	9/1/2028	DHNR,CDBG-DR,DPDC	\$1,800,000	City, CDBG, CHIP	
7	Start and complete neighborhood infrastructure evaluation and improvement plan.	9/1/2024	1/1/2025	DPW,DPDC	\$25,000	City	
8	Begin implementation of neighborhood revitalization plan.	1/1/2025	9/1/2025	DPW,DPDC	\$250,000	City	
9	File HOME - CHIP Application with DCA for New Affordable Housing Construction. \$600,000	1/1/2024	3/1/2024	DHNR	\$25,000	City	
10	Re-constitute GHIC Committee	1/1/2024	4/1/2024	City	Staff	City	

DHNR - Dept. of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
DPDC - Department of Planning, Development and Codes, CDBG - DR Staff

Chart 2
Community Work Program - 2023 - 2028

ID	Project	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Source	Notes
	Resiliency, Stormwater, Flood Control and Infrastructure Improvements						
10	Complete first 4 Master Plan stormwater and flood control projects.	Underway	12/1/2024	DPW		SPLOST	
11	Update Stormwater and Flood Control Master Plan	6/1/2024	12/1/2024	DRW	\$50,000	City	
12	Continue priority street repaving program	Underway	10/1/2028	DPW	\$1,000,000 annually	City / SPLOST	
13	Assist DHNR with neighborhood revitalization planning and infrastructure improvements	1/1/2025	10/1/2028	DPW, City Engineer, DPDC	Staff	City	
14	Participate in Park Improvements Planning	1/1/2024	12/1/2024	City Engineer	\$50,000	City and Consultant	
15	Complete Master Plan Improvements for Mary Ross Park	6/1/2024	12/1/2024	City Engineer		City and Consultant	
16	Complete NCRF Project Study	Underway	6/1/2024	City Engineer	Grant	NFWF	
	Transportation						
17	Secure funding from public and private sources and Implement recommended public transportation alternative in phases	Underway	6/1/2024	City Manager, City Engineer	\$	City, County, GDOT, Private sources	
18	Develop pedestrian and cycling connection plans from revitalized neighborhoods as Affordable Housing Plan is being carried out	1/1/2024	10/1/2028	DHNR, DPDC, PW	Staff	City	
19	Continue Historic District sidewalk and streetscape maintenance and development	11/1/2023	10/1/2028	SPDC, PW	\$100,000	Annual City Budget	

DHNR - Dept. of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
DPDC - Department of Planning, Development and Codes, CDBG - DR Staff

**Chart 2
Community Work Program - 2023 - 2028**

ID	Project	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Source	Notes
20	Implement intersection and pedestrian crossings in the Bay Street Corridor Plan.	1/1/2024	12/1/2025	DPW, GDOT	\$	City, GDOT	
Cultural and Environmental Projects							
21	Continue to assist the African American Historical Commission to develop tourism infrastructure in the city	Continued	10/1/2028	City/County AAHC/Forward Brunswick	Staff	Foundation and Private Contributions	
22	Continue to advocate for a city-wide tree ordinance for all property to protect legacy tree species	Continued	10/1/2028	DPDC	Staff	City	
23	Pusue recognition of New Town as a National Historic District	Continued	12/1/2025	DPDC	\$30,000	City	
24	Develop an inventory of cultural, historic and archaeological resources as well as cultural and historic viewsheds.	Continued	12/1/2026	Historic Board, Tour	\$100,000	Grant	
Economic Development Initiatives							
25	Consider amending the boundary of TAD #1 to include areas on US 17 and the Norwich and MLK corridors.	1/1/2024	12/1/2024	DPDC	Staff	City	
26	Consider creating TAD # 2 centered around the Medical / College Complex and including several declining neighborhoods	1/1/2024	12/1/2024	DPDC	Staff	City	
27	Consider creating a small business incubator program in downtown Brunswick	7/1/2024	6/30/2025	DPDC and Coastal College	Staff	City/College	
28	Consider a building trades apprenticeship program	7/1/2024	10/1/2028	City/GC Schools, Coastal Tech School	Staff	City/GCSS/ Technical College	

DHNR - Dept. of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
DPDC - Department of Planning, Development and Codes, CDBG - DR Staff

**Chart 2
Community Work Program - 2023 - 2028**

ID	Project	Short and Long Range Planning				Responsible Entity	Est. Cost	Funding Source	Notes
		Start Date	End Date	End Date	End Date				
29	Re-visit the Altama Corridor Plan and develop a strategy for implementation along with Annexation of key areas.	1/1/2024	12/1/2026		DPDC/Glynn County PD	Staff	City/County		
30	Update Urban Redevelopment Plan to add focus in target housing and neighborhood revitalization areas	1/1/2024	7/1/2025		DPDC, DHNR, URA	Staff	City		
31	Consider a re-use plan for Liberty Harbor using ULI/UGA and other outside resources	7/1/2024	7/1/2025		DPDC, URA	Staff	City		
32	Re-visit US 17 Overlay District and consider modifications	1/1/2024	12/1/2024		DPDC	Staff	City		
33	Complete review of all city codes dealing with development, land use and code enforcement	7/1/2024	7/1/2025		DPDC	Staff	City		
34	Complete a short and long range annexation program	1/1/2024	12/1/2025		DPDC	Staff	City		
35	Combine the Master Plans for College of Coastal Georgia and SEGMC for long range land use plan for new Institutional Zone	7/1/2024	7/1/2026		DPDC	Staff	City		

DHNR - Dept. of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
DPDC - Department of Planning, Development and Codes, CDBG - DR Staff

**Affordable Housing Plan
For
The City of Brunswick, Georgia
Challenges and Opportunities**



**Prepared by
City of Brunswick
Department of
Planning, Community Development and Codes
May 25, 2023**

What is Affordable Housing: *Housing is considered affordable if total housing expense, including rent or mortgage plus other housing expenses (utilities, insurance, etc.) paid by the occupant, does not exceed 30 – 35% of a family's gross income (Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standard).*

The Median Family Income of families in Brunswick in 2021 was just slightly under \$33,500 per year, significantly lower than families in Georgia and Glynn County. The number of Brunswick families living below the poverty level of \$27,500 per year hovered at around 34% in 2021; nearly three times as high as all of Glynn County at 12%.

The HUD affordable housing standard of 30 – 35% presents a serious challenge for City of Brunswick residents to secure affordable decent. Safe and sanitary housing within the Brunswick housing market.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of affordable housing has never been as prominent as it now is across our Nation, partially due the COVID 19 Pandemic which impacted materials cost and labor supply as well as timing and cost issues relating to transportation. The result has been the cost of housing increasing in most areas of the country by 40 – 50%. Since the pandemic abated a year ago, that increase has dropped somewhat but home construction costs remain higher by as much as 25% in most areas and rent increases of about the same percentage.

From the socio-economic and housing data gathered and analyzed for this report, one can easily see that there are real challenges for families living in the City of Brunswick to find affordable housing opportunities. Yet there are also opportunities for the city to address those needs by providing leadership and public investment in programs that will facilitate the development of affordable housing while revitalizing the community's neighborhood and core city areas. The physical and historic character of the city will benefit from both.

Much of City's population of around 15,000 does not have the financial capacity to either rent or purchase adequate and standard condition housing in today's market. The gap between available income capacity and housing costs is as much as \$10,000 per year for many of the city's Median Family Income family and non-family households. Following are some of the challenges Brunswick's families have in seeking adequate affordable housing:

- As many as 1500 or 45% of the city's family households are currently "housing cost burdened" (spending more than 30% of family income for total housing expense) as well as 1100 non-family households including single elderly persons living alone.
- 64% of all occupied dwelling units are rented and 60% of those units are single family or duplex homes, a high percentage of which require substantial rehabilitation. Few affordable apartment dwellings are available in the city.
- 9% of all single family and duplex housing structures are rated in poor condition requiring substantial rehabilitation or demolition (unfit for human habitation); 40 % are rated in only fair condition indicating a need for modest to major rehabilitation. Another 43 % are rated in only average condition, requiring modest rehabilitation. Only 8% of all single family and duplex housing is considered to be in good or excellent condition.
- As many as 2,000 families and individuals are currently living in inadequate, costly and substandard housing.
- Current sales and rental data indicate that some families and individuals are forced to leave the city because of inadequate housing opportunities. Many are relocating into developing Glynn County or even nearby Brantley or McIntosh Counties.

Most new housing since 1970 has been built outside the city with most of it being multi-family or townhome rental communities. Within the city, only 85 new single family housing units have been added over the past 10 years. In addition, consider the following current market conditions in the City:

- Currently, there are an average of only 35 - 40 homes on the market for sale inside the city with an average list price of \$172,450. These homes normally remain on the market for less than 60 days.
- There are virtually no rental apartments available within the city and those not being developed in the county have rents starting at \$1,250 for a one-bedroom unit and \$1,450 for a two-bedroom unit. Many families and individuals renting these units must devote as much as 40% – 50% of family income for housing expense. 30% - 35% is considered normal.
- New single family “starter homes” are located outside the city now priced at \$175,000 compared to under \$150,000 a few years ago and are beyond the reach of most families.
- Federally subsidized rental housing in the city, including public housing, Section 8 voucher certificates and other tax incentivized affordable housing have waiting lists of well over 1,000 families and individuals.

From this summarized data, it is easily seen that the City of Brunswick, like many communities facing affordable housing needs, has real challenges to overcome.

Yet, there are opportunities for the city to not only begin to address and meet those challenges, but by doing so, begin the transformation of many of its declining neighborhoods through innovative housing programs. Consider these opportunities:

- There is a large supply of older 2- and 3-bedroom homes, in poor condition, which can be rehabilitated and offer opportunities for affordable housing for many families.
- There are numerous incentive programs for development of affordable rental housing using Federal tax incentive programs. Two such projects have been completed in Brunswick during the past 5 years.
- Through aggressive pursuit of tax foreclosed properties using the recently created Land Bank Authority, sites can be made available for both new homeowner single-family, townhome or duplex housing or for the development of small rental complexes of 8 or more units.
- Expand the use of Federal programs like CDBG, CHIP, and the HOME Program to name a few to help with home repair and rehabilitation as well as the construction of new housing.

By implementing these and other measures, the City of Brunswick can assure that the on-going efforts to revitalize its downtown, historic core area, and its neighborhoods will continue and flourish.

An Affordable Housing Plan which, adopted and implemented, can help assure the success of a revitalized city.

INTRODUCTION

Affordable Housing has become one of the Nation's top domestic issues. Since the outbreak of the COVID 19 Virus in early 2020, we have seen the housing market nationally and locally dramatically change. Consider these current housing market conditions that evolved during the Pandemic; many of which are still continuing and affecting the market:

- Dramatic increases in the cost of building materials, in some instances as much as 40%. Even though increases have abated somewhat, builders in the area indicate that, on average, building materials are 15% - 20% higher than two years ago. Coupled with increases in labor cost, the overall cost of housing has risen around 25%.
- Shortages of construction materials and components as supply chain issues have improved but still persist for some items.
- Shortages of construction trades labor and substantial increases in labor costs. This has limited the return of many homebuilders into the market, particularly for single-family homes.
- Inventories of new and existing housing units for sale have decreased to levels not seen in many years resulting in substantial rises in sales prices. Although inventories have increased somewhat in recent months, it is still a "seller's market" because of limited supply.
- Starter homes were generally available prior to the pandemic in the \$150,000 range are now priced at \$175,000 to \$200,000 and above in most areas.
- Mortgage rates have increased from the mid 3% level to 6% or higher.

These changes in the housing market have resulted in families forced to use a higher percentage of their income for housing expense or it has forced them to share housing with other family members or friends. Those families who have chosen to rent, have seen rental rates for single family homes and apartments rise as much as 20% in some markets. Home ownership has slipped into the mid 30% range in many cities, including Brunswick.

In the State of Georgia, the affordable housing issue is considered so serious that the Governor has called attention to the negative impact it is currently having on economic development in the state. He has called on state and local government to seek solutions including removal of regulatory measures which unduly inhibit the construction and cost of housing.

The housing market in the City of Brunswick, and particularly throughout Glynn County, is no different; perhaps even worse. Coupled with the described dynamics of the national and state housing market, is a city population whose residents have a Median Family income of \$33,500 which is substantially less than what is required to obtain affordable decent and adequate housing. The city's family poverty rate still hovers at over 32%. These and other conditions, including a lack of newly constructed affordable housing either for sale or for rent, compound the challenge for Brunswick to meet the housing needs of its population. This is not a new challenge for Brunswick as it has persisted for many years.

The purpose of this Affordable Housing Plan is to quantify the challenge facing families and individuals seeking affordable housing and to recommend specific actions, policies and initiatives that can be undertaken by to meet that challenge. By adopting a plan, the City of Brunswick will acknowledge the extent of the need, establish policies, and initiate programs to meet that need.

BACKGROUND – POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES

Brunswick is a historic coastal city with a central core area of beautiful homes, churches, schools, and commercial structures amidst beautiful 100-year-old plus live oak and other “Heritage” trees. Today it boasts a thriving port which moves import and export vehicles and construction machinery through it daily as well as a thriving tourist industry due to its historic past and proximity to coastal beach areas.

Its economic past is linked to the timber and timber products industry and, during World War II, to the building of Liberty Ships for the war effort and hosting a Navy Base for sub searching blimps. It was during those years when Brunswick saw significant population growth which reached over 20,000 by early 1960s. Its urban and metropolitan areas also began to grow and develop during that period. Nearly 70% of all homes in Brunswick were built prior to 1970. The timber industry remains an important part of the area’s economy.

Table 1 presents US Census 2021 ACS projections of key population and socio-economic data for the city, its urban area (excluding St. Simons and Jekyll Islands and Sea Island) and all of Glynn County including the island population. It should be pointed out, that population, socio-economic and housing data available for this report vary considerably by data source. The margin of error for much of the US Census data is often high due to the low percentage of responses in 2020 due largely to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Every effort has been made to compare data and choose that which was felt to be most accurate including comparing data to actual counts.

- The city, and its urban area population has remained more or less static since 2000 at around 15,000 and 33,000 respectively, while all of Glynn County has increased about 25% from 67,500 in 2000 to 84,740 in 2021.
- The City’s population is 60% African American compared to 40% for the urban area and 24% for Glynn County.
- Median Family Income (MFI) among city residents is \$33,357 compared to \$45,561 for the Urban Area and \$66,537 for all Glynn County residents. Income in all these areas falls below the State level of over \$80,000. The City’s MFI has remained essentially the same since 2000 factoring in inflation.
- Median Family Income in Glynn County is heavily influenced by the population living on St. Simons Island where the MFI is estimated at \$120,000. Data for Sea Island and Jekyll Island is not estimated by the US Census because of the small number of full- time resident homeowners.

**Table 1
Population Profile**

<u>Data</u>	<u>City of Brunswick</u>	<u>Brunswick Urban Area</u>	<u>Glynn County</u>
Total Population - 2021	14,774	33,427	84,739
Total Population - 2010	15,383	33,555	79,816
Total Population - 2000	15,600	31,588	67,568
Racial Composition			
African American	60%	40%	24%
White	34%	44%	62%
Other	6%	16%	14%
AGE			
Median Age	36	35	41
% over 65	17%	15%	15%
% under 18	23%	25%	21%
Median Household Income	\$ 29,362.00	\$ 36,223.00	\$ 61,984.00
Median Family Income	\$ 33,357.00	\$ 45,561.00	\$ 66,537.00
Families Below Median Income	53%	54%	45%
Families Below Poverty Level	34%	30%	12%
Employment			
% of Labor Force Employed	93%	95%	96%
Employed where Live	21%	67%	67%
Employed Elsewhere	79%	33%	33%
Average Commute Time	19 min	22 min	23 min
Occupations			
a. Retail Trade	13%	17%	13%
b. Professional/ Management	8%	12%	12%
c. Education, Health Care	26%	21%	22%
d. Accommodations, food serv.	18%	17%	18%
e. Government	13%	11%	7%
f, All other	22%	22%	28%
Education Attainment			
a. Less than a HS Degree	14%	16%	12%
b. HS Graduate	35%	35%	28%
c. Some college / 2 yr degree	32%	33%	31%
d. College degree	19%	16%	29%

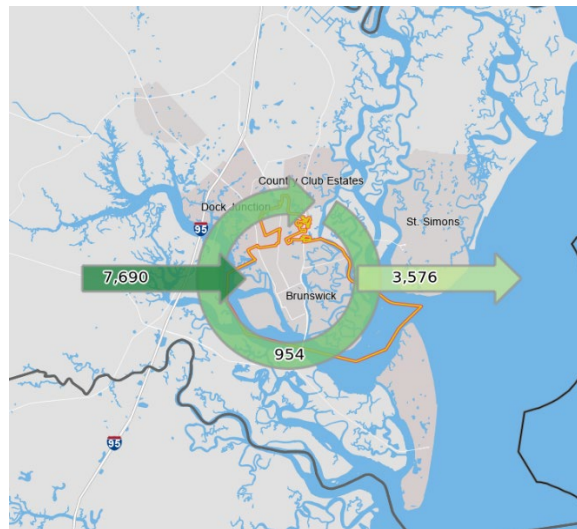
Source: US Census ACS 2021 Projections

AREA WORKFORCE AND ECONOMY

Much of the economic and job growth has occurred outside the City in recent years, particularly on the islands (St. Simons and Jekyll) fueled by tourism which continues to be a leading economic driver for the area. The Port of Brunswick, located to the Southwest of the City continues to grow and expand, and is currently one of the largest automobile and construction vehicle import and export shipping and processing facilities in the US.

Total employment in Glynn County stands at around 30,000 jobs; 8,687 jobs are within the City of Brunswick. Of the total jobs within the city, only 973 jobs (11%) are filled by the city's employed labor force living within the city. This data was collected and analyzed as a part of a public transit study for the city and also concluded:

- Only 21% of the city's labor force work within the city and fill only 11% of available jobs. Approximately 24% of the city's labor force are employed on St. Simons and Jekyll Islands. The remaining 55% are employed either inside or outside Glynn County.

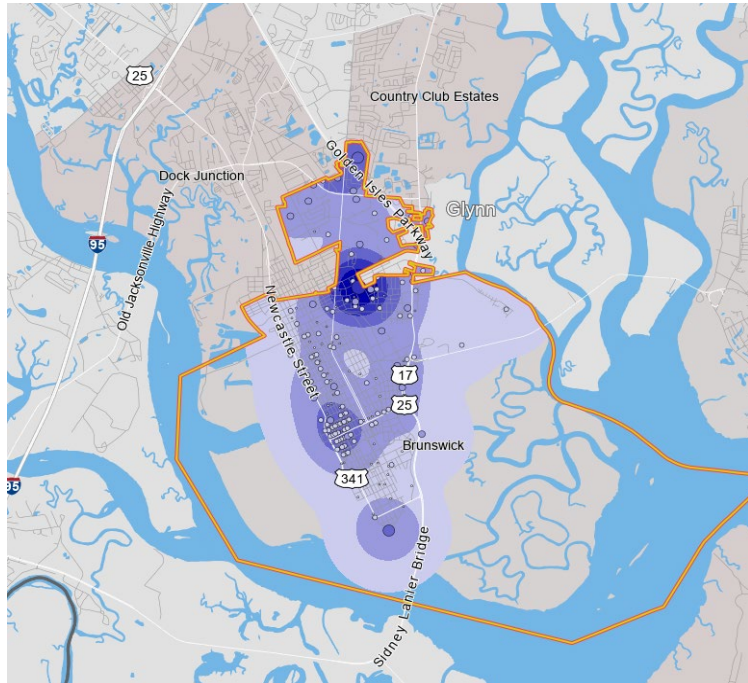


- Jobs being filled inside the City are from St. Simons (10%), Glynn County (45%) and outside Glynn County ((35%)
- The largest percentage of privately employed workers are full time in health care, education, accommodations, retail, and food service. The latter three are fueled by the tourist market in the city and on the islands. These three make up the lower paying sectors of the area job market.
- Full time earnings show that 1/3rd of city workers are earning only \$1,250 per month with 46% earning between \$1,250 and \$3,333 per month. This helps explain the low Median Family Income of under \$33,000 per year.

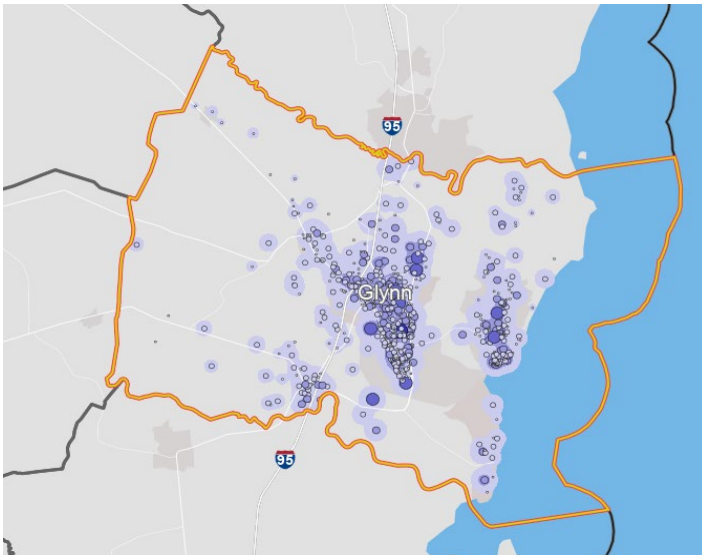
- The largest concentration of jobs in the city are in the Coastal College and Southeast GA Hospital complexes and in Downtown Brunswick as can be seen on the map below. Countywide, jobs are concentrated in the City of Brunswick, St. Simons and Jekyll Islands and at major interchanges along I-95 West of the City.

Brunswick Job Concentrations

- 1 - 5 Jobs
- 6 - 72 Jobs
- ◐ 73 - 362 Jobs
- ◑ 363 - 1,144 Jobs
- 1,145 - 2,793 Jobs



Glynn County Job Concentrations



HOUSEHOLD OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS DATA

The characteristics of households renting or owning their homes in Brunswick, provides an even clearer picture of the challenge for families to find affordable decent safe and sanitary housing. Following is a summary of housing occupancy data for the city, its Urban Area and Glynn County.

Table 2
Household Occupancy Characteristics

<u>Data</u>	<u>Brunswick City</u>	<u>Brunswick Urban</u>	<u>Glynn County</u>
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	5,616	13,234	33,401
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE	2.54	2.47	2.5
Owner Household Av. Size	2.92	2.63	2.50
Rental Household Av. Size	2.32	2.5	2.5
TOTAL FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS	3,226	7,397	21,846
Av. Family Size	3.27	3.23	3.04
a. Married Couple Family	1,219	3,465	15,027
b. Male Head of Household	338	1,076	1,564
c. Female Head of Household	1,669	2,856	5,255
d. Non-family Households*	2,390 (43%)	5,837 (44%)	11,555 (35%)
Household Size - Occupied			
a. 1-Person	37%	39%	30%
b. 2 - Person	28%	28%	37%
c. 3 - Person	21%	15%	15%
d. 4 - Person	14%	18%	18%
Mo. Housing Costs - Owner Occ.			
a. \$0 - \$499/mo.	25%	43%	26%
b. \$500 - \$999	45%	29%	22%
c. \$1,000 +	30%	28%	52%
d. Median Monthly Cost	\$1,016	\$1,015	\$1,471
Mo. Housing Cost - Rented Occ.			
a. \$0 - \$499/mo.	18%	12%	10%
b. \$500 - \$999	49%	48%	40%
c. \$1,000 +	33%	40%	50%
Median Monthly Cost	\$785	\$874	\$960
H H PAYING +30% FOR HOUSING	45%	41%	37%

*Household made up of unrelated individuals

Source: US Census ACS 2021 Projections / Glynn County Tax Assessor

In summary, this data shows:

- A large percentage of households in the city (43%) are non-family households, defined as unrelated persons are sharing housing. This category also includes elderly individuals living alone.
- Of the 3226 family households in Brunswick, 1,669 (52%) have a female head of household, a significant increase of about 11% over the last 20 years. 38% of all family household heads are married couples a decrease of about 10% over the past 20 years.
- The numbers are quite different in Glynn County as a whole. Married family heads of households make up 69% of all family households, significantly higher than the city. Non-family households make up 35% of all households, much lower than the city.
- Household makeup within the Brunswick Urban area mirrors that of the city.
- The average size for city households is 2.54 persons, slightly larger for household owners and lower for household renters. These percentages are similar for Urban Area and Glynn County households as well.
- The size of households is similar in the city, Urban Area and Glynn County Area at around 2.5 persons

CURRENT HOUSING EXPENSE FOR FAMILIES

Total housing expense including utilities, plus insurance and maintenance for housing if owned should not exceed 30 – 35% of family income. Following are the highlights of US Census 2021 estimates of monthly family housing expense for Brunswick, its Urban Area and Glynn County (See also Table 3).

- Total average monthly housing rental expense exceeds 30% of family income for 48% of families renting and 42% of families owning their homes in the City of Brunswick. Those households are paying an average \$1016 monthly for homeowner housing expense, excluding utilities, and \$785 monthly for rental expense, excluding utilities. The percentage of these housing expenses for families in the Urban Area and Glynn County average 35%
- Total average monthly rent expense of \$785 in the city exceeds 30% of MFI for 48% of families renting. In the Urban Area and Glynn County it exceeds 30% for an average 45% of families renting; essentially the same.
- While monthly housing costs are somewhat lower in the City than its Urban Area and Glynn County, housing choices are limited by supply and the condition of housing is poorer.

Table 3
Profile of Existing Housing Characteristics and Cost
City of Brunswick, its Urban Area and Glynn County

	<u>Brunswick City</u>	<u>Brunswick Urban</u>	<u>Glynn County</u>
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS	6,884	15,536	42,091
Occupied	82%	85%	79%
Vacant	18%	15%	21%
Renter Occupied	64%	57%	33%
Owner Occupied	36%	43%	67%
 HOUSING TYPE			
Single Family	70%	65%	69%
Duplex	7%	7%	5%
Multi Family	21%	19%	17%
Mobile Home	2%	9%	9%
 SF HOUSING SIZE			
1 Bedroom (incl 0 Bedrooms)	19%	12%	9%
2 Bedroom	30%	29%	21%
3 Bedroom	40%	47%	50%
4+ Bedrooms	11%	12%	20%
 SF HOUSING AGE			
Built Pre 1970	65%	49%	28%
Built 1979 - 1999	25%	38%	46%
Built After 1999	10%	13%	26%
 SF HOUSING VALUE			
Median value	\$ 105,800	\$ 111,600	\$ 204,900
Homes with Mortgage	48%	52%	62%
 OWNER AND RENTER HOUSING COST			
Owner w/ Mortgage - Median/Month	\$ 1,016	\$ 1,015	\$ 1,471
Owner Paying More than 30% of Income	42%	37%	30%
Media Rent Paid by Tenants/Month	\$ 785	\$ 874	\$ 960
Renter Paying More Than 30% of Income	48%	46%	44%

Source: US Census ACS 2021 Projections

PROFILE OF EXISTING HOUSING IN THE BRUNSWICK MARKET AREAS

Existing housing in the City of Brunswick can generally be described as older, in only average or fair condition with pockets of severely dilapidated and vacant housing in many of its neighborhoods. The Historic District in the city's core area boasts a significant number of beautifully restored homes and the neighborhoods adjoining the district are showing signs of revival. Within its urban area, the housing profile is only somewhat improved in terms of home ownership, makeup and age. Housing conditions and choices are significantly better in the newly developing portions of Glynn County where most new housing has been developed over the past 20 years.

Following is a summary of housing data presented in the preceding Table 3 based upon the US Census 2021 Projections for the City of Brunswick, its Urban Area and Glynn County:

- Within Glynn County, approximately 16% of all housing units are located in the City of Brunswick.
- Owner occupied housing in Brunswick is 36% of all occupied units compared to 67% within Glynn County and 43% within the Brunswick Urban Area.
- 64% of all housing in Brunswick is rented, compared to only 33% for all of Glynn County. Over 60% of rental housing in Brunswick are single family residences.
- In Brunswick, 70% of all housing units are single family dwellings compared to 65% in all of Glynn County. Mobile homes make up only 2% of all housing units in Brunswick but 9% within Glynn County,
- Housing units have fewer bedrooms in Brunswick with 49% having only 1 or 2 bedrooms. Three- and four- bedroom homes make up 60% of all housing in the Urban Area and 70% in Glynn County.
- 65% of all housing units (mostly single family) in Brunswick were built prior to 1970; New housing built since 2000 makes up 26% of all housing in Glynn County but only 10% in the City of Brunswick.
- The median value of all owned homes in Brunswick is \$105,800; \$111,600 in the Urban Area; \$204,900 in all of Glynn County.

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK

Existing housing conditions within the City of Brunswick are generally average to fair as characterized by the Tax Assessor's periodic assessment. Following is a summary of housing condition data taken from the Glynn County Tax Assessor's records. (See APPENDICIES 1 AND 2 and Maps 1 and 2 which depict that data):

Of a total 4,663 single family residences in the City of Brunswick.

- 40% were rated in only **Fair** condition, requiring extensive rehabilitation.

- 9% of all homes were rated in **Poor** condition, possibly requiring demolition.
- 43% were considered to be in **Average** condition, requiring moderate to light rehabilitation or minor repairs..
- Only 8% of all homes were rated in **Good or Excellent** condition.

This indicates that over half of all housing units in the City require substantial rehabilitation with 10 – 15 % of those units likely requiring demolition. Another 43 percent, ranked Average, require some rehabilitation or moderate repairs. **It is most likely that at least 2/3rds of those single-family homes requiring rehabilitation are rental units.**

The heaviest concentration of single- family homes in **fair or poor** condition were located in the following Comprehensive Plan Character Areas and Neighborhoods. This data is graphically shown on Map No. 1:

- South End Brunswick – 44% particularly in the South and Southeast Brunswick Neighborhoods.
- Dixville / Habersham Park – 71% throughout the area.
- Urbana / Mayhue – 61% throughout the area
- Old Town, particularly the TAD #1 District with 81% and Grant Street with 61%
- New Town / New Town Commons – 71% throughout the entire area.

There are virtually no areas of the city that are not impacted by poor housing conditions and declining homeownership.

The city's code enforcement department has conducted surveys of much of the City's housing as a part of their enforcement program and reports the following:

- There are currently 186 homes that are determined to be dilapidated mostly single-family homes, that will likely require substantial rehabilitation. These are predominantly located in the core city neighborhoods.
- 109 residential structures are considered uninhabitable and requiring demolition. These structures are likewise located in core city neighborhoods, particularly along MLK and Norwich Streets.
- Since 2007, property owners or the City's Code Enforcement Program has taken action to have over 323 uninhabitable homes demolished: 143 in the past 10 years.

THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK HOUSING PROGRAMS

The City's housing policies and programs have received increasing attention by the City Commission in recent years. Code enforcement and home repair programs have been guided by its Five-Year Consolidated Plan. This Plan is prepared and updated every 5 years for submission to The Department of Housing and Urban Development to support the use of their

entitlement CDBG Funds for its Housing Programs. The most recent Consolidated Plan was approved by the City in September 2020. This Plan calls for the following Goals and actions to be undertaken between 2000 and the end of 2024.

<u>GOAL</u>	<u>FUNDING</u>	<u>PROJECTED GOAL OUTCOME</u>
Housing Rehabilitation	CDBG	6 Homes Annually
Services to Homeless	CDBG	50 Persons Annually
Infrastructure Improvements	CDBG	1,000 Homes Benefitted Annually
Public Services	CDBG	131 Persons Annually
Spot Demolition	CDBG	3 Annually

Some of the housing issues identified in the current Consolidated Plan include:

- Although many of the existing homes are “affordable” for acquisition or rental, they require rehabilitation which adds to the cost to acquire or rent making them not “affordable”.
- Because such a large % of the existing housing stock was constructed before 1970, it is not hurricane wind resistant adding considerable cost to home rehabilitation.
- Many existing homes are not handicapped accessible and require alterations to access, room entry and bathroom facilities safe access.
- The incidences of overcrowding and lack of multiple facilities in homes (plumbing, adequate heat and ventilation, functioning doors and windows, etc.) is disproportionately higher among lower income and minority families.
- While Median Family Incomes are flat or decreasing, the cost of housing is increasing thus widening the affordability gap.

AFFORDABLE AND FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED RENTAL HOUSING

There are a total of 21 affordable rental apartment properties in Brunswick ranging in size from 8 units to over 100 units including:

- 589 Public Housing Units and 46 managed private units of below market rate rents ranging in size from 1 bedroom to 5 bedrooms. Public Housing Tenants pay no more than 30% of their household income for rent and utilities.
- 386 families currently holding Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers occupying approved apartment units at reduced rents. The Section 8 Home Choice Program is administered by the Brunswick Housing Authority and targets low - income families earning 30% - 80% of Median Area (Metropolitan) Income of \$75,000.

- 277 apartment units developed with Low Income Housing Tax Credits that offer reduced levels of rent to low- income families earning as little as 20% of Area Median Income.

Area median Income is established by HUD for Metropolitan Areas. The Brunswick SMSA includes all of Glynn County (including the Islands where incomes are significantly higher than the mainland) as well as McIntosh and Brantley County. The Median Family Income for just the City of Brunswick is \$33,357, less than half the Metropolitan Area Median Income of \$75,000.

These affordable rental units total approximately 1382 or 30% of all occupied rental housing in Brunswick. They are located primarily in the core and northern areas of the city. The Median Household Income of those occupying rent assisted housing is just over \$26,000 per year and the average household size is 2.47. The median rent and utility expense paid for these assisted housing units is currently \$700 per month. This compares to a median market rate rent and utility expense of almost \$800 per month for the entire city market and over \$1,000 per month for the entire Brunswick urban area including most of Glynn County.

Currently, the Housing Authority has a waiting list of over 1400 family and individual applicants for public housing units and 623 on the waiting list for Section 8 housing vouchers. These extensive wait lists illustrate the lack of available decent, safe and sanitary affordable housing in Brunswick. Currently nearly HALF of all Brunswick families are severely housing expense burdened and around 30% are estimated to be renting substandard housing.

Around 110 federally subsidized housing units have their affordability restrictions expiring by 2030 and another 230 units are scheduled to expire after that date. **The city should encourage owners to extend their affordability contracts.**

THE CURRENT HOUSING SALES MARKET IN BRUNSWICK AND GLYNN COUNTY.

Housing Market Trends 2018 – 2023

Like most residential real estate markets over the past 5 years, Brunswick and Glynn County have experienced their ups and downs. Following is a summary of sales history over the past 5 years for both markets.

	Jan. 2018	Jan.2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan. 2022
Glynn County					
Sales Inventory	904	1040	941	574	315
Median Sales Values	\$250,000	\$262,000	\$258,100	\$246,000	\$270,000
High Value	\$392,000	\$282,000	\$366,000	\$424,000	\$435,000
Low Value	\$250,000	\$262,000	\$168,500	\$179,300	\$182,900
Median Sales Price for Single Family Homes					\$285,000
Median Sales Price for Townhomes					\$302,000

BRUNSWICK - City Core Area

Median Listing Price	\$89,000	\$131,450	\$100,750	\$164,900	\$129,000
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Current Market Supply – January 2023

Zip 31520	\$172,450	29 Active Listings	Brunswick Core Area
Zip 31523	\$288,250	49 Active Listings	Brunswick Urban Area
Zip 31525	\$341,700	100 Active Listings	Brunswick Urban and Suburban Area
Glynn County	\$444,100	313 Active Listings	Includes the Islands

The Median Sales Price for housing within the entire Glynn County Market currently is averaging \$347,000. This has increased substantially since 2018 when the median sales price was below \$250,000 and prices for “starter homes” just below \$150,000. Currently, the asking price for a “starter home” begins at \$175,000 - \$250,000.

The US Census of Housing Construction has reported the following data relating to the issuance of residential building permits for the years 2019 – February 2023 for all of Glynn County:

Building Permits Issued in Glynn County – 2019 - 2022

YEAR	Total Units	SF	Duplex	3 – 4 Units	(5+ Units - No. Bldgs)
2019	460	437	10	0	13
2020	542	457	36	3	46
2021	723	691	12	0	20
2022	1567	879	88	68	537
2023 (MAR)	82		76	0	0

During the same years in the table above, the City’s Building Department reports issuing 44 permits for new housing construction. Only 30 of these were issued for newly constructed single-family homes. Four permits for multi-family apartment projects totaling 170 units were issued as well as a permit for 60 “tiny homes” for the homeless. The remainder were issued for 7 substantially rehabilitated homes.

Currently, as reported by the MLS, there are only 35 -40 homes listed for sale in the City of Brunswick averaging \$172,450 or \$118/ SF. Within Glynn County, there are currently reporting 313 listings averaging \$444,000 or \$237 per SF. This area includes St. Simons, Sea Island, and Jekyll Island which increases the average listing and sales prices for the area substantially. The current supply of homes for purchase, particularly new homes, has not yet recovered from the construction slow-down and shortage of building materials. This has resulted in a “seller’s market” environment adding to the cost pressures of higher construction costs and profits being sought by builders and their suppliers.

Home sales within the city are typically for older homes as few new single family or multifamily ownership units are being developed. The Median Sales Price for housing in the City’s core area is currently around \$160,000, with homes selling in around 36 days after being placed on the market. Some homes in the core area and adjacent neighborhoods sell for under \$80,000 but require rehabilitation. Housing needs for the City of Brunswick are primarily being met within its Urban Area to the North and West and beyond to the developing Metropolitan Area. For the past 20 or more years, most new housing, both rental and ownership, has been built outside the city.

A home purchased in the city at the median sales price \$160,000 and financed at a current interest rate after a 10% down payment, would require a mortgage payment of \$950 per month. After including taxes, insurance and monthly utility costs, that amount increases to \$1300 per month. **For a family not to be cost burdened by housing expense, such a purchase would require an annual income of \$50,000 to \$55,000; 70% above the current Median Family Income for City of Brunswick families of 4.**

For the same family to purchase a new home in the Urban Areas at \$175,000 or more, raises the annual income level needed to avoid being cost burdened to \$60,000 or more; 100% higher than the Median Family Income level for City residents.

An additional market factor adds to the dilemma of families seeking home ownership. New and existing homes are being acquired by investors offering no contingency and all cash offers (not dependent upon financing). These homes are then offered for rent with the expectation that they will increase in value over the ensuing 5–10-year period and then be sold offering the investor(s) an attractive return.

Lastly, while there are opportunities for housing developers to purchase existing housing units needing modest to extensive repairs at much lower square foot costs, that opportunity has not yet resulted in any significant increase in the supply of housing at affordable cost or even higher.

NOTE: Data on listings and sales was obtained from The Glynn Multiple Listing Service and from Redfin Real Estate Services a Nation Real Estate Management Firm. New housing construction data was sourced from the

CITY OF BRUNSWICK HOUSING MARKET DEMAND AND SUPPLY

A housing market study completed in 2019 for the Downtown and In–Town Brunswick Neighborhoods indicated **a fairly strong market for households preferring to live within an urban core area and in walkable urban styled neighborhoods.** The potential overall housing market for the Brunswick Urban Area identified in the report was for 1,425 households seeking urban style housing and neighborhoods each year for the next 5 years and that the core area of Brunswick could capture as many as 500 of that market annually.

Additionally, the market study identified that roughly half of that market demand potential was from younger singles and couples, empty nesters and small families seeking new and existing housing of almost every possible type. This market segment is primarily looking for rental opportunities (65%) with the remaining 35% seeking homeownership. Those seeking rental housing do so because of affordability issues.

With advent of the COVID pandemic in late 2020 and lasting into early 2022, many of the demand assumptions for housing have been altered. Equally important, the development of new affordable housing to meet this market demand has likewise altered due to increased costs of construction. In other words, much of the market dynamics that existed just a few years ago has now changed. Add the improved housing demand of hundreds, even thousands, of households and families currently living in Brunswick or its outlying urban areas for new and existing rental and ownership opportunities and you have potentially an even larger overall market demand.

To meet this demand, will require that many of the substandard single-family homes now being rented be rehabilitated through incentive programs and sold to existing families seeking homeownership. **Rehabilitation of existing homes is likely the best lower cost alternative for increasing the supply of affordable homes for first-time purchasers and increasing the supply of desirable single family home rentals.**

Such a program, coupled with the construction of new urban styled homes on available revitalized neighborhood lots should have an impact of meeting the demand for affordable housing in the City of Brunswick and, equally important, the revitalization of its neighborhoods.

Without question, much of the market demand for better housing among residents of Brunswick and even those seeking to live in an urban area is for rental housing. With over 60% of households now living in rental housing, it is not likely to see much of a shift to purchase of homes.

The development of new rental housing in Brunswick will require some Federal subsidy

coupled with city incentives for its development such as land assembly, infrastructure development and certainly improvement of neighborhood environment. The rehabilitation of many single-family homes now in the rental inventory of housing will also be necessary to meet demand. Without an affordable housing program backed by strong policy and financial incentives, the city will not be able to maintain the revitalization momentum it has developed over the past 5 years.

RENTAL AND HOMEOWNERSHIP HOUSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND CONCLUSIONS:

- Most new housing opportunities will continue to be developed outside the City of Brunswick in its urban and metropolitan area for the foreseeable future, unless the city acts immediately to incentivize the construction of new housing, remove blight and blighting influences from its neighborhoods and undertakes a long - range program to rehabilitate much of its existing housing stock. **There are as many as 2,000 housing units in need of moderate to extensive rehabilitation.**
- The cost of newly constructed rental or ownership housing will likely continue to exceed the financial capacity of a high percentage of City households and families burdened by housing costs exceeding 30 – 35% of family income.
- The availability of housing, existing or newly constructed, is likely to remain competitive for at least another 3 – 5 years resulting in higher sales prices and rents. **The demand for rental and purchase housing is in excess of 500 units annually.**
- For City of Brunswick families and households with median annual income levels or less to obtain rental housing will require financial subsidies through Federal or State tax incentive programs. The city must exert leadership to assure that these resources are available. **These families will likely have the best opportunity to obtain better housing by renting.**
- Given the large number of homes in the city that are in only fair or poor condition, it is very likely that there are a substantial number of families living in substandard housing units. These families will require new housing opportunities in newly built or rehabilitated housing. **This demand is likely in excess of 1,000 housing units.**
- **Creating an environment and locations for new and varied housing opportunities in Brunswick is essential for the city's economic base and livability.**

DEFINING THE GAP BETWEEN AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS AND SUPPLY

Focusing only on the needs of families and households within the City of Brunswick, it is

obvious from the data and analysis in this report that there is:

- An exceptionally large gap between the number of available decent safe and sanitary housing units for either purchase or rent, and the number of families needing this housing.
- Equally obvious from the data is that few families needing decent safe and sanitary housing can afford it even if it were available.
- It is also obvious that many families and households that can afford adequate housing are leaving the city to find it elsewhere. This is a likely factor has likely caused the population of the city to remain essentially the same for the past 20 or more years and for the socio-economic conditions of its residents to either remain static or decline over the same period.

GAP FOR HOME PURCHASE

If a family living in Brunswick wants to purchase a home in good condition or newly constructed, they are not likely to be able to find it within the city. Few new homes have been built inside the city according to building permit records. Most existing homes being sold inside the city are older homes with most requiring repairs or upgrades to make them attractive to purchasers. Such homes are typically offered in the \$80,000 - \$100,000 range and would require an additional \$75,000 to \$100,000 for such repairs or upgrades.

Most newly built homes are located outside the city in Glynn County in newly developed subdivisions and are priced at \$175,000 or more. To purchase and finance the home with a loan after a 10% down payment, a family must devote at least \$1,300 per month for mortgage and other homeowner expenses. This would require an annual income of \$55,000-\$60,000 annually. As seen in the following Table 6, only about 40% of all families in Brunswick have an income at that level.

Table 6
Family Income Ranges Brunswick City, Urban and Metro Areas

Family Income - \$	Brunswick City	Brunswick Urban	Glynn County
Less than \$10,000	13%	8%	5%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	13%	10%	4%
\$15,000 - \$4,999	12%	9%	8%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14%	12%	7%
MFI - \$33,357	52%		
\$35,000 - \$49,999	9%	14%	11%
MFI - \$45,561		49%	
\$50,000 - \$74,999	15%	20%	19%
MFI - \$70,157			52%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	9%	10%	14%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	8%	10%	18%
\$150,000+	6%	7%	14%

Source: US Census ACS Estimate for 2021

For most families with incomes at 80% - 120% of the city's Median Family Income level, a home priced at \$125,000 to \$150,000 would be within their range. Such a home would require some form of subsidy or cost reduction program to meet their improved housing needs. The number of families desiring to purchase housing in this range is estimated at 250 families.

Another gap in supply and demand, is upper tier priced housing for young professionals and families seeking to live in a more urban environment. These potential home purchasers are looking for smaller 2- or 3-bedroom units in townhomes or condominiums priced in the \$250,000 - \$350,000 range. Earlier market studies noted in this report estimate that demand at about 25 - 30 units per year. Only a very small number of these units are being developed each year; primarily in re-purposed commercial or mixed use buildings in the core city area.

It is assumed that with a more aggressive publicly assisted housing and neighborhood rehabilitation programs, that the needs of a significant number of homebuyers could be met over the next 5 years.

**The five-year need for purchase housing is 20 upper tier units/year.
And 50 units of median income tier housing/year FOR A TOTAL OF 350 UNITS**

GAP FOR RENTAL HOUSING

Single family and duplex housing units in the city total 5300 units and make up 77% of all housing units in Brunswick. Over 60% or 3200 of the existing single family and duplex housing in Brunswick is rented. Over 65% of these housing units were built before 1970, 90% before 2000. The age of this housing is reflected in its condition with nearly 2,500 units (46%) either in poor or only fair condition as rated by the Glynn County Tax Assessor's office.

A total 589 public housing units are managed by the Brunswick Housing Authority which currently has a waiting list of over 1000 seeking affordable income based rental housing. There are an additional 600 "affordable" apartment units available in the city which rent for between \$700 (1 bedroom) and \$1200 (2 or 3 bedrooms) including utilities. Other apartments, mostly one-bedroom units in small groupings, rent for as little as \$500 per month unit and their condition is considered to be only average.

While mobile homes make up only 2% of existing housing units, most are rented at less than \$500 per month.

Families with median incomes or less can most likely only afford to rent housing at rates of no more than \$800 per month including utilities. The rental housing that is available in

this range, other than those with subsidized rent, is difficult to find in acceptable living condition. Families and households with incomes at 80% or less of median Family Income, can only afford public housing or some form of assisted rental housing. Unfortunately, with a limited supply of such housing, many families must resort to renting substandard housing.

A limited number of upper market rental and sales housing has been developing in downtown Brunswick in converted commercial buildings. These units are attractive to young professionals or couples whose income is above \$75,000. Over the past 3 years approximately 50 such units have been developed and it is expected that this type of housing will continue to develop at that pace over the next 5 years.

The GAP between affordability and supply of sound quality rental housing is affecting as many as 2500 families in Brunswick who are currently living in substandard rental housing. Likewise, there is a gap between those families seeking upper tier rental units which is estimated at around 25 per year.

The estimated **5 Year** demand for rental housing, based on estimates of the number of units that can reasonably be expected to be developed in the city is as follows:

**Median Income Level Tier Apartments – Rents @ \$800 - \$1150/month incl. utilities: Small Efficiency or 1 Bedroom Units and 2- and 3-Bedroom Units
Demand Estimated at 50 units per year for families with incomes of 80% - 120% MFI Metro Area**

Upper Tier Income Single Family Homes and Townhomes - New Construction with Rents @ \$1500 – \$1900/month incl. utilities

Demand Estimated at 25 Units/year for 120% – 160% MFI

Median Income Level Tier Single Family Rehabilitated Rental Housing \$ 800 - \$1,200/month + Utilities 2 and 3 Bedroom

Demand estimated at 25 units per year for families earning 80% - 120% of Brunswick MFI.

Lower Income Tier Rent Assisted Housing - \$500 – 750/month.

2 and 3- bedroom

Demand Estimated at 50 units/year All rent income based – 50 – 80% % of Brunswick MFI.

Total 5 year goal for additional rental housing units – 150 units/year FOR A TOTAL OF 750 ADDITIONAL RENTAL UNITS.

THE CHALLENGE

From the data gathered for this study of housing supply and demand needs for Brunswick,

there are the following facts which help define the approach that need to be taken to create affordable housing opportunities for current and future residents of the city.

- With a Median Family Income of \$33,357, a Brunswick's family's housing choices are extremely limited. Current housing expenses for rentals or purchase housing require a family income of \$40,000 - \$50,000 to cover all housing expenses. This far exceeds the capacity of at least half of the city's population.
- Little new affordable housing is being added to the inventory within the city. The average number of new units added over the last 4 years is approximately 50 units per year for a total of 200 units (30 SF and 170 MF).
- The existing housing stock within the city consists of 6,884 units. 70 % or 4,663 are single-family residences 60% of which are rented. Nearly half of these single- family residences are in either poor or only fair condition most requiring major rehabilitation and approximately 10% considered to be uninhabitable requiring demolition. **To meet much of the affordable housing needs of its market, the city must begin an aggressive program of rehabilitating its existing housing stock coupled with removing blight and blighting influences to restore the once quality neighborhoods within the city.**
- There is a also a demand for new affordable and market rate housing in Brunswick. That market is made up of families living outside the city looking for a more desirable housing environment in an urban neighborhood setting, those relocating to the area seeking the same thing, and families currently living in the city who wish to have better quality and more suitable housing that meets their needs.

A 20 YEAR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN FOR BRUNSWICK (2023 – 2043)

To meet this challenge, it is recommended that the city embark on a 20 – year program to: rehabilitate at least 50 percent of it deteriorated housing stock, facilitate the development of the creation of at least 500 new housing units for sale and/or rental, and complete the revitalization of at least four of the most deteriorated Character Area neighborhoods in the city.

Such a plan should focus on:

1. Rehabilitation of its aging housing stock which has fallen into disrepair. **A 20-year goal of 50 units per year would see the rehabilitation of at least 1000 single family housing units.**
2. Selected Character Area neighborhoods and sub-areas within neighborhoods, should be revitalized through improvements to neighborhood infrastructure and improved pedestrian access within the neighborhoods and connectivity to the city's core area.

3. Continuation of efforts to remove blighted and vacant residential structures throughout the city through its existing code enforcement program and make reclaimed lots available for new housing development. Coordination of these efforts with the Land Bank Authority for properties with tax liens or title issues.
4. Continuation and added effort for the home repair program to make housing safe, accessible and livable. **At least 25 homes per year should be improved** including some that will require additional rehabilitation to correct home deficiencies.
5. Because rental housing is likely the only answer for many families whose income is below MFI, take steps to assemble property that will facilitate the development of affordable small to medium sized rental housing communities. **There is a need for at least an average of 50 new subsidized rental housing units to be added to the inventory each year.**
6. Re-energize the Public Housing Program to become active in promoting the creation of affordable housing through partnerships with developers. The Housing Authority could become the resource for temporary rehousing of families displaced from dilapidated housing.
7. Focus attention on all segments of the housing market: rent subsidies for lower income families, opportunities for first time homebuyers to purchase affordable rehabilitated or newly construct single family housing options, opportunities for development of upper market rate housing which will add diversity and opportunities for new families to live in a vibrant and active city. **The re-purposing of existing commercial properties for rental and purchased market rate housing that has seen success in the core area should spread to other areas of the city. This should lead to the construction of market driven upper tier housing opportunities for those seeking an urban environment.**
8. Creating partnerships and collaboratives with other city and public agencies to assist in meeting a 20-year plan goal and establish a financial support program from within the corporate and business community through the efforts of a housing program companion non-profit organization.

Suggested Steps for the Creation of a Housing Program and 5 year Start Up Plan:

It is recommended that the City of Brunswick adopt a 20-year housing and neighborhood revitalization program by launching a 5 – year intensive housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization program managed by a reorganized and purposed Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization and Resident Services.

To effectively launch such a program, there are steps that should be taken to assure that the program can be successful. Those steps include:

Step No. 1: Select One or More Character Area) for the initial program focus to address current housing and neighborhood conditions. One of the Character Areas, New Town (NTCAS), could be an appropriate initial selection due to pockets of severe housing deterioration. There already exists several sub- areas in the New Town Character Area including TAD District #1, the Norwich Corridor Plan, the Rise Risley 8 block redevelopment area, and the 40 unit Veterans Tiny Home Complex to name a few. Sub areas within the Character Area could be designated for concentrated efforts to remove blight, rehabilitate existing homes and use cleared property for new housing development.

Step No. 2: Establish a Department of Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization possibly incorporating those functions in the current Department of Neighborhood Services.

- Initially staff the Department with a Program Director, 2 Housing Inspectors, a Contract Officer and support clerical and legal staff.
- Create a Housing Rehabilitation Policies and Procedures Guidance Manual, approved by the City Commission.
- Develop eligibility criteria for a program of financial assistance of loans and grants to eligible homeowners and create a program of loans and tax incentives for investor owners. This document will include criteria for evaluating property owner participation in the program and requirements for maintaining affordability levels for specific time periods.

The likely cost of program administration and execution is \$300,000 annually.

Step No. 3: Adopt the International Housing Code to strengthen the ability of Code Enforcement Officers to make cursory and preliminary inspections of housing where there is evidence of neglect or badly needed repairs. Such inspections would be used to determine whether to proceed with a detailed evaluation of the property for rehabilitation.

Step No. 4: After evaluation of the initial Housing Code Inspections;

- Offer an opportunity for homeowners or investor owners, to apply for rehabilitation financial assistance (loans, grants and/or both).
- Based on owner response, define and establish the first focused Multi - Block Areas where housing rehabilitation can be initiated, dilapidated and vacant structures can be removed and neighborhood physical and family socio-economic revitalization can begin.

The initial goal should be to rehabilitate at least 40 units per year at an average cost of \$60,000 each, or \$2.4 Million annually. Over a 20-year period that level should be increased to reach a goal of 1,000 rehabilitated affordable homes.

Step No. 5: Initiate and complete needed or deficient neighborhood infrastructure improvements funded by the city's capital budget. The City Engineer should evaluate target area needs and coordinate needed repairs and improvements. The Planning, Development and Codes Department will look at opportunities to create greenspace and pedestrian connections to the city's core area via sidewalk improvements or trails.

Step No. 6: As progress is made within a Target Sub-Area and the goal is within reach, move the program to a second Target Area having potential for neighborhood revitalization.

Step No. 7: Initiate a program to bring job training and economic development programs to neighborhood commercial areas that will offer new employment and business opportunities for target area residents.

Step No. 8: Create a plan to market opportunities for development of affordable rental and ownership housing within the target area including incentives such as:

- Offering low-cost sites for homes and apartments
- Property tax abatement (5 – 15 years depending on investment)
- Home purchase loan financing programs in partnership with local banks (loan guarantees, downpayment assistance).

Step No. 9: Soon after the program is underway and Target Areas are defined within the larger Character Areas, the City should begin to develop collaborative partnerships with other agencies and entities who share common goals and objectives. Those should include:

- **The Glynn County / City of Brunswick Land Bank Authority.** This entity can provide timely assistance in capturing tax foreclosed properties within focus areas that can be used for public purposes or, added to other properties, create an opportunity for new housing development. Maintaining Focus Area Plan

objectives will be important to maximize the benefits the Land Bank can offer.

- **The Brunswick Housing Authority:** It is important for the Housing Authority to provide relocation housing for tenants and owners displaced from dilapidated and uninhabitable resulting from code enforcement.
- Initiate discussions with **non-profit organizations who have an interest and focus on housing and neighborhood revitalization** within the core city area. The purpose would be to solicit their help in raising non-public funding to assist the city in implementing its 20 – year plan.

To launch a successful and worthwhile program, the City will need to make a 5 – year financial commitment for the 5 - year start- up of the 20-year Affordable Housing Plan. By making such a commitment and demonstrating how that the program can be successful in addressing the housing conditions and needed neighborhood revitalization will help generate private financial support for the long-term success of the program. That support will be necessary for the program to reach its 20-year goal; improving of at least 50 % of its existing housing stock, the creation of at least 500 units of new affordable rental and ownership housing, increase homeownership and the revitalize the New Town Character Area and other Character Areas in Brunswick.

Following is an outline of likely program costs based on the recommended 5–year initial plan goals and steps.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET:

Home Repair - Envelope Program (currently in effect)	
25@ Av. \$10,000/ home	\$ 250,000
New Home Rehabilitation Program –	
40 Homes @ \$60,000 Av, Each	\$2,400,000
Incentives for New SF Home Construction:	\$ 250,000
Neighborhood Revitalization Investments	<u>\$ 500,000</u>
Estimated Annual Budget	\$3,400,000
TOTAL 5 – YEAR PROGRAM INVESTMENT	\$17.000,000
By The City of Brunswick	\$10 MILLION
By Non-Profits and Public Support	\$7 MILLION

Potential Sources of Funds:

1. TAD #1 Bonds could provide up to \$ 400,000/year for home rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization projects. Current TAD# Fund Balance - \$400,000.
2. Create a new TAD # 2 District encompassing the entirety of the New Town corridors and incorporate the Institutional District. Potentially, such a district could create a similar amount annually possibly beginning in Year 6 for the same purposes.

3. Brunswick does not qualify to be a “Participating Entity) under the HUD HOME Investment Partnership Program. However, it should qualify to obtain funding through the State of Georgia’s Dept. of Community Affairs HOME CHIP program. Chip could fund up to \$400,000 for home rehabilitation or \$600,000 for affordable housing construction or reconstruction of existing dilapidated housing for homeownership. This is a competitive grant program for communities who have yet to qualify under the HUD HOME program.
4. Include housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization in the New Town Character Area in a future SPLOST, \$5 Million, perhaps in 5 - years.
5. Increase the allocation of CDBG entitlement funds from \$100,000 to \$250,000 annually. Consider a Section 208 Loan to be repaid from pledged CDBG Entitlement funds which could advance future CDBG funds to aid in the start-up of the program.
6. City of Brunswick allocating program funding Annually from its budget to maintain the program at goals set.

These additional dedicated sources of funding could total as much as \$10 Million over the next 5 - years.

The additional \$7 Million needed should be sought from area non-profit and business philanthropic institutions as well as seeking any special funding opportunities available from the DHUG or State of Georgia DCA. The city should establish a working partnership with a local non-profit to assist in raising the funding necessary to meet both the 5 – year short term goal and the ultimate 20-year goal.

OTHER TOOLS AND AGENCIES THAT CAN ASSIST THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK

1. **Brunswick Housing Authority should be revitalized and become a partner in this effort.**
2. **Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)**
3. **Create a CHDO partnership with an eligible non-profit with housing development capabilities.**
4. **Federal Tax Credit Program for developing affordable rental housing.**
5. **Habitat for Humanity – Partnership to assist in developing new homeownership.**
6. **GICH Committee – Re-establish the committee to assist in securing other sources of funding that may become available through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.**

REPORT APPENDIX

- A. Appendix 1 - HOUSING CONDITION TABLE – BY NEIGHBORHOOD**
- B. Appendix 2 - HOUSING CONDITION TABLE – BY CHARACTER AREA**
- C. Appendix 3. MAP – SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING CONDITIONS**
- D. Appendix 4 -MAP - AGE OF SINGLE- FAMILY HOUSING**

**SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING CONDITIONS
CITY OF BRUNSWICK NEIGHBORHOODS**

<u>Neighborhood Name</u>	<u>Number of SF Residences</u>	<u>Average Market Value</u>	<u>Housing Condition - Number of Homes</u>					<u>Total</u>
			<u>A - Excellent</u>	<u>B - Good</u>	<u>C - Average</u>	<u>D - Fair</u>	<u>E - Poor</u>	
Union Street	167	\$ 283,795.38	21	61	56	24	5	167
Victorian	51	\$ 161,581.86	5	15	20	6	5	51
Goodyear Park	79	\$ 101,943.62	0	0	69	10	0	79
South Union	161	\$ 181,201.08	4	8	131	18	0	161
Habersham Park	77	\$ 76,395.26	0	3	26	47	1	77
Riverside	27	\$ 375,852.99	6	19	2	0	0	27
Riverside Waterfront	46	\$ 640,598.62	8	35	3	0	0	46
Riverside Marsh	23	\$ 348,237.55	2	12	9	0	0	23
Dixville	151	\$ 23,755.00	0	0	37	88	26	151
Suburban Estates	16	\$ 106,587.50	0	0	16	0	0	16
Northside Estates / Lakeside	94	\$ 184,974.00	0	0	94	0	0	94
College Park	111	\$ 89,819.82	0	0	111	0	0	111
Windsor Park	190	\$ 184,679.26	0	4	174	10	2	190
SE Brunswick	141	\$ 115,028.21	1	4	29	79	28	141
Magnolia Park	263	\$ 67,323.59	0	0	258	5	0	263
E. Goodyear Park / Eastview	104	\$ 142,508.74	0	0	103	1	0	104
Grant Street	113	\$ 95,313.30	2	6	36	66	3	113
Central South Brunswick	223	\$ 118,440.00	4	17	98	100	4	223
SE Gloucester	49	\$ 37,412.24	0	0	4	36	9	49
Norwich Street Residential	45	\$ 57,261.36	0	0	12	32	1	45
Peninsula Park	246	\$ 65,223.08	0	0	45	196	5	246
New Town A	200	\$ 53,909.00	0	1	33	136	30	200
New Town B	178	\$ 70,498.00	2	6	32	95	43	178
Town Commons	239	\$ 60,404.94	0	0	43	111	85	239
2700 - 3000 NT	114	\$ 48,871.00	0	5	61	37	11	114
Lawrenceville	100	\$ 42,946.45	0	1	33	56	10	100
1600 - 1200 NT	97	\$ 17,231.00	0	0	4	52	41	97
Town Common East	382	\$ 48,364.68	0	1	66	256	59	382
Washington Heights	83	\$ 31,489.38	0	0	18	53	12	83
Urbana	270	\$ 71,880.27	0	3	101	163	3	270
Highland Manor	16	\$ 70,308.75	0	0	6	10	0	16
Homesite	57	\$ 95,025.00	0	0	51	6	0	57
Perry Park	109	\$ 63,723.46	0	0	101	8	0	109
Perry Park East	33	\$ 45,617.58	0	0	28	4	1	33
NW Goodyear Park	48	\$ 75,009.00	0	0	25	23	0	48
Montpelier	18	\$ 30,000.00	0	0	6	11	1	18
NBHD TAD#1	170	\$ 49,572.00	0	7	25	104	34	170
Union St Victorian	172	\$ 280,736.00	29	60	55	23	5	172
	4663	\$ 121,408.39	84	268	2021	1866	424	4663
			2%	6%	43%	40%	9%	

**APPENDIX 2
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING CONDITIONS SUMMARY
BY CHARACTER AREAS 2023**

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	<u>SF Homes</u>	<u>CONDITION</u>					<u>Av. Value</u>	<u>YEAR BUILT</u>		
		<u>A - Excel.</u>	<u>B - Good</u>	<u>C - Av.</u>	<u>D - Fair</u>	<u>E - Poor</u>		<u>Pre 1950</u>	<u>1950-1970</u>	<u>After 1970</u>
SOUTH END BRUNSWICK										
a. South Union	161	4	8	131	18	0	\$ 181,201.00	35	118	8
b. Central S Brunswick	85	1	5	32	45	2	\$ 120,902.00	54	29	2
c. SE Brunswick	141	1	4	29	79	28	\$ 115,028.00	95	<u>27</u>	19
TOTALS	387	6	17	192	142	30		184	174	29
		2%	4%	50%	37%	8%		48%	45%	7%
DIXVILLE / HABERSHGAM PARK										
a. Habersham Park	77	0	3	26	47	1	\$ 76,395.00	12	60	5
b. Dixville	<u>151</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>26</u>	\$ 23,755.00	<u>100</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>19</u>
TOTALS	228	0	3	63	135	27		112	92	24
		0%	1%	28%	59%	12%		49%	40%	11%
WINDSOR PARK										
a. Windsor Park	190	0	4	174	10	2	\$ 184,679.00	154	31	5
b. SE Gloucester	<u>49</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>9</u>	\$ 37,412.00	<u>49</u>	0	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	239	0	4	178	46	11		203	31	5
		0%	2%	74%	19%	5%		85%	13%	2%
URBANA / MAYHUE										
a. Urbana	270	0	3	101	163	3	\$ 71,880.00	169	64	37
OLD TOWN (First Ave - H Street)										
a. Victorian	51	5	15	20	6	5	\$ 161,582.00	46	4	1
b. Union Street	167	21	61	56	24	5	\$ 283,795.00	157	8	12
c. Central South BWK	138	3	12	66	55	2	\$ 142,376.00	92	31	15
d. Union Street Victorian	172	29	60	55	23	5	\$ 280,736.00	144	7	21
e. TAD Dist #1	170	0	7	25	104	34	\$ 49,572.00	54	109	7
b. Grant Street	113	2	6	36	66	3	\$ 95,313.00	55	57	1
TOTALS	811	60	161	258	278	54	NA	548	216	57

**APPENDIX 2
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING CONDITIONS SUMMARY
BY CHARACTER AREAS 2023**

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	<u>SF Homes</u>	<u>CONDITION</u>					<u>Av. Value</u>	<u>BUILT</u>		
		<u>A - Excel.</u>	<u>B - Good</u>	<u>C - Av.</u>	<u>D - Fair</u>	<u>E - Poor</u>		<u>Pre 1950</u>	<u>1950-1970</u>	<u>After 1970</u>
NEW TOWN / NEW TOWN COMMONS										
a. Town Commons	239	0	0	43	111	85	\$ 60,405.00	104	95	40
c. Penninsula Park	246	0	0	45	196	5	\$ 65,223.00	184	46	16
d. Town Commons East	382	0	1	66	256	59	\$ 48,365.00	208	117	57
e. Lawrenceville	100	0	1	33	56	10	\$ 42,946.00	14	40	46
f. Washington Heights	83	0	0	18	53	12	\$ 31,489.00	21	51	11
g. Norwich Street	45	0	0	12	32	1	\$ 57,261.00	27	12	6
h. NT A (1700 - 3000)	114	0	5	61	37	11	\$ 48,871.00	79	24	11
i. NT B (1200 - 1600))	97	0	0	4	52	41	\$ 17,231.00	34	36	27
j. Perry Park	109	0	0	101	8	0	\$ 63,724.00	4	86	19
k. Perry Park East	33	0	0	28	4	1	\$ 45,618.00	0	23	10
l. New Twon A	200	0	1	33	136	30	\$ 53,909.00	140	34	26
m. New Town B	178	2	6	32	95	43	\$ 70,498.00	136	30	26
TOTALS	1826	2	14	476	1036	298	NA	951	594	295
MEDICAL PARKWOOD										
a. Goodyear Park	79	0	0	69	10	0	\$ 101,944.00	0	76	3
b. E. Goodyear Park / Eastview	104	0	0	103	1	0	\$ 142,141.00	0	97	7
c. NW Goodyear Park	48	0	0	25	23	0	\$ 75,009.00	0	48	0
d. Northside Estates / Eastview	94	0	0	94	0	0	\$ 184,974.00	0	89	5
e. Homesite	57	0	0	51	6	0	\$ 95,025.00	1	53	3
f. Montpelier	18	0	0	6	11	1	\$ 30,000.00	4	12	2
TOTALS	400	0	0	348	51	1	NA	5	375	20
RIVERSIDE										
a. Riverside	27	6	19	2	0	0	\$ 375,853.00	0	0	27
b. Riverside Waterfront	46	8	35	3	0	0	\$ 640,599.00	0	10	36
c. Riverside Marsh	23	2	12	9	0	0	\$ 348,238.00	0	12	11
TOTALS	96	16	66	14	0	0		0	22	74

**APPENDIX 2
SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING CONDITIONS SUMMARY
BY CHARACTER AREAS 2023**

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	<u>CONDITION</u>						<u>Av. Value</u>	<u>BUILT</u>		
	<u>SF Homes</u>	<u>A - Excel.</u>	<u>B - Good</u>	<u>C - Av.</u>	<u>D - Fair</u>	<u>E - Poor</u>		<u>Pre 1950</u>	<u>1950-1970</u>	<u>After 1970</u>
NORTH BRUNSWICK										
a. Magnolia Park	263	0	0	258	5	0 \$	67,324.00	0	131	132
b. College Park	111	0	0	111	0	0 \$	89,820.00	0	106	5
c. Highland Manor	16	0	0	6	10	0 \$	70,309.00	0	16	0
d. Suburban Estates	16	0	0	16	0	0 \$	106,588.00	0	2	11
TOTALS	406	0	0	391	15	0		0	255	148
CITY TOTALS	4663	84	268	2021	1866	424	4663	2172	1823	689
		2%	6%	43%	40%	9%		47%	39%	14%
								4684		