

# Community Assessment Port Wentworth Comprehensive Plan



*Submitted to:*

**Georgia Department of  
Community Affairs**

*By:*

**City of Port Wentworth, Georgia**

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# Introduction

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers Rules for Local Comprehensive Planning for all Qualified Local Governments in Georgia. The purpose of this program is to provide guidance for long range planning that will accomplish the following goals as outlined by the DCA:

- Involve all segments of the community in developing a vision for the community's future;
- Generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community;
- Engage the interest of citizens in implementing the plan; and
- Provide a guide to everyday decision making for use by the local government officials and other community leaders.

The Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1: Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, "Local Planning Requirements," were recently updated in May 2005. The updated guidelines require the completion of three major elements, the Community Assessment, Community Participation Plan, and Community Agenda as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Community Assessment summarizes the local government's evaluation of its development patterns, issues and opportunities, and level of compliance with the DCA's Quality Community Objectives. The Community Participation Plan is a proposal for a community involvement program that will offer a wide range of opportunities to local citizens interested in participating in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Lastly, the Community Agenda includes an update of the material in the Assessment based on public input, as well as a short and long-term work program and list of policies for land use decision-making.

The Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan must be submitted to DCA for approval prior to the start of the public involvement phase and completion of the Community Agenda. Therefore, the Assessment and Participation Plan must be received by DCA well in advance of the final deadline for Comprehensive Plan submittal. The City of Port Wentworth plans to submit the complete Comprehensive Plan by June 30, 2008.

This document represents the Community Assessment for the City of Port Wentworth. It is being submitted to DCA along with the Community Participation Plan and a Technical Addendum containing a detailed census and inventory data assessment. Submittal of the documents in July 2007 will allow the City the time necessary to conduct a public involvement program and finalize a Community Agenda prior to the DCA mandated deadline.

The format of this document considers the outline proposed in the State Planning Recommendations, as well as Chapter 110-12-1 of the Rules.

- Section 1 addresses development patterns including current land use, proposed character areas, and areas requiring special attention;
- Section 2 identifies issues and opportunities as they relate to all of the traditional planning elements including, but not limited to, population, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, and land use;
- Section 3 provides an analysis of the City's implementation status regarding the DCA's Quality Community Objectives; and
- Section 4 provides a summary of the Data Assessment of the 2000 Census and community inventory, which is fully detailed in the Technical Addendum.

The City of Port Wentworth is currently contending with several issues related to current and future development, growth readiness, and economic development as it relates to drawing and retaining appropriate businesses. The City is fully committed to the comprehensive planning process and is hopeful that this Comprehensive Plan will provide an outline for the following:

- Revitalization of the historic downtown area.
- An adequate transportation network that alleviates traffic congestion, addresses truck traffic related to the Georgia Ports Authority, and provides a safe pedestrian environment.
- Appropriate planning, regulation and infrastructure readiness for new development and redevelopment;
- Creation of an economic development strategy that will revitalize commercial areas and support the tourism industry.
- Preservation of the City's cultural, historic, and natural resources.

It is the goal of this plan to preserve the quality of life for both existing and future residents of the City of Port Wentworth.

# 1. Analysis of Development Patterns

## 1.1. Existing Land Use

The first step in defining a community vision for future growth is to assess existing development patterns and current land use. The future vision must relate to existing development patterns if the goals developed are to be viable and achievable. In order to have an accurate record of the existing land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, the City of Port Wentworth conducted a field survey of existing land use in August 2006. The Standard Land Use categories described in the new DCA Rules for Comprehensive Planning were used as the basis for the Port Wentworth's land use collection. The City opted to use additional categories consistent with those used on the Chatham County-City of Savannah Comprehensive Plan for this assessment. The survey was conducted with a field tablet equipped with both GPS and GIS software. The electronic data meets the requirements set forth in the Rules and a map of current land uses is included in Figure 1. For a full-size map please see Appendix A.

- Agriculture/Forestry. This category is used to describe parcels that have now or had previously an agricultural or silvicultural use. Uses may also include a single-family residential use to serve the property owner/operator.
- Residential – Single-Family. This category is used to describe single-family homes that occupy a single lot.
- Residential – Multi-Family. This category is used to describe instances where multiple residential structures are located on a single lot, or instances where one structure contains multiple units (i.e. duplexes or condos).
- Commercial – Office. This category is used to describe professional office space. Uses that fall into this category include law offices, doctors'/dentists' offices, realtors, etc.
- Commercial – Retail. This category is used to describe service related commercial activities; including, but not limited to, uses that include bars, restaurants, shops, lodging, gas stations, grocery stores, etc.
- Public / Institutional. This category is used to describe certain federal, state, or local government uses, and institutional land uses. Government uses include city halls, government building complexes, police and fire stations, public libraries, post offices, schools, etc. Examples of institutional uses include colleges, churches, hospitals, etc.
- Industrial – Heavy. This category describes higher intensity land uses such as manufacturing, assembly, and processing activities where noise, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics may result.

- Industrial – Light. This category describes low intensity land uses such as wholesale trade and distribution activities that do not generate excessive noise, traffic, particulate matter, vibration, smoke, dust, gas, fumes, odors, radiation, or other nuisance characteristics.
- Recreation – Active. This category is used to describe areas of land specifically designed for active recreational use. Uses typically include parks, playgrounds, beaches, public swimming pools, etc.
- Greenspace. This category is used to describe designated areas of open space that are permanently protected and/or designed for passive recreation.
- Transportation / Communications / Utilities. This category is used to describe tracks of land dedicated for use by public utilities. Infrastructure for electricity, gas, and water services such as power plants, sewage treatment plants, etc. are included in this category.
- Right-of-Way. This category is used to describe areas of undeveloped land used by public/private entities as a means of access to areas requiring routine maintenance or unopened roadways.
- Undeveloped Land / Other. This category is used to describe lots or tracts of land that are not currently developed for a specific use, but are likely to be developed in the future.

### 1.1.1 Future Development

The City of Port Wentworth is currently experiencing a significant amount of development. For this reason the City felt it was important to identify current ongoing development projects as part of the existing land use survey. The City must consider this ongoing and future development as objectives and strategies are developed as part of this process. It is essential that the City evaluate its current capacity for population growth and ensure that there is adequate infrastructure to accommodate new development. Regulation and enforcement of development regulations and standards must be a priority for City staff throughout the duration of these projects. The map to the right illustrates all current ongoing residential and industrial development projects. Upon completion these projects will cover approximately 2,198 acres or 20.5 percent of the total acreage for the City.

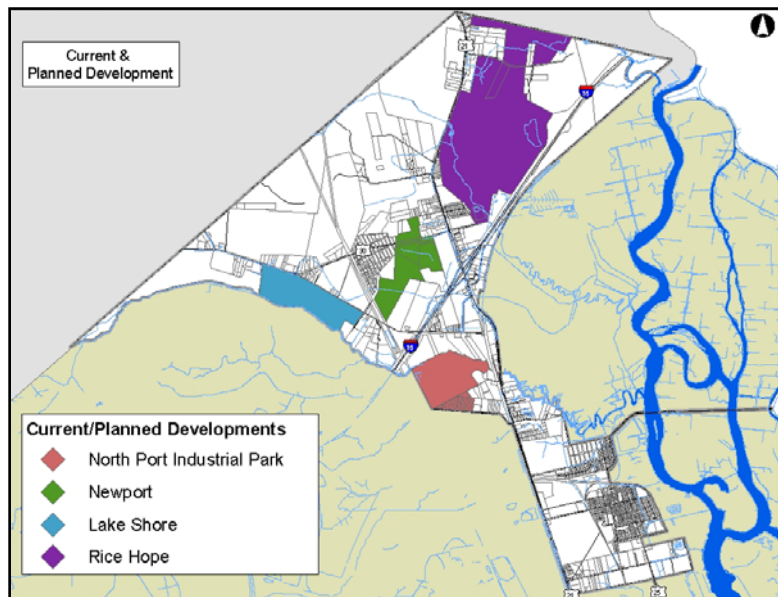
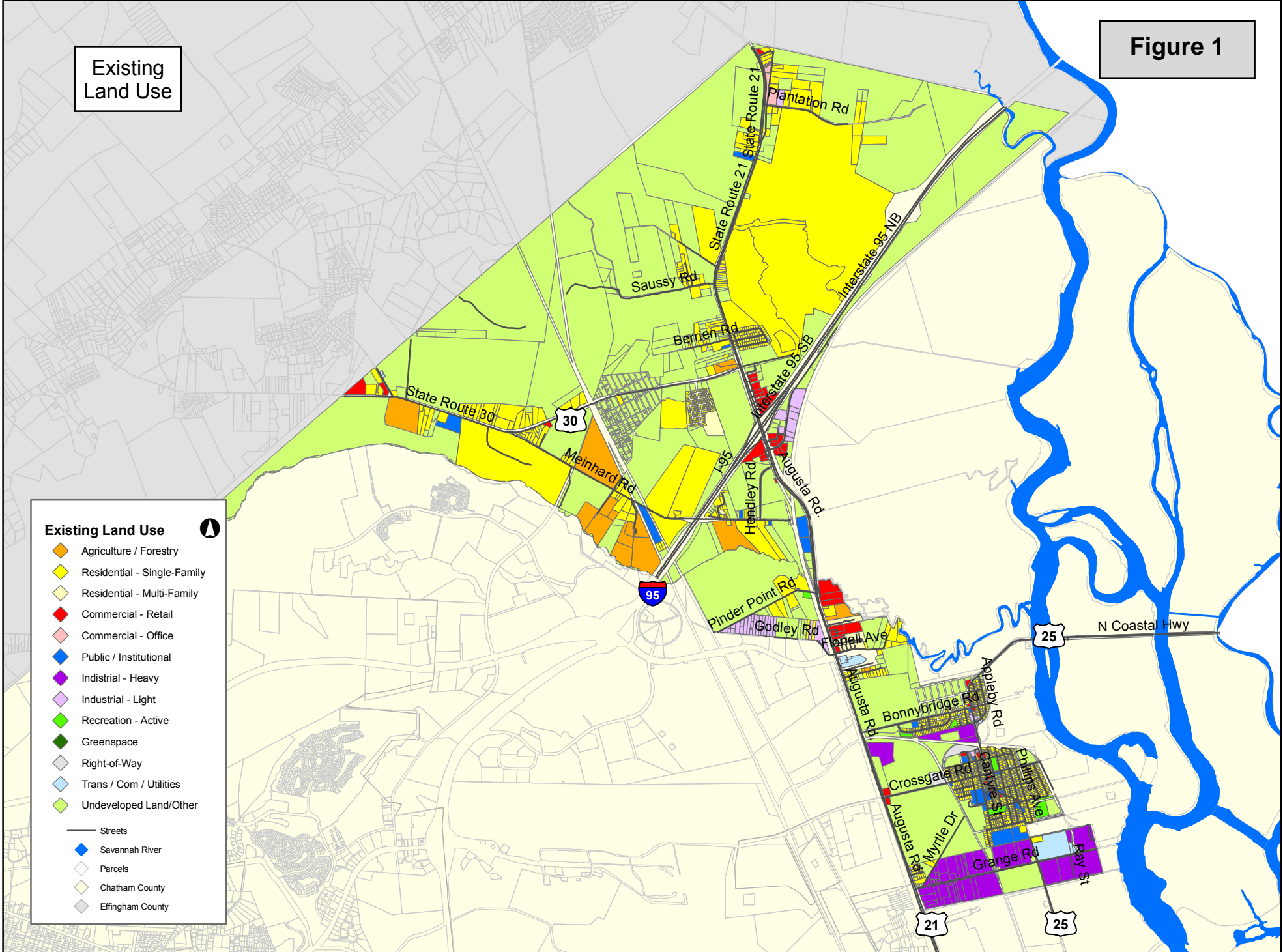


Figure 1



## 1.2. Community Character Areas

The DCA has required the development of “Character Areas” as part of the new Rules for Comprehensive Planning to acknowledge the visual and functional differences of various neighborhoods. By identifying desirable neighborhood characteristics, the City of Port Wentworth will be able to provide more specific guidance for future development through appropriate planning and implementation within each Character Area. The Character Areas identified in Figure 2, and defined below, identify areas that presently have unique or special characteristics that need to be preserved or have potential to evolve into unique areas. It is important to note while reviewing the Character Area map and descriptions that the identified character may not be accurate for every single parcel, but is rather the overall defining character of the area as a whole. The development strategies identified within each Character Area are not requirements, but recommendations for the desired types of development and redevelopment. The strategies will be utilized to help define short-term activities and long-term policies for future growth within the City of Port Wentworth. The following development strategies should be considered citywide, where appropriate:

- Architectural and landscaping standards should be developed and enforced to reflect the character of the area.
- Enforce existing City codes, development standards, and design guidelines.
- Historic structures and areas should be identified, and the City should provide incentives for their restoration and preservation.
- New development, redevelopment, and infill development should be consistent with existing character of the area in terms of architecture and use.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Village

This character area comprises the historic downtown district surrounded by older residential areas with more traditional development patterns. Characteristics include grid street pattern; sidewalks; small, regular lots; and neighborhood-scale businesses.

*Desired Development Patterns:*



- Encourage the continuation of the street grid pattern.
- Ensure that infill development and redevelopment are consistent with the traditional architectural and design style.



- Allow for higher density housing in this area to achieve the critical mass necessary to revitalize the downtown area.
- Identify and protect historic structures.
- Encourage façade improvements along the commercial main street area.
- Identify vacant or underutilized buildings and property along Coastal Highway.
- Develop a Downtown Development Plan for infill development and redevelopment along Commercial Highway.
- Develop and enforce commercial and residential property maintenance standards.
- Require the continuation of existing sidewalk networks in new development.
- Identify and seek funding for streetscape improvements to improve the pedestrian environment.
- Incorporate golf carts into any plans and projects related to the sidewalk network and pedestrian environment.
- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy for small businesses in this area.

## 1.2.2 Rural Neighborhood

This character area includes historic neighborhood areas with low density residential development, neighborhood scale commercial uses, and organic development patterns. Defining characteristics are a sense of community and long standing connections between the residents and the land.

### *Desired Development Patterns:*

- Ensure that new development, infill development and redevelopment are consistent with the traditional architectural and design style.
- Provide signage to designate each rural village area.
- Identify and protect historic structures.
- Involve each community in the development of a community concept plan for their rural village.
- Ensure that the existing zoning allows only for uses compatible with the rural village character.
- Designs for greater pedestrian orientation and access.
- Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating appropriate retail and commercial uses to serve residents, highway motorists, rural and agricultural areas.



- Create neighborhood center with attractive character, a clear boundary, and community openspace.
- Cluster buildings near the neighborhood center and leaving open space surrounding the center.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character.
- Do not allow “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Wherever possible, connect to regional network of greenspace and trails available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes.

### 1.2.3 Rural Residential

This area is rural, undeveloped land with little development pressure for suburban growth. Development patterns include low pedestrian orientation and access, very large lots, open space, and high degree of building separation.

#### *Desired Development Patterns:*

- Maintain rural atmosphere while accommodating new residential development by encouraging rural cluster or conservation subdivision design that incorporates significant amounts of rural/agricultural open space.
- Encourage compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional rural character.
- Do not allow “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
- Wherever possible, connect to or create a regional network of greenspace and trails available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians, for both tourism and recreational purposes.
- Ensure adequate wetland protection.





### 1.2.4 Suburban

These areas are where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred or will occur in the future. Development within these areas is encouraged to include neo-traditional or cluster development patterns.

*Desired Development Patterns:*

- New developments should have strong walkable connections within and between neighborhoods.
- Encourage roadway connectivity.
- Allow for smaller local roads and associated right-of-ways.
- Allow for appropriate neighborhood scale mixed uses within planned developments to provide a destination for pedestrians and to minimize the need for long trips.
- Require the preservation of trees during the development process and post-development.
- Encourage the preservation of open space and conservation-type subdivisions.
- Allow for various housing types and residential densities within planned developments.
- Ensure the adequate creation of educational as well as active and passive recreational facilities for all new residential development.
- Ensure the adequate capacity of infrastructure for existing and future development through sound long-range planning.
- Allow for planned mixed uses that serve the daily needs of the residents.



### 1.2.5 Mixed Use

This is an area that has a mix of residential, office, and commercial uses. Commercial uses should be designed to meet local residents' daily needs and match the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

*Desired Development Patterns:*

- Residential development and commercial uses should be designed to compliment each other and create a live/work environment.
- Varied residential densities and housing types should be allowed.
- Commercial uses should include a mix of retail, services, and offices to serve neighborhood residents' day-to-day needs, and should match the character of the neighborhood.
- Mixed-use area design should be very pedestrian-oriented, with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Provide connectivity to neighboring communities and major destinations, such as libraries, neighborhood centers, health facilities, commercial clusters, parks, schools, and adjacent neighborhoods on infill sites.
- Intensive commercial uses should be reserved for the Regional Commercial area.
- Design and architectural standards should be compatible with the surrounding area.



### 1.2.6 Industrial

Land uses in this area include higher intensity manufacturing, assembly, processing or warehouse activities.

*Desired Development Patterns:*

- Require the planning of future industrial areas and parks.
- Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure capacity to serve industrial areas.
- Require design and landscape standards to improve the aesthetics of industrial areas.



- Enforce existing ordinances related to water quality protection in industrial areas.
- Review existing stormwater design standards to ensure adequate consideration is given to water quantity and quality treatment in industrial areas.
- Ensure that industrial uses do not adversely impact surrounding residential and commercial areas.
- Consider transportation issues when approving future industrial areas.
- Consider fiscal impacts of new industrial development to the municipality prior to approval.
- Do not permit industrial activities in other character areas.

### 1.2.7 Community Gateway

This character area includes the developed or undeveloped land surrounding the intersection of I-95 and Highway 21 that serves as an important entrance or means of access to the community. Features include location of trucking stops and shelters and associated service businesses.

#### *Desired Development Patterns:*

- Develop a theme for signage in this area to welcome visitors to Port Wentworth. Ensure the theme is consistent with other marketing and branding efforts related to Port Wentworth.
- Develop a welcome area that includes signage, landscaping, etc.
- Consider the placement of a history center or museum that highlights the many historical features of Port Wentworth.
- Develop and enforce design and landscape standards to protect the aesthetics of this area.
- Restrict uses to commercial uses consistent with the character of the area. Prohibit overly industrial uses.
- Encourage uses that serve tourists and visitors.



### 1.2.8 Local Highway Corridor

A local highway corridor is developed or undeveloped land paralleling a local highway that has the potential to experience uncontrolled strip development if growth is not properly managed. Streetscape and pedestrian enhancements are encouraged.



#### *Desired Development Patterns:*

- Support installation of the bikeway along Highway 25 to provide a community connection to the Savannah Wildlife Refuge.
- Encourage façade improvements and streetscape improvements along Highway 25.
- Require all new development and redevelopment to connecting to the existing sidewalk network.
- Develop design standards for development along local highway corridors.
- Require pedestrian and automotive interconnections between commercial and residential development along local highway corridors.
- Support roadway projects that ease congestion along Highways 21 and 25 corridors.
- Develop standards for signage along local highway corridors.
- Participate in and support projects to ensure that local highway corridors that are also hurricane evacuation routes have an adequate level of service.
- Identify and support infill development and redevelopment along the Highway 21 and Highway 25 corridors.

### 1.2.9 Major Highway Corridor

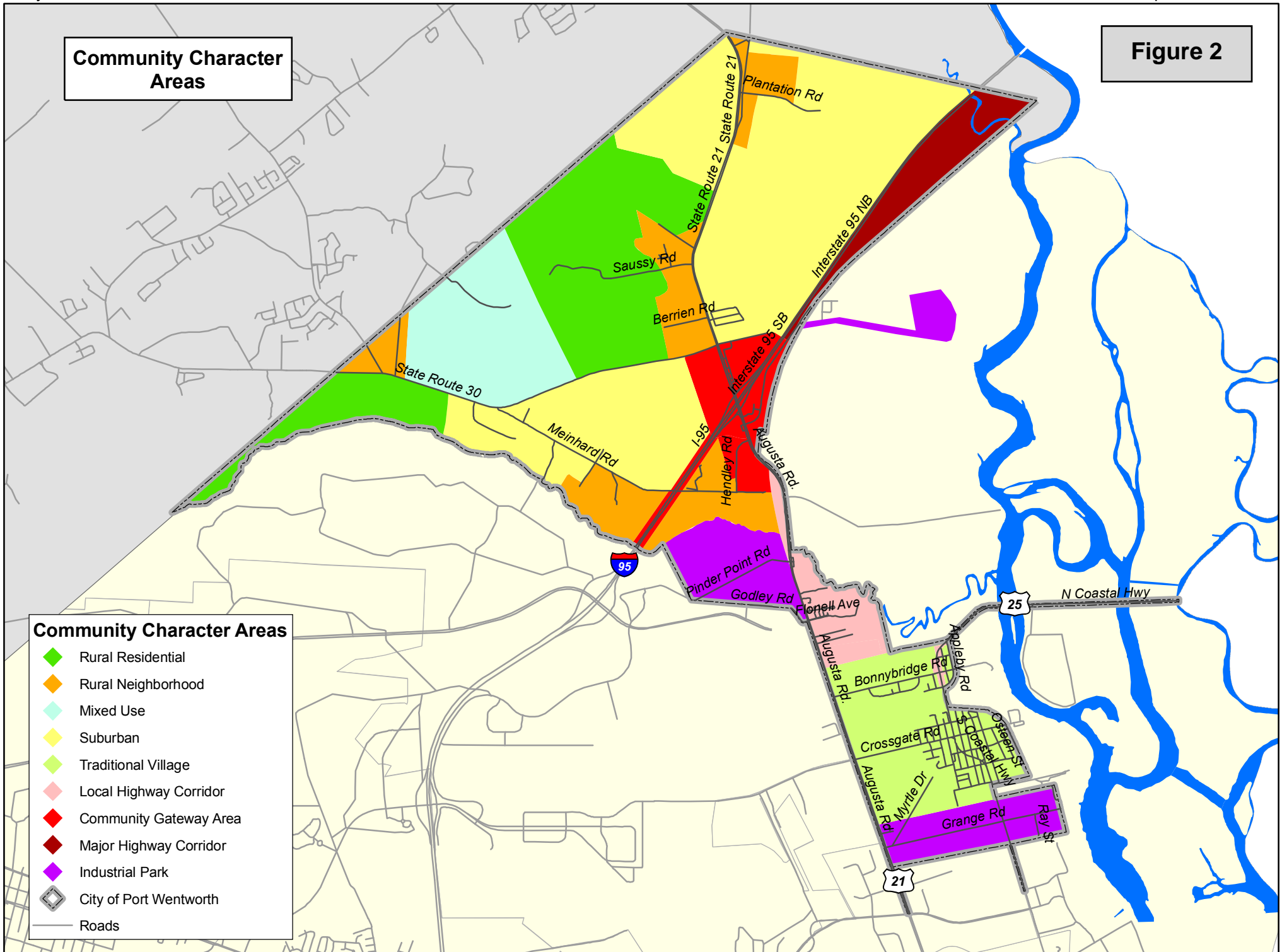
There is undeveloped land on the east sides of I-95. Development patterns include a forested buffer along the highway with new development set-back behind this buffer.

#### *Desired Development Standards:*

- Prohibit new billboards along this corridor.
- Continue to preserve the forested buffer.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting and signage at exit ramps.
- Utilize signage at exit ramps to advertise and market Port Wentworth to visitors.
- Implement and enforce the I-95 Outdoor Advertising Plan.

**Community Character Areas****Figure 2****Community Character Areas**

- ◆ Rural Residential
- ◆ Rural Neighborhood
- ◆ Mixed Use
- ◆ Suburban
- ◆ Traditional Village
- ◆ Local Highway Corridor
- ◆ Community Gateway Area
- ◆ Major Highway Corridor
- ◆ Industrial Park
-  City of Port Wentworth
-  Roads





### **1.3. Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)**

As a coastal community, the City of Port Wentworth is faced with a unique set of circumstances. With an increasing demand for property on the island and a decreasing amount of developable land, the City is faced with difficult decisions to make with regard to land use and natural resources. As a result, it is important to address and plan for the impacts that future development will have on the City. This section discusses the effects that anticipated growth, demand for property, and development pressures may have on various resources on the island. The map of Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA) is included in Figure 3.

The DCA has identified the following seven special conditions and requires that they be addressed where they exist within the community.

- Natural and cultural resources
- Areas where rapid development is likely to occur
- Areas where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of public facilities and services
- Redevelopment areas
- Large abandoned structures or sites
- Infill development opportunities
- Areas of significant disinvestment and/or under-utilized areas

The City has reviewed the existing land use and proposed Character Areas and has determined that the following areas within the City of Port Wentworth require special attention.

#### **1.3.1 Natural Resources**

The City of Port Wentworth contains a unique collection of natural resources. The island has numerous water features that include freshwater forested wetlands, the Savannah Wildlife Preserve, natural and manmade waterways, and the Savannah River. The proper management of these resources is important as the City faces anticipated population growth and development pressure. The map of ARSA illustrates these natural resources.



The Savannah Wildlife Refuge near the City of Port Wentworth is a significant economic and natural resource asset, which makes protection of this natural resource vital for the City. St. Augustine Creek runs through and along the southern border of the City. This pristine creek and wetland system provides opportunity for passive recreational activities including fishing, boating, and kayaking. Access to this creek is provided by the Houlihan Boat Ramp on Highway 25. Citizens of Port Wentworth, as well as tourists regularly visit these natural resources. Unregulated development of areas adjacent to wetlands can have a negative impact on the local economy, as well as the natural habitat.

The 100-year floodplain has also been identified on the map of ARSA. Due to its location in coastal Georgia and proximity to the Savannah River, the City of Port Wentworth has many low-lying areas. It is essential that as the City continues to grow, development in the floodplain must be regulated to protect the welfare and property of the residents of Port Wentworth and areas downstream of the City.

### 1.3.2 Cultural Resources

The City of Port Wentworth contains a wealth of historic and cultural resources. Unfortunately, previous development has eliminated many historic structures, however the location of historic events remain unchanged. Francis Marion, the Revolutionary War Hero, nicknamed the “Swamp Fox” has a historic connection to the Swamp Fox Rural Neighborhood. The Mary Musgrove Trading Post, one of the last Native American sites in Chatham County was located on the site now occupied



by the Georgia Ports Authority. The historic route of Sherman’s March to the Sea was along what is now known as Highway 21. Mulberry Grove Plantation, the site where Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, is located just outside the city limits of Port Wentworth. The City should look to preserve and highlight these and other historic sites as part of its historic and cultural heritage. For a more detailed listing and map of cultural resources, please see Technical Addendum: Data Assessment.

### 1.3.3 Areas Facing Rapid Development

The City of Port Wentworth is currently experiencing rapid residential and commercial development. As stated previously in this Assessment, currently 20% of the total acreage of Port Wentworth is currently under development. The pace of development within this area has the potential to outpace the availability of community facilities and services in the absence of proper planning. The City needs to ensure that existing facilities, transportation routes and utilities are adequate to serve the rapidly increasing population.



### 1.3.4 Areas Facing Significant Development Pressure

These areas face significant pressure for development because of their location, site characteristics and availability of adequate infrastructure. Development in this area is inevitable and the City must ensure that appropriate regulations are in place to guide future development so that it is consistent with the character identified in this plan.

### 1.3.5 Redevelopment Areas

This area, identified on the map in Figure 3, is poised for redevelopment due to changes in its accessibility and land value, all of which is due to the extension of the Jimmy DeLoach Highway. Additionally, the Highway 25 corridor currently identified as having significant opportunities for infill development is also in need of improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness.

### 1.3.6 Large Abandoned Structures or Sites

There are no large abandoned structures or sites in need of special attention in the City. However, there are properties within the Infill Development area described below that could be better utilized, are need of façade improvements, and/or have the potential for restoration.



### 1.3.7 Opportunities for Infill Development

The greatest potential for infill development on the island is along the Highway 21 and 25 corridors. These areas currently consist of commercial development in the form of automotive service centers, retail establishments, and restaurants. The City will work with developers and provide incentives to encourage compatible infill development that matches the character of the area. The City will also take steps to discourage down-zoning in this area, which creates a significant negative impact on the vitality of this commercial district.

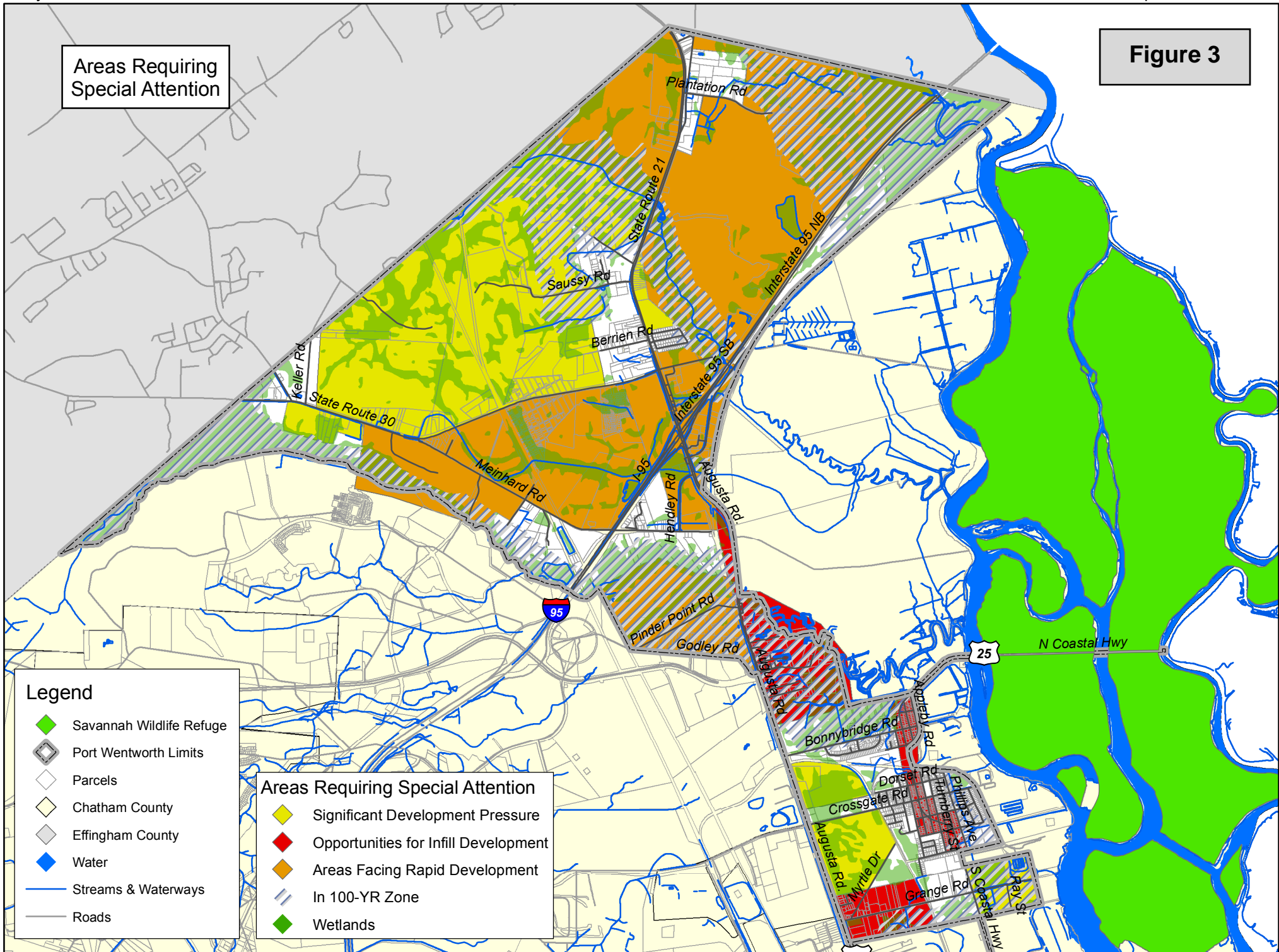


### 1.3.8 Areas of Significant Disinvestment

There are no areas of significant disinvestment present in the City.

Figure 3

## Areas Requiring Special Attention



## 2. Issues & Opportunities

A truly effective Comprehensive Plan will not only identify issues faced by the community as it continues to develop, but will also provide solutions in the form of recommended land use policies, development standards, and community-based projects and programs. Part 110-12-1-.03 of the DCA rules for development of the Community Assessment requires the City of Port Wentworth to identify potential issues and opportunities facing the City.

Representatives of the City have worked together to identify issues and opportunities that are applicable to the City of Port Wentworth. Additionally, the City has given ample consideration to objectives and strategies identified in other plans including the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and the Quality Growth Resource Team Report. This initial step has yielded a list of potential issues and opportunities for consideration during the public involvement phase of the planning process.

The City has organized the issues and opportunities by the major functional elements as defined in the Comprehensive Plan Rules. For each element, specific issues and related opportunities are presented. It is the hope of the City of Port Wentworth that the list will be further researched and refined as the Community Participation program begins and Stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in the process.

### 2.1. Population Change

*Major Trend:* Despite a decrease in population prior to the 2000 Census, population is likely to grow rapidly for the next ten years due to several major residential housing developments within the City. More families are moving to Port Wentworth because of the affordability of the new housing stock leading to an increase in the average household size and a decrease in the average age.



#### Issues:

- The number of school age children is likely to increase dramatically.
- Existing schools do not have sufficient capacity for the current population and cannot accommodate the expected increase school age children.
- Existing recreational facilities for school age children are insufficient to meet current and future needs.
- As the population grows there will be a need to expand City services including: solid waste collection; wastewater capacity; public works and public safety.

Opportunities:

- Work with the CCBOE to plan for an expansion of existing school facilities or to plan for new facilities.
- The City and local civic and community organizations should provide education and events tailored to a wider array of language and cultural patterns (i.e. – festivals, workshops, educational materials).
- Inventory existing facilities and services and encourage the development of services and facilities focused on school age children.
- Perform a comprehensive assessment of City services and determine the amount of remaining “capacity.”
- Develop a plan to expand City services as the population continues to grow.
- Work with developers to identify the need and make provisions for additional City services.

## **2.2. Economic Development**

*Major Trend:* Port Wentworth’s downtown historic district is in decline and no longer serves as a focal point for the community.

Issues:

- Additional population proximate to the downtown district is needed to support the neighborhood-based businesses and revitalize the downtown district.
- Significant truck traffic on Highway 25 discourages foot and car traffic and makes neighborhood scale commercial development along this corridor difficult.
- The aesthetics of the downtown district do not encourage customers and contribute to a negative perception of this area.
- Much of the land in the downtown district is owned by only a few landholders, some of whom do not live in Port Wentworth.
- Port Wentworth needs to be more proactive on redevelopment projects in the downtown district.
- Adequate parking is not available in the downtown district.
- Port Wentworth does not have a sufficient number or variety of restaurants or retail shops.
- Code enforcement for vacant or derelict buildings and commercial truck traffic needs to be increased.

Opportunities:

- Encourage beautification and revitalization of existing commercial structures through façade grants. Target specific owners who will participate and set an example.
- Develop a plan for downtown revitalization that includes the following:
  - An evaluation of the local market to ensure that any new downtown and neighborhood commercial development matches the identified needs and available demographics.
  - Develop recruitment and retention strategy to attract and support small neighborhood-based businesses in the downtown district. Coordinate with the Tourism Council's branding plan.
  - Provide economic incentives to encourage redevelopment in the downtown district.
  - Ensure redevelopment/infill process for commercial development is not prohibitive or perceived as difficult at the local government level.
  - Streamline the approval process for new developments and redevelopments that are consistent with the desired character of the downtown area.
- Develop a strategy to address poorly maintained and vacant structures along the Highway 25 corridor.
- Increase code enforcement for vacant structures, property maintenance, and commercial truck traffic.
- Identify potential City-sponsored redevelopment projects in the downtown district.
- Identify potential sites for multi-family development in or near the downtown district.
- Covenant and sell public land in or near the downtown district for the purpose of multi-family development.
- Support, through the permitting of appropriate neighborhood commercial projects, the development of an alternative town center in Rice Hope.
- The viaduct redevelopment project will incorporate beautification of the surrounding area including sidewalks and tree plantings.

*Major Trend:* The Georgia Ports Authority and Gulfstream are expanding and this has a significant impact on the City of Port Wentworth.

Issues:

- Truck traffic will increase which will cause congestion and traffic safety issues.
- The State has not adequately planned for offsite impacts.
- There is development pressure for warehousing.



Opportunities:

- Extension of the Jimmy DeLoach Highway will provide an alternative route for truck traffic.
- There are opportunities for spin-off and support operations for logistics, truck servicing, and Gulfstream part assembly to be located in Port Wentworth.
- Areas appropriate for warehousing should be clearing defined.

*Major Trend:* There is a potential for history based tourism and ecotourism in Port Wentworth; however it has not been adequately supported.

Issue:

- Port Wentworth is not known for its historical significance, and many of the historic sites in Port Wentworth are not widely recognized.

Opportunities:

- Support the Tourism Council's efforts to "brand" Port Wentworth.
- Create a visitors center that features the various historic, cultural, and natural resources Port Wentworth has to offer.

## **2.3. Natural & Cultural Resources**

*Major Trend:* Development is diminishing ecological integrity, historic integrity, and cultural significance of community resources.

Issues:

- Many of the existing historic sites have been developed with little consideration for the significance of the site.
- Much development of adjacent historic areas has taken place beyond the control of the City.
- There are few remaining artifacts that related to the history of the area.
- There is no facility where people can visit to learn about the history of the center.
- Development entities, public officials, and citizens are not aware of local history or the need to conserve/protect that history.
- There are not adequate linkages between greenspace, parks, cultural or historic interest points, local trail systems, state designated bike routes, and existing trails in neighboring communities.
- The Savannah Wildlife Refuge is an important ecological resources located adjacent to the City of Port Wentworth.
- Houlihan Bridge Boat Facilities needs improvement.



Opportunities:

- An inventory of historic structures should be updated and maintained.
- This inventory should be considered in the approval of rezoning and development projects.
- The City should consider the development for a visitor's center that could accommodate a historic interpretive center to highlight the area's history. This center could also house exhibits related to the Savannah Wildlife refuge and St. Augustine Creek.
- The City should work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Port Wentworth as a place for history/eco-based tourism.
- The City should support projects that connect parks and points of interest in Port Wentworth.
- The City should seek to gain ownership of the Houlihan Boat facility and improve the landing and construct a dry dock.



*Major Trend:* Land development activities are increasing stormwater runoff which impairs water quality, increases demand on the existing stormwater infrastructure, and creates flooding problems.

Issues:

- Ongoing development is increasing the amount of impervious surface and decreasing the amount of greenspace available for infiltration of stormwater.
- Citizens, developers and local officials do not often fully understand the environmental impacts of development.

Opportunities:

- The City should require new smart-growth developments to set aside a required minimum amount of greenspace.
- Implement SWMP in compliance with the City's Phase I MS4 NPDES permit.
- Perform drainage studies within each drainage basin, on a prioritized basis, to guide new development and plan the City's Capital Improvement/Replacement program.
- Provide education about resource conservation and protection that includes the public, local elected officials, developers, economic developers, etc.
- Consider the development of a stormwater utility to fund the SWMP, drainage analysis, and capital programs.

- The City should ensure that development that takes place adjacent to or upstream of the Savannah Wildlife Refuge does not have an adverse impact on this resource.
- Acquire and permanently protect property within the 100-year floodplain.

## 2.4. Facilities & Services

*Major Trend:* New development has put a strain on existing facilities and services.

### Issues:

- Development is outpacing the ability of the City to provide services.
- The capacity of existing community facilities and utilities should be evaluated and considered during future land use planning.
- Existing wastewater treatment facility is inadequate.
- Wastewater is the limiting factor on new growth.
- The communities ISO rating could be improved.
- The State of Georgia has issued the Coastal Georgia Water and Wastewater Plan with new requirements for water withdrawal permit holders.
- This City has a significant inflow & infiltration problem within its existing wastewater collection system.



### Opportunities:

- Determine the existing and desired level of service for all City services and infrastructure.
- Perform a public safety services study to evaluate the need to create police precincts and provide additional fire service.
- Expand requirement for developers to incorporate fire suppression into their projects.
- Provide publicly accessible greenspace/openspace in new development and redevelopment.
- Assess the capacity of existing and future planned services and facilities, and utilize this information when permitting new development.
- Continue planning for additional wastewater capacity.
- Implement inflow & infiltration program to open up existing wastewater capacity.



- Implement a water conservation program that incorporates water reuse and unaccounted for water to comply with applicable environmental permits.
- The public works department must be expanded to provide additional and more efficient service.
- Consider the implementation of impact fees for police, fire, roads, and recreation.

## 2.5. *Housing*

### Issues:

- Infill development and redevelopment in residential areas are sometimes out of character with the architectures/density of the surrounding area.
- There needs to be a variety of housing options for people of varying income levels and life stages.
- There is a trend in the traditional village for owner occupied residences to convert to rental.



### Opportunities:

- Allow for and encourage the development of a variety of housing types and densities with a range of housing costs in appropriate areas.
- Identify and keep an electronic database of historic houses.
- Investigate tools and incentives to encourage the restoration of historic housing.
- Encourage homeownership.

## 2.6. *Land Use*

*Major Trend:* There is not an up-to-date future land use plan for the City, and development has not always been coordinated with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

### Issues:

- Undeveloped land between Highway 25 and Highway 21 has been identified by developers for warehousing.
- The City desires this property to be residential development with some commercial development along the Highway 25 corridor, in accordance with designated character areas.

- The Jimmy DeLoach Parkway extension will also run through the middle of this property, which is identified as being part of a residential area.
- Commercial development must be appropriate for the surrounding land uses, i.e. intensive commercial uses such as warehousing are not appropriate for neighborhood commercial nodes.
- Land use patterns and zoning should encourage the preservation of rural communities such as Swamp Fox.

#### Opportunities:

- Identify an area between the future proposed Jimmy DeLoach Parkway extension and Highway 21 for multi-family residential.
- Identify the remaining area adjacent to Highway 25 for neighborhood commercial development with adequate parking.
- Ensure that the zoning ordinance clearly defines appropriate uses and is coordinated with the desired character of the area.

## **2.7. Transportation**

*Major Trend:* The existing level of service for the transportation network is poor and does not provide a useful network of roadways, connectivity, and alternative modes.

#### Issues:

- Truck traffic on Highway 25 creates a dangerous environment for pedestrians and cars and inhibits the commercial development potential.
- Accidents are increasing due to the conflict between GPA related truck traffic and passenger vehicles.
- Traffic on Highway 21 is continuing to increase and congestion will worsen when current development projects off Highway 21 are complete.
- There is no public transit.



Opportunities:

- The existing Park & Ride facilities are a success and the City should continue to support them.
- Existing sidewalks provide a good alternative transportation network and the City should continue to require future development to tie into the sidewalk network.
- The golf cart ordinance is a success and the City should continue to allow for their use and work to provide a safe multi-use trail network for the carts.
- The City should continue to support transportation projects that will improve the level of service and reduce truck traffic on Highways 21 and 25, including Jimmy DeLoach Parkway extension and Effingham Parkway.

## **2.8. Intergovernmental Coordination**

Issue:

- Port Wentworth could benefit from more coordination with other local, county, and State governments/agencies, regional agencies, private agencies, the business community, and the public.

Opportunities:

- Port Wentworth will work with other local governments to identify remote Park & Ride sites.
- Continue to participate in regional transportation planning efforts to work towards implementation of this objective.
- Continue to work with local government to ensure the adequate provision of infrastructure and capacity to serve future development.
- Work with local and regional agencies to promote Port Wentworth as a tourist destination.

### 3. Assessment of Quality Community Objectives

The following assessment was conducted to address the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs), adopted by the Board of the DCA highlighting the development patterns and policies that will help local governments protect their unique cultural, natural and historic resources as their communities continue to grow. The assessment was modeled on the QCO Assessment tool created by the Office of Planning and Quality Growth. A status report is included below to illustrate the City's strengths and needs as they relate to local zoning, ordinances, and policies. In most cases, the City has already begun to address the QCOs, and will continue to work towards fully achieving the quality growth goals set forth by the DCA.

#### 3.1. Traditional Neighborhoods

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

The City of Port Wentworth has several traditional neighborhoods in various places throughout the City. The largest concentration of this type of development is found in the neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area. This area is defined as the “Traditional Village” on the Community Character Map. This neighborhood contains a traditional grid pattern street network with a mix of residential homes typical of post World War II developments. There are other pockets of traditional neighborhood development dispersed throughout the City. These areas are illustrated on the Character Map as “Rural Neighborhoods.” The City supports infill development, redevelopment, and restoration within these areas and wishes to preserve the existing character of each area by encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing neighborhood fabric.

##### Strengths:

- Small lot sizes with short front yard setbacks encourage traditional/neo-traditional development patterns, and provide the residential density necessary to support local businesses.
- Grid street patterns encourage connectivity and improve walkability of the community. It also ensures easy connections to other areas of the City.

##### Needs:

- Streetscape improvements should be examined to make pedestrian movement safer and more appealing.
- The City should provide incentives for desirable redevelopment and infill projects.
- The City should develop design standards so new development is consistent with the existing neighborhood.

### 3.2. Infill Development

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

The City has identified several areas along the Highway 21 corridor as having potential for commercial infill development. They have also called out the Highway 25 corridor as a potential infill area. Both these highways experience a significant amount of traffic on a daily basis. Highway 21 is the main route through the City and is currently experiencing a significant amount of commercial development in the form of restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and businesses. This corridor also has the potential for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized structures. Infill development along the Highway 25 corridor also has great potential as there are a number of vacant and under-utilized commercial and residential structures.

Strength:

- There are both the opportunity and support for redevelopment and infill development projects in the City.

Needs:

- The City needs to complete an inventory of vacant buildings and sites to target for redevelopment and/or infill development.
- The City should encourage redevelopment and infill development projects by providing incentives.

### 3.3. Sense of Place

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

The City of Port Wentworth contains a number of unique features that add to the City’s sense of place. The surrounding coastal marshlands and proximity to the Savannah River contribute to the identity of the City. A revitalization and beautification effort in the downtown area would be a great benefit as it would enhance the sense of place in the City.

Strengths:

- The City already contains a significant amount of unique features.
- A tourist industry already exists within the region.
- Unique natural resources add to the City’s sense of place.

Needs:

- There is a need for revitalization and façade improvements in the downtown area.
- The City needs to market Port Wentworth better to tourists that are already visiting the area.

### **3.4. Transportation Alternatives**

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

The City of Port Wentworth has a large percentage of residents commuting to work outside the city limits. Due to the lack of transportation alternatives, these people are mainly traveling alone by automobile. The lack of convenient public transportation options leads to more traffic congestion in the City. The Georgia Ports Authority is in close proximity to the City, which generates a significant amount of truck traffic, thus adding the traffic congestion. The City is dedicated to providing and improving the pedestrian/cycling environment by offering alternative routes. The City is currently working to develop bicycle lanes and shared road-ways along a number of roads in the City.

Strengths:

- There is an existing demand for an improved pedestrian environment.
- The City has begun planning for transportation projects that include bike lanes and shared roadways.
- There is an existing, planned bypass project that will connect Jimmy DeLoach Parkway to the Georgia Ports Authority, which will reduce traffic on Highway 25.

Needs:

- Traffic movement along arterial roadways needs to be reduced in areas with a higher concentration of pedestrians.
- Improvements need to be made along Highway 25 to create a safer area for pedestrian traffic.
- Sidewalk improvements need to be scheduled and completed around the City.

### **3.5. Regional Identity**

*“Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.”*

The City of Port Wentworth is part of Chatham County and shares a close connection with the surrounding communities in the area. The shared history of Savannah and other jurisdictions has left the entire County with a wealth of facts, events, and landmarks that help identify the region as a whole.

Strengths:

- The combined characteristics of Port Wentworth and the surrounding communities offer a variety of activities for visitors.
- The tourist industry is already in place in the region.

Needs:

- The City needs to coordinate with the City of Savannah to better market available activities in the region, and to link Port Wentworth to the successful tourist industry in Savannah.

### **3.6. Heritage Preservation**

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

The City recognizes the importance of its historic features as a means of restoring the past and adding to the destination appeal of the City. There are a number of historic sites located throughout the City. However, the locations of many historic landmarks in the City are not clearly defined. An inventory of historic sites would assist the City in identifying these sites and determining the best approach for calling attention to them.

Strengths:

- The history of the region creates an added value for the historic features located on the island.
- There are many important historic locations and sites within the City of Port Wentworth.

Needs:

- There needs to be more public education with regard to the historic structures in the City.
- An inventory of historic structures and sites needs to be completed.
- A center for historic and tourist information should be located within Port Wentworth.
- Redevelopment of historic homes needs to be encouraged.

### 3.7. Open Space Preservation

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

There is a limited amount of dedicated open space and/or public parks in the City. However, there are some smaller parks located within the traditional neighborhoods in the older parts of the City. Active suburban developments have been designed in a manner where portions of openspace and/or public space are set aside for residents in the community.

#### Strengths:

- Development is restricted in the coastal marshlands.
- New developments are incorporating and setting aside greenspace as part of the subdivision design.
- Neighborhood parks and space exist in many of the older neighborhoods in the City.

#### Needs:

- The City should develop and actively implement a Greenspace Plan.
- Develop and enforce a landscape ordinance/plan.
- The City should work to link existing and future greenspace/openspace through a network of multiuse trails and green infrastructure.

### 3.8. Environmental Protection

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

The City contains coastal marshlands, waterways, and a variety of different plants and animals that rely on the health of these resources for survival. As a result, the City is taking a more active role in the protection of these environmental resources.

#### Strengths:

- The City has existing ordinances that are protective of natural resources, including the Stormwater Ordinance, the Erosion & Sedimentation Control Ordinance, the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, and the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria.
- The City is adjacent to a large wildlife sanctuary, the Savannah River Wildlife Refuge.



Needs:

- The City needs to work with industries to minimize impact on the environment.
- The City needs to develop, update, and implement plans addressing water conservation and solid waste management.

### **3.9. Growth Preparedness**

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

The City of Port Wentworth has been working to accurately assess the need for new infrastructure and economic development programs to accommodate a growing population.

Strength:

- Population projections have been forecasted for the City for the next 20 years, and these numbers will be referenced when making infrastructure decisions.

Need:

- The City needs to address wastewater service and capacity issues.

### **3.10. Appropriate Businesses**

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

Current growth and expansion in the residential sector has led to an increase in commercial and business development in the City. The City should focus on retention of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses appropriate to the demographics, infrastructure, and long-term vision.

Strengths:

- There is a strong presence of manufacturing, transportation, and service related businesses.
- The City has a traditional village area that provides a location for neighborhood commercial businesses.
- Rice Hope is developing an alternative neighborhood commercial area that will serve new residential neighborhoods on the north side of Port Wentworth.

Needs:

- There is a need for more professional businesses.
- The City should develop a plan for downtown redevelopment revitalization to address the traditional village along Highway 25.
- The City needs to develop incentives or programs that provide assistance to small businesses.

### **3.11. Employment Options**

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

The City contains a wide array of employment options. The majority of employment opportunities in the City are found in the warehousing, transportation, and other industrial fields. There has been an increasing opportunity for employment in the services related industries such as restaurants and retail as commercial development along Highway 21 continues to flourish.

Strength:

- Jobs are available for a wide range of skill levels and educational background.

Needs:

- There is a need for more professional jobs in the City.
- Creating more employment opportunities will improve the live/work ratio in the City.

### **3.12. Housing Choices**

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

The City of Port Wentworth contains a variety of housing options as well as a wide range in the price of houses. Distributed around the City is a mix of low-density single-family residential homes, multi-family residential, townhouses, and apartments. The older residential areas of the City offer houses of a more traditional style and design, while the new suburban developments contain a mix of housing options for new residents. The suburban developments contain a mix of homes that ranges from starter homes for young couples to larger houses for more established families looking to expand.

Strengths:

- A variety of different housing types exist throughout the City.
- The market for housing in the City is on the rise.
- Housing exists at prices that are affordable for a wide range of incomes.

Need:

- The City needs to develop policies to ensure that new housing is consistent with the existing neighborhood fabric.

### **3.13. Educational Opportunities**

*“Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.”*

There are a number of colleges, universities, technical training opportunities in Chatham County. Residents of Port Wentworth have relatively easy access to these resources.

Strengths:

- Training and educational opportunities are available to residents of Port Wentworth.
- There are higher education opportunities in the area.
- Jobs opportunities exist for college graduates in the Port Wentworth area.

Need:

- The City should work to provide more jobs for educated workers within the City to improve the live/work ratio.

### **3.14. Local Self-Determination**

*“Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.”*

City government offers a number of different venues for residents to provide feedback and be directly involved in the decision making process.

Strengths:

- The City has a process in place to make it simple for the public to stay informed.
- The City has a public awareness element in the comprehensive planning process. This element has a number of different levels of participation so that citizens can find a comfortable level of involvement in the process.

Need:

- The City needs to develop a set of guidelines to illustrate the desired types of development for different areas within the City.

### **3.15. Regional Cooperation**

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

The City of Port Wentworth has a good working relationship with the City of Savannah, Chatham County, the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, and other neighboring jurisdictions.

Strength:

- The City works closely with neighboring cities and the County where applicable.

Need:

- The City will need to coordinate its planning efforts with those of the MPC to ensure consistency on overlapping issues and opportunities.

## 4. Data Assessment Summary

The following section summarizes the major findings of the Data Assessment performed in accordance with DCA requirements. For a full discussion of the Data Assessment including maps, figures and tables, please see the Technical Addendum to this document.

### 4.1. Population

#### 4.1.1 Population Projections

Whether a city is experiencing rapid growth or steady decline, population projections provide valuable information and can be used as a planning tool to assist local governments and agencies in making future decisions. In an effort to provide a solid database for the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Port Wentworth (City) has developed a detailed and accurate population estimate utilizing the US Census 2000 information provided by the DCA and the City's Certificates of Occupancy (CO) database for new residential units. These methods for population projections are shown in Table 1, as is the results of Georgia Tech's recent Coastal Population Study.

*Table 1. Population Projections*

	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
DCA Projections	4,012	3,276	3,108	2,941	2,773	2,605	2,437	2,270
GA Tech Study	4,012	3,276	3,502	3,701	3,883	4,050	4,198	4,341
Based on Certificates of Occupancy	4,012	3,276	3,657	5,525	7,392	7,762	8,072	8,314

*Source: DCA, City of Port Wentworth*

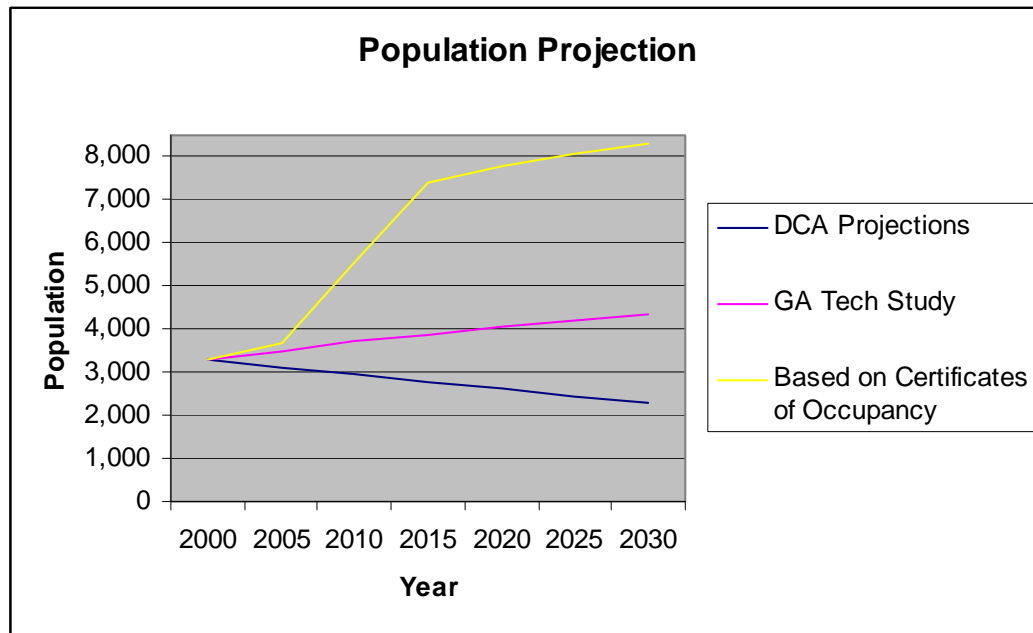
As shown in Table 1, the DCA's projection is based on the observed rate of population growth/decline observed in the 20 preceding years. Based on the significant decline in population that Port Wentworth experienced between 1990 and 2000, the DCA anticipates that the same rate of population decline will occur every five years between 2000 and 2030. This constant decline is unlikely to continue in the future due to the number of current permitted and future anticipated residential development projects. In an effort to get the most accurate projection for future population, the GA Tech study examined local population trends and land use patterns to determine future population. After studying each of the different approaches, the City feels that using the COs to estimate population in 2005 returns a more representative number for projecting future trends in population.

Population figures for 1980 through 2000 were gathered from the US Census 2000 information. In order to accurately estimate Port Wentworth's population in 2005, the number of residential COs issued between 2001 and 2005 (153) was multiplied by the

average household size as established by the 2000 Census (2.49). Based on this methodology, the City's population increase between 2001 and 2005 was 381 people or 11.6%.

Based on the status and scale of existing developments, the City assumes that an average of 150 COs will be issued each year between 2005 and 2015. This represents a 51% increase between 2005 and 2010 and a 34% increase between 2010 and 2015. The City anticipates that population growth is likely to begin leveling off after this point and the percent increase for these projections goes down to 5% in 2020, 4% in 2025, and 3% in 2030. Figure 4 compares the DCA projection and GA Tech numbers with the CO methodology.

*Figure 4. Population Projection Comparison*



#### 4.1.2 Population Comparison

The City of Port Wentworth has experienced fluctuation in population over the last 20 years. The City's population was 3,947 people in 1980 and increased to 4,012 in 1990, an increase of roughly 2%. The population of the City declined 18% during the time span of 1990 to 2000. The City is now experiencing its most significant population growth in the last 25 years, a trend that is likely to continue.

Table 2 compares population totals for the City of Port Wentworth, Chatham County, and the State of Georgia. Port Wentworth experienced a significant rate of population decrease between 1990 and 2000 when compared to Chatham County and Georgia. During the 2000-2005 timeframe, the City's population grew at a rate much higher than Chatham County. Population growth is forecasted to continue at a high rate over the next 10 years before beginning to level off. This presents the City with a number of issues related to the natural environment, City services, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life.



**Table 2. General Population**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>% Increase 1980 - 1990</b>	<b>% Increase 1990 - 2000</b>	<b>% Increase 2000 - 2005</b>
Port Wentworth	3,947	4,012	3,276	3,657	1.6%	-18.3%	11.6%
Chatham County	202,226	216,935	232,048	239,504	7.3%	7.0%	3.2%
Georgia	5,457,566	6,478,216	8,186,453	8,868,675	18.7%	26.4%	8.3%

*Source: DCA, City of Port Wentworth*

Table 3 compares the population trends in the other incorporated areas in Chatham County. This table indicates that Port Wentworth is among the top cities in Chatham County in terms of population growth. The City of Pooler is the only jurisdiction currently experiencing a larger rate of population growth. In contrast, the City of Savannah has encountered a declining population over the last 25 years. However, it is likely that the City of Savannah will experience population growth in the near future due to immanent development and annexations.

**Table 3. Population Comparison**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>% Increase 1980 - 1990</b>	<b>% Increase 1990 - 2000</b>	<b>% Increase 2000 - 2005</b>
Tybee Island	2,240	2,842	3,392	3,680	26.9%	19.4%	8.5%
Thunderbolt	2,165	2,786	2,340	2,384	28.7%	-16.0%	1.9%
Garden City	6,895	7,410	11,289	12,388	7.5%	52.3%	9.7%
Savannah	141,390	137,560	131,510	129,040	-2.7%	-4.4%	-1.9%
Pooler	2,543	4,453	6,239	7,163	75.1%	40.1%	14.8%
Bloomington	1,855	2,271	2,665	2,868	22.4%	17.3%	7.6%
<b>Port Wentworth</b>	<b>3,947</b>	<b>4,012</b>	<b>3,276</b>	<b>3,657</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>-18.3%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
Vernonburg	178	74	138	128	-58.4%	86.5%	-7.2%

*Source: DCA, US Census Bureau*

### 4.1.3 Number of Households

Between the years 1980 and 2000 the City of Port Wentworth saw decreases in the number of households when compared to Chatham County. However, there are currently a number of new developments and planned developments that will ultimately increase the number of households within the City. It is predicted that Port Wentworth will see a dramatic increase in the household numbers in the next ten years. The number of households in 2005 was determined by adding the number of COs issued between 2000 and 2005 and adding that to the number of households in 2000. Table 4 compares the number of households in Port Wentworth with those in Chatham County. As evidenced in the table, the number of households in Port Wentworth has increased by nearly 12% between 2000 and 2005. The

county as a whole experienced a much slower increase in households during the same period (5.2%).

**Table 4. Number of Households**

Category	1980	1990	2000	2005	% Increase 1980 - 1990	% Increase 1990 - 2000	% Increase 2000 - 2005
Port Wentworth	1,332	1,500	1,285	1,438	12.6%	-14.3%	11.9%
Chatham County	71,323	81,111	89,865	94,501	13.7%	10.8%	5.2%

*Source: DCA & US Census Bureau*

Table 5 below compares the projected number of households for Port Wentworth based on the DCA and COs methodologies. As previously stated, the DCA method relies on historical trends to determine future projections. The declining numbers from 1990-2000 have caused this projection to imply that the number of households will continue to decrease. However, COs issued between 2001 and 2005 indicate that the number of households within Port Wentworth is on the rise and will continue to increase in the future. The projected number of households was calculated by assuming that 150 households will be added per year between 2005 and 2015 and that the number of households will increase by 5% between 2015 and 2020, by 4% between 2020 and 2025, and by 3% between 2025 and 2030.

**Table 5. Projected Number of Households**

Category	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Certificates of Occupancy Method	1,500	1,393	1,285	1,438	2,188	2,938	3,085	3,208	3,305
DCA Method	1,500	1,393	1,285	1,273	1,262	1,250	1,238	1,226	1,215

*Source: DCA & US Census Bureau*

#### 4.1.4 Average Household Income

Household income is the total income generated by all wage earners within one dwelling unit. Average household income is the annual income (in dollar amount) averaged between all households in Port Wentworth. Table 6 compares average household income for Port Wentworth, Chatham County, and the State of Georgia. Average incomes in Port Wentworth are slightly lower than those in Chatham County as a whole and significantly lower than the statewide average. However, the average household income for Port Wentworth increased at a rate higher than Chatham County during the 1990-2000 year period. As the population in Port Wentworth grows due to the influx of new families with one to two wage earners per household, it is expected that the City's average household income will continue to rise and may eventually equal or even exceed the County-wide numbers.

*Table 6. Average Household Income (in dollars)*

Jurisdiction	1990	2000	% Increase
Port Wentworth	\$29,761	\$48,208	62.0%
Chatham County	\$34,078	\$53,742	57.7%
Georgia	\$36,810	\$80,077	117.5%

*Source: DCA & US Census Bureau*

## **4.2. Economic Development**

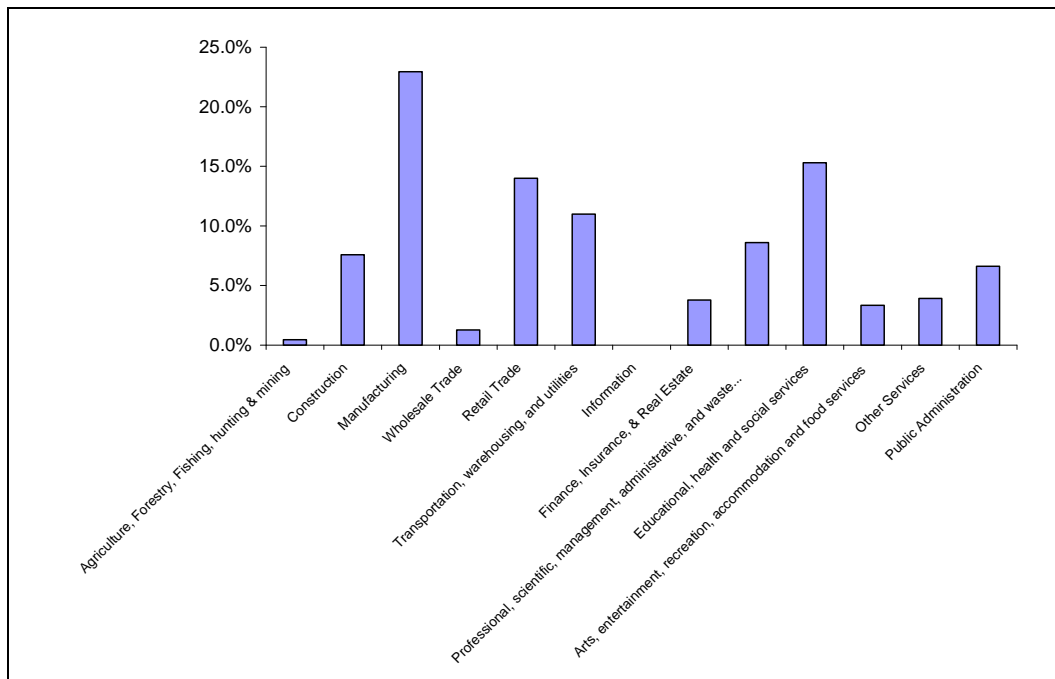
### **4.2.1 Economic Base**

The economy in Port Wentworth, as determined through the 2000 Census, is primarily made up of a few key industry types. The major industry types employing the workforce of Port Wentworth include:

- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities
- Educational, Health & Social Services

These four categories account for over 60% of the employed population of the City. A major downturn in any of these industries could have a noticeable effect on the economy of the City.

The major trend apparent from future projections related to employment by industry shows a major decline in the percentage employed in the manufacturing sector and a major increase in the professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. The other sectors will remain fairly stable or see a slight increase over time.

**Figure 5. City of Port Wentworth Industry Distribution – Employment by Industry (2000)**

#### 4.2.2 Employment Status

Unemployment rates are computed by comparing the number of total adults in the workforce with the number of civilian adults that are unemployed. Unemployment rates in Port Wentworth compare very favorable with those of Chatham County and the State of Georgia (Table 7). The City data also indicates a downward trend in the unemployment rate, which is consistent with both countywide and statewide trends.

**Table 7. Unemployment Rates**

Category	Port Wentworth		Chatham County		Georgia	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Labor Force	1,881	1,612	105,637	113,087	3,351,513	4,129,666
Unemployed	57	43	7,079	6,595	188,102	223,052
Unemployment Rate	3.0%	2.7%	6.7%	5.8%	5.6%	5.4%

Source: DCA & US Census Bureau

### 4.2.3 Economic Resources

Economic development in Port Wentworth is supported by the City through a number of quasi-governmental organizations:

#### *Port Wentworth Chamber of Commerce*

The Port Wentworth Chamber consists of businesses, professionals, and citizens who work together to promote the City of Port Wentworth. The main goals of the Chamber are to:

- Promote, support, and strengthen businesses in the community
- Solicit for and promote new businesses
- Promote tourism in the community
- Promote growth in the community
- Work for effective government to facilitate the goals of the Chamber and create a viable environment for business interest

Members of the Chamber include a wide range of businesses and groups such as accounting, engineering, churches, homeowners, manufacturing, industrial, retail, etc.

#### *Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)*

The mission of SEDA is to “improve the standard of living for people in Chatham County by stimulating economic growth through the attraction of new investment, the creation of new jobs, and the support of established businesses already in the area.” SEDA provides potential businesses with professional site services and works to ease access with regard to various state and local resources. SEDA has been very successful and acts in the best interests of the client and the community.

#### *Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce*

The economy in the Savannah area is made up of a diverse workforce that includes manufacturing, distribution, military, healthcare, tourism, and retail. As the local economy continues to prosper, the need for a well-trained and educated workforce continues to rise. The Savannah Area Chamber works to provide educational opportunities to citizens to ensure they have the opportunity to develop the necessary skills. The Chamber also acts as the voice of the business community by providing assistance with government affairs through lobbying at the local, state, and federal levels. The Chamber markets the Savannah area to both tourists and potential new businesses.

## 4.3. Housing

### 4.3.1 Types of Housing

The percentages of different types of housing in Port Wentworth are displayed in Table 8. The projections in gray are calculated based on DCA growth rates evidenced over the last 20 years. According to this projection, the current trend is towards single-family detached units, which, for the most part is consistent with current development patterns. However, despite the projection developed by the DCA, Port Wentworth should also expect an increase in single-family attached housing and a decrease in mobile homes and trailers. Examples of single-family attached units are townhouses, condos, row houses, etc. A number of single-family detached units are incorporated into existing and planned residential developments.

*Table 8. Housing Types*

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Single Units (detached)	74.6%	71.7%	69.3%	76.0%	84.0%	86.3%	88.8%	91.2%	93.7%	96.3%	98.9%
Single Units (attached)	7.0%	3.8%	1.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Double Units	1.9%	1.6%	1.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3 to 9 Units	6.2%	11.5%	16.0%	9.4%	1.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10 to 19 Units	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%
20 to 49 Units	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
50 or more Units	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mobile Home or Trailer	9.6%	10.1%	10.5%	11.4%	12.6%	13.3%	14.1%	14.9%	15.6%	16.4%	17.3%
All Other	0.0%	0.7%	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%	1.8%	2.1%	2.4%	2.6%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

### 4.3.2 Housing Costs

Housing costs and average rental costs throughout Georgia are on the rise as evidenced in Table 9 below. The rate of increase in the cost of housing is much less in the City of Port Wentworth (34.9%) than of the County (52.2%) and State (57.3%) as a whole. It is unlikely that the cost of housing in Port Wentworth will ever exceed the cost in Chatham County. This is mainly due to the fact that much of the existing houses in the City are smaller and new development generally consists of starter type homes. This adds to the affordability of the City and will likely appeal to younger couples looking for their first home. Unlike the



County or the State, median rent in Port Wentworth has actually increased at a greater rate than the median property value which encourages home-ownership.

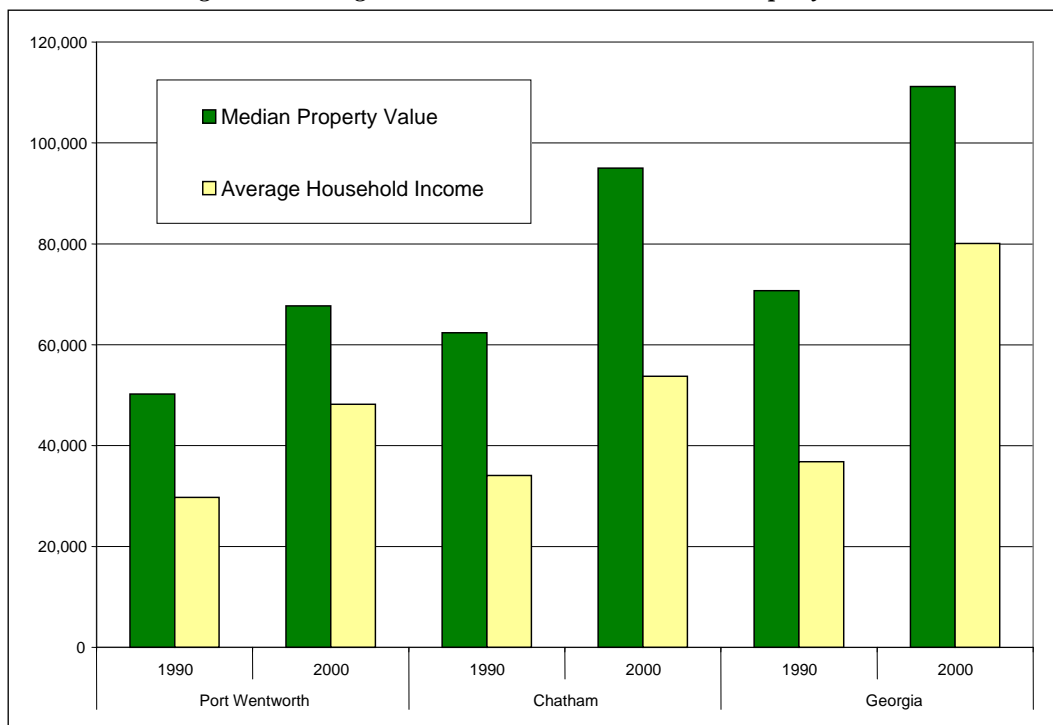
*Table 9. Housing & Rental Costs*

Category	Port Wentworth			Chatham			Georgia		
	1990	2000	% Growth	1990	2000	% Growth	1990	2000	% Growth
Median Property Value	50,200	67,700	34.9%	62,400	95,000	52.2%	70,700	111,200	57.3%
Median Rent	366	556	51.9%	406	589	45.1%	433	613	41.6%

Source: DCA, US Census Bureau

The average household income is approximately \$48,208/per year according to data collected in the 2000 Census. Typically, it is most favorable when the median property value is less than twice the average household income, which is the case in Port Wentworth (\$67,700 is less than \$96,416.) Figure 6 compares average household income with median property value based on 2000 Census data.

*Figure 6. Average Household Income vs. Median Property Value*



In 2004, Chatham County Tax Digest calculated the average sale price of property in Port Wentworth at \$207,489. This number more accurately represents the increasing value of property in the City.

Affordable housing is defined as annual owner costs less than or equal to 30% of annual gross income. Annual costs are estimated assuming the cost of purchasing a home at the time of the Census based on reported value of the home. Assuming a 7.9% interest rate and

national averages for utility costs, taxes, and hazard and mortgage insurance, multiplying income times 2.9 represents the value of a home a person can afford to purchase. For example, the average household with an annual gross income of \$48,208 is estimated to be able to afford a home worth \$139,803 without having total costs exceed 30% of their annual household income.

Additionally, the average household income increased by 62% and median property value increased by 34.9% between the years 1990 and 2000. This indicates that housing in Port Wentworth was more affordable in the year 2000 than it was in 1990.

## **4.4. Public Facilities**

### **4.4.1 Water System**

The City of Port Wentworth owns and operates the primary water system within the City, which is a combined groundwater and surface water system. The water system is comprised of roughly 110,000 linear feet of water mains, three supply wells, and one elevated storage tank, which holds 330,000 gallons. The City has a Water Withdrawal Permit to pump 0.590 million gallons per day (MGD) from the Upper Floridan Aquifer and its 2004 daily average withdrawal was 0.309 MGD. The City also has an agreement with the City of Savannah to accept 1.3 MGD of surface water from Savannah's Industrial and Domestic Water Withdrawal & Treatment Plant. All development in Port Wentworth, north of Godley Road is on surface water.

EPD has recently finalized the Coastal Water and Wastewater Permitting Plan that includes water conservation and efficiency requirements for water withdrawal and NPDES Wastewater Discharge Permits that include, but are not limited to:

- Water reuse, including purple pipe in new development
- Public education
- Unaccounted for Water program including leak detection and metering
- Plumbing fixture retrofits
- Alternative water sources

The City of Port Wentworth will now be required to implement these programs in order to receive new, renewed, or expanded water withdrawal or wastewater permits. There are also a number of small private water systems that serve small neighborhoods within the City.

#### 4.4.2 Current Sanitary Sewer Service

Sanitary sewer service is currently only provided within a portion of the Port Wentworth city limits (approximately 688 of the City's 10,632 acres). Municipal wastewater treatment and disposal for the City is provided by a Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) which discharges effluent into the Savannah River and is privately owned and operated by the Weyerhaeuser Company. The NPDES Permit (GA0002798) for this facility specifies the following effluent limits:

*Table 10. Weyerhaeuser WPCP NPDES Permit Effluent Limits*

Effluent Characteristics	Units	Discharge Limitations	
		Daily Avg.	Daily Max.
Flow	MGD	None	None
BOD <sub>5</sub>	lbs./day	6,700	13,400
Total Suspended Solids	lbs./day	28,200	55,800
Fecal Coliform	MPN/100ml		400
pH	6.0 < pH < 9.0		

*Note: Other effluent limits relate to industry specific contaminants*

Since 2003, the Weyerhaeuser WPCP had 19 incidents in which permitted effluent limits were exceeded or onsite lift stations overflowed. The table below summarizes the number of reportable environmental incidents for each year.

*Table 11. Weyerhaeuser WPCP Reportable Environmental Incidents*

Year	Lift Station Overflow	TSS Discharged	BOD Discharged
2003	6	0	5
2004	4	0	1
2005	2	0	1

In 2005, the Weyerhaeuser WPCP's average discharge was 13.0 MGD. The total inflow from Port Wentworth was 1.325 MGD. The inflow from Port Wentworth included 0.76 MGD from Savannah Sugar Refinery, 0.351 from EMD Chemicals, and 0.351 from the City sewer customers. The remaining discharge attributable to Weyerhaeuser was 11.675 MGD.

#### 4.4.3 Future Sanitary Sewer Service

Due to anticipated growth with the City and compliance issues associated with the Weyerhaeuser WPCP, the City has decided to construct a new 2.0 MGD WPCP to be owned and operated by the City. The new facility will allow the City to expand sewer service throughout the City. The City has received a wasteload allocation for the new WPCP including the effluent limits provided below.

*Table 12. Wasteload Allocation for the City of Port Wentworth WPCP*

Effluent Characteristics	Units	Effluent Limit
Flow	MGD	2.0
BOD <sub>5</sub>	mg/L	12
Total Suspended Solids (TSS)	mg/L	10
Fecal Coliform	MPN/100ml	200
Ammonia (NH <sub>3</sub> )	mg/L	2.0
Total Residual Chlorine (TRC)	mg/L	0.5
pH	Standard Units	6.0 – 9.0
Total Phosphorus	mg/L	1.0
Dissolved Oxygen	mg/L	6.0

#### 4.4.4 Parks & Recreation

Listed below are recreational activities that the City of Port Wentworth offers to residents:

- Lewis Mobley Park. This park totals approximately nine acres and includes three baseball fields, a football field, concessions, three press boxes, and batting cages.
- Armada Park. This passive park is approximately five acres and contains light walking trails and parking.
- Festival Grounds. Located on Cantyre Street and is roughly 10 acres. The pavilion has picnic tables, grills, water, and electricity. The residents of Port Wentworth are encouraged to use this facility. This facility is also used for Stand Up For America Day, which is held the last Saturday in April and the Senora Guadalupe/Festival Latino in December.
- Fountain Park. This park is located on Warren Drive and is just over two acres in size. The park contains double tennis courts (lighted) and basketball courts. These courts are available to residents and require no charge.
- Houlihan Boat Landing. This landing is located just off Highway 25. The boat landing provides access to the Savannah River. The site contains two double-wide boat ramps.

#### 4.4.5 Other Facilities

Other facilities located in the City are indicated below.

- P.B. Edwards Jr. Recreation Center. The recreation center contains the gymnasium and is available for citizens to use. The center has concession facilities, dressing rooms, showers, and is adjacent to the Recreation Annex.
- Recreation Annex. The Fitness Center is equipped with free weights, treadmills, stepper machines, exercise bicycles, abdominal machines, bench weights, and nautilus-style machines. It is located in the annex next to the P.B. Edwards, Jr. Recreation Center. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:15 p.m.
- Senior Citizens Center. The Senior Citizens Center is located in the annex next to the P.B. Edwards, Jr. Recreation Center. Seniors meet every Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 2:30 pm. Activities include lunch and bingo.
- Community Center. The Community Center is located on Appleby Road and is available for rent by any resident of Port Wentworth. The facility will accommodate approximately 100-people. It has a fully equipped kitchen, tables, and chairs.
- Library. The Chatham County Public Library's Port Wentworth Branch is located in the annex next to the P.B. Edwards, Jr. Recreation Center.

#### 4.5. Transportation

##### 4.5.1 Roads & Highways

The City of Port Wentworth contains approximately 75 miles of streets and roadways. A 5-mile stretch of I-95 adds a significant amount of traffic volume to the City on a daily basis. There is also a high volume of truck traffic due to the many industrial facilities located within and adjacent to the City. The City lies between the I-95 interchange with State Route 21 (SR 21) and the Georgia Ports Authority which adds a significant volume of truck traffic along SR 21 and Highway 25.

In an effort to alleviate some of the traffic issues within the City of Port Wentworth, there are a number of active and proposed construction projects in and around the City. Funding has been approved for improvements at the intersection of SR 21 and State Route 307 (SR 307). This area experiences a high volume of truck traffic due to the proximity to entrances to the Georgia Ports Authority. Improvements at this intersection are scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2007.

Other projects defined by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and identified in the Chatham County Long-Range Transportation Plan are listed below and illustrated in Figure 7:

- Construction of and overpass over the new Ports Authority Rail Line on SR 307.
- I-95 Welcome Center (Priority 1A).
- Improvements to Grange Road between SR 25 and SR 21 (Priority 3).
- Improvements to SR 307 (Dean Forest Road) from R.B. Miller Road to SR 21 (Priority 1A).
- SR 25 at Norfolk Southern Railroad (Priority 1C).
- SR 30 / Bonnybridge Road relocation (Priority 1C).
- Improvements to the Houlihan Bridge (SR 25) over the Savannah River (Priority 1C).
- The addition of turning lanes and other improvements at SR 21, Crossgate Road, and Gulf Stream Road.
- Northwest Tollway (Priority 3). This project is proposed to be constructed east of SR 21 and would provide connection to the Jimmy Deloach Parkway.
- Richmond Road / Black Creek Road. Construction of new road.

The Chatham County Long-Range Transportation Plan breaks down the projects into three main categories; Priority 1, 2, and 3. Priority 1 projects are programmed for preliminary engineering and have identified a funding source. Priority 2 projects are mid-range projects that are currently unfunded. Lastly, Priority 3 consists of unfunded long-range projects.

#### **4.5.2 Alternative Modes of Transportation**

Due to the heavily volumes of truck traffic in the City, it is difficult to provide a safe environment for alternative modes of transportation. However, the close proximity of the Savannah Wildlife Refuge offers a great opportunity for the City to provide a connection via a trail system. The Chatham County Long-Range Transportation Plan has identified a project that would result in the construction of a 5.5-mile bicycle route along the Highway 25 corridor from the Wildlife Refuge to Bourne Avenue, Bonnybridge Road, and SR 21. This route would cross the Savannah River and also provide scenic views of the surrounding marshlands and local wildlife.

Other projects identified in the Long-Range Transportation Plan for Port Wentworth include implementation of a Multi-Purpose Trail System. Phase I consists of five miles of sidewalks in urban areas and a multi-use trail connecting natural areas to the new town center. Also identified is the On-Road Bikeway System Extension. This contains four miles of bikeways that include 5-ft bike lanes on major roads and “Share the Road Facilities” on minor roads within the City.



### 4.5.3 Commuting Patterns

Table 13 compares commuting patterns in Port Wentworth with those patterns in the County. According to the 2000 Census Bureau data, over 97% of people either drive alone to work or carpool. Barely half a percent of residents rely on public transportation as a mean of traveling to work. This can be related to the fact that convenient public transportation does not exist.

*Table 13. Commuting Patterns*

Category	Port Wentworth	Chatham County
Car, truck, or van - - drove alone	86.6%	76.4%
Car, truck, or van - - carpooled	10.5%	13.4%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	0.5%	3.2%
Walked	0.5%	2.9%
Other means	0.9%	1.6%
Worked at home	1.0%	2.5%
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>22.3</b>

*Source: DCA, US Census Bureau*


### 4.5.4 Parking














The City of Port Wentworth contains a Park & Ride located at the intersection of I-95 and SR 21 (Shown in Figure 7). The City does not contain a significant number of other facilities related to parking.

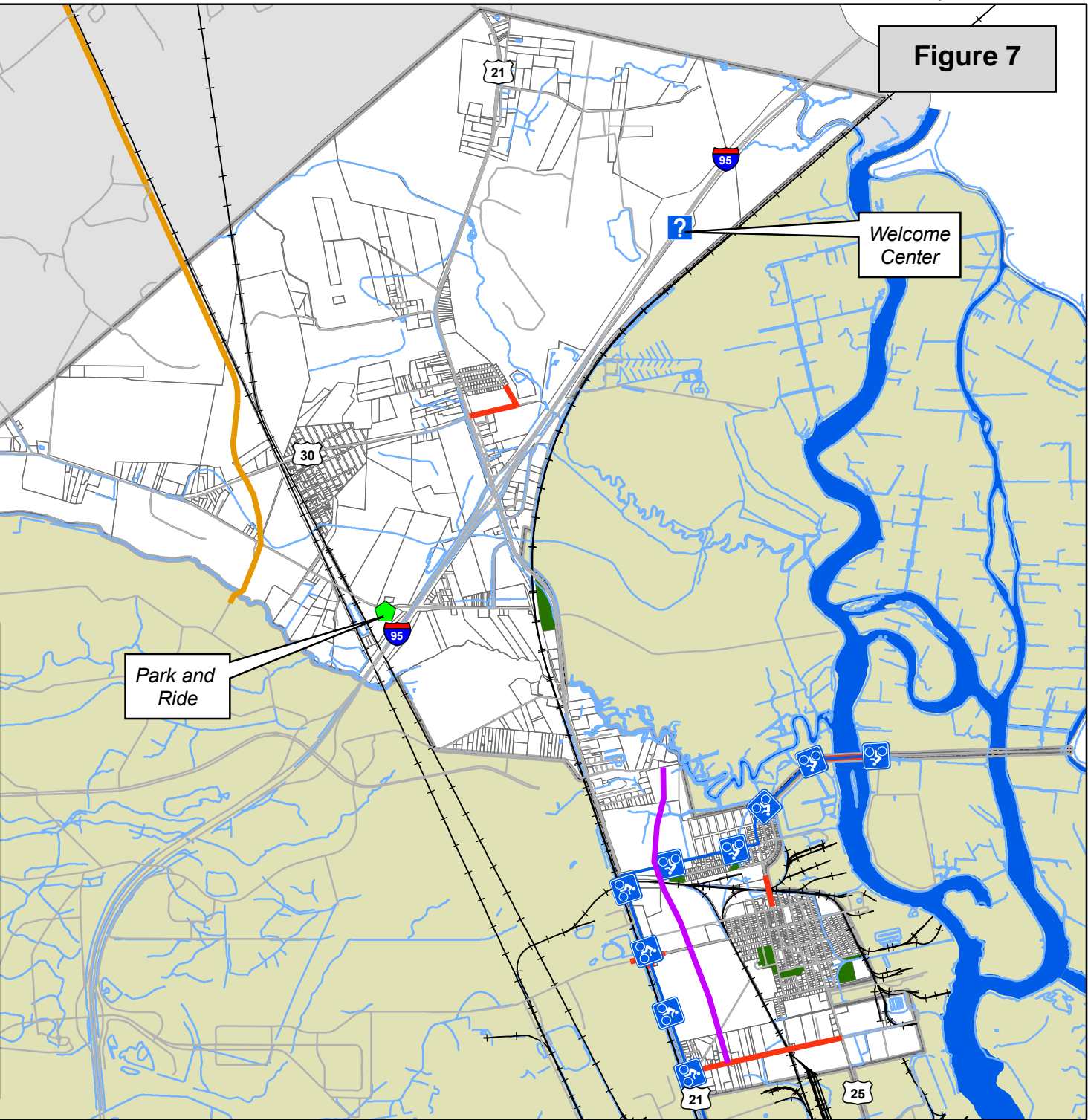
Figure 7

Transportation System

**Legend**



-  Proposed Bike Lane
-  Proposed Transportation Improvements
-  Proposed Northwest Tollway
-  Proposed Effingham HWY
-  Railroads
-  Streets
-  Waterways
-  Parks
-  City Parcels
-  Port Wentworth
-  Savannah River
-  Effingham County
-  Chatham County



#### **4.6. *Part V Environmental Planning Criteria***

The City has adopted the Part V Environmental Planning Criterion for Wetlands which is the only criterion that is applicable to the City. None of the City's land area falls within the jurisdictional boundaries of groundwater recharge zones, protected river corridors, or water supply watersheds as identified in Chapter 391-3-16 of the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria of Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division. Additionally, as the City of Port Wentworth is on the coast of Georgia, the criterion for Mountain Protection is not applicable.

#### **4.7. *Service Delivery Strategy***

The City of Port Wentworth will update their Service Delivery Strategy with Chatham County by electing to continue the existing Service Delivery Strategy until October 2008. Port Wentworth will sign the updated Service Delivery Strategy form provided by the Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) prior to completion of the Comprehensive Plan. The City will continue to work with the MPC, Chatham County, and other local governments to update this Service Delivery Strategy prior to its expiration in October 2008.

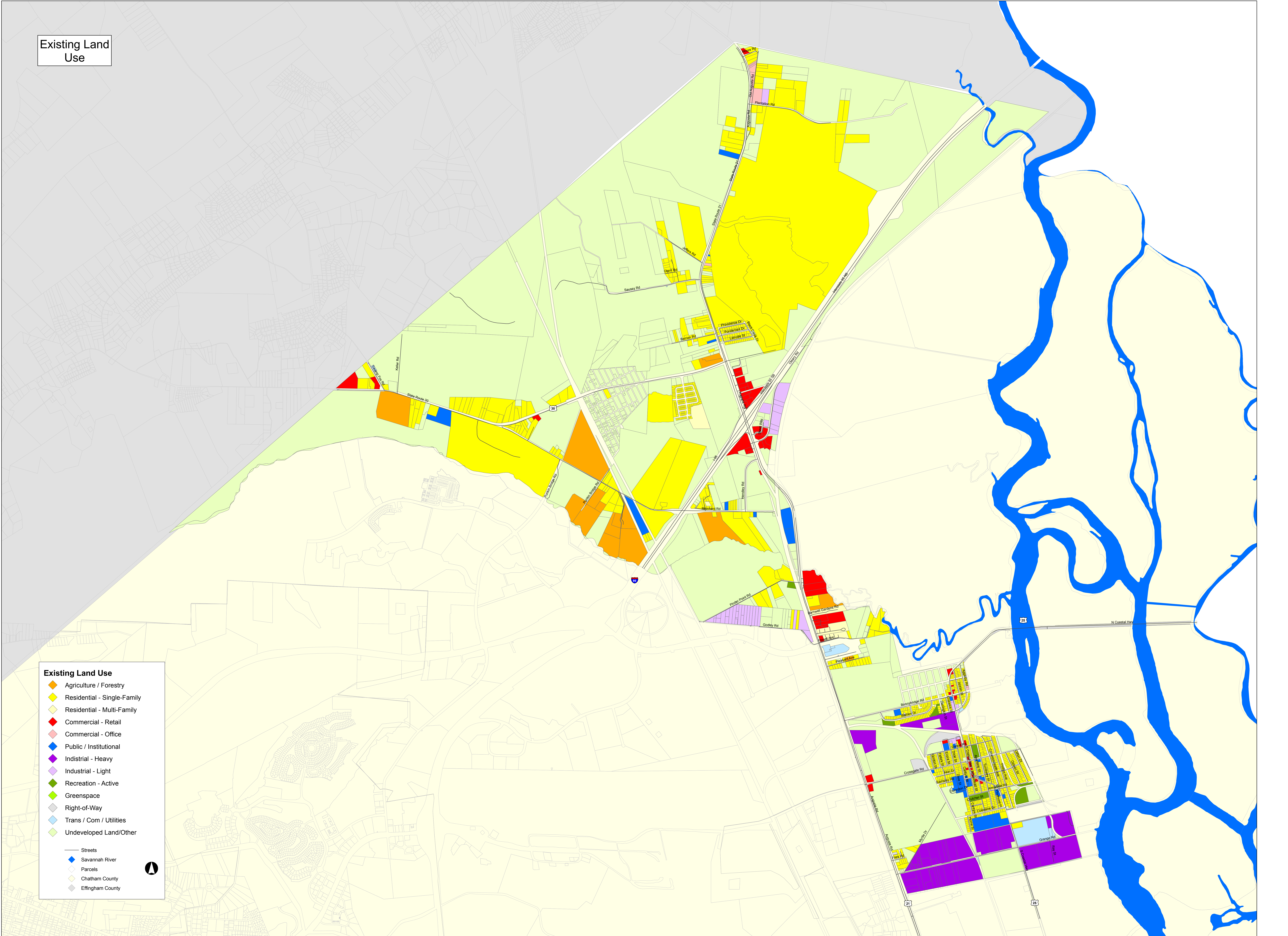
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# APPENDIX A

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## Map of Existing Land Use







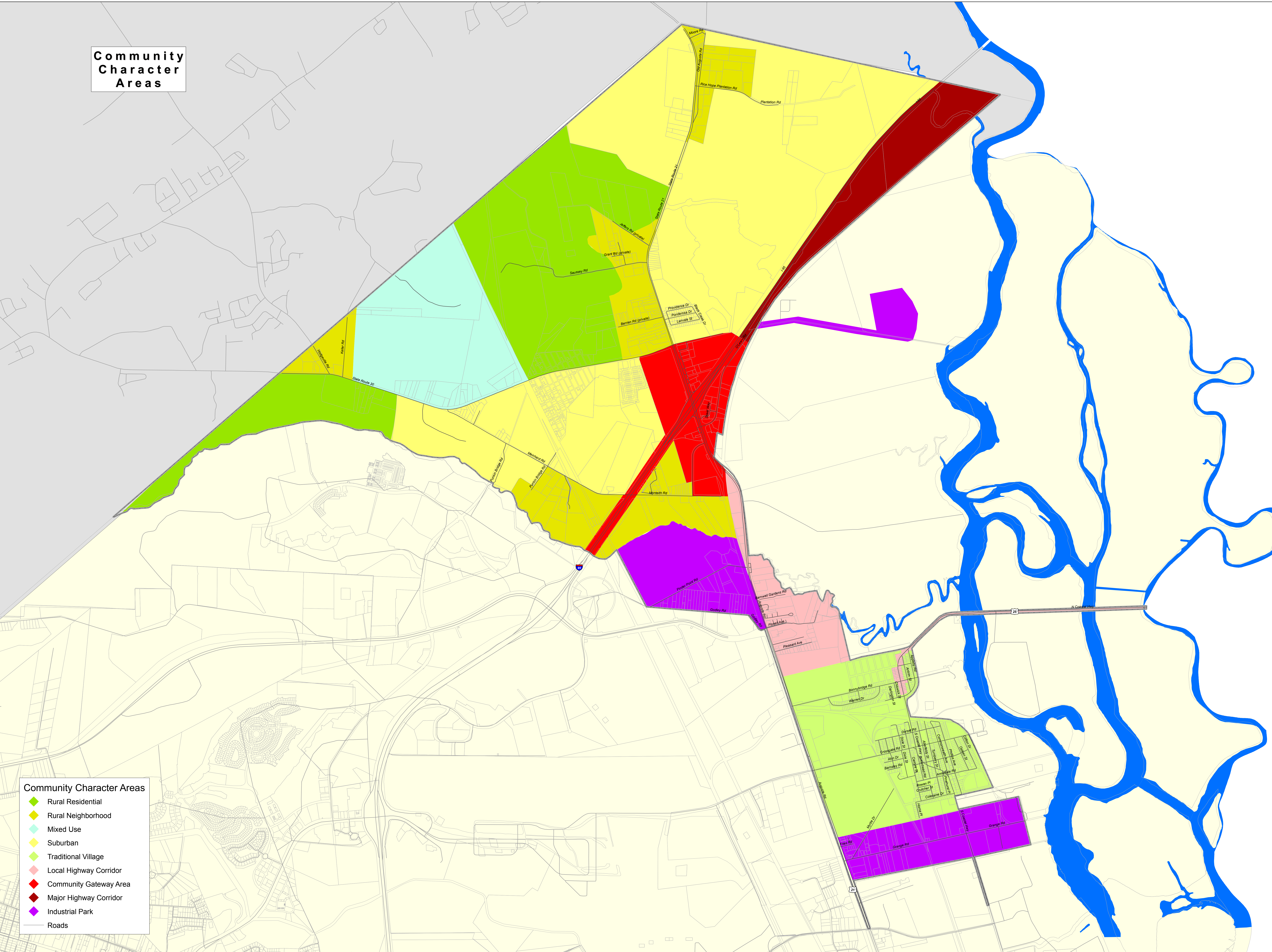
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## **APPENDIX B**

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### Map of Community Character Areas







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## **APPENDIX C**

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### **Map of Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)**



**Areas Requiring  
Special Attention**

**ARSA**

- Significant Development Pressure
- Opportunities for Infill Development
- Areas Facing Rapid Development
- In 100-YR Zone
- Wetlands

**Legend**

- Streams & Waterways
- Port Wentworth Limits
- Parcels
- Port Wentworth Limits
- Savannah Wildlife Refuge
- Water
- Roads
- Chatham County
- Effingham County

