

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element is the culmination of the previous chapters set forth in the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The foundations set in the population, housing, economic development, green infrastructure, historic resources, and transportation elements are implemented in a physical development sense by the Future Land Use Map. The Land Use Element memorializes Sumter's policy approach to the type of development that should be encouraged, where that development should be located, and of equal importance, how that development should look from a design perspective.

The Land Use Element is the primary tool when making land decisions. By and large, new land uses should be consistent with the land uses encouraged or supported by the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan. However, the Plan and its Land Use Element should be used as a flexible policy guide and not as a rigid regulatory document. This is quite different than the Zoning Ordinance, although they do go hand-in-hand. The Future Land Use Map is not intended to illustrate parcel-specific land uses. Instead, in most cases, area-based interpretations are recommended.

The Sumter 2040 Future Land Use Map builds upon the work done in 2009, especially regarding water and sewer availability. Based upon an in depth analysis, including review of all water service district boundaries, the Sumter 2040 approach recommends suburban development and corresponding residential densities (above 2 units per acre) ONLY where both water and sewer are available or can be made available.



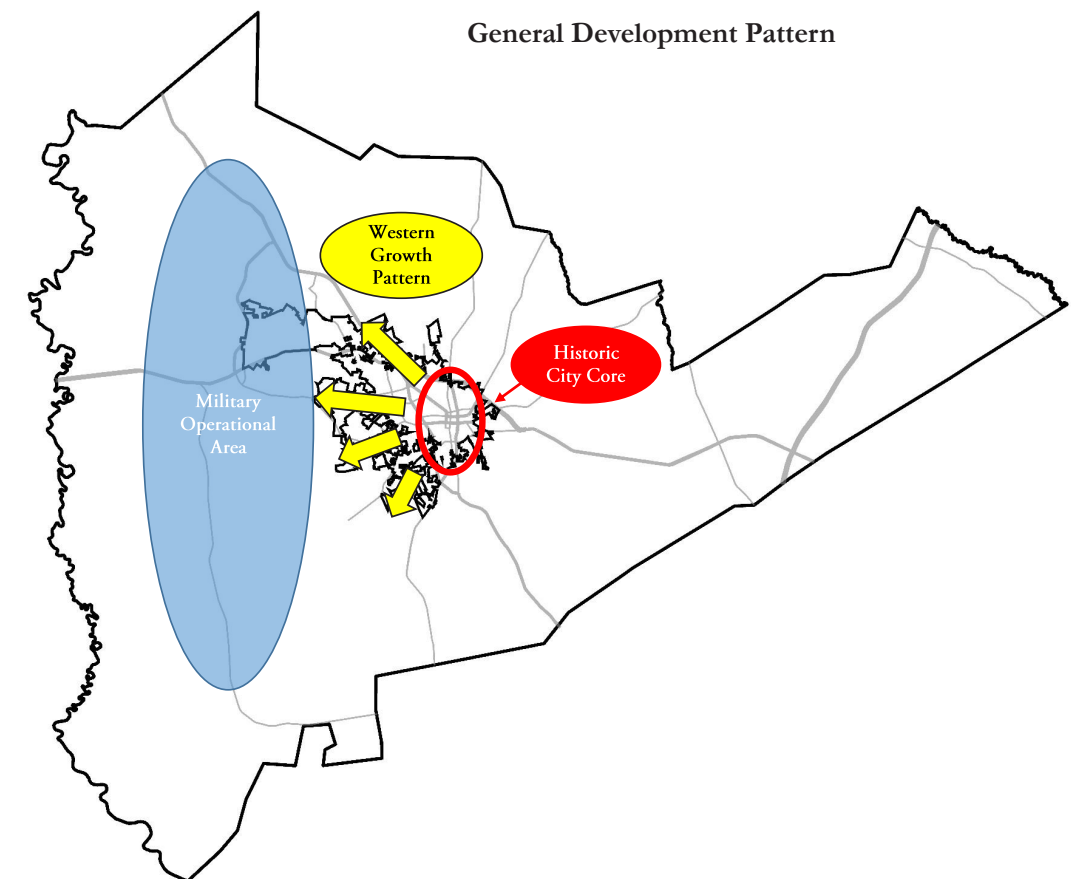
Photo: Construction in Downtown Sumter

Historical Growth Pattern & Existing Conditions

Sumter continues to grow to the west, as it has done since the 1990's, away from downtown and toward Shaw A.F.B. and Columbia. This has continued, with significant major subdivisions such as Timberline Meadows (380 units), Carolina Palms (170 units), Hunters Crossing (699 units), Foxcroft (254 units), Southbridge (393), Heritage Bay (190 units), Booth East (991 units), and Stafford Meadows (108) receiving approval entitlements.

A significant issue facing the Sumter community is the clear disconnect between new development patterns and a generally flat population growth. If the community is not adding net new population, why are we building so many new houses? The answer is complicated. Sumter's physical growth to the west must also be viewed within the context of ongoing population loss and increased housing vacancy in older centrally located neighborhoods in the City and rural areas in the County. Additionally, an available supply of land, expansive annexation policies, the influence of new military personnel in the market place, utility expansions, new housing opportunities, perceptions about school and crime, and desire for closer proximity to Shaw A.F.B. have all encouraged a move away from a more compact identifiable urban form.

Map LU-1



Correspondingly, older residential and commercial corridors continue on a downward opposite trajectory when compared with the dynamic western growth pattern. The long-term costs and trade-offs associated with this pattern of development may not be sustainable as downtown Sumter, it's surrounding neighborhoods, and other areas of the County decline.

Based on the Approved Residential Pipeline Table, 48% of all approved county subdivision lots, in subdivisions yet to be built out, have constructed homes on them. Over 850 units are still permitted to be built. This count does not include individually platted parcels or mobile home installations.

Map LU-2 Active Subdivisions

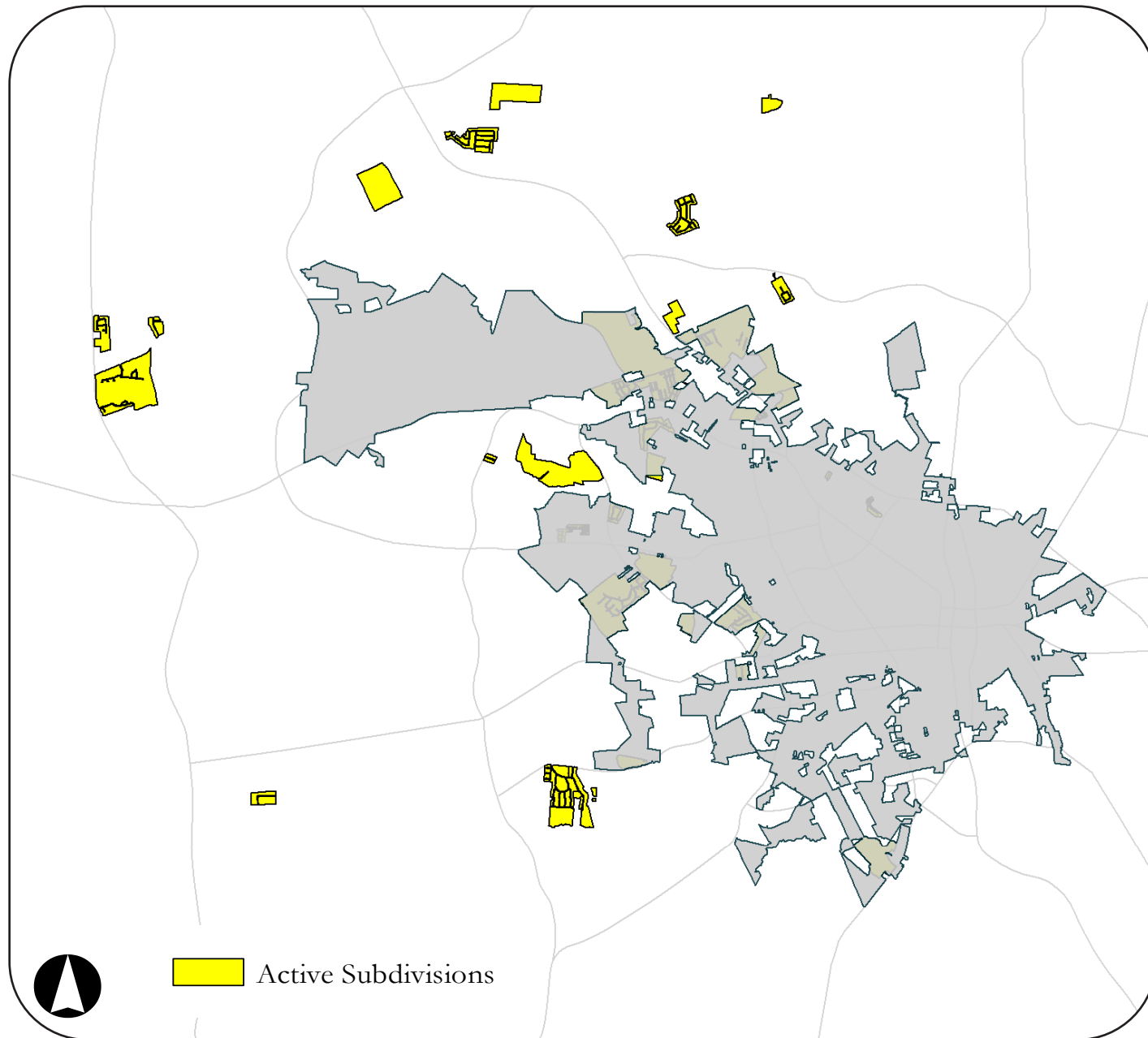


Figure LU-1

Approved Residential Pipeline

Subdivision Name	Total Units Approved	Units Built	Units Remaining	% Complete
Beach Creek	225	149	76	66%
Depass Heights	14	12	2	86%
Ellerbe Estates	58	57	1	98%
Equestrian Trail	31	25	6	81%
Ginkgo Hills	153	129	24	84%
Jackson Preserve	66	39	27	59%
Lee's Preserve	36	27	9	75%
Linwood	314	186	128	59%
Middleton	91	15	76	16%
Moonlite II	202	0	202	0%
Presidio Park	28	22	6	79%
Red Lane Road	94	0	94	0%
Rolling Hills II	88	62	26	70%
Stonecroft	236	171	65	72%
Wild Valley Pointe	16	8	8	50%
Totals	1652	902	750	45%

Status as of August 31, 2024

Existing land use closely mimics the County official zoning map and is therefore characterized by a strict separation of uses by type. Sumter has distinct industrial, commercial, residential, and rural land uses which are seldom integrated or mixed together.

Sumter County is primarily a rural, sparsely developed community. Notwithstanding areas in close proximity to the City of Sumter with urban/suburban character, the county is dominated by rural land uses. Approximately 90% of the land in the County has rural characteristics.

The Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan anticipates slow, even flat growth (and perhaps slight negative growth based on 2018 estimates). This is a reality that cannot be ignored: Continued demand for new home construction further and further away from urban centers is expected to continue barring a policy change to our approach to new development. Without measurable population growth this practice is likely unsustainable.

The Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan attempts to strike a balance between establishing new areas for future growth (it is after all a 20 year plan), and directing development to locations that already have infrastructure in place. The total approach does propose a more efficient, compact, less sprawling pattern of development. Yes, property rights and the invisible market hand are important. Yet, the Plan attempts to balance those rights in a fiscally prudent manner.

Changes from the Sumter 2030 Comprehensive Plan include:

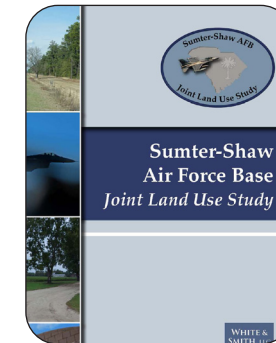
- An incremental expansion of the Military Protection Area to preserve Shaw A.F.B. and Poinsett Range based upon the Shaw A.F.B.-Sumter Joint Land Use Study produced in 2016 in cooperation with the Department of Defense.
- Directing suburban development density only to places where public water and sewer is available or planned to be available based on a review of all service districts and City of Sumter Sewer policies.
- Expansion of the Rural Development Area based on lack of available infrastructure.

This Plan takes great care to ensure there is adequate guidance for the community, especially in the Suburban Development Planning Area, where most growth is expected to take place. Additionally, the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan continues the concept of Priority Investment Areas, consistent with the State Planning Enabling law. Effectively, these areas are focal points, nodes, and priority areas where the community encourages new commercial, industrial, or mixed use development.

Existing Plans & Studies Influencing Sumter 2040 Future Land Use Policies



Sumter 2030 Comprehensive Plan (Adopted 2009)



2016 Sumter-Shaw Joint Land Use Study (Adopted 2016)



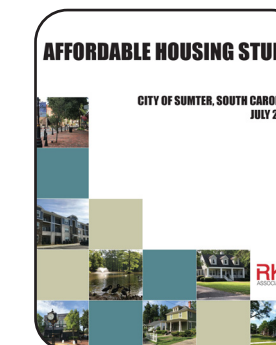
SUATS 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (Adopted 2023)



SLCOG 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (Adopted 2023)



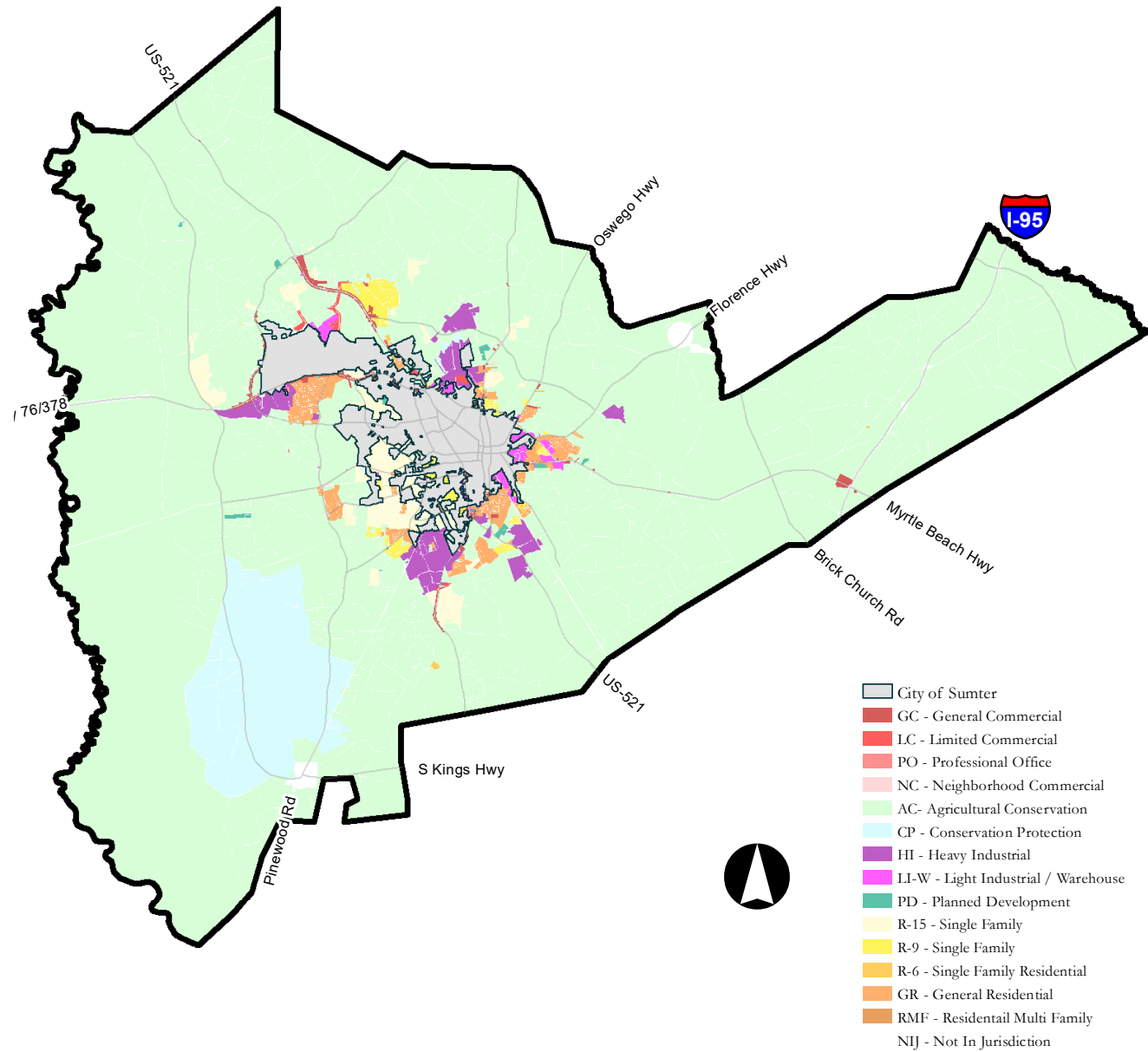
Sumter Downtown Master Plan (Completed 2019)



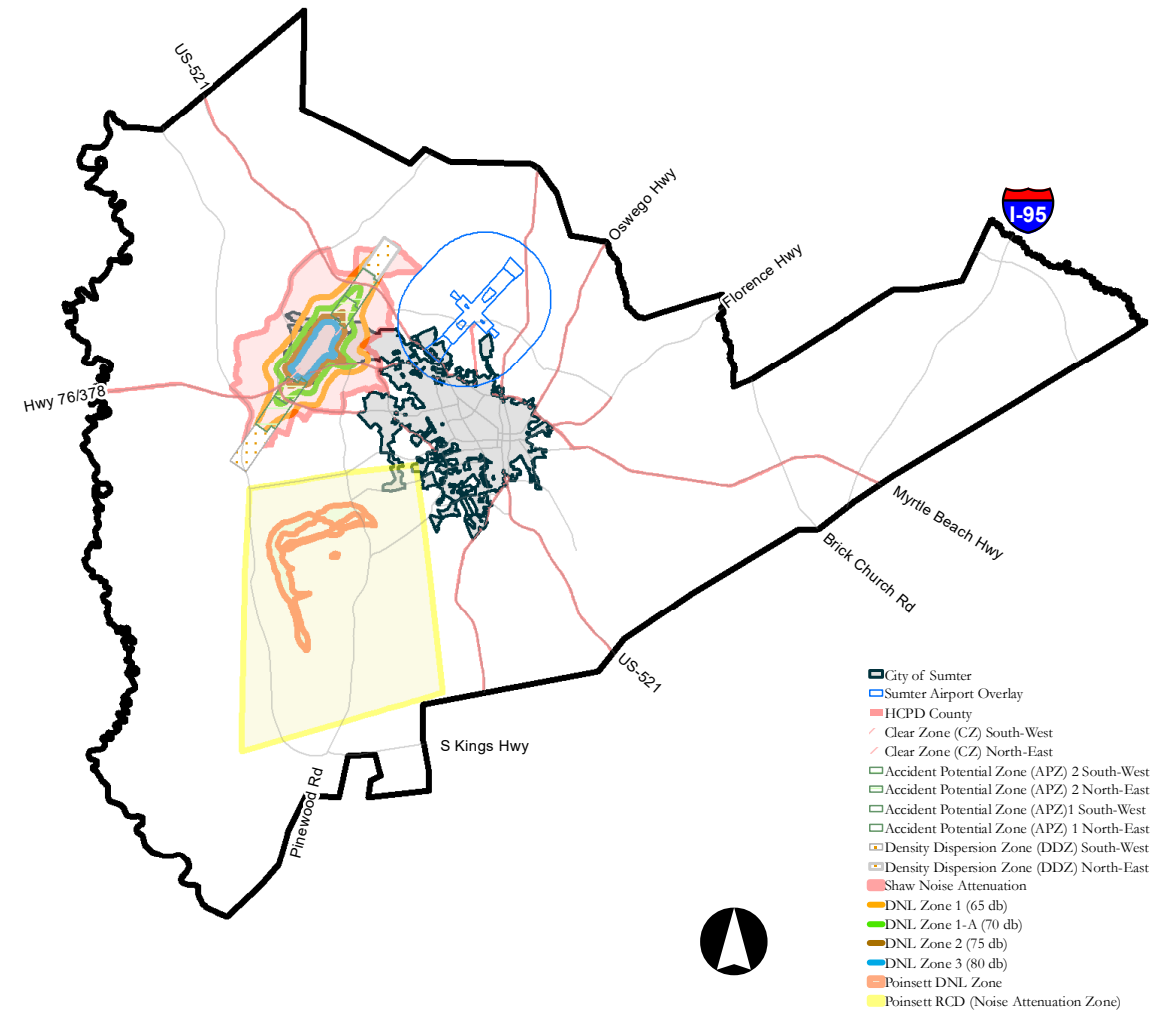
City of Sumter Housing Study (Completed 2019)

Map LU-3 Existing Zoning & MPA Overlay Maps

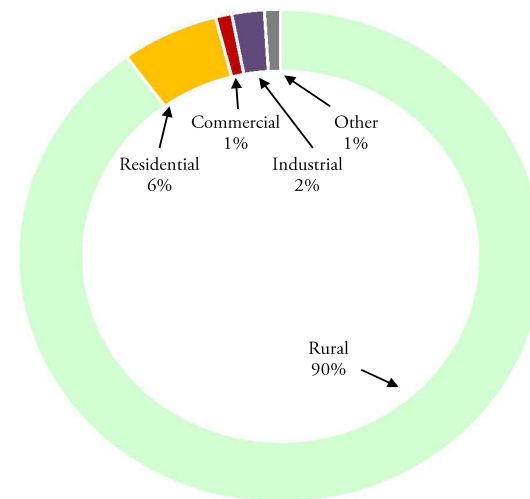
Sumter County Zoning



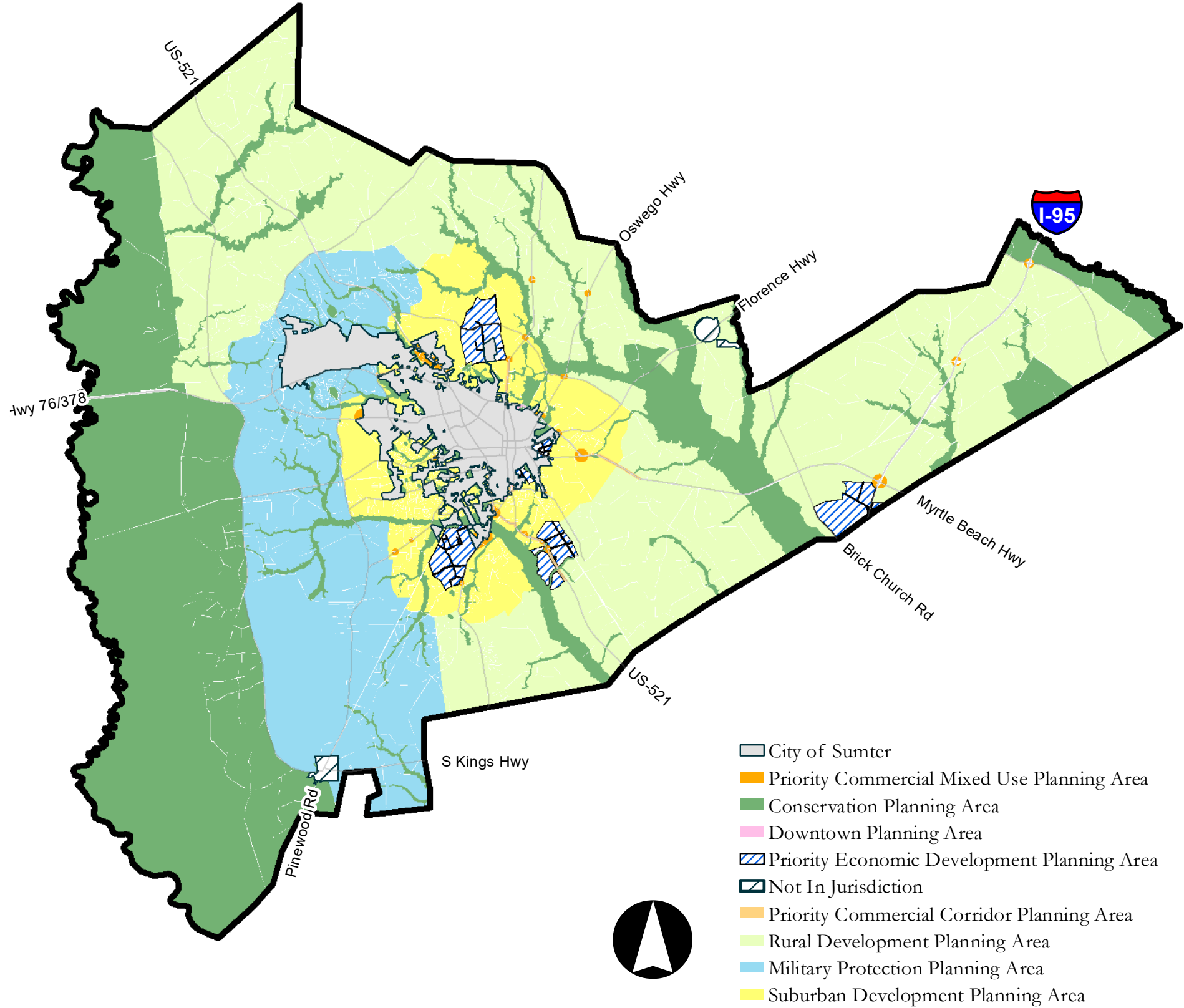
Sumter County Zoning Overlay Districts



County Land Use Characteristics



Map LU-4 Future Land Use Map



Note: Official maps located at the end of the Land Use Element

Future Land Use Planning Areas

Suburban Development Planning Area

The Suburban Development Planning Area encompasses a large area surrounding the historic core of Sumter. The area is characterized by the influences of modern suburban development: the separation of distinct commercial, residential, and industrial areas. Functionally, this pattern of development amounts to a strict separation of homogeneous residential enclaves; strip commercial corridors and; finite, stand alone, employment centers. The pattern requires multiple automobile trips for all aspects of life: work, play, worship, and shopping. Moreover, the development pattern dictates the expensive expansion of public services, schools, and utility infrastructure to serve a more spread out community. It is largely inefficient and costly to local government and its citizens.

The continued spreading westward of low density, residential subdivisions and strip commercial development also increases the threat of encroachment and incompatible uses to Shaw A.F.B. With the next generation of fighter plane, the F-35, on the horizon, extreme care should be taken when adjudicating land use actions adjacent to the base, regardless of planned land use designation.

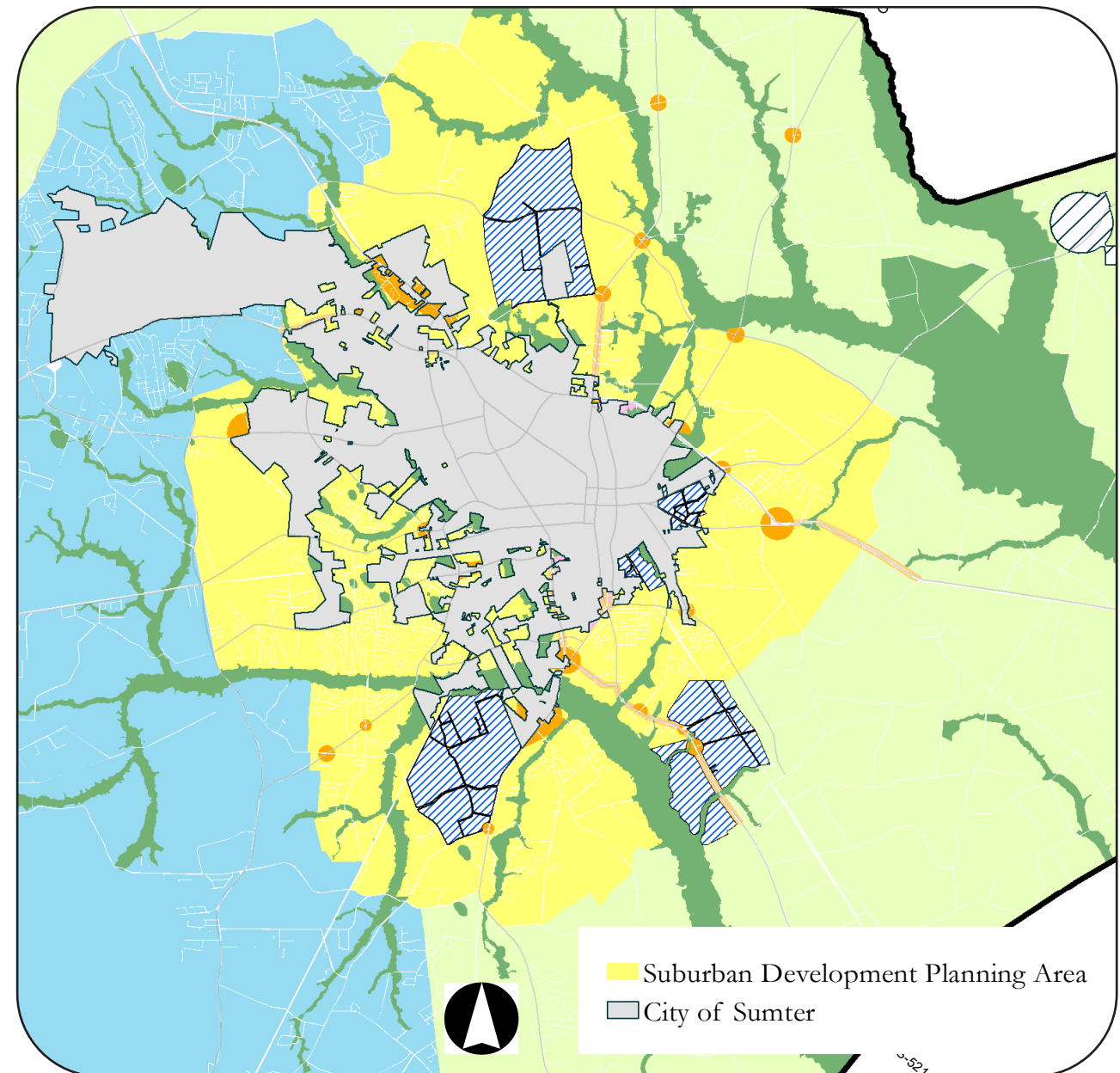


Photo: Carolina Palms Subdivision

The primary goal of the Suburban Development Planning Area is to scrutinize and manage existing development patterns, identify appropriate locations for new commercial and industrial development, to focus on improvements to the form and design of new development, and to ensure that land is developed in an orderly and efficient manner.

The current westerly leap frog approach is discouraged; infill and redevelopment in areas already suited with roads and infrastructure are more strongly encouraged.

Map LU-5 Suburban Development Planning Area



Suburban Development Planning Area Policies



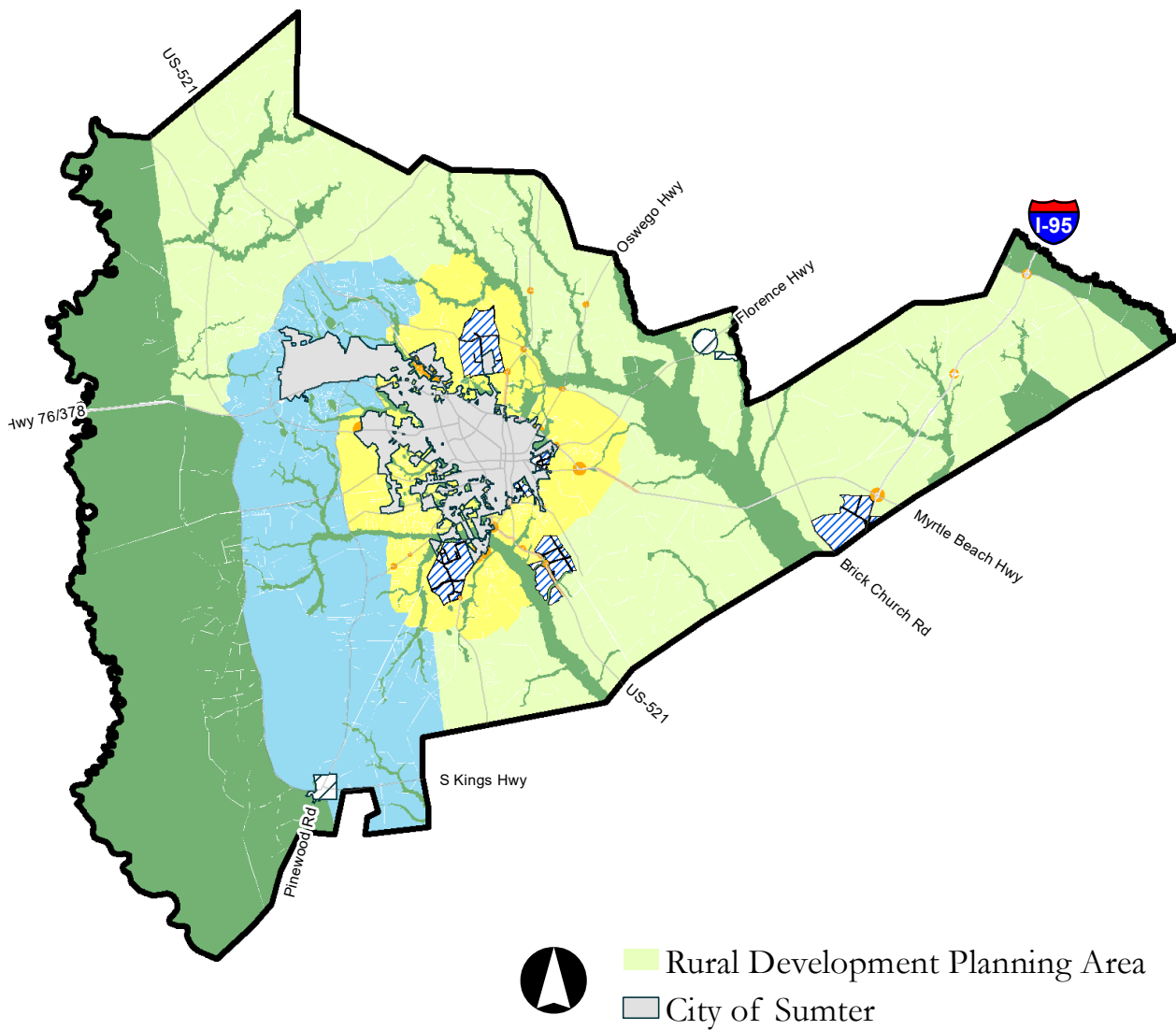
Photo(s): Various Sumter Suburban Land Use Types

1. New development in the Suburban Planning Area is intended to be served by public utilities. The County supports the extension of public water and sewer within this Planning Area, consistent with applicable utility service boundaries and policies.
2. The County will consider establishment of a new low density single family residential zoning district to service areas where public utilities, especially public sewer, are absent.
3. Low density development on private well and septic (one unit per acre or more) is appropriate adjacent to the Rural Development Planning Area and Military Protection Planning Area, or in cases where environmental or utility constraints dictate that low density residential is more appropriate.
4. New residential development shall incorporate design characteristics including but not limited to:
 - Mix of residential housing types and design diversity
 - Residential density of 3-4 units per acre (single family);
 - 6-12 units per acre (townhouse; duplex); 12-24 units per acre (multi-family)
 - Passive and Active open space developed through the conservation design process
 - Pedestrian connectivity with sidewalks and trails
 - Non-residential components such as institutional, employment, and commercial should be integrated along with residential in larger projects and Planned Developments.
5. Supportive neighborhood retail and other small scale commercial opportunities are encouraged in Priority Commercial areas and other areas adjacent to residential uses in areas at major intersections and where commercial uses complete a block. Where proposed, design, form, and details will be paramount in the land use process.
6. Larger, destination retail, employment, or other commercial uses shall be directed to Priority Commercial Areas and Priority Commercial Corridors and to major intersections and arterial corridors such as Broad St., Lafayette Dr., Guignard Dr., and McCray's Mill Rd.
7. Industrial, light-industrial, warehouse, automotive repair, and uses with a dominant outdoor storage component should be discouraged along Primary Commercial Corridors.
8. All new development is expected to mitigate its impacts on public services, community facilities, schools, and transportation networks.
9. Employment and Economic Development centers are directed to the Suburban Development Planning Area either in the existing industrial parks identified in the Economic Development Element or where adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate the proposed uses.
10. The County supports design improvements along Sumter's major corridors. The County will consider changes to the Highway Corridor design review district in an effort to strengthen implementation tools and ensure quality design related to architecture, signage and landscaping.
11. The County will examine opportunities to encourage, incentivize or require design improvements to non-conforming structures, sites, and parking lots.

Rural Development Planning Area

Sumter is as much a rural community as it is a suburban or urban place; more so, perhaps. Inasmuch as the County wants to preserve its rural and agricultural heritage, the Rural Development Planning Area is intended to support low-density residential development and selected non-residential and agricultural uses in a relaxed regulatory climate. As such, the current development of large lots (one acre or more) located on rural roads and private drives is extended in the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In areas near the County's small towns and enclaves, including Pinewood, Mayesville, Wedgefield, Rembert, and Dalzell, higher density clusters may be supported, especially if development is a clear extension of the rural village pattern and if public water and sewer is available.

Map LU-6 Rural Development Planning Area



Rural Development Planning Area Policies

1. Residential densities shall be supported at one unit per acre or more. However, in an effort to consider steps toward a more environmentally sustainable community, the County will consider zoning ordinance amendments designed to encourage cluster development - the practice of allowing smaller lot sizes clustered more closely together, yet achieving the balance of the development in preserved open space.
2. Manufactured homes and single family homes are appropriate in the Rural Development Planning Area.
3. Small scale, rural serving non-residential commercial uses are directed to locate at intersections with arterial roads or major crossroads. Agribusiness and other rural employment options are encouraged to locate at major crossroads as well.
4. Schools, libraries, government facilities, police stations, and fire stations should be located on arterial/major highways and at major intersections to better serve the community. The location of these facilities should be in relation to the populations that they will serve.
5. Public Sewer shall not be extended into the Rural Development Planning Area to support increases in density, except when providing utilities to residential and non-residential uses alike in close proximity (500 feet) to Mayesville and Pinewood.
6. Public water should only be extended into the Rural Development Planning Area for the purposes of health and safety, provided commercial and residential uses are being developed consistent with the Planning Area.
7. Development in the I-95 Corridor, particularly at the interchanges is strongly encouraged. The County will consider a specific I-95 Corridor Plan to address the land-use future of this critical economic development asset.



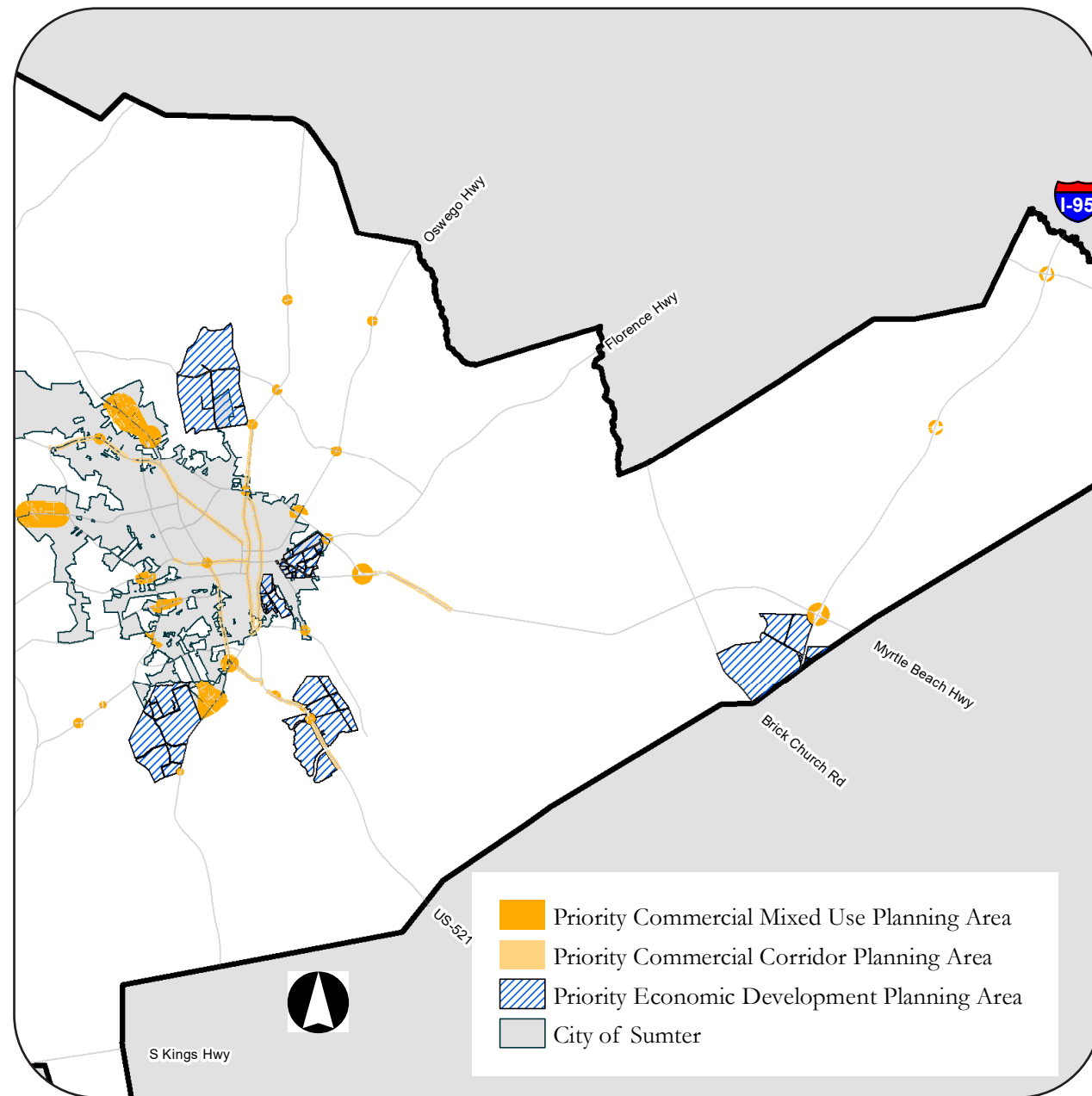
Photo: Rural Front Porch

Priority Investment Planning Area

Priority Investment Planning Areas are identified within all major planning areas identified by the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and should be considered as an overlay to the underlying Planning Area it is located in. The goal of the Priority Investment Planning Area is to more acutely identify, direct, and concentrate new development opportunities. The concept of Priority Investment Areas stems from the 2007 amendment to the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Act. Three types of Priority Investment Areas are identified: Priority Economic Development Areas, Priority Commercial/Mixed-Use Areas, and Priority Commercial Corridor Areas. In these areas, the County may relax certain requirements, waive regulatory burdens, or develop incentives to direct development to these locations.

Map LU-7

Priority Investment Planning Area Examples



Priority Investment Planning Area Policies

Priority Economic Development Areas. Economic Development projects are encouraged throughout the City and County, in new or previously established areas. However, the map identifies specific Economic Development nodes. The designation offers protection to the existing industrial parks and identifies additional locations based on input from the Sumter County Development Board. Industrial, Manufacturing, Research, Campus-style Office Headquarters and other major job creators are included in this category.

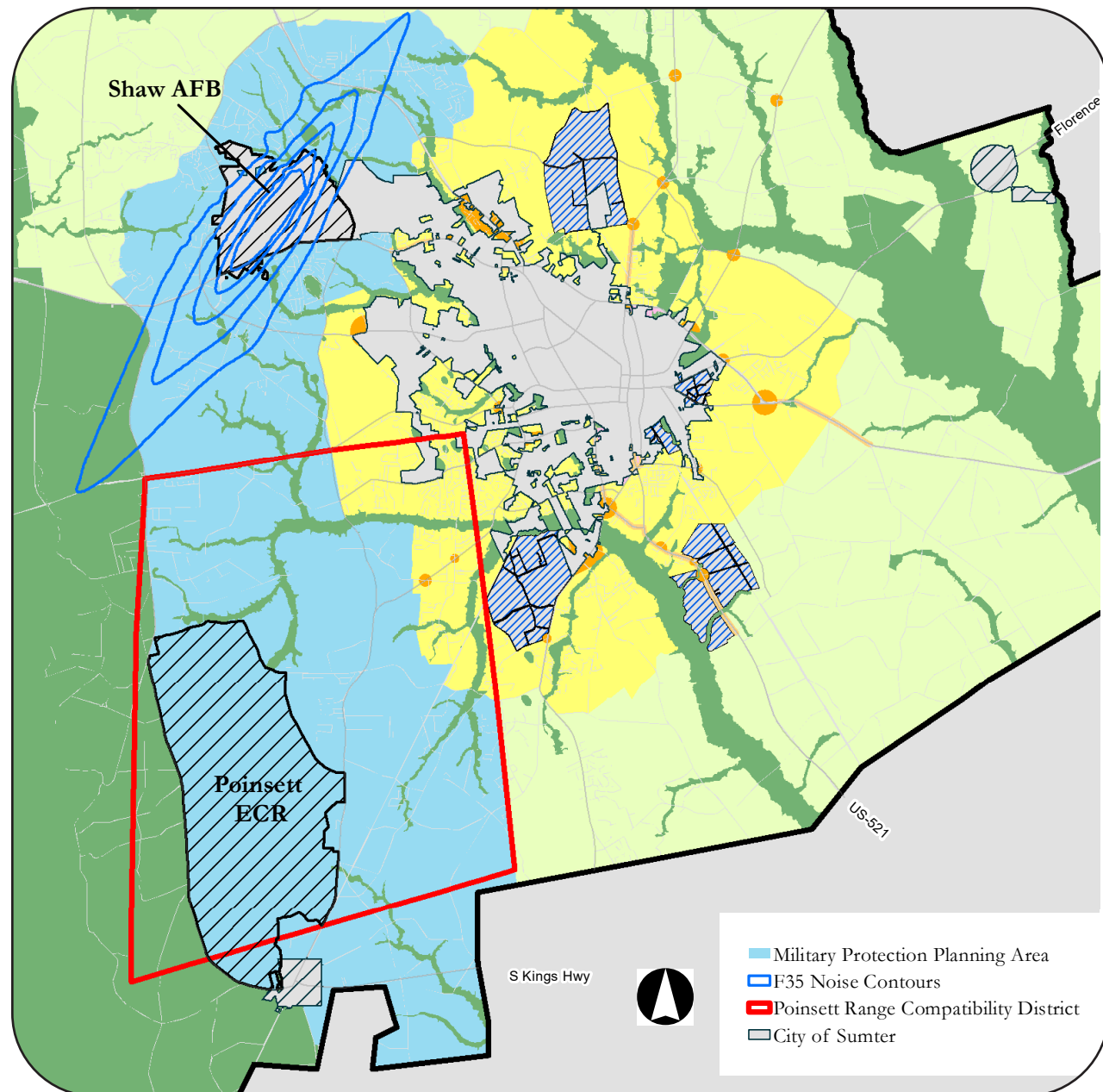
Priority Commercial/Mixed Use Areas. Commercial and Mixed-use areas or nodes are identified on the map to direct future, high quality commercial and residential mixed use development. The areas include anticipated green fields and established locations expected to re-develop with higher and better uses over time. As set forth in the broader policies, continued commercial development is expected along the major corridors. New priority locations are designated for protection against undesirable uses such as industrial, automotive repair, or uses primarily engaged in outdoor storage. These locations encourage both destination retail commercial uses and neighborhood commercial uses as appropriate. Design, layout, impact on adjacent properties, landscaping, and architecture all play a vital role in determining context viability.

Priority Commercial Corridors. This Priority Investment Planning Area focuses on existing corridors throughout the City and County. These corridors have been host to a diversity of uses from large, destination retail uses to more base industrial outdoor storage uses. Many formerly prosperous commercial corridors have struggled in recent years, such as Broad St. (from Wesmark Dr. to Church St.) or Manning Avenue in the City. Many corridors are trending toward higher levels of vacancy, or marginalization of retail uses. They are visually uninviting and face outright abandonment.

Military Protection Planning Area

The Military Protection Planning Area is intended to protect Shaw A.F.B. and Poinsett Electronic Combat Range from encroachment of incompatible land uses and reduce the accident and noise potential to citizens in areas adjacent to these two critical military installations. Protection of the Shaw A.F.B. mission is the community's primary goal in this area. The 2016 Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), a partnership between Shaw, the City, and the County, recommended changes to the Military Protection Planning Areas area based on a changing Shaw mission. Those recommendations are incorporated. Great care should be taken in evaluating any land use application in this planning area as well as adjacent and surrounding planning areas.

Map LU-8 Military Protection Planning Area



Military Protection Planning Area Policies

1. The County supports commercial, agricultural, and industrial development in this area of a type which significantly limits the concentration of people.
2. The County support very low-density residential uses of one acre or more on private well and septic tank only. Public sewer infrastructure will not be extended to the Military Protection Planning Area for residential uses.
3. The County will work with land conservation groups, the Air Force, and other partners to develop and implement land conservation, easement, and open space protection programs.
4. Existing residential zoning districts which are in clear conflict with these policies will be reviewed for potential rezoning implementation.
5. meet noise reduction and attenuation standards. The County will consider zoning amendments to restrict or prohibit the placement or replacement of mobile or manufactured homes in this planning area.
6. The recommendations adopted by County Council in the 2016 Sumter-Shaw Joint Land Use Study are incorporated into the Sumter 2040 Comprehensive Plan by reference.
7. The Military Protection Planning Area supersedes any other underlying policy area.
8. Military Protection Area boundaries will be reevaluated upon receipt of additional information pertaining to the arrival of the F-35A at Shaw A.F.B. or the required 5 year update of this document.

All new housing stock is expected to



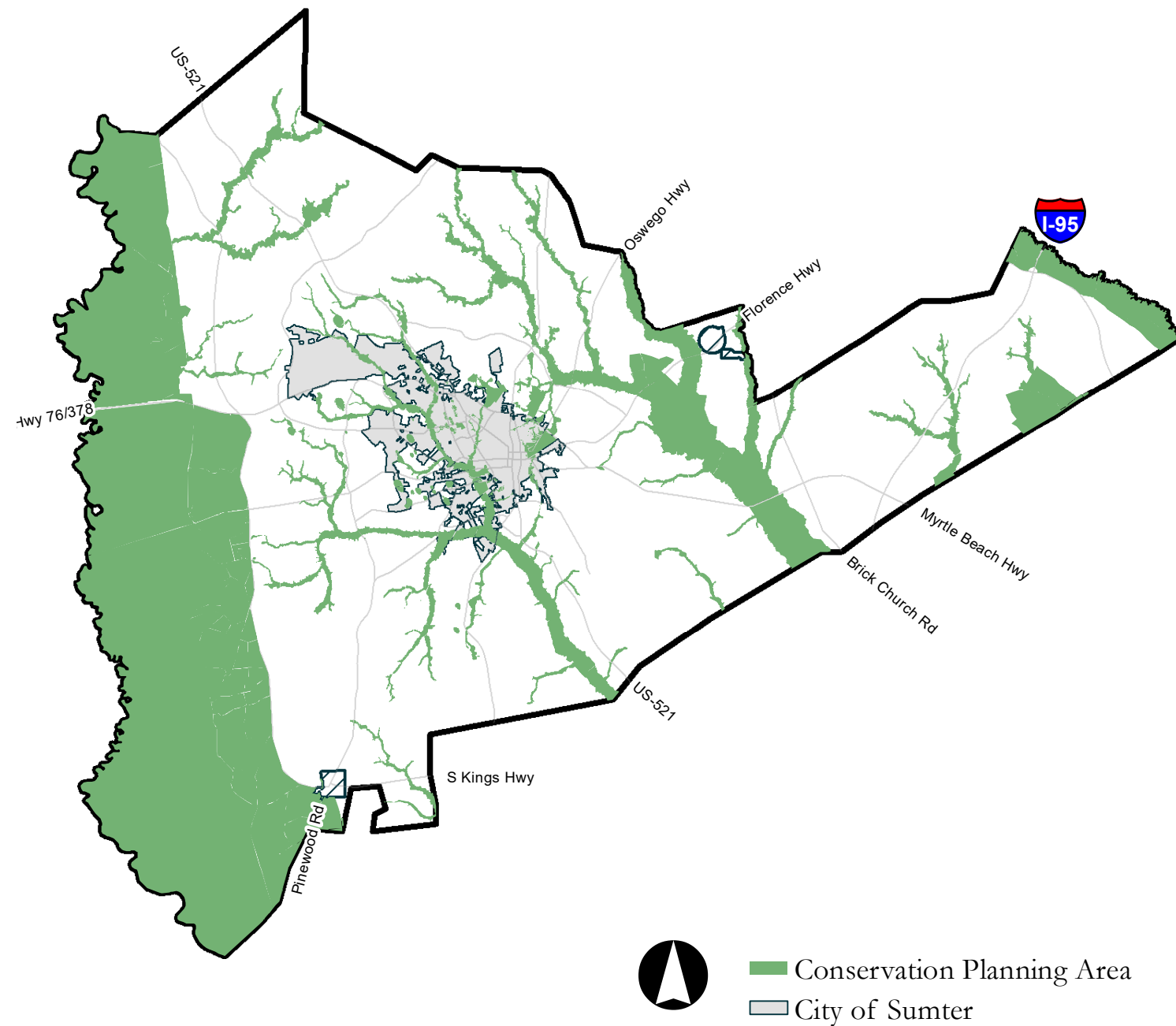
Photo(s): F-16 Fighting Falcons. These aircraft are the primary aircraft based at Shaw A.F.B.





Conservation Planning Area

Designated Conservation Planning Areas are intended to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and prime agricultural lands from residential, industrial and commercial encroachment. Throughout the County, these areas should be preserved to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive natural resources including floodplains, streams, wetlands, water bodies, state parks, historical buildings and sites, gardens, woodlands, and established natural recreational areas. Protection of these natural and agricultural resources contributes to the community's overall health and sustainability. Commercial agricultural activities and family farming are encouraged in this planning area.

Map LU-9 Conservation Planning Area



 Conservation Planning Area
 City of Sumter

Conservation Planning Area Policies

1. In Conservation Planning Areas adjacent to and surrounded by the Rural Development Planning Area, residential development is supported at rural low densities of one unit per five (5) acres or more on private well and septic.
2. Non agricultural commercial uses are not supported in the Conservation Preservation Planning Area except along the U.S. 378 corridor or as otherwise noted.
3. Conservation areas adjacent to the Downtown and Suburban Planning Areas are characterized by floodplain, stream corridors, Carolina Bays, and wetlands. As a general policy, development should be limited in these areas. Where development is appropriate, low impact engineering and architectural design practices shall be incorporated into all projects.

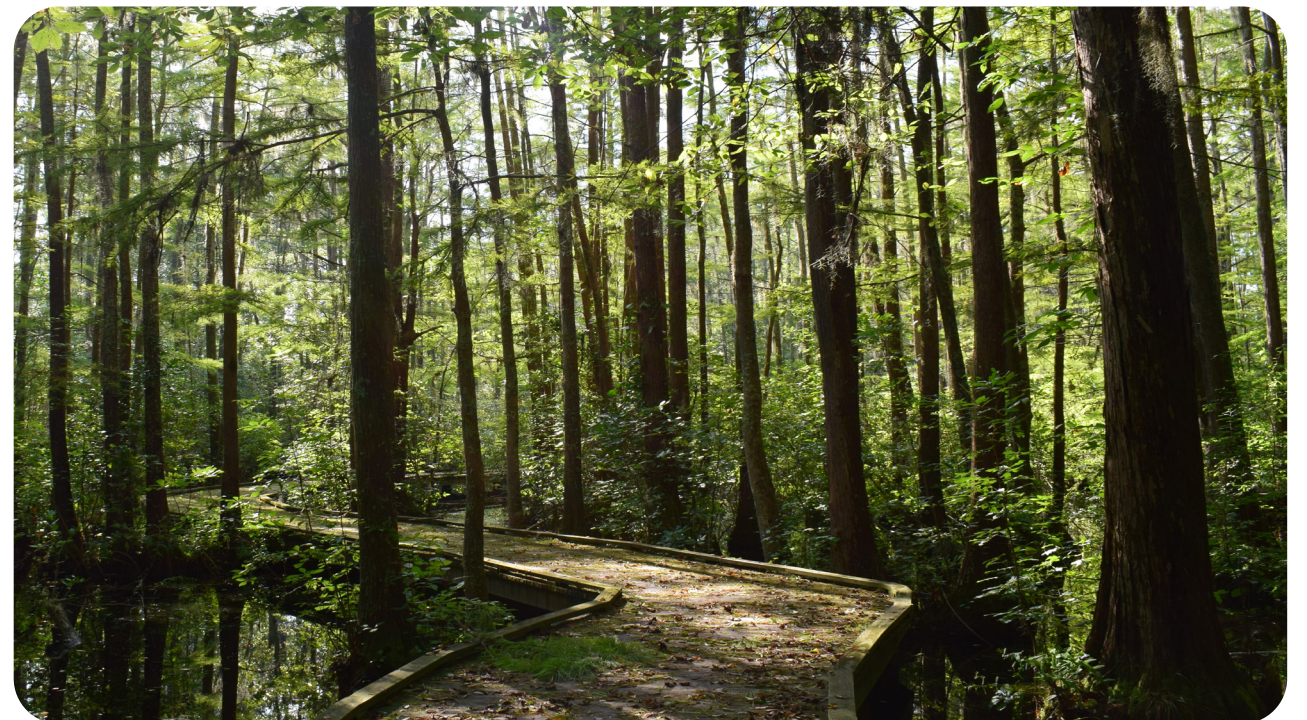
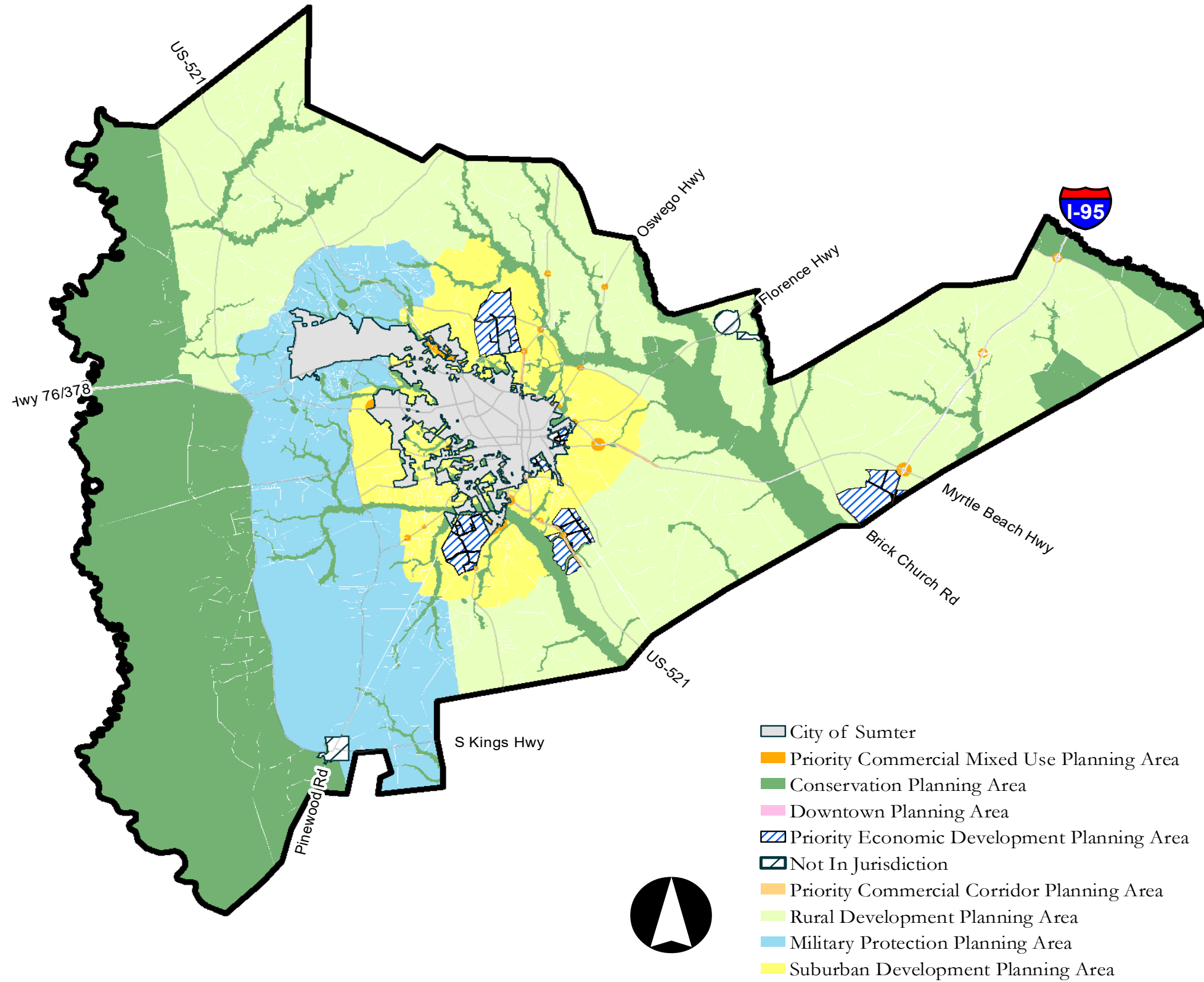


Photo: Woods Bay State Park

Map LU-10 Official Sumter County Land Use Plan Map



Map LU-11 Official Sumter County Land Use Plan Map

