

Ridgeland

2025 comprehensive plan

Adopted June 18, 2025

Ordinance 09-2025

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE TOWN OF RIDGELAND 2025-2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS MANDATED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE ENABLING ACT OF 1994, AS AMENDED; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPEAL OF ALL PRIOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANS AND ORDINANCES RELATED COMPRENSIVE PLAN ORDINACES.

WHEREAS, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted an amendment to the Code of Laws of South Carolina to incorporate therein a new Chapter 29 to Title 6 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976 as emended, entitled "South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Enabling Act of 1994" which repealed certain previously-enacted planning acts and codes, and;

WHEREAS, the 1994 South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, as amended, requires that the local planning commission develop and maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continuing re-evaluation and updating of certain planning elements considered critical, necessary and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of the areas within its jurisdictional town limits, and;

WHEREAS, the previous Town of Ridgeland Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2018, and;

WHEREAS, the Town of Ridgeland Planning Commission approved a Resolution recommending adoption of the Town of Ridgeland 2025-35 Comprehensive Plan, and;

WHEREAS, the Town of Ridgeland Town Council has reviewed the draft of the 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan and has determined that the 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan should be adopted, approved and implemented in order to comply with the mandate of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994, as amended, and;

WHEREAS, the Town of Ridgeland Town Council, by adopting this ordinance, repeals all prior Comprehensive Plans and Related Comprehensive Plan Ordinances.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF RIDGELAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, duly assembled does hereby adopt the Town of Ridgeland 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the provisions of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, as amended.

The ordinance shall become effective upon receiving approval on second reading and adoption by Town Council.

Joseph N. Malphrus, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Penelope B. Daley, Clerk/Treasurer

First Reading: 06/05/2025
Second Reading: 06/18/2025

Record of Vote:

Mayor Joey Malphrus-Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Tommy Rhodes-Yes
Councilor Libby Malphrus-Yes
Councilor Josephine Boyles-Yes
Councilor Bill Fishburne-Yes

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Acknowledgments

PLANNING COMMISSION

Frankie Denmark, Chairman
Scott May
Joss Mohr
Linda Tenerowicz
Ralph Rodina

TOWN COUNCIL

Joseph N. Malphrus, Mayor
Josephine Boyles
Bill Fishburne
Libby Malphrus
Tommy Rhodes

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Dennis E. Averkin, Town Administrator
Aaron Rucker, AICP, Director of Planning & Community Development

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Introduction

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive plan is designed to guide all aspects of future growth and development in a community. The Plan Ridgeland Comprehensive Plan provides a long-range strategic direction to elected officials, appointed boards, and staff as they develop and implement projects, programs, and policies to move the Town forward in the coming years.

PLAN PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundational planning document for the Town of Ridgeland, guiding all aspects of growth and development within the Town's jurisdiction. The Plan provides long-range strategic direction to elected and appointed officials and administrative staff as they develop and implement projects, programs, and policies that affect the future of Town.

The Plan is considered a "living" document that establishes a set of guidelines and procedures for implementing the goals and strategies in order to achieve the vision for the community. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan is intended for use by government agencies, residents, private developers, property owners, and private organizations concerned with planning the Town's future growth, development, and preservation.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

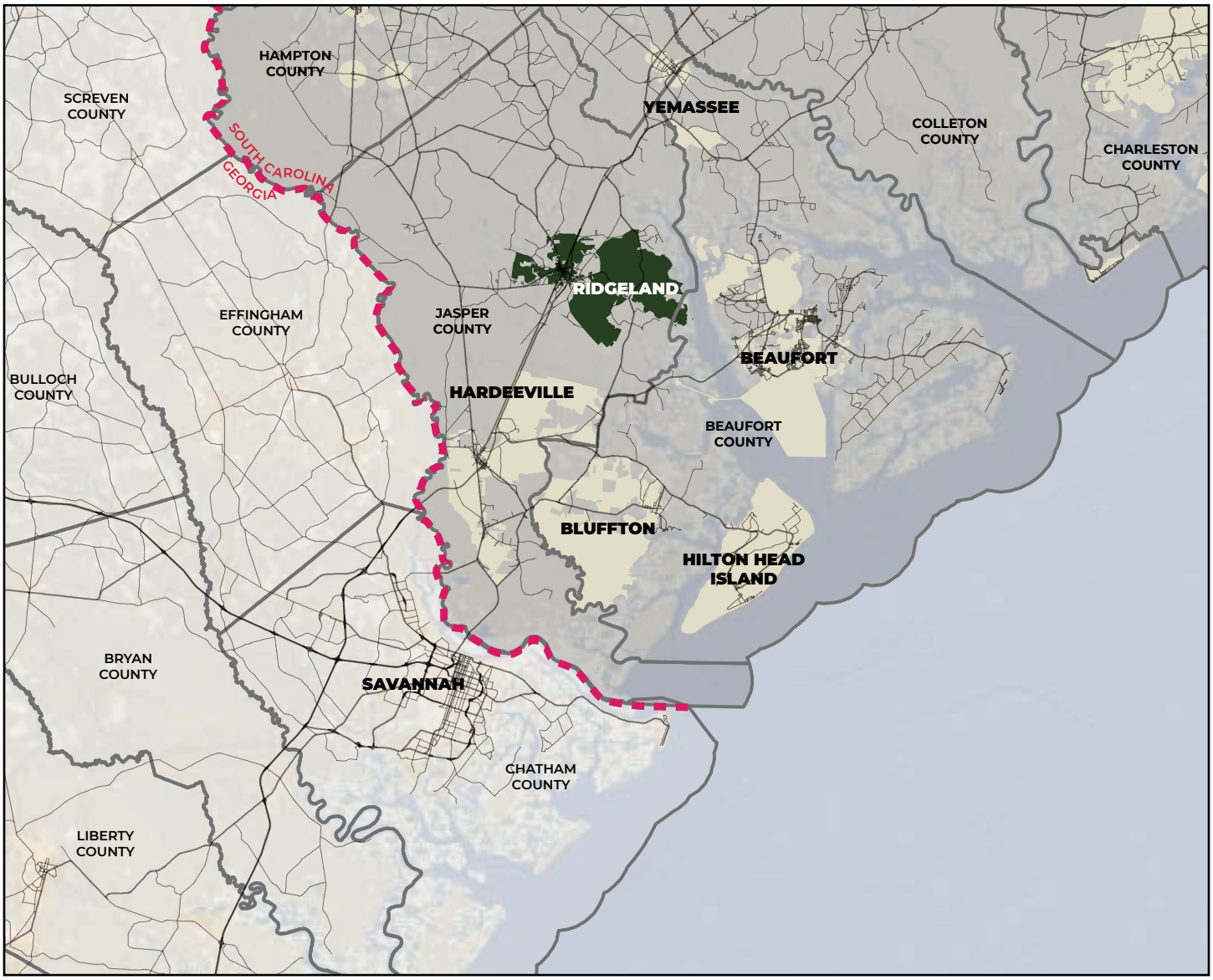
In 1994, the South Carolina Legislature passed the South Carolina Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act that granted authority to prepare and maintain comprehensive plans to local governments as set forth in South Carolina Code of Laws Title 6, Chapter 29.

While the Plan is not a legally binding "ordinance" in the degree of authority conferred by the adopted plan, it does inform land use and development ordinances and regulations. The Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act requires a Comprehensive Plan to be updated every ten years. This Act also requires a review of the Comprehensive Plan at least once every five years to determine if there are any changes needed. However, the Comprehensive Plan may be updated as often as necessary.

THE PLANNING AREA

The Ridgeland Comprehensive Plan is pertinent to the municipal boundaries of the Town of Ridgeland. Outside the Town limits, Jasper County has the authority to plan for and regulate development. However, in order to consider regional influences and other external factors which have a significant impact on the Town, some resources on the Town's boundaries were also considered. It's intended for the Town to closely coordinate planning matters with the County in the future. The Planning Area map is presented on page 3.





Ridgeland

Surrounding Municipalities

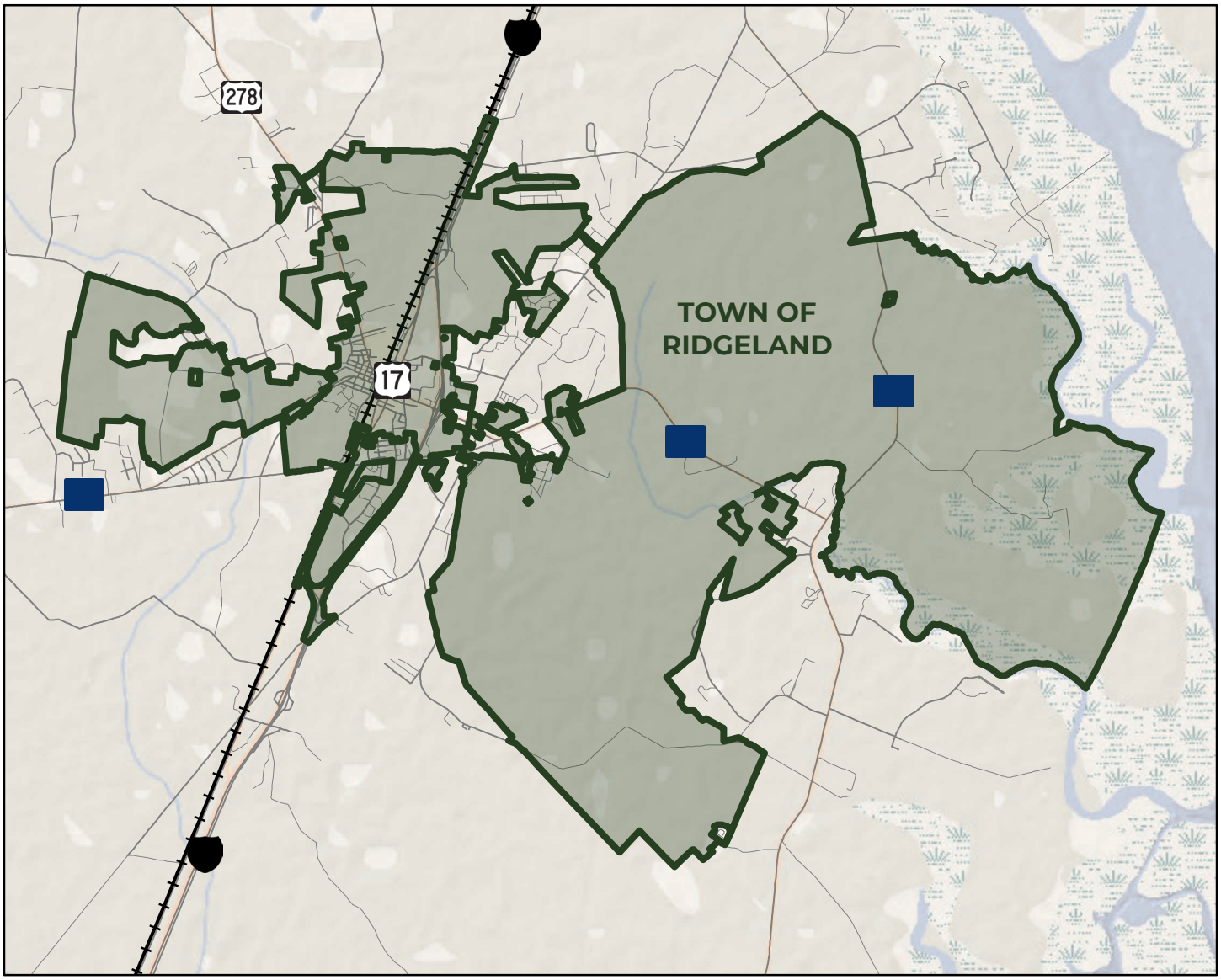
County Boundaries

South Carolina

State Boundary

Major Highways

Water Bodies



Ridgeland

Major Highways

Other Roads

Railroads

Water Bodies

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan should be used as a guide for public sector and private sector decision-making concerning the future growth and land use development in Ridgeland. Though the Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document, it does guide the Town's volunteer boards and elected officials in making decisions about the future. The Comprehensive Plan is primarily used in these areas:

A comprehensive plan establishes a "**blueprint**" for the future of the Town. While local governments must have a comprehensive plan in South Carolina, the comprehensive plan is not a zoning or regulatory document.

1. Annual Budgeting & Planning

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance during the annual budgeting process; the review of proposed capital improvements; and the consideration of utility and growth policies, transportation improvements, and other major decisions the Town may face.



2. Zoning Map & Ordinance Changes

The Town's elected and appointed officials should use the Plan to provide consistency in the evaluation of development proposals or policy changes to achieve the vision of the Plan. Rezonings and zoning ordinance amendments should be considered in relation to the Comprehensive Plan, and more specifically, the Growth Map / Future Land Use Map. The Town may also consider proactively amending the zoning map or the zoning ordinance in order to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.



3. Regional Planning & Private Development

The Plan should assist coordination efforts with other government agencies and partners on issues of mutual interest. For the private sector, the Plan provides guidance to landowners and developers on the Town's expectations for future growth.



PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan was developed over a process of about one year. The project kicked off in July of 2024, with a joint workshop of the Planning Commission and Town Council. During the background research phase, a series of data analysis was conducted, and the public was engaged through listening sessions, an online community survey, and a public kickoff meeting. The public input during this portion of the process is shared in the next section of the Plan.

After reviewing the background research, considering public input, and conducting workshops with the Planning Commission, the Plan vision and goals were developed. These were combined to develop a draft Plan at the beginning of 2025. After the Planning Commission reviewed the Comprehensive Plan, it was shared with the public at a public meeting on April 16, 2025. Approximately 60 members of the public attended the meeting to ask questions and share input on the draft Plan. The document was refined based on public feedback and then it underwent the adoption process.

The Planning Commission reviewed the changes the draft and recommended adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on May 12, 2025. The draft Plan and the Planning Commission's Resolution to recommend adoption were sent to the Town Council for a first reading and public hearing on June 5, 2025. On June 18, 2025, the Town Council held a Second Reading and adopted the updated Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance.





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

During the planning process, the public was engaged through two days of in-person listening sessions, a public drop-in meeting at the beginning of the process, a month long online community survey, an updated project website, and a public meeting at the end of the process. The adoption process also included public hearings. This section provides a summary of the input received through these events.

LISTENING SESSIONS

Two days of in-person, small group interviews, or listening sessions, were conducted at Town Hall on October 10 and 11, 2024. Over 50 stakeholders were invited to participate and 33 ended up doing so. We spoke with Town staff, utilities & infrastructure providers, environmental organizations, school system representatives, non-profit organizers, land owners, developers, engineers, County staff, and economic development representatives. The following section provides a summary of what we heard through these small group interviews.

STRENGTHS

- Low ISO rating
- Great police protection
- Own water and sewer system
- Lots of potential / natural growth
- Good bones downtown with improvements occurring
- Great broadband system (multiple providers)
- Tight knit community
- School doing $7M addition to athletic facility at Ridgeland Schools, including community gym and other community services / amenities
- Library being redeveloped and parks planned in Town
- Rural feel / history and heritage
- Polaris is a great school – lots of opportunities for kids

WEAKNESSES

- Police and Fire are understaffed
- Poor workforce
- School System (mixed opinions, but mostly bad)
- Need more activities and entertainment
- Vagrants / people hanging around making residents feel unsafe
- Seems like people work in silos / don't communicate
- Rivalry with neighbors has negative impacts
- Complicated form-based code
- Difficult / unpredictable development approval process
- Traffic – closely tied to issues on I-95

MAJOR CHANGES

- Old residents have died off, new transient population
- Influx of Hispanic residents and businesses
- New residents are start-up families / more affordable part of the region
- Ebbs and flows of downtown
- Changes in leadership; seems to be more desire for planned growth

OPPORTUNITIES

- Trade Schools / Education / Community College
- Learn off Bluffton's Growth (Ridgeland today is Bluffton in late 90s / early 2000s)
- Downtown improvements
- Clean up motels and get a nicer hotel
- Utility tax credits and grants through Palmetto Link and PRTC (to help with economic development)
- Industrial growth (small manufacturing, distribution, warehousing)
- Infill development and donut hole annexations
- Outdoor recreation / eco-tourism / cultural heritage
- Housing (of various types) planned for Town and surrounding areas
- County directing growth to municipalities

DESIRES

- Want a nice grocery store and similar retail
- May need to rezone properties / right-size opportunities
- Define an urban growth boundary
- Direct growth where infrastructure exists
- Elevate the things that make Ridgeland unique
- Protect marshland migration and flood areas
- Establish a clear vision / determine who Ridgeland wants to be
- Work with neighbors / regional partners
- More crosswalks and improved traffic signals
- More recreational programming and facilities
- Downtown Merchants Organization
- Live-work units near downtown
- Continued growth and improvement downtown (more restaurants, beautification, etc.)
- Clean up dilapidated structures and other eyesores
- Improve communication with neighbors / participate in regional planning
- More greenways / trails connecting things
- Need to prioritize infrastructure and determine best way to fund improvements

PUBLIC DROP-IN MEETING

On Monday, October 28th, a public drop-in meeting was held at Blue Heron @ Lakeside. The public meeting was advertised on the Town and project websites, as well as on the Town's social media pages and via flyers posted throughout Town. In total, about 15 participants attended the drop-in meeting, which was held between 2:00 and 4:00 pm, and then again from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Attendees were able to view a small amount of background information, ask questions and comments about the project, share their favorite things about the Town, and identify any big ideas they'd like to see in RIdgeland. A computer was also made available for those interested in taking the community survey.

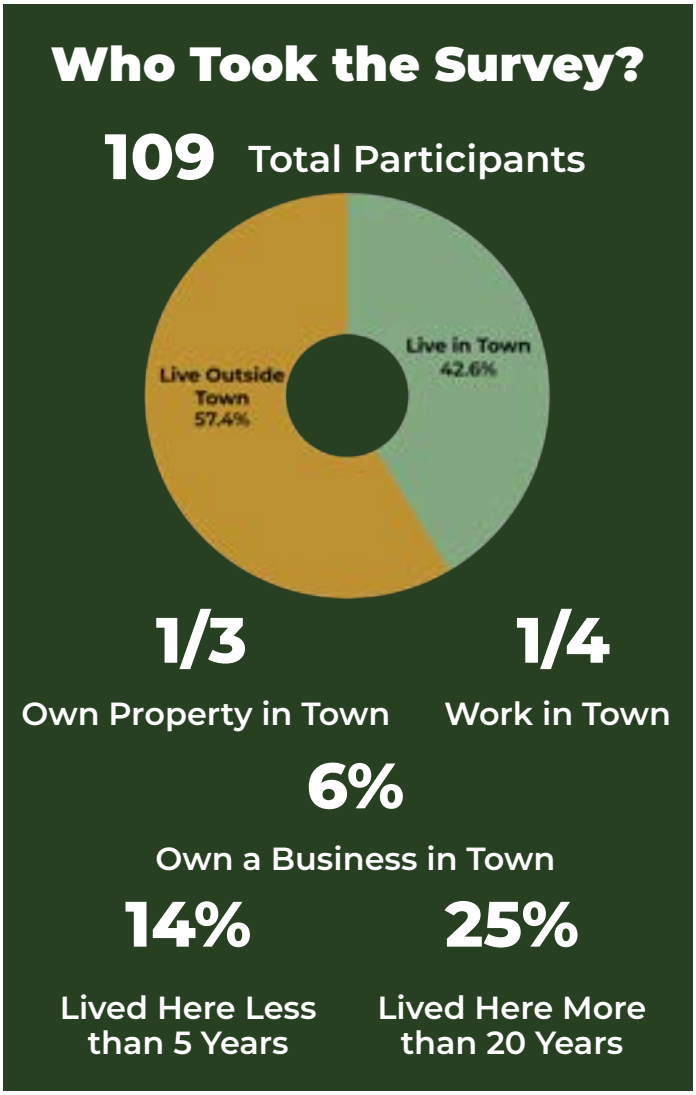
Attendees identified Main Street, the gopher hill tortoise statue, and country roads / rural areas as their favorite aspects of Ridgeland. Big ideas shared include establishing growth boundaries, engaging in regional planning, improving downtown, maintaining the rural feel, and leveraging cultural and eco-tourism as a major form of economic development.

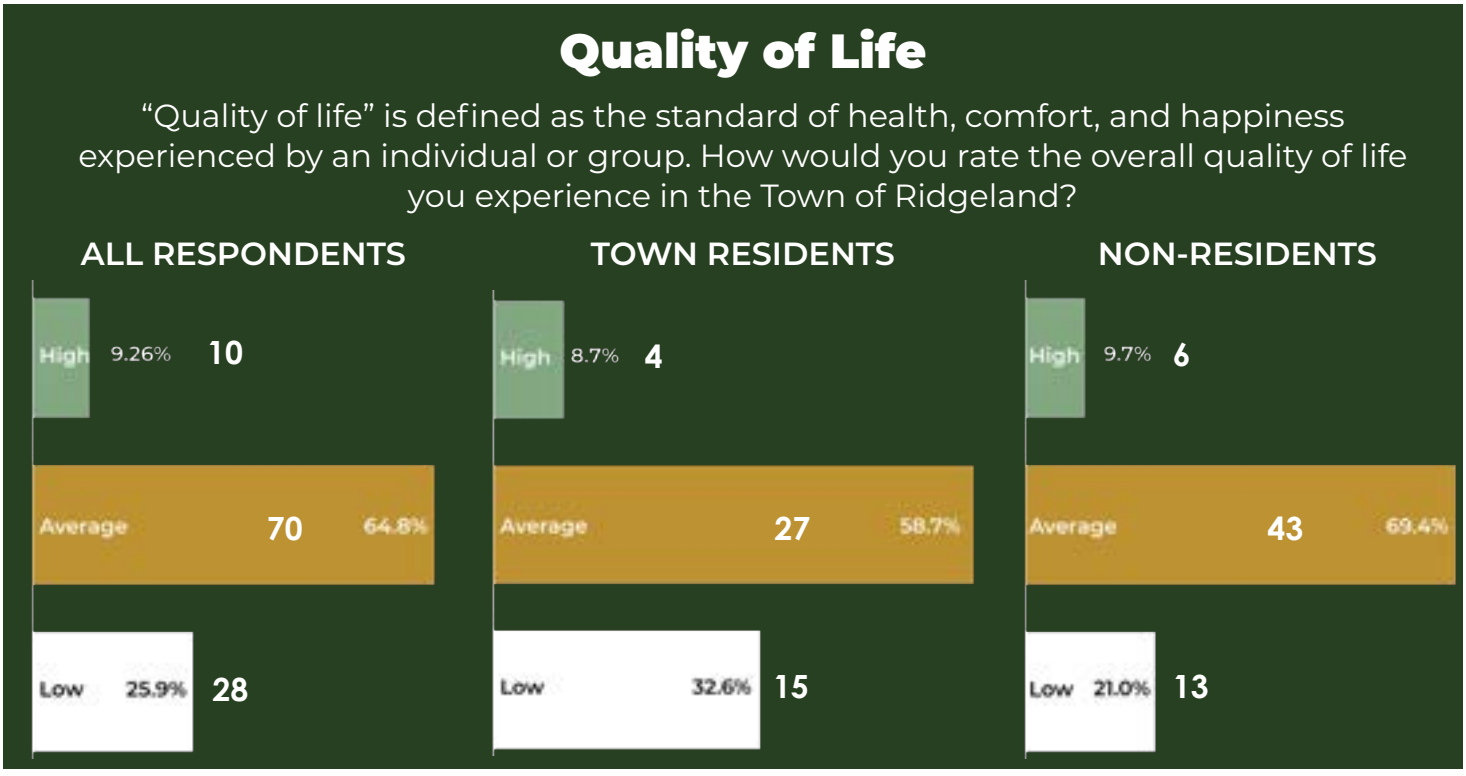


COMMUNITY SURVEY

A community survey was made available online from October 15 to November 15. It was advertised on the Town's website, on the project website, and on the Town's social media pages. Flyers advertising the community survey were posted throughout Town, including in downtown businesses and at Town Hall. The survey and flyers were made available in both English and Spanish. In total, 109 participants took the community survey. No one participated in the Spanish survey. The results are summarized here.

The community survey is one piece of information that helps illustrate major issues and assets within a community. Given the low participation rate by Town residents (46 of the 109 respondents identified as Town residents), these results should be considered carefully. As illustrated in the following pages, there was not overwhelming support or concern for the topics presented in the survey. However, these results can help to identify the top concerns and visions for the future of Ridgeland. Both the total percent and number of responses are listed in the graphics.





Top Values

What do you value most about Ridgeland?

ALL RESPONDENTS	TOWN RESIDENTS	NON-RESIDENTS
#1 Nature & Open Space	#1 Nature & Open Space	#1 Nature & Open Space
#2 Sense of Community	#2 Proximity to Other Places	#2 Sense of Community
#3 Proximity to Other Places	#3 Sense of Community	#3 Proximity to Other Places
#4 Housing Affordability	#4 Housing Affordability	#4 Housing Affordability
#5 Downtown / Businesses	#5 Historic & Cultural Resources	#5 Downtown / Businesses

Concerns

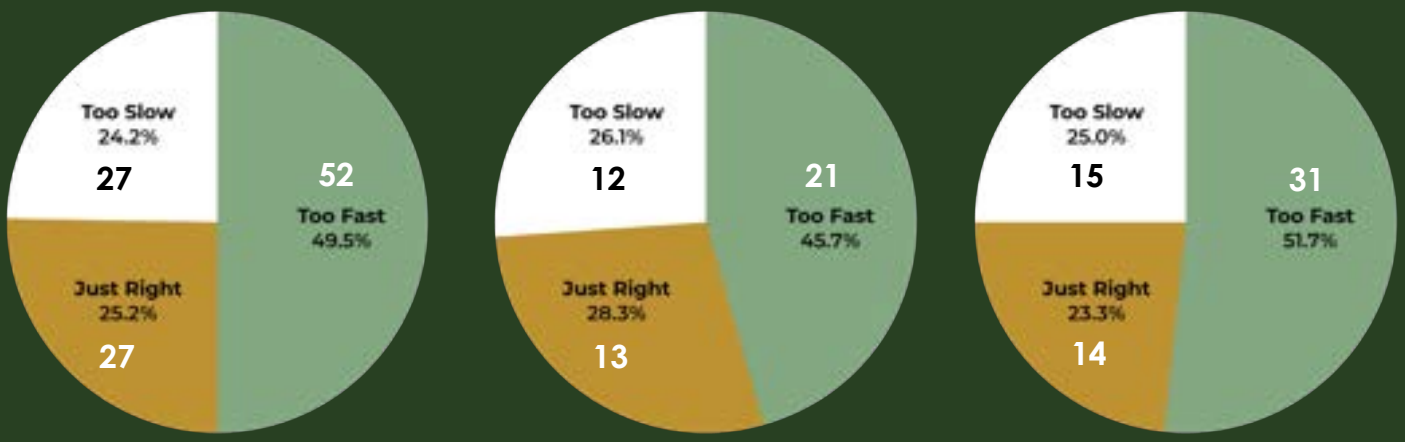
What issues are of concern to you today?

ALL RESPONDENTS	TOWN RESIDENTS	NON-RESIDENTS
#1 Roads	#1 Roads	#1 Growth & Development
#2 Growth & Development	#2 Growth & Development	#2 Roads
#3 Schools / Education	#3 Schools / Education	#3 Schools / Education
#4 Traffic	#4 Traffic	#4 Traffic
#5 Appearance	#5 Appearance	#5 Housing

The top values were pretty similar between the Town residents and non-residents who participated in the community survey. Across the board, nature and open space was the top value identified by survey respondents. This was followed by sense of community, proximity to other places, and housing affordability. Town residents value their proximity to other places slightly more than their sense of community (while non-residents have the opposite preference). The fifth top value identified by Town residents was historic and cultural resources; as compared to downtown / local businesses identified by non-residents. The top four concerns identified by Town residents and non-residents were the same; though residents were slightly more concerned with roads while non-residents were slightly more concerned with growth and development. As a fifth concern, Town residents identified appearance while non-residents identified housing.

Pace of Growth

What is your perception of the recent pace of growth in the Ridgeland area?



Traffic

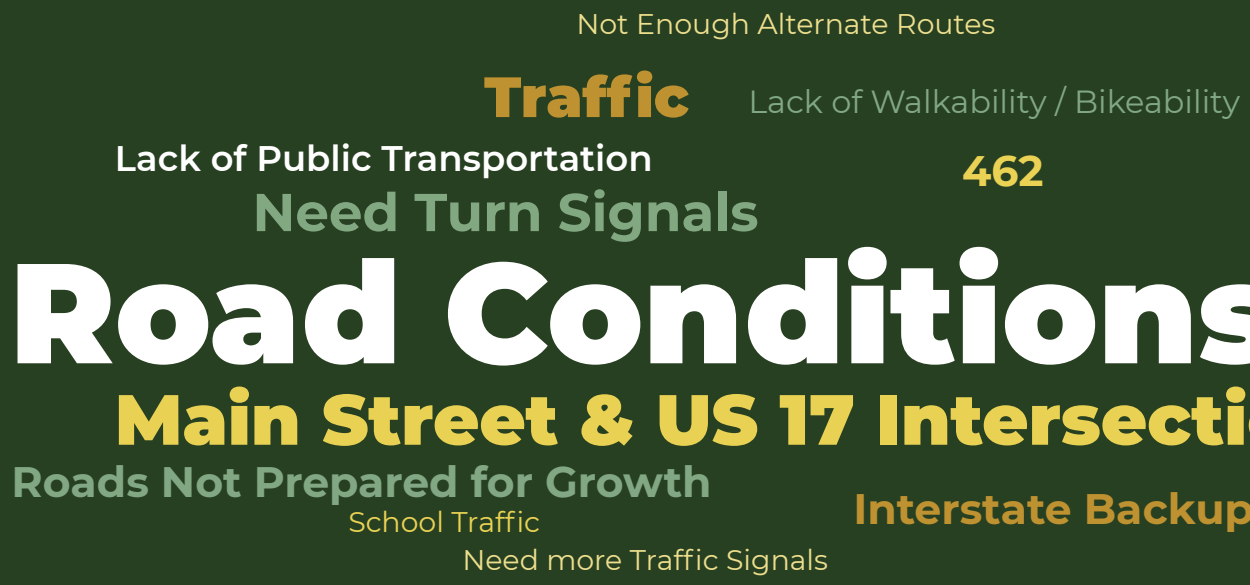
Which of the following best describes your perception of traffic in the Town?



Across the board, perceptions on the recent pace of growth were very split, with about half of respondents feeling the Town is growing too quickly, and the other half evenly divided between thinking the Town is growing at the right rate or too slowly. Comments were submitted related to a support for growth (particularly commercial growth) with a related concern for infrastructure, schools, and maintaining small town feel. Some comments discouraged growth or emphasized the need to plan for development in an appropriate manner. Opinions on traffic were evenly split, with about one-third of respondents having no traffic problems, about 42% thinking traffic will be an issue with growth, and 20% thinking traffic is a mess today.

Transportation Issues

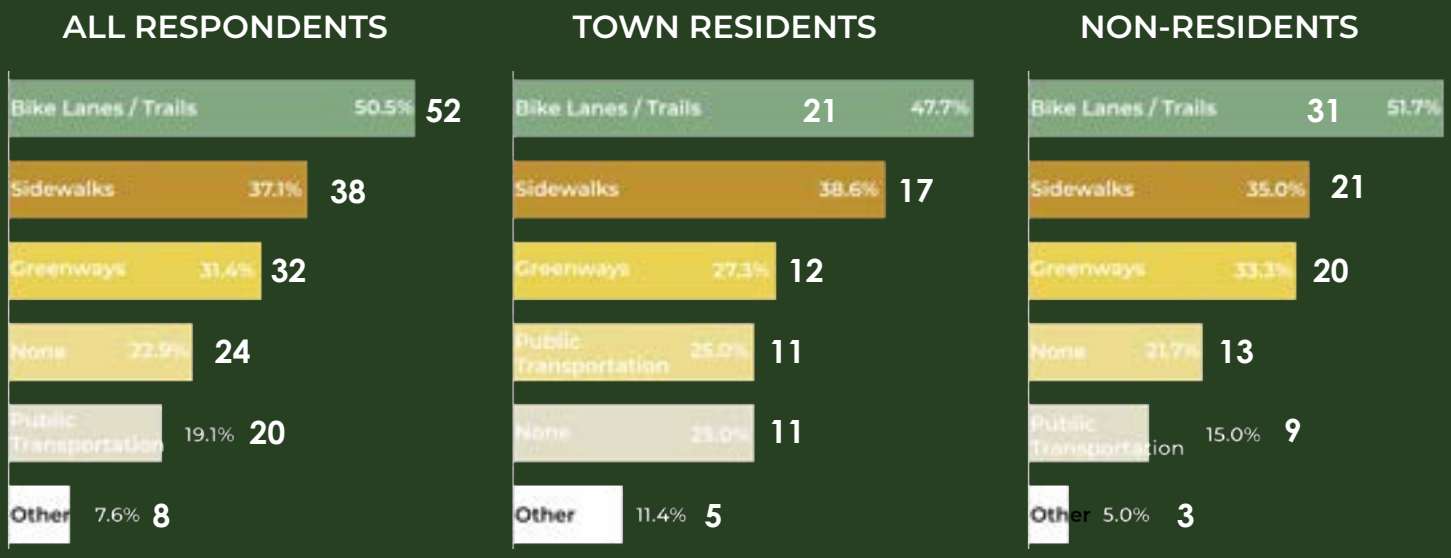
What are the top three transportation-related issues that currently affect you?



The word web above illustrates the transportation issues cited by 5 or more survey respondents. The largest words indicate the most frequent comments, and the top issue was the quality / condition of roads, with 46 respondents writing about pot holes and poorly paved roads. A number of concerns were also cited related to specific road segments. There wasn't significant support for improved access to transportation, though about half of respondents would like to see more bike lanes and trails and about one-third would like to see sidewalks.

Transportation Access

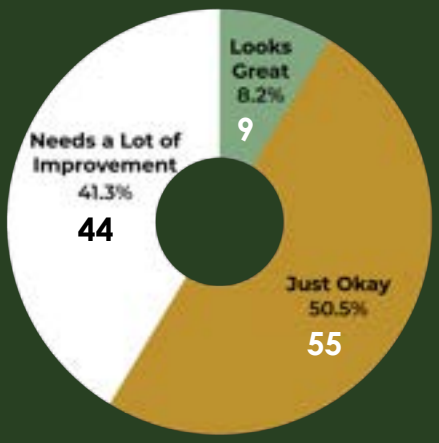
Would you like to have better access to any of the following types of transportation? (check all that apply)



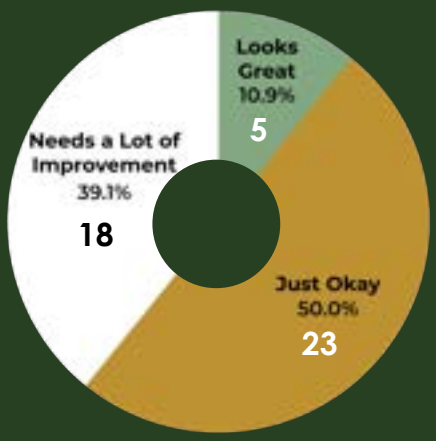
Aesthetic Appearance

What is your perception of the Town's aesthetic appearance (curb appeal)?

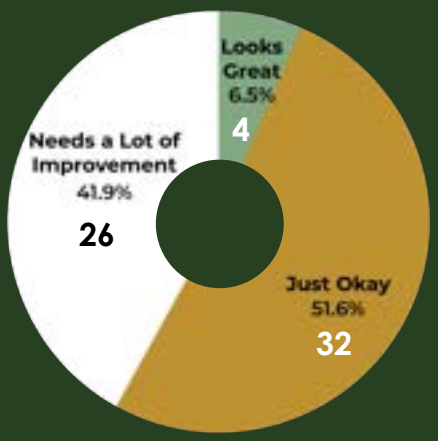
ALL RESPONDENTS



TOWN RESIDENTS



NON-RESIDENTS



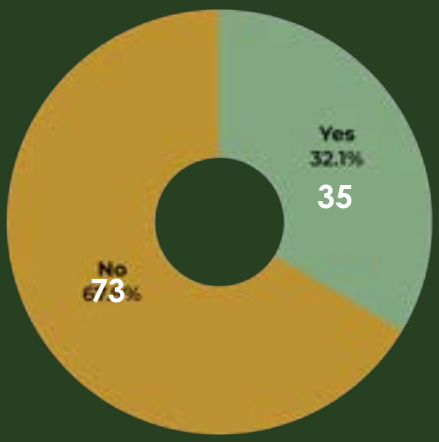
Very few people who participated in the survey feel that the Town looks great aesthetically. About half of respondents think that the Town looks "just okay" and around 40% think it needs a lot of improvement. When asked about specific improvements, many requested that dilapidated structures be removed, sidewalks and roadways cleaned up, code enforcement strengthened, and general beautification efforts made.

Only about one-third of survey respondents and one-quarter of Town resident respondents were satisfied with the current parks and recreation facilities available to them. The following page provides more information on this.

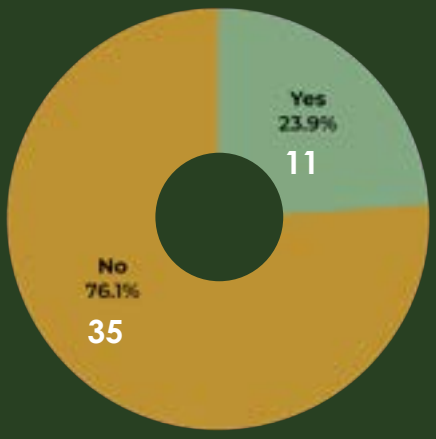
Recreation

Are you satisfied with the recreation facilities, parks, and open spaces available to you?

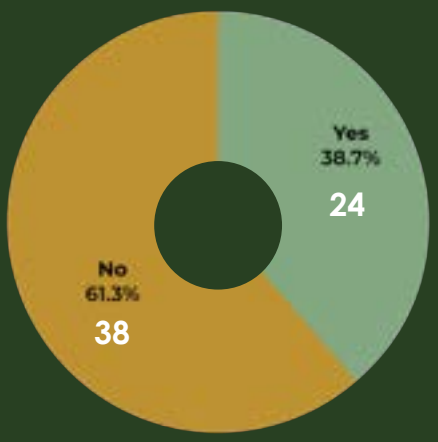
ALL RESPONDENTS



TOWN RESIDENTS



NON-RESIDENTS



Recreation

Are there any new or improved types of recreation facilities, parks, or open space that you would like to see in the Town?

YMCA

Clean Up Parks

Splash Pad

Pickleball Courts

Dog Park

Trails

Playground

Improve Park Safety

Recreation Center

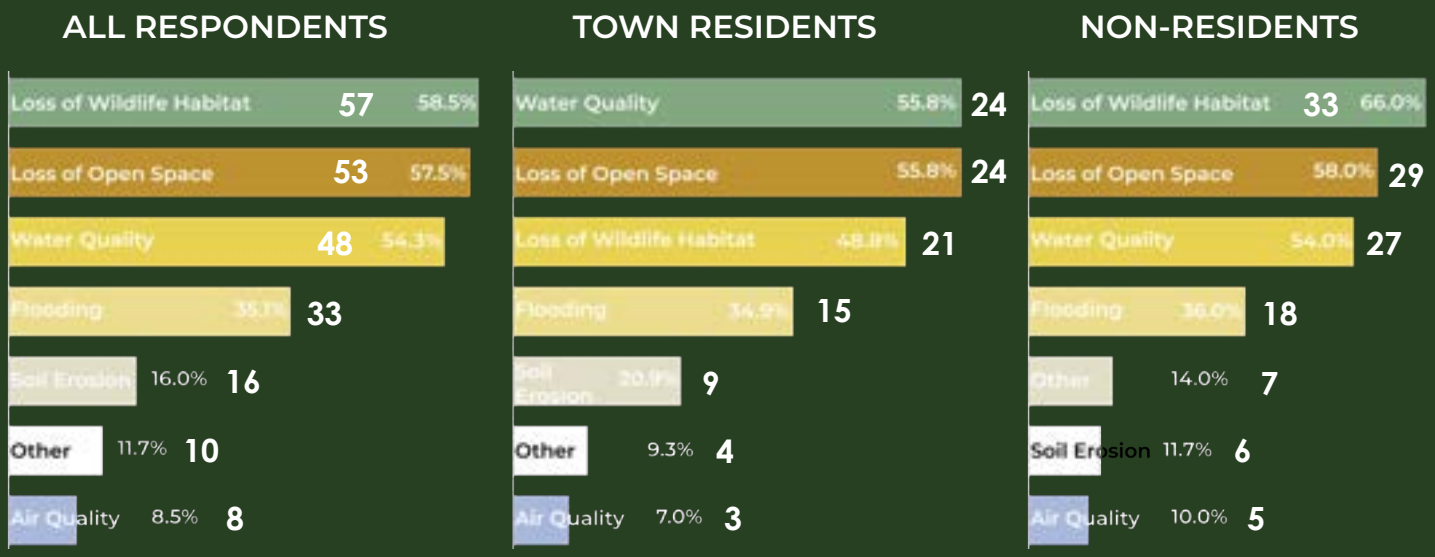
Pool

More Parks and Open Spaces

Not all survey participants were interested in seeing additional recreation facilities, though more than 70 respondents did request these. The number one request (made by about 20 respondents) was to improve safety at existing parks (particularly as it relates to the removing homeless individuals from parks). Survey respondents were not significantly concerned about environment-related issues but around 60% were concerned about the loss of wildlife habitat and open space. Town resident respondents were most concerned with water quality

Environmental Issues

Do you have any concerns about the following environmental-related issues? (check all that apply)



Town Services

Please tell us your level of satisfaction with the following general services provided by the Town.



When asked to rate their satisfaction with the various services provided by the Town of Ridgeland, respondents expressed the highest level of satisfaction with fire protection, police protection, public water services, and public sewer services. Police and fire protection typically rank highly on these questions, as many people appreciate the work of emergency services personnel. Many of the general services, including general administration, planning and zoning, and code enforcement did not score well on this question; though these types of services are generally not at the top of mind for the general public. The Town is aware of code enforcement issues and has recently begun addressing these. Parks and recreation is the main service which typically scores well but did not rank well in Ridgeland. This is likely due to the lack of a formal parks and recreation department and difficulty with homeless individuals in public areas. Street maintenance also scored very poorly.



Vision

Thinking about the next five to ten years, please describe your vision for the future of the Town. What should change? What should stay the same?



When asked to describe their vision for the future of Ridgeland, there were a broad range of responses. About 15 respondents focused on opportunities to increase employment, improve the economy, and attract business growth. There were a number of related interests in more commercial activity, particularly for new retail, restaurant, and grocery options.

Many respondents also wanted to see a focus on improving infrastructure, particularly as new development is proposed. While many respondents cited infrastructure broadly, others focused explicitly on roadway infrastructure.

Improvements to downtown, including new businesses, increased walkability, improved appearance, and related changes were described by respondents. There was also a good amount of support for growth and new development, so long as it was done in a "smart" way. Respondents were generally interested in there being more things to do in Ridgeland, while improving existing resources and ensuring the Town adequately plans for the future.

Our Vision for the Future

SECTION 2: OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

It's important to develop a sound, clearly articulated vision that is representative of a variety of interests, setting the direction of the plan. Through working with the Planning Commission, meeting with Town Council, and public outreach efforts a vision and related implementation strategies were developed for Ridgeland.

VISION

The vision for the Town of Ridgeland was developed through a combination of background research, community engagement, and meetings with elected and appointed officials. The vision establishes the desired future for Ridgeland.

It is intended to guide the Town in all decisions, directing leaders toward a future position in which the Town would like to be. Ridgeland's vision for the future is explained below:

Ridgeland strives to maintain our small-town charm while growing in a manner that respects our traditional development patterns and our valuable cultural and natural resources.

We seek to strengthen our downtown, our economy, and our community identity.

Moving forward, we will work with our neighbors to ensure that Ridgeland builds off and helps improve the lowcountry as a whole.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

While the vision statement sets a broad direction for how the Town would like to be situated in the future, the guiding principles and implementation strategies help it get there. Throughout the planning process, a set of emerging themes were identified as primary issues or areas of focus in which the Town would like to improve itself.

These emerging themes were further analyzed and developed into guiding principles. The guiding principles for Ridgeland's Comprehensive Plan are shown below. For each guiding principle, a series of recommended implementation actions were developed. These are detailed in the following section.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1 Growth Management

Facilitate high-quality growth that is both compatible with the Town's traditional development pattern and respectful of the region's unique cultural and natural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 Downtown

Continue to support the redevelopment and improvement of downtown, strengthening its place in the region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3 Historic, Cultural, Natural Resources

Promote and protect the unique historic, cultural, and natural resources that exist in Ridgeland.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4 Economic Development

Continue to identify strategies to improve employment, wages, and industry within Ridgeland.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 Coordination

Work with our neighbors to improve the greater region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6 Appearance

Prioritize improving the overall appearance and reputation of the Town of Ridgeland.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

Growth Management

DIRECT GROWTH

- Utilize the Growth Map / Future Land Use Map to guide and direct development in a manner that is consistent with the Town's vision.
- Identify and target annexation priorities and utilize the Growth Map as a tool to consider future annexation requests. Consider future water and sewer infrastructure, as well as emergency service provision and environmental features as a guidepost for growth boundaries.
- Support infill development by reducing barriers on properties surrounded by existing development. Consider marketing infill development opportunities, with particular emphasis on properties with potential to provide commercial retail amenities or foster downtown activity.
- Work closely with the County to annex donut holes that are surrounded by the Town.

MANAGE GROWTH

- Where a proposed major development would generate demand beyond existing government services or infrastructure, the Town should consider requiring a development agreement in which the applicant partners with the Town to construct / fund the necessary improvements (building a fire station, emergency medical service station, police substation, water / sewer improvement, etc.).
- Regularly assess the Town's utility infrastructure and implement necessary improvements. Examine opportunities to expand capacity of the wastewater treatment plan, as necessary.
- Work closely with property owners to determine the likely future potential buildout of Planned Developments / Special Districts.
- Coordinate with SCDOT and Jasper County to implement needed transportation improvements.
- Establish impact fees, which could help pay for increased service and infrastructure demand.
- After adopting this Comprehensive Plan, complete an assessment of the Town's development regulations and review procedures. Modify to better meet the vision of the Town, and update inaccurate or outdated sections.
- Following the adoption of this Plan, develop a Capital Improvement Plan to more specifically identify needed project funding and improvement timelines.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 Downtown

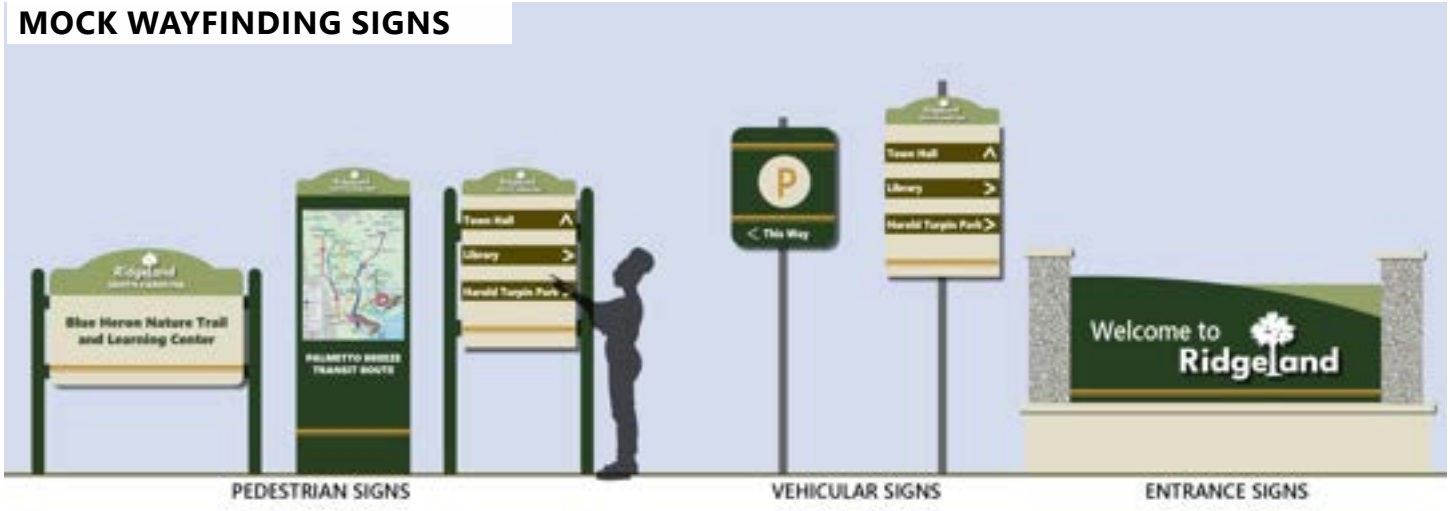
INCREASE DEVELOPMENT DOWNTOWN

- Consider working with property owners to proactively rezone all of downtown to T4 to increase densities and permit a mix of residential and commercial uses downtown. Similarly, consider increasing the number of T5-zoned properties downtown. See map on Page 111.
- Consider developing a downtown master plan which identifies specific improvements to downtown, including critical infill projects. Work with private enterprises to implement the plan.
- Encourage the redevelopment and improvement of properties downtown.

IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF DOWNTOWN

- Develop wayfinding signage that is unique to downtown but matches the character of Ridgeland.
- Examine potential improvement needs on public spaces downtown, including sidewalks, parks, and green spaces.
- Consider offering a building façade grant for properties downtown.
- Consider increasing beautification efforts, including seasonal decorations, banners, and flowers.
- Focus efforts on improving and removing, when necessary, blighted properties.
- Establish a downtown overlay within the Town's Ordinance to regulate design, architectural standards, sign regulations, and similar requirements downtown.

MOCK WAYFINDING SIGNS



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 Downtown

INCREASE ACTIVITY DOWNTOWN

- Examine the feasibility of establishing a downtown management organization. This organization would be a separate entity, but may rely on support from Town Administration. The organization would be responsible for coordinating events, appearances, and similar downtown-focused programming amongst business and property owners.
- Identify opportunities to utilize the downtown farmers market space. If a farmers market is no longer feasible, consider alternative uses for this space. Consider regular activation.
- Develop regular events downtown and market their presence to increase activity downtown. Consider a weekly event at the farmers market space, seasonal festivals, occasional food truck events, and similar activities.
- Work with the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCCOG), South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and Jasper County to identify opportunities to fund the development of bike lanes downtown. Consider adding bike racks in high trafficked areas.

ACTIVATION OF FARMERS MARKET SITE



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

ECO-TOURISM / HISTORICAL ASSET-BASED TOURISM

- Work to improve regional trail connections.
- Identify opportunities to tie into the East Coast Trail and the Lowcountry Revolutionary War Trail.
- Examine opportunities to include the Honey Hill Battlefield in a trail route.
- Consider opportunities to connect existing trails and pathways in Ridgeland, and connect them in a unified design and map, similar to the Spanish Moss Trail in Beaufort County.
- Promote downtown Ridgeland, Honey Hill Battlefield, the Morris Center, and other possible tourist attractions.
- Collaborate with Jasper and Beaufort Counties to expand and market tourism throughout the region.
- Promote historic preservation efforts and increase information about the benefits of preservation.
- Encourage national register recognition of eligible structures, including the Centralized Grade School, the Pratt Memorial Library, and R & M Plantation.
- Identify prime areas to support a new, chain hotel. Examine zoning and land development regulations to ensure a hotel could easily be built, and work to market this potential to hoteliers.
- Consider similar efforts that could improve hospitality amenities (hotels and restaurants) in Town.
- Work with the County and other partners on the development of a blueway along the Coosawhatchie River and its tributaries.

POTENTIAL BLUEWAY / GREENWAY TRAIL

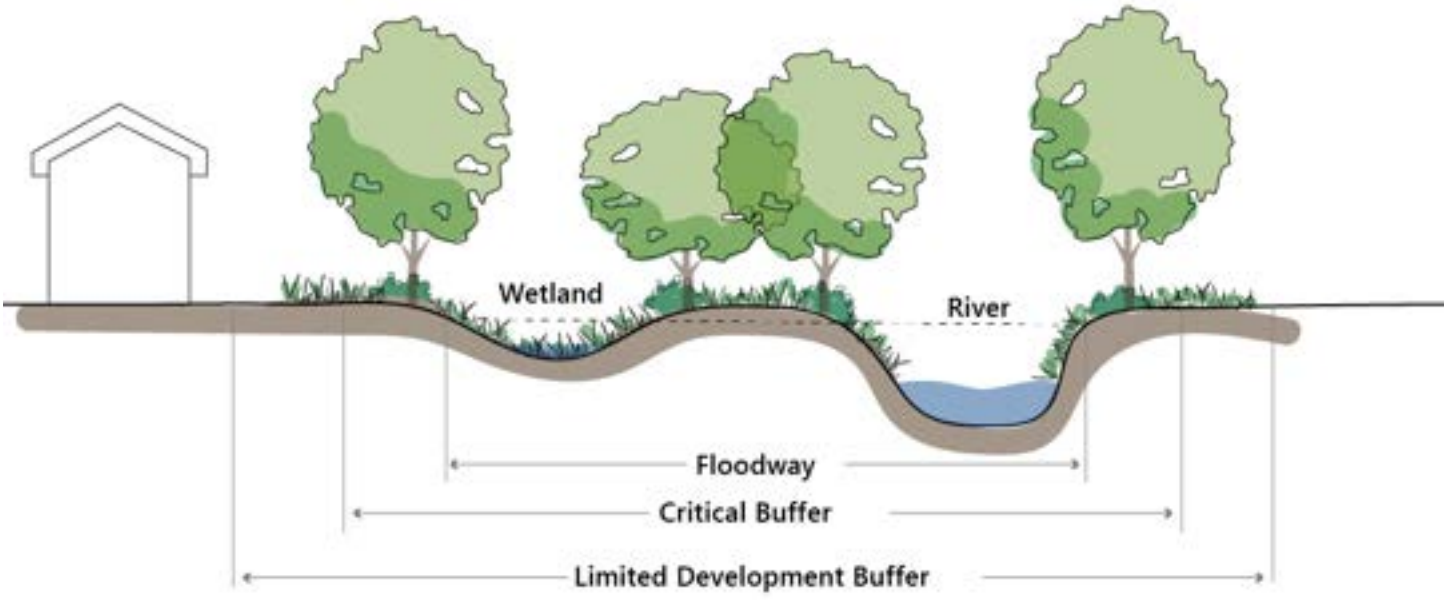


GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

PROTECT WETLANDS AND SENSITIVE AREAS

- Consider restricting development within floodplains, wetlands, and similar sensitive areas. Coordinate with land conservation organizations to encourage fee simple purchases and conservation easements. Establish critical buffer areas.
- Consider incorporating Jasper County's and / or Beaufort County's Stormwater Management Master Plan into the Town's Ordinance.
- Examine zoning and consider rezoning particularly sensitive areas to T1.
- In order to protect tree canopy, consider strengthening the Town's Tree Protection Ordinance.
- Examine the potential for establishing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program within the Town. This would require seeking outside assistance for establishing and administering.
- Consider requiring new large developments to utilize permeable roadways.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4

Economic Development

WORKFORCE TRAINING

- Work with the Jasper County School District, Thomas Heyward Academy, Polaris Tech, the Technical College of the Lowcountry, Jasper County, and the South Carolina Alliance to identify potential workforce training programs that could be implemented in the region.
- Examine the feasibility and demand for a community or technical college in Ridgeland.

INDUSTRY ATTRACTION

- Work with the South Carolina Alliance and Retail Strategies to identify potential industries which could be successful in Ridgeland. Consider marketing opportunities.
- Examine zoning and land development regulations to ensure that target industries could easily be established in ideal locations. If necessary, consider rezoning and / or subdividing properties to serve target industries. When suitable land exists, market it toward potential industries.
- Consider developing a regional assessment of medical facilities and determine if there is any potential for the Town to attract and support new medical facilities.
- Pursue the marketing and support of agricultural enterprises. Potentially examine ways to coordinate with the County's farmers market and related programs.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 Coordination

REGIONAL PLANNING

- Improve communication between the Town, County, Low Country Council of Government, the Municipal Association of South Carolina, and other regional partners. Utilize these relationships to say abreast of legislative issues, land use changes, and similar development-related topics.
- Work with Jasper County to collaboratively plan for the areas around Ridgeland. Ensure the two governments are in alignment on what should happen on the Town's boundaries (annexation, etc.).
- Participate in SoLoCo and Similar Regional Partnerships so that Ridgeland can take greater advantage of regional planning efforts and projects.
- Coordinate with the County to identify lands to protect and roads to improve with the recent local conservation fund.
- Review the 2020 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Jasper County Emergency Operations Plan. Implement recommendations from these plans and ensure the Town is adequately prepare for an emergency situation, particularly as it relates to coordination between Town and County Police, Sheriff, Fire, and Administrative Departments.
- Improve coordination between Town departments. Consider establishing regular department updates at Council Meetings or joint department meetings.

LEVERAGE REGIONAL SUCCESSES TO IMPROVE RIDGELAND

- Consider building off successful projects in the region, such as Old Town Bluffton, Hardeeville's Recreation Center, and other attractors. Identify opportunities to leverage these successes.
- Improve marketing of Ridgeland's place within the Lowcountry region. Particular attention should be made to the unique aspects of Ridgeland (downtown, Honey Hill Battlefield, etc.).

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 Coordination

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE OF AIRPORT AND MILITARY IMPACTS

- Consider requiring real estate disclosures for properties impacted by the Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport and related overlay, as well as the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort Military Operation Areas and related impacts.
- Incorporate the South Carolina Airport Compatible Land Use Evaluation (CLUE) Tool and the South Carolina Aeronautics Title 55 Airport Land Use Notification Requirements Table into the Town's Ordinances. Work with Jasper County to update the Jasper County Airport Overlay to match.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6 Appearance

PUBLIC PROPERTIES

- Develop new entrance and wayfinding signage throughout Town. Ensure the signage is clear, modern, and aligns with Ridgeland's desired identity.
- Develop a Downtown Master Plan which includes beautification efforts, and implement this plan.
- Improve maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. Consider increasing the public works budget to accommodate this.
- Examine strategies to increase the appearance and safety at parks throughout Town. This may include police enforcement of loitering and similar crimes.

PRIVATE PROPERTIES

- Continue to strengthen code enforcement efforts. Consider advertising the ability for residents to report code enforcement issues.
- Use community events to clean up and improve blighted structures, streets, or properties, when applicable.
- Coordinate with private owners and legal experts on the acquisition of blighted properties.
- Coordinate with Town Police in the removal and relocation of squatters and trespassers on blighted or abandoned properties, if necessary.
- Pursue County, State, and Federal funding for the acquisition, demolition, and site remediation of blighted properties.

STRENGTHEN DESIGN STANDARDS

- Include landscaping in design guidelines.
- Revise the Town's tree preservation ordinance.
- Revise the zoning code so that signs fit the characteristics of surrounding properties and corridors.
- While revising the zoning code, carefully examine design standards to ensure they meet the needs of the community.
- Consider establishing an Architectural Review Board.

GROWTH / FUTURE LAND USE

The Growth Map / Future Land Use Map is a visual representation of how the Town would like to see land used in the future. It is intended to guide major development, land use, and zoning decisions. The Town Council and Planning Commission in particular should review the Growth / Future Land Use Map when considering any major zoning or development request.

While the Growth / Future Land Use Map should be used as a guidepost for decisions, it is not a regulatory tool like a Zoning Ordinance. This means that future development requests are not required to align with the map. However, it is recommended that this map remain an accurate depiction of the Town's future. To this end, the map should be updated regularly, especially as factors which influence the vision change. Following the adoption of this Plan, the Town's Transect Map should be reviewed to ensure it aligns with the Growth / Future Land Use Map.

FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGY

In order to develop the Growth Map / Future Land Use Map, a number of factors which impact future development were considered. This includes:

- Utility Service Areas
- Existing Land Use
- Sector Zone Map
- Regulating Plan / Transect Map
- Recently Proposed Annexations
- Recently Proposed Development
- Environmental Features
- Other Factors that Impact Development

For instance, one major component of the Growth / Future Land Use Map strategy is utility provision. Currently, the Town's water and sewer networks are concentrated in the center of the Town, with lines running northwest along US-278 to the Cypress Ridge Industrial Park.

Future Land Use & Zoning Maps

The Future Land Use Map represents the way in which the Town would like to be used in the future. It is not regulatory but a preferred direction.

The Zoning Map is a regulatory tool which establishes what is allowed on particular properties. It should reflect the direction of the Future Land Use Map.

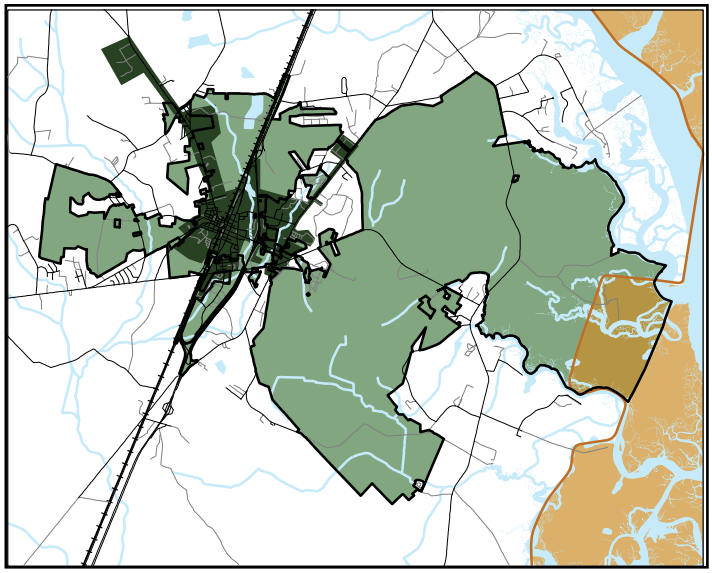
However, the Town is designated as a utility service provider for the entire municipal limits. Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority has an adopted service area that currently extends into the Town, along the most southern portion of its limits, around Hog Neck. The Town also provides police and fire protection to the Town, and in some instances, beyond the Town's limits.

In addition to service provision, there are a number of environmental factors and other limitations on development. The following pages illustrates some of those which significantly impact the future developability of the Town. Amongst them is floodplains, wetlands, sea level rise, conservation land, and existing or approved development.

Public Service Provision

When planning for development, a consideration of the Town's ability to provide public services is a major component of a land use approval. The Town is fortunate to have its own water and sewer service, as well as its own police and fire departments. The areas in which these service are currently provided, as well as where they are capable of being provided in the future is an important factor when considering future growth.

UTILITY SERVICE AREA

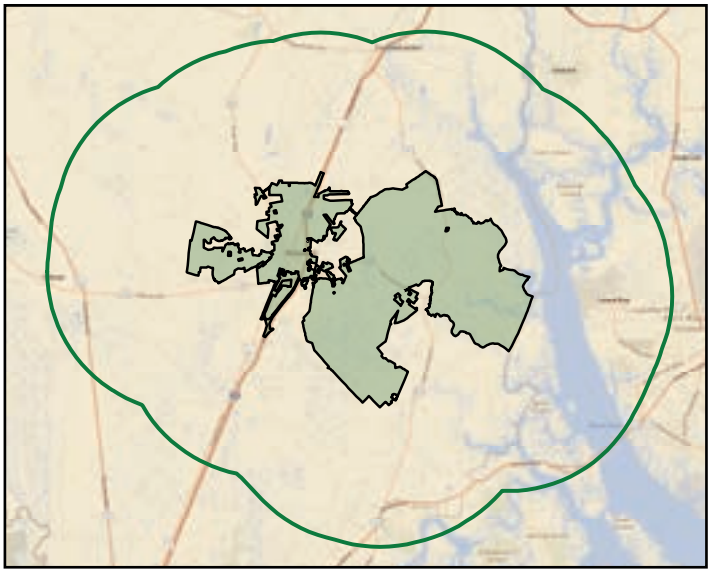


Existing Utilities

Town Utility Service Area

BJWSA Utility Service Area

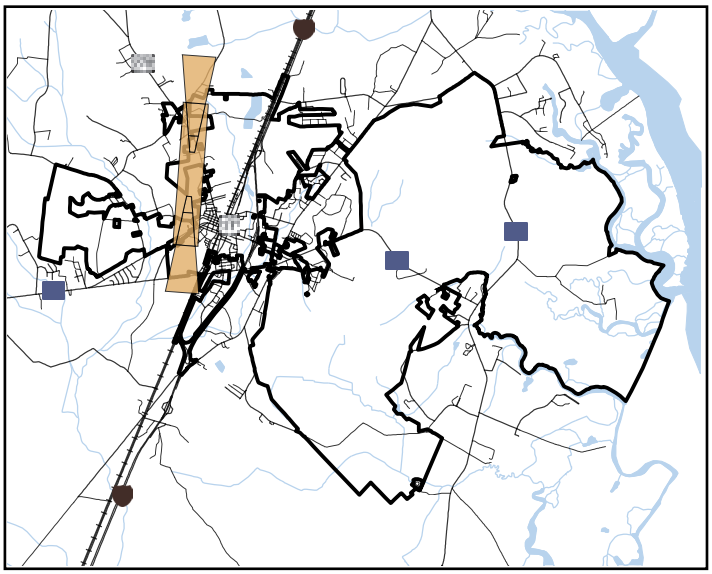
EMERGENCY SERVICE AREA



Emergency Service Area

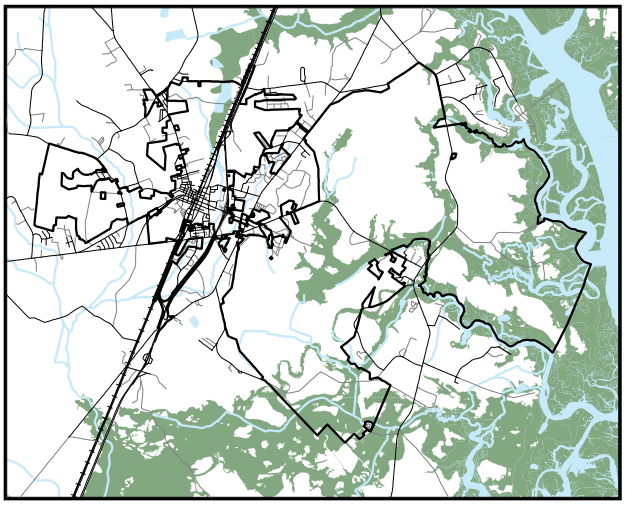
Town of Ridgeland

MUNICIPAL AIRPORT IMPACTS

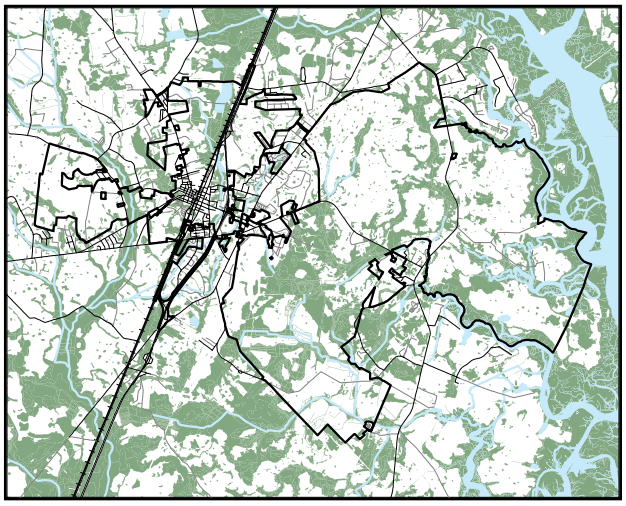


The presence of the Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport (3J1) also limits development in portions of the Town. The map to the right shows the Runway Protection Zone, Inner and Outer Approach Zones, and the Transitional Zone; all of which permit limited densities and intensities of development.

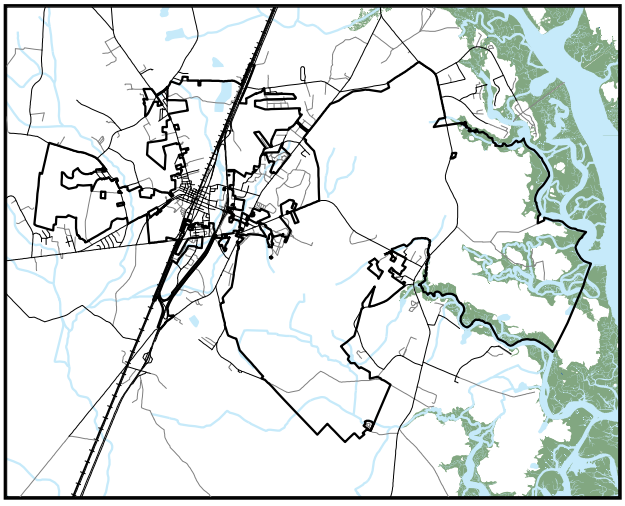
FLOODPLAINS



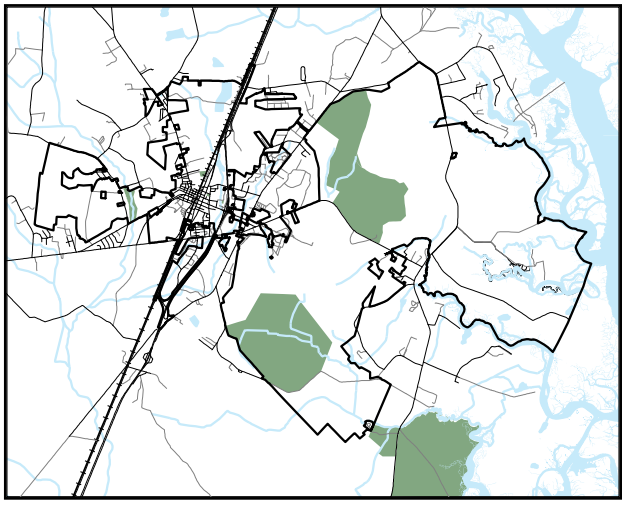
WETLANDS



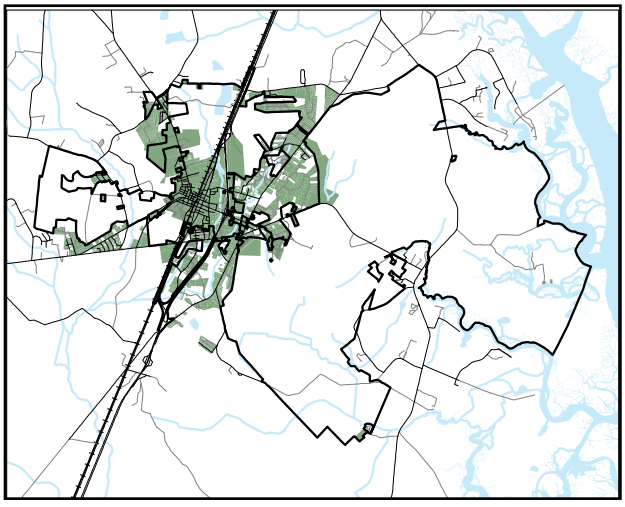
PROJECTED SEA LEVEL RISE (1 FT)



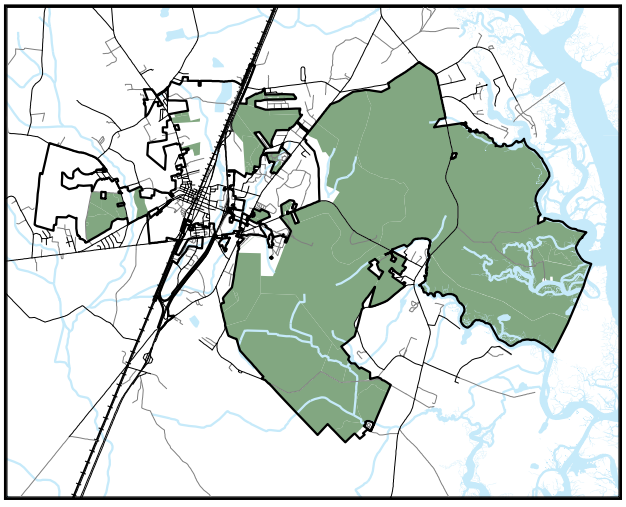
CONSERVED LAND



DEVELOPED LAND

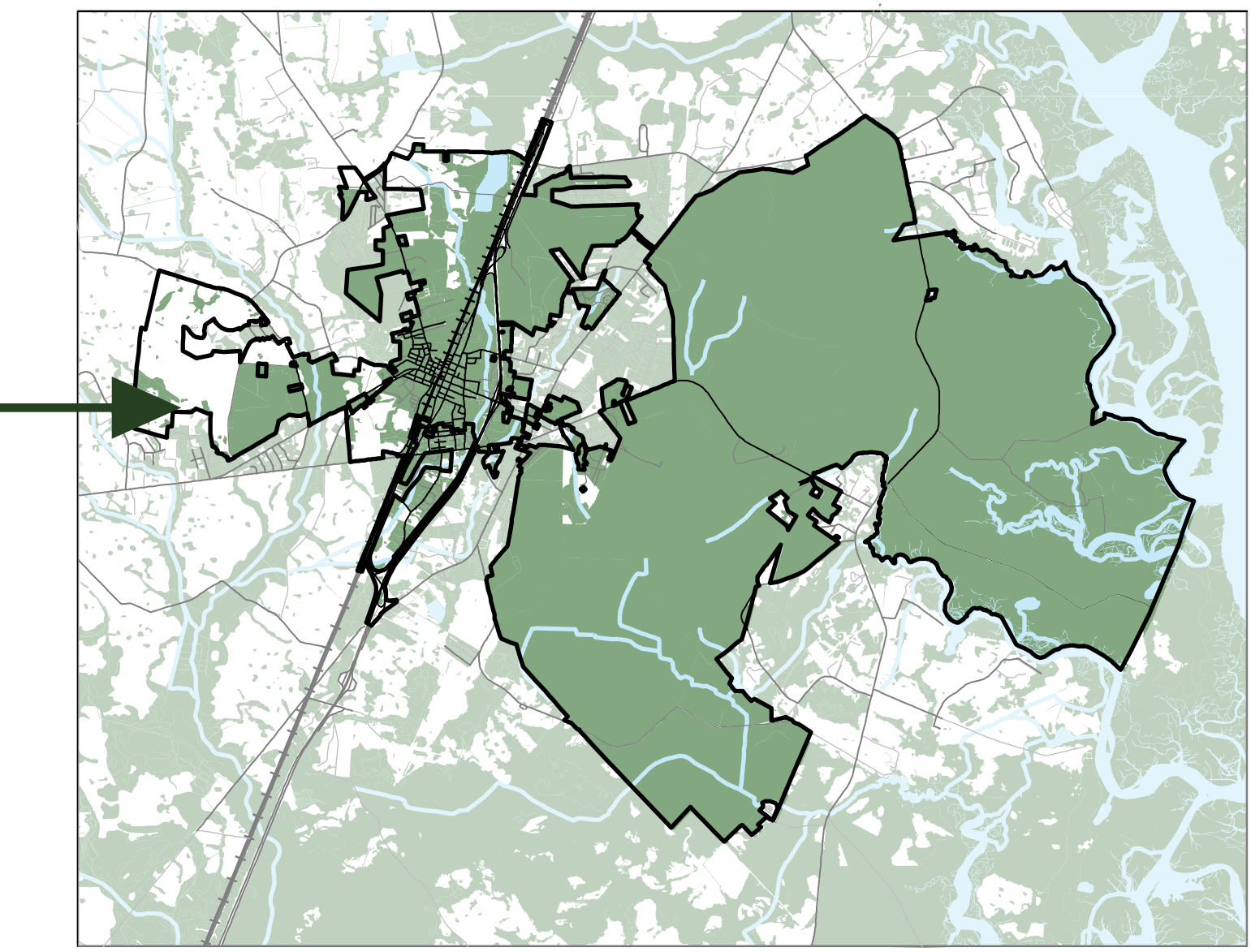


APPROVED DEVELOPMENT



Development Limitations

When considering elements which impact future development, there are a number of constraints in Ridgeland. Shown to the left, a few major factors include wetlands, floodplains, projected sea level rise, conservation land, as well as existing and approved development. In addition to those shown to the left, the Town is subject to airport overlays which limit density and building height across its entire boundaries.



Developable Land (in white)

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The following pages provide information about the Town of Ridgeland's Growth Map / Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

KEY FEATURES OF A FLUM

Land Use Categories

The map divides land into categories based on the types of land use envisioned to be there in the future. The categories also establish criteria for how development should occur.

Growth Priorities

Given its nature as a growth map, It identifies areas for future growth, redevelopment, conservation, and infrastructure investments.

Flexibility for change

The FLUM is aspirational and may adapt to reflect changing economic, social, and environmental conditions. It should be regularly updated as major aspects of the Town's vision change over time. As development and other significant changes occur in and around Ridgeland, the Future Land Use Map may also need to be revised.

HOW TO USE A FLUM

Policy Guidance

The FLUM informs zoning decisions, helping Town officials align zoning ordinances with the community's long term goals. For example, areas designated for infill / redevelopment on the map may need to be rezoned to allow a development compatible with its surroundings.

Development Review

Planners and decision makers use the map to evaluate development proposals, ensuring they are consistent with the Town's vision for land use and growth.

Infrastructure Planning

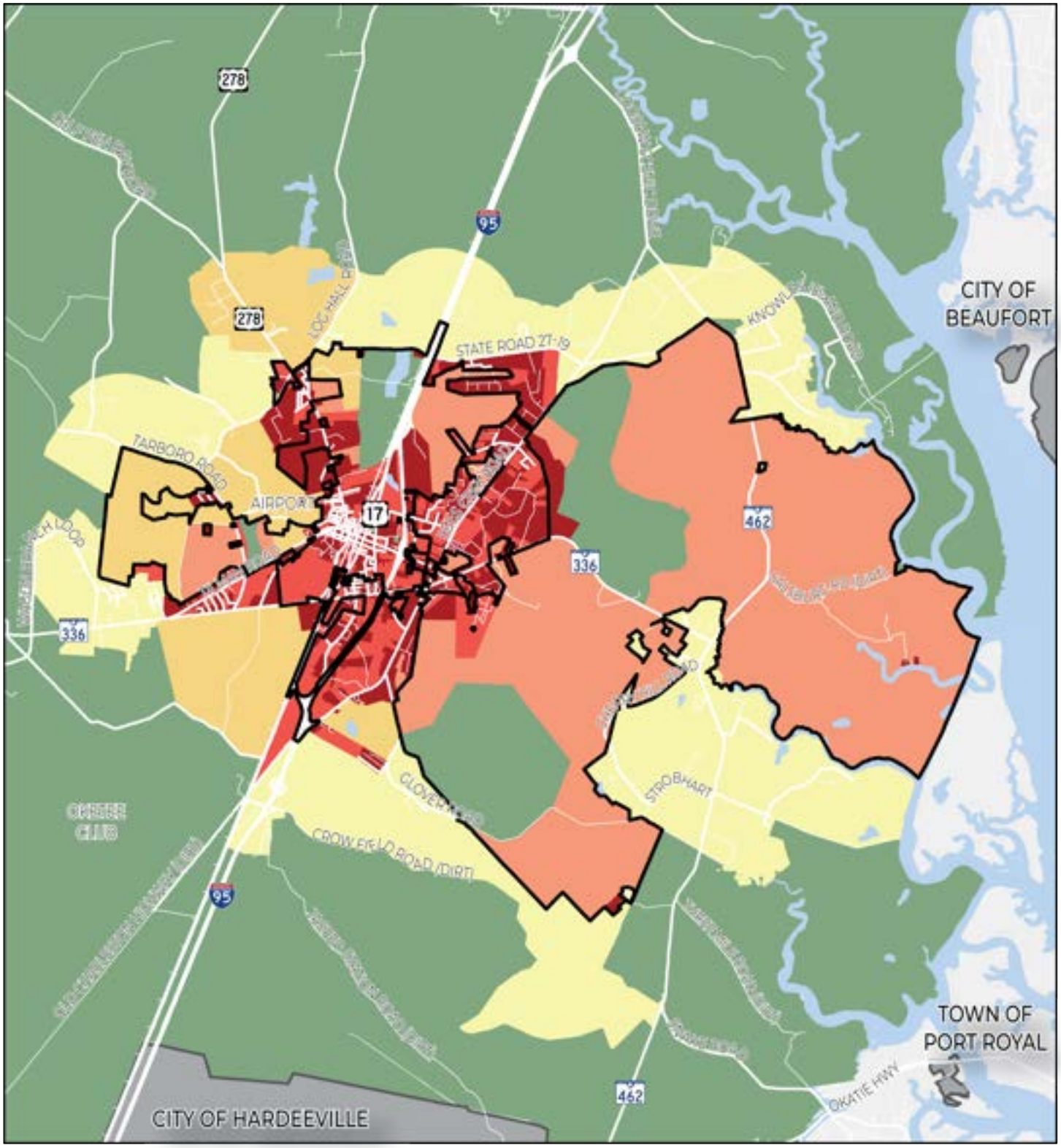
The FLUM helps to guide where to prioritize infrastructure investments such as roads, utilities, parks, and public facilities. These should be allocated both to areas in need of improvement and to support planned growth areas.

Illustrating the Town's Vision

The map serves as a visual tool for communicating the Town's overall direction for growth to residents, developers, and other stakeholders; fostering transparency and public engagement.

In summary, a Future Land Use Map, also called a Growth Map in this Plan, is a strategic framework that helps communities balance growth, development, and preservation. When used effectively, it ensures that a community evolves in a way that meets current needs while anticipating future opportunities and challenges.

The desired future development pattern for Ridgeland is described by six generalized growth / future land use categories. The Growth Map on the following page, which also serves as the Future Land Use Map, illustrates how these generalized areas are distributed across the Town and immediately surrounding region. Each of the growth / future land use categories are explained in detail in the following section. While some areas are intended to support a greater intensity or density of development, the Town supports the utilization of conservation easements and other tools which can be used to protect sensitive natural and cultural features across the region, as appropriate and when supported by property owners. These may be applicable across all growth / future land use categories.


278
95
278
STATE ROAD ZT-19
CITY OF BEAUFORT
TARBORO ROAD
AIRPORT
17
462
336
336
GLOVER ROAD
STROBHART
CROWFIELD ROAD (DIRT)
95
462
OKATIE HWY
CITY OF HARDEEVILLE
TOWN OF PORT ROYAL
Restricted Development
Secondary Growth Areas
Primary Growth Areas
Infill / Redevelopment
Approved Development
Developed Land
Ridgeland Boundary
Water Bodies

RESTRICTED DEVELOPMENT

Overview:

The Restricted Development areas are generally areas which are further away from municipal services, potentially impacted by wetlands and floodplains, under conservation, or rural with limited access. Because of these factors, future development should generally be discouraged in these areas.

The majority of the Restricted Development areas are outside of the Town's current municipal limits and often do not touch its boundaries. In these cases, they should not be considered for development until the Town's boundaries are proximate to the site and it meets the standards established in the Secondary Growth Areas.

Areas within the Restricted Development category which have particularly sensitive or special environmental features should be protected from development in perpetuity. The Town should support interested property owners in considering the use of tools such as conservation easements and fee simple purchases, to protect these unique features, as applicable.

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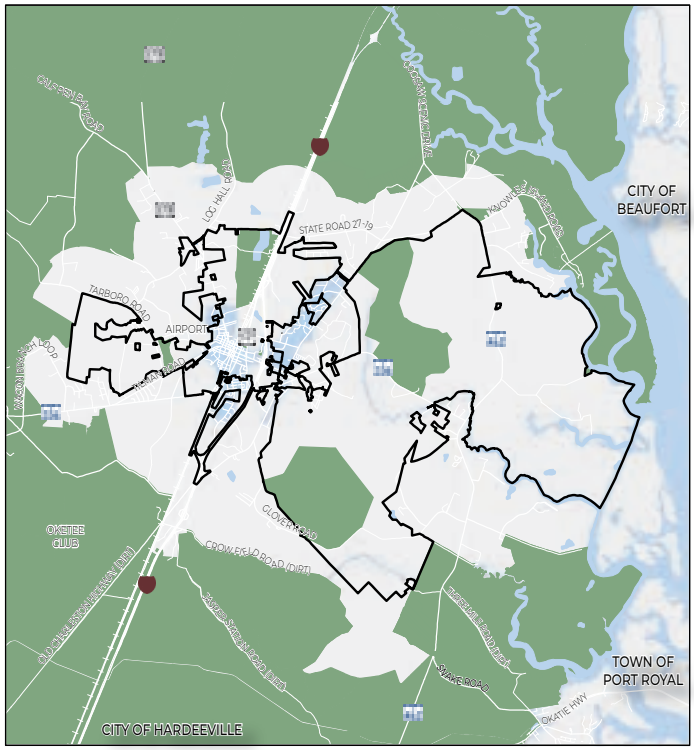
Generally rural with limited development.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T1 - Natural Zone
- T2 - Rural Zone

Land Use and Context:

- Conservation Land
- Agricultural Land
- Low Density Residential Homes
- Limited Rural Commercial Uses
- Public Recreation Areas
- Hunting Lands, Clubs, or Lodges





SECONDARY GROWTH AREAS

Overview:

Secondary Growth Areas are outside of the Town's currently municipal limits but in close proximity to the Town's boundaries. They are not ideal for development today (due to a lack of infrastructure, distance from Town services, or proximity to sensitive areas).

However, these areas could support new development if services and utilities could be provided to the sites. Like all new development, infrastructure and environmental impacts should be closely examined. The Town should not consider development which negatively impacts its ability to provide services to residents, nor should it consider development which has undue impacts on environmental features. Aspects such as wetlands, watersheds, and floodplains should be examined closely. Water quality in many of these areas is also of extreme importance. Consideration of how proposed development may impact water quality in the region should be examined closely.

If a future development is able to be served in a fiscally responsible manner and in a way which does not negatively impact environmental features, it should be considered through the use of a Special District or Planned Development. The Special District or Planned Development approval process would allow the Town's elected and appointed officials the ability to carefully examine all aspects of the proposed development to ensure it meets the needs of the community.

Character:

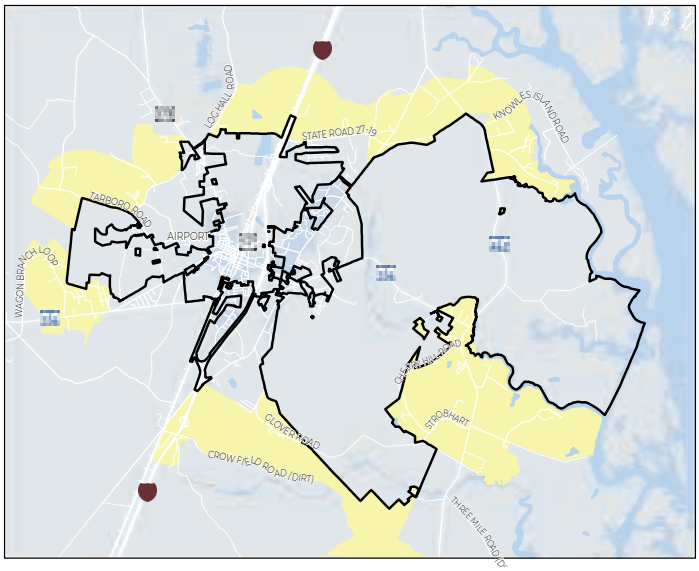
Generally rural with limited development. New development should be limited to large planned developments which are designed to preserve natural and cultural resources. When appropriate, small scale mixed-use developments may also be considered. It is anticipated that these areas would annex into the Town if they are developed.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T1 - Natural Zone
- T2 - Rural Zone
- T2.5 - Rural Crossroads
- T3 - Neighborhood General (at major nodes)
- T4 - Neighborhood Core (at major nodes)
- Special District

Land Use and Context:

- Agricultural Land
- Low Density Residential Homes
- Planned Developments / Special Districts





PRIMARY GROWTH AREAS

Overview:

Primary Growth Areas are either already in the Town's municipal limits or proximate to the Town's boundaries and able to easily support new development. These areas are within the vicinity of existing utilities and Town services, as well as proximate to major existing transportation corridors.

Despite these conditions which help to support new development, these areas are largely undeveloped or under-developed. As the Town seeks to grow its boundaries, the Primary Growth Areas should be sought after as the first ring of new development. It is anticipated that these areas which are not already within the Town's municipal limits would be annexed into the Town if developed.

As many of these properties are large in scale, the potential use of Special Districts or by-right zoning carefully calibrated, along with development agreements when relevant, to develop large-scale master planned developments should be prioritized. A focus on nature-based, smart growth development with traditional neighborhood design standards would be preferred. It is envisioned that these areas could support the greatest portion of new residential development.

Character:

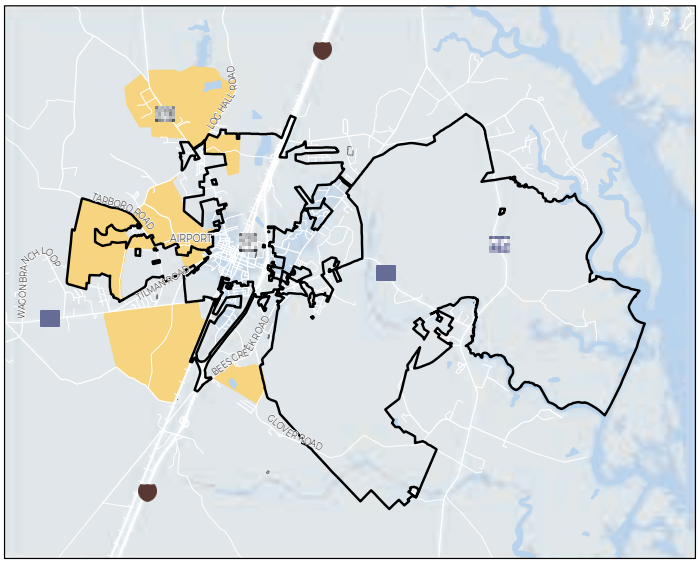
Generally suburban, primarily composed of residential development. Commercial uses could be supported, as appropriate.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core (at major nodes)
- Special District

Land Use and Context:

- Low Density Residential Homes
- Limited Rural Commercial Uses
- Planned Developments / Special Districts





INFILL / REDEVELOPMENT

Overview:

Infill / Redevelopment areas are generally concentrated toward the center of the City. These areas are either currently undeveloped or developed at a lower density / intensity than could be supported in these prime locations.

Given their proximity to existing development, particularly in and around downtown, these areas should be targeted for infill development and redevelopment opportunities. The new development should be consistent with surrounding properties, blending seamlessly into the existing footprint. Given the scattered locations of this category, future transect / zoning classifications should be determined based on surrounding zoning classifications.

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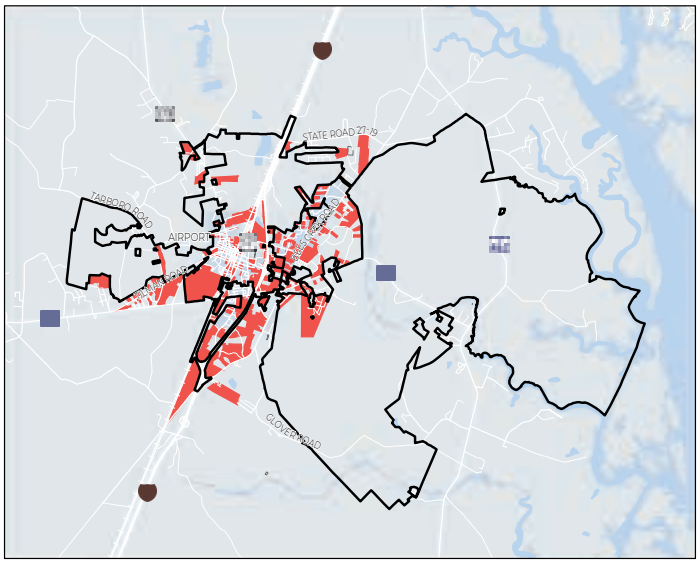
While these properties are currently undeveloped or under-developed, they are surrounded by existing development of suburban to urban scale.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core
- T5 - Town Center / Main Street

Land Use and Context:

- Residential (medium to high density)
- Commercial and Mixed Use
- Light Industrial





APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

Overview:

Approved Development recognizes properties in Town which are not currently developed but which have been approved for development in the near (or long) future. Many of these properties are of significant acreage and subject to development agreements with lengthy stays of approval. Others are subdivisions which are approved for development and should be constructed in the coming years.

This growth / future land use category aims to recognize the significant potential for large scale development in the near future. This category should be carefully considered over time, as changes in the economy and other factors may limit developability of these sites. If a development agreement should expire before construction, there's a tremendous opportunity for the Town to re-envision the future use of these sites.

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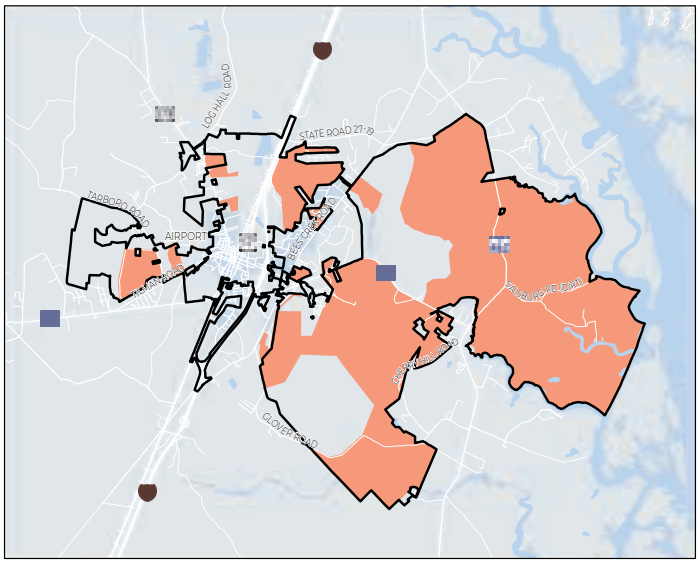
These lands are currently undeveloped but have the potential to support significant development in the future. Development agreements on some of these sites are valid for ten more years.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core
- Special District

Land Use and Context:

- Residential Subdivisions
- Planned Developments / Special Districts





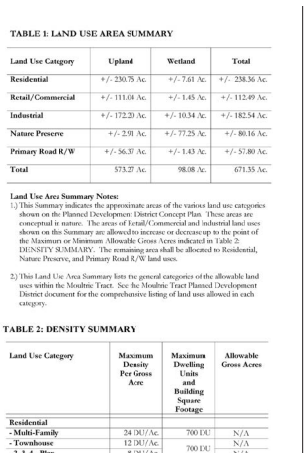


TABLE 1: LAND USE AREA SUMMARY

Land Use Category	Upland	Wetland	Total
Residential	+/- 230.75 Ac.	+/- 7.61 Ac.	+/- 238.36 Ac.
Retail/Commercial	+/- 111.01 Ac.	+/- 1.45 Ac.	+/- 112.49 Ac.
Industrial	+/- 172.20 Ac.	+/- 10.34 Ac.	+/- 182.54 Ac.
Nature Preserve	+/- 2.91 Ac.	+/- 77.25 Ac.	+/- 80.16 Ac.
Primary Road R/W	+/- 36.37 Ac.	+/- 1.43 Ac.	+/- 57.80 Ac.
Total	573.27 Ac.	98.08 Ac.	671.35 Ac.

Land Use Area Summary Notes:

1.) This Summary indicates the approximate areas of the various land use categories shown on the Planned Development District Concept Plan. These areas are conceptual in nature. The areas of Retail/Commercial and industrial land uses shown on this Summary are allowed to increase or decrease up to the point of the Maximum or Minimum Allowable Gross Acres indicated in Table 2: DENSITY SUMMARY. The remaining area shall be allocated to Residential, Nature Preserve, and Primary Road R/W land uses.

2.) This Land Use Area Summary lists the general categories of the allowable land uses within the Moultrie Tract. See the Moultrie Tract Planned Development District document for the comprehensive listing of land uses allowed in each category.

TABLE 2: DENSITY SUMMARY

Land Use Category	Maximum Density Per Gross Acre	Maximum Dwelling Units and Building Square Footage	Allowable Gross Acres
Residential			
- Multi-Family	24 DU/Ac.	700 DU	N/A
- Townhouse	12 DU/Ac.	700 DU	N/A

DEVELOPED LAND

Overview:

The Developed Land growth / future land use category recognizes portions of the Town which are developed in a manner which is unlikely to change in the near future. This includes active commercial buildings, residential subdivisions, and other properties which are utilized to their best use.

Developed land is unlikely to change in the near future. However, if it is subject to redevelopment, the new development should be compatible with surrounding uses.

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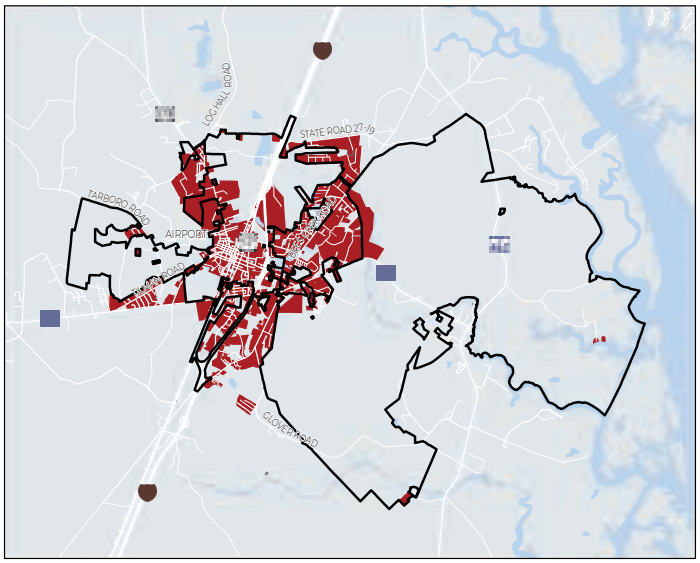
These developed areas vary greatly in terms of use, density, and appearance. However, they are unlikely to undergo significant change in the near future.

Transect / Zoning Classification:

- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core
- T5 - Town Center / Main Street

Land Use and Context:

- Residential (medium to high density)
- Commercial and Mixed Use
- Light Industrial





Plan Elements

SECTION 3: PLAN ELEMENTS

The State of South Carolina's Planning Enabling Act requires that all comprehensive plans include ten specific background elements. These elements provide information related to the historic and existing conditions of our community, and were utilized to develop recommendations for the future.

PLANNING ELEMENTS

The State of South Carolina's Planning Enabling Act establishes certain requirements for developing plans for municipalities. One such requirement is that all comprehensive plans include the following ten elements:


Population


Economic Development


Natural Resources


Cultural Resources


Community Facilities


Housing


Land Use


Transportation


Resiliency


Priority Investment

The following section provides additional details on each of these topics, providing an in-depth background on the primary factors related to growth and development in Ridgeland.

Some of these planning elements also consider resources outside of the Town's municipal limits, particularly when they have a significant impact on the Town. For instance, the Land Use Element provides information related to lands just outside of the Towns limits, as they may be annexed into the Town in the future and as they impact how land in the Town develops. Similarly, the Priority Investment Element identifies a number of opportunities for the Town to better engage with its regional partners to plan for the future.

The information presented within these Elements was utilized to draft the vision and recommendations of the plan. This background analysis, combined with public input and direction from the Planning Commission, formed the primary basis for developing this Plan.

POPULATION

The population element considers historic trends and projections, household sizes, and similar characteristics.

HISTORIC POPULATION

Prior to the interstate highway system's development, Ridgeland maintained a relatively stable, small population. While US-17 provided regional connections as soon as the 1930s, many opportunities developed with the completion of Interstate-95 (I-95) in the 1980s. At the same time, the two interchanges in Town led to significant "pass-through" traffic, resulting in the desertion of downtown. In the 1990s, downtown redevelopment efforts brought significant improvements to Town. The old downtown and the new business section of I-95 were united with a common development theme and additional commercial development followed. This led to growth in the population, as Ridgeland became the "residence of choice" for much of the workforce that served Hilton Head, Sun City, and other new and developing areas. Between 1990 and 2000, the population almost doubled (largely due to the opening of the Ridgeland Correctional Institution), reaching a total of over 2,500 residents. This growth continued into the early 2000s, leading to a population of over 4,000 residents in 2010.

The Lowcountry region as a whole has witnessed significant growth over the past few decades, as it has emerged attractive to retirement-aged individuals. Hardeeville in particular has grown at an exponential rate due to the annexation of large planned communities. Though the Decennial Census observed a slight decrease in Ridgeland's population in 2020, it is possible that this is related to "undercounts" experienced in some communities, particularly as there is a large minority population in the Town. However, the Census is the best available data to consider. American Community Survey data, also obtained from the US Census Bureau, suggests that the Town's population has increased slightly in the years following the Census (2021 - 2023).

The presence of the Ridgeland Correctional Institute poses some problems for collecting data on the Town. The inmates who live here are included in the Town's demographic summaries, accounting for almost 1,000 of the Town's residents. Throughout the document, data that has likely been impacted by the incarcerated population has been noted.

▼ TABLE 1 POPULATION CHANGE (2000 - 2020)

	2000	2010	2000 - 2010 (Percent)	2020	2010 - 2020 (Percent)
Ridgeland	2,556	4,036	57.9%	3,758	- 6.9%
Jasper County	20,678	24,777	19.8%	28,791	15.3%
Hardeeville	1,845	2,952	60.0%	7,473	153.2%
Beaufort County	120,937	162,233	34.1%	187,117	15.3%
South Carolina	4,012,012	4,625,364	15.3%	5,118,425	10.7%

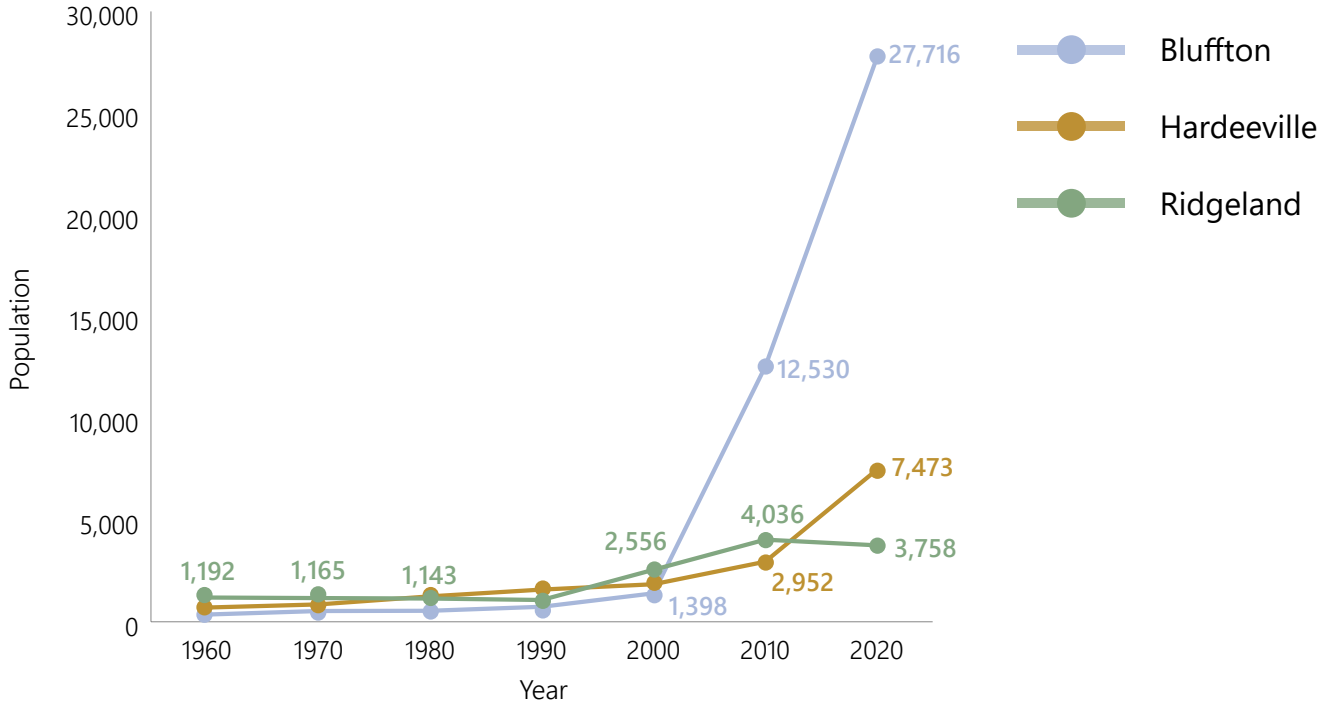
Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (2000 - 2020)

Looking closer at the historic growth of three main municipalities in the region (Bluffton, Hardeeville, and Ridgeland), some interesting trends can be observed. The Town of Bluffton was the smallest of the three communities in 1960, with just 356 residents. The region was generally rural with small populations, and comprised of very large tracts used for plantations and other agricultural production. As agricultural production slowed, these large tracts were prime candidates for planned development districts, which were acquired and designed across the Lowcountry.

In the late 90s and early 2000s, the three communities were around the same size; Bluffton with 1,400 residents, Hardeeville with 1,800 residents, and Ridgeland with 2,600 residents in 2000. By the 2000s, Bluffton exploded with development, primarily through the construction of master-planned communities such as Palmetto Bluff and Sun City Hilton Head. The Town's closer proximity to Hilton Head Island was a driver for new development and these planned communities attracted retirees and second-home buyers. These communities offer amenities like golf courses, shopping, dining, and wellness centers, making them self-sustaining and highly desirable for both families and retirees. Bluffton's infrastructure, especially Highway 278, was expanded to accommodate growth, and these improvements made Bluffton a more accessible and convenient location for new residents and businesses. The economy grew with the new population, and as Bluffton was built-out, these same development tactics were employed in Hardeeville and Ridgeland.

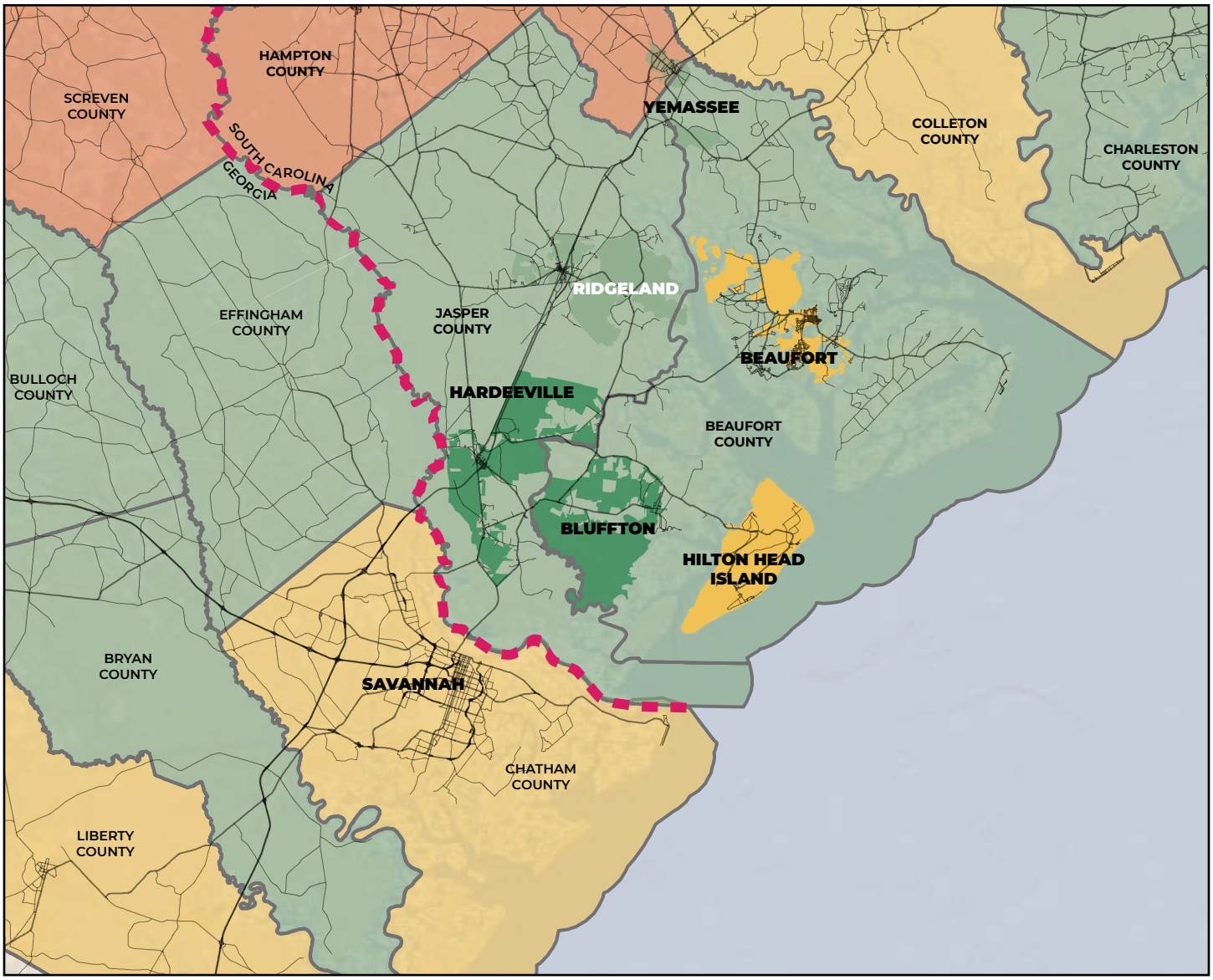
Hardeeville's population surpassed Ridgeland's over the past decade, as similar development came online along the City's eastern boundary; primarily Hilton Head Lakes and Latitude Margaritaville. Again, these communities leveraged their proximity to Hilton Head Island, even using "Hilton Head" in their titles. Similar planned developments have been approved in Ridgeland, though are not yet constructed.

▼ FIGURE 1 REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE (1960 - 2020)



Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (1960 - 2020)

▼ MAP 1 REGIONAL POPULATION CHANGE (2000 - 2020)



Lost Population

0 - 30% Growth

31 - 99% Growth

100% or Greater Growth

State Boundary

Major Highways

Water Bodies

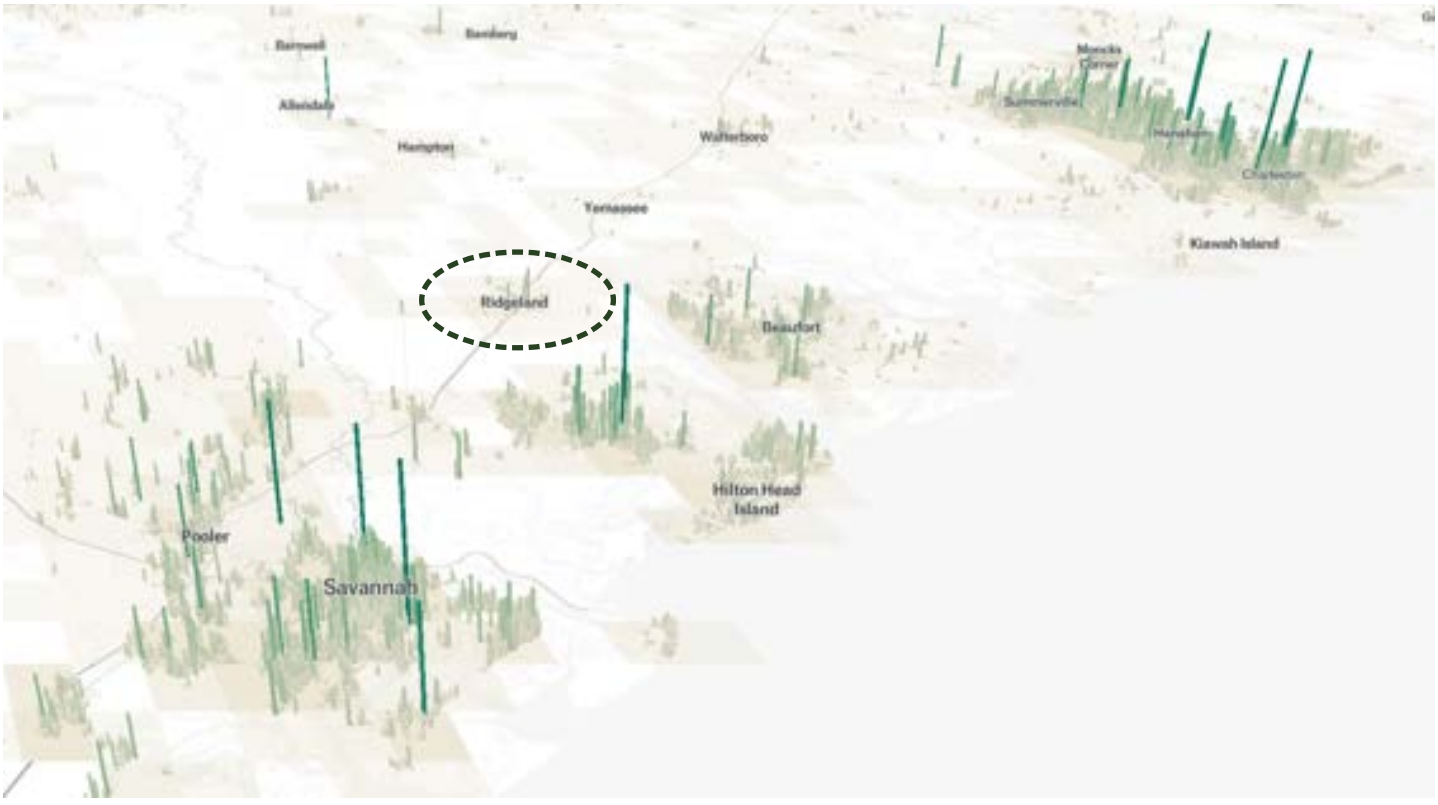
Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (2000 - 2020)

Interestingly, while Ridgeland has grown by around 1,500 residents since 2000, the people moving to Ridgeland are different than those moving to other parts of the region. As shown in the graphic on the next page, the majority of residents moving to Hilton Head Island are either coming from other parts of the south or the northeast. There are pockets of residents also moving from the midwest and west. Bluffton residents are largely moving from other parts of the south, though there are also contingents of residents moving from the midwest and the northeast. Hardeeville residents are almost exclusively moving from other parts of the south or the west. While some Ridgeland residents are moving from other parts of the south, a large contingent are moving from foreign countries. This same pattern is happening in communities northeast of Ridgeland, in both Hampton and Jasper Counties. It's likely that some of these residents are moving to help construct new development in the more coastal communities.

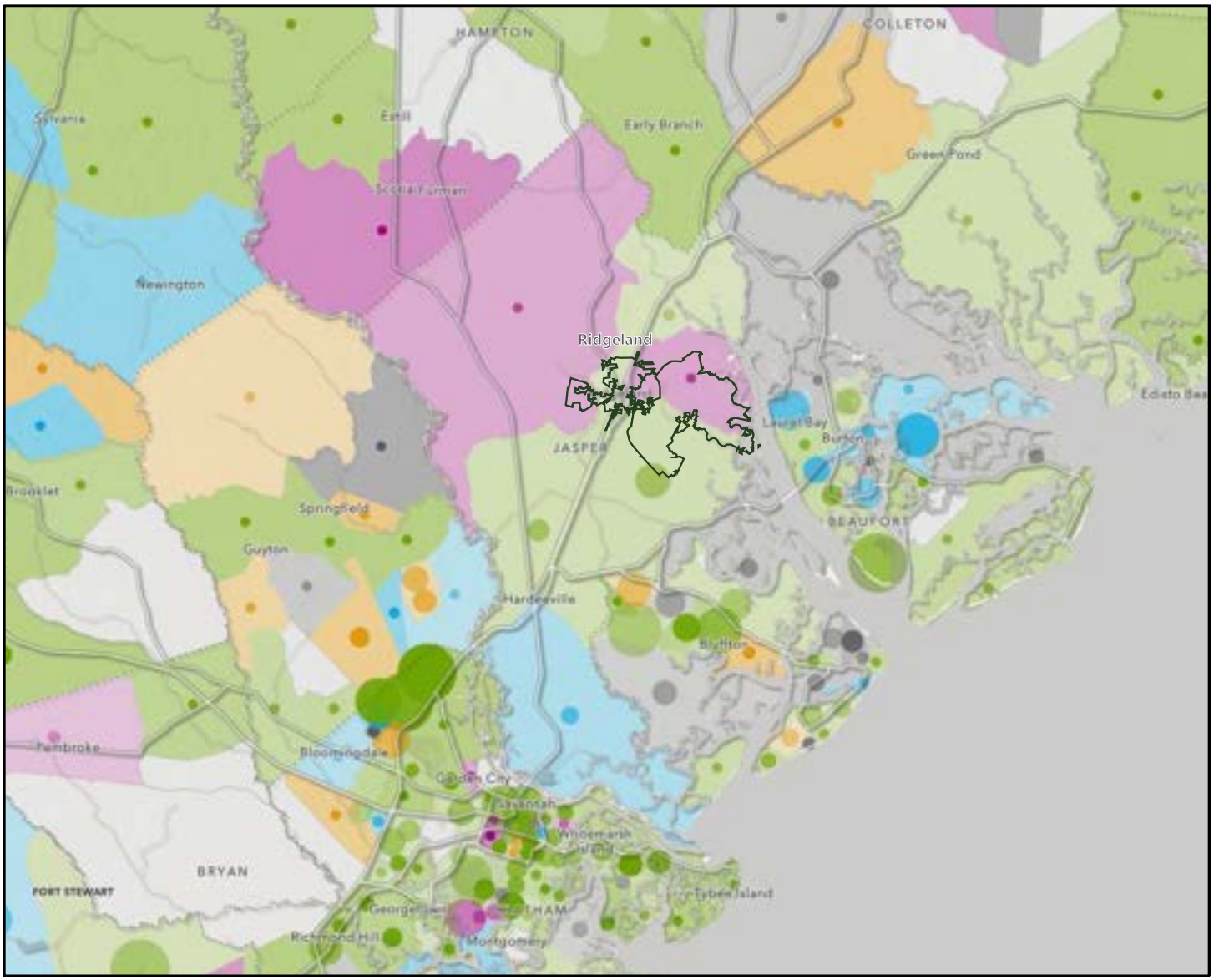
POPULATION DENSITY

As noted in the description of historic population change in the region, the greatest density of people reside in Bluffton. While much of Jasper County has a population density below 100 people per square mile, Bluffton has an average density of over 1,000 people per square mile. Hilton Head Island is slightly less dense, but it and Beaufort also have a concentrated population. Because Ridgeland has a good urban core, it has a population density of 101 - 250 people per square mile. This is comparable to outlying areas of Beaufort, Hilton Head Island, and Bluffton.

In and around Savannah, there are much larger concentrations of people spread across a greater area. Outside of this metropolitan area, the remainder of Georgia and South Carolina remain relatively rural, with less than 100 people per square mile.



Source: 3D vizualization of Population Density, The Pudding

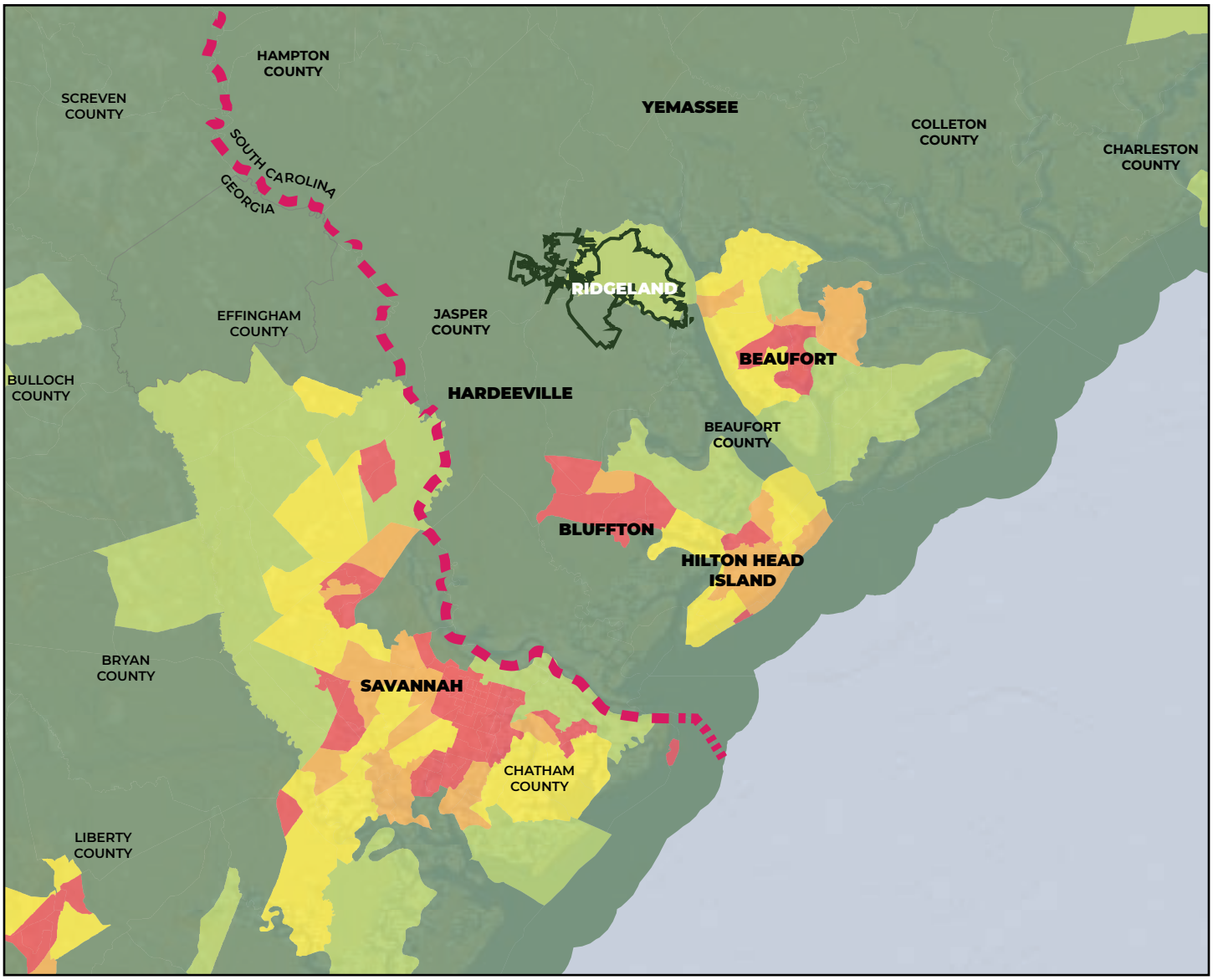


Predominant Category of Movers

- South
- Midwest
- West
- Northeast
- Foreign Country
- Other

- Major Highways
- Water Bodies
- Ridgeland Municipal Limits

Source: Urban Observatory Maps, ESRI, US Census Bureau



POPULATION DENSITY (PER CENSUS TRACT)

- 0 - 100 People per Square Mile
- 101 - 250 People per Square Mile
- 251 - 500 People per Square Mile
- 501 - 1,000 People per Square Mile
- More Than 1,000 People per Square Mile

- State Boundary
- Major Highways
- Water Bodies
- Ridgeland Municipal Limits

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2021)

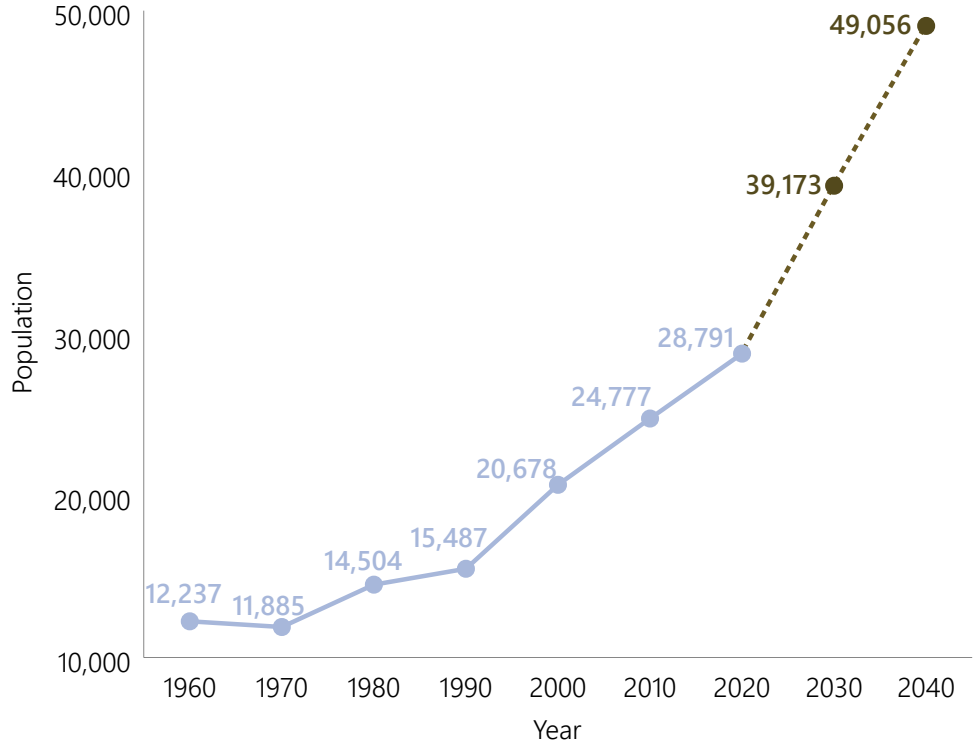
PROJECTED GROWTH

Though the planned communities have not been developed in Ridgeland yet, they have another 20 or so years in which they are permitted to be constructed. While Jasper County has experienced steady population growth in recent years, Ridgeland's population dropped slightly in the last decade after two decades of significant growth. During that time, the County became a popular suburban and exurban destination for people who work in Savannah, Bluffton, Hilton Head, and even Charleston. Significant residential development has taken place in Hardeeville and Ridgeland as these regional employees have sought out a quieter, more affordable area. The County has also seen growth related to spillover effects of regional tourism, as well as industrial and commercial development that has occurred within the County.

Going forward, the State projects that the County will grow by more than 20,000 people in the next twenty years. It's likely that some of this growth will be absorbed within the Town itself. However, given a significant amount of permitted and approved development in Ridgeland, it is difficult to project the total anticipated growth to occur in the Town in that timeframe.

Given the state of infrastructure in other communities, it is likely that at least some portion of the projected growth will be absorbed within the Town of Ridgeland. Further, the County's current growth policies are directing development into the cities and towns within the County, which would support growth in Ridgeland.

▼ FIGURE 2 JASPER COUNTY POPULATION CHANGE AND PROJECTIONS



Source: SC Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Office

POTENTIAL POPULATION GROWTH

At this time, there are over 100 residential units being constructed, with more than 4,500 residential units approved for development. These numbers do not include the more than 17,000 homes approved to be developed in the Good Hope and Genesis Special Districts. In a town of around 4,000 residents, these proposed developments will have a significant impact on the Town, more than tripling the population in the near term and growing even more exponentially in the long term.

If the entirety of the special districts and other residential development already approved within Ridgeland were to be built out by 2040 (unlikely), the Town could reach a population of over 40,000 residents. More likely, the Town will see a slower rate of growth; though with the significant potential to grow to over 12,000 residents by 2040.

An important element of this Plan, included in the Land Use Element, is a directed plan of where these new residents should live and what other types of development should be constructed in Town. While it is clear that there is significant potential for population growth in Ridgeland in the coming years, it is the goal of this Plan to ensure that it is adequately accommodated in a way that is beneficial to the community and can be supported by infrastructure.

The table below includes a few projection scenarios for the Town. If the Town were to continue losing population as it did in the last decade (unlikely), it could decrease to a population of around 3,600 residents in 2042. If it were to increase at a gradual rate, like that County, it could grow to around 4,200 residents by 2042. If all the currently approved development is built out by 2042 and occupied by the current average household size, the Town could have a population of over 66,000 residents.

▼ TABLE 2 VARIOUS POPULATION PROJECTION METHODS FOR THE TOWN

Projection Year	Based on Town Growth Rate[1]	Based on County Growth Rate[2]	Based on Approved Development[3]
2023	3,716	3,824	3,758
2027	3,695	3,914	5,939
2032	3,674	4,005	9,566
2037	3,654	4,099	-
2042	3,633	4,195	66,376

1. Town Growth Rate (2020 – 2022) is -0.6%
2. County Growth Rate (2020 – 2022) is 2.3%
3. Assumes all approved development from Table 12 (excluding Nimmer and Moultrie Tracts) are developed by 2027 (with average HH size), that Nimmer Tract is developed by 2032 (with average HH size), and that Moultrie Tract and all SDs are built out at average HH size by 2042

Source: United States Census Bureau, Benchmark Planning, Town Water and Sewer Master Plan

AGE

In Ridgeland, the median age of residents is 36 years old (as compared to 43.6 in the County and 40 in the State). This is notably young; younger even than the national average of 38 years old. While median age is often inflated by a higher number of children, in Ridgeland, there are a significant number of young adults (aged 20 to 44). This may have a number of positive economic implications, including the potential to support new employment, possible increased spending, and a generally lower reliance on social and health care services. Though it is an interesting anomaly, it may be inflated by other community characteristics.

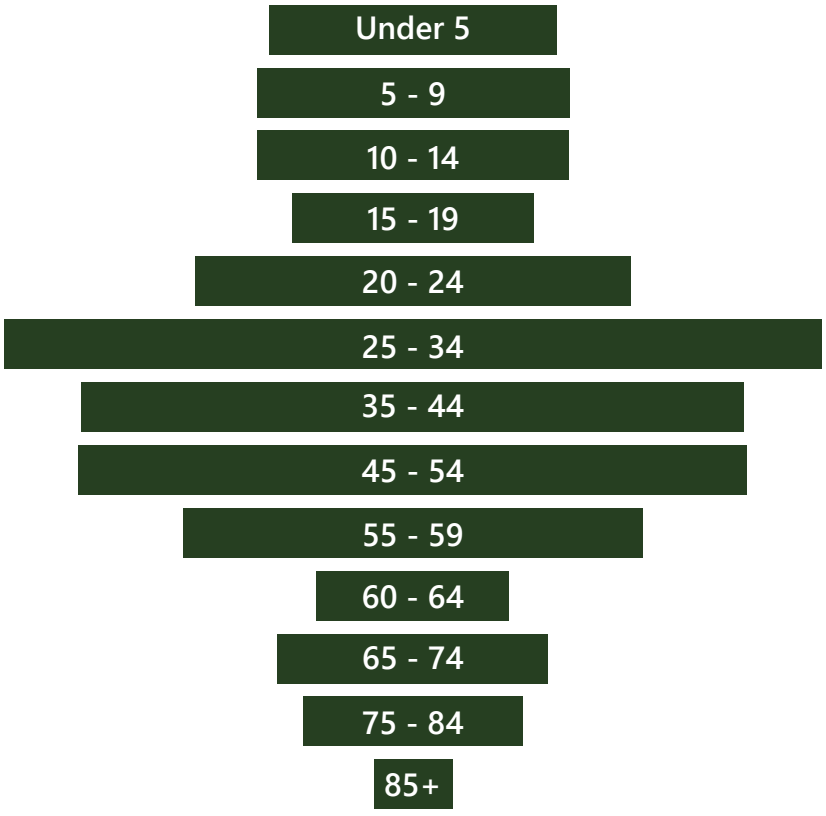
It's likely that this young population is a bi-product of Ridgeland's proximity to the more expensive communities of Beaufort, Bluffton, and Hilton Head Island. In fact, those communities have older residents largely due to their planned communities, some of which are age-restricted and others which are just attractive to retirees. Ridgeland, by comparison, has more affordable housing that is attractive to workers. As noted in the Economic Development Element, many of Ridgeland's employed residents commute to these other communities for work, living in the Town based on affordability aspects. The presence of Ridgeland Correctional Institution also likely lowers the median age of Town residents.

36
Median Age in Town

43.6
Median Age in County

40
Median Age in State

▼ FIGURE 3 POPULATION PYRAMID (TOWN RESIDENTS)



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The Town of Ridgeland has a pretty diverse population, with almost half of residents identifying as Black or African American, about 38% identifying as White, and almost 11% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Additionally, a small portion of residents are American Indian / Alaskan Native, Asian, two or more races, or some other race. This is more diverse than the State and Beaufort County, but comparable to Hardeeville and Jasper County. In fact, Hispanic and Latino populations are higher in Hardeeville and Jasper County, while Black or African American populations are higher in Ridgeland. The Ridgeland Correctional Institution's population may be impacting these statistics.



According to data compiled by ESRI, most of the people who've moved to Ridgeland in the last year came from either a foreign country or from elsewhere in the south. Comparatively, Beaufort, Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, and Hardeeville are attracting residents from the west, midwest, and northeast, in addition to people from other parts of the south. Ridgeland and areas just north of Ridgeland seem to be the only part of the region attracting people from foreign countries.

▼ TABLE 3 RACE AND ETHNICITY (2022)

	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian / Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
Ridgeland	37.4%	47.1%	10.8%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	4.0%
Jasper County	45.3%	37.3%	14.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Hardeeville	65.8%	13.6%	19.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Beaufort County	68.0%	16.1%	11.2%	0.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.5%	2.9%
South Carolina	63.0%	25.6%	6.2%	0.2%	1.7%	0.0%	0.4%	2.9%

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

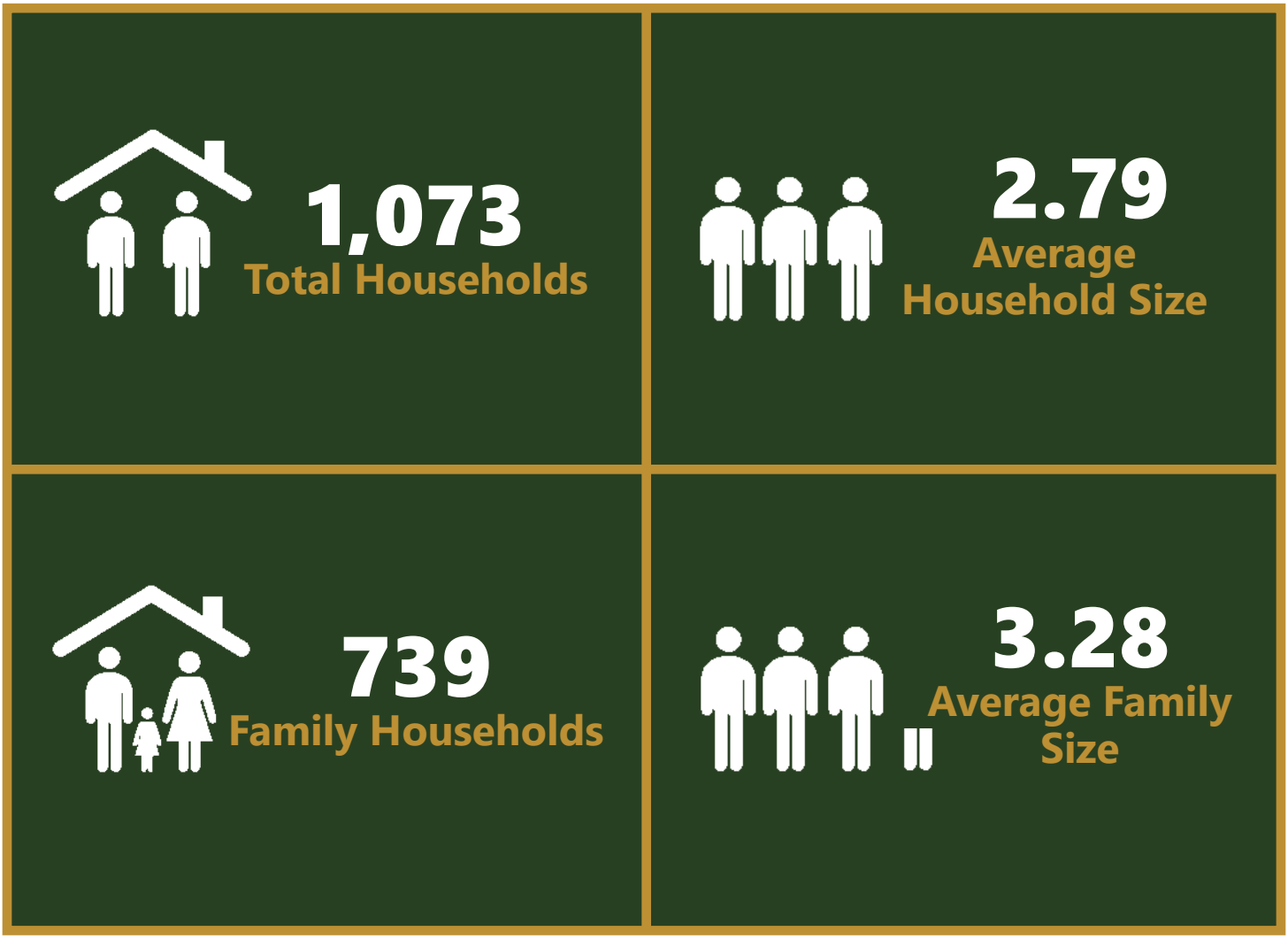
Almost 1,100 households make up Ridgeland's population. The average household size in the Town is relatively high, at 2.79 people per household (as compared to 2.43 in the County and 2.47 in the State).

69%
of households are family households

About 69% of households are family households, meaning that at least two people live together that are related by birth, marriage, or adoption. The average family household size is even larger, at 3.28 people per home. In Jasper County, the average family size is 2.92, which is smaller than the State's average family size of 3.06.

The Town may have larger household and family sizes for a number of reasons, including multi-generational living, group living situations, housing shortages, and lower incomes that necessitate shared living expenses. Almost 30% of residents are in group quarters (28% are institutionalized in the prison or a nursing facility).

▼ FIGURE 4 HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES IN RIDGELAND



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

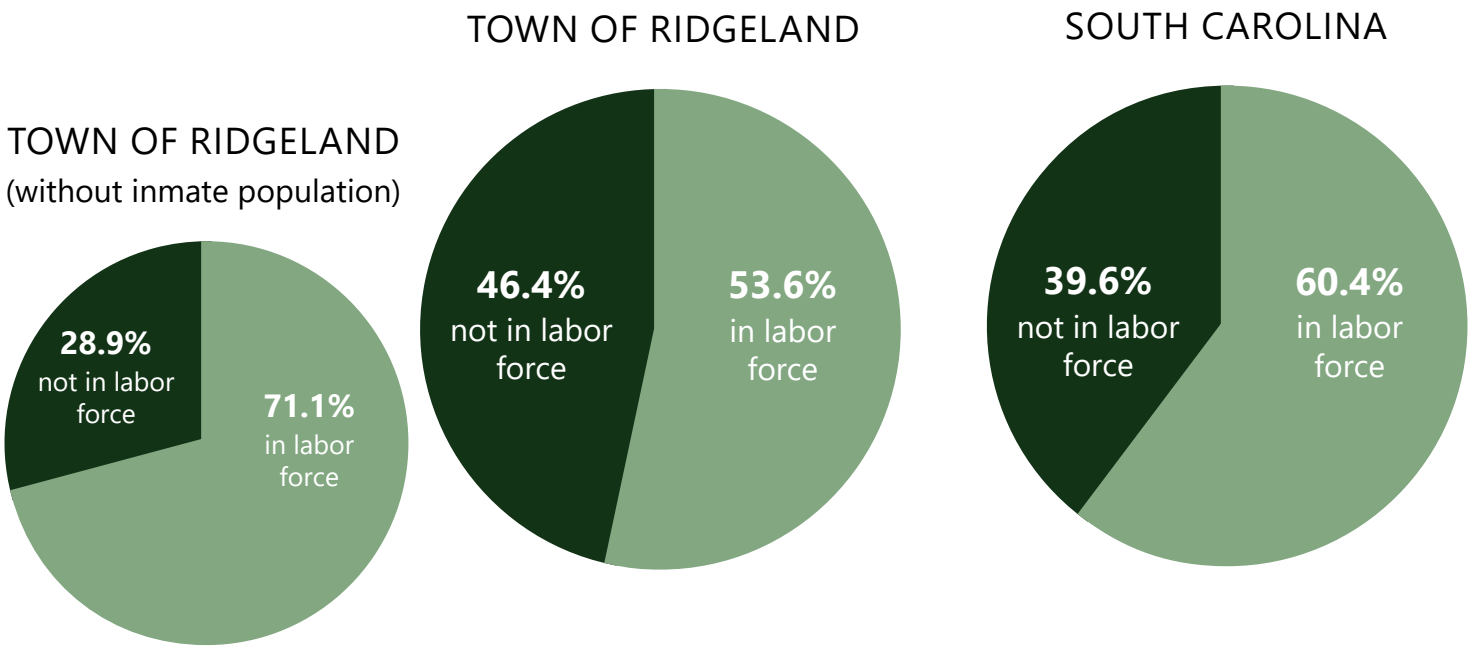
The economic development element considers labor force characteristics, employment factors, and the economy.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Despite a large working age population, labor force participation in the Town is below average. In the United States, labor force participation averages around 63%. South Carolina's labor force participation rate is a bit lower, at 60.4%, and the Town of Ridgeland's is even lower, at 53.6%. Labor force participation measures the portion of the population either currently employed or actively seeking employment. It's not the same as the unemployed, though this population is included in the labor force. A low labor force participation rate means that a significant portion of the population (46.4%) is either retired, caretakers, homemakers, or not seeking employment. This statistic is significantly impacted by the presence of a prison facility in the Town's limits. Removing the incarcerated population, the actual labor force participation rate is likely closer to 71%.

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the majority of Town residents seeking employment are able to find it. While the ACS cites the unemployment rate in South Carolina to be over 5% and in the County to be over 6%, it cites the Town's unemployment rate to be just 2%. The actual unemployment rate in the County, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, is closer to 2.6%. Regardless, it seems that the unemployment rate in the Town and County are below average. Though the State and County previously had above average unemployment rates, both dropped below the national average in 2015 - 2016 and have remained below the national average since.

▼ FIGURE 5 LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

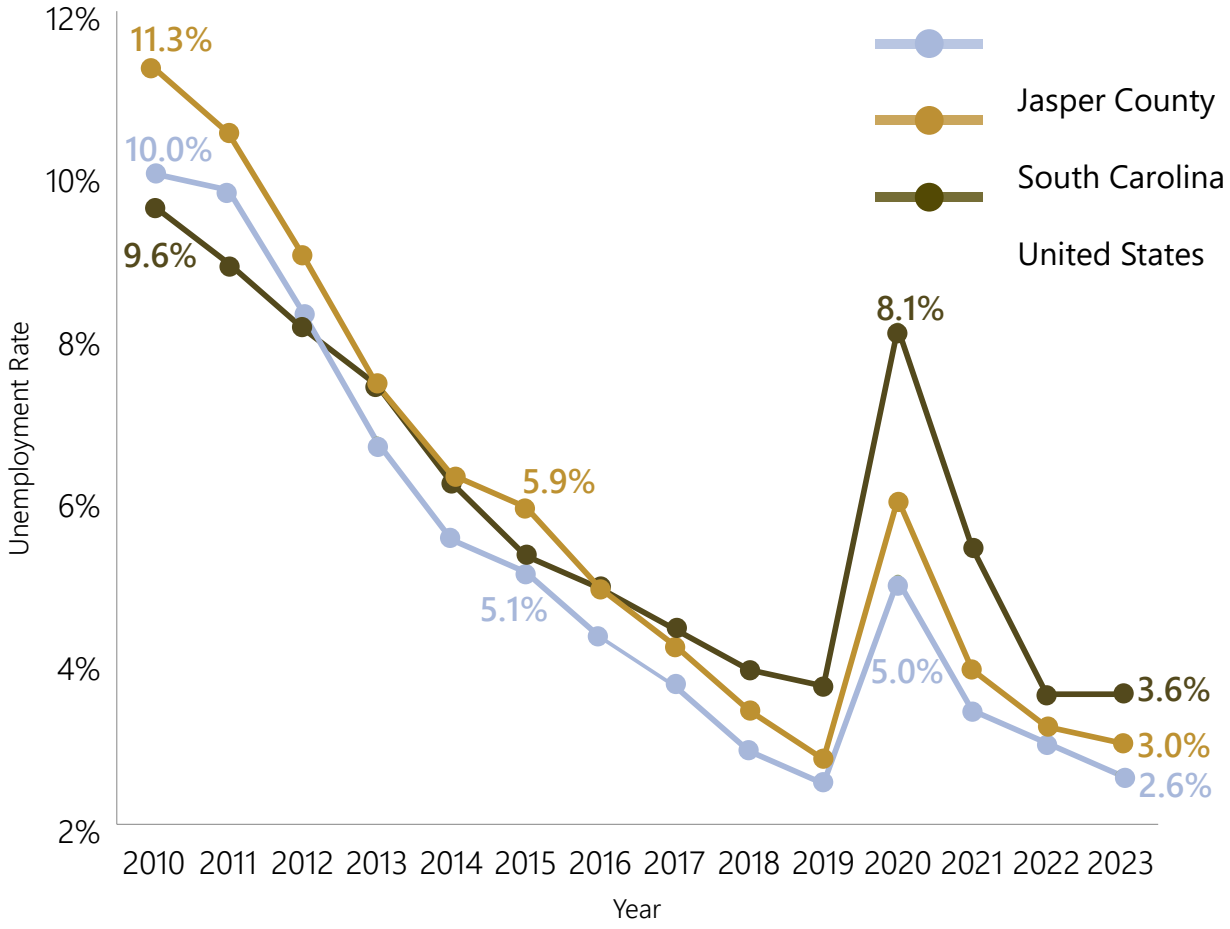


Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

▼ TABLE 4 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES PER ACS (2022)

Geography	Unemployment Rate
Ridgeland	2.0%
Jasper County	6.3%
South Carolina	5.2%
Beaufort	4.0%
Hardeeville	9.0%

▼ FIGURE 6 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN JASPER COUNTY (2010 - 2023)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022), St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank Economic Data (2024)

MAJOR EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES

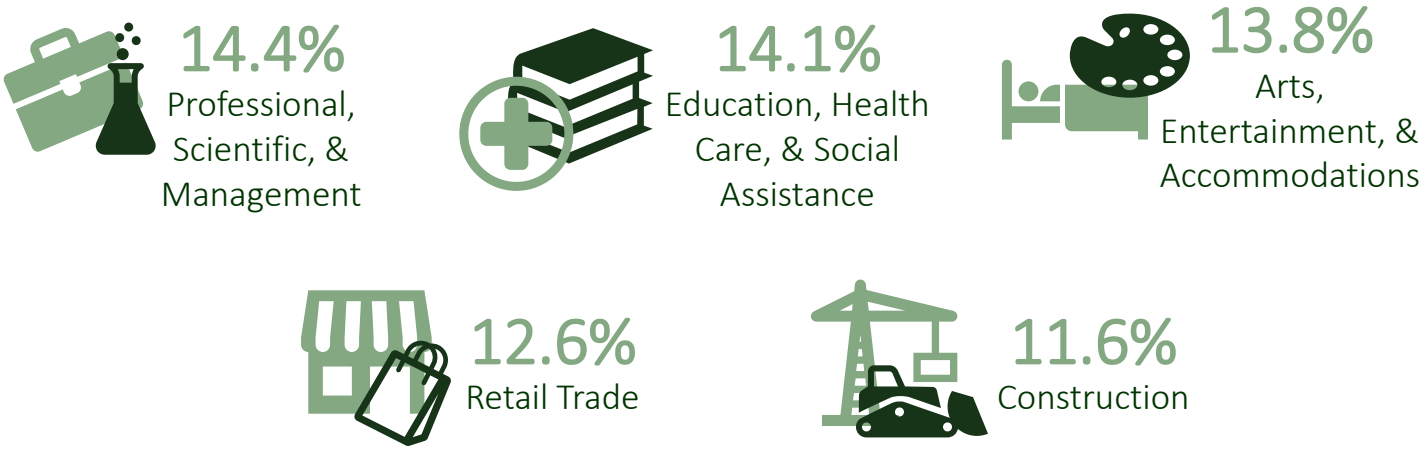
Town residents are employed in a number of major industries, with a seemingly diverse economic footprint. No one industry is a primary employer, though a notable number of residents are employed in professional, scientific, management, education, health care, social assistance, arts, entertainment, and accommodations industries.

Historically, agriculture and forestry have played a large role in the region's economy; however, these two sectors remain a traditional industry in Ridgeland today. Almost 8% of employed residents work in these fields. Additionally, the Town's proximity to I-95 makes it attractive to manufacturing and distribution. In fact, the Town is actively recruiting more light industrial, logistics, and manufacturing businesses. Due to its proximity to other urban areas, the Town has limited tourism, hospitality, construction, real estate, and retail businesses. The Town is currently working with Retail Strategies to identify additional ways to increase its retail base.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jasper County has nearly three-times as many people employed in construction than similar communities of its size. The County also has above average employment in goods-producing, education, health services, and trade / transportation / utilities sectors.

It's likely that these large employment sectors in Jasper County are also influential in the Town. In fact, a number of Town residents work in similar fields; particularly education, health care, and construction.

▼ FIGURE 7 MAJOR EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES (TOWN RESIDENTS)



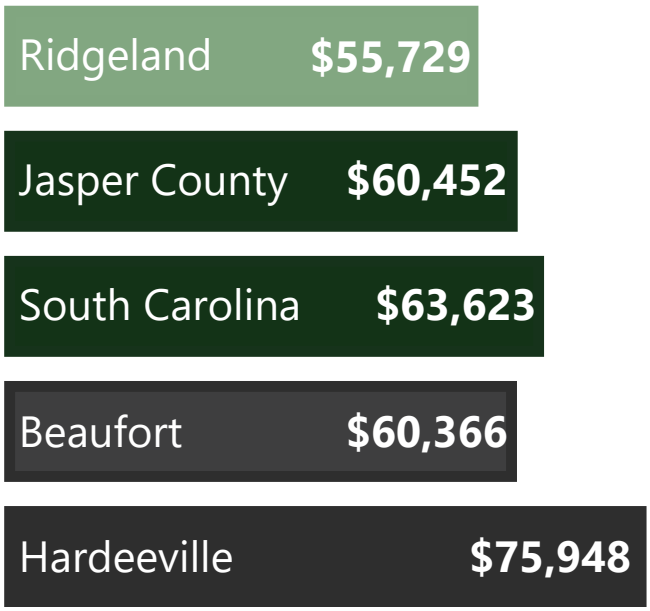
Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

INCOME COMPARISONS

The median household income in Ridgeland is about $5,000 below the County's median and approximately $8,000 lower than the State's. However, even more notably, the median per capita income of the Town is almost half the State's and almost $12,000 below the County's median per capita income. Median incomes in Town may be skewed low by the prison population. Interestingly, the Town's median family income is actually slightly higher than the County's. This is most likely due to the larger family size in Ridgeland, creating the opportunity for more workers per household. Overall, the salaries of residents are slightly lower than other communities in the region.

Comparing incomes over time, the County and Hardeeville saw significant increases in median incomes over the last decade, while the Town's median incomes remained relatively stagnant. This is likely related to an influx of new, higher earning, residents into Hardeeville, as the master planned communities there have been built out.

▼ FIGURE 8 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOMES



▼ TABLE 5 INCOME COMPARISONS (2022)

	Median Family Income		Median Household Income		Median Per Capita Income	
	2012	2022	2012	2022	2012	2022
Ridgeland	$42,813	$70,825	$34,766	$55,729	$17,397	$19,998
Jasper County	$41,451	$67,643	$36,504	$60,452	$17,366	$31,228
Hardeeville	$40,494	$88,365	$35,806	$75,948	$18,515	$47,552
Beaufort County	$66,996	$94,307	$56,581	$60,366	$32,725	$48,132
South Carolina	$55,058	$79,830	$44,623	$63,623	$23,906	$36,072

Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

COMMUTE PATTERNS

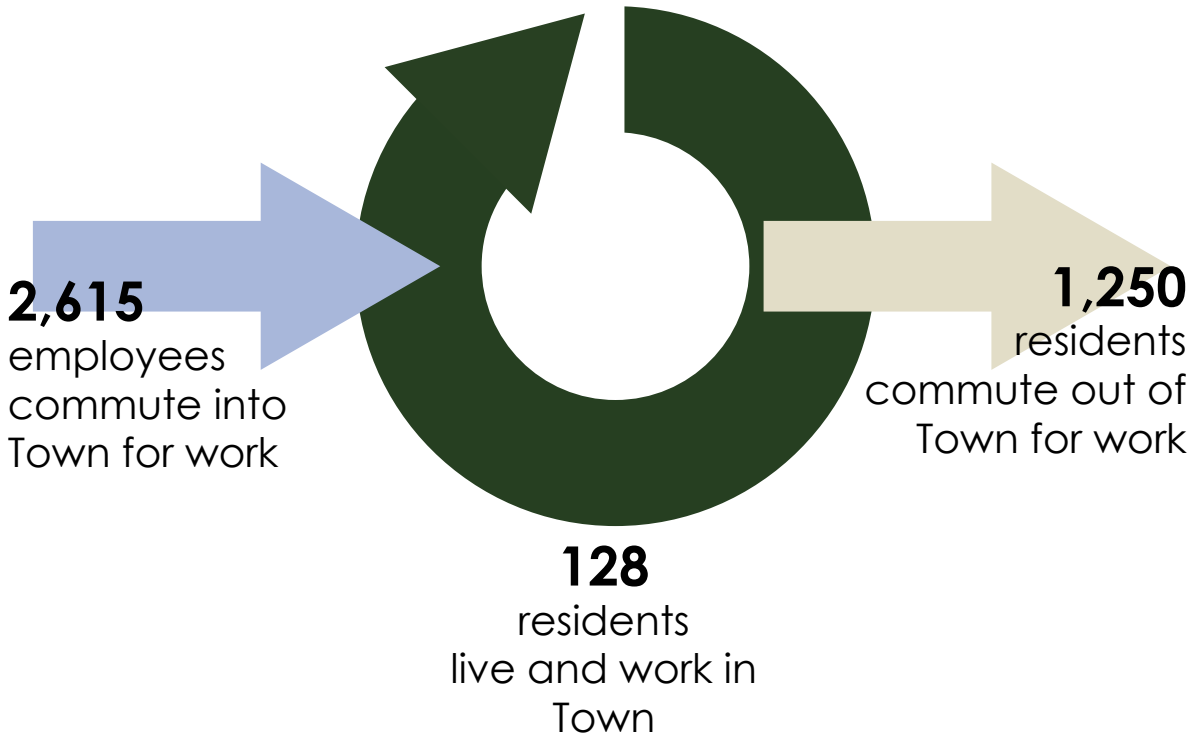
The majority of Town residents who are employed (91%) commute out of the Town for work each day. Only 128 residents both live and work in the Town, and almost one-third of residents commute out of the County each day.

Of the Town residents who commute out of Ridgeland for work, many commute into Okatie, Bluffton, Beaufort, and Hilton Head Island. These residents work in a number of different fields, as noted in the previous section. However, most likely, a number of Ridgeland residents are commuting into Beaufort County for employment in the service industry, as the major employment sectors in Beaufort County are accommodations, food services, and retail trade. Interestingly, there are also many jobs in Town and more than 2,600 employees commute into Ridgeland from other places.

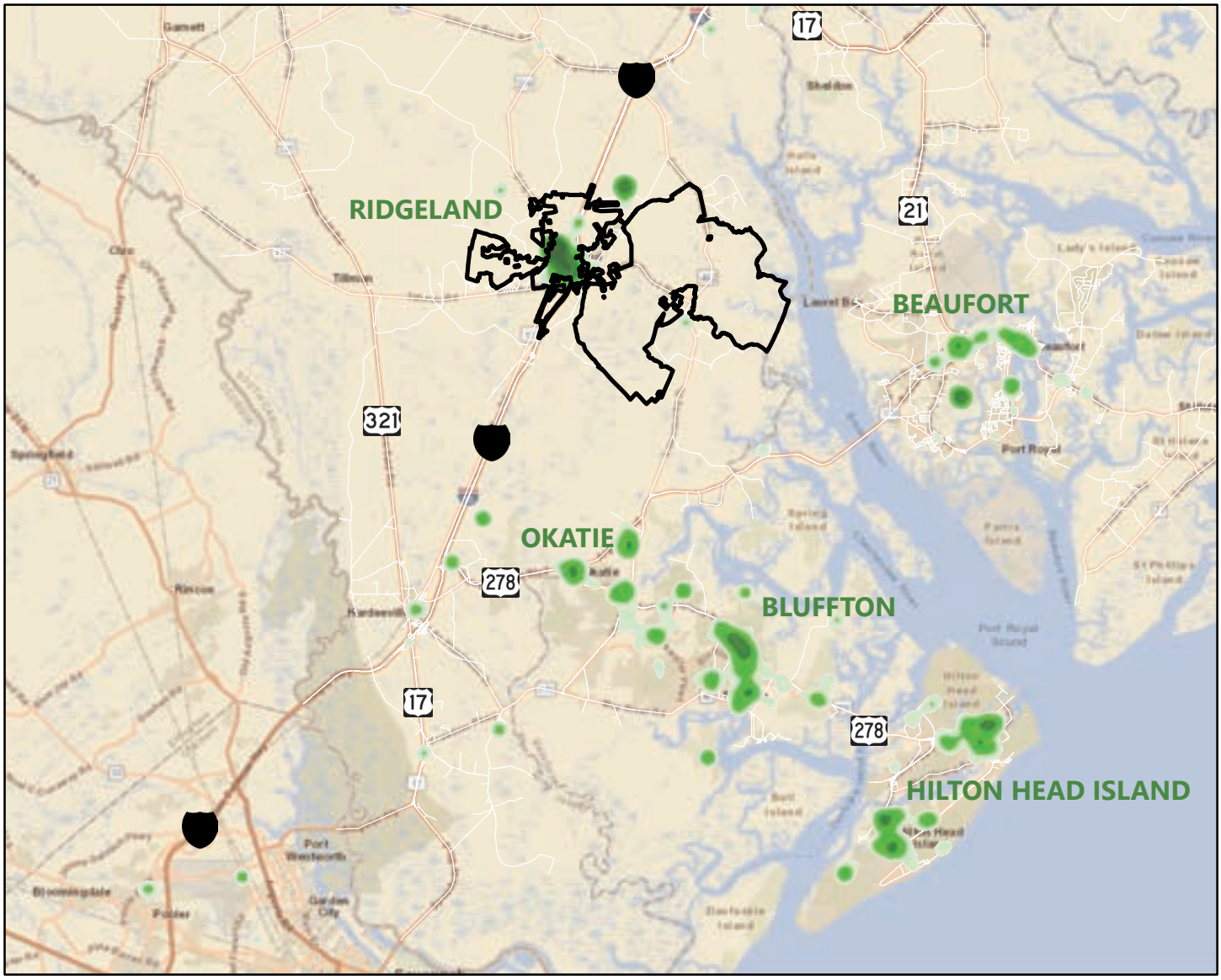
While very few of the Town's employees live in Town, many live just outside of the municipal limits. A number of workers also come into the Town from Okatie. Almost half of the people employed in the Town work in the health care and social assistance industries. Other major employment sectors in Town include education, accommodations, and food services.

It seems there is a bit of a mismatch in the region in terms of where people live and where they work. Many of Ridgeland's residents work in the service sector outside of the Town limits because the communities with significant service sector jobs have a much higher cost of living. Conversely, many of the professional jobs that exist in the Town are being filled by residents from other parts of the region.

▼ FIGURE 9 COMMUTE FLOWS



Source: United States Census Bureau, LODES Employment Survey (2021)



Resident Employment Locations

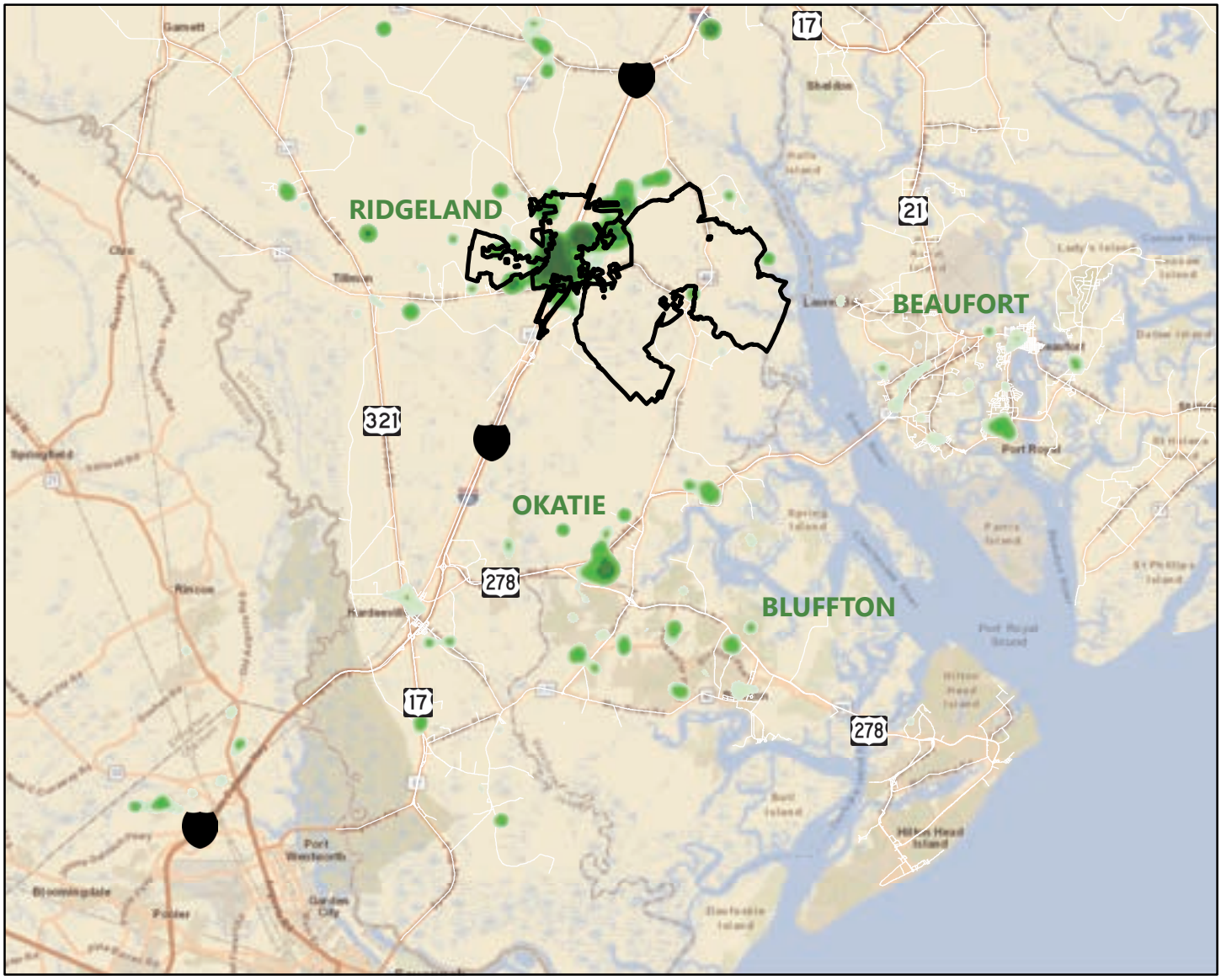
Fewest # of Jobs

Greatest # of Jobs

Major Highways

Water Bodies

Source: United States Census Bureau, LODES Employment Survey (2021)



Town Workers' Home Locations

Fewest # of Homes

Greatest # of Homes

Major Highways

Water Bodies

Source: United States Census Bureau, LODES Employment Survey (2021)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A number of regional agencies tackle economic development in and around the Town. A quick summary of the major players is described here.

The **Town of Ridgeland** offers a step by step process to help any new or established business understand what it takes to set up a new business in the community. They provide a "New Business Guide" with details on how to establish a business in the Town and a list of helpful contacts. The Town also provides a "Market Guide," references, and resources from the **Southern Carolina Alliance (SCA)**. At the time of this writing, the Town is promoting the Moultrie Tract for future economic development. The site is 670 acres with direct access to I-95 and gas, as well as nearby rail access.

Jasper County Economic Development is a member of the SCA. Jasper County Economic Development is the primary economic development entity in the County, identifying sites and buildings available for commercial and industrial uses, and working on recruitment efforts for new industries. The South Carolina Alliance is a nonprofit organization with a mission to attract companies to create good jobs in South Carolina. SCA works primarily in industrial recruitment. However, they also assist with marketing, product development, grant administration, project management, licensing and permitting, environmental and engineering studies, site preparation, and public relations on behalf of regional industry.

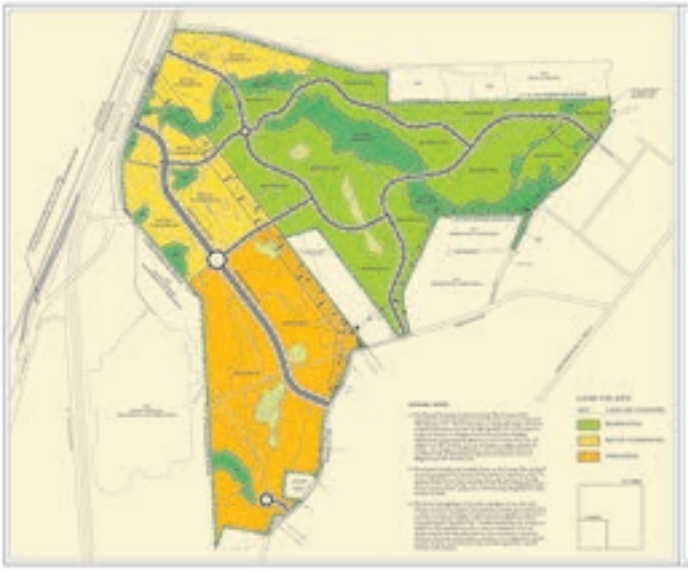
The **Jasper County Chamber of Commerce** is dedicated to stimulating growth and development in the County, with a special emphasis on advancing scientific, educational, charitable, commercial, civic, industrial, agricultural, and general interest of the area it serves. The Chamber primarily serves in a networking, marketing, and advisory role to business owners.

South Carolina Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a private organization that aims to advance South Carolina's economic development by helping entrepreneurs grow successful businesses. The SBDC is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, with additional funding from state and local governments, private enterprises, and institutions of higher learning.

Every year, thousands of small business owners turn to the SC SBDC for private consulting. The SBDC provides a number of resources and training programs that transcend across industries. In the past 5 years, they have helped more than 33,200 South Carolina entrepreneurs create or retain more than 13,000 jobs. During this period, they have also assisted in starting up over 1,000 new ventures, generating over $427 million in capital formation, and securing more than $115 million in government contracts.

Though there are not any SC SBDC locations in Jasper County, there are two locations in neighboring Beaufort County. One is located at the USCB Gateway to Hilton Head Campus in Bluffton and the other is at the USCB Historic Beaufort Campus in Beaufort.

▼ MOULTRIE TRACT CONCEPT PLAN



NATURAL RESOURCES

A natural resource element considers plant and animal habitats, wetlands, topography, soil, and similar factors.

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Ridgeland and the entire Lowcountry is known for its natural beauty, characterized by a variety of natural resources. These resources offer a range of outdoor recreation and education opportunities for residents and visitors alike. However, this complex and dynamic environment also presents challenges in terms of ecological stewardship. This section provides a summary of the major natural resources in and around Ridgeland.

GEOGRAPHY

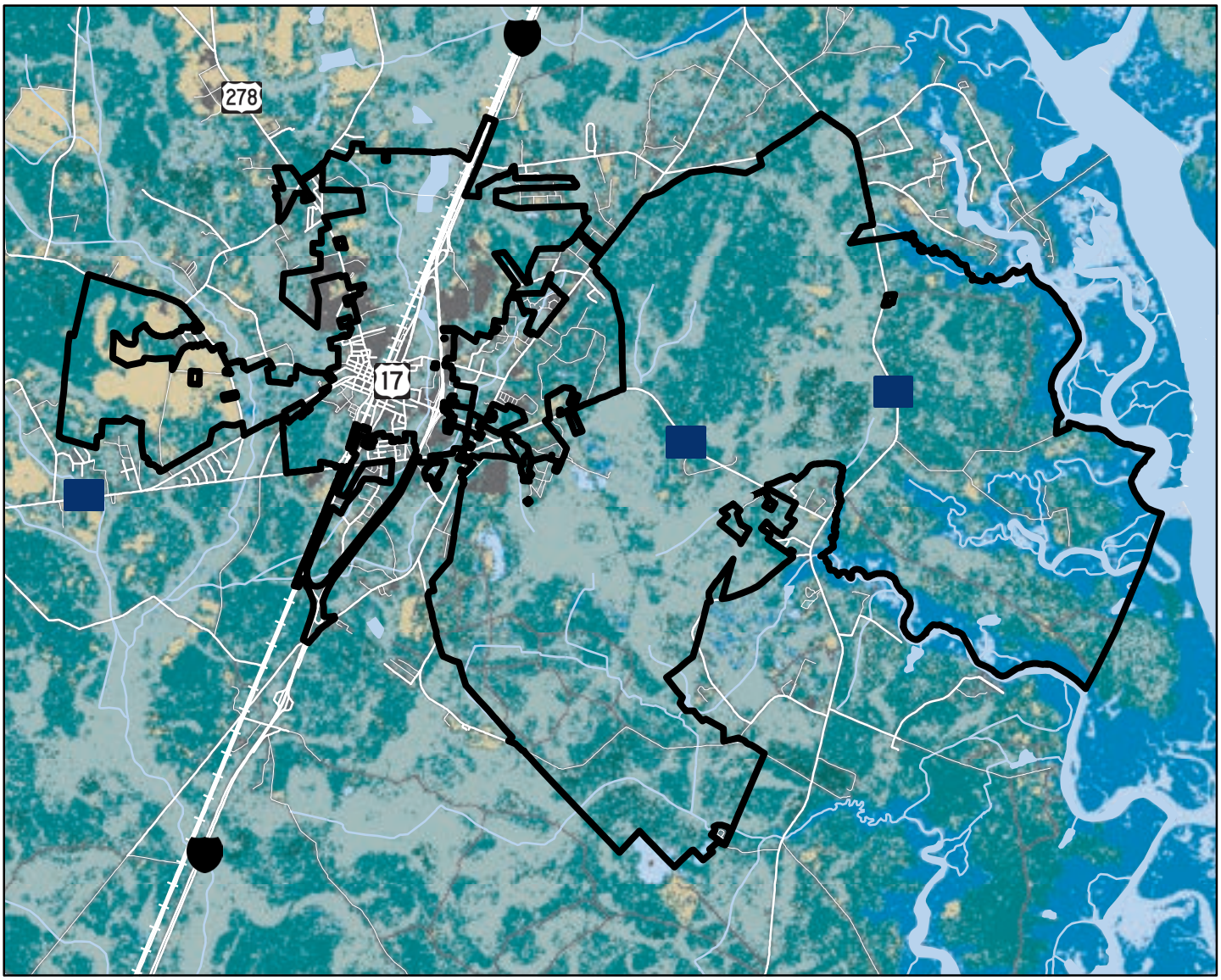
The Town is situated on a sandy ridge that is some of the highest land in Jasper County. This ridge is how the Town both got its name and its motto as "the high point of the lowcountry." Given its proximity to the coast, this high ridge is still relatively low, sitting around 62 feet above sea level. The Town is situated just 31 miles north of Savannah, Georgia and 75 miles southwest of Charleston, South Carolina.

LAND COVER

The map on the following page displays land cover in and around Ridgeland, as captured by the National Land Cover Database (NLCD). The NLCD provides nationwide data on land cover and land cover change that illustrates the ways in which land throughout the country is actively used. The NLCD is updated regularly, providing an opportunity to examine changes in land cover over time. Some statistics were pulled on land cover changes in Ridgeland between 2013 and 2023, and are shown in the table below. As can be seen, there was a significant increase in the area consumed by wetlands (more than 3,500 additional acres), as well as a significant loss of forestland (over 4,000 acres). The subsequent maps display these shifts in wetlands and forestland between 2013 and 2023. Comparing the change in wetlands, forestland, and developed land over this past decade, it seems that forestland is being lost through a combination of development and wetland migration.

▼ TABLE 6 CHANGE IN LAND COVER WITHIN TOWN

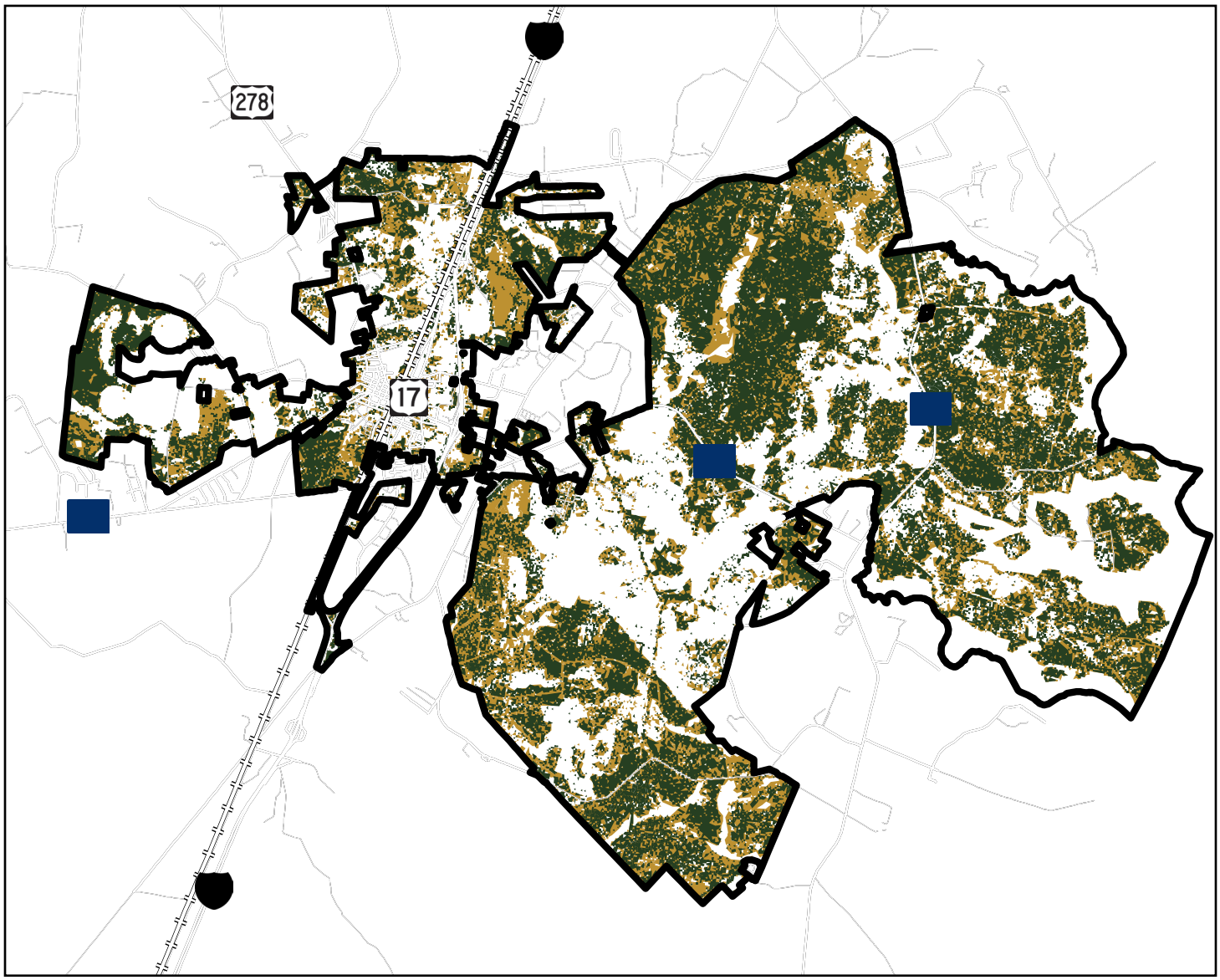
Land Cover	2013		2023 Acres		Change in Land Cover (2013 - 2023)
	Acres	% of Area	Acres	% of Area	
Water	405	1.4%	615	2.2%	+ 0.7%
Wetlands	10,126	35.4%	13,692	47.9%	+ 12.5%
Farmland	1,474	5.2%	1,445	5.1%	- 0.1%
Forestland	14,717	51.5%	10,434	36.5%	- 15.0%
Developed Land	1,826	6.4%	2,373	8.3%	+ 1.9%



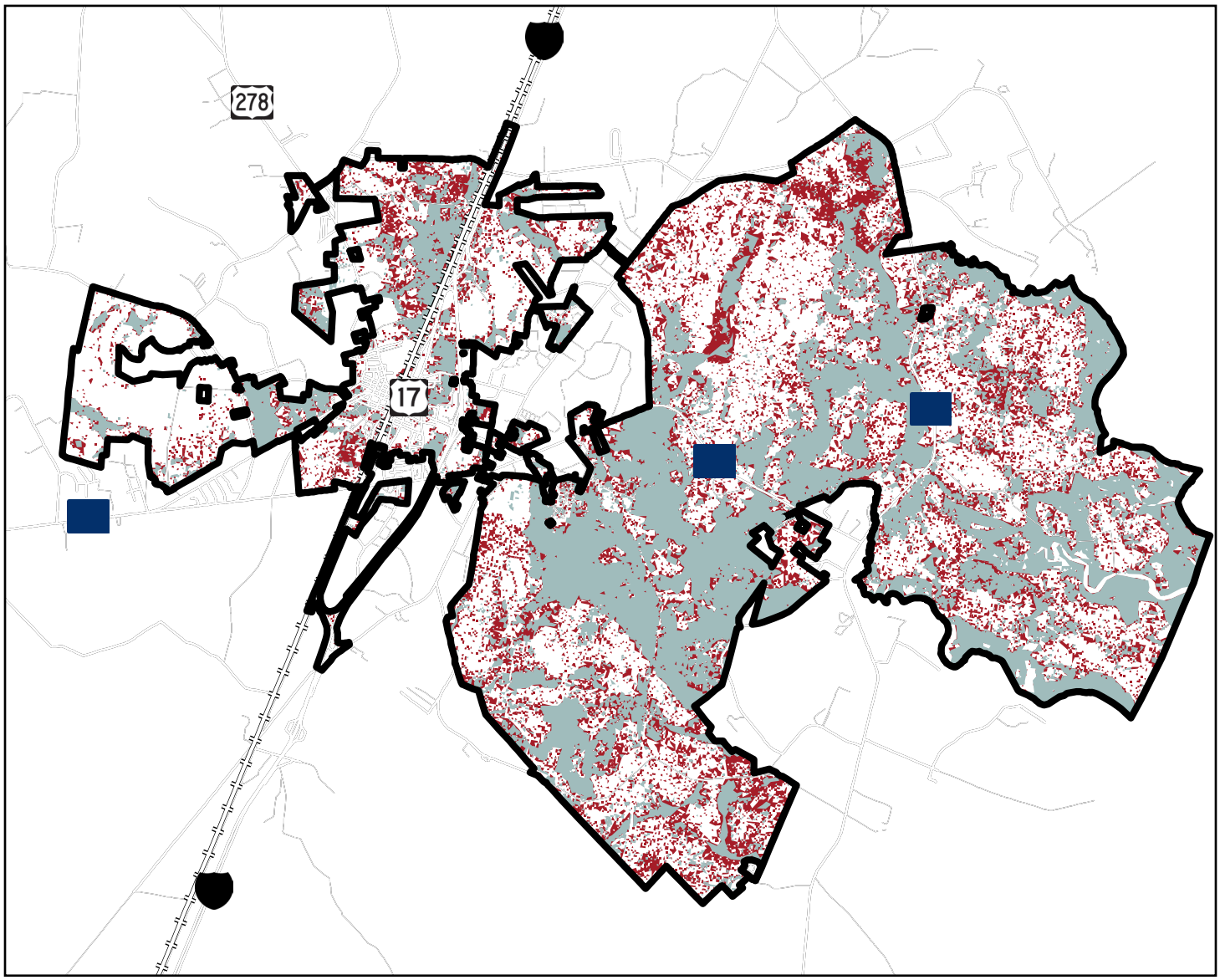
Water Bodies
Streams
Wetlands
Forests
Shrubland
Cropland
Developed Land

Ridgeland Boundary
Roads
Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service



Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service



Wetlands (2023)

Wetlands (2013)

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

According to the United States Department of Agriculture's most recent soil survey (2023), the majority of the soil within Ridgeland is considered farmland of statewide importance. Farmland of statewide importance is determined by State agencies and is generally land that includes areas of soil that nearly meet the requirements for prime farmland. These lands could economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some areas may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable.

On the edges of Ridgeland, particularly on its western boundary, there is a good amount of prime farmland. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban, built-up, or water areas. The soil quality is notable and prime farmland is of major importance in meeting the Nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber.

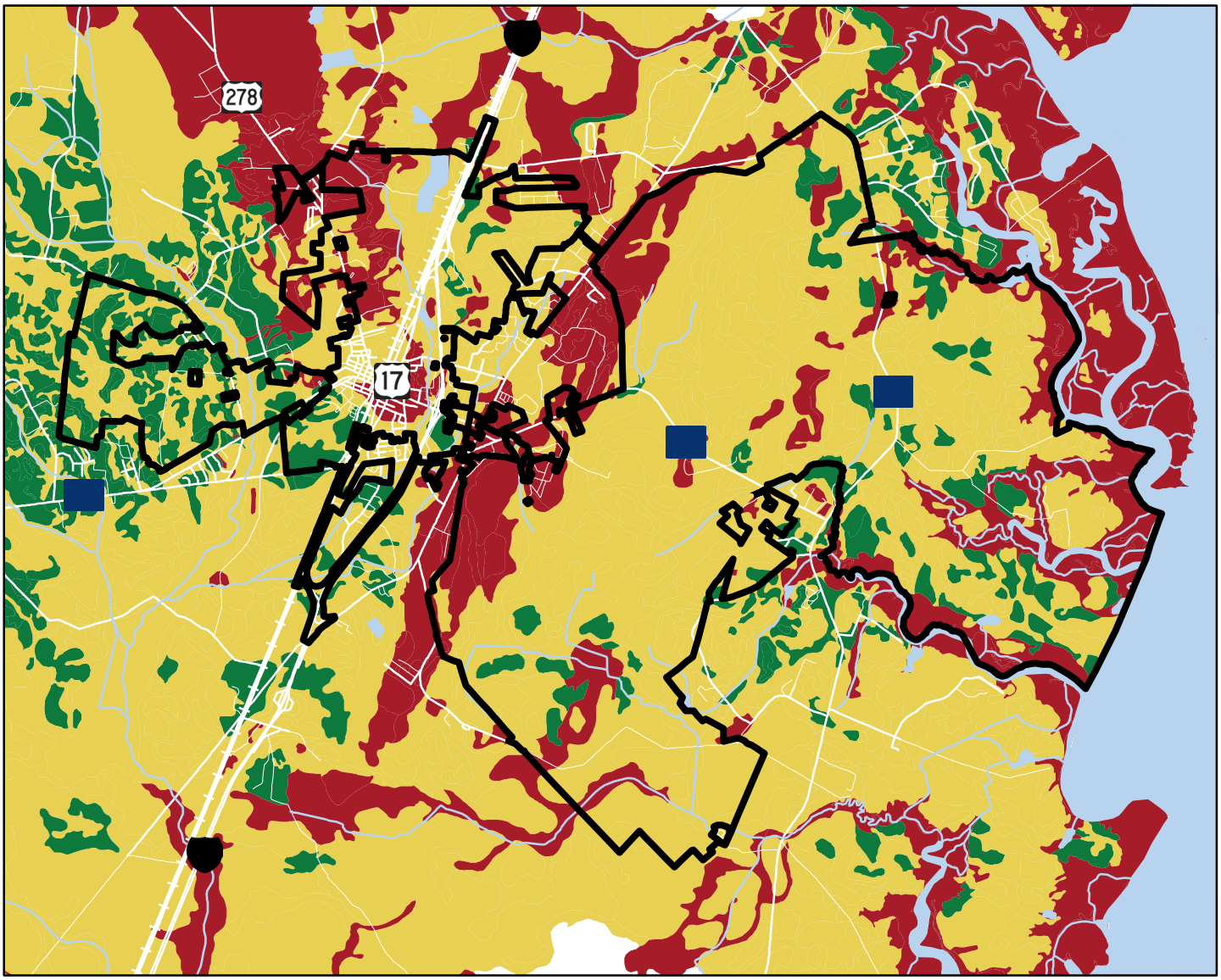
There are also large swaths of land in and around Ridgeland, particularly along water bodies, that are not considered to be high quality soils. Each of these three soil characteristics are delineated on the map on the following page.

Soils can also be rated based on their susceptibility to degradation and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) does this through the "Fragile Soil Index." Fragile soils are those that are most vulnerable to degradation. In other words, they have a low resistance to degradation processes. They tend to be highly susceptible to erosion and can have a low capacity to recover after degradation has occurred (low resilience).

Fragile soils are generally characterized by a low content of organic matter, low aggregate stability, and weak soil structure. They are generally located on sloping ground, have sparse plant cover, and tend to be in arid or semiarid regions. The fragile soil index can be used for conservation and watershed planning to assist in identifying soils and areas highly vulnerable to degradation.

Depending on inherent soil characteristics and the climate, soils can vary from highly resistant, or stable, to vulnerable and extremely sensitive to degradation. Under stress, fragile soils can degrade to a new altered state, which may be less favorable or unfavorable for plant growth and less capable of performing soil functions. To assess the fragility of the soil, indicators include organic matter, soil structure, rooting depth, vegetative cover, slope, and aridity.

The fragile soil index map displays fragile soils in and around Ridgeland. Much of the prime farmland is also moderately fragile. Additionally, a significant amount of moderately fragile soil runs north - south along the Town's eastern boundary. Some of the land bordering Ridgeland's northern and western boundaries is also slightly fragile. Over time, it will be important to monitor these areas, particularly those on the eastern side of Town, where they meet water, to ensure banks remain stabilized.



Prime Farmland

Farmland of Statewide Importance

Not Prime Farmland

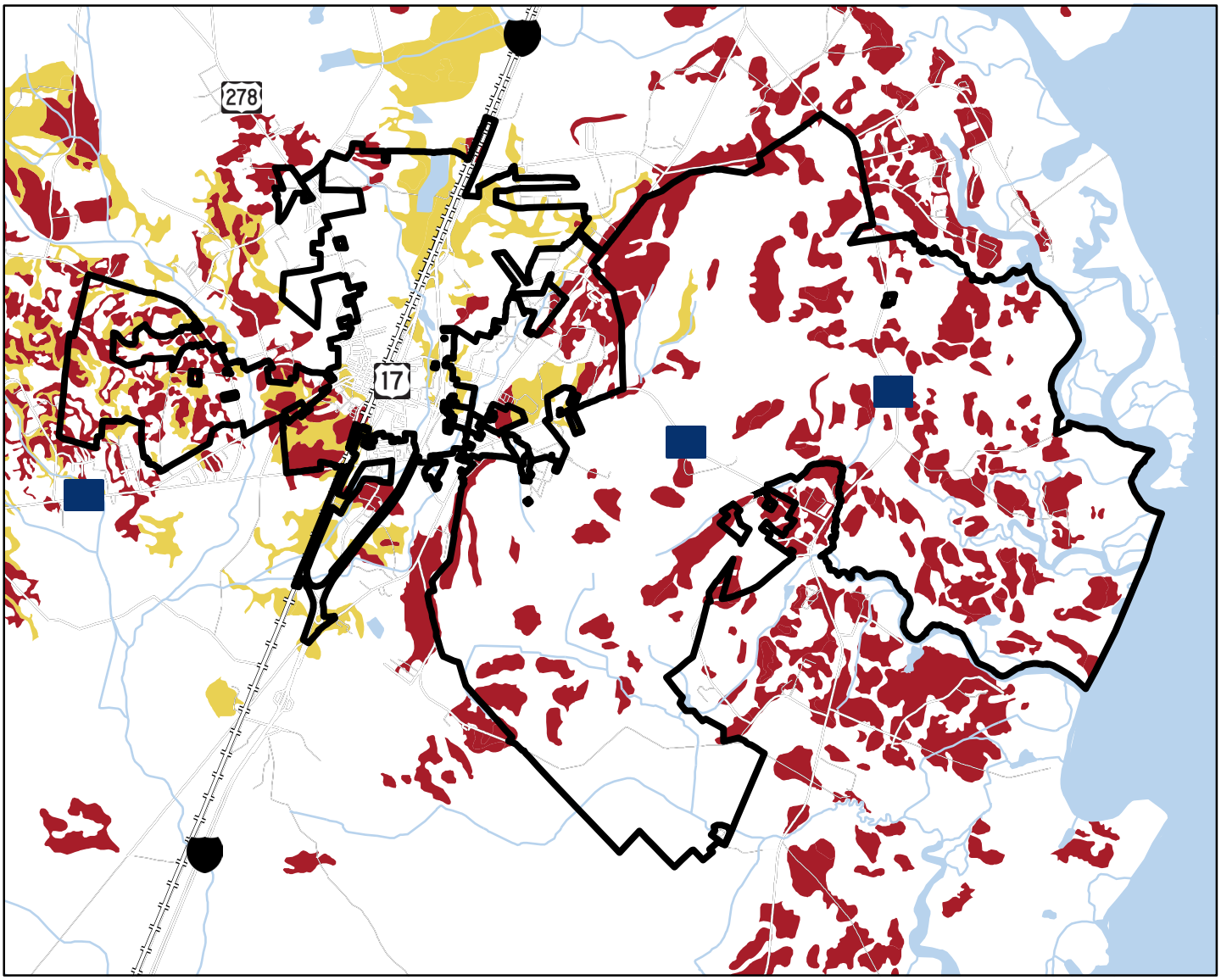
Water

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Web Soil Service



Slightly Fragile Soil

Moderately Fragile Soil

Water

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Web Soil Service

WATERSHEDS

Ridgeland is within two major river basins: the Savannah River Basin on the western side of Town and the Salkehatchie River Basin on the eastern side of Town. Each major river basin includes a series of watersheds (divided into numerous classes of watersheds) that flow from the Upper and Lower Coastal Plain to the Coastal Zone region. A large portion of the Town is within the Broad - St. Helena Watershed and the most western portion of Ridgeland is in the Calibogue Sound - Wright River Watershed. These watershed boundaries identify areas of land and water that drain to a central point. What happens on land within a watershed affects our water, as rain water and similar events carry surface water and pollutants across land into the Coosawhatchie River and Port Royal Sound.

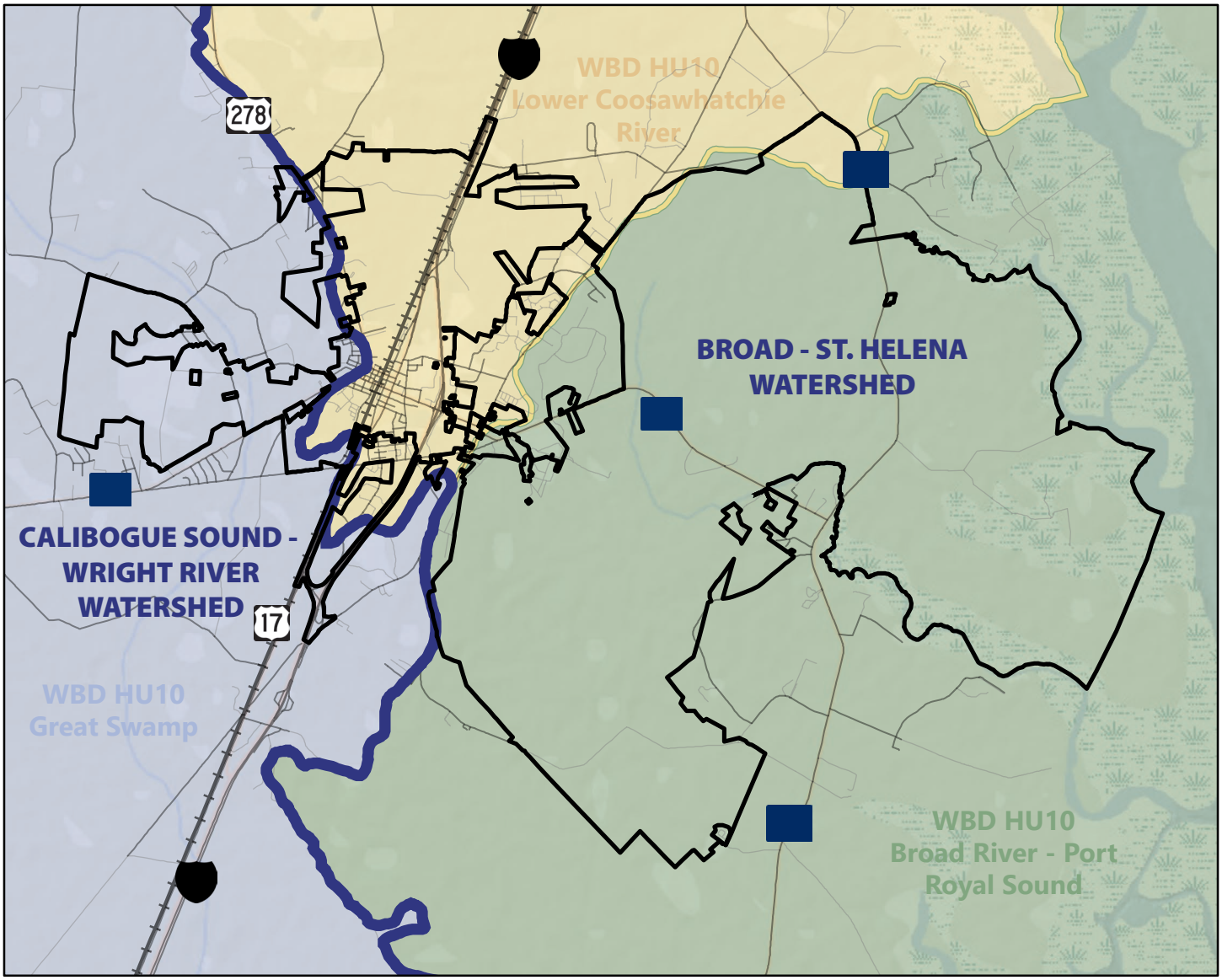
IMPAIRED WATERS

The most southern portion of the Town limits and a surrounding 31.5 square mile area is a TMDL watershed, which is a watershed who's pollutants are limited and monitored by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) in an effort to reduce pollutants. In Hazzard Creek, just southeast of the Town, there are three shellfish monitoring stations. Based on recent data, these three monitoring stations are not meeting the fecal coliform water quality standards for shellfish harvesting waters. From the headwaters to station 17-25, the area is classified as 'prohibited' due to the presence of a permitted landfill. Downstream from station 17-25 to 17-17 is classified as 'restricted,' though it is meeting the water quality standards established by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules and regulations. The restricted area extends to the next downstream station that is meeting the water quality standards. Given water quality concerns, the public is prohibited from harvesting shellfish in the restricted areas.

There are also impaired waters on the Town's most eastern boundary, also due to fecal coliform water quality standards not being met in shellfish harvesting waters. This area is in Boyd Creek, near Deloss Point and Murad Road. As shown on the impaired waters map, additional impaired waters are on the northern edge, near Roseland Plantation Drive. These areas are on the 303(d) list of impaired waters, which is developed by the SCDES every two years and is required to be maintained per the EPA's Clean Water Act.

PORT ROYAL SOUND MODEL

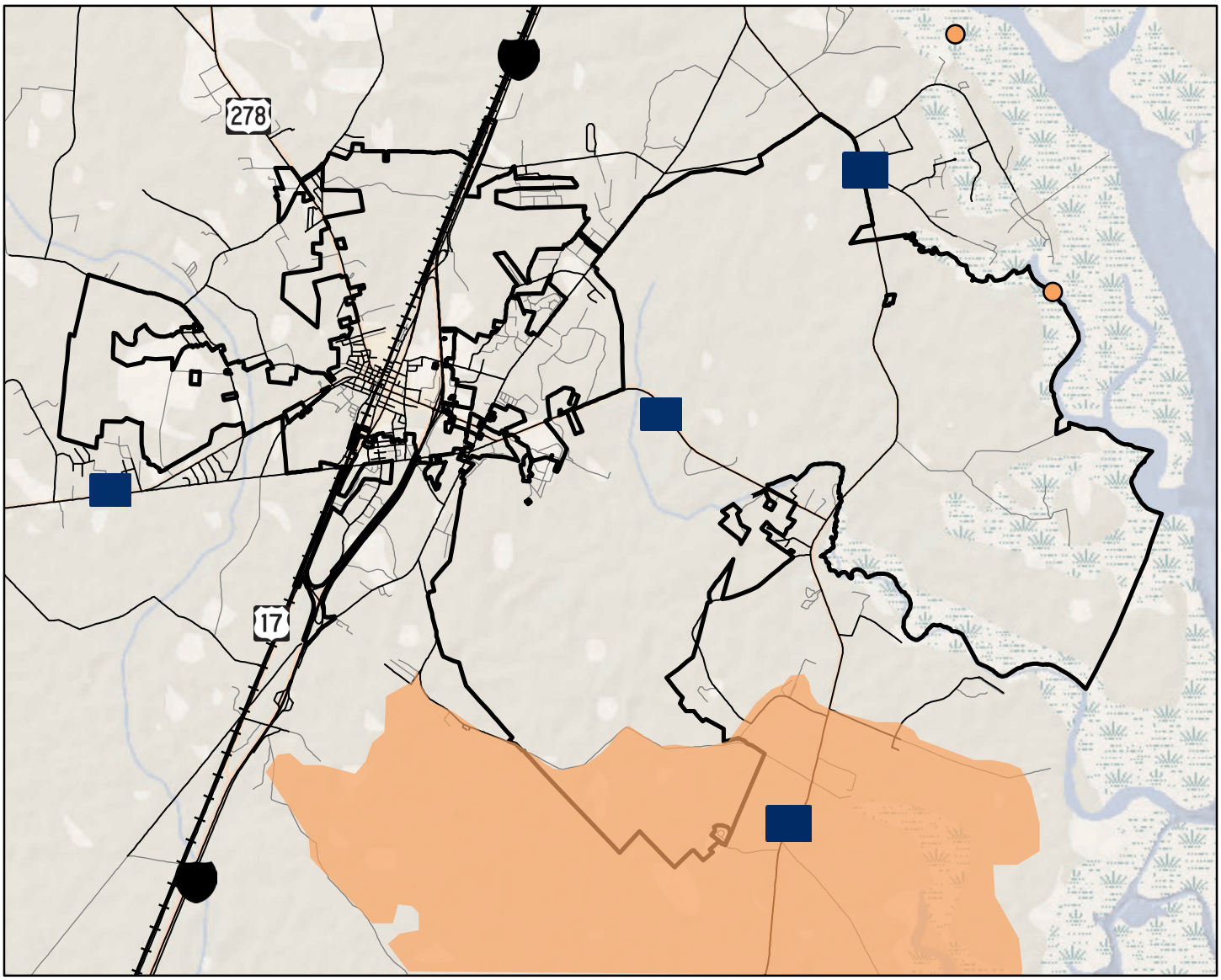
The Port Royal Sound Watershed, which covers much of eastern Ridgeland, is a unique ecosystem comprised of expansive salt marsh, nutrient-rich waters, tidal creeks, agricultural fields, large timber tracts, and rapidly developing urban and suburban areas. The watershed is comprised of over one million acres of land and over 2,100 miles of shoreline. Nearly 75% of the watershed is dominated by forest, wetlands, or open water. The Nature Conservancy and partners have recognized the threat to the Port Royal Sound Watershed and are working together to prioritize areas that are most important for protecting the long-term integrity of this unique ecosystem. The Nature Conservancy created a GIS model to help rank areas by conservation values, prioritizing those areas which are in most need of protection. Two sub-modules focused on (1) water quality priority index to identify areas to protect water quality and (2) flooding priority index to identify locations which will be most affected by flooding events. Significant portions of the Town were identified as priorities for protection, with the greatest priority on the Town's eastern boundary.



WATERSHED NAMES

- Major Watershed Boundary
- Great Swamp Sub-Watershed
- Lower Coosawhatchie River Sub-Watershed
- Broad River - Port Royal Sound Sub-Watershed
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Roads
- Railroads

Source: United States Geological Services (USGS) Watershed Boundary Dataset



WATERSHED NAMES

Impaired Waters (303(d) list)

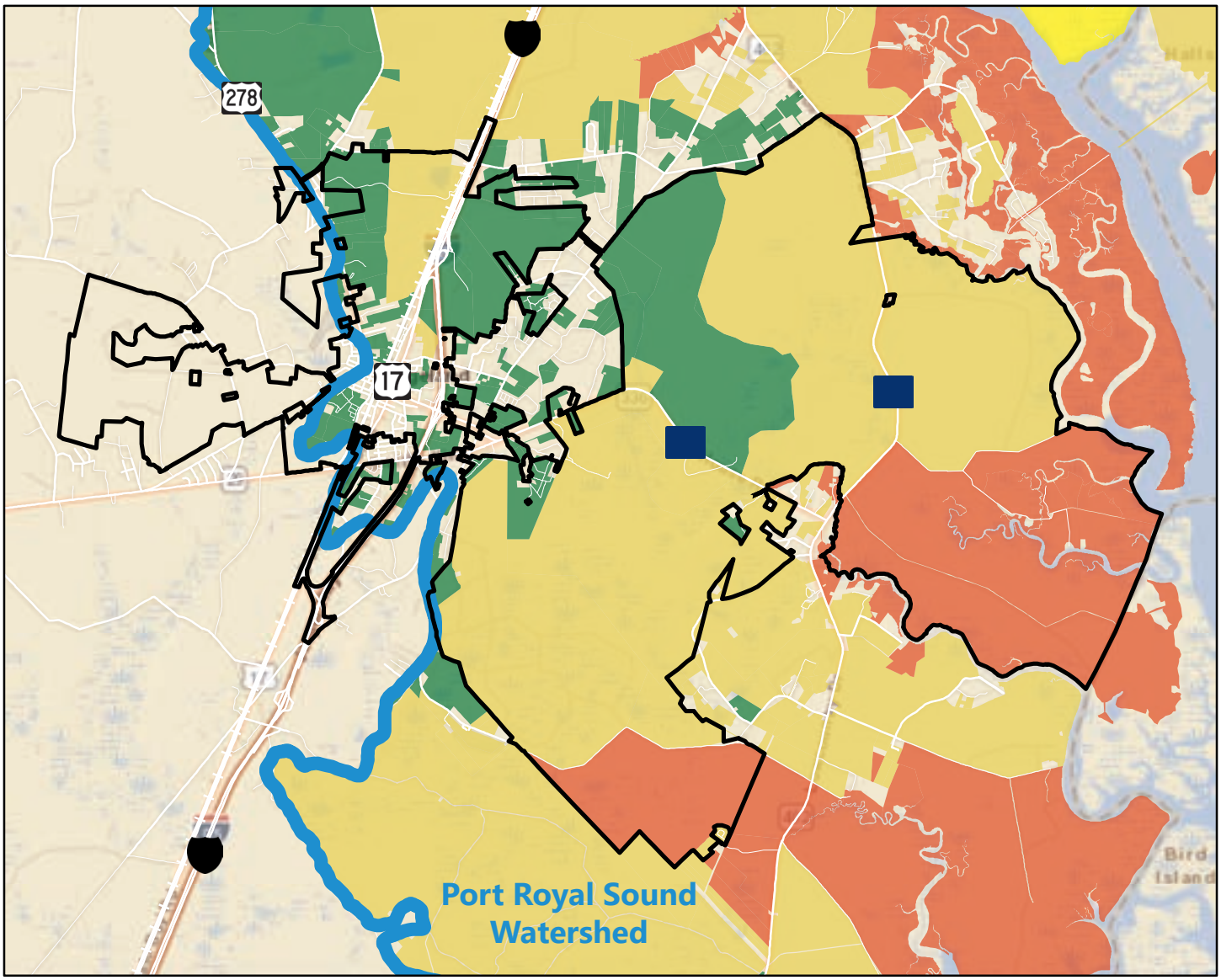
TMDL Watersheds

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI)



Watershed Prioritization Score

- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Watershed Boundary
- Railroads

Source: Port Royal Sound Watershed Model, The Nature Conservancy

WETLANDS AND WATER BODIES

As mentioned at the beginning of this Plan Element, Ridgeland and its surroundings have a very dominant marsh / wetland environment. The Coosawhatchie River runs just east of Ridgeland, touching the Town's most eastern boundaries. At Daws Island, just southeast of Ridgeland, the River merges with the Chechessee and Beaufort Rivers before running into the Port Royal Sound and eventually out to the Atlantic Ocean.

Much of the River itself is considered to be estuarine and marine deepwater; while the immediately surrounding land is estuarine or marine wetlands. Portions of the deepwater and estuarine / marine wetlands extend into the Town's eastern boundaries. Throughout the Town and its surrounding areas are a significant amount of freshwater forested / shrub wetlands. These are concentrated in large swaths that run across the northern, eastern, and western edges of the Town. A very large wetland is concentrated just south of Ridgeland's boundary as well and a notable concentration of freshwater emergent wetlands is on the Genesis Tract. Many of the freshwater emergent wetlands are currently in conservation. Wetlands are an important aspect to consider, as they both provide natural habitats and limit the developability of land.

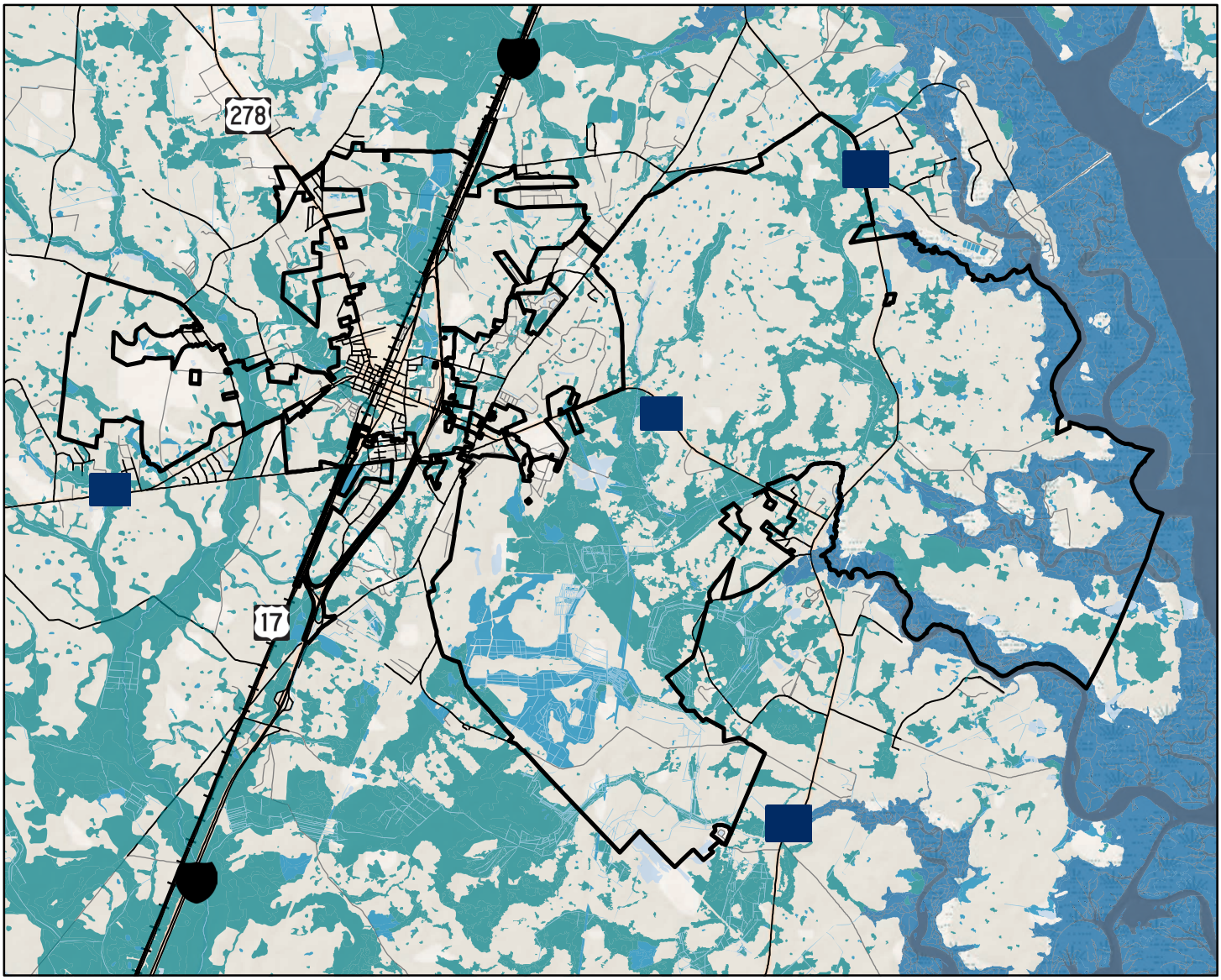
CONSERVATION LAND

According to the Nature Conservancy, there are over 4,000 acres of land in the Town that are protected from development through conservation. This includes over 2,000 acres of land protected through a private conservation easement on the Genesis Tract, as well as another 2,000 acres of land protected through a private conservation easement on the Good Hope Tract.

Additionally, the County manages Volunteer Park, which is a nine acre property in the Town that is open to the public and protected from development. The Town owns a 70 acre property preserved from development, as well as a couple two-acre parcels which are open to the public and protected from development. This includes Harold Turpin Park and the Blue Heron Nature Trail with an associated park and pond.

In total, almost 15% of the Town's land area is protected from development. There are significant conservation areas outside of the Town limits, particularly along its northern and western boundaries. The majority of these are protected through private conservation easements, though there are also state and federal conservation lands in the vicinity of Ridgeland.





Ponds and Lakes

Riverines

Freshwater Emergent Wetland

Freshwater Forested / Shrub Wetland

Estuarine and Marine Wetland

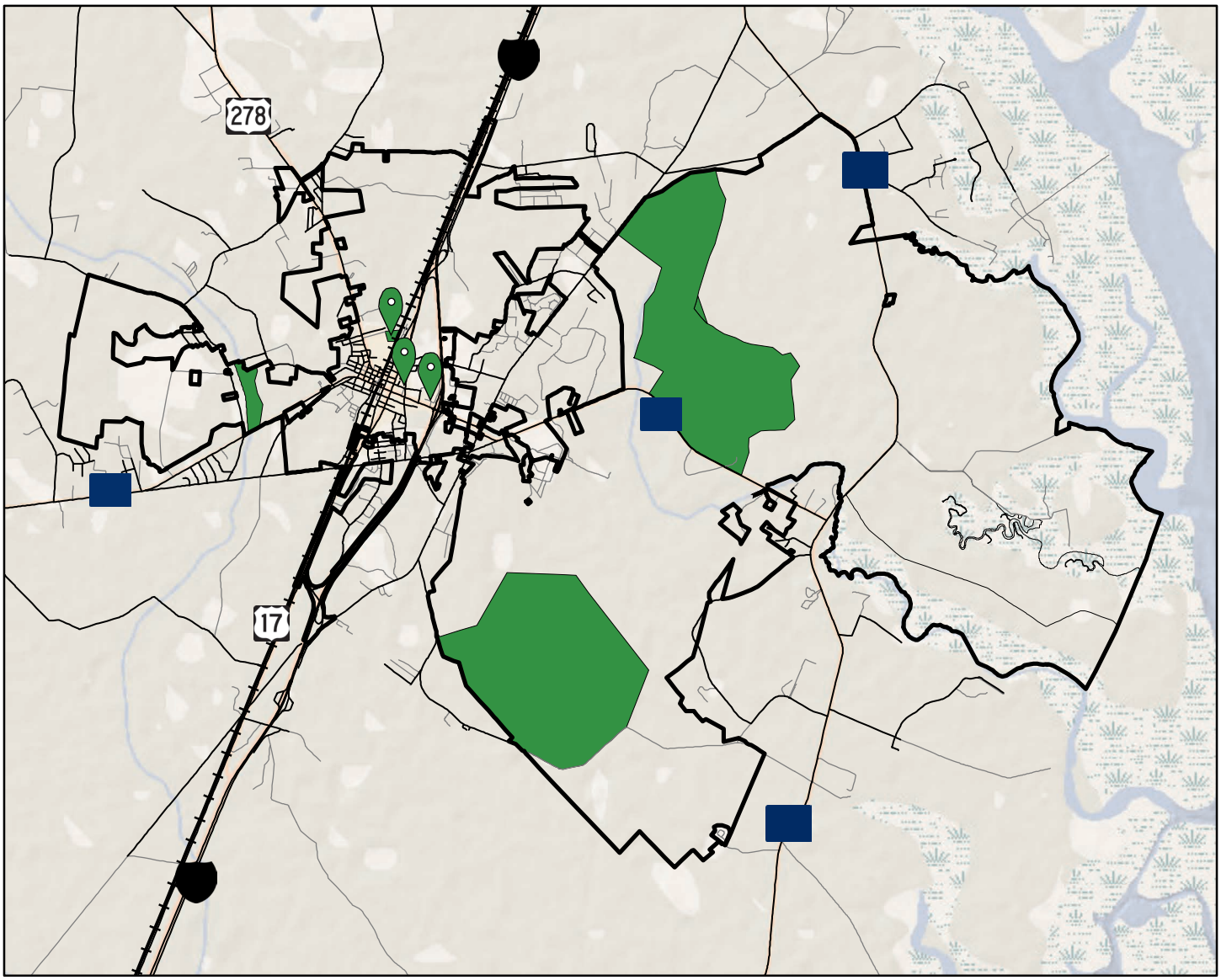
Estuarine and Marine Deepwater

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI)



Source: Port Royal Sound Watershed Model, The Nature Conservancy

CULTURAL RESOURCES

A cultural resources element considers historic buildings, unique scenic resources, and other cultural resources.

HISTORY

Before the establishment of Ridgeland, the area was home to Native American tribes, particularly the Yamasee and other coastal groups, who lived off the land, hunting, fishing, and cultivating crops. During the 17th and 18th centuries, European settlers, mostly of English descent, began to establish plantations in the surrounding Lowcountry, and the area was developed primarily for rice and indigo farming, both of which were profitable in the humid, swampy environment.

Ridgeland was originally known as "Gopher Hill," named after the local population of gopher tortoises. It was primarily a small agricultural community, with cotton plantations playing a central role in the local economy. The Town's location on a natural ridge made it less prone to flooding than other areas of the Lowcountry, contributing to its settlement and development.

The arrival of the Charleston and Savannah Railway in the 1870s was a turning point for the area. The railroad provided crucial transportation links for agricultural products, connecting the region to larger markets in Charleston, Savannah, and beyond. With this increased connectivity, Gopher Hill began to grow, and in 1894, the Town was officially renamed Ridgeland.

Ridgeland's growth continued into the 20th century, particularly after Jasper County was formed in 1912 from parts of Beaufort and Hampton counties. Ridgeland became the county seat, making it an administrative and commercial hub for the region.

The construction of U.S. Highway 17 in the 1920s, followed by Interstate 95 in the mid-20th century, further enhanced the Town's accessibility and importance as a transportation crossroads.

Agriculture remained the economic backbone of Ridgeland throughout much of the 20th century, though the development of tourism along the nearby South Carolina coast also brought new opportunities. The proximity to Hilton Head Island, Savannah, and Charleston made Ridgeland a convenient stopover point for travelers.

In the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st, Ridgeland evolved with a mix of modern developments, but it retained much of its small-town charm. While agriculture remains part of its heritage, the town has seen growth in residential communities, light industry, and businesses catering to travelers along the I-95 corridor. Its location has made it a commuter town for people working in larger nearby cities, particularly Hilton Head and Savannah.

Ridgeland has a number of historic sites and buildings that reflect its rich past. These include old plantation homes, churches, and civic buildings that have stood the test of time. One of the most notable landmarks is the Blue Heron Nature Center, which offers visitors a glimpse into the natural environment that has long been a part of Ridgeland's character.

NATIONAL REGISTER SITES

Within (and just adjacent to) the Town, there are six properties on the National Register of Historic Places. These sites are described below.



(1) The Jasper County Courthouse was built in 1915 and is the first and only courthouse for the County. It's a two-story brick Georgian Revival building. The courthouse's iconic portico, heraldic shield, and large size were devices intended to establish and reinforce the authority of the newly established county government. The courthouse was listed on the National Register in 1981.



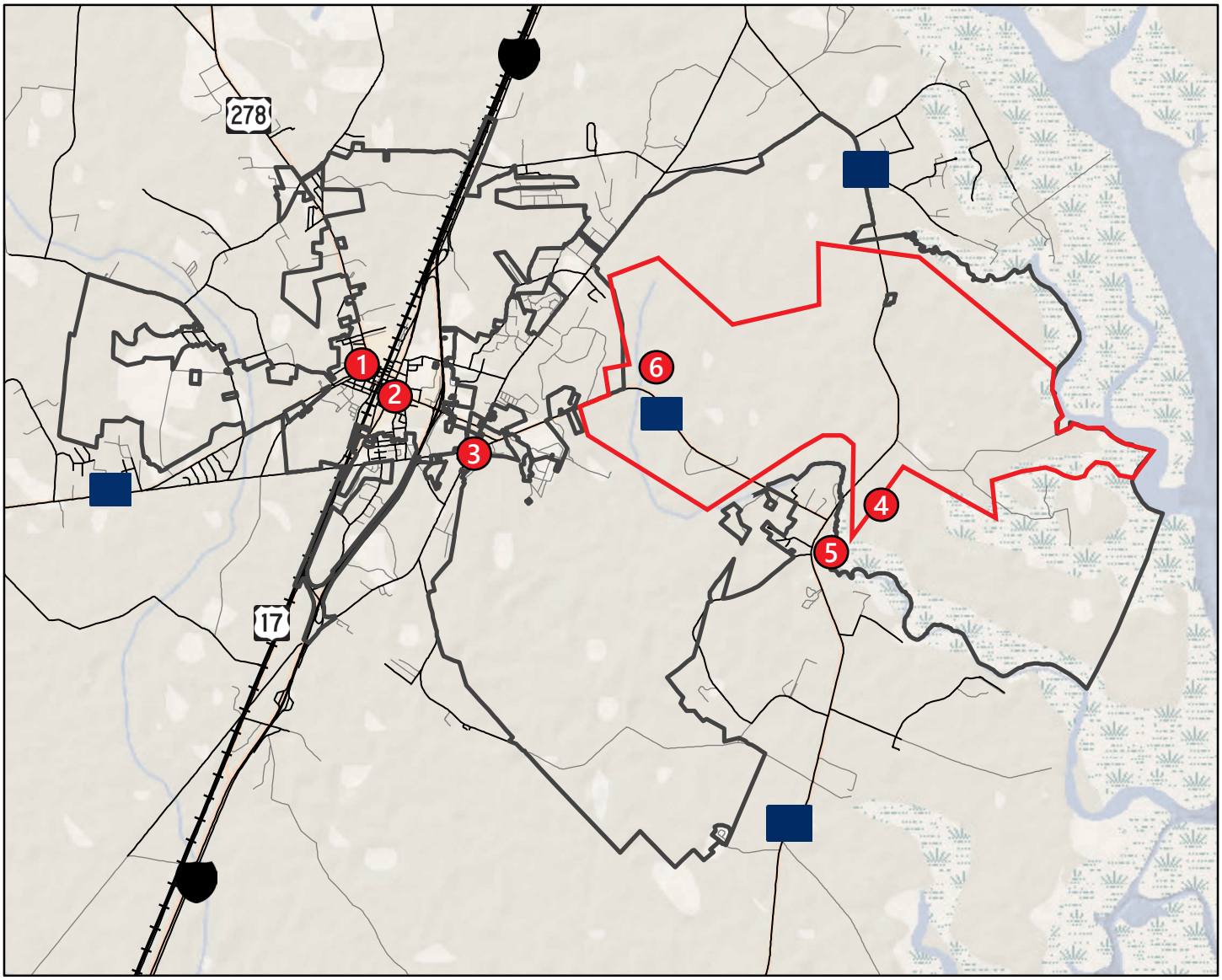
(2) The Sinclair Service Station was constructed in 1937 and is significant because it was developed as a result of the US-17 construction. The station served visitors traveling between Florida and the northeast, and remained in operation until 1978, when the demand for services was relocated to areas adjacent to I-95. The building was added to the National Register in 2015 and is also architecturally significant, as it's a well-preserved example of a Mission Revival style service station.



(3) The Church of the Holy Trinity was constructed around 1858 and is associated with an Episcopal congregation formed in the early 19th century by Grahamville planters. The church is architecturally significant as a notable example of the Carpenter Gothic style, which developed as a carpenter's interpretation of the English Gothic Revival architecture of the early 19th century. The church was listed in the National Register in 1982.



(4) Old House Plantation, also known as Daniel Heyward Plantation, is a historic plantation and grave. The plantation was first settled in 1743 and was likely active through the early 19th century. It was the birthplace and burial site of the founding father Thomas Heyward, Jr., one of South Carolina's signers of the Declaration of Independence. The plantation was added to the National Register in 1997 and an archaeological dig was recently conducted at the site. Located just outside Town, the Jasper County 250 Committee has plans to add a boardwalk, walking path, interpretive signs, and a parking lot on this property.



National Register Structures

National Register Sites

Ridgeland Boundary

Major Highways

Local Roads

Railroads

Source: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior



(5) The White Hall Plantation House Ruins and Oak Avenue are the remnants of an eighteenth century plantation house and grounds which gained additional significance as a component of an early-to-mid-twentieth century hunting plantation incorporating historic resources. The plantation house was a substantial building, built between 1771 and 1776, then enlarged between 1786 and 1791. The house at White Hall burned around 1870 and was not renovated or occupied afterward. It is privately-owned and was listed on the National Register in 2000. It is just outside the Town's limits

(6) Honey Hill / Boyd's Neck Battlefield is significant as the site of the Civil War Battle of Honey Hill (November 30, 1864), as well as the Federal enclave on Boyd's Neck and other related areas of the Honey Hill campaign (November 1864 to January 1865). The Battle of Honey Hill was one of the three largest Civil War battles fought in South Carolina, and was one of the most notable Civil War engagements involving African American troops. The battlefield and surrounding landscape is generally undeveloped and forested. The 1864 road network is substantially intact, and extensive Civil War earthworks are extant and well-preserved on the property. The property was listed on the National Register in 2004.

The land the main battle site sits on is owned by the Town of Ridgeland. It recently become part of the National Park system and is in the process of being improved to become an active tourist destination with walking trails, interpretive signs, a gazebo, bathrooms, parking lot and more. The Friends of Honey Hill are managing and overseeing the site buildout.



ELIGIBLE SITES

According to the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, there are additional sites in Town which may be eligible for historic recognition. This includes the Ridgeland Centralized Graded School, the Wise House, R and M Plantation, and Euhaw Baptist Church.

The Centralized Graded School, located adjacent to Turpin Park, was constructed in 1928 and once housed the Jasper County Health Department but is currently vacant. According to the last Plan, the structure was in relatively good shape for its age, but would cost close to $1M to repair and uplift.



Originally known as Adams Place, located at 128 E Adams Street, is a home built 1900-1906. After renovations in the early 1920s, the house became known as the Wise House. In a recent survey, it was determined that renovations may have been made according to J.D. Newcomer, a well-known Charleston architect. Additional research is needed to determine this site's eligibility for National Register recognition.

A historical survey of the County identified the R and M Plantation house as a potential historic resource that would require additional research. The house, located on US 278 about 0.8 miles south of the Old House intersection, appears to be from around 1800 but there is not much additional information on the State's website.

▼ R AND M PLANTATION



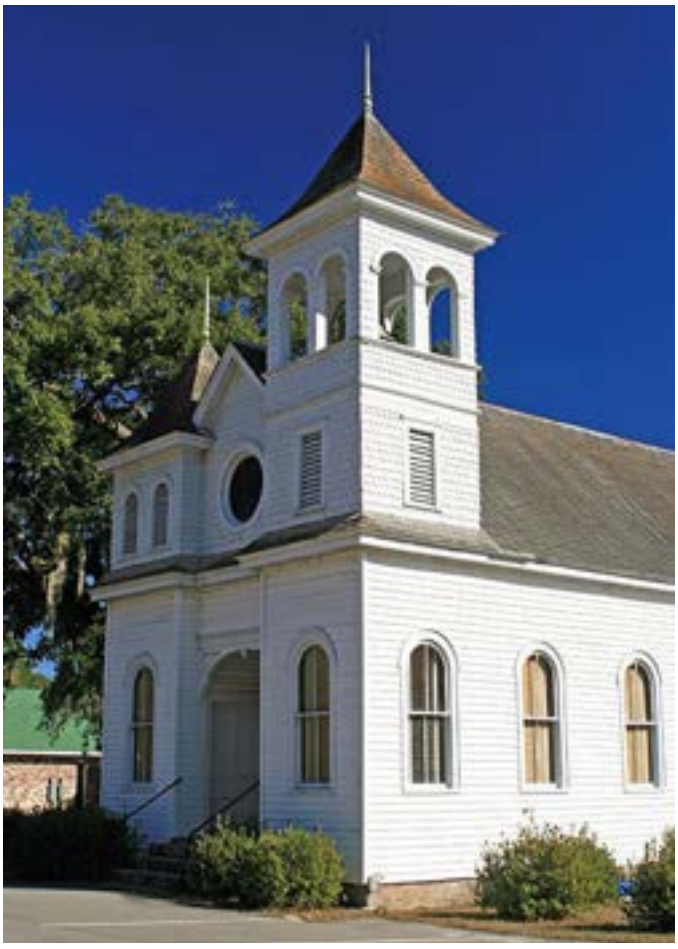
Euhaw Baptist Church was established on Edisto Island around 1686 and is one of the oldest Baptist organizations in the southeast. The Euhaw Baptist Church in Ridgeland was first built in 1751 but subsequently burned in 1857, and again in 1904. The replacement sanctuary was built in 1906.

▼ PRATT MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Though not noted as an eligible historic site by the State's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, the Pratt Memorial Library may have some historical significance to Ridgeland. The structure was built in the early thirties, and was originally used as a school. It was transformed into the Pratt Memorial Library in 1971 and is currently undergoing a major renovation.

▼ EUHAW BAPTIST CHURCH



CULTURAL RESOURCES

Despite its small size, Ridgeland is home to a number of cultural facilities and events. The main festivals, events, and resources in Town are described below.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Each October, Ridgeland holds the **Gopher Hill Festival**, referring to the original name of the Town. The festival originated in 1972 to deliver family friendly fun and entertainment. Events at the festival include pageants, auctions, live music, a fun run, and a parade.

▼ GOPHER HILL FESTIVAL TURTLE RACE



The Town owns a permanent **Farmers Market** structure at 7753 West Main Street, in downtown. The Town previously held events here; though they have had difficulty attracting visitors and have not held an actual Farmers Market there in a few years.

▼ FARMERS MARKET BUILDING



CULTURAL FACILITIES

Located in the fully restored 1930's Sinclair gas station, the **Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage** is a museum and learning facility containing exhibits based on Lowcountry history; particularly related to historic battles in the Civil and Revolutionary wars, and the contribution of Lowcountry veterans. The Morris Center develops programs for school groups, including self-guided tours and lessons based on the Honey Hill Battle, Lowcountry Culinary Traditions, Mitchellville, Reconstruction, and the history of transportation in the region. Adult opportunities at the center include yoga classes, craft workshops, culinary programs, as well as historical lectures. The Morris Center hosts meetings of the Jasper County Historical Society and Friends of Honey Hill.

▼ THE MORRIS CENTER



Additionally, there's a regional library in Ridgeland. The Allendale Hampton Jasper (AHJ) Regional Library and its presence at **the Pratt Library** is discussed more in the Community Facilities Element.

▼ PRATT LIBRARY



PUBLIC ART

The Town maintains a robust portfolio of public art which references the historical and ecological context of the Town, while serving to beautify the landscape and enhance overall sense of place. The Town has made good use of art that can also serve a purpose and function.

There is a **Gopher Tortoise Statue** located in a small park (Gopher Tortoise Square) in Ridgeland. The statue pays tribute to the Town's original name and measures about five feet long. While the area was once home to an abundance of Gopher Tortoises, there are limited tortoises surviving today and they are now a protected endangered species.

▼ GOPHER TORTOISE STATUE



Ridgeland Rocks is a community organization that decorates rocks and hides them in various locations across Ridgeland. The intention of the program is to brighten someone's day by surprising them with a small piece of art and / or inspirational messages.

▼ RIDGELAND ROCKS



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A community facilities element considers water and sewer systems, emergency services, and government facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The community facilities element addresses infrastructure and community programs that are essential to the health and growth of the Town. A comprehensive analysis of these elements is a critical component in the development of priorities for future investments. This Plan will consider the following community facilities:

- Water and Sewer Supply and Treatment
- Storm Water Drainage
- Solid Waste Collection and Disposal
- Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services
- Government Facilities
- Educational Facilities and Libraries
- Public Space and Recreation Facilities

WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM

In 2023, the Town of Ridgeland adopted a Regional Water and Sewer Master Plan, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the existing water and sewer system, as well as potential future impacts to services. The Town owns and maintains a water and sewer system that serves the entire municipal limits, as well as areas outside of Town.

The map on the following page displays Ridgeland's water and sewer service boundary, as well as the adjacent water and sewer service area maintained by the Beaufort-Jasper Water Sewer Authority (BJWSA). BJWSA provides water and sewer services to unincorporated areas of Beaufort and Jasper Counties, and to certain municipal areas by contract. The Town's water and sewer system is served by one water reclamation facility (WRF) - the Jimmy Mixson WRF; and three well sites. The BJWSA water service area is served by two surface water treatment plants, three aquifer-storage recovery wells, nine groundwater supply wells, 18 water pumping stations, and 22 finished water storage facilities. The BJWSA sewer service area is served by eight water reclamation facilities and 515 pump stations.

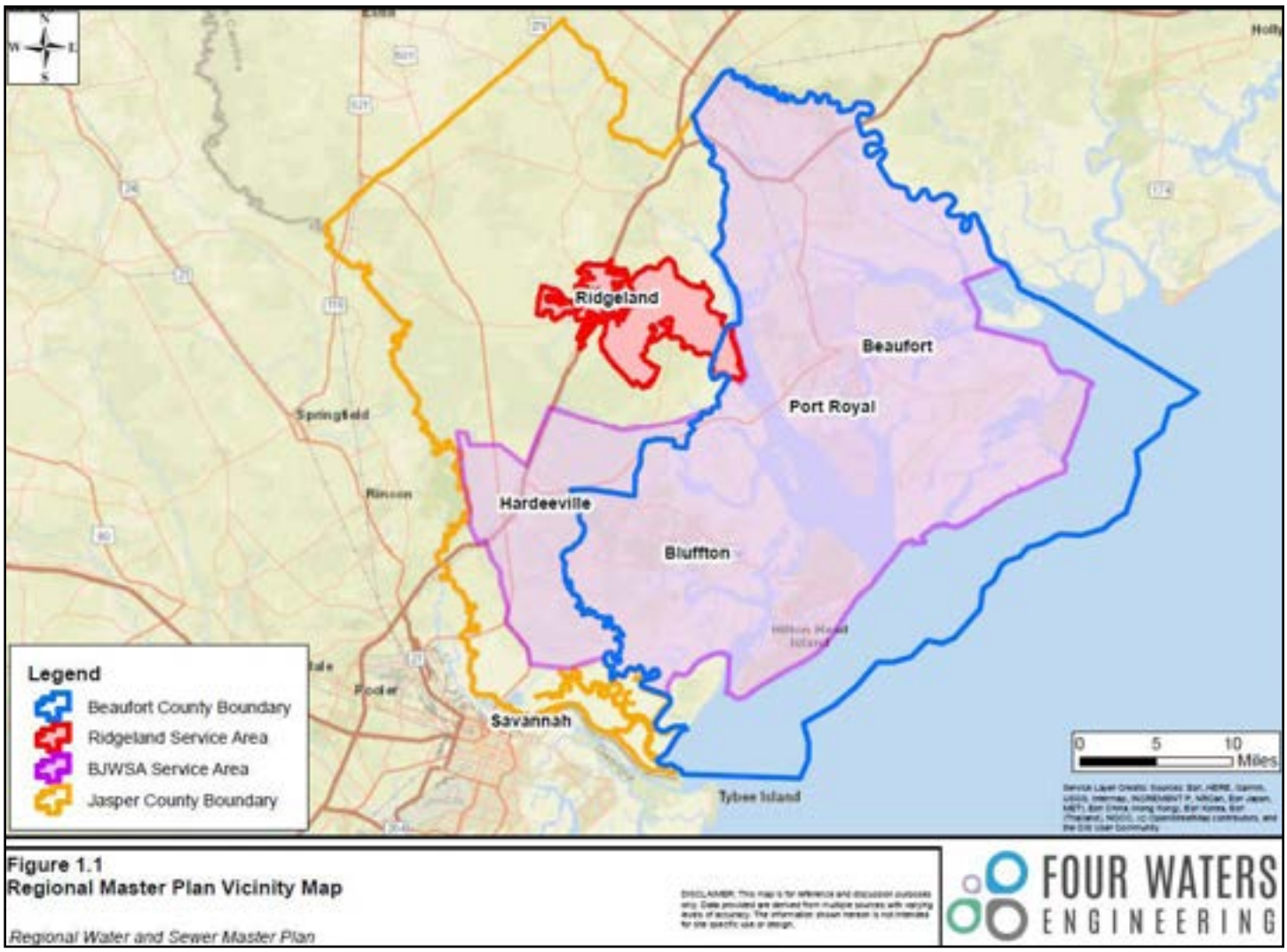
SOURCE WATER AND WATER CAPACITY

The source water for the three wells that are operated and maintained by the Town of Ridgeland is groundwater that is pumped from the upper and middle Floridan Aquifer. While saltwater intrusion is not currently a concern for the Town of Ridgeland, this is something to monitor in the future, as a possible issue that may result from sea level rise and continued migration of saltwater inland. If usage of the groundwater within the Upper and Middle Floridan Aquifers continues at unsustainable rates, saltwater will continue to migrate towards the areas where groundwater is being pumped out.

The water system includes approximately 39.5 miles of water mains. According to the Town's Master Plan (based on the 2021 / 2022 annual average daily flows (AADF)), the three wells in Town are utilizing around 35 - 40% of the permitted water system AADF groundwater withdrawal capacity. Specifically, Well No 1 is utilizing 63 - 66%, Well No 2 is utilizing 26 - 32%, and Well No 3 is utilizing 30 - 36%. However, production / consumption increased 15% from 2021 to 2022, and this is likely to continue increasing with new development. In addition to expansions, some lines will need to be replaced due to their age.

Source: Town of Ridgeland 2023 Regional Water and Sewer Master Plan

▼ FIGURE 10 REGIONAL WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREA BOUNDARIES



SEWER CAPACITY

The Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant is located on Preacher Street, and is fed by fifteen pump stations which are located throughout the Town.

In April of 2021, the Jimmy Mixson WRF was upgraded from an 800,000 gallon per day (GPD) plant to a 1.6 million gallons per day (MGD) state of the art facility capable of meeting stringent discharge limits.

According to the Master Plan, the WRF is operating at 35% of its permitted capacity. While this leaves plenty of capacity for additional development, it will not support all of that which is approved to be developed in the next 20 years. If the Moultrie Tract comes online, the Town will need to consider constructing an additional treatment plant to support this new development.

Source: Town of Ridgeland 2023 Regional Water and Sewer Master Plan

PLANNED EXPANSIONS

The Town's Master Plan anticipated significant growth and development within Ridgeland over the 20-year study period. Based on the available data and population projections generated for the Master Plan, the Town's population is expected to grow over 14 times the current population within the 20-year study period. Based on these estimates, sewer system expansion was estimated to cost $135.5M through 2042 and the water system expansion was estimated to cost $41M in that same time. Considering the extensive development projected in the eastern portion of the Town (primarily through several large, planned developments), the Town is open to partnering with BJWSA in order to meet the projected demands in a cost-effective manner. While development of the eastern portion of the service area is expected to take place over the next 40 years, the central and western portions of the service area are expected to develop over the next 20 years.

STORM WATER DRAINAGE

Currently, stormwater systems in Town are operated by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). Over the past decade, stormwater concerns have grown, as low lying areas have become subject to repeated flooding following storm events. Further, stormwater runoff has caused a few issues for the sewer system, as infiltration into sanitary sewer lines has caused the treatment plant to exceed its rated capacity.

The Town has regulations which permit the amount of impervious surface on developed properties, including reference to the County's stormwater design manual and other regulations within its stormwater design manual. Further, all new development is required to have stormwater controls. While this may solve some of the problems, stormwater planning may need to be addressed regionally in the long term.

SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

The Town of Ridgeland offers curbside trash collection, recycling, and yard waste pick up through a contract with Waste Management. Household trash, recycling, and yard waste, are each picked up one time per week for all residents who subscribe to the service. Ridgeland residents may also utilize any of six Jasper County convenience centers for the disposal of bulk waste and recycling. Two convenience centers are located in Ridgeland, and they are open from 7 am to 7 pm on Mondays, Tuesday, and Thursday - Saturday. The sites accept residential solid waste, numerous types of recyclable items, and household hazardous waste.

POLICE PROTECTION

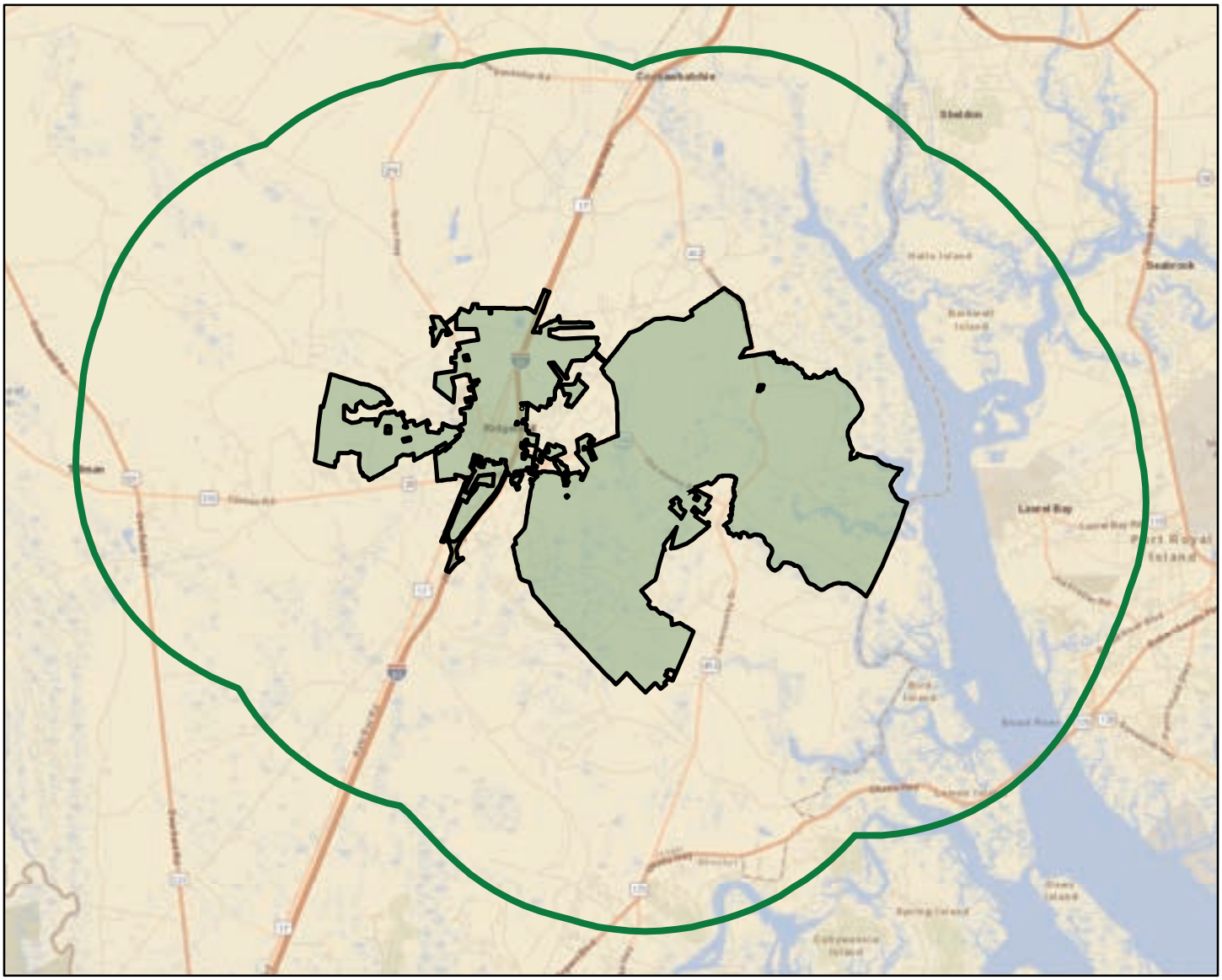
The Ridgeland Police Department is located at 11323 N. Jacob Smart Boulevard, and operates with a staff of 11 officers. There are currently a number of additional vacancies at the Police Department, as it was previously staffed with 19 officers. It is anticipated that additional personnel will be needed as the Town continues to grow.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Fire Department operates out of its headquarters at 49 S Railroad Avenue. The Department is comprised of 11 paid firefighters, 15 volunteers, and 6 cadets. It provides an ISO class 3 fire suppression service and all staff is qualified to a Firefighter II level with medical certification of Emergency Medical Responder. The Fire Department is also looking to expand its staffing, particularly in the wake of increased development. The Fire Department serves areas five miles beyond the municipal limits.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Jasper County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) serves the Town of Ridgeland with first response services. The County EMS has one station located at 1509 Gray's Highway that serves the northern portion of the County, including the Town.



Town of Ridgeland Police Department Service Area

Town of Ridgeland Fire Department Service Area

Source: Town of Ridgeland

GOVERNMENT FACILITIES

According to records obtained by the Jasper County Property Appraiser, the Town of Ridgeland owns approximately 70 properties. While some of these may be in temporary ownership by the Town, there are many which are primary government facilities. This includes Town Hall, the Police Department, the Fire Department, parks, open spaces, and other infrastructure-related properties such as the water treatment plant.

Town Hall is located on Town Square, just northwest of downtown. The building includes administrative offices, the water department, and the Town Council's chambers. The building sits on about one acre of land and was previously the offices of the Palmetto Electric Cooperative. The Town acquired the property in 1994.

The Police Department is located on N Jacob Smart Boulevard, just north of downtown. The building is positioned on almost two acres of land that were purchased by the Town in 2015. The building predates the Town's purchase, as it previously served as offices for an energy company. Ridgeland's Fire Department is located just outside of downtown, on S Railroad Avenue. The entire block, comprising four parcels, is owned by the Town, including a 3-bay garage and supporting fire department buildings.

The Town owns a number of properties associated with parks and recreation facilities, particularly around the Blue Heron Nature Trail and the adjacent Lakeside Community Building. All of the open spaces identified in the public space and recreation section of this plan are owned by the Town, as are many of the recreation properties.

Additionally, the Town owns land for its water treatment plant, water tower, and similar lands which support public infrastructure.

▼ TOWN HALL



▼ FIRE DEPARTMENT



▼ LAKESIDE @ BLUE HERON



EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Jasper County School District (JCSD) is the only public school system in the County. JCSD serves approximately 2,700 students in grades ranging from Pre-K to 12th-grade. The District faces many challenges as it falls below the State according to many standard metrics of educational achievement. However, the District is doing well in terms of student progress. In fact, while the overall rating is still low, notable improvements have been made in students' English / ELA scores, as well as in overall graduation rates and in EL students meeting proficiency targets. Unfortunately, math test scores have fallen slightly since 2017.

Since the last plan, there has been some shifting in terms of schools which serve Ridgeland residents. The District has two Pre-K to 12th-grade campuses and the north campus is located in Ridgeland. It houses **Ridgeland Elementary School** and **Ridgeland Secondary Academy of Excellence**. The campus also features a **Career and Advanced Technology Education (CATE) Center** that is home to over 20 career pathways.

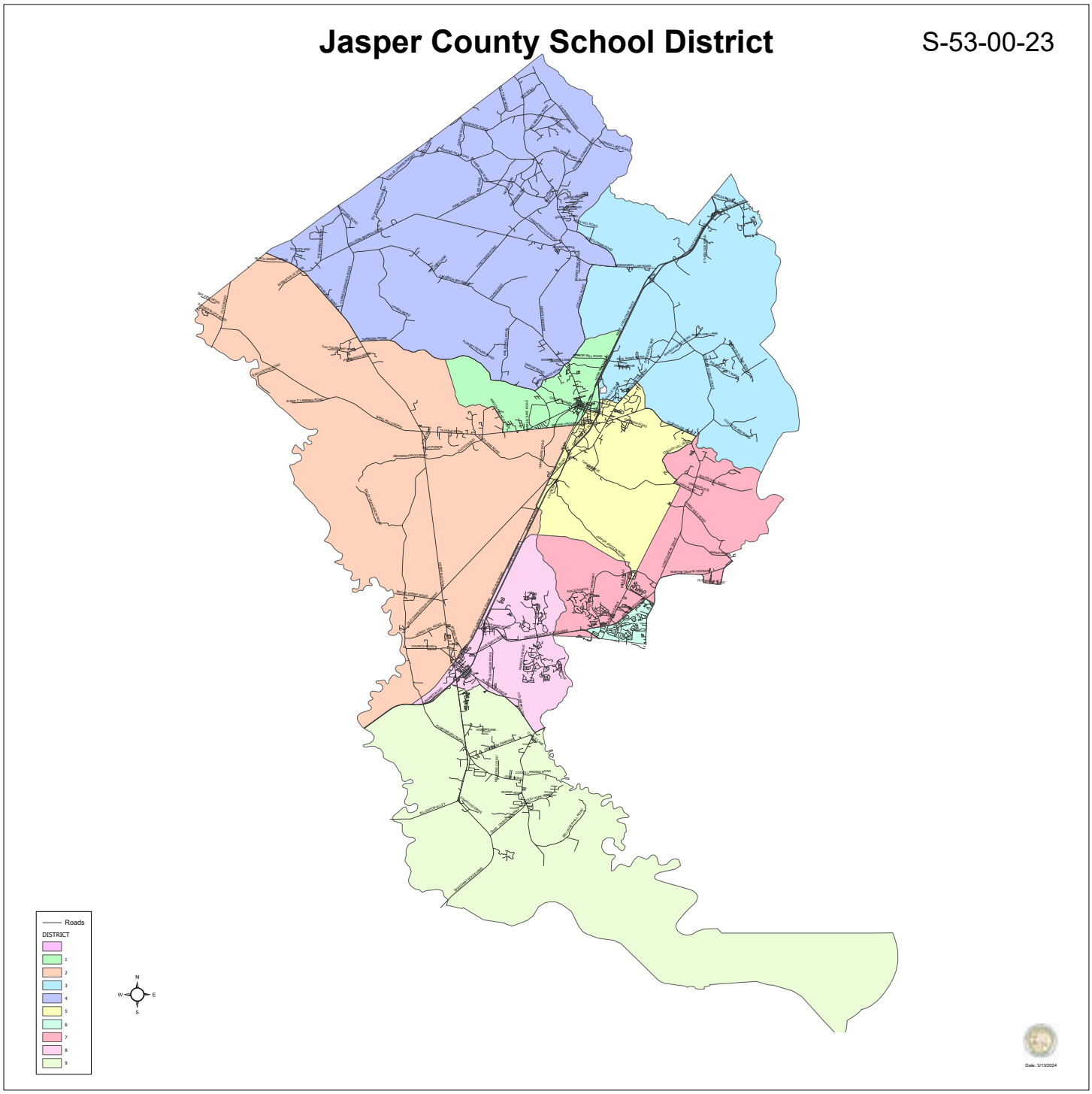
According to the South Carolina Report Card website, Ridgeland Elementary School enrolls 745 students in Pre-K to 5th grade courses. It has an average rating of 49 (Average). Ridgeland Secondary Academy of Excellence enrolls 648 students in grades 6 - 12. The middle school has an average rating of 42 (Average) while the high school has an average rating of 39 (unsatisfactory). While the total number of teachers has dropped slightly from last year, most other classroom metrics, including teachers' educational attainment and returning teachers has increased.

Students at the high school can participate in programs through the CATE Center, which provides a variety of career pathways and opportunities to earn industry credentials. These include credentials in business management, drone technology, cybersecurity, computer repair, Marine Corps JROTC, and others. JCSD also provides college and career support through offerings at the **Beaufort-Jasper Academy for Career Excellence (BJ-ACE)** for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. BJ-ACE offers 14 vocational programs, and all programs focus on producing students who are qualified to either attend college or begin their careers.

▼ TABLE 7 JASPER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT STATE GOALS SUMMARY

	Baseline	Targets			Current Year
	2017	2020	2026	2035	2024
Percent Scoring Level 2 or Above - English / ELA	74.2%	79.5%	82.1%	90.0%	79.7%
Percent Scoring Level 2 or Above - Math	75.8%	79.5%	82.1%	90.0%	70.6%
Percent Scoring Level 3 or Above - English / ELA	43.2%	47.7%	56.6%	70.0%	59.0%
Percent Scoring Level 3 or Above - Math	46.0%	50.0%	58.0%	70.0%	45.3%
Percent of Students Graduating on Time	82.6%	83.8%	86.3%	90.0%	85.4%
Percent of EL Students Meeting 70% Proficiency	31.0%	37.4%	50.2%	70.0%	38.5%

Source: South Carolina Report Cards (2023 - 2024 School Year)



According to the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, the Jasper County School Board has nine districts in the County. Ridgeland residents generally fall within one of five districts, with residents who live in the center of town falling within either district 1 (generally west of 95) or 5 (generally east of 95). Residents in northeastern Ridgeland are within district 3, while those who live the most eastern and southeastern portions of the Town are in district 7. Residents in the most southwestern portion of the Town are within district 2.

Source: South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (Retrieved 2025)

PRIVATE EDUCATION FACILITIES

Thomas Heyward Academy is a private K-12 institution located at 1727 Malphrus Road in the Town of Ridgeland. It maintains an enrollment of approximately 300 students. According to their website, they have a 100% college acceptance rate, expanding technology and STEM program, after school and summertime program, music program, dual college enrollment for 11th and 12th grade students, AdvancED and SACS accreditation, and competitive athletics.

Polaris Tech is a college and career-focused technical charter school which serves middle and high school students from Jasper County and the Lowcountry. It is a free school, focused on preparing young people for successful work and college. The academic emphasis is on six career areas: aerospace, health science, information technology, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and business management. The core academic program meets the requirements of the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate.

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

The **Technical College of the Lowcountry (TLC)** offers certificate and associate degree programs, university transfer pathways, and fast-track workforce options. According to their website, they had almost 3,000 students enrolled in the Fall 2023 Credit & Workforce Development Programs. TLC has 5 campuses, offering over 60 programs of study, and hundreds of online classes. The closest locations to Ridgeland are the New River Campus in Bluffton and the Culinary Institute of the South, also in Bluffton. There is also a Hampton Campus in Varnville, a Beaufort Mather Campus, and a TLC Colleton Campus in Walterboro.

The University of South Carolina at Beaufort has campuses located in Bluffton, Beaufort, and Hilton Head. The small, public university enrolls over 2,000 students in 50+ undergraduate academic programs and two graduate degrees.

LIBRARIES

The Allendale Hampton Jasper (AHJ) Regional Library is a three-county public library system that services Allendale, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. The system includes five public libraries throughout its service area, as well as a bookmobile that travels throughout the three counties. In Jasper County, there is one library in Hardeeville and another in Ridgeland. The Pratt Library is located at 451A Wilson Street, next to the Ridgeland Centralized Graded School and across from Turpin Park.

Pratt Library is open Monday through Saturday and features content and programming for all ages and abilities. The Library is distinguished for its collection of rare books and documents relating to Lowcountry history.

To better serve Pratt's growing community, the Jasper County Council approved a capital improvement project to complete a major renovation of Pratt Memorial Library. Construction is currently underway (Fall 2024) and expected to last for approximately 18 months. While construction is underway, there is a temporary library located at 112 Weathersby Street.

▼ PRATT LIBRARY RENDERING



PUBLIC SPACE & RECREATION

Though the Town does not have a dedicated staff for parks facilities and improvements, Ridgeland maintains a number of recreational facilities and high quality public spaces. There are also a few County recreation facilities within Ridgeland's municipal limits, and the County is currently in the process of updating their Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The sites below provide a summary of the recreation facilities within Ridgeland, and these are mapped on the following page.

BLUE HERON NATURE TRAIL

A 10-acre Blue Heron Nature Trail and Learning Center is located off Exit 21 of I-95. This in-town green space includes a nature trail that surrounds a three-acre pond and forested wetlands filled with native plants. The property also includes a butterfly garden, picnic area, outdoor classroom, observation decks, and a Nature Center. Permanent trailside displays help visitors learn more about the native flora and fauna of Jasper County and the Lowcountry. The Town recently received grant funding to expand this trail onto another adjacent 26 acre property.

▼ BLUE HERON NATURE TRAIL



CHERRYHILL COMMUNITY PARK

Jasper County owns Cherryhill Community Park, which is located just outside of the Town's municipal limits, on Bridgetown Drive. The park includes a small playground and open space.

HAROLD TURPIN PARK

Turpin Park is the largest and principal outdoor recreation center for the Town. It's behind the Ridgeland Centralized Graded School and the Pratt Library. The park features tennis courts, picnic areas, a splash pad, rock climbing walls, and a large playground with a wooden play structure.

▼ TURPIN PARK



MALPHRUS PARK

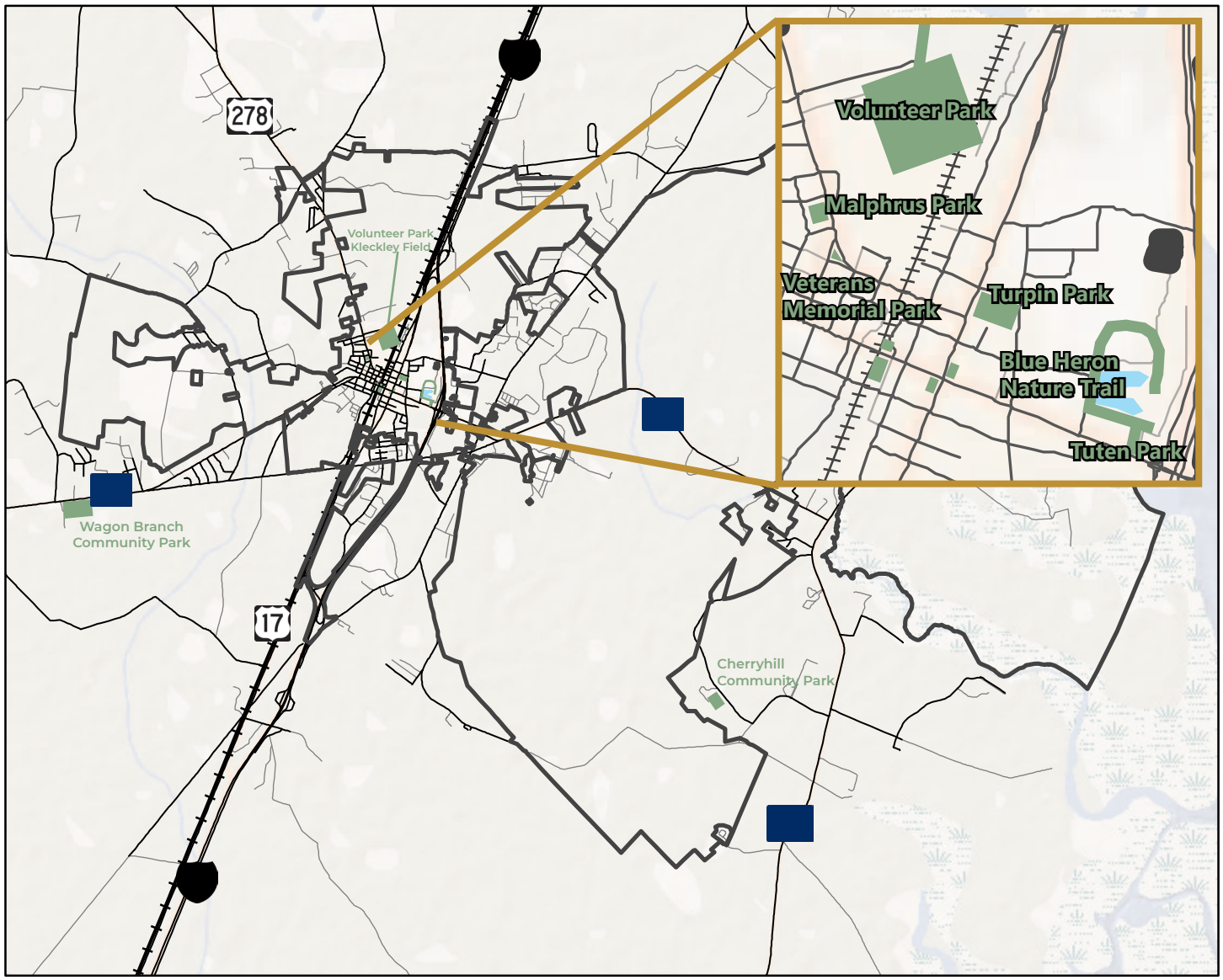
Malphrus Park is located on US-278, just a block away from the Ridgeland Veterans Memorial Park. This park is an open green area with benches positioned on its borders.

RIDGELAND VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Ridgeland Veterans Memorial Park is located on a triangular property across from Town Hall. It's dedicated to all service men and women from the County and includes paved pathways, benches, monuments, landscaping, and a flag pole.

▼ VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK





Recreation Facilities

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

RALPH M TUTEN MEMORIAL PARK

Ralph M Tuten Memorial Park, or Tuten Park, is a small linear park nestled among dining establishments on Main Street near Exit 21. It was developed over an informal and unmaintained drainage area, providing attractive hardscape with an abundance of landscaping defining the boundary. The park has two water features with sculptural elements that celebrate the wildlife of the Lowcountry.

▼ TUTEN PARK



VOLUNTEER PARK / KLECKLEY FIELD

Located just off US-278 behind the Jasper County Alternative School is Volunteer Park, Kleckley Field, and the Ridgeland Jaguar Field. These are all owned by Jasper County and the Jasper County School District but some youth programs are maintained at Volunteer Park, in part by contribution from the Town of Ridgeland. The park is home to five baseball fields, which also serve as soccer fields as needed.

WAGON BRANCH COMMUNITY PARK

Jasper County owns Wagon Branch Community Park, which is located just outside of Ridgeland's municipal limits, on Tillman Road. The park includes a community center, playgrounds, a basketball court, picnic areas, and a walking path.

OTHER PUBLIC SPACES

While less formal than other parks in Ridgeland, there are a few open spaces that provide landscaping, hardscaping, and places for the public to rest. This includes small pedestrian plazas that distinguish the intersection of Main Street and North Jacob Smart Boulevard, Langford Square, and the iconic town clock. These spaces often feature public art, such as the gopher tortoise statue, as well.

▼ DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACE



FUTURE RECREATION

In 2015, a master plan was developed for the Honey Hill Battle Site. The plans included the development of trails and interpretive elements. The Town owns the land and the Friends of Honey Hill are currently seeking funds to make improvements to the property. This is likely to provide additional public recreation in the future.

Lastly, the County is currently developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It is likely that additional improvements will be identified as part of that planning process.

HOUSING

A housing element considers type, age, condition, cost, ownership, and availability of housing.

HOUSING STOCK

According to the 2020 Decennial Census conducted by the United States Census Bureau, there are over 1,100 housing units within Ridgeland's municipal boundaries. More than half of these homes (60.5%) are single family, detached units. About one quarter of the housing units are multi-family, with many of these having more than 3 attached units. Just over 14% of the housing units are mobile homes or other types of housing (RVs, boats, etc.).

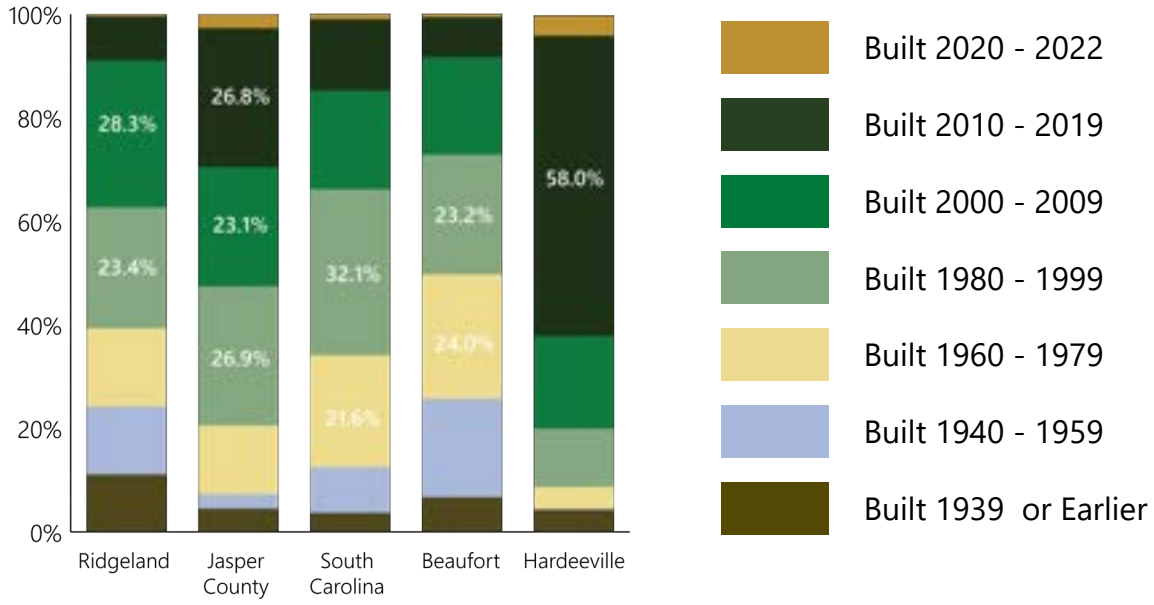
More than half of the Town's housing stock was built between 1980 and 2009, though almost no new homes were built in Ridgeland between 2020 and 2022. In comparison to the region, fewer homes (as a percentage of all houses) have been built since 2010 in Ridgeland. Interestingly, Beaufort has also seen a slowing in development.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

The vast majority (over 1,000) of the homes in Ridgeland are occupied. In fact, according to the 2022 American Community Survey, the vacancy rate in the Town is just 7.7%. This is a healthy vacancy rate, indicating that most of the homes in Town are occupied, though not so much that there is significant demand for additional housing.

In Hardeeville, the vacancy rate is microscopic, at just 1.8%, indicating a demand for additional housing units. In Jasper County, the vacancy rate is much higher, at 10.4%, and in Beaufort County, the vacancy rate is 17.1%. One element that inflates vacancy rates is seasonal residents and tourism. Places like Beaufort County, where many residents only live in the homes for portions of the year, tend to have high vacancy rates (such as 17.1%) because seasonal units are counted as vacant units.

▼ FIGURE 11 AGE OF HOUSING STOCK



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022)

HOME VALUE

Based on data from the American Community Survey, home values in Ridgeland are lower than other communities in the region and the State. At just $215,200, the median home in Ridgeland is valued almost $30,000 below the State average and more than $90,000 below the County average.

However, according to Zillow Housing Market data, the median home values in the Town are much higher and more comparable to the region. In fact, Zillow states that the median home value in Ridgeland was $301,071 in 2024, up 6.4% over the last year. This is still more than $100,000 below Jasper County's average home value of $401,987. In Hardeeville, the average home value was just below $445,000. The average value of homes in Ridgeland has increased at a lower rate than the County and Hardeeville, which have increased by 8.3% and 13.3%, respectively, over the past year.

One major discrepancy in these different home values is that the American Community Survey data is based on people's reporting of home values while Zillow reports sales values.

▼ FIGURE 12 MEDIAN HOME VALUE (2022)

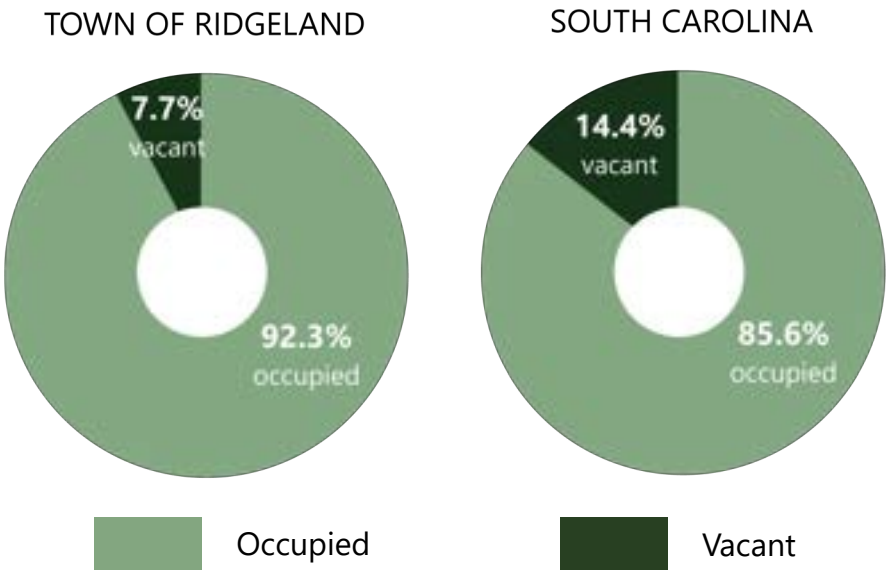


Left: ACS Value, Right: Zillow Value

$301,071

Zillow Housing Market Median Value in Ridgeland (2024)

▼ FIGURE 13 HOUSING OCCUPANCY (2022)



Source: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2022) and Zillow Market Statistics

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

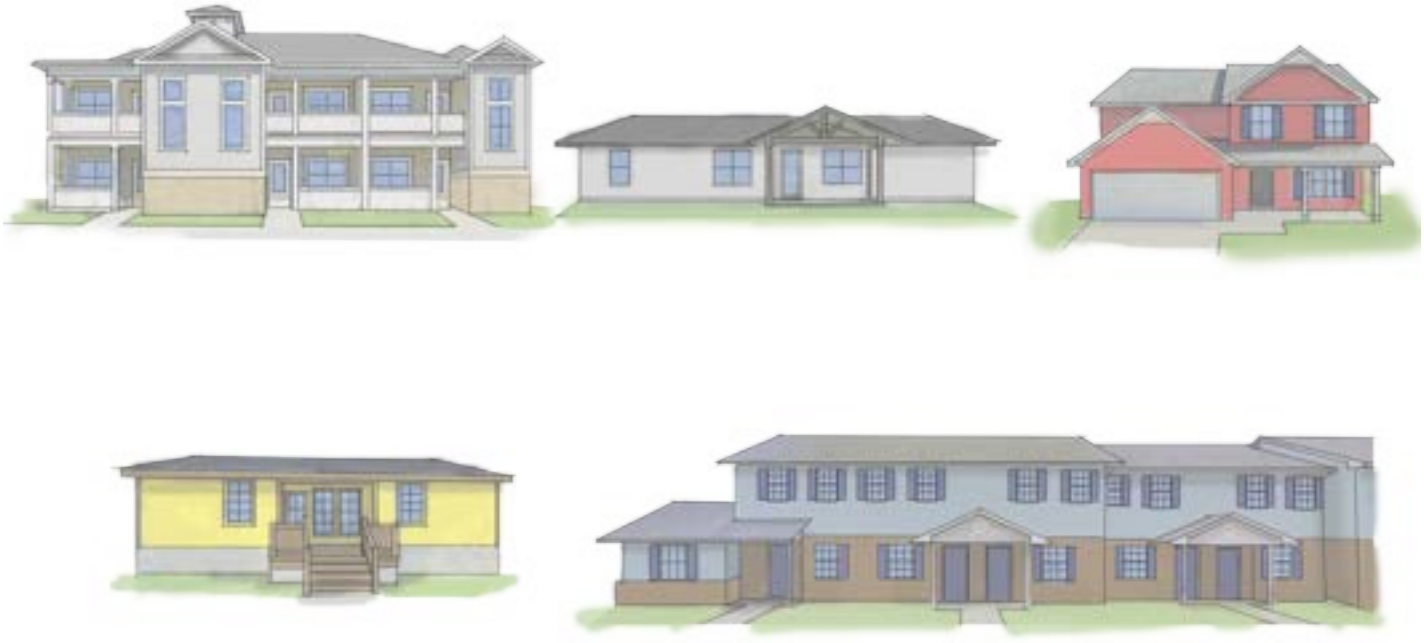
The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) produces an annual report, "Out of Reach," documenting housing affordability barriers throughout the country. The report compares average housing wages, area median incomes, and housing costs to determine how many full-time jobs are required to afford a home in counties throughout the United States.

Based on the 2024 "Out of Reach" report, the average two bedroom fair market rent (FMR) in Jasper County is $1,186 per month. The hourly wage necessary to afford that rent is $22.81, or an annual income of $47,440. This would mean that 3.1 full-jobs are necessary to afford a two bedroom FMR in Jasper County.

The annual area median income (AMI) in Jasper County is $71,800. Given general assumptions, an affordable monthly rent at this AMI is $1,795.

The "Out of Reach" report also examines renter households, and estimated that 3,128 households (or 27% of all households) were renters in Jasper County between 2018 and 2021. The estimated hourly mean renter wage for 2024 was $19.65, making an affordable monthly rent $1,022. This means that 1.2 full-time jobs (at the mean renter wage) would be required to afford a two-bedroom FMR in Jasper County.

Ridgeland Housing Stock



HOUSING RESOURCES

According to the National Housing Preservation Database, there are eight federally assisted properties in and around Ridgeland. In total, 175 units are assisted in the Town; though three of these may have expired in recent months. The remaining subsidized housing units are in the form of small apartment complexes with 24 to 56 units each. Many of these are subsidized by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). There is one Section 8 complex and three of the apartment complexes are also subsidized by Section 515 and Section 521. One of these units is primarily subsidized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Beaufort-Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission provides for the improvement of communication and cooperation among existing and future programs and the administration of new programs designed to improve the health, education, welfare, housing, or employment of residents.

The Commission has a location in Ridgeland and operates several programs to fight the war on poverty in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. The programs are funded through the local municipalities, state agencies, and Federally through the Office of Community Services and Department of Health and Human Services. These programs provide program eligible low-income individuals and families assistance through grants, education, job assistance, and advocacy. The specific programs featured on their website include the the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the General Emergency Assistance (GEAP) Program), the Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) Program, and the Youth Leadership Program.

▼ TABLE 8 FEDERALLY ASSISTED HOUSING PROPERTIES IN RIDGELAND

Property Name	Assisted Units	Total Units	Funding Streams	Target Tenant	End Date
123 Dogwood Street	1	1	HOME	-	4/25/2024
271 1st Avenue	1	1	HOME	-	6/2/2024
274 1st Avenue	1	1	HOME	-	7/9/2024
Baytree Apartments	56	56	Section 8	Family	6/29/2035
Wood Ridge Apartments	24	24	USDA, Section 515, Section 521	Family	10/27/2036
Heron Crossing Apartments	32	40	LIHTC	-	12/31/2036
Logan Lane Apartments	36	36	LIHTC, Section 515, Section 521	Family	12/1/2044
Devenwood Apartments	24	24	LIHTC, Section 515, Section 521	Elderly or Disabled	12/31/2046

Source: National Housing Preservation Database Properties (August 2023)

LAND USE

A land use element considers the existing and future use of land, and related factors.

INTRODUCTION

Land use is a key element of a comprehensive plan, particularly as it concerns recommendations for future development. This element considers land subdivision patterns, land cover, land use, and similar factors which impact existing and future development in Town. This element also includes a Growth Map / Future Land Use Map, which will help guide Ridgeland leaders as they make decisions concerning proposed development and similar plans in the future.

LAND SUBDIVISION

Most of downtown Ridgeland, and some of the central parts of the Town are comprised of small parcels (less than one half acre in size); and in fact, almost 60% of the parcels within the municipal limits are less than one half acre in size. However, given their small size, they capture just one third of a square mile of the Town (which is over 43 square miles in size). There are significantly fewer parcels between 0.6 acres and three acres in size in Town, with parcels under three acres accounting for just over one square mile of land area.

In fact, in Ridgeland, there seems to be an "extreme case" where many parcels are either less than one half acre in size or over 100 acres in size. With more than 30 parcels over 100 acres in size in the Town's limits, almost 90% of Ridgeland's land area is comprised of these large parcels.

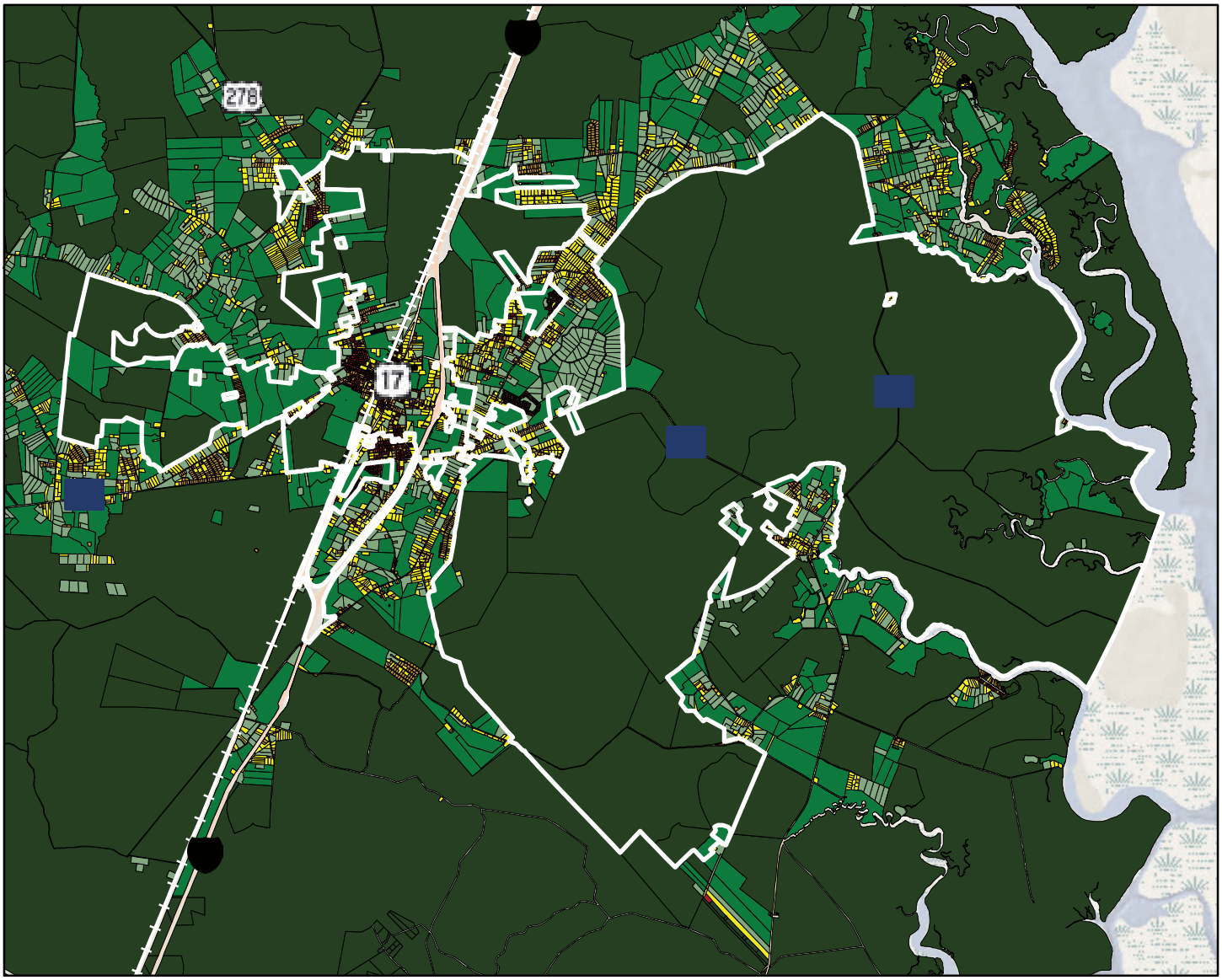
LAND COVER

The Natural Resources Element included information on land cover, particularly as it relates to a loss of farmland and an increase in forestland in Ridgeland. The Land Use Element includes some of this same information, but digs deeper into each generalized land cover, and the changes which have taken place over time.

Per the most recent data (2023), almost one half of Ridgeland's municipal boundaries is within wetlands. Over one-third of the Town's land area is forested, and just over 2% is water. These attributes significantly limit developability in Town, and just over 8% of Ridgeland's land area is currently developed in some form.

▼ TABLE 9 PARCEL SUBDIVISION PATTERNS WITHIN MUNICIPAL LIMITS

Parcel Size	Approx. # of Parcels	Approx. Acreage (total)	Square Miles	% of Area
0.0 - 0.5 Acres	856	203	0.32	0.7%
0.6 - 1.0 Acres	246	169	0.26	0.6%
1.1 - 3.0 Acres	170	295	0.46	1.1%
3.1 - 10.0 Acres	87	440	0.69	1.6%
10.0 - 100.0 Acres	70	2,759	4.31	10.0%
100.0 Acres or Larger	34	23,721	37.1	86.0%
TOTAL	1,463	27,587	43.1	



Parcel Size

- 0 - 0.5 Acres
- 0.6 - 1.0 Acres
- 1.1 - 3.0 Acres
- 3.1 - 10.0 Acres
- 10.0 - 100.0 Acres
- 100.1 Acres or Larger

- Ridgeland Boundary
- Major Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroads

The map on the following page displays land cover in and around Ridgeland, as captured by the National Land Cover Database (NLCD). This is even more simplified than the one shown in the Natural Resources Element; designating land cover by water, wetlands, farmland (both crop and pasture land), forestland, and developed land. The following series of maps and descriptions go into more detail on how the land cover has changed in Ridgeland over the past decade (2013 - 2023).

WATER

The amount of water area in Ridgeland (not considering changes in municipal boundaries) has increased by over 2% since 2013. This increase, totaling over 200 new acres of water bodies, has largely been realized on the eastern edge of Town, in direct relation to the expansion of streams coming off the river.

WETLANDS

Even more notable than an increase in water is an increase in wetlands (over 12%). More than 3,500 acres of additional wetlands have been added to the Town in the past decade, again largely on the eastern portion of the municipality. Wetlands increased from over one-third of the Town's land area to almost one-half of the Town's land area in this decade alone. This trend is likely to continue, as wetland migration, or the inland movement of wetlands, increases with sea level rise.

FARMLAND

Just over 5% of the Town's land area, or almost 1,500 acres of land, are used for farming. This is largely in the form of crop farming, though it does also include pasture land. In Ridgeland, farmland has not changed significantly in the past decade, though there was an overall loss of about 25 acres. Interestingly, the amount of cropland increased by almost 200 acres during this time but the amount of pasture land decreased by over 200 acres. Much of the cropland increase was on the western side of Town, associated with the Nimmer Turf Farm. Much of this was recently approved (September 2024) for housing development.

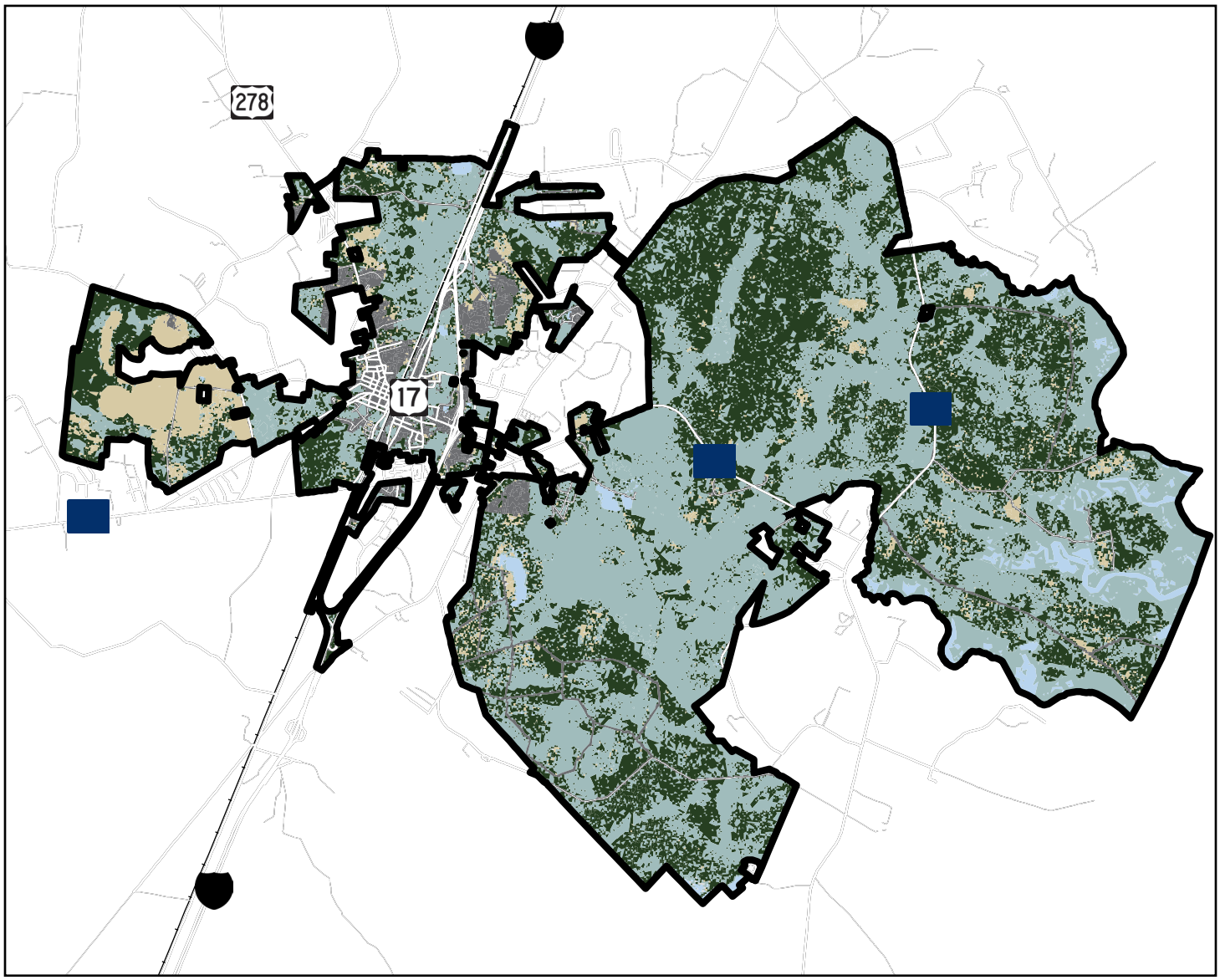
In Jasper County, there are almost 76,000 acres of land in farms. While the amount of land area dedicated to farms has increased since 2017 (by 20%), the number of farms has decreased by 17%, leaving just 112 farms in the County. The total market value of products sold from farms in Jasper County in 2022 totaled almost $18 million. The majority of these (98%) were crop sales.

The majority of farm use in the County (75%) is woodland, followed by cropland (13%). Very few farms in the County are less than 9 acres, or between 180 and 1,000 acres. More than half of the County's farms are 10 to 180 acres and around one-quarter are over 1,000 acres in size.

▼ TABLE 10 CHANGE IN LAND COVER WITHIN TOWN

Land Cover	2013		2023 Acres		Change in Land Cover (2013 - 2023)
	Acres	% of Area	Acres	% of Area	
Water	405	1.4%	615	2.2%	+ 0.7%
Wetlands	10,126	35.4%	13,692	47.9%	+ 12.5%
Farmland	1,474	5.2%	1,445	5.1%	- 0.1%
Forestland	14,717	51.5%	10,434	36.5%	- 15.0%
Developed Land	1,826	6.4%	2,373	8.3%	+ 1.9%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service & USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture

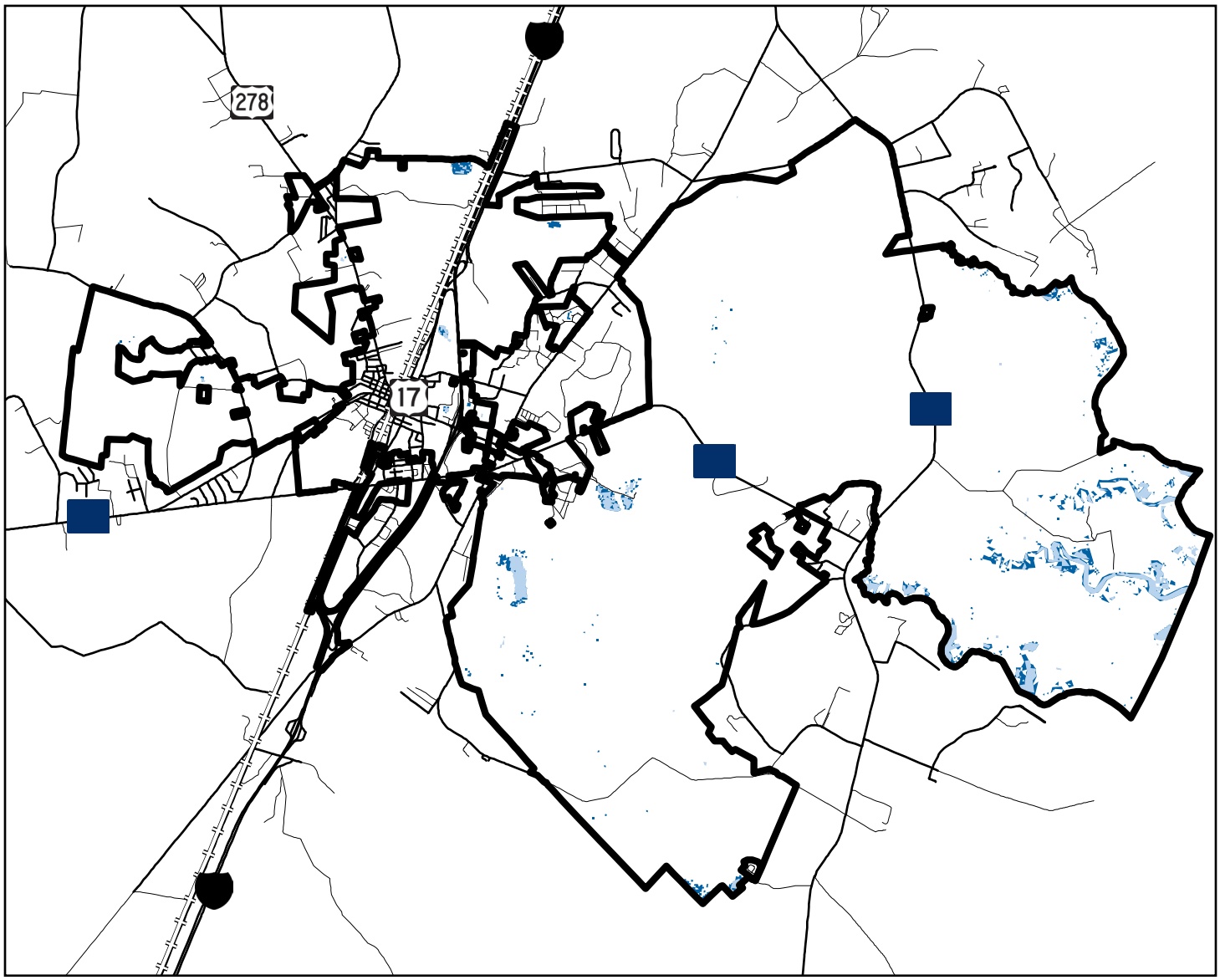


Water
Wetlands
Farmland
Forestland
Developed Land

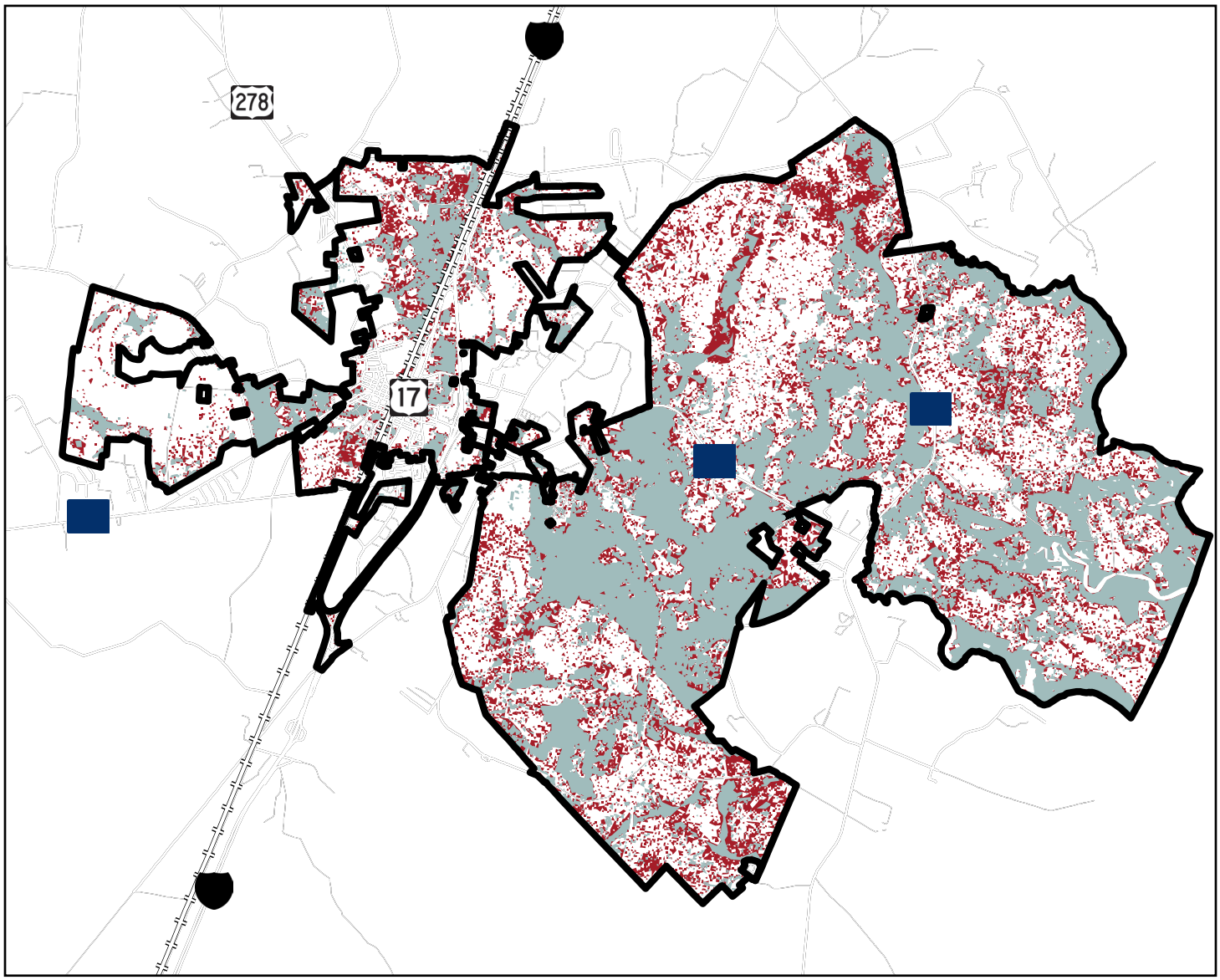
Ridgeland Boundary
Roads
Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

▼ MAP 22 CHANGE IN WATER AREA (2013 - 2023)



Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service



Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

FORESTLAND

The only category of land cover that is significantly decreasing in Ridgeland is forestland. Between 2013 and 2023, more than 4,000 acres of forestland was lost in the Town's limits. Comparing this to other changes in land cover, it appears to be caused by a combination of increased development and inland wetland migration.

DEVELOPED LAND

In the last decade, the amount of land area considered to be developed (even with just roads or paved spaces) has almost doubled in Ridgeland. Notable development has also taken place just outside of the municipality's boundaries, as can be seen on the "Increase in Developed Land (2013 - 2023)" map.

A few areas which appear to be large new development are actually solar farms, both behind the Ridgeland Correctional Institution and just southeast of the center of Town. The other large new development is an increase in impervious land around the Ridgeland Airport. A few other, smaller, new developments in Town include expansions around Camping World, the continued development of Ridgeland Lakes, and small housing development throughout Town. Outside of Town, there has been new development in Cypress Ridge Industrial Park and in small scale housing development throughout the area.

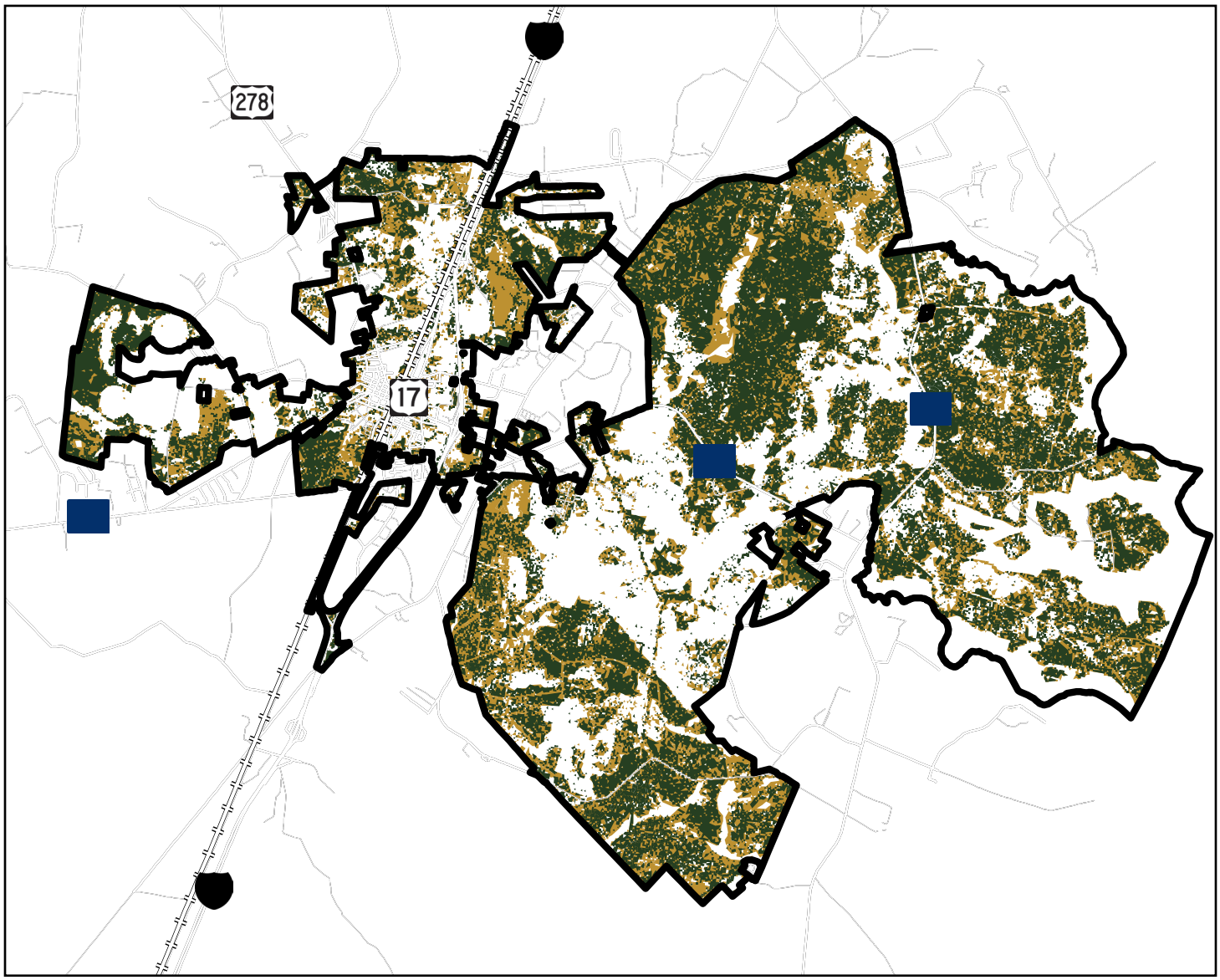
EXISTING LAND USE

Due to a number of special districts with development approved, a significant portion of Ridgeland's municipal limits (73.8%) remain undeveloped today. The second largest use, in terms of land area, is agricultural land, accounting for almost 20% of the Town, and much of this is concentrated on the edges of Town.

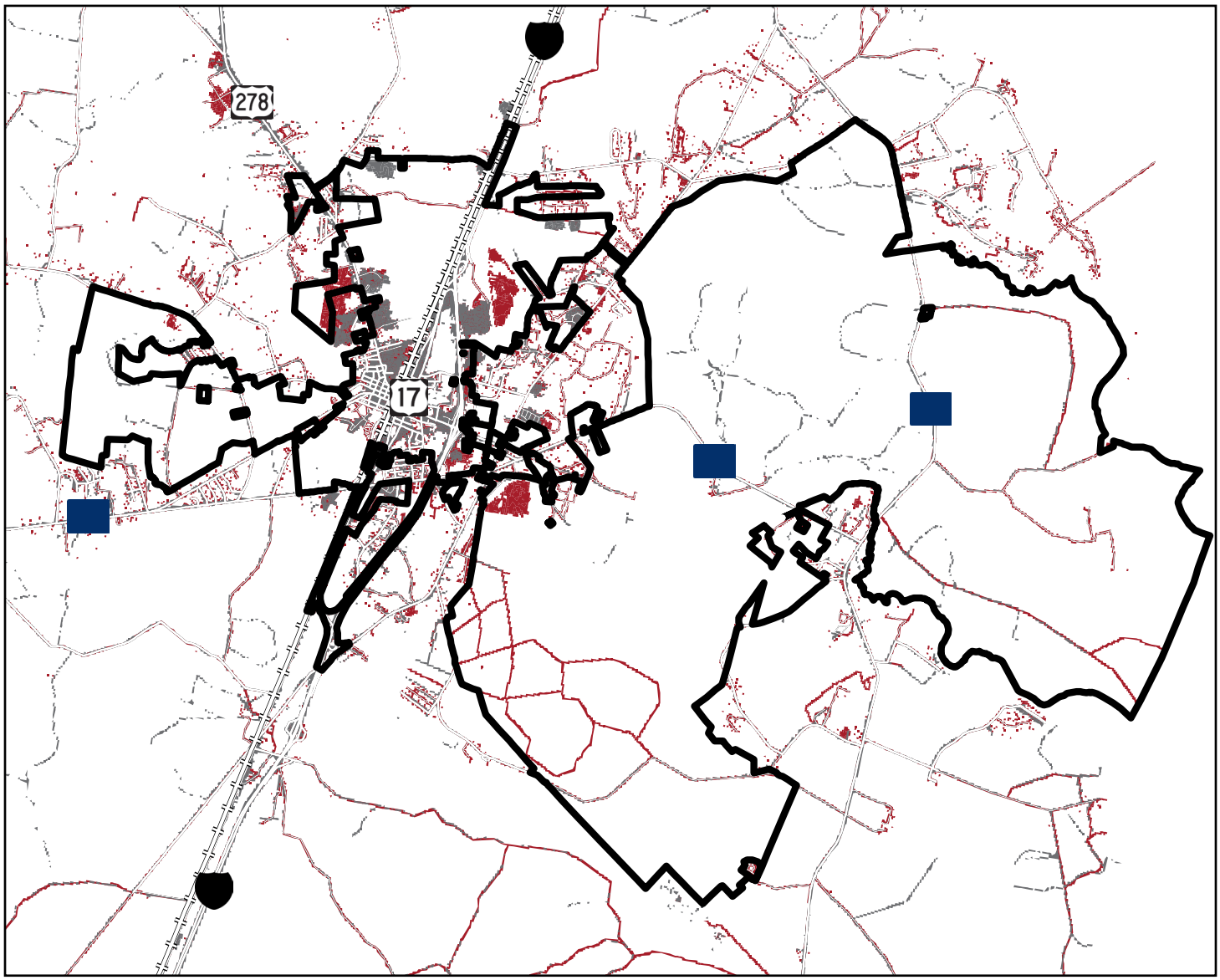
A combination of single family, multi-family, and mobile homes comprise Ridgeland's housing stock, and these are identified as residential on the existing land use map. While most of Ridgeland's residential uses are concentrated toward the center of Town, there are some outlying subdivisions. Given Ridgeland's role as the County Seat, it has a significant concentration of institutional land uses. This includes municipal and County properties, parks, churches, and civic buildings. Many of the commercial uses are concentrated in downtown or along major roadways. Industrial uses are more scattered, located on larger lots with access to utilities and infrastructure.

▼ TABLE 11 EXISTING LAND USE WITHIN TOWN

Land Use	Acres	% of Area
Undeveloped	20,349	73.8%
Utilities	35	0.1%
Agricultural	5,273	19.1%
Residential	587	2.1%
Institutional	794	2.9%
Commercial	152	0.6%
Industrial	396	1.4%



Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service



Developed Land (2013)

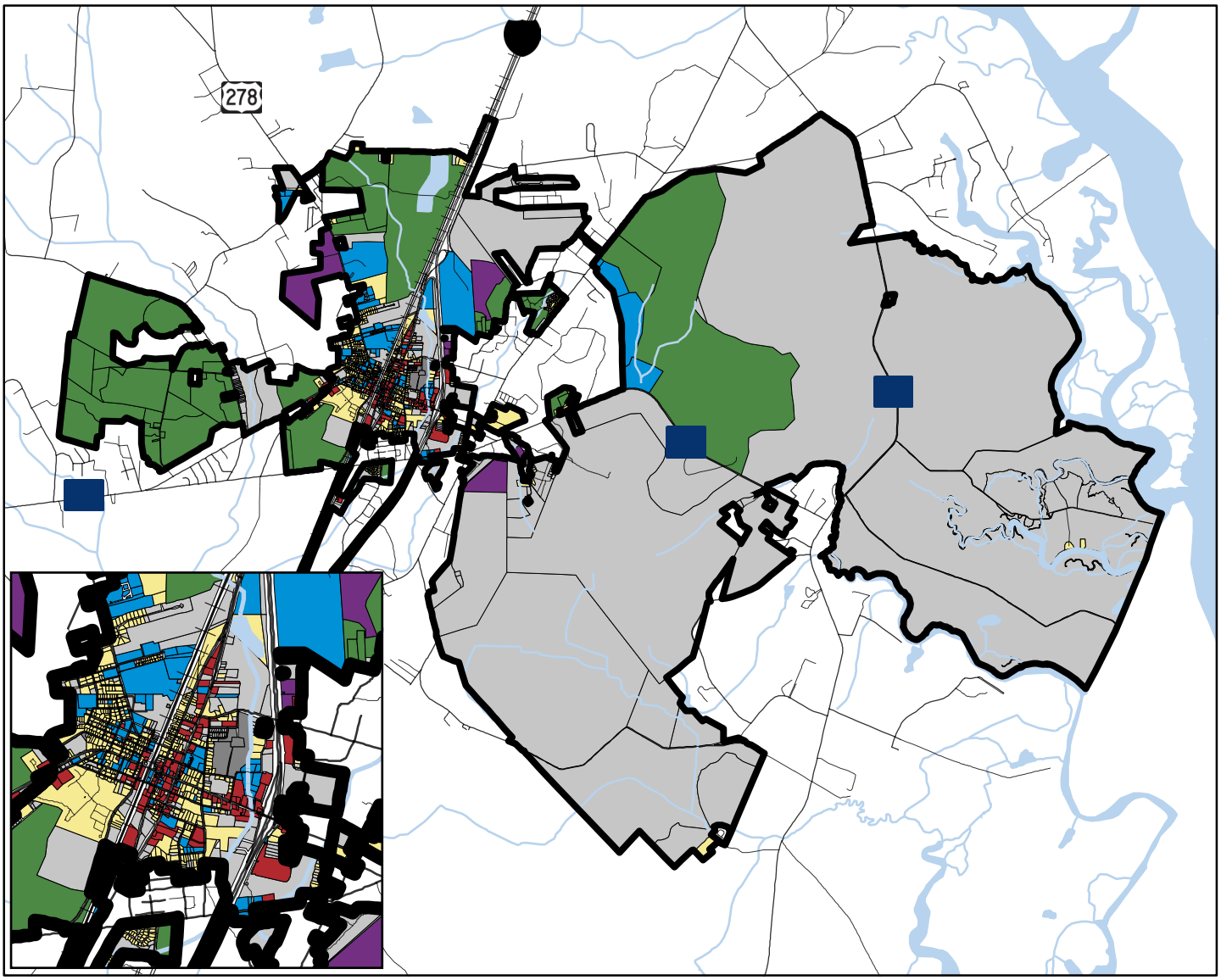
Developed Land (2023)

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service



Undeveloped
Utilities
Agricultural
Residential
Institutional
Commercial
Industrial

Ridgeland Boundary
Major Highways
Local Roads
Railroads
Water Bodies

REGULATING PLAN

Ridgeland utilizes a Smart Code in place of a Zoning Ordinance. This code establishes sectors which describe desired levels of growth throughout the Town and surrounding area. The sectors include reserved open land, restricted growth, controlled growth, intended growth, and infill growth. The growth sectors are applicable when land over a certain size is proposed for development, otherwise the regulating plan / transect map is utilized for proposed development. The sector map is illustrated on the following page. Note that some parcels on the edges of the map are not included in the sectors.

SECTOR MAP

Generally speaking, the sector map starts with the least dense development on the outskirts of Town (02) and progressively becomes more dense as you move into the center of Ridgeland (G-4). In 02 - Reserved Open Space, open space should be protected from development. This could include floodplain, steep slopes, open space, woodland, farmland, and viewsheds.

The G-1 Restricted Growth Sector is assigned to areas that have value as open space but are subject to development. Development in G-1 is permitted as clustered land development. The G-2 Controlled Growth Sector is assigned to locations that can support mixed use development, given their proximity to an existing or planned thoroughfare. Clustered land development and traditional neighborhood development are permitted by right. The G-3 Intended Growth Sector is assigned to locations that can support substantial mixed use. Regional center developments and traditional neighborhood developments are permitted by right.

The G-4 Infill Growth Sector is the only sector entirely within the Town limits. It is assigned to areas that have already developed, having the potential to be modified or completed in the form of infill traditional neighborhoods.

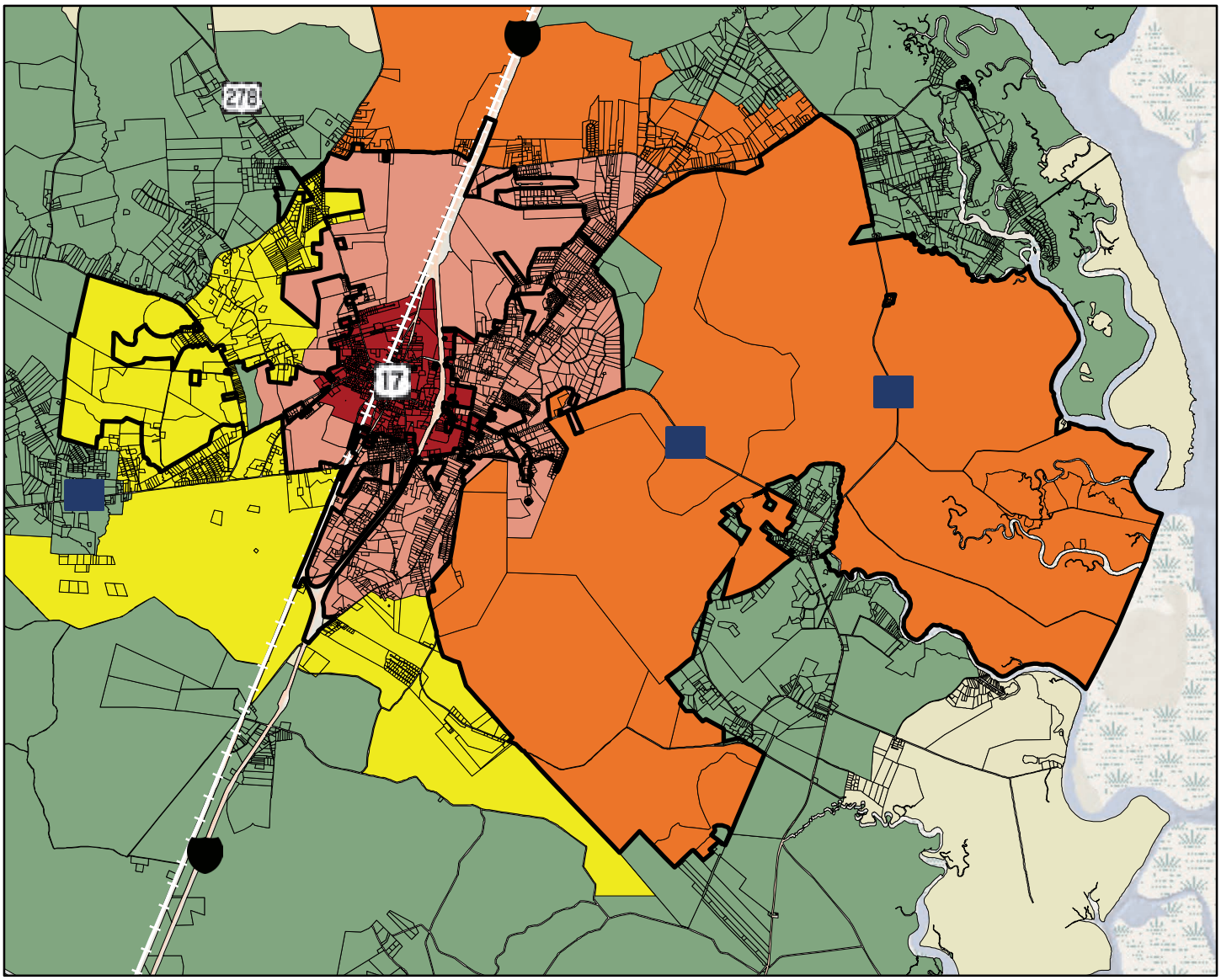
The Town's regulating plan also allows Special Districts, which are assigned to areas that, by their intrinsic size, function, or configuration, cannot conform to the requirements of a clustered land development or traditional neighborhood development. Conditions of development for special districts shall be determined in a public hearing of the Town Council and recorded within the respective Transect Zone description.

TRANSECT MAP

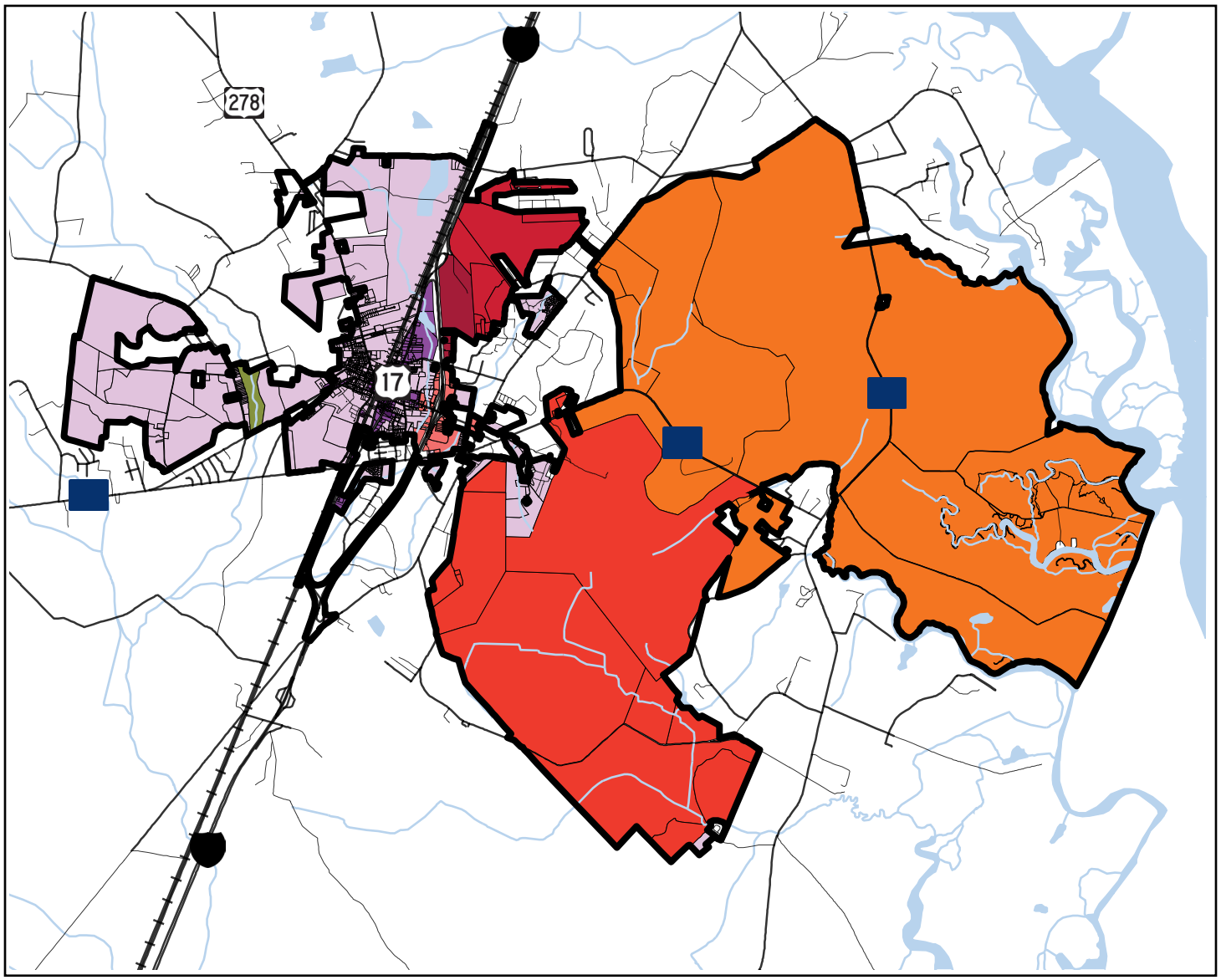
For most smaller scale development, the regulating plan, or transect map, establishes development standards. Though there are additional standards in the Town's Zoning Ordinance, only those zones which are assigned to lands in Ridgeland today are described here.

The least dense zone in Town is the T-1 Natural Zone. It's only assigned to one property: The Great Swamp along Tarboro Road. T-1 is designated for properties unsuitable for development, that could be used as natural landscapes, agricultural uses, or access to greenways and blueways.

The T-2 Rural Zone is established in the Town's Ordinance but is not applied to any of the land within Ridgeland at this time. This includes T - 2.5 Rural Crossroads.



- 02 - Reserved Open
- G1 - Restricted Growth
- G2 - Controlled Growth
- G3 - Intended Growth
- G4 - Infill Growth
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Major Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Water Bodies



- T1 - Natural Zone
- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core
- T5 - Town Center / Main Street
- SD - Exit 21
- SD - Genesis
- SD - Good Hope
- SD - Moultrie
- SD - Industrial
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Major Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

The T-3 Neighborhood General zone, which is assigned to much of the western portion of the Town, is for medium density residential areas adjacent to neighborhood core areas that contain some mixed use. The T-3 zone contains a wide array of building types and is characterized by medium-sized blocks defining neighborhoods of up to 6 dwelling units per acre.

The T-4 Neighborhood Core zone is a low intensity mixed-use district primarily in the form of existing residential homes. The T-4 zone includes a wide range of buildings, including row houses, corner stores, and single-family homes on lots up to 8 dwelling units per acre. Much of Ridgeland's core is within the T-4 Zone.

The most dense zone, T-5 Town Center / Main Street is higher density, mixed-use buildings that accommodate retail, row houses, offices, and apartments. A tight network of streets defines this zone as a highly walkable area.

There are also five Special Districts (SD) included in the transect. SD - Exit 21 surrounds Exit 21 on Interstate 95. A mix of building types, including automotive, office, and lodging uses, are permitted here. Residential units are also permitted up to 10 dwelling units per acre.

SD - Genesis applies to those lands subject to the Genesis Planned Unit Development. The development agreement includes numerous specifics but the 7,914.3 acre parcel which was granted development rights in 2008 may be built out with up to 14,862 homes and up to 16,108,924 square feet of industrial development.

SD - Good Hope applies to the almost 16,000 acres of land which were permitted as a planned unit development in 2009. This development has the potential to include up to 3,000 homes, commercial uses, and 50% open space.

SD - Moultrie applies to almost 700 acres of land included in the Moultrie planned unit development. This may include up to 2,500 homes, commercial and industrial development, and preserved land.

SD - Industrial is reserved for a mix of business types that include automotive, office, industrial, and lodging uses.

Throughout the planning process, a number of conversations were held regarding the Town's Smart Code. While many think this is a great aspirational set of regulations to maintain in a small town, there is some concern about issues with the code, particularly as it relates to difficulty interpreting standards and in an abundance of variances being requested by developers. Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will need to conduct a thorough analysis of its regulations and consider amending them to make them more clear to residents, developers, and elected officials alike.

Another trend in Ridgeland and across the country has been to increase densities and intensities of development to increase walkability and foster communities in which residents can "live, work, and play." To this end, a number of properties along Jacob Smart Boulevard have recently been "upzoned" (at the property owners' requests) from T3 to T4. The Town may wish to consider allowing and encouraging similar rezonings to occur in the future. Similarly, the Town may wish to consider upzoning or encouraging the upzoning of downtown properties from T4 to T5. The map on page 111 illustrates areas within Ridgeland which may be appropriate for such upzonings. While the Town may wish to proactively upzone select properties, many of these areas would be supported or encouraged for upzoning at the property owners' requests.



CURRENT ZONING

- T3 - Neighborhood General
- T4 - Neighborhood Core
- T5 - Town Center / Main Street
- SD - Exit 21
- SD - Moultrie
- SD - Industrial

POTENTIAL FOR UPZONING

- To T4
- To T5

PROPOSED AND APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

There are currently over 4,600 dwelling units either under construction, entitled, approved, or nearing approval in Ridgeland. Additionally, there is over 6 million square feet of commercial development nearing approval on the Moultrie Tract. While these developments alone will likely triple the Town's population, there is also another almost 18,000 homes approved for development in the Good Hope and Genesis Special Districts. These districts also include over 16 million square feet of commercial and industrial development that could be developed at any point within the next 15 years. The potential for all of this to come to fruition is of significant importance to Ridgeland's Comprehensive Plan, as it would have substantial impacts on land use, development, population, and the ability for the Town to maintain services.

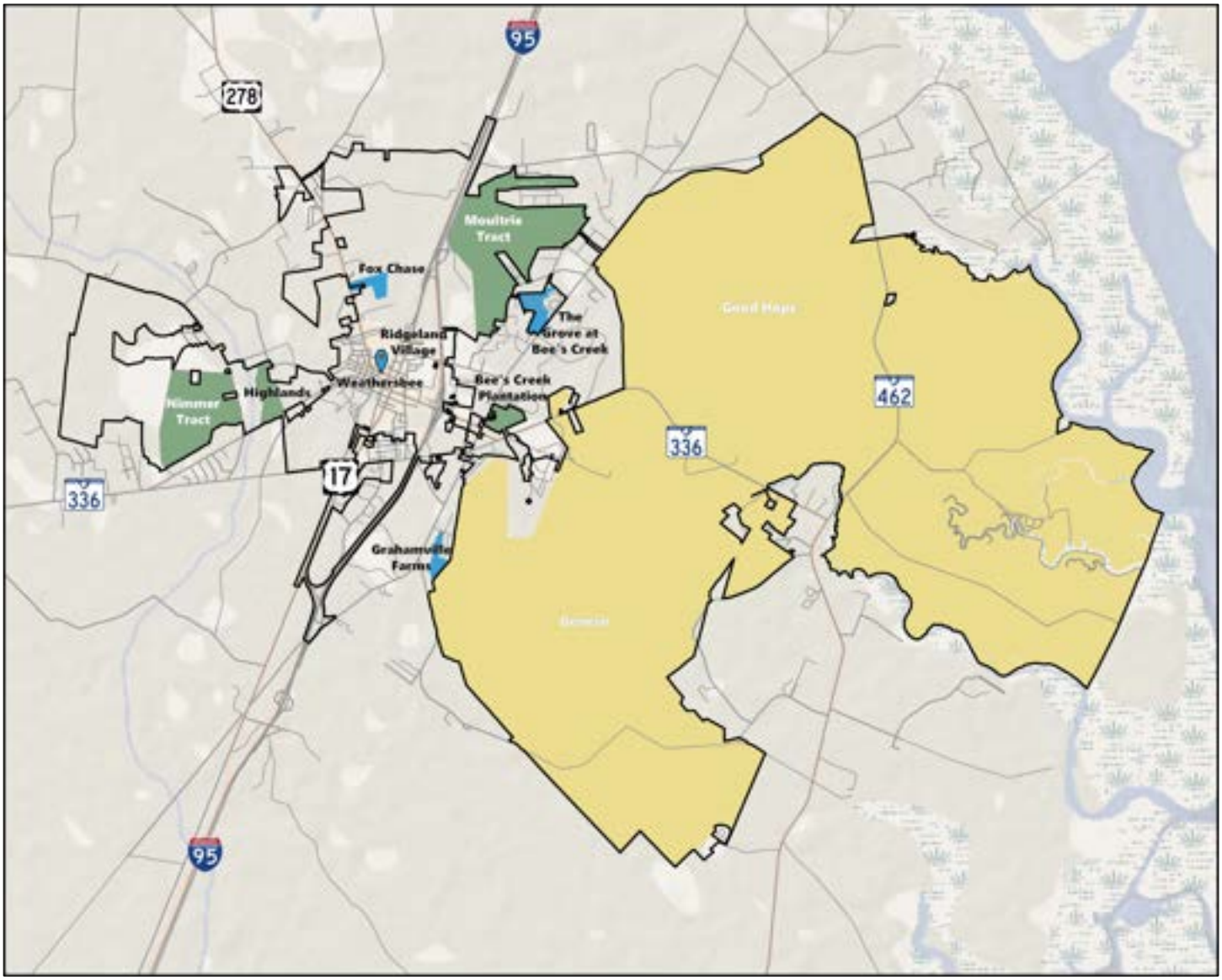
Additional information on proposed and approved developments is shared in the table below, and the map on the following page provides an illustration of where they will be developed. It should be noted that the absolute number of units could be lower once construction is completed. The approved development on the Moultrie Tract, as well as within the Special Districts, is especially subject to change, as these developments were approved almost 20 years ago and some significant changes have already taken place on those lands.

In the short term, the developments shared here are likely to occur, significantly increasing the Town's population. In the long term, much thought will need to be given to the future of the special districts on the east side of Town.

▼ TABLE 12 PROPOSED AND APPROVED DEVELOPMENT

Development	# of Residential Units / Commercial Area	Status
Weathersbee	96 units	Under Construction
Fox Chase	180 units	Under Construction
Grahamville Farms	75 units	Under Construction
The Grove at Bee's Creek	90 units	Under Construction
Ridgeland Village	13 units	Approved
The Highlands	238 units	Approved
Bee's Creek Plantation	90 units	Approved
Nimmer Tract	1,300 units	Approved
Moultrie Tract	2,600 units, 6M sf Commercial	Approved
	4,682 total units approved	

Source: Town of Ridgeland



Under Construction

Approved

Special District Approved

Ridgeland Boundary

Major Highways

Local Roads

Railroads

Water Bodies

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Jasper County recently completed a review of its Comprehensive Plan. Adopted in 2018, it focuses on maintaining the County's rural nature, as well as water, marshes, and lands that sustain itself. It also has a focus on improving economic prosperity through collaborative planning.

The Future Land Use Map for the County identifies urban transition areas in the "donut holes" around Ridgeland. These areas, though many already developed, are desired to be annexed into the Town should new development occur. The County also envisioned a couple industrial areas just north of Ridgeland, and a hamlet at the intersection of Old House Road and Coosaw Scenic Drive. Generally, the County would like to see new development east of Ridgeland to be concentrated toward this intersection, in order to preserve the rural nature of its surroundings. The County also designated much of the area south of the Town as resource conservation, to protect natural resources and water bodies.

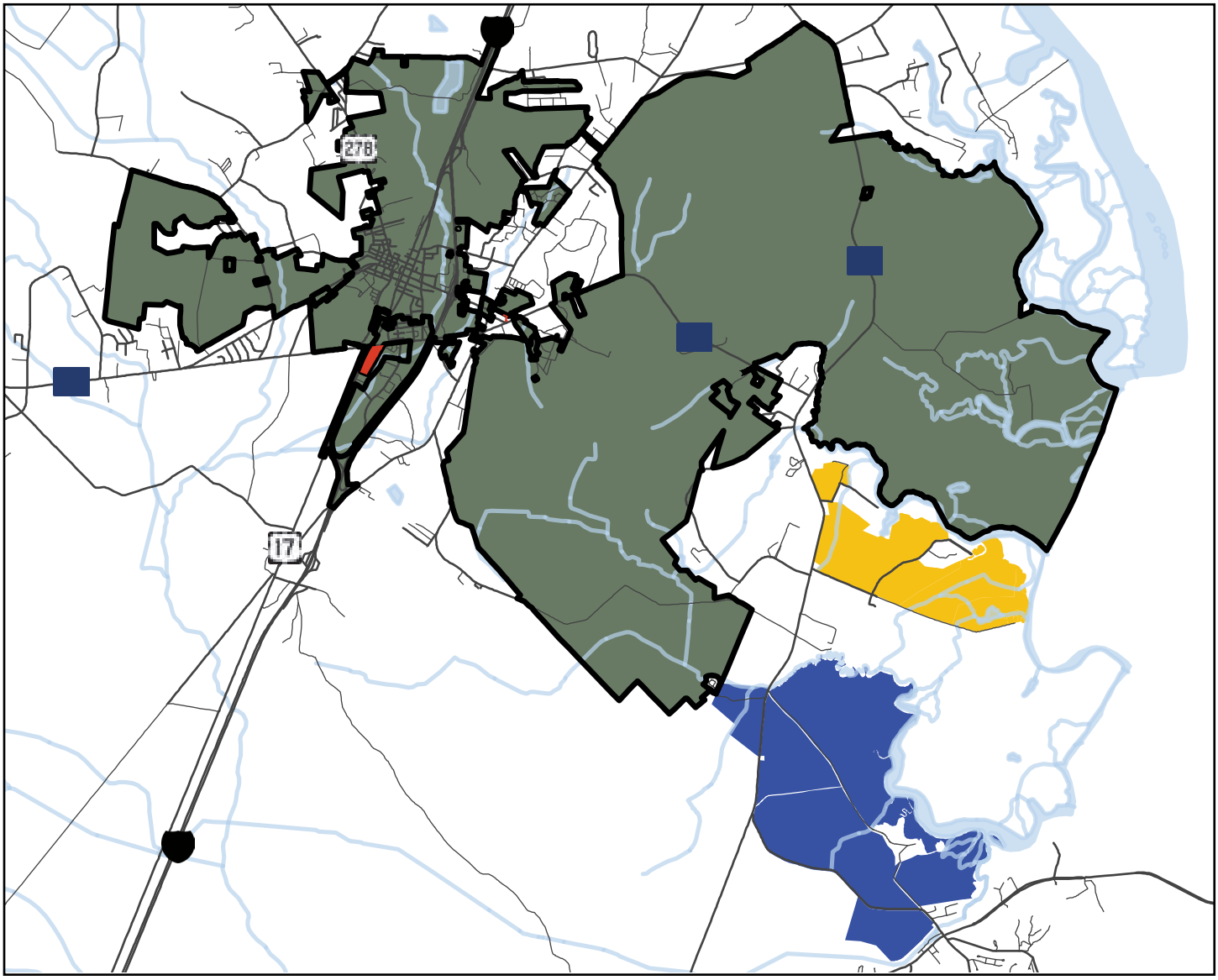
The Euhaw Broad River Planning Area, which covers much of Ridgeland's eastern and southern boundaries, is of particular concern to the County; and to allow time to review development regulations, the County initiated a moratorium for new development in this area. The moratorium, which has been in place for over a year, restricts a range of activities related to development, subdivision, and construction. At this time, the County is looking to move forward with a Euhaw Broad River Cultural District Overlay which would designate much of the land south and east of Ridgeland as Rural Preservation, with 10 acre minimum lot sizes.

ANNEXATION REQUESTS

In addition to the developments approved in Ridgeland today, there has been a recent interest in annexing into the Town. This has largely been an effect of the County's previously mentioned building moratorium. A few recent annexation requests are summarized here.

In early 2024, an annexation and Special District zoning was requested for three parcels totaling almost 2,950 acres of land on the southeastern edge of the Town. The Chelsea Special District was proposed to include a development agreement that would entitle residential, commercial, civic, and recreational uses. The overall gross density was proposed at less than one unit per acre and over 45% of the land area was to be put in conservation and mitigation space. The annexation proposal received push back and was recently (may 2025) put into conservation.

A few months after the Chelsea annexation proposal, a separate annexation request, Tickton Hall, was submitted. This included three parcels totaling over 1,520 acres on the southeastern Town limits, abutting the County line. The proposal included developing 3,000 homes and 50 docks along the water. This annexation has been discussed in previous years, and a final determination has not been made. The Town commissioned a fiscal impact analysis on the annexation and it found that there would be short-term challenges of meeting public service requirements with upfront staffing, operating, and capital costs that would result in a 40% deficit of current annual spending. Additionally, capital requirements could exceed the Town's current debt capacity. However, at build-out in 2045, annexation of the proposed project would be expected to provide Ridgeland with an annual $4M in positive fiscal impacts; in addition to an initial contribution of $9.8M in development fees, $6M in planning and building permit fees, and possibly $1M in sales tax from construction activities. At the end of 2024, two additional annexations were proposed. This includes a 1.82 acre of property and a 25 acre property, both on Jacob Smart Boulevard. These would both be used for commercial purposes if annexed.



Commercial Annexation Requests

Chelsea Annexation Request

Tickton Hall Annexation Request

Ridgeland Boundary

Major Highways

Local Roads

Water Bodies

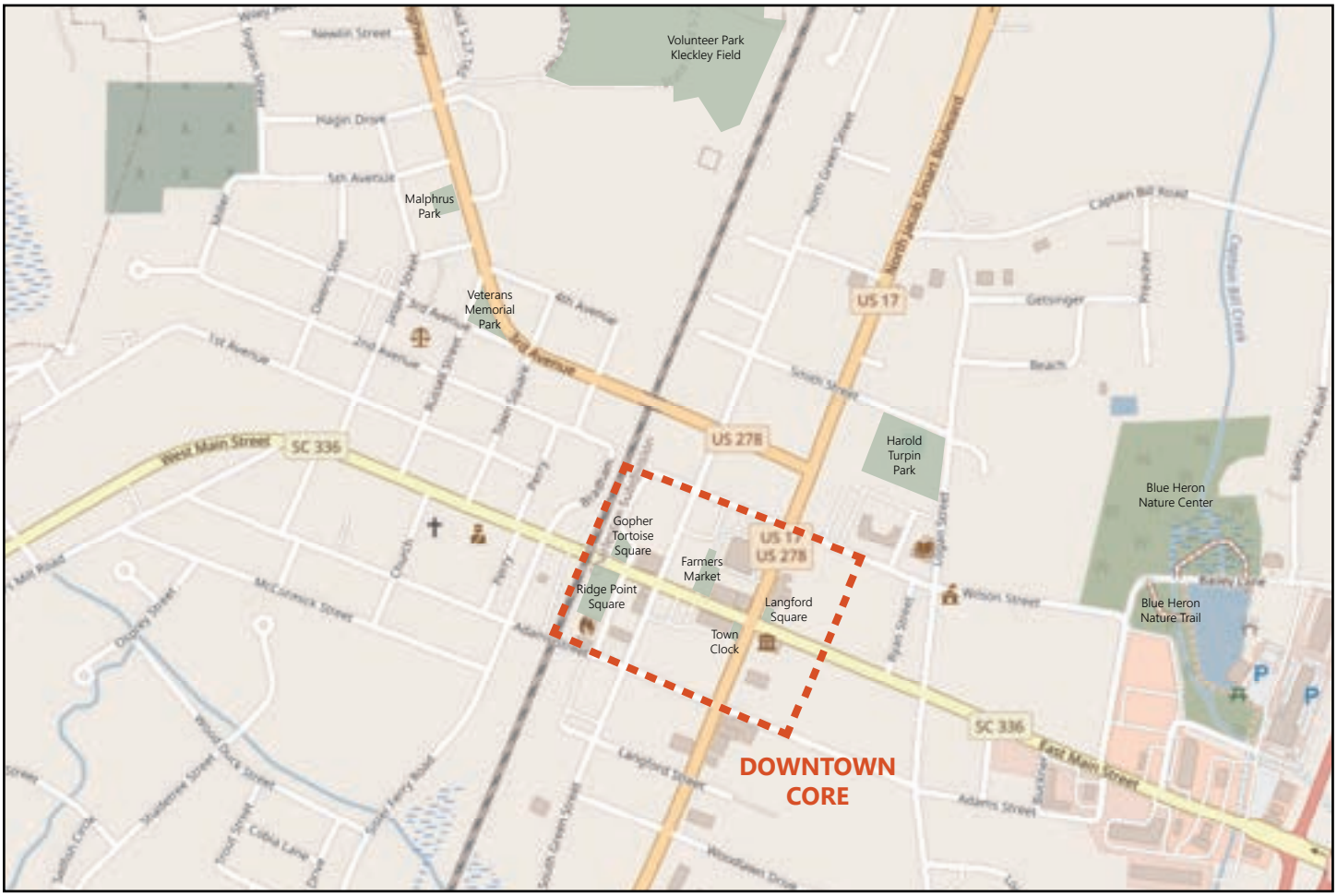
DOWNTOWN

A unique aspect of Ridgeland is the presence of an in-tact historic downtown. Centered along Main Street and Green Street, downtown Ridgeland has seen growth and improvements over the past decade. The Town has numerous open spaces and plazas spread throughout downtown, and a number of local restaurants and retail outlets are open for business. The Hispanic population in particular has invested in properties downtown, opening multiple markets and restaurants. Throughout the planning process, many residents and elected officials noted the "good bones" downtown and potential to continue growing and improving this unique attribute.

Downtown Ridgeland generally has wide brick-paved sidewalks, ornamental lighting and signage, and maintained landscaping. There is additional opportunities to enhance and strengthen some of the aesthetics of downtown, particularly through improvements to vacant or underutilized properties. However, downtown Ridgeland should be considered an attribute to build upon in the future.



▼ DOWNTOWN RIDGELAND AND SURROUNDING AREAS



MILITARY AVIATION OPERATIONS

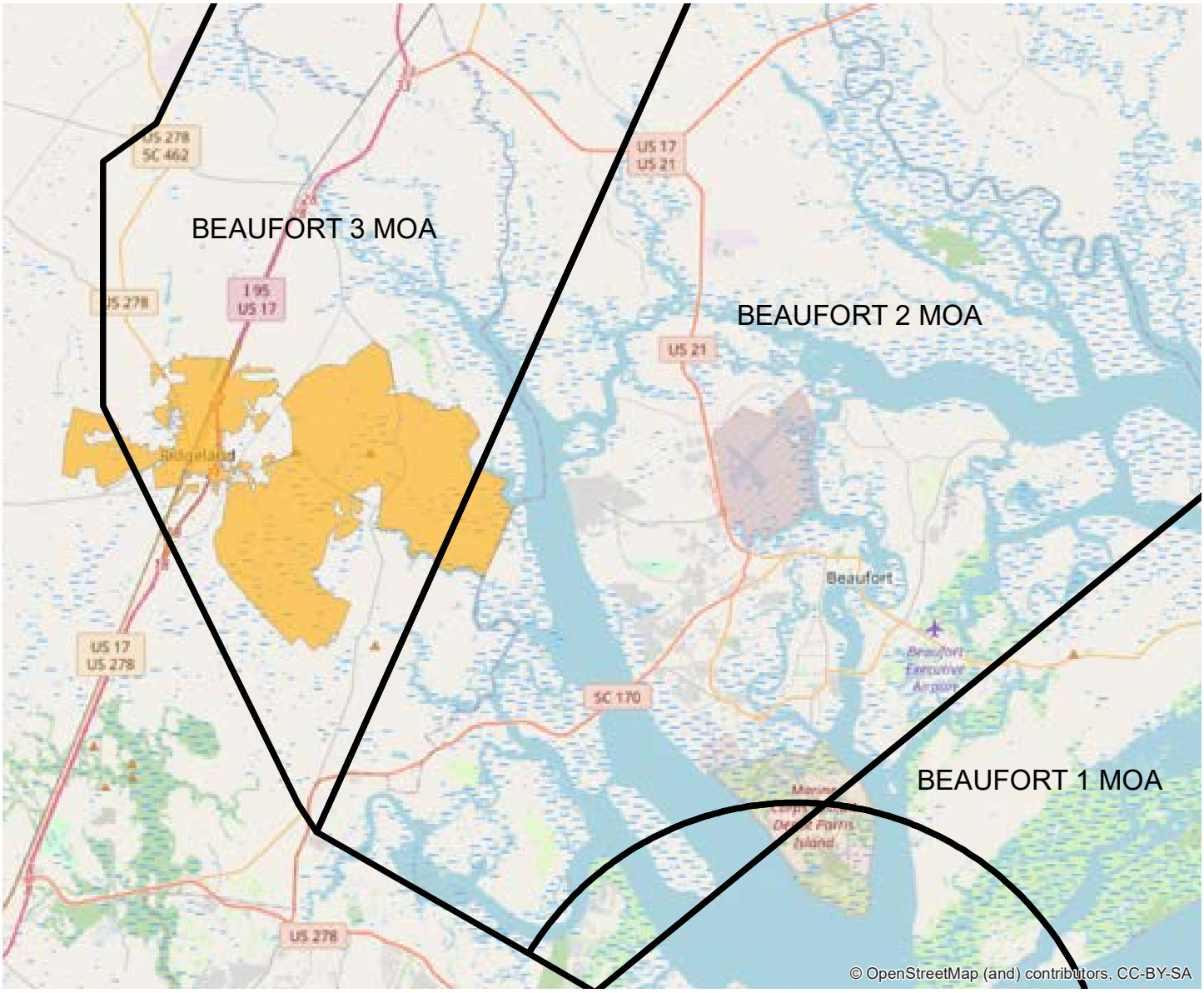
Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort (MCAS Beaufort) is located in Beaufort County, approximately 14 miles west of downtown Ridgeland. The Air Station is host to Marine Aircraft Group 31, which is composed of four operational squadrons and a training squadron that is responsible for all F-35B flight training in the Marine Corps, as well as for allied nations utilizing the airframe.

The combined training and operational missions of MCAS Beaufort generate a significant number of flight operations in the vicinity of the Air Station. While prior studies, such as the most recent Air Installation Compatible Use Zone report and 2015 Joint Land Use Study did not identify any quantifiable / discrete noise or safety impacts in Ridgeland's jurisdiction, aviation operations do take place in the airspace over and around the Town on a somewhat regular basis. Special Use Airspace (SUA) controlled by MCAS Beaufort in the vicinity of Ridgeland is designated as the Beaufort Military Operations Areas (MOA) 1-3, with the Beaufort 2 MOA and Beaufort 3 MOA intersecting the Town's corporate limits. The MOAs are "activated" for training by notice to air missions (NOTAM), with a general limit on use of up to 4 daylight hours on up to 2 days each calendar month. While the MOAs are active, aviation operations may occur as low as 100 feet above ground level (AGL), which is the "floor" altitude for each of the MOAs.

Low-level flight operations occurring over currently rural and undeveloped areas in and around Ridgeland are not likely to be as disruptive to long-time residents of these areas as they may be to new residents as the Town continues to grow. Therefore, ensuring disclosure by developers of the presence of low-level flight operations areas to prospective buyers (and subsequent buyers) should be considered to ensure that the community is well-informed of the potential for noise associated with military aviation operations. Similar disclosure requirements are currently in place in Beaufort County, for example.

The low floor altitudes of the MOAs also require vigilance to protect the airspace from encroachment by tall structures that could pose a hazard to aircraft operations. While all structures exceeding 200' are required to be evaluated by FAA for hazards, structures over 75' in the MOA could pose a hazard to aircraft given the 100' floor altitude for operations. Coordination with MCAS Beaufort when such structures are proposed will help to ensure, at a minimum, that they are aware of potential obstructions, while the Town may also desire to regulate height to prevent conflicts.





Town of Ridgeland

Military Operations Areas (MOA)

Major Highways

Minor Highways

Major Collectors

Local Roads

Water Bodies

RIDGELAND CLAUDE DEAN AIRPORT

The Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport (3J1) is located on the northwestern edge of Ridgeland, partially in unincorporated Jasper County and partially within the Town's municipal limits.

In order to protect public-use airports, the State of South Carolina Code of Laws includes provisions for recording airport safety and land use zones, and reviewing proposed developments within them. The map on the following page shows the airport safety and land use zones surrounding the Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport. Zones A, B1, and C are safety zones, while Zones B2, D, and E are land use zones. These zones are described below, with detail on the types of uses generally compatible within them.

Local governments having jurisdiction around a public airport are mandated to use zoning regulations to protect them from encroachment by hazardous or otherwise incompatible land use and structures (S.C. Code Ann § 55-9-240). Local governments are also required to provide notice to the SC Aeronautics Commission regarding all pending (or issued) development approvals within the area covered by the zones to allow the Commission an opportunity to provide comments on safety or compatibility concerns. Furthermore, structures meeting the height threshold for evaluation under 14 CFR Part 77 are required to be submitted to the FAA Obstruction Evaluation / Airport Airspace Analysis office (OE/AAA) for determination if the structure poses a hazard to safe aerial navigation in the vicinity of the airport. While the FAA does not have land use regulatory authority outside of the airport property, the determination of whether a structure poses a hazard should be incorporated into local land use decisions along with the safety and compatibility guidance promulgated by the SC Aeronautics Commission.

AIRPORT ZONE DESCRIPTIONS

ZONE A: RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONE

Land uses should be limited to airport-related and aeronautical uses only; free of occupied structures and objects interfering with air navigation. Limited use of roads may be permitted and structure heights are limited to 100 feet.

ZONE B-1: INNER APPROACH ZONE

Most land uses require additional review; very low density residential (single family homes on large lots), light manufacturing, commercial, small businesses, warehouses, roads, and agriculture may be compatible. High density and intensity uses are not compatible, and structure heights are limited to 100 feet in portions of this zone.

ZONE B-2: OUTER APPROACH ZONE

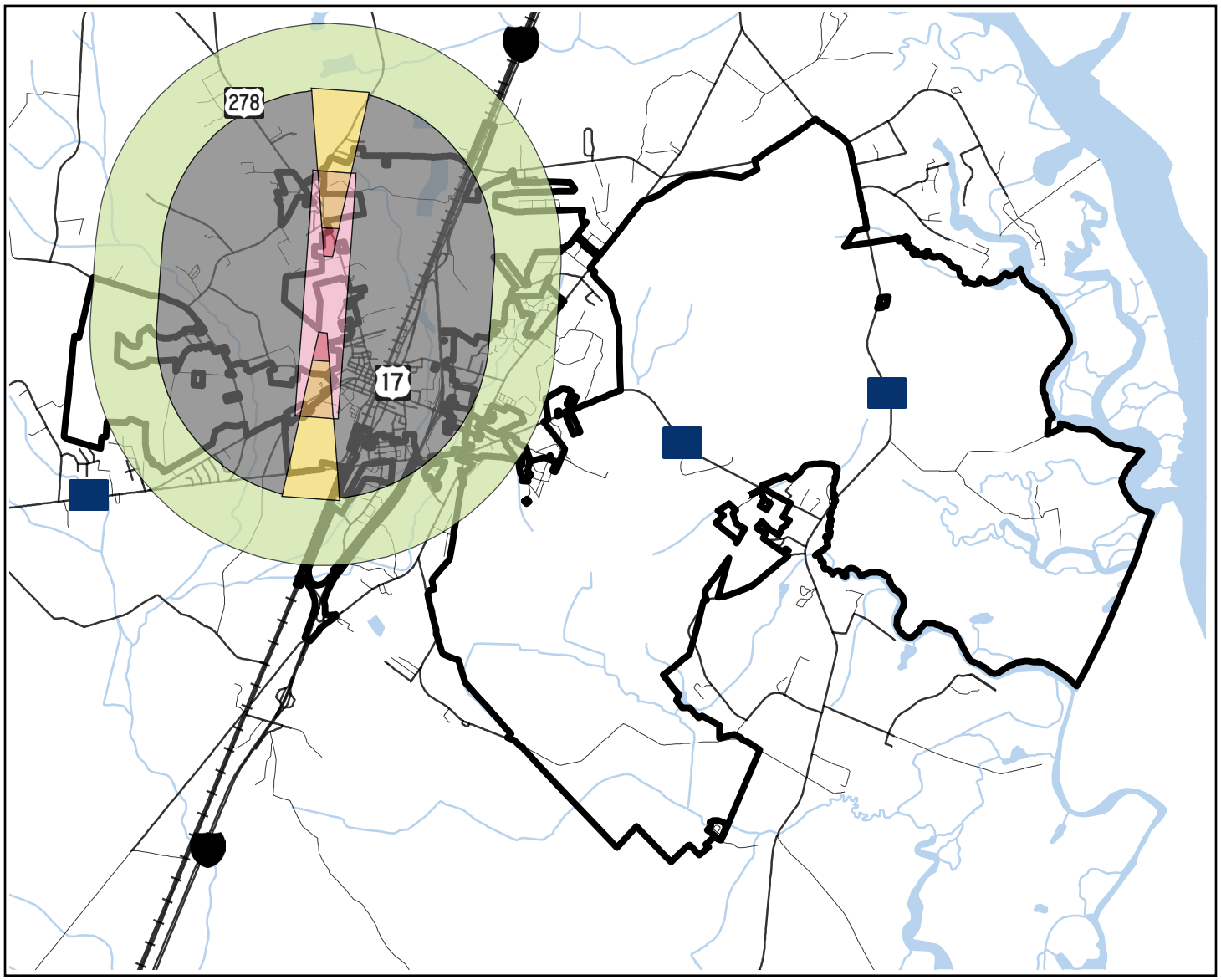
Low density residential (detached single family homes), low and medium intensity commercial and industrial uses, low density medical and educational uses may be compatible. High density and intensity uses are not compatible.

ZONE C: TRANSITIONAL ZONE

Most land uses require additional review; very low density residential (single family homes on large lots), light manufacturing, commercial, small businesses, warehouses, roads, and agriculture may be compatible. High density and intensity uses are not compatible, and structure heights are limited to 100 feet in portions of this zone.

ZONE D & E: VICINITY ZONE

Most land uses and levels of density are generally acceptable, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses. Primary land use concerns include uses that may attract wildlife (birds) and industrial uses that generate smoke or steam that could obscure visibility in the vicinity of the airport.


278
17
Zone A: Runway Protection Zone
Zone B1: Inner Approach Zone
Zone B2: Outer Approach Zone
Zone C: Transitional Zone
Zone D: Horizontal / Vicinity Zone
Zone E: Conical / Vicinity Zone
Ridgeland Boundary
Major Highways
Local Roads
Railroads
Water Bodies

TRANSPORTATION

A transportation element considers transportation facilities, including planned improvements and programs.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Throughout its history, Ridgeland has been shaped by its location on key regional transportation networks. In 1860, the Town's proximity to the Charleston and Savannah Railway helped spur growth; in the second quarter of the 20th century, US-17 brought commercial development to Town; and the construction of the Interstate has been the most influential transportation connection to the Town. With its three exits on I-95 and ongoing improvements to the Ridgeland Airport, the Town is poised to leverage these logistical advantages. However, it also has a local street grid, bicycle and pedestrian amenities, and public transportation. This element provides a summary of Ridgeland's transportation network.

ROAD NETWORK

The Town's primary form of transportation infrastructure is its road network. The Town is located along I-95, with three interstate exits. There is also a combination of local and regional routes, as detailed here.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Principal arterials are major highways, generally of regional importance, intended to serve through traffic. The only principal arterial in Ridgeland is I-95. Arterial highways are generally characterized by their ability to quickly move relatively large volumes of traffic, but with access limited by abutting properties. In Ridgeland, SC-336, US-278, and US-17 are minor arterials, all connecting smaller roads to the Interstate. There are also a number of major collectors in and around Town, which connect local roads to arterials. The majority of streets in Town, are small, local roads.

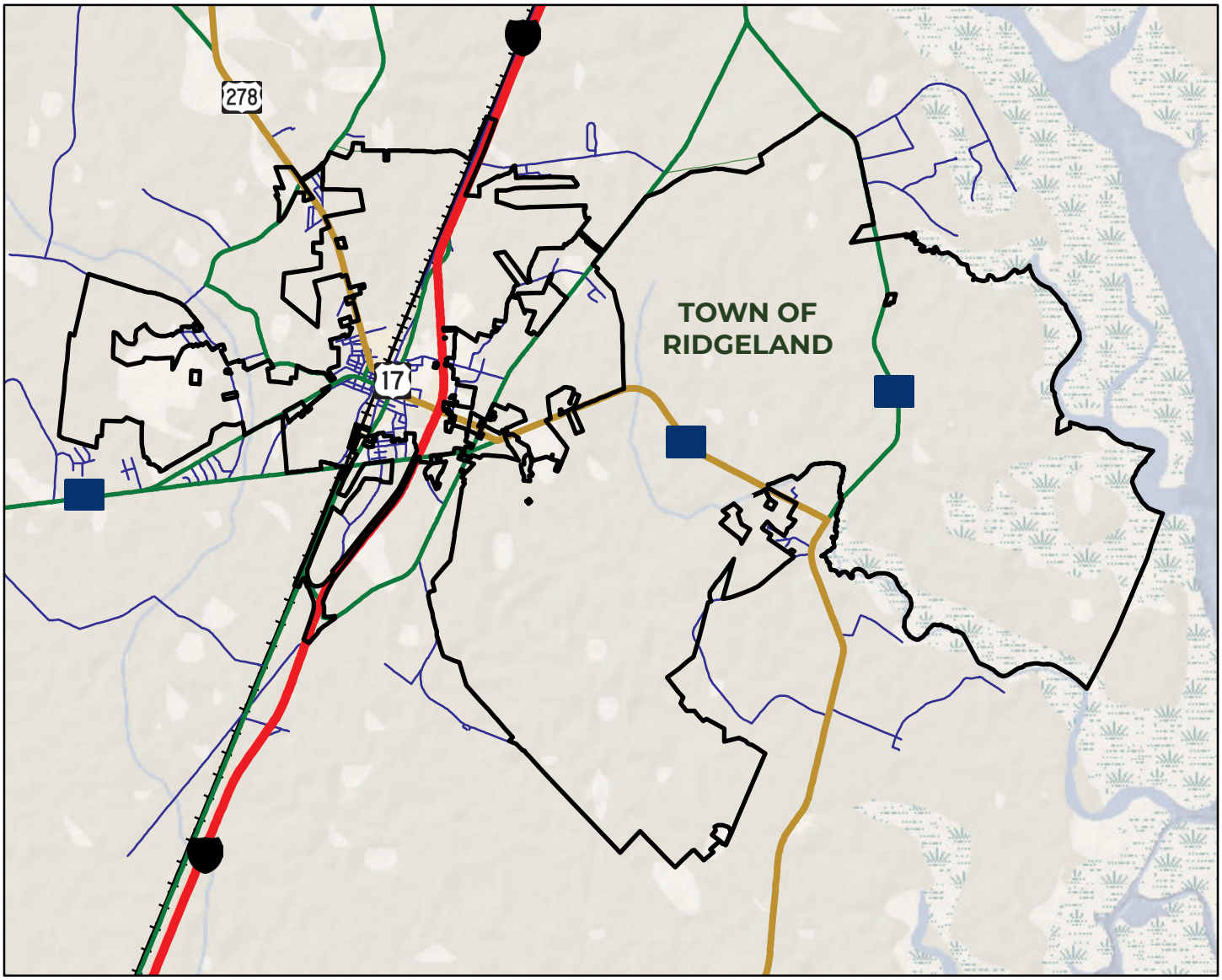
TRAFFIC

Of course, the most trafficked road in Ridgeland is I-95. The various segments in Town receive between 54,900 and 59,400 trips per day. After the interstate, the most trafficked road is the southern portion of SC-462, with 12,600 vehicle trips per day. SC-336 / W Main Street is the next most trafficked road, with over 10,000 vehicle trips per day. The majority of the remaining outlying roads receive between 5,000 and 8,000 trips per day. The least trafficked road is Log Hall Road, just north of the Town limits, and it averages just 200 vehicle trips per day.

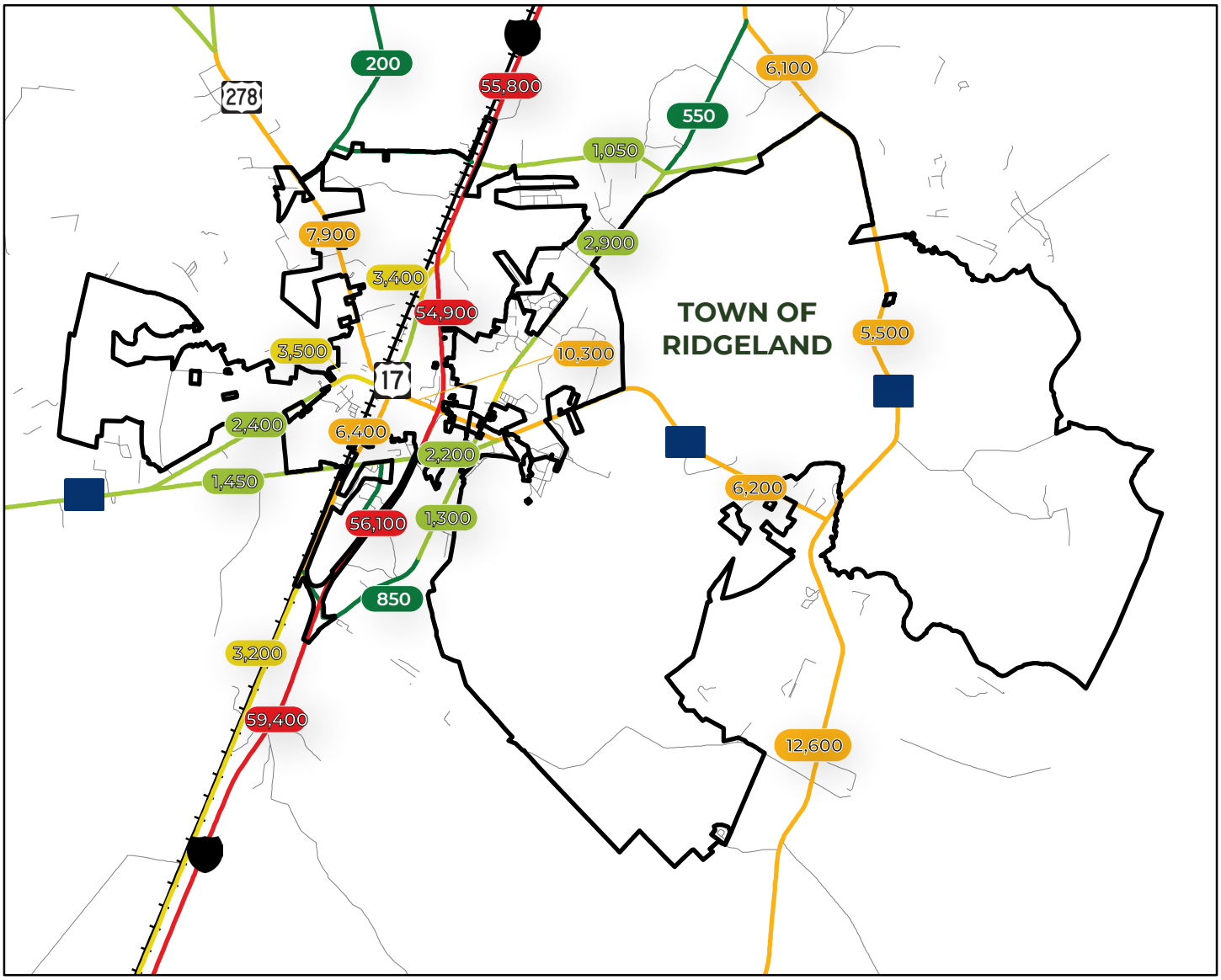
VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

The greatest point of conflict within the municipal limits is the intersection of Jacob Smart Boulevard and Main Street, where 26 accidents occurred between 2017 and 2021. The majority of other accidents in Town occurred along I-95 and along Main Street. Despite a high number of accidents, this is still significantly fewer crashes than occurred in neighboring communities over the same period. Okatie and Hardeeville in particular have witnessed significantly more vehicle crashes than Ridgeland. Generally speaking, the greatest concentration of vehicle accidents has occurred along major road corridors.

In 2023, the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) received funding through the United States Department of Transportation Safe Streets and Roads for All program to develop a Safety Action Plan for its four-county region of Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties. The plan will guide investments in safety initiatives and new infrastructure across the region. Improvements for Ridgeland are shared at the end of this element.



Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation (2024)

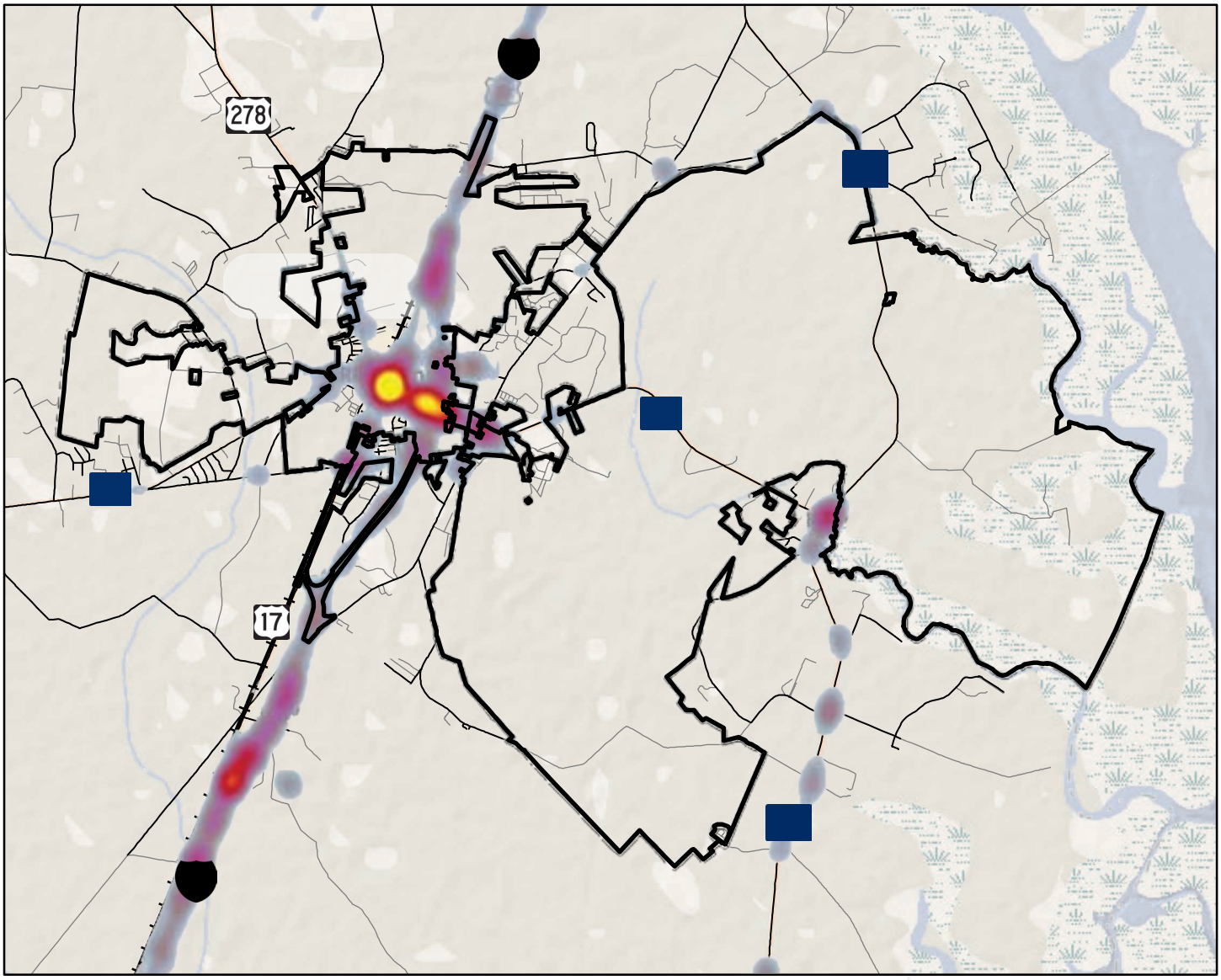


Average Vehicle Trips Per Day

- Up to 1,000
- 1,001 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 12,600
- 50,001 +

- Ridgeland Boundary
- Local Roads
- Railroads

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation (2023)



Source: South Carolina Department of Public Safety (2022)

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority / Palmetto Breeze Transit provides a wide variety of public transportation services in five Lowcountry counties (Allendale, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper). The service includes three routes which go through Ridgeland, as well as two others which travel along the Town's boundaries.

Bus routes in the area generally operate seven days per week between 4:35 am and 7:30 pm. Route 308 - Pineland / Ridgeland to Hilton Head Commuter has numerous stops within the Town, including the County Courthouse, Fordville / Captain Bill Road, BP / Shell Gas Station, and Logan Lane Apartments. Route 311 - Allendale to Hilton Head Commuter passes through Ridgeland, with a stop along Coosaw Scenic Drive / Old House Road. Route 320 / 820 - Ruffin / Walterboro to Hilton Head Commuter follows a similar path through Town. While Route 310/810 - Fairfax / Hampton to Hilton Head Commuter doesn't stop in Ridgeland, it passes through the Town via I-95.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

The Town has a network of sidewalks which connect pedestrians to many of the key commercial areas. The greatest segment of sidewalks is of course around downtown. Additionally, Blue Heron Nature Trail provides a short trail (0.6 miles) for pedestrians. There are currently no streets in the Town limits that contain bike lanes or paths designated for their use.

FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

Truck freight is the primary mode of freight in the United States, and significant truck freight passes through the Town via I-95. According to the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness' 2023 SC Logistics Economic Impact Report, over 150,000 people are employed in logistics in the State and logistics has a total economic impact of $48.3 billion. In South Carolina, the logistics sector grew by more than 31% between 2017 and 2023, likely correlating with an increase of truck traffic along I-95 in Ridgeland.

▼ FIGURE 14 PALMETTO BREEZE TRANSIT ROUTES



Ridgeland also has a CSX Transportation rail line running through Town. In South Carolina, rail freight transports raw materials and goods for industries and businesses within the state, as well as distributes products exported to other states and countries. According to South Carolina's Statewide Rail Plan (2014, currently being updated), rail tonnage is forecast to increase from 70.3 million in 2011 to 101.4 million in 2040, a cumulative increase of 44.3%. CSX owns and operates more than half of South Carolina's rail network and major commodities for CSX in the State include petroleum and coal products, lumber and wood products, chemicals and allied products, coal, and miscellaneous mixed shipments. The State plans to grow both freight and passenger rail service in the future.

AVIATION

A runway was first built in Ridgeland in 1939. By 1943, the airport was solidly in operation, with over 70 local pilots. In 1960, the State of South Carolina funded lighting and runway expansions at the airport, and it soon provided training space for the United States Army. The airport was renamed to the Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport (3J1) in 2015 and it is currently undergoing another transition. In 2019, a 4,200 foot runway and parallel taxiway was completed and additional improvements are planned for the site, including constructing an Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS), a RNAV GPS Instrument Landing System, a Fuel Farm (AVGAS & Jet-A), a Terminal Building, and additional storage and maintenance hangars.

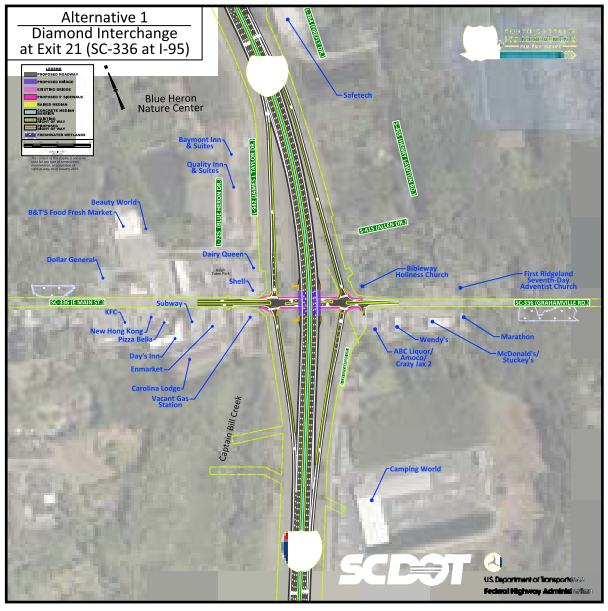
PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

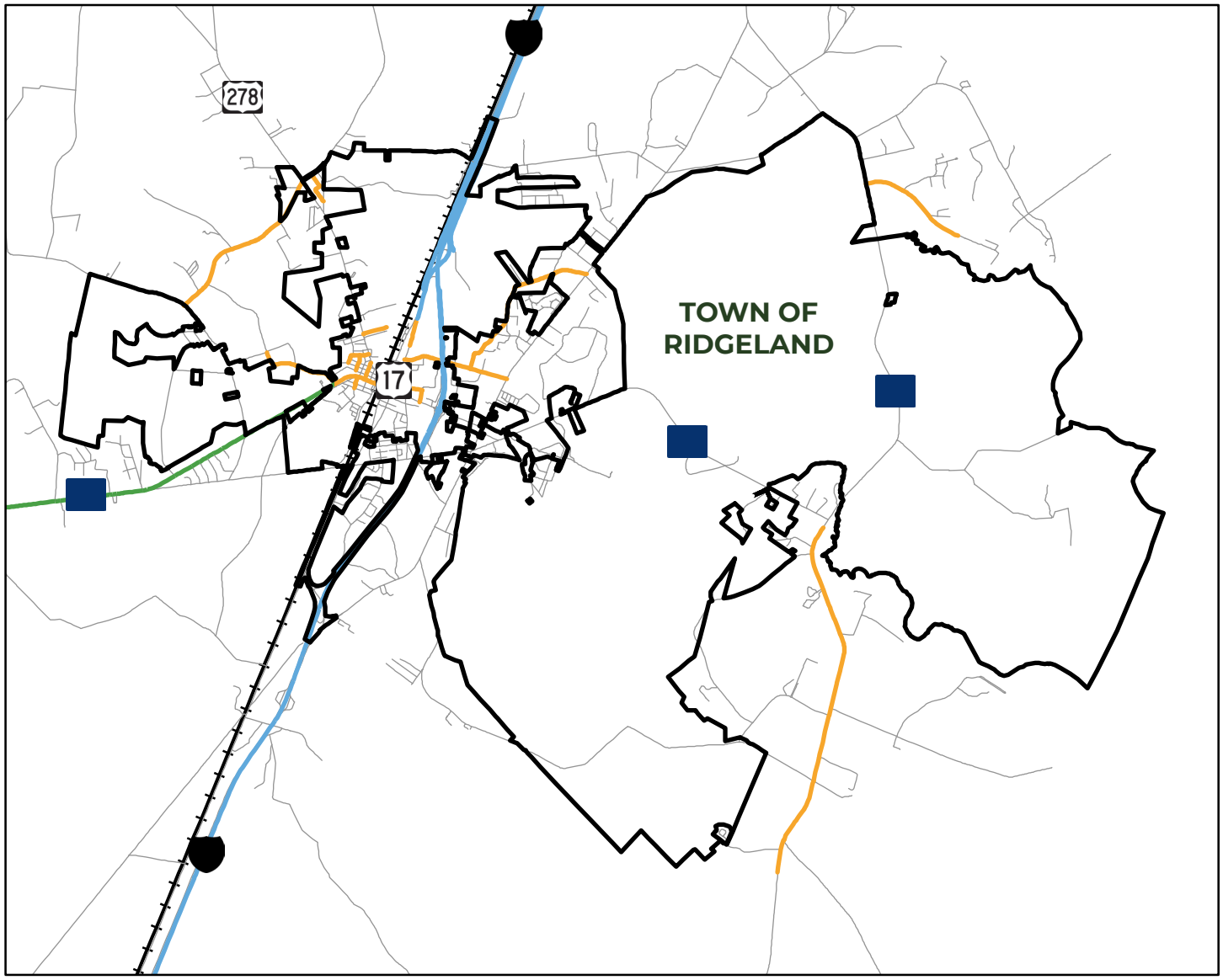
The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has a number of rehabilitation and resurfacing projects planned within Ridgeland in the coming years. While these will bring notable improvements to the Town's transportation network, the most significant project planned by SCDOT is the widening and improvement of I-95. As part of this project, SCDOT will also re-design the interchange at exits 18, 21, and 22. This project is currently in the design phase and planned to be completed by the end of 2031. SCDOT is currently considering alternative designs for the interchanges, and construction is scheduled to begin on exits 18 through 21 in the Fall of 2027.

Outside of the STIP project, the Town is considering a project to construct left turn lanes on Northbound US-17 at the intersection of Main Street. The potential timeline on this project is unknown. LCOG's Safety Action Plan (SAP) lists this intersection on the project's list making it eligible for Safe Streets For All grant funding. In fact, the LCOG's Safety Action Plan includes a number of projects within and around Ridgeland.

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation

Potential improvements are described here, and mapped at the end of this element. A revised cross section is proposed for Jacob Smart Boulevard (from E Adams Street to 3rd Avenue) to a 5-lane road with left turn lanes and access management where feasible by removing on-street parking for 0.27 miles. It also includes shared lanes or 4' bike lanes as applicable. An all-way stop control is recommended at the intersection of Grahamville and Bees Creek Roads. Improved signage and flashers are recommended at the intersection of Old House Road and Coosaw Scenic / Lowcountry Drive. The intersection of Coosaw Scenic Drive and Bees Creek Road is recommended to be realigned to eliminate the skew angle and consolidate access. On East Main Street / Grahamville Road, the SAP recommends removing palmetto trees that obstruct sight distance at unsignalized driveways and replacing them with non-obstructing vegetation. It also recommends consolidating driveways and / or restricting to right-in / right-out access where feasible to reduce conflicts. Vegetation is also proposed to be removed at the intersection of Coosaw Scenic Drive and Knowles Island Road. Roads are proposed to be resurfaced with wider shoulders, ruble strips, and improved striping on portions of US-17, Old House Road, Lowcountry Drive, and W Frontage Road.

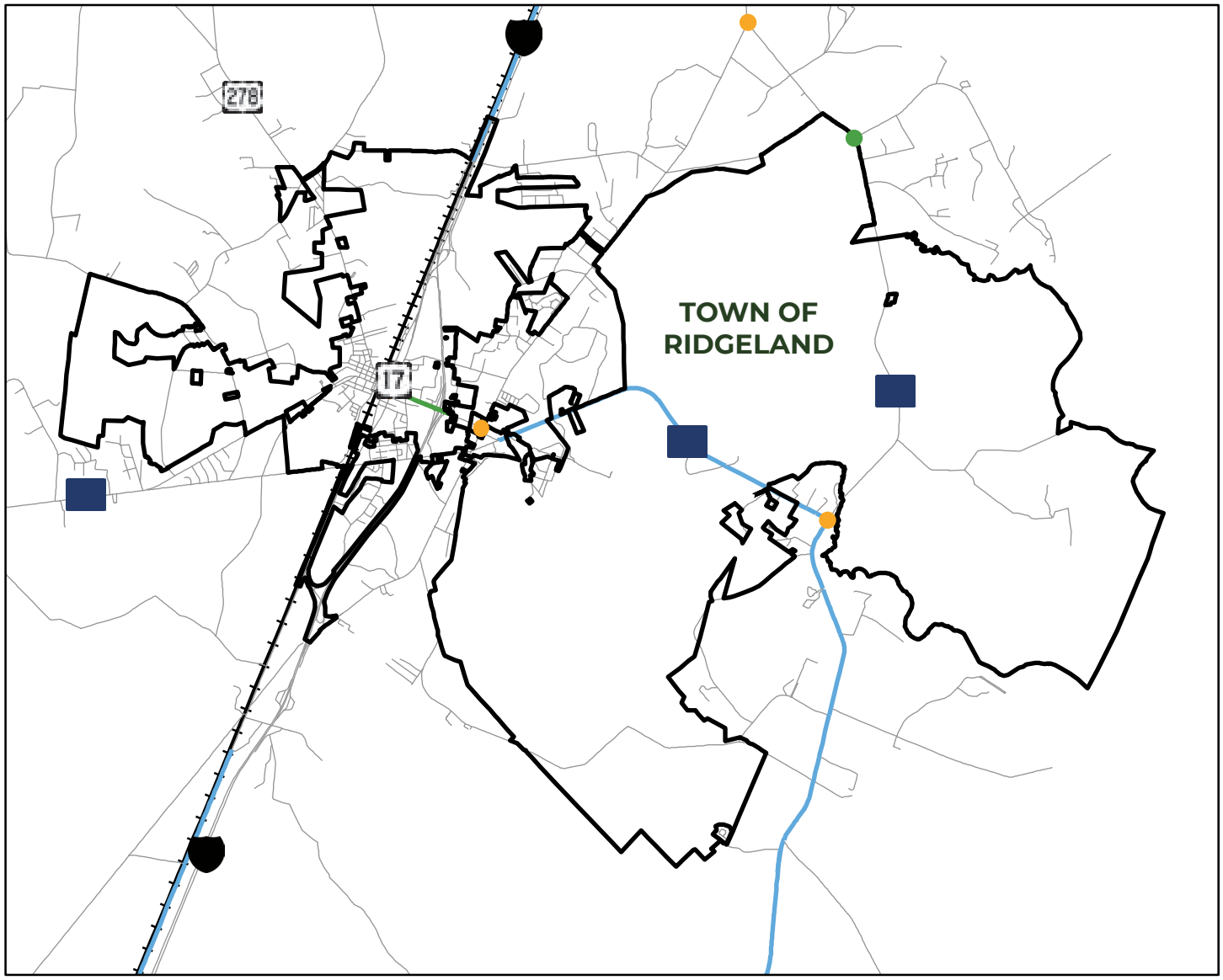




Project Types

- Rehabilitation & Resurfacing
- Install Center Line & Rumble Strips
- Widen & Corridor Improvement
- Local Roads
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Roads
- Railroads

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation (2024)



Project Types

- Intersection/Turning Enhancements
- Sight Distance Improvements
- Major Road Improvements
- Local Roads
- Ridgeland Boundary
- Roads
- Railroads

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation (2024)

RESILIENCY

A resiliency element considers the potential impacts of natural hazards and mitigation plans.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, the State of South Carolina amended the Code of Laws to establish the South Carolina Office of Resilience. This office was charged with the tasks of developing, implementing, and maintaining a statewide resilience plan and to coordinate with local governments on resilience and disaster recovery efforts. As part of this amendment, the Code of Laws also now requires that all local comprehensive plans have a resiliency element. This new element is to consider the impacts of natural hazards, including an inventory of existing resiliency conditions, resiliency planning, and intergovernmental coordination.

The Town of Ridgeland is at risk of impacts from many potential disasters, including tornadoes, hurricanes, windstorms, lightning, hail, drought, earthquakes, wildfires, floods, winter storms, coastal erosion, and extreme heat. In an effort to plan for potential disasters and reduce their impacts, the Town of Ridgeland, along with regional partners, adopted the 2020 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan is the representation of the jurisdiction's commitment to reduce the risks from natural hazards, serving as a guide for decision makers as they commit resources to reducing the effects of natural hazards.

The plan provides a profile of the most common natural hazards in the region, as well as social vulnerability indicators for identifying populations at greatest risk from the effects of natural hazards. The plan also identifies mitigation actions to save lives and to prevent major property damage and other losses caused by natural disasters. The plan was completed in June 2021 and was the first fully multi-jurisdictional plan for all four counties in the Lowcountry: Jasper, Beaufort, Hampton, and Colleton.

NATURAL HAZARDS

The following subsection provides a summary of the natural hazard potential within Jasper County, and thus the Town of Ridgeland.

Disaster Declarations

Between 2015 and 2020, there were nine disaster declarations resulting in some type of assistance in Jasper County. The majority of these were related to four hurricanes which impacted the region: Hurricane Dorian, Hurricane Florence, Hurricane Irma, and Hurricane Matthew. There was also an emergency declaration related to severe storms and flooding in October of 2015.

Since 2020, a few additional disaster declarations have been made in the County. This includes the Covid-19 Pandemic in March of 2020; severe storms, tornadoes, and winds in April 2020; Hurricane Ian in 2022; and Hurricane Debby in 2024.

Each of these disasters resulted in significant loss of life, property damage, displaced citizens, and emergency operations.

Hurricanes

Tropical cyclones, including tropical depressions, tropical storms, and hurricanes, are storms with closed, circulating winds that rotate in a counterclockwise direction and that originate over warm waters in the northern hemisphere. Tropical depressions have maximum sustained surface wind speeds up to 38 miles per hour. When wind speeds reach 39 miles per hour, the system is formally classified as a tropical storm and receives a name. When winds reach a sustained 74 miles per hour, the event is re-classified to a hurricane.

Hurricanes come in varying intensities, measured by the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale which ranges from one to five, with higher numbers representing higher wind speeds and stronger storms. Once a storm reaches Category 3 (111 mile per hour sustained winds), it is considered a Major Hurricane. According to the National Hurricane Center, hazards associated with tropical cyclones are strong wind, heavy rain, tornadoes, and storm surge. Though not directly on the coast, Ridgeland is likely to be impacted by storm surge if hit by any hurricane at or above a Category 3.

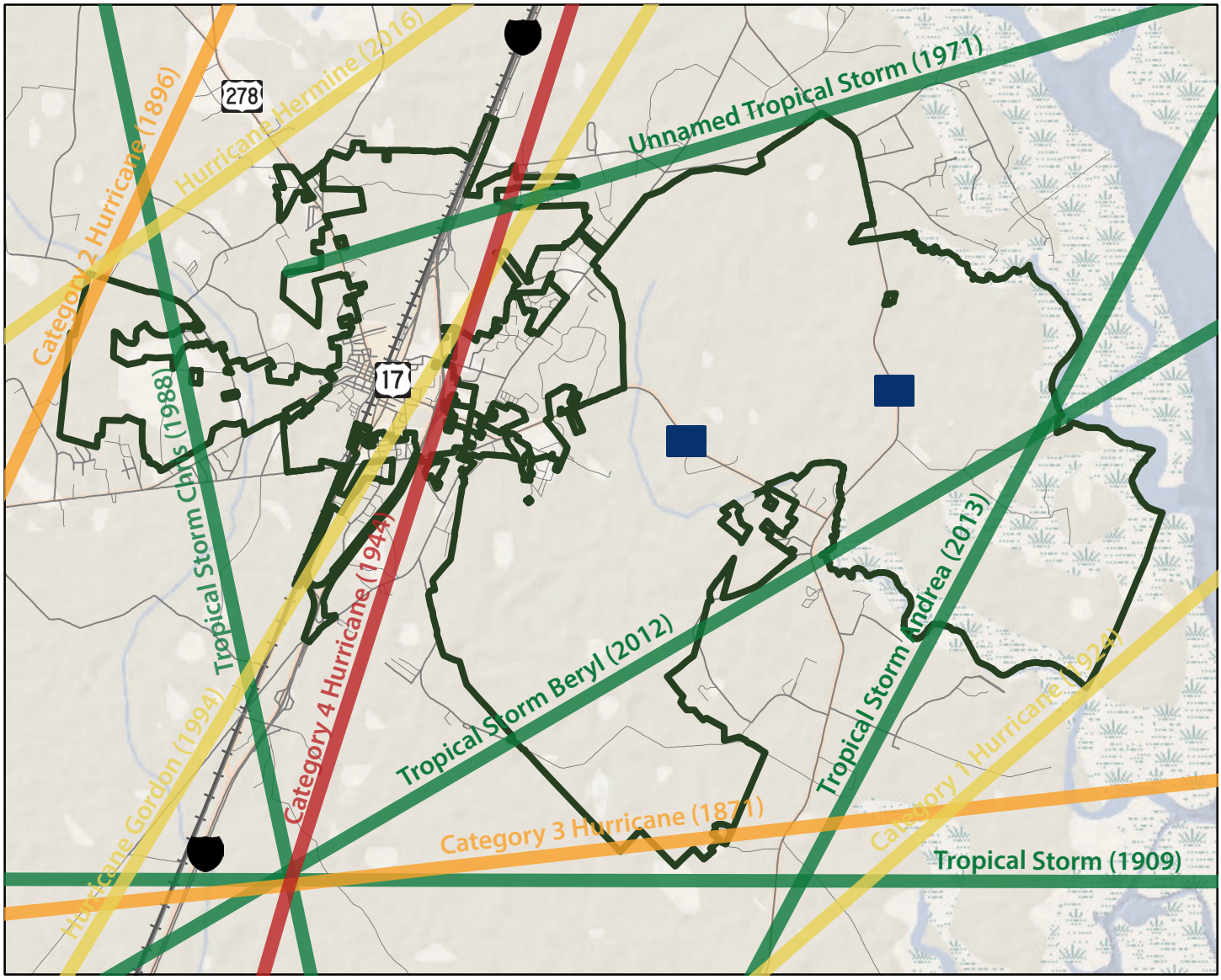
The Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan documents 55 total tropical events in the region between 1850 and 2019. Only one of these was a major hurricane (Hurricane Gracie, a category 4 storm which made landfall near Edisto Island in 1959). There were five category 2 hurricanes, eight category 1 hurricanes, nineteen tropical storms, twelve tropical depressions, one subtropical storm, one subtropical depression, and eight extratropical storms.

Given its proximity to the coast, the number of impacts and related flooding / storm surge events have been higher here than in other, inland portions of the State. When hurricanes strike the Lowcountry, the extent of the impact often encompasses the entire region. Between 2012 and 2019, there were an additional five hurricanes that passed within 50 nautical miles of the coast. These hurricanes produced enough damage in the region to warrant Presidential Disaster Declarations (PDD).

▼ TABLE 13 DISASTER DECLARATIONS IN JASPER COUNTY (2015 - 2019)

Declaration Date	Declaration Type	Disaster	Assistance Type (Category)
2019-09-30	Major Disaster Declaration	Hurricane Dorian	Public Assistance (A-G)
2019-09-01	Emergency Declaration	Hurricane Dorian	Public Assistance (B)
2018-09-16	Major Disaster Declaration	Hurricane Florence	Public Assistance (B)
2018-09-10	Emergency Declaration	Hurricane Florence	Public Assistance
2017-09-17	Major Disaster Declaration	Hurricane Irma	Public Assistance
2017-09-17	Emergency Declaration	Hurricane Irma	Public Assistance (B)
2016-10-11	Major Disaster Declaration	Hurricane Matthew	Individual Assistance & Public Assistance (A-G)
2016-10-06	Emergency Declaration	Hurricane Matthew	Public Assistance (B)
2015-10-03	Emergency Declaration	Severe Storms and Flooding	Public Assistance (B)

Source: 2020 Lowcountry Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan



Storm Category

- Tropical Storm
- Category 1 Hurricane
- Category 2 Hurricane
- Category 4 Hurricane
- Town Boundary
- Major Highways
- Railroads
- Water Bodies

Source: United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (2000 - 2020)

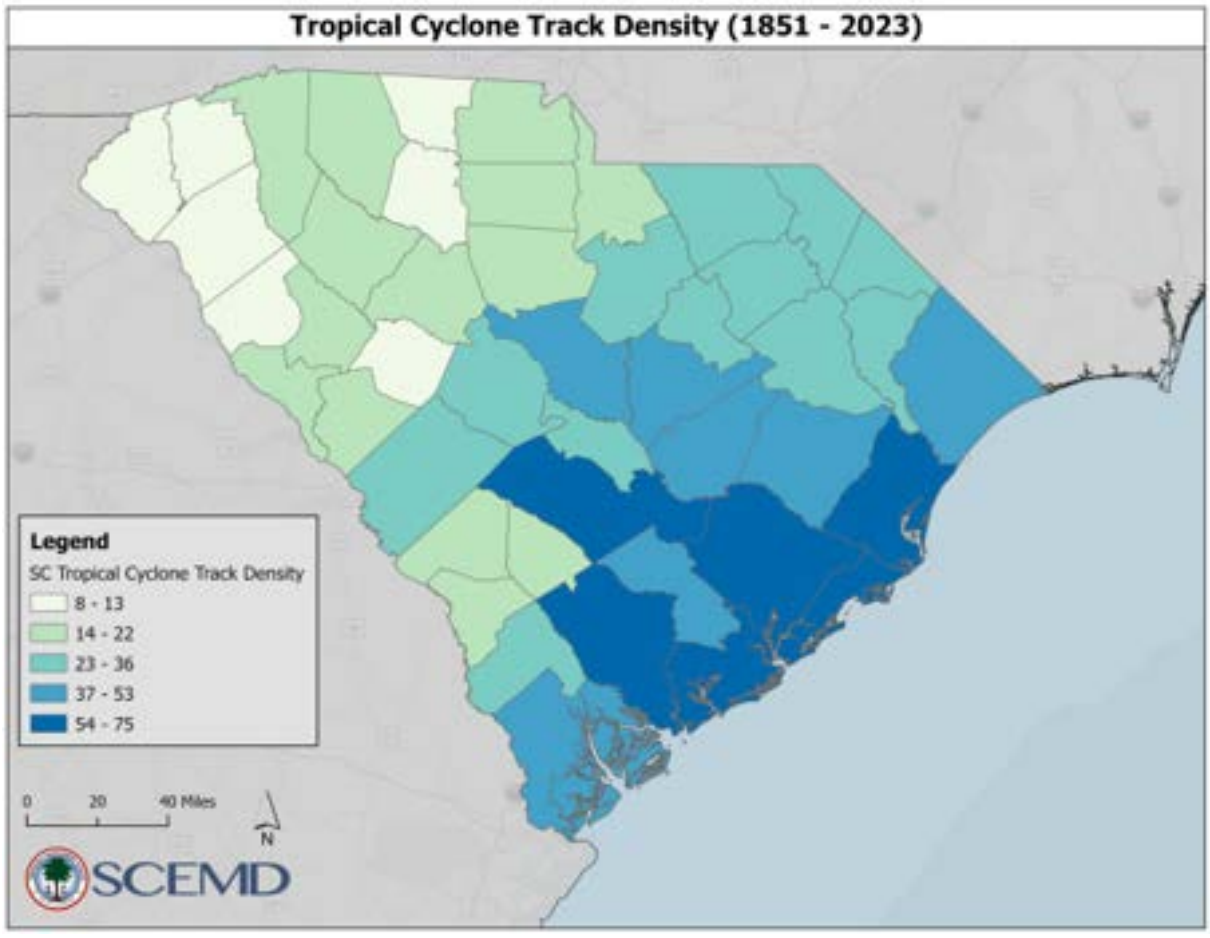
Those that specifically impacted Ridgeland and Jasper County are described here:

- May 2012: Tropical Storm Beryl produced tropical storm force winds, rip currents, heavy rainfall, and downed trees in the County.
- June 2013: Tropical Storm Andrea brought thunderstorms, causing a tree down along I-95 between Hardeeville and Ridgeland.
- October 2016: I-95 was closed between Ridgeland and Hardeeville due to many trees on the road and water covering the road surface near exit 22 during Hurricane Matthew.
- September 2017: Jasper County Emergency Management reported multiple trees down across the County due to strong winds associated with Hurricane Irma.
- October 2018: Wind associated with Hurricane Michael blew down a tree near Ridgeland.
- September 2019: Several trees fell down across the entire County due to winds associated with Hurricane Dorian.

In total, 28 hurricane and tropical storm events were recorded in Ridgeland between 1988 and 2019. This averages to about 1.14 storms per year, with an 88% future probability of tropical storms or hurricanes occurring in Ridgeland per year. This is comparative to the entire region, especially given the scale of tropical storms.

In fact, since the 2020 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted, a number of additional tropical cyclones have impacted Ridgeland. These are briefly described below:

- August 2020: Tropical Storm Isaias
- September 2020: Post-Tropical Cyclone Sally
- July 2021: Tropical Storm Elsa
- September 2022: Tropical Storm Ian
- August 2023: Tropical Storm Idalia
- September 2024: Hurricane Debby
- September 2024: Hurricane Helene



Tornadoes

According to the National Severe Storms Laboratory, a tornado is a violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm cloud to the ground. Tornadoes are extremely violent events, with the potential for winds up to 300 miles per hour. Tornado intensity and severity are measured using the Enhanced Fujita Scale, which assigns a rating based on damages. The scale ranges from EF-0 (weakest) to EF-5 (strongest), determined by variables including structures, trees, construction types, and more.

South Carolina averages approximately 11 tornadoes a year, ranking 26th in the nation for tornado damage. Between 1950 and 2020, 69 tornadoes touched down in the Lowcountry. The majority of these were in Beaufort and Colleton Counties, and over half resulted in some damage and / or a human injury or death.

Between 2012 and 2019, there were eight tornado touchdowns in the region, with just one impacting Jasper County. The EF-1 tornado touched down on June 11, 2012 between the communities of Okatie and Switzerland. It traveled four miles and inflicted $437,000 in damages. However, there were no direct impacts on the Town of Ridgeland. In fact, there is no record of a tornado impacting Ridgeland during this time, though considerable damage to trees has been found in the Town, consistent with a tornado event.

Tornado events are random in their geographic pattern, and while most likely to occur during hurricane season, they can occur year-round. They have a relatively low frequency of occurrence, and historically (1986 - 2019), Ridgeland experienced one tornado. The probability of a future tornado event is 3% chance per year.

Windstorms

There are two different types of wind hazards: strong winds and thunderstorm winds. Strong winds are non-convective winds gusting less than 58 miles per hour. Thunderstorm winds are winds associated with convective storms that produce lightning within 30 minutes of wind gusts. Thunderstorm gusts can reach 80 miles per hour in the Lowcountry, and can fell trees, damage structures, and topple power lines. Although lightning is an integral feature of thunderstorm winds, the perils associated with lightning are in a separate section of this plan.

Thunderstorm winds are frequent occurrences in the Lowcountry, with the majority of events occurring in Colleton County. According to the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, there are between 5 and 33 thunderstorm / strong wind warnings issues in Ridgeland each year. Between 2012 and 2019, Jasper County experienced 156 windstorms with $129,461 in financial loss, and no deaths or injuries. Notable events include June 11, 2012, when strong winds began in Switzerland. Someone reported a tree down on a power line on Jasper Road, and numerous trees were uprooted or snapped off. The total damage was $30,000. On July 1, 2012, thunderstorms generated cold pools through the entire County. It was estimated that 10 to 15 trees and power lines were down in Ridgeland.

Thunderstorm winds and strong winds are high frequency events, with more than 100% chance of occurring in any given year. They recur almost monthly, but with lower consequences based on damages. Less than half of the recorded thunderstorm / strong wind events caused crop or property damage, nor did they result in human casualty in Jasper County between 1996 and 2019. While Jasper County witnessed 262 storms in this period, Ridgeland only experienced 35.

Lightning

Lightning is an electrical discharge that results in a giant spark between two clouds, or a cloud and the ground. Although lightning is associated with severe storms, lighting strikes have been recorded 25 miles away from storm clouds. The primary hazards associated with lightning are structural damages to buildings and potential fire. There are also electrocution hazards to people from lightning strikes resulting in injuries or deaths, especially when outdoors in unsheltered areas.

The extent of lightning can be expressed in terms of the number of strikes in a period. The National Weather Service uses "Lightning Activity Level" on a scale from one to six to rate the cloud-to-ground lightning strikes observed in an area during the rating period.

The National Lightning Detection Network started recording lightning strikes in 1999 and have detected over 330,000 lightning strikes in the Lowcountry through 2019. More than one-third of these were within Colleton County. When looking at yearly averages, there is also a hot spot of lightning strikes concentrated in Jasper County.

Between 2012 and 2019, there was an average of 245 - 319 lightning strikes per year recorded in Ridgeland. No financial loss, injuries, or death were recorded in the Town during this time period. However, light damage and two injuries were recorded due to lightning in Jasper County between 2012 and 2019.

Lightning is a frequent hazard that occurs multiple times per day, or even per hour in strong thunderstorms. The recurrence frequency of lightning is less than 0.01 per year, but if converted to a daily frequency of occurrence, it would be roughly every 0.38 days.

Hail

Hail is the frozen precipitation from convective thunderstorms. Hail can occur anywhere and hail in the Lowcountry has ranged from the size of a pea (a quarter of an inch) to the size of a large apple (three inches). Hail can damage cars and buildings, ruin crops, and cause bodily harm to people and livestock.

Hail is described using known objects to estimate its size and the larger the hail size, the more damage produced. A total of 45 hail events were recorded in the region between 2012 and 2019, though no deaths or damages were associated with these events. The location of hail events appears to be randomly dispersed throughout the region, with a small hot spot in Beaufort County, on the eastern edge of Jasper County (near Hardeeville). There appears to have been a few hail events on Ridgeland's boundaries during this time period. The only notable hail event in Ridgeland was on May 15, 2012, when numerous showers and thunderstorms occurred across the area and an observer reported penny-sized hail near the Town.

Hail is a high frequency event, with more than a 100% chance of occurring in any given year. However, there are lower consequences based on damages. Between 1989 and 2019, there were ten hail events recorded in Ridgeland. This means that the future probability of hail events occurring in the Town is about 32% per year.

Drought

When a region receives lower-than-normal precipitation for a prolonged period, they experience drought. This deficit of rain can affect agriculture, the economy, water levels, the environment, health problems, and wildfire risk. Droughts vary in severity based on the lack of precipitation, length of the event, and area where it occurs. While they can occur throughout the year, fall is historically the driest season in South Carolina. Annual precipitation ranges between 46 and 56 inches in the Lowcountry, with the lower ends of the range falling further inland.

Droughts can last months to years and are often tied to long-term pressure systems in the Atlantic or the El Nino Southern Oscillation. There are many factors that combine to classify a drought, including spatial extent, duration, and severity. South Carolina uses seven different indicators to measure drought status, including the U.S. Drought Monitor for South Carolina, the crop moisture index, the Palmer Drought Severity Index, stream flow levels, lake / reservoir levels, groundwater levels, and the Keetch-Byram Drought Index.

Drought is a large-scale event that typically covers entire counties or regions. Between 2012 and 2020, Jasper County had a moderate drought level for three years (2012, 2013, and 2019), incipient drought status for three years (2014 - 2016), and normal drought status for three years (2017, 2018, and 2020). The Lowcountry experienced an average of 60 drought days during the past twenty years, but none of these conditions were severe. Between 2012 and 2019, Jasper County and Ridgeland experienced an average of 16.5 drought weeks per year with no reported damage, and no deaths or injuries. Future drought events are very likely to occur, with more than 1,000% chance of occurring any given year. However, the consequences based on damages are low.

Earthquake

Earthquakes are the sudden violent shaking of the ground that typically occur near tectonic plate boundaries, but can occur in the middle of plates as well. While South Carolina is located in the interior of the North American plate and does not have an active plate boundary nearby, it experiences earthquakes due to intraplate earthquakes, ancient fault zones (formed hundreds of millions of years ago during past tectonic events, such as the breakup of super-continents), and isostatic rebound (stress caused by land adjustments and rebounds made over time). Recently, South Carolina has experienced a number of small earthquake swarms.

There are multiple effects associated with earthquakes: primarily the destruction of structures and injury to people from the initial shaking of the ground; and secondarily to aftershocks which can occur for weeks to even years after the event, soil liquefaction which causes the ground to behave more like a liquid than a solid and can cause the foundation of structures to sink or shift, fires resulting from ruptured gas lines or snapped power lines, and landslides triggered by earthquakes.

Earthquakes are low probability events in South Carolina and are rarely felt. However, the Charleston Earthquake of August 31, 1886 is notable because of its intensity. According to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, earthquakes such as the 1886 Charleston event have a frequency of occurrence on the order of every 400 - 500 years. Given evidence of prior large events in the Lowcountry, it appears that any given year has about a 1/400 chance of a large earthquake event. There was no recorded earthquake event in Ridgeland or Jasper County between 2000 and 2019. The Lowcountry region has a potential for liquefaction and tsunami activity from localized earthquakes in the future.

Wildfire

According to the South Carolina Forestry Commission, a wildfire includes any outdoor fire that is not controlled and supervised. Wildfires damage forests, natural habitats, water quality, and air quality. The State's fire season extends from winter to early spring, when vegetation is dormant and dry. The most common origins of wildfires include debris burning, woods arson, equipment use, children, smoking, campfires, lightning, railroads, and other miscellaneous accidents that cause fires.

Since 2005, over 3,300 wildfires occurred in the Lowcountry region. Nearly 40% of these were in Colleton County and one of the most notable recent fires was in January of 2011 in Beaufort County (with damages totaling $1.12 million). Jasper County has a high wildfire risk, with 961 events in the County between 2005 and 2019. Almost 90% (864) of these were small wildfires (burning less than 15.5 acres). About 4% (41) were medium wildfires (burning 15.5 - 32.8 acres), and almost 5% (56) were large (burning more than 32.8 acres). A concentration of wildfires has occurred in Ridgeland recently and the future probability of wildfires is very high, with more than 10,000% chance of occurring in any given year.

Flooding

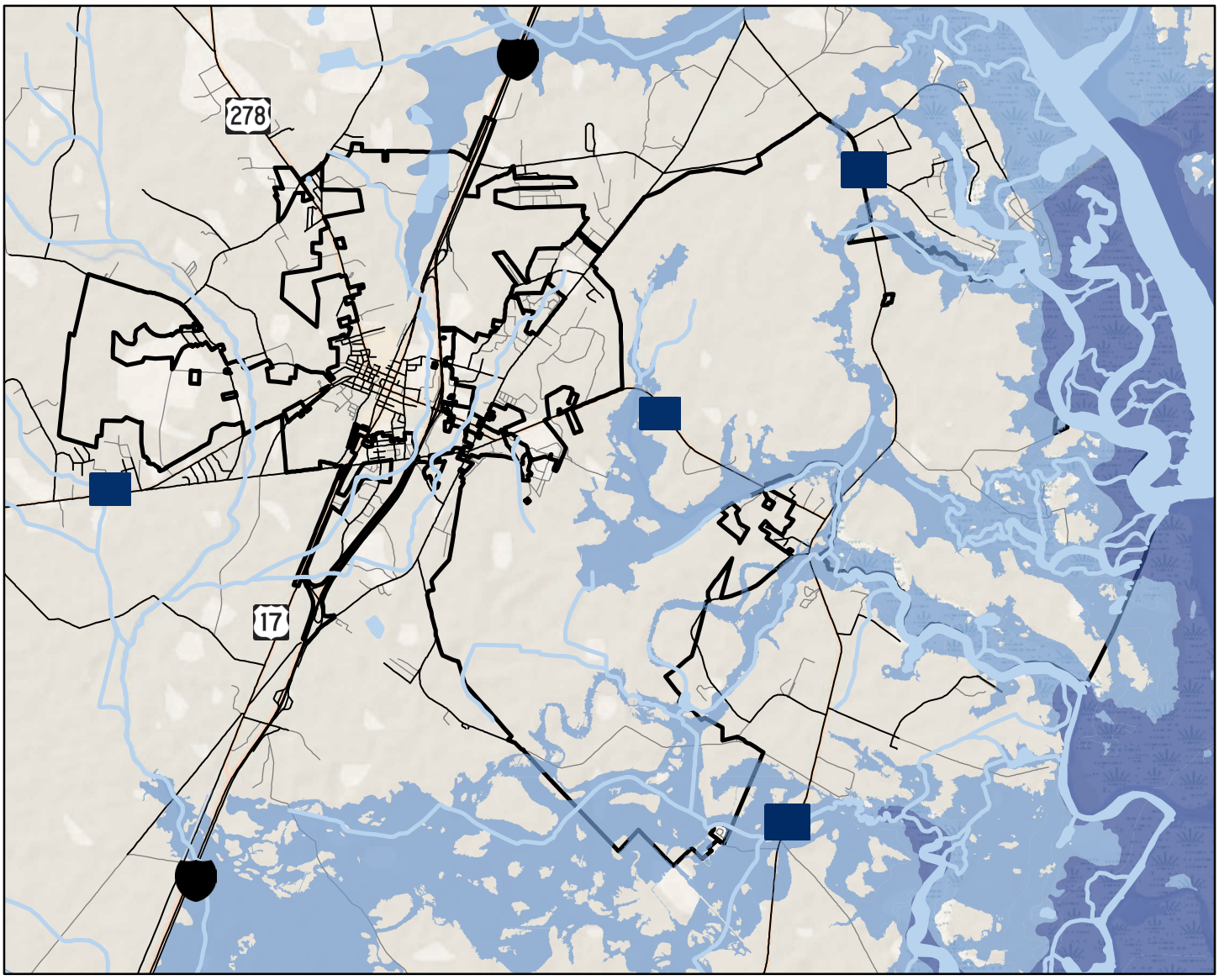
Flooding occurs when water flows or collects in areas that are usually dry. This can happen because of heavy rain, snow, high tides, dam breaks, and similar events. Floods can be for a short duration or last weeks, and they can be anywhere from a few inches to many feet. Flooding claims more lives in the United States than tornadoes, hurricanes, or lightning and flooding is the most expensive natural disaster, costing $5 billion on average each year. Flooding is a major threat in the Lowcountry, with approximately 41% of its land area being located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s regulated flood zone (or 100-year floodplain).

The floodplain map is a simplified version of information gathered by FEMA. "High Risk Floodplains" include areas within the A, AE, AH, and AO flood zones. Each of these zones have a 1% annual chance of flooding. "Coastal High Risk Floodplains" include the VE zone, which also has a 1% or greater chance of flooding each year but also has additional hazards associated with storm waves. Open water and streams are also displayed on the map to illustrate areas which are regularly underwater.

According to the National Weather Service, RIdgeland receives between 1.73 and 2.75 flash flood warnings per year. There were 13 flood events in the County between 2012 and 2019, resulting in $35,443 in financial loss. The notable events include:

- May 2016: Tropical Storm Bonnie dropped six to ten inches of rainfall in many areas, resulting in flash flooding in Jasper County. There was significant flooding on I-95 near mile marker 22. Both the northbound and southbound lanes were closed and completely impassable. Highway 17 was also flooded near I-95 and a gas station has an unknown amount of water in the building. A few cars were submerged in the flood waters and I-95 was closed between exits 18 and 24 for almost 24 hours. The damage total $10,000. In Ridgeland, Main Street was flooded and closed, as were a number of secondary roads. There was about six inches of water in a few homes in Town.
- September 2017: Widespread heavy rain associated with Hurricane Irma resulted in several reports of flash flooding, with water entering homes and businesses. At least one person was stranded and in need of rescue. The damage totaled $25,000.

The future probability of flood events is high, with a 42% chance of occurring in Jasper County in any given year.



Streams and Water Bodies

High Risk Floodplains

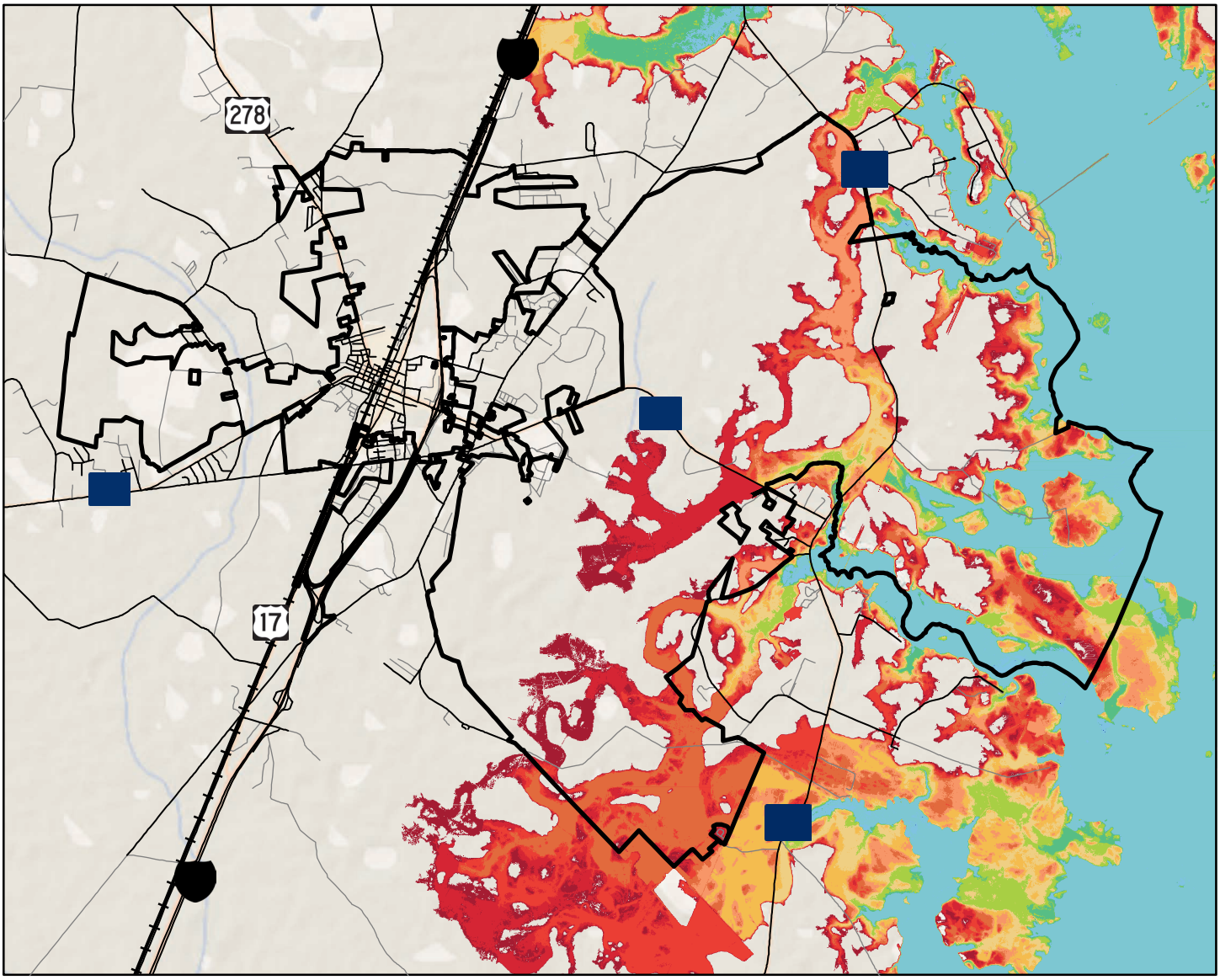
Coastal High Risk Floodplains

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (2024)



Sea Level Rise Scenarios

1 Foot

10 Feet

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Level Rise Viewer (2024)

Sea Level Rise

Given the Lowcountry's position on the Atlantic Coast, it is at special risk for sea level rise. The Fort Pulaski (Georgia) station, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)'s water level station, has recorded sea level since 1935 and, in this period, the mean sea level has increased at a rate of about 1.09 feet per 100 years. Sea level rise is likely to continue getting worse, threatening infrastructure, buildings, power plants, roads, and railways. The encroaching saltwater can poison freshwater habitats and water supplies.

Approximately 22% of the Lowcountry's land area is subject to one to two feet of sea level rise inundation, affecting roughly 68,000 people, or 25% of the region's population (per 2018 population estimates). Sea level rise events are likely to increase in frequency in severity over time, making it a major concern for the Lowcountry.

Based on data obtained from NOAA, as little as one foot of sea level rise will impact portions of Ridgeland. The greatest risk is on the Town's eastern boundary, particularly in the Good Hope Special District. With six or more feet of sea level rise, portions of the Genesis Special District would also be significantly impacted. Sea level rise is projected to approach the Town from both the northeast, direct east, and southeast.

Winter Storm

A winter storm includes events where the main types of precipitation are snow, sleet, or freezing rain. Most deaths related to winter storms are labeled as indirect deaths (such as those involving automobiles, snow shoveling, and exposure to cold). Winter storms include blizzards, ice storms, snow storms, and Nor'easters.

Winter storms are infrequent events in the Lowcountry. However, Nor'easters occasionally affect the region's beaches. According to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Lowcountry averaged two or less days of winter weather per year between 1986 and 2015. Between 2012 and 2019, there were three winter storm events in Jasper County. These included:

- February 12, 2014: Storm totaled ice accumulation of up to one quarter of an inch across inland portions of Jasper County. The highest amounts of ice accumulation were in and around Ridgeland.
- February 28, 2014: Temperatures were near or below freezing at many locations. Jasper County law enforcement reported that an ice-covered large tree limb fell onto power lines.
- January 3, 2018: Thee to four inches of snow was measured around Ridgeland. The highest amount in the County was six inches, just east of Ridgeland. The event began as freezing rain.

The future probability of winter storm events is low in the Lowcountry region, with a 25% chance of occurring in Jasper County in any given year.

Extreme Heat

Extreme heat is classified as heat indices that exceed the average that an area usually experiences in the summertime. The heat index accounts for both the measured air temperature and humidity; and different areas have different thresholds for what constitutes extreme heat.

Extreme heat can affect a person's ability to keep their body temperature from raising, leading to heat-related illness such as heat stroke, heath exhaustion, and possibly death. Although the old and very young are at the most risk to be affected, anyone who is not careful can experience heat related illness.

According to the National Weather Service, the Charleston Office considers heat risks when the heat index reaches 95 degrees and issues advisories and warnings. In August 1999, heat and humidity combined to produce heat indices ranging from 110 - 120 degrees in the Lowcountry region, with an all-time record for Beaufort County tied. There was one death associated with this event. Another heat wave in July 2010 produced a heat index value of 116 degrees at the Beaufort Marine Corps Station.

Between 1996 and 2019, there were seven extreme heat events in Ridgeland and Jasper County. The future probability of extreme heat events in the Lowcountry region is relatively low, with a 29% chance of occurring in any given year.

Overall Hazard Occurrence

The 2020 Lowcountry Region Hazard Mitigation Plan included a comprehensive summary of previous hazards, as well as the future potential for hazards, throughout the region. The table below illustrates the number of hazard events by type, years in data record, annual event, recurrence interval, future probability (percent change of occurrence), and number of recent events in Jasper County.

▼ TABLE 14 JASPER COUNTY SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL HAZARDS

Hazards	Total Number	Years in Data Record	Annualized Count	Recurrence Frequency (years)	Future Probability (% chance / year)	Total Number 2012 - 2019
Tornado	6	33	0.2	5.5	18%	1
Hurricane	28	32	0.9	1.14	88%	8
Windstorm	262	24	10.9	0.09	1,092%	156
Lightning	27,595	21	1,314.0	0.00	131,405%	33,241
Hail	33	31	1.1	0.94	106%	7
Drought	396	20	19.8	0.05	1,980%	132
Earthquake	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wildfire	3,771	32	117.8	0.01	11,784%	387
Flood	10	24	0.4	2.4	42%	13
Winter Storm	6	24	0.3	4.0	25%	3
Coastal Erosion	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Extreme Heat	7	24	0.3	3.43	29%	0

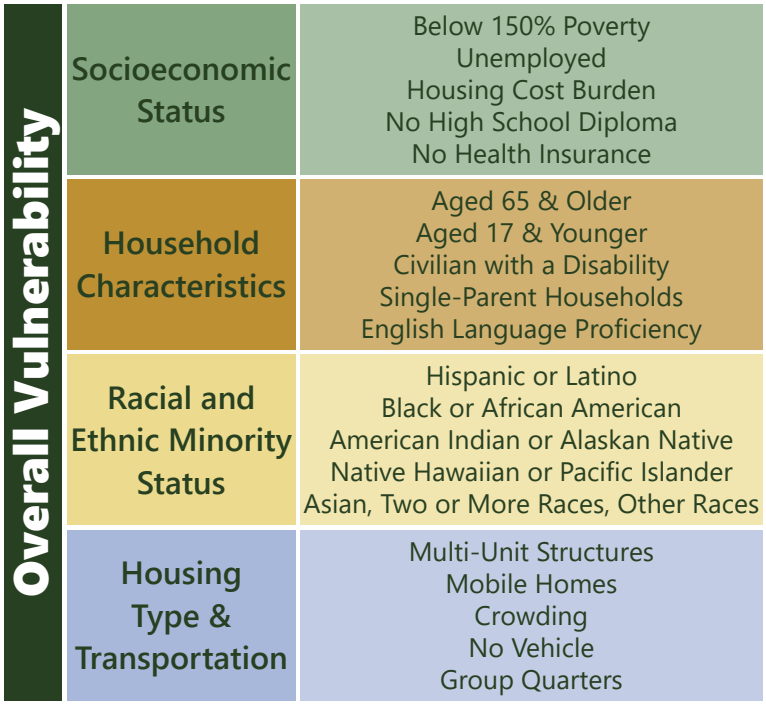
Source: 2020 Lowcountry Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

An important part of resiliency is the ability to prepare for and respond to hazardous events, whether a natural disaster like a tornado, a disease or outbreak, or an anthropogenic event such as a harmful chemical spill. The degree to which a community exhibits certain social conditions, such as high poverty, low percentage of vehicle access, crowded households, and other attributes may affect the community's ability to prevent human suffering and financial loss in the event of a disaster. These factors describe a community's social vulnerability

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) / Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)'s Geospatial Research, Analysis, & Services Program (GRASP) created a social vulnerability index (SVI) to help public health officials and emergency response planners identify and map the communities that will most likely need support before, during, and after a hazardous event.

The CDC / ATSDR's SVI ranks every census tract on 16 social factors, such as unemployment, minority status, and disability status. The factors are grouped into four themes and each tract receives a ranking for each Census variable, for each of the four themes, as well as an overall ranking. The SVI ranking is illustrated to the right.

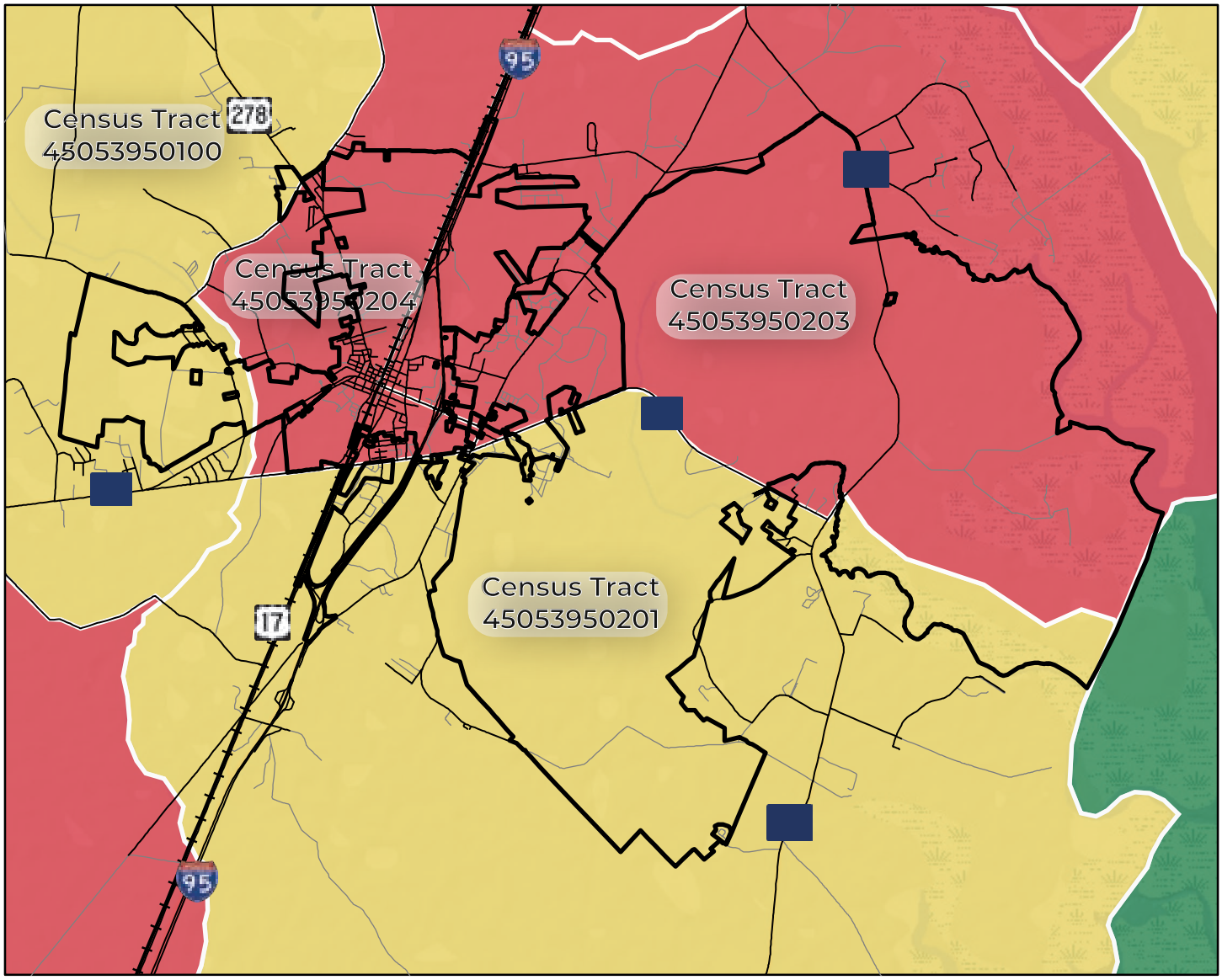


There are four census tracts within the Town of Ridgeland; two of these have an overall social vulnerability score of medium and two have an overall vulnerability score of high. Generally speaking, the northern portion of the Town is most vulnerable, due largely to a higher concentration of minority populations, overcrowding / at-risk housing, limited transportation, and the presence of a prison. SVI scores are assigned on a scale from 0 (not vulnerable) to 1 (very vulnerable / high vulnerability). The lowest scoring (least vulnerable) census tract in Ridgeland has a 0.5287 SVI ranking and the most vulnerable census tract has a ranking of 0.8877.

▼ TABLE 15 SOCIAL VULNERABILITY IN RIDGELAND (BY CENSUS TRACT)

Census Tracts	Overall Vulnerability	Socioeconomic Vulnerability	Household Vulnerability	Race / Ethnicity Vulnerability	Housing / Transport Vulnerability
45053950100	0.5458 (Medium)	0.7646 (High)	0.2557 (Low-Med)	0.6822 (Med-High)	0.298 (Low-Med)
45053950201	0.5287 (Medium)	0.5768 (Medium)	0.422 (Low-Med)	0.3966 (Low-Med)	0.5264 (Med-High)
45053950203	0.8245 (High)	0.5744 (Medium)	0.6433 (Med-High)	0.8306 (High)	0.9676 (High)
45053950204	0.8877 (High)	0.75 (High)	0.8374 (High)	0.7506 (High)	0.9183 (High)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program (2022)



Level of Vulnerability

Low

High

Ridgeland Boundary

Roads

Railroads

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Geospatial Research, Analysis, and Services Program (2022)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In January 2020, Jasper County, in coordination with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, adopted an Emergency Operations Plan for the County. The Plan is to be used by County Officials to ensure mitigation and preparedness, appropriate response, and timely recovery from hazards that may affect Jasper County. It's also designed to include the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) identified in the State Response Plan. The Plan provides a common basis for joint county and municipal governments operations in a natural, technological, or purposeful harm disaster.

To this end, departments within the Town of Ridgeland's government are assigned in supporting roles on many of the emergency support functions. A summary table of the emergency support functions and responsible agencies is provided here. The full Plan can be viewed at https://www.jaspercountysc.gov/media/acbfmibh/jaspercountyeopemergencyop.pdf. Note that the table references the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control which is now two departments: the South Carolina Department of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Services.

▼ TABLE 16 ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES MATRIX (COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN)

Emergency Support Function	Primary and Supporting Agencies
ESF-1: Transportation	**Primary:** Jasper County Public Works Department - Engineering **Supporting:** Town of Ridgeland Water & Sewer City of Hardeeville Public Works Jasper County School District Transportation Department South Carolina Department of Transportation Ridgeland-Claude Dean Airport Commission
ESF-2: Communications	**Primary:** Jasper County 911 Center Director **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services Jasper County Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
ESF-3: Public Works and Engineering	**Primary:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services **Supporting:** Jasper County Engineering Services Jasper County Assessor's Office Town of Ridgeland Water & Sewer City of Hardeeville Public Works Beaufort / Jasper Water and Sewer Authority Palmetto Electric Cooperative Dominion Energy South Carolina Department of Transportation SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
ESF-4: Firefighting	**Primary:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services - Fire Rescue **Supporting:** Town of Ridgeland Fire City of Hardeeville Fire Levy Fire Department
ESF:5- Information and Planning	**Primary:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services **Supporting:** Jasper County Assessor's Office Jasper County 911 Center Director City of Hardeeville Planning and Development Town of Ridgeland Planning and Community Development

Emergency Support Function	Primary and Supporting Agencies
ESF-6: Mass Care	**Primary:** Jasper County Department of Social Services **Supporting:** Jasper County School District Superintendent American Red Cross (Lowcountry SC Chapter) Salvation Army of the Lowcountry South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control South Carolina Baptist Convention - Disaster Relief Jasper County Office of Emergency Services
ESF-7: Finance / Resource Support	**Primary:** Jasper County Financial and Administrative Services Department **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services Town of Ridgeland Finance, HR, and Risk Management Department City of Hardeeville Finance Department
ESF-8: Health / Medical Services	**Primary:** SC Department of Health and Environmental Control **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services Jasper County Department of Social Services Jasper County Coroner Lowcountry Healthcare Coalition Coastal Carolina Medical Center
ESF-9: Search and Rescue	**Primary:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services - Fire Rescue **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services Jasper County Sheriff's Office SC Department of Natural Resources Private / Volunteer Agencies
ESF-10: Hazardous Materials	**Primary:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services - Fire Rescue **Supporting:** SC Department of Health and Environmental Control Hilton Head / Bluffton Regional Hazardous Materials Team Jasper County Public Works Engineering Services SC Department of Transportation Town of Ridgeland Fire Department City of Hardeeville Fire Department Private Industries
ESF-11: Food Services	**Primary:** Jasper County Department of Social Services **Supporting:** Jasper County School District Jasper County Office of Emergency Services South Carolina Baptist Convention - Disaster Relief The Salvation Army of the Lowcountry American Red Cross (Lowcountry SC Chapter)
ESF-12: Energy and Utilities	**Primary:** South Carolina Office of Emergency Services **Supporting:** Jasper County Public Works Engineering Services Dominion Energy Palmetto Electric Cooperative Palmetto Electric Cooperative Santee Cooper
ESF-13: Law Enforcement	**Primary:** Jasper County Sheriff's Office **Supporting:** Ridgeland Police Department Hardeeville Police Department SC Department of Public Safety SC Department of Highway Patrol SC Department of Natural Resources State Law Enforcement Division SC National Guard Jasper County Detention Center

Emergency Support Function	Primary and Supporting Agencies
ESF-14: Volunteer Services	**Primary:** Jasper County Emergency Services **Supporting:** American Red Cross (Lowcountry SC Chapter) Jasper County Department of Social Services The Salvation Army of the Lowcountry South Carolina Baptist Convention - Disaster Relief Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services/Amateur Radio Emergency Services Jasper County Department of Parks and Recreation
ESF-15: Military Support	**Primary:** Military Liaison Officer **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services SC State Guard SC National Guard
ESF-16: Evacuation Traffic Management	**Primary:** South Carolina Department of Public Safety **Supporting:** Jasper County Sheriff's Office Hardeeville Police Department Ridgeland Police Department Jasper County School District Jasper County Department of Social Services Jasper County OES
ESF-17: Animal Emergency Response	**Primary:** Jasper County Sheriff's Office - Animal Control **Supporting:** Jasper County Office of Emergency Services American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Jasper Animal Rescue Mission Humane Society of the Lowcountry Clemson University Livestock Poultry Health
ESF-18: Reserved	
ESF-19: Reserved	
ESF-20: Special Medical Needs	**Primary:** South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control **Supporting:** American Red Cross (Lowcountry SC Chapter) Jasper County Department of Social Services Coastal Carolina Medical Center
ESF-21: Reserved	
ESF-22: Reserved	
ESF-23: Reserved	
ESF-24: Reserved	
ESF-25: Specific Impact Hazards	***Varies Dependent on Hazard; See ESF 25 in Plan***





PRIORITY INVESTMENT

A priority investment element analyzes potential funding available to assist in capital improvements expenditures.

INTRODUCTION

The Priority Investment Element is intended to help prioritize and allocate funding for infrastructure improvement projects identified in the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Priority Investment Element analyzes potential federal, state, and local funding available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends projects for expenditure of these funds. The recommendations in this element will be coordinated with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions as applicable.

Many jurisdictions tie this Element to a five year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The traditional CIP is a way to schedule improvements based on available financial resources. This also helps guide investments based on the direction set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and allows for programming and prioritization of longer term projects based on projected resources. In cases where no formalized CIP exists, such as the Town of Ridgeland, this element can serve as the CIP or as the catalyst for the development of one.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Regional Funding

The Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) is one of ten South Carolina councils designed to serve as a connection between local governments and State and Federal programs. The LCOG works with local governments in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper Counties to identify and coordinate regional development, strengthen services, and improve coordination. The LCOG operates four program areas, including aging and disability resources, community and economic development, planning and transportation, and workforce development. Over the years, LCOG has connected local governments in the region to federal and state funding sources that have benefited several projects; including for well upgrades, sidewalk extensions, and sewer improvements in the Town of Ridgeland. Going forward, the LCOG will continue to be an excellent resource the Town can lean on, particularly as it relates to infrastructure projects.

The Southern Lowcountry Regional Board (SoLoCo) aims to build relationships among elected officials from differing communities, municipalities, utilities, and centers for higher eduction. They are a regional think tank that will identify the problems and opportunities facing the entire southern lowcountry, as defined by its members (administrators, managers, council members, and mayors from municipalities within Beaufort and Jasper County, as well as the counties themselves). The Board meets regularly to discuss zoning, housing, employment, quality of life, and social issues, and to propose action plans to the appropriate legislative bodies.

State Funding

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available through both the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the State Department of Commerce. CDBG funds can be used to assist local governments in a variety of projects, such as community infrastructure, job creation, neighborhood revitalization, and public facilities.

Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) awards Hometown Economic Development Grants of up to $25,000 to support economic development projects that will make a positive impact on a municipality's quality of life. The grant program also promotes and recognizes innovation in economic development practices.

South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) provides a range of grants aimed at increasing public access to the arts. These include grants for art programming, increasing access to people with disabilities, and recognition of a cultural district.

South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) helps administer federal historic preservation and planning funds to local governments through planning and preservation grants. These grants can be used to help fund historic district plans, facade improvement programs, and rehabilitation projects.

South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) provides grant opportunities to local governments that provide solid waste services. Applications are typically available every fiscal year opening in the spring.

South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SCPRT) offers a number of grant opportunities to local governments for tourism marketing, new parks and trails, and improvements to existing recreation facilities.

South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) administers community based projects through a number of federal programs. Local governments are amongst the list of eligible applicants for a few of these. Notably are the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), which is a reimbursement-based grant program that funds pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, and streetscape projects. Projects must be approved by the SCDOT or MPO and the Federal Highway Administration. Once approved, the federal government will reimburse up to 80% of project costs, which meet a range of criteria. SCDOT also administers Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding, which may be used for infrastructure improvements, education, encouragement, and enforcement programs that enable and encourage children to safely walk and bicycle to school. Selected schools can receive up to $200,000 through this program.

South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC) has several grant opportunities to assist local governments with Geographic Information System (GIS) studies, tree surveys, and environmental protection projects.

South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) has a Basic Infrastructure Grant Program which can be used to offset local infrastructure projects.

Federal Funding

Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) offers economic development grants for infrastructure to local governments. Eligible projects include the development of economic development plans in under-served areas, technology-based economic development initiatives, and opportunity zone work.

Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) provides funding to local governments for public transit system development, including buses, subways, and commuter rail.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides several grant opportunities to rural communities throughout the State. Some of the key programs include community facilities grants / loans, water and wastewater disposal loans / grants, and rural business development grants.

COORDINATION

To effectively manage growth and development, the Priority Investment Element Act requires local governments to coordinate with adjacent relevant jurisdictions and agencies before recommending projects for public expenditure. To facilitate this process, the Act encourages local governments to maintain a list of these jurisdictions and agencies so that they can be effectively included in major development decisions. In Ridgeland, the list of relevant agencies and jurisdictions to coordinate with include:

Local Governments

- Allendale County
- Beaufort County
- City of Beaufort
- City of Hardeeville
- Colleton County
- Hampton County
- Jasper County
- Town of Bluffton
- Town of Hilton Head Island
- Town of Port Royal
- Town of Yemassee

Schools

- Jasper County School District
- Polaris Tech
- Technical College of the Lowcountry
- Thomas Heyward Academy
- University of South Carolina at Beaufort

Regional Agencies and Military

- Allendale Hampton Jasper Regional Library
- Jasper County Airport
- Jasper County Chamber of Commerce
- Jasper County Economic Development
- Jasper County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Lowcountry Council of Governments
- Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort
- Southern Lowcountry Regional Board

Utility Providers

- Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority
- Dominion Energy
- Palmetto Electric
- Palmetto Link

State and Federal Agencies

- Federal Aviation Administration
- South Carolina Aeronautics Commission
- South Carolina Alliance
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- South Carolina Department of Transportation
- South Carolina Legislature
- South Carolina Small Business Development Center

Other Stakeholders

- Coastal Carolina Hospital
- Coastal Conservation League
- Friends of Honey Hill
- Jasper County Historical Society
- Morris Center for Lowcountry Heritage
- Open Land Trust
- The Nature Conservancy

Priority Investment Areas

The Priority Investment Act allows local governments to use market-based incentives to encourage the development of traditional neighborhood designs and affordable housing in designated priority investment areas. At this time, the Town is not seeking to establish any priority investment areas. However, the Town may consider such investments at a future time, such as Pattern Zones or other market-based incentives.

Capital Improvement Projects

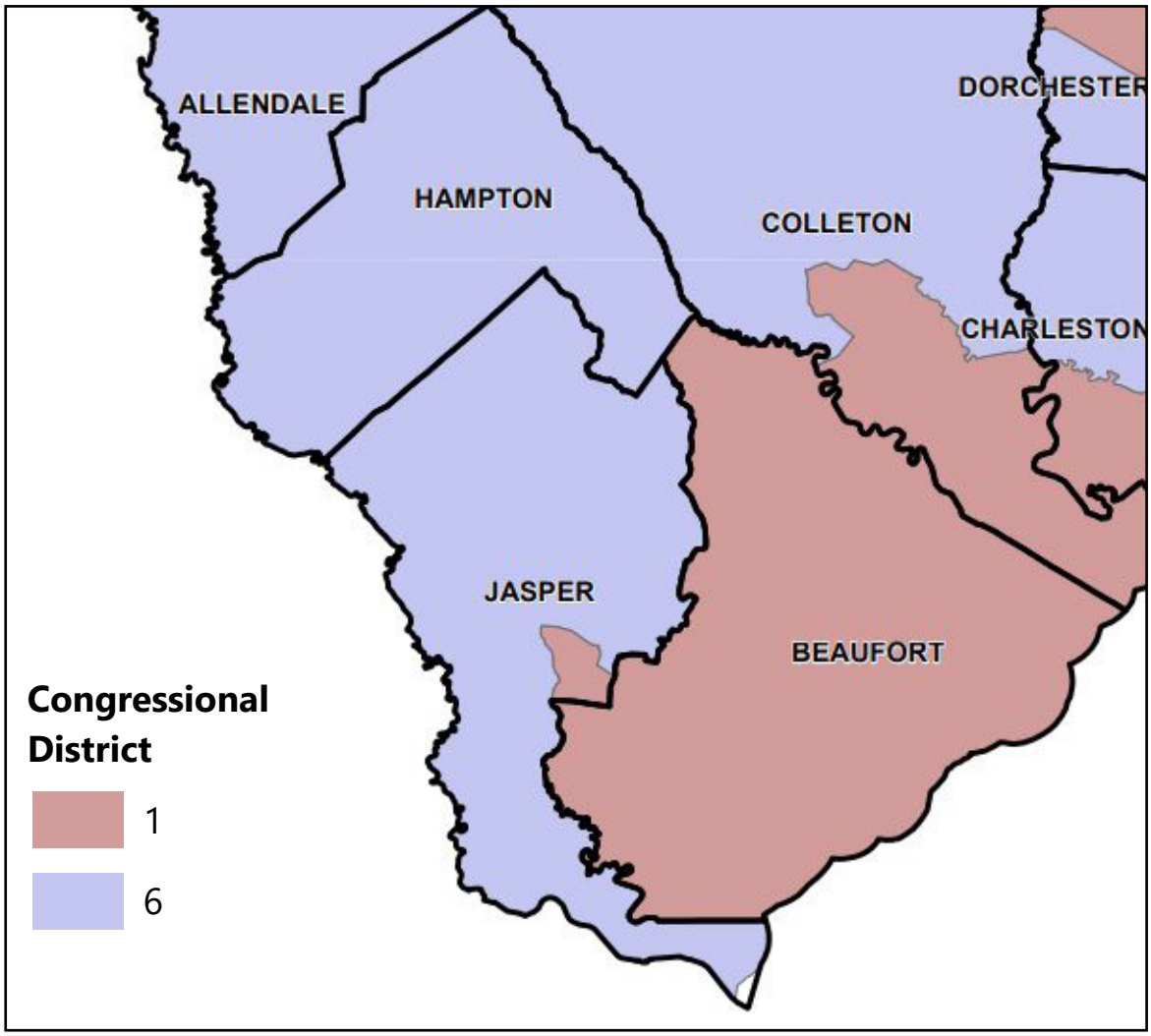
The Town does not currently maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Priority Investment Table contained at the end of this element should be considered for the initial development of a future Capital Improvement Plan. The CIP could include all of these projects, as well as other major projects which the Town would like to invest in the coming years. The CIP would include dedicated funding sources, more specific estimated costs, and more definitive project timelines.

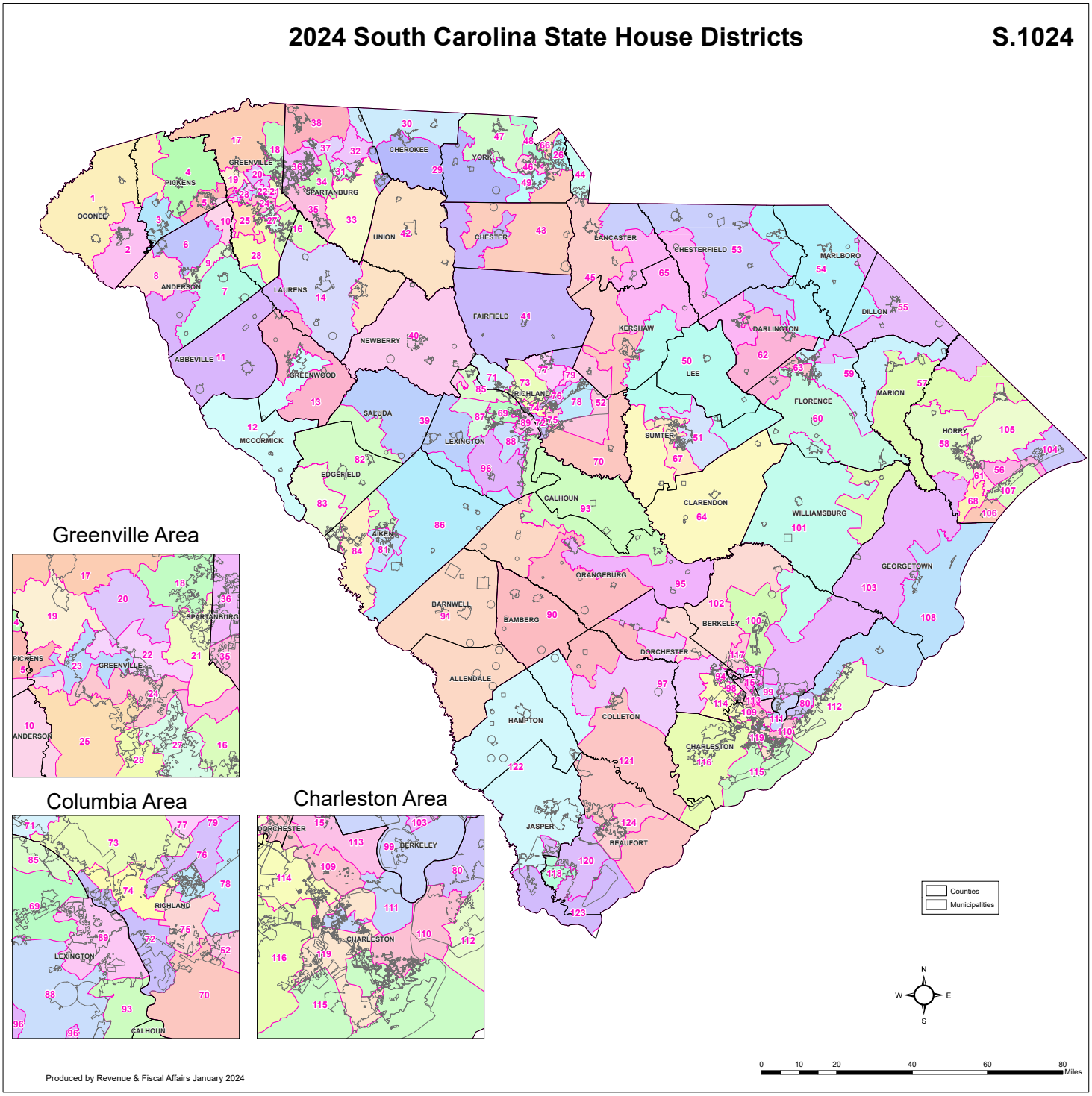
Legislative Boundaries

As of the 2022 election, per Senate Bill 865, Act No. 118 (effective January 27th, 2022), all of RIdgeland and much of its surrounding area is within the US Congressional District 6. A segment of Jasper County and all of Beaufort County is within Congressional District 1.

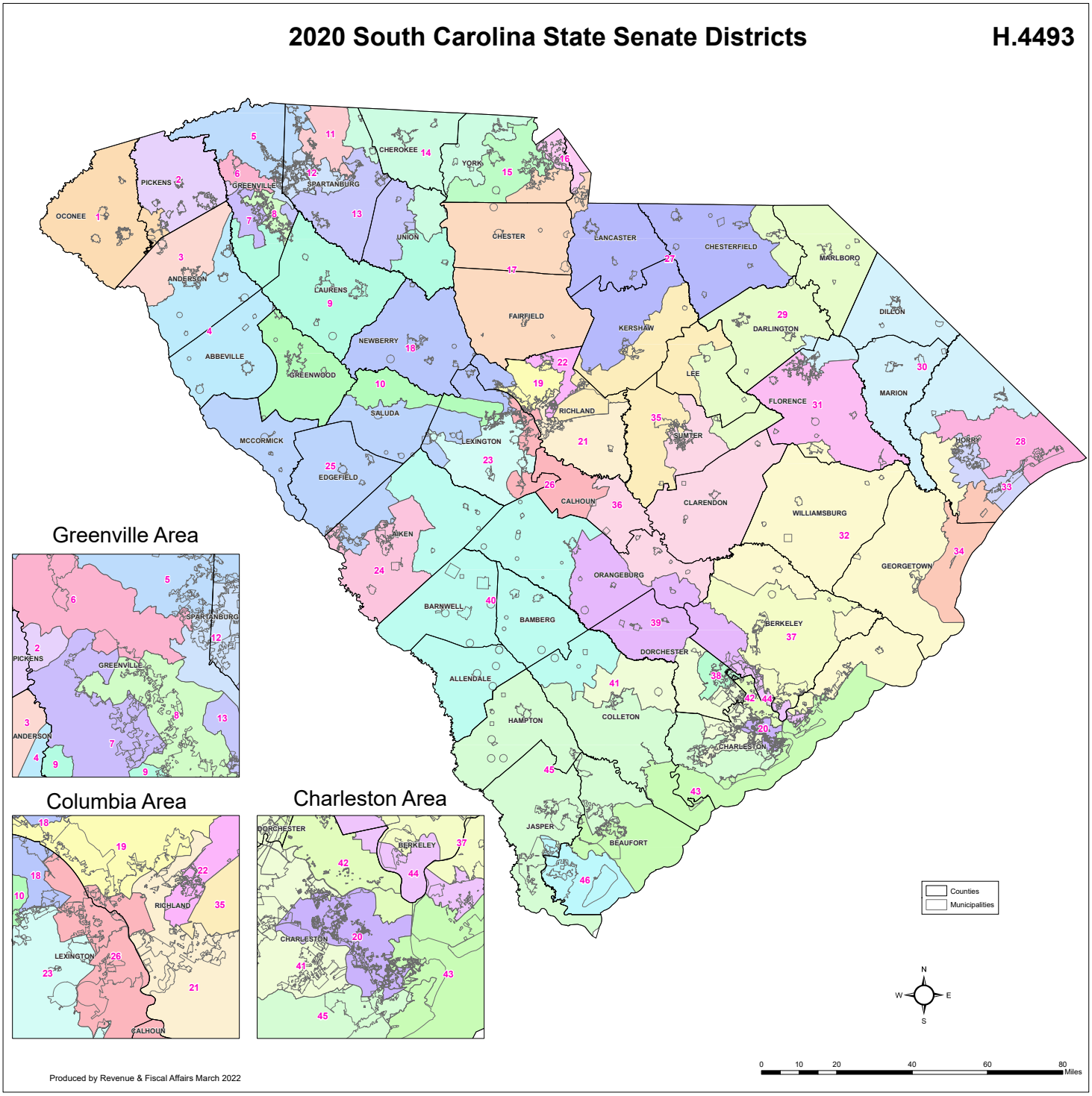
The vast majority of the Town and surrounding area is within South Carolina State House District 122, which covers much of Jasper and all of Hampton County. The most eastern edge of the Town is within House District 120, which is largely concentrated in Beaufort County.

The South Carolina Senate District Boundaries are similar to those of the House. The vast majority of the Town and surrounding area are within Senate District 45, which covers much of Jasper, Hampton, and Colleton Counties (as well as portions of Charleston County). Again, the most eastern tip of the Town is within a separate district, Senate District 43, which is concentrated along the coast, in Beaufort and Charleston Counties.





Source: South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (Retrieved 2025)

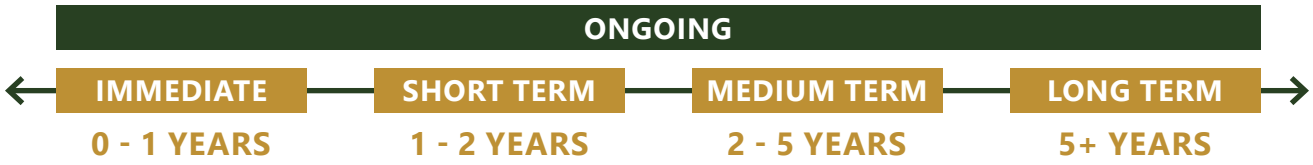


Source: South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (Retrieved 2025)

PRIORITY INVESTMENT TABLE

The Priority Investment Table outlines estimated timeframes, costs, and leadership to implement all of the strategies which were presented at the beginning of this Plan. As mentioned previously, it is recommended that this table be utilized to create a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Town. The details contained in the Plan are estimates, and many are subject to change given a range of factors.

Generally speaking, recommendations are on a timeframe ranging from "immediate" to "long term," with each timeframe characterized by a relative range of years:



An ongoing recommendation is something that should begin immediately but is not just a single task or project, Rather, it must be continued regularly into the future.

For each recommendation, a "responsible entity" or lead agency is ascribed. This is generally a Town department or Town government role. "Support entities" are also assigned to each task, identifying other groups or individuals who may need to be involved in implementation. By assigning multiple leaders to each task, this also helps to ensure implementation - if the lead entity does not direct resources towards implementation, a support entity can prompt them to do so in the future.

While some of the recommendations in this Plan rely solely on the time and work of staff or other entities, other recommendations are quite costly in terms of funding sources. Given this factor, it's acknowledged that the Town and other support agencies may lack the resources to pursue every "short term" recommendation at once. When applicable, the Town should pursue grant funding and other forms of outside assistance to assist in the implementation of these recommendations.

An illustration of how the Priority Investment Table is organized is shown below. The actual Table is detailed on the following pages.

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1			
Focus Area of Guiding Principle			
Implementation Strategy	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	***Timeline***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1 Growth Management

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: GROWTH MANAGEMENT			
Direct Growth			
Utilize the Growth Map/Future Land Use Map to guide and direct development in a manner that is consistent with the Town's vision.	Planning Commission, Town Council	Town Administration	***Immediate - Ongoing***
Identify and target annexation priorities and utilize the Growth Map as a tool to consider future annexation requests. Consider water, sewer infrastructure, emergency service provision, and environmental features as a guidepost for growth boundaries.	Town Administration	Planning Commission, Town Council	***Immediate - Ongoing***
Support infill development by reducing barriers on properties surrounded by development. Consider marketing infill development opportunities, with particular emphasis on properties with potential to provide commercial retail amenities or foster downtown activity.	Planning Commission, Town Council	Town Administration	***Immediate - Ongoing***
Work closely with the County to annex donut holes that are surrounded by the Town.	Planning Commission, Council, Administration	County Administration, Planning & Building	***Ongoing***
Manage Growth			
Where a proposed major development would generate demand beyond existing government services or infrastructure, the Town should consider requiring a development agreement in which the applicant partners with the Town to construct/fund the necessary improvements.	Town Council	Planning Commission, Town Administration, Developers	***Ongoing***
Regularly assess the Town's utility infrastructure and implement necessary improvements. Examine opportunities to expand capacity of the wastewater treatment plan, as necessary.	Town Administration	Planning Commission, Town Council	***Ongoing***
Work closely with property owners to determine the likely future potential buildout of Planned Developments / Special Districts.	Town Administration	Planning Commission, Town Council, Property Owners	***Short Term***
Coordinate with SCDOT and Jasper County to implement needed transportation improvements.	Town Administration	Town Council, SCDOT, County Administration	***Short Term***
Establish impact fees, which could help pay for increased service and infrastructure demand.	Town Council	Town Administration	***Short Term***
After adopting this Comprehensive Plan, complete an assessment of the Town's development regulations and review procedures. Modify to better meet the vision of the Town, and update inaccurate or outdated sections.	Town Administration	Town Council, Planning Commission	***Short Term***
Following the adoption of this Plan, develop a Capital Improvement Plan to more specifically identify needed project funding and improvement timelines.	Town Administration	Town Council	***Short Term***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2 Downtown

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: DOWNTOWN			
Increase Development Downtown			
Consider working with property owners to proactively rezone downtown to T4 to increase densities and permit a mix of uses. Consider increasing T5-zoned properties downtown.	Planning Commission	Town Administration, Town Council, Property Owners	***Medium Term***
Consider developing a downtown master plan which identifies specific improvements to downtown, including critical infill projects. Work with private enterprises to implement.	Town Council	Planning Commission, Town Administration, Downtown Business / Property Owners	***Medium Term***
Encourage the redevelopment and improvement of properties downtown.	Town Council	Town Administration, Property Owners	***Ongoing***
Improve the Appearance of Downtown			
Develop wayfinding signage that is unique to downtown but matches Ridgeland's character.	Town Council	Town Administration	***Medium Term***
Examine potential improvement needs on public spaces downtown, including sidewalks, parks, and green spaces.	Town Administration	Town Council	***Medium Term***
Consider offering a building façade grant for properties downtown.	Town Council	Town Administration	***Medium Term***
Consider increasing beautification efforts (seasonal decorations, banners, and flowers).	Town Council	Town Administration	***Medium Term***
Focus efforts on improving and removing, when necessary, blighted properties.	Town Council	Town Administration	***Ongoing***
Establish a downtown overlay within the Town's Ordinance to regulate design, architectural standards, signs, and similar downtown.	Town Council	Town Administration, Planning Commission	***Medium Term***
Increase Activity Downtown			
Examine feasibility of establishing a downtown management organization. This separate entity may rely on Town support; and be responsible for coordinating events, appearance, and downtown-focused programming amongst business/property owners.	Town Council	Town Administration, Downtown Property / Business Owners	***Medium Term***
Identify opportunities to utilize the downtown farmers market space. If a farmers market is no longer feasible, consider alternative uses for this space. Consider regular activation.	Town Council	Town Administration, Planning Commission, New Management Organization	***Short Term***
Develop regular events downtown and market their presence to increase activity downtown. Consider a weekly event at the farmers market space, seasonal festivals, occasional food truck events, and similar activities.	Town Council	Town Administration, Planning Commission, New Downtown Management Organization	***Medium Term***
Work with the LCCOG, SCDOT, and Jasper County to identify opportunities to fund the developing bike lanes downtown. Consider adding bike racks in high trafficked areas.	Town Administration	LCCOG, SCDOT, Jasper County, Town Council, Planning Commission	***Long Term***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3 Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES			
Eco-Tourism / Historical Asset-Based Tourism			
Work to improve regional trail connections.	Town Council	LCCOG, SCDOT, County Council, SoLoCo	***Long Term***
Identify opportunities to tie into the East Coast and Lowcountry Revolutionary War Trails.	Town Council	LCCOG, SCDOT, County Council, SoLoCo	***Medium Term***
Examine opportunities to include the Honey Hill Battlefield in a trail route.	Town Council	LCCOG, SCDOT, County Council, SoLoCo	***Medium Term***
Consider opportunities to connect existing trails and pathways in a unified design and map, similar to Spanish Moss Trail.	Town Council	LCCOG, SCDOT, County Council, SoLoCo	***Short Term***
Promote downtown, Honey Hill Battlefield, Morris Center, and other tourist attractions.	Town Council	Jasper County Chamber of Commerce	***Short Term***
Collaborate with Jasper and Beaufort Counties to expand and market tourism throughout region.	Town Council, Jasper County Chamber of Commerce	Jasper Co. Visit Beaufort, Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce	***Ongoing***
Promote historic preservation efforts and increase info. about the benefits of preservation.	Town Council	The Morris Center, Jasper County Historical Society	***Ongoing***
Encourage national register recognition of eligible structures (Centralized Grade School, Pratt Memorial Library, R & M Plantation).	Town Council	The Morris Center, Jasper County Historical Society	***Medium Term***
Identify prime areas to support a new chain hotel. Examine zoning and land development regulations to ensure a hotel could easily be built and work to market to hoteliers.	Town Administration	Town Council, Retail Strategies, South Carolina Alliance	***Medium Term***
Consider similar efforts that could improve hospitality amenities in Town.	Town Administration	Town Council, Retail Strategies	***Ongoing***
Work with the County and other partners on the development of a blueway along the Coosawhatchie River and its tributaries.	Town Council	Jasper County Council, Keep Jasper Beautiful, LCCOG, SoLoCo	***Long Term***
Protect Wetlands and Sensitive Areas			
Consider restricting development in floodplains, wetlands, and sensitive areas. Coordinate with land conservation organizations to encourage fee simple purchases and conservation easements. Establish critical buffer areas.	Planning Commission	Town Council, Town Admin., Jasper County Soil & Water Conservation District, Nature Conservancy, Open Land Trust, Coastal Conservation League	***Immediate***
Consider incorporating Jasper County's and / or Beaufort County's Stormwater Management Master Plan into the Town's Ordinance.	Town Council	Town Administration, Jasper County Planning & Building, Beaufort County Planning	***Short Term***
Examine zoning and consider rezoning particularly sensitive areas to T1.	Planning Commission	Town Council, Town Administration	***Immediate***
To protect tree canopy, consider strengthening the Town's Tree Protection Ordinance.	Planning Commission	Town Council, Town Administration	***Medium Term***
Examine establishing a TDR program within Town. This would require seeking outside assistance for establishing and administering.	Planning Commission	Town Council, Town Administration	***Long Term***
Consider requiring new large developments to utilize permeable roadways.	Planning Commission	Town Council, Town Administration	***Medium Term***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4 Economic Development

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Workforce Training			
Work with the Jasper County School District, Thomas Heyward Academy, Polaris Tech, the Technical College of the Lowcountry, Jasper County, and the South Carolina Alliance to identify potential workforce training programs that could be implemented in the region.	Town Council, Town Administration	Jasper County School District, Thomas Heyward Academy, Polaris Tech, Technical College of the Lowcountry, Jasper County Council, South Carolina Alliance	***Ongoing***
Examine the feasibility and demand for a community or technical college in Ridgeland.	Town Council, Town Administration	Jasper County School District, Thomas Heyward Academy, Polaris Tech, Technical College of the Lowcountry, Jasper County Council, South Carolina Alliance	***Medium Term***
Industry Attraction			
Work with the South Carolina Alliance and Retail Strategies to identify potential industries which could be successful in Ridgeland. Consider marketing opportunities.	Retail Strategies	Town Administration, South Carolina Alliance	***Short Term***
Examine zoning and land development regulations to ensure that target industries could easily be established in ideal locations. If necessary, consider rezoning and / or subdividing properties to serve target industries. When suitable land exists, market it toward potential industries.	Town Administration, Retail Strategies	Town Council, Planning Commission, South Carolina Alliance	***Short Term***
Consider developing a regional assessment of medical facilities and determine if there is any potential for the Town to attract and support new medical facilities.	Town Administration, Retail Strategies	Town Council, Planning Commission, South Carolina Alliance	***Medium Term***
Pursue the marketing and support of agricultural enterprises. Potentially examine ways to coordinate with the County's farmers market and related programs.	Town Administration, Retail Strategies	Town Council, Planning Commission, South Carolina Alliance	***Medium Term***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5 Coordination

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: COORDINATION			
Regional Planning			
Improve communication between the Town, County, Low Country Council of Government, the Municipal Association of South Carolina, and other regional partners. Utilize these relationships to say abreast of legislative issues, land use changes, and similar development-related topics.	Town Administration, Town Council	County Council, County Administration, LCCOG, MSAC, SoLoCo	***Ongoing***
Work with Jasper County to collaboratively plan for the areas around Ridgeland. Ensure the two governments are in alignment on what should happen on the Town's boundaries (annexation, etc.).	Town Administration, Town Council	County Council, County Administration, Planning Commission	***Ongoing***
Participate in SoLoCo and Similar Regional Partnerships so that Ridgeland can take greater advantage of regional planning efforts and projects.	Town Administration, Town Council	County Council, County Administration, LCCOG, SoLoCo	***Ongoing***
Coordinate with the County to identify lands to protect and roads to improve with the recent local conservation fund.	Town Administration, Town Council	County Council, County Administration	***Short Term***
Review the 2020 Lowcountry Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Jasper County Emergency Operations Plan. Implement recommendations from these plans and ensure the Town is adequately prepare for an emergency situation, particularly as it relates to coordination between Town and County Police, Sheriff, Fire, and Administrative Departments.	Town Administration, Town Council	County Council, County Administration, Beaufort County Administration	***Short Term***
Improve coordination between Town departments. Consider establishing regular department updates at Council Meetings or joint department meetings.	Town Administration	Town Council, All Town Departments	***Ongoing***
Leverage Regional Successes to Improve Ridgeland			
Consider building off successful projects in the region, such as Old Town Bluffton, Hardeeville's Recreation Center, and other attractors. Identify opportunities to leverage these successes.	Town Administration	Town Council, Planning Commission, Relevant Jurisdictions	***Medium Term***
Improve marketing of Ridgeland's place within the Lowcountry region. Particular attention should be made to the unique aspects of Ridgeland (downtown, Honey Hill Battlefield, etc.).	Town Administration, Jasper County Chamber of Commerce	The Morris Center, Friends of Honey Hill	***Medium Term***

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6 Appearance

Implementation Strategy	Responsible Entity	Support Entity	Timeline
GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: APPEARANCE			
Public Properties			
Develop new entrance and wayfinding signage throughout Town. Ensure the signage is clear, modern, and aligns with Ridgeland's desired identity.	Town Administration	Town Council, Planning Commission	***Medium Term***
Develop a Downtown Master Plan which includes beautification efforts, and implement this plan.	Town Administration	Town Council, Planning Commission	***Medium Term***
Improve maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. Consider increasing the public works budget to accommodate this.	Town Administration	Town Council, Public Works	***Ongoing***
Examine strategies to increase the appearance and safety at parks throughout Town. This may include police enforcement of loitering and similar crimes.	Town Administration	Town Council, Ridgeland Police	***Ongoing***
Private Properties			
Continue to strengthen code enforcement efforts. Consider advertising the ability for residents to report code enforcement issues.	Town Administration	Town Council, Ridgeland Police	***Ongoing***
Use community events to clean up and improve blighted structures, streets, or properties, when applicable.	Town Council	Town Administration, Planning Commission, Public Works	***Medium Term***
Coordinate with private owners and legal experts on the acquisition of blighted properties.	Town Council	Town Administration	***Medium Term***
Coordinate with Town Police in the removal and relocation of squatters and trespassers on blighted or abandoned properties, if necessary.	Town Administration	Town Council, Ridgeland Police	***Ongoing***
Pursue County, State, and Federal funding for the acquisition, demolition, and site remediation of blighted properties.	Town Administration	Town Council	***Medium Term***
Strengthen Design Standards			
Include landscaping in design guidelines.	Planning Commission	Town Administration, Town Council	***Medium Term***
Revise the Town's tree preservation ordinance.	Planning Commission	Town Administration, Town Council	***Medium Term***
Revise the zoning code so that signs fit the characteristics of surrounding properties and corridors.	Planning Commission	Town Administration, Town Council	***Medium Term***
While revising the zoning code, carefully examine design standards to ensure they meet the needs of the community.	Planning Commission	Town Administration, Town Council	***Medium Term***
Consider establishing an Architectural Review Board.	Town Council	Town Administration, Planning Commission	***Medium Term***

Ridgeland

comprehensive plan