

envision

ZONING UPDATE



Glynn

Diagnostic Report

DRAFT

// PREPARED BY TSW

// SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Introduction

// BACKGROUND

Land development is shaped by many forces, but is primarily shaped by local zoning and development regulations. These regulations should balance growth with public health, safety, and welfare, while also ensuring that development is consistent with a community's vision for its future.

Glynn County's existing zoning ordinance was adopted in 1966 and was updated in 1983. Additional updates were attempted in 2014 but not enacted. While some parts of the zoning are aligned with the Envision Glynn plan, there are a number of regulations that are in conflict with this vision. There are also some gaps in regulations, and some unclear or contradictory requirements.

Glynn County recognizes that the tools that regulate development must be updated and has decided to undertake a comprehensive update of their zoning code and related ordinances. This process will be governed by the following goals, which were developed based on themes distilled from stakeholder interviews and TSW's initial observations.

- Support the implementation of Envision Glynn
- Advance the vision of local residents and businesses
- Encourage appropriate growth and promote economic development
- Balance development rights with sound planning principles
- Preserve natural resources while considering community resiliency and the impacts of sea level rise
- Ensure that regulations are easy to understand and administer
- Establish the right amount of regulation to address local needs

Before the zoning code can be updated, the County and its citizens must have a detailed understanding of how well the current regulations work today. The purpose of this diagnostic report is to review existing regulations, determine their strengths and weaknesses, and identify potential technical updates to the zoning, as well as policy questions that will need further discussion with the public.



Glynn County's development ordinances should encourage appropriate development on the islands and on the mainland, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan



Documents Reviewed

Plans

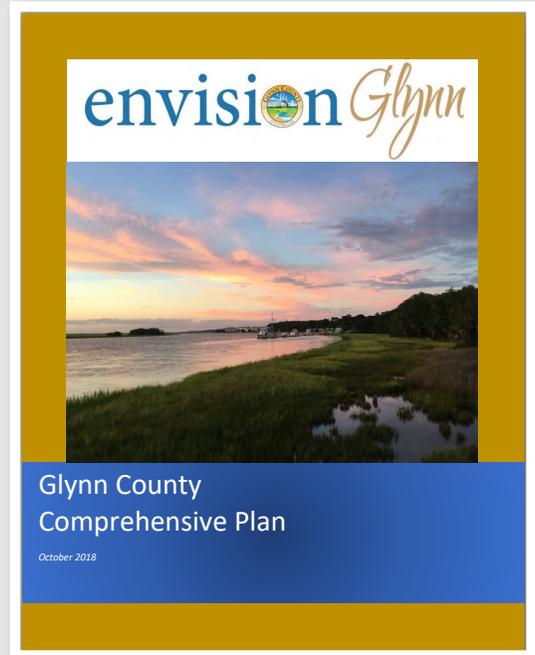
- [2018 Envision Glynn \(Glynn County Comprehensive Plan\) and Addendum of Public Engagement Summary](#)
- [2017 Glynn County Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan](#)
- [2015 Water and Sewer Master Plan](#)
- [2015 St. Simons Island Existing Conditions & Impact Analysis](#)
- [2015 St. Simons Island Traffic Study](#)

Regulations

- [Zoning Ordinance](#)
- [Subdivision Regulations](#) & Design Standards
- Relevant portions of [all County ordinances](#)

Other Documents

- [Planning Commissions Bylaws](#)
- [Development Procedures Manual](#)
- 2015 St. Simons Island Zoning Workshop Summary
- Recent variances requested



// STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2017 Glynn County Board of Commissioners Strategic Plan provides a vision, mission, and core beliefs for the County, as well as a goal related to planned and managed growth. These, as well as the entire Strategic Plan, were reviewed in preparation for this Zoning Update effort.

// ENVISION GLYNN

The 2018 Glynn County Comprehensive Plan, known as Envision Glynn, provides a unified vision for unincorporated Glynn County, including a Character Area Map and Future Land Use Map. This plan was based on extensive community involvement and was officially adopted by the Glynn County Commission. This Zoning Update effort is a direct result of the recommendations of this plan, which has been reviewed in detail and serves as the foundation for this effort. The vision statement, values, and beliefs of Envision Glynn are as follows.

Vision Statement

Glynn County's quality of life, character, culture and natural beauty are valued and protected by its citizens, offer an attractive destination for its visitors, and foster diverse economic opportunities; and its residents are actively involved in and benefit from the achievement of economic, social and cultural success for all of Glynn County.

We value:

- Our quality of life
- Rational, thoughtful development
- The natural beauty and function of our coastal environment
- The unique heritage and culture of our various communities
- A thriving economy

We believe in:

- Fostering a vibrant, connected and engaged community.
- Providing our citizens a safe place to live, work and play.
- Balancing and respecting private property rights with the overall needs of the community.
- Ensuring that no one part of our population is left behind.
- Strong, transparent intergovernmental cooperation, because it drives the overall success of our County.
- The value of planning, the importance of community support for this vision, and the responsibility of the government to use this plan when making decisions.
- The importance of a reliable, educated, properly-trained workforce that will attract and retain business and industry.
- Properly address transportation needs for our various populations.
- Maximizing the benefit of our geographic location to our economic advantage.
- Supporting local businesses, industry and entrepreneurs.
- Clear ordinances that support the vision of this plan.

Policies

Envision Glynn also lists a number of policies to guide implementation of the plan. All of these will be considered as part of this Zoning Update effort, but the following are the most relevant:

- Administer and enforce subdivision regulations, building codes, and zoning ordinance requirements.
- Consider the impacts of new development and redevelopment on existing infrastructure systems prior to approval.
- Protect existing infrastructure investments by encouraging development where sufficient infrastructure capacity already exists.
- New land uses should protect the environment, preserve historical and cultural resources, consider high flood risk areas, and conserve meaningful open space.
- Work with the JWSC to focus on infrastructure investment by maintaining and upgrading existing facilities, as opposed to expanding to new areas.

- Support opportunities to provide for alternative modes of transportation, including public transit and multi-use trails/sidewalks.
- Improve and maintain a transportation system that will implement a “Complete Streets” policy and minimize detrimental environmental impacts.
- Consider the impacts of sea level rise and increasing storm intensity when adopting local ordinances and making land use decisions.
- Protect the unique natural and cultural resources that currently make the Golden Isles a world-class tourist destination.
- Encourage low impact development that preserves riparian buffers, the floodplain, beaches, natural topography, and tree canopy.
- Encourage development of housing options that include affordable housing.
- Accommodate a diverse population by encouraging a compatible mixture of housing types, densities and costs in new neighborhoods.
- Allow for and encourage innovative residential construction.

Needs and Opportunities

Envision Glynn also identified dozens of needs and opportunities, based in part on community input. All of these will be considered as part of this Zoning Update effort, but the following are the most relevant:

- Improve aesthetics at gateway exits on I-95.
- There should be less reliance on grandfathering old structures and development patterns.
- Continue to preserve greenspace and other conservation areas.
- The County needs a plan to address the amount of future development approved through PDs on St. Simons Island, as well as the difficulty in administering the various PDs.
- More progressive and creative mixed-use developments are desired on the mainland.
- Focus commercial development on St Simons Island at the 3 existing commercial nodes, but identify opportunities for modest, neighborhood scale commercial development on the north end of SSI.
- County needs to update zoning ordinance to better manage growth.
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized commercial structures.

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- Adequate public facilities and infrastructure should be in place before development is approved.
- A more efficient process for rezoning and development review and approval is needed.
- Updated development regulations are needed to prevent negative impacts on community resources.
- Ensure that any new development or redevelopment on SSI does not outpace the capacity of island infrastructure.
- Harrington - Historic African American Community, is threatened by high density development and clear cutting.
- Limit new impervious surfaces associated with new development and redevelopment.
- Glynn County should seek to minimize development within its floodplains.
- Regulations are needed to guide infill development.
- The County should take steps to protect the tree canopy from being impacted by new development.
- Encourage affordable housing on the mainland, where reasonable, by permitting increased residential density and a greater variety of residential options, where there is adequate water and sewer infrastructure capacity.
- Identify suitable locations for multifamily housing on the mainland—generally locations serviced by existing infrastructure and close to existing employment locations.
- Development incentives such as density bonuses and property tax abatements could also be used to encourage the production of additional affordable housing units.
- Aging in place/transitional/assisted living housing is needed to serve the aging.
- Affordable housing is needed for young families and the island workforce.
- Allow new development in areas only with available water and sewer infrastructure capacity.
- A reduction in the density of approved future residential development is needed so that infrastructure and resources are not pushed past capacity.
- Research the potential for the subdivision of existing residential lots on St. Simons Island.
- Preservation standards for historically relevant housing is needed, as is an inventory of historically relevant housing.



The Envision Glynn Comprehensive Plan emphasizes that the quality of life in Glynn County should be preserved

- Tree canopy needs protection during all phases of development, including the planning, construction and post construction phases.
- The County needs to adopt regulations to protect groundwater recharge areas in west Glynn County.
- Identify opportunities to preserve openspace.
- Protect the unique natural and cultural resources that currently make the Golden Isles a world-class tourist destination.
- Encourage preservation of working forests rather than conversion to residential development, where possible.
- Work with partners to expand lands under conservation in the Lower Altamaha River Corridor and to protect undeveloped lands along the Little Satilla River Corridor.
- Expand protections for riparian buffers to better protect water quality.
- Identify opportunities to create pocket parks and community gardens in urbanized areas of the County.
- Preserve historic landscapes and natural resources as inherently valuable as well as for the purpose of supporting tourism.
- Protect marsh buffers to allow for marshes to migrate inland as sea level rises.
- Ensure that the County's land development ordinances consider the impacts of sea level rise.
- Preserve floodplains, marshlands and other low-lying areas to mitigate the impacts of coastal flooding, sea level rise, hurricanes and king tides.

Community Work Program

The recommendations of Envision Glynn are contained in the Community Work Program. The following items are most relevant to the Zoning Update effort:

- Update County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances in accordance with the recommendations of this plan. Allow for and incentivize alternative subdivision design, including Conservation Subdivision, Traditional Neighborhood Development, and Agricultural Conservation Subdivision.
- Establish design criteria for commercial, mixed use, multi-family, and planned developments as part of this ordinance update.
- Develop "green" standards, which describe the characteristics or criteria for desirable, sustainable development as part of the ordinance update.

Consider expanding requirements for riparian buffer protection, where appropriate.

- Work with JWSC to identify where there is limited or no capacity in the wastewater system and limit new development in those areas.
- Consider limiting or incentivizing the reduction of impervious surfaces, as part of the ordinance update.
- Adopt and enforce a new Tree Ordinance for the County, which may incorporate different strategies by jurisdiction and neighborhood.
- Consider updating beach usage and management ordinances, such as a leash law, litter control, alcohol usage, and parking strategies.
- Establish criteria for developer-funded traffic impact analysis, and that establishes methods, valuation, and limits for transportation impact fees/investments. Clear thresholds should be established, along with a framework for impact fees and/or developer responsibilities to mitigate development-related impacts.

// EXISTING ORDINANCES

The TSW consultant team (including zoning experts, engineers, and legal counsel) has analyzed in their entirety all County regulations that shape development. This includes the complete Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and portions of Chapter 2 of the County's ordinances that are relevant to development, transportation, the natural environment, buildings, and similar matters. Specific attention was given to clarity, consistency with state and federal regulations or model ordinances (where applicable), the legal perspective, and the practical application of regulations.

The technical review required a literal reading of existing regulations that focused on what they actually say rather than how they have been interpreted or administered over time. While this approach can result in occasional misinterpretations, it can provide insight into items needing clarification.

Any inconsistencies or weaknesses in current regulations are not intended to reflect poorly on their drafters or administrators. Many existing regulations have not been comprehensively updated for years, so it is to be expected that piecemeal amendments prepared by various authors have resulted in inconsistencies in substance and style.

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The public kickoff meeting and stakeholder interviews allowed the consultant team to understand concerns about the existing zoning regulations

The TSW team also reviewed rezonings, but there are few recent rezoning requests in Glynn County, and historically most rezonings have been to Planned Development (PD) Districts. There are no common trends in terms of recent PD rezonings that might indicate needed edits to the zoning regulations.

The TSW team reviewed a list of all zoning variances requested from 2016-2018, which includes some recurring trends, primarily requests for setback reductions. These will be considered when setback requirements and other lot standards are reviewed.

// STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of stakeholder interviews conducted between February and June of 2019 further informed the consultants' understanding of the zoning ordinance and offered an invaluable local perspective. Interviews were conducted with individuals representing County staff and leadership, the Islands Planning Commission, the business community, non-profit organizations, and local residents. These individuals represent diverse local interests and expertise, and together painted a picture of what is happening in Glynn County and what the community wants to see happen.

Interviews began with a list of individuals identified by the County, and was ultimately expanded to be open to any member of the public. Public comments from additional stakeholders will continue to be received at public meetings, and via phone, email, and the zoning update website. Interview comments were provided anonymously, but a list of all comments received was provided to the County.

// PUBLIC KICKOFF MEETING

More than 100 people attended the Zoning Update Kickoff Meeting, which was held on May 9 at the Brunswick-Glynn County Library. The consultant team began with a presentation to introduce the zoning update effort. Attendees then moved to a series of boards that allowed them to record comments related to issues and potential zoning solutions in the areas of transportation, environment, quality design, economic development, density, and more. Many comments were received that will be considered as the zoning update process continues.

Policy Questions

// ITEMS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

The following list of policy-related questions was compiled by the TSW consultant team based on input received in stakeholder interviews and at the Public Kickoff meeting, as well as the consultants' detailed reading and analysis of all relevant County ordinances. They are organized by questions related to the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and other ordinances that affect development.

These are not recommendations for ordinance changes, but rather a list of important questions that will need to be explored further by the public, County staff, and the consultant team during the zoning update process.

? What Are Policy Questions?

These big-picture questions focus on the practical impact of regulations on development and the development process. They tackle the topics that will be important to most people in the County.

Answers to these questions are different in every community. Policies vary based on the unique priorities and needs of diverse Glynn County stakeholders and must ensure that future development is in alignment with the community's vision for its future.

This list is not comprehensive; policy questions are expected to continue to emerge as the process continues. Many of these policy questions concern areas where existing regulations are not in alignment



Policy questions will be explored with the public to gauge public opinion and explore solutions

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with the recommendations of the Envision Glynn Comprehensive Plan. Once answers to these questions have been explored, the consultant team will draft potential solutions for the public and County staff and officials to review.

Policy Questions: Design & Site

Maximum Height

- Should maximum building height continue to be based on flood levels, so that buildings at lower elevations can be taller? Finished floor elevation is also currently required to be one foot above base flood elevation.
- There is currently a three-story height limit on all of St. Simons Island except in the VR Village Residential zoning district, where the maximum height is two stories. Should this be revisited?
- What should the maximum height for communications towers be? Regulations are currently inconsistent and should ultimately be in line with the latest federal standards.

Design Standards

- Minimum site design and architectural design standards exist for certain types of development. Should these be strengthened in certain areas or countywide?
- Should specific design standards be provided for the St. Simons Village Overlay or are the existing general principles appropriate? Should the Village Mixed Use district include additional design standards?
- Should design standards be established near I-95 exits or for other commercial areas?
- Are aspects of form-based zoning appropriate for any areas of the County? Form-based zoning prioritizes the form and design of buildings and sites, while conventional zoning focuses only on uses.

Open Space

- Should a minimum amount of private open space be required for new developments? Should there be incentives for the preservation of natural or open areas?

Historic Buildings

- Should the demolition or significant alteration of historic structures in the St. Simons Village or elsewhere in the County be regulated? Should there be incentives to preserve cultural or historic resources?

Buffers

- Are the various depths and types of buffers appropriate, or should they be revisited? Should narrower buffers continued to be allowed where there are fences or walls?

Fences and Walls

- Currently, there are some minimum fence and wall heights. Should maximum fence and wall heights be established by zoning district?
- Should fence and wall materials be regulated in any areas of the County?
- Should building permits be required for certain types of fences and walls?

Signs

- Should sign height, size, illumination, electronic signs, billboards, and other sign regulations be updated, including in specific areas such as along certain corridors or near scenic or historic areas?

Lot Coverage and Pervious Pavement

- Should pervious pavement continue to count toward maximum lot coverage based on the definition of **Site Coverage**?
- Should pervious pavement continue to be prohibited in parking lots with more than 10 spaces?
- Should lot coverage restrictions be established in all zoning districts?

Neighborhood Retail

- Should a neighborhood commercial zoning district be established that allows small-scale retail but not strip centers? All commercial districts currently allow strip centers.

Reverse Frontage

- Should reverse frontage (in which the backyards of houses face the road) continue to be allowed on major roads as long as there are buffers?

Policy Questions: Procedural & Administrative

Zoning Districts

- Some zoning districts are nearly identical to other zoning districts. Should the number of districts be reduced? Can districts that are on the books but not applied to any property be deleted?
- Should minimum standards or district sizes be established for the PD Planned Development zoning district?

- Should a Mixed Use or Traditional Neighborhood Development district be established to allow for new village-type development in appropriate areas?

Public Notices

- Is the requirement that rezoning notifications be mailed to property owners within 200 feet appropriate?
- Should posting a notice on the affected property and online be required for subdivisions or land disturbance activity permits?



Existing Powers & Procedures of Commissions and Boards

	PLANNING COMMISSIONS	BOARD OF APPEALS	COUNTY COMMISSION
Rezoning	makes recommendation		final decision
Zoning Text Changes	makes recommendation		final decision
Conditional & Special Uses	makes recommendation		final decision
Variances & Special Exceptions		final decision	
Sign Variances			final decision
Subdivision Variances	final decision		
Appeals		of County staff decisions	of BOA & PC decisions
Major Residential Subdivisions (Final Subdivision Plats)	makes recommendation		final decision
Site Plans	final decision		
Design Review	only in Village Overlay		
Development Procedures Manual Changes	holds hearing		final decision

Miscellaneous Planning Commission Powers

- Lower parking requirements by up to 25%
- Increase allowed lot coverage by up to 10% for mixed-use developments
- Modify buffer requirements
- Waive or modify landscaping requirements and setbacks for telecommunications towers
- Approve changes to the Development Procedures Manual
- Increase height of chimneys, steeples, flag poles, etc.
- Approve communications towers more than 150 feet tall
- Various powers related to requirements of Subdivision Ordinance
- Increase allowed height of billboards along I-95 (Mainland Planning Commission only)
- Review tree plans and grant tree variances (Islands Planning Commission only)
- Approve the closing of County parks



A number of zoning regulations should continue to be distinct on the Mainland versus the Islands

Variances

- Residential developments on the Islands are currently prohibited from applying for variances from maximum lot coverage regulations. Should this continue to be the case?
- Should the County Commission continue to decide all sign variances, or should they be decided by the Board of Appeals?
- Currently, the Board of Appeals makes the final decision on all variances except for lot coverage variances in certain commercial districts, which are decided by the Planning Commissions (based on different criteria than the usual variance criteria). Should this continue to be the case?
- New chimneys, steeples, flag poles, and similar architectural elements taller than the maximum building height must currently be approved by the Planning Commission, based on certain criteria. Should this continue to be the case?

Subdivisions

- Should non-residential subdivisions and residential subdivisions with four or fewer lots continue to be approved administratively?

Site Plan Review

- Should all commercial buildings, including very small buildings and unenclosed buildings, continue to require site plan approval?
- Should site plans (including site plans in PD Planned Development districts for developments over three acres) continue to expire after two years?
- How should Planning Commission site plan review criteria should be updated, given legal constraints?

Engineering Standards

- Should alternate engineering standards for developments that use light impact drainage practices rather than conventional engineering be allowed as long as they still properly manage stormwater?

What About Density?

The community has expressed a significant amount of concern about the density of future development and its impacts, particularly on the Islands. Many factors will have an impact on future density, including state and federal environmental protections, real estate market demands, lending and insurance constraints, infrastructure capacity, water availability, and other regulations and factors.

Many regulations affect density even though they may not refer to specific units of density such as lot size. The following policy questions from this Diagnostic Report will impact the density of future development:

- Site design standards
- Open space requirements
- Historic preservation incentives
- Buffer requirements
- Lot coverage restrictions
- Parking requirements
- Minimum lot size for lots on septic tanks
- Infill regulations on existing lots
- Tree regulations
- Stream and marsh setbacks
- Climate adaptation zones

Policy Questions: Streets & Transportation

New Street Standards

- Should sidewalks and street lights be required on new streets in certain zoning districts?
- Should new street width standards be rephrased as requirements rather than minimums?

Parking and Loading Spaces

- Should parking requirements be reduced to allow the market to control the supply of parking spaces? Should mixed-use developments be allowed to internally share parking for uses with parking demands at different times of the day and week? Should parking spaces leased on nearby properties be allowed to count toward parking requirements in certain circumstances?
- Is the requirement for a minimum number of loading spaces still important, or should it be removed or reduced?
- Should standards for bicycle or golf cart parking be established?

Connectivity

- Interparcel access driveways are currently required for all commercial development. Should these also be required for other types of development, such as multifamily residential or industrial?
- Should connectivity requirements for new streets be clarified and strengthened to more clearly require new streets to be connected to existing and proposed streets?

Curb Cuts

- Curb cuts for driveways currently have a minimum width. Should there be a maximum width?

Policy Questions: Miscellaneous

Family Size

- Should the definition of **Family** be updated to allow for additional living situations? Currently, households with roommates or adopted children do not meet the definition of family.

Lodging and Rentals

- How should short-term rentals, bed and breakfasts, time share units, and similar uses be regulated, and where should they be allowed?

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Tiny Houses & Cottage Courts

- There is currently no minimum size for a dwelling. Should this be restricted beyond the requirements in the International Building Code?

Housing Types

- Should uses and regulations be updated to appropriately allow and regulate “missing middle” housing types in suitable areas? These include quadplexes, small apartment buildings, etc.

Affordable Housing

- Should incentives be provided to encourage the creation of affordable housing units in key areas?

Accessory Dwelling Units

- Where should carriage houses and similar accessory dwellings be allowed, and how should they be regulated? Should there be a maximum size?
- Should “lock out units” (mother-in-law suites) count toward the total number of units in a development?

Building Codes

- Should Glynn County adopt the latest energy codes (before the state requires them)?
- Should Glynn County adopt more strict building codes to prevent wind damage from hurricanes and other storms?

Lots on Septic Tanks

- Under certain circumstances, residential lots on wells and septic tanks are required to be larger than lots on public water and sewer. Should this requirement be expanded?
- Should other more strict development standards apply to subdivisions without public water and sewer?
- Should some zoning districts be prohibited in areas without public water and sewer?

Agricultural Zoning

- Should residential subdivisions with half-acre lots be allowed in the FA Forest Agricultural zoning district, or should it be restricted to farms or homes on larger lots?

Small Historic Lots

- A single house is allowed to be built on any substandard size lot platted before 1966 countywide. On St. Simons Island, a new house on a substandard lot smaller than 6,000 square feet or narrower than 60 feet has height limits and a maximum number of bedrooms based on a sliding scale tied to the size of the lot. Should this rule be altered? Should the size of houses on other substandard size lots also be regulated? Should this rule also apply on the Mainland?
- Should subdividing lots smaller than one acre continue to be prohibited?
- Should combining residential lots to then create a subdivision continue to be prohibited?

At-Home Businesses

- Should on-site employees of home occupations (at home businesses) be required to be members of the family living in the home, or should roommates or off-site employees also be allowed?

Pets

- Should small numbers of pets other than cats and dogs be allowed?

Moving Historic Homes

- Should relocating historic houses or other buildings into the County continue to be tightly regulated?

**Potential Rezonings**

The focus of this effort is to update the text of the zoning and other development regulations. However, some changes to the zoning map may be needed in one or more of the following situations:

- If existing zoning districts are consolidated (for instance if multiple zoning districts with similar regulations are combined into one new district)
- If more suitable new zoning or overlay districts are created (for instance if customized regulations are created to protect the character of certain areas)
- If there are other compelling public policy reasons (such as when necessary to promote public health, safety, and welfare)

Light Pollution

- Are existing light pollution restrictions appropriate or should they be revisited? Should lights that affect marine wildlife also be regulated?

Tree Planting & Landscaping

- Should tree planting requirements be established for new developments, including parking lots?

Conservation Subdivisions

- Should conservation subdivisions be mandatory on all of St. Simons Island or an optional overlay? Should some conservation subdivision standards be incorporated into all subdivisions?

Allowed and Prohibited Uses

- Which uses should be allowed, prohibited, or allowed as special, conditional, temporary, or accessory uses in each zoning district?

Environmental Protection

- Currently, there is a state-mandated 50-foot marsh setback for all development. Should this be increased, or should additional standards or incentives related to coastal development be considered?
- Should stream buffers be increased beyond the state-mandated 25 feet?
- Should a Climate Adaptation Zone be established to reduce the impacts of flooding and sea level rise?
- Should regulations be established for the Coastal High Hazard Area (the area closest to the coast and subject to wave action during storms)?

PD Regulations

- Should residential portions of PD Planned Developments continue to be regulated by GR General Residential requirements? Should “the most restrictive standards specified elsewhere in this [zoning] ordinance” continue to apply to all non-residential uses?

Rezoning to R-6

- Should the Envision Glynn plan be updated to prohibit rezoning to R-6 on St. Simons Island?

Land Use Compatibility Table

- Currently, the Envision Glynn Comprehensive Plan provides very broad lists of the zoning districts that are appropriate in each Character Area. Should a table be created that connects zoning districts with the appropriate Future Land Use designation?

Acts of God

- Non-conforming buildings that are damaged or destroyed by an “act of God” such as a hurricane must be rebuilt to conform with all zoning requirements if the repair or re-construction cost is more than 50% of the value of the building and certain other criteria apply. Is this appropriate?

Technical Questions

The consultant team’s detailed reading of the County’s ordinances also revealed many technical questions. Some of these overlap with the policy questions above, but many more are related to legal standards, usability, and other technical matters that may not require detailed public input. This list will be expanded as additional technical questions are discovered. A number of minor technical issues related to wording or clarity are not listed here.

// ZONING ORDINANCE

Usability & Overall Technical Updates

- Language should be updated to avoid legalese where possible, while still ensuring legally defensible regulations.
- The organization of information and sections should be improved. This could occur within the existing structure or by creating a Unified Development Ordinance that incorporates all development regulations.
- Many regulations are distinct between St. Simons Island and the Mainland, but these written in many different forms and should be simplified.
- A master table of allowed, prohibited, and conditional or special uses should be created for each zoning district.
- Tables should be created to more simply display regulations for setbacks, buffers, sign height, and other information as appropriate.
- Graphics should be added to illustrate key definitions, measurements, setbacks, and other regulations.
- Regulations that apply countywide should be consolidated to the General Provisions section.
- All references to specific fee amounts should be replaced with references to an official fee schedule outside of the ordinance.
- References to the County Thoroughfare Plan, Road Classification Map, and specific road classifications (such as local, collector, and arterial) should be updated to reference official classifications by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

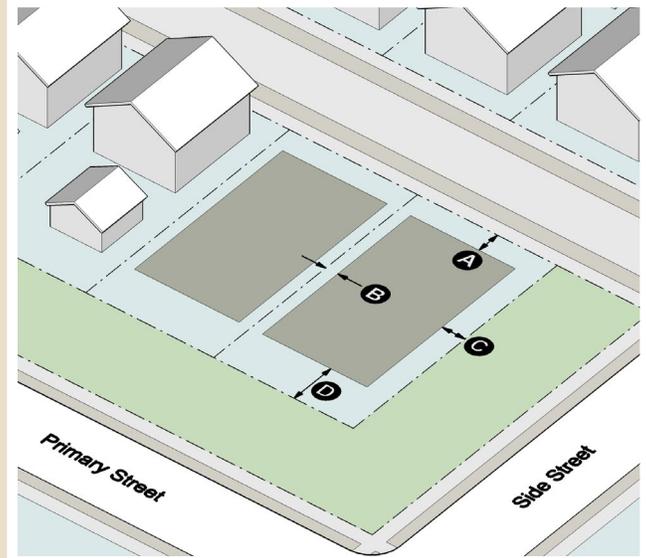


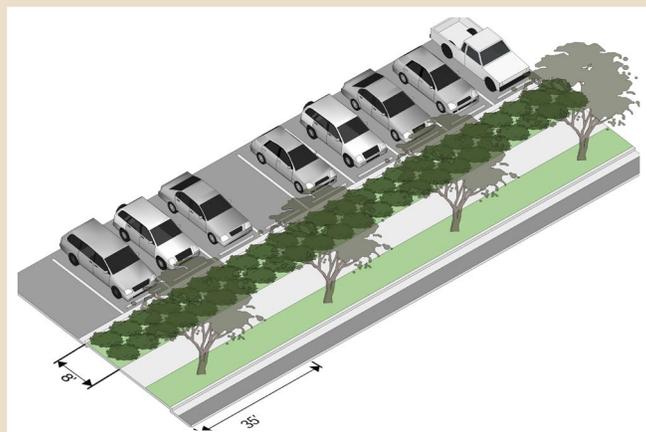
Table 9.4. Minimum Right-of-Way and Roadway Widths for New Streets and Project Access Improvements

Street Category	Design Speed	Minimum Right-of-Way [1]	Minimum Roadway[2]
Principal Arterial	55 mph	120 to 150 ft.	6 through lanes with median
Major Arterial	35-55 mph	100 to 120 ft.	67 ft; 4 to 6 through lanes with median
Minor Arterial	45 mph	80 to 100 ft.	52 to 66 ft.; 4 through lanes with median
Major Collector	35 mph	80 ft.	52 ft
Minor Collector	35 mph	60 to 80 ft.	28 ft
Local Street			
• Nonresidential	25 mph	60 ft.	32 ft
• Nonresidential cul-de-sac	N/A	60 ft. radius	50 ft. radius
Local Street			
• Residential - Urban	25 mph	50 ft.	27 ft
• Residential - Urban cul-de-sac	N/A	50 ft. radius	40 ft. radius
Local Street			
• Residential - Rural	25 mph	60 ft.	24 ft.
• Residential - rural cul-de-sac	N/A	60 ft. radius	40 ft. radius
Alley	10 mph	2 ft.	16 ft.

Table 9.4. Notes:

[1] The greater right-of-way width applies under circumstances described in Sec. 9.5.3.B.C. Right-of-ways may be public or private.

[2] Roadway width dimensions are back-of-curb to back-of-curb except where noted.



- Time limits should be established for deferrals of decisions by the Planning Commission, Board of Appeals, and the County Commission, so that decisions cannot be deferred indefinitely.
- Cross references should be simplified to be more understandable.
- Duplicate material should be removed.
- Jekyll Island is controlled by a state authority but is part of Glynn County. The zoning map and regulations should respond appropriately to this unique situation.
- The requirements of the Glynn County Local Stormwater Design Manual should be incorporated into the appropriate ordinances or County engineering standards.

Article I. Preamble and Enactment Clause

- Statements regarding the purpose of the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to make sure they are consistent with Envision Glynn.

Article III. Definition and Interpretation of Terms Used in This Ordinance

- A number of definitions should be added to this section to clarify terms used elsewhere in the zoning ordinance, especially uses. Some definitions could be removed.
- Many definitions include regulations. These should be separated from the regulations and moved to the General Provisions article, or to the most relevant section of the code.
- Many definitions will need to be updated. Examples include the following.
 - The definition of **Abandonment** should be updated to clarify what is meant by uses transferred to more restrictive zoning districts.
 - The definitions of **Building Height** and **Grade** should be clarified.
 - The definitions of **Density**, **Development Area**, and **Net Acre** should be clarified.
 - The definitions of **Industrialized Dwelling**, **Manufactured Housing**, and **Mobile Home** should be updated to conform with the latest state requirements.
 - The definition of **Multi-Family Dwelling** should be clarified.

- The definitions of **Row House Dwelling**, **One-Family Attached Dwelling**, and **Townhouse** should be clarified and combined.
- The definition of **Group Home** should be updated to conform with the latest state requirements.
- **Lock Out Units** should be called something else that better reflects what they are.
- The definitions of **Lot**, **Lot of Record**, and **Zoning Lot** should be clarified and combined.
- The definitions of **Travel Way** and **Water Resources Protection Ordinance** should be deleted, since these terms are not used anywhere in the zoning ordinance.

Article IV. Establishment of Districts

- The reference to the Official Zoning Map should be updated to refer to the latest version and address the use of digital maps.
- How rezonings are incorporated into the zoning map should be addressed.
- The reference to militia district lines should be removed if it is no longer relevant.
- Deannexation provisions should be reviewed for conformity with state statutes.
- The entirety of Section 405 should be deleted, along with references to Planning Districts throughout the zoning ordinance. The history and intent of these districts is unclear, and regulations throughout the code can continue to apply only in certain portions of the County where this is indicated.

Article V. Application of Regulations

- The requirement that rezoning and other applications can only come from the property owner or authorized representative should be removed, since this is already mandated by state law and mentioned elsewhere in the ordinance.
- St. Simons Island and Sea Island are designated as Areas of Scenic Beauty and Historic Interest. This should be reworded here and throughout the zoning ordinance to clarify that relevant regulations apply on these two islands.
- The regulations on Substandard Lots of Record should be clarified to say that a single-family house can be built on a substandard lot created prior to the adoption of the original zoning ordinance on February 1, 1966, subject to certain limitations.
- Lots used exclusively as parks or open space, or for public or private utilities, should be exempt from the minimum lot size.

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- The difference between legal non-conforming and illegal non-conforming structures should be clarified.

Article VI. General Provisions

- Front yard setbacks for properties with frontage on more than one street should be specified rather than saying they “may be reduced” down to 10 feet. It should also be specified how the front yard is determined on this type of lot.
- The Community Development Director should continue to be able to grant administrative variances to expand nonconforming buildings, but the requirement that neighboring property owners approve should be removed, and the other criteria provided should be simplified.
- A number of updates should be made to the home occupation regulations.
 - Sign requirements for home occupations should be updated to be consistent with the sign ordinance.
 - The requirement that home occupations submit a floor or site plan annually to the County should be removed.
 - The lack of parking requirements for home occupations should be clarified.
 - The grandfathering of home occupations in use since 1986 should be removed.
- It should be clarified which accessory structures, including mechanical equipment, are subject to setbacks.
- The maximum amount of residential parking spaces allowed should be clarified as to whether it applies only to spaces in garages or also outdoor parking areas.
- Where the number of parking spaces is reduced administratively or by the Planning Commission, the requirement that the remaining area remain undeveloped should be removed, since that would be difficult to prove.
- Requirements for tree plantings in buffers should reference the list of tree species in the tree ordinance rather than referring to crown spread. Shrub requirements in buffers should also be based on a list of allowed species.
- Buffer Type D should be rephrased as a screening requirement since it applies County wide and not just where buffers are required. Buffer Type E should be rephrased as a parking lot buffer for clarity.
- Exemptions from the site plan requirement should be simplified and updated.
- Site plan submittal requirements should be updated.
- It should be clarified whether residential Planned Developments are subject to site plan review.
- Internal site plan review process should be removed from the ordinance and adopted as official County policy.
- Section 623 should be moved to Chapter 2-5 Buildings and Construction.
- The definition of **Airport Property** should be clarified in the Tree Ordinance.
- The Tree Ordinance should be clarified, simplified, and coordinated with the tree ordinance in Chapter 2-16 (outside of the zoning ordinance).
- Tree size criteria should be consistent throughout the Tree Ordinance.
- The list of allowed trees in the Tree Ordinance should be updated to include a sub-list of salt tolerant species for trees near the coast.
- The requirements of the Conservation Subdivision Overlay should be clarified and updated.

Article VII. [No Title]

- Mobile homes are both prohibited and allowed in certain zoning districts—this should be clarified.
- Standards and other requirements provided within zoning district regulations should be moved to the General Provisions article.
- The requirement that golf courses be “regulation size or par three” should be revisited.
- The allowance for temporary mobile homes based on medical hardship should be revisited.
- References to use standards, sign requirements, overlay districts, and other duplicate references should be removed from every zoning district.
- The rule that allows side setbacks for townhouses to be reduced should be clarified.
- A definition for cluster homes should be provided, or this term should be deleted if it is no longer relevant.
- The name of the Village Preservation Overlay District (also called the Island Preservation District, the Design Review District, and the St. Simons Island Overlay District) should be made consistent.
- A definition for “educational facilities directly related to an authorized hospital” should be provided if this use is intended to be separately regulated from other educational facilities.

- The intent of the parking requirements for restaurants and bars in the GC General Commercial zoning district should be clarified.
- The Fire Chief can currently increase or decrease maximum building height in some zoning districts. This ability should be removed so that only the zoning regulations and building codes determine maximum building height.
- Mobile home park standards should be reviewed and updated.
- Clarify that the Beach and Dune Protection District is an overlay district that applies countywide. Clarify the requirements of this district. Reference the grandfathering provisions elsewhere in the zoning ordinance.
- Rephrase the NC Neighborhood Commercial buffer requirements in terms of the standard buffers explained in Section 613.
- Adult business definitions and regulations should be updated to be consistent with state standards. Regulations should be consistent between the Zoning Ordinance and Chapter 2-24.

Article VIII. Signs

- Sign regulations throughout this article should be updated to be consistent with state and federal regulations, including content neutrality.
- Sign definitions should be clarified and updated.
- The expiration period for sign permits should be confirmed. How signs destroyed by acts of God are regulated should also be spelled out.
- The definition of obscene should be consistent with state statute.
- Regulations for temporary signs and entrance signs should be clarified.
- Standards should be established for sign variances.

Article IX. Enforcement, Permits, Penalties and Fees

- Sections relating to sign tags should be moved to the Sign Ordinance.
- The extensive process for changes to the Development Procedures Manual should be simplified.
- Penalties for violating the Zoning Ordinance should be specified.

Article X. Appeals

- Language on the appointment of Board of Appeals members should be made consistent throughout the zoning ordinance.
- A specific time limit should be established for how long after a decision someone can file an appeal.
- Public hearing processes, time frames, and other regulations should be clarified and updated.
- Conduct of hearings should be updated and may not need to be specified here.
- The process for appealing decisions of the Planning Commissions should be made clear.
- The process for appealing County Commission decisions should be updated, including time limitations for filing appeals with the Glynn County Superior Court.
- It should be clarified who has standing to apply for an appeal.

Article XI. Amendments

- This article should be reviewed for conformity with the State Zoning Procedures Act.
- Language about rezoning timeframes, deadlines, and accepting of applications should be expanded and clarified.
- The criteria for Planning Commission decisions should be reviewed.
- The jurisdiction of each Planning Commission should be clarified.

Article XIII. Airport Zoning Ordinance

- This article should be updated to conform to FAA regulations and the latest information from both airports.
- This article should be rephrased to clarify that it is an overlay district, and should be added to the official zoning map.

Article XIV. Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance

- Regulations should be simplified and updated to reflect the latest federal standards.
- Buffer and landscaping requirements should be revisited.
- The requirement that every telecommunications tower have a community liaison officer (to report

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any complaints annually to the County) should be revisited.

- Change of ownership notification requirements should be deleted.
- Regulations about abandoned towers should be revisited.

// SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

- The purposes of the subdivision ordinance should be updated.
- The definitions of **Existing Subdivision**, **Flag Lot, Improvements**, and **Waterbody** should be clarified and updated.
- A process should be established for how to administratively review replats that do not create new lots.
- The creation of new flag lots should be better regulated.
- Street regulations should be either clarified or moved from the Subdivision Ordinance to another part of the County's ordinances, to properly regulate new streets where no subdivision of land is involved.
- The County's Local Design Guide should be referenced in the Subdivision Ordinance.
- The use of Subcollector Streets should be revisited if this classification of street type is not necessary.
- Traffic studies should be clearly required for developments of a certain size with rezoning and preliminary plat submittals.
- The requirement that all commercial and industrial developments have alleys should be removed.
- Provisions should be established for the subdivision of farms to create lots for family members.
- Expirations of preliminary plat approval should be clarified and revisited.

- The existing design standards (a separate document outside the ordinance) should be expanded and improved.
- The requirements of the Conservation Subdivision Overlay (in the Zoning Ordinance) should be clarified and updated.

// OTHER ORDINANCES

Alcohol

- Use definitions should be consistent with zoning.
- Regulations about where uses are allowed should be moved to zoning.
- Spacing requirements between businesses selling alcohol and residential zoning districts should be clarified to exclude mixed-use districts.
- Sign requirements should be consistent with the Sign Ordinance.
- Microbreweries, distilleries, and wineries should be regulated.

Domestic Animals

- Pets other than cats and dogs should be addressed.
- This ordinance should be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance in terms of kennels and number of animals.

Buildings and Construction

- Should be updated to more clearly reference the latest codes adopted by the state.
- The timeline for appealing decisions of the Building Official should be confirmed.
- The designation of GC General Commercial and GC Core as fire districts should be confirmed.
- Remove references to the Electrical Advisory Board?
- Is the requirement related to water and sewer main standards still necessary?
- Regulations on plumbing fixtures should be clarified or removed to allow for the International Plumbing Code to regulate.
- The various Boards of Appeals regulations should be reviewed and updated where necessary.

Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance

- This ordinance should be updated to match the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District model ordinance, which is considered the state standard.
- Any desired additions to or differences from the model ordinance should be confirmed.

Flood Damage Protection and Illicit Discharge

- This ordinance should undergo significant updates to match the content and organization of the Metro North Georgia Water Planning District model ordinance, which is considered the state standard.
- Some wording and definitions apply to both illegal discharge and post development stormwater runoff. These should be reorganized into a single overall section for clarity.
- Confirm that the large number of terms defined in these ordinances that are not in the model ordinance are necessary.
- The Violations, Enforcement, and Penalties article should be relocated so that it is clear that it applies to the Illicit Discharge Ordinance.
- Confirm that fill dirt cannot be used to increase site elevation to meet base flood elevation requirements.

Nuisance Abatement

- The reference to FA Forest Agricultural zoning should be replaced with a reference to agricultural uses.

Business

- Regulations on roadside produce stands and going-out-of-business sales should be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance.

Fire

- Zoning district references should be updated to reflect any changes based on the Zoning Update.

Airport

- The list of allowed uses on airport property should be coordinated with or referenced in the Zoning Ordinance.

Beach Control

- Regulations on vending on St. Simons Island beaches should be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance.

Lodging Tax

- This should be coordinated with lodging uses allowed in the zoning ordinance.

Scrap Tire

- Uses should be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance.

Planning Commissions

- This chapter should be consistent with the Zoning Ordinance.
- Update the statements of need for the Planning Commissions.
- List the specific powers of the Planning Commissions to avoid confusion.

Natural Resources

- This ordinance should be deleted, since the Zoning Ordinance already regulates beachfront lighting.

Public Decency

- Adult business definitions and regulations should be updated to be consistent with state standards. Regulations should be consistent between the Zoning Ordinance and Chapter 2-24.

Public Conduct

- Event regulations should be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance.

Clean Community Ordinance

- The International Property Maintenance Code should be adopted.