

## What does zoning regulate?

- Zoning regulations determine what uses can be built (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.), where it can be built, and how much can be built. Zoning also controls how development looks and works, including such elements as building materials, parking, and landscaping.
- Glynn County's zoning ordinance regulates development in all of unincorporated Glynn County, on the mainland as well as on St. Simon's Island and Sea Island. Development on Jekyll Island is controlled by the Jekyll Island Authority.

## What are the goals of the zoning update?

- 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.

## Who is facilitating the update?

- Glynn County has hired Atlanta-based planning, design, and zoning consultant TSW to facilitate the process. Their team includes other consulting firms with expertise in engineering, sustainability, public administration, and legal matters.
- Any zoning changes recommended by this process will require approval by the County Commission. Any future rezonings or other zoning changes will also continue to be under local control.

## How does this effort relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

- Envision Glynn is Glynn County's official Comprehensive Plan. It is based on public input from more than 1,000 stakeholders and was adopted unanimously by the County Commission in October 2018.
- Zoning is the tool to ensure that private development follows the intent of Envision Glynn.
- This zoning update was recommended by Envision Glynn and is an extension of that process that will allow the vision of the plan to be codified.

## What regulations are being updated?

- The consultant team will recommend updates to all County ordinances that affect development, including the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, and all relevant ordinances in Chapter 2 or elsewhere in County codes.

## How will the zoning updates be implemented?

- The zoning ordinance updates will include a strategy to transition between current and new regulations. This strategy may include phased zoning map updates and will include a strategy for addressing previously approved developments and development conditions. A delayed effective date will likely be chosen to allow for the transition and training of County staff.
- At this time, the County and consultant team have not identified specific solutions to address questions related to previously approved density.

## How will this affect how I develop my property?

- Zoning is one factor that determines what uses can be built on a property and at what density. Development will also continue to be regulated by state and federal environmental protections, real estate market constraints, infrastructure capacity, and other regulations and factors.

## Where can I find the existing zoning?

- The text of Glynn County's zoning and other development ordinances is available at [www.glynncounty.org/532/ordinances-and-regulations](http://www.glynncounty.org/532/ordinances-and-regulations).
- The official zoning map is available at [www.glynncounty.org/779/map-gallery](http://www.glynncounty.org/779/map-gallery).

## How can I provide input?

- A number of community meetings will be scheduled throughout the zoning update process to ask for input from the public. Meeting dates will be posted on the County's website.
- Public comments can also be provided by emailing [zoningupdate@glynncounty-ga.gov](mailto:zoningupdate@glynncounty-ga.gov) or calling (912) 554-7428.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ENVISION GLYNN: ZONING UPDATE | [WWW.GLYNNCOUNTY.ORG/ZONINGUPDATE](http://WWW.GLYNNCOUNTY.ORG/ZONINGUPDATE)

## Overview

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. The 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. This board shows relevant recommendations of the plan. The full plan can be viewed online at [www.glynncounty.org/compplan](http://www.glynncounty.org/compplan).

## 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.
- 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.
- 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.

# ENVISION GLYNN OVERVIEW

ENVISION GLYNN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | ADOPTED OCTOBER 2018

## 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.

These policy questions were 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.

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.

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

### 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?

# POLICY QUESTIONS

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## 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?

### 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?

### 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?

### REZONINGS 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?

# POLICY QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

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