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.
- The official zoning map is available at 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 or calling (912) 554-7428.
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.glyncounty.org/complan.

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. The following are the most relevant:
• Improve aesthetics at gateway exits on I-95.
• Public safety issues, including crime and noise, as well as traffic congestion.
• 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 ofSSI.
• County needs to update zoning ordinance to better manage growth.
• Ensure redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized commercial structures.
• Use the Character Area Map to help identify and preserve the unique cultural and natural character of areas.
• Consider the impacts of sea level rise.
• Improve and maintain a transportation system that will accommodate peak traffic conditions.
• Support opportunities to provide for alternative modes of transportation, including public transit and multi-use trails/sidewalks.
• Improve aesthetics at gateway exits on I-95.
• 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. 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.

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.
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 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 PERVERIOUS 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

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 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?
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
• Intercessel 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?

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.

FUNCTIONAL ZONING
• Should architectural restrictions allow multiple core uses to be allowed or required within a building?

HALL OF FAME
• Should Glynn County adopt the latest energy codes (before the state requires them)?

BUILDING CODES
• Should Glynn County adopt more strict building codes to prevent wind damage from hurricanes and other storms?

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

LLOTS 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?

POLICY QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

ENVISION GLYNN: ZONING UPDATE | WWW.GLYNNCOUNTY.ORG/ZONINGUPDATE