

*Chapter VI:*

**FUTURE LAND USE**

**ADOPTED  
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## *Chapter VI:* **FUTURE LAND USE**

### **Introduction**

The Future Land Use Plan for Smithfield seeks to achieve the following major goal:

*The Town shall plan for a balanced mix of residential, commercial and economic development uses which will accommodate the projected demands for housing, shopping and tourism, as well as promote new employment opportunities, for present and future residents.*

Each and every significant decision made and recommendation developed as this Plan evolved was made with this overall major goal in mind. The Future Land Use Plan chapter is organized into four sections which describe (1) the existing land use and physical development patterns of the Town, (2) the planning process which supports the selection of future land use designations, (3) the future land use categories to be included in the Future Land Use Plan and (4) a summary of recommendations for the Future Land Use Plan.

In the “Existing Land Use” section, the existing variety, allocation and concentration of land uses within the Town is presented and analyzed. The “Planning Process” section reviews the general approach to determining Smithfield’s future development, with the background analysis linked to the physical, ecological and economic realities of the Town. In this section, the following key planning concepts are also defined: Districts and Corridors, Planning Areas and Sub-Areas, Urban Land Suitabilities and Net Developable Acreage. The “Land Use Categories” section defines the dominant categories of land use (residential, commercial, economic development, institutional, public, recreational and conservation) which are intended to constitute the optimal mix of uses for the Town. The final “Future Land Use Plan” section summarizes the recommended future development pattern for Smithfield.

### **Existing Land Use**

The foundational underpinning of the Comprehensive Plan Update is an understanding of Smithfield’s existing land development patterns. As of December, 2008, approximately 2,874 of the 6,409 acres within the Town’s corporate boundaries were classified into various “active”,

developed urban land use categories (see Table VI-1 on page VI-10 for a complete existing land use summary). The remaining 3,535 acres (approximately 55 percent) are undeveloped and are maintained primarily as woodlands, open spaces, tidal marshes and other natural areas. The future development patterns and growth management strategies for the existing undeveloped lands will be greatly influenced by the Town's existing distribution and concentration of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses.

Nearly 30% of the Town's total land area is currently developed for residential related uses, as compared to only approximately 23% in 1991. The vast majority of recent growth in the town has occurred in single family residential development within subdivision developments located east of Cypress Creek, although several smaller, low density residential areas are scattered in the western portion of the Town. Future Town planning strategies and programs should seek to preserve and enhance these stable residential areas. Approximately 95% of the Town's total land area devoted to residential areas is allocated for single family dwellings. The remaining acreage is devoted to largely to multi-family units (including apartment buildings).

Commercial development within the Town is generally located either in shopping centers, highway corridor locations or downtown retail areas. The majority of the Town's commercial development is located along South Church Street (Route 10). A total of approximately 170 acres, or approximately 3 percent of the Town's total land area, are engaged in commercial/retail/personal service-related uses, as compared to 100 acres (approximately 3 percent) from two decades ago.

The Town has a significant amount of land which is developed for traditional industrial purposes, the majority of which is comprised of the Smithfield Foods, Inc. pork production operations. A total of 195 acres (approximately 3 percent) of Town lands are engaged in industrial uses, as compared to 147 acres (4 percent) in 1991. Smithfield's economic stability and environmental quality has been, and will continue to be, greatly influenced by Smithfield Foods' development decisions, as well as its continued commitment to the appropriate quality and scale of development in expansion.

In contrast to many of the rapidly urbanizing cities of the Tidewater area, Smithfield continues to retain its natural beauty and its recreational opportunities while, at the same time, experiencing a steady pace of growth. The protection of active open space and provision of recreational facilities is evidenced in that 38 acres (nearly 1 percent of the Town's total land area) are committed to park and recreational uses. Through the 1998 annexation process, the Town gained its first golf course. The 183-acre golf course, located within the Cypress Creek subdivision in the southern annexation area, operates as a semi-public facility that affords local,

regional, and visiting players a challenging alternative to other, older courses in the Hampton Roads region.

Bordering this variety of “active” uses is an expanse of vacant property. Over one-third of the total Town land area is undeveloped and maintained as a wooded and estuarial backdrop to Smithfield’s historic setting. Nearly seventy percent of this property (over 1,650 total acres) was incorporated into the Town during the 1998 annexation.

One of the primary objectives of the 2009 Plan Update has been to reevaluate and refine the Town’s vision for the future of the remaining tracts of undeveloped land originally addressed in the 1999 Plan. The Town has been diligent in its quest to analyze recent development trends within the Town, and to incorporate this analysis into the development of a range of land use allocation alternatives that will afford the Town its best range of options for future managed growth. The final land use allocation presented in the Future Land Use Map and described in detail in the following sections of this chapter represents the Town’s preferred option for future growth into the 21st Century.

### **The 2008 Comprehensive Planning Process**

The comprehensive planning process employed for the 2008 Plan is similar in many respects to that of the 1998 Plan. However, many refinements have been incorporated in an attempt to bring further insight and sophistication to this effort. In the preparation of the updated plan, the process has been segmented into four principal areas: (1) research, (2) analysis, (3) synthesis and (4) land use prescriptions. In seeking the optimal path to orchestrate future growth and to accommodate land use demands within the Town, this four phase process has revolved around a systematic investigation of the natural and manmade environment in the Town, with the resultant product yielding a set of resource-based, future land use recommendations.

The individual land use decisions leading to the Future Land Use Plan were resolved through a process of comparative analysis. In this process, a range of alternative land use allocation concepts were carefully weighed against the physical, social, ecological and economic underpinnings of the Town. The net result of this process is a recommended Future Land Use Plan which concurrently:

1. *Best expresses the "Vision for Smithfield" by successfully integrating the community's planning goals and objectives;*
2. *Is capable of implementation within the context of satisfying both (a) the marketplace demands and (b) the ability of the local government to responsibly supply municipal services and infrastructure; and*
3. *Provides positive community-wide benefits with the least negative impact on the measured values making up the existing physical, social, political and economic environment.*

In this regard, ecological sensitivity and land-carrying capacities must be considered principal determinants to the allocation of land use and setting rational limitations on future growth. The underlying thesis is that the Smithfield community can employ its own rational value system in preparing its local comprehensive plans. This must be achieved through a systematic planning process rather than through the sometimes obscure and artificial criteria employed in drawing conventional zoning districts and "first generation" land use plans. The geographical configurations of Smithfield's future land use patterns are deemed to be a function of the Town's environmental limitations and potentials, rather than land use patterns established by simply following property lines and political boundaries. This affirms the theory that zoning

cannot be considered a useful planning tool for Smithfield unless and until resource-based plans are drawn which reflect the intrinsic development suitabilities of the land.

The first and second stages in the planning process were to collect and analyze all necessary data and background information to create a descriptive model of the Town. This information is recorded in conjunction with both current and past Town planning studies and is included in exhibits which address the historic, physiographic, cultural, man-made systems and community infrastructure characteristics of the Town. These maps and supporting documentation, to be maintained and periodically updated by the Smithfield Planning Department, are incorporated into this Plan by reference and address the following geophysical considerations:

1. Surficial geology
2. Soils groupings
3. Hydrologic environments
4. Soil drainage environments
5. Existing vegetation
6. Physiographic features
7. Slopes and contours
8. Existing land use
9. Historic landmarks
10. Cultural features
11. Urban facilities and infrastructure
12. Ambience and community scale
13. Demographic and economic environment

### **Community Development Stages**

As with most urban areas, Smithfield's distribution of land uses and development concentrations vary widely. For planning purposes, it is necessary to establish a well-ordered system of geophysical classifications for the Town's neighborhoods and development areas. This results in a determinant based, physical organization of the Town into separate (1) planning areas and (2) entrance corridors which have a distinct order and organization, while possessing unifying physical, environmental and social characteristics.

The concept of the community development stage is integral to the process of clearly establishing planning area and corridor boundaries. Thus, the interpretation of the Town's planning areas and corridors was based, in part, on their historical "stage" (or "status") within the Town's overall community development patterns. Three general stages of development have been defined as: (1) *stable*, (2) *infill/transition*, and (3) *vacant/undeveloped*. An understanding of these three stages of development within corridors and planning areas is fundamental to the overall planning process.

### **Stable**

The Plan's primary goal for the stable districts and corridors is the preservation of the Town's existing residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, institutional properties and public resources. The main feature of these districts and corridors is the existence of a sufficient critical mass of land development (whether it be entirely single family homes, a shopping center or tourist commercial strip) to establish a definite character that is not likely to be changed by any reasonable development of the remaining vacant land. Protection and enhancement involve taking actions to reinforce the existing character of the area and preventing actions that would compromise or degrade its character.

Over the past two decades, certain areas formerly classified as stable have come under close scrutiny, both within the marketplace and by Town planners. Given their potential vulnerability for redevelopment and/or adaptive reuse, these areas are given more focused attention in the current updating process. Several of these areas are located along prime commercial corridors within the Town and have been identified as being currently "underdeveloped", meaning that the property is currently being used in a fashion that does not represent the highest and best use for the property; and therefore, is suitable for commercial redevelopment. As such, these properties have been separately classified as "Redevelopment Areas" in the current Future Land Use Plan. Also, a number of neighborhoods considered stable in the 1998 Plan have been reclassified as "threatened" by outside pressures. These pressures include a general decline in the maintenance of the existing housing stock, an increase in traffic congestion and/or growing redevelopment pressures in the neighborhood. The current Plan will attempt to identify these "threatened" and "substandard" neighborhoods, focus on the source of the mounting pressures in each, and make specific recommendations concerning measures that the Town can implement in order to help these neighborhoods remain viable.

### **Infill/Transition**

The main feature that characterizes these districts and corridors is a partially developed urban quality creating opportunities for the incorporation of new development patterns within the context of the old. In most cases, these areas are located between two incompatible stable uses which threaten to expand into the adjacent undeveloped or underdeveloped properties. The Plan has focused on several of these districts and corridors and has devised strategies on a case-

by-case basis, where appropriate. This should ensure that appropriately-scaled and buffered development is implemented.

### **Vacant**

Vacant districts and corridors generally do not have an established land development pattern which will dictate future land use decisions. Past planning efforts in Smithfield have focused specifically on the Town's vacant districts and corridors to determine the limitations and alternatives for the future use of these properties. The current planning process continues to prioritize vacant areas, particularly in light of the broad attention being given to economic development.

The Plan's approach is to focus on infill/transition and vacant areas, since these evolving growth sectors could have the most dramatic impact on the future of the Town. These targeted growth areas are subsequently referred to as "Planning Areas" and "Planning Corridors". Also, a number of stable areas which have become suitable for redevelopment have been folded into certain "Planning Areas" and "Corridors" and separately classified as "Redevelopment Areas," as explained above.

### **Planning Areas: The Synthesis Process**

The third stage of the planning process—the synthesis process, established the physical and ecological values inherent in the decisions preceding prescriptions for the utilization of Smithfield's physical and natural resources. Once done, this synthesis revealed ten distinct Planning Areas within the Town, each having its own unique geophysical attributes, development potentials and physical suitabilities for various types and configurations of land uses which may be demanded in Smithfield.

In turn, each "Planning Area", upon detailed examination, is further subdivided into "Planning Sub-Areas" in order to identify the internal geophysical components of the larger Planning Area which have prime development potentials for specific real estate orientations. In other words, the Planning Sub-Area is the portion of the overall Planning Area where urban uses should be concentrated. These areas were defined per the Town's stated objectives of identifying and promoting new development and infill opportunities on vacant or underutilized properties which are compatible with existing neighborhoods. Further, the synthesis process sought to identify those areas comprising the strongest urban development potentials. Particular attention was paid upon the undeveloped "edge" properties along the existing Town boundary for the purpose of determining: (1) the vision for the future development of these areas; (2)

their relationship to adjoining neighborhoods and land uses; and (3) the efficient future allocation of public utilities.

When the Town's Planning Areas are viewed in the aggregate, land use recommendations can be drawn to ensure that the Town's future land use demands are directed to those properties having: (a) optimal development suitabilities, (b) environmental compatibility and (c) prime opportunities for the enhancement of the adopted planning values, goals and objectives of Smithfield. As examined on an individual basis in subsequent sections of this chapter, specific recommendations have been prepared for the following Planning Areas:

### **Planning Areas**

1. *Battery Park North*
2. *Battery Park South*
3. *Cypress Creek*
4. *Jericho*
5. *John Rolfe*
6. *Pagan Pines*
7. *River Residential*
8. *Smithfield Industrial*
9. *Southern Gateway*
10. *West Main*

The analysis and recommendations for each Planning Area is detailed in the following sections. As is displayed in the table on the following page, these ten Planning Areas constitute 5,118 of the Town's 6,409 total acres. Over 1,225 acres are identified as net developable areas, which represents approximately 19% of the Town's total land area.



## **Entrance Corridors**

A major emphasis of the development of the Comprehensive Plan has been the recognition of the unique character of the Town's entry corridors and arterial roads which serve as the gateways to Smithfield's historic districts or points of tourism or cultural destinations. Five such entrance corridors have been identified:

1. *U.S. Route 258 from the west;*
2. *State Route 10 Bypass from the north;*
3. *State Route 10 Business from the north;*
4. *State Route 10/U.S. Route 258 from the southeast; and*
5. *Battery Park Road (Route 669) from the east.*

The Town's entrance corridors are those major entranceways that convey the initial perception of the character and image of Smithfield to those traveling through the outlying community and into the Town. Each of the corridors was selected because of its importance as an entrance to the Town of Smithfield and to the Historic Area in particular. The importance of the functional and aesthetic character of these corridors leads us to examine how each entranceway could be protected and enhanced thereby reflecting citizens' aspirations concerning the improvement of the design, appearance and image. The main goal embedded in this strategy is to improve the functional and visual character of the corridors for both vehicular and pedestrian movement. The intersection of Route 258 and Route 10 Bypass serves as the major gateway into Town from the west, while the South Church Street/Route 10 Bypass/Route 258 intersection forms the primary gateway from the east. It is believed that the Battery Park Road/Nike Park Road intersection will emerge as another primary gateway in the near planning term as future development east of Town will increase vehicle trip demand along this arterial.

The Town plans to introduce protection and design control measures for these corridors and gateways in order to stimulate complementary new development which will be compatible with Smithfield's historic character and which will enhance the Town's attractiveness to tourists, visitors and its residents.

Within the identified Planning Areas, it is argued that inherent social and ecological values represented by the natural processes for a given tract of land are, in many cases, suitable for a multitude of human uses. For example, moderately sloped and well-drained land may be as well suited for apartment or shopping center development as for active recreational or open space uses. Similarly, areas of historic or scenic value could, at the same time, be highly

desirable for commercial or office development. The synthesis stage in the planning process focuses on resolving any apparent conflicts which exist for the individual citizen whose property is subject to the recommendations and outcomes of the Comprehensive Plan.

The next step in the process is to determine the Town's geographical areas most suitable for future urban uses. While each Planning Area was analyzed for its intrinsic suitabilities for a range of uses—urban, conservation, agricultural, recreational, etc.—the synthesis effort made it possible to assess each Planning Area attempting to assign a “single optimal and preferred use” for each. In doing so, the degree of compatibility of that particular use with other existing and future land uses was determined.

All land within each of the Planning Areas and Planning Sub-Areas has been examined in detail to determine its urban suitabilities. Superimposed on these measurements are the social, market and ecological values supported by the planning goals and economic realities of the area. By applying sound ecological analysis to each Planning Area, it becomes obvious that internal Planning Sub-Areas with prime urban development potentials provide sufficient capacities and opportunities to absorb the Town's growth projections into the first quarter of the twenty-first century. On the other hand, the lands situated outside the Planning Sub-Areas identified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas should be maintained as open space, recreation and/or other uses which do not require significant structures.

### **Urban Land Suitabilities**

The 2008 Plan introduces a new means for the Town by which it may determine the suitability of land for urban development. This creative approach has been successfully implemented in similarly-sized communities throughout the Middle Atlantic region in the past twenty-five years. It recognizes that the physical components of the “urban suitability selection process” allow the land to “speak for itself” in a geophysical sense. Whereas most traditional zoning regulations and comprehensive planning practices in Virginia have allocated land use categories and development densities to the landscape in an indiscriminate fashion, the process of employing scaled suitability rankings allows land use allocations to be a function of the specific character and attributes of the land to which they apply. Thus, more responsive physical planning decisions can be drawn from this approach: for instance, the analysis process recognizes that flat land works better and produces more than steeply sloped land for commercial development. Similarly, it provides a sensitivity process by which the lot development yield in a residential subdivision can be quantitatively limited by the presence of floodplains, highly erodible soils, and stream valleys. Thus, the physical planning process recognizes the fact that steep slopes and significant environmental areas significantly reduce the

development potential of the land, and future land use recommendations are made subject to these and other considerations. Virginia's enabling statutes for planning and zoning lend support to such a process which applies a more sophisticated approach to orchestrating and allocating community land uses.

The synthesis process identified the significant physical parameters to be included in the urban suitability selection process. The following considerations are considered in the land use allocation models for the Smithfield Planning Areas and in structuring the boundaries of internal Planning Sub-Areas:

1. *Slopes less than ten percent (10%) are generally suitable for urban uses, infrastructure systems and transportation improvements.*
2. *Slopes in the ten to twenty percent range (10% - 20%) begin to restrict the urban development potentials and overall physical capacities of individual parcels within the Planning Areas.*
3. *Slopes greater than twenty percent (20%) pose significant capacity constraints for urban uses and development thereon should be restricted to a greater degree than more gently sloping properties.*
4. *Areas of significant archaeological and geologic features pose significant capacity constraints for urban uses and development thereon should be avoided to the extent possible.*
5. *Floodplains, tributary streams and major drainage channels constitute physical systems necessary to maintain hydrologic equilibrium in the watershed and development thereon should be avoided and development adjacent thereto should be allowed only under close scrutiny.*
6. *Tidal marshes and wetlands constitute physical systems necessary to maintain water quality as well as the ecological and hydrologic balance in the watershed and development thereon should be avoided.*
7. *Soils of low bearing capacity have restricted suitabilities for intense urban development and the total allowable density thereon should be restricted accordingly.*
8. *Soils of high erodability pose limitations on urban uses, and the scale, density and character of development thereon should be allocated and extensively managed in such a fashion as to restrict adverse environmental impacts.*
9. *Significant and/or rare vegetative cover is a valued element of a Planning Area's natural system, and the allocation of urban uses must respect the environmental maintenance and conservation thereof.*

10. *Future land uses adjoining existing built environments within Planning Areas must respect the architectural scale, density and character of contiguous developments as well as related urban design objectives.*
11. *Land areas identified by the Plan as being necessary to accommodate public facilities, utilities, rights-of-way and related infrastructure to serve urban land uses should be reserved and, in most instances, should not be included in the determination of allowable density within the Planning Area.*
12. *Construction is prohibited on land identified as Resource Protection Area by the Town Zoning Ordinance in compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. All future development in land identified as Resource Management Areas should incorporate sufficient storm water management facilities in order to meet the standards described by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act for development within the RMA.*

Emphasis on the protection and preservation of historic, cultural and natural resources surfaced as a dominant theme throughout the responses received as part of the Citizens' Survey conducted as part of the Comprehensive Plan process. Eighty-three percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the protection and preservation of the Town's waterfront areas are high priorities, and should be a major goal for future land use planning in Smithfield. Local citizens also support the preservation of historic sites and buildings in the Town. Seventy-one percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Town should use public funds to promote and maintain these sites and structures as a means of protecting the Town's historic character. With this strong public consensus in mind on these issues, the Town has evaluated the land within each of the ten identified Planning Areas within the context of these evaluation parameters.

By applying these evaluation parameters to each of the Planning Areas, certain conclusions could be drawn regarding the following: (a) the intrinsic suitability of the Planning Area for urban uses, (b) the range of most appropriate uses within the Planning Sub-Areas, (c) the land use carrying capacity of the Planning Area for the identified urban uses, (d) the identification and location of "sensitive environmental areas" within the Planning Area on which urban uses should be restricted or strictly limited and (e) the identification and location of specific land units within the Planning Area which should be reserved for transportation improvements, public facilities, infrastructure and other uses supportive of and benefiting the allocated urban uses and densities. Derived from this is a recommended set of uses and net densities to be included in the adopted Future Land Use Plan for the Town of Smithfield.

### **Net Developable Acreage Concept**

The Land Use Plan's land-use yields (usually expressed in terms of dwelling unit counts or commercial/office floor areas in square feet) for the Planning Areas and Sub-Areas are a function of the comparative suitability ratings for each area. The concept of "net developable acreage" provides for a rational approach for estimating the land carrying capacity of the Planning Areas. Similarly, the Plan recommends that the zoning districts for Smithfield should employ the "net developable acreage" calculation technique in arriving at the land use yield for any given property subject to a specific development proposal. The Town has incorporated this concept into its current Town Zoning Ordinance.

The "net developable acreage" methodology enables the planner and landowner to establish a truer estimate of a given property's development capacity. For example, a Planning Area with a gross acreage of 100 acres, but having 20 net acres of land which have been identified as "sensitive environmental areas", would yield 80 "net developable acres". Within each of the Town's major Planning Areas, these "net developable acres" (or land deemed most suitable for development) are generally depicted as a discrete Planning Sub-Area on the Future Land Use Plan. Where possible, the Planning Sub-Areas identified on the Future Land Use Plan have been delineated so as to exclude "sensitive environmental areas" (as defined by the zoning ordinance) that should be protected from future development. These sensitive environmental areas will be referred to in the Plan as "primary sensitive environmental areas. Internal to individual Sub-Areas, additional discrete pockets of land which qualify as sensitive environmental areas will likely be identified upon site-specific analysis. In order to differentiate these lands from those larger environmentally sensitive areas, these internal pockets of land will be referred to as "secondary environmental areas."

The application of this concept offers an environmentally sound process through which the land use yield of a given Planning Area or Sub-Area can be measured. When the "net developable area" concept is used in conjunction with site planning for individual development projects, the zoning district regulations, in effect, will combine conventional zoning standards with environmental performance standards. The end result is a technically sophisticated implementation process which is more responsive to the physical characteristics of the land than found in other conventional zoning and planning approaches. Thus, the land is truly allowed to "speak for itself", and, in so doing, fulfill the basic tenets of Virginia planning and zoning law which are grounded in the principle of "uniformity". This net developable acreage concept provides a consistent formula for applying land use criteria to tracts of varying size and physical characteristics.

## **FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES**

The Future Land Use Plan assigns land use classifications based on the Planning Commission's recommendations for the preferred arrangement of land uses within the Town at full development. The Future Land Use Plan map illustrates these various use classifications or "planning categories". Several of the categories which were included on the 1998 Land Use Map have been revised and enhanced to satisfy existing land use needs. In addition, several new categories have been added to specifically address land use issues which have been inadequately regulated in the past or that have only recently become important to the community. A summary of the land use categories and their applicable zoning districts is included in the table on the following page.

The following is a description of the residential, commercial, economic development and public and conservation land use planning categories along with the various types of uses which are recommended for each category.



## **Residential Land Use Categories**

Smithfield's housing stock accommodates diverse residential dwelling types and densities which span a wide range of real estate market values. Projections developed for this Plan (see Chapter V) indicate that the future residential marketplace will create demands for a range and mix of housing opportunities. Therefore, the Plan's goals and objectives encourage well designed, sensitively phased and appropriately scaled neighborhood locations for a mix of housing types, with a strong emphasis placed on providing sufficient opportunities for single family detached housing in the Town. Special attention is given to the newly annexed land areas which came into the Town under zoning designations compatible with those of Isle of Wight County. Four separate residential planning categories have been selected for inclusion in the planning process:

- 1. Low Density Residential - Single Family Detached**
- 2. Suburban Residential - Single Family Detached**
- 3. Attached Residential - Townhouses/Duplex**
- 4. Multi-family Residential and Retirement Residential**

Each residential planning category was structured according to its appropriateness to satisfy the adopted goals for future housing in Smithfield. Based on research of other Virginia communities, the recommended residential densities (or land use "yields") have been carefully studied and tested for each of the recommended residential categories. These densities are generally expressed in terms of dwelling units per net developable acre. The scope, intent and envisioned character of the four residential categories to be designated by the Future Land Use Plan are presented on the following pages.

## **Residential Planning Categories**

### **1. Low Density Residential - Single Family Detached 1-3 du/net ac.**

This category addresses the lowest intensity of subdivided residential land areas included in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, and as such, encompasses the vast majority of land in the Town. The Low Density Residential land use category is used to represent undeveloped land areas which would be most appropriate for the future development of large lot, single family detached residences. These residences should be supported by public utilities organized within the context of integrated open space, recreational and environmental amenities. This planning category is also intended to recognize existing subdivisions in the older sections of Town, including the Grimesland, Pagan Point, Red Point Heights and Moonefield neighborhoods, as well as the Downtown Historic District.

Residential development densities within this category range from 1 to 3 dwelling units per net developable acre, with conventional lot sizes ranging from 12,000 SF to 30,000 SF, depending upon net developable area ratios for particular subdivision projects. Clustering is encouraged to achieve greater efficiency and density within new subdivisions. Although several of the older subdivisions in Town are developed at a higher density than that which is promoted in this category (numerous lots in these subdivisions are smaller than 12,000 square feet in area), the low density residential designation is appropriate for planning purposes for these existing subdivisions because they are considered stable and few, if any, infill opportunities exist within them. Where opportunities do exist to develop new homes within these neighborhoods, it is recommended that future development respect the framework of the existing neighborhoods and be sympathetic to the surrounding uses in terms of its density, scale, setbacks, etc. Thus, the low density residential category provides for the most efficient means for planning future infill development within these established neighborhoods.

Historically, this land use category has been implemented via the old Town Zoning Ordinance through the R-1A, R-1S and R-1 zoning districts. However, these zoning districts failed to effectively address contemporary lot size, density and yard regulations for low density single family development supported by public utilities, and they are not significantly different in their design and scope of regulation. As part of its revision of its Zoning Ordinance, the Town replaced these districts with two new zoning districts—the Neighborhood Residential (N-R) and Downtown Residential (DN-R) districts-in order to further enhance the objectives of the Low Density Single Family Detached Residential planning category.

The N-R district is applied only to the lands formerly zoned as R-1 and applicable R-1S zoned areas. Some of the large rural parcels formerly zoned R-1S were rezoned to C-C, Community Conservation. Additionally, the D-R zoning district has been developed to replace the old R-1A district, as well as to support the types of residential uses allowed in the old ordinance by the MX and R-O zoning districts. Net developable area performance standards, which were inadequate in the old zoning ordinance, have been fully incorporated into these new districts. Furthermore, the new zoning districts prohibit future residential development from relying upon private well and septic systems.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Low Density Residential Land Areas:**

- C-C, Community Conservation district
- N-R, Neighborhood Residential district
- DN-R, Downtown Neighborhood Residential district

**2. Suburban Residential - Single Family Detached**

**3-5 du/net ac.**

Land areas carrying this designation are planned for single family detached residences developed at a moderate density in the range of 3 to 5 dwelling units per net developable acre, with conventional lot sizes of 8,000 SF to 12,000 SF. Clustering is encouraged where appropriate within these areas in order to achieve greater land use efficiencies and environmental protection. The Suburban Residential category is intended to promote the development of affordable detached housing on lots located within master planned, traditional-styled subdivisions. All future development within this land use category should be supported by public water and sewer systems. The category focuses principally on undeveloped lands (namely, the Cypress Creek and Wellington Estates subdivisions) in the annexation areas that were approved for specific development by the County of Isle of Wight according to its existing zoning ordinance. According to the annexation agreement signed by the Town and Isle of Wight County, the Town must respect the densities and land uses approved by the County prior to annexation. However, prior to the revision of the Zoning Ordinance, the Town had no zoning designation compatible with the zoning granted to these lands by Isle of Wight County. In response to this dilemma, the Town adopted the new Suburban Residential (S-R) zoning district which has been specifically tailored to replace the R-1 district and to guide future development of this density and dwelling type.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Medium Density Residential Land Areas:**

S-R, Suburban Residential district

**3. Attached Residential (Townhouses/Duplexes)**

**6-8 du/net ac.**

Townhouses, innovative cluster housing and duplexes are to be recognized by this planning category at a density in the range of 6 to 8 dwelling units per net developable acre. Design standards must be applied to ensure adequate off-street parking, recreational areas, preservation of open space and compatibility with surrounding land uses, especially existing residential neighborhoods. Apartments and other forms of multifamily dwellings are specifically excluded from this residential category.

The A-R Attached Residential zoning district is consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and has been tailored specifically to more appropriately regulate the development of townhouses and related residential attached uses (other than apartments) of this density range and dwelling type. This district also incorporates enhanced standards and design criteria for open space and recreation areas.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Attached Residential Land Areas:**

A-R, Attached Residential district

**4. Multi-family Residential/Retirement Housing**

**10-12 du/net ac.**

**20 du/net ac. (retirement housing)**

This land use category is intended to be applied primarily to new retirement housing complexes and to recognize existing multi-family areas. Given the large amount of existing multi-family housing in Smithfield, no new high density residential development (i.e. garden style apartments) is being considered for the Town's 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

In the Town Zoning Ordinance, the MF-R, Multi-family Residential Zoning District is tailored specifically to this density range and dwelling type to ensure that future redevelopment activities are consistent with contemporary multi-family development standards.

For the purposes of the 2009 Plan Update, this planning category is primarily intended to encourage the development of housing for the elderly. In order to promote this type of development in Smithfield, elderly housing proposals may be granted higher densities (up to 20 units per acre) subject to superior design proposals. Recognizing the wide appeal of this particular housing type, special design guidelines and standards should be developed to address the range of retirement and assisted living projects. These guidelines and standards should be compatible with development prototypes existing in the region.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Multi-family Residential Land Areas:**

MF-R, Multi-family Residential district

## **Commercial Planning Categories**

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes a number of opportunities for the expansion of commercial retail, mixed use and residential/office transitional land uses within the Town. To better guide these uses, the Future Land Use Plan has been organized to accommodate four distinct classifications within Smithfield:

- 1. Retail Commercial**
- 2. Downtown Commercial**
- 3. Mixed Use**
- 4. Residential/Office Transitional**

The 2009 Plan Update focuses on a reorganization of commercial, office and economic development land use classifications and the intensity of development related to each. Under the Town's former zoning regulations, there were little or no geometric standards or density criteria for the development of such land uses. The new zoning ordinance which has evolved from this planning process will address this problem by introducing formal landscaping and geometric yard requirements, as well as density criteria for these non-residential uses.

It is recommended that the density of development for future commercial and mixed uses should be governed by their Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The Floor Area Ratio represents the ratio of the total allowable building floor area to the net developable area of the property. As an illustration of how FARs are applied to a one acre site, a proposed commercial use with a maximum FAR = 0.30 would permit a building with 13,068 SF of floor space (obtained by multiplying 0.30 x 43,560 SF/acre.) Under the FAR concept, the 13,068 SF commercial structures could be developed under either a single story or multi-story footprint. Under normal circumstances, a Floor Area Ratio equaling 0.30 provides for sufficient area to accommodate on-site parking requirements while providing adequate setbacks and buffer areas.

Within the four planning categories, the density of uses will vary according to location and surrounding land uses. For general guidance, a density based on a recommended FAR of 0.20 to 0.30 is appropriate in the Residential/Office Transitional land use category. This will provide for commercial and mixed-use development which is consistent with a suburban residential scale and lot coverage. In the Retail Commercial category, higher FARs of 0.25 to 0.50 are acceptable, while FARs of between 1.00 and 2.00 are considered appropriate for Downtown Commercial and Waterfront mixed-used development. Under special circumstances, higher FARs could be conditioned upon the provision of additional landscaping, open space and other

site amenities, with special attention being given to building location and parking lot design and any other urban design guidelines as may be approved by the Town. Density increases for special projects should be subject to special use permitting and could be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the provision of enhanced site design and amenities by the developer.

The commercial land use categories and their dominant uses and density classifications are summarized in the following section:

## **Commercial Planning Categories**

### **1. Retail Commercial**

**0.20 - 0.50 FAR**

The Retail Commercial land use category will designate land areas on heavily traveled town collectors and arterial streets characterized principally by adjoining commercial and service uses. The category is intended to be applied to existing, stable retail areas, including community and neighborhood shopping centers along the major entry corridors, as well as to future commercial development. Given the nature of the Town's retail marketplace and the limited number of vacant tracts suitable for development outside of the downtown area, the Retail Commercial category will be applied mostly to highway commercial uses, shopping centers, motels, restaurants and other tourism-related retail uses. Residential and industrial uses are not included in this category.

The Retail Commercial category recognizes that remaining highway-oriented land with mixed use potential should be subject to more thorough master planning and design review processes emphasizing transportation and environmental planning, as well as coordinated architecture and urban design standards, particularly for shopping center development. The recommended maximum FAR to guide Retail Commercial uses is 0.40 to 0.50. However, development intensities for motels, which are generally multistory in character, are not adequately regulated by FAR guidelines, but should be subject to a building footprints of roughly 25% of the total site area, with parking and landscaping controlling site geometry.

Historically, the B-1 zoning district currently governed the majority of the Town's corridor frontage land use orientations. In the revised Zoning Ordinance, the B-1 district was replaced by two separate districts, the HR-C, Highway Retail Commercial District and the PS-C, Planned Shopping Center District, which will incorporate new "performance oriented" development criteria. The HR-C District is established to provide suitable locations along Smithfield's heavily traveled collector streets and arterial highways for those commercial and business uses which are oriented to the automobile and which require access characteristics independent of

adjoining uses or pedestrian trade. This district will be applied to those areas of the former ordinance's B-1 District where individual uses can be grouped into planned concentrations which limit the "strip" development effect on newly developing areas, such as in the three annexation areas, as well as on redevelopment areas where commercial development currently exists.

The PS-C District is established to provide locations in the Town for community and neighborhood retail commercial and business service uses within planned shopping districts under unified site design. Application of this district is intended to promote orderly commercial facility development, minimize vehicular traffic within the shopping complex, permit "one-stop" and comparison shopping "under one roof" and facilitate safe pedestrian movement among individual uses within the district. Both of these districts also emphasize density and geometric controls, including the introduction of minimum lot sizes and the revision of building set-back criteria.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Retail Commercial Land Areas:**

HR-C, Highway Retail Commercial district

PS-C, Planned Shopping Center district

**2. Downtown Commercial**

**1.00 - 3.00 FAR**

The Downtown Commercial planning category is consistent with the goals of the 2009 Plan and is intended to promote redevelopment and revitalization activities in Smithfield's historic downtown area. This category is designed to encourage esthetically pleasing and spatially compact downtown land uses with well conceived pedestrian orientations with respect to centralized parking lots and on-street parking. Continued adaptive reuse for mixed-use purposes of residential dwellings and other underutilized structures would be favored in the downtown area, but new, stand alone, residential construction would not be encouraged where this category is to be applied.

Due to its prime central location relative to other non-residential land, the density of the Downtown Commercial category is intended to be much higher than in the other commercial areas in the Town. The recommended maximum FAR to guide Downtown uses is between 1.00 and 2.00. Historically, the B-2 zoning district governed the Town's downtown business area. With the Zoning Ordinance's revision, the B-2 district was replaced by the D, Downtown District. The D district is established to promote harmonious development, redevelopment and

rehabilitation of uses in the existing historic downtown commercial areas of Smithfield. The regulations of the district are intended to promulgate the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for revitalization and historic district development while encouraging mixed uses in and around the downtown business area.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Downtown Commercial Land Areas:**

D, Downtown district

**3. Mixed Use**

**1.00 - 3.00 FAR**

The Mixed Use future land use planning designation expands upon the Town's past notion of focusing the emphasis for encouraging a mix of uses within the same block, property or building beyond the Downtown Waterfront Area. In past years, mixed use recommendations were limited to generally include the downtown waterfront area, commonly known to local residents as Wharf Hill. Roughly circumscribed by North Church Street, Main Street and the Pagan River, Wharf Hill has witnessed a significant amount of redevelopment in recent years. The catalyst in the redevelopment of this area was the development of the new Smithfield Foods Corporate headquarters on the waterfront adjacent to Commerce Street. Most recently, the Town acquired the old Smithfield Shopping Center and demolished it in order to make way for the Smithfield Center and new Little Theater buildings. The balance of the Waterfront Mixed Use Area, as envisioned by the Future Land Use Plan, would allow for a continuation of these redevelopment efforts by means of an appropriate mix of residential, commercial and recreational/public uses. In the updated Comprehensive Plan, the Town also seeks to encourage mixed use greenfield and infill development, as well as redevelopment in suitable locations elsewhere in the Town.

Borrowing from the PUD concept, flexibility and creativity would be promoted in the continued mixed use redevelopment of the Downtown Waterfront area, as well in new mixed use development elsewhere in the Town. Great care should be taken to ensure that future development projects respond sensitively in their design to both the high standards established by recent redevelopment projects and to the valuable natural resources in the area. Flexible provisions would involve allowing a private developer greater freedom in terms of densities, setbacks and height restrictions if a more creative arrangement of land uses is proposed, and provided there is a significant dedication of open space incorporated into the site plan of the development. The Future Land Use Plan encourages limited recreational use and development along other waterfront areas throughout the Town. Elevated marsh trails, low-impact marina

facilities and open space/park land would bring greater appreciation for these natural areas, and would enhance the marketability of the area as a destination for tourism.

Elsewhere in the Town, this Comprehensive Plan Update seeks to emphasize the need for and indeed, encourage new development of traditional neighborhood development and “smart growth in Smithfield. This approach to land development represents a departure from the traditional suburban interpretation of zoning practices in that it promotes compact, mixed-use development with an urban scale, massing, density and infrastructure configuration. Such projects should integrate diversified uses within close proximity to one another as well as within the same buildings, where appropriate. The dominant goal for this new initiative is to provide the urban infrastructure and amenities which are essential to establishing a community which provides economic opportunity within the context of social, physical and environmental sustainability. Key to the successful implementation of these types of neighborhoods are the encouragement of pedestrian movement and inviting public open spaces which so often enable the civic interaction deemed critical to vibrant neighborhoods.

New mixed use development should be designed in a scale compatible with adjacent development and street systems. Residential development densities and non-residential development intensities should be performance-oriented, with total land use yields based on the "net developable area" concept; site planning should be preceded by extensive environmental analysis.

A mix of uses shall be encouraged within blocks in the community and within individual buildings located within the block. However, a vertical integration of uses within a building shall not be the sole determination of a true mix of uses within a block or neighborhood.

In addition to a commercial and service component, other appropriate urban uses shall be integrated into the town center. A mix of offices, lodging, restaurants, recreation, freestanding residential dwellings, upper level residential uses in commercial structures, institutional buildings and public uses should be considered and tested for site accommodation and market feasibility.

The Town should seek to introduce and adopt a new "Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Option" zoning district to implement this significant urban design objective. This overlay district would enable applicable projects to be submitted and considered for approval as a land use option within any of the Town zoning district pursuant to the additional regulations and enhanced design criteria established in the proposed Ordinance. Each proposed "Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Option" project shall be guided by the appropriate land use planning

designation included in this Comprehensive Plan, and shall be governed by the overlay requirements included in the proposed overlay district, the underlying zoning districts, a submitted Master or General Development Plan, a submitted Code of Development, and the applicant's proffers which may be attached thereto.

Projects to be considered as a "Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Option" shall promote compact, mixed-use development with an efficient town or village scale, massing, density and infrastructure configuration which integrates diversified uses both within close proximity to each other and within individual buildings, where appropriate. The dominant goal for the "Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Option" is to clearly define and establish the foundational infrastructure and urban design elements within the context of social, civic, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The incorporation of a mix of residential uses compatible with the "Smithfield style" is encouraged within each "Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Option" district. In addition to single family residences, multi-family dwellings, upper level residential "flats" above commercial structures and garages, and other forms of innovative urban residential dwellings should be considered. A proliferation of repetitive, similarly sized and decorated "McMansions" are not the "vision" for these projects. Appropriate levels of affordable workforce housing should be considered.

Given the historic nature of Wharf Hill and the remaining historic structures found within the area, it was recommended that the D district be extended to the waterfront area in order to promulgate the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for further revitalization and historic area development while encouraging mixed uses in and around the Downtown Area. Higher density mixed use development is permitted within this district by special use permit to encourage the location of residences convenient to places of shopping and employment.

**Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Waterfront Mixed Use Land Areas:**

D, Downtown district

MU, Mixed Use district (proposed)

TND, Traditional Neighborhood Overlay district (proposed)

#### **4. Residential/Office Transitional**

**0.20 - 0.30 FAR**

The Residential/Office Transitional planning category is intended to accommodate low density transitional uses between residential neighborhoods and existing higher intensity commercial and retail uses. However, this category is intended not to primarily focus upon and designate existing residential uses, but rather, to designate those areas where transitional, residential-to-office services and uses are to be seriously encouraged. As such, the new Residential/Office Transitional category replaces the Residential/Office future land use category in the last Plan and can be applied to vacant properties, as well as to existing stable office and service establishment areas in Smithfield. While residential uses may be permitted within the R-O District, it is recognized that it is not intended to masquerade as a residential zone. This purpose is fulfilled by one or more of the recommended new residential categories. The basic uses permitted by right would be for professional and general offices, as well as financial institutions. Only a limited range of low intensity retail uses would be allowed by special use permit.

#### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Residential/Office Transitional Land**

##### **Areas:**

R-O, Residential/Office district

#### **Economic Development Planning Categories**

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recognizes a number of opportunities for the expansion of employment-related, economic development land uses within the Town. To better guide these land uses, the Future Land Use Plan has been organized to accommodate three distinct economic development classifications within Smithfield:

- 1. Corporate Office and Research**
- 2. Light Industry**
- 3. Heavy Industry**

Under the new Comprehensive Plan, it is recommended that the density of development for future job-producing economic development uses should also be governed by their Floor Area Ratio (FAR). As explained in the preceding section on commercial and Residential/Office Transitional land uses, the Floor Area Ratio represents the ratio of the total allowable building floor area to the net developable area of the property. The same density criteria development

procedure provided for commercial land uses will be applied to economic development uses in order to adequately regulate future development in this land use category.

The future development of Light Industry lands in the Town of Smithfield should be limited to FARs in the range of 0.20 to 0.30. Lands identified as being suitable for Corporate Office and Research and Heavy Industry should be able to support a greater intensity of development, and therefore, FARs for these lands should be extended to a range of 0.30 to 0.50. Under special circumstances, higher FARs should be conditioned upon the provision of additional landscaping, open space and other site amenities, with special attention being given to building location and parking lot design and any other urban design guidelines as may be adopted by the Town. Density increases for special projects should be subject to special use permitting and could be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on enhanced site design and amenities.

The Economic Development land use categories and their dominant use and density classifications are summarized in the following section:

### **Economic Development Planning Categories**

#### **1. Corporate Office and Research**

**0.30 - 0.50 FAR**

The Corporate Office and Research land use category is intended to identify appropriate locations within the Town suitable for the development of planned employment centers operating within a park like center. Acceptable economic development uses to be included in the Planned Corporate Office and Research planning category generally includes corporate headquarters, high-technology offices, research and development facilities, banks and financial institutions, conference centers and private training centers. Hospitality and restaurant uses are also encouraged as supporting land uses. The goal of this land use category is to encourage the development of highly attractive and well landscaped corporate office parks emphasizing coordinated development activities within key gateway locations within the Town. Development of vacant parcels within this land use classification shall be architecturally and environmentally compatible with adjoining existing land uses, including residential neighborhoods, and shall afford maximum protection to surrounding properties.

#### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Light Industry Land Areas:**

P-COR, Planned Corporate Office and Research district

## **2. Light Industry**

**0.20 - 0.30 FAR**

The acceptable economic development uses to be included in the Light Industry planning category generally includes light assembly and manufacturing centers and distribution and warehousing facilities. The intent of this category is to accommodate limited industrial uses in a well-planned setting where primary functions are to be conducted within completely enclosed buildings and where exterior storage operations are highly regulated. Site planning should emphasize high quality design standards. No use should be permitted within those land areas which might be harmful to the adjoining land uses and the residential ambience of the adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Light Industry Land Areas:**

I-1, Light Industrial district

## **3. Heavy Industry**

**0.30 - 0.50 FAR**

The Heavy Industry category is primarily intended to address those existing industries which have potentially hazardous impacts on the community, and to provide enhanced guidelines for the continuation and/or expansion of such uses. The Plan Update does not envision a significant increase in the allocation of geographical areas in the Town for Heavy Industry. Rather, Smithfield's goals and objectives for future non-retail employment focus primarily upon well-planned light manufacturing, assembly and warehousing activities which meet the criteria of the Light Industry category. However, limited opportunities for heavy industrial expansion exist within the Pinewood Heights subdivision provided that a suitable relocation agreement can be reached with existing residents and relocation and redevelopment costs are not prohibitive.

### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Heavy Industry Land Areas:**

I-2, Heavy Industrial district

## **Public and Conservation Land Use Categories**

The following land use designations are to be applied to four planning categories which warrant special attention and regulatory oversight: Public and Semi-Public Areas, Parks and Recreation Areas, Community Conservation Areas and Environmental Conservation Areas. These areas must be carefully managed to maintain public and environmentally sensitive resources for future generations.

## **Public and Conservation Land Use Categories**

### **1. Public and Semi-Public Areas**

Public and Semi-Public uses are generally institutional and municipal buildings and lands. These uses include the Town buildings, post office, state and federal facilities, public and private schools, churches and cemeteries. These uses are allowed by-right in three commercial zoning districts: HR-C, PS-C and D.

#### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Public and Semi-Public Land Areas:**

HR-C, Highway Retail Commercial district

PS-C, Planned Shopping Center district

D, Downtown district

### **2. Parks and Recreation Areas**

This category encompasses historic properties, open spaces, parks and recreation facilities which are owned and maintained by the Town, State or Federal government. Such uses are allowed by-right or special use permit in both residential and commercial zoning districts. Thus, for planning purposes, the uses described in this category are implemented via the underlying zoning district.

#### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Parks and Recreation Land Areas:**

Underlying Zoning District Designation

### **3. Community Conservation Areas**

Community Conservation areas include agricultural, forestry, open space and other lands of rural character within the Town that should be maintained in their current use on an interim basis until such point in time when development consistent with the adopted Future Land Use Plan may be pursued. It is the intent of this land use area designation to preserve existing natural features and vegetation, promote interim agricultural and forestry activities and production and encourage the conservation and maintenance of sensitive environmental areas. Special attention is given to the newly annexed land areas which came into the Town under zoning designations compatible with those of Isle of Wight County. Since the Future Land Use Plan is intended to define the “highest and best uses” for Smithfield at full development, a separate category for agricultural-oriented land uses is not included in this Plan. Because Smithfield’s future land uses are intended to be served by public utilities and infrastructure, the low-density, agriculture/residential zoning designations for the recently annexed properties are to be considered a “holding pattern” to be maintained until such point in time when the Plan’s designated future use is achieved through amendment to the Official Zoning Map.

In the Town's old zoning framework, the RR district was used to regulate activity in such land areas. However, the RR district was deemed no longer appropriate as a "holding zone" for future planning and was replaced by the recently adopted C-C Community Conservation zoning district to govern open space and agricultural land. This district was originally tailored to meet the specific needs of agricultural land and open space areas which were annexed into the Town on January 1, 1998, and will serve as a superior planning "holding zone" for these conservation areas.

### **Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Community Conservation Land**

#### **Areas:**

C-C, Community Conservation

#### **4. Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Environmentally Sensitive Areas have characteristics critical to the environmental enhancement, ecological stability and water quality of the region. Development within these areas is to be strictly limited and strongly discouraged. The Future Land Use Plan provides a generalized mapping of the Town's marshes and other sensitive environmental areas. This category includes resource protection areas as recognized by the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act.

The Environmentally Sensitive Areas include the following land features which constitute the areas subject to environmental vulnerability that fragment the Town into distinct geophysical areas: (a) major stream valleys and drainage ways, (b) 100-Year floodplains, (c) tidal and non-tidal marshes and wetlands, (d) steep slopes (>20%) adjacent to drainageways, floodplains and wetlands and (e) designated Resource Protection Areas.

Smaller pockets of sensitive environmental areas internal to properties which are otherwise suitable for development may be located outside of the areas specifically mapped for Environmentally Sensitive Areas and floodplain. The future development of these properties will be subject to performance standards which are designed to minimize the impact on sensitive areas. The concept of "net developable areas" has been introduced in the Comprehensive Plan and the new ordinance to provide a mathematical approach to the assessment of the appropriate levels of development, placement and scale of land uses, and intensity of uses on properties with sensitive features. The evaluation of environmental resources and, in particular, net developable area analysis will be required of all development within Smithfield, irrespective of the underlying zoning district.

## Recommended Zoning Districts for Implementation of Environmentally Sensitive Land

### Areas:

E-C, Environmental Conservation district

FP-O, Floodplain Overlay district

CB-O, Chesapeake Bay Resource Protection Overlay district

## LAND USE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Land Use Plan incorporates an approach to town planning which emphasizes the critical importance of both (1) conserving the Town's vulnerable environmental areas and (2) providing well-situated development areas to absorb the projected growth demands into the next century. From the initiation of this urban planning process, the Planning Commission, Town Staff and Consultants have strongly felt that these two goals should not be mutually exclusive. This Land Use Plan is presented with the belief that the Town can achieve both its conservation and open space objectives while allowing managed growth to occur.

As previously indicated, this process has organized the Town's land area into ten individual Planning Areas and five Corridors, each having a set of unique geographic and physiographic characteristics which define it as a discrete land planning unit or corridor zone. Recommended land uses for stable, infill and redevelopment areas within the Town's substantially developed sectors are separately addressed in this document. In reaching the recommendations cited herein, detailed environmental analysis was prepared for each Planning Area and Corridor to determine both its (a) overall physical development attributes and (b) environmental limitations for urban land uses. Based on the environmental assessments and "development potential analysis", each Planning Area was defined pursuant to extensive ecological synthesis and development potential analysis. Further, each Planning Area was divided into three basic physical components:

- (1) **Planning Sub-Areas**, geographical sub-units comprising the most developable land areas within the total Planning Area;
- (2) **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**, including both primary environmentally sensitive areas and secondary environmentally sensitive areas. The primary areas are geographical sub-units located outside of the Planning Sub-Area boundaries which meet the definition of "environmentally sensitive area" and which, in the aggregate, comprise areas which have major shortcomings for any urban development activities. Secondary areas are smaller geographical sub-units which qualify as environmentally sensitive areas and which, on an isolated

basis, have shortcomings for urban development within that portion of the Planning Sub-Area; and

- (3) **Existing Urban Development Areas**, representing the currently utilized portions and balance of the Planning Areas. These areas include public rights-of-way, dedicated easements, parking areas, sidewalks and buildings.

It is important to keep in mind that the Sub-Area acreages have been identified to circumscribe the predominantly prime developable land within the overall Planning Area; thereby excluding the less developable or the Primary Environmentally Sensitive Areas (comprising large contiguous areas of sensitive soils, steep slopes, wetlands and floodplain areas) from the individual Sub-Area totals. Secondary Environmentally Sensitive Areas, which represent smaller pockets of less developable areas internal to the Sub-Area boundaries, are recognized to statistically categorize those areas of environmental vulnerability with the Sub-Areas. By emphasizing the planning strategy of assigning future land uses to only the prime developable areas, the Future Land Use Plan is able to maintain essential compatibility with its adopted goal of protecting the Town's critical environmental resources while allocating growth to land possessing attributes most conducive to urban use.

Prior to the adoption of the revised Zoning Ordinance in 1998, environmental performance standards (via the site plan and subdivision ordinance) were not available to the Town in pursuit of this objective. By linking this Future Land Use Plan to the updated zoning ordinance and other innovative growth management tools recommended by the Comprehensive Plan, the Town will have an array of control mechanisms to legally allocate Planning Area land uses and densities based on the concept of net developable areas tied to the actual physical carrying capacities of the land. Based on the Plan's updated environmental analysis of the Town, 1,175 acres out of a total of 3,495 acres in the ten Planning Areas are considered as prime developable land and have been assigned Sub- Area status.

### **Residential Land Use**

The table on the following page presents a summary of the recommended land uses for the Town's Planning Areas and Sub-Areas. Future residential uses comprise approximately sixty-nine (69%) percent of these prime developable Sub-Area properties. The recommended Future Land Use Plan provides for a potential range of between 1,296 and 3,017 additional housing units, of which eighty-seven (87%) percent would be single-family dwellings, with the balance in townhouse units and retirement units.

These residential assignments to the ten Planning Areas appear well-prepared to satisfy the Town's future demand for housing relative to demand-based projections of new households, which is estimated to total approximately 1,333 additional units by 2030 (see the Projections Chapter--Chapter V. for more details related to housing demand and marketplace impacts). The land area allocated to residential housing allows for a negligible "free market multiplier."

#### **Retail and Residential/Office Transitional Development Land Uses**

As is presented in the summary table found on the following page, approximately 131 acres within the Planning Areas have been assigned to retail commercial land uses. Based on an FAR range of 0.20 to 0.50, these assigned areas could absorb a net increase in commercial building space of 932,925 to 2,332,312 square feet of gross leasable area. This reflects a dramatic increase over the allocation of retail/commercial land in the 1999 Plan. An additional 7.1 acres have been allocated for redevelopment into residential/office transitional uses in strategic locations within the Town.

#### **Economic Development Land Uses**

Economic development uses are defined as those accommodating corporate headquarters, high technology offices, research and/or light-assembly centers and master planned mixed use employment centers with offices as the dominant land use. These uses have been allocated

across three major categories: Corporate Office and Research, Light Industry and Heavy Industry. Approximately 175 acres have been depicted on the Land Use Plan for such economic development uses. This reflects approximately one-third the amount devoted to such uses in the 1999 Plan. Applying a conservative floor area ratio to these planned uses, the land allocated for economic development uses would translate into an additional 226,076 to 376,794 square feet of potential leasable space. The Comprehensive Plan's economic development goals specifically address creating additional segments of the local economic base which are not totally reliant on tourism and existing institutions. Thus, it is obvious that the Town should continue to work cooperatively and energetically with these institutions to ensure that the Plan's recommended economic development land areas will be reserved, marketed and managed for the desired purpose. For the implementation of this goal to be successful, the Town should further pursue joint planning and development opportunities with Isle of Wight County, Smithfield Foods and other existing businesses in Town.

### **Planning Sub-Area Land Use Summaries**

Planning for future land uses in the context of providing adequate public facilities at a pace compatible with good municipal stewardship is an underlying precept of this Plan. During the planning process, technical studies were undertaken to determine the levels of required services and utilities, while attempting to adjust the land use recommendations to best respond to a logical approach to future capital improvements programming. A summary outlining the final allocation of future land uses across the ten identified Planning Areas is provided on the following page.



## **Planning Area Recommendations**

In the following section, a summary of the final analysis, including specific land use recommendations and implementation strategies for each of the ten Planning Areas is presented. Statistical and graphic documentation is provided therein. The example outline below depicts the general range of issues addressed in the development of each Planning Area summary:

- I. General, Historical and Background Support
  - A. Location
  - B. Planning analysis related to subject Planning Area
  - C. History of previous Comprehensive Plans
  - D. Applicable key planning concepts for Planning Area
  
- II. Planning Area Profile
  - A. Existing land use analysis
  - B. Existing transportation analysis
  - C. Environmental baseline
  - D. Utility and infrastructure conditions
  
- III. Land Use Approach for Planning Areas
  
- IV. Planning Area Land Use Plan
  - A. Sub-Area recommendations
  - B. Sensitive environmental area recommendations
  - C. Future land use summary

## **Planning Analysis: Planning Areas and Sub-Areas**

Planning Sub-Areas designate the sections of each Planning Area which have future development potential or have been designated for special planning attention. Each Sub-Area has distinctive environmental, locational and ownership attributes which dictate that they be analyzed individually. The analysis provided for Planning Sub-Areas is not meant to delineate the characteristics of a particular parcel, and as such, the analysis may not offer all the information required to review a specific land use application.

In several Planning Areas, existing “underdeveloped” properties have been identified as being suitable for redevelopment. In most cases, these areas are located along major entrance corridors within the Town and are relatively small in terms of their net developable acreage compared to most Planning Areas. Therefore, these areas have been organized into separate sub-categories entitled “Redevelopment Areas” in the land use analysis for this Plan. The Redevelopment Areas will not receive the same level of study attention in terms of detailed analysis as will the Planning Sub-Areas; instead, they will be grouped together and analyzed as one large area. Nevertheless, the Planning Sub-Areas and Redevelopment Areas provide a useful way to present generalized information for distinct areas in order to provide adequate guidance for the Future Land Use Plan and zoning decisions related thereto. A summary of the development concentration and potential net yields of the identified redevelopment areas is provided below.

A thorough examination of each Planning Area has been performed to determine the Area's development potential. This analysis is graphically summarized in a land use summary table provided for each Planning Area in the profile summary discussion that follows.