

Chapter VI: B

**LAND USE:
BATTERY PARK SOUTH PLANNING AREA**

**ADOPTED
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PLANNING AREA PROFILE:

Location

The Battery Park South Planning Area is located in the eastern portion of the Town of Smithfield. It is bounded on the north by Battery Park Road, on the west by South Church Street, on the south by Gumwood Drive and the Waterford Oaks community and on the east by the Town's corporate limits. The Planning Area consists of approximately 560 acres.

Existing Land Use and Transportation System

The Battery Park South Planning Area is a mixed use area incorporating a wide range of residential uses bordered by a mix of corridor-based commercial, light industrial and service uses interspersed with several well-located undeveloped properties. The most notable existing uses in the Planning Area include a major community shopping center anchored by a regional chain grocery store, the Bradford Mews Apartment community and the Wellington Estates, Willow Oaks, Aspen Woods, and Scot's Landing residential subdivisions. The Planning Area incorporates the lower half of the Eastern Annexation Area, one of three Isle of Wight County territories annexed by the Town of Smithfield on January 1, 1998. Included within this Annexation Area is Wellington Estates, a planned residential community approved by the County prior to annexation for the development of approximately 250 single family detached residences. As part of the annexation agreement between the Town and Isle of Wight County, any property approved for development prior to annexation must maintain its granted development rights once it is brought into the Town's jurisdiction. Thus, the Wellington Estates community, formerly referred to as London Park in the 1999 Comp. Plan, reserves its potential to construct 250 additional dwelling units within the Town, and therefore, for the purposes of this planning exercise, is not considered as an undeveloped property suitable for a Sub-Area designation.

A significant amount of development has taken place within the Planning Area since the 1999 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. These developments include:

- *The Royal Farm Gas and Convenience Market at the corner of South Church Street and Battery Park Road;*
- *Villas of Smithfield, a retirement community located off Battery Park Road;*
- *Smithfield Manor, an attached residential community located adjacent to Battery Park Road;*

- *Smithfield Commons, a village-scaled retail and professional office center constructed adjacent to South Church Street;*
- *Rite Aid built a new drug store along South Church Street;*
- *A new Hampton Inn hotel is currently under construction just off South Church Street;*
- *Bradford Mews Apartments, a later phase of the Bradford Mews apartment community, located to the east of South Church Street; and*
- *The Harvest Fellowship Church has constructed a fellowship hall just south of Battery Park Road to the east of Wellington Estates, and is planning to add a day care facility, school, and ball fields on the southern portion of the site.*

The major roads serving the Planning Area include Battery Park Road, South Church Street and Smithfield Boulevard. Each of the major undeveloped properties located within the Planning Area are accessed either directly or indirectly by one of these streets. The numerous recent developments taking place in the Planning Area as listed above have added significantly to the daily trip demands of these major roads. Battery Park Road and South Church Street have borne the brunt of these new demands. As summarized in the Battery Park North Planning Area profile, the widening of Battery Park Road is recommended in order to ensure that a satisfactory level of service is maintained along this important entrance corridor as daily vehicular trip demand increases (see Appendix III for a more detailed explanation of the recommended improvements). The projected increase in daily vehicle trips along this corridor and the recommended roadway improvements will play a major role in shaping the future development of this Planning Area.

Existing Environmental Considerations

The Battery Park South Planning Area is unique from other planning areas in the Town in that sensitive environmental areas do not constitute a significant portion of its acreage. Only approximately six percent of the total Planning Area, approximately 35 acres, have topographic and wetland characteristics which make them unsuitable for urban development. However, the Planning Area's future development potential is impacted by poor soil conditions consistent with those found throughout the Eastern Annexation Area. The soils in this Planning Area drain poorly and are highly susceptible to high shrink-swell conditions. These poor soil conditions will threaten the full development potential of the remaining vacant parcels within the Planning Area. Of the Planning Area's 559.2 total acres, approximately 42.1 (8%) have been identified as having prime development potential.

BATTERY PARK SOUTH LAND USE PLAN

The Battery Park South Planning Area is planned as a mixed-use community incorporating a wide array of housing options, a critical mass of retail commercial uses and an existing light industrial use along its principal commercial corridor, South Church Street. The future development of the Area should occur under the guidance of a master plan for each Sub-Area, as opposed to the parcel-by-parcel approach that has historically dominated Town development

along its major corridors. Several well-located undeveloped properties within the Planning Area afford the Town the opportunity to augment its existing retail commercial base, provide for additional, affordable workforce residential housing opportunities and implement its planning goals and objectives with respect to economic development and urban corridor design and development. Additionally, there are four small parcels (less than 1-2 acres in size) which afford some nice infill opportunities for small commercial enterprises. These parcels do not contain sufficient land area for Sub-Area status and discussion below, but they too offer some potential for new small-scale development which would accent the existing uses and could further development objectives for the important South Church Street commercial corridor.

In the following sections, specific land use recommendations are presented for both of the Sub-Areas identified in the Battery Park South Planning Area.

Sub-Area 1 Recommendations

Sub-Area 1 is located in the northwestern portion of the Battery Park South Planning Area. It is bounded on the west by the Royal Farm gas and convenience center and South Church Street, on the south by a commercial use and the Colonial Avenue and Willow Oaks subdivisions, on the east by the Villas of Smithfield community and on the north by Battery Park Road. The 21.9-acre site consists of an expanse of flat, vacant property offering direct access to both South Church Street and Battery Park Road. The Sub-Area is planned for retail commercial use at a floor area ratio of 0.20 to 0.50 square feet per net developable acre per acre. At this density, the Sub-Area's 18.8 net developable acres could support between approximately 163,786 and 409,464 square feet of retail commercial space.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) maximizing the development potential associated with the prime location of the vacant parcel, (2) protecting the integrity of the future of the Battery Park Road entrance corridor, (3) vehicular access, (4) implementing the Battery Park Road improvements and (5) buffering the adjacent residential uses. This Sub-Area is widely recognized within the community as an extremely valuable piece of property in terms of its visibility, location, accessibility, topography and size. As such, the Town should make every effort to proactively target suitable regional retail commercial end-users for the site that would expand the Town's existing commercial base, support its ongoing efforts to boost local tourism and/or provide additional products and services not currently available to Town residents. The future use of the site should also serve as a "secondary gateway" along the Battery Park Road Corridor that visually welcomes travelers to the urban core of Smithfield.

A thoughtful master plan should be created for the Sub-Area which provides for shared vehicular entrances and efficient internal street systems, protects the integrity of the Battery Park Road Entrance Corridor and improves the visual quality and functionality of the South Church Street Corridor. Access points into and out of the Sub-Area should be limited along both South Church Street and Battery Park Road in order to prohibit the further proliferation of curb cuts along these roadways, while still providing the necessary access needed to adequately

serve the individual businesses within the development. The master plan should include the reservation of the right-of-way necessary to implement the recommended Battery Park Road improvements (i.e. widening the road to include two additional lanes). The plan should also implement sufficient landscaping to effectively buffer the adjacent residential communities to the east (including the Villas of Smithfield) and the south (along Colonial Avenue and the Willow Oaks subdivision). The future uses on the site should also implement sufficient lighting standards to ensure that no spillover lighting adversely impacts the adjoining residential communities.

Sub-Area 2 Recommendations

Sub-Area 2 covers 34.8 acres and is located in the northeastern portion of the Battery Park South Planning Area. It is bounded on the west by a vacant, industrially-zoned parcel and Wellington Estates, on the south by the Scot's Landing subdivision and the Town's corporate boundary, on the east by the Town's corporate boundary and on the north by the Harvest Fellowship Church facility and Battery Park Road. The entirety of the Sub-Area is undeveloped. The Sub-Area is planned for low density residential use with a supportable density of 1-3 dwelling units per net developable acre. At this proposed density, Sub-Area 2's 23.3 net developable acres could support approximately 23 to 70 new dwelling units.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) the siting of future residences, (2) vehicular access, (3) provision of public utilities, (4) protecting sensitive environmental areas, and (5) buffering from adjacent uses. The property is currently zoned C-C, Community Conservation. In this instance, the C-C zoning classification serves as a "holding zone" for property which allows for the continuation of the present use of the land until market considerations dictate a clear highest and best ultimate use for the property. In this case the property has long been conserved as vacant property, including a substantial area of wooded land. The Town has identified Sub-Area 2 as a suitable site for low density residential development. In order to develop the Sub-Area for such purposes, the property would first have to be rezoned to a suitable residential zoning designation. The Town encourages the implementation of traditional neighborhood residential development (TND) within this Sub-Area, and as such, recommends that any future rezoning seek the proposed TND overlay zoning designation which would enable the Town and property owner to work together to plan such a project.

Access is the most critical issue impacting the future land use plan for this Sub-Area. Battery Park Road will provide the primary vehicular access to the Sub-Area via a pipe stem lot design. Battery Park Road presently offers only two lanes that are becoming increasingly taxed to full capacity. As mentioned elsewhere in the Plan, the Town has recommended that Battery Park Road be widened in order to support anticipated increases in traffic demand along the road in the next fifteen years. In its acceptance of a rezoning request for the nearby Mallory Point subdivision, the Town has also negotiated the proffer and plans for the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Battery Park Road and Nike Park Road. The future

development of the Sub-Area for residential use would place additional demands on this emerging entrance corridor and should only be supported in conjunction with the recommended road improvements. Furthermore, in order to adequately support future potential traffic demands imposed by the future residents of the community, it is recommended that the future development of the Sub-Area also consider the construction of a center turn lane and a right-hand turn lane on the eastbound side of Battery Park Road to serve a single entrance into the facility. These turn lane improvements should be paid for by the eventual developer of the property should future traffic studies associated with the rezoning of the property indicate they would be necessary to maintain a sufficient level of service along Battery Park Road. The future plan for the site should also explore the potential for providing access to Nike Park Road via the adjacent undeveloped County properties owned by the Edwards family lying to the east of the site. An integrated master plan for both parcels could add value to both property owners in the ultimate build-out of their sites.

The future use of the site should also serve as a “secondary gateway” along the Battery Park Road corridor that visually welcomes travelers to the urban core of Smithfield. As such, a thoughtful master plan should be created for the Sub-Area which provides for shared vehicular entrances and efficient internal street systems in order to protect the integrity of the Battery Park Road Entrance Corridor. Access points into and out of the Sub-Area should be limited along Battery Park Road to a single, shared entrance in order to prohibit the further proliferation of curb cuts along these roadways, while still providing the necessary access needed to adequately serve the individual businesses within the development. The master plan should reserve the right-of-way necessary to implement the recommended Battery Park Road improvements (i.e. widening the road to include two additional lanes and associated turn lanes necessary to serve site-related traffic).

The provision of public utilities to the site will also play an important role in the future development of the Sub-Area. Currently, an 8-inch water line runs the full length of Battery Park Road, as does a 16-inch force main providing sanitary sewer service. The Town would require that the future developer of the site extend the necessary water and sanitary sewer lines from these existing lines into the Sub-Area to serve the recommended light industrial use.

Another important consideration for the future development of this Sub-Area is the future stability of adjacent uses and buffering of planned residences from potential adjacent light industrial uses. Specifically, the planned residences should be buffered from any future light industrial development which could take place on the industrial zoned property lying to the west. The master plan for the recommended light industrial park should include sufficient setbacks and landscape buffers, as provided for in the revised Zoning Ordinance, to minimize the impact of light, noise, dust, smoke or any other externality on these important adjacent uses. Further, the master plan for Sub-Area 2 should integrate sufficient landscape and open space buffers and a minimum 50' setback along the western edge of the property to effectively mitigate any future externalities associated with potential industrial uses.

FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan projects the Battery Park South Planning Area as an integrated, mixed-use community which will provide several opportunities to meet the Town's economic development objectives with respect to expanding its existing retail commercial core, providing additional motel facilities to support new tourism and conference visitors and attracting additional light industrial development. The Plan also calls for future development along the Town's important entrance corridors to avoid duplicating the mistakes of past parcel-by-parcel sprawl development by implementing a master planning approach to vacant parcels that respects the integrity of these corridors and follows the spirit of the new corridor design guidelines. The plan for the Area also provides for a suitable transition from its mix of highway related commercial, industrial uses along these corridors to the mix of residential uses beyond.

The Battery Park South Planning Area has the potential to accommodate between approximately 163,786 and 409,464 square feet of new retail commercial space and between approximately 23 and 70 new residences. The development of this Planning Area should provide significant non-tourist related employment and revenues to the Town. The Town should encourage the creation of a master plan for both Sub-Areas designated above which respects the natural environment and efficiently provides suitable building sites to meet Town planning objectives. No development should take place until the required and extensive utility improvements are completed by the developer(s) of each particular site.

The table on the following page summarizes the development potential of each of the Sub-Areas as recognized in the Plan.

