

Chapter VI: C

**LAND USE:
CYPRESS CREEK PLANNING AREA**

**ADOPTED
AUGUST 4, 2009**

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PLANNING AREA PROFILE:

Location

The Cypress Creek Planning Area is located in the southwestern portion of the Town of Smithfield. It is bounded on the north by the Route 10 Bypass, on the west by Great Springs Road and the Town's corporate boundary, on the south by the Town's corporate boundary and on the east by Cypress Creek. The Planning Area constitutes the western half of the Southern Annexation Area annexed by the Town from Isle of Wight County in January of 1998, and covers approximately 677 acres.

Existing Land Use and Transportation System

The Cypress Creek Planning Area is a rapidly developing area that is home to the Town's first golf-related community, the Cypress Creek subdivision. The planned residential community is anchored by a 7,072 yard eighteen hole, championship golf course and associated club that includes tennis courts and pool facilities. The master plan for the community includes over 430 total residential lots. The lots vary in size from approximately 15,000 square feet to well over an acre and are planned for single family detached residential development, although the developer would like to reserve the right to incorporate some townhouse development into the community depending upon future market considerations. The first five residential phases of the development, which consist of approximately two hundred and sixty-nine total lots, have been subdivided and approved for development. This represents approximately 60% of the total projected build-out of the project. As of December, 2008, the Town had processed 190 zoning permits for new residences in the subdivision. This represents approximately 44% of the total density approved for the project. It is anticipated that the balance of the project will be completed within the next five-to-eight years. Besides the golf course and its associated club and support uses, a handful of scattered, single family detached residences are located along Great Spring Road. Considered together, existing development accounts for slightly over one hundred and twenty-two acres, or approximately 18% of the total land area in the Planning Area.

The Cypress Creek community may be accessed directly from the Route 10 Bypass via State Route 710. As a part of the official Isle of Wight County approval of the original master plan for the community, VDOT agreed to allow an interchange off the limited access bypass road to be constructed specifically for the use of residents and visitors of the Cypress Creek community. Due to Town concerns about cut-through traffic impacting the Jericho Sub-Area, specifically Windsor Castle and South Church Street, VDOT allowed the interchange on the condition that no access be provided north of the Bypass. In order to complete the new interchange project, the developer agreed to finance the relocation of Cedar Street north of the Bypass to make room for the west bound ramp and to construct Route 710 to connect the interchange with the Cypress Creek community and Great Spring Road to the southwest. Great Spring Road provides an additional minor transportation link to the Planning Area from the west side of Town as it intersects Route 258 just west of the Bypass/Route 258 intersection. This road is extremely narrow; however, and should be widened in order to provide sufficient right-of-way to absorb some of the future traffic demands associated with the build-out of the Cypress Creek community.

Existing Environmental Considerations

The Planning Area's development potential is constrained somewhat by the presence of Cypress Creek and its tributaries. The scenic marshlands surrounding the Creek from the eastern boundary of the Planning Area and a significant tributary of the Creek effectively splits the Cypress Creek community in half. These waterways and their adjacent marshes create barriers to construction for a significant portion of the remaining undeveloped land. Nearly 7% of the total Planning Area, approximately 46 acres, have topographic and wetland characteristics which make them unsuitable for urban development. While these tidal waterways limit the total buildable area within the Planning Area, they provide dramatic siting opportunities from the adjacent ridges for both the golf course and surrounding residential sites. The golf course takes full advantage of these opportunities by incorporating the existing water features into seven of its eighteen holes, thereby providing both a magnificent backdrop and a challenging test for golfers. The golf course, club and their associated support uses cover approximately 183 acres, which represents approximately 27% of the total land area within the Planning Area. The master plan for the Cypress Creek community also calls for the development to maximize these scenic opportunities in its residential lot siting strategy. Of the Planning Area's 677 total acres, approximately 163 have been identified as having prime development potential remaining.

CYPRESS CREEK LAND USE PLAN

The Cypress Creek Planning Area is planned for the continuation of the ongoing development of the Cypress Creek residential community, as well as the conservation of identified environmentally sensitive areas adjacent to Cypress Creek. In the following sections, specific land use recommendations are presented for the three Sub-Areas identified in the Cypress Creek Planning Area.

Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3 Recommendations

Sub-Area 1 is located in the northwestern portion of the Cypress Creek Planning Area. It is bounded on the north and the east by the State Route 10 Bypass, on the west by Great Springs Road and the Town's corporate boundary and on the south by Sub-Area 2 (the Cypress Creek community). The 47.9 acre Sub-Area is planned for suburban residential use at three to five dwelling units per acre. At this density, between 49 and 82 new single family detached dwelling units could be located in the Sub-Area's 16.3 net developable acres.

Sub-Area 2 is located in the central portion of the Cypress Creek Planning Area. It is bounded on the north by Sub-Area 1 and the State Route 10 Bypass, on the west by Great Springs Road and the Town's corporate boundary and on the south and east by a tributary of Cypress Creek. Sub-Area 2 represents the western half of the Cypress Creek golf community (it includes all of the community's land west of the tributary that effectively divides the property in half) and consists of over 170 acres, nearly 24 of which have been identified as developable. The Sub-Area is planned for suburban residential use at three to five dwelling units per acre. The master plan community as approved by the Town allows for approximately 36 additional single family detached dwelling units per the existing plats recorded within the Sub-Area.

Sub-Area 3 is located in the southeastern portion of the Cypress Creek Planning Area. It is bounded on the north by the State Route 10 Bypass, on the west by a tributary of Cypress Creek, Great Springs Road and the Town's corporate boundary, on the south by the Town's corporate boundary and Cypress Creek and on the east by Cypress Creek. Sub-Area 3 includes over 442 total acres and is planned for suburban residential uses at three to five dwelling units per acre. At this density, between 258 and 367 new single family detached dwelling units could be located within the Sub-Area's 122 identified net developable acres. However, the master plan submitted to and approved by the Town incorporates approximately 307 total single family dwelling units within this Sub-Area. This represents a density of 1.82 dwellings per net developable acre. Currently, there exists the potential for approximately 258 additional single family dwellings per the existing plats recorded within the Sub-Area.

The major issues involved with the potential development of these Sub-Areas area (1) the pace, density and final use allocation of the Cypress Creek development, (2) transportation improvements, (3) the provision of public utilities and (4) sensitive environmental areas.

The Cypress Creek property was included in the larger Southern Annexation Area annexed into the Town from Isle of Wight County in January of 1988. As part of the annexation agreement, the Town was bound to accept any approved site plans and conditional zoning applications previously approved by the County. Thus, the Town was required to permit the conditional zoning of the Cypress Creek property as well as the development approval for the golf course, club and first two phases of the planned residential community. The Town was also required to apply a zoning designation for the property that effectively mirrored the zoning requirements previously applied by the County. In the absence of an existing zoning district that provided similar requirements to the County's NC-CR-2 (Neighborhood Conservation) district that was applied to the Cypress Creek parcel, the Town developed a new zoning district, Suburban Residential (S-R), specifically designed to be applied to the land formerly zoning NC-CR-2 and NC-CR-3 in Isle of Wight County (i.e. Sub-Areas 2 and 3). Thus, in the spirit of this annexation agreement, the Town shall continue to work with the developer of the community to ensure that the original master plan for the community is followed in the remaining undeveloped land areas in these Sub-Areas to the extent that it is consistent with previously approved concepts and the goals and objectives of this Plan.

The Town and the developer have already established a sound framework for the future regulation of the development of these Sub-Areas. As part of this framework, the Town should recognize that dynamic market conditions over the life of the project will dictate the need for the developer to make slight modifications to the original master plan, and therefore, the Town should be prepared to offer flexibility in the regulation of the future phases of the project with respect to design, density and residential use allocation. Given the relatively low residential density achieved to date in the project, the Town should consider the incorporation of attached single family attached building products integrated into the community if so desired by the landowner. If this housing type is deemed by the property owner as a suitable response to market needs, the Town should be willing to hear a rezoning request allowing the thoughtful integration of such units within the master plan. However, this flexibility and the Town's consideration of the attached units should not be seen as a willingness to sacrifice the high design standards established in the initial phases of the project. Much as was the original intent of the S-R, Suburban Residential zoning district, the Plan calls for the Town to provide suitable design and planning flexibility without sacrificing design quality. Consistent with the intent of the zoning district, the Plan for this Area focuses attention on preserving existing natural features and vegetation, promoting excellence in site planning and landscape design, facilitating

the efficient layout and orientation of public utilities and community infrastructure, and encouraging housing with compatible scale and character of architecture. Also, cluster provisions are available within the S-R zoning designation through the special use permit process. The landowner is encouraged to consider such provisions in the final platting and design process as a means of achieving appropriate density while preserving additional open space. Through the implementation of this zoning designation or the conditional rezoning process, the spirit and general intent of the original master plan for the community should be protected regardless of future market conditions.

Sub-Area 1 represents a logical location for a future expansion of the Cypress Creek development if market considerations warrant such a need. While the size of the Sub-Area is clearly insufficient to support an additional nine holes for a future golf facility expansion, it could be incorporated into a larger master plan of development with the vacant land lying across Great Spring Road in Isle of Wight County. Regardless of whether the Cypress Creek development expands into this Sub-Area or not, it is hoped that the type of housing product developed in the Sub-Area would mirror the density range and quality in design and building material witnessed in the adjacent golf community.

Future development in Sub-Area 1 would necessitate the extension of water and sewer lines from the adjacent Cypress Creek subdivision. Cypress Creek tapped into the 30" HRSD sanitary sewer line that runs adjacent to the Route 10 Bypass to provide its internal sewer system and developed its water line system by constructing an extension from the 12" line that runs along Cedar Street. Future development in Sub-Area 1 would require the extension of the existing 8" sanitary sewer line that presently stops at the intersection of Dunhill Court and Cypress Creek Boulevard and extension of the 8" water line that currently stops at the Fairway Drive (Route 710)/Cypress Creek Boulevard. Consistent with the Town-stated goal that future development "pay its own way," the developer of Sub-Area 1 would be expected to finance these necessary utility extensions. Furthermore, the developer of the Cypress Creek community will be required to expand the existing utility system to adequately serve future development planned for Sub-Areas 2 and 3.

Sub-Area 1 would also need to be rezoned to allow the density level prescribed in the Suburban Residential land use designation. The land in Sub-Area 1 was zoned Rural Area Conservation (RAC) by the County prior to annexation, and therefore, has been designated as C-C, Community Conservation (the Town-equivalent district) for zoning purposes. This zoning district allows residential subdivision only via special use permit, and even if the permit is granted, a maximum of five residential lots is allowed.

An additional consideration impacting the future development of the three Sub-Areas is the status of Great Springs Road. Presently this road is extremely narrow and is unable to safely support two lane traffic per VDOT standards. The improvement of this road, to include right-of-way acquisition, road widening and striping will be necessary to better serve the anticipated increased traffic demands posed by future development in the Planning Area. While the intent of providing access to the community via the Bypass was to handle the majority of the traffic demands associated with the project, Great Springs Road holds the potential to provide valuable secondary access to the western portion of Town. Future planning efforts for Sub-Areas 1 and 3 should consider the merits of providing an additional point of access directly from Great Springs Road. The master plan for Sub-Area 1 should also incorporate an extension of Cypress Creek Parkway as its primary entrance from State Route 710. This road extension should serve as the primary collector road within the Sub-Area's internal street network.

Future development in the three Sub-Areas should also respect the numerous sensitive environmental areas found in the Planning Area within which development shall be prohibited. Special attention should be placed upon preserving the wetlands and marsh surrounding Cypress Creek and its tributaries. The master plan for the future development of these sub-areas should include modern stormwater management practices and sufficient erosion and sedimentation control measures to minimize the impact of development on the valuable environmental resources surrounding Cypress Creek.

FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan projects the Cypress Creek Planning Area as an integrated, master planned residential community employing modern design and site planning practices that shall help to preserve the sensitive environmental areas that border Cypress Creek. The Planning Area has the potential to accommodate between approximately 343 and 485 new households at full build-out. The actual development of the Planning Area will span across several phases, and the pace of future development will be a function of the absorption rate of the residential lots planned and other market conditions in the region. Thus, full build-out may not be achieved for several years. In the interim, the Town should encourage the creation of a master plan for the various Sub-Areas designated above which represents the natural environment and efficiently provides suitable building sites to meet Town planning goals and objectives. No additional development should take place until the required utility improvements are completed.

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

