

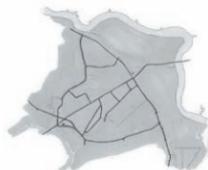
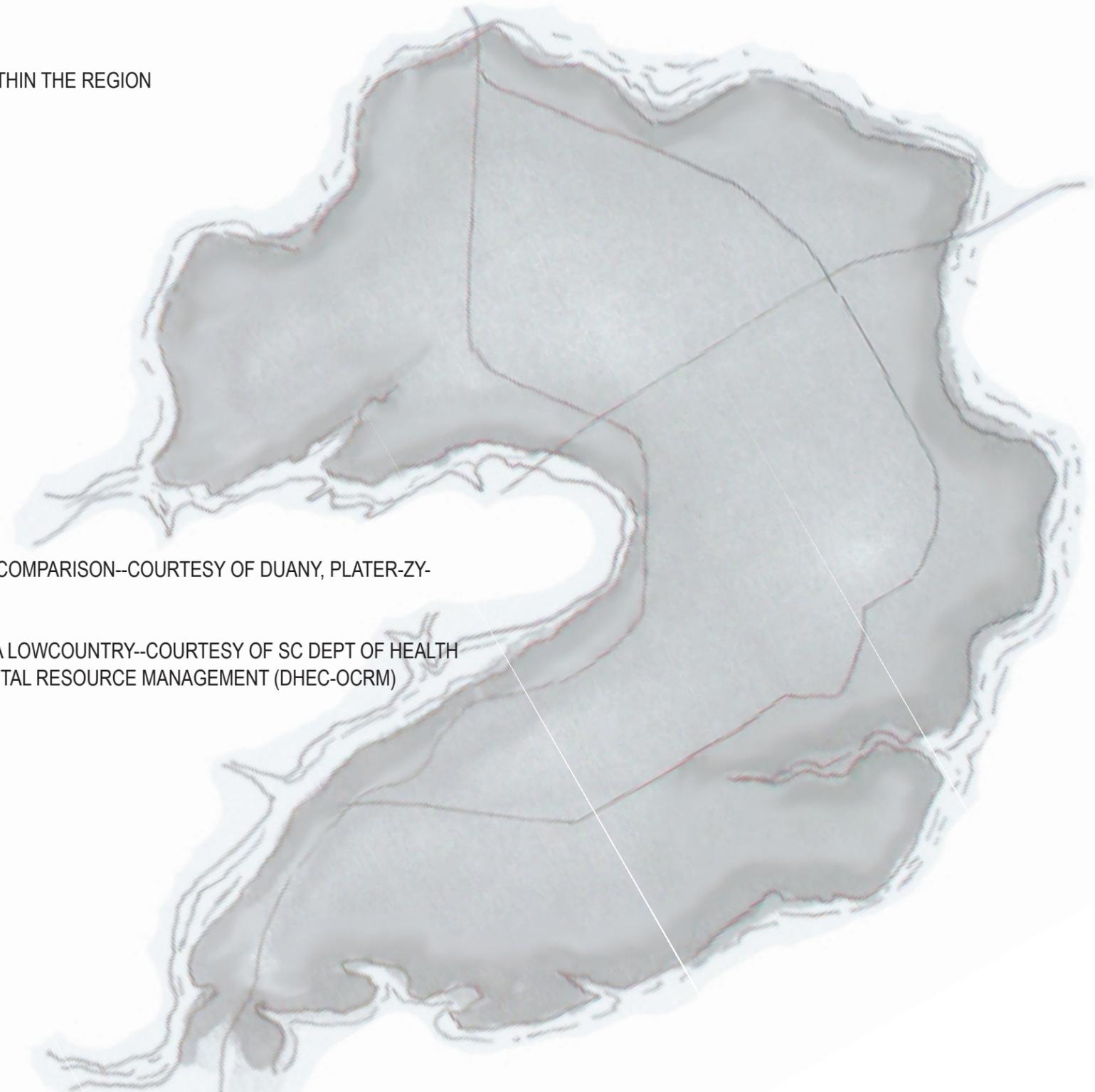
JOHNS ISLAND COMMUNITY PLAN

The City of Charleston, Department of Planning, Preservation
& Economic Innovation

Adopted by City of Charleston City Council
November 2007

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Background Information, Study Area, Context within a Region

All areas within Charleston County, as well as across the State of South Carolina, are special. Johns Island residents, however, unite time and again to ensure that the characteristics that make their island unique remain so. Johns Islanders understand very well that the culture and heritage that embody their small rural sea island are the very attributes that are most threatened by unbridled development. Along with other communities across the State of South Carolina, Johns Island has experienced unprecedented growth and development during the last two decades. Concern is widespread that without adequate land use and development regulations, the scenic roadways, pristine natural surroundings, and agricultural heritage will be forever changed. The summary within the 1995 Johns Island Land Use Plan Update states:

“Johns Island is a scenic, rural sea island characterized by its numerous tree lined rural roadways, its generous network of saltwater wetlands and waterways, and its many historic structures and sites which dot the landscape. These natural and cultural resources are what make Johns Island a unique place to work, live, and visit. As Johns Island begins facing increasing development pressures, these natural and cultural resources are in danger of being lost forever. With the loss of each tree, each waterway vista, and each historic site, Johns Island loses a piece of its identity which distinguishes it from the neighboring, more developed sea islands. In an effort to allow development and the island’s resources to coexist, and at the same time retain the rural sea island character Johns Island is known for, the following guidelines have been developed....”

The key point is that it is up to us, as stewards of Johns Island’s unique character, to plan for the protection of what we treasure, to continuously measure the outcomes of our planning efforts, and to ensure that we are accomplishing our goals, while simultaneously allowing the island to grow. This principle has served as the basis for discussion of planning efforts on Johns Island for over twenty years. These efforts have been led by the City and County of Charleston with groups of Johns Island residents and property owners since the first annexation into the City in 1983. Today, a group of Johns Island residents, land owners, and other interested citizens have once again united to discuss the outcomes of previous planning efforts, identify

areas of concern, and develop resolutions to protect the overall character of this sea island.

The latest planning efforts on Johns Island continue to echo those of the past: the need to protect this rural sea island from adverse development. In fact, the plans state that Johns Island residents and representatives of the Island are concerned about:

- changing character of the Island’s scenic rural roadways;
- changing character of the Island’s agricultural heritage, its rural heritage, and the changing character of the Island’s waterways and salt marshes;
- Water quality impacts of new development in close proximity to saltwater wetlands and waterways;
- Destruction of archaeological resources;
- Incompatible alterations to historic buildings;
- Changes to the setting of historic buildings caused by new construction on adjacent properties – those changes that threaten the integrity of the Island’s resources.



ILLUSTRATION 1
The Peninsula in relationship to the Study Area

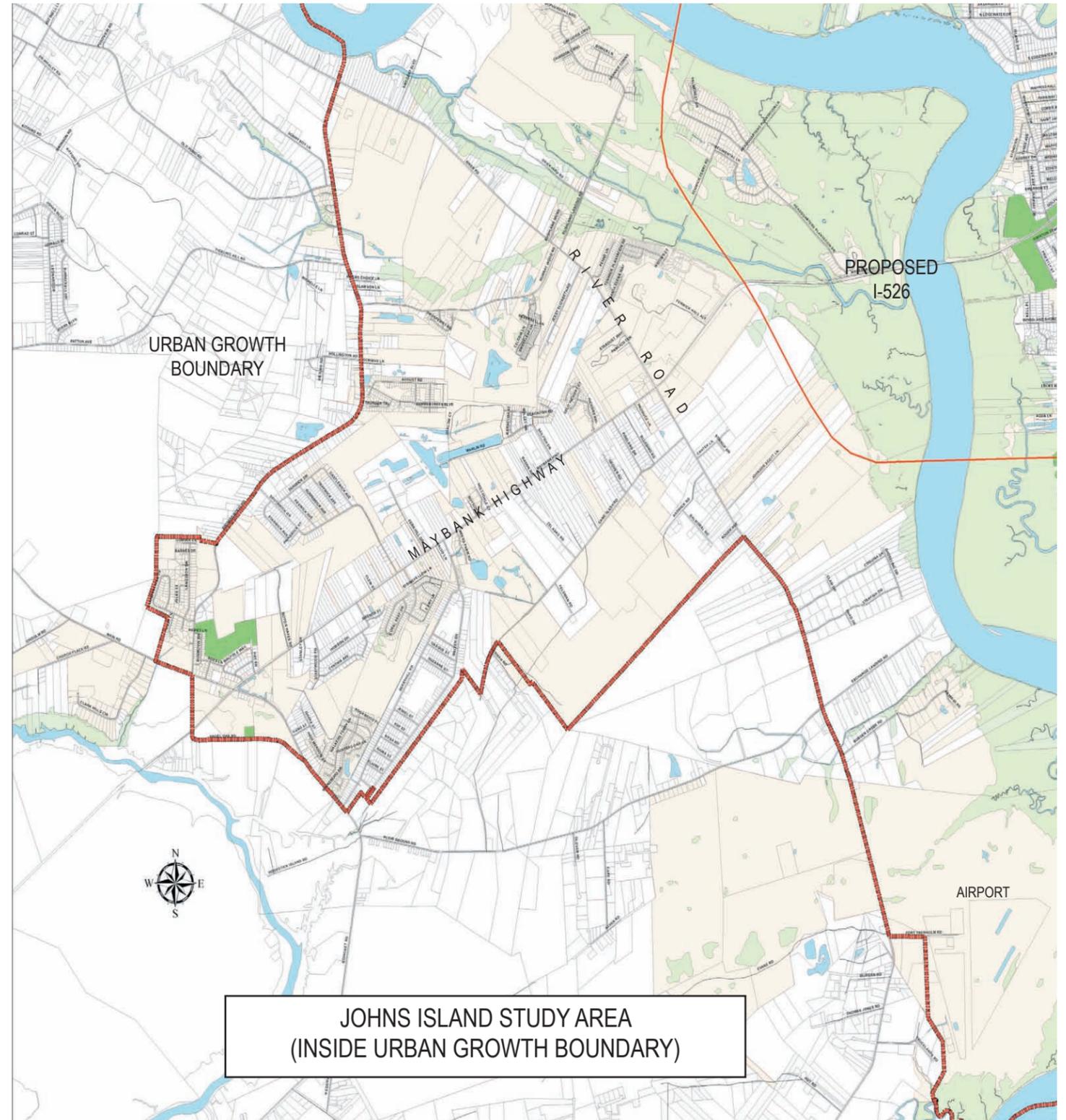
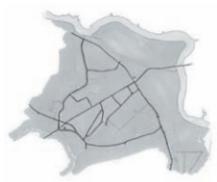


ILLUSTRATION 2

JOHNS ISLAND STUDY AREA
(INSIDE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY)



JOHNS ISLAND COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

The City of Charleston, Department of Planning, Preservation & Economic Innovation

Conducted: March 5th through 10th, 2007 Charleston, South Carolina

Background Information, The Study Area,
Context within the Region

Planning for Johns Island: 1988 through 2006

Land use policy is the responsibility of local government, and the planning for Johns Island has been unique over the years. In the case of Johns Island, the responsibility falls under the jurisdiction of both Charleston City and County governments. Both jurisdictions have a solid understanding of the need for intergovernmental coordination. This is reflected in the intensive planning efforts for Johns Island to date. For nearly two decades, however, the decisions made regarding land use, zoning, and development on Johns Island have been led and determined by a consensus of citizens. During this time, two extensive land use plans were developed by residents and adopted by both governing agencies. The original Johns Island Plan was developed in 1988; its update was adopted in 1995. Planning efforts for Johns Island include the following:

- 1988 Johns Island Plan, an intergovernmental effort of the City of Charleston and Charleston County, led by a citizen's advisory group, intended to facilitate consistent decision making regarding future land uses, development densities, and land development regulations on Johns Island;
- 1989 James and Johns Island Historic Survey, which was completed shortly before Hurricane Hugo and documented the Island's historical and archaeological resources;
- Charleston 2000, adopted in 1991, which included future land use recommendations for Johns Island;
- 1995 Johns Island Land Use Plan Update, also a coordination of both the City of Charleston and Charleston County and again led by a citizen steering committee. This plan was initiated because of increased development pressures on the Island;
- 1999 County of Charleston Comprehensive Plan, which established the Urban Growth Boundary designed to prevent urban and suburban development from expanding into rural areas, such as those that comprise rural Johns Island;
- 1999 Sea Island Comprehensive Health Master Plan; and,
- 2000 Charleston Century V City Plan, which coordinates the efforts of Charleston County by establishing the Urban Growth Boundary as policy.

In 1999, Charleston County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan. After years of public involvement and an extensive planning process, Charleston County established what has been dubbed an Urban Growth Boundary along the edge

of suburban areas throughout the County. The City of Charleston has supported the Urban Growth Boundary since its designation. The Urban Growth Boundary serves to: 1) protect rural qualities and agricultural uses for properties within rural areas, and 2) direct suburban growth to areas that are already urbanizing. The Urban Growth Boundary has been and continues to be an essential tool for managing growth on Johns Island. Illustration 1.

The City of Charleston wants to protect both the quality of rural and suburban areas on Johns Island. The "study area" for this plan is primarily defined as those lands that are located within the Urban Growth Boundary on Johns Island, South Carolina. The study area is composed of approximately 3,873 parcels of land, of which 2,413 parcels are within the City of Charleston, while the remainder of parcels are located within unincorporated Charleston County. The study area comprises 10,469 acres of land, while Johns Island in its entirety encompasses 48,670 acres—thus, the study area reflects 21.5 of the entire Island (which includes water and marsh area within the water's edge of the marsh and the UGB).

It would be short-sighted to examine the study area without maintaining a regional planning context in mind. The study area is a sub-urban area of the City of Charleston. The development of this area has been and continues to be a direct response to the need for housing. Johns Island attracts many residents who seek a more remote, rural environment in close proximity to the urban core of Downtown Charleston, as well as to the surrounding sub-urban areas of West Ashley and James Island, for commerce, education, employment, recreation, etc. Growth on Johns Island within the study area has adhered to the land use plans that were developed by citizen-based committees of Johns Island with assistance from the City and Charleston County. However, based on what we know today in terms of sustainable settlement patterns, a continuation of the existing trend may prove detrimental to the overall character of this sea island; therefore, the City has been working extensively to develop a plan that recognizes the need to change and enhance efforts and policies that yield planned growth without compromising the unique character of Johns Island. It is recognized and emphasized that a limit to development on Johns Island exists in the form of an Urban Growth Boundary (Illustration 2, Page 1).

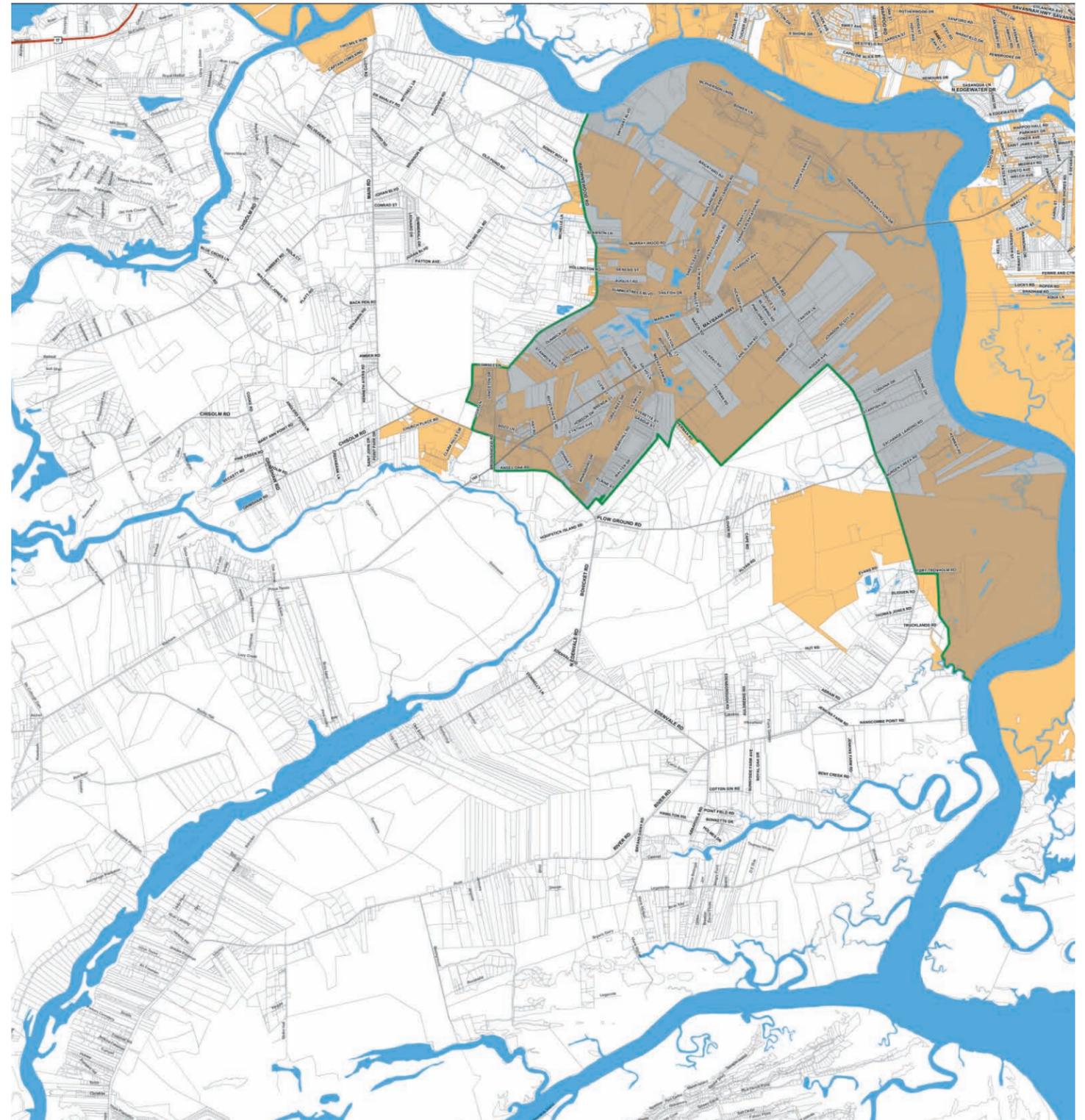
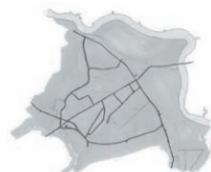


ILLUSTRATION 3
The Study Area in the Context of Johns Island



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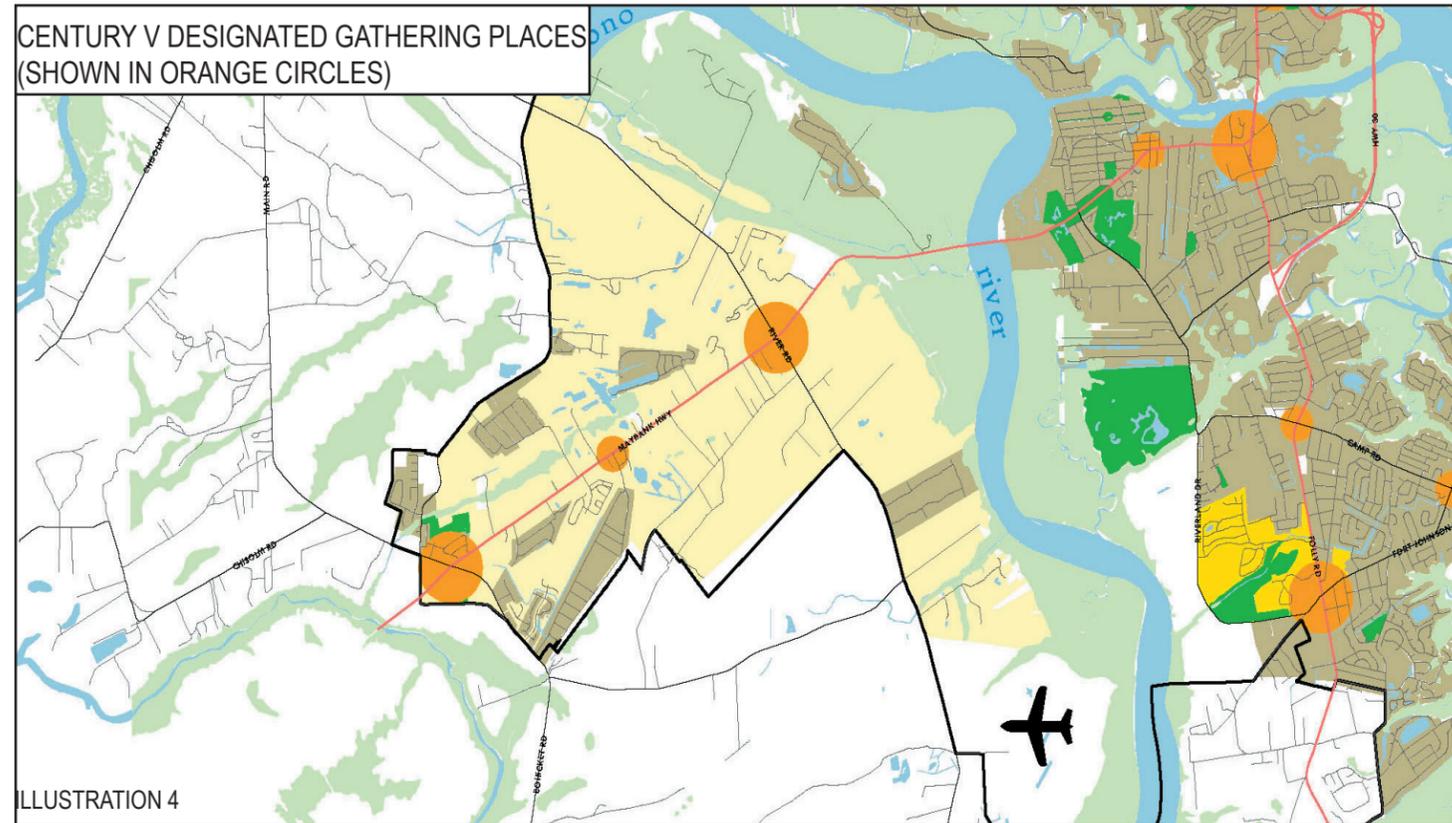
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Background Information, The Study Area, Context within the Region

Regional planning is a challenging task—one that will not occur without the cooperation of the respective jurisdictions of the defined region. In planning for the study area from a regional perspective, it is imperative that we acknowledge that growth will occur. No-growth movements and “burn-the-bridge” mentalities continue to deny the problem/matter at hand, rather than addressing it. In planning for Johns Island, this growth should be directed to the appropriate “receiving” areas and divert it from the inappropriate “sending” areas. The Johns

should not be detrimental to existing cities but rather should be complementary. The Johns Island Community Plan is the first of a set of sub area plans of the City that contribute to the paradigm shift in suburbanization of the City.

The Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Council of Governments predicted that the Johns Island population is projected to nearly double in size between 1990 and 2015 from 8,775 to 15,230 – a 75% increase, according to information cited in the 1995 Johns Island Land Use Plan Update. These projections were

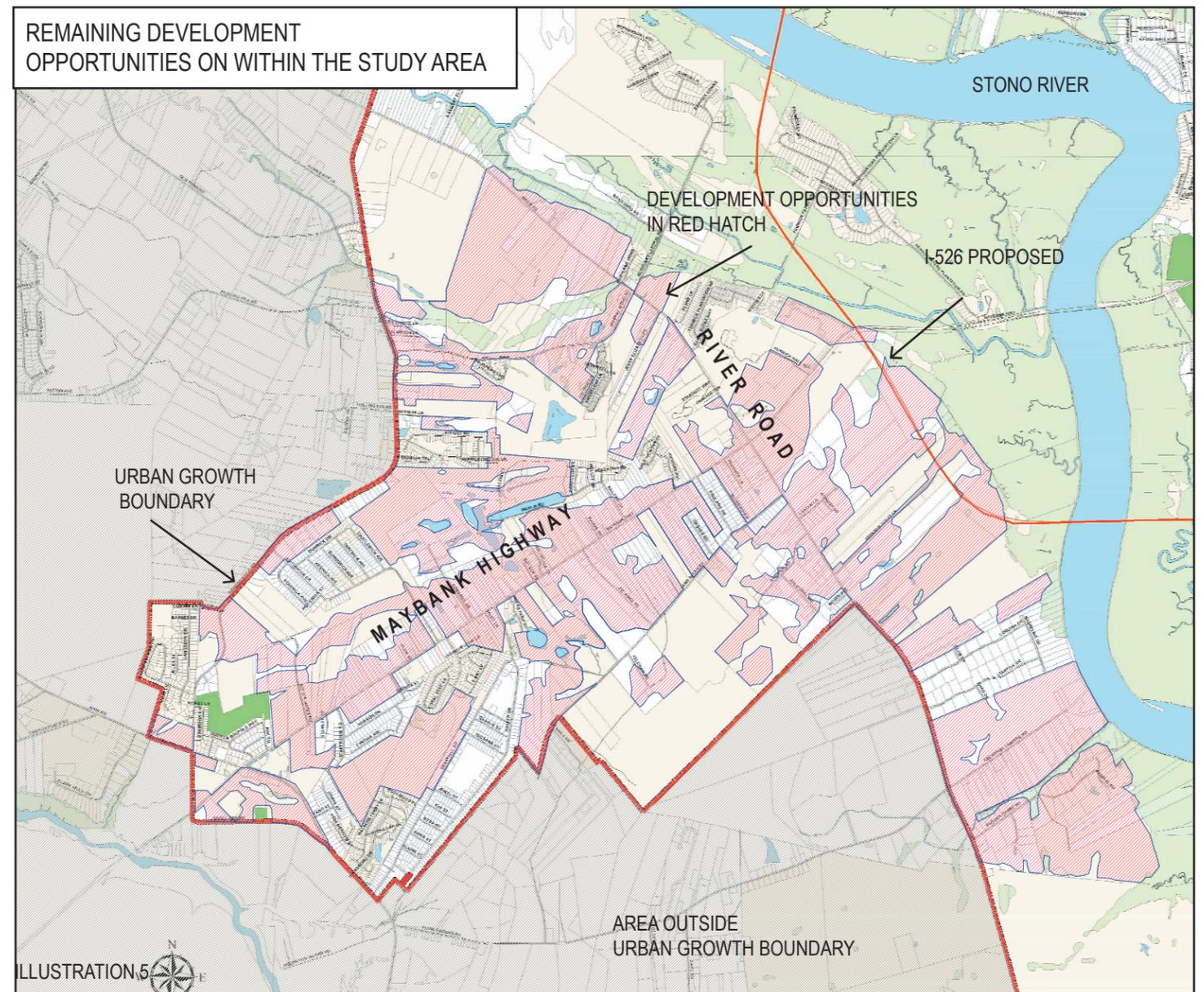


Island Community Plan is an attempt to address growth via implementation strategies rather than rehashing existing conditions.

Suburbs should complement and reflect the lexicon of settlement principles that created Downtown Charleston, including but not limited to human-scale form, inimitable public realm experiences, appreciated architectural detail, past preservation efforts, and a “green” urban experience via privatized gardens and public park spaces. Suburban growth

based on potential completion of the Mark Clark Expressway, potential residential buildout, and the availability of sewer on the Island. Today, ten years prior to this projected time, planned development on Johns Island could yield a total of 4,496 units, meaning that there could be an additional 10,026 people – a total of approximately 20,000 residents, which surpasses the 2005 projection by 58% and the 2015 population projection by 31%.

The City and County of Charleston have been working



extensively to address this growth to ensure that it does not adversely impact the rural character of this sea island. Recent planning efforts are making the most of this growth by turning it into an opportunity to improve the quality of life on the island through transportation enhancements, affordable housing opportunities, preservation of open space and rural land, and mixed use developments that offer a variety of residential, commercial, employment, institutional, recreational, and open space opportunities.

It is essential to develop this sub-urban area efficiently. It is also essential, however, that suburban growth be managed so that the quality of life within developed areas of Johns Island improves as new neighborhoods are built and the region grows. Suburban growth must result in a quality urban environment so that the pressure to develop rural areas will be minimized. First and foremost, Johns Island is essential to the future of the region because it provides a unique agricultural resource within its rural district. Effective planning within the suburban area will ensure the prolonged place of this rural district. The City has

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responded to the citizen-led Johns Island Growth Management Committee as well as to participants of the design charrette by developing recommendations for policy changes that are unique to the study area and that are designed to integrate the higher density residential area with the outlying rural area. New development within the UGB will provide a rural feel unique to Johns Island while responding to housing and commercial needs on the Island. The Johns Island Community Plan establishes an appropriate framework for suburban growth within the study area of Johns Island.

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Johns Island Growth Management Committee

Anne Frances Bleecker, Chair, Sam Brownlee, Elliot Cohen, Chris Cannon, Phil Dustan, Andrew Geer, Jimmy Kerr, Mitch Laplante, John Peters, Emily Robinson, Megan Terebus, Joel Evans (Charleston County Staff), Andrea Pietras (Charleston County Staff), Christopher Morgan (City Staff), Allison Bello (City Consultant)

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Planning Consultants: Keane Musty

Where would you prefer to live?



An arrangement of single-use pods with no beginning, center, or end; each use is strenuously isolated by code from the others by highways, walls, fences, parking lots, canals, etc.

Housing is mass-produced and strictly segregated by income level.

Everything beyond the front door requires a car trip; everyone over 16 must have a car.

Commuting to work is strictly by car, on roads simultaneously jammed with trips to school, exercise class, 7-11, breakfast...

Even neighborhood streets are engineered exclusively for cars; the rare pedestrian is frightened, embarrassed, sunburned, and bored.

Public buildings and churches are scattered along the strip among the McDonalds, Tire Kingdoms, and Payless Shoes.



A distinct center of integrated retail, office, and high density residential uses forms the nucleus; a wide mix of housing types, public spaces, and corner stores form the fabric; greenbelts create distinct edges.

Most daily needs and quite a few jobs can be found within a five minute walk of the front door; multiple cars become optional.

Mass transit stops are within a five minute walk for commuters; non-commuting car trips are also reduced as children walk or bike to school.

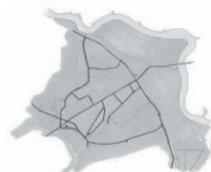
All streets are designed for people as well as cars; sidewalks are shaded and pass stores and homes, not parking lots; neighborhood streets are designed for low speeds.

Streets and squares create important locations for civic buildings that become symbols of community identity.

Civic buildings, churches, daycares, community centers, belong in special places; the top of a hill, the terminated vista of a street.

ILLUSTRATION 6

Courtesy: Dover, Kohl, & Partners



JOHNS ISLAND COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

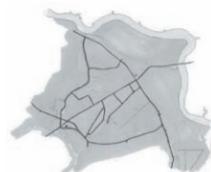
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Background Information, The Study Area, Context within the Region

Formulating the Plan

The Johns Island Community Plan was conducted in the public for the public. So often, jurisdictions plan for communities within the four-corners of the municipality's Planning offices without providing the opportunity for the public to comment/make suggestions/ask questions/etc. This is an inappropriate and ineffective planning method. Planning should be transparent and "of the people, for the people." The City recognizes "planning in public" as the desired method to address planning matters. During the week of March 5-10, 2007, over 350 Johns Island stakeholders (residents, property owners, business owners, government officials, utility representatives, etc) attended the charrette in order to plan for the future of the study area (largest attendance for a weeklong charrette conducted by the City of Charleston). This plan is the public's plan. . . Johns Island's Plan.



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