



BEAUFORT COUNTY ATLAS



Review Copy
April 2021

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Introduction

In 2020, Beaufort County initiated a community-based update to its Comprehensive Plan. As part of that process, a County Atlas was created to capture, in one place, the existing conditions of the County to support the Comprehensive Plan as well as plans that will be created in the future.

What is its purpose?

The County Atlas is a living document that supports the County's planning efforts. It provides the statistics, data and mapping typical of planning documents in one user-friendly source.

Capturing this information in one source will enable it to be updated by the County at regular intervals, enable cost savings, and promote efficiency within future planning since it will avoid duplicating this information within each planning document.

The County Atlas should be used as a resource for future planning efforts undertaken by the County.

What does it include?

Within each chapter of the County Atlas there are narratives, tables, charts, imagery, and statistics that provide the most current background information available to support long-range planning.

The County Atlas chapters are:

- 1. People**
- 2. Natural Resources**
- 3. Cultural Resources**
- 4. Economy**
- 5. Built Environment**
- 6. Public Facilities**

People





PEOPLE

Beaufort County's rapid growth rate is a relatively recent phenomenon in its 240-year history.

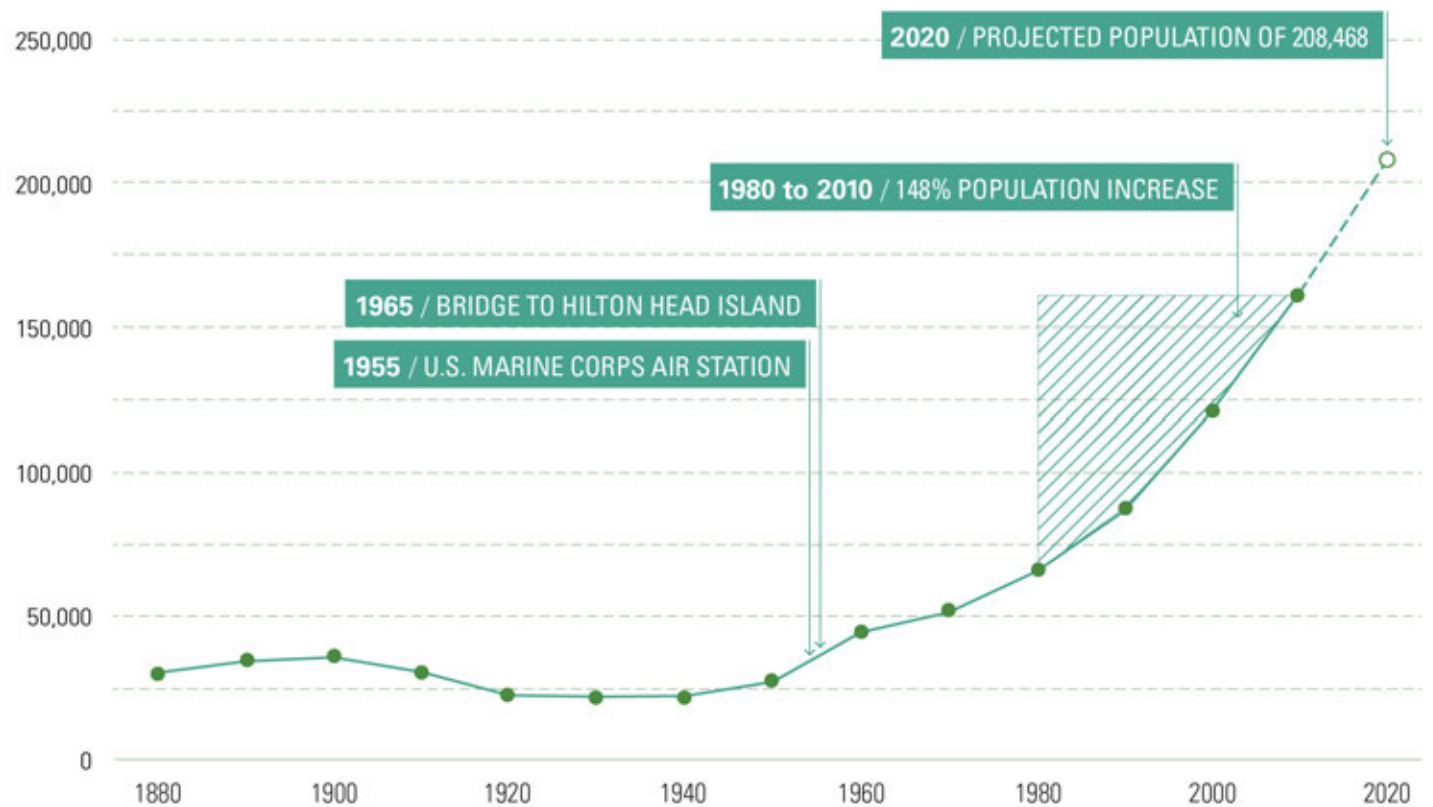
Two mid-20th-century events helped to drive this growth: the establishment in 1955 of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, which eventually brought thousands of military and civilian jobs to the region, and construction the following year of a bridge to Hilton Head Island, which spurred development of the county's tourism- and retirement-based infrastructure.

Growth has occurred and will continue to occur unevenly across the county, with the greatest

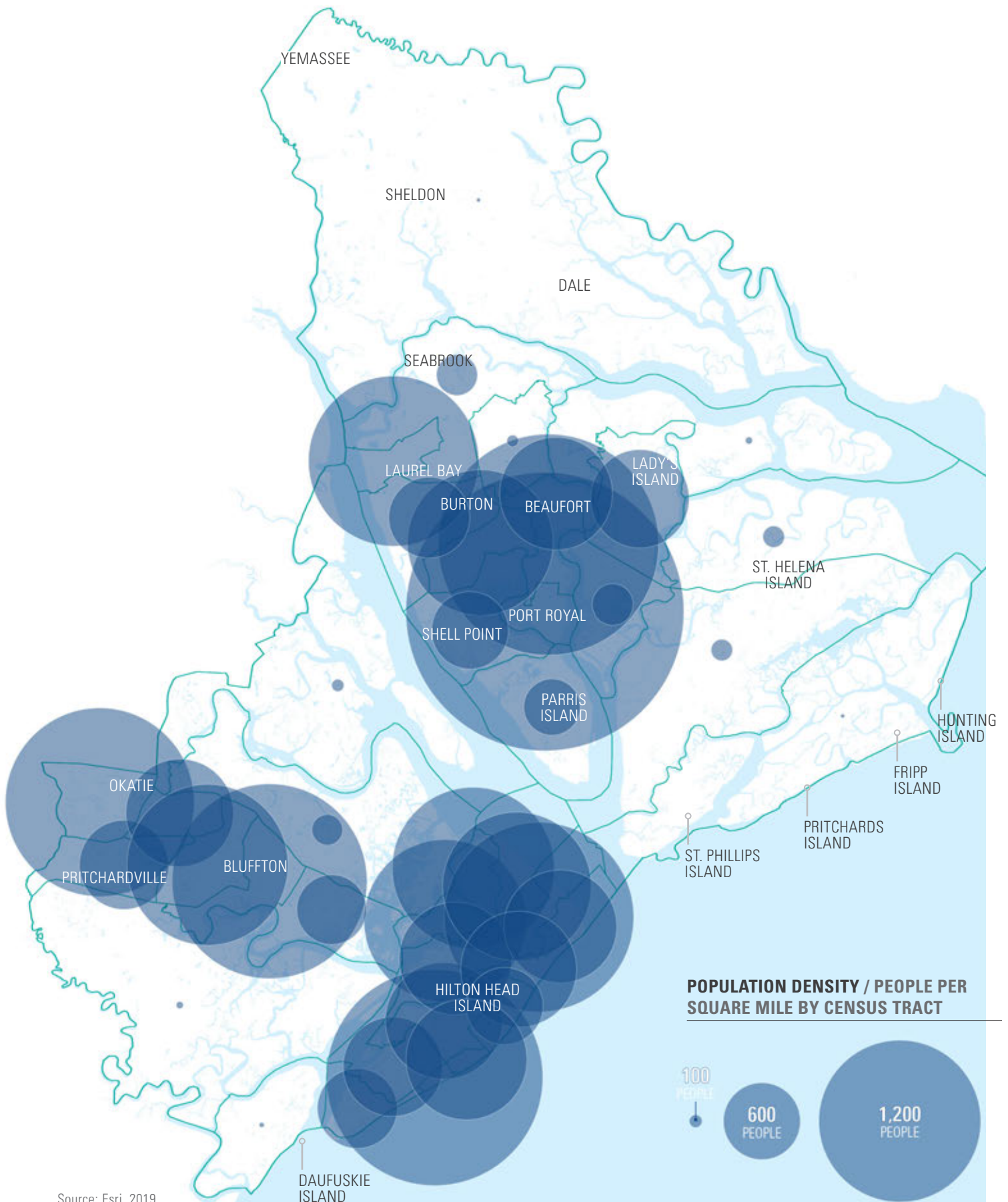
increases in Bluffton, Hilton Head Island and Lady's Island. Recent growth has been driven largely by an influx of older, wealthier and more highly educated residents. There are growing income disparities across racial and ethnic groups and across geographical regions.

Beaufort County's continued population growth has policy implications for equity, public facilities, transportation, affordable housing, water quality, and natural and cultural resources.

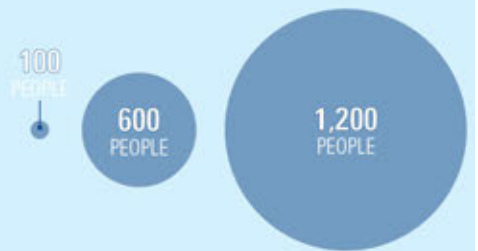
BEAUFORT COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH OVER TIME



Source: Historical figures from U.S. Census, projections based on 2019 Beaufort County Development Impact Fee Study by TischlerBise



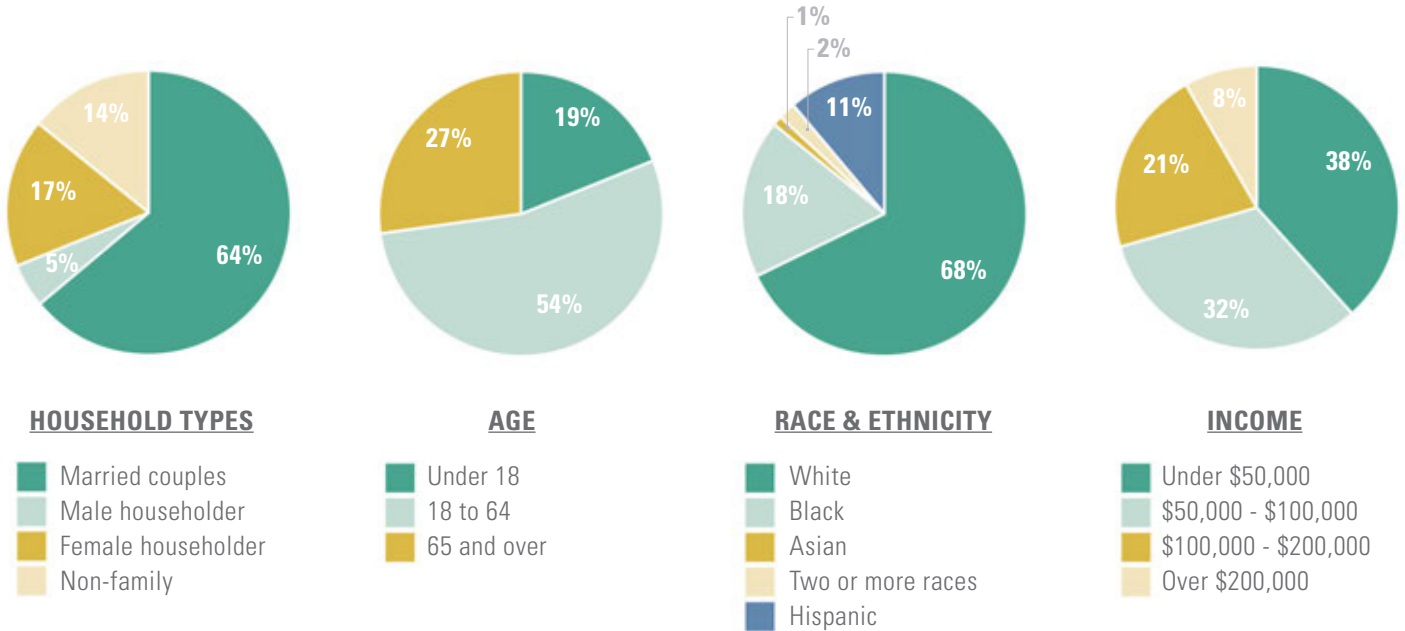
POPULATION DENSITY / PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE BY CENSUS TRACT



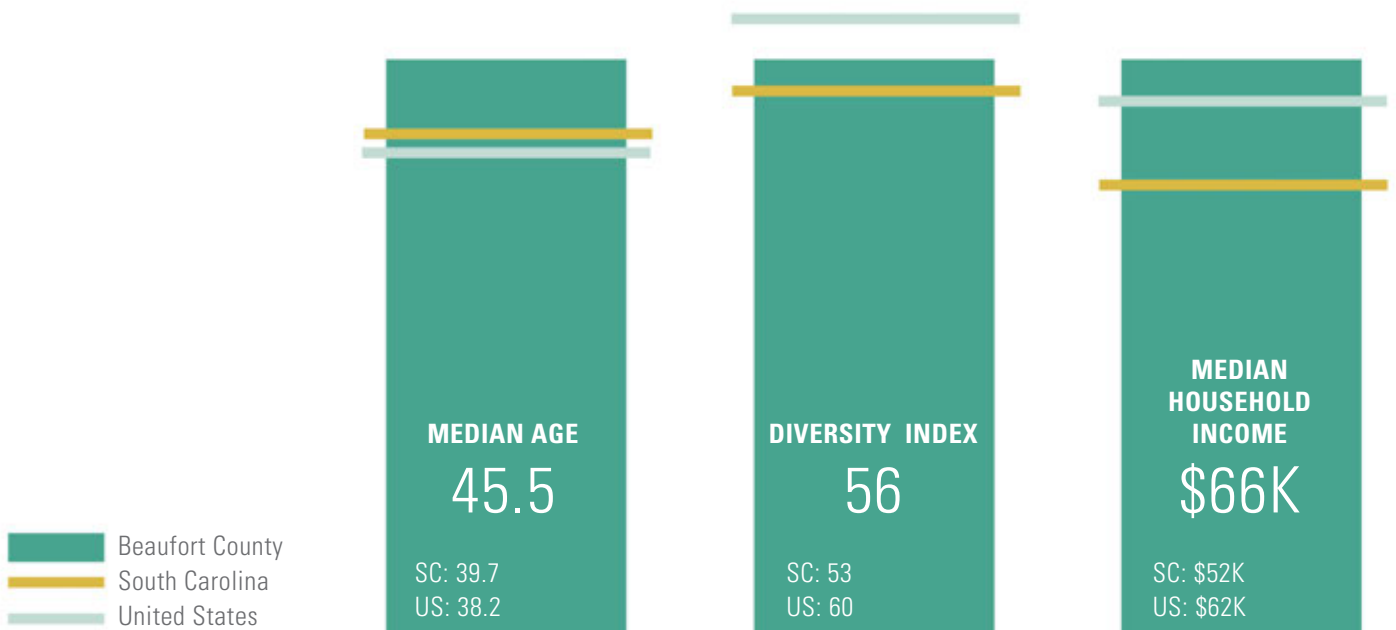
Source: Esri, 2019

POPULATION SNAPSHOT

BEAUFORT COUNTY PERMANENT RESIDENTS / AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2018

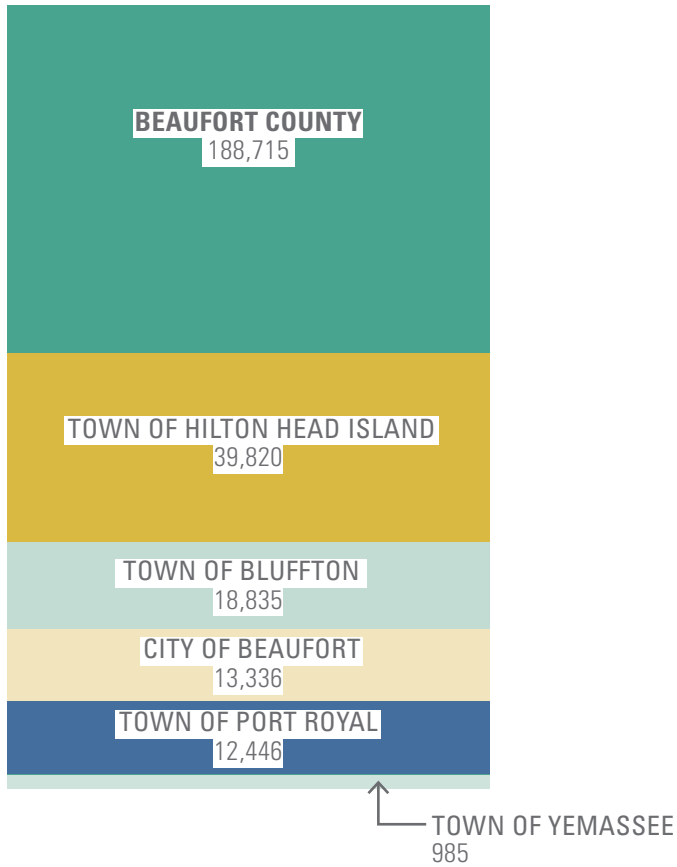


STATE & NATIONAL COMPARISONS / AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2018



Source: Census Reporter

MUNICIPAL & COUNTY POPULATIONS / 2018

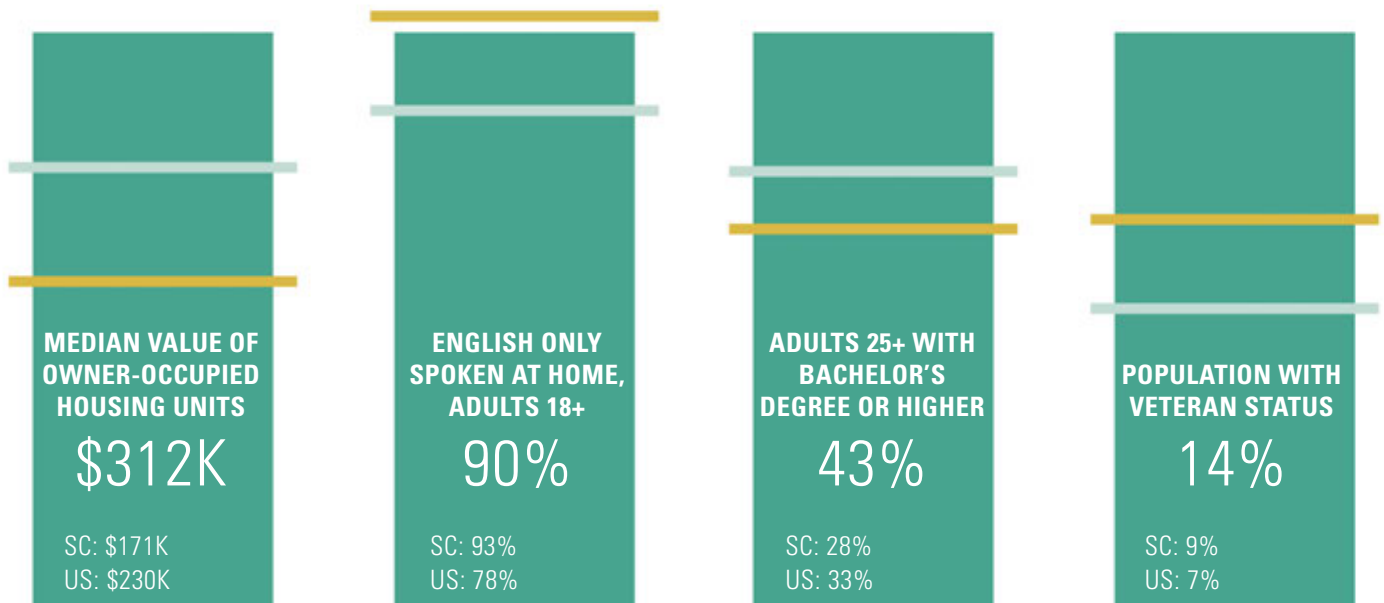


Source: 2018 American Community Survey

PEAK POPULATION / JULY 2019 ESTIMATE



Source: 2019 Beaufort County Development Impact Fee Study by TischlerBise, with data from the American Community Survey, Beaufort County Convention and Visitor Bureau, and Beaufort County Transportation Model

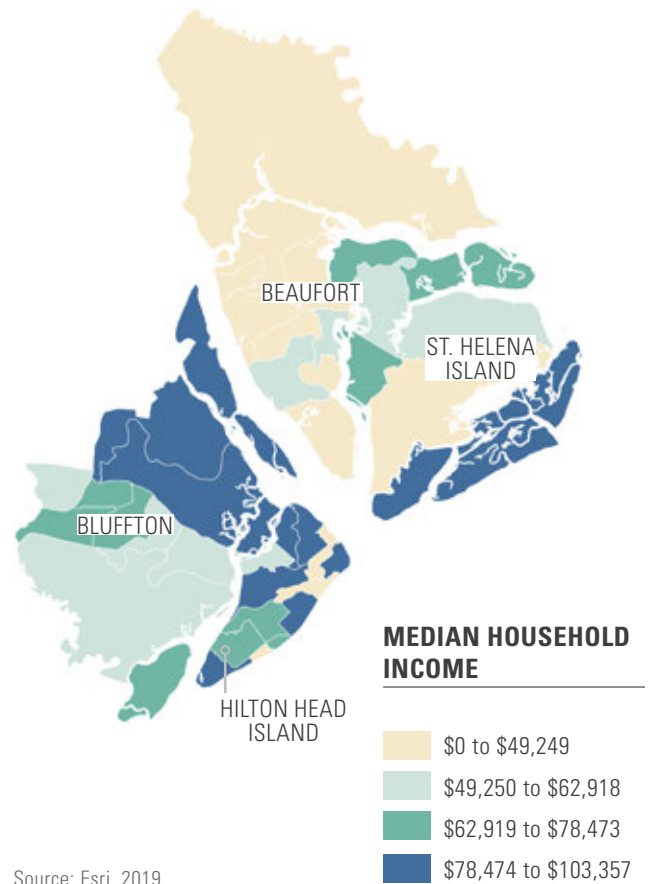
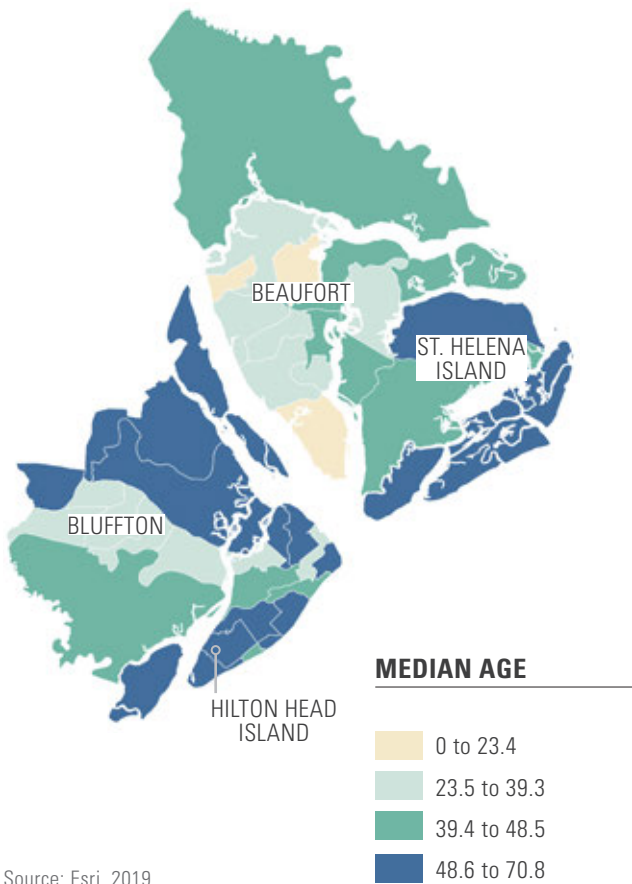


SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Current Population Trends

- Much of the recent growth has been a result of people moving to Beaufort County from other parts of the country or from other countries for retirement or to seek economic opportunities.
- Population growth over the last 30 years has brought about changes to the racial and ethnic makeup of the county. From 1980 to 2018, Beaufort County’s white population grew by 202% while the black population grew by only 58%. In 1980, one third of all Beaufort County residents were African-American compared to 18% in 2018. This demographic change is largely due to the influx of new residents, including retirees, from other parts of the country.

- The population is older, lives in smaller households, is better educated and is wealthier than the state and national populations.
- Beaufort County’s aging population can be attributed to several factors; primarily the county’s popularity as a retirement destination. Other factors include the advance of the Baby Boom generation and improvements in the standard of living as Beaufort has transformed from a poor rural county to a relatively prosperous urbanizing county.
- The reduction in household size mirrors the national trend of a growing number of smaller families, single parent households and an aging population. This downward trend will likely

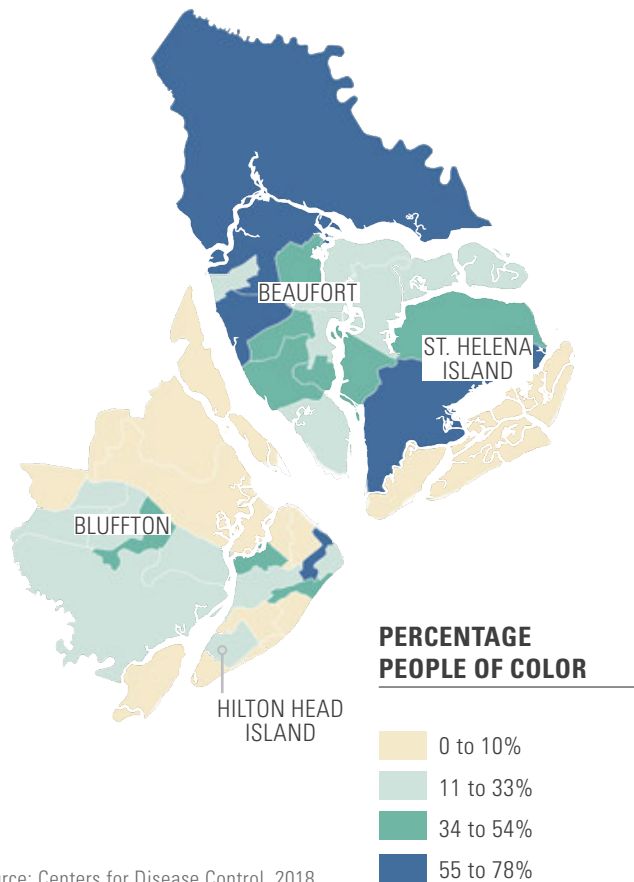


continue as the County's population ages.

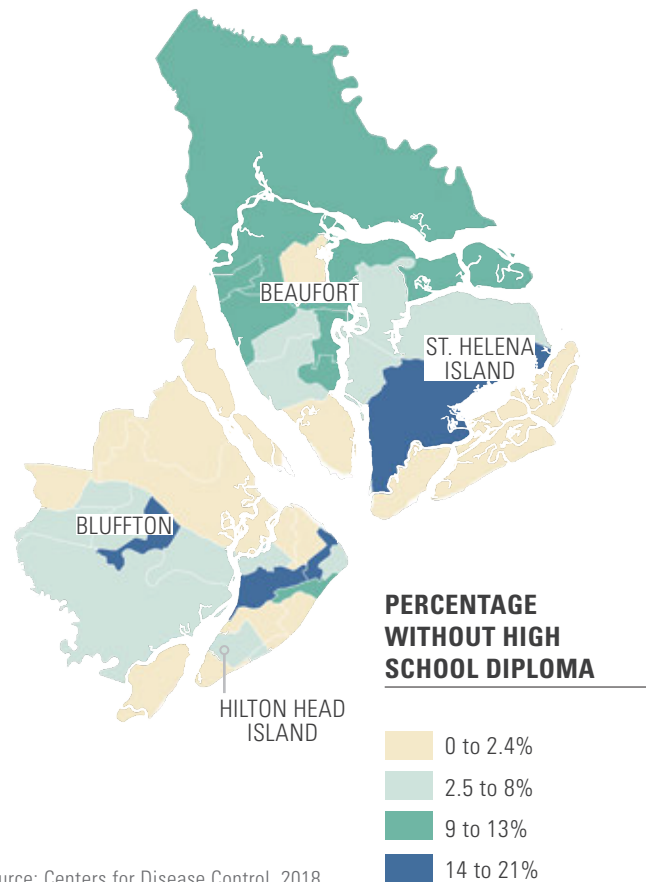
- Another significant change over the last 30 years in Beaufort County's population is educational attainment. From 1980 to 2018, Beaufort County went from 50% of the population having at least a high school diploma to 92% of the population, exceeding state and national averages. In 2018, 50% of Beaufort County's residents who were 65 years or older had a college degree compared to only 40% of the general population. This statistic suggests that some of the improvements in educational attainment result from the influx of educated retirees.
- In terms of per-capita and median income, Beaufort County is the wealthiest in South

Carolina. However, the county is unique in that only 56% of household income is derived from actual wages. A large percentage (30.6%) of personal income comes from interest, dividends and rent.

- There are income disparities across racial and ethnic groups and geographic regions of the county. The median income for African-American and Hispanic households is significantly lower than for the county as a whole. And though the county's median income is higher than median income statewide, the statewide weekly wages exceed those of the county.



Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2018



Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2018

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY INDEX

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)

Social vulnerability refers to the relative resilience of communities in the face of external stresses, such as natural disasters or disease outbreaks. The Centers for Disease Control uses 15 variables to rank social vulnerability at the Census tract level and to help local officials identify communities that might need support in preparing for or recovering from disaster.

The CDC’s general methodology is to rank each variable from highest to lowest across all the Census tracts in the country, and then to calculate a percentile rank for each Census tract over each of the variables. A percentile rank is defined as the proportion of scores in a distribution that a specific score is greater than or equal to. So a percentile rank of 0.78 would indicate a score that is greater than or equal to 78% of the other scores.

In the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index, the 15 variables are divided among four vulnerability

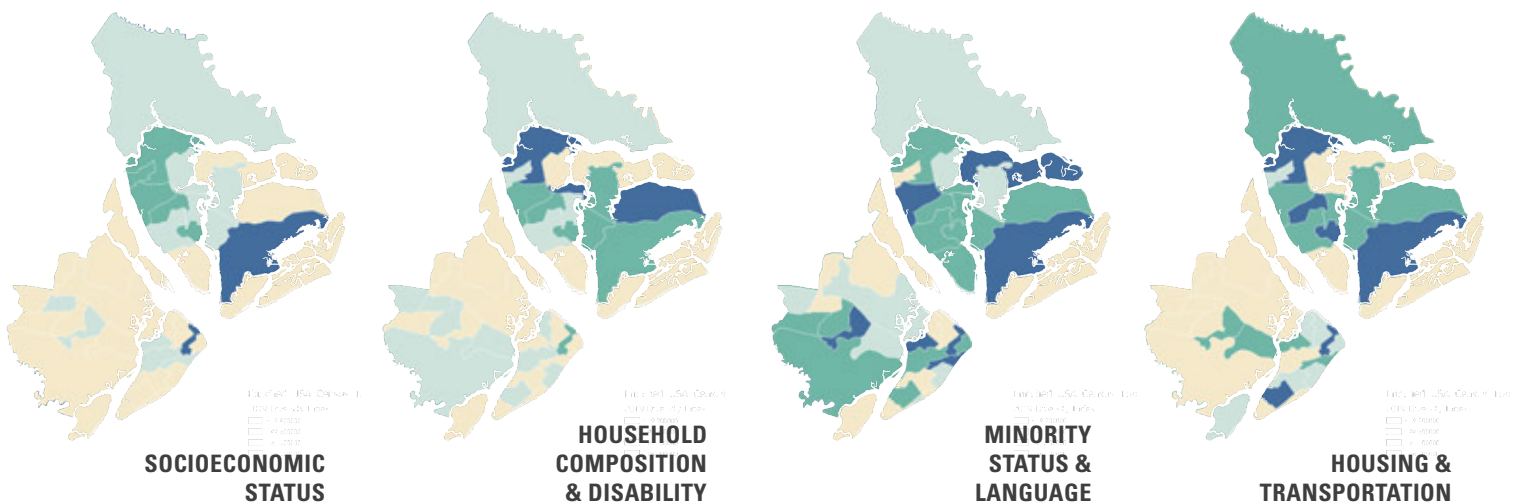
themes, and the composite of all variables and themes results in the overall social vulnerability index. The maps to the right show the rankings in Beaufort County by Census tract, by theme, when compared to other Census tracts in South Carolina. The map on the following page shows the overall vulnerability ranking for each of the county’s Census tracts.

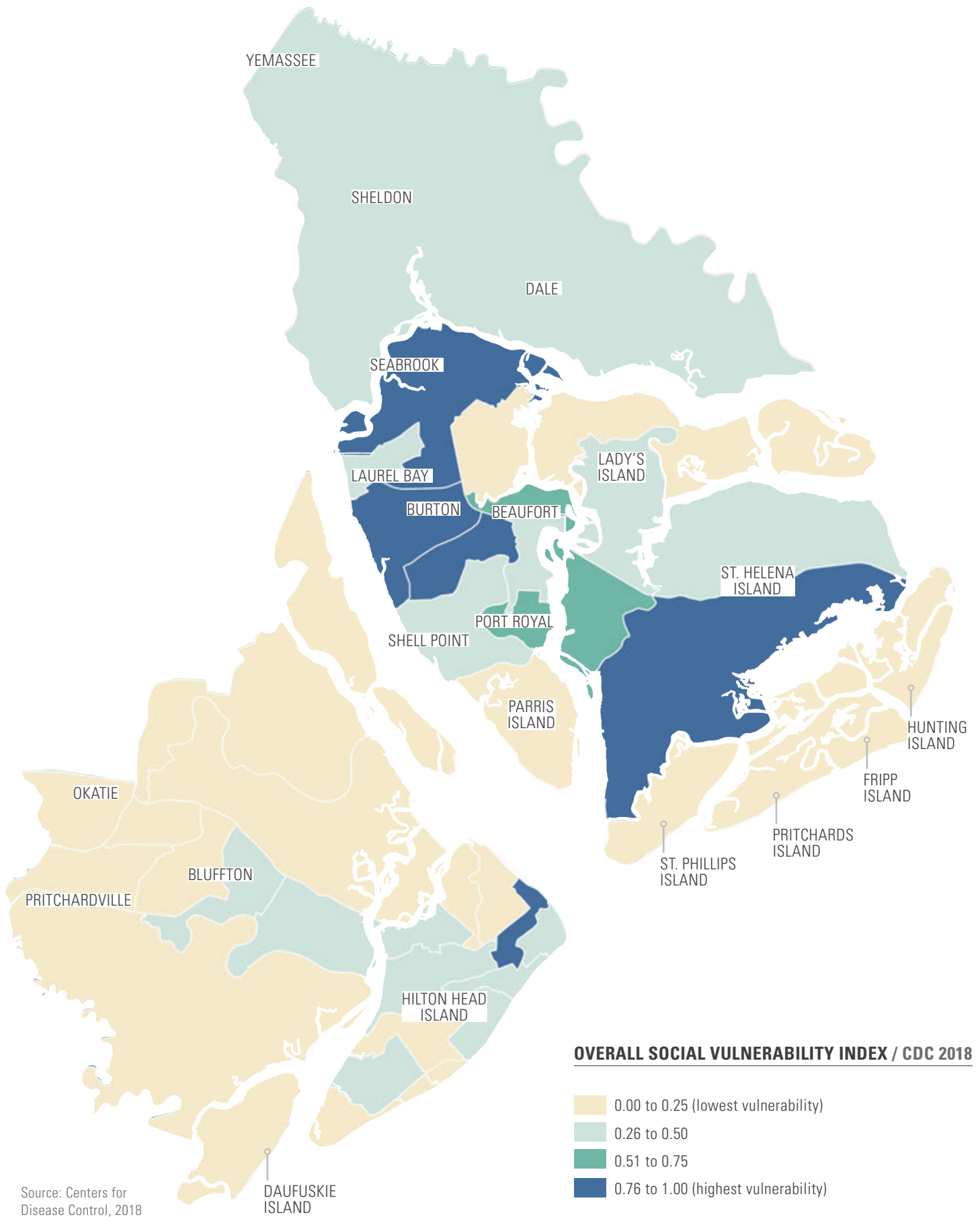
The following variables are included in each theme:

- **Socioeconomic Status:** Below Poverty, Unemployed, Income, No High School Diploma
- **Household Composition & Disability:** Aged 65 or Older, Aged 17 or Younger, Civilian with a Disability, Single-Parent Households
- **Minority Status & Language:** Minority, Speak English ‘Less than Well’
- **Housing & Transportation:** Multi-Unit Structures, Mobile Homes, Crowding, No Vehicle, Group Quarters

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY THEMES / CDC 2018

0.00 to 0.25 0.26 to 0.50 0.51 to 0.75 0.76 to 1.00 (highest vulnerability)

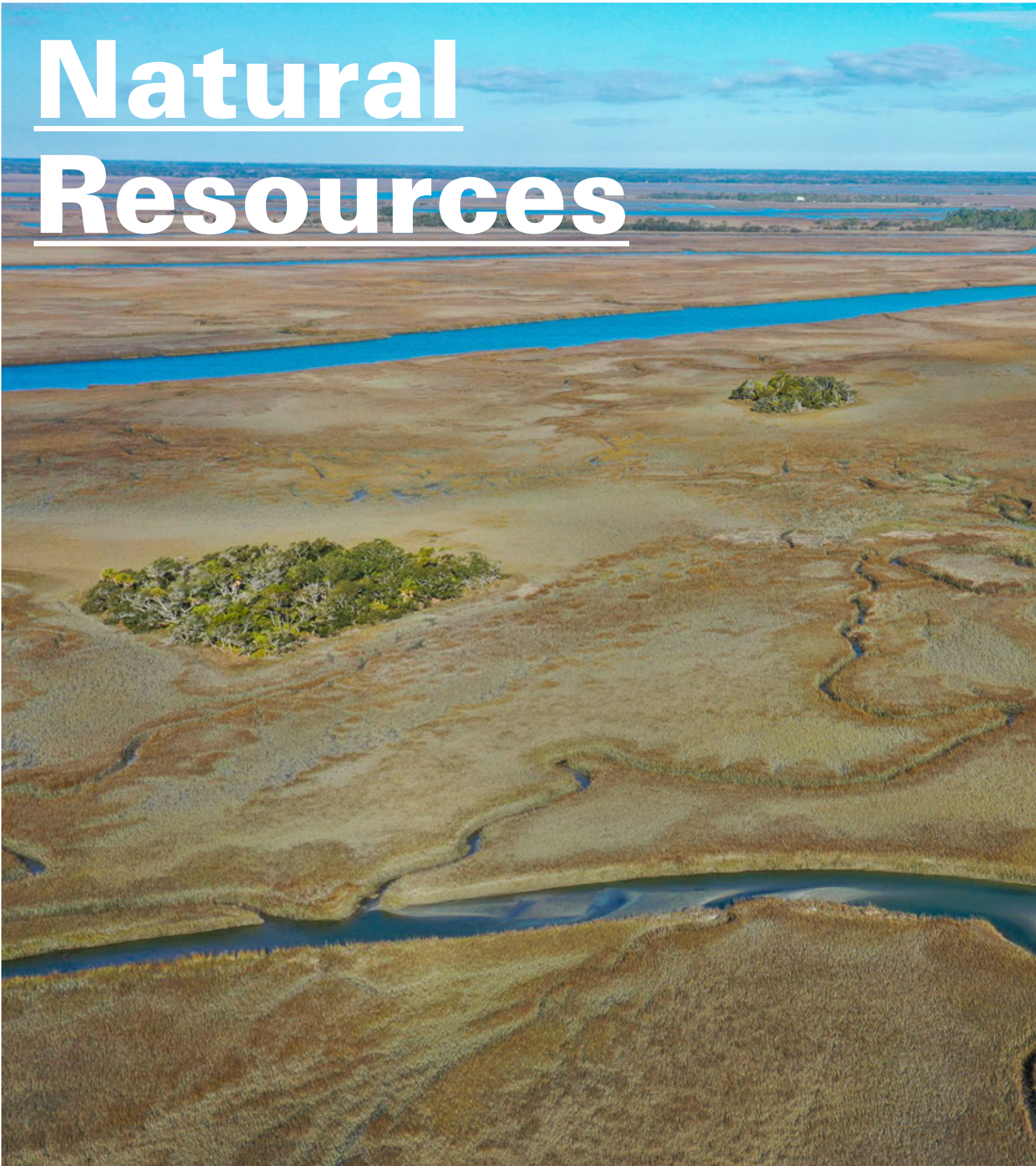




Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2018

DRAFT

Natural Resources





NATURAL RESOURCES



Beaufort County has a unique natural beauty, with expansive marsh vistas that teem with marine life, sub-tropical maritime forests of live oaks and palmettos, towering pines, forested wetlands of cypress and tupelo and over 30 miles of beaches.








Beaufort County consists of more water than land. Of its 468,000 acres, approximately 51% consists of open waters, sounds, marshes, and estuaries. An additional 15% are freshwater wetlands.

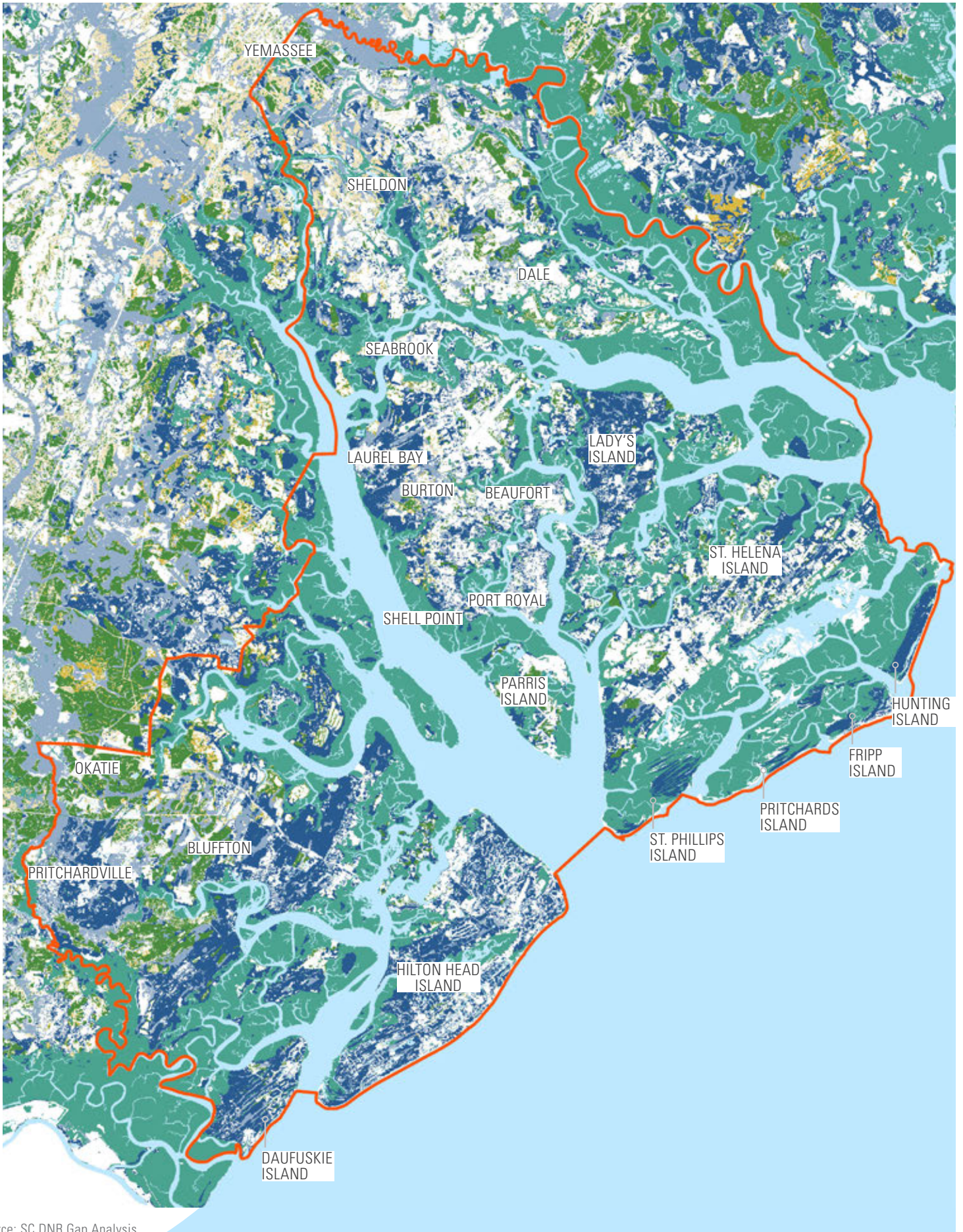
The ubiquitous presence of tidal waters, low elevation, and waterlogged soils present unique constraints to development and make the natural environment particularly vulnerable to the impacts of growth.

Beaufort County is also susceptible to many

natural hazards, including hurricanes, shoreline erosion, sea level and earthquakes.

BEAUFORT COUNTY LAND COVER / SC GAP ANALYSIS

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Open Fresh Water and Marine Water |  Closed Canopy Evergreen Forest |
|  Marsh / Emergent Wetland |  Pine Woodland |
|  Maritime and Wet Evergreen Forest |  Mixed Forest |
|  Cypress-Tupelo Swamp and Floodplain Forest | |

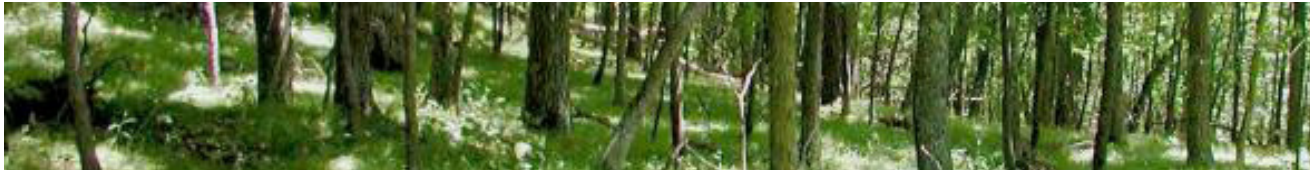


Source: SC DNR Gap Analysis

NATURAL RESOURCES SNAPSHOT

LAND COVER TYPES

**UPLAND
OAK-HICKORY
FORESTS**



**PINE
WOODLANDS**



**CYPRESS-TUPELO
SWAMPS**



**MARITIME
FORESTS**



**MARSHES &
EMERGENT
WETLANDS**



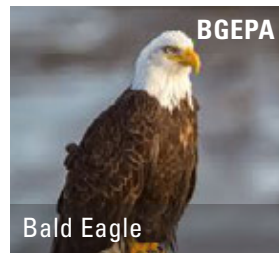
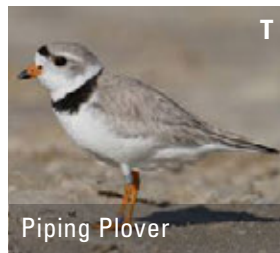
**BEACHES &
DUNES**



OPEN WATER



BIRDS

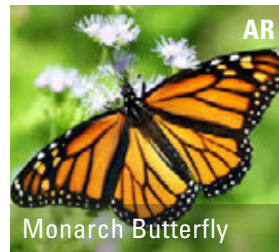


E = Federally Endangered
T = Federally Threatened
AR = At Risk
P = Proposed for Listing
BGEPA = Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act

AMPHIBIANS



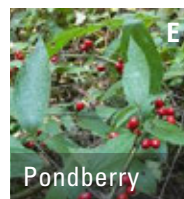
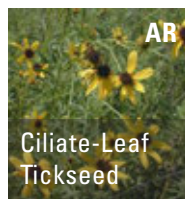
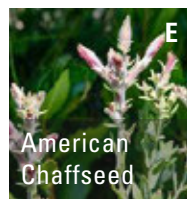
INSECTS



MAMMALS

Finback Whale - E
 Humpback Whale - E
 Right Whale - E
 Sei Whale - E
 Sperm Whale - E
 West Indian Manatee - T
 Little Brown Bat - AR
 Northern Long-Eared Bat - T
 Tri-Colored Bat - AR

PLANTS



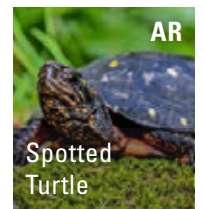
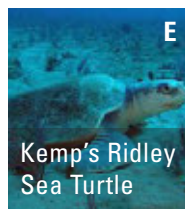
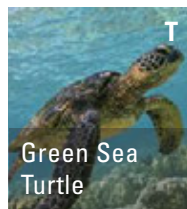
FISHES

Atlantic Sturgeon
 Shortnose Sturgeon

REPTILES

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake
 Florida Pine Snake
 Southern Hognose Snake

REPTILES



MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MILESTONES

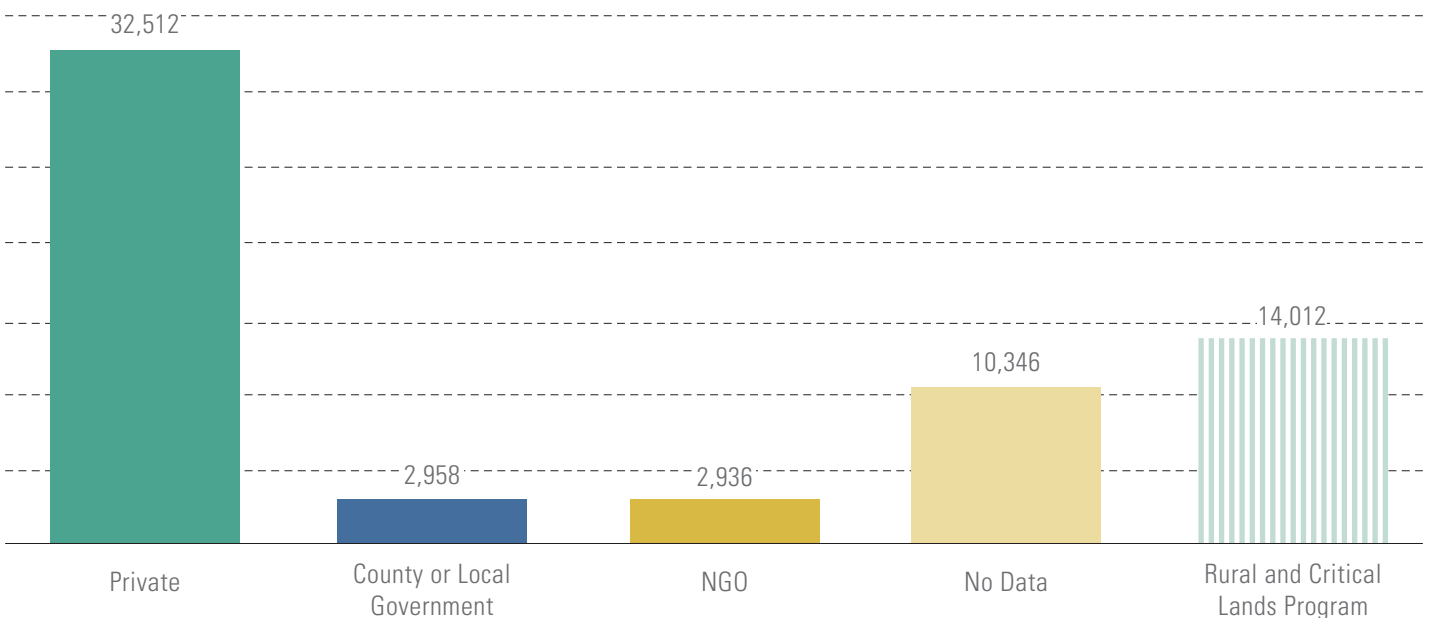
- 1995 / Beaufort Special Area Management Plan (SAMP): Responding to the closure of 500 acres of shellfish beds in 1995, the SAMP was conducted to address water pollution and to identify effective actions to prevent further degradation of the County's waterways. This study led to many future actions that are listed below including river buffers, local stormwater protection standards, and the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program.
- 1998 / Beaufort County Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual: The BMP Manual requires new development to manage stormwater to limit phosphorus, nitrogen, fecal coliform bacteria, and excessive stormwater volume from entering local creeks and rivers. The BMP manual has been continually updated to respond to local water quality monitoring data.
- 1999 / River Buffers and Natural Resource Protection: With the adoption of the Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance, the county enacted a 50-foot wide river buffer and substantial protections for trees, forests, and wetlands. These protections were carried over and enhanced when the county adopted its Community Development Code in 2014.
- 1999 / Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program: This program is aimed at preserving open space either by fee simple land purchases or the purchase of conservation easements on private property. Five successful bond referendums have provided the program with \$136 million in County funding. Over 23,900 acres of land have been preserved across the county since the program's inception.
- 2001 / Stormwater Utility: The Stormwater Utility is as a countywide program primarily aimed at maintaining and enhancing regional stormwater management systems and retrofitting older stormwater systems. The Utility partners with the City of Beaufort and the Towns of Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, and Port Royal through inter local agreements.
- 2011 / On-Lot Volume Controls: Beaufort County adopted on-lot stormwater volume controls to reduce rapid changes in salinity in areas where runoff is diverted into creeks and rivers.
- 2012 / CRS Rating: Beaufort County improved its status to a Class 6 Community under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) helping reduce the cost of flood insurance for many county residents.
- 2015 / Sea Level Rise and Coastal Resiliency: Beaufort County adopted the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Report which promoted actions to make the county more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 2021 / Southern Lowcountry Stormwater Design Manual; Stormwater Best Management Practices: this new stormwater manual sets out a regional stormwater standard and replaced the Stormwater BMP Manual originally adopted in 1998. The manual establishes new post-construction water quality standards for total suspended solids, total nitrogen, and bacteria.

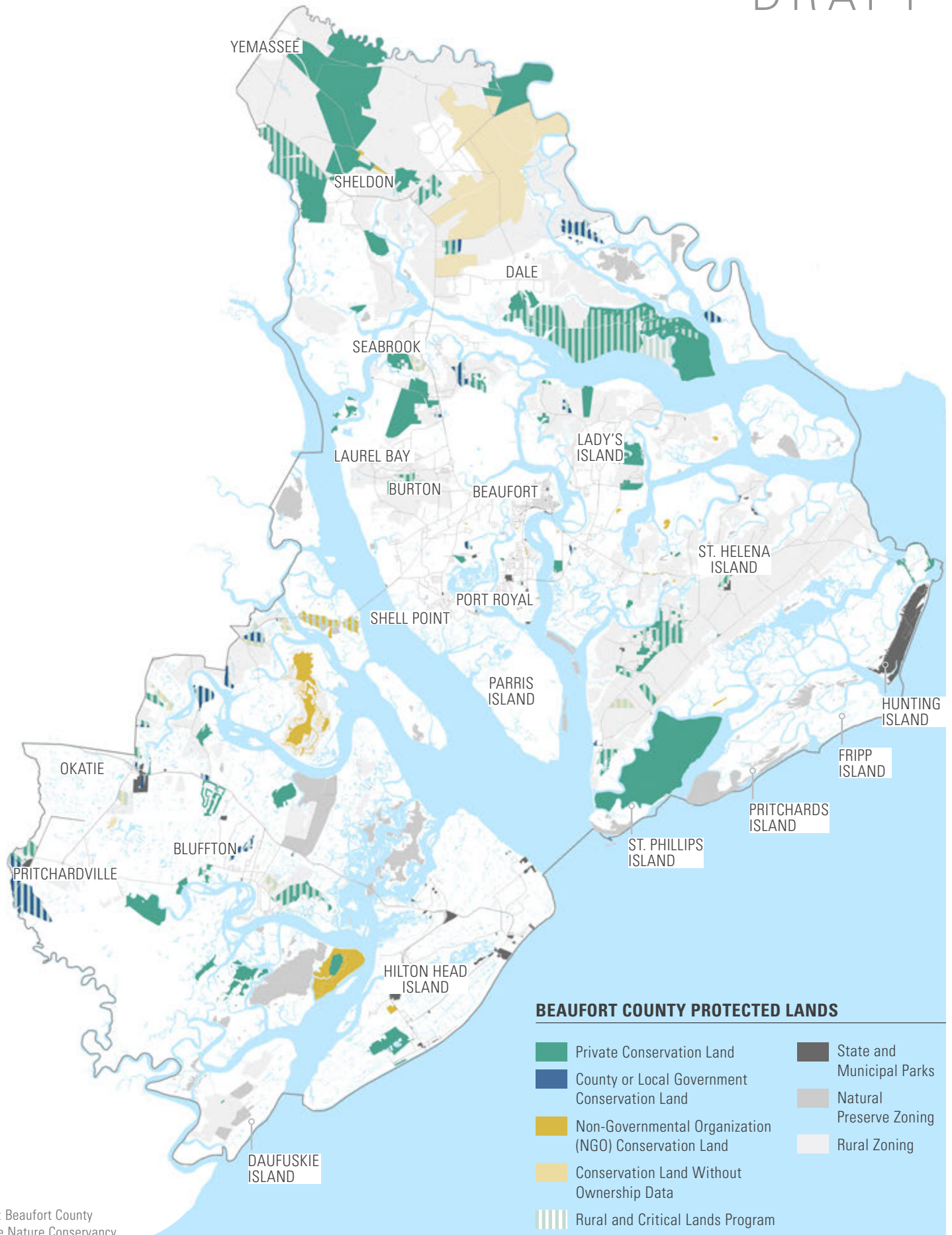


ONGOING CHALLENGES

- Future land use planning will need to pay much closer attention to restricting development of areas with poor soils, poor drainage, and low elevation.
- Older development, including PUDs, will need to be retrofitted to meet the County’s current stormwater standards to prevent further degradation of water quality.
- Continued regional cooperation is needed to ensure that environmental and water quality protection standards are consistent across the board and achieving regional goals.
- Tree and habitat protection standards will need to be frequently reevaluated to guarantee their effectiveness, especially in light of the demand for higher density development.
- Most of the county’s beaches are threatened by high erosion rates that will only be made worse by sea level rise. This will continually be a challenge for beachfront development and protecting public access and will require proactive planning policies to address.
- Consistent local standards are needed to preserve freshwater wetlands in light of uncertain federal and state protections.
- While the county has been aggressive in preserving open space, as undeveloped land becomes scarcer, it is important to prioritize connecting open space and preventing the development of areas with outstanding natural resources.
- Sea level rise and higher evaporation rates are expected to increase storm frequency and severity, worsening such environmental hazards as storm surge flooding, erosion, and saltwater

ACREAGE OF CONSERVATION LANDS BY OWNERSHIP TYPE / BEAUFORT COUNTY & THE NATURE CONSERVANCY





Source: Beaufort County and The Nature Conservancy

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Soils and Agriculture

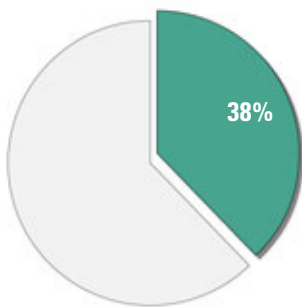
- Beaufort County’s soils provide many challenges to stormwater management, on-site septic systems, and construction in general.
- A majority (73%) of Beaufort County’s soils are classified as hydric soils. Hydric soils are characterized as having a low infiltration and high runoff potentials.
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has designated 90% of the County upland acreage as “prime” or “additional farmland of state importance.” The USDA stipulates that, when the soils are well managed, they are among the most productive in the region.
- Much of the land suitable for agriculture has been committed to development. The remaining farmland is concentrated on St. Helena Island, northern Port Royal Island and north of the Whale Branch River. Efforts to preserve remaining farmland should be focused on these areas.

- The USDA classifies 74% of the county’s soils as “very limited” in their suitability to support septic systems.
- Only 24% of the soils in the County are considered to be “not limited” or “somewhat limited” for the construction of a single-family house of three stories or less.

Climate and Weather

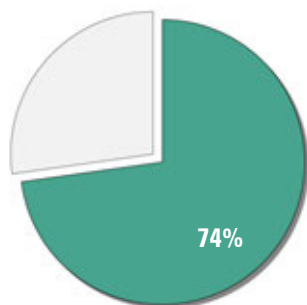
- Beaufort County’s climate is subtropical, characterized by long, hot summers followed by short and relatively mild winters.
- The county receives on average 49 inches of precipitation per year with 70% of the annual rainfall occurring from April through October.
- The Sea Islands have winter temperatures averaging 3 to 5 degrees warmer than the mainland providing 30 to 40 additional frost-free days.
- Historically, on average one hurricane or tropical storm visits the County every 4 to 5 years.

BEAUFORT COUNTY WATER & SOILS



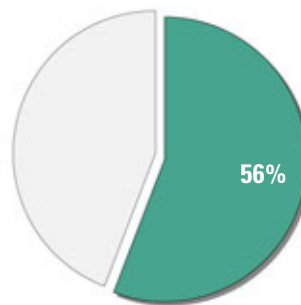
WATER

222,080 of Beaufort County’s 590,720 acres are covered by water.



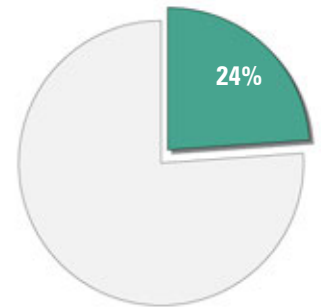
HYDRIC SOILS

Almost three-quarters of the County’s soils are hydric.



FARMLAND SOILS

More than half of the County’s soils are considered to be prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance.



BUILDABLE SOILS

Only about one-quarter of the County’s soils are “not” or “somewhat” limited for residential construction.



Source: Beaufort County

Elevation

- Beaufort County is generally flat and low-lying with elevation ranging from sea level to 42 feet in the Gray's Hill area.
- The County's low elevation makes it very vulnerable to coastal flooding.

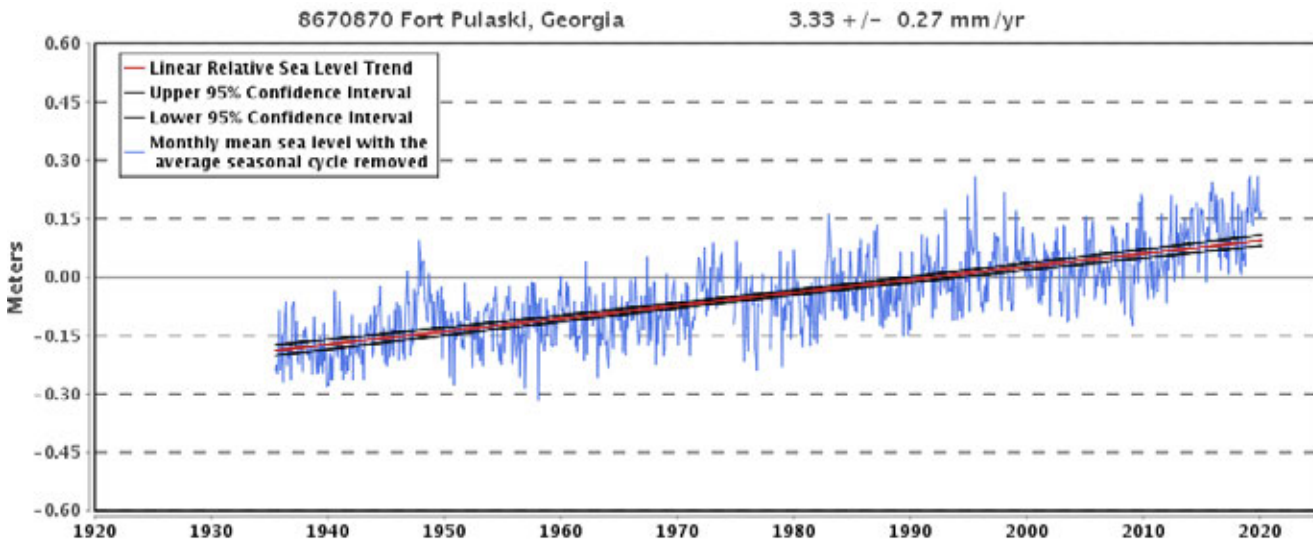
Sea Level Rise

- Historically, sea level has risen approximately 0.13

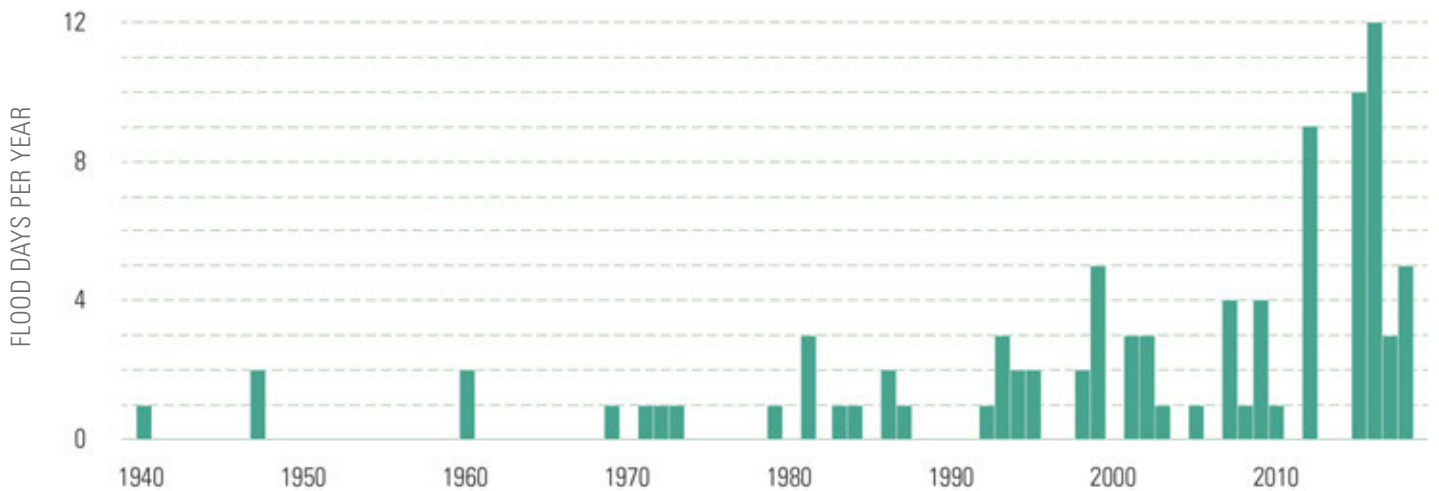
inches per year or 1.1 feet over the last century.

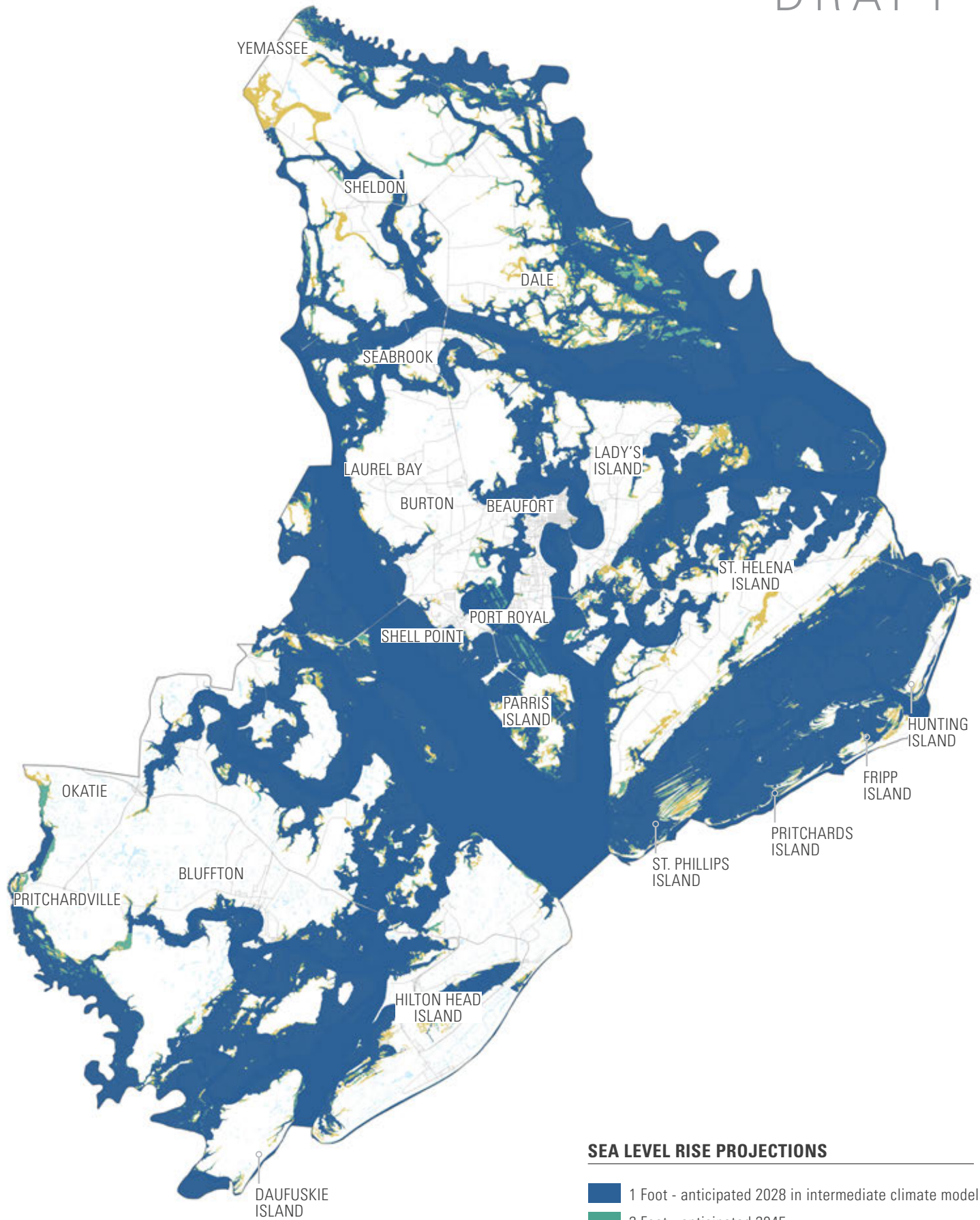
- Extreme tide events, such as king tides and minor coastal flooding, have been progressively increasing in frequency over the last three decades. These "nuisance" flood events are projected to continue to increase in frequency.
- Future sea levels are anticipated to increase between 1 and 7 feet by 2100 due to thermal expansion of the oceans and the melting of polar ice caps.

MEAN SEA LEVEL TREND / FORT PULASKI TIDE GAUGE / NOAA GRAPHIC



HIGH TIDE FLOODING / FLOOD DAYS PER YEAR AT FORT PULASKI TIDE GAUGE / NOAA DATA





Source: NOAA

Salt Marshes, Coastal Waters and Marine Environment

- Of the County's 468,000 acres, 51% are tidally influenced, consisting of sounds, rivers, creeks, and marshes.
- The County experiences the largest tidal range (between 6 and 10 feet) on the southeast coast due to its location on the Georgia Bight.
- The region's unusually large tides are responsible for the prominence of saltmarshes, which provide food, stabilize the shoreline and help absorb floodwaters and storm surges.
- With the exception of the Combahee and New Rivers, the county's waterways are saltwater arms of the ocean and do not originate from inland.
- The greatest threats to water quality are animal pathogens such as fecal coliform bacteria,

nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and salinity changes resulting from poorly managed stormwater.

Beaches and Dunes

- Beaufort County's 39-mile coast is made up of nine barrier islands which take the brunt of most offshore storms, thereby protecting the County's inland estuaries.
- Most of the county's barrier islands are experiencing moderate to severe erosion.
- Fripp Island and local areas of Hilton Head Island and Harbor Island are experiencing accretion, meaning that their beaches are gaining sand.
- Four of the county's nine barrier islands – Daufuskie, Hilton Head, Fripp and Harbor – have significant beachfront development, some of which is threatened by beach erosion.



Loggerhead Sea Turtles / Janie Lackman, Eat Sleep Play Beaufort



Source: Audubon Society



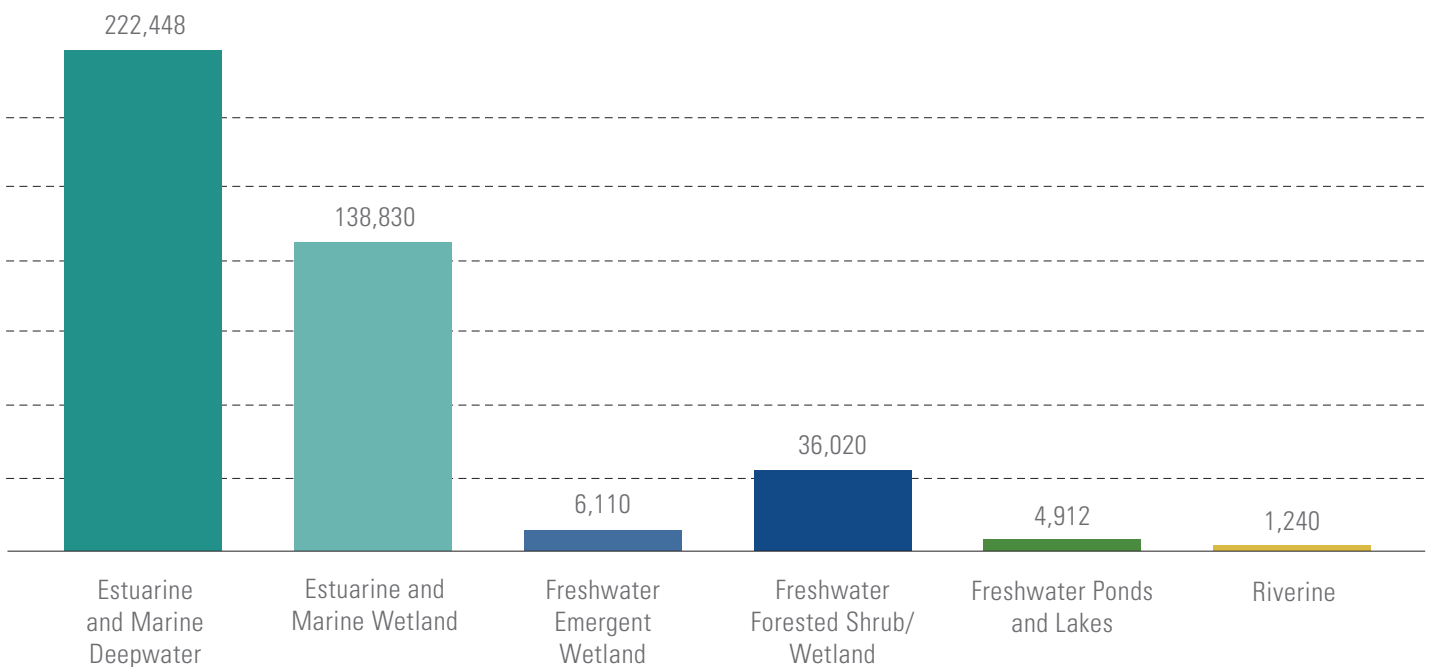
Freshwater Wetlands

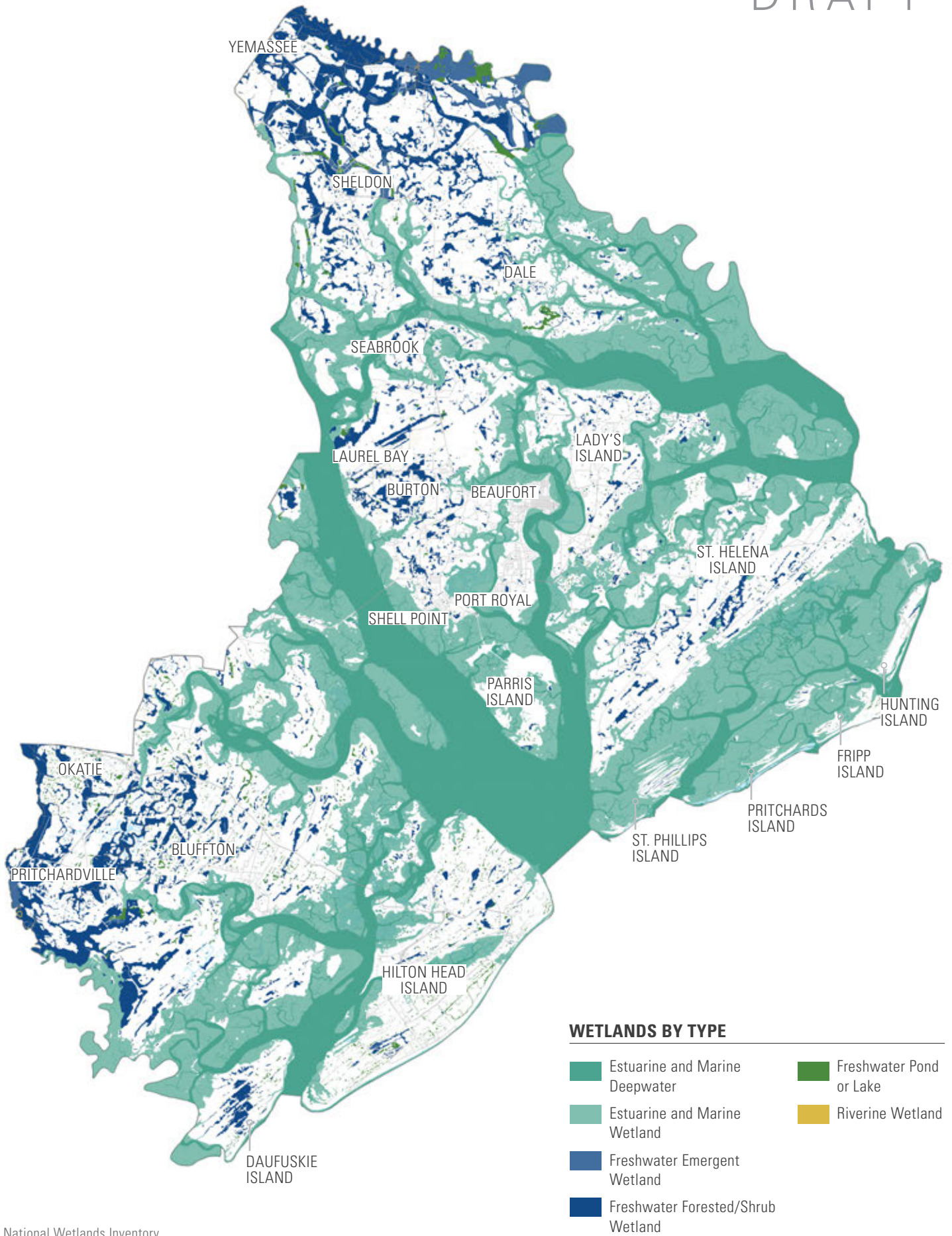
- Freshwater wetlands serve as natural stormwater drainage systems, absorbing floodwaters and filtering out pollutants while providing valuable habitat for plants and animals.
- Freshwater wetlands make up approximately 15% of the county’s land area.

Trees and Forests

- Upland plant communities in Beaufort County include pine woodland, bottomland hardwoods, upland oak hickory forest, southern mixed hardwood forest, marl forest and calcareous cliff, cypress-tupelo swamps, and maritime forest.
- Maritime forests, which support the county’s signature live oaks and sabal palmettos, typically occur on barrier islands immediately inland of dune systems and on sand ridges that mark former shorelines.

ACREAGE OF WETLANDS BY TYPE / BEAUFORT COUNTY





Source: National Wetlands Inventory

Groundwater

- Beaufort County is situated at the northern end of the Floridan aquifer which has historically supplied the region with potable water.
- Saltwater intrusion due to overuse of groundwater in the City of Savannah is a major concern in southern Beaufort County.
- While most residents and businesses get their water from the Savannah River, several areas of the county such as portions of Hilton Head Island, Pritchardville, Sawmill Creek and rural

areas rely on groundwater.

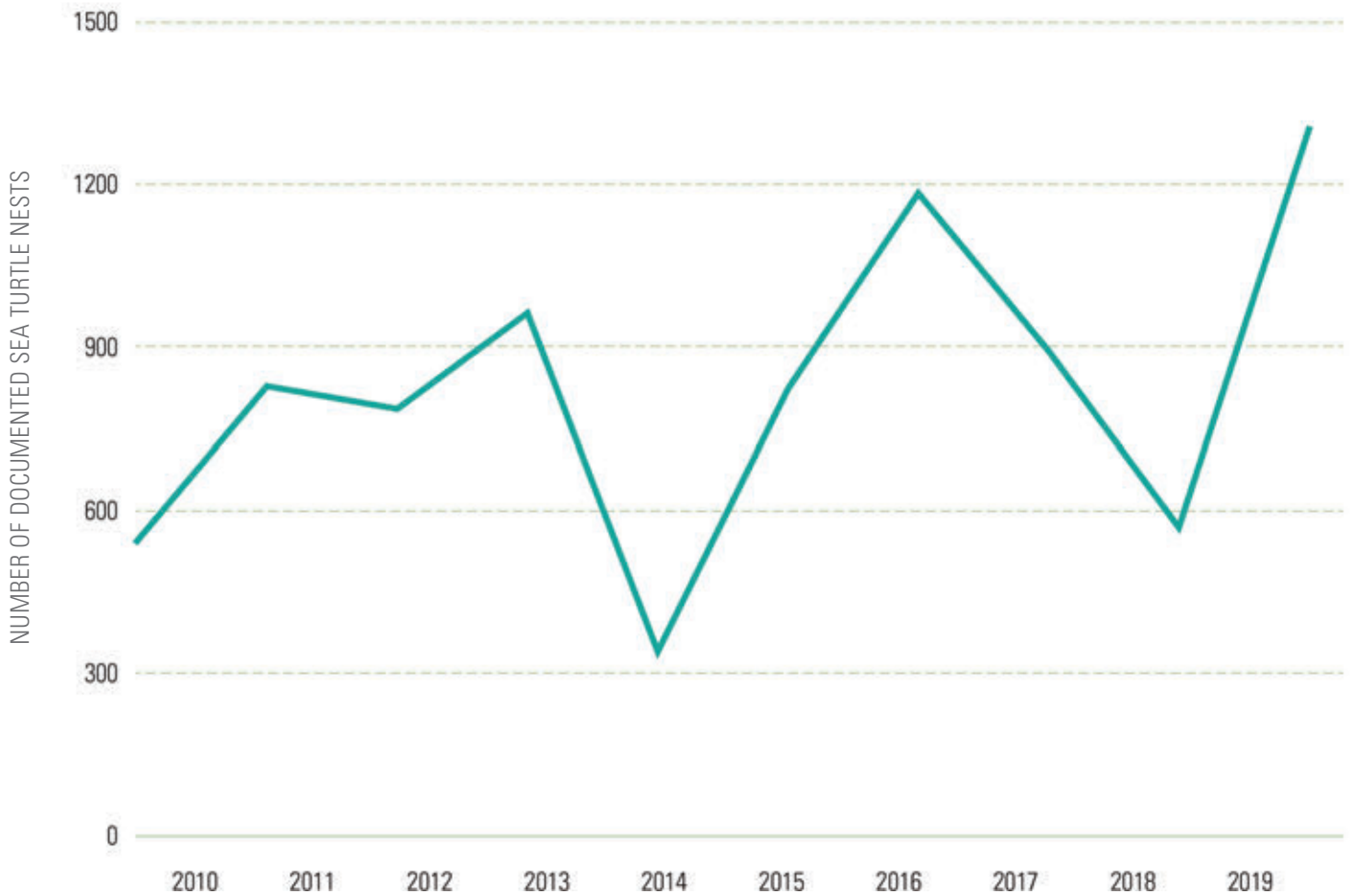
- Agriculture relies on groundwater for crop irrigation.

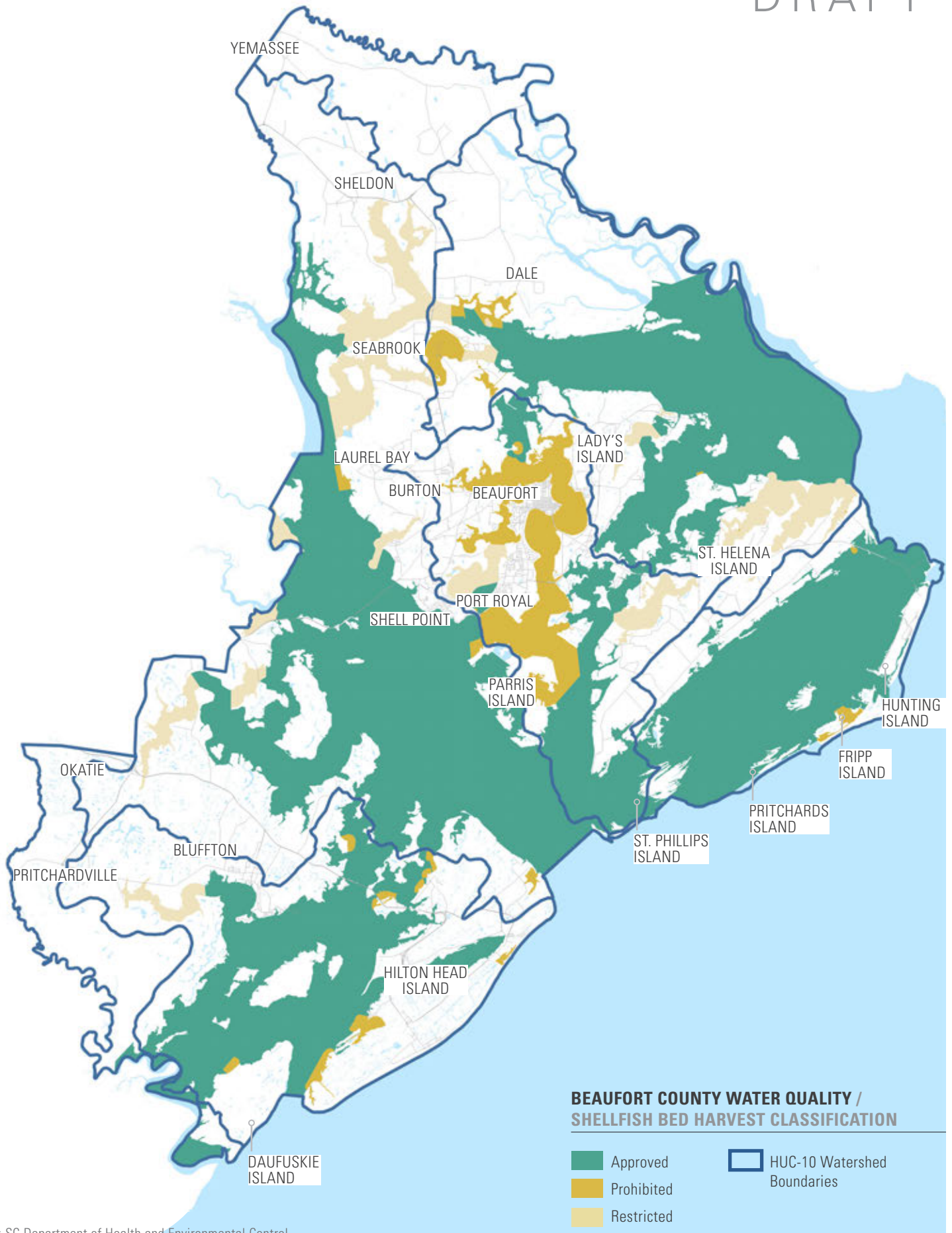
Endangered / Threatened Species

- Currently, only endangered and threatened species are protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act and reinforced by County standards. See page 17 for a list of the county's endangered and threatened species.

LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLES / DOCUMENTED NESTS ON BEAUFORT COUNTY BEACHES OVER TIME

The Loggerhead Sea Turtle, a threatened species, was named the South Carolina state reptile in 1988. The state's coastline provides some of the East Coast's most pristine nesting areas for the turtle, and Beaufort County volunteers work every year from May to October to find and protect the nests.





Source: SC Department of Health and Environmental Control



Cultural Resources



Old Sheldon Church Ruins

CULTURAL RESOURCES



Penn Center Dock

Beaufort County is one of America’s historic and cultural treasures, a place where history and tradition are reflected in a vibrant landscape that provides a tangible link between past, present and future generations.

Beaufort County’s popularity and high growth rate has brought both recognition of the County’s more visible historic assets and an influx of financial support for the rehabilitation of historic structures.

Given this rapid growth, however, it is vital to recognize the region’s less tangible but more inherent cultural resources, which make up the Lowcountry way of life.

These resources include residents’ relationship to the water as a source of food, recreation and transportation; the county’s rich agricultural heritage; the county’s military heritage; the

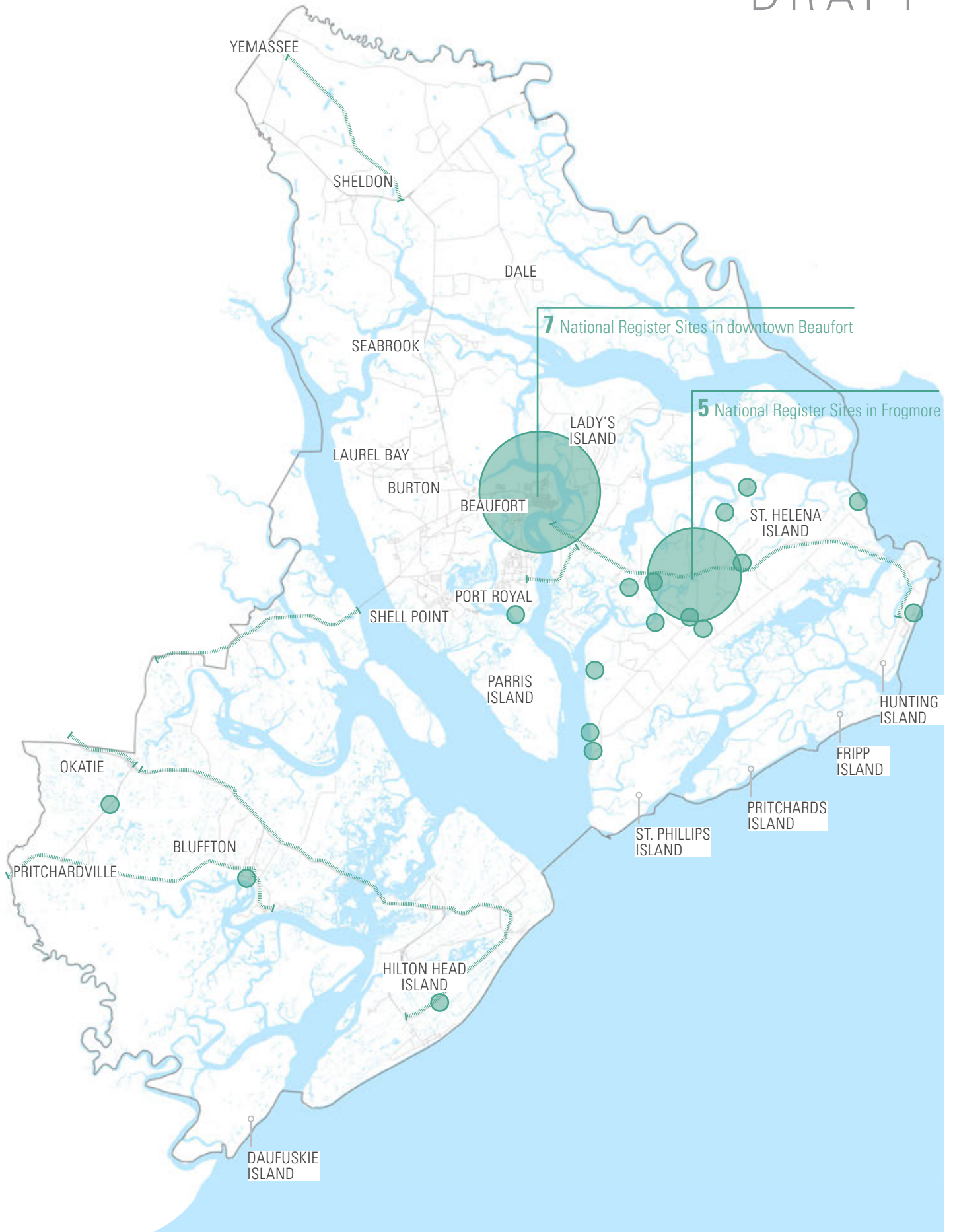
scenic highways and byways; Gullah culture; and the active visual and performing arts community.

Each of these components is vital to the region’s identity. They add to the quality of life for residents; they make this region attractive to visitors; they drive the local tourism economy; and they ideally make this region an attractive site to relocate or create new businesses.

BEAUFORT COUNTY LANDMARKS /

● National Register of Historic Places Sites, National Historic Districts, and Historic Landmarks

▬ Scenic Highways and Byways



HISTORY SNAPSHOT

SHELL RING AT SKULL CREEK / One of at least seven identified large shell rings (and a few smaller rings) in the county, believed to contain some of earliest known pottery in North America



SECOND
MILLENNIUM
B.C.E.

900-1400



RELIGIOUS TEMPLE MOUND AT LITTLE BARNWELL / One of several extant mounds believed to have been used here as a temple and at the Hassell Point site as a burial mound

BEGINNING OF SLAVERY IN SOUTH CAROLINA LOWCOUNTRY / With the arrival of enslaved people imported from the Caribbean

ARRIVAL OF SPANISH / Captain Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon and company

ARRIVAL OF FRENCH / Captain Jean Ribault and company

ARRIVAL OF ENGLISH / Captain William Hilton and company

ARRIVAL OF SCOTS / Lord Cardross and company

1526 1562 1663 1670 1684



CHARLES FORTE & SANTA ELENA / One of the most important historical sites in South Carolina, with the relatively small and undisturbed remains of three well-dated French and Spanish fort sites and two town sites representing the area's first European occupations (Charles Forte excavation site shown)

EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

EUROPEAN EXPLORATION & COLONIALISM

ESTABLISHMENT OF BEAUFORT TOWN BY THE ENGLISH

YEMASSEE WAR

ST. HELENA PARISH CHAPEL OF EASE / Plantation owners' chapel and one of the many significant tabby ruins that remain from this era



BEAUFORT PLANTATIONS / Fragment of ca. 1800 plantation plat showing slave quarters and fields cultivated by enslaved families for their own use



1711 1715-1717 ca. 1740

continued on following spread

1740s to 1770s 1779 late 18th and early 19th centuries

PLANTER & SLAVE ECONOMY / Spike in Sea Island cotton production, concentration of wealth among planter families, and clearing and draining of forests and marshes to make way for agricultural land

BATTLE OF PORT ROYAL / Beginning of British occupation of Beaufort and Port Royal, which lasted nearly to the end of the Revolutionary War

GROWTH OF COLONIAL ECONOMY & POPULATION / Driven by shipbuilding and rice cultivation with a sharp increase in the population of enslaved people, many taken from rice-growing areas of West Africa

AMERICAN REVOLUTION & POST-REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD

DRAFT

MITCHELVILLE / A town built on Hilton Head Island for formerly enslaved people, now the site of Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park



PENN SCHOOL / The first school for the formerly enslaved established on St. Helena



RAID ON COMBAHEE FERRY / June raid in which Harriet Tubman served as a key advisor, commanded three steamships and helped to free 750 slaves from plantations along the Combahee River

EMANCIPATION OAK / The site of an 1863 Emancipation Proclamation reading on St. Helena Island, and the site today of an annual celebration held in January



SECESSION OAK / Site of a pre-war speech by Robert Barnwell Rhett, the state's "father of succession"



ELECTION OF ROBERT SMALLS / Beaufort native, former slave and war hero elected in 1874 to the U.S. House of Representatives

BATTLE OF PORT ROYAL / And Union Blockade at Fort Walker and Fort Beauregard

SEA ISLANDS HURRICANE / 1893 storm with surge that inundated much of the county and killed 1,000 to 2,000

BEGINNING OF U.S. MILITARY INVESTMENT / Acquisition of part of Parris Island by the U.S. Navy in the 1890s

POST-RECONSTRUCTION ECONOMY / Huge plantations divided into smaller truck farms, which eventually consolidated acreage; emergence of timbering, shrimping and phosphate mining as major industries

CIVIL WAR

RECONSTRUCTION to EARLY 20TH CENTURY

PARRIS ISLAND / Officially designated as a recruit depot for the U.S. Marine Corps

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION / Civil Aeronautics Authority purchases land north of Beaufort for the location of an auxiliary air station that would become Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort

BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION / New bridges connect northern and southern Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island, setting the stage for the growth of the tourism and retirement community industries

SEA PINES PLANTATION / The first Hilton Head Island resort community and one of the first in the country to use covenants and deed restrictions to protect open space

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND / By the time the town was incorporated, 10 master planned communities accounted for about 70% of the island

1915 1941 1950s 1957

1983

1935

1993



CLARENDON PLANTATION / One of the estates built post-Reconstruction by wealthy out-of-towners as hunting retreats and winter homes



DEL WEBB'S SUN CITY / Age-restricted planned community, credited with accelerating the spread of master planned communities and commercial development onto the mainland

PRESENT ERA (1950 to present)

CURRENT TRENDS AND RECENT EFFORTS

Current Trends

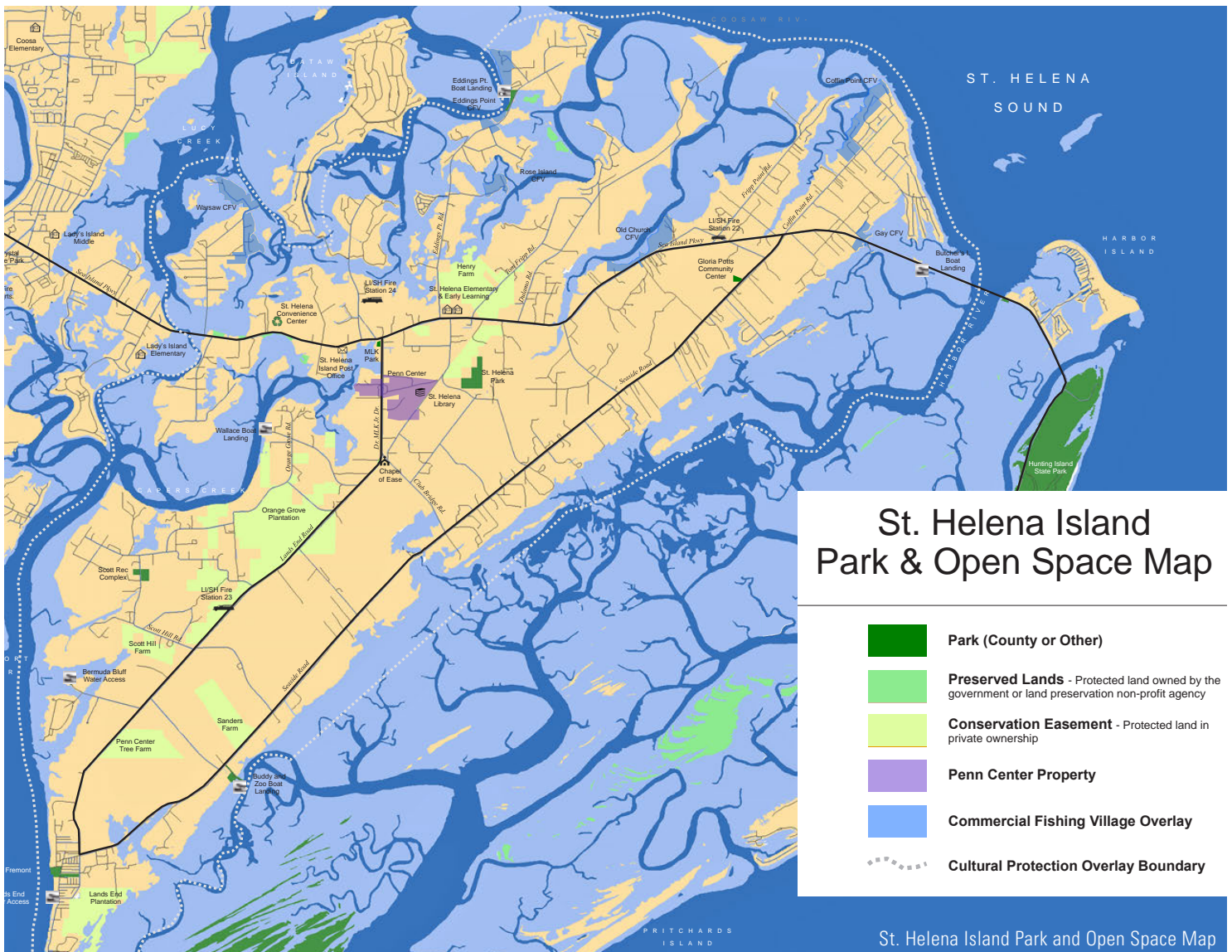
- Beaufort County’s popularity and high growth rate has brought both recognition of the County’s more visible historic assets and an influx of financial support for the rehabilitation of historic structures.
- As a result, Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, the Town of Bluffton and the Town of Hilton Head Island each have adopted ordinances that protect historic and archaeological resources.
- Beaufort County has a rich inventory of vernacular architecture, much of which is being lost to redevelopment and neglect.
- Most of the County’s principal and minor arterials and its major collectors have been or are slated to be widened to four or six lanes, impacting the scenic qualities of the roadways. Beaufort County has taken important steps to protect the scenic qualities of its highways and byways.
- Boating and fishing for recreational, and more importantly, for subsistence, are a significant facet both to the local way of life and economy. Public water access remains a key concern to support the growing demand for boating and fishing.
- Hardships facing the local seafood industry are international in scale – flat market prices, competition from Asia and Latin America, and rising fuel costs.
- Changing demographics have the potential to raise demand for shore based fishing and non-motorized boating, such as kayaking and paddleboarding.
- As in other parts of the Southeast, Gullah culture is under extreme stress from rapid coastal development, population growth, lack of recognition, and the lack of significant financial resources. Today there exists a strong movement to preserve and maintain Beaufort County’s

Gullah culture, language and customs.

Active Efforts to Preserve Cultural Resources

- Development of the Beaufort County Above Ground Historic Resources Survey which serves as a resource to local governments in development decisions as well as property owners, realtors, developers, historians, and the public.
- Adoption of local historic ordinances in Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Bluffton that require that all work done on the exterior of designated historic buildings to be reviewed and approved either by the Historic Preservation Review Board or by staff to ensure that alterations are in keeping with the historic features of the property.
- Active preservation and restoration of many local historic sites including Lobeco Library, Altamaha Town, Fort Fremont in unincorporated Beaufort County; Barker Field Tabby Ruins, Ford Shell Ring, Mitchellville, Greens Shell Ring, Honey Horn Plantation, Jenkins Island Shell Pit, Jenkins Island Cemetery, and the Fish Haul Creek Site on Hilton Head Island; and the Garvin House in Bluffton.
- Establishment by the Federal government of the Reconstruction Era National Historic Park in 2017 to preserve and commemorate activities that occurred during the Reconstruction Era.
- Designation by SCDOT of State Scenic Highways for Old Sheldon Church Road (2005) and May River Road (2012).
- Development of the Beaufort County Canopy Roads brochure to highlight scenic local roads that do not necessarily meet the qualifications of State Scenic Highway designation.
- Establishment of the Commercial Fishing Village Overlay District to help facilitate working waterfronts.

- Local government partnerships with the local seafood industry include the shrimp boat docks in Port Royal and the Bluffton Oyster Company.
- Enhancement of several boat landings and acquisition of land to provide access to Fort Frederick. Establishment of several fishing decks along on Spanish Moss Trail.
- Purchase of conservation easements to preserve farmland on St. Helena Island and in the Sheldon area.
- Adoption of the Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) that will lead to minimizing encroachment around MCAS Beaufort to preserve military culture in Beaufort County.
- Adoption and update of the Corners Community Preservation Plan and the Cultural Preservation Overlay District that actively preserve and promote Gullah-Geechee culture in Beaufort County, especially on St. Helena Island.
- Establishment by Congress of the The Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor in 2006 to help to preserve and interpret the traditional cultural practices, sites, and resources associated with Gullah-Geechee people.



SPOTLIGHT ON:

RECONSTRUCTION ERA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



Black soldiers and civilians heard the Emancipation Proclamation at Camp Saxton on Port Royal Island on January 1, 1863 / National Park Service

The Reconstruction era (1861 to 1900), the historic period in which the United States grappled with the question of how to integrate millions of newly freed African Americans into social, political, and labor systems, was a time of significant transformation within the United States.

Reconstruction began when the first United States soldiers arrived in slaveholding territories and enslaved people escaped from plantations and farms; some of them fled into free states, and others found safety with U.S. forces. During the period, Congress passed three constitutional amendments that permanently abolished slavery, defined birthright citizenship and guaranteed due process and equal protection under the law, and granted all males the ability to vote by prohibiting voter discrimination based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments).

Congress also passed a series of Reconstruction Acts that divided the former Confederacy into five military districts and laid out requirements for re-admittance to the Union (except Tennessee). The experience of Reconstruction, and the rebuilding of the Union following the Civil War, played out across America and resulted in changes that fundamentally altered the meaning of citizenship and the relationship between Federal and state governments. Central to this drama was the former Confederacy where social, economic, and political changes dramatically transformed the region and where major activities of and resistance to Reconstruction took place. African Americans – across America – faced steep obstacles as they attempted to claim their newly won rights. Ultimately, the unmet promises of Reconstruction led to the modern civil rights movement 100 years later.

Despite the importance of Reconstruction, many Americans know very little about it. And what they do know is often outdated or inaccurate. Historians once portrayed the period as a failure and defined it narrowly as the years between 1865 and 1876. Now they see its broad triumphs and also its long reach.

During this period Americans debated profound questions: What did freedom mean? What kind of country would this be? What kind of political system should govern it? What were the rights of citizenship, and who could be a citizen? They struggled earnestly – if not always successfully – to build a nation of free and equal citizens. Small wonder that Reconstruction is often called the country’s Second Founding. To this day the outcomes of the vast political and social changes of the Reconstruction era remain visible across the landscape.

One place that embodies the themes of Reconstruction with special merit is Beaufort County, South Carolina.

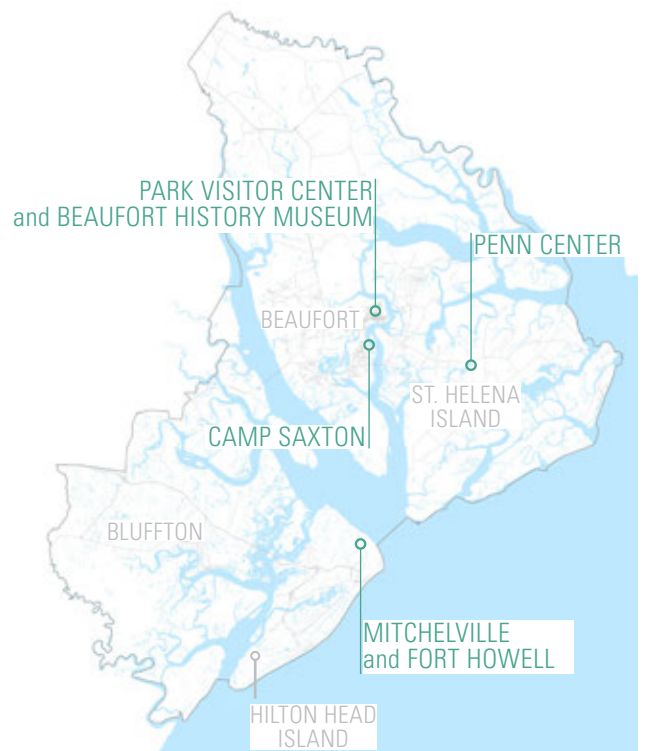
The significant historical events that transpired here make it an ideal place to tell critical national, regional and local stories of experimentation, potential transformation, accomplishment, and disappointment. In the Beaufort region, including the City of Beaufort, the town of Port Royal, and Saint Helena Island, many existing historic sites demonstrate the transformative effect of emancipation and Reconstruction.

Text from National Park Service: www.nps.gov/reer



Park sign in Beaufort / National Park Service

RECONSTRUCTION PARK / BEAUFORT COUNTY LOCATIONS



SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Historic and Archaeological Resources

- Beaufort County has a wealth of important historic buildings and sites as well as numerous pre-historic and historic archaeological sites.
- In 1997, the County completed a survey of over 1500 historic buildings and other above ground historic resources that covered the unincorporated areas of Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal. The Town of Bluffton was surveyed in 1995.
- The County and the municipalities have taken an active role in preserving and restoring many local historic sites including Lobeco Library, Altamaha Town, Fort Fremont in unincorporated Beaufort County; Barker Field Tabby Ruins, Ford Shell Ring, Mitchellville, Greens Shell Ring, Honey Horn Plantation, Jenkins Island Shell Pit, Jenkins Island Cemetery, and the Fish Haul Creek Site on Hilton Head Island; and the Garvin House in Bluffton.

- Many private residential communities, such as Dataw Island, Spring Island and Haig Point have preserved tabby ruins and historic plantation complexes.

Lowcountry Vernacular Architecture

- Older vernacular houses, roadside markets and packing sheds, which are particularly vulnerable to neglect and redevelopment, are an important component of the County's historic built environment and a potential source of affordable housing.
- Many of these structures are modest homes built largely by African Americans.
- The best examples can be found on St. Helena Island, Daufuskie Island and in the Northwest Quadrant in the City of Beaufort.

Scenic Highways and Byways

- Fifty years ago, Beaufort County's transportation network was made up of 2-lane highways,



Chapel of Ease



Coffin Point Praise House



Gay Fish Company

many of which were completely shaded under a canopy of oaks. Population growth accompanied by development has rendered this a vanishing feature of the Lowcountry landscape.

- Old Sheldon Church Road is a good example of this vanishing landscape. After much local effort, it was designated a State Scenic Highway in 2003.
- The County has taken an active role in inventorying other local canopy roads through developing a brochure in 2009 to raise awareness of this unique feature of the region's history, culture, and natural environment.
- Other local efforts to preserve these corridors include applying substantial architectural, landscaping, signage and lighting standards; and through the planting of medians and common areas along major roads and intersections.

Maritime Heritage

- Beaufort County's local waters teem with sheepshead, mullet, croaker, sea trout, and whiting, along with crabs, shrimp and oysters.

Seafood has been a staple of the Lowcountry diet since the days of the Native American inhabitants.

- Many native residents of Beaufort, especially the Gullah-Geechee community have traditionally relied on the bounty of the county's local waters for subsistence and for small-scale commercial fishing.
- The popularity of recreational fishing and boating also supports fishing charters and ecotourism which are a component of the local economy.
- According to SCDNR, between 2007 and 2014, boats registered in Beaufort County increased by 23% to 15,131 boats. Assuming this boat registration keeps pace with population growth, there will be over 20,000 registered boats by 2030. This growth will place further stress on the County's 26 public boat landings.
- The demand for shore-based fishing is already evident in the number of people fishing from bridges and in undesignated areas in proximity to roads and bridges.

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- Changing demographics have the potential to raise demand for shore-based fishing and non-motorized boating, such as kayaking and paddleboarding, putting greater demand on public water access.
- Because of growth and rising land prices, the traditional relationship between County residents and the water is being challenged. To address these challenges, Beaufort County will need to take a more active role in preserving traditional water dependent uses and providing improved access to the water for all County residents.

Local Seafood Industry

- While commercial fishing is not a major component of the local economy, it is important to the County's Lowcountry identity.
- The local seafood industry relies on working waterfronts for ice, fuel, grading and processing, freezers, access to markets, and places to moor fishing boats.
- Beaufort County has few remaining working waterfronts that provide these services to the industry which are threatened by high land costs and the marginal profitability of the industry.
- The local seafood industry is affected by increased development, which has led to the closure of shellfish beds due to pollution and lower salinity levels from stormwater runoff.
- Other impacts of development on the seafood industry include an increasing number of no wake zones due to private docks, and competition with recreational boaters at public landings.

Agricultural Heritage

- Preserving and enhancing agriculture as a way of life in Beaufort County is vital to maintaining the County's economic and demographic diversity, providing economic opportunities to rural residents and landowners, reducing the pressures of sprawl, providing a source of local

fresh produce, and retaining the traditions and characteristics that make this region unique.

- Historically and culturally, Beaufort County's identity has been closely tied to its soil. For much of the County's history, agriculture has been the mainstay of the local economy.
- Agriculture has also played an important role in sustaining its population through periods of isolation and hard economic times. From the Civil War through the first half of the 20th century when employment and capital were scarce, vegetables, melons, poultry and livestock provided the County's many small property owners, many of them freed slaves, the means to survive and remain independent in spite of poverty and isolation.
- While the County's recent population growth has brought increased economic opportunities, the importance of farming and the skills related to farming are in decline.





McLeod Truck Farm Packing Shed / National Register



www.farmersmarketbluffton.org

- Large-scale truck farms are still active on St. Helena Island and north of the Whale Branch River. Typically, tomatoes are grown and harvested during the month of June to be shipped to markets in the Northeast. These farms are subject to greater pressure from development and face the continuing need to truck their products longer distances.
- On a smaller scale many other types of crops, including collards, cabbage, turnips, carrots, beans, watermelon, cantaloupe, corn, yellow squash, okra, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins are grown locally on small farms and gardens to be marketed at the State Farmers Market in Columbia or at local farmer's markets.
- There is a growing interest among consumers for locally grown foods creating opportunities for smaller scale farmers. However, local marketing programs, such as farmer's markets and small scale wholesalers are necessary to ensure that locally grown produce makes its way to consumers.
- Rising food prices along with concerns about the safety and quality of massed produced food products have led to a worldwide interest in consuming locally grown and produced food. This global movement has the potential to benefit local small and medium sized growers in Beaufort County.

Military Heritage

- Beaufort County's military heritage is nearly 500 years old and has influenced virtually every aspect of the local culture.
- The County is centered around Port Royal Sound the Broad River which is the deepest natural harbor in the southeastern United States. This location played a key role in the original settlement of the County; the strategic role the County played in many conflicts over the years; and influenced the location of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island; the Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort; and the Naval Hospital.

- The presence of the military has influenced development patterns, the building of roads and other infrastructure and has attracted retirees and tourists.
- Military and civilian personnel contribute significantly to the economy of Beaufort both in money they spend and as part of the non-military workforce.
- Military personnel also participate in community cultural and charitable organizations.

Gullah/Geechee Culture

- The Gullah/Geechee are a community of African Americans who live along the Atlantic coast on the Sea Islands from Jacksonville, FL to Jacksonville, NC.
- Comprised of descendants of enslaved people brought from West Africa, Gullah/Geechee communities continue to thrive on the Sea

Islands today.

- The historic isolation of the Sea Islands was crucial to the survival of this culture. Within their rural communities, Gullah/Geechee people were able to maintain language, arts, crafts, religious beliefs, rituals, and foods that are distinctly connected to their West and Central African roots.
- Rapid population growth has the potential to substantially alter the traditional social and cultural character of Beaufort County's Gullah community, as new residents represent different values and customs.
- The gentrification of St. Helena Island, which represents the County's largest Gullah community, would result in a greater demand for urban services and eventually to urbanization and higher property values, which would make it more difficult and costly to maintain the



F-35B over Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort



Gullah Grub Restaurant, St. Helena Island

Gullah/Geechee Corridor Sign / www.visitgullahgeechee.com

traditional rural lifestyle on the Island.

- Increased development pressure and rise in property values has cut off many traditional water access points, access to oyster beds, hunting grounds and other amenities of the natural environment that were the lifelines for the Gullah/Geechee community.
- Many of the older cemeteries, which play an important role for the Gullah/Geechee community, are located within the original plantations and are now on private property and difficult to access.
- The main resource of the Gullah/Geechee culture in need of preservation are the people themselves, their folklore, arts, crafts, music, and traditions.
- In 2006 Congress designated the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor to recognize, sustain, and celebrate the important contributions made by the Gullah Geechee, who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida.

- The Heritage Corridor also assists in interpreting the story of the Gullah Geechee and preserving Gullah Geechee folklore, arts, crafts, and music along with historic sites, artifacts and objects associated with the Gullah Geechee people.

Visual and Performing Arts

- Beaufort County has a thriving, nationally recognized arts community and is home to a variety of arts organizations, galleries, theater groups, dance groups, orchestras, jazz ensembles, and vocal groups.
- Beaufort County has a number of performing arts facilities that provide venues for both professional performers and grass roots theater groups and musicians:
- The Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, on Hilton Head Island, includes a 350-seat main theater and two smaller venues for youth and experimental theater. They also have a gallery for the visual arts that provides space for national exhibits, statewide exchanges, and local artists.

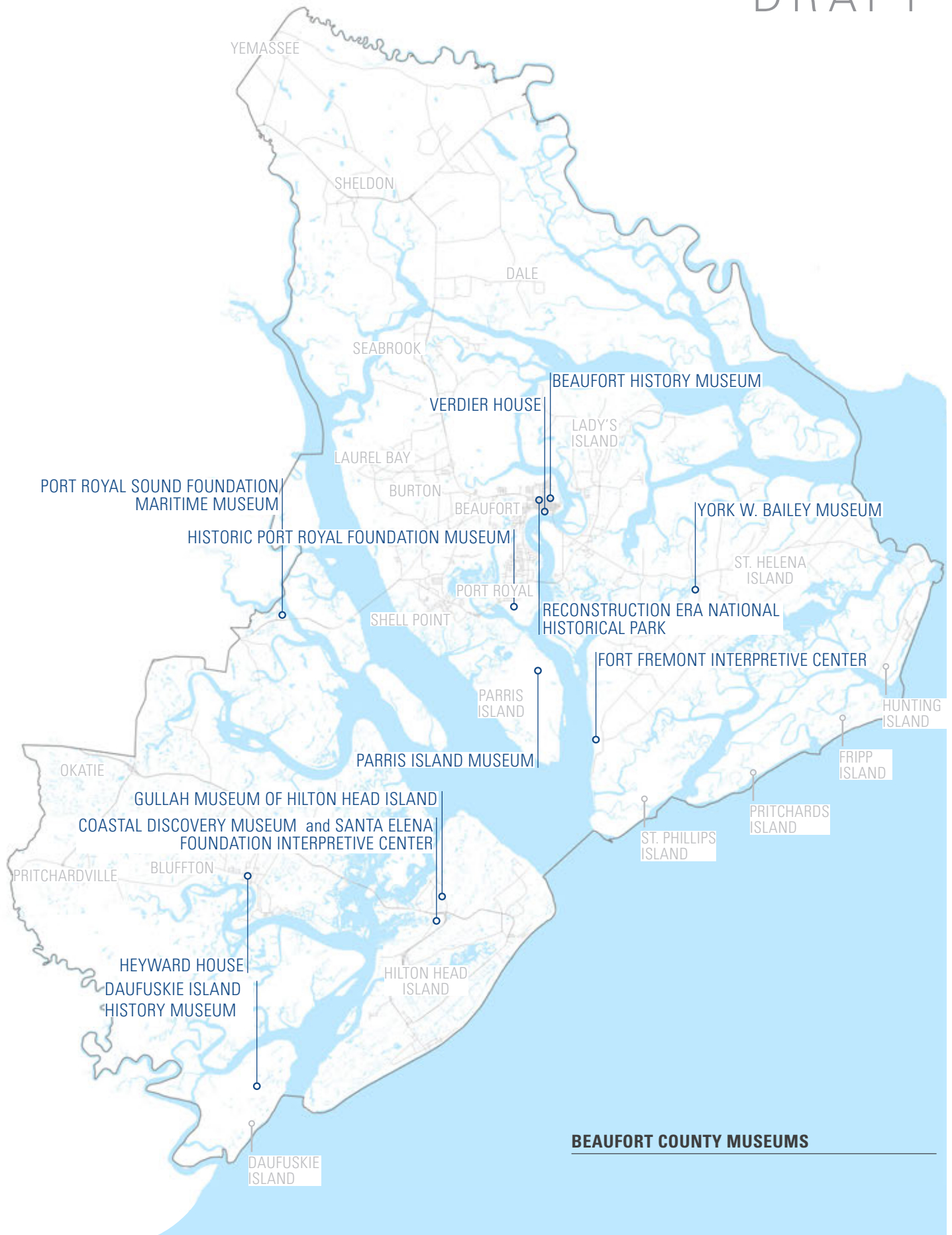


- The May River Theater, located in Bluffton Town Hall, provides a 200-seat venue for plays and other shows.
- The USCB Performing Arts Center is a 474-seat venue that is used for both local performers and touring professionals. Beaufort Performing Arts, Inc. was established in 2003 by a joint effort between USCB, the City of Beaufort, and several local arts supporters to bring high quality professional entertainment to Beaufort.
- Other venues in northern Beaufort County include the Frisell Community House at Penn Center, which seats 100, and the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park, which offers an open air, covered stage for outdoor concerts.
- The Beaufort County School District has several auditoriums in its high schools and middle schools that serve as venues for local and sometimes national performances.

Museums

Beaufort County museums, labeled on the map at right, include:

- » Verdier House (c1790) (801 Bay St., Beaufort): Federal Era house open for tours.
- » Beaufort History Museum (713 Craven St., Beaufort): Located in the Beaufort Arsenal interprets 450 years of local history.
- » Parris Island Museum (111 Panama St., Parris Island): Documents early settlement of Parris Island and history of the US Marine Corps.
- » York W. Bailey Museum (16 Penn Center Circle W., St. Helena Island): Tells the story of African-American residents of the Sea Islands.
- » Coastal Discovery Museum (70 Honey Horn Dr., Hilton Head Island): County's only natural history museum; includes Santa Elena Society."
- » Historic Port Royal Foundation Museum (1634 Paris Ave., Port Royal): Artifacts and memorabilia from the Town's history.



- » Heyward House (1841) (70 Boundary St, Bluffton): House museum operated by the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society.
- » Port Royal Sound Foundation Maritime Center (310 Okatie Hwy, Okatie): Features exhibits and classrooms focused on the natural marine environment.
- » Fort Fremont Interpretive Center (1123 Lands End Road, St. Helena Island): Artifacts and interpretation of Spanish American War Era civil defenses.
- » The Gullah Museum of Hilton Head Island (12 Georgianna Dr, Hilton Head Island): Interprets and promotes Gullah/Geechee culture.
- » Reconstruction Era National Historical Park Visitor Center (706 Craven St., Beaufort): Exhibits and information about the Reconstruction Era.
- » The Daufuskie Island Museum (44 Old Haig Point Rd, Daufuskie Island): preserves the historical and cultural heritage of Daufuskie Island.

Education and Support

- The Arts Council of Beaufort County is a countywide non-profit that provides support to the visual and performing arts community through the distribution of grant funds from the South Carolina Arts Commission.
- The Arts Council distributes approximately \$20,000 annually to artists, arts organizations, and art teachers through its Community Arts Grant Fund. Half of those funds are from the SC Arts Commission. The local match is provided by the City of Beaufort.
- The Arts Council also publishes the magazine, ArtNews three times a year which promotes the activities of local artists and performers.



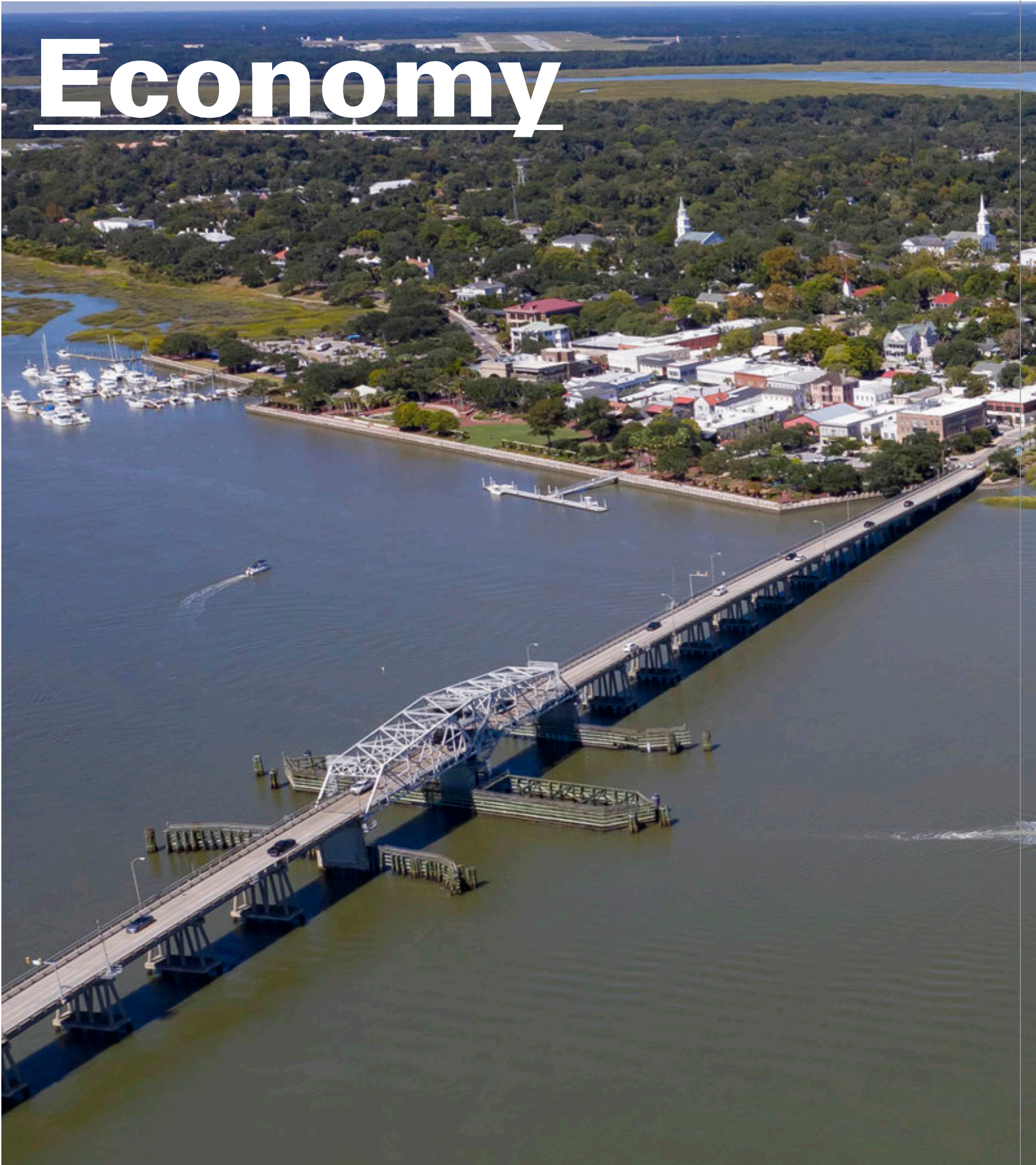
Beaufort Arsenal/History Museum



Penn Center Heritage Days 2015 / www.penncenter.com

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Economy





ECONOMY



Located in the heart of the Lowcountry, Beaufort County is well situated between the ports and airports of Charleston and Savannah, and is close to Interstate 95, the major east coast rail corridor, and the proposed Jasper Port terminal.

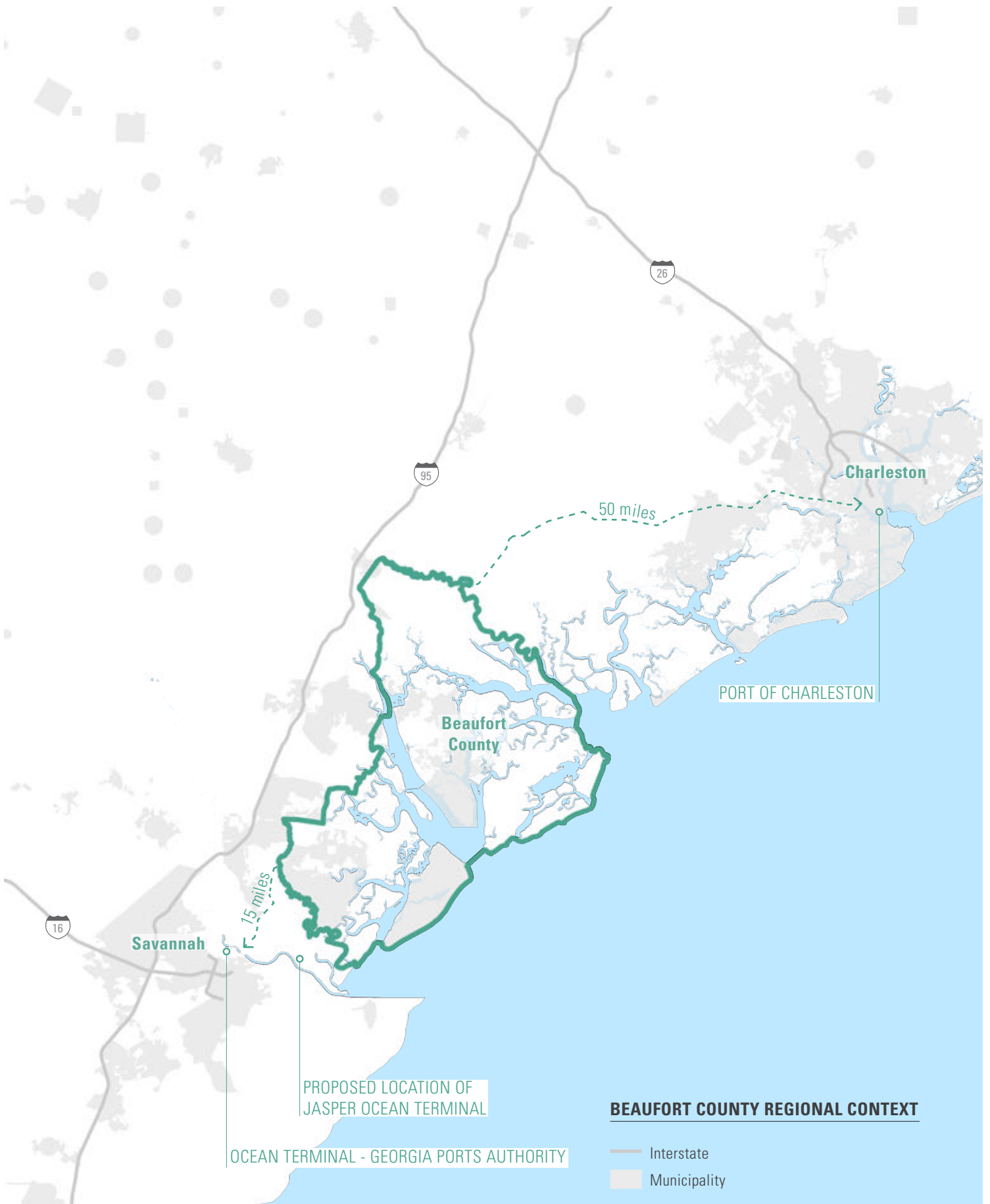
Beaufort County's economy benefits from existing economic drivers including tourism, the military, the retirement industry, residential development, education and healthcare, all of which are vital to the economic sustainability of the community. These attractions, coupled with 30 miles of Atlantic coastline, inlets, rivers and marshlands, attract a large influx of new residents, keeping Beaufort County one of the fastest growing counties in South Carolina.

The long-term success and viability of Beaufort County depends upon the creation of a larger, more diversified business tax base creating quality jobs for the County's citizens. The County is fortunate to have a solid foundation in its military presence, which positions the area well to attract new business from the aeronautics and other supporting industries. Knowledge-based and green businesses are the way of the future. Beaufort County needs to ensure the right

product, infrastructure, permitting processes and incentives are in place to attract these industries and enable them to quickly establish a presence.

The following guiding principles are necessary to maintain and enhance a healthy local economy as the County continues to grow:

- » Maintain and grow opportunities for existing local businesses while actively pursuing target industries to diversify the local economic base.
- » Seek ways to reduce the cost of doing business in Beaufort County.
- » Protect the natural environment, manage growth, and support infrastructure improvements to preserve the region's attractiveness.
- » Support education and training to create a qualified local workforce.

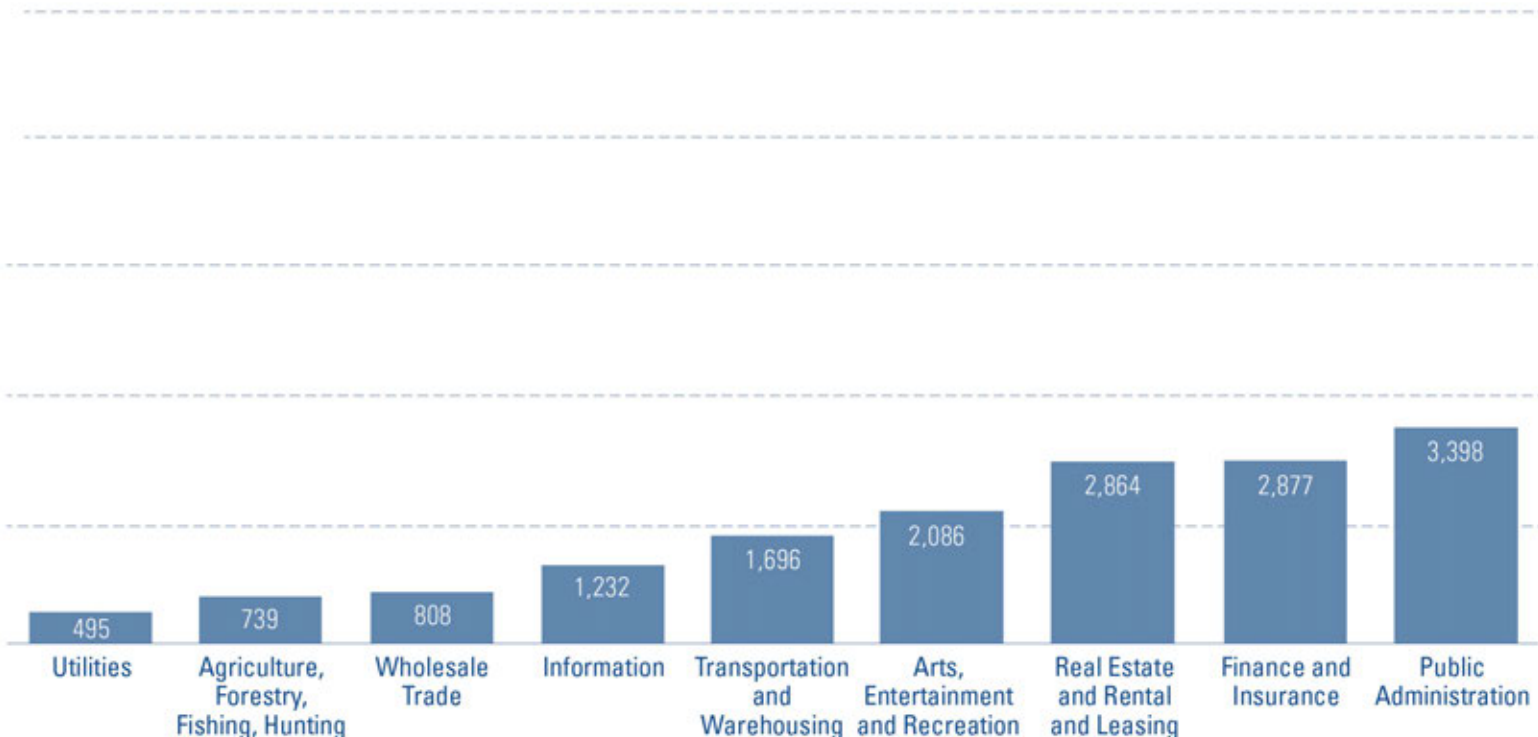


SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Economic Drivers

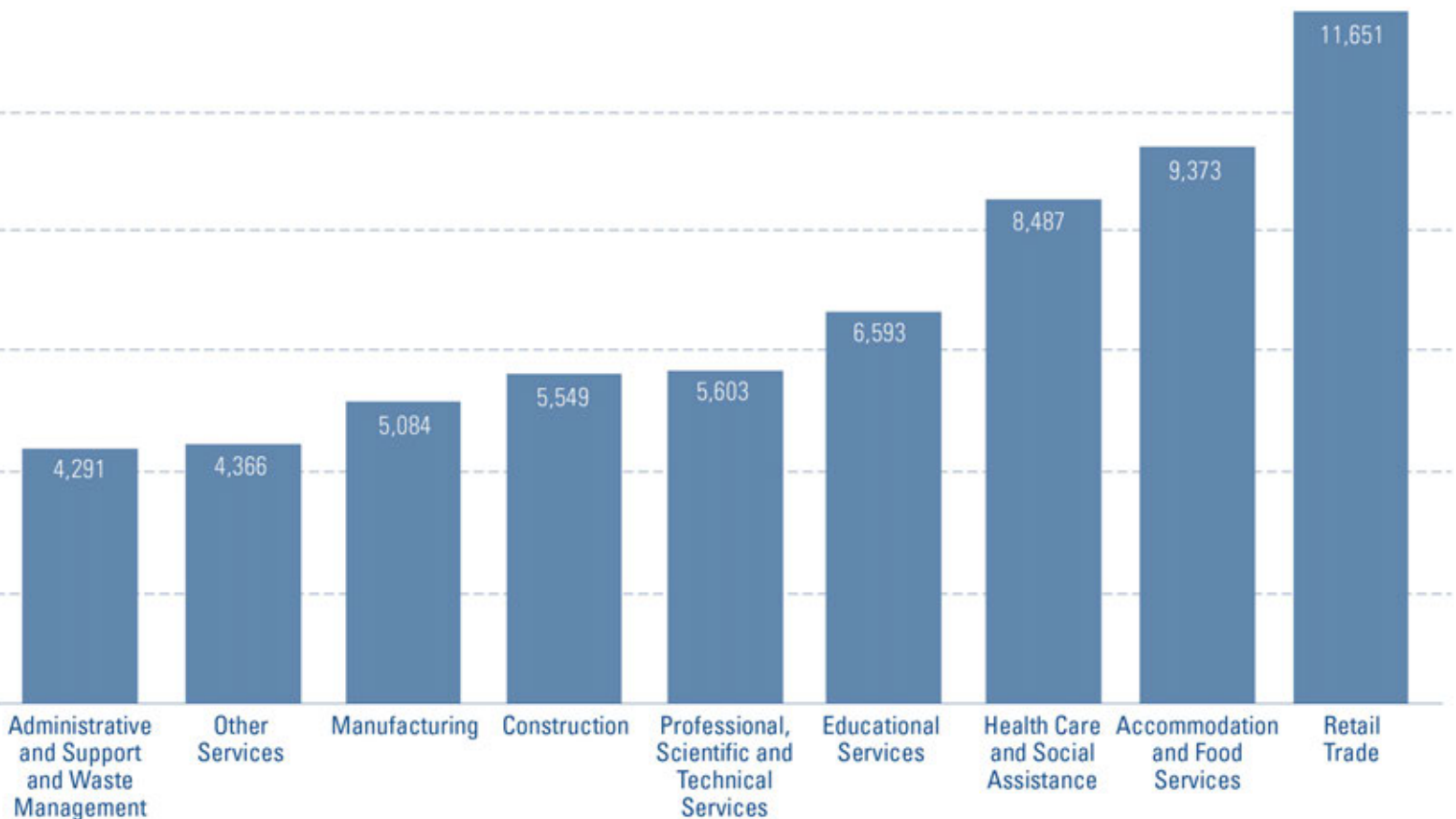
- Beaufort County's existing economic drivers include tourism, the military, the retirement industry, residential construction, education and healthcare.
- Tourism and hospitality dominate the local economy in southern Beaufort County, while the military has a major impact on the local economy north of the Broad River.
- The total economic impact of tourist spending in 2019 on Beaufort County was approximately \$1.5 billion. This spending also provided \$32.9 million in local government revenue.
- The economic impact of visitors to Hilton Head Island alone generated 16,654 jobs in 2019, representing 14.7% of all jobs in Beaufort County. *[Source: Estimated Total Impact of Tourism in Hilton Head Island, 2019 on Beaufort County, South Carolina; Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC; March 2020]*
- Beaufort County's three military bases employ 7,473 military and civilian personnel and directly add \$890 million to the local economy. Applying the multiplier effect, the three bases are responsible for a total of 14,902 jobs and adds \$1.7 billion to the local economy. *[Source: The Economic Impact of South Carolina's Military Community: A Statewide and Regional Analysis; University of South Carolina Darla Moore School of Business; April 2017]*
- It is important for the County to support its existing economic drivers including agriculture, timbering, and seafood, while actively pursuing new industries that diversify its economy and tax base.

NUMBER OF BEAUFORT COUNTY EMPLOYEES BY INDUSTRY, CIVILIANS AGE 16+ / AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2018



Locational and Workforce Advantages

- Beaufort County is located in proximity to Interstate-95 and the ports of Savannah and Charleston. The proposed Jasper Port has the potential to further increase the County’s economic development opportunities in the future.
- Beaufort County’s quality of life, unique landscape, and mild climate make it an attractive place to live. This strength has the potential to attract business owners looking to move their companies or their back-office operations to a more attractive location.
- Beaufort County’s three military installations put Beaufort County at an advantage to target defense and aerospace industries that complement the operations of the installations.
- The three military installations also create a pool of retiring military and military spouses who bring considerable talent and skills to the local workforce.
- South Carolina has the 10th lowest tax rate in the United States and provides in general many incentives for businesses to locate in the state.
- The University of South Carolina – Beaufort (USCB) is part of the University of South Carolina System and enrolls about 1,900 students. The main campus is in Bluffton, offering over 20 programs of study. The institution’s Beaufort campus houses the school’s honor programs and the Department of Visual Arts & Design. The Hilton Head Island campus is home to the school’s Hospitality Management baccalaureate degree program.
- Technical College of the Lowcountry is a public community college in Beaufort, South Carolina that serves the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. Programs includes readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™, the SC Technical College System is dedicated to furthering economic and workforce development in South Carolina.
- All high schools in the County utilize WorkKeys®



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

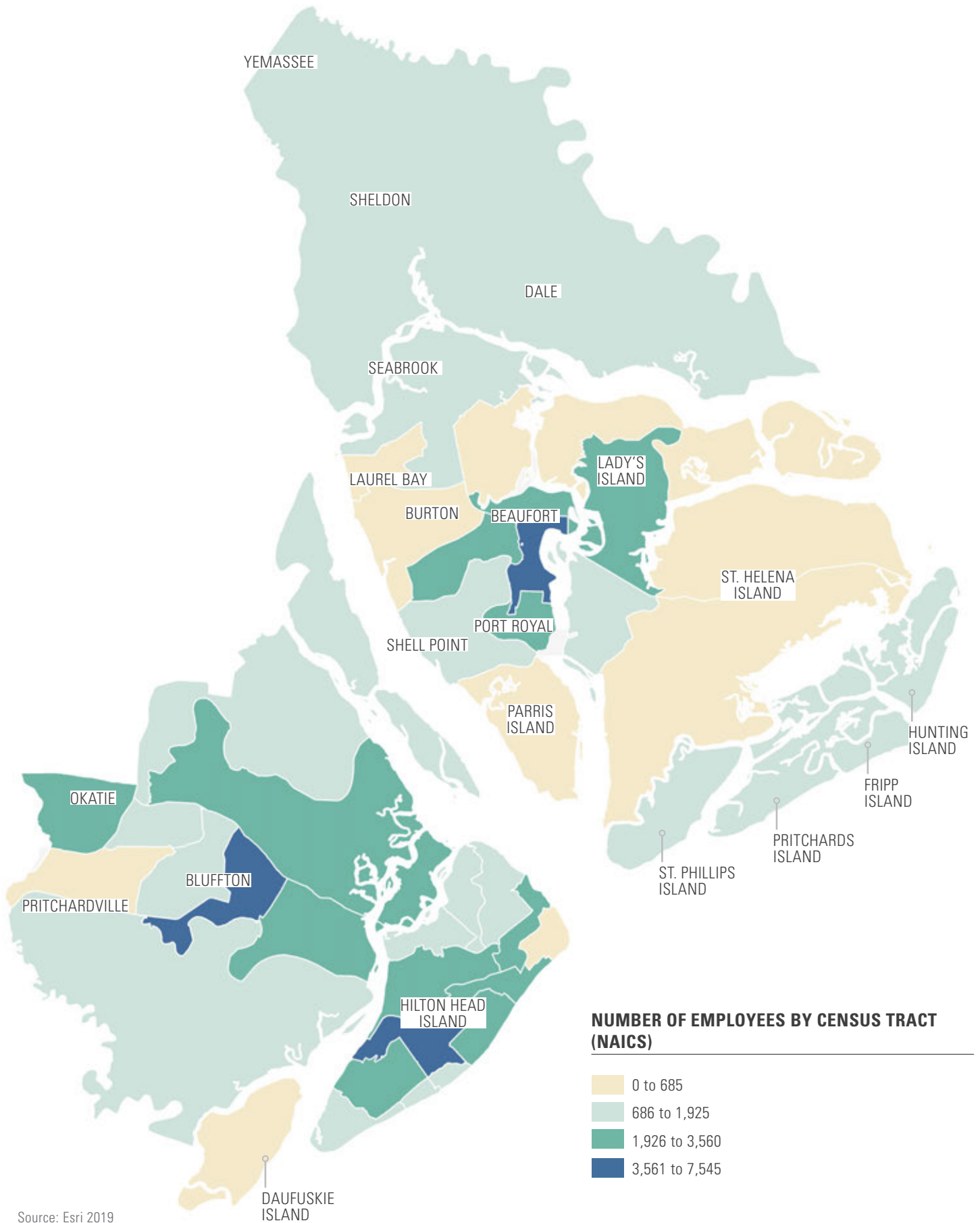
Testing System for the emerging workforce.

Major Efforts in the Last Ten Years

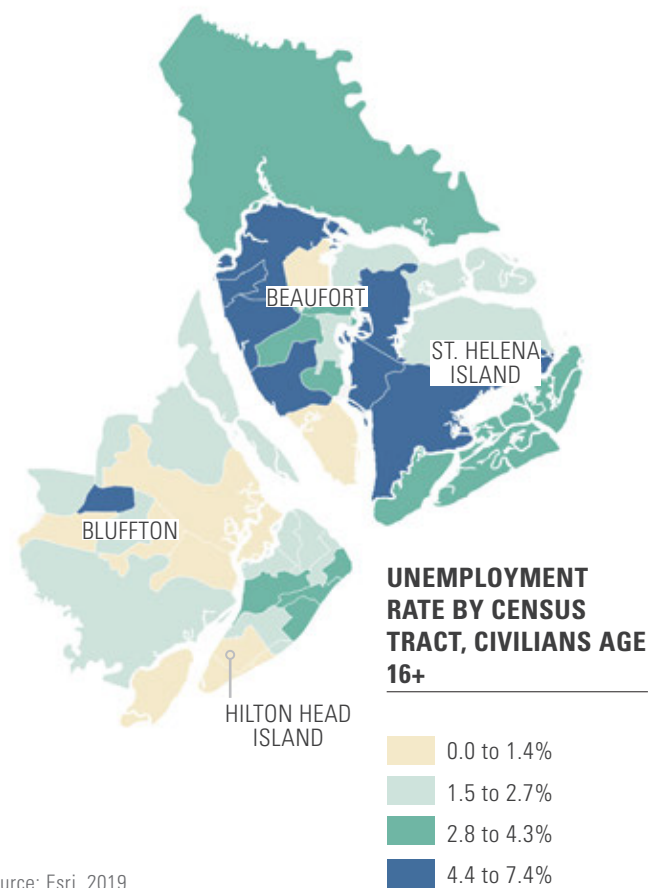
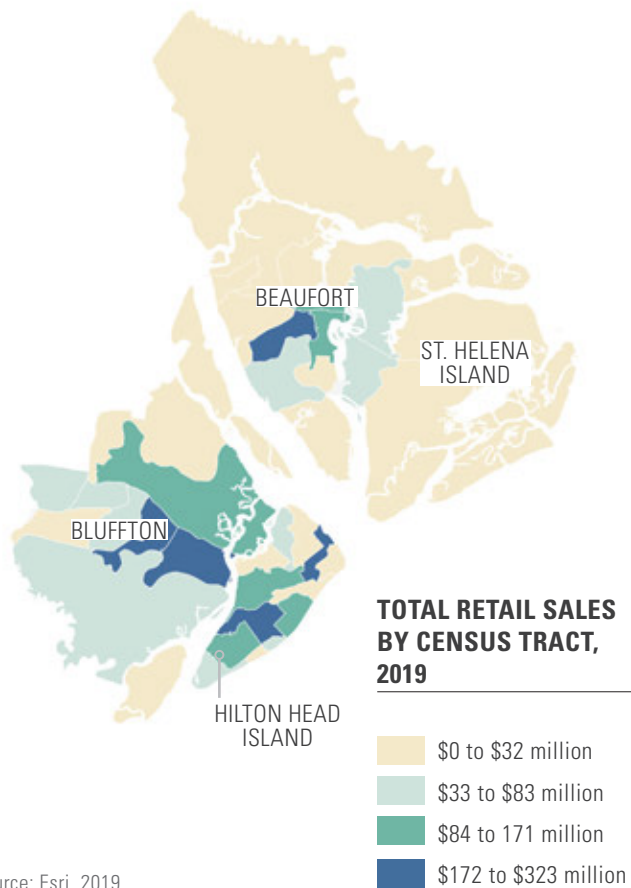
- Higher levels of regional cooperation.
- The sale of the Beaufort Commerce Park to the City of Beaufort in 2012.
- Establishment of the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation.
- Opening of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation and the Beaufort Digital Corridor to foster and encourage entrepreneurship and incubate small businesses.
- Establishment of the F-35B Pilot Training Center at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort, which opens up opportunities for supporting industries to develop.
- The sale of the Port of Port Royal to a private developer.
- Construction of the Technical College of the Lowcountry Culinary Institute of the South at Buckwalter Place in Bluffton.
- Expansion of the Hilton Head Island Airport runway, which has attracted commercial air travel to the region.

Target Industries

- Aerospace/Defense: With the arrival of the F-35B Joint Strike Fighter and its training facility at MCAS Beaufort, businesses that support these jets will follow and ancillary development around the base will grow. With the Beaufort Commerce Park located adjacent to the air station, Beaufort County is well positioned to handle the businesses that these jets will bring. MCAS personnel are equipped with significant aircraft maintenance training and high-tech skills, which, as they retire from military service, creates a ready-made workforce to staff aeronautics and precision industries.
- Tourism and Hospitality Supply Chain: Tourism and Hospitality are a strong economic driver in Beaufort County. Growing the supply chain for these industries would benefit the region by not only providing local jobs, but improving the efficiency and reducing costs to the region's hotels and resorts. One local example is Resort Services, Inc., which provides laundry and linen services for the region while employing over 200 local residents.
- Health and Bio-Related Fields: Beaufort County's rapid growth combined with its aging population has resulted in continuing need for additional health care facilities. In addition, eviCore, a medical benefits management company, employs over 600 people in the Bluffton area. Based on these factors, Beaufort County has the potential to develop a strong local healthcare and bioscience industry cluster.
- Knowledge-Based Industries: With the constant advancements in technology and the expanding global economy, business today can be conducted from virtually anywhere. Knowledge-based business can encompass professions such as architecture and finance, a call center or a business focused on, technical writing, healthcare, or even art and design. Knowledge-Based Industries are environmentally friendly, attract high-wage jobs, and can locate almost anywhere provided the necessary infrastructure is in place.
- Green Industries: The benefit of green building is gaining recognition nationwide. As protecting our natural resources is a top priority for our region, it is important to capitalize on this movement. Not only will green construction practices help us protect these important resources, it will benefit



Source: Esri 2019



both the local economy and our environment.

Creating a Business-Friendly Environment

- As the County focuses on new economic development opportunities, it will be important to create a business-friendly environment which may include the following strategies:
 - » Developing flexibility within the business license fee program for companies that fit the County's four economic development focus areas - Distribution and Logistics, Aeronautics, Knowledge-Based, and 'Green' as well as standardization of rates and classifications.
 - » Taking steps to designate properties that are currently under municipal or County control that can be offered to relocating businesses.
 - » Reviewing and updating state and local

incentives on a regular basis to attract the right industries for the state and our region as well as keep pace with the changing face of business and industry.

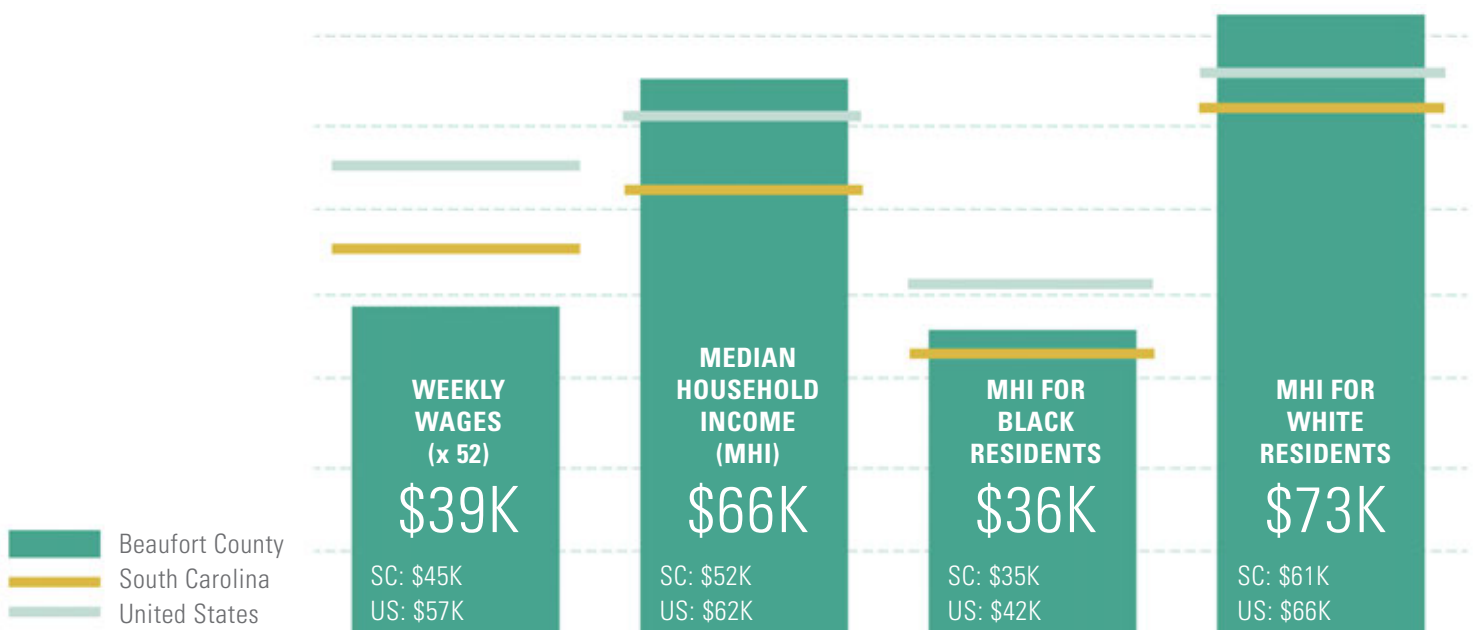
- » Encouraging the state to seriously look to upgrading their incentive package, particularly when it comes to the current Per Capita Income qualification and the minimum headquarters jobs creation requirements.
- » Adding a specified definition for Knowledge-intensive businesses to the list of businesses qualified for the state Jobs Tax Credit.
- » Providing an additional tax credit in Multi-County Industrial Park (MCIP) agreements for companies whose new construction meets LEED and Energy Star standards.
- » Encouraging green and sustainable development projects that meet economic

development requirements by thoughtfully streamlining the review processes, as well as creating fee reductions and waivers, and building height or density bonuses.

Incentives

- Beaufort County’s direct competition exists up and down the southeast coast in communities, from Jacksonville, Florida to Norfolk Virginia, with similar growth patterns, culture and quality of life elements. A wide range of attractive incentives, together with competitive tax rates, provide an exceptional economic climate for business in Beaufort County.
- State Statutory Incentives:
 - » No state property tax
 - » No local income tax
 - » No inventory tax
 - » No sales tax on manufacturing machinery, industrial power or materials for finished products
 - » No wholesale tax
 - » No unitary tax on worldwide profits
- Corporate Income Tax Incentives:
 - » Favorable corporate income tax structure
 - » The Job Tax Credit (JTC) is a statutory incentive offered to companies, both existing and new, that create new jobs in the state. The credit is available to companies that establish or expand corporate headquarters, manufacturing, distribution, processing, qualified service-related, research and development facilities. This credit is extremely beneficial for companies because it is a credit against corporate income taxes, which can eliminate 50% of a company’s liability.
 - » South Carolina allows manufacturers locating in Economic Impact Zone (EIZ) counties a one-time credit against a company’s corporate income tax of up to 5% of a company’s investment in new production equipment. The actual value of the credit depends on the applicable recovery period for property under the Internal Revenue Code.
 - » In an effort to offset the cost associated

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with relocating or expanding a corporate headquarters facility, South Carolina provides a generous 20% Corporate Headquarters Credit based on the cost of the actual portion of the facility dedicated to the headquarters operation or direct lease costs for the first five years of operation. The credit can be applied against either corporate income tax or the license fee. These credits are not limited in their ability to eliminate corporate income taxes and can potentially eliminate corporate income taxes for as long as 10 years from the year earned. Eligibility for this credit is determined by meeting a number of specific criteria.

- » The Research and Development Tax Credit rewards companies for increasing research and development activities in a taxable year. South Carolina offers a credit equal to 5% of the taxpayer's qualified research expenses in the state. The term "qualified research expenses" is defined in Section 41 of the Internal Revenue Code. The credit taken in any one taxable year may not exceed 50% of the company's remaining tax liability after all other credits have been applied. Any unused portion of the credit can be carried forward for 10 years from the date of the qualified expenditure.
- State Discretionary Incentives:
 - » The Job Development Credit is a discretionary, performance-based incentive that rebates a portion of new employees' withholding taxes that can be used to address the specific needs of individual companies, approved on a case-by-case basis. Job Development Credits are cash payments made to a firm based on the location of the facility and the hourly wages paid. The payment ranges from 2% to 5% of the location's payroll. A firm may receive the payments for up to 15 years. The payments received may be used to offset the cost of rents or investments in fixed assets such as land, building and infrastructure.
 - » The Economic Development Set-Aside Program assists companies in locating or expanding in South Carolina through road, water and sewer infrastructure, site improvements and other costs related to business location or expansion.
 - » The Enterprise Zone Retraining Credit Program allows existing industries to claim a Retraining Credit for existing production employees. The credit allows up to 50% of approved training costs for eligible production workers (not to exceed \$500 per person per year).
 - » The Rural Infrastructure Fund assists qualified counties in South Carolina's rural areas by providing financial assistance for infrastructure and other activities that enhance economic growth and development, including job creation and product development.
 - » The Port Volume Increase income tax credit is offered to qualified entities that use state port facilities and increase base port cargo volume by 5% over base-year totals. (The base year qualifications are 75 net tons of non-containerized cargo or 10 loaded TEU's transported through a South Carolina port).
 - » Tourism Infrastructure Development Grants support new or expanding tourism, recreation facilities or designated development areas primarily through infrastructure projects.
- Other Incentives: Other incentives include: readySC™, Apprenticeship Carolina™, Foreign Trade Zone and BuySC, which are administered by the SC Coordinating Council for Economic Development [CCED].
- Local Incentives:
 - » The 5 Year Property Tax Abatement allows companies to apply for a five-year exemption from county property taxes (does not apply to school taxes) for the following: a \$50,000 investment in manufacturing

facilities, a \$50,000 investment in research and development facilities or a \$50,000 investment (and 75 new jobs) in corporate headquarters or distribution facilities.

- » The Fee in Lieu of Property Tax (FILOT) allows qualifying companies to negotiate a fee instead of paying property taxes. Advantages include: significantly lowering property tax payments and negotiating the applicable millage rate to a 20 year locked rate or a five-year adjustable rate and stabilizing payments to local government for the term of the agreement (up to 20 years). Companies investing as little as \$2.5 million dollars may negotiate this exemption with the county in which they locate. This 20-year incentive creates significant savings for companies by lowering the assessment ratio from 10.5% for manufacturers to as low as 6%. Furthermore, the millage may be held lower than if the property were not under a FILOT.
- Regional Incentives: Together with the non-profit regional economic development organization serving the area, SouthernCarolina Alliance, we are motivated to incentivize projects. Our incentives may include free or low-cost assistance from the state's leading experts to handle your company's permitting and environmental questions, free upfront legal guidance on navigating tax incentives and SC laws to maximize the incentives to your company, and/or engineering consultation for construction of new facilities or the up-fitting of existing ones.
- Federal Incentives: The Federal New Market Tax Credit is an often underutilized, but very powerful financing tool. Businesses can obtain benefits including lower interest rates (sometimes below market) on loans, interest-only payments for seven years, non-traditional financing not available in the marketplace, access to a reduced cost of capital, and more. The NMTC is a competitive program administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

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Built Environment





BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Bluffton, SC

Beaufort County has been shaped by its location near water. Whether for access, the movement of goods, fortification, or recreation, the sounds and waterways of the region define why so many throughout history have chosen to occupy this region, often along roadways that used to serve as hunting paths for the indigenous peoples who lived here.

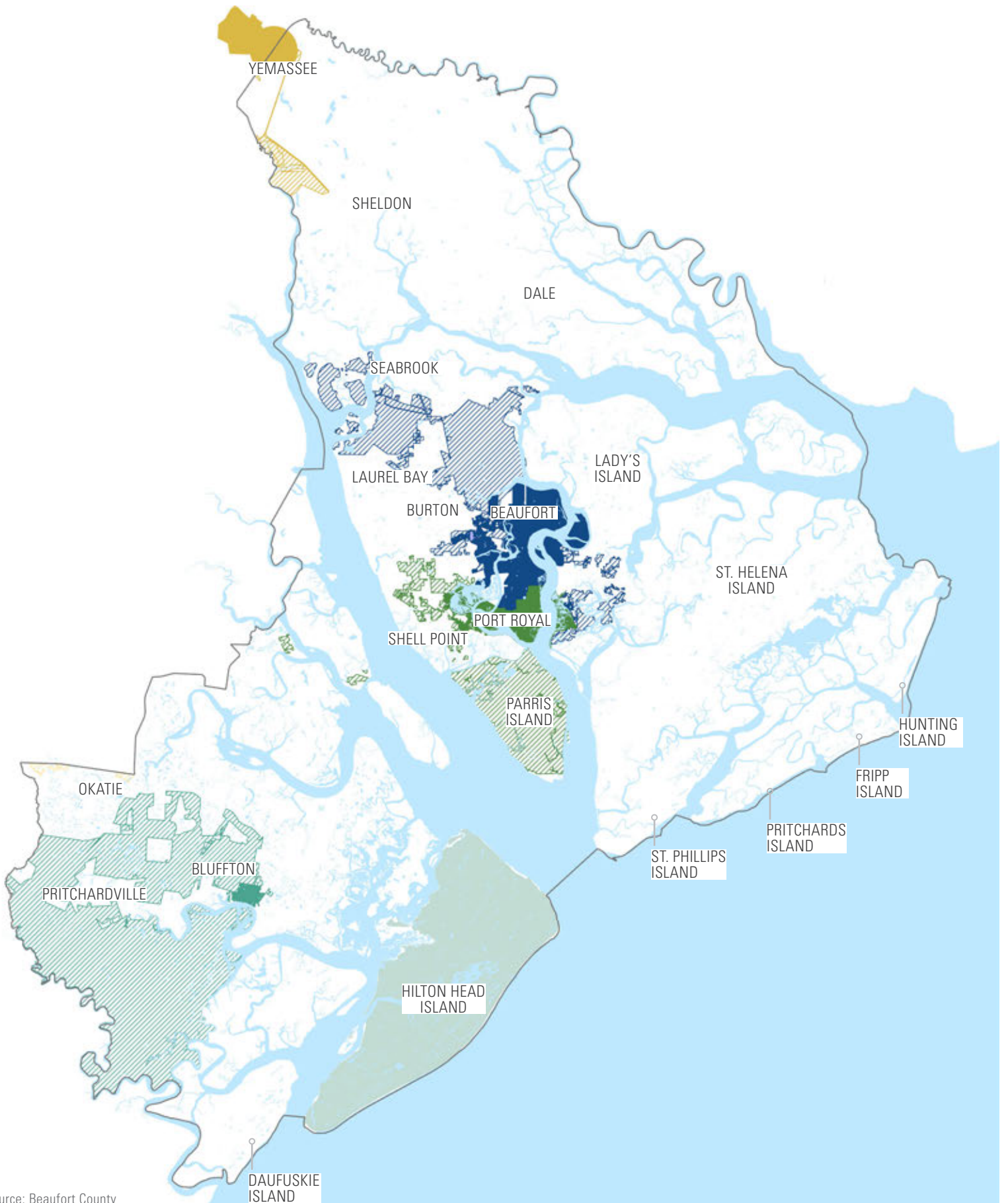
The ability to grow things and ship them also provided impetus for colonization and forced people onto these lands to grow cotton, indigo and rice on large plantations owned by wealthy landowners. These large plantations became the places where large resort communities evolved, beginning on Hilton Head.

The county’s built tapestry includes towns and cities located along navigable waterways, resort developments located on the barrier islands, suburban amenity-based communities that have

spread inward now that the barrier islands have been built out, military bases, and inland rural communities.

MAP LEGEND / MUNICIPAL LIMITS OVER TIME

- Beaufort, 2000
- Beaufort growth post-2000
- Port Royal, 2000
- Port Royal growth post-2000
- Bluffton, 2000
- Bluffton growth post-2000
- Yemassee, 2000
- Yemassee growth post-2000
- Hilton Head Island, 2000
- Hardeeville post-2000



Source: Beaufort County

EXISTING COMMUNITY FORMS

Historical Towns with Traditional Urban Form

The City of Beaufort, the Town of Bluffton and the Town of Port Royal exemplify high-quality urban form and sense of place. Each has a gridded network of walkable streets with buildings and shop fronts that front directly onto them. There is a mix of land uses that provide places to dine, shop, live and be entertained. These are rich environments that future mixed-use environments should model themselves after.

New Urbanist/ Neotraditional Communities

Some new developments — such as Habersham, Newpoint, Broad Street, City Walk, Westbury Park, and Tabby Roads — model themselves after the historical towns and coastal communities of the late 19th and early 20th century and are planned with the same components of gridded walkable streets, neighborhood nodes, parks, and traditional home designs that reflect the low country climate and aesthetic. These communities offer a good model for how to add additional housing density, while remaining true to the region’s look, feel and character.

Master-Planned Communities

Beginning with Sea Pines Plantation in the late 1950s, places like Hilton Head Island have been developed into large, self-contained, resort-oriented communities that offer a full slate of recreational amenities, access to the beach or waterways, golf, and security gates. These communities have attracted people to vacation and ultimately live in the region and offer the type of living that many retirees dream of. Given their gated entrances, they do not offer connectivity other than on the major roadways from which they are accessed.

Conventional Subdivisions

There are many conventional new community subdivisions – such as Royal Pines, Telfair, Shadow Moss and the many subdivisions along Buckwalter Parkway and New Riverside Road – that offer living

opportunities similar to the resort plantations but with a more modest package of amenities and mix of uses. These communities are generally low density residential with house and lot packaged and built by major developers. They are designed with suburban community patterns of cul de sac streets, limited connectivity, and limited points of access. They generally do not offer places to shop or dine within their boundaries. Many retirees as well as “local residents” live in these communities.

Military Installations

The County boasts three military communities: MCAS Beaufort, MCRD Parris Island, and Beaufort Naval Hospital, in addition to Laurel Bay, which offers housing to military personnel with families. They include in-home and community amenities, health care, child development centers, swimming pools, playgrounds, community centers, dining options and access to base facilities. These communities are designed to provide a complete living experience at low cost.

Rural Communities

Rural communities are important to the region’s history, cultural preservation, and landscape. They are predominately located in four areas, including the Sheldon area north of the Whale Branch River, St. Helena Island, northern Lady’s Island, and along SC 170 south of the Broad River. St. Helena Island is informally divided into several different communities, each with its own distinct identity. The two most established communities on the island are the Corners Community, which is the commercial center of the island, and Land’s End, which is home to Fort Fremont, a former military battery. Sheldon is made up of several rural crossroads including Sheldon, Big Estate, Gardens Corner, Dale and Lobeco. It also includes many former plantations that are preserved through public and private conservation easements, in addition to the Old Sheldon Church Ruins.

Historical Town with Traditional Urban Form



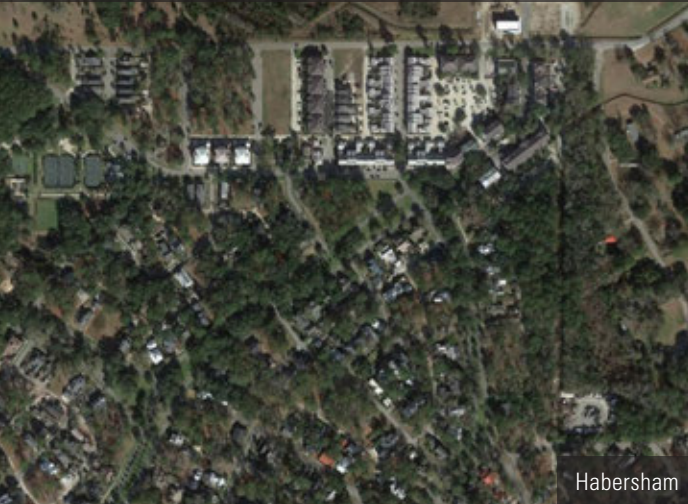
Historic Beaufort

Conventional Subdivision



Laurel Bay

New Urbanist/Neotraditional Community



Habersham

Military Installation



U.S. Marine Corps Air Base

Master-Planned Community



Dataw Island

Rural Community



St. Helena Island

EXISTING LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Beaufort County has evolved from being mostly rural to the dynamic place it is today. It is only within the last 40 to 50 years that Beaufort County has truly witnessed a surge in population growth, brought about initially by the development of tourism on Hilton Head Island in southern Beaufort County and by the growth of the military bases located in northern Beaufort County. Following the development of residential communities, commercial areas have sprouted and line busy state highway corridors. Essential services and businesses have been developed to support the growing population.

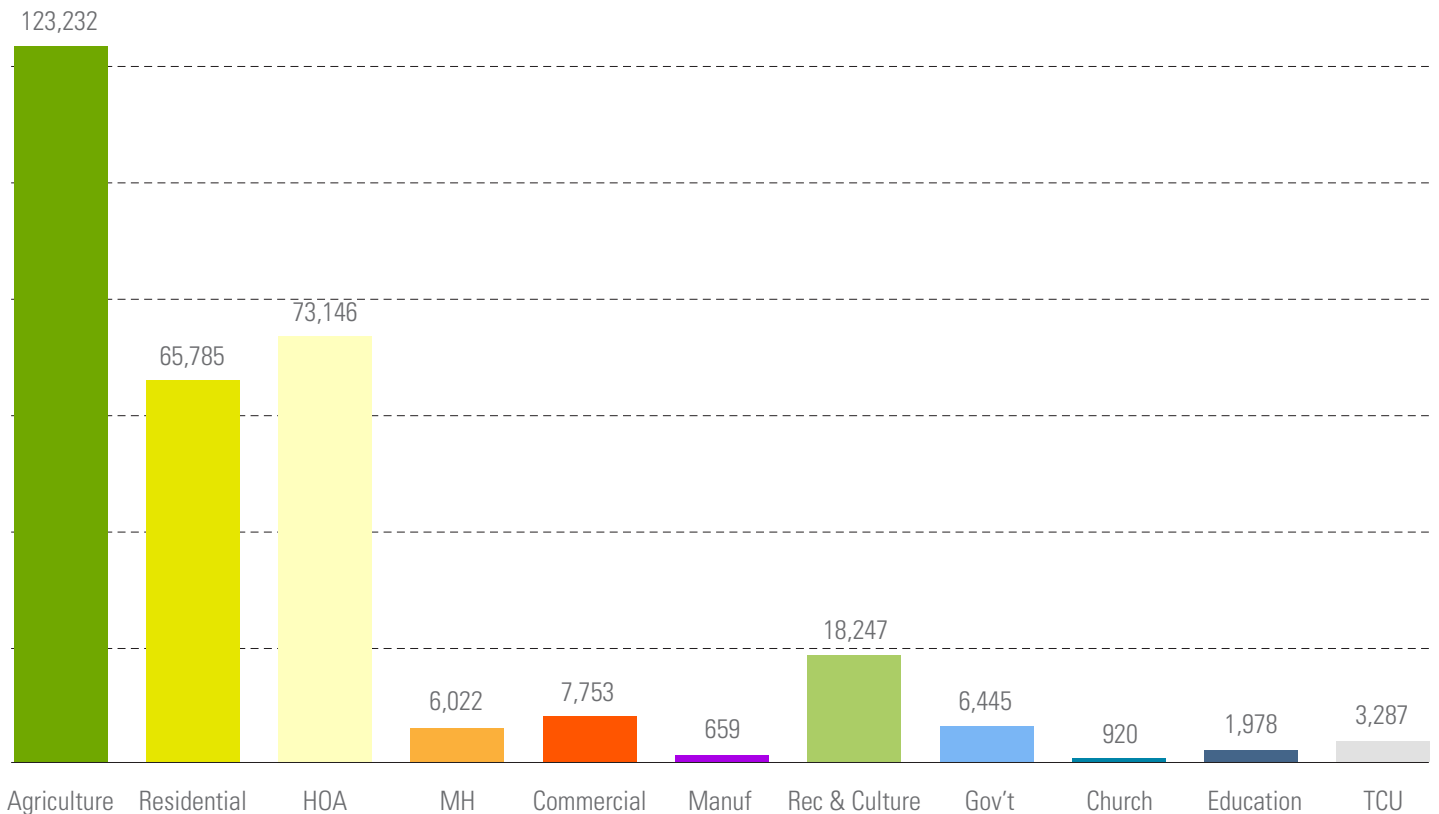
Along the way, the rural character of the region and that distinct separation between town and country has been blurred by sprawling suburban developments. Recent and noble efforts have been made to

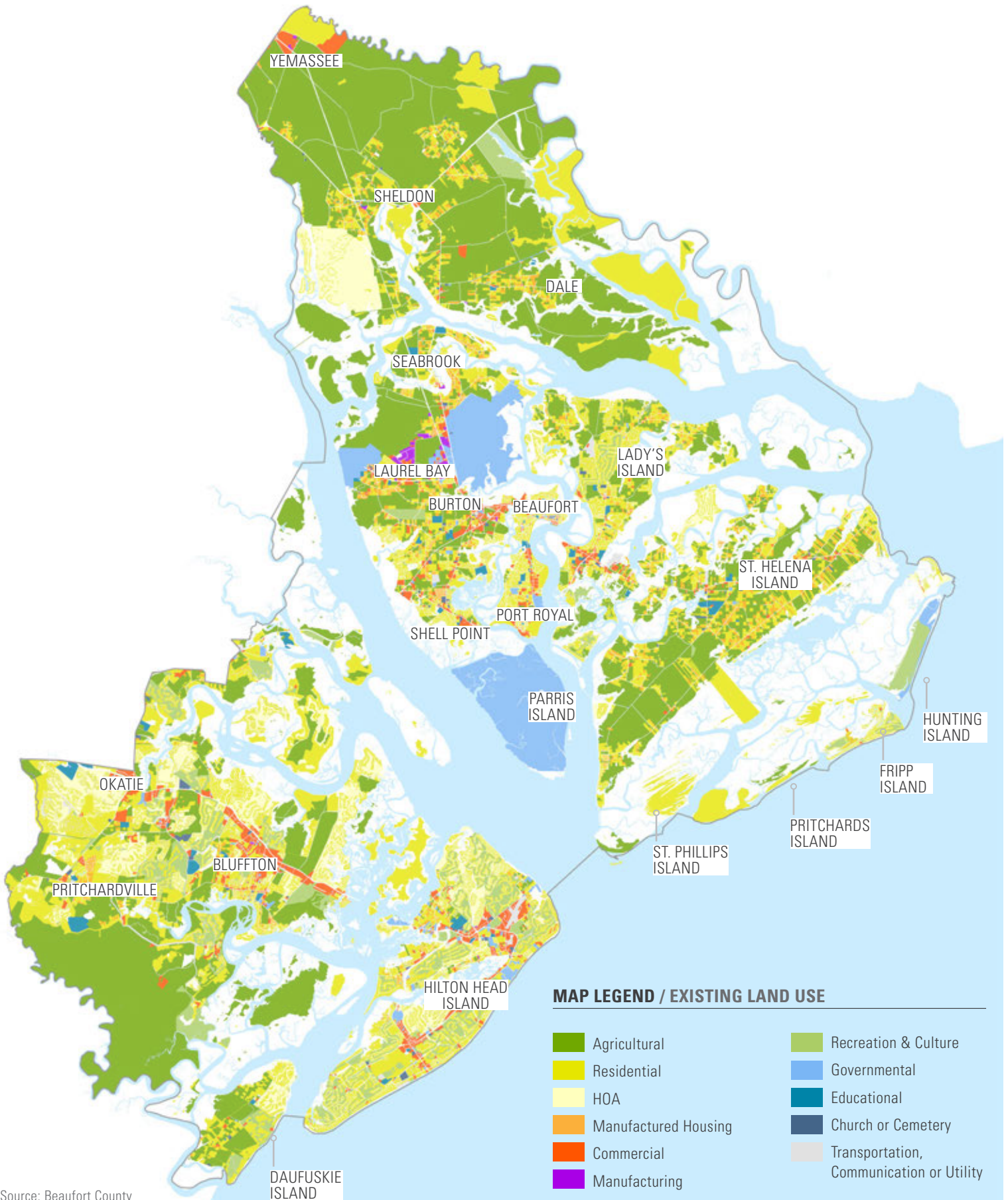
characterize zoning in the form of character and form based transects, and to preserve and protect important environmental features and rural communities, in an effort to accommodate growth while retaining the special qualities of place that have made Beaufort County an attractive place to live and visit.

Current and future issues associated with housing affordability, increased flooding and sea level rise will further define how and where the shrinking available land can best accommodate growth and development, while also preserving and protecting people, properties, culture and landscapes from the impact of major storm events and rising property values.

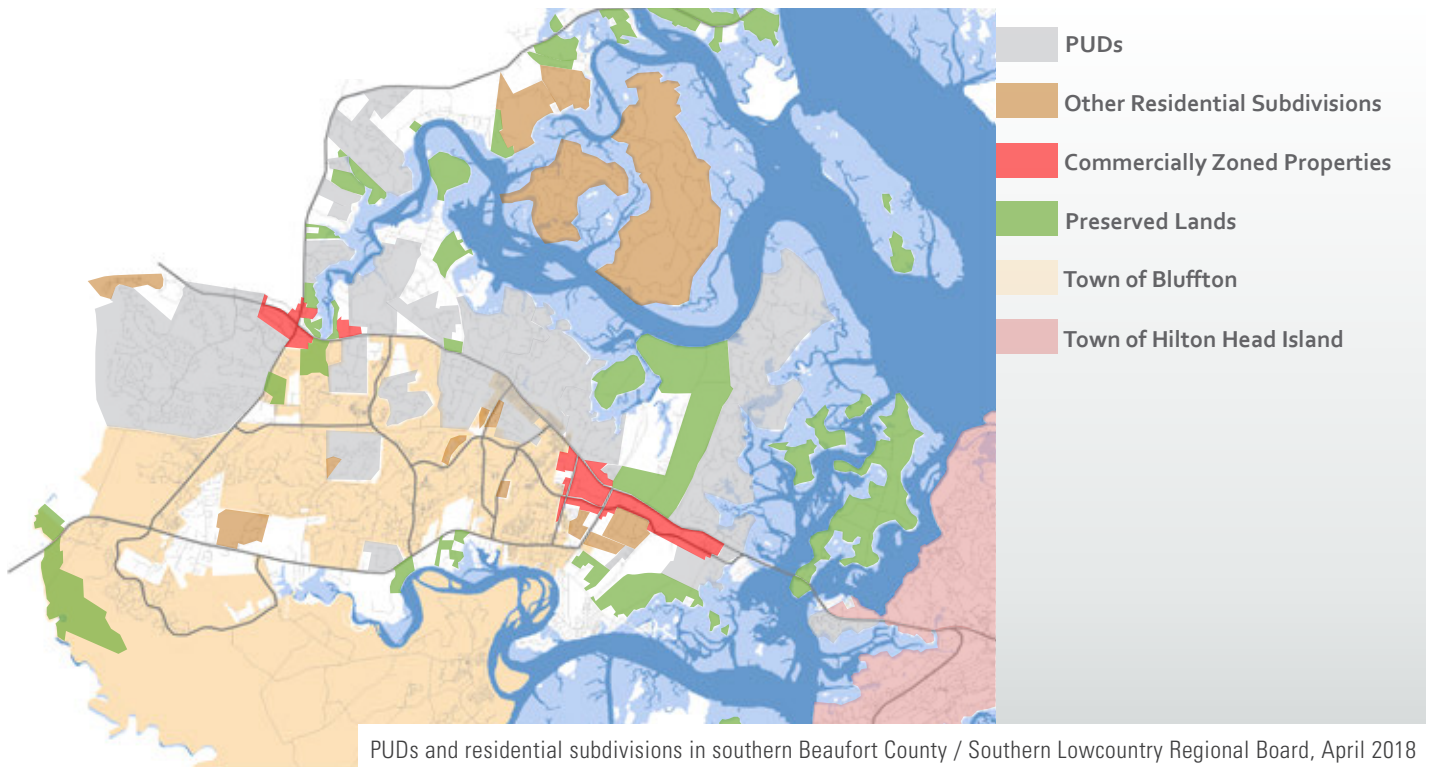
Due to Beaufort County’s size and overall geography, the county is often seen as being comprised of

ACREAGE OF EXISTING LAND USES / BEAUFORT COUNTY PARCELS DATA





Source: Beaufort County



two distinct areas: southern Beaufort County and northern Beaufort County, divided by the Broad River. This is relevant to the comprehensive plan because the development trends and patterns are varied between these two areas.

Recent Growth Trends in Southern Beaufort County

A majority of the county’s recent growth has taken place in southern Beaufort County, spurred initially by the resort and master planned developments on Hilton Head Island. Southern Beaufort County is characterized by the following common development patterns:

- Large, amenity-based, low-density master planned communities dominate the developed landscape of southern Beaufort County.
- The planning of these communities has been primarily a private sector endeavor with great care given to internal road networks, the delivery of services, and private covenants ensuring that development standards are high.
- The planned unit development (PUD) has been the preferred zoning tool to facilitate the development

of these communities because it provides greater site design flexibility.

- Outside the master planned communities, government has been faced with the challenge of providing roads, infrastructure, and land use regulations to connect the rest of the community.
- Many of the region’s current transportation challenges are a result of poor connectivity between master planned communities and insufficient land being available for a road network.
- Development is spreading west. Modern development began on Hilton Head Island, spread to the greater Bluffton area (Bluffton and unincorporated county lands), and is well underway in Jasper County and the City of Hardeeville.
- Currently, over 90% of the land area of southern Beaufort County is either committed to future development or preserved from development.

Recent Growth Trends in Northern Beaufort County

Northern Beaufort County has also continued

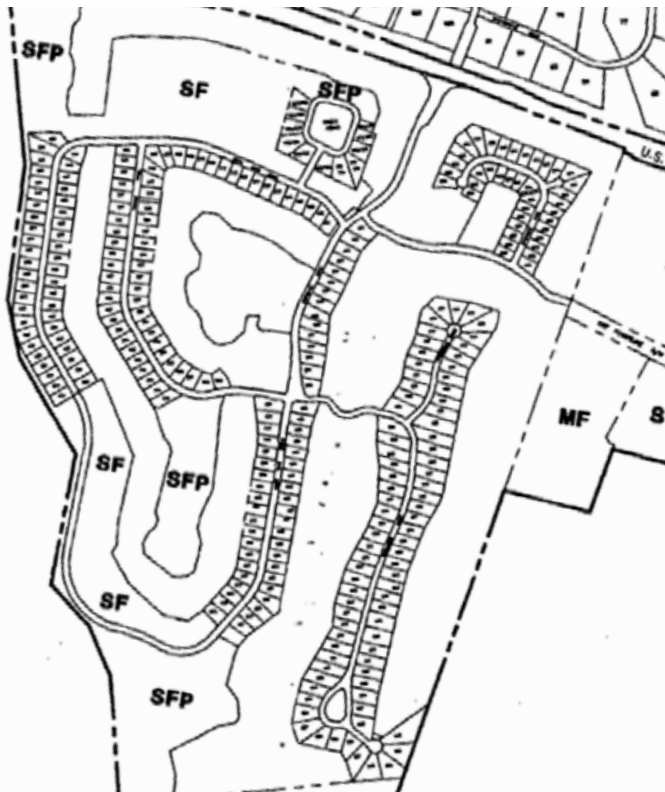
to grow since the 1950s with the growth of the military bases, the growing popularity of the City of Beaufort's historic district, and the attractiveness of the region's natural and cultural resources.

- Northern Beaufort County has experienced steady growth over the last decade, but it has not grown as rapidly as the southern portion of the county.
- Most of the growth has been occurring on Port Royal Island and on Lady's Island.
- Lady's Island's population growth is particularly challenging due to its limited road network and island geography.
- There is much more rural land remaining in the northern portion of the county than in the southern portion.
- While there remains rural land on Port Royal Island and Lady's Island, the bulk of the rural areas are in the Sheldon area north of the Whale

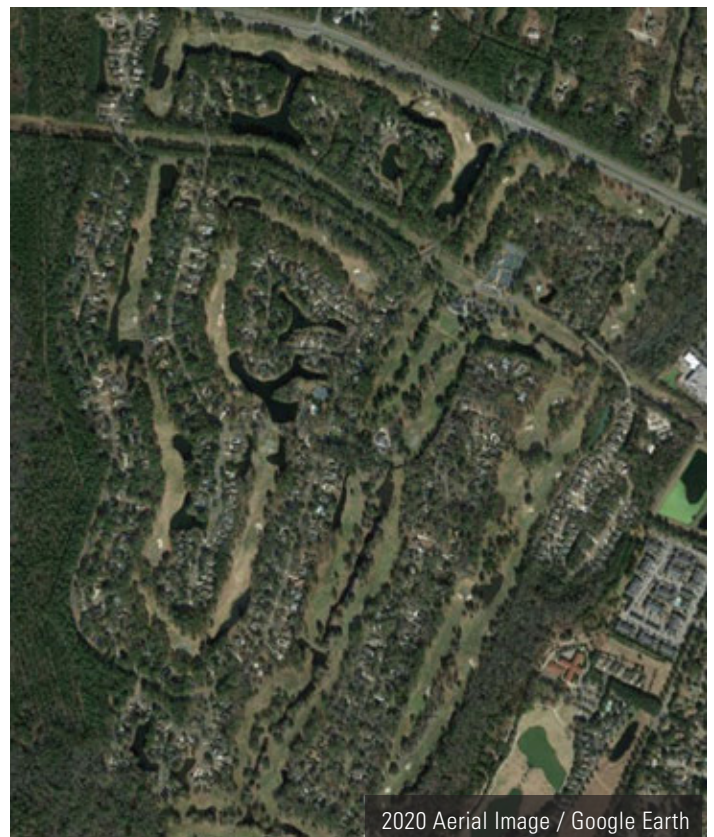
Branch River and on St. Helena Island.

- The local governments of northern Beaufort County (City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, and Beaufort County) adopted a growth boundary to protect rural lands by channeling future growth to Port Royal Island and Lady's Island.
- Rural areas in northern Beaufort County are primarily located north of the Whale Branch River and on St. Helena Island, where residential density is largely restricted to one dwelling unit per three acres.
- Family compounds are a traditional settlement pattern in rural Beaufort County. Most of the family compounds are located on heirs' property, property with no clear title, which has been inhabited by a family for decades. This settlement pattern not only provides affordable housing, it provides an extended family support, which stabilizes and preserves the county's rural communities.

ROSE HILL PUD, BLUFFTON / PUD PLAN SUBMITTAL & POST-CONSTRUCTION AERIAL



1988 Plan / Beaufort County Government Archives



2020 Aerial Image / Google Earth

EXISTING ZONING & OVERLAYS

Growth Boundaries in Northern Beaufort County

- Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal have mutually agreed on a growth boundary in Northern Beaufort County that limits urbanization and protects rural areas.
- Land located inside the growth boundaries is expected to ultimately annex into a municipality and develop in an urban or suburban manner.
- Land outside the growth boundaries is expected to remain unincorporated and develop at rural densities of no more than one unit per three acres gross density unless otherwise subject to existing Community Preservation Districts (CPD).
- Land outside the growth boundaries is not envisioned to be served with urban services.

Community Development Code

Beaufort County first adopted zoning regulations in 1990. In 2014, Beaufort County adopted the Community Development Code that utilized the most effective tools of its first two zoning ordinances (e.g. natural resource protection, architectural standards, open space requirements) while providing new tools to foster the creation and enhancement of mixed-use walkable communities that reflect the natural and built environment of the region.

Principles of the Beaufort County Community Development Code

The Community Development Code integrates both form-based and conventional districts as one comprehensive countywide land use policy to promote the diversity of places in Beaufort County from the most rural and pristine to the most urban.

- Resource Conservation Areas: The code maintains and conserves sensitive environmental habitats while limiting and restricting appropriate

















development.

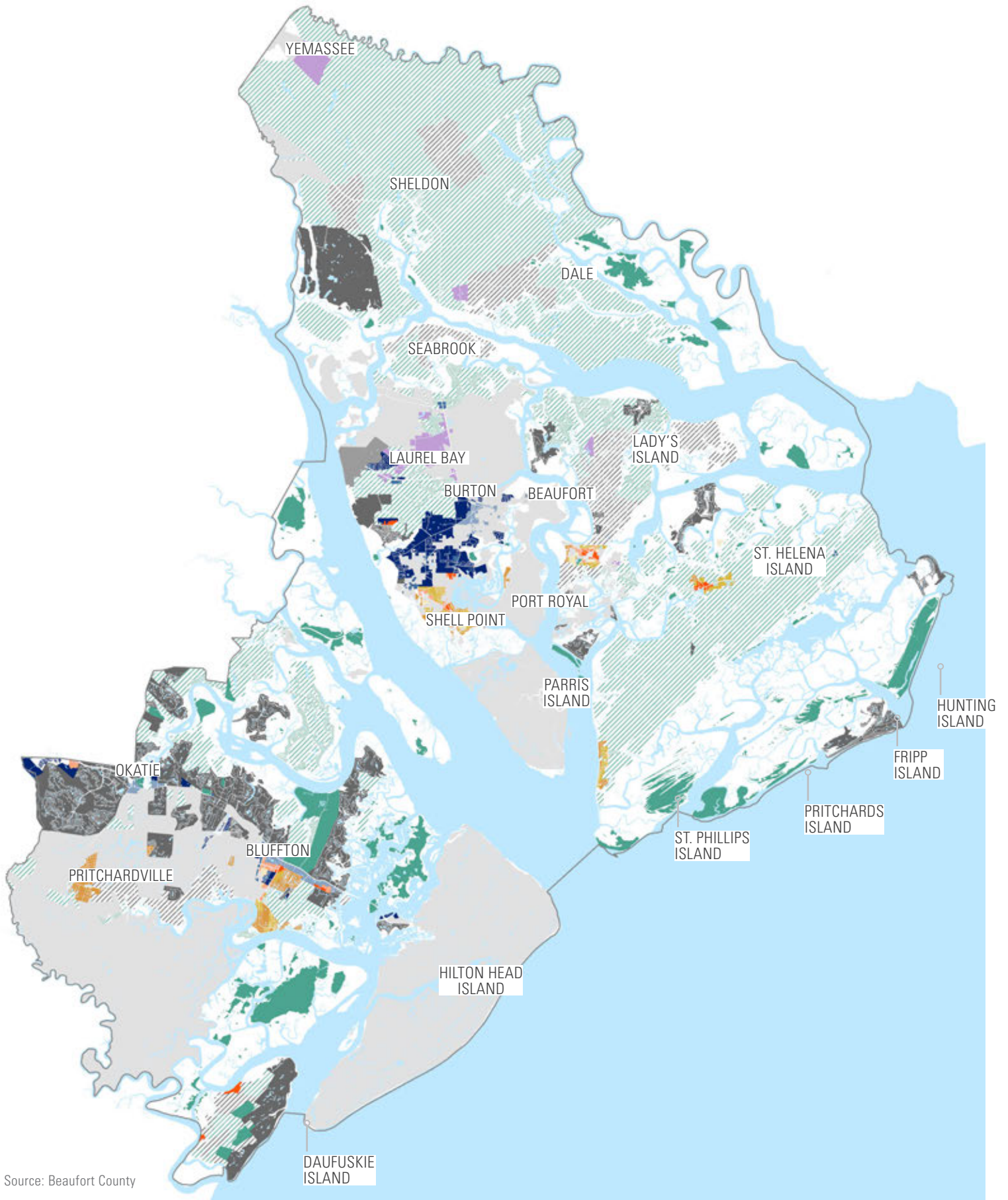
- Rural Areas: The code provides tools that allow for increased walkability, encourage economic vitality, and promote healthy evolution that does not compromise their rural character.
- Suburban Areas: The code provides appropriate tools to protect and preserve suburban neighborhoods while allowing for the transition over time to walkable urban patterns. In some cases, it provides incremental improvements for pedestrian-oriented development within existing drivable, suburban patterns. In others, it provides tools to transform and intensify areas when redevelopment is appropriate.
- Urban Areas: The code provides appropriate tools to preserve, enrich, and enhance them as mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented places of quality.

Beaufort County Zones

- The Beaufort County Transect and Conventional zones are pictured in the map at right, and the Overlay zones are shown later in the chapter. Descriptions of each zoning type can be found in Article 3 of the Beaufort County Community Development Code.

MAP LEGEND / BEAUFORT COUNTY ZONING

	Existing Planned Unit Development		Natural Preserve [T1]
	Military		Rural [T2R]
	Community Preservation Districts and Community-Specific Zoning		Rural Neighborhood [T2RN]
			Rural Center [T2RC]
			Edge [T3E]
			Hamlet Neighborhood [T3HN]
			Neighborhood [T3N]
			Hamlet Center [T4HC]
			Neighborhood Center [T4NC]
	CONVENTIONAL ZONING:		
	Neighborhood Mixed-Use		
	Community Center Mixed-Use		
	Regional Center Mixed-Use		
	Industrial		



Source: Beaufort County

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- » **Transect Zones:** These zones primarily focus on mixed-use, walkable areas of the County and range in function and density from primarily residential areas with a mix of building types (e.g. T3 Hamlet Neighborhood), to medium density neighborhoods and other commercial and retail areas (e.g. T4-Hamlet Center).
- » **Conventional Zones:** The conventional zones are primarily the zones that are more auto-dependent, such as single-family subdivisions, other suburban residential areas, auto-dependent commercial and retail areas, and industrial areas.
- » **Overlay Zones:** Overlay zones include areas of the County that are subject to additional design standards or limitations, such as the Airport MCAS Overlay.

Transect Zones

The Rural-to-Urban Transect is a means for considering and organizing the human habitat in a continuum of intensity that ranges from the most rural condition to the most urban. The transect focuses first on the intended character and type of place and second on the mix of uses within. This differs from the framework found in conventional or Euclidean zoning in which use, rather than form, is the primary focus. Transect-based zones are used to regulate the preservation, evolution, and creation of walkable places from the most rural (T1) to the most urban (T4).

- T1 Districts
 - » T1 Natural Preserve: This zone is intended to preserve areas that contain sensitive habitats, open space, and limited agricultural uses. This Zone typically does not contain buildings; however, single-family dwellings, small civic.
- T2 Districts
 - » The Rural (T2R) Zone, along with the other T2 districts, is intended to preserve the rural character of Beaufort County. T2R applies to

T2R Rural Zone



T2RN Rural Neighborhood Zone



T2RC Rural Center Zone



All transect zone illustrations are from the Beaufort County Community Development Code.

areas that consist of sparsely settled lands in an open or cultivated state. It may include large lot residential, farms where animals are raised or crops are grown, parks, woodland, grasslands, trails, and open space areas.

- » The Rural Neighborhood (T2RN) Zone protects the residential character of existing communities and neighborhoods in the rural area. The district is intended to minimize non-conforming lots and provide owners of small, clustered rural lots flexibility in the use of their land. The districts are established by identifying areas with five contiguous lots of five or fewer acres. It permits subdivision of existing lots to a maximum of 1.2 units to one-acre gross density, with DHEC approval, for wastewater treatment. The district is not intended to promote tract development or to encourage rezoning.
- » The Rural Center (T2RC) Zone applies to areas that are in the immediate vicinity of a Rural Crossroads or other important rural intersections, where service and limited commercial uses can cluster in more closely spaced buildings of residential character.

- T3 Districts

- » The Edge (T3E) Zone is intended to reinforce established neighborhoods, to maintain neighborhood stability and provide a transition on the edges of communities between the walkable neighborhood and rural or natural areas.
- » The Hamlet Neighborhood (T3HN) Zone is intended to reinforce established neighborhoods, to maintain neighborhood stability and provide a transition between the walkable neighborhood and rural areas. The district predominantly includes large to medium lot residential and supporting uses and forms.
- » The Neighborhood (T3N) Zone is intended to provide a walkable, predominantly single-family neighborhood that integrates compatible multi-family housing types, such

T3E Edge Zone



T3HN Hamlet Neighborhood Zone



T3N Neighborhood Zone



as duplexes and cottage courts within walking distance to transit and commercial areas.

- T4 Districts
 - » The Hamlet Center (T4HC) Zone is intended to integrate appropriate, medium-density residential building types, such as duplexes, townhouses, small courtyard housing, and mansion apartments in an environment conducive to walking and bicycling. The T4 Hamlet Center is appropriate for more rural areas, implementing the Comprehensive Plan goals of creating areas of medium intensity residential in portions of Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal.
 - » The Neighborhood Center (T4NC) Zone is intended to integrate vibrant main-street commercial and retail environments into neighborhoods, providing access to day-to-day amenities within walking distance, creating potential for a transit stop, and serving as a focal point for the neighborhood. The T4 Neighborhood Center Zone implements the Comprehensive Plan goals of creating areas of higher intensity residential and commercial uses in Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal.

Conventional Zones

The conventional zones recognize that much of Beaufort County's developed landscape is made up of drivable suburban places including single family subdivisions, shopping centers, apartment complexes, and industrial parks. The conventional zones allow for the preservation of these existing communities by assuring compatible adjoining development or adequate screening and buffering of incompatible development. The districts, however, provide tools that allow for the development of walkable communities on infill and redevelopment sites.

- C3 – Neighborhood Mixed Use: This zone provides for high-quality, moderate density

residential development, with denser areas of multi-family and mixed use development to provide walkability and affordable housing options. The design requirements are intended to provide a suburban character and encourage pedestrian, as well as automobile access.

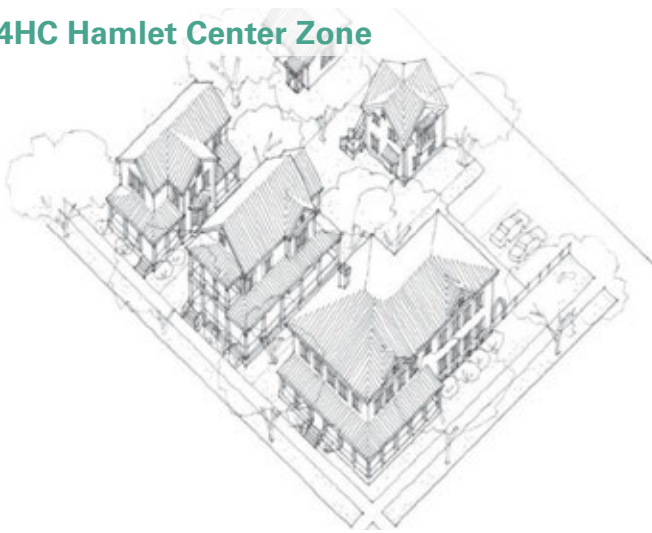
- C4 – Community Center Mixed Use: This zone provides for a limited number of retail, service, and office uses intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood. The intensity standards are set to ensure that the uses have the same suburban character as the surrounding suburban residential areas.
- C5 – Regional Center Mixed Use: This zone permits a full range of retail, service, and office uses. Uses include large commercial activities that serve the entire County and highway-oriented businesses that need to be located on major corridors.
- S1 – Industrial: This zone permits office, manufacturing, industrial, warehousing, and uses that support them.

Overlay Zones

Overlay zones apply an additional layer of standards to all areas within a defined overlay boundary, regardless of the underlying base zoning district. In Beaufort County, Overlay zones may provide additional restrictions over the base zoning as in the case of the MCAS Airport Overlay, or allow uses that would otherwise be restricted in the base zoning district, as in the case of the Commercial Fishing Village Overlay.

- MCAS Airport Overlay (MCAS-AO): This zone is designed to discourage encroachment around the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort by restricting uses and density within the noise contours, accident potential zones and clear zones identified in the Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ). The zone also requires real estate disclosure when property is transferred within the overlay zone.

T4HC Hamlet Center Zone



T4NC Neighborhood Center Zone



Moody Tract / Beaufort County Open Land Trust

DRAFT

- Beaufort County Airport Overlay (BC-AO): This zone protects the lives and properties of owners or occupants of lands in the vicinity of the Beaufort County Airport on Lady's Island by limiting the height of structures that may impose hazards to aircraft using the airport.
- Cultural Protection Overlay District (CPO): This zone acknowledges St. Helena Island's historic cultural landscape and its importance as a center of Beaufort County's most notable concentration of Gullah-Geechee culture. The zone restricts the development of gated communities, resorts and golf courses on St. Helena Island.
- Commercial Fishing Village Overlay District (CFV):

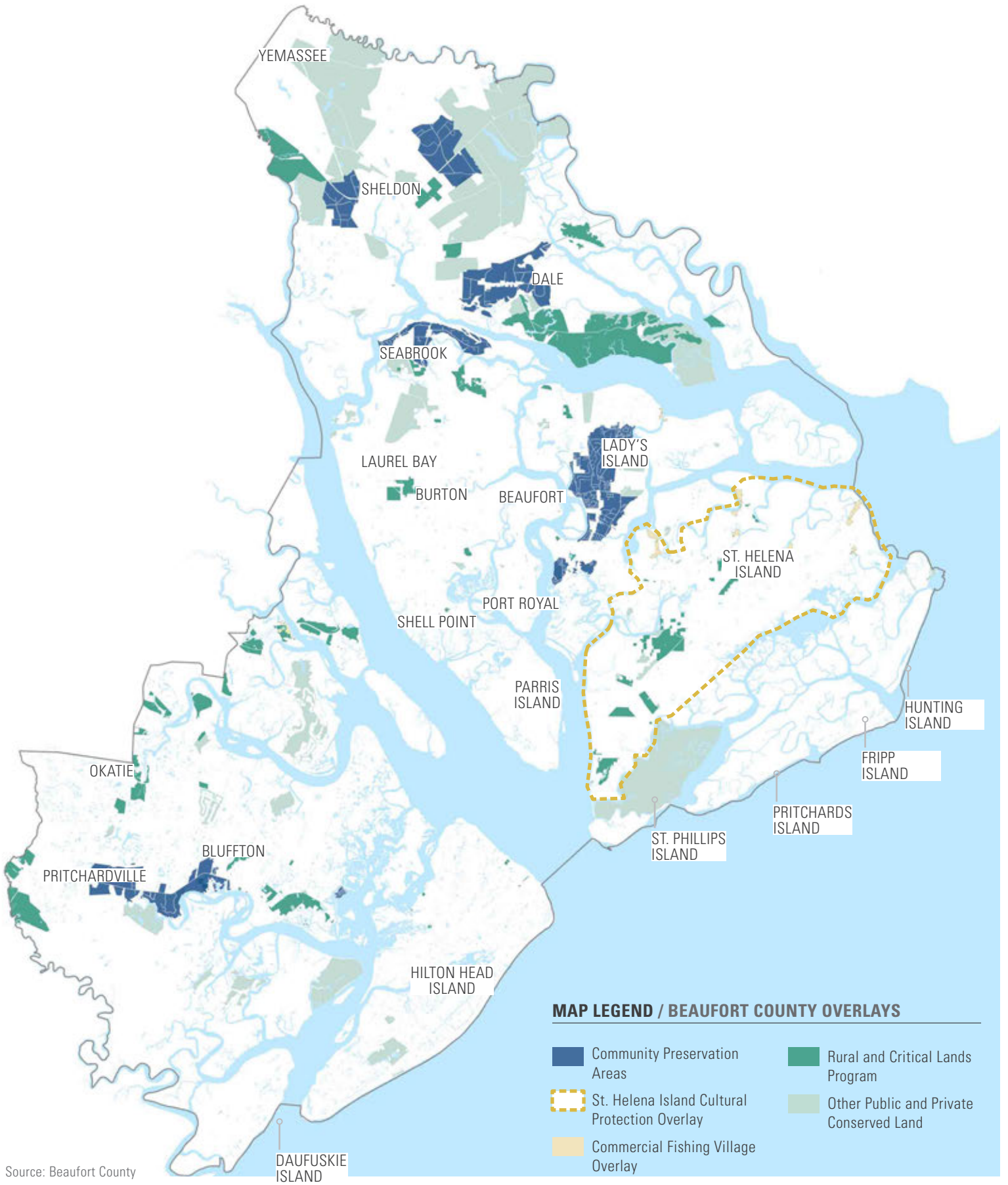
This zone recognizes the contributions of the seafood industry to Beaufort County's cultural landscape. The district boundaries encompass traditional working waterfronts and allow for the continuation or expansion of processing, warehousing, repair and retail that support the local seafood industry.

Community Preservation Districts

Going all the way back to the 1997 Comprehensive Plan, Beaufort County recognized that there were communities throughout unincorporated Beaufort County that possessed distinct qualities. In an effort to protect the character of these areas, the county designated them as Community Preservation (CP)



St. Helena Island



MAP LEGEND / BEAUFORT COUNTY OVERLAYS

- Community Preservation Areas
- Rural and Critical Lands Program
- St. Helena Island Cultural Protection Overlay
- Other Public and Private Conserved Land
- Commercial Fishing Village Overlay

Source: Beaufort County

DRAFT

Areas and called for detailed community plans to be conducted for each of the CP areas that would lead to design guidelines and community-specific land

use and development standards to implement the plans. One of the impacts of these area plans are the creation of community specific zoning districts.

Community Preservation Area	Community Plan
Alljoy Road (Brighton Beach)	April 2005; updated with November 2011 charrette
Big Estates	No
May River	September 2010
Buckingham Landing	June 2007
Corners Community	February 2002; updated with December 2011 charrette
Dale	December 2000
Daufuskie Island	Completed September 2010; revised 2018
Lady's Island	March 2000
Lands End	Addressed with December 2011 charrette
Pritchardville	Addressed with November 2011 charrette
Seabrook-Stuart Point	August 2003
Sheldon	No
Tansi Village	No
Shell Point	November 2002; updated with October 2011 charrette



Bluffton Oyster Company

***CP AREA MAP NEEDED FROM
BEAUFORT COUNTY***



Place Type Map

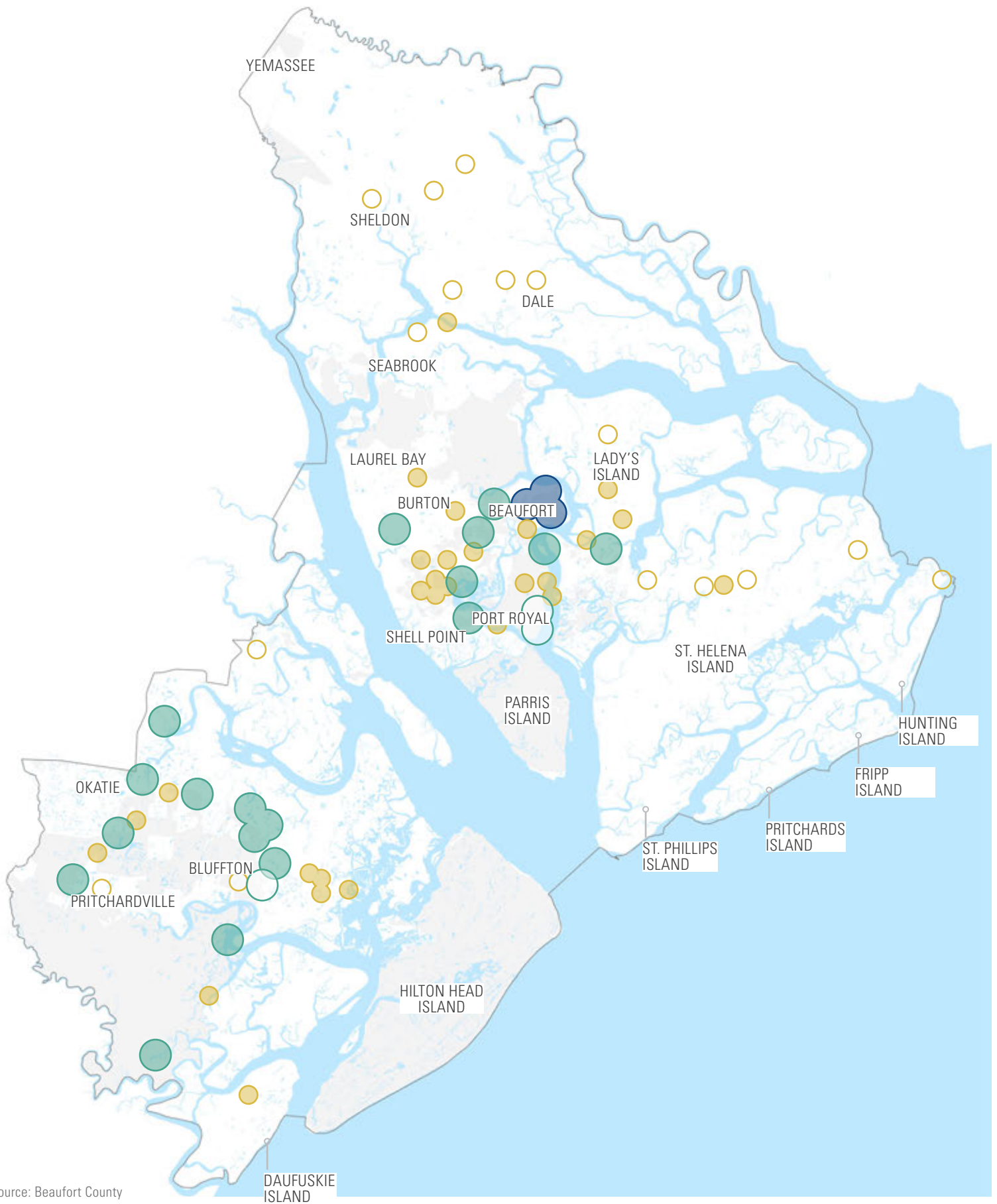
- The Place Type Map is a planning tool that identifies locations in the County to promote appropriately scaled walkable environments with a mix of housing, civic, retail, and service choices. The Place Type Map recognizes that walkable environments vary greatly from small rural settlements to city main streets. Beaufort County’s place types include the following:
- Rural Place Types: While rural landscapes consist largely of natural areas, agricultural and forestry uses, and low-density residential development, historically, small walkable communities served as retail, service and civic hubs for the surrounding rural hinterlands. Rural Place types include:
 - » Rural crossroads are typically located at the intersection of two or more rural roads. They provide a small amount of pedestrian-oriented, locally-serving retail in a rural context, and transition quickly into agricultural uses and/or the natural environment as one moves away from the intersection. Historic examples of rural crossroads include Pritchardville in southern Beaufort County and the Corners Community on St. Helena Island.
 - » Hamlets are typically larger and more intense than rural crossroads and are often located at the edge of the rural and urban condition. A hamlet often has a small, pedestrian-oriented main street with surrounding and supporting residential fabric that is scaled to the size of a pedestrian shed. The main street and surrounding residential fabric transitions quickly into agricultural uses and/or the natural environment. A historic example of a hamlet includes the original settlement of Bluffton along Calhoun Street. The size and scale of the Habersham community would currently be classified as a hamlet, but could develop into a village if existing development plans are realized.
- Urban Place Types: Urban places are more complex with concentrations of public

infrastructure, community services, and existing homes and businesses. They are located within urbanized areas, and are organized within an interconnected network of streets and blocks in multiple pedestrian sheds. They include areas where one has the opportunity to walk, bike, or ride transit to work, to fulfill daily shopping needs (such as groceries), and to access other amenities within close proximity. These places are composed of elements that create complete walkable places, including downtowns, neighborhood main streets, neighborhood centers, and residential neighborhoods of varying densities and intensities.

- » Villages are made up of clusters of residential neighborhoods of sufficient intensity to support a central, mixed-use environment. The mixed-use environment can be located at the intersection of multiple neighborhoods or along a corridor between multiple neighborhoods. Habersham is a good example of a place that is evolving into a village.
- » Towns are made up of clusters of neighborhoods or villages that can support a larger, more complex mixed-use environment. Buildings at the core of a town are attached and may be up to four stories tall. Towns are important centers of the County. The Town of Port Royal represents the local archetype.
- » Cities are made up of clusters of neighborhoods or villages that can support the most intense, complex mixed-use environments. Buildings within the cores of a city are attached and may be taller than four stories in height. Cities are regional centers of the County and contain primary commercial and civic destinations. The City of Beaufort represents the local archetype.

MAP LEGEND / BEAUFORT COUNTY PLACE TYPE OVERLAYS

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Rural Crossroads |  Villages |
|  Hamlets |  Towns |
| |  Cities |



Source: Beaufort County

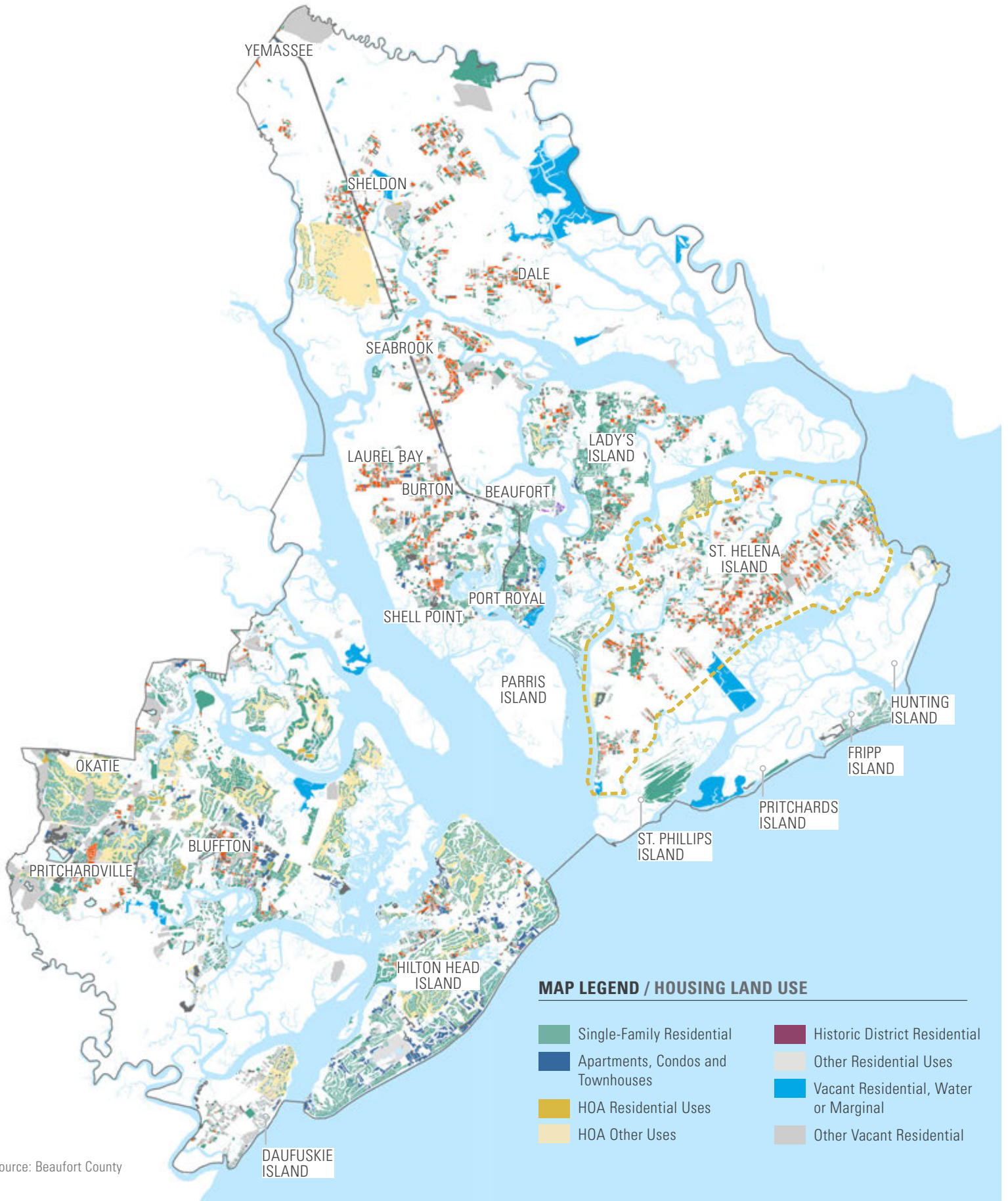
HOUSING

Context

- The beauty, coastal amenities, and temperate climate of the Lowcountry have attracted large numbers of new residents to Beaufort County, which has consistently been one of the fastest growing counties in South Carolina.
- Commercial development has followed population growth, creating high demand for service and retail employees and, along with that, competition for existing workforce housing.
- Even though Beaufort County has the highest HUD defined median income in South Carolina, middle-to-low income wage earners often have difficulty entering the housing market.
- This has created the need for an active role by the public sector to encourage the development of affordable housing.
- Housing policies for the region will need to emphasize higher-density, mixed-use, transit-friendly development that promotes internal trip capture and reduced vehicle miles traveled in order to make affordable housing accessible to employment.
- By shouldering that responsibility, Beaufort County is building a sustainable future for tourism and other major industries, protecting its military bases and natural resources, and continuing to be a desirable place to live for people of all income levels.
- This affordability gap is expected to continue because household growth over the next five years is expected to outpace the supply of attainable housing units.
- One major driver of high housing cost is prevailing low-density development patterns. This factor also hinders the effectiveness of public transportation, and therefore, pushes affordable housing further from places of employment.
- Continued growth has created concerns about traffic congestion and maintaining levels of services for parks, schools and libraries, which will likely fuel calls for lower density development in the future, making land and housing more expensive.
- To a lesser degree, growth has increased development pressures in the rural areas of the County, generally located in the northern part, threatening traditional settlement patterns and raising the prospect of higher property taxes, loss of heir's property, and more stringent land use regulations.

Current Trends

- There is a housing affordability gap in Beaufort County. The inventory of for-sale units does not meet the current or future housing needs of homebuyers, with over 80% of available units priced above \$200,000, but with only half of county residents having the ability to afford such units.
- **Beaufort County's Growing Housing Affordability Gap**
- Over the last 20 years, the cost of housing in Beaufort County, both owner occupied and rental, has been outpacing median household income growth.
- In 2018, median housing costs in Beaufort County (\$288,500) were 86% higher in Beaufort County than the average for South Carolina, while median household income (\$63,110) was only 23% higher than the state as a whole.
- Between 2000 and 2018, the County's median income grew by only 26% (\$49,992 – \$63,110) while median rent increased by 68% (\$690 - \$1,157). The median value of owner-occupied housing, however, increased during the same



Source: Beaufort County

period by 64%.

- This disparity varies within Beaufort County. Median income in northern Beaufort County is only 78% of the County average. This disparity further deepens when comparing median income in the rural areas of St. Helena Island and Sheldon Township which is only 54% that of the county as a whole. The latter has the lowest median household income in the county (by census tract geography) at \$34,306.

Age of Housing Stock

- When compared to state and national averages, Beaufort County has a relatively small supply of older housing, which in many other markets, is a

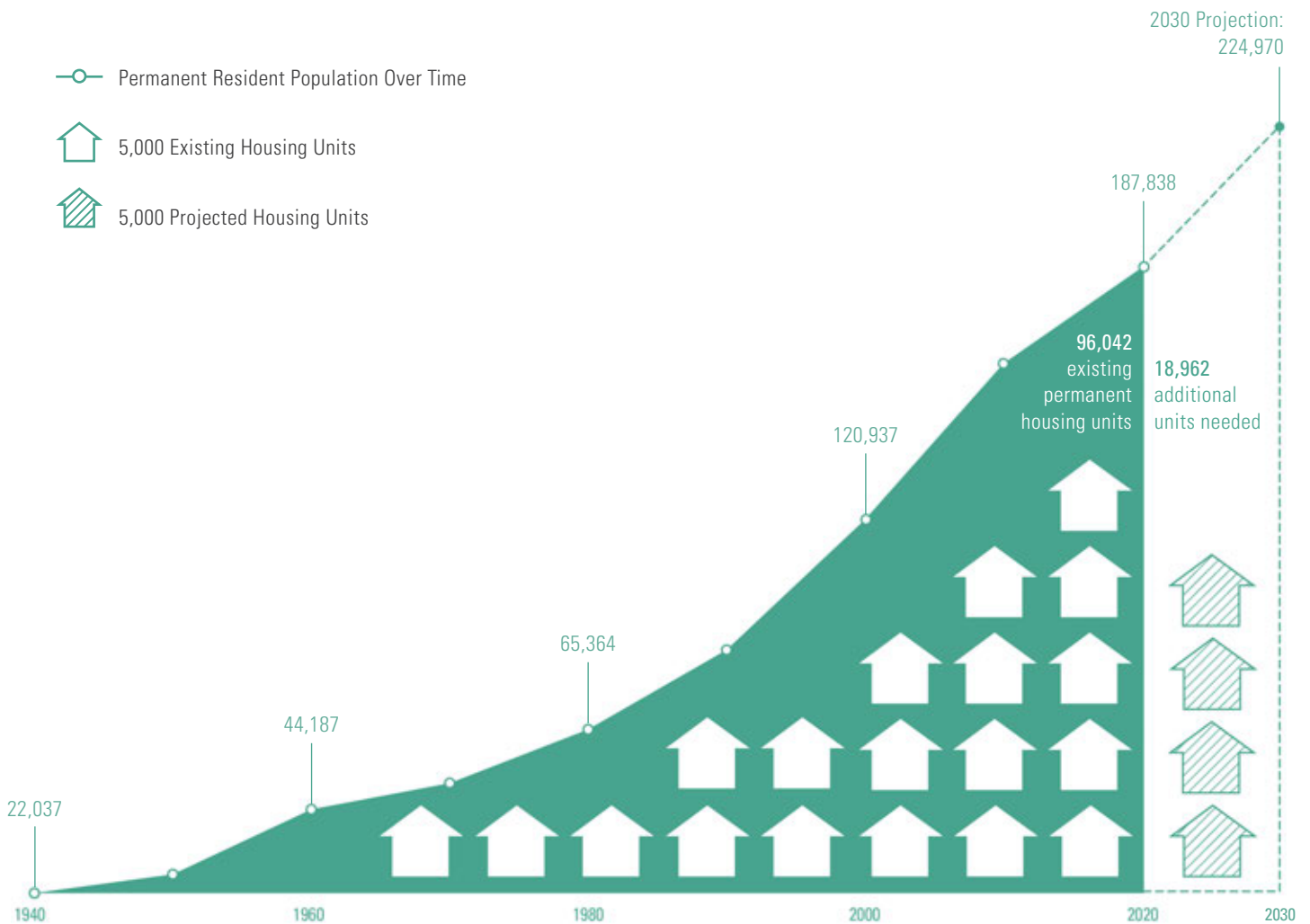
significant source of low-cost housing.

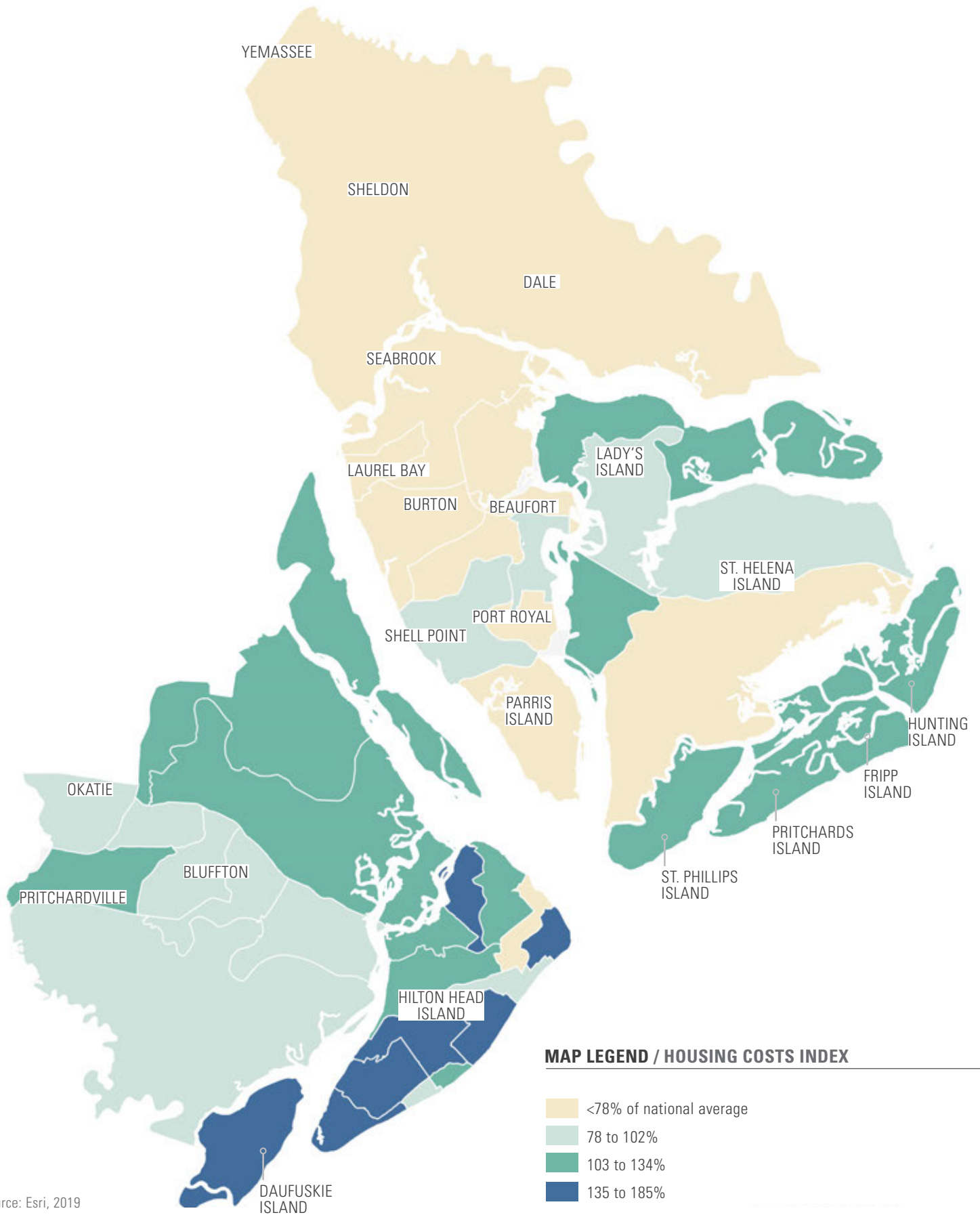
- The relatively low supply of older housing creates the need for new affordable housing to be developed.

Mobile Homes

- Mobile homes have played an important role in providing affordable housing for Beaufort County residents.
- However, mobile homes have been decreasing both as a percentage of the County's housing stock and in numbers. In 2000, over 16% (9,624) of the housing stock were mobile homes compared to just over 9% (6,414 units) in 2018.

POPULATION & HOUSING PROJECTIONS / U.S. CENSUS & TISCHLER BISE 2019 IMPACT FEE STUDY





Source: Esri, 2019

Housing Tenure

- Beaufort County has a slightly higher rate of homeownership (71.6%) than the state (68.9%) and national (63.8%) averages.
- Rates of homeownership vary within the County, with northern Beaufort County falling within the national range.

Vacancy Rates

- Vacancy rates in Beaufort County (30.6%), which are higher than national (12.5%) and state (16.9%) averages, are largely a result of the County's tourism and second home market.
- The seasonal fluctuation of tourism, especially in Southern Beaufort County, creates a higher demand for workforce housing in the summer months.
- Beaufort County's rental market is very tight with a vacancy rate of 2.4%. Typically, healthy and well-balanced markets have vacancy rates between 4% and 6%.

Homelessness

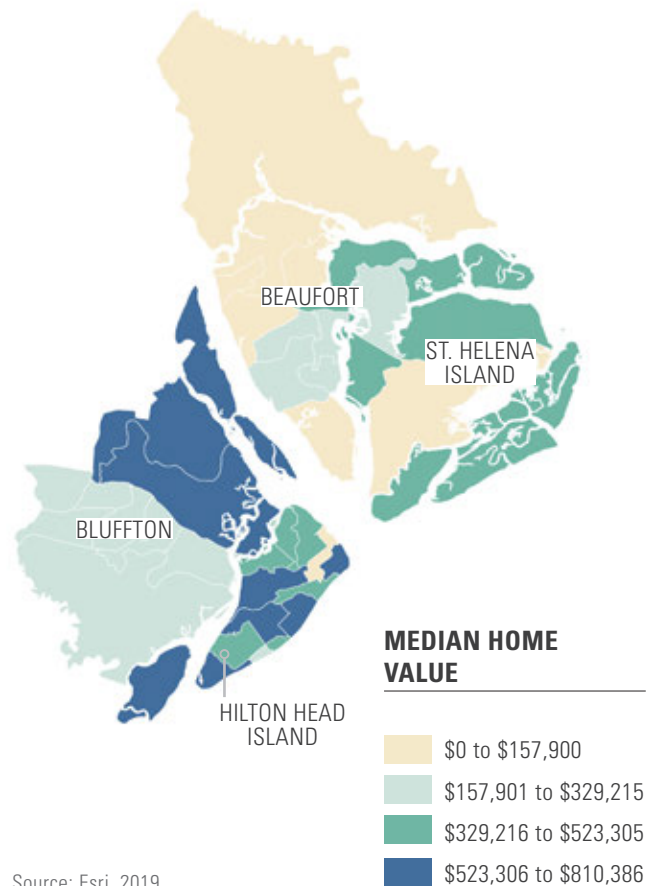
- According to the Human Services Alliance, in 2020, there were 756 documented homeless in Beaufort County, which includes unsheltered homeless, homeless individuals living in their cars or motels, and "housing insecure" households—individuals about to become homeless, or living with family or friends.
- Beaufort County lacks an emergency homeless shelter for men. The closest shelters are in Savannah, Charleston and Walterboro.
- There are local agencies that assist specific homeless populations. Family Promise works with area churches to provide temporary housing to families; the Child Abuse Prevention Association (CAPA) provides housing for homeless children; and Citizens Opposed to Domestic Abuse (CODA) provides services to victims of domestic violence.

Rural Housing

- The rural areas of Beaufort County tend to have a larger proportion of low- and moderate-income households and substandard housing.
- Much of the existing affordable rural housing is supplied in the form of family compounds on heirs' property. Under state law, land that is handed down without a will is legally owned by all the descendants in common.

Senior Housing

- The largest share of households in Beaufort County is among those between the ages of 65 and 74. The greatest growth over the next 5 years is projected to occur among households ages 75 and older.
- Based on these trends, it will be important for the future Beaufort County housing market to



include additional senior-oriented housing that meets mobility, affordability, and service needs of the senior population.

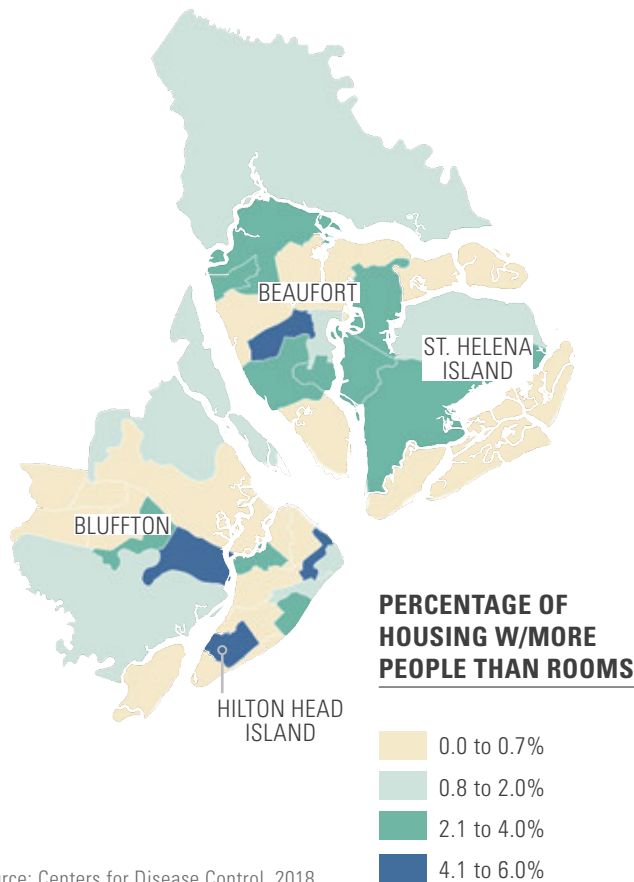
Very Low and Extremely Low-Income Housing

- Beaufort Housing Authority (BHA) is a major institutional provider of housing for very low and extremely low-income households.
- BHA owns and operates 293 public housing units and administers 611 Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly Section 8). While BHA is able to meet a substantial part of the need of very low and extremely low-income households, it does not have the resources to accommodate all needy households.
- In January 2020, there were 280 households on the waiting list for public housing and over 1,000

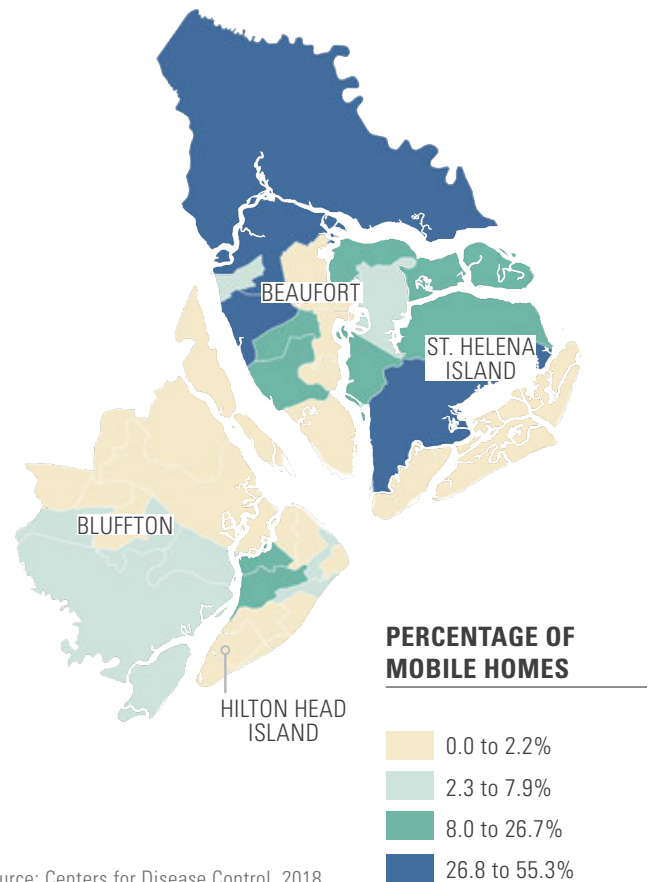
families on the waiting list for Housing Choice Vouchers.

Military Housing

- The military installations in northern Beaufort County employ over 12% of the County’s labor force.
- The military provides 1,718 single-family units at Laurel Bay, Parris Island, and on the Naval Hospital site for active military.
- Civilian employees and military households who live off base primarily reside in the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, Lady’s Island, and unincorporated Port Royal Island, and have benefited from several new moderately priced developments in the Shell Point and Burton areas.



Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2018



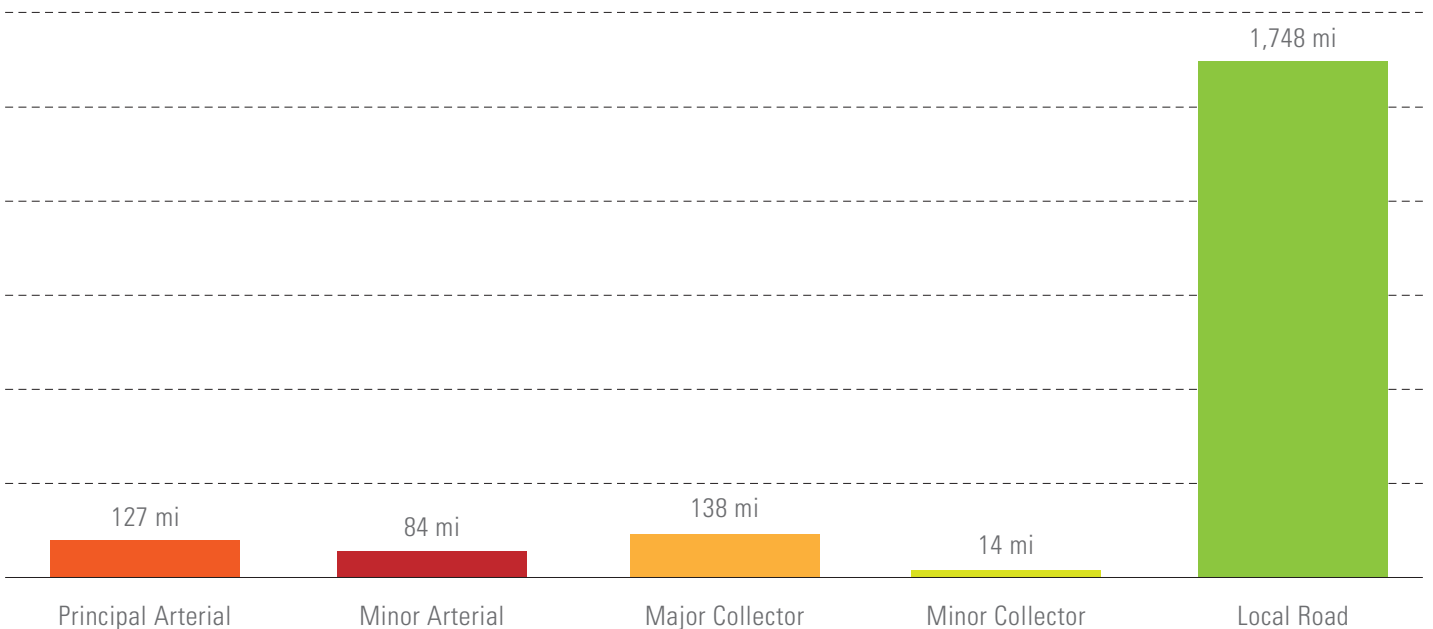
Source: Centers for Disease Control, 2018

TRANSPORTATION

Context

- Traffic congestion on Beaufort County’s roadways is the most tangible and noticeable indicator of the impact on quality of life caused by new growth.
- As a result, Beaufort County has invested heavily in improving its transportation network over the last 15 years.
- While the county and the region will continually need to improve its road network to keep up with new growth, several factors challenge the sustainability of the current levels of commitment to fund and implement large-scale transportation improvements:
 - » Fiscal Constraints: The limited availability of tax dollars to fund large scale transportation improvements and competition with other public needs, such as schools, parks, and public safety facilities.
 - » Environmental and Geographical Constraints: Beaufort County’s unique physical environment limits the construction of new roads.
 - » Quality of Life Constraints: Even if the County had unlimited resources to address traffic congestion issues, many citizens may object to continual road widening or grade separated intersections as eroding the character and aesthetics of the Lowcountry.
- As the County continues to grow, its transportation infrastructure approach will need to shift its focus more toward smaller scale network improvements, such as intersection improvements, turning lanes, parallel roads, and intelligent transportation systems (ITS).
- The County will also need to pay more attention to promoting other modes of transportation such as transit, walking, and cycling in order to reduce automobile dependency.

ROAD LENGTHS BY CLASSIFICATION / SCDOT





Source: SCDOT

Organization/Management

- Lowcountry Council of Governments Transportation Planning.
- Beaufort County, and the Towns of Hilton Head Island and Bluffton have a joint agreement to review projects of regional significance.
- South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- Aviation Advisory Board.

Current Trends

- Cooperating with regional partners on planning, funding, and implementing transportation improvements.
- Integrating innovative transportation management concepts to reduce trips and delays.
- Supporting state funding with additional funding sources.
- Expanding transit services.
- Upgrading airports.

Major Efforts in the Last 15 Years

- Northern and Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan sent a clear message that the region suffered from a deficiency in its road network that would only get worse with projected growth. This spurred local leaders to aggressively pursue funding and implementation of local transportation improvements.
- A successful Capital Project Sales Tax referendum in 2006 generated \$152 million to construct much needed transportation improvements. This was repeated in 2018 when a \$120 million one-cent sales tax was approved by voters.
- The County and Municipalities implemented many major transportation projects including:
 - » The widening of US 278 to six lanes from SC 170 to the bridge to Hilton Head Island.
 - » The construction of the Bluffton Parkway from

170 to the bridge to Hilton Head Island.

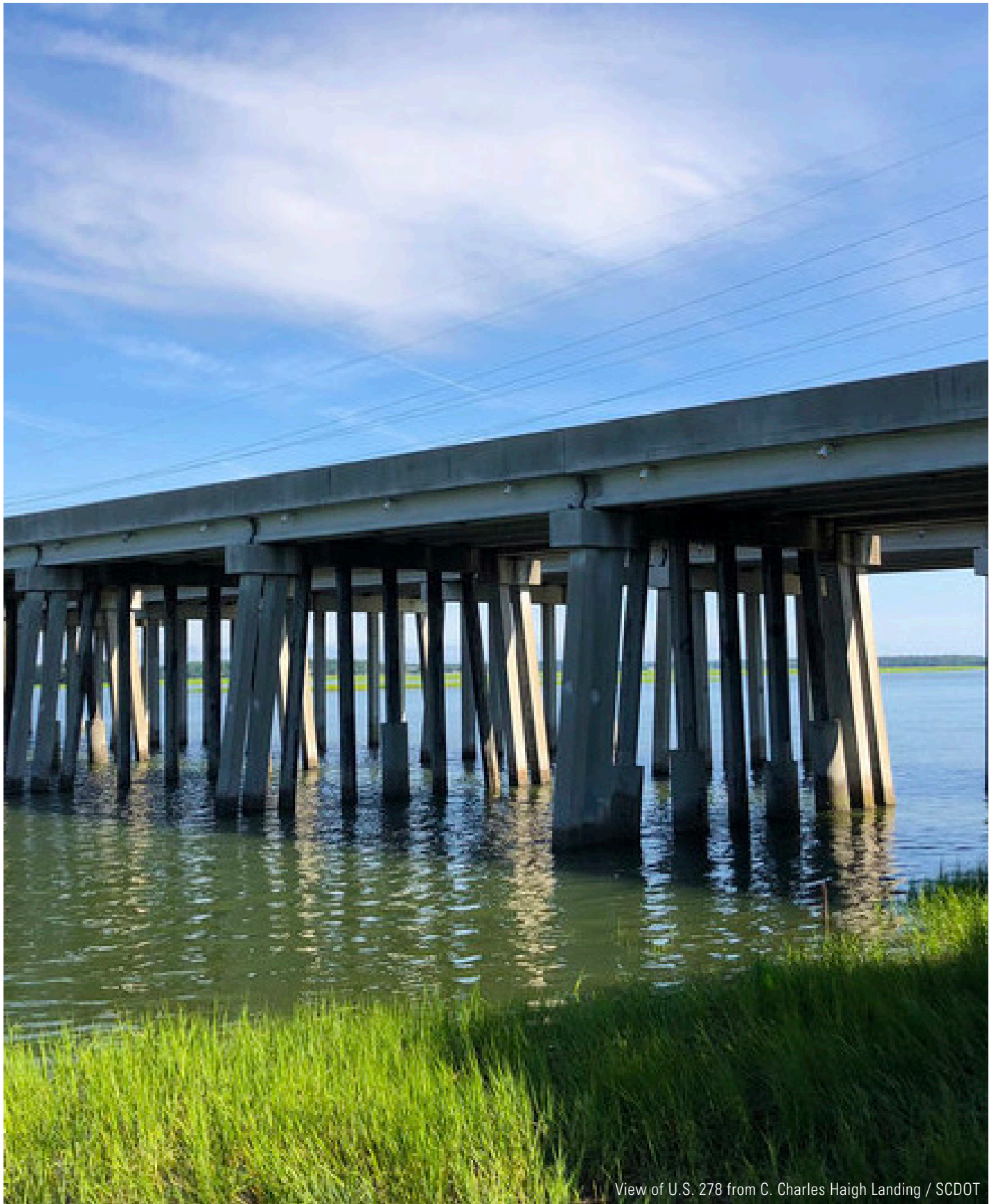
- » The widening of Lady's Island Drive and the McTeer Bridge from two to four lanes.
 - » The widening of Savannah Highway from two to four lanes.
 - » The construction of 10 miles of the Spanish Moss Trail on the former right-of-way of the Port Royal Railroad.
 - » Additional pedestrian and cycling improvements along Bluffton Parkway, Okatie Highway, the McTeer Bridge, Savannah Highway, Boundary Street, and US 17.
- The Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization was formed, which gives the region direct access to federal transportation dollars.

Road Project Funding

- State funding has not been able to keep up with the need for new road improvements and local governments have had to be more active in seeking additional funding sources, which include:
 - » Impact Fees
 - » Capital Projects Sales Tax
 - » Federal Earmarks
 - » Admissions Tax

Access Management Standards and Corridor Planning

- Corridor access management plans that prescribe access management policies have been completed and adopted along the following roadways:
 - » US 278 between McGarvey's Corner to the bridge to Hilton Head Island;
 - » Robert Smalls Parkway (SC 170) between SC 802 to the Broad River Bridge: This is a joint plan between the City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal and Beaufort County; and
 - » SC 170 (Oldfield to McGarvey's Corner) and US 278 (McGarvey's Corner west to the Jasper County line: This plan was also



View of U.S. 278 from C. Charles Haigh Landing / SCDOT

adopted by Jasper County.

- Additional access management plans for Buckwalter Parkway and Bluffton Parkway are currently being drafted.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

- The County operates 51 surveillance cameras along its major highways offering live video of traffic conditions to the county's Emergency Management Department.

Travel Demand Modeling

- Beaufort County adopted its first travel demand model in 1999. The model, which is based on growth projections derived from approved development and the comprehensive plans of the county and its municipalities, allows the county to forecast future traffic volumes along its roadways.

Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinances

- Beaufort County's Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinance requires developers to determine the impact of their proposed development on the road network and provide mitigation, if necessary.
- The performance standard to determine whether mitigation is needed is LOS "D" along affected roadways and intersections.

Public Transportation

- Palmetto Breeze (formerly Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority) is the public transit provider for Beaufort County and the surrounding region (Jasper, Allendale, Colleton and Hampton Counties).
- Palmetto Breeze operates seven commuter fixed routes that all share Hilton Head Island as their southern terminus. The fixed route lines offer one ride in the morning and one in the afternoon to assist riders with daily commutes to work. Two of the commuter fixed routes serve northern Beaufort County, while the other five bring riders from Colleton, Hampton, Jasper and Allendale Counties.

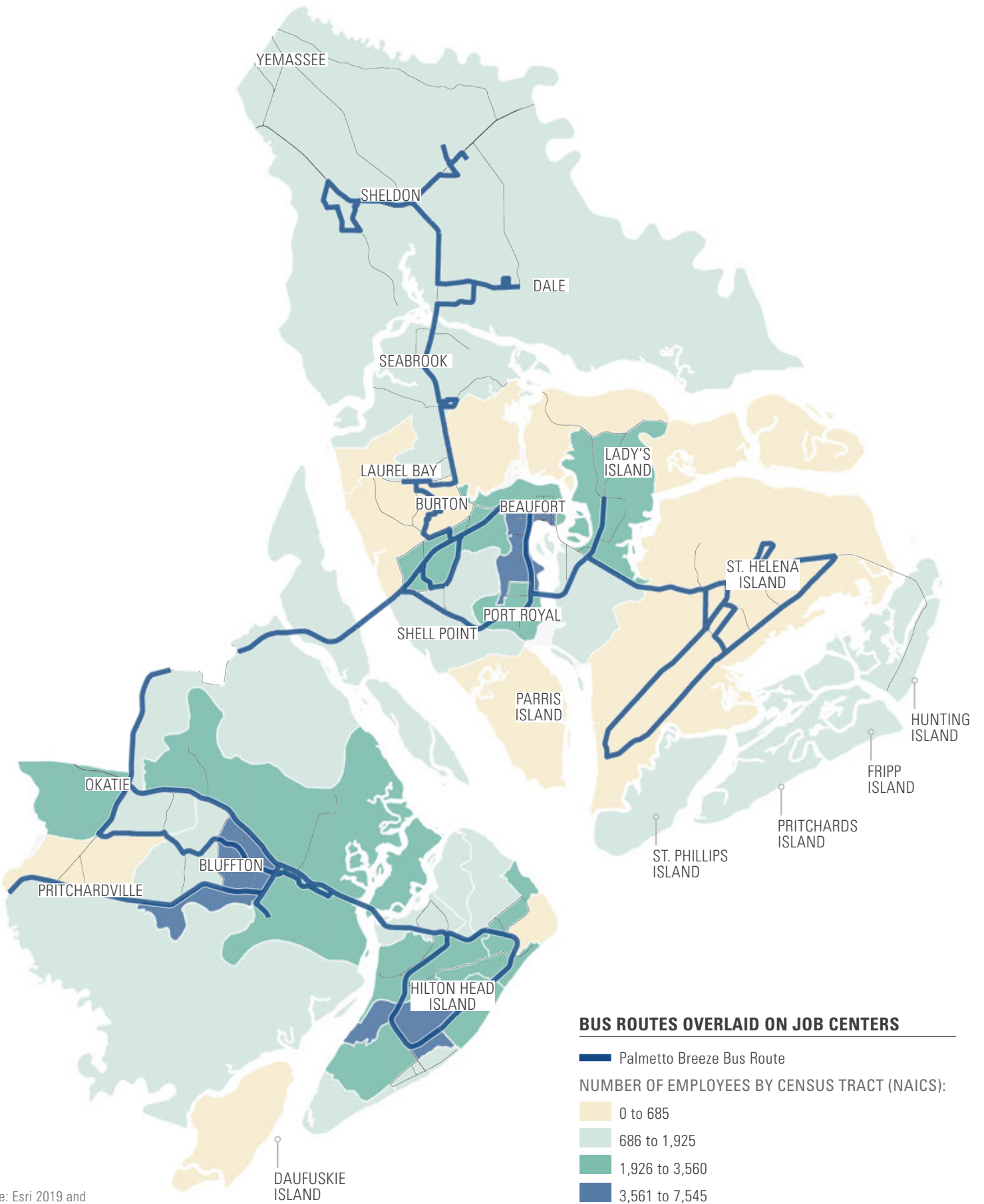
- Palmetto Breeze has historically focused on bringing rural residents to jobs in Beaufort County. In FY 2006 Palmetto Breeze had 25 active vehicles providing more than 230,000 passenger trips.
- Local funding is provided by the five member counties with over 76% of the contributions coming from Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head Island.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails

- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are a vital component to Beaufort County's regional transportation network by providing an alternative transportation choice.
- These facilities also promote healthier lifestyles, improve real estate values, attract knowledge-based industries, and elevate the overall quality of life for the region.
- Beaufort County, with its flat terrain and mild climate, has a great potential to improve its



Spanish Moss Trail / Friends of Spanish Moss Trail



Source: Esri 2019 and www.palmettobreezetransit.com

conditions for walking and cycling.

- The Town of Hilton Head Island has been a leader in the region, developing over 50 miles of public trails on the island. The trails connect a majority of the residential, commercial and resort destinations.
- In the Bluffton area, over 22 miles of multi-use paths have been developed as part of the construction of the Buckwalter, Bluffton and New Riverside Parkways; and the widening of SC 170 between US 278 and SC 46 connecting many residential areas with businesses, schools and employment centers.
- The Town of Bluffton has made many sidewalk improvements to advance the walkability of Old Town Bluffton and to provide safe routes to area schools (Simmonsville, Buck Island, and Red Cedar Roads).
- In northern Beaufort County, along with serving an important regional recreational need, the 10-mile-long Spanish Moss Trail connects residential areas with businesses, major employers, such as the US Marine Corps Air Station and Beaufort Memorial Hospital, and retail and tourist destinations.

Water Transportation

- Ferry service is a possible alternative mode of transportation given the region's many navigable waterways and the potential to reduce travel demands on US 278 and SC 170.
- Small ferries exist that connect Hilton Head Island to neighboring Daufuskie Island, which are privately owned and operated. Beaufort County and the School District also contract for ferry service for residents.
- Other private services exist for moving goods and materials to and from Daufuskie Island, Bull Island and other islands without road access.

Airports

- Beaufort County owns and operates two airports: the Hilton Head Island Airport and the Beaufort

County (Lady's Island) Airport.

- Oversight is provided by the Aviation Advisory Board appointed by County Council. Financially, both airports operate as an enterprise fund.
- The Hilton Head Island Airport (KHXD) is owned and operated by Beaufort County. Facilities include a 4,300-foot runway with two parallel taxiways, one commercial and two general aviation terminals, an air traffic control tower, and professionally trained and equipped fire, crash and rescue teams. A 2010 Airport Master Plan calls for extending the runway to 5,000 feet to allow for commercial regional jets as well as a diverse mix of private and corporate aircraft.
- The Beaufort County Airport has a 3,430 foot runway. Unlike the Hilton Head Island Airport, this airport serves only private planes and the County's Mosquito Control aircraft.

Emergency Evacuation

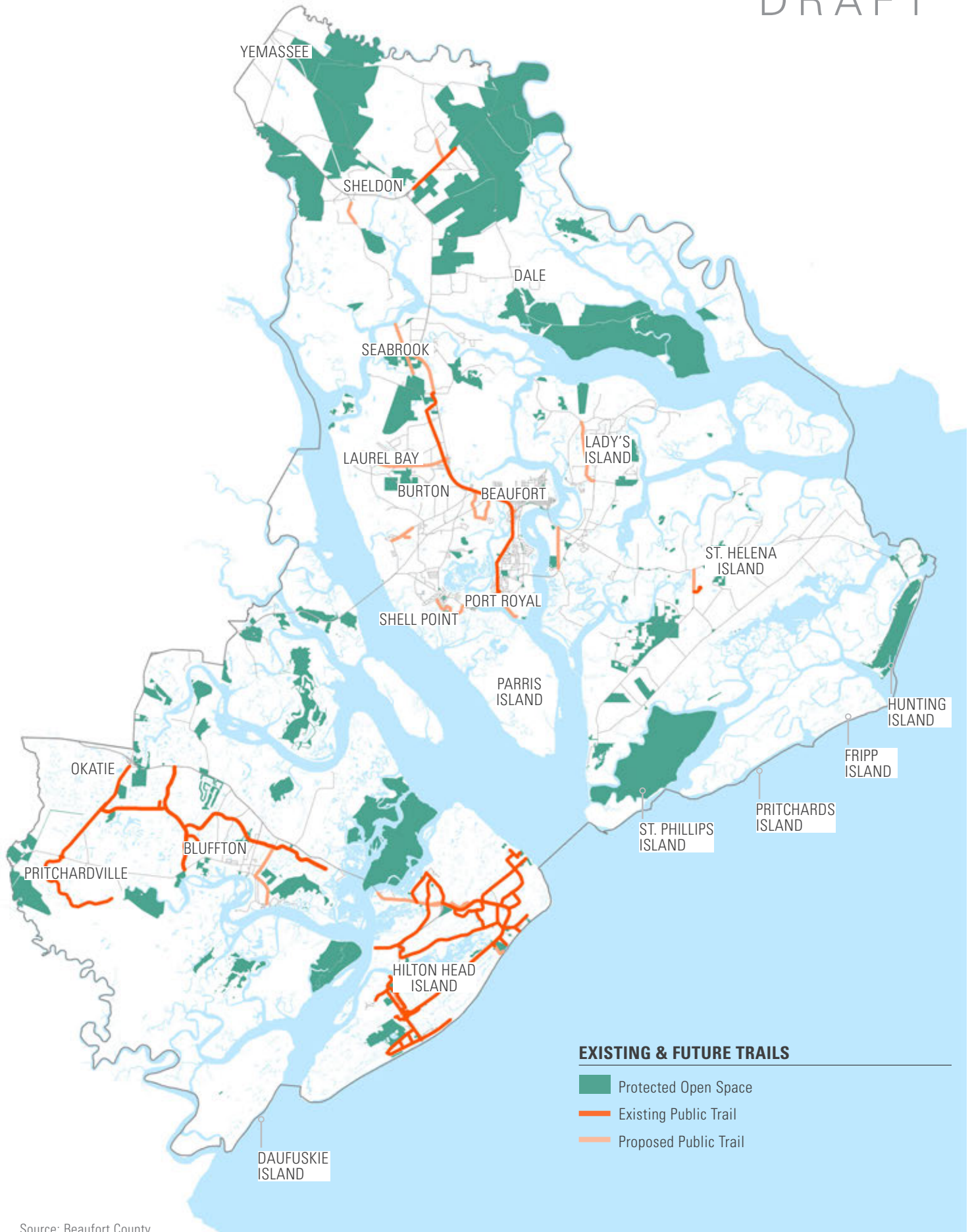
- Beaufort County, while relatively unscathed over the last 50 years, is still vulnerable to the destructive power of hurricanes. Beaufort County has an emergency evacuation plan that directs traffic along designated routes to get people inland as quickly as possible in the event of an evacuation.

Land Preservation

- Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head Island both have pursued land purchase programs aimed in part at removing land from potential development that could add to our traffic volumes.

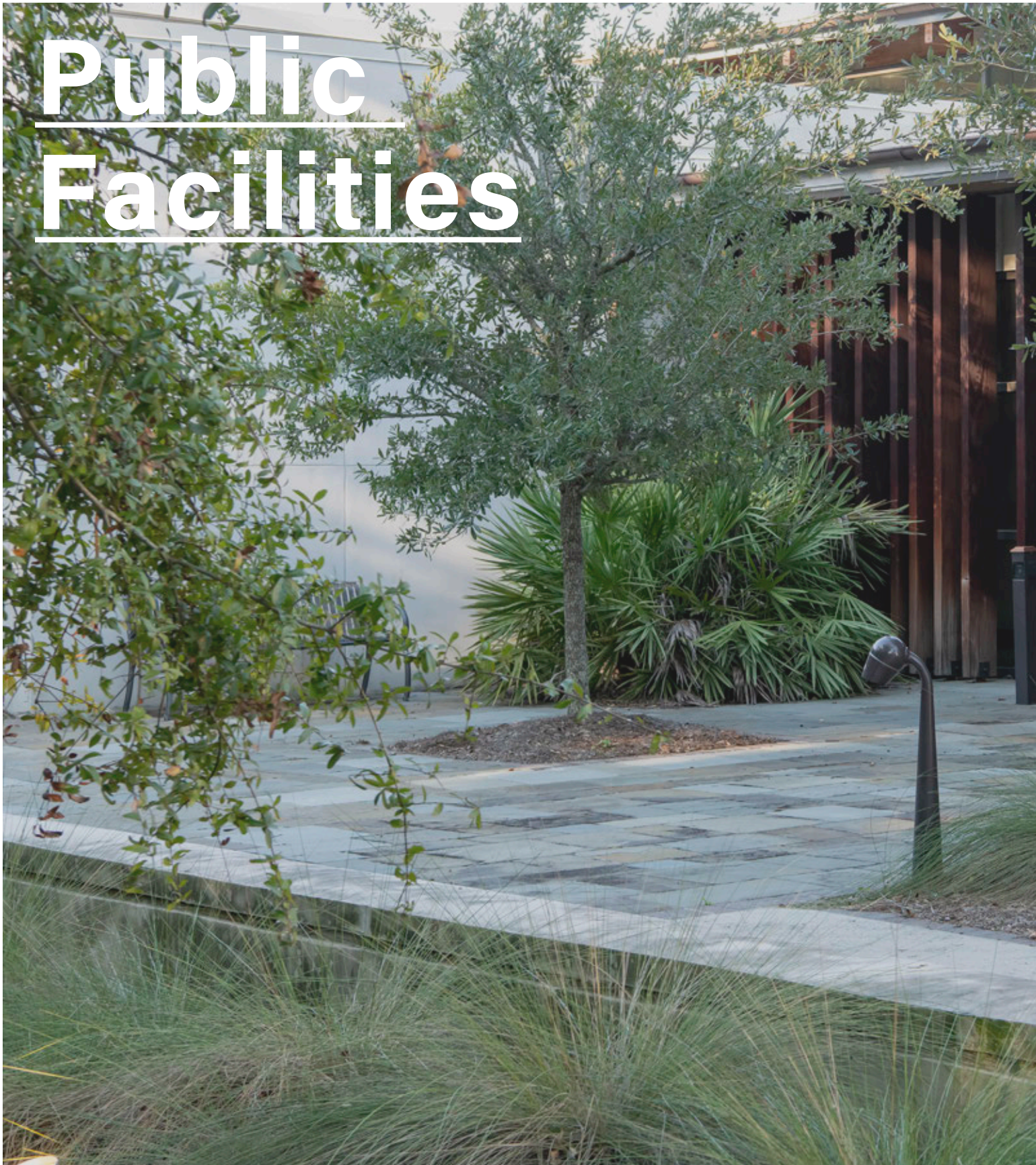
Land Use Policies

- Generally, two types of land use policies are effective in reducing VMT's:
 - » Policies directed at promoting internal trip capture by allowing or requiring mixed use development.
 - » Policies that promote centralized, high-density development that facilitates the use of public transportation.



Source: Beaufort County

Public Facilities





St. Helena Branch of the Beaufort County Library

PUBLIC FACILITIES



The quality and maintenance of Beaufort County’s public facilities – including its parks, beaches, boat ramps, libraries, schools, utility infrastructure and emergency services – are essential to the wellbeing and quality of life of County residents.

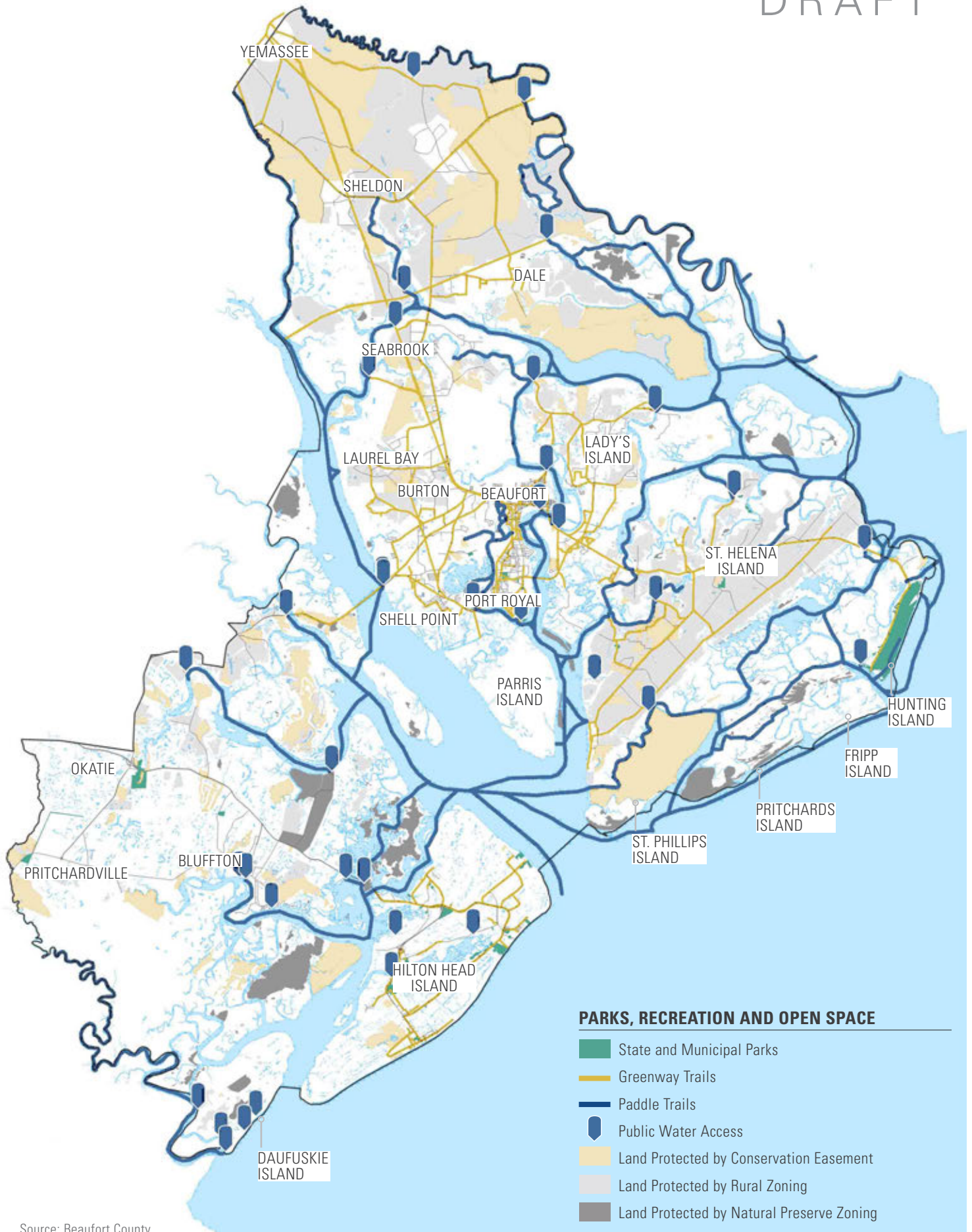
Beaufort County and its state and municipal partners continue to expand public facilities and services to keep pace with rapid population growth.

In 2003, the County moved its engineering department and development services administrator to the Beaufort Industrial Village (BIV). Since that time other departments followed suit and two new office buildings were constructed, one is under construction, and one more is planned for the BIV.

County departments also have offices in

Bluffton, including Building Codes, Parks and Leisure Services, Public Works, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, other County health agencies, and the Magistrate’s Office.

The County occupies 18,000 square feet of space in the Myrtle Park Professional Center on Bluffton Parkway. Beaufort County occupies approximately 24,000 square feet on Hilton Head Island with offices for the magistrate, probate court and sheriff’s deputies who are contracted to work in the Town.



Source: Beaufort County

SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN PUBLIC FACILITIES

- Population Growth Challenges: Due to the County's rapid growth, it is an ever present challenge to keep up with desired levels of services for community facilities, especially south of the Broad River.
- Active Parks and Recreation Needs: The Beaufort County Parks and Recreation Department is continually challenged to keep up with facilities to serve the needs of its active recreation programs. There is always a need for practice fields for soccer, football, and baseball.
- Passive Park Trends: Over the last 10 years, the County has moved toward offering more passive park amenities, due in part to the acquisition of land through the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program and specific funding set aside in the program for the development of passive park improvements. Recent successes include Crystal Lake and Fort Fremont Preserve, with future facilities planned or underway at Widgeon Point Preserve, Fort Frederick, Whitehall Park, Pineview (Lady's Island), Bailey Memorial Park, Okatie River Park, and Ford Shell Ring on Hilton Head Island.
- School Capacity Issues: South of the Broad





River, the School District has serious capacity issues due to rapid growth. While enrollment in 2019 was currently at 88% capacity, most of the capacity was in elementary schools. Middle schools are projected to be at capacity in 2023, high schools in 2021. While there is excess capacity as several schools north of the Broad River, it is not geographically feasible to redraw attendance boundaries to address capacity needs.

- Changes in How Solid Waste is Collected: Beaufort County is exploring ways to expand curbside solid waste pickup in areas with higher density while reducing the number of convenience centers.
- New Landfill Needed: Hickory Hill Landfill, is owned by Waste Management, handles all of

Beaufort County's municipal solid waste and located in Jasper County. It has an estimated lifetime of only 8 years.

- Growing Demand for Potable Water: Water demands are estimated to double over the next 20 years to as much as an average of 56 MGD and a maximum daily demand of 96 MGD.
- Public Safety Facility Needs: The Beaufort County Sheriff's Department is outgrowing its existing headquarters on Duke Street. Beaufort County will be faced with the choice of expanding the existing facility or developing a new law enforcement center in the next 10 years. The Detention center will also need to be expanded to accommodate growth and programmatic needs in its inmate population.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Beaufort County provides a wide range of recreational offerings, including everything from competitive sports programs to passive parks. The Beaufort County Parks and Recreation Department (BCP&R) oversees and manages active recreational programs and regional parks. Passive parks, those offering more low-impact facilities such as trails, picnic areas and historic sites, are managed by the Planning Department through the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program. The County’s recreational network is greatly enhanced by federal, state and municipal parks including Hunting Island State Park, the Beaufort Waterfront Park, Sands Beach in Port Royal, and the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Active Recreation

- BCP&R’s facilities include two regional recreation centers, 10 neighborhood recreation centers, four swimming pools, in addition to multi-purpose fields, baseball diamonds, basketball and volleyball courts,

tennis courts, batting cages and playgrounds.

- Recreational programs include competitive sports such as youth football, cheerleading, soccer, basketball, softball, and adult softball and soccer.
- BCP&R provides non-competitive programs including swimming lessons, after school programs senior citizen programs, summer camp, aerobics, yoga, and tae kwon do.
- BCP&R provides its facilities to such annual events as the Lowcountry Home and Garden Show at the Buckwalter Recreation Center and the Dixie Youth Baseball Tournament at Oscar Frazier Park. These events bring visitors and exposure to Beaufort County.

Passive Recreation

- The Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program has acquired nearly 24,000 acres since its inception in 2000. Many of the properties that are owned by the County are suitable to some form of passive recreation.
- Recently developed passive parks include Fort Fremont (St. Helena Island), Crystal Lake (Lady’s Island), and Wigeon Point (Lemon Island). Passive Park master planning is underway at New Riverside (Bluffton) and Mitchellville (Hilton Head Island).
- Multi-use trails serve as linear passive parks. In the Bluffton area, over 22 miles of multi-use paths have been developed as part of new road projects or road widenings. In northern Beaufort County, 10 miles of the Spanish Moss Trail have been constructed on the former right-of-way of the Port Royal Railroad.

BEAUFORT COUNTY OPEN SPACE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

TOTAL BEAUFORT COUNTY OPEN SPACE

3,061 ACRES

- Beaufort County
- U.S. low-density cities, median figure
- All U.S. cities, median figure



Sources: Beaufort County 2019, Trust for Public Land 2017

Funding and Land Acquisition

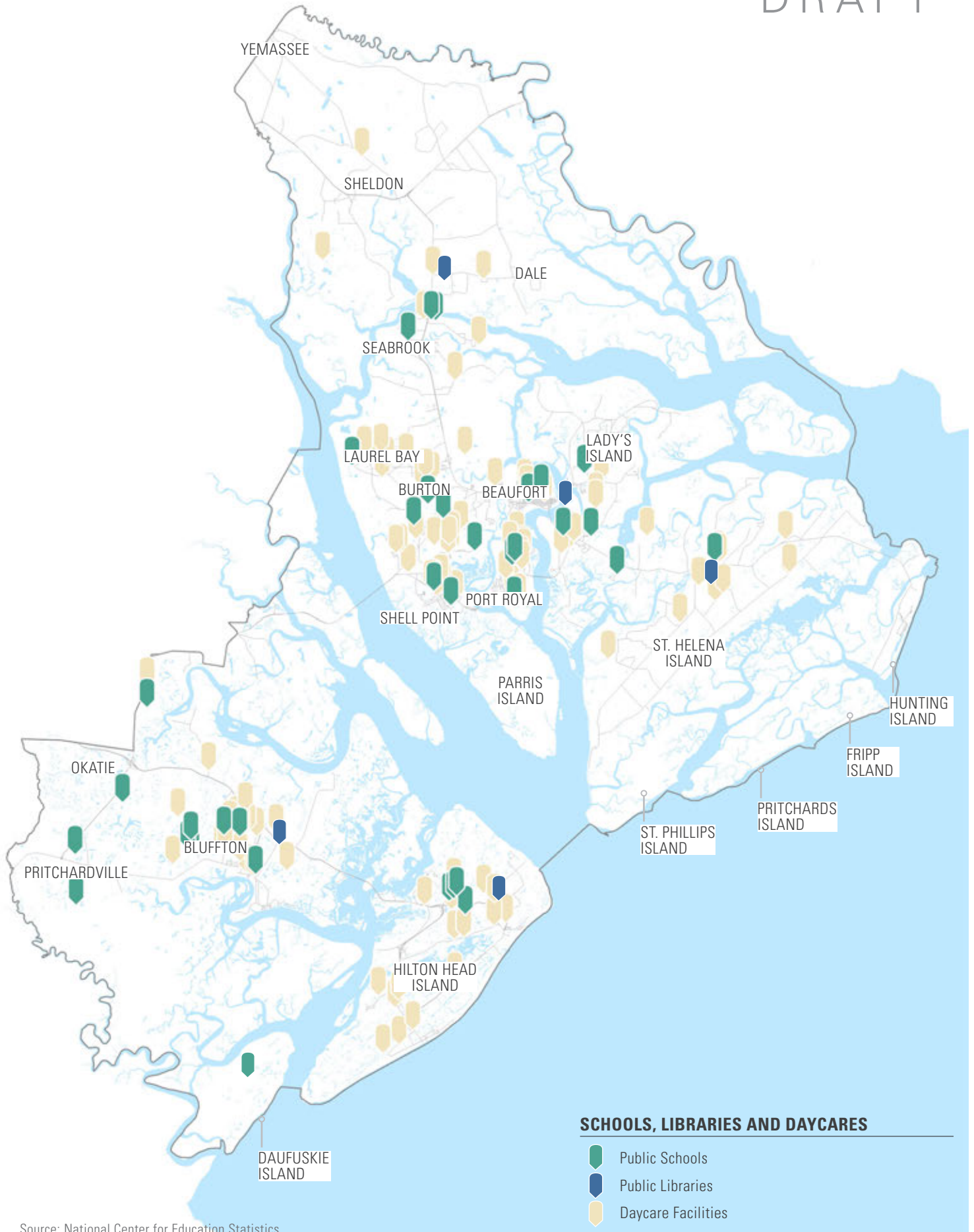
- Funding for BCP&R activities and park maintenance comes from the County’s general fund.
- Park facilities and land needs that result from new development are funded in part by impact fees.

- The Beaufort County Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program provides funding for both land acquisition and park facilities for passive parks.
- Private developers have donated much of the existing active parkland in the Bluffton area as part of Development Agreements.
- Daufuskie Island has approximately 3 ½ miles of beach with only one public access point.
- In northern Beaufort County, only Hunting Island State Park's three miles of beach is easily accessible. Recent storms have brought significant erosion to the island which has resulted in reduced parking and campground capacity.
- Public access to the beaches of Harbor and Fripp Islands is highly restricted with only Harbor Island requiring a gate fee and very limited parking.
- The Beaufort County Public Works Department maintains and manages 25 public boat ramps and 10 fishing piers to facilitate the public in pursuit of water activities. Additionally, the City of Beaufort has two boat landings and the Town of Port Royal maintains the Sands Fishing Pier.
- Beaufort County has over 39 linear miles of beaches plus countless miles of waterfront along the county's creeks, bays, and saltmarshes.
- Providing public access to this amenity is vital to both the quality of life for the area's residents and to the economic health of the region's tourism industry.
- In southern Beaufort County, Hilton Head Island has nine public access points with approximately 1,400 parking spaces along its 19 miles of beaches.



PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

- The Beaufort County School District is composed of 37 schools. The District currently serves over 22,300 students countywide and employs over 2,700 persons. The School district serves a diverse population. 39% of the students are white, non-Latino, 27% are Latino, 27% are African American, and 7% are other. Nearly 22% of the students' native language is not English.
- South of the Broad River, the School District has serious capacity issues due to rapid growth. While enrollment in 2019 was currently at 88% capacity, most of the capacity was in elementary schools. Middle schools are projected to be at capacity in 2023, high schools in 2021.
- In 2019, Beaufort County voters approved a bond referendum to target \$26 million toward improving school safety, renovating facilities and adding classroom space to address enrollment growth.
- Beaufort County has a countywide system of libraries that serve both the unincorporated county and its municipalities. The system consists of five branches with a total of 111,647 square feet of building space in addition to two bookmobiles to serve residents lacking access to the five branches.
- In addition to traditional collection materials, the library system offers cardholders free access to digital materials through third party services such as Hoopla Digital and cloudLibrary eBooks.
- The library system operates as a fiscal and administrative department of County government and employs 62 full time and 19 part time persons.
- The Beaufort County Library Board of Trustees acts as an advisory body to County Council. The Board establishes library policy, monitors library operations, and makes recommendations to County Council concerning budget and planning and development.
- Approximately 90% of the Beaufort County Public Library's funding comes from County funds. Operations and maintenance costs are paid for from the County's general fund. Capital costs are funded with impact fees. Most of the remaining funds will have to come from the State of South Carolina through appropriations and competitive grants.
- The Friends of the Library also helps the Library through cash contributions, book sales, and volunteer services.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

- In Beaufort County, public collection of solid waste and recycling is financed and operated through a system of 11 staffed convenience centers (collection facilities), seven of which accept recyclables.
- The City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, and the Town of Bluffton provide traditional curbside solid waste and recycling collection. Residents of the unincorporated areas of the county and Hilton Head Island who desire curbside collection of household solid waste must contract with private companies for those services or transport their household solid waste to one of the County's convenience centers. Twenty percent of Beaufort County households have no curbside collection services.
- Under the current setup, the County is required to staff, maintain, manage collection, and pay for disposal of items from the convenience centers. In 2019 there were 1.6 million visits to the 11 convenience centers and it cost the county \$2.8 million to dispose of the materials.
- The County's solid waste is disposed of at Hickory Hill Landfill. Approximately 145,000 tons of solid waste were disposed of in FY 2019.
- Hickory Hill Landfill, is owned by Waste Management, handles all of Beaufort County's municipal solid waste. It has an estimated lifetime of 8 years.
- Curbside recycling service is provided by the City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, and Town of Bluffton, and is available in some Planned Unit Developments serviced by private companies. Outside of these municipalities, lack of convenience remains a major barrier to widespread recycling.
- The County pays for the entire cost of residential solid waste disposal (i.e., residents currently do not pay disposal fees). The cost of commercial solid waste disposal is paid by the generator. The source of funding for County Solid Waste and Recycling Program is the general fund.

WATER UTILITIES

Water and Sewer Providers

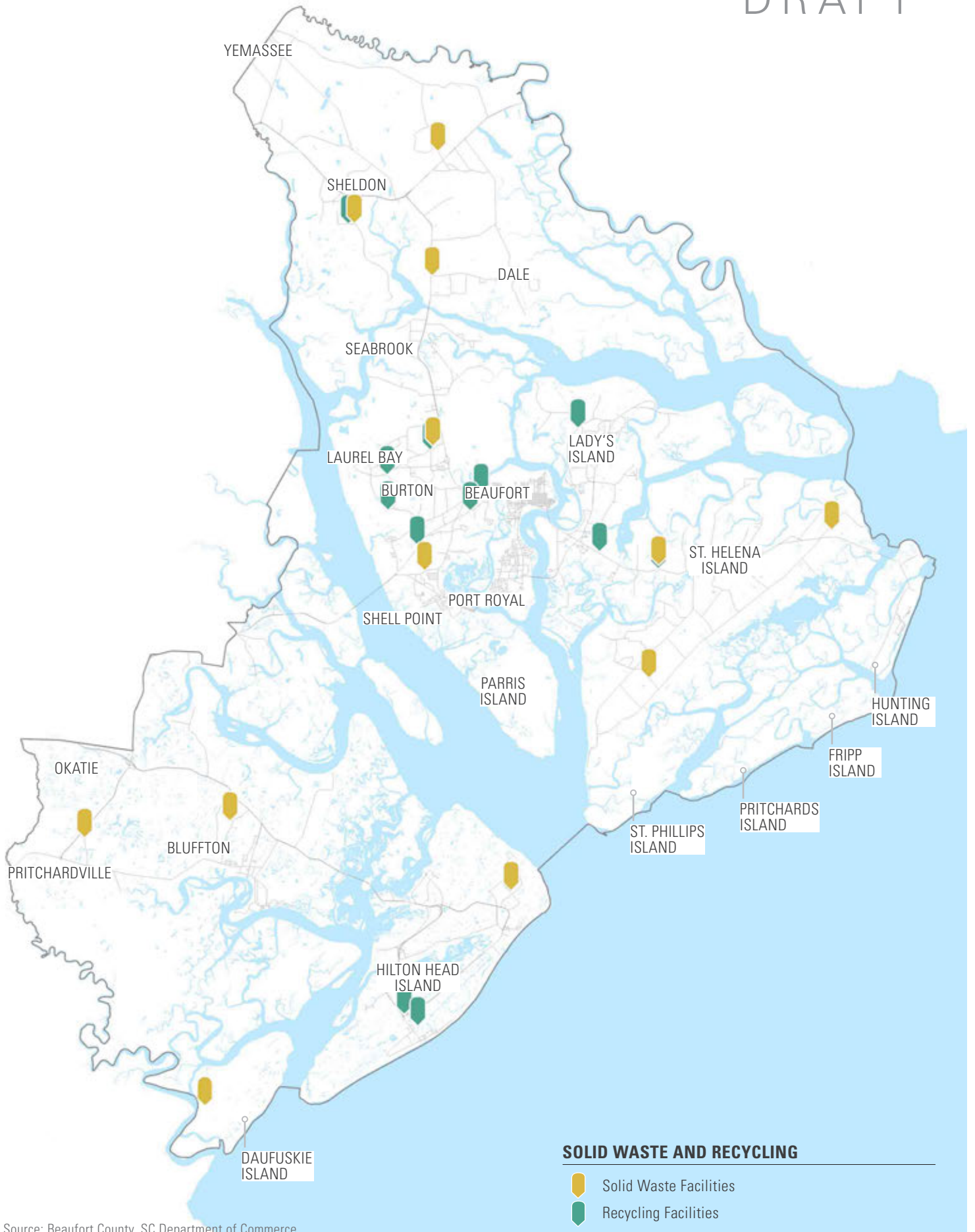
- The primary provider of water and wastewater treatment in Beaufort County is the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA).

Water Supply

- Water services in Beaufort County are currently provided by approximately 16 public and private agencies, including six governments, four public service districts, and six private water companies.
- Although the County has a variety of different

water retailers, most of them utilize the same source of water, the Savannah River, as distributed by BJWSA, which maintains all water transmission lines.

- Surface Water Supply:
 - » The Savannah River is the primary source of drinking water in Beaufort County. BJWSA operates two treatment plants in Jasper County that supply Beaufort County residents and businesses with an average of approximately 20 million gallons per day (MGD) and a maximum demand of 39



SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

-  Solid Waste Facilities
-  Recycling Facilities

Source: Beaufort County, SC Department of Commerce

million MGD, representing over 75% of the county's water.

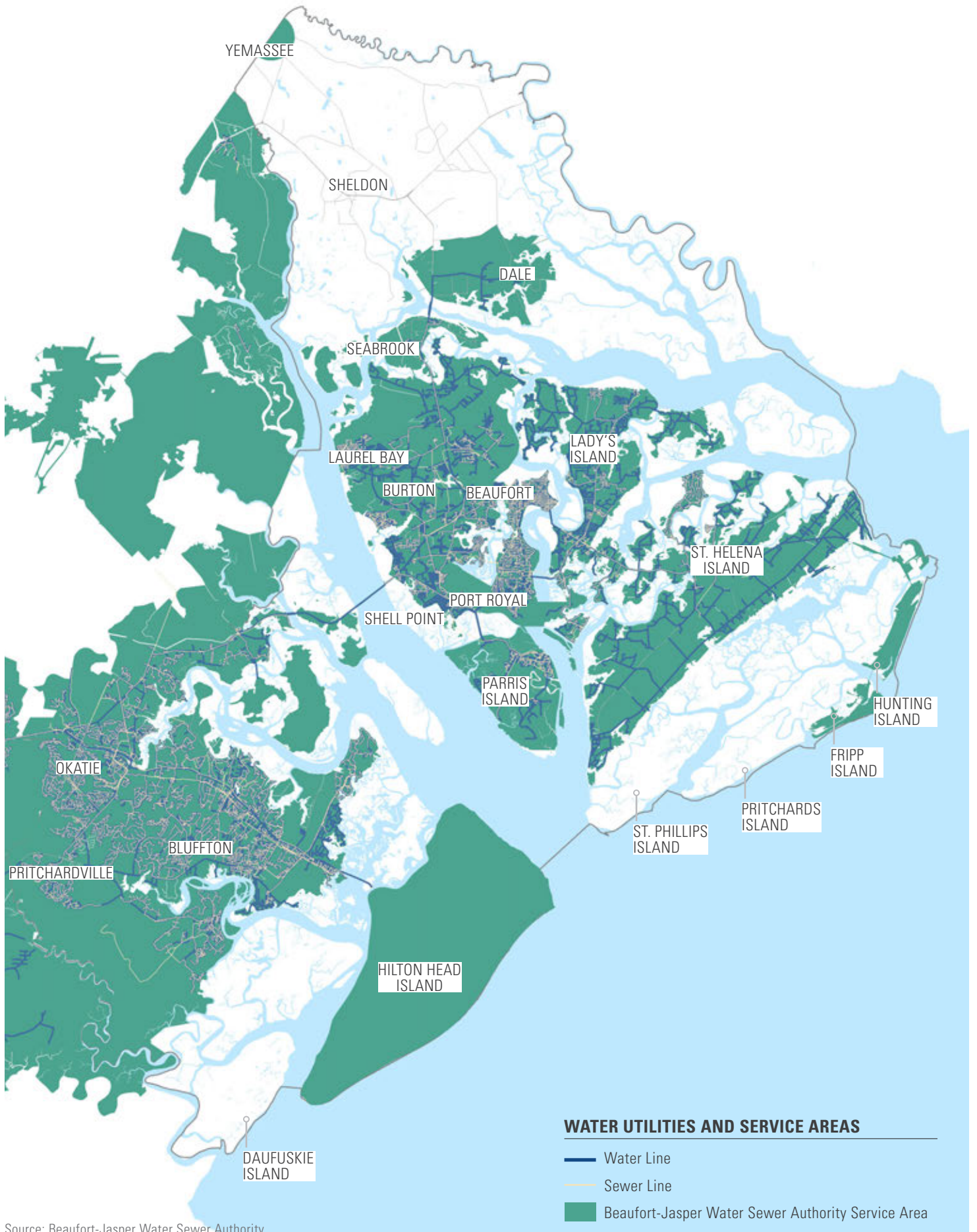
- » BJWSA is currently permitted to withdraw 100 MGD from the river. While safe yield of the Savannah River appears to be adequate over the next 20 years, the capacity of the river would be limited if the City of Atlanta is permitted to tap the river as a water resource.
- Groundwater Supply:
 - » On Hilton Head Island, three public service districts (PSD's) supply approximately 10.5 MGD from the Upper and Middle Floridian Aquifers and the Cretaceous Aquifer.
 - » There are three known points of saltwater intrusion into the aquifer in the county; one underlying northern Hilton Head Island, one underlying the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge, and one under the Moss Creek area. These challenges have led to the use of surface water to serve the majority of potable water demand.
- Private Wells:
 - » Private wells provide drinking water to residents and businesses in Sheldon Township (north of the Whale Branch River) and in portions of Pritchardville and Sawmill Creek in southern Beaufort County.

Wastewater Treatment

- Wastewater treatment services in Beaufort County are primarily provided by BJWSA via four wastewater treatment plants – Cherry Point and Palmetto Bluff in southern Beaufort County and Port Royal and St. Helena in northern Beaufort County.
- The Town of Hilton Head Island is served by three Public Service Districts which each have their own wastewater treatment plant.
- BJWSA and other major utilities utilize two basic methods for the disposal of treated wastewater

– surface water discharge and land application, where treated effluent is spread over land infiltrating into the groundwater.

- The Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) has been designated as the Water Quality Planning Agency for Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties. LCOG prepares and revises the Lowcountry Areawide Water Quality Management Plan which provides the regional framework and policies for all management and service agencies with the region.
- Beaufort County Council is the management agency and must approve the location of new treatment facilities, and ensure compliance and consistency regarding location, operation and maintenance of treatment facilities with the Lowcountry Areawide Water Quality Management Plan and any local plans, especially the Comprehensive Plan.
- In addition to public wastewater treatment facilities, there are private package treatment facilities on Callawassie Island, Spring Island, Moss Creek, Pleasant Point, Harbor Island, Fripp Island and two plants on Daufuskie Island. These plants have generally experienced problems because of age and inconsistent maintenance.
- The remainder of Beaufort County residents are served by individual on-lot septic systems.
 - » Of all the methods of wastewater treatment, on-lot septic systems have the greatest potential to adversely affect surface and ground water quality.
 - » While on-lot septic systems are common in rural areas where it is often impractical to extend public sewer, Beaufort County has many moderate density “suburban” communities that are still served by individual septic systems.



Source: Beaufort-Jasper Water Sewer Authority

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire Protection

- Fire services in Beaufort County are offered by nine separate providers including three municipal fire departments, five special purpose tax districts, and one public service district.
- All emergency dispatching in the county is coordinated from the County's Law Enforcement Center (LEC), except for the Town of Hilton Head Island which has its own dispatch system.
- Over 400 certified firefighters, paid and volunteer, staff a total of 32 stations throughout Beaufort County.

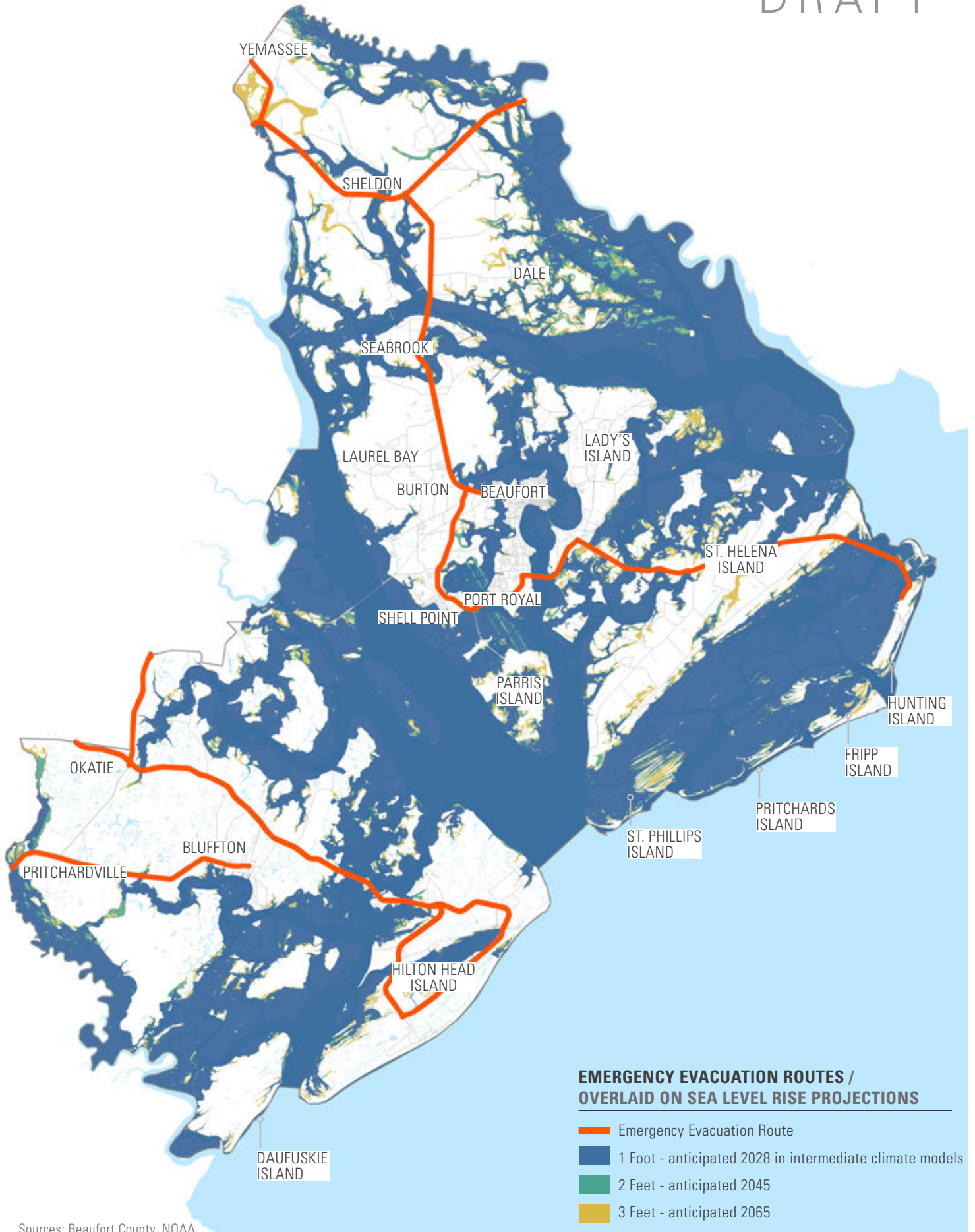
Emergency Management

- The Department employs 70 persons responsible for:
 - » Emergency preparedness;
 - » Operation of Central Dispatch and the E-911 Program*;
 - » Enforcement of the Beaufort County Hazardous Materials Ordinance;
 - » Coordination of the Hazardous Materials Response Team;
 - » Managing communication equipment for fire, police and EMS; and
 - » Issuance of house addressing to ensure that correct data is available for Central Dispatch and 911.
- Beaufort County's consolidated Dispatch Center is housed in the County's Law Enforcement Center, within the Government Complex and has outgrown its space.
- The Center provides dispatching services for all County and Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies, Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services, and a variety of other public safety agencies utilizing state-of-the-art technology and communications capabilities.

- The Town of Hilton Head Island has its own Dispatch Center, which dispatches fire and EMS units for the Town and Daufuskie Island.
- The County operates 78 surveillance cameras along its major highways offering live video of traffic conditions to the County's Emergency Management Department.
- Beaufort County has an emergency evacuation plan that directs traffic along designated routes to get people inland as quickly as possible in the event of an evacuation.

Emergency Medical Services

- The Beaufort County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department serves all areas of Beaufort County, with the exception of the Town of Hilton Head Island, with emergency medical care and transport and inter-hospital transport from Beaufort Memorial Hospital and the U.S. Naval Hospital to hospitals in Charleston and Savannah.
- EMS operates 13 stations throughout the county, most housed within fire stations in the various fire districts.
- System-wide equipment includes 11 primary ambulances and six quick response vehicles (QRVs).
- All stations are equipped to provide advanced life support services. There are currently 87 full-time, 20 part-time and six volunteer staff members.
- EMS response time to any service area in the County is 8.59 minutes. The Department's goal is a five-minute response time Countywide.
- In order to keep response time to a minimum, the EMS stations operate on a tiered response system based on ambulance relocation.
- Beaufort County EMS also performs several



Sources: Beaufort County, NOAA

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ancillary missions, which include Tactical medical support as embedded members of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office Special Weapons and Tactics Team; medical support for large events through deployment of specially trained Emergency Bike Teams; and Direct support to local disaster recovery and catastrophic events as members of the Low Country Regional Medical Assistance Team (RMAT).

- The department's ambulances employ state-of-the-art medical equipment including the Physio Control Lifepak 15, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), the LUCAS Chest Compression System, and Handtevy Pediatric Emergency Standards.

Sheriff's Office

- The Sheriff's Office has 306 authorized personnel positions (224 are sworn personnel and 82 are non-sworn personnel).
- The department is made up of three divisions – Enforcement, Emergency Management, and Administrative and Support Services.
- The organization as a whole has grown considerably over the last ten years due to the population increase in the county as well as the increase in tourism.
- The Department's main headquarters are located in the County Government Complex in Beaufort. This building houses the administrative division of the Sheriff's Department as well as the Emergency Management Division. The facility is at capacity as several offices and storage spaces have been utilized to create more offices. Many employees share spaces.
- There is also a substation south of the Broad River that serves Hilton Head Island. Services to the Town of Hilton Head Island are provided on a contractual basis.

Detention Facilities

- The capacity system is based on two terms,

rated and operational. The rated capacity of the facility is 255 with an operational capacity of 191.

- In FY 2017, a total of 6,754 inmates were booked into the Detention Center.
- The difference between rated and operational capacities is due to separate housing required for various classifications of inmates including male, female, 16 year olds, 17 year olds, mental health issues, super max, maximum, close, medium, and minimum security.
- A March 2017 Needs Assessment determined that within the next 25 years, the detention center would need approximately 520 beds.



View over U.S. 278 toward Hilton Head Island

