

Adopted: TBD

**DRAFT**

## **CITY OF DARIEN 2018-2038 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **City of Darien Mayor and City Council**

Hugh “Bubba” Hodge, Mayor

Barbara Shaw, Council

Griffin Lotson, Council

John Cox, Council

Augustus Skeen, Council

### **Steering Committee Members**

Marcy Goodyear, Council

Kate Pontello, Planning & Zoning Chair

Charlie Potts

Sheila Deverger

Howard Clements

### **Stakeholder Committee Members**

Eunice Moore, Gullah Geechee

Charles McMillan, GA Conservancy

Stacey Kessell, Downtown Development Authority

Mandy Harrison, McIntosh Chamber of Commerce

Wally Orrel, IDA



## COASTAL REGIONAL COMMISSION

Allen Burns, Executive Director

### **Planning and Government Services Team**

Lupita McClenning, Director of Planning & Government Services

Russell Oliver, Senior Planner II

Quentin T. McPhatter, Senior Planner

Hunter Key, GIS/IT Director

Lisa Fulton, Planner / GIS Analyst

Tara Lopez, GIS Analyst

Meizi Wolven, Grant Specialist

Teresa Townsend, Administrative Assistant



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires Comprehensive Plans in Georgia to be revised and updated. This update reassesses where the City of Darien is today, and how it intends to develop, as well as organizes the document to meet the state standards. It presents a community vision, corresponding goals and how the City of Darien is to address working towards its vision. The update includes a work program designed to make its vision a reality.

The City of Darien prepared a Comprehensive Plan Update document to guide the City's collective growth and development decisions. The Plan serves as the intent of the City regarding actions to be undertaken, policies to be observed, and to promote agreed upon goals related to economic development, land use, transportation, housing, and quality of life.



## COMMUNITY VISION









**“Darien is a unique coastal community, economically viable, rich in history, which flourishes as a result of preserving its cultural and natural resources.”**

The City of Darien is committed to achieving this vision through:

- Advancement of community by emphasizing education, promoting housing of various sizes and pricing, creating employment opportunities and a community with a variety of retail, commercial, and improved public spaces.
- Balanced growth guided by planning principles that promote housing, economic development and access to recreation and natural resources.
- Natural resource preservation by recognizing these resources are necessary to meet the needs of future generations.



The vision addresses the City’s desire to maintain its coastal community-small town feel with commercial, employment and economic development opportunities. The vision is supported by the following overarching goals created to help shape the City of Darien’s development:

	<b>Eliminate Blight Underutilized Parcels</b>
	<b>Eliminate Negative School Reputation</b>
	<b>Preserve Historic District and Character, Planned Squares</b>
	<b>Preserve Cultural Heritage of Gullah Geechee and Scottish Highlanders</b>
	<b>Achieve Comprehensive Parking Plan</b>
	<b>Enforce Code Enforcement</b>

The City of Darien’s vision is further defined by the **Character Area Map**. The Character Area Map plays a role in guiding future development and is further supported by the **Future Land Use** which also provides guidance on future land uses that is in keeping with the City’s vision.



## NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The recommendations of the City of Darien's Plan were crafted to address the Needs and Opportunities identified through the public outreach effort and the existing conditions analysis.

Among the recommendations of the City of Darien's Plan, the following six items are key in achieving the City's vision for the future. These six items help the City also achieve multiple goals and its long-term vision.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Eliminate Blight  
Underutilized Parcels**

**Eliminate Negative School  
Reputation**

**Preserve Historic  
District and Character,  
Planned Squares**

**Preserve Cultural  
Heritage of Gullah Geechee  
and Scottish Highlanders**

**Achieve  
Comprehensive  
Parking Plan**

**Enforce Code  
Enforcement**

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# PLAN OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Scope
- 1.3 Methodology



## PURPOSE 1.1



The City of Darien’s Comprehensive Plan is a living document updated and shaped by its leadership, staff and citizens. It is a policy guide for making zoning and land use decisions and it sets policies for City officials and staff concerning the future development of the City.

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range land use plan to guide future growth and the physical development of the City. The goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan are designed to help the City of Darien become prosperous, healthy, equitable, and resilient.

The City of Darien’s Comprehensive Plan is a five year update as required by the “The Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning,” (Minimum Standards) adopted by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The latest version of these standards can be found in O.C.G.A Chapter 110-12-1, effective March 2014.

In meeting these standards, this Plan enables the City to maintain its Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, making it eligible to receive certain types of state funding. This plan update reassesses where the City of Darien is today, and how it intends to grow in the future. Following the Minimum Standards, the Plan presents a community vision, goals and a work program designed to make the vision a reality.

## SCOPE 1.2

In keeping with the Minimum Standards, this plan is presented in three components:

- 1 COMMUNITY VISION** - which lays out the future vision and goals that the community wants to achieve in text and maps;
- 2 NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES** – which provides a list of the various needs and opportunities that the community will address; and
- 3 COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM** – which provides a 5-year Short Term Work Program designed to address the needs and opportunities. This program include activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances and administrative systems to be put into place or maintained to implement the plan.

In addition, the plan incorporates planning elements as defined by the DCA Minimum Standards that are important to shaping the future of the City of Darien.

A Record of Accomplishments highlighting the success of the previous Short-Term Work Program, a description of the public involvement proves, and a report on how this plan is consistent with the Regional Water Plan and Environmental Planning Criteria is a part of this report.



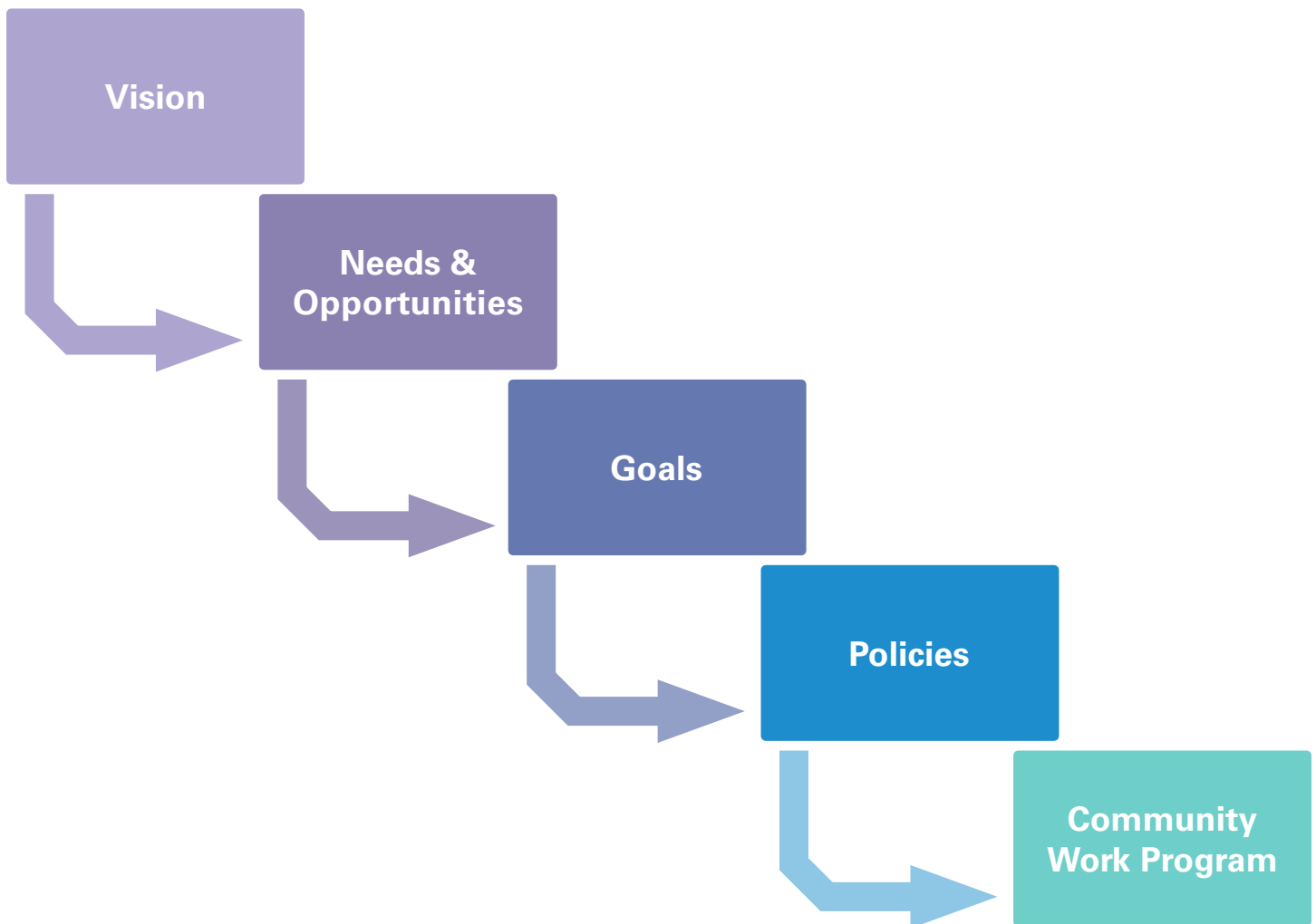


## Boundary and Description

Darien is the second oldest city in the state of Georgia and was originally called New Inverness. The town of Darien was founded in 1736 by Scottish Highlanders recruited by James Oglethorpe to act as settler-soldiers protecting the frontiers of Georgia. Darien was laid out in accordance with the Oglethorpe Plan. Into the early 1900s, Darien was one of the largest Southeastern ports for shipping lumber. By 1916 Darien's timber industry had ceased due to overharvest of trees along the Altamaha.<sup>1</sup> By 1930, Darien's population had declined by 50 percent and led those who chose to stay to take up commercial fishing. Over time, Darien's commercial fishing industry evolved from its simple beginnings in the largest commercial fleet in Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

The city has a total area of 2 square miles and has an elevation of 30 ft above sea level.

The City of Darien is rich in history, cultural, and environmental resources. The aesthetics of the area, including, live oak canopies, expansive marshland vistas and barrier islands, create a distinctive environment that defines Darien as a coastal area of unmatched natural beauty.



1. Buddy Sullivan, *Early Days on the Georgia Tidewater: The Story of McIntosh County and Sapelo*. 4th ed. (Darien, Georgia: McIntosh County Board of Commissioners, 1995), 535.
2. Buddy Sullivan, "Darien" *New Georgia Encyclopedia*.

## METHODOLOGY 1.3



The public outreach effort launched for this plan update includes two public hearing, a kick-off meeting, a community workshop, and Steering Committee meetings.

Announcements and notifications of these meetings were included on the Coastal Regional Commission's website <http://crcplanning.org/updates/?view=calendar&month=August-2017>.

The Steering Committee was formed comprised of members representing a cross-section of the community including an elected official, key staff, members of the planning and zoning board, a member of the Gullah Geechee Committee, and residents. The stakeholder committee included Eunice Moore (Gullah Geechee), Charles Mcmillan (GA Conservancy), Stacey Kessell (Downtown Development Authority), Mandy Harrison (McIntosh Chamber of Commerce), and Wally Orrel (IDA).

### Goals of the Steering Committee

**Seek agreement on key issues.**

**Help craft a common vision for the future.**

**Provide guidance on action needed to achieve that vision.**

**Affirm public input.**

Members of the Stakeholder Committee included the Executive Director of Georgia Conservancy, GA DCA, the Director of Downtown Development, the Director of the Industrial Development Authority, the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Gullah-GeeChee committee.

During the initial kick-off meeting, members of the committee were introduced and discussed the role of the committee. The kick-off meeting also provided an overview of the planning process, and the purpose of the Minimum Standards and Procedures as set forth by the GA DCA.

An initial public hearing was held at 2:00 PM on October 3, 2017 at Darien City Hall to brief the community on the Plan Update process, and provide members of the public opportunity for public participation.

A community-wide workshop was held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on October 30, 2017 at the Todd Grant Elementary School. Community stakeholders participated in carrying out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the City and helped to identify Needs and Opportunities of Darien.





# NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Public Input
- 2.2 Analyzing the External Environment
- 2.3 Analyzing the Internal Environment
- 2.4 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
- 2.5 Needs and Opportunities Matrix





## NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 2



The process which identified the Needs and Opportunities unique to the City was based on indicators from the technical assessment and input collected as part of the engagement process.

A need can be defined as a condition of something that is required or wanted, while an opportunity is a chance for progress or advancement. In order to achieve the City of Darien's vision and goals for the future, a number of Needs and Opportunities that the City must address were identified.



## PUBLIC INPUT 2.1

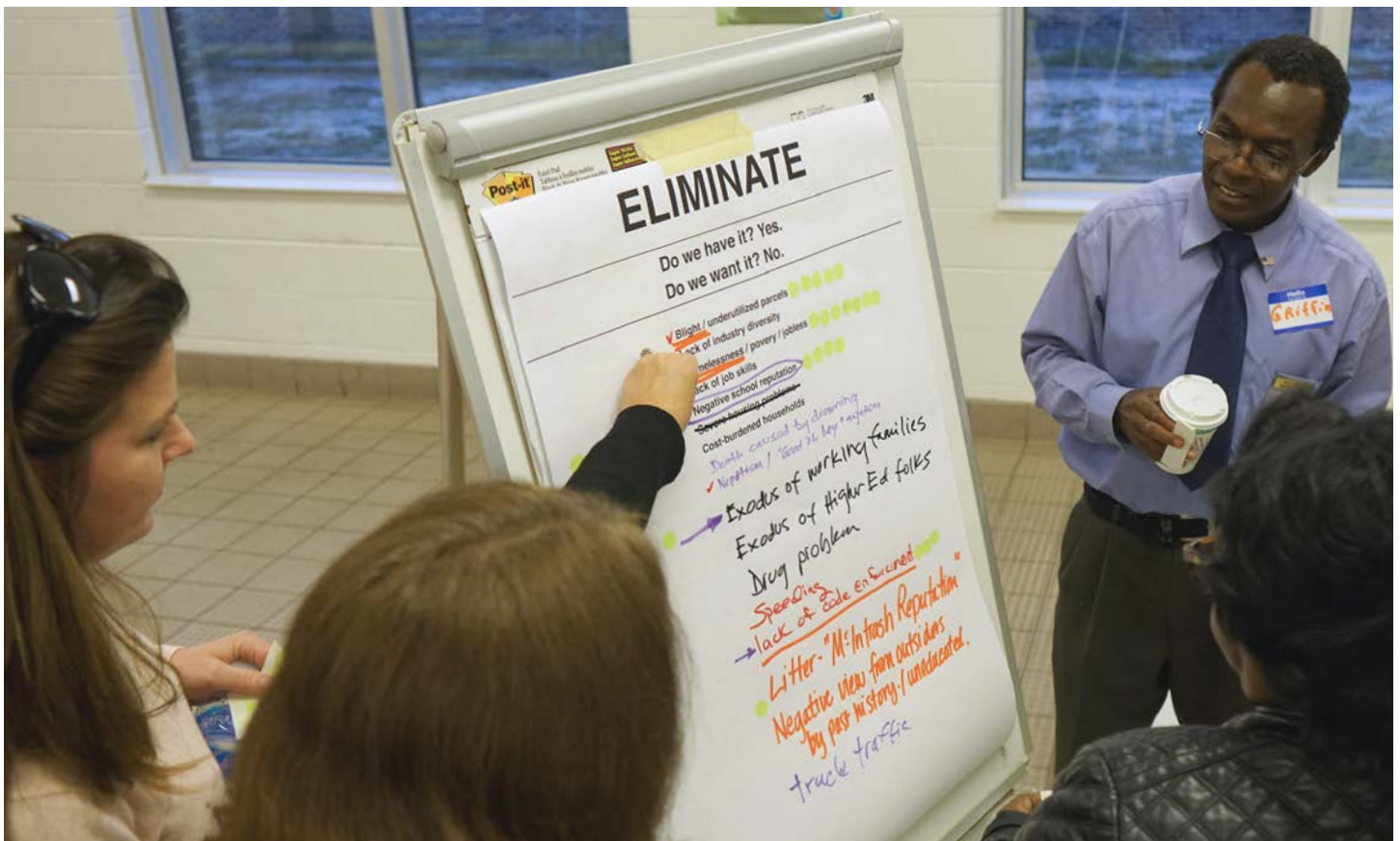
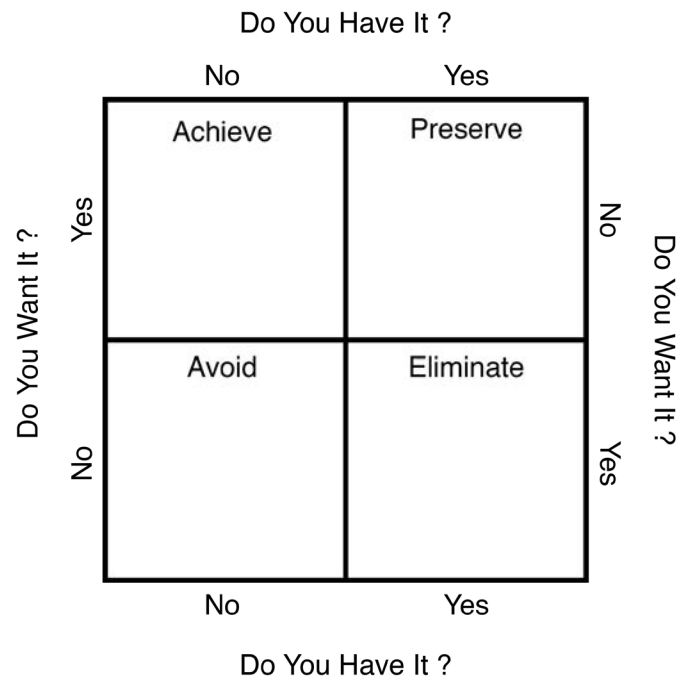
Members of the Steering Committee participated in a kick-off workshop held for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Community members participated in a **Needs and Opportunities** workshop held by the City of Darien on October 30, 2017 at the Todd Grant Elementary School.

Needs and Opportunities were identified through a facilitated discussion of the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**.

In order to collectively steer the process, a 2x2 matrix was constructed to examine the *Yes* and *No* answers to two questions:

1. Do we have it?
2. Do we want it?



The SWOT analysis was designed to identify priorities for the City and was conducted through a “Matrix” that included an exercise with the interplay of ‘yes’ and ‘no’.

The interplay of Yes and No answers to these questions define four basic categories, **Achieve, Preserve, Avoid or Eliminate.**

## ACHIEVE

- More retail/sales tax generator
- Better use of historic resources
- Market ecotourism
- Educated workforce
- Brand recognition
- Attract new residents
- Property value increase
- A destination to live, work and play
- Improved storefronts
- Comprehensive Parking Plan
- GDOT to improve Hwy 17/Streetscape
- Cohesive downtown signage
- Paid fire department
- Visitor Center downtown Darien
- Commercial redevelopment Hwy 17
- Lighted downtown

## AVOID

- Unplanned growth
- Attracting wrong ‘money makers

## ELIMINATE

- Blight/underutilized parcels
- Lack of industry diversity
- Homelessness/poverty/jobless
- Lack of job skills
- Negative school reputation
- Severe housing problems
- Cost-burdened households

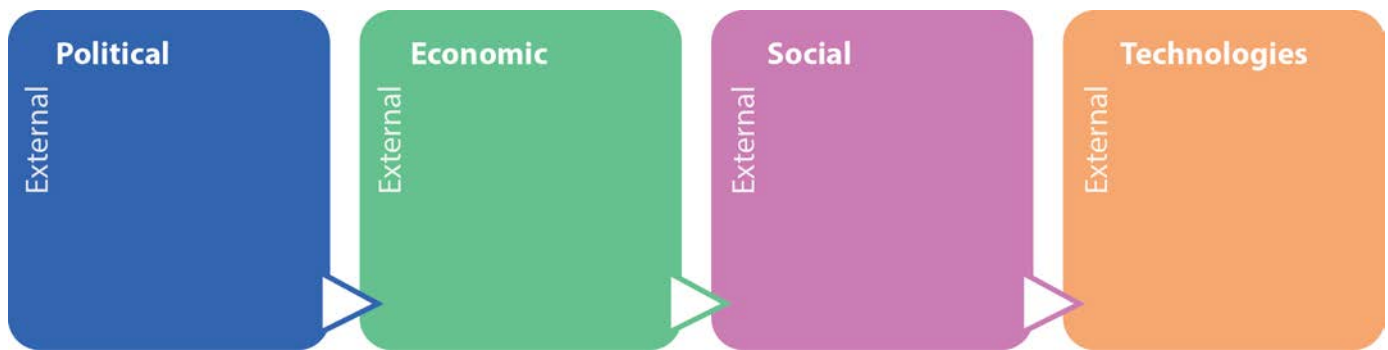
## PRESERVE

- Natural resources
- Waterways
- Viewscales
- Historic district and character
- Small town feel



## ANALYZING THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT 2.2

Once the four categories were identified, the analyses of the **external environment** including social change, new technologies, political environments was examined to determine how, if at all, might affect the City of Darien. A chart for analyzing the external environment is the **PEST** chart, an acronym for Political, Economic, Social and Technologies analysis that encompass the process.



### External Analysis Political

- Elected officials/agencies
- Environmental regulations
- Military owned lands
- State owned lands
- Funding streams

### External Analysis Social

- Elderly Population
- Homelessness/poverty/jobless
- Skills/lack of

### External Analysis Economic

- Cycles and market
- Funding streams
- Hurricane perception
- General perception
- Economic growth
- School Reputation

### External Analysis Social

- Need diverse industry/job base

ANALYZING THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
2.3

A critical component in the planning process is also documenting what the City of Darien knows about itself, analyzing the **internal environment**. An internal analysis is an exploration of the organization. What defines the City of Darien’s culture? What is its image in the eyes of its stakeholders and others? Are clear lines of communicating present? Is there skilled and experienced staff?

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

- City and County work in silos and do not plan together
- Zoning ordinances need updating
- Code enforcement activities need improvement

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)
2.4

The information derived from the external analysis feeds into the Opportunities and Threats segments of the SWOT analysis.

The information derived from the internal analysis drives the Strengths and Weaknesses components of the SWOT.

Citizen input helped determine the City of Darien’s needs and opportunities as part of the comprehensive planning process. The results are incorporated into the body of the plan.





## STRENGTHS

- Abundant Natural Resources
- Small Town Charm and Feel
- East Coast Greenway
- Close proximity to I-95
- Strong Fishing and Shrimping Industry
- Higher percentage of workforce that State and Nation in Arts & Entertainment, Recreation Accommodation, and Food Services.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Become an Eco Tourism Destination
- Retiree Livable Community Destination
- Market Natural & Historic Resources
- Market Waterways & Viewscapes
- Recruit Industry
- Broadband Availability
- Diverse industry
- Funding and Resources Available

## WEAKNESSES

- Median Income less than State and U.S.
- Lack of Commercial Retail
- Large Percentage of Land Owned by Federal/State Agencies
- City reputation needs improving
- The City lacks an educated/skilled workforce
- City and City Work in Silos
- Zoning Ordinance Out-of-date
- Code Enforcement Activities need attention

## THREATS

- Declining Population
- Homelessness/High Poverty/High Unemployment
- Percentage of adults not graduating from high school is higher than the State
- Declining High School Graduation Rates
- Decreasing population in higher education
- Cost-burdened Housing (households paying more than 30% on housing costs). 72.4% of housing with a mortgage is cost burdened. 44.5 % of all rental households is cost burdened.
- High crime rate. City of Darien crime rate is 106. U.S. National Average is 100.



## NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES 2.5

A need is identified as a condition of something that is required or wanted, while an opportunity is a chance for progress or advancement. More specifically, a “need” refers to the gap or discrepancy between a present state (what is) and a desired state (what should be). The need is neither the present nor the future state; it is the gap between them. An “opportunity” refers to something that the County has that should be maintained, promoted or that the city can capitalize on that improves the community.

Input from the Steering and Stakeholder Committees, the technical assessment, and citizen input helped determine Darien’s Needs and Opportunities as part of the comprehensive planning process.

## POPULATION

### ISSUES

**Aging Population** - Age composition from 2000 to 2017 shifted to a smaller percentage of children (under 18 years) and a larger percentage of retiree-age adults (62 years and over). Total population substantially increased for ages 62 to 74 years and 85 years and over. The City of Darien's aging population will increasingly have special needs in terms of residential choices and community services and facilities.

**Declining Average Household Size** – From 2000-2010 the average household size decreased 5.9 percent from 2.54 to 2.39. From 2010 – 2017 the county continued to decrease by 0.8 percent to 2.37. According ESRI Business Analysis, the decreasing trend is estimated to continue. Some of the decrease can be attributed to the larger retiree-aged population living in households without children.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Livable Communities** - Darien is considered a retiree community. The City can assess their age readiness, and implement initiatives designed to help prepare for their aging population by focusing on making local-level changes to facilitate aging in place.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### ISSUES

**Low Educational Attainment** – The significance of education in today’s competitive workplace cannot be stressed enough as being extremely important. The percentage of adults not graduating from high school in the City is 29.5 percent which is higher than the state at 17.7 percent. Compared to McIntosh County and State of Georgia, Darien has a lower percentage of adults with a bachelor degree and above (percent including Graduate or Professional Degree) in both 2010 (12.6 percent) and 2017 (10.3).

**Declining Employment** – In 2000, Darien’s unemployment rate of 3.4 percent was lower than the county, state, and nation. In 2010, the economic recession of 2008 resulted in a high unemployment rate for the City at 8.1 percent. In 2015, Darien’s unemployment rate increased to 14.8 percent.

**Lacking and Educated Workforce** – From 2010 - 2015, adults age 25-34 with at least a bachelor’s degree, decreased from 10.5 percent to 3.3 percent.

**Declining Median Household Income** – From 2010 to 2015, the median household income decreased by 27.7 percent to \$25,776 from the 2010 value of \$35,671.

**Declining Property Values** – In 2015, the median home value in Darien declined 17.9 percent to \$89,600 from the 2010 value of \$109,200.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Unrivaled Historic and Cultural Resources** – The City of Darien has extraordinary and unsurpassed historic and cultural resources including Fort King George and ruins at the Waterfront Park.

**Broadband Capacity** – Darien has sufficient broadband. Bandwidth means greater speed. Broadband can deliver several million bytes per second or megabytes/Mbps Broadband/high-speed Internet. Broadband has become a key economic development tool and private sector job creation vehicle.

**Eco-tourism Education** – Darien’s access to rivers, wildlife, birds, fish, and proximity to the ocean makes the City prime for ecological education programs.

**Boating and Kayaking Opportunities** – Darien’s waterways are flush with wildlife where one can see bottle nosed dolphins, manatee, otters, alligators, deer, eagles, osprey, and thousands of sea-birds. Kayakers can navigate through tidal swamps of cypress trees and rich bottomland forests. Darien’s waterways provide an excellent opportunity to for kayak and boating tours.

**Abundant Natural Resources** – Darien has abundant natural resources nearby with opportunities to market bird watching, wildlife viewing, sport fishing, and nature walks. The City has an opportunity to create interpretation and educational centers and enhance access to its abundant resources.

**East Coast Greenway** – The Highlander Trail runs from Sapelo Dock Road along SR 99 and connects to the pedestrian/bike trail in Darien. This trail is a section of the East Coast Greenway.

**Downtown Infill** – The City has an opportunity for redevelopment and restoration of vacant lots and underutilized buildings in the downtown area.

**Oglethorpe Grid** – Darien’s grid offers a walker friendly streetscape. The City has an opportunity to maximize accessibility by preserving its street grid.

## HOUSING

### ISSUES

**Cost Burdened Housing** – Cost-burdened households are those households paying 30 percent or more of their net income on housing costs. Based on housing costs rising at a faster rate than household income, the percentage of cost burdened housing is expected to increase. In 2015, the percentage of cost-burdened housing with a mortgage increased from 38 percent to 72.4 percent. Also in 2015, the percentage of cost-burdened housing without a mortgage increased from 4.7 percent to 24.1 percent.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Infill Housing** – Infill housing opportunities can contribute and enhance established neighborhoods.

**Managing Development** – The City has the opportunity to identify land use and a new zoning classification to accommodate workforce/affordable housing opportunities.

**Incorporate Universal Design** – Universal design incorporates design elements usable by everyone including seniors, and people with disabilities without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The City can prepare the demographic change by incorporating these design features for new residential developments.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### ISSUES

**Restricted Infrastructure** – The City of Darien operates a 0.60 mgd wastewater treatment facility with approximately 0.30 mgd average daily flow. The condition of the collection system is considered good while that of pump stations is considered fair with rehabilitation of several stations seen as a need. The treatment facility is also only in fair condition, with capacity and rehabilitation needs noted. (In accordance with the Coastal Georgia Water, Sewer and Stormwater Inventory Report of 2009)

### OPPORTUNITIES

**High-tech Infrastructure** – Darien has adequate high-tech infrastructure in place to support business recruitment and expansion.

**Future Water Needs** – Darien has a total permitted capacity of 1.05 mgd and is currently using 0.213 mgd based on the questionnaire, pumping from five Upper Floridan wells. There are two elevated storage tanks with total volume of 0.75 million gallons. The system was initially installed in the 1950's with a major upgrade in the 80's and in general is in good condition. Based on a 2009 study of the unused capacity, an additional 2,800 ERUs can be served.

## TRANSPORTATION

### ISSUES

**Travel Patterns** – Physical and jurisdictional topography play a significant role in shaping travel patterns within Darien. Physical constraints serve to limit travel choices, thus influencing travel patterns. U.S. HWY 17 is the only route for north-south travel through the City.

**Traffic Light for Safety** – Darien has no traffic lights.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**East Coast Greenway** – The Highlander Trail runs from Sapelo Dock Road along SR 99 and connects to the pedestrian/bike trail in Darien. This trail is a section of the East Coast Greenway, which extends from the northernmost point in Maine to the southernmost points in Florida.

**Bike Routes** – The City should implement the plan for bicycle routes through the City of Darien.

**Trails** – The City should continue to develop and implement the Multi-Use Trail Masterplan.

**Historic Grid** – The City should work to restore and extend the Oglethorpe street grid, complete with squares, into areas of new development.

## LAND USE

### ISSUES

**City Ordinances** – City ordinances do not regulate building materials in highly visible areas outside of historic districts.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Proximity to Waterways** – The City's development standards should ensure infill development along the waterways maintains the integrity of the downtown area, the historic areas, and is compatible with the character of the waterfront area.



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

### ISSUES

**Historic Preservation District** – Many of the historic structures in the City are in peril. The State and City need to work together to develop a masterplan for restoration and preservation.

**McIntosh County and City of Darien** – The City and County cooperate on a number of services, but can work together to provide better services which are also more financially sound. Collaboration can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government.

**Community Partners** – The City can strengthen its relationship with community partners such as the Industrial Development Authority, McIntosh County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of Education in order to better communicate, and plan for the viability of the City of Darien.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Coastal Regional Commission (CRC)** – The City maintains close working relationship with CRC for GIS services, transportation, and as the City implements its Comprehensive Plan.

**Community Partners** – The City has opportunity to strengthen its relationship with community partners such as the Industrial Development Authority, McIntosh County, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of Education to better communicate the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and to plan for the viability

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### ISSUES

**Dreary Social Indicators** – The City of Darien is facing an elevated high school dropout rate, low educational attainment, lack of employment opportunities, cost-burdened housing, severe housing problems, an exodus of middle income families, and little if any private investment.

**Poor Reputation** – There exists a poor reputation as it relates to the Board of Education and throughout the City in general.

**High Crime Rate** – According to Business Analyst Online (BAO) the total crime rate (June 2017) for Darien is 106. The index values for the U.S. level are 100, representing average crime for the country. A value of more than 100 represents higher crime than the national average, and a value of less than 100 represents lower crime than the national average.

### OPPORTUNITIES

**Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources** – The natural, historic, and cultural resources in Darien give the City its sense of identity and collectively tell a unique and compelling story.

# COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

- 3.1 Vision Statement
- 3.2 Goals
- 3.3 Community Policies
- 3.4 Quality Community Objectives





## COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

### 3

The Community Vision and Goals identify the City of Darien's direction for the future and are intended to serve as a guide to the City of Darien officials in day-to-day decision making. They are the product of public involvement and include the following components:

- Vision Statement
- Overarching Community Goals
- General Policies
- Character Areas Map and Narrative
- Future Land Use Map

## VISION STATEMENT

### 3.1

The Community Vision paints a picture of what the City of Darien desires to become. The vision statement offered below was refined through discussion with the Steering Committee.

**"A unique coastal community, economically viable, rich in history, and flourishes as a result of preserving its cultural and natural resources."**

The City of Darien is committed to achieving this vision through:

- Advancement of community by emphasizing education, promoting housing of various sizes, sizes and pricing, creating employment opportunities and a community with a variety of retail, commercial, and improved public spaces.
- Balanced growth guided by planning principles that promote housing, economic development and access to recreation and natural resources.
- Natural resource preservation by recognizing these resources are necessary to meet the needs of future generations.







The vision addresses the community's desire to maintain a small town feel with commercial, employment, and economic development opportunities.

The vision is supported by the following overarching goals created to help shape the City of Darien's future development.

## GOALS 3.2

Goals are long-term outcomes the City hopes to achieve by implementing the Comprehensive Plan. They are aspirations, expressing the City of Darien’s collective desires and values.

The City identified a number of goals in order to make the City of Darien’s vision a reality. The following goals represent the recurring themes, and like the vision statement, were derived from a vetting process involving elected officials, school officials, members of the Steering Committee, stakeholders, and members of the public.

	<b>Eliminate Blight Underutilized Parcels</b>
	<b>Eliminate Negative School Reputation</b>
	<b>Preserve Historic District and Character, Planned Squares</b>
	<b>Preserve Cultural Heritage of Gullah Geechee and Scottish Highlanders</b>
	<b>Comprehensive Parking Plan</b>
	<b>Enforce Code Enforcement</b>



## **Eliminate Blight & Underutilized Parcels**

Blight is one of Darien's pressing problems. It has many causes and contributes to negative consequences. Vacant and deteriorating properties add to an unfavorable impression of the City. Blight hinders economic stability and growth, and can create public health and safety hazards.

Blight has a negative effect on surrounding property values, which hurts adjacent property owners and reduces local property tax revenue.

The City of Darien plans to implement its urban redevelopment plan to address blight. This effort includes updated ordinances that apply to zoning and building codes, and design guidelines to provide standards for redevelopment.





## **Eliminate Negative School Reputation**

This goal centers on the City's desire to manage its school reputation.

While much of what needs to happen to turn around low-performing schools takes place at the school site, the City of Darien understands that the economic viability is closely linked to the performance and reputation of the Board of Education.

The City seeks to partner with the BOE, IDA, DDA, Chamber, and business leaders to support the improvement of low education attainment and the impact it has on economic viability.



## **Preserve Historic District and Character, Planned Squares**

Darien is fortunate to have an established Historic Preservation Commission and a preservation ordinance. These initiatives protect Darien's natural and historic resources. The City is recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG status opens up the availability of Historic Preservation grants.

To remain a CLG and retain eligibility to funds, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to enforce the preservation ordinance and hold regular, open meetings.

Preserving the Historic District and Character was identified as a top need and opportunity by the public during the planning process.





## **Preserve Cultural Heritage of Gullah Geechee and Scottish Highlanders**

During the planning process, preservation for the cultural heritage of Gullah Geechee and Scottish Highlanders was a dominant goal expressed by participants. The main purpose of the goal involves preserving the community, and the culture of language, arts, crafts, folklore, food, and history.





## Comprehensive Parking Plan

Participants in the planning process identified the need to address parking issues. A parking plan will help assess the amount of parking, how parking is utilized, and if parking is a need or perception.

The prime areas of opportunity for the parking plan include parking supply and demand, policy requirements and management, and potential infrastructure solutions.



## **Enforce Code Enforcement**

During the planning process, participants expressed that the City needs to boost its enforcement of regulations to ensure a clean, healthy, and safe environment that provides a quality of life for the residents, businesses, and guests that visit the City of Darien.

## COMMUNITY POLICIES 3.3

Policies set preferred direction and describe what must be done to achieve goals. They are specific enough to help determine whether a proposed project or program would advance the values expressed in the goals.

The following policies provide on-going guidance and direction to local government officials for making decisions consistent with achieving the Community Goals. For this reason these policies are organized by goals, although individual policies will likely achieve multiple goals.



### **Eliminate Blight & Underutilized Parcels**

- The City shall implement the Urban Redevelopment Plan to address blight.



### **Eliminate Negative School Reputation**

- The City shall create a task force to include BOE, IDA, DDA, McIntosh County, Chamber, and business leaders to promote higher educational attainment and improve the economic viability of the City.





## **Preserve Historic District and Character, Planned Squares**

- The City shall maintain and update the inventory of Darien’s significant historic resources.
- The City shall protect potentially significant historic structures from demolition.
- The City shall recognize Darien’s cultural, historic, recreational, educational, and environmental assets as important marketing and image-building tools.
- The City shall produce and update a map which identifies areas of historic resources.
- The City shall work with local businesses, neighbors and property owners, and neighborhood associations to designate historical landmarks.
- The City shall establish historic design guidelines for each district.



## **Preserve Cultural Heritage of Gullah Geechee and Scottish Highlanders**

- The City shall seek ways to respect and strengthen cultural values in new development projects that implement this Comprehensive Plan.
- The City shall continue to work with appropriate agencies on culture- based theme tours and promotion of historic tourism.
- The City shall support the U.S. 17 Heritage Corridor/Scenic Byway project.



## **Achieve Comprehensive Parking Plan**

- The City shall assess current parking demand, forecast future parking needs, and develop a parking plan.



## **Enforce Code Enforcement**

- The City shall conduct a general plan review, ensuring the plan accurately represents the residents' long-term desires for the City.
- The City shall increase code enforcement efforts by following up on complaints from community members.

# QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

## 3.4

DCA's Vision: Every Georgia community offers a quality of life where people and businesses can grow and prosper. This section is used as a guide to determine which Quality Community Objectives the City of Darien will seek to accomplish with future planning efforts and developments.

### 1. Economic Prosperity

Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries suitable for the community.

The City of Darien is located on Georgia's coast at the mouth of the Altamaha River, approximately 50 miles south of Savannah, and is part of the Brunswick, Georgia Metropolitan Statistical Area. Darien is 20 miles north of the Port of Brunswick and abuts Interstate I-95 and Highway 17. Darien is a magnet for commercial and recreational fishing. The City seeks to diversify by recruiting more retail and service businesses to enhance community character and seeks to promote its "blue collar aspect" of the economy by diversifying with more retail and light commercial.

### 2. Resource Management

Promote efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

The City of Darien contains coastal marshlands, waterways, and a variety of plants and animals that rely on these resources; thus it promotes efficient use of natural resources. The City seeks to further identify and protect significant cultural and natural areas of the City.

### 3. Local Preparedness

Identify and put in place prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve.

The City of Darien has identified Character Areas to provide guidance on the type of development and communities the City seeks to achieve. Darien intends to update its zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to manage development and redevelopment. The City's leadership and staff desire to maintain their capability of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges.

### 4. Efficient Land Use

Maximize use of existing infrastructure by encouraging redevelopment; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; and, carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure.

The City has identified target areas for redevelopment including the Highway 17 Corridor. The City has identified this area as having potential opportunity for commercial infill development. Additionally, the City of Darien has established goals for housing within the redevelopment area which include eliminating substandard housing; encouraging quality infill development within established neighborhoods; creating affordable housing opportunities within the community; and, creating a diverse housing stock in terms of housing types and densities.



## 5. Sense of Place

Protect and enhance the community's unique qualities that are important to defining the community's character.

The City of Darien contains unique features that add to the City's sense of place. The surrounding wetlands, distinctive waterfront, historical landmarks, and the general downtown charm contribute to the identity of the City and should be embraced as part of what makes Darien a vibrant, industrious, and healthy city. To add to its sense of place, the city is revitalizing and seeks to make the City the go to for tourism, business, retail, and commercial development.

## 6. Regional Cooperation

Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs by actively participating in regional organizations.

The City of Darien is connected with the surrounding communities in the area. The shared history of the Georgia Coast has left a wealth of facts, events, and landmarks that help identify the City as a whole. The City seeks to further develop cooperative solutions for issues such as protection of shared natural resources and the development of a region wide bicycle network.

## 7. Housing Options

Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and efficient housing in the community.

The City of Darien seeks to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, and inclusive housing by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities through new development and through redevelopment efforts.

## 8. Transportation Options

The City of Darien seeks to address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents.

The City of Darien is dedicated to providing and improving the pedestrian/cycling environment. The City is currently working on a multi-use trail masterplan to expand the existing trail system and provide an improved pedestrian level connection to the various cultural and recreational activities in the area.

The City works collaboratively on region wide efforts for the U.S. Bike Route 1 designation and the Georgia Coastal Greenway. Traffic congestion is not a major concern in Darien. Although, the speed of traffic moving through the City on Highway 17 needs to be addressed in order to improve safety along this corridor. A safe environment for pedestrian movement throughout the downtown and alternative modes of transportation for visitors are the major goals of the City in terms of transportation.

## **9. Educational Opportunities**

The City of Darien seeks to coordinate with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.

The City of Darien has access to a number of colleges, universities, and technical training opportunities offered in neighboring Glynn County. The City seeks to encourage the creation of more jobs for educated and skilled workers by working with these partners.

## **10. Community Health**

Ensure community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and excellent work opportunities.

The World Health Organization defines a healthy city or community as “one that is safe with affordable housing and accessible transportation systems, work for all who want to work, a healthy and safe environment with a sustainable ecosystem, and offers access to healthcare services which focus on prevention and staying healthy.” A healthy community is also defined as one in which a diverse group of stakeholders collaborate to use their expertise and local knowledge to create a community that is socially and physically conducive to health.

# 4

## LAND USE

- 4.1 Character Areas and Defining Narrative
- 4.2 Future Land Use



## CHARACTER AREAS AND DEFINING NARRATIVE









### 4.1

The Character Area Map, along with the character area narratives that follow, lay out a vision, specific goals, appropriate land uses, and implementation strategies for Darien's unique sub-areas, districts, and neighborhoods. There are eight character areas in total: seven are primarily residential in nature, and one is community/commercial activity subareas of varying intensities.

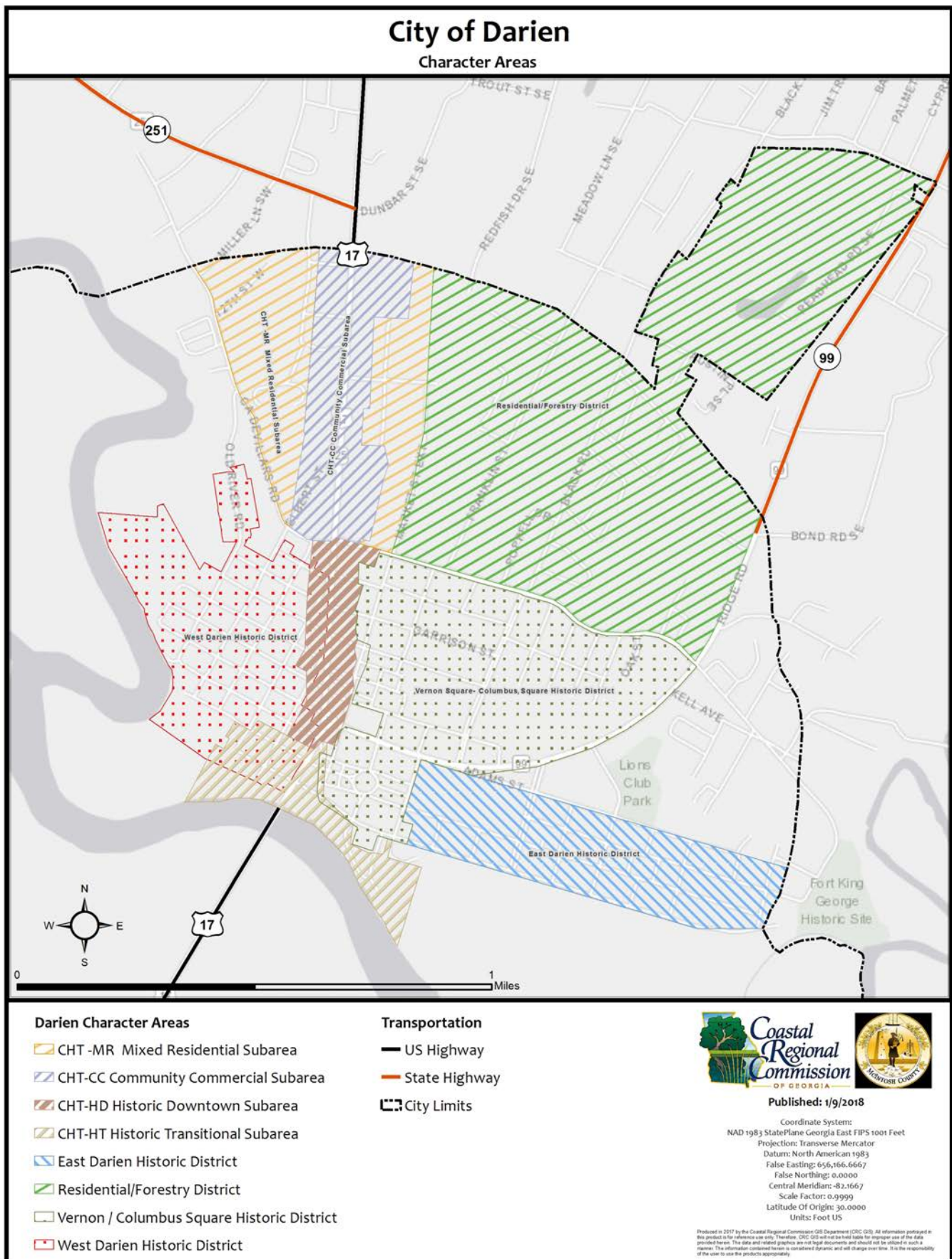
Interpretation of the Character Area Map is provided in the supporting text to be considered along with the City's zoning, the Future Land Use map, and other local policies when decision-makers consider land development questions or requests. The supporting text provides written description of the patterns of development that the City will encourage in each area.

The supporting narrative provides policy direction for regulating development with the goal of furthering consistent character within each area as defined by the City's vision. Where appropriate, statements for policy and goals are also established.

### City of Darien Character Areas

-  Mixed Residential
-  Community / Commercial
-  Historic Downtown
-  Historic Transitional
-  Vernon/Columbus Square Historic District
-  West Darien Historic District
-  East Darien Historic District
-  Residential/Forestry District







## MIXED RESIDENTIAL

### Character Area Description

The Mixed Residential subarea is an area that blends residential, commercial, and institutional development around the Community/Commercial subarea along HWY 17 in the northern portion of the city. Land uses in this area include single and multi family residential, general commercial, parks and open space, and the Todd Grant Elementary School. This area also includes scattered vacant lots.

### Community Vision

The vision for this district is to create and enhance neighborhoods with a variety of mixed-uses that complement the established surrounding areas. Mixed uses may occur vertically or horizontally. The area should encourage development of walkable, prosperous neighborhoods that serve as attractive places to live, work, shop, and play.

### Future Zoning Considerations

- C-1** Commercial Neighborhood
- C-2** General Commercial
- R-1** Single Family Residential
- R-2** Multi-Family Residential
- PD-12** Planned Unit Development

### Implementation Strategies

- Accommodate a variety of housing styles, sizes, densities and price points to suit diverse housing needs.
- Ensure that the appropriate zoning is in place to foster mixed use development with high quality design.
- Ensure appropriate buffers and height transitions provide for uses adjacent to single family neighborhoods.
- Identify and implement appropriate traffic calming techniques to reduce vehicular speeds and increase pedestrian safety.
- Develop a user friendly mixed-use zoning district to be applied in this area.
- Implement streetscaping standards that promote walkability.
- Pursue opportunities to connect existing path network with new pedestrian connections.





## COMMUNITY / COMMERCIAL

### Character Area Description

The Community / Commercial area is an area of high-intensity development along the interchange of HWY 17 in the northern portion of the city. Land uses in this area are predominately commercial.

### Community Vision

The vision for this area is to redevelop an existing commercial corridor to enhance the quality and compatibility of development, to encourage the most appropriate use of land, and to promote safe and efficient movement of traffic.

### Future Zoning Considerations

**C-1** Commercial Neighborhood

**C-2** General Commercial

### Implementation Strategies

- Gradually convert the HWY 17 corridor to an attractive boulevard with wayfinding signage to downtown and scenic areas around the community.
- The appearance of the corridor can immediately be improved through streetscaping enhancements. The streetscape should include street lights, landscaping, crosswalks, sidewalks, bike lanes, and street furnishings.
- Enact design guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street, to ensure that the corridor becomes more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.
- Upgrade the appearance of existing older commercial buildings with facade improvement, new architectural elements, or awnings.
- Reconfigure the parking lots and circulation routes for automobiles.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycling amenities, including covered walkways, benches, lighting and bike racks.
- Add landscaping and other appearance enhancements, trees and landscaping in parking lots to provide shade and help reduce storm water runoff.



## HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

### Character Area Description

The Historic Downtown Character Area is bisected by Highway 17 and is bounded by Jackson Street to the west; Market Street to the east; 7th Street and Garrison Street to the north; and 2nd Street W and Adams Street to the south. This area is contains single family homes, the Old McIntosh County Jail, churches, a post office, McIntosh City Hall, and some commercial development.

### Community Vision

The vision for this area is for the downtown character of the community be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic buildings, encouraging new development to be of scale and architectural design to complement the existing historic fabric, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important in defining the Darien's character.

### Future Zoning Considerations

- C-1** Commercial Neighborhood
- C-2** General Commercial
- R-1** Single Family Residential
- R-2** Multi-Family Residential

### Implementation Strategies

- Conduct a historic survey to provide information that the city and property owners can use at the outset of considering an improvement project, in order to determine if a property has historic significance.
- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
- Linkages to regional greenspace/trail system should be encouraged.





## HISTORIC TRANSITIONAL

### Character Area Description

The Historic Transitional Character Area is bisected by Highway 17 and bounded by Jackson Street to the west, Boone Dock Road to the east, 2nd Street W and Adams Street to the north, and Darien Creek to the south. This area contains commercial, general maritime, single and multi family housing, and Darien's Waterfront Park. The lower water front area contains the tabby ruins of the former warehouses, shops, and taverns that once lined the river.

### Community Vision

The vision for this area is to preserve and revitalize the historic waterfront, and ensure the quality of development complements the City's character. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing structures should be encouraged, and new infill development should be pedestrian-oriented and compatible with the historic architecture.

### Future Zoning Considerations

- C-1** Commercial Neighborhood
- R-1** General Commercial
- R-2** Single Family Residential

### Implementation Strategies

- Conduct a historic survey to provide information that the city and property owners can use to help provide guidance of the properties which are less sensitive, and where greater flexibility for alterations is appropriate.
- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- Adopt architectural standards and site design requirements to support new development and redevelopment that enhances and reflects local character.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
- Connect to regional network of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians and bicyclists for both tourism and recreational purposes.
- Consider including resources as Individually Protected Properties, especially those of significant architectural or cultural value and those that are becoming rare surviving examples of their type or period of construction.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Historic Transitional District as an alternative, more flexible type of local historic district. Monitoring techniques may include resident surveys and tracking demolition permits.
- Identify opportunities to increase intensity of use and flexibility of design in targeted areas to allow for more vibrancy and creative reuse of existing buildings.
- Encourage mixed-use development.





## VERNON SQUARE - COLUMBUS SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

### Character Area Description

The Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District is a historic area on the eastern side of Darien, GA. It encompasses two squares of the original 1805 Oglethorpe city plan, although Vernon Square now contains a circular street. The area is bounded by Market Street and North Way to the west, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd to the east, Trumbull Street to the north, and Fort King George Drive to the south. This area contains single and multi family housing, a city park, and Darien's historic squares.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church is a contributing building within the district.

### Community Vision

The Vernon Square - Columbus Square Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places on March 14, 1985. The vision for this area is to continue to preserve and revitalize historic areas of the district.

### Future Zoning Considerations

**R-1** Single Family Residential

### Implementation Strategies

- Protect historic properties and public squares from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
- Linkages to regional greenspace/trail system should be encouraged as well.
- Protect Oglethorpe traditional street grid design.





## WEST DARIEN HISTORIC DISTRICT

### Character Area Description

The West Darien Historic District Character Area is bounded by Highway 17 to the east, Old River Road / Houston Street to the west, 9th Street W to the north, and Darien River to the south. This area contains single family housing and commercial development.

### Community Vision

The West Darien Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 17, 2001. The vision for this area is to continue to preserve and revitalize historic areas of the district.

### Future Zoning Considerations

**R-1** Single Family Residential

### Implementation Strategies

- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
- Linkages to regional greenspace/trail system should be encouraged as well.
- Protect Oglethorpe traditional street grid design.





## **EAST DARIEN HISTORIC DISTRICT**

### **Character Area Description**

The East Darien Historic District Character Area is bounded by Rittenhouse Street to the west, McIntosh Road to the east, Adams Street to the north, and Fort King George Drive to the south. This area contains single family housing, McIntosh Middle School, and is a corridor to the Fort King George Historical Site.

### **Community Vision**

The vision for this area is that the traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

### **Future Zoning Considerations**

#### **R-1 Single Family Residential**

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Protect historic properties from demolition and encourage rehabilitation with appropriate incentives, including National Register of Historic places designation, which enables eligibility for tax incentive programs.
- Historic properties should be maintained or rehabilitated/restored according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- New development in the area should be of scale and architectural design to fit well into the historic fabric of that area.
- Pedestrian access and open space should be provided to enhance citizen enjoyment of the area.
- Linkages to regional greenspace/trail system should be encouraged as well.





## RESIDENTIAL/FORESTRY DISTRICT

### Character Area Description

The Residential / Forestry District Character Area is bounded by Market Street to the west, Ridge Road to the east, Pine Street to the south, and includes an undeveloped subdivision to the north of Dakota Street. This area contains single family housing.

### Community Vision

The vision for this area is to ensure residents have safe, affordable housing opportunities with access to agriculture and small grazing animals such as goats or sheep.

### Future Zoning Considerations

- R-1** Single Family Residential
- R-A** Residential Agriculture

### Implementation Strategies

- Adapt zoning regulations to allow for small grazing animals and agricultural uses.
- Improve affordable housing options and allow accessory housing units to be constructed on single-family lots, where appropriate.



## **FUTURE LAND USE 4.2**

### **Future Land Use Guiding Principles:**

- The City should strive for consistent development types and characteristics within similar land use areas.
- The City should require appropriate transitions between different land use areas such that there is a “step down” or “step up” between these different uses.
- The City should discourage the establishment of intense or heavy industrial or commercial land uses near existing residential areas.
- The City should not allow more intense development in areas not served by public water and/or sewer and these non-sewered areas should be limited to less intensive land uses.

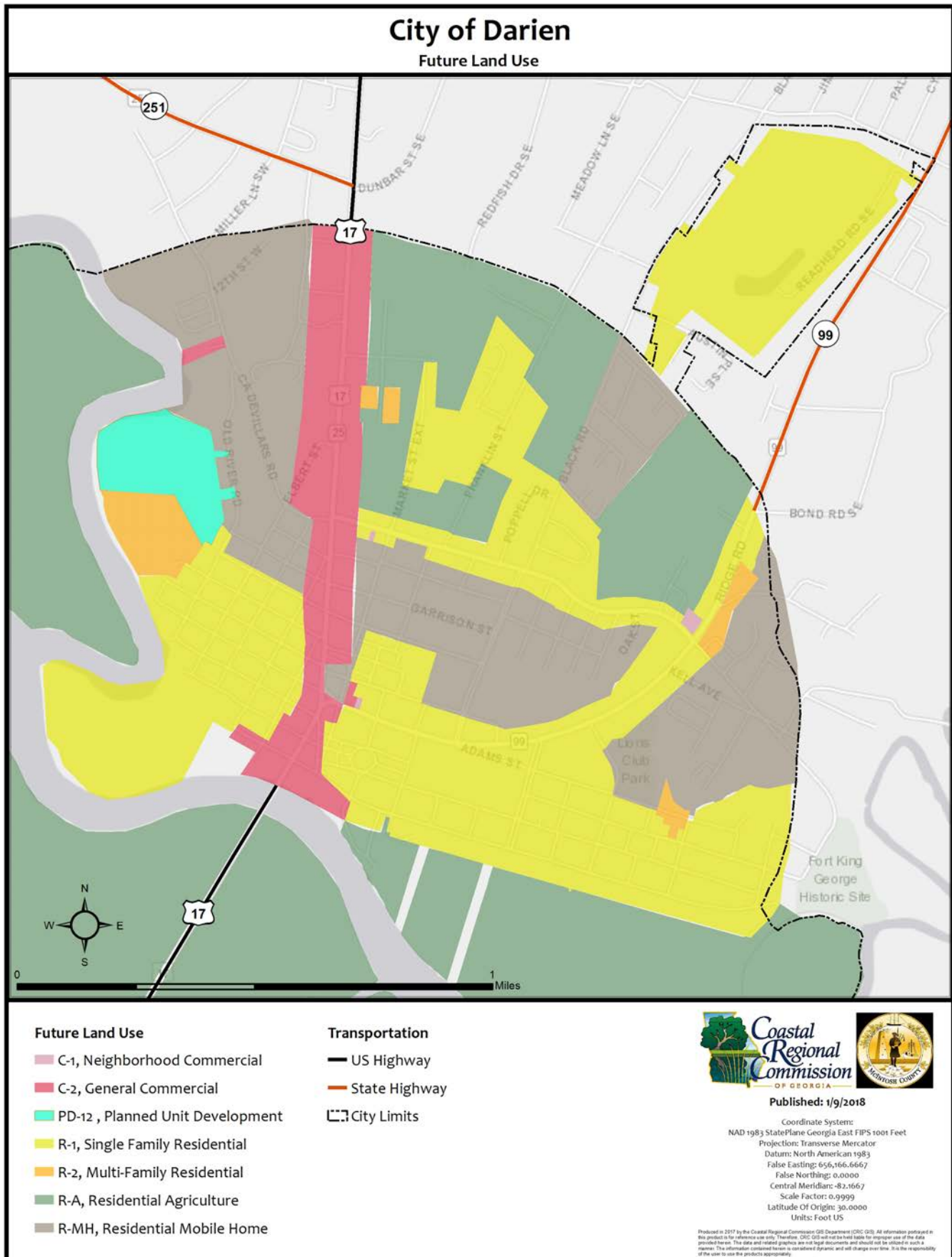
### **Future Land Use Map**

The Future Land Use Map is a visual representation of the City’s future land use.

Interpretation of the Future Land Use Map is provided in the supporting Future Land Use table.







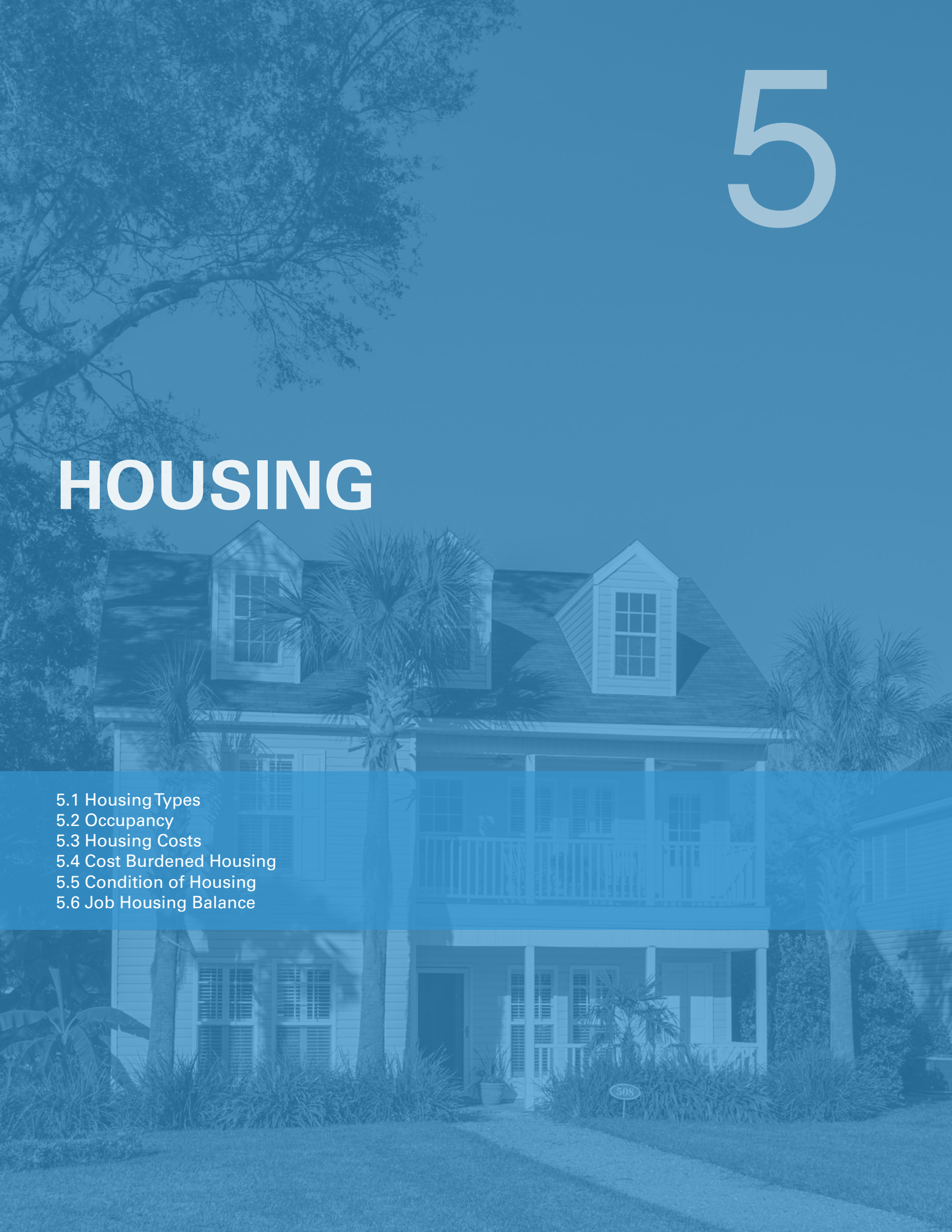


DESCRIPTION	LAND USE
<b>Agriculture</b>	
This category is for land dedicated to farming (fields, lots, pastures, farm-steads, specialty farms, livestock production, etc.), agriculture, or commercial timber or pulpwood harvesting. This category is also for land dedicated to active or passive recreational uses. These areas may be either publicly or privately owned and may include playgrounds, public parks, nature preserves, wildlife management areas, national forests, golf courses, recreation centers or similar uses.	Residential Agriculture
<b>Residential</b>	
The predominant use of land within the residential category is for single-family and multi-family dwelling units organized into general categories of net densities. This land use is protected from encroachment of industrial or other uses capable of adversely affecting the residential character.	Residential Single-Family
	Planned Unit Development
	Residential Multi-Family
	Residential Mobile Home
<b>Commercial</b>	
This category is for land dedicated to non-industrial business uses, including retail sales, office, service and entertainment facilities, organized into general categories of intensities. Commercial uses may be located as a single use in one building or grouped together in a shopping center or office building. Communities may elect to separate office uses from other commercial uses, such as retail, service or entertainment facilities.	General Commercial
	Neighborhood Commercial

# 5

## HOUSING

- 5.1 Housing Types
- 5.2 Occupancy
- 5.3 Housing Costs
- 5.4 Cost Burdened Housing
- 5.5 Condition of Housing
- 5.6 Job Housing Balance







The Housing section provides a framework for promoting a diverse housing supply, protecting and improving the health and livability of the City's communities, and making adequate provisions for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community. The City must foster housing that is affordable to those at all income levels - from low-income and workforce families, to those earning higher wages.

Housing demand is largely driven by economic conditions and demographics. Demographic characteristics influence market demand with regard to the number of households; household size, make-up and tenure (owner v. renter); and preference for styles and amenities.

Perhaps the most pressing and complex challenge facing the City is housing affordability for all economic segments of the community. The quality of any community is defined, in large part, by whether families and individuals are able to find the type and size of housing that fits their household needs at a price they can afford.

The City's distinct communities include residential districts that are differentiated by housing density, age, size, architectural style, condition, and neighborhood commercial districts with mixed housing types. These communities, each with their own unique character, offer a variety of housing and lifestyle opportunities.

Some of the factors that local governments can influence are the supply of available residential land; the availability of public services; development regulations (density and design), and support for low and moderate income housing through funding or incentives.





Total occupied units decreased from 1,142 to 1,058 between 2010 and 2015

Detached single units steadily decreased from 60.9 percent to 57.5 percent



## HOUSING TYPES 5.1

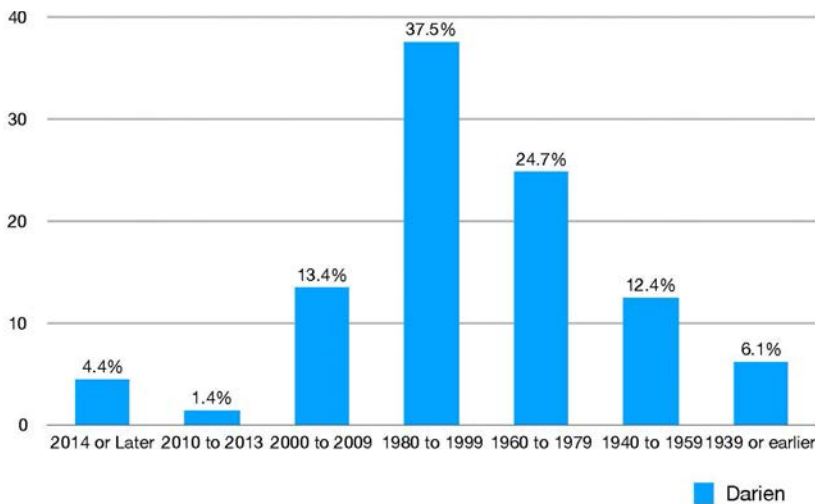
The majority of the occupied housing types in Darien are detached single units. From 2000 to 2010, there was a decrease in total occupied units. The percentages of detached single units decreased from 63.8 to 60.9 percent, 2 apartments decreased 0.4 percent, 3 or 4 apartments increased 1.5 percent, and 5 to 9 apartments increased 1.8 percent.

Attached single units decreased from 0.7 to 0.4 percent and 10 or more apartments increased from 0.3 to 0.6 percent respectively. Mobile home or other type of housing experienced no change from 2000 to 2010.

From 2010 to 2015, the total occupied housing units in Darien decreased from 1,142 to 1,058 units. Detached single units decreased from 60.9 percent to 57.5 percent. From 2010 to 2015, mobile home or other type of housing decreased from 27.7 to 26.5 percent.

## Age of Occupied Housing

The largest percentages (~37.5 percent) of structures built in the City of Darien were built between 1980 and 1999. The second largest percentages (24.7 percent) of occupied housing units for Darien were built in 1960-1979. In Darien, approximately one-half of the housing units were built from 1960 or earlier.



**Between 1980 and 1999, 37.5 percent of structures were built in Darien**

U.S. Census Bureau

## OCCUPANCY 5.2

From 2000 to 2010, because of the increase in development, total housing units in Darien grew by 74.8 percent. However, with the economic downturn in 2008, vacant units rose by 8 percent. Owner-occupied housing units decreased by about 12 percent, while renter-occupied units increased by 6 percent.

From 2010 to 2015, the total housing units decreased in the city. Vacant units almost maintained the same percentage. In 2015, compared with renter-occupied, owner-occupied housing units had an additional 18 percent. Compared with the state, the City had 6 percent fewer owner-occupied units.

### Occupancy Characteristics

Category	Darien		
	2000	2010	2015
<b>Total Units</b>	833	1,456	1,343
Owner-Occupied	60.6%	49.2%	48.8%
Renter-Occupied	23.0%	29.2%	30.0%
Vacant	13.7%	21.6%	21.2%

U.S. Census Bureau





## HOUSING COSTS 5.3

From 2000 to 2010, median home values increased at a larger rate than monthly gross rent and monthly homeowner costs. From 2010 to 2015, median home value decreased, but monthly gross rent and homeowner costs continued to increase.

From 2000 to 2010, median household income and Per Capita Income was able to catch up to the median gross rent and homeowner costs in Darien. But from 2010 to 2015, the rate of change for median gross rent and homeowner costs exceeded both the rate of change for median household income and per capita income. This results in a larger fraction of income being required for housing costs.

**Median Rental and House Costs Comparison (Dollars)**

Category	Darien				
	2000	2010	2015	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2015
Median Monthly Gross Rent	418	497	581	18.9%	16.9%
Median Monthly Owner Costs (w/Mortgage)	673	813	1,133	20.8%	39.4%
Median Home Value (Owner Occupied)	57,900	109,200	89,600	88.6%	-17.9%
Median Household Income Comparison	\$24,135	\$35,671	\$25,776	47.80%	-27.7%
Per Capita Income Comparison	\$11,938	\$16,969	\$14,197	42.1%	-16.3%

U.S. Census Bureau



## COST BURDENED HOUSING 5.4

Cost-burdened households are those households paying 30 percent or more of their net income on housing costs. Based on housing costs rising at a faster rate than household income it is expected that the percentage of cost burdened housing to increase for renters and those with a mortgage.

In 2010, percentage of renters in the City of Darien that were cost burdened was 47.3 percent. In 2015, the percentage of renters cost-burdened decreased by 3 percent.

In 2010, those with a mortgage and cost-burdened were 38 percent. By 2015, those with a mortgage and cost-burdened increased grew to 72.7 percent. Compared to the state, cost-burdened households with a mortgage were much higher in Darien.

In 2010, households without a mortgage and cost-burdened were 4.7 percent. In 2015, those without a mortgage and cost-burdened increased by 20 percent, which is 11 percent higher than the state.

**From 2010-2015, approximately 46 percent of renters were cost burdened.**

**From 2010-2015, housing units with a mortgage that were cost burdened increased from 38 percent to 72.7 percent.**

**Summary of Cost Burdened Housing Units**

Category	2010			2015		
	Darien	McIntosh County	Georgia	Darien	McIntosh County	Georgia
<b>Occupied Units Paying Rent</b>	380	1,080	1,036,967	346	948	1,190,334
Gross Rent Exceeds 30% of Household Income	47.3%	49.1%	51.4%	44.5%	49.3%	52.4%
<b>Housing Units with a Mortgage</b>	416	2,201	1,668,262	249	2,229	1,526,935
Selected Monthly Owner Costs Exceed 30% of Household In-come	38.0%	39.0%	35.6%	72.7%	41.0%	31.7%
<b>Housing Units without a Mortgage</b>	300	2,025	644,878	406	1,883	711,202
Selected Monthly Owner Costs Exceed 30% of Household In-come	4.7%	15.9%	13.9%	24.1%	15.1%	13.10%

U.S. Census Bureau

## CONDITION OF HOUSING 5.5

Good housing conditions are essential for people's health and affects childhood development.

Condition of housing includes those units with insufficient plumbing and kitchen facilities. In 2010, units without complete plumbing facilities were 4.5 percent and units without complete kitchen facilities were 4.5 percent. In 2015, both units with incomplete plumbing and kitchen facilities decreased to 0 percent.



## JOB HOUSING BALANCE 5.6

A job to housing ratio in the range of 0.75 to 1.5 is considered beneficial for reducing vehicle miles traveled. The job to housing ratio indicates whether an area has enough housing for employees to live near employment and sufficient jobs in residential areas. An imbalance in jobs and housing creates longer commute times, more single driver commutes, and loss of job opportunities for workers without vehicles.

A balanced community generally has a jobs-housing ratio of 1.25 to 1.75. From 2010 to 2015, as housing units and employment decreased, the jobs-housing ratio dropped from 0.88 to 0.79. The City of Darien is below the target range for a balanced community.



### Purpose Built Communities

Purpose Built Communities is a non-profit consulting firm that works side by side with local leaders to plan and implement a revitalization effort tailored specifically to McIntosh County. The goal is to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by helping local leaders transform struggling neighborhoods, and bringing together the vital components necessary for holistic community revitalization: high quality mixed-income housing, an effective cradle-to-college education pipeline, and comprehensive community wellness resources.



### Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.

Over a 1, 2, or 3-year period, as selected by the grantee, not less than 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. In addition, each activity must meet one of the following objectives for the program: benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or address community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community for which other funding is not available.



### DCA Georgia initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Program

GICH is a three-year program designed to help communities improve their quality of life and economic vitality through the development of locally-driven housing and revitalization strategies. This is accomplished through technical assistance, training, and ultimately producing a community housing plan with objectives and goals.





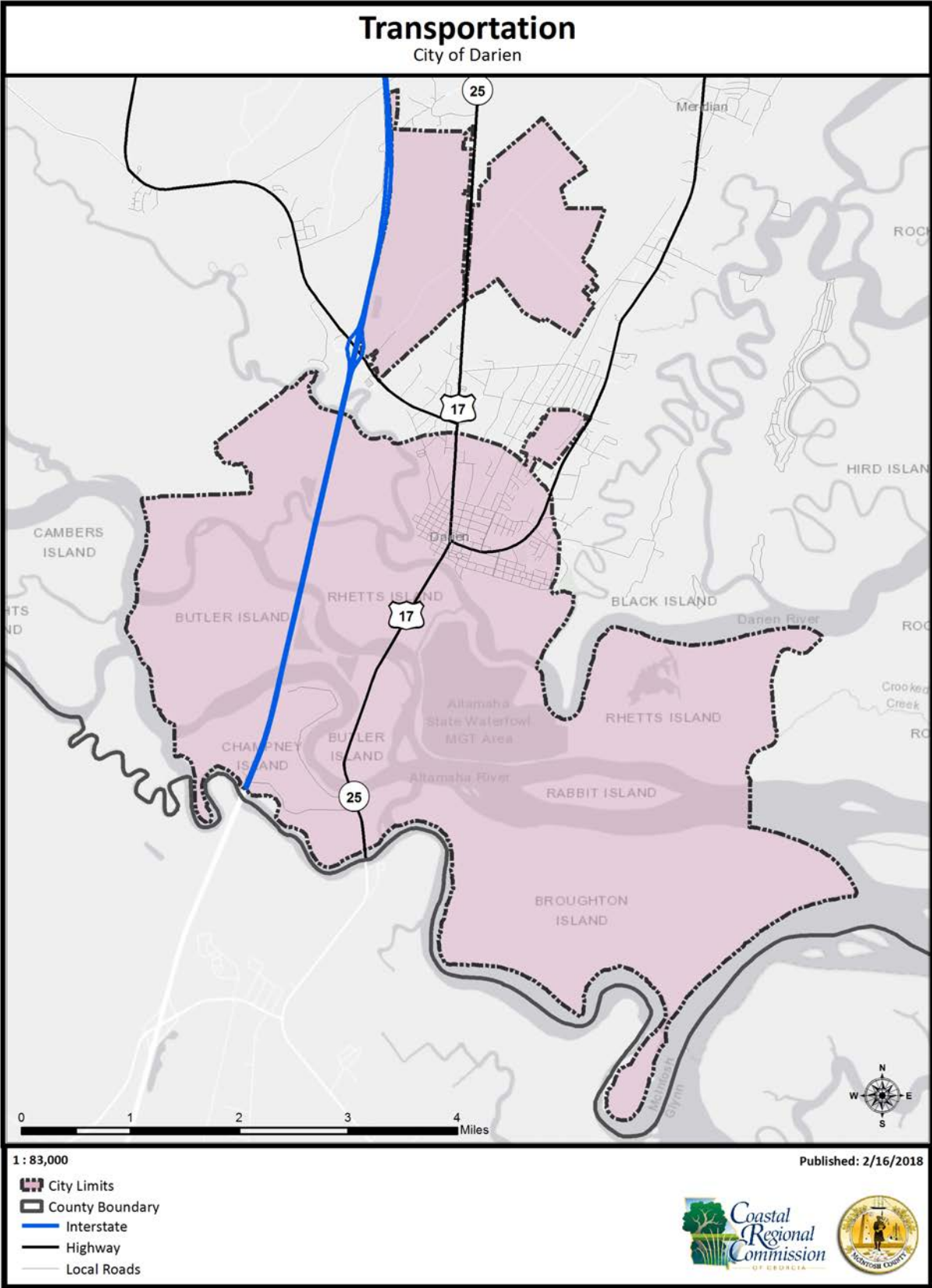
### **U.S Department of Agriculture Rural Development**

Low interest, fixed-rate Homeownership loans are provided to qualified persons directly by USDA Rural Development. Financing is also offered at fixed-rates and terms through a loan from a private financial institution and guaranteed by USDA Rural Development for qualified persons. Neither one of these home loan programs require a down payment.

# 6

# TRANSPORTATION

- 6.1 Roads and Highways
- 6.2 Road Network Hierarchy
- 6.3 Alternative Modes of Transportation



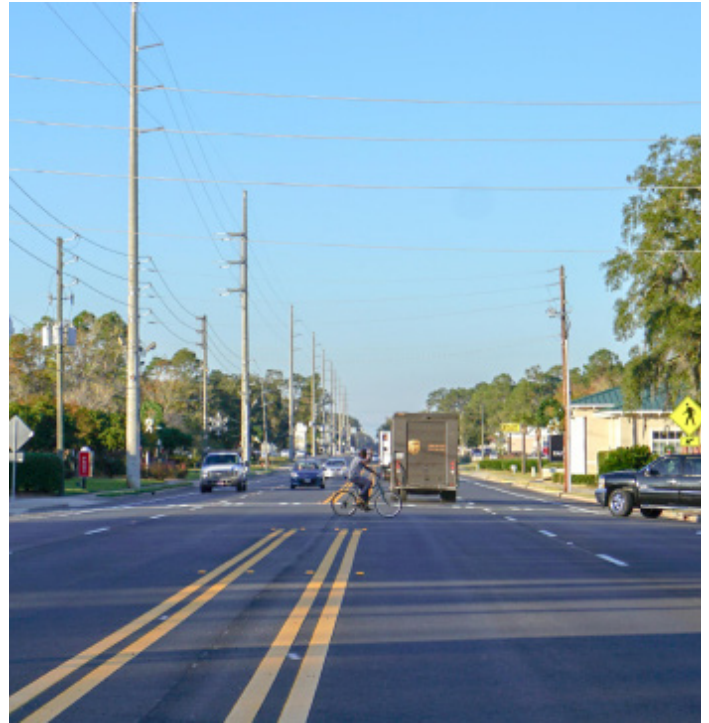
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Transportation is an important component of the economy as economic opportunities are linked to the mobility of people, goods, and information. The relationship between the quantity and quality of transport infrastructure and the level of economic development is apparent. Highly connected networks are efficient and provide economic and social opportunities that result in positive multipliers effects such as better accessibility to markets, employment, tourism activities, and additional investment.

In the City of Darien transportation contributes directly to economic activity through roads and can potentially contribute through maritime local services.

Transportation facilities are the artery for economic growth and proper management and maintenance of these facilities is imperative.



## ROADS & HIGHWAYS 6.1

The City of Darien contains Interstate 95 (I-95), U.S. Route 17 (HWY 17), and State Route 25 (SR 25). The remainder of the City consists of primarily local roads with collectors providing access to the major transportation routes in the City.

### Inter-County Travel

Inter-county travel in the City of Darien is primarily north-south in nature and reliant upon U.S. Route 17 (HWY 17) as a primary travel corridor. I-95 and U.S. Highway (HWY) 17 are the only routes for inter-county north-south travel.



## ROAD NETWORK HIERARCHY 6.2

### Freeways

Limited access roads, freeways or motorways, including most toll roads are at the top of the hierarchy. These roads provide largely uninterrupted travel, often using partial or full access control, and are designed for high speeds. Interstates 95 in the City of Darien is a limited access freeway.

### Arterials

Major through roads that are expected to carry large volumes of traffic are designated as arterials. These are often divided into major and minor arterials, and rural and urban arterials. Examples of rural minor arterials in the City of Darien include US 17/US 25/SR 99/SR 251.

### Collectors

Next in the hierarchy are collector roads, which collect traffic from local roads, and distribute it to arterials. Traffic using a collector is usually going to or coming from somewhere nearby. Examples of collectors in the City of Darien include Fort King George Drive and McIntosh Road.

### Local Roads

These roads are at the bottom of the hierarchy, have the lowest speed limit, and carry low volumes of traffic. In some areas, these roads may be unpaved.

### Bridges

The City of Darien has identified 6 major bridges within the City. There are three bridges that span over the Altamaha River, (one on I-95 and two on Hwy 17), a bridge over the Butler River, a bridge over the Champney River, and the Darien River.

### Signalized Intersections

The City of Darien has no signalized intersections. There is one flashing light in the City at the intersection of North Walton Street and 1st Street West / Washington Street.

### Signage

The City has identified a need to invest in signage at community access points including the US Hwy 17 Scenic Route, US Bike Route 1, and the East Coast Greenway. Additionally, wayfinding signage to the area's natural assets including the historic areas, fishing docks, and waterfront park help to inform visitors and direct them to the unique resources within the City.

### Parking

The City of Darien has identified a need for a comprehensive parking plan.





## ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

### 6.3

#### **Pedestrian & Bicycle Paths**

The Coastal Georgia Greenway is a 155-mile trail system which connects South Carolina to Florida through Georgia's six coastal counties. The centerpiece of the Coastal Georgia Greenway is a continuous trail along various north-south routes including the US Hwy 17 corridor. The Highlander Trail runs from Sapelo Dock Road along State (SR) 99 and connects to the pedestrian/bike trail in Darien.

The US Hwy 17 corridor is part of the U.S. Bike Route 1, a cross-country bicycle route that will run the length of the eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine. US Bike Route 1 is one of the two original US bicycle routes.

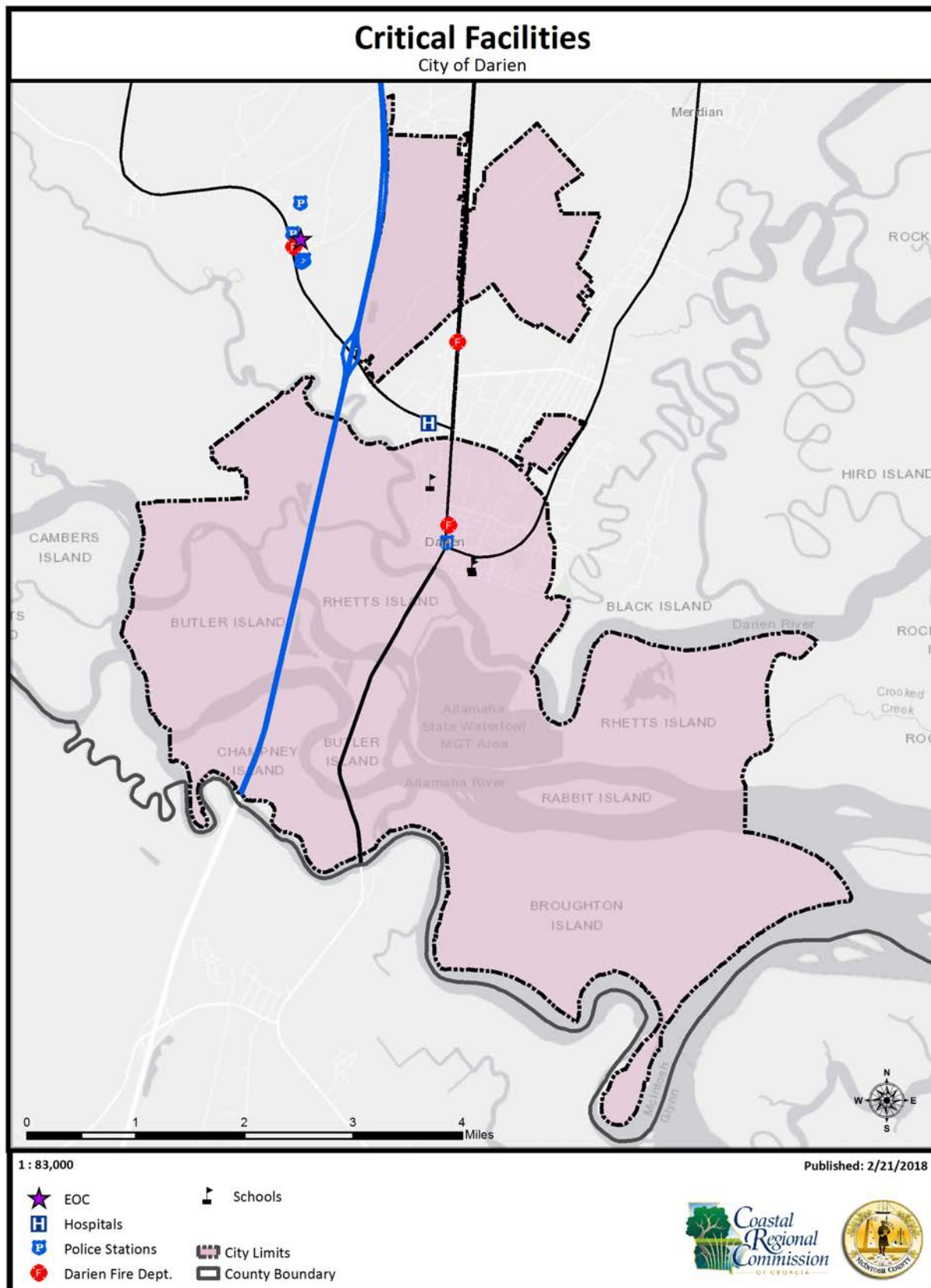




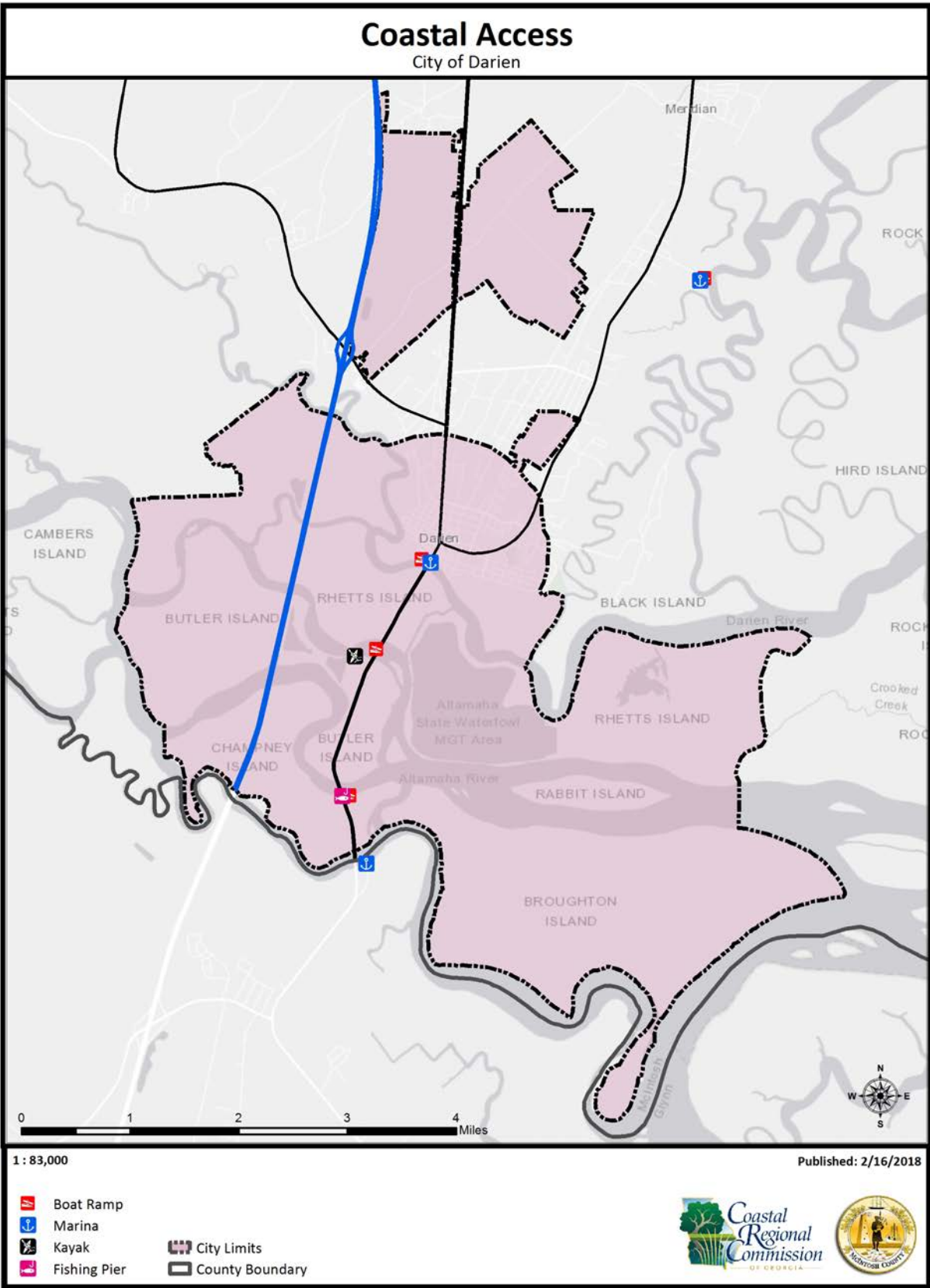
# 7

## COASTAL VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

- 7.1 Natural Hazards
- 7.2 Storm Surge and Development
- 7.3 Vegetation / Open Water Buffers
- 7.4 Vulnerable Populations
- 7.5 Income and Poverty Level
- 7.6 Means of Transportation
- 7.7 Housing Type



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## Coastal Vulnerability and Resilience

Resilient communities minimize any disaster's disruption to everyday life and their local economies. Resilient communities are not only prepared to help prevent or minimize the loss or damage to life, property, and the environment, but they also have the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and timely economic recovery.

## NATURAL HAZARDS 7.1

Locations of Darien are located within low lying coastal plains. These areas are susceptible to flooding from rivers and canals. As a coastal community, the City is also subject to flooding from hurricanes. The Altamaha Sound intersects the City and can contribute to the threat of flooding.

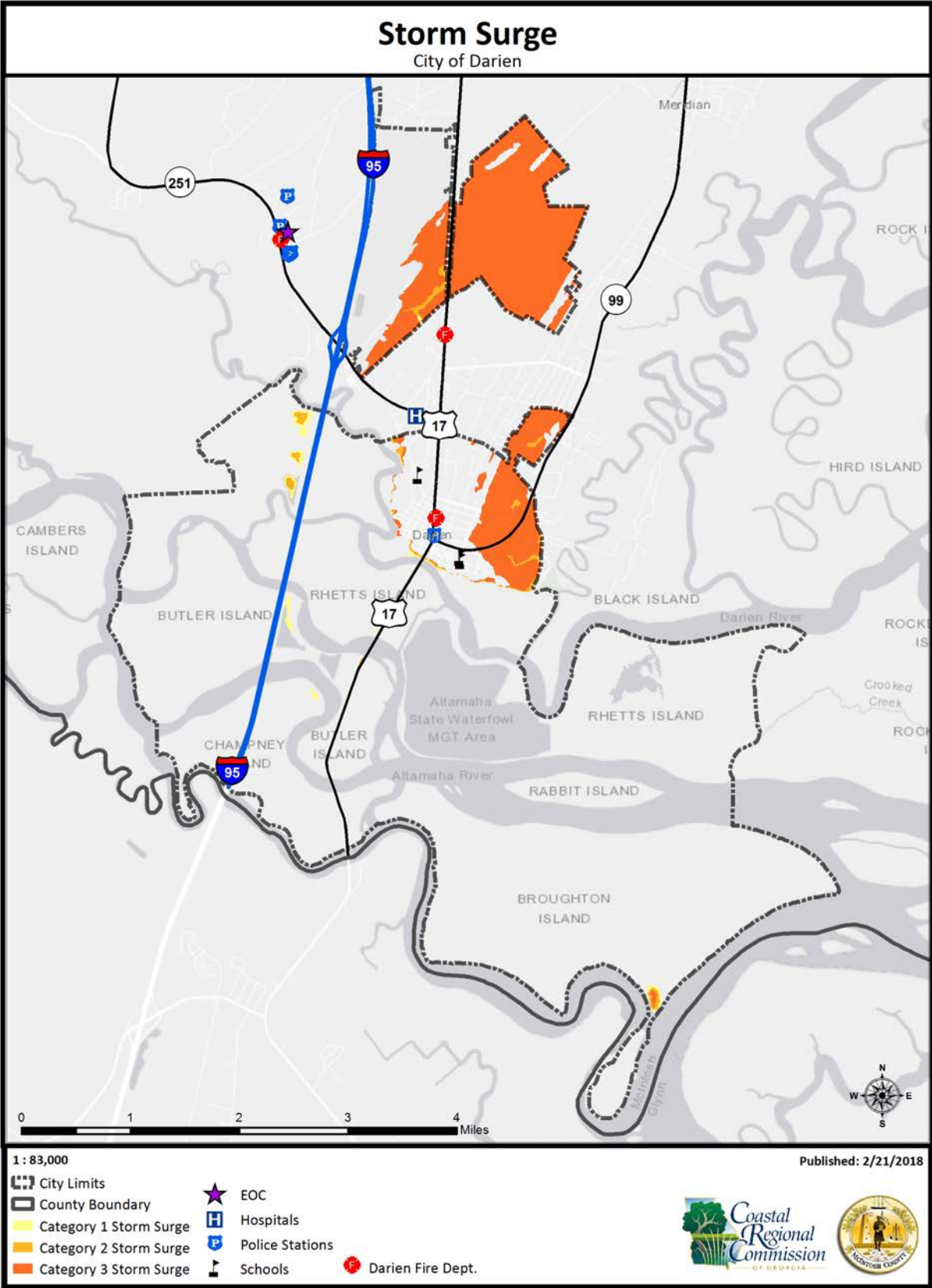
According to the research by the College of Environment + Design, the City of Darien can at times suffer from extreme drought due to low precipitation levels of the region.

## STORM SURGE AND DEVELOPMENT 7.2

Category 1 Storm Surge shows that the City of Darien's development is below .33 percent within storm surge 1.

Category 2 Storm Surge shows that the City of Darien contains .81 percent of development within storm surge 2.

Category 3 Storm Surge shows that the City of Darien has an increase of development to 10.52 percent within storm surge 3.



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## VEGETATION/OPEN WATER BUFFERS 7.3

Riparian buffers can be given a value based on their presence and allowance from open water and wetlands towards the built and developed environment. Three categories of consideration include: 100, 150, and 200-foot riparian buffers. A 100-foot riparian buffer is the recommended minimum based on literature reviews by the scientific community. As reported by the U.S. Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection agency in 1997, there are specific riparian widths that are associated with specific objectives. The recommended buffer width for flood control should be up 200 feet. This buffer width provides flood and sediment control as well as wildlife habitat.

Buffers narrower than 35 feet can provide some limited benefits but may require long-term maintenance since their ability to trap sediments is reduced.

The City of Darien currently requires that all conservation subdivisions maintain an undisturbed natural vegetation buffer width of 75 feet. The state currently mandates a 25-foot buffer from hydrology, which is inadequate for protecting the vital natural system.

## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS 7.4

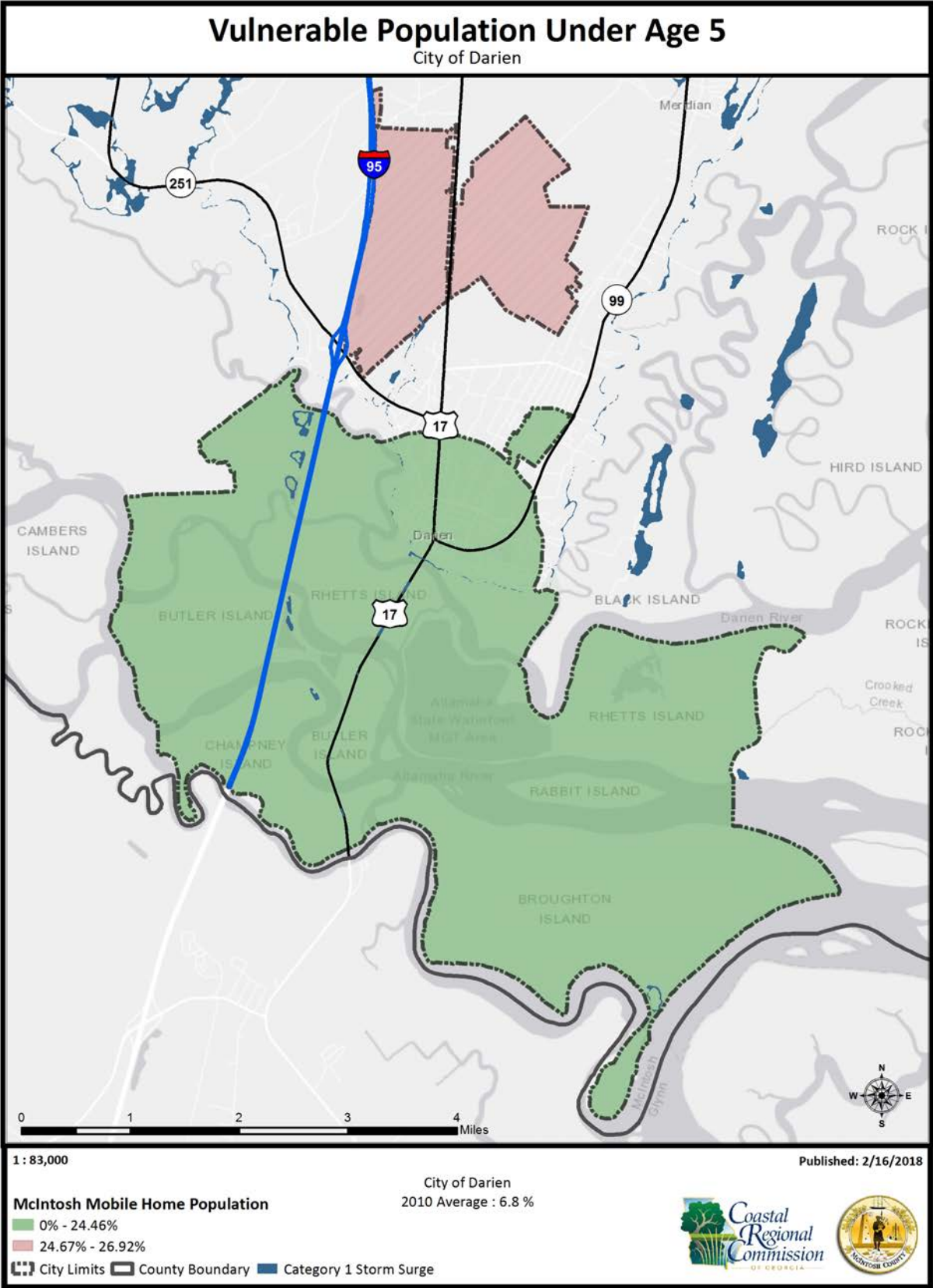
A key factor in examining resiliency is quantifying vulnerable populations. These populations include those residents who live in vulnerable areas, the 100-year and 500-year flood plains, but also those who may have difficulty in heeding evacuation orders due to age, income, and mobility.

The most vulnerable populations include children less than five years old, the elderly and frail elderly, persons living in poverty, and persons without reliable transportation that live in communities with limited public transportation. For elderly, we have identified the percentage of the population 65 and older. There is no specific age cohort for frail elderly, but the literature defines frailty in people 65 and older that called for the diagnosis when three or more of the following five criteria were present: unintentional weight loss of 10 pounds or more in the past year, self-reported exhaustion, weakness as measured by grip strength, slow walking speed and low physical activity. The frail elderly are individuals, over 65 years of age, dependent on others for activities of daily living.

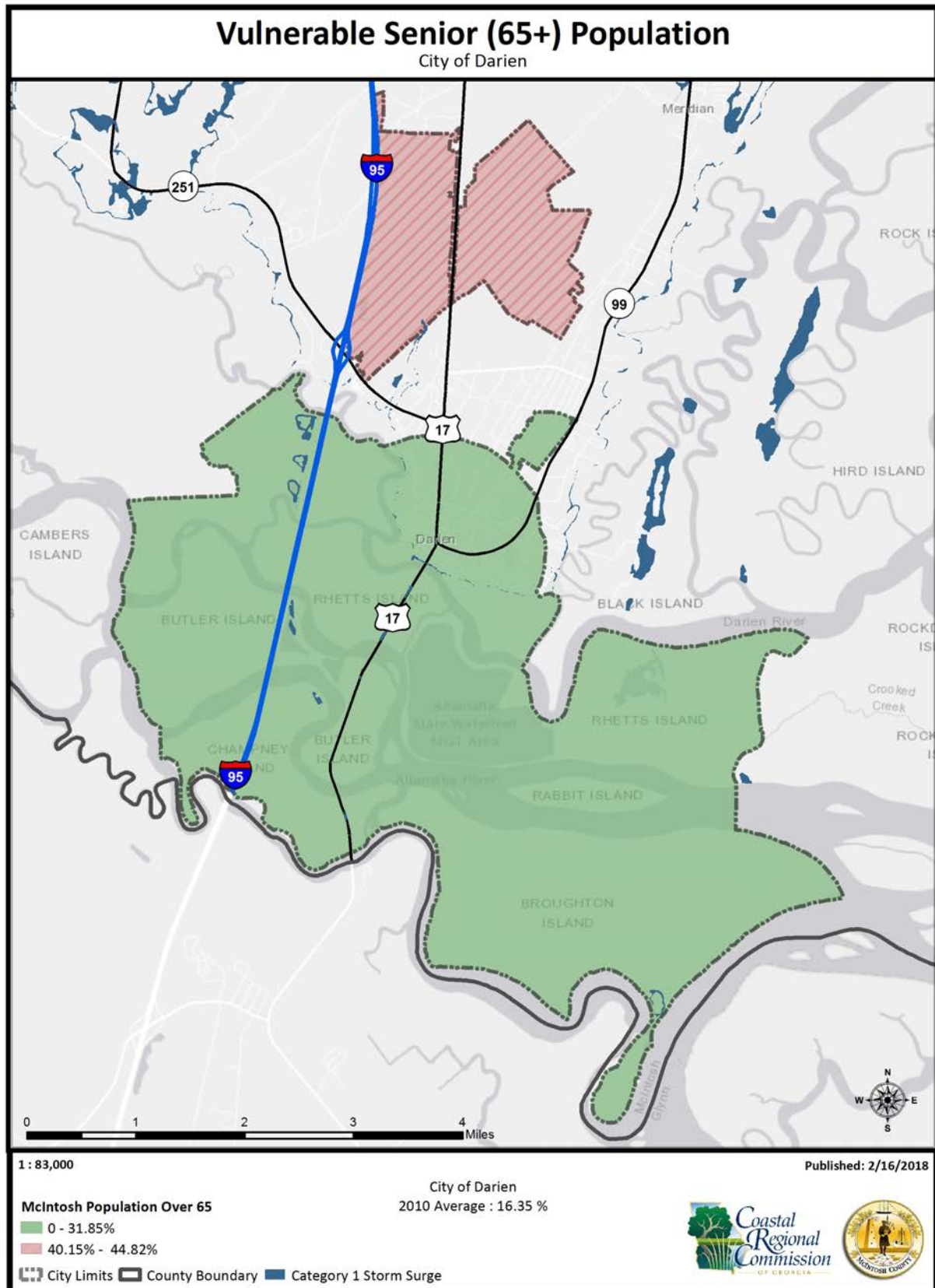
In the City of Darien the percentage of children under age five decreased by 0.2 percent from 2000 to 2010, while the percentage of persons 65 and older increased by 2 percent during the same period.

**The most vulnerable populations include children less than five years old, the elderly and frail elderly, persons living in poverty, and persons without reliable transportation that live in communities with limited public transportation.**





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## INCOME AND POVERTY LEVEL 7.5

Income can directly relate to a family's ability to have reliable transportation, which then directly relates to a family's ability to evacuate their homes in the event of an evacuation order. Income also impinges upon a family's ability to secure temporary lodging (hotels or motels) beyond publicly provided shelter, or to obtain replacement housing should they lose their homes due to a storm event or natural disaster.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau, Darien's median household income in 2015 was \$25,776. Low- and moderate-income is defined as up to 80 percent of median household income, which would be \$20,621 for Darien. Poverty levels are established by the federal government and are based upon income and family size. For Darien, 40.4 percent of individuals fall below the poverty level.

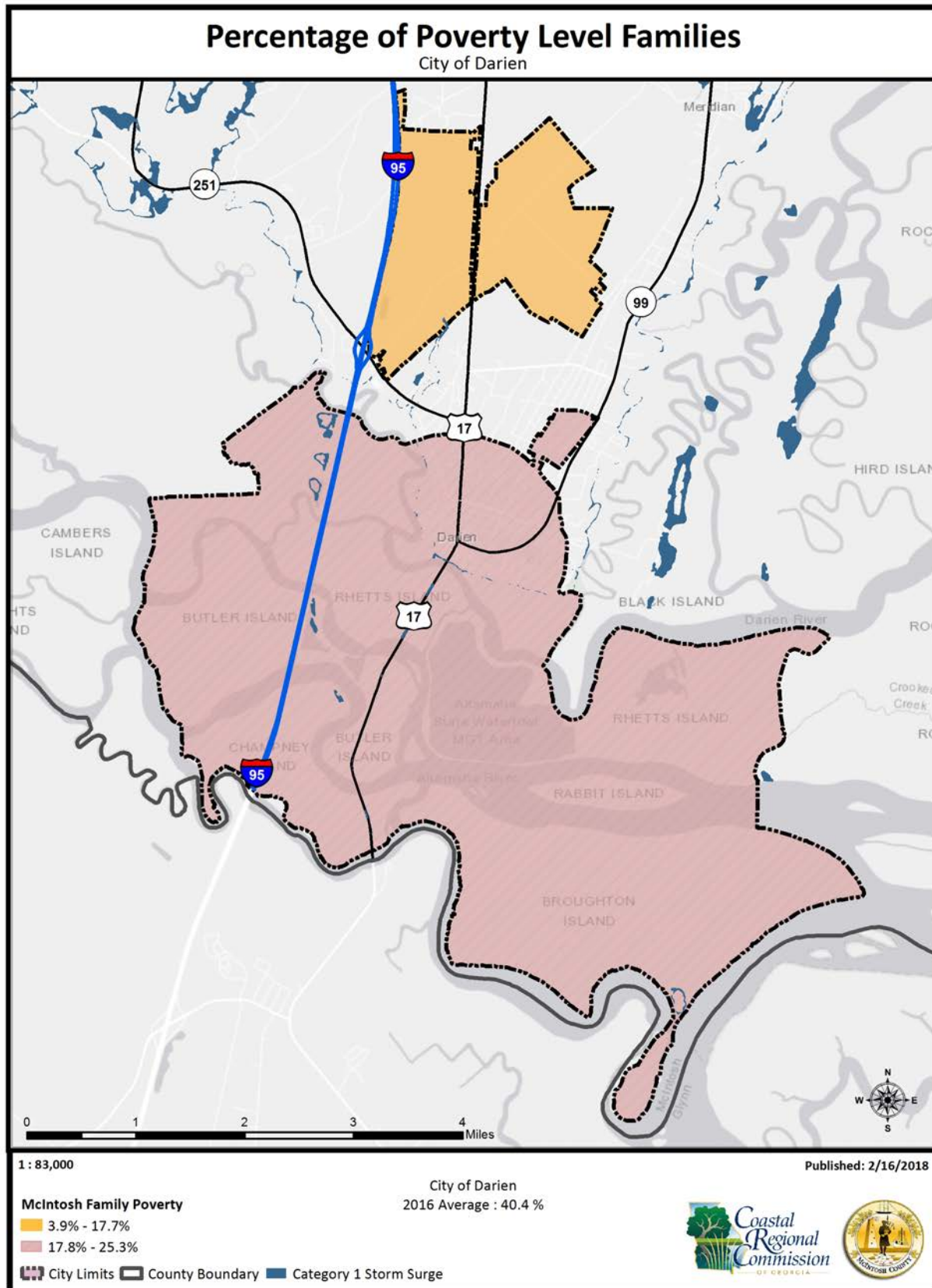
## MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION 7.6

The U. S. Census reports on the number of vehicles available to households. This is an important indicator of the percentage of the population that has reliable transportation should they need to evacuate their homes in the event of a storm or other natural disaster. In Darien, 3.9 percent of households do not have a vehicle.

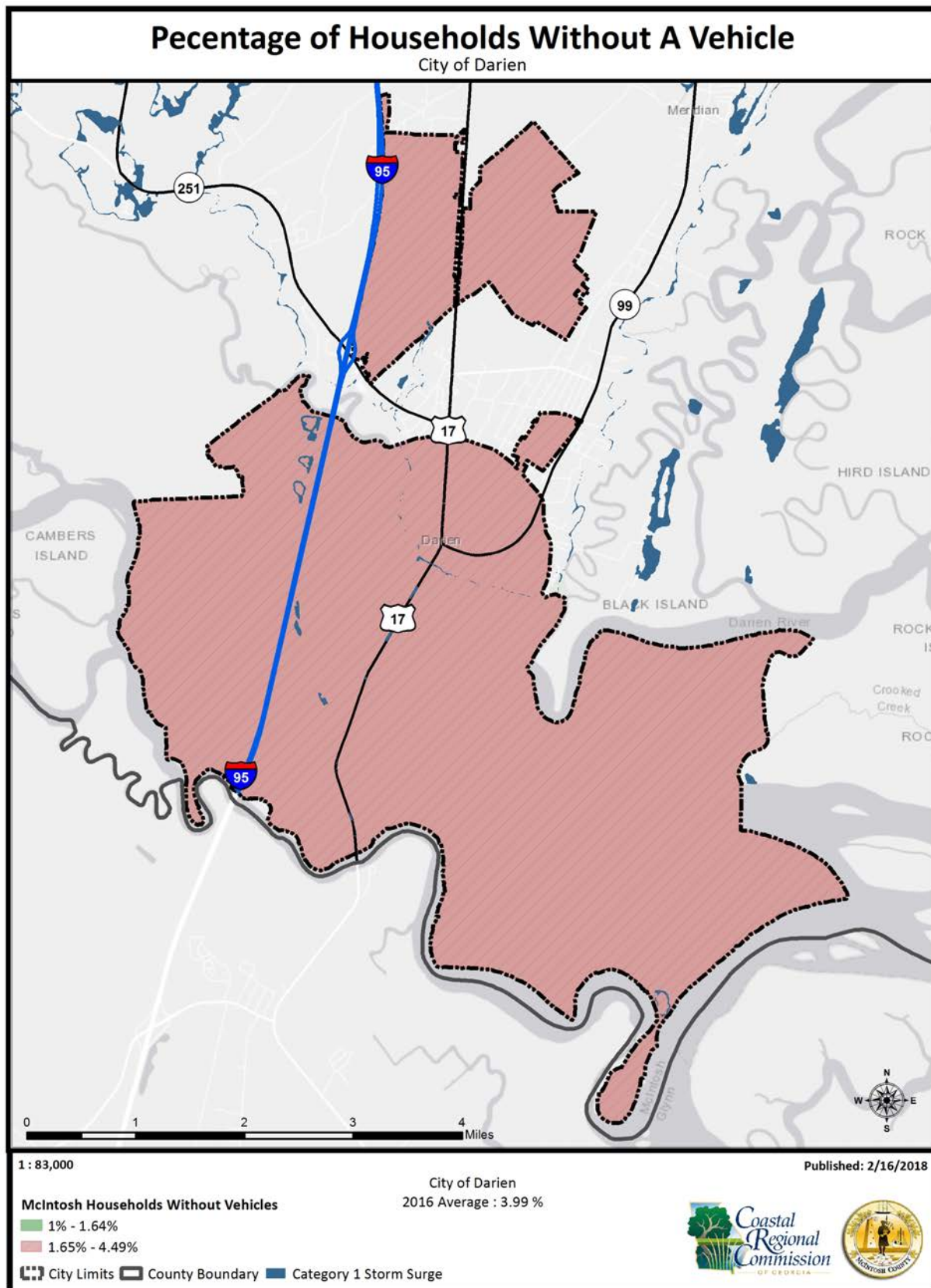
## HOUSING TYPE 7.7

Mobile homes have been identified as a particularly vulnerable type of housing during storm events due to their susceptibility to damage caused by high winds and flying debris. In Darien, 12 percent of families live in mobile homes.

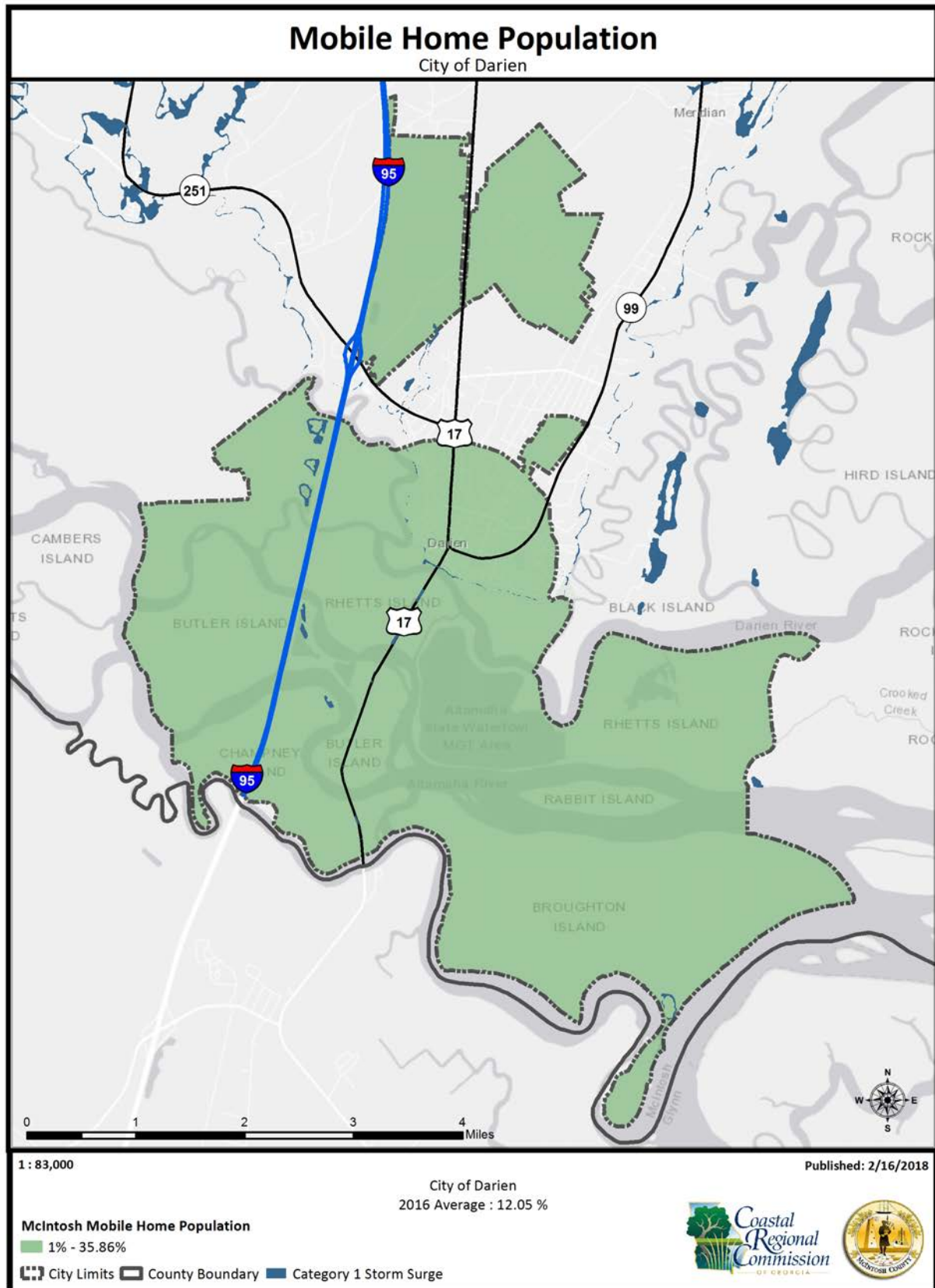




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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 Economic Base
- 8.2 Unemployment Rate
- 8.3 Occupation
- 8.4 Class of Labor Force and Places of Employment
- 8.5 Workforce Development Issues

TURNIP GREENS  
COUNTRY MARKET  
DARIEN, GA





## Economic Development

Economic development creates the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services. Economic Development requires effective, collaborative institutions focused on advancing mutual gain for the public and the private sector.

Economic development is policy intervention with the goal of improving the economic and social well-being of its community. Economic growth is observable through productivity and the rise in the value of services produced. Increasing productivity can raise living standards because more income improves the ability to purchase goods and services, and improve housing and education.

Economic development opportunity via tourism for the City of Darien is tied to its coastal assets through waterways and the natural, historic, and cultural resources. Darien's economic development and economic growth can also be leveraged through industrial development in the top three industry types identified including:



1. Retail trade, 21.9 percent
2. Arts, entertainment, and recreation, accommodation, and food services, 18.2 percent
3. Educational services, health care, and social assistance, 12.4 percent.

The projections of modest growth in in-demand industry sectors are important to the future of Darien's economy.



## ECONOMIC BASE 8.1

The table provides the percentages of Darien workforce employed in each industry type from 2000 to 2015.

Industry Type	Darien		
	2000	2010	2015
Total Employed (16 years and over Civilian Labor Force)	1,250	1,287	1,067
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.7%	0.0%	0.4%
Construction	9.3%	8.4%	4.6%
Manufacturing	9.2%	9.0%	7.7%
Wholesale trade	2.6%	4.2%	0.0%
Retail trade	14.0%	8.5%	21.9%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.3%	2.3%	9.9%
Information	2.5%	0.0%	2.2%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.5%	2.3%	9.6%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6.0%	5.4%	3.1%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	16.6%	25.6%	12.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16.2%	15.2%	18.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.9%	8.2%	3.5%
Public administration	7.3%	11.0%	6.7%





## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 8.2

In 2000, Darien's unemployment rate of 3.4 percent was lower than the county, state, and nation. In 2010, the economic recession of 2008 resulted in a high unemployment rate for the City at 8.1 percent. According to the U.S. Census, Darien's unemployment rate increased to 14.8 percent in 2015.

## OCCUPATION 8.3

The U.S. Census reports five primary occupation types and the trends of total employed in each occupation for the City of Darien since 2000 are presented below.

**30.6%**  
**SERVICES**

Occupation Type	Darien
Total Employed	1,067
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	15.2%
Services	30.6%
Sales and Office	23.0%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	4.7%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	26.6%



## CLASS OF LABOR FORCE AND PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT 8.4

The class of workers in the labor force includes 77.4 percent private and salary workers, 12.7 percent government workers, and 0.8 percent self-employed workers.

Class of Labor Force	Darien
Total Employed	1,067
Private Wage and Salary Workers	77.4%
Government Workers	12.7%
Self-Employed Workers	0.8%
Unpaid Family Workers	8.8%

**77.4%**  
PRIVATE WAGE AND SALARY

In 2015, Darien had 44.7 percent of its working class working outside of the county.

**44.7%**  
WORK OUTSIDE  
COUNTY

Location of Workforce	Population	Percentage
Population of Workers 16 years and over in Darien	1,003	100%
Worked in state of residence	961	95.80%
Worked in County	513	51.1%
Worked outside County of residence	448	44.7%
Worked outside state of residence	42	4.2%





## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES 8.5

Workforce development issues, which threaten quality economic development in the region include:

- High poverty rate;
- Low rates of educational attainment;
- Inferior skill levels for high-wage; and
- A poor level of occupational “soft skills.”

These factors present the risk of disinvestment and also pose difficulty in recruiting new firms to the area.



### Coastal Workforce

One of the primary roles of the Coastal Workforce is to provide leadership and coordination of economic development and workforce programs.

Coastal Workforce coordinates and participates in partnerships that align with business, such as organized labor, community organizations, economic development practices, and education that enhances the economic viability. Coastal Workforce also coordinates with government agencies, such as human services, education systems (e.g., public school systems, community colleges, and universities), unions, and industry and trade associations.

Coastal Workforce is charged with ensuring that its job centers are business/customer-focused and outcome-based, with the placement of job seekers who meet businesses' hiring needs being a high priority. Because Coastal Workforce maintains effective workforce development systems, it enables many quality connections, matching employers' specific needs with those seeking gainful employment. All centers concentrate on the existing and emerging economic conditions and in-demand target industries.





### **Department of Community Affairs Economic Development**

DCA offers a variety of economic development incentives and tools designed to help promote growth and job creation throughout the state.



### **U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development**

USDA provides economic opportunity through financial assistance programs for a variety of rural applications, including funding to develop essential community facilities, projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas.

# COMMUNITY WORK PROGRAM

9.1 Implementation Program  
9.2 Short Term Work Program

## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM 9.1

The implementation program outlines a variety of action items that need to be undertaken to address the needs and opportunities. These action items include policies, ongoing efforts, short term efforts, and long term efforts. Short term efforts are those that can be accomplished in the next five years and are included in the Short Term Work Program. Long term item efforts are those that may be accomplished beyond the 5 year immediate time frame or an opportunity may arise.

## SHORT TERM WORK PROGRAM 9.2

The Short-Term Work Program (STWP) identifies specific implementation actions the City government or other entities intend to take during the first five-year time frame of the planning period. This includes ordinances, administrative systems, community improvements or investments, and financing arrangements or other programs/initiatives to be put in place to implement the Community Agenda. For each action the STWP outlines the following information:

- Brief description
- Time frame for undertaking the activity
- Responsible party for implementing the activity
- Estimated cost
- Funding source

POPULATION								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Work with Purpose Built Communities to eradicate poverty and improve educational attainment.	X	X	X	X	X	Staff	Staff Time	General Fund
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Continue to develop marketing program for environmentally sensitive economic development.	X	X	X	X	X	City	\$5,000	General Fund, Private Organizations



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Conduct an inventory of available business assets.	X					DDA	\$2,000	General Fund
Develop and implement a business recruitment and retention program.	X	X	X	X	X	DDA	\$10,000	General Fund, Grants
Develop a marketing campaign to brand the City as a center for eco-tourism, cultural heritage, and waterfront activities.	X	X	X	X	X	DDA	\$10,000	General Fund, Grants
Develop a plan for restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures.			X	X	X	Historic Preservation Commission	\$3,500	General Fund, Grants
Implement the Urban Redevelopment Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	DDA, City	\$1.5 Million	CDBG, Private Investment, General Fund
Coordinate with S.C.O.R.E. and S.B.A. to provide services to small businesses and start-up companies.	X	X	X	X	X	DDA	Staff Time	General Fund
Develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public as a regional economic development tool.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Pursue funding for cultural/historical museums, such as a maritime museum.	X	X	X	X	X	City, DDA, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund
Coordinate with appropriate organizations to improve workforce training and readiness in support of economic development efforts.	X	X	X	X	X	City, IDA	Staff Time	General Fund
Participate in the US 17 Heritage Corridor project by the CGRDC and scenic and heritage byway programs to enhance tourism using natural, cultural, and historic resources.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Attract nature-based economic development initiatives consistent with natural resource conservation and protection.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Implement The Unified Economic Development Plan.	X	X				City	Staff Time	General Fund
Pursue funding sources to implement Darien Better Hometown Program improvements.	X	X	X	X	X	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund
Support innovative methods of improving the quality and diversity of public education such as those set up under the articulation agreements.	X	X	X	X	X	City, School Board	Staff Time	General Fund
HOUSING								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Conduct a condition assessment of housing in the City.	X	X				City, Census Bureau	Staff Time	Census Bureau, General Fund
Assist prospective developers of low and moderate income housing in getting technical information on site development, financing, building requirements, etc.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Support Habitat for Humanity projects and other such programs that encourage housing structures for elderly and low-income persons.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund

NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Review and update ordinances related to protecting natural resources.	X	X	X	X	X	City	StaffTime	General Fund
Perform study to determine feasibility of restoration of the Mustering Ground, Jefferson Square, and Franklin Square.	X	X				City	\$10,000	General Fund
Begin restoration of the Dairy Barn as a cultural/ environmental interpretive center.	X	X	X	X	X	City, County	\$100,000	General Fund, Grants
Seek funding sources for the restoration of the Adam Strain Building.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission, DDA	StaffTime	General Fund, Grants
Support local historic district designation of western downtown area of Darien, across U.S. 17 from City Hall.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission	StaffTime	General Fund, Grants
Develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission	StaffTime	General Fund, Grants
Designate historic districts, unique landmarks, and protect natural resources following DNR/ HPD guidelines.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission	StaffTime	General Fund
Pursue resources to support a comprehensive downtown redevelopment plan.	X	X	X	X	X	City, DDA	StaffTime	General Fund
Promote designated historic sites and natural resources through events, projects, public education, and recognition programs.	X	X	X	X	X	City, DDA, Better Hometown Program	StaffTime	General Fund
Work through Darien Better Hometown Program to develop impact and design standards within historic districts.	X	X	X	X	X	City	StaffTime	General Fund
Seek grant funding for protection and enhancement of historic sites and resources.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission	StaffTime	General Fund
Develop and distribute promotional materials in support of history based tourism.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Chamber	StaffTime	General Fund
LAND USE								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Review and update development related ordinances and construction standards to incorporate architectural and design standards.	X	X	X			City	\$12,500	General Fund, Grants
Rezone all squares in the City to an openspace / parks classification.	X					City	StaffTime	General Fund
Update Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to ensure their conformity to this plan.	X	X				City	TBD	General Fund, Grants

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Coordinate with McIntosh County to provide services to residents.	X	X	X	X	X	City, McIntosh County	Staff Time	General Fund
Ensure coordinated efforts between the Downtown Development Authority, Chamber, City, and the County.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Develop a masterplan for restoration and preservation of historic structures.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Historic Preservation Commission, DDA	TBD	General Fund, Grants
Develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public.	X	X	X	X	X	City, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund
Develop proposals for community facility projects and set priorities within project classifications.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Investigate the feasibility of developing additional community meeting facilities.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Keep public squares and other recreational areas in good repair with maximum public access.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Work with school board and other agencies to facilitate providing adult education.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
Develop master plan for streetscapes and downtown parking study.	X	X	X			City	TBD	General Fund
Explore implementation of a stormwater utility.	X	X	X	X	X	City	Staff Time	General Fund
COMMUNITY FACILITIES								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Implement the Multi-use Trail Masterplan Recommendations.	X	X	X	X	X	City	TBD	Grants, General Funds
Develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to plan for infrastructure improvements.				X	X	City	\$100,000	General Fund, SPLOST, Enterprise Fund



TRANSPORTATION								
Action/Implementation Strategy	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
Adopt an ordinance to allow for scooters and golf cart transport in appropriate areas.	X	X				City	StaffTime	General Fund

# REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## 9.3

Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
<b>DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS</b>					
Continue to develop marketing program for environmentally sensitive economic development.	2013-2018	City	\$5,000	General Fund, Private Organizations	Underway (on-going)
<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>					
Continue to revise regulations to be consistent with Coastal Comprehensive Plan.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Complete a plan for projects under the Darien Better Hometown Program and update as necessary.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue to develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public as a regional economic development tool.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to pursue funding for cultural/historical museums, such as a maritime museum.	2013-2018	City, DDA, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to develop and maintain a marketing program for tourism.	2013-2018	City, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to coordinate with appropriate organizations to improve workforce training and readiness in support of economic development efforts.	2013-2018	City, IDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Participate in the US 17 Heritage Corridor project by the CGRDC and scenic and heritage byway programs to enhance tourism using natural, cultural, and historic resources.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Attract nature-based economic development initiatives consistent with natural resource conservation and protection.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to implement The Unified Economic Development Plan.	2013-2018	City, County	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to pursue funding sources to implement Darien Better Hometown Program improvements.	2013-2018	City, DDA, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Support innovative methods of improving the quality and diversity of public education such as those set up under the articulation agreements.	2013-2018	City, School Board	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway

Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
<b>RESOURCE CONSERVATION</b>					
Continue to develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public.	2010	City	\$1,000	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to designate historic districts, unique landmarks, and to protect natural resources following DNR/HPD guidelines.	2013-2018	City, Historic Preservation Commission	\$25,000	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST	Underway (on-going)
Continue to investigate all opportunities for conservation of protected animal and plant habitats, achievement of water quality standards and management of water resources, conservation of freshwater and saltwater marshlands, and protection of aquifer recharge areas.	2013-2018	City, DNR	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants	Underway (on-going)
Pursue adoption and implementation of tree ordinance.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue to pursue financial resources to support a comprehensive downtown redevelopment appearance plan emphasizing landscaping and visual quality.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to promote designated historic sites and natural resources through events, projects, public education, and recognition programs.	2013-2018	City, Historic Preservation Commission	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to support local historic district designation of western downtown area of Darien, across U.S. 17 from City Hall.	2013-2018	City, Historic Preservation Commission	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to work through Darien Better Hometown Program to develop impact and design standards within historic districts.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to seek grant funding for protection and enhancement of historic sites and resources.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to develop and distribute promotional materials in support of history based tourism.	2013-2018	City, Chamber	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Adopt DNR Part V environmental protection ordinances as required.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue to develop and enhance local ordinances which facilitate resource protection.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue cooperation with the Darien Better Hometown Program and other organizations to refine a preservation program focusing on revolving fund and sympathetic new construction in historic districts.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue promotional efforts for tourism possibilities of the historic districts.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Inventory natural and cultural resources and restrict development within these areas.	2013-2018	City, DNR	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Apply to become a Tree City.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Finalize the lease and begin restoration of the Dairy Barn as a cultural/environmental interpretive center.	2013-2018	City, County	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway



Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
<b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>					
Continue to develop programs to enhance and promote cultural and historic resources to the public.	2010	City	\$1,000	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to improve basic public service standards through grant-funded projects.	2013-2018	City	\$25,000	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST	Underway (on-going)
Continue to coordinate and cooperate with school board on issue of mutual interest, such as development of infrastructure (see also Economic Development).	2013-2018	City, School Board	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants	Completed
Develop proposals for community facility projects and set priorities within project classifications.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Update joint comprehensive plan.	2013-2018	City, County	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Complete Phase II pedestrian access improvements.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue to pursue facade grants under Darien Better Hometown program.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Develop master plan for streetscape and downtown parking study.	2013-2018	City, DDA	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Investigate the development of a community arts center.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Investigate the feasibility of developing additional community meeting facilities.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to keep public squares and other recreational areas in good repair with maximum public access.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to work in coordination with McIntosh County in an effort to increase allocation of beds in nursing homes.	2013-2018	City of Darien	Staff Time	General Fund	Not Accomplished (City is unaware of any such facility)
Continue to work with school board and other agencies to facilitate providing adult education.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway (on-going)
Continue to improve roads and drainage system.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Postponed
Install lighting of compatible historical design in parks and on streets.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue to explore implementation of a stormwater utility.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Conduct an assessment of existing parks and openspace, including a digital inventory and a needs assessment for new park development.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Work with the County to update the Service Delivery Strategy.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed

Activity	Year	Responsible Party	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
<b>GOVERNMENT RELATIONS</b>					
Conduct a study to determine the cost-benefit of charging impact fees.	2010	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Pursue CDBG funds for areas of disinvestment and infrastructure improvements.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund, Grants, SPLOST	Completed
Implement plans for City Dock restoration.	2013-2018	City, DDA	TBD	General Fund, Grants	Completed
Ensure coordinated efforts between the Downtown Development Authority, Chamber, City, and County.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
<b>HOUSING</b>					
Continue to assist prospective developers of low and moderate income housing in getting technical information on site development, financing, building requirements, etc.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Adopt and implement regulations that require the removal of dilapidated structures.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Continue support for Habitat for Humanity projects and other such programs that encourage housing structures for elderly and low-income persons.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Continue to review and, as appropriate, upgrade manufactured housing standards.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
<b>LAND USE</b>					
Review and update development related ordinances and construction standards to incorporate architectural and design standards.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Rezone all squares in the City to an openspace / parks classification.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
Review and update Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to ensure their conformity to this plan.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Underway
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>					
Implement the plan for bicycle routes through the City.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed
Conduct a condition assessment of sidewalk and prioritize areas in need of improvements.	2013-2018	City	Staff Time	General Fund	Completed