

**BATTERY PARK
NORTH
PLANNING AREA**

BATTERY PARK NORTH Planning Area

PLANNING AREA PROFILE:

Location

The Battery Park North Planning area is located in the eastern portion of the Town of Smithfield. It is bounded on the north and west by Moone Creek and its adjacent marsh, on the south by Battery Park Road and on the east by Battery Park Road and the Town's corporate limits. The Planning Area consists of approximately 425 acres.

Existing Land Use and Transportation System

The Battery Park North Planning Area is a largely undeveloped area which includes the Rising Star neighborhood, several scattered single family detached residences and two light industrial uses located along Battery Park Road, as well dozens of acres of farmland. The Rising Star neighborhood is a small collection of older single family residences served by an old gravel road, aging wells and in many cases, failing septic systems. This community is slated to receive several significant Town-funded community development and infrastructure improvements in the near planning term. This ambitious project includes the design and construction of a water main, drainage and sanitary sewer improvements along Battery Park Road in order to improve living conditions in the neighborhood.

The Planning Area incorporates the northern half of the Eastern Annexation Area, one of three Isle of Wight County territories annexed by the Town of Smithfield on January 1, 1998. The vast majority of this land is vacant and maintained as woodlands, wetlands and open fields, supporting little active agricultural activities. Little development or agricultural activities have taken place here over the years due to the poor soil conditions that characterize the majority of the property. Soils in the vast majority of the Planning Area drain poorly and are highly susceptible to shrink-swell conditions.

Battery Park Road provides the sole means of vehicular access to the Planning Area. In recent years, Battery Park Road has been transformed into a significant entrance corridor into Smithfield as an increasing number of Town and Isle of Wight County business persons and residents have been traveling to and from the Peninsula via Battery Park Road, Nike Park Road, Titus Creek Road, Smith's Neck Road and Carrollton Boulevard and the James River Bridge. Battery Park Road forms the principal access point into and out of Smithfield along this "cut through" corridor. As such, the road serves two primary purposes: it serves local trips by area residents and it provides the integral access way to the shortest route for travelers moving between Smithfield and the James River Bridge to the east and the Peninsula beyond.

The results of a study completed by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) in 1997 indicate that the road has witnessed a rate of daily traffic demand that exceeds that experienced along the Town's other primary connector roads and corridors. As a part of this study, the HRPDC developed an extensive level of service analysis for the corridor. The study concludes that while Battery Park Road is currently operating at an acceptable level of service, it is projected that the road will operate at a less

than acceptable level of service by the year 2015. As the Smithfield area develops beyond 2015 and reaches full build-out, the HRPDC study concludes that Battery Park Road may absorb as many as 30,000 vehicle trips per day (nearly five times existing demand levels) and will need to be widened from its two existing lanes to incorporate at least two additional lanes. Clearly, these projections pose significant consequences for the future of the Planning Area as the corridor continues its transformation from a two-lane rural highway into a four-lane urban connector road and primary entrance corridor. Ultimately, development pressures will increase within the Planning Area as daily traffic volume increases along Battery Park Road.

Existing Environmental Considerations

The Planning Area's development potential is constrained severely by its poor soil characteristics and the presence of Moone Creek and its associated marshlands along its northern and western boundaries. The vast majority of the soil in the Planning Area drains poorly and is highly susceptible to shrink-swell conditions. The scenic marshlands and inland waterways surround and penetrate the Planning Area to create barriers to construction for a significant portion of the land. Slightly over thirty-six percent of the total Planning Area, approximately 153 acres, have topographic and wetland characteristics which make them unsuitable for urban development. While these tidal waterways limit the total buildable area, they provide dramatic siting opportunities from the adjacent ridges. Of the Planning Area's 424.8 total acres, approximately 282 (66%) have been identified as having prime development potential. However, these prime developable lands will not support dense development due to its poor soil compatibility.

BATTERY PARK NORTH LAND USE PLAN

The Battery Park North Planning Area is planned as a community conservation area allowing only extremely low density residential development to complement the existing residential neighborhood and scattered single family residences and light industrial uses that line its sole corridor, Battery Park Road. The future development of the Area should occur under the guidance of a master plan for the lone Sub-Area identified within the Planning Area, as opposed to the parcel-by-parcel approach that has historically dominated Town development along its major corridors. This parcel-by-parcel development pattern has contributed to the proliferation of a hodgepodge of uses along Smithfield's principle corridors that fail to link together in any sound urban context. By creating a long range plan, the owners of the various properties lining Battery Park Road would be able to produce a better product that would appropriately respond to the road's emerging role as a primary gateway and entrance corridor into Smithfield. A thoughtful master planning effort in this Planning Area would also allow the Town to better prepare its efforts to provide the necessary public services to future development in the area. No intensive development should take place in the vast amount of vacant land in this Planning Area until the water and sewer distribution systems are significantly upgraded to adequately serve the planned uses.

In the following section, a specific land use recommendation is presented for the Planning Area's lone identified Sub-Area.

Sub-Area 1 Recommendations

Sub-Area 1 incorporates the vast majority of the Battery Park North Planning Area, including the Rising Star community. It is bounded on the north by Moone Creek and its adjacent marsh, on the west by the Moone Plantation residential subdivision (Phase IV), on the south by Battery Park Road and on the east by Battery Park Road and the Town's corporate boundary. Encompassing approximately 282 acres, Sub-Area 1 constitutes one of the largest undeveloped areas in the entire Town. It is planned for low density residential development. This land use designation would allow single family detached residential development at a density of between one and three dwelling units per acre. At this density, between 126 and 378 new housing units could potentially be located within the Sub-Area's 126.1 net developable acres. However, it is highly unlikely that the upper reaches of this probable range will ever be achieved due to the poor soil conditions found in the Sub-Area.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) the necessary rezoning of the properties, (2) the provision of public utilities, (3) vehicular access, (4) the improvements planned for Battery Park Road and (5) sensitive environmental areas.

Although the future land use designation for the Sub-Area promotes a density range that would support up to three residential dwelling units per acre, the existing zoning (C-C, Community Conservation) of the properties located within the Sub-Area provides that new residential subdivisions shall only be permitted in the district via special permit and that each subdivision shall not exceed five lots. Thus, any future subdivisions proposed for higher density residential purposes must be individually rezoned to a residential zoning district compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and pursuant to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Before any rezoning of this nature would be approved by the Town, adequate public water and sewer service would have to be provided for all planned uses as no lots shall be permitted with private domestic well and septic utilities except by special permit for temporary service. Currently, public sanitary sewer service is provided along Battery Park Road via a 16-inch force main which extends to the Nike Park Road intersection, where an 8-inch force main then runs along the road to the Gatling Pointe subdivision. An 8-inch water line provides public water service along the entire length of Battery Park Road from South Church Street to Gatling Pointe. The Town is planning to upgrade water and sewer service in the Rising Star neighborhood by extending lines in order to hook up residents in this area. Future low density residential development in the Sub-Area should be able to extend lines from this planned improvement area or tap directly into the existing lines along Battery Park Road in order to serve residences. It shall be the primary responsibility of the developer(s) of the project to extend the necessary utility lines to adequately serve the planned uses in the Sub-Area. No future development should take place in the vast amount of vacant land in this Sub-Area until these improvements are made.

A thoughtful master plan should be created for the Sub-Area which provides for shared vehicular entrances and efficient internal street systems, as well as protection of the Area's scenic surroundings, sensitive ecology and Moone Creek which parallels the northern border of the Planning Area. Access points into and out of the Sub-Area should be limited along Battery Park Road in order to prohibit the further proliferation of curb cuts and vehicular entrances along this roadway. Future residences should be sited within the areas which are most conducive for urban land uses, while the fragile environmental areas along the Sub-Area's northern boundary are to be maintained as permanent open space. Any urban use of "sensitive environmental areas" (situated outside the Sub-Area) should be avoided.

The master plan for the Sub-Area should also complement the improvements planned for Battery Park Road. As mentioned earlier in this Planning Area profile, the HRPDC recommends that the road be widened to include two additional lanes in order to accommodate anticipated future increases in daily traffic demand. This widening would require the acquisition of additional right-of-way along Battery Park Road, approximately 20 feet on both sides of the highway. The study also suggests that the Town and County plan ahead for roadway improvements along this study corridor by requiring new construction along the roads to respect a minimum 55-foot setback to allow for future roadway widening. The vast majority of land fronting Battery Park Road in the Town is zoned C-C, Community Conservation. The C-C district requires a 60-foot minimum front yard setback, so new development in the majority of the area will reserve the appropriate right-of-way needed for the future road widening. The only exceptions are two industrial parcels located on the northern side of Battery Park Road and the London Park tract located south of the road. The two industrial parcels currently are home to existing industrial uses that are considered stable and could realistically remain in operation on the sites to full build-out of the Sub-Area. Nevertheless, the parcels are zoned I-1, which requires a minimum 50-foot front yard setback, slightly less than the 55-foot setback recommended by the HRPDC for the corridor. If the parcels were to be redeveloped, the Town should work with redeveloper to reserve the necessary right-of-way for the recommended road widening. Thus, any future redevelopment of the parcels under the existing zoning district should comply with the slightly more restrictive set back requirement.

The topography and soil conditions of the Sub-Area are not suitable for massive buildings and expansive parking; therefore, low single family attached residential development would be the most efficient use of the property. The siting of new homes should be gently placed within the angular terrain, employing extensive landscaping and minimal earthwork. Before any subdivision or lot located on soils found to susceptible to shrink-swell conditions is approved for development, a geotechnical report shall be submitted with preliminary plat and plans as required by the revised Zoning Ordinance. The report shall be prepared by a registered professional engineer and shall address the feasibility of development on the subject soils. The proposed master plan should also protect as many existing trees as physically possible within the future development plan. Such a master plan approach is critical to insuring that each of these issues are appropriately responded to in the proper development of this site.

FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan projects the Battery Park North Planning Area as a low density residential community planned for the provision of a suitable transition from its mix of light industrial and residential uses along the Battery Park Road corridor to the expanse of undeveloped land bordering Moone Creek. Existing development within the Planning Area, especially the Rising Star neighborhood, will be stabilized and preserved, and the integrity of the emerging Battery Park entrance corridor will be protected as traffic demands and development pressures increase. The Battery Park North Planning Area has the potential to accommodate between approximately 126 and 378 new households. While it is unlikely that the upper level of this projected density range will ever be realized due to the poor soil conditions that characterize the Area, the future development of the Planning Area should provide significant additional single family detached residential development opportunities. However, the active use of these properties may not occur for many years as there are no pending development plans for the Area. Nevertheless, in the interim, the Town should encourage the creation of a master plan for the undeveloped land which respects both the existing adjacent residences and the natural environment and outlines specific opportunities to support Town planning objectives, especially with respect to the ongoing development of entrance corridor guidelines. No future development should take place until the required public utility improvements necessary to support future development are completed.

The following table summarizes the development potential of the sole Sub-Area as recognized in the Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

BATTERY PARK NORTH PLANNING AREA

Sub-Area	Sub-Area Acreage	Net Developable Acreage	Recommended Use	Density	Yield
1	282.1	126.1	Low Density Residential	1-3	126 - 378 du
Sub-Area Total	282.1	126.1	Estimated Totals: Low Density Residential		126 - 378 du
Sensitive Environmental Areas	153.3				
Existing Urban Development	32.5				
Planning Area Total	424.8	126.1			