

**WEST MAIN  
PLANNING AREA**

## WEST MAIN Planning Area

### PLANNING AREA PROFILE:

#### Location

The West Main Planning Area is located in the western portion of the Town of Smithfield. It is bounded on the north by Mount Holly Creek and the Town's corporate boundary, on the west by Waterworks Road and the Town's corporate boundary, on the south by the upper reaches of Little Creek and the Town's corporate boundary and on the east by the Route 10 Bypass, West Main Street and Cary Street. The Planning Area, so named because of the Town's expressed goal to expand the design influence and spirit of redevelopment witnessed along West Main Street in the Downtown Area westward along Route 258, consists of approximately 751 acres.

#### Existing Land Use and Transportation System

The West Main Planning Area is a relatively underdeveloped area which includes a mix of corridor-based commercial, industrial and residential uses bordered by an expanse of vacant property. Its most notable existing uses are the Smithfield Middle School, the Jersey Park and Lakeside subdivisions and a mobile home park located in the Woods Edge neighborhood. The Planning Area incorporates the Western Annexation Area, one of three Isle of Wight County territories annexed by the Town of Smithfield on January 1, 1998. This Annexation Area lies principally west of the Smithfield Middle School and north of Route 258, with a small exception being several tracts of land south of Route 258 adjacent to a tributary of Little Creek. The vast majority of this land is vacant and maintained as woodlands, wetlands and open fields, supporting little active agricultural activities.

The 1992 Comprehensive Plan listed the Jersey Park neighborhood located just north of Route 258 and adjacent to the Smithfield Middle School as one of the three major concentrations of blight existing within the Town and placed a high priority on implementing several specific measures to combat the deteriorating housing conditions therein. Several significant improvements have been made to the neighborhood since the last Plan was adopted, including the rehabilitation of several abandoned homes and the upgrading of a substandard water line that serves the neighborhood. As a result of these improvements and the investment of private funds and sweat equity in the redevelopment and improved maintenance of the community, the Jersey Park subdivision is now considered a stable neighborhood that should be properly buffered from the future development planned for adjacent lands.

The major roads serving the Planning Area are the Route 10 Bypass, West Main Street/Route 258 (which serves as an extension of West Main Street beyond the Route 10 Bypass intersection), Waterworks Road and Cary Street. Each of the existing developments in the Planning Area are accessed either directly or indirectly by Route 258 or West Main Street.

### **Existing Environmental Considerations**

The Planning Area's development potential is constrained somewhat by the presence of two significant creeks, Mount Holly Creek and Little Creek, along its northern and southern boundaries, respectively. The scenic marshlands and critical slopes of these waterways surround and penetrate the Planning Area to create barriers to construction for a significant portion of the land. Nearly thirty-two percent of the total Planning Area, approximately 236 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 751 total acres, approximately 233 (31%) have been identified as having prime development potential.

### **WEST MAIN LAND USE PLAN**

The West Main Planning Area is planned as a mixed-use community incorporating a range of housing options in addition to light industrial and retail uses, Town recreational facilities and commercial redevelopment along its principal corridor, Route 258. The future development and redevelopment of the Area should occur under the guidance of a master plan for each Planning Sub-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 South Church Street and Route 258 that fail to link together in any sound urban context. By creating a long range plan, the owners of the various properties would be able to produce a better finished development product that would appropriately respond to the existing, stable uses that border Route 258 between the Smithfield Middle School and the Route 10 Bypass intersection. 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. The Town should also take the lead in encouraging and supervising the extension of the ongoing redevelopment of the West Main Corridor beyond the Route 10 Bypass intersection along Route 258.

In the following sections, specific land use recommendations are presented for each of the six Sub-Areas and for the three Redevelopment Areas identified in the West Main Planning Area.

### **Sub-Area 1 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 1 is located in the western portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the west and north by the Town's corporate boundary, on the east by the Smithfield Middle School and on the south by Route 258. Encompassing 192 acres, Sub-Area 1 constitutes the largest amount of undeveloped land in the Planning Area and one of the five largest undeveloped areas in the entire Town. It is planned for community conservation which is intended to preserve existing natural features and vegetation, promote interim agricultural and forestry activities and production and encourage the conservation and maintenance of sensitive environmental areas in the Sub-Area. This land use designation would allow single family detached residential development at a density of no more than one

dwelling unit per acre. At this density, as many as 121 new housing units could potentially be located within the Sub-Area's 120.8 net developable acres.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) the appropriate density of future development, (2) the availability of public utilities, (3) vehicular access and (4) sensitive environmental areas. Although the future land use designation for the Sub-Area promotes a density range that would support up to one residential unit 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 residential purposes incorporating a higher density must be individually rezoned to a residential zoning district compatible with the Comprehensive Plan and pursuant to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

Given existing market conditions and the availability of several preferable vacant parcels currently zoned for low density single family detached residential development, it is estimated that the Sub Area will remain undeveloped for the foreseeable future. However, 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. Currently, public sanitary sewer service culminates at the middle school along Route 258. The Town has recently extended its water service beyond the school along Route 258 to Waterworks Road. As a part of this public works improvement, a new 8" line was also extended along Waterworks Road to the Town's corporate limits. Future development in the Sub-Area will be able to tap directly into this 8" water line to serve residences; however, the developers will be responsible for extending the sanitary sewer line to serve the area. Additionally, no lots shall be permitted with private domestic well and septic utilities except by special permit for temporary service.

A thoughtful master plan should be created for the Sub-Area which provides for shared vehicular entrances and efficient internal street systems and protects its scenic surroundings, sensitive ecology and the Mount Holly Creek which parallels the northern border of the Planning Area. Access points into and out of the Sub-Area should be limited along both Route 258 and Waterworks Road in order to prohibit the further proliferation of curb cuts along these roadways. Future development 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 these "sensitive environmental areas" (situated outside the Sub-Area) should be avoided.

The topography of the Sub-Area is not suitable for massive buildings and expansive parking; therefore, low density single family detached 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. The proposed master plan should protect as many existing trees as physically possible within the future development plan. A master plan approach is critical to insuring that each of these issues are appropriately responded to in the proper development of this site.

### **Sub-Area 2 and 3 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 2 covers approximately 24 acres and is located in the northern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the west and north by the forested land bordering Mount Holly Creek, on the south by the Jersey Park subdivision and on the east by Sub-Area 3. Sub-Area 3's 39.4 acres are located directly adjacent to Sub-Area 2 and are bounded on the north by Redevelopment Area 1 (the Town's old wastewater treatment facility), on the east by the Route 10 Bypass, on the south by Redevelopment Area 2 and the west by the Jersey Park subdivision and Sub-Area 2. Both of these Sub-Areas are planned for light industrial use with an allowable floor area ratio of 0.20-0.30 square feet per net developable acre. At this proposed density, Sub-Area 2's 15.8 net developable acres could support between approximately 137,000 and 206,000 square feet of light industrial space, while Sub-Area 3's 25.6 net developable acres could support between 223,000 and 335,000 square feet of light industrial space. Considered together as one contiguous site, the two Sub-Areas could support as much as 540,000 square feet of space for light industrial users.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) vehicular access and (2) buffering. Access is far and away the most critical issue impacting the future land use plan for these Sub-Areas. At present, Pole Road provides the only direct vehicular access to the Sub-Areas, and it is an unpaved road. Any future development of these areas for industrial use would necessitate the improvement of Pole Road as a two lane road capable of supporting future trucking and employment traffic demands imposed by the future user(s). As a limited access road, direct access from the adjacent Route 10 Bypass is currently unavailable to these Sub-Areas. It is recommended that once a suitable employment-generating user is identified for the Sub-Areas, the Town and the user should lobby VDOT for a restricted access point along the Bypass into and out of the planned light industrial facility. It is recommended that these Sub-Areas be developed as a formal light industrial park that would be master planned to incorporate an efficient internal street system that would funnel the majority of its traffic demands to this restricted access ramp, thereby minimizing the burden placed on Pole Road and the Pole Road/Route 258 intersection.

Another important consideration for the future development of these Sub-Areas is the future stability of adjacent uses: the Jersey Park subdivision to the south and the Town recreational facility and park planned for Redevelopment Area 1 to the north. The master plan for the recommended light industrial park for Sub-Areas 2 and 3 should include sufficient setbacks and landscape buffers, as provided in the revised Zoning Ordinance, to minimize the impact of light, noise, dust, smoke or any other externality on these adjacent uses.

#### **Sub-Area 4 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 4 is located in the northeastern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the north and east by Cary Street, on the west by the Route 10 Bypass and on the south by commercial uses adjacent to West Main Street. The 40.3 acre Sub-Area is planned for low density residential use at one to three dwelling units per acre. At this density, between 23 and 69 new single family detached dwelling units could be located within the Sub-Area's 22.9 net developable acres. It is hoped that the type of housing product developed in the Sub-Area would mirror the density and quality in design and building materials witnessed in the nearby Goose Hill Creek subdivision which lies directly across Cary Street.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) vehicular access and (2) buffering. It is recommended that in order to eliminate the potential for overloading the already strained West Main Street corridor with additional vehicles, as well as the need for acquiring the necessary right-of-way to allow access to West Main Street via the adjacent commercial parcels, future access to the site should be limited to a single entrance off Cary Street. Ideally, the entrance would be located directly across from Goose Hill Way in order to provide an efficient suburban intersection, where a future stoplight may be warranted at project completion. Future development of residences in the Sub-Area should be located away from the Route 10 Bypass and should be well buffered with appropriate landscaping as is provided in the revised Town Zoning Ordinance.

#### **Sub-Area 5 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 5 is located in the southwestern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the west and south by the Town's corporate limits, on the north by Route 258 and on the east by Sub-Area 6. The 16.9 acre Sub-Area is planned for retail commercial use at a floor area ratio of 0.20 to 0.50 square feet per net developable acre per acre. At this density, the Sub-Area's 11.0 net developable acres could support between approximately 95,800 and 239,600 square feet of commercial space.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Areas are (1) vehicular access and (2) sensitive environmental areas. This Sub-Area should be planned to be accessed from a single, shared commercial entrance along Route 258. A shared entrance would be preferable for this Sub-Area because future entrances along this roadway should be minimized in order to decrease future traffic congestion. Along with the careful placement of the entrance, the eventual site plan for the Sub-Area should also provide sufficient vegetative buffering between the future development and the sensitive woodlands located adjacent to the property's southern boundary. Existing vegetation should also be maintained as much as possible and should be incorporated into a thoughtful landscaping plan for the site in order to preserve the existing rural character of this section of the roadway and help to moderate the noise, exhaust and lighting generated by passing traffic. Additionally, future development in the Sub-Area should be of a scale and design quality that will serve to make a profoundly positive entrance statement to visitors and citizens approaching the Town along this corridor, as this property will serve as the initial visual clue that the traveler is entering Smithfield.

### **Sub-Area 6 Recommendations**

Sub-Area 6 is located in the southern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the west by Sub-Area 5, on the north by an assortment of uses fronting Route 258 (including an apartment complex, a mobile home park and an industrial use), on the south by the upper reaches of Little Creek and on the east by the vacant woodlands bordering the Quail Street neighborhood. The 64.3 acre Sub-Area is planned for light industrial use at a floor area ratio of 0.20 to 0.30 square feet per net developable acre. At this density, the Sub-Area could support between approximately 325,000 and 487,000 square feet of new light industrial space within its 37.3 net developable acres.

The major issues involved with the potential development of this Sub-Area are (1) sensitive environmental areas, (2) vehicular access and (3) buffering. A thoughtful master plan should be created for the Sub-Area which protects its scenic surroundings, especially the sensitive ecology found in the adjacent tributaries of Little Creek. Thus, future development plans for any given sector of the Sub-Area should not be approved without a clear vision for the future of the entirety. Planned light industrial uses should be sited in an industrial park setting in the areas which are most conducive for urban land uses, while the fragile environmental areas along the fringes of the property are to be maintained as permanent open space. The planning effort should include a comprehensive stormwater management analysis of the local watershed to include a formal plan for future management strategies, including any best management practices needed for the future development of the site.

Access to the site will be another primary consideration for the future development of the Sub-Area. Right-of-way will need to be obtained via one or more of the properties fronting Route 258. If feasible, two separate main entrances off Route 258 should be incorporated into the master plan of the site, and these entrances should be connected by a thoughtful internal street network. Topographic and environmental concerns on the eastern edge of the property would prevent any feasible direct access to the site via an improved Great Spring Road.

Another important consideration for the future development of this Sub-Areas is the impact of the proposed use on the numerous adjacent uses. The master plan for the recommended light industrial park should include sufficient setbacks and landscape buffers, as provided in the revised Zoning Ordinance to minimize the impact of light, noise, dust, smoke or any other externality on these adjacent uses. The use's hours of operation and peak transportation demands should also respect the existing nature of the surrounding community and not pose any undue hardship on existing homeowners, business and retailers.

### **Redevelopment Area Recommendations**

**Redevelopment Area 1** is located in the northeastern portion of the West Main Planning Area and incorporates the Town's former wastewater treatment facility. It is bounded on the north by Cary Street, on the west by a tributary of Mount Holly Creek, on the south by Sub-Area 3 and on the east by the Route 10 Bypass. The 11.5 acre Redevelopment Area is planned for a new Town recreational park that would include several ball fields for softball, baseball and potentially soccer, picnic facilities, hiking and biking trails and a generous amount of open space. This adaptive reuse project would serve a need expressed

repeatedly in surveys and public work sessions by Town residents, especially those living in the Downtown area or points westward who have requested additional recreational facilities near their homes and places of work or business. No additional development is currently planned for the Area.

**Redevelopment Area 2** is located in the eastern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the north by Sub-Area 3, on the west by a retail commercial use, on the south by Route 258 and on the east by the Route 10 Bypass. The 2.6 acre Redevelopment Area is located within the right-of-way of the Route 10 Bypass and is maintained and under the complete control of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Currently, it is used as a commuter parking lot for employees of the ham production plants or other nearby businesses. Along with several adjacent commercial uses, it forms the principle gateway into the Town from the north and west, and as such, provides as a less than optimal entrance statement for those entering Smithfield. Although the Town has little, if any, regulatory control over the appearance and use of the site, it has worked with VDOT in recent months to add landscaping in order to improve the visual image provided at the intersection of Route 258 and the Bypass. Further improvements are needed to transform this site into an appropriate gateway for the community. Although it is anticipated that VDOT will retain the existing use of the site in the near planning term, it is recommended that the Town continue to lobby the State to provide appropriate landscaping, buffering and signage improvements that will fit in nicely with the Town's planned entrance corridor improvement program and form an inviting statement to connect travelers on the Bypass to the Historic Downtown Area and waterfront.

**Redevelopment Area 3** is located in the eastern portion of the West Main Planning Area. It is bounded on the north by Route 258, on the west by an apartment complex, on the south by the Quail Street neighborhood and on the east by the Route 10 Bypass. The 11.9 acre Redevelopment Area is planned for retail commercial use at a floor area ratio of 0.20 to 0.50 square feet per net developable acre. At this density, the Sub-Area could support between approximately 37,000 and 94,000 square feet of new gross leasable space within its 4.3 net developable acres. The Redevelopment Area is currently home to a convenience store and other "underdeveloped" commercial uses. It is recommended that these parcels be combined in order to provide a sufficient amount of acreage to support a retail commercial use that would provide the highest and best use for the property, as well as improve the image of the gateway area represented at the Route 258/Route 10 Bypass intersection.

The major issues involved with the potential redevelopment of these Areas are (1) acquiring and consolidating the properties within the Redevelopment Area, (2) removing and/or renovating the existing structures and (3) vehicular access. As with any major redevelopment project involving multiple property owners, this first issue can become a substantial hurdle. The Town should open discussions with the property owners in each Redevelopment Area in an attempt to clarify the redevelopment potential of the properties. If the current owners show no interest in redeveloping the properties on their own, the Town could explore the possibilities of acquiring the properties and consolidating them into one contiguous parcel within the Redevelopment Area that could be marketed to a commercial developer. The Town should also approach the existing businesses located within the Redevelopment Area and encourage them to participate in the redevelopment process.

### **FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY**

The Comprehensive Plan projects the West Main Planning Area as an integrated, mixed-use community which will provide several opportunities to meet the Town's economic development objectives with respect to additional light industrial development, while also providing a suitable transition from its mix of highway related commercial, industrial and high density residential uses along Route 258 to the expanse of undeveloped land bordering the Mount Holly and Little creeks. The Town should focus its efforts in this Planning Area on the marketing of Sub-Areas 2, 3 and 4 as suitable properties for future light industrial park development and on supporting the recommended redevelopment of the old wastewater treatment facility into a Town park. The West Main Planning Area has the potential to accommodate between approximately 144 and 190 new households. It also has the potential to provide between 685,000 and 1,028,000 square feet of new light industrial space and between 130,000 and 330,000 square feet of new retail commercial space. The development of this Planning Area should provide significant non-tourist related employment and revenues for the Town. However, the active use of these properties may not occur for many years because there are no pending development plans for the Area. In the interim, the Town should encourage the creation of a master plan for the various Sub-Areas designated above which respects the natural environment and efficiently provides suitable building sites to meet Town planning objectives. No development should take place until the required and extensive utility improvements are completed.

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

**FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

**WEST MAIN PLANNING AREA**

Sub-Area	Sub-Area Acreage	Net Developable Acreage	Recommended Use	Density	Yield
1	192.0	120.8	Community Conservation	1	121 - 121
2	24.3	15.8	Light Industry	0.20-0.30	137,650 - 206,474
3	39.4	25.6	Light Industry	0.20-0.30	223,027 - 334,541
4	40.3	22.9	Low Density Residential	1-3	23 - 69
5	16.9	11.0	Retail Commercial	0.20-0.50	95,832 - 239,580
6	64.3	37.3	Light Industry	0.20-0.30	324,958 - 487,436
<b>Sub-Area Total</b>	<b>377.2</b>	<b>233.4</b>	<b>Estimated Total</b> Community Conservation Low Den.SF Residential Retail Commercial Light Industry		121 - 121 23 - 69 95,832 - 239,580 685,634 - 1,028,452
<b>Redevelopment Area</b>					
1	11.5	3.9	Parks & Recreation	N/A	0 - 0
2	2.6	0.0	Parks & Recreation	N/A	0 - 0
3	11.9	4.3	Retail Commercial	0.20-0.50	37,462 - 93,654
<b>Redevelopment Area Total</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>Estimated Total</b> Retail Commercial Parks & Recreation		37,462 - 93,654 0 - 0
<b>Sensitive Environmental Areas</b>	236.0				
<b>Existing Urban Development</b>	144.0				
<b>Planning Area Total</b>	<b>750.6</b>	<b>241.6</b>	<b>Estimated Total</b> Community Conservation Low Den.SF Residential Retail Commercial Light Industry Parks & Recreation		121 - 121 23 - 69 133,294 - 333,234 685,634 - 1,028,452 0 - 0