

Coleman Boulevard – Ben Sawyer Boulevard Revitalization Plan 2005

Final Recommendations



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Purpose

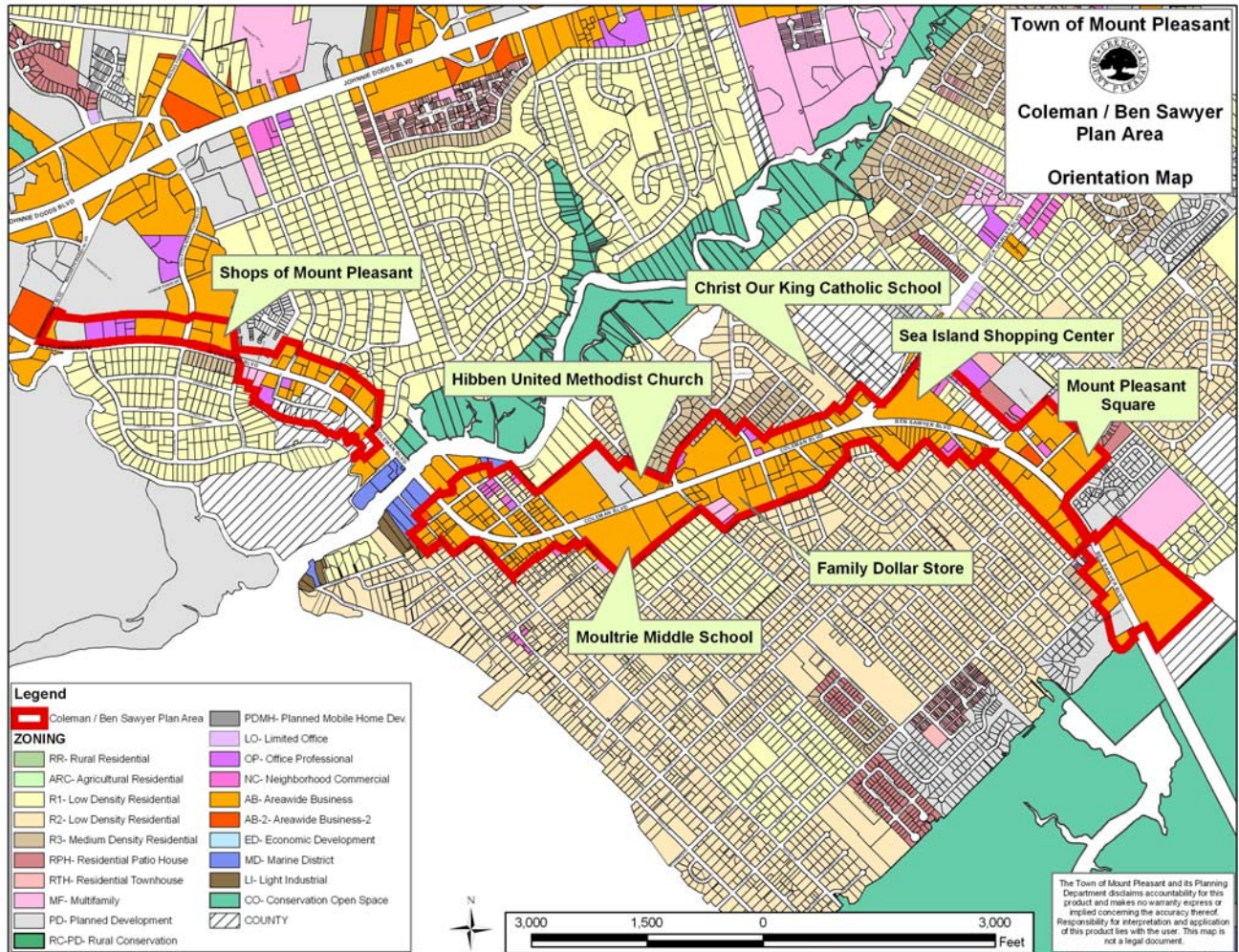
In 1993, the Town of Mount Pleasant adopted a Coleman Boulevard Revitalization Plan. The purpose of this plan was to review the existing conditions along Coleman Boulevard and to develop specific goals which would lead to the revitalization of this area. The 1993 Plan makes recommendations that would allow for accomplishing the goal of creating a town center along Coleman Boulevard. This town center, as outlined in the goals set forth in 1993, should provide a safe and enjoyable environment, reflect the traditions of Mount Pleasant, stimulate the economic health of the area, and promote the significant natural, historical, and cultural amenities of the area.

Thirteen years later, this plan is now being updated. In updating the Coleman Plan, an important consideration is the significant changes that the Town of Mount Pleasant has seen since the original Coleman Plan was adopted in 1993. The population of the Town in 1993 was approximately 35,000. The population has increased today to over 60,000 people, with a substantial amount of growth having occurred well beyond the Coleman Blvd. area extending to the furthest reaches of the Mount Pleasant Planning Area. Also, the Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan recognizes an additional commercial “node” at Highway 17 near the Isle of Palms Connector. This commercial node, mostly known as Towne Centre, had not yet been developed at the time the 1993 Plan was adopted. Both of these factors have a significant bearing on how and when Coleman Boulevard might be redeveloped or “revitalized”.

In an effort to encourage redevelopment of the Coleman Boulevard area, the Town should provide development standards that are not viewed as hindrances or obstacles towards redevelopment but instead encourage development in a manner that will lead towards the accomplishment of the goals as outlined in the Coleman Plan. Recognizing that the commercial / mixed use development on Coleman and its proximity to residential uses is distinctive to that area is important in that it provides unique opportunities for more pedestrian activity, locally owned businesses unique to Mount Pleasant, and a mixture of uses – residential / civic / commercial – different from development on Johnnie Dodds and the northern end of Mount Pleasant.

Description of Plan Area

The Plan Area extends from the intersection of West Coleman Boulevard and Magrath Darby Boulevard to the Ben Sawyer Causeway at Simmons Seafood. It includes most properties bordering West Coleman, Coleman, and Ben Sawyer Blvds. as depicted on the map exhibit below. It does not include properties in Bayview Acres or within the Shem Creek Waterfront Overlay District. This represents an expanded plan area as the 1993 Plan was confined to those properties along Coleman Boulevard between Shem Creek and Camellia Drive.



Recommendations

Staff recognizes that in order to achieve a thriving mixed use community, zoning ordinance amendments will be required as well as public improvements. Seeing such, the recommendations have been divided into two sections: **Zoning Recommendations** and **Public Improvement and Goals**

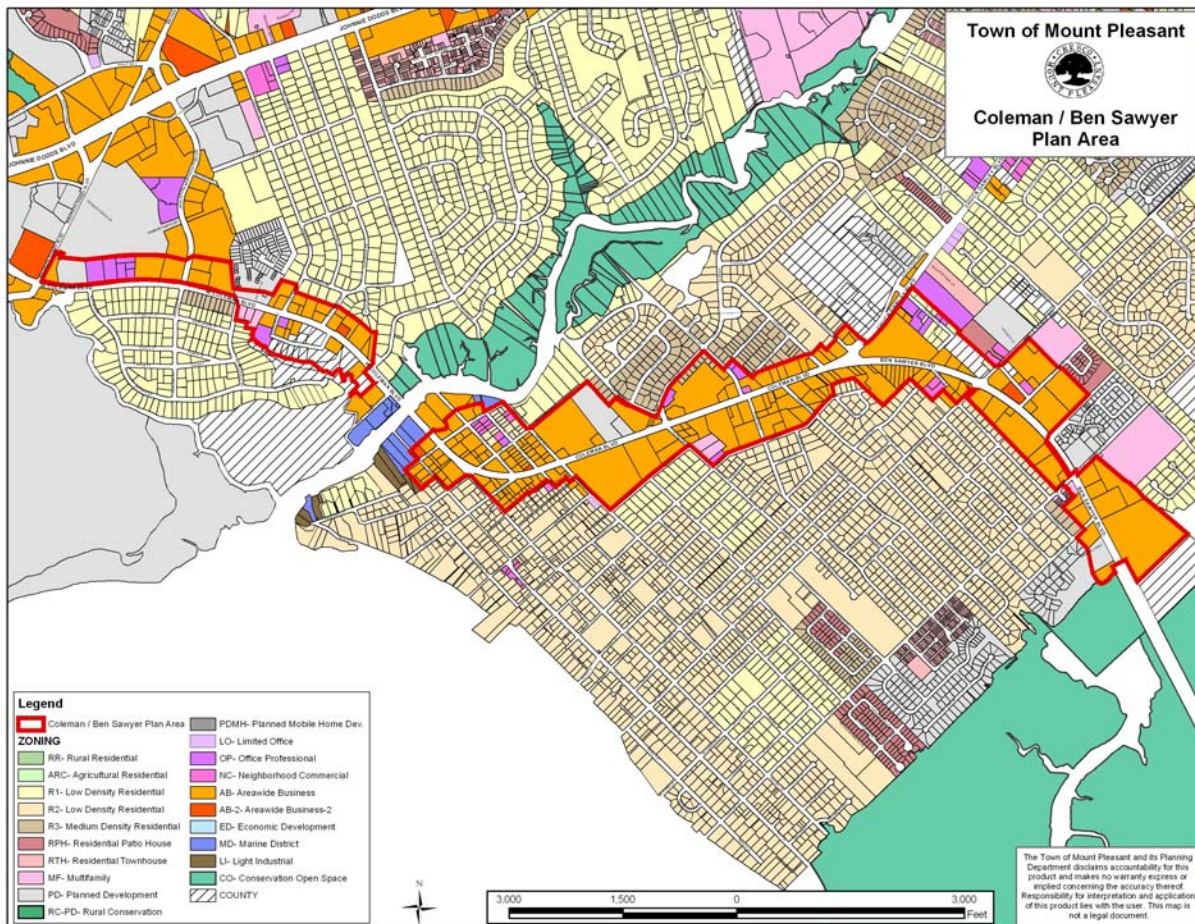
Recommendations. All recommendations represent a culmination of recommendations from the original 1993 Plan, suggestions from the three stakeholder meetings held through late summer and fall, and recommendations from staff.

Zoning Recommendations- *All of the following recommendations would require a public hearing as they would be text amendments to the Code of Ordinances.*

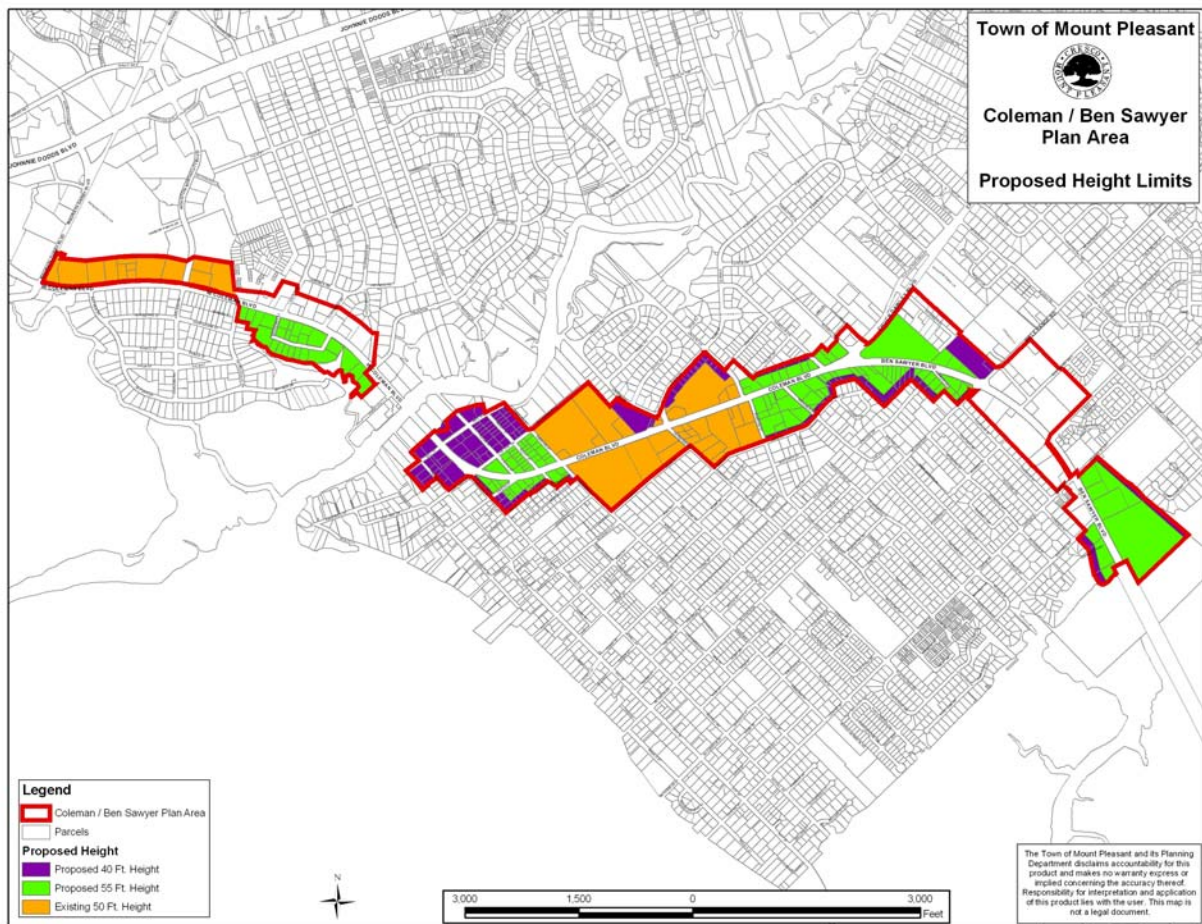
- Create a Coleman / Ben Sawyer Overlay Zoning District
- Revise the Building Permit Allocation Program to allow for exemption of residential developments within the overlay
- Eliminate the Shem Creek Village Overlay District
- Amend the Joint Town / County Highway Corridor Overlay District to remove properties located at the Chuck Dawley and Schirmer intersection which are included in this new overlay
- Amend the Height Plan Map

Create a Coleman / Ben Sawyer Overlay Zoning District

An overlay district should be established that allows for this area to redevelop as a mixed use neighborhood through zoning requirements and incentives. Included in this document is a copy of the proposed Coleman Boulevard - Ben Sawyer Overlay District. An overview of that document is provided here:



- **Allowed Uses-** Mixed uses to include all uses allowed in RTH, MF, LO, NC, OP, and AB. Conditional uses and special exception uses as identified by the underlying zoning district would still apply. The only exception is that outdoor dining shall become a use of right rather than a special exception.
- **Density-** Allowed density would be 16 units per acre unless workforce housing is provided as described below. This is an increase over the 8.6/ acre currently allowed in MF and 12/ acre allowed in NC and AB.
- **Height-** A proposed height map is included below. It illustrates where 50 feet is currently allowed, as well as those areas recommended for an increase. For selected areas along Coleman and Ben Sawyer, a height of 55 feet measured from eave height would be allowed. Roofs may project above 55 feet, but the area above the 55 feet could not be used for human occupancy. Where 50 feet is currently allowed on the Official Zoning Map, staff would recommend increasing the height to 55 feet as described above. There will be a 2-story minimum required and a 4-story maximum allowed in the 55 foot height zone. Selected areas or portions of properties closer to Shem Creek, existing residential areas, or the Historic District would be limited to 40 feet measured to the highest point of the building, not eave height. These structures would be limited to a maximum of 3 stories.



- **Workforce Housing-** A bonus density of 20 units per acre will be allowed for any development that provides at least 10% workforce housing. By requiring that these workforce housing units be incorporated into the development, the units will become integrated with the rest of the development rather than isolated groupings of “low income” housing. These units may be either rentals or owner occupied. Units would be deed restricted for a period of ten years. An attachment has been provided that includes the formulas used for calculating sales prices and rental rates based on current interest rates, etc. Attachments have also been provided based on the proposed formulas with estimated sales prices and rental fees. The assumption is that most units in this area would likely be efficiencies or 1- or 2-bedroom units. It would be required that the developer provide a mixture of unit types.
- **Activity Zone-** The proposed ordinance allows for what is referred to as an activity zone. The area for the activity zone will be a designated area along Coleman Boulevard where certain activities would be allowed. These activities would include street side dining and outdoor display of merchandise. This street activity would serve as an attraction and would be an integral part of a vibrant mixed use community.



No space for an activity zone

Successful activity zone



- **Mixture of Uses-** Staff recognizes that retail and restaurant type uses as opposed to office uses create more activity. Seeing such, it is appropriate to recommend that 60% of all first floor business fronting on Coleman should be required to be retail / restaurant. This would only apply to properties in the area from Live Oak Drive to Sea Island Shopping Center and to lots that have a minimum lot frontage on Coleman of 100 linear feet or greater. This requirement would prevent the area from becoming dominated by office uses and better create the diverse environment needed for success towards revitalization.

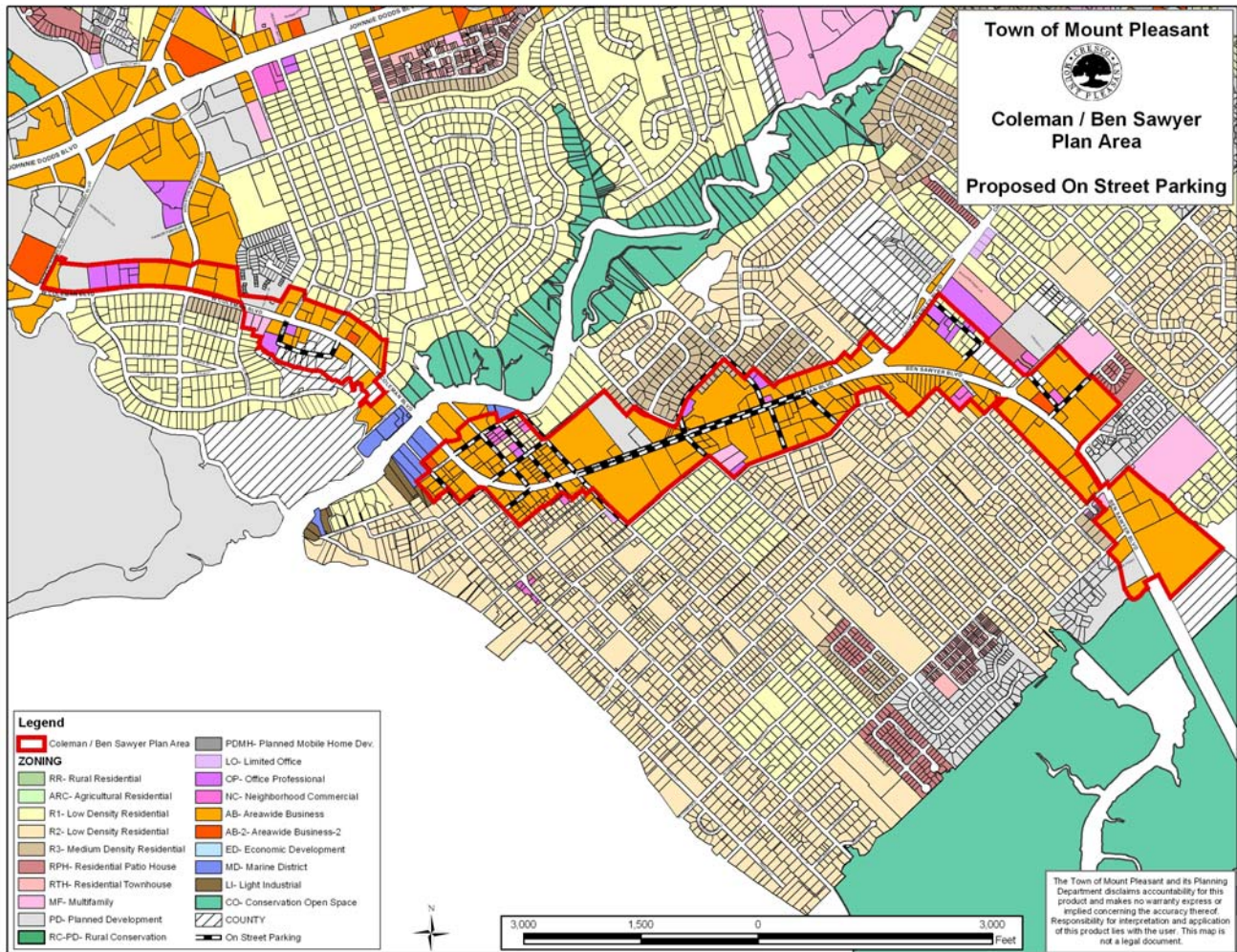


Single use area with closed windows

Pedestrian-friendly mixed use development

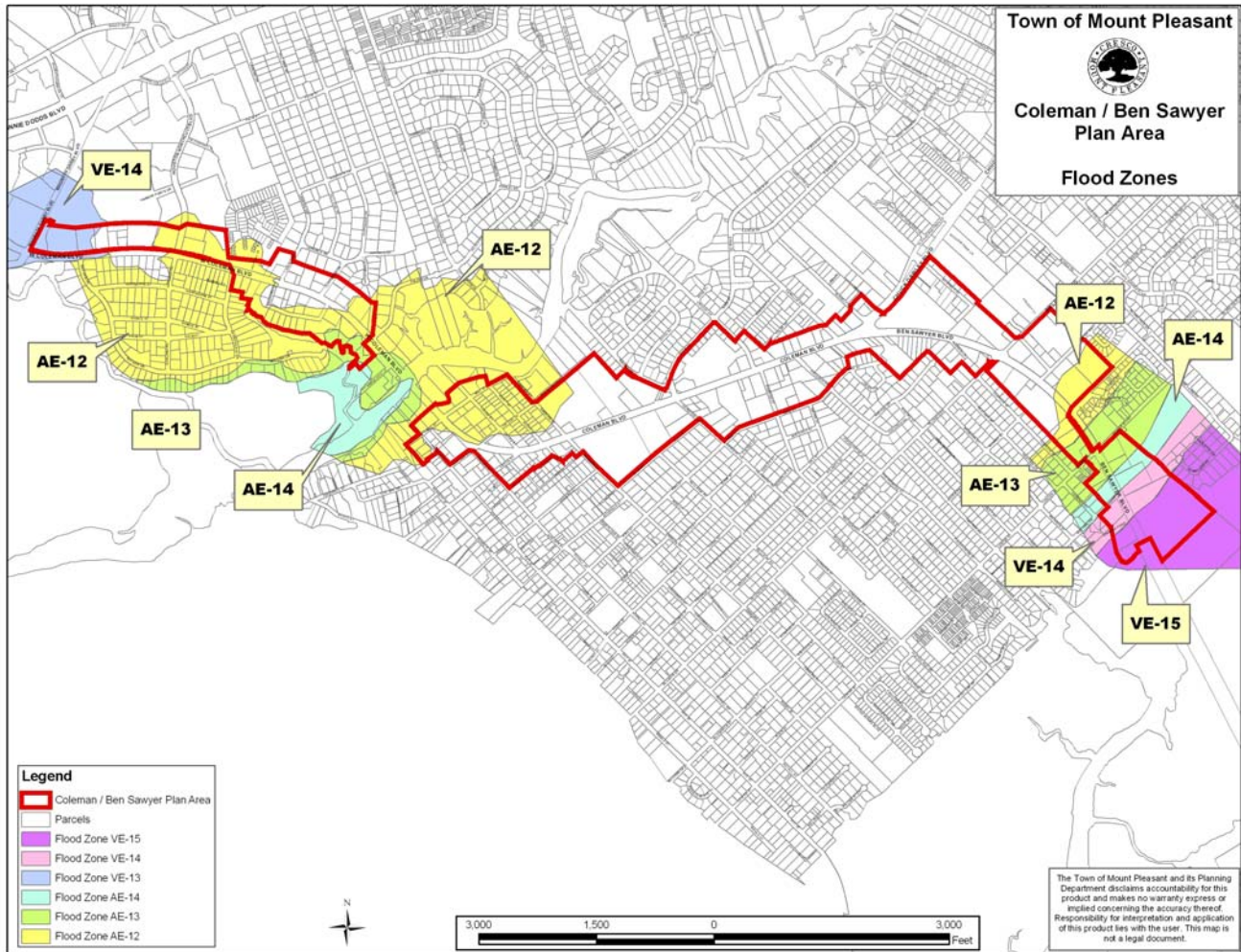


- **Parking-** Shared parking and on street parking will be required. An exhibit map illustrating where on street parking would be allowed / required is included below. On street parking along Coleman Boulevard will not be required at this point. Further research should be done to investigate the feasibility of such.



On street parking with street print

- **Flood Zones-** Buildings located within “A” flood zones should be required to flood proof buildings. This allows for the buildings to remain at street level providing for greater pedestrian accessibility. Leniency could be considered towards developments where the topography / elevation makes such less feasible.



○ **Additional recommendations include:**

- 20 foot “build to line” along Coleman / Ben Sawyer for all buildings, to be measured from the back of curb. There would be an exception to this for civic uses such as schools and churches.
- 10 foot wide sidewalks required to abut building face on all front streets, 5 feet for side and rear streets
- Wider awnings
- Street furniture and planter boxes required

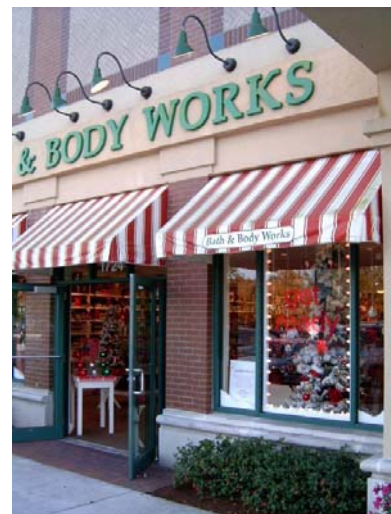


Wide sidewalks and planter boxes

- Larger canopy trees will be required, but no understory required
- Display windows may not be blocked or screened on street level



Street level windows closed with no displays



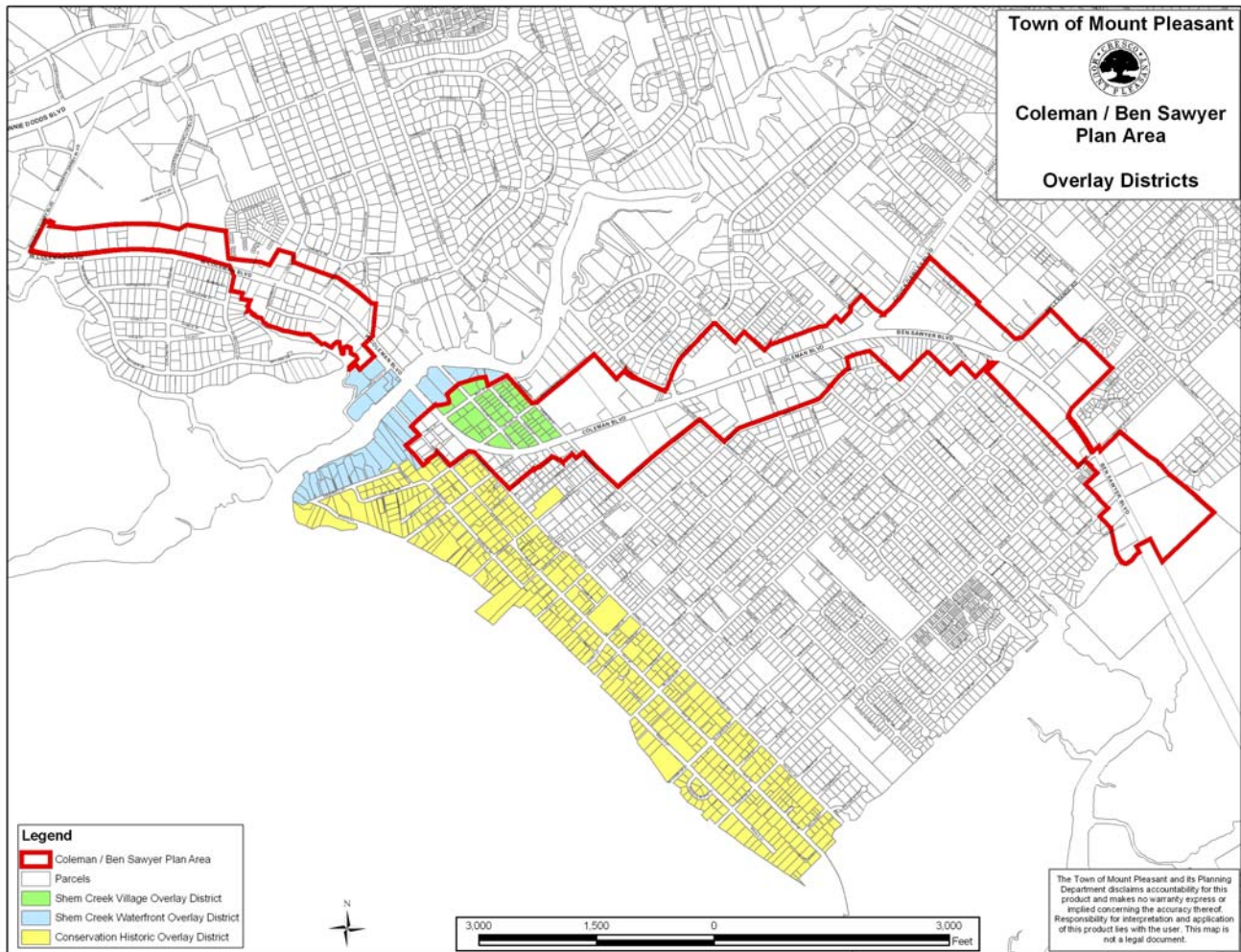
Vibrant window displays

Revise the Building Permit Allocation Program to allow for exemption of residential developments within the overlay

In an effort to encourage redevelopment of the Coleman / Ben Sawyer area, staff would recommend exempting new residential development within this overlay area from the BPA program. The intention of this exemption would be to further promote infill and redevelopment. The residential component is key to the success of a mixed use community.

Eliminate the Shem Creek Village Overlay District

The requirements found within the new Coleman / Ben Sawyer Overlay District essentially eliminate the need for this overlay. The proposed overlay will provide more incentives for redevelopment and also more guidance for the Commercial Design Review Board.



Amend the Joint Town / County Highway Corridor Overlay District to remove properties located at the Chuck Dawley and Schirmer intersection which are included in this new overlay

Considering the recommended buffer requirements, etc. found within the Coleman / Ben Sawyer Overlay, it would be most appropriate to remove those properties located along the east side of Chuck Dawley at Schirmer Avenue from the requirements of the Town / County Overlay. A minimal number of properties would be affected and this effort would be coordinated with Charleston County Planning Department.

Amend the Height Plan Map

The Official Height Plan Map should be amended to reflect the proposed increased heights as outlined in the proposed overlay.

All of the zoning recommendations relate to one another in that the success of one is dependent upon the implementation of another. For example, the proposed requirement for 60% retail / restaurant uses on the ground floor for portions of Coleman Boulevard will have a direct impact on whether or not an activity zone is also successful. A street section dominated by office uses would lessen the success of such thus lessening pedestrian traffic. The same can be said for greater height and increased residential densities (greater height = ability to achieve density = more people = more activity = successful mixed use). The goal is to allow the Coleman / Ben Sawyer area to successfully develop into a dynamic, vibrant mixed use community.

Public Improvement and Goals Recommendations

Staff recognizes that zoning amendments are only one element of a successful revitalization plan. A commitment towards public improvements would also be necessary for this plan to be successful. Recommendations are listed below.

- **Develop a Master Design Plan:**

Staff would recommend hiring a consultant to assist in developing a master plan for Coleman Boulevard. This plan would include on street parking on Coleman Boulevard, intersection improvements such as a roundabout at Chuck Dawley, mast arms, crosswalks, a street lighting plan, public parking plan, etc. Further descriptions of some of the elements to be included in a master design plan are listed below. This plan would become a great tool in that it could be used in conjunction with grant submittals for public improvements along the corridor, towards planning efforts, and a guide to property owners and developers. It could also be useful to the Commercial Design Review Board as they review projects.

- **Chuck Dawley Roundabout:**

In one of stakeholder meetings, it was recognized that improvements should be made to this intersection especially as it relates to pedestrians and also the ability to safely merge from Chuck Dawley onto Coleman. Considering that one of the main elements to a successful mixed use community is pedestrian activities, consideration should be given towards improvements to this very wide, very pedestrian “unfriendly” intersection. Also, as drivers approach Coleman from Chuck Dawley, they often have to completely turn around to check for oncoming cars. This can become a safety issue. It was suggested that a roundabout might be a solution to these problems. An aerial photo of this intersection is included as an attachment. Estimated Construction Cost = \$800,000 to \$1,200,000 (not including ROW acquisition)





Chuck Dawley Intersection

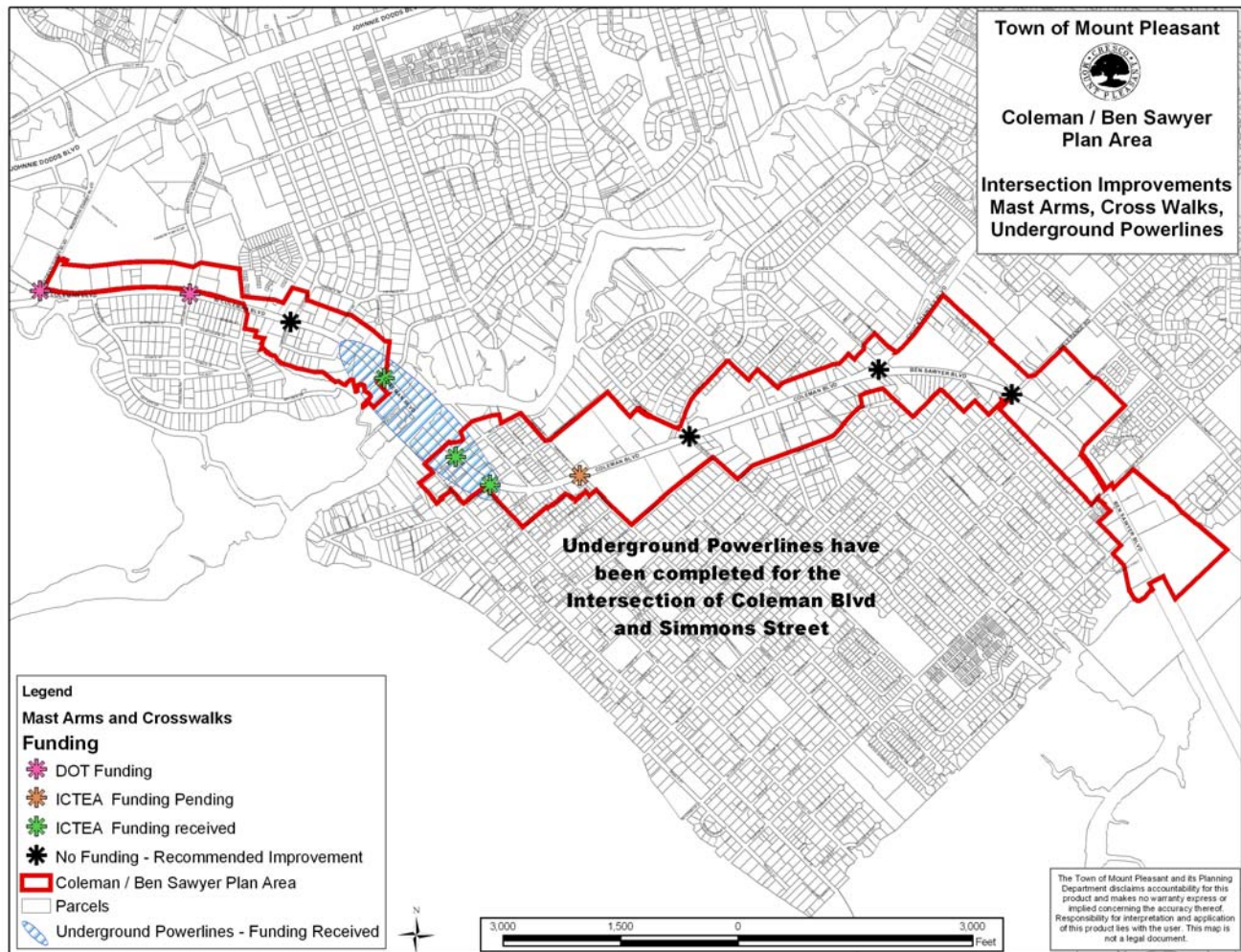
- **Public Parking:**

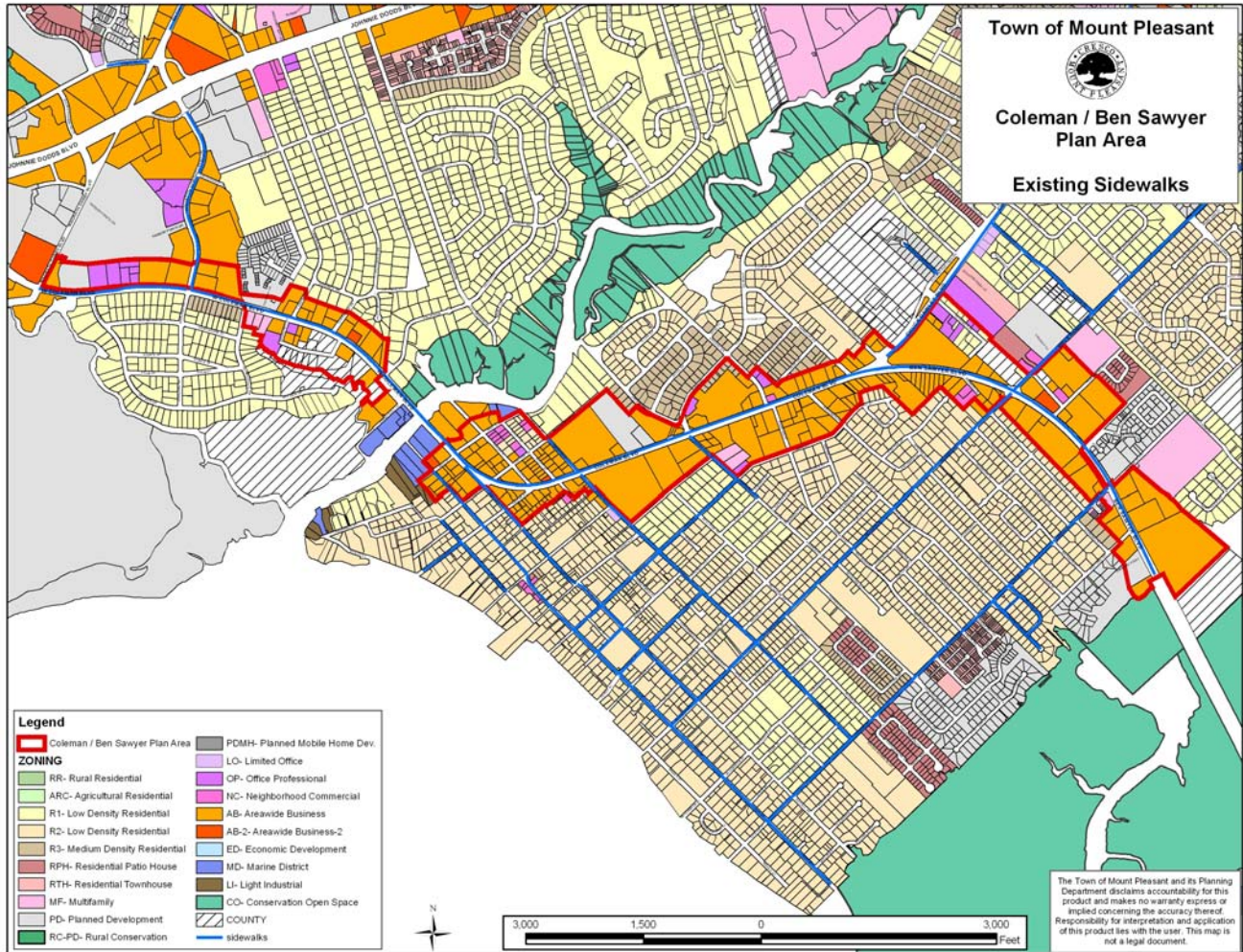
On Street- Though the zoning recommendations of this plan include a requirement of on street parking to be installed by developers, there may be some instances when the Town should be responsible for installation of on street parking spaces – such as near Moultrie Middle School.

Public Parking Garage- The Town should pursue or perhaps coordinate with a developer to find the appropriate location to construct a public parking garage. This would be especially useful in the areas between Shem Creek and Camellia Drive.

- **Public Street Side Improvements:** (*note: the included map illustrates currently funded intersection improvements and those with no funding*)

- *Crosswalks-* Street print- \$8/ square foot at 1500 square feet per intersection on Coleman- 4 intersections are unfunded and additional crosswalks would likely be needed in other areas
- *Mast Arms-* (4 intersections unfunded) Estimated Cost- \$150,000 per intersection
- *Underground Powerlines-* Estimated Cost of \$1,000,000 per mile
- *Street Benches-* Estimated Cost- \$1,000 per bench (as is recommended in the zoning section, developers should be responsible for the installation of a certain portion of these, but in order to ensure installation, uniformity, and maintenance, the Town should also be responsible).
- *Sidewalks-* Many of the existing side streets are missing sidewalk connections or are in need of improvement. An exhibit map of existing sidewalks is included.
- *Lighting-* The Town should coordinate with SCE&G to develop a master lighting plan to include decorative street lighting. Estimated Cost unknown
- *Street Trees-* Assuming 4 inch live oaks- Estimated Cost- \$650-700 per tree
- *Median Landscaping-* Estimated Cost not including demo or curb work- \$5000 per 100 linear feet of a 9 foot wide area





- **Shem Creek Pedestrian Access:**

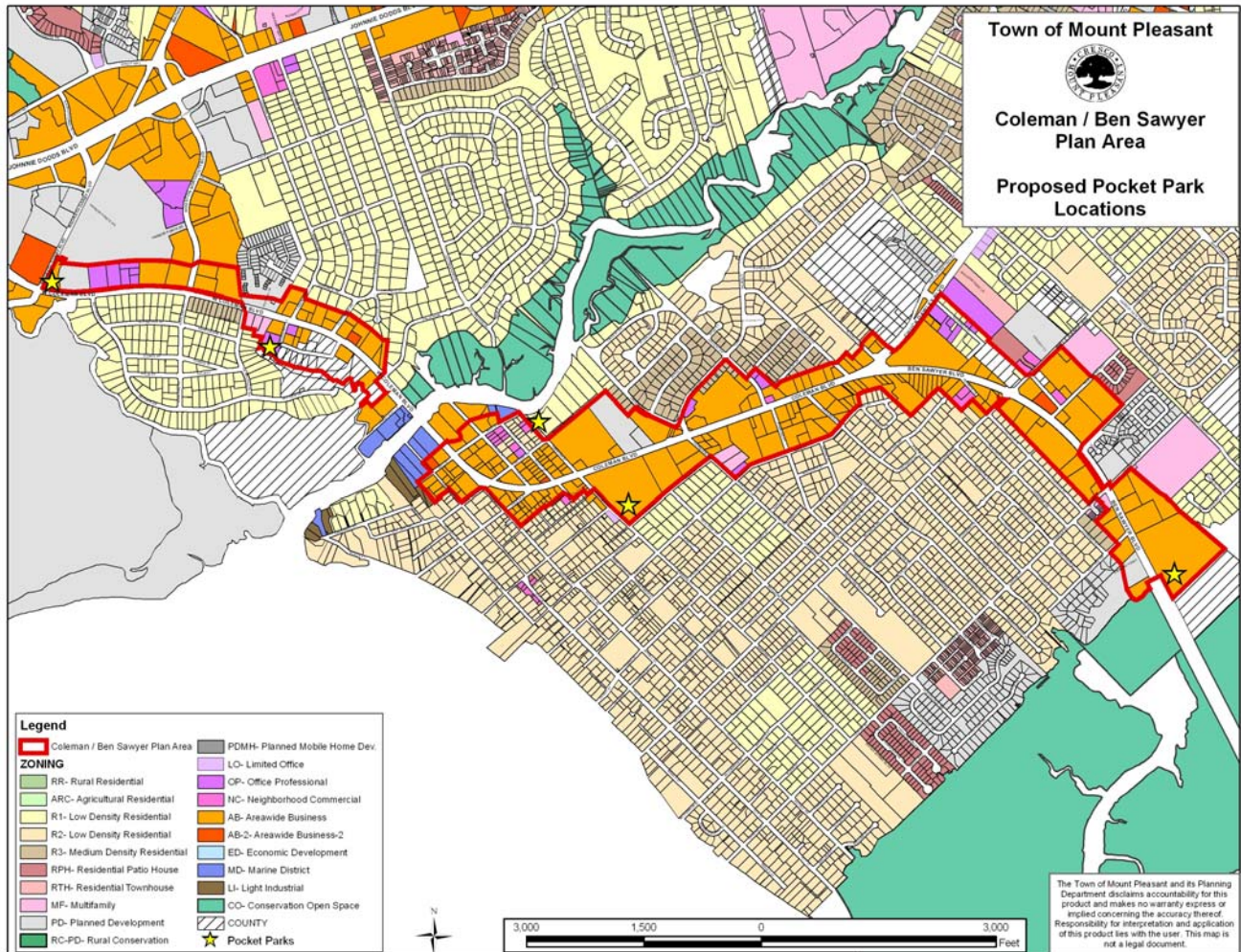
Staff strongly recommends improvements to the Shem Creek Bridge that would allow for greater pedestrian and bicycle access. A number of people travel this route by foot or bike on a daily basis, especially now that the new Ravenel Bridge is open for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Also, this is probably one of the most photographed sites in the area. Providing safer access is essential and would further encourage people to walk as opposed to using their cars. Estimated Cost unknown.



Shem Creek Bridge

- Pocket Parks:**

The Town should pursue the development of pocket parks within the plan area or within close proximity. Pedestrian connections accessing these parks should be provided. Parks should also include amenities such as benches and picnic areas. Acquisition of properties or partnerships with property owners will be necessary. An exhibit map showing a few potential locations is attached. Other opportunities may become apparent through redevelopment.



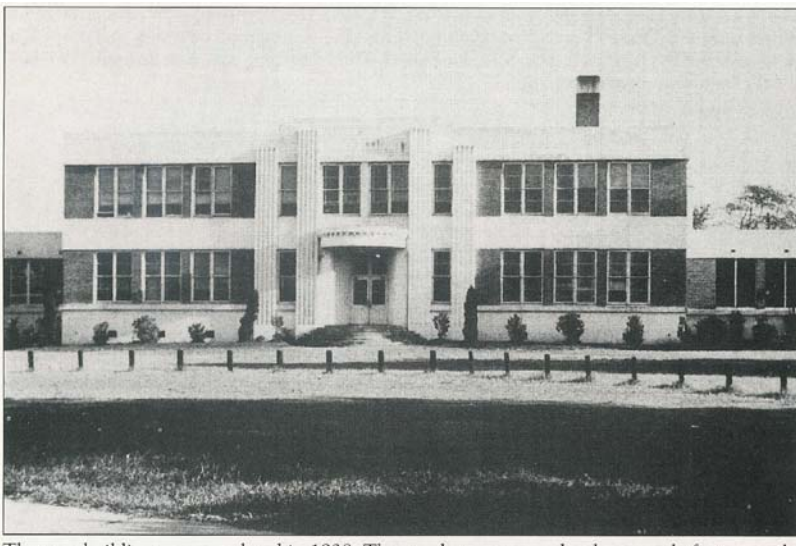
Moultrie Middle School:

The Moultrie Middle School site is a focal point on Coleman Boulevard. Located at the center of the Coleman Revitalization Plan area, this site serves not only as a school but also hosts a number of recreation activities and other civic uses, most notably the Farmers Market. The Charleston County School District (CCSD) plans to rebuild a new school at this site beginning in Fall 2006. The involvement of the Town of Mount Pleasant in the design of the new building as well as the site is crucial as this school serves as a cornerstone on Coleman Boulevard. It is a highly visible site that serves multiple purposes. The school should be rebuilt / redeveloped in a manner that allows it to blend with the mixed use environment surrounding it and that invites and encourages pedestrian activity and civic uses.

In rebuilding the school at this location, CCSD will be required to submit building and site plans to the Town's Commercial Design Review Board for approval. Strong consideration should be given towards a 2-story school similar in structure and detail to the old Mount Pleasant Academy which was built in 1938 at this same location or the new Bishop England High School on Daniel Island. The building and site should convey a sense of community and history unique to Mount Pleasant and Coleman Boulevard. As a matter of information, Bishop England currently has the same approximate attendance as Moultrie Middle School with about 800 students. Photographs of both are included below.

The Town desires to continue a partnership with CCSD that would allow for joint uses on the property to include civic uses such as the Farmers Market or recreational uses on the ball fields. Retention of a civic lawn is critical. The Town should coordinate further with CCSD to construct a permanent facility to be used for events such as the Farmers Market and Christmas events. Construction of such could be a shared cost. An open air covered facility would allow for greater options during inclement weather and provide shade from the heat. On a weekly basis, approximately 1,000 people visit the Farmers Market. Enhancements or improvements including a permanent facility, improved parking, and improved access will only stand to increase this attendance and should be included into the redevelopment of this site.

The Town may consider as part of the Master Design Plan and the redevelopment of Moultrie Middle hiring a traffic consultant to assist in developing a plan for access and transportation for the school.



Mount Pleasant Academy, 1938

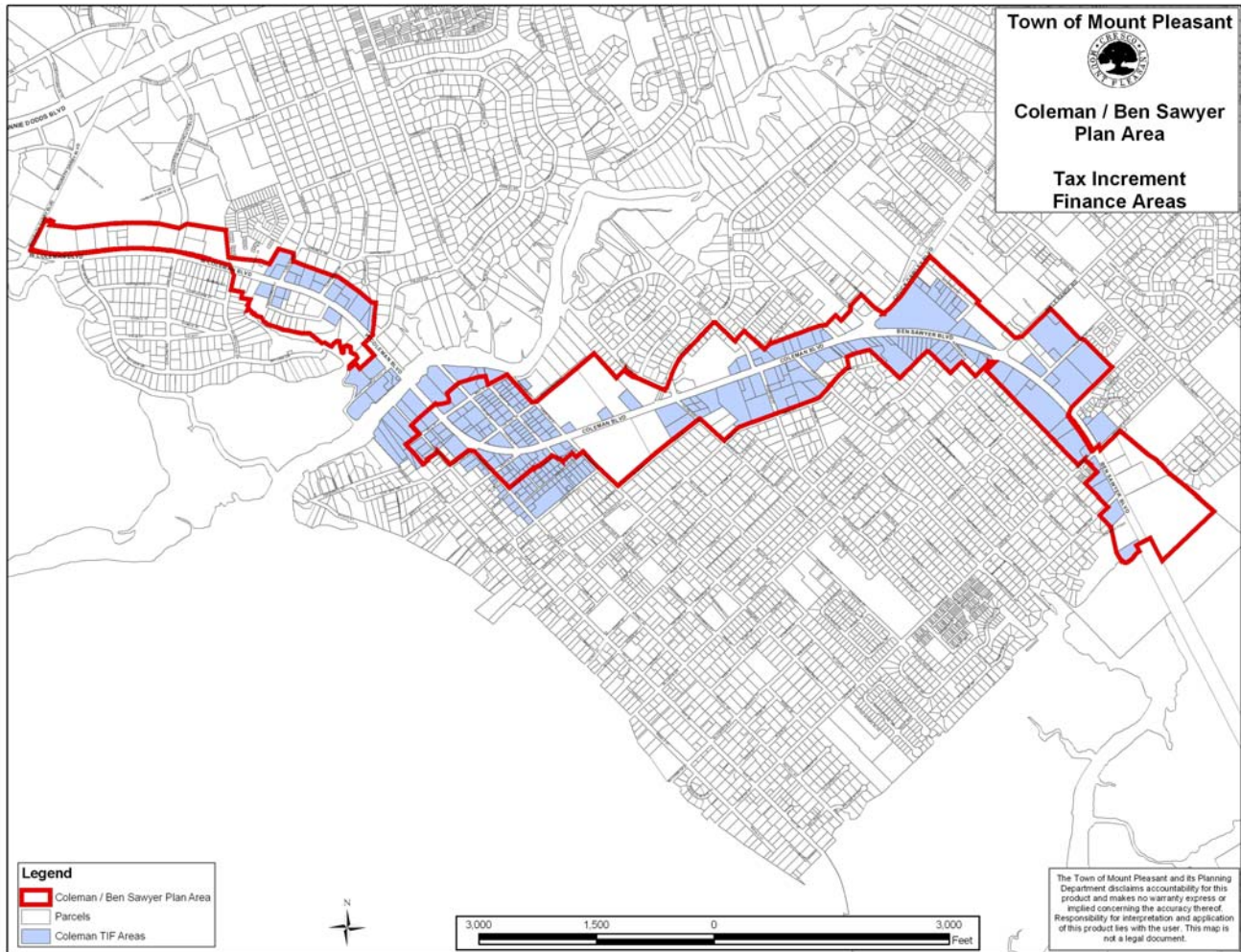


Bishop England High School,
Daniel Island

Funding of Improvements

All recommendations listed above would be eligible for funding through the Tax Increment Financing funds. Currently, there is \$500,000 set aside through TIF funds specifically for Coleman Boulevard. If a master plan were developed that incorporates all of the elements listed above, additional funds would be needed. Options for additional funding include:

- **Tax Increment Financing-** Town Council could appropriate additional TIF funds to be used for improvements to Coleman and Ben Sawyer. As noted earlier, all elements listed would be eligible for TIF funds.
- **Municipal Improvement District-** The Town could establish a MID for the Coleman Plan area. The City of Charleston implemented one for King Street. Establishing a MID for the entire area could be potentially tedious and difficult to coordinate. If this method of funding were to be pursued, then it would likely be best to select certain portions of the area where there are willing property owners who would directly benefit from the improvements. As a note, residential may not be included in the MID. Though this method of funding is possible, it may not be the most desirable due to the complicated nature.
- **Accommodations / Hospitality Tax-** There is a minimal amount of money available from either of these sources. Using either accommodations or hospitality tax is likely best as a match to any grant that the Town might pursue towards any public improvements.
- **Grant Funding-** The Town has always been very successful in pursuing grant funding towards public improvement projects. As noted above, monetary or in kind matches are typically required.



Other Goals

- Annexation-** There are several properties within the plan area that are still unincorporated. These properties are located at Broadway Street and Peach Orchard Plaza and also at the intersection of Rifle Range Road and Ben Sawyer. The Town should aggressively pursue annexation of these properties. Higher densities, relief from the BPAP, and greater height could be presented to these property owners as incentives towards annexation.

Recommendation for Action

Recognizing the recommended public improvements may require a substantial financial commitment on the part of the Town of Mount Pleasant and that the recommendation to hire a consultant to assist in the design / redesign of Coleman Boulevard will require a commitment of time, staff would recommend moving forward with the zoning aspect of this plan (as the Planning Committee sees fit). The public improvement recommendations likely will require further consideration as these types of commitments involve time and money.