



Ogeechee Road/US 17 Sector Plan

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OGEECHEE ROAD/US 17 SECTOR PLAN

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Ogeechee Road Corridor Overview

Ogeechee Road is a major arterial in the metro-Savannah area. This report assesses the performance of the highway from Abercorn Extension/SR 204 in southside Savannah to US 80/Victory Drive just west of the downtown historic district. The study area is shown in Figure 1. Ogeechee Road is US 17/SR 25 from SR 204 to I-516, and then is US 80 to its intersection with Victory Drive/US 80. Ogeechee Road connects via US 17 north to Winchester, Virginia and south to Punta Gorda, Florida, and connects via US 80 west to Dallas, Texas and east to Tybee Island, Georgia.

Two segments of the corridor are designated by the Coastal Region (CORE) MPO as vista amenity corridors for preservation and enhancement, as shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. The corridor has also been identified as a gateway at I-516 and as a priority for landscaping and aesthetic improvements in previous CORE MPO plans. It is functionally classified by the Georgia Department of Transportation as an Urban Principal Arterial. As a principal arterial, the highway is intended to carry trips through the region, emphasizing mobility over access to adjacent land.

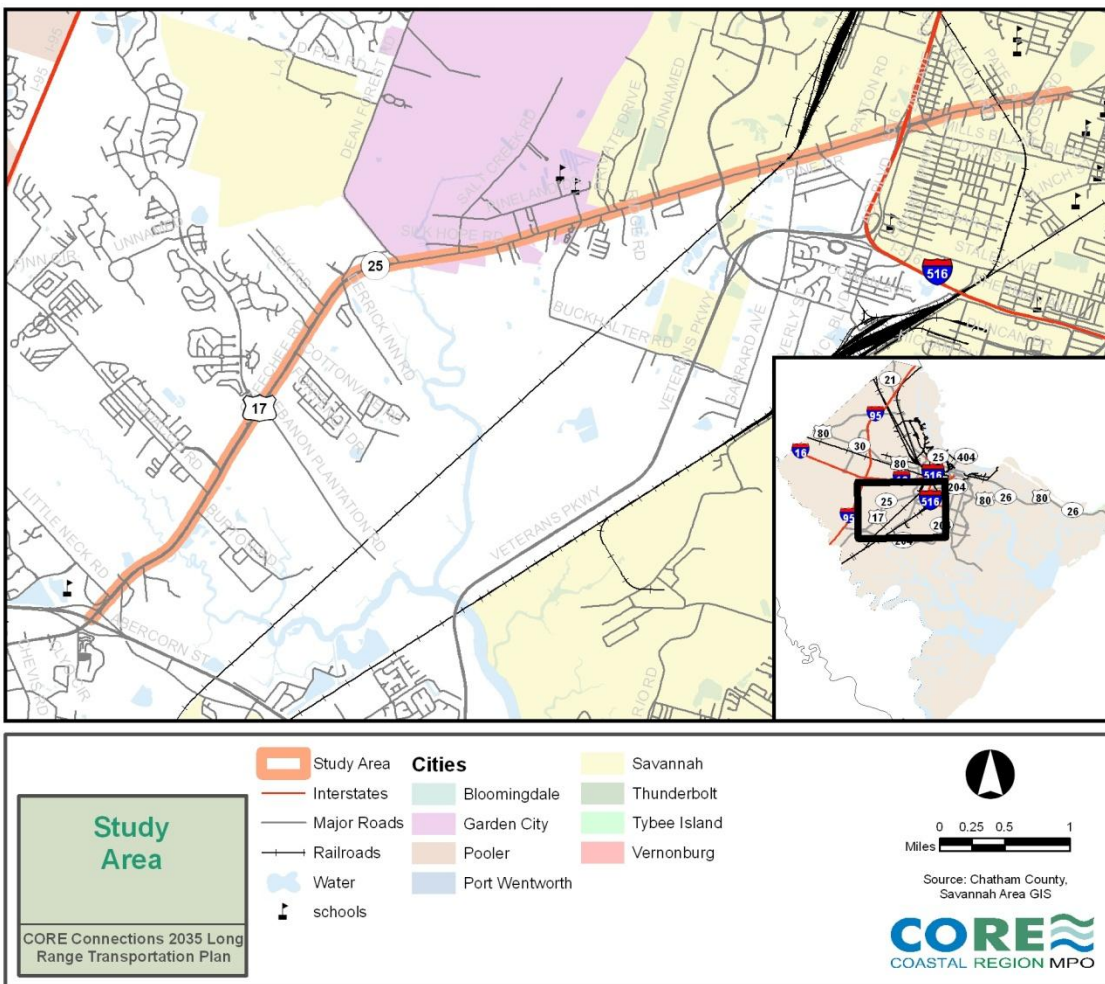


Figure 1 Study Area

Development Character

The corridor character ranges from recent development in commercial areas surrounding major intersections to declining commercial areas with light industrial, motels, and mobile home parks. There is a segment of natural marshland and forest. Much of the corridor has the potential for redevelopment. Figure 19 through Figure 22 highlight redevelopment potential. The value of improvements is less than the land value for a majority of parcels along the corridor, and total real estate value per acre is in the lowest fourth quintile for most of the corridor.

Multimodal Users

The corridor has local bus service operated by Chatham Area Transit (CAT). From Abercorn extension to Dean Forest Road, there are bike lanes striped on the right side of the traveled way. Sidewalks are intermittent along the corridor and are apparently buried in some locations. Walking paths are worn along the roadside in several locations. Figure 12 shows transit routes as well as planned and existing bicycle facilities and greenways; existing sidewalks were not included in existing GIS data for the area.

Access Management

The corridor provides a high degree of access to adjacent land, with no curb between the traveled way and adjacent parking areas in some locations. The driveway spacing on the corridor does not meet GDOT standards in several locations. In general, there are no parallel alternate routes. So, local traffic, as well as regional and through traffic, uses the corridor.

The corridor has a raised median for about 3.8 miles from SR 204 northeast to Dean Forest Road, where a center two-way left turn lane begins. The TWLTL continues for 3.4 miles to I-516, where the road is divided with a median in the interchange area. The road is a two-lane undivided cross section from I-516 to Victory Drive.

Signal Spacing

There are nine traffic control signals along the corridor, shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10. With the exception of the signals at the I-516 interchange and the adjacent signal at W 52nd Street, all traffic signals are adequately spaced at more than one-half mile between signals. For reference, GDOT recommends urban area signal spacing of 1,320 feet, with a minimum of 1,000 feet. Other sources, such as ITE, recommend a signal spacing of 2,640 feet, or one-half mile in urban areas for major arterials that emphasize mobility. There is no coordination between adjacent signals on the corridor.¹

Traffic

The latest 2009 GDOT traffic counts on Ogeechee Road range from 26,880 near Quacco Road and the Abercorn extension to 15,590 near Victory Drive.

In 2009, truck percentages reported by GDOT on the corridor ranged from 9 to 11 percent of daily traffic. There are several freight destinations, particularly on the eastern side of the corridor where railroads connect to light industrial and building supply retail locations.

¹ Conversation with Mike Weiner, May 10, 2011.

Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the estimated congestion on the corridor, with traffic volumes above capacity near Dean Forest Road and Quacco Road in the western portion of the study area.

Corridor Issues

1. Lack of parallel facilities; lack of interparcel access
2. Two-way left turn lane conflicts, safety and traffic impacts
3. Density of access points (driveways and intersections) reduces capacity of roadway; some areas with open curbs to parking rather than driveways
4. Some areas of blight, lack of building and site maintenance
5. Lack of pedestrian facilities, in particular a lack of sidewalks linking bus stops with destinations
6. Lack of pedestrian and transit amenities such as shelters, trees, benches, lighting
7. Corridor aesthetics, signage, and landscaping
8. Compatibility of light industrial uses, warehousing, junk yards, auto-oriented uses with residential, recreation, hotel/motels, commercial areas that generate increasing pedestrian trips

Corridor Opportunities

1. Redevelopment potential of adjacent parcels creates an opportunity to increase access management and provide pedestrian facilities as the area redevelops
2. New or recent developments with frontage roads or other parallel facilities
3. Currently used by autos, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians
4. Transportation strategies to increase mobility for lower income population (e.g., mobile home parks)
5. Widening project in constrained 2035 LRTP to extend four-lane section from I-516 to Victory Drive
6. Natural resources in area and scenic vista amenity corridor on two segments

Corridor Assessment by Segment

For a more detailed analysis, the study team divided the corridor into six segments based on development character and the highway cross-section. The figure below shows the analysis segments.

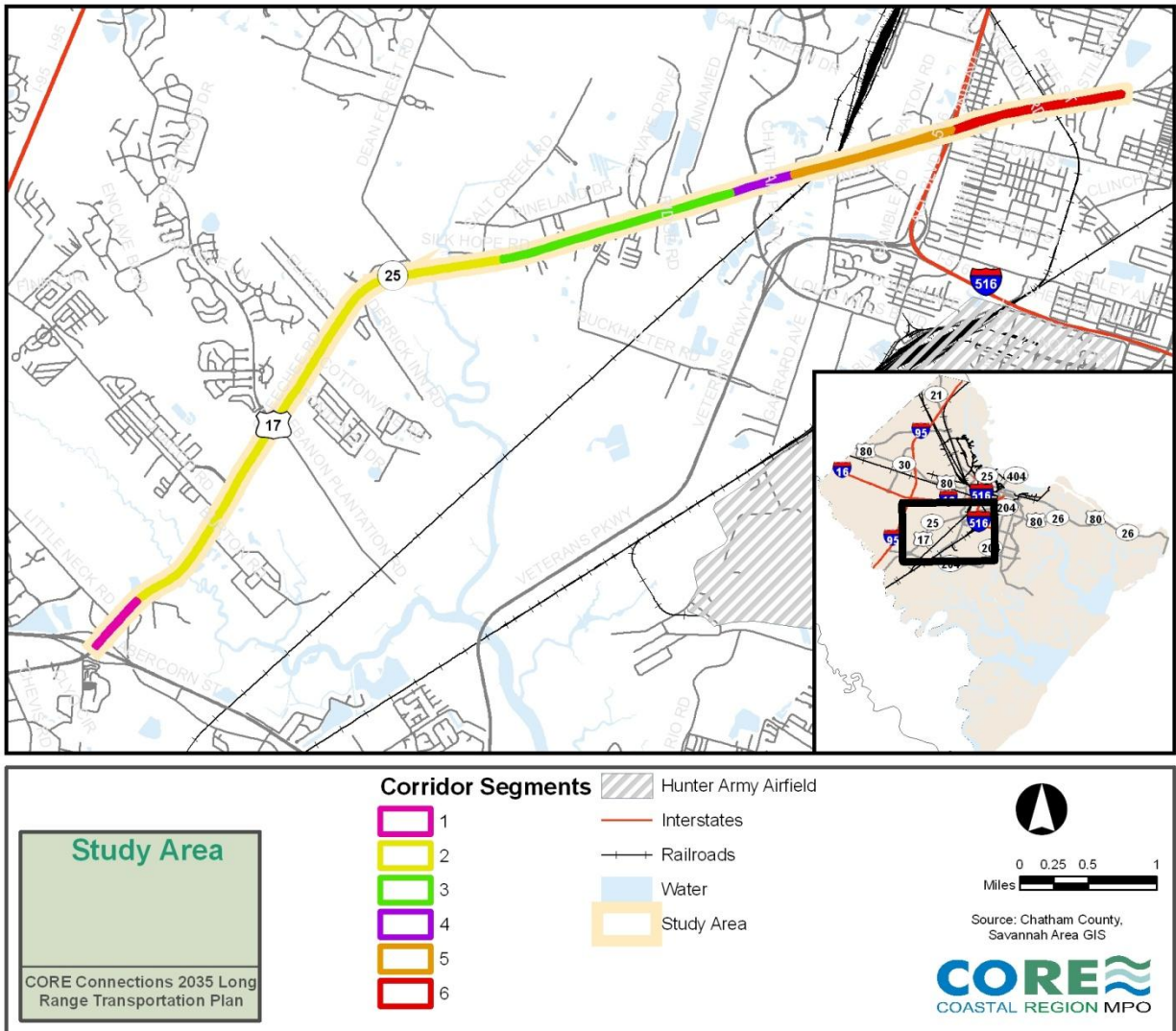


Figure 2 Corridor Segments

Analysis Segments

1. Abercorn Extension to private drive east of Little Neck Road. Interchange influence area with new or recent strip commercial development and high-end residential subdivisions. Segment 1 is divided for its entire length.
2. Vista amenity corridor (extended) from private drive to Silk Hope Road dead-end. Adjacent parcels are mostly undeveloped, ranging from forest to marshland. Transitions to new commercial development surrounding Berwick Boulevard, which connects to Southbridge and other subdivisions. Segment 2 is divided with a median to Dean Forest Road.
3. Silk Hope Road dead-end east of Salt Creek Road to one-quarter mile west of Chatham Parkway. Low income residential, mobile home parks, used car sales and service, machinery shops, and other auto-oriented retail with primarily unpaved parking and open access. Segment 3 has a two-way left turn lane for its length.

4. Chatham Parkway influence area (one-half mile segment centered on intersection with Chatham Parkway). Recently developed commercial area with typical suburban arterial development pattern of drive-thru restaurants, strips, etc. Segment 4 has a two-way left turn lane for its length.
5. East of Chatham Parkway (0.25 miles east of Chatham Parkway) to I-516. Characterized by motels and a mix of retail including building supply companies. Paths are worn along the roadside. Segment 5 has a two-way left turn lane for its length.
6. I-516 to Victory Drive. Dominated by light industrial uses, building supply retailers, and mobile homes. Varying cross section with one lane in each direction primarily. Segment 6 has a median at I-516 and then is undivided. A widening project is in the constrained LRTP for this segment.

Access Management

The figures below show that most of the corridor does not meet the minimum spacing standard for driveways per GDOT. (The westbound figure should be read right to left.) Corridor mobility would improve from increased driveway spacing; Segment 3, in particular, is an opportunity to increase driveway spacing as the area redevelops. Conflicts resulting from traffic turning into driveways would also be reduced by increasing the required spacing between driveways.

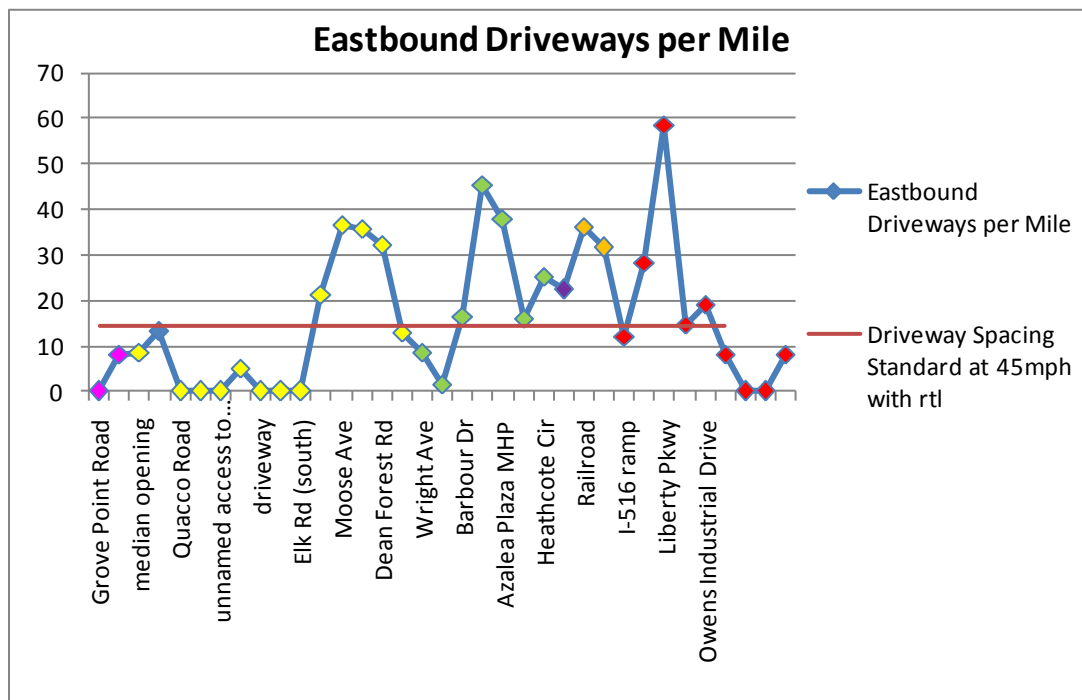


Figure 3 Driveway Spacing

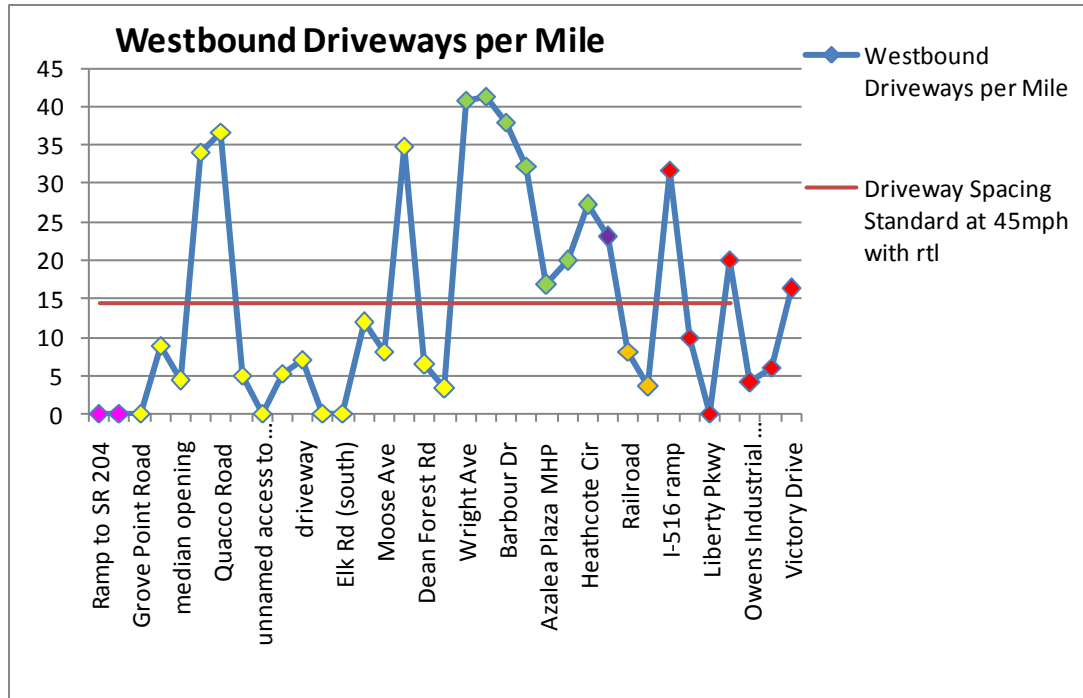


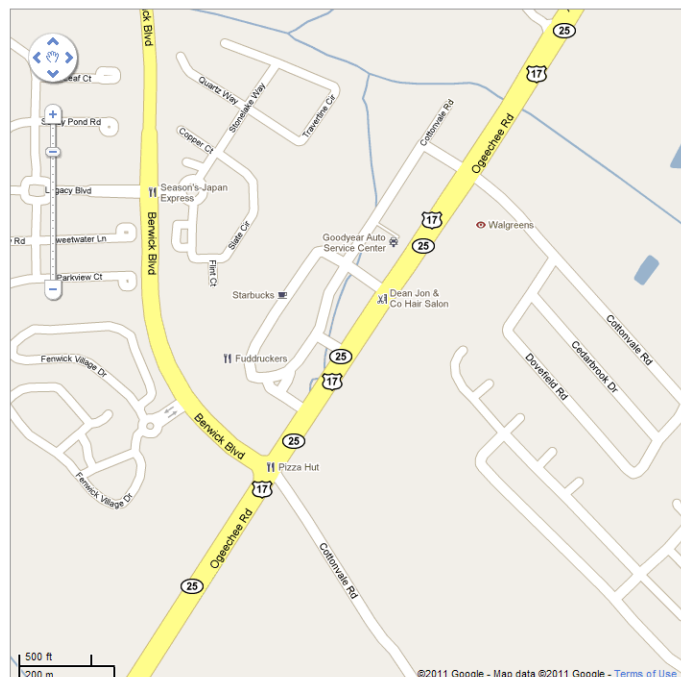
Figure 4 Driveway Spacing

Segment 1: Abercorn Extension to Vista Corridor

1. Adjacent land is zoned commercial, planned development, and residential.
2. Interchange could increasingly influence development; there are several vacant parcels in this small corridor segment.
3. Driveway spacing is within recommended spacing standards, and should be maintained as development occurs.

Segment 2: Vista Amenity Corridor

1. Adjacent land is zoned marsh, residential, planned development, and commercial. Garden City segment zoned light commercial north of US 17 and industrial south of US 17.
2. Congestion may be a concern today. The roadway is projected to operate near capacity in the future (without changes).
3. Salt Creek boat ramp and public park is at the eastern end of this segment.



4. Retail sites and new residential are located at Berwick Road, shown above. Kroger plaza and adjacent commercial parcels include a parallel facility as a one-lot deep backage road. This connection should continue to adjacent developments. This may be a good model for future developments in corridor.
5. Driveway spacing is adequate per GDOT standards to Cottonvale Road, after the Kroger plaza at Berwick Road. Then, the spacing is too close for about one-half mile.
6. AADT on this segment ranges from 26,880 (estimated) to 19,720 (actual) vehicles in 2009. The truck percentage in 2009 was 9%. Actual counts near Quacco Road and Berwick Road increased from 16,170 in 2005 to 26,420 in 2008 (at station 0198), probably due to the residential development along Berwick Road. This segment is estimated to operate near or above capacity on a regular basis, resulting in congestion.

Segment 3: Silk Hope to West of Chatham Parkway

1. Adjacent land is zoned commercial, residential and planned development. Garden City segment zoned heavy commercial to the north of US 17 and industrial or commercial to the south of US 17, with exception of one residential parcel.
2. Some curb and gutter. Closely spaced driveways. Unpaved parking areas and access roads.
3. Driveway spacing is below the GDOT standard for the entire segment on both sides of the road.
4. AADT on this segment was reported as 19,760 in 2009, with 11% trucks.

Segment 4: Chatham Parkway Influence Area

1. Adjacent land is zoned commercial and institutional.
2. New developments are highway oriented commercial. Interparcel access is provided between parking lots of newer establishments. Southwest quadrant has not been redeveloped, and has no interparcel access, resulting in several driveways spaced closely together and access from the intersection's right-turn lane into one parking lot.
3. Area is influenced by office complexes on Chatham Parkway; midday traffic is relatively high due to restaurants.
4. Driveway spacing is below GDOT standard in southwest quadrant of intersection.

Segment 5: East of Chatham Parkway to I-516

1. Adjacent land is zoned commercial and light industrial.
2. The former Trane plant, now a large vacant building with parking lot. is located in southwest quadrant of I-516 interchange.
3. Several hotels in area.
4. Sidewalks are not continuous. There is no parallel facility in this corridor segment.
5. Driveway spacing is generally below standard; redevelopment should include interparcel access and shared driveways to increase spacing.
6. AADT on this segment was estimated at 18,660 in 2009.

Segment 6: I-516 to Victory Drive

1. Adjacent land is zoned commercial, light industrial, or residential. More light industrial land in this segment than any other segment in the study area, mostly adjacent to railroad.
2. Roadway is estimated to be operating near capacity today and is projected to be congested in the future. However, the LRTP includes a road widening project for the segment.
3. Pavement conditions show deterioration. Rutting and cracking; shoulder drop-offs in some locations. See Figure 35.
4. Narrow or lack of paved shoulder in areas; I-516 to Liberty Parkway on south side of road has curb and gutter.
5. Driveway spacing is generally adequate, except for parcels on either side of Liberty Parkway, such as Kroger plaza and BP gas station.
6. AADT on this segment was estimated to range from 15,590 (near Stiles Drive) to 18,170 near Tremont Road.

Corridor Issues and Opportunities

A number of consistent issues were identified throughout the corridor. These issues include:

1. Lack of parallel facilities; lack of interparcel access
2. Two-way left turn lane conflicts, safety and traffic impacts
3. Density of access points (driveways and intersections) reduces capacity of roadway; some areas with open curbs to parking rather than driveways
4. Some areas of blight, lack of building and site maintenance
5. Corridor aesthetics, signage, and landscaping
6. Lack of pedestrian facilities, in particular a lack of sidewalks linking bus stops with destinations
7. Lack of pedestrian and transit amenities such as shelters, trees, benches, lighting
8. Compatibility of light industrial uses, warehousing, junk yards, auto-oriented uses with residential, recreation, hotel/motels, commercial areas that generate increasing pedestrian trips

In addition, there were also a number of opportunities within the sector area that were identified. These opportunities include:

1. Redevelopment potential of adjacent parcels creates an opportunity to increase access management and provide pedestrian facilities as the area redevelops
2. New or recent developments with frontage roads or other parallel facilities
3. Current use by autos, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians

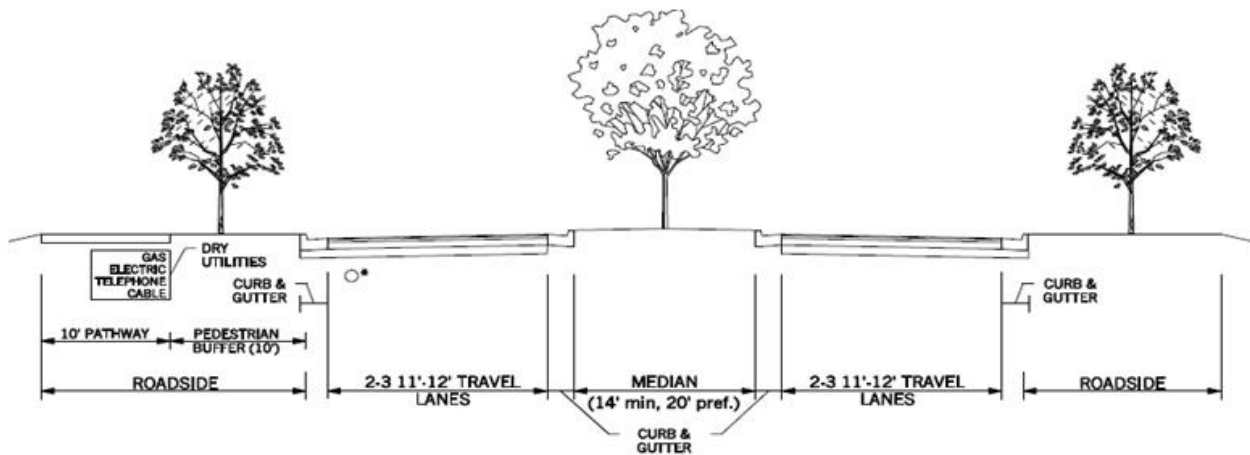
4. Transportation strategies to increase mobility for lower income population (e.g., mobile home parks)
5. Widening project in constrained 2035 L RTP to extend four-lane section from I-516 to Victory Drive
6. Natural resources in area and scenic vista amenity corridor on two segments

Recommendations

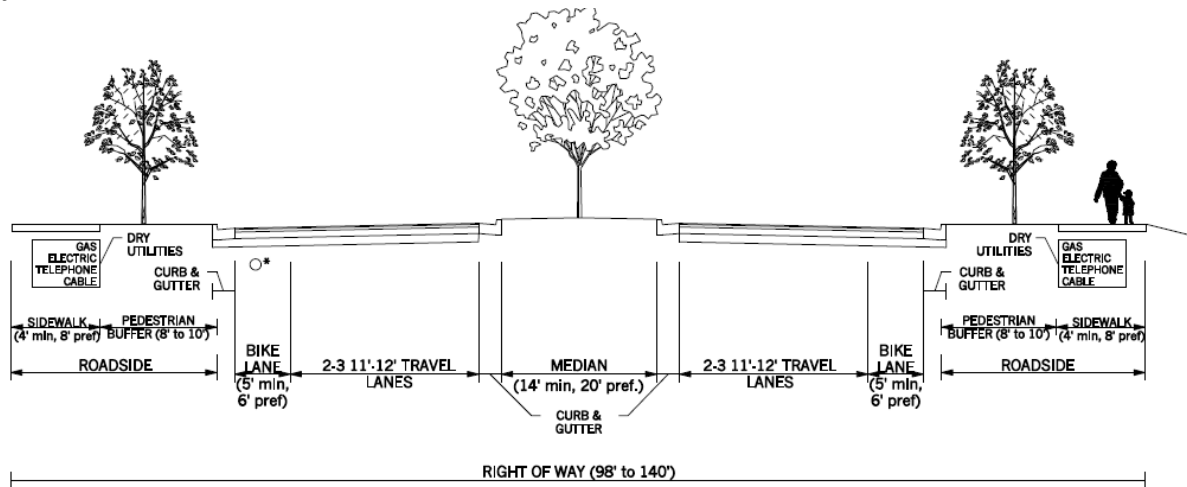
As part of the Total Mobility Plan, a Thoroughfare Plan has been developed. This Thoroughfare Plan, developed in conjunction with local jurisdictions, defines the facility types by their function in the roadway network, as well as the character of the area they serve and the need to serve multimodal users. The combination of the transportation function and the area character or context, informs the design parameters for each identified facility type. Typical sections were developed for each of the identified thoroughfare types; the recommendations for the US 17/Ogeechee Road corridor were developed through the application of the thoroughfare types for the corridor.

US 17/Ogeechee Road is identified in the Thoroughfare Plan as a Major Arterial – Suburban from SR 204 to I-516. From I-516 to Victory Drive, the designation is Major Arterial – Urban. The typical cross section for each of these thoroughfare types is shown below.

Major Arterial – Suburban



Major Arterial - Urban



Based on the identified thoroughfare and corresponding typical section, the following improvements are recommended for each segment. Each of these recommended projects has been incorporated into the Vision Plan, or unfunded needs list.

Segments 1 and 2:

- Addition of separated bicycle/pedestrian facility/multi-use path

Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5

- Addition of a median and separated bicycle/pedestrian facility/multi-use path

Segment 6: I-516/Liberty Parkway to Victory Drive

- Addition of two 11 foot travel lanes; planted median; sidewalks and bicycle lanes

Map Series

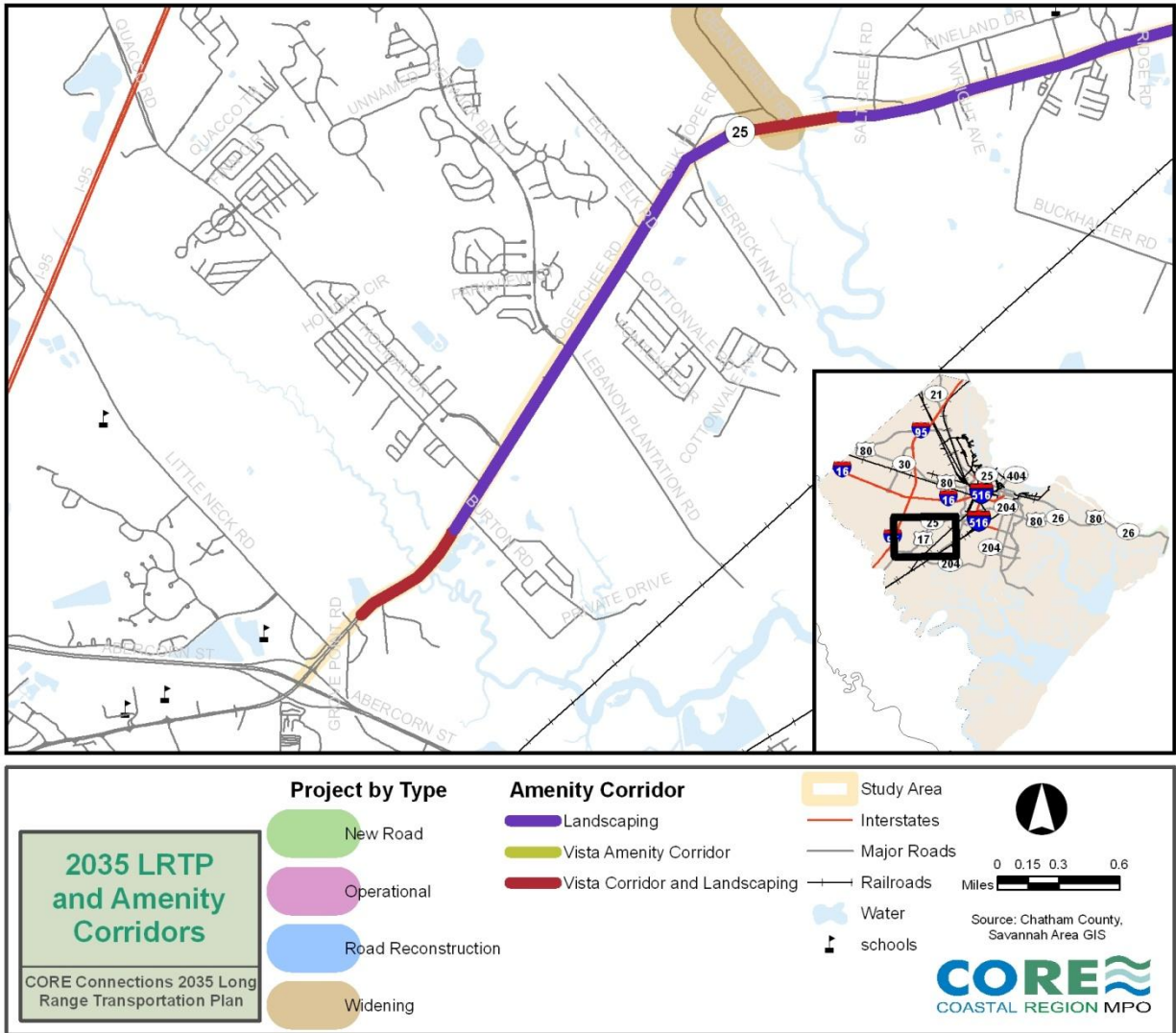


Figure 5 Amenity Corridors and 2035 LRTP Projects (western study area)

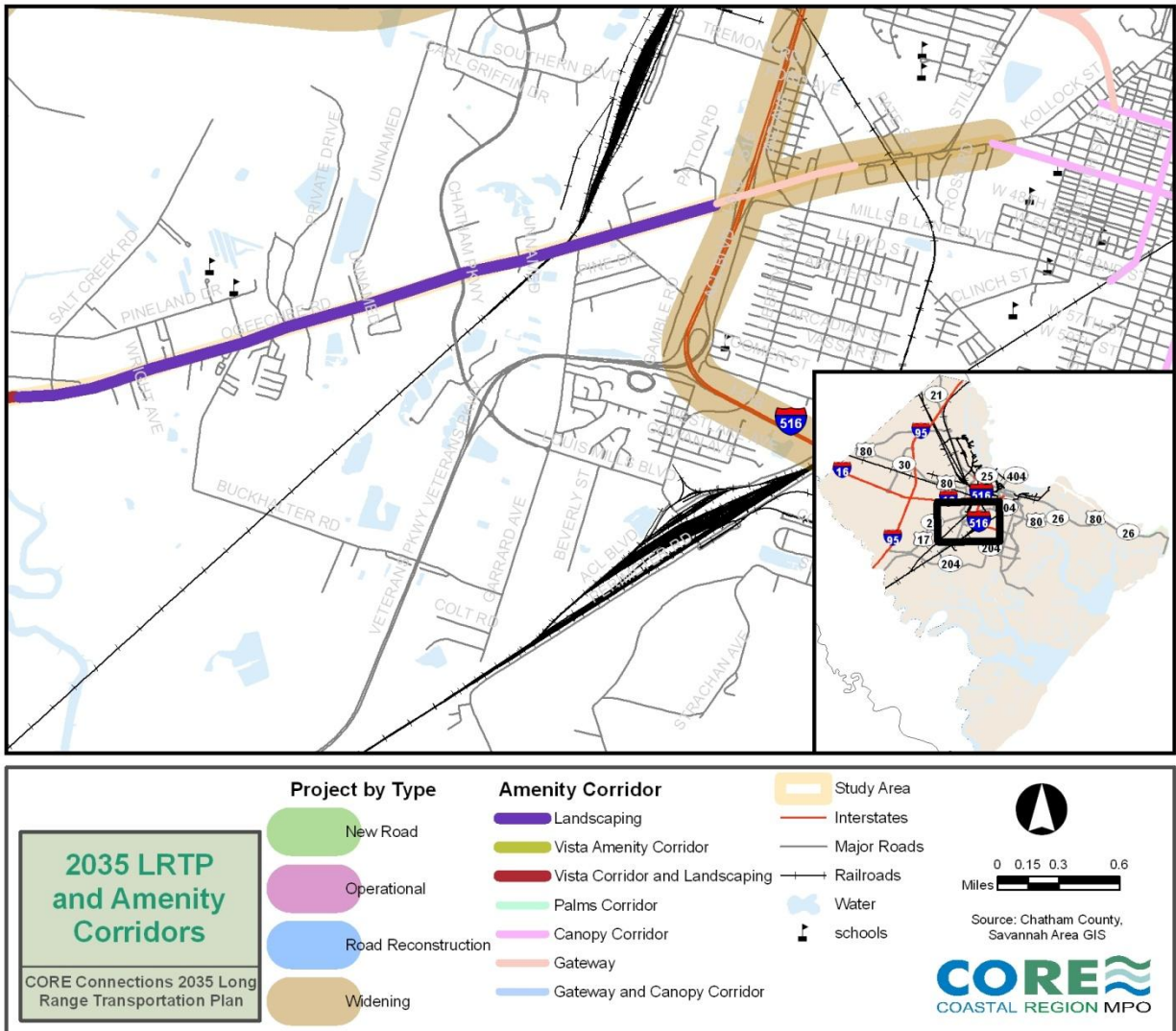


Figure 6 Amenity Corridors and 2035 LRTP Projects (eastern study area)

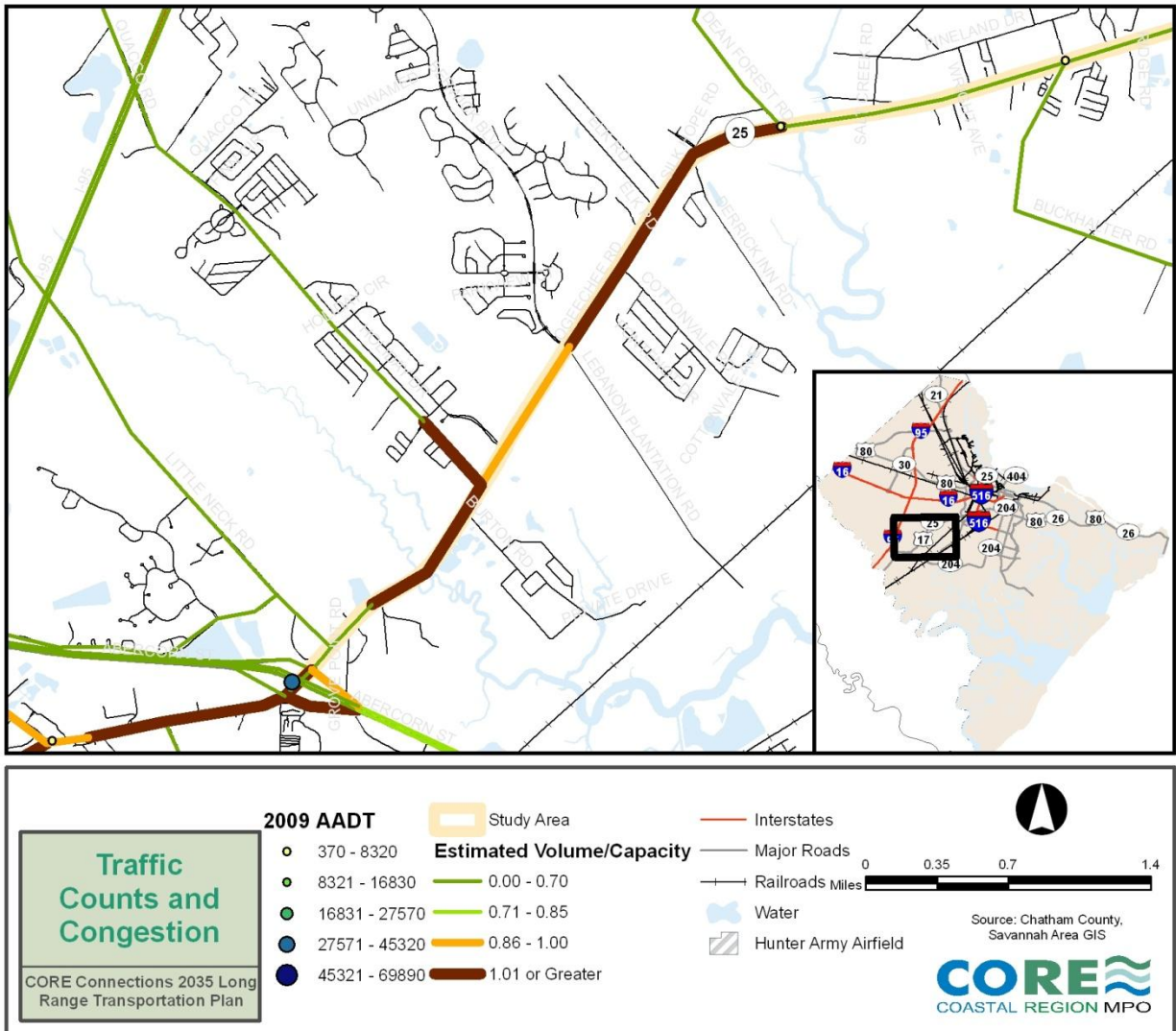


Figure 7 Traffic Counts and Congestion Estimates (western study area)

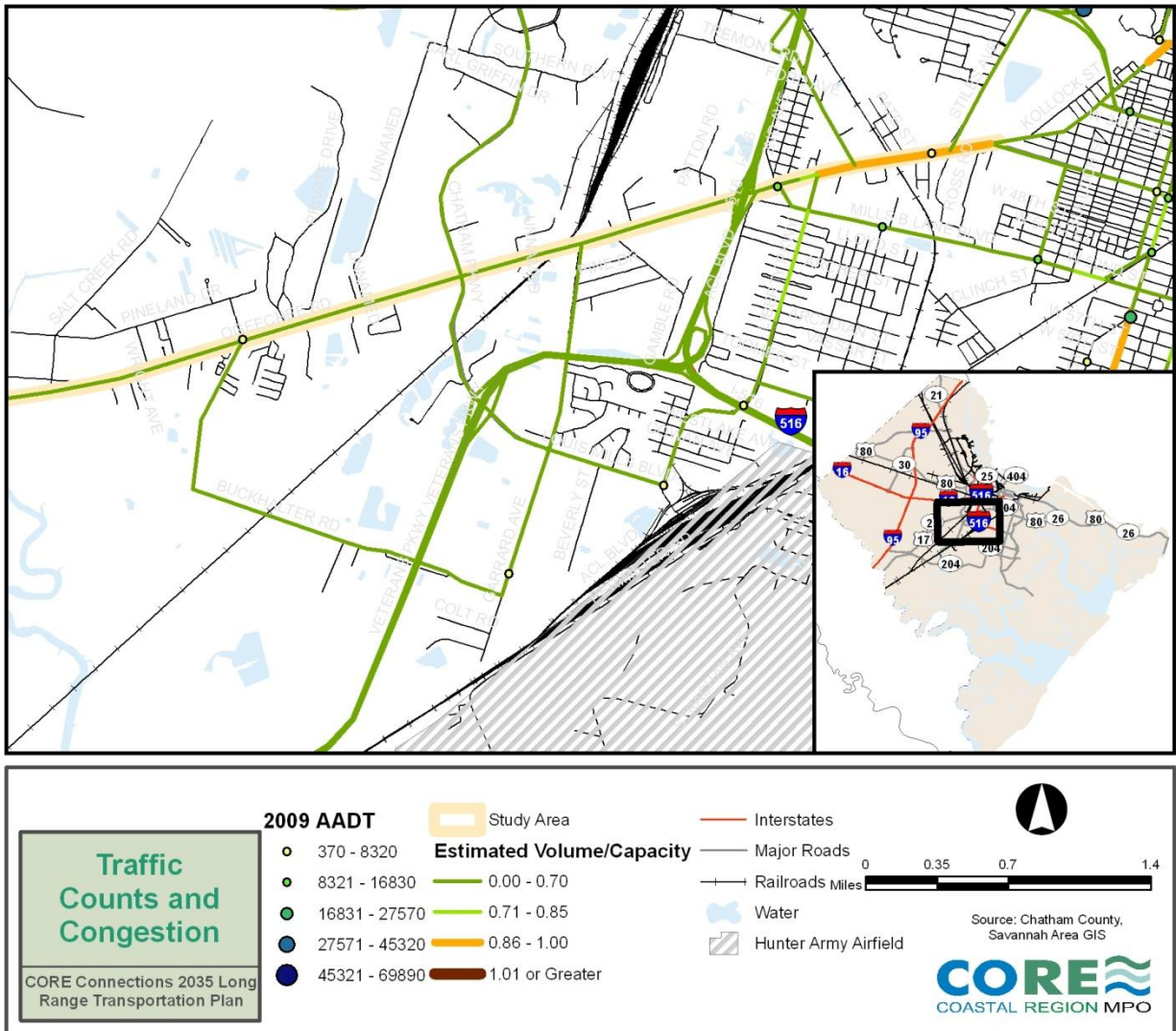


Figure 8 Traffic Counts and Congestion Estimates (eastern study area)

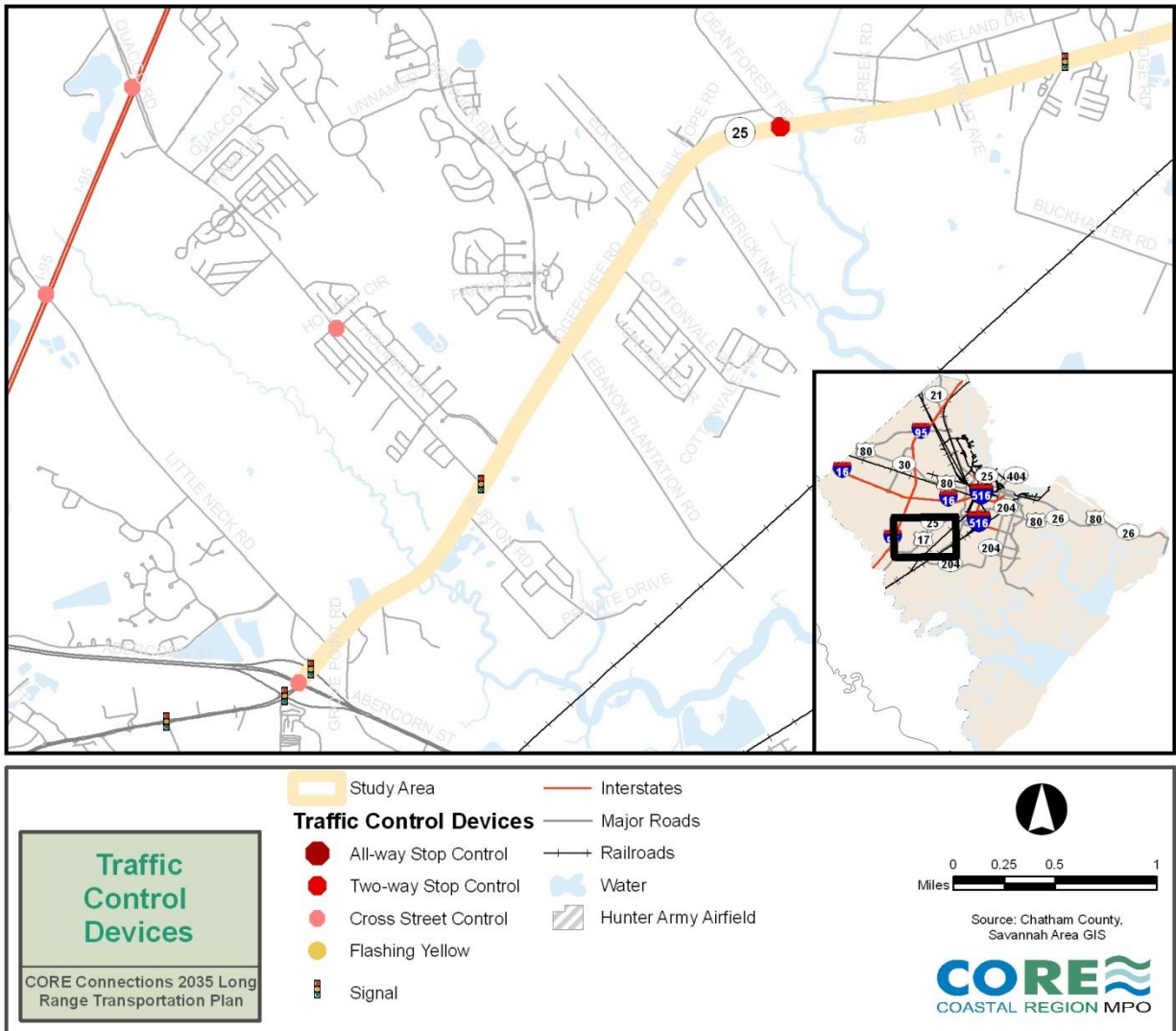


Figure 9 Traffic Control Devices (western study area)

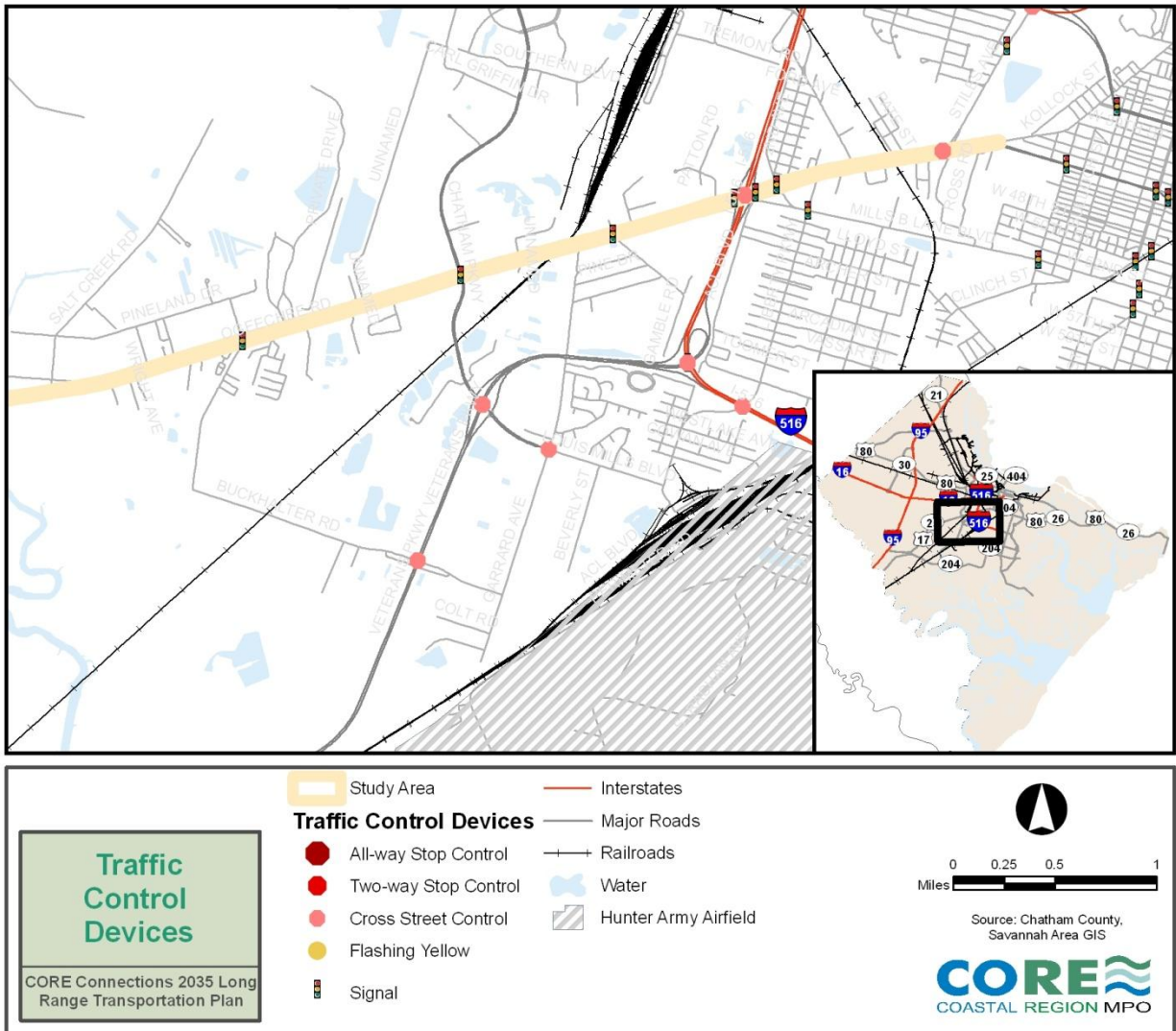


Figure 10 Traffic Control Devices (eastern study area)

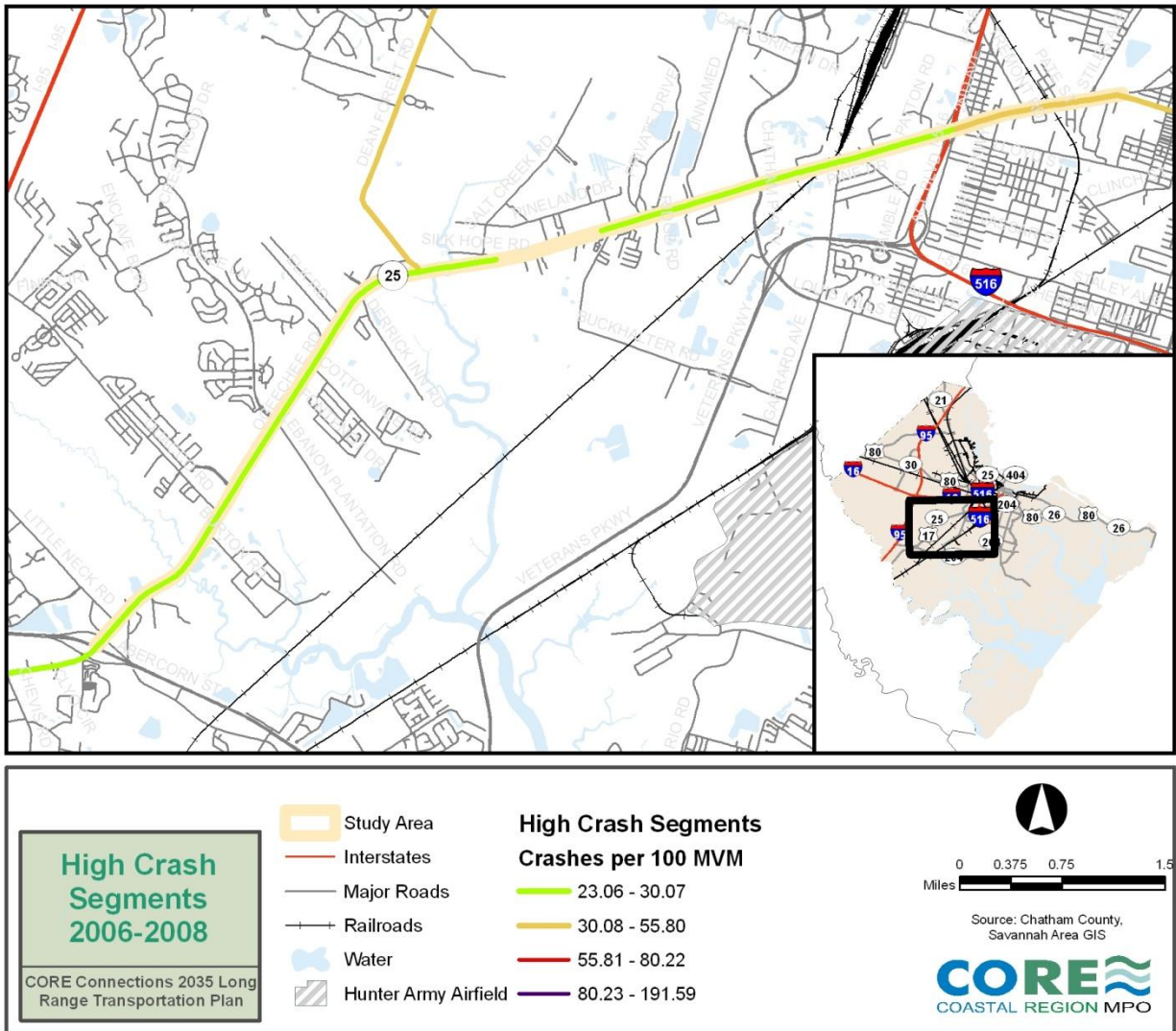


Figure 11 Crash Rates

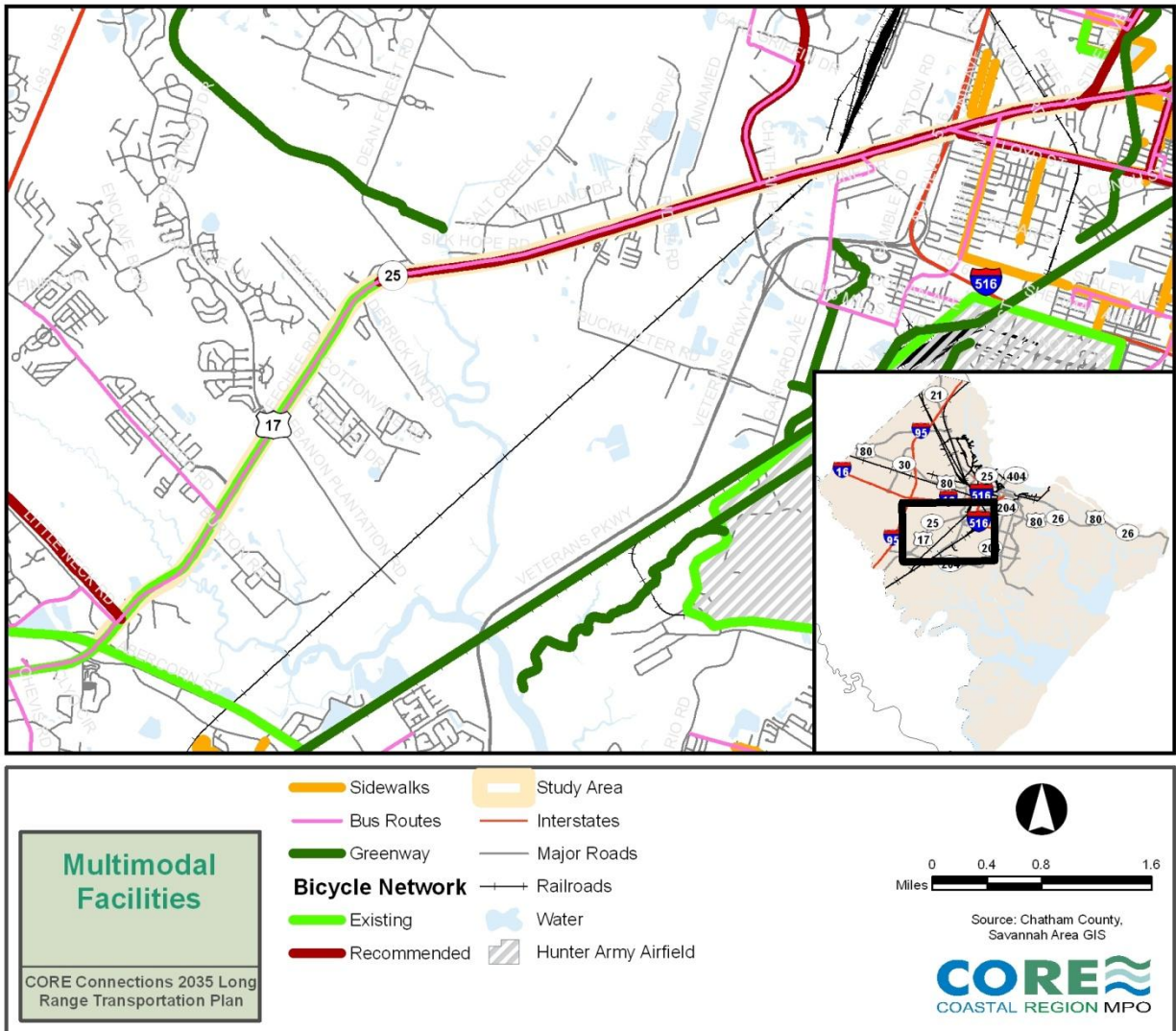


Figure 12 Multimodal Facilities

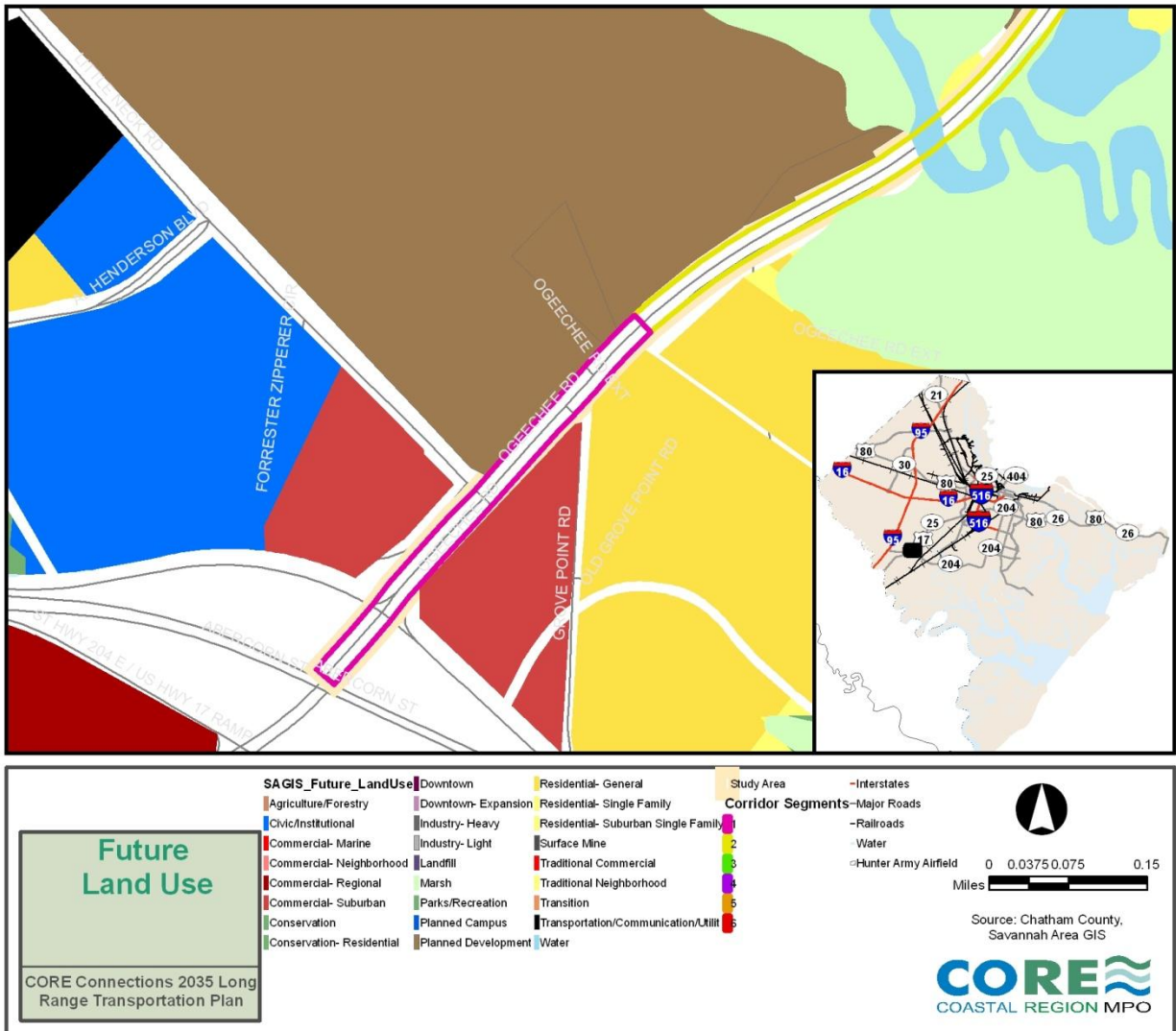


Figure 13 Segment 1 Future Land Use

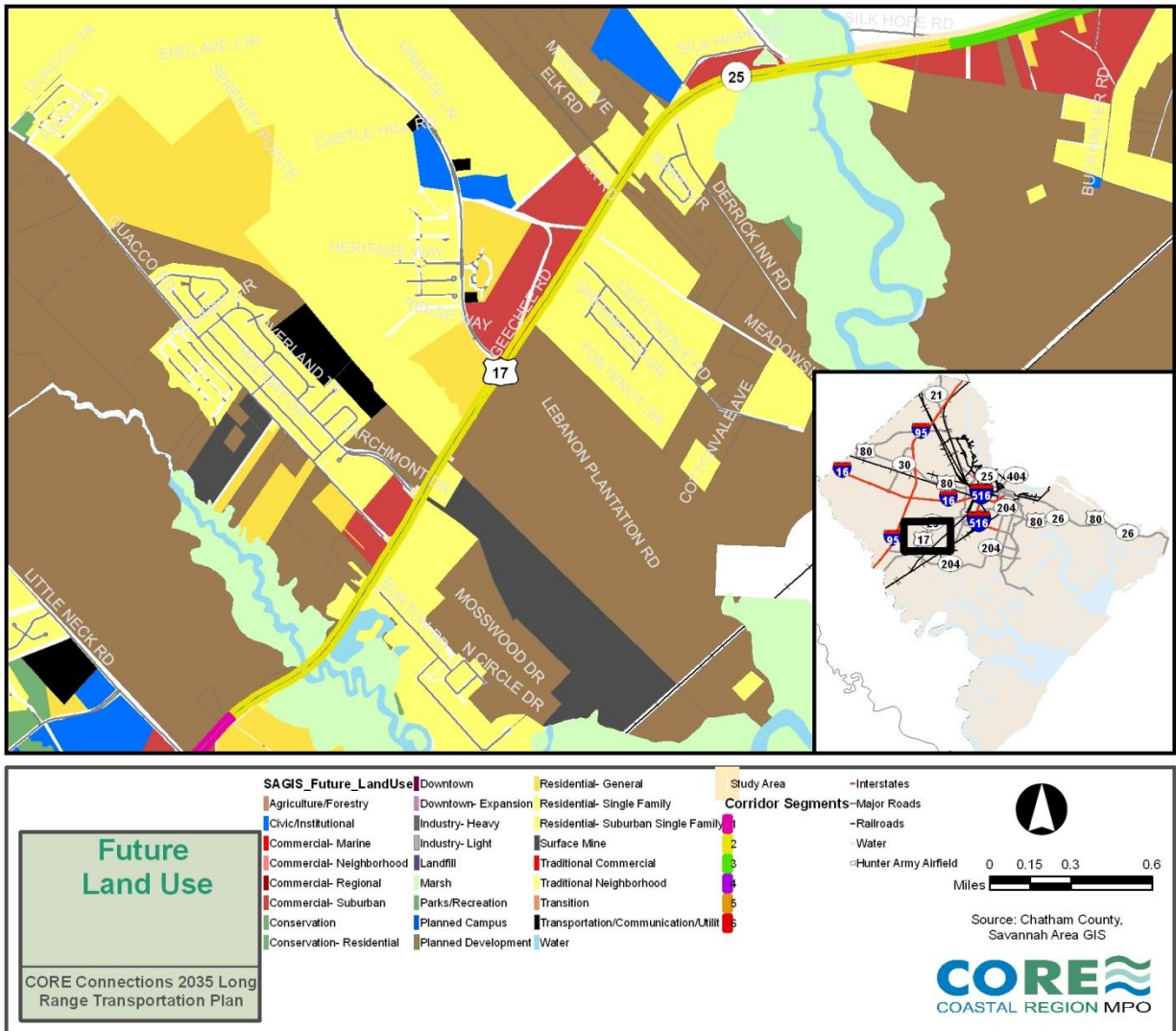


Figure 14 Segment 2 Future Land Use

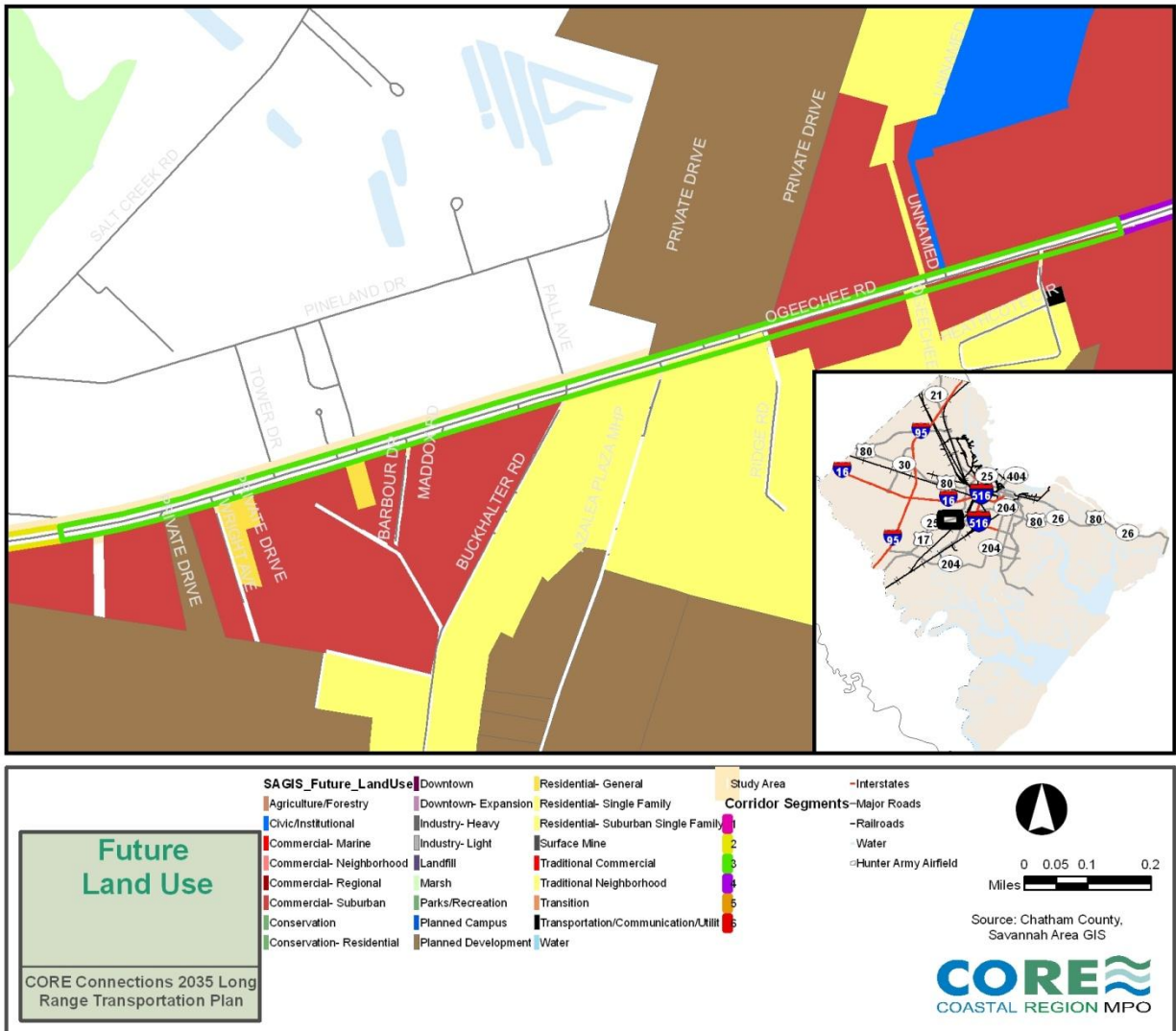


Figure 15 Segment 3 Future Land Use

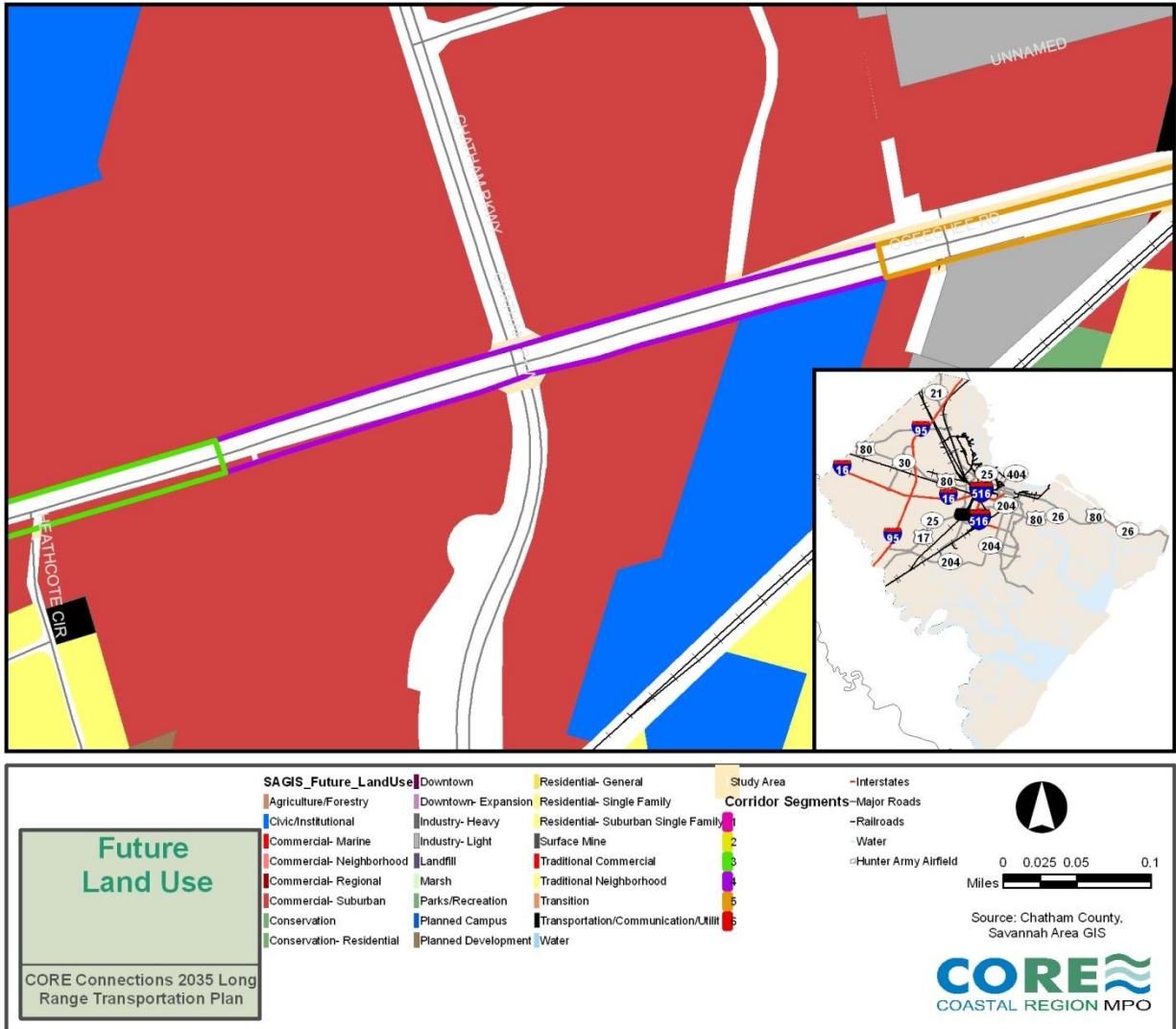


Figure 16 Segment 4 Future Land Use

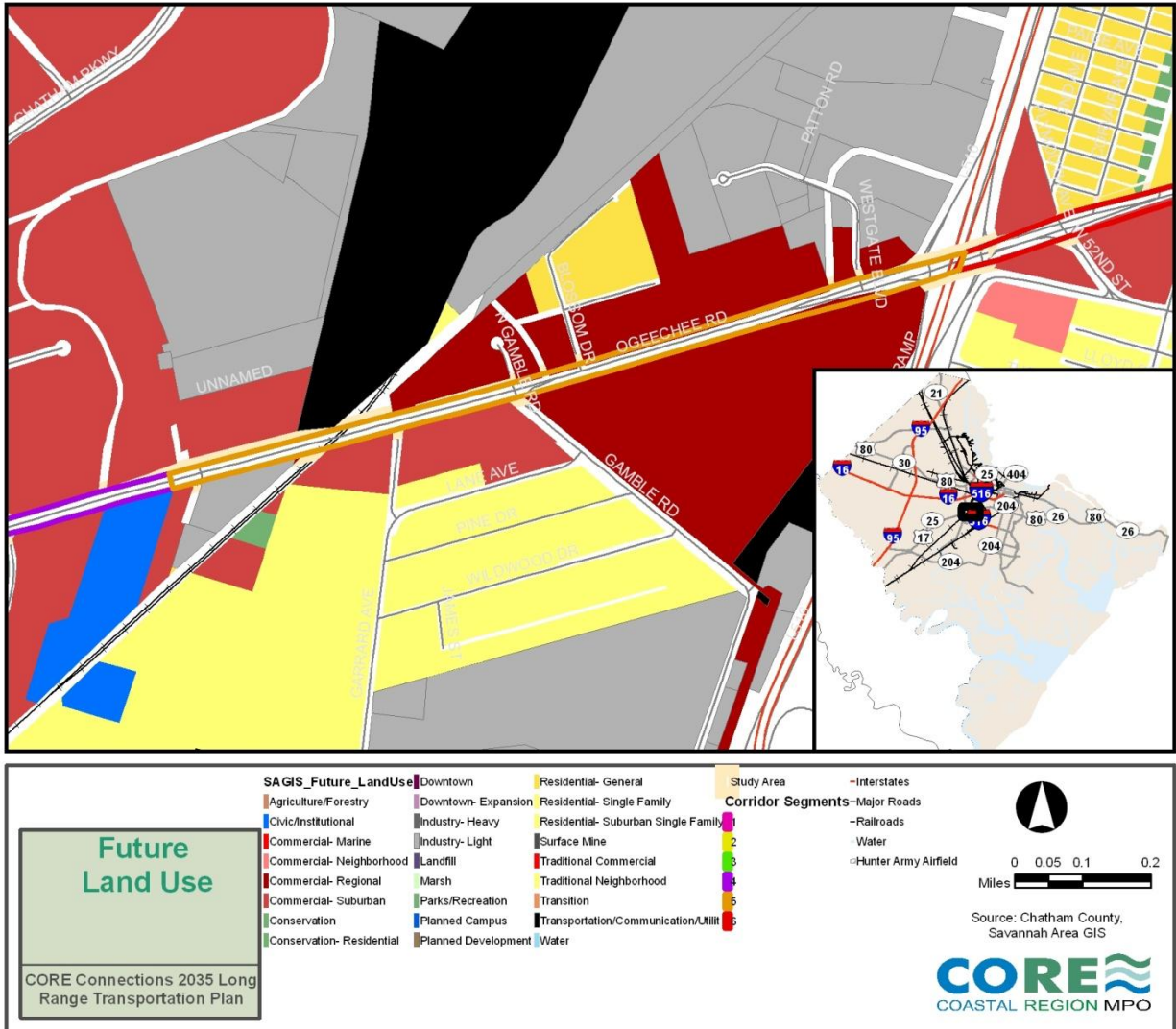


Figure 17 Segment 5 Future Land Use

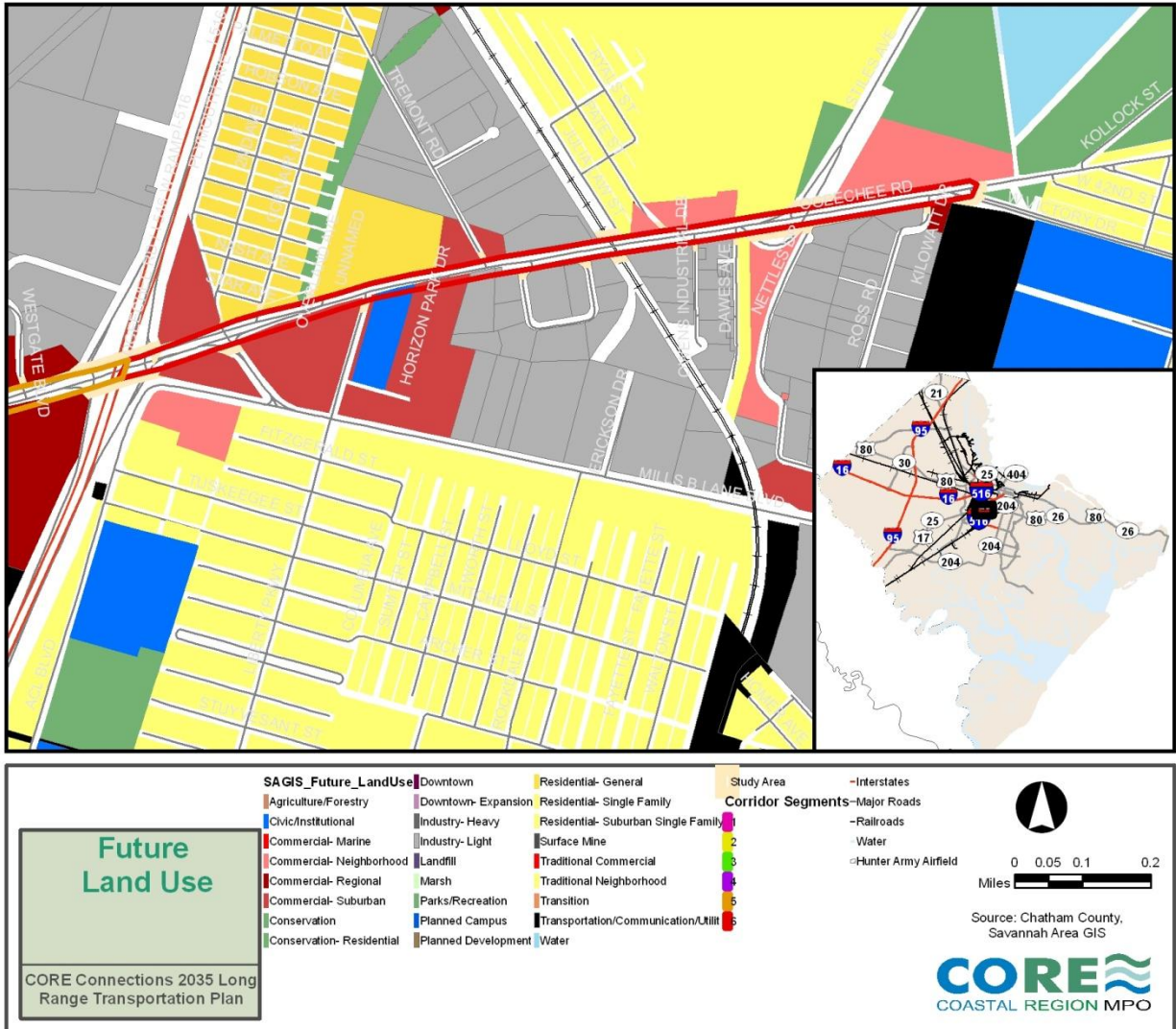


Figure 18 Segment 6 Future Land Use

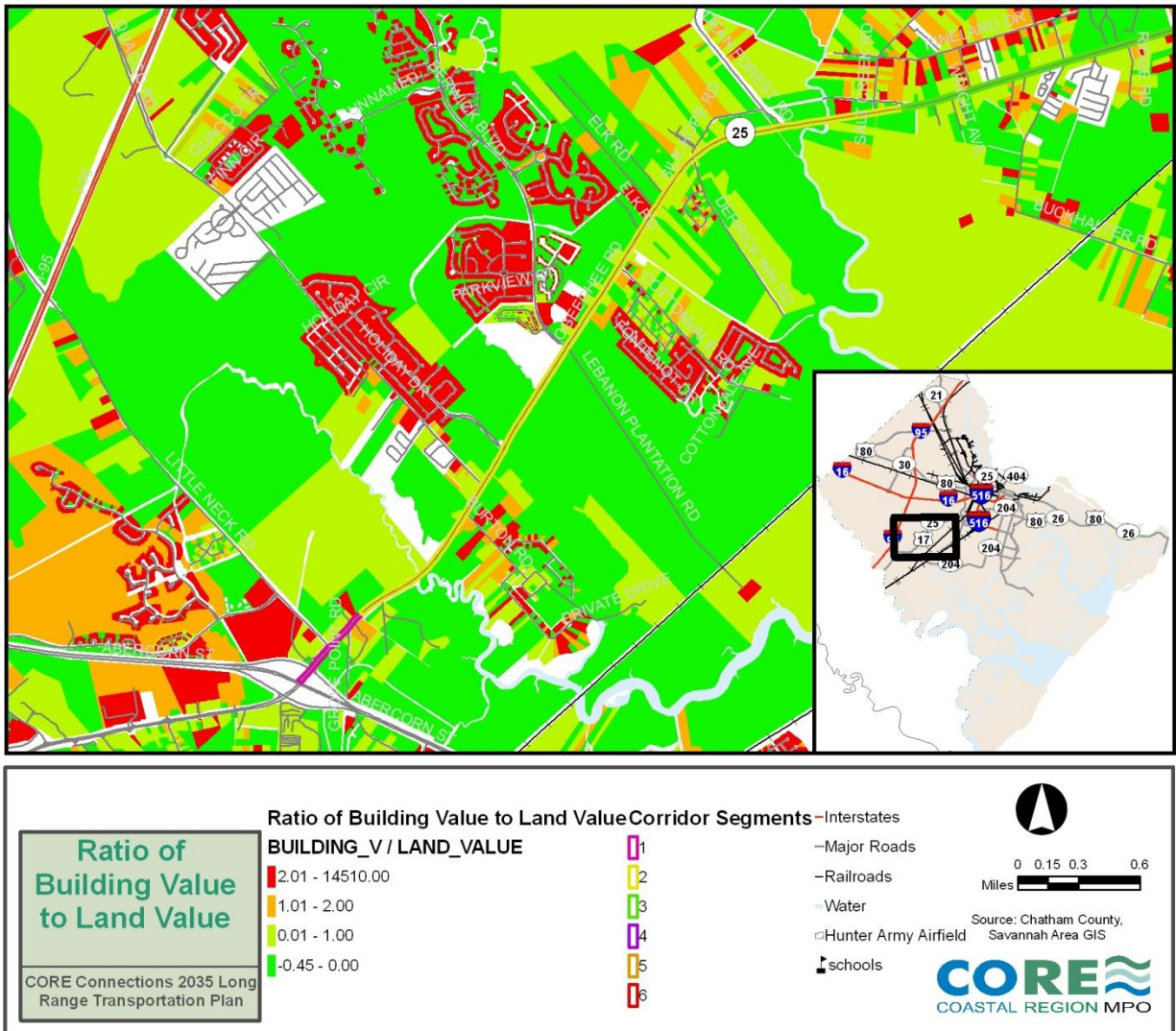


Figure 19

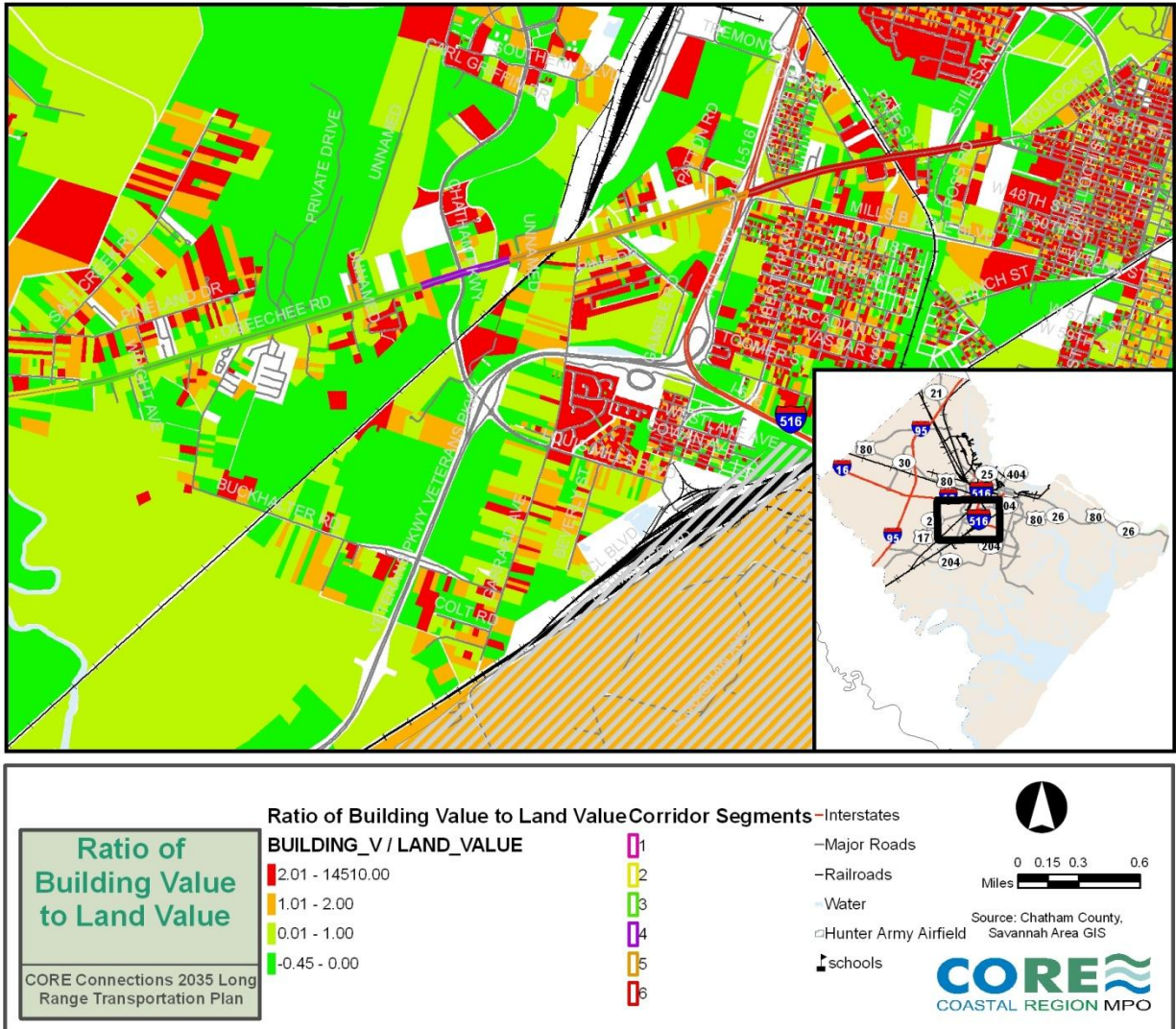


Figure 20

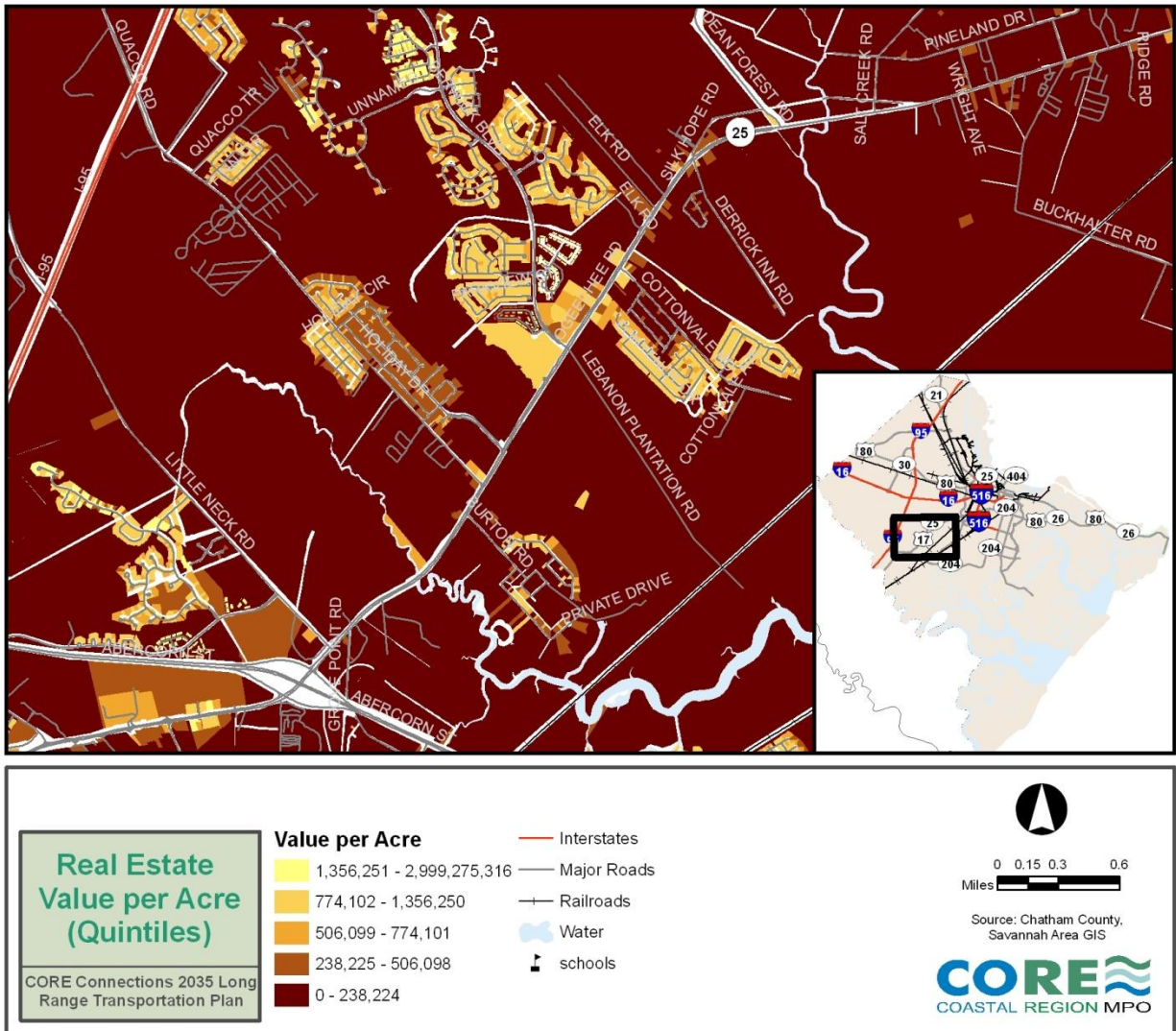


Figure 21

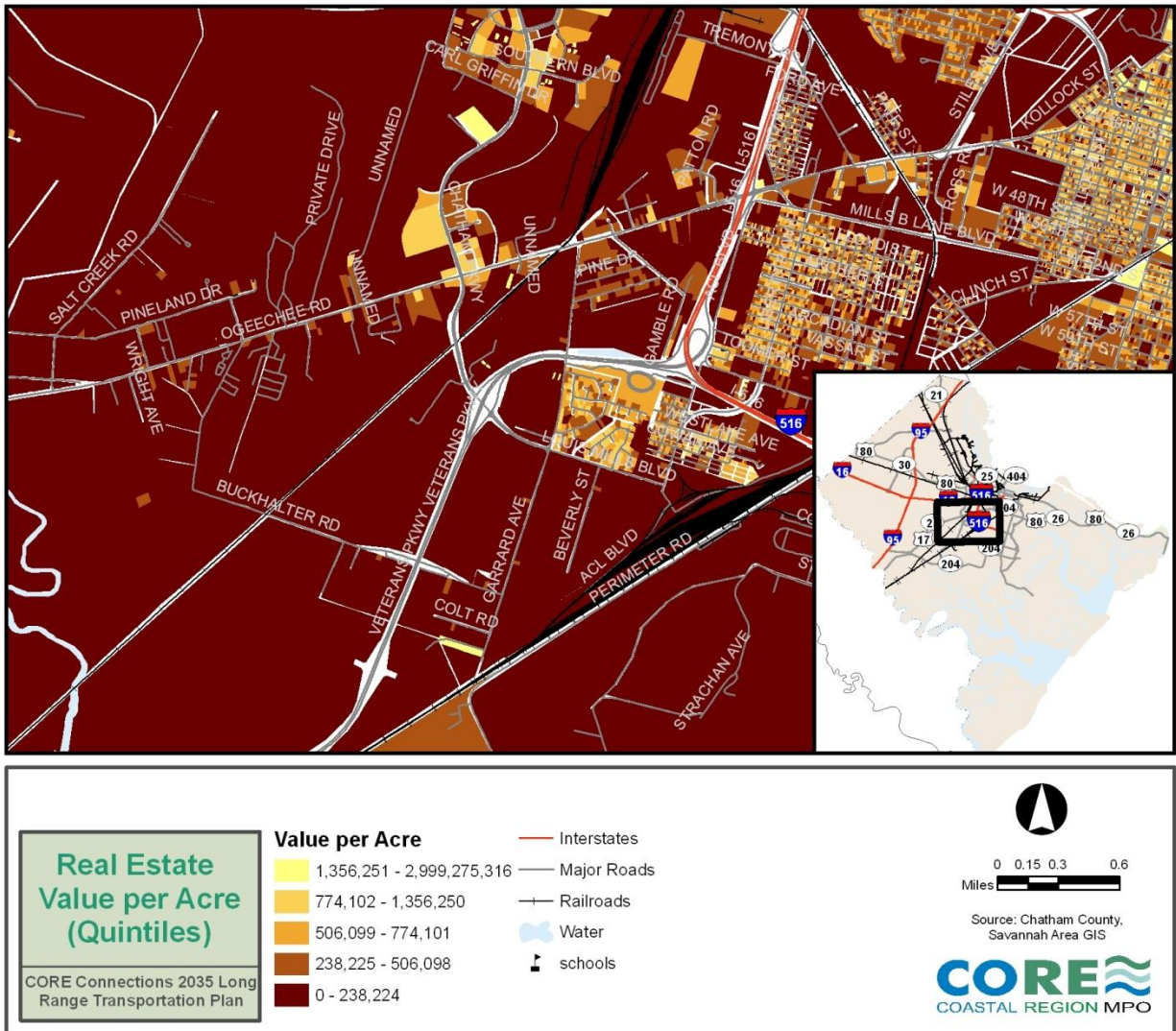


Figure 22

Photos



Figure 23 Pedestrian Path, Segment 2



Figure 24 US 17 over Salt Creek



Figure 25 Segment 2 Salt Creek Boat Ramp and Park, Segment 2



Figure 26 Playground at Salt Creek, Segment 2



Figure 27 Crosswalk and Curb-cuts, Segment 3



Figure 28 Path Worn on Roadside Near Mobile Home Park and School, Segment 3



Figure 29 Cyclist in Right Turn Lane and Bus Stop Location, Segment 3



Figure 30 Recently Developed Commercial Area at Chatham Parkway with Frontage Road and Interparcel Access, Segment 4



Figure 31 Pedestrian Path along Side of Road, Segment 5



Figure 32 Frontage Road and Bus Stop Location, Segment 5



Figure 33 Frontage Road and Bus Stop Location, Segment 5



Figure 34 Pedestrian Paths in Commercial Area, Segment 5



Figure 35 Segment 6 pavement conditions



Figure 36 Pedestrian on Shoulder, Segment 6



Figure 37 Open Access to Parking Area, Segment 6