



## Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

### Phase 1 Summary Memorandum, Corridor Overview & Assessment



## Victory Drive Corridor Study

March 31, 2015



The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) are committed to the principle of affirmative action and prohibit discrimination against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap, or disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program in its recruitment, employment, facility and program accessibility or services.

MPC and CORE MPO are committed to enforcing the provisions of the Civil Rights Act, Title VI, and all the related requirements mentioned above. CORE MPO is also committed to taking positive and realistic affirmative steps to ensure the protection of rights and opportunities for all persons affected by its plans and programs.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, or the Federal Highway Administration.

Prepared in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

## Table of Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	4
II. The Victory Drive Corridor	7
III. Corridor Assessment	14
IV. Recommendations	38
V. Implementation	67
VI. Conclusion	68

### Appendix:

(Provided Under Separate Cover)

- A1. Victory Drive Historic Corridor Study Report By: Jong Hyun Lim
- A2. Previous Studies Assessment Memorandum
- A3. Stakeholder Feedback – Sign-In Sheets
- A4. Stakeholder Feedback – Comment Cards

# I. Introduction

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

In early 2014, the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC), partnered with several local advocacy groups to initiate a planning study of the Victory Drive Corridor. This Victory Drive Corridor Study is conducted on behalf of the Coastal Region MPO (CORE MPO) and includes the following funding partners: City of Savannah; Downtown Garden Club; Ardsley Park Garden Club; Trustees Garden Club; Savannah Tree Foundation; Historic Savannah Foundation; Savannah Area Board of Realtors; and Cora Bett Thomas Commercial Realty

The study area is the 19.8 mile long corridor which begins at the Victory Drive/Ogeechee Road intersection in Savannah and continues east and south to the end of Butler Avenue on Tybee Island.

The corridor study is a two-phase process. Phase I begins with a high-level assessment of the corridor study area. For the western, more urban section of the corridor, the study will focus on the presence, condition and/ or potential of complete streets elements (bicycle/ pedestrian/ transit facilities) while also reviewing the integrity of the historic road section and landscape conditions. For the longer eastern section, the study will focus primarily on the presence, condition and/ or potential of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities and on existing or potential landscape conditions, treatment and interventions.

Phase II of the corridor study will concentrate on a specific portion, or focus area, of the corridor west of the Wilmington River. The focus area will be identified during Phase I as being either an area of the corridor which is considered to be at greatest risk of further degradation or as a section of the corridor with a unique set of opportunities and potential which merits further exploration. This second phase of the study is intended to serve as a model, or potential pilot-project, focused on implementation and the specific steps necessary to achieve the vision defined for the area in Phase I.

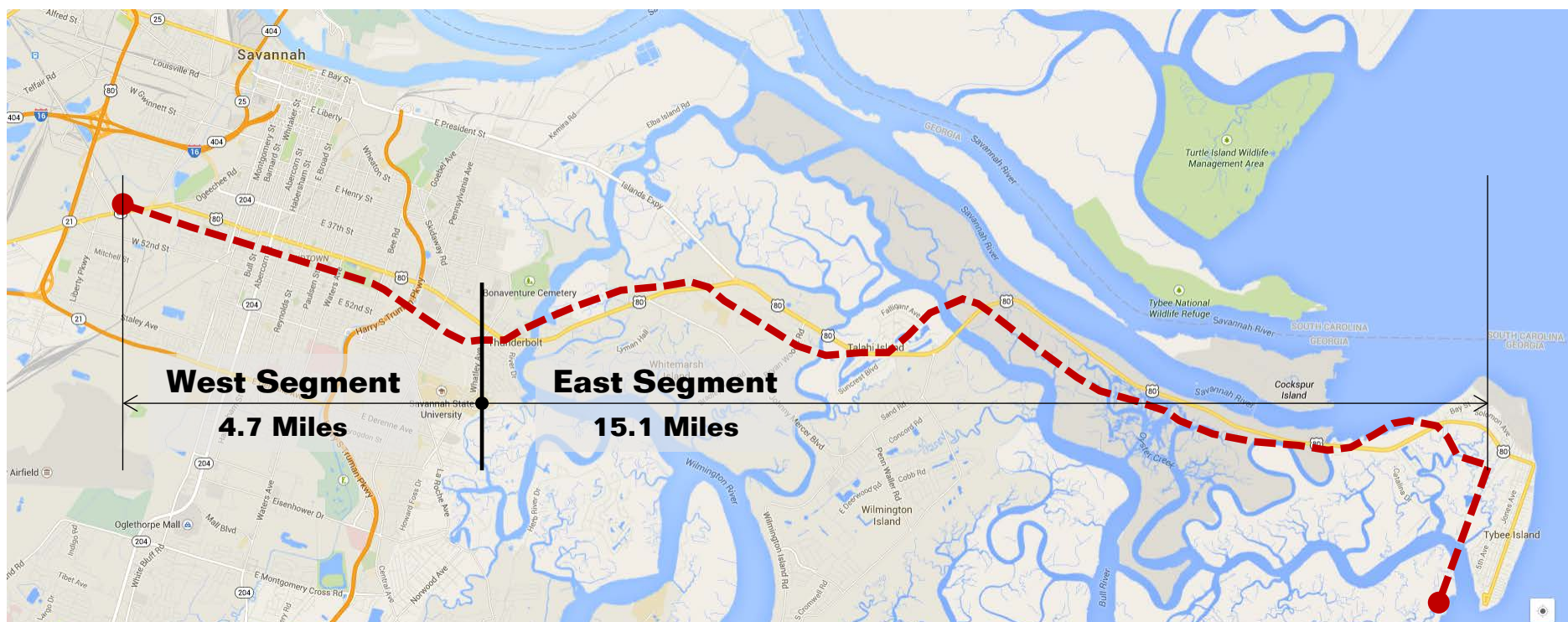


## GOAL STATEMENT

*“The Victory Drive Corridor Study aims to preserve, revitalize and maintain Victory Drive’s historic, commemorative landscape and prominence as a signature boulevard.*

*Through a public-private collaboration, this study seeks to develop an implementable plan incorporating context sensitive solutions to balance the transportation and land use demands of a contemporary street.”*

## Corridor Study Area



The study begins with a high-level overview of the entire corridor; a corridor which stretches from Ogeechee Road, at the western end, to Butler Avenue on Tybee Island, at the eastern end of the corridor. This almost 20 mile long corridor changes dramatically in character as one moves along it from west to east. The west segment is the more developed and urbanized section. The much longer eastern segment of the corridor is very different in character from the western section.

The corridor assessment focuses on three key elements or themes - landscape, transportation, and urban design. With these themes in mind, a summary snapshot of the corridor helps define the characteristics that make these two segments so different. The western segment is more formal in its landscape and urban form; historic, stately homes are placed relatively close to the street and together with the large, regularly spaced, canopy live oaks they help frame a focused view along the corridor. The public Right-of-Way (ROW) is narrow with a tight urban street section which includes adjacent sidewalks all defining a unique linear corridor. This compact, formal, urban landscape is contrasted with the eastern segment of the corridor which is characterized, on Whitemarsh and Talahi Islands, by a more suburban style of development with buildings set far back from the ROW and on Tybee Island with a low-scale, beach village style of development. This eastern section of the corridor has more informal, natural landscape plantings, few canopy trees, less historically significant architecture, wide open vistas and long viewsheds across the marshlands, and a very different rural-style road section with wide travel lanes and broad, open shoulders.

It is the intent of this study to begin, in Phase I, with an overall assessment of the entire corridor, to then define key character areas within these larger segments, and to identify key challenges and potential opportunities for enhancement within each of the character areas. This initial report will identify existing challenges and opportunities along the corridor and identify potential enhancement strategies and solutions to explore both across the entire corridor and within each of the future focus areas. Phase II of this study will then focus on one character area with a more detailed exploration of future potential implementable improvements in that area. The initial focus area will be within the West Segment of the corridor. The longer-term goal will be to prepare additional detailed studies for each of the character areas along the corridor.

## PLAN GUIDANCE

As a starting point for the corridor study, a series of relevant previous studies and reports were reviewed. (See Appendix A2. for the Previous Studies Assessment Memorandum.) The relevant studies include:

### **CORE MPO Plans, Studies, and Programmed Projects :**

1. Amenities Plan and Supporting Resolutions
2. Context Sensitive Design Manual, Chatham County – Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (2007)
3. Core MPO 2004 Congestion Management Process
4. Core MPO 2009 Congestion Management Process Update
5. 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan
6. 2035 Core Connections Framework Mobility Plan
7. 2040 Core MPO Total Mobility Plan (Draft)
8. Core MPO Transportation Improvement Program
9. Ongoing GDOT Projects
10. Victory Drive Past Improvements and Information
11. US 80 Bridges Replacement Study, 2012
12. Core MPO Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (Draft)

### **Chatham County - Savannah MPC Plans:**

1. Chatham County - Savannah Tricentennial Plan 2006, 2012

### **Partner Agency Plans and Studies :**

1. Chatham Area Transit – Transit Development Plan (TDP)
2. Gateway to Coastal Georgia: Connecting the Coast, Coastal Georgia Land Trust, 1996
3. Wave Ecology and the Highway 80 Challenge, Chatham County and Tybee Island 2010
4. Martin Luther King / Montgomery Street Revitalization Plan, SDRA, 1998
5. Tybee Island Comprehensive Plan 2008

### **6. Tybee Island Pedestrian and Traffic Study**

7. Thunderbolt Comprehensive Plan
8. Cuyler-Brownsville Overlay Planned Neighborhood Conservation District, Savannah 1997, 2004
9. Mid-City District, Savannah, 2005, 2013
10. Waters Avenue Revitalization Plan, Savannah, ongoing effort

### **Other Studies:**

1. Journey of a Road: Victory Drive Between Bee Road And Skidaway Road – By Jessica Archer 2013
2. National Register Nomination Review – By Josh Ward



## II. The Victory Drive Corridor

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Like much of Savannah and the surrounding region, the Victory Drive/ US 80 Corridor is one steeped in history. The Victory Drive Corridor includes two historically significant road segments which are today connected as US 80. The first is the segment which is traditionally known as Victory Drive (Ogeechee Road to the Wilmington River) and runs through a number of Savannah's historic neighborhood districts. This segment includes remaining sections of the historic World War I memorial landscape of live oaks, cabbage palms and azaleas. The second is the Tybee Road segment that connects Tybee Island to the river islands of McQueen's Island, Talihi Island, Whitemarsh Island and Wilmington Island.

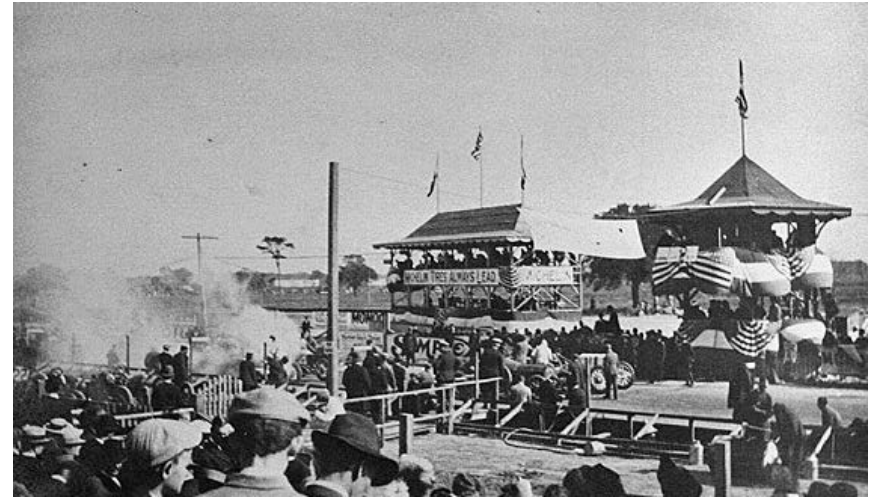
The following pages include a brief overview of the significant events which helped shape the corridor. For a more detailed description of the corridor's history, see Appendix - A1.



## 1908 - 1911: Automobile Club of America Race (Dale and Estill Avenues)



Historic Marker at Waters Avenue and 46<sup>th</sup> Street: Savannah received worldwide publicity for the races held in 1908, 1910, and 1911



Savannah Grand Prize and Vanderbilt Cup Race in 1911

### 1910 - 1912: Prototype of Current Landscape

- 1910: 460 Palms were planted on Estill Avenue
- 1911: New “Parkway” was “beautified”
- 1912: A median and more palms are proposed on Estill Avenue



Image of Estill Avenue from the postcard stamped in 1913



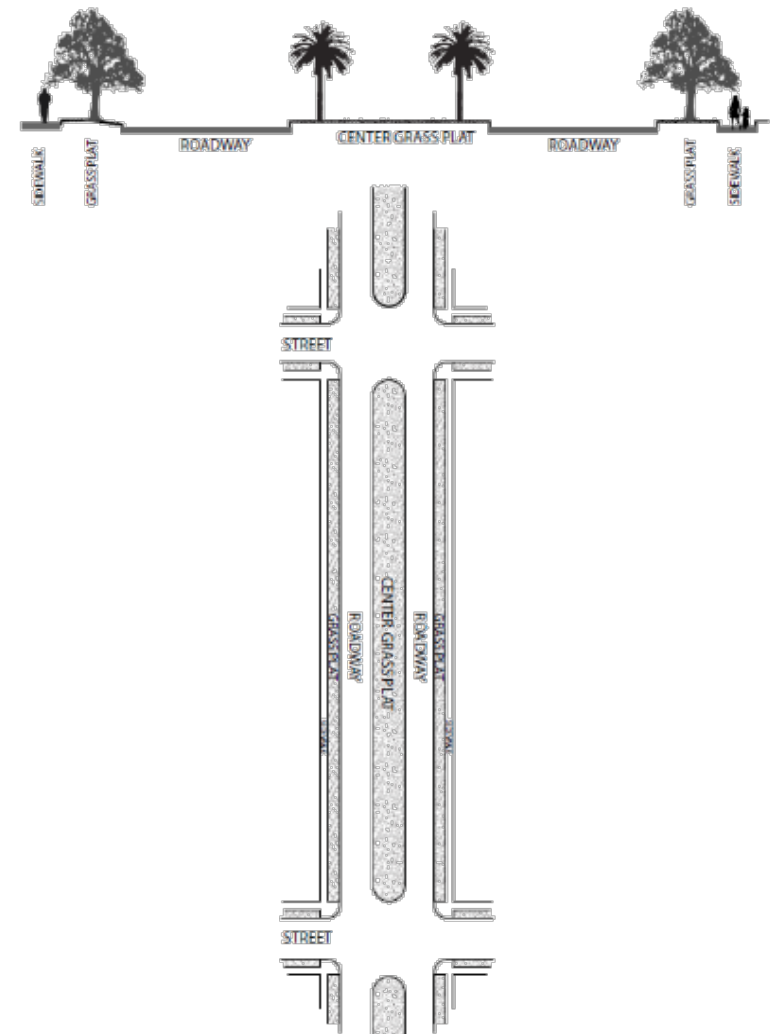
Historic Landscape View (top) and current condition of Victory Drive (bottom) at Atlantic Avenue

### 1919: Proposal for a War Memorial Boulevard

- A WWI Memorial Blvd proposed in the City of Savannah
- Roadway improvements authorized
- Extension of Victory Drive proposed

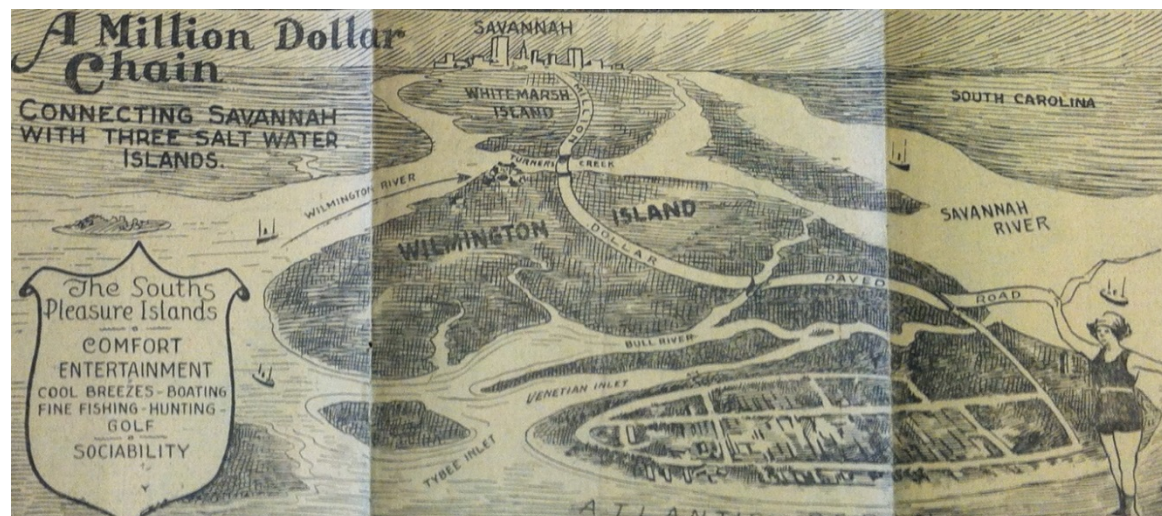


Victory Drive lined with palm trees, (Georgia Historical Society, Date Unknown)



Reproduction of 1919 Proposal Drawing by Mr. W.O'D Rockwell, City Engineer (October 16, 1919, The Savannah Press)

June 21, 1923: Road work complete “Million Dollar Road” is open



The Road to Tybee, 1923



1924, Tybee Road 14 Miles from Savannah - 40 Feet Wide



Note that the original Tybee Road alignment was different than the current US-80 alignment which today takes a more northern route across Whitmarsh Island. The “old Tybee Road” ran along what is now Johnny Mercer Boulevard, and was once State Route 367 across Whitmarsh and Wilmington Islands. The former SR-367 was decommissioned in 1984.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_former\\_state\\_routes\\_in\\_Georgia\\_%28U.S.\\_state%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_former_state_routes_in_Georgia_%28U.S._state%29)

### 1936: City's Designation as Victory Drive

- City Council Ordinance
- Victory Drive from Bull Street to the eastern city limits
- Park and Tree Commission Planted 317 palms



1935, East Victory Drive Near Daffin Park



1935, East Victory Drive

## VICTORY DRIVE IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

More than a century has passed since the first Automobile Club races were held on what is today Victory Drive but was then Estill and Dale Avenues. Since those early days of the twentieth century the corridor has changed and evolved significantly, much development has occurred and the landscape has matured. In its prime, the corridor was a destination, the subject of photographs and post cards and at one point was known as the longest palm lined boulevard in the country. Today, the Victory Drive/ US 80 Corridor has lost much of its former grandeur. The modern day pressures of increasing traffic demands and commercial development have taken precedent over the preservation of the historic landscape.



### KEY EXISTING VICTORY DRIVE CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS:

- The corridor serves an important role as the primary emergency evacuation route off of the islands
- Increasing traffic congestion
- Multiple jurisdictions abut different segments of the Victory Drive corridor, a road currently within both the federal and state highway systems and administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT),
- GDOT and FHWA design guidelines for state and federal highways are applicable
- Flooding issues are prevalent
- Plant material is consistently over grown and some arrangements are horticulturally unsustainable
- Natural and cultural resources along the corridor have been lost or ignored



### III. Corridor Assessment

The Victory Drive/ US 80 Corridor Study began with a high-level assessment of the corridor. The assessment was organized in three thematic areas: landscape, transportation, and urban design. Given the extent of, and the differences between them, the corridor was broken into two major segments - western and eastern. The western segment, which runs from Ogeechee Road to the Wilmington River, is the more urbanized section of the corridor and includes portions of Savannah and Thunderbolt. The eastern segment, which runs from the Wilmington River to the south end of Tybee, traverses through more suburban areas, across the river islands and marshlands, and into the coastal, beach village environments of Tybee Island.

#### CHARACTER AREAS

The two primary segments were further sub-divided into a total of seven character areas. Each of these character area segments shares a unique environment, built form, land use types, and landscape and hardscape materiality. The seven character areas are:

1. Ogeechee Road To Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
2. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard To Bull Street
3. Bull Street To Bee Road
4. Bee Road To Wilmington River
5. Wilmington River To Bull River
6. Bull River To Lazaretto Creek
7. Tybee Island

These seven areas, as illustrated on the following page, provide the organizing framework in which this study analyzes existing conditions and later recommends potential solutions.

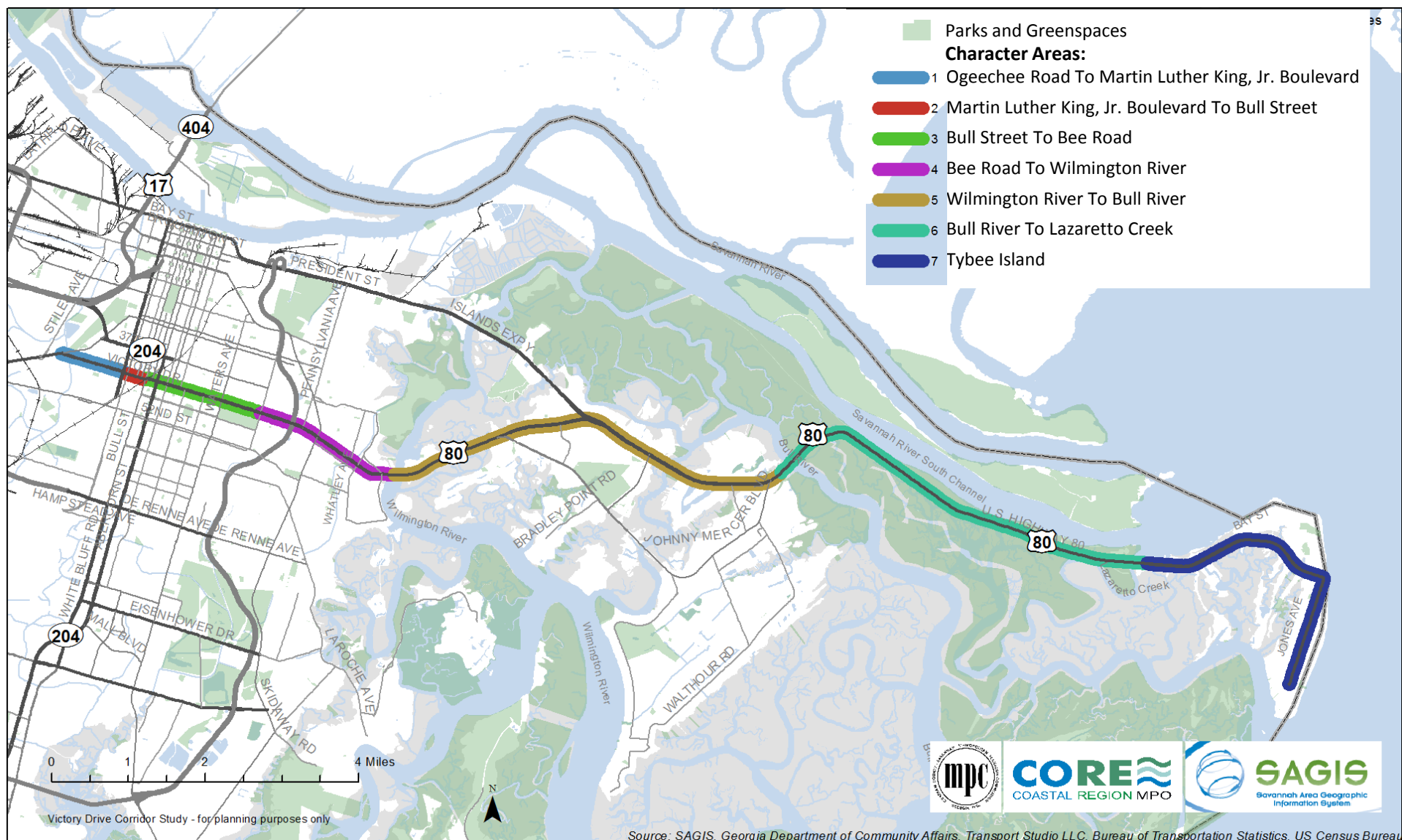
#### ASSESSMENT THEMES

The analysis of the seven character areas is organized into three general assessment themes. The assessment themes are:

- Landscape
- Transportation
- Urban Design / Land Use



## Character Areas Diagram



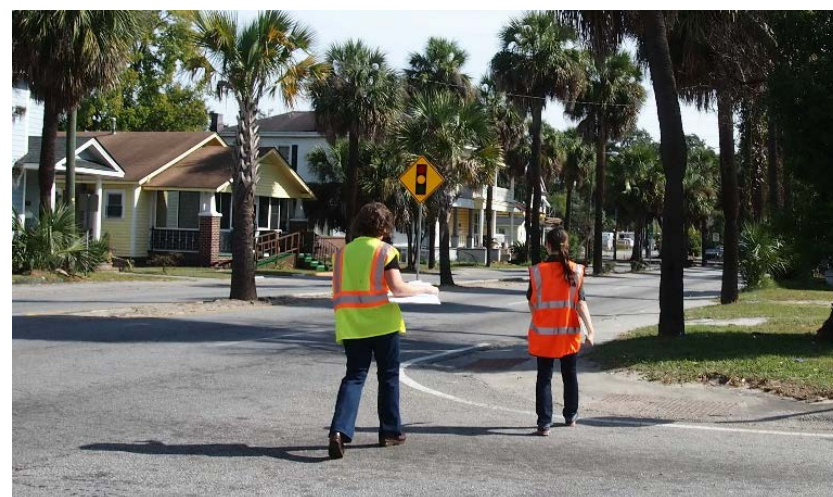
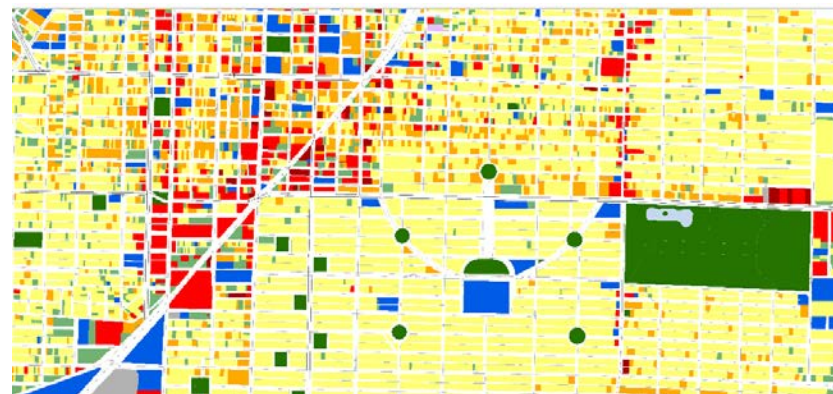
## DATA COLLECTION

To understand the range of current issues that face the corridor, the study team utilized three approaches to data collection. These approaches work together in a system of checks and balances to verify that accurate data is collected. They include:

- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping**
- **Stakeholder and Community Engagement**
- **Field Documentation**

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) MAPPING

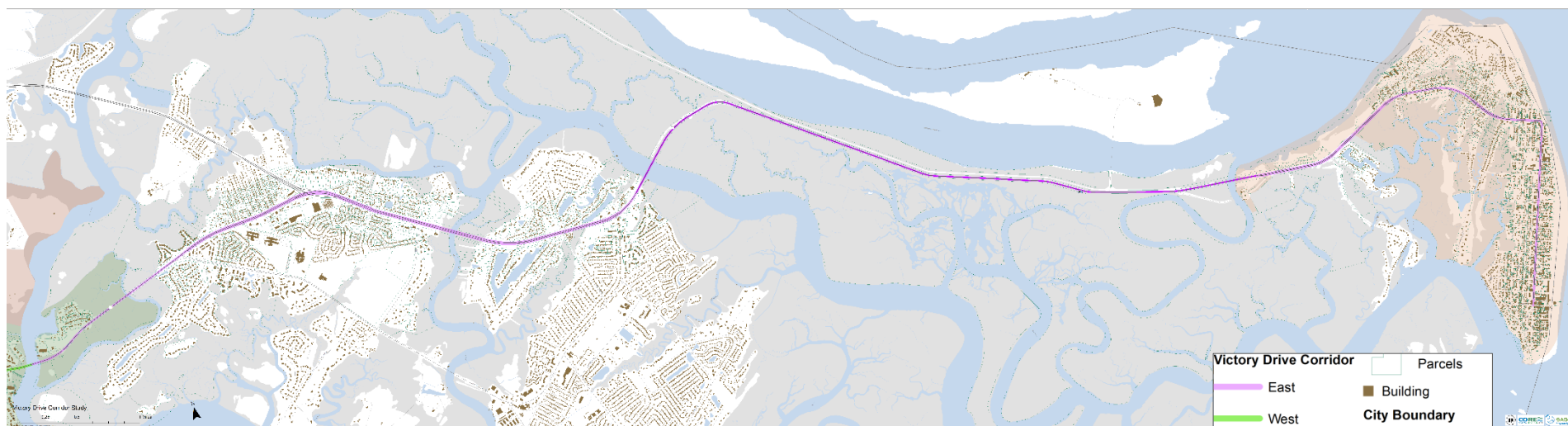
GIS mapping technology was utilized to create a series of project base maps and to analyze the corridor for specific data sets. The corridor was analyzed in terms of topography, environmental sensitivity areas, floodplain, land use, zoning, historic districts, tree canopy coverage and wildlife management areas. Several of the GIS data maps used in this analysis are shown on the following pages.



## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) Corridor Study Base Maps

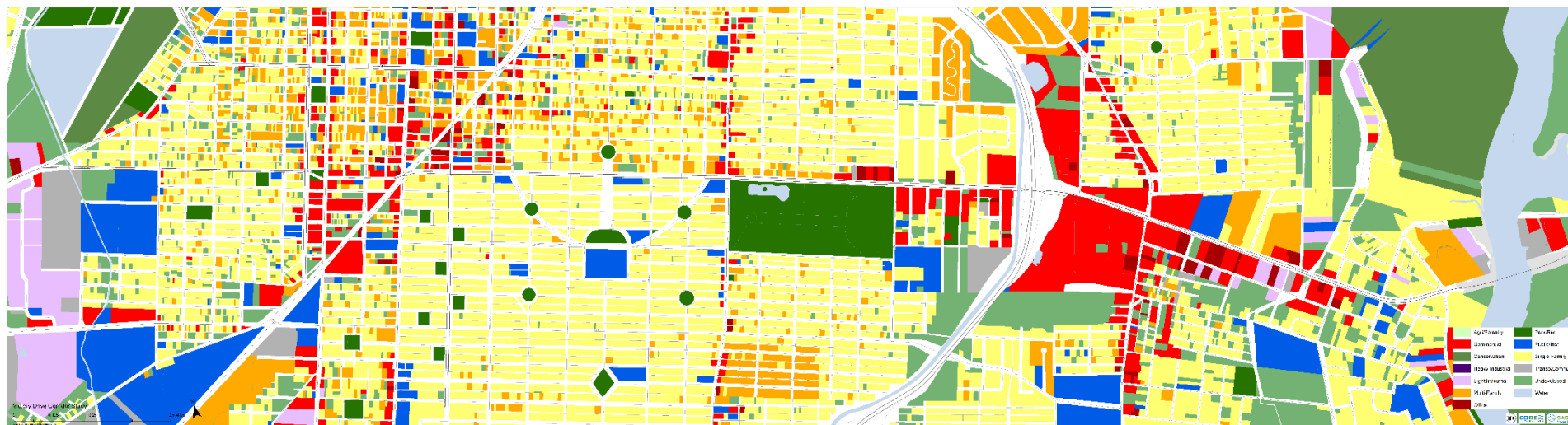


Western Segment

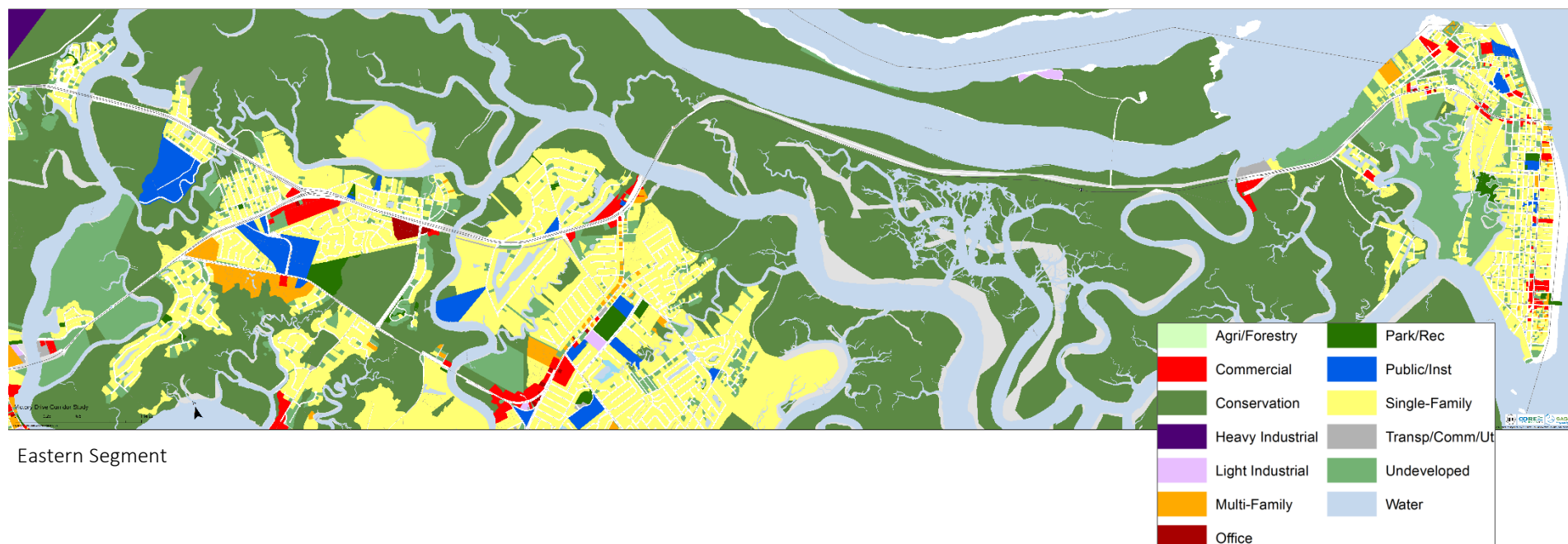


Eastern Segment

## Land Use

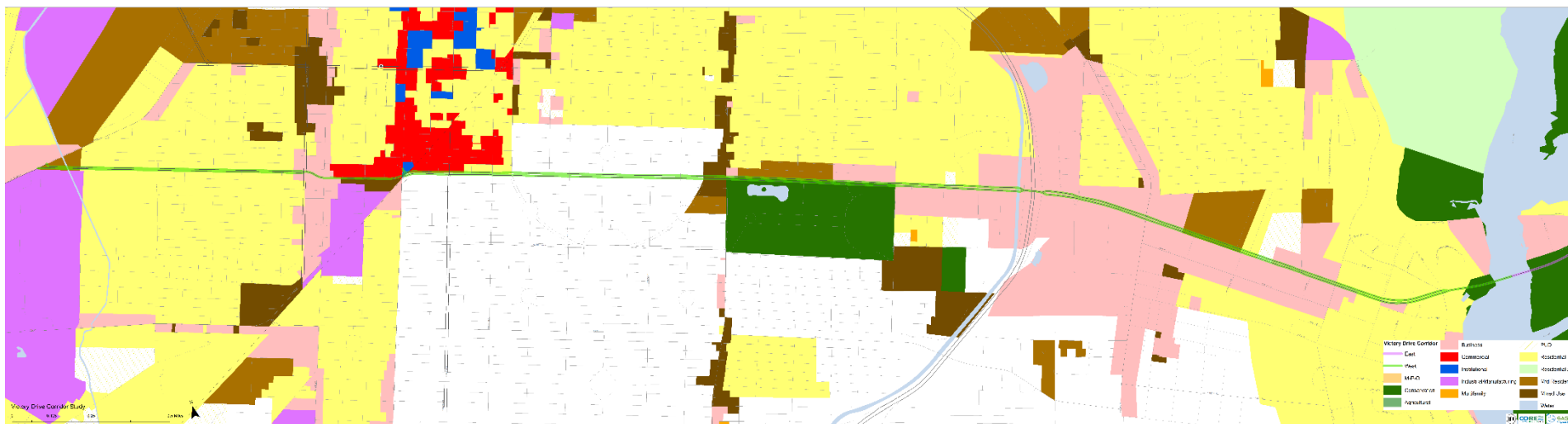


Western Segment

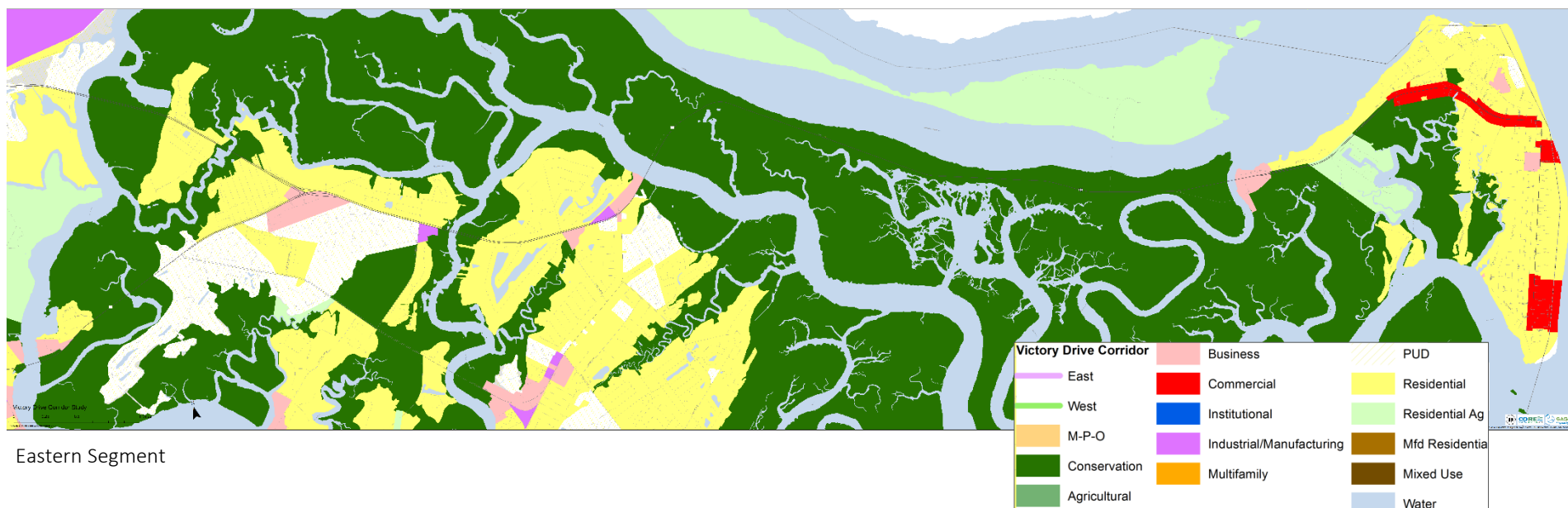


Eastern Segment

## Zoning

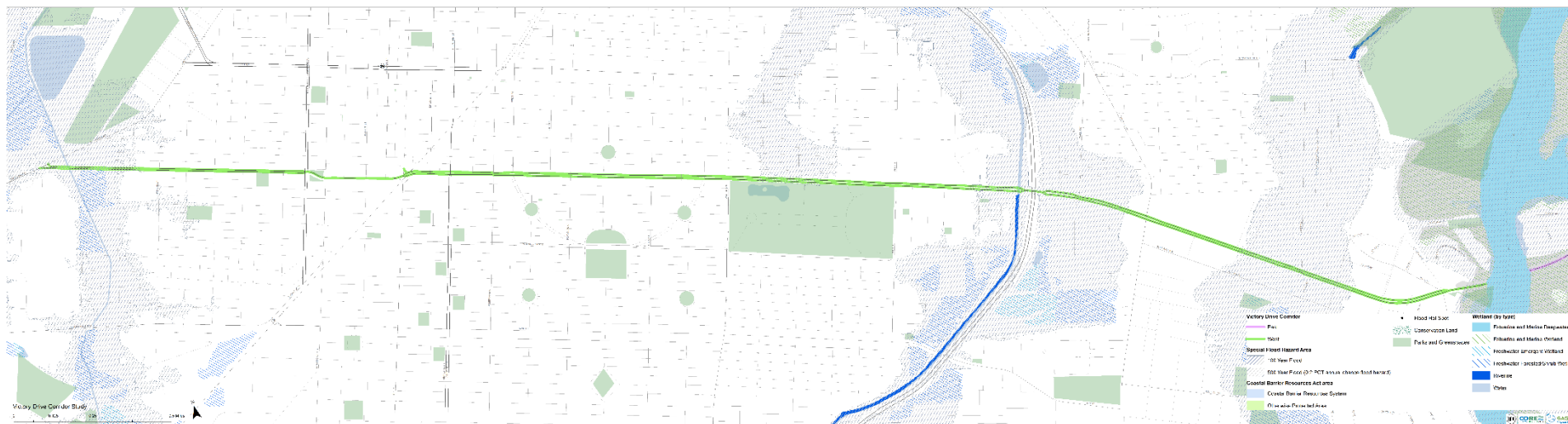


Western Segment

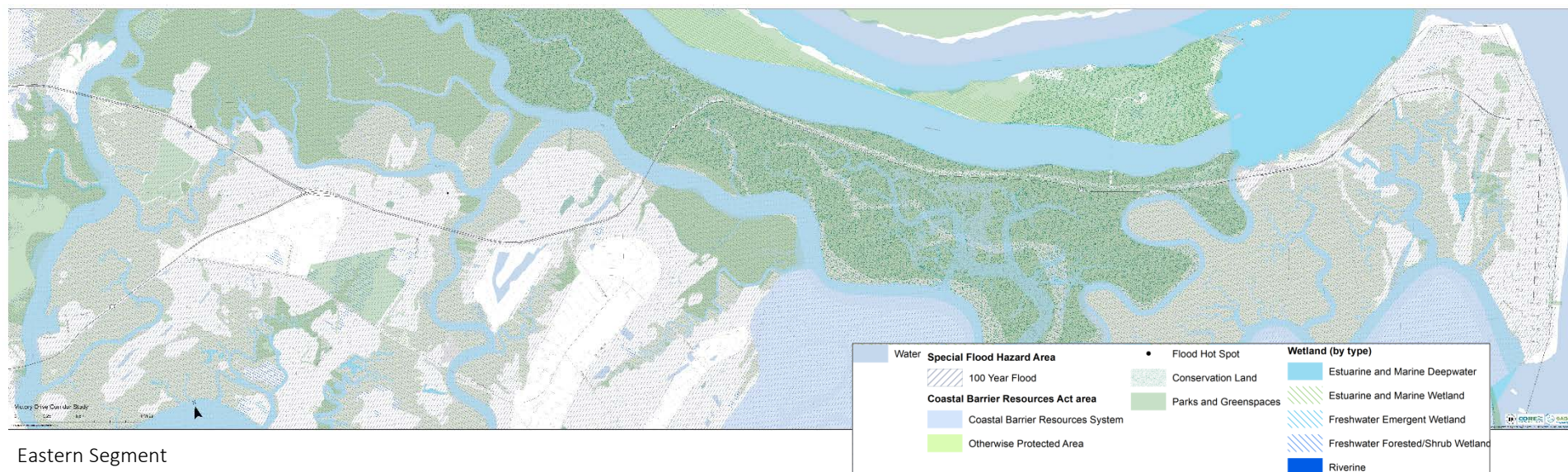


Eastern Segment

## Environmental

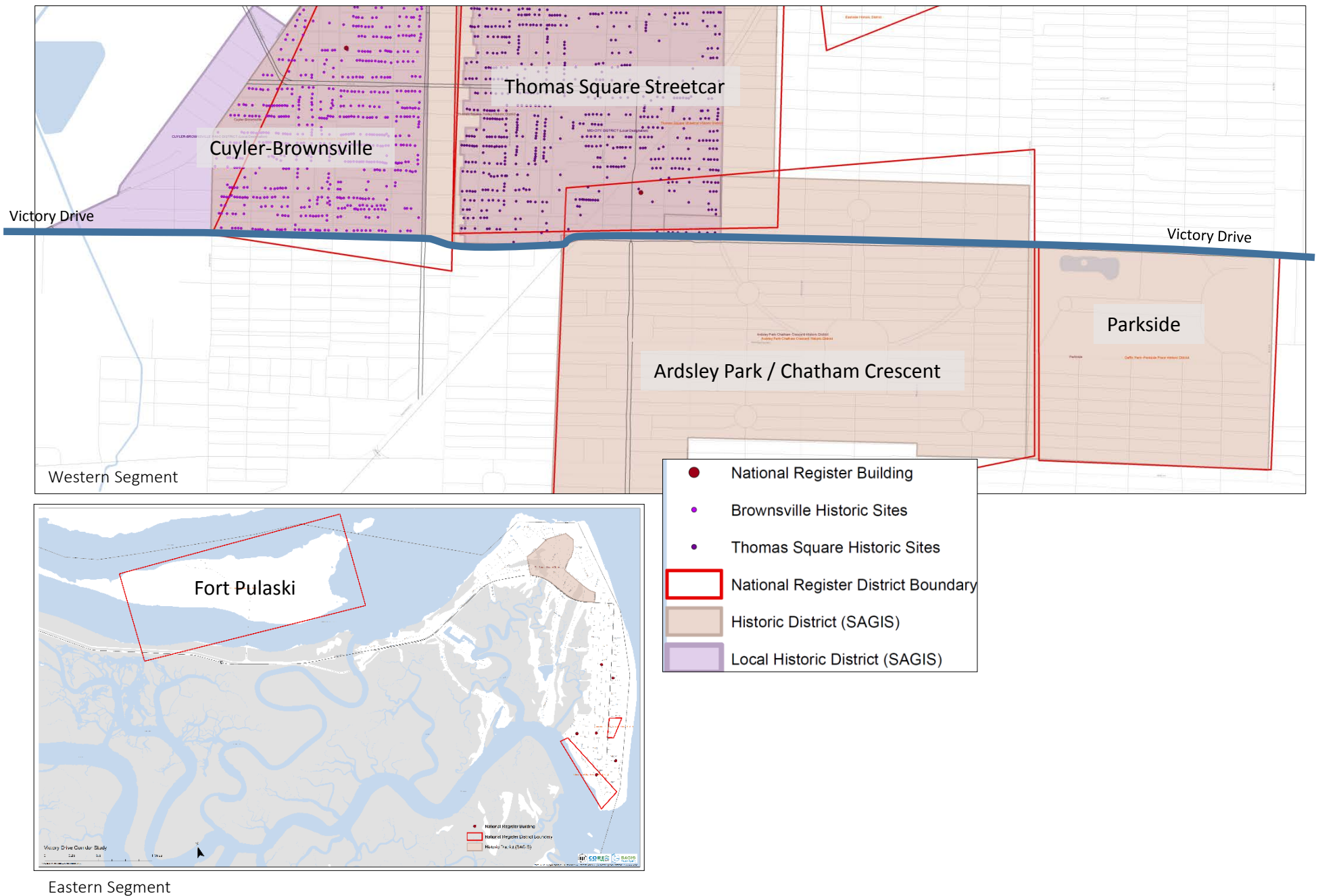


Western Segment



Eastern Segment

## Historic Districts



## STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

As part of the data collection, the community was engaged and asked to help identify both issues and opportunities along the corridor. Stakeholders who participated in the assessment phase come from a diverse range of interests and included businesses, neighborhood associations, residents, churches, institutions, schools, city and county staff and officials, utility providers and community organizations.

During the initial Phase I charrette week, which ran from November 3 through November 7, 2014, a series of stakeholder meetings were held to gain insight on corridor conditions from the public. These meetings took various formats including both formal presentations and more informal, open-house sessions. Stakeholders were able to provide input via comment cards and/ or by participating in the “dot” exercise.

The dot exercise proved to be a fun way for stakeholders to better understand their corridor and to offer detailed insight. Each participant was given three red dots and three green dots to place along the 27 foot long, to-scale corridor base map. Red dots were used to highlight areas of concern while green dots represented positive attributes along the corridor. Yellow sticky notes accompanied the red and green dots to briefly describe the positive or negative comments.

This information reflects a summary of the input received during the stakeholder engagement process.

## GENERAL FEEDBACK – CORRIDOR WIDE

### LANDSCAPE

- Live oaks and palms framework should be restored from Bull Street to River Drive in Thunderbolt
- Critical to restore the landscape for the entire corridor
- Return to the original ‘Formosa’ azaleas

### TRANSPORTATION

- It will be impossible to balance preservation with transportation – choose the trees over the turn lanes
- Traffic lights need to be synched
- Use smaller azaleas due to sight distance limitations

## LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Multiple jurisdictions need consistent regulations along the corridor
- Need a consistent look and feel that unifies the entire corridor
- Need to communicate the historic significance of the corridor
- Need better enforcement of current laws
- Promote the military and veterans organizations that help maintain the corridor
- Architectural and other development guidelines are needed to control commercialization
- Buildings should not be built right up to the roadway without room for landscape



**CHARACTER AREA 1:**  
**OGEECHEE ROAD TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD**

## LANDSCAPE

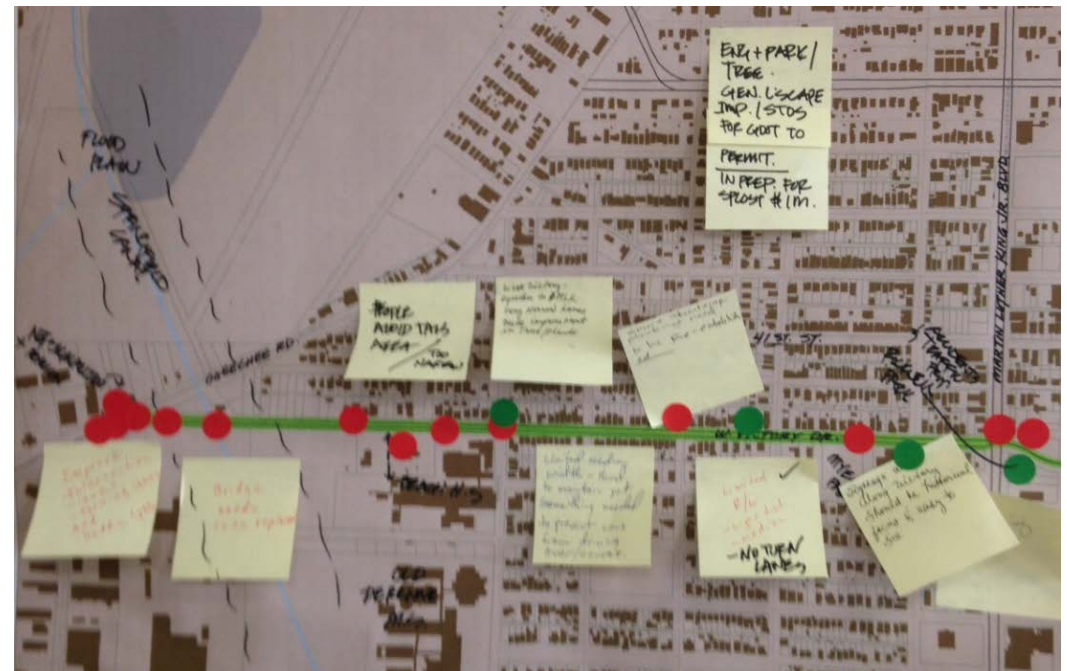
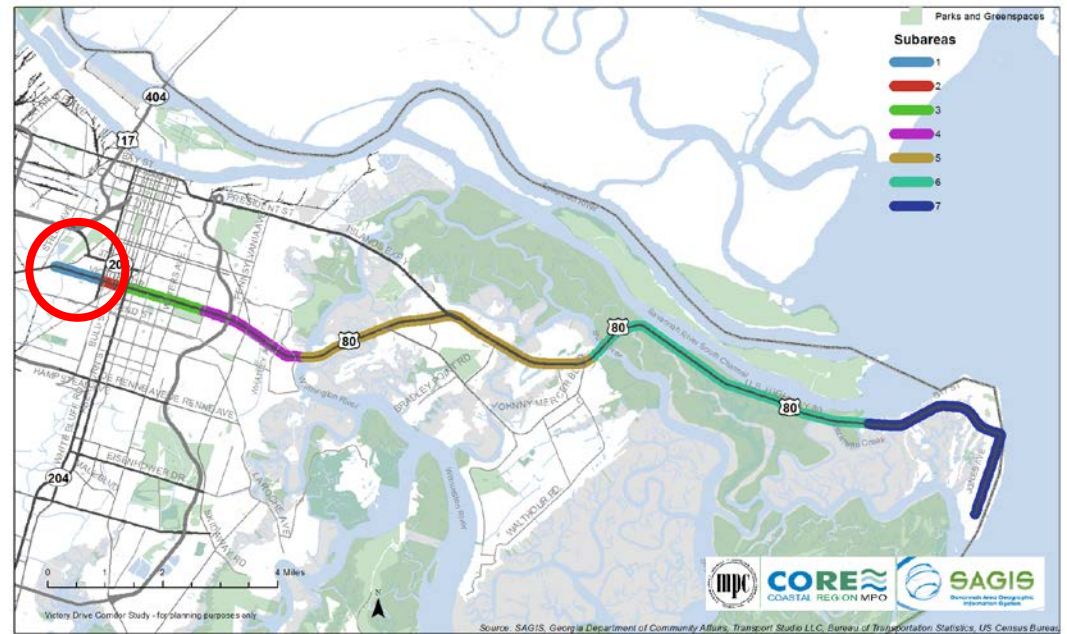
- Park at Martin Luther King, Jr. intersection is an asset
- Median washes out – needs curbing
- Flooding
- Encroachment from private property
- Not sustainable

## TRANSPORTATION

- Ogeechee Road intersection needs work
- Martin Luther King, Jr. & Victory Drive intersection – sight triangle issues
- Narrow lanes
- Heavy school bus use at Hopkins Avenue
- Narrow Median

## LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Single family residential
- Lack of pocket parks
- New High School
- Lack of stormwater infrastructure



## CHARACTER AREA 2:

### MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD to BULL STREET

#### LANDSCAPE

- Martin Luther King, Jr. intersection is 'green' (i.e. shaded with significant tree canopy)
- Dark
- Flooding
- No median remaining today

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Lack of bike connectivity
- Dangerous intersections at Habersham Street and Abercorn Street

#### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Needs code enforcement
- Building setbacks are varied
- Residential rezoning to commercial



### CHARACTER AREA 3: BULL STREET TO BEE ROAD

#### LANDSCAPE

- Daffin Park is a great draw for the community
- GDOT resist irrigation
- Atlantic Avenue compliments Victory

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Bike travel lanes not consistent
- Atlantic Avenue is a major thoroughfare for pedestrians
- Lack of lighting makes it uncomfortable to walk at night

#### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Truman linear park phase 2 – connects Daffin Park to Lake Myer park
- Predominantly single family residential
- Preserve character



## CHARACTER AREA 4: BEE ROAD TO WILMINGTON RIVER

## LANDSCAPE

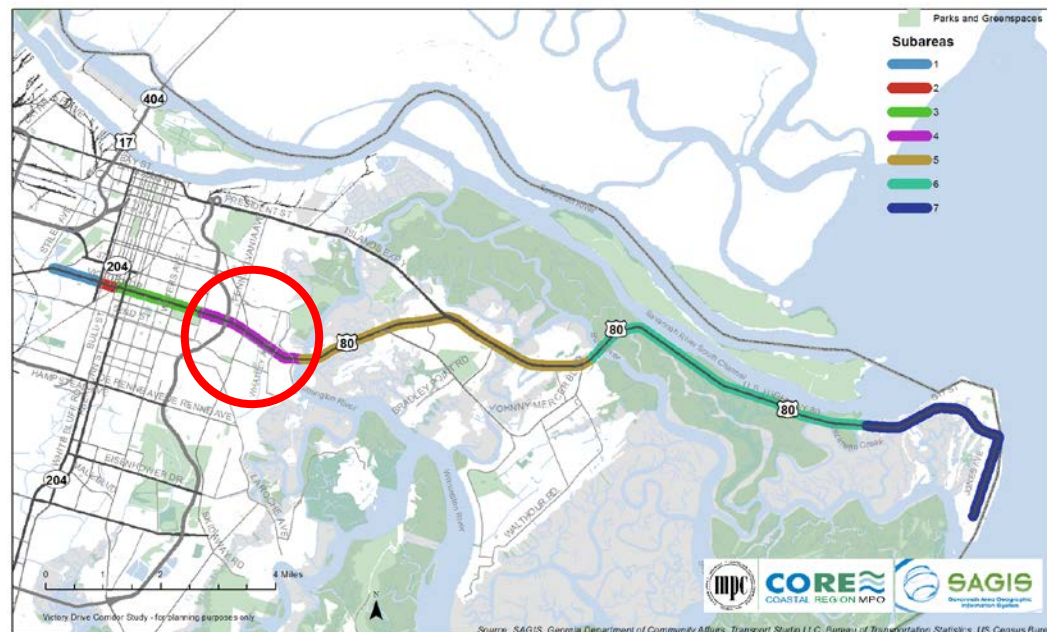
- Potential to restore framework
- Degradation in commercial area
- Flooding

## TRANSPORTATION

- Major congestion
- Bike travel at a minimum
- Truman Parkway is a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists
- Traffic signal timing is too short
- Lack of access management
- Pedestrian lawlessness

## LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Heavily commercialized
- Illegal signage
- Inconsistent building setback



## CHARACTER AREA 5: WILMINGTON RIVER TO BULL RIVER

### LANDSCAPE

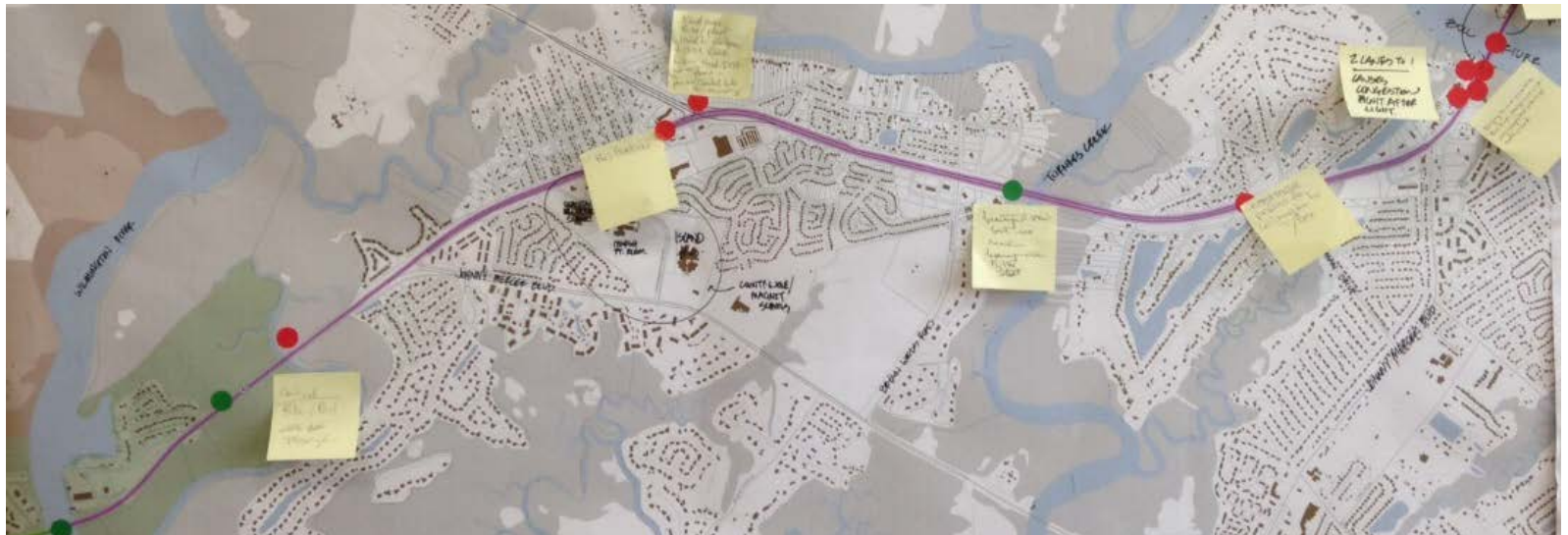
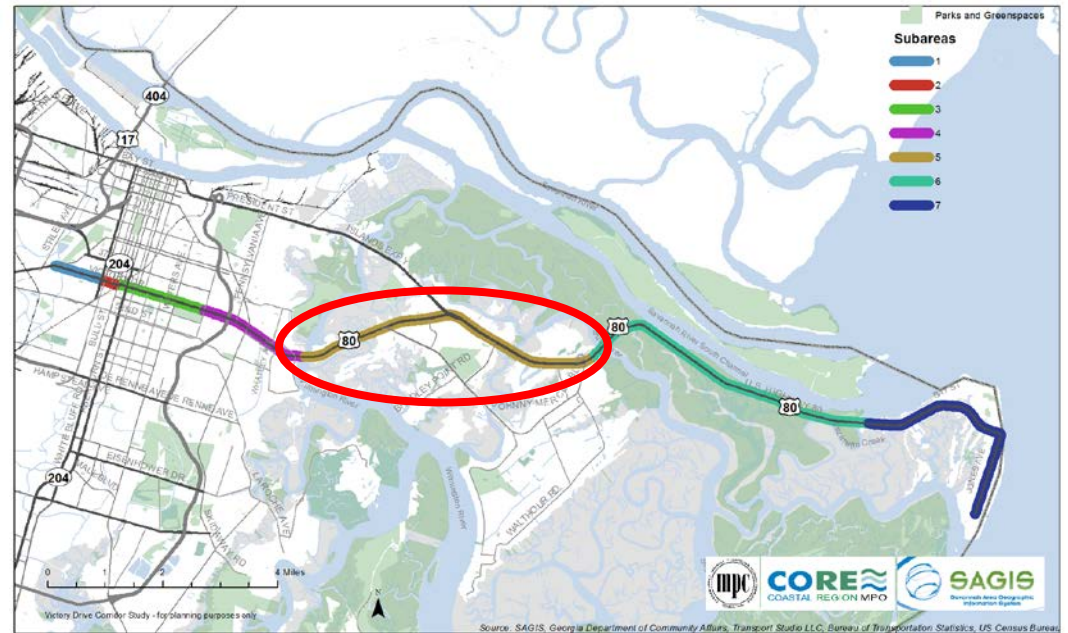
- Great views of marsh
- Planted medians are well vegetated
- Wooded buffers to neighborhoods

### TRANSPORTATION

- Bull River bridge needs to be widened
- Lack of consistent bike and pedestrian facilities
- Rumble strips need crossing opportunities

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Corridor opens up
- More suburban feel
- Some commercial is buffered
- Large open ditches



## CHARACTER AREA 6: BULL RIVER TO LAZARETTO CREEK

## LANDSCAPE

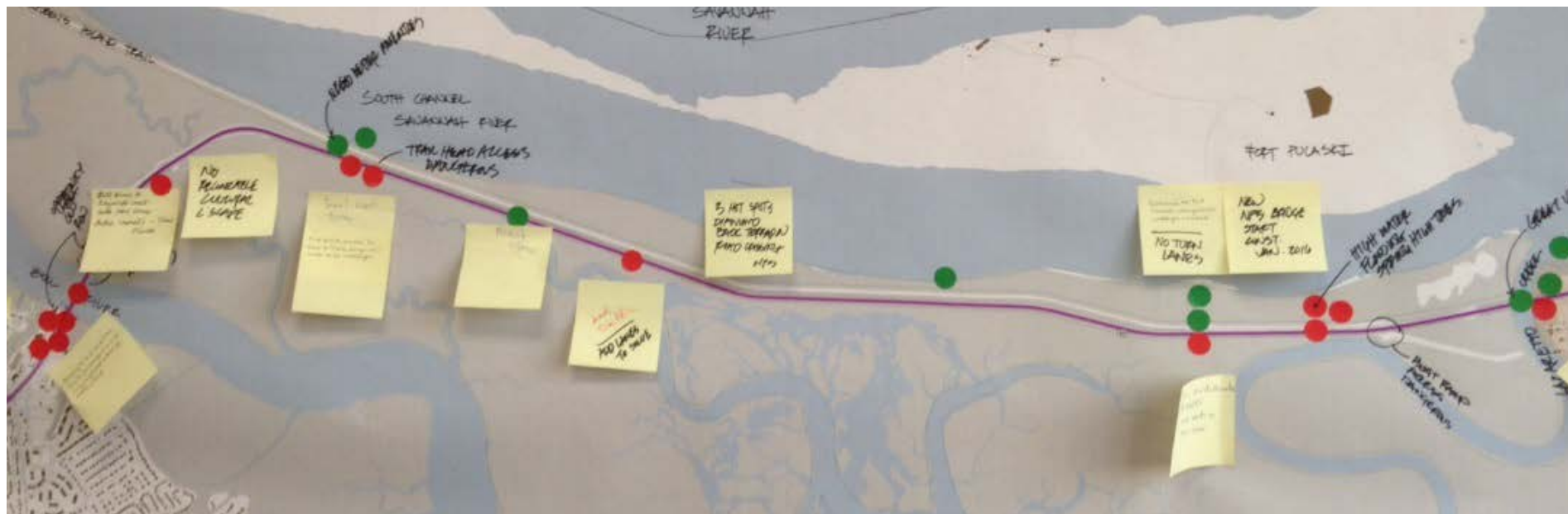
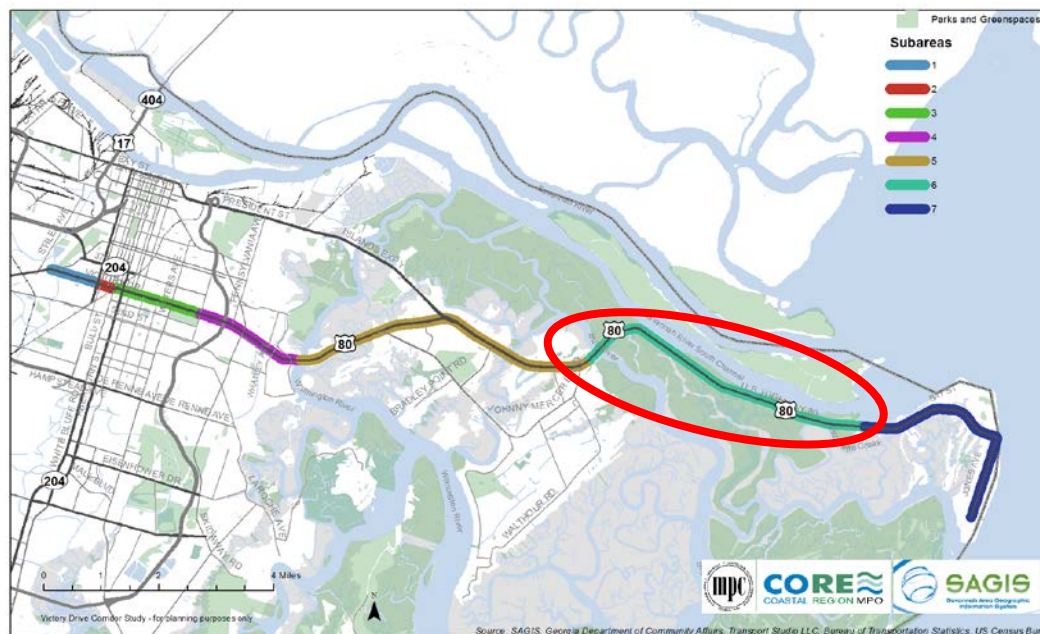
- Diamondback Terrapin hot spots should be protected

## TRANSPORTATION

- Fort Pulaski entrance is a problem
- Lack of bike connectivity – use old Tybee Road
- Shoulder too narrow
- Poor soil

## LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- McQueen's Island Trail – great amenity. Needs public facilities and better parking
- Conservation zone



## CHARACTER AREA 7: TYBEE ISLAND

### LANDSCAPE

- Framing opportunities on Butler Avenue
- Memorials lost when library was built

### TRANSPORTATION

- Shortage of parking

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Loss of character on 1<sup>st</sup> Street due to commercialization



## FIELD DOCUMENTATION

In an effort to become more intimately knowledgeable about the corridor and to help validate the information received from the GIS mapping and public feedback sessions, the consultant team walked and drove the corridor. The full length of the Victory Drive Corridor was traversed and analyzed by the consultant team. Data collection included site photos, measurement taking, map annotation and experiential analysis.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Once the corridor data collection process was complete, the team analyzed the various information sources and prepared a list of preliminary findings. These findings include a range of issues and needs, as well as opportunities that exist along the corridor.

Issues and opportunities with the greatest priority are also identified. These are items that the team feels need immediate attention due to one or more conditions. These may include the potential for increased degradation of the historic commemorative landscape, safety concerns and/ or the potential to integrate solutions with another pending project.

It is these preliminary findings that inform and shape the recommendations that are proposed later in this document.



## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

This information is a brief summary of the corridor assessment team's initial findings.

### CHARACTER AREA 1:

#### OGEECHEE ROAD TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD

##### LANDSCAPE

- Median is too narrow – four foot width between curb, they are poorly maintained, no mulch
- Pyracantha is not appropriate as a median planting, grows too quickly to maintain
- Lack of framing elements – Live Oaks or Sabal Palms
- There are voids where some of the palms could be replaced
- Loss of curb and lack of mulch contributing to significant soil erosion in medians
- Private plant and other materials encroaching in numerous places onto public sidewalk
- Myers Park trees need to be limbed up to open visibility and allow more light

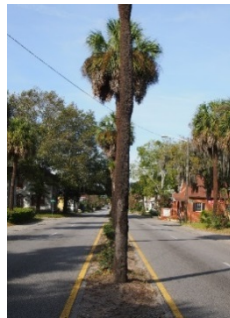
##### TRANSPORTATION

- Extremely narrow lanes and right-of-way
- Railroad crossing at Bull Street creates a difficult intersection to negotiate, especially for pedestrians
- Traffic counts, existing and 2040 projected, do not warrant four lanes
- Lack of pedestrian connectivity and a lack of ADA compliant crossings
- *Lacks safe bike/ pedestrian routes to the schools\**
- *Ogeechee Road intersection congested and not functioning at an acceptable level of service\**
- Curb has been eroded through repaving over time

##### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Single family residential – typical 15 foot setback from road
- Lack of small pocket parks and community gathering spaces along the corridor
- Stormwater inlets are typically clogged
- Post and chain barricades across median should be removed
- Find opportunity to celebrate Springfield Canal

*\* These items should be considered immediate priorities*



## CHARACTER AREA 2:

### MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD to BULL STREET

#### LANDSCAPE

---

- Bring green into intersection at Montgomery Street
- One West Victory was a missed opportunity to add trees (palms) onto the street to soften building facades. Posted speed limit is 35, which in urban areas like this, allows for a tree to be planted 4 feet off the face of curb. If development standards are in place, trees could be placed in tree lawns all along this section
- This section of Victory once had a median; a median here could once again help soften/"green-up" this section of the corridor. However, space and GDOT design guidelines present challenges to recreating the median

#### TRANSPORTATION

---

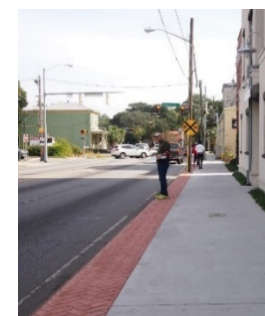
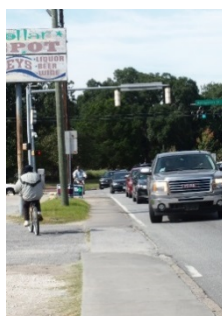
- Open access to parking a problem. Consider access management to maintain capacity of road
- Bike and pedestrian connectivity is an issue both north/ south and east/ west

#### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

---

- The north half of Rockwell Park remains to be renovated to compliment the recently updated southern half of the Park.
- Building setbacks and character differ from north side to south side
- *One West Victory will be a good catalyst project – Need public realm guidelines and design standards in place prior to next developments\**

*\* These items should be considered immediate priorities*



### CHARACTER AREA 3: BULL STREET TO BEE ROAD

#### LANDSCAPE

- This section appears to have the most remaining structural framework, i.e. have the highest integrity, of the entire corridor regarding historic plantings that reflect the iconic cultural landscape everyone recognizes from old postcards. This framework includes Live Oaks on the sides and double palms in the medians
- Medians beginning here are sparsely planted. Bare soil is pervasive throughout. Little groundplane vegetation except for sparse groupings of shrubbery, most of which is exotic.
- There is evidence of the City's ongoing palm replacement program but generally the image throughout much of the corridor seems to cry "lack of funds" to support maintenance efforts
- Some property owners have constructed walls and/or added fill outside of the ROW but within the critical root zone of the live oaks which may adversely impact the health of the oaks
- The historic granite curb has been lost in many areas due to either (1) lack of milling road edge when new paving is done, or (2) curbs have depressed due to pressure of heavy truck traffic occasionally running over curbs when ground is wet

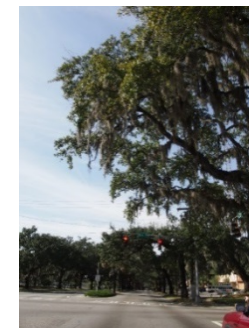
#### TRANSPORTATION

- Bee Road lacks a complete crosswalk connection; Atlantic Avenue has evidence of regular vehicular median crossings/damage at midblock
- Bicycle riders use the sidewalk on north side of Victory Drive; lack of space for shared lanes or designated facility
- Very "constrained" corridor segment
- Need clearly delineated pedestrian connections
- Possible sight distance issues at multiple intersections\*

#### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Maintain historic residential character
- *Several intersections missing ADA ramps\**
- *Light fixtures are hidden by overgrown tree canopies; active management of the canopy may be appropriate to help improve light levels\**

*\* These items should be considered immediate priorities*



## CHARACTER AREA 4: BEE ROAD TO WILMINGTON RIVER

### LANDSCAPE

- Landscape framework is mostly in tact
- Medians throughout are sparsely vegetated except for periodic small groupings of azaleas
- Recent attempts to add native understory vegetation include Muhley Grass and Saw Palmetto. This attempt appears only slightly successful.
- The image throughout much of the corridor seems to cry “lack of funds” to support maintenance efforts
- There needs to be a much simpler base application of plant materials. This base should withstand foot traffic, hold the soil, be easy to rake and/ or blow clean and require less man hours for maintenance personnel.
- Many older live oaks in the corridor express root dominance over the shrub planting areas

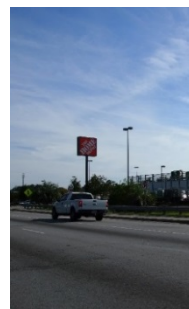
### TRANSPORTATION

- Most congested corridor segment
- Wilmington River bridge has bikeable shoulder
- Difficult bike and pedestrian connections across Truman Parkway
- Possible sight distance issues at multiple intersections\*
- Lack of access management; driveway spacing and median openings below standard
- Lack of pedestrian connections on south side, but consistent worn paths demonstrate desire routes\*
- No pedestrian facilities on either side of road between Whatley Avenue and River Drive
- No formal connection to the Police Memorial Trail / Truman Linear Park Trail

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Businesses use the right-of-way for parking which blocks sidewalk
- Open drainage ditches run parallel to Victory Drive
- Potential pocket park site between Bee Road and Oleander Avenue
- Enforcement needed to eliminate illegal signage and jaywalking\*
- Celebrate the crossing of, and explore potential connections to, the Placentia and Casey Canals

\* These items should be considered immediate priorities



## CHARACTER AREA 5: WILMINGTON RIVER TO BULL RIVER

### LANDSCAPE

- Big open views should be celebrated
- Marsh comes up to causeway at many points
- Native vegetation should be utilized
- Opportunity to provide framework in island upland stretches
- Recent median plantings have added attractive small tree and understory plantings
- There are guardrails in some areas that would make tree plantings (behind the guardrails) more likely to be acceptable to GDOT

### TRANSPORTATION

- *Lane drop west of Bull River bridge may be an operational issue\**
- Lack of consistent bikeable shoulder or bike lane (largely due to rumble strips)
- *Crosswalk maintenance needed in some locations\**

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- Suburban development diverging from prior Victory Drive development patterns along the western segments
- Debris on shoulder requires better maintenance
- Opportunity to implement stormwater best management practices in the large open ditches on both sides of road

*\* These items should be considered immediate priorities*



## CHARACTER AREA 6: BULL RIVER TO LAZARETTO CREEK

### LANDSCAPE

- Remnant palms speak to a landscape in transition
- The ‘Palm Boulevard’ may not be horticulturally sustainable given the coastal salt marsh environment, occasional flooding and salt water intrusion
- Some remnant under-plantings from the past (almost exclusively Oleander) remain, but the predominant woody understory plants are native Wax Myrtle, Saw Palmetto, Yaupon Holly and Groundsel Tree
- The few surviving Palm Boulevard’ plantings appear to be only those plants that were in areas high enough to survive salt inundation, and/or far enough away from road improvements to escape removal.
- Otherwise, we see naturally occurring mostly native understory plants that have germinated from seeds dropped by birds or carried by the wind, coming up around the remnant palm plantings

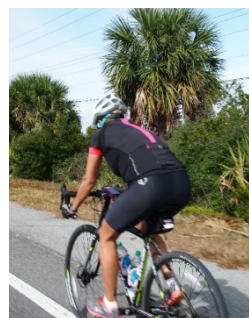
### TRANSPORTATION

- *Congestion and safety issues at McQueen’s island trail entrance\**
- *Safety issue at Fort Pulaski entrance due to turning traffic\**
- Rumble strips are not bicycle friendly
- Vehicular travel lanes are 12’ wide; the corridor has the potential to become more bike-friendly, in part by reducing the width of the travel lanes.

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- The natural character of this segment should remain
- Add interpretive signage
- Potential use of power line easement for bike/ pedestrian facilities

*\* These items should be considered immediate priorities*



## CHARACTER AREA 7: TYBEE ISLAND

### LANDSCAPE

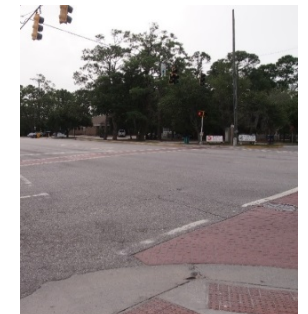
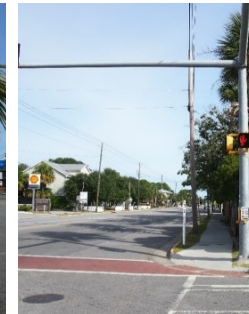
- Partial medians can be implemented
- Introduce landscape islands at intersections
- No palms are currently lining 1<sup>st</sup> Street, but there is room to add them
- Lazaretto Creek bridge, great view
- Medians just east of the Lazaretto Creek bridge are being planted with a combination of native grasses that are typical of the material allowed by GDOT in medians of this width

### TRANSPORTATION

- Traffic speed conflicts with bicyclists and pedestrians – potential for traffic calming
- No dedicated bike facilities – alternate route on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- Constrained pedestrian facilities due to obstructions

### LAND USE / URBAN DESIGN

- South end of Butler Avenue has new design standards; the City has had discussions in the past about recreating the median which once ran down the center of the street.
- Butler Avenue has a consistent “beach” character (i.e. similar materials and scale)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Street lacks a similar “sense of place”; it has no unifying materials, architectural style and scale or consistent building setback
- Unique, eclectic feel to Butler Avenue includes many versions of the white picket fence
- *New streetscape zone has furnishing encroachment\**
- Note that Butler Avenue is signed “Korean War Memorial Highway”



\* These items should be considered immediate priorities

## IV. Recommendations

This document provides general recommendations for the overall corridor and also begins to explore ideas for potential improvements within each character area. This study is intended to be the starting point and reference document for further detailed analysis and recommendations in each character area along the corridor.

### A GREAT STREET

Despite its many modern day challenges, the Victory Drive Corridor has great potential. It was once a great street that drew people from near and far to experience its beauty.

The American Planning Association defines the characteristics of a great street:

- Provides orientation to its users, and *connects well to the larger pattern of ways.*
- *Balances the competing needs of the street* — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc.
- *Fits the topography and capitalizes on natural features.*
- *Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape.*
- *Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design.*
- *Relates well to its bordering uses* — allows for continuous activity, doesn't displace pedestrians to provide access to bordering uses.
- *Encourages human contact and social activities.*
- *Employs hardscape and/or landscape to great effect.*
- *Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day.*
- *Promotes sustainability through minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands, and responding to climatic demands.*
- *Is well maintained, and capable of being maintained without excessive costs.*
- *Has a memorable character.*

Source: <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/characteristics.htm>

Victory Drive today offers many of these characteristics. The Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Victory Drive is to return the entire corridor – from Ogeechee Road to the south end of Butler Avenue - to its potential as a truly great street.

### THE VISION

***As a restored, revitalized, and fully modernized “Great Street”, the Victory Drive / US-80 boulevard and parkway shall:***

***Be unified through a common theme dedicated to the veterans of all American wars,***

***Be a continuous beautiful but evolving landscape,***

***Offer amenities which support all users, where practical, including pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles and public transportation ,***

***Provide a fully functional infrastructure system to include stormwater management and coordinated above and below-ground utilities, and***

***Be regulated by a unified, multi-jurisdictional code***

### Objectives

In support of both the vision statement and the project goal statement, the following corridor-wide objectives will guide the recommendations for victory drive's future. These objectives are organized by the three thematic areas of: landscape, transportation and land use/ urban design.



## LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVES

- Protect the sections of the Corridor’s landscape that have the highest historic integrity
- Put land development standards in place that are focused on cultural landscape preservation
- Don’t force landscape elements in “wild” areas of the corridor; those mostly natural areas where development other than a road or a trailhead will never be permitted. Conserve/restore the marsh/upland interface as a natural wildlife habitat. Restore using native plants that naturally occur within the ecology
- Plant/preserve native plants that celebrate the environment as a way to honor those who fought for this country
- Look for places to plant canopy trees
- Reestablish framework plantings to help memorialize the experience.



## TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

- Increase bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- Improve operations
  - Safe and efficient travel
- Reduce congestion at bottlenecks
- Balance needs of all road users
  - Public transportation
  - Automobiles
  - Trucks
  - Pedestrians
  - People on bikes



## URBAN DESIGN/ LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- Identify potential regulatory/ policy/ enforcement controls
- Define image & character within each character area
- Celebrate cultural resources
- Incorporate pocket parks/ green space/ gathering nodes
- Preserve/ frame key view corridors
- Manage stormwater/ urban ecology
- Explore trail and green space connections to and along adjacent canals



## POTENTIAL DESIGN TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Informed by both the vision and objectives stated above and by the specific findings discussed earlier, the team has identified a series of potential design tools which may be appropriate to consider for use on portions or all of the corridor. These are organized by the three assessment themes: landscape, transportation and urban design / land use.

### LANDSCAPE DESIGN TOOLS AND STRATEGIES:

- 1) Protect/ honor/ respect the historic landscape framework that has the highest integrity. Define where the strongest framework of historic elements exist, then put **development standards** in place that restricts further degradation.

- 2) Adjust to environmental conditions. Landscape elements must be able to withstand intense urban stresses including pollution from automobiles.

New understory plantings, aimed at stabilizing the soil and withstanding urban conditions, should be **native, drought-tolerant species** which require less intensive maintenance regimens versus the exotic species used in the past.



- 3) Borrow space from the street to **enlarge pedestrian zones and/ or greenspace** by replacing asphalt with pavers, benches, small trees, bike racks and decorative lighting.

- 4) Break up urban district facades – **Palms can fit in small urban spaces** without causing structural damage to sidewalks.



- 5) **Corridor-wide maintenance** programs are needed. At a minimum, they should include regularly scheduled pruning, fertilization, debris cleanup, weed control and mulching.
- 6) In constrained urban residential neighborhoods along the corridor, with narrow pedestrian zones (8'-10' width), use **palms as outside framing elements**. While this solution may deviate from the corridor's predominate historic landscape framework, this may be an appropriate, complete streets solution in the highly constrained segments of the corridor.



- 7) In special constrained urban character areas look for **architecture worthy of framing and celebration.**



- 8) Recognize “Cut Thru” areas along corridor. Infill with plantings that obscure visibility to other side and install some form of curb or other **devices to protect plantings.**



- 9) In developed suburban areas where GDOT maintains the medians to achieve clear zone (sight-line/visibility) policies, **utilize canopy shade trees outside the clear zones** to frame the corridor with shade and to buffer commercial development .



- 10) In areas where original palm lined road plantings previously crossed wetlands, **work with the natural landscape** and don't force a rigid framework where it is not needed.



- 11) Judiciously select the places where we **celebrate the “Veteran’s Highway”**. Entrances into special places such as historic sites, approaches to bridges over creeks and rivers, etc. are portals into what makes our community unique. Use these portals as places to make statements that honor our veterans. Replace unattractive barriers, as shown in the picture below, with appropriate portal celebrations.



- 12) Palms along causeways between islands can be useful in screening and buffering overhead power lines. In this natural setting, **palms should be used in informal arrangements** and only in an as-needed basis.



- 13) Another way to show respect and honor our veterans is to **clean up the corridor**.



- 14) **Utilize greywater for irrigation** when available. In particular, the line running from the plant adjacent to Truman Parkway can be tapped for use along Victory Drive.



## TRANSPORTATION: POTENTIAL DESIGN TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

- 1) Explore the potential for a reduced cross-section along portions of the corridor. Based on traffic counts, **not all segments of the corridor need four travel lanes**. For instance, by reducing a 4-lane section down to 2-lanes, the opportunity arises to widen the median, widen the sidewalks, add parallel parking and / or create bicycle lanes.

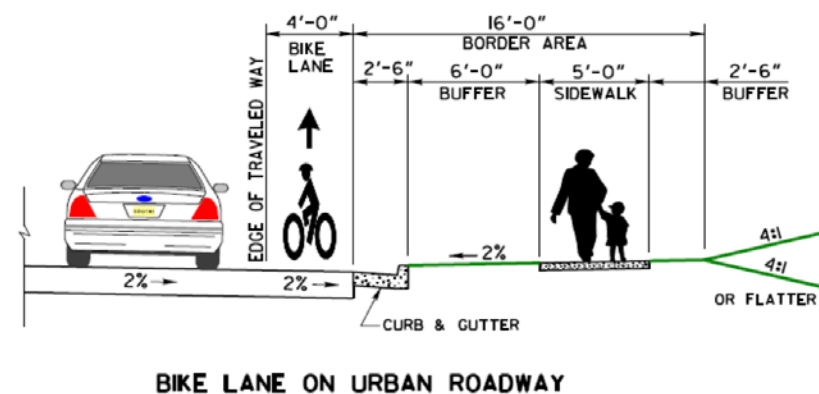
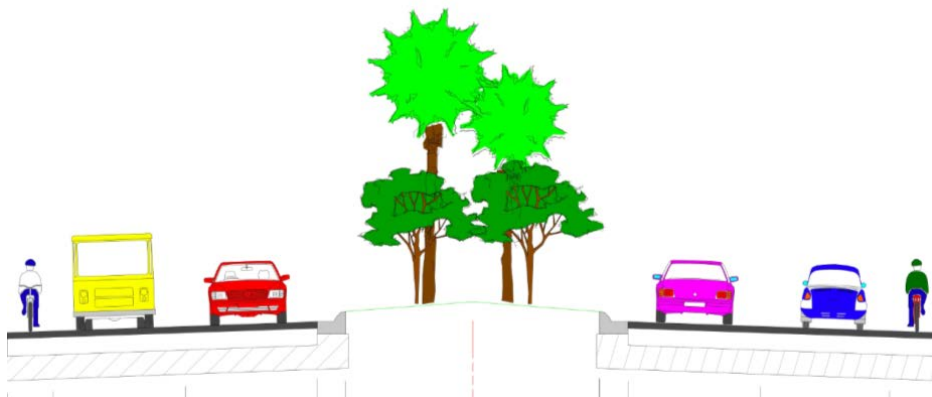


Figure 9.9. Illustration of Bicycle Lane Design along Rural and Urban Roadways.

Source: GDOT Complete Streets Policy

- 2) **Provide bicycle facilities** on or adjacent to the corridor by retrofitting and maintaining bikeable shoulders or restriping to accommodate bike lanes. Analyze parallel corridors for best bike routes.



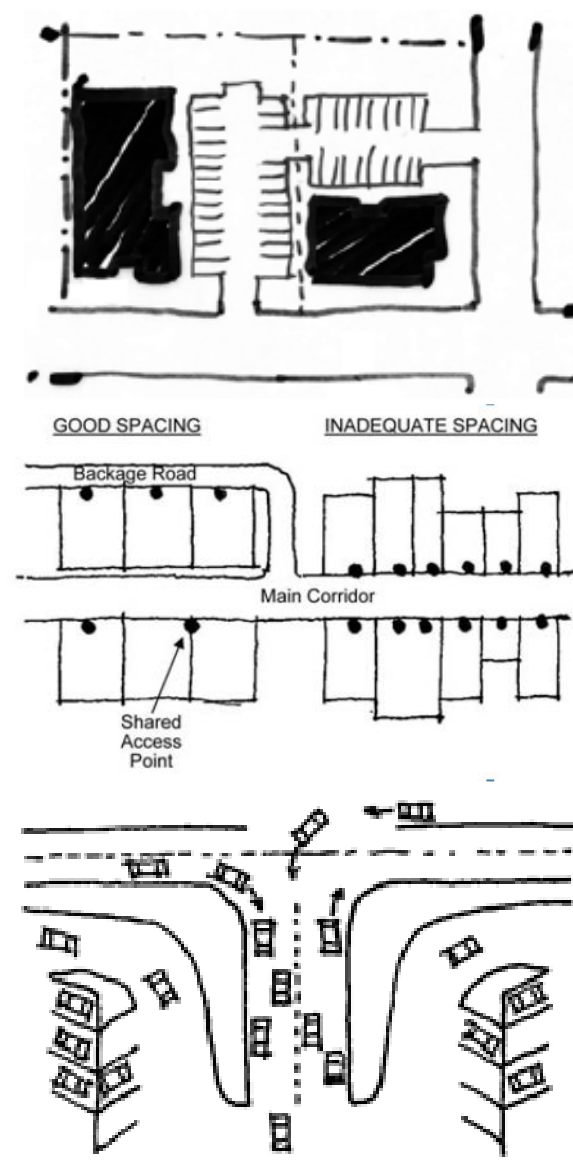
Washington Avenue bike lane parallel to Victory Drive.



- 3) Provide for better connected, **safer pedestrian facilities**. Increase the visual impact of pedestrian crossings through the use of material standards. Use signage and other crossing technologies, such as HAWK signals (High-intensity Activated crossWalk), to increase awareness of pedestrians at conflict points. Improve pedestrian comfort with shade trees and seating options.



- 4) **Apply access management techniques throughout the corridor.** Potential tools can include: overlay district guidelines; inter-parcel access; shared driveways and parking; driveway spacing minimums; driveway design/length; median opening and signal spacing; and connections to parallel route(s).



5) Utilize **traffic calming techniques to slow vehicular travel and increase safety** for all users. Traffic calming bulb-outs are one method of reducing travel speeds. Bulb-outs can be designed to accomplish the following:

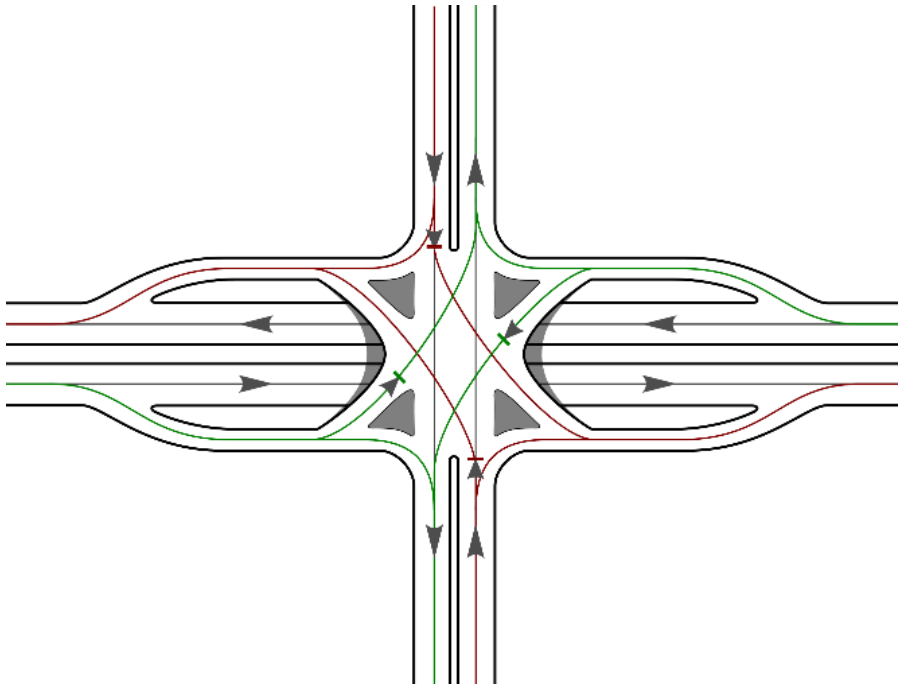
- Reduce traffic speeds
- Accommodate drainage
- Accommodate bikes and pedestrians



- 6) Traffic circles, also referred to as **roundabouts**, are a potential design solution for intersections. They offer several benefits including **improved traffic operations and reduced maintenance costs**. Traffic circles can also be designed to provide a “gateway” experience for corridor users.



- 7) Single Point Urban Interchanges (SPUI) are intended for interchanges that carry large traffic volumes, but have limited space for a traditional ramp network. **Signal phasing is adjusted to efficiently move vehicles through the interchange.** This solution can require a substantial capital cost to implement as ramps may need to be reconstructed. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations will be a critical design consideration. This type of interchange has the potential to reduce the number of signalized intersections and thus potentially move traffic more efficiently. The feasibility of a SPUI will require further study.



## URBAN DESIGN / LAND USE: POTENTIAL DESIGN TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

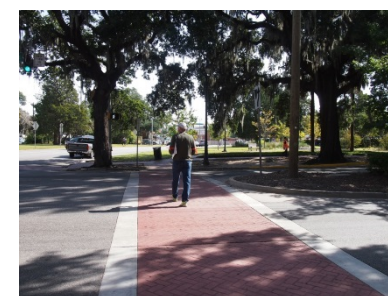
- 1) **Regulatory controls** can be utilized to preserve and enhance the image and character along the corridor as future development and/ or maintenance projects take shape. There are many forms in which regulatory control can be utilized including the establishment of overlay districts, form-based code, design standards and enforcement of new and existing regulations.

**Overlay Districts** can be setup to **guide appropriate development** along the corridor. As necessary within the various character areas, regulations can address architectural styling and character, signage use, typical cross sections, streetscape standards and material languages.

**Form-based code regulates the spatial relationships** and scale of buildings to the street. These regulations can ensure a consistent feel within character areas without restricting land-use types.

Design standards can help **unify the corridor** through the use of consistent elements such as landscape treatment, site furnishings, lighting fixtures, paving and signage.

**Enforcement** is the vehicle through which regulators ensure that controls are being upheld. Current issues which can be improved with strategic enforcement include jaywalking, temporary signs within the public right-of-way and residences with overgrown landscaping.



- 2) Pocket Parks and other potential community gathering nodes should be incorporated into the corridor where feasible. A general rule of thumb suggests that these types of **small pocket parks and civic spaces** should be no further than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile, or a 5 minute walk, away from any user. Currently, the corridor contains stretches of nearly a mile between gathering spaces. To further increase pedestrian use, the corridor should be analyzed for potential pocket parks, civic plazas, **green spaces and gathering nodes** to offer attractive, comfortable destinations and resting points for users.



- 3) **Stormwater management** is a major issue along the length of the corridor. Many areas experience flooding on a regular basis. In addition, current drainage swales are unattractive and poorly maintained. Most of the current stormwater infrastructure consists of underground piping which increases strain on receiving waters without providing visual or ecological benefits to the corridor. To better understand the capacity of the existing stormwater infrastructure and to determine effective solutions, a **corridor-wide stormwater system master plan** should be conducted.

Utilizing an **urban ecology** approach, stormwater best management practices should be incorporated into typical road cross sections. Rain gardens, infiltration cells and the use of pervious pavement are just a few techniques which can help control quality and quantity of stormwater throughout the corridor. Managing stormwater with a system wide approach will help alleviate the demand on the receiving canals while increasing biodiversity and adding aesthetic benefits along the travel ways.

#### What is LID?

**Low Impact Development** is a comprehensive land planning and engineering design approach with a goal of maintaining and enhancing the pre-**development** hydrologic regime of urban and **developing** watersheds.

<http://www.lowimpactdevelopment.org/>



- 4) Incorporate cultural and natural resource **interpretive signage** along pedestrian routes and within pocket parks. For larger, open corridors on the islands, explore the potential for pull-offs to allow travelers to experience key resources and views in a safe location.



## CHARACTER AREA CONCEPTUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings detailed earlier and with the project vision and objectives in mind, the corridor planning team has developed a series of broad recommendations where various tools and strategies might be applied for each of the seven character areas along the corridor.

### CHARACTER AREA 1: OGEECHEE ROAD TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD

- ① A roundabout could improve the Ogeechee Road intersection while also acting as a gateway to the corridor and neighborhood.
- ② A pocket park along the Springfield Canal could add to the gateway experience and provide a potential linear park connection to the Laurel Grove Cemetery.
- ③ Pedestrian facilities should connect the corridor to adjacent school campuses.
- ④ A revised cross section with one lane in each direction, reducing the section from four lanes to two lanes, will allow for improved pedestrian or bicycle facilities or a wider median. The hurricane evacuation function of Victory Drive would need to be considered in conjunction with this concept.
- ⑤ Myers Park is a great asset along the corridor and should be enhanced with improved maintenance and upgraded facilities.
- ⑥ The MLK intersection is an important transition zone between character areas. Elements of the Victory Drive palette must continue along the corridor to provide visual unity.
- ⑦ With the increased dimension gained through the revised cross-section, widen the sidewalk, restore a palm-lined framework to both the sides of the road and, if possible, within the median. Appropriate shrubs and groundcovers should replace pyracantha in the median.
- ⑧ Provide pedestrian crossings including clearly delineated crosswalks and ADA ramps. For major intersections, provide pedestrian signalization and proper north/ south connectivity.

- ⑨ Restore curb to provide safe separation from travel ways and assist in stormwater drainage.
- ⑩ Ensure a unified transition between character areas with a common material palette and overlay regulations.
- ⑪ Provide a smooth, safe transition as lane configuration shifts from four lanes to two lanes.
- ⑫ Address localized flooding issues and introduce a continuous system of BMP's within the typical cross section.



This narrow cross section should be explored for potential methods of relief. Current traffic counts do not require the current four-lane section.



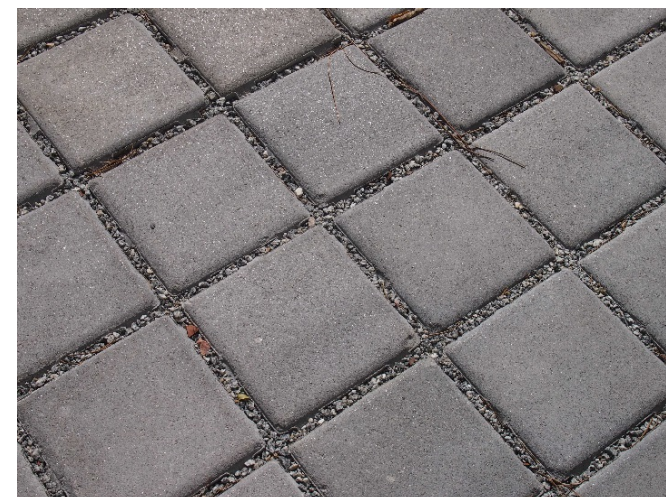
A stormwater master plan should be performed to assess potential system wide solutions to manage flooding. Stormwater infrastructure must then be properly maintained to ensure it continues to function as designed.



## CHARACTER AREA 2: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD TO BULL STREET

- ① Complete Rockwell Park on the north side of Victory Drive.
- ② Provide canopy trees framework along corridor between MLK, Jr. Boulevard and Montgomery Street. Extend the “green” across the Montgomery Street intersection to complete the park-like feel for the block.
- ③ Recreate curb lines to manage parking access along the corridor.
- ④ Improve north/ south bicycle connections at key intersections.
- ⑤ Explore potential for additional public realm improvements along the north side of the corridor between Montgomery Street and Bull Street. This may provide an opportunity for east/ west bike and pedestrian facilities and reintroduction of the landscape framework.
- ⑥ Implement development standards which emphasize the built form and provide for similar character and building setbacks on both the north and south sides of the corridor. Guidelines need to be in place before more new development occurs in this area.<sup>^</sup>
- ⑦ Explore the potential for infill development and/or a pocket park location at the northeast corner of the Whitaker Street intersection.

<sup>^</sup> Potential elements of a corridor-wide set of standards and guidelines.



Inclusion of pervious paving, such as this pavement installed at One West Victory, should be considered a priority when creating design standards for future development.



Enforcement is needed to ensure that pedestrian facilities are kept clean and usable. This dumpster left in the right-of-way on the north side of Victory Drive should be removed immediately.

## CHARACTER AREA 3: BULL STREET TO BEE ROAD

- ① Improve north/ south bicycle and pedestrian connections at key intersections of Habersham Street, Price Street, Atlantic Mall, Waters Avenue and Bee Road.
- ② Encourage east/ west bicycle traffic to utilize alternate parallel routes such as Washington Avenue.
- ③ Improve east/ west pedestrian facilities including clearly delineated crosswalks, ADA compliant ramps and proper signalization.
- ④ Coordinate traffic signals to encourage east/ west flow.
- ⑤ Implement corridor development standards for curb cuts, driveway throat lengths and access management.^
- ⑥ Improve lighting levels – explore pedestrian-scale lighting on the corridor. Prune/manage canopies to allow light fixtures to function at full capacity.^
- ⑦ Address localized flooding issues. Introduce stormwater BMP's along the length of the corridor in a system wide management approach.^
- ⑧ Restore median curb and re-vegetate the groundplane with urban and ecologically appropriate species.
- ⑨ Restore lost segments of the historic landscape framework – recreate the “parkway” feel.

^ Potential elements of a corridor-wide set of standards and guidelines.



Historic monuments within this area should be restored to prominence.



The Atlantic Avenue crossing should offer preference to the pedestrian. This important north/ south greenway node should be celebrated as one of the corridors greatest assets.



#### CHARACTER AREA 4: BEE ROAD TO WILMINGTON RIVER

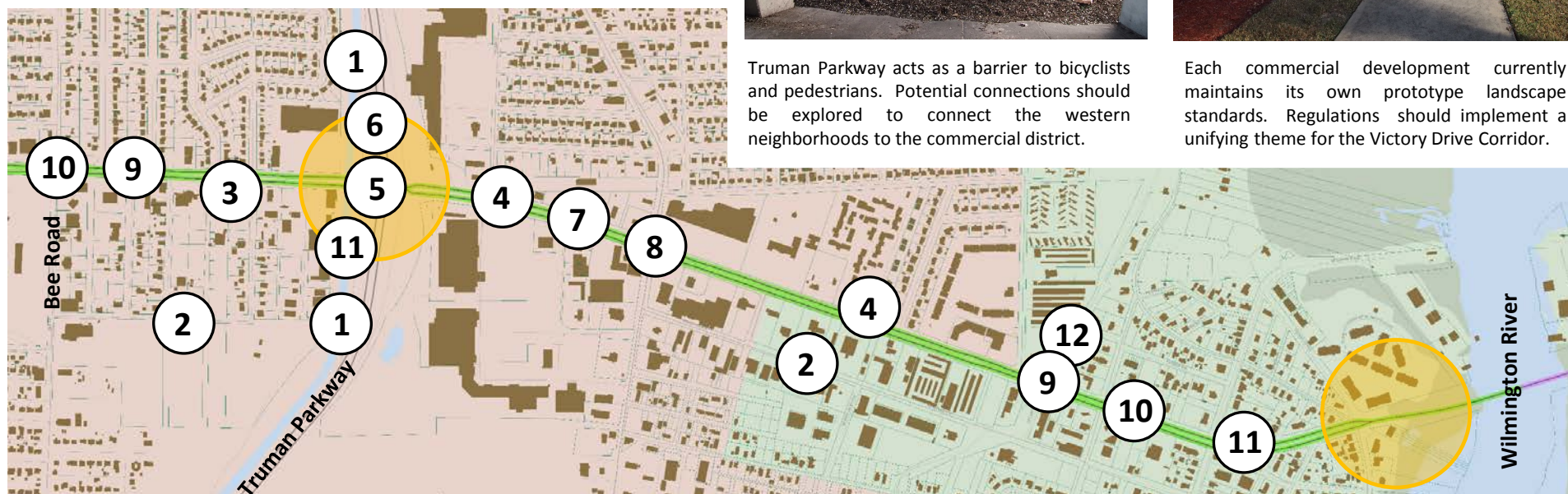
- ① Create connections to the Truman Linear Park Trail along the Casey Canal.
- ② Explore alternate east/ west bicycle facilities on Rowland Avenue and 52<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- ③ Explore non-standard paths, such as boardwalks, to work around canopy trees.
- ④ Coordinate signal timing to encourage east/ west movement.
- ⑤ Explore potential for single point urban interchange (SPUI) at Truman Parkway.
- ⑥ Improve pedestrian and bicycle crossing at Truman Parkway.
- ⑦ Explore the potential to return the live oak framework to the commercialized district streetscape.
- ⑧ Implement development standards to control future commercial development.
- ⑨ Enforce restrictions on temporary signage and jaywalking
- ⑩ Address localized flooding issues and enhance existing swale network with stormwater BMP's and a path network for a functional linear system.
- ⑪ Provide sidewalks on the south side of Victory Drive between the commercial district and the Wilmington River bridge. Return bicycle connections to Victory Drive at the Wilmington River bridge.
- ⑫ Create pocket parks and/or trail connections at Placentia Canal and Casey Canal corridors



Truman Parkway acts as a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians. Potential connections should be explored to connect the western neighborhoods to the commercial district.



Each commercial development currently maintains its own prototype landscape standards. Regulations should implement a unifying theme for the Victory Drive Corridor.



## CHARACTER AREA 5: WILMINGTON RIVER TO BULL RIVER

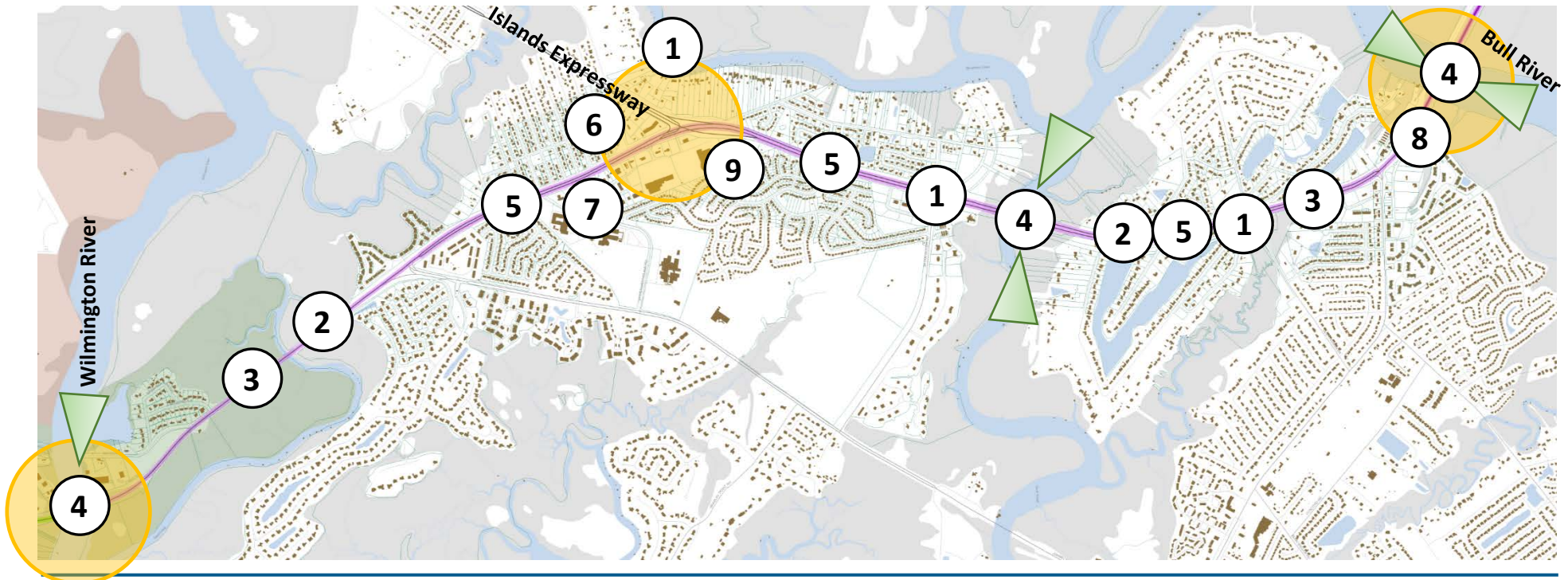
- ① Provide pedestrian crossing facilities at all major intersections.
- ② Provide rumble strips that meet current bike-friendly standards with regard to width, depth, gaps, and placement within shoulder.
- ③ Connect bike lanes and pedestrian facilities where current gaps exist.
- ④ Enhance open views to the marsh by framing with new plant materials, selective clearing and minimizing visual clutter in these areas.
- ⑤ Provide canopy framework plantings for upland island sections.
- ⑥ The intersection at Island Expressway should be celebrated with plantings as a major node.
- ⑦ Large drainage ditches should be vegetated to perform better storm water quantity and quality control.
- ⑧ Improve traffic operations in the area where the lane drops from two to one west of the Bull River bridge.
- ⑨ Commercial development to mimic residential character in terms of buffering, form and setbacks.



The combination of narrow shoulder and roughly grooved rumble strips makes bike riding uncomfortable. Proper bike lanes should be connected throughout this stretch.



A framework of canopy trees should be implemented along the corridor. In addition, large swales should be vegetated to function as rain gardens.



#### CHARACTER AREA 6: BULL RIVER TO LAZARETTO CREEK

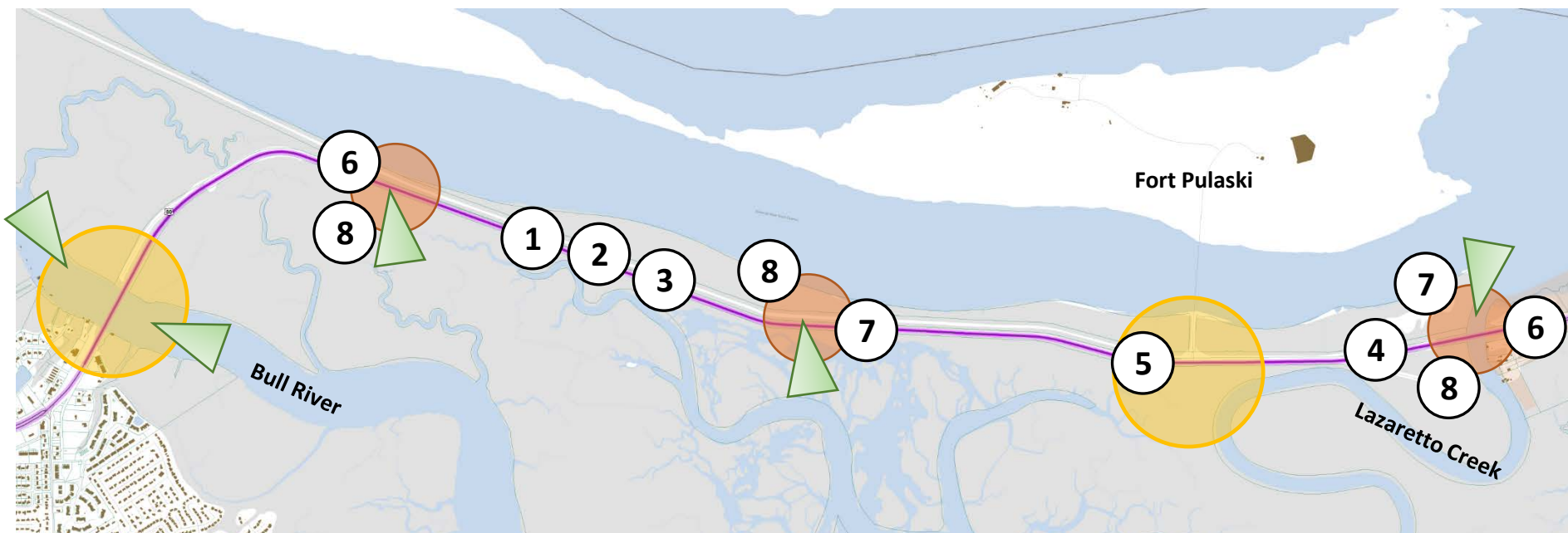
- ① Palms utilized only to screen utilities, no formal planting arrangements.
- ② Utilize only native landscape species.
- ③ Comply with NPS Management Plan aspiration for a wilderness environment on McQueen's Island.
- ④ Provide bike lane connection to Tybee Island.
- ⑤ Reconfigure lane shift at the Fort Pulaski entrance to improve safety.
- ⑥ Address safety issues at McQueen's Island trailhead parking and at the Old US-80 boat ramp. Provide safe parking ingress and egress.
- ⑦ Interpretive signage to highlight cultural and natural resources.
- ⑧ Explore potential for automobile pull-offs at key view points.
- ⑨ Pursue a sustainable approach to managing the marsh/upland interface; plant and maintain low non-woody vegetation that is compatible with the marsh environment. Some of these plants are just low grasses that hold the soil. Others do that as well as have beautiful flowering seasons. All should allow for unobstructed views to the salt marsh.



McQueen's Island trailhead requires that cars back out into the US-80 travel way. This safety hazard should be immediately reconfigured.



McQueen's Island trail is a great amenity along the corridor. Connections to Tybee Island are planned and highly recommended.



## CHARACTER AREA 7: TYBEE ISLAND

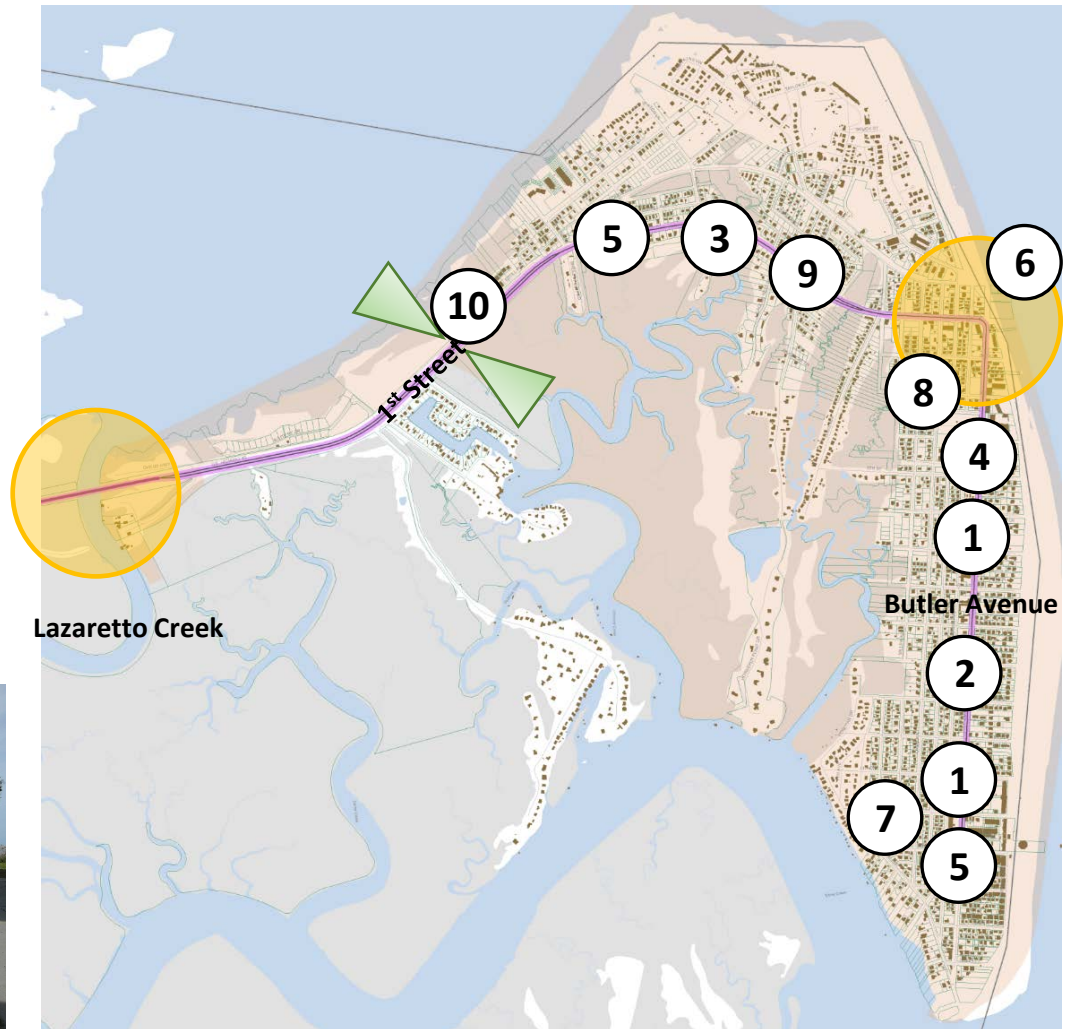
- ① Insert green landscape bulb-outs at intersections to reduce asphalt and provide safer pedestrian crossings.
- ② Explore the potential to reduce lane widths on Butler Avenue for short segments to provide space for small landscape medians or green space.
- ③ Add palms to the 1<sup>st</sup> Street framework.
- ④ Consider extending the South Butler Avenue streetscape improvements up the entire Butler Avenue section.
- ⑤ Introduce traffic calming techniques and provide designated bike and pedestrian facilities.
- ⑥ Explore potential concepts for a major gateway transition at the 90 degree turn from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to Butler Avenue.
- ⑦ Implement new standards for locating site furnishings and utilities. Remove them from the pedestrian zone on South Butler Avenue.
- ⑧ Major intersections should receive clearly delineated crossings and pedestrian signalization.
- ⑨ Create design standards for 1<sup>st</sup> Street to provide a consistent character for this section.
- ⑩ Enhance open views to the marsh by framing with new plant materials, selective clearing and minimizing visual clutter in these areas.



Parking meters, utilities and site furnishings should be located within the brick zone as opposed to cluttering the pedestrian sidewalk



1<sup>st</sup> Street and Butler Avenue have two distinctly different characters. Explore a gateway transition at the right turn onto Butler Avenue.



## POTENTIAL PHASE II FOCUS AREAS

During this initial phase of the corridor study, each of the character areas within the western section of the corridor has been explored for potential to become the focus of the next, more detailed, phase of this study. The Phase II focus area will take a more in-depth look at how the preliminary recommendations contained in this study may be further developed and applied as an implementable project. The intent then is that the focus area will serve as a starting point for the initiation of corridor improvements. Four potential focus areas have been identified and the potential of each character area, or portion thereof, to serve as the focus area is discussed below.

### A. OGEECHEE ROAD TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD

This character area offers one of the more exciting opportunities for restoration and revitalization along the corridor. Based on traffic counts, this segment is a candidate for a revised cross-section. This opens up the potential to not only introduce a complete streets approach to the corridor, but also to restore a landscape framework more consistent with the historic character of the neighboring Section C of Victory Drive. Also, as the western most segment, this segment offers an opportunity to create a corridor gateway element at the Ogeechee Road intersection and to connect with, or be integrated into, the GDOT study currently underway.

### B. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BOULEVARD TO BULL STREET

This segment between Montgomery Street and Bull Street contains a section of the corridor which has been degraded over the years as much as any other along the

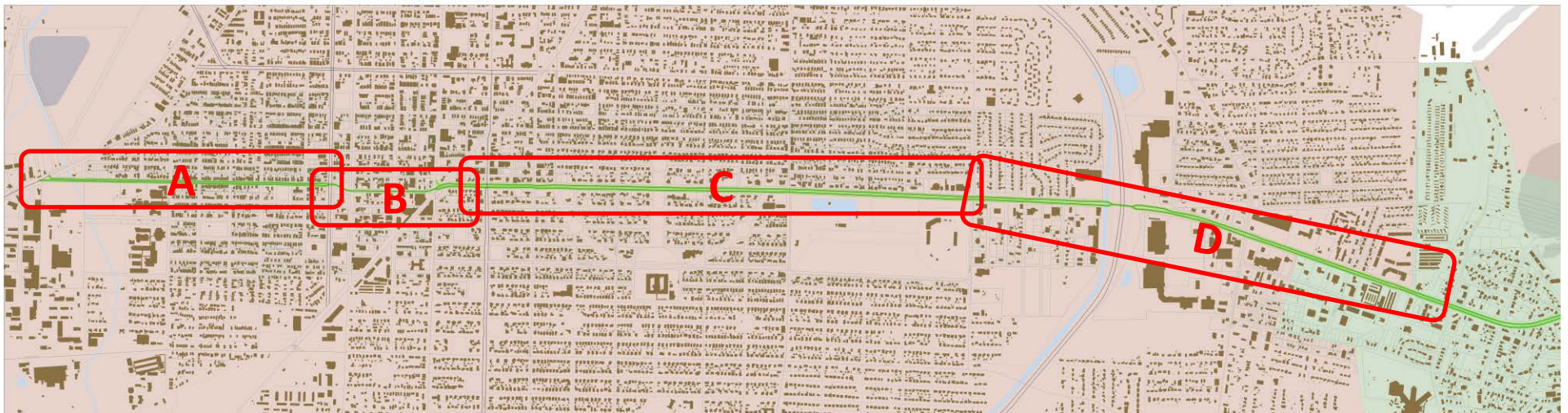
corridor. Through the use of various strategies including access management, form-based code and the implementation of design standards, this segment also possesses the potential for continued investment, revitalization and redevelopment.

### C. BULL STREET TO BEE ROAD

This segment represents the section of Victory Drive which is most intact and therefore has the best potential to be restored to the grandeur of the original historic street. Much of the original landscape framework, including live oaks, palms and azaleas, remains in place throughout this segment. An implementation effort focused largely on landscape, horticulture and maintenance issues could dramatically improve this section of the corridor and unite the fragmented framework. This is also the most appropriate section to explore for potential designations such as the National Register of Historic Places.

### D. BEE ROAD TO SAVANNAH/ THUNDERBOLT CITY LIMITS

This segment has been affected most over the years by commercialization. The historic framework is extremely fragmented here due the affects of increased commercial development, associated traffic-related “improvements” and a lack of regulatory control. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are minimal at best through this section, especially in commercial areas. An in-depth transportation and urban design study of this area will be required to assess potential policy and capital strategies.



## V. Implementation

### STRATEGIES TO EXPLORE

During the initial data gathering phase of the project a series of potential implementation strategies were identified as having merit for further consideration relative to the long-term implementation of the Victory Drive corridor plan.

#### POTENTIAL CORRIDOR DESIGNATIONS

One approach that might help limit further degradation of Victory Drive's remaining historic resources would be to obtain designation as a protected landscape and /or roadway. One or more of these designations could help guide future development and aid in acquiring implementation or maintenance funding. Several potential designations which might apply to the Victory Drive corridor exist. They include:

##### National Register of Historic Places

"The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources". Source: *National Register of Historic Places website: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>*

##### National Garden Clubs - Blue Star Memorial Highway Program

"The Blue Star Memorial Program honors service men and women. This program began with the planting of 8,000 Dogwood trees by the New Jersey Council of Garden Clubs in 1944 as a living memorial to veterans of World War II. In 1945, the National Council of State Garden Clubs adopted the program and began a Blue Star Highway system, which covers thousands of miles across the Continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. A large metal Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker was placed at appropriate locations along the way.

The program was expanded to include all men and women who had served, were serving or would serve in the armed services of the United States. Memorial Markers and By-Way markers were added to the Highway Markers, to be used at locations such as National cemeteries, parks, veteran's facilities and gardens". Source: National Garden Clubs, Inc. website: <http://www.gardenclub.org/projects/ongoing-projects/blue-star-memorials.aspx>

##### National Scenic Byway Program (FHWA)

"The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Established in [Title 23, Section 162 of the United States Code](#) under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and reauthorized and expanded significantly in 1998 under TEA-21 and again under [SAFETEA-LU](#) in 2005, the program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States.

FHWA's May 18, 1995 interim policy provides the criteria for the National Scenic Byways Program. This policy sets forth the procedures for the designation by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation of certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. There are 150 such designated byways in 46 states. FHWA promotes the collection as America's Byways®. This policy also specifies the type of projects eligible for funding and lists the funding priority for grants". Source: FHWA website: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic\\_byways/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways/) (Note that the Scenic Byway designation first requires designation at the state level.)

#### POTENTIAL FOR RE-DESIGNATION OF US 80

Another option to consider is the potential to re-designate the US-80 route off of Victory Drive's western segment. As a state and federal highway, US 80 must adhere to strict regulations administered by GDOT and FHWA. These regulations will limit the potential strategies and solutions that might be applied to enhance the Victory Drive / US-80 corridor.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

Public / Private Partnership – Implementation of this corridor-wide enhancement project will be complex, time consuming and expensive. In today's constrained governmental budgetary environment no one entity will be capable of implementing such a project. A successful implementation program will require the collaboration and long-term dedication of many parties, both public and private sector organizations, all working together to leverage their combined resources to achieve the ultimate vision for the corridor.

## VI. Conclusion

The Victory Drive Corridor Study seeks to return this once great street to a 21<sup>st</sup> century version of its former grandeur. The goal of this project is to create a beautiful, modern grand boulevard/parkway – a complete street that is effective for all users, that balances transportation needs with the desire to restore the historic commemorative landscape framework. The vision is to realize the great street potential of the entire length of the Victory Drive/US-80 corridor from the Ogeechee Road intersection in Savannah to the south end of Butler Avenue on Tybee Island.

Phase I of the study sought to gather information on the historical significance of the corridor and understand the current issues and needs existing today. Public feedback played a major role in this exercise as stakeholders attended meetings to share their knowledge and experiences along the corridor. Based on the data collected, the consultant team generated a series of findings relating to the issues and opportunities along the corridor. These findings led to the Phase I recommendations summarized above; these recommendations all work towards achieving the vision and address ways in which the corridor can be enhanced.

Phase I will conclude with a presentation to the MPC, CORE MPO and key stakeholders of this summary memorandum. The presentation will also include a recommendation on the proposed focus area to be explored in greater depth during Phase II of this study.





*Beautiful Victory Drive*

*Savannah, Georgia*



*A PORTION OF BEAUTIFUL VICTORY DRIVE WHICH EXTENDS FROM SAVANNAH TO THE SEA*





## Appendix:

(Available Under Separate Cover)

A1. Victory Drive Historic Corridor Study Report

A2. Previous Studies Assessment Memorandum

A3. Stakeholder Feedback – Sign-In Sheets

A4. Stakeholder Feedback – Comment Cards



# Acknowledgements

## COASTAL REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

---

Albert Scott, Chairman, Chatham County Commission

Lee Smith, County Manager, Chatham County

Jason Buelterman, Mayor, City of Tybee Island

Mark Egan, CORE MPO Citizens Advisory Committee

Curtis Foltz, Executive Director, Georgia Ports Authority

Keith Golden, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Transportation

Greg Kelly, Executive Director, Savannah Airport Commission

Tennyson Holder, Mayor, City of Garden City

William Hubbard, President and CEO, Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce

James Hungerpillar, Mayor, Town of Vernonburg

Edna Jackson, Mayor, City of Savannah

James Aberson, CORE MPO Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Glenn Jones, Mayor, City of Port Wentworth

Ltc. Clarence Bowman III, Garrison Commander, Hunter Army Airfield

Mike Lamb, Mayor, City of Pooler

Shedrick Coleman, Chairman, Metropolitan Planning Commission

Chad Reese, Executive Director, Chatham Area Transit Authority

Pete Liakakis, Chatham Area Transit Board of Directors

Stephanie Cutter, City Manager, City of Savannah

Beth Goette, Mayor, Town of Thunderbolt

Wayne Tipton, Mayor, City of Bloomindale

Trip Tollison, Executive Director, Savannah Economic Development Authority

## COASTAL REGIONAL METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

---

### STAFF MEMBERS

Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP, Executive Director

Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP, Director of Transportation Planning and Project Manager

Jessica Hagan, Transportation Administrative Assistant

Jane Love, Transportation Planner

Wykoda Wang, Transportation Planner

Project Manager on Behalf of CORE MPO/MPC  
Denise R. Grabowski, AICP, LEED AP,  
Principal, Symbioscity

### CONSULTANT TEAM

---

#### jB+a PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

John Fish, ASLA, APA, Director of Community Planning

Michael Browning, PLA, ISA, LEED AP, Savannah Office Director

Gary Caraway, PLA, LEED AP, Landscape Architect

Lee Maine, Landscape Designer

#### TRANSPORT STUDIOS

Whitney Shephard, PE, LEED AP, Principal

Sarah Rayfield, Planner

#### LONG ENGINEERING

David Jackson, PE, Principal

#### HERITAGE SMART LTD.LIABILITY CO

Jong Hyun Lim, Preservation Consultant & Heritage Specialist

