

2023



**ADOPTED
JUNE 15, 2023**

**COMPREHENSIVE
LAND USE PLAN**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1-1
COMMUNITY BACKGROUND.....	1-1
INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE PLAN PROCESS.....	1-1
WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN?	1-2
HOW TO USE THIS PLAN	1-2
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	1-3
<i>Community Survey Results</i>	1-4
CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE	2-1
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS.....	2-1
<i>Population Trends</i>	2-1
<i>Population Projections</i>	2-2
<i>Population by Age</i>	2-3
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS	2-4
<i>Housing Units by Type</i>	2-4
<i>Housing Tenure</i>	2-5
<i>Housing Trends</i>	2-5
<i>Housing Value</i>	2-6
ECONOMIC INDICATORS	2-6
<i>Income & Poverty Level</i>	2-6
<i>Employment</i>	2-7
<i>Educational Attainment</i>	2-8
<i>Travel to Work</i>	2-8
<i>Agricultural Economy</i>	2-10
SUMMARY	2-10
CHAPTER 3: NATURAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS	3-1
HAZARDS.....	3-1
<i>Flood Hazard Areas</i>	3-1
<i>FEMA Flood Insurance</i>	3-2
<i>Hurricanes</i>	3-2
<i>Tornadoes</i>	3-4
WATER QUALITY	3-4
WETLANDS	3-5
FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS	3-8
<i>Prime Farmland</i>	3-8

Farmland of Statewide Importance 3-8

Farmland of Unique Importance 3-8

NATURAL SYSTEMS GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS 3-9

Natural Systems 3-9

Hazard Mitigation & Resiliency 3-10

Agricultural Lands 3-11

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES **4-1**

 WATER AND WASTEWATER 4-1

 TRANSPORTATION 4-1

Village-Owned Streets 4-1

Traffic Counts 4-1

Freight & Rail 4-2

Transportation Planning 4-2

 EMERGENCY SERVICES 4-2

 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES 4-2

 COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS 4-3

Water & Wastewater 4-3

Transportation 4-3

Recreation 4-4

CHAPTER 5: LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT **5-1**

 HOW TO USE THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND GUIDELINES 5-1

 FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES 5-1

Rural Agriculture 5-1

Residential 5-2

Commercial 5-2

Transitional 5-3

Industrial 5-3

 LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS 5-4

Land Use and Growth Management 5-4

CHAPTER 6: MOVING FORWARD **6-1**

 ROLE OF THE LAND USE PLAN IN LOCAL DECISIONS 6-1

 ACTION PLAN 6-2

 CONCLUSION 6-3

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 2.1 ST. HELENA & PENDER COUNTY POPULATION2-1

TABLE 2.2 30-YEAR POPULATION PROJECTION.....2-2

TABLE 2.3 HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE (2000 & 2020)2-4

TABLE 2.4 HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE (2020)2-4

TABLE 2.5 HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE (2020).....2-5

TABLE 2.6 YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT (2020)2-5

TABLE 2.7 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS OR OLDER2-8

TABLE 2.8 COMMUTING PATTERNS (2020).....2-9

TABLE 2.9 MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK (2020)2-9

TABLE 2.10 AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC STATISTICS (2020).....2-10

TABLE 2.11 PENDER COUNTY CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE STATISTICS.....2-10

TABLE 3.1 FLOOD INSURANCE POLICIES AND LOSS STATISTICS.....3-2

TABLE 3.2 HURRICANES AND THE SAFFIR-SIMPSON SCALE3-3

TABLE 3.3 OPERATIONAL ENHANCED FUJITA TORNADO SCALE3-4

TABLE 3.4 ST. HELENA WETLAND TYPES3-7

TABLE 6.1 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM THE 2023 VILLAGE OF ST. HELENA LAND USE PLAN.....6-2

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1 MEDIAN AGE2-3

FIGURE 2.2 POPULATION BY AGE2-3

FIGURE 2.3 MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING (2020)2-6

FIGURE 2.4 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2020).....2-6

FIGURE 2.5 INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (2020).....2-7

FIGURE 2.6 PENDER COUNTY ANNUALIZED UNEMPLOYMENT RATE2-7

FIGURE 2.7 MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK (2020)2-8

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Southeastern North Carolina is experiencing strong population growth, a trend that is anticipated to continue into the future. While much of this growth has been centered along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, communities farther inland are seeing increased development pressure as well. This update to the Village of St. Helena’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan will help shape the Village’s policy approach to future land development as well as potential investments in infrastructure and community facilities.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The Village of St. Helena is located in Pender County, North Carolina just south of Burgaw – the county seat – and approximately twenty miles north of Wilmington – the region’s most populated municipality.

The community of St Helena was developed for immigrants under the direction of Hugh MacRae. It was in 1905, MacRae began to divide into general regional farms the woodlands consisting of 3,824.25 acres. The farms were laid out in ten-acre plots according to an official company map. A loading depot was built next to the railroad and streets and public areas were laid out. Large barns were built in which mules, wagons, plows and other farm equipment were kept and rented to the colonists until they could purchase their own.

The community was named for an Italian queen and six streets were given Italian names. The first efforts to attract colonists to St Helena brought families directly from northern Italy, according to a U.S. Senate report from the early 1900s. As time went on, other immigrants arrived including people from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia. With their arrival, a mixture of cultures, traditions, cuisines, and languages intertwined to make St. Helena “A Community of Many Nations.”

Today, St. Helena is a quiet, rural village on the frontier of a growing coastal region. It is likely that the development regulation decisions made over the coming decade will strongly influence the community’s character in the future.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE PLAN PROCESS

The comprehensive planning process provides the Village the opportunity to assess where it is today, where it wants to go in the future, and a means to develop the necessary tools to help encourage private development and public investment that meet the community’s needs. The land use planning process represents an opportunity to think strategically about the community’s future.

Specifically, the land use planning process intends to:

- Establish goals, policies, and recommended actions based upon public input
- Provide the basis for development standards and regulations
- Deliver the necessary information to inform future collaborations between the Village and other partners to achieve positive outcomes

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN?

A comprehensive land use plan is the official land use policy document for the Village and should be used faithfully and consistently to facilitate growth, development, and capital improvement allocation. The plan should be used by Village leaders, staff, citizens, private land owners, and developers as the basis for evaluating short-term actions against long-term goals. The plan should be used as a guide in developing and approving land development proposals and for setting capital improvement plans and priorities. Overall, the plan seeks to translate the community's values into policies that will inform responses to the challenges, decisions, and conflicts that accompany land use decisions.

Assuming responsibility for the future is a necessary step in encouraging the kind of development that will produce desired outcomes.

Having a plan will help the Village prioritize its goals, providing a lens through which officials can evaluate policy decisions and balance public and private interests. This vision, created by combining public input with a technical understanding of the issues at hand, will provide a solid foundation upon which decision-makers can build St. Helena's future.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Village's Land Use Plan serves a variety of functions and the plan for the future contains a broad range of:

- **Goals:** Desired ends toward which policies and programs of the Land Use Plan are directed.
- **Objectives:** More specific and measurable than the general goals and in some cases a goal has multiple objectives;
- **Policies:** A consistent set of principles or guidelines for making a variety of local decisions designed to accomplish the goals and objectives. These policies guide decisions by the Village Council, its appointed boards, and staff.
- **Recommended Actions:** Specific actions that can be taken to implement and advance the plan's policies. Many of these recommended actions are non-regulatory in nature and will be addressed through the Village's capital planning or through subsequent planning efforts.

Collectively, the goals, objectives, policies, and recommended actions provide a long range planning function but they also help guide day to day operations. The daily functions relate primarily to the decisions and actions of elected and appointed officials and the Village's administrative staff.

For the Village Council, the Land Use Plan contains Village policies and provides a guide when making decisions regarding future land use and development, public access, protecting the environment, mitigating natural and manmade hazards, or ensuring that the Village's infrastructure and services are adequate. While the Land Use Plan's policies do not have the same status as a local zoning ordinance, the policies and recommended actions and the future land use map help guide decisions on future ordinances and zoning decisions. Moreover, North Carolina General Statutes (160D-604 and 160D-605) require statements of consistency with comprehensive plans or any other locally adopted plan(s) before adopting or rejecting zoning text changes or map amendments. General Statute 160D-501 also requires the adoption and reasonable maintenance of a comprehensive plan or land use plan as a condition of adopting and applying zoning regulations. Amendments to this plan will be initiated and approved by the Village Council/Planning Board.

In addition to guiding development decisions, the Village Council may use the Land Use Plan's policies and recommended actions when making decisions on the Village's capital planning and its annual operating budgets. Other Village boards and committees will also use the Land Use Plan. The Village's Planning Board will use the plan and its policies to determine the consistency of project plans and development proposals with community goals and objectives. Its policies and recommendations will also guide decisions on whether to grant or deny requests for such things as ordinance amendments, rezonings, or special use permits.

Lastly, the plan is a useful tool for developers and property owners because it provides guidance on the types of land use and development that are desired within the community. The plan's policies and recommendations may help developers to craft proposals that are consistent with the Village's goals and objectives, thereby increasing the likelihood that these projects will be approved. The plan also provides information that will help owners and developers better understand the capabilities and limitations of their property or may assist community members in supporting or opposing projects within the community.

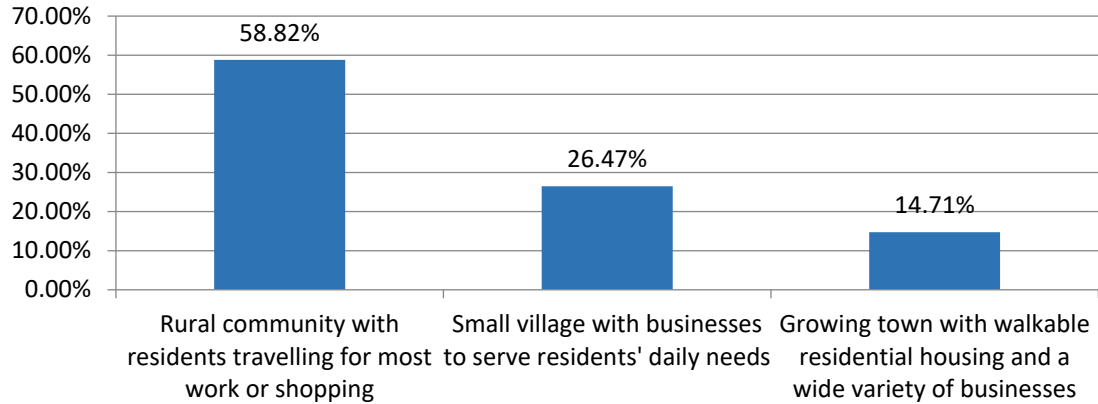
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement is vital to any land use planning process by ensuring that citizens and stakeholders have the opportunity to express their concerns and aspirations regarding the Village's future. Community involvement aids in formulating policies that are consistent with the public's wants, needs, and desires, and helps local leaders determine the most important issues facing St. Helena. A land use plan also conveys the importance of long-range planning, the role the local government plays in encouraging economic development, the impacts of natural hazards, and the importance of preserving natural resources. In addition to holding

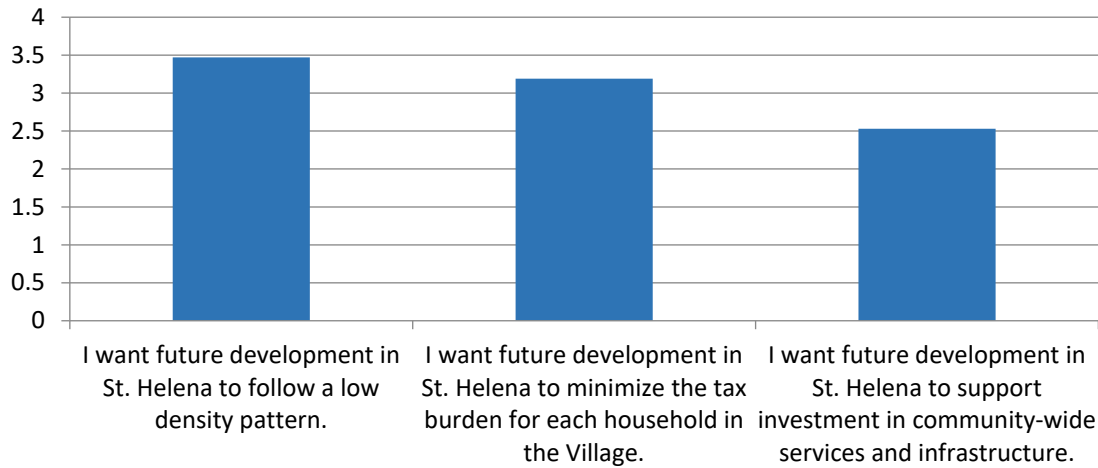
public meetings regarding the Land Use Plan, a community survey was conducted to gather feedback on issues of importance to the Village.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

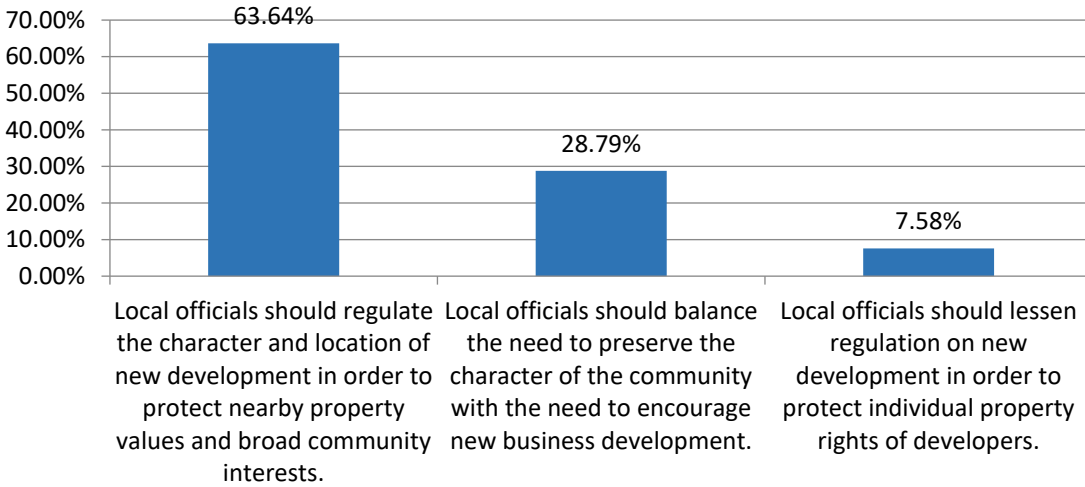
What type of community would you like St. Helena to be in 20 years?



Please rank the following statements by how much you agree with them.



Which statement about regulating new development do you agree with most?



Please rank the following housing characteristics based on their importance to St. Helena

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minimizing development of new housing	40.74%	18.52%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%	12.96%	16.67%
Affordable housing	24.49%	10.20%	18.37%	16.33%	10.20%	6.12%	14.29%
Preservation of existing housing	22.64%	35.85%	5.66%	13.21%	7.55%	7.55%	7.55%
Diverse mix of housing types (duplexes, townhomes, etc.)	8.51%	17.02%	8.51%	4.26%	19.15%	29.79%	12.77%
Housing located within walking distance of community facilities and businesses	8.51%	6.38%	19.15%	12.77%	21.28%	8.51%	23.40%
Housing that is clustered together to preserve natural and agricultural areas	8.33%	10.42%	22.92%	14.58%	12.50%	14.58%	16.67%
Housing for seniors/elderly	4.26%	8.51%	23.40%	27.66%	21.28%	12.77%	2.13%

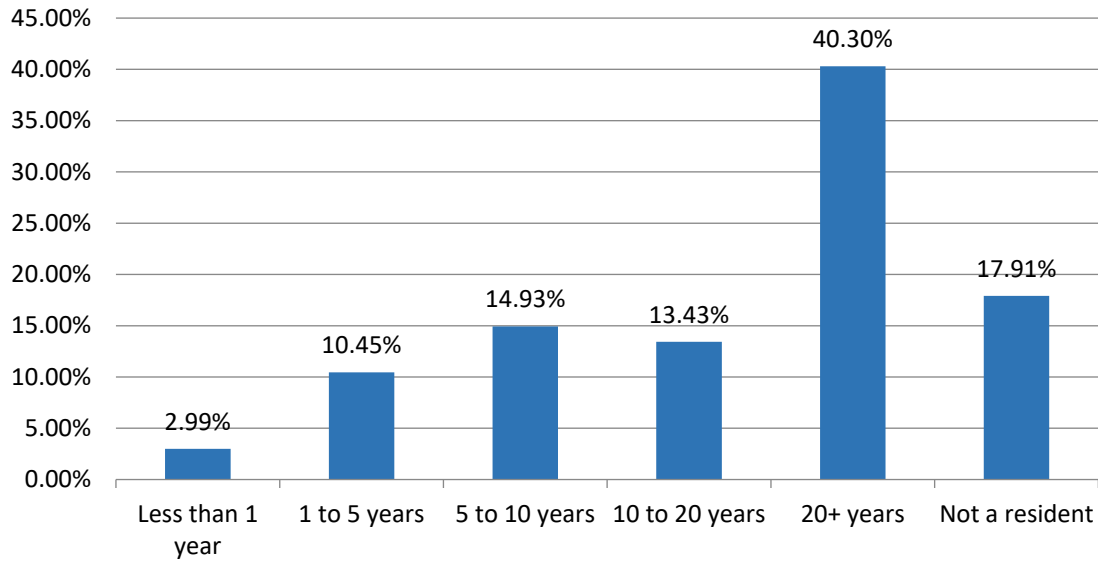
Please rank the following environmental issues based on their importance to St. Helena

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Drinking water quality	28.00%	36.00%	14.00%	12.00%	6.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Wastewater issues (e.g. failing septic systems)	20.41%	16.33%	10.20%	12.24%	14.29%	4.08%	22.45%
Stormwater runoff and flood prevention	19.23%	15.38%	17.31%	19.23%	11.54%	13.46%	3.85%
Public forest and natural areas for wildlife	18.00%	8.00%	14.00%	12.00%	10.00%	14.00%	24.00%
Air quality	17.39%	13.04%	17.39%	17.39%	15.22%	4.35%	15.22%
Waste management and recycling	6.00%	6.00%	10.00%	16.00%	16.00%	34.00%	12.00%
Water quality of streams and other water bodies	4.08%	10.20%	18.37%	10.20%	22.45%	20.41%	14.29%

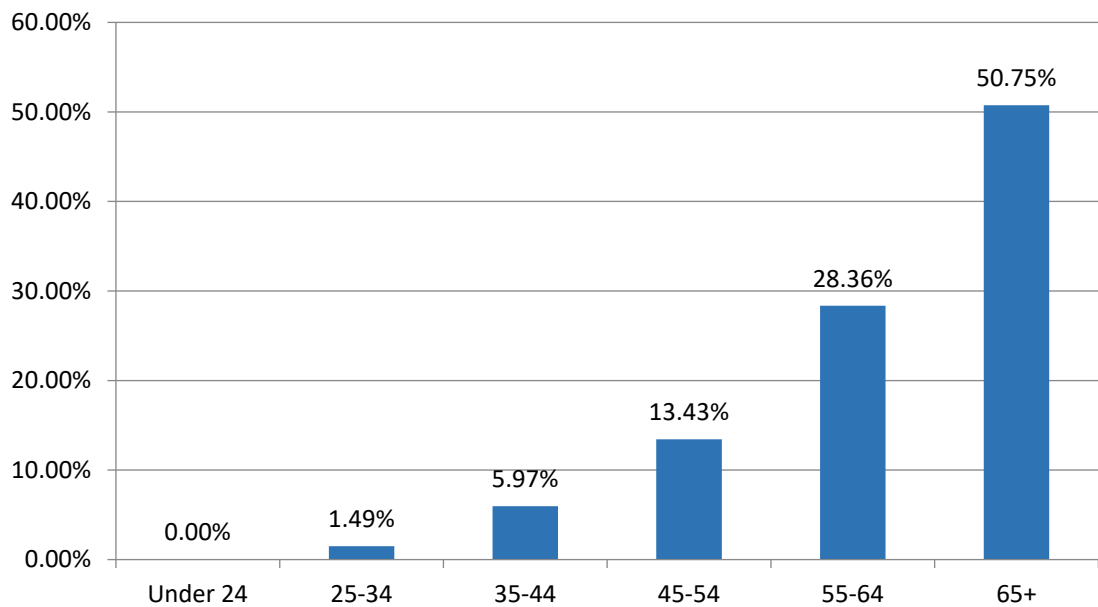
Please rank the following transportation concerns and needs based on their importance to St. Helena.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Road maintenance	44.83%	32.76%	13.79%	6.90%	1.72%	0.00%	0.00%
Road drainage	28.81%	37.29%	11.86%	10.17%	6.78%	1.69%	3.39%
Adequate street lighting	13.73%	3.92%	13.73%	21.57%	27.45%	13.73%	5.88%
Sidewalks and bike lanes	8.33%	8.33%	10.42%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%	22.92%
Traffic and congestion on local roads	5.66%	9.43%	16.98%	26.42%	15.09%	18.87%	7.55%
Public transportation availability	4.08%	0.00%	8.16%	2.04%	10.20%	26.53%	48.98%
Proper signage	3.92%	11.76%	31.37%	13.73%	15.69%	15.69%	7.84%

How long have you lived in the Village of St. Helena or its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)?



What is your age?



Please provide additional comments based on previous questions or other concerns.

Generally, respondents expressed a desire to maintain St. Helena’s rural character and honor the community’s agricultural heritage through limiting new development. Addressing stormwater drainage was also a concern of some respondents.

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CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

This chapter of the land use plan identifies important community characteristics and demographic trends that warrant consideration when formulating policies and long-term growth strategies. The following analysis provides information on the population, housing, and economic characteristics of St. Helena. Such information is intended to allow staff and officials to make growth management decisions based on an understanding and knowledge of where the Village has come from, where it is today, and where it may be heading.

The current population size and the level to which it will change during the planning period can help estimate the demands that will be placed on infrastructure (roads, sewer, stormwater, community services, etc.) which are directly related to changes in population and development. As a result, staff and officials can use the information contained herein as a resource for decision making.

NOTE: Data and statistics contained in this chapter are derived from a number of sources. Figures for years beyond 2020 are considered projections. Statistics are sourced from the US Census Bureau/American Community Survey, NC Office of State Budget and Management (NCOSBM), and NC Commerce among others (sources are provided with each respective table and/or figure).

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

POPULATION TRENDS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, St. Helena’s population has grown by nearly 30% between 1990 and 2020 **as seen in Table 2.1**. While these findings represent strong population growth, Pender County as a whole grew by nearly 110% over the same period. This discrepancy is due to the significant population increase within the coastal portions of the county – particularly Hampstead and Surf City.

Table 2.1: St. Helena & Pender County Population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Year	St. Helena	Absolute Increase/Decrease	St. Helena Percent Change	Pender County	Absolute Increase/Decrease	Pender County Percent Change
1990	321	-	-	28,855	-	-
2000	395	74	23.1%	41,082	12,227	42.37%
2010	389	-6	-1.5%	52,217	11,135	27.10%
2020	417	28	7.2%	60,203	10,936	15.29%
1990-2020	-	96	29.9%	-	31,348	108.64%

While coastal Pender County has experienced the brunt of population growth, inland areas such as St. Helena have seen growth due to nearby commercial services, highway access, and some employment opportunities.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections can vary widely due to intervening factors such as the strength of the economy, availability of jobs, and housing prices. Population projections identify potential challenges and needs that may confront a local government in the near future. The Village, in close proximity to rapidly-developing Hampstead, Rocky Point, and New Hanover County, is likely to experience growth pressure over the coming decades as decreasing land availability and increasing home prices in the vicinity of St. Helena encourage prospective homebuyers and renters in the region to consider previously unexplored property markets.

The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) provides population projections at the County level through 2050 which can be used to develop rough estimates for municipalities. In the 2020 Census, St. Helena accounted for 0.69% of the population of Pender County. A projection of Village growth based on county population projections is found in **Table 2.2**. For infrastructure planning and other calculations based upon these projections, it is wise to use only a twenty-year projection.

Table 2.2: 30-Year Population Projection

Source: US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census, NCOSBM

Year	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
St. Helena	417	448	481	514	546	579	612
Pender County	60,203	64,950	69,689	74,426	79,163	83,900	88,638
Share (2020)	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%	0.69%

If St. Helena continues to contain the same proportion of Pender County residents, it will have approximately 612 residents in the year 2050 according to NC OSBM. While much of Pender County's population growth to date has been within Topsail Township (e.g. Hampstead and Surf City), patterns will likely shift as developable land closer to the coast grows scarce.

A more conservative method of projecting the future population of St. Helena is to apply the previous 29.9% growth rate of the previous three decades (see **Table 2.1**) to the coming 30 years. If the Village grows by an additional 29.9% compared to 2020, its population in 2050 will be approximately 542.

Ultimately, while the opportunity for strong population growth is clear, local policies regarding development will play a strong role in determining the extent and pattern of growth within the community.

POPULATION BY AGE

The age of a community’s population is important for determining future health care needs, school facility expansion requirements, and economic development considerations among other things. In St. Helena, the median age is slightly over 48 years old, whereas the median age in North Carolina is around 39. As a whole, Pender County’s median age of approximately 43 emphasizes the County’s attraction for both retirees and young families.

Figure 2.1: Median Age (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

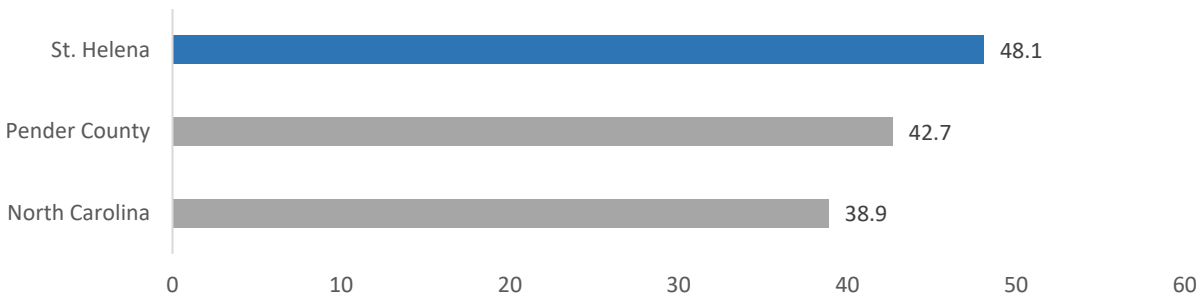
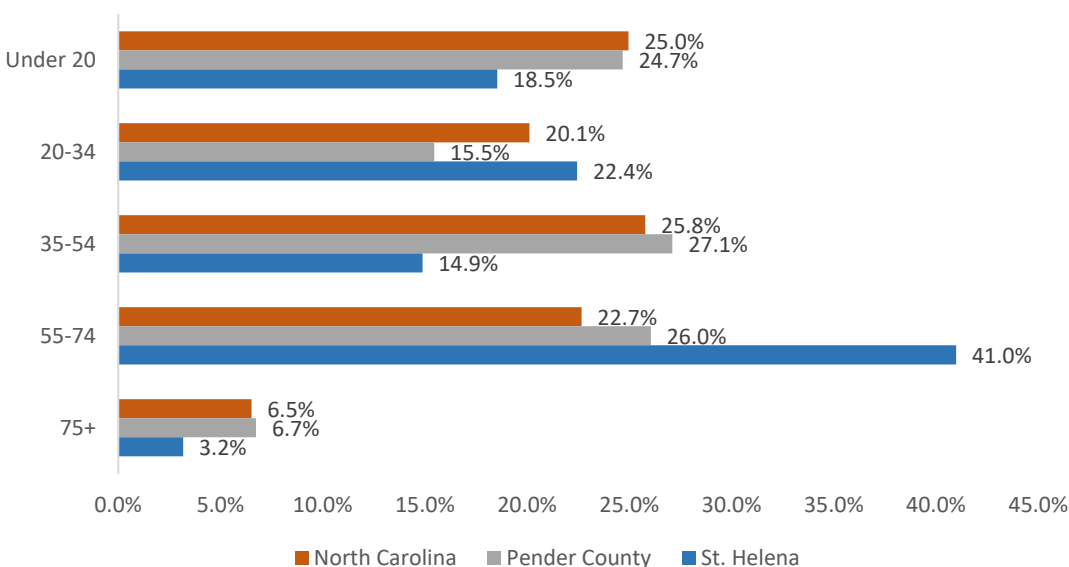


Figure 2.2 displays the population distribution and age cohorts for St. Helena, Pender County, and North Carolina as a whole. This breakdown underscores the higher average age in St. Helena when compared to the state as a whole. This disparity may illustrate the movement of career-oriented individuals and young families to locations with greater economic opportunity. Some choose to return at a later stage in life once they have secured a more portable career or are ready to retire.

Figure 2.2: Population by Age (2020)

Source: US Census



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

Analyzing the existing housing stock enables the community, elected officials, and staff to get an overall picture of the range of housing opportunities available in the jurisdiction. Other housing attributes such as the age of the structure, owner versus renter occupation, and housing value, act as indicators to the nature and characteristic of the existing housing stock and can be considerations when formulating development policies.

HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE

From 2000 to 2020, the Census Bureau reports that the total number of single-family homes within the Village increased by more than 26% (see **Table 2.3**). Single-family homes are the overwhelming majority of housing within the Village, with a transition from manufactured to stick-built construction apparent over the course of the past two decades.

Table 2.3: Housing Units by Type (2000 & 2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Housing Unit Type	2000		2020		Percent Growth/Decline from 2000 to 2020
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Single-Family	126	73.7%	171	88.1%	26.3%
Duplex	3	1.8%	3	1.5%	0.0%
Manufactured home	42	24.6%	19	9.8%	-121.1%
Multi-family (3+ units)	0	0.0%	1	0.5%	100.0%
Total	171	100.0%	194	100.0%	11.9%

Across Pender County and North Carolina, as in St. Helena, single-family homes account for the greatest percentage of housing units. Overall, Pender County and North Carolina have a more diverse mix of housing types due to the broader variety of land uses found within those geographies.

Table 2.4: Housing Units by Type (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Housing Unit Type	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Single-Family	88.1%	70.6%	69.6%
Duplex	1.5%	0.6%	2.0%
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Manufactured Home	9.8%	23.7%	12.4%
Multi-family (3+ Units)	0.5%	5.0%	15.9%

HOUSING TENURE

Nearly 80% of housing units in St. Helena are owner-occupied, while slightly more than 11% are occupied as rental units. Only about 10% of homes in the Village are considered vacant (see **Table 2.5**).

Owner-occupied housing makes up a significantly larger proportion of housing units in St. Helena than at the county or state level. This data highlights the Village's low vacancy rate, less than half of Pender County as a whole.

Table 2.5: Housing Units by Tenure (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Count	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Occupied Housing Units (Owner & Renter)	174	22,812	4,031,592
Owner-Occupied	152	18,390	2,649,849
Renter-Occupied	22	4,422	1,381,743
Vacant	20	6,749	655,530
Total	194	29,561	4,687,122
Percentage	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Occupied Housing Units (Owner & Renter)	89.7%	77.2%	86.0%
Owner-Occupied*	78.4%	62.2%	56.5%
Renter-Occupied*	11.3%	15.0%	29.5%
Vacant	10.3%	22.8%	14.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Percentages of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing are based upon the total number of housing units.

HOUSING TRENDS

More than a fifth of St. Helena's housing stock was built between 1970 and 1979, with relatively steady levels of development in subsequent decades. In comparison, Pender County and North Carolina overall have seen accelerating development of housing units in nearly every decade from 1950 forward.

Table 2.6: Year Structure Built (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Year Built	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
2010 or later*	11	3,450	414,251
2000 to 2009	35	7,816	879,788
1990 to 1999	29	6,643	922,749
1980 to 1989	32	4,339	713,784
1970 to 1979	41	3,221	629,554
1960 to 1969	13	1,422	403,894
1950 to 1959	0	973	321,554
1940 to 1949	11	395	160,520
1939 or earlier	22	1,302	241,028
Total	194	29,561	4,687,122

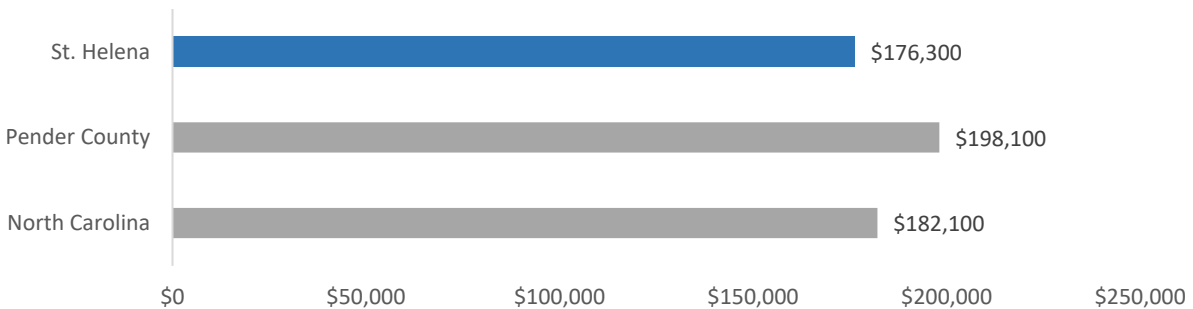
*The number of housing units within the "2010 or later" category does not capture the true number of housing units constructed since 2010. Lag time involved in data updates results in a lower total unit count.

HOUSING VALUE

According to Census data, and as shown in **Figure 2.3**, owner-occupied housing values in St. Helena are lower than Pender County and approximately in line with the state as a whole. As the Wilmington region continues to experience challenges in providing affordable housing, locations like St. Helena will likely experience an increased level of demand due to residents of the region seeking less expensive housing markets.

Figure 2.3: Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau



ECONOMIC INDICATORS

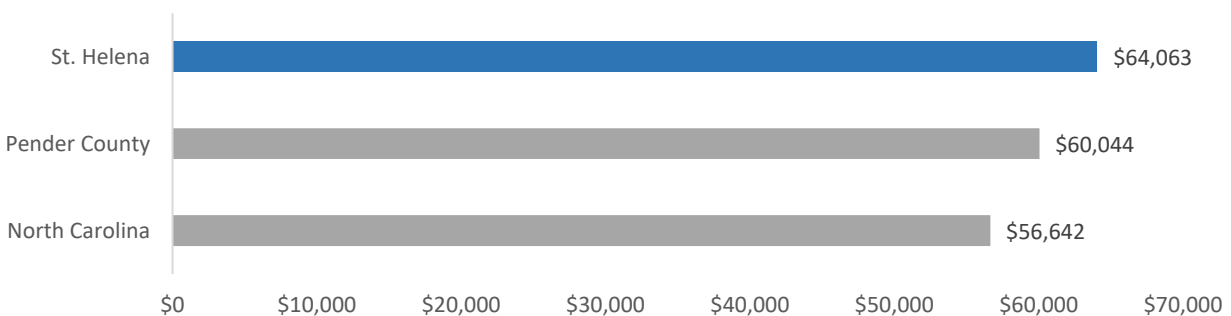
Economic factors such as household income, poverty level, educational attainment, and employment are key indicators in a community's economic vitality and growth potential. Those factors are further explored in this section of Chapter 2.

INCOME & POVERTY LEVEL

Median household income in St. Helena is \$64,063, which is more than 10% higher than North Carolina as a whole. The Village's median income is also higher than that of Pender County. See **Figure 2.4** for more information.

Figure 2.4: Median Household Income (2020)

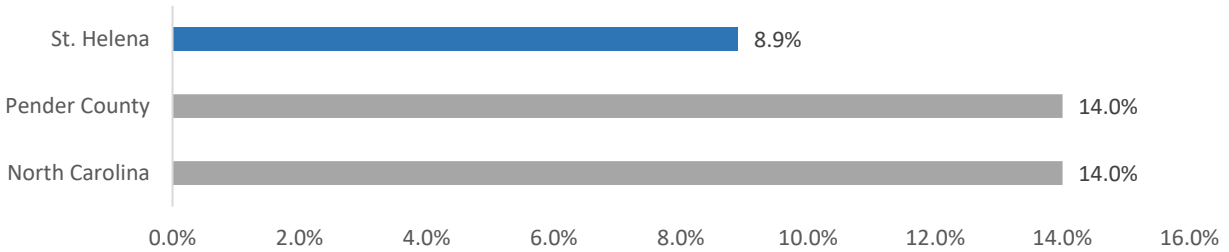
Source: US Census Bureau



The number of individuals living below the poverty level is also a key indicator for the economic wellbeing of a given community. According to 2020 Census data, the United States poverty line for a family of four is approximately \$26,200 per year. North Carolina and Pender County both have significantly higher proportions of individuals below the poverty line than St. Helena. This data points to a larger proportion of Village residents with disposable income to support local businesses than the County or State. See **Figure 2.5** for more information.

Figure 2.5: Individuals Below Poverty Level (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

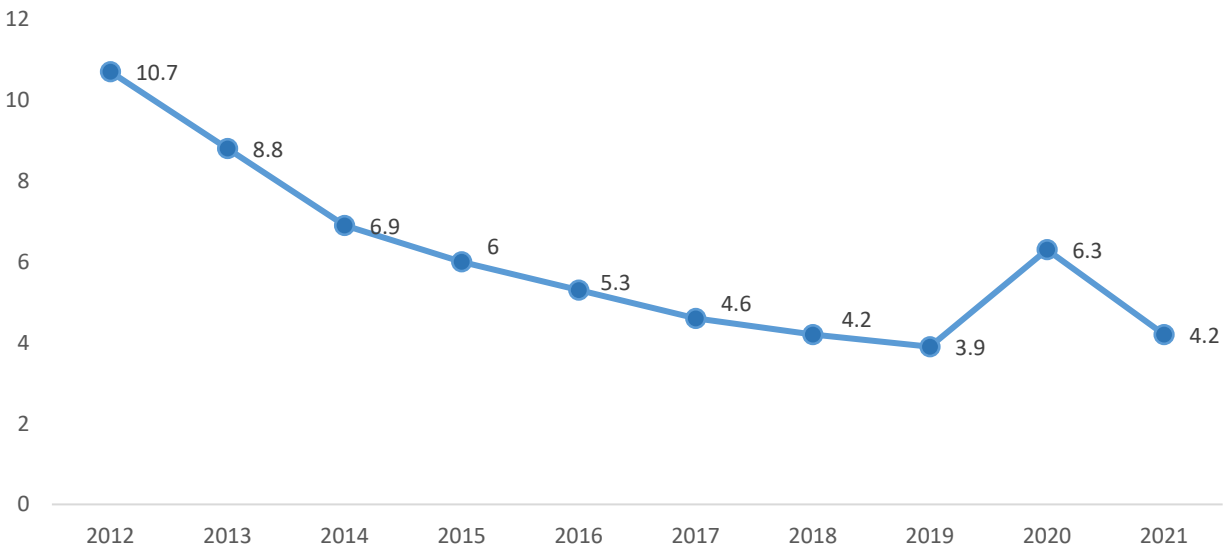


EMPLOYMENT

As with population projections, state agencies do not calculate unemployment rates for populations as small as St. Helena’s. Looking at the trends in Pender County provides a substitute for direct data. Over the past ten years, unemployment has steadily decreased with a slight uptick during the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. (see **Figure 2.6**).

Figure 2.6: Pender County Annualized Unemployment Rate

Source: NC Department of Commerce



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The level of training and education of a community’s workforce is a vital component of economic development efforts. The educational attainment of a community – the highest level of education completed – can be highly indicative of a population’s health, employment, and income level. A more educated community tends to have increased workforce productivity and involvement in society. In St. Helena, there is a higher percentage of individuals with a high school diploma or GED than in Pender County or North Carolina as a whole. As shown in **Table 2.7**, the Village has a similar level of individuals with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher than the County, with a slightly smaller proportion than the State.

Table 2.7: Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years or Older (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

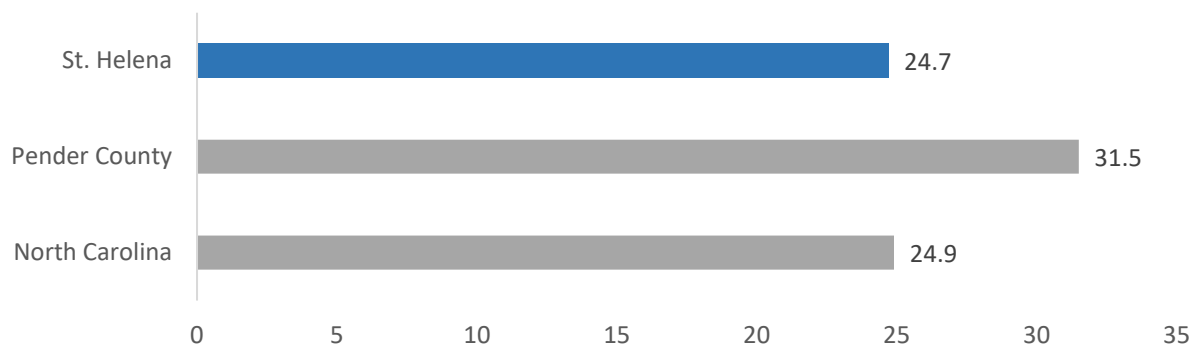
Education	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Percent Less than High School	8.0%	11.3%	11.5%
Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	28.3%	29.0%	32.0%

TRAVEL TO WORK

As shown in **Figure 2.7**, employed residents of St. Helena have a commute of just under 25 minutes, which is in line with the State average and more than five minutes lower than all Pender County residents combined.

Figure 2.7: Mean Travel Time to Work (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau



More than 58% of employed St. Helena residents are employed inside of the County. This compares favorably to Pender County overall, where nearly 57% of workers travel across county lines for work (see **Table 2.8**). However, approximately 71% of workers in North Carolina are employed within their county of residence.

Table 2.8: Commuting Patterns (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Place of Work	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Worked in county of residence	58.4%	42.2%	71.4%
Worked outside county of residence	40.7%	56.9%	26.0%
Worked outside state of residence	1.0%	1.0%	2.6%

Similar to the County and State overall, the vast majority of workers in St. Helena drove alone to their place of employment (see **Table 2.9**). An elevated proportion of Village residents carpool relative to the County and State.

Table 2.9: Means of Transportation to Work (2020)

Source: US Census Bureau

Transportation Mode	St. Helena	Pender County	North Carolina
Drove Alone	78.9%	81.0%	79.3%
Car Pooled	13.4%	9.7%	9.0%
Public Transportation	0.0%	0.5%	1.0%
Walked	0.0%	0.7%	1.7%
Bicycle	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Other Means	0.0%	0.6%	1.2%
Worked at Home	7.7%	7.5%	7.7%

While there are not many employment opportunities directly within St. Helena, the adjacent Town of Burgaw has the center of Pender County Government operations in addition to a small hospital, several schools, and a growing variety of private businesses. Additional employment opportunities in nearby Rocky Point and New Hanover County

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Agriculture continues to make a major contribution to the local economy in Pender County. According to the NC Department of Agriculture, the agricultural industry contributed nearly \$140 million dollars to the local economy in 2017 and ranked 23rd out of 100 counties in agricultural economic output (See **Table 2.10**).

Table 2.10: Agriculture Economic Statistics (2020)

Source: NC Department of Agriculture

Cash Receipts	Dollars	State Rank
Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry	\$97,337,351	20
Crops	\$34,068,222	35
Government Payments*	\$7,790,478	31
Total	\$139,196,051	23

*The Census of Agriculture defines government payments as payments received from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) plus government payments received from Federal, State, and local programs other than the CRP, WRP, FWP, and CREP, and Commodity Credit Corporation loans.

From 2007 to 2017, the number of farms in Pender County moderately declined (2017 is the latest available year in the Census of Agriculture). During that time, the average size of farms in the County increased. In addition, the market value of products sold per farm increased by more than 22%.

Table 2.11: Pender County Census of Agriculture Statistics

Source: Census of Agriculture

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold per Farm (2007 & 2017)		
Year 2007	Year 2017	% Change
\$462,179	\$596,139	22.47%
Number of Farms		
Year 2007	Year 2017	% Change
357	336	-6.25%
Acres in Farms		
Year 2007	Year 2017	% Change
61,571	64,484	4.52%
Average Size of Farm		
Year 2007	Year 2017	% Change
172	192	10.42%

SUMMARY

Overall, the available data suggest that the Village of St. Helena has a strong community foundation that is likely to be attractive to potential future residents or prospective businesses looking to establish themselves within the region.

CHAPTER 3: NATURAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Managing the impact of natural hazards and continuing to leverage the value of natural resources are key factors to consider as the Village establishes its vision for the future. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze the natural resources, environmental conditions, and agricultural lands as they exist today in and around St. Helena's planning jurisdiction. The chapter concludes with goals, policies, and recommended actions for managing the impacts of natural systems on Village residents and vice versa. More specific land use goals and policies are included in Chapter 5.

HAZARDS

Due to its geographic location, St. Helena is susceptible to a variety of natural hazards. These hazards are summarized in the following sections.

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is defined as an area of land that has a 1% chance of being inundated by a flood in any given year. The 100-year floodplain is the federally accepted benchmark for defining flood hazard areas. See **Map 3-1** for the locations of flood hazards in and around the Village, including:

- *AE*: Special flood hazard areas inundated by the 100-year flood (one percent chance of a hundred-year flood event in alluvial plains or riverine systems).
- *A*: Similar to AE zones, but without detailed study regarding anticipated flood depths.
- *0.2% Annual Chance*: Not considered part of the 100-year floodplain but still identified as having elevated flood risk.

In North Carolina, local governments have been granted broad authority to regulate development in flood-prone areas. This includes provisions for regulating development outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year) and the inclusion of freeboard requirements, among other things, to ensure citizens and structures are protected from future flood events.

Preliminary flood maps have been prepared, which are pending adoption at the Federal level. One significant change in the preliminary maps is the introduction of an AO zone with a depth of two feet. AO zones delineate areas of potential sheet flow associated with sloping land. As proposed, this flood zone will be established along the east prong of the Osgood Branch. See **Map 3.2** for a depiction of the preliminary flood maps.

FEMA FLOOD INSURANCE

Flood insurance coverage is required for purchasers of property within the 100-year floodplain in order to obtain a federally backed mortgage. Typically, this requirement is met through participation in the federal government’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), there are approximately five million NFIP policies in force across the United States. Flood insurance through the NFIP is available in more than 22,000 participating communities nationwide including St. Helena, where five policies are in force with a total value of \$1,750,000. Since 1978, there have been no documented losses in the Village. See Table 3.1 for additional details.

Table 3.1: Flood Insurance Policies and Loss Statistics (As of December 22, 2022)

Source: NC Department of Public Safety

	Policies In-Force	Insurance In-Force	Total Losses	Total Payment
St. Helena	5	\$1,750,000	0	\$0
Burgaw	87	\$24,672,500	43	\$2,041,070
Watha	2	\$469,000	0	\$0
Pender County	2,094	\$622,806,800	1,454	\$72,064,119
North Carolina	118,354	\$32,497,908,400	105,487	\$1,995,067,848

FEMA has recently changed the NFIP’s methodology in an attempt to more appropriately price insurance policies. Called Risk Rating 2.0, this effort considers a broader range of data than current insurance pricing. According to preliminary information gathered by FEMA, more than 25% of policyholders in North Carolina are expected to experience a decrease in premiums while the remainder experience an increase. Approximately 65% of North Carolina NFIP policyholders are projected to experience a premium increase of less than \$10 per month.

HURRICANES

One of the main flooding threats facing coastal regions is from hurricanes. A hurricane is a cyclonic storm that originates in tropical ocean waters. As a hurricane develops, barometric pressure at its center falls while its winds increase. Winds at or exceeding 39 miles per hour result in a named tropical storm that is closely monitored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA’s) National Hurricane Center. When winds exceed 74 miles per hour, it becomes a hurricane.

Hurricanes are judged by their power according to the Saffir-Simpson Scale. This measure of the power of a hurricane classifies hurricanes according to a sliding scale from 1 to 5, with Category 5 denoting highest severity. See Table 3.2 for additional information. Since hurricanes derive their strength from warm ocean waters, they generally deteriorate in intensity when they make landfall. The forward momentum at the time of landfall can range from just a few miles per hour to upwards of 40 miles per hour. The forward motion, combined with the counterclockwise surface flow make the front right quadrant of the hurricane the most dangerous in terms of damaging winds and storm surge.

Table 3.2: Hurricanes and the Saffir-Simpson Scale

Source: National Hurricane Center

Category	Wind Speed (mph)	Types of Damage
1	74-95	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed frame homes could have damage to roof, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters. Large branches of trees will snap and shallowly rooted trees may be toppled. Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
2	96-110	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed frame homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
3	111-130	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built framed homes may incur major damage or removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will be snapped or uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
4	131-155	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built framed homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
5	>155	Catastrophic damage will occur: A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.

In the past few years, the Village of St. Helena has been impacted by several hurricanes including Matthew, Florence, and Isaias. Each storm had the potential to cause catastrophic damage from wind and flooding. However, while property near the ocean is often thought of as having the most hurricane-related risks, the most substantial damage from recent storms has occurred to inland communities some fifty miles from the coast.

TORNADOES

The National Weather Service defines a tornado as a violently rotating column of air in contact with the ground and extending from the base of a thunderstorm. Although tornadoes can occur throughout the year, most occur during the spring months of March (13 percent), April (11 percent), May (22 percent), and June (14 percent). The Enhanced Fujita Scale replaced the now-obsolete Fujita scale as the United States' tornado rating system in 2007. The scale was revised to reflect better examinations of tornado damage surveys, so as to align wind speeds more closely with associated storm damage. "EF" categories associated with the Enhanced Fujita Scale are listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Operational Enhanced Fujita Tornado Scale

Source: NOAA, Enhanced F Scale for Tornado Damage

EF-Scale	Winds (mph)
EF 0	65-85
EF 1	86-110
EF 2	111-135
EF 3	136-165
EF 4	166-200
EF 5	>200

WATER QUALITY

The relative condition of surface water and its ability to support aquatic life are important contributing factors to the quality of the Village's natural resources. Surface waters should contain a balanced amount of nutrients and have normal fluctuations in salinity and temperature. They should also have plenty of oxygen and little suspended sediment so that marine life can breathe and receive enough sunlight to grow. Monitoring changes in North Carolina's water quality is important because of the impacts it has on the ecosystem, tourism, and quality of life.

Data collected by the NC Department of Environment Quality (NCDEQ) helps evaluate changing water quality conditions. Factors affecting water quality include:

- *Nutrients*: While essential for plants and animals, they can be harmful if there is an overabundance;
- *Sediments*: Can cloud the water and hamper the growth or even kill aquatic plants;
- *Water temperature*: Changes in normal water temperatures can affect when animals and plants feed, reproduce and migrate;
- *Salinity*: Changes in salinity can adversely affect a wide range of marine life;
- *Dissolved oxygen*: Is essential for animals living in the water body. Reduced levels (e.g., due to an algae bloom or eutrophic conditions) can adversely affect marine life; and
- *Contaminants and other pollutants*: There are a variety of other contaminants and pollutants that can adversely affect the growth, survival, and reproduction of marine and benthic organisms.

As a strategy for the management of North Carolina's waters, the NCDEQ's Division of Water Resources (DWR) assigns classifications to all surface water bodies which identifies the supported uses. See **Map 3.3: Surface Water Classifications**.

The primary classification for surface waters in the vicinity of St. Helena is C: Waters protected for uses such as secondary recreation, fishing, wildlife, fish consumption, aquatic life including propagation, survival and maintenance of biological integrity, and agriculture. Secondary recreation includes wading, boating, and other uses involving human body contact with water where such activities take place in an infrequent, unorganized, or incidental manner.

A supplemental classification used to identify nearby water bodies is *Swamp Waters (SW)*, intended to recognize waters which have low velocities and other natural characteristics which are different from adjacent streams.

WETLANDS

Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act ("the Clean Water Act") defines wetlands as "areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation adapted to life in saturated soil conditions."

"Any person, firm, or agency (including Federal, State, and local government agencies) planning to work in navigable waters of the United States, or discharge (dump, place, deposit) dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, including wetlands, must first obtain a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)." If an activity requires a USACE '404' permit, the state of North Carolina requires that a '401' water quality certification be obtained as well. The '401' certification is basically a verification by the State that a given project will not degrade waters of the State or otherwise violate water quality standards.

Wetlands have significant value that can enhance the Village's resilience to flooding. These values include:

- **Water Storage:** Wetlands are able to store heavy rain, surface runoff, and flood waters, thereby reducing downstream flooding.
- **Shoreline Stabilization:** Ground cover and roots of wetland plants help hold soil in place and prevent sedimentation and nutrient transport.
- **Water Quality:** Wetlands plants can enhance water quality by removing pollutants from surface water runoff.
- **Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat:** The variety of plants, hydrologic, and soil conditions associated with wetlands provide abundant food and cover for animal populations and support a number of endangered species and other rare plants and animals.
- **Recreation and Education:** The rich array of plants and animals supported by wetlands provide significant consumptive and non-consumptive use values such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, kayaking, etc.

Conserving wildlife habitat and maintaining as much mature, swamp, bottomland, and floodplain forest as possible will reduce the severity of natural hazards and the extent of inland flooding. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), conserving one acre of wetlands prevents three acres of flooding. A description of the types of wetlands found in St. Helena's planning jurisdiction is below, the locations of identified wetlands can be seen on **Map 3.4**, and additional data can be found in Table 3.4.

Depressional Swamp Forest – Very poorly drained non-riverine forested or occasionally scrub/shrub communities that are semi-permanently or temporarily flooded. Typical species include cypress, black gum, water tupelo, green ash, and red maple. These are distinguished from riverine swamp forests in the data by having a hydrogeomorphic (hgm) class of flat (f).

Freshwater Marsh – Herbaceous areas which are flooded for extended periods during the growing season. Included in this are marshes within lacustrine systems, some managed impoundments, some Carolina Bays, and non-tidal other non-tidal marshes (i.e. marshes which do not fall into the Salt/Brackish Marsh category). Typical communities include species of sedges, millets, rushes and grasses not specified in the coastal wetland regulations.

Hardwood Flat – Poorly drained interstream flats not associated with rivers or estuaries. Seasonally saturated by a high water table or poor drainage. Species vary greatly but often include sweet gum and red maple.

Headwater Swamp – Wooded, riverine systems along first order streams. These include hardwood dominated communities with moist soil most of the year. Channels receive their water from overland flow and rarely overflow their own banks.

Human Impacted – Areas of human impact have physically disturbed the wetland, but the area is still a wetland. Impoundments and some cutovers are included in this category, as well as other disturbed areas such as power lines.

Managed Pineland – Seasonally saturated, managed pine forests occurring on hydric soils. This wetland category may also contain non-managed pine forests occurring on hydric soils. Generally, these are areas that were not shown on National Wetland Inventory maps. These areas may or may not be jurisdictional wetlands.

Pine Flat – Palustrine (non-tidal), seasonally saturated pine habitats on hydric (saturated) soils that may become dry for part of the year, generally on flat or nearly flat areas that are not associated with a river or stream system. This category does not include managed pine systems.

Pocosin – Palustrine (non-tidal) scrub/shrub communities (i.e. non-Estuarine Scrub/Shrub) dominated by evergreen shrubs, often mixed with pond or loblolly pines. Typically occur on saturated, acid, nutrient poor, sandy or peaty soils; usually removed from large streams; and subject to periodic burning.

Riverine Swamp Forest – Riverine forested or occasionally scrub/shrub communities usually occurring in floodplains, that are semi-permanently to seasonally flooded. In bottomland hardwood systems, typical species include oaks (overcup, water, laurel, and swamp chestnut), sweet gum, green ash, cottonwoods, willows, river birch, and occasionally pines. In swamp forest systems, typical species include cypress, black gum, water tupelo, green ash, and red maple.

Table 3.4: St. Helena Wetland Types*

Source: NCDEQ

Types	Incorporated	ETJ	Total Planning Jurisdiction	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Percentage of Total Wetland Acres
Depressional Swamp Forest	0.72	1.35	2.07	0.05%
Freshwater Marsh	0.00	0.09	0.09	0.00%
Hardwood Flat	54.08	66.44	120.52	2.78%
Headwater Swamp	0.17	2.97	3.14	0.07%
Human Impacted	0.93	0.00	0.93	0.02%
Managed Pineland	1,407.15	1,729.74	3,136.89	72.32%
Pine Flat	168.14	722.25	890.39	20.53%
Pocosin	0.00	56.73	56.73	1.31%
Riverine Swamp Forest	5.98	121.04	127.02	2.93%
Total	1,637.17	2,700.61	4,337.78	100.00%

*Determination of permit requirements is subject to an on-site visit.

FARMLAND CLASSIFICATIONS

As discussed in Chapter 2, agriculture is a key part of the local economy and the heritage of St. Helena. As such, it is important to understand the tradeoffs involved in developing on land that supports farm jobs. Several categories of farmland are described below, with their locations depicted in **Map 3.5**.

PRIME FARMLAND

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service defines prime farmland as land with the best physical and chemical composition for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. The land is characteristic of soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply necessary to produce economically consistent high yields of crops. Generally, prime farmlands have sufficient and stable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, minimal rocks, and a favorable temperature and growing season. Prime farmland is found in abundance within St. Helena’s planning jurisdiction.

FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

Farmland of statewide importance lands include lands that are characteristic of producing economically consistent high yields of crops, such as food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Farmland of statewide importance is found in small pockets within the eastern portion of the Village’s planning jurisdiction.

FARMLAND OF UNIQUE IMPORTANCE

Farmland of unique importance is defined as land other than prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance that might be used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. Examples of such crops are tree nuts, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables. In St. Helena, farmland of unique importance is found in limited areas within the eastern portion of the Village’s planning jurisdiction.

NATURAL SYSTEMS GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Goals, policies, and recommended actions in this chapter relate to natural systems including natural resources, hazard mitigation, and agricultural lands.

Please note the following concerning the usage and definition of a Goal, Policy, and Recommended Action. Each of these terms are intended for a specific component of the implementation and utility of this land use plan. See below for more information:

- **Goal:** A general statement indicating a desired end or the direction the Village will follow to achieve that end.
- **Policy:** A statement identifying the Village’s position regarding the pursuit of a goal.
- **Recommended Action:** A statement outlining a specific course of action the Village may pursue to implement goals and policies.

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Goal 3.1: Maintain, protect, and, where possible, enhance the natural environment and water quality.

Policy 3.1.A: Natural Resource Protection. The Village shall take actions designed to protect and where possible enhance the sensitive natural resources located in and adjacent to St. Helena.

Recommended Action 3.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to de-snag and eliminate large woody debris from area streams.

Policy 3.1.B: Stormwater Runoff: The Village supports efforts to limit the impacts of localized stormwater runoff and nuisance flooding.

Recommended Action 3.1.B.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to maintain the effectiveness of stormwater infrastructure associated with local roads.

Recommended Action 3.1.B.2: Consider opportunities to amend Village development regulations to diminish stormwater runoff created by future development or redevelopment activities.

Policy 3.1.C: Watershed Restoration and Protection: The Village supports the protection and enhancement of watersheds for natural floodplain management and stormwater runoff.

Recommended Action 3.1.C.1: Consider seeking partnerships with Pender County and the Town of Burgaw to develop a Watershed Restoration Plan(s).

Recommended Action 3.1.C.2: Consider pursuing grant funds to assist in developing a Watershed Restoration Plan. Pursuant to Section 205(j)/604(b) of the Clean Water Act, the Division of Water Resources will award grant funds to Regional Commissions and Councils of Government for to carry out water quality management and planning projects.

Recommended Action 3.1.C.3: If pursued, ensure that the Watershed Restoration Plan contains the nine minimum elements required to receive EPA Section 319 funds for implementation of capital improvements projects.

HAZARD MITIGATION & RESILIENCY

Goal 3.2: Conserve and maintain floodplains, wetlands, and other natural features for their storm protection functions and their natural resources giving recognition to public health, safety, and welfare issues.

Policy 3.2.A: Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency Planning: The Village supports proactive hazard mitigation planning, including implementation of the *Southeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)* and related policies.

Recommended Action 3.2.A.1: Consider developing specific and timely recommendations for implementing hazard mitigation measures contained in the *Southeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)* following a state or federally declared natural disaster.

Recommended Action 3.2.A.2: Consider applying for funding from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and other applicable sources for priority projects if the President declares St. Helena a disaster area.

Recommended Action 3.2.A.3: Consider opportunities to strengthen collaboration with area emergency response agencies in preparation of future natural disasters.

Policy 3.2.B: Flood Insurance: The Village encourages property owners to consider obtaining FEMA Flood Insurance, regardless of their location in relationship to the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA).

Policy 3.2.C: High Winds: The Village supports enforcement of the NC State Building Code. The Village shall continue to require construction design standards to meet the minimum required wind loads.

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Goal 3.3: Support those who depend upon working lands for their living and encourage the preservation of prime farmland where possible.

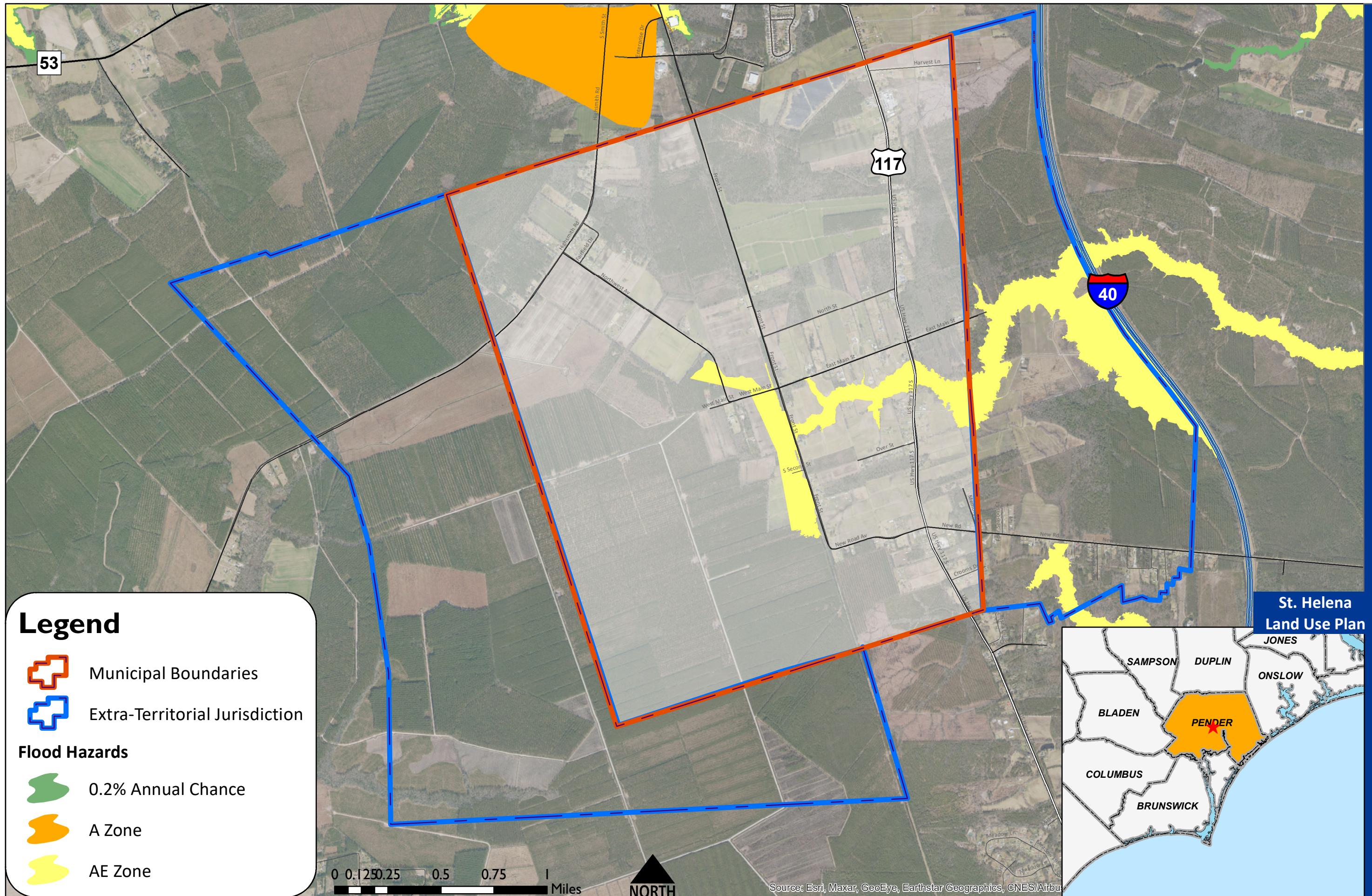
Policy 3.3.A: Voluntary Agricultural Districts: The Village supports the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program. VAD members may be eligible for farmland preservation funds, present-use tax value assessments, waived water and sewer assessments, and increased protection from nuisance suits.

Policy 3.3.B: Present Use Tax Value: The Village supports the present use tax value program that enables agricultural operations to reduce their tax liabilities.

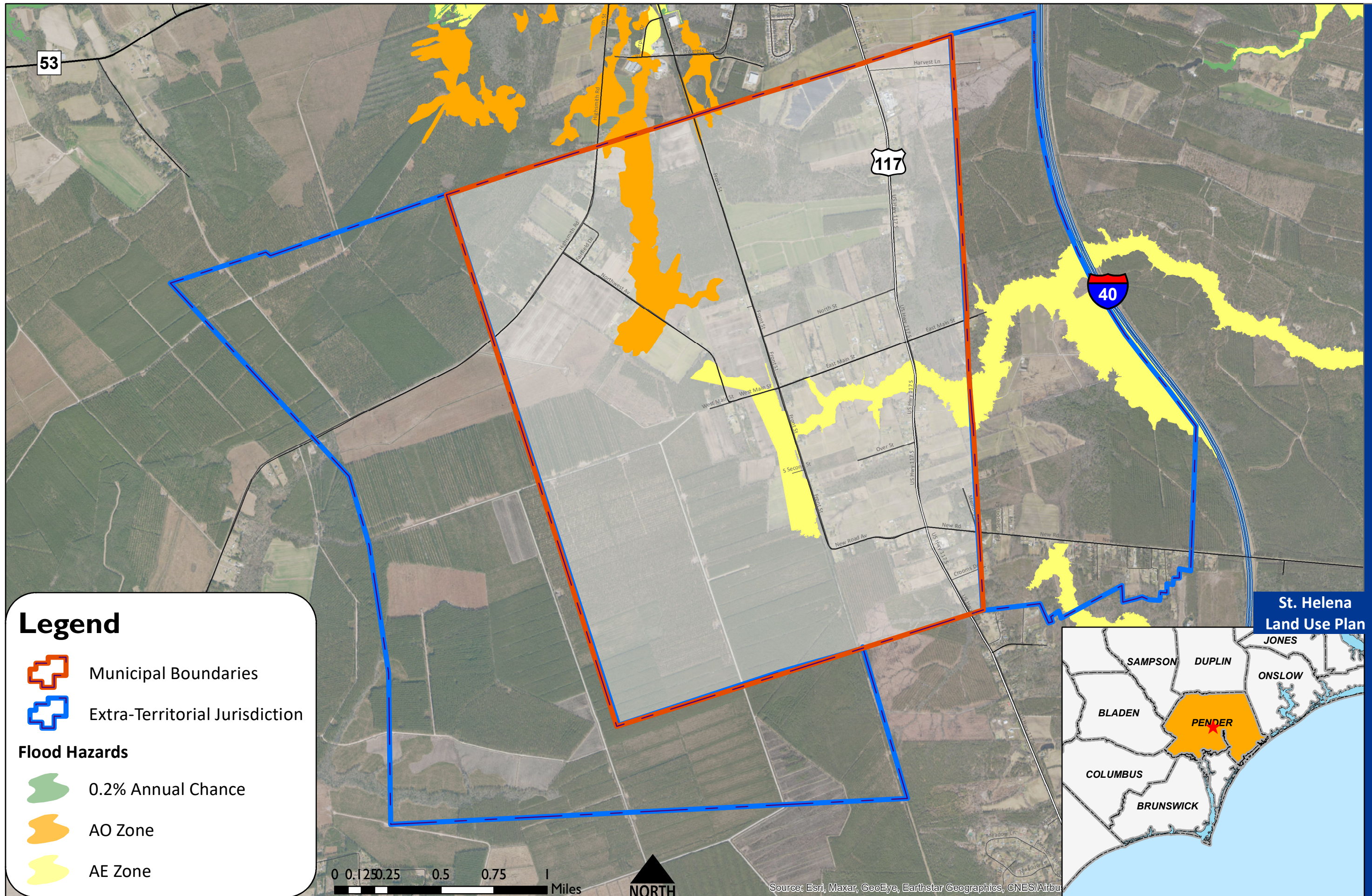
Policy 3.3.C: Agricultural Preservation: The Village supports the preservation of agricultural working lands.

Recommended Action 3.3.C.1: Consider opportunities to amend the Village's development regulations to preserve the agricultural character of St. Helena.

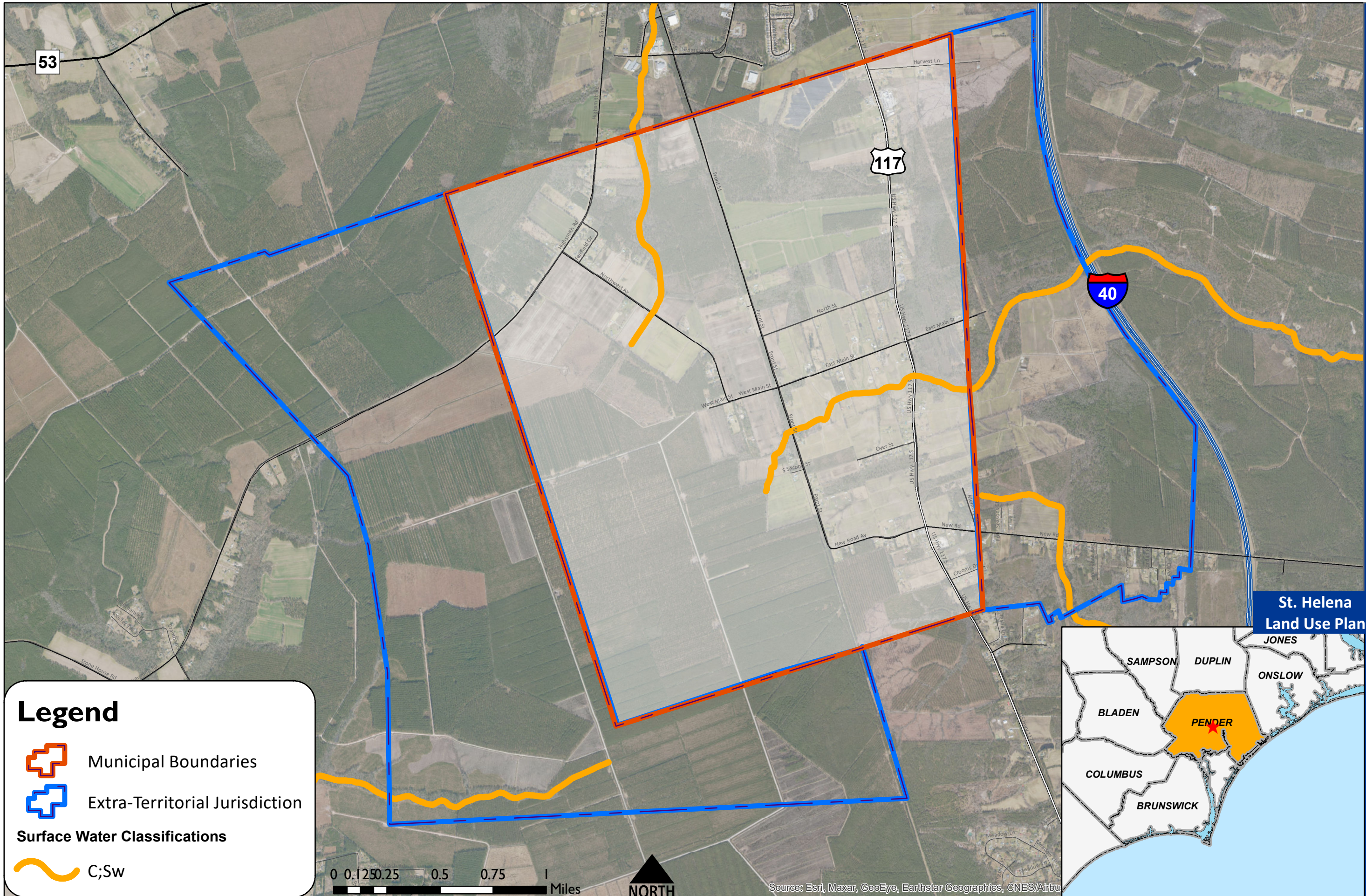
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Map 3-1: Effective Flood Hazard Areas



Map 3-2: Preliminary Flood Hazard Areas

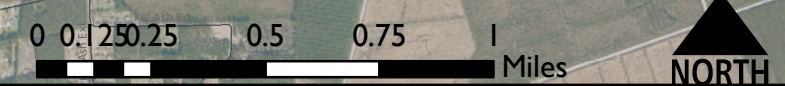


Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction

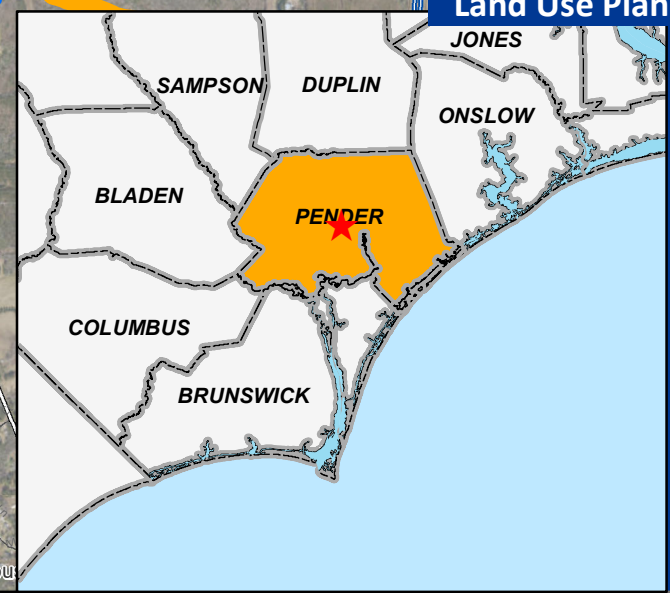
Surface Water Classifications

-  C;Sw

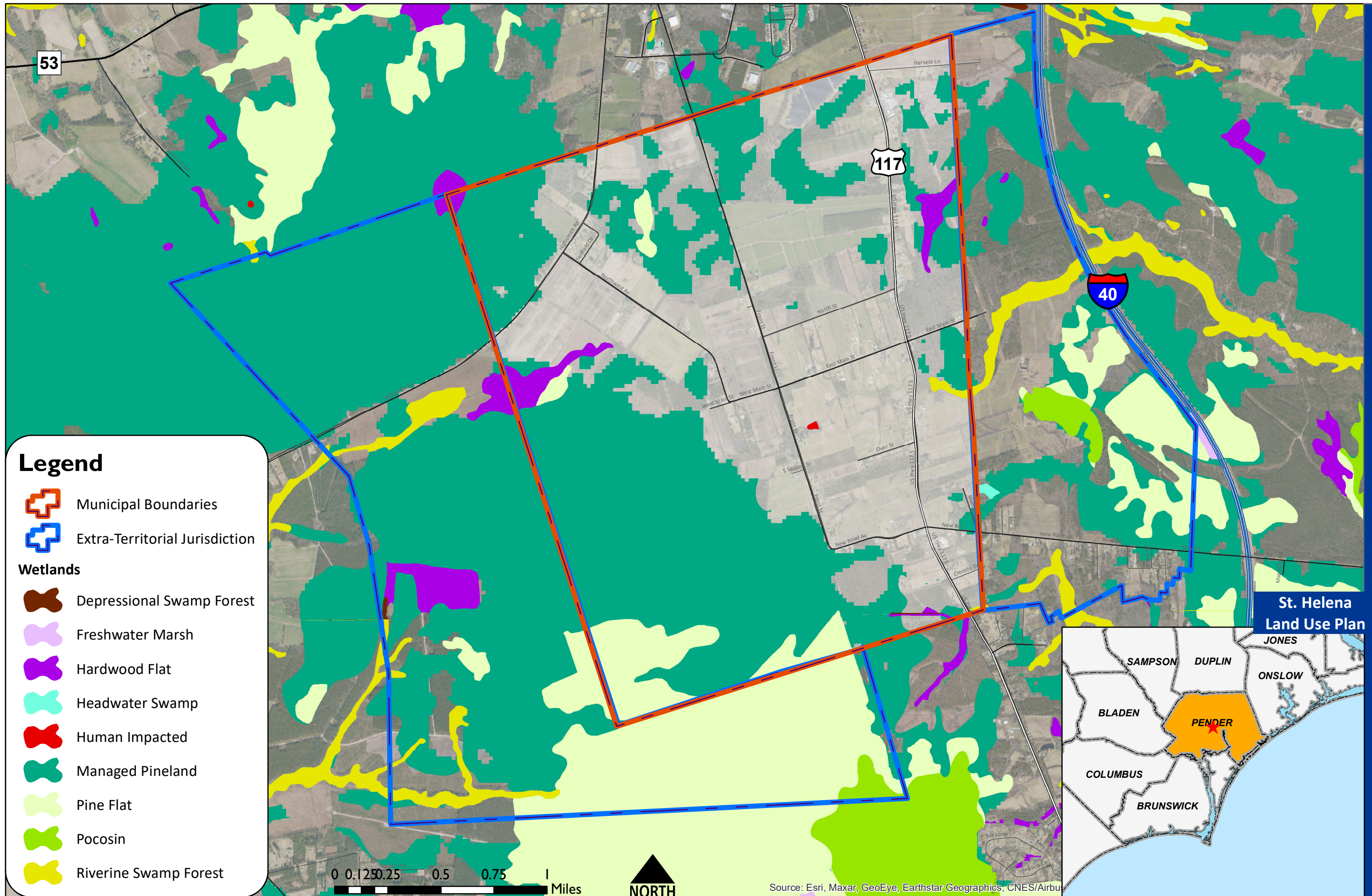


Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbu

St. Helena
Land Use Plan



Map 3-3: Surface Water Classifications



Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
- Wetlands**
-  Depressional Swamp Forest
-  Freshwater Marsh
-  Hardwood Flat
-  Headwater Swamp
-  Human Impacted
-  Managed Pineland
-  Pine Flat
-  Pocasin
-  Riverine Swamp Forest

St. Helena
Land Use Plan



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbu

Map 3-4: Wetlands



Map 3-5: Farmland

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities and services are key components of community character. This chapter provides analysis and information pertaining to each item listed below.

- water and wastewater systems;
- transportation systems;
- emergency services; and
- recreational opportunities.

WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

The Village of St. Helena has neither a centralized water nor sewer system that hooks up to residences or businesses within the community. As a result, structures are almost exclusively served by on-site well and septic systems.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Understanding the relationship between transportation systems and land use planning is vital to connecting Village residents to jobs, services, and other destinations. In addition, planning that considers not just the automobile, but also the pedestrian and cyclist, will allow populations to age in place and encourage residents to remain active.

VILLAGE-OWNED STREETS

The Village receives annual financial assistance from an NCDOT administered State-Aid program (the Powell Bill). Powell Bill funds must be used for resurfacing streets within the City limits or for maintaining, repairing, constructing, reconstructing or widening any street. The funds may also be used for planning, construction, and maintenance of bikeways, greenways, or sidewalks. These funds are divided among municipalities on the basis of population and eligible locally owned road mileage. In 2022, St. Helena's population of 425 and 1.42 certified miles of Village-maintained roadways resulted in an allocation of \$11,596.35 in Powell Bill funds from the State.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

The annual traffic count used for transportation planning purposes is called the Annual Average Daily Traffic Count (AADT). The AADT is the number of vehicles passing in both directions over a single point on a roadway over the course of a year divided by the 365 days in a year. For example, if 36,000 vehicles pass a single point on the road in a year, the AADT is 98.6 vehicles per day ($36,000 / 365 = 98.6$). It must be noted that these annual traffic counts are averages, and certain peak season days may produce traffic counts well in excess of the AADT count.

The highest counts in St. Helena are found on US Hwy 117 south of North Road, with an AADT of 9,000. North of North Road, AADT on US Hwy 117 is 7,500. See **Map 4.1: Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)** for more information.

FREIGHT & RAIL

The ability to move raw materials and finished goods safely through a community can result in a community attracting businesses, jobs, and commercial services. St. Helena is located in close proximity to a number of state and federal highways, providing strong connectivity to the rest of the state. In particular, Interstate 40 is adjacent to the Village's planning jurisdiction and links St. Helena to both Raleigh and Wilmington. These connections provide businesses with the potential to distribute goods to and from St. Helena.

Until the 1980s, the Village was located on a rail line connecting locations further inland to Wilmington. However, the line has been abandoned and the track dismantled. Reestablishing the connection to Wilmington has been recognized as a desired outcome by some stakeholders in the region. However, no funding or timeline for accomplishing this goal has been identified.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Village is within the boundaries of the Cape Fear Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RPO), one of twenty RPOs designated by North Carolina to coordinate rural transportation planning at a regional level. The Cape Fear RPO region includes rural portions of Brunswick and Pender Counties as well as all of Columbus County.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Law enforcement is provided by the Pender County Sheriff's Office. The entirety of the Village is within the Pender Central Fire District, while a small portion at the southern end of the ETJ is within the Rocky Point Fire District. EMS services are provided by Pender EMS and Fire Station 1 in Burgaw.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Recreational opportunities are important to a community's economic and social well-being while also promoting a healthy lifestyle. Community recreation provides an opportunity for stress relief, exercise, and social interaction.

While St. Helena does not have any public parks, it is near Pender County's Pender Memorial Park in Burgaw. This facility includes five lighted baseball/softball fields, three football/soccer fields, two batting cages, a playground, a picnic shelter, and restrooms. Additionally, Village Hall is a location for community gatherings and is available for residents to rent for their events.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Goals, policies, and recommended actions in this chapter relate to infrastructure, transportation, and recreation.

WATER & WASTEWATER

Goal 4.1: Where practical and in keeping with the community’s rural character, ensure that the health, safety, and welfare of community residents is maintained through access to water and wastewater facilities.

Policy 4.1.A: Water and Wastewater: The Village supports efforts to assist property owners and residents who may have challenges with constructing or maintaining well and septic.

Recommended Action 4.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with Pender County Environmental Health on grants or projects to assist community members with failing or failed septic systems.

Policy 4.1.B: Private Utility Services: The Village opposes private water and wastewater utility service within St. Helena’s planning jurisdiction.

Recommended Action 4.1.B.1: Consider opportunities to update the St. Helena Unified Development Ordinance to prevent unintended expansion of utility services.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal 4.2: Advocate for proper upkeep and enhancement of the transportation system serving Village residents.

Policy 4.2.A: Regional Coordination: The Village shall advocate for ensuring that community transportation needs are adequately addressed through Cape Fear RPO Transportation Improvement Program requests.

Policy 4.2.B: Rail Service: Should a project to reestablish rail service through Pender County move forward, St. Helena supports maintaining street connectivity at all existing crossings.

Policy 4.2.C: Pender County Transportation: The Village supports paratransit service as a vital resource for the elderly, disabled, and/or those without access to a personal vehicle.

Recommended Action 4.2.C.1: Consider opportunities to work with the County to improve the current delivery of senior citizen transportation in St. Helena.

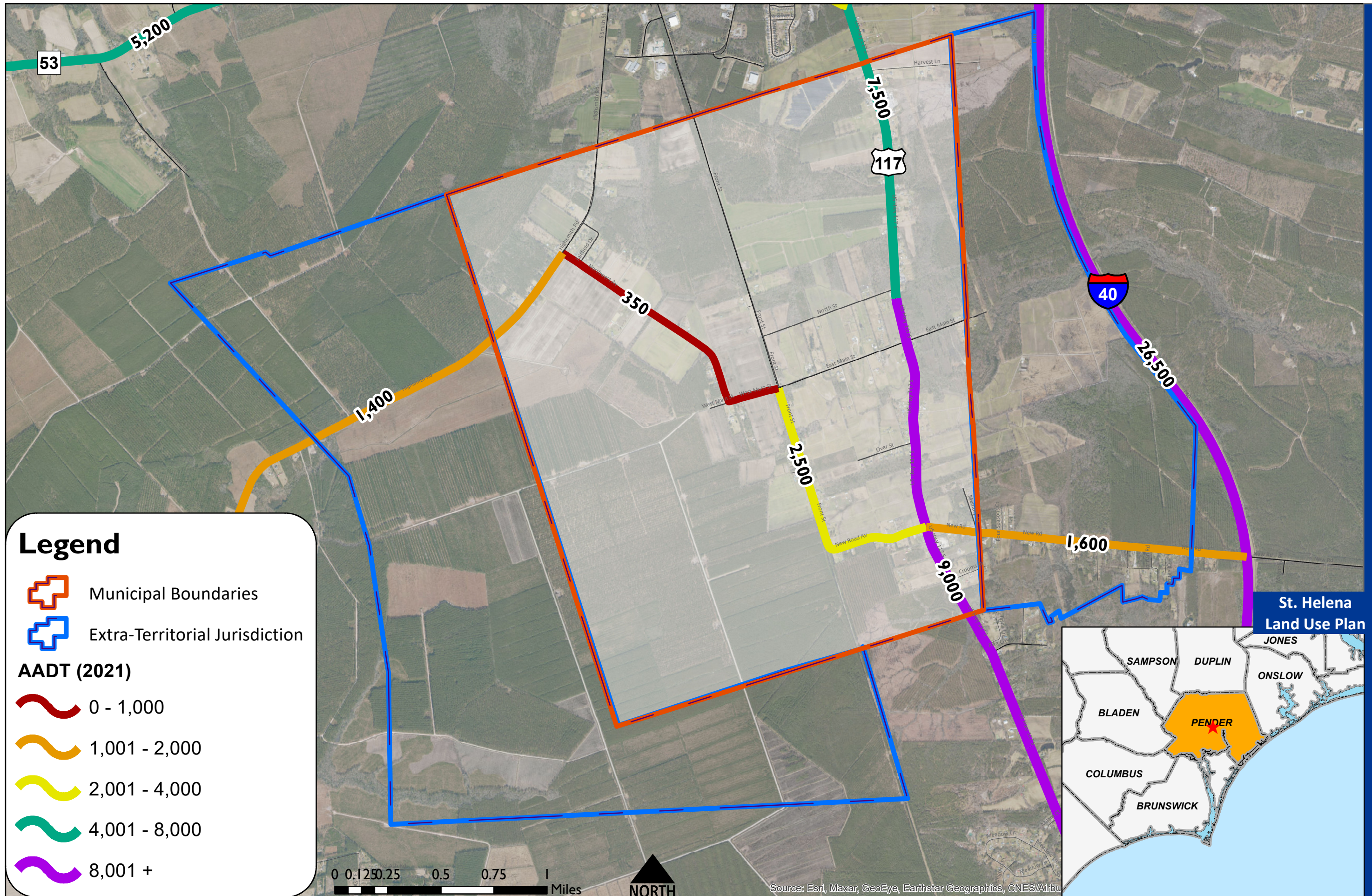
RECREATION

Goal 4.3: Support Village residents’ health and quality of life through recreational opportunities.

Policy 4.3.A: Regional Collaboration: The Village supports efforts by Pender County Government to provide desired recreational facilities for residents of central Pender County.

Recommended Action 4.3.A.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with Pender County or other relevant agencies to host programs for seniors at Village Hall.

Policy 4.3.B: Share the Road: The Village supports efforts by the North Carolina Department of Transportation to ensure that rural highways include shoulders that provide sufficient space for bicyclists and/or pedestrians and have “share the road” signs to alert drivers.



Map 4-1: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

CHAPTER 5: LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

This chapter also contains the future land use map and a narrative that provides a framework for land use decisions over the next ten to twenty years. Goals, policies, and recommended actions are provided relating to land use and development at the end of the chapter.

HOW TO USE THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND GUIDELINES

Upon adoption of this plan, the Planning Board, Village Council, and citizens should reference this chapter in reviewing land use and development related decisions and policy implementation. The future land use map should be amended if significant changes occur or are proposed to occur.

Each future land use classification (note: category is used interchangeably throughout this chapter) contained in this chapter is described with a short narrative and supporting development guidelines. The color that identifies that future land use category on **Map 5.1: Future Land Use Classifications** is also provided on the page containing the narrative and development guidelines. It should be noted that the boundary of each future land use category is not bound explicitly by parcel lines.

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

This section defines the future land use guidelines for St. Helena. North Carolina General Statutes require that all rezoning decisions and ordinance amendments be reviewed for consistency with the Village's Land Use Plan, including a statement by the Planning Board and Village Council as to whether the amendment is or is not consistent with the Land Use Plan.

Each future land use category includes a description and desired uses. The following narrative outlines the key desired development guidelines for each individual future land use category depicted on the future land use maps.

RURAL AGRICULTURE

This future land use category supports and protects St. Helena's unique rural and agricultural heritage. Within the Rural Agriculture future land use category, agriculture uses are encouraged. Preservation of prime farmland soils for continued prosperity of farming and forestry operations should be considered. Low density single-family dwellings are appropriate uses in this category.

Limited commercial, civic, office, and institutional uses may be considered where compatible with existing residences and as a resource or employment opportunity for area residents.

Desired Uses:

- Low density single-family dwellings
- Agricultural lands
- Recreation, parks, and open space

**Rural
Agriculture**

Undesired Uses:

- Multi-family residential uses
- Most commercial, office, and institutional development
- Industrial development

RESIDENTIAL

The Residential future land use category provides areas for single-family dwellings within the context of St. Helena’s rural development pattern. Commercial and industrial uses are inappropriate in these areas, as are large institutions and other significant traffic generators. Duplexes may be suitable where appropriately sited within the surrounding community.

Desired Uses:

- Stick-built single-family residential uses
- Recreation, parks, and open space
- Limited supporting civic uses
- Agricultural lands

Residential

Undesired Uses:

- Non-residential development
- Multi-family residential uses

COMMERCIAL

The Commercial future land use category is intended to provide for a wide range of commercial uses which will serve the needs of the community. All development within this district should have ample parking, controlled traffic movement, and suitable landscaping. It is designed to accommodate retail or service establishments customarily patronized by transient traffic as well as non-transient traffic.

Desired Uses:

- Commercial, retail, office, & institutional uses
- Employment centers
- Artisan manufacturing (e.g. small-scale, low-impact craft operations)

Commercial

Undesired Uses:

- Residential uses
- Industrial uses

TRANSITIONAL

This future land use category is established primarily for institutional, office, and commercial activities having only limited contact with the general public, not involving the sale of merchandise at retail except incidentally. Transitional areas are generally situated between business and residential areas, and development should protect and be compatible with nearby residential districts.

Desired Uses:

- Office, civic, and institutional uses
- Non-retail commercial establishments
- Artisan manufacturing


 Transitional
Undesired Uses:

- Residential uses
- Retail development
- Most industrial development

INDUSTRIAL

The purpose of this land use category is to provide for industrial, manufacturing, assembling, and other uses which would not be inherently obnoxious and yield only very minimal noise, odor, smoke, light, vibration, dusts, or the use of dangerous chemicals and/or materials. Adequate buffering between uses within the district and other bordering districts will be required. The array of permitted uses is limited to support the environmental protection of this district and the.

Desired Uses:

- Industrial and manufacturing facilities
- Limited intensive commercial and institutional uses


 Industrial
Undesired Uses:

- Residential uses
- Retail uses

LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

St. Helena has established a set of land use and development related policies to act as guidelines during any official decision-making process. These policies and goals reflect the comments and concerns received during the public involvement process and provide citizens, property owners, and developers with a predictability of official actions. Policies in this chapter relate to land use and growth management.

LAND USE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Goal 5.1: Land Use and Growth Management: Manage future development pressure on St. Helena such that the community's rural character is preserved.

Policy 5.1.A: New Development: The Town shall require all development to adhere to the land use regulations set forth in St. Helena's Unified Development Ordinance.

Recommended Action 5.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to update the Village's regulations to comply with this plan, community concerns, and emerging issues.

Policy 5.1.B: Land Use Plan Consistency: The Village generally requires that any official land use and development related actions (e.g. re-zonings, text amendments, and special use permits) remain consistent with the policies adopted in this plan and any other applicable plan. Any actions that are inconsistent with such plans shall require a statement from the Planning Board and Village Council approving such decisions, as to why the action was reasonable and in the public interest.

Recommended Action 5.1.B.1: Periodically review the future land use map to ensure growth patterns reflect desired outcomes for future development.

Policy 5.1.C: Multi-family Residential Development and Infrastructure: The Village does not support multi-family residential development in its planning jurisdiction as it is incompatible with the rural character of the community.

Policy 5.1.D: Commercial Development: The Town supports limited commercial development, particularly those businesses that provide needed services to residents.

Policy 5.1.E: Industrial Uses and Business Development: The Village supports compatible industrial, commercial, and employment establishments as consistent with the Village's future land use map.

Policy 5.1.F: Single-family Residential Development: The Village supports single-family residential development as the primary residential use in St. Helena.

Recommended Action 5.1.F.1: Consider amending the Village's Unified Development Ordinance to permit clustering of homesites to preserve land for open space or agriculture.

Recommended Action 5.1.F.2: Consider reviewing existing and permitted lot sizes to confirm that the Village will be satisfied if St. Helena’s planning jurisdiction is built out as currently zoned.

Recommended Action 5.1.F.3: Consider opportunities to preserve existing housing stock through strategic code enforcement action.

Policy 5.1.G: Manufactured Homes: The Village shall continue to provide areas for manufactured housing development in the planning jurisdiction.

Policy 5.1.H: Agricultural Business: The Village supports efforts to preserve existing farming operations.

Policy 5.1.I: Rural Land Use Patterns: The Village supports the rural agricultural land use patterns as they currently exist throughout its planning jurisdiction.

Policy 5.1.J: Rural Non-Residential Uses: The Town shall continue to accommodate limited non-residential uses in rural areas.

Policy 5.1.K: Recreation and Open Space Lands: The Village supports the public and private preservation of land for flood hazard mitigation, ecotourism, education opportunities, natural aesthetic qualities, wildlife habitat, and stormwater drainage.

Policy 5.1.L: Subdivision Roads: All new public and private roads shall be built to state and/or local standards as applicable. Only roads meeting the Village’s technical standards for construction will be considered for maintenance acceptance and as part of the Village’s public street network.

Recommended Action 5.1.L.1: Consider periodically reviewing the Village’s development regulations regarding street design standards to ensure they remain current.

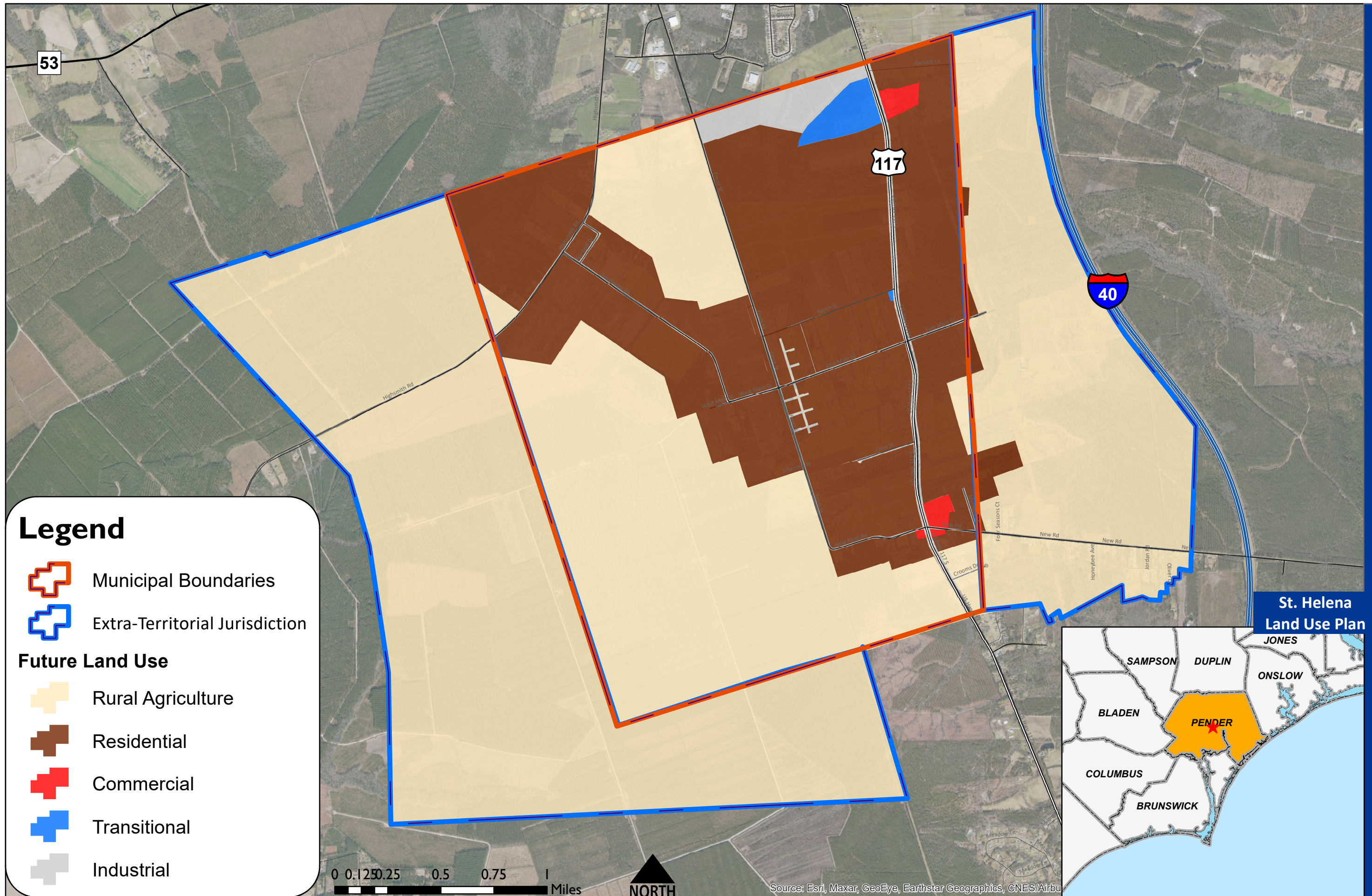
Policy 5.1.M: Stormwater Runoff: The Town supports NC Division of Water Quality regulations regarding stormwater runoff resulting from development activity and shall coordinate with the NC Department of Transportation and NC Division of Water Quality to address stormwater ponding on roadways and consider opportunities to mitigate the impacts from stormwater runoff.

Policy 5.1.N: Planning to Preserve Resources: The Village discourages short-sighted or premature commitments of the area’s natural resources and supports working in a collaborative manner with development interests to implement this policy. To the extent practicable, development shall be environmentally clean, environmentally sound, and protect residents’ health, safety, and welfare.



Policy 5.1.O: Development in Hazardous Locations: The Village encourages low intensity land uses in areas subject to natural or man-made hazards. Areas located within the 100-year floodplain shall be subject to the Town’s Flood Damage Prevention regulations.

Policy 5.1.P: The Village supports the preservation of significant historic and cultural resources.






Recommended Action 5.1.P.1: Consider opportunities to designate historic, cultural or architecturally significant properties through National Register or local historic programs.



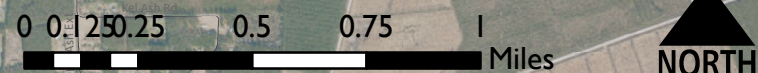
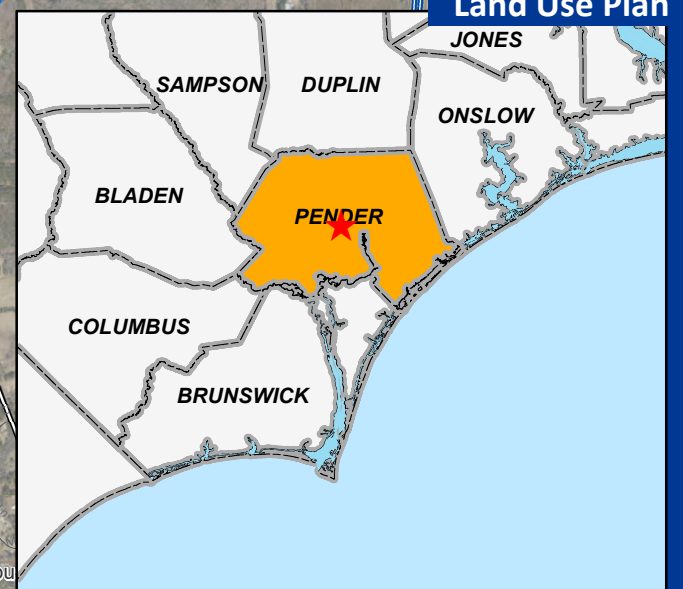
Legend

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction

Future Land Use

-  Rural Agriculture
-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Transitional
-  Industrial

St. Helena
Land Use Plan



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbu

Map 5-1: Future Land Use Classifications

CHAPTER 6: MOVING FORWARD

This section of the land use plan describes the role the land use plan plays in decision making and also a schedule for implementation of recommended actions.

- *Role of the land use plan in local decisions:* the role of the plan and the status of its goals, objectives, policies, and recommended actions in St. Helena’s land use and development decisions.
- *Action plan:* a collection of the recommended actions that will be taken to implement the plan as established in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

ROLE OF THE LAND USE PLAN IN LOCAL DECISIONS

The goals, objectives, policies, and recommended actions provide a long-range planning function but they also help guide day to day operations. The daily functions relate primarily to the decisions of actions of elected and appointed officials and the municipal administrative staff.

For the Village Council, the Land Use Plan contains Village policies and provides a guide when making decisions regarding future land use and development, public access, protecting the environment, mitigating natural and manmade hazards, or ensuring that the Village’s infrastructure and services are adequate. While the Land Use Plan’s policies do not have the same status as zoning regulations, the policies and recommended actions and the future land use map contained in the plan help guide decisions on future ordinances and zoning decisions. Moreover, general statutes require statements of consistency with comprehensive plans or any other locally adopted plan(s) before adopting or rejecting any local code, ordinance, or zoning changes or amendments.

In addition to guiding development decisions, the Village Council may use the Land Use Plan’s policies and recommended actions when making decisions about the Village’s annual operating budgets. The Village Council will also review the implementation strategy and make periodic adjustments based on budgetary considerations, emerging issues, problems or community needs, or to coordinate with future planning efforts and ongoing projects.

Administrative staff use the plan’s policies and recommendations in a variety of ways. Staff will use the plan when reviewing development proposals. This plan will also guide proposals for development projects and plans for public services and facilities. Many of the plan’s policies and recommended actions also guide ongoing operations and programs as well. Accordingly, staff will use the implementation strategy to guide budget preparation and refer to the plan when applying for various sources of grant funds.

The Land Use Plan will be of use to a variety of community members. The plan is a useful tool for developers and property owners because it provides guidance on the types of land use and development that are desired within the community. The plan also provides information that will help owners and developers to better understand the capabilities and limitations of their property. The plan also provides community members with information to reference when supporting or opposing projects within the community.

ACTION PLAN

The following table collects the recommended actions found throughout the Land Use Plan. These recommendations form the foundation for Village staff and officials to implement the policy direction adopted through this Plan. Some recommendations may require stand-alone action, while others may be grouped together to be addressed (e.g. through a comprehensive Unified Development Ordinance update).

As time and resources allow, it may be advisable to identify priority action items for each fiscal year and coordinate with appropriate stakeholders to execute those recommendations.

Table 6.1: Recommended Actions from the 2023 Village of St. Helena Land Use Plan

Action Item
Natural Systems
3.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to de-snag and eliminate large woody debris from area streams.
3.1.B.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to maintain the effectiveness of stormwater infrastructure associated with local roads.
3.1.B.2: Consider opportunities to amend Village development regulations to diminish stormwater runoff created by future development or redevelopment activities.
3.1.C.1: Consider seeking partnerships with Pender County and the Town of Burgaw to develop a Watershed Restoration Plan(s).
3.1.C.2: Consider pursuing grant funds to assist in developing a Watershed Restoration Plan. Pursuant to Section 205(j)/604(b) of the Clean Water Act, the Division of Water Resources will award grant funds to Regional Commissions and Councils of Government for to carry out water quality management and planning projects.
3.1.C.3: If pursued, ensure that the Watershed Restoration Plan contains the nine minimum elements required to receive EPA Section 319 funds for implementation of capital improvements projects.
Hazard Mitigation & Resiliency
3.2.A.1: Consider developing specific and timely recommendations for implementing hazard mitigation measures contained in the <i>Southeastern NC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)</i> following a state or federally declared natural disaster.
3.2.A.2: Consider applying for funding from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and other applicable sources for priority projects if the President declares St. Helena a disaster area.
3.2.A.3: Consider opportunities to strengthen collaboration with area emergency response agencies in preparation of future natural disasters.
Agricultural Lands
3.3.C.1: Consider opportunities to amend the Village’s development regulations to preserve the agricultural character of St. Helena.

Action Item
Water & Wastewater
4.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with Pender County Environmental Health on grants or projects to assist community members with failing or failed septic systems.
4.1.B.1: Consider opportunities to update the St. Helena Unified Development Ordinance to prevent unintended expansion of utility services.
Transportation
4.2.C.1: Consider opportunities to work with the County to improve the current delivery of senior citizen transportation in St. Helena.
Recreation
4.3.A.1: Consider opportunities to collaborate with Pender County or other relevant agencies to host programs for seniors at Village Hall.
Land Use and Growth Management
5.1.A.1: Consider opportunities to update the Village’s regulations to comply with this plan, community concerns, and emerging issues.
5.1.B.1: Periodically review the future land use map to ensure growth patterns reflect desired outcomes for future development.
5.1.F.1: Consider amending the Village’s Unified Development Ordinance to permit clustering of homesites to preserve land for open space or agriculture.
5.1.F.2: Consider reviewing existing and permitted lot sizes to confirm that the Village will be satisfied if St. Helena’s planning jurisdiction is built out as currently zoned.
5.1.F.3: Consider opportunities to preserve existing housing stock through strategic code enforcement action.
5.1.L.1: Consider periodically reviewing the Village’s development regulations regarding street design standards to ensure they remain current.
5.1.P.1: Consider opportunities to designate historic, cultural or architecturally significant properties through National Register or local historic programs.

CONCLUSION

This Comprehensive Land Use Plan contains the adopted goals and policies for the Village of St. Helena, which are to be implemented and followed over the next five to ten year planning period and beyond if an update is not completed within 10 years. The intent of the goals and policies detailed in this plan are to be carried out in good faith by current and future elected officials and staff. Any public decisions by Village officials regarding growth and development (e.g. rezonings, land use related ordinance revisions, special use permits, capital improvement projects, public grants, etc.) should remain consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives in this plan – where feasible. To allow flexibility if circumstances or community preferences change, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan can be updated or amended.