

Summary of Comments from Public Kickoff Meeting

May 9, 2019

The following text documents raw, unedited comments and has not been checked for spelling, accuracy, or feasibility. Neither the TSW team nor Glynn County makes any endorsement of a specific idea.

Comments will be considered as the zoning update process continues.

Economic Development Concerns

- If zoning allows more density than infrastructure can handle then economic development may have a downturn
- Compare true cost of med to high density on systems – the real cost over time. Insist through code that individual lot owners as well as developers pay real cost up front. If that's a hardship it isn't. It really means property may not be as valuable as selling for or that owners want.
- Density!!!
- Density density
- Traffic traffic
- Focus on residents' quality of life/improvements first – they pay the taxes!
- I have no concerns about how our current zoning impacts economic development. My concern is how chasing after fake economic development impacts the community.
- Please consider quality of life. Not mentioned on any slide.
- Should fix, expand sewer water first.
- Ordinances overly favor developer vs. the current residents → decrease in quality of life for residents
- We don't enforce the zoning we have, so it's hard to consider econ. dev.
- Put the concerns of the locals (tax payers) of SSI over developers

Economic Development Solutions

- Please utilize existing unoccupied business/commercial properties!
- Reduce densities on the Island to push development to the mainland. Brunswick & unincorporated Glynn Co. have many of the same lovely marsh & tree vistas as the Island, and have the infrastructure (particularly roads) to accommodate growth. Commercial development should be restricted on the Island to small business that fits – no big box or shopping centers.
- Items to help infrastructure handle what we currently deal with in traffic & growth (future)
- Balance urban form & density
- Reduce density
- Shoddy developers like Palmetto are bad for the island
- Sadam Hussein has “solutions” – he desolved his critics in acid
- “Solutions” is a pointless buzz word
- This is easy. Don't overbuild. What company wants to relocate or expand in an area where employees can't get to work because of traffic?

- Keep new commercial away from beaches
- Obvious commercial corridors s/b zoned so all commercial encroachment into residential
- No rezoning to any density except lower.

Transportation Concerns

- 1. No current effort to deal with SSI traffic
- 2. Safety re evacuation
- 3. No plan north causeway
- 4. No more roundabouts. They help w/ traffic at the roundabout location, but cars trying to enter from side streets are greatly hindered by the roundabouts.
- 5. Need more roundabouts – the only problem is that people don't know how to use them.
- 6. See St. Simons Island Existing Conditions and Impact Analysis 2015 commissioned by County. 50% 75% & 100% development of already approved projects result in gridlock of all major roads.
- 7. Will/does St. Simons meet FEMA standards for emergency evacuation rates?
- 8. Our Island Planning Commission has little chance to talk about evacuation & impact of more residents
- 9. Assure that growth doesn't outpace infrastructure – roads, bike paths, etc.
- Vacation rentals (short term) has much more impact than full time residents & changes the character & use of a neighborhood
- 10. Current zoning – I don't see that as the issue. I see lack of overall trans plan as the issue. Roundabouts work; just not w/ traffic lights. Better plan all future as it “works” in an overall scenario. Future presentations should use layman terminology and not be presented by an engineer with a laser pointer.
- 11. No second causeway – there really would be a traffic issue – turn SSI into an A1A like corridor
- SSI – enough said!
- Safety concerns as well
- High density on SSI causes high traffic, affecting quality of life, air quality, etc.
- Development decisions do not consider traffic status quo
- Island/Brunswick needs form of mass transportation to alleviate traffic – e.g. visitor free shuttles, buses for workers, etc.
- Over-development without first studying traffic impact is a serious concern
- Your schedule does not allow for completion of the Transportation Sector Study before finalization of the new codes. 18 mos. vs ≈15 mos.!
- Too much development in nort St. Simons equals too much traffic
- SSI traffic gets worse daily, but we don't want to widen Frederica & lose the trees & character of the island (Yes!!)
- Restricting density of future development is a must! No more row houses north of Demere. Frank Cullen.
- Large development without any traffic studies or impact studies
- Too many cars already
- Traffic studies are a joke
- Need a real traffic study
- Toll bridge
- Consider shuttles/public transport to beaches village

Transportation Solutions

- Reduce densities
- Create viable pedestrian & bicycle options
- Group riding stations
- Getting of the island during evacuation?
- Put the toll back in place on causeway, use the \$ for road/bridge improvement
- Parking ordinances – cannot block right away in driveways on the county right of way 13'
- No parking to block view on narrow streets (safety)
- On SSI allow police to ticket for private driveways
- Limits on short term rentals that often rent & bring in 6 to 8 cars by overfilling houses
- Start the toll again. Good revenue for infrastructure.
- Start the toll again
- Toll on bridge or just on island. \$1 more than Jekyll.
- All roundabouts and 4-way/3-way stop signs. There will be little more traffic & much better flow.
- 3 or 4 land Federica Rd. eliminate eyebrows – a waste
- Connect bike paths. Better sidewalks. Priority: pedestrians, bicycles, golf carts, automobiles.
- Enforce texting/hand held com. devices
- Consider parking deck for village. Make that area pedestrian oriented.
- Require a traffic impact study prior to approving high density development (SSI) Hear, hear! Do it before!
- Bus service north south (cheap) (regular) (clean)
- Public transport – use existing trolleys
- Round about @ Frederica & Sea Island Rd. Good idea!
- Sea Island Co. / Cloisters should be supplying transportation for their employees.
- Stop employees from dumping their cars/vehicles at CVS.
- There should be no big rigs traveling to the north end of SSI for delivery; use smaller vans.
- Promote EVs; more charging stations
- Have Sea Island employees park on the mainland and shuttle to their work. This will open up green space on the island of SSI and reduce traffic on the causeway at key times each and every day. It will also be a cost savings to the workers at Sea Island.

Environmental Concerns

- Above all – protect the natural beauty of the Golden Isles!
- Density does not allow for tree preservation and protection
- Unfettered filling in of wetlands for development
- Inadequate stormwater management
- Inadequate sewer system on SSI to handle growing (yes!) population
- All of the above is caused by overdevelopment of a fragile and finite area
- Development has been allowed when infrastructure can't support it. And oh, we don't want further development on SSI!!!
- Too many to list at this stupid dog & pony show!
- Calculate wetlands
- Instead of building sewers for new developments, it's time to spend money for sewers to replace septic tanks and mitigate sea level rise impact to the environment

- Concerns are spelled out in published report. St Simons Island Existing Conditions and Impact Analysis, 2015, commissioned by Glynn County. Impacts of currently approved projects are analyzed in detail. Please read it!
- Preservation of tree canopy and get serious about pervious vs. impervious % of lot coverage
- Instead of building more sewers
- 1. Filling in wetlands
- 2. Stormwater runoff (ditto!) Road Dawiey.
- 3. Agree with #1 & 2
- 4. Future growth
- 5. Broad removal of trees affects pollution & wildlife habitats as well as residential & neighborhood values.
- 6. Impervious surfaces & runoff, East Beach storm drains are very limited
- 7. Density prevents saving large trees, caused too much stormwater run-off, no buffers
- 8. Tree canopy – most valuable iconic resource next to ocean/beach
- 9. Density – lower on island, no more lot splitting w/o minimum of 1 acre
- Where is our canopy in all this?!!
- 10. Wetlands, sea level rise, storm surge
- Horrible smell at corner of Sea Island Rd & Frederica Rd.

Environmental Solutions

- Larger buffers—maintained and enforced after development is complete
- Follow a strict tree ordinance
- Eliminate use of wetlands for development. Yes! Ditto.
- Protect wildlife habitat
- Yes, yes, yes!
- Agree w/ all of the above
- Agree with all the above
- Don't invade the marsh—obey the Shore Protection Act
- Hold developers in check—this has not been done
- Stop the zoning for excessive multi-family developments. It strains the sewer system.
- Include wetlands in calculations.
- Promote recycling – eliminate all plastic bags, introduce a bottle return ordinance.
- Promote use of pervious pavement and other eco-friendly building practices
- Promote true, meaningful greenspace between developments
- Be strict/fine contractors, residents, whoever who violate zone protections—don't allow it to be worth their while/profit to go ahead, violate, & write-off the fine.
- No more building on SSI
- No live oaks cut down
- We have enough businesses and residences
- Already way too much traffic
- Building up property below 7' causing flooding to surrounding property. Come see 514 Delegal St. SSI. Enforce George Law about affecting adjacent properties
- Stormwater runoff on new & old “redo” properties
- Impervious surfaces
- New development cannot be allowed to bring in and build up properties that cause flooding on other properties!

- Fencing codes needed
- Drainage issues—no one dumps on neighbors. If cost of proper drainage tax individual lot or whole subdivision – compute the cost it the real \$’s & make it requirement of permit.
- Secure marsh/wetland buffer zones
- Recognize that the large oaks, etc. are wanted by the community along roads, etc. – just need to figure out how to deal with
- Stop overloading the sewer system – the system should run @ 90%, not 100%+ all the time. If there’s no capacity, people will have to wait!
- Focus a bit more on resident’s quality of life versus economic development!
- Wetlands
- Buffers
- Storm surge
- Density!!!
- Ditto

Quality Design Concerns

- Require commercial buildings to adhere to specific architectural standards, including signage
- Standardize signage to be more aesthetically pleasing – limit billboards
- The best design is nature. Quit cutting it down and building things we don’t need just to satisfy the developers – they need to move on.
- Strict codes for saving trees when building.
- Too much signage allowed.
- SSI is an eclectic place. It’s part of the charm. Leave the “sameness” & blank cookie cutters to specific subdivisions.
- Create good set of site coverage/tree replanting/setbacks such that good design required
- [name and phone number redacted]
- Island lacks infrastructure but county continues to approve development
- Island – size increase in traffic (& tourism)
- What will the county do about climate chg. & rising tides
- Superfund site cleanup delayed for decades – poor track record & confirmed carcinogens in water
- County is not committed to protecting the environment & clear cutting
- Most of island issues are related to development mgt.
- Favorable approach to developers in the “status quo” in this county
- Need highten controls including mandatory approval of all applications
- Need smart growth
- What may be reasonable for other areas of county are not for the islands
- Failure of See Island Company (& bankruptcy) has had serious impact on SSI
- Over dense development of subdivisions & row houses change the character of the island
- Bad zoning will make our lovely island look like the zoning disaster in Houston (Yes!!)
- Current zoning allows the “lowest common denominator.” Developers will always do the minimum, so the minimum needs to be a higher standard.
- Site plan approval is not enforced – what the IPC approves is not the “as built.” A site plan approval should require that the design elements and materials shown on the plan are enforced by staff.
- Shoddy builders like Palmetto are able to thrive – back pocket of commissioners.

Quality Design Solutions

- Form based zoning
- I have advice for your company. You have already antagonized the few people who came tonight by not allowing us to speak. You're not off to a great start.
- Housing density on SSI is getting unmanageable
- SSI we will have a humanitarian crisis if we need to suddenly evacuate – no more development, please
- Deed restrictions
- Design restrictions
- Find out best practices

Other Concerns

- Enforcement is a concern
- Need to have a knowledgeable speaker do workshop on how zoning can be updated & it is not a taking
- The discussion of (and implementation of) impact fees should be part of this exercise!
- Property rights of all need to be considered as decisions impact more than the applicant
- Over building the island!
- No mention of quality of life (second that!)
- Ensure flexibility of the new system to have different zoning in different areas. One solutions does not fit all!
- Comp plan public input way to controlled. Did not address significant input issues. Done to meet state date reqm't or loose \$\$
- The County Commissions turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the citizens of SSI
- Water & sewer is a mess (ditto). Don't allow more development (ditto!) until it's fixed. Intersection of Frederica & Sea Island Rds stinks!
- Fix H₂O & sewer – without tax increase to cover full renovations or use fees. Use some of big dollars flung into tourism from bed tax etc. to help fund also toll. No 20-30 year plan that done first will be broken again.
- Current zoning does not address massive increase in island density. Development occurs before infrascruture is capable. Needs to be an end point for commercial & residential as well as design. (Agree!)
- I wholeheartedly agree!
- Zoning impacts the character of SSI. That is a serious issue which affects tourism and economic development. Who wants to visit (or work) a place with constant traffic congestion?
- The lack of dialogue at the opening meeting is an issue
- We are dealing with finite resources – solution is fewer people, not more roads.
- Impacts all density and infrastructure.
- Island density is maxed – infrastructure, incl. traffic, water/sewer, loss of canopy, affect all residents.
- Residents are cash cows – island pays for Glynn County
- County does not charge developers for top-ins, instead just raises prices!
- Our relationship with county government is negatively impacted by zoning fails – review power taken from IPC to punish the island
- Need planning commissions with public input and authority

- Disregards existing residents/real stakeholder's quality of life concerns – the ones who actually live here! (SSI)
- Please look at implementation of fencing ordinances from standpoint of safety, “look,” appropriateness to neighborhood and other neighbors, etc.
- Infrastructure cost for development is passed onto established citizens. Developer should pay for costs (sewers, roads, walks, schools)
- Density
- Density
- Density

Other Solutions

- Implement impact fees to hold developers accountable for their developing
- Treat SSI separately from mainland – not derisive – there are significant differences
- Have separate codes for SSI – ditto – amen!
- Have significant impact fees for building on SSI – Ditto
- Impact fees
- Separate zoning for SSI
- Don't allow density if sewers can't handle
- 1. Prohibit future development on SSI. We have enough of everything.
- Too much traffic
- 2. Don't cut down any more of our trees!!!
- 3. Give SSI residents more say about rezoning. Currently there are 7 county commissioners. Only 2 represent SSI. If a conflict ensues, SSI loses every time.
- Agree with # 1, 2, and 3.
- Amen! Especially #3
- Building requirements could be stronger: like no one car garages all 2 car, limit impervious surfaces in some area, other possible design standards to help with density ← Yes!
- Amen to #3!!!
- Keep St. Simons as a tourist destination, not gridlock – no more traffic please
- Actually charge impact fees to developers – we pay the freight now
- Slow down development on SSI
- Expand consideration of ADU's (acc. dwelling units)

Density Concerns

- Density, density, density! Clear cutting lots, builders like Palmetto
- Bad zoning = density of population = bad traffic congestion = loss of character of SSI = unhappy residents and possible lack of tourism
- Too much on SSI – control before quality of life is diminished

Density Solutions

- For SSI: Smart growth. Don't overbuild and strain the island's infrastructure.
- Lower. Pod development. Green space protection incentives.
- No trees cut w/i setbacks of lot in smaller residential lots, special permission if can't
- Encourage development upisland discourage south end, which is basically redevelopment now
- Plan for sea level rise on the entire island
- Get rid of septic tanks

- The goal on SSI should be to assure a continuing high quality, sustainable quality of life (QOL). If QOL standards fall tourists won't come, R.E. values will fall & the unique aspects of SSI vs. Virginia Beach, Hilton Head, etc. will go away. What a shame especially since it is possible to leverage SSI prosperity into growth, investment & prosperity for Brunswick & Glynn County.

Comment Card Comments Related to Zoning/Development

- Something needs to happen to control the skyrocketing # of new houses/developments on Saint Simons Island because there is no infrastructure to support these massive developments – The purpose of choosing to come to SSI as a quiet restful haven is being defeated by the uncontrolled and unplanned growth.
- Inforce a moratorium until done!!!
- As you can see most representation tonight is St. Simons. Preserving this island with strict regulations on architecture of businesses, as well as restrictive building that traffic and infrastructure can't handle. All marsh, wetlands, trees and wildlife habitat must be protected throughout Glynn. Rein in greedy developers and commissioners. More transparency!
- There should be a moratorium on all future development until this process is completed; otherwise, there will be a rush by developers to put their PD's in under the current "lacks" ordinance.
- Codes to reduce storm water runoff from developing property (GA law forbids impact to neighbor's property—needs Glynn code implementation)
- Fences – no Glynn codes currently exist (if you aren't in a HOA that addresses fencing you must sue to resolve issues with your neighbors. This is unacceptable – as our island gets more dense this issue will only increase! Our neighbor has built an unsightly and unsafe fence. Our insurance co. will not cover any property damage if it falls because it is unsafe. Our only choice would be thousands in litigation. Come take a look at it! [address redacted]
- Property rights—must realize that one's property rights stop at the place where they conflict with those of other property owners. Have to have a contextual definition.
- If zoning is being changed effective summer 2020, how can zoning decisions be made now
- Glynn County Nuisance ordinance relating to outdoor fires and burning only relates to burning tires and garbage. It should encompass other trash fires and burning, which pollute the environment with both smoke and stench. Recognizing the County is comprised of rural, undeveloped areas and urban, highly developed areas, the ordinance, to be effective, should ban/restrict open burning within 100 feet of other residences/buildings. This is quantifiable and enforceable. A required Burn Permit does nothing to diminish or lessen either the pollution or the nuisance. We, the people, need this.
- Re: Noise ordinance. It is now 50' can we reduce it to 25'? Thank you!
- Commissioners should enact a zoning moratorium on the Island until the process is complete. Otherwise there will be a rush to entitle properties to be grandfathered under the old zoning. Address entitled properties and educate commissioners about what a "taking" really means. Explain that regulation of development is not a taking.

Comment Card Comments Related to Meeting/Process

- You antagonized the few people who came—you refused to let us ask questions. Not a great beginning. [name redacted]
- I'd like to have a one-on-one with you. [name and contact info redacted]
- You should have listened. That's why we came . . . to be heard.

- The meeting needed a 15-20 minute Q&A session before we wrote down our suggestions & solutions. It truly would have stimulated more ideas and suggestions.
- Have public comment periods and announce it! People tonight upset!
- Enjoyed the presentation. I would like to be interviewed by your staff. [name and background/contact info redacted]
- There is no representation tonight from any members of the non-white community in Glynn. How are you reaching out to diverse populations?
- You should convene meeting of heads of HOA's throughout the County – they represent their members & should have input beyond the people county staff recommended. [name and contact info redacted]
- [name redacted] interested in making sure she is part of the community workshop
- Are the stackholders really the citizens or just the politicians that are currently in office?
- Why are Pamela Thompson and Alan Ours so anti citizen input to the planning process?
- I would like to talk with you about urban growth boundary, rural zoning, green infrastructure, conservation development. Thank you. [name and contact info redacted]
- Please explain how the Sector Study will be completed (15-18 months) in time for sufficient review and public comment to be incorporated into the final version of the zoning ordinance re-write process.
- In order to fully understand and comprehend the issues facing St. Simons, we assume you have requested and reviewed the County 2015 Build Out Study. Please provide your comments relative to that study and advise as to your thoughts how it will be incorporated into your process.
- Next public forum in early 2020 – not acceptable. There should be much more public involvement.