

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range road map for the future of a community, which examines and makes recommendations on a variety of planning activities such as land use, utilities, infrastructure, housing, community facilities, historic preservation, recreation, economic development, and more. It provides information about current conditions, trends, and issues in a community and identifies actions needed to address such issues.

A comprehensive plan is not a regulatory document on its own. Rather, it establishes goals and priorities that guide future growth and development. It also:

- ◆ Documents a community conversation: "Where are we at? Where would we like to be?"
- ◆ Provides a basis for decision-making, problem-solving, and policy development by government officials.
- ◆ Establishes priorities for government projects, staff, and services.

The State of North Carolina requires every town or city that has zoning must maintain a current Comprehensive Plan and update their plan every ten years.

WHAT IS A CAMA PLAN?

The Coastal Area Management Act (or CAMA) was established in the 1970s to protect and preserve North Carolina's coastal lands, shoreline, and waters through collaboration between local governments and the State of North Carolina. To achieve this, the state created the Division of Coastal Management (DCM), the state office dedicated to working with coastal communities like the City of Southport and Brunswick County, and the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC), the advisory committee that establishes the policies, adopts the rules for coastal development, certifies local land use plans, and designates areas of environmental concern.

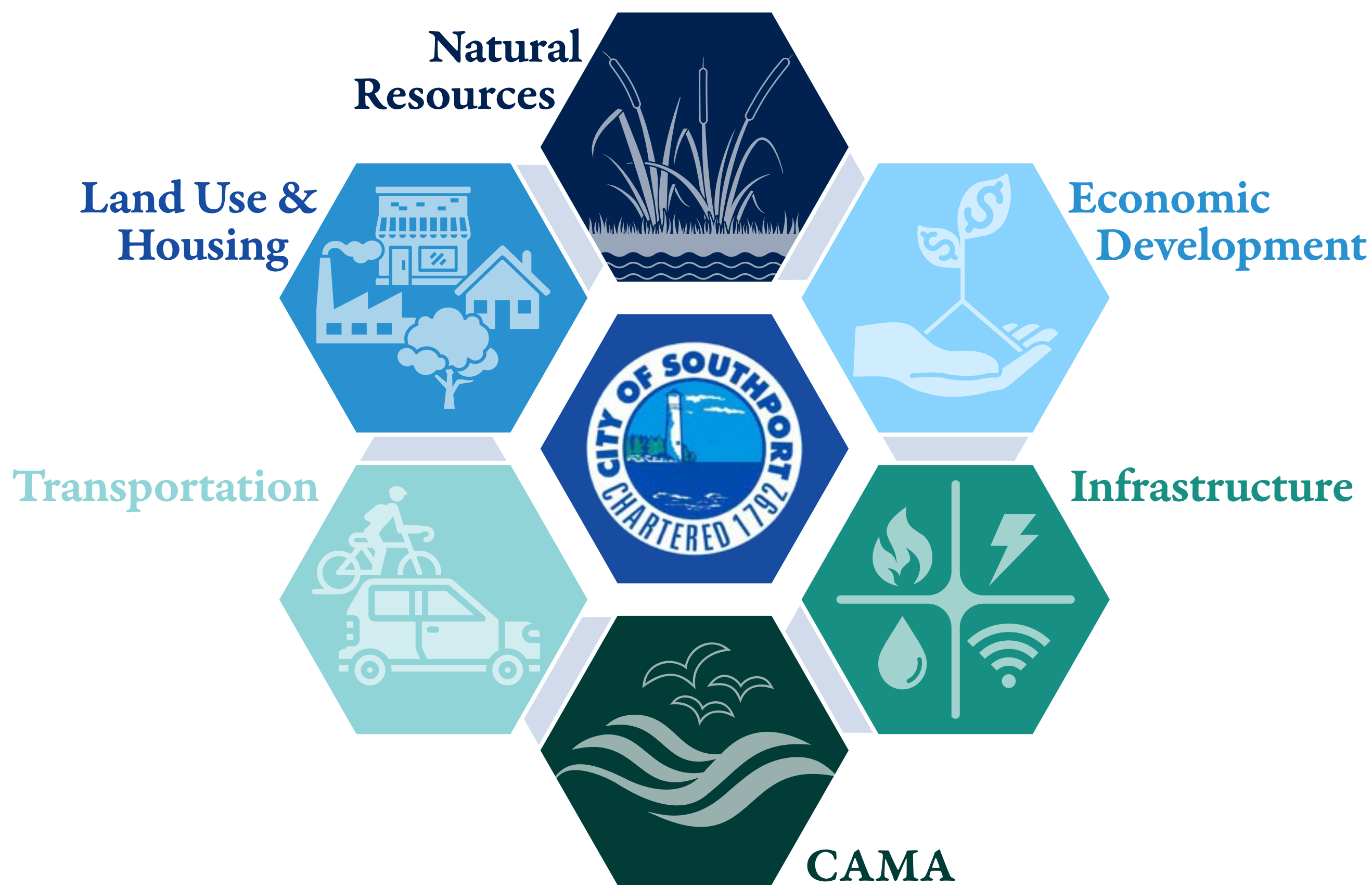
In order to be certified, a CAMA Plan must satisfy all of the requirements determined by the CRC. This includes following the CAMA planning process, which has a specific set of guidelines.

WHAT IS PLAN SOUTHPORT?

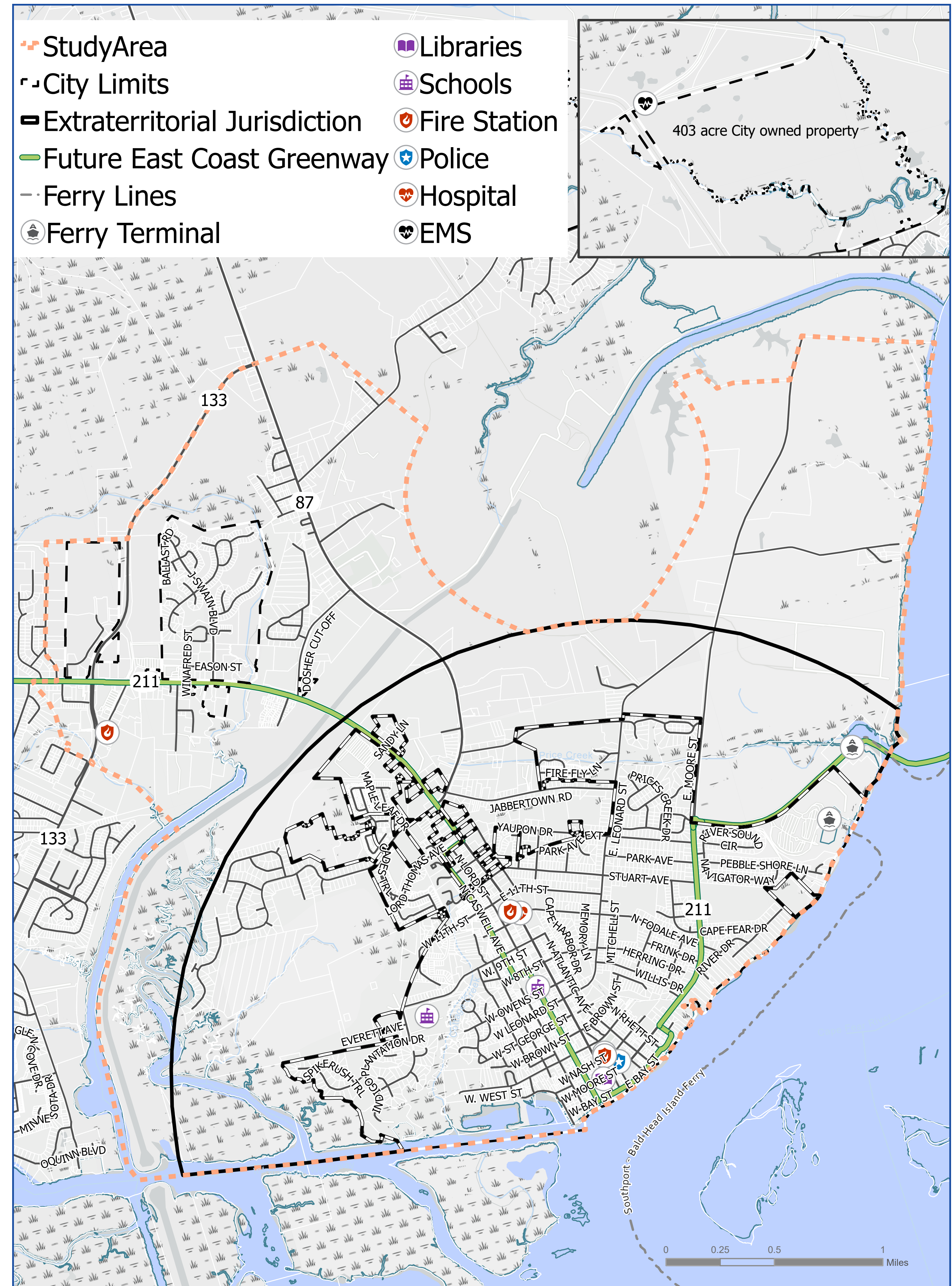
Plan Southport 2050 will be Southport's CAMA-certified Comprehensive Land Use Plan. It will combine both the standard comprehensive planning process and the CAMA planning process, streamlining the City's guidance into one document. The new Comprehensive CAMA Plan will be a modern resource for the City, reflecting current conditions and incorporating industry best practices, replacing the current City of Southport CAMA Core Land Use Plan, adopted in 2014. Plan Southport will be used as to guide a broad range of decisions made by Southport's local government for approximately the next 20 years.

PLAN ELEMENTS

Plan Southport 2050 will cover these topic areas and more.



STUDY AREA MAP



PROJECT SCHEDULE

TASK	2023												2024											
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
1 – Initiation and Discovery	[Task Bar]																							
Plan Assessment & Data Gathering	[Subtask Bar]																							
Tour and Initiation Meetings	[Subtask Bar]																							
Existing Conditions Research	[Subtask Bar]																							
Stakeholder Interviews	[Subtask Bar]																							
Community Survey	[Subtask Bar]																							
2 – Analysis, Visioning & Plan Development	[Task Bar]																							
Public Workshops	[Subtask Bar]																							
Vision and Goals	[Subtask Bar]																							
Policy Recommendations and Future Land Use Map	[Subtask Bar]																							
3 – Implementation & Adoption	[Task Bar]																							
Implementation Strategies	[Subtask Bar]																							
Plan Adoption	[Subtask Bar]																							

- Public Meeting
 - Community Survey
 - Steering Committee or Elected or Appointed Board
 - Task
 - Subtask
- State review of CAMA plans cannot take 75 days or longer. This schedule is subject to change, please review the project website for most up-to-date information.

Planning Process

This planning process began at the end of 2023 and is anticipated to conclude in the Winter of 2024. The process will be split into three overlapping phases. The first phase is the initiation and discovery phase, where the City and the project team will collect and review data. During this phase, a Steering Committee of local community representatives will be created to help guide the planning process. The middle phase is the analysis, visioning, and plan development phase. This is the longest stage and includes the majority of the public events and engagement opportunities which will help to craft the guiding vision for the City of Southport and determine priorities that will shape the recommendations for the future. The draft plan and draft recommendations will be presented and made available to the public for comment. The last phase of the project is the implementation and adoption phase. Here, the project team, along with the City and other partners, will lay out a broad plan of how, with who, and when different recommendations should be carried out. Once that is completed and added to the document, Plan Southport 2050 will be presented to the Planning Board for approval and the Board of Aldermen for adoption before being sent to the Coastal Resources Commission for review and certification.



STAY INVOLVED!

There are more ways you can get involved with Plan Southport 2050 — you can take the project survey, and you can enter the Plan Southport Photo Contest!

TAKE THE SURVEY

Visit the project website or scan the QR code to find out more information and take the project survey.



ENTER THE

PHOTO CONTEST

Visit the website or scan the QR Code to find out how to participate.



HISTORY OF SOUTHPORT

1600's - 1700's

Brunswick County was inhabited by Waccamaw and Tuscarora tribes prior to European arrival. Spanish and English explorers were the first Europeans to visit the Southport area. Other early visitors to the area included pirates. Local lore claims that Stede Bonnet, the Gentleman Pirate, frequented the area. Bonnet was eventually captured right outside Southport, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

1745

Fort Johnston was established at the mouth of the Cape Fear River to protect the area from attacks. The town naturally grew around the fort's borders. Southport's oldest cemetery, Old Smithville Burying Ground, was established sometime during this period as well. Historians believe this cemetery is the oldest in Brunswick County and have stated that some graves date back to the 1700's. The cemetery is the final resting place for Confederate soldiers, ship captains, and other important historic figures. According to local legend, Governor Benjamin Smith, whom the town was originally named for, is buried in this cemetery.

1775

Fort Johnston was raided and burned by patriots in defiance of the British.



1792

The Town of Smithville was incorporated around the site of the fort. The town was named for Governor Benjamin Smith who served as colonel in the Revolutionary War. The town grew as a fishing village and military hub.

1795

While Fort Johnston was being rebuilt, residents used the site as a meeting place for their first documented Fourth of July celebration. The town has annually celebrated the Fourth of July ever since.

1808

Smithville was named the county seat of Brunswick County. This status was held until 1975.

1810

Construction of Fort Johnston's Garrison House was completed. Today, the Garrison House is the fort's only surviving structure and is now home to the Fort Johnston-Southport Museum and Visitors Center and the Southport Historical Society.



1816

The new Fort Johnston was completed.



1866

St James AME Zion, Southport's oldest African American church, was founded. It is the only African American church listed in the 1867 NC Business Directory.

1887

After the war ended, officials envisioned Smithville as a major port city and entrepreneurial hub. To achieve this vision, officials planned to enhance river and railroad transportation. The town was renamed "Southport" in anticipation of the growth and in hopes of rebranding as a major port city for the area. Though the town was renamed, you can still see remnants of the former name at the Old Smithville Burying Ground and Smithville District Park.

1966

A ferry connecting the town with Fort Fisher was established.



1904

Old Brunswick County Jail was built for \$6,738. Since 1984, the structure has been maintained by the Southport Historical Society and is now a museum.

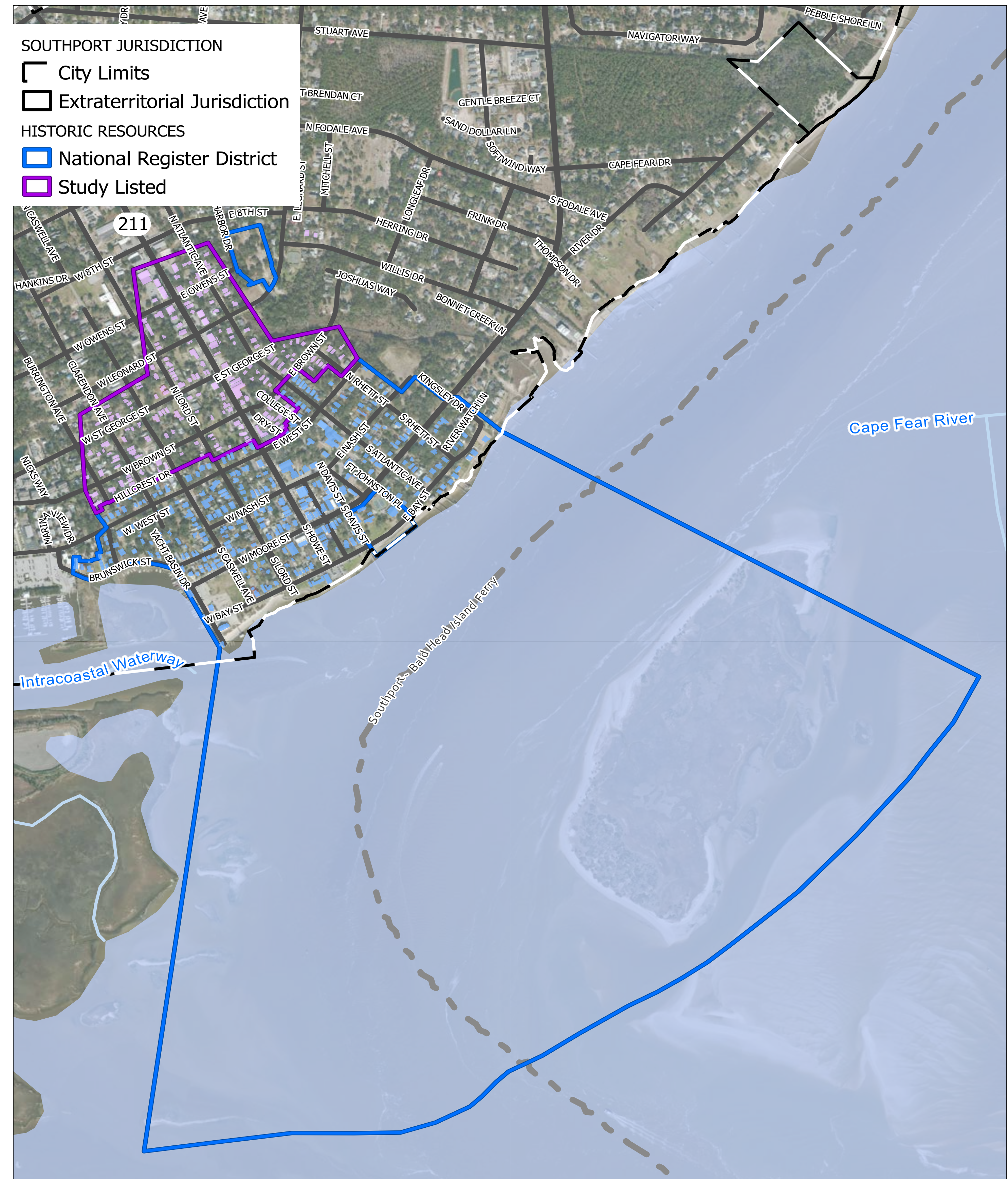
1968

Construction on the Brunswick Nuclear Plant began.

1980's AND BEYOND

Southport emerged as a popular setting for films. Retirees and vacationers began to flock to the area, and the town grew.

NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT



Source: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office data, 2024

LOCAL DISTRICT

The City of Southport is currently working in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office on establishing a local district. A local district provides the **most protection** in North Carolina. Any major renovations, new construction, or demolitions are reviewed by Southport's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). This process is a quasi-judicial process where the members of the HPC use Southport's Design Standards that are applicable in the local district to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness. Any minor works, such as maintenance, cleaning, painting, or landscaping in the rear are reviewed by staff.

The Historic Preservation Commission is currently working on establishing a local district boundary. The boundary will include most of the National Register boundary (above in blue) and a portion of the study listed boundary (above in purple). As part of this process, a local designation report, design standards, and boundary must be reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Benefits of a Local District

- ◆ Public notification of projects that may alter the **character of a neighborhood**
- ◆ Opportunity to apply for **matching grants** for surveying, planning, pre-development, and/or development related activities (applicable if **Certified Local Government**)
- ◆ Continued **educational opportunities** for staff and HPC members
- ◆ Stabilization of **property values** by protecting the elements that define the area's character including buildings, structures, objects, and sites

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use is determined using a combination of parcel data and aerial imagery. As opposed to zoning, it represents a more current indication of land uses. It shows the quantities of individual uses and their spatial patterns.

Industrial
The industrial use category includes land owned by Duke Energy Brunswick Nuclear Plant, food processing uses, and waste recycling treatment uses. This land use category consists of 8.37% of land in the study area. It does not include Dutchman Creek Outlet Channel, the intake channel, or the land where the nuclear plant is located.

Commercial
The commercial category includes retail, restaurants, hotels, motels, grocery stores, RV parks, and other service uses. The downtown is included in this category and may have some mix of uses including offices. The commercial land use category makes up 8.97% of land in the study area.

Institutional
The institutional category includes city hall, the community building, schools, emergency services, churches, the hospital, and other medical office uses. The institutional land use category makes up 1.38% of land in the study area.

Multi-Family Residential
The multi-family residential category includes townhomes and apartments. The multi-family residential land use category makes up 1.07% of land in the study area.

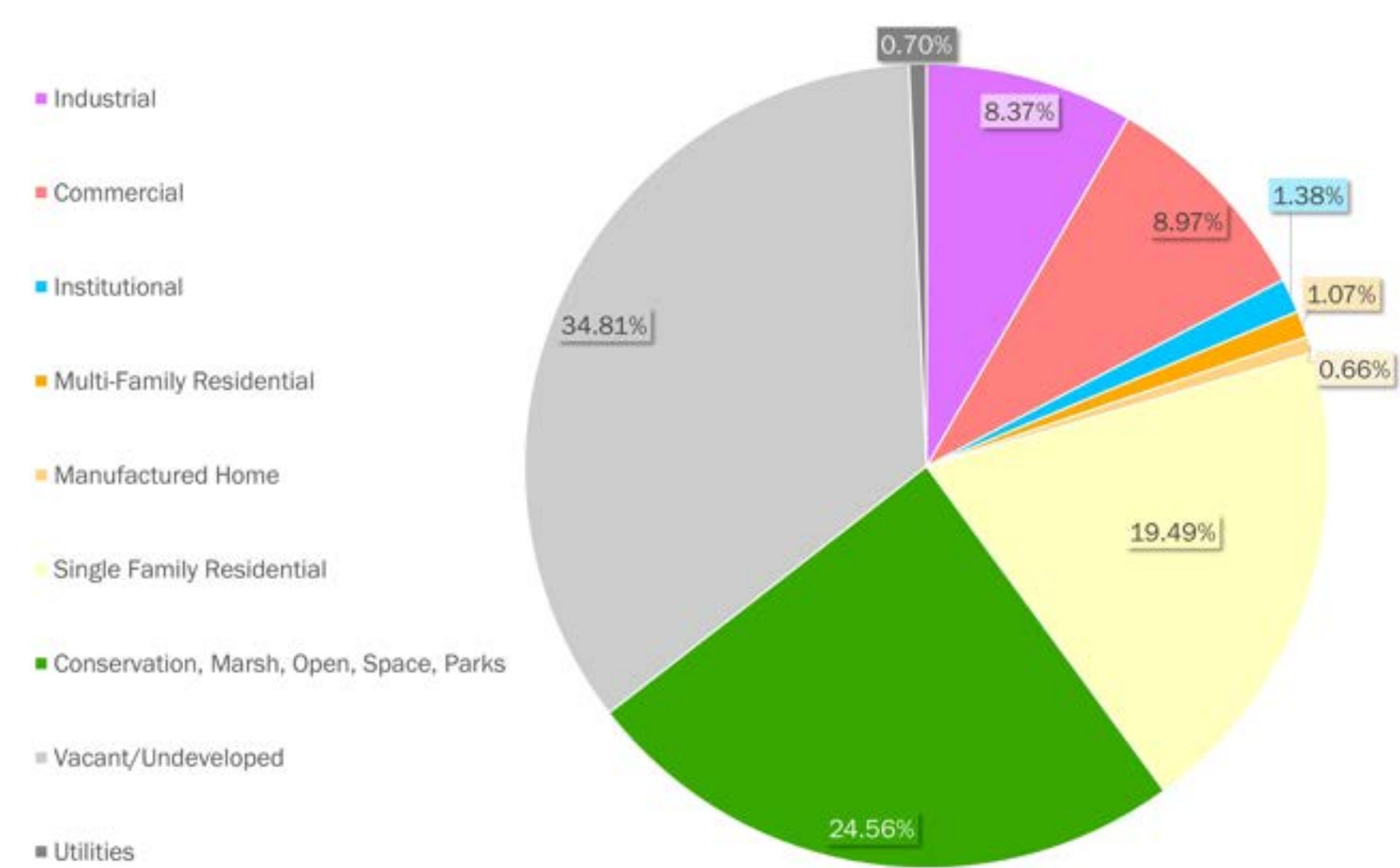
Manufactured Home
The manufactured home category includes manufactured homes. The multi-family residential land use category makes up 0.66% of land in the study area.

Single-Family Residential
The single-family residential category includes single-family detached homes, bed and breakfast inns, and short-term rentals. The single-family residential land use category makes up 19.49% of land in the study area.

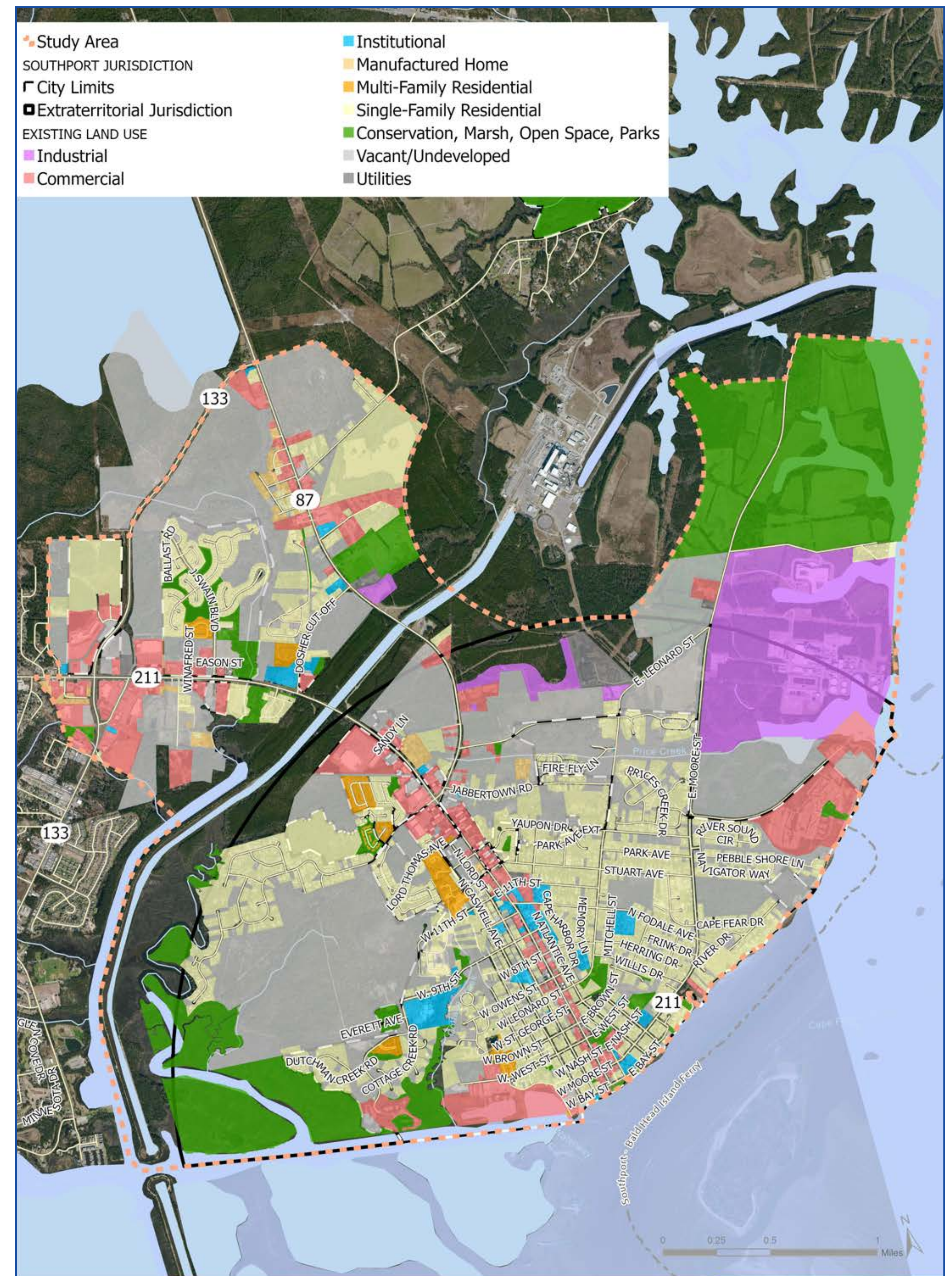
Conservation, Marsh, Open Space, and Parks
The conservation, marsh, open space, and parks category includes cemeteries, parks, open space, salt water marshes, and conservation land. The conservation, marsh, open space, and parks land use category makes up 24.56% of land in the study area. It is the second largest category in the study area.

Vacant/Undeveloped
The vacant/undeveloped category includes noncoastal wetlands, vacant, and/or undeveloped land. The vacant/undeveloped land use category makes up 34.81% of land in the study area, making it the largest land use category in the study area.

Utilities
The utilities category includes water towers, electric substations, and other utility related uses. The utilities land use category makes up 0.70% of land in the study area.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Source: Brunswick County Tax Parcel Data, 2024

Existing Land Use

Existing Land Use	Acres	%
Industrial	496.5	8.37%
Commercial	531.9	8.97%
Institutional	81.8	1.38%
Multi-Family Residential	63.6	1.07%
Manufactured Homes	39.3	0.66%
Single-Family Residential	1156.3	19.49%
Conservation, Marsh, Open Space, Parks	1456.9	24.56%
Vacant/Undeveloped	2065.3	34.81%
Utilities	41.3	0.70%
TOTAL*	5932.9	100%

*Total acreage excludes rights-of-way

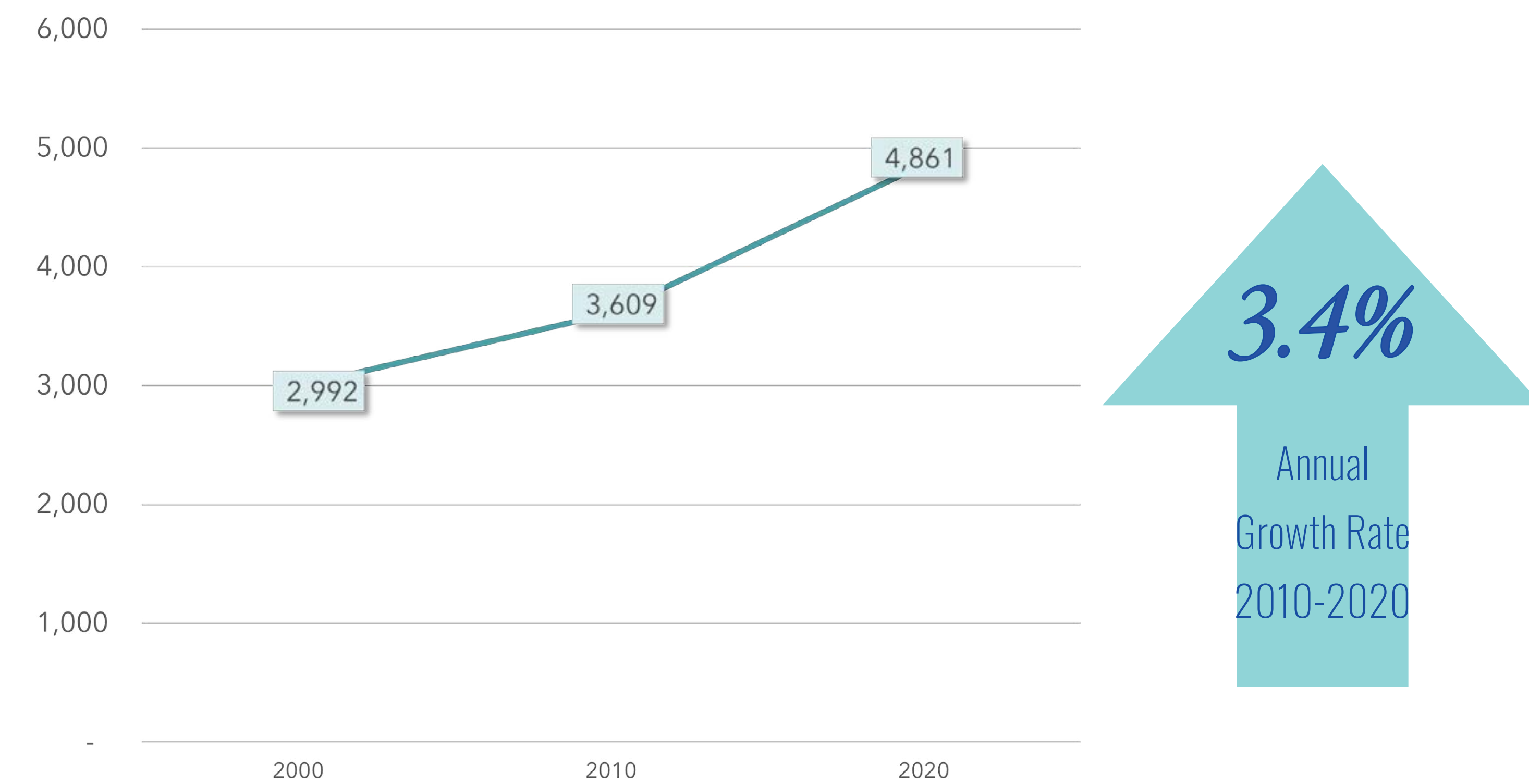




POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The City of Southport has seen a steady increase of residents from 2000 to 2020, growing from 2,386 in 2000 to 3,971 in 2020. This is an increase of 1,585 people, or +66.4%, over 20 years. The annual growth rate from 2000-2020 was 2.6%. Southport's planning jurisdiction which functions as the study area, includes its City Limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and has seen steady growth as well. Southport's study area population has increased by 1,869 people from 2000 to 2020, which can be seen in the graph below.

STUDY AREA POPULATION (CITY LIMITS + ETJ)

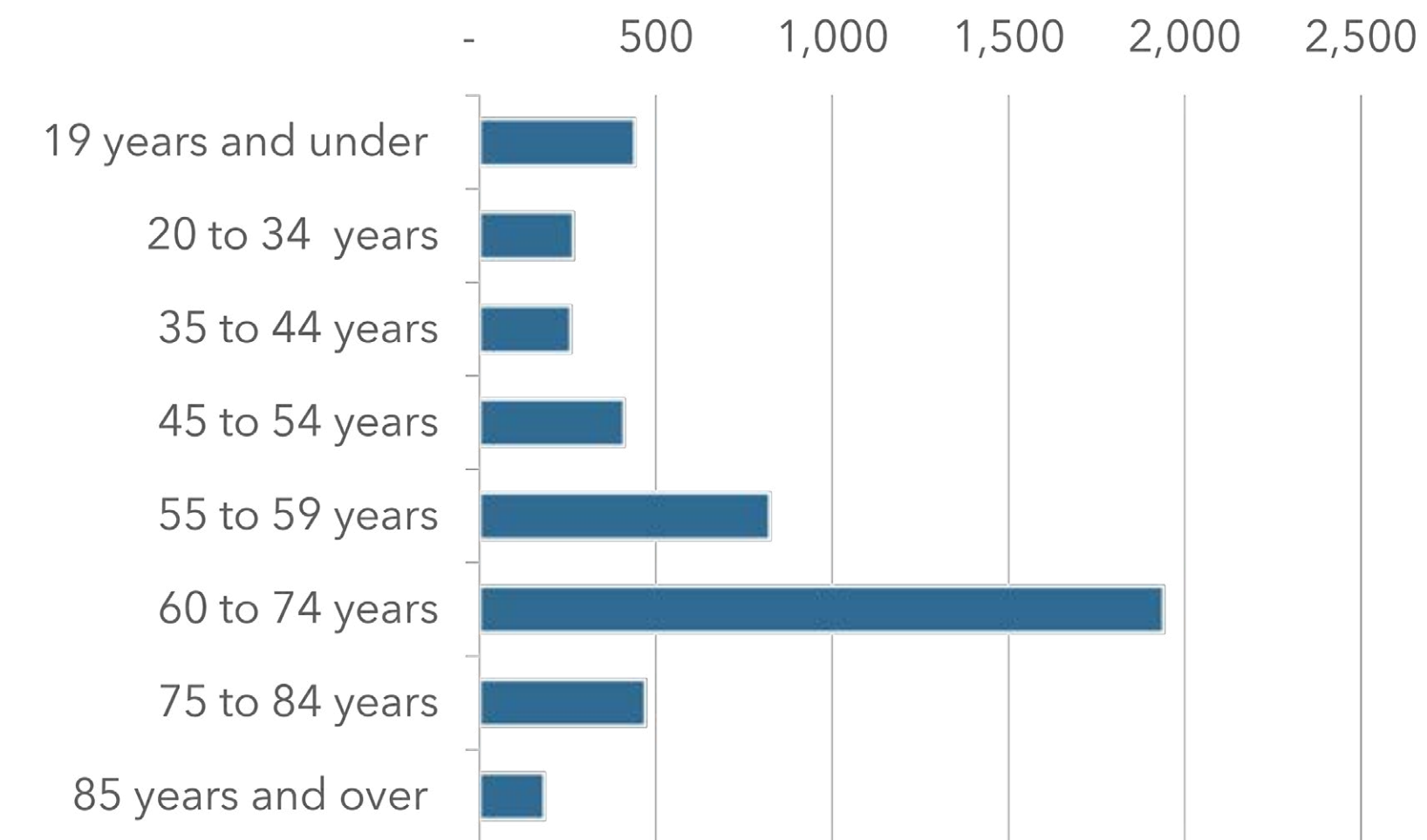


RACE AND AGE

Southport's median age has increased steadily from 47.5 years in 2000, to 55.7 years in 2010, and 59.6 years in 2020. The largest age cohort in both 2010 and 2020 was ages 60-74 years.

Since 2010, the populations identifying as white alone, American Indian alone, Asian alone, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone have increased, while the population identifying as Black or African American has decreased by 34%.

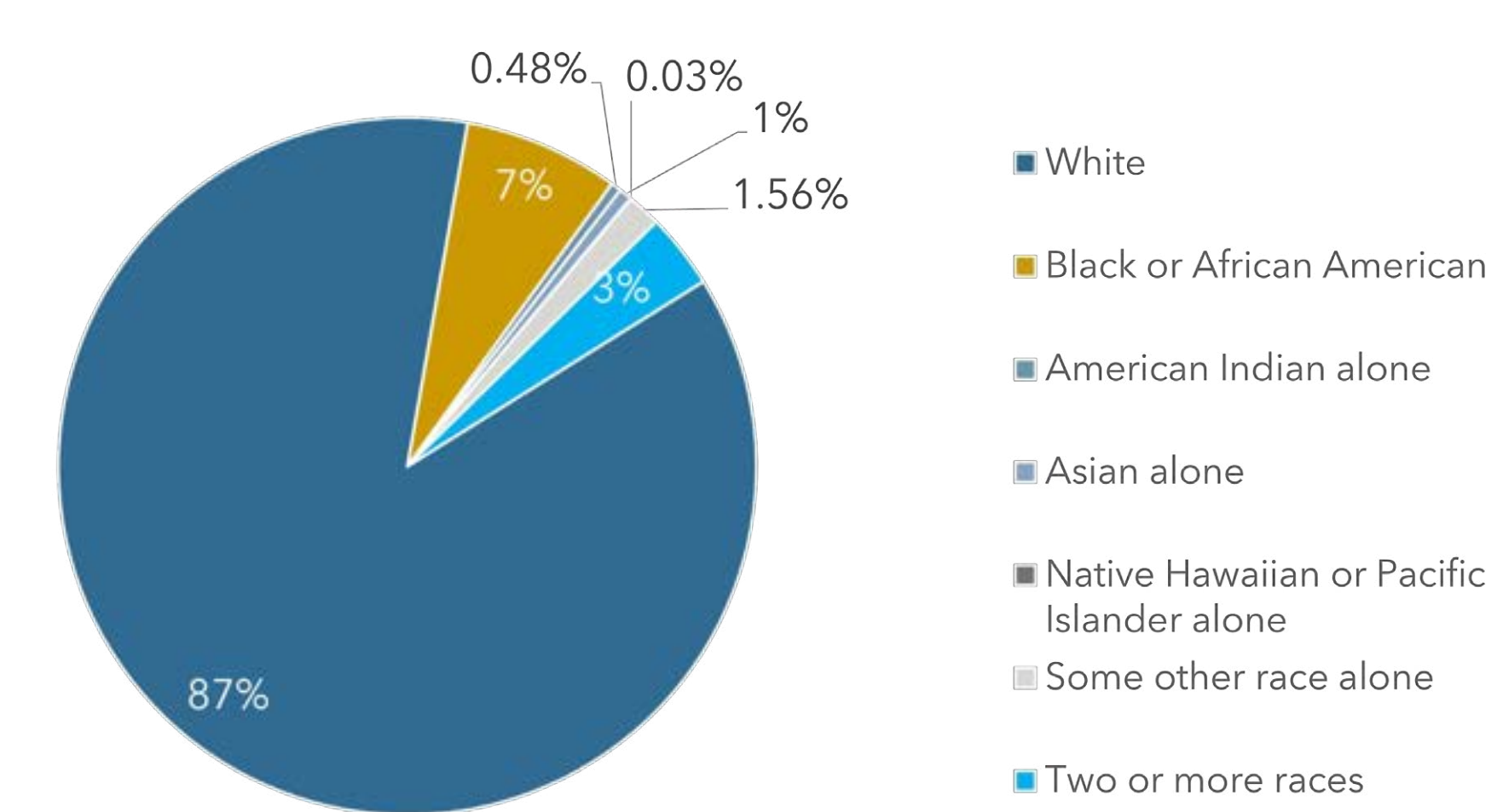
AGE COHORTS, 2020



25%
Increase in median age 2000-2020



RACE, 2020



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

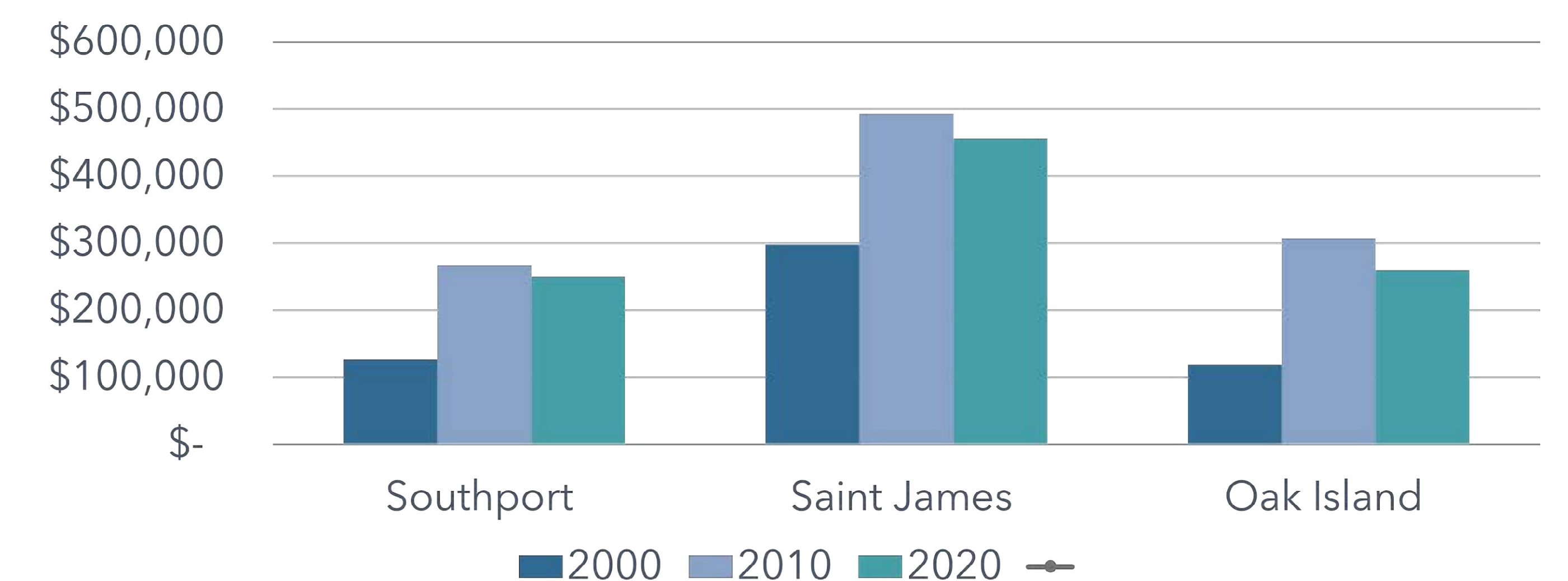
In 2020, Southport's median home value was \$249,900, which was a 97% increase from the 2000 median value of \$126,600. Realtor.com lists the median home sale price as \$445,300 and indicates that it is currently a sellers market in the area with more potential buyers than there are homes and properties available to buy.

Southport has a fair amount of homes built in 1939 or earlier, which speaks to the presence of historic neighborhoods and parts of downtown. There was an increase of homes being built starting in the 1970's with around 250 homes built each decade with the exception of 2000 to 2009 where almost 450 homes were built prior to the Great Recession.

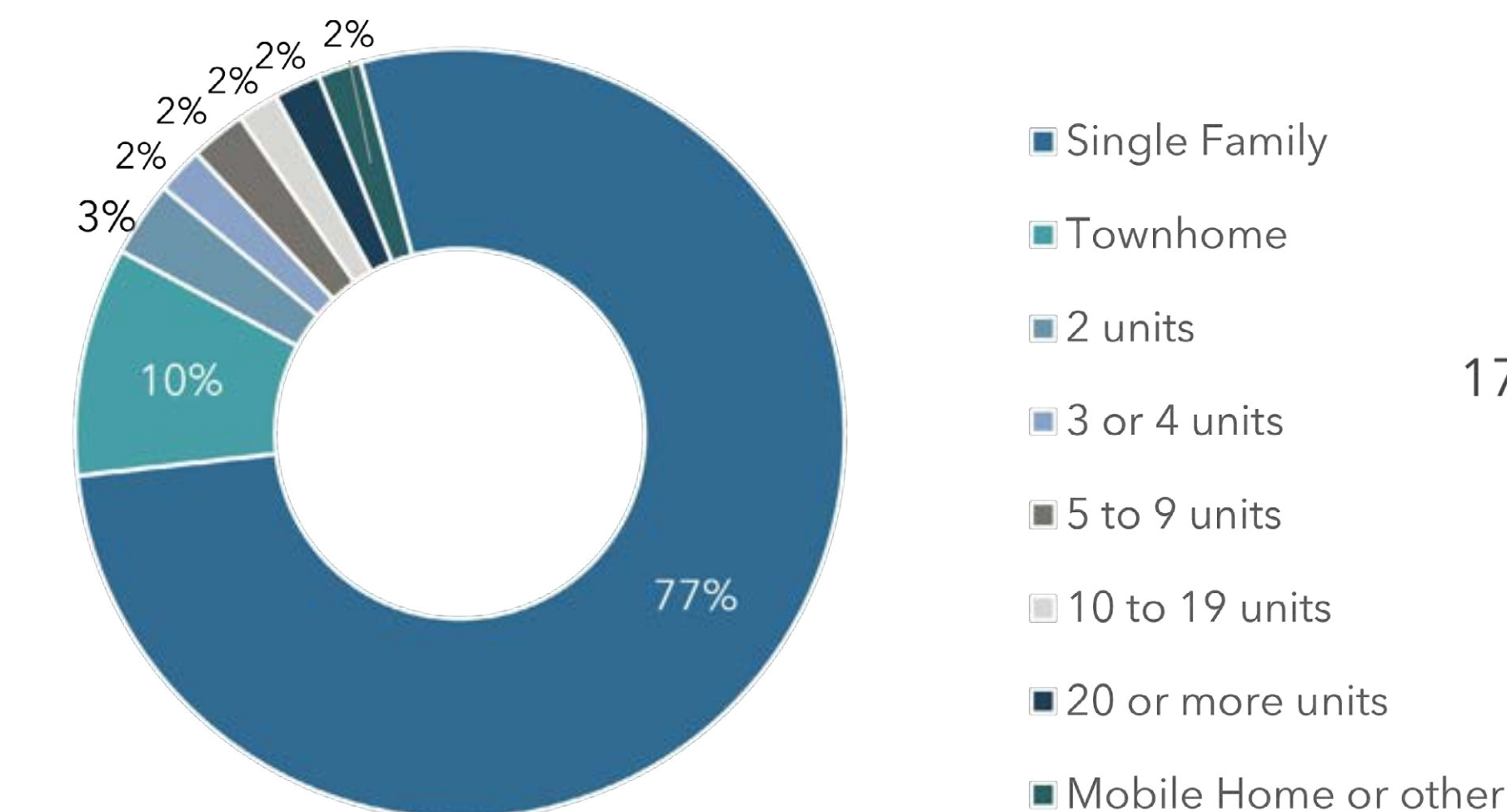
In Southport, 68% of the homes are identified as "Vacant". The majority of these homes are utilized as a secondary residence, for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, or for rent or sale but not currently occupied.

Southport has a predominantly single family housing makeup, with 77% of the homes being single family, 10% being townhomes, 3% being two dwelling units, and 2% being three to four dwelling units.

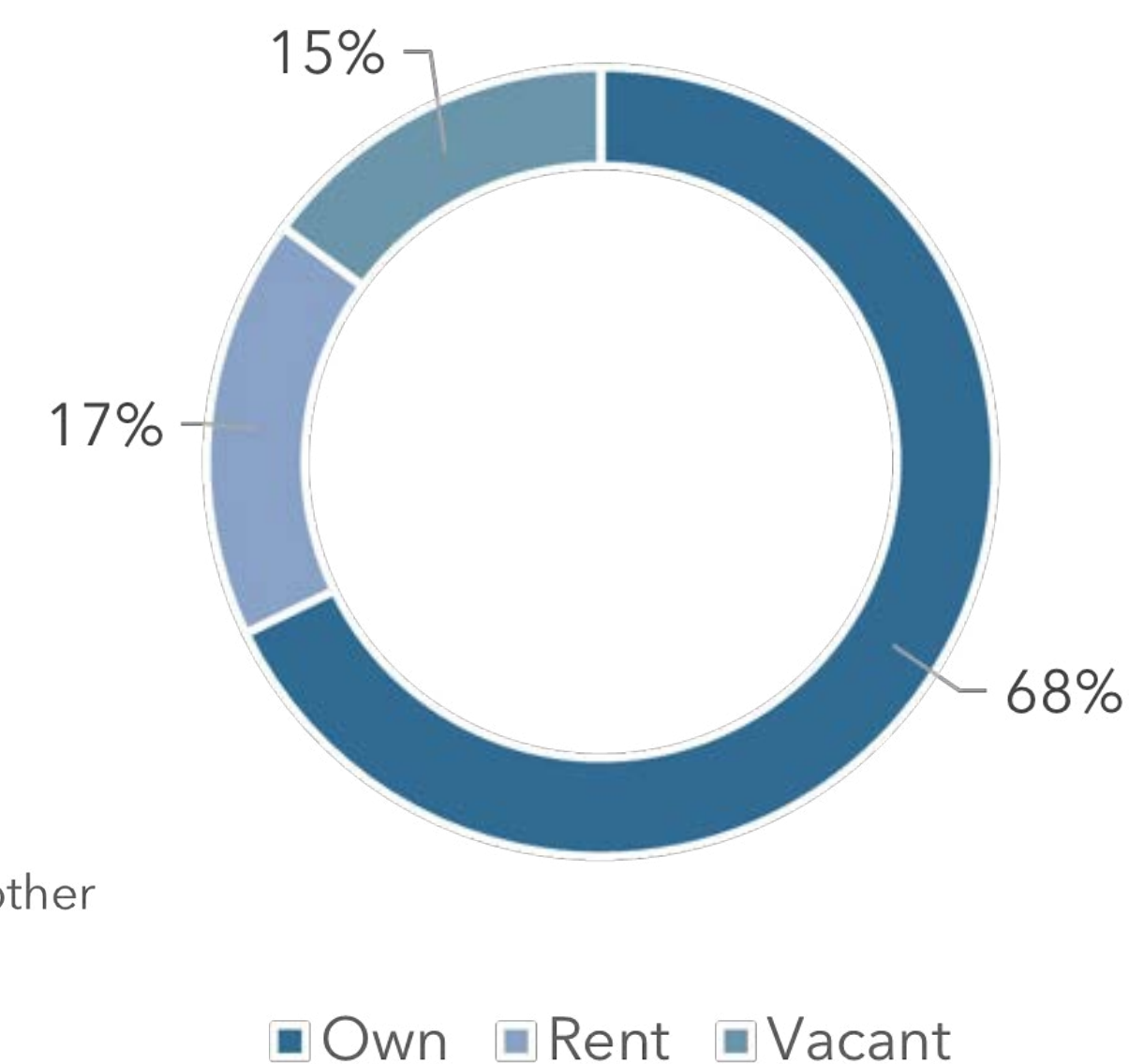
MEDIAN HOME VALUE



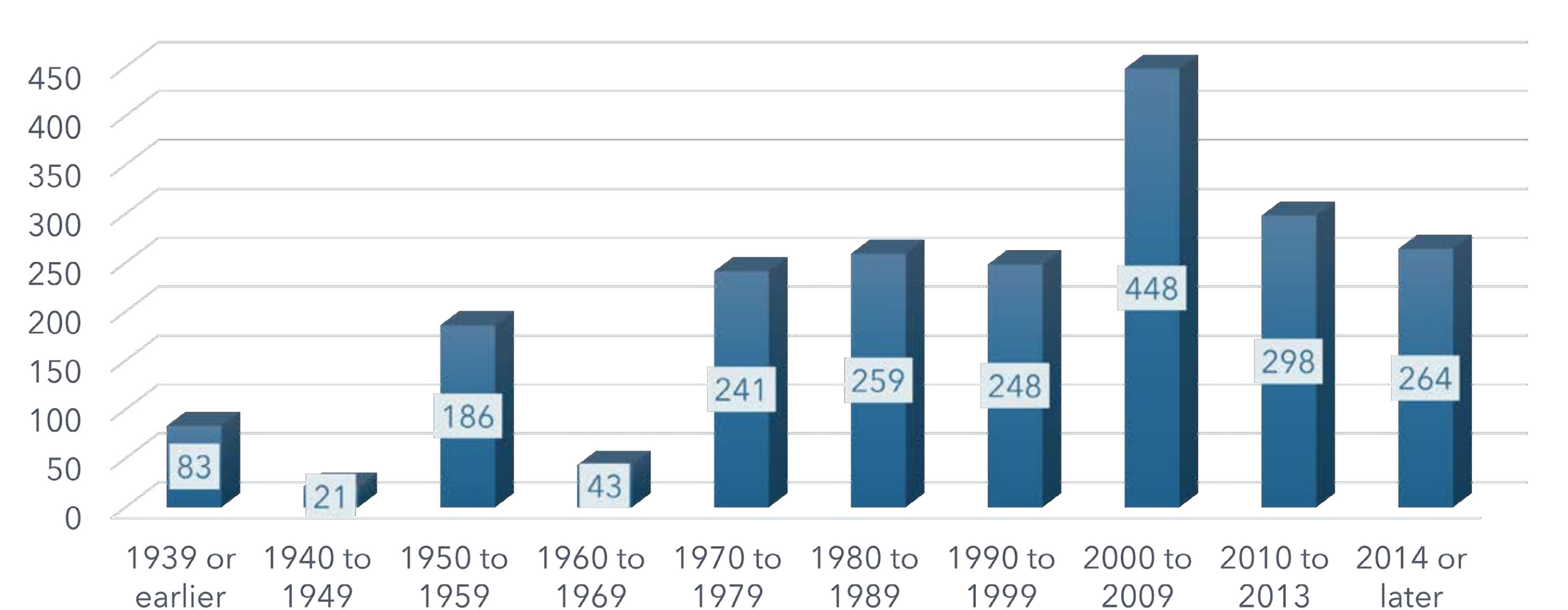
HOUSING BY TYPE, 2020



TENURE, 2020

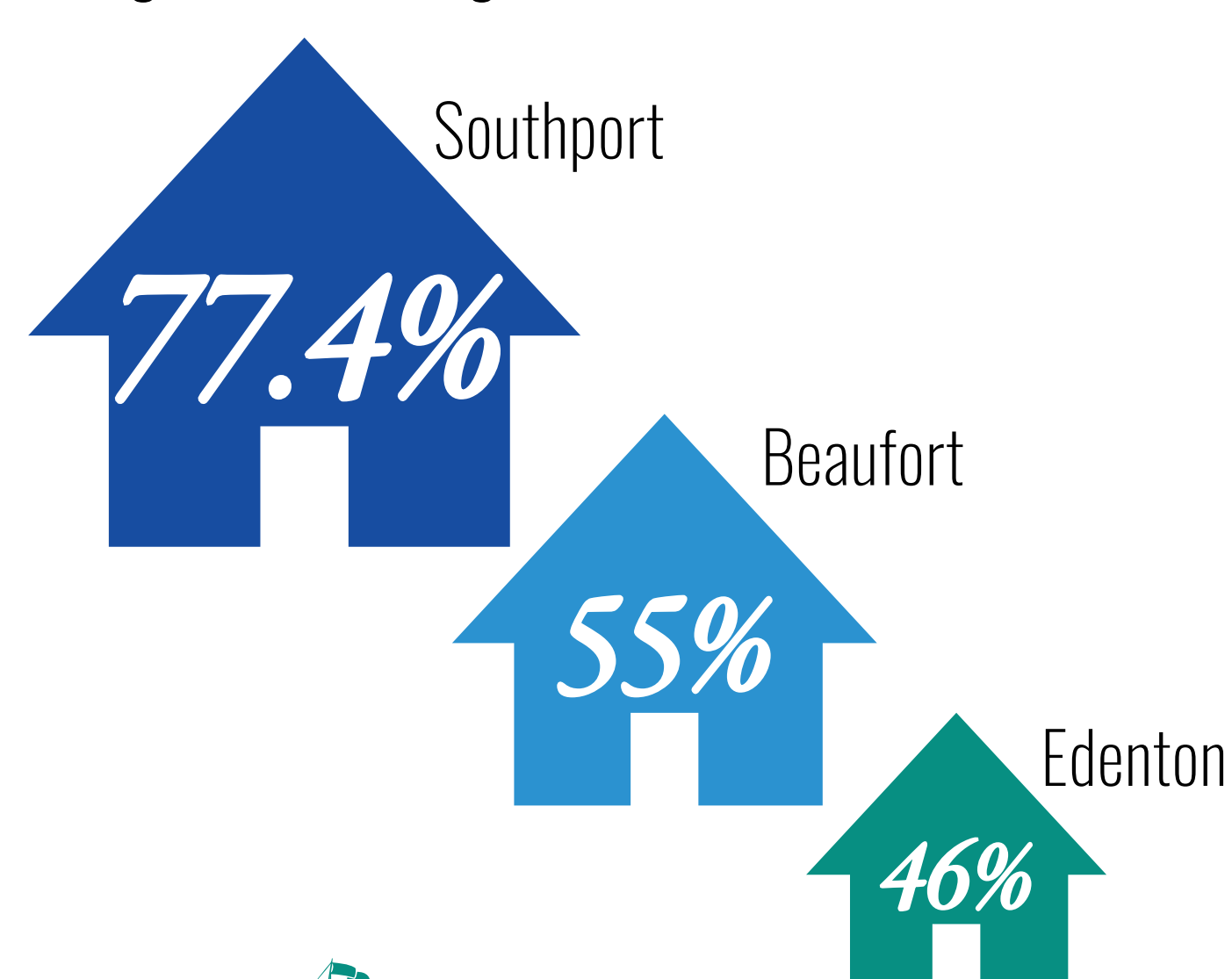


HOUSING YEAR BUILT



EXISTING HOUSING STOCK COMPARISON:

What percentage of the existing housing stock is made up of single-family dwellings?



Data Sources

Data provided by US Decennial Census, the American Community Survey, and ESRI. Information was gathered to depict an overview of the City of Southport and its planning jurisdiction. Graphs shown here may be updated prior to the plan being finalized.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING EFFORTS

State Transportation Improvement Program

- ◆ TIP #R-5021 - N.C. 211 from SR 1500 (Midway Road) to NC 8 - Widen to four lanes.
- ◆ TIP #EB-5982 - N.C. 211 (North Howe Street) from East Owen Street to Doshier Hospital - Construct sidewalk.

Brunswick County Comprehensive Transportation Plan - 2024

The Brunswick County CTP was adopted in February of 2024 and was prepared by NCDOT in cooperation with Brunswick County and their numerous departments and agencies, as well as the municipalities within Brunswick County, the State Ports Authority, and the Wilmington MPO (metropolitan planning organization). Recommendations from the CTP impacting Southport include:

- ◆ #35 N.C. 211 (North Howe Street) - a proposal to widen NC 211 from N. Howe Street to a 4-lane divided roadway spanning from N.C. 87 to W. 9th Street (SR 1209), approximately .76 miles. This project is identified based on levels of congestion and traffic.
- ◆ #36 SR 1526 Jabbertown Road - a proposal upgrade the road from its current 2-lane roadway to 3 lanes with a center turning lane and paved shoulder from N.C. 87 to SR 1527 (E. Leonard Street), approximately .79 miles. This project is identified to improve congestion and mobility.

City of Southport CAMA Core Land Use Plan - 2014

The most recent CAMA Land Use Plan for the City of Southport was adopted in 2014, with later amendments in 2020. The plan was prepared by the Cape Fear Council of Governments in coordination with the City of Southport and gave the following recommendations related to transportation and pedestrian infrastructure:

- ◆ Support construction of state transportation improvement projects to include the following:
 - ◆ Town Creek, replace bridge #61
 - ◆ Allen Creek, replace bridge #56
 - ◆ NC 211/NC 133 to NC 87 at SR 1525. Construct a two lane connector on new location
 - ◆ Widen NC 211 from near the intersection with NC 87 to St. James Plantation
 - ◆ Install a stop light at NC 211 and Stuart Avenue
 - ◆ Construct a new "east side connector" to allow better traffic flow from the East Moore Street area to north of the city due to anticipated residential development on the east side of the city
 - ◆ Make drainage and general improvements to Leonard Street.
- ◆ Support the recommendations contained in the Pedestrian Safety Study.
- ◆ Periodically review local ordinances relating to speed limits and traffic flow with the goal of reducing congestion and risk in severely-congested or unsafe areas.

PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

While the City of Southport is seen to be a very walkable community, there are still obstacles to a fully connected pedestrian infrastructure that were identified during the City's Comprehensive Pedestrian Transportation Plan process including:

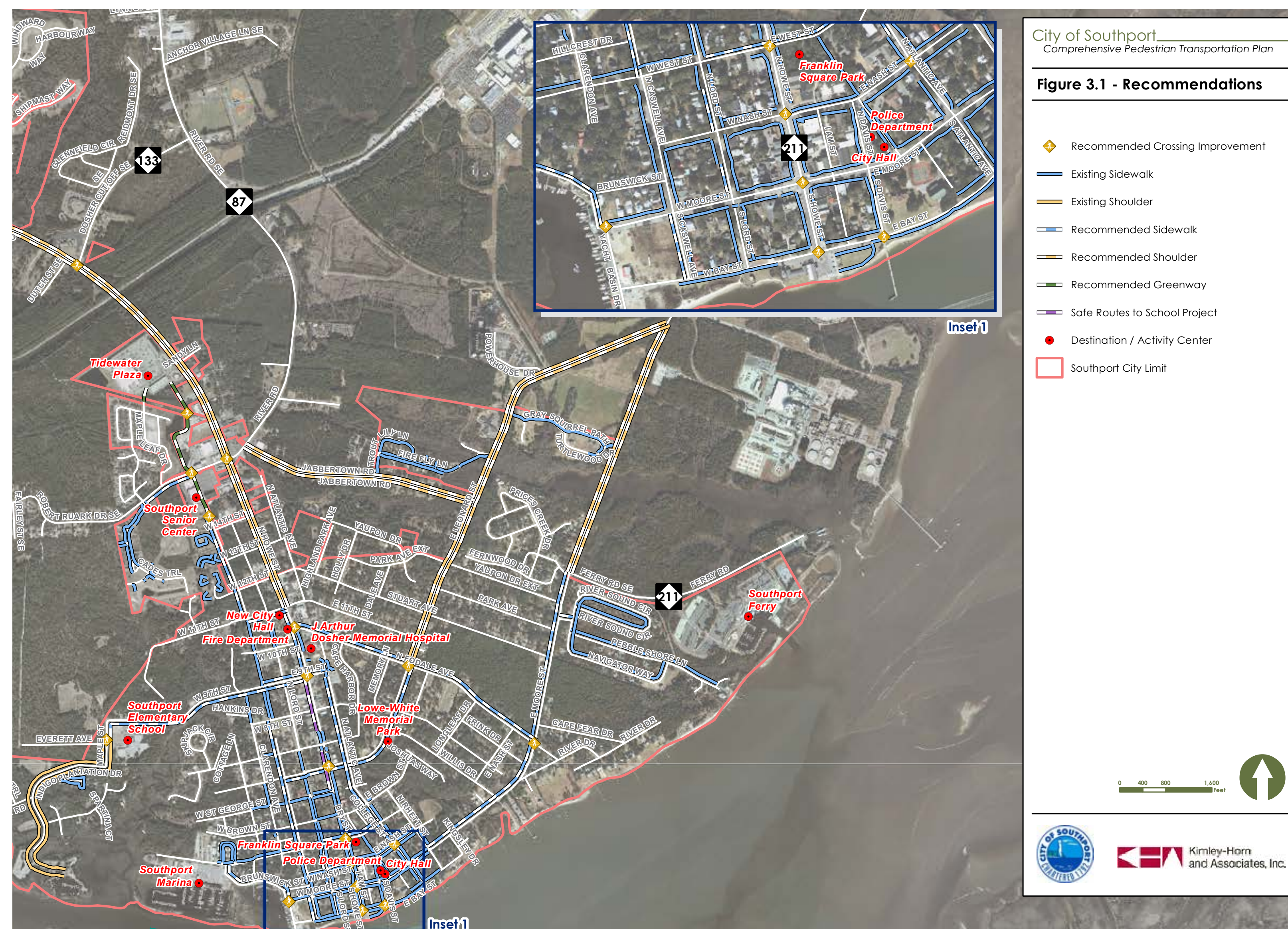
- ◆ Narrow Sidewalks
- ◆ Network Gaps
- ◆ Lack of Safe Crossings
- ◆ Man-made Barriers
- ◆ Maintenance and Design

The following more specific recommendations were made for key intersection improvements:

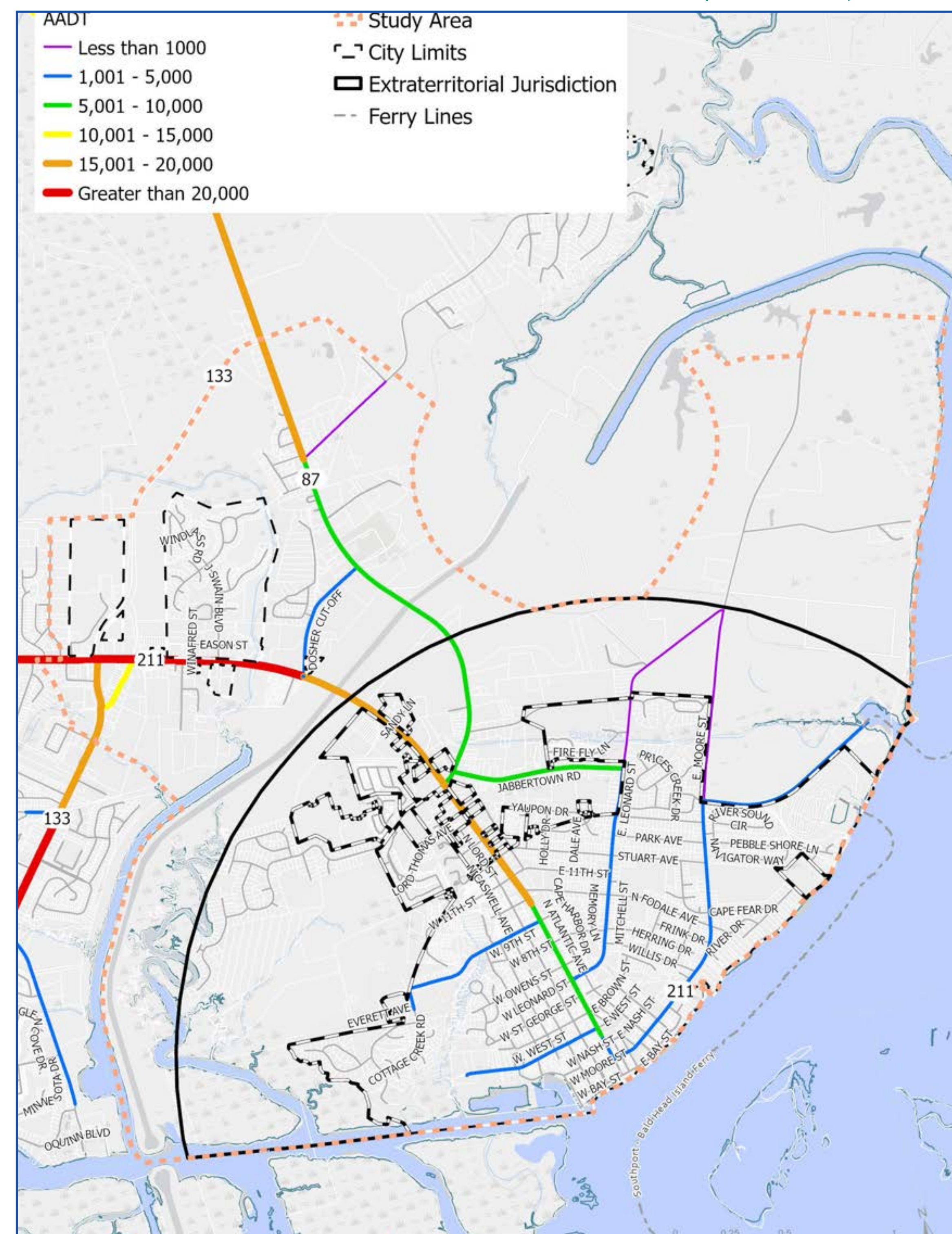
- ◆ Howe Street and Bay Street
- ◆ Howe Street and Moor Street
- ◆ Howe Street and Nash Street
- ◆ Howe Street and West Street
- ◆ Atlantic Avenue and Nash Street



New pedestrian infrastructure at Howe Street and West Street.



ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT) MAP



ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

The AADT map highlights the most frequently travel roadways in Southport and the surrounding area. NC Highway 211 sees on average over 20,000 vehicles per day just outside of Southport's ETJ, and between 15,000 and 20,000 once inside of the ETJ and City Limits. Both NC Highway 87 and Howe Street see a range of 5,000 to 10,000 vehicles per day on average. Other connector within City Limits see up to 5,000 vehicles per day.



CITY OF SOUTHPORT ACTIVE PROJECTS

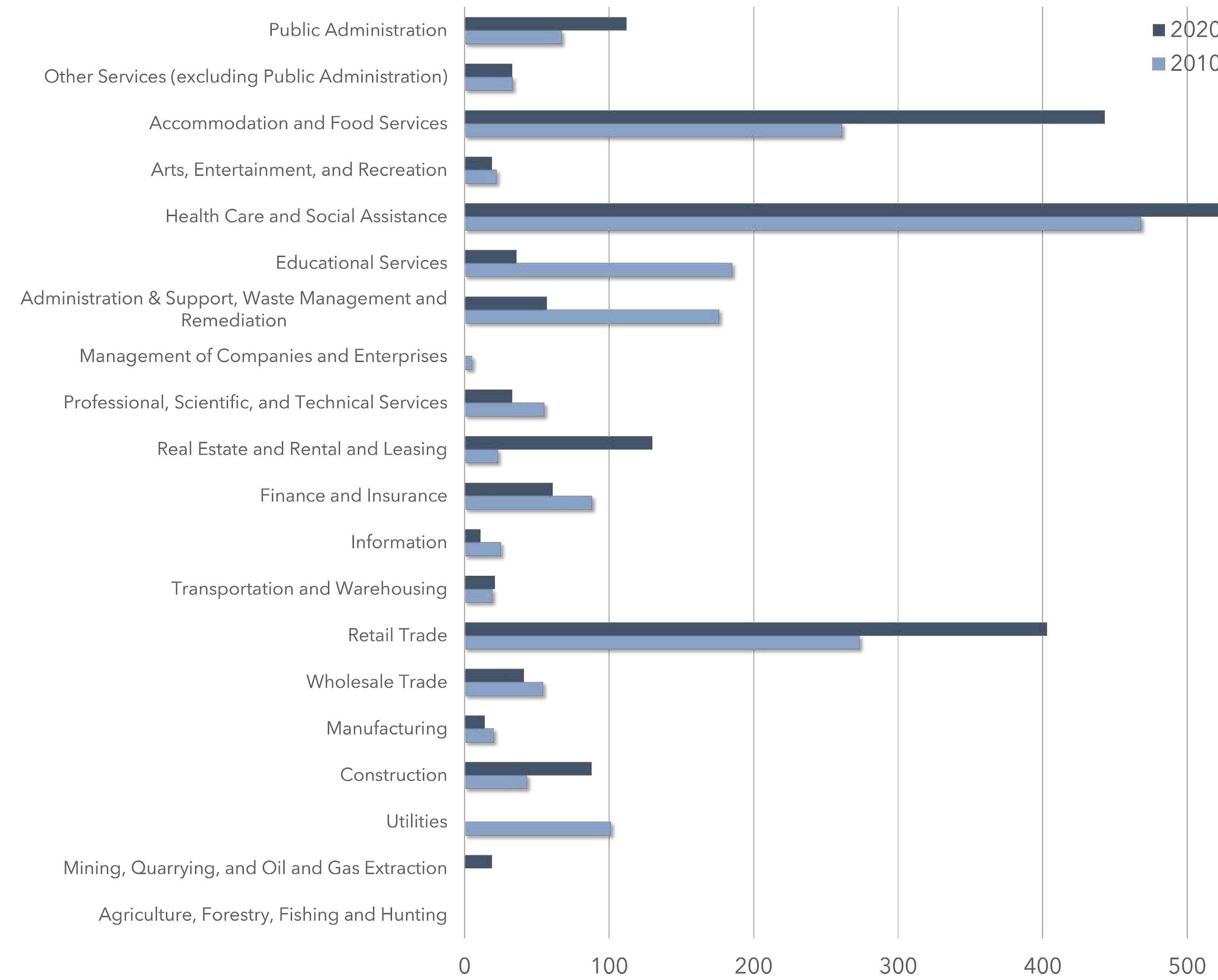
- ◆ Shoreline Stabilization - Deadline 6/1/26
- ◆ Yacht Basin Dredging - Deadline TBD
- ◆ Parking Study - Deadline TBD, work to begin in 2024
- ◆ Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations - Deadline TBD, work to begin 2024
- ◆ Utility Related Projects
 - ◆ Pump Station Rehabilitation - Deadline 2024
 - ◆ Sewer Replacement - Deadline 2024
 - ◆ Mulberry Branch Sewer Plan Expansion - Deadline 2024
 - ◆ Utility Pole Replacement - Ongoing
 - ◆ Overhead to Underground Electric Conversion - Ongoing

For the full list of projects and more information about the City's Active Projects, please visit the City of Southport Website.

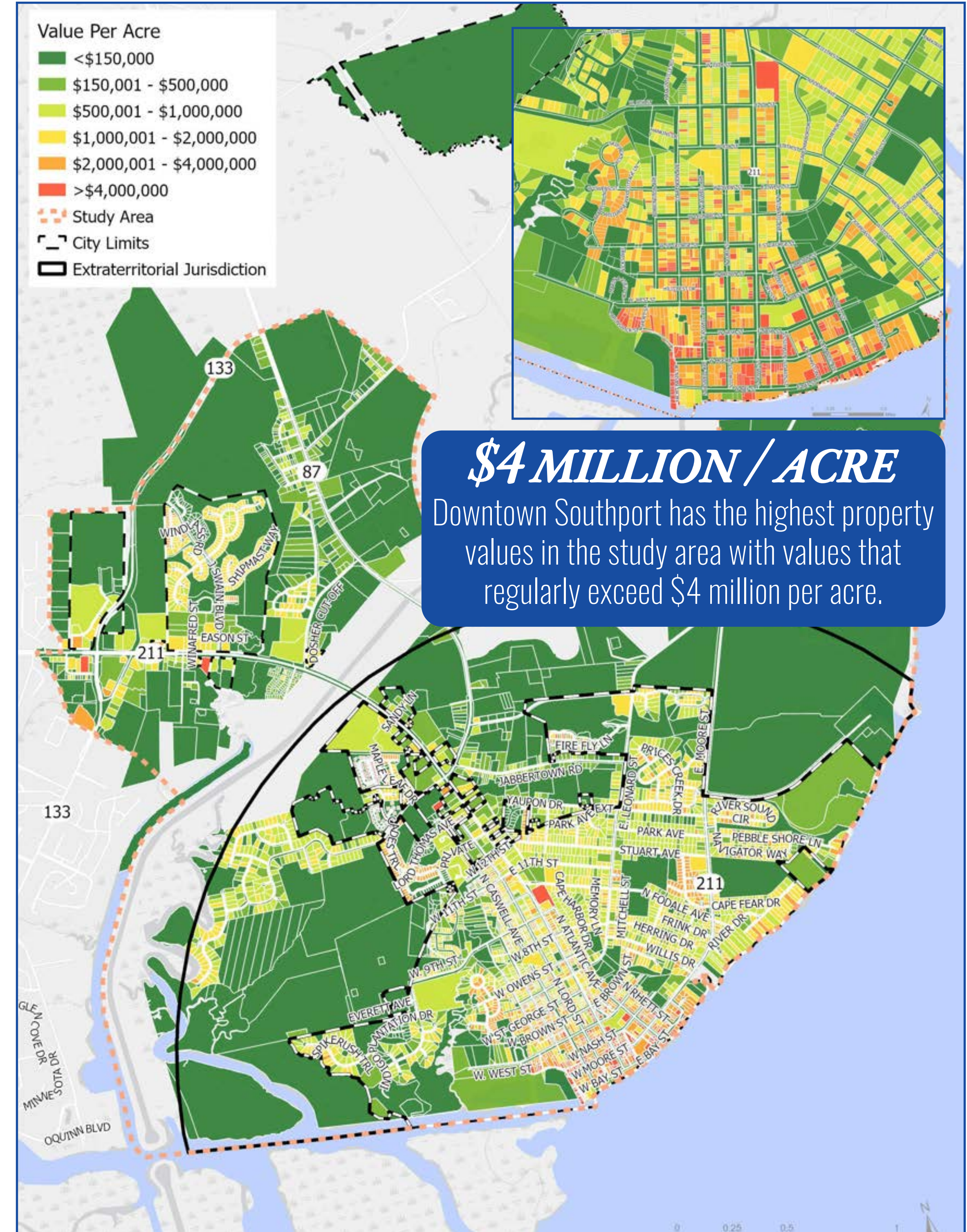
EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Data from the US Census and the NC Department of Commerce show that Southport's job market brings in over 1,865 people to the area who live elsewhere. Health care and social assistance, accommodation and food and retail are Southport's top industries. These industries also resulted in the highest increases in jobs between 2010 and 2020.

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN STUDY AREA



VALUE PER ACRE

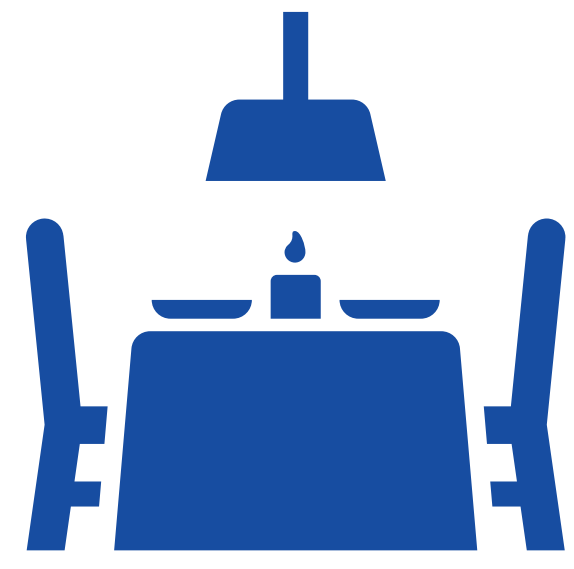


GROWTH BY INDUSTRY 2000-2020



26.02%

Health Care and Social Assistance



21.55%

Accommodations and Food Services



19.6%

Retail Trade

TOURISM STATISTICS

Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of Southport, boosting the accommodations, food services, and retail employment sectors. Seen throughout Brunswick County, Southport experiences a both a seasonal population and visitor population influx primarily in the warmer months.

\$975.1 MILLION

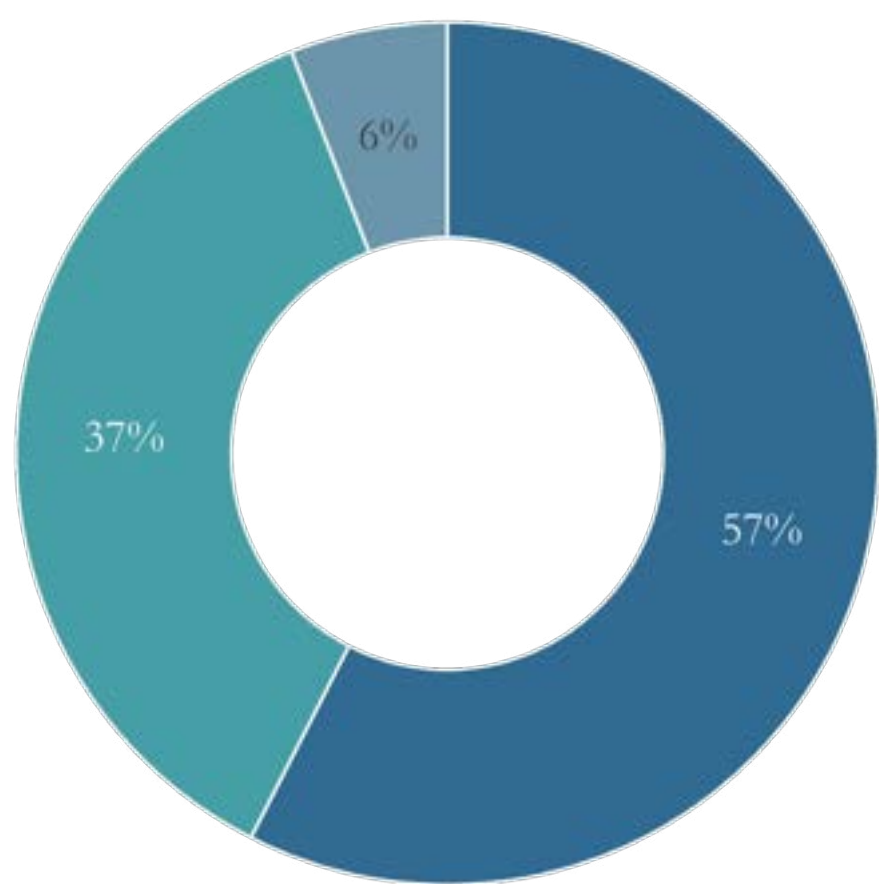
spent by visitors in 2021 on lodging, food and beverage, recreation, retail, and transportation in Brunswick County.

The City of Southport collected \$228,932 in accommodations taxes from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (1 year).

Southport has made itself known as the place to be for the Fourth of July where 40,000 - 50,000 people come to experience the festivities that make up the holiday weekend. The event was officially established as the N.C. 4th of July Festival in 1972, but the first recorded celebration was in 1795.



COMMUTE PATTERNS, 2020



- Employed in Southport Area but Living Outside
- Living in Southport but Employed Outside
- Living and Employed in Southport



2020 Geographic Employment Patterns

- ◆ 191 people live and work in Southport
- ◆ 1,186 people live in Southport, but work elsewhere
- ◆ 1,865 people live elsewhere, but work in Southport

BUDGET BREAKDOWN - FY 2022-2023

General Fund Anticipated Revenues - Retail and Tourism Related

- ◆ Franchise Taxes - \$300,000
- ◆ Occupancy Taxes - \$190,000
- ◆ Rental Revenues - \$132,500
- ◆ Local Option Sales Tax - \$1,365,000

18%

Of the total revenue for the City of Southport is related to tourist spending. Property values and taxes which are the largest source of revenue also are impacted due to increased demand.

DOWNTOWN SOUTHPORT

Southport's downtown core is home to numerous shops and boutiques, restaurants, historical markers and museums, bed and breakfasts, and tree-lined sidewalks connecting people and places. Historic neighborhoods surround downtown and a majority of the building downtown are also historic and have been converted into their current uses, adding to the vibrancy and southern coastal charm that the City is known for.

Southport also has the "Yacht Basin" district which includes numerous waterfront properties with residential, retail, and restaurant spaces. Southport is unique in that it can be accessed by both land and water.





PARKS

The City of Southport maintains and operates a number of parks and public spaces including:

- ◆ Alvin C. Caviness Memorial Park
- ◆ Atlantic Avenue Pocket-Park
- ◆ Bay Street Overlook / Deck
- ◆ Fort Johnston-Southport Museum and Visitors Center Garrison Lawn, Tennis Courts and Playground
- ◆ Franklin Square Park
- ◆ Historic Riverwalk
- ◆ Jaycee Building / Senior Building Complex
- ◆ Kezia Memorial Park
- ◆ Kingsley Street Park
- ◆ Lowe-White Memorial Park
- ◆ Salt Marsh Boardwalk and Waterway Overlook
- ◆ Southport City Dock (at the Old Yacht Basin)
- ◆ City of Southport Gym
- ◆ Waterfront Park
- ◆ Taylor Field Park

County Parks and Other Open Spaces

- ◆ Smithville District Park
- ◆ Old Smithville Burying Ground
- ◆ Smith and Northwood cemeteries

CAMA Public Access Areas

- ◆ S. Kingsley St.
- ◆ S. Atlantic Ave.
- ◆ S. Davis St.
- ◆ S. Lord St.



PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The 2023-2028 Parks and Recreation Master Plan documented needs from a survey, interviews and a public meeting. Recommendations for programming and facilities were included in the plan.

Key recommendations from the plan included:

- Establishing a safe, functional non-vehicular pedestrian and bicycle transportation network
- Land acquisition near Stevens Park, the Yacht Basin, for greenways and near existing parks
- Improving public access to waterways
- Replacement of the gym and parks and rec department office with a new multi-purpose recreation center
- Upgrades to existing parks
- New ADA public restrooms in downtown
- Renovation or replacement of the Jaycee Building and Senior Building
- Programming enhancements to meet needs

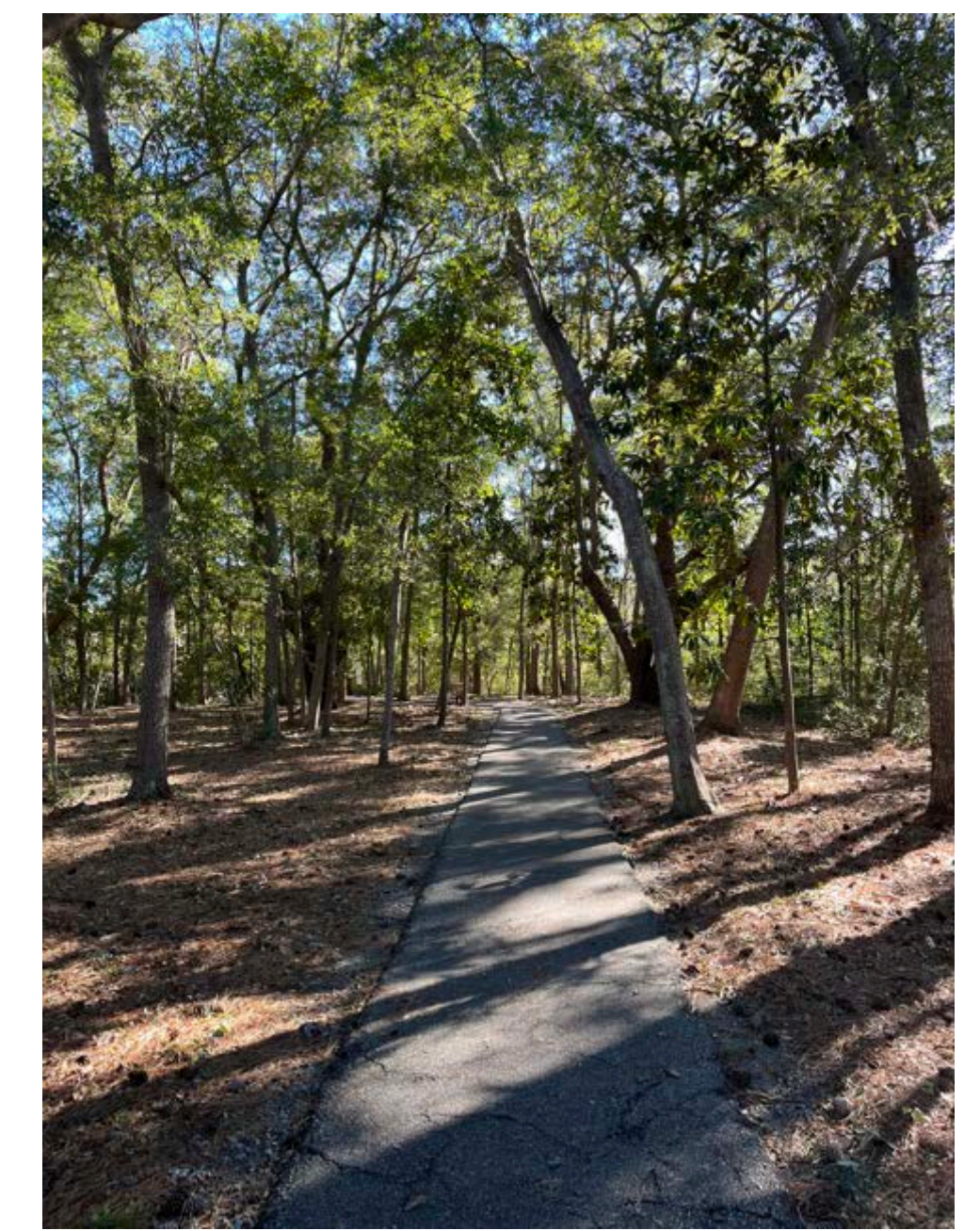
SIDEWALKS AND TRAILS

Many roads in the core of the City have sidewalks. New residential subdivisions, multi-family developments and many types of nonresidential developments are required to have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Major subdivisions with 20 lots or more require sidewalks on both sides of the street or a greenway on one side of the street.

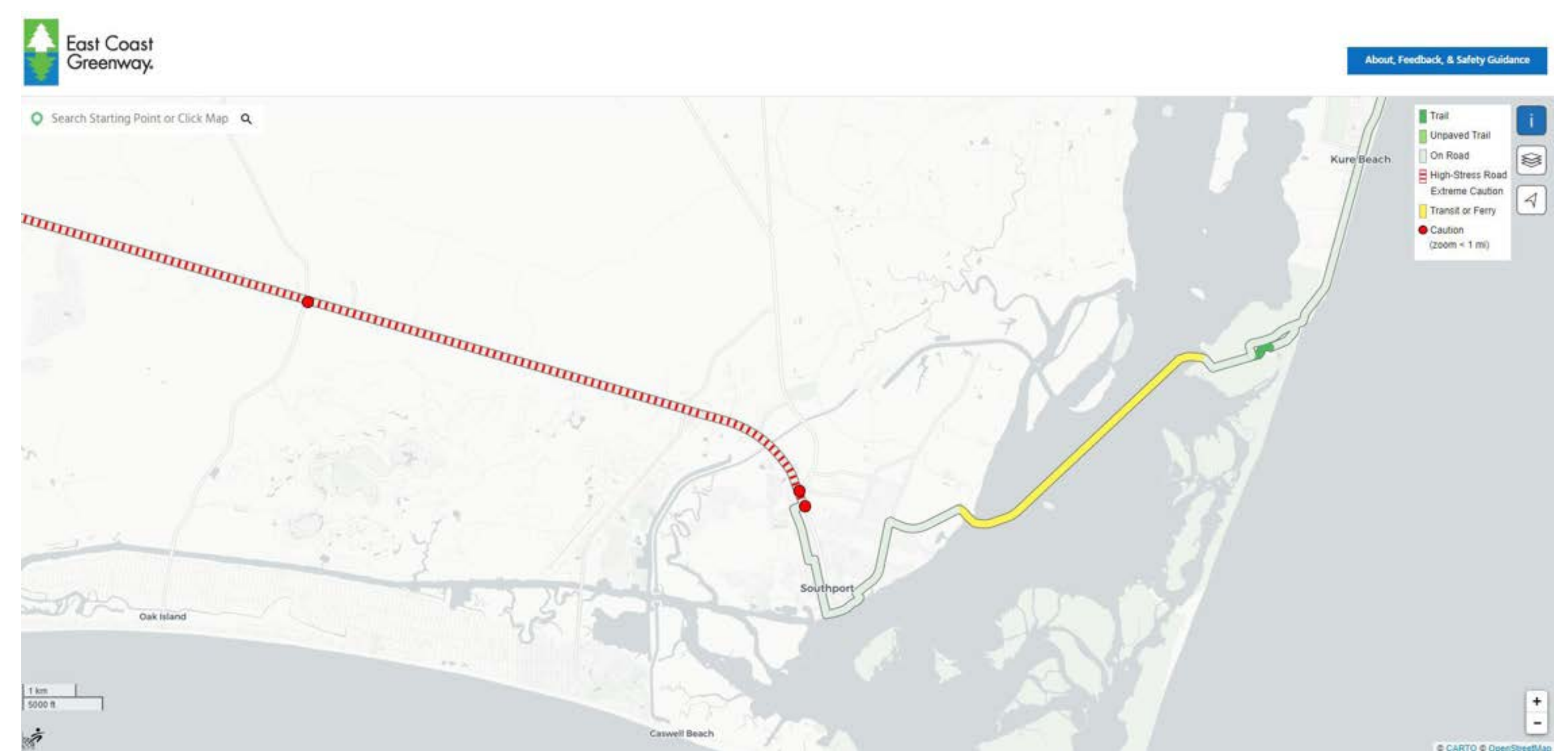
A project to extend the sidewalk along Howe Street is underway. It will add a sidewalk northward from its current terminus south of 8th Street to Doshier Memorial Hospital.

Lowe-White Memorial Park has a greenway that links Leonard Street to Rhett Street. Other parks, including Franklin Square and Waterfront Park have internal walkways that connect to roadways and other destinations.

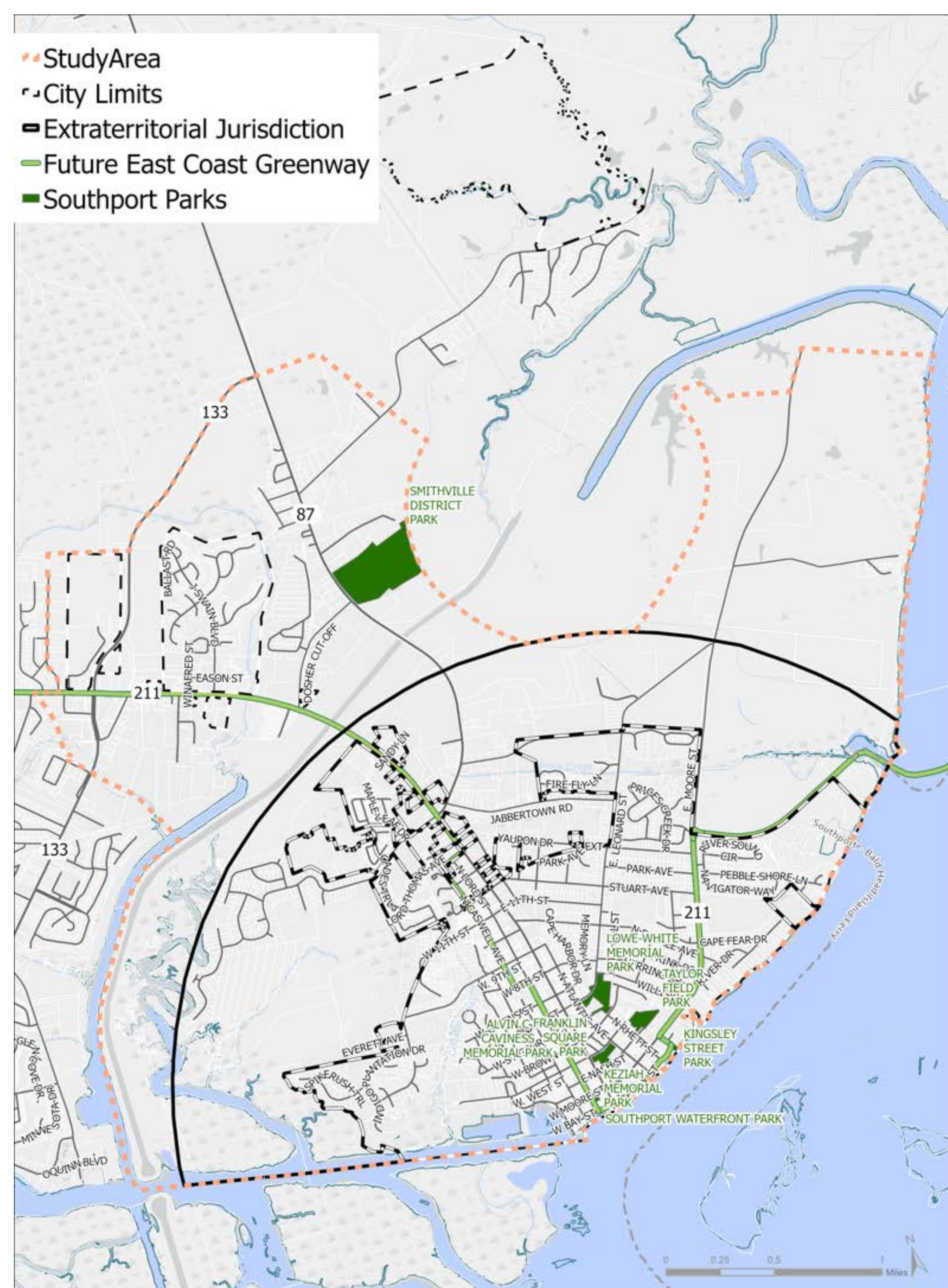
The East Coast Greenway (ECG), a walking and biking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida, passes through Southport. Much of the length of the route traverses sidewalks, although segments between downtown and the Ferry and downtown and St. James are on road segments with no designated facilities for pedestrians or bicyclists.



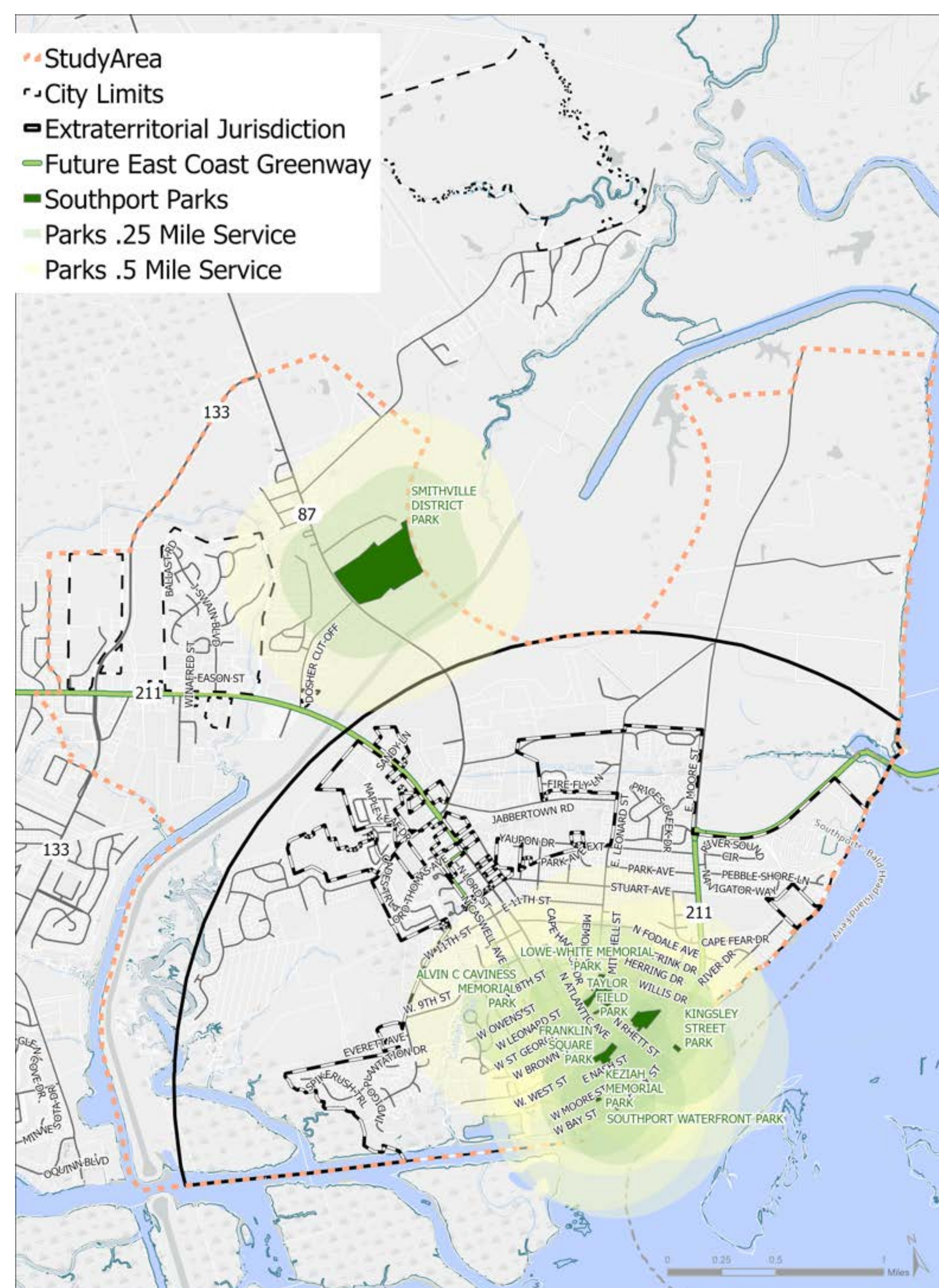
EAST COAST GREENWAY



PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE



PARKS LEVEL OF SERVICE



ONGOING PARK STUDIES

FRANKLIN SQUARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The City is currently gathering input from citizens about priorities for the revitalization of Franklin Square Park. Take the survey by accessing the link via the QR code to the right.



TAYLOR FIELD OF DREAMS INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

The City is currently gathering feedback on a proposed inclusive playground that is planned for Taylor Field.

HAZARDS AND VULNERABILITY

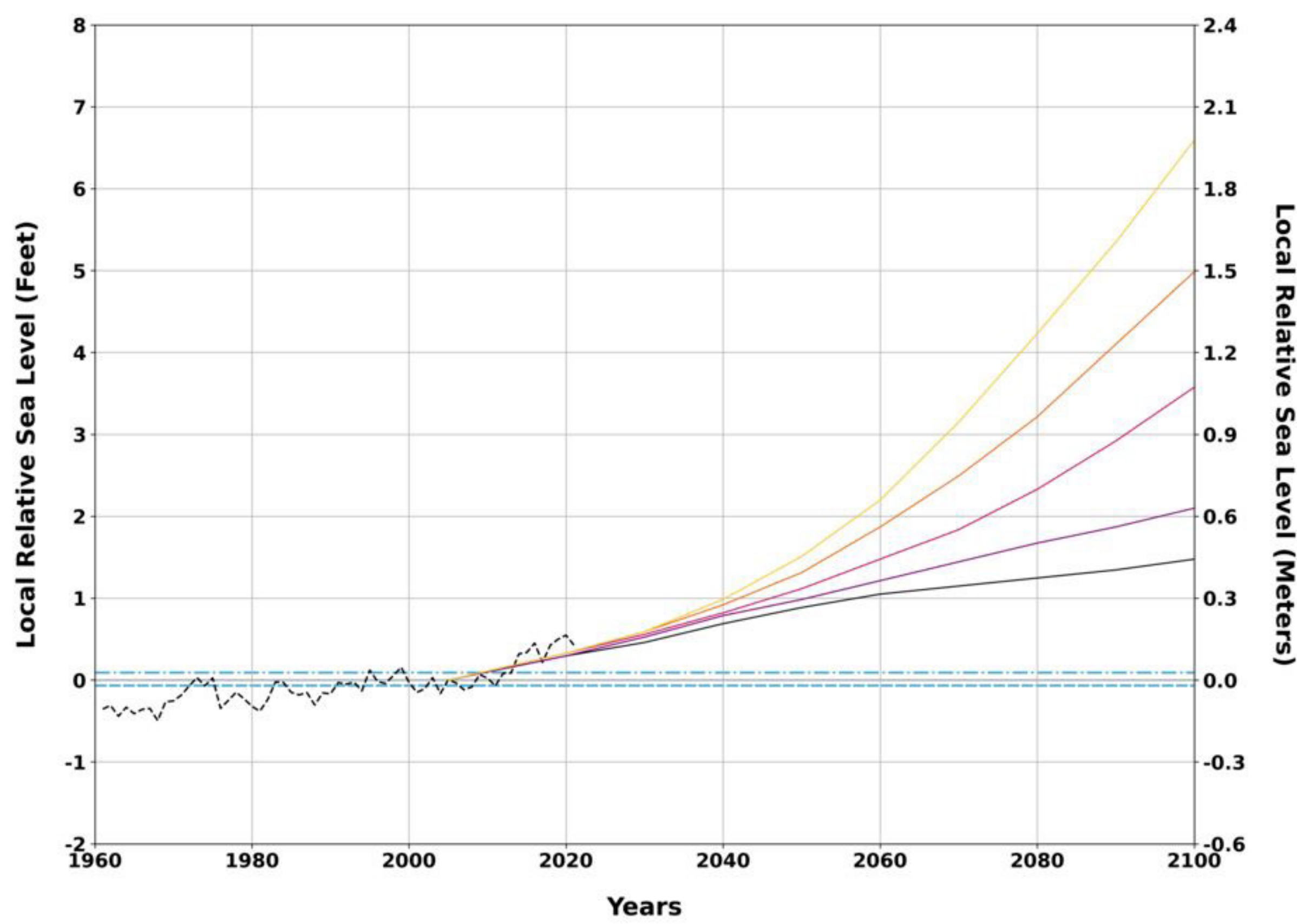
Southport's location at the mouth of the Cape Fear River and two miles from the Atlantic Ocean is both a great asset and a liability due to inherent exposure to natural hazards including storms and flooding. Natural hazards include:

- ◆ **Floodplains:** Significant floodplains exist adjacent to low lying areas near the Cape Fear River and Dutchman's Creek, Cottage Creek and Price Creek.
- ◆ **Sea Level Rise:** The sea level off our coast has risen by 11 inches since 1950. Projections indicate that a 2-3 feet rise is likely in the area by 2080. The relatively high elevation of Southport protects most of the City from projected sea level rise, however areas along Price Creek, the Yacht Basin and the marinas will likely experience increased threats. Increased wave action and rising water levels may also impact areas of the waterfront.
- ◆ **Wind and Storm Surge:** Winds from tropical storms, hurricanes, and nor'easters present risks to structures. In addition, storm surge impacts from hurricanes at a category 3 or higher may extend well inland. Hurricane Fran was the strongest hurricane to make landfall since Hazel (Cat 4) in NC in 1996 bringing 24.06 inches of rain to Southport and 137 mph winds.

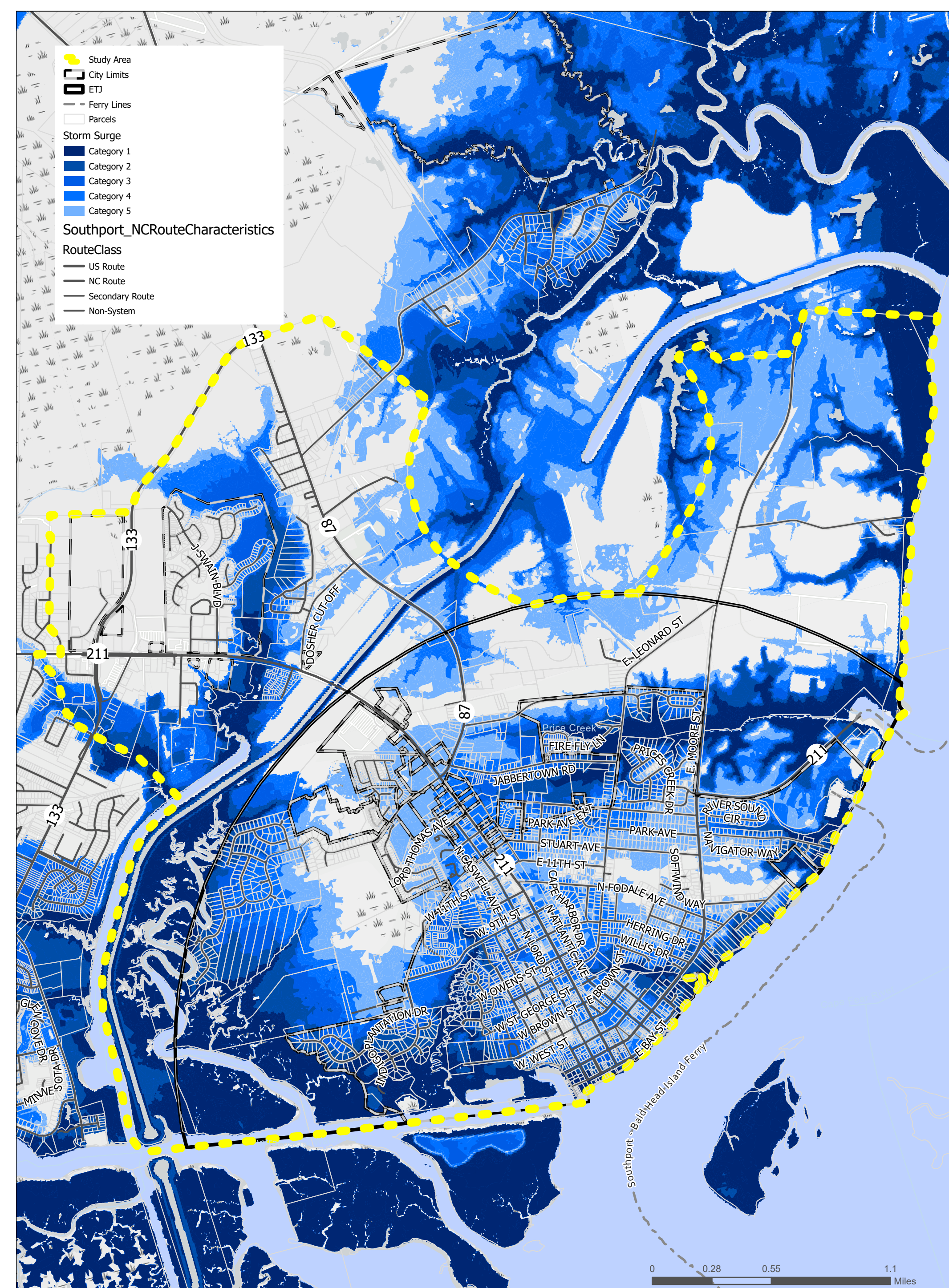
SEA LEVEL RISE



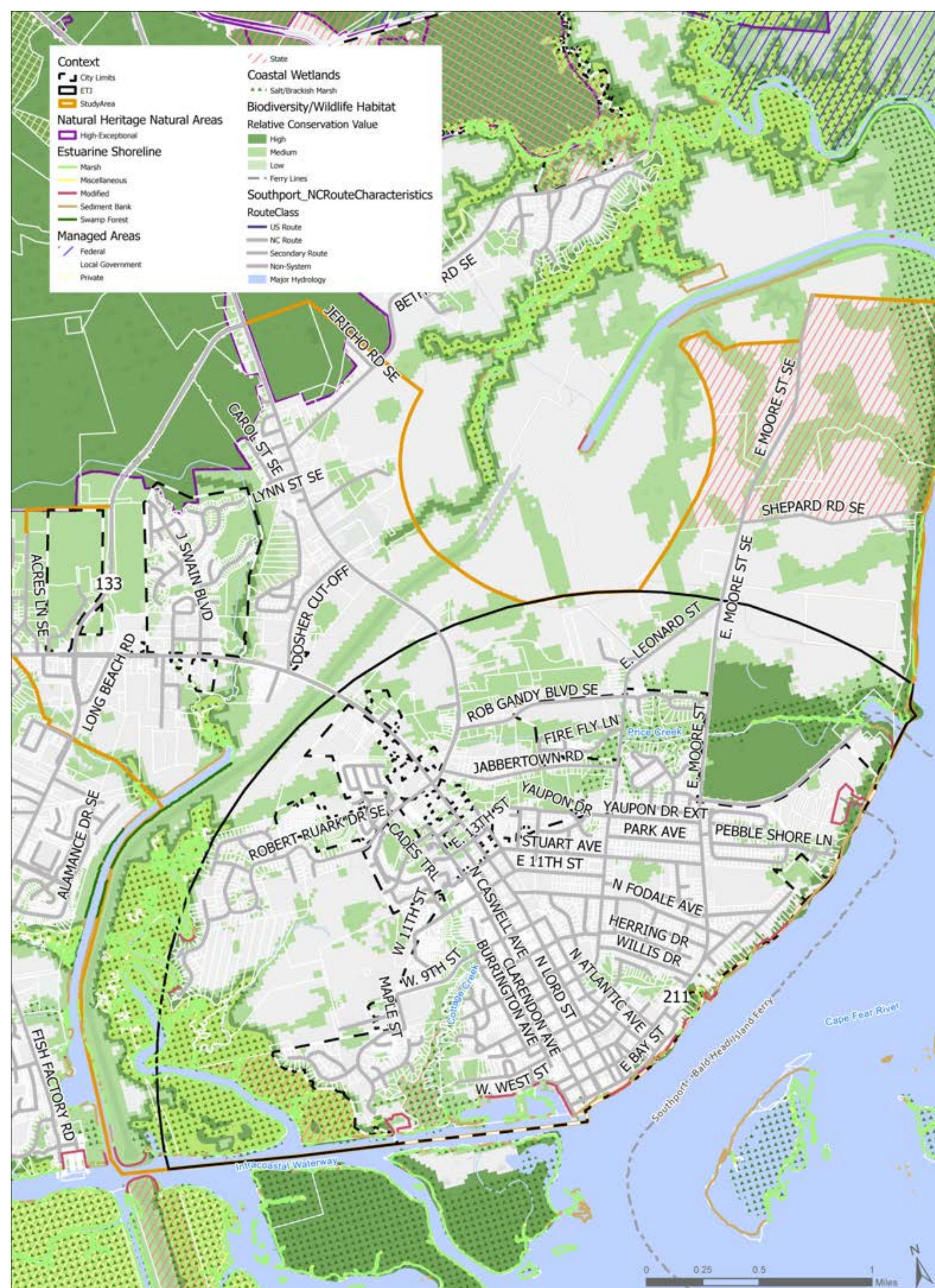
**Annual Relative Sea Level Since 1960 and Projections
8658120 Wilmington**



STORM SURGE



ENVIRONMENTALLY FRAGILE AREAS



MANMADE HAZARDS

The Duke Progress Energy Brunswick Nuclear Plant is located just north of Southport. An accident at the plant could impact the City's emergency response resources.

The second potential hazard is the possibility of an oil or chemical spill in the Cape Fear River from a tanker traveling by Southport to or from the Port of Wilmington. In addition, explosives are shipped to Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal just north of the City.

NATURAL ASSETS

The study area includes three designated Natural Heritage Natural Areas. These include:

- ◆ Lower Cape Fear River Aquatic Habitat
- ◆ Southport Ferry Landing Forest
- ◆ Boiling Spring Lakes Wetland Complex

Wetlands within the study area include an estimated 874 acres of non-coastal wetlands and 568 acres of salt-brackish marsh. Wetlands, floodplains and areas of intact maritime forest rank high as areas of biodiversity.

The area surrounding Dutchmans Creek is identified as a Primary Fishery Nursery Area.

