



# CITY OF OCEAN SPRINGS 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DISCOVERING FOUNDATIONS,  
CHARTING THE FUTURE

ADOPTED MONTH XX,  
2024

**DRAFT 11/14/2024**



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## INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs, "Charting the Future: Ocean Springs 2045," is organized into two distinct time periods to enhance readability, accessibility, and the impact of the planning document. The plan is organized to serve as a practical and strategic guide for the city's growth and development over the next 20 years. It is divided into these time periods to address different aspects of the city's past, present, and future. This division underscores our commitment to creating a user-friendly plan that clearly delineates the city's historical context and future vision.

**Discovering Foundations** — The first part, "Discovering Foundations", provides a compre-

hensive overview of Ocean Springs' historical, geographical, and environmental background. This foundational context is crucial for understanding the city's current state and the factors influencing its development. By presenting this information separately, we acknowledge the broad availability of detailed data in alternative formats, which allows readers to access specific background information as needed without overwhelming the strategic elements of the plan. Therefore, this part of the plan has been selectively edited from a more comprehensive analysis to present the most important and relevant information as a foundation for planning for Ocean Springs' future growth and development.

**Charting the Future** — The second part, "Charting the Future", focuses on the visionary aspects of the plan, outlining goals, objectives, and strategic initiatives for the next 20 years. This part showcases the forward-thinking components, emphasizing the city's commitment to sustainable growth, community well-being, and economic vitality. By separating the future plans from the background data, we highlight Ocean Springs's proactive approach to navigating the path toward a vibrant, prosperous, and resilient future.

The decision to divide the plan into two parts stems from the need to create a document that is comprehensive, easily navigable and engaging. This structure ensures that readers can quickly find and focus on the forward-looking strategies that will shape Ocean Springs' future while having access to the necessary background information. By doing so, we aim to make the plan more accessible to a broader audience, including residents, stakeholders, and policymakers, facilitating informed decision-making and active community participation.

## **ORGANIZATION OF DISCOVERING FOUNDATIONS**

The first part of the Comprehensive Plan, "Discovering Foundations," serves as a crucial element in understanding Ocean Springs' historical, geographical, and demographic context. This part lays the groundwork for informed decision-making and strategic planning, providing a detailed analysis of the city's existing conditions and past development efforts. The chapters in this part offer a comprehensive overview

of Ocean Springs' unique characteristics and current state, which are essential for guiding future growth and development.

### **CHAPTER 1: PLANNING FOUNDATIONS**

The introduction provides an overview of the Comprehensive Plan's purpose and scope. It explains the importance of a long-term vision and strategic framework for guiding the sustainable growth and development of Ocean Springs over the next 20 years. This chapter outlines the collaborative and participatory process that informed the plan, ensuring that it reflects the community's needs and aspirations. Key focus areas include land use, housing, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, public services, environmental stewardship, and community character.

### **CHAPTER 2: HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

This chapter delves into Ocean Springs's rich history, regional geography, and natural resources. It provides a detailed account of the city's historical development, from its early days to its present status as a vibrant coastal community. The chapter also explores the geographical features that shape the city's landscape, including topography, elevation, watersheds, floodplains, wetlands, surface water resources, groundwater, and wildlife. Understanding these foundational elements allows the community to appreciate its unique environmental assets and address development constraints and restrictions.

### **CHAPTER 3: POPULATION AND ECONOMY**

An in-depth analysis of the population and economic characteristics of Ocean Springs is presented in this chapter. It covers demographic trends, including natural increase and migration patterns, population projections, and educational attainment. The housing market is also examined, highlighting the diversity of housing types and the dynamics of housing occupancy. Additionally, the chapter explores income characteristics and the city's economic landscape, providing insights into the workforce, employment sectors, and economic opportunities. This analysis is essential for planning future development that meets the needs of a growing and diverse population.

### **CHAPTER 4: EXISTING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION**

This chapter provides an inventory and analysis of the existing land use and transportation systems in Ocean Springs. It explores the city's neighborhoods, districts, and significant land use categories, such as residential, commercial, industrial, and public spaces. The transportation section reviews the functional classification of existing streets, traffic counts, and the active transportation network, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Public transportation systems and transportation challenges are also addressed. Understanding the current land use and transportation framework is crucial for identifying areas for improvement and future development.

### **ORGANIZATION OF CHARTING THE FUTURE**

The second part of the Comprehensive Plan, "Charting the Future," outlines the strategic vision for Ocean Springs over the next 20 years. This section sets forward-looking goals, objectives, and actionable steps to ensure sustainable growth, community well-being, and economic vitality. The chapters in this part emphasize the city's commitment to maintaining its unique charm while navigating future challenges and opportunities.

### **CHAPTER 5: VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This chapter articulates the clear goals and objectives that will guide Ocean Springs' future development. These goals are informed by community input and reflect the collective aspirations of our residents, businesses, and stakeholders. The major focus areas include sustainable land use, diverse and affordable housing, vibrant local economy, enhanced mobility and connectivity, reliable infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and preservation of community character.

### **CHAPTER 6: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

The future land use plan is presented in this chapter, detailing the proposed distribution of land uses and development strategies. It includes a comprehensive land use plan that designates areas for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational uses. The chapter also addresses development constraints and promotes mixed-use projects, infill development, and the

redevelopment of underutilized properties to maximize land use efficiency.

### **CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

This chapter outlines the transportation improvements needed to enhance mobility and connectivity within Ocean Springs. It includes strategies for upgrading existing streets, expanding public transportation services, developing a comprehensive network of sidewalks and bike lanes, and supporting transit-oriented development. These initiatives aim to improve traffic flow, increase accessibility, and promote active transportation.

### **CHAPTER 8: COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN**

The future needs of community facilities and public services are the focus of this chapter. Recommendations include expanding and enhancing parks and recreational facilities, modernizing public utilities, improving public safety resources, supporting educational facility development, and implementing housing initiatives. These efforts ensure that Ocean Springs can

provide high-quality amenities and services to its growing population.

### **CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The final chapter outlines the strategies and tools necessary for effectively implementing the Comprehensive Plan. It emphasizes the importance of using zoning regulations, capital improvement programs, and development incentives to achieve the plan's goals. The chapter also establishes a framework for regular updates and evaluations of the plan, fostering ongoing public engagement to ensure responsiveness to community needs and aspirations.





# DISCOVERING FOUNDATIONS





**Ocean Springs is a vibrant, resilient,  
inclusive coastal community that  
cherishes its rich heritage, celebrates its  
natural beauty, and embraces  
innovative growth**

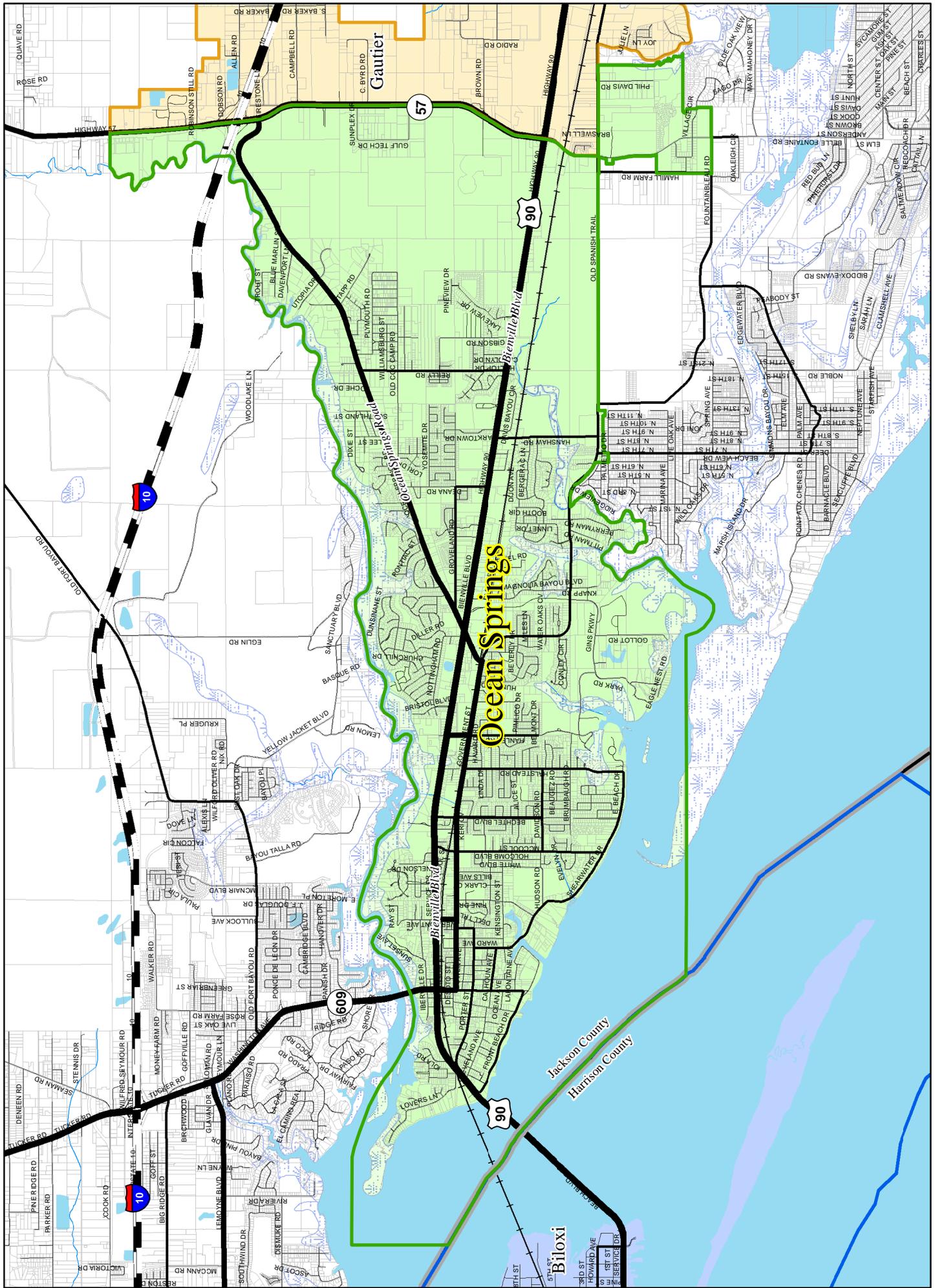


## CHAPTER 1—PLANNING FOUNDATIONS

- \* **VISION**
- \* **WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?**
- \* **HOW WILL THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BE USED?**
- \* **PLANNING PROCESS**
- \* **WHO WILL IMPLEMENT THE PLAN?**
- \* **PLANNING HISTORY AND PRECEDENTS**

The Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs, Mississippi, is a visionary and strategic framework designed to guide the city's sustainable growth and development over the next 20 years. This plan aims to preserve and enhance Ocean Springs' unique coastal charm, natural beauty, and cultural heritage while fostering a thriving, resilient, and inclusive community. The plan ensures balanced growth, environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic vitality by addressing the needs of current and future residents, businesses, and visitors.

Through a collaborative and participatory process, the Comprehensive Plan identifies key priorities, goals, and strategies across interconnected focus areas, including land use, housing, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, public services, environmental stewardship, and community character. This plan will act as a living document, adaptable to the evolving needs and aspirations of the community, incorporating ongoing public engage-



Map 1: Base Map

ment and periodic evaluations to remain relevant and responsive.

As a guiding document, city officials, planners, and community members will utilize the Comprehensive Plan to inform decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation. By aligning these decisions with the plan's strategic priorities, Ocean Springs can ensure that its future growth is well-balanced and sustainable, promoting a high quality of life for all its residents. The successful implementation of this plan will require the commitment, cooperation, and coordination of multiple stakeholders, including local government agencies, private sector partners, non-profit organizations, and community members. Ocean Springs can confidently navigate its path toward a vibrant, prosperous, and resilient future through these collective efforts.

## **VISION**

Ocean Springs is a vibrant, resilient, inclusive coastal community that cherishes its rich heritage, celebrates its natural beauty, and embraces innovative growth. As "The City of Discovery," we are committed to fostering a sustainable environment, a thriving local economy, and a high quality of life for all residents. Through thoughtful planning, community engagement, and strategic investment, we will preserve our unique character while boldly navigating future challenges, ensuring that Ocean Springs remains a place where tradition and progress meet and every resident can flourish.

## **WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?**

The Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs, Mississippi, provides a long-term vision and strategic framework to guide the sustainable growth and development of our community over the next 20 years. This plan aims to preserve and enhance Ocean Springs's unique coastal charm, natural beauty, and cultural heritage while fostering a thriving, resilient, and inclusive community that meets the needs of current and future residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Through a collaborative and participatory process, the Comprehensive Plan identifies key priorities, goals, and strategies across interconnected focus areas, including land use, housing, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, public services, environmental stewardship, and community character. The plan promotes well-balanced growth, environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic vitality in Ocean Springs by aligning decision-making and resource allocation with these strategic priorities.

This Comprehensive Plan serves as a living document, adaptable to our community's changing needs and aspirations. By incorporating ongoing public engagement and periodic evaluations, the plan will ensure that Ocean Springs' vision remains relevant, responsive, and reflective of our residents' and stakeholders' diverse voices and values. Together, we will shape Ocean Springs, Mississippi's vibrant, prosperous, and resilient future.



Section 17-1-1 of the *Mississippi Code* defines a comprehensive plan as:

“A statement of public policy for the physical development of the entire municipality or county adopted by resolution of the governing body, consisting of the following elements at a minimum:

(i) **Goals and objectives** for the long-range (twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) years) development of the county or municipality. Required goals and objectives shall address, at a minimum, residential, commercial and industrial development; parks, open space and recreation; street or road improvements; public schools and community facilities.

(ii) **A land use plan** which designates in map or policy form the proposed general distribution and extent of the uses of land for residences, commerce, industry, recreation and open space, public/quasi-public facilities and lands. Background information shall be provided concerning the specific meaning of land use categories depicted in the plan in terms of the following: residential densities; intensity of commercial uses; industrial and public/quasi-public uses; and any other information needed to adequately define the meaning of such land use codes. Projections of population and economic growth for the area encompassed by the plan may be the basis for quantitative

recommendations for each land use category.

(iii) **A transportation plan** depicting in map form the proposed functional classifications for all existing and proposed streets, roads and highways for the area encompassed by the land use plan and for the same time period as that covered by the land use plan. Functional classifications shall consist of arterial, collector and local streets, roads and highways, and these classifications shall be defined on the plan as to minimum right-of-way and surface width requirements; these requirements shall be based upon traffic projections. All other forms of transportation pertinent to the local jurisdiction shall be addressed as appropriate. The transportation plan shall be a basis for a capital improvements program.

(iv) **A community facilities plan** as a basis for a capital improvements program including, but not limited to, the following: housing; schools; parks and recreation; public buildings and facilities; and utilities and drainage.”

Section 17-1-11 also states that “The governing authority of each municipality and county may provide for the preparation, adoption, amendment, extension and carrying out of a comprehensive plan for the purpose of bringing about coordinated physical development in accordance with present and future needs and may create, independently or jointly, a local plan-

ning commission with authority to prepare and propose

- (a) a comprehensive plan of physical development of the municipality or county;
- (b) a proposed zoning ordinance and map;
- (c) regulations governing subdivisions of land;
- (d) building or set back lines on streets, roads and highways; and
- (e) recommendations to the governing authorities of each municipality or county with regard to the enforcement of and amendments to the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations and capital improvements program.”

## HOW WILL THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BE USED?

The Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint and guiding document for Ocean Springs, Mississippi's growth, development, and future prosperity. The plan serves several vital functions, including:

**Vision and Goals:** The plan establishes a clear vision and goals for Ocean Springs's future, providing direction for decision-makers, stakeholders, and community members to achieve the desired outcomes.

**Policy Guidance:** The Comprehensive Plan outlines policies and strategies across various focus areas, such as land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, public services, environmental stewardship, and community character. This guidance will inform local ordinances, regulations, and codes to ensure consistency with the plan's objectives.



**Decision-Making:** The plan serves as a reference point for city officials, planners, and community members when evaluating proposed projects, initiatives, and investments. By aligning these decisions with the plan's priorities, Ocean Springs can ensure that resources are allocated effectively and that growth is well-balanced and sustainable.

**Coordination and Collaboration:** The Comprehensive Plan encourages collaboration among various agencies, organizations, and stakeholders in implementing the plan's strategies. This coordinated approach will help maximize the impact of available resources and foster a sense of shared ownership in the community's future.

**Public Engagement:** The plan serves as a communication tool to engage residents and stakeholders in ongoing conversations about Ocean Springs' future. By incorporating diverse perspectives and providing opportunities for input and feedback, the plan helps ensure that the community's vision remains relevant and responsive to changing needs and aspirations.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Comprehensive Plan establishes benchmarks and performance measures to track progress and assess the effectiveness of its strategies. Regular updates and revisions will ensure that the plan remains adaptive to evolving conditions and continues to provide valuable guidance for Ocean Springs' growth and development.

## **WHO WILL IMPLEMENT THE PLAN?**

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs, Mississippi, is a collaborative effort involving multiple stakeholders, including local government agencies, private sector partners, non-profit organizations, and community members. The plan's successful implementation requires ongoing commitment, cooperation, and coordination among these stakeholders. Key players and their roles in implementing the plan include:

**Local Government:** City departments, such as planning, public works, and parks and recreation will play a crucial role in implementing the

plan through policy development, zoning and regulatory updates, capital improvement projects, and the provision of public services.

**Elected Officials:** The Board of Mayor and Aldermen will be responsible for adopting and supporting the policies and strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. They will also allocate resources and approve budgets to facilitate plan implementation and advocate for support necessary to achieve desired outcomes.

**Planning Commission:** The planning commission will review and provide recommendations on proposed developments, zoning changes, and other land use decisions to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies.

**Private Sector:** Developers, business owners, and property owners will play a significant role in implementing the plan by investing in projects and initiatives that align with the community's vision and priorities.

**Non-Profit Organizations:** Local non-profit organizations will contribute to plan implementation by advocating for specific policies, providing expertise, and partnering on projects that support the plan's objectives.

**Community Members:** Residents and stakeholders will participate in the implementation process by providing input on proposed projects and initiatives, attending public meetings, and volunteering for community projects and events that align with the plan's goals.

**Regional and State Agencies:** Collaboration with regional and state agencies, such as trans-

portation and environmental agencies, will be essential for coordinating and leveraging resources to support plan implementation.

The Comprehensive Plan outlines specific action steps, timelines, and responsibilities for each policy and strategy to ensure effective implementation. Additionally, a monitoring and evaluation process tracks progress, assesses the effectiveness of the plan's strategies, and makes necessary adjustments to respond to changing conditions and community needs.

## PLANNING HISTORY AND PRECEDENTS

Ocean Springs' planning history reflects a continuous effort to manage growth, enhance livability, and address emerging challenges through comprehensive and focused planning initiatives. Planning in Ocean Springs can be divided into key phases before and after Hurricane Katrina. Before Katrina, Ocean Springs' comprehensive planning focused on infrastructure (primarily automotive) and community facilities and separating land uses into distinctly different neighborhoods and districts. Post-Katrina, however, the City began incorporating traditional neighborhood design, urbanism, mixed-use, and walkability into community planning. These elements endure in today's plans for Ocean Springs' future growth and development.

### PRE-HURRICANE KATRINA COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

#### *The 1965 Comprehensive Plan*

Ocean Springs began formal planning in the late 1950s, culminating in the "Evaluation of the

Economy—Long Range Land Use Plan for Ocean Springs, Mississippi" in 1965. This plan and subsequent publications, such as the Major Thoroughfare Plan (1966) and the Community Facilities Plan (1966), identified issues such as strip commercial development and the need for controlled land use.

### **1971 Comprehensive Plan**

The 1971 Plan included reports on community goals, economic and population studies, inventory and analysis, housing, public improvements, and a comprehensive development plan. It set goals for city growth and development until 1990.

### **2001 Comprehensive Plan**

The planning process for the 2001 Comprehensive Plan began in 1995 and aimed to guide development from 2000 to 2020. It was the city's first official land use strategy, focusing on data collection and issue identification. The plan included goals for city growth and addressed issues from previous plans.

## **POST-HURRICANE KATRINA COMMUNITY PLANNING**

### ***The Mississippi Renewal Forum***

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 led to the Mississippi Renewal Forum, which emphasized building compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use neighborhoods. The Mississippi Renewal Forum's recommendations for Ocean Springs, along with the Bienville Boulevard Design Handbook (pictured below) and Front Beach Master Plan, addressed key areas of the City and priorities post-Katrina. These documents set the stage for major revisions to the city's development regulations focused on improving neighborhood connectivity, urban design, and mixed-use development.

### ***Ocean Springs Blueprint 2010***

The "Ocean Springs Blueprint 2010" updated previous plans, integrating new goals and strategies. This plan focused on preserving the city's character, managing growth, and ensuring a high quality of life for residents.

*Mississippi Renewal Forum sketches for Bienville Boulevard*



### ***Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan 2018***

In November 2018, the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan was developed for Jackson County, including Ocean Springs. This plan aimed to enhance walking, bicycling, and paddling infrastructure, making these activities safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities. It was driven by public and stakeholder input, emphasizing the need for dedicated and separated facilities to improve safety and increase mobility.

### ***Gulf Coast Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2045***

The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan provides a vision for the future of transportation in the Mississippi Gulf Coast region, covering all modes of transportation. It includes strategies for roadway expansion, intersection redesigns, and biking and walking infrastructure expansion. The plan emphasizes improving transportation choices, enhancing regional connectivity, supporting economic vitality, and managing the relationship between transportation, community, and the environment.

### ***Mississippi Gulf Coast 2045 Transit Development Plan (TDP)***

The 2045 TDP serves as a guiding document for improving public transportation in the region over the next 25 years. It includes a needs analysis, plan recommendations for service, capital, technology, and marketing improvements, and a detailed financial plan. The TDP also outlines a strategy for promoting transit-oriented development (TOD), aiming to create dense, mixed-use communities with accessible public transportation.

### ***Mississippi Gulf Coast Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2025-2028***

The TIP outlines a set of transportation projects and programs aimed at enhancing the transportation system in the Gulf Coast region, including Ocean Springs. The program focuses on safety, efficiency, and resilience, aligning with national goals and regional priorities. It includes funding and project details for multi-modal infrastructure improvements, intersection upgrades, and more.

### ***Interim Apartment Survey 2020***

The Interim Apartment Survey, conducted by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC), provides a detailed overview of the multifamily rental housing market along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This interim survey, influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and a record-breaking hurricane season, focused on unassisted and assisted rental units across the region, including Ocean Springs.

### ***Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) District 9 Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024 - City of Ocean Springs Mitigation Action Plan***

The Ocean Springs Mitigation Action Plan, as part of the MEMA Region 9 Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024, outlines key strategies to minimize risks associated with natural and technological hazards. It includes measures such as enforcing building codes, maintaining a debris management program, and promoting public education on hazard preparedness. The plan prioritizes protecting critical facilities, infrastructure, and natural resources while also enhancing emergency response capabilities to ensure the safety and resilience of the Ocean Springs community.

These planning efforts collectively highlight Ocean Springs' commitment to strategic growth management, infrastructure enhancement, community well-being, and an overall integrated and coordinated approach to improving the City and region. Each plan builds on the previous ones, and the 2045 Comprehensive Plan draws inspiration from and builds on these planning efforts to address new challenges and opportunities to ensure a sustainable and vibrant future for the city.

## **CONCLUSION**

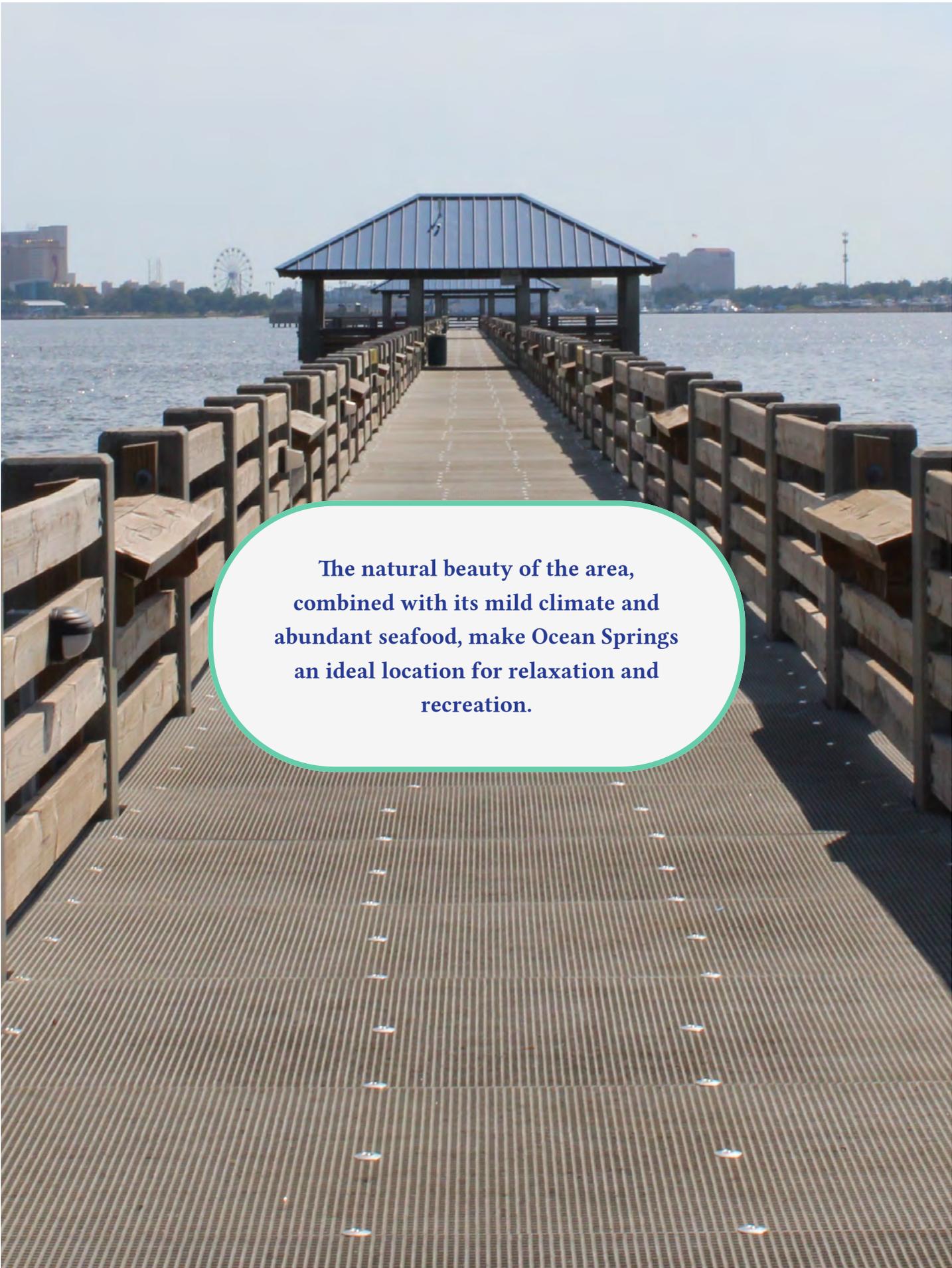
The Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs extends decades of thoughtful planning and strategic development. It builds upon the city's rich history and previous planning efforts, integrating modern community design and infrastructure development approaches. This plan is not merely a static document; it is a dynamic framework that guides the city's growth and evolution over the next 20 years, ensuring that Ocean Springs remains a vibrant, prosperous, and resilient community.

As the city continues to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, this Comprehensive Plan will serve as a crucial tool for aligning public policies, private investments, and community actions. It emphasizes the importance of balanced growth, sustainable development, and preserving the city's unique character. The plan outlines specific goals, strategies, and actions across various sectors, including land use, housing, transportation, public services, and economic development, all

aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

The Comprehensive Plan's success will require the collaborative efforts of local government, private sector partners, non-profit organizations, and the community. Through continued public engagement and periodic evaluations, the plan will remain responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of Ocean Springs. Together, these efforts will ensure that the city can meet the demands of the present while preserving the qualities that make it a cherished home for future generations. The Comprehensive Plan thus stands as a testament to Ocean Springs' commitment to fostering a thriving, inclusive, and forward-looking community.

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**The natural beauty of the area, combined with its mild climate and abundant seafood, make Ocean Springs an ideal location for relaxation and recreation.**



## CHAPTER 2—HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES

- \* CITY HISTORY
- \* REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY
- \* TOPOGRAPHY AND SLOPE
- \* SOILS
- \* SURFACE WATER
- \* GROUNDWATER
- \* WILDLIFE, ENDANGERED SPECIES
- \* DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS AND RESTRICTIONS
- \* WATERSHEDS, FLOODPLAINS, AND WETLANDS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides background and context for understanding Ocean Springs, Mississippi, by examining the city's history, regional geography, and environmental characteristics. This chapter outlines the city's evolution, from its early days as a settlement by the Biloxi and Pascagoula tribes to its current status as a vibrant coastal community. The section on city history delves into the various cultural and economic shifts that have shaped Ocean Springs, including the influence of French, British, and Spanish settlers, the development of the shipbuilding and seafood industries, and the city's emergence as a popular tourist destination.

The chapter also highlights the city's unique regional geography, characterized by its coastal environment, flat topography, and significant water resources, including the Gulf of Mexico and Biloxi Bay. These geographical features play a crucial role in defining the



city's culture, economy, and lifestyle while presenting challenges such as vulnerability to flooding, hurricane and tropical storm hazards, and the need to manage natural resources carefully. Additionally, Ocean Springs' topography, watersheds, and wetlands underscores the importance of preserving critical natural areas and the city's commitment to environmental sustainability.

## **CITY HISTORY**

Ocean Springs was named in 1854 by Dr. William Glover Austin, who believed in the healing properties of the local springs. It was incorporated on September 9, 1892, with a second incorporation on March 16, 1910, to address a technical issue in the original incorporation that was deemed invalid. At its re-

incorporation, the population was around 1,472 people and roughly doubled to just over 3,000 by 1950. However, population growth accelerated in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, with the 2020 population reaching 18,429. Territory added through a 2024 annexation increased the population of the City to just over 20,000.

In its pre-Columbian history, the area was first inhabited by the Biloxi and Pascagoula tribes, who lived along the Gulf Coast and relied on fishing and hunting for their sustenance.

In the early 1700s, French explorers arrived in the area and established settlements, including nearby Biloxi. The French ceded control of the region to the British in 1763, who later turned it over to Spanish control in 1783.

In the early 1800s, the first permanent settlers arrived in Ocean Springs. Among them were several wealthy New Orleans families who built large homes and established plantations in the surrounding areas. The town was initially known as “Old Biloxi” but later became known as Ocean Springs after the natural springs found in the area. Following a period of disputed control between the United States and Spain, the United States Congress formally claimed the land between the Pearl River and Perdido

River in 1812, incorporating it into the Mississippi Territory in 1812 and the new State of Mississippi in 1817.

Throughout the 1800s, Ocean Springs continued to grow, thanks in part to its thriving shipbuilding industry. The town became a major center for shipbuilding, with dozens of ships launched from its shores each year. The ships were used for various purposes, from trading and fishing to transportation and defense. In the late 1800s, the seafood industry began to take hold in Ocean Springs. The region's location on Biloxi Bay and proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Sound made it ideal for fishing and seafood harvesting. Over the years, many businesses began to process and distribute these products, including oyster factories, shrimp and crab processing plants, canneries, and fish markets.

The natural beauty of the area, combined with its mild climate and abundant seafood, made it an ideal location for relaxation and recreation. The city's first hotel, the Ocean Springs Hotel, was built in 1853, and several others followed over the years. In the early 1900s, Ocean Springs began attracting wealthy tourists from New Orleans and nearby cities. The tourism industry in Ocean Springs continued to grow throughout the 20th century as more and more people discovered the area's charms. Over the years, the town continued to grow and expand, and today, Ocean Springs is home to more than 20,000 residents. It is known for its thriving arts community, vibrant downtown area, beautiful beaches, and natural surroundings.



Ocean Springs, Mississippi, has a rich history that spans centuries. From its earliest inhabitants to its thriving shipbuilding and seafood industries to its growth as a popular vacation destination, the city has undergone many changes over the years. However, its strong sense of community and dedication to preserving its unique history and culture have remained constant throughout its history.

## REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

Ocean Springs is located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in Jackson County. The city is situated on a narrow strip of land between Biloxi Bay to the west and south and Old Fort Bayou to the north. The area is characterized by low-lying, marshy terrain and beaches and is home to various coastal plant and animal life.

The city covers an area of approximately 17.4 square miles and has a population of approximately 20,000. It is part of the Gulfport-Biloxi Metropolitan Statistical Area. The city borders Biloxi to the west and Gautier to the east. U.S. Highway 90 runs east-west through the city, connecting it to Pascagoula, Gautier, and Biloxi. Ocean Springs is approximately 75 miles east of New Orleans and 170 miles southeast of Jackson, MS, the state's capital.

Ocean Springs' landscape is dominated by its coastal environment. The city is home to several beaches, including Front Beach, located near downtown and features a pier, playground, and picnic area. The city is also home to several parks and nature reserves, including the Davis Bayou Area of the Gulf Islands National Sea-

Map 2: Regional Geography Map



shore, known for its scenic beaches, hiking trails, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

In addition to its coastal environment, Ocean Springs is home to several inland waterways, including Fort Bayou, which winds along the city's northern edge and provides kayaking, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

The city's leaders and residents take pride in their coastal heritage and are committed to preserving and protecting this important natural resource for future generations.

## **TOPOGRAPHY, ELEVATION, AND SLOPE**

Ocean Springs has a relatively flat topography, with most of its elevation approximately 100 feet above sea level or lower. The city's elevation gradually increases as you move northwards away from the coast towards the inland areas of Jackson County. The slope of the city is generally gentle, with a few slightly steeper inclines in some areas, such as along Old Fort Bayou. The city's relatively flat topography makes it an ideal location for residential and

commercial development and provides opportunities for outdoor recreation such as biking, hiking, and jogging.

One of Ocean Springs's topographic challenges is its location in a coastal area vulnerable to flooding and storm surges during hurricanes and other severe weather events. The city is situated along Biloxi Bay, and many areas are at or near sea level. This makes them more susceptible to flooding during heavy rainfall, tidal surges, and storm surges.

Another topographic challenge is the presence of wetlands and marshes, which can be difficult to develop and can limit the available land for development. Wetlands provide important habitats for many species of plants and animals and serve as natural buffers against flooding and storm surges. However, development in or near wetlands can negatively impact these ecosystems through habitat loss, water quality degradation, and erosion.

Overall, Ocean Springs's topographic challenges require careful planning and management to



ensure that the city can continue to grow and develop while minimizing its impact on the natural environment and reducing the risk of flooding and other hazards.

## **SURFACE WATER RESOURCES**

Ocean Springs is bounded by and primarily defined by its surface water resources, including bayous and bays of the Gulf of Mexico. These waterways are important for the local community, providing recreation, tourism, and economic opportunities. The geography largely follows the drainage basins of the area's watersheds. Most of the study area drains to Biloxi Bay through Old Fort Bayou, Davis Bayou, or directly into the bay.

Biloxi Bay is a shallow, brackish bay along Mississippi's Gulf Coast. It is approximately 20 miles long and 10 miles wide, covering an area of approximately 90 square miles. It is connected to the Gulf of Mexico through a narrow opening at its southern end and is connected to the Back Bay of Biloxi through small channels and estuaries to the north. It is surrounded by a mix of residential, commercial, and natural areas and is an important resource for the local community. The bay is home to various fish and wildlife species, including oysters, crabs, shrimp, and numerous fish species, such as speckled trout and redfish. These species are important for commercial and recreational fishing and provide significant ecological and economic benefits to the region.

Biloxi Bay is also popular for recreational activities such as boating, kayaking, and swimming. It is surrounded by several public parks and

recreational areas, including the Biloxi Bay Bridge Walkway, which provides a pedestrian and bicycle path between Biloxi and Ocean Springs.

Like many coastal waterways, Biloxi Bay faces several environmental challenges, including pollution from stormwater runoff, nutrient runoff from agricultural and urban areas, and erosion and sedimentation from natural and human-caused disturbances. Efforts are underway to address these challenges and protect Biloxi Bay's ecological and economic value for future generations.

Ocean Springs has several smaller creeks and bayous that are important for stormwater management and provide habitat for various aquatic species. These waterways include Old Fort Bayou, Davis Bayou, and several smaller creeks and tributaries. The creeks and bayous are surrounded by environmentally sensitive landscapes that divide the city and its surroundings into areas suitable for new development and areas suitable for conservation.

Overall, the surface water resources in Ocean Springs are essential natural resources that provide a range of ecological, recreational, and economic benefits to the community. These resources must be managed and protected to ensure long-term sustainability and viability. The City of Ocean Springs has taken steps to preserve and protect these critical natural areas.

## **GROUNDWATER**

Ocean Springs and numerous nearby public water systems draw water from groundwater wells. The city draws water from the Graham



Ferry Formation. Ocean Springs relies on these aquifers for its groundwater resources and to supply water to five public water wells. The City also purchases water from the Jackson County Utility Authority (JCUA), whose water comes from the Miocene Aquifer System of the Pascagoula Formation. Groundwater in the region is mainly used for residential, commercial, agricultural, and industrial purposes. Groundwater quality can vary depending on the depth and location of the aquifer. Water is treated and distributed for drinking and other potable uses in the city and surrounding areas.

Monitoring and managing groundwater resources is crucial to ensuring long-term sustainability, especially considering the potential impacts of population growth, urban development, and climate change on water supply and demand. Preventing groundwater contamination is vital to the City of Ocean Springs' success. Potential sources of contamination include agricultural activities, industrial operations, urban runoff, and improperly managed waste disposal sites. Local and state agencies are vital in

monitoring groundwater quality and implementing measures to protect and preserve these valuable resources.

As part of its comprehensive planning efforts, the City of Ocean Springs must carefully manage its groundwater resources, using policies and strategies to protect them from pollution and other threats.

## **WILDLIFE, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

Ocean Springs is home to diverse wildlife and vegetation due to its location along the Gulf Coast and its proximity to wetlands, forests, and other natural habitats. The city's unique ecological features provide essential habitat for various species, including birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.

The city's marshes and swamps are home to various waterfowl, including ducks, geese, and herons, as well as many species of fish, shellfish, and crustaceans. The forests and woodlands in and around Ocean Springs are also home to diverse wildlife, including deer, rac-

coons, opossums, and various species of birds and reptiles. These areas provide critical habitat and nesting sites for many species.

In terms of vegetation, Ocean Springs is known for its native hardwood trees, such as oak, hickory, and magnolia. The city is also home to various other plant species, including wetland plants such as cypress, tupelo, sawgrass, and various wildflowers and grasses.

Along with the area's rich biodiversity, there are threats to the local wildlife and vegetation. Development and urbanization can disrupt natural habitats and fragment wildlife populations, while pollution and other environmental hazards can negatively impact water quality and harm wildlife. Conservation efforts and sustainable land use practices are essential for protecting Ocean Springs' natural and maintaining the local ecosystem's health.

There are many threatened and endangered species in Jackson County, Mississippi, listed here along with their common name, scientific name, and a summary:

#### **PLANTS:**

Louisiana Quillwort (*Isoetes louisianensis*) - A small, aquatic plant found in streams and wetlands. It is endangered due to habitat loss and degradation.

#### **MAMMALS:**

West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) - A large aquatic mammal found in shallow coastal areas. They are endangered due to habitat loss and collisions with boats.

#### **REPTILES:**

Alabama Red-bellied Turtle (*Pseudemys alabamensis*) - A medium-sized turtle found in rivers and streams. They are endangered due to habitat loss and degradation.

Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) - This giant freshwater turtle is one of the heaviest in the world. It is a threatened species found in rivers, canals, and other freshwater habitats. It has a unique appearance with a large head and a spiked shell. It is often hunted for its meat and shells, which has led to its population decline.

Black Pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus lodingi*) - A large, nonvenomous snake found in pine forests. They are threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) - A large, terrestrial tortoise found in upland habitats. They are threatened due to habitat loss and fragmentation.

Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) - A large marine turtle found in coastal waters, green sea turtles are threatened by habitat loss and degradation and incidental capture in fishing gear.

Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) - This medium-sized marine turtle is found in coral reefs. It is endangered due to habitat loss and degradation and incidental capture in fishing gear.

Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) - A small marine turtle found in shallow coastal waters. It is critically endangered due to habitat



loss and degradation, incidental capture in fishing gear, and nest predation.

Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

This is a large marine turtle found in open ocean waters. It is critically endangered due to habitat loss and degradation, incidental capture in fishing gear, and ingestion of plastic debris.

Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) - This is a large marine turtle found in coastal waters. It is threatened by habitat loss and degradation, incidental capture in fishing gear, and nest predation.

Yellow-blotched Map Turtle (*Graptemys flavimaculata*) - A medium-sized freshwater turtle found in rivers and streams. They are threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

**AMPHIBIANS:**

Dusky Gopher Frog (*Rana serosa*) - This medium-sized, stocky frog is found in longleaf pine forests. Its distribution is very limited, and it is endangered due to habitat loss.

**BIRDS:**

Eastern Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis*) - This small, secretive bird is found in marshes and wetlands. It is listed as threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

Mississippi Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis pulla*) - This large, long-legged bird is found in pine savannas. It is endangered due to habitat loss and degradation.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) - This small, sand-colored bird is found on beaches and sandbars. It is listed as threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) - This medium-sized shorebird is found on beaches and mudflats. It is listed as threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) - This small woodpecker has a distinctive black-and-white barred pattern on its back. It is found in pine forests and relies on mature pine trees for nesting. Due to habitat loss, it is listed as

endangered and has been the focus of extensive conservation efforts.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) - This large wading bird has a distinctive bald head and long legs. It is found in wetland habitats and feeds on fish and other aquatic prey. Due to habitat loss and degradation and the impacts of climate change, it is listed as a threatened species. Conservation efforts have focused on habitat protection and restoration to support its populations.

#### **FISHES:**

Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) - A large freshwater fish found in the Pascagoula River. It is threatened by habitat loss and degradation, overfishing, and dam construction.

Pearl Darter (*Percina aurora*) - A small, freshwater fish found in streams and rivers. They are threatened due to habitat loss and degradation.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS AND RESTRICTIONS**

Numerous constraints may be of concern when discussing the development potential of vacant land. Not all constraints can be documented on a map or discussed within this plan. Some constraints may be purely based on the effects of human preferences or decision-making. For this analysis, constraints to development are divided into locational constraints and environmental constraints. It is important to note that not all constraints are negative; they may be restrictive but have a positive or beneficial outcome. The constraints discussed in the following pages affect growth within and outside the

City of Ocean Springs; they also set parameters for identifying a comprehensive planning area and determining future land use.

### **LOCATION CONSTRAINTS**

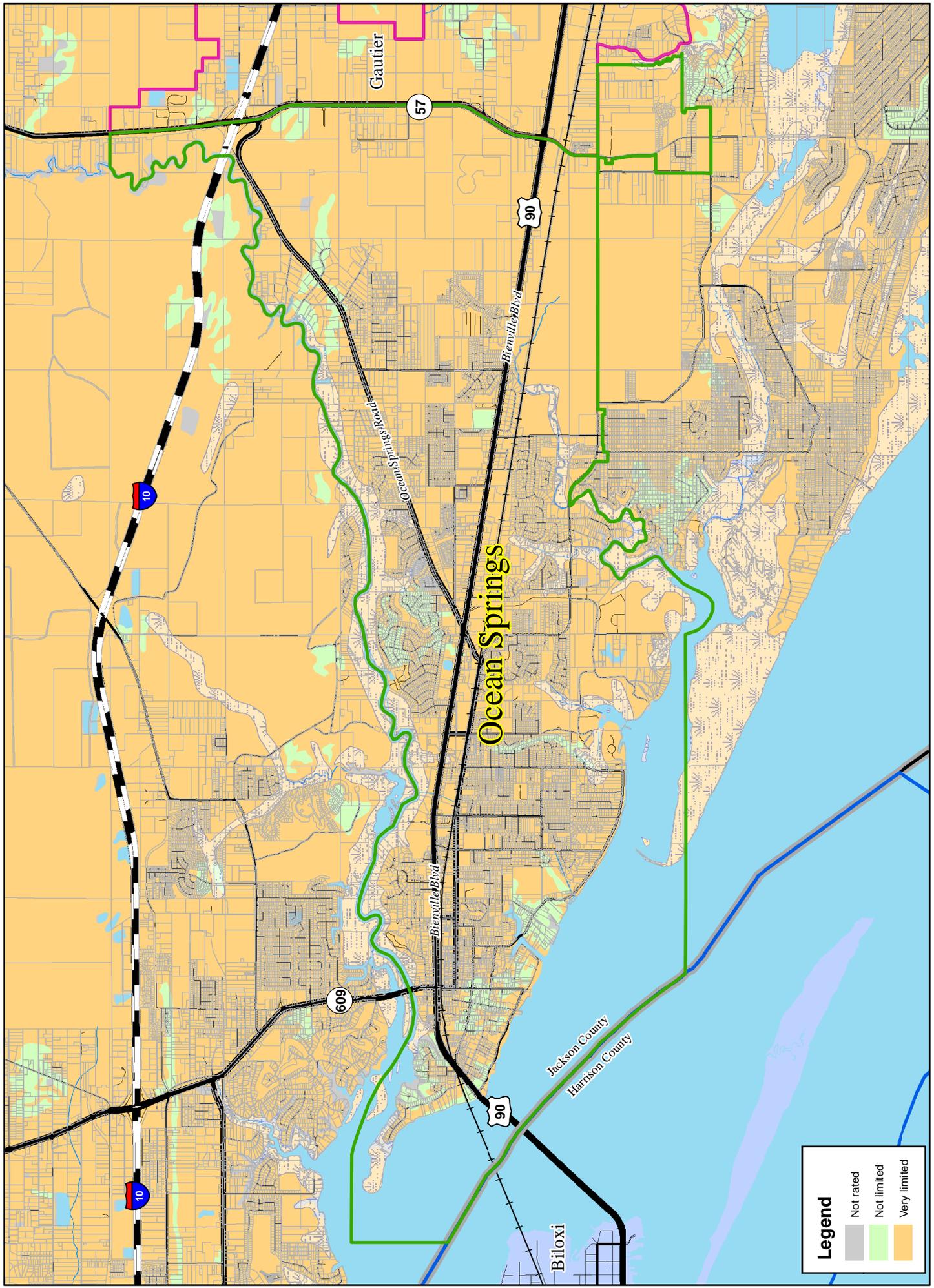
Location constraints consist of areas of the City or unincorporated areas with certain rules or regulations impacting future development, such as Federal or State lands or Historic Districts. The City of Ocean Springs does have areas that are considered location constraints. There are federally designated lands to the north of the area. These lands comprise approximately 6% of the area within the city and 22% of the area within the planning area. The City also has six historic districts, which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. The historic districts comprise approximately 413 acres, all in the downtown core of the City.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS**

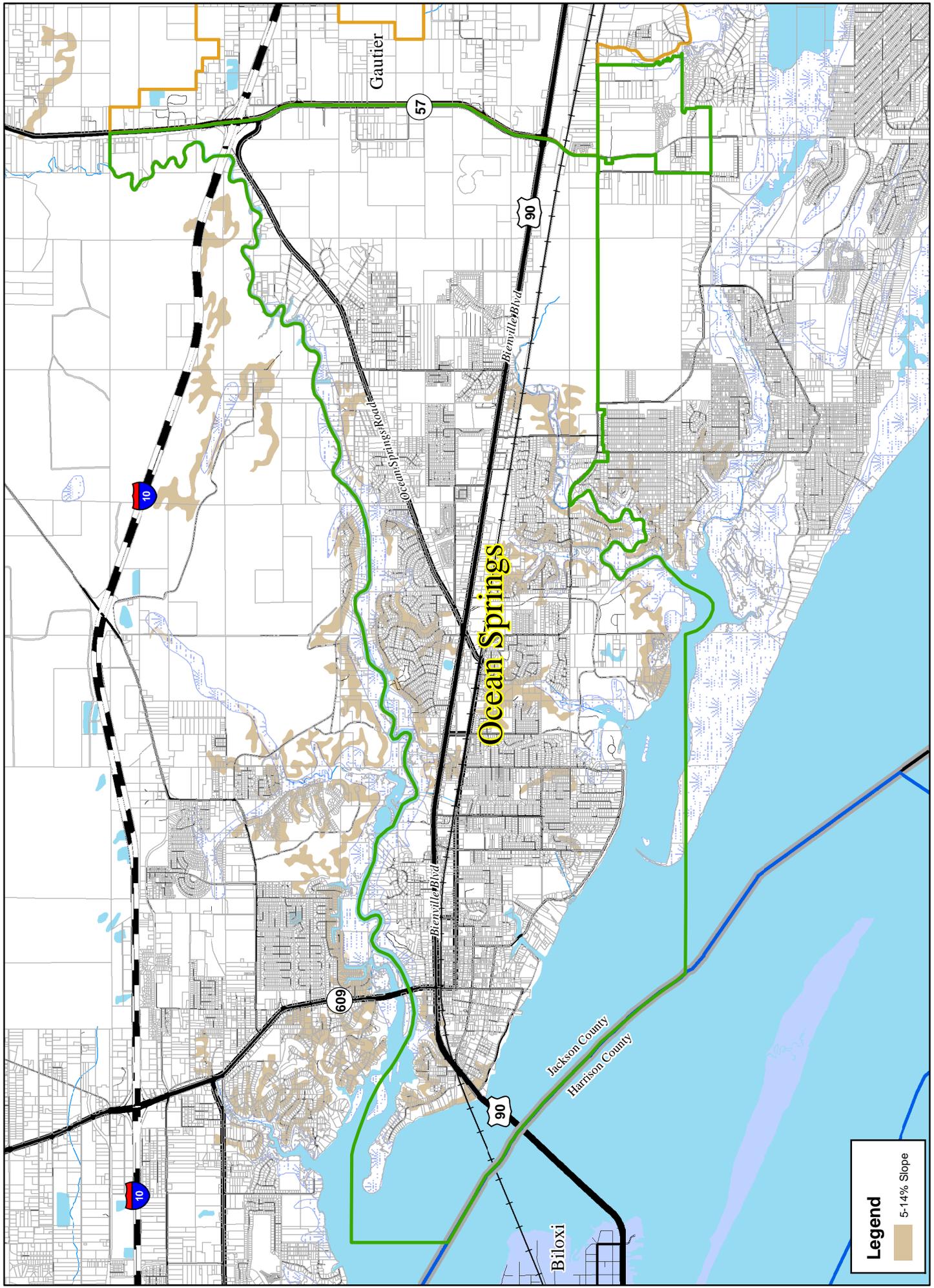
Environmental constraints represent specific land qualities that affect future building, such as flood zones, steep slopes, wetlands, and soil suitability for sewage disposal. The following pages will discuss these constraints in detail, along with maps displaying each constraint.

#### **Soils**

Ocean Springs is in the Coastal Flatwoods soil resource area, which reflects the generalized location of soil groups based on topographic and geological conditions. The soils in the area are silty and sandy loam, moderately susceptible to erosion, and with a low depth to the water table. These features can make the soil in the region challenging for septic tanks and sewage lagoons and for developing roads and build-



Map 3: Septic Soil Limitations



Map 4: Severe Slopes

ings. The three most prevalent soil types are Bayou, Handsboro, and Harleston.

Bayou soils are poorly drained, with slow surface runoff. Permeability is moderate in the upper part of the profile and moderately slow in the lower part. They formed in loamy sediments of marine origin. Bayou soils are saturated during the wet season, primarily in winter and early spring, and have seasonal water tables that range from 0 to 1.0 feet below the surface.

The Handsboro series consists of deep, very poorly drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in thick accumulations of highly decomposed herbaceous plant remains that have thin strata of mineral soil sediments. These soils are in regularly flooded salt marshes in estuaries of the Eastern Gulf Coast Flatwoods. This soil is subject to inundation with brackish water at high tide every day. The water table is always near or above the soil surface.

The Harleston series consists of very deep, moderately well-drained, moderately permeable soils on terraces and uplands of the Eastern Gulf Coast Flatwoods. These soils are formed in sandy and loamy marine or stream deposits. Some of the low terrace areas overflow occasionally for a very brief duration during periods of high rainfall.

### **Septic Tank Suitability**

Ocean Springs and the planning area primarily consist of soil types where the use of septic tank absorption fields is very limited or somewhat limited. The soil survey produced by the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service)

rates each soil type based on certain characteristics needed for the adequate performance of alternative sewage disposal systems. Some limitations may be overcome, but it can be costly. County Health Departments are typically the entities that inspect and regulate the construction of absorption fields. However, the best way to regulate sewage disposal is through a centralized sewer system and a requirement to connect to municipal sewer service. The limited nature of the soil in Ocean Springs should make connecting every sewage-producing entity in the City to the sewer system a top priority. Also, when development occurs along the City fringe or within a known growth area of the City, connection to sewer service should be mandatory.

### **Severe Slopes**

Defining severe slopes can vary depending on the community and location. For Ocean Springs, severe slopes have been defined as slopes above fifteen percent. This is based on the soil category breakdown by the NRCS. The map does not represent the exact slope of land but represent where soils with qualities that produce a specific slope range are likely to exist. A greater effective slope leads to higher costs for development, and for some projects, these costs may be prohibitive. The map shows that approximately 8% of Ocean Springs has a slope from five to fifteen percent, and none of the City has a slope greater than fifteen percent.

## **WATERSHEDS, FLOODPLAINS, AND WETLANDS**

Wetlands are an essential ecological feature in Ocean Springs, and they play a vital role in maintaining the local environment's health. Wetlands are areas of land saturated with water for at least part of the year, and they are characterized by the presence of unique plant and animal communities adapted to living in these waterlogged conditions. Ocean Springs has several types of wetland habitats, including salt marshes, freshwater marshes, and cypress swamps. These wetlands provide essential habitat for various plants and animals, including migratory birds, fish, and other aquatic species. Wetlands also help filter water pollutants, reduce erosion and sedimentation, and protect against flooding and storm surges. Development in wetland areas can damage these habitats, reducing environmental health and increasing flood hazards.

To address the flooding issues within Ocean Springs, the city has implemented several measures to reduce the risk of damage from storm surges and tidal flooding. These include the construction of levees and floodwalls, the creation of retention ponds and other stormwater management infrastructure, and implementing land use regulations that limit development in flood-prone areas and prevent damage to wetlands. Despite these efforts, however, flooding remains a significant risk in Ocean Springs, and the city continues to explore new strategies and technologies to mitigate the im-

pact of flooding and protect the natural environment.

### **100-YEAR FLOODPLAINS**

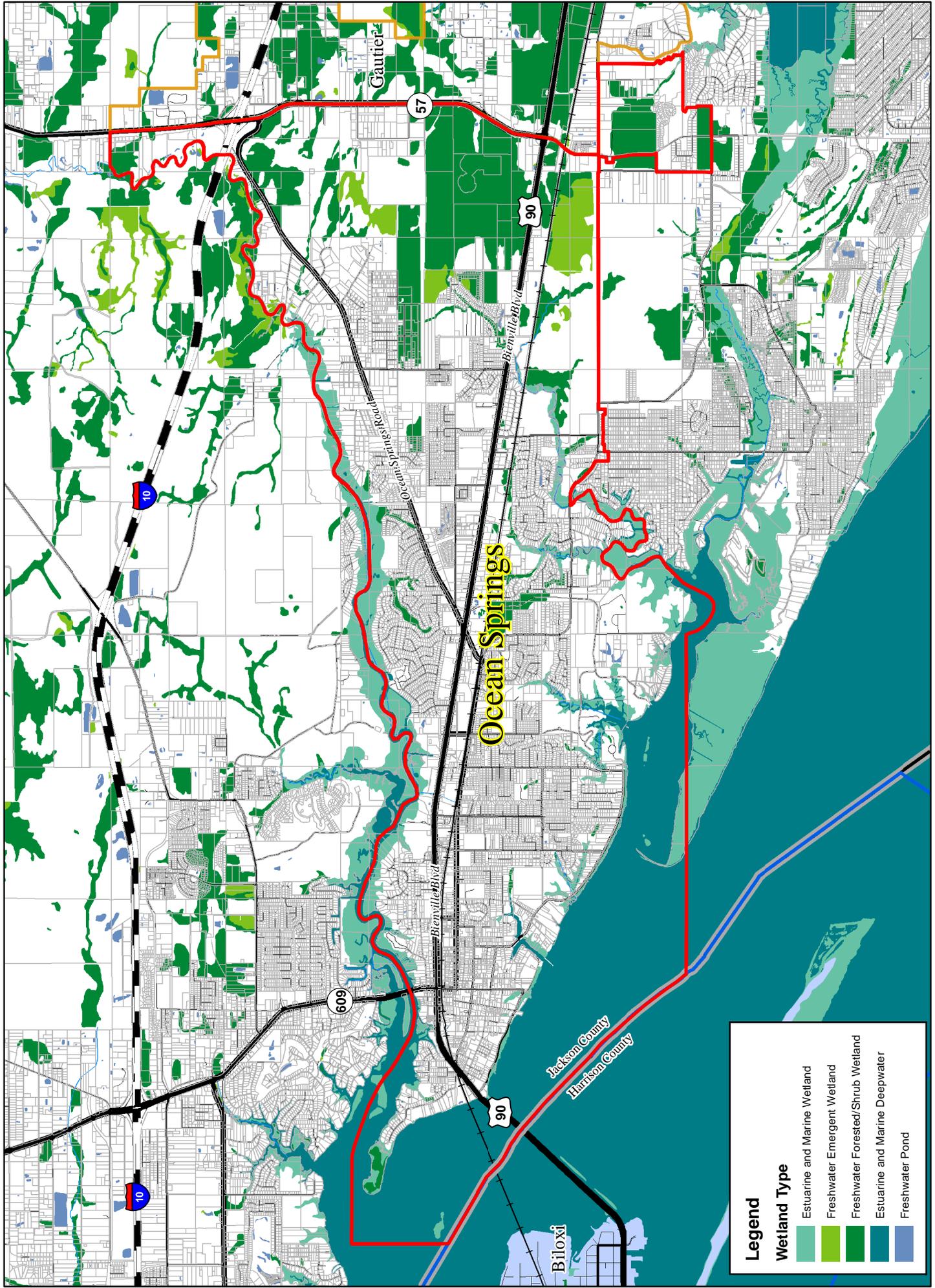
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) creates digital flood insurance rating maps (DFIRM) for the State of Mississippi. The map portrays the most current mapping of flood potential areas in Ocean Springs. These areas are delineated as floodways, floodplains, and velocity zone.

FEMA defines a floodway as “the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.” Approximately 3.1% of the City is within the floodway.

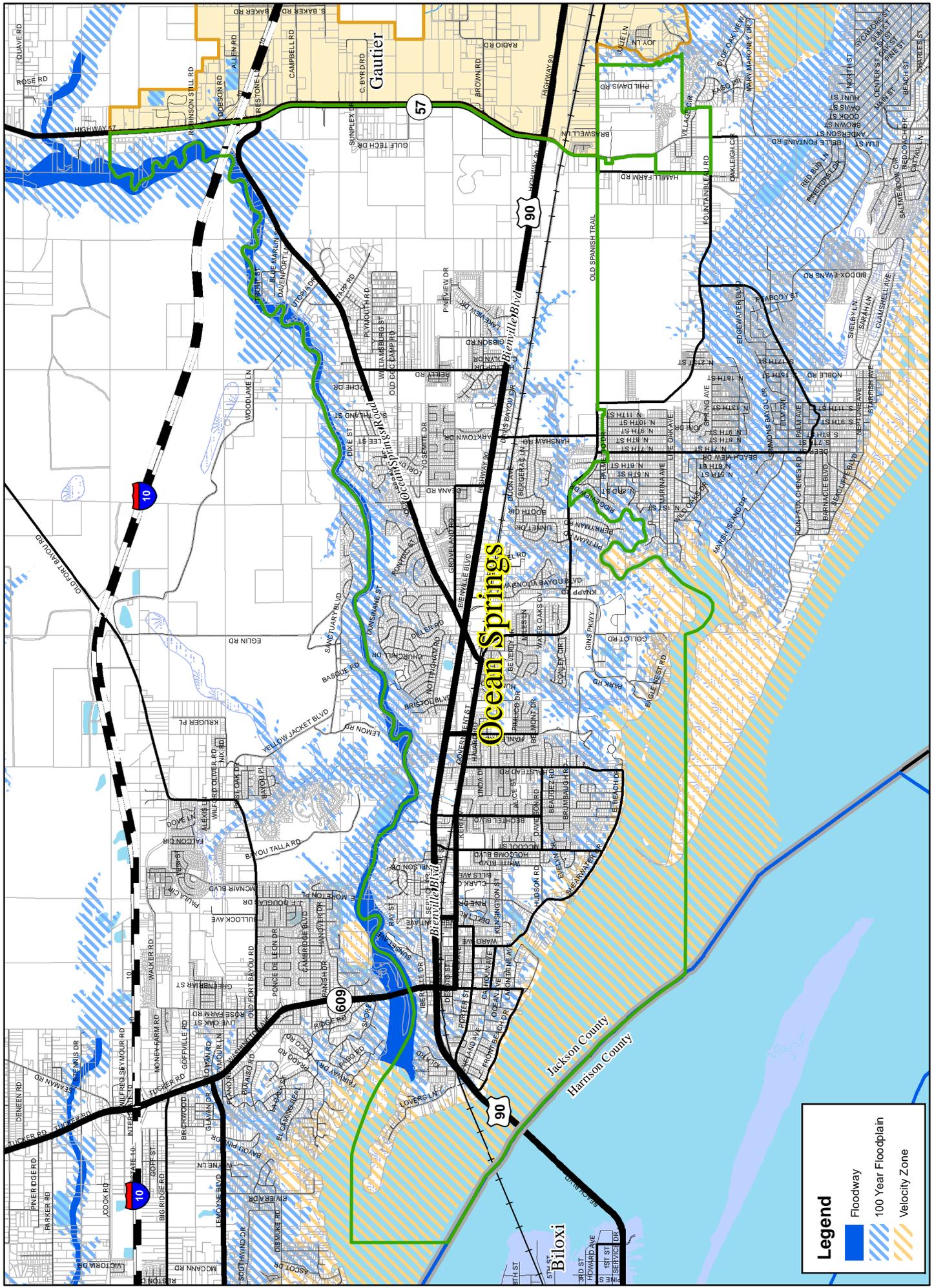
A floodplain is any land susceptible to being inundated by flood waters. The 100-year floodplain is the most common flood zone used for analysis purposes. The 100-year floodplain area has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year. Approximately 23.4% of the City is within the 100-year floodplain.

The velocity zone is an area along the coast that has a 1% or greater chance of flooding and is subject to high velocity wave action from storms. Approximately 29.6% of the City is within the velocity zone, with a majority of that percentage due to the City limits extending into Biloxi Bay.

The city should educate and encourage the purchase of flood insurance for the residents who live in and near these areas. The city should al-



Map 5: Wetlands



**Legend**

- Floodway
- 100 Year Floodplain
- Velocity Zone

Map 6: Flood Hazard Areas (DFIRM)

so work with the State NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) Coordinator to ensure that the floodplain ordinance and permitting process is up-to-date and documents are properly retained.

## **WETLANDS**

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a National Wetlands Inventory mapping system. The City of Ocean Springs and planning area is significantly impacted by wetlands. Approximately 26.8% of the city is classified as Estuarine and Marine Deepwater. Estuarine and Marine Wetland and Freshwater Emergent Wetland make up 9.6% of the city. Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland makes up 15.7% of the city. Lastly, Freshwater Ponds and Lake & Riverine comprise only 0.3% of the city. These areas should remain undeveloped in order to preserve wetland functions and protect

the environment and local development from pollution and flooding.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ocean Springs today is a testament to its rich historical and cultural heritage. The city's natural beauty, characterized by its coastal environment, wetlands, and diverse wildlife, continues to be a defining feature. The community's efforts to manage environmental challenges, such as flooding and habitat conservation, reflect a dedication to sustainability. As Ocean Springs looks to the future, it remains focused on balancing development with preserving its historical and natural resources, ensuring that it continues to be a vibrant, welcoming community for generations to come. Through careful planning and a strong sense of community, Ocean Springs will continue to honor its past while forging a bright and resilient future.



**By leveraging its strengths, Ocean Springs is well-positioned to continue being a vibrant and thriving community on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.**



## CHAPTER 3—POPULATION AND ECONOMY

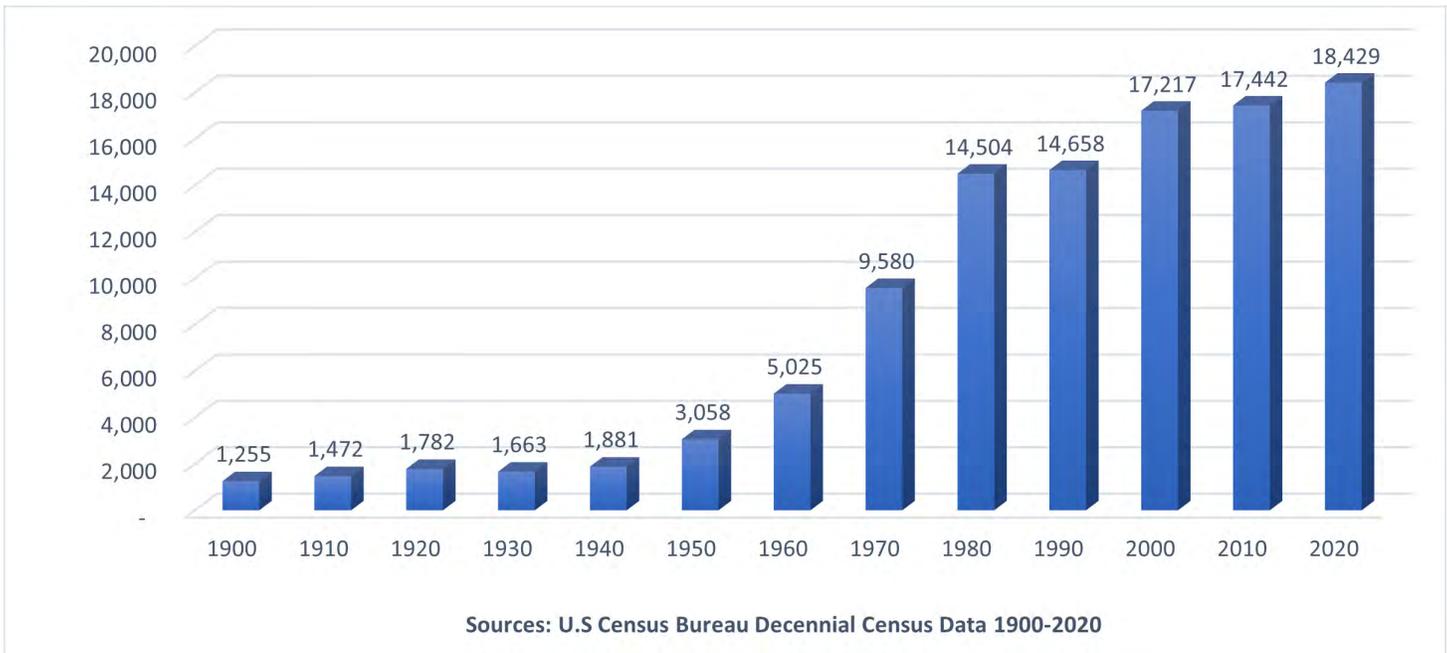
- \* **POPULATION ANALYSIS**
- \* **NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION**
- \* **POPULATION PYRAMIDS**
- \* **AGE COHORT ANALYSIS**
- \* **POPULATION PROJECTION**
- \* **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**
- \* **HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**
- \* **INCOME CHARACTERISTICS**

### INTRODUCTION

Demographic analysis in comprehensive planning provides a detailed understanding of the population, housing, and economic trends within a community. In Ocean Springs, this analysis is a foundation for informed decision-making and strategic planning. By examining various demographic factors such as population growth, age distribution, and housing characteristics, city planners and policymakers can identify current and future needs, allocate resources effectively, and develop policies that support sustainable development. A thorough demographic analysis helps to anticipate changes in the community, ensuring that infrastructure, services, and amenities are appropriately scaled and targeted to meet the evolving needs of residents.

Moreover, understanding the economic landscape is crucial for fostering a vibrant local economy. Economic data, including income levels, employment trends, and industry composition, pro-

Figure 1: Historical Population of Ocean Springs



vide insights into the city's economic health and potential growth areas. This information is essential for attracting new businesses, supporting existing ones, and creating job opportunities. In Ocean Springs, leveraging demographic and economic insights allows for developing comprehensive plans that enhance the quality of life, promote economic vitality, and ensure the city's long-term sustainability and resilience.

## POPULATION ANALYSIS

As shown in Figure 1, Ocean Springs's population has increased over the past several decades, with decades of rapid growth followed by gradual increases leading to today's population estimates. Between 1900 and 2020, the City of Ocean Springs experienced consistent growth.

From 1970 to 1980, growth skyrocketed, increasing just over 53% in that decade before leveling off from 1980 to 1990, then growing by 17% from 1990 to 2000. Steady increases since 2000 brought the population up to 18,429 in 2020. Recently annexed territory added an estimated 1,718 people to the city. Between projected growth from 2020 and the recent annexation, the current population estimate is 20,496 residents in the City of Ocean Springs.

## NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION

Between 2010 and 2020, the Ocean Springs' population increased by 987 residents. In Figure 2 below, the growth is broken down by natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths within the city limits during the

Figure 2: Population Growth from Natural Increase and Migration

2020 Population	18,429
2010 Population	17,442
<b>Difference</b>	<b>987</b>
<b>Growth due to natural increase (Births minus deaths)</b>	<b>-295</b>
Total Births (2010-2020)	1,483
Total Deaths (2010-2020)	1,778
<b>Gain due to in-migration (2010-2020)</b>	<b>1,282</b>
Sources: U.S Census Bureau Decennial Census Data and Mississippi Department of Health - Statistics	

previous decade) and in-migration (people who moved to the City of Ocean Springs during that same time period). A majority of growth came from residents moving into the city. When comparing births to deaths using vital statistics, it shows a net decrease of 295 people, as more people died than were born in Ocean Springs. In the meantime, an estimated 1,282 people moved to Ocean Springs, making up for the population lost to mortality and providing an additional boost to the total population. Many residents coming from in-migration illustrates that Ocean Springs is seen as an attractive city, as more people are coming in than moving out. This is an important characteristic as the city continues to make plans and decisions related to growth.

### POPULATION PYRAMIDS

Population pyramids show the distribution of residents in 5-year age groups, broken down the middle into male population on one side and female population on the other. Like a pyramid, the younger age groups are generally larger than the older populations and, there-

fore, should form the base of a pyramid. Bulges in a pyramid indicate a larger population in those age groups than in the ones older and younger. These bulges can help identify what age groups the city has had success attracting and then how the city can retain or attract new populations .

Figures 3 and 4 below show the 2010 and 2020 population pyramids for the City of Ocean Springs. As expected, population numbers decline in later years, creating the pyramids shape. Both pyramids show larger numbers of residents in the middle years, peaking at 45 to 49 in 2010 and 55-64 in 2020. Young adults are the smallest cohorts in each pyramid. A second peak can be seen in younger age groups, peaking at 15-19 in 2010 and 10-14 in 2020. These age distributions indicate a slightly older and family-friendly community, but one with limited opportunities for young adults. Ocean Springs is a family-oriented community, and maintaining its appeal to families will continue to be important over the next 20 years. Retaining and attracting young people to Ocean

Figure 3: Population Pyramid, 2010

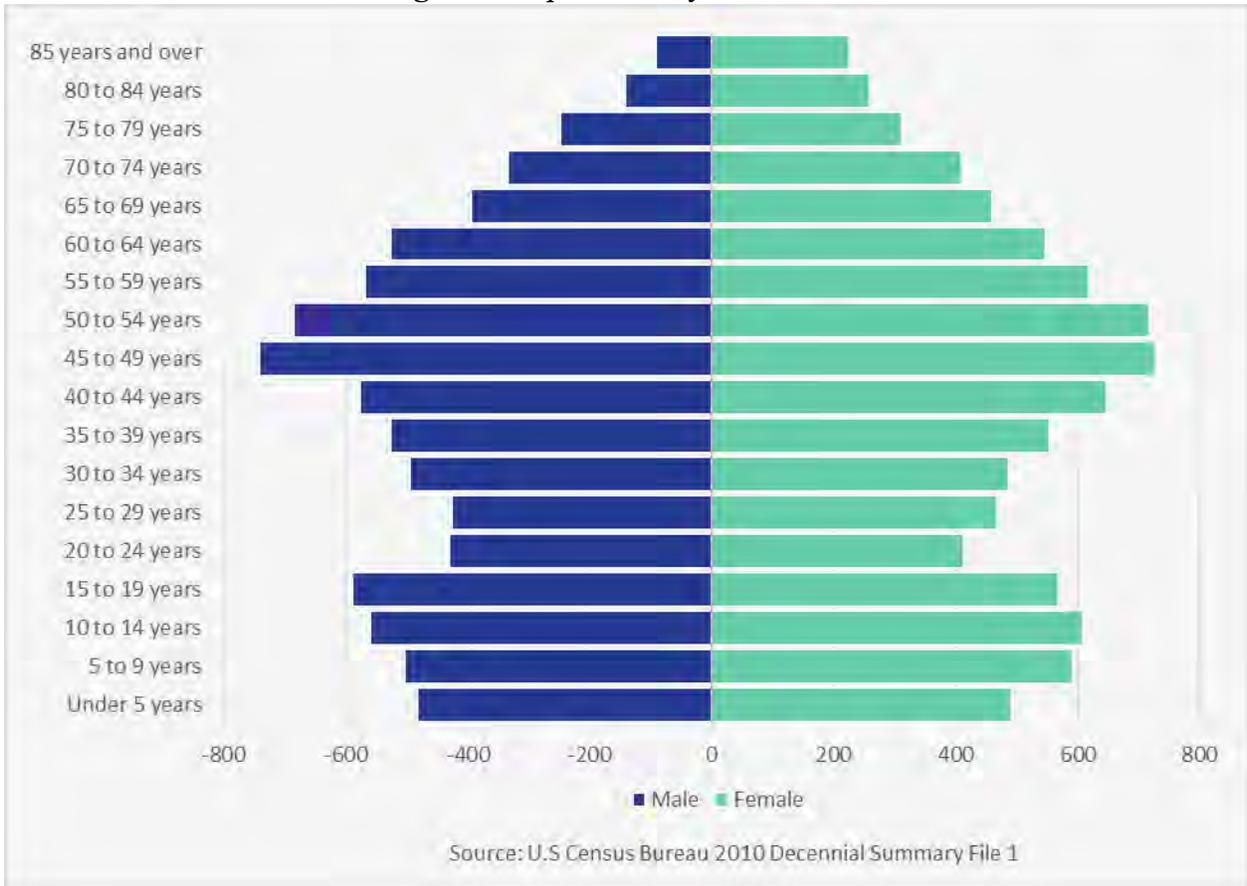


Figure 4: Population Pyramid, 2020

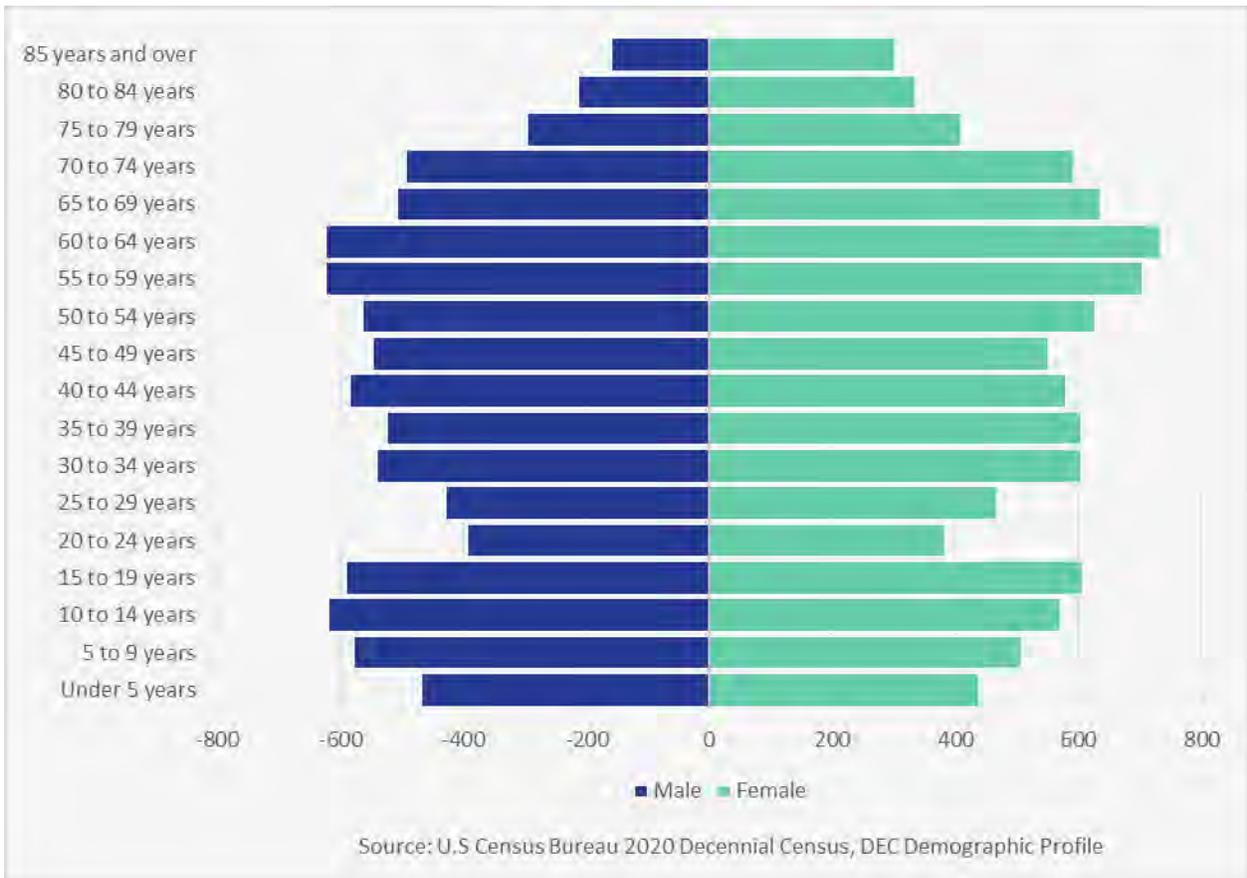
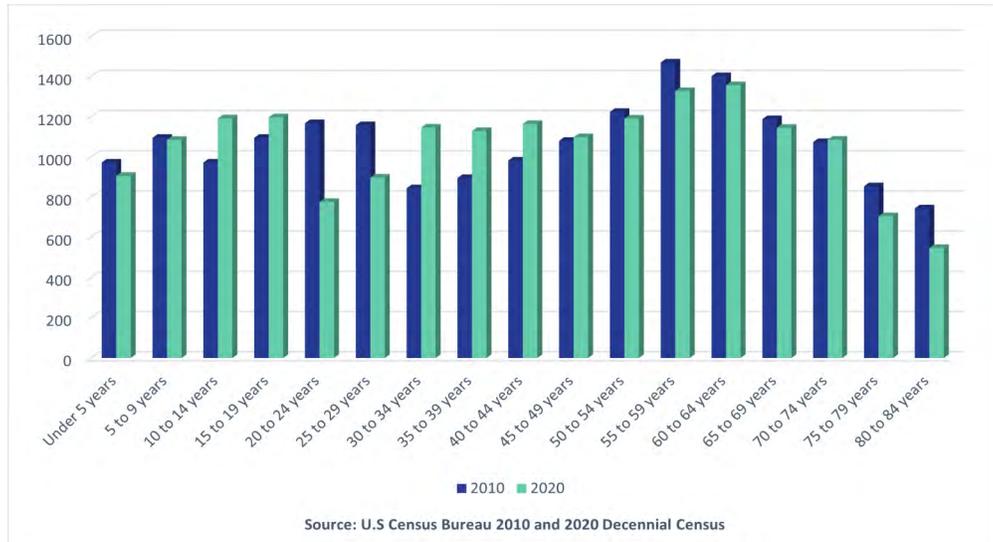


Figure 5: Cohort Population, 2010 vs 2020



Springs as they age into adulthood should be a consideration to help continue growth.

### AGE COHORT ANALYSIS

Age cohort analysis is a demographic method used to examine the changes in population structure over time by focusing on specific age groups or cohorts as they progress through different stages of life. An age cohort is a grouping of people who are approximately the same age. For example, the 0- to 4-year-old age cohort in 2010 would be 10 to 14 years old ten years later in 2020. Observing changes in age cohorts allows for identifying trends, patterns, and population size, distribution, and composition shifts as cohorts age. Figure 5 shows the cohort populations for 2010 and 2020.

Age cohort analysis can provide valuable insights into the demographic processes that drive changes in a population, such as:

**Fertility rates:** Changes in the size of younger cohorts may indicate trends in fertility rates, which can have long-term implications for pop-

ulation growth, labor force participation, and social support systems.

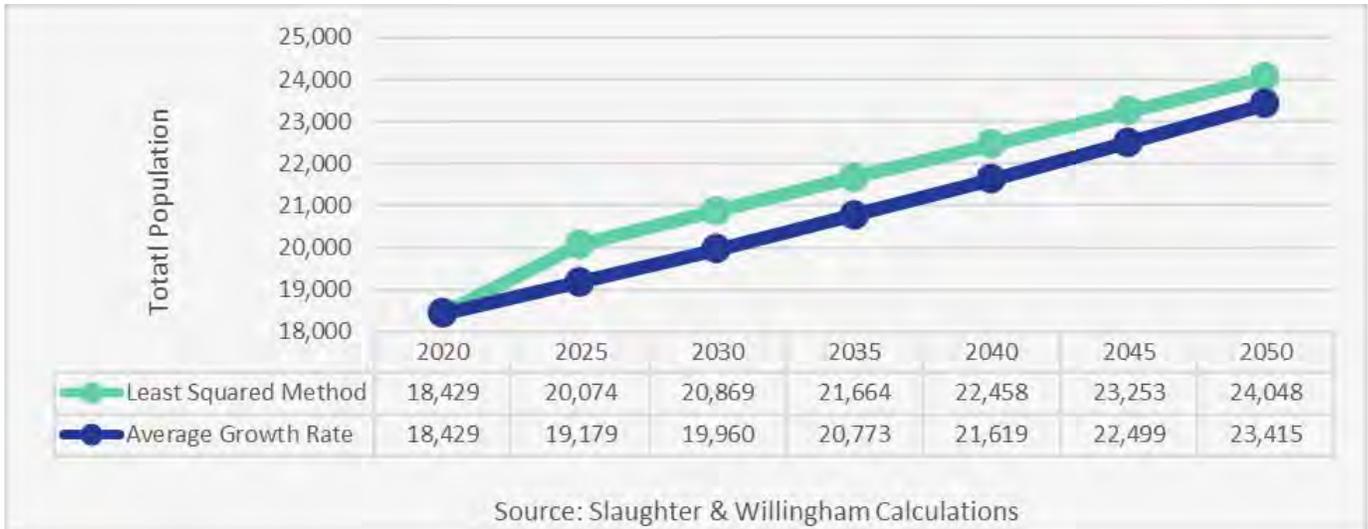
**Mortality rates:** Differences in the sizes of older age cohorts can reveal changes in life expectancy and health conditions over time, helping to identify areas that need improvements in healthcare and social services.

**Migration:** If a certain age cohort experiences a significant increase or decrease, it may indicate migration patterns, such as young adults moving to urban areas for education and employment opportunities or retirees relocating to more desirable locations.

**Aging population:** Age cohort analysis can reveal changes in the age structure of a population, such as an increase in the proportion of older individuals, which may have impacts on healthcare, social services, and public policy.

**Socioeconomic factors:** Examining cohorts over time can help identify the impact of economic and social factors on population trends, such as changes in educational attainment, em-

Figure 6: Population Projection



ployment opportunities, or cultural norms around family formation.

Overall, age cohort analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how a population evolves over time and helps identify areas of focus for public policy, economic planning, and social services to address the unique needs of different age groups.

The youngest age cohorts in Ocean Springs were those between 0 and 9 years old in 2010 and 10 to 19 in 2020. These cohorts experienced significant growth in the decade between 2010 and 2020. This could be attributed to families with children migrating to Ocean Springs in the past decade.

The young adult population experienced considerable declines. This represents a loss of population among those who were 10 to 19 in 2010 and 20 to 29 in 2020. This may be due to the outmigration of young adults seeking education or job opportunities.

The cohort of people in their middle years, those who were 30 to 49 in 2020, had significant

population gains, indicating a growth in the slightly older prime working-age population. This could be related to a strong job market and economic growth that have attracted workers and new residents in the past decade.

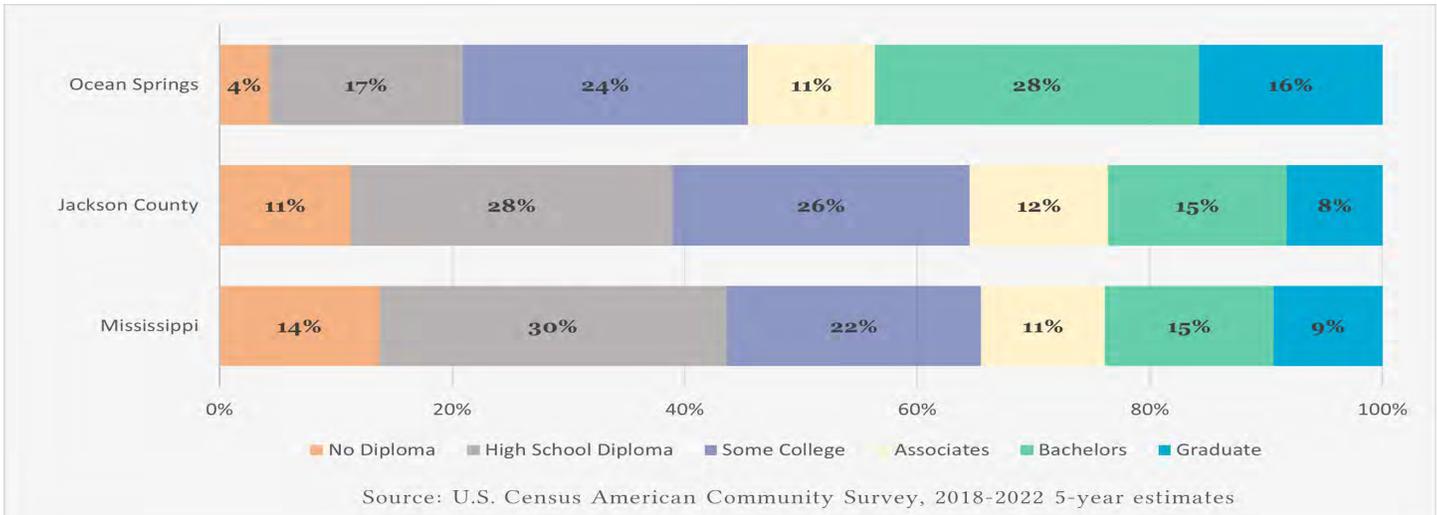
The older working age cohorts aged 50 to 64 in 2020 had a downward trend, which could indicate out-migration among people approaching retirement age.

The older age group experienced losses across all cohorts, with the most significant decline in those aged 80 to 84 in 2020. This can be expected due to the natural process of aging and mortality.

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Ocean Springs has seen significant growth over the last couple of decades, from a relatively small town of 3,058 in 1950 to a sizable coastal city of 18,429 by 2020. To understand how previous growth will impact future populations, projections for the year 2050 were used to estimate growth, shown in Figure 6 above.

Figure 7: Educational Attainment



Because of Ocean Springs's rapid growth, common projections (the average growth rate and the least squared method) were used. Both methods predict consistent growth in the city through 2050. Both projections also predict 2050 population to be around 24,000 residents. Population projections do a good job using previous data to predict future populations, but are more unreliable if historic patterns of growth shift. Therefore, these figures do not predict what the future patterns will look like. Events such as hurricanes, annexations, or new commercial or industrial development could dramatically change the future population projections.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

As shown in Figure 7 above, the educational attainment for residents in Ocean Springs, ages 25 and older, is higher than in the State of Mississippi and Jackson County. Over half of Ocean Springs residents have some a degree (associate degree and higher), while only 4% have less than a high school diploma. Ocean Springs' well-educated workforce can help

bring good-paying jobs to the city and help strengthen the local economy. Attracting and keeping highly educated workers will be an important goal for the city to focus on over the next 20 years.

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The United States Census Bureau documents housing characteristics that provide insight into the distribution of owner- and renter-occupied units, the vacancy rate, the types of units, the year units were built, etc. Understanding the trends behind Ocean Springs's housing stock is an important consideration when addressing future needs.

### HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as "... all the people who occupy a housing unit." Similarly, a family is defined as "...a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together." The main difference between a household and a family is that in a household, residents do not have to be related to one another. For this analysis, the fo-

Figure 8: Housing Units by Status

Housing Units	2010	2020
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7,814</b>	<b>8,264</b>
<i>Occupied</i>	6,984	7,609
<b>Percent</b>	<b>89.4%</b>	<b>92.1%</b>
<i>Vacant</i>	830	655
<b>Percent</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>

cus will be on measuring changes in households.

**HOUSING OCCUPANCY, UNIT TYPE, AND AGE**

According to the Census Bureau, Ocean Springs gained 450 total housing units from 2010 to 2020. More notably, the city added 625 occupied housing units in that same time frame. Of the total housing units, 655 (7.9%) were vacant in 2020, a significant (-21.1%) decrease in vacancy rates over the decade. Figure 8 above shows the change in housing units from 2010 to 2020.

The Census Bureau’s 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates indicate that 77% of all residential units in Ocean Springs are single-family, detached homes. Mobile and manufactured homes represented about 1.2% of residences, and multi-family units accounted for 19.7 of all housing units. Lastly, single-family attached homes make up 2.2% of the housing stock. Figure 9 below shows the percentages for each category.

Another important characteristic of housing is the age of the housing stock in a city. Housing

Figure 9: Housing Units by Type

Housing types	Percentage
1-unit, detached	77.0%
1-unit, attached	2.2%
2 units	2.5%
3 or 4 units	2.9%
5 to 9 units	5.2%
10 to 19 units	3.2%
20 or more units	5.9%
Mobile home	1.2%

Figure 10: Housing Units by Year Built

Year Structure Built	Percentage
Built 2020 or later	0.2%
Built 2010 to 2019	9.4%
Built 2000 to 2009	16.1%
Built 1990 to 1999	10.7%
Built 1980 to 1989	11.8%
Built 1970 to 1979	21.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	16.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	7.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	1.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	4.8%

stocks that are older can indicate that growth has slowed, while lots of newer housing indicates that a city is experiencing a growth wave. According to the Census Bureau’s 2022 ACS 5-year estimates and shown in Figure 10 above, about 30% of Ocean Springs Branch's housing stock was constructed before 1970. About 45% was built between 1970 and 2000, and about 25% was constructed after 2000.

As shown in Figure 11 below, housing tenure is relatively low. Housing tenure is a measure of how long someone has lived in a housing unit,

calculated as a percentage by the year people moved into their housing unit. Housing tenure indicates a relatively high unit turnover in Ocean Springs. Only 9.5% of the householders in Ocean Springs are estimated to have moved into their homes before 1989. Almost 83% have been moved into since 2000. High unit turnover can indicate a strong housing market as people change homes due to migration into the city, or upgrading and downsizing over time to accommodate changing lifestyles and family needs.

Figure 11: Housing Unit by Year Moved Into

Year householder moved into unit	Percentage
Moved in 2021 or later	8.1%
Moved in 2018 to 2020	19.9%
Moved in 2010 to 2017	31.1%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	23.6%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	7.8%
Moved in 1989 and earlier	9.5%

The 2020 Apartment Survey by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission highlights that Ocean Springs has a total of 538 unassisted rental units, with the majority being two-bedroom apartments. The average costs for unassisted apartments in Ocean Springs are \$715 for a one-bedroom, \$779 for a two-bedroom, and \$1,062 for a three-bedroom unit. Notably, the vacancy rate for unassisted rental units in Ocean Springs reached 0.0% in 2020, reflecting an exceptionally high demand and no availability in the rental market.

## **INCOME CHARACTERISTICS**

According to the ACS 5-year estimates, the median household income in Ocean Springs was \$72,500, compared with \$52,719 for the State of Mississippi and \$60,966 for Jackson County. An estimated 6.2% of all individuals had incomes below the poverty level, compared to 19.2% for the State of Mississippi and 15.7% for Jackson County. Even though fewer Ocean Springs residents live in poverty, Ocean Springs should continue to strive to provide opportunities for everyone, especially those who have less financial means and may need more support.

## **CONCLUSION**

The population analysis of Ocean Springs underscores the city's robust growth and dynamic demographic shifts. As the city continues to attract new residents and expand its housing stock, it faces both opportunities and challenges in managing this growth sustainably. The analysis highlights the importance of addressing the needs of a diverse and changing population, from young families to older adults. Sound

planning and proactive policies will be essential in maintaining the city's appeal, supporting economic vitality, and ensuring that all residents have access to quality housing, education, and services. By leveraging its strengths and addressing its challenges, Ocean Springs is well-positioned to continue its trajectory as a vibrant and thriving community.

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**Ocean Springs is renowned for its rich history, vibrant culture, and diverse neighborhoods**



## CHAPTER 4—EXISTING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

- \* **EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS**
- \* **EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**
- \* **TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS**
- \* **FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**
- \* **TRAFFIC COUNTS**
- \* **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**
- \* **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
- \* **TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES**

### EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS

Ocean Springs is renowned for its rich history, vibrant culture, and diverse neighborhoods. This section of the land use plan explores the city's significant districts and existing neighborhoods, highlighting their unique characteristics and contributions to the community's fabric.

As one of the Gulf Coast's most cherished locales, Ocean Springs boasts a tapestry of districts that reflect its storied past and dynamic present. From the bustling Central Business District, known for its eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, and cultural venues, to the serene and picturesque residential areas that line its shores, the city's districts are varied and vibrant. Each neighborhood, whether steeped in history or newly developed, offers a distinct sense of place, contributing to the overall identity of Ocean Springs.

The historic districts preserve the architectural heritage and traditional charm that has long defined the city. Well-preserved homes, tree-lined streets, and a strong sense of community characterize these areas. Meanwhile, other locations in the city are poised for future development, offering opportunities for new housing, commercial ventures, and mixed-use projects.

This section explores the defining features, historical significance, and current dynamics of Ocean Springs' significant districts and neighborhoods. By understanding these elements, we can better appreciate the city's unique character and plan thoughtfully for its continued growth and prosperity.

### **BIENVILLE BOULEVARD**

Visitors to Ocean Springs are likely to first enter the city via Bienville Boulevard (U.S. Highway 90). This key thoroughfare shapes daily life and travel for residents and visitors alike. A mix of commercial and residential developments characterizes Bienville Boulevard. It functions as a major east-west artery, connect-

ing the city with neighboring communities and providing vital access to local businesses and amenities. The boulevard is an important gateway into Ocean Springs and is critical in shaping visitors' first impressions of the city and residents' daily lives. The current configuration, dominated by vehicle-oriented infrastructure, presents challenges for creating a more inviting and vibrant streetscape.

Bienville Boulevard hosts a variety of commercial establishments, including fast food restaurants, convenience stores, strip shopping centers, and big box stores. This corridor is designed primarily for automobile access, with ample parking spaces, driveways, and a layout emphasizing vehicular traffic. The area has seen significant commercial growth, often at the expense of green spaces and architectural cohesiveness. The boulevard lacks pedestrian-friendly features in other parts of Ocean Springs, such as downtown. Large parking lots and wide setbacks detract from the potential for a more walkable, aesthetically cohesive environment.



The city has adopted commercial and multi-family design guidelines to enhance the quality and character of developments along the boulevard. As a result, several new developments have incorporated mixed-use elements combining commercial and residential land uses within multi-story buildings along Bienville Boulevard. However, challenges remain in fully transforming the corridor into a more integrated and visually appealing space.

Bienville Boulevard currently prioritizes automobile traffic, with limited accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists. The city's plans for the area include the potential transformation into a multi-way boulevard, featuring a more balanced design with lanes for through traffic, local traffic, and dedicated spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. Significant planning initiatives are aimed at revitalizing the area, including possibly introducing more mixed-use developments and public amenities.

#### **DOWNTOWN/CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The Downtown District of Ocean Springs serves as the cultural and economic heart of the city, renowned for its vibrant atmosphere, historic charm, and diverse local businesses. As a focal point for residents and visitors, the Downtown District is integral to the city's identity. It is crucial in the community's daily life and long-term development. The Downtown District has several historic buildings and landmarks, reflecting the city's rich heritage. This area showcases a mix of architectural styles, from quaint Creole cottages to elegant Victorian structures, offering a visual representation of the city's

evolution over time. The district also hosts numerous cultural institutions, including art galleries, museums, and theaters, contributing to Ocean Springs' reputation as an arts and cultural hub.

The Downtown District supports various uses, integrating residential spaces among commercial establishments. This mix includes apartments, lofts, and historic homes, offering diverse living options that cater to different lifestyles. The residential component enhances the





district's vibrancy, ensuring activity throughout the day and night. The downtown area is a bustling commercial center featuring an eclectic mix of boutiques, specialty shops, restaurants, and cafes. This vibrant retail and dining scene attracts locals and tourists, making it a vital driver of the local economy. The district's pedestrian-friendly streets and attractive storefronts create a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging foot traffic and supporting local businesses.

Public spaces that foster community interaction and events are central to the district's layout. Small parks, plazas, and public art installations provide residents and visitors with places to relax and socialize. Events like the annual Peter Anderson Arts & Crafts Festival and various farmers' markets further enhance the district's role as a community gathering space.

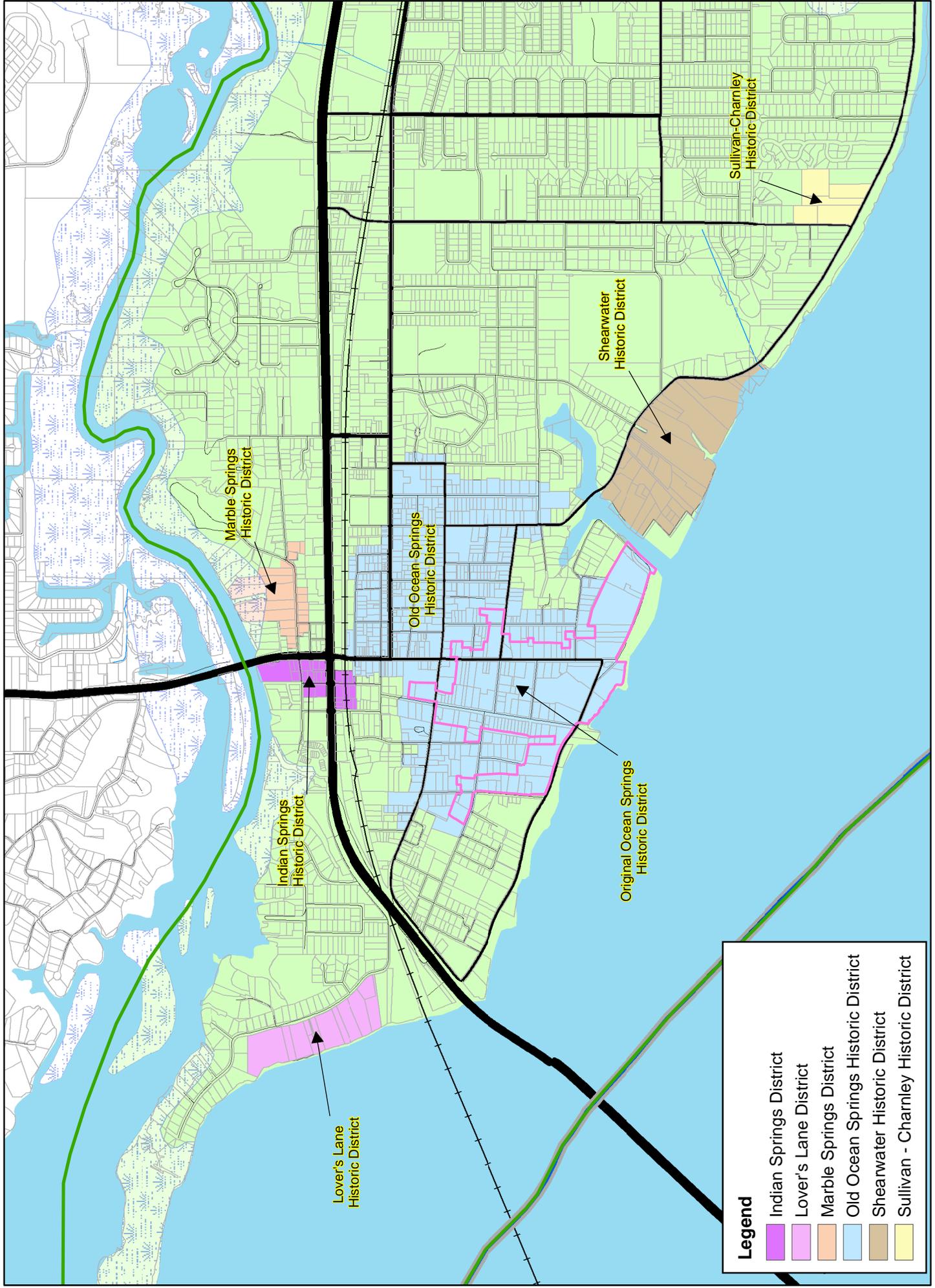
Ocean Springs' transportation network serves the district, which has ample parking, pedestrian-friendly streets, and bicycle facilities. The district's layout encourages walking and biking, promoting a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

Its accessibility makes it a convenient destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment.

In planning for the future of the Downtown District, it is essential to balance growth and preservation by ensuring that new developments respect the district's architectural heritage and scale. This includes encouraging economic development while maintaining the unique character of the local business community, expanding and improving public spaces to support community activities and events, promoting developments that integrate residential, commercial, and cultural uses, and enhancing infrastructure to support pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access, including considerations for public transit options.

### **HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Ocean Springs is home to several historic districts, each with unique characteristics and architectural styles. Here is an overview of the main historic districts in the city.



**Legend**

- Indian Springs District
- Lover's Lane District
- Marble Springs District
- Old Ocean Springs Historic District
- Shearwater Historic District
- Sullivan - Charmley Historic District

Map 7: Historic Districts

### *Old Ocean Springs Historic District*

The Old Ocean Springs Historic District encompasses the city's central business district and areas to the south and west of that area. This district is notable for its mix of residential, commercial, and professional uses, particularly along Jackson and Washington avenues. The district showcases a diverse range of architectural styles, including Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Craftsman. These styles are often adapted to the Gulf Coast climate, with features



like porches and minimal chimneys. The district's history reflects the development of Ocean Springs as a resort community, with a concentration of street-oriented properties that display a variety of building forms. Near the old railroad depot, that area was historically associated with the African-American community of Ocean Springs, with housing and commercial structures developing near the railroad. The district expanded in 2014 to include the former

Railroad Historic District and the Bowen Avenue Historic District.

### *Shearwater Historic District*

The Shearwater Historic District is situated on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi Sound. This district is significant for its association with Shearwater Pottery and the Anderson family, including renowned artist Walter Inglis Anderson. The area includes a variety of water-oriented residential architecture, ranging from Southern farmhouse styles to Bungalows, French Provincial farmhouses, and Colonial Revival homes. The district's development spans from the early 1800s to the mid-20th century, preserving the integrity of the waterfront sites and offering a visual record of Ocean Springs' architectural evolution.

### *Indian Springs Historic District*

Located near Old Fort Bayou, the Indian Springs Historic District is characterized by its informal layout and various residential architecture from the 1850s to the 1930s. The area has a rich history, with mineral springs attracting visitors for centuries. The district features diverse architectural styles, including Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman, often in unique and individual interpretations. Rehabilitating many residences for professional use reflects a modern appreciation for the district's historic buildings.

### *Marble Springs Historic District*

The Marble Springs Historic District is located near Old Fort Bayou and is notable for its collection of nineteenth and early twentieth-century residential architecture. The district's name comes from the historic Marble Springs, a

community social center known for its mineral waters. The area's homes vary in scale and style, with more elaborate houses on the north side and smaller, vernacular dwellings on the south side. The district also includes a replica of the historic springhouse, reflecting its historical significance.

### *Lover's Lane Historic District*

The Lover's Lane Historic District occupies the peninsula's western shore between the Back Bay of Biloxi and Old Fort Bayou. This district is known for its grand summer estates, reflecting Ocean Springs's development as a resort community. The area is significant for its eclectic, high-style residential architecture, including Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Its association with Fort Maurepas, the original French settlement in the Louisiana colony further highlights the district's historical importance.

### *Sullivan-Charnley Historic District*

The Sullivan-Charnley Historic District comprises contiguous waterfront estates between Weeks, Halstead, and Davis Bayous. The dis-

trict is renowned for associations with architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Its buildings showcase shingle-clad structures and a strong horizontal emphasis. These late nineteenth-century cottages and their dependencies represent unique examples of architectural design in Mississippi. The district's waterfront location provides an extensive water view and significant landscape design elements.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The City of Ocean Springs has a comprehensive set of historic preservation guidelines to maintain the city's unique architectural heritage and historic character. These guidelines, managed by the Ocean Springs Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), are essential for guiding the development and preservation of the city's historic districts. Key elements of the guidelines include:

**Historic Districts and Landmarks:** The city recognizes multiple historic districts with distinct architectural styles and historical significance. These areas are protected under local or-



dinances that enforce specific preservation standards.

**Design Review Process:** All exterior changes to designated historic properties must be reviewed to ensure compatibility with the historic character. This includes new construction, alterations, and demolitions. The HPC recommends approval or disapproval of Certificates of Appropriateness for these actions when they affect landmarks and buildings within historic districts. Final decisions regarding Certificates of Appropriateness are made by the Ocean Springs Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

**Architectural Details and Materials:** The guidelines emphasize preserving original materials and architectural details, such as windows, doors, roofs, and siding. When replacements are necessary, they must match the original in material, design, and appearance.

**New Construction and Additions:** New buildings and additions within historic districts must respect the scale, style, and character of the surrounding historic environment. This includes considerations for height, massing, materials, and architectural details.

**Site and Setting:** The guidelines address the broader context of historic properties, including landscaping, fences, and other site features. These elements contribute to the historic character and must be preserved or appropriately integrated with new development.

**Public Education and Awareness:** The HPC is responsible for promoting public awareness of Ocean Springs' historic resources and preser-

vation benefits. This includes providing guidance and resources to property owners and developers.

These guidelines are designed to ensure that Ocean Springs' historic districts retain their unique character and continue to be valued assets for the community. They balance the need for growth and development with protecting the city's architectural and cultural heritage.

## RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Ocean Springs boasts a diverse array of residential developments that cater to various lifestyles and preferences. These neighborhoods offer a mix of housing types, from modern single-family homes to townhouses and apartments, reflecting the city's growth and development over recent decades. The suburban areas of Ocean Springs are characterized by single-family homes with larger lots, often featuring contemporary architectural styles. These neighborhoods are well-connected to major roadways, providing easy access to downtown and neighboring cities. In recent years, Ocean Springs has seen the development of newer residential communities, including planned unit developments (PUDs).

The city's coastal areas feature some of the most sought-after residential properties, with homes offering stunning views of the Biloxi Bay and access to water-based activities. The proximity to water bodies like Biloxi Bay and the Gulf Sound makes these neighborhoods highly desirable for those seeking a coastal lifestyle.



## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial development is primarily located in the central part of the city, between Bienville Boulevard (U.S. Highway 90) and the CSX Railroad, and east in Sunplex Light Industrial Park on Highway 57. Transportation infrastructure has significantly shaped Ocean Springs's industrial development footprint. Highway 90 runs parallel to the Gulf of Mexico and is a central transportation corridor that has helped to facilitate commercial development and tourism along the coast. This major east-west corridor provides access to residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The CSX Railroad, which runs east and west through the city, also contributed significantly to development. The railroad directly connects to the Port of Gulfport and other major transportation hubs, making it an attractive location for manufacturing and distribution businesses.

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

### *Ocean Springs School District*

The Ocean Springs School District is crucial to the community, offering high-quality education and a nurturing environment for young students. The school system includes several key institutions:

Pecan Park Elementary School is located at 504 Hanley Road and it serves students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. The school is known for its strong academic programs and various extracurricular activities that support students' overall development. Pecan Park has an enrollment of approximately 500 students and is committed to fostering a love of learning from an early age.

Magnolia Park Elementary School is located at 3500 Government Street, Magnolia Park Elementary accommodates students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. The school provides a comprehensive curriculum that includes core subjects and arts and physical education. With an enrollment of around 640 students, Magnolia



Park focuses on creating a supportive and inclusive environment.

Oak Park Elementary School is located at 2230 Government Street. Oak Park Elementary serves grades K-3 and has an enrollment of approximately 480 students. The school emphasizes a well-rounded education with strong parental and community involvement.

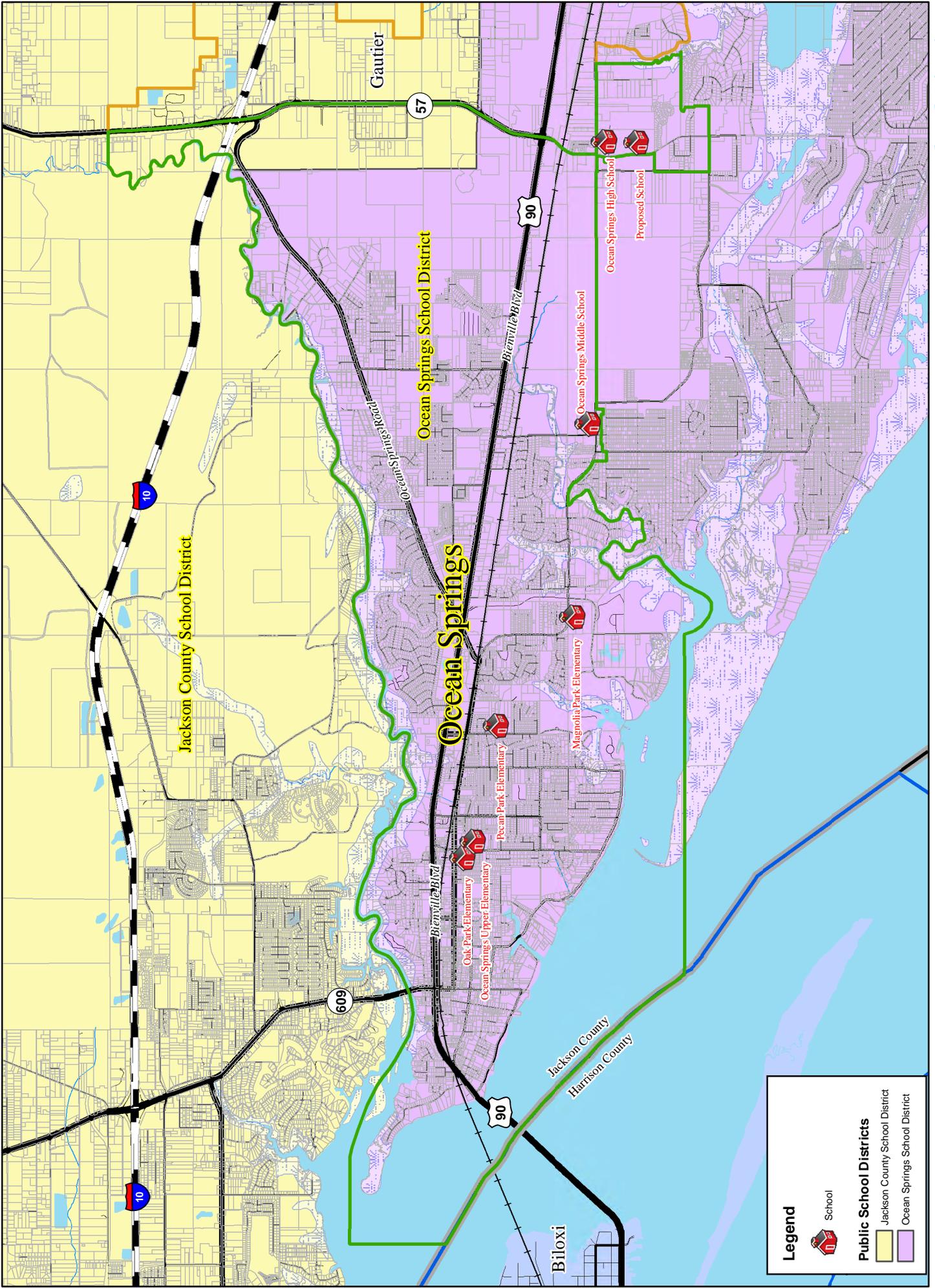
Ocean Springs Upper Elementary School is located at 2320 Government Street, this school serves 4th through 6th-grade students. With an enrollment of about 1,270 students, the Upper Elementary School offers specialized programs that prepare students for the transition to middle school.

Ocean Springs Middle School is located at 3600 Hanshaw Road, the middle school serves students in 7th and 8th grades. With an enrollment of approximately 960 students, the school offers a robust curriculum that includes advanced placement courses, fine arts, and athletics. The middle school is known for its commitment to academic excellence and for providing a sup-

portive environment for adolescents during a critical period of their education.

Ocean Springs High School is located in part of the newly annexed area of Ocean Springs at 6701 Old Spanish Trail and serves students in grades 9-12. The high school is a cornerstone of the community, with an enrollment of around 1,950 students. It offers various academic programs, including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual enrollment opportunities, and specialized career and technical education (CTE) tracks. The school's facilities include state-of-the-art classrooms, science labs, performing arts spaces, and athletic fields. The high school is renowned for its strong extracurricular programs, including competitive sports teams, arts programs, and various student clubs.

According to the latest grades from the Mississippi Department of Education, for the 2022-2023 school year, the Ocean Springs School District was rated the #1 school district in the state. In addition, Ocean Springs High School was ranked the #2 high school in the state. These rankings reflect the quality of, and commitment



**Legend**

- School
- Public School Districts
  - Jackson County School District
  - Ocean Springs School District

Map 8: School Districts

to, education in Ocean Springs by elected officials, stakeholders, and residents.

### **Higher Education**

#### **The University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL)**

The University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL), located in Ocean Springs, is one of the largest marine laboratories in the southeastern United States. Established by the Mississippi Legislature in 1948 and 1950, GCRL is the state's designated marine laboratory, playing a critical role in providing scientific support to Mississippi and the broader Gulf of Mexico region. With approximately 200 faculty, researchers, graduate students, and support staff, GCRL conducts applied research and higher education across its expansive 50-acre Halstead and 224-acre Cedar Point sites.

GCRL's research encompasses many marine science topics, including sustainable fisheries, marine aquaculture, coastal ecology and restoration, and aquatic health and conservation. These areas of study are vital for understanding and preserving marine and coastal ecosystems. The laboratory's facilities, which include advanced laboratories, research vessels, and field stations, enable comprehensive studies of these critical environments.

The laboratory offers extensive academic programming centered around its core research areas. This includes graduate studies, which provide advanced education and research opportunities in marine sciences. The undergraduate Summer Field Program allows students to

gain hands-on experience in marine and coastal research. Additionally, GCRL engages the broader community through citizen science initiatives and K-12 educational offerings, such as the popular Sea Camp.

GCRL's role extends beyond research and education to community and regional impact. It supports sustainable management practices, conservation efforts, and policy development related to marine and coastal resources. The laboratory's outreach and educational programs foster community engagement and raise awareness about the importance of marine conservation, making GCRL a vital institution for the State of Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico region.

#### **Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) - Jackson County Campus**

Located nearby in Gautier, the Jackson County Campus of MGCCC offers a wide array of academic and technical programs. MGCCC provides quality education and training that meets the needs of the local community and workforce. The campus offers associate degrees, certificate programs, and continuing education courses in various fields, including business, healthcare, technology, and liberal arts. Students benefit from modern facilities, experienced faculty, and a supportive learning environment that prepares them for immediate employment and further academic pursuits.

## EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The existing land use categories are divided into: residential, commercial, industrial, public & semi-public, parks and recreation, and vacant. This survey categorizes the land use in the City of Ocean Springs and surrounding areas and also provides a detailed analysis of the distribution of land use in both.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

The City of Ocean Springs is composed of four main types of residential uses: single family, multi-family, duplex, and manufactured homes.

**Single-Family Residential** identifies parcels of any size that contain one detached residential unit.

**Manufactured or Mobile Home Residential** identifies parcels of any size that contain a residential unit constructed on a chassis as defined by US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definitions.

**Duplex Residential** identifies parcels that contain two attached residential units.

**Multi-Family Residential** identifies parcels of any size that contain three or more attached residential units, such as triplexes, quadruplexes, or apartments.

Single-family homes are the most prevalent land use in the city, composing 33.2% of the city's total area. Manufactured homes are the second most prevalent type of housing, composing 0.8% of the city's total area. Duplexes are the least frequent residential type in the city, composing approximately 0.1% of the

city's total area. Lastly, multi-family is the second most prevalent residential use, utilizing 1.2% of the city's total area.

### COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial establishments are those that operate privately, for profit, and provide merchandise or services. This survey classifies commercial land use as either office commercial or general commercial. Examples include banks, restaurants, medical offices, law offices, and insurance offices. Approximately 5% of the city is composed of commercial land use.

### INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

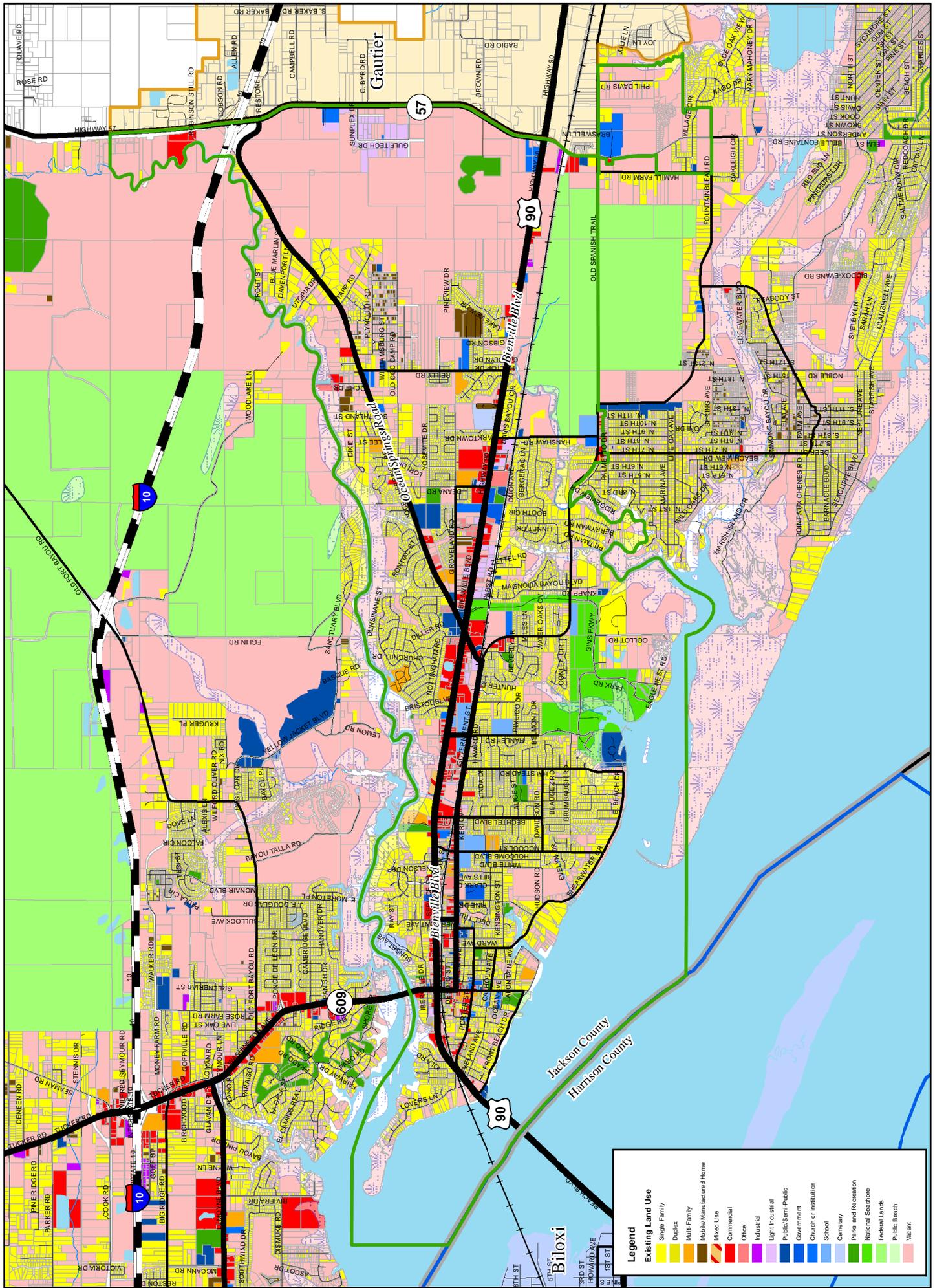
Industrial establishments are those that process, manufacture, store, or distribute goods to other businesses for later sale or use. They do not usually provide on-site sales of goods or services. Industrial uses account for approximately 1% of the city's land area.

### PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC

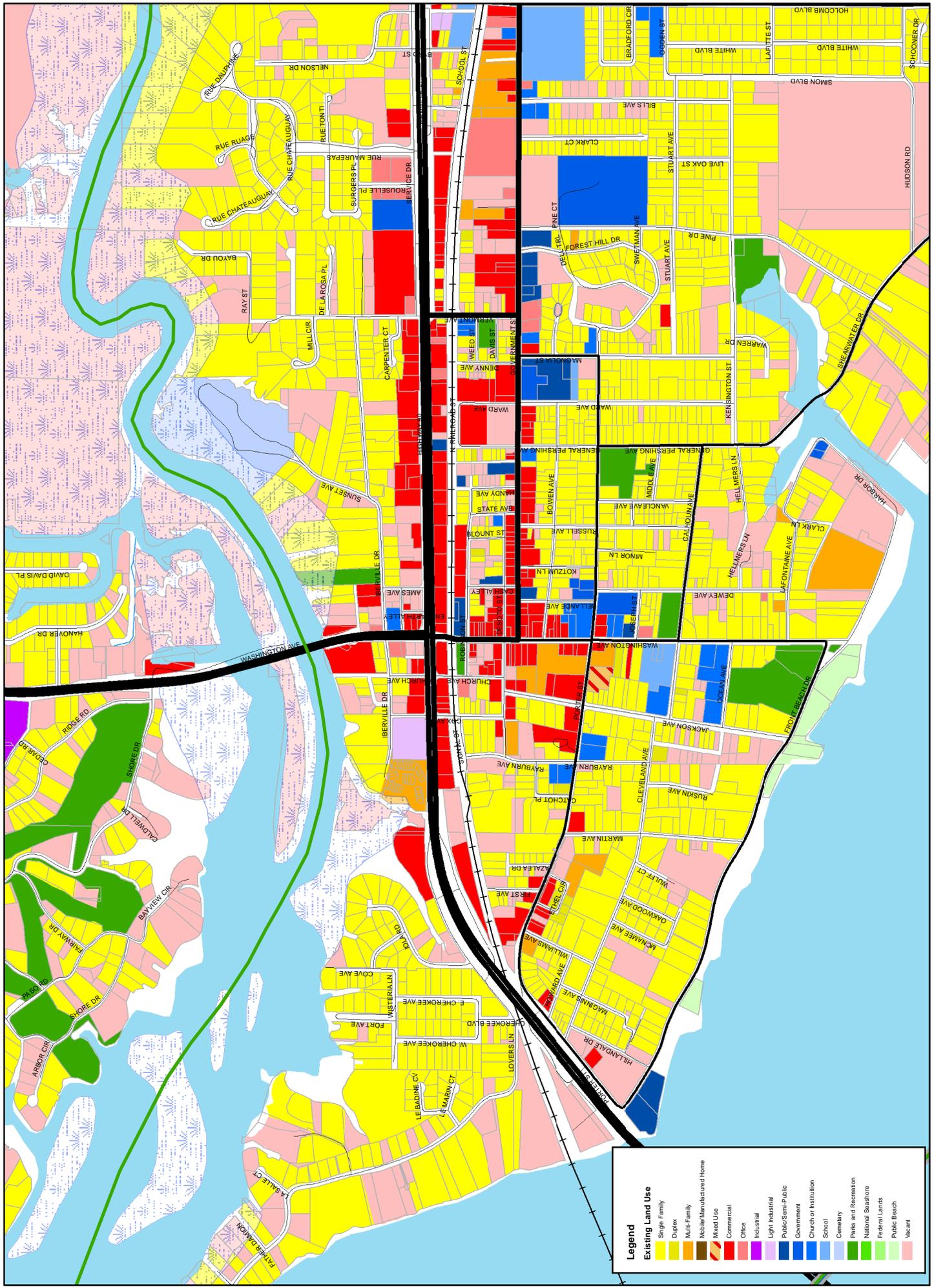
Public and semi-public land uses comprise the second most prevalent land use in Ocean Springs. These uses include government facilities, schools and colleges, parks and recreation, churches and institutions, cemeteries, private clubs, and utilities. Together, they account for 15% of the city's land area, with a majority of that percentage (10.6%) coming from parks and recreation facilities.

### VACANT LAND USE

For this land-use study, vacant land indicates any undeveloped land or being used for agricultural purposes. Approximately 43.8% of the land inside the city. This land may be available for



Map 9: Existing Land Use Map

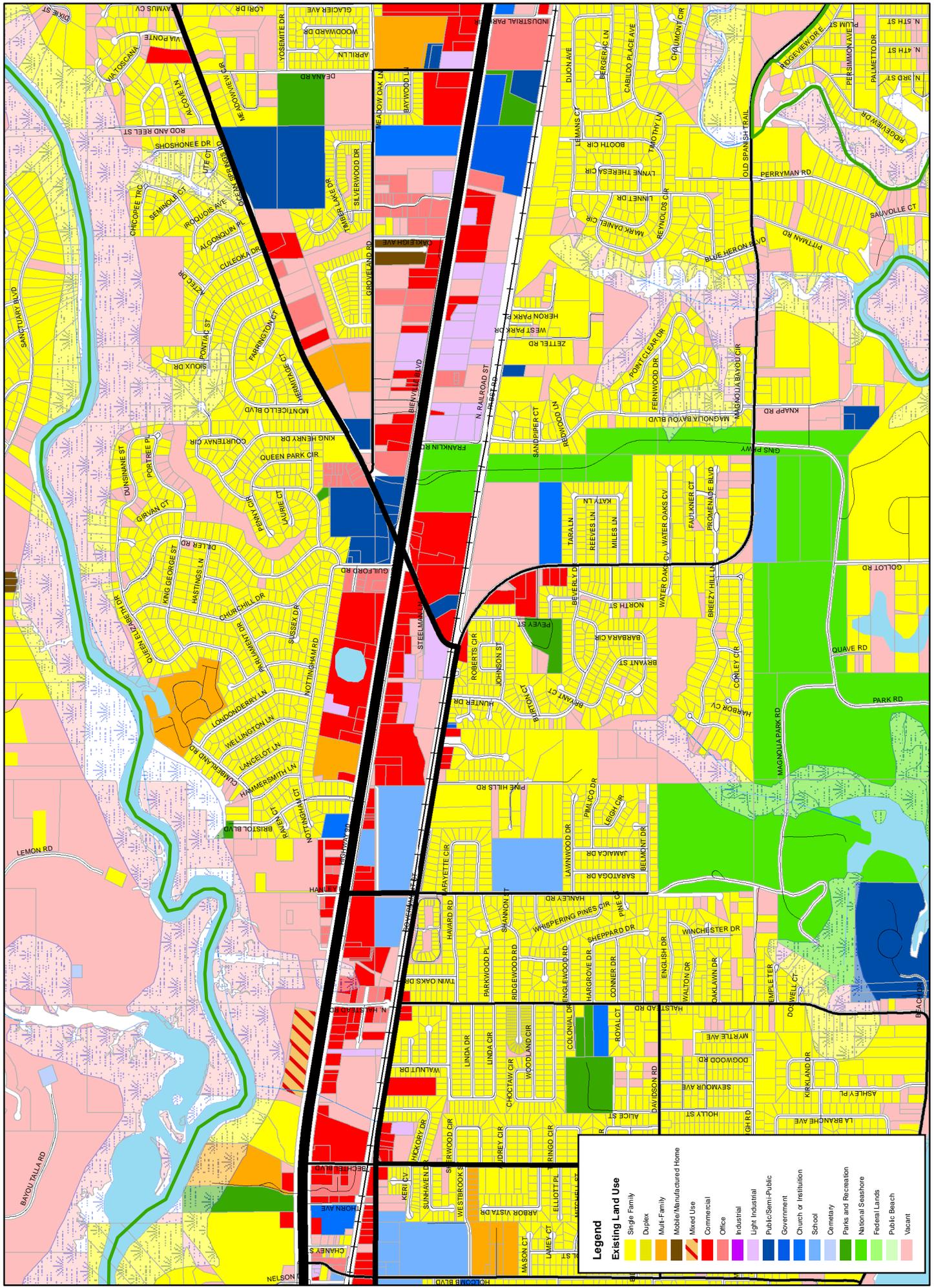


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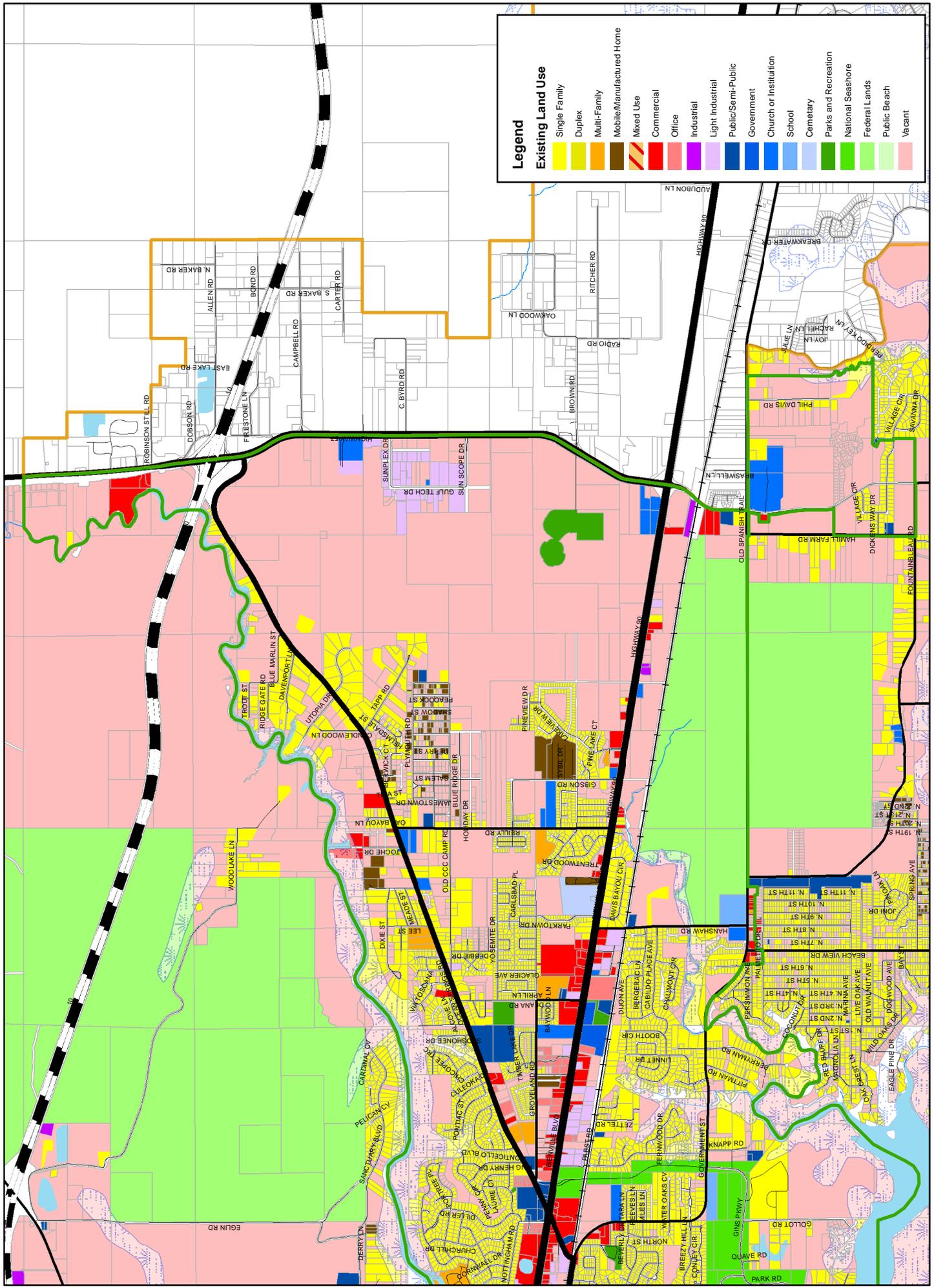
**Existing Land Use**

Single Family	Double	Multi-Family	Mobile/Manufactured Home	Mixed Use	Commercial	Office	Industrial	Light Industrial	Public/Semi-Public	Government	Church or Institution	School	Cemetery	Parks and Recreation	National Seashore	Federal Lands	Public Beach	Vacant
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Map 10: Existing Land Use Map (West Zoom)



Map 11: Existing Land Use Map (Central Zoom)



Map 12: Existing Land Use Map (East Zoom)

development, or natural features or regulations may constrain it.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Ocean Springs has a well-developed transportation system with various options for residents and visitors to get around the city and the surrounding area. Some of the key components of the transportation system in Ocean Springs include:

**Roads and Highways:** Ocean Springs is located near several major highways, including Interstate 10 and US Highway 90, which provide easy access to nearby cities and attractions. Interstate 10 is a major east-west highway that runs through the southern United States. Ocean Springs connects to Interstate 10 via State Highway 609 out of downtown and State Highway 57 to the east. I-10 provides convenient access to nearby cities such as Biloxi, Gulfport, and Mobile, Alabama and attractions such as beaches, casinos, and cultural sites. The newly annexed territory along State Highway 57 brought the I-10 and Highway 57 interchange into the city limits, creating additional development opportunities in the eastern parts of Ocean Springs.

**Local Streets:** The city also has a network of local roads that connect residents to businesses, schools, and other destinations within the city.

**Airports:** The Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport is approximately 20 miles west of Ocean Springs and offers regular flights to destinations throughout the United States.

**Taxis and ride-sharing services:** Several taxi companies operate in Ocean Springs, and ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft are also available in the area.

Overall, Ocean Springs's transportation system is designed to be convenient and accessible for residents and visitors, with various options to meet different needs and preferences. The city's focus on pedestrian—and bike-friendly infrastructure also helps to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for its residents.

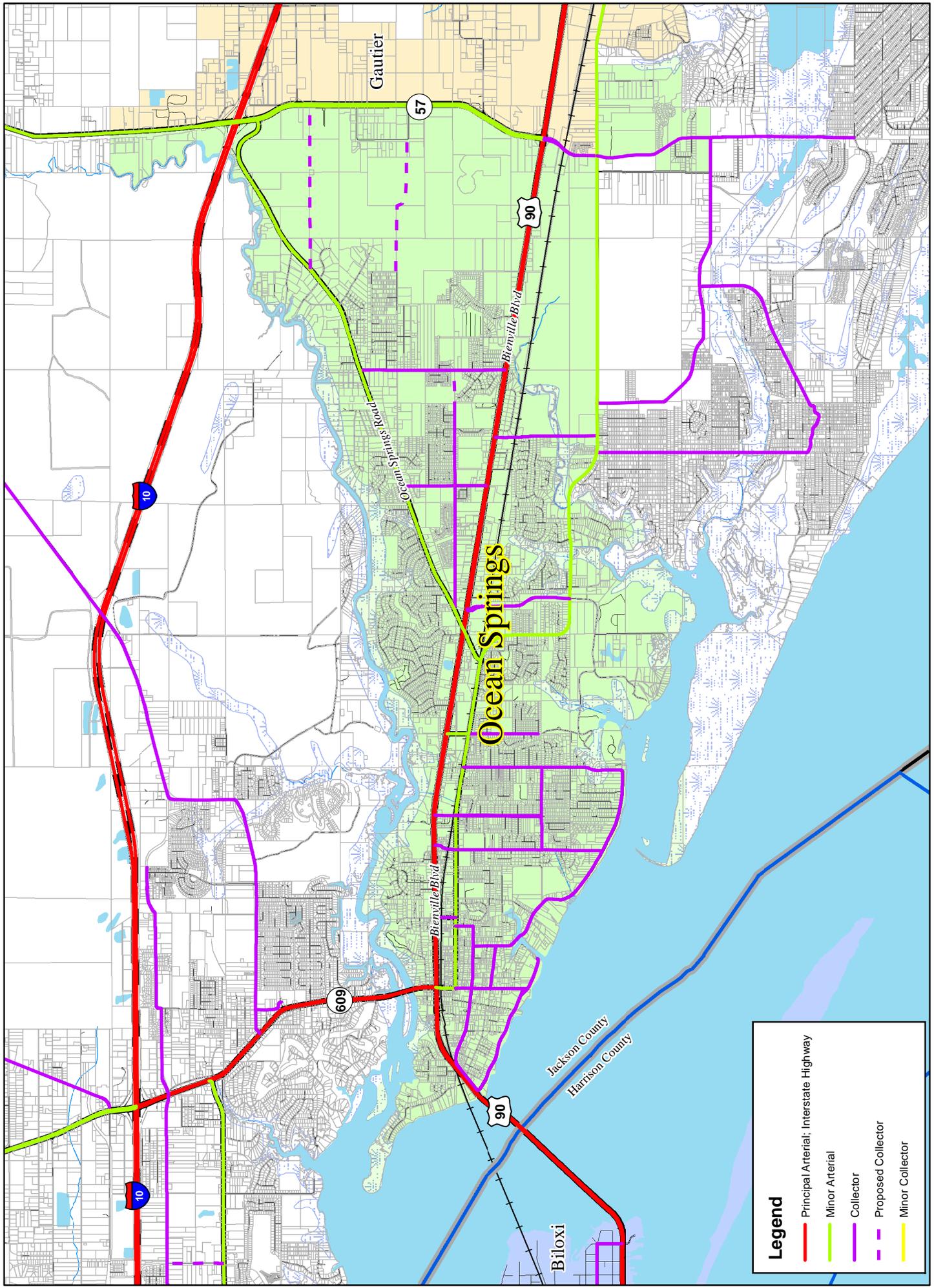
## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF EXISTING STREETS

A functional classification for streets categorizes roads and streets based on their purpose, capacity, and role within the overall transportation network. This system helps to organize and manage traffic flow efficiently by distinguishing between different types of roadways. The primary categories typically used in functional classification include:

**Arterial Roads:** These are the main roads designed for long-distance travel and high traffic volumes. They connect regional destinations such as cities, towns, and regional centers. Arterial roads are further divided into:

*Principal Arterials:* Major highways and interstates that handle the highest traffic volumes and provide direct routes between major urban areas.

*Minor Arterials:* Roads that connect smaller communities and serve as feeders to the principal arterials.



**Legend**

- Principal Arterial; Interstate Highway
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- - - Proposed Collector
- Minor Collector

Map 13: Functional Classification Map

**Collector Roads:** These roads gather traffic from local streets and funnel it to the arterial roads. They balance the need for mobility and land access, often serving residential neighborhoods and local commercial areas.

**Local Roads:** These streets are primarily designed to access individual properties, including homes and businesses. They handle lower traffic volumes and are not intended for long-distance travel.

By categorizing streets into these functional classifications, transportation planners can design and manage each type of road according to its intended use, ensuring efficient traffic flow, safety, and connectivity within the transportation network.

## TRAFFIC COUNTS

**US Highway 90 (Bienville Boulevard):** US Highway 90 serves as the primary east-west artery through Ocean Springs, running parallel to I-10 and connecting key points from the Biloxi Bay Bridge on the western edge of town to just east of Highway 57 in Gautier (Map numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 11). This corridor is critical for local and regional traffic, providing access to commercial areas and residential neighborhoods and serving as a main route for through traffic. The traffic counts along this stretch reflect its importance, with volumes remaining stable in some areas and slightly declining in others, particularly as you move eastward. This stability underscores the highway's role as a backbone of the local transportation network. At the same time, the slight decrease in some segments may suggest shifts in traffic patterns

or a redistribution of traffic due to alternate routes or changes in local development.

**I-10 North of Ocean Springs:** Interstate 10, located north of Ocean Springs, is a major regional highway significantly impacting the town's transportation dynamics (Map numbers 14 and 15). This section of I-10, just north of the town, has seen substantial growth in traffic over the past decade, reflecting its vital role in facilitating long-distance travel and commercial transport and providing a swift connection to other major cities and regions. The increase in traffic volume on I-10 is indicative of regional growth and the increasing reliance on this interstate for both local commuting and regional connectivity.

**Northern Approaches to Ocean Springs:** Approaching Ocean Springs from the north on the east end of town from the direction of I-10 involves routes that serve as key access points to the town's northern and downtown areas (Map number 3). The steady traffic counts on this northern approach highlight its importance for residents and visitors, providing a crucial link between the northern residential areas, downtown Ocean Springs, and the broader regional transportation network. This stability in traffic volume suggests consistent usage, likely driven by local commuting and access to the town's amenities and services.

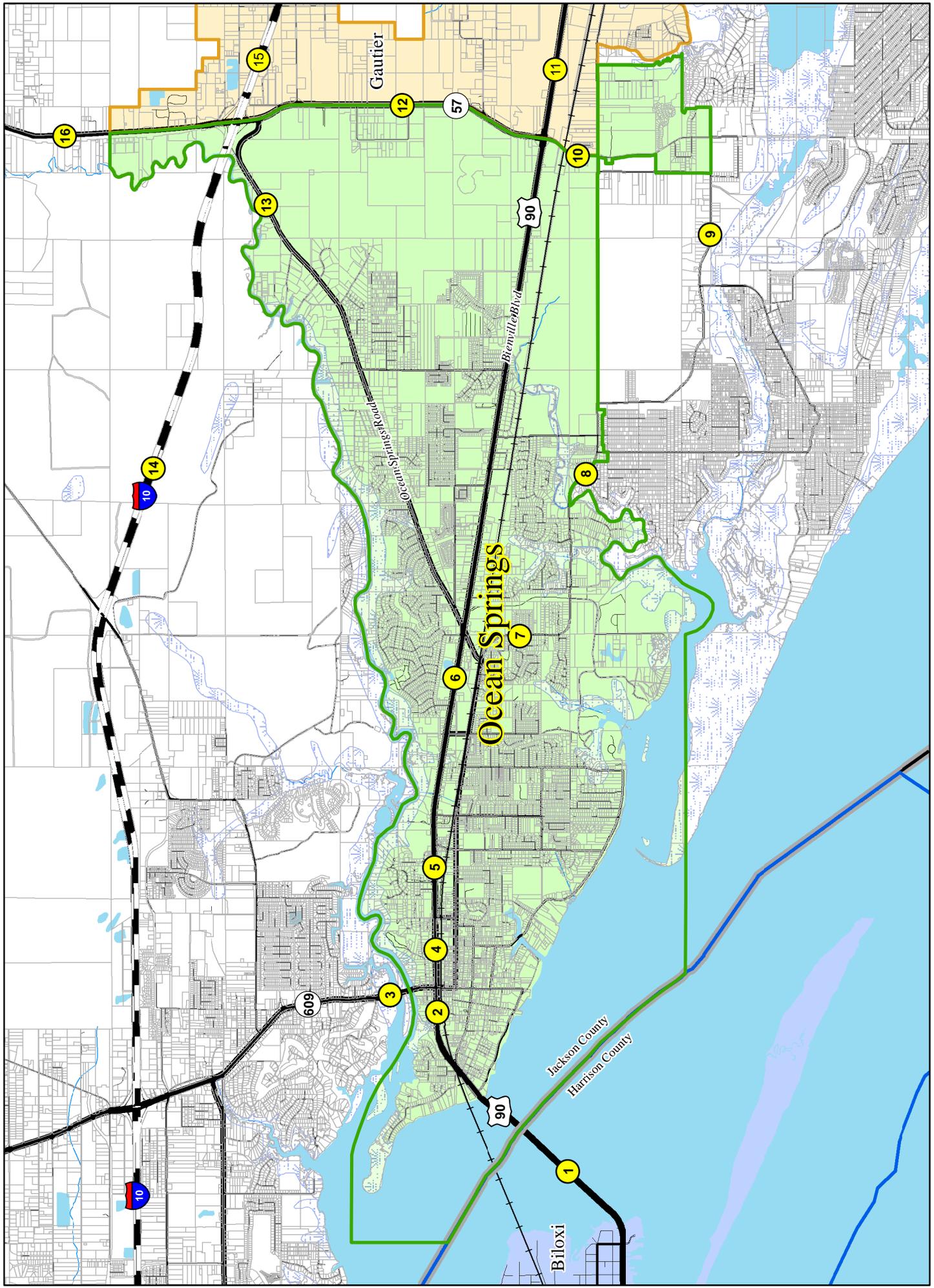
Ocean Springs Road, near its intersection with Highway 57, and sections of Highway 57 form another critical component of the town's transportation network (Map numbers 12, 13, and 16). These routes are primary north-south con-

**TABLE 1: TRAFFIC COUNTS**

Map #	Site ID	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2013-2023	
												# Change	% Change
1	240410	25000	26000	26000	26000	26000	26000	26000	23000	25000	25000	0	0%
2	300050	25000	26000	26000	26000	26000	26000	26000	23000	25000	25000	0	0%
3	301010	35000	35000	35000	36000	36000	36000	36000	33000	32000	35000	0	0%
4	300060	41000	28000	28000	29000	29000	45000	45000	40000	40000	40000	-1,000	-3%
5	300070	43000	39000	40000	40000	42000	42000	42000	39000	39000	40000	-3,000	-8%
6	300090	39000	40000	40000	39000	40000	40000	38000	36000	39000	39000	0	0%
7	305070	8700	9100	9100	9200	8700	8800	8800	9500	9300	9800	1,100	11%
8	305071	8400	8400	7700	7800	8100	7600	7700	8600	8500	8600	200	2%
9	300651	1500	1300	1300	1300	1500	1500	1500	1500	1500	1600	100	6%
10	300655	7900	10000	10000	10000	11000	11000	11000	11000	12000	13000	5,100	39%
11	300110	24000	24000	25000	26000	26000	25000	25000	24000	24000	24000	0	0%
12	300660	11000	13000	13000	13000	15000	15000	16000	15000	15000	16000	5,000	31%
13	300650	5800	5900	5900	6800	7000	7100	7500	7200	7500	7500	1,700	23%
14	301502	48000	49000	50000	65000	66000	67000	69000	69000	63000	64000	16,000	25%
15	301505	50000	51000	54000	56000	56000	57000	59000	60000	59000	59000	9,000	15%
16	300670	6900	6400	6500	6600	6900	6900	7000	7000	6900	7900	1,000	13%

**Note:** Black indicates estimated traffic counts, red indicates actual traffic counts  
 No traffic counts were conducted or released for 2020.

**Source:** Mississippi Department of Transportation Traffic Count Application



Map 14: Traffic Counts

nectors, linking residential areas with the town center, commercial zones, and beyond. The increasing traffic volumes along Highway 57, particularly in areas before and after I-10, point to growing usage, possibly driven by residential development and increased local traffic. Greyhound Way, near Ocean Springs High School, has seen the most significant traffic increases, reflecting its importance as a key route for school access and local commuting (Map number 10).

**Southern Routes:** The southern end of Ocean Springs, particularly the routes extending from west to east toward newly annexed territory in the southeast (Map numbers 8 and 9), represents gradual growth. While traffic volumes have slightly increased, this area connects to locations experiencing steady development, with transportation infrastructure playing a role in connecting these newly annexed regions to the broader town. The modest rise in traffic suggests ongoing development and integration of these areas into the town's overall transportation network, with these routes serving as vital links for future growth.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Ocean Springs has a well-developed active transportation network supporting walking, biking, and paddling activities. The city's infrastructure includes pedestrian facilities, trails, and blueways, providing residents and visitors with diverse active and recreational transportation options. The city has an extensive network of sidewalks, particularly in the downtown area and residential neighborhoods. These sidewalks facilitate safe and convenient walking, connecting key destinations such as schools, parks, and shopping areas.

**Live Oaks Bicycle Trail:** this trail is a notable bike route in Ocean Springs, designed to offer cyclists a scenic and safe path through the city. This trail is part of a broader network of bicycle and pedestrian routes in Ocean Springs to promote active transportation and enhance connectivity. The Live Oaks Bicycle Trail runs through some of the city's most picturesque areas, featuring lush greenery and live oak trees. The route connects key destinations, including



neighborhoods, parks, schools, and downtown. It is a critical link in the city's efforts to provide safe and accessible routes for cyclists of all ages and abilities. The trail primarily comprises shared-use paths, bike boulevards, and designated bike lanes. These facilities are designed to accommodate both recreational and commuter cyclists. The trail's infrastructure includes signage, pavement markings, and safety features such as traffic calming measures and crossings at major intersections.

**Old Fort Bayou Blueway:** this is a scenic blueway in Jackson County, Mississippi, that runs immediately adjacent to the northern city limits of Ocean Springs. The Old Fort Bayou Blueway offers a unique paddling experience through diverse natural habitats. The blueway extends for approximately 13 miles, from the headwaters in the longleaf pine savannas near Vancleave to its mouth at Biloxi Bay in Ocean Springs. The trail meanders through subtidal estuarine marshes and slash pine savannas, providing paddlers with diverse landscapes. The bayou hosts a variety of habitats, including estuarine areas where freshwater meets saltwater. Along the blueway, paddlers can explore notable sites such as the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge, The Nature Conservancy's Old Fort Bayou mitigation property, and the Land Trust's Twelve Oaks Conservation Park. The blueway is popular for fly fishing, offering opportunities to catch various species nurtured in the bayou's inlets. The trail also provides access to picnic areas, camping sites, boat ramps, and parking facilities, making it a

well-rounded destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

Ocean Springs continues to expand, with several areas earmarked for future residential development. These future growth areas are expected to include a mix of housing types catering to a growing population and diverse demographics. The city's planning efforts focus on sustainable development, ensuring new neighborhoods are well-integrated with existing infrastructure and community amenities.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Ocean Springs is served by the Coast Transit Authority (CTA), which provides public transportation options that connect the city with the broader Gulf Coast region. The public transit facilities in Ocean Springs are designed to offer accessible, reliable, and convenient transportation for residents and visitors. The CTA operates fixed-route bus services that traverse key corridors in Ocean Springs and connect to nearby cities such as Biloxi and Gulfport. These routes are designed to provide access to major destinations, including shopping centers, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions. In addition to regular bus routes, CTA offers shuttle services that cater to specific needs, such as transporting passengers to special events or providing service to less densely populated areas.

Ocean Springs has several designated bus stops along the main routes, providing passengers safe and convenient boarding points. These stops are located near residential areas, com-

mercial centers, and public facilities. Many bus stops are equipped with shelters and seating to protect passengers from the elements while they wait for the bus. These facilities enhance the comfort and convenience of using public transit.

CTA buses and facilities in Ocean Springs are designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. This includes low-floor buses, wheelchair ramps, and priority seating areas. The transit system is committed to providing equitable service to all passengers.

For commuters traveling to other Gulf Coast cities, CTA provides park-and-ride facilities where passengers can park their vehicles and transfer to public transit. These lots are conveniently located near major highways and bus routes, facilitating easy access to the transit network.

CTA buses have bike racks, allowing passengers to combine cycling with public transit. This integration supports multimodal transpor-

tation and encourages the use of active transportation options.

## **TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES**

Ocean Springs confronts several challenging roadway conditions that make driving difficult, potentially hazardous, and less efficient. These conditions can significantly impact safety, travel times, and the overall effectiveness of a transportation network. Key challenges include:

**Traffic Congestion:** High traffic volumes, especially during peak hours, can lead to slow-moving traffic, increased travel times, and heightened frustration among drivers. Congestion occurs most frequently during morning and afternoon rush hours along major highways and collector routes, especially within school zones and at the intersections along Highway 90.

**Poor Road Surface Conditions:** Potholes, cracks, and uneven surfaces can damage vehicles and contribute to accidents, making driving uncomfortable and hazardous. Street maintenance is an ongoing concern in the city.



**Narrow or Obstructed Lanes:** Lanes that are too narrow or obstructed by parked vehicles, construction, or debris can force drivers into dangerous situations, such as sudden lane changes or reduced maneuvering space. Narrow lanes are most common in Ocean Springs' historic neighborhoods, adding to the city's historical charm but requiring increased caution to avoid collisions with other motorists, pedestrians, and parked cars.

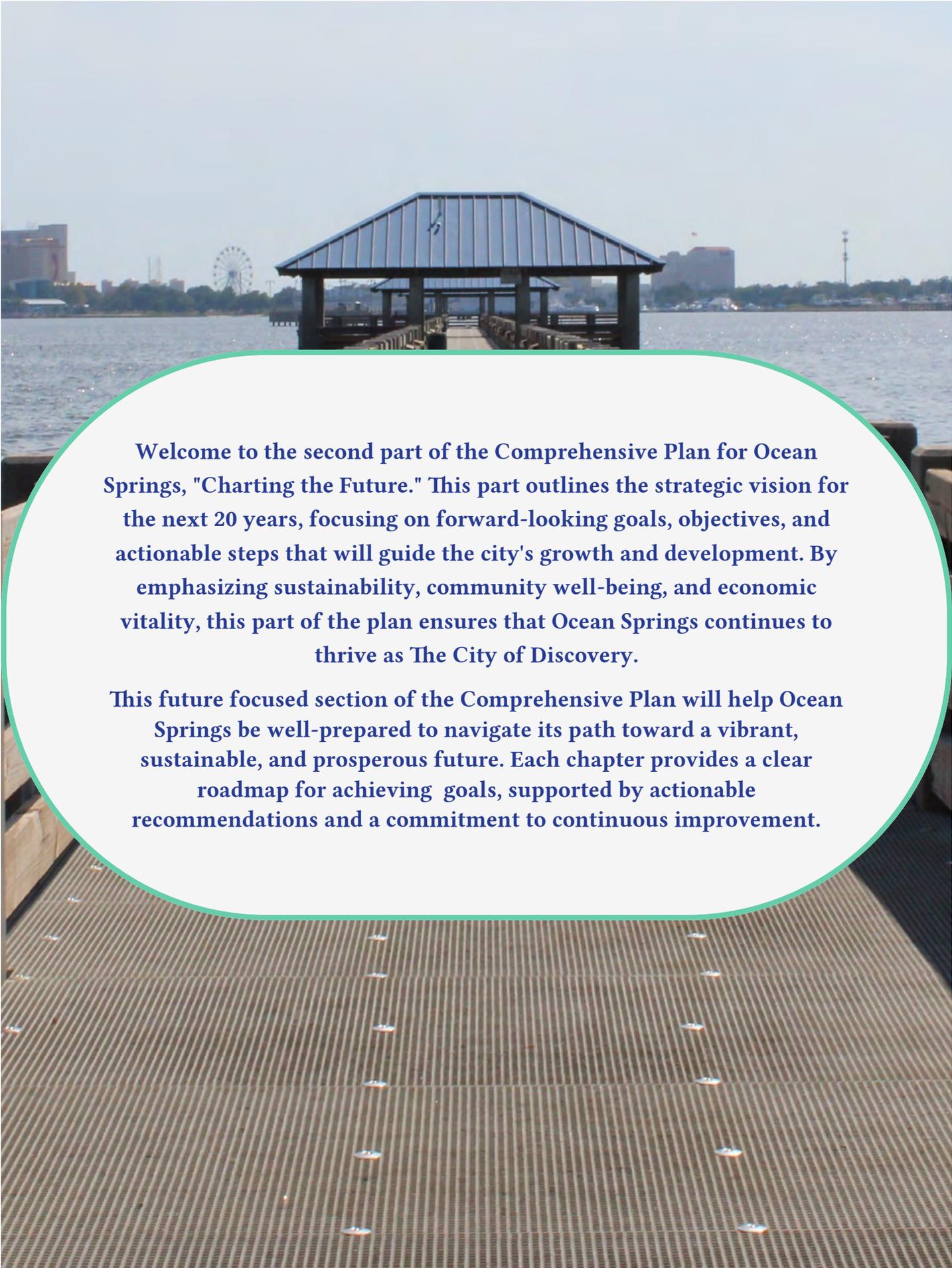
**Pedestrian and Cyclist Interactions:** High pedestrian and cyclist activity, especially in areas lacking adequate crosswalks, bike lanes, or sidewalks, can lead to conflicts and accidents. Ocean Springs has significantly improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists and continues to prioritize these improvements in its overall planning.

**Weather-Related Hazards:** In Ocean Springs, clearly marked evacuation routes are necessary. There are presently few options for northerly evacuation from Ocean Springs.

Addressing these challenges through proper maintenance, infrastructure improvements, and effective traffic management strategies is crucial for ensuring safe and efficient travel.



# CHARTING THE FUTURE



Welcome to the second part of the Comprehensive Plan for Ocean Springs, "Charting the Future." This part outlines the strategic vision for the next 20 years, focusing on forward-looking goals, objectives, and actionable steps that will guide the city's growth and development. By emphasizing sustainability, community well-being, and economic vitality, this part of the plan ensures that Ocean Springs continues to thrive as The City of Discovery.

This future focused section of the Comprehensive Plan will help Ocean Springs be well-prepared to navigate its path toward a vibrant, sustainable, and prosperous future. Each chapter provides a clear roadmap for achieving goals, supported by actionable recommendations and a commitment to continuous improvement.



## **CHAPTER 5—VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- \* **VISION**
- \* **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- \* **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Ocean Springs envisions a future where thoughtful planning and strategic growth foster a thriving community. This comprehensive plan outlines the vision, guiding principles, goals and objectives for land use, transportation, economic development, and community well-being. By maintaining a sustainable mix of land uses, enhancing transportation corridors, preserving historic and natural resources, and fostering a vibrant downtown, Ocean Springs aims to create a high-quality living environment for all residents. The plan prioritizes balanced growth, interconnectivity, and cultural enrichment, ensuring that the city remains a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

### **VISION**

Ocean Springs is a vibrant, resilient, inclusive coastal community that cherishes its rich heritage, celebrates its natural beauty, and

embraces innovative growth. As "The City of Discovery," we are committed to fostering a sustainable environment, a thriving local economy, and a high quality of life for all residents. Through thoughtful planning, community engagement, and strategic investment, we will preserve our unique character while boldly navigating future challenges, ensuring that Ocean Springs remains a place where tradition and progress meet and every resident can flourish.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles outlined in this section serve as overarching value statements that will direct the actions and decisions made within the City of Ocean Springs as it grows and evolves. These principles are organized by key focus areas—land use and development, transportation, and community facilities—and provide a foundation for creating policies and strategies that align with the city's long-term vision. They are designed to ensure that the city's growth is balanced, sustainable, and community-focused while preserving Ocean Springs' unique character and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. These guiding principles appear again in later chapters of the plan, where they are further expanded upon in the context of specific planning areas, providing a comprehensive framework for decision-making and implementation.

### **LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Future Land Use plan helps ensure that future growth will be directed into the areas of the city that can handle different types of

growth, whether residential, commercial or industrial. The guiding principles will help make sure that land is developed efficiently, with the highest and best use for each parcel.

#### **1. Sustainable and Compatible Land Uses**

- Maintain a balanced mix of residential and non-residential uses to meet the needs of businesses and residents.
- Promote private investment in existing neighborhoods through infrastructure improvements and code enforcement.

#### **2. Mixed-Use Development**

- Transform auto-dominated strip commercial areas into compact, multi-modal-oriented, mixed-use places.
- Develop compatible mixed-use activity centers and infill development that reflects neighborhood character.

#### **3. Community Character and Design**

- Ensure that commercial and residential development is designed to reflect Ocean Springs' unique character.
- Enhance the overall design quality of new developments with improved signage, site design, architectural standards, and landscaping.

#### **4. Interconnectivity**

- Promote interconnectivity between adjacent land uses for both pedestrians and automobiles to create more accessible and cohesive neighborhoods.

#### **5. Environmental Stewardship**

- Protect and preserve natural resources, including marshes and wetlands, habitats, and water and air quality.

These principles guide the development and implementation of policies and strategies to ensure balanced, sustainable, and community-focused growth in Ocean Springs.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs is built upon several guiding principles designed to create a cohesive, accessible, and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of all users. These principles ensure that transportation infrastructure supports the city's growth, enhances quality of life, and promotes sustainable development.

### 1. Multi-Modal Transportation

- Develop an integrated transportation network that accommodates various modes of travel, including cars, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Prioritize projects that improve connectivity and accessibility for all users, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transit routes.

### 2. Safety and Accessibility

- Ensure that all transportation infrastructure is safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities.
- Implement safety enhancements such as improved crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and ADA-compliant facilities.

### 3. Economic Vitality

- Support the local economy by enhancing transportation infrastructure that facilitates efficient movement of goods and people.

- Improve key commercial corridors, develop transit-oriented developments, and ensure reliable access to business districts.

### 4. Connectivity

- Enhance connectivity within Ocean Springs and to the broader region to facilitate efficient and convenient travel.
- Develop transit hubs, expand bus routes, and improve regional transportation links.

By adhering to these guiding principles, the Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs aims to create a well-connected, efficient, and sustainable



ble transportation system that supports the city's growth and enhances the quality of life for all its residents.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Community Facilities Plan for Ocean Springs outlines the essential services and infrastructure that support the city's vibrant and growing community. This plan addresses a wide range of facilities, including general government operations, police and fire departments, emergency management, parks and recreation, public utilities, public works, educational resources, and housing. The guiding principles below are designed to ensure that these facilities meet current needs and adapt to future demands, fostering a resilient and thriving community.

### 1. Accessibility and Inclusivity

- Ensure that all community facilities are accessible and serve the diverse needs of Ocean Springs' residents.
- Design public spaces and facilities to be inclusive, with ADA-compliant features and equitable access for all community segments.

### 2. Community Engagement and Collaboration

- Foster community involvement in the planning and development of facilities.
- Engage residents through public consultations, workshops, and collaborative planning sessions to ensure facilities meet community needs and preferences.

### 3. Safety and Preparedness

- Ensure that all community facilities contribute to the safety and emergency preparedness of the city.
- Equip facilities with modern safety features, maintain emergency management protocols, and ensure readiness for natural disasters and other emergencies.

### 4. Fiscal Responsibility and Efficiency

- Allocate resources efficiently and ensure the financial sustainability of community facilities.
- Plan and equitably fund public facilities through strategic budgeting, capital improvement programs, and partnerships with private and non-profit sectors.
- Invest in high-quality design and regular maintenance of community facilities to enhance their functionality and longevity.

### 5. Strategic Location and Connectivity

- Ensure that community facilities are strategically located and well-connected to maximize their accessibility and impact.
- Plan for facilities in central, easily accessible locations, and ensure connectivity through robust transportation networks.

Aligning actions with these guiding principles will allow Ocean Springs to operate effectively and efficiently, provide the highest-quality community services, and contribute to the City's vitality and quality of life for decades to come.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section provides a clear framework for achieving sustainable development, enhancing community well-being, and preserving the unique character of Ocean Springs. The goals and objectives are organized by thematic areas, with each goal followed by specific objectives that detail the approaches necessary to achieve the desired outcomes in land use, transportation, community facilities, economic development, and other key areas of focus for the city's growth and development. The comprehensive approach outlined in this chapter ensures that every aspect of the city's growth and development is considered, focusing on creating a vibrant, resilient, and prosperous community for all residents.

### LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Goal 1

Maintain a sustainable and compatible mix of land uses in the City of Ocean Springs through effective, coordinated growth management.

#### Objectives:

- 1.1. Provide a diverse yet complementary mix of residential and non-residential uses to meet the needs of the City's businesses and residences.
- 1.2. Promote private investment in existing neighborhoods through public investment in infrastructure and code enforcement to eliminate non-conforming uses and site designs that do not respect the community's historical and cultural character.
- 1.3. Transform auto-dominated strip commercial areas into compact, multi-modal-oriented, mixed-use places.
- 1.4. Develop compatible mixed-use activity centers and infill development consistent with neighborhood character.
- 1.5. Ensure commercial and residential development is designed to reflect Ocean Springs' unique character.

1.6. Promote interconnectivity between adjacent land uses for both pedestrians and automobiles.

1.7. Support annexation to manage growth, provide services efficiently, promote economic development, control city entryways, and encourage rational growth patterns. A fiscally responsible annexation program will include:

- Ensuring facilities in annexation areas meet city standards or have provisions for upgrades.
- Evaluating costs and benefits of proposed annexations before proceeding.
- Phasing annexation and development of contiguous land holdings.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Goal 2

Develop a comprehensive transportation system accommodating all users, modes, and purposes.

#### Objectives:

- 2.1. Develop a multi-modal transportation system serving current and future needs.
- 2.2. Integrate transportation planning with land use and economic development goals.
- 2.3. Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the City.
- 2.4. Encourage the use of public transportation.
- 2.5. Promote the use of environmentally friendly transportation alternatives.

2.6. Ensure transportation infrastructure is maintained and improved to meet current and future demands.

2.7. Establish new connections to U.S. Highway 57 through newly annexed territory by extending through streets from Ocean Springs Road to U.S. Highway 57 and from Old CCC Camp Road to Sunplex Industrial Park.

2.8 Connect Groveland Road through to Riley Road.

2.9 Plan for constructing a railroad underpass to the railroad tracks at Halstead for emergency evacuation with a water pump to prevent groundwater flooding.

2.10 Address oversight/enforcement and connectivity issues related to golf carts along City streets through residential and commercial neighborhoods and north of Bienville Boulevard (U.S. Highway 90).

### Goal 3

Enhance the Bienville Boulevard corridor to support economic development, multi-modal transportation, and high-quality community character.

#### Objectives:

- 3.1. Transform Bienville Boulevard from a highway thoroughfare to a multi-way boulevard with lanes for through traffic, frontage roads, pedestrian amenities, and street trees.
- 3.2. Promote regional retail businesses and higher intensity, mixed-use development along Bienville Boulevard.

3.3. Ensure new development includes pedestrian-oriented features linking residential and commercial uses.

3.4. Enhance the overall design quality along Bienville Boulevard with improved signage, site design, architectural standards, and landscaping.

3.5. Prohibit new billboards and encourage the removal of existing ones.

## **DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

### **Goal 4**

Foster a vibrant mixed-use downtown that retains historic character while increasing opportunities for residents to live near neighborhood amenities and workplaces.

#### **Objectives:**

4.1. Enhance Downtown and the Central Business District as destination places for residents and visitors.

4.2. Promote specialty retail, service, and entertainment businesses in the Central Business District.

4.3. Encourage mixed-use buildings with ground-level retail and upper-level offices and residences.

4.4. Limit drive-through facilities in pedestrian-oriented areas.

4.5. Establish transition areas around Downtown with a mix of residential and low-intensity commercial uses.

4.6. Support bed and breakfast lodging near the CBD and in transition zones that buffer adja-

cent residential neighborhoods from higher-intensity land uses.

4.7. Make Downtown more pedestrian-friendly by expanding walkways and providing amenities like green spaces, seating areas, and public art.

4.8. Ensure a multi-modal transportation system serves Downtown.

4.9. Reduce reliance on open parking areas and encourage screened parking lots behind buildings.

4.10. Coordinate shared public parking areas to encourage redevelopment.

4.11. Ensure public street designs support pedestrian movement and efficient use of public services.

4.12. Retain government offices and public services frequently visited by the public in the Downtown area.

## **NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING**

### **Goal 5**

Provide high-quality residential neighborhoods with a variety of compatible housing types to serve the diverse needs of Ocean Springs residents.

#### **Objectives:**

5.1. Provide flexibility in housing types, including residences on the upper floors of non-residential structures and moderate-density units like patio homes and townhomes.

5.2. Ensure housing quality and design to promote long-term neighborhood stability.

5.3. Ensure land uses abutting residential development are compatible with neighborhood character.

5.4. Encourage redevelopment and infill development to provide upper-level apartments and loft units.

5.5. Plan for medium-density housing near principal employment centers.

5.6. Integrate residential and non-residential uses in community activity centers.

5.7. Support affordable and workforce housing programs.

5.8. Encourage housing alternatives for seniors, including maintenance-provided homes.

5.9. Maintain compatible transitions between different land use and housing types through effective land use and site design regulations.

5.10. Protect stable single-family neighborhoods from incompatible land uses.

5.11. Target unstable or declining neighborhoods for revitalization planning efforts that engage local residents.

5.12. Develop a rental licensing and inspections program to ensure the maintenance of rental housing stock.

5.13. Continue code enforcement to ensure high-quality housing and protect neighborhoods from blighting influences.

## COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND DESIGN

### Goal 6

Establish Ocean Springs as a community showcasing high-quality design to benefit residents, businesses, and visitors.

### Objectives:

6.1. Promote good site and architectural design through regulatory tools and incentives.

6.2. Protect and enhance the tree canopy with native species.

6.3. Require street trees in all new developments to establish an urban tree canopy cover.

6.4. Preserve existing trees during development projects, with on- or off-site mitigation for unavoidable damage.

6.5. Ensure pedestrian amenities to promote walkability.

6.6. Incorporate public spaces in redevelopment and new development projects.

6.7. Promote pedestrian-oriented mixed-use and commercial development near one another and residential neighborhoods.

6.8. Mitigate traffic noise and other negative impacts on development and develop an enforceable noise limit within residential neighborhoods.



- 6.9. Promote high-quality and environmentally sensitive landscaping.
- 6.10. Enhance streetscaping with capital improvements.
- 6.11. Enhance gateways and corridors with landscaping and design standards.
- 6.12. Encourage developments that exceed landscape and open space requirements.
- 6.13. Ensure context-sensitive architectural design standards for large commercial buildings and historic areas.
- 6.14. Promote high-quality signage design through regulatory tools and incentives.
- 6.15. Maintain neighborhood safety and integrity through effective code enforcement.
- 6.16. Establish and maintain attractive, well-lit, and landscaped gateways to the City of Ocean Springs.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **Goal 7**

Preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources reflecting Ocean Springs' heritage and character.

#### **Objectives:**

- 7.1. Support the Historic Preservation Commission's efforts to protect historic districts and structures.
- 7.2. Encourage investment in the preservation, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of significant structures.
- 7.3. Ensure new development in historic districts is compatible with existing development.

- 7.4. Invest in historic neighborhood infrastructure to encourage private investment.
- 7.5. Support adaptive reuse of historic structures through flexible standards.
- 7.6. Promote heritage tourism by leveraging historic resources.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES**

### **Goal 8**

Efficiently provide and fund high-quality facilities and services for all businesses, residents, and visitors.

#### **Objectives:**

- 8.1. Support fair and predictable regulatory requirements.
- 8.2. Plan and equitably fund public facilities and services.
- 8.3. Coordinate with the School Board to implement long-range plans and maintain quality education services.
- 8.4. Ensure municipal services are efficient and costs for new development do not shift to existing residents and businesses.
- 8.5. Coordinate with other service providers on utility installation or replacement timing and location.
- 8.6. Ensure development meets service demands concurrently.
- 8.7. Ensure adequate public facilities are available or funded before new development approval.
- 8.8. Adopt a Capital Improvements Program addressing existing and future needs.

8.10. Maintain adequate police and fire protection response times.

8.11. Ensure new development funds its proportional share of capital facilities costs.

8.12. Promote and support local service providers for social services.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

### **Goal 9**

Provide a parks and recreation system meeting the needs of all community segments.

#### **Objectives:**

9.1. Ensure public recreation facilities serve all residents and are accessible.

9.2. Design open space for multi-use, environmentally friendly activities.

9.3. Plan for multi-purpose recreational, cultural, educational, and leisure facilities, including new indoor venues for sports such as pickleball and volleyball and outdoor venues such as skate parks and disk golf.

9.4. Support additional public access to waterfront resources while protecting neighborhoods.

9.5. Support partnerships between the City, School District, and other service providers.

9.6. Ensure parks and recreation facilities are equitably funded by all users, including new development.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Goal 10**

Maintain and enhance a sustainable local economy that provides employment opportunities and supports a high quality of life.

#### **Objectives:**

10.1. Support private sector economic development efforts aligned with the City's vision and goals.

10.2. Pursue a higher ratio of employment to housing, focusing on professional services jobs.

10.3. Support expanding medical services and encourage the development of tourism and the hospitality industry.

10.4. Encourage the development and expansion of homegrown businesses.

10.5. Pursue economic development opportunities serving the elderly and retirement population.

10.6. Encourage clean industry, retail, and professional office development.

10.7. Limit commercial and industrial development generating heavy truck traffic to highways and interstates.

10.8. Support incentives that result in higher wages and job creation.

10.9. Maximize sales tax revenues as a primary funding source for City services.

10.10. Enhance the City's role as a retail, restaurant, and entertainment center by promoting tourism, conferences, and events.

10.11. Provide quality municipal services as a primary contribution to economic development.

10.12. Promote new recreational facilities for tournaments.



## ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Goal 11

Establish Ocean Springs as a prominent center for the arts and culture on the Gulf Coast.

#### Objectives:

- 11.1. Promote existing art and cultural programs.
- 11.2. Encourage public and private investment in arts and cultural amenities.
- 11.3. Develop and adopt a master plan for cultural programs and facilities.
- 11.4. Encourage partnerships with arts organizations and educational institutions.
- 11.5. Promote cultural tourism through marketing and programming.
- 11.6. Encourage the development of live/workspaces for artists.
- 11.7. Establish a new visitor and welcome center in the vicinity of I-10 and Highway 57 in the newly annexed territory.

## NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### Goal 12

Protect and preserve natural resources, including marshes and wetlands, habitats, and water and air quality.

#### Objectives:

- 12.1. Limit development on environmentally sensitive lands.
- 12.2. Support the development of compatible public amenities in conservation areas.
- 12.3. Encourage low-impact design techniques for stormwater management.
- 12.4. Protect viewsheds and environmental features contributing to Ocean Springs' beauty.
- 12.5. Promote curbside recycling and begin recycling in public areas.
- 12.6. Mitigate activities affecting water quality during the development process.
- 12.7. Reduce solid waste volume entering landfills through expanded recycling and other programs.

## HAZARD MITIGATION

### Goal 13

Protect life and property throughout Ocean Springs.

#### Objectives:

13.1. Promote strategies to protect people and property from hazards.

13.2. Ensure evacuation routes are designed and maintained for safe evacuation.

13.3. Ensure development adheres to the Fire Code and Building Codes.

13.4. Prevent inappropriate development in floodplains.

13.5. Adhere to FEMA base elevations for development.

13.6. Support the region's hazard mitigation plan.

13.7. Encourage underground placement of utility lines.

## CONCLUSION

The goals and objectives outlined in this comprehensive plan reflect the City of Ocean Springs' commitment to sustainable development and community enhancement. The city aims to preserve its unique character through coordinated efforts across various sectors while promoting economic vitality and environmental stewardship. The plan serves as a roadmap for the future, guiding decision-making processes and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. By adhering to these principles, Ocean Springs will continue to be a vibrant, inclusive

community that honors its past while embracing future opportunities.

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**The Future Land Use will help manage growth and preserve the city's unique character. It serves as a blueprint for the city, developers, and residents by offering a cohesive vision for the future**



## CHAPTER 6—LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

- \* **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- \* **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**
- \* **FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES AND MAP**

### INTRODUCTION

The Land Use and Development chapter of Ocean Springs' comprehensive plan provides a detailed framework for guiding the city's growth and development. Ocean Springs faces unique challenges and opportunities in managing land use as a coastal community with a rich historical and cultural heritage. The Future Land Use Plan provides a vision for balanced development, emphasizing the need for mixed-use areas, conservation of natural resources, and enhancing community character. Together, these components create a cohesive strategy for ensuring that Ocean Springs continues to thrive as a vibrant, sustainable community.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on the goals and objectives outlined earlier in this document, the guiding principles for future land use planning in Ocean Springs are as follows:

### **1. Sustainable and Compatible Land Uses**

- Maintain a balanced mix of residential and non-residential uses to meet the needs of businesses and residents.
- Promote private investment in existing neighborhoods through infrastructure improvements and code enforcement.

### **2. Mixed-Use Development**

- Transform auto-dominated strip commercial areas into compact, multi-modal-oriented, mixed-use places.
- Develop compatible mixed-use activity centers and infill development that reflects neighborhood character.

### **3. Community Character and Design**

- Ensure that commercial and residential development is designed to reflect Ocean Springs' unique character.
- Enhance the overall design quality of new developments with improved signage, site design, architectural standards, and landscaping.

### **4. Interconnectivity**

- Promote interconnectivity between adjacent land uses for both pedestrians and automobiles to create more accessible and cohesive neighborhoods.

### **5. Environmental Stewardship**

- Protect and preserve natural resources, including marshes and wetlands, habitats, and water and air quality.

These principles guide the development and implementation of policies and strategies to ensure balanced, sustainable, and community-focused growth in Ocean Springs.

## **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

The Future Land Use Plan (FLU) for Ocean Springs serves as a blueprint for the city's physical growth and development, ensuring a harmonious balance between urbanization and the preservation of the city's unique character. This plan delineates various future land use categories, each specifying the general character, primary use, and desired density of development in different areas of the city. By providing a clear framework for land use, the plan aims to facilitate orderly and economical development, support diverse activities, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

The land use categories outlined in the plan range from natural areas designed to protect environmentally sensitive lands to high-density residential and commercial centers that encourage vibrant, mixed-use developments. Each category aligns with specific zoning districts, guiding the appropriate placement of various land uses and densities. This alignment ensures that development aligns with the city's long-term vision and meets community needs while preserving Ocean Springs' distinctive charm. The Future Land Use Plan is integral to the city's comprehensive plan, setting the stage for sustainable growth and the careful stewardship of resources.

## **FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES**

Future land use categories provide for the general character and primary use of land throughout Ocean Springs. Each category describes land uses and the general density of development desired at different locations throughout

the city. The future land use categories fit into the overall plan for physical growth and development in Ocean Springs. They provide a land area for various activities while ensuring orderly and efficient development and enhancing Ocean Springs' unique community character and quality of life. The future land use categories include:

**Natural:** this category is intended to preserve land unsuited to urban development due to its location or environmental character. This category also includes public or private lands restricted to wildlife preservation, habitat, or agricultural use. It may include beaches, designated wetlands, floodways, floodplains, or soils not conducive for supporting urban development. Development is limited to temporary improvements or buildings and structures that support passive recreation, conservation, and agricultural uses.

**Residential Low-Density:** this category provides space for low-density (1-4 dwelling units per acre), single-family residential development. Development in this area is devoted to single-family detached residences on low-density lots. Typically, these are fully improved with urban infrastructure, with frontage on a public road. In rare instances, municipal or certificated utilities such as water, sanitary sewers, natural gas, or stormwater drainage infrastructure may not reach some land in this classification. Limited small-scale mixed-use and commercial development may serve these neighborhoods. This category may also include compatible and complementary amenities such as rec-

reational facilities, golf clubs, and marinas intended to provide services to the neighborhood.

**Residential Medium-Density:** this category is intended for moderate-density (4-9 dwelling units per acre) suburban residential uses. These include the highest densities of single-family detached residential development and opportunities for two—to four-unit structures. The land in this classification has been improved with urban infrastructure and has frontage on a public road. This category may also include compatible and complementary mixed-use commercial and recreational uses intended to provide services to the neighborhood.

**Residential High-Density:** this category is intended for residential uses of high-density (9 or more dwelling units per acre). This category includes townhomes, multi-family residential complexes, and similar structures mixed with higher-density single-family detached residential developments and two to four-unit structures. The land in this classification has been improved with urban infrastructure and has frontage on a public road. Compatible and com-



plementary mixed uses that provide services to the neighborhood are encouraged.

**Commercial Center Low-Intensity:** this category accommodates neighborhood-scale (two stories or less) commercial and mixed-use development alongside compatible residential land uses. This category is intended to promote smaller mixed-use activity centers connected and integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods. These centers have a community or neighborhood emphasis and include a range of retail and service uses, along with various live/work, attached, and detached residential activities.

**Commercial Center High-Intensity:** this category is intended for regional activity centers with the most intensive commercial, mixed-use, and high-density residential development. This category also includes the city's largest mixed-use activity centers with a community-wide or regional emphasis. This land use classification was designated to include the full range of office, retail, and service establishments and allows for residential uses (detached and attached) with the highest densities.

**Industrial:** this category includes land uses that produce, manufacture, or store goods and materials. This category includes manufacturing finished goods and manufacturing products used in the downstream supply chain, warehousing and storage uses, bulk storage, and retailing heavy and bulk goods.

**Civic Space:** this land use classification includes governmental and other institutional facilities. Such land uses include existing Federal,



State, and local government buildings and facilities; utilities; schools and other educational and related facilities; research centers and laboratories; religious institutions and related facilities; libraries, museums, and exhibit spaces for visual arts; community centers, public assembly buildings and facilities for the performing arts; sports arenas, coliseums, stadiums, and active parks and recreational facilities; cemeteries and mausoleums; and publicly accessible historic sites.

The future land use categories correspond with the current zoning districts that are desirable to promote the land use and density of development proposed for each future land use category. Connecting the future land use categories to the zoning districts helps ensure that the future land use is taken into account when making future zoning decisions. A table showing how the current zoning districts relate to the future land use categories is shown on Table 2. The city should use that table to guide zoning decisions, evaluate any amendments required for better alignment with this plan, and codify the

Matrix Key	
Zoning District Allowed by FLU	
Zoning District Not Allowed by FLU	

Future Land Use Categories	Natural	Residential, Low-Density	Residential, Medium-Density	Residential, High-Density	Commercial, Low-Intensity	Commercial, High-Intensity	Industrial	Civic Space
<b>Residential Zoning Districts</b>								
R-1 Low Density Single-Family								
R-2 Low-Medium Density Single-Family								
R-10 Medium Density Single-Family								
R-3 Medium Density								
R-6 Residential								
R-D								
RMH Mobile Home Parks								
R-1A Special Apartment Use District								
RM-2 Multi-Family Dwellings								
<b>Non-Residential and Mixed-Use Zoning Districts</b>								
CMX-1 Neighborhood Commercial/Mixed-Use								
CMX-2 Community Commercial/Mixed-Use								
C-H Regional Commercial								
M-1 Manufacturing/Warehousing								
P Public District								
C-P Commercial-Public and Civic Facilities								
C-M Commercial Marina								

TABLE 2: MATRIX OF FLU CATEGORIES AND ZONING DISTRICTS

table within the text of the Unified Development Code (UDC). This will help ensure that zoning decisions are made with respect to Future Land Use considerations.

## **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a vital component of the comprehensive plan for Ocean Springs, serving as a visual representation of the city's long-term vision for growth and development. This map delineates the designated land use categories, illustrating the planned distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, and civic spaces throughout the city. By highlighting each area's intended uses and density of development, the Future Land Use Map provides a clear and organized framework for the city's future expansion and conservation efforts.

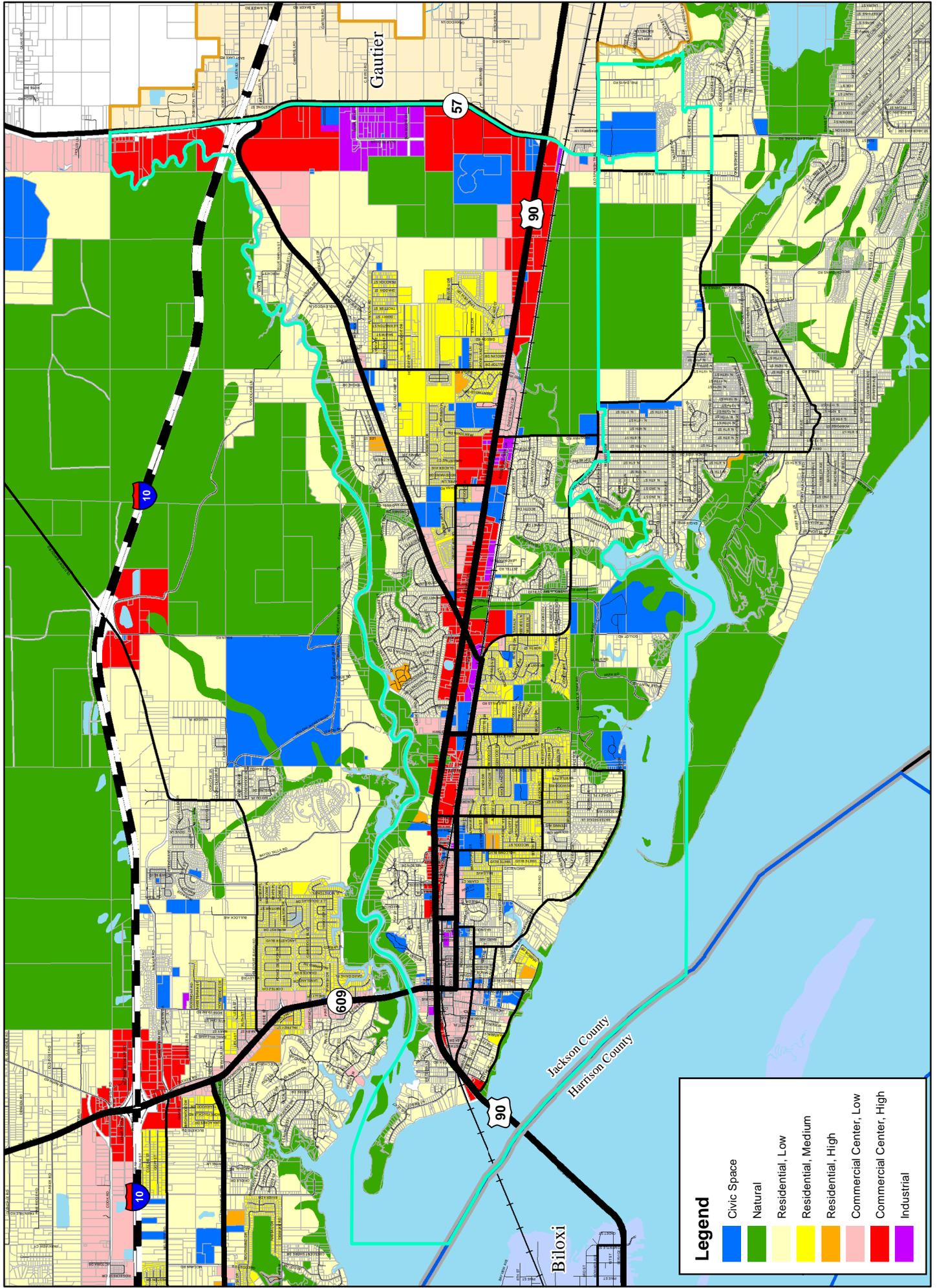
The role of the Future Land Use Map in guiding growth is pivotal. It is a reference for city planners, developers, and the public, ensuring that land development proposals align with the city's strategic goals. When evaluating new projects, the map helps determine the suitability and compatibility of proposed land uses, maintaining consistency with the city's overall vision. This alignment is crucial for promoting orderly development, protecting environmental and cultural resources, and enhancing the quality of life for Ocean Springs' residents. By providing a clear direction for land use decisions, the Future Land Use Map supports sustainable growth and helps manage the city's evolution in a balanced and thoughtful manner.

The Future Land Use Map establishes distinct future land use categories that define the general character, primary use, and desired density of development for specific areas. These categories are crucial for setting clear expectations and guidelines for development, ensuring that growth aligns with the city's long-term vision. The future land use categories provide a structured approach to land development, guiding decisions on zoning, infrastructure investment, and community amenities. Each category serves to direct appropriate development to suitable locations. This categorization helps balance growth, maintain the character of existing neighborhoods, and protect valuable natural and cultural resources. By clearly defining the intended uses and densities for each area, the future land use categories on the map play a critical role in promoting orderly and sustainable development, facilitating effective land use planning, and ensuring a cohesive urban form for Ocean Springs.

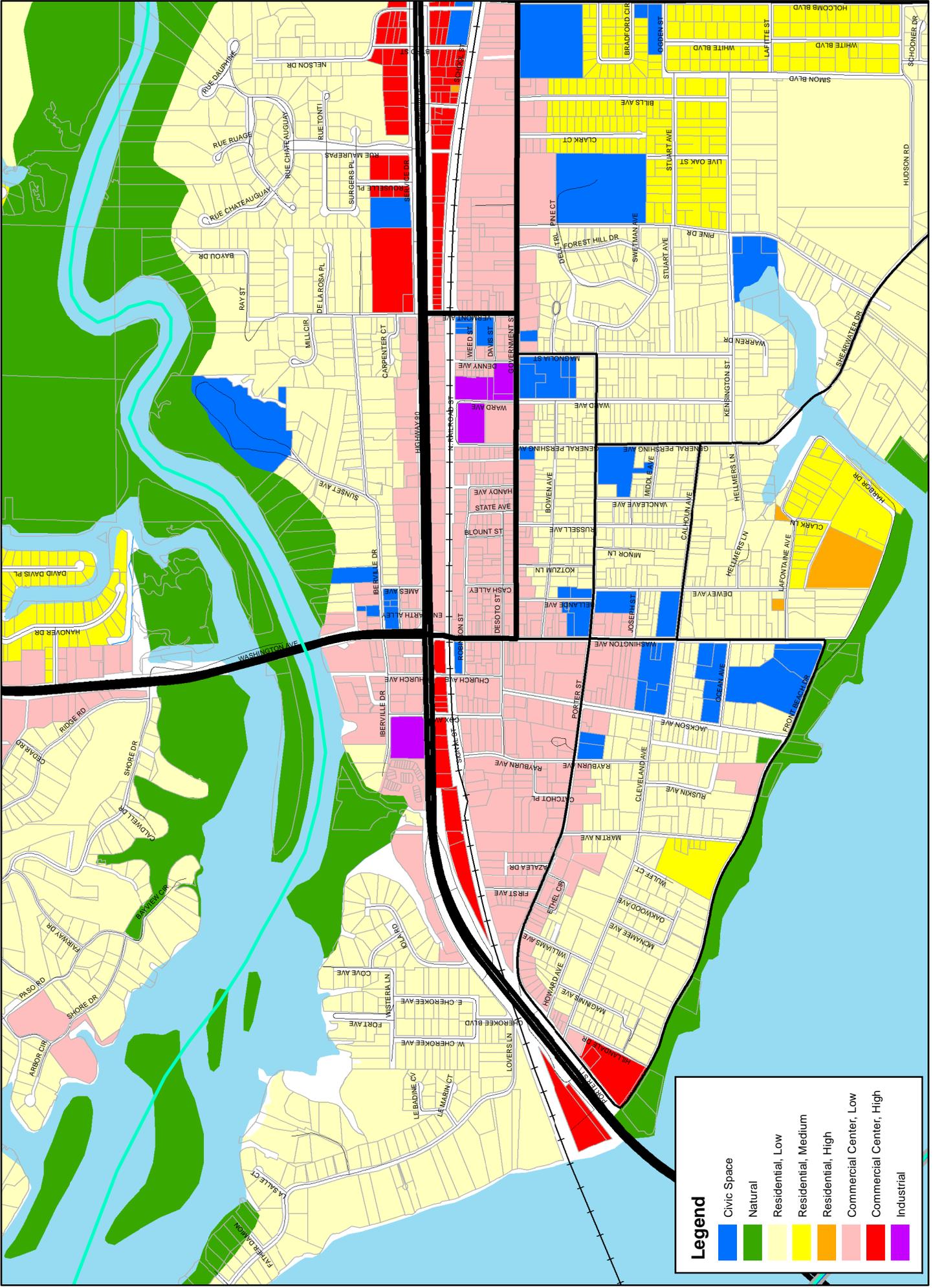
## **CONCLUSION**

The Land Use Plan of Ocean Springs' comprehensive plan provides a strategic framework for guiding the city's growth and development in a balanced and sustainable manner. By defining future land use categories and illustrating them on the Future Land Use Map, the plan sets clear expectations for how different areas of the city should evolve. Careful planning ensures that new developments are compatible with existing neighborhoods, respect environmental constraints, and contribute to the overall quality of life.

As Ocean Springs grows, the Future Land Use will be instrumental in managing change and preserving the city's unique character. It serves as a blueprint for decision-makers, developers, and residents, offering a cohesive vision for the future. By adhering to the principles and guidelines outlined in this plan, Ocean Springs can foster a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community that meets the diverse needs of its residents while safeguarding its rich heritage and natural beauty. The Future Land Use Plan is not just a static document but a dynamic tool that will evolve with the city's needs, guiding its development toward a prosperous and sustainable future.



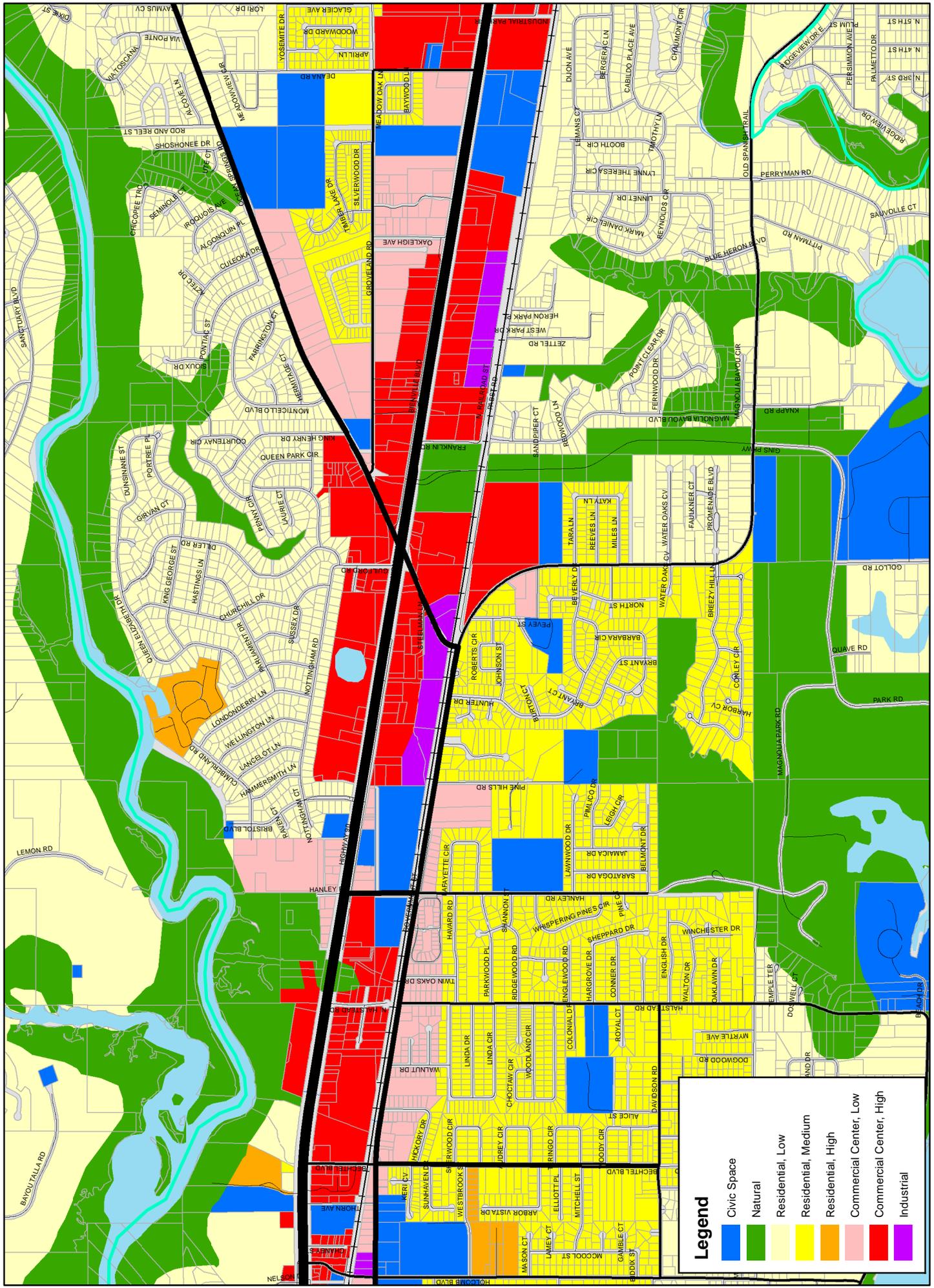
Map 15: Future Land Use Map



Map 16: Future Land Use Map (West Zoom)

**Legend**

- Civic Space
- Natural
- Residential, Low
- Residential, Medium
- Residential, High
- Commercial Center, Low
- Commercial Center, High
- Industrial



**Legend**

<span style="color: blue;">■</span>	Civic Space
<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Natural
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span>	Residential, Low
<span style="color: orange;">■</span>	Residential, Medium
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Residential, High
<span style="color: pink;">■</span>	Commercial Center, Low
<span style="color: purple;">■</span>	Commercial Center, High
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span>	Industrial

Map 17: Future Land Use Map (Central Zoom)





**A balanced and multimodal transportation network tailored for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists ensures that Ocean Springs can meet the demands of its growing population**



## CHAPTER 7—TRANSPORTATION PLAN

- \* **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- \* **STREET IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- \* **PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- \* **BICYCLE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- \* **TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

### INTRODUCTION

Transportation and land use are intricately connected, shaping how a city grows, functions, and prospers. Effective transportation planning is essential to accommodate the demand for trips generated by residents, businesses, and visitors while ensuring that infrastructure investments are efficient and sustainable. The Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs recognizes the importance of this relationship and outlines strategies to create a cohesive, accessible, and vibrant urban environment that embraces multi-modal transportation.

Land use planning plays a pivotal role in transportation planning. The location and intensity of different land uses—such as residential, commercial, and industrial areas—directly influence the demand for transportation services. Conversely, transportation infrastructure availability and quality can significantly affect land use patterns. In Ocean Springs, a well-integrated approach to land use

and transportation planning ensures that development is strategically aligned with transportation capabilities and goals, including vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit routes.

Understanding the demand for trips is crucial for effective transportation planning. Different land uses generate varying traffic levels, necessitating a functional classification system that categorizes roads based on their intended use and capacity. For example, major highways and arterial roads facilitate long-distance travel and high traffic volumes, while local roads and collectors support shorter, generally intra-city trips. Additionally, traffic counts help identify high-demand areas for future improvements. The city's transportation network also emphasizes the importance of public transit stations and routes, ensuring accessibility and convenience for all residents.

Land use planning can alleviate many transportation problems by reducing congestion, minimizing travel times, and enhancing accessibility. Ocean Springs is committed to fostering mixed-use developments along main transportation corridors and in commercial districts. These areas will combine residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, encouraging shorter trips and reducing reliance on automobiles. Higher-density residential development in key locations will support public transportation and make more efficient use of infrastructure. Furthermore, the city plans to enhance bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including dedicated bike lanes, safe pedestrian crossings, and

greenways, promoting active transportation options.

The Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs is designed to create a well-connected, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that supports the city's growth and enhances the quality of life for its residents. Through careful planning and strategic investments in multi-modal transportation, Ocean Springs aims to build a transportation network that meets the community's evolving needs and promotes a vibrant, thriving city.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs is built upon several guiding principles designed to create a cohesive, accessible, and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of all users. These principles ensure that transportation infrastructure supports the city's growth, enhances quality of life, and promotes sustainable development.

### **1. Multi-Modal Transportation**

- Develop an integrated transportation network that accommodates various modes of travel, including cars, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Prioritize projects that improve connectivity and accessibility for all users, such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transit routes.

### **2. Safety and Accessibility**

- Ensure that all transportation infrastructure is safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities.

- Implement safety enhancements such as improved crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and ADA-compliant facilities.

### 3. Economic Vitality

- Support the local economy by enhancing transportation infrastructure that facilitates efficient movement of goods and people.
- Improve key commercial corridors, develop transit-oriented developments, and ensure reliable access to business districts.

### 4. Connectivity

- Enhance connectivity within Ocean Springs and to the broader region to facilitate efficient and convenient travel.
- Develop transit hubs, expand bus routes, and improve regional transportation links.

By adhering to these guiding principles, the Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs aims to create a well-connected, efficient, and sustainable transportation system that supports the city's growth and enhances the quality of life for all its residents.

The following sections outline a comprehensive strategy to enhance the city's transportation network, addressing the needs of all users throughout Ocean Springs. These sections include detailed plans for street improvements, pedestrian enhancements, bicycle infrastructure upgrades, and transit developments. By integrating these elements, the plan aims to create a safe, efficient, and accessible transportation system that supports the city's growth and improves the quality of life for all residents.

## STREET IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The Street Improvements Plan for Ocean Springs sets forth comprehensive standards for developing new streets in subdivisions and enhancing connectivity between major roadways. As the city continues to grow, it is crucial to establish a cohesive and efficient street network that supports safe and convenient transportation for all users. This plan outlines the guidelines for constructing new streets in residential subdivisions, ensuring they meet modern design standards and integrate seamlessly with the existing infrastructure. Additionally, the plan emphasizes the importance of improving connectivity between major roadways, facilitating smoother traffic flow and better access to key destinations.

A significant component of this plan is the redevelopment of Bienville Boulevard, a major commercial corridor in Ocean Springs. The redevelopment initiative aims to transform Bienville Boulevard into a more pedestrian-friendly and visually appealing thoroughfare, supporting local businesses and enhancing the overall



experience for residents and visitors. By implementing these improvements, Ocean Springs aims to create a well-connected, accessible, and vibrant urban environment that meets the needs of its growing population.

### DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW STREETS

The following design standards guide the development of new streets in Ocean Springs' subdivisions and ensure a consistent, safe, and functional street network. These standards address various aspects of street design, including layout, materials, safety features, and accommodations for different modes of transportation.

#### STREET LAYOUT AND HIERARCHY

**Classification:** Streets should be classified into local, collector, and arterial categories, based on their function and expected traffic volumes. Each classification will have specific design criteria to ensure proper flow and safety.

**Connectivity:** New streets should be designed to enhance connectivity within subdivisions and between major roadways, minimizing dead-end streets and promoting a grid or modified grid pattern where feasible.

**Right-of-Way Width:** The right-of-way width should be appropriate to the street classification, allowing for sufficient space for travel lanes, sidewalks, utilities, and landscaping.

#### TRAVEL LANES AND ROADWAY DESIGN

**Lane Width:** Travel lanes should generally be 10-12 feet wide, depending on the street classification and anticipated traffic. Wider lanes may be considered for arterial streets.

**Pavement Materials:** Streets should be constructed with durable, low-maintenance materials suitable for the local climate and soil conditions. Asphalt and concrete are the preferred materials.

**Curbs and Gutters:** Curbs and gutters are required on all streets to facilitate drainage and protect the roadway edge. Rolled curbs are preferred in residential areas, while vertical curbs may be used on higher-volume streets.

#### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

**Sidewalks:** Sidewalks are mandatory on both sides of all new streets, with a minimum width of 5 feet for local streets and 6 feet for collector and arterial streets. Sidewalks should be ADA-compliant and include curb ramps at intersections.

**Bicycle Lanes:** Dedicated bicycle lanes should be provided on collector and arterial streets, with a minimum width of 5 feet. Shared-use paths may be considered in areas with high pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

**Crosswalks and Pedestrian Safety:** Marked crosswalks should be provided at all major intersections and mid-block crossings at collector and arterial streets and on local streets where adjacent land uses such as parks and recreation facilities, churches, and schools create higher pedestrian volume. Pedestrian safety features should be incorporated appropriately, such as raised crosswalks and pedestrian refuge islands.

#### LANDSCAPING AND AESTHETICS

**Street Trees:** Trees should be planted along all new streets, spaced appropriately to provide

shade and enhance the streetscape. Native and low-maintenance species are preferred.

**Lighting:** Street lighting should be installed to ensure adequate visibility and safety for all users. Energy-efficient lighting options, such as LED, are encouraged.

**Signage and Wayfinding:** Appropriate street signs and wayfinding signage should be installed to facilitate navigation and ensure compliance with traffic regulations.

### SAFETY AND TRAFFIC CALMING

**Speed Limits:** Speed limits should be set based on street classification and surrounding land use, with lower limits in residential areas.

**Traffic Calming Measures:** Consider the inclusion of traffic calming measures, such as speed tables, roundabouts, and narrow travel lanes, to reduce vehicle speeds and enhance safety in residential neighborhoods.



### UTILITIES AND DRAINAGE

**Utility Placement:** Utilities should be placed underground to enhance aesthetics, reduce maintenance, and protect from natural hazards. Utility easements should be clearly defined.

**Stormwater Management:** Streets should include appropriate stormwater management systems, such as storm drains and detention basins, to prevent flooding and manage runoff.

These design standards aim to create a cohesive, functional, and attractive street network that accommodates all modes of transportation while promoting safety and accessibility. They serve as a guideline for developers, planners, and engineers in the planning and constructing new streets in Ocean Springs.

### BIENVILLE BOULEVARD

Bienville Boulevard (Highway 90) is a major artery through Ocean Springs, connecting residential, commercial, and recreational areas. It is the principal east-west route along the Gulf Coast through Ocean Springs; however, rapid growth, increasing traffic congestion, and a desire for more sustainable urban development have created conditions that necessitate significant changes to this corridor. The need for better traffic management, enhanced connectivity, and more pedestrian-friendly environments highlights the importance of developing a comprehensive plan to transform Bienville Boulevard into a more functional and attractive thoroughfare.

#### Existing Conditions

**Traffic Congestion:** High traffic volumes on Bienville Boulevard lead to frequent congestion,



especially during peak hours, resulting in longer travel times, increased emissions, and frustration among drivers.

**Safety Concerns:** The high number of access points, frequent turning movements, and lack of controlled intersections contribute to safety hazards for motorists and pedestrians.

**Urban Sprawl:** Uncontrolled development along the corridor has led to inefficient land use and a lack of cohesive community planning.

**Lack of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure:** The existing infrastructure does not adequately support non-motorized transportation, limiting the options for residents and visitors who prefer walking or cycling.

**Economic Development Needs:** There is a growing demand for mixed-use developments that combine residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, fostering economic growth and community vitality.

### *Transforming Bienville Boulevard*

To address these conditions, Ocean Springs has identified an improvement zone for Bienville

Boulevard that extends from Vermont Avenue to Highway 57. Within this zone, the plan for Bienville Boulevard involves a multi-faceted approach to enhance connectivity, improve safety, and support sustainable growth through strategic infrastructure improvements. Key elements of this transformation include:

**Establishment of Parallel Streets:** Two-way parallel streets should be developed on both sides of Bienville Boulevard to provide alternative routes for local traffic. As connectivity evolves with new mixed-use neighborhoods, these will transition to one-way streets to optimize traffic flow and reduce conflicts.

**Access Management Enhancements:** Implementing controlled intersections, consolidating driveways, and constructing medians with designated turn lanes will streamline traffic movements, reduce congestion, and improve safety.

**Development of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure:** Building continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes along parallel streets will create a more pedestrian- and cyclist-

friendly environment, promoting alternative modes of transportation and enhancing overall accessibility.

**Streetscape Enhancements:** Beautifying the corridor with landscaping, street lighting, and amenities like benches and bus shelters will create a more inviting and vibrant public space.

**Support for Mixed-Use Development:** By creating a well-connected and accessible transportation network, the plan supports the development of mixed-use neighborhoods along the corridor, fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Through these strategic improvements, Bienville Boulevard will be transformed into a dynamic, efficient, and safe corridor that supports the needs of a growing community, encourages sustainable development, and enhances the overall urban environment.

### *Performance Improvements and Key Benefits:*

**Reduced Traffic Congestion:** The parallel street network provides alternative routes for local traffic, alleviating congestion on Bienville Boulevard and improving overall traffic flow.

**Improved Safety:** Access management enhancements, such as controlled intersections, medians, and consolidated driveways, reduce conflict points and the likelihood of accidents.

**Enhanced Connectivity:** The transition to one-way streets and improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure creates a more connected and accessible environment for all users, encouraging multi-modal transportation.

**Support for Mixed-Use Development:** These improvements facilitate the development of mixed-use neighborhoods by providing the necessary infrastructure for residents, businesses, and visitors to access and navigate the area safely and efficiently.

**Economic Growth:** Enhanced access and improved streetscapes attract businesses and residents, boosting economic activity and increasing property values in the area.

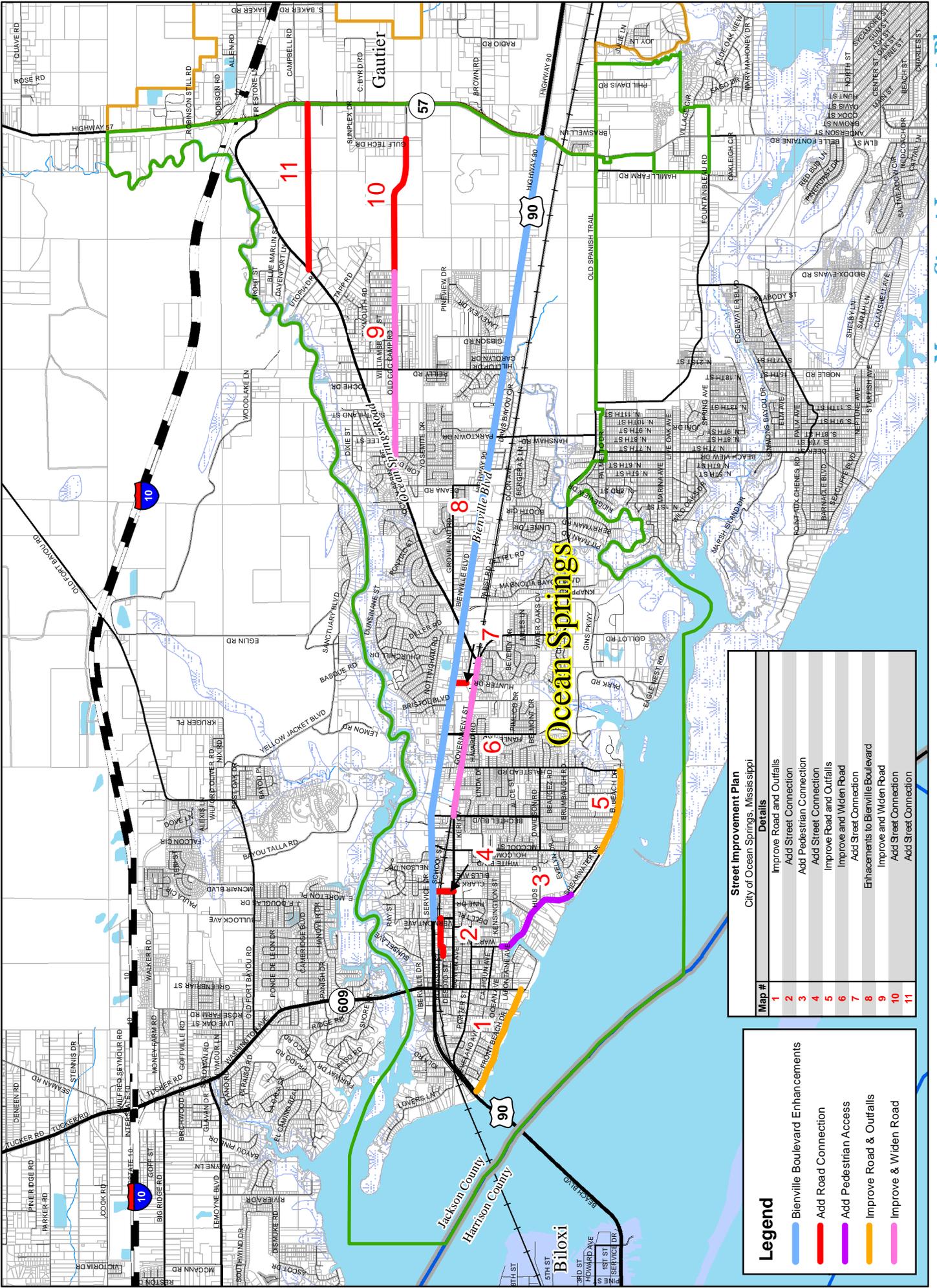
Overall, the proposed improvements to Bienville Boulevard aim to create a balanced, efficient, and vibrant transportation network that supports mixed-use development and enhances the community's quality of life.

### **STREET IMPROVEMENTS PLAN MAP**

The Street Improvements Plan Map provides a visual representation of proposed upgrades and enhancements to Ocean Springs' roadway network. This map highlights key projects aimed at improving traffic flow, safety, and connectivity across the city. It identifies specific areas for new road construction, widening, resurfacing, and intersection improvements, serving as a guide for the planned infrastructure developments. The map is an essential tool for visualizing the future layout and priorities of the city's street network, ensuring a well-organized and efficient transportation system.

### **PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

The planned pedestrian improvements in Ocean Springs aim to create a safer, more accessible, and enjoyable walking environment for resi-



Street Improvement Plan	
City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi	
Details	
1	Improve Road and Outfalls
2	Add Street Connection
3	Add Pedestrian Connection
4	Add Street Connection
5	Improve Road and Outfalls
6	Improve and Widen Road
7	Add Street Connection
8	Enhancements to Bienville Boulevard
9	Improve and Widen Road
10	Add Street Connection
11	Add Street Connection

Legend	
	Bienville Boulevard Enhancements
	Add Road Connection
	Add Pedestrian Access
	Improve Road & Outfalls
	Improve & Widen Road

Table 3: Proposed Intersection Improvements

ID	N/S Cross Street	E/W Cross Street
IO-1	MS-609/Washington Avenue	US-90
IO-2	Vermont Avenue	US-90
IO-3	Holcomb Blvd	US-90
IO-4	Bechtel Boulevard	US-90
IO-5	Hanley Road	Government Street
IO-6	Hanley Road	US-90
IO-7	Ocean Springs Road	US-90
IO-8	Deana Drive	US-90

dents and visitors. Key initiatives include the expansion of sidewalks and pedestrian paths, particularly in high-traffic areas and along major corridors. The city plans to enhance crosswalk safety with improved signage, lighting, and signal timing to protect pedestrians at busy intersections. Additionally, there are plans to develop pedestrian-friendly zones in commercial districts, encouraging foot traffic and supporting local businesses. The integration of greenways and walking trails into the city's infrastructure will provide recreational opportunities and promote a healthier lifestyle. These improvements are designed to foster a more walkable community, reduce reliance on automobiles, and enhance the overall quality of life in Ocean Springs.

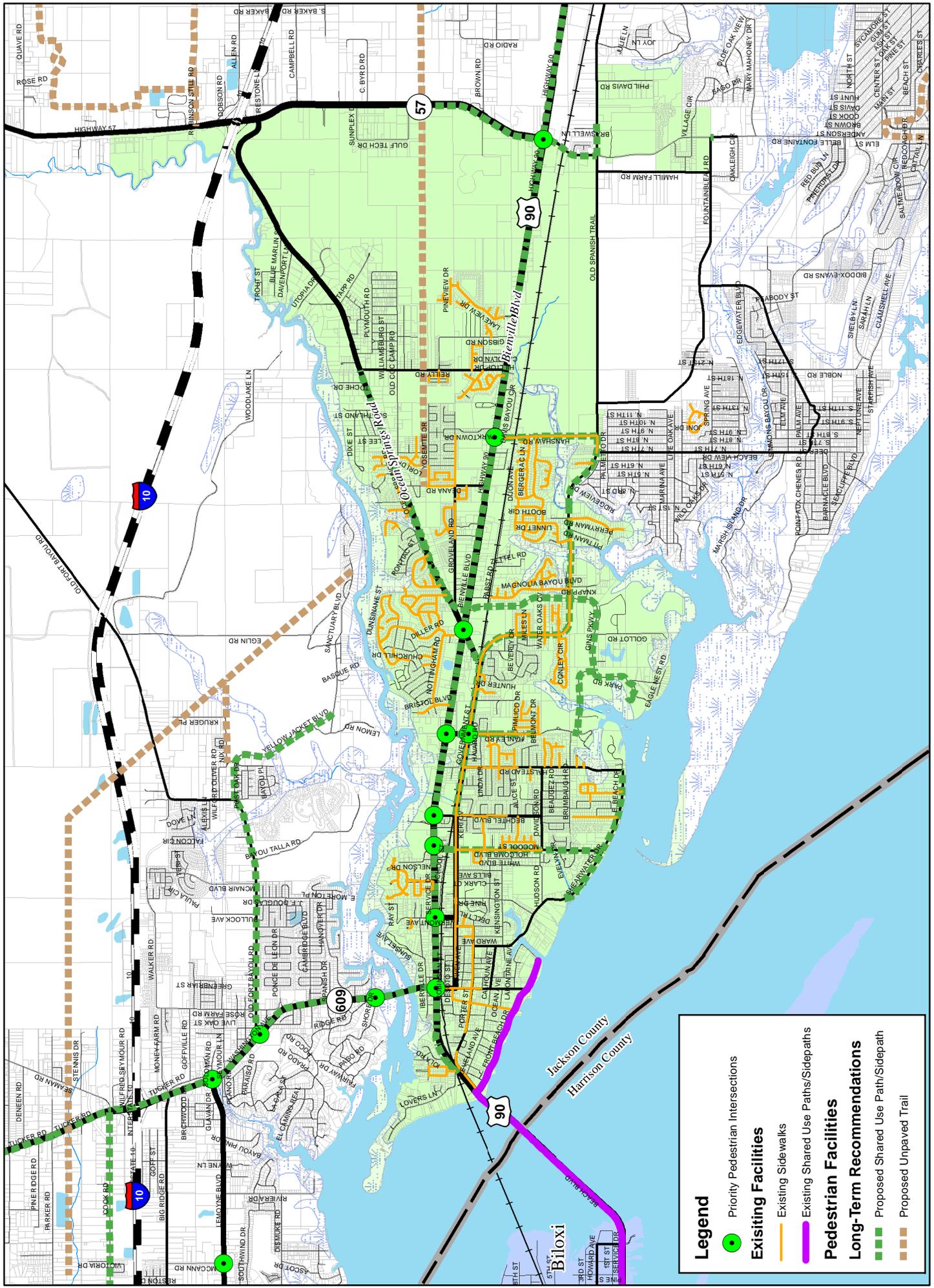
**PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS MAP**

As part of Ocean Springs' commitment to enhancing walkability and promoting a pedestrian-friendly environment, the following Pedestrian Improvements Map outlines a comprehensive plan for pedestrian improvements throughout the city. This plan includes a detailed pedestrian

improvements map, which identifies key areas for new sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure enhancements. The map serves as a visual guide for planned projects and priority areas, aiming to create a safe and accessible network for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Focusing on connectivity, safety, and accessibility, these improvements are designed to encourage walking as a viable and enjoyable mode of transportation in Ocean Springs. The map includes both intersection improvements and sidewalk enhancements as core improvements to pedestrian facilities in Ocean Springs.

**INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**

The planned intersection improvements in Ocean Springs are focused on enhancing pedestrian safety and accessibility. Key locations targeted for these upgrades include major intersections along busy corridors such as Bienville Boulevard, Washington Avenue, and Government Street.



**Legend**

- Priority Pedestrian Intersections
- Existing Facilities**
  - Existing Sidewalks
  - Existing Shared Use Paths/Sidepaths
- Pedestrian Facilities**
  - Proposed Shared Use Path/Sidepath
  - Proposed Unpaved Trail

Map 20: Pedestrian Improvement Plan



These improvements feature high-visibility crosswalks with ladder-style markings, making pedestrian crossings more noticeable to drivers. Additionally, pedestrian countdown signals will be added to inform walkers of the remaining time to cross the street safely. Curb extensions, or bulb-outs, will be implemented at select intersections to shorten crossing distances and improve sightlines for pedestrians and drivers. Other safety measures include upgrading signal timing to ensure ample time for pedestrians to cross, especially in areas with high foot traffic or where older adults and children frequently cross. Installing pedestrian refuge islands in the middle of wide streets will provide a safe space for pedestrians who may not be able to cross the entire intersection in one signal cycle. Furthermore, the city plans to implement tactile paving at crosswalks to aid visually impaired pedestrians. These comprehensive intersection improvements aim to create a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment throughout Ocean Springs. Table 3 above lists the proposed intersection improvements.

### SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed pedestrian sidewalk improvements in Ocean Springs aim to enhance connectivity, safety, and accessibility throughout the city. These improvements will focus on expanding and upgrading sidewalks in key areas, including downtown districts, school zones, and high-traffic residential neighborhoods. Table 4 on the following page lists the proposed projects for sidewalk improvements.

Major corridors such as Government Street, Washington Avenue, and Bienville Boulevard are targeted for these improvements. Additionally, sidewalks will be extended around public facilities like parks, libraries, and community centers to encourage more foot traffic and provide safe walking routes for residents.

General features of these sidewalk improvements include the construction of wider sidewalks to accommodate higher pedestrian volumes and ensure comfort for all users, including those with strollers or mobility devices. Installing ADA-compliant ramps at intersections

Table 4: Proposed Sidewalk Improvements

ID	Road	From	To	Linear Feet	Facility Type	Unit Cost (per linear foot)	Estimated Cost
O-1	Porter Avenue	Williams Avenue	Martin Street	370	Sidewalk	\$250	\$92,400
O-2	Washington Avenue	US-90	Robinson Street	370	Sidewalk	\$250	\$92,400
O-3	Cash Alley	Robinson Street	DeSoto Street	370	Sidewalk	\$250	\$92,400
O-4	Bowen Avenue	Washington Avenue	Bellande Avenue	317	Sidewalk	\$250	\$79,200
O-5	Martin Luther King Jr. Ave	US-90	Government Street	950	Sidewalk	\$250	\$237,600
O-6	Bowen Avenue	Kotzum Avenue	Ward Avenue	1,426	Sidewalk	\$250	\$356,400
O-7	Washington Avenue	Joseph Street	Front Beach Drive	2,112	Sidewalk	\$250	\$528,000
O-8	Calhoun Street	Washington Avenue	General Pershing Avenue	1,742	Sidewalk	\$250	\$435,600
O-9	General Pershing Avenue	Government Street	Kensington Avenue	2,169	Sidewalk	\$250	\$542,250
O-10	Shearwater Drive	Kensington Avenue	~ 0.2 mile south of Hudson Road	3,766	Sidewalk	\$250	\$941,500
O-11	Bechtel Boulevard	US-90	Government Street	1,003	Sidewalk	\$250	\$250,800
O-12	Bechtel Boulevard	Arbor Vista Drive	Davidson Road	1,637	Sidewalk	\$250	\$409,200
O-13	Davidson Road	Holcomb Boulevard	Halstead Road	3,326	Sidewalk	\$250	\$831,600
O-14	Halstead Road	Colonial Drive	E. Beach Drive	4,752	Sidewalk	\$250	\$1,188,000
O-15	Deana Road	Ocean Springs Road	Yosemite Drive	1,214	Sidewalk	\$250	\$303,600
O-16	Ocean Springs Road	US-90	Groveland Road	1,003	Sidewalk	\$250	\$250,800
O-17	Groveland Road	Ocean Springs Road	Oakleigh Road	2,957	Sidewalk	\$250	\$739,200
O-18	Groveland Road	Timber Lake Drive	Deana Road	739	Sidewalk	\$250	\$184,800
O-19	Deana Road	Baywood Lane	US-90	950	Sidewalk	\$250	\$237,600
O-20	Groveland Road	Chalmette Avenue	Niagara Street	898	Sidewalk	\$250	\$224,400
O-21	Parktown Drive	Groveland Road	US-90	1,954	Sidewalk	\$250	\$488,400
O-22	Reilly Road	Groveland Road	US-90	1,109	Sidewalk	\$250	\$277,200
O-23	Kensington Avenue	Pershing Avenue	Simon Avenue	3,222	Sidewalk	\$250	\$805,500

will improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Sidewalks will also be built with smooth, durable surfaces to reduce tripping hazards and enhance the overall walking experience.

In addition to these basic features, the improvements will include incorporating street furniture, such as benches and trash receptacles, to create a more pleasant walking environment. The addition of pedestrian-scale lighting will

improve visibility and safety during nighttime hours. Landscaping elements, such as street trees and planters, will beautify the streetscape and provide shade and environmental benefits. These comprehensive sidewalk enhancements are designed to promote a more walkable, vibrant community in Ocean Springs.

### **BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

Bicycle facilities are a vital part of Ocean Springs' transportation network, providing nu-

merous benefits that align with the city's goals for sustainable development and community well-being. By offering safe and convenient options for cyclists, these facilities help reduce traffic congestion and parking demand, making the city's transportation system more efficient and enjoyable for all residents. Incorporating bike lanes and greenways into the city's landscape also preserves natural areas and adds to the city's charm. Additionally, cycling as a regular mode of transportation can help reduce chronic diseases and improve mental well-being, so investing in bike infrastructure supports healthier lifestyles and enhances the quality of life for its residents. Bike-friendly areas often see increased business activity, as cyclists are more likely to frequent local shops and restaurants and a robust bicycle network can attract tourists, boosting the city's economic potential. For these reasons, developing a comprehensive bicycle network is crucial for Ocean Springs' future growth and prosperity.

The proposed bicycle improvements in Ocean Springs are designed to create a safer and more connected network for cyclists, while also considering the needs of pedestrians. These enhancements will focus on developing dedicated bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, and supporting infrastructure in key areas throughout the city.

Major corridors such as Bienville Boulevard, Government Street, and Washington Avenue will be the locations for these bicycle improvements. These areas are critical for connecting residential neighborhoods with commercial districts, schools, and recreational areas. Addition-

ally, bike lanes will be integrated into existing and newly developed roadways to ensure a comprehensive network covering the entire city.

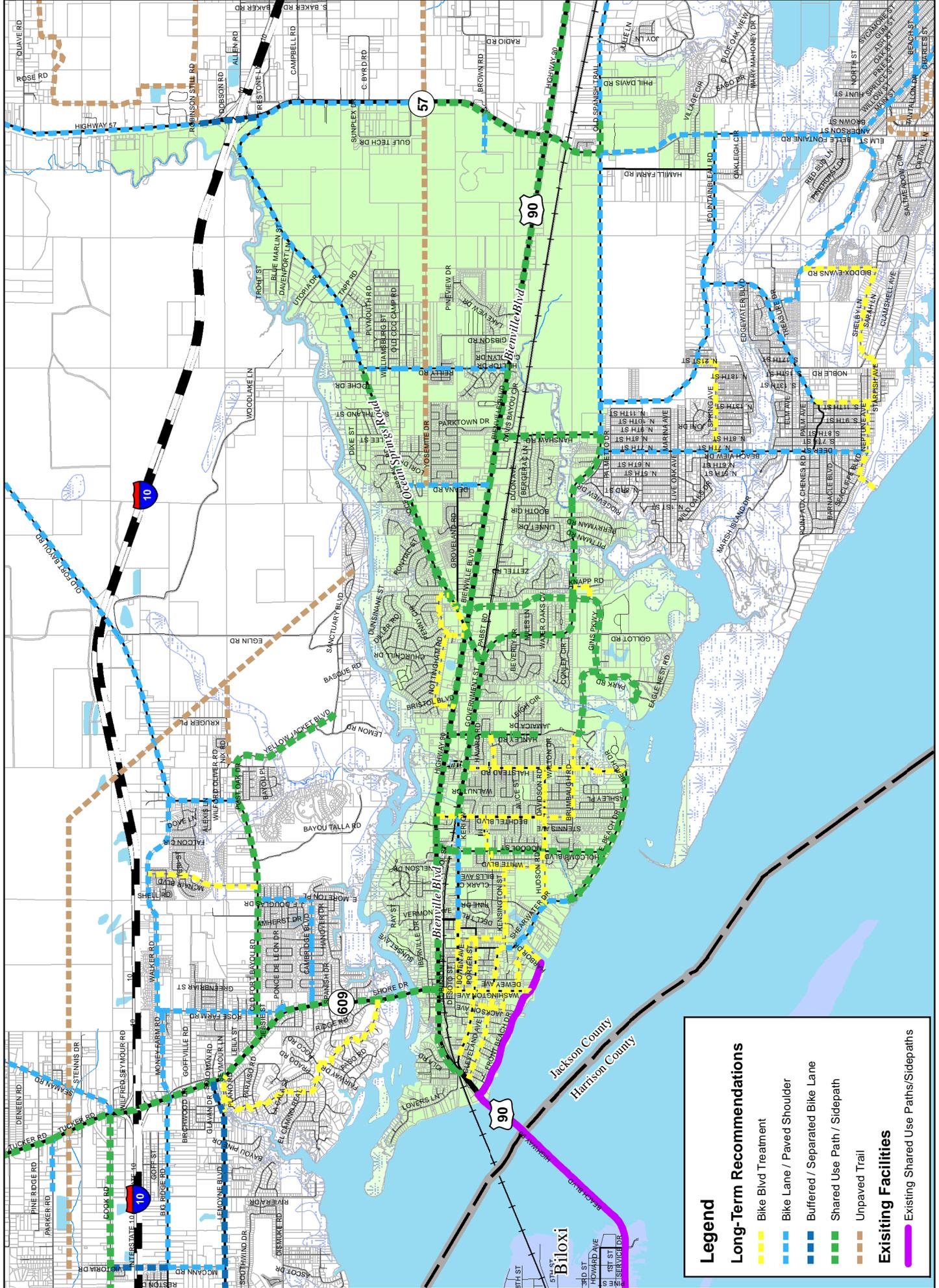
General features of the proposed bicycle improvements include the installation of dedicated bike lanes, marked with clear signage and road markings to distinguish them from vehicular traffic. In certain areas, separated bike lanes will be implemented, providing physical barriers such as curbs or bollards to enhance safety for cyclists. Shared-use paths, which accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, will be developed along scenic routes and greenways, offering a recreational option for residents and visitors.

To further support cyclists, the city plans to install bicycle racks and repair stations at key locations, including downtown areas, parks, and transit hubs. These facilities will encourage biking as a viable transportation option and provide necessary amenities for cyclists. Additionally, intersections will be upgraded with bike boxes and dedicated bike signal phases to improve safety at crossings and intersections.

Overall, these bicycle improvements aim to create a more bicycle-friendly environment in Ocean Springs, promoting cycling as a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation while ensuring harmonious coexistence with pedestrian traffic. Table 5 on the following pages lists the proposed bicycle improvements.

## **TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

The Transit Improvements Plan for Ocean Springs, in partnership with the Coast Transit



**Legend**

**Long-Term Recommendations**

- Bike Blvd Treatment
- Bike Lane / Paved Shoulder
- Buffered / Separated Bike Lane
- Shared Use Path / Sidepath
- Unpaved Trail

**Existing Facilities**

- Existing Shared Use Paths/Sidepaths

Table 5: Proposed Bicycle Improvements

ID	Road	From	To	Linear Feet	Facility Type	Unit Cost (per linear foot)	Estimated Cost
O-1	Beach Drive	Holcomb Boulevard	Halsted Road	3,482	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$522,243
O-2	Bechtel Boulevard	US-90	Davidson Road	4,967	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$74,500
O-3	Bellande Avenue	Government Street	Bowen Avenue	303	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$4,552
O-4	Bike/Ped Connection	Lovers Lane	Porter Street	231	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$3,469
O-5	Bowen Avenue	Bellande Avenue	Ward Avenue	1,738	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$26,070
O-6	Bristol Boulevard	Nottingham Road	US-90	859	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$12,878
O-7	Brumbaugh Road	Eastland Boulevard	Robert McGhee Road	3,394	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$50,915
O-8	Calhoun Street	Jackson Avenue	General Pershing Avenue	2,393	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$35,888
O-9	Cleveland Avenue	Porter Avenue	Jackson Avenue	3,049	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$45,734
O-10	Davidson Road	Holcomb Boulevard	Halsted Road	3,326	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$49,891
O-11	Deana Drive	Ocean Springs Road	US-90	3,911	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$195,555
O-12	Eastland Boulevard	Davidson Road	Brumbaugh Road	1,312	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$19,685
O-13	Government Street	Bechtel Boulevard	Old Spanish Trail	15,825	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$2,373,769
O-14	Government Street	Martin Luther King Jr Avenue	Bechtel Boulevard	4,072	Bike Lane	\$20	\$81,436
O-15	Government Street	Washington Avenue	Martin Luther King Jr Avenue	2,848	Bike Lane	\$20	\$56,959
O-16	Guilford Road	Nottingham Road	US-90	782	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$11,724
O-17	Halsted Road	Government Street	Beach Drive	7,321	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$109,820
O-18	Hanley Road	US-90	Belmont Drive	4,248	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$637,135
O-19	Hanshaw Road	US-90	Old Spanish Trail	4,709	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$706,377
O-20	Harbor Road	Front Beach Drive	La Fontaine Street	988	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$14,817
O-21	Holcomb Boulevard	US-90	Government Street	1,045	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$15,671
O-22	Holcomb Boulevard	Railroad Tracks	Shearwater Drive	7,817	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$1,172,500
O-23	Hudson Road	Shearwater Drive	Holcomb Boulevard	2,195	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$32,927
O-24	US-90	Lovers Lane	MS-57	36,180	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$5,427,061
O-25	Jackson Avenue	Cleveland Avenue	Porter Avenue	1,400	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$21,002
O-26	Kensington Avenue	Pershing Avenue	Simon Boulevard	3,237	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$48,550
O-27	King Henry Drive	Princess Ann Drive	Ocean Springs Road	478	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$7,163
O-28	Knapp Road	Government Street	VFW Road	769	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$11,533
O-29	La Fontaine Street	Washington Avenue	Harbor Road	1,939	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$29,083
O-30	Lovers Lane	Cherokee Boulevard	US-90	2,044	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$306,589
O-31	Nottingham Road	Bristol Boulevard	Princess Ann Drive	4,071	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$61,067
O-32	Ocean Avenue	Jackson Avenue	Washington Avenue	754	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$11,315
O-33	Ocean Springs-to-Gautier ROW Trail	Deana Drive	Gautier-Vancleave Road	36,064	Unpaved Trail	\$10	\$360,636
O-34	Ocean Springs Road	Park Road	Reilly Road	10,244	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$1,536,556

*Ocean Springs 2045 Comprehensive Plan*

O-35	Ocean Springs Road	Reilly Road	MS-57	12,503	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$625,161
O-36	Ocean Springs Road	Government Street	US-90	1,496	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$224,456
O-37	Ocean Springs Road	US-90	Park Road	1,246	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$18,693
O-38	Ogden Avenue	Simon Boulevard	Holcomb Boulevard	615	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$9,226
O-39	Old Spanish Trail	Hanshaw Road	Greyhound Way	11,234	Bike Lane	\$20	\$224,685
O-40	Old Spanish Trail	Government Street	Hanshaw Road	3,305	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$495,782
O-41	Park Road	Ocean Springs Road	Southern Terminus	12,762	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$1,914,327
O-42	Parkwood Place	Hanley Road	Halstead Road	1,344	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$20,153
O-43	Pershing Avenue	Kensington Avenue	Shearwater Drive	835	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$41,725
O-44	Pershing Avenue	Calhoun Street	Kensington Avenue	326	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$4,884
O-45	Porter Avenue	Williams Street	Ward Avenue	4,788	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$71,815
O-46	Princess Ann Drive	Nottingham Road	King Henry Drive	721	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$10,815
O-47	Reilly Road	Ocean Springs Road	US-90	6,749	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$337,445
O-48	Robert McGhee Road	Brumbaugh Road	Park Road	3,442	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$516,364
O-49	Shearwater Drive	Weeks Bayou	Holcomb Boulevard	2,600	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$389,962
O-50	Shearwater Drive	Pershing Avenue	Weeks Bayou	2,919	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$145,971
O-51	Simon Boulevard	Ogden Avenue	Hudson Road	2,390	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$35,854
O-52	VFW Road	Park Road	Knapp Road	510	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$7,652
O-53	Ward Avenue	Bowen Avenue	Kensington Avenue	1,769	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$26,532
O-54	Washington Avenue	US-90	Front Beach Drive	4,173	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$62,596
O-55	Washington Avenue (MS-609)	Shore Drive	US-90	2,806	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$420,865
O-56	Westbrook Street	Holcomb Boulevard	Bechtel Boulevard	1,361	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$20,418
O-49	Shearwater Drive	Weeks Bayou	Holcomb Boulevard	2,600	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$389,962
O-50	Shearwater Drive	Pershing Avenue	Weeks Bayou	2,919	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$145,971
O-51	Simon Boulevard	Ogden Avenue	Hudson Road	2,390	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$35,854
O-52	VFW Road	Park Road	Knapp Road	510	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$7,652
O-53	Ward Avenue	Bowen Avenue	Kensington Avenue	1,769	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$26,532
O-54	Washington Avenue	US-90	Front Beach Drive	4,173	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$62,596
O-55	Washington Avenue (MS-609)	Shore Drive	US-90	2,806	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$420,865
O-56	Westbrook Street	Holcomb Boulevard	Bechtel Boulevard	1,361	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$20,418
O-49	Shearwater Drive	Weeks Bayou	Holcomb Boulevard	2,600	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$389,962
O-50	Shearwater Drive	Pershing Avenue	Weeks Bayou	2,919	Paved Shoulder	\$50	\$145,971
O-51	Simon Boulevard	Ogden Avenue	Hudson Road	2,390	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$35,854
O-52	VFW Road	Park Road	Knapp Road	510	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$7,652
O-53	Ward Avenue	Bowen Avenue	Kensington Avenue	1,769	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$26,532
O-54	Washington Avenue	US-90	Front Beach Drive	4,173	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$62,596
O-55	Washington Avenue (MS-609)	Shore Drive	US-90	2,806	Shared Use Path/Sidepath	\$150	\$420,865
O-56	Westbrook Street	Holcomb Boulevard	Bechtel Boulevard	1,361	Bike Blvd Treatment	\$15	\$20,418

Authority (CTA), aims to enhance public transportation by expanding fixed-route services, developing transit hubs, and promoting transit-oriented developments (TOD). Key recommendations include increasing bus frequency and service hours, especially along major corridors like Bienville Boulevard, and establishing strategically located transit hubs with essential amenities. The plan also calls for revising zoning codes to encourage mixed-use developments around transit hubs and improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These initiatives aim to create a more efficient and sustainable transportation system, fostering vibrant communities centered around transit access.

### **EXPANDING FIXED ROUTE SERVICE**

In partnership with the Coast Transit Authority (CTA), Ocean Springs should conduct a demand analysis to identify peak travel times and high-demand routes. The city can then work with CTA to allocate additional buses during these periods, especially along major corridors like Bienville Boulevard and Washington Avenue. Extended service hours should also be considered to support nighttime economic activities, particularly downtown and other commercial areas.

Given the commuter population and service sector economy prevalent in Ocean Springs, the city should work with the CTA to identify and prioritize underserved areas for new routes into the city. This will improve workforce access to locations in Ocean Springs. The city can collaborate with the CTA to map out these new routes and ensure they connect with key desti-

nations, including schools, shopping centers, and healthcare facilities.

### **DEVELOPING TRANSIT HUBS AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENTS**

Ocean Springs can work with CTA to develop transit hubs at strategic locations, such as the intersection of Bienville Boulevard and Washington Avenue, near the Ocean Springs Hospital, and the downtown area. These locations offer high visibility and accessibility and serve as central points for multiple transit routes.

Ocean Springs can also collaborate with CTA to design and build transit hubs with essential amenities, including covered seating, restrooms, bike racks, and information kiosks. The city should explore public-private partnerships to include retail options, such as cafes or convenience stores, within the hub areas.

In addition to collaborating with CTA, the city can partner with Amtrak as it resumes service between New Orleans and Mobile. Currently, the route will not stop in Ocean Springs, but growth over the next 20 years could create demand for a stop. Such a stop would be an ideal location for transit-oriented development in the area surrounding the depot station.

Designing hubs to facilitate easy transfers between buses, bicycles, and potential future rail services includes providing secure bicycle parking and integrating bike-sharing stations. The city can work with local cycling groups and CTA to promote multimodal transportation options.

The city must ensure adequate public safety measures, such as enhanced lighting, surveillance cameras, and emergency call stations, at all transit hubs. Regular maintenance and cleanliness should be a joint effort between the city and CTA, ensuring a safe and pleasant environment for passengers.

Local zoning codes should encourage higher density, mixed-use developments around transit hubs, focused on areas near the downtown core and along significant routes like Bienville Boulevard. The city can offer incentives, such as density bonuses to developers who include affordable housing and other community benefits in their projects. The city can partner with developers and CTA to ensure these projects align with the broader transportation and housing goals.



The city can improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in TOD areas, including wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and well-marked crosswalks. In addition, focus initial improvements on the downtown area and the corridors leading to major transit hubs. The city can also work with CTA to provide secure bike parking at these locations.

Community outreach programs to educate residents about the benefits of TOD and public transit will help explain a different style of development that is possible in Ocean Springs. This includes hosting public meetings, providing informational materials, and utilizing social media platforms. Engaging with local businesses and community organizations will be crucial in gathering feedback and building support for transit initiatives.

By implementing these recommendations in cooperation with CTA, Ocean Springs can significantly improve its public transportation system, enhance connectivity, and foster vibrant, sustainable communities centered around transit access.

## CONCLUSION

The Transportation Plan for Ocean Springs represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to addressing the city's diverse mobility needs. By prioritizing a balanced and multi-modal transportation network, the plan aims to accommodate all users—drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists—ensuring that the city's infrastructure evolves to meet the demands of its growing population.

The plan outlines strategic upgrades to roadways and intersections for automotive traffic, enhancing safety and efficiency. These improvements will reduce congestion, optimize traffic flow, and provide residents, businesses, and visitors with a reliable transportation network. The focus on maintaining and expanding the road infrastructure underscores the importance of efficient vehicular mobility as a cornerstone of the city's economic and social vitality.

The plan's pedestrian elements emphasize creating a walkable and accessible urban environment. By expanding and upgrading sidewalks, improving crosswalks, and enhancing pedestrian safety features, Ocean Springs is committed to fostering a more inclusive and vibrant community. These efforts not only improve daily life for residents but also encourage walking as a sustainable and health-promoting mode of transportation.

Cyclist considerations are integral to the plan, with dedicated bicycle lanes, shared-use paths, and supporting infrastructure to promote cycling as a practical and safe transportation option. The plan's emphasis on creating a connected and accessible network for cyclists aligns with broader goals of environmental sustainability, public health, and active transportation.

The Transportation Plan is a blueprint for a well-rounded, resilient transportation system that serves all community members. By integrating automotive, pedestrian, and cyclist needs, the plan seeks to create a cohesive and

efficient network that supports the city's growth, enhances quality of life, and prepares for a sustainable future. Through thoughtful planning and strategic investments, Ocean Springs is poised to become a model of modern, multimodal urban mobility.



**Community Facilities in Ocean Springs are essential services that support the city's vibrant and growing community. Each sector plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of life for residents**



## CHAPTER 8—COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

- \* **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- \* **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**
- \* **POLICE**
- \* **FIRE**
- \* **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**
- \* **PARKS AND REC**
- \* **PUBLIC WORKS**
- \* **PLANNING**
- \* **HOUSING**
- \* **SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### INTRODUCTION

The Community Facilities Plan for Ocean Springs outlines the essential services and infrastructure that support the city's vibrant and growing community. From general government operations to specialized departments such as police, fire, and emergency management, each sector plays a crucial role in ensuring the well-being and quality of life for residents. This plan also highlights the diverse recreational facilities managed by the Parks and Recreation Department, which provide ample opportunities for outdoor activities and community engagement. Additionally, the educational resources available in Ocean Springs, including K-12 schools and higher education institutions, underscore the city's commitment to fostering a well-rounded and educated populace.

By carefully evaluating the current status and planning for future improvements, Ocean Springs aims to create a network of community facilities that not only meet the present needs but also antici-

pate and adapt to future challenges and opportunities. This approach ensures that our shared spaces remain vibrant, functional, and inclusive, reflecting the spirit of "The City of Discovery."

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Community Facilities Plan for Ocean Springs outlines the essential services and infrastructure that support the city's vibrant and growing community. This plan addresses a wide range of facilities, including general government operations, police and fire departments, emergency management, parks and recreation, public utilities, public works, educational resources, and housing. The guiding principles below are designed to ensure that these facilities meet current needs and adapt to future demands, fostering a resilient and thriving community.

### **1. Accessibility and Inclusivity**

- Ensure that all community facilities are accessible and serve the diverse needs of Ocean Springs' residents.
- Design public spaces and facilities to be inclusive, with ADA-compliant features and equitable access for all community segments.

### **2. Community Engagement and Collaboration**

- Foster community involvement in the planning and development of facilities.
- Engage residents through public consultations, workshops, and collaborative planning sessions to ensure facilities meet community needs and preferences.

### **3. Safety and Preparedness**

- Ensure that all community facilities contribute to the safety and emergency preparedness of the city.
- Equip facilities with modern safety features, maintain emergency management protocols, and ensure readiness for natural disasters and other emergencies.

### **4. Fiscal Responsibility and Efficiency**

- Allocate resources efficiently and ensure the financial sustainability of community facilities.
- Plan and equitably fund public facilities through strategic budgeting, capital improvement programs, and partnerships with private and non-profit sectors.
- Invest in high-quality design and regular maintenance of community facilities to enhance their functionality and longevity.

### **5. Strategic Location and Connectivity**

- Ensure that community facilities are strategically located and well-connected to maximize their accessibility and impact.
- Plan for facilities in central, easily accessible locations, and ensure connectivity through robust transportation networks.

Aligning actions with these guiding principles will allow Ocean Springs to operate effectively and efficiently, provide the highest-quality community services, and contribute to the City's vitality and quality of life for decades to come.

## OCEAN SPRINGS' COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Ocean Springs is committed to providing high-quality community facilities that support the well-being, safety, and enrichment of its residents. This section of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the essential services and infrastructure that form the backbone of our vibrant community. Each section of the Community Facilities Plan provides a detailed overview of the existing community facilities, including their locations and current conditions and outlines specific plans for improvements and expansions. These plans are designed to address the growing needs of our population, enhance the quality and accessibility of services, and ensure that our facilities are equipped to meet future demands.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Ocean Springs' general government operations are housed in City Hall, located at 1018 Porter Avenue in the heart of downtown Ocean Springs. This central hub serves as the administrative center for the city, encompassing key services such as the Mayor's office, City Clerk, Finance Department, and Human Resources. Additionally, Ocean Springs Water's administrative offices are located here. As growth occurs, the city can ensure that all aspects of city government operate transparently, efficiently, and that all municipal services are delivered effectively to meet the community's needs. Improvements to general government operations are all-encompassing and apply to each City department equally.



## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT NEEDS**

- Regularly review personnel and equipment needs.
- Maintain existing facilities and equipment.
- Evaluate and implement technology and training to improve the ability to support general government operations and city departments and to provide high-quality and efficient customer service.
- Develop a Capital Improvements Plan for Ocean Springs.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Ocean Springs Police Department, headquartered at 3810 Bienville Boulevard, is pivotal in maintaining public safety and law enforcement throughout the city. The main station is centrally located, providing easy access to major thoroughfares and neighborhoods. The department also operates a substation in downtown Ocean Springs, which serves as a convenient point of contact for community members and enhances the department's presence in the area. With a strong focus on community policing, the department collaborates closely with residents to prevent crime and ensure a safe environment. The department's facilities, including its dispatch center and training rooms, as well as its fleet and equipment, are regularly evaluated to meet the community's evolving needs.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT NEEDS**

- Expand the main police station to accommodate growth.

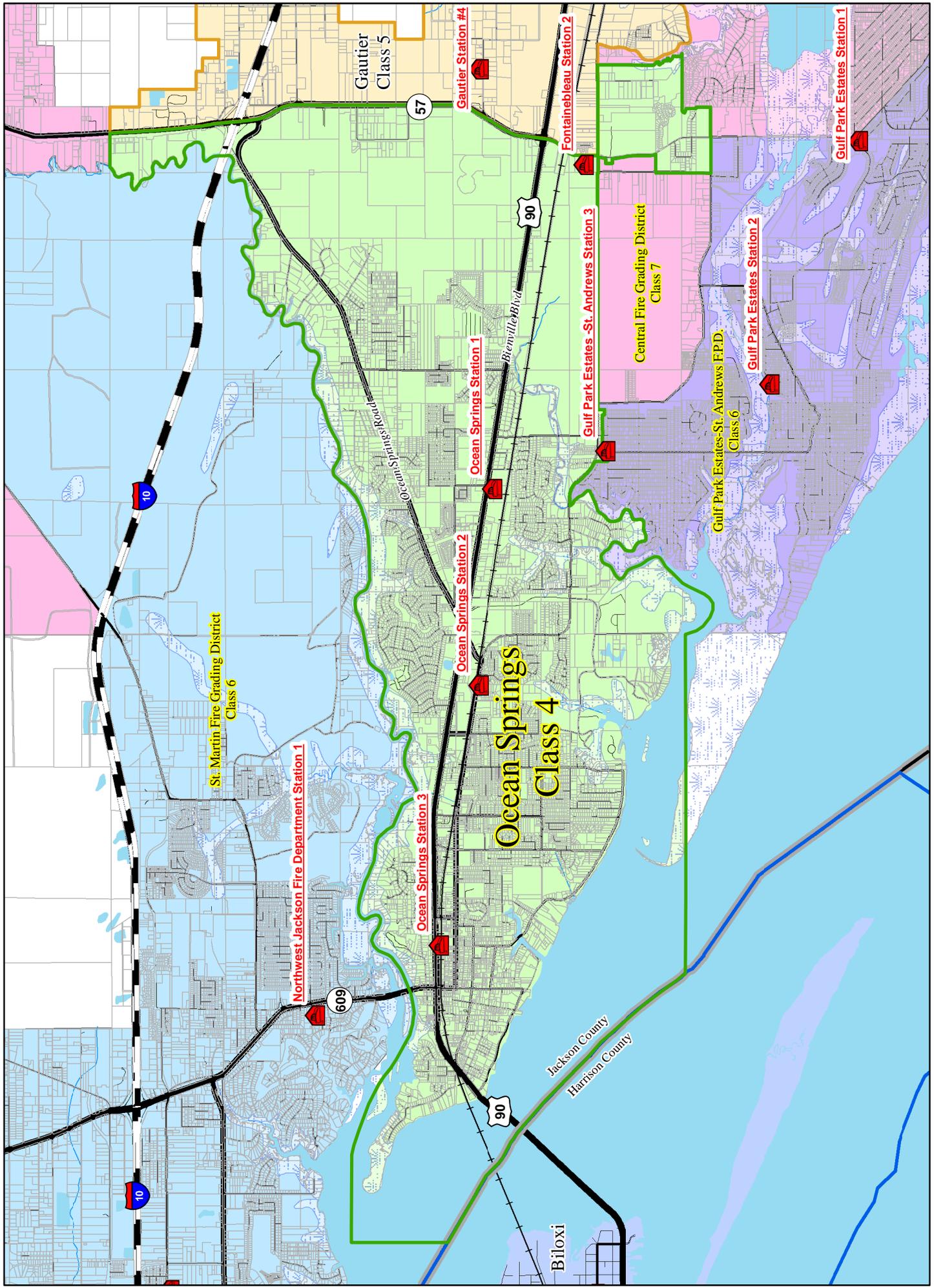
- Upgrade technology and communication systems.
- Increase the number of officers to serve the city's growing population effectively.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Ocean Springs Fire Department operates from multiple stations strategically located throughout the city to ensure rapid response times and comprehensive fire protection coverage. The main fire station, located at 3811 Bienville Boulevard, serves as the central hub for the department's operations, including administrative offices, training facilities, and emergency response units. Additional stations, such as Station 2 on Pine Drive and Station 3 on Ocean Springs Road, enhance the department's ability to respond quickly to incidents across different parts of the city. The department's responsibilities extend beyond fire suppression to include fire prevention education, emergency medical response, and hazardous materials management. Equipment is in good condition but must be regularly maintained and replaced. The city has recently ordered two new fire trucks with a rated useful life of 20 years. The department's greatest need is to recruit more personnel.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT NEEDS**

- Recruit new firefighting personnel.
- Construct a new fire station to serve areas farther south and east of the current city limits, near the newly annexed areas.
- Acquire equipment and personnel to support a new fire station, which will require a new pumper and nine new personnel.



Map 22: Fire Districts, Ratings, & Stations

- Upgrade and maintain existing facilities with state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The Emergency Management Department in Ocean Springs is critical in safeguarding the city's residents' health, safety, and welfare during declared emergencies. The department operates from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 1018 Porter Avenue, at City Hall. In addition to the EOC, the city utilizes the West Jackson County shelter, located at 13000 Walker Road, Ocean Springs, MS 39564, which has a maximum capacity of 375 individuals. This facility provides a safe refuge for residents during emergencies.

The department's success in managing emergencies stems from comprehensive contingency

planning, coordinated response efforts with local and state agencies, and a commitment to public education on all-hazards preparedness. The Emergency Management Department adheres to the four phases of emergency management: 1) Preparedness, 2) Response, 3) Recovery, and 4) Mitigation. These phases guide the department's efforts to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the impact of disasters. The department also conducts regular disaster training and exercises for emergency responders to ensure a swift and efficient response to crises. The Emergency Management Department strives to protect the community and enhance the city's resilience to emergencies through these comprehensive efforts.

The City of Ocean Springs actively participates in the region's hazard mitigation plan, collaborating with neighboring jurisdictions to develop strategies that reduce the risk of disasters.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEEDS**

- Prepare lift stations for storm events by raising electrical components above flood elevations.
- Ensure adequate buffers from streams, wetlands, and the wildland-urban interface.
- Mitigate properties in the V and AE zones through acquisition.
- Update the city's hazard Mitigation and Emergency Response Plan and its Hurricane Response Plan regularly to ensure emergency service and evacuation routes are adequate for demand, well-marked, and accessible to individuals with special needs.



- Increase the number of fire and police response personnel trained to respond to hazardous waste releases on the railroad, highways, hospitals, and other critical facilities.
- Implement an early warning network to alert citizens to upcoming hazards.
- Establish a high-ground staging area for emergency vehicles that provides added protection from wind-blown debris.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

The Ocean Springs Parks and Recreation Department offers many recreational facilities, parks, and sports complexes, providing ample outdoor activities and community engagement opportunities. The department manages various locations, each offering unique amenities to cater to residents' and visitors' diverse interests and needs.

**Alice Street Park**, located at 400 Alice Street, is a vibrant community hub featuring playground equipment, swings, a T-ball field, and restrooms. The park's central location and amenities make it a popular destination for families and children.

**Clay Boyd Park**, situated at 214 Morris Noble Road, offers a mix of playground equipment and a splash pad, providing a fun and refreshing environment for children during the warmer months. The park also includes restrooms, ensuring convenience for visitors.

**John Gill Park**, located at 3318 Nottingham Drive, offers a quieter setting with playground equipment and a pavilion. This park is ideal for

family picnics and community gatherings, providing a serene environment.

**Fort Maurepas Park**, located at 499 Front Beach, is a scenic beachfront park featuring playground equipment, a splash pad, a pavilion, a stage, and restrooms. The park's beachfront location and stage make it an excellent venue for community events and performances.

**Hanley Road Toddler Park**, located at 504 Hanley Road, caters specifically to younger children, offering a safe play area with appropriate playground equipment.

**Inner Harbor Park**, situated at 127 Pine Drive, includes playground equipment, restrooms, and two lighted tennis courts. This park provides a comprehensive recreational experience, ideal for sports enthusiasts and families alike.

**Keys Park**, located at 800 Cash Alley, offers a peaceful setting with public parking, scenic views, and benches, providing a quiet retreat for relaxation and contemplation.

**Little Children's Park**, located at 400 Washington Avenue, is a beloved community space featuring playground equipment, swings, a pavilion, and restrooms. The park's amenities make it a popular spot for family outings and children's activities.

**Marble Springs Park**, at 1109 I'berville Drive, offers a unique experience with its scenic views and historical significance, providing a tranquil and educational space for visitors.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Park**, located at 811 Martin Luther King Boulevard, features a playground, swings, a lighted basketball court, a pa-



vilion, and restrooms. This park serves as an important community gathering space, offering various recreational opportunities.

**Shearwater Park**, located on Shearwater Drive, offers scenic views and benches, making it a perfect spot for those seeking a peaceful outdoor experience.

**Trentwood Park**, situated at 3105 Shadow Wood Drive, provides a playground and a basketball court, catering to both younger children and older youth looking for recreational sports opportunities.

**Alice Street Ball Fields**, located at 400 Alice Street, includes two ball fields, concessions, and restrooms, making it a suitable venue for sports events and local leagues.

**Clay Boyd Ball Fields**, at 214 Morris Noble Road, features two ball fields and restrooms, supporting the city's youth and adult baseball and softball programs.

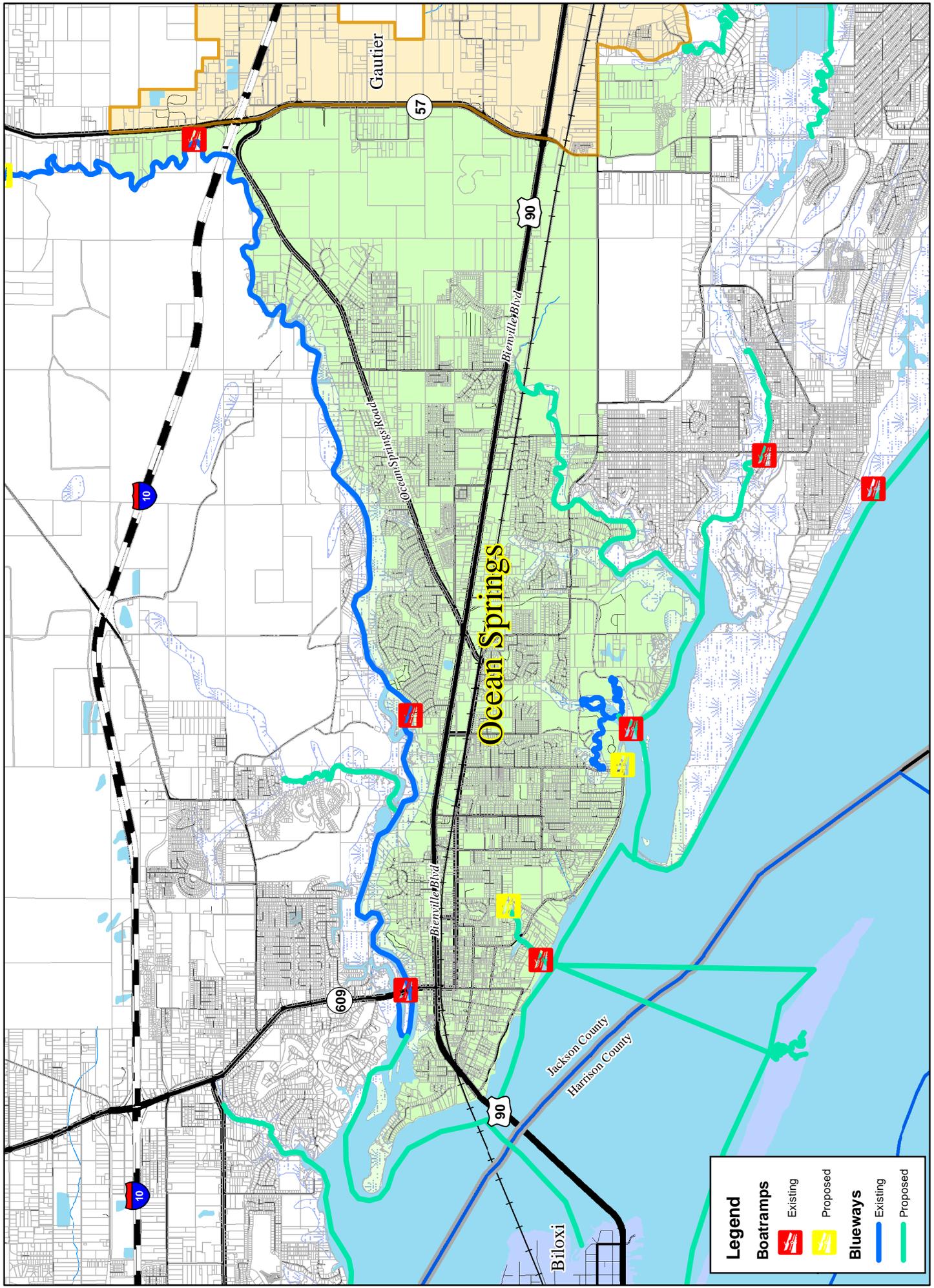
**Freedom Field**, at 1425 Porter Avenue, offers a walking track and restrooms, providing a space for exercise and community events.

**Gay-Lemon Complex**, located at 1493 Deana Road, includes two 275-ft softball fields, two football fields, concessions, and restrooms, offering a comprehensive sports facility for various athletic activities.

**Steven Parker Ball Fields**, situated on Pine Drive, includes two ball fields and restrooms, supporting local baseball and softball leagues.

**Highway 57 Sports Complex**, located at 4515 Hwy 57, is a premier sports facility featuring four 300-ft softball fields, three 225-ft baseball fields, two 275-ft baseball fields, four regulation-size soccer fields, and two football fields. The complex also includes pavilions, concessions, a meeting room, and restrooms, making it a versatile venue for sports events and community gatherings.

These facilities provide residents and visitors with diverse recreational options, enhancing the quality of life in Ocean Springs. The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to maintaining and improving these spaces to



Map 23: Blueways Improvement Plan



meet the community's evolving needs and promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

### **PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS**

- Develop a comprehensive park and recreation master plan for Ocean Springs.
- Quantify and plan for demand of indoor recreation, e.g., pickleball, volleyball, and basketball.
- Quantify and plan for demand of outdoor recreation, e.g., disk golf, skate parks, splash pads, and new ballfields.
- Replace fields displaced by new development.
- Implement proposed Blueways expansions including new launches and routes to complement the Old Fort Bayou Blueway.

### **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

The Public Works Department, headquartered at 712 Washington Avenue, houses the city's street, drainage, water, sewer, and beautification divisions. Key challenges include hiring sufficient numbers of qualified personnel and

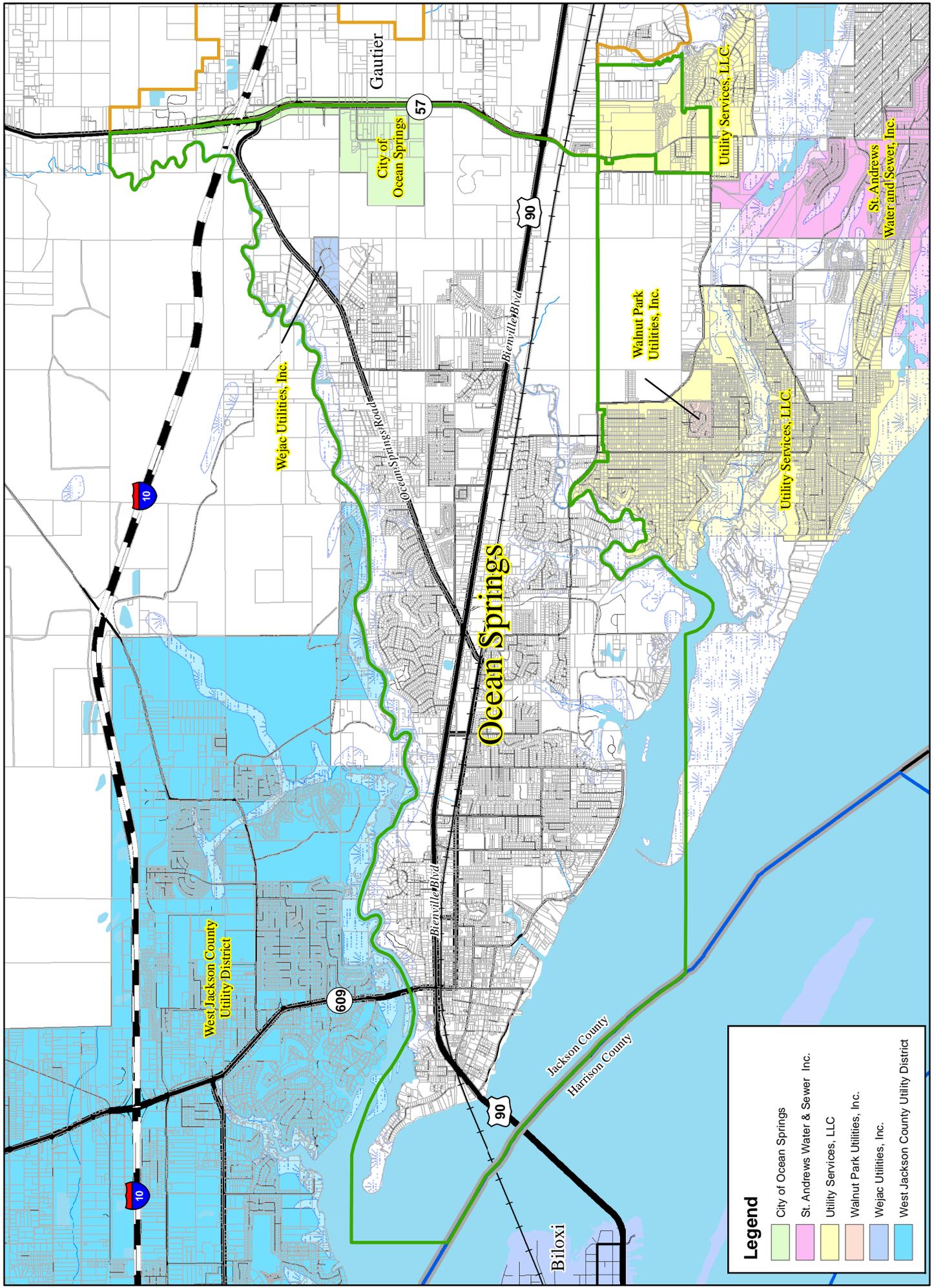
expanding water and wastewater capacity to meet demands from new growth.

### **STREETS AND DRAINAGE**

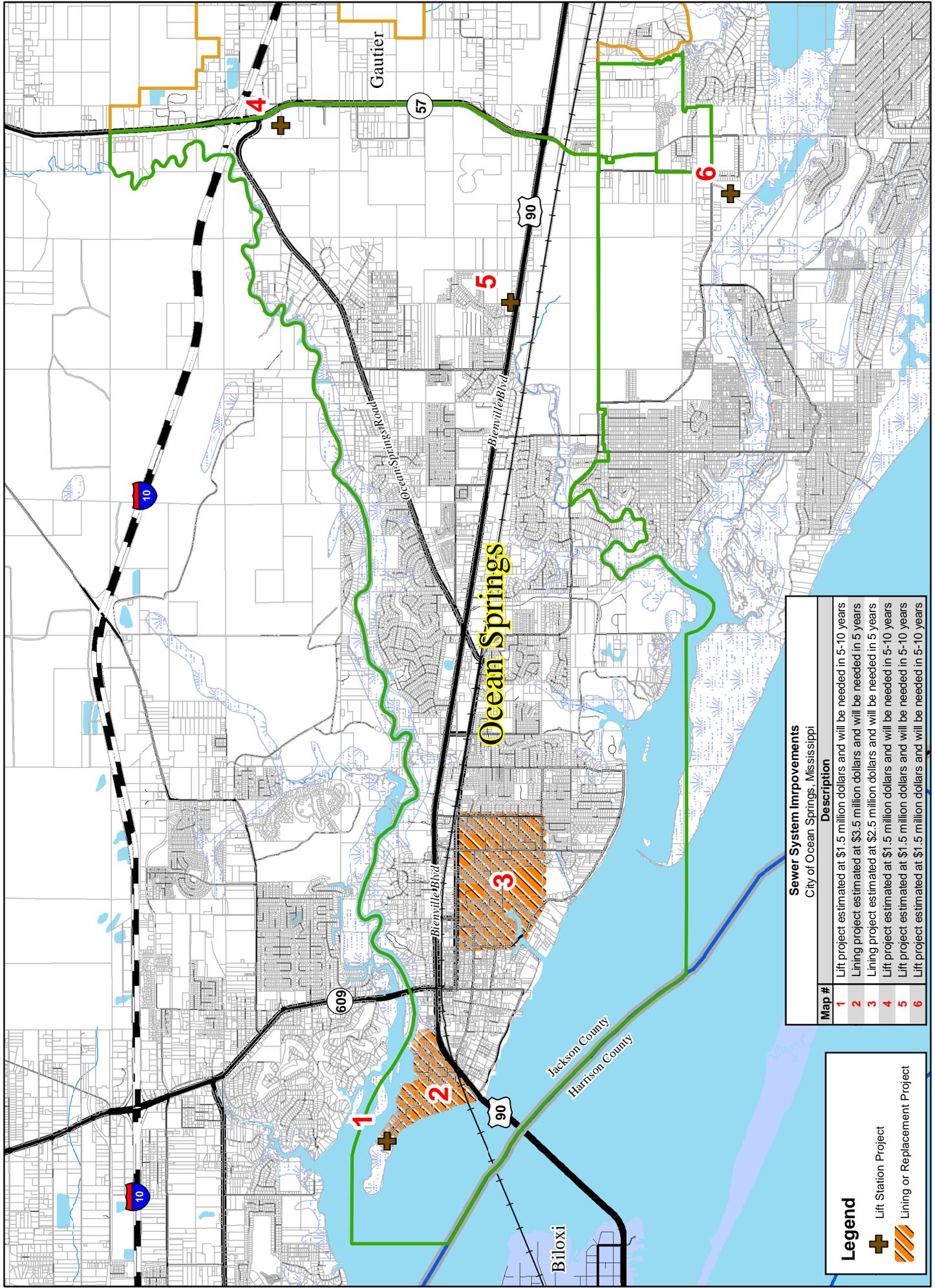
The Street division maintains the city's streets, sidewalks, and public infrastructure. It oversees street maintenance, drainage systems, and public property upkeep. While the county performs pavement maintenance and resurfacing, the public works department provides key services, including pothole repair, debris removal, and trash collection. Key priorities include improvements to bridges, drainage systems, pavement management, and resurfacing city streets. A new drainage outfall is needed south of Bienville Boulevard.

### **WATER**

The Ocean Springs Public Works Department manages the city's water supply and distribution. It oversees water wells, water treatment, and a comprehensive network of water mains and service lines.



Map 24: Sewer Certificated Areas

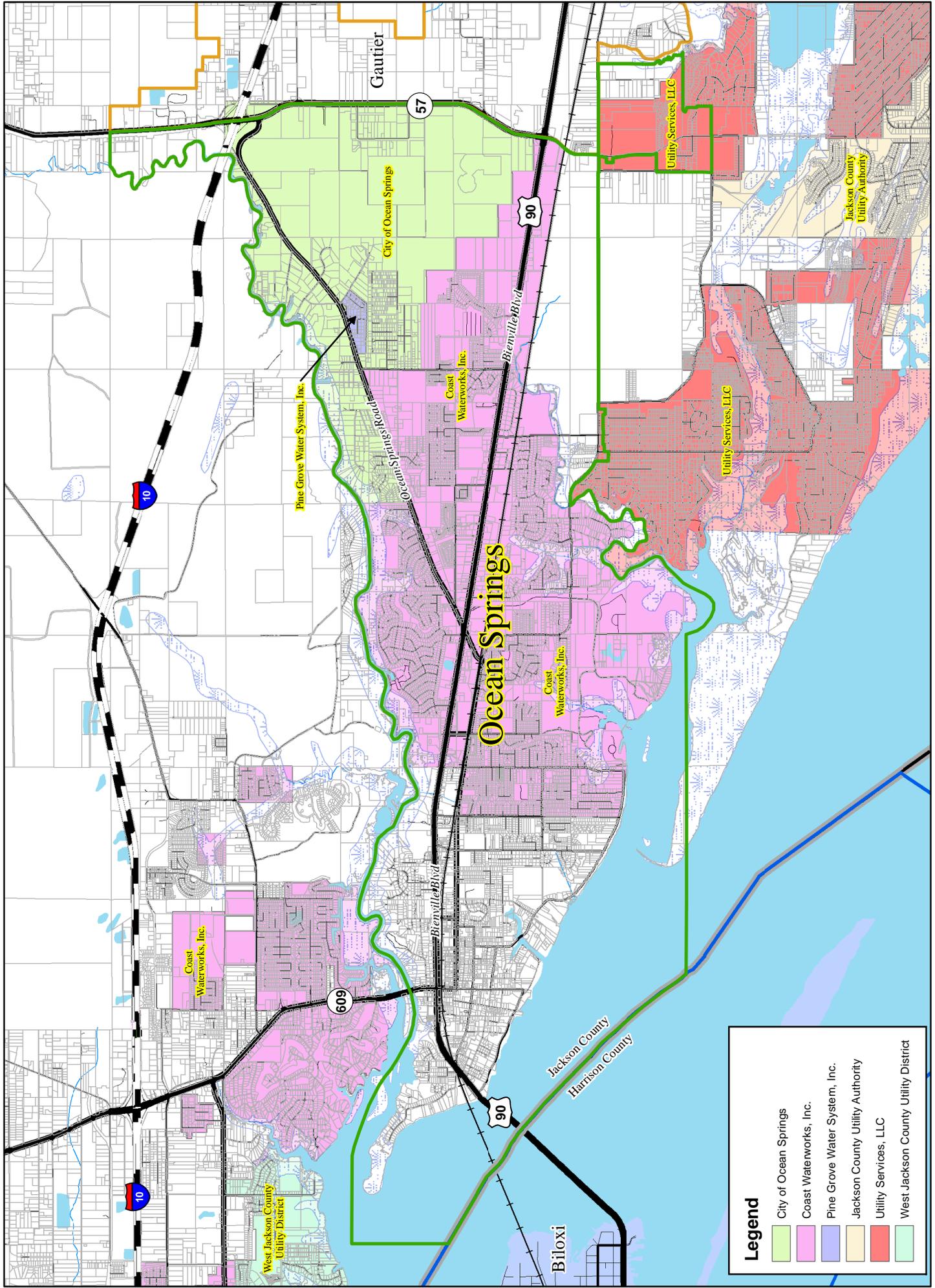


Sewer System Improvements	
City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi	
Map #	Description
1	Lift project estimated at \$1.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5-10 years
2	Lining project estimated at \$3.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5 years
3	Lining project estimated at \$2.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5 years
4	Lift project estimated at \$1.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5-10 years
5	Lift project estimated at \$1.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5-10 years
6	Lift project estimated at \$1.5 million dollars and will be needed in 5-10 years

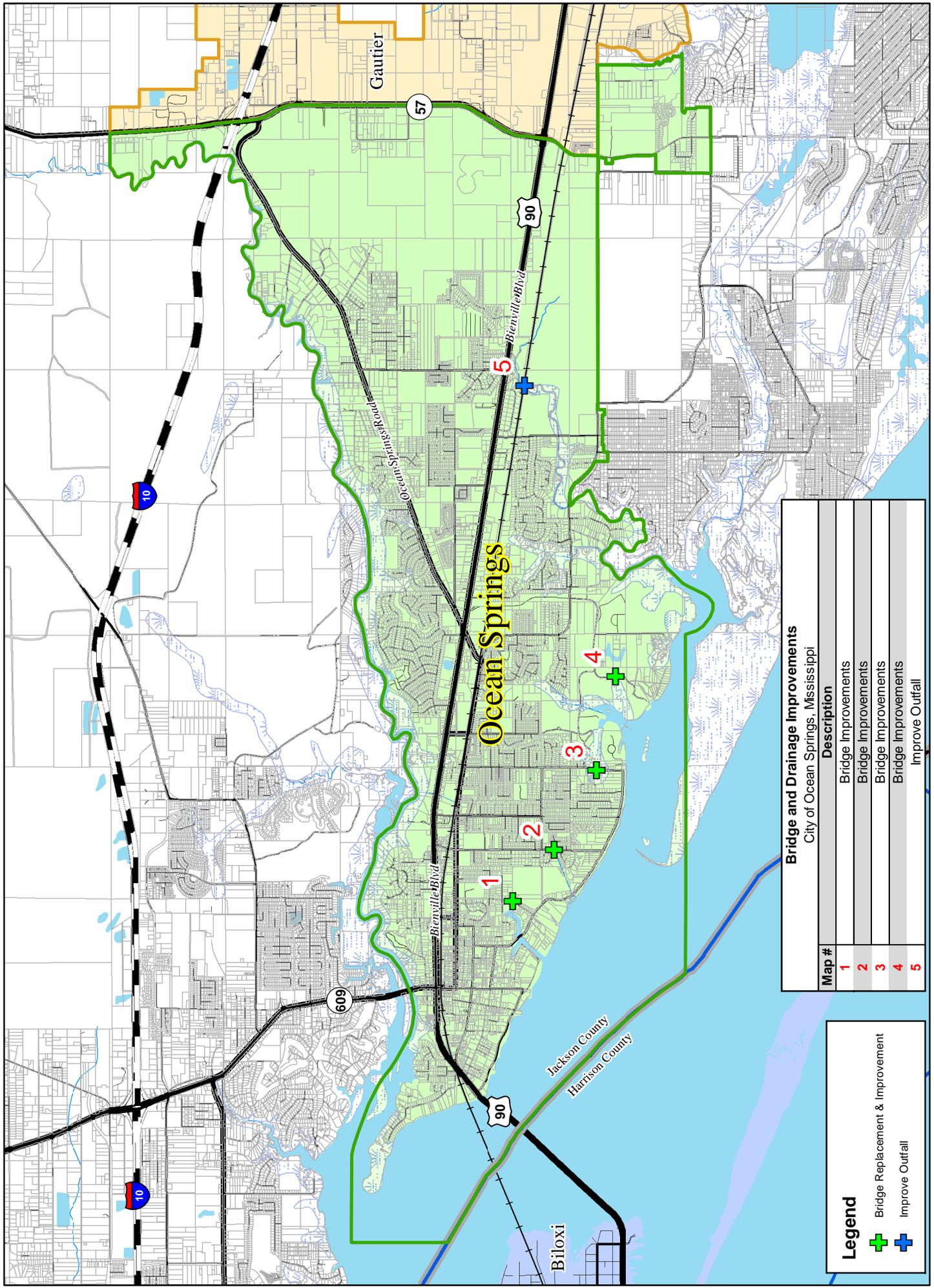
**Legend**

- Lift Station Project
- Lining or Replacement Project

Map 25: Sewer Improvement Plan



Map 26: Water Certificated Areas



**Bridge and Drainage Improvements**  
City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Map #	Description
1	Bridge Improvements
2	Bridge Improvements
3	Bridge Improvements
4	Bridge Improvements
5	Improve Outfall

**Legend**

	Bridge Replacement & Improvement
	Improve Outfall

Map 27: Bridge & Drainage Improvements

## SEWER

The city's wastewater treatment facilities, managed by the Ocean Springs Public Works Department, are crucial for treating and managing sewage and wastewater. Ocean Springs operates a sewer collection system, which connects to the Jackson County Utilities Authority's collection and treatment system, ensuring there are no direct discharges to waterways in Ocean Springs.

### PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NEEDS

- Relocate the public works facility to a location with better access and a lower impact on downtown development. The new public works facility should include new administrative offices and drive-through facilities for payments.
- Expand water and sewer infrastructure, including fire protection and adequately spaced fire hydrants and sewer services, to newly annexed parts of the city.
- A new well will be needed in the next 10 years to accommodate growth on the east side of Ocean Springs.
- New lift stations will be required in the next 5 to 10 years to accommodate growth in the vicinity of Highway 57 and Old Spanish Trail in the newly annexed territory of Ocean Springs.
- Prioritize repairs and maintenance to existing water and sewer mains.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department, located at City Hall, manages land use, zoning, land development,

and historic preservation in Ocean Springs. The department ensures that development projects align with the city's comprehensive plan and zoning regulations. Key duties include reviewing development proposals, facilitating public hearings, and guiding the city's growth. The department administers the City's Planning Commission, Historic Commission, and Zoning Adjustment Board and implements regulations adopted by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT NEEDS

- Update the city's Unified Development Code (UDC) to implement zoning in newly annexed territory.
- Review personnel and facilities requirements to keep pace with growth and development.



## CODE ENFORCEMENT

Code Enforcement in Ocean Springs is dedicated to ensuring compliance with city ordinances and maintaining the quality of the built environment. This department handles the issuance of building permits, ensuring that all construction projects meet local codes and standards. Additionally, Code Enforcement is responsible for enforcing property maintenance codes, addressing violations, and ensuring buildings and properties meet health and safety standards. The team conducts regular inspections, responds to complaints, and works with property owners to resolve issues.

### CODE ENFORCEMENT NEEDS

- Review personnel and facilities requirements to keep pace with growth and development.
- Increase public awareness of code requirements.
- Enhance collaboration with other city departments to maintain a clean and safe community.

## HOUSING

Ocean Springs boasts a diverse and evolving housing market, characterized by a mix of single-family homes, multi-family units, and various types of rental properties. The city's residential landscape includes historic homes, modern subdivisions, and new developments, reflecting a blend of architectural styles and community growth.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Ocean Springs saw a net gain of 450 housing units from 2010 to 2020, with a total of 8,264 housing

units recorded in the latter year. Of these, 92.1% were occupied, with a significant decrease in vacancy rates over the decade, dropping to 7.9%. The housing stock in Ocean Springs is primarily composed of single-family detached homes, which account for approximately 77% of all residential units. Multi-family units make up 16.5% of total units, and mobile homes represent about 1.2%. Notably, approximately 30% of the city's housing was built before 1970, with a substantial portion constructed between 1970 and 2000.

### APARTMENT MARKET AND RENTAL PROPERTIES

The 2020 Apartment Survey by the Gulf Regional Planning Commission highlights that Ocean Springs has a total of 538 unassisted rental units, with the majority being two-bedroom apartments. The average costs for unassisted apartments in Ocean Springs are \$715 for a one-bedroom, \$779 for a two-bedroom, and \$1,062 for a three-bedroom unit. Notably, the vacancy rate for unassisted rental units in Ocean Springs reached 0.0% in 2020, reflecting an exceptionally high demand and no availability in the rental market.

### HOUSING TRENDS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As Ocean Springs grows, the city must consider expanding its housing stock to meet increasing demand, particularly for affordable housing options. Future development plans will focus on creating mixed-use neighborhoods, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting sustainable living environments. The city will also prioritize pre-



servicing its unique architectural heritage while accommodating new construction, ensuring a harmonious blend of old and new within its community fabric.

### **HOUSING NEEDS**

- Evaluate zoning restrictions on the location of accessory dwelling units.
- Monitor the impact of short-term rentals on the availability of permanent housing.
- Encourage density and mixed-use development in the vicinity of transportation and transit infrastructure. Consider minimum mixed-use development standards that require housing in all significant commercial developments.

### **OCEAN SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Ocean Springs School District is a vital part of the community, providing high-quality education and a supportive environment for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The district comprises several key institutions,

each contributing to the academic and personal growth of its students.

According to the latest grades from the Mississippi Department of Education, for the 2022-2023 school year, the Ocean Springs School District was rated the #1 school district in the state. In addition, Ocean Springs High School was ranked the #2 high school in the state. These rankings reflect the quality of, and commitment to, education in Ocean Springs by elected officials, stakeholders, and residents.

**Pecan Park Elementary School:** Located at 504 Hanley Road, this school serves approximately 500 students in kindergarten through 3rd grade.

**Magnolia Park Elementary School:** Situated at 3500 Government Street, Magnolia Park accommodates around 640 students in grades K-3.

**Oak Park Elementary School:** Located at 2230 Government Street, Oak Park serves approximately 480 students in grades K-3.

**Ocean Springs Upper Elementary School:**

Located at 2320 Government Street, this school serves about 1,270 students in grades 4-6.

**Ocean Springs Middle School:**

Located at 3600 Hanshaw Road, the middle school serves around 960 students in grades 7-8.

**Ocean Springs High School:**

Located at 6701 Old Spanish Trail, the high school serves approximately 1,950 students in grades 9-12.

**OCEAN SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT NEEDS**

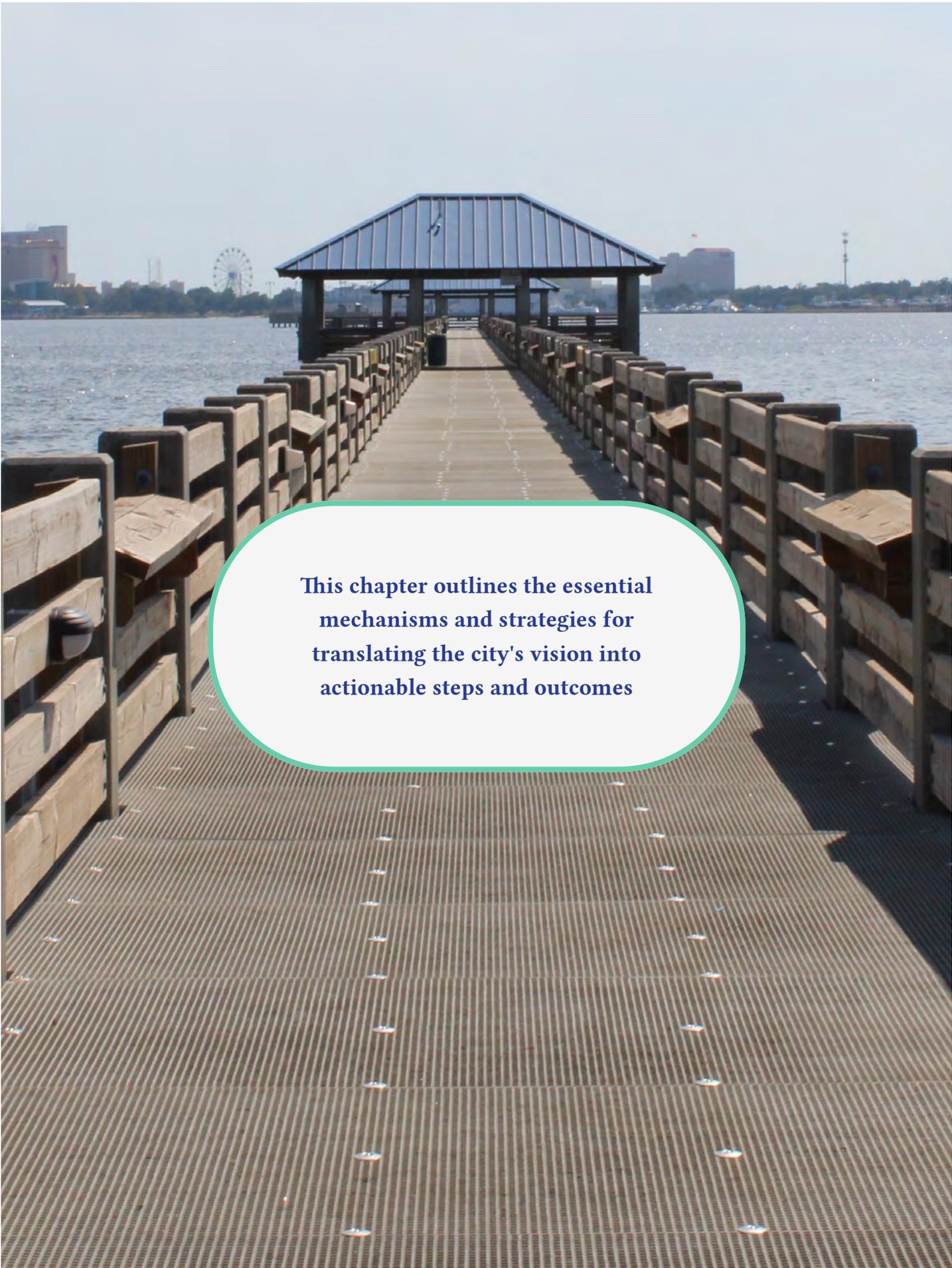
- Monitor enrollment in concert with growth management and planning for new housing in the City of Ocean Springs.
- Expand campus facilities to support a growing student body.
- Enhance career and technical education programs and promote college and career readiness initiatives.
- A new elementary school will soon be needed to support growth in student enrollment and is being explored in the vicinity of the High School.

**CONCLUSION**

Ocean Springs is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing its community facilities to meet the evolving needs of its residents. The city's strategic planning and ongoing investments in public services, infrastructure, and recreational amenities are designed to promote a high quality of life and ensure sustainable growth. By focusing on key areas such as public safety, education, and recreational opportunities, Ocean Springs aims to create a resilient and thriving commu-

nity. As the city continues to develop, these comprehensive efforts will support the long-term vision of a vibrant, inclusive, and well-served Ocean Springs.

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**This chapter outlines the essential mechanisms and strategies for translating the city's vision into actionable steps and outcomes**



## CHAPTER 9—IMPLEMENTATION & MAINTENANCE

- \* **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**
- \* **PLAN MAINTENANCE**
- \* **CONCLUSION**

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter of Ocean Springs' comprehensive plan outlines the essential mechanisms and strategies for translating the city's vision and goals into actionable outcomes. This chapter provides a detailed overview of various tools, including the annual budget, Capital Improvements Program (CIP), zoning codes, and other regulatory measures that guide the city's development and ensure the consistent application of planning principles. By leveraging these tools, the city can prioritize projects, allocate resources effectively, and maintain a cohesive community character. Additionally, the chapter discusses the importance of intergovernmental agreements, design standards, and day-to-day policy enforcement in achieving the plan's objectives. These tools serve as a critical foundation for managing growth, preserving public safety, and enhancing Ocean Springs residents' overall quality of life.

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS**

### **ANNUAL BUDGET**

The annual budget is a process in which the City of Ocean Springs reviews various needs in the community and makes decisions to fund certain services, programs, capital expenditures, etc. Many local governments incorporate recommendations or policies from the comprehensive plan into the budgetary process. Including the comprehensive plan in the budget, discussions can ensure that the needs or goals previously outlined are being reviewed annually and considered for implementation. Because a comprehensive plan is a guide for the future, using it during the budgetary process can help direct funds to the goals already laid out during the planning process.

### **BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION, AND FIRE CODES**

Construction, building, and fire codes, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, etc., provide a standard upon which to build safe structures. Adoption of up-to-date versions of the International Building Code, International Property Maintenance Code, and other codes from the International Code Council will greatly assist Ocean Springs in efforts to ensure safe housing and buildings. However, with the adoption of such codes comes the responsibility of the city to make inspections to ensure compliance with the codes.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

A capital improvement program (CIP) is also a budgeting process that plans and projects costs and expenditures for major public investments

over five years. This is an effective way to concentrate on major investments such as wastewater plants, sewer lines, water lines, fire trucks, etc. It clearly identifies investment goals and helps the city focus on specific needs and objectives. A CIP can also alleviate monetary stresses if projects are spaced over time. Spreading costs over several years can also reduce dramatic changes in the city's tax structure.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

Intergovernmental agreements between local government entities can help to spread the burden of particular services by sharing some responsibility to benefit the community. This comprehensive plan does not recommend any specific agreements. However, the city currently utilizes this tool for various services, such as police cooperation. The continued use of this tool can be effective and beneficial for the residents of Ocean Springs and the planning area.

### **ZONING (UDC)**

Zoning is a standard implementation tool for carrying out the future land use portion of the comprehensive plan. It regulates land uses and is intended to guide development into compatible land use patterns. It protects individual landowners and preserves and establishes a community's character. Updating and strictly enforcing the current UDC for the City of Ocean Springs is an effective way to implement elements of this comprehensive plan.

The Comprehensive Plan's future land use categories correspond with the current zoning districts. Connecting the future land use categories

to the zoning districts helps ensure that the future land use is taken into account when making future zoning decisions. A table showing how the future land use categories relate to current zoning districts can be found on Table 2 in Chapter 6. The city should use that table to guide zoning decisions, evaluate any amendments required for better alignment with this plan, and codify the table within the text of the UDC. This will help ensure that zoning decisions are made with respect to Future Land Use considerations.

### **SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS**

Subdivision regulations control the process of land division and establish design standards for property improvements. These regulations ensure that property owners have adequate public utilities and roadways. Subdivision regulations can also further the goals of the comprehensive plan, such as transportation improvements or water and sewer facilities.

### **COMMUNITY DESIGN AND APPEARANCE**

In the future, the city should consider adopting design standards that establish consistent com-

mercial, industrial, and downtown appearance guidelines. These standards or guidelines often include structural elements, exterior facades, exterior materials, etc.

Sign regulations, unkempt property ordinances, and landscaping guidelines are other ordinances that can help to create a desired appearance throughout the community. These can be separate ordinances or are often included in the zoning ordinance. Amended landscaping standards and stronger unkempt property ordinances may be of interest.

### **DAY-TO-DAY POLICY ENFORCEMENT**

Many of Ocean Springs's goals and strategies involve setting or updating policies and then enforcing said policies. This usually involves city staff processing complaints that have been raised with or identified by elected officials. The city will need to continue to strengthen day-to-day policy enforcement to raise the level of service.



## **PLAN MAINTENANCE**

Maintaining the Comprehensive Plan is as important as implementing it. Many factors, including new developments, emerging economic factors, or population shifts, can lead to the need for revisions.

### **AMENDMENTS**

This plan, along with all its elements, is designed to be a guide for the long-term development of Ocean Springs. Significant investments (both local and outside the city) and market conditions (local, national, and international) can significantly shift growth patterns and influence land use in ways that cannot be foreseen. To adapt to these changes, the city should set up a process for amending elements in this document. While multiple amendments can unintentionally alter the policies that this plan was based on, amendments that are well-justified due to changing circumstances should be approved on a limited basis.

### **PLAN REVIEW AND FUTURE UPDATES**

The Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic document. Periodic review and update of the Comprehensive Plan is essential to reflect the city's changes accurately. A yearly review is crucial to keep the Plan current on any special topics or influences affecting the city. Every three to five years is the minimum time frame for a review of significant land use changes, but if drastic changes occur in the city, a plan review and update may be needed sooner than that. During a review process, the Board of Alderman, Planning Commission, or Comprehensive Planning Committee should examine the ongo-

ing success in implementing the current plan before making any changes. After all elements, goals, and objectives have been updated as necessary, a draft of the revised Plan must be viewed at a public hearing before being adopted and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter serves as a comprehensive guide for Ocean Springs to systematically and effectively realize the goals outlined in the comprehensive plan. By integrating the annual budget and CIP with land use and zoning regulations, the city can direct growth in a manner consistent with its long-term vision. This chapter also emphasizes the importance of ongoing plan maintenance, including regular reviews and updates to accommodate changing circumstances and emerging trends. This proactive approach ensures that the city's policies remain relevant and responsive to the needs of its residents. Through careful implementation and periodic adjustments, Ocean Springs can continue to grow and thrive as a vibrant, sustainable community.

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