



City of Beaufort, South Carolina

Open Space Master Plan

Prepared by The City of Beaufort
Department of Planning and
Community Development
December 2003

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this plan is to develop an Open Space Master Plan which will guide the land acquisition and preservation efforts of the City of Beaufort

Plan Objectives

- To preserve open space from rapid development
- To manage growth and preserve Beaufort's natural heritage
- To protect and expand view corridors
- To protect critical habitat and maintain or increase existing bio-diversity with special emphasis on rare, threatened and endangered species
- To minimize degradation of water quality due to non-point source pollution through the protection of important riparian and wetland buffers
- To increase public access to water resources and to provide greater recreational opportunities for all
- To provide options for the use of alternative, non-motorized transportation such as walking and bicycling

Definition of Terms

Greenways

Corridors of open space which connect people and places, protect natural habitat, buffer and protect riparian areas, aid with flood control and drainage, protect and improve water quality and provide recreational opportunities

Open Space

Developed or undeveloped land areas that have important ecological functions, natural and/or cultural resources that are worthy of conservation, restoration and protection

Permanent Protection Methods

- Conservation Easements
 - Legally binding covenant that is publicly recorded and runs with the property deed for a specified period of time or in perpetuity regardless of the owner
- Fee Simple Purchase
 - Outright purchase of the land generally with land use stipulations set by the seller
- Purchase of Development Rights
 - Purchase of the rights to develop property that does not involve the actual purchase of the land itself

State and Local Programs

- Recreation Land Trust Fund
 - State granting program (up to \$100,000 with 50% match)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - State granting program (up to \$250,000 with 50% match)
- Beaufort County Rural and Critical Lands Program
 - \$40,000,000 fund to allow for protection of rural and critical lands
- Real Estate Transfer Fee (pending legislation)
 - Allocation of 0.25% of the total purchase price to be used exclusively for open space acquisition or improvement

State and Local Programs

- South Carolina Conservation Bank Act of 2002
 - Competitive granting program
 - Funded through the documentary deed stamp recording fee (\$0.25 of the \$1.35 fee)
- South Carolina Scenic Rivers Act of 1989
 - State income tax deduction equal to the fair market value of the easement granted
- Conservation Incentives Act of 2000
 - State income tax credit (up to \$2,500.00 in any tax year)

Federal Programs

- Transportation Enhancement Program:
Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21 Century
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1968
- Pittman-Robertson Act: Federal Aid in Wildlife
Restoration Act
- Wetlands Reserve Program

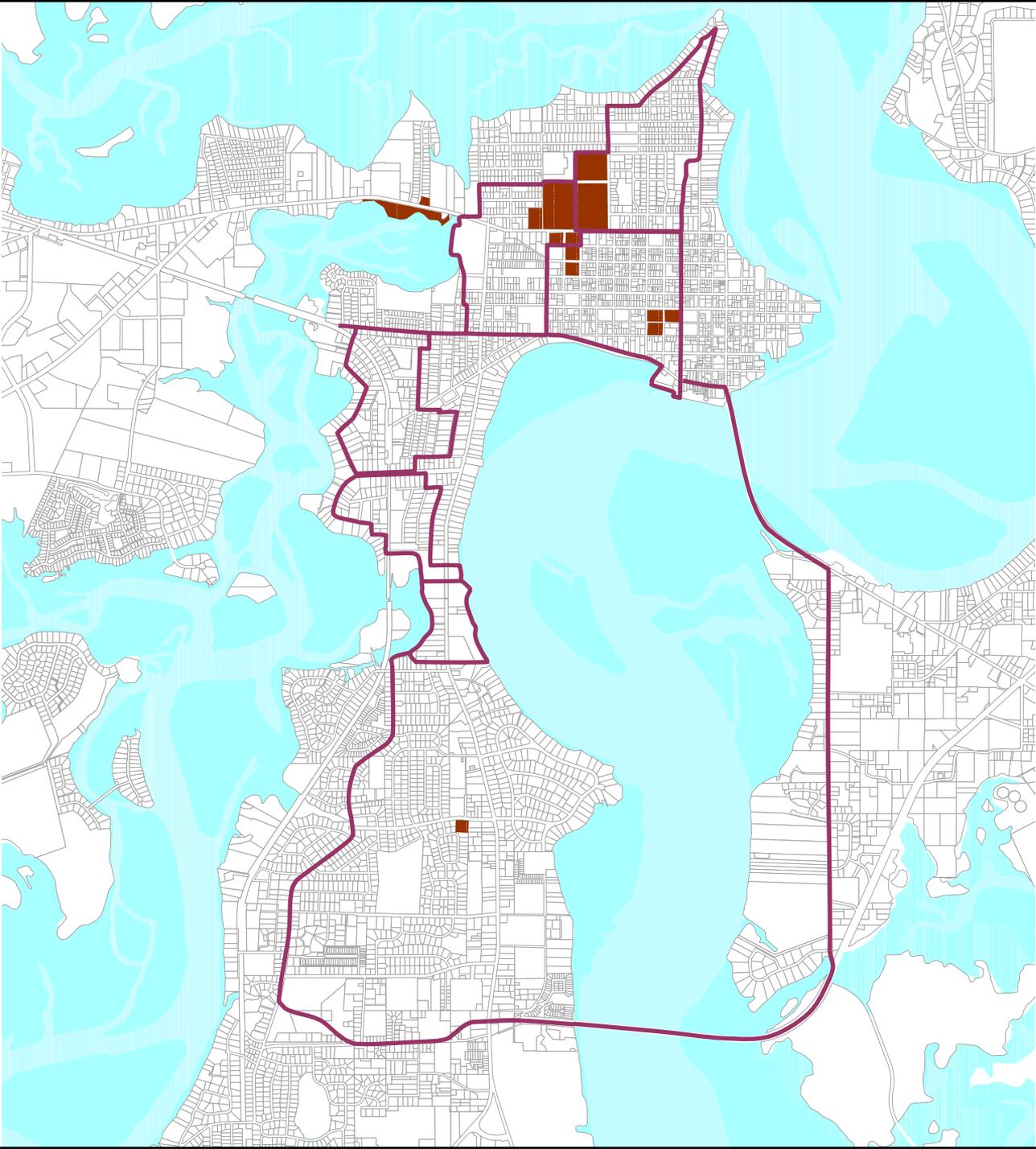
Benefits of Open Space

- Preserves and enhances quality of life
- Increases recreational opportunities
- Provides means for alternative transportation
- Protects natural resources
- Mitigates pollution
- Increases educational opportunities
- Fosters economic development and civic pride

Benefits of Open Space

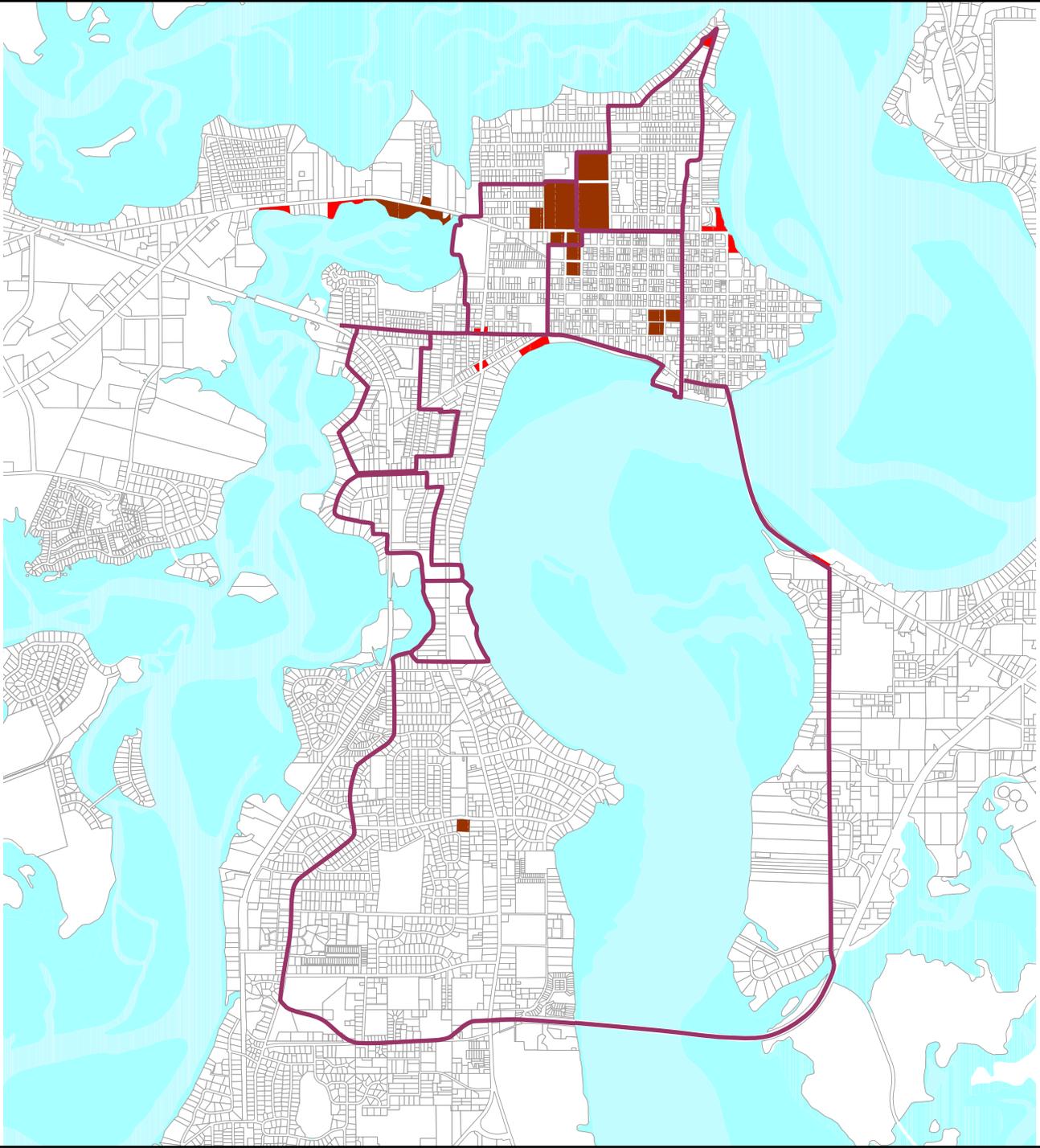
- Improves community access to waterways
- Increases nature-based tourism revenue
- Increases property values
- Protects and preserves historic sites
- Ensures equal access to natural amenities
- Helps protect biodiversity
- Promotes a healthier community

Cemetery



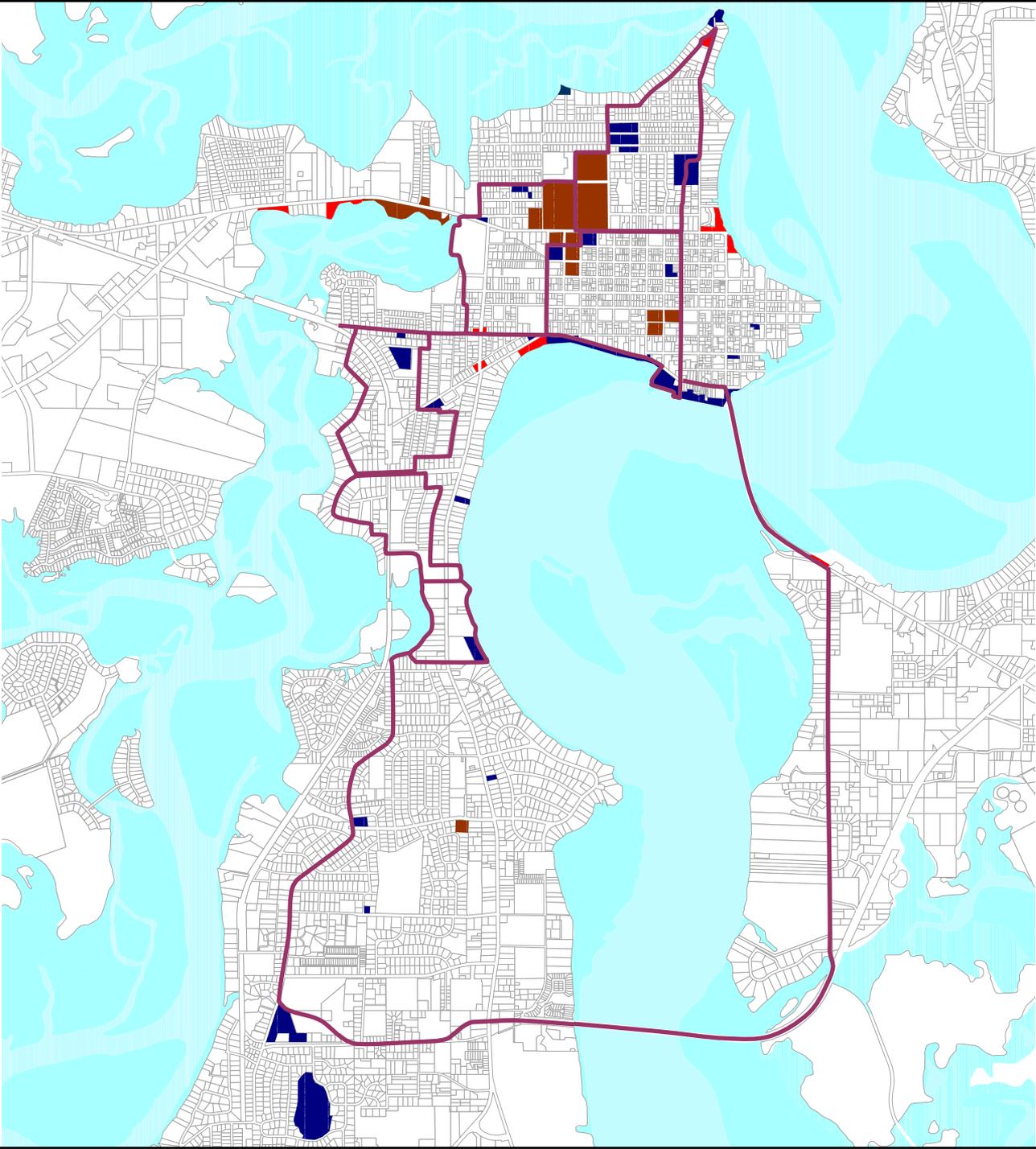
Open Spaces

 Cemeteries



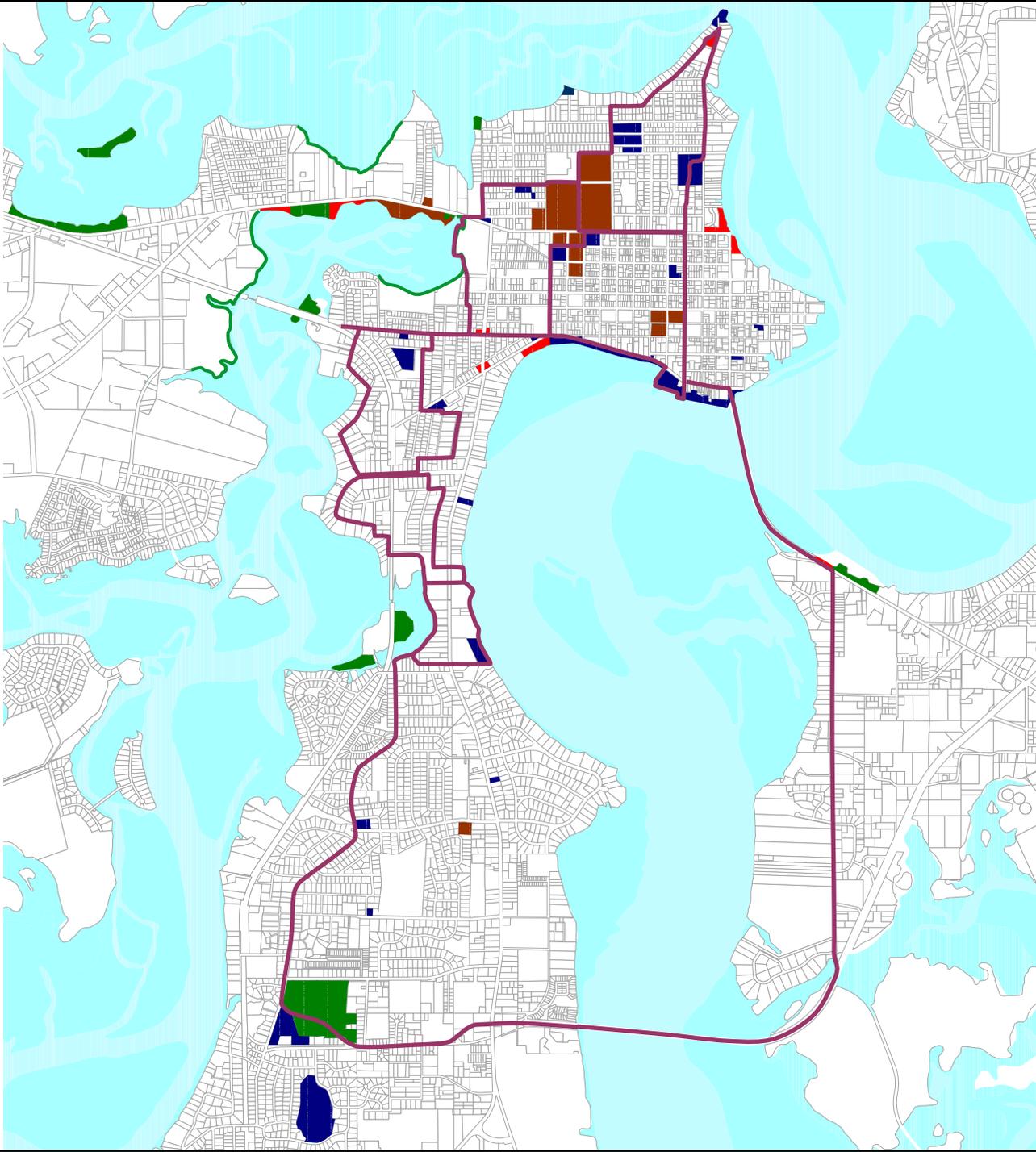
Parks

-  Cemeteries
-  Open Spaces



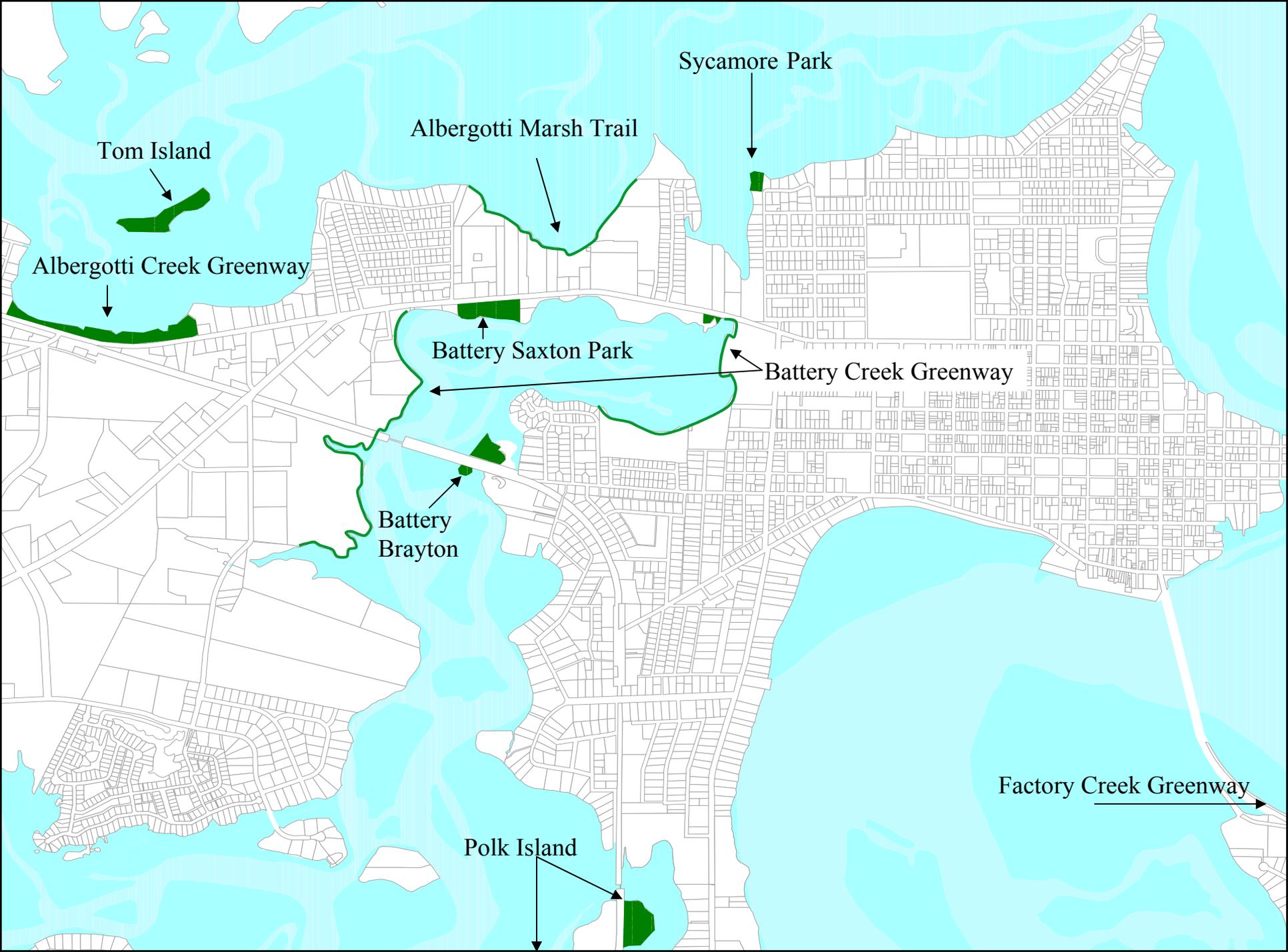
Proposed

-  Cemeteries
-  Open Spaces
-  Parks



Priority Acquisition Areas

1. Battery Creek Greenway/ Battery Saxton Park
2. Albergotti Creek Greenway
3. Battery Brayton
4. Polk Island
5. Factory Creek Greenway
6. Tom Island
7. Sycamore Park
8. Albergotti Marsh Trail



Tom Island

Albergotti Marsh Trail

Sycamore Park

Albergotti Creek Greenway

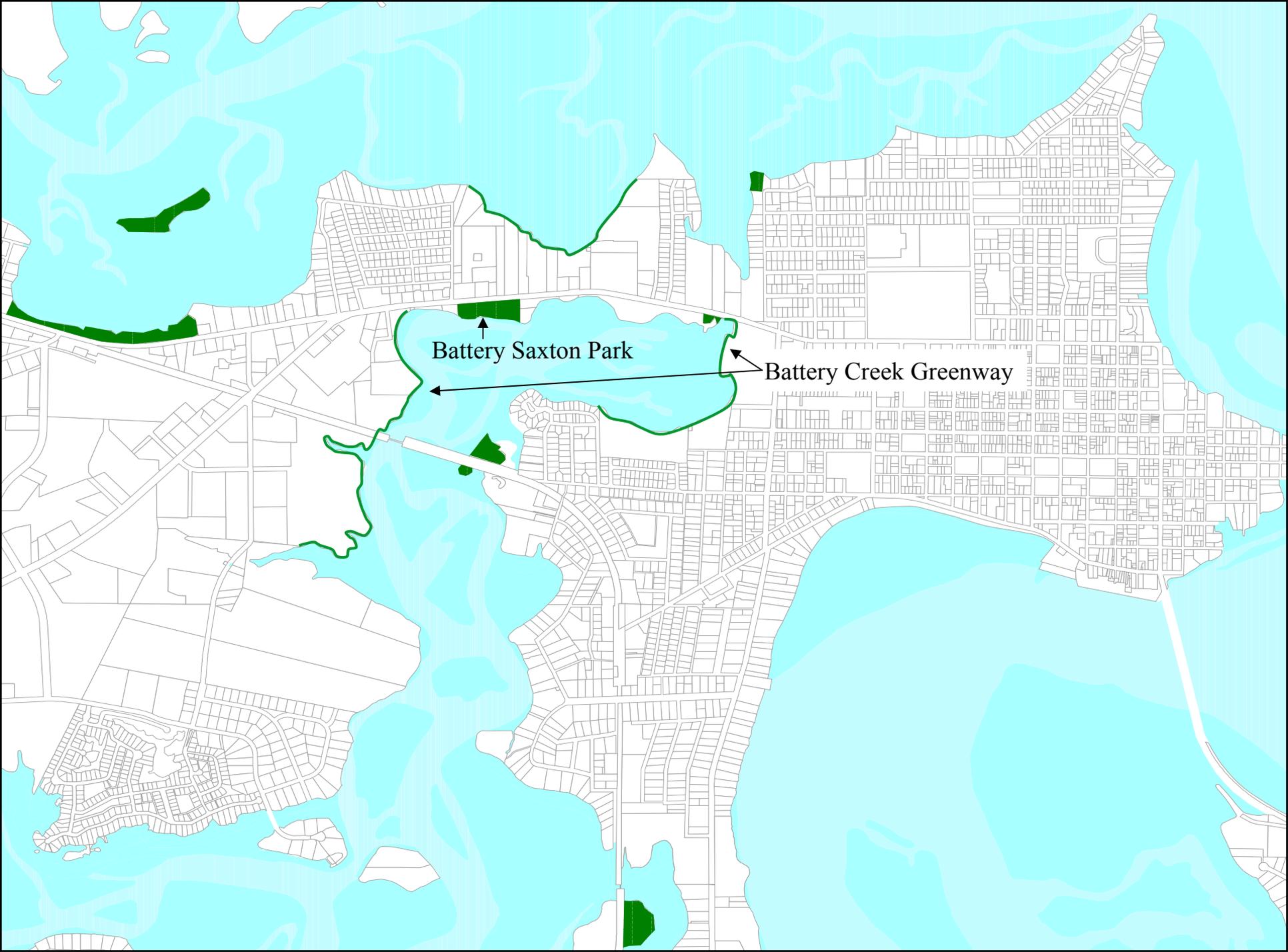
Battery Saxton Park

Battery Creek Greenway

Battery
Brayton

Polk Island

Factory Creek Greenway



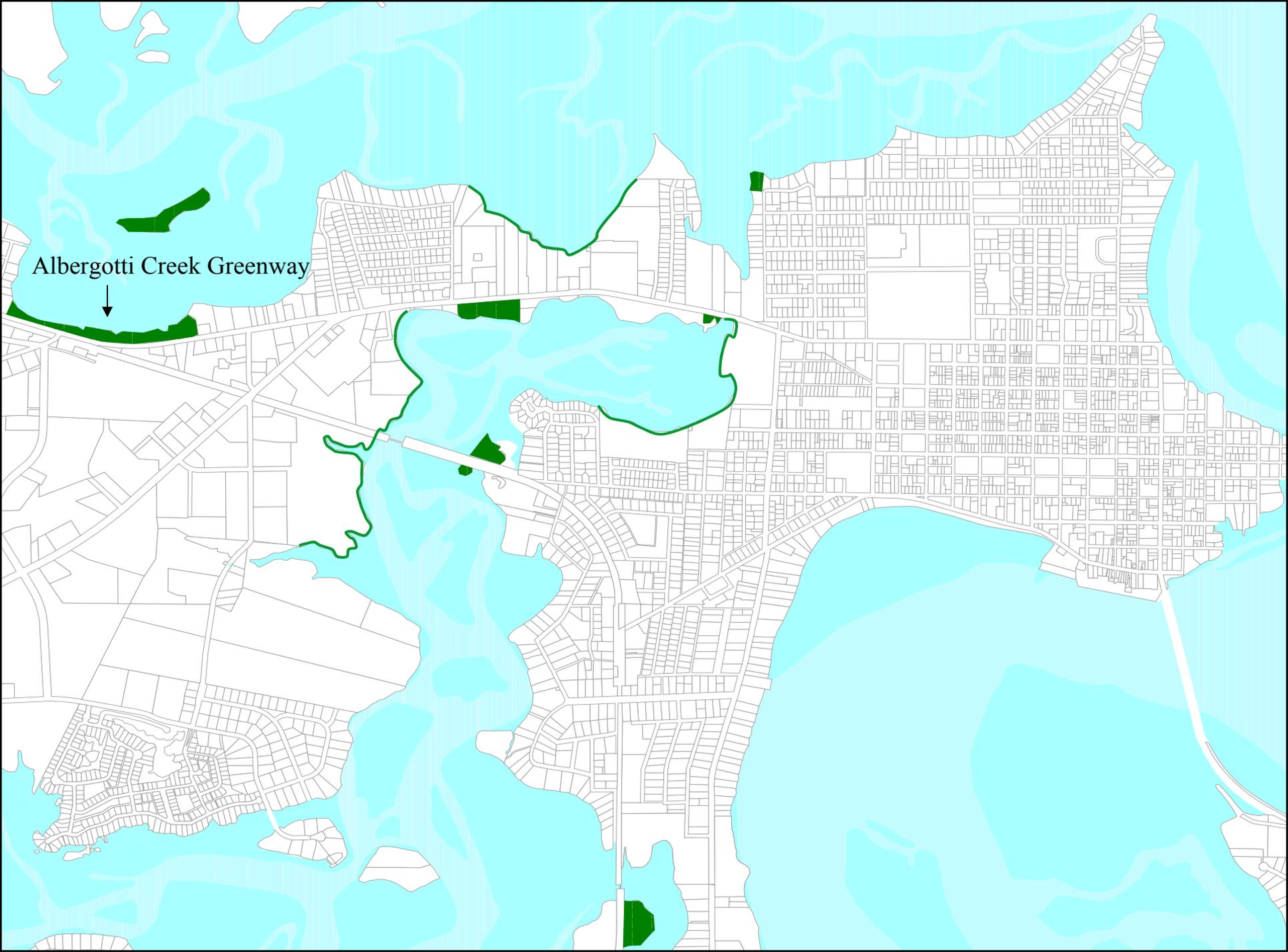
Battery Saxton Park

Battery Creek Greenway

Battery Creek Greenway and Battery Saxton Park

This area serves as one of the gateways to the National Historic Landmark District. The greenway also serves as an important riparian buffer between Battery Creek and Boundary Street. Additionally a historic battery, Battery Saxton, the most visible and accessible Civil War earthworks existing in the area, is located on these properties. The City intends to develop a historic park on the site. The City of Beaufort has begun the acquisition of property in this important area and plans to eventually purchase all parcels.





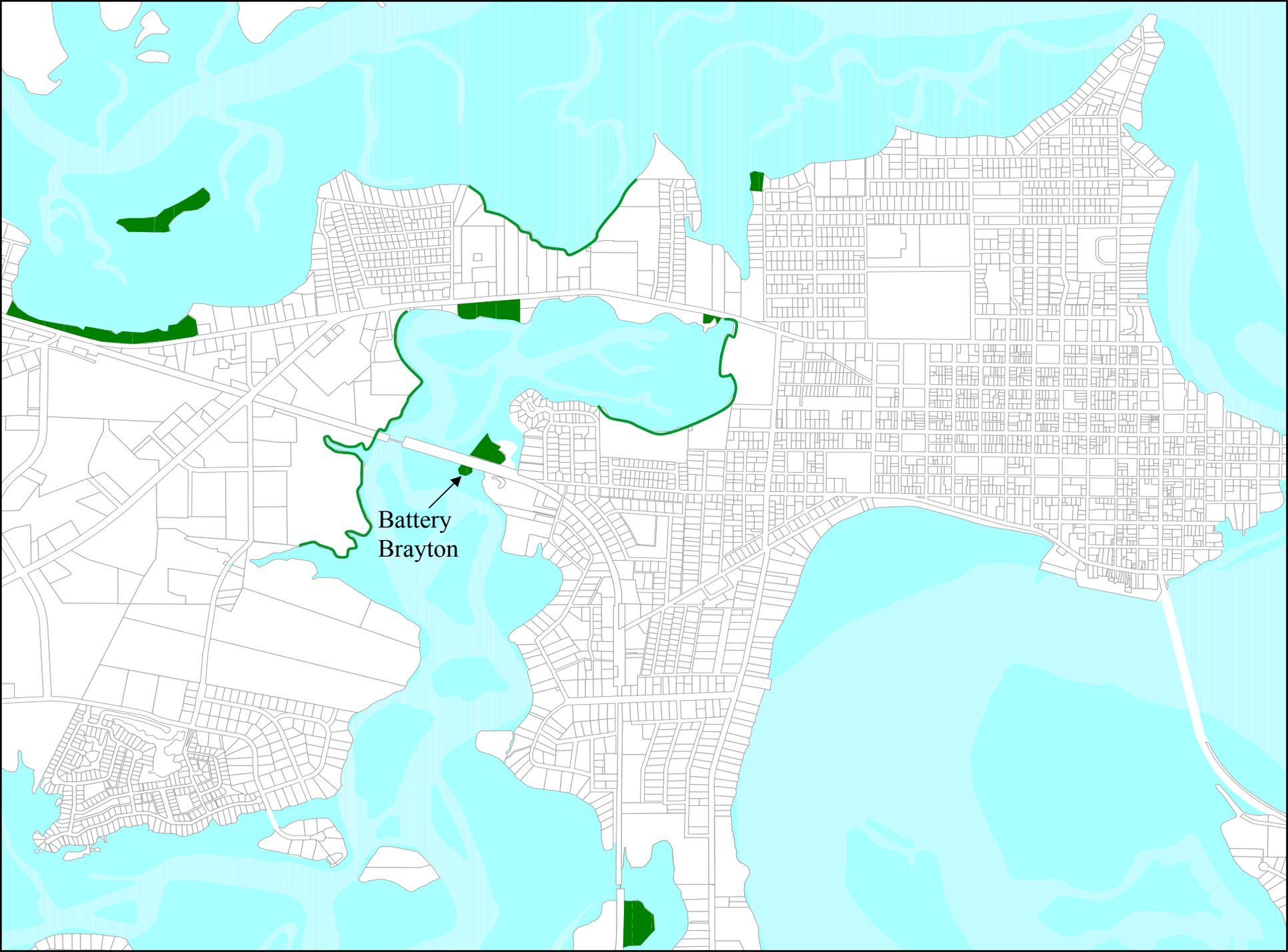
Albergoti Creek Greenway



Albergotti Creek Greenway



The proposed Albergotti Creek Greenway consists of 16 parcels between Albergotti Creek and Boundary Street/Hwy 21 which are relatively shallow and in very close proximity to sensitive waterways. This area is an important corridor and one of the main entrances into the City of Beaufort. There are a number of businesses located on these properties which could pose a significant threat to water quality through non-point source pollution. The goal is to restore these parcels to their natural state with an incorporated walking trail. The enhancements to this area will vastly improve the entrance into the city and provide critical riparian protection as well as an important view corridor.



Battery
Brayton

Battery Brayton



Battery Brayton is a two-acre parcel of property located at the terminus of North Street on the marshes of Battery Creek. The Battery is a Civil War earthwork which consists of an open berm with at least one clearly defined gun emplacement. There is only a portion of the Battery left, but what has survived is largely intact. The Battery is also adjacent to the Battery Creek Marsh which is facing increasing pressure from development and, if preserved, will provide an important riparian buffer and historic park.

Implementation

- Address the Joyner Street Property in order to replenish the Land Acquisition Fund
- Pursue funding opportunities such as grants
- Explore local funding options for open space such as real estate transfer fees, impact fees, special assessment districts, general obligation bonds or revenue bonds
- Pursue public input on open space acquisition through public meetings and charrettes
- Conduct a thorough study of all government owned property within the City of Beaufort in order to identify key property to be preserved for habitat and open space as well as to identify surplus property that could be sold and used for future open space acquisition

Implementation

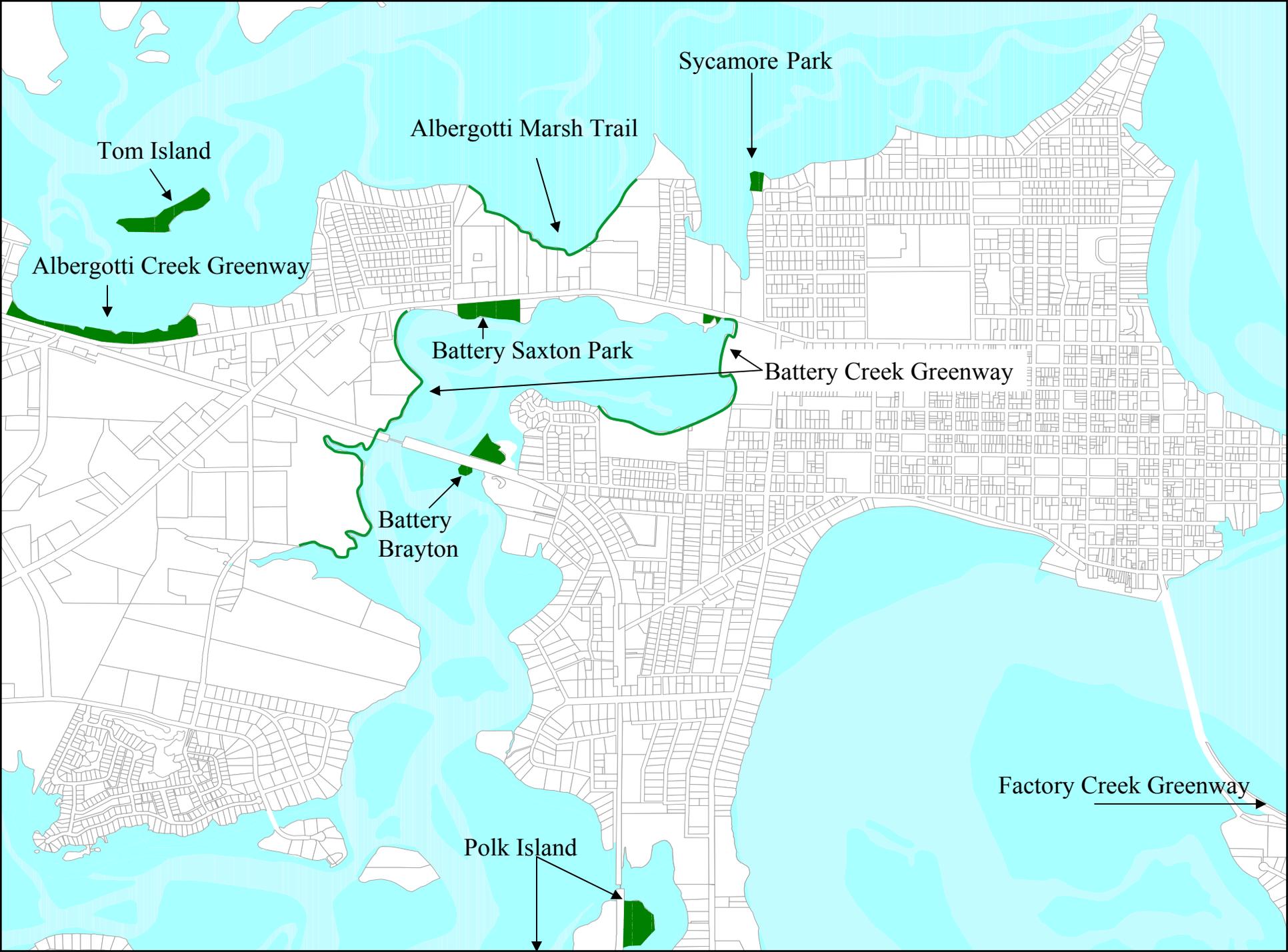
- Begin a campaign to enlist landowners in donating conservation easements on sites of historic value and sites with valuable wildlife habitat or open space
- Develop incentive packages for landowners who donate conservation easements on all or part of their land
- Develop a ranking criterion for properties, both public and private, to be inventoried and acquired
- Begin purchasing property for preservation identified by the Open Space Acquisition Map
- Pursue permanent conservation easements on critical lands and open space owned by the City of Beaufort and other government entities
- Coordinate with other agencies to protect key properties

Answers for Property Owners

- Does the fact that my property is included in the Master Plan mean that the City will be actively attempting to acquire it?
 - The City would like to work with property owners to protect areas which have been established as providing significant community benefit, whether it be ecological, cultural, historical or recreational. There are many methods of protection of which outright purchase is only one.

Answers for Property Owners

- The City would consider purchasing property if it should become available.
- This is an opportunity for land owners to partner with the City to permanently protect their property. There are often tax benefits associated with the placement of permanent protection on property.



Tom Island

Albergotti Marsh Trail

Sycamore Park

Albergotti Creek Greenway

Battery Saxton Park

Battery Creek Greenway

Battery
Brayton

Polk Island

Factory Creek Greenway