

Introduction

Bayard Community Plan

Bayard is a historically rural community located in southeastern Duval County near the intersection of U.S. 1 (Philips Highway) and St. Augustine Road/Alphons Road. Named after Thomas Francis Bayard, a member of President Grover Cleveland's Cabinet, the area was first platted in 1884 and promoted as a conveniently located community halfway between Jacksonville and St. Augustine and in close proximity to navigable waterways and the railroad. Each block of Bayard was platted with eight 125' x 170' lots. The community became a stage stop and depot town as a result of the presence of sawmills and turpentine distilleries along the Florida East Coast Railroad between Jacksonville and St. Augustine.

Much of the development in Bayard occurred during the last part of the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century. The Bayard Inn, demolished in 2005, was erected in 1899 by the widow of a Union soldier who died in a sawmill accident. The three-story, frame building opened as a general store, with The Wing Hotel occupying the second and third floors. The hotel boomed in the 1920s with automobile tourists using it as a rest stop midway between Jacksonville and St. Augustine. In the 1930s the building was pushed back to make room for a wider highway. The Inn closed in 1947, and a brothel and post office occupied the first floor, with a residence on the second floor. By the late 1930's, Bayard included separate school buildings for white and black students as well as two churches. The building that housed the school for black children is still part of the Bayard community.



Bayard Inn, ca.1900

With the completion of the U.S. 1 in 1934, Bayard became a stopping point for travelers along the highway, which at the time was the only major north-south route along the east coast. Commercial uses fronting during this time included motor courts, hotels, restaurants and gift shops.

In recent years, the historical commercial uses and buildings within Bayard have largely disappeared, though there are still a number of small businesses and long-time residents who still call Bayard home. In addition, a number of large-scale developments and proposed road improvements in the area have sparked development interest that could alter the character of Bayard.

INSERT VICINITY MAP 1

The Bayard Community Plan has been prepared in response to this potential for community change. The Plan seeks to balance the rural, small-town heritage of Bayard with new development that will result from the proposed State Road 9B, the widening of U.S. 1, and the prospective build-out of nearby Developments of Regional Impact such as Bartram Park, Gran Park and Nocatee. As the suburban scale development that characterizes much of the Southside of Jacksonville moves toward Bayard, the community will be faced with the challenge of preserving Bayard’s unique qualities and heritage.

Study Area

The Bayard Community Plan encompasses approximately 427 acres in the area that falls within these general boundaries: Philips Highway/U.S. 1 to the west, the proposed State Road 9B extension to the east and south (adjacent to Charlene Avenue) and Davis Creek to the north. Map 2 provides an aerial photograph of the study area limits with the proposed State Road 9B improvements. The northern boundary is irregularly shaped and encompasses a number of “paper” streets and blocks that were platted, but never built.

Project Description

The Bayard Community Plan was initiated to provide a framework for the future of Bayard that maximizes the quality of life for existing residents and guides growth and development that is sensitive to the history and traditions of Bayard. This Plan has been developed with extensive input from Bayard community stakeholders and includes the following elements:

- Existing conditions analysis including an examination of historical and current development trends, land use and zoning, structure inventory and conditions, demographics, transportation and mobility, and utilities;
- Extensive community participation program using workshops, surveys and interviews;
- Development of town center concept and transit-oriented development (TOD) elements;
- Synthesis of data, analysis and community input into a comprehensive Community Plan for Bayard; and,
- SmartCode model development ordinance that guides the form of the built environment and implementation strategies.

STUDY AREA MAP 2