



The Town of Hilton Head Island  
**Our Plan Regional Work Group**

**Tuesday, August 20, 2019, 10:00 a.m.**

**Technical College of the Lowcountry  
New River Campus – Room 125  
100 Community College Drive  
Bluffton, SC 29909**

## **AGENDA**

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*As a courtesy to others please turn off / silence ALL mobile devices during the meeting. Thank You.*

### **Work Group:**

#### ***Expand to Embrace an Integrated Regional Focus***

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. FOIA Compliance** - Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- 3. Discussion Items**
  - a. Revisit discussion on input from regional municipalities
  - b. Begin 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan Review
- 4. Staff Reports/Updates**
- 5. Adjournment**

*Please note that a quorum of Town Council may result if four (4) or more of their members attend this meeting.*

*Please note that a quorum of the Planning Commission may result if five (5) or more of their members attend this meeting.*



Town of Hilton Head Island  
**Our Plan Regional Work Group Meeting**

Tuesday, August 6, 2019 at 10:00 am

The Living Lab at Town Hall

## **MEETING NOTES**

Work Group:

*Expand to Embrace an Integrated Regional Focus*

**Present from Work Group:** John O'Toole, Terry Herron, Charles Wohl, Leslie McGowan, Jocelyn Staigar

**Present from Town Council:** None

**Present from Town Staff:** Jayme Lopko, Taylor Ladd

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- The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.
- Terry Herron gave an update on the presentation to the Development Team and the feedback received from the Team regarding the information presented as part of the SOAR activity performed by the Work Group. The group discussed options to gather input from regional municipalities both from a local and county level including Beaufort and Jasper Counties as well as Savannah.
- Taylor Ladd went over the Our Plan terminology of goal, strategy, and tactic. The following are definitions for these terms:
  - a. Goal – an aspiration; a desired outcome
  - b. Strategy – a plan of action
  - c. Tactic – a tool or action item
- Jayme Lopko and Taylor Ladd went over a document handed out that contains the current Comprehensive Plan implications, goals, and implementation strategies. This document will be used to evaluate topics related to Regional Focus to see what has been accomplished and what should be carried forward to Our Plan. Ms. Ladd also explained how the Our Plan core values will be linked to the required elements of the Comprehensive Plan per State law.
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 AM.

**Submitted by:** Jayme Lopko

# **Charting the Island's Future – From Here to 2030**

*Element Goals and Implementation Strategies - Excerpts*



## **Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan**

July 18, 2017

# **Table of Contents For Excerpts from 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan**

## **List of Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan**

(Appended Plans are available in Box and as requested)

## **List of Tables**

(Specific Tables can be provided to your Work Group upon request)

## **List of Figures**

(Specific Figures can be provided to your Work Group upon request)

### **Chapter 2: Cultural Resources**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
Implementation Strategies

### **Chapter 3: Natural Resources**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
Implementation Strategies

### **Chapter 4: Population**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
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### **Chapter 5: Housing**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
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### **Chapter 6: Community Facilities**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
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### **Chapter 7: Economic Development**

7.1 Comprehensive Plan Approach  
7.2 Economic Model  
7.3 Economic Development Discussion  
7.4 Key Island Economic Assets and  
Capabilities  
7.5 Potential Risks for Future Economy with  
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7.6 Potential Strategies with Implications for  
the Comprehensive Plan  
7.7 Some Key Implementation Strategies

### **Chapter 8: Land Use**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
Implementation Strategies

### **Chapter 9: Transportation**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
Implementation Strategies

### **\*Chapter 10: Recreation**

Implications for the Comprehensive Plan  
Goals  
Implementation Strategies

\*Element not required by SC statute

# Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan

- Beach Management Plan
- Bridge to Beach Redevelopment Plan
- Broad Creek Management Plan
- Chaplin Initiative Area Plan
- Fire & Rescue Master Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan (2009)
- Stoney Initiative Area Plan
- Ward One Master Land Use Plan (1999)

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## **CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **2.1 Historical/Cultural Resources**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Recognize the importance of the shrimping industry as part of Lowcountry history and culture by encouraging Lowcountry sustainable seafood industry initiatives.
- Several studies have been completed on single archaeological sites on Hilton Head Island. The last archeological survey of the Island was completed in 1986 for the Comprehensive Plan. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan acknowledged the need for further study of the Islands historic and archeological sites.
- The Town of Hilton Head Island does not require routine archaeological assessments as part of the development approval process, except through the review of the project by the State of South Carolina, Department of Archives and History. The only protection for these sites is through the Town's Municipal Code, Chapter 2 Sections 17-2-111 and 112 that states it is unlawful to damage, deface, or loot archaeological or historic sites, tombstones, and monuments.
- The 2004 Comprehensive Plan noted that historic sites behind the gates of communities should be accessible to the public for education and viewing. Current access to historic sites is limited to guided tours by the local museum (for a fee) in Port Royal, automobiles in Hilton Head Plantation (no tour buses), and for a fee of six dollars to enter Sea Pines.
- Native Island cemeteries located behind the gates of communities are currently accessible to those visiting family within the cemeteries. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan recommended that access to these historic sites and cemeteries be maintained and options researched to make these areas more easily accessible.
- Typically, Native Islanders are African Americans who lived on Hilton Head Island before modern development and who trace their roots to Gullah slaves from central and western Africa. After the Civil War, freedmen established farms, small communities, schools, and churches throughout the Island. Several of the community names are still used to describe historic neighborhoods. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan recommended mapping these historic neighborhoods, which is shown in Figure 2.2, Historic Neighborhoods of Hilton Head Island.
- The Town's unique sense of place and character through the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage and historical resources should be enhanced as a valuable cultural resource.

#### **Goals**

- A. To identify historic and archaeological sites in Hilton Head Island. Various archaeological sites on Hilton Head Island are thousands of years old. A number of churches and cemeteries date back hundreds of years. Even certain modern buildings, which are products of early resort development, have character worth retaining. Without protection these areas may not be preserved into the future. These areas and structures should be recognized and preserved as important elements in the Island's historic heritage.
- B. To provide access to important historic and religious sites located inside gated communities that are currently inaccessible to the public. The Town should encourage improvement of access to these sites, while protecting them from destruction or loss.

- C. To preserve Native Island culture. Increased development and changing demographics have the potential to lead to the loss of Native Islander culture. The Town should assist Native Islanders (Gullah-freedmen descendent) culture with programs that will sustain deep ties to family-owned lands and historic neighborhoods.
- D. To encourage education about the rich cultural heritage of Hilton Head Island.
- E. To celebrate the Town's unique sense of place and character through the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage and historical resources. The heritage and legacies of the Native Island Community is cherished and capitalized by the development of a center for Gullah studies.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider conducting a Town-wide study of all archeological and culturally significant sites.
- B. Consider developing a historic landmarks protection program to preserve important sites and architecture on the Island. Research the need to create an ordinance, regulations, or a zoning district to offer additional protection to historical and culturally significant sites.
- C. Encourage planned communities and other landowners to provide access for family members, friends and historians to cultural and historic sites to respect cultural dignity and allow for maintenance of historic areas.
- D. Improve access to historic sites for educational purposes. Research the options of increasing the ease of accessibility to these sites for education, viewing, and maintenance.
- E. Identify historic landmarks and important archaeological sites with a Historic Resource Survey. Elements of the survey should include development approval incentives for preservation, consideration of variances to encourage rehabilitation, purchase and lease options, and moving certain structures to designated Historic Preservation Zones.
- F. Identify appropriate locations for historic markers that identify important people, places, events, and neighborhoods.
- G. Identify historic figures within Hilton Head Island to use for street naming applications. Various books and manuscripts at the Heritage Library Foundation provide extensive information on historic figures with ties to Hilton Head Island.
- H. Work on public land acquisition to preserve historic and cultural sites for future generations.
- I. Cooperate with the Coastal Discovery Museum to establish a strong Gullah cultural education component at the Honey Horn site.
- J. Promote preservation of Gullah/historical neighborhoods and historic structures to help maintain the Gullah culture.
- K. Support the goals of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor organization and promote the Gullah culture within Beaufort County and on Hilton Head Island.
- L. Promote educational programs and interpretive signage that help residents and visitors of all ages to understand the long unique history and rich cultural traditions on Hilton Head Island.
- M. Preserve the identity of traditional neighborhoods. Officially, recognize historic neighborhood names by showing their locations on Town maps, and by encouraging other mapmakers to also include the names.
- N. Increase education about Hilton Head Island's diverse cultural resources through the following:
  - i. Continue to fund educational programs and cultural celebrations.

- ii. Apply for grants to fund development of interpretive facilities and programs about cultural/historic resources.
  - iii. Coordinate with Coastal Discovery Museum and other institutions to provide educational materials and hands-on programs to schools and various subcultures to promote cultural understanding.
  - iv. Provide interpretive displays of cultural artifacts and themes at public buildings, such as Town Hall, the Beaufort County library, and Coastal Discovery Museum.
  - v. Increase awareness of the brochure created by the Chamber that includes a driving tour of important historic and archaeological sites on the Island.
- O. Preserve Native Islander and Gullah cultural history through the following:
- i. Continue to provide financial support for the annual Gullah Celebration through ATAX grants and other appropriate sources.
  - ii. Incorporate Native Islander history into public parks in and near their neighborhoods.
  - iii. Encourage property owners of family cemeteries to provide for the perpetual protection of the cemeteries.
- P. Provide funding and promotion of cultural events for all cultures represented on the Island, from festivals to art exhibits to prominent entertainers.
- Q. Support and improve media coverage for local arts and cultural events through an enhanced relationship with the local Chamber of Commerce and inclusion in the Town's website and newsletter.
- R. Recognize the economic value of Hilton Head Island's arts and cultural resources in tourism.
- S. Consider the creation of a Cultural Committee to promote all cultures through art and photographic exhibits, theatrical and musical performances, sporting events, etc.

## **2.2 Arts**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- There are numerous arts and cultural organizations on the Island. There is no one organization that represents the arts community as a whole.
- Arts and cultural tourism gives the Island a sense of community and provides educational benefits to both residents and visitors.
- The arts can play a role in shaping a community, enhancing unique character, and providing for expanded opportunities for economic development.

### **Goals**

- A. To support arts through sources such as ATAX funding. In the past the Town has contributed an average of 45% of total ATAX funds annually to the arts and cultural organizations of the Island.
- B. To create one vision for the arts and cultural community of the Island. There are numerous arts and cultural organizations on the Island; however there is no one organization that represents the arts community as a whole.
- C. To have adequate space to serve as a large arts venue with appropriate seating and layout conducive for the type of events that are held on the Island.
- D. To provide space for local artists for public display of art in parks and within buildings to display their work while adding character to the space where it is located.

- E. To understand that fine arts are an integral part of the cultural resources on Hilton Head Island, which contribute to mutual appreciation of different cultures, and promote and support those resources as necessary.
- F. To have a Public Art Program that employs goals such as the following to guide the Public Art in the Town:
  - i. The Public Art Program should reflect the diverse spectrum of beliefs, cultural heritage and traditions, and artistic expressions of Hilton Head Island.
  - ii. The Public Art Program should include works of art representing a broad variety of media and styles and support community interests to have an aesthetically built environment.
  - iii. The Public Art Program should endeavor to provide opportunities for artists of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, artists with disabilities, and artists of all other diverse groups.
  - iv. The program should identify and pursue additional sources of funds such as a 1% fund, and donations of Works of Art to the Town.
  - v. The program should develop public art projects which enhance the public spaces as well as the visual design form and content of the community; which enhance a particular neighborhood; and, which may enhance the tourist and economic potential of the Town and particular sites within the redevelopment program.
  - vi. The program should pursue opportunities to inform the public regarding public art including possibilities for public participation in all phases of the public art process.
  - vii. The program should promote the visual arts and inform and work to increase understanding within the community about the purposes and meaning of the works of art in the Collection.
  - viii. The program should inventory, document, maintain and conserve works of art in the collection, regardless of the source of acquisition.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Recognize and support the continued education efforts of the arts community.
- B. Evaluate the current public art program.
- C. Support Arts through ATAX funding.
- D. Utilize Town land for arts and cultural activities.
- E. Based on the recommendation of the Venue Committee, if needed coordinate with arts organizations for a new facility that will have a larger capacity as well as being more suitable for quality arts performances. This will help foster additional arts and cultural opportunities.
- F. Support the development of an Arts Master Plan to provide a unified position and voice for the entire arts and cultural community, which could include the creation of a Cultural Committee to support the needs and goals of the Arts Master Plan.
- G. Work with Chamber to promote arts and cultural as visitor attractors.
- H. Research the economic benefits and return on investment for expanding arts venues and programs as a means to attract and enrich the Island experience for residents and visitors.
- I. Support development of a Public Art Master Plan.
  - i. The intent of developing guidelines is to strike a reasonable balance between allowing the future artist maximum freedom while ensuring that the art is suitable and appropriate for the site and the community.

- ii. Most sites should be located on public property such as Town, State and County owned property, but can include private property having a high degree of public visibility within the area covered by a Public Art Master Plan.
  - iii. The Master Plan Map should consider various neighborhood identities, each defining a distinct context for public art. The Map should suggest locations appropriate for placement of public art. The purpose is to alert artist and art selection of the nature and character of each part of Town.
  - iv. The Town is concerned with the issue of visual clutter. The approach to avoid such problems on public property is to master plan public art locations. A plan should be developed that identifies in advance the publicly owned locations that are suitable and appropriate for artful public spaces.
- J. Consider Implementing a Percent for Art Density Bonus Program. This program would provide bonus density as an incentive to develop the facilities and the community amenities specified in an adopted public art plan. The private sector would be encouraged to invest in public art such as the following:
- i. Allocate and spend 75% of the 1%-2% of construction costs on a work(s) of art and contribute the remaining 25% directly to the Public Art Trust Fund.
  - ii. Contribute the full 1%-2% of construction costs to the Public Art Trust Fund.
  - iii. Contribute an amount greater than 25% of 1%-2% of construction costs to the Public Art Trust Fund, and dedicate the balance to on-site artworks.
- K. Consider a Percent for Art CIP Program.
- i. Public art is a creative way to celebrate the Town's unique culture while encouraging public private partnerships, furthering sustainability in Town projects and enhancing community pride. To complement the numerous projects the Town funds throughout the community, it is recommended that there be established a 1% for Public Art CIP Program.
  - ii. To assist with the allocation of the 1% program funds, the Town could partner with the Public Art Committee of the Community Foundation. By working together, the two agencies should seek to reach a broad base of artists with diverse perspectives and talents, while encouraging interest in the Town as a venue for their product, and leverage Town resources.
  - iii. "Percent for Arts Program" would require public and private development to allocate 1% of total costs to the creation of public art. The private development participation could be limited to specific areas of the Town where a particular emphasis on art is envisioned.
- L. Consider creating arts spaces.
- i. Finding and retaining affordable live/work space is a problem for artists, painters, sculptors, dancers, and others who require an abundance of well-lit space in which to work. Many artists gravitate to old warehouses and other industrial buildings, but their very presence in an industrial neighborhood often acts as a catalyst, setting in motion a process of gentrification that drives rents up and forces the artists out.
  - ii. Art space would be a Town initiative through public/private partnerships to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. The Town should pursue this initiative through development projects, asset management activities, consulting services, and community-building activities that serve artists and arts organizations of all disciplines, cultures, and economic circumstances. By creating art spaces the Town

supports the continued professional growth of artists and enhances the cultural and economic vitality of the surrounding community.

## **2.3 Community Character**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- These concepts have helped to shape the Island and Community Character for Hilton Head Island and provide a guide to protect these important legacies.
- Character preservation and “sensitive renewal” have been identified as key components to guide growth, regulation and control.

### **Goals**

- A. To preserve and enhance the natural and physical environments that reflect the character of the Island.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Preserve and enhance natural and physical environments that reflect character of the Island.
- B. Support development concepts and architectural styles that foster and promote Island and Community Character and that preserve culture or history of the Island.
- C. Protect Island Character and the authenticity of the Island experience.
- D. Consider formalizing the Design Guide through development of a Community Design Element to improve the Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Update Design Guide with a design-oriented focus for redevelopment areas.
- F. Preserve Island and neighborhood character through approved design standards. The Town has a Corridor Overlay District and Neighborhood Character Overlay Districts that are designed to preserve Island and neighborhood character.
- G. The following components should be used to protect Island Character:
  - i. Preserve significant existing site features, trees and vegetation.
  - ii. Treat the landscape as a major element of the project.
  - iii. Provide landscaping of a scope and size that is in proportion to the scale of the development.
  - iv. Design and maintain landscaping in its natural shape and size.
  - v. Design structures appropriate for their use and neighborhood.
  - vi. Promote pedestrian scale circulation.
  - vii. Demonstrate the fundamental principles of good architectural design.
  - viii. Design structures with subtle visual impact and utilize natural colors, materials, textures and colors.
  - ix. Provide lighting that is adequate for safety and enhances the site.
  - x. Coordinate and harmonize the design of structures, parking and site amenities.
  - xi. Provide continuity of design on all facades of the building.
  - xii. Conceal visually undesirable utilities and equipment.

## **CHAPTER 3: NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **3.1 Water Quality & Quantity**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The data collected on the local, regional and national scale suggests that the current development strategies can have a negative impact on water quality. The Town needs to continue to make water quality and quantity a high priority by encouraging water conservation, reducing impervious surfaces, encouraging environmentally sound drainage and flood control practices, as well as sustainably manage stormwater for small and large scale development.

#### **Goals**

- A. Management of impaired watersheds.
- B. To preserve all blueways, which are interconnected waterways that provide aquatic trails for wildlife and recreation opportunities for humans (which includes salt marsh, freshwater wetlands, open canals, ditches and open water systems).
- C. To encourage water conservation.
- D. To encourage private property owners to incorporate water quality protection measures into their home and/or development.
- E. To research the possibility of instituting an irrigation inspection program to assist in water conservation and design efficiency.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Explore incentives to motivate applicants to utilize watershed friendly, low-impact planning strategies during both the development and redevelopment review process.
- B. Maintain and/or improve watershed condition by reducing impervious surfaces through land acquisition.
- C. Explore the opportunities for trading development rights within impaired watersheds to take development pressure off environmentally sensitive headwater regions, areas of particular concern are watersheds 6, 8, 11, 19, 20, and 22 (see Figure 3.1 Impervious Surface Analysis Map for more details).
- D. Maintain and/or improve watershed pervious surface for Town projects.
- E. Require wetland buffers vegetated with native plants for all land-use types.
- F. Encourage the use of drought tolerant native plantings with high wildlife value (food and cover).
- G. Consider training qualified staff to conduct field inspections of installed irrigation systems to ensure water resource conservation and design efficiency. Inspections conducted by qualified Town staff would assist in saving money for the owner as well as water resources for the entire Island.
- H. Monitor water quality at stormwater discharge points and use the data to guide future infrastructure improvements.
- I. Use the latest technology to monitor environmental conditions and the effectiveness of current regulation.
- J. Implement the recommendations of the Broad Creek Management Plan.

- K. Avoid channelizing naturalized waterways solely for drainage purposes.
- L. Encourage land owners and developers to utilize alternative stormwater management techniques through incentives provided by the Town of Hilton Head Island and the Stormwater Utility, to include LID techniques such as bioretention, treatment trains, permeable pavement, and infiltration.
- M. Highlight resources for alternative stormwater management and designs for both single family and non-single family developments on the Town's website.

### **3.2 Air Quality**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Toxic and cancer-causing chemicals can be inhaled directly or carried by small particles into the lungs. Millions of pounds of these chemicals are emitted into the air over our nation every year by motor vehicles and by both large and small industry. The Town needs to consider the human health and environmental implications of declining air quality and act to prevent further degradation through alternative and innovative transportation strategies, providing incentives for energy efficiency, researching the feasibility of enacting an anti-idling ordinance and maintaining effective tree protection and replanting regulations.

#### **Goals**

- A. To explore opportunities for alternative transportation to limit traffic congestion and pollution, including potential for effective mass transit and other innovative transportation strategies.
- B. To preserve and plant trees for reduction of the urban heat island effect and to lessen the formation of disease-causing ground-level ozone.
- C. To educate residents and visitors about the impacts of idling and traffic congestion and provide ways in which each person can help to reduce idling time as well as reduce overall personal and commercial vehicle usage. The Island imports nearly 100 percent of goods. The commercial fleet utilized to transport these goods should be encouraged to reduce idling time due to its potential impact on air quality.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Promote innovative technologies for alternative transportation. Educate visitors and residents of the impacts that idling and traffic congestion have on air quality.
- B. Encourage bicycle friendly roadways through signage.
- C. Encourage walking districts to reduce daily trips.
- D. Explore opportunities for Park-n-Ride lots on mainland for commuters.
- E. Look at opportunities for staggered work hours.
- F. Continue the conversion of the municipal vehicle fleet to more efficient technology whenever practical.
- G. Continue to encourage the conservation of mature forests.
- H. Require island and median width (min. 15 feet) in parking lot construction to accommodate large shade trees. Flexibility for other site features may be considered to accommodate this provision.
- I. Encourage private developments to create alternative forms of transportation to essential destinations.



- J. Encourage, through incentives, the use of resource efficiency in new and redevelopment projects.
- K. Preserve vertical layers of vegetation (canopy, understory, shrub, herbaceous) wherever possible and restore these layers in disturbed areas.
- L. Initiate an assessment of the Town's Urban Tree Cover.

### **3.3 Positive Impacts of Environmental Preservation on Quality of Life**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The preservation of natural resources includes thoughtful planning techniques and sustainable land use practices. The Town needs to maintain healthy beaches and creeks, invest in well-planned green space, and protect mature tree canopies in order to enhance and support mental and physical health, economic vitality and a high quality of life.

#### **Goals**

- A. To monitor the effectiveness of the Critical Storm Protection and Dune Accretion Area and Transition Area overlay district.
- B. To maintain human health through natural resource preservation.
- C. To maintain beach ecosystem for wildlife (e.g. sea turtle nesting, island glass lizard habitat, piping plover critical habitat).
- D. To preserve open space (including improvement and enhancement of existing).
- E. To encourage greenways between present and future town properties.
- F. To encourage the preservation and/or enhancement of wildlife habitat on all town properties.
- G. To encourage blueways between present and future town properties.
- H. To enhance, create and maintain vegetated riparian wetland buffers with viewing corridors and windows.
- I. To incorporate wildlife design standards for all roads (new and upgrades to existing).
- J. To preserve and enhance our urban forest by continuing to preserve native species and the species mix on the Island.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Reduce or remove obstructions for corridors between blueways – especially between freshwater wetlands, salt marshes and beaches.
- B. Investigate incentives to encourage all property owners to replant native trees and understory vegetation.
- C. Assist utility companies to maintain easements in a natural state.
- D. Recommend methods to enhance wildlife habitat on Town projects such as parks, natural areas and rights-of-way. Some examples could include nesting boxes, nesting platforms, littoral shelves in ponds, wildflower patches, living hedges and thickets, and enhanced buffers.
- E. Utilize wildlife friendly infrastructure for roads, including but not limited to: culverts for under-road crossings; no curbing or rolled curbing; lower speed limits and/or traffic-calming devices (e.g. curved roads, trees on shoulders, landscaped medians); wooded medians on roadways 4 lanes or greater (act as wildlife crossing refuges); signage to alert motorists of crossing areas.

### **3.4 Environmental Education**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Our community and our nation's future rely on a well-educated public to be wise stewards of the very environment that sustains us. It is environmental education which can best help us as individuals make the complex, conceptual connections between economic prosperity, benefits to society, environmental health, and our own wellbeing. Ultimately, the collective wisdom of our citizens, gained through education, will be the most compelling and most successful strategy for environmental management. Therefore, the Town should take a leadership position to provide enhanced environmental learning opportunities for community development.

#### **Goals**

- A. To initiate and maintain partnerships with other Island, county, state and federal agencies for environmental education purposes (e.g. Coastal Discovery Museum, Port Royal Sound Foundation, Chamber of Commerce, Clemson University, OCRM, SCDNR, and NOAA).
- B. To continue to communicate with Island residents and visitors for general environmental education relating to stormwater, native plants, buffers, wildlife, and water quality.
- C. To continue to create and disseminate brochures and other informational material for visitors and citizens.
- D. To encourage property owners to become 'wildlife friendly' through environmental education.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Assist in funding the Clemson Extension Agent.
- B. Host workshops and seminars in Beaufort County for the general public's information on environmental issues and regulations.
- C. Show how to reduce nutrient inputs, sediment, pathogens, organic matter and litter before it reaches drainage conveyance systems using demonstration projects and public education.
- D. Implement interpretive signs at Island parks; include researching grant opportunities for financial support.
- E. Develop an education program to inform property owners of the benefits (to their health, property values and wildlife) of preserving or enhancing native vegetation.
- F. Inform the public about programs for certifying backyard wildlife habitat that help make properties wildlife friendly such as: National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, National Audubon Golf Course Certification, and Carolina Yards and Neighborhoods.

### **3.5 Sustainable Development**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Coastal municipalities are under increasing pressure to accommodate human-induced changes to the natural environment. In order to sustain long-term wellbeing, the Town needs to employ and encourage others to utilize resource efficiency and low impact development practices on every site.

#### **Goals**

- A. To create incentives for low impact development (both site and structure design).
- B. To create a "green" standard for all capital improvement projects.

- C. To establish a “green” maintenance standard for Town properties.
- D. To create positive environmental effects on the surrounding neighborhood through the Town open space land acquisition program.
- E. To preserve wetlands (isolated freshwater are of high priority), individual and stands of trees, specimen trees, rare or critical animal habitats, rare or critical plant species, and reduce impervious surfaces in impaired watersheds through land acquisition.
- F. To reduce and mitigate the negative impacts of sea level rise and global warming effects on Island.
- G. To explore the opportunity to implement a plastic bag fee for shopping establishments.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan that addresses green practices throughout its operations to position the Town as a nationally recognized leader in the green movement. This sustainability plan would address the design and construction of new facilities and parks as well as retrofits of existing facilities and assist in the formulation of enhanced regulations for the private sector to follow for new and existing development. It would also include the implementation of an effective Townwide recycling program and a comprehensive education program.
- B. Integrate a LID menu of optional design techniques into the Land Management Ordinance. Each LID design technique should be incentivized to encourage use by the applicant/developer.
- C. Explore the opportunities for monetary and non-monetary incentives for LID.
- D. Green-up Capital Improvement projects to include achieving green certifications with programs such as Sustainable Sites Initiative, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Earthcraft for new and redeveloped Town facilities and infrastructure. It could also include the use of recycled building materials and recycled asphalt for roadways. Other greening initiatives could utilize reflective paint for dark surfaces to reduce urban heat islands, the use of solar panel technology, employment of green roofs, pervious parking, wildlife-friendly crossings during roadway construction, preservation of existing tree canopy, green roofs and rainwater harvest technologies for the capture and reuse of stormwater.
- E. Establish criteria to include during the solicitation process for potential contractors based on level of environmental responsibility. Criteria can be established to evaluate a contractor based on environmental stewardship.
- F. Develop green maintenance strategies, including the use of organic fertilizers and cleaning products, low-VOC paint and carpet.
- G. Increasing building efficiency by utilizing compact fluorescent and other high-efficiency bulbs for light fixtures and enhancing the weatherproofing for both doors and windows. This may include the need to conduct an energy audit for Town facilities in order to properly assess energy usage and target ways in which the Town could improve efficiency. These projects can then function to provide practical examples for the public to follow and integrate into future developments.
- H. Support beach renourishment activities.
- I. Institute an effective, Island-wide recycling program.
- J. Increase the frequency of the hazardous waste round-ups.

- K. Identify smaller pieces of land for acquisition in order to provide localized benefits such as reduction of stormwater runoff, increased shading of impervious surfaces and overall reduction of impervious surfaces.
- L. Utilize the latest technology to better understand the long term implications of sea level rise and global warming on island natural resources.
- M. Consider eliminating the grandfather clause for nonconformities in the Critical Storm Protection Dune Accretion Area and Transition Area overlay district. This is in order to protect private property from storm surge and sea level rise as well as maintain a mature intact dune system.
- N. The implementation of a small fee for the use of plastic bags would reduce the overall demand, reduce litter, as well as provide a small amount of money to the Town for reinvestment. Low cost reusable bags could be provided by the Town.

## **CHAPTER 4: POPULATION**

*Note: For this element, Goals and Implementation Strategies are categorized differently than Implications. Scroll past 4.8 Income for Goals and Implementation Strategies, which end at 4.3 Community Building*

### **4.1 Population**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Permanent and seasonal population has experienced significant growth.
- As an Island with a large commuter work force and large visitor draw, the Town of Hilton Head Island should have accurate counts of seasonal and daytime Island populations. The data is necessary for many reasons, in particular, to assist in planning for evacuations, traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements and the provision of other public services (More information is in the Transportation and Community Facilities Elements).
- Establishing a method for tracking the Island's actual daytime and seasonal population including the impacts of the commuting workforce and seasonal visitor population is important.
- With the growing size and diversity of the Town's population, new and unforeseen challenges are likely to arise. To better understand and address these challenges the Town needs access to a large base of comprehensive demographic information.
- The sense of community on Hilton Head Island needs to be reenergized and all elements of its population made more aware of each other. The Town needs to foster a Town identity and continue to play an active role in merging Hilton Head Island's many communities into one Island community.

### **4.2 Population Projections**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Population projections provide useful information that assists in determining future service needs and proper allocation of land uses.
- Providing updated population projections at a regular interval would provide beneficial information to decision makers in planning for the provision of services in the future.
- The impact of economic conditions, programs such as land acquisition, and changes to zoning all impact potential development within the Town and should be monitored.
- As an island with a large commuter work force and large visitor appeal, the Town of Hilton Head Island needs to have accurate counts of seasonal and daytime Island populations. The data is necessary for many reasons, in particular, to assist in planning for evacuations, traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements and the provision of other public services (More information is in the Transportation and Community Facilities Elements).

### **4.3 Age Distribution**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Provisions that allow for aging in place should be considered, especially as the population percentage of people over the age of 65 in the Town continues to grow. These include additional medical and health care services, transportation, and mobility and access to appropriate services.

- The gradual aging of the Town's population presents both new opportunities and new problems. The Town needs to work to insure that the problems are identified and solved. The Town needs to assist the community in best utilizing the skills that older citizens possess.
- Children and teenagers represent the long-term future of the community, as well as the County, State and Nation. Given the many pressures that young people face today, the Town needs to place more focus on the expectations, problems and needs of this segment of the population.

#### **4.4 Racial Composition and Trends**

##### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town population trends are moving toward a slightly more diverse population, which creates challenges and opportunities. Creating a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic and cultural diversity by understanding the needs and assets of the Island's many ethnic groups is important.

#### **4.5 Gender Composition**

##### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Facilities for males and females should be programmed at an even rate.

#### **4.6 Households**

##### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Smaller average household sizes may result in reduced impacts to community infrastructure such as roads, schools and sanitary sewers. When planning projects and programs these impacts should be considered.
- There is a segment of the population which cannot afford the high cost of housing on the Island. In order to insure the diversity of the Island's population and to develop a healthy self-sustaining community, additional moderate income housing is needed (See the Housing Element for additional details on the difficulties that many families face to find affordable housing).

#### **4.7 Education**

##### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The current enrollment and projected enrollment in the Hilton Head Island schools indicate that there are no immediate needs for additional school sites or expansion of existing facilities.
- The Town has social capital from a highly educated citizenry. This provides the Town with some advantages as the boards, commissions and other volunteer positions, including community organizations, may be comprised of highly skilled professionals. It also provides a source of labor for future employers.

#### **4.8 Income**

##### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town has a wealthy population relative to the County and State. Increased financial service sector operations may develop to support the needs associated with this population.
- Today, the Town is a diverse community that includes families and residents of all ages, educational and economic achievements, as well as many races. This increasingly diverse population will present challenges and opportunities that are not currently being addressed.

The Town needs to identify these challenges and opportunities to help the Island be a more sustainable community in the future.

#### **4.1 Demographics**

##### **Goals**

- A. To acquire accurate Census data.
- B. To broaden the types of data available, such as health statistics or more detailed economic information.
- C. To maintain information to track the Island's actual daytime and seasonal populations including the impacts of the commuting workforce and the seasonal tourist population.

##### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Endorse and fund future efforts to maintain the most current and accurate demographic data for Hilton Head Island.
- B. Request mid-decennial Census counts to provide Hilton Head Island with a more accurate and detailed look at population shifts.
- C. Research other sources of demographic information, such as the University of South Carolina or the S.C. Office of Research and Statistical Services.
- D. Update official Town demographic data on the Town's World Wide Web site regularly.
- E. Develop and update a demographic profile for the Town.
- F. Track the daytime population on Hilton Head Island by coordinating a system to monitor commuting traffic onto Hilton Head Island with estimates of the tourist population, daily workforce and current permanent resident population estimates. This will allow the Town to maintain a useful and accurate estimate of the actual Island population at any point in time.

#### **4.2 Population Diversity**

##### **Goals**

- A. To create a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic and cultural diversity by understanding the needs and assets of each of the Island's many different communities. By better understanding these needs and assets the Town will work to become less dependent on the workforce residing on the mainland and ensure the ability of different communities to work and live on Hilton Head Island.
- B. To work with the appropriate organizations that can help the Town to best utilize and support its older population. Assist local businesses and organizations in properly implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to insure that the Town's infrastructure is not an impediment to this population.
- C. To actively promote interaction among Hilton Head Island's numerous communities. Also, facilitate recognition of these communities by including neighborhoods in non-master planned Island areas alongside the Island's well-recognized planned communities. By bringing the various communities together, the Town will create a more complete identity.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Organize an outreach program to study the culture, lifestyles, landmarks, etc. of various communities and groups to insure that opportunities and infrastructure exists so that all groups can enjoy a high quality of life.
- B. Gather information to help determine appropriate activities that support the proper development of the Island's youth.
- C. Cooperate with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce to promote further growth of the family and resident young adult population while continuing to promote the Island as a desirable destination for retirees and vacationers.
- D. Pursue programs that meet the special needs of groups such as the elderly, youth, disabled, Native Islanders and the Hispanic population. Information from the regular tracking of demographic trends can inform the Town as to what groups on the Island may need specific attention.
- E. Identify methods to support construction of new moderate income housing. See the Housing Element for additional needs, goals, and implementation strategies on this issue.

### **4.3 Community Building**

#### **Goals**

- A. To support moderate income housing in an effort to develop a healthy self-sustaining community. See the Housing Element for needs, goals, and implementation strategies regarding this issue.
- B. To develop and support programs and activities to meet the needs of its diverse population and age groups.
- C. To emphasize "quality of life" issues when reviewing proposed residential developments.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Promote community building efforts among the Island's communities.
- B. Foster events, organizations and infrastructure that encourage involvement from the Island's entire population. Community and recreational activities can help to bridge geographical and social boundaries by involving children, adults and seniors from all cultural and ethnic groups on the Island.
- C. Identify and support the many different organizations and groups that currently are involved in community building efforts.
- D. Consider creating incentives for redevelopment that opt for a planned community approach with goals of diversity in housing cost and transportation modes.
- E. Consider flexible ordinances for planned unit developments (PUD), cluster homes and other innovations in housing development that meet workforce housing needs.
- F. Encourage interconnection between developments to promote the establishment of neighborhoods and to provide safe and convenient access to neighborhood level public facilities, such as parks and schools.
- G. Consider establishing a mechanism to evaluate the quality of life likely to be experienced in proposed developments.



## **CHAPTER 5: HOUSING**

### **5.1 Housing Units & Tenure**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Housing tenure, or financing methods for housing, is impacted by various factors such as housing supply and demand, lifestyle choices, and employment or income status. In addition, seasonal population trends of the Town affect the number of vacant structures and also have a direct effect on the ownership type. Due to the character of the Island as a popular location for visitors and part time residents, depending on the season, units may be vacant during various times. Existing structures should be refurbished and renovated to reflect the needs and wants of the current market when possible.
- Although, an increase in the total number of housing units contributes to the economic tax base for the Town, it is important that both the quantity as well as quality of the housing stock is maintained to sustain the current and future population and overall property values. As the amount of available land declines for new development, it will be very important to maintain a high quality housing stock on residential properties. In addition, the availability of various housing types is important for the housing market viability to accommodate the diverse needs of the Island's population.
- An increase in home ownership is important for a community because it enables the homeowner to establish a deeper connection with the community. Therefore, it is important to strive for increased opportunities for home ownership as a housing option. Second homes, vacation and seasonal homes as well as timeshare units comprise a large portion of the Island's housing stock. The high number of second homes impacts the percentage of total owner-occupied homes Town-wide and doesn't necessarily portray an accurate assessment of home ownership status on the Island.
- It is also important to acknowledge that mobile homes may be more vulnerable during storms and other significant weather events, such as tornados, hurricanes or floods. Fluctuations to the number, as well as areas of concentration of mobile homes, should be monitored to ensure public safety.
- The ownership structure for interval occupancy units, with multiple owners having a stake in individual units presents a challenge in cooperative efforts to redevelop the properties and keep them current with changing trends, desires and market demands. Incentives to encourage these types of communities to tackle their own individual challenges should be considered in order for the Town to remove barriers to redevelopment that may be particular to timeshare developments. Additional issues include cooperation with property management agencies and archaic covenants for condos and timeshare developments.

#### **Goals**

- A. To encourage redevelopment of multi-family residential structures to meet market demands and new trends.
- B. To encourage occupancy of existing residential properties.
- C. To consider incentives that remove barriers to redevelopment and encourage redevelopment of properties that have multiple owners.
- D. To support programs aimed at increasing home ownership.

- E. To continue focusing on requiring high quality development to meet future housing needs.
- F. To monitor availability of housing types and occupancy rates to meet housing demands.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider providing flexibility in the LMO to allow for accessory dwelling units as a housing option.
- B. Consider providing flexibility in the LMO to provide options to the traditional housing or subdivision standards in the form of family compounds. Look to other communities, particularly Beaufort County for examples on how to allow for family compounds which may assist in removing the barrier to legal and title issues associated with heirs property.
- C. Educate owners of heirs property on methods to clear titles and to build houses on their land. Pursue partnerships with organizations such as the Penn Center, a credit counseling agency or legal aid agency to overcome title and credit issues preventing land owners from building homes.
- D. Consider revising the LMO to include flexible zoning options and tools that allow a mix of uses for residential over commercial or other live work units. This may be a tool to foster both a commercial and housing option as well as a means to provide affordable housing and to reduce the amount of infrastructure necessary to travel from home to work or other basic services. Other LMO revisions may include regulations to facilitate the conversion and redevelopment of empty commercial or office space to residential units or allow for a mix of residential within the redevelopment.
- E. Encourage owners of small properties to assemble land resources through density bonuses tied to increased property sizes.
- F. Consider addressing ownership or heirs property issues with tools such as transfer of development rights or the purchase of development rights.

## **5.2 Housing Opportunities**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Affordable or obtainable housing availability poses many challenges in most communities. The Town of Hilton Head Island is not unique in the challenges that the community faces relative to the creation of obtainable housing. High or increasing land costs, coupled with declining availability of developable land on the Island, drives up the cost of many housing options, often above more traditional obtainable price levels. Construction costs, particularly those associated with building to hurricane standards, statutory requirements such as point of sale taxation and other economic drivers are barriers to keeping housing costs affordable. The Town has attempted to engage in policies and projects that encourage affordable housing, such as regulations and incentives in the Land Management Ordinance, and partnerships with developers; however, these programs were not successful. Affordable housing remains a challenge for both local and regional communities.
- A sustainable workforce is essential to the future economic potential of the Island. To be sustainable over the horizon envisioned by this Comprehensive Plan, the workforce needs appropriate education, training, and access to affordable housing. While efforts for education and training may be broadly addressed on a regional basis, the current strategy for affordable housing seems to hinge on an off-Island labor pool. While this may meet short term (3-5 years)

needs, potential development in Jasper County and other areas west of the Island may create competitive pressure on this off-Island labor pool and may threaten the Island's access to a viable work force.

- It is important that the Town of Hilton Head Island assists in the ability for the population to age in place. As the average age of the population gets older, the needs of the community change. It is important that housing options accommodate these changes. It is also important that the family and friends that support aging family members are able to reside in close proximity. The location of assisted living facilities is also important. Special complimentary land uses and associated infrastructure are needed. When one ages in place, it is important that one is living in close proximity to basic services, for instance banks, grocery stores and medical services and provisions for emergency evacuation are considered.
- Although current market conditions have resulted in reduced housing values and costs, the long-term rise in cost of housing will threaten aging in place. There are several solutions to the rising housing cost problems. One is accessory apartments, "granny-flats" or accessory dwelling units (ADU) built within a single-family home or separate structure on the same lot that functions as an apartment. The additional unit can house a family member or professional providing health care to reduce cost or it might be rented for additional revenue.
- The LMO (Land Management Ordinance) counts accessory dwelling units toward the density in most residential zones. Advocates point to benefits for the community in the form of higher tax revenue. Other solutions include co-housing, home sharing, taxation, and financial tools such as a reverse mortgage that can pay for home modifications and health care. There are many advantages to the solutions mentioned but communities must make the general public aware of such opportunities.
- There are additional groups that will grow this market area. First are the multigenerational households, including aging parents moving in and 20 somethings moving back with their parents. Second, low wages jobs and high housing cost forces several non-family members into occupying a house. Finally, there is a growing trend of retirees becoming renters. The home in some communities will no longer be the great investment it once was, or the kids are gone and the house is too big, the taxes are high, and mowing the grass is not as much fun as traveling. Millions of baby boomers will sell their home and invest.
- The replacement of the older housing stock to larger homes, typically located in close proximity to the beach, is a trend that has the potential to change the character of Island neighborhoods. The Forest Beach and Folly Field neighborhoods saw this change occurring and reacted with the adoption of regulations that protect the existing neighborhood character by limiting the size of homes and requiring additional setbacks. The conversion of small homes to large luxury homes threatens the traditional single family character of some neighborhoods and can also put a strain on the infrastructure of these areas, which were planned and built to accommodate single family development, not short term rentals utilized by as many as five families or more at one time.

## **Goals**

- A. To engage in projects that encourage affordable/workforce housing on the Island or within the region.
- B. To look at housing opportunities as a mechanism to maintain its essential workforce.
- C. To encourage housing options that provide opportunities for residents to age in place.
- D. To monitor changing demographics and trends in housing development to provide housing options that meet market demands.
- E. To consider residential overlay districts to maintain traditional single family character.

## **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider developing alternative approaches to affordable housing such as viewing it as community infrastructure and establish a 'minimum level of service' with a focus on transportation and access issues and location related to concentration of employment centers. The level of service concept could be based on a goal of insuring that a specified percentage of the total housing units in a neighborhood or development are affordable.
- B. Consider developing a master plan for Town-owned properties that considers future development projects or land swaps for affordable housing sites.
- C. Review inclusionary housing programs within the Town boundaries or the region that foster a mix of housing choices and forms.
- D. Support employer assisted housing programs to encourage more employees of various professions (teachers, police officers, firemen) to live within the Town limits or within Beaufort County.
- E. Consider developing housing programs and other educational workshops to the middle class and workforce housing markets.
- F. Educate the public on the potential impact on their daily quality of life that is directly affected by the supply or lack thereof of workforce housing. Workshops and discussion groups should be considered as a means to brainstorm strategies to address housing issues and should involve all players in the community and throughout the region.
- G. Review the land acquisition program to determine if an affordable housing component would be an appropriate modification.
- H. Encourage redevelopment of individual units to maintain marketability and code compliance, especially in developments that have multiple owners.
- I. Consider creating incentives for redevelopment that opt for a planned community approach with goals of diversity in housing cost and transportation modes.
- J. Consider flexible ordinances for planned unit developments (PUD), cluster homes and other innovations in housing development that meet workforce housing needs.
- K. Consider regulations to require interconnection between developments, which promotes the establishment of neighborhoods and to provide safe and convenient access to neighborhood level of public facilities, particularly parks and schools.

### **5.3 Barriers to Affordable Housing**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- None Listed
- Subjects: Land Costs; Land Supply; Construction Costs; Long-Term Sustainability; Marketability and Potential Profit; Attitudes Towards Affordable Housing; Lack of Developer Incentives

#### **Goals**

- A. To address housing issues using a systemic approach that integrates other elements such as economic development, transportation and land use.
- B. To consider mechanisms that decrease or eliminate barriers to affordable housing.
- C. To address affordable housing considering Town and regional solutions.
- D. To include partnerships and the cooperation with the entire community.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Encouraging property owners of unsafe or dilapidated structures to rehabilitate and convert the buildings to affordable housing should be researched as a means to provide both redevelopment and affordable housing.
- B. Facilitate the construction and redevelopment of housing opportunities through economic incentives, such as grants or other funding sources.
- C. Consider establishing a Redevelopment Agency or other similar agency to administer housing programs and continue researching housing options, and serve as an educational resource.
- D. Monitor statutory issues and the implications they have on homeowners. This includes any proposed legislation that addresses taxation, property owner's association fees and taxes and the point of sale or real estate transfer taxes.
- E. Consider creating development incentives to encourage diverse housing options that may include increased density, reduced parking requirements and increased height standards.

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## **CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **6.1 Build-out and Future Service Needs**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town government should continue to provide creative, innovative and visionary solutions in dealing with the challenges of growth and development, as well as continue to provide a high level of service to the public keeping in mind fiscal responsibility, return on investment and the community's willingness to pay.

#### **Goals**

- A. To provide innovative and visionary initiatives that mitigate challenges of growth and redevelopment while making available higher levels of service for community facilities in a fiscally responsible manner.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Continue an ongoing assessment of community facility needs in the Town as growth and redevelopment continue.
- B. Develop visionary and innovative initiatives to mitigate challenges of build-out in a proactive manner that considers fiscal responsibility and the community's willingness to pay.

### **6.2 Town Government**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Adequate facilities should be provided in order to facilitate the administration of all Town government functions.
- After Town projects are constructed, provide maintenance that preserves or improves upon the original quality of the project.
- As the Town matures, the scope of Town government should continue to be evaluated.
- The state limits expanding services through an increase in taxes.
- Developing other sources of revenue is critical to providing any new or expanded services.

#### **Goals**

- A. To provide excellent Town services funded through a variety of revenue sources.
- B. To provide the staff and requisite facilities to maintain the superior administration of all Town government functions as the community's needs increase.
- C. To work toward a more balanced composition of Town boards that better reflects the diversity of the Island's population.
- D. To set an example for the community by maintaining Town projects and properties in a manner that preserves and enhances the Island's character.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Review the scope of Town government to determine if any increases or decreases should be made to the services that are provided by the Town.
- B. Develop a long range plan to address staffing levels of existing and potential new departments, and to consider the facility needs of the Town staff for the next twenty years.

- C. Ensure that adequate facilities are available to continue the high level of services offered by the Town.
- D. Research the availability of new funding sources that will help to diversify the Town's revenue sources and assist in funding any new services that may be provided by the Town.
- E. Promote diverse participation of all members of the community through appointments to Boards, Commissions and Task Forces.
- F. Maintain the economic capacity to provide for the operation and maintenance of Town projects and properties.

### **6.3 Transportation Network**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town needs a comprehensive transportation network composed of roads, pathways, water and air transportation opportunities that are adequately maintained and meet current standards.
- The Town should coordinate with the State and County to provide for a safe, efficient and well maintained regional transportation network.
- The bridge and causeway are critical public facilities that provide a lifeline for residents and visitors as well as the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations. Protection of these critical facilities should be a priority.
- While the Island currently has an extensive pathway network, opportunities to improve pathway connections between destinations that provide additional recreational opportunities and promote alternative means of transportation on the Island should be considered.
- The Island's pathway network could be enhanced by providing a link to mainland pathway facilities.

#### **Goals**

- A. To provide a transportation network that includes opportunities for roadway, pathway, water-based and air-based transportation to and on the Island.
- B. To have a safe, efficient and well-maintained regional and local roadway network.
- C. To protect the bridges that provide the only ground transportation link from the Island to the Mainland.
- D. To have a pathway network that provides for recreational opportunities as well as an alternative means of transportation to and on the Island.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Coordinate with the County of Beaufort and the SCDOT (South Carolina Department of Transportation) to implement the recommendations included in the Town's annual Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Report and to ensure that high quality maintenance is provided for the Island's roadway network.
- B. Coordinate with appropriate agencies for the protection and routine maintenance of the bridges and causeways.
- C. Continue to expand the Island's pathway network.
- D. Coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to provide a pathway link to the mainland.



## **6.4 Town Acquired Property**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Funding of the Town's land acquisition program should be continued to further protect natural resources as well as to further implement goals of the program.
- As the Town matures and the need for redevelopment increases, the evaluation of policies related to land acquisition can help to better address the changing needs of the community.
- As the number of Town-owned properties continues to increase careful consideration of future utility is important to long range planning efforts.
- Development and land use changes adjacent to Town properties should be monitored.

### **Goals**

- A. To preserve and protect the Island's character through land acquisition.
- B. To assess the utility and character of Town acquired property.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Continue funding the Town's Land Acquisition Program.
- B. Evaluate the policies of the Town's Land Acquisition Program to determine if any changes are needed to better address the changing needs of the community as it builds out and reaches maturity.
- C. Create a Town-owned property master plan.
- D. Monitor development activities adjacent to Town-owned property.

## **6.5 Utilities**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Adequate water service should be provided for both domestic use and fire and safety purposes.
- Adequate sewer service should be provided Island-wide to improve public health, safety and welfare, reduce detrimental impacts on the Island's environment and accommodate growth and redevelopment.
- Saltwater intrusion increases the need to evaluate viable water source solutions to ensure that the Town will have an adequate water supply in the future.
- The Town should continue to work with Island PSDs to encourage water conservation.
- In order to maintain water quality, reduce negative impacts on natural systems and provide for improved stormwater conditions on the Island, the Town should continue improving stormwater infrastructure and promoting the use of best management practices.
- By encouraging recycling the Town can help reduce solid waste and pollution, as well as save natural resources and energy.
- The Town should continue to evaluate cost effective and efficient solid waste disposal and recycling options to ensure that there are adequate facilities available for these purposes.
- The Town should help educate Island residents and visitors about recycling options.
- Continued power line burial is needed to improve aesthetics and protect the Island from interruptions in electrical service, especially during significant weather events.

- Cooperative use of utility easements, primarily Santee Cooper's power line easement, should be considered.
- Utilization of Town Convenience Center has experienced significant increases, ultimately capacity and location should be evaluated to meet future needs.

### **Goals**

- A. To have a safe and effective utility system that minimizes interruption in services.
- B. To provide adequate water service for both domestic use and fire safety to all areas of the Island.
- C. To address the challenges that salt water intrusion presents for Island water sources.
- D. To promote water conservation.
- E. To have sewer service Island-wide.
- F. To have well-maintained, effective stormwater infrastructure on the Island.
- G. To have a solid waste and recycling program for the Island and to educate residents and visitors on the benefits of recycling.
- H. To improve the utility and cooperative use of publicly owned easements on the Island.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Take a leadership role in seeking funding sources and cooperative agreements with the existing PSDs for the construction of sewer lines where needed. Continue to coordinate with HHPD on the implementation of its Sewer Master Plan.
- B. Continue to Implement the Town's Sewer Policy.
- C. Continue to evaluate the positive and negative consequences of additional combinations of the three separate PSDs.
- D. Encourage the development of a joint sludge composting operation on the Island with participation from solid waste disposal and recycling organizations.
- E. Coordinate with Island PSDs to evaluate Island water needs in relationship to the impacts of salt water intrusion.
- F. Promote water conservation through joint efforts with Island PSDs and educate island residents, visitors and businesses about the importance of reducing water use.
- G. Use reclaimed water when maintaining Town projects where financially feasible.
- H. Research and compile data on the amount of waste produced by Island residents and businesses, and use that data to determine target amounts for recycling.
- I. Develop an effective recycling program for the Island and educate residents, visitors and business owners about recycling options.
- J. Cooperate with the County and appropriate agencies to seek funding sources to increase the capacity and level of service for recycling on the Island.
- K. Continue to fund the Island's power line burial program.
- L. Coordinate with Santee Cooper and other easement holders to explore the use of such easements for uses such as wildlife corridors, roadway connections and parking.
- M. Continue to improve Island stormwater infrastructure.
- N. Continue to develop cooperative agreements with Island PUDs for maintenance of stormwater infrastructure.

## **6.6 Public Safety**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- In order to ensure that the Town has adequate fire and rescue as well as emergency management services, Town of Hilton Head Island Fire and Rescue Master Plan and other emergency management plans should be implemented, keeping in mind fiscal responsibility.
- The cost effectiveness and level of service provisions for law enforcement services and facilities should be monitored.

### **Goals**

- A. To have adequate and cost effective law enforcement services for the Island.
- B. To provide Fire and Rescue and Emergency Management services to Island residents and visitors.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Continue to assess the adequacy of all public safety services, including law enforcement, in light of updated resident population and visitor figures.
- B. Please refer to the Fire & Rescue Master Plan and the emergency management plan for needs, goals, and implementation strategies for public safety.

## **6.7 Communications**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- As technology improves, it is important for the Town to implement improvements that will help to enhance the services provided to Island residents and visitors.
- The Town should continue to monitor available technologies for improvements to the Town's communications system for emergency management purposes as well as economic development incentives.
- The Town should continue to install and provide wireless internet hot spots in all Town parks and facilities.

### **Goals**

- A. To have effective communication services that minimize service interruptions on the Island that support emergency management as well as economic development applications.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Communication improvements should be made to improve capacity (4G) for economic development and emergency management through cooperation with service providers.

## **6.8 Health Care Services**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town has a higher percentage of older adults than an average community. (See Population Element). This results in a higher demand for medical care including emergency services.
- Consideration for evacuation needs in relationship to Island medical facilities should be considered.
- Maintaining a comprehensive and viable community for medical care is integral to attracting additional retirees and permanent residents to the Island.
- The Town's large service industry employment, which tends to have lower wages, can increase the number of residents without financial resources for health care services.
- Facilities are necessary to provide a final resting place for the deceased. The Town should cooperate with the County and other appropriate organizations to meet the continuing need for final resting places.

### **Goals**

- A. To have adequate, cost effective health care service for Island residents and visitors.
- B. To work toward provisions that would allow for aging in place on Hilton Head Island.
- C. To provide for safe and efficient evacuation including Island medical facilities in accordance with the Town's adopted Emergency Management Plans.
- D. To coordinate with the County and other appropriate organizations regarding the provision of a final resting place for members of the community.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Coordinate with health care providers to access health care needs for the aging population.

## **6.9 Educational Facilities**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Adequate daycare services should be provided to support the Island's workforce.
- Enrollment trends and future projections indicate no immediate need for additional school facilities on the Island.
- Continuing and adult education has been identified as important to Island citizens. More on-island opportunities should be considered for higher education.
- Because of the resort nature of the Town's economy there are opportunities to expand higher education in areas that support the local economy, such as culinary arts, golf and hospitality services.
- Adequate library facilities and services are important to the community. Continued implementation of the levels of service adopted by the County should be considered.

### **Goals**

- A. To have adequate daycare facilities for the Island's workforce and residents.
- B. To coordinate with educational agencies in the community to meet the educational needs of the Island's population.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Cooperate with the public school district, Island non-profit organizations, and concerned citizens to assess the Island's daycare facilities and propose potential ways to improve daycare options.
- B. Encourage Beaufort County to provide adequate resources and funding for the library located on Hilton Head Island.
- C. Coordinate with USCB in the development of an educational facility on the island to provide higher education programs and adult education services for Island residents.

**6.10 Capital Improvement Program**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The strong link that exists between the Capital Improvement Program and the Comprehensive Plan helps to ensure that public investment in municipal facilities and infrastructure is coordinated with the Town's projected growth and development. This relationship is important and should be maintained during the development of future Capital Improvement Plans.
- During the annual review of the CIP, the goals and implementation strategies adopted in the Comprehensive Plan should be used to assist in the development of project identification and prioritization.

**Goals**

- A. To have a Capital Improvement Program that is grounded in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Utilize recommended strategies contained in the Town's Comprehensive Plan as the driving force for the development of the Town's Capital Improvement Program.
- B. Estimate the impacts of continued operations and maintenance of all proposed facilities as part of the development of the Capital Improvements portion of the annual budget.

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## **CHAPTER 7: ECONOMY**

*Note: This element of the 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan has a different outline from the other element chapters.*

### **7.1 Comprehensive Plan Approach<sup>1</sup>**

Beginning in November 2007 element meetings were conducted to outline a rigorous approach to develop the Economic Development Element and the Comprehensive Plan. The existing comprehensive planning process was merged with a best practice business planning methodology with the framework shown in Figure 1.

### **7.2 Economic Model<sup>2</sup>**

This approach led to the formulation of the following preliminary economic dynamic model for the Town of Hilton Head Island shown in Figure 2.

Residents/Second Home Owners and Visitors/Tourism sectors are the economic engines while the Retail and Service sector is the integrator for Island wealth creation.

### **7.3 Economic Development Discussion**

Since the Town was incorporated in 1983, Hilton Head Island has developed a relatively stable economic system enabled by the two well springs of economic wealth (Residents/Second Home Owners and Visitors/Tourism - Model Figure 2)

- Residents and second home owners have increased residential capital invested on the Island from \$3.5 Billion in 1994 to \$13.8 billion in 2008 while the value of nonresidential property has increase from \$800 million to \$3.1 billion over the same time period.<sup>3</sup>
- Visitors have steadily increased from nearly 1 million at the time the Town's incorporation to nearly 2.5 million in 2000.<sup>4</sup> Visitor rates have declined somewhat since then to around two million in 2008. Overall the increase in visitors has generated an increase in nonresidential, service sector, capital invested from \$372 million to over \$1.5 billion today.<sup>5</sup> (Economic Development Table 7.3)
- Town government revenues from residential, visitors and service sectors have increased from \$18.3 million in 2003 to \$36.2 million in 2008.<sup>6</sup>
- Presently, there are more than 600 real estate executives employed on the Island.<sup>4</sup>
- 61% of local jobs are tourism-related.<sup>4</sup>

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1 See Figure 7.1

2 See Figure 7.2

3 Beaufort County Assessor Data

4 Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce

5 Town of Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

6 Town of Hilton Head Island Consolidated Municipal Budget

- Tourism in the Hilton Head Island area employs over 10,000 people living both on the Island and in the surrounding communities.<sup>4</sup>
- Approximately 43 percent of the 5,000 licensed Island enterprises are retail and service-oriented companies.<sup>4</sup>
- Retail operations and restaurants, in particular, have grown on Hilton Head Island.<sup>4</sup>
- Tourism contributes more than \$1.5 billion into the Hilton Head Island area economy annually.<sup>4</sup>
- Visitor accommodations on Hilton Head Island pay nearly \$20 million in property taxes to Beaufort County. <sup>4</sup>
- Sales taxes paid by Hilton Head Island visitors total \$47 million. Taxes paid by visitors save every South Carolina taxpayer more than \$200 each year in state taxes. <sup>4</sup>
- Last year, \$2.5 million in accommodation taxes paid by visitors was awarded to community organizations and Town government to help <sup>4</sup>:
  - Promote tourism
  - Nourish beaches
  - Support beach parks
  - Build pathways
  - Support various cultural organizations
  - Pathway rehabilitation
- This system has created a dynamic and broad-based service industry infrastructure, based largely on hospitality, tourism and residential support, which provides a relatively stable economic base for the Island.

#### **7.4 Key Island Economic Assets and Capabilities**

The key assets and capabilities that have contributed to the Island's economic success are:

- Unparalleled natural assets in the form of 13 miles of pristine beaches, green spaces, parks, trees and waterways which have been maintained and protected by both early restrictive covenants and a Town governance process focused on the need to protect and preserve these natural assets. These natural assets not only make the Island environmentally pleasing, but also are key tangible assets of Hilton Head Island's economy in attracting and retaining residents and visitors alike.
- An evolved community culture with an image of a quieter, natural experience for visitors and residents alike having a real "Island" feel.
- Access and communication via a land bridge which increases the opportunity for relatively low cost transportation for visitors, residents, and employees.
- Sensitive regulation and ordinance that owe much to the vision of the early Island founders and developers, resulting in a recognizable (and marketable) Hilton Head Island image and style as a recreation and residential resort. This "brand" image is a key intangible economic asset for the Island.
- Development of a first class, diverse, service sector offering friendly hospitality for families, outstanding sporting facilities in the form of PGA caliber golf and renowned tennis facilities, diverse restaurants, medical support, and educational opportunities to enable residential and visitor growth.



## **7.5 Potential Risks for Future Economy with Comprehensive Plan Implications <sup>7</sup>**

There are potential risks to the Island's economic future that should be addressed:

- The primary access to the Island, which has proven to be so vital to the growth of its economy, is dependent on a road bridge system. Any significant disruption to this critical gateway from marine shipping damage, or other major event, would have a serious impact on the Island's economy. No volume-capable alternative currently exists. The Island's small airport is limited in capacity (around 4% of visitors historically arrive by air – Figure 3) and expansion capability is limited.
- In addition, continued mainland growth coupled with no plans to widen Interstate 95 or Interstate 26 may limit future access to the Island. This issue will be addressed in the Transportation Element.
- The Island has reached a stage of relative maturity from its earlier rapid growth in the life cycle of its development. Some of its hospitality and other service sector assets are aging (becoming "tired" looking) and are in need of revitalization or potential replacement. "Sensitive Redevelopment" has become a major theme resonating from the research interviews and community input. Older condominium units, in particular, present a challenge due to the multiplicity of owners in any given development.
- "Flexibility" (where reasonable people may disagree but must find a solution) in the application of historic regulation and ordinance was called for to improve existing non conformities and future redevelopment.
- Preservation of natural assets - Continual protection, nourishing and replenishing of beaches, dunes and native vegetation with continuity of the Town's successful land acquisition program to preserve green space and control density is vital to the future economic potential of the Island.
- With the early rapid growth of the base economic engines of residential and visitor investment slowing, as the Island approaches maturity, efforts should be focused on initiatives for enriching the economic potential while preserving the essential character and natural assets that have been responsible for the Island's success.
- A sustainable workforce will become essential to the future economic potential of the Island and is essential to support the social economic population mixing that is vital for a vibrant and sustainable economy. To be sustainable over the horizon envisioned by the Comprehensive Plan such a workforce needs both appropriate education and training, and access to affordable housing. While efforts for education and training may be broadly addressed on a regional basis, the current strategy for affordable housing seems to hinge on a "pool of labor" being accessible off Island. While this may be valid short-term (3-5 years) thinking, it is a costly one for employers on Island and is a contributing factor in driving business "off Island". One Island employer, for example, estimates that employee labor costs incur a penalty in excess of \$2000 per employee per year for "crossing the bridge". Potential development in the Jasper County and other areas west of the Island will likely put severe competitive pressure on this off-Island labor pool which, in turn, may threaten the Island's access to this "pool".

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<sup>7</sup> See Figure 7.5

## **7.6 Potential Strategies with Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

In addition to the ongoing work that the Chamber of Commerce and Town have engaged in tourism and residential attraction, consideration should be given to leveraging and growing high value added business, and business travel and hospitality, segments that are consistent with, or do not threaten, the Island's character or natural assets, such as:

- Become more focused on major national and international corporations with a view to becoming a premier corporate meeting location. Hilton Head Island has natural beauty, sporting and hospitality amenities but is comparatively unknown in the corporate world and may be limited by the capacity of its airport to safely and effectively support corporate aircraft transportation (the latter to be addressed by the Transportation Element).
- Promotion of the Island as world class, but quiet, well-maintained, coastal Island resort community with hi-speed telecommunication capability, road, sea and air access that may lend itself to segments like consulting, some focused medical or medical/sporting research where it is possible to operate with remote capability ("telecommuting") and also enjoy a rich Island lifestyle.
- Off season arts, education, culinary and sports festivals leveraging off such successes as Heritage Golf Tournament, the Concours d'Elegance, and the Wine Festival. With more than 60 miles of cycling and walking track now becoming interconnected, the Island is gaining a national (and possibly international via word-of-mouth) reputation as an excellent facility for casual cycling events. This should be capitalized on as should the potential to develop a Center for Gullah Studies and a Central Arts Facility.
- Major theme #4 "Mobility and Access" identified the Island's airport as "a community asset requiring sensitive development" and that the Town should "own the airport as an asset", especially in growing the business travel and hospitality segment of the economy. Consideration should be given to such ownership with the thought of developing the airport in line with similar assets owned by other major upscale resort communities. Direct ownership may not be a high priority within the short term (3-5 years), especially given the magnitude of the current recession, but certainly within the 20 year scope of the Comprehensive Plan. A well-developed, small Island airport is a key tool in further enhancing the Island's economy through potential for growth in the niche, premier corporate meeting and functions segment.
- Identify and prioritize areas in need of redevelopment including any obsolete, or run down, commercial buildings. Incentivize the development of flexibility of streamlining in regulation of density caps, setbacks (and other controls) that enable a qualitative, principle based, asset revitalization that enhance the Island's positive legacies.
- A revitalization of effort to attract residential and retiree growth emphasizing not only character and natural assets but the quality, and breadth, of the service infrastructure that has developed relative to its competitor communities along the southeast coast.

## **7.7 Some Key Implementation Strategies**

- In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and key Island or leading regional businesses, consider forming a “Business Renewal Task Force” (or equivalent concept) to focus on, and identify and assess, potential opportunities to supplement, or enrich, the economic space that may be becoming vacated by the slowing of traditional growth from tourism and residential sectors. Again, any potential opportunities should be consistent with, or not threaten, the Island’s character or natural assets.
- Also in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, USCB, TCL and other agencies such as SCORE give consideration to the development of a Center for Economic Excellence for small businesses. The purpose would be to provide practical business education, training and consulting support for potential local entrepreneurs wishing to set up and/or grow and diversify small business enterprises in the Island’s retail and service economy.
- Foster a renewed and positive mindset between Staff, Town Council and the public in accepting that the challenges of maturity - versus growth - require a different, and in many cases more complex, regulatory and management approach.
- Champion innovation in Community Planning and reward creative concepts of approach to legacy issues, such as the need for affordable housing, revitalization of public transport, recycling, etc... and need for new initiatives such as the arts and corporate meeting centers of attraction.
- Continue to address recommendations from Ward 1 Master Plan such as:
  - Expansion of the pathway network and paved roads to improve access for employment and economic growth.
  - Coordination with Hilton Head Public Service District to expand sewer service.
  - Ward 1 is also seen as a gateway to the Island and should be high on action list for redevelopment.
- Consider setting up a Land Planning and/or “Green Practices” Center of Excellence based on, and leveraging off, Hilton Head Island early visionary thinking (Fraser principles), heritage learnings, and leading edge knowledge gained from the development of renowned developments such as those at Sea Pines.
- As a further tool to attract and retain retirees (i.e. those who have choice of location for retirement) consider developing a “Center for Creative Retirement” using the well publicized, and successful, Asheville NC model as a guide. The North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement (NCCCR) is an award-winning, internationally-acclaimed learning community dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, leadership, community service, and research.
- Consider also the Fraser vision of Hilton Head Island becoming an “Aspen East” with the development of an “Institute for Learning and Arts” on Island. The Aspen Institute Harman-Eisner Program in the Arts was established to support and invigorate the arts in America and to return the arts and artists to the center of the Aspen Institute's "Great Conversation". It brings artists and art works to the Institute, and it also brings together leading artists, arts managers, sponsors and patrons to generate, exchange and develop ideas and policies to assure vibrancy and dynamism in all artistic realms, and to enrich civic culture in ways only the arts can do.
- Solutions to the sustainable workforce issue (7.6) should be addressed in a fully systemic way, analyzing learnings from past initiatives, including the potential for low cost public transportation

options (both on and off and within the Island), collaborative employer and developer nonprofit initiatives (Silicon Valley, Charleston models), planned mixed use developments, consideration for conservation based land banks and workforce advisory committees. The issue is vital to the economic future of the Island requiring a full palette of solutions and tools.

- The question of the future of Hilton Head Island Airport has become highly emotional in the community necessitating that an informed “position” be developed from a Hilton Head Island Town perspective (versus the current Airport Master Plan development which views the airport from a “regional” perspective). Consideration should be given to a small Town sponsored Island work group to examine the Airport’s significance to the Island’s future, as part of the overall transportation/communication system of the Island that considers aspects such as, but not limited to:
  - Creating a financial baseline analysis of continued airport operations versus alternate land/asset use.
  - Viability for future commercial airline use as part of the overall transportation system serving the Island and leveraging off the learnings of value to community of other Island airport models.
  - Use of the airport to facilitate currently under served markets such as the lucrative corporate hospitality and meetings segment (a relatively quick survey of Fortune 20 corporations should establish potential opportunity) and the rapidly growing telecommuting market (several communities exist in Colorado to serve as examples)
- Encouragement should be given to upgrading electronic telecommunication capability on the Island to facilitate development of the telecommuting market segment. Far too many wireless “cold” spots exist and 3G (third generation) capability on the Island (and higher as it evolves) is limited and spotty. A necessary element of the evolution of the Island’s economy will be the need to embrace the upgrading of reliable wireless capability if the Island is to attract and retain the rapidly growing telecommuting community market segment. Best Management Practice communities, such as Aspen CO, provide excellent learning opportunities to adopt on the Island.

## **CHAPTER 8: LAND USE**

### **8.1 Existing Land Use**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Due to the physical characteristics of the Town, opportunity for growth and physical expansion from annexation is limited. However, there may be opportunities to annex more land located on the Island as well as crossing water bodies to other contiguous properties. It is important to consider annexation in order to appropriately plan for growth and development. An annexation process should be considered in order to ensure that growth is compatible with the character of the Island, establishing criteria which would maintain the character of the Town of Hilton Head Island.
- The calculations of each land use type indicate that there is slightly more than 10 percent of land available for development or inclusion in one of the other categories. Town policy leaders should use this analysis in determining the direction for future development and specifically redevelopment in conjunction with all of the information contained herein. More detailed analysis in the chapter and the other chapters will help determine whether or not the Town has an adequate amount of each classification to support its population, both permanent and seasonal.
- Remaining vacant land, totaling approximately 2,114.6 acres or 10 percent of the Hilton Head Island's land area, represents the remaining pool of land available for development. A major challenge for development will be to maintain the character of the Island while insuring adequate infrastructure is in place and balancing land conservation.

#### **Goals**

- A. To have an appropriate mix of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future populations.
- B. To maintain the character of the Island while insuring adequate infrastructure is in place and balancing land conservation to meet future needs.
- C. To encourage development to reflect the character of Hilton Head Island for lands adjacent to existing Town limits, including the bridge.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Evaluate annexation beyond the physical boundaries of the Island and should take into consideration purposes other than physical growth, such as regulation of the bridge and land beyond the existing municipal boundaries.
- B. Consider drafting a "Town owned property master plan" that identifies the details of the Town's Land Acquisition Program and identifies policy on the potential uses of the property. This plan should include criteria to prioritize land for future purchases.

## **8.2 Building Permit Trends**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Building permit data is indicative of several factors, one being the state of the economy as well as current building needs and growth in both residential and commercial types. Redevelopment of our existing built environment and infill development should be a focus for the future development of our community, while the Town has entered a more mature level of development.

### **Goals**

- A. To monitor trends of issued building permit data in order to respond to development trends and community needs.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Develop a building permit report at regular intervals to allow the Town to adjust to development trends and meet customer service needs.

## **8.3 Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The location of each concentration of land use category and type is important to consider when determining infrastructure and other service needs, while also ensuring a high standard of quality of life. The location of the land uses within the PUDs as well as outside the PUDs has a direct relationship to the regulations or policies that we adopt as a Town depending on where they are applicable.

### **Goals**

- A. To provide flexibility for the PUDs as future policies, regulations and requirements are adopted Town-wide.
- B. To have an appropriate mix of land uses to accommodate permanent and seasonal populations and existing market demands is important to sustain the Town's high quality of life and should be considered when amending PUD Master Plans.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider flexibility within the PUDs to address appropriate commercial or service land uses in areas with a high residential concentration.

## **8.4 Existing Zoning Allocation**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Analysis of this table along with the nonconforming parcels should be looked at together in order to determine whether or not changes to the LMO and the permitted uses in each district are warranted. This information should also be used in the future planning for the location of supporting infrastructure and other uses.

**Goals**

- A. An appropriate mix of land uses to accommodate permanent and seasonal populations and existing market demands is important to sustain the Town's high quality of life and should be considered when amending the Town's Official Zoning Map.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Determine if there is an adequate amount and location of current zoning districts through review of existing zoning district classifications.
- B. Consider implementing alternatives to traditional zoning classifications, such as Form Based Codes or Smart Code.
- C. Evaluate land use consumption rates using the best available data, including building trends, to monitor future build-out and determine an appropriate zoning mix.
- D. Evaluate the use of Neighborhood Commercial and Mixed Use developments, both inside and outside PUDs.
- E. Review of use designations within each zoning category should be conducted to determine if there is adequate supply and a suitable mix to meet community build-out needs.

**8.5 Land Use Per Capita**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- A fundamental policy of land use is whether or not the Town has sufficient land uses to support the population, both the permanent and seasonal population. It is also important that the portion of each land use classification is supported and sustainable in terms of infrastructure and natural resources to ensure a high quality of life that contributes to the character defining features of our community.

**Goals**

- A. To have an appropriate mix and availability of land uses to meet the needs of existing and future populations.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Monitor land use demands upon existing and projected demographics for the Town.

**8.6 Build-Out**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The amount of vacant land and population trends can be used to determine build-out, which may be defined as the highest level that the Island can sustain. The level that the community may want to sustain depends on several factors; therefore, determining an established number for build-out in terms of building density is a complicated task. Because of the anticipation of build-out, creative redevelopment policies and alternatives to traditional zoning and land development regulations should be a focus for all land use policies and regulations.

**Goals**

- A. To monitor land use consumption and conversion rates to maintain a proper balance of public infrastructure, private development, and land conservation.
- B. To consider developing regulations and requirements to maintain the Island character and meet the needs of the community as it approaches build out.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider flexibility within the Land Management Ordinance to address future development and redevelopment of existing sites. Areas of existing and future redevelopment should be reviewed and identified and additional TIF (Tax Increment Finance) districts considered.
- B. Evaluate a Transfer of Development Rights program to guide development to appropriate locations and areas within the Town.

**8.7 Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The location of permitted timeshares or interval occupancy units is important because it has a direct relationship on the transportation network and infrastructure of our Island. It is also important to analyze the impact that timeshares have on our economy and establishing a balance with our natural resources and preservation of our character.

**Goals**

- A. To maintain an inventory of Short Term Rentals, Interval Occupancy Units, or Timeshares.
- B. To encourage Short Term Rentals, Interval Occupancy Units, or Timeshares to locate and/or redevelop in areas that have available supporting infrastructure.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Consider flexibility to upgrade and maintain inventory of Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares to allow for redevelopment to meet market demands and eliminate functional obsolescence.
- B. Direct Short Term Rental/Interval Occupancy Units or Timeshares to areas that have adequate infrastructure in place to meet service demands.

**8.8 Nonconforming Parcels by Use**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Current zoning classifications should be reviewed along with the associated regulations for each use. Areas that have high instances of nonconforming uses should be reviewed closely and revisions should be made where necessary. Creative alternatives to traditional zoning classifications should be considered, such as form based and smart codes to reflect current building and development trends that are indicative of our Island character.



**Goals**

- A. To monitor nonconforming uses and consider flexible regulations for redevelopment.
- B. To evaluate the locations of nonconforming uses to determine areas to consider for Zoning Map Amendments.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Evaluate the zoning districts or regulations of the districts when high concentrations of nonconforming properties by use exist to determine if amendments are appropriate.

**8.9 Age of Structures**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The location of the older developments should be reviewed to determine the areas that may be primed for redevelopment. Changes in building codes, building trends, and consumer expectations should also be considered when determining the appropriate age of structures to target redevelopment strategies.

**Goals**

- A. To monitor areas that have high concentrations of aging structures to target for potential redevelopment.
- B. To encourage redevelopment of properties with aging structures or that no longer meet current market demands.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Target areas for redevelopment using information such as age of structure and assisting with reducing the vulnerability of structures to storms and natural disaster events due to noncompliance to current building codes.
- B. Develop flexible regulations and incentives to encourage redevelopment of aging structures and districts.

**8.10 Zoning Changes**

**Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Reviewing the background information as well as analyzing the trends will guide future zoning changes, whether the changes are map amendments or text changes to the requirements for each district. Future land use decisions and requests for zoning changes will be determined using the background information contained in this plan as well as the future land use map, currently represented by the Town's Official Zoning Map.
- Future land use maps for the Town of Hilton Head Island may be developed using the information from the analysis of the existing land use, information from the public meetings and surveys as well as the analysis from the other elements of this plan. The best available data should be used in hazard mitigation practices, particularly the relocation of critical service facilities. Green infrastructure and compact development practices should also be considered for all future land use changes. Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) is another creative tool that should be considered in order to focus development in the most appropriate and suitable locations to ensure the sustainability of our Town.

**Goals**

- A. To provide appropriate modifications to the zoning designations to meet market demands while maintaining the character of the island.

**Implementation Strategies**

- A. Review the appropriate locations of certain land uses in critical areas such as headlands, velocity zones, airport overlay, critical line for storm and the dune accretion zone.
- B. Consider focusing higher intensity land uses in areas with available sewer connections.

**8.11 Land Use Goals and Implementation Strategies**

1. Insure that future land uses do not adversely impact the environment through better oversight in the placement of structures in environmentally sensitive areas and through better stormwater management techniques.
2. Identify an acceptable level of future development that does not overtax the area's natural environment and infrastructure. This can be done by monitoring allowable densities and by continuing to purchase lands that would adversely impact the island if developed.
3. Balance the demand for recreation and the environmental health of the waterways.
4. Promote quality infill development and use redevelopment opportunities to promote more pedestrian friendly retail environments.
5. Provide better emergency preparedness and reduce vulnerability based on the utility of land.
6. Encourage continual intergovernmental cooperation on regional land use issues. The land use element specifically calls for the participation in the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan.

## **CHAPTER 9: TRANSPORTATION**

### **9.1 Road Network**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The Town owns 3% of the roads on the Island and has limited authority to maintain or service roads it does not own. Coordination with the County, State and PUDs to ensure proper safety and road maintenance is important on the nearly 98% of roads not owned by the Town.
- Continued coordination with South Carolina Department of Transportation and Beaufort County to maintain the current capacity of William Hilton Parkway and other arterials by controlling access points and median crossing locations, improving intersections, adding decelerations lanes, optimizing the synchronized traffic lights with the mainland's system and investigating other methods of traffic management and development control is recommended.
- Alternative connections to alleviate traffic from William Hilton Parkway should continue to be considered.
- The bridges onto the Island are critical public facilities that provide the only vehicular access for residents and visitors to the Island, as well as the only ground transportation link for emergency evacuations. Protection of these critical facilities should be a priority.
- The Town's use of roundabouts rather than conventional signalized intersections has strengthened its identity and differentiated the Island from many other communities. The character of the Island as a unique residential and resort destination is enhanced by limiting typical street intersection design. The use of roundabouts should be continued, keeping in mind, public safety, reduced impact on natural resources and financial considerations.
- The Town enjoys a positive reputation for the high quality of maintenance along its roadways. This should be considered as additional development or redevelopment is proposed. Protection of aesthetics and natural character of the Town's main arterials has been and should continue to be a priority. With this in mind streetscapes should be used to establish character for redevelopment areas, recreation or activity centers, pedestrian oriented areas and gateways to the Island.
- The County requires that road improvements made with the intention of conveying ownership and maintenance to the County be constructed to the approved standards. In addition, the County has limited capacity to accept additional roads into its maintenance program. Alternative standards, including different materials used in road building may provide a means to improve existing substandard roads, reduce impervious surfaces and enhance fire and rescue access.

#### **Goals**

- A. To improve the road network by creating safe and convenient access and interconnections to all areas of the Island while protecting community investments, neighborhoods, and the natural environment.
- B. To maintain specific traffic analysis standards in the Land Management Ordinance to guide development in accordance with existing and future needs of the Town.

- C. To provide intersection design standards and maintenance for public safety while considering the unique Island character, aesthetics, topography, vegetation, environmentally sensitive areas, and neighborhood cohesiveness.
- D. To maintain all roads on Hilton Head Island to ensure safety and adequate access.
- E. To ensure that aesthetic and vegetative character are maintained and improved along main arterials without sacrificing safety.
- F. To maintain Town landmarks through Transportation planning efforts.
- G. To minimize the negative impact of construction projects on adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Continue to coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to maintain the current capacity of William Hilton Parkway and other arterials by controlling access points and median crossing locations, improving intersections, adding deceleration lanes or extending existing deceleration lanes, optimizing the synchronized traffic lights and investigating other methods of traffic management and development control.
- B. Continue to consider plans for alternate road systems to remove some of the traffic burden from William Hilton Parkway.
- C. Support installation of infrastructure that promote efficiency, improves environmental quality and promotes alternatives to traditional automobile travel such as recharge station for electric cars and leading edge technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells.
- D. Secure adequate land for needed transportation improvements.
- E. Implement intersection signal improvement proposals (left turn signals, right turn signals, pedestrian signals and crosswalks, etc.) that have been endorsed by the South Carolina Department of Transportation.
- F. Continue to consider the use of standard intersection design, traffic circles or roundabouts, when developing road improvement projects.
- G. Consider implementation of concepts such as "Complete Streets" that integrates multiple forms of transportation modes and promotes connectivity.
- H. Continue to implement the use of mast arms at traffic signals and install light emitting diode (LED) traffic lights exclusively at all signalized intersections.
- I. Coordinate with gated communities to identify and provide alternative ingress/egress points for emergency vehicles.
- J. Continue to purchase parcels that have high traffic generating development potential.
- K. Continue to maintain traffic analysis standards in the Land Management Ordinance.
- L. Discourage the installation of traffic signals permitted at a spacing of less than 1,500 feet from established signalized intersections.
- M. Continue to seek funding for safety improvements to Island roads by coordinating with SCDOT, County Transportation Committee (CTC), and other entities to secure funds.
- N. Maintain and update the transportation impact fees program for both the Town and County with new developments paying for new road modifications based on their impact to the transportation system.
- O. Coordinate with State and local law enforcement officials to enforce laws regarding all vehicle standards, towing regulations and other regulations that improve safety.

- P. Continue to educate and involve the public regarding transportation safety issues via television, radio, direct mail, internet and all other appropriate media and alternative education forums.
- Q. Continue to improve and streamline signage for better direction.
- R. Utilize local traffic accident data to design and evaluate projects to minimize injuries.
- S. Work with and encourage Beaufort County, the SCDOT, and private road owners to maintain their roadways and associated drainage facilities.
- T. Develop and maintain a priority list for dirt road paving.
- U. Coordinate with SCDOT and Beaufort County to protect the capital investment in the transportation system through adequate maintenance of facilities and roadways.
- V. Continue to offer maintenance and support litter-control efforts on and off-Island.
- W. Periodically review and update the design and performance standards relating to road building, landscaping, and buffering to ensure that aesthetic and vegetative character are maintained and improved along the Island's roads.
- X. Examine and install streetscaping methods that do not hinder a driver's vision for use along business sections of William Hilton Parkway and other major and minor arterial roads.
- Y. Utilize the streetscape to establish a character or theme for redevelopment areas, recreation or activity centers, pedestrian oriented areas, and gateways.
- Z. Retain Sea Pines Circle as a Circle.
- AA. Preserve and protect the public investment in the landscaped medians along William Hilton Parkway to the greatest extent practicable.
- BB. Utilize streetscaping techniques such as coordinated landscaping, lighting, street furniture, and other public amenities on all appropriate new or reconstructed roads.
- CC. Investigate all possible alternatives to widening William Hilton Parkway before committing to such a project.
- DD. Future roadway widening projects within the Town should be carefully planned to protect vegetative cover along roads, and to assure neighborhoods are not excessively adversely impacted.
- EE. Consider improvements to the Town's Drainage Plan and other Capital Improvement Projects in conjunction with transportation improvements.
- FF. Coordinate road improvements with the Island's Drainage Study and any other drainage, water or sewer improvement project.
- GG. Continue to update and maintain a ten-year Capital Improvement Program in accordance with all state laws. This program should consider road and multi-use pathway improvements, park and town facilities, and drainage projects, at a minimum.

## **9.2 Traffic Volumes and Trends**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Future traffic volumes may exceed the capacity of the Town's road network impacting both the efficiency and safety of the Island's roads. Improvements to the road network that include safe and convenient access and interconnections to all areas of the Island that still protect community investments, neighborhoods and the natural environment should be considered.
- Continued monitoring and review of the Town's traffic analysis standards should be conducted in accordance with existing and future needs of the Town.

### **Goals**

- A. To acquire and maintain data on traffic volume for the road network throughout the year to assess existing and potential deficiencies in the transportation network.
- B. To have multiple transportation options available to residents, visitors and employees.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Acquire traffic data for the Town at a regular interval and provide a trend analysis at least once per year.
- B. Coordinate a periodic review of regional traffic volumes and trends with appropriate organizations in the region.

## **9.3 Traffic Planning & Modeling on the Island**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Data on traffic volumes and movements is required to perform accurate traffic modeling. The Town should continue to collect appropriate supporting data to assist in traffic modeling. This will allow for continued monitoring and evaluation of traffic management practices.
- Future development and zoning classifications have an impact on the potential build-out of properties on the Island. Increasing the density of properties in certain areas of the Town may not be appropriate due to the inability of the current transportation network to handle the resulting additional traffic volumes. It may be more appropriate to provide density in areas that have the available roadway capacity and to reduce densities or development potential in areas that do not have the appropriate roadway capacity.
- The analysis of TAZ zones provides a localized view of the travel demand placed on the Island's roadway network from Island residents and visitors; but, it does not provide a macro look at the regional impacts on the transportation system. A regional analysis or travel demand modeling, taking into account potential development in both Beaufort and Jasper Counties, would be an appropriate next step for traffic planning in the region.

### **Goals**

- A. To collect data on traffic volume for the road network throughout the year and provide a basis for making future transportation and land use decisions.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Coordinate traffic modeling with regional partners to develop a regional transportation vision that identifies critical transportation deficiencies that should be addressed.
- B. Conduct consistent traffic counting each year at strategic points on the Island.
- C. To obtain necessary data for traffic modeling and management, ensure the four existing permanent traffic counters continue to function properly, and obtain updates to the software necessary to run the system when appropriate.
- D. Continue to prepare Traffic Monitoring and Evaluation Reports on an annual basis.
- E. Perform traffic modeling at least once every 10 years, or more often as needs and concerns dictate, to identify roadway improvements and capital improvement projects.
- F. Continuously monitor and improve traffic management practices.
- G. Monitor the function of traffic circles and roundabouts, especially Sea Pines Circle.

## **9.4 Pathway Network**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Pathways do not currently serve all areas of the Island. The Town should continue to move forward with construction of pathways to connect these areas.
- While the Island currently has an extensive pathway network, opportunities to improve pathway connections between destinations that provide additional recreational opportunities and promote alternative means of transportation on the Island should be considered.
- The Island's pathway network could be enhanced by providing a link to the bridge to the mainland in anticipation that other jurisdictions will connect pathway facilities on the mainland.
- There may be potential benefits of linking private community pathways to destinations such as shopping and entertainment centers immediately adjacent to the PUDs via pathway connections or secondary access points. This could have the potential to reduce the number of automobile trips on Island roadways, reduce the parking area required to accommodate customers and integrate the PUDs and non PUD areas.

### **Goals**

- A. To expand the pathway network to provide pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of non-motorized transit with a safe and efficient infrastructure to connect residential and tourist areas to schools, parks, commercial areas, and potential off-Island connections.
- B. To complement public transit operations such as those of the Palmetto Breeze (LRTA), by connecting transit stops with employment destinations and tourist destinations.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Expand the Island's Multi-Use Pathway System to connect all appropriate land uses such as parks, schools, open spaces, and beach access facilities on the Island along with residential and commercial destinations:
  - i. Continue to assess the viability of constructing pathways along with each Town road improvement project or drainage project.
  - ii. Identify areas for sidewalk or multi-use pathway locations which have significant commercial, recreational, resort, entertainment or other intense public use but do not have adequate pedestrian or bicycle access.
  - iii. Investigate the use of power line easements for potential multi-use pathway locations.
  - iv. Consider installation of bicycle loop detectors to count bicycle trips at selected locations on the Island's multi-use pathways to determine needs.
  - v. Encourage bicycle parking facilities, especially on Town-owned properties.
- B. Encourage new public and private development and redevelopment to create connections to the Island Multi-Use Pathway System:
  - i. Educate developers during pre-application conferences of future multi-use pathway locations in relation to their development and encourage developers to include pathways or sidewalks along all roads within their development and connections to the existing public system.

- ii. Coordinate with Beaufort County, Bluffton, and the Lowcountry Council of Governments to connect Island multi-use pathways to pathway systems on the mainland.
  - iii. Continue to seek funding for safety improvements to Island multi-use pathways by coordinating with SCDOT, CTC (County Transportation Committee), and other entities to secure funds.
- C. Continue to improve safety of the Island's Multi-use Pathway System by identifying conflicts and improvement opportunities:
- i. Inventory areas for safety on an annual basis for problems such as low-hanging vegetation, inadequate signage, lines of sight, and irregular asphalt.
  - ii. Schedule safety maintenance of pathways at least annually.
  - iii. Coordinate with SCDOT and other agencies as well as private road owners to mark major intersection crossings with colored and textured pavement or painted crosswalks, and install pedestrian activated crosswalks where needed.
  - iv. Utilize accident data to determine pedestrian and bicyclist needs at intersections.
  - v. Identify pedestrian crossing signal locations on all roads and plans for their installation should be included in the Capital Improvement Program.
  - vi. Ensure warning signs that alert motorists of pedestrian/cyclist crossings on all roadways are installed and maintained for visibility.
- D. Continue to promote the Island Multi-Use Pathway System as a viable alternative to auto-oriented transportation:
- i. Produce brochures showing the relationship of multi-use pathways to shopping areas and other areas of interest, and distribute to the general public through bicycle rental shops, hotels, and other appropriate places.
  - ii. Educate the public about multi-use pathways via the world-wide web, newspaper and other media.
  - iii. Maintain and update the Town's multi-use pathway kiosk signs along the pathways.

## **9.5 Public Transportation**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Current public transportation may not serve the actual needs of the Island community, including certain segments of the population with specific requirements. Better coordination between the Town, public transportation providers, major employers, special needs providers and other agencies could result in an increased utility of public transportation resulting in fewer automobile trips on Island roads.
- Integration of bike racks on buses and linking pathways to bus stops has the potential to enhance the transportation network on the Island and provide a link to off-island users.
- Internal shuttle systems such as the Sea Pines Trolley and Palmetto Dunes Buggy have the potential to reduce trips on Island roads. Expanding this concept to other areas of the Island and coordinating schedules with public transportation routes should be evaluated.

### **Goals**

- A. To identify the Island-wide needs for public transportation and research alternative ways to provide the needed services.



### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Prepare a Public Transportation Plan to address public transportation issues on the Island. This plan should include a needs assessment and recommendations for actions to meet identified deficiencies. All modes of public transit should be considered, and attention should be given to special populations such as the disabled and elderly.
- B. Support the coordination of regional public transit to serve the mainland and the Island for workers and visitors, including the potential for public transit to the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport. Work with the County and other government entities such as LCOG, SCDOT, GDOT the Town of Bluffton, and Jasper and Chatham Counties to investigate and implement new options for public transportation such as marine transit, small-gauge rail service, trolley service, and ride-share programs.
- C. Continue to promote public transportation by providing infrastructure, transit shelters, pull-off lanes, and multi-use pathway links to existing viable transportation services that move people to and from mainland locations and within the Island, and promote shuttle service as a transportation mode for hotels and resort areas.
- D. Consider public transportation options when planning and designing new public improvement projects such as parks, marinas, and other public land-uses.
- E. Support coordination between public transportation providers, major employers and special needs providers to increase utility of public transportation resulting in fewer automobile trips on Island roads.
- F. Support enhancements to the public transportation network, including integration of bike racks on buses and linking pathways to bus stops providing a link to off-island users.
- G. Explore potential for internal shuttle systems such as the Sea Pines Trolley and Palmetto Dunes Buggy to reduce trips on Island roads. Expanding this concept to other areas of the Island and coordinating schedules with public transportation routes should be evaluated.

### **9.6 Air Transportation**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

The future of Hilton Head Island Airport has become a highly emotional discussion in the community. The Town and Beaufort County worked together with input from Hilton Head Island residents to develop the 2010 Hilton Head Island Airport Master Plan Update. The Town should continue to examine the Airport's significance to the Island's future, as part of the overall transportation/communication system of the Island that considers aspects such as, but not limited to:

- Viability for future commercial airline use as part of the overall transportation system serving the Island and leveraging off the value to the community of other Island airport models.
- Use of the airport to serve an underserved market such as the lucrative corporate hospitality and meetings segment.

### **Goals**

- A. To ensure that airport operations remain safe while providing air travel to Island.
- B. To ensure that development surrounding the airport is designed and constructed to minimize the negative impacts of being located near the airport.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Assist Beaufort County with pre-planning for airport modifications.
- B. Continue to review development proposals within the Airport Overlay District to ensure the site is designed with the maximum safety possible for the occupants of the site.
- C. Coordinate and plan with Beaufort County to utilize the airport as a staging ground during a disaster recovery.

## **9.7 Marine Transportation**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- As an Island, there is potential to expand the transportation network to include marine access to and from the mainland as well as other destinations. Long term integration of a water transportation system, including parking facilities and links to ground transportation, and Palmetto Breeze as a public transportation provider, may be considered.
- There are opportunities to expand the marine activity and access through installation of publicly owned docks and boat landings as there are very few non-private facilities.

### **Goals**

- A. To integrate a marine-based transportation option into the transportation network that has the potential to serve Town residents, visitors, and employees.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Support efforts to expand marine transportation that reduces vehicular trips on Island roads or increases revenue through expanded tourism.
- B. Support coordination of regional partners to assess potential water-born transportation to serve areas from Beaufort to Savannah.

## **9.8 Emergency Evacuation**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The population of the Island and region has reached the level where emergency evacuations pose significant challenges. These include safely evacuating Island residents and visitors by providing advanced warnings of a potential risk, ensuring that the Island's roads are adequately maintained and working with State, County and regional entities to provide safe and efficient evacuation routes.

### **Goals**

- A. To work with the appropriate agencies to plan for implement safe and efficient evacuation routes away from the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Coordinate with appropriate agencies to plan for and evaluate the capacity of emergency evacuation routes through Beaufort and Jasper Counties and the State of South Carolina, including the widening of I-95 and I-26.
- B. Coordinate with SCDOT and Jasper County to connect Route 321 to I-95 (Exit 8) for a direct interior route from the interstate to one of Beaufort County's evacuation routes.
- C. Coordinate with SCDOT to widen I-95 from Exit 8 south to the Georgia border where it connects with an existing 6 lane section going south to I-16.
- D. Coordinate with regional planning agencies including Savannah-Chatham County, GA to examine evacuations on a regional basis.
- E. Coordinate with SCDOT and GDOT to ensure that roads in the interior portions of South Carolina and Georgia are designed to handle coastal evacuations.

### **9.9 Regional Transportation Issues**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Development on the mainland continues to impact the Island, creating issues related to increased volume and travel times on US 278. The town should make every attempt to ensure that traffic conditions on the mainland provide the minimum amount of adverse impacts to the development and enjoyment of the Island. This should include coordination with all appropriate entities that make decisions that impact the US 278 corridor, including South Carolina Department of Transportation, Beaufort and Jasper Counties, the Town of Bluffton, the City of Hardeeville and the Lowcountry Council of Governments.

#### **Goals**

- A. To promote regional transportation and land use planning for all of southern Beaufort County.
- B. To work with appropriate agencies to provide input on roadway improvements along the US 278 corridor and projects such as the widening of I-95 and I-26.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Engage in cooperative planning efforts with officials from Jasper County, LCOG, and Chatham County (GA) to provide input on their land use decisions that will affect shared use of major transportation modes and infrastructure.
- B. Sponsor a series of workshops with regional transportation partners to develop a regional transportation vision that identifies needs and provides a unified voice for the region when requesting funding for transportation improvements.
- C. Establish a close working relationship with SCDOT by continuing to meet at a minimum on a quarterly basis to review Town, County and regional transportation issues.
- D. Coordinate with SCDOT, Bluffton, and Beaufort County for the creation of a secondary road system in southern Beaufort County.
- E. Coordinate with SCDOT, Beaufort and Jasper Counties, and Bluffton to maintain the current capacity of US 278 in southern Beaufort County by controlling access points, improving intersections, adding deceleration lanes, computer-controlling traffic signals, maintaining the Intelligent Transportation System, and investigating other methods of traffic management.

- F. Coordinate with the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to assist their staffs with growth management strategies such as public land acquisition, purchase or transfer of development rights, and other planning tools.
- G. Assist Bluffton and Beaufort County with mapping processes.
- H. Assist Beaufort County with development of an updated regional traffic model.

## **CHAPTER 10: RECREATION**

***Note: This element is not required by the state of SC for the Comprehensive Plan. It was added by the Town of Hilton Head Island.***

### **10.1 Park Definitions**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- The detailed definitions for the different park categories provide the Town with more information to plan for future parks and provide a tool to plan for specific types of parks to serve the community.
- The detailed definitions for the different recreational facilities provide the Town with the background needed to plan for future facilities and provide the basis to determine future needs.

#### **Goals**

- A. Utilize definitions and categories when evaluating the current inventory and future potential needs for parks.
- B. Provide a combination of passive and active parks.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Ensure adequate number of parks provided in each category.
- B. Ensure adequate facilities provided within each park category.

### **10.2 Park Sites**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- An inventory of each facility, the type and the location should be used as a tool in determining whether or not the recreational facilities adequately serve the visitors and population of the community.

#### **Goals**

- A. Continue to enhance the public recreation system by providing adequate facilities to meet the needs of a broad spectrum of the Island population (including visitors) while maintaining sensitivity to the specific needs of the Island.

#### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Improve and expand existing parks to accommodate additional facility needs.

### **10.3 Park Development Guidelines**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- As the population of the Island changes, so does the need for recreational opportunities.
- Guidelines should provide a mechanism to establish a plan to develop future parks and to determine the needs of the community. Several factors should be considered such as

population, level of service, and the associated projections. The Comprehensive Plan should provide the foundation to establish the guidelines while recognizing that other factors, such as changing community needs and use trends in order to determine whether or not future parks are necessary.

- Additional funding sources and ways to efficiently utilize the existing funding sources should be considered and reviewed.

### **Goals**

- A. Continue working with Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton to ensure a regional park system on the mainland is developed that will serve the recreational needs of the residents and visitors of Southern Beaufort County.
- B. Acquire conservation and park lands as a means to preserve natural and cultural resources for educational, interpretive, and passive recreation uses.
- C. Provide neighborhood parks where needed and desired.
- D. Continue to seek and utilize a variety of funding sources in order to attain required parks at build-out.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Be proactive in consideration of leisure services based on the current parks and recreation needs assessment.
- B. Include within the park system a combination of all park types and strive to achieve the park guidelines as stated in this element by providing the number of future parks needed based on population projections.
- C. Encourage public participation in the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of recreational facilities and programs.
- D. Coordinate with various agencies including Beaufort County Rural & Critical Lands Board and property owners to identify and purchase undeveloped property for parks and recreation lands as needed.
- E. Acquire properties located in areas of need for both passive and active uses, and for access points to waterways.
- F. Support accessible regional parks which complement the local park system.
- G. Apply for Federal and State grants for park construction.
- H. Continue to seek private donations and co-operative agreements.
- I. Continue to evaluate Park Impact Fee Program to determine its adequacy.
- J. Seek additional funding sources.

### **10.4 Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities**

#### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- It is important to understand the recreation facilities that are available throughout the Town. The inventory includes both public and private recreational facilities indicating that organizations and individual communities have assumed the responsibility to develop recreational opportunities to meet their needs. This detailed inventory of available recreational opportunities should be used as a tool in determining whether or not adequate facilities are available for the community.

- All organizations and groups, including the Town, School District and private communities and developers should work together when developing park and recreation plans.

### **Goals**

- A. Continue national promotion and recognition of Town's recreational facilities, programs, and opportunities, such as beaches, pathways, and cycling.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Promote and seek recognition for the Town as a place that offers unique recreation facilities, programs, and opportunities.

## **10.5 Facilities Guidelines**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Guidelines should be considered when making recommendations for future park development. However, they should be used as a tool with the consideration that our population and visitors may have needs that are unique to the character of the Island community.

### **Goals**

- A. Continue improving and expanding the existing network of multi-use pathways throughout the Island enabling residents and visitors to access recreational areas, shopping centers, schools and businesses by non-motorized forms of transportation.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Future park needs or park expansion should be considered when the Town evaluates properties for acquisition.
- B. Work directly with residents of neighborhoods to determine a need or desire for a neighborhood park.
- C. Continually make improvements to the existing pathway system and provide new pathway links.
- D. Link new parks with the multi-use pathway system.

## **10.6 Park Maintenance Tasks and Levels of Service**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- Responses from the Community Survey indicated that the community is satisfied with the existing recreational facilities and parks; however, would like to ensure that they are maintained to ensure high quality and character.
- Fiscal responsibility and the community's willingness to pay for potential increase in costs associated with the redevelopment or development of new or existing facilities and to maintain a certain level of quality should be included as a consideration when making policy and planning decisions.

- The Town should coordinate maintenance standards and other related maintenance issues, including a formalized agreement with Beaufort County and Shore Beach Services to verify that all organizations and departments involved in maintenance of recreational facilities are operating under the same standards.

### **Goals**

- A. Continue working with Beaufort County to provide the high standards of maintenance Island residents and visitors expect from this community.
- B. Budget for and provide cost effective park maintenance and operations in order to maintain the expected level of service for all Town-owned parks.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Determine if the Town's Facilities Management Division should increase park maintenance responsibilities.
- B. Examine the need to create a Parks and Recreation Department to supplement or replace those services provided by Beaufort County.
- C. Work with the County to ensure high quality recreational facilities through proper maintenance.
- D. Increase park maintenance funding proportionately to increases in park construction.

## **10.7 Recreation Programs**

### **Implications for the Comprehensive Plan**

- There are various programs available on the Island that cross different population and socio-economic groups. As our population changes, community programs and services should be evaluated to ensure that the needs of our community are being met. The variations in programs provide social interaction and provide connectivity among members of the community.
- It is recommended the Town continue to participate with local recreation organizations to develop recreation programs that will meet the needs of the residents and visitors of the Island, including: baseball, football, tennis, soccer, running, sailing, and martial arts.

### **Goals**

- A. Participate with local recreation organizations in the development of programs and facilities to meet the needs of the resident and visitor populations of the Island.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- A. Continue participation with local recreation organizations in the development of programs and facilities to meet the needs of the diverse populations of the Island.
- B. Work with appropriate agencies to ensure the recreational needs of the Island's various age groups, specifically youth and elderly residents are met through adequate facilities and programs.
- C. Educate residents and visitors on the use of bicycles and the rules and responsibilities of bicycling.
- D. Educate residents and visitors on the use of pathways.



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