



Town of Hilton Head Island
Our Plan Regional Work Group Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 10:00 am

The Living Lab at Town Hall

MEETING NOTES

Work Group:

Expanding to Embrace an Integrated Regional Focus

Present from Work Group: Jen Bonnett, Rob Merchant, Meredith Burns, John O'Toole, Terry Herron, Charles Wohl, Carol Crutchfield, Leslie McGowan

Present from Town Council: None

Present from Town Staff: Jayme Lopko, Taylor Ladd, Jennifer Ray

- The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM.
- Jayme Lopko and Taylor Ladd conducted the SOAR activity with group members. This activity was requested by the Development Team in order to better understand where each group is relative to their Core Value. The members were given an opportunity to discuss one of the items they added to the SOAR activity. After the discussion, members voted for which items they felt were important and they included:

Strengths:

- Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) is active & brings regional stakeholders together to discuss – Southern Lowcountry Regional Board (SoLoCo) – Lowcountry Council of Governments (LOCOG), Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC), SoLoCo support, nurture, and building on these – BCEDC partnership - Southern Carolina Alliance (5)
- Education [K-12, TCL, USCB] – K12 public school program best in the region on HHI (3)
- Interconnected bike paths (3)
- Diversity in the region, lots of people are from somewhere else - People from everywhere, diversity (2)
- Quality of life (2)
- Strong biking culture & infrastructure on HHI (1)
- A Town government that sees the need to “create our future” versus “predict the future” (1)
- Our volunteerism is amazing – Volunteers “experts” [distinctive cultural trait] (1)
- Proximity to Savannah airport & HHI airport (1)
- Creative pool of retirees – Vast resources of professionals who are active in the community (1)
- Strong environmental & development standards - Clean air & water - Strong beliefs in conserving the natural beauty of HHI - Clean accessible beaches and bike trails that attract repeat tourism - World class beaches - Priority to trees, landscaping, and aesthetics in site design (3)

- Heritage Golf Tournament, PGA alliance (1)
 - Food culture
 - Climate
 - Brand quality
 - Bikes, decrease auto traffic
- Pretty large and capable planning department that is/can continue to be involved on a lot of issues, high capability

Opportunities:

- Grow non-hospitality industry - Recruiting economic sectors that diversify the region - Industry focused economic development, pick an industry where we can lead tourism technology, sustainable energy? (8)
- Gullah brand “Lowcountry” – fully integrate minority community (2)
- Make regionalism a built-in part of everyday planning and processes in Town committees and Town staff planning (2)
- Redevelopment of vacant properties instead of clearing new land (2)
- Connect volunteers to opportunities - Central location to find out about volunteer opportunities (1)
- Use “Our Plan” as a springboard to build a 3-County coalition for major regional needs with decision making ability (1)
- K12 & higher education, work closely with local industry/jobs to ensure training for jobs available now & future (1)
- Connected health care with regional
- Implement best practices in workforce housing
- Diversified economic opportunities
- Increase educational attainment
- Public transportation throughout Beaufort County – retail locations and housing connected
- Use LATS to continue furthering Palmetto Breeze/ transit goals & address HHI employee commute issue.
- Work at regional level for conservation of assets to preserve what brings people to HHI to Live-Work-Play
- Increase local workforce
- Business that promotes environmental issues/ conservation efforts of HHI.
- Create or hire a DMO that fosters & promotes our ecotourism, history & heritage assets, and arts & culture & food
- Create local & regional tax and other incentives to attract soft industries and in-home businesses
- Doctor turn-over
- Partner across state lines for economic development

Weaknesses:

- Sprawl & auto dependency – Decentralize sprawl, impacts of life & Beaufort County’s ability to compete in attracting same demographics (2)
- Workforce housing (2)
- Emergency communication – improve relationships with all emergency responder in prep for natural disasters, active shooters, etc. Coordinate pre-plans (1)

- Vulnerability to storms and climate change (1)
- Heirs property laws (1)
- Transportation (1)
- Not enough “imperative” to tackle gentrification and/or address cultural sustainability (1)
- Not enough outreach to the business & service stakeholders for input (1)
- Disparity between rich & poor
- Not enough car charging stations
- Time & money it takes for workers to get on & off the island
- Take seriously the need for cultural sustainability for Gullah
- After 2 hurricanes, is there a need for expertise in resiliency planning?
- Not enough 2 year or trades education
- Improve traffic on/off HHI, second bridge?
- Current state of commercial space, need modernizing
- Rising cost of living

Threats:

- Future recessions that impact hospitality industry & housing market (1)
- Climate change (1)
- No marquis customers with local decision makers
- Rising sea level threat, control growth

Aspirations:

- Pristine environment – Increase celebration of environment – Protecting & nurturing the natural environment (7)
- Three County Coalition that brings together out history & heritage assets and markets them collectively and aggressively – Cultural tourism tied to the region (4)
- Housing close to access to transportation and job locations (3)
- Connect HHI multi modal infrastructure to rest of region – More walkable/bikable places (2)
- Push HHI as a viable arts & culture friendly community and offer tax and other incentives – Arts community (2)
- Dynamic growth [sensitive to environment] (1)
- Welcoming
- Increased commercial space utilization
- Provision of Housing affordable to service workers
- Ad campaign – HHI “We are more than great beaches”
- Reinvent sustainability
- Viable public transportation

Results:

- Penny tax for roads – Increase percentage of people walking/biking/carpooling/taking transit other than single occupancy vehicles – Reduction in automobile congestion due to people choosing other modes of transportation. (5)
- Reduce travel time & financial burden for workers commuting to HHI – Measureable reduction in peak hour traffic on 278 bridge (4)
- Economic Diversity across industries (3)
- Reduction in the disparity between rich and poor – Per capita income (3)
- Capital Investment
- Success – mindset not a destination
- Medical services for all (hospital, VIM, assisted living options)
- Mayor’s Task Force for regional thinking
- Tourism numbers increase economic impact

- Decrease acrimony, increase community
- Increase in the age 18 to 40 age cohort
- The group concluded discussions. Jayme Lopko will reach out to members that were not able to attend to give them the opportunity to participate and their responses will be incorporated into the results.
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 AM.

Submitted by: Jayme Lopko