



APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT



A PUBLIC INPUT

Beaufort has a rich history of civic dialogue and public participation. Community leaders in Beaufort intended that the development of this plan follow in that tradition. In fact, public participation and input were the cornerstones of this planning effort and are the basis for the plan’s recommendations.

Appendix Highlights

- A.1 Overview of Public Input
- A.2 Public Survey Summary

The City sought to insure that public input on the plan was garnered from as wide a spectrum of community members and stakeholders as possible. To that end, the public participation included several key elements:

1. An advisory committee including a wide range of community perspectives including business owners, elected and appointed officials, and area residents and leaders.
2. A community-wide survey that was distributed during the plan process.
3. A plan website that included up to date information on the plan process and supplementary information for education and public comment.
4. Finally, a five-day public planning and design workshop (also known as a “charrette”) was the centerpiece public involvement event. All told, more there were more than 1,000 discrete citizen interactions through all of these modes of public input.

City of Beaufort staff, area non-profit organizations, local media groups, and the consultant team went to great lengths to publicize the charrette process and schedule. City staff and Advisory Committee members distributed posters and plan information throughout the community. These bulletins served notice to the public of the approaching charrette, inviting all interested persons to attend and participate in the workshop activities. In addition, City staff placed signs at key locations around town. This outreach was well-received and helped citizens become active participants in the exciting design work and visioning for Beaufort’s future. Citizens were also alerted through internet applications, as well, by postings listed on the project website.

The public’s participation in each of the public input venues and events shaped the plan’s final recommendations. The public comments, along with information gained from stakeholders, public officials and other representatives, guided the consultant team in their work and were key determinants of the plan’s outcomes.

A.1 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC INPUT

The following is a combined summary of the input from the Advisory Committee, the charrette public feedback, and the public survey comments.

Promote Environmental Protection & Sustainability

- Focus on Water Quality & Water Availability
- Protect Trees
- Promote and Enforce Local Environmental Sustainability Practices
- Reduce Energy Use/Promote Alternative Energy Sources

Provide for Parks & Open Space

- Provide and Encourage Parks/Greenspace within Neighborhoods/Districts
- Expand/Promote Utilization of Waterfront Park
- Expand Open Space/Greenspace Preservation
- Plan, Expand Trail Network
- Build Dog parks
- Explore Creative Ways to Fund/Maintain Parks
- Enhance Public Water Access

Practice Growth Management and Regional Cooperation

- Promote Limited and Sensitive Growth beyond Current City Boundaries
- Stop Sprawl/Promote Infill & Redevelopment
- Engage in Regional Planning and Dialogue

Support Economic Development & Real Estate Investment

- Support Small Business Growth & Retention
- Create Small Business-friendly Process/Approach to Investors
- Economic Development key to Residential & Other Development
- Create Certainty/Mitigate Risks for Investors
- Support Educational Institutions & Push for Improvements
- Reduce Taxes/Control Costs

Develop an Efficient and Multi-modal Transportation Network

- Create Efficient & Liveable Local & Regional Roadway network
- Explore a Variety of Local and Regional Transit Options, including Ferry Service
- Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans and Increase Local Connectivity
- Fund/Implement Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Create and Implement Design/Streetscape standards for All Users
- Implement Traffic Calming and Roundabouts

Support Efficient, Safe, and High-Tech Utility Services

- Promote Water Conservation, Reuse, and Best Practices for Septic Systems
- Bury Utility Lines
- Promote High Level of Broadband and Wireless Communication Availability

Enhance and Support Existing Neighborhoods

- Build Community Partnerships, Enhance Neighborhood Character, & Promote Community Interaction/Understanding
- Invest in Neighborhood Amenities & Infrastructure: Parks, drainage, utilities, etc.
- Mix Housing types and densities, but with sensitivity to neighborhoods
- Develop Neighborhood Standards/Guidelines
- Provide Property Owner Assistance to Residents who want to Stay in Beaufort
- Plan for and Provide for an Aging Population

Encourage a Broad Range of Housing Options

- Serve a Broad Range of Constituents, Especially Workforce, Young Families, and Low Income
- Focus on Housing Repairs/Renovations
- Promote Residential Density/Infill/Appropriate locations; Mix Uses
- Provide Variety of Housing Options
- Develop Creative Funding Sources for Affordable Housing
- Increase Residential Design Standards
- Streamline Regulatory/Approval Process
- Promote and Support Education/Financial Literacy re: Housing & Regulations

Emphasize Historic Preservation

- Implement the Preservation Plan
- Promote, Enforce, and Fund Historic Preservation
- Apply Contextually-Appropriate Design Standards for New Buildings in Historic areas
- Develop Strategies for Protecting and Enhancing NW Quadrant
- Plan for & Improve Infrastructure Improvement Issues in Historic Areas: Sea Wall, water/sewer system, trees, utilities

Promote Downtown Development

- Improve Signage & Regulation of Such
- Plan for Infrastructure Investment in Downtown
- Encourage a Broad Range of Retail Development in Downtown
- Promote/Enhance Downtown Entertainment/Events
- Increase Business Development in Downtown Area
- Develop a Parking Master Plan for Downtown

Support Arts & Cultural Facilities

- Link Arts, Tourism & Economic Development
- Foster Partnerships between USCB & Arts
- Develop Arts Organization/Leadership
- Expand Strategies to Build Art/Culture: Assessments, Architecture, Museum, Facilities, Festivals

Create Predictable Criteria for Big Box and Regional Retail

- Develop Criteria for Big Box Location; Ensure Appropriate Infrastructure In Place
- Ensure Regulatory Predictability and Good Design for Commercial Uses

A.2 PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

City staff, the Advisory Committee, and the consultants developed and distributed a survey to elicit feedback on community priorities. The survey was available on the project website and in hard copy form for three weeks prior to, during, and subsequent to the planning charrette. 140 surveys were completed. While the numbers of respondents is not large enough to create a valid sample size for statistical purposes, the responses do provide an impression of the opinions of the community’s active citizenry and stakeholders. The responses also confirm and further define community priorities articulated through this and previous planning processes.

Survey Respondent Demographic Summary

Number of survey respondents:	140
Full-time residents of City:	63%
Non-residents:	30.4%
Part-time residents:	6.7%
Home zip code:	56% listed 29902 (Beaufort/Parris Island) 19% listed 29907 (Lady’s Island)
Work zip code:	67% listed 29902
Own their residence in Beaufort:	90.1%
Own a business in Beaufort:	26.6%
Employed Full-time:	46.6%
Retired:	36.6%
Length of residence in Beaufort:	76.8% 5+ years 33.1% 20 + years
Annual household income:	42.5% below \$75,000 37.0% between \$75,000 – \$150,000 20.5% above \$150,000

The survey revealed that respondents view protecting natural and historic resources; an efficient and multi-modal transportation system; adequate infrastructure; and a mixture of uses in a walkable setting as the top priorities for the City.

Top 5 Community Objectives

The table below lists the top 5 objectives for Beaufort as ranked by survey respondents. The survey asked respondents to rank their top five out of 18 community objectives identified by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (which were adapted from objectives from the Northern Beaufort Regional Plan). While all of these objectives have been articulated as important to Beaufort residents, the survey revealed that respondents view protecting natural and historic resources; an efficient and multi-modal transportation system; adequate infrastructure; and a mixture of uses in a walkable setting as the top priorities for the City.

Community Objectives	Percent Response	Rank
Protect our natural resources (including water resources and trees, etc.) and open spaces/green areas.	64%	1
Maintain and protect our historic structures and resources.	50.4%	2
Support an efficient transportation system that provides route choices and provides for walking, biking, transit and other alternatives to driving.	45.3%	3
Ensure new development is consistent with community infrastructure (roads, etc.) and public facilities (parks, etc.).	44.6%	4
Encourage a mixture of housing, stores, services, and parks within walking distance of each other.	30.9%	5

Top 5 Economic Development Priorities

The survey asked respondents to prioritize nine strategies for economic (job) growth in Beaufort. The table below lists the top five strategies as ranked by survey respondents.

<i>Economic Development Priorities</i>	<i>Average Score (out of 3)</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Preserve historic buildings and places	2.49	1
Support existing businesses	2.40	2
Encourage and support small businesses and industries	2.40	3
Support education, medical facilities, and city services	2.38	4
Support the downtown area	2.29	5

Top 5 Transportation Priorities

The survey asked respondents to prioritize 13 strategies for transportation in Beaufort. The table below lists the top five strategies as ranked by survey respondents and is consistent with the ranking for “an efficient transportation system” in the community objectives question.

<i>Transportation Priorities</i>	<i>Average Score (out of 3)</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Maintain existing roads	2.41	1
Provide bike lanes, bike routes, and bike paths	2.14	2
Develop neighborhoods so that people can walk to stores and services	2.11	3
Increase sidewalks and walking paths	2.08	4
Provide bus service	1.71	5

Options for building new roads and bridges (including the Northern Bypass) or expanding existing roads to serve additional motor vehicles were at the bottom of the ranking of listed [transportation] strategies.

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Top 5 Housing Priorities

The survey asked respondents to prioritize various types of residential development in Beaufort. The table below lists the top five strategies as ranked by survey respondents. Neighborhoods with only one housing type and age-restricted housing developments ranked at the bottom of the list of 12 options.

<i>Housing Priorities</i>	<i>Average Score (out of 3)</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Affordable housing for working residents	2.17	1
Affordable housing for low income residents (including seniors)	1.99	2
Infill housing on vacant or underutilized sites	1.90	3
Mixed-use buildings (residential over commercial)	1.88	4
Neighborhoods with a mixture of housing types	1.83	5

Capital Spending Priorities

The survey asked respondents to indicate which of 12 potential community capital projects which they would be willing to pay additional taxes. Respondents did not have to rank projects for which they would not be willing to pay additional taxes.

Priority Capital Projects	Percent Response	Rank
Natural areas/conservation areas	54.1%	1
Bicycle lanes, paths, routes	48.1	2
Greenways	40.6	3
Parks	39.1	4
Sidewalks (maintain existing & build new)	33.1	5
Improvements to City streets/sidewalks	30.1	6
Bus service	26.3	7
Stormwater facilities	26.3	7
Affordable housing/workforce housing	23.3	8
Improvements to major roads (US21, SC280, SC170, Ribaut, etc.)	21.1	9
Public parking lots/garages	16.5	10
New street connections/intersection improvements	6.8	11

Beaufort Survey Comments organized by topic

Economic Development Recommendations

- Create economic activity beyond the military, home building and tourism
- Attract young, college age workers
- Continue to make promotion of Beaufort as a destination a high priority
- More nature oriented tourism
- Already support tourism too heavily in funds
- Opportunities come with environmental stewardship
- Promote research jobs, like tidal energy
- Make it easier and cheaper to start a new business downtown
- Provide meaningful incentives to attract new businesses
- Encourage locally owned business by not allowing chain stores

Support Educational Institutions

- Promote Better Grade Performance in Public Schools
- Support the USCB and encourage its growth

Promote the Arts and Creative Economy

- The arts and the creative economy
- Encourage and fund the arts and art related projects in schools and for public
- Cultural facilities
- Construction of a multi-usage arts facility, including auditorium/theater, studio space, rehearsal hall, dance studio, and audio-visual studio

Stop Sprawl/Promote Infill & Redevelopment

- Stop sprawl
- Infill
- Infill development should be prioritized for adaptive reuse, not clearcutting
- Redevelopment
- Brownfield development

Promote Historic Preservation



- Historic preservation
- Please include the historic preservation plan as an integral part of the comp plan!
- Historic restoration

Make Beaufort Bicycle/Pedestrian-Friendly

- Create more bike paths and walking trails in the city
- Tempt people to walk or bike with proper planning
- Become bicycle friendly - driver/rider interaction education
- We need bike lanes painted on existing road
- Rails to trails
- Convert old SC Ports Authority corridor to a bike trail
- Use P.R. Railroad for bike path to Yemassee and road access from SC 170 to Allison Road or beyond to difuse traffic from Boundary St. and Ribaut Rd.
- Provide parking for bikes and encourage their use
- Pay people to walk

Explore transit options

- Light rail using existing tracks
- Ferry/shuttle service to Hilton Head
- Shuttle service from government center to shopping centers & downtown
- A water taxi service from Beaufort to Hilton Head and/or Bluffton, and a circular shuttle that goes around Hilton Head
- Back-up ferry service from Lady's Island to Beaufort
- Parking shuttle from underused lots like Uptown Plaza

Provide downtown parking options

- Build downtown parking garage and parking lots
- Re Parking - make creative use of existing space downtown
- Provide parking outside downtown with trolleys to Bay St.
- Avoid a parking garage at all cost

Other Transportation Strategies

- Plan Infrastructure
- Continue to improve infrastructure
- Complete Boundary Street Plan ASAP
- Improve streetscapes
- More lighting for our roads for safety and night driving
- Reroute intercoastal waterway 'tall boats' around Beaufort
- Updating the downtown swing bridge!
- A local or county gas tax should be used to fund transportation and roads
- Stop Buggy Tours-They are dangerous and owners don't properly clean up after horses
- Our roads are at capacity. We cannot afford more population without more roads.
- A street through Kmart, behind National Cemetery and over the river
- Interconnect blueways into transportation network!

Enhance Public Water Access

- Docks at city owned waterfront properties
- Expand day dock areas/provide for inexpensive hourly/half-day docking options
- Save Hunting Island the ONLY PUBLIC BEACH IN 50 miles
- Make better use of our Waterfront Park (Is the rental fee too high?)
- Public access to more beaches



Increase Parks & Greenspace

- Parks to support high density housing
- greenspace protection
- With the needed higher density parks, green space and open space are very important. These should be passive and low maintenance but large enough for neighborhood use. Allow structures to be taller if more of the land is devoted to green space. Water view and access for neighborhoods is also a benefit.

Provide Variety of Housing Options

- Mixed types of housing; high end, medium and low as in the point neighborhood
- Student housing near uscb
- Graduated senior living (independent thru skilled nursing facility)
- Housing for seniors downtown would be good if we had a grocery of some sort.
- High density housing will change the small town feel of Beaufort and turn us into another charleston, with attendant parking, crime, and other issues
- Work with habitat for humanity to improve housing options
- Please don't create future ghettos here by jamming a lot of habitat style houses together. . .City must make sure these houses aren't allowed to fall into ruin

Reduce Energy Use/Promote Alternative Energy Sources

- I'd be willing to spend money on things that reduce energy use
- Green energy source

Reduce Taxes/Control Costs

- No additional taxes. Cut services.
- Control Government spending on non-essential services
- Not willing to pay additional taxes; new residents, developers, new businesses should cover impact needs above our current taxes
- Cut costs and do more with present taxes; be more efficient; do cost studies
- Current taxes seem exceptionally high
- None of the above - sponsorship from businesses
- We pay enough as it is

Other Comments

- Eliminate the bad attitude in the zoning department
- It is a total anti business climate at city hall/etc.
- Allow additional zoning uses in the depot road LI district
- Ensure positive feedback to good citizens and adequate law enforcement for offenders
- Turn back the hands of time
- Promote stabilization instead of growth
- Less focus on new investment, which is not sustainable in the long term as our natural resources diminish. . .Concentrate on a smaller service economy that uses our resources sparingly
- We don't want traffic jams and overpopulation. This is why so many of us live here, to enjoy the slower pace and no traffic jams!



PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

In 1985 Main Street Beaufort was formed to carry out the Main Street revitalization program in downtown Beaufort. For fifteen years it has made a steady incremental progress in transforming downtown Beaufort into an active, thriving, viable downtown. Technically, Main Street Beaufort is charged with the entire Beaufort CBD, but it has focused its efforts on the waterfront commercial core. Because of its success, and understanding that it should begin to look at an expanded geographic area, it asked the South Carolina Downtown Development Association to conduct a design charrette focused on the entry into downtown formed by U.S. Highway 21 as it approaches Boundary Street and Boundary Street itself.

The charrette was conducted on January 19-22, 2000. A team of design, planning, transportation and community professionals was assembled to take public input on the design area and provide design and implementation recommendations to improve the entry corridor.

BEAUFORT



A Public Input Process
and
Design Charette
for the City of
Beaufort, South Carolina

Prepared for:
The City of Beaufort, South Carolina
In Conjunction with Main Street Beaufort, USA
Prepared by:
The South Carolina Downtown Development Association
Columbia, South Carolina
January 19-22, 2000