



CHAPTER TWO: THE PATH FORWARD

2 THE PATH FORWARD



Beaufort is a community with many high expectations. Rife with natural resources and history, its residents and its neighbors draw their unique identity from the smell of the salt marshes, the flow of the rivers, the live oaks that provide shade to the streets, the much beloved neighborhoods that have served many generations, and the experience of walking and shopping along Bay Street.

Chapter Highlights

2.1 Major Goals & Priorities

2.2 The Triple Bottom Line for Beaufort

2.3 Smart Growth Principles

On one level, it is hard to understand why modern Beaufort cannot be simply an extension of the historic framework that has served this community well for nearly three centuries. Yet Beaufort is a much more complex urban form with both the very best of walkable urbanism and some of the most auto-oriented suburban sprawl all within its compact borders. Add to this the fractured corporate limits due to ad hoc annexations, an interwoven boundary shared with Port Royal, and a level of County urbanism (or more specifically suburbanism) that is virtually indistinguishable from the city, and you have a recipe for many overlapping if not competing interests.

This plan is intended be both visionary in its expectations but grounded in the realities of implementation. It consolidates the many and varied plans that have been adopted through the years and attempts to prioritize. In particular, it incorporates a level of decision-making that emphasizes the triple bottom line —one that considers the relative impact of local initiatives on environmental, social, and economic considerations. And when it comes to economic impacts, each priority is also assessed as to capital and operating costs on the city.

This plan is charged therefore with synthesizing and prioritizing the many laudable and important goals and objectives from the City’s previous planning efforts. In this regard, the broad reaching nature of this document serves as an organizing framework for previously adopted plans as well as all future plans. South Carolina law requires cities to adopt a new plan every ten years with an update required every five years. Beaufort’s previous plan (adopted in 1999; updated in 2004) is the direct predecessor of this plan.

We are capable of deciding our own destiny. The question is which path we will choose?



Success is bred not from what we say but in what we accomplish.

2.1 OUR VISION, ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

The City of Beaufort and its citizens envision a City with:

- Beautiful, stable neighborhoods
- A common community vision
- A sustainable economic base
- Transportation options and convenient access to services & destinations
- Attractive and vital community gateways and corridors
- Natural resources that balance protection with public access and enjoyment
- A balance between preservation and sensitive infill and redevelopment of our historic core
- A predictable development process for citizens and developers alike
- A welcoming atmosphere to all people

To help achieve this vision, we will build upon and protect our assets and strengths:

- Natural beauty and open spaces
- Unique community design and historic atmosphere
- Access to local goods, services, and cultural amenities
- The military presence, hospital, and higher education institutions
- Community interaction and small community feel

To achieve this vision, the following directives have been established to guide the decision making process both for this plan and future implementing elements.

1 Sustainability

The activities of the City of Beaufort will consider the balance of social, environmental, and economic sustainability principles for both the community and the private property owner with all of our decisions.

2 Regionalism

We are committed to the implementation of the *Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan* as a guideline for our regional decisions and future urban form and we will continue to engage and coordinate in regional planning activities. Our planning will extend to the established urban growth boundary and will tie together all areas of the community in a cohesive manner.

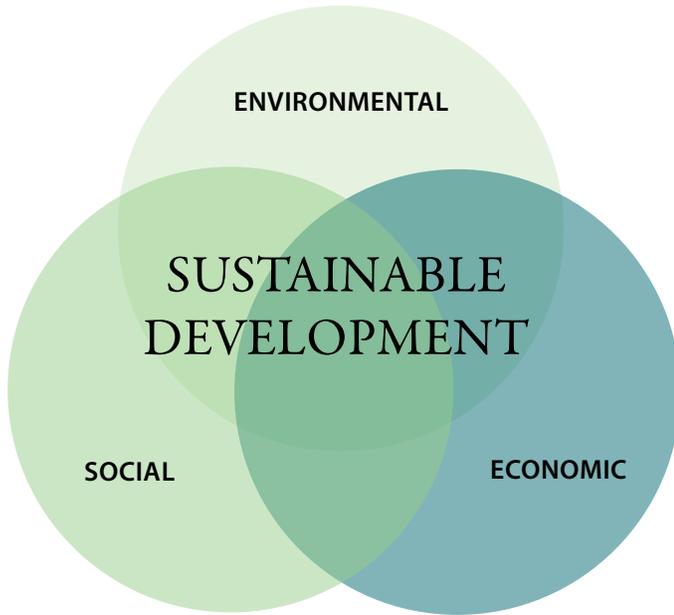
3 Natural Infrastructure

We must protect our environmental resources as fundamental to the natural ecosystem and our quality of life. We will utilize innovative and context-sensitive solutions to conserve and protect our natural resources including our salt marshes, marsh islands, coastal waters, and marine resources; trees, forests, and wildlife habitats; beaches and dunes; and open space preservation.

4 Growth

We must encourage growth within our urban service area by primarily focusing on the regeneration of our current assets through infill and redevelopment. Development in our urban growth boundary shall be sensitively focused on a conservation ethic with a compact and efficient built form that could be serviced with municipal services in the future.

- 5 Economic Development**
A strong, vibrant, and healthy economy will be achieved through a successful economic development program in order to ensure the long term success and viability of the City of Beaufort. We must support the continuation and expansion of our primary economic engines - tourism, the military, healthcare, and education - while also seeking to expand opportunities for the arts and the recruitment of creative/knowledge-based industries.
- 6 Access and Mobility**
Our citizens and visitors need a transportation system that integrates regional solutions with a fine-grained local network of choices that accommodate the automobile, pedestrians, bicyclists, and water-based travel.
- 7 Urban Form**
The City will maintain its distinct urban form by encouraging growth and development using the model of walkable, urban, mixed-use neighborhoods established by the historic core of the City.
- 8 Neighborhoods**
We believe that all our neighborhoods, including the downtown, must be vibrant and diverse and thus require consistent and continual public and private attention, maintenance and re-investment. Our neighborhoods should be reinforced in all planning and infrastructure projects.
- 9 Parks & Public Open Spaces**
The City will permanently preserve and expand a community-wide parks, recreation and open space network that serves the entire city from the neighborhood playground to the regional reserve.
- 10 Historic and Cultural Resources**
Beaufort is a living, dynamic community and must balance the protection of its abundant natural, cultural, institutional and historic resources with managed growth that adds to the community's character for future generations without degrading those resources which we value.
- 11 Social Diversity**
We will maintain and celebrate the integrated ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the community. To this end, we are committed to the provision of affordable and workforce housing throughout the city.
- 12 Hazard Mitigation**
As a coastal community, we will feel the direct impacts of tropical storm activity and flooding. We must be prudent in our preparation for these expected hazards and mitigate against the loss of property to the greatest extent practical.
- 13 Climate Change**
We must participate in solutions that reduce or avoid potential impacts to our regional and global climate and in turn we must adapt to those conditions which are likely to be inevitable, most specifically sea level rise.
- 14 Resource Efficiency**
We will manage our consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources including energy and water and will continue to reduce our total waste stream. In addition we will be supportive of community activities that promote resource efficiency and the production of alternative energy and innovative water use and protection practices.
- 15 Fiscal Sustainability**
The city, as a provider of urban services, must focus on long-term solvency with each incremental decision. Capital investments should leverage future benefits and must consider the impact on long term operational costs prior to their implementation. Perhaps most importantly, we will constantly seek efficient and innovative ways in which to deliver services and maintain our assets.
- 16 Adequacy of Infrastructure and Facilities**
The contiguous extension of our corporate boundaries will be considered to the extent that the provision of city services can be economically and efficiently provided and will be subject to the adequate availability and timely construction of community infrastructure and public facilities.
- 17 Planning & Implementation**
We will continue our history of thoughtful, detailed planning and will include practical implementing elements to leverage our ideas with actions. Success is bred not from what we say but what we accomplish.



While many definitions for sustainable development have been put forward, the simplest test for sustainability may be “if we continue doing things this way, will future generations have food to eat, clean water to drink, a functioning natural environment and a functioning economy?”

– On Common Ground, Summer 2008, a publication of the National Association of Realtors

2.2 THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE IN BEAUFORT

Coined by author John Elkington in 1994 and later expanded in his 1998 book *Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*, the term “Triple Bottom Line” (TBL) has come to be known as a balance of environmental, social, and economic sustainability for organizations.

EN Environmental Sustainability

SO Social Sustainability

EC Economic Sustainability

The practice has largely been popularized in the corporate world as an accounting method to quantify a company’s responsibility to not just its “shareholders” but its “stakeholders” as well. Today, many firms are adopting “3B” principles as part of a campaign to mitigate their environmental and community footprint while ensuring a positive bottom line.

This concept was adapted for Shell by SustainAbility (a consulting firm) and described more succinctly for the corporate world as “People, Planet and Profit”.

“People” (Human Capital) pertains to fair and beneficial business practices toward labor, the community and region in which a corporation conducts its business. A TBL company conceives a reciprocal social structure in which the well being of corporate, labor and other stakeholder interests are interdependent. A triple bottom line enterprise seeks to benefit many constituencies, not exploit or endanger any group of them.

“Planet” (Natural Capital) refers to sustainable environmental practices. A TBL company endeavors to benefit the natural order as much as possible or at the least do no harm and curtail environmental impact. A TBL endeavor reduces its ecological footprint by, among other things, carefully managing its consumption of energy and non-renewables and reducing manufacturing waste as well as rendering waste less toxic before disposing of it in a safe and legal manner.

“Profit” is the bottom line shared by all commerce, conscientious or not. In the original concept, within a sustainability framework, the “profit” aspect needs to be seen as the economic benefit enjoyed by the host society. It is the lasting economic impact the organization has on its economic environment. This is often confused to be limited to the internal profit made by a company or organization. Therefore, a TBL approach cannot be interpreted as traditional corporate accounting plus social and environmental impact.

What distinguishes this plan from previous planning efforts is that for the first time, we have married the environment, social needs, and our economy into one document that unifies our community. No longer can we assume that the trends of the past will predict our future. Instead with careful management and strategic investment, we stand poised to leave to future generations a community that we hope will be truly sustainable.

HOW DOES THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE APPLY TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING?

Many local governments have considered each of the Triple-Bottom-Line (TBL) elements in planning efforts, but they rarely are considered as a comprehensive approach to overall community sustainability.

For example, the image of the Dushanbe Tea House in Boulder, CO (upper right) is by most standards an economically and socially successful space with its adjacency to the rushing waters of Boulder Creek in downtown. But, by today's one-sized-fits-all environmental regulations, the lack of a sizeable buffer to the creek would make this scene illegal to replicate. In many regards this toolbox suggests that communities need to find an appropriate balance among all three elements. What is appropriate in one context may not be appropriate in others.

This doesn't mean to suggest that environmental regulations should be disregarded in the name of economics. On the contrary, all planning should strive for the highest level of achievement for each element and then calibrate to adjust for various scenarios. What isn't shown in the image of Boulder is that the City has aggressively protected the headwaters and the entirety of the channel to the point that it enters and as it leaves the downtown (see image on lower right). This permits the creek to receive some level of pollution in the short stretch it travels through the urban environment because it is otherwise pristine.

A sustainable community is therefore defined as one that maintains the integrity its natural resources over the long term, promotes a prosperous economy, and hosts a vibrant, equitable society.

Planning should be comprehensive in nature and even the most technically specific strategy should be evaluated within the TBL framework to ensure its overall efficacy.



Image Source: City of Boulder

Images from top: The Boulder Dushanbe Tea House in downtown Boulder, CO with its hardscaped patio seating area; Boulder Creek as it passes by the Tea House patio area; Boulder Creek after it leaves the downtown area as it passes through a permanently conserved area purchased by the community

RESOURCES

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives—Local Governments for Sustainability: www.iclei.org

The Triple Bottom Line-The Blog: getsustainable.net/blogfiles/blog.html

Elkington, John. *Cannibals With Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. Stony Creek: New Society Publishers, 1998.

Esty, Daniel C. and Andrew S. Winston. *Green to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage*. Yale University, 2006.

Savitz, Andrew W. with Karl Weber. *The Triple Bottom Line: How Today's Best-Run Companies are Achieving Economic, Social, and Environmental Success - And How You Can Too*. Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2006.

“The more intensely we feel about an idea or a goal, the more assuredly the idea, buried deep in our subconscious, will direct us along the path to its fulfillment.”

—Earl Nightingale



Photos from top: A compact village; Walkable community; New housing in Bluffton, SC; Children and parents walking and biking to school.

2.3 PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH

- 1 Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices**
Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy.
- 2 Create Walkable Neighborhoods**
Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth.
- 3 Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration**
Growth can create great places to live, work and play—if it responds to a community's own sense of how and where it wants to grow.
- 4 Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place**
Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development and construction which respond to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation.
- 5 Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective**
For a community to be successful in implementing smart growth, it must be embraced by investors and developers.
- 6 Mix Land Uses**
Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live.
- 7 Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas**
Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by bolstering local economies, preserving critical environmental areas, improving our communities quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities.
- 8 Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices**
Choice that provides people with more alternatives for access to housing, shopping, and jobs.
- 9 Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities**
Smart growth directs development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and thereby conserving open space and irreplaceable natural resources outside of developed areas.
- 10 Take Advantage of Compact Building Design**
Smart growth provides a means for communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development.

BLADEN STREET

Given the level of development activity currently occurring in the City, and particularly in the Historic District, Bladen Street is likely to change in the coming years. Thus, the purpose of this plan is to set a vision for that change, and outline the steps necessary to achieve this vision so that the impact on the area will be a positive one. In addition, this plan will also function as a guide for why and how City resources should be used to enhance and revitalize Bladen Street.

Information on the historical development of Bladen Street is scarce however the Sanborn Insurance Maps of 1899, 1905, 1912, and 1924 provide some information. These maps indicate a mix of residential and commercial uses occurred along Bladen Street throughout this 25-year period. The 1899 map shows a variety of uses from King to Bay Street including a grocery and hardware store, a machine shop, the Beaufort County courthouse, and residential dwellings, with the later maps showing much of the same.

Bladen Street Area Revitalization Plan

Beaufort, South Carolina

