



NORTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY
SOUTH CAROLINA

REGIONAL PLAN

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan represents agreement reached by Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, and the Town of Yemassee as to how the region will grow and develop. The plan begins with a series of common regional goals that serve as the foundation on which the plan is built.

The plan delineates a future growth boundary that focuses new growth in well-defined areas, preserving over 60% of the land area for rural related uses. The plan includes a future land use plan that creates a framework within which each community will continue to plan their own futures within a regional vision. It includes a transportation planning strategy that will enable effective regional transportation planning in a changing and unpredictable environment. It addresses the fiscal aspects of planning so that allocating regional costs of growth can be prepared for. It includes improved baseline environmental standards and other planning initiatives. Finally, it sets the stage for continued oversight of the implementation of the plan through intergovernmental action.

The Planning Process

This plan was prepared in close consultation with a Steering Committee that was appointed by Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, and the Town of Yemassee. It had representatives from Beaufort County Council, Beaufort City Council, Port Royal Town Council, Yemassee Town Council, the Beaufort County Planning Commission, the Joint Planning Commission, the Lowcountry Council of Governments, and the Beaufort County School District.

The Steering Committee generally met on a monthly basis for more than a year to prepare this plan. It was supported by planning staffs from each jurisdiction working together with planning consultants as a unified planning team. In addition, the Technical Advisory Committee was formed with representatives of many other community organizations and agencies to provide advice and expertise on particular topics relevant to the plan. The Technical Advisory Committee, in turn,

organized itself into a series of special topic working groups who provided focused recommendations on different elements of this plan.

The Steering Committee held public meetings over the course of the planning process at locations throughout the county in order to provide public input and comment. In addition, all meetings of the Steering Committee were open to the public, and public comments were taken by the Committee.

The Steering Committee worked its way through the planning process in a logical and orderly manner. It began by working with the planning staff team to develop a series of “guiding principles” that set the scope and tone of the planning process. Those guiding principles were eventually translated into the Common Goals that are in Chapter I of this plan. The Steering Committee worked with staff to understand possible growth forecasts and alternative future growth scenarios, and ultimately focused in on a particular growth scenario that evolved into what is now embodied in the growth boundaries and land use plan.

Northern Beaufort County is forecasted to grow by approximately 53% over the next twenty years, from approximately 80,500 to almost 123,500. The Committee spent a great deal of time analyzing what future growth meant in terms of transportation needs, and ultimately developed a transportation strategy for the future. Following the transportation analysis, the Committee then worked with a fiscal impact consultant to understand the regional costs of growth related to transportation and other public facilities.

The working groups of the Technical Advisory Committee worked hard to develop specific recommendations for other plan elements, particularly the need for baseline environmental standards, and these recommendations were embraced by the Steering Committee and are included in this plan. Finally, the Committee worked hard to develop a system for future implementation and monitoring of the plan, so that it could become a regional reality.

The Plan

The Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan is organized into eight chapters.

Chapter I – Regional Growth and Common Goals: This chapter contains a series of Common Goals that were derived from the initial Guiding Principles created by the Steering Committee early in the process. These Common Goals are in effect the regional planning “values” that are the foundation for the plan. They include a series of regional planning themes, including:

- The importance of each community working together to coordinate growth in a collaborative way,
- The related importance of coordinated regional infrastructure planning, such as regional transportation facilities,
- The importance of a strong and diverse regional economy,
- The need for a sustainable and fair way of funding regional infrastructure,
- The need for consistent natural resource protection from one jurisdiction to another,
- The desire to focus growth in certain areas, thereby preserving rural character and avoiding inefficient sprawl,
- The importance of preserving open spaces,
- The desire to preserve socioeconomic diversity of the region,
- The regional need for affordable and workforce housing for residents,
- The role that high quality compatible infill can play in regional development,
- Recognition of the need to balance planning policies with the rights of land owners,
- The importance of military facilities in the regional economy and the importance of coordination with military planners,
- The need for continued coordination of the various governments, and
- The need to institutionalize this plan through local community plans and regulations.

Chapter 2 – Growth Coordination Principles: This chapter contains what is in many ways the heart of the plan – future growth boundaries and growth principles. While all elements of the plan are important, this plan revolves around agreement on boundaries for where communities are to grow, and where they agree not to grow, making it possible for the municipalities to plan for their services and for the county to encourage long term sustainable rural areas. The growth boundaries create predictability for both the municipalities and the county by addressing where growth will occur. The growth principles that go with the boundaries lay the groundwork for future agreements as to how the growth will occur, in particular the future “rules” for how development and annexations will be reviewed. The emphasis in the plan is on jurisdictions working together to maximize benefits of growth while mitigating its negative impacts, particularly cross jurisdiction impacts.

Chapter 3 – Land Use: This chapter works in concert with Chapter 2 by defining a future land use plan that fits within the growth boundaries framework. It defines land uses at a level of detail that

creates a regional vision, while allowing each community to continue to do more fine grained land use planning within the regional plan.

Chapter 4 – Transportation and Other Public Facilities: This chapter outlines a strategy for transportation and other public facilities. It recognizes that transportation, perhaps more than any other element, is the “canary in the mine”, meaning that road congestion is often the first and most visible evidence of negative impacts of growth. The plan recognizes, however, that transportation planning occurs in a very dynamic environment, making it difficult to plan at a 20 year horizon with great specificity. For example, many alternatives are identified in this plan that could make certain road projects unneeded in the 20 year horizon, such as mass transit, improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and enhanced access management, but no one can predict with certainty how effective these alternatives can be in reducing the growth of vehicular traffic. For this reason, this plan suggests that certain road improvements be included in this plan for continued planning and evaluation, such as the US 21 widening, and the western bypass, recognizing that there is a strong desire by many in the region to avoid having to construct those projects due to perceived negative impacts on the quality of the community.

Chapter 5 – Fiscal Impact of Growth: This chapter places the price tag on future growth. Not surprising, the fiscal analysis points out that current funding sources will not allow the region to keep up with the capital and operating costs of regional public facilities. The unfunded capital costs for transportation, libraries, parks and recreation, and other regional governmental services is expected to be over \$216 million over the next twenty years, 77% of which are transportation related. Another \$230 million in operating and maintenance costs are expected over the same time period. The net fiscal deficit for regional facilities, including capital and operating costs, is forecasted to be in excess of \$217 million over 20 years. This analysis makes it clear that the communities of Northern Beaufort County must work together to identify and plan for new tools to fund this projected deficit, such as updated impact fees, and capital sales tax. Efforts to fund operating costs will be a particular challenge.

Chapter 6 – Baseline Environmental and Corridor Standards: This chapter along with Chapter 7 represents the efforts of the Technical Advisory Committee Working Groups. These Working Groups developed excellent recommendations that address specific implications of plan policies and are an excellent guide to some of the actions that are needed to carry the plan forward. Chapter 6 contains recommendations for improved baseline environmental standards. These include implementation of the Beaufort County Special Area Management Plan (SAMP), storm water “best management practices”, critical line setbacks and natural vegetative buffers, baseline standards for the protection of freshwater wetlands, and others. Baseline standards are also recommended for shared scenic and travel corridors

throughout the region, and for the use of transfer of development rights to preserve open space.

Chapter 7 – Regional Planning Initiatives: This chapter contains recommendations for a series of additional regional planning initiatives related to economic health and diversity, socioeconomic diversity, affordable and workforce housing, infill and redevelopment, military base coordination, and a regional growth tracking system.

Chapter 8 – Implementation Oversight: This chapter provides an overall framework for the implementation of the plan. It provides a four point approach to implementing the plan, including a continuing role for the Steering Committee as an implementation oversight group, the use of intergovernmental agreements to ratify certain plan elements, the inclusion of regional plan policies in local plans and regulations, and ongoing work by the Technical Advisory Committee on additional planning initiatives.

This plan represents a quantum leap forward for regional planning in Northern Beaufort County. In the past, each community engaged in local community planning; while each community tried to plan responsibly, they planned without a sense of the regional implication of their own actions. This regional plan creates a starting point for local planning within a regional framework. While this plan respects the planning autonomy of each community, it represents an agreement by each community to plan as part of the larger regional entity.



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Regional Growth and Common Goals

Introduction

Northern Beaufort County has experienced steady growth over the last decade. It has not grown as rapidly as the southern portion of the county, but it appears that growth pressures may be increasing – at the very least, we can expect that growth pressures will remain steady. This growth is occurring in an extremely sensitive natural environment that is home to many historic rural, urban, and suburban communities, each of which contributes to a unique and much treasured quality of life.

Growth forecasts were prepared for Northern Beaufort County as part of this regional planning process using the methodology developed originally for the regional transportation planning model. The method of making those forecasts is explained more fully in Appendix A of this plan.

Northern Beaufort County is forecasted to grow by approximately 53% over the next twenty years, from approximately 80,500 to almost 123,500. The following table illustrates the breakdown by planning sub area, and also shows how that population translates into potential dwelling units. During the process of preparing this plan, some members of the public suggested that growth may occur faster than that forecasted using this methodology. It was suggested, for example, that the population could exceed 145,000 in the next twenty years. It should be noted that these population forecasts are not intended to be “predictions” of the future. There are many variables that can influence future growth, including local, regional, national, and global economic trends and changes. Rather, these forecasts should be considered as reference points for planning purposes.

Figure 1

Planning Area	2006	2006	2025	2025
	Dwelling Units	Population	Dwelling Units	Population
Port Royal Island	19,875	50,244	30,587	76,299
Sheldon	2,123	5,266	3,696	9,203
Lady's Island	4,855	11,918	7,430	18,911
St. Helena Island	7,599	13,190	8,937	19,119
TOTAL	34,452	80,618	50,650	123,532

In addition to an increase in population and resulting residential dwelling construction, there will also be a corresponding increase in non-residential growth, for uses such as retail, office, industrial, and institutional uses. It is estimated that an additional 6.4 million square feet of non-residential land uses could be added over the next twenty years, most of which would be in the form of retail and office uses (2.3 million square feet of retail, and 2.2 million square feet of office).¹

The communities that make up Northern Beaufort County, including the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, the Town of Yemassee, and Beaufort County (together referred to as The Participating Local Governments), recognize that a regional approach is needed to manage this growth, to supplement ongoing local planning in each community. For this reason, the four local governments agree to cooperate and coordinate on regional planning issues that transcend local boundaries. This regional plan is the starting point for an ongoing collaborative regional planning process.

Unlike the southern portion of the county, the communities of Northern Beaufort County are able to set the pattern of growth in the future. In the southern portion of the county, over 90% of the land is already committed in one form or another. In the Northern portion of the county, over two thirds of the land remains uncommitted, which means that the land use pattern has yet to be set.

This plan begins with a series of common regional goals. These common goals are a broad statement of regional planning values and aspirations and serve as the foundation of other plan recommendations in subsequent chapters of this plan.

¹ The methodology for the growth forecasts is described in Appendix A.

Recommendation 1.1: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to achieve common goals related to:*

- *Coordinated Growth*
- *Public Facilities*
- *Economy*
- *Fiscal Health*
- *Environment*
- *Quality of Growth*
- *Open Space*
- *Cultural Diversity*
- *Affordable and Workforce Housing*
- *Infill and Redevelopment*
- *Individual Property Rights*
- *Military Facilities*
- *Local Planning within the Regional Plan*
- *Intergovernmental Coordination*

Each of these is discussed below.

Coordinated Growth

Northern Beaufort County includes four different units of local government, including the City of Beaufort, the Towns of Port Royal and Yemassee, and Beaufort County, each of which is responsible for a wide range of local government services. Each entity has jurisdiction over diverse areas that are unique in their challenges and opportunities, and each entity values their autonomous ability to act in their best interests. Further, there is desire to continue to have distinct and unique communities, each with their own identities.

While recognizing this autonomy and uniqueness of interests, there also are many regional growth and development issues that transcend the boundaries of individual jurisdictions. Chief among these are transportation, natural resource protection, education, workforce housing, and providing public facilities. The livability of individual communities or areas is, in fact, heavily influenced by what happens in other jurisdictions. For this reason, it is agreed by all jurisdictions that certain regional planning issues must be addressed through coordinated regional actions. It is not effective for any one jurisdiction to try to address these regional issues without the coordinated action of all jurisdictions. It is agreed that growth and development, particularly near areas where jurisdictional boundaries meet, should be subject to

strong collaborative planning, while respecting individual jurisdiction autonomy.

Compounding the issue, the unique geography and topography of Northern Beaufort County makes it difficult to define and predict the pattern of future growth, thereby making it difficult to plan for community “edges”. The relationship between historic land use patterns and the unique nature of upland, lowland, island, and water does not lend itself to an easy pattern of concentric growth radiating out from existing communities. Nonetheless, it is critical to the future health and sustainability of the region for the various jurisdictions to come together through a collaborative planning process to address the issues of future growth. A key building block for this regional plan will be agreement on an approach to municipal annexation of property that is currently in the county’s jurisdiction, with mechanisms to facilitate joint planning for such development.

Common Goal 1:

The City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, the Town of Yemassee, and Beaufort County will coordinate growth in Northern Beaufort County, especially around the current and future edges of the communities.



Timing and Adequacy of Infrastructure and Public Facilities

The provision of infrastructure and public facilities, such as roads, schools, utilities, public safety services and facilities, and libraries is a fundamental purpose of local government. It is incumbent upon local government to provide adequate levels of public service for existing population and businesses and to plan for future facilities to serve anticipated future population. Further, it is incumbent of local government to provide these services in a timely manner relative to the rate of new growth, and to do so in a fiscally responsible manner that fairly allocates the cost of the services relative to existing and new population.

Individual jurisdictions are responsible for various local infrastructure and public facilities within their own jurisdictions and those local facilities are not appropriately addressed as part of this regional planning effort. However, certain facilities have a regional role that goes beyond individual jurisdictions, such as regional roads, bridges, regional parks, schools, and libraries. Other services are provided locally, but can benefit from multi-jurisdictional cooperation, such as public safety services (i.e. police and fire/EMS).

The region's transportation facilities are among the most important in terms of continued economic health and community livability, and they are also the facility that would most benefit from a regional approach. Safe and adequate transportation facilities are important for many reasons: economic trade, convenience of residents and businesses, safety service accessibility, and hurricane evacuations. The planning for and reservation of adequate transportation corridors relative to anticipated growth, and the planning for capital investment and maintenance of roads, are paramount regional challenges to be addressed in this plan.

Common Goal 2:

Adequate and timely regional infrastructure and public facilities will be provided in a fair and equitable manner through a cooperative process in which all units of local government participate and act in the spirit of partnership.

Economic Health and Diversity

One of the critical success factors for any region is to have a strong, vibrant, and healthy local economy. A strong local economy provides employment opportunities for residents, creates a sense of progress and activity, and generates tax dollars that fund local public services and facilities.

There are continuing efforts to actively encourage economic development through agencies such as the Economic Development Partnership and the Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce, and through efforts such as the Beaufort Commerce Park. Part of the challenge in such efforts is to identify and set aside land well served by adequate transportation facilities and other supporting infrastructure.

Beaufort County is in very serious need of new economic development that draws capital and investment from outside the county and provides good wages and opportunities for our citizens. While the county has the highest per-capita income of any county in South Carolina, it has one of the lowest wage rates. It also relies heavily on its residential tax base for property tax revenue. To change this, the county must make a priority of attracting and retaining new business and industry that can make substantial capital investment, and pay good, above state average wages.

Northern Beaufort County is well situated between the ports and airports of Charleston and Savannah, and is close to Interstate 95 and the major east coast rail corridor. The quality of life is high and the county is increasingly a destination for early retirees from eastern metropolitan areas. In spite of these locational advantages, four obstacles have been identified to economic development in Northern Beaufort County.

- The region lacks an adequate supply of appropriately zoned and appropriately located land for non-retail commercial uses. While Northern Beaufort County has two designated industrial parks, one of these, the Yemassee Park, is almost completely wetlands. A more suitable site closer to I-95 should be established to benefit from the locational advantages described above.
- The region also lacks suitable vacant industrial buildings that businesses wishing to locate here can use. The one suitable building available, the Vanguard Building on US 21, was acquired by the Economic Development Partnership and transferred to Greenline Industries, a manufacturing firm that has hired forty persons for good wages and intends to hire more. If more vacant buildings were available, there would be more success in attracting suitable firms to the region.

- Even when a suitable site is available, the development approval and permitting process in Beaufort County and in most municipalities can be time consuming and may discourage potential industrial companies and speculative building developers from locating in the county.
- Finally, a critical piece of our challenge with economic development lies with our workforce. Because we have had few skilled employment opportunities, we have not attracted a pool of skilled labor nor have we provided incentives for our young people to acquire technical skills. Therefore, when a prospective business looks at the availability of skilled workers, the pool is lacking.

Common Goal 3:

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 Northern Beaufort County region.

Fiscal Sustainability

As new growth occurs, it will bring with it demands for new regional public service and facilities along with the need for maintenance of both new and old facilities. The construction and maintenance of those facilities will be funded by tax revenues. When tax revenues are not adequate to fund those needs, there will be a fiscal imbalance that can not be maintained in the long run. Therein lays the challenge: how to achieve a land use balance and a revenue structure that funds regional public service and facility needs in a fair and equitable manner among existing and new population and among the Participating Local Governments.

Common Goal 4:

Northern Beaufort County will maintain a fiscally sustainable system of funding regional capital infrastructure, operating, and maintenance needs.

Consistency of Environmental Standards

Natural resource protection is an obvious and classic instance of where impacts transcend political boundaries. Further, the natural environment in Northern Beaufort County is of paramount importance to its lifestyle, image, and economy, more so than in most regions of the country. During the Southern County Regional Plan process, the natural resources deemed most important for protection were salt marshes, marsh islands, coastal waters, and marine resources; trees, forests, and wildlife habitats; beaches and dunes; and freshwater wetlands. That plan also recognizes the importance of mechanisms to permanently preserve open space as a way to protect these natural resources. This planning effort embraces these same natural resources.

While each jurisdiction is free to develop natural resource protection measures that best fit its area, there is great value in having an agreed upon base of environmental protection standards below which no jurisdiction should go. Consistency among jurisdictions in standards relating to water quality is especially important.

Common Goal 5:

Northern Beaufort County will be protected by baseline standards for natural resources including salt marshes, marsh islands, coastal waters, and marine resources; trees, forests, and wildlife habitats; beaches and dunes; and open space preservation that each jurisdiction adopts as part of their planning policies and regulations.

Quality and Form of Development

Northern Beaufort County has a rich diversity of unique “places” – far from the homogeneity of many growing suburban areas, one can experience a full range of natural and man made environments. From the rural historic landscape of Sheldon, to the historic neighborhoods of Beaufort and Port Royal, to the coastal island environment of St. Helena, to the new urbanism styles in communities such as Habersham and Point View, the area is home to distinct “forms” of development and environment. As the region continues to feel growth pressure in the future, all agree that we should strive to maintain its unique sense of place.

Further, the relationship of existing and new communities and neighborhoods is important. The concept of “connectivity”, while it has many dimensions, is an important regional issue. The way in which existing and newly developing areas are connected with roads, pedestrian facilities, and environmental corridors can help contribute to a sense of integrated community, rather than a sense of isolated pods of development.

One of the ways in which a sustainable regional form can be accomplished is to identify a regional vision for the overall form of new development relative to existing development and the natural environment, and then to implement local planning policies and regulations to implement that vision. While each community will continue to have its own responsibility to implement such policies at the local level, the region as whole benefits from a common understanding of the how the individual communities will fit together as a region. While it would not be desirable to have each community have the same standards – having all the communities look alike would detract from diversity of the area – it is very desirable for each community to understand where it fits into the regional form.

Common Goal 6:

Northern Beaufort County will maintain a distinct regional form of compact urban and suburban development surrounded by rural development for the purpose of reinforcing the valuable sense of unique and high quality places within the region.



Open Space Preservation

One of the features that most contributes to the character of Northern Beaufort County is its extensive amount of open spaces. These open spaces take many forms – water, marshes, pine forests, farms, and simple vacant land. The long term preservation of some of these open spaces is important to preserve community character. The open space preservation issue is closely tied to both the natural resource protection and regional form issues discussed in those respective common goals. The preservation of natural resources often also preserves open space, and a well designed regional open space system contributes heavily to an overall regional form.

Substantial preserved open spaces that form a regional system will not occur without a strong regional effort. It is true that participating local government can and should pursue open space preservation at a local level, but those efforts should be part of a regional framework to ensure that they fit together in such a way that they reinforce natural resource and regional form goals.

It is also important to recognize as part of this regional planning effort that the extensive open spaces that currently exist can not be expected to remain without active efforts by the communities. Most open spaces (other than those already permanently protected) are in private ownership. In a sense, this is “borrowed open space” - much of the general public appreciates and enjoys that open space, but we can not expect private land owners to carry the burden of providing open space in the long term.

Common Goal 7:

Methods of creating and permanently preserving a regional open space system will be developed.

Diversity

Northern Beaufort County is blessed with a diverse population, both ethnic and socioeconomic. It has many people whose families and culture date back centuries, and whose roots and commitment to the community are deep. However, as a potential high growth region with tremendous natural beauty and character, there is concern about the ability of many within the indigenous population who were in Beaufort County prior to modern development in the later part of the twentieth century to remain in the region as land values and housing costs rise.

There are many regions around the country where high growth changes the fundamental nature of the local economy, making it difficult for many people to afford to continue to live in the area (including being able to afford real estate based taxes) or to participate fully in the economic prosperity and opportunities that growth can bring. This is particularly true of the underprivileged or poor.

Northern Beaufort County and its Participating Local Governments want to avoid this phenomenon of cultural and economic displacement and isolation of certain populations in the region. All of the local ethnic and socioeconomic groups contribute to the quality of the region and its communities, and this plan recognizes the role that they have played in making the area what it is.

Common Goal 8:

An integrated ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the region will be promoted regionally, and in particular the ability of indigenous population groups to remain a contributing part of the region and benefit from the opportunities that come from growth will be protected.

Affordable and Workforce Housing

Related to the issue of diversity is the provision of affordable and workforce housing. While the availability of affordable housing and the provision of work force housing for local workers are different issues, they are part of the same larger need to ensure that the region is providing a full range of housing to meet a growing and changing population.

Common Goal 9:

Affordable and workforce housing will be addressed on a regional basis through a multi-jurisdictional approach.

Infill and Redevelopment

Infill and redevelopment refers to the development of vacant land that is surrounded by development, or the redevelopment of land that had previously been developed but which is underutilized under current market conditions. While this is not often an issue addressed at the regional level, infill and redevelopment can have regional implications in that may reduce pressure for growth in “greenfield” areas. Thus, while each community will wish to have its individual infill and redevelopment policies to ensure that this type of development occurs in a way that is compatible with the community, the regional plan embraces the idea of infill and redevelopment as a way to absorb some share of regional growth, perhaps reducing pressure around the edges.

Common Goal 10:

Compatible local infill and redevelopment by the local governments will be supported on a regional basis.



Balancing of the Broad Public Interests with Fairness to Individual Property Owners

Planning for the future of a region inevitably involves the balancing of interests. Local governments have the right and responsibility to plan for the broad public interest, in the manner that such public interest gets defined in an individual community. Much of the planning that occurs directly affects people who own private property. While it is well established that local governments have the ability to regulate the use of private property within the limits of law, the importance of private property rights is also a core value.

Land in Beaufort County is obviously owned by a wide range of interests. Some is owned in large assemblages and some is owned in small holdings. Some is owned by relative newcomers to the region, and some has been in family hands for many generations. Some is owned by interests who wish to capitalize on it as an investment, and some is owned by people who intend to use their land as is indefinitely into the future. In all cases, planning must involve a balancing of property ownership and public interests, a balancing that is unique in each region.

Common Goal 1 I:

The Northern Beaufort Regional Plan will promote the broad public interest, but it will be mindful of the impacts that planning policies have on private property interests.

Relationship of Growth to the Military Facilities in Northern Beaufort County

The military facilities in Northern Beaufort County, such as the Marine Corp Air Station, the Naval Hospital, and Paris Island are important components of the regional planning effort. The military facilities are long-time major economic engines for the County, and their continued presence is important to the long term economic health of the region. The Participating Local Governments all agree that this plan must

respect the operational needs and constraints presented by the presence of the military facilities.

The Air Station in particular has potential impacts that affect this planning effort. The Air Station has been clear in identifying its potential impacts on the region through the publication of AICUZ maps (Air Installation Compatible Use Zones). The Station has also been a willing participant in intergovernmental planning efforts designed to plan for the external impacts of the base. Further, potential changes in the mission and types of aircraft associated with the base may expand the zone of impacts of future flight patterns.

Common Goal 1 2:

The Northern Beaufort Regional Plan will result in continued collaboration with military facility planners, and in particular will respect the AICUZ contours.

Preparation of Comprehensive Plans

Beaufort County and its municipalities face statutory requirements for preparing new Comprehensive Plans in 2007 and 2008. With overlapping geographic areas of common interest, along with issue areas that transcend jurisdictional borders, it is important that these new individual policy documents contain common approaches to regional challenges. The plans should be based on a common expectation for growth patterns in the county, and contain consistent approaches to transportation, environmental, and housing issues.

Common Goal 1 3:

Preparation of individual Comprehensive Plans for each of the county's jurisdictions in 2007 and 2008 will use this Northern Regional Plan as a common policy base for growth patterns and issues of regional scale.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Overlaying all the issues identified in these Common Goals is the need to identify a way in which to accomplish the regional strategies that ultimately arise from this plan. It is clear to all that close cooperation, collaboration, and communication is needed on these issues.

Common Goal 14:

The regional planning effort will require future intergovernmental coordination to implement this plan.



2

Growth Coordination Principles

Introduction

The Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan provides a framework for the Participating Local Governments to plan cooperatively for the future. While it is fully recognized that each jurisdiction will continue to plan for their own best interests, it is also recognized that there is a strong need for an overall organizing vision for the region's and the people's common good that transcends local boundaries. Further, the Participating Local Governments agree that a shared regional vision put into practice benefits not just the region and its citizens, but each community individually as well.

The regional plan is wide ranging and far reaching, addressing issues as diverse as land use, the delivery of essential public services, transportation, the environment, the economy, fiscal sustainability, and affordable housing. However, in order to successfully address these diverse issues on a regional level, it is necessary to embrace the overarching growth coordination principles set forth in this chapter.

The following principles propose agreement on a basic set of future growth boundaries, a future regional land use pattern, the implications that these boundaries and land uses have on future municipal growth and rural preservation, how this plan can be institutionalized in local planning programs, and how the implementation of this plan can be promoted. The over-riding principles to be applied in all instances are: (1) Mutual public benefit, (2) Mitigation of extra-territorial impacts, (3) Joint regional plan consistency, and (4) Plan implementation through inter-government agreements.

Recommendation 2.1: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to incorporate growth boundaries and growth principles into future regional and local planning efforts, policies, plans, and land use regulations.*

Growth Boundaries

Agreement on future boundaries of growth is a critical step for the Northern Beaufort region. Growth boundaries allow for the municipalities to plan for their future growth in an efficient and predictable manner. Likewise, growth boundaries allow for the county to plan for rural areas and focus its attention on county-wide issues such as transportation and environmental resources in a cooperative manner with the municipalities. In order to provide a clear boundary to growth and identify those areas anticipated to be preserved for rural uses, the Participating Local Governments agree:

- That the Growth Boundary identifies land that is envisioned as the future growth areas (inside the boundary, with the exception of the AICUZ areas and the northern portion of Lady’s Island discussed separately in this plan) and land that is envisioned to remain rural in character (outside the boundary).
- That land located inside the Growth Boundary (see Figure 2) is expected to ultimately annex into a municipality with a demonstration that adequate public facilities are available or will be available at the time of development and that negative impacts of development will be mitigated.
- That land outside the Growth Boundaries is envisioned as developing at rural densities of no more than one unit per three acres gross density or subject to existing Community Preservation Districts (CPD), and that such land is not anticipated to be annexed into a municipality nor is it envisioned as being approved for urban densities. It is acknowledged by the Participating Local Governments that the county will further plan for and define rural planning policies through its comprehensive plan update and that this additional planning may further define rural development options and policies. However, the county agrees that the underlying policy of preservation of rural character and low density development patterns as contained in this regional plan will be respected in the comprehensive plan update.
- The Participating Local Governments agree that rural preservation is an important component of the overall system of Growth Boundaries and that it is in the regional interest to protect rural character and density while allowing economic use of rural property. In order to ensure longtime residents in the rural areas are protected, it is anticipated that the county will continue to allow family subdivision exemptions. Generally what the provision would do is exempt the transfer of certain size parcels from long-time landowners to their children. It is further anticipated that the county will seek to enhance economic opportunities for rural

residents by encouraging nonresidential activities that are compatible with rural areas through uses such as rural business districts, cottage industries, and continued agriculture and forestry.



Land Use Plan

Within the framework of the Growth Boundaries, it is also in the regional interest for the various communities to agree on an overall land use pattern (see Chapter 3). This will allow for closer coordination of land use planning and provision of services among and between the communities as they continue to engage in their own local planning and land use regulation. In order to provide a long term regional land use vision, the Participating Local Governments agree:

- That the Future Land Use Plan will serve as the regional guide to future land uses in order to ensure that growth will occur in an orderly and coordinated manner.
- That the Future Land Use Plan will be supplemented with land use definitions and policies that identify the circumstances under which they are considered appropriate.

Annexation Principles

While it is important to agree on growth boundaries and recognize that annexation is likely within those boundaries, it is also important for the communities within the region to agree on how annexations will occur, and in particular how land use and service delivery will be addressed relative to multi jurisdictional impact. In order to provide for efficient annexation that promotes the long term economic health of municipalities, allows for reasonable growth within designated growth boundaries, and mitigates negatives impacts on unincorporated land and provision of services, the Participating Local Governments agree:

- To develop mutually agreeable annexation principles that address mitigation of extraterritorial impacts associated with annexations, including protection for designated CPD's, public facility standards, traffic impact study requirements, baseline open space requirements, and baseline environmental standards that will be met prior to annexation occurring. These will include at least the following:
 - The Participating Local Governments agree to develop procedures for notices of proposed annexations by a municipality with an ample opportunity for comment by the county.
 - The Participating Local Governments agree to develop administrative mechanisms to analyze and mitigate the potential impacts of proposed annexations on the delivery and level of service of public services and facilities, including fire, parks, library facilities, law enforcement, schools, transportation and roads, and public water (river) access in order to assure that adequate public services and facilities will be available to serve development expected as a result of annexations.
 - The Participating Local Governments agree to develop administrative mechanisms to analyze the impact of proposed annexations on the efficiency of services. This will include the ways in which services can be coordinated among jurisdictions, the avoidance of inefficient overlap of services or potential gaps in services, and a fair and proportional funding of services between the municipality and the county.
 - When, or if, after review and comment by the county, there is disagreement as to the consistency of the annexation with the regional plan, the participating municipality and the county shall devise a method by which the two bodies resolve their differences on the matter and come to a mutually agreeable decision.
- To develop mutually agreeable principles that address enclaves of unincorporated county territory within the Growth Boundary to provide for the most efficient pattern of land uses and provision of services consistent with the regional plan. Mutually agreeable

principles will also be developed that address instances in which development approval is requested, but where municipal annexation is not yet practical or desirable due to lack of contiguity with a municipality. These will include at least the following:

- The Participating Local Governments agree that it is the policy of this plan that land contiguous to municipalities will not be increased in authorized density without annexation to a municipality.
- For properties that are not contiguous to a municipality, the Participating Local Governments agree that the most appropriate method of urban or suburban development is through eventual annexation to a municipality. The Participating Local Governments agree that it is contrary to this regional plan for the municipalities and the county to compete for urban or suburban development or to allow the jurisdictions to be a party to zoning “jurisdiction shopping” by applicants. The county agrees that it will encourage property owners / developers who desire to increase density on non-contiguous property to first explore the feasibility of annexation, including consultation with the municipality and contiguous property owners.
- The Participating Local Governments agree that it is the policy of this plan not to increase density on property within the Growth Boundaries that is not contiguous to a municipality unless feasible annexation options have been ruled out and until the municipality has been provided the opportunity to review and comment on the request. If it is determined that it is not feasible to annex due to a lack of contiguity, the Participating Local Governments agree to develop guidelines for municipal review and comment to the county prior to their being considered for rezoning.
- Further, the Participating Local Governments agree that it is in the regional interest to avoid the creation of developed enclaves of unincorporated land that create inefficient service patterns. The Participating Local Governments agree to work together to find ways to encourage the eventual annexation of non contiguous urban or suburban development. Specifically, the Participating Local Governments agree to explore legal mechanisms whereby urban or suburban development could be subject by agreement by property owners to annex to a municipality under prescribed circumstances at a later date, subject to law.
- The Participating Local Governments agree to develop guidelines for the protection of existing Community Preservation Districts within the Growth Area.
- When, or if, after review and comment by the municipality, there is disagreement as to the consistency of the rezoning and development standards with the regional plan and agreed upon guidelines, the participating municipality and the county shall devise a method by which the two bodies resolve their differences on the matter and come to a mutually agreeable decision.

- The Participating Local Governments agree to develop approaches to addressing existing enclaves of unincorporated county land surrounded by municipal land, particularly to assure an orderly and efficient provision of public services and facilities, and the possible ultimate annexation of such areas.

Comprehensive Plans and Regulations

There is a clear desire on the part of the communities in the region for this regional plan to become ingrained in local planning policies and practices and serve as a true regional planning guide. In order to make this regional plan a part of the local planning and regulatory systems, the Participating Local Governments agree:

- To incorporate the policies and recommendations of this plan into their local comprehensive plans and local land use regulations.

Ongoing Implementation

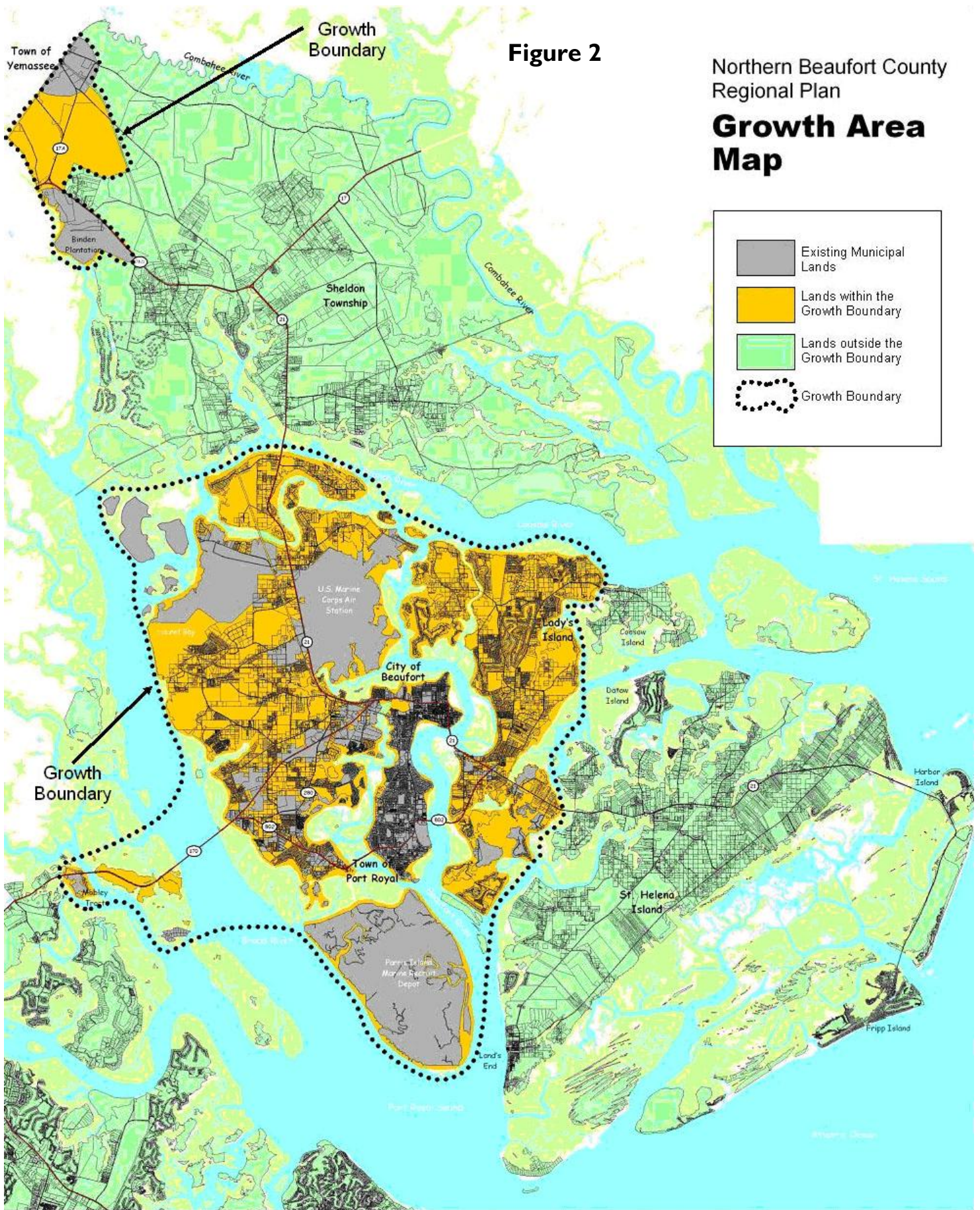
Just as there is a desire for this plan to make a difference at the local level, it is important that this plan be accompanied by measures designed to make it a reality. In order to insure that this regional plan is implemented, the Participating Local Governments agree:

- That once the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan is completed the Regional Plan Steering Committee will continue to exist under the name of the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Oversight Committee and meet with responsibility for monitoring and facilitating implementation of this plan.
- To pursue development of an intergovernmental agreement that will establish the provisions for complying with, monitoring, overseeing implementation, and updating this plan.

Figure 2

Northern Beaufort County
Regional Plan

**Growth Area
Map**



3

Land Use

Introduction

The growth boundaries described in Chapter 2 establish a broad and critical regional vision of growth areas and rural areas. Within this framework, it is also important to define a regional land use pattern. This chapter summarizes the future regional land use pattern envisioned by the Participating Local Governments for Northern Beaufort County. This regional land use plan will serve as the basis for updates to land use plans for each of the individual communities.

The Future Land Use Map (See Figure 3) identifies a land use pattern that builds on the Growth Area Map. It includes land uses organized into six categories, including residential, commercial, light industrial, rural, preserved, and military. Within the broad categories there are more detailed breakdowns of land uses, along with definitions of the land uses. Also, the land use categories include additional discussion of the regional issues associated with those land uses in order to further guide the individual communities in their local planning processes.

Generally speaking, the areas within the growth boundaries are designated for either commercial, light industrial, urban residential, or neighborhood residential uses, and the areas outside the growth boundaries are designated for rural uses. There are, however, several exceptions to this pattern:

- The area around the Marine Corp Air Station is designated as low density residential,” as part of the joint planning effort designed to minimize growth within potential noise or hazard zones.
- The area on the northern portions of Lady’s Island is designated as “rural” use. While this is within the growth boundary, it is not desirable for this area to develop at higher than rural densities due to the regional transportation constraints (namely the bridge crossings between Lady’s Island / St. Helena and Port Royal Island). At such time that a third crossing or other relief can be provided in the future, this plan could be reevaluated relative to rural

designations within the growth boundary as part of a regional plan update.

- There are several “neighborhood residential” areas designated on Fripp and Harbor Islands, simply reflecting the existing development patterns. This plan does not envision those neighborhood residential areas expanding beyond their current boundaries.

Recommendation 3.1: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to implement the regional land use plan through their own local plans and land use regulations.*

Residential Land Uses

To promote a desirable regional pattern, new residential uses should develop in a pattern that maximizes the efficiency of regional infrastructure and the avoidance of sprawl or “leap-frog” patterns. Residential uses are encouraged to develop inter-connected neighborhoods, not isolated subdivisions that lack regional connections. Residential areas should promote regional pedestrian connections and should be coordinated with regional parks and open space facilities where feasible.

The Residential Land Use group includes urban residential and neighborhood residential land uses.

Urban Residential - Future development within the urban residential area is anticipated to be similar to the type and mix of land use currently found in the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal. Infill and redevelopment would be targeted within Beaufort and Port Royal and in the Shell Point areas, parts of Lady’s Island and Burton (outside of the Airport Overlay District). Gross residential densities are between 2 and 4 dwelling units per acre with some denser pockets.

Neighborhood Residential - Neighborhood residential use implies that residential is, in fact, the primary use, with some supporting neighborhood retail establishments. New development is encouraged to be pedestrian-friendly, have a mix of housing types, a mix of land uses and interconnected streets. Maximum gross residential density is approximately 2 dwelling units per acre. It is assumed that 5% to 10% of the land area may consist of commercial development. This designation also includes Dataw, Fripp, and Harbour Islands.

Low Density Residential - Low density residential uses, which are located in northern Port Royal Island and Lady’s Island, are affected by

the noise contours and accident potential zones associated with the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station. Residential development and places of assembly would be highly limited in those areas. Light industrial, commercial, and agricultural uses would be recommended in these areas.



Regional Planning Issues Associated with Residential Uses:

- It is recognized that urban and neighborhood residential areas will include a mix of uses, housing types, and residential densities, however it is important that the overall density remain within the parameters established in the above definitions and that the mixture of non-residential uses not overwhelm the residential character of these areas. While local commercial uses are envisioned as appropriate and desirable in residential areas, they should retain the local commercial scale so as to not overwhelm the residential neighborhoods. Similarly, while higher density multi-family uses are envisioned as being appropriate in residential areas, they should be offset with lower density residential and open space in the neighborhood to maintain the residential neighborhood character.
- Residential uses should be designed and developed to improve regional transportation connectivity. While the design of streets in individual neighborhoods is a local matter, the promotion of multiple road connection options on a regional level should be encouraged in residential developments.
- Residential developments that are made possible by annexation should be sensitive to and mitigate negative impacts on surrounding residential areas, including those in remaining unincorporated land.

Commercial Land Uses

Commercial development in Northern Beaufort County should embody high quality site plan and design principles, particularly related to landscape, signage, building design and orientation, and parking lot designs. Commercial development should be compatible with surrounding residential areas and should be connected to pedestrian systems such as sidewalk and trail systems that exist. Commercial uses should focus on key transportation nodes, avoiding strip patterns.

The commercial land use group includes core commercial, regional commercial, and community commercial.

Core Commercial - Core commercial uses include downtown Beaufort and Port Royal and areas along Boundary Street that are planned to have pedestrian scale, zero lot line oriented commercial development.

Regional Commercial - Regional commercial uses are those uses due to their size and scale that will attract shoppers and visitors from a larger area of the county and outside the county. Typical uses include “big box” retail uses, chain restaurants, and supporting retail.

Community Commercial - Community commercial uses typically serve nearby residential areas, such as a shopping district anchored by a grocery store. Good local examples of community commercial areas are at the intersection of US 21 and SC 802 on Lady’s Island and Midtown Plaza (Bilo) in Shell Point.

Regional Planning Issues Associated with Commercial Uses:

- Commercial land uses should be designed according to sound access management principles and techniques in order to provide for efficient ingress and egress of traffic to minimize the efficiency and capacity of the regional transportation system.
- Commercial uses should promote regional transportation connections, and should avoid being designed and located so as to impede efficient regional transportation flow.

Light Industrial Land Uses

Chapter 7 of this plan identifies the need for providing a sufficient quantity of suitable located land zoned for non-retail commercial uses that promote the region's economic health and diversity. Uses in this category include the following: business parks, research and development centers, product assembly, distribution centers, cottage industries, and light and heavy industrial uses.

Rural Land Uses

The historic character of rural areas should be preserved and strengthened respecting existing Community Preservation Districts, providing for family subdivision options, by promoting compatible density and intensity, and by allowing rural economic opportunities that are compatible with rural areas.

The Rural Land Use group includes rural areas and rural communities.

Rural Community - These areas roughly correspond with the areas designated as “community preservation” in the county's Comprehensive Plan. These areas are proposed to serve the surrounding rural community with small scale retail and service uses and low to moderate density residential – approximately 1 dwelling unit per acre.

Rural - Rural areas are situated outside of the urban service area. Except where noted, these areas would retain their rural character with low density residential development, supporting small scale commercial development, and agricultural land uses. Future development in rural areas is anticipated to be similar to the type and mix of land uses currently found in the Sheldon area and St. Helena Island. Maximum gross residential density – 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres.



Regional Planning Issues Associated with Rural Uses:

- The Rural Land Use categories assume a mix of land uses, including agricultural, residential, and commercial. However, commercial land uses should be limited to those supporting the surrounding residential or agricultural areas and should typically be located along arterials.
- This Regional Plan acknowledges and respects the rural communities. In several of the rural communities, local plans have been undertaken and will continue to govern planning in those areas. It is anticipated that local plans will be completed for other rural communities as designated on the future land use map.

Preserved Lands

The Participating Local Governments should continue to preserve lands for open space purposes consistent with this regional plan.

This category includes all park lands and public and private lands preserved through conservation easements.

Military

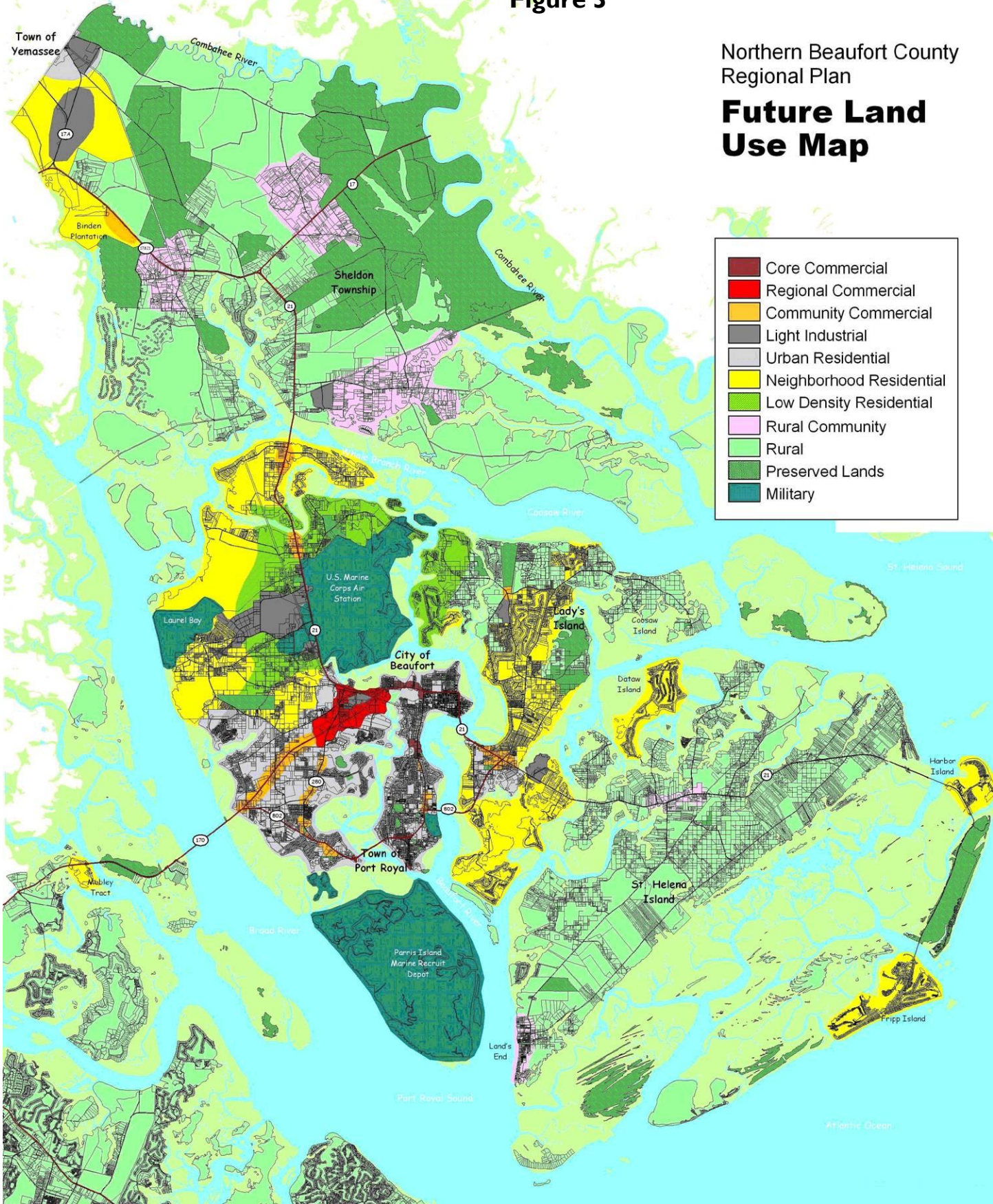
The Participating Local Governments should continue to coordinate land use planning with military installation planning consistent with this regional plan.

This category includes all military installations.



Figure 3

Northern Beaufort County
Regional Plan
Future Land Use Map



4

Transportation and Other Public Facilities

Introduction

One of the common goals of this plan is to provide public facilities in a coordinated way concurrent with new growth. While some local public facilities are best planned for and provided by individual communities and are beyond the scope of this plan, some public facilities raise issues that go beyond the ability of individual communities to address.

Traffic congestion is the most tangible and noticeable indicator of the declining quality of life caused by new growth. This is not to suggest that other public facilities, the natural environment, and other elements of this plan are any less important, but transportation level of service, particularly related to vehicular traffic congestion, is where we often see the earliest impacts of growth. It is the proverbial “canary in the mine”. For this reason, this plan focuses attention on understanding the implications of growth for transportation, the potential solutions to address impacts of growth, estimated costs of those improvements, and a strategy for responding to the uncertainties involved in planning for transportation improvements in an ever changing environment.

This plan also identifies public facility needs and costs related to parks and recreation, sheriff’s facilities, detention facilities, general government and courts, health and human services, libraries, and emergency medical services.

Transportation

The transportation strategies identified in this chapter are based upon extensive analysis performed to determine transportation needs in the northern region of Beaufort County. The land use assumptions developed in the plan (as explained in Appendix A) were incorporated into the transportation analysis. In addition to the capacity of the existing road network, the analysis factored in committed and planned transportation improvements. Even with these committed and planned projects, the analysis identified future road deficiencies that will likely result from new growth in the next 20 years. Rather than simply addressing these deficiencies by building more roads, this analysis first looked at how future road capacity could be preserved and enhanced by pursuing the following alternative transportation strategies:

- Transit
- Travel Demand Management
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections
- Access Management
- Intersection Operational Improvements

Transportation projects are summarized in two categories: “planned and committed” projects, and “recommended additional transportation solutions”. Each is discussed below.

Planned and Committed Transportation Projects in Northern Beaufort County

The analysis of future transportation conditions was based on year 2025 and reflected projects with committed funding (committed project) or for which significant studies have been performed and are included in the Beaufort County planning process for future funding (planned projects). The analysis results for the “committed and planned projects” assumed to be in place in the future year 2025 are shown in Figure 4.

Recommendation 4.1: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to implement planned and committed road widenings, new road alignments, and planned intersection improvement projects:*

Committed Widening Projects

- 1) US 21 on St. Helena Island (3 lanes)
- 2) US 17 from US 21 to SC 64 (4 lanes)

Planned Widening Projects

- 3) US 21/SC 802 from Ribaut Road to US 21 (widen to 4-lane divided road)
- 4) SC 802 from SC 170 to SC 280 in Port Royal (widen to 4-lane divided road)

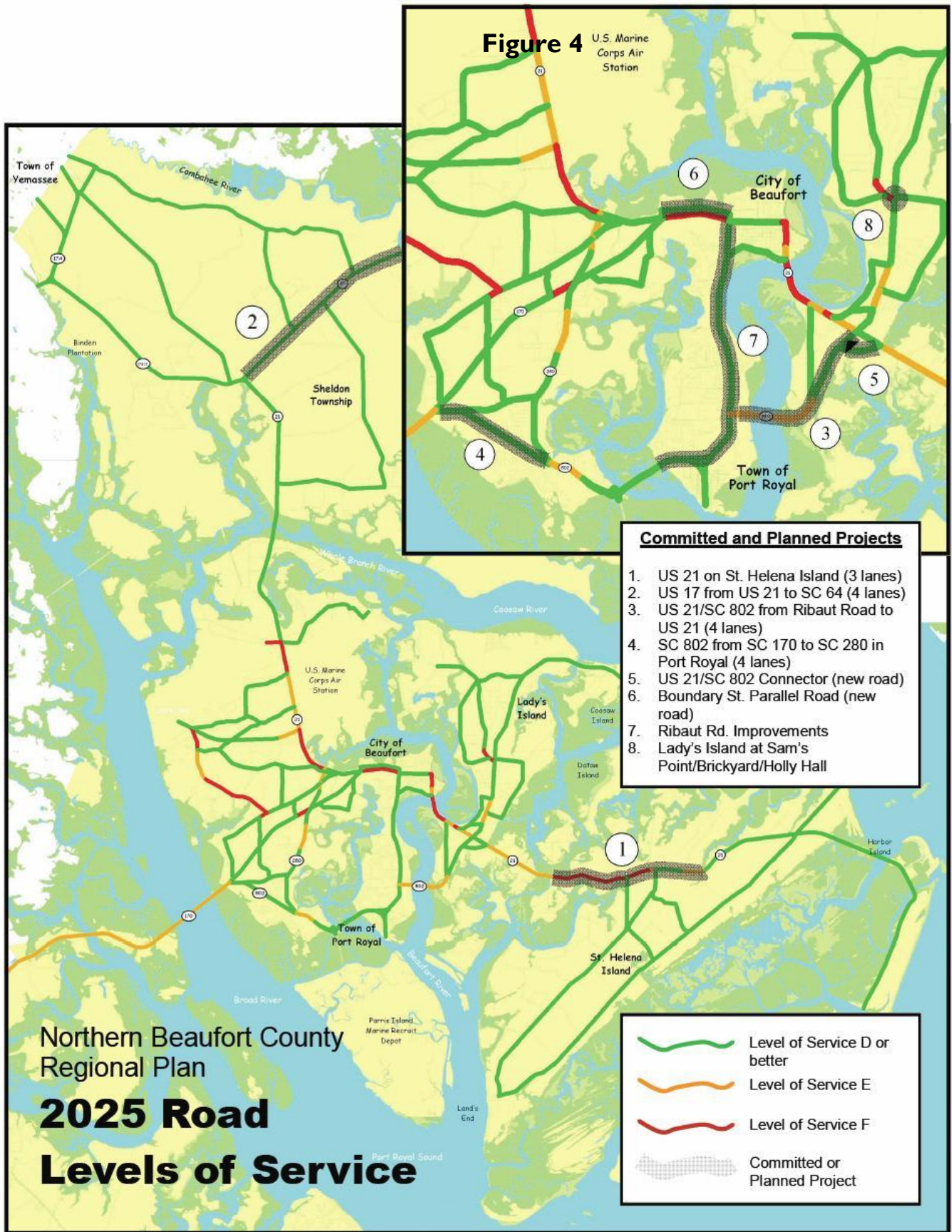
Planned New Roadway Alignment

- 5) US 21/SC 802 Connector (new 4-lane divided road)
- 6) Boundary Street Parallel Road (new 2-lane road)

Planned Intersection Improvements

- 7) SC 802 (Ribaut Road) Improvements
- 8) Lady's Island at Sam's Point/Brickyard/Holly Hall





Recommended Additional Transportation Solutions

The transportation analysis shows that even with the planned and committed projects, additional transportation solutions are needed for longer term growth. Specifically, assuming the planned and committed projects are built, the following areas are forecasted to be deficient in the long run (by year 2025) based on growth forecasts:

- US 21 (Broad River Boulevard to Clarendon Road)
- US 21 (SC 170 to Ribaut Road)
- US 21 (Boundary Street to St. Helena Island)
- SC 802 (east of Ribaut Road)
- SC 802 (north of US 21)
- Joe Frazier Road (north of Broad River Boulevard)
- SC 170 (west of SC 802)
- SC 280 (US 21 to Mink Point Boulevard)

Thus, additional improvement recommendations were prepared after considering a wide range of solutions, including major capacity improvements, transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections, access management, and operational improvements.

Recommendation 4.2: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to explore and evaluate a range of transportation improvements, including road capacity improvements, transit, pedestrian and bicycle connections, enhanced access management, and operational improvements. It is important to recognize that these approaches should be explored and evaluated, and that flexibility is needed to determine the best specific solutions based upon analysis of changing conditions.*

Transit and Travel Demand Management – *A transit route could reduce the trips made across the key Woods Memorial Bridge and SC 802 river crossings. A circulator between these areas would need to operate with frequent service/short headways to be effective in attracting riders to switch modes from automobile use. A program to provide an organized approach to teleworking, flexible work hours, carpool matching, and vanpool services is recommended for the Downtown Beaufort and Port Royal areas. A second program to focus on U.S. Marine Air Station carpooling is also recommended. The transit and travel demand management strategies will require more detailed study to determine the anticipated level of benefits and feasibility.*

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections – *Providing local pedestrian and bicycle connections where commercial areas are present near residential*

communities could reduce trip making along adjacent arterials. On a larger scale, implementation of a bike corridor along the abandoned railroad corridor west of US 21 is recommended to provide access to an alternative transportation mode for those along the US 21 corridor. This corridor would provide a trail that is separated from automobile traffic, enhancing safety for all users over on-street bike lanes or “share the road” designations.

Access Management – Access management along major corridors is recommended to maximize the capacity available to move through traffic. Access management is recommended along the following corridors:

- US 21 north of SC 170
- US 21 south of the Beaufort River to St. Helena Island
- SC 170 from US 21 to the Broad River
- Joe Frazier Road from SC 170 to Laurel Bay Road
- SC 280 from SC 170 to Mink Point Boulevard

US 21 Widening from SC 170 to Clarendon Rd (6 lanes) – The US 21 corridor experiences significant capacity limitations that are beyond those effectively addressed with the alternatives to capacity expansion examined. Further, significant growth management would be needed to reduce trip making to mitigate deficiencies along the corridor. Therefore, widening of US 21 north of SC 170 is recommended to accommodate these travel needs. This should be designed as a “complete streets” application to include automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit considerations, as well as landscaping.

US 21 to SC 170 – Western Bypass (Planning, feasibility analysis, and right-of-way for a 2 lane road with turn lanes and bicycle lanes) – This connection will provide a link from the US 21 corridor to the SC 170 and SC 802 corridors. This connection has the potential to relieve US 21 for traffic traveling to/from SC 170, as well as serving some traffic along US 21 north of Beaufort that is destined for Port Royal, Lady’s Island, or St. Helena Island. This project will provide the planning and analysis needed for consideration of this alternative for application beyond year 2025.

Third Crossing of Beaufort River (Planning, feasibility analysis, and right-of-way for additional Lady’s Island Crossing) – The capital project sales tax currently provides funding for a possible alignment (the northern bypass) for a third crossing from Lady’s Island to the mainland. Pursuant to Federal concept definition/NEPA requirements, this feasibility study would include analysis of the mobility, economic, and community/environmental impacts and benefits of various alignment options.

New Connector Road from SC 170 to Ribaut Road (2 lanes with bike lanes) – This road would connect from SC 170 near Neil Road eastward via an abandoned rail corridor toward Downtown Beaufort. This linkage would provide direct relief to the congested section of US 21 between SC 170 and Ribaut Road, as well as provide a bicycle connection through the area. In order to minimize long distance through travel, the roadway cross

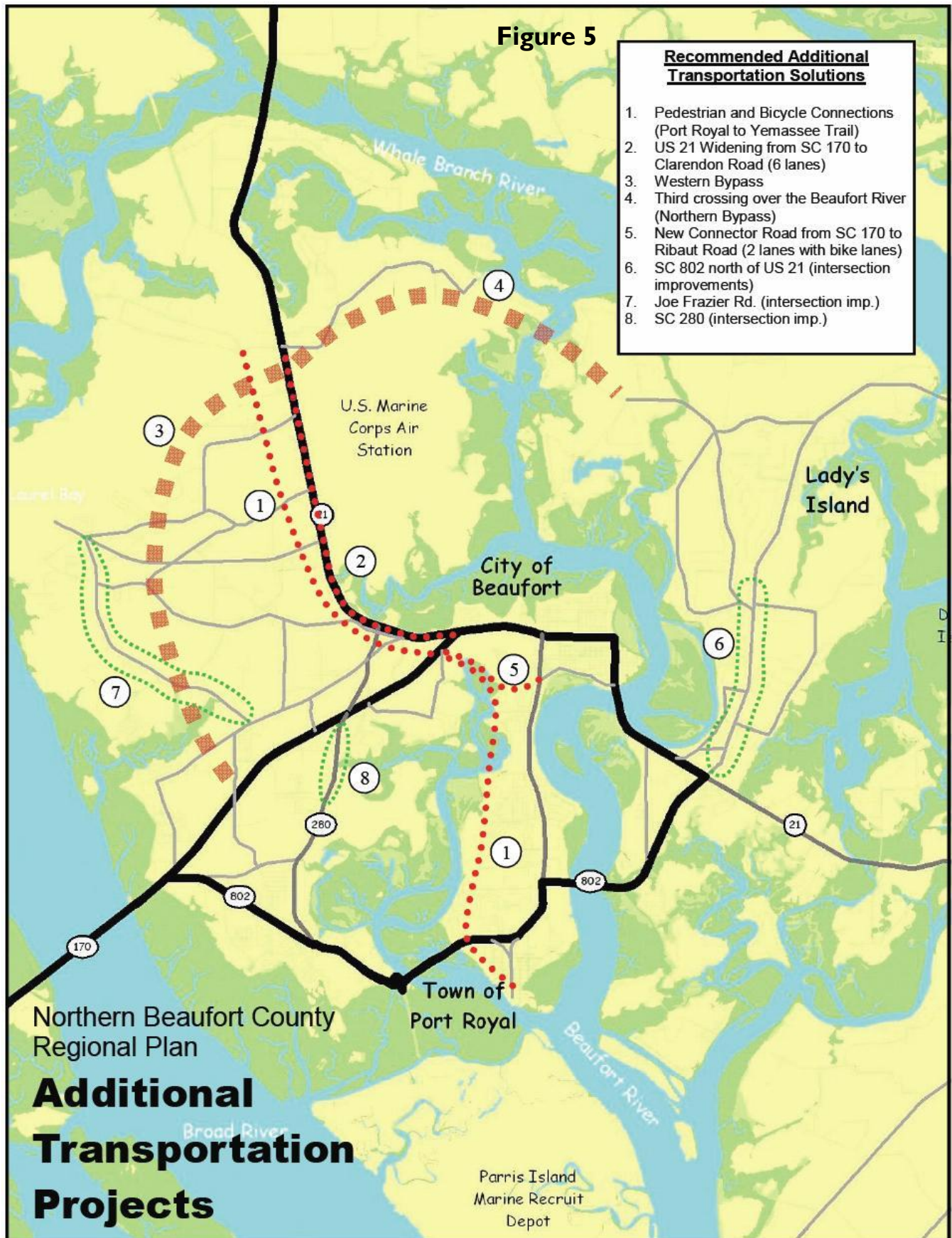
section and speed design should be that of a collector road for local connectivity.

Intersection and Roadway Operational Improvements – Implementation of turning lanes at appropriate locations and intersection improvements to enhance flow at bottleneck intersections could free underutilized capacity along key corridors. Operational improvements are recommended in the following areas:

- SC 802 north of US 21
- Joe Frazier Road from SC 170 to Laurel Bay Road
- SC 280 from SC 170 to Mink Point Boulevard

The Recommended Additional Transportation Solutions are illustrated in Figure 5.





Transportation Cost Estimates

Capital cost estimates for transportation improvements are indicated below in 2006 dollars. The fiscal impact of these capital costs are evaluated in Chapter 5.

Committed and Planned Roadway Improvements

Below is a list of the eight “committed and planned” projects and their associated costs, totaling approximately \$178 million. The County sales tax will be used to match the larger state and federal shares of these projects. Based on the availability of state and federal funds, many of these projects could be implemented in the short-range (2007-2015).

Committed Widening Projects

- 1) US 21 on St. Helena Island (3 lanes) - \$12.3 million
- 2) US 17 from US 21 to SC 64 (4 lanes) - \$92 million for Beaufort County portion only

Planned Widening Projects

- 3) US 21/SC 802 from Ribaut Road to US 21 (widen to 4-lane divided road) - \$35.7 million
- 4) SC 802 from SC 170 to SC 280 in Port Royal (widen to 4-lane divided road) - \$7.0 million

Planned New Roadway Alignment

- 5) US 21/SC 802 Connector (new 4-lane divided road) - \$6.0 million
- 6) Boundary Street Parallel Road (new 2-lane road including Boundary Street improvements) - \$22.0 million

Planned Intersection Improvements

- 7) SC 802 (Ribaut Road) Improvements - \$2.3 Million
- 8) Lady's Island at Sam's Point/Brickyard/Holly Hall - \$250,000

Additional Transportation Improvements

Beyond the eight planned and committed projects, this plan recommends an additional list of transportation improvements. These eight additional recommended projects result in an overall cost of \$122.3 million with \$33.7 million occurring in the short-range and \$88.6 million occurring in the long range. Some of these costs could be reduced through potential state or federal dollars. The transit improvements in particular could be assisted by up to a 50% match by the federal government. Further, it is possible that the costs of creation of a local transit authority could be avoided by working with the existing

Low Country Council of Governments (LCOG) authority. However, for the purpose of conservative planning, the total costs of these improvements are assumed to be a local responsibility.

Transit and Travel Demand Management - \$20.3 million

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections – \$10.9 million

Access Management - \$6.9 million

US 21 Widening from SC 170 to Clarendon Rd (6 lanes) - \$38.0 million

US 21 to SC 170 – Western Bypass (Planning, feasibility analysis, and right-of-way for a 2 lane road with turn lanes and bicycle lanes) - \$12.6 million

Third Crossing of Beaufort River (Planning, feasibility analysis, and right-of-way for additional Lady’s Island Crossing) - \$6.4 million

New Connector Road from SC 170 to Ribaut Road (2 lanes with bike lanes) - \$9.5 million

Intersection and Roadway Operational Improvements - \$17.6 million

In summary, substantial transportation improvements will be needed to maintain acceptable levels of service as growth continues to occur. Many of those projects are already committed and planned for the region, at a cost of approximately \$178 million. However, the projects that are already committed and planned are not adequate for the long range planning horizon of 20 years. This plan recommends a strategy of exploring additional projects, at an additional cost of approximately \$122 million. Thus, the total capital cost of transportation improvements is approximately \$300 million for transportation. Note that some of this capital cost is already funded with state and federal funds, which affect its fiscal impact, as further discussed in Chapter 5.

Other Public Facilities

Additional public facilities will be needed as a result of the forecasted growth in Northern Beaufort County. In order to plan for this growth, including the need to finance public facilities, estimates are made about new facility demands that could be created by future growth. There are several important things to understand about these estimates:

First, they focus on county level facilities. Individual communities will continue to have responsibility for providing certain local public facilities on a local basis.

Second, they assume that current levels of service are maintained in the future. It isolates the public facility needs created only by future growth assuming the future growth is served with public facilities at the same level as is current population. To the extent that the region desires to increase levels of services for existing population and for future growth, those costs would be in addition to those assumed for this analysis. For example, the current library administrators for Beaufort County note that the existing levels of service for libraries do not meet national standards and would propose to raise the local level of service to achieve those national standards. This regional plan certainly does not suggest that increased levels of service are inappropriate; however for the purpose of estimating needs created by new growth, estimating costs, and examining the fiscal implications of those needs and costs (see Chapter 5), existing levels of service are assumed to be the minimum standards for the future.

Recommendation 4.3: *The Participating Local Governments will work together to coordinate the planning and funding of parks and recreation, libraries, schools, sheriff and public safety, general government, courts, health, and human services, and other regional public facilities.*

The following public facility needs and costs are estimated at almost \$50 million as follows:

- *Parks and Recreation (\$27.9 million)*
 - New capital facilities include ten neighborhood parks (100 acres total) and six community parks (150 acres total)
- *Library (\$7.2 million)*
 - Two additional library branches totaling 23,000 square feet would be constructed using the current standard of 0.6 square feet per capita
- *Sheriff and Public Safety (\$5.4 million)*
 - 4,606 square feet of additional Sheriff's space would need to be constructed
 - 25,630 square feet of Detention Center space would need to be constructed
- *General Government (\$2.9 million)*
 - 12,355 square feet of additional General Government office space would need to be constructed
- *Courts (\$2.7 million)*
 - 12,716 square feet of additional Court space would need to be constructed

- *Health and Human Services (\$2.8 million)*
 - 3,709 square feet of additional Health Department office space would need to be constructed
 - 8,390 square feet of Human Services space would need to be constructed

The fiscal implications of these costs are explored in the following chapter.



5

Fiscal Impact of Growth

Introduction

Population in Northern Beaufort County is forecasted to grow by more than 53% over the next 20 years, from just over 80,500 to over 123,500. This population growth will create additional regional demands for transportation, parks and recreation, EMS, sheriff, general government, and health and human services capital infrastructure.

The costs of providing infrastructure to serve this new growth at current levels of service are estimated to be approximately \$350 million, including approximately \$300 million in transportation improvements, and \$50 million in other public facilities, as described in Chapter 4.2. Of the \$300 million for capital transportation costs, approximately \$134 million is already funded with state and federal dollars, leaving \$166 million to be funded. Thus, for fiscal modeling purposes, it is assumed that approximately \$216 million in capital costs will be funded locally. Note that this is a conservative estimate in that it assumes no state or federal funds for transportation beyond those already committed. Obviously the region will continue to actively pursue outside funding, which would mitigate the regional fiscal needs.

In addition to capital costs, there will be ongoing operations and maintenance costs that can be expected in excess of \$230 million over this planning period. The funding of operating and maintenance costs is

² Since this analysis focused on county facilities, it does not include schools or fire services. In the case of schools, the school district is currently in the process of conducting a space needs assessment, and that information is not yet available. However, as a follow up phase to the fiscal analysis, the capital costs of schools will be included on a county-wide basis.

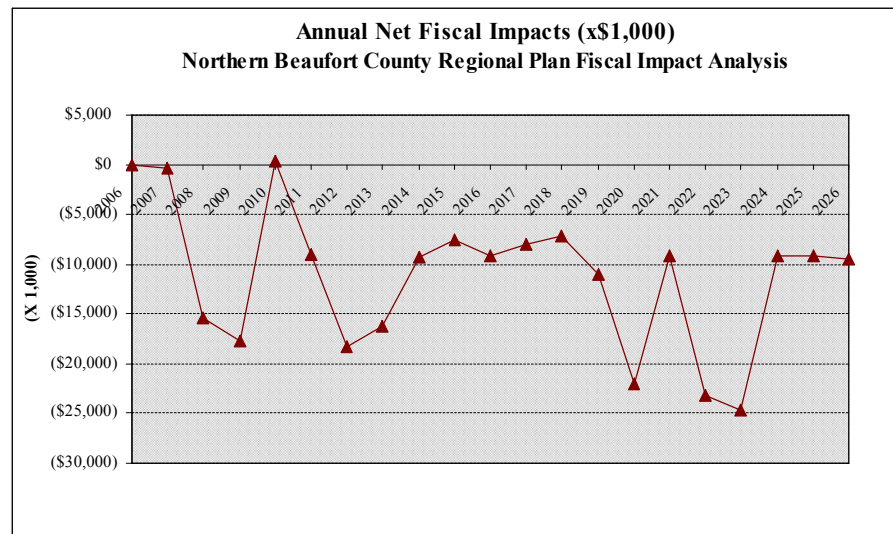
a county-wide problem that will be examined on a county-wide basis in the subsequent phase of the fiscal analysis, but it is included in this analysis in order to understand the magnitude of the issue.

In order to understand the net fiscal impact of this growth, a fiscal impact analysis was prepared as part of this regional planning process. Specifically, the fiscal impact analysis was performed to evaluate whether revenues generated by new growth are forecasted to be sufficient to cover the resulting costs to Beaufort County of continuing existing levels of public services and facilities for new growth.

Fiscal Impacts

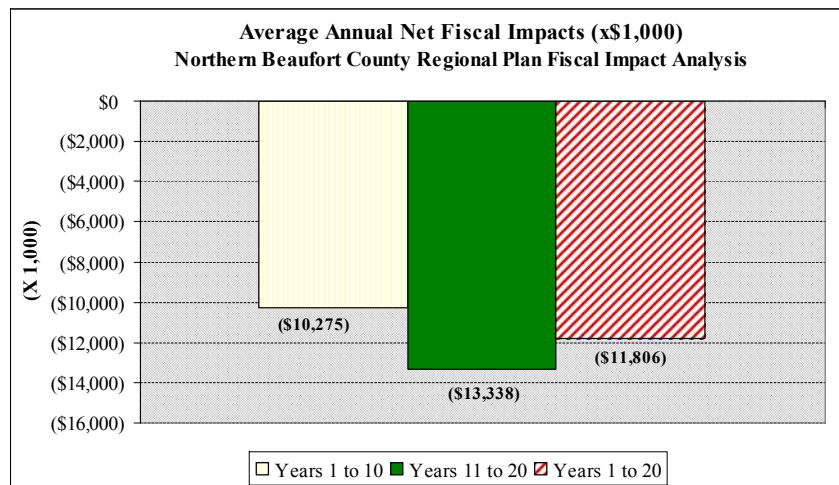
The fiscal impacts were summarized in several ways. First, annual net results are shown from one year to the next over the twenty year planning period. (These results are for new growth only, and do not include costs and revenues from existing population.) By showing the results annually, the magnitude, rate of change, and timeline of deficits and surpluses can be seen over time. As can be seen, on a year-to-year basis there are varying degrees of deficits – the “bumpy” nature of the line represents the opening of capital facilities and/or major capital operating costs being incurred. New growth is expected to generate annual deficits to the county in all but one year in the planning period. The greatest deficits will likely occur in the later half of the planning period primarily due to transportation improvements required after the current capital sales tax expires. At that time, the current impact fee structure is not adequate to offset these capital costs (see later discussion of potential next steps).

Figure 5



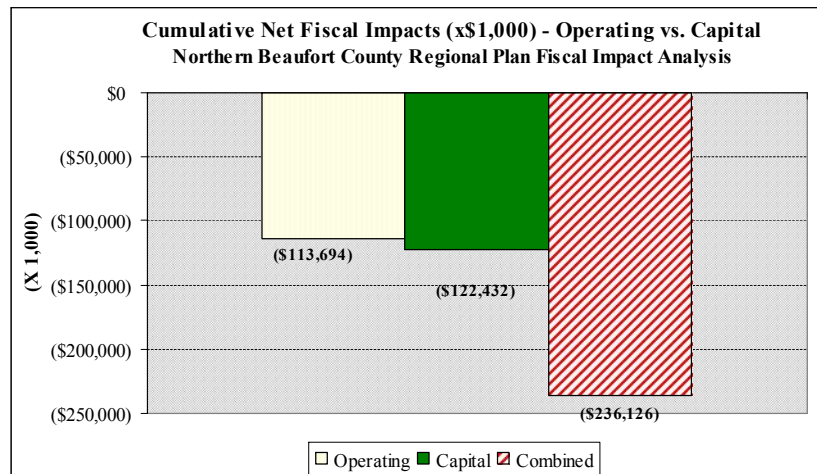
The fiscal impacts can also be summarized by the average net fiscal impact over the twenty year planning period, broken down in ten year increments. The net fiscal deficit, including capital and operating costs for years 1 – 10 are in excess of \$10 million per year; for years 10 – 20 they are in excess of \$13 million per year; and for the total 1-20 year period they average out at almost \$12 million per year. As can be seen, new growth generates average annual net deficits to the county in all three time periods. Once again, the higher deficits in the later half of the planning period are due to the current capital sales tax expiring in five years time, leaving the county with only impact fees as a dedicated funding source for transportation capital costs.

Figure 6



Finally, the fiscal impacts can be summarized by showing the net fiscal impact to the county for both capital and operating costs. As can be seen, cumulative net deficits are generated for both the operating and capital budget. The cumulative net impact of operating costs over the 20 year planning period is over \$113 million. The cumulative net impact of capital costs over the 20 year period is over \$122 million. The total net impact combined is over \$236 million.

Figure 7



Several conclusions can be drawn from the fiscal analysis:

- The average annual net deficits generated show that the county's present revenue structure cannot provide current levels of service to new growth without finding new revenue sources or raising existing rates. This is similar to what most other communities and regions in the country face – in order for growth to pay for itself, new funding sources and solutions must constantly be explored and evaluated.
- The total deficit including both capital and operating budgets is forecasted to be in excess of \$236 million over the planning period of 20 years.
- By far, the greatest shortfall for capital funding is for transportation and parks/recreation, which comprise 90 percent of the capital costs.
- In order to provide at least the current levels of service for new growth, additional funding sources must be identified or existing funding sources must either be continued or expanded.

Fiscal Impact Recommendations

The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan also examined the fiscal impact of growth, and recommended a regional funding strategy to address the issue. That strategy is applicable in Northern Beaufort County, and is also endorsed in this plan, as follows. Specifically, the Northern Beaufort County communities agree to work together to explore regional approaches to funding regional infrastructure, focusing on a limited range of regional tools similar to those to be explored in the southern portion of the county, including:

Recommendation 5.1: Adopt Regional Level of Service (LOS) Standards: *In order to establish a foundation for coordinating transportation and parks planning across the region, each of the Participating Local Governments will adopt the same level of service standard for these facilities, that is consistent and coordinated with the LOS adopted by the other Participating Local Governments.*

Recommendation 5.2: Identify Existing Deficiencies and Future Capital Improvements Needs: *Using the agreed upon LOS standards, the Participating Local Governments will then work cooperatively to identify needed capital projects, determine their costs and identify revenue sources to fund the projects.*

Recommendation 5.3: Work Cooperatively with the School District: *While the School District has the responsibility to plan and provide funding for its capital needs, a framework needs to be established where the Participating Local Governments can work cooperatively with the School District and support its efforts to plan for the future deficiencies and future capital improvement needs for public schools.*

Recommendation 5.4: Develop an Overall Funding Strategy: *The following factors should guide the selection of revenue sources to address the capital and operating funding gap:*

- **Revenue Potential:** Whether the tool can generate substantial sums of monies to fund capital infrastructure;
- **Geographic Application:** Whether the tool can be applied across the region;
- **Legislative Authorization:** Whether the tool requires legislative authorization;
- **Technical/Administrative Ease:** The ease of administering the tool; and
- **Public Acceptability:** How citizens will accept the tool.

Recommendation 5.5: *Focus First on Available Funding Tools:* In order to take immediate action on addressing capital funding needs, it is important to concentrate first on revenue sources that the State of South Carolina enables local governments to use to fund capital improvements. These include property taxes, local sales, impact fees, and taxes. For example, the current capital sales tax is expected to generate approximately \$62,200,000 for capital transportation facilities in Northern Beaufort County. In addition, the impact fee for Southern Beaufort County was recently updated, demonstrating that when kept current impact fees could be expected to generate substantial additional capital revenues.

Recommendation 5.6: *Consider Funding Tools that Require Changes in State Legislation:* If the available funding tools are not adequate to address the funding gap, particularly the operating cost gap, it may be necessary to lobby the state to initiate legislation that would enable new funding sources.

Recommendation 5.7: *Explore New Institutional Arrangements:* Where appropriate, new institutional arrangements to facilitate multi-jurisdictional cooperation on funding issues should be explored.

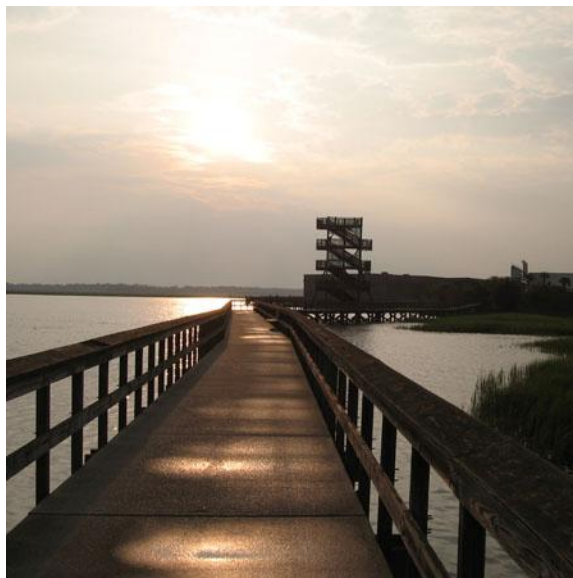


6

Baseline Environmental and Corridor Standards

Introduction

Several of the Common Goals contained in Chapter I involve the creation of agreed upon baseline standards, especially for environmentally sensitive areas and key travel corridors in Northern Beaufort County. This chapter offers specific actions that need to be taken to accomplish those goals. These actions should be addressed first through intergovernmental agreements and then ultimately through local plans, and especially through the land use regulations of the local communities, as is further discussed in Chapter 8 Implementation.



Consistency of Environmental Standards

Recommendation 6.1: *The Participating Local Governments should make it their priority to protect water quality by implementing the recommendations of the Beaufort County Special Area Management Plan (SAMP).*

- **Background:** *Much of the local efforts and initiatives that address water quality and environmental protection in the last seven years are a direct result of the Beaufort County Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) and its recommendations. The SAMP, initiated in 1999, encompassed a wide range of topics and activities ranging from more advanced stormwater controls, wastewater management, and water quality monitoring, to public education and outreach. Recommendations 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5 below provide a further explanation of which measures are being proposed in Northern Beaufort County to protect water quality in accordance with the SAMP.*

Recommendation 6.2: *The Participating Local Governments should require all new development to adhere to a common Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's) Manual.*

- **Background:** *Traditionally, stormwater management has dealt with controlling the quantity of runoff from a site in order to avoid flooding downstream properties. This measure of stormwater protection, however, does not protect against specific pollutants that impair water quality and threaten shellfish beds. In 1998, Beaufort County adopted the Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) manual which has specific attenuation standards for two types of pollutants – nutrients (phosphorus) and fecal coliform bacteria. The City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, and the Town of Yemassee currently do not require new development to meet these standards.*

Recommendation 6.3: *The Participating Local Governments should adopt baseline standards for critical line setbacks and natural vegetative buffers.*

- **Background:** *The purpose of the natural vegetative buffers is ultimately to improve water quality by capturing sediments and pollution from stormwater runoff. Critical line setbacks and vegetative buffers also stabilize the shoreline, reduce flooding and flood damage, preserve the natural habitat and create a sense of place and privacy for the homeowners. Currently Beaufort County requires a 50-foot wide natural vegetative buffer for single family houses and a 100-foot wide buffer for all other uses. The City of Beaufort has a 30-foot requirement for single-family residential development. An average buffer width of 50 feet with a*

minimum of 35 feet is required for multi-family and commercial development. The Town of Port Royal and the Town of Yemassee currently only require natural vegetative buffers in specific PUD's or development agreements.

Recommendation 6.4: Where justified, the Participating Local Governments should provide opportunities for limited community uses in close proximity to the OCRM critical line in order to enhance the community's enjoyment of the waterfront.

- **Background:** One criticism of vegetative river buffer standards is that they would preclude the development of regional attractions such as the Waterfront Park in Beaufort, the Battery in Charleston, and Harbortown on Hilton Head Island. Each of these developments provides the public with views and access to the water. In order to accommodate this type of development and at the same time preventing the degradation of the environment, it is important to establish guidelines that must be met in order to relieve river buffer requirements.

The development cannot be on a waterway classified as ORW (Outstanding Resource Waters) and SFH (Shellfish Harvesting Waters) by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Stormwater management must be designed to compensate for the reduction or elimination of the natural vegetative buffer and increase in the amount of impervious surfaces.

Recommendation 6.5: The Participating Local Governments should apply more stringent standards in critical areas such as the headwaters of local waterways, low-lying areas and the ACE Basin.

- **Background:** The SAMP called for the creation of a River Quality Overlay District Ordinance to address such concerns such as setbacks, vegetative buffers and appropriate impervious surface cover limits to minimize impacts of development to salt water marshes. This recommendation would most appropriately be applied in sensitive areas such as headwaters because of their increased vulnerability to pollution.

Recommendation 6.6: The Participating Local Governments should develop and adopt baseline standards for the protection of freshwater wetlands.

- **Background:** With the current condition of Federal and State wetlands protection, the role of local governments is vital to protecting small, "non-jurisdictional" wetlands. Beaufort County has wetland protection regulations, which allow fill for non-tidal wetlands less than one acre in size and require mitigation. Of the municipalities, currently only the Town of Port Royal has wetland protection requirements and they are limited to planned communities in the Shell Point Overlay District.

Consistency of Corridor Standards

Recommendation 6.7: *The Participating Local Governments should adopt consistent corridor overlay district standards among the Participating Local Governments on shared corridors such as SC 170 (Robert Smalls Parkway), U.S. 21 and SC 280 (Parris Island Gateway).*

- **Background:** *It is understood that the county and its municipalities have a mutual interest in preserving shared corridors and the rural character of the entrance corridors to the municipalities. Currently, a patchwork quilt of political jurisdictions exists in Shell Point, Burton, Sheldon, and parts of Lady's Island. It is important that consistent development standards are required regardless of political jurisdiction. Another important factor is that in some corridors (Boundary Street, Ribaut Road, US 21 on Lady's Island), development is encouraged or required to be pedestrian friendly and address the street, while on other corridors (Trask Parkway, Robert Smalls Parkway) development is required to be set back from the highway and screened with a vegetated buffer (see Figure 2). It is important for the county and its municipalities to recognize where it is appropriate to apply these distinct sets of development standards.*

Recommendation 6.8: *The Participating Local Governments should establish a shared Corridor Review Board for all applicable projects in Northern Beaufort County.*

- **Background:** *Currently Beaufort County and the City of Beaufort have their own Corridor Review Boards that oversee development in their respective Corridor Overlay Districts. Establishing a shared board would accomplish two objectives:*
 - *It would provide for more consistency in the application and enforcement of corridor overlay district standards.*
 - *There is a limited pool of design professionals in Northern Beaufort County who are willing to serve on boards. The more boards there are, the more difficult it is to find board members.*

Specific local design districts such as the City's historic district and the Traditional Town Overlay District in Port Royal, however, will continue to be better served by local boards.

Recommendation 6.9: *The Participating Local Governments should identify which highways will most likely be widened in the next 20 years and apply corridor overlay district standards accordingly.*

- **Background:** Northern Beaufort County's population growth and increased traffic congestion has necessitated the widening of many roads. Road widenings can have a negative effect on the region's aesthetic qualities. Therefore, to preserve highway buffers, it may be necessary to require greater buffer widths along corridors that will be widened in the future. Also, it may be necessary to require interim front yard setbacks in areas where development is encouraged to be pedestrian friendly and address the street. Zero lot line development must be avoided on roads that will be widened to avoid encroachment that may necessitate condemnation to secure additional right-of-way width.

Recommendation 6.10: The Participating Local Governments should develop programs such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's), payment in lieu of open space, and density bonuses to encourage clustered village development in rural areas as opposed to low-density sprawling development.

- **Background:** The current density requirement in Beaufort County's rural district is one dwelling unit per three acres. Strict application of this standard may result in low-density suburban sprawl and fragmented open space. A more desired development pattern would consist of higher density hamlets and villages surrounded by large tracts of agricultural land and open space. This type of development could be encouraged by the application of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program or a payment in lieu of open space program (see Common Goal 7).

Recommendation 6.11: The Participating Local Governments should support the establishment of dedicated utility corridors to divert major transmission lines away from residential neighborhoods.

- **Background:** South Carolina Electric & Gas (SCE&G) plans to upgrade its transmission lines connecting Beaufort with Lady's Island from a 46,000 volt capacity to a 115,000 volt capacity. This upgrade would require an increase in height of the utility poles from 65 feet to 75 to 95 feet. This has raised both aesthetic and health concerns in the affected residential neighborhoods. This recommendation proposes to solve this issue from a regional perspective by diverting these power lines away from populated areas. Future roads, such as the third crossing to Lady's Island, would provide a possible location for utility corridors because the right of way for the road and the utility corridor could be planned, negotiated, and acquired at the same time. The advantages of this policy include reducing the amount of land affected, avoiding duplication, reducing the impact on homes and businesses, reducing construction cost, making maintenance more accessible, and (depending on circumstances) reducing ongoing maintenance cost.

7

Regional Planning Initiatives



Introduction

In addition to the common goals that lend themselves to a regulatory approach as recommended in Chapter 6, other common goals will require proactive action in order to accomplish the goals. These initiatives should be more fully explored and addressed first by the Technical Advisory Committee and its working groups, and ultimately through the local plans and initiatives of the local communities, as is further discussed in Chapter 8 Implementation.

Economic Health and Diversity

Recommendation 7.1: *The joint future land use plan for the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan must provide a sufficient quantity of suitably located land zoned for non-retail commercial uses that promote the region's economic health and diversity. Non-retail commercial uses include the following: business parks, research and development centers, product assembly, distribution centers, cottage industries, and light and heavy industrial uses.*

- **Background:** *Steps involved to forward this recommendation include the following:*
- The Planning staffs of the Participating local governments should inventory the existing supply of appropriately zoned land available for non-retail commercial development within Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal and the Town of Yemassee and assess the present opportunities they provide for competitive economic development. The staffs should make this inventory and assessment available to local and regional agencies involved in promoting economic development.

- The Participating Local Governments should support the Economic Partnership’s efforts to establish the Northern Beaufort County Corridor Commerce Park near the intersection of US 17 and 17A.
- Beaufort County should rezone to rural the 700 acres of land presently zoned light industrial located in the unincorporated county between Old Sheldon Church Road and River Road.
- The Participating Local Governments should expand non-retail commercially zoned properties within the Airport Overlay Districts, including the existing business park and light industrial zoned properties near the Beaufort County Airport (Lady’s Island) and the Beaufort Commerce Park where such uses are compatible or could be made compatible with adjacent properties. This policy may not be appropriate universally throughout the Airport Overlay Districts, especially in portions of Gray’s Hill and northern Lady’s Island which are more rural and rural residential in character.
- The Participating Local Governments should provide more flexibility in commercial zoning districts to permit smaller non-retail commercial uses such as contractor’s offices, small assembly facilities, and small light industrial operations that do not adversely impact surrounding retail uses.

Recommendation 7.2: *The Participating Local Governments should commit resources to construct infrastructure and provide new and renovated light industrial buildings to attract companies interested in locating or expanding in the region.*

➤ **Background:** *There are two approaches to this recommendation. One is providing financial support to construct capital improvements to the Beaufort Commerce Park or the Northern Beaufort County Corridor Commerce Park. In addition to funding the installation of roads and infrastructure, these capital improvements also include the construction of spec buildings to provide readily available space for prospective companies interested in locating in the region. Another approach includes inventorying vacant non-residential structures (e.g. underutilized retail buildings and packing sheds) and identifying and overcoming regulatory obstacles to converting them to non-retail commercial uses.*

Recommendation 7.3: *The Participating Local Governments should establish an expedited permitting process for projects that forward the economic development goals in Northern Beaufort County.*

➤ **Background:** *One of the obstacles to attracting industry to Northern Beaufort County is the length of time it takes to complete the local development permitting process. One approach to addressing this problem is for the local jurisdiction to “pre-permit” non-retail commercially zoned properties, similar to the process established in the Beaufort Commerce Park. This involves the local jurisdiction proactively analyzing the properties, assessing site conditions, determining the location of natural resources, determining appropriate locations for*

buffers, etc. for the purpose of completing portions of the development permitting process for the applicants. Another approach is for the local jurisdiction to create “floating zones” that would be available for business parks or industrial areas.

Recommendation 7.4: The Participating Local Governments should encourage industries that support sustainable practices by promoting renewable energy and attracting or growing value-added industries that support using locally available resources such as agricultural or seafood products.

Recommendation 7.5: The Participating Local Governments should facilitate a higher level of coordination with the Technical College of the Lowcountry and the University of South Carolina Beaufort to establish research and development facilities to provide workforce development and stimulate high-tech entrepreneurial activities in the region.

Open Space Preservation

Recommendation 7.6: In order to create a regional network of open spaces, four broad-based open space acquisition goals are recommended:

- Preserve large agricultural land holdings on St. Helena Island and north of the Whale Branch River.
- Maintain a green corridor through the ACE Basin and along the Whale Branch River.
- Continue to target open space acquisition within the Airport Overlay District (AOD) boundaries around the US Marine Corps Air Station.
- Provide for the passive recreation needs for Northern Beaufort County’s residents.

Recommendation 7.7: The Participating Local Governments should continue to utilize the “Greenprint” process for targeting the acquisition of future preserved lands.

- **Background:** Federal, state and local governments have been aggressive in securing open space and natural areas in Northern Beaufort County. However, Figure 8 illustrates that many of these preserved places are discrete and unconnected. As growth continues to occur, these natural areas will become more isolated and will not effectively be able to support healthy wildlife communities. In addition, as land becomes scarcer, it is more important to prioritize areas with outstanding natural

resources in order to target future acquisitions of open space. The “Greenprint” program established by the Trust for Public Lands for Beaufort County is a good strategy for targeting open space acquisition to further regional goals.

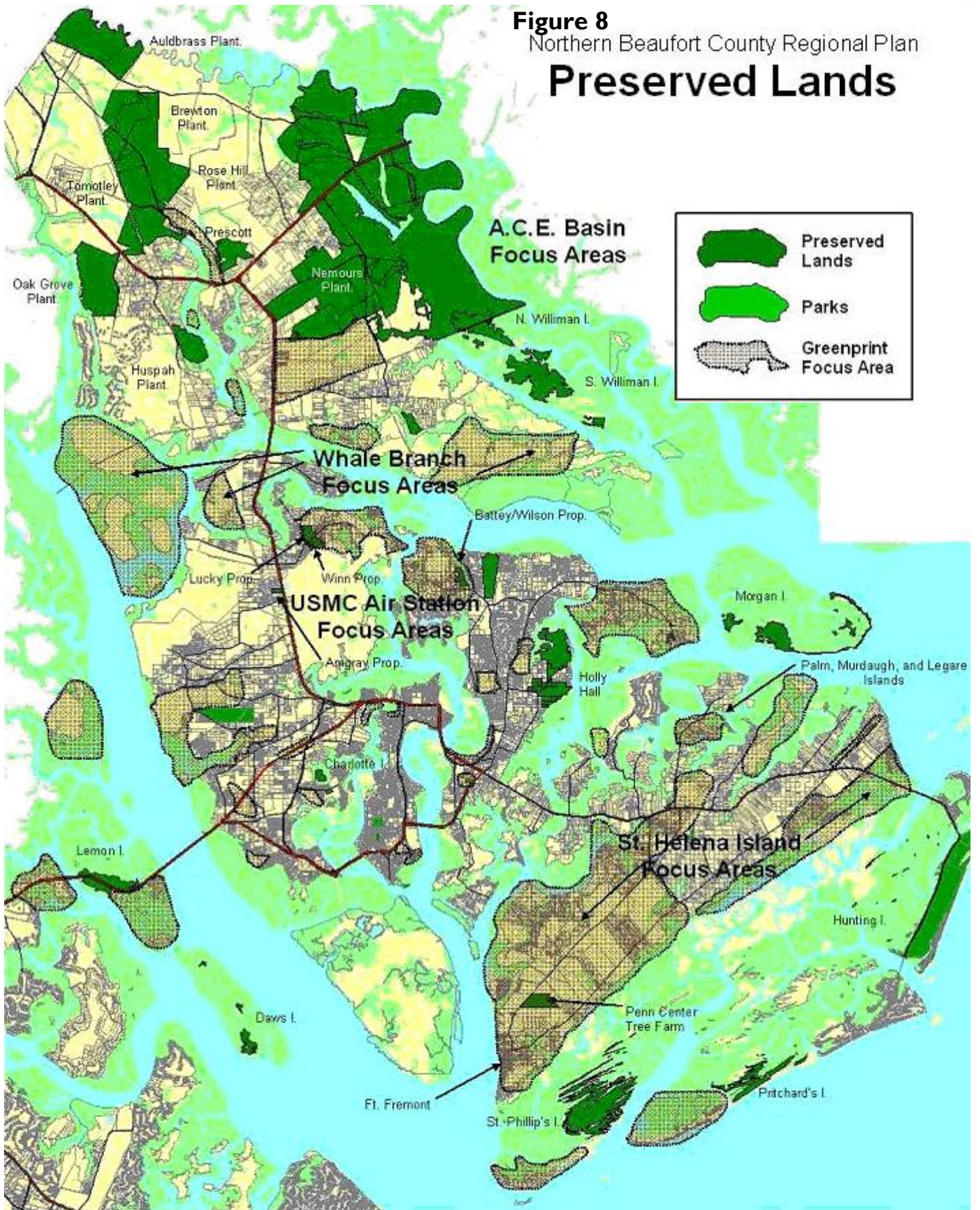
Recommendation 7.8: The Participating Local Governments should consider an open space land bank where fees are collected in lieu of open space to apply to the purchase and preservation of larger or more critical lands.

- **Background:** Required open space set asides for major subdivisions and PUD’s is a useful tool for enhancing the region’s open space network. Poor application of these standards can result, however, in small fragments of open space that provide no real benefit to the larger open space goals of the region. A fee in lieu of open space option could allow developments with no outstanding natural features or resources to pay into a program where the fees could be applied to the purchase (fee simple or development rights) of more critical lands.

Recommendation 7.9: The Participating Local Governments should establish a common definition and baseline standards for regional open space.

- **Background:** Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal have different requirements and standards for open space when land is subdivided or developed. This recommendation calls for the Participating Local Governments to agree on the required percentage of land area to be set aside as open space when a rezoning or annexation occurs. This recommendation also calls for the Participating Local Governments to agree on a common definition and consistent requirements for open space. This would address such concerns as whether wetlands can count towards required open space, whether stormwater detention ponds could be placed within open space, and to what degree does open space serve recreation needs vs. preservation needs.

Figure 8
Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan
Preserved Lands



Diversity

Recommendation 7.10: *The Participating Local Governments should support the Penn Center’s Land Use and Environmental Education Program.*

- **Background:** *This program was established to assist native Sea Islanders in preserving and maintaining their land and cultural practices in the midst of the pressures of growth and rising property values in the coastal regions of the Southeast. The program concentrates on citizen education, land use planning and reform and sustainable economic development. General program activities include assistance with issues pertaining to taxes, heirs’ property, and community organizing.*

Recommendation 7.11: *Beaufort County should assess whether the Cultural Protection Overlay District is achieving its goals to protect and enhance St. Helena Island’s rural culture and assess whether it should be applied to other rural areas of the region such as Sheldon Township.*

Recommendation 7.12: *The Participating Local Governments should carefully weigh its goals to promote infill development and redevelopment in established neighborhoods in Beaufort and Port Royal with the unintended consequence of the displacement of poorer residents of these neighborhoods.*

Recommendation 7.13: *Beaufort County should assess the pros and cons of its current policy to restrict the extension of public sewer into rural areas as a method of protecting the diversity of the rural areas both within and outside of the Community Preservation districts.*



Affordable and Workforce Housing

Recommendation 7.14: *The Participating Local Governments should pass a multi-jurisdiction mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance.*

- **Background:** *An inclusionary zoning ordinance would require all new residential development to address the provision of affordable dwelling units. Making this policy mandatory and applying it consistently throughout the region would help to increase the supply of workforce housing, whose need was documented in the 2004 Workforce Needs Assessment commissioned by Beaufort County. The inclusionary zoning policy should include provisions for, on a case by case basis, a housing fee in lieu of, off-site inclusionary units, land donation, and incentives such as density bonuses that are greater than the Inclusionary Zoning set aside so that the builder can reap the benefit of some bonus market-rate units.*

Recommendation 7.15: *Participating local governments should work jointly to identify federal and state funding streams to address the housing needs throughout the county.*

- **Background:** *In addition to applying for such funds directly, the Participating Local Governments should work with nonprofit organizations such as the Economic Opportunity Commission, Habitat for Humanity, the Lowcountry Community Development Corporation of Hilton Head and other agencies to maximize the utilization of funds to increase housing opportunities.*

Recommendation 7.16: *The Participating Local Governments should establish and implement different affordable housing strategies appropriate for urban/suburban areas and for rural areas to preserve rural culture, combat sprawl, and to ensure that a majority of workforce and affordable housing is located in proximity to jobs and services.*

- **Background:** *The following housing strategies are recommended for different parts of the region:*
 - *Urban/Suburban areas (Port Royal Island and Lady's Island): Focus affordable housing strategies on constructing new workforce housing and low/moderate income housing and on the rehabilitation of existing housing structures.*
 - *Rural areas (Sheldon Township and St. Helena Island): Focus affordable housing strategies on the rehabilitation of existing houses for low/moderate income homeowners, and eliminating barriers to expanding existing housing compounds.*

Recommendation 7.17: *The Participating Local Governments should make home repair and replacement of substandard housing a housing priority to further the recommendations outlined in the 2004 Workforce Needs Assessment.*

- **Background:** *In order to maximize the amount of grant funds available for housing rehabilitation, the Participating Local Governments will continue to provide local matching funds to the Lowcountry Regional Home Consortium (comprised of Beaufort, Colleton, Jasper and Hampton Counties), which is a Participating Jurisdiction eligible to receive Home Investment Partnership Funds (HOME) and American Dream Down Payment Assistance Funds from HUD. The funds can be used to increase the affordable housing stock by providing down payment assistance to eligible first time homebuyers; sustaining homes through home repair; assisting with the development of new homeowner and rental units; providing assistance for infrastructure; and encouraging involvement of community based non-profit homeownership initiatives.*

Infill and Redevelopment

Recommendation 7.18: *The Participating Local Governments should recognize common definitions for “infill” and “redevelopment”.*

- **Background:** *In order to set up an effective program to target the development of infill parcels, it is important to have a common understanding of what is meant by infill and redevelopment. The following definitions are offered as a starting point for this discussion:*
 - **Small Tract Infill Development:** *The targeting of individual subdivided lots within existing residential subdivisions and commercial strips. Usually necessitates additional subdivision of land. Example: The construction of a single-family house, duplex or small apartment building on a single vacant urban lot.*
 - **Large Tract Infill Development (leapfrogged parcels):** *The targeting of larger undeveloped residential or commercial parcels (10 acres or greater). Development of these sites would require further subdivision of the land. This includes large lots in urbanized areas and areas with concentrations of undeveloped or underdeveloped large lots that have been passed over in favor of larger parcels further from the urban centers (e.g. Burton, Shell Point).*
 - **Small Scale Redevelopment:** *Replacing a single family house on a large lot with several houses or multi-family structures on smaller lots.*
 - **Large Scale Redevelopment:** *Redevelopment of a larger scale that requires the assembly of several parcels, removal of the older*

structures and the construction of more intense residential or commercial development.

Recommendation 7.19: *The Participating Local Governments should identify infill and redevelopment priority areas.*

➤ **Background:** *The following infill priority areas are suggested:*

- Urban Residential neighborhoods with a large number of small vacant lots;
- Areas of Northern Beaufort County with a large number of undeveloped parcels that are situated close to urbanized areas and public facilities (Burton, Shell Point, Lady’s Island Redevelopment District); and
- Marginal commercial corridors with a large number of vacant or under-utilized buildings (Parris Island Gateway, Trask Parkway).

Recommendation 7.20: *The Participating Local Governments should conduct an infill parcel inventory in the identified priority areas.*

➤ **Background:** *Once the infill priority areas have been identified, then it will be easier to further identify individual parcels that have development or redevelopment potential. The following are some steps that could be taken to complete this inventory:*

- Establish GIS “screening” criteria to identify possible infill areas or parcels. Consider such factors as zoning, size of parcels, infrastructure, land use, and constraints to development such as wetlands.
- For redevelopment, look at such factors as ratio of assessed value of improvements to land value, age of structure, etc.
- Conduct field surveys to supplement GIS screening – condition of structures, surrounding land use patterns.

Recommendation 7.21: *The Participating Local Governments should identify impediments to infill development and develop strategies to overcome the impediments.*

➤ **Background:** *There are many real and perceived impediments to infill and redevelopment. These include the cost of redevelopment, possible regulatory barriers, opposition of neighbors, and lack of developer interest. Below is a summary of these barriers and possible solutions to overcome the barriers:*

- Cost of Development: Infill parcels typically cost more than land in “green field” sites. While land costs are greater in developed areas, the cost of public services and infrastructure may be less expensive.

- Possible solutions: Density bonuses; Fee waivers and subsidies (impact fees, development permit fees); Land assembly by the public sector; Tax abatements or rebates.
- Neighborhood Resistance: Neighborhood resistance can delay a project, especially if the land needs to be rezoned.
- Possible solutions: Establish design standards that ensure the compatibility of new infill development. Require developers to meet with residents of the surrounding area to solicit their input on the project design before finalizing plans.
- Regulatory Barriers: Zoning, subdivision and land development regulations, and even building codes may present obstacles to developing infill sites. Setbacks and minimum lot sizes may frustrate single-lot infill development. Density must be addressed – very often infill is only justified economically if increased densities are allowed.
- Possible solutions: Consider conducting an infill audit that examines local plans, codes, and practices to identify infill barriers.
- Lack of Developer Interest: Developers may be unaware of the market potential for infill development.
- Possible solutions: Publicize infill parcel inventory and make information available to developers. Provide examples of successful infill development projects.

Military Base Coordination

Recommendation 7.22: *The Participating Local Governments should continue to enforce standards within the AICUZ contours that discourage development that would adversely affect the mission of the US Marine Corps Air Station.*

➤ **Background:** *The JLUS (Joint Land Use Study) Implementation Committee drafted an Airport Overlay District that would restrict land uses within the AICUZ contours to be adopted by Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort, and the Town of Port Royal. All three local governments have adopted the ordinance. The Airport Overlay District (AOD) essentially has four components. They are as follows:*

- **Disclosure:** All potential homebuyers and renters will be required to be notified that they are in a noise zone and/or accident potential zone.
- **Noise Level Reduction:** New construction will be required to be built to achieve a 25 to 35 decibel reduction from exterior to interior, depending on the noise zone.

- **Use Limitations:** New hospitals, churches, schools, day care centers, multi-family housing and other incompatible uses would not be permitted in the Clear Zone, Accident Potential Zone and Noise Zone 3. Existing buildings would be grandfathered.
- **Density Limitations:** Residential densities will be restricted to avoid encroachment of development around the Air Station.

Recommendation 7.23: *The Participating Local Governments should consider such tools as transfer of development rights (TDR) program to compensate affected property owners within the Airport Overlay District (AOD) and continue encroachment partnering acquisition efforts in the vicinity of the Air Station.*

- **Background:** *Many property owners may be negatively affected by restrictions proposed to be adopted within the AOD boundaries. A TDR program has the potential to offer relief to these property owners. The JLUS (Joint Land Use Study) Implementation Committee recommended that this program will complement the proposed Airport Overlay District ordinance. A conservation partnering program relieves encroachment pressures from either incompatible development and/or loss of natural habitat on training, testing, and support operations at military installations (this could apply to Parris Island some day due to their ranges). The most effective way to avoid encroachment is to prevent incompatible development in the vicinity of the Air Station. This recommendation is further supported in Recommendation 7.1.*

Regional Growth Tracking System

Recommendation 7.24: *The Participating Local Governments should work together to create and maintain an improved regional growth tracking system, including a land demand and land use forecasting model integrated with other regional models (such as the transportation model) that can be used by all entities for planning purposes.*

- **Background:** *It became clear during the process of preparing the growth forecasts for this plan that an improved regional model is needed that is capable of providing regional data related to growth. For example, there is not readily available data that summarizes historic growth, pending development (i.e. growth that is in the “pipeline”), or remaining capacity for growth under local land use plans or zoning. Likewise, there is no system in place to regularly monitor growth forecasts that are the basis for transportation or other regional planning, such as schools. This recommendation would mirror the recommendation in the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan and would involve the creation of a regional data base and model that would likely build on the existing traffic*

model and its traffic analysis zones, but it could be expanded for use in a wide range of planning efforts by local and regional agencies. Specifically:

- The county's new Land Development Office (LDO) program would be configured to count Certificates of Occupancy by tax district and address.
- Municipalities would use the same system to enter permit and occupancy data or planning staff will enter data in the interim.
- The LDO development counts will be integrated with GIS traffic analysis zones through address or parcel ID numbers.
- A growth report will be periodically generated to show the change in growth by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ), by tax district, and by jurisdiction.



8

Implementation Oversight

Introduction

This regional plan reflects significant changes in direction for regional planning in Northern Beaufort County. The policies in this plan grew out of a long and intense process of analysis, consideration of alternative approaches, and consensus building. While this process achieved agreement on many important concepts, its success will only be meaningful if there is follow through on actions needed to implement the plan.



Recommendation 8.1: *The implementation of the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan should involve a four point approach:*

- 1) The evolution of the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Steering Committee into a continuing Implementation Oversight Committee,*
- 2) The drafting and execution of intergovernmental agreements that ratify key plan elements,*
- 3) The incorporation of regional plan policies in local comprehensive plans and local plan implementation tools, such as land use regulations and ordinances, and*
- 4) Ongoing work of the Technical Advisory Committee and working groups on ongoing planning initiatives.*

Each of these is discussed below.

Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Implementation Oversight Committee

The Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan Steering Committee that oversaw the preparation and completion of this plan will be reappointed and reformed into an Implementation Oversight Committee, and will continue to work on a long term basis. This Implementation Oversight Committee will oversee and coordinate the actions identified in this chapter, and will oversee the preparation of the intergovernmental agreements and the technical committee working groups that will work on long term planning initiatives as identified in this plan. Specifically, the Implementation Oversight Committee will have at least the following responsibilities:

- Responsibility for preparing intergovernmental agreements as discussed in the next section.
- Responsible for prioritizing actions in collaboration with the city, towns, and county.
- Serve as an advocate for strong regional planning initiatives and actions in concert with the Participating Local Governments pursuant to this plan.
- Overall responsibility for working with local communities on their long range transportation plans, pursuant to the transportation strategy outlined in Chapter 4 of this plan.

- Overall responsibility for working with local communities to plan for adequate funding of regional infrastructure, pursuant to the fiscal strategies outlined in Chapter 5 of this plan.
- Responsibility for encouraging local governments to incorporate this regional plan into local plans and regulations.
- Oversight of the Technical Advisory Committee and its working groups.
- Monitoring, amending, and updating the plan.

Intergovernmental Agreements

This regional plan identifies several sets of planning issues that should be addressed initially through intergovernmental agreements. These include the following:

Growth Management and Annexation Policies

Chapter 2 of this plan establishes a commitment on the part of the Participating Local Governments to develop mutually agreeable principles that address:

- Mitigation of extra territorial impacts of annexations,
- Mitigation of negative impacts on the delivery of public services,
- Procedures for notice and comment on proposed annexations,
- Enclaves of unincorporated county territorial within the growth boundaries,
- Guidelines for the protection of existing Community Preservation Districts, and
- Policies for city and county consideration development requests within and outside the growth boundary.

The negotiation, preparation, and execution of an intergovernmental agreement / agreements is a high priority of this plan.

Baseline Standards

Chapter 6 of this plan establishes a commitment to adopt baseline standards related to several issues, including environmental protection and corridor protection. The plan calls for baseline environmental standards that address:

- Storm water management best management practices,
- Critical line setback and buffers (with provision for flexibility in cases of public access),
- Enhanced standards for especially sensitive areas such as waterway headwaters, low lying areas, and the ACE basin, and
- Protection of freshwater wetlands.

Chapter 6 also establishes a commitment to adopt baseline standards that address consistent corridor overlay standards along shared travel corridors.

Local Planning Conformity Commitments

Chapter 2 of this plan establishes a commitment to carry the policies of this regional plan into the local planning process as described below. This commitment to bring local plans and regulations into conformance with this plan should be further endorsed through an intergovernmental agreement.

Local Plans and Regulations

The true test of the willingness of the Participating Local Governments to implement this regional plan will be the extent to which the policies of this plan can be institutionalized through the incorporation of those policies in local plans, such as comprehensive plans. Even more important, the local governments should carry those policies through into the local land use regulations – including zoning codes and subdivision regulations.

As each community updates its comprehensive plans and updates its land use regulations, the Implementation Oversight Committee will work with the communities to build this plan and its policies into that process. Local land use plans will be encouraged to be consistent with

the growth boundaries and regional land use plan contained in this plan. Local transportation plans will be encouraged to be consistent with the transportation strategy outlined in this plan. Baseline standards for environmental and corridor protection that are developed through the intergovernmental agreements will be encouraged to be incorporated into land use regulations. Local governments will also be encouraged to use their plans to establish the policy foundation for planning initiatives related open space preservation, infill development, economic development, housing, and coordination with military authorities will be encouraged.

The Participating Local Governments will explore opportunities to coordinate the updating of comprehensive plans and regulations, including the timing of updates, the use of common data and information, joint land use planning, and the creation of common planning and regulatory terminology, definitions, and standards.

During the development of the intergovernmental agreement that would confirm the communities' commitment to build regional plan policies into local plans and regulations, the communities should discuss and consider the creation of a voluntary plan conformity review process. This plan conformity review process could involve agreement by each of the communities to audit their planning and regulations for ways in which the plans and regulations currently advance the regional plan policies, ways in which they may conflict with regional plan policies, ways in which local plans and regulations can be modified to better reflect the regional plan, and actions that the communities agree to undertake when updating their plans.

Technical Advisory Committee and Working Groups

During the preparation of this regional plan, the Technical Advisory Committee and the related working groups demonstrated tremendous value in thinking through the actions needed to help implement this plan. The Technical Advisory Group is envisioned as continuing to work and assist the Implementation Oversight Committee on an ongoing basis. The Technical Advisory Committee will help with the coordination of longer term planning initiative identified in this plan, including:

- Regional economic development initiatives,
- Regional open space planning and preservation,
- Cultural diversity initiatives,

- Affordable and workforce housing initiatives,
- Creation and implementation of a regional infill development strategy, and
- Coordination with military authorities.

Regional Plan Management

This regional plan is intended to plan for a 20 year horizon; however it is recognized that it is a policy guide that must be monitored and updated periodically. The Implementation Oversight Committee will work with local planning staffs and the Technical Advisory Committee to develop methods for the following:

- Annual monitoring, including the creation of benchmarks for charting progress in achieving the plan, along with an annual report of plan implementation progress.
- Updating of this plan every five years.
- A process and guidelines for hearing requests for amendment to the plan by the Implementation Oversight Committee and the Participating Local Governments.



Appendix A

Population Estimation, Projection Methodology for the Beaufort County Transportation Model & the Beaufort County Regional Plans

The following is a brief description of Beaufort County's population projection methodology used in its transportation model and applied to the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan. It is important to point out that Hilton Head Island has its own traffic model and forecasting methodology which is not described here.

Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs)

Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's) provided the level of analysis for the population projection methodology. TAZ's are small geographical sub-areas of the county (see Diagram A) that are used for the purpose of analyzing the impact of future population growth on the road network. In each TAZ, there is an estimate of the future (2025) number of dwelling units, population, employment and school attendance. Estimations made at the TAZ level can be assembled to define larger planning areas such as Northern Beaufort County, Lady's Island, or any of the land bodies or tax districts. Because the TAZ boundaries are drawn based on Census delineations, Census data can be used to supplement local data, and for base data comparisons.

Estimating Current (2004) Population

Current population estimates began with a count of current dwelling units in each of the TAZ's. This was accomplished using the County's GIS/Assessor database. The parcels in each TAZ were selected, the residentially coded parcels were then selected, and those with buildings or manufactured homes were counted. The parcels with tax codes for multiple units were viewed on an aerial for an estimated unit count as no current County database lists unit counts. Current population was estimated by applying persons per household and vacancy rates from the 2000 Census, for the Census tract within which the TAZ was located, to the dwelling unit count. Where new development was proposed in a particular TAZ that did not resemble historic growth patterns in that area (e.g. recent fast-growing areas within Bluffton), persons per household and vacancy rates from similarly profiled Census Tracts were used.

Forecasting 2025 Population

Population forecasts for the year 2025 are based on the historic growth rate and the amount of developable land remaining in each TAZ. The amount of developable land left within each TAZ was determined by analyzing aerials and subtracting out wetlands and marshes (unbuildable land). Future development within vacant land was assumed to occur at already approved densities, or, where no development had been approved, at densities consistent with the selected future land use plan scenario.

Based on the two factors of growth rate and remaining developable land, an S-curve was used to forecast the future rate of growth. The s-curve (see Diagram B) was divided into the following four slopes whose parts represent four broad categories of growth in Beaufort County:

- a) slow historic growth (e.g. rural and constrained growth in areas such as Sheldon)
- b) moderate growth (e.g. Port Royal Island)
- c) high growth (e.g. Bluffton, Lady's Island)
- d) tapering growth of places approaching buildout (e.g. Hilton Head Island)

In addition to the above described methodology, there are many developments in Beaufort County (mostly in the Bluffton area) where the developer has provided a timetable for completion usually via a development agreement. These "known" forecasts were applied where applicable.

Once a TAZ was assigned a growth category, the current residential count was then entered into a compounding formula at a rate for X

years to generate the curve assigned. [See Diagram C for an example of the growth curve for category 3 or those TAZs that are growing at the pace of Lady's Island in general.] Finally, forecasted dwelling units were converted to population figures by assuming the same persons per household and vacancy rate as the 2000 Census for the Census tract within which the TAZ is located where appropriate or using the rates of a similarly profiled community. The individual TAZ projections were added up and the result was compared to historic growth trends in the region to ensure that the overall 2025 growth projections for the region are consistent with historic growth trends.

Population Projection Results

Planning Area	2006 Dwelling Units	2006 Population	2025 Dwelling Units	2025 Population
Port Royal Island	19,875	50,244	30,587	76,299
Sheldon	2,123	5,266	3,696	9,203
Lady's Island*	4,855	11,918	7,430	18,911
St. Helena Island	7,599	13,190	8,937	19,119
TOTAL	34,452	80,618	50,650	123,532

State Review and Approval of Method

The *TAZ scale and use of a growth-curve* for estimating and projecting the 124 different growth scenarios for the TAZ model was novel, therefore the Planning Department contracted with the S.C. Budget & Control Board's Office of Statistical Data to review the method, the process, and the results. At every stage that Office was supportive of the methods used to detail and locate Beaufort's growth indicators. The Office of Research and Statistics' veteran statistician, Diana Tester of Health and Census Statistics was the reviewer.

**DIAGRAM A:
Beaufort County's 124 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ's)**

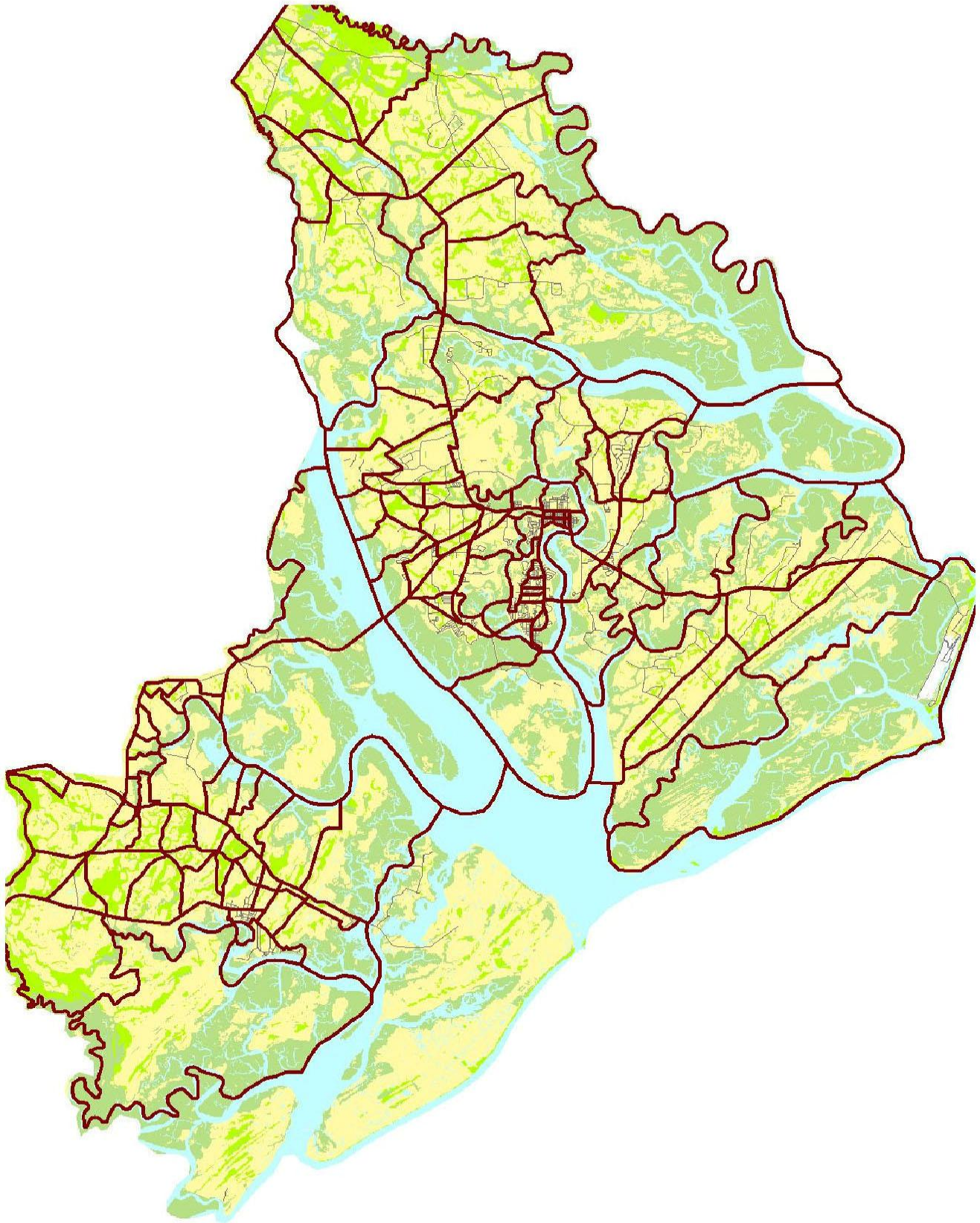


DIAGRAM B

Criteria For Determining Growth Curves For Beaufort County T.A.Z. Areas

		PACE OF GROWTH SINCE 2000		
		SLOW S	MEDIUM M	FAST F
LAND CAPACITY	EXTENSIVE E	ES	EM	EF
	MODERATE M	MS	MM	MF
	LIMITED L	LS	LM	LF

Area Average Growth Rates

Location on the Growth Curve

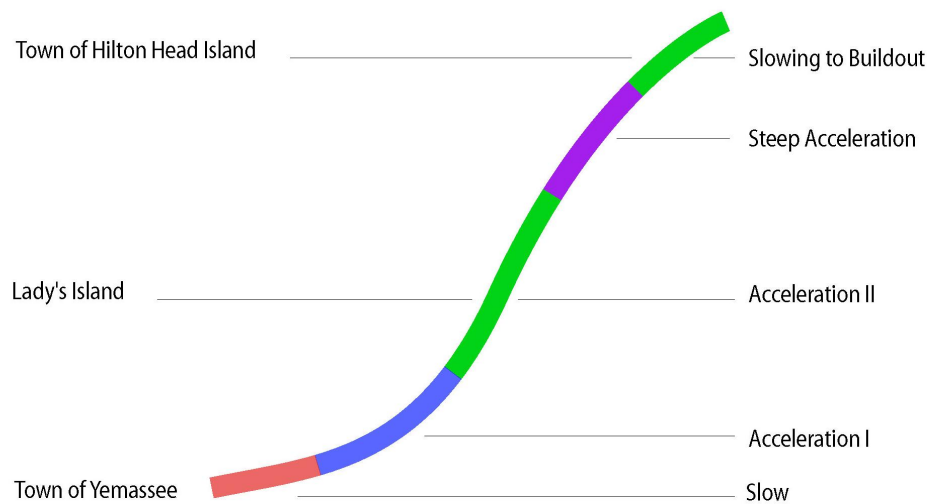


DIAGRAM C

Sample Population
Growth Curves
*Compounded Rates
To Simulate Area
Growth Patterns*

