SOLOCO
Southern Lowcountry Regional Board

Beaufort County | City of Beaufort | Town of Bluffton
City of Hardeeville | Town of Hilton Head Island
Jasper County | Town of Port Royal
Town of Ridgeland | Town of Yemassee

May 27, 2025 Meeting Summary

1. Review of Previous Meeting

- Updates included Bluffton's new wetlands ordinance, a task force proposal by Tom Lennox, a growth planning workshop proposal by Rob Merchant, and a plastic bag survey update.

2. Tom Lennox's 20-Year Regional Plan Proposal

- A task force under SoLoCo was formed to create a structured, inclusive framework for regional planning.
- Focus areas: transportation, workforce development, education, stormwater management, public safety, and affordable housing.
- The task force has reviewed regional plans, economic factors, and AI-assisted frameworks.
- Coordination with entities like BJWSA, Beaufort County, and others is ongoing.
- Suggestions were made to include Jasper County entities and both school districts in the planning process.

3. Rob Merchant's Regional Workshop Proposal

- Proposed a two half-day workshop to align regional planning efforts and identify actionable strategies.
- Estimated cost: up to $75,000, with a proposed cost-sharing model based on population (using American Community Survey data).
- Discussions included alternative cost-sharing models (e.g., landmass, development potential) and concerns about double taxation.
- Some members questioned the value of the workshop given existing plans and agreements.
- Others emphasized the need for a shared regional vision and the benefits of collaboration.
- Suggestions included using local facilitators to reduce costs and ensuring the workshop leads to actionable outcomes.

4. Next Steps for Workshop Proposal

- Each jurisdiction is to:
    - Define desired outcomes.
    - Propose a cost-sharing formula.

    - Gauge council support.
- A decision is expected in two months.

5. Tri-Share Childcare Resolution

- Hardeeville and Beaufort have passed the resolution; others are pending.
- Some jurisdictions are awaiting presentations before deciding.
- Goal: secure state funding for one-third of the program cost.
- Updates are expected in two months.

6. Next Meeting Agenda

- A presentation on hurricane preparedness and evacuation planning was proposed and accepted.
- Participants will include local emergency services and sheriff's offices.