



PLANNING DIVISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Anthony Criscitiello, Planning Director
DATE: December 31, 2009
SUBJECT: Daufuskie Island Plan

The Beaufort County Planning Department is forwarding the attached documents for your review and approval: the draft Daufuskie Island Plan (Appendix F, Section 7, of the Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan).

The compilation of the Daufuskie Island Plan was a major undertaking that not only provides Daufuskie Island with a clear and detailed vision for the future, but also introduces a new type of zoning to the Island as well as Beaufort County.

The new documents were initiated with a community meeting in the spring of 2005. At that time, residents interested in serving on the Community Preservation Committee submitted their names to the Community Planner. Councilman and Planning Commissioner Alan Herd assisted in selecting and organizing the 11 eleven member Committee. The Committee was ultimately confirmed by the Beaufort County Planning Commission.

The first CP Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, April 20th 2005. Over the next two years the County planning staff and CP Committee spent significant time drafting a conventional zoning ordinance. In 2007 the County hosted an Island-wide charrette in which professionals, stakeholders, and residents were forced to look beyond the boundaries of the CP District and conceive of a vision for the entire Island.

In early 2008 the face of the Daufuskie Island Planning team changed significantly with a new Community Planner and a new Chair elected by the Committee. Rather than forwarding the conventional zoning ordinance, the Community Planner asked the Committee to first develop a detailed Plan aimed at identifying and addressing the Island's tougher issues and consider using a Form Based Code (FBC) as a means of implementing the new Plan. The FBC allowed residents to establish a predictable and unified vision for Daufuskie Island while ensuring that traditional Lowcountry patterns and architecture was maintained. This is important given the Island's status as a National Historic District. The Committee was receptive to the changes, and the consulting team of Allison Ramsey Architects was hired to assist with this coding process.

For an additional two years the Planning Team, CP Committee, and several stakeholders (large property owners, major and minor developers, ferry providers, and the fire chief) attended bi-monthly meetings, hosted workshops, toured the Island, and even visited a jurisdiction that has had a Form Based Code in place for ten years.

In the spring and fall of 2009 the Committee hosted three events in which the Plan was presented to the community. Over sixty residents and Councilman Stewart Rodman attended the third and final presentation to the Island. The Plan was extremely well received.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan includes a future land use map for the Island, known as a *Sector Map*. The Sector Map is designed to preserve as much of the Island's undeveloped land as possible. The Sector Map calls for the establishment of a *Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)* program and designates appropriate sending and receiving areas. A TDR program will allow the County to shift density into desired growth sectors without devaluing personal land rights. The Sector Map is also used to designate both Island and neighborhood centers.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the creation of an Island-specific *Form Based Code (FBC)*. The *Form Based Code* contains a zoning map for the Island known as a *Regulating Plan*. The Regulating Plan zones significant portions of the Island as D1 Natural or D2 Rural. This assures that these lands will remain undeveloped or come to reflect a rural character. Conversely, the new Code ensures that intense development and activity will occur at the Cooper River landing (zoned D3, D4, and D5 on the Regulating Plan). This area encompasses two existing ferry terminals (Freeport Marina, Melrose Landing) as well as the massive Webb tract PUD. The Webb tract PUD has a pre-existing agreement with the County that permits nearly 900 units to be built on the site. Representatives for the Webb tract determined that they would prefer to build "by right" under the new Code and eventually "sunset" their existing PUD agreement. This area is envisioned as the primary portal or gateway to the Island.

A secondary portal or gateway is anticipated at the south end of the Island in the area surrounding the County ferry landing and the Jolly Shores retreat facility. Additionally, two areas of the Island are designated as Public District (PD). The Public District is identical to the D4 district, only the zoning is designed to promote existing and future civic sites.

The Comprehensive Plan promotes the consolidation of Island infrastructure and services such as water & sewer, waste & recyclables, and transit & transportation. This allows for economies of scale that currently do not exist. For example, three ferry operators provide service to the Island, yet service within the CP District is limited and at times unreliable. This negatively impacts both locals and tourists. The Plan calls for the establishment of a Ferry Operating Plan to provide for the full development of the Island, including intermodal mass transit, public barge service, and school ferry service.

Until recently, the Island's two water and sewer plants were controlled by private developments. Service was not available in the Community Preservation District. This has negatively impacted resident's quality of life and hindered the Island's ability to thrive economically. The same can be said about the Island's dirt roadways. The majority of roads within the CP District are not deeded to a government entity. Though the County maintains the roadways via prescriptive easement, they are technically unclaimed pathways that run across private property. The result is twofold. On one hand the Island benefits from having such a uniquely narrow, canopied, and character defining road network. On the other hand, the lack of "right of way" hinders efforts to surface specific roadways (a fire, safety, and welfare issue), as well as the ability to run infrastructure across the Island. The Plan thoroughly examines all of these issues.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that Daufuskie Island is a *National Historic District*. The promotion of historic preservation and heritage industries will affirm the continuity and evolution of Island society, increase cultural tourism, and address issues of housing. Heritage industries include farming, building arts, and artisan colonies. Historic buildings will be used to facilitate these industries, or re-used as residential alternatives. Such practice is sustainable, economically beneficial, and critical to Island tourism. The County can increase funding opportunities by becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG)¹ and participating in efforts to establish a Gullah-Geechee cultural/heritage corridor. Such funding will allow for the establishment of an Island website, the expansion of cultural festivals such as Daufuskie Day, and the creation of a Tourism and Wayfinding plan.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes two organizations to implement these documents. The Daufuskie Island Community Leadership Committee (DILC) serves as the primary organization with regard to implementing the Plan, specifically issues of policy. This organization provides Daufuskie Island with a quasi government and future accountability. The Sustainable Planning Team (SPT) is the design review committee created to oversee implementation of the Form Based Code. The Committee is there to address the "exception to the rule" as much as it is to regulate development guidelines.

¹ The Certified Local Government (CLG) program in South Carolina promotes community preservation planning and heritage education through a partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and National Park Service that facilitates funding, technical assistance, and training. Through local preservation planning, CLGs are better prepared to manage future growth and encourage economic development while protecting the historic and prehistoric resources that are significant to their community, to the state and to the nation.