

CHAPTER SEVEN: LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains information on existing land uses and recommendations for future land use in the City of Beaufort. Land use planning information from the previous Comprehensive Plan is still relevant and should be referred to when reviewing this update.

Recommendations about future land use are derived from the data compiled in the elements of this plan as well as from the goals and policies worked out with the help of the Comprehensive Plan Committee following public input from Public Workshops. Planning assumptions, which form the basis to develop future land use growth concepts, are built on an analysis of existing and projected data provided from various sources. Five sections are presented within this chapter including:

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS: Inventory and analysis provides identification of existing land use and physical conditions in the City. The Existing Land Use map for Beaufort at the end of this section is a graphic representation of these data.

OPPORTUNITIES: Opportunities identify the conditions present within the City that provide distinct advantages for future planned growth and development. Important among these opportunities is the issue of annexation. Though this plan is not intended to direct the City towards making annexation decisions, some recommendations are made as to potential areas that might be annexed and land uses for those areas.

CONSTRAINTS: Constraints identify the conditions present within the City that are distinct disadvantages for future growth.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS: Assumptions for land use concepts and recommendations are build upon past, current, and future trends of land use as derived from the analysis of physical and socioeconomic conditions and goals and policies.

FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPTS: Based on opportunities, constraints and planning assumptions, recommendations are made for the future development of the City. Future Land Use maps included at the end of this section illustrate a twenty year concept diagram for Beaufort, a twenty year concept diagram for areas adjacent to the City, and a five year land use plan with parcel level land use recommendations.

A description of specific policies for the five-year land use plan follows the description of future land use concepts. This section provides preliminary density levels for residential land uses,

describes the mixed-use concept in the plan, identifies intentions for the business park/industry land use classification and the parks and open space classification.

EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

The intent of this portion of the comprehensive land use plan update is to guide the development of the City of Beaufort based on an understanding of the City's current development status and development trends. A key element in the planning process is developing an up-to-date inventory of existing land use and proposed new development. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, there are approximately 12.1 square miles of land and water within the city limits of Beaufort, and approximately 3,427 acres of total land area. The following section explains the process of inventorying the uses of the City's land area, defines the land use classification system, and describes changes to the existing land use following completion of the previous plan. The result to these analyses is the Existing Land Use map.

Method of Recording Land Use

Identification and location of existing land use within the City of Beaufort was assisted by existing land use map records from the previous City of Beaufort Land Use Plan and other plans, a review of aerial photography available for Beaufort, and field surveys performed in the Winter and Spring of 1997-98. Field surveys were conducted throughout the City, particularly in areas which are experiencing most of the new development.

Land Use Classification

The land use classifications listed below are similar to the descriptions in the previous comprehensive plan. To provide clarity in the land uses and descriptions, the previous "Public Schools /Building" classification has been combined with "Quasi-Public Building/Institutions/Churches" classification into one "Institutional" classification. This reduces the number of land use classifications from eleven to ten.

Descriptions of the classifications are as follows:

1.) Single Family Residential Land Use

Single family residential land uses include single family homes or estates occupying individual tracts of land usually smaller than 2 acres.

2.) Duplex/Mobile Home Land Use

The duplex/mobile home classification indicates more dense housing arrangements including duplex, triplex, and quadruplex dwelling units, organized individually or in

groups on individual lots or in building complexes as well as clusters of mobile homes.

3.) Multi-Family Land Use

The multi-family classification includes individual apartment buildings and most public housing projects.

4.) Commercial Land Use

Commercial uses include retail or strip malls, auto related businesses, funeral homes, and restaurants. The form and appearance of commercial use differs greatly according to the nature of the neighborhood and/or district.

5.) Office and Professional Land Uses

The office/professional classification includes, finance, insurance, real estate and medical offices.

6.) Industrial Land Use

The industrial classification includes manufacturing, storage and warehousing, technology related manufacturing with office, processing operators, assembly plants, and extraction.

7.) Transportation/Communications/Utilities

This classification includes airports, water and sewer facilities, power stations, substations, water storage tanks, radio and television stations, limited access highways, railroad lines, cellular towers and utility corridors.

8.) Institutional

This classification includes churches and cemeteries, lodges, hospitals, clubs and community service buildings, land owned by local government for the provision of services including schools, fire stations, police stations, city hall, the County courthouse and maintenance facilities.

9.) Parks/Open Space

Parks/open space includes all public parks, recreational facilities, government owned open space, golf courses and reservations. Properties identified as parks/open space may be owned by a non-profit entity or government owned at the local, county, state or federal level.

10.) Undeveloped

The undeveloped land classification, for an urban area such as the City of Beaufort, is used to indicate land that may be suitable for development which is not currently

developed or used in an active manner. It is assumed that with the continuing influence of growth in the area, these land areas will be developed and should therefore be planned for suitable development in the future.

Table 40: City of Beaufort Existing Land Use

Land Use	Number of Parcels	Total Area (Acres)	Percentage of Total Area	Average Area per Parcel
Single Family Residential	3,765	1447.07	46.55%	.38
Duplex/Mobile Home Res.	13	31.70	1.01%	2.44
Multi-Family Residential	37	86.61	2.79%	2.34
General Commercial	404	344.08	11.07%	.85
Office/Professional	131	49.68	1.60%	.38
Industrial	19	13.97	0.45%	.74
TCU	12	97.92	3.15%	8.16
Institutional	88	205.82	6.62%	2.34
Park/Recreation/Open Space	61	86.29	2.78%	1.41
Undeveloped Land	202	745.21	23.97%	3.69
Totals	4,732	3108.35	100%	.65

Table 40 displays the current land use dispersal according to numbers of developable land parcels and acreages. It is immediately apparent that land in Beaufort is largely occupied with residential uses as approximately 50 percent of the City’s total acreage and nearly 65 percent of developed acreage is occupied by single family or multi-family housing. This residential development is relatively dense by current standards, as the average parcel size for a single family home is 0.38 acres. There is a considerable amount of undeveloped land within the City’s limits. Undeveloped land includes larger tracts of land near the limits of the City as well as what could be considered as infill lots in developed commercial and residential areas. The average commercial property size of 0.85 acres reflects the mixture of small-parcel commercial properties and those occupying large parcels within the City. The separation of office and professional commercial land uses from general commercial is intended to distinguish those commercial uses that are less intense in nature. In Beaufort, professional offices exist in the form of many small office buildings and converted housing units which occupy lots of an average size of 0.38 acres, the same as the average for a single family home in the City. Public lands such as government buildings and parks, and institutional properties such as churches occupy a considerable amount of City property. Beaufort’s numerous museums, cemeteries, cultural sites and government facilities are larger in size than many private land uses.

Changes in Land Use

An approximate comparison of land use over time is possible due to the land use inventories recorded in past land use plans for the City. These comparisons are approximations, however, as methods and classifications for land use inventory have differed from one plan to the next.

Table 41 records the trend of land use change by category for the time period 1989 to 1998. Trends that seem apparent from this comparison are a steady increase in land used for single family residential property, a dramatic increase in the amount of land used for commercial property, and a decrease in the amount of land used for industrial purposes. These trends follow common sense observations of the past ten years in Beaufort which has seen steady housing growth, increased commercial activity occupying larger land parcels, and a general decline in light industry and manufacturing activities. Other changes apparent in the table do not necessarily agree with other analyses, such as a decline in multi-family housing land use, a decline in office/professional land use, and an increase in the acreage of undeveloped land. These apparent trends may be affected by differences in land use classification and surveying or other factors such as annexation in the past.

Table 41: Historical Comparison of Land Use Division in the City of Beaufort

Land Use	1977 Acres	1989 Acres	1998 Acres	Percent Change: 1989 - 1998
Single Family Residential	941	1,127	1447	28%
Multi-Family Residential	54	145	118	-17%
General Commercial	96	137	344	+152%
Office/Professional	*	54	50	-8%
Industrial	4	18	14	-22%
Undeveloped Land (not marsh or water)	457	521	745	+43%

OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities identify the conditions present within the City that provide distinct advantages for future growth. Included among these opportunities is the potential for annexation of County areas into the City.

1. Transportation Network

The transportation network in Beaufort presents opportunities as well as problems. The extensive old grid system of streets in Beaufort's downtown is an effective system for distributing transportation across portions of the City. The further development of the transportation network to be more interconnected and to involve additional modes of transportation will enhance the quality of Beaufort's transportation facilities and allow the City to function more efficiently.

2. Vacant Land/Undeveloped Land

Though the City is densely developed overall, there remain vacant and undeveloped parcels of land within the City's limits and in adjacent areas. The benefit of this remaining undeveloped land is twofold. Firstly, undeveloped land offers the opportunity to preserve open spaces in the City for parks and recreation. Secondly, undeveloped land offers the opportunity to encourage needed types of development in the City. The future land use plan makes recommendations to both ends.

3. Community Identity and Image

The City of Beaufort has a strong sense of identity based on a long history of Beaufortonians who have been committed to the City and its future. Beaufort's residents today identify with established neighborhoods and have a general pride and appreciation for their City. As the image of Beaufort becomes more widely recognized, the residents of Beaufort have an opportunity to see their City grow as well as a responsibility to ensure that growth does not damage the quality of the culture and history they have inherited.

4. Topography and Landscape

Beaufort's topography and landscape have been dominant forces shaping the development of the City in the past. Though constraining in terms of the existence of vast wetlands and marshes within the City's limits, this rich natural landscape provides an environment that is one of Beaufort's chief assets.

5. Location

The City of Beaufort is located in the heart of Beaufort County, one of the fastest developing counties in South Carolina. The numerous assets of this location on the South Carolina coast continue to make Beaufort a desirable place to live and visit.

6. Parks, Open Space and Natural Resources

There is a rich and varied supply of natural resources and open spaces in Beaufort, due largely to its marshes and the Beaufort River. These create the opportunity for numerous recreation and leisure activities. Additionally, there are several well-developed parks in the City to serve the needs of residents.

7. Leadership and Organization

There are a variety of strong organizations with an interest in the planning of the City of Beaufort. Many of those organizations have been represented through the Beaufort Comprehensive Plan Committee. The establishment of a unified vision for Beaufort by this committee should be the foundation for future development decisions. The implementation of recommendations in this plan can be realized through the leadership provided within the City, a permanent body of citizens serving as a planning commission for the City, and from regulations established in the zoning process and other regulatory processes.

8. Architectural and Historical Fabric

There is an extremely rich architectural and historical fabric in the City of Beaufort which is nationally recognized. The various organizations working to promote and protect Beaufort's historic and architectural assets are actively working with the City to ensure that these assets are preserved and enhanced into the future.

9. The Beaufort River

As a part of the Intracoastal Waterway, the Beaufort River serves both as a defining geographical feature in Beaufort and a unique connection to the rest of the Eastern Seaboard.

10. Quality of Life

The quality of life for any community is difficult to define and everyone asked would have a different opinion. Beaufort has many of the qualities people often think of when they think of "Quality of Life", such as a beautiful natural environment, a strong link with history and a well-

developed yet relatively uncongested small-town urban environment. The preservation of that atmosphere should be one of the primary goals used to guide development of the City in the future.

11. Annexation

The finite limit of developable land within Beaufort's current city limits and the limited capacity of Beaufort to continue to grow are two strong arguments for the consideration of annexation. Another major factor in this consideration is the continuing urbanization of Beaufort County and, specifically, of areas adjacent to Beaufort's city limits. In addition to the annexation of existing "donut holes" within the sphere of Beaufort's city limits, reasonable possibilities for annexation exist in three locations:

Lady's Island:

Along the Highway 21 corridor beyond Woods Bridge on Lady's Island is an increasingly urbanized community of commercial, residential and institutional land uses.

If not already, this area may soon demand services above the level to which the County is able to efficiently provide. The City may consider annexation of parcels of land along Highway 21 and radiating out from the intersection with Lady's Island Drive and Sam's Point Road as a means to add another node to the City's future land use scheme.

Highway 170 West:

The Cross Creek Shopping Center, currently the westernmost extent of the City's limits, is the core of a regional commercial node in the future land use scheme. Annexation in this area could be considered in terms of adding to the capacity of this node and of adding other land uses to the node.

MCAS Beaufort area:

The potential for annexation of areas along Highway 21 extending north from the City and of the MCAS Beaufort base itself may hold benefits for the City, but should be carefully considered in terms of compatible land uses with the Air Station's operations. The City should recognize all existing policies concerning airport noise and safety zones, and should limit land uses to the lowest intensities within these areas. While annexation of the MCAS Beaufort area may increase the size and population of the City, there should be emphasis placed on the existing City of Beaufort area as an ideal place for base families to live.

General land use recommendations for areas adjacent to the City of Beaufort are indicated in the map entitled "Future Land Use Concept - Adjacent Areas 1998-2018" found at the end of this section. These general and conceptual recommendations should be specified in the event of

annexation to be compatible with the land use plans of both the City and the County.

The “Future Land Use Concept” map showing areas adjacent to the City of Beaufort should not be considered as presenting all of the land that the City may consider annexing or may annex in the next 20 years. The Future Land Use Concept map shows those areas with the highest probability of being annexed in the short term due to their relative proximity to the existing city limits. As annexation occurs, more outlying areas will become contiguous and may be considered for annexation. The City will consider petitions for annexation on a case by case basis, with priority consideration given to lands considered urban or urbanizing. These lands include, but are not limited to, the Burton area, Lady’s Island and the smaller adjoining islands, and portions of St. Helena Island.

CONSTRAINTS

Constraints identify the conditions present within the City that are distinct disadvantages for, or hindrances to, future growth and development.

1. Environmental Sensitivity:

The sensitive environment of waterways, marshes and estuaries in the Beaufort area has coexisted with the urban development of Beaufort for over a hundred years. Despite this fact, urban development in Beaufort and surrounding areas has impacted these sensitive environments in the past and can have a detrimental effect in the future if proper efforts are not undertaken for environmental protection.

2. Limited Undeveloped Land:

Due to the island-like geography of Beaufort, there is limited land which is developable within the City's limits. This factor poses a constraint to new development and provides extra incentive to redevelop some of the City's currently developed areas rather than seeking undeveloped land.

3. Transportation Limitations:

There are a very limited number of access points to the City of Beaufort which contributes to a level of congestion on certain roads which is undesirable and even damaging to the City. The capacities of these few major corridors into and through the City have a direct impact on the levels to which the City can continue to grow and develop and maintain an efficient transportation system.

4. Economic Sector Deficiencies:

Beaufort currently lacks jobs in sectors which are needed to attract and retain young families and professionals. Attraction of industries in the computer technology and telecommunications fields, for example, has the potential to add high wage jobs to the economy. Future development will require these new types of jobs to support the population.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions include the past, current, and future trends of land use that have been derived from analysis of physical and socioeconomic conditions as well as the public participation process and development of goals and policies.

1. Historic and Environmental Preservation

The cultural/historic and environmental resources of Beaufort are of primary importance and consideration. Therefore, it is recognized that the concepts, goals, policies and strategies for future land use in Beaufort should all serve to bolster historic and environmental resource preservation.

2. Steady Residential Growth

Population projections estimate that Beaufort will increase by less than 50 percent of its current estimated population in the next twenty years. Though this is not a dramatic increase, it may have a dramatic effect on the demand for housing due to the level of development that currently exists in Beaufort. Likely needs in the future include housing developments of higher density, housing options for an aging population, and affordable housing development and multi-family housing options for young families and families of military service personnel.

3. Growth of New Industries

Beaufort's economy should experience increased diversification in the future due to changes in the national economy and the recruitment efforts of City and County officials. The future attraction of industries such as the technology and communications industries, research and development activities associated with the area's military industry, and medical professionals and services should create a demand for land and facilities to support such activities.

4. Moderate Commercial Growth

The growth in the retail sector is closely tied to the City's population growth and transportation network. Population trends towards high growth will likely improve commercial development opportunities. The continued development of the tourism and leisure recreation industry associated with the area's natural and historic resources may also lead to increased commercial activity.

The projected steady levels of population growth in Beaufort and the projected improvements of transportation linkages with the rest of Beaufort County will equate to demand for additional commercial facilities in the future. A large portion of this demand, however, could be met through the redevelopment of existing commercial areas.

5. Strategic Open Space Growth

The City of Beaufort has a considerable share of public land including open spaces. Thus, the consideration of adding parks or urban open spaces must be a balance between the needs and opportunities to increase open space and the cost to the City of doing so. Open space preservation that is most justified is that which occurs in connection with the City's Greenways plan and/or offers an opportunity to preserve land adjacent to marshlands with sensitive environmental conditions and attractive views.

6. Moderate Institutional Growth

Beaufort has been a center for institutional land use in the County and has increased its level of institutional land use over the past decades. The levels of past development make it unlikely that there will be great levels of need for institutional land in the future, although the City of Beaufort has current space needs. A preferable solution for meeting institutional space needs in the future would involve the use or adaptive reuse of existing and historic buildings in Beaufort.

FUTURE LAND USE CONCEPTS

This section summarizes recommendations for future land use development and transportation improvements based on the planning assumptions, goals and policies, and physical and socioeconomic condition analysis. The recommendations are intended to form a framework to be used as a guide for decision-making concerning future land use in Beaufort for the next 20 years. Graphic depictions of these recommendations are found at the end of this section in the form of a twenty-year land use concept diagram and a five-year land use plan.

These future land use concepts were developed and presented to the Beaufort Comprehensive Plan Committee and to the general public at a land use Public Workshop for review and discussion. The various aspects of the concept are derived from analysis of pertinent data and development of goals, policies and strategies through Public Workshops and Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings.

Future Land Use Concepts:

1. Nodes of Development Concentration

The future land use concept for Beaufort identifies “nodes” of concentration of development which are interconnected by the transportation system of streets and greenways. These nodes are characterized by a relatively high intensity of land uses involving commercial and mixed-use commercial and residential communities. Downtown Beaufort and the surrounding historic district comprise the original node in the City’s development. Additional nodes include a mixed-use commercial and residential node around the general area of the intersection of Highways 170 and 21 to the west of downtown, an office and medical services node along Ribaut Road near the Beaufort Medical Center, and a regional commercial node at the western extent of the City’s limits along Highway 170.

2. Neighborhood Preservation

Beaufort’s many established neighborhoods should be preserved as residential communities with an environment that is conducive to families. These neighborhoods should be protected from encroachment of undesirable land uses and should be buffered at their edges with the use of transitional land uses. Neighborhood parks and a greenway system will enhance existing neighborhoods and better connect them to other parts of the City.

3. Commercial Redevelopment and Revitalization

The redevelopment of commercial areas in the City is intended both to revitalize existing

commercial areas and to create areas with a new dynamic of mixed-use commercial activity. Commercial redevelopment in the Boundary Street area, for example, will be focused on revitalizing a community commercial area of businesses capable of serving adjacent residential communities. Commercial redevelopment in the New Village Center area of the intersection of Highways 170 and 21 is intended to more resemble a traditional downtown with the inclusion of housing and commercial and a less highway-oriented commercial type.

4. Pedestrian Circulation System

The Palmetto Greenway plan serves as a guideline for the development of a greenway system in the City. The ability of such a pedestrian and cyclist oriented transportation system to increase connectivity among the different parts of the City is a key concept of the plan. In the future, the Palmetto Greenway system should be augmented by additional parks and open spaces that are linked, as well as a major greenway corridor along the rail corridor that reaches to the Town of Port Royal.

5. Parks and Open Space Provision

The future land use concept includes additional community and neighborhood parks which are linked together by the greenway system. In addition to opportunities to secure individual parks, there are opportunities to preserve open space for buffering purposes such as along the east side of Ribaut Road near the Town of Port Royal. Where possible, open space is designated along a waterfront or adjacent to a wetland for preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and vistas. Finally, some of the larger remaining undeveloped areas that are located with marsh frontages are conserved as very low density development through a conservation residential land use classification. This classification allows for some very low density development, but is intended to preserve areas of land which are candidates for development of a large park or environmentally focused recreation center for the City.

6. New Village Center: Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential

A mixed-use commercial/residential area is recommended within the New Village Center, in the area surrounding the intersection of Highways 170 and 21, which allows for flexible residential and commercial development. Flexible zoning would also have to be adopted to allow for the broad mix of uses associated with "Mainstreet" types of development. Zoning should allow for upper level residential conversions, second story residences, lofts, row houses, reduced setbacks and on-street parking. The emphasis on development in this area is to allow for a variety of commercial and service oriented businesses that are designed to be pedestrian friendly. Rear service areas and flexible parking requirements are necessary in this type of area. Reduced off-street parking requirements are also encouraged.

7. Business Park Development

The designation of considerable area for campus-style business park development is a key issue in the future land use concept. This area, along Highway 170 in the western portion of the City, should offer the type of business and industry facilities sought after by contemporary industries such as technology firms and research and development. An asset to the campus style business park is that it does not rely on road frontage in the same manner as highway commercial, thus allowing for the frontage of Highway 170 to be preserved from typical corridor development. A landscaped corridor along Highway 170 would offer an extension of the greenway system to the western extremity of the City.

8. Institutional District

The basic formation of an institutional district in the downtown historic district has long been established by existing churches and government buildings. This area could be further enhanced with streetscape improvements to emphasize this area as the civic center of the City.

9. Medical Office Center

The presence of Beaufort Memorial Hospital has attracted the development of numerous medical offices along the Ribaut Road corridor extending south from the hospital. This area should be further defined as a focal area for medical offices and medical service oriented businesses, particularly as these land uses are more compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods than are more intense commercial land uses.

10. Gateway Improvements

Gateway visual improvements are recommended for the major entry and exit points along vehicular routes into the City and to different areas of the City. The purpose of these improvements is to enhance the City's identity through improvements such as lighting, landscape planting, and signage. Partnerships with community service organizations and local businesses have proven to be a successful tool for implementation of this concept. Gateway visual improvements are recommended at the Highway 170 City limits, the Highway 21 City limits, and entrances to the City's downtown historic district.

Specific Future Land Use Policies:

Some specific policies are involved with the five-year future land use plan for the City of Beaufort. Whereas the future land use concepts deal with the City at a more general level and for a longer range time period, these recommendations and policies for the five-year land use plan give specific guidance as to how the future land use concepts may begin to take shape in the immediate future.

1. Residential Densities:

A key issue in the development of a future land use plan is the specification of density levels for residential land use. The existing land use analysis for Beaufort has shown a wide variety of residential densities in the City, although predominately at an urban scale. Current densities in the downtown historic district, for example, are as high as 10 units per acre for single family houses. Other City neighborhoods have housing densities in a range from 1 to 4 units per acre. Only areas considered to be environmentally sensitive, such as certain island and waterfront areas, are specified as Conservation Residential and given lower density levels than currently existing densities in the City. For Beaufort’s future land use, there are four defined density levels of residential land use with associated numeric density recommendations:

Low Density Residential: 0 to 4 units per acre.

Medium Density Residential: 0 to 10 units per acre.

High Density Residential: 0 to 14 units per acre.

Conservation Residential: 0 to .33 units per acre.

2. Mixed-use Nodes:

Indications of commercial land use in certain areas of the future land use map are overlaid with emphasis on mixed-use commercial/residential development. This recommendation applies primarily to the commercial node surrounding the intersection of Highways 21 and 170, and suggests that commercial development in this area should begin to abandon the highway commercial model and move towards a “mainstreet” mixed-use node, including compatible commercial and residential uses in the same development. Mixed-use land use patterns are also recommended as appropriate in the Downtown Beaufort Historic District. Much of the Historic District has a general mixed-use nature, as areas of small-scaled commercial land use are directly adjacent to moderate density residential areas. In addition to such adjacencies of land uses in the district as a whole, certain areas, such as Bay Street and the Charles Street corridor, are also

appropriate as mixed-use, residential and commercial corridors or nodes.

3. Business Park/Industry

The Business Park/Industry classification is not intended to produce a traditional industrial area. Rather, the appropriate development in this area is in the form of campus-style business parks of moderate density, which feature office uses and light intensity warehousing and manufacturing.

4. Parks and Open Space

Parcels identified as parks and open space in the five year future land use plan are those which are currently undeveloped land and/or which either have strong linkages with the proposed greenway plan or which are strategically located to be open spaces next to wetlands or marshes. The suggestion of the plan is that the City both take measures to prevent inappropriate development of these areas and attempt to secure these areas in some fashion as permanent open space.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR FUTURE LAND USE

CITY OF BEAUFORT LAND USE

GOAL 1: Utilize appropriate planning procedures and innovative planning tools to guide growth, development and redevelopment.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

1.A: Provide appropriate development regulations that protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the City of Beaufort.

1.B: Provide clarity, efficiency, equity, and consistency in City department policies and procedures relating to land development review.

Reexamine the procedures of the Board of Architectural Review and the Zoning Board of Appeals to ensure the efficient and equitable function of both.

1.C: Actively seek the participation of residents in developing land use planning tools, revising procedures, and for providing sufficient notification of important public meetings.

Consider the development of a City of Beaufort Planning Commission that is separate from the Beaufort County Planning Commission, but that cooperates with Beaufort County and other municipalities.

Encourage the development of, and support the activities of, strong neighborhood associations that represent each neighborhood community in the City of Beaufort.

1.D: Establish criteria for annexation that consider land use compatibility with adjacent uses, compatibility with adjacent areas outside of City limits, community facilities demand and supply, contiguity of land parcels including the elimination of "out-parcels" and "islands," irregularities in City boundaries and consistency with the goals and policies of the city's land use plan.

Specific focus should be placed on annexation of the "islands" or "donut holes" within the western area of the City's limits in order to give a uniform and consistent City boundary for purposes of planning and service provision.

1.E: Update and strictly enforce building & zoning codes to protect and preserve the quality of life within the City.

Zoning and building codes should be examined in light of the recommendations of this comprehensive land use plan.

1.F: Coordinate with Beaufort County on decisions relating to land use and land development.

The Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan and Beaufort County Planning Department should be used as information and policy sources for decisions related to major new development in the city.

GOAL 2: Promote orderly and appropriate growth, development and redevelopment in the City of Beaufort.

Promote orderly growth and development based on physical, social, and economic needs, environmental considerations and the ability of the City's tax base and public facilities and services to support all growth and development.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

2.A: Ensure that all Future Development in the City of Beaufort is Environmentally Sensitive.

Enforce landscape guidelines, tree ordinances, and other mechanisms to protect natural features within the urban areas.

Restrict certain land uses, such as those which heavily involve pollutant materials or contribute significant stormwater runoff, in areas adjacent to water resources or marshes.

2.B: Protect existing stable land uses from encroaching incompatible uses when making land development decisions.

Ensure that historic residential areas do not absorb commercial or other uses to the extent that the character of the neighborhood is compromised.

2.C: Promote compact rather than sprawled and scattered development to maximize use of existing and programmed public facilities, maximize preservation of open space, minimize public service costs, and reduce negative environmental impacts.

Seek to encourage development and redevelopment in nodes of activity within the City as indicated in the future land use concept. These areas which are already in the City limits are the preferred location for commercial activity and mixed-use community development.

Consider the addition of a cluster development option to the City's subdivision regulations that will encourage cluster development and preservation of open spaces.

Revise the City's Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance to require that a minimum of 25

percent of any PUD site be dedicated as landscaped open space for passive or active recreational use.

Protect remaining areas of open land from sprawling development by encouraging compact housing subdivisions and preservation of open space.

Protect developable land that is adjacent to wetland or marsh areas through existing regulations and site plan reviews. Strongly encourage developers to plan for publicly accessible open spaces in such areas.

2.D: Maintain and expand the City's tax base by designating specific areas for non-residential private development.

In addition to encouraging additional non-residential development in currently active commerce areas, the City should designate and promote land for development into business park-type areas for the attraction of new industries.

2.E: Establish criteria for implementing a redevelopment policy within the City.

General standards should be established for redevelopment of various land uses within the city. Further standards should be established for each land use type and should be coordinated by the Board of Architectural Review when appropriate.

Evaluate redevelopment proposals based on the impacts to adjacent land uses and service delivery.

2.F: Promote an attractive urban environment.

Maintain a sufficient staff to monitor development in the City and enforce design guidelines.

Development and redevelopment proposals should be judged for their contribution to urban environment of Beaufort and should meet certain guidelines for quality and compatibility with the City's unique character.

GOAL 3: Preserve and improve residential neighborhoods.

Maximize the opportunity for a wide range of residential living arrangements to serve the varying housing needs of Beaufort's existing and future population while encouraging the preservation and rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods within the City.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

3.A: Protect and preserve established neighborhoods including those of historical significance to

the City.

Involve neighborhood associations in land use decisions concerning their neighborhood.

3.B: Support developments offering a mix of residential types and diversities.

Mixed-use development should be encouraged to include housing as a component. It is desirable for higher density housing to exist in concordance with some types of commercial and office activities.

3.C: Ensure that higher density housing is located close to major thoroughfares, employment centers, shopping facilities, and other activity centers.

Encourage developers of multi-family housing to design for easy pedestrian access to commercial facilities and employment areas.

3.D: Encourage medium or high density residential development to serve as a buffer between nonresidential nodes and surrounding single family detached neighborhoods.

3.E: Create strategies that will encourage the appropriate development of new housing arrangements and will respond to the issue of accessory uses.

Develop a strategic plan to address the issue of accessory uses on residential properties, such as accessory dwelling units and home offices.

Allow for residential uses in downtown Beaufort in order to meet a demand for such housing and to bolster the economy of downtown beyond the focus on tourism. Consider residential uses, such as apartments, on the second story of downtown retail establishments.

GOAL 4: Provide for the development of adequate commercial facilities on both citywide and neighborhood levels.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

4.A: Encourage reuse and revitalization of obsolete commercial facilities.

Redevelopment of commercial areas into new commercial, business park or mixed-use commercial and residential developments should be encouraged.

Encourage redevelopment by promoting a high level of flexibility in ordinances that relate to the redevelopment of property.

4.B: Wherever possible, promote compact and planned rather than strip commercial development.

Commercial nodes should be established in the City and recognized as the first choice location for commercial development and redevelopment.

4.C: Restrict further commercial strip development on major streets beyond existing developed and zoned areas. Within existing strip commercial areas, allow for the in-filling of compatible commercial uses.

Strip commercial development along Boundary Street, Ribaut Road, and Robert Smalls Parkway should be limited to its existing extents and further commercial development directed into commercial nodes at points along these corridors. Undeveloped land along these corridors should be promoted for development consistent with the future land use plan and should include site design and landscaping features that are pedestrian and community friendly.

Major corridor areas that have not already been heavily developed with commercial land uses should be developed according to the future land use plan and related corridor plans.

4.D: Promote appropriate mixed-use commercial development and redevelopment.

Commercial and residential land uses should be allowed to exist on the same site within appropriately designed mixed-use development plans for nodes identified as amenable to mixed-use development in the future land use plan.

4.E: Provide safe and adequate pedestrian and bicycle access from nearby areas to commercial and other activity centers.

Land use decisions should be linked with transportation decisions and investments in order to ensure that compatible land uses which are located adjacent to each other are easily accessible with multiple modes of transportation.

4.F: Locate neighborhood serving commercial uses in areas convenient to existing and future residential development.

In areas such as Boundary Street near the Bellamy Curve and Carteret Street south of the University, neighborhood or community-oriented commercial services should be encouraged. These areas, and other commercial areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods of moderate density, should receive exceptions to parking and site design requirements as appropriate to encourage pedestrian activity.

GOAL 5: Retain existing office and professional business areas while providing for the development of suitable areas for business and professional office growth and expansion.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

5.A: Encourage retail and office uses to locate in designated areas well served by public infrastructure.

Prevent commercial development in areas that will create additional through traffic in residential neighborhoods.

5.B: Encourage commercial and office developments to be designed so that they are compatible with surrounding land uses.

Work with developers to ensure that buildings and sites are appropriately designed and are separated from residential neighborhoods with buffering or step-downs in use and intensity.

A campus approach to business parks, which is compatible with adjacent commercial and residential land uses, should be encouraged for future business development areas.

5.D: Encourage parking lot site plans that provide adequate areas for landscaping.

Enforce current site landscape design guidelines and ordinances.

Encourage the use of pervious paving surfaces for parking where appropriate.

5.E: Locate office development near commercial activities and higher density residential areas.

5.F: Where conversion of a property in a transitional area from residential use to a more intense use is inevitable, preference should be given to office/professional use of the property to minimize impacts on adjacent residential properties.

Determine the allowable amount of office use within the historic district.

Encourage employees in historic district offices to use shared parking facilities.

GOAL 6: Provide for the adequate provision of public and semi-public facilities and services to meet the needs of Beaufort's population, and control the type, locations, and timing of future development.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES:

6.A: Provide centralized locations for municipal buildings and facilities.

Establish the institutional district in downtown Beaufort as the primary and preferred location for municipal buildings and facilities.

Adapt the use of older buildings in or near the institutional district such as the Carnegie building and the old jail to City office use.

6.B: Provide sites for schools and other government facilities in proper relationship to existing and future residential development.

Encourage the location of new schools in areas where it is possible for students to walk to school via greenways and sidewalks.

Develop a plan for the future expansion of the USCB campus in the areas of Carteret and Boundary Streets near the Bellamy Curve. Encourage USCB to develop as a vibrant community of faculty and students who live, study and work in the City of Beaufort.

6.C: Ensure that government and institutional facilities are designed with adequate landscaping, parking, and open space.