



# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **‘Beaufort Code’ to simplify zoning, permitting and economic development in the City**

A new development ordinance called the Beaufort Code will be under public review through late spring. The project updates the City’s Unified Development Ordinance and is designed to simplify traditional zoning, streamline the permitting process and promote economic development.

“We want to make it a lot easier and simpler to understand ‘zoning’ in the City of Beaufort, and to streamline the whole permitting process,” Beaufort City Manager Bill Prokop said. “The Beaufort Code will give staff more flexibility to work with developers to meet the intent of the Civic Master Plan.”

Beaufort began updating its zoning regulations in late November to promote walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods guided by the city's civic master plan. A series of technical reviews and community meetings are scheduled through next spring.

The review committee is led by Bill Harris, an architect with Allison Ramsey Architects and a member of the Metropolitan Planning Commission. The committee includes City Councilmen George O’Kelley and Phil Cromer along with members of several city boards and commissions.

“We’ve been working on these revisions for quite some time, along with the Town of Port Royal and Beaufort County. It’s a lot of work, but the result will be worth it for our citizens, our business community and developers,” Prokop said.

City planners listed key goals of the Beaufort Code:

- It is easy to read, understand and use by the public
- Streamlines the development review process
- Makes the outcome of the development process more predictable

- Preserves historic, natural and cultural resources while promoting appropriate new development
- Encourages change as envisioned by the Civic Master Plan
- Results in appropriate infill in existing developed neighborhoods
- Promotes economic development
- Supports public capital infrastructure investments that have been made and will be made
- Allows opportunities for diverse housing types
- Encourages walkable urban places.

In addition, this code update will ensure the City’s ordinance is compatible with the new, similar form-based ordinances that have recently been adopted by Beaufort County and the Town of Port Royal, said Libby Anderson, planning director for the City of Beaufort. This coordinated form-based development code process is one of the first in the country, and is something that the municipalities have been working on since 2010.

The new Beaufort Code won’t eliminate the Historic Review Board, which examines major exterior changes to structures within the city’s National Historic Landmark District.

The ordinance addresses development based on the surrounding context, from rural areas to neighborhoods to urban corridors such as Boundary Street. There are still “use requirements” that are applied based on a property’s zoning district. A common misperception is that form-based codes address only how properties look and fit in on the outside, regardless of what goes on inside, and that’s not true, Anderson said.

For more information and a list of upcoming public meetings about the new ordinance, visit [www.cityofbeaufort.org/beaufort-code](http://www.cityofbeaufort.org/beaufort-code).

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