

BEAUFORT 2030

The Future We Create
Insights & Recommendations

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REBECCA  RYAN



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AN OPEN LETTER TO BEAUFORT

For the past several months, I have been working in your community listening as clerks, artists, pastors, shop-keepers, school children, historians, teachers, retirees, entrepreneurs, electeds, activists, reformers, and yes, bartenders, tell their story of Beaufort.

Everyone has a different story — how they got to Beaufort (born-and-raised, boomeranged back, or relocated), reasons they stay, their frustrations, and their hopes. Beaufort is not a single place; *Beaufort means different things to different people.*

But as Beaufort continues to grow in population and reputation, there are some issues that everyone agrees we must get right to have the strongest possible future.

Beaufort 2030's goal was to address our future. We did this by using professional foresight tools—the same tools that NATO, the military, and Fortune 200 companies use to evaluate their futures—and by engaging a broad cross-section of people in the process from seventh graders to seventy-year olds, at workshops and through a community survey. Mayer Keyserling said that a group as diverse as those assembled for the first *Beaufort 2030* workshop had never been convened before.

Beaufort 2030 will influence the city's next Civic Master Plan which will detail the community's "hardware" — new streets, parks, residential, and commercial districts. But *Beaufort 2030* reveals that the community's future will be largely shaped by its "software" — how people engage with the City, their sentiment about how Beaufort addresses their aspirations and fears, and whether they feel that their children can have a prosperous future in Beaufort.

The following pages lay out the hardware and software insights gained from the *Beaufort 2030* process, interlaced with professional guidance from a team of futurists who've been working alongside you in this process. Now the fun begins.

To your future,

Rebecca Ryan
NEXT Generation Consulting, Inc.



KEY INSIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following insights are a summary of a series of public workshops and professional futurists' insights about Beaufort's current trends and possible futures. These insights and recommendations are intended to give the City Council, staff, and engaged citizens useful information as they undertake the Civic Master Plan and shape a vision for Beaufort 2030.

#1: Good data drives better decisions

At the first *Beaufort 2030 Lab* in January 2019, community members gathered to play "The Big Sort," a table-top card game to discuss and debate forty "STEEP" trends (Society, Technology, Economy, Environment, Politics) facing Beaufort's future.¹ Participants debated: How likely is this trend? How much impact will it have on Beaufort? How ready are we?



¹ Download a copy of the trends: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bxi8yGqp2jyeHboKHiIYg5dD2UqiVoDO>



At the conclusion of the game, participants reflected:

“I didn’t know many of these facts about our community.”

“This is the first time we’ve really sat down together and talked about trends like these.”

“It’s clear that the city must collaborate with others to affect change.”

These comments demonstrate the important role that good data plays in discussing decisions for the future:

- Using data creates new knowledge and insight into community issues
- Data and trends spur dialogue
- Data can reveal the interconnected properties of problems and solutions, and the need to work across boundaries for real change
- Tracking data can show progress on issues

Recommendations:

1.1 Identify missing critical data that the City and its partners would like to use to drive decision-making, and partner with a local college, university, or agency to provide it. *Beaufort 2030* revealed that it was difficult to find reliable community data for Beaufort. This required substituting state or national data, which was less useful for participants. A shared approach to identify and track data will be useful for the City and its partners.



1.2 Monitor “weak signals”. Weak signals are signs of an emerging issue. If we can learn to listen and watch for weak signals, we can be more prepared for the emerging future. Unfortunately, humankind is notoriously poor at identifying weak signals and as a result, we are caught off-guard by major disruptions that, in hindsight, seem obvious. For example, how did U.S. banks and the Fed fail to predict the subprime mortgage crisis? In hindsight, the signals were there, but people failed to notice or take action because those signals were drowned out by market noise.²

A team of futurists who worked alongside Beaufort 2030 identified the following weak signals that Beaufort should pay attention to, because they impact many of the most critical issues facing Beaufort’s future. Each weak signal includes lead time, the amount of time Beaufort will have to respond between detection and impact:

Education: South Carolina’s state revenue funds shift from public schools to charter schools. This will further degrade the public education system.
Lead time = 2 fiscal years

Housing: Federal budget reductions in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). See: <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/50782>
Lead Time = 1 fiscal year

Energy Grid: Cyber attack anywhere in US.
Lead time = 90 days

Environment: Significant increase in flood and natural disaster insurance for residential property.
Lead time = 24 months

“No man comes up with a good idea when being chased by a tiger.”

² Read a case study about weak signals: <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/how-to-make-sense-of-weak-signals/>



#2: Residents Agree on Top 8 Trends Affecting Future

The following table ranks the “Top Trends”³ that workshop participants and survey respondents identified as most important to Beaufort’s future. The **bolded items** indicate the top 8 trends that both workshop participants and the public rated as most critical to Beaufort’s future

Workshop FQ*	Community Survey Rank	Trend
14	2	32. Rising K-12 Teacher Shortage
13	5	19. Rising Sea Level
12	11	1. Increasing Population
12	8	31. Growing Nursing Shortage
12	1	26. Affordable Housing is Falling Short
10	6	20. Storm Impacts Expected to Grow
9	7	21. Decreasing City Flooding
8	3	10. Improving K-12 Academic Performance and Career Prep
8	10	38. Rising Costs of Living Burden School District Budget
8	4	9. Child Poverty is Growing
8	16	3. Population Age 65+ is Growing Most
7	12	40. City Revenues are Growing But...
7	15	27. Senior Care Housing is Falling Short
7	18	5. Higher-Income Households are Growing
6	14	22. Improving Infrastructure
6	9	29. Growing Employment
6	17	6. Rising Burden of Chronic Conditions
5	13	24. Increasing Pedestrian-Oriented Built Environment

* Workshop FQ (Frequency) is the number of teams that selected the trend as a "high impact" and "high certainty". There were 14 teams at the workshop.

³ A complete set of the trends likely to affect Beaufort through 2030 is available for download: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bxi8yGqp2jyeHboKhiIYg5dD2UqiVoDO>



Recommendations:

2.1 Develop a dashboard of Top 8 Trends that the City and its critical local partners, e.g., School district, Beaufort County, etc., will publish, monitor, and use to take appropriate action.

Start with the top 8 identified on the previous page. One best practice is to list these trends on a public facing website and build a communication channel around each one. For example:

- What is the trend?
- Why is the trend important? What happens in our community if we get it right? If we get it wrong?
- How are the City and its partners responding?
- How can you track progress or get involved?

2.2. Report out on the Top Trends at public meetings. Keeping these top trends top of mind - and reporting on progress to the public - will keep the City and all partners accountable.

2.3 Re-rank the Top Trends on a regular basis. For example, the City Council can re-assess on a bi-annual basis or a community survey can ask community members to reconsider the ranking. It's natural that as the City makes progress and reports their progress, some of these trends will fade in importance over time, and new or different trends will come to the fore.



#3: Residents Agree on Top 4 Priorities for Action

Related to the “Top Trends” on the previous page, residents at the *Beaufort 2030* workshops and respondents to the community survey agreed on the rank order of the first four issues that need immediate attention for a prosperous 2030.

Workshop Votes	Community Survey Rank	Issue
34	1	Increase affordable housing units for workforce
22	2	Increase diverse career opportunities for early and mid-level professionals
20	3	Increase retention of locally trained students/grads for local jobs
16	4	Increase emphasis on childhood poverty
13	6	Increase intergovernmental cooperation on critical future issues
10	5	Attract and retain health care talent

Recommendations:

3.1 Include these top issues into the Civic Master Plan and the City’s comprehensive plan.

Similar to recommendations 2.1-2.3, build these issues into all public communication and be prepared to be accountable to residents and community stakeholders about these issues.

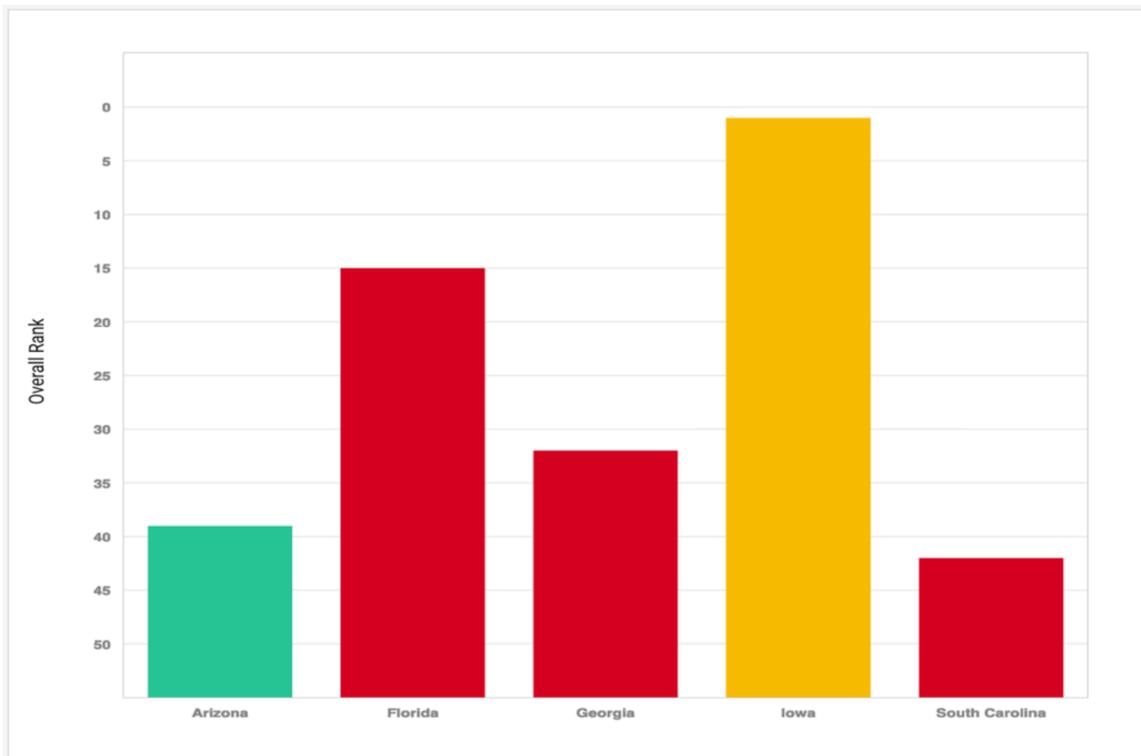


#4: What Does “Affordable Housing” Mean?

Participants at the *Beaufort 2030* workshops and residents who took the community survey identified “affordable housing” as the most pressing issue the community needs to address, to face its future.

Is “affordable housing” a real issue in Beaufort?

Data confirms that affordability is a real concern, not an overblown perception problem.⁴ We ran South Carolina’s affordability and housing costs against several other “retirement” states, plus Iowa.



When it comes to housing, “affordability” means different things to different groups, depending on their income:

⁴ Source: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/opportunity/affordability>



- What does “affordable housing” mean to teachers (median salary \$51,000)⁵, police officers (\$49,000)⁶, nurses (\$46,000)⁷, and those who perform critical community functions?
- What does “affordable housing” mean to residents who are on fixed pensions and social security?
- What does “affordable housing” mean to empty nesters who raised their children here and could sell their home at a premium due to the current housing market, but can’t find an appropriate and affordable smaller home for their life stage?
- What does “affordable housing” mean to families who rely on public assistance but want to stay in the area to keep their family intact and limit disruptions to their children’s education?

Recommendations:

4.1 Create a detailed map of all the property the City and County currently own and assess the opportunities for affordable housing for the groups listed above.

4.2 Work together with other communities to share ideas, run experiments, and possibly even do group buying of architectural or planning services that will enable you to share the costs and benefits of navigating this complex issue. Beaufort is not the only city facing an affordable housing crisis and it should not face this issue alone.

4.3 When talking about affordable housing in the community, keep high standards for aesthetics. It is easy for the public to equate “affordable housing” with slums or worse. Use architectural renderings of aesthetically pleasing housing that aligns with the character of Beaufort’s existing housing stock and addresses the needs of the specific group outlined above.

⁵ Source: https://beaufortschools.net/UserFiles/Servers/Server_170841/File/BCS%20District/DEPARTMENTS/Administrative%20Rules%20and%20Procedures/Salary%20and%20Stipend%20Schedules/APPROVED%20-%20Salary%20and%20Stipend%20Schedules%2007-01-2017.pdf

⁶ https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/beaufort-police-officer-salary-SRCH_IL.08_IC1155218_KO9,23.htm

⁷ [https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Registered_Nurse_\(RN\)/Hourly_Rate/9e720716/Beaufort-SC](https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Registered_Nurse_(RN)/Hourly_Rate/9e720716/Beaufort-SC)



#5: From Vision to Plan

“A journey of a 1,000 miles starts with a single step.”

The *Beaufort 2030* process is still in motion.

- The community is currently being asked their opinions about the top trends and priorities for action. Their input will be critical to further action.
- The Civic Master Plan will begin development soon; this is a ripe opportunity to build awareness and consensus for action on affordable housing
- The City Council is using preliminary results to drive strategic planning at a March retreat

Recommendations

5.1 Assign someone to *Beaufort 2030*. To give *Beaufort 2030* the best chance of success, someone needs to wake up every day thinking about it and helping orchestrate success. This could be a part-time or full-time position housed within the City or shared among several stakeholder groups. Their primary responsibilities are to orchestrate and convene the *Beaufort 2030* communications, task forces, implementation, and measurement.

5.2 Engage the community volunteers who donated their time and energy to *Beaufort 2030*. Options:

- Ask *Beaufort 2030* participants how they want to be engaged moving forward, and follow up with meaningful conversations or meetings. Convene study-action teams committed to one of *Beaufort*'s future issues (See “What matters most to a strong future?”) Study-action teams have a limited duration (no more than 18 months) and are tasked with studying a critical community issue and making recommendations for action. Best practice: “How to Form a Study-Action Team” page 54, *Good to Great*, Greater Lafayette, Indiana: <https://www.lafayette.in.gov/DocumentCenter/View/274/2012-Good-to-Great-Report-PDF?bidId=>
- Convene a multi-generational “*Beaufort 2030* Advisory Team” to work alongside the Mayor, City Council, and City staff as they implement *Beaufort 2030*.
- Invite participants to apply for positions on City commissions: <http://www.cityofbeaufort.org/260/Boards-Commissions>



#6: Final Notes from your Futurists

A team of futurists reviewed all of the *Beaufort 2030* workshop materials and outputs as well as the community survey results, and offer these final words of insight.

1. **Adequate education.** All *Beaufort 2030* workshop teams recognized that education is the civic sub-system that feeds the community over time. Beaufort should continue to grow its stable of educational institutions and programs. This is a strong long-term bet that Beaufort can make for its future sustainability and it will also help diversify Beaufort's population across the age and life-life-stage spectrum. Workshop participants rightly noted that the key driver in education is teachers.
2. **Environmental impacts.** Beaufort sits on the geographical edge of the storm. Recurring hurricanes and rising sea levels place the community in peril of adverse weather impacts regardless of the root cause. If environmental trends continue, Beaufort expects to ultimately see dwindling population and a relocation of key economic drivers, including the military. This realization is only beginning.⁸
3. **Lack of affordable housing.** The workshop teams' perception of lack of adequate affordable housing is a symptom of overall, relative quality of life, i.e., Beaufort's quality of life is excellent for some and substandard for others. See page 10. What's more, the "quality of life" that has historically attracted an older, active citizenry can quickly become a detractor of inward migration.
4. **Aging population.** Beaufort County has the second highest percentage of residents age 65 and older in the state; one out of every five residents is over age 65. By 2030, South Carolina is expected to have more retirees than school-aged children, and if present trends continue, Beaufort will be far ahead of that curve. Beaufort's aging population increases demand for healthcare services, both in delivery and prevention. Someone once observed "demographics is destiny" and that is certainly the case here. Again, the workshop teams come back to an understanding that what once spurred

⁸ US Climate Resilience Toolkit, <https://toolkit.climate.gov/case-studies/lowcountry-lowdown-sea-level-rise>



growth and desirability may turn back on the community as an increased burden.⁹

5. **Leadership Development.** No workshop groups spoke about adequate visionary leadership as a requirement for changing system dynamics. It may well be that current leadership is viewed as satisfactory. However, with the emphasis on malfunctions in sub-systems and in two scenarios a recognition of a need for closer coordination/collaboration across programs, it is noteworthy.
6. **Technology.** Only one *Beaufort 2030* scenario introduced technology and how it could be used to improve local government effectiveness. In large group discussions, technology was also mentioned as a transformative tool that could ease pressure on the local educational and health system delivery challenges.

Recommendations:

6.1 The City Council should identify which of the areas above it can control or influence, and then determine how it will execute. Best practice: the City Council of Olathe, KS did a similar exercise and found it had significant influence with stakeholders, like CEOs of local companies, than it imagined.

6.2. The City should convene a leadership roundtable or civic workgroup for all, or each, of these issues. The goal is: to begin a sincere and focused conversation about the root causes of these issues and develop a menu of possible solutions. Best practice: Greater Lafayette convened “Study-Action” teams for its Good to Great initiative.¹⁰

⁹ “South Carolina braces for aging population,” <https://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article102839997.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.lafayette.in.gov/DocumentCenter/View/274/2012-Good-to-Great-Report-PDF?bidId=>



BONUS MATERIAL

Top Trends Impacting Beaufort Through 2030

Total FQ*	Trend
12	1. Increasing Population
12	31. Growing Nursing Shortage
9	21. Decreasing City Flooding
7	40. City Revenues are Growing But...
10	20. Storm Impacts Expected to Grow
7	5. Higher-Income Households are Growing
6	22. Improving Infrastructure
13	19. Rising Sea Level
12	26. Affordable Housing is Falling Short
8	10. Improving K-12 Academic Performance and Career Prep
8	3. Population Age 65+ is Growing Most
7	27. Senior Care Housing is Falling Short
6	29. Growing Employment
5	24. Increasing Pedestrian-Oriented Built Environment
14	32. Rising K-12 Teacher Shortage
6	6. Rising Burden of Chronic Conditions
4	36. Growing "Thin" Civic Engagement
4	15. Increasing Data Use in Civic Engagement
8	38. Rising Costs of Living Burden School District Budget
8	9. Child Poverty is Growing
2	11. Growing Reliance on Natural Gas and Solar Energy

* Total FQ (Frequency) is the number of teams that selected the trend as a "high impact" and "high certainty" trend. There were 14 teams at the workshop.



Total FQ*	Trend
2	12. Increasing Energy Efficiency in Public Sector
8	28. Rising Cost of Long-Term Care
5	7. Rising Burden of Alzheimer's Disease
3	16. Growing Risk of Cyberattacks on Energy Infrastructure
5	33. Self-Employed Workers are Increasing
4	4. Small Households are Growing Most
3	34. Shrinking Farmland
1	30. Increasing Chance of Higher Ed Closures and Mergers
2	13. Increasing Tech-Driven Educational Disparities
4	18. Growing Job Automation
5	23. Rising Need for Higher Mobility or Car-Free Lifestyle
3	2. Population is Shifting to Urban Areas
1	Added: Future trends in emergency and natural disaster preparedness and response
3	39. Decreasing Correctional System Costs
3	14. Increasing Tech that Lowers Cost of Living
2	17. Growing Cyberattack Impacts on K-12 and Local Gov
1	35. Rising Political Influence of US South and West
2	8. White Residents are Increasing Most
1	Added: Future trends in the local food industry, e.g., support of our local shrimp industry has been decreasing largely because of imported seafood
1	Added: Future impact of local commercial logistics getting increasingly automated as opposed to relying on traditional people power
4	Added: Trends shaping the role and impact of local military installations, and the City's relationship with these installations
2	Added: Future trends in engaging local youth, e.g., sports programs and efforts involving disenfranchised youth in positive civic, entrepreneurial and recreational activities

Download a complete copy of these trends: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bxi8yGqp2jyeHboKhiIYg5dD2UqiVoDO>



Crossover Issues - Master List from February 2019

Crossover Issue	Community Workshop Votes
Increase affordable housing units for workforce	34
Increase diverse career opportunities for early and mid-level professionals	22
Increase retention of locally trained students/grads for local jobs	20
Increase retention of locally trained students/grads for local jobs	20
Increase emphasis on childhood poverty	16
Enhance intergovernmental cooperation on critical future issues	13
Attract and retain health care talent	10
Need to collect good data	6
Increase civic engagement	5
Improve collaboration to proactively prepare for devastating storm	4
Ask targeted employers, e.g. health care, teachers, for incentives, e.g. debt forgiveness	3
Offer higher quality kindergarten-lifelong learning	2
Expand support for tech-enabled delivery of services, e.g. healthcare and education	2
Increase tax-based incentives	0
Increase services for growing population including impoverished populations	0
Increase facilitates and care for geriatric population	0
Support K-12 education	0

If you would like additional information about the Beaufort 2030 process, please contact:

Yasemin Arikan

NEXT Generation Consulting, Inc.

Email: ya@rebeccaryan.com.