A scenic photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The sky is filled with scattered, light-colored clouds. A white sailboat with two masts is positioned in the middle ground, its reflection clearly visible in the calm water. The background shows a dark silhouette of a shoreline with trees and buildings.

City of Beaufort 2020-2022 Strategic Plan

OUR VISION

We will ensure that the City of Beaufort offers its citizens broad economic opportunities; housing they can afford; a well-run government; and confidence in the community's preparedness for weather and climate-related impacts. The City seeks this future while maintaining the diversity, authenticity, history, tourism, and balance between the built and natural environment for which our city is renowned.

Beaufort: Where History, Charm and Business Thrive



KEY FOCUS AREAS



Economic Development & Innovation



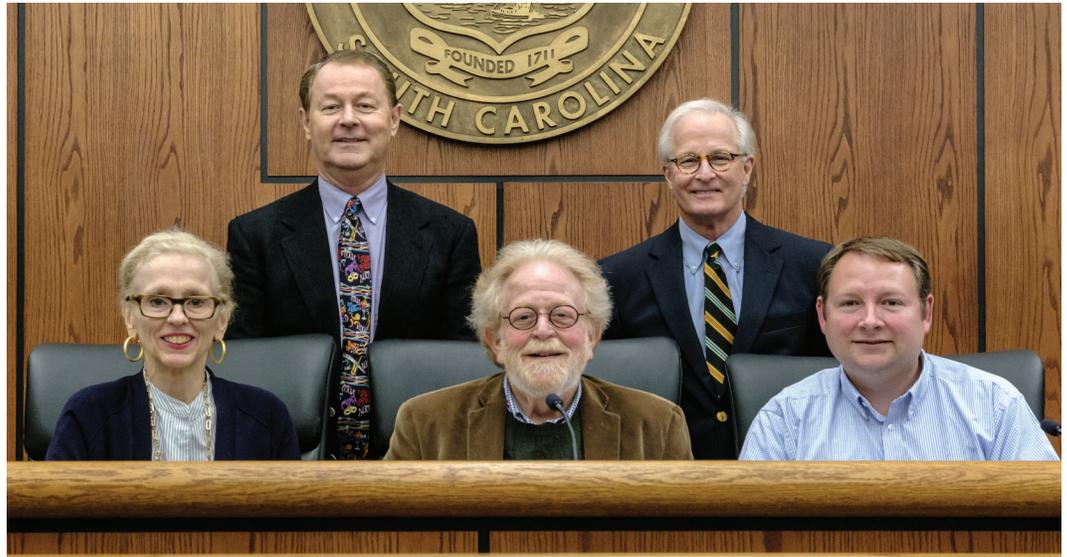
A Safe & Vibrant City



Growth & Natural Resources



Organizational Excellence



Beaufort City Council in 2020

FRONT: Councilwoman Nan Sutton, Mayor Billy Keyserling, Councilman Stephen Murray
BACK: Mayor Pro Tem Mike McFee, Councilman Phil Cromer

Dear Friends:

Every year, City Council and City staff gather for a two-day retreat to review and update the City's Strategic Plan. We did that in February. By late March – around the time we would be fine-tuning our plan, we were in the midst of adjusting operations as the Covid-19 pandemic surged.

But while we adjusted our operations and budget to the pandemic fallout, we did not lose sight of our City's short- and longer-term goals addressed in this Strategic Plan. Our 2020-2022 plan lays out four Key Focus Areas:

- Economic Development & Innovation
- A Safe & Vibrant City
- Growth & Natural Resources
- Organizational Excellence

Within each of these Key Focus Areas are objectives and initiatives that the City of Beaufort staff will focus on over the next two years. For the public, our progress will be measured by a dashboard that will become available on the City's website.

During our retreat, we kept coming back to the word "authenticity." Authenticity is everything that makes Beaufort a special hometown and a premier destination -- our schools, our shops, our businesses, our parks, our homes, our parades and festivals, our military bases, and our waters and land filled with people of all ages, races, and incomes enjoying a constantly evolving, vibrant life. As we make progress on our goals over the next two years, we will keep in mind just what it is that makes Beaufort authentic.





Economic Development & Innovation

The City will strengthen and diversify its economy, and build employment opportunities, through partnerships and innovation. We will support existing businesses and recruit new businesses as we promote balanced land use, support diverse tourism, and remain an authentic hometown.

Objective 1: Promote business prosperity and sustainable development

Initiatives:

- 1.1 Provide a collaborative environment by engaging partners, including the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation (BCEDC), Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Beaufort-Port Royal Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), as we work toward building a vibrant and sustainable economy. Continue to work with landowners on business recruitment and ensure the balanced administration of the Beaufort Code.
- 1.2 Assess the distribution of business and industry by 6-digit NAICS code.
- 1.3 Collaborate with the CVB, Beaufort Area Hospitality Association, University of South Carolina-Beaufort (USCB), the Downtown Beaufort Merchants Association, and all stakeholders to enhance and diversify tourism.
- 1.4 Increase the awareness and use of the Beaufort Pride of Place, an initiative to beautify and improve Beaufort through private donations.
- 1.5 Develop a local incentives package (permitting, tax abatement, private incentives from communications/utility companies) targeting startups, businesses that are expanding, and companies looking to relocate.
- 1.6 Leverage partnerships with USCB, the Technical College of the Low Country, and the Beaufort County School District, the military, and the Beaufort Digital Corridor to build out career pathways that will help diversify the City's economic base. These include health care, digital commerce, and cybersecurity.



Objective 2: Increase median incomes as we recruit new businesses and industry that are a good fit for Beaufort

Initiatives:

- 2.1 Partner with the BCEDC on prospect development, land transactions, and site and building development in Beaufort Commerce Park.
- 2.2 Support through partnerships and financial contributions the South Coast Cyber Center as we strive to become a city/region known for cybersecurity expertise. Work with our educational partners, the military, Beaufort County, and the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce to develop career pathways, research, and jobs centered around cybersecurity.
- 2.3 Complete the second-phase renovation of 500 Carteret Street as a “corporate landing pad” for overseas companies wishing to learn more about opportunities here.



Beaufort Digital Corridor

Objective 3: Preserve our authenticity

Initiatives:

- 3.1 Apply the Beaufort Code to ensure a balanced land-use mix for fiscal sustainability.
- 3.2 Create a citywide digital inventory of businesses and commercial property and evaluate vacant or underutilized properties for development opportunities. This will include type of use, financing, incentives, and other resources.
- 3.3 Leverage Beaufort 2030 (community-based futurism exercise) to continue to influence the discussion about education and support the 1795 Scholarship Committee (stipend for student housing in Beaufort) and others as requested.
- 3.4 Coordinate and enhance the current signage and information to make “wayfinding” easier throughout the entire downtown area and Historic District.

Measuring Progress

- 1.1 Project starts
Permit apps
Tax base vs. collections
Number of business licenses and revenue
- 1.2 Measure NAICS numbers in code class against target
- 1.4 One project per quarter
- 2.1 Additional tenants or property owners
- 2.2 Office for Cyber Center; jobs created
- 2.3 Construction timeline and occupancy for landing pad
- 3.1 Comprehensive Plan approval followed by zoning map changes
- 3.2 Accepted by MPC and adopted by City Council as part of the Comprehensive Plan
- 3.3 Gather primary and secondary student population numbers
- 3.4 New signs





A Safe & Vibrant City

To continue to build an authentic, safe, and equitable city, the city will pursue affordable housing opportunities for all segments of the population, will provide responsive public safety, and will improve public spaces.

Objective 4: Pursue opportunities for affordable and workforce housing

Initiatives:

- 4.1 Implement recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force.
- 4.2 Work with landowners on developing economically viable multifamily housing.
- 4.3 Permit a wide range of housing types within the Beaufort Code.
- 4.4 Conserve and reuse historic structures

Objective 5: Provide accessible public facilities and spaces

Initiatives:

- 5.1 Complete an inventory of needs of existing neighborhood parks.
- 5.2 Determine an update and replacement schedule for park equipment and structures.
- 5.3 Update the Southside Park plan.
- 5.4 Complete the connector for Whitehall Park.
- 5.5 Complete city assumption of maintenance at Whitehall Park.
- 5.6 Support the expansion of the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park as Beaufort seeks to become the center for the exploration of Reconstruction history.
- 5.7 Address deferred maintenance of city infrastructure.
- 5.8 Continue to manage flood infrastructure projects, including Mossy Oaks, Johnny Morrall, Allison Road, Broad Street, Hay Street, Lafayette Street, Kings Ridge, Calhoun Street and The Point.
- 5.9 Complete a review of facilities master plan.
- 5.10 Cooperate with military on a shared services program.



Objective 6: Provide strong public safety support

Initiatives:

6.1 Maintain service level provisions for the Police, Fire and Public Works departments

6.2 Explore opportunities to publish law enforcement/fire fighting statistics on website/social media.



Objective 7: Facilitate unified and coordinated transportation planning

Initiatives:

7.1 Continue to participate in the Lady's Island planning process.

7.2 Update street infrastructure plan.

7.3 Evaluate parking and shuttle service.

7.4 Create a connectivity study of pedestrian/bicycle paths with the goal of enhancing pedestrian/bicycle access throughout the city, paying special attention to connecting schools, civic spaces, and places of employment.

7.5 Enact land use polices and Beaufort Code changes with the goal of reducing VMT (vehicle miles traveled per capita).

Measuring Progress

4.1 Update Beaufort Code

4.2 Grow number of multi-family units

4.4 Preserve Contributing Structures

5.2 Incorporate into FY 2022 budget

5.3 Updated plan approved

5.5 Assume maintenance of Whitehall Park

5.8 Complete Mossy Oaks Phase 2

5.10 Agreements in place

6.1 Call statistics; unit utilization reporting

6.2 Website data reports

7.2 New street plan approved

7.3 More parking spaces; measure number of complaints





Growth & Natural Resources

To maintain the city's authenticity and attractiveness, while accommodating future growth and preparing for climate related challenges, the city will evaluate environmental, municipal, and private constraints on growth; will identify commercial and residential areas requiring immediate attention; and will promote balanced growth through infill.

Objective 8: Manage growth boundaries

Initiatives:

- 8.1 Prepare small area plans for neighborhoods and districts.
- 8.2 Evaluate private and public assets for growth.
- 8.3 Evaluate environmental, municipal, and private constraints on growth.
- 8.4 Determine commercial and residential focus areas.

Objective 9: Manage and encourage infill development

Initiatives:

- 9.1 Promote infill incentives.
- 9.2 Update the Beaufort Preservation Manual from 1979, known as the Milner Report.
- 9.3 Update the survey of above-ground structures in the Historic District.



Home in Historic District





Objective 10: Manage annexation

Initiatives:

- 10.1 Focus annexation efforts on parcels surrounded by city limits and contingent properties in Tax District 100.
- 10.2 Expand delivery of services within the growth boundaries of the city.

Objective 11: Plan for sea level rise

Initiatives:

- 11.1 Discourage development in hazard zones.
- 11.2 Engage community and other stakeholders in discussion, plans and actions related to sea level rise.
- 11.3 Develop mitigation and implementation strategies.

Measuring Progress

- 8.1 Small area plans adopted
- 8.2 Marketable inventory of assets
- 8.3 Report completed
- 8.4 Updated land use plan
- 9.1 Reduced number of vacant properties
- 9.2 Publication of updated guidelines
- 9.3 Publication of updated survey
- 10.1 Successful annexation petitions
- 10.2 Service provision data in growth areas
- 11.1 Updated flood damage ordinance
- 11.2 Transparency in efforts to safeguard city from flooding
- 11.3 Project funding, construction and completion





Organizational Excellence

To provide a transparent, efficient organization, the city will engage its citizens and community and business stakeholders, will integrate technologies which enhance the execution of city functions, will staff the organization with highly qualified personnel, and will provide municipal education opportunities for boards, commissions and citizens.

Objective 12: Engage community stakeholders

Initiatives:

12.1 Establish separate training/education programs for board/commission members and citizens.

12.2 Continue to build social media presence, increase distribution of monthly newsletter, and increase subscriptions to Notify Me.



12.3 Increase use of surveys to gather more input from community on important city issues.

Objective 13: Transparency in city operations

Initiatives:

13.1 Continue live-streaming of all boards, commissions, and public meetings; encourage public comment through Zoom, Facebook, email, and traditional means.

13.2 Develop a digital dashboard to show progress on city initiatives.

13.3 Promote availability of financial transparency tool.



Objective 14: Provide responsive, efficient and innovative services

Initiatives:

- 14.1 Recruit and retain a diverse, educated, and high-performing workforce.
- 14.2 Establish a customer service academy for new hires.
- 14.3 Continue to find ways to make operations more efficient by sharing in regional services, such as fire, building inspections, code enforcement, etc.

Objective 15: Sustainability in finance, infrastructure, and planning

Initiatives:

- 15.1 Advocate for a change in state legislation concerning the local government fund, changes in Act 388 to allow for local autonomy in taxing; and resist legislative overstep in business licensing regulation.
- 15.2 Include Strategic Plan in annual budget document.
- 15.3 Tie all capital purchases to identified initiatives in Strategic Plan.
- 15.4 Increase efficiency in online payment receipt and processing.
- 15.5 Capture data connected to projects in one place.



Measuring Progress

- 12.1 Training completed by board members
- 12.2 Increase number of newsletter subscriptions, social media engagements
- 13.1 Engagements and access to meetings
- 13.2 Complete dashboard
- 13.3 User access
- 14.1 Performance reviews
- 14.2 Employee engagement and quality service
- 14.3 Regional service partnerships
- 15.1 Changes in state law
- 15.2 Connect budget/ financial reports to objectives
- 15.3 Updated Capital Improvement Plan



HOW TO REACH US

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