

Beaufort Comprehensive Plan Update

Focus Group Meeting - Group 1 – Economic Development & Business Community

Meeting Information

- Date: » December 8, 2020
Time: » 1:15 PM
Location: » Zoom Meeting: Video / Conference Call
Attendees: » Don Kirkman (Carteret County Economic Development), John Hagle (Chamber of Commerce), Susan Sanders (Downtown Business Association), Jim Browder (Tourism Development Authority), Perry Harker (Carteret County Community College), Kyle Garner (Beaufort), Kate Allen (Beaufort); Jay McLeod (Stewart), Jaquasha Colon (Stewart)

Agenda Items

- Project Purpose and Schedule
- Introductions
- Input

Summary of Input

- Opportunities/Assets
 - Small-town charm and rich history have created high demand for tourism and development, as well as an influx of new residents
 - Historical and cultural assets should be preserved
 - Great community, neighborly people who support one another
 - Safe town with low crime rates
 - Natural assets, beautiful scenery
 - One of the only jurisdictions in Carteret County with sewer service
- Challenges/Concerns
 - Need to maintain small-town charm and character amidst pressures of growth and development
 - Climate change and sea level rise
 - Wastewater Treatment Plant is 10 years old and nearing 70% capacity (including committed allocations); discharges to Taylors Creek
 - Infrastructures is being overloaded; WWTP is expensive to operate and maintain with a large debt to repay which leads to high rates; non-town sewer users pay double rates

- Stormwater discharge will become more difficult in the future (Sea level rise)
- Failing infrastructure along Front Street boardwalk
- Job creation for citizens (exacerbated by COVID-19)
 - Atlantic Veneer employs approximately 50-100 people. As land costs continue to rise, the property will be more desirable for other uses.
- Availability of affordable housing; the Town is environmentally constrained by water and cost of land and demand is high, resulting in high-priced homes
- Context
 - Mid-down (north of downtown) is a thriving area that needs more investment and guidance
 - Future I-41 will accelerate population growth and tourism significantly
 - Carteret County Economic Development promotes Beaufort as a place to live in order to draw new residents
 - Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority aims to build year-round tourism, particularly in the off-season in order to maximize the use of existing investments/infrastructure