

Beaufort Comprehensive Plan Update

Steering Committee Meeting #4

Meeting Information

Date: » June 22, 2021
Time: » 4:00 PM
Location: » Hybrid; Town Hall Conference Room or Virtual via Zoom
Attendees: » Mr. McLeod McLeod (Stewart), Allison Evans (Stewart), George Stanzielle (Stewart), Mr. Garner Garner (Town), Kate Allen (Town), Ms. Meelheim Meelheim, Ms. Gillikin Gillikin, Johnna Davis, Guy Copes, Mr. Merrill Merrill, Mr. Harper Harper, Heather Poling

Agenda Items

- Project Schedule and Status Update

Mr. McLeod provided an update on the project schedule.

- Committee Review and Discussion

- Character Areas

Mr. McLeod gave a presentation on the **draft** character areas. Discussion ensued, particularly regarding the proposed “Non-Intensification Zone.” The draft character areas are included at the end of the minutes.

- Future Land Use Map

Mr. McLeod presented the draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Discussion ensued. Mr. McLeod asked that the committee review the draft FLUM and submit additional comments/concerns following the meeting.

- Draft Goals and Recommendations

Mr. McLeod discussed the updated draft goals, which were revised based on the input received. (the draft goals are included as an attachment to these minutes). He noted that there were some changes, mainly elaborating/expanding on the original draft goals. He added that these documents are working documents.

Goal 1: Protect, preserve, and restore our shorelines, sensitive habitats, and waterways.

Ms. Gillikin said that it looks like some of the items included in the draft goals align with the stormwater plan and asked how the stormwater plan was considered in this document. Mr. McLeod said that the goals of the plan were reviewed and included where possible.

Mr. McLeod asked if anyone had any thoughts/concerns about 1d “Minimize and track natural

shoreline and habitat loss.” He explained that this is a very broad statement which should be heavily considered. Ms. Gillikin asked if mapping the area includes private property; Mr. McLeod confirmed that this would be for all shorelines in town, not just public land. Ms. Gillikin asked if this would be a recommendation or formal policy. Mr. McLeod said that at this point, tracking/educating would be the first step. Ms. Gillikin explained that unless you consider properties in the ETJ, there are limited areas that have shorelines in the town limits. Discussion ensued. Ms. Gillikin suggested a gentle statement about evaluating policy changes could be quite valuable to the plan. Mr. Harper said that this group could start the conversation, but ultimately it would be up to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Gillikin added that the RCR may be willing to partner with the town on these efforts.

Discussion on 1e, “Manage litter and water-related debris.” Mr. McLeod said that some of these concepts are pretty bold and bring up questions about enforcement (1e.ii.5). Mr. Harper said that littering is a huge issue in this area, and he feels that these are good suggestions and should be left in. Discussion/reference to other communities who have enacted similar efforts.

Ms. Davis submitted the following via chat box, “I would just like to add that I highly support limiting/banning single use plastics. I spent several years in Seattle, and they ban plastic bags at the grocery store and charge a minimal amount if you don’t bring your own bags and have to use paper bags. I also think educating our restaurants to not use Styrofoam would also be a great step.”

Mr. Merrill asked if there was any consideration given to wildlife that has been displaced by ongoing development and if it should be identified as a goal. Mr. McLeod said there were a few options and suggested adding an objective relating to terrestrial habitats. He also asked who the nature conservancy is in this area – Coastal Land Conservancy. Allison mentioned that a lot of the wooded areas are included in the non-intensification zone. Ms. Gillikin asked if conservation easements have been considered, noting that it could be an option to address these problems.

Mr. Merrill mentioned requirements for open space in our ordinances. He asked if there could be a requirement for a natural [undisturbed] area instead of open space going forward. Mr. McLeod said that could be an option.

Mr. McLeod asked for clarification regarding the conservation easements – as a standalone program, or requirement for future development.

Goal 7: Protect our unique character by enhancing and maintaining our natural resources, recreational opportunities, historic downtown, and cultural resources.

Mr. Merrill suggested including standards to prevent excessive light pollution; dark sky ordinance. Ms. Meelheim agreed, noting porch lights should also be considered. Mr. Merrill asked Mr. Garner if we could incorporate something similar to the historic district that

regulates light pollution. Mr. Garner asked Mr. McLeod to send an email with standards for lighting pole/fixture styles to Greg, Mr. Merrill and Mr. Garner - this; perhaps something that can be addressed now.

Mr. Harper pointed out a missing sentence 7a.ii.; Mr. Garner asked Mr. McLeod to add Cedar Street too. Mr. Merrill asked if Mr. McLeod could expand on options for preservation. Mr. Merrill referenced a recent rezoning request... Mr. Garner said that should also include infill development – design standards/elements/etc. Mr. McLeod cautioned that there are limits to what controls the town has over residential structures.

7d.i. Regulation of short-term rentals. Discussion ensued; with attendees noting the ongoing lawsuit in Wilmington. Ms. Meelheim suggested requiring off-site parking (i.e. satellite parking area).

7e.i. emphasis on recreational opportunities for seniors. Parks and recreation is an important element of any community. Walking/jogging/biking trails – Mr. McLeod showed the draft FLU and neighborhood nodes. Mr. Merrill said that one of these goals should be to expand the town's sidewalk network. He said that when the sidewalks were installed at the new park (RJ), the entire feeling of the area changed drastically. Ms. Gillikin asked if there should be something addressing open space & recreation could be a shared space where feasible. Mr. Merrill said he also sees the value in dog parks.

7f.ii. Mr. Harper asked about various properties lost to adverse possession/quit claim deed/etc. Written comment: I'd also like to agree with the importance of securing and/or getting back the street termination access. When you compare Beaufort to Morehead, we are really missing out on a fabulous resource for the community.

Goal 8. Celebrate, recognize, and amplify the voices of our diverse community.

Concerns expressed about distribution of town resources for repairs/maintenance.

Goal 2. Increase resiliency to natural hazards and climate change impacts for natural and built areas.

Non-Intensification Zone – based on special flood hazard areas. Non-Intensification Zone – discussion ensued. Potentially include higher standards in the flood damage prevention ordinance. Ms. Gillikin mentioned statistics – flood insurance claims; 30% of flood claims are from properties not located in flood zone. Flood waters do not follow boundary lines.

Mr. McLeod said that based on the time remaining, he would like to discuss the FLUM and circle back to character area descriptions at another time.

- Next Steps
- Comp Plan

Mr. McLeod asked the committee to continue to review the draft character areas, FLUM, and goals and submit any comments to the project team.

- Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) Update

There was nothing significant to report regarding the RCCP. Contracts are still under review; more to follow.

Attachments:

- **Draft** Character Areas & Descriptions
- Revised **Draft** Goals
- **Draft** Future Land Use Map

Preamble:

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and character areas represent the community's vision for the future and are one of the factors that guides decision makers and town staff in future rezoning, land use, or permit issuance decisions. A FLUM is also valuable for communicating public investment priorities (including possible future extensions of public facilities and services) and community vision to private sector investors. The FLUM is descriptive and not prescriptive. It identifies the predominant land use types and character intended for different parts of the study area. In some specific areas or instances, it may not be perfectly applicable, whereas perhaps other recommendations from this plan may be more applicable.

The FLUM will help guide the slow transition from present day to the desired future state. It is not advisable to immediately rezone properties to reflect the FLUM, but rather to evaluate each rezoning request individually based on a variety of factors including the request's individual merits, surrounding context, presence (or absence) of adequate public facilities, potential financial impact (or burden) of the project, vested rights, environmental impact, timing, etc.

The character areas should also be used to further refine the land use vernacular and preserve and enhance the local development flavor. These character areas also provide direction for any updates to the Town's land development regulations to help make the community vision a reality.

The following describes the future land use character areas in terms of general character, example uses, necessary infrastructure, and other concerns related to their application. While typical uses and potential uses are described, these lists are not exhaustive or necessarily prohibitive. For instance, some uses may be appropriate in many (or all) future land use character areas. These might include uses such as government maintenance buildings, small utility substations (electric, natural gas, sewer lift stations, water towers, etc.). Even large utilities (wastewater or water treatment plants, electrical generation plants, etc.) might be appropriate in many locations, too. However, some uses should be carefully considered so that they do not unintentionally create an attraction that creates a demand for development in inappropriate areas. For instance, institutional uses such as churches, primary and secondary schools, clinics, or hospitals might be appropriately sited in most residential areas, but if located in rural or agricultural areas would create an attraction for more development to occur in these less suitable areas. Likewise, the size of operations is also a consideration. For example, a small church might be appropriate in a rural context, but a mega church might not.

An especially important consideration in Beaufort is the relationship of the use or structure to the water and environment. Some uses are water dependent (marinas, commercial fishing operations, boat ramps, public access points, jet ski rentals, water taxis and ferries, ecotourism boat tours, etc.) and must by necessity be situated in these vulnerable areas. In this case, "vulnerable" refers not only to the impact on the natural environment, but also the natural hazards vulnerability that the use or structure might encounter being so exposed to storm surge and other water-related hazards. Other uses are not water dependent, such as general commercial operations, homes or apartments, and should not be located or allowed in areas where they will have a negative impact on the natural environment. This negative impact can occur both in present day (use of fertilizers leading to nutrient pollution of local waterbodies,

increased stormwater runoff because of increased impervious surfaces, etc.) or in the future (loss of natural shoreline as sea level rise and erosion prompts owners to convert natural shoreline to altered shoreline which reduces natural habitat, decreases water quality, prevents coastal marshland migration, etc.). Even elevating a use or structure up and “out of” any regulatory floodplain can still have a long-term negative impact on the natural environment, especially if natural shoreline is converted to artificial shoreline to prevent erosion from undermining structures. In these instances, a better approach might be to prohibit the location of non-water dependent uses in areas that will likely experience these conditions or are otherwise environmentally sensitive. Many homes in Beaufort are already located in these areas and developers will confirm that the top dollar lots are right on the water. A community conversation is needed about the role of the public sector in encouraging development in these locations (through the extension of public services, primarily sewer service, into these higher risk or higher maintenance areas) as well as options for accommodating individual profit and development, but perhaps with a greater weight given to community values and long term considerations.

Some uses, such as wastewater treatment plants or sewer lift stations are caught between

competing priorities. Placing these facilities in low-lying areas is advisable from the perspective of operations, since water flows to the lowest point. However, these low-lying areas are also more prone

Avoiding Pre-Emptive Zoning

The temptation often exists to **preemptively up-zone** all property fronting a highway or major road to widely allow commercial uses. The argument is usually that this highly-visible and accessible property is suited to commercial use and that by speculatively up-zoning property, it will somehow generate new development and investment, and possibly even diversify the economy or balance of land uses. The reality is that speculative up-zoning does not create quality places, spur development unsupported by demand, or generate wealth. Developers and business owners will pursue a rezoning to suit the business community's needs if and when there is market demand.

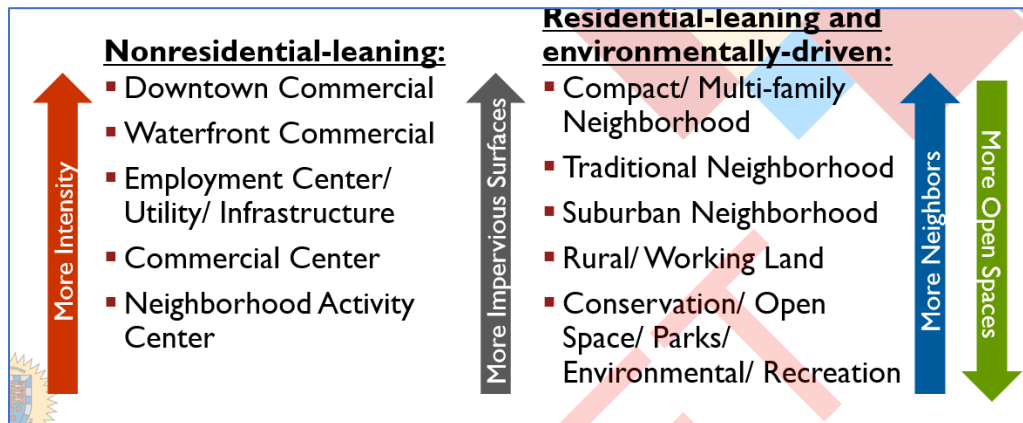
Is pre-emptive up-zoning ever advisable? In extremely limited instances – for example, perhaps for a specific, economic development catalyst project or other government-sponsored catalyst site that involves major public investment.

What are the effects of pre-emptive up-zoning? Pre-emptive upzoning often creates traffic congestion and degrades the quality of life for residents, rather than helping to build lasting wealth. Strip commercial zoning creates sprawling, low-quality commercial development that is in excess of market demand and thus does not attract high-value tenants. It results in a congested, automobile-dependent area that never achieves the commercial density or mass necessary to build a place the community will value. The excess of commercially zoned land also depresses the overall price of that land, leading to reduced revenue from land sales per acre.

Is there a better solution? Only up-zone properties abutting existing commercial development in areas where the appropriate infrastructure exists. The necessary infrastructure includes, but is not limited to: a secondary street network with maximum block length standards (to disperse traffic), shared driveways that serve multiple businesses (to reduce traffic congestion), cross access easements that create connections between adjacent businesses, sewer service that supports density, quality design standards, pedestrian facilities, fire suppression infrastructure, public spaces, and proximity to a significant population of customers.

to flooding and will become increasingly vulnerable as seas continue to rise and storms become more severe. When a wastewater treatment plant or sewer lift station floods, it can have significant and severe impacts on the environment and human health. The placement and/or expansion of these uses and structures should be carefully considered in order to ensure operational and financial viability over the lifespan of the infrastructure balanced against current and future environmental vulnerabilities.

From the presentation, for context. Probably needs to be further explained in a general introduction of the character areas.



Traditional Neighborhood

General Description:

These neighborhoods are walkable with structures situated close to each other. The residential areas exemplify the character found in the historic district and closer to downtown. Lots are typically smaller and closely packed with residential densities generally around 3 to 5 dwelling units per acre, although localized variability exists with some areas approaching 7 dwelling units per acre. The historic development pattern prioritizes people and accommodates cars. Off-street parking is often to the side or around back, with homes pulled up close enough to the street to allow neighbors to engage with people on the sidewalk.

Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Primarily single family detached residential, with a mix of other highly compatible residential uses scattered throughout, including duplexes, accessory dwellings, garage apartments, and occasionally even larger homes that have been converted to discrete multi-family structures or even small bed-n-breakfast businesses.



If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional uses (churches, primary or secondary schools, hospital, government buildings, etc.)
- Accessory dwellings
- House-scale multi-family residential
- Small hotels or bed-n-breakfast establishments

Streets and Circulation:

Streets are typically low volume and prioritize pedestrians through the provision of sidewalks on both sides. Street trees soften the streetscape and further enhance pedestrian comfort. Connectivity is high because of the grid network which very rarely has blocks longer than 500' on a side. On-street parking is either formal or informal, depending on context. Bicycles share the vehicular travel lanes because speed limits are low enough to accommodate them safely.

Other Concerns:

In the historic district, these neighborhoods have significant restrictions that help preserve their quaint appearance and character. Although there may not be full support to extend all of these requirements to other areas, it may be possible to extract some of the more defining characteristics (buildings close to the street, parking in the rear, street trees, narrow streets, etc.) and bring those design elements to other neighborhoods.

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Suburban Neighborhood

General Description:

These neighborhoods typically have larger lots or shared open spaces and common areas such that the overall residential density is lower than in the Traditional Neighborhood. The neighborhoods are still walkable from house to house, but most households probably depend primarily on automobiles to reach day-to-day necessities. Off-street parking is typical of a suburban residential neighborhood and various configurations exist. Residential densities typically range from around 1-3 dwellings per acre, although some developments will exceed that either in localized areas (especially if there are shared open spaces, amenities, or common areas) or overall. In neighborhoods with larger lots, open space is typically provided on the individual lots rather than at a common or shared location.



Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Primarily single family detached residential, with an occasional mix of other highly compatible residential uses scattered throughout, including duplexes, accessory dwellings, and garage apartments. Sometimes, but more rarely, there may also be duplex neighborhoods.

If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional uses (churches, primary or secondary schools, hospital, government buildings, etc.)
- Accessory dwellings
- House-scale multi-family residential, patio homes, or small townhome developments - very occasionally.

Streets and Circulation:

These neighborhoods have medium levels of connectivity which can unfortunately contribute to increased congestion on arterials, since secondary routes to day-to-day necessities are rarely available. Streets should be low volume, low speed routes. Every effort should be made to increase connectivity except in instances where it would excessively harm environmentally sensitive areas. Block lengths should not exceed 650' on a side unless absolutely unavoidable. Pedestrian facilities should be provided on at least one side of every street. Bicycles can share lanes on low volume streets, but on arterials dedicated (and preferably separated) facilities should be provided.

Other Concerns:

Extending public facilities (water, sewer, etc.) to these areas may place an increased strain on maintenance budgets since the lower densities and lower taxable value per linear foot of public facilities may not cover the costs of maintenance. This land use type consumes land a greater rate and with fewer homes than the other residential future land use character areas.

Compact / Multi-family Neighborhood

General Description:

These higher density areas are appropriate for multi-family residential dwellings such as apartments, condominiums, townhomes, duplexes or other attached residential. Densities should be higher than all other residential districts and as such will require less land to accommodate more households. Where waterfront adjacent, buildings are likely to be oriented to the water with their backs turned to the street. In all other locations, structures should be pulled up to and oriented to the street (e.g. – individual entrances for ground floor units, stoops or porches, living areas located on the street side of the unit, etc.) with parking in the rear or internal to the development and not visible from the street. Balconies, porches, and decks should also be provided to encourage interaction with neighbors. When these higher density neighborhoods are designed in this way, it enhances public safety by providing a sense of “eyes on the street” while also encouraging the sense of community that residents value so much. These neighborhoods should also have adequate pedestrian facilities and convenient access to public, semi-public, or private open spaces and recreational facilities. Location adjacent to commercial centers is a win-win because it promotes walkability and creates easy access for businesses to the customers that support them. Public sewer is a requirement, but long extensions to distant properties should be avoided unless higher density uses are specifically desired, planned for, and immediately anticipated to fill in the stretch between activity nodes.



Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Primarily higher density (relatively speaking) attached residential uses (apartments, condominiums, townhomes, patio homes, etc.) with duplexes also appropriate as long as they can be provided at high enough densities to be context appropriate. Single family residential and other low density uses should be discouraged as it does not create the density of households to support adjacent commercial areas.

If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional uses (churches, primary or secondary schools, hospital, government buildings, etc.)
- Hotels
- House-scale multi-family residential and duplexes, if higher density
- Low-intensity, neighborhoods serving commercial uses on the corners of higher activity intersections

Streets and Circulation:

Streets are typically low volume and prioritize pedestrians through the provision of wide sidewalks on both sides. Street trees soften the streetscape and further enhance pedestrian comfort. Street trees may be in tree grates where sidewalks are paved up to the curb – occurs when adjacent to on-street parking. Because of the high density of pedestrians and proximity to commercial centers, connectivity should be high, utilizing a grid network which very rarely has blocks longer than 500'-600' on a side. On-street parking should be formalized (striping, landscaped tree islands every so often, etc.) and will typically serve visitors. Bicycles should have dedicated facilities but may share the vehicular travel lanes where speed limits and traffic volumes are low enough to accommodate them safely. Eventually some of these areas may incorporate transit service. In the interim, it is important to consider centralized school bus stop locations.

Other Concerns:

In Beaufort, these higher density areas are often limited by density caps as well as minimum parking requirements and restrictions on structure height. Structured parking (aka parking decks) is typically not viable in the current market. These density-limiting factors reduce the potential for these areas to provide their maximum value in terms of maximizing public infrastructure investments (water, sewer, sidewalks, etc.), and being a potentially more affordable option for residents (less density means higher cost per dwelling because land costs are fixed). Clustering these higher density land uses directly adjacent to commercial nodes and public parks can maximize walkability and livability.

Rural / Working Lands

General Description:

Traditional working lands (agriculture, silviculture, ranching and livestock, old farm fields, and homestead farms) predominate this character area. It also includes areas that are vacant or used for hunting or other non-residential, non-urban uses. These areas are not served by sewer service, which when combined with the typically poor septic infiltration potential for local soils, makes them undesirable for residential or other types of development. If homes are present, they are often on very large lots or have been carved out of a larger tract of farmland. On-site septic treatment is one limiting factor to residential density, although the Town may also choose to restrict it further in the interest of maintaining rural character and/or maximizing use of public services (water, police, fire, emergency services, etc.).

Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Primarily silviculture, ranching and livestock, old farm fields, and other agricultural uses and supportive structures. Occasionally homestead farms or isolated large-lot single family detached residential. Schools, hospitals, and other residential attractors should be discouraged and instead focused towards the Town, where services exist.

If Context Appropriate:

- Small footprint institutional uses (churches, government buildings, etc.)
- Accessory dwellings

Streets and Circulation:

Streets in these areas are typically not curb-and-gutter (aka “ditch section”). There is typically not enough pedestrian activity to justify sidewalks, although if densities approach those of the Suburban Neighborhood future land use character area, then they should be required in a similar amount. Blocks should not exceed twice the maximum length of the Traditional Neighborhood character area. This is especially relevant when connecting to existing streets which are or will be thoroughfares or collectors of any sort, including residential collectors. The appropriate block length will allow these neighborhoods to evolve, redevelop, and become denser as the Town grows. So, while this connectivity may seem excessive in the present, it will preserve the ability for a more appropriate future condition to occur which is otherwise lost if block lengths are too long or streets too curvilinear. As always, streets should be on a grid and new neighborhoods should stub out to adjacent properties unless it would have an extremely negative impact on the environment.

Other Concerns:

Extension of public facilities (especially sewer service) to these areas for a single, remote development has the potential to increase overall system maintenance costs a disproportionate amount. This type of “leapfrog” development also will decentralize the geography of rooftops and/or commercial attractors and can create a disorganized hodgepodge of development that is not intuitive or conducive to focused activity centers. It will also create the incentive for further sprawl to develop along the extended public facilities. Significant consideration should be given to potential impacts before a decision of this type is made. If lower density residential development is allowed in these areas it is important to ensure that the appropriate street connections are made so that in the future as public facilities are extended, that the appropriate connectivity exists to serve the higher density redevelopment and infill development as these places evolve.



Conservation / Open Space / Parks / Environmental / Recreation (COSPER)

General Description:

Floodplains, wetlands, and sensitive environmental areas (shoreline, coastal marshes, etc.) are important to the identity and natural character of the community. In fact, the natural environment is probably one of the top three reasons that people treasure Beaufort so much. These natural spaces also provide vital community support services, such as floodwater storage, air purification, wildlife habitat and nurseries, passive recreation, and others. This character area contains several types of typically “undevelopable” areas, in the traditional sense, as well as other areas where traditional development should not occur or where development should be low-impact, community oriented, and/or recreation-oriented. The greatest care should be taken that any development in these areas does not degrade the natural environment and that public investments do not encourage development of these areas if they are environmentally sensitive or vulnerable. At some point in the future, conversations may also be needed about the potential costs and consequences of armoring or retraction of public services from areas that are environmentally vulnerable, especially if those areas are projected to be even more vulnerable as time passes.



Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Traditional parks, such as sports fields, playgrounds, public water access points, or recreation facilities, may be appropriate in some locations. Open space might include passive parks, wildlife viewing areas, natural area access, or low-impact walking or bicycling trails. Environmental areas are those sensitive, natural areas that should not be developed in the traditional sense, and if they must be, then development should have as little impact on these sensitive areas as is absolutely necessary. This includes regulatory floodplains, shorelines, and coastal marshes and wetlands, where the highest and best use may be the accommodation of floodwaters and/or natural habitat.

If Context Appropriate:

- Water dependent uses (marinas, boat launches, public water access, docks, boat houses, piers or jetties, fishing operations, ferries, etc.)
- Public restrooms or public pavilions
- Interpretive center

Streets and Circulation:

Public streets should not be located in these areas. Driveways, if unavoidable, should appropriately handle stormwater so that it does not degrade the environment. Pedestrian and cyclist movement is typically by trails or sidewalks.

Other Concerns:

The natural environment has been clearly identified by the community as one of their most valued assets. Any efforts to protect or enhance it, especially efforts that restore water quality or natural habitat, will no doubt be embraced. Ultimately, the economy of Beaufort rests on people wanting to live in a beautiful place. The natural environment, the built environment, and the people of the community make it beautiful, and a two-legged stool cannot stand up by itself.

Neighborhood Activity Center

General Description:

These areas have small-scale non-residential uses that serve the neighborhood and sometimes even a greater region. Often it may only be three or four corners of an intersection or one large, multi-tenant compound, but sometimes larger geographic stretches may also be appropriate. Sites, structures, and streets are human-scaled. Buildings may be setback from the street, particularly if it is a previously residential structure that has been converted for a commercial use. However, it may also be appropriate to have buildings pulled up to the street, with parking in the rear, especially at busy intersections or in particularly active nodes.

Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Smaller footprint, lower intensity, neighborhood serving commercial, retail, services, or offices. Pedestrian-serving uses (boutique shopping, personal care, arts, creative classes like yoga, etc.) are more appropriate than automobile-oriented uses (vehicle or machinery repair, rental and service, commercial nurseries or lumber yards, fast food restaurants, drive-thru banks, etc. Upper story dwellings (aka “live/work”) are also appropriate.

If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional uses (churches, primary or secondary schools, hospital, government buildings, etc.)
- On directly adjacent parcels to this character area, multi-family residential may be appropriate, particularly if it is likely to support adjacent businesses.



- Higher density residential development, whether as detached or low-impact attached residential is usually appropriate within a ¼ mile network walking distance of these areas.

Streets and Circulation:

Streets should have good pedestrian facilities to support walking from businesses-to-business or from home-to-business. Pedestrians are prioritized, but automobiles are accommodated, and might even have a transit stop nearby. Accommodating a mix of transportation options is important to being accessible to customers. Blocks should rarely, if ever, exceed 500 feet on a side so that they are walkable and might even be able to one day evolve into a condition similar to Downtown Commercial.

Other Concerns:

Depending on context, some of these places may evolve into higher activity Downtown Commercial areas some day in the distant future. It is important to keep that in mind when planning public infrastructure projects and curating the public realm.

Commercial Center

General Description:

These areas have large-scale non-residential uses that serve the entire community and sometimes even the larger region. These sites are often occupied or anchored by a large tenant (“big box”) and the development may span the entire block. Often it is a multi-tenant development with outparcels and large swaths of shared parking, but it can have other, more pedestrian-friendly configurations, too. Buildings are generally setback from the public street and front on individual or shared parking lots, although this is not a prerequisite. These places are typically automobile-oriented, generate large volumes of traffic, and often (and unfortunately) are fairly unfriendly for pedestrians or cyclists. Some developments may choose to have buildings pulled up to the street, with parking in the rear, especially at busy intersections or in particularly active nodes where surrounding neighborhoods can easily walk to the center.

Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Large footprint, higher intensity, regional commercial, retail, services, or offices, including less pedestrian friendly uses such as vehicle and machinery repair, sales, and rental, lumber yards, commercial nurseries, fast food restaurants, etc. Hotels are also appropriate. Automobile-dependent businesses predominate.



If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional uses (churches, primary or secondary schools, hospital, government buildings, etc.), provided they do not detract from the overall commercial nature of an area.
- On directly adjacent parcels to this character area, multi-family residential is often appropriate, particularly if it is walkable to nearby businesses. Higher density residential development, whether as detached or attached residential is usually appropriate within a ¼ mile network walking distance of these areas.
- Upper story dwellings (aka “live/work”) may be appropriate in extremely limited instances.

Streets and Circulation:

Streets should be (or have easy access to) higher volume streets or highways. Business frontages should have pedestrian connections to each other and to the surrounding sidewalk network, even if walking is generally uncomfortable because of the longer distances. Automobiles are usually prioritized, but pedestrians should not be forgotten. If developments use extensive private drives or have adjacent parking areas, cross-access (automobile and pedestrian) should be required to adjacent nonresidential or multi-family residential uses, in order to reduce traffic congestion on the main roads. Due to the high attraction of these centers, there might even be a transit stop nearby one day. Blocks do not necessarily need to be unfriendly to pedestrians and should not exceed 700' feet on a side. If they do, the site may need to be redesigned to accommodate the public street network. Landscaping and proper stormwater management are key to ensuring attractive parking areas that do not contribute to excessive runoff.

Other Concerns:

Maintaining connectivity through these developments and to surrounding and adjacent neighborhoods and parcels is important. Allowing these developments to only connect to the main thoroughfare the front on will contribute to additional traffic congestion as neighboring developments will have to travel the major thoroughfare to enter through the front, instead of having access from the sides and/or rear of the parcel. The connectivity, longevity, and public utility of the public street network must not be considered subordinate to a shopping center's preferred development plan. Shopping centers come and go, are developed and redeveloped, but the right-of-way network established at the subdivision or site plan stage of development defines the built environment often for many, many decades (and often much longer!).

Downtown Commercial

General Description:

This area is characterized by being walkable, bustling with activity night-and-day, and great for window shopping. It is the social hub of the Town and is a major attraction, not only for its historic development character and beautiful streets, but also for the activity and pleasant, pedestrians-first environment. Comfortable outdoor public spaces, dining, and shopping abound. Partly because of the high cost of space and partly because of previous development decisions, stores, restaurants, and shops are primarily small footprint, boutique, local operations. The tightly packed businesses maximize public infrastructure and services and likely generate more taxable value per linear foot of infrastructure than any other location in Town. These businesses also help each other because their lively public-facing facades encourage visitors to continue to walk to the next shop over, just to see what there is to see. The buildings are pulled close to the wide sidewalks and directly interact with the public right-of-way. Parking is at a premium and is located primarily in formalized on-street spaces or in shared or public lots around back or on separate parcels within walking distance.



Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Active storefront uses (retail, restaurants, shopping, etc.) are a must, but it's not uncommon to have other commercial, office, service, or even residential uses on upper floors. Accessory uses that cater to the public (instructional classes, etc.) are appropriate, too. Anything that encourages visitation, activity, relaxation, dining, and/or recreational shopping is encouraged. Drive-thru facilities (banks, drive-thru restaurant, etc.) or low-activity uses that do not cater to the general public (churches, schools, offices, etc.) or are by appointment only (dentists, architects, hair salon, etc.) and are rarely, if ever, appropriate on ground floors.

If Context Appropriate:

- On directly adjacent parcels to this character area, multi-family residential may be appropriate, particularly if it is likely to support adjacent businesses.
- Higher density residential development, whether as detached or low-impact attached residential is usually appropriate within a ¼ mile network walking distance of these areas.
- Any development in or near this district probably needs to consider historic character and development requirements.

Streets and Circulation:

Streets have exceptional pedestrian facilities to support walking from businesses-to-business or from home-to-business. Pedestrians are prioritized, but automobiles are accommodated. Landscaping and street furniture (benches, trash cans, etc.) are everywhere. Parking is primarily in formalized, on-street spaces. Blocks never exceed 500 feet on a side but more often are closer to 400' or 450'. Alleys may be necessary for services and operations, and utilities (especially overhead utilities) should be placed here if possible, so that they do not interfere with the public experience.

Other Concerns:

Although this character area currently focuses on (and is named for) the downtown, it may be appropriate in the future to extend it to other, select, and geographically limited locations within Town that have similar characteristics and/or where this type of character is desired. If this occurs, it will be essential to ensure that these areas are both allowed and required to create a development character and experience that mimics the original downtown. Caution should be taken when designating these areas because the Town can only support so much of this high-intensity district and if there is too much supply of this type of character area it can lead to a decentralization of supply that creates disinvestment in the existing downtown. Any expansion of this character area should be first directly adjacent to the existing downtown.

Waterfront Commercial

General Description:

This character area shares many similarities with the downtown area and this location is where it shines brightest. However, this district also encompasses other water-dependent, nonresidential areas which may exhibit the distinct historical character of the downtown. Regardless, the uses and structures in this character area are usually water-dependent but are always water-oriented and are typically accessible by boat. The shoreline has nearly always been converted from a natural condition to a hardened, engineered conditions (bulkheads, seawalls, riprap, docks, piers, etc.), although it is not impossible to imagine the interface of sea and land to a more environmentally-respectful configuration, and efforts should be made to increase habitat and ecological function if possible. Public access should be provided entirely along these waterfronts, both visually and physically, if possible. Because the shoreline and sea are public resources, every effort must be maintained to ensure public access.



Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Public boat docks and boat ramps, marinas, waterfront restaurants, commercial fishing operations, public parks and boardwalks, public water access, boat manufacturing and public boat houses, boat rentals, ferry docks and water-based ecotourism.

If Context Appropriate:

- Water-dependent institutional uses (fire, police, or U.S. Coast Guard operations, etc.)
- Hotels, in very limited instances and even then, there should be significant separation from other similar uses so that the waterfront does not become walled off from the neighborhoods.
- Upper story residential

Streets and Circulation:

Since the shoreline and sea are public resources, public and pedestrian access along the entire waterfront should be prioritized. Streets should be extended through to the water and used as street end CAMA access points (signed and maintained as such)

Other Concerns:

As always, the conversion of shoreline from natural to artificial should be avoided due to the negative impacts associated with loss of habitat and associated ecosystem services. Some of these uses and structures are located in environmentally vulnerable areas that will become further challenged as seas rise. Careful consideration should be given to which places should be armored in place and which should retreat or make accommodations to retract. Public infrastructure investments in these areas will likely also carry greater maintenance costs and could potentially have cascading impacts that affect overall operations. For instance, saltwater intrusion can contaminate drinking water wells, deteriorate water supply pipes and concrete sewer pipes, and salt water can also negatively impact treatment operations at the wastewater treatment plant. Sea level rise, storm surge, and king tides will also likely exacerbate issues with public service provision in waterfront areas.

Employment Center / Utility (ECU)

General Description:

These employment-supporting land uses are integral to the self-sufficiency of the community. They provide jobs and centers for economic growth. In many other towns, these types of uses are heavily screened or separated from other uses, but in Beaufort they are typically pre-existing and/or are already closely located to neighboring structures.

These areas should not allow lower intensity uses to infiltrate, since this type of land usually already has the unique combination of factors needed to support these higher intensity uses, and the value to the community of these larger employment-generating uses is significant.

Example Uses:

Typical Uses:

Offices, manufacturing, fabrication, and industrial uses, lumber yards or high intensity contractor's offices, breweries and distilleries, transportation, logistics, and warehousing. Industrial-supportive commercial uses are also appropriate, such as wholesale operations. Larger institutional uses, such as hospitals or technical colleges involving industrial uses, but excluding non-intensive uses such as churches and primary and secondary schools.

If Context Appropriate:

- Institutional operations (government maintenance buildings, etc.), provided they do not detract from the overall commercial nature of an area.
- Some outside industrial operations may be permissible, depending on location and the extent of external impacts. Otherwise, it is preferable if operations are conducted inside a building.
- Lay-down yards and outdoor storage of heavy equipment or materials.
- Storage of hazardous materials should only occur outside of areas susceptible to flooding. Best practices would exclude more than just areas in the 100-year floodplain to ensure the risk of environmental pollution is tightly managed, particularly in an area like Beaufort that is so dependent on the natural environment.

Streets and Circulation:

Because these types of uses have requirements that are often specific to the occupant, care should be taken at development to maintain efficient traffic flow and cross access, while also respecting occupant needs. Automobiles and freight are prioritized over pedestrians, although pedestrian linkages are still necessary in some locations. Streets are designed to accommodate larger vehicles and delivery trucks. Typically, blocks should not need to exceed 500' to 600', but in some locations (such as the old Atlantic



Veneer campus) these areas have grown through the years without the appropriate public street connectivity, but it seems to work fine in their current location and current level of activity.

Other Concerns:

With the ever-present high demand for residential properties in coastal communities, it is difficult to argue against old industrial or manufacturing properties converting to residential neighborhoods. In fact, it's almost like lawmakers have to protect commercial and industrial properties from being converted to residential uses. This is especially difficult if buildings are vacant and there is limited demand for manufacturing business space. However, it is important to realize that once these industrially-suited areas are lost they will likely never return in the same neighborhood. This may be tolerable and/or even appropriate, based on the specific situation, but it is a consideration to be discussed, especially given some community members' desire to diversify the employment base of the community away from a sole reliance on tourism. If these properties are lost and demand for those uses still exists, it is likely new sites will be developed elsewhere, potentially not in Town limits, which has impacts on the balance of land uses.

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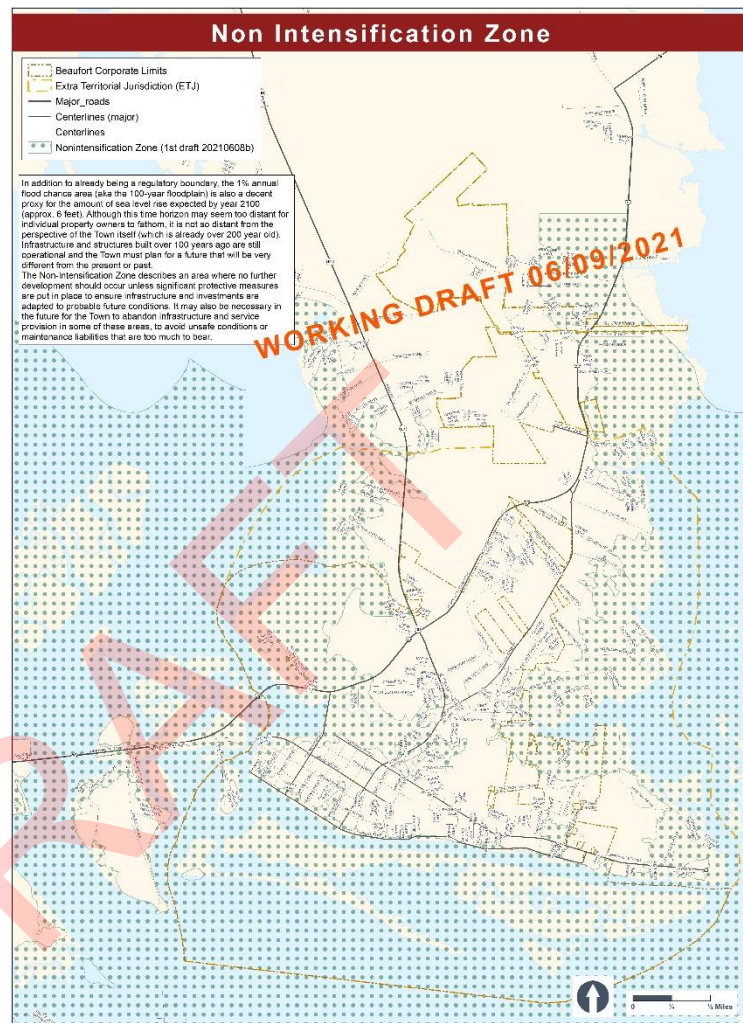
Non-Intensification Zone

General Description:

Beaufort is closely intertwined with the sea, shoreline, and estuaries that surround it. As seas rise, the Town becomes increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters, property damage, and population displacement. The community understands the need to balance these needs of the present against the uncertainties and risks of an uncertain climate future. The Non-Intensification Zone recognizes this vulnerability and seeks to minimize both the threats to the health, safety, and financial security of current and future residents and the Town itself.

The 1% annual flood chance area (aka the 100-year floodplain) is already a regulatory boundary. In addition, this boundary is a decent approximation for the amount of sea level rise possible by the year 2100. Although this time may seem too distant for individual property owners to fathom, it is not so distant from the perspective of the Town itself (which is already over 200 years old). Infrastructure and structures built over 100 years ago are still operational and the Town must plan for a future that will be different from the present and past. The fundamental role of the local government is to protect public health, safety, and welfare by minimizing these negative externalities. As development in the Town continues to intensify there must be an accounting for the associated negative impacts, including but not limited to loss of the natural environment and vulnerability of the built environment to storms and sea level rise.

The Non-intensification Zones describes an area where future development should be limited and public infrastructure should not continue to be intensified unless significant protective measures are put in place to ensure infrastructure and investments are adapted to probable future conditions. The purpose of the Non-Intensification Zones is to protect the residents' safety and quality of life, the community's fiscal well-being, and environmental quality through the recognition of the changing climate and the community's unique vulnerability to it.



Typical Uses:

Single family detached residential of low densities (i.e. – without public utilities) should be the only use allowed in the Non-Intensification Zone, with the exception of existing nonconformities. As uses in these areas are ceased or abandoned, public utilities should be disconnected and any re-use of that property should occur as described above. New development should only occur with the explicit acknowledgement that these properties will not be allowed to install erosion control measures and that any structures placed in these areas will need to be designed such that they can be abandoned or relocated, in order to allow the natural shoreline to migrate as seas rise. Public infrastructure should not be expanded or extended further. In areas that are already intensely developed and are deemed essential to the identity of the Town, such as the Downtown Commercial and Waterfront Commercial areas, it may be appropriate to continue to maintain existing public infrastructure so long as measures are taken to protect such infrastructure against probable future conditions. This may involve elevation of roadways, pipes, and floodproofing of infrastructure.

If Context Appropriate:

- Water-dependent uses, but only if public infrastructure is adequately protected and/or any additional maintenance burden or liability is covered by the private landowner or deemed to be in the public's best interest.

Other Concerns:

As seas rise, the floodplains will expand into areas of Town that are not now currently subject to the requirements of the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area (aka 1% annual flood chance, or 1-in-100 year storm). The Non-Intensification Zone as currently proposed does raise the bar too high, in terms of protection of public infrastructure, but it is a step forward. The Special Flood Hazard Area is not the highest level of protection against flooding, it is the bare minimum required by the federal government. Other communities around the world take flood risk much more seriously than the United States. For instance, the Netherlands designs for the 1-in-4,000 year storm. The Town could decide to be more proactive in their resilience to flooding and storms by choosing a higher benchmark for the Non-Intensification Zone (e.g. the 0.2% annual flood chance area) and/or could implement additional flood protection standards in areas greater than the Special Flood Hazard Area.

The financial cost of floodproofing all of the Town's infrastructure is likely beyond the capabilities of the Town without significant outside investment, and outside investment is unlikely to occur in areas that are of high flood risk. It may also be necessary or prudent in the future for the Town to abandon public infrastructure and service provision in some of areas, to avoid unsafe conditions or maintenance liabilities that are insurmountable. This type of decision will have significant impacts on private investments as well as public financial interests. However, as private and public entities (Moody's, FEMA, etc.) continue to better understand and communicate the financial risks associated with sea level rise and future climate conditions, communities that take measurable actions to minimize their liabilities will surely be viewed more favorably than if they had not.

Purpose

The Beaufort CAMA Land Use Plan is a comprehensive planning document that establishes a high-level vision, goals and objectives for the community. It serves as a long-range “policy” tool to guide Town decisions regarding environmental concerns, housing, land use, recreation, town services, transportation, and economic development.

The adoption of this plan will fulfill the requirement of the Coastal Area Management Act and implement the new requirements of North Carolina General Statue 160D-501 which requires any North Carolina community to have an adopted “comprehensive plan” in order to apply zoning regulations.

The Plan is based on community feedback and captures a vision of the Town created by its residents, boards and staff. When Town staff and appointed or elected boards are making development and budget decisions, they will analyze how those decisions will or will not support the vision, goals and policies in this plan.

Over time, this planning document is meant to be implemented incrementally through actions of the Town, its partners, member of non-profit organizations and private businesses/landowners. The Plan is also meant to be regularly analyzed to account for new development and changes in conditions or market trends.

How to Use This Section

As mentioned, this section is not organized according to management topic, but by goals, which were formed through the community engagement process. These goals reflect desired outcomes as a result of implementing this plan. Within each goal, objectives, policies, and actions are enumerated that will guide Town toward achieving the goals for the lifespan of this plan.

This section can be read as follows:

1. Goal – a desired outcome to be achieved over the lifespan of this plan

- a. **Objective** – More specific than goals, these are measurable outcomes of different elements that contribute toward a goal.
 - i. **Policy** – A principle or guideline that will be used for making a variety of local decisions designed to accomplish the goals and objectives. These policies guide the Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and town staff.
 - 1. **Action** – Specific actions and activities that can be taken to implement and advance the plan’s policies.

Regarding the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA):

The Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) outlines five Land Use Plan Management Topics that must be addressed in a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) land use plan. They include: Public Access, Land Use Compatibility, Infrastructure Carrying Capacity, Natural Hazard Areas, and Water Quality. A CAMA-compliant comprehensive land use plan must address these management topics to ensure that plans support the goals of the CRC. Each required management topic includes a Management Goal and a Planning Objective, which are specified in the North Carolina State Statutes governing land use planning in coastal communities, followed by recommendations for future action. Some recommendations may align with more than one management topic.

A CAMA land use plan also affords the opportunity for a community to address areas or issues of local concern, which may be asset-based, programmatic, regulatory, geographic, or otherwise. These issues were identified during the land use plan development process and are included herein. The issues do not necessarily align with the exact CAMA management topic structure, but are still locally important. These recommendations are not required to have associated timelines for completion or implementation, although in some cases timelines may be provided. Not all of the recommendations contain specific action items, but that should not be perceived as any less a call to action. In addition, not all of the recommendations outlined herein are immediately ripe for implementation, and (as with the Future Land Use Map) local discretion and Town leadership will determine priorities and timelines. Policies that are not able to be implemented in the short-term will guide future development decisions, so that future development will bring the reality of the Town closer to the vision.

Draft Goals

1. Protect, preserve, and restore our shorelines, sensitive habitats, and waterways.

- a. Protect and improve water quality in the creeks, wetlands, and waterways around Beaufort.
 - i. Reduce and address nonpoint source pollution.
 1. Explore and utilize low impact development strategies and on-site storage for stormwater management. For high intensity areas, like downtown, a regional stormwater approach may be necessary.
 2. Encourage reduction of impervious surface cover and increased use of permeable surfaces in new development.

3. Enhance standards for implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) or green infrastructure stormwater and water quality measures.
4. Retrofit streets and other publicly-owned areas with new or improved Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs).
- ii. Protect and improve the health of vulnerable natural environments such as maritime forests and coastal marshes that help improve water quality.
 1. Actively document marsh and maritime forest loss. Identify restorable areas of each type.
 2. Clearly identify areas where shoreline armoring will and will not be permitted, and where structures will have to relocate as shorelines erode.
- b. Preserve, maintain, and enhance Rachel Carson Reserve.
 - i. Partner with NC DEQ and/or the RCR Local Advisory Committee to continue efforts to protect and enhance the Reserve, especially its habitat quality and storm mitigation features.
 - ii. Create public educational material on the ecological benefits of the Reserve.
- c. Minimize the impacts of tourism and active recreation on natural environments.

Impacts of tourism include soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires.

 - i. Mitigate the negative impacts of water and recreation access points in sensitive environments.
 - ii. Partner with local watersports businesses to direct recreation away from sensitive environments.
 1. Provide educational materials for businesses on areas for recreation away from sensitive natural environments
- d. Minimize and track natural shoreline and habitat loss.
 - i. Educate the public about the public rights to the estuarine habitat and public benefits (property values (even in-land), fisheries value, quality-of-life, etc.) and take a firm stance on not perpetuating further shoreline habitat degradation.
 - ii. Map shoreline habitat and designate where certain types of erosion control measures should be provided.
 1. Clearly designate where the least impactful intervention is needed and/or allowable including:
 - a. First option: Natural shorelines (natural processes: erosion control prohibited, managed retreat of structures)

- b. Second option: Living shorelines (moderately impactful: marsh building, off-shore oyster beds, plantings, etc.), and
 - c. Last option: Hardened shorelines (most impactful and habitat destructive: Bulkheads, seawalls, riprap, hardened shorelines, sills, etc.) should be utilized in only the most urban settings.
- e. Manage litter and water-related debris.
 - i. Enforce anti-littering ordinances and promote education on the impacts of trash on our delicate natural environment.
 - ii. Implement recommendations and steps from the North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan.
 - 1. Launch a stewardship program to engage neighborhoods, property owners, businesses, and institutions around debris prevention and cleanup.
 - 2. Conduct town-sponsored cleanup events and or dedicate maintenance staff to maritime cleanup.
 - 3. Encourage voluntary certification of businesses to generate less waste (e.g., NC Green Travel, Ocean Friendly Establishments).
 - 4. Provide waste reduction toolkits for businesses and households.
 - 5. Ban single use plastics.
 - 6. Recruit volunteer groups to install and manage bins for recycling.

The North Carolina Marine Debris Action Plan was completed in 2020 and the Town of Beaufort participated in the planning process. The full list of action items can be found in Appendix D of the Action Plan.

2. Increase resiliency to natural hazards and climate change impacts for natural and built areas.

- a. Reduce vulnerability by utilizing guidance from the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to focus growth and public infrastructure investments away from flood-prone areas toward higher ground.
 - i. Keep zoning densities lower in vulnerable areas, using the Non-Intensification zone, floodplains, and best available sea level rise projections as guidance.
 - ii. Direct vulnerable land uses, including hospitals, age-restricted housing, group homes, and schools away from vulnerable areas and/or provide support to ensure they can sustain and recover more quickly from storms.
 - iii. Relocate and site sensitive community infrastructure (critical public services and facilities, etc.) outside of vulnerable areas.
- b. Adapt to rising seas
 - i. Manage retreat and contraction of public infrastructure and services away from high vulnerability areas.
 - ii. Use current, best available sea level rise projections and environmental vulnerability knowledge when making public infrastructure investment decisions.
 - iii. Direct public and private investment and capital improvement projects away from vulnerable areas and ensure any public investment in these areas is capable of surviving anticipated future conditions.

The State of Florida has the highest chance of hurricane landfall and is often on the receiving end of around 40% of all US hurricanes in a typical year. (Comparatively, North Carolina receives about 19% of US hurricanes making landfall along its coast.)

With the frequency and intensity of hurricanes increasing due to climate change, cities in Florida have a vested interest in ensuring construction standards are adapting to modern hurricanes.

As such, the Florida Building Code has been regularly updated every three years since 2001, with the 7th edition being released in 2020. It is widely recognized as having some of the most stringent standards in storm resilient building construction (for both new builds and retrofits) in the country, while still based on the International Building Code (IBC) that is used in the US. Many state reference FBC standards or developed their own requirements using the FBC as a framework.

The Town of Beaufort should utilize this resource when making updates to local construction standards.

<https://floridabuilding.org/c/default.aspx>

- iv. Mitigate tidal and storm surge flooding through structural improvements that prepare infrastructure for long-term resistance to environmental threats.
 - 1. Identify and map priority areas, such as at key locations along Front Street or Town Creek.
 - 2. Identify vulnerable roads, water, sewer, and stormwater pipes, electric facilities, and other public infrastructure and elevate/armor against rising seas.
- c. Protect against future storm damage
 - i. Increase storm-safe construction standards, utilizing the most up-to-date code language by industry leaders, such as the Florida Building Code or the IBHS FORTIFIED Home criteria.
 - 1. Launch a town-led retrofitting campaign that encourages residents to brace their homes against storms.
 - 2. Explore funding opportunities to increase residential fortification.
 - 3. Increase freeboard requirement in 100- and 500-year floodplain (aka 1% annual chance and 0.2% annual chance, respectively).
 - ii. Establish a localized program to rapidly clean up debris from destroyed homes that are in highly vulnerable areas. For instance, an annual fee could be used to build fund reserves for use after storms to quickly clear debris from homes that are destroyed. This fee might be scaled based on the structure's vulnerability. Such a fee could expedite cleanup activities and protect water quality.
- d. Adapt to shoreline erosion.
 - i. Increase armoring of vulnerable, immovable areas that have high or irreplaceable community value (i.e. – historic downtown).

The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety created an above-code voluntary program called FORTIFIED Home, which contractors can be certified in. This program is designed to help individuals build, re-roof, or retrofit homes to protect against severe weather, and offers a commercial property program as well. The FORTIFIED roof requirements include specific material and installation methods for stronger edges, sealed roof decks, better attachment, and impact-resistant shingles in hail-prone areas.
<https://fortifiedhome.org/about/>
<https://strengthenyourroof.com/Home/ProgramRules>

- ii. Establish a prohibition on hardening shorelines in all locations other than immovable areas that have high or irreplaceable community value (i.e. – historic downtown).
- e. Expand emergency preparedness efforts.
 - i. Develop an annual education and outreach program for residents and property owners that includes sea level rise, storms, shoreline erosion, evacuation procedures, and preparedness materials.
- f. Coordinate fast, equitable disaster recovery.
 - i. Examine and update policy standards surrounding resiliency.
 - ii. Examine infrastructure and services redundancy measures and incorporate new technologies as necessary.

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3. Encourage a diverse and affordable housing stock that serves the needs of current residents.

- a. Encourage efforts to make housing more diverse and affordable.
 - i. Create a Town affordable housing plan.
 - ii. Increase options for workforce housing.
 - 1. Allow diverse home types such as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), townhomes, and house-scaled multi-family units in all residential zoning districts.
 - 2. Encourage or require multiple housing types within a single development.
 - 3. Adopt standards for vertical mixed use (aka “live/work”) in appropriate locations.
 - iii. Consider a local public/private partnership to build and operate affordable housing. [*insert Charlotte Case Study: [Roof Above](#)*]
- b. Regulate short term rentals so that housing is preserved for local occupation. (see callout box on options)
 - i. In single family neighborhoods not near tourist attractions:
 - 1. Restrict whole-house short term rentals.
 - 2. Allow short term rental of up to two bedrooms where the operator resides on-site (i.e. – similar to bed-n-breakfast).
- c. Encourage context sensitive infill housing and development/ redevelopment of substandard or underutilized sites.
 - i. Identify barriers to infill development within town development codes and ordinances, and make updates.
 - ii. Consider specific by-right policies to allow for higher density infill in existing neighborhoods [[Affordability Strategies](#)]
- d. Increase walkability in neighborhoods.
 - i. Require bicycle and pedestrian connections (and future connection opportunities) within and between neighborhoods and new developments.
 - ii. Adjust zoning district standards to reflect the block lengths of the future land use character areas.

4. Ensure infrastructure and public facilities keep up with increasing demand and changing environmental conditions.

- a. Foster a safe, connected street network where roads are in good condition and accommodate all users.
 - i. Introduce traffic calming downtown.
 - ii. Conduct a street condition survey.
 - iii. Improve sidewalks connectivity, accessibility, and condition.
 - iv. Coordinate with NCDOT on priority street improvement projects and funding.
- b. Increase stormwater management and resiliency methods.
 - i. Continue to manage and expand existing stormwater infrastructure, including the potential for regional stormwater management for built-out, troubled or vulnerable areas.
 - ii. Evaluate and update impervious surface standards.
 - iii. Assess stormwater facilities' resiliency to rising seas and identify needed upgrades.
 - 1. Identify and codify priority for low-lying areas such as Front Street and Charles Street.
 - iv. Encourage and utilize low impact development strategies for stormwater management, if feasible.
- c. Maintain the quality and availability of public drinking water.
 - i. Upgrade/relocate public wells as needed to keep up with demand and maintenance.
- d. Ensure sewer treatment capacity keeps pace with demand.
 - i. Plan to increase capacity (When anticipated?)
 - ii. When upgrading facilities, relocate, elevate, or armor against future hazardous conditions or events.
- e. Evaluate parks and recreation needs and facilities and establish a level-of-service standards for parks.
 - i. Identify priority acquisition and facilities development based on current and future needs and pursue those projects.
- f. Continue to provide adequate, responsive public services, including land and sea activities.

5. Embrace and leverage our unique economic assets and opportunities.

- a. Identify and promote Beaufort's historical, cultural, and artistic assets to develop a sustainable economy that supports a high quality of life for year-round residents.
 - i. Partner with Carteret County and the Chamber of Commerce to conduct a formal economic evaluation of assets, opportunities, obstacles, and competitive positioning, with particular focus on ecotourism, arts and crafts (especially environmentally-inspired and sustainably-sourced arts), maritime industry, remote work, airport, port-related, etc.
 - ii. Create a marketing plan for Beaufort based on the assets found in this study.
- b. Continue to support existing small businesses and encourage new local businesses.
 - i. Promote local events that help to increase commerce for local businesses.
 - ii. Research and update ordinances that might inhibit local businesses.
- c. Explore economic development opportunities that create non-tourism jobs.
 - i. Target businesses that employ workers year-round at living wages.
- d. Continue to support the Michael J. Smith Field as an asset to Beaufort's economy.
- e. Support workforce training programs and/or encourage education through incentive policies.
 - i. Coordinate with similar local and regional initiatives to expand program visibility and participation
- f. Explore the potential for what the Town and its partners can do to extend and install infrastructure for high-speed internet. This will likely involve a regional planning effort in coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.

6. Support a multi-modal transportation system that is convenient, safe, and accessible, especially for non-automobile transportation (walkers, bikes, etc.).

- a. Increase multi-modal connections to neighborhoods.
 - i. Create new connections and opportunities for future connections. (insert map)
 - 1. Create and improve connections to parking facilities, hotels, commercial areas, employment centers, and water transport destinations.
 - 2. Connect to and further efforts to create a statewide greenway network



- b. Enhance cycle and pedestrian facilities to meet current design standards.
 - i. Implement Bike/Pedestrian Plan improvements where possible.
 - ii. Install pedestrian crosswalks and signals at major intersections.
- c. Increase safe cycling facilities and designate primary routes throughout Town.
 - i. Follow latest NCDOT standards in bike facility design (WalkBikeNC Plan, see Design Toolbox).
 - ii. Focus on facilities that improve safety and comfort for users of all ages and abilities (“ages 8-80”).

d. Utilize Universal Design principles to expand accessibility.

- i. Upgrade existing sidewalks, crosswalks, town parking lots, and town indoor facilities to meet ADA standards.
- ii. Require new facilities to meet or exceed ADA standards and apply Universal Design when able.
- iii. Use the ADA transition plan as guidance.

e. Implement active parking management solutions downtown.

- i. Optimally utilize existing parking by encourage satellite or shared parking.
- ii. Encourage parking turnover using techniques such as time limits.

f. Improve and maintain maritime facilities, safety, and services as a means of transportation

- i. Complete the Harbor Plan and upgrade Town-owned docks and infrastructure as needed.
- ii. Connect multi-modal transportation network to marinas and ferry dock (map showing ferry route).
 - 1. Work with local ferry services to plan for increasing use.
 - 2. Boat tours and commuter travel would necessitate different pricing options to support local commuters.
- iii. Increase boat launch opportunities. (map)
- iv. Expand convenient kayak storage areas.
- v. Increase kayak launch points.

Universal Design

Defined originally as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” Universal Design, when applied to the built realm, describes a place without ramps, outdoor lifts, or costly additions and alterations. Universal Design should be a forethought in master planning and site design, and when done well, no accessible route is needed.

<https://www.planning.org/planning/2016/mar/designforeverybody/>

<https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/>

7. Protect our unique character by enhancing and maintaining our natural resources, recreational opportunities, historic downtown, and cultural resources.

- a. Preserve the character of Beaufort's built environment.
 - i. Update town ordinances with design standards that help ensure new development fits its context.
 - ii. Identify and inventory character-defining building stock in existing character areas such as the Live Oak Street corridor. Create a list of contributing building features that the town can incorporate into a
 - iii. Incorporate development standards that implement the character descriptions proposed in the future land use character area descriptions.
 - 1. Examples include setbacks, parking location, materials, transparency, roofline, and massing standards from building design inventory.
- b. Continue to support downtown as a cultural, economic, and community asset.
 - i. Continue to offer public events and activities downtown and expand offerings to make events more inclusive and accessible.
 - ii. Enhance connections between natural and recreational assets and downtown Beaufort for non-motorized users.
 - 1. Identify areas where cycle and pedestrian access between these points is lacking or unsafe and implement upgrades.
 - iii. Expand public art downtown.
- c. Preserve Historic Beaufort
 - i. Continue local-level protections of historic assets and districts.
 - ii. Consider expansions if warranted to increase community character.
- d. Protect existing neighborhoods that give Beaufort its small-town charm.

- i. Short-term rental regulation.
 - 1. Mitigate impacts such as parking, noise, trash, etc.
 - 2. Consider additional options for regulation.
 - ii. Maintain the small-town character
 - 1. Identify regulatory methods to encourage property owners to maintain character
- Regulation of Short-Term Rentals:**
Menu of acceptable options to be developed further, but may include: separation, restriction to particular zoning districts, perhaps in some districts operators must reside on-site (similar to bed-and-breakfasts), establish guidelines for how many bedrooms is too many, design requirements, etc.
- e. Increase parks and recreation access to increase the level of service for all residents.
 - i. Identify areas underserved by parks and incorporate solutions into future park planning.
 - ii. Balance active and passive recreation opportunities.
 - iii. Continue implementation of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, including the creation of multi-use paths (aka greenways) around town.
 - iv. Establish a goal to incrementally increase the percentage of existing and new residential structures within ½-mile of a greenway/bicycle route or trail access point.
 - 1. Identify current percentage of existing homes within ½ mile of access points.
 - 2. Determine where potential connections are most needed and where they can be created.
 - v. Maintain and expand recreational facilities and programming.
 - 1. Expand programming for senior and the under-18 demographics.
 - f. Increase public water and natural resources access while balancing the need for preservation.
 - i. Update the Town Waterfront Access Plan. (insert map with access points and opportunity areas shown).
 - ii. Secure street terminations with signage, maintenance, parking areas, simple amenities (ex - benches), and clear demarcation of boundaries.
 - iii. Pursue extension of existing dead-end streets to provide additional access points and create interconnection opportunities.

8. Celebrate, recognize, and amplify the voices of our diverse community.

- a. Increase public participation from minority groups.
 - i. Set targets for representation on Town boards and volunteering where minority representation is at least consistent with the Town's demographics.
 - ii. Track demographic information on participants for town public engagement.
 - iii. Set benchmarks for increased minority participation in town public engagement, including meeting attendance and survey responses.
 - iv. Incorporate new public engagement strategies such as community group outreach, neighborhood meetings or pop-ups, and translation services to increase participation among minority groups.
- b. Incorporate equitable hiring practices for Town staff positions.
- c. Address flooding and slow storm recovery in vulnerable communities.
 - i. Consider a Community Recovery and Development Plan that includes specific recommendations for vulnerable communities. See the [Community Recovery Management Toolkit](#) provided by FEMA for more information and case studies.
 - ii. Implement a program that provides recovery resources to low-income residents.
 - 1. Partner with the North Carolina Housing Coalition to address localized affordable housing issues.
 - iii. Prioritize stormwater infrastructure improvements where it will directly impact vulnerable communities. Some types of infrastructure investments can be more cost-effective and contextually appropriate than others, like expansion of natural areas or permeable green infrastructure.
- d. Celebrate local and regional Black and minority history and historical contributions to Beaufort and the region.
 - i. Provide educational signage at historical sites that illustrates the historical contributions, struggles, and victories of Black and minority residents.
- e. Support community organizations that represent economically, socially, and racially diverse groups.

Regulation of Short-Term Rentals:

Community Recovery and Development Plans help communities improve their resiliency and start mitigation and disaster-recovery planning so they can be more proactive and less reactive.

- i. Create and maintain an updated list of community organizations that represent these groups and include them on sunshine list email communications.
 - 1. Identify and address barriers that prevent these groups from receiving Town communications.
 - 2. Prioritize outreach to these groups during public engagement processes.
 - ii. Provide Town support for these groups when they host public events.
- f. Equitably distribute town funds, projects, and investments.
 - i. Track public investments to ensure they are equitably distributed.
 - ii. Establish an equitability standard for projects using town funding.

DRAFT

Future Land Use Map

Beaufort Corporate Limits

Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

Neighborhood Activity Areas 1000 ft

Community Activity Areas 2000 ft

Proposed Connections and Improvements

Street

Street or Multi-Use Path

Multi-Use Path

Bicycle Route or Multi-Use Path

Future Land Use Character Areas

Conserv., Open Space, Parks, Environ., & Rec.

Rural/Working Lands

Suburban Residential

Traditional Neighborhood Residential

Compact/Multi-family Neighborhood

Neighborhood Node

Commercial Center

Downtown Commercial

Waterfront Commercial

Employment Center, Utility, & Infrastructure

Employment Ctr. or Suburb. Resid.

Right of Way

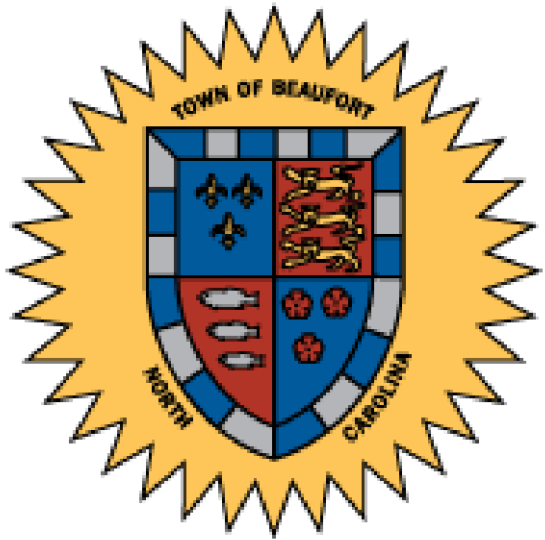
Non-Intensification Zone

In addition to already being a regulatory boundary, the 1% annual flood chance area (aka the 100-year flood plain) is also a decent proxy for the amount of sea level rise expected by year 2100 (approx. 6 feet). Although this time horizon may seem too distant for individual property owners toathom, it is not so distant from the perspective of the Town itself which is already over 200 year old). Infrastructure and structures uilt over 100 years ago are still operational and the Town must plan for a future that will be very different from the present or past.

The Non-Intensification Zone describes an area where no further development should occur unless significant protective measures are put in place to ensure infrastructure and investments are adapted to probable future conditions. It may also be necessary in the future for the Town to abandon infrastructure and service provision in some of these areas, to avoid unsafe conditions or maintenance or operational liabilities that are beyond tolerance, unsafe, or too burdensome.

Street, Bicycle Route, and Multi-Use Path routes are not prescriptive, but show the desire for an overall connection between two areas. This map is not all-inclusive and other priority routes are also shown in other adopted plans.

WORKING DRAFT 06/18/2021



Beaufort NC Comprehensive and CAMA Land Use Plan

