

# 4

## *Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan*

### Future Land Use



**Table 4-4: Status of Beaufort County's Community Preservation (CP) Areas**



Beaufort County's Community Preservation (CP) Areas

CP Area	Status
Alljoy Road (Brighton Beach)	Completed (April 2005)
Big Estates	Waiting initiation
May River (Bluffton)	Completed (Sept 2010)
Buckingham Landing	Completed (June 2007)
Corners Community	Completed (Feb 2002)
Dale	Completed (Dec 2000)
Daufuskie Island	Completed (Sept 2010)
Lady's Island	Completed (March 2000)
Lands End	Waiting initiation
Polk Village	Removed*
Pritchardville	Waiting initiation
Sawmill Creek	Removed*
Seabrook	Completed (Aug 2003)
Sheldon	Waiting initiation
Tansi Village	Waiting initiation
Shell Point	Completed (Nov 2002)

\*In 2003, Polk Village was rezoned to Urban and Sawmill Creek was rezoned to Rural Residential. This implemented a recommendation from the 5-year review of the Comprehensive Plan in 2002.

### OTHER PLANNING INITIATIVES

In addition to the above plans, the county currently employs several planning tools and strategies to assist in the implementation of the various plans. The following is a summary of some of these tools.

**Rural Policy Assessment:** Beaufort County undertook a comprehensive review and evaluation of planning policies related to development in the rural areas. This effort was a direct implementation strategy dictated by the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan. The results of this assessment are incorporated into the comprehensive plan. Most of the changes are incorporated into this chapter, while others have been incorporated into the Cultural Resources chapter.

### AICUZ Protection and Transfer of Development Rights

**Program:** In October 2004, the County Council, City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal adopted the Lowcountry Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), the purpose of which was to cooperatively plan for and protect the present and future integrity of operations and training at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort. One of the recommendations that came out of the JLUS was for the three jurisdictions to develop a coordinated "AICUZ Overlay" district for all land affected by accident potential and/or noise zones associated with the air station.



Entrance to the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort

Approximately 13,000 acres of unincorporated land in Beaufort County fall within one or more of the AICUZ footprints, and about 10,000 of these acres are currently undeveloped. In December 2006, the County Council adopted the new overlay regulations, which limited the type and density of development that could occur within the AICUZ boundaries. The City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal subsequently adopted the overlay district. To prevent long-term encroachment of incompatible development around MCAS and to provide some economic relief for those landowners affected by the new overlay district, the local governments agreed to explore the feasibility of establishing a transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Such a program would essentially “transfer” development out of the AICUZ zones and “send” it to other “receiving” areas within the growth boundary that have been targeted for additional density. A property owner in the receiving area who agrees to buy the development rights would compensate a property owner within the overlay district who sells their development rights. Through a grant received from the U.S. Department of Defense, the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) contracted with a consulting firm to evaluate the feasibility of such a program and to develop a specific TDR process for Beaufort County. This project is currently underway. If the program proves to be successful for the AICUZ area, it may be expanded in the future as a way to further preserve land within the rural areas.



Land at the headwaters of the Okatie River preserved through the Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program.

**Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program:** Beaufort County’s Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Program (RCLPP), established by Ordinance in 1999, is an effort to provide a means by which lands may be protected by fee simple purchase or conservation easements. Beaufort County contracted with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to manage the program, negotiate with property owners and to assist in the purchase of properties. The Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Board was set up to prioritize properties and make recommendations to County Council. The Board consists of eleven citizens representing a cross section of the County and the municipalities. In 2004, the County adopted a “Greenprint” map to help narrow the geographical areas to target preservation efforts. Based on citizen input gathered at a number of public meetings, TPL developed focus area maps to concentrate the program’s money.

The RCLPP has preserved more than 10,000 acres of land with approximately 120 acres designated as historic, more than 9,000 acres slated for preserves, and over 600 acres established with conservation easements.

their rural character with low-density residential development, supporting small-scale commercial development, and agricultural land uses. The maximum gross residential density in rural areas is one dwelling unit per three acres. Rural land uses within the growth areas should meet the development guidelines established for rural land uses outside of the growth areas.

### LAND USES OUTSIDE OF THE GROWTH AREAS

The policies outlined in this section are a result of a comprehensive review and evaluation of existing rural planning policies. Land uses for the areas of Beaufort County located outside of the growth areas are classified into the following categories:

**Rural:** Rural areas are situated outside of the growth areas. Except where noted, these areas should retain their rural character with low-density residential development, supporting small scale commercial development, and agricultural land uses. Future development in rural areas is anticipated to be similar to the type and mix of land uses currently found in the Sheldon area, St. Helena Island, and along the SC 170 corridor between McGarvey's Corner and the Broad River Bridge. The maximum gross residential density in rural areas is one dwelling unit per three acres. Rural areas should not be targeted with the development of major public infrastructure or the extension of public sewer service except where a documented health, safety, and/or welfare condition warrants such an expansion.

**Rural Development Guidelines:** Future development in the rural areas should occur pursuant to the following guidelines:

- Utilization of the purchase of development or transfer of development rights program (as described in the Recommendations section) is highly encouraged in this area to preserve open space and the rural character;
- Higher densities may only be considered when appropriate wastewater treatment is available and the higher density is offset by preserved land; and
- The clustering of development may be considered as a rural and natural resources preservation technique when the proposed development maintains the overall proposed gross density and is clustered on lots compatible with surrounding areas.
- Small-scale commercial (primarily retail and service uses) that serve the surrounding rural neighborhoods are encouraged where there are existing concentrations of commercial uses such as Lobeco and Garden's Corner.



Albany Grocery Store in the Dale Community Preservation Area.

**Rural Community Preservation:** These areas correspond with the areas designated as “community preservation areas” in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan that are located outside of the growth areas. The

**Recommendation 4-3: Adopt and Implement the Recommendations of the Rural Policy Assessment**

Once the county completes the rural policy assessment process that is currently underway, the county should review the recommendations and consider for adoption. Upon adoption, this plan, the ZDSO, and other county plans should be amended to incorporate the recommendations.

**Recommendation 4-4: Update the County Land Use Regulations**

Beaufort County will update the county's zoning and development standards ordinance to incorporate the related recommendations of the regional plans and to facilitate the Future Land Use element of this comprehensive plan. In particular, the county will consider incorporating the following recommendations:

- Incorporate the development guidelines and recommendations established in this plan and in the regional plans; and
- Encourage mixed-use developments, where proposed, through revisions that will expedite review procedures and provide density incentives.
- Codify requirements that allow for the county, municipalities, the school district, and where involved, the military, to review and comment on major development proposals and annexations. This action would require that any application for an annexation or proposed rezoning will be sent to the planning directors, or similar official, of the relevant review body prior to the public hearing on the application. Any comments provided by such planning official will be included in the review packets for the subject annexation or rezoning.

**Recommendation 4-5: Continue to Utilize and Expand Existing Tools to Further the Policies of the Comprehensive Plan**

This plan identifies some of the major tools, beyond zoning, that the county already uses in order achieve the goals established as part of this plan. The county should continued to utilize these tools, identified in *Planning Framework* section, with the following recommendations:

- Implement the TDR program recommendations that arise from the evaluation currently underway as part of the AICUZ Overlay district surrounding the Marine Corps Air Station.
- Consider expanding the TDR program, described above, based on the results of the initial program around the Marine Corps Air

Station to preserve rural areas and provide financial relief to large rural property owners.

- Continue to utilize the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program as its strategy for purchasing development rights. This program should be used to preserve as much rural lands as feasible. For the purposes of this comprehensive plan update, the county should also consider revisions to the current program to encourage more protection of rural and critical lands on St. Helena Island and in Sheldon.
- Continue to promote the establishment of conservation easements as a method of protecting rural lands, natural resources, and the rural character of Beaufort County. This program should be further studied by the county and coordinated with the efforts of the TDR and PDR programs as well as the Open Lands Trust.

#### **Recommendation 4-6: Utilize Development Agreements to Accomplish Goals of this Plan and the Regional Plans**

The county should utilize development agreements, where feasible, to accomplish the goals set forth in this plan and the regional plans. These agreements can be utilized to implement a number of the recommendations including coordinating development in the growth areas and protecting the rural character of the county.

Any development agreement must be consistent with the comprehensive plan and land use regulations that will be implemented following plan adoption. Development agreements are discouraged in areas where development impacts may affect the provision of essential services and available infrastructure. The process by which the agreement is negotiated must be a public process to ensure that potentially affected citizens are notified and aware of any potential impacts.

#### **Recommendation 4-7: Establish and Adopt Baseline Standards for PUDs and Development Agreements**

The county will work with the municipalities to establish and adopt uniform baseline standards for Planned Unit Development (PUDs) and development agreements. For PUDs, the standards should address the following issues, at a minimum:

- Open Space;
- Environmental Protection;
- Traffic Mitigation;
- Connectivity; and
- Access Management.