

# process

04-01-2009 DRAFT

The Buck Island Simonsville (BIS) Neighborhood planning effort is one of two recommended community planning efforts made through the Town's Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in September 2007. This planning effort is also a result of an overwhelming amount of community concern for existing and future conditions within the Neighborhood.

The effort represents a partnership of interested property owners, community members, merchants, developers, Town staff, local elected officials, county and state agencies, and non-profit organizations.

The BIS Neighborhood Plan was developed during interactive public workshops and a charrette process spanning over seven months. The purpose of the public workshops and charrettes was to provide a forum for residents and community stakeholders to describe their vision for the future of the Buck Island Simonsville Neighborhood. Prior to the start of the planning process Town staff met with the local ministerial group, Town Council, Planning Commission, and community leaders to discuss the planning process and its goals.

Plan recommendations were developed with input from the public workshops, advisory group meetings, elected officials, and Town staff. Identified topic areas were:

- Community Identity and Neighborhood Involvement
- Natural Resources
- Community Development
- Planning, Zoning, and Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Utilities and Infrastructure
- Public Safety

## advisory group

An advisory group was formed as a part of the neighborhood planning process. The advisory group was made up of a combination of residents living in the neighborhood, elected officials, local business leaders, and pastoral leadership within the community.

The advisory group, which met in between the larger public meetings, served two primary roles. The first was to assist Town staff in further identifying community issues and opportunities. The second was to help develop the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan.

The group assisted Town staff in prioritizing major issues in the Buck Island Simonsville Neighborhood. These priorities were derived from workshop conversations, community survey results, and other plan-related discussions. These priorities, as identified by the advisory group, are listed in the appendix in bold.



Figure 3: Public meetings are critical for obtaining feedback from residents.

## public workshops

The planning process was designed as a collaborative and interactive endeavor. A survey was sent to property owners in the study area to gauge neighborhood satisfaction and determine priority issues to examine through the planning process. The survey results, as well as results of the kick-off meeting, helped form the agendas for the workshop meetings.

Subsequently, a series of charrettes brought decision makers and members of the community together to help shape the direction of the Buck Island Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. The charrettes brought out issues, opportunities, alternatives, and solutions for current and future planning initiatives. Results of the survey and meetings can be found in .

### kick-off meeting

The planning process began with a kick-off meeting held on June 2, 2008 at Town Hall, where over 70 property owners, stakeholders, and Town officials were in attendance. The meeting format included the introduction of staff, an overview of the existing condition data collected, and an interactive visioning exercise. Part one of the exercise consisted of a series of questions of likes and dislikes within the community as well as things the community would like to see changed. Part two of the exercise allowed participants to rank their likes, dislikes, and recommended improvements according to priority.

### public workshop I

On June 16, 2008, Public Workshop I was held at the Oscar Frazier Rotary Community Center. The workshop format was in the form of a charrette. Using large scale maps participants worked in four groups:

- land use and zoning
- traffic and transportation
- housing
- community identity

### public workshops II-IV

On July 14, August 4, and August 25, 2008 speakers from the Town, County, and State spoke to the community on special projects within the community and about concerns of the community. Speakers for these three workshops included the following Town agencies: Environmental Protection Division, Engineering Department, and Construction & Compliance Division. Other speakers included Beaufort County Transportation and Traffic Engineering, South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Bluffton Township Fire District, and Beaufort County School District. Topics such as road improvements, pathways, fire safety, police programs, and building codes were discussed at these sessions. These meetings were set up as forums where the speakers provided short background summaries of current projects/activities, followed by a question and answer session.



Figure 4: Multiple public meetings, involving local community members, helped guide the planning process.

