

The Northern Area Plan
Beaufort and Port Royal as partners in a Metro Service Delivery Platform
Presented to the City/Town Councils of Beaufort and Port Royal
September 14, 2009
Scott Dadson, City Manager
City of Beaufort

“What is a City? it is a place; it is a cradle of culture; it is the crucible of creativity; it is a container; it supplies the heartbeat and signature for a region; A good City is one that works, with basic services delivered efficiently, has transportation linkages, has overcome fragmentations of governmental units, it fits into the metropolitan, multi-centered region as part of a larger whole...”(Hudnut, 2007)

The City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal are two historic and geographically intertwined towns in Northern Beaufort County nestled upon the Beaufort River and Battery Creek waterways of Port Royal Island. While they are two separate legal governmental entities, with each a special history, and have their own unique sense of place, they also share common service delivery efforts. For years now, the two jurisdictions have worked together in the delivery of public services from Fire to Recycling. The two towns have also worked together on smaller, one-time projects such as stormwater, park, and right-of-way projects. Our Police departments share in managing the border and over-lapping jurisdiction lines to ensure public safety. This was visible during the 2007 McTeer Bridge incident, an event that altered the traffic patterns of Northern Beaufort County for several months.

The Beaufort-Port Royal Joint Planning Commission represents a shared governance structure of which the results are considered as they affect physical land use elements of both jurisdictions. Beaufort and Port Royal each providing staff support to it this board yet each maintains its own standards of review and compliance. While planning and zoning documents and processes vary, the authority of the board and their recommending nature create an opportunity to better manage growth and to reduce fractionalization of service delivery of essential public services and their associated cost of capitalization.

Both Jurisdictions are part of the Northern Area Planning effort, in partnership with Beaufort County. The Northern Area plan (<http://www.bcgov.net/Planning/documents/NorthernBeaufortCountyPlan6-28-07.pdf>) has several common goals regarding growth in the Northern Region of Beaufort County (an area affectionately known as North of the Broad, Broad being the Broad River). Both the City and the Town are currently working on their own Comprehensive Plans and both plans seek to coordinate with the Northern Area Plan, to achieve common goals.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the intent of the City and the Town, who working together, wish to coordinate the land-use planning process and delivery of public services with the County, within the Growth Boundaries established by the Northern Area Plan, with a “Metro” strategy. Both the City and the Town believe that land-use planning/development and public service delivery are intrinsically tied and buoy each other for a positive outcome for the community at large.

A Coordinated Growth Platform

“...a coherent and supportive physical framework... its own identifiable center and edges” (CNU, Charter)

In developing their comprehensive plans, both the City (see; <http://visionbeaufort.blogspot.com/>) and the Town (see; http://www.portroyalsc.org/pdf_2009/PR_Comp_Plan_draft02.pdf) have attempted to coordinate the principles of the Northern Area Plan with their own unique jurisdictional and metro-like affects. At a recent meeting of the Northern Regional Plan Implementation Committee, all present agreed to study the issue of a Metro Planning Commission. This effort bodes well with the intent of the Northern Regional Plan, and the intent of both the City and Towns Comprehensive Plans.

The City of Beaufort, in adopting the Intergovernmental Agreement to carry the various Goals of the Northern Area Plan forward, did so with the intent of working together with the Town of Port Royal and the County in the development of strategies for the successful implementation of this plan. The City, for its

part in approving the Intergovernmental Agreement, stressed that it is committed to common goals expressed in the Northern Area Plan. The City further stressed that the planning should be led by the Cities in cooperation with the County recommending that the items to be tackled first are the expansion of the Beaufort Port Royal Joint Planning commission to include county representatives and working to define service levels, service costs and the governance issue (See: Appendix A)

The Town of Port Royal, in their Comprehensive Plan, articulates the other parts of this issue to include agreement on the growth boundaries associated with the municipalities doing the urban planning and the county doing rural planning, as well as multi-jurisdictional planning such as transportation, and environmental planning thus allowing all involved to plan for growth in an efficient and predictable manner.

An additional, yet equally as important aspect of support of the plan and approval of the intergovernmental agreement by the City of Beaufort and the Town, is that land-use approvals for development be tied with the ability to have urban service levels, as provided by both the Town and the City, as part of the approval process. Defining the services necessary, the services levels, the service cost and governance are important in understanding what land-uses should be approved and where they should be approved within the Growth Boundaries.

A Metro Service Delivery Platform

“...as mortgage bankers and developers, we have financed for others or built for our own account most of the components of a city—but they have been splattered over the countryside in the unrelated bits and pieces that mark the accidental, fractured growth of our cities.” James Rouse, developer of Columbia, MD (Olsen, 2003)

What is a “Metro Service Delivery Platform?” It is the inter-municipal cooperation or functional consolidation of public services whose outcomes are meant to facilitate economic development, service provision or democratic voice in a region with an ultimate goal of eliminating political fragmentation. The objective of a “Metro Service Delivery Platform” is to focus on the efficiency of service delivery to the end user. These end users are customers, investors (taxpayers), and citizens.

The City of Beaufort has finished its draft of its comprehensive plan. While this plan has yet to be adopted, there are some nuggets of information that we can glean from this report as they deal with the current positive relationship between town and city and further serve as a baseline for a “Metro Service Delivery Platform.” Here is what our plan says about service delivery:

Explore a service delivery model that employs a metro-like structure. As noted, the patchwork quilt of service delivery in the Urban Growth Boundary is extremely inefficient. In addition to requiring more efficient development patterns, the city and its regional partners should explore a framework of urban service delivery that ensures an adequate, consistent, and equitable level of service for urbanized areas. The most successful metro service agencies are those that are able to break down the jurisdiction barriers and focus on the efficiency of service delivery to the end user. (Chapter 5, VisionBeaufort, 2009) see <http://visionbeaufort.blogspot.com/>

What about this notion of the elimination of political fragmentation? There are several ways to look at this, the least of which is the prioritization of public services and a discussion as to their necessity, but, I digress. Those options for public service delivery include intergovernmental agreements, contracts with private providers or other quasi-public service providers, regionalism, functional governance, and the like. Regardless of the service delivery platform, these services need to be discussed within the parameters of service delivery standards.

Service Standards should have a direct relationship with that Capital Structure that underwrites and the governance attached. And, while the “cost” of a public service (local government) is not set by a national or industry standard but rather by that organizations [sic] needs, wants, and political economy, there is a need to understand the environment for which the service exists. Those issues within the context of the service delivery environment include:

1. Economies of Scale
2. Convenience of performing the task
3. Distribution of Natural Resources
4. Surplus physical facilities; and,
5. The need for duplication of services or the reduction of certain re-dunencies.

Further, in order to create the necessary level of Accountability, Authority, and Equity regarding Urban Service provisions within the Northern Area Growth Boundary, a certain level of Intergovernmental Cooperation and Functional Consolidation should be studied and considered. The objective here is to understand what services should be delivered, by whom, and most of all, who benefits as a result of any such arrangement.

Working Together to Properly Grow a Region

As first mentioned in this paper, the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal enjoy both the Planning and Cost of Services model now. In a presentation to the Councils of jurisdictions, this relationship and the possibility of expanding this relationship was presented and discussed. [This presentation is posted on the following page, along with this paper:

http://www.cityofbeaufort.org/Departments/City_Manager/Default.aspx].

In this presentation, there was discussion of the current Joint Planning Board, Fire Services, and Recycling programs, their cooperative nature and yet, how each jurisdiction maintains its own unique “senses of place.” The discussion was expanded to consider further residential sanitation, business Liscence, and street sweeping (see; Appendix B). It is proposed that these opportunities for public service be pursued by the City and Town but further that they serve as model in which to continue our relationship with the County as we discuss the Northern Area Plan and its ultimate strategic intent.

What does it Cost (see; Appendix C)? We have built a cost model of the typical City in Beaufort County. Based upon this, the Metro Planning Commission, and the Metro Service Delivery Platform, the effort, while expanding the efforts between the two jurisdictions, serves a model to move forward with. This is important to emphasis. We have a working model, let’s use it. Let’s learn from the current economic crisis and the efforts by the City of Beaufort to correct its cost structure (see; http://www.cityofbeaufort.org/client_resources/city%20manager/getting%20our%20heads%20out%20of%20the%20sand%20rev%20cwm.pdf) and move forward with working together to properly grow a region!

Appendix A.

Here is an excerpt from the adopting resolution of the Northern Area Plan Intergovernmental Agreement adopted by the City of Beaufort in July of 2009:

WHEREAS, Council wishes to initiate implementation of the recommendations and policies set forth in the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan with the full expectation that all participants will demonstrate similar commitment toward that objective; and

WHEREAS, Council believes that governance should be metro-driven within the growth boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Council desires the City, Town, and County to work toward expanding the current joint planning commission by adding representatives from the unincorporated area and giving the commission authority within the growth area; and

WHEREAS, the Implementation Committee should continue to work toward resolving the issue of noncontiguous upzonings; and

WHEREAS, the Implementation Committee should work towards defining service levels, service costs, and governance; and

WHEREAS, the Intergovernmental Agreement should be coordinated with the City's Comprehensive Plan, using the Comprehensive Plan as a baseline.

Figure 1. From City of Beaufort adopting resolution dated July 14, 2009

The Town of Port Royal, in their Comprehensive Plan, defines this effort as follows:

As part of the Northern Beaufort Regional Plan, the jurisdictions involved all came to agreement on growth boundaries associated with each of the municipalities. As stated in the regional plan, these growth boundaries allow for the municipalities to plan for their growth in an efficient and predictable manner. Likewise, growth boundaries allow for the county to plan for rural areas and focus its attention on countywide issues such as transportation and environmental resources in a cooperative manner with the municipalities. Therefore, the planning areas included in the Port Royal Comprehensive Plan extend beyond the town's current town limits as agreed upon in the Northern Beaufort Regional Plan.

Specific to this effort towards regional governance regarding the planning process are the following goals from the Northern Area Plan:

Common Goal 1: The City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, the Town of Yemassee, and Beaufort County will coordinate growth in Northern Beaufort County, especially around the current and future edges of the communities.

Common Goal 14: The regional planning effort will require future intergovernmental coordination to implement this plan.

Appendix B

Public Services: Raising the Standards and Lowering the Cost

Presentation Outline by Scott Dadson, City Manager

City of Beaufort, SC

Sept 2009

- I. The Way to Lowering our Cost Structure
 - a. Sanitation Services
 - b. Limited Landscape Maintenance Contracts for;
 - i. Right of Way,
 - ii. Small Pocket Parks, and
 - iii. Open Space Operations and Maintenance (O/M)
 - c. IT Services
 - d. Development/Code Services
 - e. Keeping a Core level of Service Labor, Capital, and O/M
- II. Where the City and Town currently work together
 - a. Fire
 - b. Recycling
 - c. Planning
- III. What Opportunities Exist to expand the relationship?
 - a. Sanitation
 - b. Parks
 - c. Specialty Parks- Rail to Trails
 - d. Business Liscence Administration
 - e. Stormwater
 - f. Human Resources
 - g. Street Sweeping (which is really part of Stormwater)
 - h. Right-of-Way and Open Space Services

Appendix C

FUNDING A TYPICAL MUNICIPALITY IN BEAUFORT COUNTY

Article by Jim Hicks,
September Edition of LIBPA Newsletter,
Ladys Island, 2009

Scott Dadson, the City Manager for the City of Beaufort, in an effort to get a better handle on the city budget, did some research which produced a great deal of very interesting information (if you enjoy statistics). One of the more interesting things he and his Finance Staff did was to take the period 2001 to 2007 and for that seven years combine the annual budgets of the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal, Bluffton and Hilton Head and using that data compile a financial picture of a composite municipality in Beaufort County. Following are some of the points of interest regarding this composite municipality

Revenue. Money to run the composite municipality came primarily from local sources (86%) with only 10% being received from state sources, 1% from federal sources and 3% from other sources. Two of the primary sources of revenue obtained from local sources were real and personal property taxes (27%) and license fees and permits (30%). Indicative of the amount of growth in Beaufort County over the period 2001 to 2007 the amount of revenue received by the composite municipality almost doubled over the 7 year period. These increases were due mostly to an increase in Business License receipts, mostly from contractors related to the housing industry and to consumption vis-a-vie. Contrary to popular belief, the increase was not from increased values in real property as they, at the time of reassessment, are required to be kept revenue neutral. Any increases were the result of growth of the total amount of improved real assets.

Expenditures. The annual cost to run this composite municipality went from \$28.9 million to \$79.8 million or almost tripled over the 7 year period. In spite of this increase in the cost to operate the municipality there was more revenue coming in than was being spent until 2007 when the housing bubble burst and the economy took a nosedive. In 2007 the composite municipality spent more than it received in revenue and was forced into a deficit spending mode.

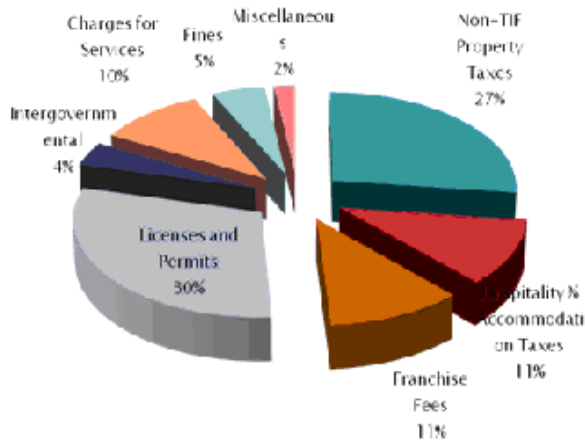
Cost of Running a Municipality. Following is a typical annual budget for this composite municipality

Area	% of Total Annual Budget
General Government	31%
Public Safety	47%
Transportation	4%
Public Works	6%
Recreation and Cultural	4%
Debt Service/Interest on Debt	2%

Purchase of Land and Facility Construction	11%
All Other	1%

It must be noted that the percentage figures are not indicative of any single municipality but rather a composite of the 4 major municipalities in Beaufort County. For example, the City of Beaufort in the past fiscal year and the current fiscal year, have lowered their cost structures by more than 25%, making hard decisions in service deliver, human resources, and capital. The City has however, due to its efforts been able to create a five year financial policy that controls the loss of revenue all the while improving the delivery of public services through efforts such as cost control and outsourcing. Mr. Dadson has a web page on the City of Beaufort web site on which he has a straight talking type article entitled “Getting our Heads Out of the Sand” and in addition to the research, from which this article was derived, is some thoughts on defining the cost of public services. These are challenging times and we, as a community, are lucky to have professional managers such as Mr. Dadson who have both the ability to take a hard look at how we are running our governments and the professional courage to tell it like it is.

FY 2008 GENERAL & PARK FUNDS REVENUE MIX



Beaufort, Port Royal, Bluffton & Hilton Head Combined Revenue Mix

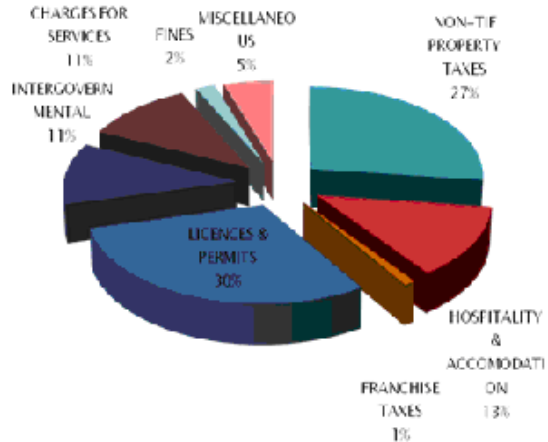


Figure 2 Composite Capital Structure