

Guiding the Future for a Lasting Lowcountry

Comprehensive Plan Update
Charleston County, South Carolina

Planning Commission
Sixth Meeting
March 27, 2008



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Clarion / ACP Team

Work Session Overview

Meeting outcomes and expectations (10 minutes)

VI. What have we so far done? (15 minutes)

VII. What have we learned? (30 minutes)

VIII. Break (10 minutes)

IX. Plan recommendations (2 hours)

X. Plan structure and form (15 minutes) (vote)

MeadWestvaco discussion

XIII. Workshop Summary and Next steps (10 minutes)



Meeting Outcome and Expectations

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Meeting Outcome and Expectations

- 1. Provide a thorough update to Planning Commission on the status of the project*
- 2. Establish clear direction on land use policies*
- 3. Establish clear direction on representing the recommendations (plan structure and form)*
- 4. Affirm approach for completing the update process – four decision points*



Decision Points

1. Comprehensive Plan Goals
2. Land Use Objectives
3. Land Use Map Approach and Matrix
4. Plan Structure and Form



VI. What have we done so far?

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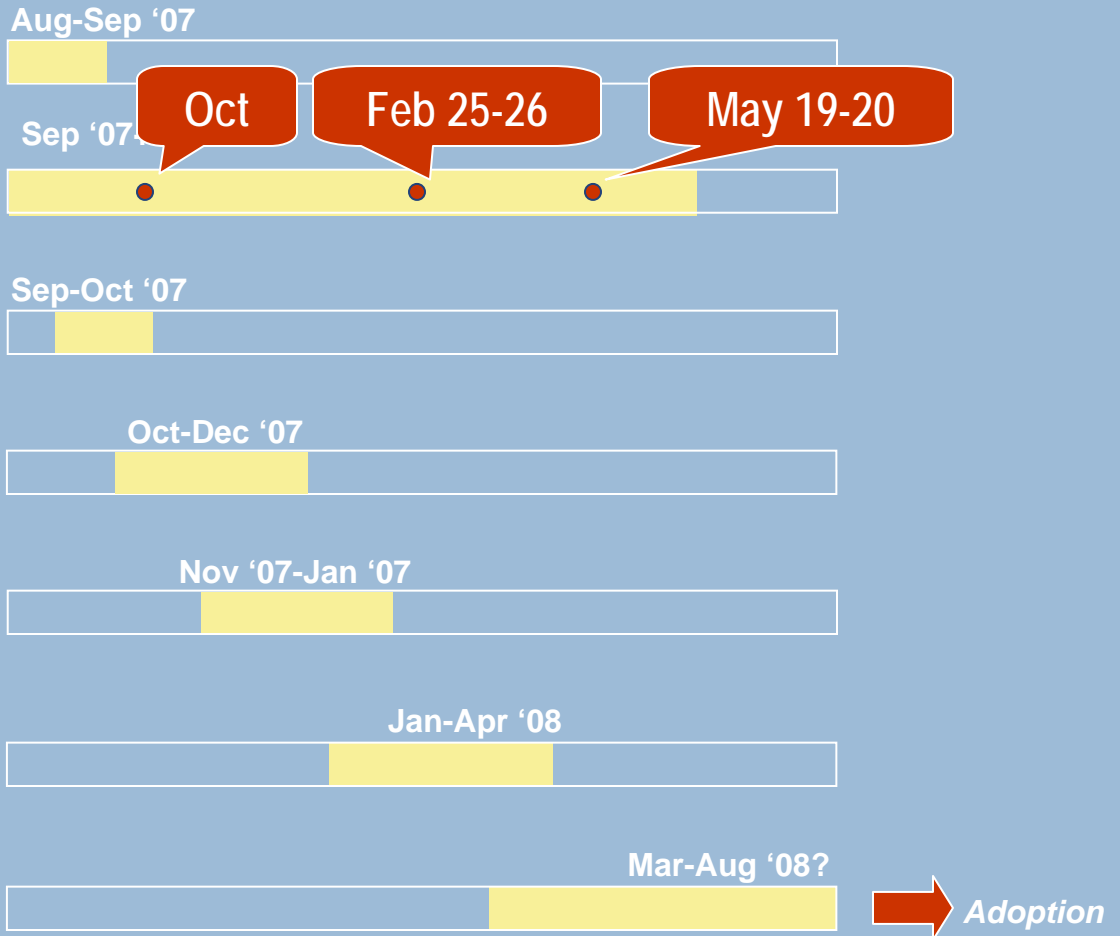
VI. What We Have Done So Far?

- Worked closely with Planning Commission (6 meetings)
- Two series of four public workshops each
- Existing land use analysis and population forecasts
- Coordinated with agencies and service providers
- Coordinated with municipalities
- Refined goals and land use objectives
- Created an outline and format for the plan



Major Phases and Timing

- A** Project Set-up
- B** Public Participation
- C** Data Collection & Analysis
- D** Development Capacity
- E** Trends/Demand Analysis
- F** Policy Development
- G** Draft Plan



VII. What Have We Learned?

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VII. What Have We Learned?

...from our research

...from the public



Research Results

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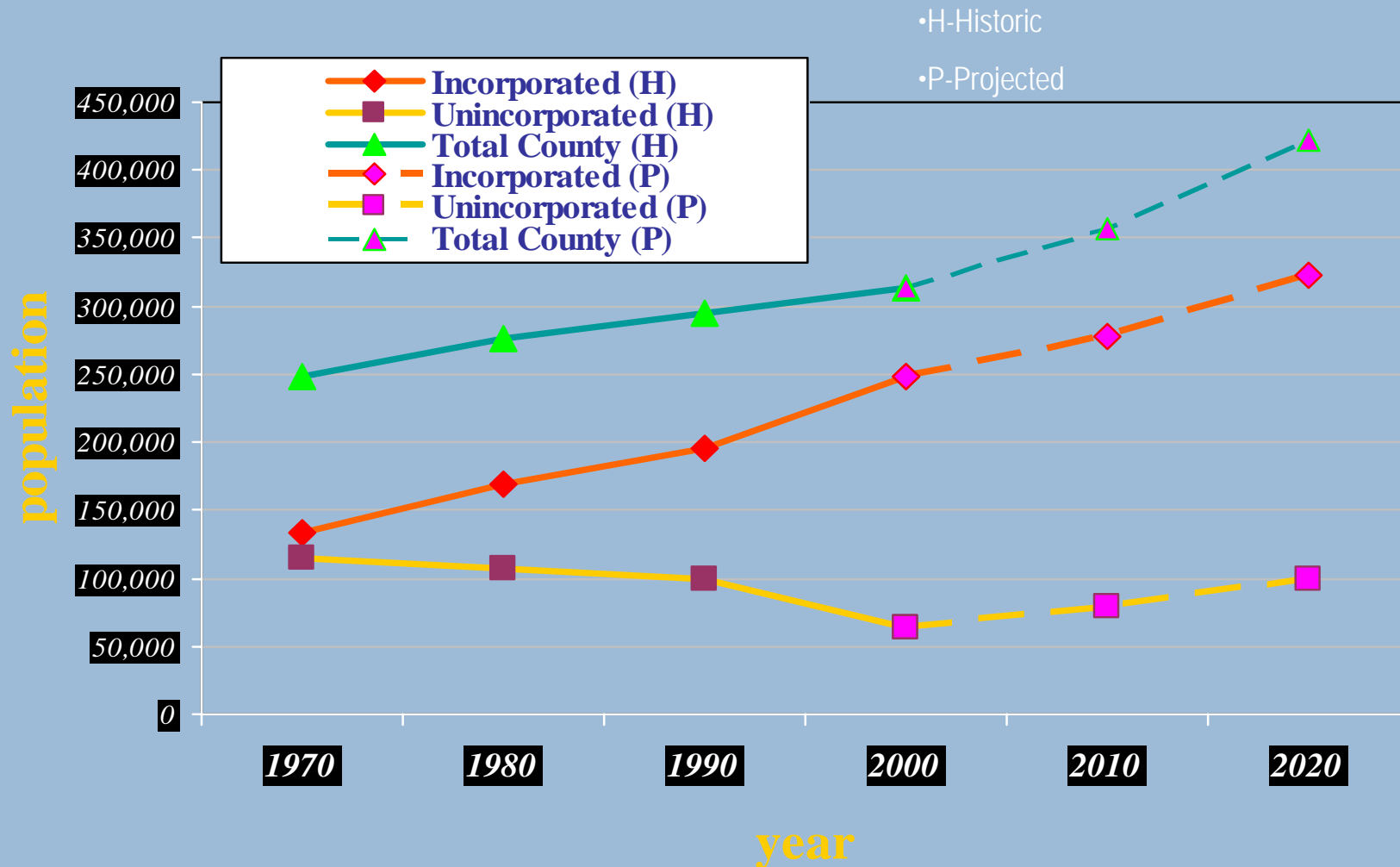
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Population Forecasts and Land Use

- Total county population forecasted to grow from 340,000 to 425,000 by 2020
- Unincorporated population forecasted to grow from 75,000 to 100,000 (12,000 new dwelling units) by 2020
- Adequate capacity in the county under current land development policies to accommodate growth through 2020 and beyond

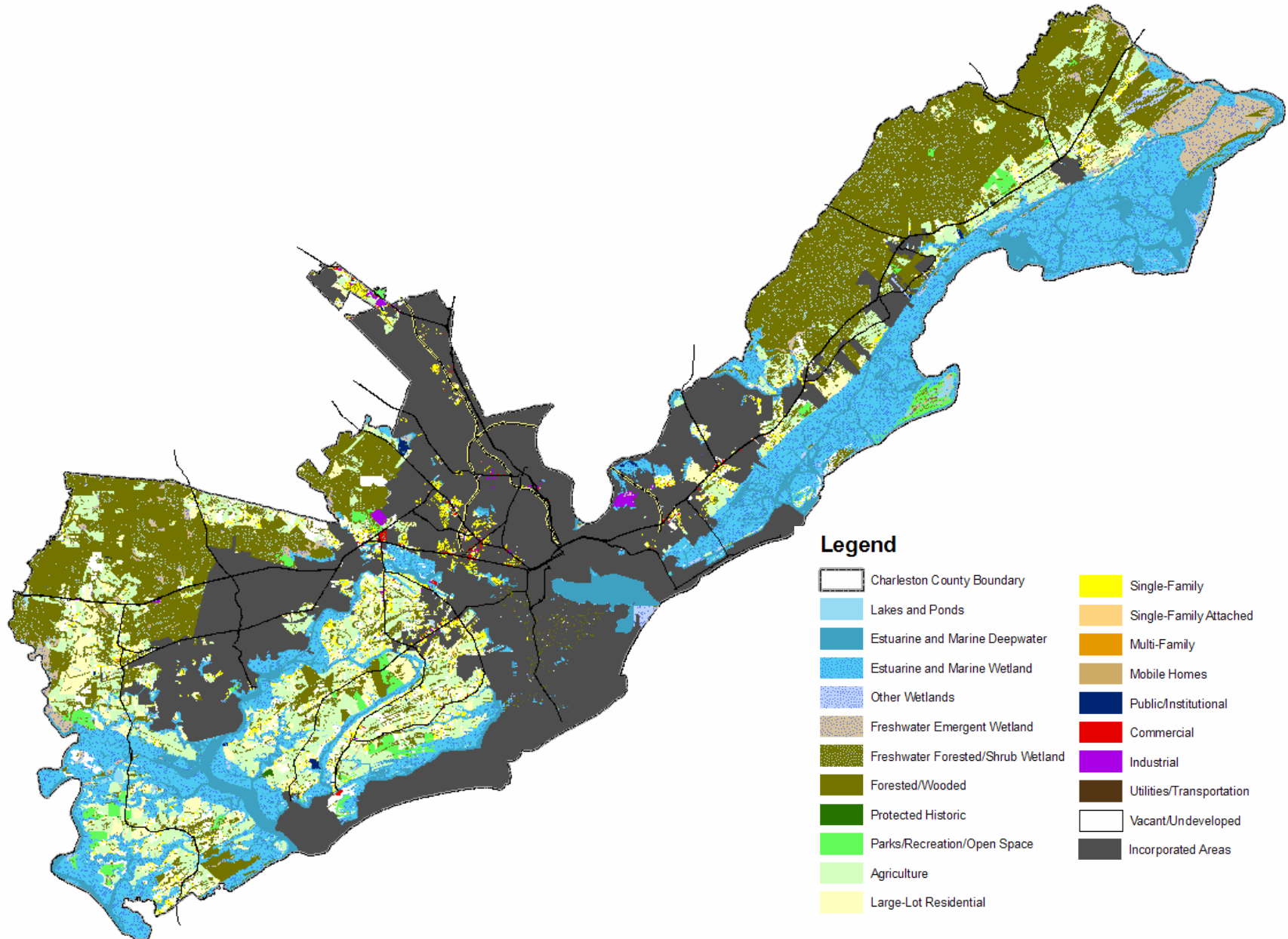


Charleston County Population Growth 1970-2020

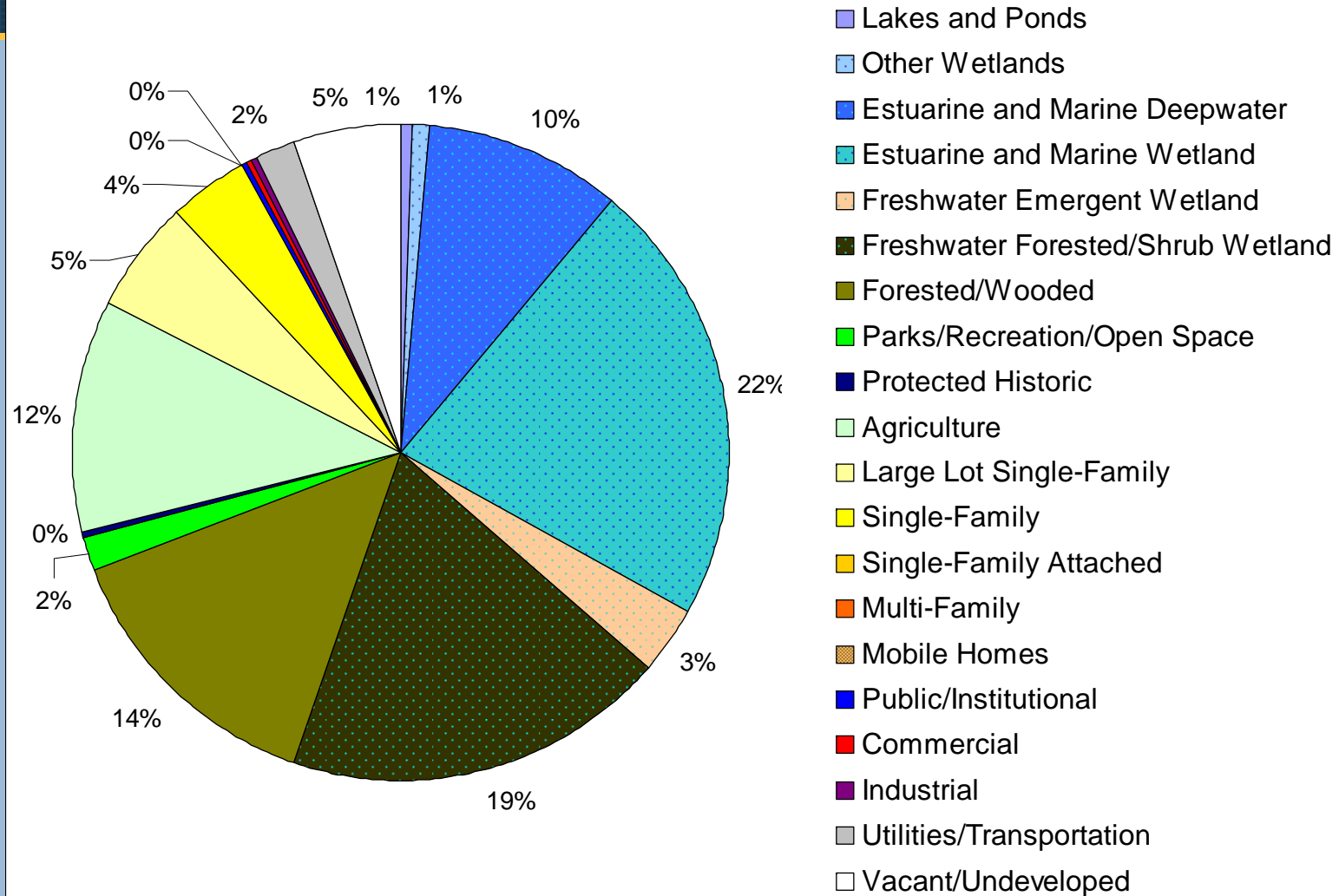




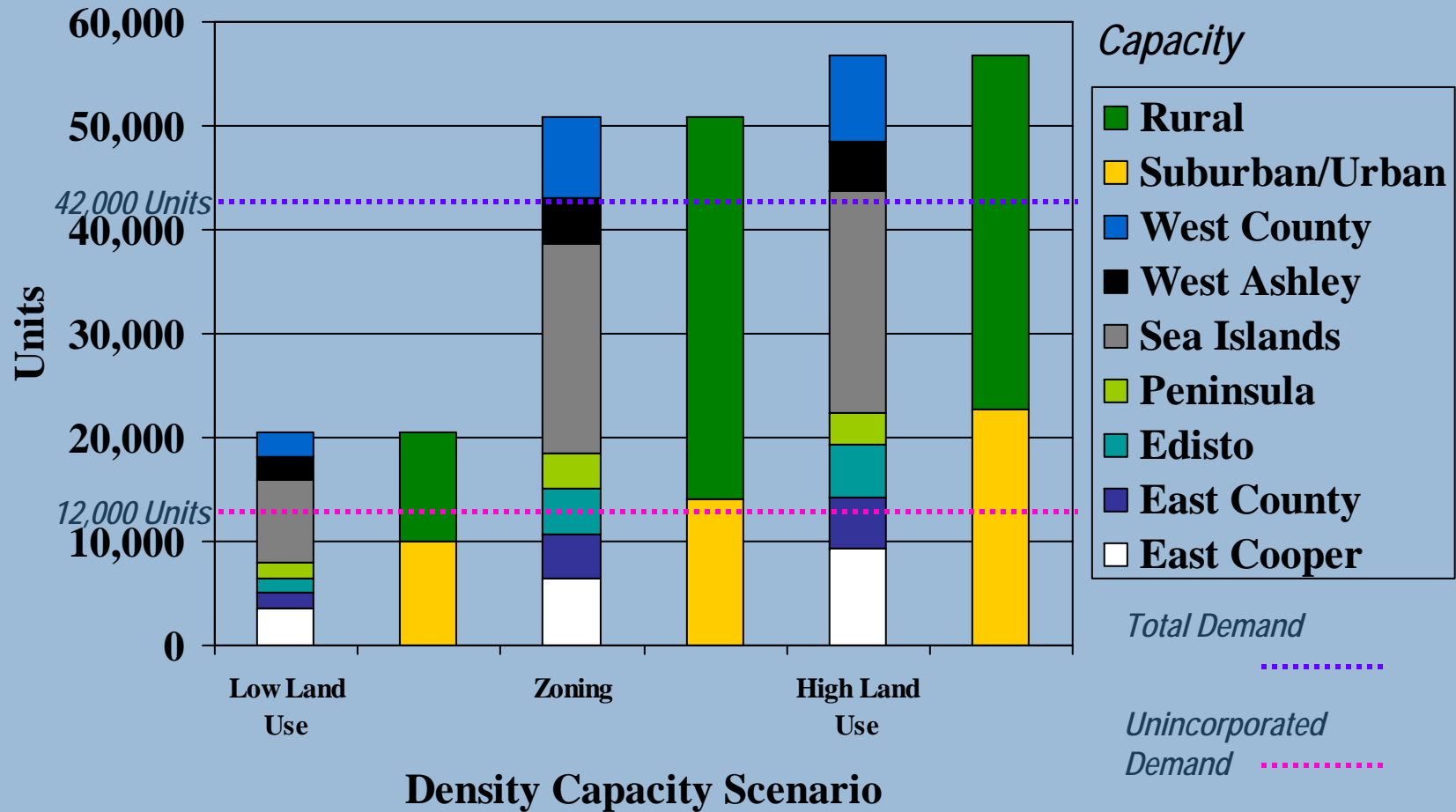
Existing Land Use



Unincorporated Existing Land Use Summary



Residential Demand vs. Capacity



High demand includes total residential demand for the whole county.

Low demand is the residential demand for just the unincorporated county.



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Workshop Results

Public Workshops,
Round 2
February 25 and 26, 2008



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Meeting Purpose

To continue gathering public input in the comprehensive planning process by thinking about how and where growth should occur in Charleston County.



Agenda, Workshop 2

- Welcome: Why are we here?
- Presentation: What have we learned?
- Evaluate Proposed Goals
- Evaluate Land Use Objectives
- Break Out Groups
 - *Character Area Locations and Descriptions*
 - *Character Area Visions and Intentions*
- Report Small Group Work
- Exit Questionnaire



Major Themes

- Support for goals and objectives
 - All scored positively
 - Natural resources and Land Use received strongest support
 - Clarification and minor refinement
- Strong support for focus on character
 - Clarifications provided by participants
 - Additional clarifications needed
 - A different way of formulating land use policy
- Some skepticism about commitment to follow-through



Major Themes from Work to Date

1. Strengthen the plan, but stay the course
2. Improve quality and character of new growth
3. Simplify and make the plan more user friendly
4. Strengthen urban growth boundary concept



1. Stay the Course

- Consensus that current plan embodies the right values for preservation and growth
- Little interest in changing the existing / planned geographic pattern of land uses
- Little interest in changing the basic densities in plan



2. *Improve Quality and Character*

- More of a focus needed on preserving and creating community character through improved design
- Work within the existing / planned geographic pattern of land uses and densities
- Preserve and protect, especially rural and natural character
- Framework: a character area approach to land use, while maintaining critical land use provisions



3. *Simplify and More User Friendly*

- Current plan is 450 pages long, while most people use only the land use map and density chart
- Revised plan will be less than 100 pages long
- Simplify the hundreds of goals, objectives, and policies
- Respect community aspirations
- More strategic and measurable
- Improved graphics



4. *Strengthen Urban Growth Boundary*

- Current plan never uses the terminology, yet the public perception is that there is an urban growth boundary in the plan
- Current plan has no provisions for an intergovernmental approach to considering modifications



VIII. Break

10 Minutes



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IX. Plan Recommendations

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IX. Plan Recommendations

- Comprehensive Plan Goals
- Land Use Objectives
- Land Use Map
 - Rural Example



Why Have Goals and Objectives?

- Goals and objectives establish the direction of the plan
- Provide the framework for the other elements of the plan
 - land use, public facilities, natural resource protection, implementation tools
- Should be strategic and focused
- Are required by statute



Why Have Goals and Objectives?

Terminology:

Goal: A desired end state that the community aspires to...

Objective: A more specific (sometimes measurable) statements that help further define and focus goals.



Comprehensive Plan Goals

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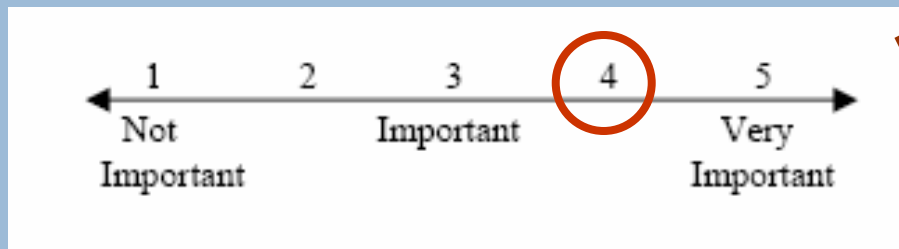
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Evaluate Proposed Goal

Review proposed goal
Record your responses on
the worksheet provided
Indicate level of importance
for each of the draft goals



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Draft Goals Worksheet

Introduction

Your comments are very important to us. Please use this worksheet to provide input on the nine draft goals for the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Update. These goals are intended to reflect the desired future for the Low Country for each of the nine required elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Please indicate the importance of each goal by rating it on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not important and 5 = very important). **If you have comments** related to a specific goal, please record them in the space provided.

No.	Goal	Level of Importance (Circle the appropriate score)
1	Population: A socio-economically diverse and growing population will be accommodated by Charleston County in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner with particular attention to low to moderate income residents. Comments – Population Goal	← 1 2 3 4 5 → Not Important Important Very Important
2	Economic Development: Charleston County will be an integral part of a strong, diverse, and growing regional economy, providing economic opportunities for its citizens and fostering fiscal health for county government services and facilities. Comments – Economic Development Goal	← 1 2 3 4 5 → Not Important Important Very Important
3	Natural Resources: Unique Low Country natural resources, such as rivers, creeks, wetlands, aquatic and wildlife habitat, beaches and dunes, groundwater, forests, farmland soils, and air quality will be preserved, mitigated from any potential negative impacts of growth and development, and/or enhanced. Comments – Natural Resources Goal	← 1 2 3 4 5 → Not Important Important Very Important



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Natural Resources:

Unique Lowcountry natural resources, such as rivers, creeks, wetlands, aquatic and wildlife habitat, beaches and dunes, groundwater, forests, farmland soils, and air quality will be preserved, mitigated from any potential negative impacts of growth and development, and/or enhanced.



Natural Resources Comments:

- Natural Resources are vital to the character of the lowcountry
- Preservation of farmland, beaches and rural character
- A preservation approach should balance growth and development



Draft Goals

4.4

2/9

Land Use:

Land resources will accommodate high quality growth in a way that respects the unique character of different parts of the county, promotes economic opportunity where appropriate, respects private property rights, is coordinated with the provision of community facilities, and protects natural resources.



Draft Goals

4.4

2/9

Land Use Comments:

- Respect property rights
- Preservation
- Limit undesirable development
- Protect the natural environment and the character of existing communities



Cultural Resources:

Cultural, historic and archaeological resources, unique settlement patterns of traditional Lowcountry communities (such as historically African-American communities and family settlements), and traditional activities will be preserved and protected from potential negative impacts of growth and development.



Cultural Resources Comments:

- Preservation of cultural resources and assets
- Preservation of cultural resources should not overly restrict development and property rights



Draft Goals

4.0

4/9

Transportation:

A transportation system that is coordinated with land use patterns, community character, and promotes alternative ways to move people and goods with an acceptable level of service that supports economic development and maintains a high quality of life.



Transportation Comments:

- Lack of transportation management can undermine other goals
- Transportation improvements should not adversely impact rural character and the environment
- Enhance road connectivity
- Expand public transportation service



Draft Goals

3.8

5/9

Economic Development:

Charleston County will be an integral part of a strong, diverse, and growing regional economy, providing economic opportunities for its citizens and fostering fiscal health for county government services and facilities.



Economic Development Comments:

- Improve fiscal health
- Concern that economic development could affect community character
- Some support regional economic development initiatives, while others support local economic development



Community Facilities:

Community facilities and services will be provided in a fiscally responsible manner with adequate levels of service and will be coordinated with surrounding jurisdictions and will be linked to land use planning and development decisions so that community facilities and services have capacity for expected growth and are in place when needed.



Community Facilities Comments:

- Importance of jurisdictional cooperation
- Ensure facilities are available to serve the existing population
- Limit growth by constraining the expansion of water and sewer service



Draft Goals

3.8

5/9

Housing:

Quality and affordable housing will be encouraged for people of all ages, incomes, and physical abilities.

Comments:

- Let market forces dictate housing supply
- Use planning and zoning to guide new housing
- Need more affordable housing
- Housing near employment centers



Draft Goals

3.7
8/9

Priority Investment:

Public infrastructure projects will be prioritized through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

Comments:

- Should be achieved through collaboration among government entities and private investment



Draft Goals

3.5

9/9

Population:

A socio-economically diverse and growing population will be accommodated by Charleston County in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner with particular attention to low to moderate income residents.



Draft Goals

3.5

9/9

Population Comments:

- Population growth should be managed
- Focus on diversity and support of all income levels
- Growth should mainly serve the existing population



Decision Point: Comprehensive Plan Goals

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Land Use Objectives

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Land Use Objectives

4.6
1/7

Protect and enhance creek and river front lands, beaches, and access to beaches and waterways.

Comments:

- Concern that “protecting” and “enhancing access” to natural areas are conflicting interests



Land Use Objectives

4.2

2/7

Implement design concepts that enhance the quality of development along commercial corridors, establish scenic corridors, and establish areas of environmental and cultural significance.

Comments:

- Limit development
- Clarify language



Land Use Objectives

4.0

3/7

Foster the rural character of land outside suburban communities, allowing for lower density development.

Comments:

- Clarify language
- Clustering density may provide an alternative to strict "low density"
- No additional development in rural areas



Land Use Objectives

3.9

4/7

Coordinate residential land use patterns with employment and retail development to provide communities and neighborhoods where people can live and work.

Comments:

- Importance of workplace, residential and service proximity
- Encourage walking and reduce commuting



Land Use Objectives

3.8

5/7

Encourage compact growth and moderate density in areas adjacent to existing urban and suburban centers and in designated business and industrial corridors.

Comments:

- Clarify application of this objective
- Promote compact development in designated areas
- Intent should be an alternative to sprawl



Land Use Objectives

3.8

5/7

Support infill of existing vacant sites in urban areas over development in low growth areas, giving high priority to areas of greatest employment and residential density.

Comments:

- Reduce blight and make use of existing infrastructure
- Redevelop brownfield sites
- Allow vacant site to return to a natural state



Land Use Objectives

3.8

5/7

Encourage protection and revitalization of existing developed areas.

Comments:

- Clarify language
- Focus on infill and protect existing areas

