

## INITIAL SUMMARY DRAFT

Comments from Comprehensive Plan Update  
Public Workshop Series 3, July 14-15, 2008  
Report Date: July 25, 2008



# Comprehensive Plan Update

*Guiding the future for a lasting Lowcountry.*

## A. Overview

This document provides an initial summary of public comments received at the third and final round of public workshops for the update of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan. (A full report similar to the reports done for the first two series of public workshops will be prepared.) The summary is based on a review of all public comments offered on the Plan elements and the exit questionnaires. Attached are (1) the individual public comments gathered at the workshops organized by Plan element; and (2) a summary of the exit questionnaire comments.

### Key Observations

- **Support for the Plan:** Attendees were generally quite supportive of the substance of the draft Comprehensive Plan. There are clearly comments that challenge certain aspects—and the staff and consultants will consider them—but the strongest sentiments are supportive. There are comments suggesting ways to clarify some of language included in the draft Plan.
- **Focus on Implementation:** Many of the comments addressed the “how to” in achieving the desired outcomes reflected in the policy recommendations. In many cases this orientation implies acceptance if not support of the recommendations; participants have moved to the next logical step, which is implementing those recommendations.
- **Planning Culture:** Attendees were grateful—if not enthused—for the opportunity to participate in the comprehensive planning process. (Of the exit questionnaires returned, 99% of attendees indicated that they would like to continue to participate in the planning process.) Attendees indicated support for planning the future and think more planning should be undertaken for the County to realize the vision and its potential.
- **New/Previous Participation:** About 1/3 of the attendees had participated in the November 2007 workshops, 40% in the February 2008 workshops, and 27% had attended a County Planning Commission workshop. This reflects a healthy mix of new attendees with attendees that have previously participated in the update process.

## B. Attendance

Site	Attendees
Johns Island/Wadmalaw Island Area	56
West County/Edisto Island Area	51
East Cooper Area	46
Central/Urban Area	<u>28</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>

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## C. Comment Cards

At each of the four workshops, participants could provide written comments on any or all elements of the draft Comprehensive Plan. For the 181 attendees, 385 comments were received.

Outlined below is a summary of the comments for all elements. Themes have been identified by reviewing the three-part structure of the comment card: Comments of Support; Comments of Concern; and General Comments. For all elements, there are insightful and specific comments that should be considered—even if they do not belong to a theme. (The definition we are using for “theme” is a recurring idea—this typically means three or more comments regarding the same idea.)

As you see in the table below, there are many comments of support but they total less than comments of concern. This should not be interpreted that there is more concern than support. (Please keep in mind that participants selected the type of comment (e.g. concern) they offered.) The comments indicate strong support of the draft Plan, especially the land use recommendations. Many of the comments of concern are cautionary relative to the challenges of implementation (e.g. intergovernmental cooperation) as opposed to opposition to the recommendations.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Concern</b>	<b>General</b>	<b>Total</b>
Land Use	28	43	27	98
Economic Development	12	18	12	42
Natural Resources	13	16	5	34
Cultural Resources	10	11	6	27
Community Facilities	7	17	5	29
Housing	9	14	3	26
Transportation	27	35	18	80
Priority Investment	18	17	14	49
<b>Totals</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>385</b>

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## Land Use Element (98 total comments)

- Support (27)
- Concern (43)
- General (28)

### Themes

- Strong general support for the land use direction. (Many from Johns Island/Wadmalaw Island Area workshop)
- Strong expression about the need to formalize the Urban Growth Boundary, with a few comments that it needs to be adjusted or flexible.
- Several map clarifications offered.
- Recognition of the need for cooperation with municipalities.
- Need for some/managed growth—mainly focused on jobs. (West County/Edisto Island Area)

## Economic Development Element (42 total comments)

- Support (12)
- Concern (18)
- General (12)

### Themes

- Strong support of eco-tourism as means to protect natural assets and improve economic conditions.
- Some concern that tourism jobs do not provide a living wage.
- Rural areas need jobs to sustain.
- Support for localization of food sources.

*(NOTE: One comment raises an obvious, but fundamental, question related to the first two themes: "Is a strategy needed that speaks to...balancing environmental versus economic trade-offs for prime development areas in the County?")*

## Natural Resources Element (34 total comments)

- Support (13)
- Concern (16)
- General (5)

### Themes

- Very positive comments of support.
- Encouragement to better understand and continue to protect natural assets.
- Acknowledgement that better regulatory tools are needed.

## Cultural Resources Element (27 total comments)

- Support (10)
- Concern (11)
- General (6)

### Themes

- Very positive comments of support.
- Protection of family settlement patterns reinforced, with specific reference to African American communities. (Cultural Resources Strategy CR4)
- Tension with protecting rural, historical patterns and limiting growth (jobs).

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## Community Facilities Element (29 total comments)

- Support (7)
- Concern (17)
- General (5)

### Themes

- Strong support for new growth to pay for itself.
- Recognition that governmental collaboration needs to be stronger to implement these strategies.
- Recognition that infrastructure extension can facilitate growth and vice versa.

## Housing Element (26 total comments)

- Support (9)
- Concern (14)
- General (3)

### Themes

- Support for broad policy intent, but concerned that there is not enough commitment from County elected officials to realize implementation.
- Recognition that location issues of housing (proximate to jobs) is critical aspect of this topic.
- Recognition that creative tools (regulation, incentives) are needed to work with private developers.

## Transportation Element (80 total comments)

- Support (27)
- Concern (35)
- General (18)

### Themes

- Alternative transportation modes from the automobile are not as strongly addressed they need to be in the draft Comprehensive Plan. Public transportation needs to be emphasized. *(NOTE: This was the overwhelming comment. Some of these comments could be attributable the current rise in fuel prices, but these comments should not discounted because of this.)*
- Many supportive comments on the strategies and approach to transportation.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of the relationship between land use and transportation, especially mixed use.
- Acknowledgement of the importance street/public realm design in contributing to character of place.

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## Priority Investment, Implementation and Coordination Element (49 total comments)

Support (18)

Concern (17)

General (14)

### Themes

- Numerous comments in support of the recommendations.
- Acknowledgement of the implementation challenges, e.g. intergovernmental collaboration, funding, follow-through.
- Need to give more emphasis to implementing mass transit.

*(NOTE: This is the only element in which there were more comments of support than concern.)*

## D. Exit Questionnaire

A review of the attendance rosters indicate that 181 individuals registered for the open houses. In terms of the exit questionnaires, approximately 113 participants completed these forms.