

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Planning Commission Document  
January 26, 2017**

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# Introduction

The Town of Atlantic Beach has a rich cultural history as a preeminent African-American beachfront community. During segregation the town provided access to recreational and leisure opportunities that were otherwise restricted or unavailable to African-Americans. This rich history is further strengthened by the strong connections many Atlantic Beach residents maintain with Gullah-Geechee traditions. In order to preserve this heritage and provide for resident control of the town's destiny, Atlantic Beach incorporated in 1966 becoming one of the few East Coast beachfront communities with African-Americans constituting the majority of land owners.

Over the years, the town's small geography and closed streets system worked to foster a sense of community. Ironically, these same conditions have also contributed to Atlantic Beach's difficulties in attracting new residents and commercial investment. Recent years have witnessed a continued decline in population and much of the town's once thriving beachfront is vacant. Despite these challenges, town residents and officials remain optimistic of Atlantic Beach's bright future.

## Plan & Process

An important tool for communities in defining its vision for long-term growth and development is the comprehensive plan. South Carolina law requires that communities develop and adopt a plan (or select elements) prior to the implementation of zoning and land development regulations, public facility reviews, and an official map. Without a comprehensive plan, communities are limited in their ability to provide meaningful input in the development process and to direct future growth.

The comprehensive plan provides an analysis of a community's existing conditions, an assessment of challenges and opportunities, policies to be pursued, and implementation strategies. The plan's strategies provide actionable activities to be undertaken in implementing the community's vision. In addition, the plan's policies help to guide decision making as it relates to development and redevelopment proposals and initiatives.

Atlantic Beach has a long history of municipal planning. Since its incorporation in 1966, the town has adopted comprehensive plans and implemented land use regulations with the last major plan amendments occurring in 2001. More recently, the town adopted a master plan in 2007, *The Atlantic Beach Master Plan*, which provides strategic guidance for implementing revitalization efforts. In 2014, recognizing the importance of moving forward with the implementation of recommendations in the master plan and the need to remain compliant with the state's planning enabling law, Atlantic Beach initiated the process of updating its 2001 comprehensive plan.

Beginning in June 2015, the town's planning commission held a series of scoping meetings to develop the required nine elements of the updated plan. These elements include: 1). *Population*, (2). *Economic Development*, (3). *Natural Resources*, (4). *Cultural Resources*, (5). *Community Facilities*, (6). *Housing*, (7). *Land Use*, (8) *Transportation and*



(9) *Priority Investment.* Each of the planning commission meetings provided the public an opportunity to review, participate and provide input on the updated plan.

The result of this effort is the *Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina Comprehensive Plan, 2017-2027*. This plan is designed to meet the requirements of Title 6, Chapter 29 of the State of South Carolina Code of Laws. Equally important, this plan is designed to provide policy guidance and implementation activities to be undertaken to assist in the fulfillment of the town’s redevelopment vision.

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Population Element



# Population Element

Communities are defined in large measure by the people who live there and, at its core, planning is for people. Having an understanding of the town’s population, as well as an understanding of the prospective population is an important initial step in planning for Atlantic Beach’s future.

This element of the comprehensive plan examines the characteristics and trends of the town’s population. An inventory of population growth/decline, gender, age, race, education, and nativity is analyzed. Areas immediately adjacent to the town, the county and state are also studied for comparison and to give a regional context to observed trends. The final section of this element provides goals and accompanying objectives to be implemented over the next ten years.

## Part I. Analysis of Existing Conditions

**Population Growth/Decline:** The three decades following the town’s 1966 incorporation witnessed steady growth with the peak population of 446 permanent residents occurring in 1990. In recent decades, the town’s population has declined. In 2010, the Town of Atlantic Beach had 334 residents. Estimates, as provided by the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) (2009- 2013), place the town’s population at 269.

This decline is in contrast to the steady population growth experienced by the surrounding City of North Myrtle Beach, Horry County, and the State of South Carolina over the same period. From 1990 to 2010, Horry County grew by 87%, adding 125,238 residents. Table P-1 provides population data from 1970 to 2010.

| Table P-1<br>Population and Trends<br>Town of Atlantic Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Horry County, and South Carolina |           |           |           |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | 1970      | 1980      | 1990      | 2000      | 2010      |
| Town of Atlantic Beach   | 215       | 289       | 446       | 351       | 334       |
| North Myrtle Beach   | 1,957     | 3,960     | 8,636     | 10,974    | 13,752    |
| Horry County   | 69,992    | 101,419   | 144,053   | 196,629   | 269,291   |
| South Carolina   | 2,590,516 | 3,121,820 | 3,486,703 | 4,012,012 | 4,625,364 |

Several factors have led to Atlantic Beach’s recent population declines. These include the removal or vacancy of several housing authority units; the lack of infill to replace removed housing stock; and, the use of existing housing for transitional or seasonal occupancy.

**Gender:** Communities typically have a slightly higher percentage of females due in part to a longer life expectancy. Atlantic Beach is no exception, with the percentage of female residents surpassing males 52.4% to 47.6%. The town’s percentage of female residents is slightly higher than the county and state averages. Table P-2 provides a comparison of gender percentages from the years 1990 to 2010.

Gender, coupled with age, can be an indicator of the potential for natural increases in community population; however, national studies show women are continuing to have



fewer children and are waiting to have their first child at a later age. This along with the relatively low base population and its transitional nature, diminishes this factor as a source for future population growth.

**Age:** An understanding of a community’s age distribution is important for the identification

of present and future social and economic needs. Age distribution plays a large role in determining the need for capital facilities and services, such as schools, day care and youth centers, recreation facilities, retirement programs, and assisted living.

According to the 2010 Census, the median age for an Atlantic Beach resident was 31.7 years. This was lower than the county’s (41.1) and the state’s (37.9) median age. As a generalization, median age has risen as Baby Boomers have grown older. For many areas along the Grand Strand, the increase in median age has been a result of the immigration of retirees. For Atlantic Beach, neither factor appears to have a significant impact as increases in median age have been modest over the past decade.

| Table P-2<br>Gender Profile<br>Town of Atlantic Beach, Horry County & South Carolina |                        |              |                |
|--|------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|  | Town of Atlantic Beach | Horry County | South Carolina |
| 1990   | 46% Male               | 49% Male     | 48.4% Male     |
|  | 54% Female             | 51% Female   | 51.6% Female   |
| 2000   | 50% Male               | 49.1% Male   | 47.9% Male     |
|  | 50% Female             | 50.9% Female | 52.1% Female   |
| 2010   | 47.6 Male              | 48.9% Male   | 48.6% Male     |
|  | 52.4 Female            | 51.1% Female | 51.4% Female   |

Chart - P-3  
Age Profile: Town of Atlantic Beach, Horry County and South Carolina

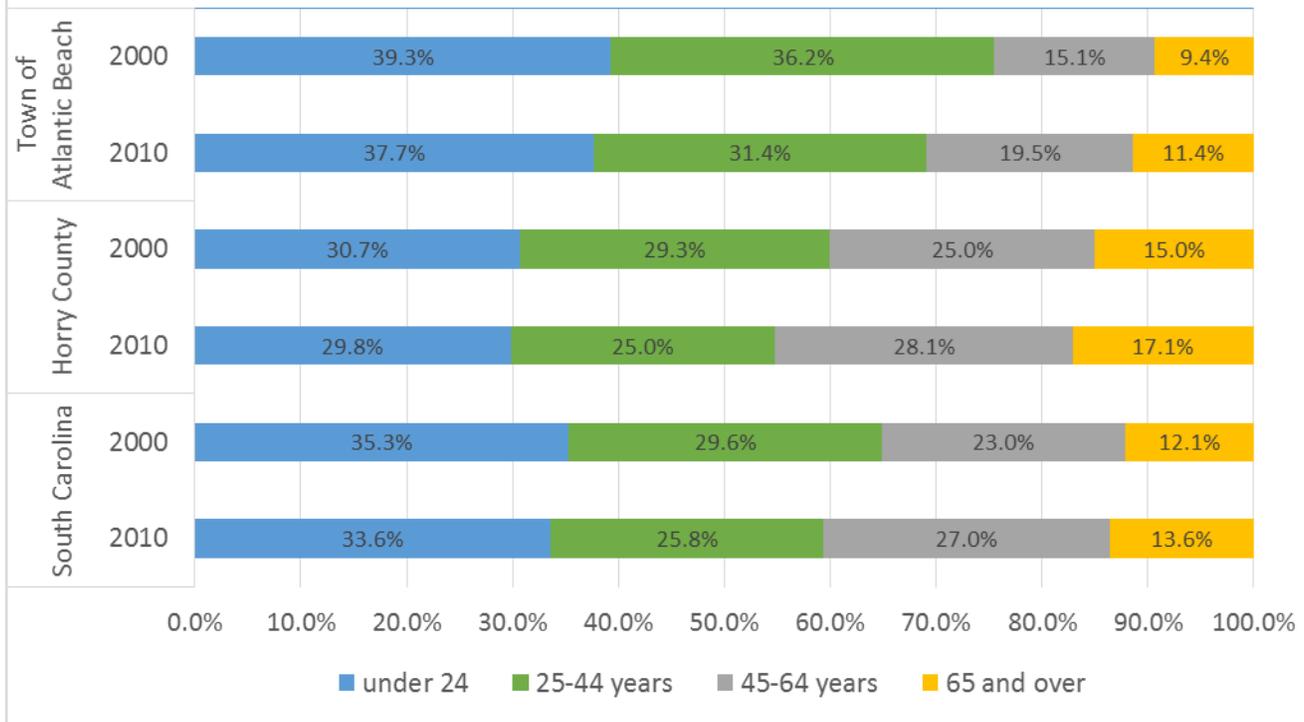




Chart P-3 above provides a breakdown of population by age cohort. The town has a lower percentage of residents over the age of 65 and a higher percentage of residents under the age of 24.

**Race:** The Town of Atlantic Beach maintains a strong African-American heritage and the town’s racial composition reflects this; however, while the population has remained predominately African-American, this percentage has declined in recent years. In 2000, approximately eighty-two percent of residents were African-American. In 2010, this percentage had declined to fifty-five percent.

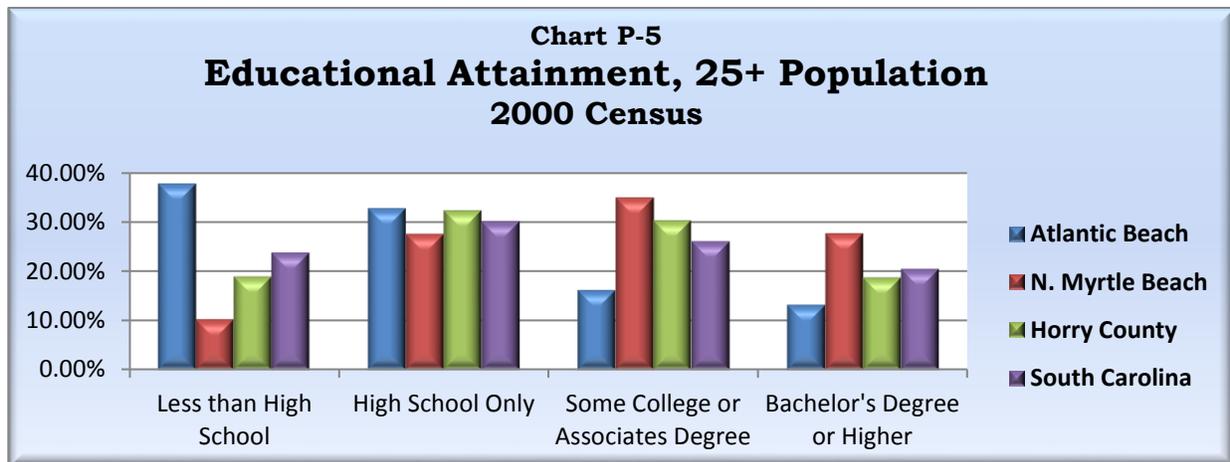
**Household Size:** As a national trend, household size has decreased steadily since the 1960s. This holds true for the Town of Atlantic Beach and the State of South Carolina as a whole. Surrounding North Myrtle Beach and Horry County have stabilized household

| Table P-4<br>Average Household Size<br>Town of Atlantic Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Horry<br>County & South Carolina |      |      |          |
|---|------|------|----------|
|   | 2000 | 2010 | % Change |
| Town of Atlantic Beach  | 2.66 | 2.24 | -15.8%   |
| North Myrtle Beach  | 2.03 | 2.04 | 0.5%     |
| Horry County  | 2.37 | 2.37 | 0.0%     |
| South Carolina  | 2.53 | 2.49 | -1.6%    |

size over the past decade. Table P-4 provides a comparison of household size for the town, North Myrtle Beach, Horry County, and state.

Decreases in the town’s household size in the past decade correspond with decreases in age cohorts for residents under the age of 45. Also, nonfamily households constitute well over half of the town’s households and approximately forty-three percent of households consist of a householder living alone. This compares to 26.8% for Horry County and 26.5% for the state.

**Educational Attainment:** According to the 2000 Census, the percentage of town residents, over the age of twenty-five, who had less than a high school education far exceeded that of North Myrtle, Horry County, and the state. During this time, the town also had a lower percentage of the adult population with some college, an associate’s degree, or a bachelor’s degree or higher. Chart P-5 provides a comparison of resident educational attainment for the Town of Atlantic Beach, North Myrtle Beach, and the state.





American Community Survey data suggests that educational attainment is improving. Estimates from 2009 to 2013 place adult residents with less than a high school education at 33% of the population and those with a bachelor’s degree or higher at 28.2%.

**Mobility:** As a whole, Americans have become increasingly mobile. Career opportunities, housing needs, educational decisions, retirement, and health considerations are all reasons for relocation. Table P-6 summarizes residency patterns collected from the five-year American Community Survey estimates. As the table indicates, the Town of Atlantic Beach has a larger percentage of relocation within the same county as compared to the other studied areas. This may be due to the higher percentage of renter occupancies as discussed later in the Housing Element.

| <b>Table P-6<br/>Residency Patterns</b>       |                       |           |                     |           |                       |           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates |                       |           |                     |           |                       |           |
| <b>Residency Status</b>                       | <b>Atlantic Beach</b> |           | <b>Horry County</b> |           | <b>South Carolina</b> |           |
|   | 2005-2009             | 2009-2013 | 2005-2009           | 2009-2013 | 2005-2009             | 2009-2013 |
| Moved, within same county                     | 23.9%                 | 27.1%     | 8.7%                | 10.0%     | 8.5%                  | 8.4%      |
| Moved; from different county, same state      | 0.0%                  | 4.8%      | 1.7%                | 1.5%      | 3.2%                  | 3.2%      |
| Moved; from different state                   | 1.0%                  | 5.9%      | 5.6%                | 4.8%      | 3.7%                  | 3.4%      |
| Move; from abroad                             | 1.0%                  | 0.0%      | 0.7%                | 0.5%      | 0.5%                  | 0.4%      |

According to a Geographic Mobility report published by the US Census Bureau, 15.4 percent of the United States population over the age of one lived in a different residence one year ago. While North Myrtle Beach, Horry County, and South Carolina are on par with the national figure, the town holds a much higher percentage with approximately thirty-eight percent of residents living in a different residence one year earlier. Approximately forty-five percent of residents moved into their existing home after 2010 (ACS). In 2000, the percentage of Atlantic Beach residents living in a different home in 1995 was 41.7%.

**Summary of Existing Conditions:** From a review of the population data, the following generalizations regarding Atlantic Beach’s population can be made:

- The town’s population has declined over the past twenty years.
- Females constitute a slightly higher percentage of the population; however, these differences are similar to local, state, and national averages.
- The population is younger than surrounding communities and the state and nation as a whole.
- Household size is smaller than local, state, and national averages. This is due in part to a higher percentage of single person households.
- Educational attainment for adult residents is lower than local, state, and national averages; however, recent data suggests this is improving.



- The town's population is highly mobile and is changing due in part to the town's higher percentage of rental units and seasonal occupancy.
- The loss of public housing in the town may impact age, household size, and other indicators. The significance of these changes will be reflected in future census data.

## **Part II. Future Conditions**

Projecting future population is oftentimes a difficult undertaking. In absolute terms, future population equals current population plus births minus deaths plus net migration. Given the town's relatively low base population, the factor that will most contribute to the future growth or decline of the town will be migration. In other words, will more people move into Atlantic Beach or will more people leave. Also, because of the small base population and a high tendency toward mobility, migration will ultimately govern the trends for other demographic variables such as age, race, educational attainment, etc.

Because the future population of the town will be determined by migration, it is important to consider factors that will contribute or potentially deter future population growth. Factors that will contribute to population growth include:

1. Area growth and appeal of the oceanfront.
2. Availability of land for new housing.
3. Affordability.

Factors that will contribute to no growth or continued population decline include:

1. Lack of existing housing choice.
2. Seasonal housing.
3. Community appearance and perceptions of decline.
4. Regulatory uncertainty.
5. Lack of annexation potential.

How these factors are addressed will in large measure determine the future population of the town.

In analyzing the potential for population growth, areas to the town's immediate north and south were reviewed. These areas in North Myrtle Beach have, in many cases, similar zoning designations and a high level of build-out. Also, these areas have a very high percentage of seasonal housing.



The ninety-nine acres (similar to Atlantic Beach in size) immediately to the town's south has a population of 358 with 1246 housing units. A similarly sized area to the town's north has a population of 419 and 2,315 housing units.

If fully developed comparable to immediately adjacent areas, the town's housing stock could approach 1,200 to 2,400 units. At the town's current average household size (2.24) and occupancy rate (45%), a population base of 1,210 to 2,420 is conceivable; however, it is anticipated that the percentage of town's seasonal occupancies will rise with development on and near Atlantic Beach's oceanfront (see also the Housing Element). Given the tendency to seasonal occupancy, a future population base of 400 to 700 is the more probable outcome of buildout.

### **Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

From a review of the area's population data, the following needs were identified: 1. stabilize and build the town's permanent population; 2. provide an attractive community; 3. continue to enhance public safety and amenities; and 4. provide housing choice.

**Goal P1:** ***Build a permanent and seasonal population by promoting the town as a safe, attractive place to live and visit.***

Objective A: Enhance and enforce property maintenance codes that address overgrown lots and dilapidated buildings.

Objective B: Improve streetscapes and appurtenances that distinguish Atlantic Beach from surrounding communities (see also the Transportation Element). Concentration should be given to:

1. Town entrance points along US 17 at 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues; and
2. Beach access points with specific emphasis at Ocean Boulevard/Atlantic Avenue.

Objective C: Promote anti-litter campaigns and encourage civic groups to participate in town-wide clean up events.

Objective D: Encourage the establishment of neighborhood watch programs and continue to enhance the Atlantic Beach Police Department (see also Community Facilities Element).

**Goal P2:** ***Recognize the importance of the town's seasonal population in stabilizing property values and providing a prospective source of new permanent residents.***

Objective A: Enhance the town's website and visitor's page to promote area events and provide information on relocating to the area.

Objective B: Provide opportunities for interval or accommodations type occupancies near the oceanfront.



Objective C: Consider the development of a quarterly newsletter or informational mailing to property owners and frequent visitors.

Objective D: Continue to provide opportunities for public involvement and, where appropriate, participation on municipal boards to property owners and seasonal residents.

**Goal P3:** *Recognize that seasonal visitors (and current residents) may choose to relocate to (or remain in) Atlantic Beach in retirement or in mid-to-late career. Town policies should promote the concept of aging in place.*

Objective A: Encourage the expansion of public transportation to service Atlantic Beach.

Objective B: Support the initiatives of nonprofit programs/organizations such as Neighbor-to-Neighbor and Assisted Rides which provides older and disabled residents with no-cost, non-emergency transportation to medical providers.

Objective C: Investigate options for housing rehabilitation assistance using CDBG and/or HOME funding.

**Goal P4:** *Provide amenities which are conducive to attracting families to live in Atlantic Beach.*

Objective A: Ensure that options for affordable housing are available to developers and property owners. Provide through zoning and other town initiatives:

1. Areas in the town where mixed housing options are available; and
2. Density bonuses or other relaxed regulations when open space or public amenities are provided (see also the Housing and Priority Investment Elements).

Objective B: Actively recruit and provide, in the town's land management ordinance, opportunities for childcare, after-school programs, and youth/adult educational offerings.

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Economic Development Element**

# Economic Development Element



The Economic Development Element includes an analysis of existing economic trends specific to the Town of Atlantic Beach, with a focus on labor force, unemployment rates, per capita income levels, poverty data and commuting patterns. Taken individually and as a whole, these economic trends provide basic indicators for understanding the current state of Atlantic Beach's economy. Analysis of existing economic trends is followed by actionable goals, objectives and implementation strategies addressing specific economic needs of the community. Ultimately, the main purpose of the economic development element, in conjunction with the entirety of the comprehensive plan, is to provide local leaders guidance in implementing the town's vision for a prosperous economy.

## Historic & Current Context

Part of the much larger Grand Strand, the Town of Atlantic Beach has a strong sense of identity and remains significant as one of the few historic African American beach communities in the United States. Known as the Black Pearl, Atlantic- Beach provided African Americans oceanfront entertainment, entrepreneurial and residential options during the era of segregation. For most of its history, Atlantic Beach's commercial center was along Atlantic Avenue (30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) where a number of motels, restaurants and entertainment clubs catered to a burgeoning African American tourism industry. De-segregation drastically altered Atlantic Beach's economy, as African American tourist gained access to previously restricted leisure destinations. Over time, the town's commercial heart shifted away from Atlantic Avenue to U.S. Highway 17. Atlantic Avenue's economic decline eventually spread to the town's surrounding neighborhoods, leading to additional losses of permanent residents and businesses, further eroding the town's economic base.

Atlantic Beach's economic development conditions can be viewed within local and regional context. More recently, the Great Recession had a significant negative impact on the Grand Strand's tourist based economy, which in some regards is still recovering. Locally, the impact of the Great Recession intensified Atlantic Beach's already fragile economy, perpetuating the town's existing high unemployment, poverty levels and declining housing market.

Atlantic Beach is geographically small, comprising approximately 100 total acres, limiting land use and redevelopment options. The town's lack of street connectivity, small lot sizes, and declining residential population, are additional factors impeding sustained economic development. Despite these constraints, the town does possess characteristics



Undeveloped areas along and near the oceanfront



advantageous to economic development including an affordable cost of living, available parcels, location within the Grand Strand, undeveloped oceanfront and a unique sense of place. In the end, Atlantic Beach’s future economic development will be largely guided by how well the town can simultaneously preserve and utilize its unique physical and cultural characteristics to encourage economic growth.

**Part I. Analysis of Existing Conditions & Economic Needs**

**Labor Force Characteristics**

According to the 2009-2013 ACS, the Town of Atlantic Beach had an estimated 149 residents in the labor force. This represents 66% of the population sixteen years or older. Within the labor force, 125 residents were employed. Of the 125 residents employed, 73% were in service oriented industries (including other services, except public administration). Retail trade, the next largest industry, employed approximately 10% of the labor force. The remaining breakdown of Atlantic Beach’s labor force includes: education/health care and social assistance (approx. 6%), professional, scientific and management, and administrative and waste management services (approx. 5%), and construction (3%). These numbers are roughly in line with Horry County’s labor force distribution, with education/health care having a larger role in the county. Similarities in labor force data reflect patterns typical to Horry County and other Grand Strand municipalities, with a heavy emphasis on service, retail trade and health care employment.

**Unemployment Rate**

Atlantic Beach’s unemployment rate has been historically higher in comparison to other Grand Strand municipalities, Horry County and South Carolina unemployment rates. According to the 2009-2013 ACS, the Town of Atlantic Beach unemployment rate was 16%, compared to an 11% unemployment rate for both Horry County and South Carolina. As of 2015, the unemployment rate reported by the South Carolina Department of Commerce, for both Horry County and South Carolina ranged between 6.0-6.5%, reflecting the broader regional and national economic recovery.

|                 | <b>2000 U.S.<br/>Census</b> | <b>2009-2013<br/>ACS</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Atlantic Beach  | 3.3%                        | 16%                      |
| N. Myrtle Beach | 2.3%                        | 5.7%                     |
| Myrtle Beach    | 3.0%                        | 8.8%                     |
| Horry County    | 2.9%                        | 11%                      |
| South Carolina  | 3.6%                        | 11%                      |

Atlantic Beach’s persistently high unemployment rate may indicate broader factors impacting the town’s economic development.

**Industry & Place of Employment**

Historically, Atlantic Beach’s largest employment sectors were associated with tourism, retail and service industries catering to the African American community. Desegregation and other socioeconomic factors contributed to the loss of small tourism-based businesses primarily owned and operated by local residents. Currently, the majority of



local businesses and consequently a large source of the town’s commercial revenue are located along Highway 17. Many of these businesses are dependent on seasonal tourism.

Aside from businesses along Highway 17, the town has a limited number of small, local or family operated businesses along Atlantic Avenue and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue. These businesses serve as visual reminders of a bygone beach resort and recreation era.

For the majority of Atlantic Beach residents, employment options are more likely found in the larger neighboring municipalities of North Myrtle Beach, Myrtle Beach and parts of Horry County. Table ED-1 reveals a comparison of local and regional unemployment rates, followed by Table ED-2 which lists the top ten employers in Horry County.

| <b>Table ED-2<br/>Top Ten Employers in Horry County</b> |                  |                         |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Businesses</b>                                       | <b>Employees</b> | <b>Type of Business</b> |
| Horry County School District                            | 5,473            | Public School District  |
| Horry County Government                                 | 2,178            | Government              |
| Coastal Carolina University                             | 1,582            | Public University       |
| Conway Medical Center                                   | 1,500            | Healthcare              |
| Grand Strand Regional Med Center                        | 1,400            | Healthcare              |
| Food Lion, LLC  | 1,000            | Food/Grocery Services   |
| McLeod Loris Seacoast                                   | 940              | Healthcare              |
| Blue Cross/ Blue Shield                                 | 837              | Health Insurance        |
| City of Myrtle Beach                                    | 850              | Government              |
| National Golf Management                                | 800              | Recreational Management |
| Horry Telephone Cooperative                             | 684              | Utility Services        |
| Loris Community Hospital                                | 680              | Healthcare              |

Source: Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development (online date September 2016)

In summary, in-town businesses are few with limited employment options. A more diverse local business sector brings potential year round employment, alleviates commuting burdens and reduces the town’s tax revenue dependency on a handful of establishments.

**Transportation & Commuting Patterns**

Transportation plays an important role in shaping Atlantic Beach’s economic development and, like housing, will be examined more thoroughly as a separate comprehensive plan element. The town’s high commuting rate places a heavy reliance on vehicular transportation to access employment opportunities outside of Atlantic Beach. The lack of available safe public transportation, including bus stops, dedicated bicycle lanes and basic sidewalks place a heavy burden on local residents dependent on employment in other areas.

Typical to the Grand Strand region, a vast majority of Atlantic Beach residents depend on vehicular transportation for commuting to work. Approximately 53% of town residents drive alone, with an additional 24% carpooling. Significantly, approximately 22% of Atlantic Beach residents utilize alternate forms of transportation including



walking and bicycling to work. The mean travel time to work for Atlantic Beach residents is 18.8 minutes, in line with North Myrtle Beach residents (18.7 minutes) and slightly less than Horry County residents (21.2 minutes). The percentage of residents using non-vehicular transportation (walking, or other means), suggests a need to consider implementing safe alternative transportation options.



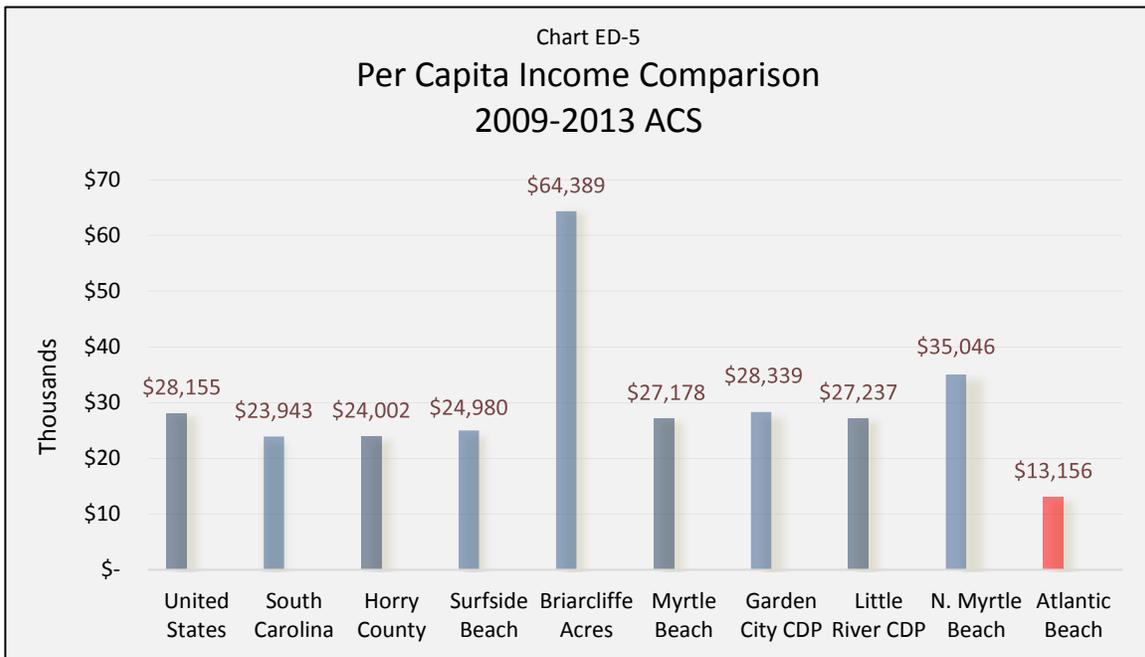
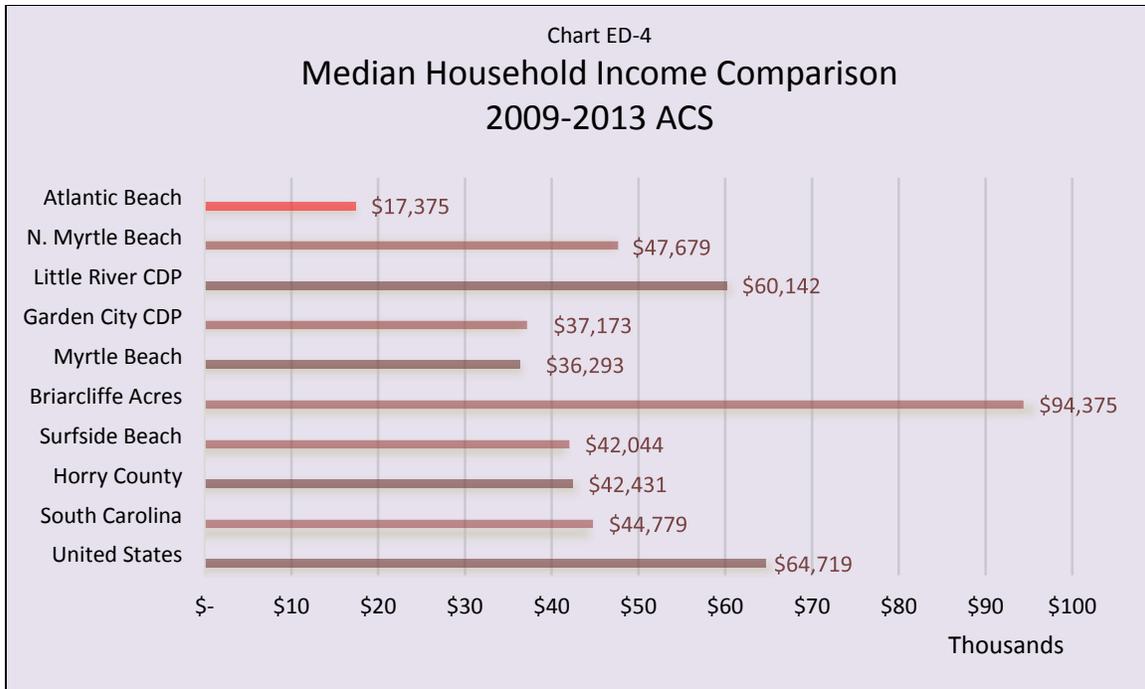
Absent sidewalks, footpaths along US 17 mark pedestrian use

A major impediment to nonresidential economic development in the town’s interior and along the oceanfront is the lack of street connectivity. The town’s streets do not connect to adjoining neighborhoods in North Myrtle Beach and cross connectivity between the town’s streets is poor. This issue is further discussed in the land use and transportation elements including recommendations for improving access and connectivity.

| Table ED-3<br><b>Commuting Rates for Atlantic Beach Residents</b><br>2009-2013 ACS |                 |                     |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|
|  | <b>Estimate</b> | <b>Percentage %</b> |
| Car, truck, or van- drove alone  | 65              | 53.7%               |
| Car, truck, or van- carpooled  | 29              | 24%                 |
| Public Transportation (excluding taxicabs)   | 0               | 0.0%                |
| Walked   | 22              | 18%                 |
| Other means  | 5               | 4.1%                |
| Worked at Home   | 0               | 0.0%                |
| <b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>  | 18.8            |                     |

**Median Household and Per Capita Income**

Median household and per capita income data are strong indicators of a community’s economic wellbeing. The 2009-2013 ACS, shows Atlantic Beach residents with significantly lower median household income and per capita income than neighboring Grand Strand municipalities, Horry County, the state, and nation. Low median household and per capita income levels inversely correlate with the town’s high unemployment rates and poverty levels.



## Housing

Housing plays a significant role in shaping a community's economic development. Some of the housing issues specific to Atlantic Beach include a declining housing stock, lack of affordable housing, and a large percentage of renter occupied homes. These and other housing issues will be more closely examined in the Housing Element.

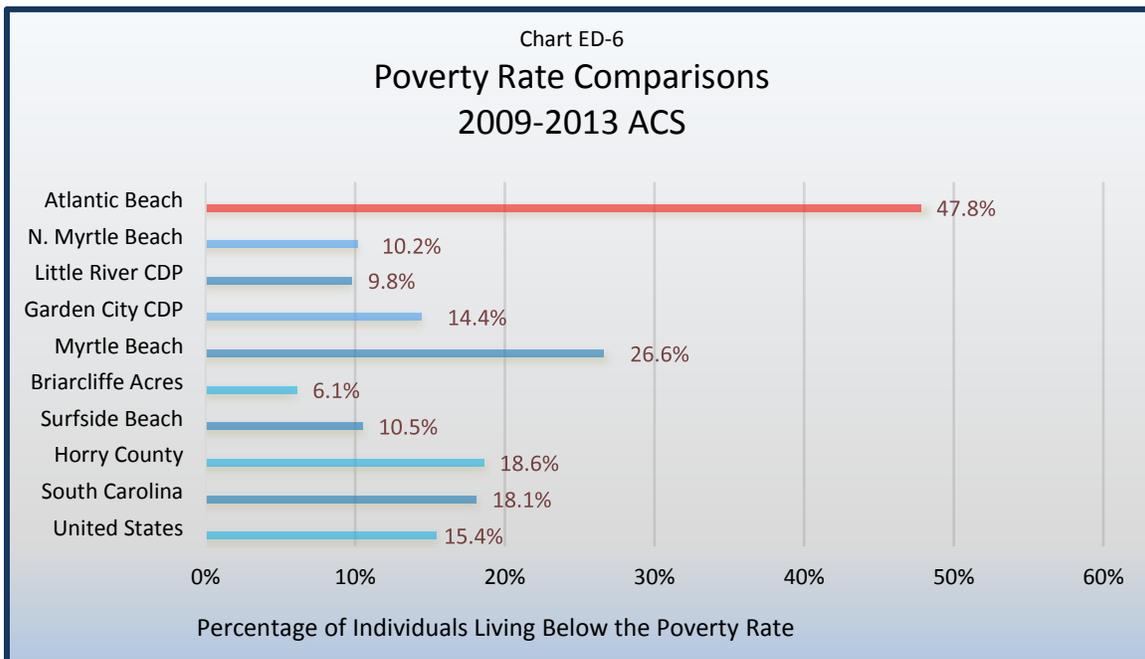


**Land Use**

Land use plays a vital role in shaping Atlantic Beach’s economic development. The 2007 Master Plan indicated that approximately 53% of the town’s land was undeveloped (approximately 52 acres). The majority of the town’s parcels are small and include many vacant lots available for redevelopment. While appropriate for residential development, these small fragmented parcels are major impediments in attracting large scale commercial developers, especially along the town’s oceanfront. Consolidation of land parcels is a difficult undertaking, with potential options and strategies examined more thoroughly in the Land Use Element.

**Poverty Stats**

Atlantic Beach’s high poverty rate has been a systemic problem for several years. Understandably, the issue is largely related to the town’s lingering high unemployment rate and to other socioeconomic factors contributing to poverty, including access to education, transportation and affordable healthcare. According to the 2009-2013 ACS, approximately 47.8 % of town residents lived below the poverty level, significantly higher than other Grand Strand municipal poverty rates and more than double Horry County’s 18.6% poverty rate. With increased local and regional economic development leading to additional employment opportunities, the hope is that the town’s poverty rate will start to fall in line with those of area municipalities.



**Summary of Existing Conditions**

From a review of the economic data, the following generalizations regarding Atlantic Beach’s economic conditions can be made:

- Labor force employment by industry is generally in line with the region.
- There is a lack of commercial businesses both in number and diversity.



- Unemployment and poverty rates remain higher than other Grand Strand municipalities, Horry County and national averages. Incomes are significantly lower.
- Small, fragmented land parcels impede large scale commercial development.
- Commuting patterns generally follow local and regional patterns, with a modestly higher percentage of residents using alternative forms of transportation.
- Existing housing and transportation issues continue to impede economic development.

## **Part II. Future Conditions**

### **Opportunities for Future Economic Growth**

Atlantic Beach possesses numerous assets conducive to creating a vibrant local economy including a strong sense of community identity, affordable cost of living, available land and an undeveloped oceanfront. As an integral part of the Grand Strand, the town is well positioned to benefit economically from the region's anticipated economic growth.

*Ideal Location:* Atlantic Beach is ideally located within the heart of the Grand Strand. Surrounded by North Myrtle Beach, the town is located near important centers of infrastructure including the Grand Strand Airport, Intercostal Waterway, and US 17. The town's eastern boundary is defined by a pristine undeveloped oceanfront. Close proximity to regional infrastructure provides Atlantic Beach excellent economic development potential, as the Grand Strand's economy and infrastructure continue to expand.

*Sense of Community:* Atlantic Beach possesses an important quality many Grand Strand communities are struggling to define, a strong sense of community identity. Even though much of the town's physical history has disappeared, the essence of Atlantic Beach's identity remains intact, especially within the African American and African American Gullah-Geechee communities. The town should endeavor to protect, preserve and promote its unique identity to use as a catalyst for economic development.

*Favorable Cost of Living:* Compared to North Myrtle Beach, Atlantic Beach's single-family home and vacant lot prices are generally lower, providing affordable housing options. As area home prices continue to rise, an increasing amount of the Grand Strand's coastal area is becoming unattainable for single family homeowners. The town's lower cost of living provides favorable housing and residency opportunities.

*Opportunities for small business & entrepreneurship:* The availability of small vacant parcels provides homeowners and potentially small businesses attractive redevelopment options, generally unavailable in other areas immediately adjacent to the town.

*Undeveloped Oceanfront:* One of Atlantic Beach's most important economic and natural resource assets is a stretch of undeveloped oceanfront, a rare commodity along the heavily developed Grand Strand coastline. Accommodations and related commercial development will likely occur, with the right circumstances and conditions. The question then becomes how to promote development while preserving this unique asset for the benefit of Atlantic Beach residents.



### **Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

From a review of the forgoing, the following needs were identified: 1) the need to promote the town's distinctive qualities and development potential, 2) the need to improve infrastructure, 3) the need to provide zoning and development regulations which are conducive to thoughtful growth and development.

#### **Goal ED 1: *Promote Atlantic Beach as a distinct Grand Strand community.***

Objective A: Utilize professional PR firm and/or collaborate with local colleges/university marketing departments with experience in community identity branding.

Objective B: Initiate process with South Carolina's Historic Preservation Office for listing Atlantic Beach (as a historic district) on the National Register of Historic Places. Listing on the NRHP provides national recognition and increased media exposure (see also the Cultural Resources Element).

Objective C: Implement reasonable design elements identified in the town's master plan for creating distinctive architectural gateways and streetscapes (see also the Transportation Element).

Objective D: Create a clean and safe community that is attractive to residents and business interests (see also the Population Element).

#### **Goal ED 2: *Cultivate and support economic diversity.***

Objective A: Support local entrepreneurship and small businesses through local tax incentives, SBA loan guarantees, CDBG grants and other financial means, when possible.

Objective B: Create a small business association focused on the town's economic development.

Objective C: Investigate the development of a small business incubator/innovation center for Atlantic Beach, through a collaborative effort with local and regional universities, to assist in the development of small commercial enterprises.

Objective D: Partner with local food and tourism professionals, including the Waccamaw Market Collaborative in creating an Atlantic Beach farmer's market showcasing local agricultural and hand-crafted goods.



**Goal ED 3: *Utilize municipal financing tools to encourage economic development.***

Objective A: Investigate the creation of Tax Increment Financing District in conjunction with development along the oceanfront and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Objective B: Evaluate and potentially alter existing business licensing fee structure to ensure competitiveness with neighboring Grand Strand municipalities.

Objective C: Work to ensure the town's credit rating does not impede economic development opportunities.

Objective D: Evaluate use of financial incentives to encourage private development including fee and permit waivers, tax abatements or rebates and density bonuses.

**Goal ED 4: *Stabilize, enhance and diversify local housing opportunities (see Housing Element).***

Objective A: Create a housing infill and redevelopment strategy to capitalize on available vacant land and buildings.

Objective B: Identify and implement economic incentives for property owners to rehabilitate deteriorating structures and develop vacant lots including but not limited to HOME and CDBG funds.

Objective C: Provide affordable housing options for local residents through various economic tools, including Tax Increment Trust, EDA Revolving Loan Funds, CDBG Funds and Low-Income Tax Credits.

Objective D: Create, publicize and make available an infill parcel inventory for the benefit of potential developers.

**Goal ED 5: *Develop and adopt land use standards that are specific to Atlantic Beach's economic needs and conducive to generating economic development (see Land Use Element).***

Objective A: Simplify current Land Management Ordinance with an emphasis on ease of use and predictability of outcome.

Objective B: Explore alternative land use plans including form-based codes, design guidelines and other development standards promoting vibrant pedestrian oriented communities.

Objective C: Identify regulatory impediments to business development and refine standards where appropriate.



**Goal ED 6: *Promote Atlantic Beach’s ocean front as a key economic and natural resource asset.***

Objective A: Continue to identify and work with private businesses interested in creating land partnerships, as identified in the town’s master plan.

Objective B: Explore collaborative opportunities with coastal research institutions. Atlantic Beach’s pristine oceanfront situated within a dense urban environment provides for unique research opportunities.

Objective C: In conjunction with Coastal Carolina’s Clay Brittain Jr. Center for Resort Tourism, develop an eco-tourism plan specific to the town’s unique oceanfront and special events.

Objective D: Explore and cultivate private/public partnership opportunities for developing recreational amenities specific to the town’s oceanfront (East Coast Greenway, boardwalk, etc.).

**Goal ED 7: *Promote Atlantic Beach’s affordable cost of living.***

Objective A: Collaborate with area real estate professionals, associations and local business owners in promoting Atlantic Beach as an affordable, livable, Grand Strand coastal community.

Objective B: Collaborate with local, regional and state Chambers of Commerce to promote the town’s affordability and livability.

Objective C: Explore various advertising opportunities with media associated with retirement, travel, leisure/recreation and cultural heritage promotion.

**Goal ED 8: *Develop and implement infrastructure improvements supporting safe commuting options for town residents (see Transportation Element).***

Objective A: Collaborate with regional transportation agencies including COAST RTA, SCDOT and others to create public transportation options for town residents.

Objective B: Identify federal, state and local transportation funding to implement improvements, including sidewalks, dedicated bike paths, traffic calming curb bump-outs, highway medians, crosswalks, and other measures contributing to safe mobility within town limits. Potential infrastructure funding opportunities identified in the town’s master plan include TIF Funds, Revenue Bonds, CDBG Funds and Gullah-Geechee Corridor/East Coast Greenway Funds (see Priority Investment and Transportation Elements).



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Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Natural Resources Element**



# Natural Resources Element

The promotion, protection, and preservation of natural resources are important considerations in the development or redevelopment of a community. In addition, the natural environment and its hazards can present constraints to development. This element of the comprehensive plan will provide an inventory and assessment of Atlantic Beach's natural resources and provide policies for implementation over the next ten years.

## Part I. Analysis of Existing Conditions

### Geographic Profile

The Town of Atlantic Beach is located in the northeastern portion of Horry County, South Carolina. The town borders the Atlantic Ocean to the east. To the north, south, and west the town borders the City of North Myrtle Beach.

Horry County is located in the Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic region. This region is comprised of extensive layers of softer sedimentary rocks and soil types. The region's terrain is relatively level to slightly sloping with frequent rivers and drainage ways which empty into the Atlantic Ocean.

Although the town does not contain any rivers or significant drainage ways, the topography generally follows that of the area with an average elevation 20 to 30 feet above mean sea level. The town's topography is illustrated on Map Exhibit NR-1. Unlike other areas, the gentle slope to the beach coupled with the lack of oceanfront development creates a spectacular unobstructed view of the Atlantic Ocean.

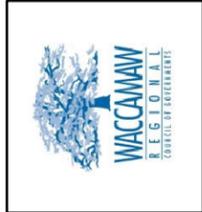
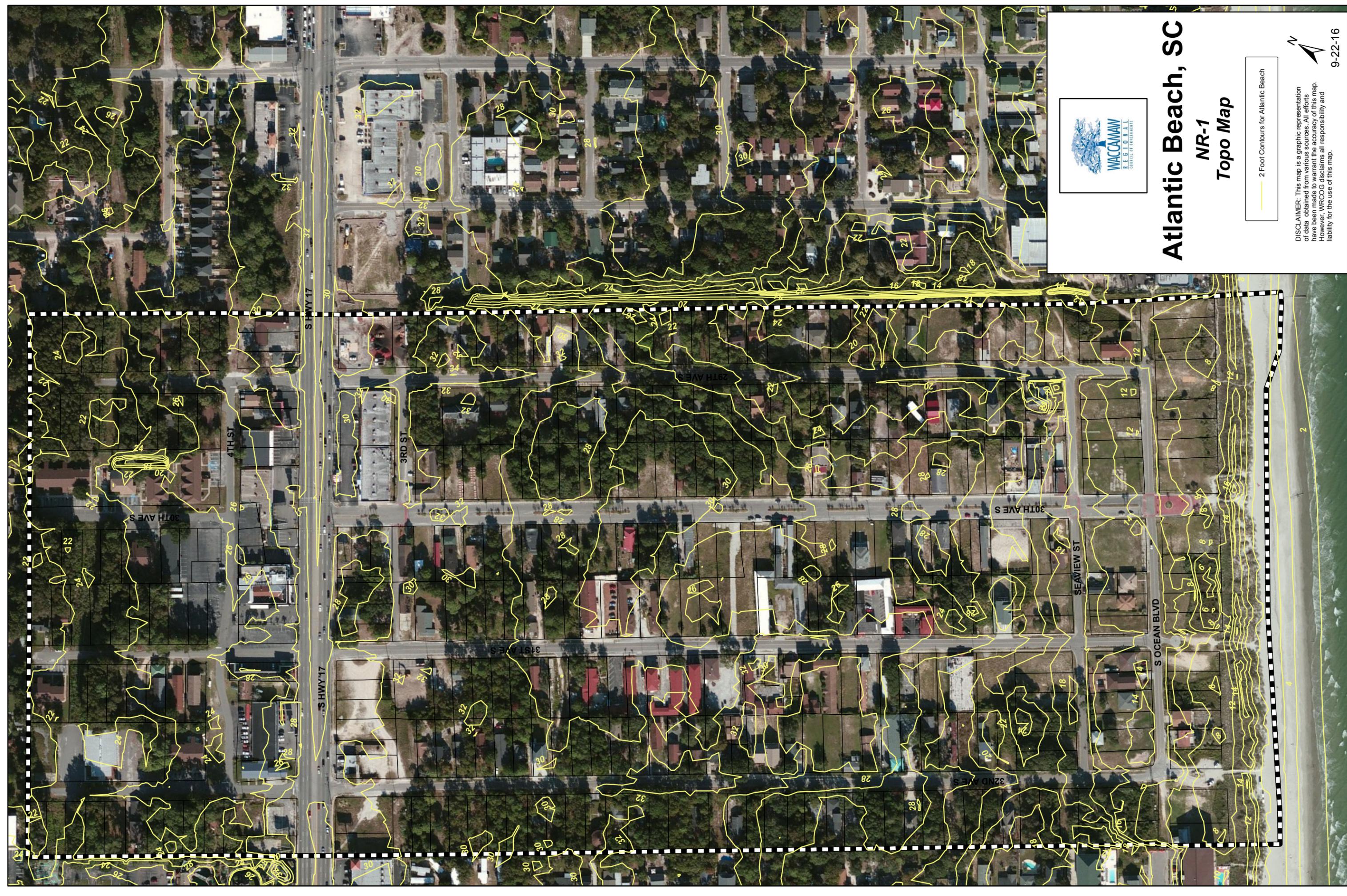


Public beach access adjacent to Atlantic Avenue and Ocean Boulevard

### Climate

The area's climate is classified as maritime subtropical. The Atlantic Ocean contributes to the town's mild climate, serving to warm the area in the winter and providing cooling ocean breezes in the summer. The mean average temperature is 64.4 degrees with a range of 45.9 in January to 81.7 degrees in July.

Annual precipitation averages 51.6 inches per year, with the highest amounts recorded in July. Precipitation during the summer is usually warm and short in duration, offering little resistance to outdoor recreational activities. Although rains in the winter occur less



# Atlantic Beach, SC

## NR-1 Topo Map

— 2 Foot Contours for Atlantic Beach



DISCLAIMER: This map is a graphic representation of data obtained from various sources. All efforts have been made to warrant the accuracy of this map. However, WRCOG disclaims all responsibility and liability for the use of this map.

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Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, etc.

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frequently, they are usually longer in duration. Storms typically move into the area from the northwest, west, or southwest and less frequently from the south or southeast. Occasionally, storms will form over the area or intensify along the coast. The area’s summer and fall weather can also be influenced by hurricanes.

Table NR-1 provides general climatic information for the area:

|                             | January | April | July | October | Annual Average |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|------|---------|----------------|
| Average High Temperature    | 58.3    | 76.2  | 91.1 | 76.9    | 75.5           |
| Average Low Temperature     | 35.4    | 51.2  | 71.0 | 53.3    | 52.8           |
| Average Precipitation (in.) | 3.67    | 3.05  | 6.97 | 3.01    | 51.6           |

Source: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, SC State Climatology Office

### Soil Profile

Soil conditions play a major role in planning and development. As is typical for many of South Carolina’s coastal communities, the town’s soil types can present a development constraint with foundation cracks and corrosion of underground facilities being common impediments. Fortunately, the majority of the town’s soils present only a slight limitation to development and many of these limitations can be mitigated through proactive planning and engineering.

Based on mapping and studies performed by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service, the town is composed of four main soil types: Beach, Lakeland, Leon, and Newhan. Map Exhibit NR-2 illustrates the approximate location of the town’s soils and Table NR-2 provides a description of each soil type:

| Soil Name             | Soil Type       | Description  | Soil Limitations            |                 |                     |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|                       |                 |  | Dwellings without Basements | Local Roads     | Septic Tanks        |
| <b>Beach (BC)</b>     | Sandy Shoreline | This soil type includes the sandy shorelines that border the Atlantic Ocean. Most of the acreage illustrated for this soil type is unstable due to erosion and other factors. This soil type is well suited to recreation use but is unsuited for most other uses. |                             |                 |                     |
| <b>Lakeland (LaB)</b> | Fine Sand       | This soil type is excessively drained with very rapid permeability. The depth to the seasonally high water table is more than six feet.  | Slight                      | Slight          | Severe: poor filter |
| <b>Leon (Le)</b>      | Sand            | This soil type is poorly drained with moderate to moderately rapid   | Severe: wetness             | Severe: wetness | Severe: wetness     |



# Atlantic Beach, SC

## NR-2

### Soils Map

| Soil Type                               |
|---|
| Beaches                                 |
| Lakeland sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes    |
| Leon fine sand                          |
| Newnan fine sand, 0 to 6 percent slopes |



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|                     |           |   |        |        |                     |
|---------------------|-----------|---|--------|--------|---------------------|
|                     |           | permeability. The water table is within a foot of the surface in winter and spring.   |        |        | and poor filter     |
| <b>Newhan (NhB)</b> | Fine Sand | This soil type is excessively drained and is found along dunes adjacent to beaches. This soil type is well suited to most urban uses. | Slight | Slight | Severe: poor filter |

### Flora and Fauna

Horry County is noted for its abundance and variety of plants and animals. Many of the protected or significant plant and animal species are found in proximity to the county's rivers, marshes, and in Carolina Bays. Atlantic Beach's more urban environs limit the abundance of terrestrial wildlife; however, the town's undeveloped coastline supports several species of migratory birds, shellfish, marine fishes, sea turtles, and other wildlife. Table NR-3 provides a listing of Horry County's threatened and endangered species:

| Common Name                | Scientific Name                 | Federal Designation | State Designation |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Loggerhead Turtle          | <i>Caretta caretta</i>          | Threatened          | Threatened        |
| Spotted Turtle             | <i>Clemmys guttata</i>          |                     | Threatened        |
| Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat | <i>Corynorhinus rafinesquii</i> |                     | Endangered        |
| Bald Eagle                 | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> |                     | Threatened        |
| Wood Stork                 | <i>Mycteria americana</i>       | Endangered          | Endangered        |
| Red-cockaded Woodpecker    | <i>Picoides borealis</i>        | Endangered          | Endangered        |
| Least Tern                 | <i>Sterna antillarum</i>        |                     | Threatened        |
| Seabeach Amaranth          | <i>Amaranthus pumilus</i>       | Threatened          |                   |
| Chaffseed                  | <i>Schwalbea americana</i>      | Endangered          |                   |

Trees are one of the most important natural resources in any community. Residential developers generally avoid areas void of a canopy of trees. Trees in the urban environment serve to protect and enhance property values, control erosion, moderate climate extremes, provide screens and buffers, promote traffic safety and contribute to community ambiance and beautification. Atlantic Beach's trees serve no less a purpose. The value of this resource is such that regulating and monitoring the care and cutting of trees is recommended as a means of protection and enhancement.

In recognition of the importance of trees, the town council incorporated tree protections and planting requirements into the 2001 Atlantic Beach Land Management Ordinance. The ordinance provides tree protection zones and encourages the retention of native species. Replacement and removal requirements place high value on broad-leaf evergreen overstory hardwoods, deciduous overstory hardwoods, and broad-leaf evergreen understory. The highest valued/protected species include American Holly,



Bald Cypress, Laurel Oak, Live Oak, Pond Cypress, Spruce Pine, and Southern Magnolia.

In addition, the town's 2007 Atlantic Beach Master Plan encourages the planting and retention of native species into proposed redevelopment concepts. Highest priority is placed on shade tree species with a de-emphasis of ornamental trees such as palm species.

### Coastal Resources

The town's entire eastern boundary, approximately 1,400 feet, consists of undeveloped beachfront. This resource currently provides residents and visitors with opportunities for recreation and leisure in a setting unlike other areas immediately adjacent to the town.

Primary and secondary dunes extend the length of the beachfront. These dunes lessen the impact from a moderate storm surge and are a habitat for various amphibian, avian, and plant species. The South Carolina Department of Environmental Control's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management protects and regulates development within the ocean front's critical area which includes the town's primary dunes. In addition, the primary and secondary dunes are protected by the town's 2001 Land Management Ordinance.

### Natural Hazards

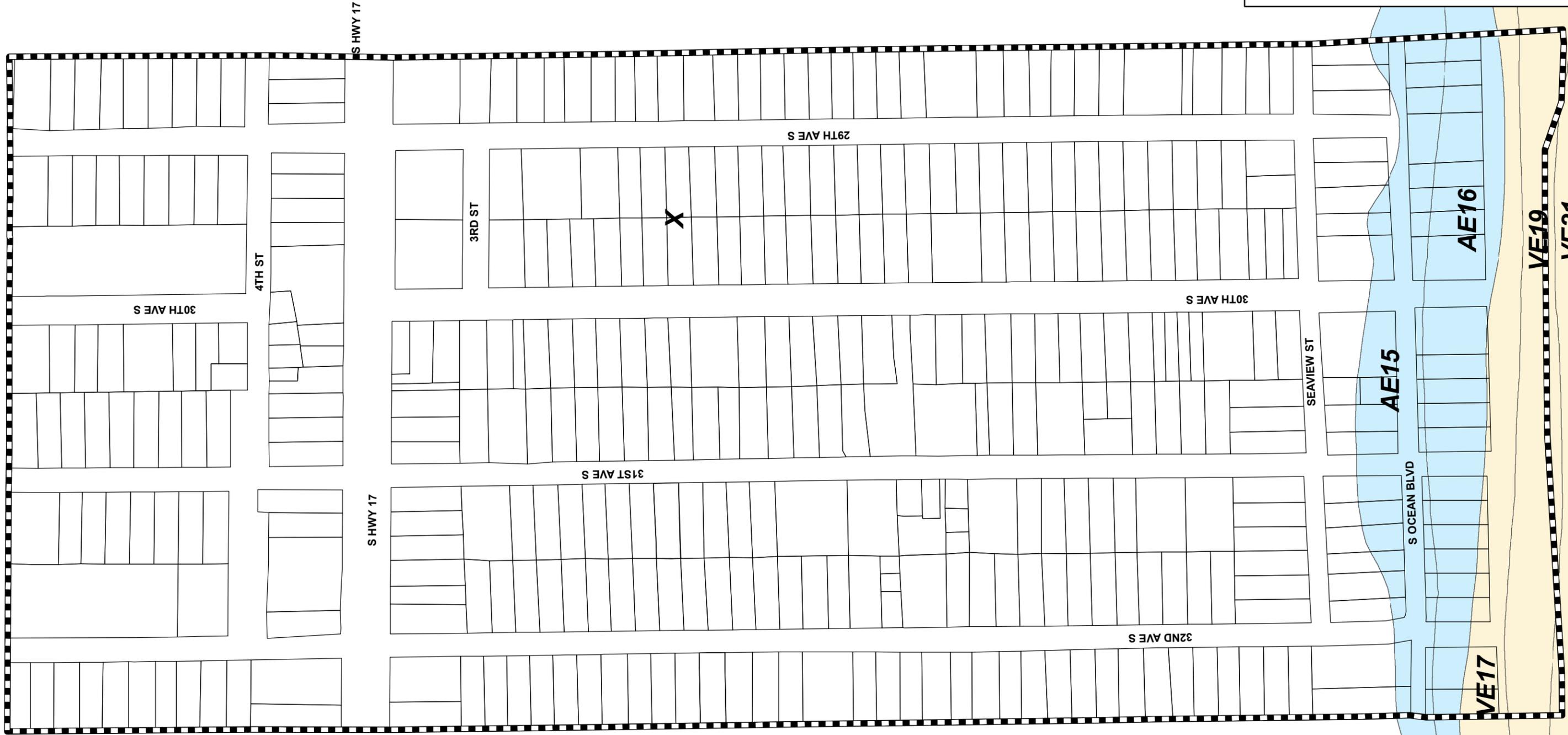
In 2014 and 2015, the Town of Atlantic Beach participated with Horry County and other in-county jurisdictions in the development of the *Horry County Multijurisdictional All-Hazards Plan, 2015*. This plan, which was adopted by the town on March 7, 2016, identifies several potential natural hazards including hurricanes, storm surge, earthquakes, wildfires, floods, tornados, severe thunderstorms and wind, lightning, winter storms, extreme heat, drought, and tsunamis. When assessing the likelihood and potential severity of natural hazards, reference can be made to the county's all-hazards plan.



Hurricane Hugo prior to 1989 landfall

Of particular importance, properties within the town adjacent or in close proximity to the ocean are located within special flood hazard areas (VE and AE zones). In 2014, ten structures and approximately 27 undeveloped lots were located in these hazard areas. The town's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requires that new construction have their first floors elevated to three feet above the base flood elevation. In addition, special construction standards apply.

Map Exhibit NR-3 illustrates the town's flood zones. Current flood hazard maps for the town were adopted in 1999; however, the Federal Emergency Management Agency



Flood Data obtained from Horry County GIS



# Atlantic Beach, SC NR-3 Flood Map

100 Year Flood Zone with Elevations

|    |    |
|----|----|
| AE | VE |
|----|----|



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(FEMA) has recently issued updated (preliminary) maps which are pending adoption following the review/appeal period.

Hurricanes can also pose a significant hazard to the town both from storm surge flooding and high winds. In 2014, an estimated 35 structures in the town were highly susceptible to the effects of storm surge from a hurricane. The Atlantic hurricane season extends from June 1 to November 30. A typical season will result in ten named storms with five reaching hurricane status. Although the probabilities of a direct impact on any given year are relatively low, hurricanes have and will continue to impact the town.

**Summary of Existing Conditions:** From a review of the natural resources data, the following was noteworthy:

- The town contains a pristine and under-developed beachfront. Several locations throughout town provide for spectacular views of the ocean.
- Development constraints, such as soils, floodplains, and other natural hazards, are typical of coastal communities in South Carolina.
- The town contains an undisturbed dune system.

## Part II. Needs, Goals, and Objectives

From a review of the natural resources data, the following needs were identified: 1). protect the town's beachfront and dunes, 2). reduce the impacts of natural hazards; and 3). preserve the town's natural features, such as native trees and view sheds, in the development process.

**Goal NR1: *Protect Atlantic Beach's oceanfront. Measures should be taken which:***

Objective A: Encourage design sensitive development, with consideration given to:

1. The preservation of view sheds;
2. The protection of dunes;
3. A provision for beach access by the public; and
4. The appropriateness of scale.

Objective B: Identify and mitigate threats to residents and visitors' beach experience: Threats which should be addressed include, but are not limited to:

1. Litter;
2. Excessive noise;
3. Large tents and other beach obstacles;
4. Fireworks;
5. Excessive lighting; and
6. Public parking.

Objective C: Coordinate the town's review and permitting process required by the South Carolina Department of Health and



Environmental Controls, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC-OCRM).

Objective D: Provide for the periodic review of the town's shoreline protection ordinance.

Objective E: Provide for a comprehensive update of the town's beachfront management plan.

Objective F: Actively support periodic beach renourishment.

Objective G: Maintain an emergency management plan for the town.

**Goal NR2: *Take steps to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards.***

Objective A: Actively participate with Horry County and other jurisdictions in the update of the county's hazard mitigation plan.

Objective B: Continue the town's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Activities include:

1. Update and actively enforce the town's flood damage prevention ordinance;
2. Consider standards, in excess of NFIP minimums, as a means of protecting properties and reducing insurance premiums; and
3. Consider participation in the FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS).

Objective C: Actively enforce the International Building Code (or equivalent code mandated by the state).

Objective D: Encourage the retrofitting of buildings and structures. Actively pursue FEMA grants.

Objective E: Where possible, locate the town's critical facilities outside of the 500-year floodplain.



**Goal NR3: *Protect and promote the town's natural resources.***

Objective A: Require the identification of sensitive areas as part of the development review process. These areas include, but are not limited to:

1. Floodplains;
2. Wetlands;
3. Dunes and the OCRM Critical Line; and
4. Significant or landmark trees.

Objective B: Require tree plantings and/or preservation as part of the town's approval of new development proposals.

Objective C: Incorporate native trees and other plantings in right-of-way improvements and streetscape projects.

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Cultural Resources Element

# Cultural Resources Element



The Cultural Resources Element focuses on cultural/historic resources associated with the Town of Atlantic Beach. One of the town's defining characteristics is its strong historic traditions as one of the few African-American majority beachfront communities on the East Coast. This element will identify goals, objectives and implementation strategies that perpetuate Atlantic Beach's historic traditions and preserve its unique sense of place.

## Part I. Historic & Current Context

Prior to discussing Atlantic Beach's cultural resources, it is important to place the town's history within a broader regional context. Horry County occupies a unique historical narrative defined by Native American settlement, Spanish explorers and all aspects of our nation's early and modern history. Even with the proliferation of railroads in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Horry County was primarily agrarian with large swaths of land devoted to the production of timber, cotton, and tobacco. Not until the appearance of automobiles, modern highways, and the Intercostal Waterway in the 1920s and 30s that the county became synonymous with coastal tourism, best exemplified by the 1930 opening of the opulent Ocean Forest Hotel, located just south of Atlantic Beach. Thereafter, travel and leisure became synonymous with Horry County, fueling explosive growth that helped define the modern Grand Strand region.

Atlantic Beach's history begins in 1934 when George W. Tyson, an African-American entrepreneur from Wilmington, NC, purchased 47 acres of land for \$2,000 from R. V. Ward. The property was originally part of the larger Crescent Beach land tract. In 1941, Tyson purchased an additional 49 acres for \$600 from Viola Bell, whose family owned large amounts of land in the area. By 1943, Tyson accumulated approximately 96 acres, roughly 4 blocks, of what was to become modern day Atlantic Beach.

In 1943, a group of African-American physicians and professionals chartered the Atlantic Beach Company with the goal of developing the land into an oceanfront community. During World War II, a number of African-American soldiers stationed in the area used



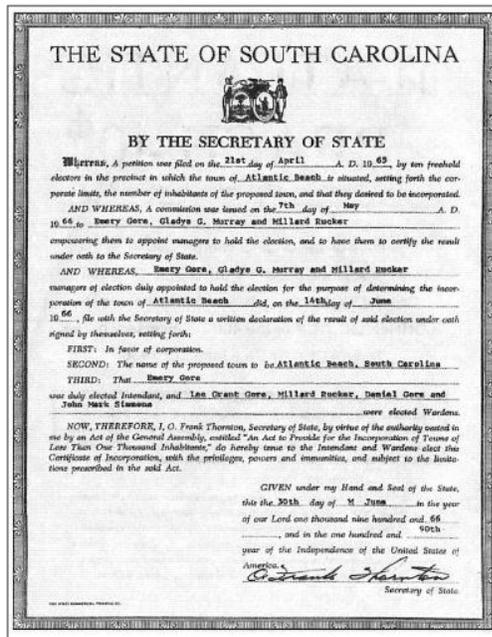
Atlantic Beach's accommodations and recreational opportunities. Over time the town became synonymous as an R&R destination for military personnel stationed at Myrtle Beach Air Force Base, Ft. Bragg and points beyond. Over the next couple decades, Atlantic Beach established itself as a haven for African-Americans seeking safe and



enjoyable leisure opportunities in a segregated environment. The town thrived during this era with hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues, and a vibrant beach scene contributing to Atlantic Beach's reputation as an epicenter for African-American entertainment and leisure.

In 1966, Atlantic Beach incorporated as a town, instilling residents with a sense of pride as one of the few majority African-American owned and governed municipalities in the United States. In 1968, the municipalities of Ocean Drive Beach, Crescent Beach, Windy Hill Beach, and Cherry Grove Beach consolidated to become North Myrtle Beach. With the scars of segregation running deep and a self determination to maintain its own unique identity, Atlantic Beach opted to remain an independent town. Desegregation brought socioeconomic difficulties to Atlantic Beach, as residents, business owners and tourists sought out newly available opportunities. The Town has been slow to recover from the dramatic shift in post-segregation demographics and its lasting negative impact on the town's revenue, infrastructure, and public services.

Despite hardships, Atlantic Beach continues to maintain a strong sense of identity with hopes of for a brighter future.



Town of Atlantic Beach Charter, dated June 30, 1966.

### Modern Timeline of Horry County and the Town of Atlantic Beach

- **1890**-Population of Horry County is 19,256 (71% white; 29% African-American)
- **1899-1900** The Seashore and Conway Railroad construct a line from Conway to the beach. The town of Myrtle Beach is founded
- **1930**- The grand Ocean Forest Hotel opens
- **1934**- George W. Tyson purchased 47 acres of land for \$2,000
- **1936**-Intercoastal Waterway completed
- **1938**- Myrtle Beach incorporated
- **1941**- George W. Tyson purchases additional 49 acres of land for \$600
- **1943**- Atlantic Beach Company is chartered, purchases 94 acres from George W. Tyson
- **1948**- Ocean Drive Beach incorporated
- **1953**- Crescent Beach incorporated
- **1954**- Hurricane Hazel destroys large parts of the Grand Strand/ Atlantic Beach
- **1959**- Cherry Grove Beach incorporated
- **1964**- Surfside Beach and Windy Hill Beach incorporated
- **1966**- Atlantic Beach incorporated on Thursday, June 30th
- **1968**- Ocean Drive Beach, Crescent Beach, Windy Hill Beach and Cherry Grove Beach consolidate to become North Myrtle Beach
- **1974**- Ocean Forest Hotel is demolished, Friday, September 13
- **1976**- Briarcliff Acres incorporated
- **1980**- First Bikefest
- **1989**- Hurricane Hugo damages parts of Atlantic Beach
- **2015**- Population of Horry County is estimated at 298,832 (82% white; 13% African-American)
- **2016**-50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Atlantic Beach's incorporation



Iconic image of Atlantic Beach during segregation. Ropes extended into the shore to ensure separation of races.

*The Negro Travelers' Green Book* provided African-American travelers information for "safe and welcoming" accommodations during the Jim Crow era. Atlantic Beach was considered a safe haven for African-American vacationers traveling the East Coast. (Spring 1956 ed., USC Library)

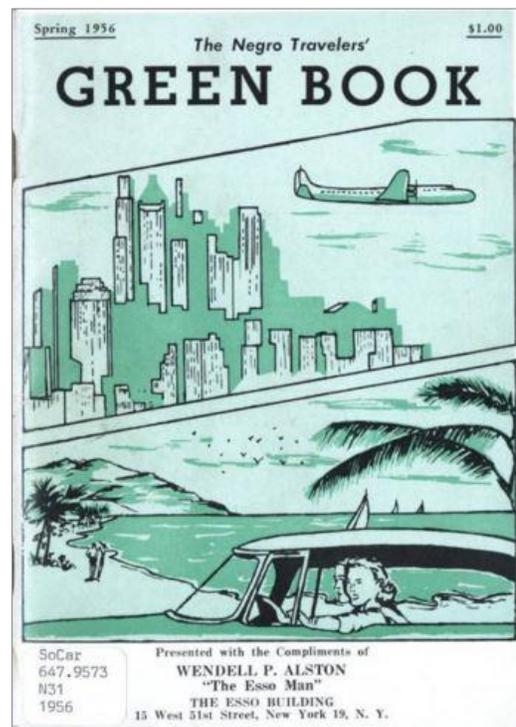


Image of ferris wheel and beachfront entertainment synonymous with Atlantic Beach, date unknown. (USC Library)

## Part II. Existing Constraints and Opportunities

### Atlantic Beach Bikefest

Bikefest and the Town of Atlantic Beach have become synonymous since the inaugural event held in 1980 during Memorial Day weekend. What started out as a handful of motorcycle enthusiast seeking to raise funds for the town has grown exponentially into a nationally recognized event with thousands of participants and visitors encompassing the entire Grand Strand. Notwithstanding the event growing beyond the confines of the town, Bikefest continues to be an important cultural event for Atlantic Beach. Moving forward, the town should explore ways to diversify the event by providing more family oriented activities, incorporating events tied to African-American culture and finding new opportunities to promote local businesses and vendors.



Early Bikefest image c. 1980

### Gullah/Geechee Culture

A significant portion of Atlantic Beach residents can link their ancestral heritage to the Gullah/Geechee culture, a distinct African-American community located primarily along the eastern seaboard. Historically, the Gullah/Geechee culture evolved from West African slaves utilized for their specific knowledge of indigo and rice cultivation. These slaves eventually melded together African and European traditions and dialects into a



culture with a distinctive ethos. Despite its resiliency, socioeconomic factors, tourism development and generational assimilation have placed obstacles to perpetuating the culture to future generations. In recognition of these threats and the critical need to preserve and protect existing Gullah/Geechee culture, Congress enacted the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Act in 2006, resulting in the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. Stretching from Jacksonville, FL to Pender County, NC, the corridor encompasses four states and approximately 8.2 million acres of southeast coastline.

U.S. House Representative James E. Clyburn, one of the primary legislative authors of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Act, sums up the importance of the corridor to cultural preservation:

“The Gullah/Geechee culture is the last vestige of fusion of African and European languages and traditions brought to these coastal area. I cannot sit idly by and watch an entire culture disappear that represents my heritage and the heritage of those who look like me.”

The Gullah/Geechee Corridor is one of 49 National Heritage Areas (NHAs) created in recognition of a place(s) “where a combination of natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources have shaped a cohesive, national distinctive landscape.” Although NHAs are not technically a part of the National Park Service, they do qualify in receiving federal technical and financial support for the development and implementation of goals sets forth by the corridor management plan. NHA’s are similar to national parks in that they stimulate economic development and create local jobs, two critically important issues to Atlantic Beach.



*“Much like national parks, NHAs help revitalize tourism industries and create jobs in gateway communities. Some NHAs also bring needed employment opportunities to abandoned urban centers. And because NHAs are generally created through coalitions of interested local citizens and businesses, they reflect the pride regions have in their own histories and resources.”*

### **Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Purpose**

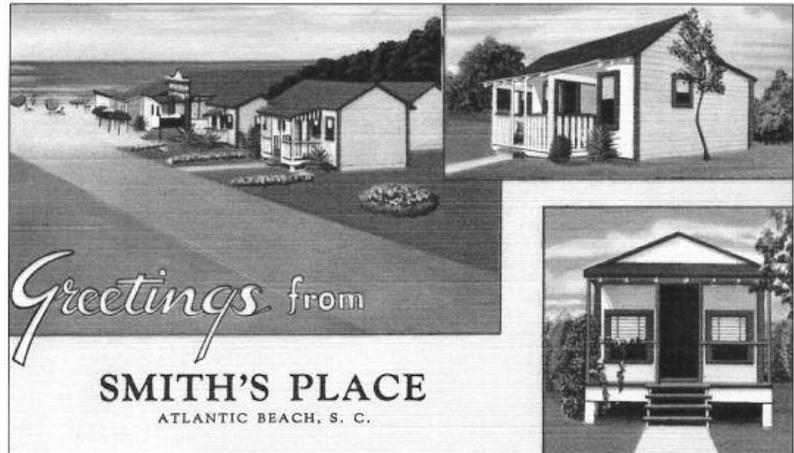
- Recognize the important contributions made to American culture and history by African Americans known as Gullah/Geechee who settled in the coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida.
- Assist state and local governments and public and private entities in South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida in interpreting the story of the Gullah/Geechee and preserving Gullah/Geechee folklore, arts, crafts and music.
- Assist in identifying and preserving sites, historical data, artifacts and objects associated with the Gullah/Geechee for the benefit and education of the public.



The large concentration of residents identifying with the Gullah/Geechee culture provides Atlantic Beach a unique opportunity to position itself as an important regional hub in the corridor. By promoting and incorporating, when and where feasible, the corridor’s goals, the town stands to gain economic benefits associated with the burgeoning heritage tourism industry.

### Historic Preservation

Over the years, Atlantic Beach’s historic integrity has been severely impaired through a combination of storms and economic stagnation. Hurricane Hazel destroyed large parts of the Town in 1954, effectively erasing Atlantic Beach’s architectural heritage up to that point in time. Economic decline and subsequent



property neglect further damaged the town’s remaining historic and cultural landmarks. Even so, there are still physical reminders of the town’s heyday as a center of entertainment. Modestly scaled homes and hotels situated on larger lots contrast sharply with surrounding high density development, providing glimpses of an earlier Grand Strand era.

In 2006, Horry County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation initiated a countywide historic resources survey in response to the proposed extension of I-73. The final report, called the *Horry County Historic Resources Survey* (HCHRS) identified 2,914 sites within Horry County with potential historical significance. The goals of the survey were two-fold: identifying historic properties, districts or



landscapes for possible nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and, secondly, to be used as a tool in assisting with regional planning and historic preservation initiatives. Of the 2,914 total county resources/sites surveyed, 26 were



located in Atlantic Beach: 10 residential buildings, 11 commercial sites, two buildings of unknown use and three vacant structures dating to the 1940s and 1950s. The survey makes specific mention of site 2494, known as the “The Boss” motel (now demolished), acknowledging its appearance in historic postcards of the town. In addition to “The Boss” motel, the survey acknowledges Atlantic Beach as having a “good concentration of brick mid-century hotels that retain their historic integrity.”



Close to ten years have passed since the last architectural survey of Atlantic Beach was completed. As such, a informal survey of the 26 previously listed sites and their existing conditions is recommended. An updated survey would assist the town in prioritizing and preserving its remaining architectural heritage, and help guide future preservation strategies.



### National Historic District Designation

Although Atlantic Beach has no historic properties or landscapes eligible for individual nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, the town as a whole is eligible for nomination as a potential National Historic District. The SC State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) conducted research and architectural surveys of Atlantic Beach in 2007, and determined the town would be eligible for designation as a National Historic District based on its historical contributions and unique role as a planned African-American community created during segregation. The HCHRS and Atlantic Beach Master Plan (2007) make similar recommendations for nominating the town to the National Register.

Images of typical beach front property located along Atlantic Beach’s Ocean Boulevard c. 1940s and 1950s.

Located near Jacksonville, FL, American Beach shares historical and physical similarities with Atlantic Beach as one of the few beach resorts available to African-Americans during segregation. In 2002, American Beach was successfully listed as a National Historic District based on the town’s strikingly similar role as an African-American planned community associated with Jim Crow and mid-century African-American entertainment and leisure.



Based on SHPO’s earlier support and the successful listing of American Beach, there is a probable likelihood of Atlantic Beach being listed as a National Historic District. However, one of the restrictions for historic district listing is that a majority of property owners within the designated boundary must agree to the proposed designation. SHPO’s recommendation sets Atlantic Beach’s proposed historic district boundaries to all properties east of US 17.

There are a number of myths associated with properties and/or districts listed on the National Historic Register of Places. The primary is the perceived restrictions on private



property rights. According to the National Park Service, the agency responsible for managing the National Historic Register, “listing alone does not place restrictions

or obligations on private property owners with regards to use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property.” Furthermore, listing on the National Register does not lead to public acquisition or require public access. A majority of property owners within a designated district boundary is required in order to list a national historic district.

Atlantic Beach should facilitate open discussions with residents on the potential economic and cultural impacts listing on the National Register would bring to the town. Should Atlantic Beach decide to pursue the listing process, in-depth discussions with SHPO and associated consultants is required.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Benefits of national historic district designation include increased national, regional and local recognition, inclusion within various preservation organizations, various state and federal technical assistance and eligibility for federal preservation grants. One of the primary incentives for listing properties and/or districts on the National Register is the opportunity to qualify for federal and state historic tax credits. Designed to promote historic building rehabilitation, tax credits provide eligible property owners rehabilitating their *certified historic structures* a 20% reduction of their federal and 10% reduction in state income taxes. According to the National Park Service, certified historic structures are defined as

*“a building that is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places  
OR*

*a building that is located in a registered historic district and certified by the National Park Service as a contributing to the historic significance of that district.”*

There are a several restrictions for receiving federal and state historic tax credits. Foremost, eligible properties must be income producing and must be certified by the National Park Service as contributing to the district’s historic character. The owner of income producing properties must invest “substantial” rehabilitation cost, the amount of which is determined by NPS guidelines. The research conducted by HCHRS and SHPO have identified potential sites in Atlantic Beach with contributing status, reiterating the need for an updated survey.

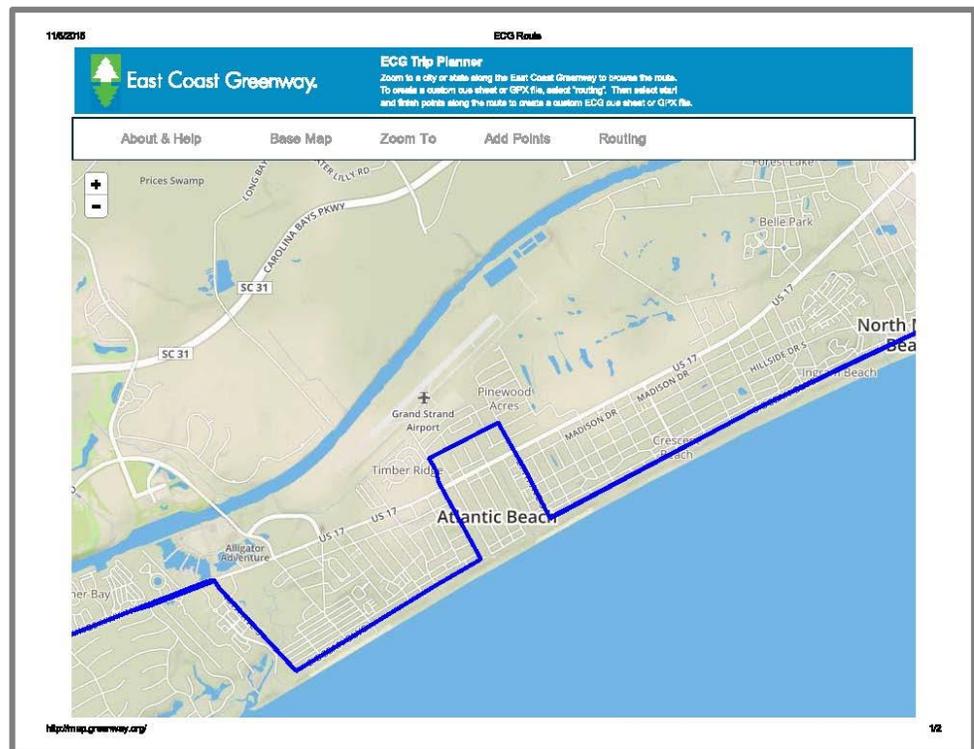


## Pedestrian & Bicycle Connection

Urban greenways have become positive transformative elements for communities. Not only do they contribute tourism dollars to the local economy but they also work to enhance a sense of place while providing health and transportation benefits. High profile urban greenways including New York City’s High Line, Atlanta’s Beltline and San Antonio’s River Walk-Mission Trail are large scale examples of successful urban greenways typically created and funded through public/private collaborative initiatives. Regionally and locally, South Carolina has a number of successful urban greenway projects including Greenville’s Swamp Rabbit Trail, Columbia’s Three River Greenway and Bike the Neck Greenway.

Nationally, the East Coast Greenway Alliance is developing a trail system running the entire Eastern Seaboard, including through most of the Grand Strand region.

Currently, the proposed Grand Strand section of the ECG trail (see insert) bypasses rather than goes through Atlantic Beach due to the closure of Ocean Boulevard between the town and North Myrtle Beach. Orienting the ECG trail through the town will provide Atlantic Beach increased exposure as part of a national trail system. Although a relatively small contribution to the trail’s proposed 2,900 miles, the town’s inclusion in the ECG should be prioritized.



## Local, Regional and National Cultural Collaboration

Atlantic Beach has a unique historical narrative, combining elements of Gullah/Geechee culture, Jim Crow era segregation, and mid-century African American leisure and entertainment. Ideally, Atlantic Beach’s history should be preserved and told within the context of modern museums, community centers, libraries and other public/private institutions. To help facilitate these goals the town should develop both short and long



term strategies. Short-term the town should work to develop interpretive programs that can be easily integrated with local cultural institutions. Long-term Atlantic Beach should look to develop, in some capacity, a permanent museum to properly interpret and preserve the town's unique history. In each case, a public history/museum studies professional should be consulted to determine specific interpretative strategies.



Example of interpretive displays focusing on cultural education.

Examples of area public and private institutions that can help preserve, educate and promote Atlantic Beach's cultural heritage include:

- North Myrtle Beach Area Historical Museum
- Horry County Historical Society
- Horry County Museum
- Horry County Libraries
- Coastal Carolina University
- Franklin G. Burrough-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum of Myrtle Beach
- Myrtle Beach State Park
- Huntington State Park
- Brookgreen Gardens
- Hobcaw Barony

The fall 2016 opening of the National Museum of African American History & Culture provides the town an opportunity for national recognition of its unique cultural history. The town should establish and foster a collaborative relationship with the museum, to promote Atlantic Beach's history through artifacts, oral stories and by sponsoring of special cultural events.

### **Recreational & Cultural Grant Resources**

The following grant resources identified in the 2013 South Carolina State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) are examples of available recreational and cultural funding opportunities, many of which are administered through SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT).



***Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)***

LWCF is a federally-funded grant program administered by SCPRT for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas. LWCF funds are available only for local or state agencies. Grants provided under the program require a 50% match and are reimbursable. The minimum grant request is \$50,000 and the maximum amount is \$250,000. However, if the proposed project is determined to have regional or statewide significance it may be eligible for funding up to \$500,000. Because federal funding for the LWCF program fluctuates annually, appropriations are not stable and cannot be estimated with any certainty.

Contact: SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Office of Finance 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 517 Columbia, SC 29201 803-734-1658  
<http://www.scprt.com/our-partners/grants/lwcf.aspx>

***Recreational Trails Program (RTP)***

RTP is a federally-funded grant program available to federal, state, and local government agencies or qualified private organizations for the purpose of building or improving trails. In South Carolina, SCPRT administers RTP as a reimbursable grant program that requires a 20% match for trail projects across the state. The minimum grant amount available under the program is \$10,000, with a maximum of \$100,000. The RTP program budget is established and updated under the federal transportation bill every six years. Future funding is expected to remain at the current annual level of approximately \$1 million. Contact: SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Office of Finance 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 517 Columbia, SC 29201 803-734-0130  
[www.scprt.com/our-partners/grants/trails.aspx](http://www.scprt.com/our-partners/grants/trails.aspx) and [www.sctrails.net](http://www.sctrails.net)

***Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD)***

PARD is a state-funded, non-competitive reimbursable grant program for eligible local governments or special purpose districts which provide recreational opportunities within each county. The actual grant awards are made on a project-by-project basis. The funds are used for permanent indoor or outdoor improvements to public parks and recreation facilities. These projects must consist of new development, not maintenance. Eligible project costs will be reimbursed at a rate of 80% (80/20 match). Grants cycles are monthly with application deadlines the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Projects require endorsement of county legislative delegation members. New allocations are received in July of every year, with available funds varying from year to year.

Contact: SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Office of Finance 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 517 Columbia, SC 29201 803-734-0185  
<http://www.scprt.com/our-partners/grants/pard.aspx>



### ***Heritage Corridor Development Grants***

The SC National Heritage Corridor Development Grant Program assists communities and non-profit organizations located within the SC National Heritage Corridor in developing, implementing, and maintaining a successful heritage tourism attraction or program that benefits residents and attracts visitors to the area. These 50/50 matching grants are focused on assisting eligible communities to develop their historical, cultural and natural assets so they may contribute to the sustainable economic revitalization of the Heritage Corridor region. Grant projects must fall into one of the three following categories: Planning, Product Development and Marketing, and Visitor Services. Projects that directly impact the visitor experience and that demonstrate a high degree of sustainability are given greater consideration.

Contact: President and CEO South Carolina National Heritage Corridor PO Box 477 Belton, SC 29627 864-245-7380 or <http://www.scnhc.org>

### ***Historic Preservation Grant Program***

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History administers the State's Historic Preservation Grant Program through funding provided by the US Department of Interior's National Park Service. The program began in 1987 and has awarded more than \$1.2 million for stabilization and weatherization projects to date. Grant awards range from \$2,500 to \$25,000, with a maximum award of \$30,000. Approximately \$100,000 is available yearly for grants, with 10% allocated annually per federal regulation to projects for Certified Local Governments (CLGs) in the form of matching grants. There are currently 25 CLGs in the state including the cities of Aiken, Anderson, Beaufort, Bennettsville, Charleston, Chester, Columbia, Conway, Darlington, Dillon, Georgetown, Greenville, Laurens, Rock Hill, Spartanburg, Sumter and York; the towns of Bluffton, Cheraw, Chesterfield, Fort Mill, Lexington, McClellanville, and Mount Pleasant; and Horry County. Grant applications may be made under two project categories:

*Survey and Planning Projects* – Any governmental entity, non-profit organization, or institution may apply for funding under this category, including churches and other religious organizations. Funding under this program can be used for a variety of historic preservation projects including identifying, recording and recognizing historic properties; planning for historic districts and multiple historic properties; strengthening local government historic preservation programs; and planning for individual historic properties.

*Stabilization Projects* – Grants for stabilization projects may only be used in cities and towns that are CLGs, and may be applied for by the CLG, or any non-profit organization or institution within the incorporated limits of a CLG, as long as the grant application includes the signature of the chief elected official of the CLG. CLG grant funds may be used to help pay for stabilization repairs to National Register buildings,



excluding churches and church-owned property (contact: SC Department of Archives and History).

### ***Transportation Alternatives Program Grants***

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was authorized and renewed under the FAST Act - the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act that was signed into law on December 5, 2015. The Transportation Alternatives Program redefines the former Transportation Enhancements (TE) activities and consolidates these eligibilities with the Safe Routes to School and Recreational Trails Programs. The Transportation Enhancements program was originally authorized in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and continued through two successive laws, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU. The Transportation Alternatives program builds upon the legacy of the TE program by expanding travel choices, strengthening the local economy, improving the quality of life, and protecting the environment (contact: Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments).

### ***Agritourism and Tourist Oriented Directional Signage Program***

Commonly referred to as TODS, this program allows tourism and agritourism-oriented facilities to have directional signing placed in the highway right-of-way. The program is a cooperative effort between the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) and the SC Department of Agriculture (SCDA). Designed to promote agritourism and tourist-oriented facilities in rural areas, the program provides directional signage from the closest primary route, a designated SC or US route. The SCDA and the SCPRT are responsible for promoting the program and screening businesses to ensure that they qualify to participate in the program (contact: SCDOT).

### ***Undiscovered SC Grant Program***

The Undiscovered SC grant program is designed to assist communities and non-profit organizations with the development of publicly-owned tourism products and attractions that will encourage visitation to South Carolina. The applicant must be a county or municipal government with accommodations tax distributions of \$500,000 or less, according to data released by the SC State Treasurer's Office.

Through the Undiscovered SC program, SCPRT will assist in the creation or expansion of viable tourism products with the potential to add value to their communities. The grants can help cover the implementation of existing plans and the expansion or enhancement of existing tourism product. This grant program represents an exciting new dimension of support for tourism product development in our state (SC Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism).



### Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives

From a review of the cultural resources information, the following needs were identified:  
1) Provide for new cultural events and opportunities for residents, 2) preserve and promote the town's culture, 3) maintaining collaborative relationships with regional and national cultural institutions.

**Goal CR 1: *Preserve Atlantic Beach's cultural identity through historic preservation efforts.***

Objective A: Provide opportunities for public input and debate for pursuing the town's designation as a national historic district. Once favorable consensus is determined, the town should consider initiating the nominating process with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Objective B: Work with the State Historic Preservation Office in exploring potential grant funding to assist with or pay in full, costs associated with the National Register listing process.

**Goal CR 2: *Increase awareness of and foster Atlantic Beach's Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage.***

Objective A: Support and integrate goals and strategies identified in the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor Management Plan.

Objective B: Consider ways to establish Atlantic Beach as hub community within the Heritage Corridor.

Objective C: Promote local Gullah/Geechee culture and history in museum exhibitions, festivals and interpretative trails (potentially integrated with the East Coast Greenway).

**Goal CR 3: *Coordinate development of area greenway networks through Atlantic Beach.***

Objective A: Work with East Coast Greenway Alliance to reorient the East Coast Greenway through Atlantic Beach.

Objective B: Monitor and identify opportunities to connect Atlantic Beach with current and future local/regionally planned greenways.

**Goal CR 4: *Monitor and identify grant resources applicable to recreation and cultural development.***

Objective A: Work with local agencies for assistance in grant monitoring, writing and application.



Objective B: Prioritize local recreational and cultural needs to assist the grant writing process (see Priority Investment Element).

**Goal CR 5: *Increase and diversify recreational and cultural opportunities for local residents.***

Objective A: Identify opportunities for new festivals and community events.

Objective B: Integrate and promote Atlantic Beach cultural heritage with area cultural festivals, farmer's markets and institutions.

Objective C: Explore recreational opportunities associated with the town's pristine beach.

**Goal CR 6: *Develop collaborative strategies with local and regional cultural institutions in preserving, educating and promoting Atlantic Beach's cultural heritage.***

Objective A: Establish collaborative relationships with area private and public cultural institutions.

Objective B: Consult with public history/museum studies professionals and/or local academic programs in establishing an interpretative program of Atlantic Beach's history.

Objective C: Designate a town cultural liaison tasked with responsibilities in promoting and educating the public on Atlantic Beach's cultural heritage.

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN

**Community Facilities Element**



# Community Facilities Element

This element provides an overview of the Town of Atlantic Beach’s municipal facilities and services, including the town’s police and fire protection, public works and municipally owned buildings. In addition to assessing existing capabilities, this element also works to identify and prioritize the town’s future infrastructure needs. The goals and objectives section provides achievable implementation activities over the next ten years.

## Part I. Inventory of Existing Community Facilities and Services

### Municipal Structure

The Town of Atlantic Beach employs a council-manager form of government, comprised of a mayor and four council members. Residents elect council members and the mayor to staggered four year terms. Town council meetings are held monthly with special meetings called when necessary. Council meetings are held at the town’s community center located at 1010 32nd Avenue South.

In addition to a town council, Atlantic Beach also has a planning commission. The commission is responsible for recommending amendments to the town’s zoning and land management ordinance and evaluating and updating elements of the comprehensive plan. The planning commission meets once a month at the town’s community center. Members of the planning commission are appointed by town council.

### Town Administration

Atlantic Beach’s administration includes a town manager, who is selected by town council, and supporting administrative staff, responsible with implementing policies adopted by town council. The town manager is also responsible for implementing the town’s zoning and land development ordinances, overseeing the administration of building and stormwater permits and carrying out day-to-day town functions. The town’s administrative offices are located within town hall.



Atlantic Beach Town Hall & Police Department



### **Inter-agency Cooperation**

Atlantic Beach’s small population necessitates the town enter into inter-agency agreements with either private contractors or other municipalities in order to provide for essential services. This includes the town’s fire and EMS support, waste and stormwater management, water/waste water sewer service and public street maintenance.

### **Police Protection**

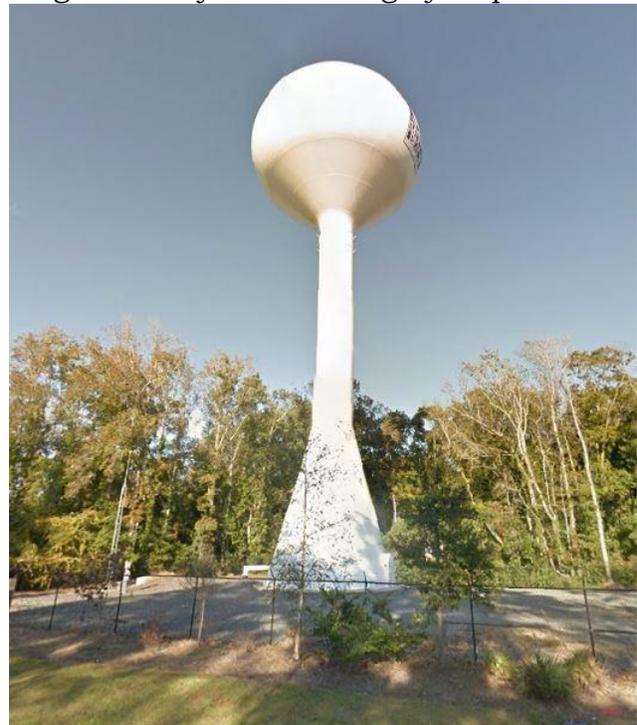
Atlantic Beach’s Police Department has a chief of police and two police officers responsible for the safety and welfare of town residents. The department is supported by the latest equipment, including three patrol cars and one Hummer off-road vehicle. The Horry County Sheriff’s Department and Horry County Police Department provide the town additional law enforcement support. The police department is located within town hall.

### **Fire Protection**

Atlantic Beach’s fire protection has traditionally been covered through a primary service contract agreement with the City of North Myrtle Beach. The North Myrtle Beach Fire Rescue Department currently maintains five fire rescue stations, with Windy Hill-Station 3 closest in proximity to Atlantic Beach. NMB Fire Rescue average service area response time is 3-5 minutes (including Atlantic Beach). NMB Fire Rescue maintains an Insurance Services Office (ISO) class rating of 2, with an ISO Class 1 being the highest achievable rating. A Class 2 rating not only reflects highly capable fire protection services, but it also reduces home fire insurance premiums for Atlantic Beach residents. The town’s fire protection is supplemented by Horry County Fire Rescue through a mutual aid agreement with the City of North Myrtle Beach.

### **Water Utilities (Potable and Wastewater Services)**

Atlantic Beach’s water utilities, including its drinking/potable water supply and sanitary sewer services, are provided and maintained by the City of North Myrtle Beach’s Water & Sewer Division. Most of the town’s existing water infrastructure is similar in age and condition to North Myrtle Beach’s water infrastructure. The town’s potable water supply is provided by an elevated water tank located in



Water Tank located along 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue S, North Myrtle Beach.



North Myrtle Beach’s Crescent Beach neighborhood. The town’s wastewater is treated at a wastewater facility located in Crescent Beach at the Grand Strand Airport.

### **Electric Utility Services**

The town’s electric service is provided through a ten year Utility Services Agreement with Santee Cooper. The service agreement includes a long-term plan to bury the town’s overhead utility lines. A similar agreement between the City of North Myrtle Beach and Santee Cooper has resulted in the burying of utility lines along the city’s segment of US-17. Atlantic Beach’s service plan will likely replicate this by prioritizing the burying of utility lines along the town’s section of US 17. Once implemented, the relocation of utility lines underground will protect the town’s electric infrastructure from natural disasters, while serving to enhance the town’s physical appearance (see the Transportation Element).

### **Public Works (Waste Management, Streets and Stormwater Management)**

Atlantic Beach’s waste management has traditionally been provided by a private contractor. The majority of the town’s solid waste is transferred to the Horry County landfill located on Highway 90 near the City of Conway. The town plans to initiate a resident recycling program in 2017.

Atlantic Beach employs part-time personnel to provide maintenance duties to public streets and facilities, including the town hall and community center. The majority of the town’s public streets are maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT).

Stormwater runoff is a leading non-point pollution contributor to ground and surface waters. Clogged or damaged stormwater drains can result in localized flooding and impaired water quality. Horry County is responsible for managing the town’s stormwater infrastructure. The town is currently working with the county on developing a plan to repair and/or replace damaged stormwater outfall pipes. Long-term stormwater management plans have identified the future need to extend drainage outfall pipes that currently terminate on the beach, further into the ocean.



## Municipal Facilities

Atlantic Beach has two municipal facilities: a leased town hall located at 717 30th Avenue South and a town owned community center located at 1010 32nd Avenue South. Atlantic Beach Town Hall houses the town's administration and police departments and is approximately 1,800-2,000 sq. ft. The town's community center is approximately 8,000 sq. ft. and provides meeting space for town officials and residents. Both structures are over 30 years in age and in need of substantial interior and exterior renovations. The town has prioritized transitioning to a new or renovated town hall within the next five years. Map PI-1 denotes properties owned or leased by the town.



Atlantic Beach Community Center

## Hospital & Emergency Medical Service

A number of small urgent care facilities and physician offices, located primarily along US 17, provide health care services associated with minor emergencies and outpatient care. McLeod Seacoast Hospital in Little River and Grand Strand Medical Center located in Myrtle Beach provide comprehensive health care services for area residents. Atlantic Beach residents can access each hospital facility by car or EMS transport in under 15 minutes.

McLeod Seacoast, located at 4000 Highway 9 East, is a 50 bed critical care and rehabilitation hospital serving northern Horry County and southern Brunswick County, NC. The hospital's 150 physicians and associated staff provide a wide range of primary and specialist medical care.

The Grand Strand Medical Center, located at 809 82<sup>nd</sup> Parkway, Myrtle Beach, is the region's primary health care facility serving residents of Horry County and surrounding counties. The hospital's 300 bed acute care services extend to cardiology, neurosurgery and pediatric intensive care. Grand Strand Medical is one of three Level II trauma centers in South Carolina, as designated by DHEC and the American College of Surgeons.

Horry County EMS provides Atlantic Beach residents emergency medical services, including life support and transportation to area hospitals. The department is split



geographically into three battalions with Station 32 located on 1002 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in North Myrtle Beach being the nearest in proximity to the town.

### **Airports**

Atlantic Beach residents have convenient access to one general aviation terminal and three general aviation airports located in the Grand Strand area including Myrtle Beach International (MYR), Twin Cities Airport (5J9), Conway-Horry County Airport (KHYW) and Grand Strand Airport (KCRE). The airports are owned and partially funded by Horry County and managed through the county's Department of Airports (see the Transportation Element).

### **Primary and Secondary Education**

Atlantic Beach is part of the Horry County School District and is located within the North Myrtle Beach Attendance Area. Associated schools and their approximate 2016 enrollment numbers include: Ocean Drive Elementary (938 students), North Myrtle Beach Middle (1,020 students) and North Myrtle Beach High School (1,319 students). With 51 schools enrolling over 42,000 students, Horry County Schools is the third largest among the state's 85 school districts. The district has a reputation for academic achievement reflected by its numerous state and national educational honors.

### **Higher Education**

Coastal Carolina University (CCU), a state-supported four-year degree institution, is located in Conway, SC, approximately 20 miles from Atlantic Beach. Founded in 1954, CCU enrolls over 10,000 students and provides over 40 undergraduate majors and 10 master's program. CCU is consistently ranked as one of the best regional higher education values.

With three locations in Horry and Georgetown counties, Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is a two-year higher education institution with emphasis on technical training. HGTC enrolls nearly 7,000 students and provides over 90 two-year associate degrees and certificate programs.



Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Main Campus (Conway, SC)



## **Library Services**

The Horry County Memorial Library system provides physical and online library services to residents of Horry County. There are currently ten public libraries within the county's library system with future plans of expansion. The nearest public library for Atlantic Beach resident's use is the North Myrtle Beach Public Library located at 9101 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S, North Myrtle Beach. The North Myrtle Beach Public Library's modern facility houses over 80,000 books, CDs and DVDs, an extensive children's collection and a large 75 person conference room. The library's 25 personal computers support a growing community need for computer and online access. Classes on computer literacy, job searching skills and small business support are examples of how Horry County's Memorial Library system supports communities beyond their traditional services.

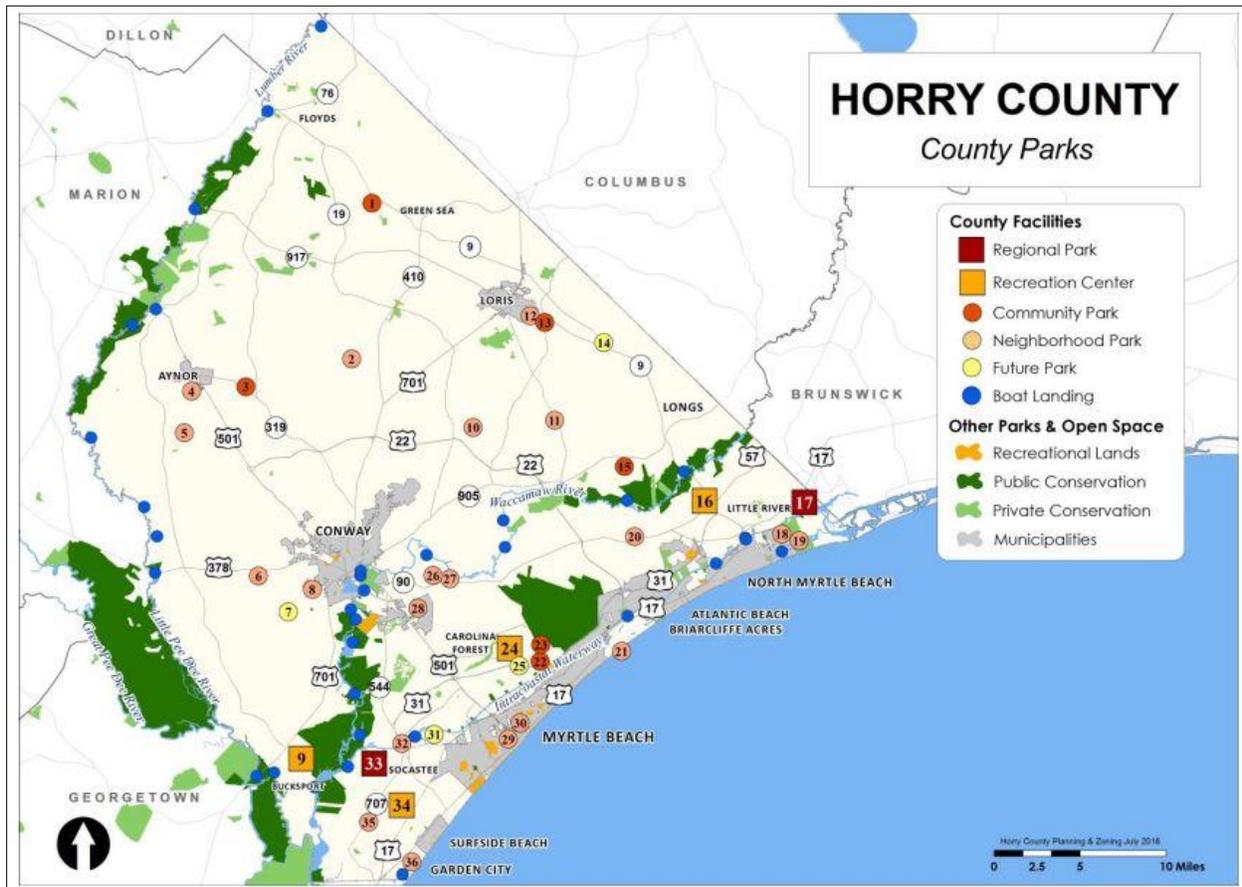
## **Parks and Recreation**

Atlantic Beach currently has two public parks: a children's playground located adjacent to the community center and a basketball court located on 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue one block from the beach. Of greatest significance, the town's pristine beach front remains a primary recreation destination for residents and visitors alike. There are ample recreational opportunities in close proximity to Atlantic Beach, many of which are within walking or biking distance.

Neighboring North Myrtle Beach has 11 passive and active recreational parks and over 240 beach access points. The recently constructed NMB Park and Sports Complex along with NMB's Central Park are two of the area's premier active recreation parks hosting a range of adult and youth sporting events. The J. Bryan Floyd Community Center provides the community with a variety of year-round instructional classes including fitness, art, and dance.

Horry County Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains more than 30 neighborhood and community parks totaling over 618 acres of land. Additionally, the department operates 27 public boat landings, with Horry County Public Works and Engineering Department maintaining 22 beach access points. Horry County offers two regional parks located at each end of the county that are accessible to town residents. Vereen Memorial Historical Gardens located in Little River, SC includes three miles of nature trails and boardwalks among 115 acres of marshland. Socastee Recreational Park provides Atlantic Beach residents active recreational opportunities at the county's southern end.

In 2016, Horry County produced a Parks and Open Space Inventory Plan with a goal of addressing future recreational needs and opportunities. Atlantic Beach should pursue an active role in the plan's anticipated five-year update, to help ensure the town's parks and recreational needs are adequately addressed on the county level.



Source: *Parks and Open Space Inventory, Horry County* (June, 2016)

Myrtle Beach State Park and Huntington Beach State Park, two of South Carolina’s most visited state parks, offer overnight camping and a variety of programs dedicated to environmental education. Both state parks are within a short drive from Atlantic Beach.



## Part II. Summary of Community Facility Needs

Atlantic Beach’s short to mid-range community facility needs include renovations to its town hall, community center and public parks. Town hall is inadequately sized to properly support both town administration and police services. Likewise, the community center is in need of interior and exterior repair/upgrades. In the long-term Atlantic Beach should consider pursuing the town’s master plan recommendations



identifying the need for a newly expanded community center capable of accommodating educational classes, cultural events, and a small museum/visitor center.

The town's two public parks are in need of extensive maintenance and repair. The parks' dilapidated condition not only inhibit residents' use and enjoyment, but they also serve to further exacerbate public perceptions of the town. Atlantic Beach has also identified a critical need for public restrooms to support beach activities and cultural events. The town is pursuing federal and state grant funding to assist in renovating its community facilities and parks.

Long-term infrastructure projects include extensions of existing stormwater drainage outfalls, capacity upgrades to water and sewer lines and relocating overhead utility lines underground. The town should continue to monitor, coordinate and plan for future improvements to its beachfront including improving public access points and beach renourishment projects.

### **Part III. Goals & Objectives**

The following goals and objectives are based on an analysis of the town's existing and future community facility needs.

**Goal CF1: *Ensure a high level of public safety for town residents and visitors alike:***

Objective A: Provide for a quality police force.

1. Support the police department in maintaining appropriate State Law Enforcement Accreditation;
2. Support personnel with adequate equipment and facilities, including the renovation and expansion of town hall; and
3. Perform a comparable salary and compensation study to aid in personnel retention and recruitment.

Objective B: Support fire protection services provided by the City of North Myrtle Beach Fire Rescue.

1. Monitor potential issues impacting primary service agreements between the town and NMB; and
2. Where applicable, support NMB Fire Rescue to ensure a low ISO rating.

**Goal CF2: *Support initiatives to involve Atlantic Beach residents in identifying opportunities and needs related to improving the town's facilities, infrastructure and services.***

Objective A: Explore the use of a resident advisory committee to inform town council and/or staff on maintenance, facilities and service needs and issues.



Objective B: Use the town's website to collect, report and address resident comments and/or suggestions related to maintenance and service needs and issues.

Objective C: Develop public outreach initiatives to inform residents of town operations and services.

**Goal CF3: *Improve and expand both active and passive recreational opportunities within the town.***

Objective A: Identify federal, state and county parks and recreation grant monies to assist in enhancing the town's recreational and cultural opportunities.

Objective B: Renovate the community center to better accommodate resident needs.

Objective C: Provide public restroom facilities to support beach activities and cultural events.

Objective D: Enhance resident use of the town's beachfront, by:  
1. Promoting water quality and anti-littering initiatives; and  
2. Ensuring public beach access and ADA accessibility standards.

**Goal CF4: *Support the expansion and/or improvement of services performed by the town or by other municipalities, agencies or private entities.***

Objective A: Encourage plans by Santee Cooper to bury utility lines underground. The town should prioritize burying of utility lines along US-17 to protect infrastructure from natural disasters while improving town aesthetics.

Objective B: Identify ways to improve facility maintenance services to enhance town functions and improve town appearance.

Objective C: Continue to collaborate with the City of NMB and Horry County to ensure effective fire protection, water/ sanitary sewer and stormwater management services.



**Goal CF5: *Work to ensure effective town administration of services and operations.***

Objective A: Support town administration/staff with training and professional certifications to promote work place efficiency.

Objective B: Perform periodic salary and compensation evaluations to ensure the town is competitive in the recruitment and retention of employees.

Objective C: Implement facility improvements to town hall and the community center to support town administrative and government operations.



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Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Housing Element**



# Housing Element

Housing quality, availability, and affordability are significant factors in defining the vibrancy of a community. Housing represents the town’s largest land use and its discussion is intrinsically linked to all other comprehensive planning elements.

This element provides a review of the town’s housing stock including age, condition, renter/owner composition, occupancies, type, location, and affordability. The final section of this element will provide the town’s housing goals and objectives. A discussion of implementation activities to be undertaken in pursuit of these policies is produced in the final section of this plan.

## Part 1: Analysis of Existing Conditions

**Housing Stock, Type, and Occupancy:** In 2010, the US Census Bureau reported that the town contained 328 housing units. This total represented an increase of 84 units from the 2000 Census. The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) (2009- 2013) estimates the town’s housing count at 297 units. Table H-1 below provides a comparison of housing unit counts by housing type:

| <b>Table H-1<br/>Housing Count Comparison by Housing Type</b>                                     |              |                          |                                  |
|---|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
|   | <b>2000*</b> | <b>2009-2013<br/>ACS</b> | <b>GSATS Land Use<br/>Survey</b> |
| Single-Family Detached  | 115          | 90                       | 96                               |
| Single-Family Attached  | 6            | 16                       | 0                                |
| Two-Family  | 16           | 3                        | 10                               |
| Multi-Family  | 92           | 171                      | 98                               |
| Mobile Home   | 25           | 17                       | 3                                |
| Boat, RV, Van, etc.   | 0            | 0                        | 0                                |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>254</b>   | <b>297</b>               | <b>207</b>                       |
| *Note: Year 2000 totals are Summary File 3 datum. Summary File 1 datum denotes 244 housing units. |              |                          |                                  |

In 2010, the town’s vacancy rate was 54.9%. Recent estimates (2013) indicate that this rate has remained relatively stable. Although significantly higher than state and national averages, Atlantic Beach’s vacancy rate is not atypical of coastal communities. In 2010, approximately 60% of the town’s vacancies were seasonal or occasional use units.

Rental units comprise over two thirds of the town’s occupied housing (approximately 80% in 2010). This rental composition is much higher than state and national averages and is higher than many similarly situated coastal towns.

**Home Value and Housing Costs:** The median value of housing in the town has historically been lower than surrounding areas and the state and national averages. In 2013, the American Community Survey estimated that the median home value in the Town of Atlantic Beach was 112,500. Median values at the county, state and national level were \$159,600, \$137,400 and \$176,700, respectively. Since 2000, housing values have appreciated by 16.3% compared to 33.3% at the county, 44.8% at the state and 44.7% at the national levels.



As reported in 2013, Atlantic Beach’s median gross rent was \$677. This was significantly below county (\$833), state (\$768), and national (\$904) averages.

**Age and Condition of Housing:** The average home in Atlantic Beach was constructed in 1973. The town’s housing units are slightly older than the national average and are significantly older than the county (1992) and state (1983). Chart H-2 below illustrates housing by period of construction. As clearly denoted in the chart, two-thirds of the homes in Atlantic Beach were constructed between 1960 and 1980.

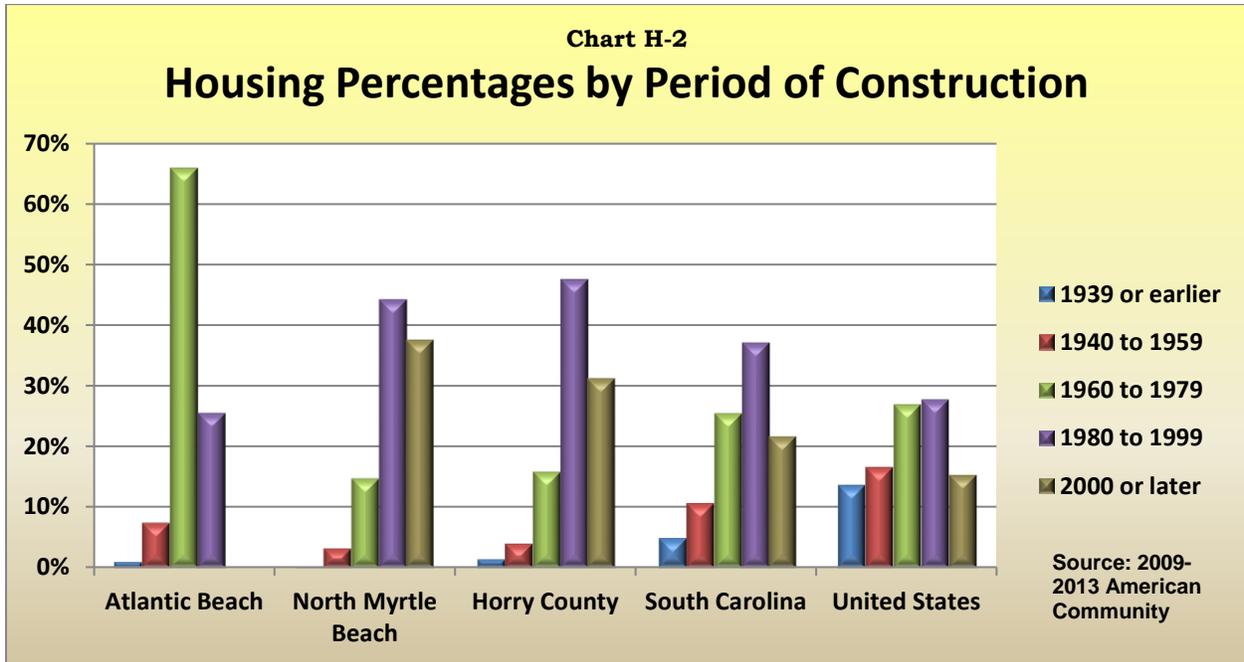


Table H-3 compares the town’s housing statics with those of surrounding communities and state and national averages.



**Table H-3  
Housing Comparison for  
Atlantic Beach and Surrounding Communities**

| <b>General Housing Characteristics (2010 Census &amp; 2009-2013 ACS)</b>  |                    |                            |                                     |                             |  |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Housing</b>  |                    | <b>Total Housing Units</b> | <b>% of Single Family Detached*</b> | <b>Median # of Rooms</b>    | <b>Average Household Size (Owner/Renter)</b> |
|   | Atlantic Beach     | 297                        | 30.3                                | 3.3                         | 1.57/2.07                                    |
|   | North Myrtle Beach | 27,629                     | 32.1                                | 4.2                         | 1.92/2.06                                    |
|   | Horry County       | 186,957                    | 45.5                                | 4.9                         | 2.61/2.33                                    |
|   | South Carolina     | 2,134,464                  | 62.3                                | 5.5                         | 2.56/2.53                                    |
|   | United States      | 132,057,804                | 61.7                                | 5.5                         | 2.69/2.50                                    |
| <b>Median Value of Single-Family Owner-Occupied Homes (2009-2013 ACS)</b> |                    |                            |                                     |                             |  |
| <b>Value</b>  | Atlantic Beach     | <b>\$112,500</b>           | Charleston County                   | \$236,100                   |  |
|   | Briarcliff Acres   | \$541,700                  | Georgetown County                   | \$158,800                   |  |
|   | Myrtle Beach       | \$167,100                  | Horry County                        | \$159,600                   |  |
|   | North Myrtle Beach | \$248,000                  | Brunswick County, NC                | \$186,600                   |  |
|   | Surfside Beach     | \$246,100                  | South Carolina                      | \$137,400                   |  |
| <b>Occupancy as a Percentage of Total Housing Stock (2010 Census)</b>     |                    |                            |                                     |                             |  |
| <b>Occupancy</b>  |                    | <b>% Owner Occupied</b>    | <b>% Renter Occupied</b>            | <b>% Vacant or Seasonal</b> |  |
|   | Atlantic Beach     | 15.8                       | 31.6                                | 52.5                        |  |
|   | North Myrtle Beach | 19.2                       | 7.1                                 | 73.7                        |  |
|   | Horry County       | 42.2                       | 18.5                                | 39.3                        |  |
|   | South Carolina     | 57.4                       | 25.7                                | 16.9                        |  |
| <b>Monthly Gross Rent (2009-2013 ACS)</b>                                 |                    |                            |                                     |                             |  |
| <b>Housing Costs</b>  | Atlantic Beach     | <b>\$677</b>               | Charleston County                   | \$950                       |  |
|   | Briarcliff Acres   | \$2,000+                   | Georgetown County                   | \$803                       |  |
|   | Myrtle Beach       | \$822                      | Horry County                        | \$833                       |  |
|   | North Myrtle Beach | \$827                      | Brunswick County, NC                | \$860                       |  |
|   | Surfside Beach     | \$903                      | South Carolina                      | \$768                       |  |
| <b>Monthly Owner-Occupied Housing Costs with Mortgage (2009-2013 ACS)</b> |                    |                            |                                     |                             |  |
| Atlantic Beach  | <b>\$1,275</b>     | Charleston County          | \$1,682                             |                             |  |
| Briarcliff Acres  | \$2,888            | Georgetown County          | \$1,303                             |                             |  |
| Myrtle Beach  | \$1,305            | Horry County               | \$1,266                             |                             |  |
| North Myrtle Beach  | \$1,555            | Brunswick County, NC       | \$1,314                             |                             |  |
| Surfside Beach  | \$1,539            | South Carolina             | \$1,205                             |                             |  |



**Summary of Existing Conditions:** From a review of the housing data, the following generalizations can be made:

- The town's housing stock is older than housing in surrounding communities, with the majority of housing constructed between 1960 and 1980. New construction over the past decade has been minimal.
- The town contains a lower percentage of owner-occupied housing with rentals comprising two-thirds of all occupied units.
- The majority of town's housing units are vacant or seasonal. This is not atypical of coastal communities.
- Housing values as reported by the US Census are significantly lower within the town when compared to surrounding communities and state and national averages.
- Gross rent is significantly lower than surrounding communities.
- Housing units within the town, as measured by the number of rooms and bedrooms, are smaller than in surrounding communities. The high percentage of rental units and lack of more recent construction may contribute to this disparity.
- The higher percentage of vacant lots (as discussed further in the Land Use Element), including vacant parcels previously containing housing authority units, provides a significant opportunity for residential infill and housing stock growth.

## **Part II: Analysis and Future Conditions**

The number, density, age, and condition of housing is significantly different than in the portions of North Myrtle Beach immediately adjacent to the town. This has occurred despite oceanfront proximity and similar zoning. Unlike in surrounding coastal areas, investment in new housing over the past two decades has been minimal. As a result, the town's housing stock has aged and there is a higher percentage of vacant parcels.

Fortunately, the availability of land and the proximity of the ocean provide an unrealized opportunity for growth. In recognition of this, the town undertook the development of a master plan in 2006 and 2007. This plan contained several recommendations for future housing and these recommendations, where not specifically varied herein, are incorporated by reference.

Housing along 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues serve to anchor the town's permanent population with parcels along these streets consisting of single-family residences. It is recommended that this development pattern continue. Future zoning should provide for single-family and other low-to-medium density housing along these streets. As these streets approach US 17 and the ocean, transition is anticipated to commercial uses (along US 17) and to high density residential, accommodations, and entertainment uses (near the ocean). Where these transition points occur, use and traffic mitigation measures will be important in protecting the future residential viability of these streets. Zoning protections will need to be implemented which guard against nuisances.



It is anticipated and recommended that housing along 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues will consist of mixed densities including apartments, townhouses, and upper-story residences. As these streets incorporate commercial uses, site design and use integration will be important. These factors will need to be addressed through the town's zoning and development regulations (see also the Land Use Element). Property maintenance and the removal of deteriorating residential and commercial structures along these streets will need to occur in the short-term as the current condition of several properties along these streets will make investments on adjacent lands less likely.

Along the ocean and near the terminus of 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues, densities are anticipated to increase with the development of multi-story, seasonal and transient (hotel) housing. Because of the high intensity nature of these uses and their proximity to the oceanfront, site design and development review is perhaps the most critical of any area within the town. Design criteria as recommended in the Land Use Element and master plan will need to be incorporated in the town's zoning ordinance to ensure compatibility, the retention of public beach access, and the preservation of viewsheds.

Finally, an important area for future housing is the sections of 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues west of US 17. These streets include a mixture of housing types. Also within this area are several larger vacant lots which formerly contained units managed by the Atlantic Beach Housing Authority. The redevelopment of these parcels for housing (including townhomes and low-rise multifamily) has the potential to provide a catalyst for revitalizing this section of town. Impediments to redevelopment and revitalization include the need for infrastructure improvements and current lack of transition/separation from incompatible uses along US 17. The Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map provide specific recommendations for the redevelopment of this area.

If redevelopment is fully realized, it is anticipated that the total number of housing units within the town (for both permanent and seasonal populations) could exceed 1,200. This growth, if fully realized, will significantly alter the town and place greater demands for municipal services and infrastructure.

### **Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

From a review of the town and area's housing data, the following needs were identified:

1) Improve housing quality and property maintenance; 2) improve housing options and promote infill; 3) provide for the integration of uses and the protection of future residential building sites; 4) affordability; and 5) stabilize and grow the tax base.

**Goal H1: *Provide for viable residential uses and occupancies that promote safe, convenient, and enjoyable living.***

Objective A: Adopt zoning standards which provide ample areas for varied residential occupancies and housing types.

Objective B: Implement density standards which consider historical development patterns and the town's master plan.



Objective C: Mitigate nuisances to residential uses. Nuisances to residential enjoyment include but are not limited to:

1. Excessive lighting;
2. Litter, junk, overgrown lots, and dilapidated structures;
3. Excessive traffic;
4. Noxious odors, dust, smoke, fumes, and other pollutants;
5. Inadequate drainage;
6. Loud noises and vibrations;
7. Overcrowding; and
8. Loss of privacy.

The level of mitigation may vary based on the type and location of uses. Districts designed for single-family housing should be afforded the greatest degree of protection.

Objective D: Encourage new housing construction that is compatible in size, orientation, and intensity. Zoning standards should be developed that consider:

1. Setbacks;
2. Height;
3. Building and impervious coverage;
4. Floor area and the overall size (bulk) of buildings;
5. The permissibility, size, and location of accessory structures; and
6. Other factors that contribute to residential compatibility.

Objective E: Adopt development regulations that require that new lots and building sites have:

1. Frontage and access to a public street;
2. Public water and sewer services;
3. Adequate fire protection;
4. Sidewalks and pedestrian access;
5. Adequate drainage and storm water facilities;
6. Tree plantings or preservation; and
7. Mitigated floodplain or wetland encroachments.

**Goal H2:** *Protect the character of the town’s single-family residential areas and streets, specifically residential areas along 29th and 32nd Avenues.*

Objective A: Mitigate nuisances (see above).

Objective B: Provide restrictions on residential density which limit the number of units per lot to two units per every fifty feet of street frontage.



Objective C: Recognize that areas along 29th and 32nd avenues transition (or are anticipated to transition) to higher intensity commercial and residential uses for lots near US Hwy 17 and the ocean (see the future land use map). Mitigation measures should be taken that:

1. Ensure adequate or increased setbacks where higher intensity uses adjoin single-family dwellings;
2. Require buffering and screening for commercial uses along rear and side yards that adjoin existing or planned residential uses;
3. Protect viewsheds;
4. Ensure privacy; and
5. Restrict the location of parking areas, refuse collection, and other nuisance generated by commercial features.

Objective E: Prohibit nonresidential uses except where nuisances can be mitigated or these uses are essential or compatible with low to medium density residential occupancies. Provide for select nonresidential uses as a conditional use or special exception.

Objective F: Provide for prioritized amenities to stabilize housing and encourage infill.

**Goal H3: *Encourage mixed uses and higher density residential development along 30th and 31st avenues. Standards should be developed that:***

Objective A: Allow multi-family and transient residential uses.

Objective B: Encourage, where practical, upper story residential occupancies above ground floor commercial or professional uses.

Objective C: Encourage innovative design while ensuring architectural, aesthetic, and functional compatibility through the development and implementation of design guidelines.

Objective D: Where appropriate, differentiate standards for properties nearest the ocean and U.S. 17.

**Goal H4: *Provide for high density residential occupancies along the oceanfront.***

Objective A: Allow, through zoning, the town’s highest residential densities along the oceanfront. Housing may include multi-family, transient, and accommodations type uses.

Objective B: Prohibit new stand-alone single-family dwellings.

Objective C: To the extent that is practical, require first floor commercial,



dining and entertainment, or similar accommodations/resort uses on the first floor of structures.

Objective D: Encourage innovative design while ensuring architectural, aesthetic, and functional compatibility through the development and implementation of design guidelines.

Objective E: Ensure that development preserves public access to the ocean.

**Goal H5: *Ensure that housing is constructed and maintained in a manner that contributes to long-term revitalization and housing stability. Objective include:***

Objective A: Adopt the latest edition of the International Residential Code (with South Carolina Amendments) and provide for local enforcement.

Objective B: Consider the adoption of a property maintenance code which addresses overgrown lots, litter, junk, abandoned vehicles, and dilapidated and blighted structures.

Objective C: Consider the adoption of a vacant property registration ordinance.

Objective D: Provide for local site plan review and permitting of new housing development. The town’s regulations and review should:

1. Be tiered based on the size and scope of development;
2. Coordinate zoning, development regulation, flood damage prevention, and building code requirements into a unified review process; and
3. Include a mechanism for surety instruments and other financial guarantees when developments require the installation or upgrades to public infrastructure.

**Goal H6: *Provide and implement regulations or activities that promote affordability while furthering the vision for the town’s revitalization.***

Objective A: Periodically review the town’s zoning and development regulation to determine where unnecessary or extraneous requirements contribute to the cost of housing. The adoption of new regulations should compare the costs of compliance to the benefits gained through increased regulation.



- Objective B: Periodically review the town’s fee schedule to ensure that review fees are competitive with adjoining jurisdictions.
- Objective C: Consider a provision for density or development bonuses (such as height) for projects that incorporate affordable housing.
- Objective D: Pursue the redevelopment of the housing authority’s vacant parcels. Consideration should include a provision for multi-family and townhouse development with the implementation of prioritized improvements as outlined in the land use, transportation, and priority investment elements.
- Objective E: Work with community housing development organization (CHDOs) to identify affordable housing opportunities and projects.
- Objective F: Explore the use of federal HOME funding for home-owner rehabilitation and new construction.
- Objective G: Work to reduce the cost of home-ownership by improving the town’s ISO and CRS ratings, thus lowering the cost of homeowner and flood insurance.

**Goal H7: *Recognize that manufactured and other non-stick built housing types provide an affordable housing option; however, the introduction of manufactured and other non-stick built housing present compatibility, aesthetic, and appreciation concerns.***

- Objective A: Prohibit mobile homes not constructed to HUD’s safety standards and require their removal from the town.
- Objective B: Prohibit new manufactured housing. The town may provide for the continuation of existing manufactured homes subject to nonconformity provisions which prohibit replacement and encourage timed removal.
- Objective C: Prohibit travel trailers, tents, vehicles, and similar arrangements for use as permanent housing.
- Objective D: Clearly define and differentiate requirements for mobile homes, manufactured homes, and modular homes in the town’s Land Management Ordinance.



**Goal H8:** *Provide for innovative planning in the development of new housing. Consideration should be given to providing zoning provisions that include planned unit developments, cluster developments, form-based codes, and other innovative zoning techniques.*



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Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Land Use Element**



# Land Use Element

The land use element is perhaps the most critical of the comprehensive plan's elements. South Carolina law requires that prior to the implementation of zoning, a land use element must be adopted. As it is necessary for the town to retain its ability to provide for the thoughtful review and input into the direction of future growth and redevelopment, a land use element is essential. Land use policies and accompanying regulations must be in accordance with the adopted element and plan.

This element provides an overview of the existing land use characteristics of Atlantic Beach and outlines the vision for future development within the town. Goals and objectives are also provided to guide land use decision making. This plan concludes with a listing of implementation activities to be undertaken by the town to encourage the realization of this plan's vision.

## Part I. Existing Conditions

In July 2016, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' (WRCOG) staff conducted a land use survey of the Town of Atlantic Beach. The survey used parcel data furnished by Horry County and was supplemented by data from the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study's (GSATS) land use survey conducted in 2014. For the purpose of data reporting, land uses are categorized as follows:

- Single Family Residential Uses include stick built and modular single-family units that are located on a separate lot;
- Two-Family Residential Uses include duplexes and lots which contain two, detached housing units;
- Multi-Family Residential Uses include apartment complexes and all lots containing three or more residential units, attached or detached;
- Trailer or Manufactured Home Uses include all trailer homes and manufactured homes not on a permanent foundation. Lots containing more than one trailer or manufactured home are separately denoted as two-family residential uses or multi-family residential uses;
- Commercial Uses include all retail trade, wholesale trade, finance, insurance and real estate services, business services, entertainment and accommodation uses, repair services, and professional services;
- Recreational Uses include public tennis courts, swimming pools, parks, and similar recreational or open areas;
- Industrial Uses include all manufacturing, fabricating, and warehousing activities;
- Public/Semi Public Uses include educational, governmental, hospital, and religious uses;



- Utility Uses include wastewater treatment plants, public wells, water towers and other water delivery systems, communication towers, electric substations, and similar uses; and
- Vacant includes lots with no structures or other visible uses.

The town’s land uses are illustrated on Land Use Map LU-1 and are further described in the table and text below:

| <b>Table LU-1</b>   |                          |              |                               |                                    |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Atlantic Beach Existing Land Uses by Land Use Category, 2016</b>       |                          |              |                               |                                    |
| <b>Land Use Category</b>  | <b>Number of Parcels</b> | <b>Acres</b> | <b>% of Land Area in Town</b> | <b>% of Developed Land In Town</b> |
| <i>Single Family Residential</i>  | 96                       | 16.84        | 17%                           | 50.2%                              |
| <i>Two-Family Residential</i>   | 5                        | .84          | 1%                            | 2.5%                               |
| <i>Multi-Family Residential</i>   | 13                       | 2.57         | 3%                            | 7.7%                               |
| <i>Trailer or Manufactured Home</i>                                       | 3                        | .52          | 1%                            | 1.6%                               |
| <i>Commercial</i>   | 50                       | 10.3         | 10%                           | 30.7%                              |
| <i>Recreational</i>   | 3                        | .53          | 1.6%                          | .53%                               |
| <i>Industrial</i>   | 0                        | 0            | 0                             | 0                                  |
| <i>Public/Semi-Public</i>   | 5                        | 1.92         | 5.7%                          | 1.9%                               |
| <i>Utility</i>  | 0                        | 0            | 0                             | 0                                  |
| <i>Streets, Railroads, and Other Rights-of-Way (including oceanfront)</i> | NA                       | 24.95        | 25%                           | NA                                 |
| <i>Vacant</i>   | 228                      | 43.1         | 42%                           | n/a                                |
| <b>Total*</b>   | <b>403</b>               | <b>101.6</b> | <b>100%</b>                   | <b>100%</b>                        |

**Source:** WRCOG staff assessment based on land use survey data, GIS parcel series data furnished by the county, and zoning data provided by the Town of Atlantic Beach. \* **Note:** Percentages are rounded which may result in a total exceeding 100%.

Single family uses account for just over half of all developed lands within the town. These uses are located town-wide with the highest concentrations found on 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues. 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues contain a mixture of uses and the town’s commercial uses are primarily centered along US 17. Commercial uses occupy approximately ten percent of the town’s land area and constitute 30.7% of all developed lands. In 2014, commercial uses occupied an estimated floor area of approximately 100,000 square feet.

The town contains a high number of vacant lots including most of the lots in the vicinity of the town’s beachfront. In 2016, approximately fifty seven (57) percent of the town’s lots were vacant. This vacancy percentage is much higher than coastal areas to the town’s immediate north and south.

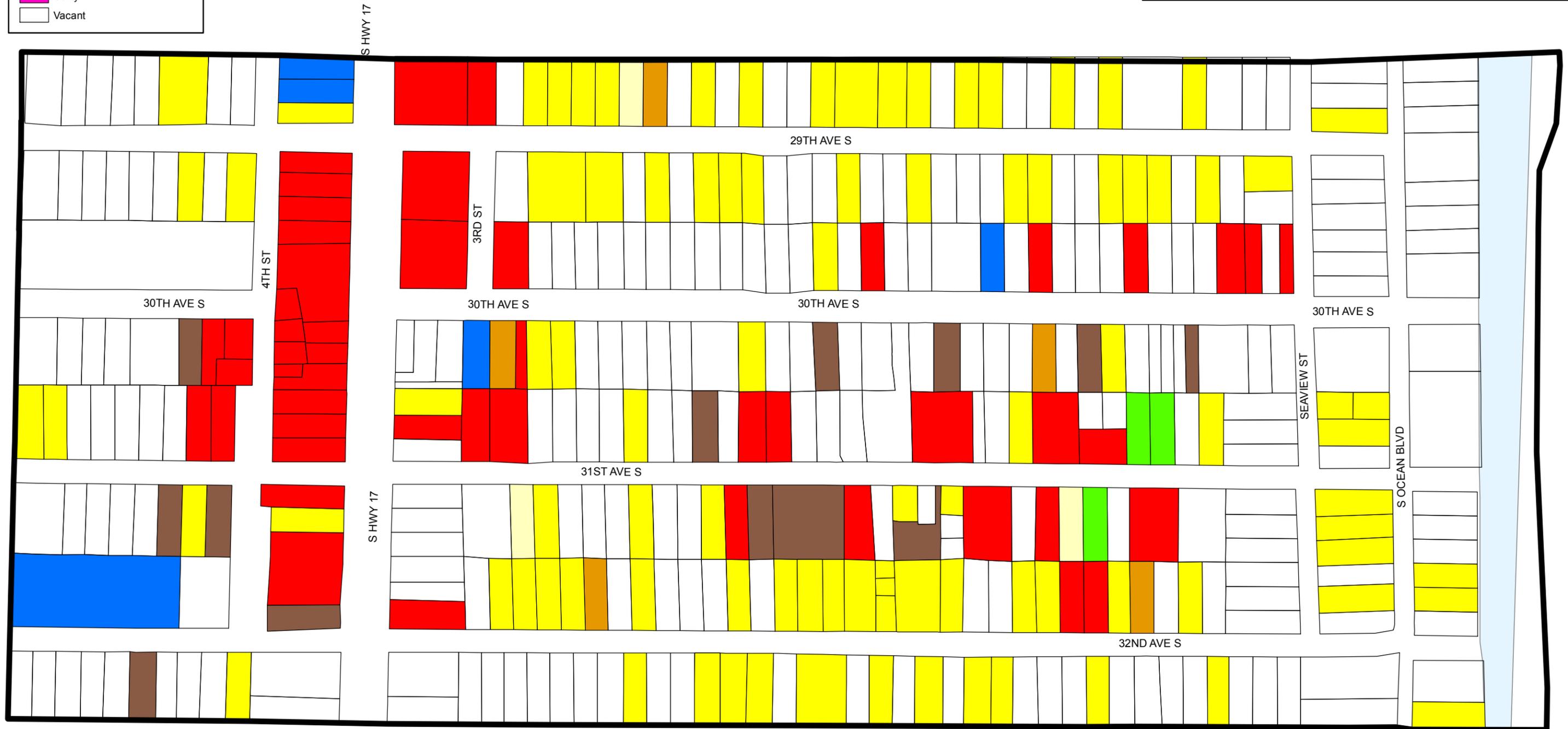
**Legend**

- Single Family Residential
- Two-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Trailer or Manufactured Home
- Recreational
- Public/ Semi-Public
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Utility
- Vacant

# Atlantic Beach Land Use Map LU-1

January 2017

DISCLAIMER: This map is a graphic representation of data obtained from various sources. All efforts have been made to warrant the accuracy of this map. However, WRCOG disclaims all responsibility and liability for the use of this map.







Lots within the town are generally uniform in dimension (50' by 150') and are relatively small averaging 7,500 square feet. Most of the town's lots, including those along the oceanfront, appear to have been originally platted for single family housing which, in the absence of property consolidation, makes higher intensity residential uses as well as commercial uses difficult in several areas. A detailed analysis of lot size and current regulatory requirements are contained in the *Atlantic Beach, South Carolina Master Plan, 2007* (master plan).

## Zoning

The *Town of Atlantic Beach Land Management Ordinance* (LMO) was adopted in 2001. As a unified ordinance, the LMO contains the town's zoning requirements, development regulations (previously referred to as subdivision regulations), stormwater management ordinance, and flood damage prevention ordinance. The LMO is the town's primary tool for directing future development.

The LMO divides the town into seven districts. These districts are illustrated on map LU-2 and are described below.

- CP Conservation Preservation District: This district includes the town's immediate beachfront and extends inland to approximate the boundary of OCRM's critical line. The town's beach and dune system represent an environmentally sensitive area and development is severely restricted. In addition to town requirements, this area is subject to restrictions and permitting by the state.
- R-1 Residential-Low-density District: This district includes the majority of properties west of US 17. The primary allowable use within this district is single-family residential dwellings; however the district does allow for recreational uses. Attached single-family dwellings (townhouses) may also be permitted as a special exception. The minimum lot size in this district is 7,500 square feet.
- R-2 Residential-Medium-density District: This district includes most properties along 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues east of US 17. This district allows for single-family, two-family, and multi-family housing. Lot size requirements are 6,000 square feet and setbacks are slightly less restrictive than the town's R-1 district.
- OPI Office Professional/Industrial District: This district includes select parcels along US 17, parcels associated with the town's community center, and one of the Atlantic Beach Housing Authority's parcels. This district permits public and civic uses as well as a select number of commercial uses. Unlike its name would imply, industrial uses, excluding some utility uses, are prohibited in this district. Residential uses in this district are also prohibited. The minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet.
- MU Mixed Use District: The mixed use district includes properties along 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues and extends to the ocean. This district is essentially two districts: a beachfront mixed use district (BF) and a CB mixed use district. The CB district permits all housing types and most commercial uses either by right or by conditional use. The beachfront portion of the MU district

**Legend**  
**ZONING 2016**

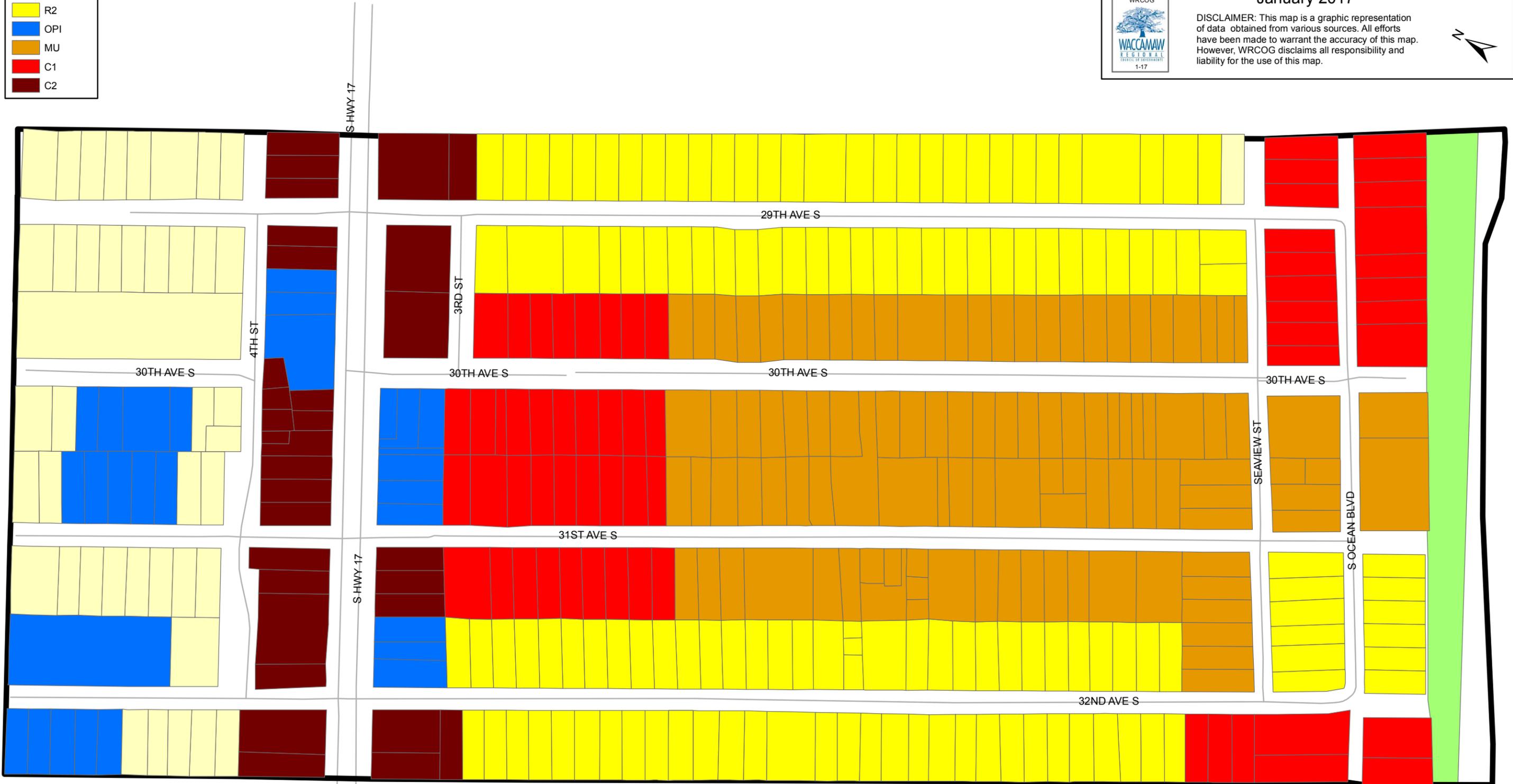
- CP
- R1
- R2
- OPI
- MU
- C1
- C2

# Atlantic Beach Zoning Map LU-2

January 2017



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prohibits housing, permits a fewer number of commercial uses, and allows for resort accommodations such as inns and hotels. Setback and lot size requirements for the CB and BF portions of the mixed use district are identical.

- **C-1 Resort Commercial District:** The C-1 district includes lots along US 17 and portions of 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues closest to Kings Highway. This district also includes lots along the beachfront near 32<sup>th</sup> Avenue and at the oceanfront terminus of 30<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> avenues. Like the mixed use district, the C-1 district is bifurcated into a beachfront (BF) and CB designation. The beachfront portion of the district permits all housing types while the CB portion does not permit housing. Resort accommodations are allowed in the CB and BF portions as are many commercial uses. Setbacks are identical; however, lot width requirements along the beachfront are greater (150 feet).
- **C-2 Highway Commercial District:** The town’s highway commercial district is located exclusively along US 17. This district permits commercial uses typical of a major highway corridor. Residential uses are limited to divisible dwelling units, as a conditional use, and second floor residences.

The town’s zoning ordinance also provides two options for planned unit developments: a PD-1 and PD-2. Both districts offer design and use flexibility. The PD-1 is intended for areas of ten lots (75,000 square feet) or greater while the PD-2 option is available for smaller areas. These districts can be requested by a developer and the requirements for each district vary slightly. Presently, the planned development concept has not been used within the town.

Table LU-2 provides information on the acreage, number of parcels, and availability of vacant lots for the town’s seven zoning districts.

| <b>Table LU-2</b>   |                         |                         |                           |                         |                        |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Atlantic Beach Zoning Districts by Estimated Area and Utilization</b>  |                         |                         |                           |                         |                        |
| <b>Zoning District</b>  | <b># of<br/>Parcels</b> | <b>Parcel<br/>Acres</b> | <b>Vacant<br/>Parcels</b> | <b>Vacant<br/>Acres</b> | <b>%<br/>Developed</b> |
| <b>CP Conservation Preservation</b>   | NA                      | 1.2                     | 1                         | 1.2                     | 0%                     |
| <b>R-1 Residential-Low-density</b>  | 42                      | 9.23                    | 27                        | 6.57                    | 28.8%                  |
| <b>R-2 Residential-Medium-density</b>   | 137                     | 23.95                   | 63                        | 10.89                   | 54.5%                  |
| <b>OPI Office<br/>Professional/Industrial</b>   | 28                      | 6.02                    | 20                        | 3.27                    | 45.7%                  |
| <b>MU Mixed Use</b>   | 105                     | 19.57                   | 64                        | 11.74                   | 40.0%                  |
| <b>C-1 Resort Commercial</b>  | 60                      | 11.41                   | 46                        | 8.83                    | 22.6%                  |
| <b>C-2 Highway Commercial</b>   | 31                      | 6.43                    | 8                         | 1.8                     | 72.0%                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>403</b>              | <b>71.4</b>             | <b>228</b>                | <b>44.3</b>             | <b>37.9%</b>           |
| <i>Source: WRCOG staff assessment based on field survey data, GIS parcel series data furnished by the county, and zoning data provided by the Town of Atlantic Beach.</i> |                         |                         |                           |                         |                        |



All of the town's existing zoning districts include available undeveloped acreage. Excluding the Conservation Preservation district, underutilization is most pronounced in the C-1 and R-1 districts.

### **Analysis**

From a review of the land use data, the town's regulatory documents, and information collected in preparation of this plan's elements, the following observations can be made:

- Over one-half of the lots in the town are undeveloped. This condition is atypical of coastal properties in adjacent communities.
- Lots were primarily arranged for single-family residential occupancies. In most areas, lot sizes do not readily accommodate intense commercial uses. Lot sizes along the oceanfront are relatively shallow, limiting nonresidential development.
- Land use constraints, such as soils, floodplains, wetlands, etc., are typical of coastal communities and should not present an unreasonable obstacle to development (see the Natural Resources Element).
- The lack of property and structural maintenance are a hindrance to development and private investment in the town (see the Population and Housing elements).
- Utility services, such as water and sewer, are in place and are sufficient to accommodate most development scenarios (see the Community Facilities Element).
- The lack of street connectivity and extremely low traffic counts on the town's streets (excluding US 17) are not conducive to commercial activities that rely on high visibility and traffic (see the Transportation Element).
- Available lots are present in all zoning districts with high levels of underutilization noted in the town's C-1 and R-1 districts.
- The town's regulatory structure is marginally sufficient; however, improvements should be made. A detailed analysis of the town's zoning is contained in the town's master plan and this analysis is incorporated herein by reference (see master plan page 47 through 62). Recommendations on improving the town's regulatory framework are also provided in the section below.

### **Part II. Future Conditions & Recommendations**

In 2006, the town undertook a yearlong visioning process and planning study. This study resulted in the development of the *Atlantic Beach, South Carolina Master Plan*. This plan was adopted by the town council in 2007.

The master plan provides a comprehensive vision for future growth and redevelopment. The plan envisions relatively intense development along the beachfront including hotels, entertainment and similar resort accommodations, the protection of viewsheds through revised zoning requirements, and the development of a boardwalk. Areas along 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues (both east and west of US 17) are envisioned as mixed use corridors with enhanced streetscapes, common design motifs, and other amenities. US 17 is envisioned to remain a predominately commercial highway corridor; however, enhancements to the corridor's streetscapes and the orientation of buildings (through zoning setback and signage changes and the construction of



sidewalks) are intended to provide a distinctive feel when entering the town. 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues are envisioned to remain predominately low-to-medium density residential (typical cross-sections for all streets are provided in the Transportation Element).

This element adopts this long-term vision for future development within the town. Except as provided in this element, the recommendations of the town’s master plan are incorporated herein by reference (see pages 109 to 122).

The recommendations of the master plan are, in several cases, contingency based. Some of the master plan’s land use recommendations assume the opening and realignment of Ocean Boulevard, the extension of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and the midblock construction of several interior-connecting streets. In addition, the plan also assumes substantial public and private investment which, to date, has failed to



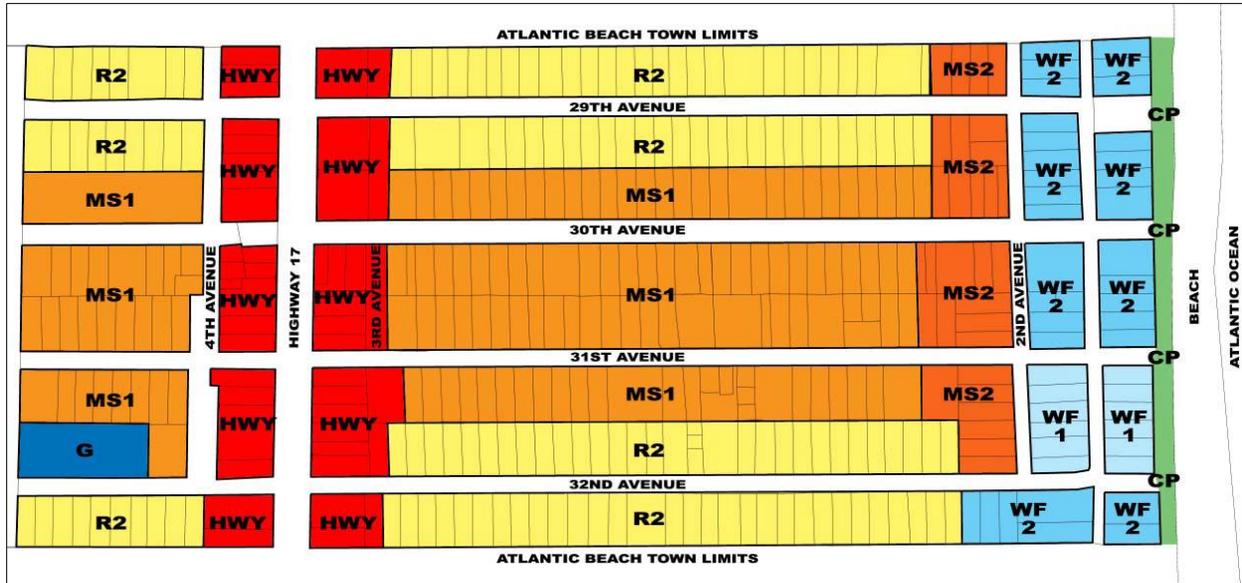
Master Plan conceptual of a developed Atlantic Beach

materialize. In the absence of transportation improvements (specifically the opening/realignment of Ocean Boulevard and the extension of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue) the master plan’s recommendations and expectations for intense commercial, entertainment, and resort accommodation development may be unrealistic, at least in the short-term (see page 72 of the master plan).

It is unlikely, within the next five years, that the opening of Ocean Boulevard (or the full implementation of other improvements) will be realized; however, it is possible that implementation could occur within the next ten years. At the same time, it is possible that the town may determine that opening Ocean Boulevard or implementing other master plan recommended improvements are not in Atlantic Beach’s long-term interest. This uncertainty makes projecting and planning for future growth difficult but not impossible. Even in the absence of transportation and other improvements, growth, albeit slower, will occur and will likely be residential with modest commercial activity. Irrespective of type and intensity, this growth will need to be well planned and thoughtfully regulated.

### Implementation of Master Plan

From a regulatory standpoint, the master plan recommends the restructuring of the town’s zoning districts into eight new, or slightly modified, districts. These districts include the creation of two waterfront districts, two mixed use districts, a highway commercial district, and the retention of the town’s R-2 and conservation districts. The master plan also recommends the discontinuance of the town’s R-1 district (see pages 109 to 122 of the master plan for a complete description of the recommended districts). The exhibit and descriptions below illustrate the master’s plan recommendations for future land uses and zoning districts.



These future districts include:

- Waterfront 1 (WF1). The intent of this district is to provide for pedestrian oriented, beachfront medium-density residential and mixed use development. Mixed use development should be required in conjunction with multi-family development. Uses are intended to be composed of retail, dining, nightclub and cultural uses. This district implements a floor area ratio requirement, limits height to eighty five (85) feet, and increases setbacks (with decreasing floor area) above elevations of forty-five feet (see page 112 of the master plan for a complete description).
- Waterfront 2 (WF2). The intent of this district is to provide for pedestrian oriented, beachfront high-density residential and mixed use development. Mixed use development should be required. Uses are intended to be composed of retail, dining, nightclub, and cultural uses. Building height is permitted to reach 200 feet and setbacks vary by height to provide for the preservation of an ocean view. This district also provides for development bonuses (see page 113 for a complete description).
- Main Street 1 (MS1). The intent of this district is to provide for pedestrian oriented low-density development. The district as a whole is intended to be mixed-use and the development of mixed-use projects should be encouraged; however, single uses should be allowed in order to promote and ease infill development. Uses should be composed of neighborhood scaled (less than 20,000 sf) retail and office uses as well as multi-family and transient residential uses. Single-family residential should not be allowed. Height is limited to fifty-five (55) feet and setbacks vary by elevation (see page 117 for a complete description).
- Main Street 2 (MS2). The intent of this district is to provide for medium-density development. Mixed-use development should be required for development on



multiple lots. Uses are intended to be composed of retail, dining, nightclub and cultural uses (e.g. entertainment district uses) while upper levels are generally composed of residential or transient residential uses. Single-family residential uses should not be allowed. Building height is limited to eighty-five (85) feet and setbacks vary based on height (see page 119 for a complete description).

- US 17 (HWY). The intent of this district is to provide for highway oriented retail and office development. The district as a whole is intended to be mixed-use and the development of mixed-use projects should be encouraged; however, single uses should be allowed in order to promote and ease infill development. Single use residential development should not be permitted. Uses should be composed of retail and office uses as well as multi-family and transient residential uses. Residential uses should be discouraged at the street level. Height is limited to fifty-five (55) feet and setbacks vary based on height (see page 120 for a complete description).
- Government (G). The intent of this district is to allow for the development of facilities for local government, public health, recreational, cultural or educational activities. Building height is limited to fifty-five (55) feet and setbacks vary based on height (see page 121 for a complete description).
- Residential (R2). The intent of the R2 district is to remain unchanged from the town's current R-2 district with respect to setbacks, height, and footprint. With respect to density, two units per 50' of lot frontage should be allowed. Lot frontage means the dimension of the property line that fronts a public street (see page 122 for a complete description).
- Conservation Preservation (CP). The intent of this district is to retain the town's current conservation district requirements (see page 110).

The town should pursue amendments to its zoning ordinance and map to align with the master plan's recommendations; however, in the absence of certain improvements the following modifications should be made:

### **Modifications in the absence of Ocean Boulevard Opening**

- *Prohibition on single family residential and the expectation for future use.* The master plan recommends that single-family housing be prohibited in the MS1 and MS2 districts. The expectation is that the opening of Ocean Boulevard will increase traffic counts and property visibility thus rendering stand-alone single family housing as less than the highest and best use of property. In the absence of street connectivity, this assumption will need be reconsidered especially on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and for MS2 designated properties nearest 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues. If stand-alone single family housing is permitted, the town may wish to bifurcate the MS1 and MS2 districts to provide for this zoning distinction. In addition, the town should reexamine the LMO's Use Table and the master plan's use descriptions to identify activities that would be viable or likely with a closed transportation system.



- *Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and other setback recommendations.* In general, the master plan’s recommendations for building height, setbacks, and other dimensional requirements should be implemented. The plan assumes the realignment of an opened Ocean Boulevard along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (with the potential closure of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue). In the absence of opening and realignment, minor adjustments to FAR and setback requirements for lots within the WF2 district may be warranted. This deviation should be examined, provided that changes are in keeping with the vision of the master plan, specifically with regard to the preservation of viewsheds and the control of building height.

### **Modifications in the absence of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue’s Extension**

- The master plan recommends the extension of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This extension of the town’s “main street” would enhance access and visibility for properties west of US 17. As such, the master plan designates properties along the western extents of 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues as a future MS1 district. In the absence of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue’s extension, the lack of property access, traffic counts, and visibility will significantly reduce the mixed use potential for these properties. A medium-density residential designation (to include multi-family housing, townhomes, and other residential development) that also permits a select number of compatible nonresidential uses may be more appropriate.

### **Other Recommendations to Encourage & Direct Future Growth**

In addition to the recommendations of the master plan and those above, the town should undertake the following activities following the adoption of the comprehensive plan:

- *Capital improvements plan.* Several needed improvements are identified in the Community Facilities, Transportation and Priority Investment elements. Many of these improvements (especially transportation improvements) will directly affect the location and prevalence of future land uses. In addition to the guidance provided in the Priority Investment Element, the town should develop a capital budgeting process that prioritizes improvements and allocates funding with scheduled implementation.
- *Rewrite of the town’s LMO.* In addition to text amendments needed to align the town’s zoning code with the land use and zoning recommendations of the master plan and comprehensive plan, the town’s LMO should be rewritten with emphasis placed on: 1) streamlining the code to increase its clarity and the consistency of enforcement; 2) updating standards for flood damage prevention to incorporate changes in the federal requirements, recommended best practices, and the new flood maps; and 3) incorporating updated public improvements specifications that align with the street concepts contained within the Transportation Element and master plan (see also the implementation section).
- *Architectural standards.* The master plan recommends the creation of architectural standards for areas along the waterfront and the town’s primary corridors (see pages 123 to 138). Although the master plan provides general architectural and design guidance, specific enforceable standards will need to



be developed. In addition, the town's LMO provides for a Board of Architectural Review (BAR); however, the members of this board have not been appointed. The development of enforceable design standards and the appointment of BAR members should be coordinated with other updates to the town's LMO.

- *Impact fee structure.* The town has adopted impact fees (see Article XVIII of the town's LMO). This fee structure will need to be re-examined and updated in accordance with Section 6-1-910 et seq. of the state code. This activity will need to be coordinated with the development of a capital improvements plan.
- *Dilapidated structure removal and property maintenance.* The condition of several lots and buildings within the town provide an obstacle to future development and private investment. As outlined in the Population and Housing elements, the town should implement and actively enforce a property maintenance code. In addition, the town should pursue grant funding to assist in the removal of dilapidated structures and to encourage owner-occupied housing rehabilitation.
- *Determination on the status of Ocean Boulevard.* The prevalence and intensity of future development in the town will be determined in large part by whether or not Ocean Boulevard is opened. If Ocean Boulevard is to remain closed, the primary focus for future land use actions should be to encourage infill residential development and to foster a quiet, residential beachfront community with commercial activity concentrated primarily on US 17. If opened, future land use actions should be geared toward fully implementing the master plan and maintaining a balance between residential, mixed use, and commercial activities.

### **Future Land Use Map**

Map Exhibit LU-3 denotes the desired location of future land uses within the town of Atlantic Beach. This map, coupled with the goals and objectives of this plan, is designed to help guide the future zoning of property. It is recognized that the implementation of the map and accompanying zoning text will take years to fully implement. In addition, it is understood that, in some cases, changes in zoning and land use requirements should be timed to correspond with the installation of public improvements. The map sheet and this element provide transitional contingencies to be considered as improvements are implemented.

### **Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

From a review of the town and area's land use data, the following needs were identified: 1) development of the town's vacant lots in a manner which is economically viable and sustainable; 2) improvement in the quality and aesthetics of new construction; 3) improvement of design and use standards that establish a sense of distinctiveness and place; 4) coordination of private and public investments; 5) protection of residential occupancies from nuisances and other incompatibilities; and 6) stabilization and growth of the tax base.

# Atlantic Beach Future Land Use Map LU-3

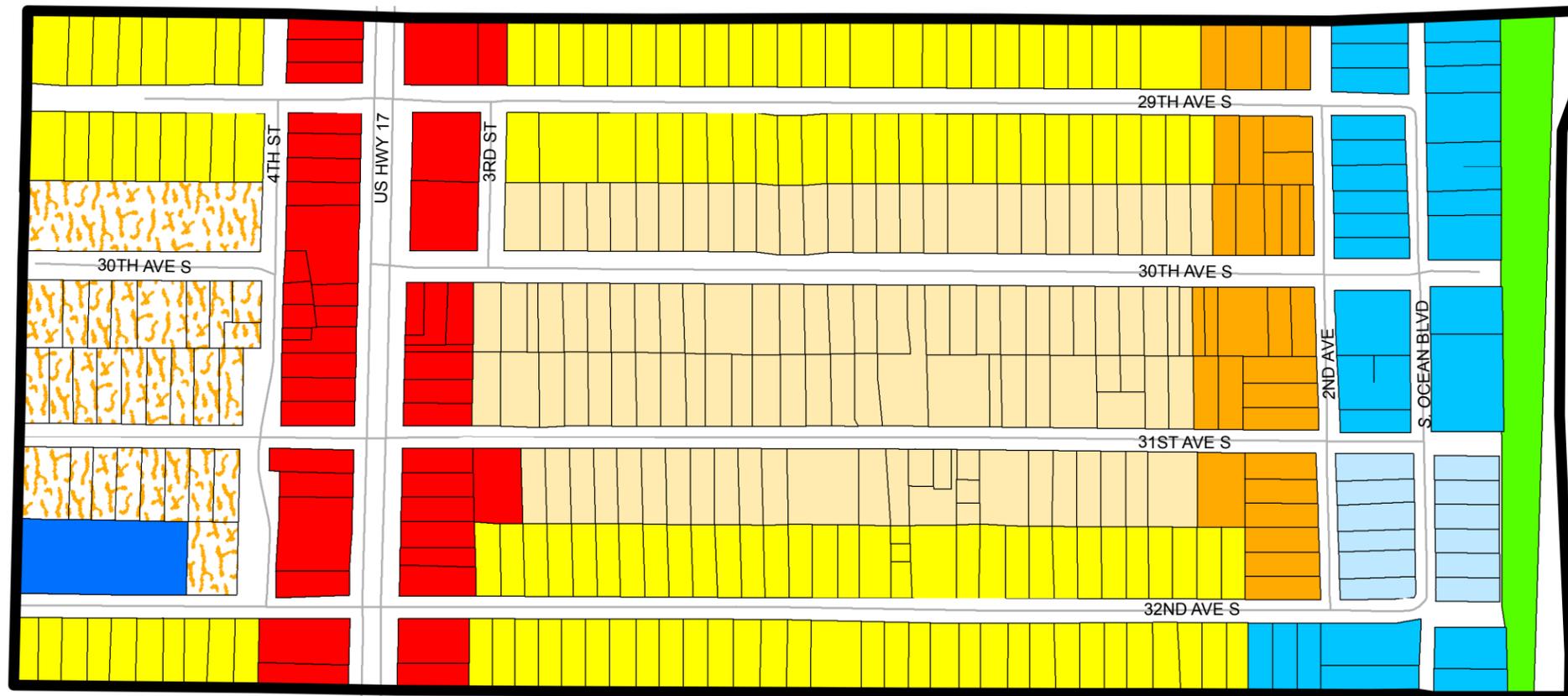


DISCLAIMER: This map is a graphic representation of data obtained from various sources. All efforts have been made to warrant the accuracy of this map. However, WRCOG disclaims all responsibility and liability for the use of this map.



## Legend

- Conservation Preservation
- Flexible Use (Commercial)
- Government, Cultural and Institutional
- Low to Medium Density Residential
- Mixed Use (Low to Medium Density)
- Mixed Use (Medium Density)
- Mixed Use West (Low to Medium Density)
- Waterfront Mixed Use (High Density)
- Waterfront Mixed Use (Medium Density)



### Conservation Preservation

This area includes lands where environmentally sensitive features (such as the town's dunes and beach) are present. As such, these areas should permit only minimal development.

### Low to Medium Density Residential

This area is designed for low to medium density residential housing with a density of no more than two units per every 50' of lot frontage. This area roughly approximates the Residential (R2) district as denoted in the master plan.

### Government, Cultural, and Institutional

This area is intended to provide for the development of facilities for local government, public health, recreation, cultural, or educational activities. These uses are not limited to this area and may be included in the other mixed use designations.

### Flexible Use (Commercial)

This area is intended to provide for highway oriented retail and office development. Development should include multi-family and transient residential oriented uses; however, single use residential development should not be permitted. This area roughly approximates the Highway 17 (HWY) district as denoted in the master plan.

### Mixed Use (Low to Medium Density)

This area is intended to be mixed-use and the development of mixed-use projects should be encouraged. Single uses may be allowed in order to promote and ease infill development. Uses should be composed of neighborhood scaled (less than 20,000 square feet) retail and office uses as well as multi-family and transient residential uses. If Ocean Boulevard is opened, single family should be prohibited. If Ocean Boulevard remains closed, single family may be considered for areas along 31st Avenue and as described in this plan. This area roughly approximates the Main Street 1 (MS1) district as denoted in the master plan.

### Mixed Use (Low to Medium Density)(Hashed Area)

This area is intended to accommodate medium density residential projects. Developments may contain a mixture of residential types including single family detached, duplex, townhouse, and multi-family. This area may also include mixed uses similar to those anticipated in the Mixed Use (Low to Medium Density) area as described above. The provision of nonresidential and mixed uses for this area may be conditioned on the extension of 30th Avenue.

### Mixed Use (Medium Density)

This area is intended to provide pedestrian oriented medium density development. Mixed-use development should be required for development on multiple lots. Uses are intended to include retail, dining, nightclub, cultural uses (e.g. entertainment uses), and complementary land uses with upper levels consisting of residential and transient residential uses. If Ocean Boulevard is opened, single-family residential should not be allowed. If Ocean Boulevard remains closed, single family should be considered as an option for areas adjacent to 29th, 31st, and 32nd avenues. This area roughly approximates to the Main Street 2 (MS2) district as denoted in the master plan.

### Waterfront Mixed Uses (Medium Density)

This area is intended to provide for pedestrian oriented, beachfront medium-density residential and mixed-use development (excluding condominiums). Mixed-use development should be required in conjunction with multi-family development. Uses are intended to be composed of retail, dining, nightclub and cultural uses (entertainment district) while upper levels are generally composed of residential or transient residential uses. This area roughly approximates the Waterfront 1 (WF1) district as denoted in the master plan.

### Waterfront Mixed Use (High Density)

This area is intended to provide for pedestrian oriented, beachfront high-density residential and mixed-use development (excluding condominiums). Mixed-use development should be required in conjunction with multi-family development. Uses are intended to be composed of retail, dining, nightclub and cultural uses (entertainment district) while upper levels are generally composed of residential or transient residential uses. This area is intended to provide greater floor areas and height than the medium density waterfront designation. This area roughly approximates the Waterfront 2 (WF2) district as denoted in the master plan.





**Goal LU1: *In general, implement the vision and land use recommendations contained within the Atlantic Beach, South Carolina Master Plan, 2007.***

Objective A: Actively work to implement the design and use recommendations of the master plan through amendments to the town's land management ordinance.

Objective B: Coordinate setback, orientation, design, and public improvement standards with the street design recommendations of the master plan and Transportation Element.

Objective C: Recognize that many of the master plan's design and land use recommendations are contingency based. Modifications or adjustments to the plan's recommendations and corresponding LMO amendments are anticipated and may be warranted based upon:

1. The level and timing of necessary private investment;
2. The availability of required public funding;
3. Street connectivity (or the lack thereof);
4. Economic conditions; and
5. Recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan.

**Goal LU2: *Recognize that the small geographic area of the town requires the orderly and efficient use of land. The town's policies and regulatory climate should encourage the highest and best use of property while promoting compatibility.***

Objective A: Refine the town's zoning standards to ensure that uses and structures are compatible. At a minimum, standards should address:

1. Size and scale;
2. Height;
3. Setbacks from streets and adjoining properties;
4. The preservation of open space and viewsheds;
5. Intensity and density;
6. Impervious coverage and storm water management;
7. Flood and storm surge protection;
8. Landscaping;
9. Vehicular access and parking;
10. Appearance and structural orientation;
11. Utilities, infrastructure, public safety, and other public services;
12. Screening and buffering;
13. Signage; and
14. Use.



Objective B: Refine the town's land development standards to ensure:

1. New lots and development sites have access to public streets;
2. Developments can be adequately served by water, sewer and other essential infrastructure;
3. Wetlands, floodplains, water quality, native soils, vegetation and other environmentally sensitive areas are protected;
4. Needed easements and rights-of-way are provided;
5. New infrastructure including water, sewer, fire hydrants, streets and sidewalks are constructed to acceptable engineering standards; and
6. New subdivisions and development conform to all other town requirements.

Objective C: Provide for a detailed review of proposed amendments to the town's zoning text, zoning map, and development regulations prior to adoption. The planning commission's review should consider:

1. A proposal's conformance with the comprehensive plan;
2. The precedents or possible affects that may result from the requested change;
3. Whether the altered use or district requirements would be appropriate for the area concerned;
4. Whether the change would result in the loss or degradation of historic sites or significant natural features; and
5. Whether the capacity of the town or other governmental agencies is sufficient to provide services if the zoning change is approved.

Objective D: Prohibit heavy industrial and other nuisance laden uses and restrict the placement of uses that generate detrimental secondary effects (see also the Housing Element). Work with area jurisdictions to identify appropriate locations for siting these uses.

Objective E: The use of lands adjacent to the town will impact the viability of development within Atlantic Beach. Work actively with the City of North Myrtle Beach, and provide input as necessary, on land use changes and development proposals in close proximity to the town.



**Goal LU3: *Implement density standards which consider the demands for infrastructure, public safety, parking and traffic generation, and the need for privacy, nuisance abatement, and the enjoyment of residential occupancies (see also the Housing Element).***

Objective A: Restrict residential areas identified as low to medium-density (i.e. the R2 district) to no more than two units per every fifty feet of street frontage. In general, areas along 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue should be limited to low to medium-density residential development (see also the Housing Element).

Objective B: Provide for medium to high and high-density residential development. In the main, areas along 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue should permit medium to high-density development. Select areas along the oceanfront should permit high-density development (see also the Future Land Use Map).

Objective C: Provide for buffering, screening, setback, and orientation standards that mitigate potential nuisances at locations where densities and uses transition.

Objective D: Consider providing density and other design bonuses for developments that incorporate open space, parks, or other enhanced amenities.

**Goal LU4: *Implement design and use standards that promote a sense of place and distinguish the town from adjacent jurisdictions. Coordinate the implementation of these standards with identified public improvements (see also the Transportation and Priority Investment elements).***

Objective A: Improve the appearance and functionality of the US 17 corridor. Concentration should be given to:

1. Installing sidewalks with ADA accessible ramping;
2. Installing mast arms, pedestrian signals, and a pedestrian refuge at the US 17 and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection;
3. Work with local businesses to identify potential sites for bus shelters in anticipation of an extension of Coast RTA's route;
4. Developing standards for signage that reduce visual clutter and differentiate the town;
5. Improving the town's entrance signage at the town limits and at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Work with private owners to secure sites in cases where the right-of-way is insufficient to accommodate placement;
6. Working with Santee Cooper to move forward with the undergrounding of utilities; and



7. Ensuring that the town's LMO provides for the diversification of commercial uses along the corridor.

Objective B: Implement design standards for building and uses along US 17, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and for properties in proximity to the oceanfront. Design standards should be context sensitive and follow the general motifs outlined in the town's master plan.

Objective C: Where in agreement with this plan, allow for innovative design and development techniques including but not limited to planned developments, cluster developments, and overlay zones.

**Goal LU5: *Provide for areas of commercial, governmental, mixed, and flexible land uses (see the Future Land Use Map and corresponding text descriptions).***

**Goal LU6: *Provide for areas of low to medium-density residential land uses and protect these areas from incompatible uses (see the Future Land Use Map and corresponding text description).***

**Goal LU7: *Promote the development, redevelopment, and/or renovation of publicly owned lands and buildings in keeping with the policies outlined in this plan.***

**Goal LU8: *Provide for the thoughtful and timely review of development proposals. Create a climate which is development friendly while implementing and enforcing requirements that protect the town and the future viability of private properties and residential occupancies.***

Objective A: Revise the town's Land Management Ordinance to streamline requirements and improve clarity.

Objective B: Provide for the local review and enforcement of the town's LMO, building code, and flood damage prevention ordinance.

Objective C: Ensure that reviews are conducted in a timely manner and build predictability into the permit process.

Objective D: Provide for the continual professional training of town staff, planning commissioners, and board members.



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Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# Transportation Element



# Transportation Element

Transportation is a key component of comprehensive planning. In many cases, transportation facilities represent the largest single piece of infrastructure that is planned, owned, and/or maintained by local government. The location, function, and access to streets drive land uses thus dictating the location of utilities. Transportation corridors provide access to employment and consumer centers. Moreover, local streets and pedestrian walkways help define the character and livability of neighborhoods.

This element will examine the existing condition of streets, pedestrian ways, and alternate transportation facilities in the Town of Atlantic Beach. The examination of existing conditions will culminate in a statement of community transportation needs, transportation goals, and implementation strategies. The priority investment element of this plan will discuss improvement costs. This element incorporates many of the ideas, themes, and general goals of the town's 2007 Master Plan. As such, select passages from the master plan have been included in this element.

## Part I. Inventory of Existing Conditions

Transportation infrastructure includes facilities such as streets, sidewalks, and in-right-of-way open spaces. It also includes public and quasi-public modes for moving people and goods such as by bus, rail, and air service. This section will provide an overview of existing transportation facilities and infrastructure within and near the Town of Atlantic Beach.

### Streets and Rights-of-way

The town contains nine (9) streets. A brief description of each is provided below:

- **US Highway 17:** United States Highway 17 (US 17) is an 1189 mile roadway extending from Punta Gorda, Florida to Winchester, Virginia. Also known as the Ocean Highway, US 17 bisects the town from north to south and is presently the town's sole link to surrounding communities. All four of the town's east to west streets, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues, intersect with US 17.

Functionally, US 17 is classified as a major arterial, with average daily traffic counts near Atlantic Beach ranging from 40,000 to 41,400 (SCDOT, 2015). The road's right-of-way through Atlantic Beach is approximately one hundred (100) feet in width and the road proper consist of six lanes with a dual center left turn lane. US 17 provides direct access to lots along the town's highway commercial district.

- **29<sup>th</sup> Avenue South:** 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, also known as Tyson Street, extends east to west adjacent to the town's northern boundary. This street provides access to US 17, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> avenues. US 17 bisects the street, with the eastern section of 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. extending





2100 feet and terminating at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The western section’s right-of-way extends 690 feet, of which 440 feet is improved roadway.

Functionally, 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. is classified as a local street. The road’s right-of-way is sixty (60) feet in width and the road consists of two, ten-foot travel lanes. 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. provides unrestricted access to residential lots.

- **30<sup>th</sup> Avenue South:** 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, also known as Atlantic Street, extends from east to west and is composed of two disconnected sections.

The eastern section of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. serves as the town’s primary corridor to the Atlantic Ocean. Providing access to a mixture of commercial and residential uses, this section of improved street is approximately 2150 feet in length and extends from the town’s only signalized intersection at US 17 to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The right-of-way continues east beyond 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to the Atlantic Ocean. By far the town’s most significant east to west street, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. consist of two lanes with a raised vegetative median. Paved on-street parking is provided the entire length of this street east of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.



The western section is approximately 480 feet in length (490 feet ROW) and begins at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue terminating in a dead-end just short of the town’s western boundary. This portion of street is short, relatively narrow, and provides access to residential lots and uses including the former site of the town’s public housing complex (Cleveland Stevens Terraces).



- **31<sup>st</sup> Avenue South:** 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, also known as Carolina Street, is functionally classified as a local street. The roadway contains two segments. From US 17, the street extends west approximately 685 feet and provides direct access to both residential and commercial uses. East of US 17, the improved street extends 2100 feet and terminates at 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue’s right-of-way continues from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue approximately 200 feet to the Atlantic Ocean. This unimproved section of right-of-way is used for beach access. Although 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. provides access to both residential and commercial uses,





functionally it is classified as a local street. The street’s right-of-way is approximately forty-nine (49) feet in width and the street consists of two lanes with no designated on-street parking.

- **32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South:** 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, also known as Virginia Street, extends east to west adjacent to the town’s southern boundary. This street provides access to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> avenues and US 17. 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. is bisected by US 17 with the western section approximately 690 feet in length. The eastern section extends an improved length of 2110 feet to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue with an unimproved section of right-of-way extending from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue an additional 165 feet to the Atlantic Ocean.



Functionally, 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. is classified as a local street. The road’s right-of-way is forty-nine (49) feet in width and the road consists of two lanes. 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. provides unrestricted access to residential lots.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Avenue:** 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue extends from north to south parallel to the Atlantic Ocean. This street intersects 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S., and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. Although in alignment with Ocean Boulevard in North Myrtle Beach, the improved street terminates approximately 180 feet from the town limits both north and south, despite a right-of-way which appears to extend to the town limits.



1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is classified as a local street with an average daily traffic count of 175 (SCDOT, 2015). The street’s right-of-way is approximately forty (40) feet in width. The street consists of two, ten-foot travel lanes.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue extends from north to south and runs parallel to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Like 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, this street intersects 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S, 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S., and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. The improved length of the street is 1020 feet with an additional 180 feet of unimproved right-of-way appearing to extend north to the town limits. The street’s right-of-way is approximately forty (40) feet in width, with the street consisting of two, ten-foot travel lanes.





- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue connects 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. with 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. This short section of street is approximately three hundred (300) feet in length and runs parallel to US 17. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue also extends from 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. to 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. a length of 300 feet; however, the right-of-way for this section is unclear. Parcels having frontage on this street also have alternate frontage on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. and/or US 17. This alternate frontage and the street’s relatively short length limit the functional significance of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.



- 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue:** 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is located west of US 17 and, running north to south, extends from 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. to 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. Functionally, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue can be classified as a local street consisting of two, ten-foot travel lanes. The right-of-way for this street is significant, ranging from approximately 70 feet to 100 feet in width. The alignment of the street is irregular. This street provides rear access to commercial uses fronting on US 17 and provides an outlet for the western section of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.

- Private Roads and Alleys:** Although not a significant transportation feature, the town contains a number of private access drives. Typically, these private roads provide rear and side yard access to lots; however, in at least one observed case, sole access to a residential lot was provided by a private street. The use of private drives should be discouraged as ownership and maintenance responsibilities are often ambiguous.



### Traffic Counts and Level of Service

Traffic counts are available for three of Atlantic Beach’s most heavily traveled streets, US 17, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S, and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (Ocean Boulevard). US 17, by far the most significant street, had average annual daily traffic counts ranging from 35,600 to 60,500 during the years 1992 to 2015 (SCDOT). US 17 traffic has traditionally been a function of tourism with traffic volume fluctuating to correspond with seasonal tourism and the general economic conditions of the region.

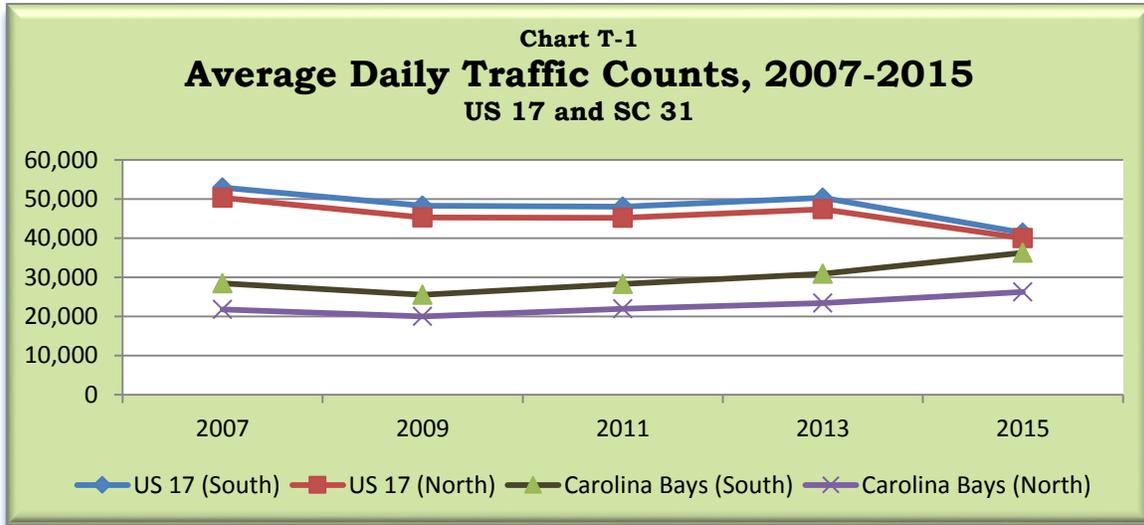
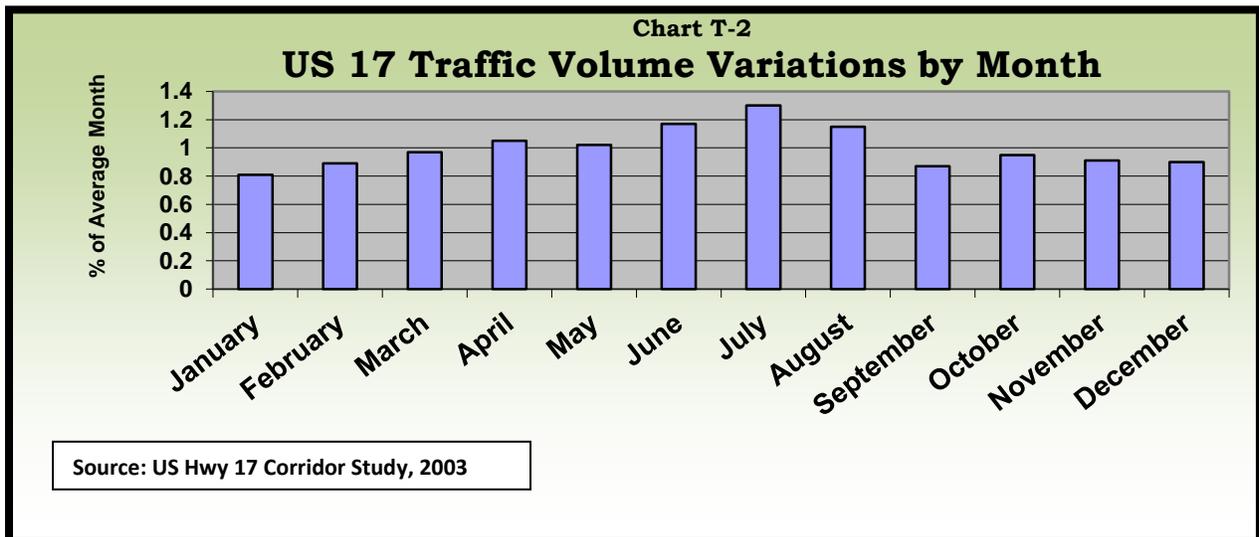


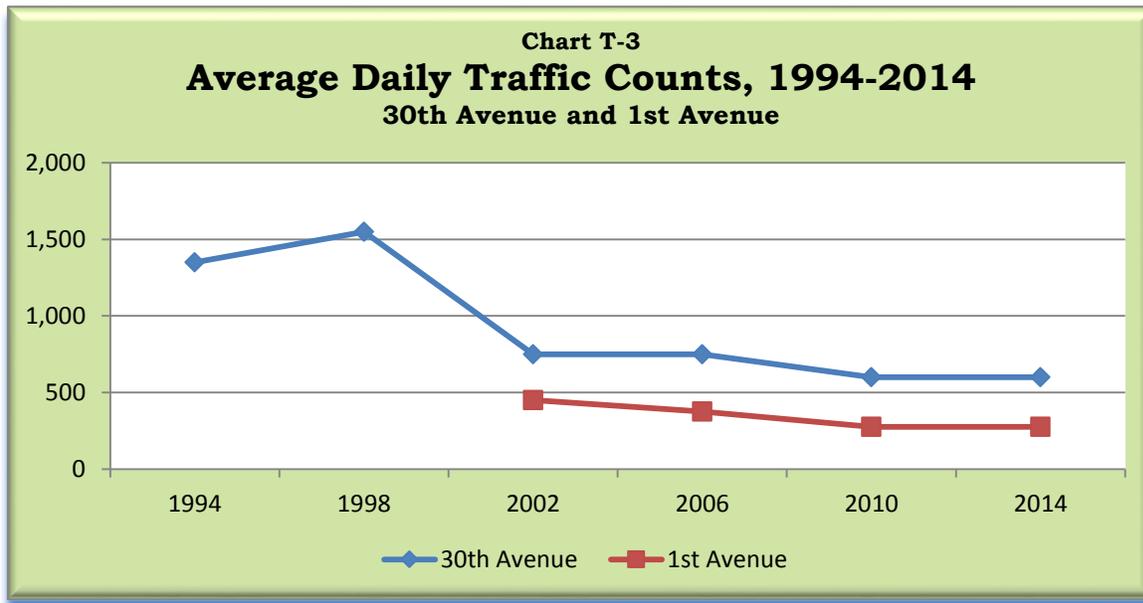
Chart T-1 provides traffic count data for US 17 and SC 31 (Carolina Bays) along road segments in proximity to the town. As illustrated, traffic along US 17 has been steady to declining over the past several years. The opening of the Carolina Bays Parkway in 2002 along with a second phase’s completion in 2005 has provided an alternate north to south option for residents and visitors. It is anticipated that the decline in traffic volumes is a temporary phenomenon, with projections indicating an anticipated steady increase in US 17 volumes over the next twenty years.

Historically, the months of June, July, and August register the highest volume for US 17. During the summer months, US 17 experiences traffic volumes up to 30% greater than the average monthly rate. This compares with the winter months that have volumes as low as 80% of the annual monthly average (*US Highway 17 Corridor Study, 2003, page 2-7*).





Historical counts for 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue are illustrated below:



The noticeable trend when comparing yearly traffic counts is the marked decline in volumes for both streets, most notably 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. Year 2015 volumes were 600 vehicles daily. Current traffic volumes are approximately 40% of daily averages recorded during the 1980’s and early 1990’s. Another notable feature is the high association between count changes on 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

Level of Service (LOS) is a measure of the relationship between a street’s service capacity and service demand. In measuring a street’s LOS, factors considered include “speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety.” LOS is ranked from A to F. The Transportation Research Board’s Highway Capacity Manual defines each ranking as follows:

*Level of Service A represents free flow. Individual users are unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. Freedom to select desired speeds and to maneuver within the traffic stream is high.*

*Level of Service B is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS A.*

*Level of Service C is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interaction with others in the traffic stream. The selection of speed is now affected by the presence of others, and maneuvering within the traffic stream requires substantial vigilance on the part of the user.*



*Level of Service D represents high-density but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.*

*Level of Service E presents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult.*

*Level of Service F is used to define forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaches a point that exceeds the amount that can traverse the point. Queues form behind such locations. Operations within the queues are characterized by stop-and-go waves. Vehicles may progress at reasonable speeds for several hundred feet or more, then be required to stop in cyclic fashion.*

Level of Service datum is available for US 17, 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. As of 2015, the portion of US 17 extending through Atlantic Beach had an LOS of F with traffic volume exceeding capacity by 170%. The LOS for 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue are rated A, with volume to capacity ratios of .06 and .03 respectively.

**Pedestrian Facilities**

Pedestrian facilities, specifically sidewalks and crosswalks, are an essential part of a community’s transportation system. Sidewalks are present, at least partially, on five of Atlantic Beach’s nine streets. Street sections west of and including US 17 do not have sidewalks. East of US 17, 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Only 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. have sidewalks on both sides and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. is the only street in the town with clearly delineated crosswalks. Crosswalks are provided at the intersections of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> avenues.

Sidewalks along all of the town’s streets, with the exception of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., are three (3) feet in width and may not provide adequate accessibility. 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue’s sidewalks are four (4) feet in width and wheelchair ramping is provided at crosswalks. The photograph to the right is representative of the width and general condition of Atlantic Beach’s sidewalks.



**30th Avenue S- Brick Textured Crosswalk**



**32nd Avenue S - Typical 3' Sidewalk**



### On-street Parking

Only 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. has designated on-street parking. Stalls are 8’ by 17’ and handicapped spaces are distributed along the length of the street. Approximately one hundred (100) spaces are currently striped. Limited in-right-of-way parking is available at beach access points located at the terminuses of 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues. These parking areas are unimproved which limits their capacity.

### Street and Right-of-Way Maintenance

The visual appearance of street surfaces in the town is generally good. 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue (portion), 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S., and US 17 are maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. The Town of Atlantic Beach maintains 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S. and a portion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

**Table T-1**  
**Summary of Street Conditions**  
Town of Atlantic Beach

| <b>STREET NAME</b>                           | <b>ROW WIDTH (Ft)(+/-)</b> | <b>DESCRIPTION</b>   | <b>NUMBER OF LANES</b>                    | <b>LANE WIDTH (Ft)</b> | <b>SIDEWALK/ WIDTH</b>         | <b>ON-STREET PARKING/ STALL SIZE</b> |
|--|----------------------------|--|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>US HWY 17</b>                             | 100                        | Full Extent of Town- North to South. Partial curb and gutter.  | Six plus center dual left turn lane       | 12                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Avenue</b>                 | 40                         | 1040 Feet  | Two                                       | 10                     | YES- 3-Feet on west side only  | NO                                   |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue</b>                 | 40                         | 1020 Feet  | Two                                       | 10                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue</b>                 | 60 and Unclear             | 300 Feet within ROW plus an additional 300 feet                | Two                                       | 11                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Avenue</b>                 | Varies- 60 to 100          | 1000 Feet  | Two                                       | 10                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S (West of 17)</b> | 60                         | 440 Feet   | Two                                       | 10                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>29<sup>th</sup> Avenue S</b>              | 60                         | 2100 Feet  | Two                                       | 10                     | YES- 3 Feet on south side only | NO                                   |
| <b>30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S (West of 17)</b> | 60                         | 480 Feet   | Two                                       | 10                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>30 Avenue S</b>                           | 60                         | 2150 Feet plus 100 feet beach access. Curb and gutter present. | Two with 8’ center median (non-mountable) | 12                     | YES- 4 Feet on both sides      | YES- 17’ X 8’                        |
| <b>31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S (West of 17)</b> | 49                         | 685 Feet   | Two                                       | Varies 10 to 14        | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S</b>              | 49                         | 2100 Feet  | Two                                       | 11                     | YES- 3 Feet on both sides      | NO                                   |
| <b>32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S (West of 17)</b> | 49                         | 685 Feet   | Two                                       | 10                     | NO                             | NO                                   |
| <b>32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S</b>              | 49 Feet                    | 2110 Feet  | Two                                       | 10                     | YES – 3 Feet on north side     | NO                                   |



## Alternate Transportation Facilities

**Bus and Shuttle Service:** The Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority (Coast) is the area's regional transit operator and provides commuter bus and shuttle transport. Coast's fixed route service consists of over thirty-five vehicles which cover nine routes extending from Georgetown to Myrtle Beach and as far west as Andrews and Conway. The fixed route service operates year-round, seven days a week.

In addition to fixed route service, Coast also operates a paratransit service for persons with disabilities. Offered for areas within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile of the fixed route service, the paratransit service provides curb to curb pickup and delivery for disabled passengers who could not otherwise utilize the fixed route service.

Currently, the closest fixed route stop is located twelve (12) miles south of Atlantic Beach at 82<sup>nd</sup> Parkway in Myrtle Beach. A short to intermediate range goal for the town is the extension of Coast RTA's fixed route service to provide stops in Atlantic Beach (see Goals and Objectives).

Long distance bus services do not maintain stations within the town. Intercity service is available through Greyhound, which maintains a station thirteen (13) miles south of Atlantic Beach on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in Myrtle Beach. Additional Greyhound stations are located in Georgetown and Florence.

**Rail Service:** Atlantic Beach does not have freight or passenger rail lines within the town limits. Amtrak provides regional passenger rail service. Passenger stations are located in Florence, Kingstree, and Charleston.

Freight rail lines are not located in close proximity to the town. The nearest operational lines are located in Conway and Georgetown. There is no multi-user truck transfer terminal in the immediate area and terminals are generally confined to single user industrial sites.

**Airports:** Although Atlantic Beach does not have an in-town airport, four airports are located within close proximity. These facilities include:

- *Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR):* MYR is located seventeen miles south of Atlantic Beach. Owned by Horry County, MYR opened to commercial aviation in 1976. Covering over 3,700 acres, the airport has one 9,503' by 150' runway. MYR is the area's only commercial airport and is served by nine airlines offering direct flights to over thirty cities. Passenger volumes have increased yearly with the airport handling approximately one million deplanements annually. The airport has recently undergone expansion/modernization to accommodate increase passenger volumes.



- *Twin City Airport (5J9)*: The Twin City Airport in Loris is located approximately twenty-eight miles northwest of Atlantic Beach. This small, unattended airfield is open for general aviation. Owned by Horry County, the facility consists of one 3,694' by 60' runway.
- *Conway-Horry County Airport (KHYW)*: The Conway-Horry County Airport is located approximately thirty-one miles west of Atlantic Beach. This general aviation airport is owned by Horry County and consists of one 4401' by 75' runway.
- *Grand Strand Airport (KCRE)*: KRCE is Atlantic Beach's closest airport and is located approximately 1500 feet west of the town limits. KRCE is an attended general aviation airport with one 5997' by 100' runway. The airport is owned by Horry County.

**Ports:** Large commercial ports are located in Charleston, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina. The Port of Georgetown, located approximately fifty (50) miles south of Atlantic Beach, is a dedicated breakbulk and bulk cargo facility handling steel, salt, cement, aggregates, and forest products. Shallow draft ports for fishing vessels and pleasure craft are located in Murrells Inlet and Little River Inlet.

## **Part II. Future Conditions**

The projection of future traffic conditions is often difficult in that assumptions must be made as to the construction and improvement of roadways, the locations and prevalence of future land uses, the growth of population, and the future viability of the area's economy. Although difficult, a general understanding of potential traffic conditions is an important consideration in comprehensive planning.

Of the town's nine roadways, only US 17 has been formally studied. The *US Highway 17 Corridor Study, North Myrtle Beach, 2003*, projected future conditions through the year 2025 and assumed a 2.7% yearly increase in traffic volume. Increases in projected volumes have not materialized as forecasted due in large part to the impact of the Carolina Bays Parkway in providing travelers with an alternate route. Modeling performed by the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study as part of the area's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan suggests that the cessation in traffic volume increases may be short lived with projected volumes ranging from 56,000 to 72,000 by the year 2035.

Future traffic on Atlantic Beach's remaining streets will be determined in large measure by whether or not connectivity is provided through an Ocean Boulevard extension. At present, the town's streets operate as a closed transportation system. If this condition continues, future traffic counts and level of service will be chiefly determined by internal



land uses. Listed below are traffic generation potentials for various uses as provided in the Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Trip Generation Manual*, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition:

| <b>Trip Generation Characteristics for Select Uses</b>  |                               |  |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Residential<br>Uses   | Use                           | Average Daily Trips by Unit            | Daily Trip Rate                     |
|   | Single Family Detached        | 9.57                                   | 4.31 to 21.85                       |
|   | Low Rise Apartment            | 6.59                                   | 5.10 to 9.24                        |
|   | High Rise Apartment           | 4.20                                   | 3.00 to 6.45                        |
|   | Condominium                   | 5.81                                   | 1.53 to 11.79                       |
| Nonresidential<br>& Commercial<br>Uses  | Use                           | Average Daily Trips per 1000 Square Ft | Daily Trip Range per 1000 Square Ft |
|   | Quality Restaurant            | 89.95                                  | 33.41 to 139.80                     |
|   | Specialty Retail Center       | 44.32                                  | 21.30 to 64.21                      |
|   | Movie Theater w/matinee       | 27.39 (Saturday-peak hour only)        | 15.77 to 37.95 (peak hour only)     |
|   | Recreational Community Center | 33.82                                  | 22.88 to 36.71                      |
|   | Drinking Place                | 11.34 (peak hour only)                 | 3.73 to 29.98 (peak hour only)      |
| <b>Source:</b> Institute of Transportation Engineer's <i>Trip Generation Manual</i> , 9 <sup>th</sup> Edition |                               |  |                                     |

29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues and the streets west of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue have been traditionally used for single-family housing. The current zoning and land use proposals contained in the master plan and Land Use Element promote the continuation of single-family housing as the primary use along these streets. The average daily trip generation for single-family housing is approximately ten trips per unit. Although residential infill is anticipated, traffic generation is tempered by the total acreage available for new construction. As such, single family residential development along 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues and the streets west of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue should not impact the future level of service.

Traffic generation potentials are most pronounced on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues. Current zoning and the land use proposal contained within the master plan indicate that future uses in this area will contain a mixture of multi-family and commercial uses. Although the total acreage available for development is a limiting factor, chief factors, which will determine traffic potential, are the allowable height and floor area ratios of structures. This is especially true for multi-family and condominium housing.

Moderate development, for example a 10,000 square foot commercial development with three high-rise apartments or condominiums (300 units), along the oceanfront could generate over 2000 trips per day. This would triple current traffic counts along 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> avenues. The mitigating factor is, in the existing closed transportation system, traffic counts are extremely low which allows moderate increases in traffic volume with limited impact on the level of service.



The opening of Ocean Boulevard has the potential of substantially increasing traffic, especially on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (or 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue). Presently, Ocean Boulevard traffic in North Myrtle Beach is routed to US 17. Current traffic counts along Ocean Boulevard in North Myrtle Beach range from approximately 4,500 to 11,000. It is conceivable that the opening of this thoroughfare could result in comparable traffic counts along the Atlantic Beach section of Ocean Boulevard. Traffic calming measures (indirect routing) may partially mitigate the potential for thorough traffic.

A secondary consideration with the opening of Ocean Boulevard would be the impact on Atlantic Beach’s west to east avenues, chiefly 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. Presently through traffic originating from or destined to US 17 cannot use Atlantic Beach’s streets as alternate routes. The connection with Ocean Boulevard would provide an alternate route. For comparison, 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. are located in North Myrtle Beach and run parallel to Atlantic Beach’s west to east avenues. Traffic counts for these streets, which have access to adjacent sections of Ocean Boulevard are 1,650 and 4,700 respectively (SCDOT, 2015).

### **Part III. Needs, Goals, and Objectives**

The enhancement of Atlantic Beach’s transportation infrastructure is a requisite for full-scale redevelopment. A review of existing conditions coupled with analysis conducted in the development of this element identified several critical needs for the town. These include: 1. the need to protect existing infrastructure and roadway assets; 2. the need to improve street connectivity to stimulate development; 3. the need to improve the aesthetic condition of streetscapes; 4. the need to improve pedestrian amenities; 5. the need to protect and improve public parking; 6. the need to link transportation improvements/protections with new development; and, 7. the need to develop a funding mechanism(s) to pay for right-of-way improvements.

The goals and objectives listed below are intended to focus activities to be undertaken in addressing the town’s transportation needs. A discussion of street specific opportunities and implementation concepts is contained in Section IV of this element.

**Goal T1: *Protect the viability of existing streets from the potentially adverse impacts of development.***

Objective A: Control the number and location of entrances onto existing streets.

Objective B: Ensure adequate, unobstructed sight distance at all intersections.

Objective C: Protect street rights-of-way from visual and physical encroachments through zoning setback, off-street parking, and corridor management standards.



Objective D: Establish a permitting process and require bonding for private work within city owned public rights-of-way.

Objective E: Require that large developments submit traffic impact studies and implement improvements necessary to maintain the existing level of service.

Objective F: Establish landscaping standards consistent with this element and the town's master plan.

Objective G: Establish standards for storm water runoff that minimizes impacts to adjacent properties and public rights-of-way.

**Goal T2: *Plan for the creation of new streets that complement the existing street network and contribute to the redevelopment of Atlantic Beach.***

Objective A: Establish street construction standards which provide minimum requirements for subsurface compaction, pavement composition, lane width, and utility placement.

Objective B: Establish requirements for sidewalks and on-street parking as part of all new street construction.

Objective C: Discourage the use of curvilinear streets except in cases where connectivity necessitates their use.

Objective D: Establish landscaping requirements which are consistent with the town's Master Plan.

Objective E: Incorporate designed drainage facilities/elements into new street construction which address both storm water quantity and quality issues.

Objective F: Coordinate the creation of new streets with zoning amendments to establish appropriate setbacks.

**Goal T3: *Plan for the potential closure of streets as identified in this element and the town's master plan.***

Objective A: Establish criteria for the closure of streets which considers:

1. Post-closure property access;
2. Impacts on the transportation system;
3. Post-closure economic development potential;
4. Other in right-of-way infrastructure such as public utilities and storm water facilities; and
5. Right-of-way ownership.

Objective B: Ensure community input and general support of closing initiatives.



Objective C: Coordinate closure activities with the City of North Myrtle Beach and the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

**Goal T4: *Actively explore the possibility of extending Ocean Boulevard to provide connectivity with North Myrtle Beach.***

Objective A: Examine alternate routes to include 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Objective B: Build community consensus prior to pursuing a connection.

Objective C: Build community consensus prior to selecting a route.

Objective D: Coordinate any connection with the City of North Myrtle Beach and the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Objective E: Investigate funding options to include the closure and sale of the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue's right-of-way if an alternate connection is feasible.

Objective F: Incorporate design guidelines through zoning and subdivision regulations which preserve the functional viability of the connecting corridor.

Objective G: Investigate the feasibility of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

**Goal T5: *Protect unimproved rights-of-way, specifically those which provide beach access or provide the potential for street connectivity.***

Objective A: Adopt design standards which preserve the view and access to the ocean.

Objective B: Adopt setback standards which protect the ability to extend streets onto unimproved rights-of-way.

Objective C: Actively monitor the town's unimproved rights-of-way to guard against intended or unintended encroachments.

**Goal T6: *Develop guidelines which address the use of existing private streets and discourage the creation of new private streets.***

Objective A: Require all new subdivision of property have direct frontage on and access to a publicly maintained street.

Objective B: Restrict the use of parcels which rely on private streets for sole access.

Objective C: Require that existing private streets be continuously maintained to ensure unimpeded access by emergency and utility providers.



**Goal T7: *Provide for non-vehicular and pedestrian friendly amenities.***

Objective A: Establish standards for sidewalk construction to include minimum requirements of composition, surface strength, location, width, and accessibility.

Objective B: Require the rehabilitation and/or construction of sidewalks as a condition of development approval.

Objective C: Establish a maintenance and repair program, with clearly delineated public versus private responsibilities, to address sidewalk deterioration and repair.

Objective D: Develop a sidewalk widening program to increase accessibility for disabled residents.

Objective E: Investigate the creation of bicycle lanes and bike parking areas.

Objective F: Coordinate sidewalk and bike-path placement with the East Coast Greenway.

Objective G: Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Needed improvements include, but are not limited to:

1. The construction of sidewalks along US 17;
2. The installation of ramping and widening of existing sidewalks to ADA standards;
3. The construction of sidewalks along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and local streets west of US 17;
4. Improvements to crosswalks to include pedestrian signals and a pedestrian refuge (on US 17); and
5. The provision for handicapped and wheelchair accessibility along the oceanfront (see also priority investment insert).

Objective H: Encourage of the extension of Coast RTA routes to Atlantic Beach with designated in-town stops.

**Goal T8: *Maintain existing on-street parking and provide additional parking options.***

Objective A: Include parking stall maintenance and re-striping as part of the street maintenance program.

Objective B: Require off-street parking for new developments to reduce dependency on on-street facilities. Ensure that:

1. The number of private parking spaces is consistent with use demands;
2. Private spaces and aisles are sufficiently sized;
3. Private parking is on the same lot or is located in close proximity to the generating use; and



4. Private parking requirements incorporate screening, setback, and other location restrictions in accordance with this element and the town's master plan.

Objective C: Ensure that new driveways and access points do not reduce on-street parking.

Objective D: Develop enforcement policies and practices which ensure that parking spaces are free of trash, abandoned vehicles, and other obstructions.

Objective E: Where feasible, incorporate on-street parking in new street construction.

Objective F: Investigate providing on-street parking along 2<sup>nd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenues as demand increases.

Objective G: Investigate the creation of off-street public parking areas/structures as a means of encouraging adjacent development and to accommodate the town's special events.

Objective H: Consider the creation of a special development district parking facility plan and investigate fee in lieu or TIF options to fund public parking.

**Goal T9:** *Develop funding sources which will allow for infrastructure improvements. Examine the use of impact fees, SCDOT/GSATS transportation funds, revenue bonds, and community development block grants.*

**Goal T10:** *Ensure coordination between transportation and land use activities.*

Objective A: Incorporate transportation corridor protections in the town's Land Management Ordinance.

Objective B: Consider the impact of development on the transportation network as part of original zonings, rezonings, and special exception reviews.

Objective C: Consider existing and proposed uses of land when reviewing pending transportation improvements.

Objective D: Ensure that information regarding significant development is disseminated to transportation agencies for review and comment.

Objective E: Encourage transportation agencies to disseminate information concerning transportation projects which may impact land use.



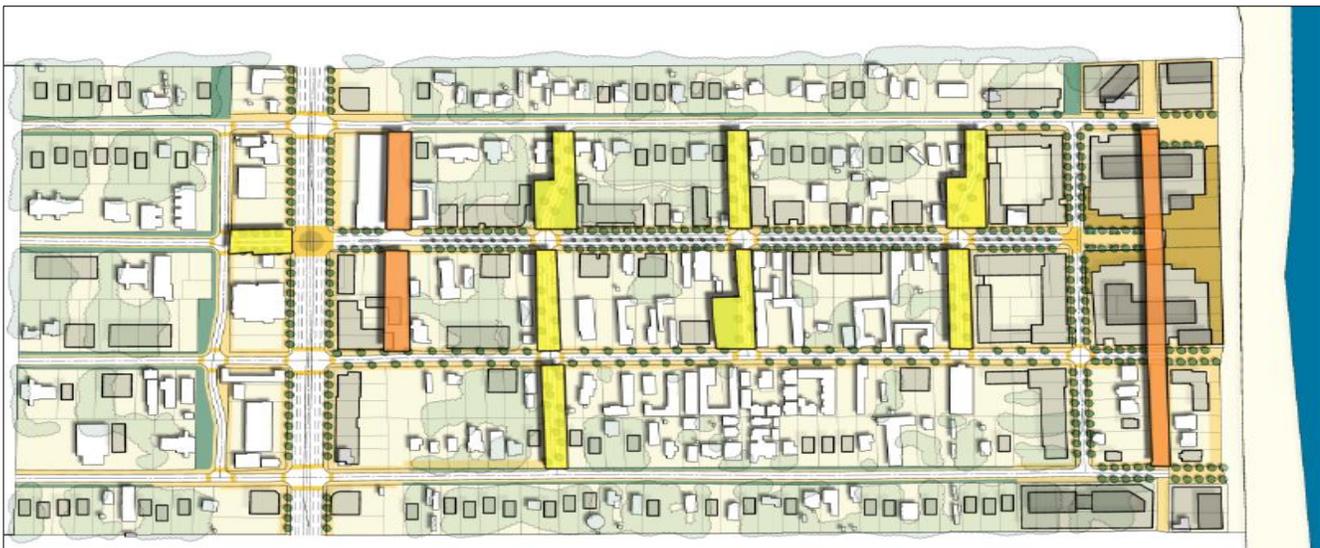
## Part IV. Implementation Strategies

One aspect of the town’s existing street network that is likely detrimental to development is a relative lack of connectivity. Blocks in the center of town stretch for more than 1,700 feet without access to neighboring blocks. This is detrimental to pedestrians and vehicular mobility in the town and also places an undue traffic burden on US 17 (*Atlantic Beach, South Carolina Master Plan, 2007, page 71*).

### ***New Streets and Street Closures***

The introduction of new streets may alleviate these problems. New streets should be constructed as “pathways” incorporating permeable materials, narrow lanes, and a high percentage of native landscaping in order to reinforce the existing character of the town. The location for new streets as illustrated below are conceptual and are located based on current vacant properties to create a reasonable block dimension more suitable to pedestrian traffic. Actual locations should be determined based on cooperative agreements between the town and property owners.

The closure of two existing streets will provide a more suitable development footprint and better parking arrangement for new and existing development. The closure of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue would allow for the expansion of the US 17 zoning district and provide space for parking in the rear of buildings. The closure of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, between 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> avenues would allow for the more appropriate development of beachfront properties.



New Streets (Yellow) & Closures (Orange)



1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Ocean Boulevard

Historically, the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue/Ocean Boulevard corridor was not connected to neighboring communities through the town because of racial segregation. The roadway remains closed today. This condition has protected the town from additional traffic and private investment. During the public meetings associated with the development of the master plan, this “protection” was viewed by many in the town as a positive force, while others viewed it as a detriment to future development. Resolution of these differences will require cooperation and good will among community members to resolve. Two options for consideration are:

Option 1: 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Remains Closed to Thru-Traffic

The continued lack of connectivity with Ocean Boulevard, and the regional traffic it supports, is likely to continue to protect the town from additional traffic and private investment. Private investment will occur; however, it will most likely occur at the lower levels and at a slow pace in comparison to Option 2, below. Private developers strive to provide a product that is easily accessible, highly visible, and convenient. These characteristics affect the ability to sell product. Additionally, retailers and restaurateurs need traffic to help generate sales. The lack of convenient access currently afforded by the town’s street network will likely impact the perceived return on investment and will therefore likely temper that investment. A caveat to this likelihood is that, if the town can make key improvements and bolster a positive identity within current financial constraints, it is possible to speed up investment activity.

Option 2: 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is Opened to Thru-Traffic

Connecting 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Ocean Boulevard will likely increase development activity due to an increased level of access, visibility and convenience. It also will likely increase the value of properties and the pace of development. Additionally, it will improve the overall mobility of the area and it is for this reason that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has expressed interest in the opening of the roadway.

If 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is opened to thru-traffic, the following is recommended:

- That 1<sup>st</sup> street be closed and the connection through the town be made via 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue with connections from 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenues. This will produce a traffic calming effect by forcing drivers to make multiple turns and operate at slower speeds.
- That the town request from SCDOT the ability to temporarily close the street for special events or other suitable reasons (72-73).



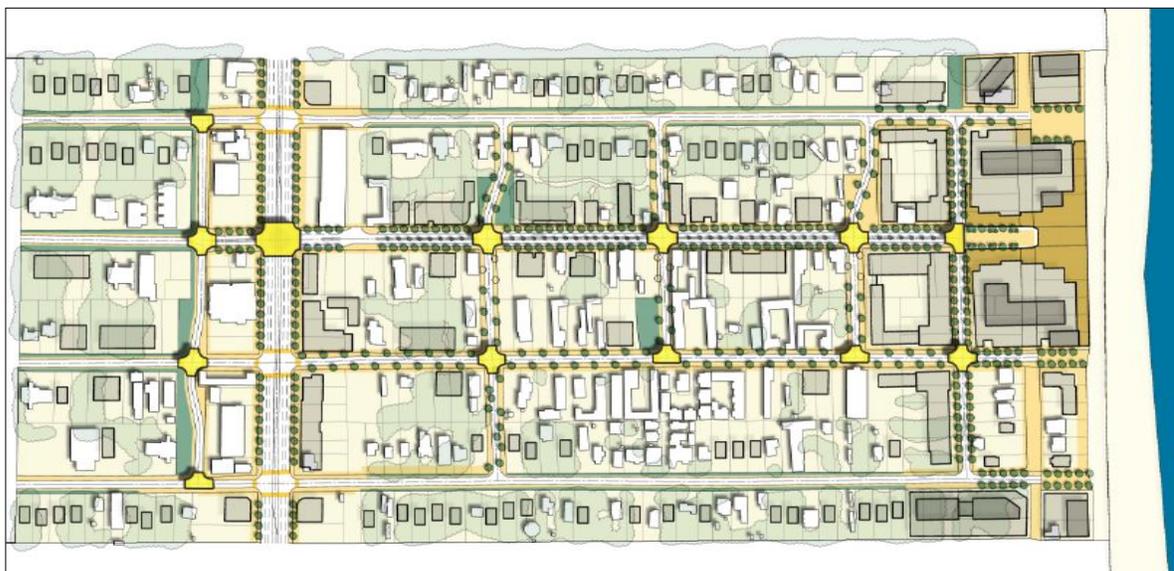
## ***Streetscapes and Pedestrian Facilities***

Successful streets balance the needs of pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic and provide places for extra activities, window shopping, small gatherings, and outdoor dining. These “extra” activities are crucial to the development of an economically sustainable town and a unique sense of place.

### *Pedestrian Improvements*

Given the existing conditions, pedestrian improvements are imperative for the future redevelopment of the town. Not only will these improvements provide for a pleasant walking experience, the “walkability” of the town has economic and social impacts as well. “Walkability” is a measure of the pedestrians ease of movement and safety. This movement directly impacts the ability to reach goods and services, overall transportation costs, social, and environmental costs. It also impacts the livability conditions of the town and the health of its residents (74).

Pedestrian improvements include components primarily associated with streetscapes such as ample sidewalk width, well-defined pedestrian zones and crosswalks, attractive lighting and landscaping and on-street parking to provide pedestrian/vehicular buffers. Additionally, pedestrian improvements include building components, such as awnings, canopies, and well maintained storefronts that promote and support pedestrian traffic. A good streetscape provides balance between the needs of pedestrians and vehicles. Because these improvements do not come with a small price tag, they should be strategically implemented to support the overall town redevelopment effort. Therefore, US 17, 30th Avenue S., and the beachfront area should receive the initial attention.





Conceptual Streetscapes

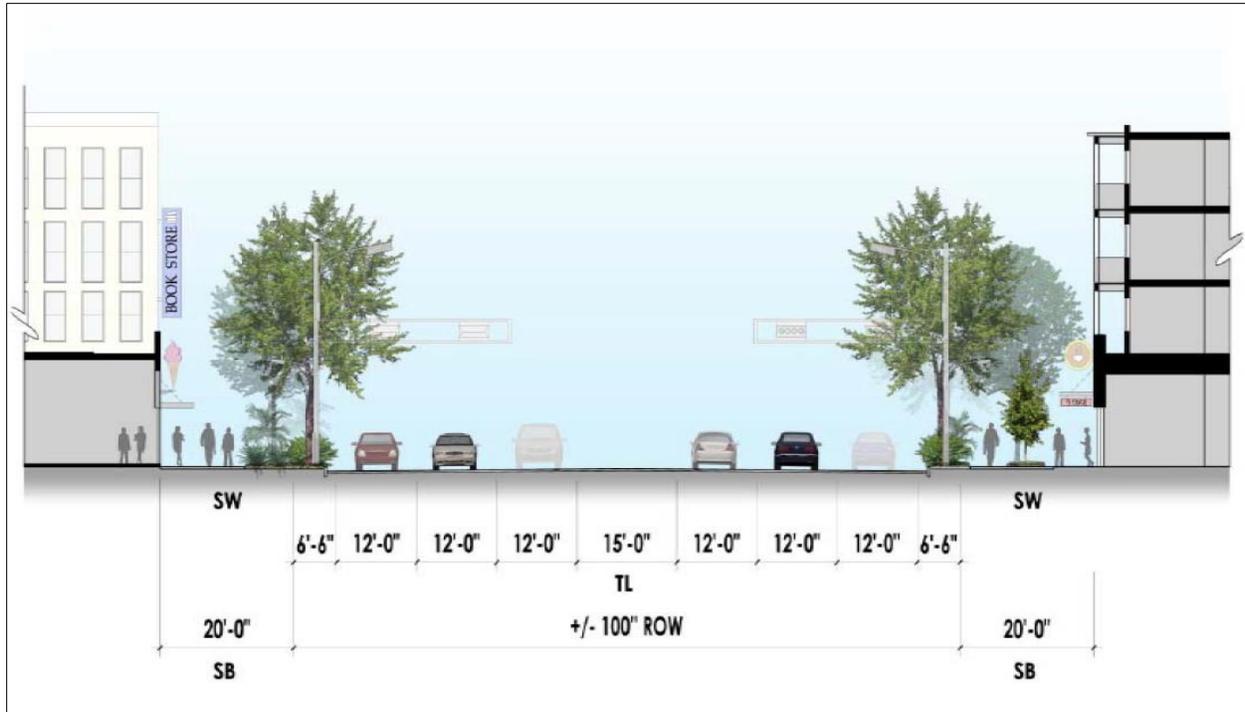
The conceptual streetscapes presented on the following pages provide the design intent with respect to general form, character, and dimensional definition. Proposals include that building setback areas be improved as an integral part of the streetscape design. This can be accomplished either through careful collaboration between the town and property owners or through the enactment of streetscape easements. The intent of both is that sidewalk areas in the public right-of-way and on private property are improved in a seamless manner, blurring the boundaries between from the pedestrian perspective. Below are general principles to ensure that final designs reflect an appropriate character:

- Pedestrian comfort and safety is crucial and should be of greater concern than the convenience of drivers.
- Streetscapes should offer protection from the elements and to the greatest degree possible, continuous overhead cover should be provided.
- Streets should offer variety and encourage building occupants to add something to the street such as awnings, café seating, plants, and flowers. The goal of street design within the town should be to provide appropriate space for these things to occur, thus ensuring a vibrant and interesting public place.
- Hardscape Materials: Materials should be durable, low-maintenance quality. When pavers, textured or colored materials, are used they should reflect local/vernacular materials or customs (e.g., pavers may be composed of shell aggregate or be of light sand color. Patterned materials may reflect the rhythm and harmony of a sweetgrass basket weave, echoing the crafts of the Gullah-Geechee).
- Landscaping Materials: Native landscape components should be used for all landscape elements. Planting techniques that provide for healthy root growth, long tree life, maximum drainage, and reduced risk of hardscape damage should be incorporated (e.g., continuous trench, proper tree pit sizing, maximize pervious areas). Shade trees are preferred over ornamental trees or palm species and should be incorporated when sufficient space is available for healthy growth (75).

US 17: Improvements to US 17 will perhaps play the largest role in defining the town’s future identity. The recommendation for this streetscape is to provide heavily landscaped edges that will effectively buffer pedestrians from the busy roadway. Within the context of neighboring communities, this will provide an effective gateway to the town by announcing to passersby that they have entered a place that is different. The execution of this recommendation is highly dependent on cooperation with adjacent property owners (and SCDOT), as there is minimal right-of-way that can be dedicated to improvements. Its effectiveness will also depend on the willingness of property owners

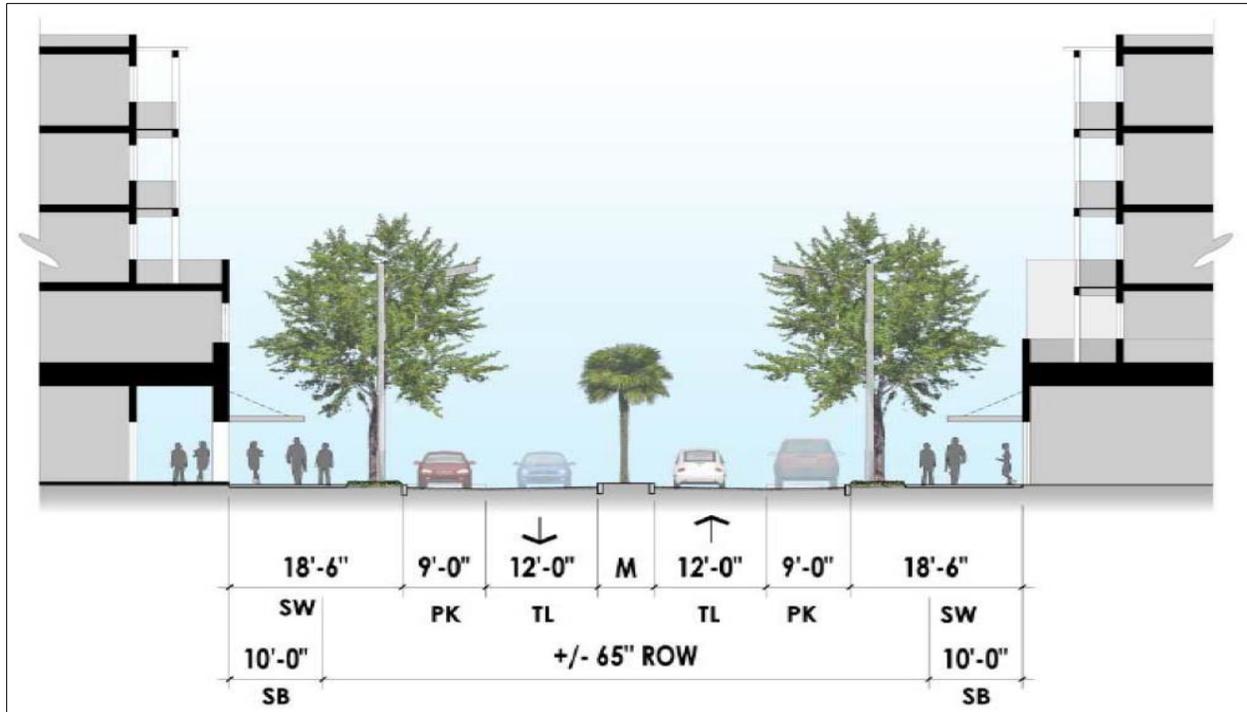


to improve or redevelop their properties and especially their building signage. The streetscape should also incorporate an announcing gateway feature at the intersection of the highway and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This could include incorporating a highly visible pavement design that reflects the desired character of the town (82).

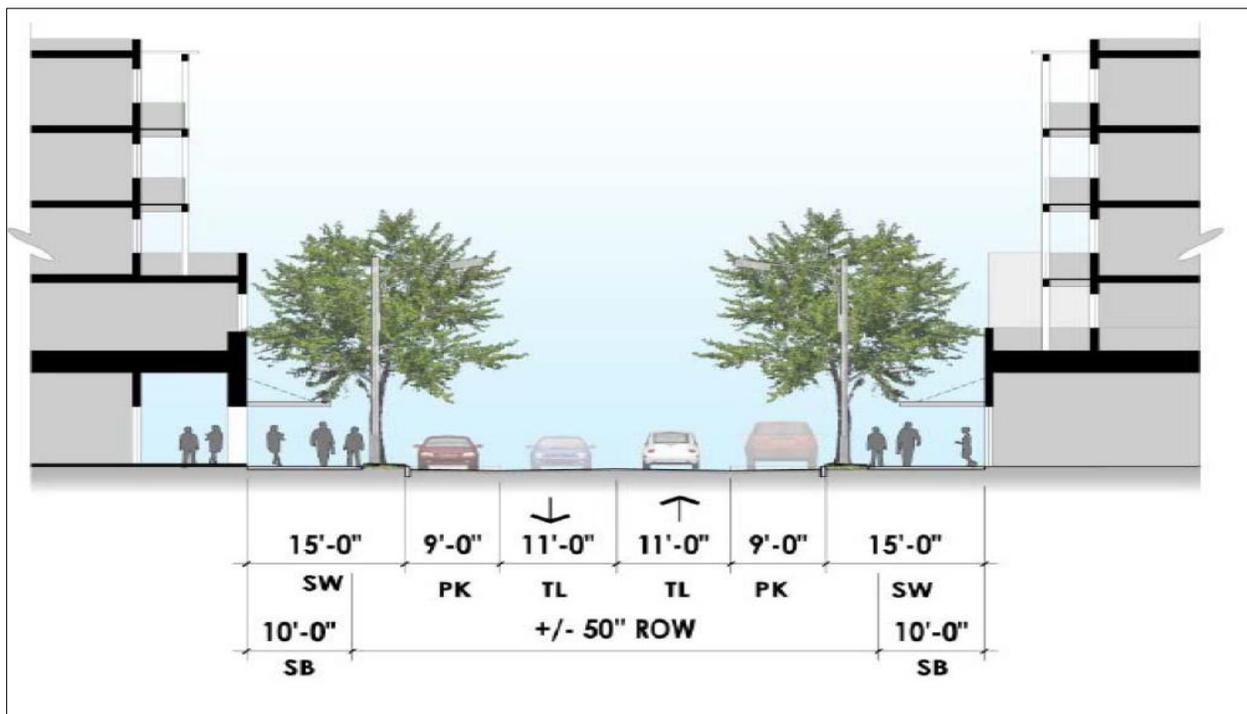


30<sup>th</sup> Avenue South: 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. is the historic main street of Atlantic Beach. In its heyday, the road served as the primary location for businesses and entertainment venues. Other than Highway 17, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S. has the widest unobstructed right-of-way of all other streets in the town. Judging from the existing conditions of the street, it has received improvements in the recent past which were composed of on-street parking, median improvements, and the addition of pavers. Future improvements should include the addition of shade trees and landscape buffers, bulb-out at intersections, and lighting improvements. The town should also consider new paving materials that better reflect its unique identity. Below is a conceptual design to guide these improvements (76).

East of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, where the topography of the town begins to slope toward the beach, the streetscape should be widened to enhance the important view corridor. In cooperation with private development, the streetscape should incorporate an elevated boardwalk along its edges, providing an enhanced pedestrian relationship with the retail activities and supporting entertainment uses that will be required to be elevated given flood prevention requirements (77).

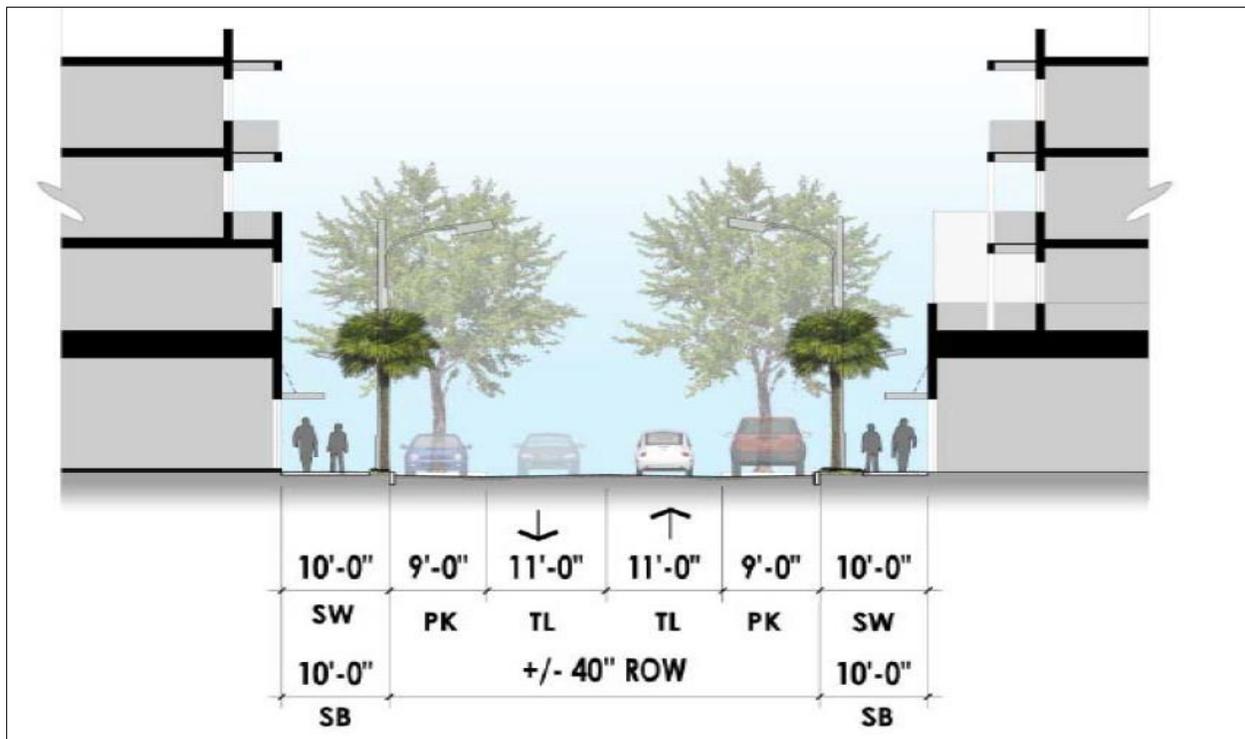


31<sup>st</sup> Avenue South: 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. also has historic importance for the town and supports an interesting mix of uses. The recommendations for 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue S. are similar to 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue S., but do not include a median component (79).

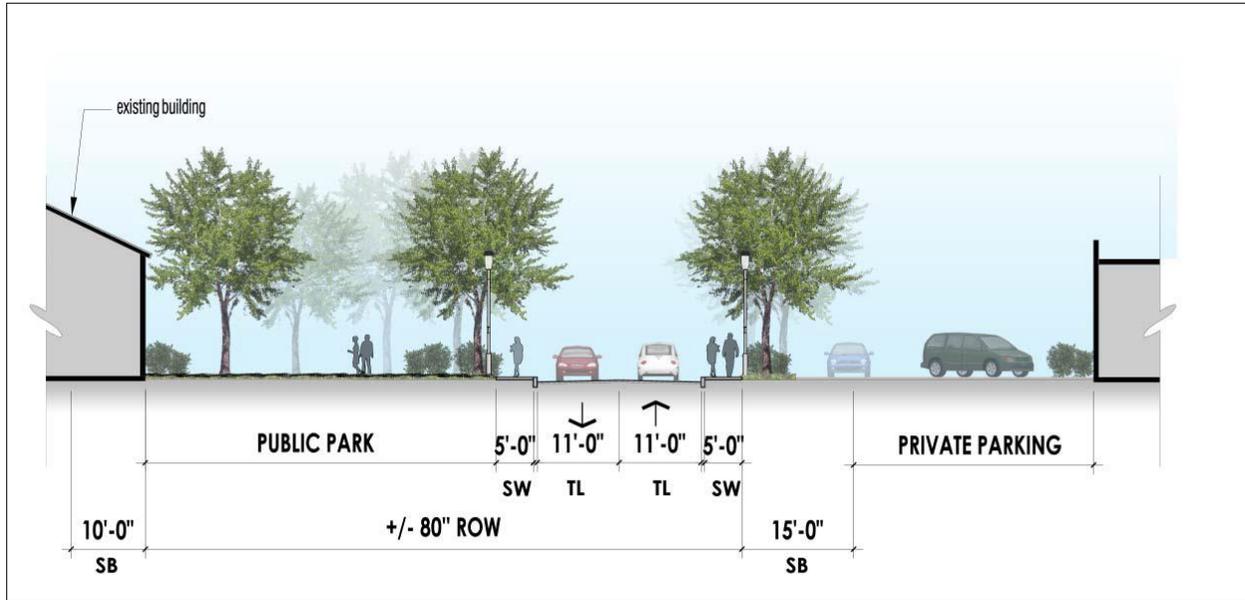




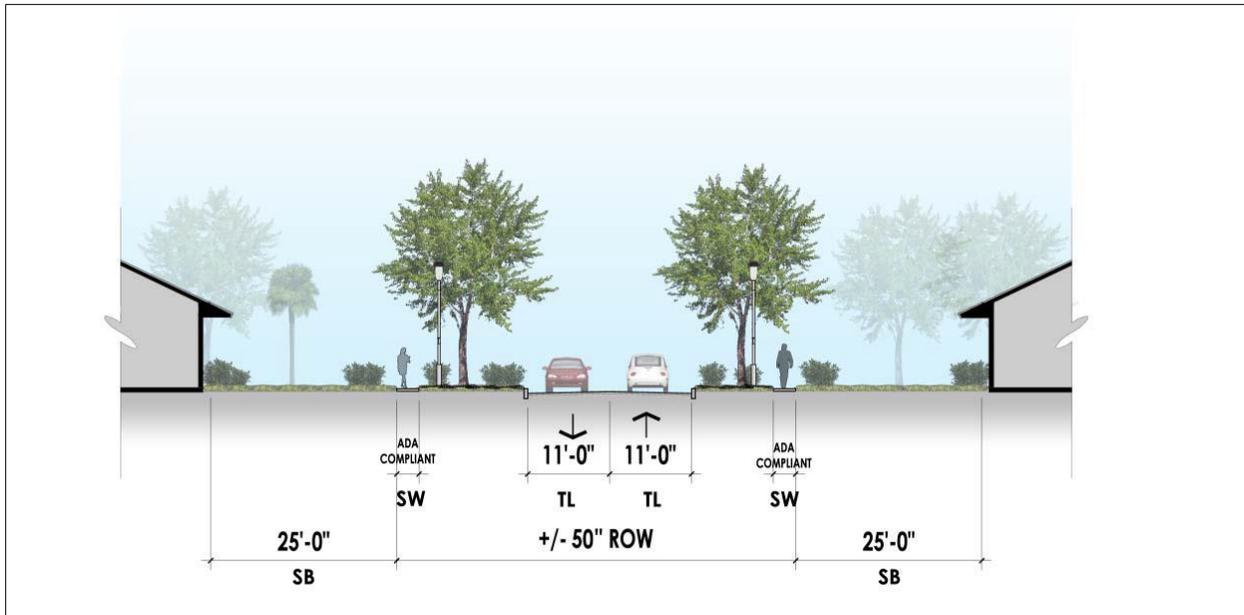
2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue: The recommendation to close 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenues and the potential for 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue to serve as the connective link to Ocean Boulevard makes this street a very important component of the redevelopment effort. The streetscape should incorporate traffic calming measures that include on-street parking, bulb-outs at intersections and interesting paving. Given the narrow right-of-way, the implementation of these measures will require cooperation with adjacent property owners and the implementation of proposed setbacks. The streetscape should incorporate native palms between intersections and shade trees at intersection bulb-outs (80).



4<sup>th</sup> Avenue: 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a street that should act as a buffering device between residential uses on the west and US 17's commercial uses on the east. To accomplish this, the streetscape should provide landscape buffers between the sidewalk and commercial off-street parking. The street has sufficient right-of-way to improve its western edges as public open space, adding an additional buffer between the uses. In some places, it may be appropriate to add on-street parking to support the commercial uses on US 17 (84). Other improvements where consideration may be warranted include: 1) shifting 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue's paved surface westward to allow for additional vegetative buffering and plantings along the eastern edge of the street; 2) restricting vehicular access to defined entrance drives; and 3) limiting portions of the street to one directional traffic.



29<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenues South: These avenues are primarily residential in character and the streetscape should reflect this. Swales should be improved and planted with native vegetation to improve storm water runoff. Shade trees should be planted at regular intervals and lighting should be improved with fixtures that provide appropriate lighting levels. Sidewalks should be of minimum ADA compliance (81).



New Streets/Pathways: It is recommended that new streets, as recommended by this plan, be improved with the character of a pathway, incorporating pervious materials such as shell with more subdued definition between travel lanes and on-street parking. Landscaping elements should have a looser arrangement that those of commercial streets to create a more residential character (86).



### ***Public Parking***

The master plan estimates that on-street parking associated with streetscape improvements will potentially provide up to three hundred (300) public parking spaces in the town. This estimate accounts for on-street parking lost to curb cuts and intersection bulb outs. An additional one hundred (100) spaces may be provided in the form of off-street parking below the public boardwalk and within the flood zone not otherwise usable for habitable development. Coupled with parking provided for new commercial development, it is anticipated that this parking will fulfill the needs of the public in the near future.

If successful redevelopment and a heightened level of activity in the town merits additional public parking beyond four hundred (400) spaces, the construction of a centralized surface parking lot, preferably along 30<sup>th</sup> or 31<sup>st</sup> avenues, should be considered. This location would better service commercial activities. Properly designed, a surface parking lot developed on four lots would yield approximately seventy (70) additional spaces (87).

### ***Public Open Spaces***

Public open space is a fundamental component of a healthy urbanized environment and provides the community opportunities for recreation and relaxation, exercise, cultural entertainment and education. The discussion of public open space is generally found in the cultural or community facilities element of the comprehensive plan; however, the master plan identified several opportunities for the inclusion of public open spaces within the town's right-of-ways. These opportunities range from improvements to existing public right-of-way (along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the street ends), to public plazas adjacent to new street proposals, to beachfront open space situated in public right-of-way or associated with new beachfront development. Areas identified that are currently under private ownership should only be considered with the willing cooperation of the property owner (88).

### **Timing and Coordination of Transportation Improvements**

Improvements outlined in this element and the town's master plan should not be viewed as all or nothing scenarios. Many of these improvements will require several years to implement. Implementation will require substantial public and private investment and the timing of this investment, particularly private investment, is uncertain. Despite this uncertainty, several implementation activities can be undertaken by the town in the short to medium term. These activities are further described in the implementation section of this plan.

Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Priority Investment Element**



# Priority Investment Element

This element provides an overview of the Town of Atlantic Beach’s capital improvement needs along with tentative costs, timelines and potential funding sources. The priority investment element provides the town a way to identify and prioritize the allocation and expenditures of public monies over the next ten years. Project timelines and corresponding responsible entities are explained in further detail within this plan’s implementation section.

## Part I: Enabling Act Requirements

The state’s planning enabling law requires the inclusion of a Priority Investment Element as part of all local comprehensive plans. This provision, enacted in 2007, requires:

*“A priority investment element that analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools. The recommendation of those projects for public expenditure must be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. For the purposes of this item, ‘adjacent and relevant jurisdictions’ means those counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project. For the purposes of this item, ‘coordination’ means written notification by the local planning commission or its staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed projects and the opportunities for adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies to provide comment to the planning commission or its staff concerning the proposed projects. Failure of the planning commission or its staff to identify or notify an adjacent or relevant jurisdiction or agency does not invalidate the local comprehensive plan and does not give rise to a civil cause of action”.*

This element is designed to meet the requirements of the 2007 Priority Investment Act.

## Capital Improvements Plan

In addition to meeting the statutory requirements contained within the Priority Investment Act, the priority investment element serves as an integral component of planning capital improvements. Capital improvements planning has long been a function of planning commissions, predating the 2007 act and the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994. The current planning enabling act provides:

*“In the discharge of its responsibilities, the local planning commission has the power and duty to prepare and recommend for adoption.....a capital improvements program setting forth projects required to implement plans which have been prepared and adopted, including an annual listing of priority projects for*



*consideration by the governmental bodies responsible for implementation prior to the preparation of their capital budget” (SC Code §6-29-340).*

This element is designed to provide a unified listing of pending, anticipated, and needed projects within the town over the next ten years. The cost and potential funding sources associated with many of the recommended improvements are not fully known or may change over time.

Atlantic Beach does not currently maintain a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP); however this element does recommend the town consider the future adoption of a CIP, in addition to an official town map to help facilitate and prioritize town improvements. Any future CIP should be annually re-evaluated by the planning commission and town council to ascertain the status for the projects identified within this element.

**Project Coordination**

State law mandates the Priority Investment Element coordinate with “adjacent and relevant jurisdictions” to identify projects impacting the jurisdiction. Accordingly, correspondence requesting input on current and future capital projects was sent to the City of North Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach Fire Rescue, Horry County government, Horry County School District, South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), Santee Cooper and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (SCDHEC-OCRM). The responses provided by the correspondence assisted in creating a comprehensive project listing for Atlantic Beach (See Tables PI-1, PI-2, PI-4 & PI-5).

**Part II. Priority Capital and Operational Projects**

To assist in the preparation of this element, information was solicited from the town’s administration, associated provider municipalities and agencies regarding needed capital and operational expenditures over the next ten years.

| <b>Table PI-1<br/>Priority Capital and Operational Projects (Departmental)<br/>2017 to 2027</b> |                               |                            |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>General Administration Project<br/>(administration, finance,<br/>and building/zoning)</b>    | <b>Estimated<br/>Timeline</b> | <b>Projected<br/>Costs</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Funding Source</b> |
| New Town Hall   | 2017-2020                     | \$1,000,000                | GF, Bonding                         |
| Renovate Community Center   | 2017-2020                     | \$150,000-<br>200,000      | GF, CDBG, Bonding                   |
| Miscellaneous Equipment/<br>Computers   | 2017-2019                     | \$5,000                    | GF                                  |
| <b>Fire Department Projects</b>   | <b>Estimated<br/>Timeline</b> | <b>Projected<br/>Costs</b> | <b>Potential<br/>Funding Source</b> |
| No projects provided or identified  | -                             | -                          | -                                   |



| <b>Police Department Projects</b>   | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs*</b>      | <b>Potential Funding Source</b> |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| No projects provided or identified  | -                         | -                            | -                               |
| <b>Public Works Projects</b>  | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs*</b>      | <b>Potential Funding Source</b> |
| No projects provided or identified  | -                         | -                            | -                               |
| <b>Parks &amp; Recreation Projects</b>  | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs*</b>      | <b>Potential Funding Source</b> |
| Community Center Playground   | 2017-2020                 | \$50,000-100,000             | PARD/CDBG/GF                    |
| Basketball Court Renovation   | 2017-2020                 | \$50,000-100,000             | PARD/CDBG/GF                    |
| Beachfront Public Restroom Facility   | 2017-2022                 | \$150,000-200,000            | PARD/CDBG/GF<br>DHEC-OCRM       |
| Improved ADA compliant beachfront public access, including renovated plaza  | 2017-2022                 | \$1,000,000-1,200,000        | PARD/GF/DHEC-OCRM               |
| New Pocket Parks (Existing ROW)   | 2017-2027                 | \$1,000,000                  | PARD/GF                         |
| <b>Total Need (Departmental) (Approximated)</b>   |                           | <b>\$2,250,000-2,600,000</b> |                                 |
| <b>Note:</b> Project information is per the individual town departments. CDBG = Community Development Block Grant, PARD = Parks and Recreation Development Fund, DHEC-OCRM= Coastal Access Improvement Grant and GF = General Fund. |                           |                              |                                 |

| <b>Table PI-2<br/>Priority Capital and Operational Projects (Other Agencies)<br/>2017 to 2027</b>                                  |                           |                        |                       |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>County Projects (non-transportation)</b>  | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> |
| Horry County provided initial feedback on the town's priority investment element; however, no additional projects were identified. |                           |                        |                       |
| <b>Water and Sewer Projects (City of North Myrtle Beach)</b>   | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> |
| No projects provided or identified   | -                         | -                      | -                     |
| <b>Horry County School District Projects</b>   | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs</b> | <b>Funding Source</b> |
| No projects provided or identified   | -                         | -                      | -                     |



| Army Corp of Engineer Projects   | Estimated Timeline | Projected Costs   | Funding Source          |
|--|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Reach One beach re-nourishment project (including NMB and Atlantic Beach)                                      | 2017-2032          | \$5,000,000 - 6,000,000 (for entire Reach One)              | Federal/GF              |
| Santee Cooper Projects   | Estimated Timeline | Projected Costs   | Funding Source          |
| Burying of utility lines along U.S. 17 & 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue   | TBD                | U.S. 17- \$1,500,000 & 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue- \$1,000,000 | GF/Private/Utility Fund |
| Note: The preceding projects were provided by representatives of the above agencies/jurisdiction in 2016-2017. |                    |   |                         |

### Planning Activity Costs

The goals and objectives within this and other elements have identified various planning activities that will need to be undertaken within the next ten years. It is anticipated that some of these activities will be funded and undertaken by town staff, while other activities may be provided with the assistance of external agencies.

| Table PI-3<br>Priority Planning Projects<br>2017 to 2027 |                    |                         |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Implementation Activity                                  | Estimated Timeline | Projected Costs (Range) |
| Land Management Ordinance (Rewrite)                      | 2017-2018          | \$50,000-80,000         |
| Beach Management Plan                                    | 2017-2022          | \$40,000                |
| Comprehensive Plan (Statutory Review)                    | 2021-2022          | \$15,000-25,000         |
| Comprehensive Plan (Statutory Update)                    | 2026-2027          | \$40,000-60,000         |



### Transportation Funding

Approximately \$7.6 million dollars is available annually for regional transportation projects through the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS). The GSATS Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) also coordinates approximately \$300,000 in annual transportation enhancement funds, of which the town would be eligible for up to \$40,000 per project. In addition to funding available through GSATS, the County Transportation Committee (CTC) coordinates the expenditure of \$3-4 million dollars for transportation improvements annually within Horry County.

Table PI-4 provides a listing of funded transportation projects in the Atlantic Beach and North Myrtle Beach area. The table listing is based on the town’s Transportation Element, and information provided by GSATS, SCDOT and Horry County.

| <b>Table PI-4<br/>Programmed (Funded) Transportation Projects<br/>2015-2035</b>   |                           |                        |                                 |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Transportation Projects<br/>(County or SCDOT)</b>  | <b>Estimated Timeline</b> | <b>Projected Costs</b> | <b>Potential Funding Source</b> |
| SC 65 Widening-Crescent Beach   | 2017-2019                 | \$4,500,000            | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| US-17/ Barefoot Landing Intersection Improvements   | 2017-2019                 | \$1,774,000            | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| Signal system timing project on US-17   | 2017-2019                 | \$1,194,000            | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| <b>Total \$ of Programmed Projects</b>  |                           | <b>\$7,468,000</b>     |                                 |
| <b>Note: (*) indicates projects that have been prioritized and funded either in GSATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and by SCDOT.</b> |                           |                        |                                 |

Table PI-5 provides a listing of unfunded transportation projects in the Atlantic Beach and North Myrtle Beach area.



| <b>Table PI-5<br/>Unfunded Transportation Projects<br/>2015-2035</b>  |                               |  |                                 |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Transportation<br/>Projects<br/>(County or<br/>SCDOT)</b>  | <b>Estimated<br/>Timeline</b> | <b>Projected<br/>Costs</b>   | <b>Potential Funding Source</b> |
| <b>N-29:</b> Connect Madison Drive to Poinsett Street in NMB.   | TBD                           | \$600,000  | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| <b>N-30:</b> Extend 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue South to Wiley Drive in NMB.  | TBD                           | \$1,000,000  | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| <b>N-38:</b> Connect Possum Trot Road to Windy Hill Road Extension and extend 17 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> , 33 <sup>rd</sup> , and 37 <sup>th</sup> Avenues. Include multipurpose path on 21 <sup>st</sup> to Ocean. | TBD                           | \$5,000,000  | GSATS/SCDOT/Private Sources     |
| <b>N-44:</b> Connect Outrigger Road with Hilton Drive from just north of David Street to Belle Dr. at 9 <sup>th</sup> Avenue S in NMB.  | TBD                           | \$1,700,000  | GSATS/SCDOT/Private Sources     |
| Opening of Ocean Boulevard connecting town to NMB   | TBD                           | \$650,000 for preliminary project planning and engineering                 | GSATS/SCDOT/Town/NMB/Private    |
| Enhanced streetscapes for 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue & U.S. 17   | TBD                           | \$8,200,000  | GSATS/SCDOT/CDBG/Private        |
| New sidewalks along U.S.17 and within town boundary   | TBD                           | U.S.-17<br>\$500,000-1,000,000<br><br>Town limits<br>\$500,000-\$3,000,000 | GSATS/SCDOT                     |
| Proposed new street openings  | TBD                           | Appx.\$2,000,000 per street  | GSATS/SCDOT/Private/ GF         |
| Proposed realignment of East Coast Greenway   | TBD                           | \$175,000-200,000  | GSATS/ GF                       |



|   |     |                                |               |
|---|-----|--------------------------------|---------------|
| through Ocean Boulevard   |     |                                |               |
| Beachfront off-street parking   | TBD | \$250,000                      | Town/ Private |
| <b>Total \$ of Unfunded Projects</b>  |     | <b>\$20,575,000-23,600,000</b> |               |
| <b>Note: Listed projects have been identified by GSATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the 2007 Atlantic Beach Master Plan and town staff. Each of the listed projects are currently unfunded.</b> |     |                                |               |

**Part III. Anticipated and Potential Funding**

**Grants**

Federal and state grant monies can be an important source of funding to assist in the planning and implementation of capital projects along with associated personnel training and operational expenses. Project or formula based grants, like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), provide the town infrastructure and community enrichment funding opportunities. Additionally, CDBG funding is primarily geared toward assisting people of low to moderate incomes (see the Population Element).

Most competitive grants require the local government to match awards with a specific percentage of funding or in-kind contribution. Combined with the extensive administrative obligations required to manage grant projects, the process can at times be impractical for communities with limited resources. The following grants have been identified for the town to consider pursuing to assist in funding planned capital improvements:

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants (PDMG)
- Hazard Mitigation Grants Program (HMGP)
- Coastal Access Improvement Grants (SC DHEC-OCRM)
- \* Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- \* Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARF)
- \* Historic Preservation Grant Program-National Park Service

*\*(See Cultural Resources Element for grant details).*

**Tax Increment Financing**

One potential source for funding public improvements and/or economic development projects involves the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Commonly used as a financial instrument to improve blighted areas, TIF captures and earmarks property tax



revenue increases of a defined area to fund various infrastructure projects. For example, property tax revenues generated by an intense oceanfront development could potentially be utilized towards improving the town’s roads, water and sewer systems, or pay down bond debt used to finance public improvements.

TIFs can be difficult to implement and are more often utilized within large urban districts and planned developments. The town’s master plan recommends a TIF analysis be conducted to ascertain its potential viability along with conditions for enactment. This element recommends the town further explore TIF options prior to any anticipated oceanfront development.

#### **Part IV. Priority Investment Zones**

A useful strategy for cities and towns to encourage targeted revitalization efforts is through the creation of priority investment zones. Priority investment zones primarily use market based incentives like reduced or waived fees, flexibility in design and zoning standards, density bonuses and expedited permitting to encourage economic development including affordable housing. The coordination and strategic application of public monies used to improve community facilities and infrastructure projects can further aid the development of priority investment zones.

The 2007 Priority Investment Act granted local jurisdictions the ability to create priority investment zones. These priority investment areas, as defined by the act, are described as:

*A zone “in which the government authority adopts market based incentives or relaxes or eliminates nonessential housing regulatory requirements, as these terms are defined in this chapter (Title 6, Chapter 29 of the state code), to encourage private development in the priority investment zone. The governing authority also may provide that traditional neighborhood design and affordable housing, as these terms are defined in this chapter, must be permitted within the priority investment zone.”*

This element recommends Atlantic Beach consider creating priority investment zones aimed at enhancing areas that are pivotal to the town’s revitalization efforts. Each recommended zone contains its own unique circumstances and opportunities; however, the following goals can be generally applied: increase and/or stabilize the town’s housing stock, foster neighborhood connectivity, improve recreational opportunities, enhance the town’s aesthetics, create a unique sense of place and enhance transportation and utility infrastructure.

Map PI-1 identifies three priority investment zones for possible consideration. These include (1) U.S. 17 Gateway Corridor Priority Investment Zone (2) 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Ocean

# Atlantic Beach Priority Investment Map PI-1 January 2017



DISCLAIMER: This map is a graphic representation of data obtained from various sources. All efforts have been made to warrant the accuracy of this map. However, WRCOG disclaims all responsibility and liability for the use of this map.

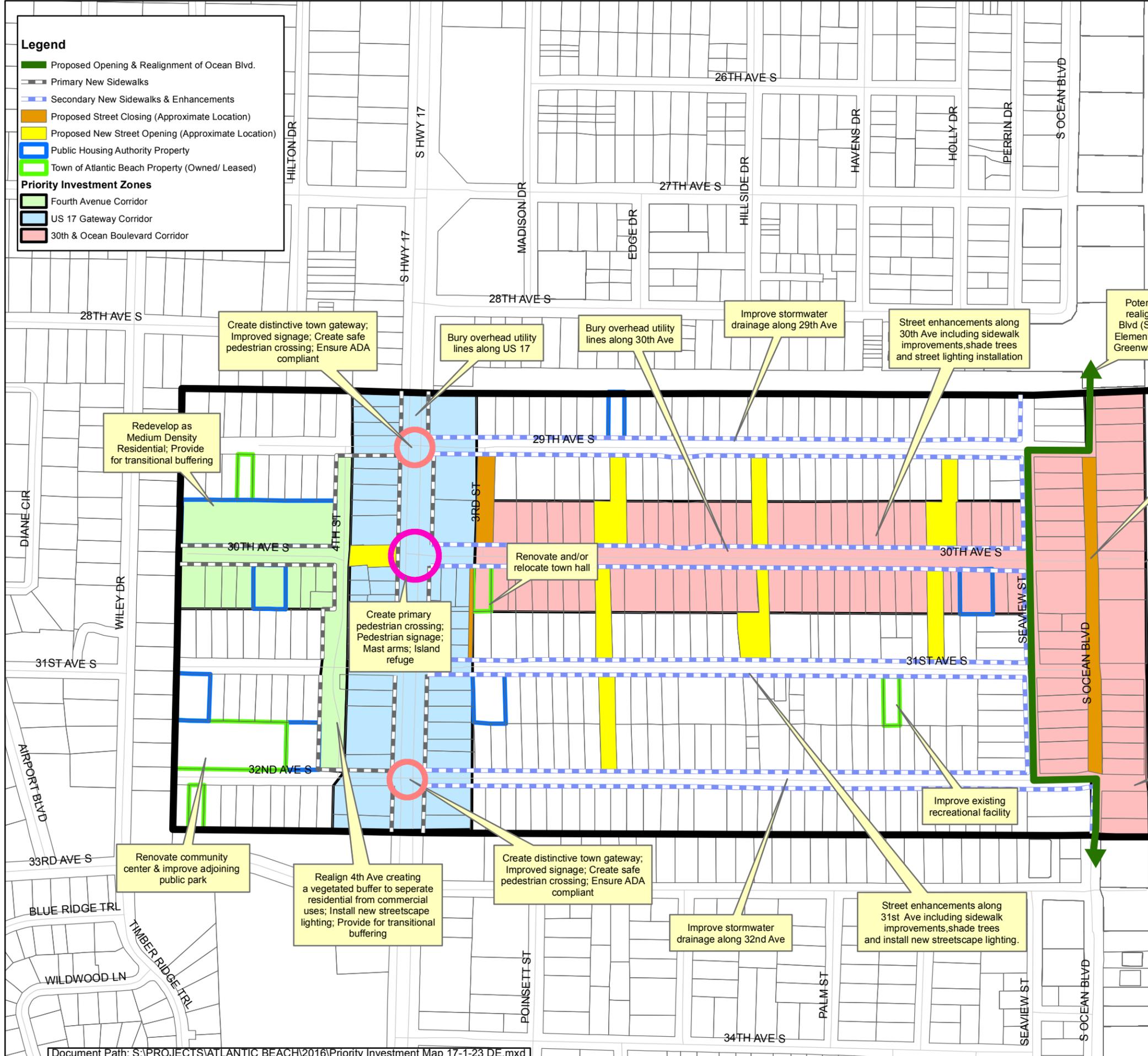


**Legend**

- Proposed Opening & Realignment of Ocean Blvd.
- Primary New Sidewalks
- Secondary New Sidewalks & Enhancements
- Proposed Street Closing (Approximate Location)
- Proposed New Street Opening (Approximate Location)
- Public Housing Authority Property
- Town of Atlantic Beach Property (Owned/ Leased)

**Priority Investment Zones**

- Fourth Avenue Corridor
- US 17 Gateway Corridor
- 30th & Ocean Boulevard Corridor



**30th Avenue and Ocean Boulevard Investment Zone**

The purpose of this zone is to promote the revitalization of a historically significant corridor linking the town's ocean front to U.S. 17. Furthermore, this zone is intended to provide for a safe, aesthetically pleasing pedestrian experience, encourage development and consolidation of vacant lots and provide for neighborhood connectivity. Initiatives/ incentives may include but are not limited to:

- Density bonuses to encourage development along Ocean Boulevard.
- Promote town cohesiveness through the creation of new streets within town's interior boundaries.
- Creation of a land bank to assist in the conversion of abandoned properties to viable residential and commercial use.
- Prioritized sidewalk, streetscape and street lighting improvements/installation and public parking.
- Prioritized renovation and/or relocation of town hall.

**Fourth Avenue Corridor Investment Zone**

The purpose of this zone is to promote the revitalization of adjacent properties, encourage housing infill and density, promote affordable housing options and encourage separation of residential use from adjacent commercial activities. Initiatives/ incentives may include but are not limited to:

- Waiver or reduction of permitting fees for new residential construction.
- Waiver of tap fees for new residential construction.
- Density bonuses to encourage affordable housing construction.
- Examine New Markets and Low Income Tax Credits to attract private investment.
- Creation of a landscaped buffer to separate residential housing from adjacent commercial properties.
- Creation of an assistance program to owners choosing to make repairs or upgrades to their properties.
- Prioritized sidewalk, streetscape and street lighting improvements/installation.

**U.S. 17 Gateway Corridor Investment Zone**

The purpose of this zone is to provide for distinctive town gateways, enhanced town aesthetics, create/improve major intersections, provide pedestrian safety and encourage commercial revitalization. Initiatives/ incentives may include but are not limited to:

- Creation of prominently visible and attractive town entrance signs, street light banners and wayfinding signage.
- Prioritized burying of utility lines along U.S. 17.
- Prioritized improvements at gateway intersections of U.S. 17 and 29th, 30th and 32nd avenues; including paved street crossings, enhanced pedestrian signals, signage, master arms and pedestrian refuges.
- Prioritized sidewalk, streetscape and street lighting improvements/installation.
- Ensure ADA compliant pedestrian crossings along U.S. 17 and applicable intersections.
- Creation of an assistance program to owners choosing to make repairs or upgrades to building facades.





Blvd Priority Investment Zone and (3) Fourth Avenue Corridor Priority Investment Zone. Specific investment zone initiatives are assigned to assist revitalization efforts. Should one or more of these priority investment zones be implemented, it is recommended the town council and planning commission conduct yearly reviews to ascertain the zone(s) effectiveness and potential need for updates and revisions.

## **Part V: Needs, Goals & Objectives**

Based on the town's assessment and additional input provided by adjacent municipalities and agencies the following priority investment needs were identified: 1) Renovate and/or build new town facilities, 2) improve existing parks and create new open space, 3) provide for streetscape improvements and safe pedestrian transit, and 4) improve stormwater drainage.

### **Goal PI1: *Actively solicit the input of residents in the identification and prioritization of capital projects.***

Objective A: Pursue and encourage active resident participation on town boards, commissions, and other advisory bodies charged with identifying and prioritizing capital projects.

Objective B: Provide for resident input through the town's website and traditional outreach initiatives including surveys, mailings and public meetings.

Objective C: Develop a process to allow for public facility review in accordance with the state code.

### **Goal PI2: *Provide for periodic review and update of needed projects to reflect new opportunities and funding sources.***

Objective A: Consider the development and implementation of a Capital Improvement Plan along with coordinating project prioritization and budgeting with biennial review.

Objective B: Actively identify and pursue associated grant funding opportunities for capital projects.

Objective C: Consider the development of an official map that delineates planned roadways, sidewalks, infrastructure and public buildings.

Objective D: Consider the establishment of impact fees on new development to help fund needed capital improvements.

### **Goal PI3: *Promote project coordination with other jurisdictions and agencies.***

Objective A: Ensure that town staff, committee members and/or elected officials are represented on boards, commissions and other



advisory bodes tasked with identifying, prioritizing and funding capital projects.

Objective B: Request relevant jurisdictions and agencies provide regular updates to town staff and council on the status of ongoing and planned capital projects.

**Goal PI4: *Create a Priority Investment Zone(s) to promote economic development and revitalization of identified corridors.***

Objective A: Consider waiving permitting and tap fees for new residential construction.

Objective B: Develop density bonuses to encourage new development including affordable housing.

Objective C: Create a land bank to assist in the conversion of abandoned properties to viable residential and commercial use.

Objective D: Prioritize sidewalk, streetscape and street lighting improvements.



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Town of Atlantic Beach, South Carolina



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

# Plan Implementation



# Plan Implementation

The Town of Atlantic Beach Comprehensive Plan 2017-2027 provides nine elements that contain substantive goals and objectives derived from an analysis of the town's historical trends, existing conditions and future needs. This section provides implementing strategies designed to support this plan's goals and objectives.

Implementing strategies requires a coordinated approach by the town council, planning commission, town staff, residents and where applicable adjacent municipalities and agencies. From the nine elements, overarching themes were identified and consolidated to avoid duplication. Furthermore, each implementing strategy includes responsible parties tasked with initiating the activity along with tentative time frames. As this plan addresses numerous actionable activities, the omission of an implementing activity in this section does not preclude or limit the town's ability to pursue such activities when in furtherance of this plan's goals and objectives.

## I. Enhance Community Appearance

| Implementation Strategies  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Applicable Element(s)  | Description  | Tentative Time Frame   |
| <i>Population &amp; Housing</i>  | Review existing property maintenance standards and consider adopting the latest edition of the International Property Maintenance Code. The town may consider combining enforcement responsibilities with those of the building official or use existing staff. In addition, the town may wish to consider the adoption of a vacant property registration ordinance. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council</b> | Review & Possible Adoption: 18 months following comprehensive plan completion.   |
| <i>Population, Economic Development, &amp; Housing</i>                             | Consider pursuing small communities CDBG funding through the SC Department of Commerce to assist in the removal of dilapidated structures. This activity should be coordinated closely with property owners and stakeholders to ensure support and the identification of eligible properties. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council</b>  | Ongoing, beginning with the Fall 2017 Community Enrichment funding round.  |
| <i>Population, Economic Development, Transportation, &amp; Priority Investment</i> | <b>Streetscape Improvements:</b> Continue participation on GSATS' Policy Committee and consider developing a request for street enhancement funding along the US 17 corridor. Other funding options that should be pursued include CDBG funding for streetscape improvements. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Planning Commission (Planning Phase) and Town Manager &amp; Council (Grant Application Phase)</b>       | Plan development to begin in 2017. Grant application process to be considered in 2017 and 2018 and thereafter as needed. |
| <i>Community Facilities, Cultural Resources</i>                                    | Explore creating a parks and recreation committee, which may be appointed by town council. Primary responsibilities should include creating new recreational opportunities for residents and making improvements to facilities and parks. Alternatively, a resident based volunteer organization could provide similarly tasked responsibilities. <b>Initiator: Town Council &amp; Town Manager</b>                    | 12-18 months   |
| <i>Community Facilities, Cultural Resources, &amp;</i>                             | Continue to actively pursue grant funding, including Park and Recreation Development Fund (PARD)   | 1-3 years. CDBG Community  |



|   |   |                              |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| <i>Priority Investment</i>  | provided by SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and CDBG Community Enrichment Funding to assist in the renovation of community facilities and parks. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>  | Enrichment Funding Fall 2017 |
| <i>Community Facilities, Priority Investment, Natural Resources, &amp; Transportation</i> | Continue the partnership with Santee Cooper to develop a plan to bury overhead utility lines, with prioritization given to lines located along US 17. Monitor and identify current water and sewer services for potential upgrades. Continue partnership with Horry County to develop Low Impact Design and other strategies to enhance the town’s water quality. Continue to coordinate and plan for street improvements and maintenance with SCDOT. <b>Initiator: Town Council and Town Manager</b> | Ongoing                      |

**II. Promote Efficient and Transparent Municipal Governance**

| <b>Implementation Strategies</b>                                 |  |                             |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Applicable Element(s)</b>                                     | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Tentative Time Frame</b> |
| <i>Housing, Population, Land Use, &amp; Economic Development</i> | <b>Monitoring:</b> Available data, including building permits, census estimates, and other indicators, should be reported to the town’s policy making boards at least semi-annually. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>  | Ongoing                     |
| <i>Priority Investment &amp; Community Facilities</i>            | <b>Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP):</b> A Capital Improvements Plan assists the town in prioritizing and budgeting projects. Additionally, a CIP promotes public participation, government transparency and is a requirement prior to the implementation of impact fees. <b>Initiator: Planning Commission &amp; Town Council</b> | 12-18 months                |
| <i>Priority Investment &amp; Community Facilities</i>            | Provide effective outreach and communication to town residents with regards to planned projects, including public announcements, posting of information on the town’s website and traditional mailings. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>   | Ongoing                     |
| <i>Community Facilities</i>                                      | Support collaborative relationships with municipalities, agencies and other government entities tasked with providing town services. The town should identify and actively participate in local and regional public works/infrastructure planning initiatives. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>  | Ongoing                     |

**III. Promote Housing Choice and Affordability**

| <b>Implementation Strategies</b>           |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Applicable Element(s)</b>               | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Tentative Time Frame</b>                             |
| <i>Housing, Population, &amp; Land Use</i> | Following the completion of the Comprehensive Plan, the town’s Land Management Ordinance (LMO) should be reviewed. Special consideration should be given to uses and amenities necessary for retaining or recruiting | LMO review to begin within six months of the completion |



|  |  |                           |
|--|--|---------------------------|
|  | population. Examination should include the permissibility of parks, recreation, day cares, home occupations, medical facilities, etc. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Planning Commission</b>   | of the comprehensive plan |
| <i>Housing &amp; Natural Resources</i> | Explore mechanism to reduce costs to owners for insurance. The town should consider participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) and should consider increased standards with the update of the town's flood maps and ordinance. <b>Initiators: Town Manager &amp; Council</b> | Ongoing                   |

**IV. Preserve and protect Atlantic Beach's Cultural Heritage and Natural Resources**

| <b>Implementation Strategies</b>        |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Applicable Elements</b>              | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Tentative Time Frame</b>  |
| <i>Natural Resources &amp; Land Use</i> | <b>Beachfront Management &amp; Protection:</b> In conjunction with a review of the town's LMO, the town's shoreline protection requirements should be re-evaluated and updated to correspond to changes in DHEC-OCRM guidance and changes in the baseline and setback line. Also, permitted uses and encroachments onto the beachfront should be examined. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Planning Commission</b>   | Review to begin within six months of the completion of the comprehensive plan  |
| <i>Natural Resources &amp; Land Use</i> | The town should ensure that local permitting adjacent to the oceanfront is concurrent with DHEC-OCRM review. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Building Official</b>   | Immediate  |
| <i>Natural Resources &amp; Land Use</i> | <b>Beach Renourishment:</b> The town should initiate a comprehensive update of its beachfront management plan to ensure federal funding eligibility. The town should continue efforts to lobby for scheduled beach renourishment and continue to budget funds to meet anticipated match requirements. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council</b>   | Ongoing  |
| <i>Natural Resources &amp; Land Use</i> | <b>Hazard Mitigation:</b> In conjunction with the recent release and adoption process for new flood maps, the town should review its flood damage prevention ordinance to insure consistency with current requirements and recommended best practices. <b>Initiators: Town Manager &amp; Council</b>  | Ongoing  |
| <i>Natural Resources</i>                | <b>Tree Preservation and Planting Requirements:</b> Tree preservation and planting requirements are contained within the town's LMO. These provisions should be reviewed and revised to incorporate recommendations from the town's master plan. In addition, the public improvement provisions should also be reviewed and amended to specify planting requirements adjacent to the town's streets. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Planning Commission</b> | Review to begin within six months of the completion of the comprehensive plan. |
| <i>Cultural Resources</i>               | <b>National Register Nomination:</b> Initiate contact with the State Historic Preservation Office on the viability  | 12-18 months   |



|  |   |         |
|--|---|---------|
|  | of listing the town on the National Register of Historic Places. The town should take steps in exploring the steps and eligibility requirement for listing parts of the town as a historic district. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>   |         |
| <i>Cultural Resources &amp; Transportation</i> | Identify, monitor and implement steps needed to ensure the town’s inclusion and participation in existing and future planned trail networks, including the East Coast Greenway and Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b>                              | Ongoing |
| <i>Cultural Resources</i>                      | Establish collaborative relationship with area cultural institutions. The town should establish a cultural liaison and/or re-establish a historical committee dedicated to promoting and preserving Atlantic Beach’s cultural heritage. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council</b> | Ongoing |

**V. Pursue Balanced Economic Development**

| <b>Implementation Strategies</b>                              |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Applicable Element(s)</b>                                  | <b>Description</b>   | <b>Tentative Time Frame</b>   |
| <i>Land Use, Economic Development &amp; Natural Resources</i> | <b>LMO Update:</b> The town should begin the process of updating the Land Management Ordinance. As identified in this plan, several areas will need to be examined and updated. This includes, but is not limited to: 1). the elimination of unnecessary development costs; 2). the permissibility of strategic/context sensitive uses; 3). streamlining the requirements imposed on home based and small start-up businesses; 4) updating the town’s zoning districts and corresponding use and dimensional standards to align with the master plan and this plan; 5) updating flood damage prevention requirements; 6) examining and revising impact fees; 7) developing enforceable architectural standards; 8) updating public improvement specifications to align with the master plan and this plan; 9) updating landscaping and planting requirements; and 10) improving the organization and clarity of the overall document. These review/update activities may occur concurrently or in planned sequence. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Planning Commission</b> | LMO review to begin within six months of the completion of the comprehensive plan |
| <i>Land Use, Economic Development, &amp; Transportation</i>   | <b>Determination on Ocean Boulevard:</b> The location and intensity of economic investment in the town will in great measure be determined by decisions regarding the opening (or continued status) of Ocean Boulevard. A decision to open Ocean Boulevard should specify prerequisites for opening as well as a determination on the preferred alignment. This decision should be made prior to amendments to the town’s land management ordinance and zoning map. <b>Initiator: Planning Commission &amp; Town Council</b>   | Ongoing   |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><i>Transportation, &amp; Economic Development</i></p>                           | <p><b>Transit:</b> The town should continue efforts to promote transportation choice. The town should initiate discussions with Coast RTA in collaboration with the City of North Myrtle Beach on extending the fixed route bus service with stops in Atlantic Beach. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council</b></p>  | <p>Ongoing</p>   |
| <p><i>Transportation, Economic Development, &amp; Land Use</i></p>                 | <p><b>Street Opening/Closures:</b> The town should identify the preferred locations for new streets as outlined in this element. This process should involve 1). determining the status of existing versus needed right-of-way; 2). discussions with affected property owners; and 3). the adoption of an official map indicating the location of future streets. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b></p> | <p>12 to 24 months following the adoption of the comprehensive plan</p>                  |
| <p><i>Economic Development</i></p>   | <p><b>Review Municipal Fee Structure:</b> The town should review existing business licensing fees to ensure competitiveness with other municipalities. <b>Initiator: Town Manager &amp; Town Council.</b></p>  | <p>Review &amp; Possible Adoption: 18 months following comprehensive plan completion</p> |
| <p><i>Economic Development, &amp; Cultural Resources</i></p>                       | <p><b>Collaboration:</b> The town should appoint a liaison responsible with coordinating, managing and developing relationships with area colleges and universities on collaborative economic development and cultural initiatives. <b>Initiator: Town Manager</b></p>   | <p>Initiated within 18 months and thereafter continuous</p>                              |
| <p><i>Priority Investment, Housing, Economic Development</i></p>                   | <p><b>Create priority investment zones:</b> The town should consider creating priority investment zones to encourage revitalization and affordable housing within designated areas.</p>  | <p>1-3 years</p>   |
| <p><i>Priority Investment Community Facilities, &amp; Economic Development</i></p> | <p><b>Create an official town map:</b> An official map can assist the town in prioritizing improvements projects by delineating planned roadways, infrastructure and public buildings. <b>Initiator: Planning Commission &amp; Town Council</b></p>  | <p>12-18 months</p>  |



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