
Strategic Direction for Dorchester County

March 21, 2019

Introduction

Council Members: George Bailey, David Chinnis, Jay Byars, Harriott Holman, Larry Hargett, Eddie Crosby, and William R. “Bill” Hearn

Staff: Jason L. Ward, County Administrator
Rebecca Vance, Deputy Administrator for Community Services
Daniel Prentice, Deputy Administrator/CFO
Tracey Langley, Clerk of County Council
Susan Brickle, Clerk to County Administrator
Tiffany Norton, PIO
John Frampton, County Attorney
Brad Mitchell, Deputy County Attorney
Jason Carraher, Public Works Director
Larry Harper, Water & Sewer Director

Facilitators: Bill Tomes, Fellow Riley Center for Livable Communities
Ali Titus, Director Community Assistance Program, College of Charleston

1. Introductory Exercises

The facilitators had Council complete the True Colors personality assessment and a team acrostic, and then led a discussion of the challenges and benefits of teamwork. The facilitators then led a discussion on the role of council.

2. Update on the 2016 Key Results and Strategies

County Administrator Jason Ward and staff presented an update on progress made on the key results and strategies established in 2016.

3. Review of Current Vision Statement

Prior to the meeting, Council members were asked to complete a short survey about their vision for the County and the issues the County is facing. The facilitators summarized the responses to the vision statement. Council reviewed the current vision statement and revised it to the following:

Vision Statement

The government of Dorchester County, in partnership with its citizens and businesses, will play a leadership role in achieving a balance between growth, the environment, and preservation of the unique cultural and natural characteristics of Dorchester County.

Mission Statement

Dorchester County Government delivers essential services that contribute to the well-being and quality of life of its citizens. In doing so, we seek to meet the collective needs of our citizens in a cost-efficient manner.

Issue Identification

The facilitators summarized the responses to the survey items regarding issues the County is facing. Common responses were:

- Zoning
- Education
- Public Safety
- Resources for Seniors

Based on the Council's vision for the County, survey results, and staff retreat, Council members identified the following issues to be addressed over the next two to three years.

1. Funding
2. Economic Development
3. County Services
4. Growth management/zoning
5. Education
6. Infrastructure
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Conservation

After discussing the issues listed above, Council decided that County Services was an operational issue and that staff were making significant progress in that area. Parks and Recreation and Conservation were combined since they were so closely related. The issues were prioritized, and key results and strategies developed.

Strategic issues

1. Infrastructure

Key Results

- Plan for infrastructure funding
- Have infrastructure in place for future development

Strategies

1A. Seek funding for roads – SCDOT, CHATS, SCTIB, BUILD grants, etc.
(Public Works, County Administrator, and County Council)

1B. Seek additional authorization under the Water Resources Development Act (County Administrator and Water and Sewer)

1C. Prepare Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan and recommend funding for projects
(Public Works and Business Services)

1D. Establish a dedicated road funding source for repairs (vehicle road fee) (Public Works, Business Services, and County Council)

1E. Plan for a future Capital Project Sales Tax (County Administrator, Public Works, and County Attorney, and County Council)

1F. Plan for the early sunset of the Transportation Sales Tax (County Administrator and Business Services)

1G. Reserve Right-of Ways for the Glenn McConnell Parkway (Public Works)

1H. Analyze and adjust water, sewer and stormwater rates/fees (Public Works, Water and Sewer, and County Council)

1I. Seek funding through Rural Infrastructure Authority, Economic Development Administration, S.C. Department of Commerce, and Public/Private Partnerships for infrastructure funding.
(County Administrator and Water and Sewer)

2. Economic Development

Key Results

- Resolve the wetlands issues
- Improve the “hit rate”
- Increase jobs and investments
- Increase Class A office space
- Increase retail businesses

Strategies

2A. Request assistance from the governor and delegation about wetlands regulations at the state level (Public Works, Economic Development, County Administrator, and County Council)

2B. Have affordable wetlands credits available for roads, utilities, economic development and park projects (Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Water and Sewer)

2C. Investigate opportunity zones (Economic Development)

2D. Consider developing Class A office space (Economic Development)

2E. Ensure alignment between public schools and workforce needs (Economic Development)

3. Growth Management and Zoning

Key Results

- All county residents have access to healthcare
- County is zoned for managed growth
- Improve library access for citizens

Strategies

3A. Explore options for providing healthcare services in western Dorchester County (Human Resources and County Administrator)

3B. Prioritize zoning in western Dorchester County – hold a zoning retreat (Planning and Zoning and County Council)

3C. Consider increased minimum lot sizes and other development restrictions (Planning and Zoning and County Council)

3D. Investigate development impact fees (County Administrator, Water and Sewer, Public Works, Planning and Zoning, and Business Services)

3E. Implement Library Master Plan (County Administrator, County Council, Library Board)

4. Education

Key Results

- County workforce is prepared for job opportunities in the County

- Underemployed residents have more job opportunities
- K-12 schools are an asset in attracting growth
- Reduce public safety vacancies

Strategies

4A. Continue development of Trident Technical College campus (County Administrator, Economic Development, and County Council)

4B. Advocate for school district consolidation (County Council)

4C. Advocate for career training for high school students and adults (County Council and Economic Development)

4D. Develop a regional law enforcement academy (Sheriff)

5. Funding

Key Results

- Fully fund Local Government Fund
- Diversify revenue stream
- Build capital projects without impacting property taxes

Strategies

5A. Communicate with state senators and house members about the importance of fully funding the Local Government Fund (County Council and County Administrator)

5B. Take advantage of intergovernmental cooperation opportunities (County Council and County Administrator)

6. Parks and Recreation

Key Results

- Improve County parks
- Improve recreational opportunities
- Resolve wetlands issues

Strategies

6A. Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Parks and Recreation, County Council, and County Administrator)

6B. Work with municipalities on building and maintaining recreation facilities (Parks and Recreation and County Administrator)

6C. Identify and dedicate continuing funding for parks and conservation (user fees, corporate sources) (Parks and Recreation and Business Services)

6D. Consider implementing Transfer Development Rights Ordinance to balance growth and preserve green space and wetlands (Planning and Zoning, County Administrator, Parks and Recreation, and County Attorney)