

Dauphin Island Strategic Planning

Interim Planning Report

submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Dauphin Island contracted with Five E's Unlimited of Seattle, WA on January 4, 2007 to lead a Strategic Planning process for the Town in order to guide its community toward a sustainable future. Five E's engaged the University of Washington (Seattle, WA) and the Bellwether Group of

Mobile, AL as partners in this planning effort to form the Consultant Team that would facilitate the Town's Strategic Planning activities.

The Consultant Team was guided in its design of a strategic planning process by the questions outlined in Table 1. These questions were developed by the Steering Committee assembled to oversee the Strategic Planning process on behalf of the Town. The articulation of these questions represented the Steering Committee's collective wisdom on the community's concerns and needs for the future.

From the beginning of its work, the Consultant Team understood that the Dauphin Island community recognizes the importance of natural resources and ecologic systems in supporting both economic development and societal well-being, as represented by maintenance and improvement in quality of life and preservation of cultural integrity. The community shows a deep concern for environmental sustainability as it relates to the social and economic capacity concerns of people. But at the same time, Town's people recognize there is real possibility for significant change on the Island landscape in the

years to come because of recent natural disasters. This anticipated change causes concern about community well-being. It also motivates the Island community's identity of needed emphasis on "sustainable" development for effectively influencing the direction and momentum of the change affecting resource management, land-use, and community growth over the next several decades.

Table 1

Questions to Focus Dauphin Island Strategic Planning

(source: from Dauphin Island Request for Proposals)

- How can the Dauphin Island Community come together to develop a common vision for the community of what the island should be in 20 to 30 years?
- How can the Dauphin Island Community plan for and develop improvements to Island infrastructure that are environmentally sensitive and hurricane resistant?
- How can the Dauphin Island Community engage in commercial revitalization and expansion of economic opportunities including tourism and business growth in a way that capitalizes on its community assets?
- Can the Dauphin Island Community manage growth through the implementation of Smart Growth concepts sustaining the unique environmental quality of the island, including the beaches, dunes, maritime forest, swamplands and marshes that make the island a special place?
- How can the Dauphin Island Community maintain and improve housing diversity so that work force and other affordable housing for island commercial/retail establishment workers will be available?
- How can the Dauphin Island Community improve/expand its arts/community/recreational facilities and opportunities and access to the water?
- How can the Dauphin Island Community improve provision for social/community services on the island?
- Composition of the island is such that we have various entities. How can we better work both independently and interdependently as a community?
- Can the Dauphin Island Community better coordinate its governing activities, financing activities and the organizational capacity of the current entities?

Strategic planning looks for synergy (*i.e.*, co-action, harmony) among actions that cause major changes in the community in order to achieve a stated vision the community holds in common. Stakeholders (1) identify problems they perceive on the Town’s landscape or in the regional context, (2) turn those negative aspects of community life into a positive view of what the future could hold if everything were to work right, (3) identify the assets the community possesses to support moving in the defined direction of positive change (the vision), as well as identifying the “landmines” that may exist as challenges, and (4) then after defining these boundaries to perceived hopes for the future, the community works at physically “designing” the different parts of the community that when changed will move them closer to their shared vision. These designs of the different “future” components of the community will then be evaluated for reality by the community (no one else can speak to how the community will achieve their goals except themselves), for available and required resources, and for synergy with other design features of the overall strategic plan.

The Dauphin Island Strategic Planning project was designed to address the needs of the community with regards to forms of participation, diversity of different stakeholder types, and living on a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico. One of the first activities of the Consultant Team was to familiarize themselves with the historical planning activities the Town has engaged in over time. Other key elements of the overall planning process the Consultant Team structured its efforts around included those requirements listed in Table 2. The scope of work the Team proposed in order to address these different planning requirements of the Town is illustrated in the lower half of Table 2. This work included community visioning and goal setting, the identification of assets and challenges to be overcome, and a process of futuring to design a preferred, agreed upon future for the Town.

One of the more important overall requirements of the strategic planning process was that it be “community-driven” rather than designed and presented by the consultants. This required that the Consultant Team use its experience and ingenuity to determine a number of different ways in which

Table 2 Dauphin Island Strategic Planning
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Key requirements for the planning process to succeed include:

- 1) the consultant team’s understanding for where the Town has been with planning activities that will appreciably inform this project and what the stakeholder aspirations and core values look like regarding a future, sustainable Dauphin Island community; which will require
- 2) the community’s deep and extensive science-based understanding of ecological, economic, and social sustainability, in all of its temporal, spatial and systemic dimensions, communicated effectively to participants and stakeholders in a way that inspires vision and action; to inform
- 3) a thoroughly community-based and community-driven process of deliberation and decision making, engaging all stakeholders in the identity of weaknesses and threats as well as community assets, and capable of guiding the making of difficult trade-offs while creating cohesive win-win solutions; whose outcomes are expressed in
- 4) a solid, comprehensive, implementable Strategic Plan fulfilling all best-practice planning and statutory requirements, which will identify the necessary resources to overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities, and will be a model for change management that effectively guides the Town of Dauphin Island in revising its Comprehensive Plan in order to direct progress toward a successful, resiliently enduring future.

Scope of work phases

- 1) reviewing existing documents and statutes applicable to future development,
- 2) providing stakeholder sustainability awareness and inventorying all stakeholder place-based interests, values, practices, and future vision,
- 3) conducting community asset identification via public consultation processes,
- 4) developing visual frameworks of historical and current conditions that will influence changes in environment, community development, and cultural views,
- 5) planning and designing management strategies through public participation, including the visualization of possible futures and related timelines for progress, and
- 6) promoting implementation of a management strategy and measurement processes.

the public could be engaged. A stakeholder survey was designed and circulated throughout the community, and beyond. In addition, a general meeting forum was employed, workshop settings were designed, small, targeted group meetings were carried out, individual telephone interviews were conducted, and one-on-one dialogues were held with people on the street, the beach, or in places of business. This strategy of stakeholder contact to-date has reached **935** people. A total of **569** individuals have filled out and returned a survey form (as of April 12, 2007). We have completed a kick-off orientation and initial fact-finding workshop (**104** people), telephone interviews (**19** people), targeted small group meetings (**52** people), church meetings (**58** people), and one-on-one discussions with people in the streets, on the beach, and at the Town's businesses (**84** people).

The initial fact-finding workshop (February 8, 2007) provided a means of focusing on immediate, spur-of-the-moment thoughts participants had on the problems the Town faces. These were classified as concerns generated spontaneously without much forethought. The surveys on the other hand, identified those longer-term issues that stakeholders feel are important with regards to their planning for a more sustainable future, after giving some thought to a large list of issues. These surveys also provided data on stakeholders general complaints about the Town of Dauphin Island, thought of as short term, nagging problems they have with living on the Island day to day. And finally, the survey form allowed the Consultant Team to identify the different stakeholder types on the Island, or associated with the Island. So in summary, the original data from stakeholders could be classified into everyday, nagging complaints about Town conditions (which relate to comprehensive planning elements) and more longer-term issues of major concern about how the future of the Island will look (more in-line with a strategic planning process).

The last part of this Interim Report will provide detail on the Shared Vision the Dauphin Island Community has developed to guide the remainder of the Strategic Planning process. The surveys, interviews, and initial workshop were designed to allow all stakeholders to articulate the problems associated with living in the Dauphin Island community. These problems are viewed as setting the boundaries on change that stakeholders desire for their future. And the outcome of this change is characterized by a shared vision community members created in March 2007 to initially shape the path of change they will pursue and the desired end-state they perceive. If the desired end state is not openly defined and agreed upon, the participants may have different end states in mind and the results of planning will be ineffective.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

The Dauphin Island Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2000. This plan identified a total of 27 actions the Town was suppose to address in improving its governance, infrastructure, and function over the following 5-7 years. A chart of the 27 Comprehensive Plan Actions, the assessment by the Town Council and Staff regarding stage of completion for these actions, and related comments on these actions from the Stakeholder Surveys is presented in the **APPENDIX** at the end of this Report. Some of the progress of the Town in comprehensive planning and implementation have included the adoption of ordinances for wetlands protection, signs, noise, stray/loose dogs, new construction site maintenance, and communication towers. Some progress has been made on tree protection, parking regulations, porous driving surfaces, and zoning, but more work is needed in these areas.

A number of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan action items were addressed by the survey responses of stakeholders. More than 700 survey responses identified concern for beach stability on the Island. The Comprehensive Plan review indicated the existence of a beach management plan as questionable. A significant number of surveys registered concerns for wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas

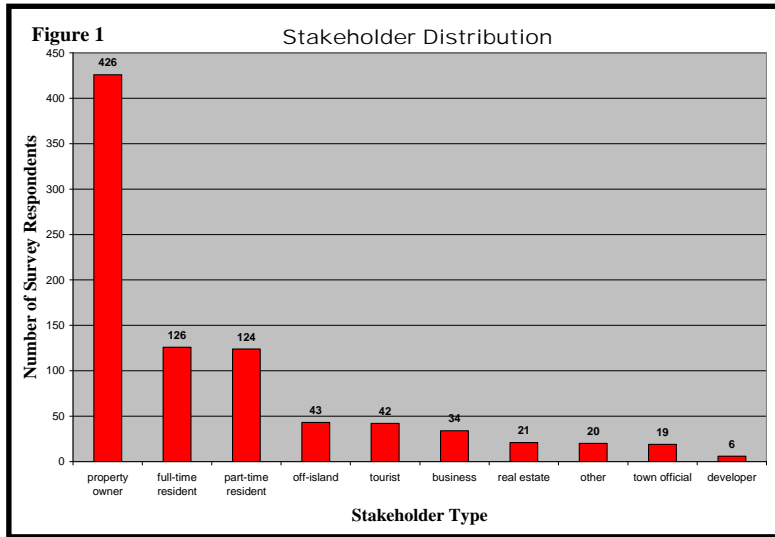
protection. An additional number of survey respondents were concerned for the status of building codes, zoning ordinances, and control over additional condominium development. There were also a large number of concerns registered in the surveys for trash and litter issues as well as coordinated garbage collection on the Island. And the concern for coordination of governance activities was strongly expressed in the surveys. In general, survey respondents did not believe that effective ordinance enforcement was occurring on the Island or that there was sufficient information available about the capacity of water supply and wastewater treatment for the community.

DEFINING KEY PROBLEMS

The Orientation and Fact Finding Workshop held on February 8, 2007 included more than 100 participants that were introduced to the project and asked to provide the Consultant Team with their initial impressions of problems facing the Town in its quest for a sustainable future. During the Workshop breakout groups decided on their initial, spontaneous (instinctive) issues of concern and contributed these ideas to an overall workshop opinion of key issues which is illustrated in Table 3. In terms of their rank order the issues included Protection of Natural Resources, Economic Sustainability,

Table 3. Results of Breakout Session Discussion of Major Issues – Public Meeting 2-8-07

Protection of Natural Resources	Economic Sustainability	Consistent Enforcement of Laws	Affordable Quality & Quantity of Water	Consolidation of Government	Coastal Protection	Community Facilities
Environmental fee or toll onto Island	Encourage local businesses & support them	Enforce ordinances/laws (e.g., dogs, tree cutting, litter, drugs, driving)	Clean drinking water (preserving wetlands)	One government – no POA or Park & Beach Board	Preserve south shore (beach renourishment)	No youth care (day care) or structured youth activity
Maintain & conserve airport preserve	New businesses to the Island (restaurants)	Reduce speed limits	Cost & quality of water	Too many civic entities	Recovery of shoreline & low density development	Need an activity center
Conserving, replenishing, preserving natural assets	Incentives to promote attractive businesses	Increased traffic gridlock	Encourage Mobile water/sewer service to DI	Synergy among town, park & beach bd, POA, & water& sewer	Restoration of coast line (engineered beaches)	Keep community-use properties for community use in perpetuity
Conserve, preserve, replenish natural resources	Support for restaurants and other businesses	Enforce all zoning ordinances & traffic/parking	Drinking water quality	Consolidation of public entities	Clean & healthy beaches	No childcare on Island
Save the trees and wetlands	Alternative sources of Town revenue (other than condos)	Comprehensive tree ordinance	Enough water supply & sewage capacity for development	Join water, fire, POA into Town	Beach replenishment	No community center for Town
Preserve the east end dunes	Toll to Island	Greenways – wildlife corridors	Quality & quantity of water sources			
Preserve the seafood industry	Toll on the bridge	Tourism garbage impact on island				
Environmental impact fee	Can the Island pay for itself?	Too many drugs on Island				
Preserve habitat for birds & other wildlife	Income industries – fishing, tourism, residents, royalties	Trash pick-up				
Public dock for commercial shrimpers	Lack of restaurants	Develop ordinances that have forethought instead of just reaction				
Wetland protection	Lack of restaurants on Island					
Save all wetlands	Missing downtown & related services					
Control development for conservation of natural resources						
Control developers and protect trees (no clear cutting)						

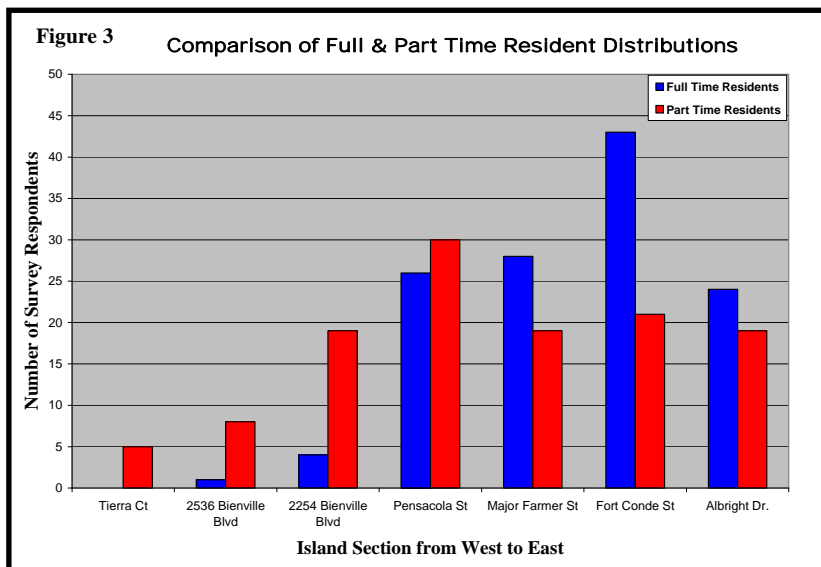
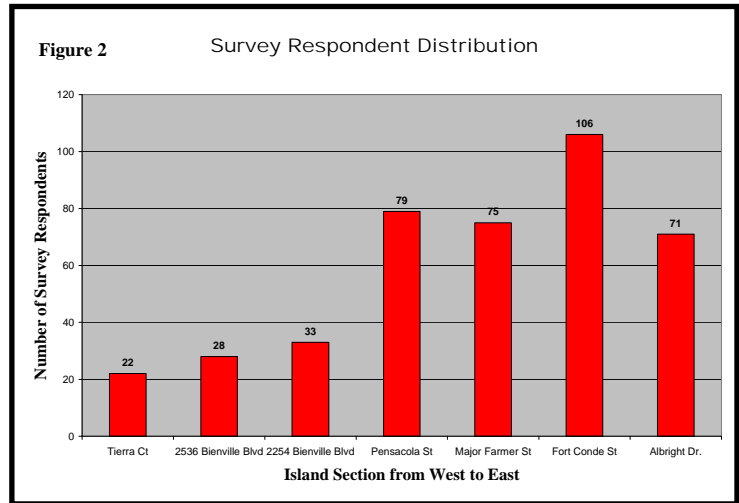


Consistent Enforcement of Laws, Affordable Quality and Quantity of Water, Consolidation of Government, Coastal Protection, and Community Facilities. Three (3) of these issues related to environmental quality (natural resources, water, and coastal concerns), two (2) issues related to Dauphin Island governance (unified and effective in enforcement), while two other issues spoke to long-term economic vitality of the community and social facilities for the community, respectively.

As of the date of this Report (April 20, 2007), 569 Stakeholder Surveys have

been received for analysis of community concerns – related to problems on the Island identified by respondents. The distribution of survey respondents was dominated by property owners (Figure 1). The property owners were almost equally divided between full-time residents and part-time residents. The stakeholder category of “tourist” also made up a sizeable portion of the respondents.

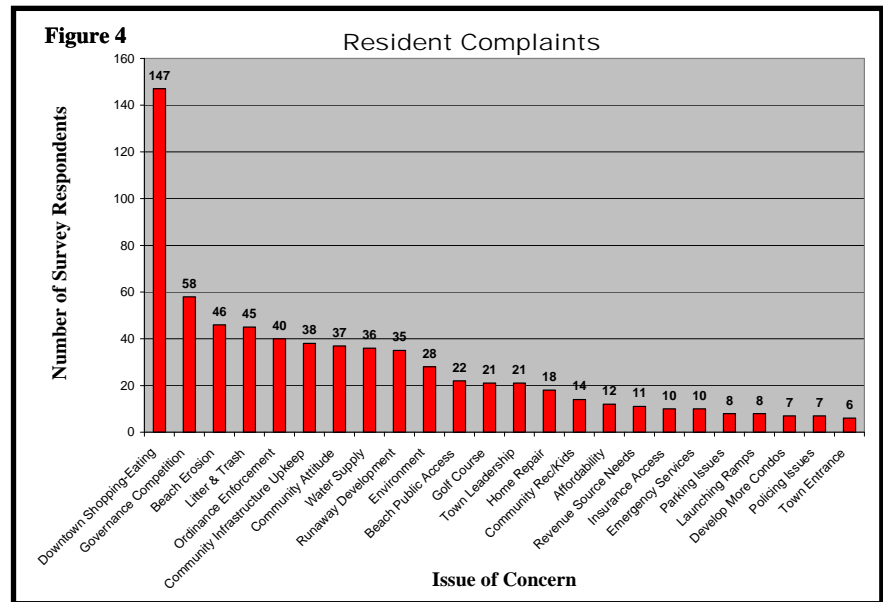
With regards to where on the Island people lived (or owned property) who responded to the stakeholder survey, residents on the east end of Dauphin Island dominated the returns (Figure 2). The greatest number of responses came from people living a half mile on either side of the Fort Conde Street intersection with Bienville Blvd. Less than 20% of all surveys were received from property owners at the far west end of Dauphin Island.



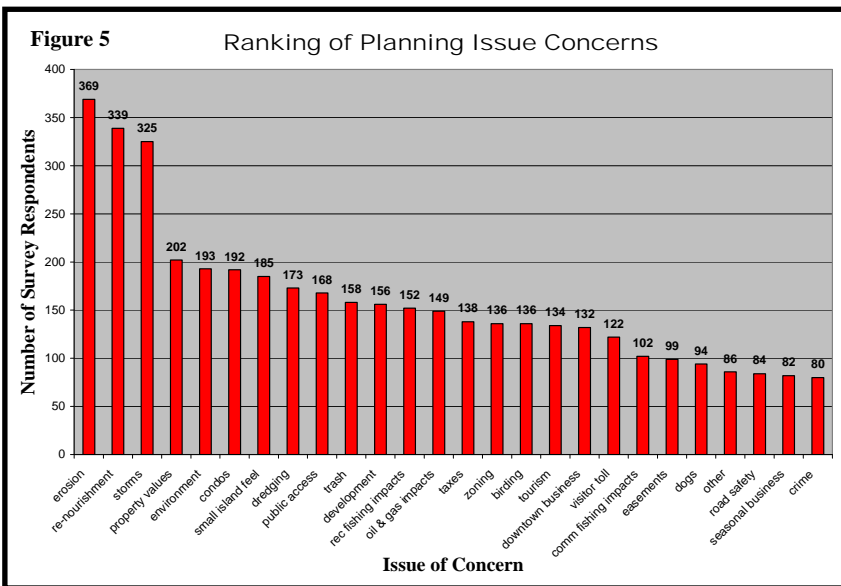
In examining the survey responses in more detail for distribution of part-time and full-time residents, the distributions illustrated in Figure 3 were informative. Full-time residents responding to the survey were predominately located on the east end of the Island. And the east end also was the location for this dominance of respondents (property owners) who classified themselves as part-time residents. Very few respondents were full-time residents on the west end and by far the majority of west end responses were from part-time property owners.

As stated earlier, from the questions posed in the survey we were able to obtain different insights into the views of stakeholders. By asking them to list three complaints they had about living on Dauphin Island, we were able to assess their short-term concerns for an effectively functioning and viable community. These “thorn-in-the-side” kinds of responses are illustrated in the chart in Figure 4.

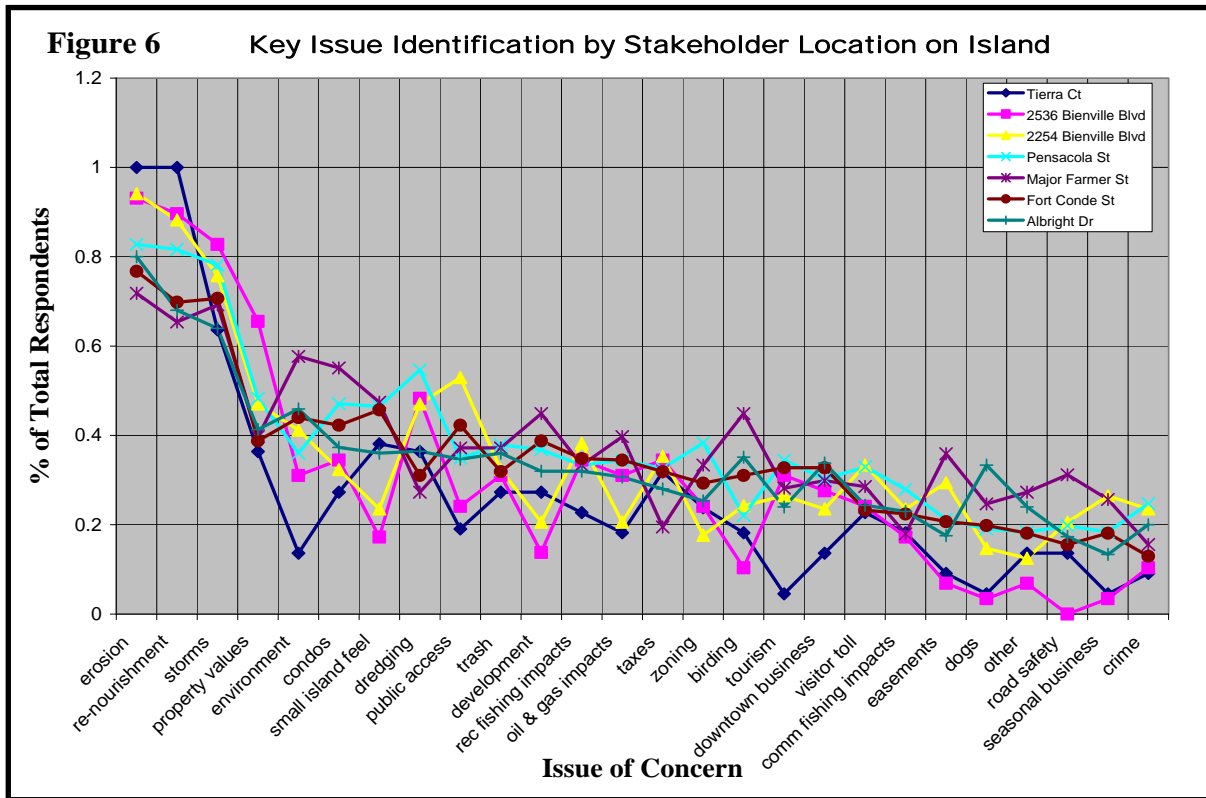
The predominant concern of respondents was related to the lack of adequate facilities for shopping and eating in Dauphin Island. Community governance in the form of competing entities was the next greatest concern, followed by beach erosion and litter/trash issues. Many of the concerns illustrated in Figure 4 were able to be related to the present circumstances regarding status of the full implementation of all 27 action items from the 2000 Dauphin Island Comprehensive Plan. For example, several issues such as governance, effective ordinance enforcement, litter and trash, etc., related to progress, or lack thereof, in the comprehensive planning action items, as further illustrated in the **APPENDIX** at the end of this Report.



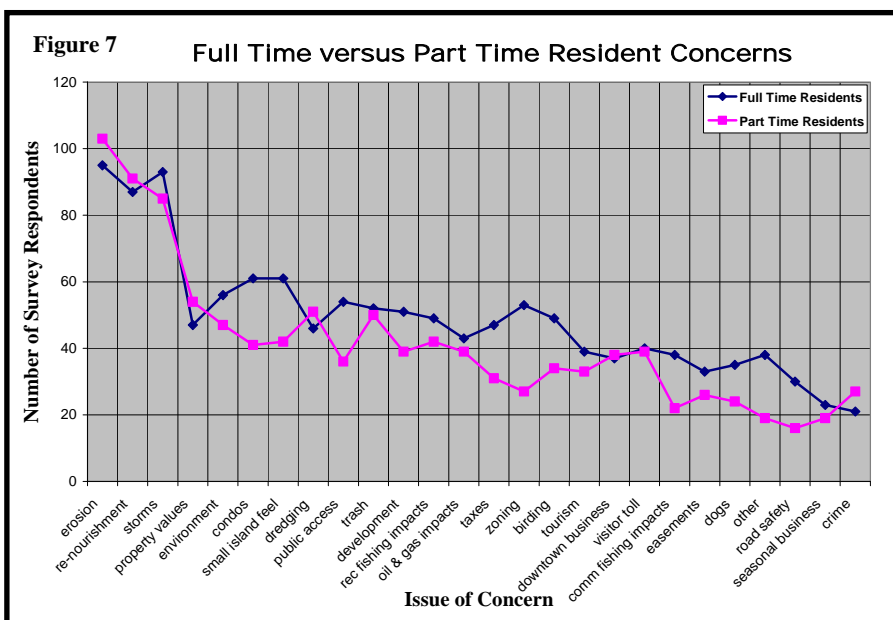
Dauphin Island stakeholders were also asked to respond to their most important issues of concern regarding future planning for the Island community. The results of these survey responses are shown in Figure 5. The top three concerns involved overall condition of the Island beaches. Beach erosion, maintenance through re-nourishment programs, and future storms were of major concerns to most stakeholders. Issues of environment, including unsound land development were also high among respondent concerns.



A stakeholder’s residence or property ownership location on the Island might influence the way they responded to certain questions posed on the survey. So we decided to examine the key issues of concern from stakeholder survey responses according to the part of the Island that people lived on. These results are illustrated in Figure 6.



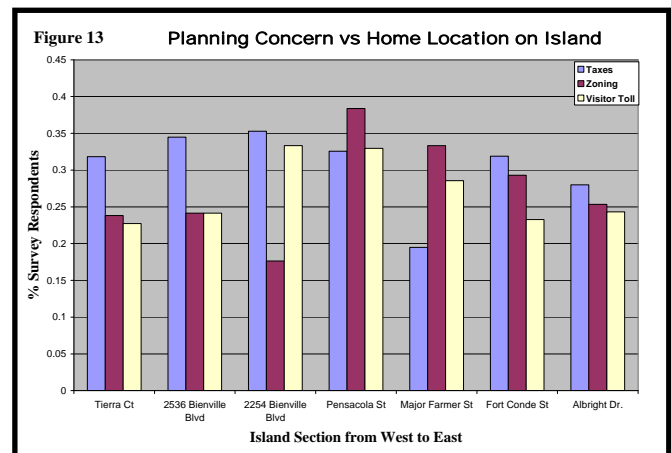
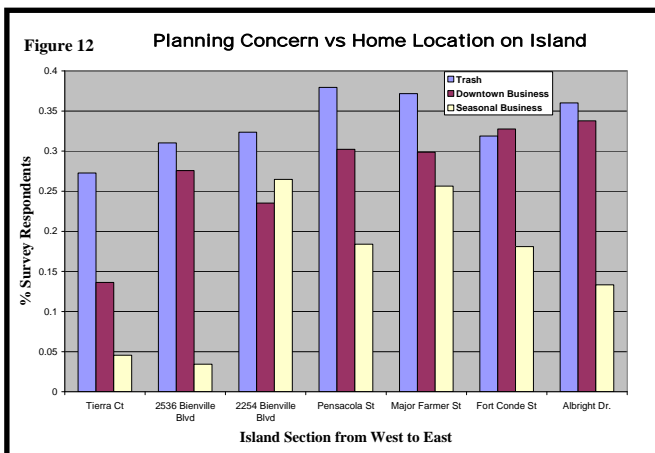
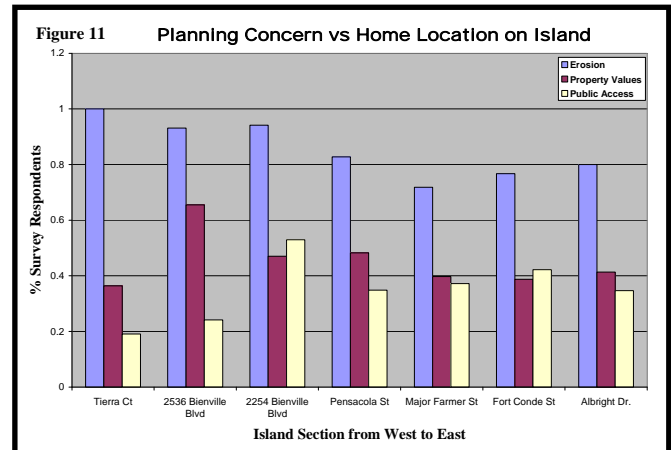
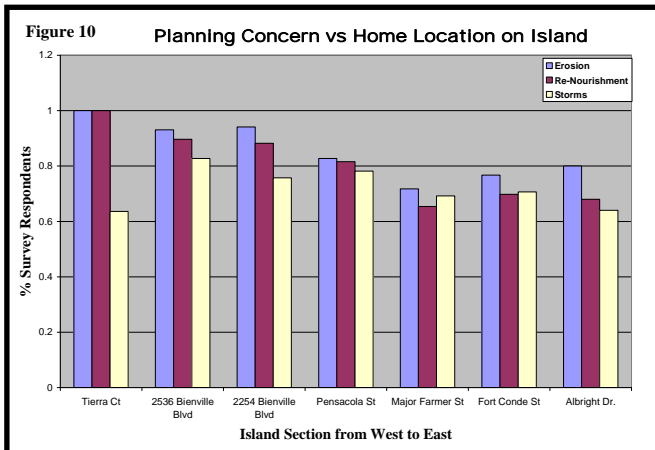
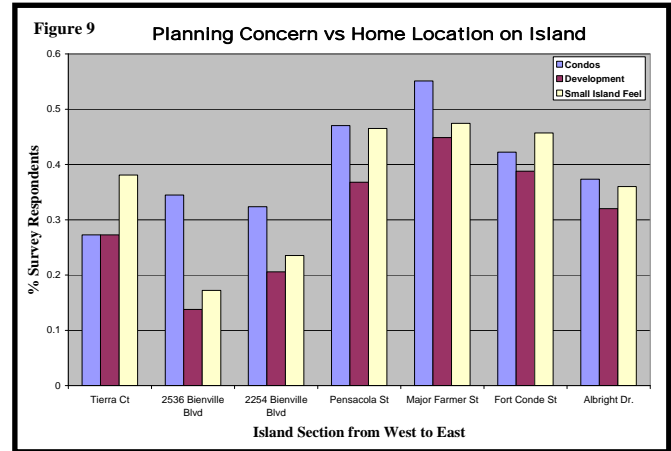
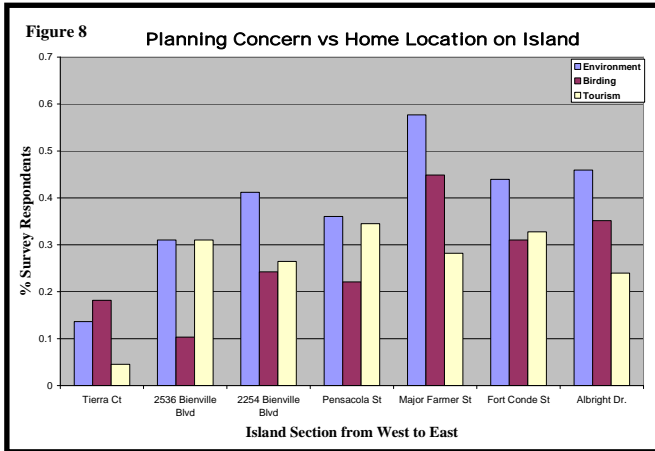
One of the greatest differences between the location where survey respondents owned property on the Island and their opinion regarding concern for any one issue was shown for beach stability fears of erosion, re-nourishment, and storms – in this case the west end residents showed more concern. Another difference in issue concern related to where people on the Island owned property involved the environment – people at the east end showed much more concern for the environment, and for birding than elsewhere. Likewise, public beach access was of much more concern to east end residents than to west end residents. Issues of zoning and ordinance enforcement were also much more important to people living on the east end of the Island than on the west end.

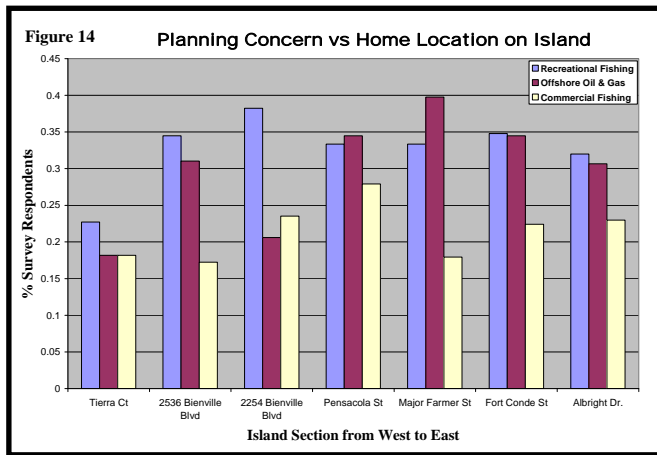


Another factor that might show differences in key issues of concern, besides where people lived, is the opinions of part-time versus full-time residents. Figure 7 shows how the different issues of concern regarding the future of Dauphin Island vary between these two segments of the Town’s property owners. Full-time residents were much more concerned about planning issues that affect the Island’s environment and small island feel as well as the further development of condominiums and changes in zoning

regulations that would encourage further growth and condominium building. In general, part-time residents seemed less concerned about most issues than full-time residents. This might suggest the situation of less engagement of part-timers in the regular on-going dynamics of the Island community overall.

Although Figure 6 provided a comprehensive picture of stakeholder concern about planning issues that can affect the future of the Dauphin Island community with regards to residence and/or property ownership location on the Island, Figures 8-14 show stakeholder perspectives according to Island residence location for some specific planning issues.





A few highlights from these chart comparisons of difference in community opinion for issues of concern related to property owner location on the Island included the pattern for environmental and birding issues (Figure 8). In both cases more concern for these characteristics of Dauphin Island were shown by people who live on the eastern part of the Island, where the business district and the wooded residential areas are located. In contrast, concerns for further condominium development and retaining a small island feel (Figure 9) were shown most by people who live mid-way between the east and west

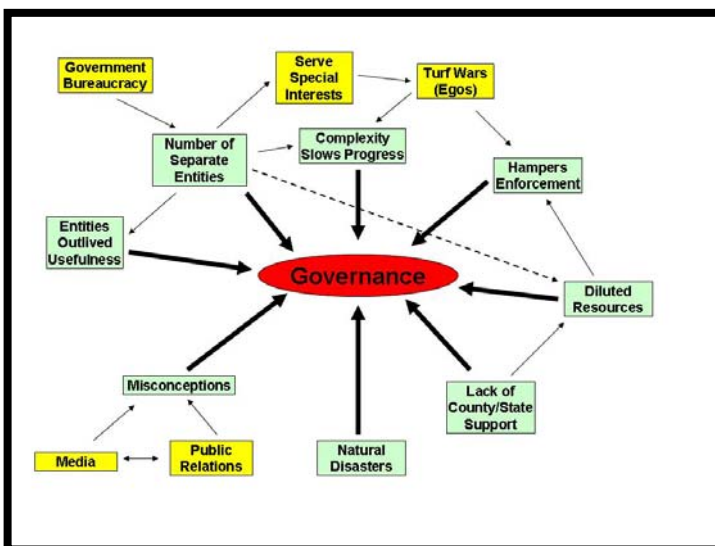
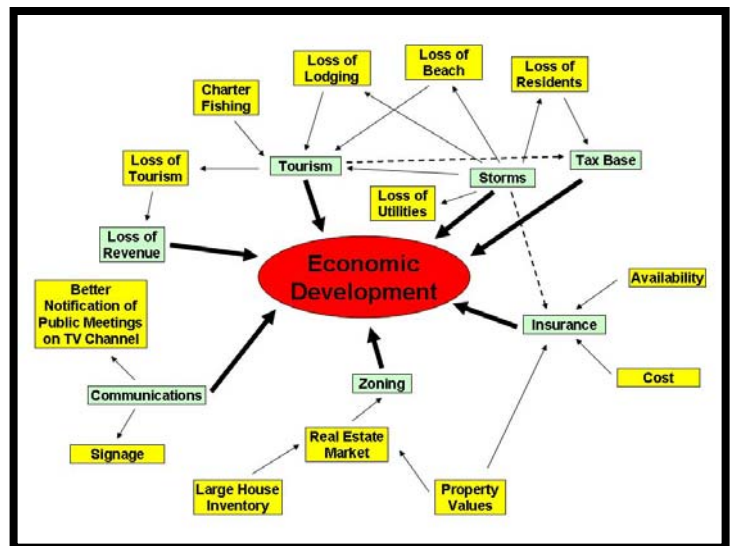
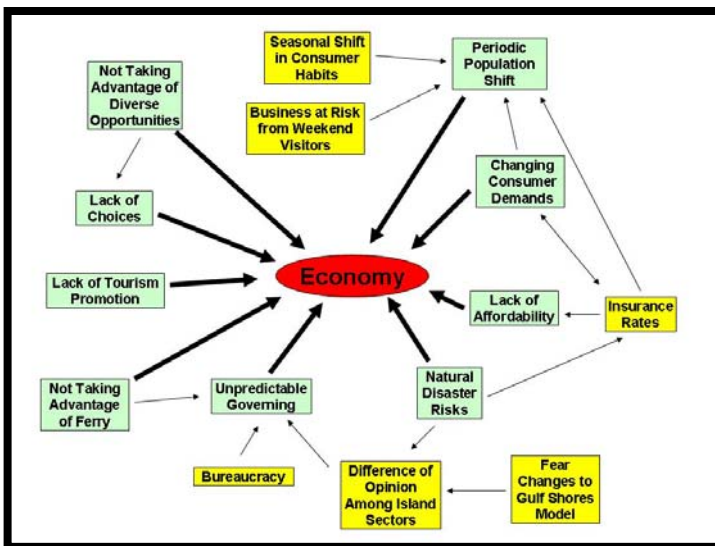
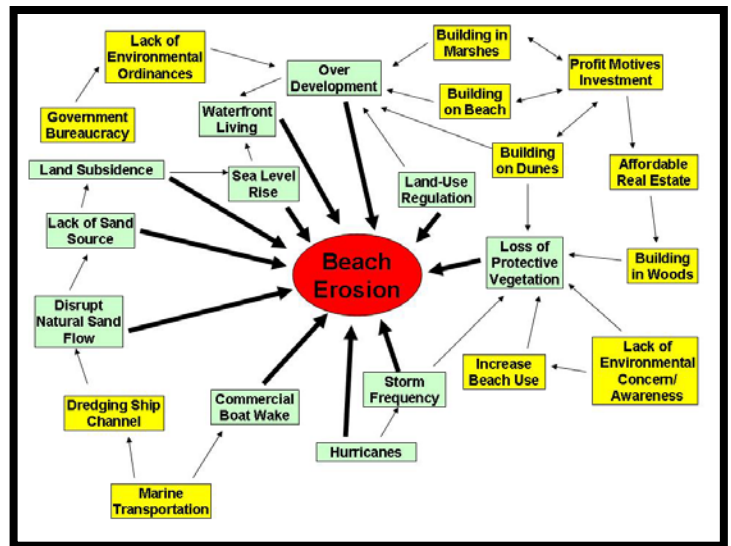
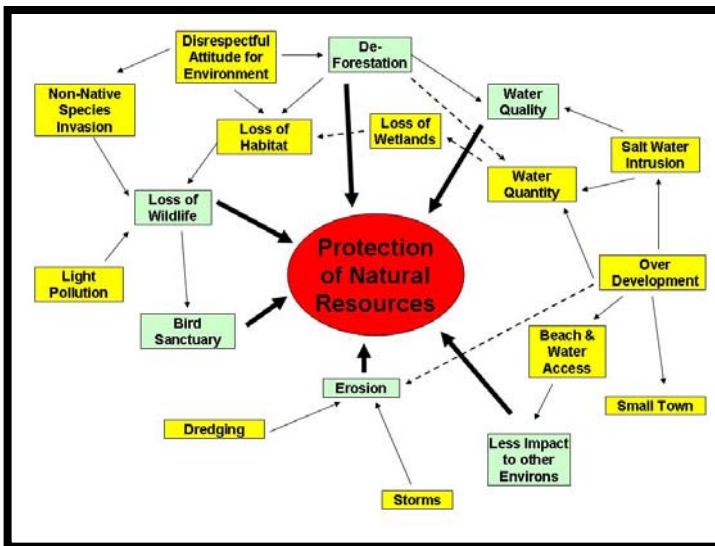
ends. Concerns for trash and downtown business development (Figure 12) were similar across the Island landscape, but there definitely seemed to be more concern for challenges created by seasonal businesses on the Island from those who live on the east end (Figure 12). Generally 25-30% of respondents stated that taxes and a visitor toll were issues to be seriously considered in future planning activities for the Island (Figure 13). Zoning concerns on the other hand, appeared to be more important to people living in the wooded neighborhoods on the eastern part of Dauphin Island. There appeared to be no real differences between the issues of commercial and recreational fishing anywhere on the Island from the survey responses (Figure 14).

DEVELOPMENT OF A SHARED COMMUNITY VISION

The stakeholder survey, workshop, small meeting, and personal interview data examined in the charts provided above serve as the primary information to define the different problems the Dauphin Island community faces with regards to its future. Many of these potential planning issues, and the problems they represent, are of major concern to the Island community. The above data identifies the topics the community must address in its creation of a shared community vision that will serve to direct future activities toward a common end point in the search for solutions to their key problems.

As the many charts above illustrate, most people associated with the Island are generally concerned about similar issues and want to live in the same kind of world. That in no way diminishes the degree to which people can disagree about how to get to a better future for their community. The process of visioning brings stakeholders together and engages them in thinking about and describing a common view of how past events led them to where they are now – what “now” looks like – and how an ideal future might differ from the one that looks probable if the status quo prevails. As an outcome of the visioning process, participants can develop a shared vision and a deep understanding of the problems that are defined as the gap between what is and what should be.

During the week of March 26, 2007 Visioning Workshops were conducted for the Dauphin Island community. A total of 49 stakeholders participated in these visioning activities. After reflecting on what Dauphin Island might have looked like 20 years prior to today for the subject area being considered by each visioning breakout group, participants at each table during the workshops were asked to describe present conditions for the subject being considered. The groups did this by mapping on the wall all the forces and trends that contribute to today's reality for each subject area being considered. In developing these Pattern Maps for each subject (identified by the red center circle in each of the following charts), participants became aware of the interconnections and complexities for the different trends and forces affecting the subject area (*i.e.* beach erosion). This exercise allowed



breakout groups to identify relationships and acknowledge which factors were most influential on the subject being mapped. From this work each group was then able to better perceive a probable future condition for their subject area if nothing were to change and they did not achieve their vision for the subject of concern.

These Pattern Maps are informative, not only for their value in visioning, but also for their assistance to stakeholders in being able to more fully understand the many different important factors that influence and direct the outcome of management strategies that might be applied to an issue such as natural resource protection.

Therefore, the Pattern Maps completed during the Visioning Workshops are illustrated here for the continued use by all strategic planning participants in the months to come.

The Proposed Community Vision that was produced by the workshop participants stated a clear image of a desired future situation as follows.

Shared Community Vision for Dauphin Island

On behalf of the people of Dauphin Island, the Town will lead this small island community through the 21st century by preserving the island's history, culture, and environmental assets, while planning for a future that capitalizes on its natural resources to promote economic well-being.

This shared community vision is supported by the following elements that further define this desired future for Dauphin Island. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of votes by workshop participants that certain supporting elements of the vision received, indicating their priority over other elements.

Community

- ***citizens that are active environmental stewards (3)***
- ***community-wide communication services (7)***
- ***affordable housing for its workforce (2)***
- ***access to necessary health and other vital services***

Environment

- ***conservation and restoration of the island's beaches, shore, and other important habitats (18)***
- ***adaptive management of beaches and erosion mitigation by encouraging natural processes while tracking most up to date advancement of maintenance technologies (18)***
- ***construction and land use activities that represent low impact development (4)***
- ***management of healthy natural ecosystems, locally and regionally, to protect the services they provide (29)***

Culture

- ***diversity of people made up of permanent residents, part-year and seasonal residents, as well as week-long visitors, weekenders, and day-trippers (2)***
- ***local history museums that document/communicate historical cultures of the island***
- ***promotion of local and regional art and artists***

Governance

- ***unified and effective (43)***
- ***transparent government operations***

- ***recognition of all special interests in governmental affairs and responsive to citizen concerns***
- ***encouragement of active public involvement in the Town's governance***
- ***maintenance of diverse revenue generating activities to support Town services (8)***
- ***responsible planning for a sustainable future (13)***
- ***fair and equitable conflict resolution***

Economics

- ***a small, central downtown village that integrates a mix of waterfront activities and retail opportunities (23)***
- ***a working waterfront***
- ***incentives to support small business***
- ***a small-town feel with balance of retail and basic services that support tourism and address permanent resident needs (12)***
- ***efficient, effective and appropriate public transport (3)***

Tourism

- ***appropriate recreational uses of beaches***
 - ***public access to resources***
 - ***nature-based, economically vibrant, and responsible tourism activities (17)***
 - ***diversified tourist services including restaurants, entertainment, lodging, and other retail sales***
 - ***visitors that are active environmental stewards***
-

From this community-driven visioning process it became quite clear that there were some elements of the shared vision statement created by workshop participants that were more compelling than other elements. The desire of a unified and effective government for the Town, instead of the existence of four separate entities that best characterizes the present situation, was a very strong component of the overall vision for a preferred future. A small, central downtown business area was also an element that received a lot of attention. Several components of the environment were extremely important to workshop participants with regards to their indicated weight in the vision elements. Plus, the importance of healthy environmental resources to support a local, nature-based economy was also recognized in this vision.

In addition to stating their vision for an Island preferred future, workshop participants also identified some goals to achieve under their major elements of the vision statement. These goals included the following.

Central Downtown Village Environment

- Good plan that is aesthetically attractive and walkable
- Give a positive presentation of mixed use opportunities to the community
- Incentives for small business development (maybe reduced taxes)
- Effective business promotion
- Encouragement from Town leaders
- Provide incentives to encourage development of a cottage industry on Island
- Affordable
- Village as destination
- Has resident appeal – not just seasonal for tourists
- Develop mass transit plan and implement (*i.e.* trolleys)

Effective Governance

- One entity
- Able to identify creative sources of revenue
- Shows follow-through on implementation
- Flexible and adaptive

New Sources of Revenue

- Island user fee (to also cover boat launch and parking fees)
- City-owned garbage collection
- Promoting nature-based tourism
- Identify imaginative assets to generate revenue (*e.g.* windmill generation of electricity)

Sustainable Beaches & Dunes

- Well planned and managed beach
- Maintained vegetation on beach and dunes
- Funding for engineered beach
- Positive leadership to obtain money for beach restoration
- Make beneficial use of dredged materials
- Promote beach/dune element of DI Comprehensive Plan
- Employ coastal engineering expertise
- Identify sustainable offshore sand sources to maintain enhanced beach
- Develop public education on beach stability and restoration
- Provide public access and facilities to beaches
- Use of artificial reefs to influence beach stability
- Encourage cooperation between different jurisdictional regulators and community

Eco-Tourism

- Develop more trails (hiking, biking, non-motorized boating)
- Education and awareness (Elderhostel, Estuarium)
- Identify and seek out nature-based businesses
- Develop incentives to attract and promote nature-based businesses

Healthy Ecosystems

- Proper drainage to protect ecosystems and humans
- Real tree ordinance
- Enforceable wetlands ordinance
- Preserve and protect natural areas and open space
- Encourage native plantings on developed properties
- Develop public education on how to maintain healthy ecosystems and their importance

Sustainable Small Town Community

- Create affordable housing, especially for workforce
- Make zoning changes that support mix-used, maybe more dense community development (*i.e.* smart growth)
- Develop strategies to enhance small town feel
- Work to improve social services that already exist

The statement of the community's shared vision for the future of Dauphin Island provides the guidance and framework necessary for the community to begin to identify those assets the Dauphin Island landscape provides and the challenges that must be overcome to begin taking actions that will achieve this vision. These assets and challenges will be identified through the next strategic planning process the community engages in – a SWOT analysis to articulate community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (June 7, 2007).

MAPPING FAVORITE PLACES

Another form of data the Consultant Team believes is important to collect from Dauphin Island stakeholders is the identity of “favorite places” on the Island. The making of maps (cartography) is concerned mainly with the spatial distribution of things for a purpose, but stops short of dealing with meanings. For example, you might go to the Internet site MapQuest to make a map that will guide you while driving from Mobile to Dauphin Island. Space as represented on a map is abstract, geometrical and undifferentiated. Space is more concrete than place. Place, on the other hand, is about experience. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better, are able to describe it with personal feelings, and endow it with value of our own determination. The concept of place imbues both locational detail and experiential meanings. Seeking and visualizing Island map patterns to form spatial narratives provides a framework for synthesizing fuzzy layers of landscape information from across the community with environmental data and mapping. Having a tool to array a mix of cultural and biophysical data will expose new levels of discussion and landscape understanding, and ultimately sustainability.

The mapping of special places in a general locality such as Dauphin Island provides additional insight about the differentiated important locations the community recognizes. These are places that usually go beyond the value provided by identifying tangible assets on a map such as parks, roads, business locations, etc. These are also locations that if not identified in a different way than by traditional

planning approaches, could “fall through the cracks” when it comes to decision-making about specific planning processes.

An interactive web site has been designed by the Consultant Team in order to allow all Dauphin Island stakeholders to identify their favorite places on a map of the Island. The monitoring of this on-line mapping exercise participated in by Dauphin Island stakeholders has allowed us to begin developing an “Inventory of Important Places” which is an opportunity for individual Island stakeholders to express their own values and experiences about specific locations. Most entries have been submitted using the Internet site set up for this purpose, with some additional entries recorded in person or on a paper version of the online survey. This exercise allows for identification of individual values about the Island landscape and also provides for collective or consensus value of particular locations (illustrated by multiple entries for a single place).

As of April 11, 2007 eighty eight (88) individuals have made 222 entries on the Favorite Places web page. As an example of output from this on-going data collection process, the following locations have been identified as favorite places with the number of selections for each place in parentheses.

Airport (10)	Jeffries Park (1)
Airport Marshes (8)	Lighthouse Bakery (4)
Aloe Bay (5)	Little Dauphin Island (1)
Audubon Sanctuary (35)	Little Red School House (2)
Audubon Sanctuary lake (2)	Maritime Forest & Lake (1)
Billy Goat Hole boat ramps (1)	Marshes east of Albright Dr. (10)
Blue Heron Park (1)	Martis of Dauphin Island (1)
Boat Launch Area (2)	POA land (1)
Business district (9)	Park and Play ground (1)
Dauphin Island Marina (3)	Pelican Point (2)
Cadillac Square (6)	Pelican Pub (2)
Campground (2)	Pirate's Cove-DIPOA Park (1)
Dauphin Island Public Beach & Fishing Pier (7)	Public Boat Launch (1)
Dauphin Island Sea Lab (5)	Sawgrass Point Marsh (1)
Dauphin Surf Club (1)	Shell Mound (26)
DeSoto Landing Beach (1)	Ship & Shore (3)
Dunes (2)	Steiner Block (1)
East End (2)	St. Edmund Church (1)
Estuarium (5)	The Sand Box (1)
Fort Gaines (19)	Town Hall (1)
Fort Gaines, beach, jetties (2)	Treasure Trove (2)
East End (1)	Tupelo Gum Swamp (1)
Gorgas Swamp (1)	Water Plant (1)
Goat trees (7)	Water Tower (5)
Isle Dauphine Golf Course (18)	West End (4)
Isle Dauphine Golf Course beach (3)	West End beach (2)
Isle Dauphine Golf course restaurant (1)	West Surf Beach (1)
Isle Dauphine Pool (1)	West end beyond road (5)
Isle Dauphine building (1)	

Each visitor to the favorite places mapping site is encourage to give a description of the location they identify and to state the importance of the location for them. Below are a few examples of these descriptions and importance characteristics.

Description:

- This is a dense, beautiful thicket of coastal woods--a refuge and haven to both migratory and resident creatures.
- Water Tower and associated woodlots are the first sight of our small village.
- The Dauphin Island Audubon Bird Sanctuary is one of the premier places on Dauphin Island and the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico to view birds.
- The bird sanctuary is a pleasant place to walk, feed the fish and turtles, and meet people from all over the country.
- The airport puts us on the map.
- Bayou Aloe is a deep water anchorage that permits sail boats and other craft to anchor out, row ashore, and visit places within close proximity.
- Shell Mounds Park enjoys a world-renowned reputation as one of the 10 best places in the US to observe bird migration.

Importance:

- This area is (I believe) the largest remaining piece of coastal forest on DI.
- All the area east of the pier makes this a beach to those who don't have beach front property.
- The Goat Trees are the second jewel in the crown of best birding places on the island.
- This is an enjoyable place to try to make a golf shot behave.
- West end of Dauphin Island provides critical habitat for many shorebirds, including willets, plovers, herons, egrets, sanderlings, ruddy turnstones, bitterns, and many others.
- This should not be allowed to be developed, but kept as an example of a natural barrier island habitat.
- This area also provides a buffer zone against damaging storm winds and tidal surges.
- Preserving the bird sanctuary will preserve a look into the island's past.

Acknowledgement

This Interim Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Report has been prepared with the combined contributions of Warren Flint, Gene Martin, and Mary Mullins.



Interim Report Appendix

Town of Dauphin Island 2000 Comprehensive Plan Review of Status (April, 2007)

	<i>Comp Plan Action Item</i>	<i>Land Use Regulation Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	<i>Current Regulation if different from Recommendation</i>	<i>Stakeholder Survey Comments</i>
1	Wetlands Preservation	Clear definition of wetlands	Wetland Ordinance Adopted	Updated regulation post Comp Plan; Wetlands need a better definition of "disturbed" or "impact to wetlands." Need better public awareness of wetland ordinance. Realtors need to have copies of ordinance for potential buyers	Environmental concerns, including wetlands, received 221 responses from the survey while water supply issues received 36 responses. People have observed drainage of lots with wetlands.
		Mapping of Wetlands	No		
		Mitigation 3x area	Mitigation implemented	Mitigation of wetlands at 2:1 ration and required on the Island, not a land bank someplace else	
2	Building Codes	Adoption of current edition of Standard Building Code	Yes	Adopted 2003 International Building Code	18 building repair & construction concerns from Survey. "Should not have encouraged rebuilding on the west end."
		Requirements in addition to the current building code to support hurricane resistance	Yes	Raised elevation of living space from 1 to 2 feet above base flood elevation maps. Requirements for deeper piling depths. Adopted house number ordinance. Attempted to create new zoning class with lower height and more residential options.	

	<i>Comp Plan Action Item</i>	<i>Land Use Regulation Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	<i>Current Regulation if different from Recommendation</i>	<i>Stakeholder Survey Comments</i>
3	Non-Conforming Land Uses	Review of existing provisions in land use regulations	Some identified but not evaluated Island-wide		Concern for development practices on the Island were registered 191 time in survey responses.
		Correction of non-conforming uses	No		
		Mapping of non-conforming uses	No		
4	Sign Ordinance	Changes to sign ordinance	Yes	Sign Ordinance re-written; some feel too many sign regulations	Concerns for ordinance enforcement in general were reported 134 times in survey responses. "Any ordinance allowing a fiberglass shark to hang on road is not working."
		- enforcement of ordinance	Partial action	Town weak on enforcement; needs improvement	
		- administration	Not really	Planning Commission has review responsibility but not enforcement ability.	
5	Parking Regulations	Resident/visitor Parking Stickers	West end parking limited to R-O-W in 4 locations, requiring identification stickers. Parking requirements for new structures enhanced. Limited boat launch parking.	Parking is problem for older structures build before Town incorporation. Not enough support for this to-date	Parking concerns related to road safety were recorded for 92 survey responses.
		New parking area with self service permits	NO	Some Council members have been promoting this.	
		Signage	Some, but not adequate.		
		Parking fees/fines	Yes	Fines - police do issue citations but only to flagrant violators	
6	User Fees	Public Boat Ramp User Fees	Not allowed on State-provided services	Federally funded operations so no fees allowed.	A total of 122 survey respondents indicated need for visitor toll.

	<i>Comp Plan Action Item</i>	<i>Land Use Regulation Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	<i>Current Regulation if different from Recommendation</i>	<i>Stakeholder Survey Comments</i>
		Self Service Launch permits	No	Town does not own any boat launches	Launching ramp concerns were reported 8 times in the stakeholder survey.
7	Solid Waste Collection	Mandatory Solid Waste disposal	Ordinance was written and bids solicited but public against implementation.	Many residents are part-time and take their waste home with them. Town Council tabled the motion.	Survey responses included 203 recorded concerns for litter and trash along with effective garbage pick-up.
		Proof of Service/Monthly fee	No		
		Waste Disposal Fines	No		
8	Set Back Requirements	Chart creation	No	Changes recommended but not agreed to by POA	
		Unified Set back requirements with POA	Partial action	Town and POA have worked together to unify some areas	Survey responses included 136 people concerned about zoning enforcement on the Island.
		Prohibition of zero setbacks in any zoning district	Partial action	Some zoning allows zero setbacks if approved by Planning Comm. PC has not allowed any building from lot line to lot line in RC or IM zoning.	
9	Lowering Height Limits in Resort Commercial Districts	Lowering height limits in commercial zoning district from 75 ft.	No	Lowering height in RC deemed as "taking" so not done. Increasing parking requirements has limited possibility of building to max height allowed. Two projects permitted for 75' but height allowance standardized to 45' in all zoning areas	Stakeholder survey responses indicated that 227 people had concerns for condominium development.

	<i>Comp Plan Action Item</i>	<i>Land Use Regulation Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	<i>Current Regulation if different from Recommendation</i>	<i>Stakeholder Survey Comments</i>
10	Repetitive Loss Properties	Acquisition/relocation strategies for repetitive loss properties	Partial action	Have worked with FEMA and AEMA in this regard on a couple of properties for hazard mitigation and/or elevation. Town has acquired 2 green space areas, one for a playground, but no building construction allowed.	
		Creation of map	Partial action	Some kind of data base developed to capture repetitive loss info that is regularly updated, but no map yet.	
11	Noise Regulations	Public Nuisance Ordinances	Yes	Adopted noise, dog leash, and noisy barking dog ordinances; Amended dog leash ord.; Amended glass on beach ordinance.	Concerns for ordinance enforcement in general were reported 134 times in survey responses.
12	Personal Watercraft Regulations	Public Safety Ordinances for personal watercraft	No	Coordinate with marine police on watercraft regulations: Town does not have enforcement capabilities.	
13	Environmentally Sensitive Areas	Zoning changes to conservation park	No formal ordinance yet.	Town working with FEMA and AEMA on hazard mitigation buyout to gain property for open space and conservation. Adopted wetland ordinance (above); zoning changes limited by AL "spot zoning law."	Concerns for the Island's environment were recorded in 211 survey responses.
		Encourage acquisition of property by the Town or other preservation organizations	Other - DIBS	However, DIBS has purchased many parcels of property	

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14	Tree Ordinance/Green Belt Areas	Changes to Tree Ordinance	Yes	Stronger ordinance in place (tree removal limited to footprint of project plus 5 feet and driveway access) but needs revision and stricter enforcement	Concerns for the Island's environment were recorded in 211 survey responses.
		Designation of Green Belt Areas	No	Any designated areas being used as fire alleys or for citizen storage of equipment.	
15	Construction Site Requirements	Dumpster requirements	Yes	Amended building permit ordinance to require dumpsters on site - Enforced	
		portolet requirements	Yes	Enforced	
16	Utility Services Capacity	Annual written report requirements for utility companies re: comprehensive planning for their utility	Lack of utility cooperation	Telephone Co responded after storms. Have asked others numerous times - only get reassuring responses	
		Statement of service capacity for all new residential and commercial developments	Does not appear to be full disclosure	Water Utility needs to provide clear picture of water and wastewater capacity of Island resources	36 survey respondents showed concern for water supply capacity issues.
17	Porous Driveways	Requirement of porous driveways	Encouraged but not required	All areas should be subject to this to improve aquifer recharge	36 survey respondents showed concern for water supply capacity issues.
18	Red Clay	Control of use of red clay	Partial action	Created maps of restricted areas; prohibited in designated areas but could be better managed; enforcement by building inspector	

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19	Citation Powers for Building Official and Zoning Officer	Creation of citation powers for building inspector/zoning officer for violation of regs including zoning violations, building codes, dilapidated structures, abandoned vehicles and other aesthetic issues.	Yes - adopted municipal offence ordinance to address this	Zoning Officer & Building Inspector	Concerns for ordinance enforcement in general were reported 134 times from survey responses.
20	Comprehensive Plan Updates	Public official training	To some degree	Some members have training; Strategic Planning process might assist this	
		Comprehensive Plan update	Some on-going considerations, but nothing in-depth	The Strategic Planning effort will inform this process	
21	Beach Management Planning Initiatives	Beach Management planning initiatives	Questionable	Study complete - Report from Scott Douglas	Survey returns showed 754 respondents concerned about beach stability issues (including erosion, re-nourishment, and storms).
22	Conservation Park Zoning District	Changes to conservation park zoning district to protect environmentally sensitive areas	No progress	Town working with FEMA and AEMA on hazard mitigation buyout to gain property for open space and conservation. Adopted wetland ordinance (above); zoning changes limited by AL "spot zoning law."	
		Plan for conversion of conservation park area	No		
23	Parking Regulations	New comprehensive parking regulations	Partial action	Parking requirements for new construction in place. Planning commission enforces during site plan review. Did pass tighter ordinance on business, but no relief in sight for public	Parking concerns related to road safety were recorded for 92 survey responses.

	<i>Comp Plan Action Item</i>	<i>Land Use Regulation Recommendations</i>	<i>Implementation Status</i>	<i>Current Regulation if different from Recommendation</i>	<i>Stakeholder Survey Comments</i>
24	Communication Towers	Regulation of Communication Towers	Yes	Ordinance in place per FCC requirements and enforced	
25	Consolidation and Coordination	Consolidation/coordination of all associations, organizations, and agencies	No	Attempts between POA & Town on zoning issues; but no overall cooperation among Town, POA, DI Water & Sewer, and DI Park & Beach Bd	Governance cooperation and leadership were cited as concerns by 58 survey respondents.
26	Unified Land Use Regulations	Deeds and restrictions of POA and zoning regulations of Town be consistent with adoption of the more stringent	In Discussion	To-date not enough support from POA in making rules consistent	
27	Land Use Regulations Updates	Conduct a review for consistency, accuracy, effectiveness and re-write	No	Need new/changed zoning in areas; zoning ordinance in need of comprehensive review; clarity is needed	