

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

## *Executive Summary*

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 Planning and Development Department - City of North Myrtle Beach, SC | May, 2010  
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*“Livable communities have strong, vibrant economies that encourage local enterprise, meet resident’s needs, and promote stable employment while also furthering social equity and environmental sustainability.”*

*- Local Government Commission*

**T**his Chapter III (Sustainable Community) of the plan addresses the Economic, Housing, and Population Elements. In Chapter II (The Natural Environment) the term sustainability was used in the traditional sense regarding protection and conservation of natural resources. Sustainability has been defined as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. In Chapter I, (The Built Environment) the term “sustainable development” extended the concept. Strategies were included to meet the City’s present Built Environment needs without compromising the ability of future generations to maintain their quality of life. Best practices for developing livable communities should be taken into account as transportation facilities, community facilities, and land development practices are considered.

In this Chapter (III) regarding the Housing, Population and Economic Elements of the Plan update, the concept of “Sustainable Community” and “Livable Community” will be incorporated as well.

In a sustainable community there should be a connection and balance between conservation and economic development policies, environmental protection and quality of life issues, as well as built environment and natural environment decisions.

### **Economic Element**

Until recently, community sustainability and livability issues were often left out of economic development and growth strategies in many community plans. In some cases the two were considered to be in conflict. However, recent sustainable developments that embody the interdependencies among

environmental, social, quality of life, and economic issues and policies have proven invaluable for business investment.

### **Housing Element**

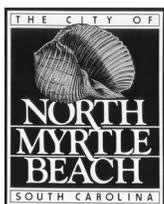
Concern regarding “affordable work force” housing specifically noted in the SC Priority Investment Act of 2007. The Priority Investment Act highlights the need for affordable housing as a key component in any community’s strategy for developing a strong economy, healthy environment, and sustainable transportation system.

### **Population Element**

According to the most current Census Bureau estimate (2008), the City’s population increased from 10,974 permanent residents in 2000 to 15,816.



338 45th Avenue North, NMB



■ I S S U E S - G O A L S - S T R A T E G I E S

Issue	Goal	Strategy	Comment
North Myrtle Beach remaining economically competitive	Enhance North Myrtle Beach's image, maintain its current tourism base and allow for moderate growth therein, create a community branding program for marketing and tourism promotion	Hire a professional public relations firm to work with city officials, residents, and businesses to create a memorable city "brand."	*Ongoing...the City is partnering with the NMB Chamber of Commerce and local business owners, i.e. the <i>Main Street Transformed</i> , sports tourism, and general tourism marketing
		Use the identity going forward so that all new facilities such as buildings, streets, street lighting, street ends, parks, streetscape, and actions such as zoning, policing, code enforcement, sanitation, and franchising are consistent with and conform to the city identity	*Ongoing...public buildings located on the municipal campus, "complete streets," new street lighting, new street end designs at 6th Avenue South and 21st Avenue South, uniform park and wayfinding signage, and new exterior property maintenance code help establish such consistency
	Encourage the business community to support the branding effort and develop new or upgrade older facilities to be consistent with the identity... new facilities and upgrades to existing businesses can be encouraged to contribute to this effort while ensuring that the City remains an attractive place to live	Partner with stakeholders to achieve the desired result	*Ongoing...the draft U.S. 17 Overlay and Main Street Transformed are two examples
		Offer incentives for participation in the redevelopment of older facilities to be consistent with the new identity	*Ongoing...consider available incentives as part of a larger revitalization initiative anticipated to occur within the Priority Investment Element and "Activity Centers and Corridors" future planning
	Enhance city approach to resort tourism planning...public services provided for resort tourism can be better coordinated...	Create a coordinated resort tourism management program	*Ongoing...the Parks and Recreation Department has taken on this task and is aggressively pursuing opportunities.
	Encourage facilities such as a performing arts center to support year-round economic activity...seasonal unemployment rates and decreased sales and revenues can be offset by new attractions	*Identify the best mix of destination attractions that compliment existing tourist and resident demographics, and encourage new tourism	*Ongoing...the City hired Woolpert design firm in early 2007 to create a master plan concept for the 80-acre municipal complex...recently discussed public/private ventures involving sports tourism
		Secure financial backing for a new cultural center, which may include a performing arts center, art museum, natural history museum, library, adult education center, and technology center	*Ongoing... City budgeting priorities consistently identify capital improvement projects that support this goal.
Matching needs for labor with available supply	Ensure that the city's labor force is able to meet current and future employment needs	Partner with interested stakeholders to perform a survey/needs analysis of the business community to determine if there is a need to augment the current labor force in number or skill sets	
		Review housing and transportation plans with an eye towards ensuring that employees are able to live within a reasonable distance to workplaces and/or have adequate modes of transportation to employment centers	*Ongoing...the Built Environment and Sustainable Community Elements discuss

1. Economic Element

\* New Item

■ I S S U E S - G O A L S - S T R A T E G I E S

	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1. Economic Element Cont'd	*Concern that the City of North Myrtle Beach is losing its "sense of place," small family beach town character and urban design vernacular that visitors and locals remember	*Maintain, enhance, and pay tribute to, in new development, the various sights, scenes, character and feel that made Cherry Grove, Windy Hill, Ocean Drive and Crescent beaches (joined to form the City of North Myrtle Beach) "THE PLACE" to visit on the Grand Strand... ensure the City avoids becoming "Anywhere USA"	*Develop a program for City staff to work with residents, businesses and property owners to develop "Character Areas" to guide future planning and subsequent policies...in some cases this process can be a component of the Economic Development Element discussing Activity Centers and Corridor Plans.	*Ongoing...in some cases this may be a component of the Economic Development strategies in the "Activity Centers and Corridors" discussed in the Priority Investment Element... often communities take this district and neighborhood approach to maintain a sense of place
			*Develop new planning tools	*Ongoing...creating public/private partnerships for revitalization and/or preservation...overlay zones with incentives and/or regulations...use of priority investment zone planning tools...identification of certain districts and themes...incentives for complying with design guidelines...affordable workforce housing in mixed-use areas
	*Concern regarding economic competitiveness, retention of existing businesses, community design and appearance, "quality of life" for residents and "quality of visit experience" for tourists	*Sustain and enhance a successful business and tourism friendly community, while improving the quality of life and sense of place for residents and visitors.	*Create an ongoing "Activity Centers and Corridors" process and public/private sector partnership to plan for and design the public realm (streetscapes/beach access/greenways/waterway/park) in coordination with the "private realm" (land uses and development forms) on the adjacent private properties	*Ongoing... "Activity Centers and Corridor" plans should be an ongoing process...potential future areas include: U.S. 17, Main Street (including a future "bridge district" activity center/city campus area), Cresscent Beach traditional activity center centered on 17th Avenue South at Ocean Boulevard and U.S. 17, Cherry Grove traditional activity center at Sea Mountain Highway and Ocean Boulevard (including an overall Sea Mountain Highway corridor plan
	*Overreliance on non-renewable energy resources	*Position the City to take advantage of the "Green Economy"	*Incorporate an energy element into the proposed environmental stewardship chapter of the zoning ordinance	*Ongoing...at the request of City Council, a draft small wind energy generation ordinance is currently being reviewed
	Preservation and strengthening of existing residential neighborhoods	Foster collaboration with existing neighborhoods and key stakeholders as new development occurs	Review the current planning process to ensure that it promotes meaningful public participation	*Ongoing
	Lack of diversity of housing types	Increase diversity of housing types to respond to market demand and the evolving housing needs of different population groups (moderate income, workforce housing, etc.)	Eliminate barriers to such housing, and offer development incentives where market forces have failed to provide for it	*Ongoing
2. Housing Element	Not enough pedestrian mobility, street connectivity or emphasis on traditional forms of community development	Encourage traditional neighborhood design that fosters and promotes a diversity of modal choices	Create a traditional neighborhood design overlay ordinance	*Completed Zoning Ordinance was revised to include a TND Overlay
		Achieve connected, humanly-scaled, livable neighborhoods.	Review the subdivision ordinance and other codes to determine the best way to ensure that new subdivisions connect to existing streets networks	*Completed now required as per the Land Development Regulations
			Review the subdivision ordinance to determine the best way to ensure that sidewalks and bike facilities are installed at the time of land development	*Completed "complete streets" now required as per the Land Development Regulations

\* New Item

■ I S S U E S - G O A L S - S T R A T E G I E S

Issue	Goal	Strategy	Comment
<p>*Concern regarding “affordable workforce housing” (noted specifically in SC Priority Investment Act of 2007)... the Priority Investment Act highlights the need for affordable housing as a key component in any community’s strategy for developing a strong economy, healthy environment and sustainable transportation system</p>	<p>*Develop a “workforce” housing analysis and strategy for the City</p>	<p>*Consider inclusionary zoning techniques and/or incentives to encourage mixed-use development, as well as a variety of housing types and costs</p>	<p>*Ongoing</p>
		<p>*Inventory and evaluate housing regulations that add unnecessary costs to the development of workforce housing, but which are not essential to protect public health, safety or welfare. Included should be an evaluation of standards or requirements for minimum lot size, building size, setbacks, spacing between buildings, impervious surfaces, open space, landscaping, buffering, parking, storm water drainage, sizing of water sewer lines, and application and review procedures that require or result in extensive submittals and/or lengthy review periods.</p>	<p>*Ongoing... ascertain unnecessary housing regulatory requirements and include “an analysis of market-based incentives that may be made available to encourage development of affordable housing” as stated in the Priority Investment Act</p>
<p>*Adequate affordable “work force” housing</p>	<p>*Increase variety of housing types and costs to allow for people to live and work within the community, and to reduce commuting times and congestion</p>	<p>*Investigate methods to allow flexibility for more mixed-use development, especially regarding sites under two (2) acres in size, since 2 acres is the current requirement for requesting rezoning to Planned Development District (PDD), possibly using recommendations of the SC Priority Investment Act</p>	<p>*Ongoing</p>
		<p>*Investigate incentives for redevelopment and development of “infill” properties where infrastructure is in place</p>	<p>*Ongoing</p>
<p>*Need to better understand seasonal variations in population</p>	<p>*Conduct an updated seasonal population study</p>	<p>*Pursue partnerships with local organizations and identify funding sources</p>	<p>*The last study was completed in 2001</p>

2 Housing Element Cont'd

3. Population Element

\* New Item