

# **Building Sustainable Communities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Breakout Sessions**

## All Responses to Discussion Questions

### **BCD (Tri-Counties) -A**

**Local governments in the BCD region face growing problems in traffic congestion, affordability of housing and air and water pollution. These problems are not only related to each other, but also shared throughout the region. BCD COG's "Our Region, Our Plan" seeks to address these problems at a regional level**

**What strategies should be pursued at the regional level to address traffic congestion, affordability of housing, and air and water pollution? 3:18 – 3:35**

- (8 votes) Regional leadership education –workshops, regional working groups, regular (quarterly or monthly meetings). Alternative vs. conventional methods. Share success stories.
- (7 votes) Review of ordinances and regulations. Until it is cheaper to develop in a smarter way, it won't happen. Need regulatory/financial incentives to make smart, quality growth and redevelopment worthwhile. Provide more information to developers on brownfield development and green building.
- (7 votes) Link land use planning to transportation planning.
- (5 votes) State enabling legislation for regional planning issues. Make it required. LU planning currently disconnected from DOT. Voluntarily coordinate comprehensive plans with local jurisdictions within BCD.
- (3 votes) Mass transit, light rail, HOV lanes, express busses (Summerville to central business areas). Study where people end their trips. Bike paths on all streets. Parking issues could influence tourism.
- (2 votes) Water quality – Encourage elected officials to regard runoff water in the same way as wastewater to improve water quality (Treatment)
- 2 Incentives and guidelines for open space, connectivity between open spaces. Bike/pedestrian greenways.
- (2 votes) Change perception with elected officials that major roads solve congestion problems. Move toward the notion of connected secondary roads.
- (2 votes) Better communication of lessons learned. Charleston county is the 'California of the lowcountry'. Have learned about what to do and not to do due to the rapid growth. Seeing an unfortunate repeat of CHS county mistake in Berkely and Dorchester county, and small towns within charleston county. Share lessons learned
- (2 votes) Affordable housing near job. (ie – workforce housing)
- (1 votes) Small towns deal w.in own jurisdictions, and do not communicate. Isolation, lack of concern for other communities' issues. (my problem, not our problem) Many problems affecting individual communities are greater in scope and will require subregional planning. Grouping to address problems would be more effective. Need mechanism for subregional planning, moving up to regional planning.
- (0 votes) "Our area will perish for a lack of vision" John Knott. Beautiful area, but no vision for pulling it all together. Education, education, education.

**What can you do to raise awareness of the shared nature of these problems and the need for shared strategies? 3:38 – 3:55**

- (11 votes) Comprehensive plans mandate that affordable housing, traffic, and pollution are addressed within the plan. There is no way to enforce that comprehensive plan strategies are actually enforced. Need a mechanism for implementation.
- (8 votes) Receive emails about local planning meetings from organizations like CCL and Sierra Club. Increases awareness. Diversity of communication tools – email, web-based interactions. What about non-tech communities? TV, community bulletin board, etc.
- (6 votes) Conferences, media coverage of planning processes, shared local area plans (outside of jurisdictions).
- (4 votes) Raise awareness of energy costs of sprawl (Greenfield building) and health care costs of Greenfield building. Note savings of redevelopment and brownfield building. Need to educate people – make this link for people. Demand consideration of these issues from our elected officials.
- (4 votes) Need guidance on how to implement comp plan strategies. (how to work on traffic congestion, etc.). Guidance should be incorporated into comp plan, or have a go-to manual.
- (4 votes) Develop speakers' bureau, volunteer group to educate public, elected officials. Community and officials have lack of awareness of the benefits of smart growth/green building plans.
- (3 votes) Educate high school students. Idea – Have students educate the community and elected officials. Way to incorporate media coverage
- (1 vote) People that come to meetings about comprehensive planning aren't sure how to communicate about it, or don't understand what the plan really means.
- (0 votes) The Our Region, Our Plan effort is a good way to raise awareness about regional problems and develop shared strategies. Promote and encourage participation in Our Region, Our Plan
- (0 votes, but not captured on flip chart) What is the best way to communicate? Face to face seems better. Reports/papers sit on people's desks. Must get the right people in the room (experts)

**What steps do you agree to take within your community to implement these shared strategies? (OPT) 3:55 – 4:00**

- Agree to ride bicycle as many places as possible to encourage bikeable communities
- Working to provide affordable senior housing through assisted nursing care within the home. Aging in Place housing.
- Willing to participate in Speakers Bureaus to help educate communities
- Willing to utilize professional position to educate local officials (Mt. P Planning office)
- As a citizen, participate in local planning processes (town and county)
- Infiltrate comprehensive planning process to think larger, bigger and deal with tougher issues.
- Work harder to translate research on low impact development/sustainable development into usable information.
- Encourage citizens with a regional vision to run for elected office. We all hate politicians, but we won't run.

## **BCD (Tri-Counties) B**

### **What strategies should be pursued at the regional level to address traffic congestion, affordability of housing, and air and water pollution?**

- (7) Need comprehensive mass transit plan w/ secondary and tertiary routes, including light rail connectivity
- (5) Stop spending transportation money on sprawl generating roads and focus on mass transit and bike paths
- (3) Establish enforceable growth boundary, especially in Dorchester and Berkeley Counties
- (2) Raise gasoline tax and put it towards mass transit (funding critical problem)
- (2) Encourage ports to locate in areas that can accommodate traffic and pollution (effect of Panama Canal – deepening to handle larger ships)
- (1) Modify existing structures to suit development needs
- (1) Encourage/promote live-work-play
- Encourage local government to increase density around transit stops
- Build public awareness about why it is better to use mass transit, and move into existing/older houses – understand chain reaction
- Make areas pedestrian friendly – sidewalks, density, cross walks, bike paths
- Need covered transit stops, safe places for people to wait
- Coordinate future school sitings with land use plans
- Promote mixed housing types

### **What can you do to raise awareness of the shared nature of these problems and the need for shared strategies?**

- (5) Provide training for citizen decision-makers (i.e. members of planning commissions)
- (5) Show fiscal analysis of why sustainable development is better than current development practices
- (5) Include the costs / benefits of projects, including health care costs environmental externalities
- (4) Educate builders and developers about LID and the higher monetary value of TND
- (1) Support green political candidates (open-minded regarding new paradigms for sustainable development)
- (1) Scientists need to show the cause and effect of environmental degradation
- Attend public meetings about proposed projects and expressed ideas
- Publicize information on problems and solutions (e.g. air quality)
- Educate the public through personal practices
- Find common ground with developers for sustainable practices – meet in the middle (not all or nothing)
  - i. Can the consultant be proactive?

## Coastal Communities A

### What coastal-specific information or training assistance would you need to help your community implement quality growth strategies?

- Council member education (8)
- Infrastructure, current capacity, and plans for future
- Growth trend information, development hotspots (where are they)
- Look at zoning ordinances to identify changes needed to allow LID (6)
- Incentive programs that have worked in communities for quality growth
- Training on design, permitting, construction installation, long-term maintenance and management for a demonstration site – Targeting
- Factoring in global warming, SLR – planning on a 50-year time frame (3)
- Enforcement- Follow through to insure what was permitted is in place and maintenance of what was permitted. Implementation. (1)
- Analysis of public interest – if you build it, will they come?
- Economic analysis for growth strategy. Bang for your buck? Economic information that is relevant to counties/municipalities (8)
- Help on how to do implementation
- On-line resources – list of existing resources
- What should stakeholders be asked to do and what can they do?
- Training on ordinance development and PUD's, form-based codes (6)
- Performance standards, for PUD's and how much/how they're allowed to deviate from existing ordinances (e.g., Beaufort, SC – asks for “unique design”- how defined? (3)
- Help in developing specific ordinances for codes, especially water quality (1)
- Bridge the gap /disconnect between comprehensive planning side and water quality side (e.g., How to link land use decisions with TMDL's ) (2)
- Evaluating status of current and past ecosystem health – Need to present the problem, We/They don't know how bad it is (2)
- More transparent process for how to work through development process in a municipality
- Training on form-based codes (1)

#### *Not for voting-added at end*

- Information on stormwater modeling, implementation, and maintenance for LIDs
- Information and training on decentralized sewage vs. traditional sewer systems

### If your community has been successful in implementing quality growth strategies, what were the ingredients used (e.g., partners, strategies, ordinance changes, etc.)?

- What not to do – Need to look at both sides (what has worked, what has not worked) so don't repeat mistakes

#### **Not Good:**

- Urban sprawl
- No county zoning
- Wanting to make money (greed)
- Unclear regulations on what can be “parks/public space”

**Good:**

- Developed community plans with the residents/communities- Worked with residents to develop community plans to address the growth they want to see (5)
- Bond approach for conservation program (easements) Administered by NGO (Trust for Public Land). Public input on plan to prioritize the areas of concern. (13)
- Signage acknowledging to public where their tax dollars have helped to preserve land (2)
- County-wide zoning ordinance (1)
- Helpful to have examples of municipalities who have been successful (1)
- County resolution to be greenest county (Chatham County, GA). Started plan and public involvement hopefully get some ordinances out of that (1)
- County resource protection commission brought together all sides/parts of county gov't to the table (transportation, NGO's Land use planners, utility) (6)
- Having developers with capacity to do quality growth projects. Developers with enough patience, knowledge to deal with red tape of building traditional neighborhood developments
- Having a development coordinator – lead person that applicant can talk to about the process and potential projects...or combine all the levels into one department (streamlining the process) (13)

## Coastal Communities - B

**Coastal communities encounter various obstacles (e.g., ordinances, codes, regulations, political will, market forces) in implementing planning to make their communities more resilient to natural hazards.**

**What are the key strategies to making your community more resilient natural hazards?**

- Networks with communities outside area of danger (sister community) have plan in place (e.g., hospitals may partner; need to plan ahead) - 5
- Ensure that you're considering natural buffers, natural, floodplains 5
- Land uses—golf course on floodplain but not community 4
- Need plenty of connectivity in streets/ transportation system for evacuation -3
- Long term retreat strategy (get development out of hazardous areas)-3
- Communication system not reliant on electricity, phones-2
- Mapping of things like pharmacies, hospitals, etc (critical facilities) 0
- Know community assets, including people with relevant skills and knowledge 1
- Vulnerability/risk analysis 0
- Adopt building codes for hurricane/earthquake resistance 1
- Tie into tourism- plan evacuation of tourists too (Doubletree hotel has emergency info) 0
- Promoting personal responsibility 2
- Understand the community demographics so you know which areas have vulnerable populations (where don't have cars, etc) 0
- Mobile, distributed power systems (can get up and running quickly) 0
- National Flood Insurance Program may be subsidizing risk- should have to self-insure if you live in a hazardous area 1
- Incorporate adaptability into policies at all levels (e.g. distributed power systems, redundant systems) 0
- Utilities underground 1
- Financial incentives/ disincentives 1
- Coordination- planning departments, public safety, Chamber of Commerce, TV stations (education) 2
- Learning from previous disasters 0
- Federal and state mandates for evacuation strategy 0
- PR campaign about investing in mitigation and preparedness versus paying for repair and clean up 0
- Plan for how to use volunteers (sometimes no clear mechanism) 0
  - Pre-train, keep list update
- Purchase easement for areas where shouldn't develop 1
- Develop strategy for utilities/ critical facilities before event so response can be rapid, coordinate between the utilities 1
- Figure out everything in place in community (inventory existing organizations and plan) 0
- Communities should work together on regional basis 0
- Plan for a variety of scenarios (wind, storm surge, up-river flooding) 0
- Think about risks from multiple hazards- think about secondary impacts 0
- Retreat- after past storms have done some of this (mitigation grants) 0
- Preventative measures to reduce debris 0
- Think at house/site level as well regarding mitigation 0

- Freeboard (elevate buildings) 0
- Setbacks (from river, coast) 0
- Think about risks/impacts of nearby disaster- if hits neighbor, what happens to us? 0
- Comprehensive emergency management strategy 3

### **What are the obstacles to implementing them?**

- Emergency preparedness is large and complex task; competing priorities; small municipalities don't have time (one solution is intergovernmental cooperation) 7
- No one person or organization in charge—need coordination 6
  - Planning and development sometimes becomes a catch-all
- Lack of funding; expense of solutions 4
- Inadequacy of public dialog alternatives (e.g. talk about alternatives to building road for evacuation) 4
- Lack of intergovernmental cooperation 1
- Lack of willingness to do what needs to be done (lack of political will, “The Bubba Culture”) 3
- May not know where to start 1
- Adding climate change and sea level rise makes even more daunting 0
  - lack of agreement about climate change makes it hard to develop policy
- Misinformation 0
- People don't understand the risk or are in denial 0
- Less tangible threat 1
- Political resistance if all stick and no carrot 3
- Current code (e.g. lack of multi-use, road width can lead to increased impervious surface) 1
- “If it bleeds it leads” mentality in media- hard to get coverage of smart growth 0
- Cultural and linguistic barriers hard to communicate about strategies; some avenues don't reach some 0
- Poor communication strategies 3
- Turn-over in communities- too easy to put plan on shelf (need to maintain) 2

## **Inland Communities - A**

### **What do you see as the biggest “driver” or incentive to encourage quality growth and development practices in your community?**

- Economic feasibility. 10
- Representing green benefits through tax structure – tax benefits to homeowners for retrofits, etc. 9
- Education of the benefits of quality growth to the general public, i.e. health benefits, etc. 8
- Loss of jobs 1
- Successful examples 2
- Regulatory requirements 0
- Maintaining water quality and quality of life 3
- Addressing perceptions of density 0
- Incentives to make density attractive 1
- Faster approval process 1
- Charge fees and taxes associated with practices 1
- Control costs of infrastructure (lifecycle costs) 0
- Interest in preserving regional / community character and protecting landscape character 1
- Marketing of “green” development 1
- Maintaining working lands 0
- Awards / recognition 1
- Convince developers there is money going green 3
- Public safety benefits market to fear 0
- Education needed for sustainable development 1
- Buy-local movement could encourage smart growth 0
- Need cost comparisons for conventional vs. green 5
- Seeing that what we’ve done in the past hasn’t worked 0

### **What specific information or training assistance would you need to help your community implement quality growth strategies?**

- Need cost-benefit analyses – what is our return on investing in smart growth, including long-term societal and environmental benefits? 13
- More diverse representation on planning boards – need to educate more people on planning and engage them in the planning process. 10
- Need specific training for developers on the financial benefits and marketing assessments of smart growth. 6
- Need more info on benefits of BMPs 0
- Need planning / charette process assistance 2
- Need to “train-the-trainers” (i.e. implementation process) 0
- Ability to provide rapid / free / low cost assessments via GIS / mapping techniques. 4
- Showing developers what consumers want – show them there is a market 1
- Specific training for developers (financial benefits and marketing assessments of smart growth) 3
- Buildouts of local communities are needed – but need accurate data for rural communities. 0
- Need more infill development and economic benefits of infill. 1

- Integration of land use and transportation planning (training for developers) i.e. where is the most sustainable place for development. 4
- Education of homeowners associations 2
- Need to address all key audiences (public / planning staffs / policy enforcers / policy makers) 4
- There are watershed assessments available online.0
- Communities need to look at larger picture – i.e. watershed and resources in it. 3
- Which communities want help on watershed basis. 1

- **Inland Communities – B**

**What do you see as the biggest “driver” or incentive to encourage quality growth and development practices in your community?**

- Need to have planning and zoning regulations that allow/require quality and sustainable development. Planning departments are behind on this. - 14
- Better job of educating our developers and consumers. – 13
- Leave our communities’ environment in better condition than we found it for enjoyment of future generations. - 9
- Stormwater permits that are not specific, but cause impaired water quality and lead to improved communities – key to local enforcement; no jurisdiction federally. - 9
- Recognition of what is being lost and wanting to do something about it. - 2
- Consumer education creating demand for products, such as energy efficient appliances and economic incentive to fill the demand. - 3
- Growing awareness that we need to use energy more efficiently and that we need to get away from oil dependency. - 2
- Price of gas. - 1
- Economic return of the developer that drives how green the community is, including federal policies that drive design and economic return. - 2
- Water quality issues, such as impaired streams that are directly tied to stormwater run-off from developments.
- Better understanding of values and costs of existing assets and practices to determine what works and what doesn’t; better data. - 3
- Enforcement – if local zoning ordinances are being followed, then you can’t enforce certain developments. - 1
- Provide sustainable design infrastructure (regional planning agencies) and pushing or encouraging this at the beginning of the process, especially in a public forum. Also, plan and promote zoning and development ordinances in communities where they don’t exist.
- Public health (air quality and commuting), recreation, and quality of life. - 7
- More sustainable businesses encourage other areas to do the same and can grow and improve the economy.
- As long as our local officials have the ability to overturn practices in favor of the developers. Need to have federal mandates. Find avenues/mechanisms to prevent local officials from overturning planning commission decisions.
- People vote with their money – vote in favor of places that have sustainable lifestyles. Voters/consumers will create the market for sustainability.
- Water quantity and drought; protection of your water basin reservoir; transfer/drinking water. - 4

**What specific information or training assistance would you need to help your community implement quality growth strategies?**

- Cost benefit analysis of BMPs so the citizens can make more informed decisions (maps). - 14
- Elect the political-will to enact legislation that provides incentives. Create political infrastructure. – 11
- Getting the right people to the training and assistance (decision-makers, professionals) -11

- Growth-readiness training.
- Need massive education/media campaign. - 10
- Leaders/decision-makers that know what they are doing and have a vision.
- Show citizens ways to do it differently that would create pressure and support for elected officials to implement quality growth strategies. Process of engagement too. - 7
- Assistance for public visioning. - 1
- Basic understanding of natural resources and fundamental education at the junior high and high school. Future generation. - 5
- Cost benefit features analysis data (cost of beach closures). - 1
- Quantitative data about benefits (water quality, parks, property values). -7
- List of BMPs for livable communities and a guide to follow. - 3
- Provide local examples of the comparison between sustainable neighborhoods and non-sustainable neighborhoods and how the houses are selling. - 3