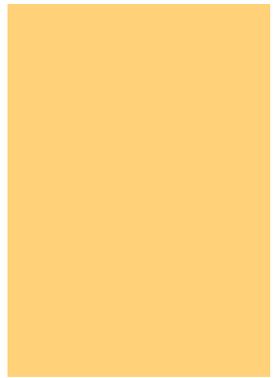




October 19, 2007

# GEORGIA COASTAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## Stakeholder Involvement Program - Draft





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# INTRODUCTION



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## Introduction

The Georgia coast is one of the most pristine and natural coastal environments on the eastern seaboard. In recognition of the significant growth pressures facing the coast and the importance of protecting the fragile natural resources, Governor Perdue issued an Executive Order directing the development of a Comprehensive Coastal Master Development Plan, also referred to as the Coastal Comprehensive Plan. The order also established the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CCPAC) to guide the planning process. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs is the state agency charged with the development of this plan.

This Stakeholder Involvement Program is the first step of the stakeholder involvement process and will provide the vision, guidelines and mechanisms for sharing information with stakeholders, local governments, planning agencies, environmental groups and interested citizens. It will also serve as a blueprint for the coordination of project activities with key stakeholders and ensure that all segments of the community are involved in developing a vision for the region's future.

## Study Area

The study area includes the six coastal counties in Georgia and the municipalities within each county. These counties include Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn and Camden, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Key Locations in the Study Area**





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## Study Duration

The development of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan began in early 2005 and is scheduled to be completed in September 2007. This schedule was set in the Governor's Executive Order to develop the plan. Throughout the study, a number of opportunities will be available for both stakeholders and the public to learn more about the study and to make comments.

## Public Involvement Goals and Objectives

The nature of this project implies some innovative approaches to the involvement philosophy, organizational structure, and implementation of activities. Unlike many other comprehensive planning initiatives, this project has some unusual characteristics:

- The study is regional in scope and includes a large number of political jurisdictions.
- The composition of the region varies widely, containing large urban cities to very small, rural communities. The ability of the governments to provide both staff and services to meet the needs of citizens is also widely varied.
- The need to maintain the unique characteristics of each community while supporting the overall goals and vision of the region.
- The number of stakeholders with a strong interest in the area is relatively large, although many of these stakeholders focus primarily on one component of the region; thus the stakeholder identification and strategies for inclusion must be all-inclusive in scope.

With these considerations in mind, the following goals and objectives are proposed for the Stakeholders Involvement Program. The goal statements are broad expressions of the desired state of involvement activities. Objectives are statements that express in more detail how each of the goals will be achieved.

*Goal 1: Provide opportunities for stakeholders, citizens and interested parties to learn about and help shape policies and strategies through an active engagement process that is open, inclusive, and accessible and recognizes citizen and stakeholder perspectives.*

- Objective 1.1: Provide learning and participation opportunities for anyone who chooses to participate.
- Objective 1.2: Develop partnerships with local governments, agencies, the Regional Development Center, and other community organizations interested in the region.
- Objective 1.3: Build credibility and trust among all stakeholders, citizens, and project participants.



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***Goal 2: To provide clear, accurate, timely, and useful information which can be transmitted through a variety of ways to reach stakeholders, citizens, and other interested parties.***

- Objective 2.1: Use non-technical language and simple graphics to explain the technical aspects of the project.
- Objective 2.2: Use a variety of media, including a website, fact sheets, presentation materials, electronic mail inquiries, and other methods to exchange information about the project with interested parties, especially prior to key decision points. Take a proactive approach in disseminating accurate information.
- Objective 2.3: Provide informational materials in a timely manner to allow sufficient time for stakeholders, citizens and other interested parties to properly consider and respond to the information.
- Objective 2.4: Look for opportunities to reach out and obtain input from a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, including low-income and ethnically diverse communities that may not consistently participate in planning processes.

***Goal 3: Provide mechanisms to receive input from stakeholders and citizens and integrate this information into the development of the project.***

- Objective 3.1: Continuously monitor the progress of the technical analysis through team meetings, e-mails, and stakeholder involvement activities to systematically identify potential issues of concern to citizens and stakeholders.
- Objective 3.2: Document issues and concerns received from stakeholders and citizens throughout the project. Ensure that voices are heard equally and that one group does not dominate the process.
- Objective 3.3: Acknowledge the input on issues and concerns received from stakeholders and citizens during the project.

***Goal 4: Continuously monitor the progress and effectiveness of the public involvement program in communicating and receiving information among stakeholders, citizens, planning partners, and the project team.***

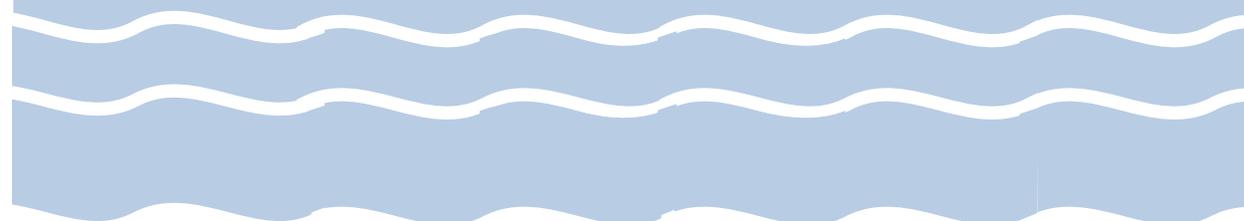


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- Objective 4.1: Conduct short questionnaires of those participating in the public involvement activities on their understanding and level of satisfaction with the process.
  - Objective 4.2: Solicit feedback from the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee on their level of satisfaction with the stakeholder coordination activities.
  - Objective 4.3: Solicit feedback from the Project Team (DCA and consultants) on the level of satisfaction with the public involvement process.
  - Objective 4.4: Maintain constant communication via email with DCA project manager and CCPAC on status.



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# IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS





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## Identification of Stakeholders

The Coastal Comprehensive Plan will involve many participants, including community stakeholders and citizens from throughout the region; local governments; metropolitan planning organizations; and other interested parties. The wide range of interested parties and their areas of interest require an organized approach to stakeholder coordination. The following section describes the overall organization of the stakeholder coordination element of the project as well as the key players involved in the study.

### **Key Participants**

The individuals and groups expected to be involved in the study are likely to fall into the following major groups of participants.

#### *Project Team*

The Project Team has two elements: the DCA Office of Planning and Quality Growth and the Consultant Team. The DCA is responsible for leading the project on behalf of the State of Georgia. The DCA participants include the Project Manager and other planning professionals responsible for providing technical support and guidance to the project. The Project Team also includes members of the consultant team, Lott + Barber Architects and Reynolds, Smith & Hills, including the Consultant Project Manager, task leaders, and their technical team members. The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Conservancy are also providing consulting services, and other consultants may be added as needed.

#### *Project Advisory Committee*

In order to receive a wide variety of perspectives on the region, DCA has established an advisory committee for this study. This committee is the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CCPAC), which is composed of individuals who are influential at the policy level. This committee includes elected officials, experts in specific areas, and other decision makers from each of the included communities, as well as key individuals from state agencies. This committee serves as the overall steering committee for process. Their responsibilities include providing feedback, advising the planning team (DCA and consultants) and generally helping to guide the entire planning process.

#### *Stakeholders*

Stakeholders from communities across coastal Georgia which have a general or specific interest in the plan development will be invited to participate in public workshops for the project. Stakeholders will be identified through input from the Plan Advisory Committee, Technical



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Advisory Committees, interviews with local government officials, and input received from stakeholders regarding others to involve in the process.

Local governments in the project area are among the critical stakeholders in this process. Therefore, a special purpose committee has been established, as recommended by DCA's publication, *Planning for Community Involvement*. This committee is the Local Government Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This committee is comprised of city and county managers, administrators, and planning staff from each of the local governments in the region. This technical advisory committee has an in-depth understanding of, and can provide input on, the day to day issues faced by local governments in the provision of infrastructure and services. This committee is comprised of those who will be the primary users of the plan, being charged with locally implementing the policies and procedures recommended by the plan.

The planning team also reserves the right to appoint additional technical advisory committees and special purpose committees to address specific issues. The activity of these special purpose committees may be of short duration during the process.

Potential stakeholders include:

- Local elected officials
- Local appointed officials (planning commission, etc.)
- Local government staff
- State and federal government agencies (i.e., Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield, King's Bay Submarine Base, Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Homebuilder Associations
- Industrial Development Authorities
- Environmental organizations
- Coastal scientific community
- Non-profit organizations
- Historic organizations
- Regional and Interstate Groups (Florida and South Carolina)
- The University System and Department of Technical and Adult Education
- Cultural and historic resources organizations
- Agriculture and silvaculture interest groups
- Local government organizations, including the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA)



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### *Community Groups*

Community-based organizations with a general interest in community and planning, such as Chambers of Commerce, regional or local development authorities, civic and neighborhood groups, and others, may have an interest in the study. These groups will have an opportunity to attend public workshops throughout the region to learn about the project and provide input to the study as it progresses. Members of the consultant team will also be available to meet with these organizations at their regularly scheduled meetings. Community groups will be identified through input from the Plan Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and interviews with local government officials, media references, and other sources.

### *Elected Officials*

The input and involvement of state and local elected officials is critical in addressing the planning issues which benefit and/or impact their communities. Those elected officials not participating on the CCPAC will be advised of public workshops for the study and will be encouraged to participate.

### *Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)*

Three MPO areas are located within the region. Because transportation is such a key component of the plan, it is expected that MPO representatives will participate in the stakeholder coordination process for this study.

Note: MPOs are planning agencies established under federal guidelines to provide a continuing, comprehensive, urban transportation planning process undertaken cooperatively by state and local governments in urbanized areas of over 50,000 in population.

### *Regional Development Center (RDCs)*

The Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center represents the interests of all six of the counties and municipalities included in the project scope of the Georgia Coastal Comprehensive Plan and will therefore play an important role in both development of the plan and communication with the local governments.

## **Stakeholder Coordination Structure**

The structure of the Project Team and the elements related to public involvement and stakeholder coordination ensures that three important principles guide the structure of the Advisory Committee/Stakeholder Involvement process:

- Continuous communication and exchange of key information through the stakeholder coordination and involvement processes are conveyed to the project team for use in the development of the plan.



- The process also provides for a direct communications and interaction link between DCA's Project Manager and the Advisory Committees to minimize any confusion in the overall direction of the project at the policy level.
- Continuous communication is maintained throughout the project between the Advisory Committees/Stakeholder Involvement team and all of the parties interested in participating in the study.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective implementation of the stakeholder involvement and coordination program for this project relies on an understanding of clearly described roles and responsibilities.

- **DCA Project Manager**  
The DCA Project Manager is responsible for directing the overall project on behalf of DCA and is the leader of the project team.
- **DCA Project Team**  
The role of the DCA Project Team is to assist the DCA Project Manager and the consultant team, if needed, to achieve the overall goals of the project.
- **Consultant Project Manager**  
The Consultant Project Manager is responsible for directing the work of the consultant team.
- **Consultant Team**  
The role of the consultant team is to conduct the contractual requirements for the project as specified in the Scope of Work, including the completion of all work consistent with professional standards on time and on budget.
- **Project Advisory Committee**  
The purpose for the Project Advisory Committee is to:
  - Assist in achieving its overall goals and objectives for the project.
  - Serve as a sounding board in considering proposed policies, technical procedures, and study recommendations.
  - Serve as experts to assist in the consideration of potential strategies to ensure a sustainable future for the Coastal Region.

The operation of the advisory committee is described more fully in the next section.



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- Stakeholders, Citizens and Interested Parties  
These persons are interested individuals and groups who seek to participate in the development of the plan. A list of potential stakeholders is identified above.



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# IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES



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## Identification of Participation Techniques

A variety of activities, strategies and tools will be used to ensure that the stakeholder involvement process is both adequate and meaningful. The tools and strategies proposed for public outreach include proven techniques that have been successfully utilized for previous planning efforts. The following sections describe in detail these tools, strategies and mechanisms that will be utilized throughout the course of the planning process.

### **Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CCPAC)**

The Plan Advisory Committee will be involved over the course of the plan development. The Committee will meet on a quarterly basis to provide input and feedback to the project team. The Project Team will attend and participate as needed in these meetings.

### **Technical Advisory Committees**

Technical Advisory Committees will meet as needed. The Project Team will attend and participate as needed in these meetings. The Local Government Technical Advisory Committee (LGTAC), comprised of city and county managers and planning staff, has been formed. Other committees will be formed as needed.

### **Project Website**

A project website will be developed and maintained with current information on the project status, meetings, and plan development. Information will be posted as available, including meeting summaries and draft documents for review. The website will include an email address for submittal of public comments at any point during the planning process and may also include surveys for receiving targeted public input.

The website will also provide up-to-date information on the planning process, including a list of all upcoming meetings for the CCPAC, public meetings, etc. Status reports will be included on the project website as well.

### **'Community Choices' Survey**

A "Community Choices" pictorial survey and presentation will be presented during the public workshops and will help the public to visualize various elements of community and urban design. This tool will be used to assist the public in articulating preferred development patterns.



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## Media Relations

Working with the DCA and the members of the Project Team, information will be disseminated to the general public through local media outlets and will be an important resource for those unable to attend meetings or participate in other public outreach events. The project team will help to prepare press releases and identify important opportunities in support of media related efforts, including announcement of public meetings. Only DCA staff will provide and/or arrange interviews and responses to media inquiries. Information will be presented to the media in a proactive manner through formal press releases to encourage the most accurate reporting of information.

## Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held at key milestones throughout the course of the study to gather feedback and to disseminate study findings. Three rounds of public meetings, each consisting of three public meetings, will be held throughout the study. These meetings will be held in locations throughout the region. Potential locations include Savannah, Midway and St. Marys. These locations throughout the region provide the opportunity for participation without undue hardship or travel arrangements. The schedule will be flexible, based on the progress of the study and the milestones reached.

The tentatively scheduled workshop dates and topics are:

### *Workshop #1: late October, early November, 2006*

The meetings will provide an overview of the process and an introduction to quality growth principles. Participants will be asked to provide input into the issues and opportunities facing the coast, the identification of character areas and will be provided the opportunity to participate in a 'Community Choices' presentation.

### *Workshop #2: late March, early April, 2007*

The second round of meetings will provide the opportunity to give feedback and react to alternative development scenarios. This session will also continue the visioning process started during the first workshops.

### *Workshop #3: August 2007*

The final round of workshops will present the findings of the quality growth audits, conducted for each of the 28 local governments. These workshops will also present a draft of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan.



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## **Public Meeting Materials**

A variety of meeting materials will be utilized to effectively communicate information to the meeting participants. These materials can include display boards, fact sheets, and electronic presentations. Following each public meeting, all meeting materials will be made available on the project website for download to provide access for participants who were not able to attend the meetings. Comment forms will also be made available at public meetings to encourage public feedback.

## **Interviews**

Individual interviews with representatives of each county and city government in the region will be conducted. A standard survey will be developed and utilized to ensure consistency of the questions asked and for comparison of the results.

## **Contingency Meetings**

The project team will be available to meet with, and or provide information to other community groups, such as Chambers of Commerce and civic organizations. These additional meetings will provide the opportunity to communicate project information as well as collect additional input. A general presentation about the planning process will be available to share with these organizations.

## **Project Team Meetings**

Regular project meetings will be held with DCA and the project team. These Project Team meetings are anticipated monthly beginning in November 2006 through September 2007, with bi-weekly meetings through October 2006.

# Public Involvement Program Evaluation

## Evaluation Process

Efforts will be made throughout the project to ensure that effective tools and practices are used to engage the Advisory Committees and all of the interested parties that seek to participate in the project. These efforts will include:

- Short questionnaires distributed to the members of the CCPAC and TACs at their meetings to determine the level of satisfaction with the efforts used to solicit and use the input.
- Short questionnaires distributed at public workshops to gauge the level of understanding of project concepts and the level of satisfaction with the public involvement activities.
- Feedback sessions with the DCA Project Manager and project team to gauge the level of satisfaction with the overall stakeholder involvement and coordination activities.

The Project Team will also use a set of performance measures to gauge the overall success of the stakeholder involvement program. These measures are described in the following section.

## Performance Measures

Planning organizations are increasingly using performance measure systems to continuously improve the quality of the services and products they deliver. In keeping with this philosophy, certain stakeholder involvement performance measures have been established. These measures relate directly to the overall goals and objectives of the stakeholder involvement and Plan Advisory Committees activities. The specific objectives and performance measures related to each one are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Public Involvement Performance Measures**

Public Involvement Objective (As listed in Section 2)	Performance Measure
<b>Objective 1.1</b> Provide learning and participation opportunities for anyone who chooses to participate.	Public meetings were advertised, held in convenient locations, held at convenient times, and presented materials were easily understandable.
<b>Objective 1.2</b> Develop partnerships with local governments, agencies, the RDC, and other community organizations interested in the region.	Local governments, agencies, and other community organizations were invited to participate and were engaged in the planning process.

<p><b>Objective 1.3</b> Build credibility and trust among all stakeholders, citizens, and project participants.</p>	<p>The project team was welcoming and accessible and available to answer questions, present accurate information, and work cooperatively with stakeholders during project development.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2.1</b> Use non-technical language and simple graphics to explain the technical aspects of the project.</p>	<p>Materials presented to the public were reviewed to eliminate overly technical language that might hindering understanding of the subject matter.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2.2</b> Use a variety of media, including a website, fact sheets, presentation materials, electronic mail inquiries, and other methods to exchange information about the project with interested parties, especially prior to key decision points. Take a pro-active approach in disseminating accurate information.</p>	<p>Techniques other than public meetings were used when appropriate to obtain citizen and stakeholder input on the project.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2.3</b> Provide informational materials in a timely manner to allow sufficient time for stakeholders, citizens and other interested parties to properly consider and respond to the information.</p>	<p>Information was provided prior to project activities to stakeholders, elected officials, agencies, and citizens.</p>
<p><b>Objective 2.4</b> Look for opportunities to reach out and obtain input from a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, including low-income and ethnically diverse communities that may not consistently participate in planning processes.</p>	<p>Beginning early in the planning stage, the potential participation for those populations traditionally not engaged in the planning process was assessed to determine where special efforts to engage those populations should be made.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3.1</b> Continuously monitor the progress of the technical analysis through team meetings, e-mails, and stakeholder involvement activities to systematically identify potential issues of concern.</p>	<p>Project team members exchanged information about issues and concerns received from stakeholders, citizens, and other interested parties.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3.2</b> Document issues and concerns received from stakeholders and citizens throughout the project. Ensure that voices are heard equally and that one group does not dominate the process.</p>	<p>Public and stakeholder inputs were systematically captured throughout the project and shared with the project team for consideration during the planning process.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3.3</b> Acknowledge the input on issues and concerns received from stakeholders and citizens during the project.</p>	<p>Written (regular mail or e-mail, as appropriate) acknowledgement of the receipt of comments from the public or stakeholders was provided.</p>

<p><b>Objective 4.1</b> Conduct short questionnaires of those participating in the stakeholder involvement activities on their understanding and level of satisfaction with the process.</p>	<p>Objective data were obtained from participants about their levels of understanding of the planning issues and satisfaction with the public involvement process.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.2</b> Solicit feedback from the Advisory Committees on their level of satisfaction with the stakeholder coordination activities</p>	<p>Obtain data and information from the Advisory Committees on the level of satisfaction with the stakeholder activities.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.3</b> Solicit feedback from the Project Team (DCA and consultants) on the level of satisfaction with the public involvement process</p>	<p>Obtain and analyze information from DCA and the consultant team about the effectiveness of the public involvement activities in helping to guide the project development process.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.4</b> Maintain constant communication via email with DCA project manager and CCPAC on status.</p>	<p>Email correspondence with the DCA project manager and CCPAC occurs on a regular basis.</p>



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# SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF THE REGIONAL AGENDA



## Schedule for Completion of the Regional Agenda

The stakeholder involvement program and activities associated with the Advisory Committees have been scheduled in a manner that encourages public and stakeholder input prior to major decisions being made during the study. The initial set of public workshops is scheduled for October, 2006 with the second set of public workshops planned for March-April, 2007, and the final round scheduled for August, 2007. Technical committee meetings will occur regularly throughout the course of the project and could potentially meet as frequently as monthly. Table 1 shows the general timing of the major meetings associated with the project.

**Table 1: Meeting Schedule**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Quarterly, September 2006 – September 2007	Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Meetings	Varies
October 2006	Public Meetings – Round 1	Savannah, Midway, St. Marys
March-April 2007	Public Meetings – Round 2	Savannah, Midway, St. Marys
August 2007	Public Meetings – Round 3	Savannah, Midway, St. Marys
Monthly or Quarterly, September 2006 - September 2007	Technical Advisory Committee Meetings	Varies
September 2006 – September 2007	Project Team Meetings	Savannah

## APPENDIX



### Results of Public Meetings:

- Public Workshops Summary
- Public Workshop Round #1 Summary
- Public Workshop Round #2 Summary



### Community Choices Survey Results



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# Public Workshops Summary

## Stakeholder Involvement Program

### Public Workshops Summary

*Midway – October 31, 2006*

*Savannah – November 1, 2006*

*Kingsland – November 2, 2006*

*The Armstrong Center, Savannah – May 21, 2007*

*Old City Hall, Brunswick – May 22, 2007*

*Coastal EMC, Midway – May 24, 2007*

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) recently concluded the second round of public workshops to receive citizen input regarding development of the Georgia Coastal Comprehensive Plan. Duplicate public workshops were held in three locations along the coast. Over one hundred citizens attended and participated in the workshops.

The meetings opened with welcoming comments from Adriane Wood of DCA and a brief presentation by project consultants Denise Grabowski (Lott + Barber Architects) and Beverly Davis (RS&H). The presentation highlighted recent planning activities, including:

- **Results from Fall Public Workshops**

- *Community Choices Survey*

The survey was intended to help the public visualize various elements of community and urban design and to articulate preferred development patterns. In this process, citizens are shown a selection of scenes illustrating various planning concepts and asked to rate them on a preference scale. In order to assess the findings, the images are analyzed using three primary classifications: setting (rural, urban, etc.), land use (commercial, residential, etc.), and orientation (auto, pedestrian, etc.).

Detailed results of the survey are provided in the *Community Choices Survey Results* report. In general, scenes with an inviting character and attractive design elements, such as mature trees, landscaping, attractive signage, and community elements, scored highest, regardless of setting, land use or orientation. As part of the survey, participants were also asked to state why they live in coastal Georgia – the natural environment and quality of life were consistently among the top reasons selected. Although images of rural and undeveloped areas ranked well in the survey, developed areas which reflect an appreciation of the coastal environment and high quality of life scored equally as well.

- *Issue Themes*

Meeting participants worked in small groups to identify issues relating to eight major issue categories. From their input and work of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CCPAC), the issues identified were grouped into major themes, as follows:



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- **Cultural and Historic Resources**

- Preservation and protection
- Conflicting uses
- Maintaining character

- **Economic Development**

- Loss of traditional activities
- Workforce development
- Diversification and growth with balance

- **Intergovernmental Coordination**

- Education
- Agency coordination
- Consistent regional approach & enforcement

- **Transportation**

- Public transportation
- Funding for maintenance and construction
- Evacuation
- Availability of alternative modes
- Congestion

- **Housing**

- Affordable options & escalating land values
- Retirees and second homes
- Sustainable, quality developments

- **Facilities and Services**

- Water, wastewater, stormwater
- Solid waste
- Service delivery by local governments

- **Natural Resources**

- Preservation and conservation
- Water quality and quantity
- Habitat encroachment

- **Land Use**

- Preservation of community character
- Sustainable, innovative developments
- Greenspace protection
- Public access to water

- **Review of Local Ordinances**

- The consultant team has reviewed the ordinances of all 28 local governments in the 6-county Coastal Region. Information from these ordinances has been compiled into a comprehensive database which will be further analyzed in a quality growth audit. In addition, these ordinances also provided information for one of the future growth scenarios (see below).

- **Future Growth Scenarios**

- In order to evaluate the potential impacts growth may have on the coast, three future growth scenarios were developed to project various growth patterns over the next twenty years. The scenarios were designed to illustrate the following:

- Scenario 1: Projection of existing conditions
- Scenario 2: Projection of existing conditions within the framework of existing ordinances
- Scenario 3: Projection of growth based on quality growth principles

Based on input from the public workshops and the CCPAC, scenario three was selected as the preferred alternative for further discussion.



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### **Group Exercise**

Following the presentation, meeting participants broke into facilitated groups for in-depth discussion. Participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness and acceptability of sample potential strategies for addressing the issues identified earlier in the planning process. Detailed results of these discussions are provided in the *Public Evaluation of Strategies* report.

### **Wrap Up**

The meeting closed with discussion of the next steps, which includes:

- The quality growth audit of local government ordinances.
- Detailed analysis of the future growth scenarios to identify supporting infrastructure needed, cost estimates, and impacts based on the issue categories for each scenario.

# Public Workshop Round #1 Summary

The first round of public workshops was held in the fall of 2006. The meetings were: Midway on October 30, Savannah on November 1, and Kingsland on November 2. The foci of the workshops were the identification of issue subgroups based on the eight overall issue themes identified by the CCPAC, and to conduct the Community Choices Photograph Survey.

Midway- 10/30/06	Savannah- 11/1/06	Kingsland- 11/2/06
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	Intergovernmental Coordination
Land Use	Land Use	Economic Development
Cultural/Historic Resources	Economic Development	Land Use
Economic Development	Transportation	Natural Resources
Facilities and Services	Cultural/Historic Resources	Facilities and Services
Housing	Facilities and Services	Transportation
Transportation	Intergovernmental Coordination	Cultural/Historic Resources
Intergovernmental Coordination	Housing	Housing

The Community Choices Photograph Survey presented a series of slides to the stakeholders, for which they were to identify their most preferred to least preferred choices. Overall, the group preferred rural scenes the most, with typical suburban scenes rated the least preferred. Urban or village scenes scored in the middle preference range. Multi-modal and pedestrian oriented scenes generally scored higher than those which were more automobile oriented. Additionally, scenes with inviting character and attractive design elements scored well regardless of the setting or particular land use depicted.



## Public Workshop Round #2 Summary

### *Executive Summary*

During the second round of public meetings, meeting participants were asked to participate in facilitated sessions of 8 to 12 people to discuss the effectiveness and acceptability of sample strategies for addressing issues identified earlier in the planning process. The eight issue categories discussed were:

- Cultural & Historic Resources
- Economic Development
- Facilities & Services
- Housing
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Transportation



Specific comments are recorded below each section. In general, most of the strategies identified were viewed as effective approaches, but concerns were often expressed regarding how these strategies could be implemented. However, many of these strategies have been successfully used in other communities and are feasible.

As part of a regional plan for the six coastal counties, the potential for regional approaches was a recurring theme. Participants generally supported a regional approach on many issues, especially environmental issues and economic development. Concerns were expressed regarding the capabilities of some local governments to address these complex issues, especially since many have very limited staff and funds. Regional cooperation was therefore identified as a positive direction, but care should be taken to ensure that local governments are fully involved and a part of the implementation process.



### *Methodology*

During the fall public workshops and meetings of the Coastal Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CCPAC), issues were identified relating to eight topic categories. Major themes were identified

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in order to develop strategies to address the issues. Meeting participants were provided with sample strategies to address the major themes and asked to respond to their effectiveness at addressing the issues and their acceptability to the public.

While the strategies reviewed are certainly not all-inclusive, they are intended to provide a gauge regarding various types of strategies to consider throughout the planning process.

Participants were asked to rank the effectiveness and acceptability on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high).





**Cultural and Historical Resources - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Protection and Preservation**
- ✓ **Conflicting Uses**
- ✓ **Maintenance of Character**

Strategies:		<i>Average</i>
1. Identify, assess, and promote the cultural and historic sites and artifacts in the region.	Effectiveness	<b>3.4</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.6</b>
2. New development not compatible with existing uses should be buffered from the existing sites, with buffers increasing based on differences in uses.	Effectiveness	<b>3.1</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.8</b>
3. Direct development away from historic, archaeological, and cultural resources.	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.9</b>
4. Recognize the rich heritage of traditional cultures and protect/promote these cultures through research, educational, and tourism programs.	Effectiveness	<b>3.2</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.4</b>

- Our cultural/historic resources are part of what make our coast unique. Strategies 1 and 4 together can find the links between cultural/historic resources and the potential for increased tourism.
- Strategies 1 and 4 were commonly viewed as closely related to one another and that this recognition is necessary as the first step, but 2 and 3 were needed for protection. Buffers received a mixed reaction, as they were sometimes viewed as not always appropriate or effective.
- There is a difference between sites and cultures, and different approaches may be needed for each. For example, a historic site may not need a buffer the way a historic culture may. Similarly, some resources should be promoted for tourism, while others should remain protected.
- Some overlap may exist between the protection and preservation of cultural/historic resources and natural resources. For example, historical sites may be adjacent to or located within environmentally-sensitive areas, such as near a marsh or along a river.
- Many comments supported appropriately-placed, responsible development as an effective way to protect resources. Directing all development away from these resources may be difficult due to their abundance.
- The “Southern Passage” alternative travel route (US Hwy 17) needs to be better promoted and its resources better maintained.



**Economic Development - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Loss of traditional activities**
- ✓ **Workforce development**
- ✓ **Economic diversification and growth with balance**

Strategies:		Average
1. Establish specific programs targeted at supporting traditional coastal industries such as agriculture, silvaculture, and fishing.	Effectiveness	<b>2.9</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.0</b>
2. Work with post-secondary educational institutions to expand training and development opportunities for residents.	Effectiveness	<b>2.5</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.3</b>
3. Employ a regional approach to economic development and support the regional programs through education of public and public officials and coordination between jurisdictions.	Effectiveness	<b>3.1</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.8</b>
4. Support expansion of historic tourism, eco-tourism, and similar natural & cultural resource-based economic development programs.	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.3</b>
5. Encourage sustainable operation of port and maritime operations & transportation through government coordination on all levels and master planning activities.	Effectiveness	<b>3.1</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.1</b>

- Input on the continuation of traditional coastal industries was very diverse. Many liked having these industries remain viable, but there was a great deal of uncertainty regarding the feasibility. There was also a recognition that traditional industries may be able to continue through change. For instance, fishing as a profession may be declining, but sport fishing is increasing and provides significant financial benefits to the region. Of the three industries, fishing was commonly identified as the most important to support.
- Some traditional industries, such as fishing and shrimping, are natural resource-based and are directly linked to preservation of these resources.
- Education, including education prior to post-secondary, is extremely important and existing facilities, such as Georgia Tech, should be supported and expanded.
- A regional approach to economic development is very important and will be most beneficial for everyone, including those communities not directly involved, and will also maximize the most appropriate citing for new facilities. Implementation may require a regional tax sharing or similar program. It is important to keep independent perspectives while maintaining a cooperative approach.
- Strategy 4 will require cooperation between managers of cultural/historic, natural resources and parks, and economic development programs. All forms of tourism are recognized as a vital part of the regional economy. Care should be taken not to over-exploit these resources.



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- Jobs created by tourism are low paying jobs, and there must be a balance between these and other job opportunities. However, tourism brings in billions of dollars a year, so is important to support.
  - A major challenge to Strategy 5 will be limiting the environmental impacts that the ports have on the region while remaining competitive in a global market.

**Facilities and Services - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Water, wastewater, and sewer**
- ✓ **Solid waste**
- ✓ **Service delivery by local governments**

Strategies:		Average
1. Carefully monitor and manage impacts of water withdrawal (aquifer and surface waters), stormwater runoff, wastewater discharge, and urban development.	Effectiveness	<b>3.5</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.2</b>
2. Eventually eliminate septic systems and use the best available technologies for wastewater treatment.	Effectiveness	<b>3.2</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.6</b>
3. Promote solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives on a regional scale, making it easy for residents and visitors to recycle.	Effectiveness	<b>3.6</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.2</b>
4. Promote service delivery on a regional scale, such as joint water and sewer authorities, regional transportation planning, etc.	Effectiveness	<b>3.1</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.5</b>

- Strategy 1 was commonly recognized as absolutely essential. Although some monitoring is currently occurring, it was generally thought that more is needed.
- There was general concern regarding the draw down of the aquifer and consensus that everyone – residents, businesses, industries, and local governments – need to conserve more.
- Managing stormwater runoff and water quality using a “natural systems approach” as opposed to conventional methods may incur higher personal costs to landowners and developers, but should be encouraged using incentives and education about the potential benefits.
- Pollution from septic tanks was a concern, but many felt that improved monitoring and maintenance, along with implementation of improving technology, could allow their use to continue. However, they should be eliminated as densities increase. This strategy could be very effective, but not very acceptable.
- Recycling initiatives were widely supported, although many felt that funding challenges and community awareness will make it difficult to implement recycling programs.
- Regional service delivery was strongly supported and recognized for potential economies of scale. There were concerns about shifting costs and/or control from one jurisdiction to another. Planning should happen at a regional level, but implementation should be local.
- Many felt that water quality and watershed protection is a regional concern and needs to be addressed by the state. Plans that are created to address water quality at the regional scale should also be implemented by a regional authority.



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- Transportation planning at the regional scale may improve allocation of financial resources.

**Housing - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Affordable option**
- ✓ **Escalating land values**
- ✓ **Retirees and second homes**
- ✓ **Sustainable, quality developments**

Strategies:		Average
1. Provide incentives for developers to create quality workforce housing.	Effectiveness	<b>2.9</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.6</b>
2. Renovate/eliminate substandard housing.	Effectiveness	<b>3.0</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.9</b>
3. Revise current assessment protocols to assess properties on current use rather than potential uses in order to maintain fairer land values.	Effectiveness	<b>3.1</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.1</b>
4. Encourage home ownership through educational and incentive programs.	Effectiveness	<b>2.8</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.9</b>
5. Promote live-work-play communities.	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.1</b>

- Affordable housing drew diverse comments – is it feasible in all communities?; inclusionary zoning is needed for workforce housing; the market alone will promote exclusionary housing; and availability of affordable housing affects other issues, such as transportation facilities and employers.
- Most agreed that the region needs a net increase in affordable housing. It was recognized that substandard housing can be difficult to address, especially in rural areas.
- “Green” building should be encouraged to promote both affordability and sustainability.
- Renovation of housing was strongly preferred over demolition, especially of historic housing stock.
- Land valuation and taxation produced a great deal of discussion. People supported Strategy 3, as their value should not be affected by what others are doing with their property. Comments also revealed that if conservation easements resulted in lower taxes, then their use would greatly increased.
- Strategy 4 generated much discussion, with some agreeing that the market should direct home ownership possibilities. Others said that the market would create exclusionary housing and that incentives must be required, at least in the near-term, to boost homeownership in many communities.



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- Live-work-play communities will only be viable if there is an adequate employment base; otherwise, such communities must be located near to existing city cores and employment centers in order to maintain the live-work-play connection. These communities were generally supported as also helping to address transportation issues.



**Intergovernmental Coordination - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Education of public officials**
- ✓ **Agency coordination at all levels**
- ✓ **Consistent regional approach and enforcement**

Strategies:		<i>Average</i>
1. Develop educational programs for public officials that include coordination needs and opportunities.	Effectiveness	<b>3.0</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.2</b>
2. Identify and promote opportunities for coordination at the federal, state and local levels.	Effectiveness	<b>3.2</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.2</b>
3. Coordinate local government ordinances, regulations and enforcement.	Effectiveness	<b>3.4</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.0</b>
4. Develop regional programs for economic development, resource protection, and greenspace protection.	Effectiveness	<b>3.2</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.9</b>

- There was very strong support for regional coordination and cooperation and the idea that we must move beyond thinking only to county boundaries. People typically strongly supported the idea and felt it is very important, but also recognized it could be difficult. Strong support was expressed for a regional authority, or strong financial incentives to make coordination occur.
- Many felt that educational opportunities and technical training should also be extended to the staff level, which is where much implementation of policy occurs.
- Education of elected officials and staff was identified as very important, but the continuing support of education is complicated by turnover of elected officials.
- It was widely agreed that regional policies must be enforced uniformly in order for them to be effective.
- In general, all four strategies were strongly supported.

**Land Use - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Preservation of character**
- ✓ **Sustainable, innovative development**
- ✓ **Greenspace protection**
- ✓ **Public access to water**

Strategies:		<i>Average</i>
1. Implement transfer of development rights program and identify, map and designate sending and receiving areas for the program.	Effectiveness	<b>2.9</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.7</b>
2. Direct new development to areas served by existing infrastructure.	Effectiveness	<b>3.5</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.8</b>
3. Ensure that new developments recognize pre-existing land uses and utilize design measures to prevent conflicts.	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.0</b>
4. Require set aside of open space/greenspace in new developments.	Effectiveness	<b>3.6</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.2</b>
5. Preserve and maintain public access to water through ordinances and acquisitions.	Effectiveness	<b>3.6</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.4</b>

- Discussions of a transfer of development rights (TDR) program received diverse responses. Although many groups supported the idea, they recognized it may be difficult to implement. Educating the public and elected officials about the potential benefits of TDR was felt to be essential to their success.
- Strategy 2 received diverse responses, with many agreeing that development should be limited to areas with existing water and sewer services. It was generally supported as a good strategy, but some were concerned about feasibility and suggested that incentives may be needed to hook up to existing services.
- Greenspace protection was strongly supported as both a mandatory requirement in new developments and to establish a permanent funding mechanism, potentially through a real estate transfer fee.
- Many felt that greenspace should be strategically considered on a regional scale in addition to ongoing support of traditional greenspace protection strategies, such as conservation easements.
- Preservation of public access to water should be a high priority. Increases in the coastal population should also be considered, as the need for more points of access will likely have a corresponding increase. Ordinances were generally not viewed as an effective mechanism for protection of public access.

**Natural Resources - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Preservation and conservation**
- ✓ **Water quality and quantity**
- ✓ **Habitat encroachment**

Strategies:		Average
1. Preserve sensitive areas from encroachment by development by directing new development to suitable locations.	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.1</b>
2. Actively enforce environmental protection ordinances and regulations.	Effectiveness	<b>3.7</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.4</b>
3. Promote sustainable stormwater management (green infrastructure, low impact development) to address water quality, quantity, and natural hydrologic conditions.	Effectiveness	<b>3.6</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.3</b>
4. Identify sensitive habitat areas and educate the public, local government officials, and the development community mechanisms to protect such areas.	Effectiveness	<b>3.4</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.4</b>

- Strategy 1 is difficult because many of the sensitive areas are those that are most attractive to development. Environmentally sensitive areas should be ranked as to their level of importance.
- Many felt that the best and most effective way to protect sensitive areas was for state or conservation organizations to purchase and manage them.
- Programs need to be more than voluntary, but property owners should be adequately compensated.
- Active enforcement of environmental regulations was identified as absolutely necessary. Political protection should be provided to the enforcement personnel for doing their job.
- The need for green infrastructure plans and stormwater management BMPs were widely supported and should be encouraged or required by development regulations. Many believed this is already happening or will in the near future.
- Public health consequences of not protecting environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources need to be considered when guiding development. Water quality is especially important not just to ecosystems but to human health.
- Strategy 4 was supported but there was concern that not enough staff or political will is currently in place to educate the public and development community and to implement the necessary programs.

**Transportation - Major Themes:**

- ✓ **Public transportation**
- ✓ **Funding**
- ✓ **Evacuation**
- ✓ **Availability of alternative modes**
- ✓ **Congestion**

Strategies:		Average
1. Implement a regional public transportation system that is integrated with local systems and includes a variety of opportunities (park and ride, carpool/vanpool programs, transit, etc.).	Effectiveness	<b>3.3</b>
	Acceptability	<b>2.9</b>
2. Include transportation impacts/evacuation needs in the assessment of new developments.	Effectiveness	<b>3.4</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.1</b>
3. Require provisions for alternative modes (walking, cycling, etc.) in new developments, new transportation projects and in transportation improvement projects.	Effectiveness	<b>3.5</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.3</b>
4. Integrate and coordinate transportation with land use.	Effectiveness	<b>3.7</b>
	Acceptability	<b>3.4</b>

- There was strong support for regional public transportation, though many agreed that it would be difficult to pay for and implement. A growing and aging population, however, will eventually require some kind of networked public transportation infrastructure. Support was expressed for passenger rail, bus service, and van pools.
- Strategy 3 was recognized as perhaps the easiest to implement and most acceptable. Support was expressed for the great potential for a regional trail system, which would enhance alternative transportation, economic development, and quality of life.
- There were varied opinions as to how the public facilities would actually work. For example, some felt that bicycle lanes should be provided alongside the roadways, while others felt that they should be kept separate from vehicular traffic.
- Simple strategies, such as park-and-rides and van pools, are proven to work and should be implemented.
- Input regarding evacuation varied widely – some felt it was essential to evaluate, while others felt that evacuation criteria was a poor excuse for widening roads, especially in sensitive areas, since sophisticated forecasting provides plenty of advanced warning for evacuation.
- Strategy 4 was felt to be essential to the overall success of a regional plan.



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# Community Choices Survey Results

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a part of the public involvement effort, outlined in the Stakeholder Involvement Process, a Community Choices pictorial survey was developed and presented during the public workshops. The survey was designed to solicit first impressions of participants on the types of development and community design features depicted in the survey presentation. The survey was conducted at the first round of SIP public involvement meetings, held in Liberty County (Midway), Chatham County (Savannah), and Camden County (Kingsland). The survey was also available on the Coastal Georgia Comprehensive Plan website for anyone accessing the site to complete.

The survey, in conjunction with the other planning components and public involvement opportunities, will help guide the planning process in establishing the framework for future development in the Coastal Region.

In order to assess the survey results, the images were categorized into three main groups: Setting, Land Use, Transportation Orientation, and into subsets within each of these main groups. The defined subsets included:

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Transportation Orientation</b>
Rural	Commercial	Automobile
Suburban	Institutional	Pedestrian
Village (Small Town)	Mixed Use	Multi-modal
Urban	Public (Parks, etc)	Not Applicable (N/A)
Unknown	Residential (Single Family)	
	Residential (Multi Family)	
	Undeveloped	

Within the Setting category, the most preferred images were those depicting rural scenes and the least preferred were suburban images. Within the Land Use category, the most preferred images were those depicting public and/or undeveloped spaces and commercial scenes were the least preferred. The most preferred images in the Transportation Orientation category were those depicting a multi-modal alternative and the least preferred scenes were automobile oriented images.

However, within each of the least preferred categories, there were images that scored as highly preferred. These diverging results indicate that scenes with inviting character and attractive design elements scored well regardless of setting, land use or orientation.



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## BACKGROUND

As a part of the public involvement process, outlined in the Stakeholder Involvement Program (SIP), a Community Choices pictorial survey was developed for presentation at the round of public workshops.

The survey was intended to help the public visualize various elements of community and urban design and to identify their preferred development patterns and community design elements. The survey will be used in conjunction with other components of the planning process to determine the framework for future development in the Coastal Region.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The use of pictorial surveys provides an engaging, interactive and relatively simple method to evaluate the preferences of stakeholders. In this process, workshop participants were shown a selection of scenes illustrating a wide variety of development and community design elements and asked to rate them on a preference scale. In addition, descriptive information, such as age, current area of residence, and length of time in the region was requested from the respondents.

Participants were asked to rank each of the images, using a scale from 1 through 8, with 1 being the least preferred and 8 being the highly preferred. During the survey, each image was displayed for approximately 10 to 15 seconds, and participants were asked to record their first impressions utilizing the scale. A wide variety of scenes were utilized to illustrate existing development concepts from the Georgia Coast and those typical of modern development throughout the Southeastern United States.

The images shown in the Community Choices survey are categorized into three major groups: Setting, Land Use, and Transportation Orientation. Setting describes the images based on the level of urbanization and development and each image was identified and assigned to a subset. Those scenes where the setting was not apparent were labeled "Unknown". The following subsets were used in the Setting category:

### Setting

- Rural
- Suburban
- Village (Small Town)
- Urban
- Unknown



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The “Land Use” category describes the type of land use depicted within the image. Scenes exhibiting a lack of organized development were identified as “Undeveloped.” The following subsets were used in the Land Use category.

### Land Use

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Public (Parks, etc)
- Residential (Single Family)
- Residential (Multiple Family)
- Undeveloped

The third group, “Transportation Orientation” was designed to depict the various levels of interaction between land use and transportation and included a variety of modes. Images where both automobile and alternative modes of transportation were present, or could reasonably be assumed to be in use, were classified as “Multi-modal”. This multi-modal classification does vary across the settings. For example, a rural driveway leading to several homes was assumed to support pedestrian travel, whereas a similar scene within a suburban subdivision was only classified as “Multi-modal” if a continuous sidewalk was visible. If a transportation orientation was not easily perceptible, it was classified as “Not Applicable.” The following subsets were used in the Transportation Orientation group:

### Transportation Orientation

- Automobile
- Pedestrian
- Multi-modal
- Not/Applicable (N/A)

In addition to the three main categories, each image was reviewed to determine if it exhibited characteristics of the following descriptions:

- Historic/Cultural/Traditional
- Natural Environment
- Coastal Character
- New-Urbanism/Neo-Traditional

## SURVEY RESULTS

The survey was conducted at the first round of SIP public involvement meetings, held in Liberty County (Midway), Chatham County (Savannah), and Camden County (Kingsland). In addition,

the survey was posted on the Coastal Georgia Comprehensive Plan website where those accessing the site could participate in the survey on-line.

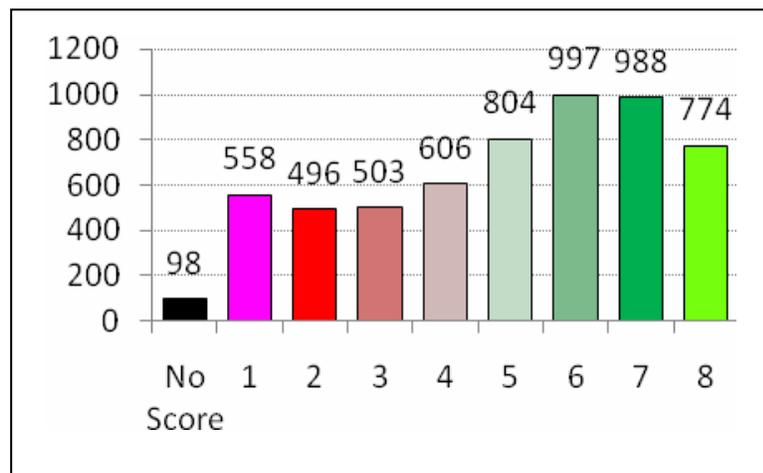
The number of survey responses returned from all four venues totaled 97. The breakdown of the participants by venue is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Participants

Venue	Number of Responses
Liberty Co. (Midway)	36
Chatham Co. (Savannah)	28
Camden Co. (Kingsland)	27
CGCP Website	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>

Details on how the entire Community Choices survey was scored are provided in Figure 1. Overall, survey respondents had a positive preference towards the images within the survey: 62% of the total scores were in the positive preference range 5 through 8.

Figure 1. Community Choice Survey Results





## Setting

As outlined in the methodology section, the survey images were classified within the Setting group into the following categories:

- Rural
- Suburban
- Village (Small Town)
- Urban
- Unknown

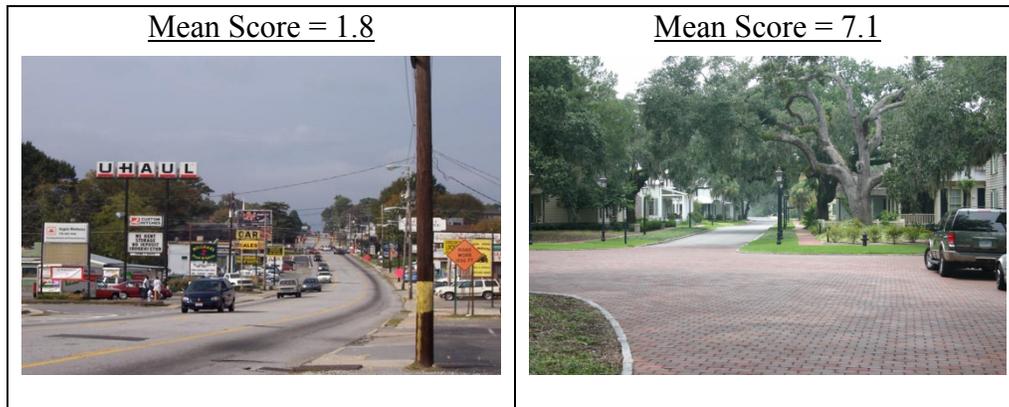
In general, scenes depicting rural areas were the most preferred and suburban areas were least preferred by survey participants. Pictures illustrating areas with a more centralized population (urban and village) were roughly in the middle. These relative preferences were consistent across the survey sample regardless of the reported residence of the respondent, with the exception of the respondent from McIntosh County and the respondents from outside the six coastal counties. Table 2 contains the detailed breakdown of preferences by residence of the participants.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Setting Preferences by Residence of Respondent

	Bryan	Camden	Chatham	Glynn	Liberty	McIntosh	Other	Not Supplied	Overall
<b>Rural</b>	6.3	6.2	6.6	6.3	6.3	7.3	6.2	6.2	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Urban</b>	5.6	5.6	6.5	5.7	5.4	4.6	4.9	5.7	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Village</b>	5.3	5.5	5.9	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.4	<b>5.5</b>
<b>Suburban</b>	5.3	4.6	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2	3.6	4.6	<b>4.3</b>

While the suburban category was least preferred overall, it contained by far the most number of pictures (35) and significant variation existed across the category: the highest scoring suburban image had a mean score of 7.1 while the lowest received a 1.8 mean score. For illustration purposes, these two images are shown in Figure 2.

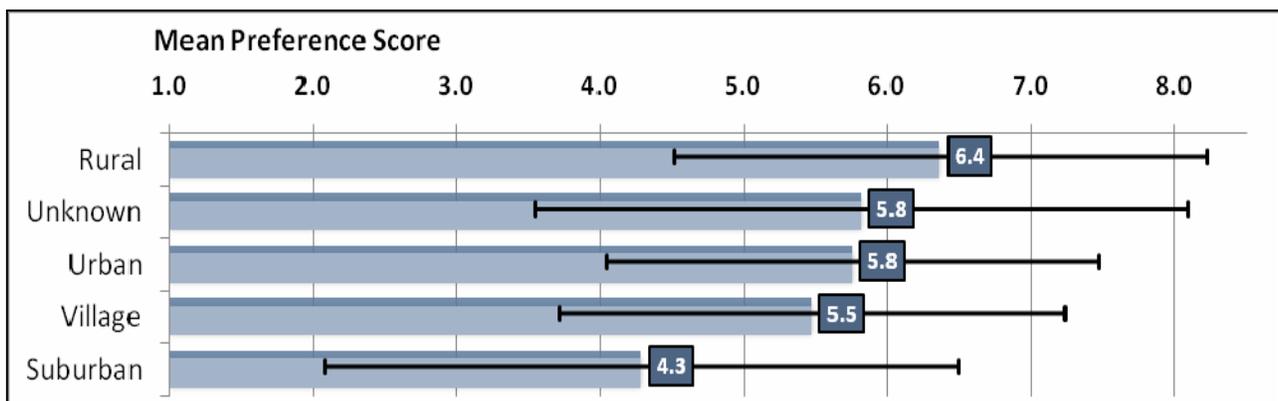
Figure 2. Variation in Suburban Setting Images



In general, those suburban scenes with an inviting character, often exhibiting high quality landscaping, significant public greenspace or attractive design elements, scored well while scenes with uninviting characteristics scored poorly. The lowest scoring images were clearly oriented towards automobile associated uses. This relationship will be further discussed in the “Transportation Orientation” section of the findings.

Because the images within the Suburban category are so dramatically disparate with regard to overall attractiveness, caution should be exercised when comparing summary statistics of the Suburban category with those of the other categories. The mean preference scores of each subset of the Setting category are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Mean Preference Score – Setting



## Land Use

Each image was classified into an applicable land use subset as follows:

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Public (Parks, etc)
- Residential (Single Family)
- Residential (Multiple Family)
- Undeveloped

Pictures within the Community Choices survey that conveyed an impression of undeveloped land or public/common space were substantially preferred to those illustrating higher levels of development. In addition, images depicting a mix of land uses were generally preferred to those of separate and distinct uses, with commercial use the least preferred of all use types.

There was a wide variation in the scores associated with pictures showing commercial land uses, and this suggests that other characteristics in each scene were important in the scoring process. Similar to the variation seen in the Suburban Setting category, these characteristics speak to the attractiveness and organization of the scene. Higher scoring scenes had clear pathways for the movement of people, structured design elements to differentiate each establishment, and attractive natural landscaping. Scenes that scored poorly were cluttered (poor signage control, in particular) and clearly focused on the role of the automobile. Figure 4 contains two of the commercial images that scored at either end of the spectrum. Figure 5 provides the mean preference score of the Land Use Category. Relative preferences with respect to land use were consistent across the survey sample.

Figure 4. Variation in Commercial Land Use Images

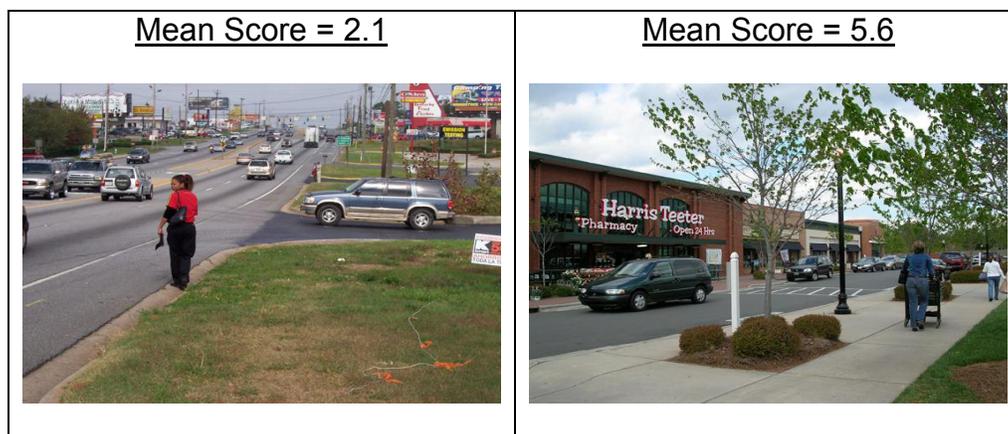
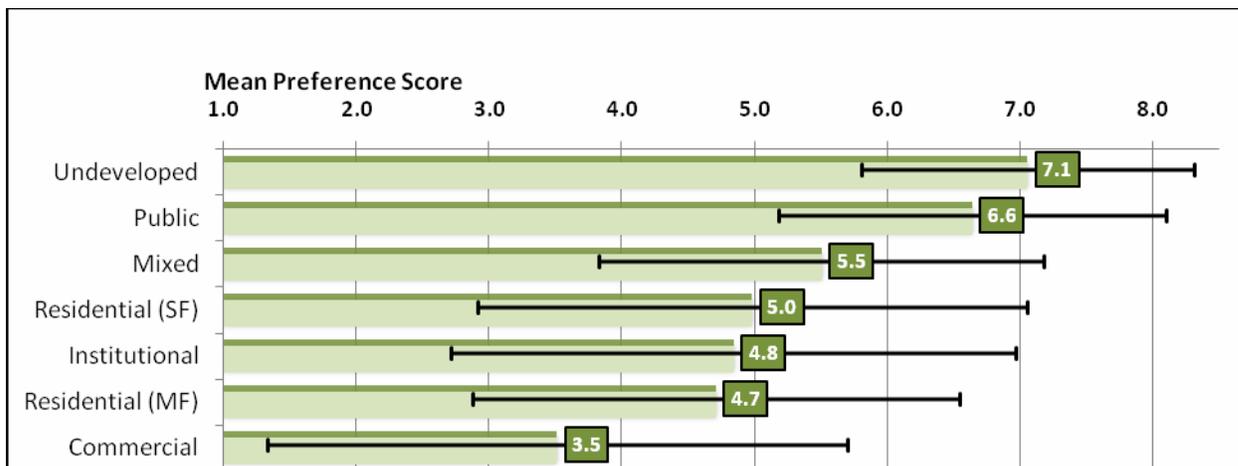


Figure 5. Preferences By Land Use Category

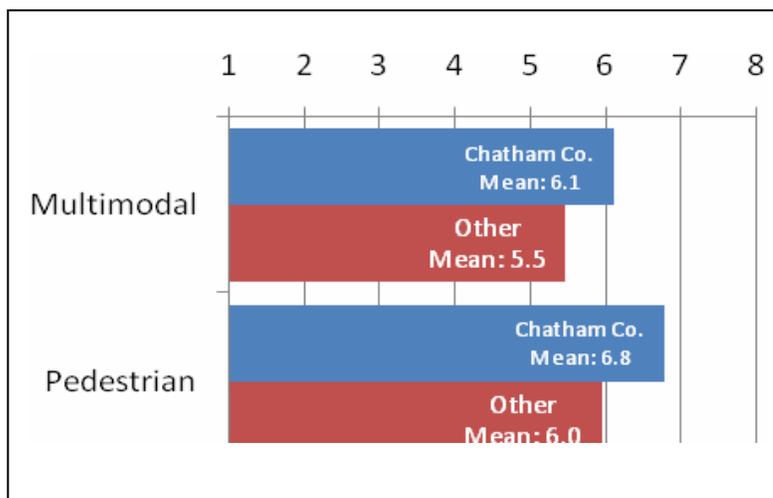


### Transportation Orientation

Of the three categories identified for this survey, preferences with regard to transportation orientation were the most clearly defined. Scenes with pedestrian and multi-modal oriented environments were clearly preferred to those that focused most heavily on the automobile. Again, while some variation existed between preferences expressed for pedestrian and multi-modal environments, the relative preferences with respect to transportation orientation were consistent across the survey sample.

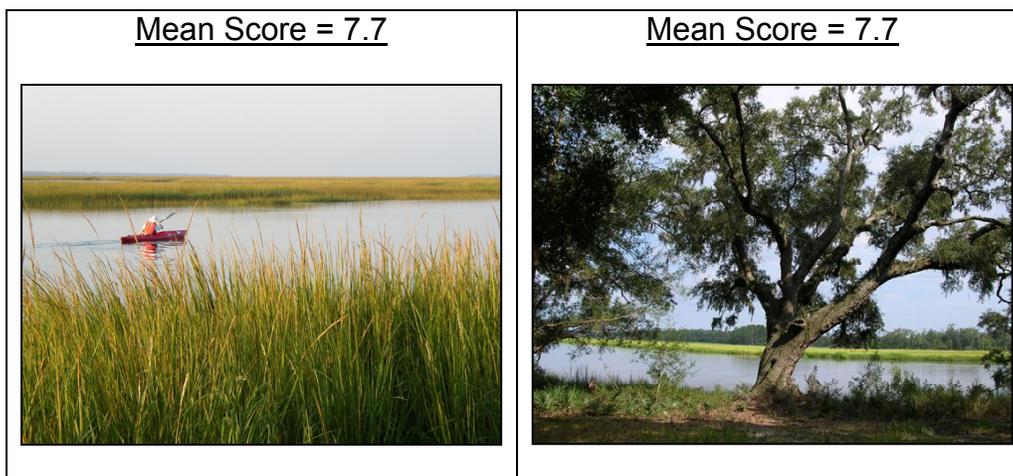
The variation between preferences expressed for pedestrian and multi-modal environments could be a result of the relative intensity of development depicted within the images. Pedestrian-oriented scenes were the most likely to illustrate urban forms of development while multi-modal oriented pictures include a range of development intensities, from predominantly rural to predominantly urban. This is borne out in the expressed preferences of the survey respondents. For example, Chatham County residents consistently scored images oriented towards multi-modal and pedestrian transportation modes an average of 11% and 13% higher than other respondents, respectively. This example is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Chatham County Multi-modal and Pedestrian Scores



Those scenes without a transportation orientation scored were the most preferred. These images included scenes of undeveloped land, natural recreation areas, and uniquely coastal elements. In this light it is not surprising the mean score is relatively high. These images are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Most Preferred Scenes



As previously stated, images conveying a sense of automobile dependence or orientation were clearly the least preferred. In general, only images of commercial land uses were less preferred. As with the Suburban Setting and Commercial Land Use categories, the Auto Orientation category contained a significant number of relatively

unattractive images and this likely contributes to their poor scores. Five of the 28 images in the category received a mean score of 2.0 or less.

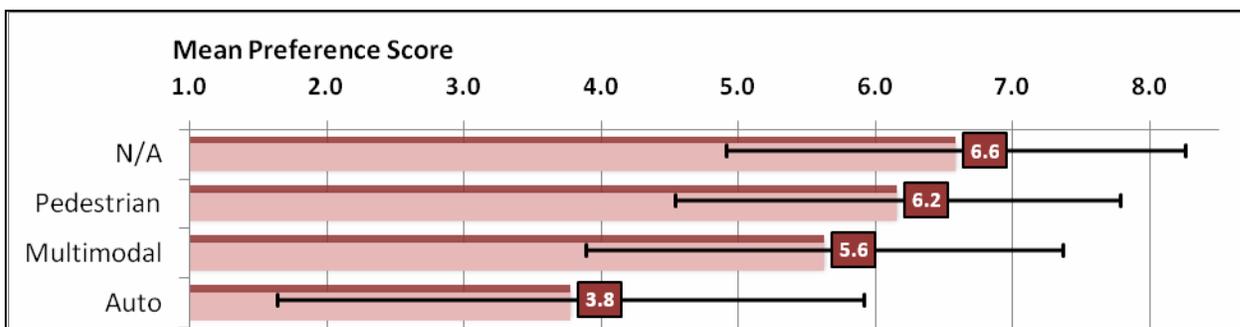
These five images do not completely explain the difference in scores between the categories, but it is unclear if the remaining differentiation can be placed solely upon the transportation orientation of the scenes. For example, within the Mixed Use Land Use category, images oriented towards pedestrian/multi-modal elements did not score dramatically different from automobile-oriented scenes. A comparison is provided in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Mixed-Use Multi-modal and Automobile Orientation Comparison



However, there is a clear correlation between the factors that constitute “attractiveness” and transportation orientation that does provide insight into the expressed preferences of the survey respondents. Simply put, scenes that contain characteristics the respondents prefer were much more likely to be multi-modal or pedestrian oriented than automobile oriented. Figure 9 depicts the mean preference score for the Transportation Orientation category.

Figure 9. Preferences By Transportation Orientation



### Additional Categories

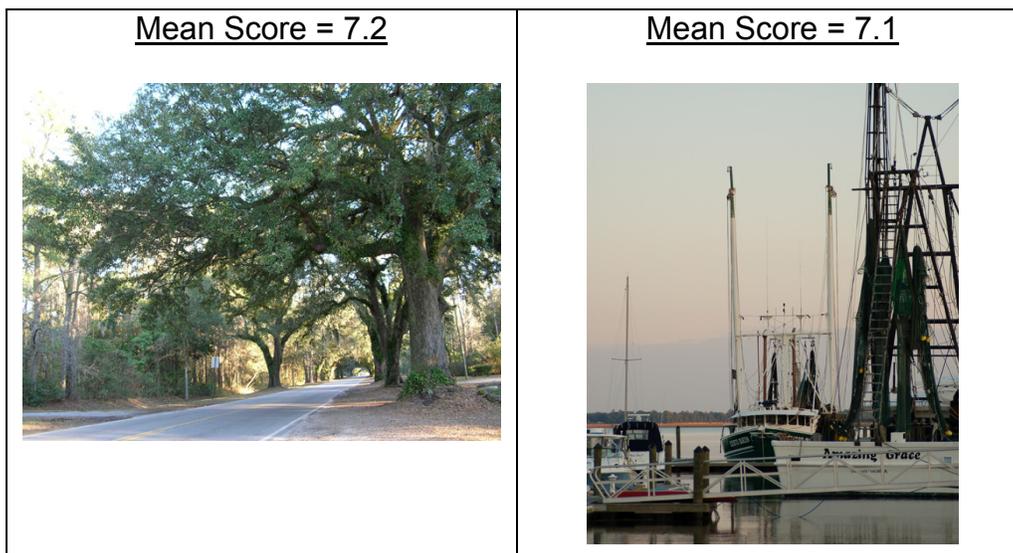
Each of the images was also classified into additional categories. These categories were established to better refine and understand the results from the survey. The information provided by these categories is also an effort to gauge the importance of uniquely coastal characteristics and the current leading development trends in the region. The additional categories include:

- Historical/Cultural/Traditional
- Natural
- Coastal
- New Urbanist/Neo-Traditional

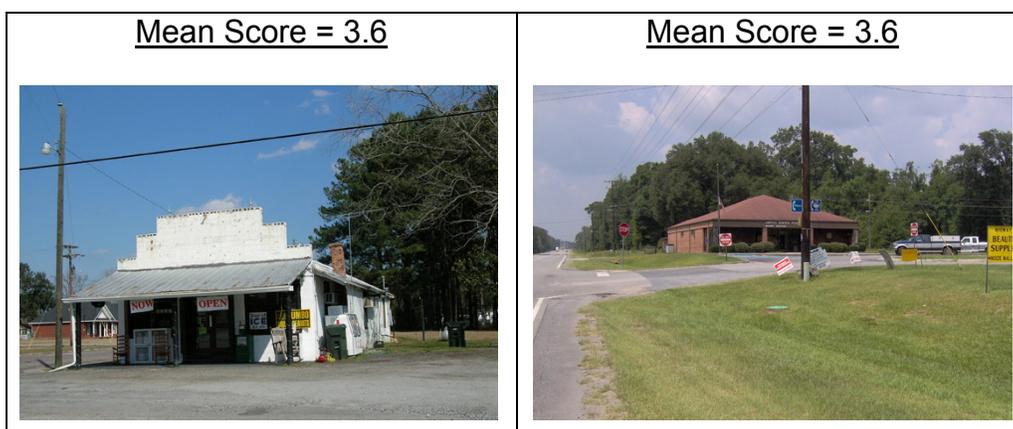
### Historical/Cultural/Traditional

The images that scored the highest within this category depicted scenes that are distinctly coastal. There were 21 images classified in this category and the scores ranged from a high of 7.2 to a low score of 3.6. Those scenes that were the least preferred were pictures from the coastal area, but both lacked any attractive design elements. This scoring re-enforces the conclusion that regardless of the coastal nature of the image, attractive design elements are an integral element in scoring preference. Figure 10 depicts the two most preferred images and the two least preferred images from this category.

Figure 10. Most Preferred Scenes



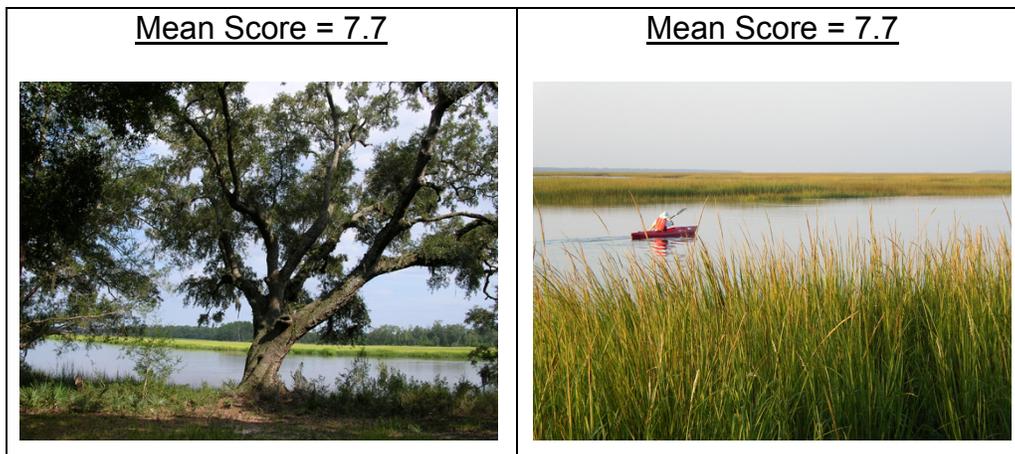
*Least Preferred Scenes*



Natural

The images identified in this category scored distinctly higher, with an average score of 6.8. There were 8 images in this category and the scores ranged from a high of 7.7, with two images, to a low score of 5.5. The image that was the least preferred was a picture of a landscaped garden, which, while attractive, was obviously suburban in nature. Those pictures that scored as the most preferred were rural and undeveloped or were scenes from a park and/or greenspace. This scoring reflects the preferences identified overall and the two images were the highest scoring images in the survey. Figure 11 depicts the two most preferred images and the least preferred image from this category.

Figure 11. Most Preferred Scenes



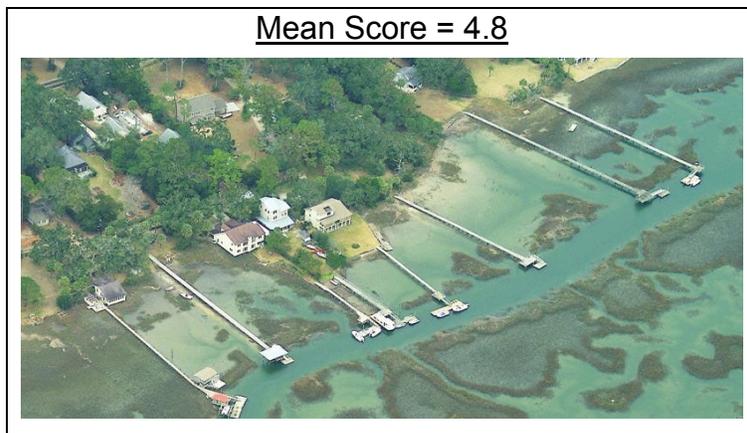
Least Preferred Scene



## Coastal

There were only 4 images identified in this category which focused on those elements or characteristics that are unique to the Coastal Region. Two of these images were the highest scoring images overall and the third image was one of the most preferred overall, with a mean score of 7.1. The fourth image scored much lower and depicted the overdevelopment of the coast line. Again, the scoring of this category reflects the bias of the respondents to uniquely coastal images and the concern over development patterns in the region. Figure 12 contains the image with the lowest mean score in this category. The two highest scoring images are shown previously in Figure 11.

## Least Preferred Scene

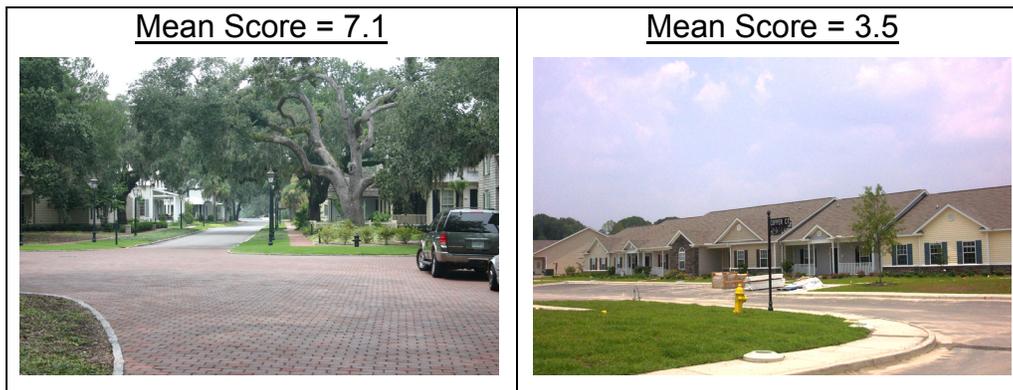


## New Urbanist/Neo-Traditional

The primary trend for new developments, both greenfield and infill, along the coast, as well as other regions, is the neo-traditional model. The elements making up these developments are intended to model characteristics found in cities that developed in an earlier time, with connected transportation networks, accommodations for alternative modes of travel, and orientation to the front streetscape, rather than the backyard. Many developments contain some of the characteristics, but still maintain much of the traditional suburban detail.

This category contained 11 images, of which all but 2 were defined as suburban. Those 2 were defined as urban, but with a multi-modal or pedestrian orientation. The scoring preference in this category ranged from a high of 7.1 to a low score of 3.5. The highest scoring image contains attractive design elements and landscaping. The lowest scoring image, while also suburban and in a neo-traditional design, does not contain those design characteristics that are attractive to the respondents. These two images are contained in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Variation in New Urbanist/Neo-Traditional Images



## CONCLUSION

The overall results of the Community Choices survey shows that the most preferred images were those that depicted distinct and unique coastal scenes, such as a view of a marsh and river and live oak trees.

Each of the three categories contained images within specific subsets that were, in general, the most preferred. Within the Setting category, the most preferred images were those depicting rural scenes and the least preferred were suburban images. Within the Land Use category, the most preferred images were those depicting public and/or undeveloped spaces and commercial scenes were the least preferred. The most preferred images in the Transportation Orientation category were those depicting a multi-modal alternative and the least preferred scenes were automobile-oriented images. However, within each of the least preferred categories, there were images that also scored as highly preferred.

The overall conclusion shows that regardless of setting, land use, or orientation, scenes that had an inviting character and attractive design elements score well.



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