

# Town of Edisto Beach



## *Comprehensive Plan 2010*

*Town of Edisto Beach  
Planning Commission*

*Lowcountry Council of  
Governments*

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**TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH**

**AN ORDINANCE**

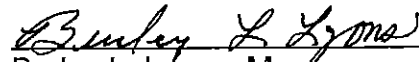
**TO ADOPT THE 2010 VERSION OF THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code §§ 6-29-310, et seq.) [the Act] requires the Town to adopt and maintain a Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the Town has adopted by resolution a revised Comprehensive Plan after careful thought and deliberation and presented same to Town Council for adoption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Edisto Beach, South Carolina, in council duly assembled that the 2010 Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Edisto Beach, South Carolina, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted pursuant to the provisions of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code §§ 6-29-310, et seq.) and all prior editions of the Comprehensive Plan are hereby repealed.

This ordinance shall take effect upon final reading.

  
Burley L. Lyons, Mayor

Public Hearing: December 15, 2009

First Reading: January 14, 2010

Amended: February 11, 2010

Final Reading: February 11, 2010

ATTEST:

  
Iris Hill, Administrator

Approved as to form: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Elbert O. Duffie III, Town Attorney

**WHEREAS**, the State of South Carolina mandates that every municipality with a Comprehensive must revise its Plan every five years, with a complete update every ten years

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Edisto Beach has directed the Planning Commission to revise the Town's official Comprehensive Plan

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council, Planning Commission, Town staff and citizens of the Town of Edisto Beach are committed to directing growth and development in the Town in order to preserve the unique lifestyle of this special beach community

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council, Planning Commission and Town staff have worked closely with the Lowcountry Council of Governments in revising the Comprehensive Plan and have created a carefully drawn updated version of the Plan

***NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH RESOLVES*** as follows:

The Planning Commission of the Town of Edisto Beach recommends for adoption, the Comprehensive Plan, as revised, for adoption by the Town Council of Edisto Beach

## *Introduction and Vision*

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### **Background**

The Town of Edisto Beach's Comprehensive Plan was first completed for the Town in 1996 in compliance with the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, which defines a set of requirements that must be met for the planning activities of a local government to be enforceable. The Enabling Act requires specific plan elements for implementation ordinances to be legal, defines required comprehensive plan elements, the role of the Town Council and Planning Commission, and the public review process and procedures for adopting comprehensive plans. It also establishes a life cycle for comprehensive plans; the 1994 Enabling Legislation for South Carolina requires that:

“The local Planning Commission shall review the Comprehensive Plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The Comprehensive Plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years.”

The initial Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1996 by LCOG planning staff and was adopted by the Town Council in the winter of 1996. Following the adoption of the plan, LCOG staff reviewed and revised the Town's zoning ordinance to bring it into compliance with the Enabling Act. During 2002 and 2003 LCOG planning staff assisted Town officials in a very detailed review of the Plan (including the development of a housing conditions database) and the changes in the community since 1996. The Town adopted the reevaluation in 2003.

Because of the changes that have occurred since 2003, and also the ongoing development and environmental pressures experienced by Edisto Beach, and the State requirement that the plan be updated every 10 years, the Town's Planning Commission began an update in the fall of 2006 with an initial draft completed in July 2007. LCOG planning staff was again contracted by the Town upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission to update the draft plan to incorporate the changes in the community since 2003. Because Edisto Beach does not exist in a vacuum, changes occurring in the rest of the Lowcountry, the state of South Carolina and the

United States as a whole also impact the community. As a result, the impacts of economic, real estate marketing and other factors were included in this update.

The 2009 Town of Edisto Beach Comprehensive Plan Update contains the following elements in compliance with the Enabling Legislation, as updated in the spring of 2007:

- History
- Population/Demographic Data
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Priority Investment Areas

The present document is a 10-year update, and a five-year review is required by the Enabling Act by 2012 (at the latest).

### **Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan: 1996-2007**

Since the adoption of the original Comprehensive Plan and then following the adoption of the 2003 revision, Town of Edisto Beach staff and elected/appointed officials have made a concerted effort to implement the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The effectiveness of the Town's efforts since 2003 can be measured by the identified accomplishments listed below.

#### **Beach/Dunes Protection**

- The Town continues to use the Beachfront Management Plan to direct both new development and redevelopment as far landward as possible.
- To encourage new construction away from the beach, the Town continues to utilize a "Beach Management Overlay Zoning District" to enforce the retreat strategy and storm hazard mitigation requirements within the baseline established by the South Carolina Office of Coastal Resource Management.

- The Town, with funding from the local municipal government, Colleton County and the Federal Government, had an \$8M beach restoration project completed during the spring of 2006.
- Groin numbers 1-23 were refurbished in 2005 at a cost of \$262,204.00
- The Town, as well as the State Park, utilized volunteers to complete a sand fencing project from the northern end of the State Park campground to the beginning of the sound on the southern end of the Town's beach area. As of the spring of 2007 it was visually obvious that sand dunes were beginning to develop along the sand fencing. Additionally, existing sand fencing has been repaired/replaced up to the Summer of 2009, and some fencing has been added to "fill in the gaps"

### **Flood Mitigation**

- The Town continues to enforce regulations to ensure that both new buildings and buildings that are being "substantially improved" must comply with flood regulations.
- The Town continues to utilize a plan developed after 1996 for educating the public about flood hazards and how to prevent flood losses by including the information in visitor brochures and with the Town's annual "Flood Hazards Outreach Project."
- To control the amount of impervious surfaces which can lead to flooding, an ordinance continues to be enforced limiting the footprint and size of a single family dwelling.
- A tree ordinance revision was adopted in 2006 adding additional protective measures for historic and protected trees including the root system under the tree canopy. The Town continues to require that a permit be issued for the removal of historic trees and land clearing with the tree commission determining if replacement trees are needed.
- A Storm Water Management Plan was adopted in 2007, which imposes additional restrictions on new development.

### **Stormwater Drainage & Septic/Sewer Issues**

- B. P. Barber & Associates completed their short term and long term recommendations and cost estimates for improving storm water drainage. This was utilized in developing the Storm Water Management Plan referred to on the previous page.

- The Town’s Water & Wastewater Committee in 2006 selected American Engineering Co. to evaluate the wastewater treatment plant and the water distribution system. A preliminary evaluation on the wastewater treatment plan was presented by American Engineering in March, 2007. This report concluded that there is adequate capacity to extend the sewer system approximately 20 blocks for front beach housing.
- The Town adopted an ordinance amendment in March, 2007 which restricts irrigation systems that utilize Town water, to watering three days a week during the busy summer tourist season.
- The Town could dramatically increase its sewer treatment capacity without increasing the footprint of the current facility.
- American Engineering also presented their preliminary findings on the water distribution system. The current available water volume was found to be adequate but the distribution system is the limiting factor during the busy summer tourist season. The tentative conclusion is that larger storage capacity and larger piping will be required.

### **Community Facilities**

- The Town was awarded grants to refurbish sidewalks. The initial phase was completed in 2006 with the second session completed in early 2007. Additional applications for grants have been submitted.
- The Town has recently acquired the Bell Buoy property and facilities are planned for this location.
- The Fire Department has added a new fire truck with an extension ladder and a quick response brush truck.
- The Town utilized the “Beach Access Management Study” prepared by Clemson University to plan beach access improvements in 2005. In 2006, 15 of the 34 beach accesses were improved utilizing a grant and matching funds. An additional grant was received in 2007 and further improvements are planned. Accesses have been marked on the road and beach sides with numbered signs for easy identification of location in case of medical emergency.
- New bike paths have been added to the Town of Edisto Beach.



- Construction is planned on a new reception center for the Edisto Beach State Park on Hwy. 174.
- The parking area at the beach area of the Edisto Beach State Park was extensively revised and improved in 2006.
- A new restroom facility was completed for the cabin area of the Edisto Beach State Park. The cabins have also been updated with new interior and exterior cosmetic changes, and their HVAC systems were upgraded.

### **Overview of Changes in and Affecting the Town of Edisto Beach**

Since the Plan review was completed five years ago, a number of significant changes have occurred in the Town, the County, in coastal South Carolina and beyond that have altered the planning environment, compared to that which existed in 2002 and 2003. Chief among these are:

- Slower, but reasonably robust, growth. Between 2000 and 2007, the rate of growth in Edisto Beach was nearly 10 times the rate for Colleton County as a whole, but lower than that of the whole Lowcountry region. At an annual average of 1.53 percent, the 2000 to 2007 growth rate was lower than the Town's previous annual average of 8.85 percent between 1990 and 2000. The lower growth rate during the later period may be a result of the implementation of the growth management policies and practices in Edisto Beach's 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the lessening availability of developable land or the less buoyant US economy—or a combination of all three and other factors.
- Changes in the Real Estate Market. The period from approximately 2000 to 2006 was one of the most overheated eras in residential real estate in many areas of the US, including Edisto Beach. Rapid, large and continued price increases throughout that period led to the purchase of residential real estate as second homes and investment/rental properties. Edisto Beach, as one of the few relatively unspoiled and traditional beach resorts on the southern Atlantic coast, attracted its share of buyers whose purchasers were in those two categories. At this time it remains to be seen if Edisto Beach will suffer the

negative fallout from the collapse of various segments of the residential real estate market.

- **Expectations of Future Growth.** The combination of growth management by the Town of Edisto Beach and the slow down in the local, state and national economies will likely mean slower growth than that experienced by the Town between 2000 and 2007.
- **New Municipal and County Planning Cooperation.** The preparation of Colleton County's Comprehensive Plan has involved cooperation and consultation with the municipalities to an extent that was never attempted before, and it is expected that this approach will continue based on the completed plan. One of the key recommendations of the Plan is to encourage the municipalities to annex the lands around their present municipal boundaries into which they have already expanded or expect to expand in the foreseeable future. The reasons for this include encouraging orderly growth outward from existing built-up areas and discouraging sprawl and "leapfrogging" development. Obviously residents of these areas would have to give their approval to any annexation proposals.

## **A Vision and Planning Goals for the Town of Edisto Beach**

The Town of Edisto Beach presently offers its permanent residents, and also its visitors and part-time residents, a quality of life that should be protected and enhanced. The combination of mostly single-family homes, traditional beachfront cottages, small-scale retail and commercial development to serve only residents and visitors, “walkability,” formal and informal bike paths, traditional grid pattern streets, dunes and public-access beaches is now being imitated by new special-purpose beach towns in Florida. The so-called “neo-traditional” communities of Seaside and Rosemary Beach, for instance, are very expensive imitations of what comes naturally to Edisto Beach. These special qualities and opportunities, however, need to be preserved and extended into new development and redevelopment by means of continued enforcement of this updated *Comprehensive Plan* and the revisions to the *Zoning Ordinance*.

To ensure that future growth, both inside and outside the current municipal boundaries, occurs in a manner which is as favorable for all the current residents as it is to the future prosperity of the Town, the following should be achieved:

- ***Land use and development*** patterns for the incorporated portion of the Town should continue the present grid street pattern and building scale and height, with an emphasis on connectivity between existing and new residential development or redevelopment by means of pedestrian and bicycle systems, as well as roads. Likewise, new commercial and retail development should also be pedestrian-oriented. Appropriately scaled and designed new development will be encouraged to maintain the integrity of the community. Careful infrastructure planning and capital budgeting should balance the Town’s long range vision with the rights of landowners.
- ***Natural resources*** should continue to be protected and enhanced, maintaining these invaluable resources for present and future residents and visitors.
- ***Public services*** must adequately and efficiently meet the demands of the Town’s growing population, with infrastructure investments strategically planned to help implement the Town’s land use goals and maximize long term value. To allow for a manageable increase in the level and quality of public services and facilities, a

coordinated, comprehensive infrastructure investment plan and capital improvements budget needs to be implemented. New growth should pay for itself without creating undue financial burdens on the Town's existing population. The Town should explore the implementation of impact fees to offset the cost of development.