

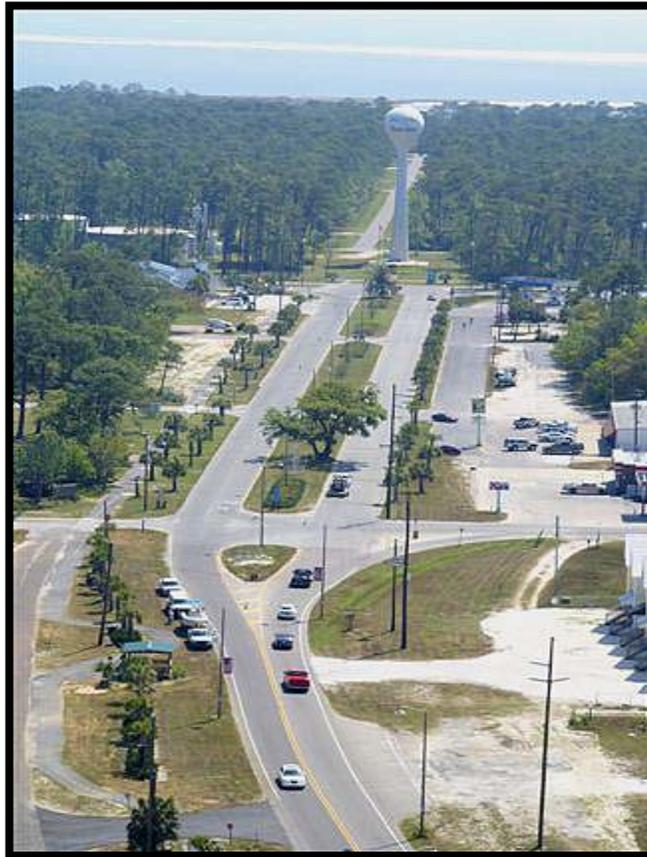
*Dauphin Island Strategic Plan*  
*A 20 Year Vision*

# Final Report & First Five Years of Implementation Recommendations

*submitted by*

*Five E's Unlimited*

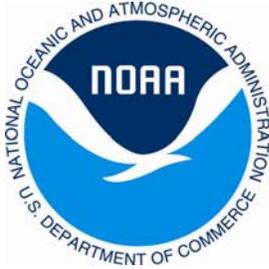
Seattle, WA 98101  
rwflint@eeee.net



**October 15, 2007**

This publication was supported by the National Sea Grant College Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under NOAA Grant # NA06OAR4170078, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, The Town of Dauphin Island, Five E's Unlimited, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-State Lands Division. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of any of those organizations. Publication number: MASGP07-023.

This publication was supported by the National Sea Grant College Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under NOAA Grant # NA06OAR4170078, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, The Town of Dauphin Island, Five E’s Unlimited, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-State Lands Division. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of any of those organizations. Any duplication of this document is protected under copyright and can only be done with explicit approval from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium and/or the Town of Dauphin Island.



*The Town of Dauphin Island*



Proper citation for this Report is the following:

**Five E’s Unlimited. 2007. Dauphin Island Strategic Plan – 20 Year Vision: Final Report & Implementation Recommendations. Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium Publication Number: MASGP07-023. 58 pp.**

## Dauphin Island Strategic Planning

# Final Report & Implementation Recommendations

### Executive Summary

The Dauphin Island community recognizes the importance of the Island's natural resources and ecologic systems toward improving future economic development and societal well-being. But at the same time, the Town shows great concern for potential uncontrolled growth that might degrade these resources and the community's quality of life. Likewise, the Town's people recognize there is real possibility for significant change on the Island landscape in the years to come because of recent natural disasters. Wanting to be in control of their own destiny with regard to anticipated change has motivated stakeholders to engage in a strategic planning process and build consensus on sustainable development programs that will collectively improve resource management, land-use, economic vitality, and community growth over the next several decades for the well-being of all stakeholders. To guide strategic planning the community defined its share vision for the next 20-30 years.

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

The Dauphin Island community has a "clean slate" to work from in its efforts to reinvent itself. The importance of this opportunity to the community is obvious from its recent economic decline. But the chance to solve many of its problems in a holistic context is also important to Alabama in general with regard to the Island continuing to serve as a storm buffer protecting the mainland from storms and providing a recreational area – still in its natural conditions – to residents of Mobile County, the State of Alabama and beyond.

Approximately 1,000 Dauphin Island stakeholders participated (through surveys, workshops, Internet programming, personal conversations, etc.) over the last eight months to identify the important focus areas and strategic actions that will move the community toward sustainability. Major areas identified for potential improvement included community development, environmental protection, economic improvement, unified governance, and means for capitalizing on the Island's cultural assets and tourism/recreational resources. Large-scale measures the community believes are needed include (1) re-design of a downtown village business district – that retains a small-town feel – closely linked with all other commercial efforts, (2) new and improved efforts by the four Island governing entities to cooperate in a more flexible, adaptable manner, (3) the development of programs for sustaining the Island's beaches and dunes, (4) promotion of low-impact development on the Island's east end to protect a major source of drinking water (groundwater) and all other natural resources, and (5) evaluation of potential re-development of the Island's west end beach area, including the consideration of alternative improvement concepts – in contrast to the single-family, large square-footage homes – that can equally provide significant revenue sources to the Town.

Specific goals the community outlined to guide strategic actions and the measurement of progress toward achieving a more sustainable community over the next 20-30 years include the following:

- **Expand commercial development to revitalize the Dauphin Island economy while providing affordability to permanent residents through construction of a quaint, centralized small-town village business district in the area of LeMoyne Drive with an attractive Island entry to attract visitors that provides added revenue to support Town operations and services.**

- **Honor the Island’s cultural heritage by developing a working waterfront for commercial fishing, recreational boating, retail, and residential uses compatible with the downtown village design on LeMoyne Drive.**
- **Develop a mechanism that will connect economic activities on both east and west ends to the general commercial area.**
- **Develop a long-term strategy for beach/dune preservation, environmental protection, and appropriate use of the west end beach area, emphasizing more access for the public to these resources that generates added revenue for the community.**
- **Design programs that promote low-impact development processes to guide the future residential development of east end forested parcels, while protecting the Island’s groundwater drinking source, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and the other natural resources so important to Island integrity and socio-economic vitality.**
- **Implement the planning and design elements necessary to influence how people are (1) moved around the Island (some form of public transit) to the different commercial and recreational areas and (2) afforded ample car and trailer parking so that traffic congestion does not become a problem, natural resources are not over-burdened, and revenue sources are provided to maintain and protect the community’s many assets.**
- **Plan and implement an environmentally-sound, integrated strategy for the Island to best capitalize on its innate beauty and bounty of cultural and natural resources in order to promote sustainable forms of tourism and create a unique destination for visitors.**
- **Design and implement appropriate mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration among the four Island governing entities in order to establish a collective, adaptable (flexible), learning-based approach to Island community management that offers sound leadership and the capacity to develop sources of continuing revenue to insure community sustainability.**

To begin the journey of long-term strategic action implementation to achieve these goals, the Consultant Team, guided by the community’s input, identified short-term, priority actions that can be implemented over the next year to seed the transition to sustainable community development. Some of these, in no special order, are listed below:

- *Conduct bi-monthly community-wide meetings of the four governing entities to enhance dialogue*
- *Develop the Island’s branding and design a promotional package compatible with the community’s vision*
- *Retain services of non-stake holding facilitator to manage dialogue, coordinate action, nurture leadership, mobilize civic assets, and steer consensus-building among private, public, and institutional sectors*
- *Increase lobbying campaigns for added attention to capital strategic action items from county, state, and federal officials*
- *Redefine and enact zoning classifications for targeted commercial re-development areas*
- *Investigate applying for Sole-Source Aquifer designation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- *Design and implement, a study to evaluate the cost-benefit analysis of alternative future development and beach protection plans for the Island’s west end*
- *Take initial actions to create an attractive gateway to the Island*
- *Conduct research for and design Town Ordinances to better promote conservation-based, residential low-impact development strategies*
- *Develop a coordinated economic development process that integrates and tracks different economic improvement activities at targeted sites around the island ( including but not limited to the east end, central village and working waterfront, and the west end beach.)*
- *Contact potential developers to assess interest and feasibility of design for desired improvements in Island commercial areas*
- *Negotiate changes in state and county tax distributions to support capital improvements on the Island that benefit these constituencies*

**Table of Contents**

*Executive Summary* ..... 1

*Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Steering Committee* ..... 4

*Acknowledgements* ..... 4

*Introduction*..... 5

*Strategic Planning Process*..... 7

*Town of Dauphin Island “Branding”* ..... 9

*Priority Strategic Planning Objectives* ..... 10

*Sustainable Community Economic Development*..... 12

*Areas of Focus for Strategic, Sustainable Improvement*..... 16

*Strategic Actions* ..... 20

**Commercial Revitalization** ..... 21

        Central Village Business District & Ferry Landing..... 21

        Working Waterfront ..... 32

        Tourism & Resource Protection ..... 35

**Island Growth Control**..... 41

        East End Development & Water/Resource Protection ..... 41

        West End Beach Development ..... 48

        Island governance..... 54

*Evaluation* ..... 56

*Next Steps*..... 57

**Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Steering Committee**

Sherry Cain	Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board	A
Jeff Collier	Town of Dauphin Island	P
David Connolly	Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce	A
George Crozier	Dauphin Island Sea Lab	P
Nannette Davidson	Dauphin Island Planning Commission	P
Pat Edwards	Dauphin Island Planning Commission	P
Marti Harding	Dauphin Island Foundation	P
Bill Harper	Dauphin Island Property Owners Association	P
Mike Henderson	Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board	P
Tom Howes	Facilitator	P
Lamona Lucas	Dauphin Island Foundation	A
Georgia Mallon	Dauphin Island Sea Lab	A
Merrill McPhearson	Dauphin Island Water & Sewer Authority	A
John Porter	Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary	P
John Reed	Dauphin Island Property Owners Association	P
Fred Rounsaville	Dauphin Island Water & Sewer Authority	P
Mary Scarcliff	Dauphin Island Chamber of Commerce	P
Linda Smith	Dauphin Island Property Owners Association	A
LaDon Swann	Auburn University – MS-AL Sea Grant Consortium	P
Roberta Swann	Mobile Bay National Estuary Program	P
Jody Thompson	Auburn University (Sea Grant Extension)	P
Mary Thompson	Town of Dauphin Island	P
Carolyn Wood	Town of Dauphin Island	P

P = primary committee member:                      A = alternate committee member

**Acknowledgements**

A number of dedicated individuals contributed to the success of this overall Dauphin Island Strategic Planning process as well as the development of this final Report. My consultant colleagues, Gene Martin of the University of Washington (Seattle, WA) and Mary Mullins of the Bellwether Group (Mobile, AL) were great partners and without whose major contributions this project would not have succeeded. The entire Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Steering Committee listed above is recognized for the valuable guidance many of its members continuously provided to the work of the Consultant Team. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the contributions, work, and brainstorming that Roberta Swann, Carolyn Wood, and Nannette Davidson offered throughout the project. Special thanks are extended to the Mayor of Dauphin Island, Jeff Collier, who possesses a passion for the Island community that is unique and inspiring.

Because so much of this Strategic Planning project focused upon public consultation, there were a number of key people who provided expert facilitation to this process I would like to recognize. They include: Todd Davison, Becky Boudreaux, and Heidi Recksiek of the NOAA Coastal Services Center; Jody Thompson of the Auburn University Extension Service; Pat Rischbieter, a landscape architect expert on Dauphin Island; LaDon Swann of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; Joanne McDonough of the Auburn University Marine Extension Research Center; Michael Robinson and Andrew Cole-Tyson of Auburn University; Roberta Swann of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program; Mark LaSalle of the National Audubon Society; and Chastidy Piper of the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the organizations that provided funding for the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning project. Funds and many in-kind services were provided by the Town of Dauphin Island. Grant funds were also provided to support this project from the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division; and the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program.

## Dauphin Island Strategic Planning

# Final Report & Implementation Recommendations

### Introduction

The Town of Dauphin Island is located on a Gulf of Mexico barrier island that forms the western boundary of the channel entrance to Mobile Bay along the Gulf coast. The Island is connected to the Alabama mainland by a three mile high rise bridge and the Fort Morgan peninsula, accessible by ferry. The Town has approximately 2,400 property owners including 1,400 permanent resident owners. Many of these numbers are only part-time residents and some use their homes part of the year as rental properties for added income.

The Town desires to develop a strategic approach for sustaining its economic livelihood and

environmental relevance. The Island community recognizes the importance of natural resources and ecologic systems in supporting both economic development and societal well-being, as represented by maintenance and improvement in quality of life and preservation of cultural integrity. The community shows a deep concern for environmental responsibility as it relates to the social and economic capacity concerns of people.

But at the same time, the Town shows great concern for potential uncontrolled growth that might degrade these resources and the community's quality of life. Likewise, the Town's people recognize there is real possibility for significant change on the Island landscape in the years to come because of recent natural disasters. This potential change causes concern about community well-being. It also motivates the Island community's identity of needed emphasis on "sustainable" development for effectively influencing the direction and momentum of the change affecting resource management, land-use, and community growth over the

<b>Table 1</b>	<p><b>Questions to Focus</b>  <b>Dauphin Island Strategic Planning</b>  <small>(source: from Dauphin Island Request for Proposals)</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community come together to develop a common vision for the community of what the island should be in 30 years?</b></li> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community plan for and develop improvements to Island infrastructure that are environmentally sensitive and hurricane resistant?</b></li> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community engage in economic revitalization and expansion of money-making opportunities including tourism and business growth in a way that capitalizes on its community assets?</b></li> <li>• <b>Can the Dauphin Island Community manage growth through the implementation of Smart Growth concepts sustaining the unique environmental quality of the island, including the beaches, dunes, maritime forest, wetlands, and marshes that make the island a special place?</b></li> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community maintain and improve housing diversity so that work force and other affordable housing for island commercial/retail establishment workers will be available?</b></li> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community improve/expand its arts/community/recreational facilities and opportunities and access to the water?</b></li> <li>• <b>How can the Dauphin Island Community improve provision for social/community services on the island?</b></li> <li>• <b>Composition of the island is such that we have various entities. How can we better work both independently and interdependently as a community?</b></li> <li>• <b>Can the Dauphin Island Community better coordinate its governing activities, financing activities and the organizational capacity of the current entities?</b></li> </ul>
----------------	---

next several decades. Wanting to be in control of their own destiny has motivated stakeholders to engage in a strategic planning process and build consensus on sustainable development programs that will collectively improve the well-being of all stakeholders.

Therefore, the Town of Dauphin Island contracted with *Five E's Unlimited* of Seattle, WA on January 4, 2007 to lead a Strategic Planning process for the Town in order to guide its community toward a sustainable future. *Five E's* engaged the University of Washington (Seattle, WA) and the Bellwether Group of Mobile, AL as partners in this planning effort to form the Consultant Team that would facilitate the Town's Strategic Planning activities.

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

Strategic planning looks for synergy (*i.e.*, co-action, harmony) among actions that cause major changes in the community in order to achieve a stated vision the community holds in common. Stakeholders (1) identify problems they perceive on the Town's landscape or in the regional context, (2) turn those negative aspects of community life into a positive view of what the future could hold if everything were to work right, (3) identify the assets the community possesses to support moving in the defined direction of positive change (the vision), as well as identifying the "landmines" that may exist as challenges, and (4) then after defining these boundaries to perceived hopes for the future, the community works at physically "designing" the different parts of the community that when changed will move them closer to their shared vision. These designs of the different "future" components of the community will then be

**Table 2** Dauphin Island Strategic Planning PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**Key requirements for the planning process to succeed include:**

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

**Scope of work phases**

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

evaluated for reality by the community (no one else can speak to how the community will achieve their goals except themselves), for available and required resources, and for synergy with other design features of the overall strategic plan.

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



One of the more important overall requirements of the strategic planning process was that it be “community-driven” rather than designed and presented by the consultants. This required that the Consultant Team use its experience and ingenuity to determine a number of different ways in which the public could be engaged. This public engagement focused on Dauphin Island stakeholders, defined as a

party who affects, or can be affected by, a community’s or jurisdiction’s actions. The data and characterization of stakeholders for this project are shown in the Interim Planning Report (April 2007) to the Town of Dauphin Island ([http://www.eeee.net/di\\_interim\\_report.htm](http://www.eeee.net/di_interim_report.htm))

A stakeholder survey was designed and circulated throughout the community, and beyond. In addition, a general meeting forum was employed, workshop settings were designed, small, targeted group meetings were carried out, individual telephone interviews were conducted, and one-on-one dialogues were held with people on the street, beach, local pub, or in places of business. This strategy of stakeholder contact reached **976** people. A total of **659** individuals filled out and returned a survey form. An initial kick-off orientation and fact-finding workshop was conducted (**104** people), telephone interviews (**19** people), targeted small group meetings (**52** people), church meetings (**58** people), and one-on-one discussions with people (**84** people).

## *Strategic Planning Process*

We collected data in a number of different ways and from a variety of different stakeholders to identify what people enjoy about living on the Island and their main issues of concern with regard to the Island’s future. The data gathered was then used by stakeholders to state a shared community vision ([http://www.eeee.net/di\\_planning\\_events.htm](http://www.eeee.net/di_planning_events.htm)) for the Island, including a set of strategic planning elements and related goals.

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

### Shared Community Vision for Dauphin Island

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

This shared community vision is supported by several key elements that further define the desired future for Dauphin Island. For these and other detailed information regarding the planning results of different community workshops (*i.e.*, key issues of concern, mapping of favorite places, visioning goals, stakeholder characterization) leading up to the stakeholder identification of Top Ranked Objectives (TRO) for further planning and the actual Design Charrette that allow stakeholders to define their future for specific objectives and evaluate alternative forms of development, you can go to the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Interim Planning Report ([http://www.sustainabledevelopmentsolutions.com/di\\_interim\\_report.htm](http://www.sustainabledevelopmentsolutions.com/di_interim_report.htm)).

The work of Dauphin Island stakeholders during a June 7, 2007 SWOT Analysis Workshop identified the key areas that would serve as the focus of future strategic planning toward the long-term development of the Island community. More than 50 community stakeholders participated in this Workshop and were given an update on what had occurred with the planning process to-date including the shared community vision with a number of supporting elements that stakeholders developed in March 2007.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis provided the community with the chance to concentrate on the objectives of the shared vision in order to better define assets the community possesses (strengths & opportunities) and challenges (weaknesses & threats) it faces to seeing the dreams of the community become a reality, in the short-term and long-term. Identifying these assets and challenges led to discussion of realistic solutions and design characteristics that when implemented will contribute to the community's future as envisioned by all participating stakeholders.



Participants developed an action-oriented flow chart of Strategic Steps to be taken in order to achieve the shared, community defined Vision for Dauphin Island's future. This workshop analysis identified eight topics that resident design teams would address at a July 2007 Design Charrette. These included:

1. alternative development strategies for the Island's west-end, including entry to the west-end beach area
2. design of a centralized small downtown business district
3. working waterfront development
4. enhance economic opportunities compatible with existing uses at the Ferry Landing & Billy Goat Hole/Fort Gaines Harbor
5. better protection and conservation of our primary shallow water aquifer and greater conservation-based sensitivity for in-fill development on the east-end of the Island
6. coordinated Island governance

7. overall economic development issues and affordability strategies, including new sources of revenue
8. nature-based tourism
9. natural resource protection

The Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Design Charrette, a multi-day workshop and the last public consultation activity in this project, was conducted July 26-28, 2007 to engage all stakeholders in a dialogue process that would mobilize local support and foster new levels of cooperation for encouraging desirable change in the community. The design charrette process provided the opportunity for the community to provide input to future strategies for assisting the Town in beginning to move toward its shared stakeholder vision of a sustainable, small, economically vibrant, seaside town. Grassroots, charrette-based approaches to planning can be the kernel that starts major planning initiatives, reorganization efforts, agency advancement, and legislative adoptions affecting communities for decades after their occasion. Through this process the community could engage in dynamic, live input and discover sustainable solutions to their issues in a manner that can be endorsed by all the Islanders.

The community started the Design Charrette with a “blank easel” that was just waiting for stakeholder innovation and creativity. The Charrette allowed all stakeholders an opportunity to draft a future for the Town that will be sustainable, based upon the collective wisdom that each stakeholder brought to the process. In essence this was a chance for community members to become part of the re-design of a complete village for Dauphin Island that included honoring its culture as a seaside town.

The Design Charrette provided the setting for the community to evaluate all previous planning activity outcomes in this Strategic Planning process ([http://sustainabledevelopmentsolutions.com/di\\_planning\\_events.htm](http://sustainabledevelopmentsolutions.com/di_planning_events.htm)) and pool their collective wisdom to design what the next 20 years will look like for the Island with regard to a downtown village, development of a working waterfront,



redevelopment of the Island’s west end beach area, protection of its primary source of drinking water and other environmental resources, general economic revitalization, enhancement of tourism opportunities, sound and effective governance, and commercial development around the Ferry Landing. The results of the stakeholder-driven July 2007 Design Charrette informed the strategies that the Strategic Planning Consultant Team (acting under contract to the Town) would recommend for implementation over the next 20 years in order for the Town to move toward the shared vision the community has expressed for the Island.

## **Town of Dauphin Island “Branding”**

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the features of your community or company’s goods and services to differentiate your community or products from those of others.

Therefore it makes sense to understand that branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition, but it is about getting your prospective visitors to see you as the only one that provides the kinds of experience they are seeking. The objectives that a good brand will achieve include:

- Delivers the message clearly
- Confirms your credibility
- Connects your visitor prospects emotionally
- Motivates the visitor to come to Dauphin Island
- Concretes visitor loyalty

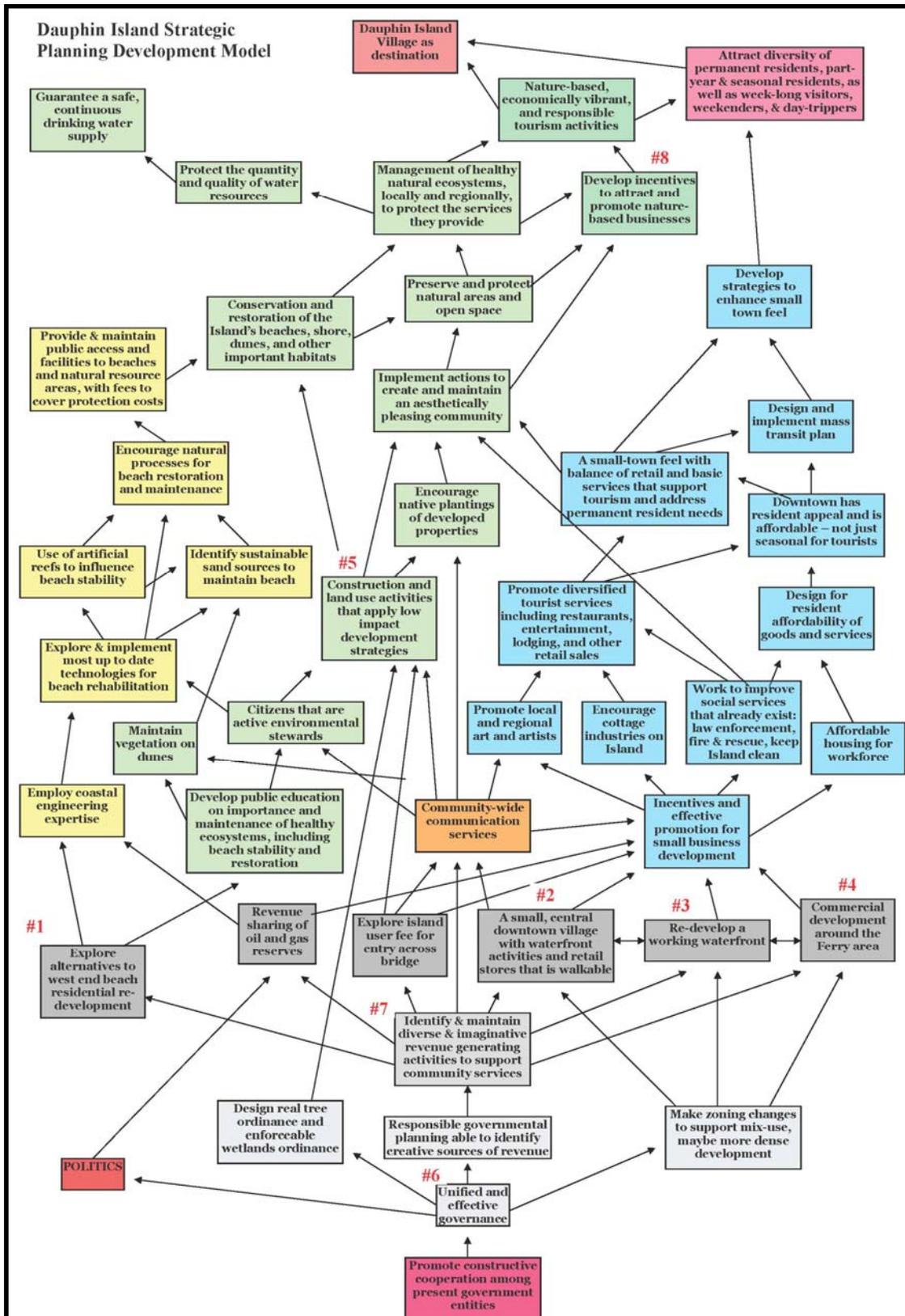
To succeed in branding you must understand the needs and wants of your Island visitors and prospective visitors. You do this by integrating your brand strategies at every point of public contact. Your brand resides within the hearts and minds of visitors. It is the sum total of their experiences and perceptions, some of which you can influence, and some that you cannot. A strong brand is invaluable as the battle for tourists intensifies day by day. It's important to spend time investing in researching, defining, and building your brand. After all, your brand is the source of a promise to your visitor. It's a foundational piece in your marketing communication and one you do not want to be without.

Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Design Charrette stakeholder participants were provided the opportunity to offer their own thoughts on a statement or “saying” that might sum up what the Town of Dauphin Island is about to both residents as well as the outside visitor/tourist. They provided the following thoughts, shown in order of the votes given each by the Workshop participants.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ➤ Dauphin Island: A Rare Find (17)                    | ➤ 365 ¼ Things to do on Dauphin Island (1)                        |
| ➤ It's About What we Don't Have (10)                  | ➤ Laid Back Place to Live; Nice Place to Visit                    |
| ➤ Village by the Sea (10)                             | ➤ Alabama's alternative to beach casinos and high rise condos     |
| ➤ Dauphin Island – Nature's Crossroads (8)            | ➤ Natural Paradise  |
| ➤ Slice of Paradise (7)                               | ➤ Gateway to the Gulf   |
| ➤ If Unique is what you Seek (5)                      | ➤ Living now the Way it Use to Be                                 |
| • beaches   | ➤ Come Golf with the Dolphins                                     |
| • boating   | ➤ Where the Dolphins Play   |
| • fishing   | ➤ Where the Only Thing that Bites are the Fish                    |
| • birds   | ➤ Separate from all the Rest                                      |
| • golf  | ➤ Dauphin Island Decompresses you as Soon as you Cross the Bridge |
| • getting away from stress/crowds                     | ➤ Charming, Natural not Contrived                                 |
| • relaxing  | ➤ Living with Nature  |
| ➤ Beaches, Birds, Boats – Where Time Stands Still (3) | ➤ Dauphin Island – People Come to Get What they Don't Have        |
| ➤ Island Community with Long History (2)              |   |
| ➤ Dauphin Island: A Best Kept Secret (1)              |   |

## **Priority Strategic Planning Objectives**

During the SWOT Analysis Workshop (described on Page 9) participants defined the Top Ranked Planning Objectives (TRO) for the community to proceed with. They then worked to develop a Strategic Plan Flow Chart (shown on Page 12) that would guide the Town's actions toward its future, sustainable development. This flow chart assisted the strategic planning process in identifying key topic areas that stakeholder Design Teams focused upon for further, detailed strategic action planning at the July Design Charrette (July 26-28, 2007).



Dauphin Island strategic planning development model from the discussion of stakeholders attending the June 2007 SWOT Analysis Workshop. Yellow boxes represent west end beach issues, green boxes natural resource protection issues, blue boxes economic development issues, and pink boxes are “top” ranked objectives. These objectives may not necessarily be implemented by the Town but rather are for guidance.

The development foundation the community as a whole believes needs to be built is an ability to have constructive cooperation among all the present governing entities (four) that have responsibilities for certain key community services. With this enhanced cooperation, the Town will be able to comprehensively develop future ordinances and zoning classifications that will improve the sustainable development of the community as outlined in the community's shared vision. In addition, responsible planning on the part of entities acting in cooperative governance will allow for the identity and furtherance of targeted revenue sources that will support the needs of the Town of Dauphin Island over the long-term.

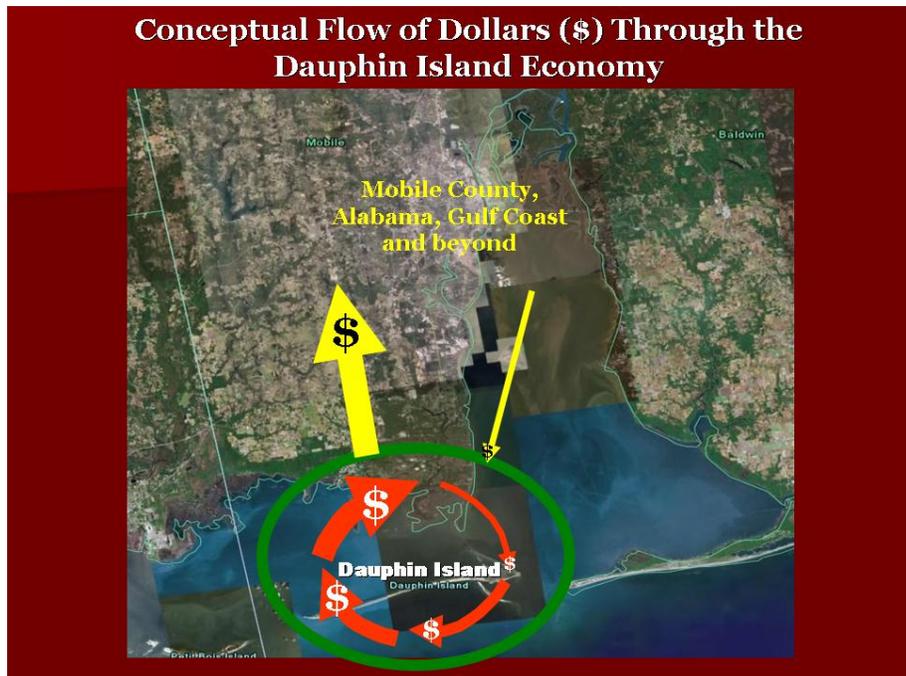
These potential sources of revenue are identified in the flow chart on Page 12 (Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Development Model) as the dark-gray shaded level of boxes (e.g., revenue sharing of oil & gas reserves, working waterfront, redeveloped small village downtown, commercial development around ferry, Island bridge user fee, and west-end redevelopment). They will be the revenue sources that can bring economic vitality to the Town and support the different forms of sustainable development stakeholders imagined by their shared vision articulated in March 2007.

According to the flow chart (Page 12) that lists the major planning objectives the community has selected for further evaluation, a number of development threads emerge. In all cases these development threads are anchored by one of the Design Charrette topics of focus (listed above) that are shown in "red numbers 1-8" on the flow chart. The "yellow" development thread involves planning objectives that will address the state of Island west-end residential re-building, in contrast to other uses for the west-end. The "green" development thread explores all the environmental issues that come together in guiding future east-end residential development and designation of ecotourism as a viable economic activity for the Island. The "blue" thread integrates the different planning objectives that have been listed by the community relating to DI small town (village) re-development that capitalizes on its history and culture as a working waterfront seaside community. The development model (Page 12) is topped-off by one of the Top Ranked Objectives (TRO) for the community, "attract a diversity of permanent residents, part-year and seasonal residents, as well as week-long visitors, weekenders, and day-trippers." Achieving this TRO will create a varied community that has a number of assorted economic drivers supporting a local, stable, and viable economy. This leads to another TRO, "Dauphin Island village is a destination," which can only happen if the economy is diversified and significantly enhanced to create the attractive venues visitors would come to Dauphin Island to appreciate and leave their money. Therefore, the top of this flow chart emphasizes the need for major economic development in the community and this objective is placed in a context of achieving through the wise-use and protection of all the community's resources. In other words, these TROs are guided by community-developed planning objectives within the flow chart hierarchy that recognize the importance of west-end beaches to the well-being of the community, enhance a small town feel for Dauphin Island, care for the Island's only source of drinking water, and protect its ecosystems in recognition that these are a major economic resource to the community as well.

## ***Sustainable Community Economic Development***

Most other topics addressed by Dauphin Island strategic planning stakeholders are in some ways related to the overarching issue of Dauphin Island economic development that will be environmentally sound and yet vital to the community's sustainability. With the potential long-term decline in revenue from west end activities there is a need for the community to identify and

capitalize on other assets it possesses to add value to developing alternative forms of revenue and operating funds. This is not unlike any other rural small town in the U.S. that has to rely on its particular resources to maintain a vital community. With some imagination and ingenuity (“thinking outside the box”) the Dauphin Island community can identify strategies that will offer resident affordability while taking advantage of the money that visitors will want to spend enjoying the small town charm of a redeveloped Island village and all the recreational opportunities the Island offers. Affordability is especially important to Dauphin Island stakeholders, as it received between 7-10% of all responses from two of the three stakeholder data collection methods. And with the variability and unpredictability of storms and climate change the Town should not become over dependent on continued revenue from the west end in the form of rental income taxes.



Enhancement and diversity of the Dauphin Island economy can be achieved by focus upon a number of new project areas in the community that can contribute to the Island’s economic resiliency and sustainability in light of a number of changing conditions over time. These can include, but are not limited to:

- public transit system development
- effective Island branding
- Island entry fee – maintenance of environmental resources, parking costs, launching costs, infrastructure depreciation (also head count method for limiting cars on Island)
- west end windmill farm for electric power generation
- homestead exemption on property taxes for generational residents to increase affordability
- dual economy to enhance affordability – resident discount card in all retail stores
- workforce housing locations
- mixed-use commercial with upstairs retail owner living or employee rental
- reversing rural economic leakage
- identify best ways to capture monies from outside the Island
- looking at parking fees as a source of revenue and a way to control resource overburdens
- Golf Club expansion/marketing and Isle Dauphine Club development

In order to promote Dauphin Island’s future economic well-being strategic planning participants believed that several things could/should happen to maintain a healthy economy. First and foremost the development of new retail and basic services is needed to make Dauphin Island a functional and viable community. This can be done by offering business motivations that include the design of effective business promotion programs and incentives to encourage the development of a cottage

industry on Island. Planning and project implementation for an aesthetically pleasing community is needed to attract a diversity of people made up of permanent residents, part-year and seasonal residents, as well as week-long visitors, weekenders, and day-trippers. And most stakeholders are adamant about developing a small-town feel in this planning/building process that balances retail and basic services that both support tourism and address permanent resident needs.

One of the real concerns for many long-standing (generational) residents of the Island is finding ways to maintain a level of affordability. Higher prices for goods and services for visitors, escalating insurance rates, high real estate values, and age/background of permanent residents, all act as challenges to many wanting to continue to make Dauphin Island their permanent home. There is an opportunity among these challenges to explore a potential solution to the growing problem of affordability. The Town could look at creating a “dual” economy to meet affordability needs of residents while fully capitalizing on visitor/tourist spending. There are several “Loyalty Credit Card” programs around the U.S. now that target the use of credit cards to serve certain issues. And then there are the retail store-dedicated cards that provide automatic discounts to members. These technologies are growing everyday and might offer Dauphin Island a community-wide means of providing more affordability to permanent residents and the Town’s labor force.

The economic stability of Dauphin Island is important and affects almost every other element of life in the community. But as one of the Design Charrette stakeholder topic groups stated, “never let economic drivers overpower or take precedence to the branding concept of the Island.” And this branding concept will most certainly turn-out to have a major focus on the valuable natural and cultural assets the Island possesses. These can not be degraded at the expense of bad economic decisions. To place future decision-making in context with regard to economic improvements, it is helpful to understand what the present economic situation looks like (in a very general way) concerning income and expenses. The tables below summarize these economic data for the Town of Dauphin Island for the 2003 through 2007 fiscal years (year-end in September).

<b>REVENUE SUMMARY FROM 2002-2007</b>					
<b>REVENUE SOURCE</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>
AD VALOREM	259,548	268,967	344,784	390,281	369,035
BEER/WINE	22,654	24,390	21,236	17,435	16,458
CABLE FRANCHISE	9,013	10,109	10,753	10,175	10,304
ELEC FRANCHISE	86,339	87,690	89,848	83,384	96,194
GAS TAX	30,065	47,751	40,039	33,990	30,192
LODGING TAX	218,765	285,918	236,896	153,464	194,917
SALES TAX	301,420	363,316	451,503	466,956	488,430
FOUR CENT		7,200			155,000
SEVEN CENT		-28	7,499	89,349	94,000
BUILDING LICENSE	96,250	79,024	91,839	84,781	67,839
PERMITS	57,978	119,875	478,372	387,776	98,684
INTEREST	19,682	16,970	35,200	166,523	173,138
MOBILE BAY FERRY	21,000	29,250	3,750		
PARKING TICKETS	1,140	3,250	1,591	2,476	7,880
COURT	27,127	23,247	23,845	17,053	28,598
DRAINAGE DONATIONS		8194			
ADEM	30,000	32,200	11,738	4,889	35,450
OIL PRODUCTION	680,599	687,512	742,898	110,3951	661,678

IVAN FEMA				11,080	
DENNIS FEMA				76,216	
KATRINA FEMA				703,789	1,476,091
FEMA DISASTER FUNDS	73,573		266,1316		
BUSH-CLINTON KATRINA FUND				600,000	
INSURANCE DAMAGE		10,500	123,660	153,411	5,224
LEMOYNE BEAUTIFICATN	478,708	2,542			
FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION	148,127				1,620
SALE OF ASSETS	500,150	2,320	8,501	5,863	3,450
STATE DEPT TRANSPORTATIO N					123,290
MEDICAL CLINIC GRANT					87,624
TREE GRANT					35,778
BILLY GOAT HOLE					12,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE (all sources)</b>	<b>\$3,104,851</b>	<b>\$2,239,234</b>	<b>\$5,446,636</b>	<b>\$4,636,956</b>	<b>\$4,330,208</b>

<b>EXPENSE SUMMARY FROM 2002-2007</b>					
<b>EXPENSE ITEM</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>
INSURANCE	82,333	84,111	77,123	108,581	112,762
EMP HEALTH	127,713	138,929	148,919	157,254	136,222
FICA TAX / MEDICARE	56,959	60,810	58,865	59,675	51,326
RETIREMENT	25,403	38,093	47,977	50,116	43,431
ACCTING/LEGAL FEES	45,862	55,607	62,813	103,143	81,270
FIRE/RESCUE DONATION	17,485	13,888	25,000	62,500	37,500
CAPITAL PURCHASES	356,653	102,569	42,922	47,918	714,249
CAR LEASES	26,108	42,816	29,757	65,589	64,584
SALARIES	741,181	781,236	767,441	785,209	723,032
CONTRACT LABOR		7,155	5,000	38,298	25,136
BERM CONSTRUCTION		154,518	127,700	128,496	3,128,274
MAIN LEMOYNE/BIEN	478,708	68,753	5,008	1,749	4
BILLY GOAT HOLE	511,338	1,190		31,300	6,712
OFFICE SUPPLIES/EXP	33,534	26,340	27,812	31,632	21,416
UTILITIES	24,773	30,492	27,908	30,927	28,604
UNIFORMS	14,421	15,266	19,000	3,920	5,309
MAIN/REP VEHICLES	30,726	33,344	25,183	28,135	38,432
FUEL	12,913	26,114	16,421	48,620	42,318
AMMO/MISC	11,901	7,634	7,000	8,437	10,134
BEAUTNATIVE PLANTS	1,999	248	3,500	16,968	43,235
TELEPHONE/PAGERS	15,003	14,625	13,783	22,350	23,289
PUBLIC RELATIONS	27	745	500	266	14,770
WALKOVERS BERM					135,986
KATRINA REPAIR				177,326	806,544
OFFICE BLDG RENOV					162,976

ADEM CONTRACT EXP	406,644	399,230	382,443		
MEDICAL FACILITY					126,301
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> (all sources)	<b>\$2,944,296</b>	<b>\$2,664,209</b>	<b>\$1,739,814</b>	<b>\$2,298,149</b>	<b>\$7,243,620</b>

<b>TOWN OF DAUPHIN ISLAND ANNUAL BUDGET CARRY-OVER</b>					
	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
<b>REVENUE FORWARD</b>	<b>\$ 160, 555</b>	<b>&lt;\$424,975&gt;</b>	<b>\$3,706,822</b>	<b>\$2,338,807</b>	<b>&lt;\$2,913,412&gt;</b>

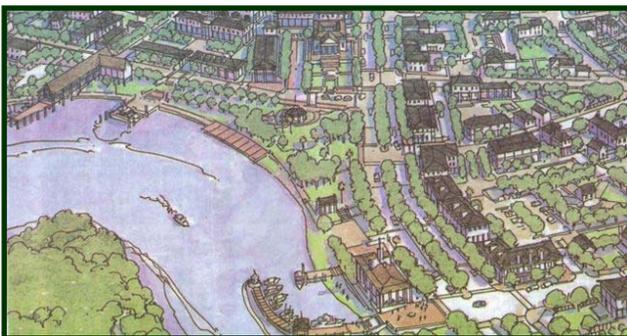
Governmental accounting standards require that all revenues are reported in the fiscal year received and expenses are reported in the fiscal year spent. Revenue for hurricane relief was received after Hurricane Ivan (2004), Dennis (2005) and Katrina (2005) disasters. The repairs these revenues were to fund may not have been completed and expensed in the same fiscal year as the revenue was received. There are other projects that have been expensed and the Town has not yet been reimbursed. As of this report, some projects related to storm damage are still not completed and the final revenue has not been received. This creates an unbalanced look to the financial statements. In addition, the Town has made several large purchases of property assets from cash reserves.

The primary issue to note regarding the Town of Dauphin Island annual budget statements shown above is that with the exception of years when major storm events prompted major subsidies from federal programs to help the Island recover from the damages, the Town does not have much ability to build any kind of reserve from year-to-year. Without significant increased revenue source identification in the near future, the Town will not be able to support many of the goals it has articulated for major economic revitalization and community improvement.

## ***Areas of Focus for Strategic, Sustainable Improvement***

### **Central Village Revitalization & East End Economic Area**

Dauphin Island downtown business revitalization obtained more than 20% of all responses from stakeholders showing their concern for major issues to the community in two of the three forms of stakeholder data collection. This topic also was identified as part of the major path (from the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Development Model – planning objectives flow chart – above) for achieving the top ranked objective of the Dauphin Island village becoming a “destination” for visitors. The primary stakeholder concern in this reinventing of downtown was that any development project always keep in sight the major objective the community has for maintaining a “*small town feel*.” This would include consideration of affordability and the provision of goods and



services that meet resident needs as well as attracting the interest of visitors. Other issues the community wanted to encourage regarding redevelopment of the central village business district included consideration for what forms of public transit might be appropriate to service a downtown area, while also alleviating congestion and parking issues from too many cars on the Island, and what kind of “gateway” message can the LeMoyné Drive business area offer.

There are already proposals for development of the Billy Goat Hole harbor region to serve recreational fishing needs (presently under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). The meeting of recreational needs plus the chance to provide retail opportunities for all the Ferry riders is an important revenue generator for the Town, if the assets this area provides are utilized. The development of a public transit strategy would also enhance the likelihood of success developing in this area of the Island with regard to a few shops, some eateries, and other services for fishing. Conflicts between boat launching and waiting for the Ferry would have to be resolved and this waterfront area would require an integrated strategy that accounts for a balance in all the different uses possible because of the diversity of resources available (*i.e.*, camp ground, Dauphin Island Sea Lab/Estuarium, Fort Gaines, boating access to the Gulf, public commercial fishermen, the Ferry arrival/departure, etc.). In considering commercial development strategies there should be significant effort to connect this end of the Island with the downtown business district around LeMoyne Drive, especially for the walk-ons to the Ferry.

### **Creating a Seaside Village Feel through Working Waterfront Development**

The Aloe Bay area on the north side of the Island, near the across-bay bridge entry, is a prime “redevelopment” Gateway to Dauphin Island. A public access point exists in Aloe Bay through the operation of the Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board. Aloe Bay is a prime location for access to the Gulf Intracoastal waterway and land is still affordable. It is also somewhat protected from hurricanes through its location on the bayside. Aloe Bay can present the last vestige of a working waterfront, which would be a strong tourism draw, as long as sufficient public access is maintained.

### **Protecting Natural & Cultural Resources as Tourism Assets**

The natural beauty and cultural heritage that Dauphin Island possesses are both major assets that can offer value-added opportunities in order to provide sources of revenue to businesses and the Town’s operating budget. These resources require detailed planning to guarantee they are not over-burdened by tourism activities and that the tourism activities don’t grow to the detriment of permanent residents on the Island. Issues of concern in this regard include:



- evaluation of natural resource assets
- identity of cultural and historical assets
- Island branding to include identification of rich cultural and eco-tourism experiences
- mapping of Island-wide resource distribution
- assessing access to all natural, cultural, and historical resource areas
- maximum visitation to consider for health (protection) of resources
- conflicts between residents and tourists
- parking and transport
- need for new regulations, laws, and/or ordinances to protect environmental and cultural resources
- educational programming to encourage voluntary protection of resources

Strategies should be considered that can balance economic needs with the needs of those who call Dauphin Island their home. There are a number of innovative ways of addressing resource use and protection that can be considered to ensure the sustainability of these resources while at the same

time benefiting from their perceived value to visitors and residents alike. One worthy approach is to consider the quality of the experience rather than the quantity of visitors, which has been found in other places to be equal in economic benefits derived. For example, our work in the mid-1990s involving the Eastern Shore of Virginia Birding Festival and its economic impact analysis over a six-year period indicated that increased enjoyment of the experiences from added event amenities during each festival produced much greater visitor attraction and spending of money than expanding the time of the festival or producing more than one festival per year (Flint & Danner, 2001; The nexus of sustainability and social equity. *Int. J. Econ. Dev.* 3(2) [URL - [http://www.spaef.com/IJED\\_PUB/v3n2.html](http://www.spaef.com/IJED_PUB/v3n2.html)]).

### **East End Residential Development: Protect Groundwater & Habitats**

If alternative strategies are developed for the Island's west end, beside residential redevelopment, the only area of the Island still available for residential building is the forested, east end. This is also the major area of recharge for the Island's primary source of drinking water, the groundwater aquifer. Protection of the environment, including groundwater and wetlands received 15-25% of all responses showing concern for community issues in two of the three forms of stakeholder data collection. So residents are concerned about over-development of this resource and further growth, recognizing that there are a large number of property parcels still available for building. Wildlife habitat issues are also a concern for this area of the Island, especially since the Audubon Bird Sanctuary is located here. Conservation-based development strategies should be a major part of the design in addressing further development in the Dauphin Island east end forested area to allow safe, environmentally sound residential expansion to proceed while meeting the need of future residents.

### **Alternative Development Patterns for the Island's West End Beach Area**

This topic attracted 25% of all responses identifying major issues of concern from one of the three forms of Dauphin Island stakeholder data collection and 7-9% of total responses in other forms of stakeholder data collection. The main discussion issue here involves the risk to rebuilding the west end beach area as it has been in the past, due to both frequency of major storm events and rising sea level.

Dauphin Island was originally subdivided by the Mobile Chamber of Commerce in 1953. Since that time, the West End has served as a favorite destination for visitors and as a unique location for home sites. The natural beauty and recreational opportunities available in this area are quite



attractive to individuals who want to experience the true feeling of "living on an island". However, living in such close proximity to the coastline can be risky when hurricanes threaten the area.

As a barrier island, the physical characteristics of the West End are constantly changing. While natural processes such as wind and waves continually alter the delicate landscape, man has also contributed to erosion process through dredging and disposal practices associated with the ongoing maintenance of the Mobile Ship Channel. Emphasis should be placed on securing methods of shoreline stabilization to insure sustainability.

The West End contains a majority of the rental properties on the island and therefore directly supports the local economy through lodging and ad valorem taxes. In addition, sales tax revenues are also positively impacted by renters who frequent island businesses. The Town relies on these sources of revenue to supplement its annual budget. Recognizing this fact, consideration must be given to alternative uses of the West End and associated revenue sources to insure economic stability.

Are there options available to property owners for dealing with or otherwise off-setting significantly increasing insurance rates for areas like Dauphin Island? Are there other types of development and/or uses for the West End (other than residential structures) that would provide a dependable revenue stream and minimize potential loss of property from future storms? Is a public beach with fees and services comparable for income potential? What role could “Buy Outs” play in acquiring property for public access and parking? Should parts of the West End be rezoned to accommodate additional commercial development? These are a sampling of the questions considered by this strategic planning process.

### **Governance through Collaboration among all Entities**

Governance effectiveness was a major concern for more than 10% of all respondents to two of the three forms of stakeholder data collection. In the Survey Results the community’s concerns for Dauphin Island governance effectiveness ranked 6<sup>th</sup> overall from more than 20 total concerns noted by respondents. While some people are confused about exactly which governing entity is responsible for what service(s), the community expects them to work together in some format to provide basic services, public works, safety, and protection of the environment, which includes the following governing characteristics:

- *coordinated and collaborative*
- *conduct transparent government operations*
- *recognize of all special interests and be responsive to citizen concerns*
- *encourage active public involvement in each entity’s governance*
- *be able to identify creative sources of revenue*
- *maintain diverse revenue generating activities to support services*
- *be responsible in planning for a sustainable future*
- *show follow-through on implementation from planning*
- *provide fair and equitable conflict resolution among entities and the public*
- *be flexible and adaptive in management approaches*

The Dauphin Island governance issue also serves as the foundation of all top ranked planning objectives (Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Development Model, Page 12) the community has defined for implementation over the next 20 years. Without effective governance there is a good likelihood the community will not be able to identify and take advantage of major potential sources of revenue that can support the goods and services residents demand. And without continual cooperation and collaboration among the different governing bodies in the community, the hope of complex strategies to redevelop the Island with a small town feel, and yet attractive to visitors, will not be realized.

## *Strategic Actions*

The Town of Dauphin Island is at a transition point with regard to its economy and every element of community life that both supports and benefits from this economy. Stakeholder recognition of this transition is apparent from the public consultation processes conducted during the Town's Strategic Planning activities throughout 2007. People understand that the Town's economy is presently fragile and in serious jeopardy of further decline due to its reliance on traditional revenue sources, such as rental income from west end beach houses. This is fully demonstrated in examining the Town's Balance Sheets for revenue and expenses between 2002-2007.

From the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning Development Model (Page 12) it is illustrated how the community believes the primary issue (objective) needing attention to improve the community's situation is how to "identify and maintain diverse and imaginative revenue generating activities to support community services." This conclusion causes a major focus on opportunities to increase the tax base and provide other forms of revenue identified higher up the flow chart, that in many instances are different than what the Town has taken advantage of historically to provide fiscal security.

The fact this issue of concern is positioned near the base of the planning objectives flow chart emphasizes the need for attaining many of the other planning objectives in the flow chart hierarchy, collectively leading ultimately to the Top Ranked Objective of the "Dauphin Island village as a destination." Working toward this TRO provides many opportunities for capitalizing on varied revenue sources resulting from achieving objectives further down the flow chart that collectively will make the Town economically viable and sustainable. The one caution in working through this transition is that the Town continues to emphasize the importance of the Island's environmental and cultural resources and conducts appropriate decision-making and action-taking that is environmentally and culturally responsible to insure the community's sustainability with regard to its ecologic integrity, its social equity involving resource access and opportunities, and its economic vitality.

The Island community experienced significant damage from hurricanes in 2004 (Ivan) and 2005 (Katrina). This resulted in declines in revenue from west end vacation home rentals as well as revenue decreases from still-damaged infrastructure that supports normal economic activities. Recognizing this major economic risk there is a need for the community to identify and capitalize on other assets it possesses to add value in developing alternative forms of revenue and operating funds that will serve to support the continued viability of the Town. These circumstances are not unlike any other rural small town in the U.S. that has to rely on a diverse array of resources/assets to maintain a vital community. With some imagination and ingenuity ("thinking outside the box") the Dauphin Island community can identify strategies that will offer resident affordability while taking advantage of the money that visitors want to spend enjoying the small town charm of a redeveloped Island village business district, as well as all the recreational opportunities the Island offers. The variability and



unpredictability of storms and climate change, with associated sea level rise (which is already occurring in the Gulf of Mexico), the Town should consider establishing other sources of revenue, including value-added strategies, to supplement what could be dwindling (and certainly unpredictable) revenue in the future from the west end in the form of rental income taxes.

In the context of present circumstances the Town of Dauphin Island finds itself in, as briefly highlighted above, the following **strategic recommendations** are made that support the achieving of specific community improvement **goals** over the next 20 years Island stakeholders have agreed to through their shared visioning process during the Strategic Planning activities. In turn, each strategic recommendation under a particular goal is supported by one or more **action strategies** that detail how the plan for community improvement can be implemented to meet a particular goal.

The community goals and strategic recommendations begin with a focus on the ways to achieve **Economic Revitalization** through design and building of a (1a) central downtown village business district, as well as (1b) commercial development at the Island's east end Ferry Landing, that is well-integrated into companion plans for a (2) working waterfront to emphasize Dauphin Island's long-standing heritage as a seaside village. Another element of the **Economic Revitalization** focus includes recommendations on how to most soundly (from an environmentally and socially responsible point of view) utilize the Island's wealth of natural, cultural, and historical resources to derive sources of revenue through (3) tourism that is founded on an attitude of resource protection.

Following recommendations on economic revitalization, goals and recommendations with action strategies are listed for **Island Growth Control**, including future residential development in the (4) natural resource important east end and (5) residential/business revitalization in the west end beach region. And finally, recommendations and action strategies are outlined for a more (6) effective and cooperative governance structure to provide guidance for controlling growth on the Island and to oversee the Island's movement to a more sustainable community over the next 20 years.

The recommendations made here to implement strategic actions that are intended to revitalize the Dauphin Island community over the next 20 years, should be reviewed for progress at five-year intervals. Because of the adaptive management context of this recommended 20-year strategy, assessment every five years, based upon learning that has occurred during the five-year period, should be performed to measure progress on accomplishing the goals of this strategy and making changes where required to continue meeting the shared vision initially established by the community.

## I. Economic Revitalization [1)central village & east end business development area including ferry landing, 2)working waterfront, and 3) tourism & resource protection]

### 1. Central Village Business District & East End Business Area (including Ferry Landing)

#### **GOAL 1:**

**Design and construct a charming, centralized small-town village business district in the area of LeMoyne Drive with an attractive Island entry to attract visitors that also**

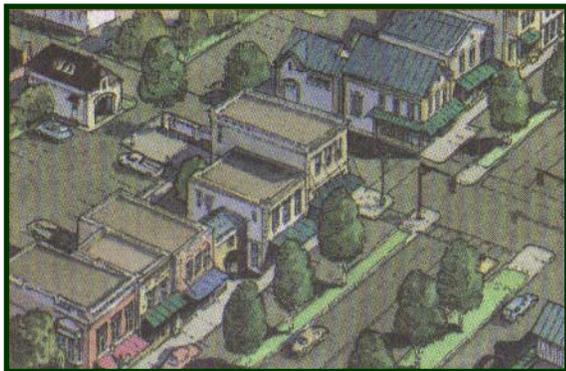
provides needed resident commercial services and added revenue to support Town operations.

### **Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Design and implement consistent and development-friendly zoning classifications to enhance local character and promote economic vitality.**

Background: Aesthetic appreciation of the Island by the visitor will be important for the Town to achieve its goal of quality visitor attraction and economic vitality without having to rely on an unreasonable quantity of visitors. Future zoning ordinances should incorporate aesthetic standards and architectural design details for consistency, as well as the traditional core requirements, to create a zoning package that results in a safe, attractive, and monitored but developer-friendly means of economic revitalization. In the process of rezoning considerations, there needs to be an assessment of the many restrictive covenants that exist in the Town now, such as the Isle Dauphine Club deed restrictions, which need to change in order to make this facility and other areas more viable economic assets to the entire community.

Several small towns in Georgia (*e.g.*, Norcross, GA) have adopted the zoning concept of a “Downtown Corridor District” (DCD) that significantly improves the process of meeting zoning requirements with regard to the integration of residential, commercial, and public activities in one village setting within a town environment. The DCD can provide a method of comprehensively structuring multiple development activities and attracting of businesses/developers for the Dauphin Island centralized village business district. The purpose of the DCD is to preserve and enhance the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented nature of the downtown area. The district allows a wide range of mutually supportive uses in order to enhance the central village downtown area’s role as a commercial, cultural, governmental, health/ medical, entertainment, education, and residential center. The DCD standards can also facilitate the creation of a strong and distinctive sense of place through the inclusion of open space and public plazas. A detailed explanation of these DCD standards can be found in Section 106.90 of the Norcross, GA zoning ordinances and amendments entitled “**DCD, Design Concept Development District**” ([http://www.norcrossga.net/user\\_files/Ch106--Zoning.pdf](http://www.norcrossga.net/user_files/Ch106--Zoning.pdf)). The use of design standards should maintain the historical integrity, enhance the quality of design, and preserve the human-scale development of downtown.



The consideration of a Downtown Core District zoning structure might be a good way for the Town of Dauphin Island, and all other governing entities, to proceed regarding village commercial business district development strategies. Then the targeted central business district will not have a number of different and potentially contradictory regulations that have to be met. After developing the DCD zoning classification, the Town could consider a new approach to actual project approval for downtown business area development. The potential

investor/developer would provide to the Town a conceptual framework of all development plans and details on architecture and other design aspects. Once a negotiated agreement is reached between the developer and the Town, then the developer must stick to the planned conceptual design in all details, except when a deviation is reviewed, negotiated, and approved by the Town

prior to its change being implemented in the proposed development plans and details by the developer.

The Town can use this opportunity of rezoning the areas targeted for commercial activities to encourage green building strategies. Incentives for stimulating green building (*i.e.*, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – LEED Certification) for new developments might include tax breaks, promotional support, or other financial encouragement. Along with concern for aesthetics and other protections offered by zoning ordinances, there should be consideration given to the kind of lighting that is provided on the Island. The areas of the Island frequented by residents and visitors should be well-lighted for safety reasons. But, at the same time the Island’s natural resource value can be diminished by too much lighting or lighting directed toward the sky. Therefore, the development of commercial areas on the Island should be given serious consideration regarding the kinds of lighting required and this should be defined in a lighting ordinance that pertains to the many different areas throughout the Island.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Consider new zoning classifications for targeted development areas of the Island that provide consistency of land-use and building design regulations and offer developer-friendly adherence with appropriate monitory strategies.
  - adopt modern signage, streetscape, and building façade improvements
  - be consistent across different governing entities (*i.e.*, Town and Park & Beach Board; Property Owners Assoc. and Town).
  - include opportunities for mixed-use residence – business at street level and residences on top
  - encourage compact development (higher density) including live/work combinations
  - allow a strategy of storefronts with living in back, separated by courtyard
  - make it easy to develop the “right thing” – do pre-approval of building designs that support the community character and its branding
  - develop village zoning requirements that require street-oriented buildings with no blank walls facing the streets
  - require use of native vegetation for public streetscapes in any zoning ordinances
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the “Smart Code” (<http://www.tndtownpaper.com/images/SmartCode6.5.pdf>) and “form-based code” (<http://www.formbasedcodes.org/definition.html>) in order to implement new urban planning and design principals and policies with appropriate regulatory mechanisms by revision of the existing Dauphin Island zoning requirements.
- Consider developing a zoning ordinance to allow “mother-in-law” apartments (*i.e.*, over garages) for less expensive areas of the Island in and around the commercial districts and in the east end forested region.
- All governing entities be consistent in their direction of regulatory processes so that the central village will represent a destination through appropriate, attractive architectural design.
  - study historic Dauphin Island architecture styles to develop guidelines
  - design and maintain common architectural themes, encouraging creativity and diversity

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Create a base zoning situation with design review overlays as one means of implementing the strategies of a DCD.
- Enforce Dauphin Island zoning ordinances and be prepared to conduct adaptive (learning-based) management with regards to needed periodic adjustments in zoning to promote most effective and efficient means of revitalization.
- Design an effective means of monitoring and enforcing all zoning ordinances that includes a “sunset” timeframe clause to ensure timely completion/improvement of development projects.
- Design the central business district for year-round retail activity; enhance year-round feel by being architecturally diverse with themes to create year-round destination interest.

**Strategic Recommendation #2:**

**Create an aesthetically pleasing main entry-way onto Dauphin Island.**

Background: The first things that visitors to Dauphin Island see in coming over the bridge or off the Ferry need to be aesthetically pleasing and attractive to convey a good impression. First impressions are extremely important in the tourist industry. The “dressing-up” of the area just off the bridge is a necessity. One significant improvement would be the



painting of murals on the large boat storage barns on the east side of the bridge exit. Charrette participants suggest that Andrew Weyland might be contacted about painting a mural. Similar kinds of improvements can be considered for the sewage treatment tanks on the west side of the bridge exit. Sculpture pieces might also be used as screening for the treatment plant tanks as well as areas around the water tower. Native vegetation can be used to effectively beautify otherwise distracting parts of the landscape. Synergy and creativity must be emphasized in any beautification campaign for the Island, however, in that consistency is maintained (*e.g.*, design elements for the different gateway points to the Island – ferry, bridge, airport – all consistent), ordinances are developed that encourage private property cleanliness and beautification, and other incentives are implemented that ultimately cause residents to take pride in the message and image they present to visitors. The ultimate objectives in creating an aesthetically pleasing experience for all of Dauphin Island is 1) to provide a reason for residents to take pride in the place they live, and 2) to achieve economic vitality for the community by capitalizing on the quality of visitor and the money they are willing to spend rather than the quantity of visitors to reap the same amount of money.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Create a new “front door” for Dauphin Island by adding civic space and other amenities to the area immediately off the bridge.
- Plan and contract for a non-advertising mural on the marina storage dry boat barn at foot of bridge.
- Explore ways of camouflaging the water treatment tanks.
- Build on existing Island-wide clean-up campaigns to promote pride in the community and to encourage beautification of each property owner’s individual real estate holdings.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design an effort to redirect the main electrical power supply to Island through bridge conduits instead of poles across the bridge/bay.
- Develop a Town directed garbage/waste pick-up system that adequately serves the community, is affordable, and encourages waste recycling.

### **Strategic Recommendation #3:**

**Develop a mixed-use, centralized village business district with a diversity of retail opportunities to increase the Town’s tax base, to meet resident needs for goods and services, and to attract the interest of visitors and tourists.**

Background: The Dauphin Island community is presently limited in the number of different kinds of retail opportunities that exist to meet the variety of resident and visitor needs. In fact many



residents and most visitors meet their needs at businesses located off the Island. This is due to recent hurricane events as well as limited commercial retail opportunities on the Island. Economic studies in small towns in general indicate that visitors are tempted to visit these small individual towns for **unique retail experiences**. Unfortunately the dilemma of a less than adequate business area for Dauphin Island is like the “chicken and egg story.” Business investment needs a certain critical

mass of potential consumers and yet the consumers (and visitors) will not come until there are businesses to attract many of them. There needs to be a critical mass in both retail and consumers to create a sustainable business environment. Thus, for the Town of Dauphin Island to attract new businesses, there are going to have to be some creative initiatives developed that might include incentives for business owners, changes in zoning to attract businesses (as discussed above), and other business-friendly opportunities. Some of the types of businesses that community stakeholders believe are needed on Dauphin Island include:

- grocery store with 15,000 to 20,000 minimum square footage floor space – consider places for 18-wheeler storage so business owners can get inventory off the Island before a storm
- drug store/pharmacy
- meat market (maybe integrated into grocery store complex)
- coffee/wine shop
- knick-knack and novelty shops
- barber-beauty shop choices
- local arts and crafts shops or market

Many similar business types could be combined under the same roof or under “one awning” to accommodate traffic, logically meet shopper’s needs, and address mixed-use design issues regarding the streetscape. Mixed-use buildings could significantly enhance the potential success of a downtown village environment. Most rural small towns (one stop-light towns) have single-family residences and businesses adjacent to one another in the same area. Business down and living up is also a practical way in small town settings to meet the needs of affordability for business owners. In addition, the seasonal nature of some businesses that might want to establish themselves on Dauphin Island can benefit from an investor who wants to purchase a two-story structure for living upstairs and could then afford to rent the business space downstairs to a business owner that only operates his/her business for a part of the whole year.

The actual focus of a centralized, mixed-use business district for Dauphin Island, as proposed by the participants of the Design Charrette, is illustrated in the adjacent image of Dauphin Island in “blue” shading. The “gray” shading within the blue indicates areas for potential future mixed-use development if more central business area is needed based on success of initial re-development measures. This business area is defined as mixed-use, to be a place for single residences, small business, and buildings with living quarters up and retail opportunities down that exist in the same proximity. The particular business district area on the map includes the following boundaries: from the foot of the Dauphin Island Bridge to the intersection of LeMoyne Drive and Bienville Blvd; west on De Soto to Levert Street; south on Levert to Chaumont, then return back east to LeMoyne; east on De Soto Street to Key Street; south to Cadillac Ave.; then return west to LeMoyne Drive.



Workforce housing can be considered for the downtown business district on odd bits of land that left after other forms of development, providing infill opportunities. The “mother and daughters” approach of raised cottages is one such typology. Others might be courtyard housing, townhouses, mother-in-law suites, and larger houses with multiple units to truly honor the idea of residences and business existing in an attractive common place. All of these housing types used as infill development are important strategies to hold at bay the simplistic density and value increase that high-rise condominium buildings represent. It is important to recognize for Dauphin Island that in general high-rise condos, mid-rise hotels, and mega-mansions will all erase permanently the memory and feel of the uniqueness of the small island environment. The alternative would be a modest number of condos – built on the model of the lost antebellum homes, with four or six units per building – that would help to restore the tax base. Therefore, the form (height, width, and depth) of new buildings should be codified, with any additional density to happen to the rear of homes.

Overall, the downtown business revitalization and housing development should significantly grow the Dauphin Island tax base by increasing business activity and housing opportunities. This village environment should be a true central gathering area of the Island where people can shop, socialize, and enjoy the small-town amenities of Dauphin Island.

### **Future Actions:**

#### **Short-term:** (6 – 12 months)

- Retain services of non-stake holding facilitator to manage dialogue, coordinate action, nurture leadership, mobilize civic assets, and steer consensus-building among private, public, and institutional sectors.
  - rebuilding will be most successful if citizens are actively engaged
  - meaningful involvement from a broad social spectrum, which requires the skills of a neutral, third-party facilitator

- Develop the Island’s **branding** concept and design a promotional package and strategy compatible with the community’s vision.
- Increase lobbying campaigns for added attention to capital improvement strategic action items from county, state, and federal officials.
- Design the new police station complex in order to integrate covered, public parking underneath the building.
- Negotiate changes in state and county tax distributions to support capital improvements on the Island that benefit these constituencies.
  - tax incentives to potential start-up businesses –
  - paid for from buy-in from State/County to increase % of Real Property taxes coming back to Town
- Plan a developer competition for new downtown village design concepts as defined by the Strategic Planning process – contact appropriately identified developers for their interest.
- Design and promote incentives to encourage development of cottage industries on the Island.
- Develop a plan for creating workforce housing.



Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Support the Chamber of Commerce (possibly through the establishment of an effective Business Improvement District entity as other communities have done) to help guide business revitalization and offer services to the business community toward their own improvements.
- Conduct a developer competition for new downtown village design concepts that propose improvements in Town targeted commercial areas meeting the community’s shared vision.
- Name a master developer for the downtown central village business district to coordinate retail and mixed-use development.
- Create a network of walkable streets and green-spaces that tie together the different parts of the central downtown village business district.



**Strategic Recommendation #4:**

**Advance the idea of a sustainable small-town community.**

Background: In every form of public dialogue conducted during the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning process, stakeholders demanded and were consistent in their desire to maintain the Island as a community that has a “small town feel.” In all new work to improve the Town’s economy and residential neighborhoods stakeholders are adamant about Town leaders making decisions that will maintain and enforce the image of a well-loved, family-oriented, friendly, diverse, and inclusive, beach town. Only in this way can Dauphin Island truly increase the Island’s attraction to families and year-round residents, as well as strategically cater to the vacation market.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Develop a comprehensive mixed-use planning document that promotes community-wide connections, advances resident retail-buying affordability, encourages residential diversity, and creates workforce housing.
- Insure that the zoning changes to support economic revitalization in the central village business district meet the objectives of this recommendation (*i.e.*, mixed-use, maybe more dense community development).
- Work to improve social services that already exist and provide more access to necessary health and other vital services.
- Design plans for the development of a Dauphin Island Community Center that will be centrally located on the Island and be multi-dimensional in serving the needs of all community stakeholders.
- Develop other strategies to enhance small town feel.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Recruit businesses that offer models of effective environmental stewardship and social responsibility to the community.
- Cluster complementary uses on pedestrian-friendly streets to support walkable commerce and reduce demand for motoring.
- Build a Dauphin Island Community Center strategically-located near the downtown central village business district.

**GOAL 2:**

**Design and build a commercial tourist district at the Island’s east end, that includes the Ferry Landing, that will connect the assets there with the rest of the Island, provide east end neighborhood shopping opportunities, capture visitor’s money before they leave on the Ferry, and preserve, return, and improve the working waterfront.**

**Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Take advantage of existing assets (Audubon Park, Fort Gaines, Estuarium, Camp Grounds, Fishing Piers, Boat Launch Area, Ferry Boarding) to enhance the Island’s economy and gain more revenue from visitors and tourists.**



Background: There are a number of visitor attractions and resident places of enjoyment located at the far-east end of Dauphin Island, in the area of the Ferry Landing that receives the ferry from Fort Morgan across the Mobile Bay channel. In fact most of the ferry foot-traffic comes to Dauphin Island to visit these many attractions. Additionally, the east end always represented a part of the Island’s working waterfront that should be preserved and enhanced. The problem is that marketing and promotion of all tourist attractions on the east end need to be better designed so that tourists will take advantage of all the

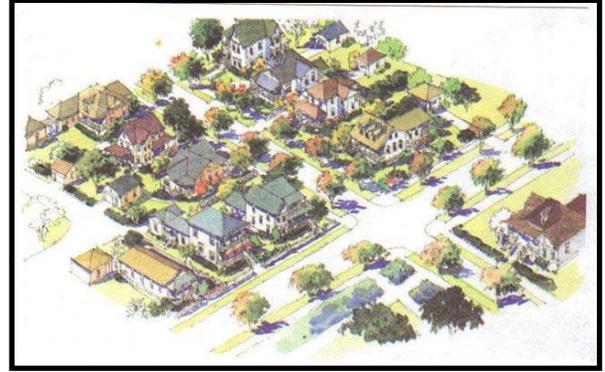
opportunities. In addition, thought needs to be given to how tourists can be attracted to the central village area of the Island (LeMoyne Drive) because it is a walking distance of more than three miles away. In terms of enhanced Town revenue receipts, commercial retail development in the

proximity of the east end Ferry Landing car-waiting area offers additional opportunities to capture more tourist dollars before they leave the Island, while they are “held captive” by the Ferry queue.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Integrate the existing, planned project to develop a concession area and pier (presently in a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting process) into design and planning for other capital improvements around the east end Ferry Landing with consideration for adequate public parking needs (see public transit section).
- Investigate the opportunity to include the development of a new municipal commercial fee-based loading/unloading dock at Billy Goat Hole in the present plan for a concession area and pier that is being reviewed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Plan and implement a promotion campaign to encourage “walk-on” ferry riders to the Island to visit more than just Fort Gaines and the Sea Lab/Estuarium complex.



Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Consider reservation ticket system to eliminate idea ferry riders feel “held hostage” while waiting.

**Strategic Recommendation #2:**

**Create an area at Dauphin Island’s east end that will provide new retail goods and services to residents as well as serve as an economic driver for tourists visiting east end attractions and/or waiting on the Ferry departure.**

Background: Sound decisions to develop the east end Ferry Landing area to better serve the tourist with retail opportunities, will also consider serving the commercial goods and services needs of all the permanent residents that live on the east end of the Island. In many cases distance for these residents to the east end Ferry Landing area is less than the distance to the proposed redeveloped central village business district along LeMoyne Drive.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Identify the kinds of commercial retail that are desired by east end residents in the area of the Ferry Landing and evaluate the probability of developing those facilities in relationship to land availability, demand, and economic benefit.
- Research the possibilities of providing commercial retail facilities to serve the Ferry “waiting line” of cars by building a few raised store structures over the existing Ferry queue area on Bienville Boulevard.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Implement a promotional/ marketing campaign that targets the east end retail and tourist activities.
- Develop a means of transporting people (especially ferry walk-ons) to the central village area of the Island and other interesting Island sites.
- Seek a developer to comprehensively develop the Ferry Landing area into a commercial setting that will achieve the Island stakeholder’s vision and serve both east end residents as well as the tourists that use the east end for attractions and Ferry boarding.



**GOAL 3:**

**Implement the planning and design elements necessary to influence how people move around the Island (some form of public transit coupled with effective parking facilities) to the different commercial and recreational areas.**

**Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Develop a “public transit” system (way of moving people) that serves the centralized village business district, integrates the different destination points on the Island, and is able to decrease traffic congestion.**

Background: One form of alternative people moving suggested by Design Charrette participants was to create rental businesses for moped-type vehicles, bicycles, or street-legal golf carts. They also promoted the need for public transit on the Island. Any public form of transit should probably be smaller than a regular bus and should also fit the theme of “island life.” A series of transit stops could be established Island-wide with most emphasis for major movement of people between the east end ferry area, the central village business district, and the entry to west end beach attractions. A public transit system should consider the needs of retired persons as



well as people who want to enjoy the many natural areas of the Island. Routes should be creatively designed to meet peak needs, to cover all parts of the Island, to best support the encouragement of parking vehicles in designated places, and to persuade local residents to use buses over their vehicles.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Research what other communities have implemented in the way of small-town public transit systems.
- Propose and design a comprehensive (including several possible forms of transit) public transportation system that is efficient, effective, and appropriate (*i.e.*, trolleys).



Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Implement a community-accepted plan to build a public transport system for Dauphin Island that not only serves the needs of people on the Island, but also transports people from parking areas across the bridge to the Island.

**Strategic Recommendation #2:**

**Design and implement strategies to provide ample vehicle and trailer parking (especially from heavy recreational fishing demands) so that traffic congestion does not become a problem, natural resources are not over-burdened, and revenue sources can be obtained to maintain and protect the community’s many assets.**

Background: Dauphin Island stakeholders believe that the coupling of public transit and parking



needs would compliment both sets of needs. Parking should be designated in centrally-located places and should be designed to have pervious surfaces for enhanced drainage and groundwater percolation. “Main Street” style angular parking could be designated in front of storefronts in the central village business district. Large areas like the Mobile County Jaycees property might be used for special events parking. A valet system could also be developed to serve the needs of boat trailer parking, which would also provide another business opportunity. All parking that

predominantly serves visitors and tourists should be established to collect parking fees that can support the community’s maintenance of natural areas and infrastructure. Furthermore, consideration should be given to all parking such that it is design in an aesthetic and attractive way to blend with the surrounding landscapes and should take full advantage of native vegetation planting. The Town could purchase a number of contiguous lots in the downtown area for parking, or might even consider integrating large parking areas into the design of new Town buildings and other facilities, such as the new Police Station.

**Future Actions:****Short-term:** (6 – 12 months)

- Work with Mobile Jaycees to utilize the Rodeo property more effectively, year-round as a parking area for community events.
- Negotiate with bayside property owners for purchase of property by the Town for potential additional parking sites.

**Long-term:** (1 – 5 years)

- Establish a boat launch on the bayside to lessen Billy Goat Hole (BGH) congestion.
  - provide adequate parking
  - incorporate boardwalks/bird watching opportunities

**2. Working Waterfront****GOAL:**

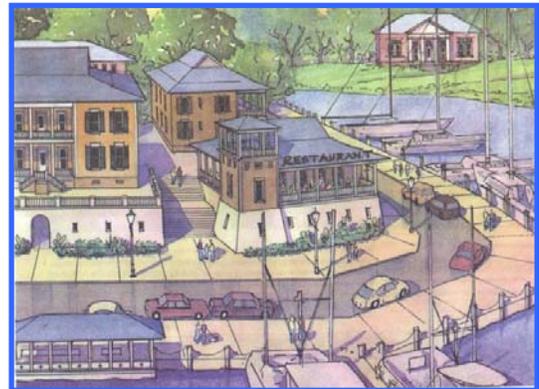
**Honor the Island’s cultural heritage by restoring and preserving a working waterfront for commercial fishing, recreational boating, retail, and residential uses compatible with the downtown village design on LeMoyne Drive.**

**Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Design and implement consistent and development-friendly zoning classifications.**

**Background:** Stakeholders strongly believed that Dauphin Island should re-establish a viable working waterfront both to honor the Town’s culture and history and to be able to benefit from potential added revenue sources that might come to the Town from a high-energy working waterfront. Stakeholders were fully in support of the fact that the working waterfront should be equally accessible to all and not developed in any way as a “gated community.” Therefore the following characteristics were recommended to be part of the design consideration for any future working waterfront development.

- Pier at foot of bridge for inshore fishing (public)
- Include public observation points in sidewalk system
- Provide services to attract daytrip/transient boaters and tourists
- Provide commercial fishing support facilities
- Privately-owned marinas should provide slips available for public rental
- Waterfront should support mixed-use area including shops, lodging, residential, slips for owners, rental slips, and charter fishing operations
- Explore potential for workforce housing opportunities
- Maintain current commercial docks and accommodate existing fleet as tourist draw
- Tax incentives might include break on lodging tax for providing rental slips
- Incorporate all waterfront areas into trolley route
- Beautification concerns such as murals on boat storage facilities and native vegetation in common space areas to provide an attractive gateway to Dauphin Island for visitors

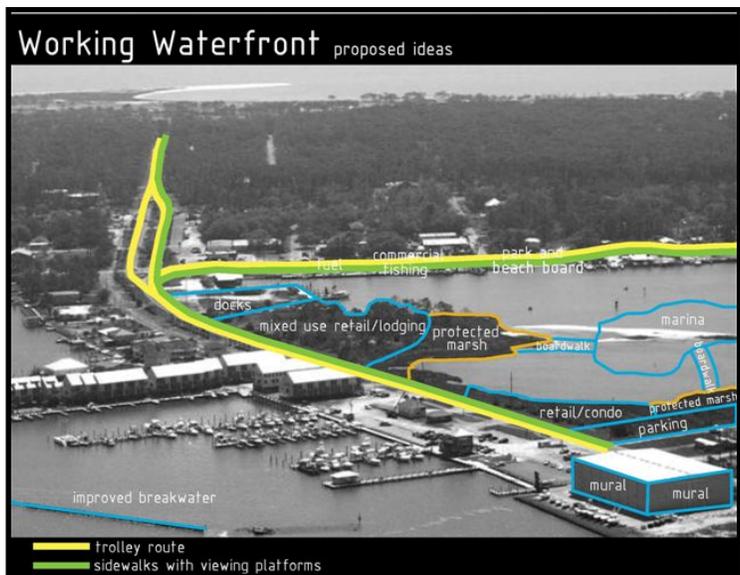


Because of the many zoning classifications that presently characterize the Dauphin Island targeted working waterfront area of Aloe Bay shorelines, many of which are contradictory, significant review and revision of existing zoning ordinances is going to be required to meet the community's vision. This vision includes revitalizing a true working waterfront that builds upon its past, creating a small, mixed-use area with working commercial fishing boats and an adventure eco-tourism focus. Housing could be part of this mix, situated above the retail spaces.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Designate the Aloe Bay Working Waterfront as “special district.”
- Review zoning and other restrictions in the Aloe Bay waterfront area with the Town of Dauphin Island, the Dauphin Island Property Owners Association, and the Park & Beach Board, so that every jurisdiction is in agreement with future intended uses.
- Consider new zoning classifications (*e.g.*, mixed-use residence – business at street level and residences on top; storefronts with living in back, separated by courtyard) that allow for living and working environments (see Goal 1: Strategic Recommendation #1 above) in the working waterfront area with consistency in land-use and building design regulations/considerations across different governing entities (*i.e.*, Town and Park & Beach Board; Property Owners Association and Town).
- Create overlay zoning and/or special zoning district classifications for waterfront development (*i.e.*, downtown core district, DCD, as done in Norcross, GA) that will promote favorable land-uses and “grease the wheels” for development, as well as considering other incentives to developers for architecture, public slips, public parking, etc.



#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Develop plans for workforce housing just off the wharfs of the working waterfront with attractive street frontage in the area of LeMoyne Drive that will provide added appeal to the Island's gateway design.
- Take steps to resolve Aloe Bay water-bottom ownership designated in the deeds to this area.

### **Strategic Recommendation #2:**

**Develop the concept for a working waterfront design that integrates with design features of the adjacent downtown village setting on LeMoyne Drive and implement this concept.**

Background: Dauphin Island has a long history of intimate relationships with the sea through recreation, commercial and sport fishing, oil and gas exploration, and boat travel along the Intercoastal waterway. It is important to the Island's economic recovery that it tries to capitalize on

this history as assets that possess value and are of interest to visitors coming to Dauphin Island. Therefore, community stakeholders fully support the idea that a working waterfront be redeveloped that will allow the following mixed uses:

- Create living-working environments
- Public and private boat mooring and public launch facilities
- Commercial fisherman facilities
- Retail sales of fish and shrimp
- Access to public waters
- Sufficient availability of parking
- Mixed-use development
- Capitalize on the commercial and tourist interest for revenue sources
- Protect natural resources within the development footprint

The working waterfront of Dauphin Island could serve as an attraction to visitors and offer them a means to get to the Island by the integration of services from a proposed

water taxi operation serving several seaside villages around the Bay. The development of a water taxi service would create a network of connections around Mobile Bay to Dauphin Island; it would lessen the traffic coming onto the Island; it would enhance the preservation and conservation of the existing Island’s ecology through the lessening of traffic; it would provide an additional means for visitors to appreciate the historic and environmentally rich landscape of Dauphin Island; and it would add an extra sightseeing mechanism to enhance various tourism programs.



**Future Actions:**



Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Guarantee that all design activities seriously consider how “connections” are made between the working waterfront and the downtown, village revitalization area of LeMoyne Drive.
- Market the working waterfront with connection to the downtown centralized village business district as “Aloe Bay Village” in order to provide a unique focus of commercial activity on Dauphin Island.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Seek grants and bonds for supporting capital improvements to the waterfront area.
- Develop a proposal to attract the stopping several times a day of a water taxi operation from Mobile that regularly travels around Bay.
- Design and implement plans for a harbor shrimp and fish market and a range of boat facilities and restaurants as an integral part of establishing the working waterfront on Dauphin Island.
- Enhance the bay-front with new piers, marinas, improved access and mixed-use development.

**Strategic Recommendation #3:**

**Enhance and encourage commercial fishermen use of a Dauphin Island working waterfront.**

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Seek from commercial fishermen their needs and develop ideas regarding a designated working waterfront redevelopment for Dauphin Island on Aloe Bay
- Obtain assistance from the MS-AL Sea Grant Consortium to develop the concept of a true working waterfront that will prove successful on Dauphin Island.



Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Work with the AL Working Waterfront Coalition toward revisions to current use taxation for working waterfront businesses.

**3. Tourism & Resource Protection**

**GOAL:**

**Plan and implement an environmentally-sound, integrated strategy for Dauphin Island to best capitalize on its innate beauty and bounty of cultural and natural resources in order to promote sustainable forms of tourism and create a unique destination for visitors**

**Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Design cultural and nature-based, economically vibrant, & responsible tourism activities.**



Background: Communities in culturally rich, natural resource abundant settings have found it profitable to develop cultural and nature-based tourism strategies for producing revenue streams and increasing their tax base. Dauphin Island stakeholders participating in the Town’s Strategic Planning process believe that the community could promote diversified tourist services in conjunction with improvements in restaurants, entertainment, lodging, and other retail sales venues on the Island. Some of the different resources that were identified as potential assets

to support this economic activity included:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fort Gaines</li> <li>• Estuarium</li> <li>• Sea Lab</li> <li>• Campgrounds &amp; lodging rentals</li> <li>• Ferry boat</li> <li>• Audubon Bird Sanctuary</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isle Dauphine – golf course, grill, club, pool, tennis, conference center</li> <li>• Airport</li> <li>• Fishing Piers</li> <li>• Marina – sightseeing boat tours</li> <li>• Beach</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

- Parks
  - Magnolia Park
  - Cadillac Square
  - Aloe Bay Landing
  - Salt Creek
  - Pryor Park
  - Quarles Park
  - Goat Trees
  - Shell Mound
  - Bayou Heron
  - East End
- Public Boat Launches
  - Billy Goat Hole
  - East tip
- Light House
- Coastal areas – Scenic Byway eventual national status
- Seafood industry observation
- Kayak rental
- Coasting birding trail
- Battle of Mobile Bay – Civil War trail

In evaluating these different Island historical, cultural, and nature-based tourism locations, stakeholders were able to develop an inventory of different kinds of tourism opportunities that would attract people to the Island, which if promoted in the right way would increase tourist visitation rates. These included:

Day Trips

- birding
- beaches
- boating
- swimming
- fishing
- kayaking
- wind surfing
- kite boarding
- golfing

- walking/hiking
- history appreciation
- sailing
- stargazing
- beachcombing

Overnight – all of the above plus

- weddings
- vacationers
- bike tours

Dauphin Island already has a number of planned events and festivals each year that attract visitor interest from a very large geographic area, well beyond State of Alabama boundaries. Strategic Planning participants identified these and then listed additional new opportunities for events and festivals that could occur at other times of the year, different than those held now. Current and future potential events included:

Current

- Fishing Rodeos
- Fort Gaines – Battle of Mobile, 5K Run, etc.
- Hurricane Run
- Mardi Gras
- Mobile Symphony POPS
- Junior Miss
- Christmas Pageant & Parade
- Dauphin Island Regatta (sailboat races)
- Spring & Fall Bird Migration
- Dauphin Island Sea Lab Discovery Days

Potential

- Art Festival
- Migration Festival
- Heritage Festival
- Passion Play
- Musicals/Concerts
- Ferry Dinner Cruise
- Dockside Seafood Market on weekends
- Airport fly-ins
- Butterfly Migration
- Kite Festival
- Oyster Festival
- Bicycling events



It is important for the Town to focus on existing facilities to develop multiple events that will attract a variety of visitors. For example the Isle Dauphine Club, the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo (ADSFR) site, the Sea Lab, and Fort Gaines could be sites for band concerts, other amphitheatre-type events, and there could be “concerts in the park” at various

existing locations around the Island. The Town should also capitalize to the maximum extent that is prudent, on the festivals, events, parades, etc. that it already hosts each year in ways to make improvements. Other kinds of festivals, an antique car show, flea market days, benefits, and civil war movie showings at the Fort could all be activities that would take advantage of existing infrastructure. These events could be planned and hosted by different organizations so that activities could be spread throughout the year, even to cover the less predictable weather of the winter season. This kind of strategy requires integrated activity and cooperation among the different governing entities on the Island.

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Implement adequate public notification systems related to water conditions and swimming safety issues around the entire Gulf beach area (*i.e.*, lifeguards, flags).
- Design and put in place more trails (hiking, biking, non-motorized boating) for tourists and residents to enjoy.
- Begin work on further Golf Club improvements, facilities expansion, and marketing.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Develop, design, and implement a revision to the existing Bienville Boulevard walking path to create a “walk through time” on the bike trail that has stations highlighting different periods of Dauphin Island history with associated exercise opportunities.
- Develop a means of providing tourists and residents better access to beaches that offer retail opportunities (food, drinks, beach-going items, etc.).
- Design and implement a controlled beach access method, possibly by the selling of a day-tag (*i.e.*, NJ beaches), to avoid overcrowding and provide additional sources of revenue for the Town.
- Design and implement the development of the Isle Dauphine Club as an appealing, attractive small event venue (attracting retreats, meetings, and other forms of small entertaining gathering).



**Strategic Recommendation #2:**

**To preserve and promote Dauphin Island’s history & culture.**

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Provide accurate information to the Coastal Connection Scenic Byway program for identity of Dauphin Island resources.
- Conduct stakeholder guided tours to familiarize business owners with Island points of interest (in-town referrals) so all Dauphin Island businesses can become advocates for the tourism industry.
- Develop a map of tourism attractions and businesses and maintain a calendar of events that is readily accessible.

- Coordinate advertising materials, strategies, and campaigns between businesses, lodging facilities, and real estate agencies (*i.e.*, maps, promotions, joint advertisements, special events, refrigerator magnet) that are consistent with the “branding” decided upon to identify the Town.
  - seasonal advertising to serve different interests (*e.g.*, winter versus summer or fall)
  - targeted advertising off-season
    - snowbirds
    - seasonal events
    - special interest (civil war trail, birding trail)
    - niche market groups
  - single ticket price for multiple sites from individual business owners



Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design regulatory programs that will maintain the sustainability of natural ecosystems and cultural/historical resources, locally and regionally.
- Identify and seek-out nature-based businesses and develop incentives to attract and promote these eco-tourism businesses
- Develop a campaign that will promote local and regional art and artists – create an arts district as a draw for the region.
- Explore opportunities for establishing public transit means to the Island (including Mobile Bay Ferry services that use to stop daily at the Island) to attract tourists.

**Strategic Recommendation #3:**

**Protect all natural and cultural resources by determining user capacity in light of resource vulnerability.**

Background: Achieving an improved quality of life for members of the Dauphin Island community is built upon the premise of expanding and taking full advantage of the cultural and eco-tourism opportunities available to support the generation of increased revenue for the Town. Often an immediate concern with this kind of strategy is if you significantly expand the tourism industry then you will soon overburden the resources (natural, cultural, historical) upon which the industry is based. Some of the kinds of threats that Strategic Planning participants thought required further consideration in planning with regard to resource degradation, as well as issues that would hinder appropriate use of resources, included the following:

- natural disasters and recovery time
- overcoming negative image of the Island
- potential loss of small island community feel
- overdevelopment – losing green space and wetlands
- need to increase and enforce (have capability) protective ordinances
- uncontrolled parking
- under-staffed community services
- lack of small animal control
- over-use of natural resources at foundation of attracting tourists
- wind farm (energy) development effects on birds
- lack of restaurants
- loss of electrical power
- significant refuse and not having compulsory garbage collection
- must have more lodging for increase tourism strategies that are low-profile and environmentally sensitive

Therefore, the question is, how much growth can these resources sustain without damage? Growth means quantitative increase in physical size, thus implying that eco-tourism for example should grow unimpeded on Dauphin Island, ultimately exceeding physical limits to this activity. Development, in contrast to growth, as in sustainable development, however, means qualitative change, realization of potentialities, and transition to a fuller or better state – improvements through changes in quality, not quantity. Therefore, increased revenues from investments in cultural and eco-tourism can be achieved while at the same time not degrading the resources upon which this industry and other aspects of Dauphin Island ultimately depend. How can this happen?



Increasing the quality of the overall tourism experience through other supporting industry improvements as well as providing the best of tourism opportunities can cause people to spend more money than they might otherwise because they will stay longer to fully enjoy the experience and their pleasure from the experience will influence their willingness to pay more. Numerous studies on the eco-tourism industry have demonstrated that increasing the quality of nature-based business

activities such as birding festivals, for example, without having to continually draw increasing crowds of people to planned events in the traditional sense of “growing the event,” can still produce the desired economic benefits of increasing profits to support the local economy from one year to the next. It is clear that effective strategies can be enacted to enhance cultural and eco-tourism businesses toward supporting the economic needs of communities, without overburdening and consequently degrading the resource base so important to supporting this particular economy, as well as many other elements of the Island.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Design a strategy for establishing coordinated, event integrated visitor trips (Reservation Service Organization - RSO) to lessen random traffic to the resource sites.
- Develop an Island-wide program (that includes participation by all governance entities) to produce better signage and more signs for resource protection and education.
- Research and evaluate the implementation of a user fee structure to provide maintenance and development costs for tourism resources, and to provide soundly designed parking facilities for tourist sites.
- Develop strong ordinances that protect identified resources (*i.e.*, light ordinance, tree ordinance) and effectively enforce these ordinances.
- Develop a community-accepted waste pick-up program that includes recycling community-wide, more trash receptacles on Island with regular maintenance, and bi-weekly garbage pickup.
- Implement and enforce better domesticated animal control strategies Island-wide.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design education materials and programs for tourists and residents promoting environmental awareness and eco-friendly tourism (*i.e.*, slogan “share beach with turtles,” encourage “butterfly

gardening,” refrigerator magnets, brochures/flyers). These materials and other programs should encourage people to be active environmental stewards.

- Design and implement a protection and replanting program for dune vegetation.
- Incorporate into existing ordinances a means of preserving waterfront views – representing a balance between new development and preservation of scenic views.
- Plan and implement strategies to guarantee heavy industrial facilities are not allowed in primarily-designated conservation/park areas.
- Encourage the increase of bed & breakfast facilities (need to amend zoning ordinances to allow these Island-wide) to provide alternative visitor stay opportunities to the traditional motel/hotel option.
- Design and implement a public transit system (trolley) to minimize individual automobile impacts on Island resources.

**Strategic Recommendation #4:**

**Dauphin Island continues to be a more environmentally friendly community by moving away from traditional building and utilities service toward “green” processes.**

**Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Develop a strategy for providing tax incentives for building “green” on Dauphin Island.
- Promote the utilization of water-saving appliances Island-wide and introduce other forms of water conservation.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design systems for residential and community facilities to redirect rain runoff into wetlands and Audubon Lake.
- Research and plan for the possibility of wind farm development on the Island’s west end.
- Develop means for increasing the capacity of recycling “grey water” from the Island’s present sewage treatment system.
- Explore, design and put into operation alternative forms of sewer and waste treatment to become more “eco-friendly”



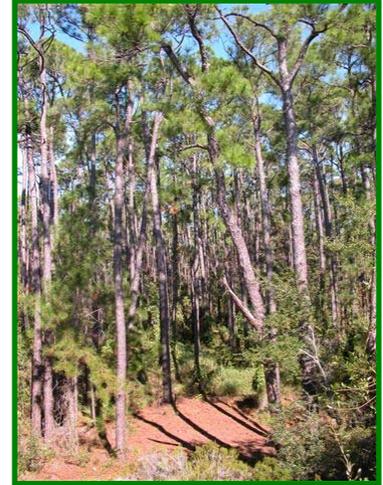
## II. Island Growth Control [4) residential development in the forested east end, 5) residential/business development on the west end, and 6) Island governance]

### 4. East End Development & Water/Resource Protection

#### **GOAL 1:**

**Protect, maintain, and enhance healthy terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and other natural resources so important to Dauphin Island's integrity and socio-economic vitality.**

Background: Seven natural resource categories were identified during the Dauphin Island Strategic Planning process for the Island in general, but with specific reference to the east end. These included: Maritime Forests with tree/forest canopy; Wetlands – saltwater and freshwater; Dune lands/beaches; Aquifer – groundwater; Lake surface water; Terrestrial fauna/birds, flora, and fisheries; and Barrier islands/shoals.



#### **Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Design and carryout programs for canopy protection and habitat preservation of the east end Maritime Forest ecosystem.**

Background: The **Maritime Forests** provide habitat for birds and other forms of wildlife, provide aesthetic qualities, stabilize island sediments, provide a wind break and support the dune system, provide temperature moderation, and serve as a major factor in recharging the groundwater aquifer. The Island's forested area faces threats from invasive species and generally causes conflict within the community because they provide no tax revenue or reduced revenue, their preservation is divisive, and many perceive they limit development. These forests often experience clear cutting, which is viewed as a cheaper way to develop, maximizing property size, and usually results in no restoration efforts after development. A typical four-foot diameter tree in the forest absorbs and holds approximately 75,000 gallons of water at any time, holds soils in place, maintains nutrient recycling with the ambient environment, serves as our air treatment system by taking in our exhaled CO<sub>2</sub> and expiring O<sub>2</sub> for all animal and human breathing. Imagine if the 75,000 gallons of water a typical tree in the forest holds were lost to the surface waters and aquifer recharge because the tree was cut down and discarded or in other ways moved off the Island!

#### **Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Revise and provide community-wide comment on the existing Dauphin Island tree ordinance to make it more protective and effective and develop appropriate means of enforcing the ordinance.
- Include in any tree ordinance the consideration of surrounding parcel vegetation to capitalize on opportunities to enhance connected forested areas that will effectively create wildlife habitat corridors.

- Encourage reforestation programs that utilize native plantings on developed properties by promoting a 10% rebate on taxes for all properties planted in native vegetation in the east end forested part of the Island.
- Develop public education programs on the importance of ecosystems and how to maintain healthy ecosystems.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Initiate a program of assessment to identify all east end environmental assets on a map (e.g., Audubon, Goat Trees, etc.) in order to effectively guide further development and preservation activities.
- Explore opportunities and availability of resources to purchase at-risk properties in order to achieve a more wide-ranging maritime forest protection program on the east end of the Island that acts to accomplish the
  - linking of habitat types and
  - establishing wildlife corridors.

### **Strategic Recommendation #2:**

#### **Protect and sustain the Island's groundwater aquifer.**

Background: The **Groundwater** aquifer under Dauphin Island is the primary source of drinking water for inhabitants and is also used for businesses and irrigation. Present information suggests that the Dauphin Island aquifer is a sole source aquifer, meaning that it is not supplied by any other aquifer and is confined to the geologic formations directly under the Island. Therefore, this water source is limited – finite source/capacity versus zone density (pressure/volume) – is not presently supported by sufficient recycling/recovery processes in the local sewage treatment and overall drainage system, and faces a continuous threat of saltwater intrusion. Further loss of wetlands jeopardizes the groundwater system and it will be extremely expensive to find substitutes for this water supply. It still remains to be determined, however, if there might be a much deeper aquifer under Dauphin Island that could in the future be accessible by deeper well drilling.



### **Future Actions:**

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Investigate and consider the process to achieve sole source aquifer designation with the assistance of the County through an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (seek Congressman Bonner's assistance; <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/drinklink.html>; Kevin McCormick: 202-564-3890 or Alanna Conley: 404-562-9443).
- Design ordinances and other regulations to preserve and protect existing natural areas and open space on the Island.
- Design and conduct hydrologic studies to measure the sole source groundwater aquifer condition and supply capacity on Dauphin Island. Compare this capacity to alternative future scenarios of potential demand through further development.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design and implement an Island-wide drainage system that properly drains all properties to protect ecosystems and humans, while guaranteeing that no freshwater is lost to the sea but instead directed to Island groundwater recharge areas.
- Develop programs for Island-wide water conservation/protection strategies and approve regulations that will allow mandatory regulations of water use exterior to residences in times of water shortage.
- Design and implement plans for effectively recovering/re-using grey water and rainwater, both in public facilities and private residences.

**Strategic Recommendation #3:**

**Take all protective measures available to preserve wetland and surface water ecosystems because of their important support of the Island's wildlife habitats and drinking water source.**



Background: The fresh and saltwater **Wetlands** offer excellent nursery areas for aquatic and terrestrial fauna, stabilize the north side of the Island, enhance groundwater recharge, offer a place for storm water retention and purification, and provide an overall habitat area that includes a drinking water source, food, cover for animals, and provides aesthetic characters that many people appreciate. Wetland areas are often maligned because of their propensity for harboring mosquitoes often thought of as a public health problem, and their limiting of development. Wetland areas

present significant protection enforcement problems and are threatened by invasive species. When faced with mitigation efforts regarding the use and misuse of wetlands their real property value and appropriate uses are often brought into question.

**Surface Water** on the Island supports wetlands and provides habitat for plants and animals and recreation for humans. Surface water systems recharge the aquifer and are generally aesthetically pleasing to residents and visitors. These systems are significantly impacted by lack of stormwater management on the Island as well as the inadequate management of drainage ditches (culverts, natural state, earth removal). They are also another source for mosquitoes and serve as an aesthetically displeasing litter trap.

**Future Actions:**Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Partner with the Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center to implement a Clean Water Guardians recognition program for Dauphin Island.
- Design an incentive program for property owners that enhance stormwater management and control through the use of rain gardens, cisterns, and green building strategies.
- Establish markers or interpretive signage for the identification of all Dauphin Island wetland areas as a means of notice as well as public education for the importance of these ecosystems.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Explore opportunities and availability of resources to purchase at-risk properties containing wetlands or the use of easements that will
  - establish wetland buffers,
  - guarantee their ability for providing ecosystem services, and
  - provide accessibility to the public.
- Design a program for providing incentives to existing property owners that have wetlands on their properties and that will encourage them to conduct best management practices regarding their wetlands.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management plan that provides for better management of sediments, especially fill and clay, and offers sufficient drainage methods with appropriate terminus in freshwater habitats to contain the maximum possible of freshwater that is present at any one time on Dauphin Island. (Visit the Scruggs Center to learn about opportunities for conserving surface waters)

**Strategic Recommendation #4:**

**Act in ways that fulfill the importance of barrier island systems like the Dauphin Island complex of Sand Island Shoals, Pelican Island, and Little Dauphin Island, for the people who live there, the wildlife that rely upon their existence, and the coastal mainland protection they offer, as well as the added significance that sand dunes provide to these systems.**



Background: The fact that Dauphin Island is a **Barrier Island** (ebb/tidal development) presents relatively unique issues with regards to development. Barrier islands are extremely important habitats for the marine environment, are generally aesthetically pleasing and intriguing to people, provide storm protection to interior bays and the coastal mainland, and offer recreation that contributes to tourism. Issues that barrier islands often face include questions about ownership/control/management, threats from coastal erosion and storm surge, degradation through inadequate

sediment management, and inappropriate recreational uses (*i.e.*, swimming to Sand Island). Barrier islands are prone to the accumulation of dead trees and litter and are plagued by inadequate efforts at restoration.

As both a non-consumptive and consumptive resource **Fauna** on the barrier island provide economic benefit because they are aesthetically pleasing, support tourism activities (*e.g.*, birding), taste good (*i.e.*, fish and shellfish), and are abundant (*e.g.*, reptiles, birds, fishes). Certain animals on the Island can cause problems however, such as feral cats, invasive species (*e.g.*, nutria, Norway rats), and stray dogs, all of which affect the natural habitats.

**Dune Lands & Beaches** are a predominant landscape feature of the Island's east end and serve very important functions to the ecosystem, including meeting the needs of humans. They protect forests, houses, and infrastructure, provide habitat, support a variety of human recreation demands, are thought of as aesthetically pleasing ("pretty"), and influence the ability of the Town to gain revenue from tourism. The dunes and beaches are plagued with erosion problems with insufficient

means for restoration, are impacted by building and people walking on/over the dunes and berm, and face the threat of invasive species that will overcome native plants important for maintaining the dune structure. Presently on Dauphin Island there is generally a lack of sufficient dune and beach protection through enforcement and rehabilitation. There needs to be a focus on encouraging educational strategies to inform residents and visitors of dune and beach ecosystem importance, the potential for 4-wheeler destruction and problems with litter, and that there is a constant threat from hurricanes and other storm events in terms of human safety and beach erosion.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Conduct activities that will allow the Island community to continually remain informed about regional plans for coastal sediment management that will affect the quality of Dauphin Island beaches.
- Maintain consistency in the enforcement of State laws prohibiting ATV traffic on the sand dunes of Dauphin Island.
- Institute a beach access tag system to enforce dune protection, control excessive beach traffic, and generate revenue for support of further beach/dune protective measures (similar to what has been done for NJ beaches).
- Develop educational and awareness programming that not only stresses the importance of Dauphin Island as a barrier island to people who live on the Island, but also for the benefit of visitors and regional politicians/regulators for which the Island represents a form of protection for the coastal mainland environment.
- Design incentive programs to encourage beach maintenance by the restoration of sediments and vegetation through the actions of private property owners.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

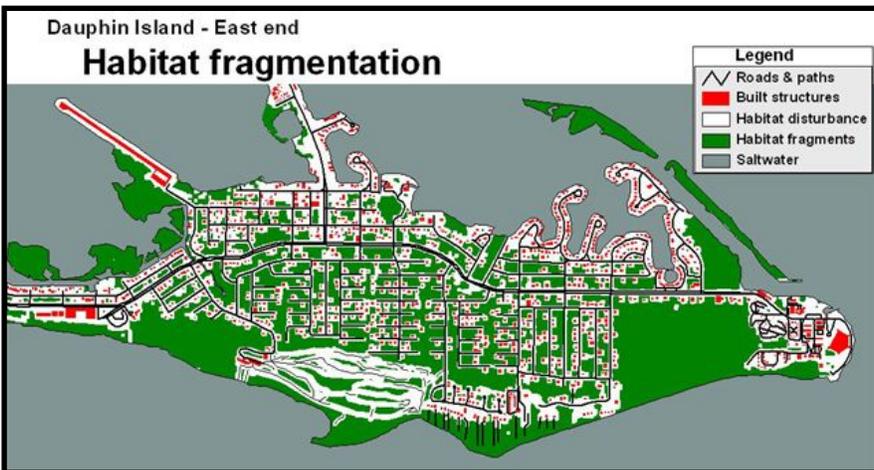
- Devise a comprehensive landscape plan for beach access areas Island-wide that identifies sanctioned dune walk-over areas along the entire extent of the beach.
- Design a program to fully research and evaluate all the options available for protection and maintenance of the Island's coastline (both east and west ends) that would include
  - consideration of a re-engineered beach,
  - the introduction of materials offshore to affect currents and sand movement, or
  - leaving the coastline alone for natural coastal dynamics to dominate.
- Evaluate any flexibility in the existing Island lodging fees and target potential funds from these sources to meet costs of essential services related to beach and dune protection/maintenance.
- Enact regulations and voluntary actions through incentives that provide for the conservation of sensitive and stop-over species habitats and the promotion/protection of extensive habitats for existing wildlife on the Island.
- Design and implement programs intended to protect beach and sand dune habitats through the encouragement of residents to create "backyard habitats" for indigenous wildlife.

**GOAL 2:**

Identify and implement programs to promote low-impact development (LID) processes that guide the further residential improvement of east end forested parcels on Dauphin Island in a way that protects the natural resources present.

**Strategic Recommendation #1:**

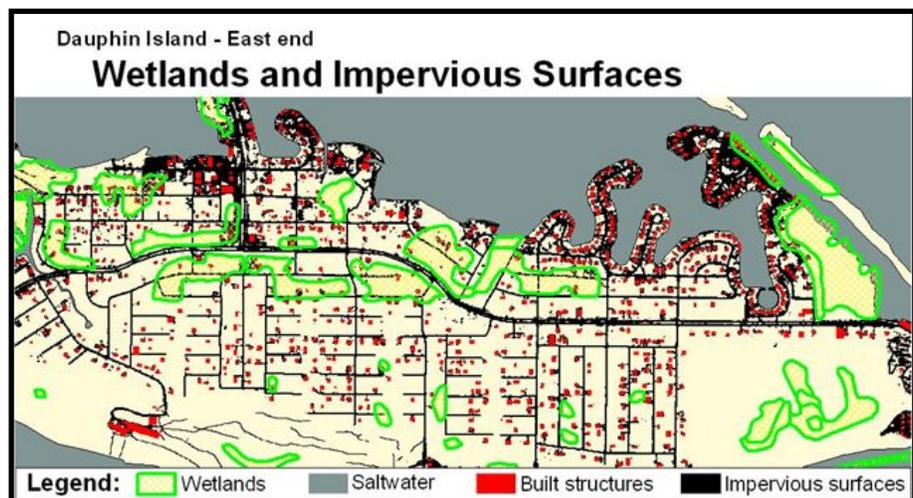
Pursue conservation-based development strategies that achieve desired housing densities with minimal development footprints and maximize open space, wildlife habitat, and groundwater percolation regions (i.e., Smart Code)



**Background:** Conservation-based development is the practice of integrating environmental and social issues into the meeting of economically viable mixed-use development of both urban and rural landscapes. The concept of conservation-based development covers many different issues: from the environmentally sound use of rural lands, to the

protection of natural, ecological, and agricultural resources, to the maintenance of small town and village integrity, to the assessment of urban sprawl consequences. Conservation-based development can effectively deal with and anticipate impacts of urban sprawl on adjacent rural districts. The intent in using this strategy is to integrate the valuable natural assets of a region with related economic and other development objectives toward sound, "win-win" scenarios of community improvement. Conservation-based development practices will help a developer to:

- make thoughtful choices about where new development should/should not go, to improve water quality and natural habitat protection;
- understand how good environments (open space preservation; coastal bay ecosystem health; forested and agricultural land protection, etc.) will in-turn support healthy economies (value-added agriculture; eco-tourism; enhanced commercial fisheries, etc.);
- formulate rational strategies for using already developed land and resources more efficiently to enhance community revitalization;
- link land-use development with conservation and protection of economically valuable watersheds;
- develop rural, sustainable communities through grassroots



- empowerment and enhancement of social and cultural assets;
- set up regulatory mechanisms that are fair, clear, consistent, and far-sighted; and
- offer a better quality of life in an equitable way for all citizens of the region.

In further planning for achieving overall conservation-based development, low-impact development (LID) is a strategy that should be considered. LID involves the selection and design of features and practices that mimic natural hydrologic functions. These include filtration of runoff through vegetation, soils and organic matter, evapo-transpiration by vegetation, biodegradation of pollutants by soil bacteria, infiltration and groundwater recharge. Conventional development and storm drain system design typically inhibit natural hydrologic functions by creating large areas of impermeable surfaces that prevent infiltration and recharge, increase runoff, and quickly transport pollutants to streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands. LID practices that mimic natural hydrologic functions include vegetated swales, bio-retention basins and permeable pavement. In addition to providing water quality benefits, LID practices reduce runoff from developed areas and assist with water conservation.

In planning residential improvements, the Town should investigate and encourage development to take the form of interconnected neighborhoods with central public spaces, mixed housing, and neighborhood services within easy walking distance of residents. Provide a range of housing types to increase affordability, family orientation, beach-going, aging-in-place and youth culture. The typical neighborhood unit should be based on the ¼ mile, five minute walk from the center to the edge; it contains a mix of uses and housing types and incomes; it encourages walking and biking; it provides basic needs and civic expression within a reasonable distance; and, finally, it connects with a complex of network streets, sidewalks and paths to other neighborhoods and to a long walk in nature.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Research other jurisdictional examples and design Dauphin Island Town Ordinances to better promote residential low-impact development strategies that guide environmentally sound development in the forested east end area of Dauphin Island.
  - develop zoning changes that support mixed-use, maybe more dense community development (*i.e.*, smart growth) in the east end residential areas (*e.g.*, development of remaining parcels in less than half the property space allocated for each private residence)
  - recommend that building footprints occupy as little of the building parcel as possible to maintain trees, habitat, and open, pervious ground space



- always consider decreasing the fragmentation of habitat areas (*i.e.*, wetlands and forests, including the Audubon Bird Sanctuary) by making determined efforts for maintaining the connectivity of landscapes
- promote the use of pervious driveway and parking surfaces in all construction activities on Dauphin Island to enhance stormwater management

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Design a process for developing zoning overlays such as planned unit developments (PUD) to allow for deviations from traditional zoning requirements that support conservation-based residential development.
- Preserve, enhance, and expand parklands to provide all citizens access to water.
- Build a greenway that emphasizes the Audubon Bird Sanctuary to promote eco-tourism.

## 5. West End Beach Development

### GOAL:

**Develop a long-term strategy for beach/dune preservation, environmental protection, and appropriate use of the west end beach area, emphasizing more access for the public to these resources that generate Town revenue.**

### **Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**Develop a better Island-wide understanding for the extent of what is called the “west end” of Dauphin Island and exactly what it represents to the Island in resources.**

Background: The West End of the island is geologically newer/younger than the rest of the island. The tree line is approximately the geographic divider between the Island’s more ancient east end areas which have higher ground and more stability and the newer west end with less stability. The actual boundaries of the west end of Dauphin Island for future planning purposes include:

- For purposes of this document, the delineation of the west end is from Pelican Street on the east portion of the beach area to the end of the road on the west. This area has been long-sought



after by potential property owners wanting to build large homes for rental and part-time personal use. It represents fabulous beach resources for water sport usage and is a very valuable aesthetic asset. It possesses water, sewer, and electric supply infrastructure. Access is presently available to all residents but significantly limited to the public in general and is limited in public facilities and commercial retail opportunities. Besides the continual changing in beach location and threat from storms, the major short-term problems on the west end are litter

and public trespass on private property from beach-going and parking. The west end generates money for the entire Island through property taxes, lodging taxes, and increased sales tax revenues from renters. The extensive area of the Island’s west end provides a buffer for the Alabama mainland during storm events. Questions to be addressed for the west end include:

- how to effectively maintain accessibility for both residents and the public while protecting the resource and
- obtaining as much economic benefit as possible while limiting new roads to the west end which will further protect the resource and its ambience but further limit access.



- West end private property includes the stretch of beach and bay-front from the end of the maintained road to the end of the island, including the area's island-width cut by Hurricane Katrina. This property is held by one landowner who is thought to be favorable to proposed land uses that will benefit the Town while not diminishing the value of his holdings. This area has significant value and many stakeholders in the Strategic Planning process have expressed an interest in it being used for

eco-tourism activities or local nature-based get away activities. Some have recommended that the far west end could be considered for potential alternative renewable energies, such as the construction of wind mills. As is true of the entire Island, maintenance of the west end with regards to dune and vegetation protection is important to the welfare of coastal Alabama as a protection from storm events. Therefore, only foot access should be allowed and this should be effectively regulated. One recommendation is that the existing owner sells the extreme west end to an environmental/conservation group. The existing "cut" in the Island as a result of Hurricane Katrina should not be addressed because it is difficult and expensive to reconnect the cut to the main part of the Island (could possibly happen in the future as other cuts have been filled in the past; but unlikely).

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Formulate a means of encouraging cooperation between the different jurisdictional regulators and the community for the most effective decision-making regarding Dauphin Island west end issues.
- Develop public education programs on beach stability and restoration so that all stakeholders understand exactly what is involved in achieving community-stated objectives on a barrier island.
- Review and change as necessary the beach/dune element of the Dauphin Island Comprehensive Plan.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Conduct a study – cost-benefit analysis – on the west end to consider the full economic impact and advantages from engineered beach rehabilitation and maintenance in support of traditional uses; design and implement the study that will also include the evaluation of the cost-benefit analysis for alternative future development and beach protection plans on the Island's west end.
- Conduct an economic analysis that compares benefits and costs regarding new forms of residential and commercial development, in contrast to no further development of the west end for commercial and residential uses and instead maintains the west end solely as a public beach for daytrips and camping.

## Strategic Recommendation #2:

**Beach stabilization: Identify best ways to seek beach stabilization – engineered beach (restoration) with continued re-nourishment maintenance issues or leave the beach coastline movements to nature.**

Background: Strategic Planning participants acknowledged that more beach access is necessary to support the Dauphin Island economy, but that there must also be concern about possibilities of a development project's end results changing the ambience/branding of the Island in general. The natural process of Gulf coast barrier island evolution is to "roll" over time, often moving in a northerly direction. But Dauphin Island is especially sand starved and has massive erosion issues. In addition, continuous storm events do not allow time for the barrier island beaches to heal. In the end, Strategic Planning participants believed that the west end beach area should be engineered and re-nourished to protect the island in general and the communities that live there. They felt that if the west end beach was left in its present condition then community retreat will be inevitable.



Because of the need for possible zoning changes to accommodate future potential development patterns on the west end, participants believed that a cost-benefit analysis should be performed for the west end to consider the full economic impact and advantages from engineered beach rehabilitation and maintenance along with new forms of residential and commercial development, in contrast to no further development of the west end for commercial and residential uses or maintaining a public beach.

If restoration/re-nourishment of the west end beach is the chosen alternative, it becomes an Island-wide issue because of both the potential revenue to the Town as well as the rehabilitation costs which will end-up being shared by the entire Dauphin Island community. The Dauphin Island Property Owners Association (DIPOA) should consider transfer of the beach to the town (Property Swap Program) which would justify Island-wide costs by providing public access as well as increasing various funding options that would benefit not only the west end but also the rest of Island. The present unknown status of the DIPOA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) lawsuit could provide potential future incentives to pursue certain kinds of development strategies on the west end (~ \$7 million +/-).

Once an engineered design for the west end beach is implemented, Town fund development must be targeted to continued maintenance/re-nourishment. Maintaining a dedicated fund for west end beach stabilization should have island-wide equitable contribution because of benefits to the whole Island cited above; but there can be possible monetary benefits to enhance Island services from any surplus in the beach maintenance fund. Any funding from



the federal government towards engineering and beach rehabilitation will require beach public ownership and public access controlled by public entities.

As far as physical aspects of continued beach maintenance, there are thought to be two good sources of sand for re-nourishment: off the east end of the island and off the far west end of the island. Possible natural maintenance could also occur if the USACE drops sediments from dredging commitments into the right places on the seafloor for natural currents to bring sand to where it is needed for re-nourishment. Another form of beach nourishment enhancement might be through the construct/depositing of artificial reefs in the environment off-shore of Dauphin Island (<http://www.dot.gov/arrairs/marad1206.htm>; <http://www.enn.com/today.html?id=12837>). The “Liberty Ships” program of the national Department of Transportation ([http://voa.marad.dot.gov/programs/ship\\_disposal/index.asp](http://voa.marad.dot.gov/programs/ship_disposal/index.asp)) is a potential source of artificial reef materials. Any consideration of west end beach rehabilitation must take into account environmental impact issues such as disruption of surrounding environments from engineered beach nourishment. In addition, if a re-engineered beach leads to significantly more permanent residents on the west end, added water supply demand should be considered.

**Future Actions:** (Include consideration of actions listed under East End Development & Water/Resource Protection, Goal 1, Strategic Recommendation #4 above)

Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Conduct activities that will allow the Island community to continually remain informed about regional plans for coastal sediment management that will affect the quality of Dauphin Island beaches.
- Maintain reliable sources of sand from for example, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging programs.

Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Conduct a study on the west end to evaluate the full range of options available for beach restoration and stability maintenance in support of traditional uses that considers as many forms of available technology as possible, including the option of no-action; design and implement study.

**Strategic Recommendation #3:**

**West end beach land-use – Consider all the options available for future Dauphin Island west end development, including no further development, and consider those options that best meet the needs of the entire community (east and west end) with regards to natural resource protection, generation of revenue, and derived best-use benefits to support Island-wide community welfare.**



Background: Strategic Planning participants see an opportunity from recent natural disaster impacts/outcomes to explore other uses for west end properties besides large footprint house building. Participants acknowledged that there are unintended consequences to additional development on the Island’s west end including parking, more cars, needed services, including

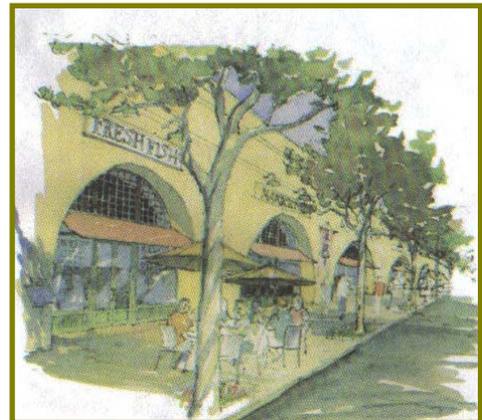
police, all of which need money built into the Town budget. The alternative to further residential/commercial development of the west end would require environmental impact assessments as well as researching the possibility of swap programs for west end property owners to obtain east end properties. This choice would also require evaluating the opportunities/possibilities for retail/commercial development at the beach entry on the west end, around the area of present high-rise condos, to determine what kinds of services would be necessary to attract west end beach-going uses.

If further residential development is promoted for the Dauphin Island west end beach area, then Strategic Planning participants believed that certain concerns must be met. Zoning and ordinances must be consistent and in agreement with Island-wide standards of elevation, structural type, and character/branding; they must also consider the environmental impacts (*i.e.*, trees, runoff, water source – supply and quality); and must mesh with the other strategic plans for the Island. Any regulations must also consider the negative impacts of development to beach nourishment areas. The ability of property owners to obtain appropriate insurance should be thoroughly investigated. Post-Katrina residential construction should include eco-friendly footprints/landscaping (construction and development – *e.g.*, transition to pervious services for driveways). Codes for the west end (which are now at 2003 International Codes standards) should be established as “Code Plus” requirements, requiring stronger structures above minimum code – including wind and flood – as well as mitigation measures. The Town also needs to evaluate the long-term savings and cost effectiveness of implementing these Code Plus standards (for new structures and for retrofitting existing structures). Aesthetic building considerations needed to match branding and to consider water supply for redeveloping the west end might include:

- Beach Cottages
- Density issues (limits to how many)
- Architectural style
- Colors
- Size - Restrict square footage
- Height of new houses

Dauphin Island Property Owner Association covenants and restrictions should be consistent with the Town’s codes (there are discrepancies now) and considerations must be given to a choice between single family units only, or allowing other kinds of development to occur as well, along with the promotion of best management practices for the land owners to enhance the work of natural processes at dune and beach stabilization (requiring them to plant).

Because of the complicated and unique nature of finding sound solutions for the future development and/or restoration of hurricane-damaged properties on the Island’s west end beach area, Strategic Planning Charrette participants strongly believed that this overall issue should be stewarded by a group of qualified people to take this on as their cause/full time job (a committee or other group with dedicated funding for technical or academic assistance). With specific focus on this particular issue, outside of the other responsibilities of the Town, there is more likely a chance of finding real solutions to redevelopment questions that exist for the road-area of the west end that will meet community-wide goals for this landscape. One of the first tasks such a group should take-on would be examination of



present zoning regulations for this entire stretch of west end beach. If retail economic development is desired to serve west-end beach goers, there would be a need to consider possible zoning changes. Mixed-use and small business development, as suggested by Design Charrette participants for the entry area to the west end beaches, would require changing current residential zoning to allow for new commercial. These changes should also consider requiring aesthetic considerations to match the Island Branding characteristics and would need to be consistent and in agreement with Island-wide standards. Creative zoning could be designed so that it supports investment by mom and pop operations instead of “condo flippers.” This might encourage such enterprises as:

- More Restaurants – non chain, mom and pop restaurants (create and enforce ordinances)
- Island Coffee (not Starbucks)
- Specialized shops (wine and cheese)
- Dairy Isle (games, beach floats, milk shakes, kids community center)
- More recreational activities for kids
- News stands

In order for west end beach commercial development to occur the Town needs to create incentives for people to invest in commercial endeavors and it must demonstrate that business activities can be cost effective – that there are enough people to support the business. The Town also needs to consider implications of increases in traffic in west end beach areas that might become commercialized. These issues should all be considered by a commissioned study the Town implements to better define cost-benefit analyses for the different options that presently exist for Dauphin Island west end development in the maintained road area of the west end where utility services are provided.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Consider new zoning classifications for targeted west end development areas of the Island that provide consistency of environmentally sound land-use and building design regulations.
- Create legislation for transfer of development so homeowners can swap land for higher ground at the east end of the Island – property swap program with west end property owners.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Guarantee that all plans, designs, zoning regulations, and ordinance changes for the west end beach area consider and retain the ambience and small town feel of the Island.
- Enforce Dauphin Island zoning ordinances and be prepared to conduct adaptive (learning-based) management with regards to needed periodic adjustments in zoning to promote most effective and efficient means of revitalization.
- Create a master development plan and work with developers for the targeted west end commercial business area to coordinate retail and mixed-use improvements if commercial development is proved reasonable from the economic studies performed.

### **Strategic Recommendation #4:**

**Identify methods for beach environmental protection and dunes preservation on the Dauphin Island west end, west of where the maintained road and utility services end.**

Background: Strategic Planning participants discussed the option of protecting Dauphin Island west end beach area resources by converting this part of the Island into a State or National Park property.

Potential benefits for this choice of land use would include: the provision of a public access point for the entire west end, the property would be maintained by the government and would be eligible for receiving federal or state funds, and there would be an economic benefit from charging entrance fees. The west end would then also be easier to protect and to receive funds for damages because of it being a public facility. Any decision in this regard that involves wanting to protect west end resources through public beach and park access certainly should be consider an option of any cost-benefit economic analysis for Island-wide assessment of future strategies.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Explore the opportunities available and the political support for changing the present west end beach area, west of where the maintained road and utility services end, from private/public access and development to the status of a park.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Research and investigate the benefits of turning the west end beach area into a State or National Park and include the results of the economic studies above in a final decision on this issue.

## **6. Island governance**

### **GOAL:**

**Design and implement appropriate mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration among the four Island governing entities in order to establish a collective, adaptable (flexible), learning-based approach to Island community management that offers sound leadership and the capacity to develop sources of continuing revenue to insure community sustainability.**

### **Strategic Recommendation #1:**

**To develop a cooperative, collaborative Island-wide governance structure.**

Background: A retreat was held in early June 2007 for governing representatives from each of the four Dauphin Island governing entities. Discussions at this retreat were very informative and productive. In general, the different entity representatives showed genuine concern for issues such as:

- public perceptions
- how to build confidence in the public
- community expectations
- coordination
- cooperation
- eliminating public confusion
- sharing of responsibility
- sharing of resources
- transparency
- minimizing duplication
- whole is greater than sum of the parts
- how arrangements among entities would best serve needs of DI community



- potential areas of cooperation and/or overlap
- jointly develop property held solely by one entity in the best way to meet community-wide benefits
- identify primary reasons for some formal arrangement among the entities regarding consolidation and/or cooperation

While some people are confused about exactly which governing entity is responsible for what service(s), the community expects them to work together in some format to provide basic services, public works, safety, and protection of the environment.

All Retreat participants agreed that they had to do better at their intentions for developing flexible and adaptive ways of doing business and that they had to more effectively identify creative sources of revenue. In particular, participants recognized that they must listen to all special interests in governmental affairs and be responsive to all citizen concerns. They indicated that they wanted to encourage active public involvement in the Town's governance and make sure that it was conducted in a fair and equitable way with sufficient time for conflict resolution. Representatives of the different entities acknowledged in some instances that they had to be more concerned about demonstrating publicly their follow-through on implementation activities so that people really knew and understood what they are doing.

### **Future Actions:**

#### Short-term: (6 – 12 months)

- Design the format for and conduct a bi-monthly (every two months) public meeting of the four Dauphin Island governing entities where a four-entity panel will be available for public question/concern dialogue and to encourage community spirit.
- Employ activities to promote constructive cooperation among present government entities that engage the community by maintaining community-wide communications.
- Establish rules of conduct that guarantee all governing entity activities will be conducted through transparent operations.
- Develop a specific project, practice, or process where all governing entities can show a united front to conduct effective lobbying of county, state, and federal people who can help.

#### Long-term: (1 – 5 years)

- Continue the June 2007 retreat gathering process of all four Dauphin Island governing entities to further explore how all can better cooperate and collaborate. Through this activity attempt to answer the question, is there justification for a single, unified governance structure on Dauphin Island?
- The four Dauphin Island governing entities cooperate on the joint development of resident/visitor information manual.
- Develop a process to integrate and track the different commercial development activities at targeted sites around the Island (east end Ferry, central village and working waterfront, west end beach) to maintain consistency and eliminate duplication.

## **Evaluation.**

This Strategic Plan to guide Dauphin Island forward toward a sustainable future is a “living and evolving” document. The plan should never be viewed as final or “set in concrete” but rather is a document that is alive and can change as the community learns more about itself, where it wants to be in 20 years, and what tools may become available in the future to help the community along its path. This is the beauty of “learning-based” management directed at achieving sustainable development desired by communities willing to take charge of their own destiny, like Dauphin Island.

The strategic plan presented here, along with all its short and long-term actions for implementation, looks out into the future 20 years. Because the goals of the plan and associated implementation strategies were developed in the context of a learning-based adaptive management framework, this set of recommended strategies for Dauphin Island community improvement and sustainability will require period assessment of progress. The direction being pursued by implementation strategies can be periodically assessed, and if in conflict with the community’s original vision, can be noted and taken to the community-at-large to determine what to do. Based upon the experiential learning of these evaluations, the community can then agree on changes to the implementation strategy that will likely take the community back on course with regards to its direction forward. This process characterizes what adaptive management by a community wanting to be sustainable is really all about. You plan, do or implement your plan, measure progress, and act to correct deviations from your expected path to defined goals. In this learning-based approach, through the community-defined evaluation methods, if it is judged the strategy appears to be moving the community away from its core values and long-term vision, then the recommended long-term strategies should be revised to get the community and the process back on track.

The development of key indicators by the community and periodic evaluations of those indicators, at least once every five years, is a good way to monitor progress of the strategic plan intentions as it becomes implemented. For example, monitoring the percent of total revenue from any particular income source contributing to the support of Town operations can be measured against other revenue sources over time to evaluate the diversity of the Dauphin Island economic base. The more diverse this base, the more resilient the community will be to future change, such as major damage from hurricanes. The diversity of revenue streams to the Town will maintain stability in light of one economic activity declining for some reason.

Thus, it is recommended that the community begin to develop a set of indicators relevant and understandable to all sectors of the Dauphin Island community. Then, every five (5) years, or less, an evaluation can be carried out regarding strategic improvements the community has accomplished guided by the recommendations listed here, and if this evaluation does not prove satisfactory, revisions in approach can be made by the community as a whole.

## Next Steps

Today, in rural America, it seems the most productive economic development strategy and most productive investments for long term prosperity are ultimately tied to creating a community where people want to raise a family, live, recreate and own a business. Instead of always concentrating on how people and institutions from other places can help, towns are shifting the focus to their own community and its resources, its character and its people, in a way their desire for true prosperity may well be realized. This means fully understanding the social-economic-environmental system of which members of the community are a part. This involves taking a systems approach to redevelopment and reinvention.

A new spirit has emerged from a number of Dauphin Island residents that speaks to the urgency for change and progress on the Island. This spirit will be best served if the Dauphin Island community and its leaders are able to maintain a system's thinking approach to their deliberations for moving forward with improvements. And this path forward will require sincere efforts for cooperation and collaboration from all stakeholders.



The first act the Town should take is to retain a neutral, non-stake holding facilitator to manage dialogue, coordinate action, nurture leadership, mobilize civic assets, and steer consensus-building among private, public, and institutional sectors. Revitalization of the Dauphin Island community will be most successful if citizens are actively engaged, but guided. Meaningful involvement from a broad social spectrum can be obtained, but requires the skills of a third-party catalyst. Implementation of strategic actions can best be guided by an expert assisting

the work of a community-wide, vested interest steering committee where actual action is based upon a timeframe the community feels is realistic.

Additionally, groups of committed stakeholders should identify themselves and take stewardship for championing a specific issue the Town faces. These stewardship groups can become the resident experts and trackers of a particular subject area (*i.e.*, best means for restoring the west end beach). Teams of residents form in these stewardship groups to become citizen experts, sources of resources/information, and “watchdogs” for a specific improvement action the Town wants to implement (*e.g.*, sole-source aquifer designation, governance cooperation/collaboration, gateway entry design, etc.). These resident teams would report to a select committee convened by the Town that includes key leaders and decision-makers, as well as “active” representatives of each of the four governing entities, serving the role of Dauphin Island comprehensive revitalization coordination.

The uncertainty with regard to the future of development on the west end beach area of Dauphin Island strongly suggests the need for a unifying view and associated leadership among the different entities presently responsible for governance on the Island. Cooperation, collaboration, and unification of governance are going to be required to achieve the broad vision for an improved future from what the community stakeholders have indicated they want from Dauphin Island

community-wide revitalization as stated in this document. Effectiveness in action and in benefiting from new-found revenue sources for the entire community can only be achieved through a concerted effort by all governing entities to work together.

All major revitalization activities proposed here that are intended to improve the economic vitality of the Town require significant changes in zoning regulations. So one of the first actions of the Town, in cooperation with the other governing entities, must be to codify revised zoning articles into law that target the major areas of revitalization, such as the central village business district around LeMoyne Drive, the east end Ferry Landing area, the west end beach entry area, and the east end forested residential area. This zoning should be amended and revised to assist the Town in recruiting interested developers and investors who are attracted by the willingness of the Town and community to explore economic development opportunities on the Island.

It is difficult to know how to move toward “where you want to be” if you don’t know what “where you want to be” looks like! The Dauphin Island community needs to spend time and stakeholder energy engaging a PR/Marketing Firm in mounting a major branding and marketing campaign for the Island. A “brand” that speaks to the shared community vision of the Island, as presented in this document, must be developed and religiously employed for guiding every action the Town takes in its reinvention process. The brand will lend credibility and consistency to how the Town is perceived by others. This branding and a corresponding promotional campaign should be mounted as soon as possible.

The Town of Dauphin Island should evaluate its process for outreach to its governmental representatives and other influential institutions. Because of the uniqueness of what Dauphin Island represents to the Gulf Coast region and the State of Alabama, an aggressive lobbying campaign should be sustained in order to tap all available and potential sources of support for accomplishing what the Town wants to achieve, as outlined in this Plan.

If the steps outlined above are taken in short-order, this entire set of strategic planning recommendations will unfold naturally and successfully to the benefit of all Dauphin Island stakeholders. “Actions spring not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer).