

# *ULI in the Community*

C A S E S T U D I E S F O R A C T I O N

## Community Outreach in South Carolina

### South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative

#### Project Summary

ULI, in partnership with the South Carolina Real Estate Center at the University of South Carolina's Moore School of Business (SCREC), formed the South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative to guide state leaders in their search for pragmatic and effective solutions to the growth challenges facing the state. This multiyear effort included the formation of a

Statewide Committee, a series of forums held around the state, a statewide symposium, and the publication of a final report recommending actions that the state can take. Unlike other ULI community outreach programs, the South Carolina initiative did not involve the leadership of a district council.

#### Background

South Carolina historically has been blessed with a strong economy, rich natural and cultural resources, and a high quality of life. But projections reveal that over the next 25 years, the population of South Carolina will grow by an additional 1.1 million people, resulting in a population of more than 5 million. A third of this growth is expected to locate in the state's treasured coastal areas. In 2001, ULI and SCREC established the South Carolina Quality Growth

Initiative in response to the mounting growth pressures facing the state.

The initiative was created to inform and elevate the debate on growth and development issues, to identify actions that can be taken in South Carolina to improve future development patterns, and to influence decisions at the state level.

#### Implementation

To lead the initiative, a statewide coordinating committee was created. This 36-member group consisted of leaders from various stakeholder groups, including developers and other business representatives, environmentalists, academics, and public officials. To ensure geographic balance across the state, an approximately equal number of members representing five key regions were

chosen: Charleston, Beaufort/Bluffton, Columbia, Greenville, and Myrtle Beach.

The committee met frequently from September 2001 until March 2003, sponsored nine statewide and regional meetings, and held a one-day symposium halfway through the process.

## ***ULI in the Community***

### C A S E S T U D I E S F O R A C T I O N

To guide the overall initiative, the committee adopted ten high-quality growth principles that both defined quality growth and formed the foundation of the committee's final recommendations.

1. Preserve and enhance South Carolina's quality of life.
2. Encourage comprehensive land use planning.
3. Enhance and revitalize existing communities.
4. Develop mixed-use communities.
5. Coordinate transportation investments with land use decisions.
6. Preserve open space, natural resources, and the environment.
7. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
8. Respect private property rights.
9. Foster governmental collaboration and coordination.
10. Encourage education and community participation.

The committee felt strongly that it wanted to fill a niche and not duplicate the work of others. In developing its recommendations and strategies for implementation, therefore, the committee followed five guiding criteria:

- The recommendations should be compelling, and politically and economically viable.
- The recommendations should address problems that are not already being addressed successfully by other groups.
- The strategies should have a meaningful impact if implemented.
- The strategies should address the needs of a broad cross section of stakeholders and be able to mobilize their interest.
- The recommendations and strategies should be complementary and mutually supportive to ensure the greatest impact.

Using the information gleaned from the four regional forums and the statewide symposium, in addition to its own extensive deliberations, the Statewide Committee developed five broad recommendations. These final five recommendations for state action are premised on the understanding that growth is inevitable and beneficial, and is not harmful to South Carolina's residents, communities, and economy. Furthermore, they are designed not to burden developers or businesses, but to make high-quality growth easier and more likely to occur. The recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** Create a commonly shared vision for high-quality growth in South Carolina.

**Recommendation 2:** Beginning with the visioning process, institute a broad-based program to educate public and private leaders and the general public about the prospects, challenges, and opportunities inherent in high-quality growth.

**Recommendation 3:** Create a statewide institutional framework that works at the state, regional, and local levels to encourage and support improved comprehensive and issue-specific planning.

**Recommendation 4:** Encourage interagency and interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination in land use planning, infrastructure spending, and environmental protection.

**Recommendation 5:** Protect, preserve, and enhance environmental resources.

For each recommendation, the committee developed an extensive list of very specific strategies that the state could follow to implement it. These strategies can serve as a “road map” for the state to achieve better development patterns.

Working with Statewide Committee member Terry Farris, director of the Center for Real Estate Development at Clemson University, ULI staff produced the final report of the committee’s work. The report, *Growing by Choice or Chance: State Strategies for Quality Growth in South Carolina*, provides background on South Carolina’s growth trends and challenges, describes the initiative, and presents the committee’s key recommendations and implementation strategies.

Upon completion of the final report, ULI and SCREC devised a strategy to disseminate the report and market its recommendations. The report was mailed to more than 1,500 public and private leaders across the state. The initiative cochairs arranged a private meeting with the governor and his key staff to brief them on the recommendations. They also met with key legislators and cabinet leaders. Staff also arranged for press announcements, editorial board meetings, placement of op-ed pieces, and interviews on local television and radio programs. A full copy of the report was posted on the SCREC’s Web site, and members of the committee and ULI placed links to the report on their organizations’ Web sites.

The ultimate advancement of the report’s recommendations hinges on the commitment and energy of the committee members. A new ULI South Carolina District Council is now being formed and is expected to focus considerable attention on advancing the report’s recommendations.

## Partners

With no ULI district council in South Carolina, former ULI Chairman Jim Chaffin, president of Chaffin/Light Associates in Spring Island, South Carolina, and Mayor Joe Riley of Charleston took the lead and chaired the Statewide Committee. The project was supported by the ULI Community Outreach staff in Washington,

D.C., and staff at the SCREC in Columbia, South Carolina. Together, they coordinated, recruited, and staffed the committee; managed meeting and event logistics; and organized the effort to produce and disseminate the report. A professional facilitator was retained for several of the Statewide Committee’s meetings.

# ULI in the Community

C A S E S T U D I E S F O R A C T I O N

## Project Funding

Funding for the initiative was provided by a \$50,000 grant from the SCREC and a matching contribution from ULI. Financial support cov-

ered meetings and events, report preparation, and the recommendations' rollout strategy. Both organizations provided in-kind services.

## Lessons Learned/Experience Gained

- **Strong district council participation creates local presence.** During the rollout of this initiative, there was no ULI district council in South Carolina. Providing staff support and project leadership from Washington, D.C., presented some logistical challenges as well additional travel costs. A local ULI district council would have been a strong advantage, creating a local presence and providing insight into the local culture and political landscape. ULI staff and leaders in South Carolina are currently discussing how to bring a district council into existence. One focus of the district council is expected to be programming and outreach activities to support implementation of the recommendations in the quality growth report.
- **Developing an implementation strategy requires a long-term vision and coordination with the release of the report.** It is important to devise a report dissemination strategy that encourages implementation. Too often, committee reports such as these are distributed but inevitably collect dust on bookshelves. Initiative leaders should proactively seek opportunities to draw attention to the report and develop means to support stakeholders seeking to advance its implementation.
- **Effective programs and recommendations stem from having a broad range of stakeholders involved in the initiative.** In all of its community outreach strategies, ULI has found that bringing the right people to the table and reaching consensus among them makes all the difference. In order to promote the best use of land, it is necessary to consider the issue from many perspectives. Therefore, bringing together representatives from all stakeholder groups, including those who might be inclined to resist participation or to block consensus, is essential.
- **The meeting facilitator must be strong and able to balance competing interests and various perspectives.** Because of the diverse makeup of the committee, it was important to have a facilitator who could maintain momentum while preserving a sense of balance among potentially competing interests. Meetings held without the guidance of a facilitator proved noticeably less fruitful.
- **Diverse groups might not always reach unanimous agreement.** Although unanimous agreement on all of the recommendations was not reached, the committee decided that the consensus achieved was sufficient to continue to move forward as a partnership and make significant recommendations on a broad range of topics.

- **The need and desire for a local ULI presence in South Carolina has resulted in the formation of the ULI South Carolina District Council.** One of the inadvertent but welcome results of this initiative is the formation of the ULI South Carolina District Council. One focus of the district council is expected to be programming and outreach activities inspired by the quality growth report.
- **Because this is a multiyear process, participants must make a long-term commitment.** The level of participation and commitment varied among the committee members. Over the course of a year, the committee met frequently in meetings and forums. They were encouraged, but not required, to attend the symposium. With these types of initiatives, it is important that committee members understand the time commitment involved. It is desirable to have the same people around the table at the meetings so that the initiative continues to move forward.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Contact: Suzanne Cartwright, ULI's Director of Community Outreach, at 202-624-7029 or [suzannec@uli.org](mailto:suzannec@uli.org).**

**A copy of the report can be found at <http://realestate.moore.sc.edu/smartgrowth.html>.**