

About the South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative

In 2004, the Urban Land Institute and the South Carolina Real Estate Center in the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina convened the geographically and professionally diverse South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative Statewide Committee. The purpose of the initiative was to begin preparing the state's communities for the anticipated growth, and the development that will be needed to accommodate the changing population.

Under the leadership of co-chairs James J. Chaffin, Jr., president of Chaffin/Light Associates and past chair of the ULI Board of Trustees, and Joseph P. Riley, Jr., mayor of Charleston, the committee met over several years. During this time, South Carolina's growth, impediments to quality growth,

and model growth practices in South Carolina and other parts of the country were studied and reviewed.

After regional and statewide meetings and with the input of hundreds of stakeholders, the Statewide Committee reached broad consensus on recommendations and strategies that can advance quality growth in the state. These recommendations and strategies are outlined in detail in the report titled *Growing by Choice or Chance: State Strategies for Quality Growth in South Carolina*.



What quality growth boils down to is offering more choice—choices in the way people live, work, shop, relax, and get from one place to another. It means creating an atmosphere that instills pride, fosters a sense of belonging, and motivates people to consider their community's collective potential.

Quality growth is the difference between growing by choice and growing by chance.

—James J. Chaffin, Jr.

Principles for Quality Growth

Early in the initiative process, ten principles for quality growth were adopted. These principles help define quality growth and provided the foundation for the committee's final recommendations. The principles are:

- Enhance South Carolina's quality of life;
- Encourage comprehensive planning;
- Enhance and revitalize existing communities;
- Develop mixed-use communities;
- Coordinate transportation investments with land use decisions;
- Preserve open space, natural resources, and the environment;
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective;
- Respect private property rights while achieving broad community objectives;
- Foster governmental collaboration and coordination; and
- Encourage education and community participation.

What South Carolina Can Do to Encourage Quality Growth

In many parts of the state, the high quality of life and natural amenities have been a drawing card for new and expanding businesses, retirees, mobile professionals, and tourists. While prosperity brings economic growth and amenities, it does not come without challenges, including traffic congestion, lack of workforce housing, loss of natural resources, deteriorating infrastructure, and funding shortfalls. In addressing these issues, it is important to be mindful of South Carolina's varied growth patterns, its diversity, and the resources of the state and local governments.

As public stewards, state and local officials have choices about the way the state grows, and can look to developments and practices in place around the country for examples of how to respect the needed balance of financial, environmental, and social priorities to ensure South Carolina's future prosperity. After studying the state's issues and opportunities, the Statewide Committee developed five recommendations and some potential strategies intended to create more certainty in the development process and to encourage high-quality development and policies that promote decent and affordable housing, good jobs, and public amenities for all South Carolinians.

Recommendations from the South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative Statewide Committee

Create a Shared Vision

RECOMMENDATION 1: Create a commonly shared vision for quality growth in South Carolina.

- The statewide visioning process should:
- Be championed by the governor and the legislative leadership;
 - Begin at the local level and then move on to regional and statewide discussions;
 - Be based on an assessment of growth trends, characteristics, and citizens' views across the state;
 - Engage all parts of the state, including areas not currently under pressure from growth;
 - Include the involvement of stakeholder groups;
 - Include workshops focused on regionwide planning and responses to targeted issues of greater than local impact; and
 - Result in state-level guiding principles and a commonly shared vision for how and where the state will grow.

Start an Education Program

RECOMMENDATION 2: Institute a state-led educational program for public and private leaders and the general public about the prospects, challenges, and opportunities for quality growth.

- 2.1. General Education**
- The governor and state leaders should promote the understanding that economic development, infrastructure investment, housing opportunity, environmental quality, and respect for private property rights can be mutually supportive and that growth can be accommodated in ways that will enhance the quality of life. Using state and regional resources, the state should:
- Publicize demographic and economic information and trends that will shape growth choices;
 - Identify and promote local land use planning models; and
 - Sponsor seminars and other educational programs targeted to stakeholders that will build support for a quality-growth vision and for strategies that can make quality growth a reality.

2.2. Technical Assistance to Local Governments

The state should take the lead on providing technical assistance and guidance to local and regional governments. Particular strategies the state could use include to:

- Improve decision making through analysis and forecasting;
- Enlist councils of government (COGs), universities, and state agencies to assemble and disseminate information on economic and demographic trends, infrastructure maps, and other mapped data;
- Develop instructional materials and guidebooks to assist comprehensive planning efforts;
- Prepare model ordinances that allow housing choices for local consideration; and
- Explore participatory planning processes.

2.3. Public Education

The state should engage a variety of media representatives to assist with general public education about economic and demographic trends and growth challenges, and about the visioning process and other new initiatives for quality growth.

2.4. Stakeholder Education

The state should engage key stakeholder groups and enlist their assistance in educational efforts to ensure a broad-based understanding of growth challenges and opportunities. Stakeholder groups should include professional organizations, government entities, nonprofit organizations, education institutions, and underserved populations.



Create an Institutional Framework

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 on policy areas of key or compelling state interest.

This activity should include fostering regional coordination of planning efforts, providing technical assistance to localities and regions, and coordinating and directing state funds to encourage quality growth. *The committee strongly recommends creation of a state-level office to champion this initiative.* The state should develop a framework for planning that includes a vision statement, goals, and principles to provide guidance for state agencies in budgeting and program administration, and for regional cooperation on issues of regional interest.

3.1. Issues with Regional Impacts

The state should identify key policy areas—issues of greater than local impact—in which the state has a vested interest. These policy areas include:

- water quality and quantity;
- wastewater management;
- air quality;
- transportation and transit;
- environmental and economic development issues that cross state lines;
- key environmental, natural, and cultural resources;
- economic vitality relative to per-capita income;
- affordable housing;
- annexation;
- educational facility and site standards;
- building and related safety codes for new construction and rehabilitation; and
- natural-disaster preparedness and recovery.

3.2. Planning Framework

The state should foster the creation of a coordinated multijurisdictional planning framework that emphasizes limited bureaucracy, protection of property rights, coordination among jurisdictions, and incentive-based strategies. This framework must build from the local level up and include citizen and stakeholder involvement, basic standards, and guidelines for plan development.

3.3. Office of Planning Resources and Coordination

The state should create a state-level nonregulatory Office of Planning Resources and Coordination as a resource and advocate for high-quality planning at the state, regional, and local levels. This office would:

- Report to the governor;
- Develop a results-oriented system based on incentives and consultation;
- Partner with local governments; and
- Work with the General Assembly to integrate planning and budgeting processes, including local government allocations based on identified priorities.

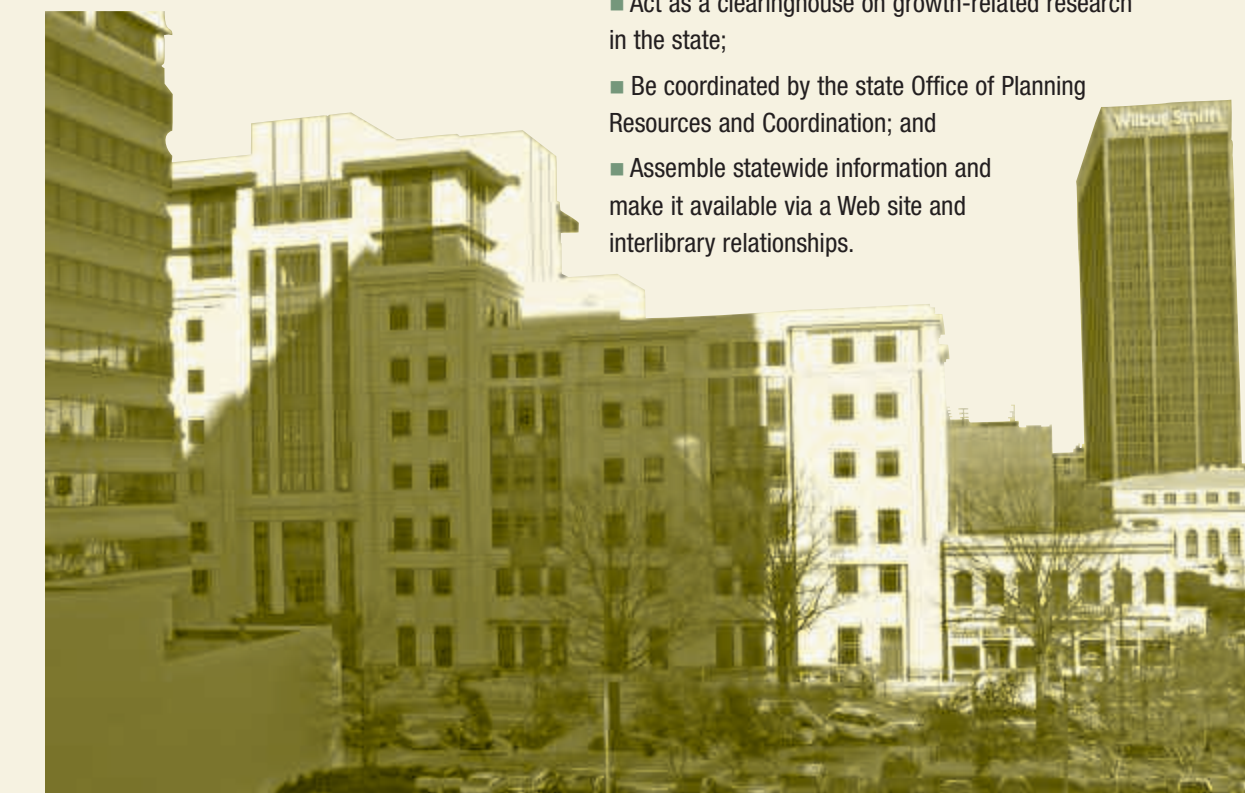
3.4. Office Responsibilities

The Office of Planning Resources and Coordination should:

- Coordinate state agency decisions that influence land use and infrastructure investments;
- Develop incentives for model policies and practices, and regional coordination and cooperation;
- Compile examples of local comprehensive plans and model land use practices from within and outside the state as a resource for South Carolinians; and
- On request, provide technical assistance, referrals to other resources, and consultation to regional and local agencies on a range of planning issues.

3.5. Coordination Committee

A coordinating committee should be created. It would include representatives from state agencies that influence land use planning, including those governing environmental resources, transportation, education,



housing, economic development, agriculture, and other areas. The committee would:

- Be staffed by the Office of Planning Resources and Coordination;
- Ensure that state decisions and investments are complementary and consistent; and
- Provide advice on priorities for state capital expenditures, tax incentives, grants, and loans that are consistent with state, regional, and local plans.

3.6. Technical Resources

The state should provide and publicize an inventory of planning information and resources available in the state. As part of this effort, it should:

- Include in the inventory educational institutions conducting related research;
- Support the efforts of South Carolina's State Mapping Advisory Committee (SMAC);
- Document institutions with geographic information system (GIS) capability and consider how these resources can be coordinated and leveraged on behalf of local communities and the private sector;
- Explore the development of a statewide GIS system that includes parcel data and zoning information; and
- Provide GIS information and other kinds of data to support local and regional planning efforts.

3.7. Research Network

A network of South Carolina-based researchers and organizations should be established to compile and initiate research on growth and development patterns. The research network would:

- Act as a clearinghouse on growth-related research in the state;
- Be coordinated by the state Office of Planning Resources and Coordination; and
- Assemble statewide information and make it available via a Web site and interlibrary relationships.

Encourage Cooperation and Coordination

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

Coordination across South Carolina's 700-plus local government entities—46 counties, 269 municipalities, 85 school districts, 290-plus public service districts—is a challenge.

4.1. Lead Agency

The Office of Planning Resources and Coordination should take the lead in coordinating decisions on land use planning, infrastructure spending, and environmental protection. The state should:

- Determine the jurisdictional level at which plans for various functions and services are best prepared;
- Determine the extent to which plans and regulations should be voluntary or mandatory, and which incentives, if any, should be applied;
- Determine the degree to which regional or state oversight is required; and
- Ensure the consistency of data and analysis used for planning purposes.

4.2. State Statutes

South Carolina should consider enacting state statutes that require coordination of land use policy decisions among local, regional, and state government entities.

4.3. Incentives

The state should use financial and other incentives to foster regional coordination of local land use plans and infrastructure investments. State funds, such as the infrastructure bank and economic development funds, should be used as incentives.

4.4. Jurisdiction

Regions should be defined according to the issue to be addressed. Application of regional authority should help the state avoid excessive fragmentation among various services. To apply these principles, the state should:

- Review council of government boundaries in light of changing economic and demographic trends;
- Encourage and facilitate metropolitan regional planning and coordination on issues of key state concern. In some cases, the COG may serve this function; in other cases, the most logical boundaries for regional planning may vary from COG boundaries;
- Consider consolidating public service districts as a way to cut costs; and
- Consider a structure allowing review and comment by affected jurisdictions on the plans of related municipalities, counties, and regional governments.

4.5. Annexation

State annexation laws should be reviewed and revised to allow more rational land use planning.

4.6. Guidelines

The state should set guidelines and measurable goals for cooperative agreements between COGs and local communities. Provisions should be included that address COG review and comment on comprehensive plan updates and revisions, an agreed-upon method for identifying projects with extrajuris-

dictional impacts, public notice requirements, a review and comment process, and an intergovernmental consensus strategy for mitigating development impacts.



Protect Environmental Resources

RECOMMENDATION 5: Protect, preserve, and enhance environmental resources.

The state should take several steps to ensure that South Carolina's unique environmental resources and habitats are preserved for years to come.

5.1. Inventory

In partnership with the appropriate state agencies and nongovernmental organizations, the state's natural resources inventory should be compiled and mapped in a geographic information system.

5.2. Suitability Analysis

Based on the natural resources inventory, areas suitable for development and areas of environmental significance deserving preservation should be identified. In addition, capital improvements that harm agricultural and forest resources should be avoided.

5.3. Impacts

The economic and health impacts of protecting natural areas should be documented.

5.4. Incentives

Policies should be developed to reward property owners for natural resource stewardship.

5.5. Development Agreements

Creation of development agreements should be encouraged in appropriate locations to allow development certainty and preservation of significant natural areas.

5.6. Stormwater Management

The state should continue to enforce the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) stormwater management requirements for public agencies.

5.7. Support and Assistance

To assist local environmental efforts, the state could:

- Conduct research on and educate property owners and communities regarding development practices that reduce non-point-source pollution, and quantify the economic benefits of these practices;
- Encourage use of conservation easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and mitigation options that support comprehensive plans;

- Increase the funding share for the South Carolina Conservation Bank from the existing real estate transfer fee, when fiscally appropriate;
- Encourage expedited permitting for model projects that protect vital ecosystems; and
- Consider additional sources of revenue for local government acquisition of significant natural areas.

(This final recommendation did not receive unanimous agreement from the Statewide Committee.)

Moving Forward

The recommendations and strategies in *Growing by Choice or Chance: State Strategies for Quality Growth in South Carolina* have been presented to the governor and at local, regional, and state meetings of planners, developers, and environmental groups. An Outreach Committee has been formed to supervise implementation of the Statewide Committee's recommendations.

In 2005, after the report was released, the ULI South Carolina district council was formed. ULI has an international reputation of providing responsible leadership, convening stakeholders, and facilitating the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among industry leaders and policy makers. Now, through ULI South Carolina, the resources of ULI and its members' dedication to creating better places are available to the state.

Implementing the recommendations and strategies will be a challenge. However, to prosper in the midst of the anticipated changes to the state's landscapes, a call to action is vital. With commitment, persistence, vision, and action, South Carolina will leave a legacy of economic prosperity, healthy communities, and a highly desirable quality of life for its current citizens and those to come.

South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative Statewide Committee

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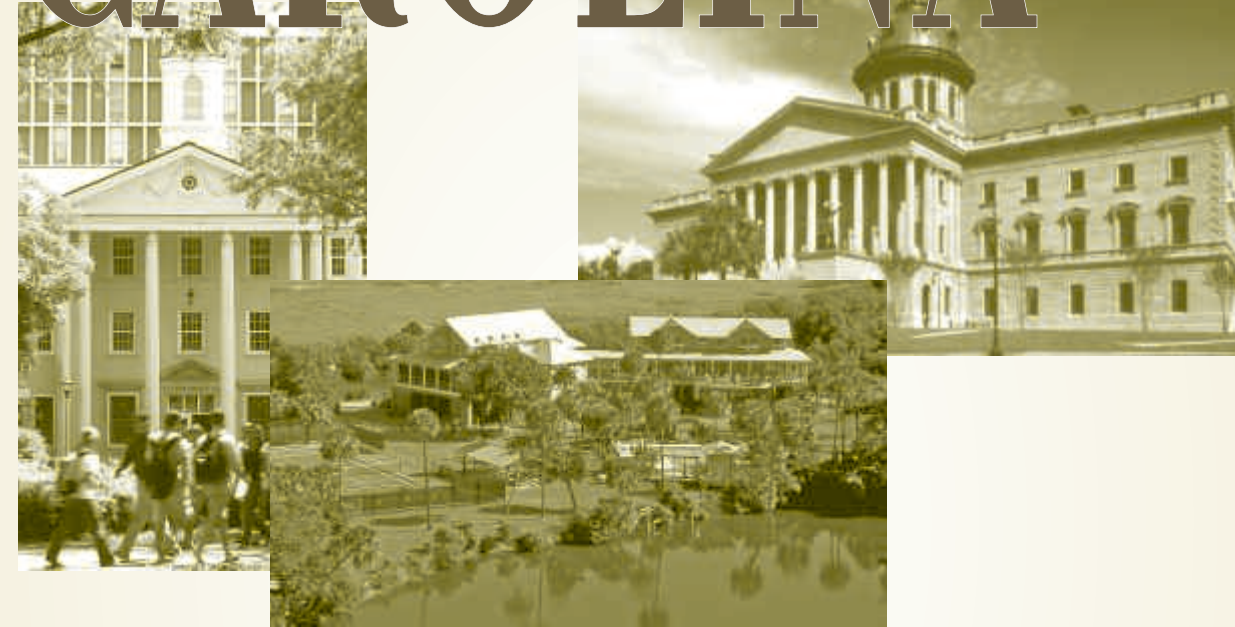
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GROWING BY CHOICE OR CHANCE: SOUTH CAROLINA



State Strategies

for Quality

Growth

South Carolina has enjoyed strong growth and accompanying development over the past century. With an estimated 1.1 million additional new residents expected by 2030, the state now faces the challenges presented by a fast-growing population. It is important to protect South Carolinians' investment in property and infrastructure. South Carolina residents also recognize the state's rich history and character, and the value of the state's natural resources to the economy and quality of life. For these reasons, the South Carolina Quality Growth Initiative was formed.