



LSL Planning, Inc.

Community Planning Consultants

October 3, 2013

LeNolon Edge, AICP
Director
Planning and Building Services
Jasper County
358 Third Avenue
Ridgeland, SC 29936

Re: Jasper County Comprehensive Plan: Sub-Task #9: Priority Investment Chapter

Mr. Edge:

Included below is the draft structure of the Priority Investment Chapter. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments concerning the draft language/structure.

Chapter 9

Priority Investment –ROUGH DRAFT

Governor Sanford signed into law the South Carolina Priority Investment Act ("PIA") on May 23rd, 2007. The act amended State planning and zoning enabling legislation and the requirements of the comprehensive plan and planning process. The main intent of the act is to better plan for public infrastructure and expenditures by opening and improving lines of communication with adjacent jurisdictions and applicable agencies. The PIA ensures open and honest communication to best account for public use of funds for infrastructure. The PIA element is further described by the following passage:

[The] priority investment element...analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools. The recommendation of those projects for public expenditure must be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. For the purposes of this item, "adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies" means those counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project. For the purposes of this item, "coordination" means written notification by the local planning commission or its staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed projects and the opportunity for adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies to provide comment to the planning commission or its staff concerning the proposed project (SECTION 6-29-510 D 9).

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Jasper County, like many local governments in South Carolina, does not maintain a locally-adopted capital improvements plan (CIP). As a result, the Priority Investment Chapter serves as the initial step toward developing a plan to finance public infrastructure and facilities identified to manage growth and development in the community.

PROCESS

Local governments are required to prepare a list of public infrastructure and facilities needed over the ten-year planning horizon to ensure adequate capacity is reserved to serve the magnitude and timing of anticipated development in the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan. To prepare the list of public infrastructure projects, County department directors provided a prioritized list of capital improvements to the Administration. Projects were based on needs identified in the Comprehensive Plan as well as known improvement projects, such as addressing needed fixes or repairs to old or obsolete facilities and infrastructure.

The projects are listed by department, priority, timeframe and cost. Projected long term costs are shown to be _____. Further analysis, prioritization, and review of projects will need to occur prior to the actual implementation of the capital projects.

-----Insert Project List/Table-----

PRIORITIZATION

A methodology to prioritize capital improvements required to achieve and maintain desired levels of service and to repair and replace public facilities is recommended. This methodology should take into account both capital costs and the cost to operate and maintain proposed capital improvements in order to achieve the best use of funds and potential overall cost savings. Jasper County should set the relative priorities among types of public facilities as follows:

Priority 1: New public facilities and improvements to existing facilities that eliminate public hazards and address immediate needs (Years 1-2).

Priority 2: The repair, renovation or replacement of obsolete or worn out facilities that are necessary to achieve or maintain existing levels of service and eliminate existing deficiencies in levels of service (Years 3-5).

Priority 3: New and expanded facilities necessary to serve new development and redevelopment projected during the next 10 years (Years 6-10).

PROJECTED FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL FUNDS

The chapters of this Comprehensive Plan identify where and how growth in Jasper County should and may occur over the next ten years. The strategies contained in the plan are carried forward through the Priority Investment and Implementation Chapters. The County intends to continue to maintain the public facilities and services that are in place today and maintain and increase existing service levels over the next 10 years. Likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years includes, but are not limited to:

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): TIF Districts allow a local government to channel property tax revenue to an account programmed for financing infrastructure or public facility improvements within predetermined district locations. TIFs are typically established for areas that are in need of

development or redevelopment where additional capital projects are needed or encouraged. This funding mechanism is especially useful in downtown areas or mixed use districts.

Special Assessment Bonds: Special assessment bonds are secured by special assessments imposed on property located in Community Development Districts (CDD) also known as Municipal Improvement Districts (MIDs) or Residential Improvement Districts (RIDS). The special assessment is generally levied in relation to the benefit a property receives from an improvement project.

Impact Fees: A one time fee based on the cost associated with providing capital improvements to new homes or businesses. This fee is a per unit exaction paid at the time property is developed or purchased. These fees are placed into a special fund for system-wide capital facilities and are determined by fiscal impact analysis on the future demand a proposed development will have on the local infrastructure system.

Capital Project Sales Tax: A sales tax collected for the express purpose of funding capital projects.

Hospitality Tax: This is a tax on dining and beverages that helps fund special projects and general operations.

Accommodations Tax: This is a tax on lodging that is restricted by state statute and may only be used for tourism-related projects.

C-Funds: State gas tax funds allocated to counties for transportation improvements.

Special Tax District: This is an option widely used in both the City and County for sewer improvements for subdivisions and other special areas. An additional annual tax is levied on property for a special purpose where individual property owners are elected to a commission to oversee the spending of these funds.

Bonds: General obligation bonds may be issued for a specific construction project with the local government pledged to pay interest and principal to retire the debt. Revenue bonds are sold for revenue and financed through service charges or fees incurred from the development of the project.

State and Federal Grants: Grant funding for many projects is available through state, federal and private grant procedures that typically require a competitive application process. Recent grant sources funding Jasper County projects include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Trails (SCPRT) program.

User fees: User fees may be utilized or increased in order to offset costs that will be incurred through upgrades or new construction of capital facilities.

MAJOR PLANNING EFFORTS & INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

The intent of the County in identifying major planning efforts is to establish a process by which multi-jurisdictional agreements can be made between the County and adjacent jurisdictions and agencies to ensure coordinated land use planning and provision of services. Projects of regional significance should continue to be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies.

The unique circumstances of the jurisdictional boundaries and service provision in the Lowcountry Region make inter-jurisdictional coordination necessary in order to have successful implementation of this Plan. Inter-jurisdictional coordination can be informal such as regular meetings between staff of various agencies and jurisdictions and open sharing of information; or formal when an official contract, such as a Memorandum of Agreement, is enacted between jurisdictions for a particular purpose. In recent years, Jasper County has adopted a resolution to participate in formalized regional coordination process on projects of significance.

PLANNING

A long term strategy is recommended to provide the population with adequate and properly planned infrastructure and improvements. General strategies include:

Funding: Continually analyze the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years.

Planning: Formalize a capital project planning process. Recommend the projects for expenditure of funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools.

Prioritization: Develop a prioritization system for capital project planning that considers capital costs and the cost to operate and maintain proposed capital improvements

Coordination: Coordinate public-funded projects with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies, generally including but not limited to adjacent counties, municipalities, school district, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over public projects.

Regional Planning: Continue the process established with Beaufort County and nearby jurisdictions to ensure coordinated regional land use, natural resource and transportation planning to the maximum extent practical.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions by phone (616-336-8176) or by email at jjirousek@lslplanning.com.

Sincerely,



David M. Jirousek, AICP
Senior Planner