



Planners to outline regional growth plan

By Warren Wise
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Regional planners have begun a two-year initiative to outline a blueprint for the future on how they want the Lowcountry to grow.

The goal is to develop a vision, tools and strategies to serve as a guide for Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties as well as the 27 municipalities in the region.

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments, which is heading the initiative, has contracted with international planning and engineering firm HNTB Corp. of Kansas City, Mo., which will provide experts in land-use planning, place making, economics and infrastructure.

HNTB consultants and COG will develop a vision of how to balance resource conservation with sustainable economic growth and development in the counties.

The final product will provide a "greenprint" for sustainable growth and development, lay the foundation to manage proposed large-scale and fast-paced growth and develop a uniform platform that integrates all the region's planning initiatives.

"The region will be able to plan more effectively for an economically prosperous and environmentally sustainable future," a COG statement said.

They also want the initiative to help local governments distribute growth based on population in 2040 and employment forecasts.

The trick will be to get local interests to accept a regional vision, said COG Executive Director Ron Mitchum. "You want a vision that all municipalities buy into. We want people to buy into how they fit together in the big picture."

Public involvement is key to the plan, and the Council of Governments will hold an all-day public input session July 26 at the North Charleston Convention Center. They also plan to conduct surveys online and on paper.

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