

# SWANSBORO

## WATERFRONT ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SPRING 2012



# Project Origin



- ✿ **A Master Plan was last developed in 1993.**
- ✿ **The 2010 Downtown Renaissance Committee reported a need for more waterfront access.**
- ✿ **The Board of Commissioners' goals for FY12 included an updated waterfront plan.**
- ✿ **The Board of Commissioners appointed an 11-member committee to formulate recommendations.**

# Committee Duties and Planning Process



- ☼ Identify key issues and concerns that affect development.
- ☼ Discuss concepts used in other communities.
- ☼ Provide opportunities for public comment and input.
- ☼ Develop a future vision.
- ☼ Identify factors that would help implement the vision.
- ☼ Submit recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

# Development History



## Completed Projects

- ☼ Bicentennial Park
- ☼ Ward's Shore Park
- ☼ Town Dinghy Dock
- ☼ Riverview Park Phases I and II
- ☼ Two waterfront properties from NCDOT
- ☼ Olde Towne Square



## Proposed Projects

- ☼ 2009 CRFL Grant effort for a boat landing facility
- ☼ 2010 CAMA Grant effort to build docking facilities at Bicentennial Park
- ☼ Moore Street dock is in progress
- ☼ A Port O Swansborough docking facility is being considered

# Waterfront Models

- ☼ Charleston, SC
- ☼ Oriental
- ☼ Southport
- ☼ Beaufort – North and South Carolina
- ☼ Wrightsville Beach
- ☼ Murrells Inlet, SC



Oriental, NC

*Committee members observed that few communities had to traverse as many small parcels as Swansboro.*



Beaufort, SC



Southport, NC



# Waterfront Regulations

- ⚓ **Riparian Rights**
- ⚓ **Coastal Management Rules**
- ⚓ **Urban Waterfront Designation**
- ⚓ **Federal Channel Issues**
- ⚓ **Flood Zone Restrictions**



# Waterfront Analysis



# Strengths



Restaurants and End Streets



Visitor Center



Historic District and Merchants



Commercial Marina and Charter Boats



# Weaknesses



Lack of Public Boat Docks



Limited Access to Shoreline



Underused End Streets (Elm St.)



Marginal Parking for Visitors

# Opportunities



Pedestrian Route Designation



End Street Development



Formal Connection of Waterfront Features



Front Street and Historic District



# Challenges



Linear Dock-walk Concept



Maintaining Village Atmosphere



Facilitating Boaters



Parking and Pedestrian Crosswalks

# Conclusions

## Waterfront Access Needs:

- ✿ For pedestrians and boaters
- ✿ Parking to support merchants and pedestrian waterfront access

## Plan Needs to:

- ✿ Guide waterfront development
- ✿ Help qualify the Town for grants

## Public Comment:

- ✿ Public comment suggests a *continuous* public dock-walk is not feasible
- ✿ At best, limited sections of waterfront walkways may be achievable

## Riparian Rights:

- ✿ Any substantial waterfront improvement will require riparian rights

## Funding

- ✿ Little local funding has been set aside for waterfront property acquisition and grant sources have become more limited.

## Street Ends:

- ✿ Provide basic public access, but the potential for structural improvements is limited

## Pier Head Line:

- ✿ The Town has the ability to adopt a municipal pier head line

## Urban Waterfront:

- ✿ The existing urban waterfront designation can be extended to the causeway area

## Federal Channel:

- ✿ De-authorization could be a lengthy process, but would not change the existence of a strong tidal current

## Amenities:

- ✿ Downtown has an array of conveniences for tourists, shoppers, local boaters, and transient boaters



# Concerns

- ⚓ **Parking limitations**
- ⚓ **Scarce public docking**
- ⚓ **State and Federal regulations**
- ⚓ **Lack of awareness by beach visitors**
- ⚓ **Appearance issues**
- ⚓ **Resistance to public waterfront improvements**
- ⚓ **Funding Improvements**

# Vision and Recommendations

The vision for the Swansboro downtown waterfront should be to create a continuous waterfront trail from Riverview Park to Ward Shore Park – consisting of segments that are either on the water, adjacent to the water, or near the water – and to create multiple significant points of interest and access to the waterfront, for both pedestrians and boaters, along the waterfront trail.

# Waterfront Trail

## Continuous Route

- ☼ Use a combination of existing dock walks, sidewalks, and publicly-owned properties to create a designated pedestrian route from Riverview Park to Ward Shore Park.

## Improvements

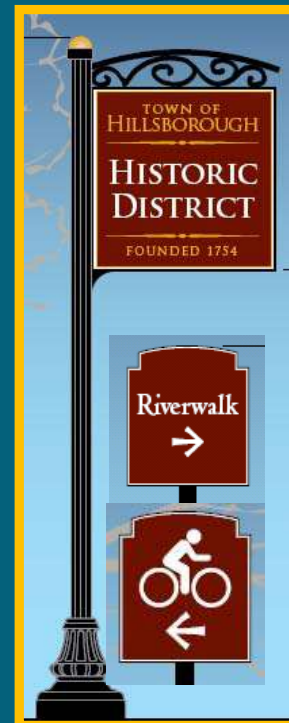
- ☼ Should seek easements, construct dock walks or waterside walks where feasible.
- ☼ Construct sidewalks along Water Street if feasible.
- ☼ Install lighting underneath the Corbett Ave. bridge.

## Wayfinding

- ☼ Should devise a way-finding system to clearly designate the trail and its features.



## Wayfinding Concepts



# Funding



## Riparian Rights

- ☼ Set aside and seek funds for acquisition of waterfront properties and/or riparian easements.

## Local Funding

- ☼ Establish a capital reserve for waterfront property rights acquisition.

## Grants

- ☼ Seek grants to help fund waterfront property and riparian rights acquisition.

## Tourism Funding

- ☼ Work with the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority to identify projects for tourism-related funding.

## County Funding

- ☼ Pursue County tourism funding to help construct facility improvements.



# Partnerships

The Town should work to develop cooperative projects with private property owners. Examples of possible partnerships are:

## Boat Dock

- ❁ Negotiate an agreement with the Port O Swansborough to construct a transient boat docking facility.

## Riverside Walkway

- ❁ Work with the owner of the White Oak Bistro to acquire a public walkway easement.
- ❁ A related consideration is to acquire the Valente property. It would provide additional downtown parking, and an alternate site for a public boat dock and/or kayak launch.
- ❁ The two actions would provide a shoreline connection at the end of Elm Street to the public sidewalk near Trattoria Restaurant and Bicentennial Park.



Port O Swansborough



White Oak Bistro

# Facilities Improvements

## Riverview Dock Walk Extension:

- ☼ A dock walk connection should be constructed from the large covered deck at Riverview Park back up towards and connecting to the Corbett Avenue sidewalk.



Riverview Dock Walk

## Bicentennial Park Pier, Dock, and Kayak Launch:

- ☼ Construct an additional (non-fishing) pier, small boat dock and kayak launch at Bicentennial Park. Other potential kayak launch sites could also be explored.



Bicentennial Park and Front Street

# Facilities Improvements

## Boat Docking Facility

- ✿ Work with the property owners at the Port O Swansborough to construct an extension from their existing dock facility.
- ✿ Facility could also provide a docking facility, in the heart of the downtown waterfront, for tour and cruise boats.

## Sidewalk Extensions

- ✿ Construct sidewalks along the southeast side of Water Street to provide a continuous wayfinding connection, from Church Street and the Visitor Center to Ward Shore Park, forming the southwestern section of the Trail.
- ✿ Explore the potential for a wayfinding sidewalk on the north side of Moore and Main Streets, from Front St. to the water.



Port O Swansborough



Water Street

# Supporting Amenities

- ✪ *Additional public parking*
- ✪ *No Wake Zone*
- ✪ *Shade Shelters at end streets*
- ✪ *Benches along walks and end streets*
- ✪ *Decks/Kayak Launches at end streets*
- ✪ *Building Maintenance*
- ✪ *Museum*
- ✪ *Historic Info & Wayfinding Kiosks*
- ✪ *Marketing*
- ✪ *Access Signage*



## End Street and Kiosk Concepts





# Swansboro Waterfront Trail



# Policy Action



- ❁ **Urban Waterfront Designation:** The Town should extend its urban waterfront area designation to include the causeway business area.
- ❁ **CBRA Zone:** The Town should remain vigilant regarding efforts to extend Coastal Barrier Resource Areas into the Swansboro harbor area.
- ❁ **Pier Head Line:** The Town should, if it appears necessary to accomplish access facility projects, adopt a municipal pier head line that maximizes the potential lengths of piers.
- ❁ **Federal Channel De-Authorization:** The Town should initiate a process to seek de-authorization of that portion of the federal channel and turning basin that is adjacent to the Swansboro waterfront.
- ❁ **Fishing Areas:** The Town should designate specific areas for fishing and should limit fishing in other areas of municipally-controlled waterfront access.
- ❁ **Plan Coordination** Waterfront-area improvements should keep in mind and be consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Renaissance Report.

# Summary

- ☀ The proposed linear concept incorporating end streets would *formally* link waterfront parks, restaurants, retail shops, overnight accommodations, public access areas and public/commercial docking facilities.
- ☀ In an effort to attract more boaters, the committee recommends constructing a dock for small boats and a kayak launch at Bicentennial Park; and identified the Port of Swansborough as the best location for expanding public dock facilities along Front Street.
- ☀ The committee recommends implementing a consistent Swansboro themed design scheme that would not detract from the town's historic seaside character, but showcase it.
- ☀ Intended for the enjoyment of its local citizens and as a tourist attraction, the “walk” could easily be promoted as The White Oak River Walk of Swansboro, or some other unique tag line.
- ☀ With the exception of Port O Swansborough, the concept does not require the use of any private property.

# Swansboro

## Waterfront Advisory Committee

**Larry Philpott, Chair, Town Commissioner**

**Junior Freeman, Vice-Chair, Town Commissioner**

**W. T. Casper, Waterfront property owner**

**Hal Silver, Waterfront property owner**

**Kathy Zuccarelli, Downtown business operator**

**Jerry Stevenson, Downtown property owner**

**Cirilla Cothran, Real estate broker**

**Lee Manning, Waterfront property owner**

**Joe Rhue, Waterfront property owner**

**John Freshwater, Hawkins Creek property owner**

### **Town Staff:**

**Patrick Thomas, Former Town Manager**

**Jennifer Holland, Town Planner**

### **Consultants:**

**Kathy Vinson, Coastal Planning Services, Inc.**

**Joann Carter, Coastal Carolina Comm. College**

