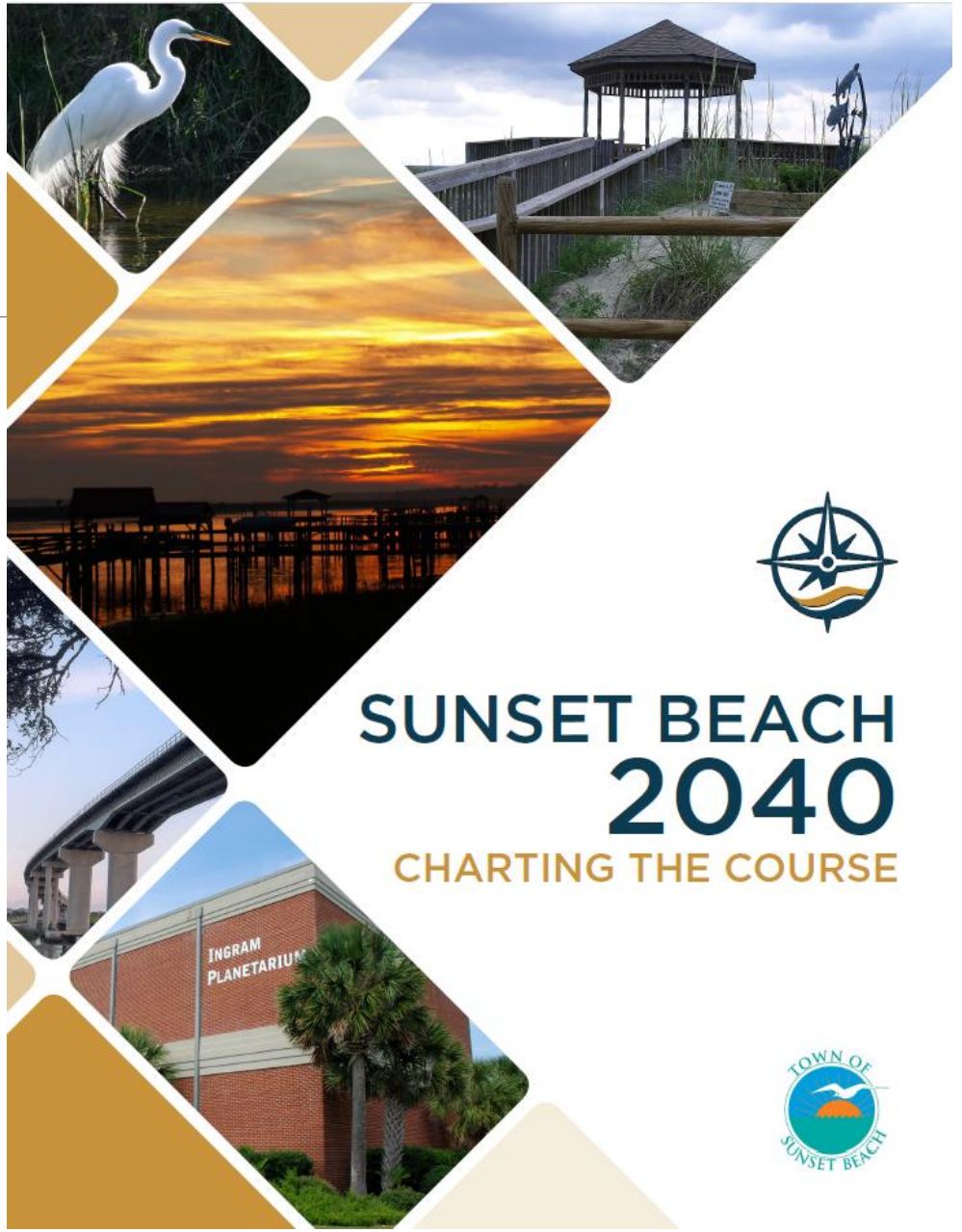
SUNSET BEACH 2040:
CHARTING THE COURSE

October 15, 2026

WES MACLEOD, AICP, ASLA
PRINCIPAL
ANCHORPOINT PLANNING

Outline

- What is a Land Use Plan?
- Project Overview and Status
- Timeline
- Demographics
- Community Survey Results
- Next Steps
- Questions?



Why do a Land Use Plan?

- Provides an opportunity for community self-evaluation, particularly of its development regulatory programs and ordinances

- Allows for input from various departments, staff, and elected/appointed boards in short and long term needs. Helps guide future budgeting processes.

- § 160D-501. Plans.
- (a) Requirements for Zoning. - As a condition of adopting and applying zoning regulations under this Chapter, a local government ***shall adopt*** and ***reasonably maintain*** a comprehensive plan or land-use plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Consultant:**
- Prepare materials and plan document, facilitate meetings, serve as technical advisor.
- **Advisory Committee (Planning Board):**
- Provide objective feedback and input to staff and consultants. Review draft plan materials and prepare for each meeting.
- Provide oversight to ensure goals, priorities, policies, and plan material is representative of the citizens and property owners of Sunset Beach.
- **Town Council:**
- Review final draft plan following Planning Board recommendation.
- Provide policy direction on key issues.
- Hold public hearing and adopt the final plan.
- Utilize the adopted plan in growth management, budgeting, and ordinance decisions.

Project Status

- Community Survey Prepared and Distributed (Closed March 26)
- Stakeholder Interviews Conducted (February 26)
- Three Planning Board meetings held
- Drafts of Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Community Profile, and Chapter 3: Natural Systems, and Appendix A: Definitions distributed to Town

Sunset Beach 2040: Charting the Course *Anticipated* Timeline		
Meeting Date	Agenda	Deliverables
November 24, 2026 - Complete	*Review Planning Process and Survey*	*Survey*
January 15, 2026 - Complete	*Review Demographic Information and seek Planning Board input.*	*Chapter 1 &2*
February 19, 2026 - Complete	*Review Chapter 1 Introduction & Chapter 2 Community Profile*	*Chapter 3*
October 15, 2026	**Review Chapter 3 - Natural Systems**	**Chapter 4 (in process)**
November 12, 2026	Public Engagement Sessions	N/A
November 17/19, 2026	Review Chapter 4 Community Facilities	Chapter 5 & 6
December 10/17, 2026	Review Chapter 5 - Land Use and Growth Management & Chapter 6 - Tools for Managing Development	Revised Chapters
January 21, 2026	Review Final Draft & consider Recommendation for Approval	Final Draft with Revisions
January/February, 2027	Public Engagement Session -- Open House/Draft Plan	N/A
February 18, 2027	Planning Board Approval (if necessary)	None
January - March/April 2027	DCM Review	None
March/April to May 2027	Town Council Review/Approval	None
May/June 2027	CRC Certification/Approval	None

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Community Profile

- Population
- Population Growth and Projections
- Age
- Housing Units and Growth
- Economy
- Tourism

Chapter 2: Community Profile

INTRODUCTION

This section of the comprehensive plan examines the community characteristics and related demographic and economic trends that should be considered when developing policies and long-term goals.

In the following discussion, Sunset Beach is compared with North Carolina, Brunswick County, and other coastal communities to better interpret the information. These trends include the population, housing, and economic characteristics of Sunset Beach. This information will help inform town officials and allow them to make growth management decisions based on knowledge of the town's past, present, and future. Permanent and seasonal population estimates can be used to help estimate development pressures that may impact coastal resources. Pressures from growth in population and development can also impact community infrastructure such as roads, drinking water, stormwater, etc. This information may be used as a resource by town staff and officials to make informed growth management decisions.

Note: Data and statistics in the following section come from several sources. Figures from beyond 2024 are projections. Statistics are sourced from the US Census Bureau/ American Community Survey and the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (NCOSBM). The NCOSBM provides annual population figures for each municipality in the state. This number can often differ from those identified from the American Community Survey. Other statistics, facts, and figures related to age, housing, income, and employment will be sourced from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey. Additional information will be sourced from the Town of Sunset Beach and Anchorpoint Planning where necessary.





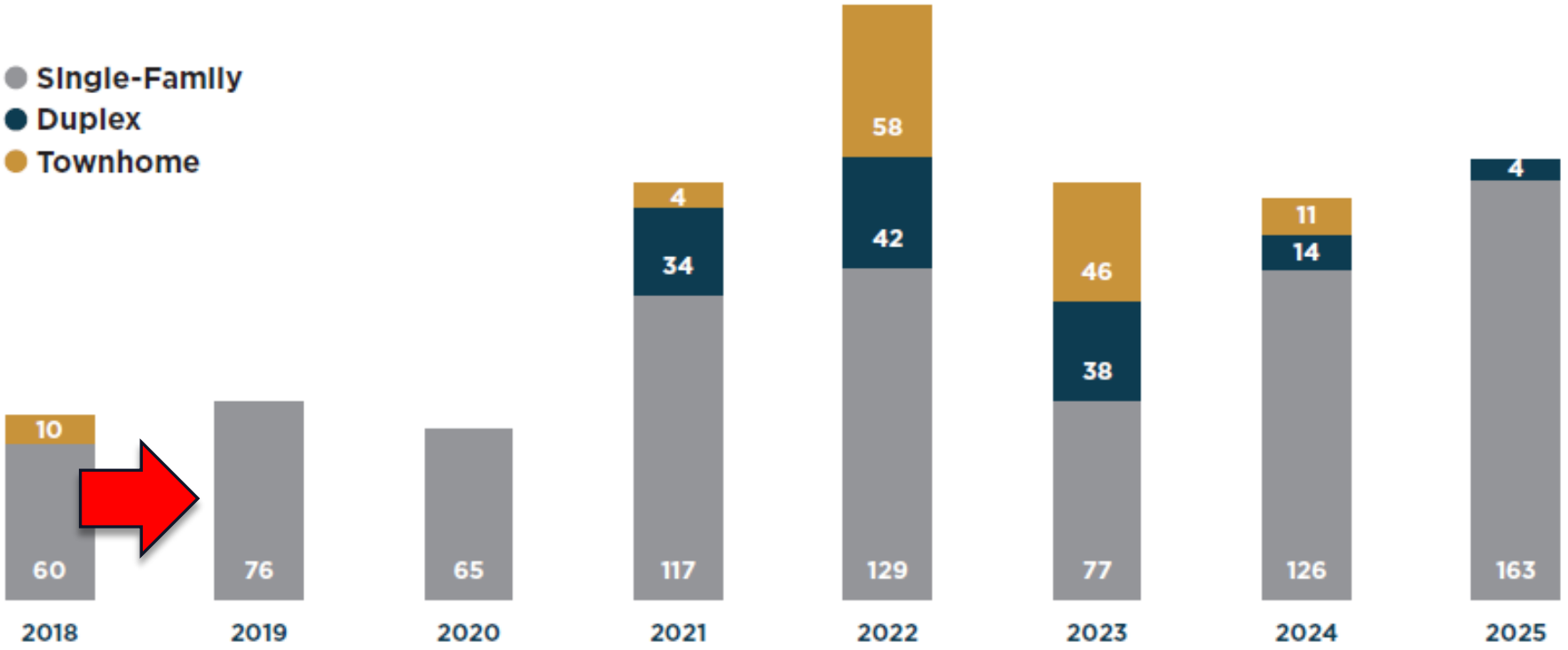
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SUNSET BEACH 2040
CHARTING THE COURSE

Table 2.1: Population Trends 1990 – 2024
Source: 2023 American Community Survey; NC OSBM

Year	Sunset Beach			Brunswick County		
	Total Pop.	Absolute Increase/ Decrease	Percent Change	Total Pop.	Absolute Increase/ Decrease	Percent Change
19	311	-	-	50,985	-	-
2000	1,852	1,541	495.5%	73,143	22,158	43.5%
2010	3,572	1,720	92.9%	107,431	34,288	46.9%
2020	4,177	605	16.9%	136,608	29,177	27.2%
2024	4,768	591	14.1%	169,448	32,840	24.0%
1990-2024		4,	1,433.1%		118,463	232.3%

Figure 2.4: New Residential Construction Permits (2018-2025)
Source: Town of Sunset Beach

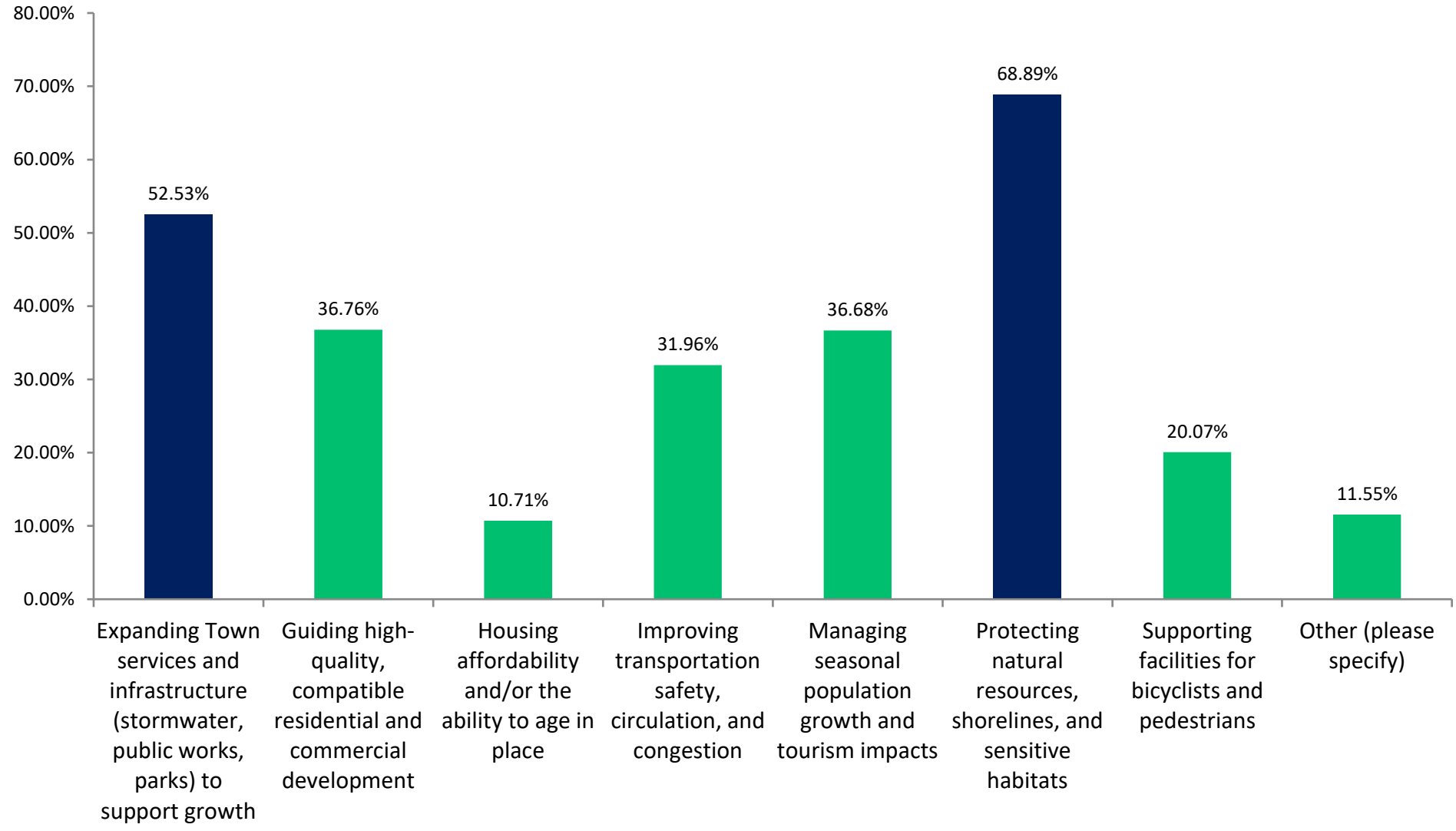


Community Survey Results

- 1,186 responses
- Survey open November through March 2026

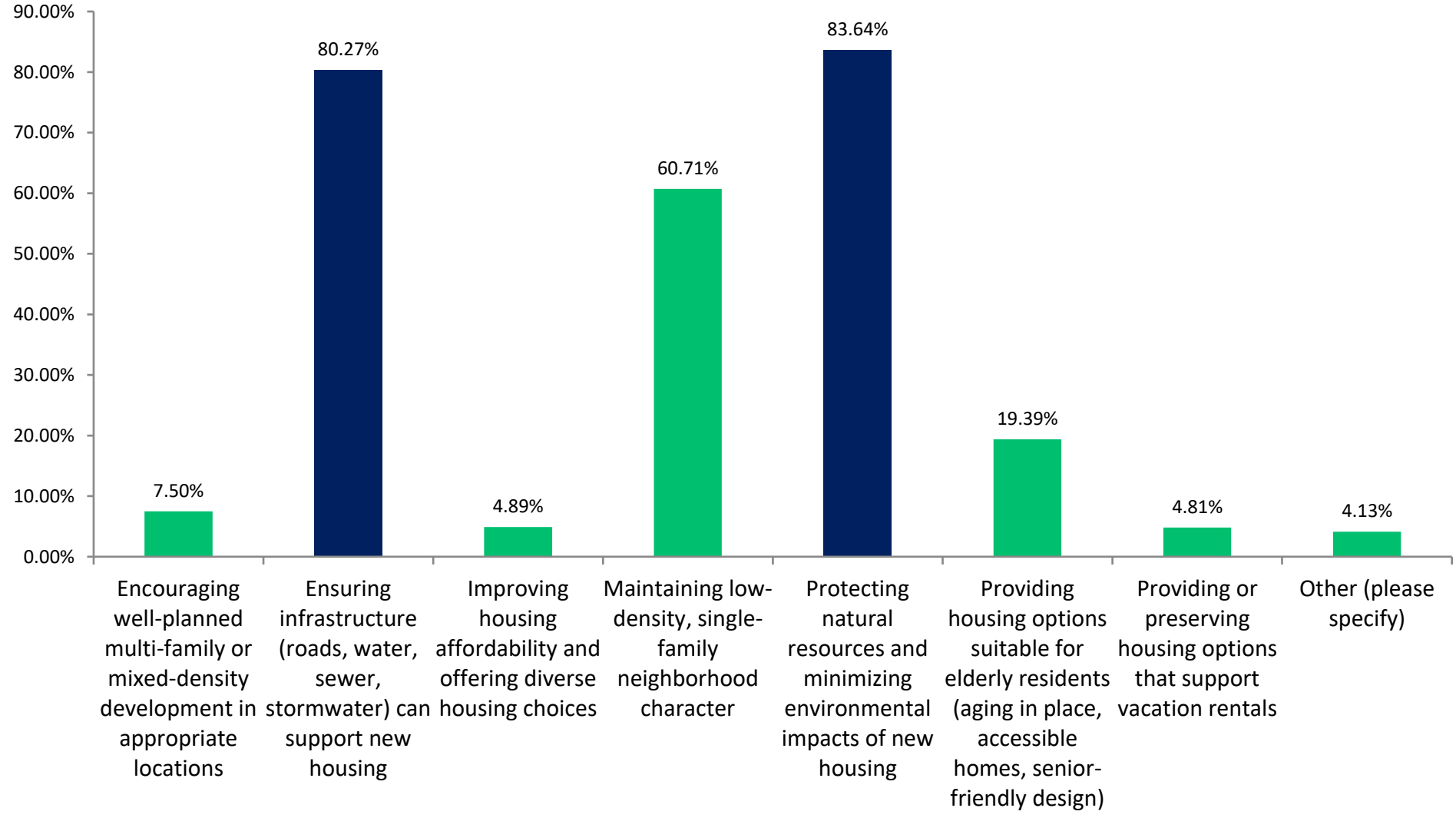


What do you think are the most important growth and development issues facing Sunset Beach?



Environmental protection outranks every other growth concern — by a **16-point margin**.

Which of the following housing characteristics are most important for the Town of Sunset Beach?



Housing decisions hinge on **environment & infrastructure** — not density or affordability.

What is your favorite thing about Sunset Beach?

TOP FIVE THINGS RESIDENTS LOVE

01 The beach itself
Clean, accessible sand and shoreline — the heart of it all.

02 Quiet, small-town feel
A slow pace and genuine community, unlike busier beach towns.

03 Natural, undeveloped character
Trees, wildlife and unspoiled scenery.

04 Low density & height limits
Building restrictions that keep the island uncrowded.

05 Safe, family-friendly community
A welcoming place to raise a family and feel secure.

IN RESIDENTS' WORDS

"The small town feel with lovely homes."

"Quiet and natural."

" Small community feel. Height restrictions on the island. Low density. "

"The small-town charm, which it is quickly losing."

Themes for the plan

1. Natural resource protection is the top priority across multiple questions
2. Residents strongly prefer low-density growth
3. Infrastructure capacity and water supply are major concerns
4. Seasonal congestion and beach access remain key issues
5. Recreation and parks are favored over higher-intensity development

Chapter 3: Natural Systems Analysis

Review.

Next Steps

- Finalize and deliver Chapter 4: Community Facilities
- Continue mapping and analysis for Chapter 5: Land Use and Growth Management
- Hold dedicated Public Engagement Session on November 12th
- Confirm next meeting with the Planning Board
- **Council would like these meetings to be solely focused on the Land Use Plan**
  - Availability on November 17th?
  - Availability on December 10th?
  - Availability on January 14th?

Public Input Meeting

- November 12th – Community Center
- Time Slot #1: 2 to 3:30 PM
- Time Slot #2: 5:30 to 7 PM

SUNSET BEACH 2040

TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH

Land Use Plan Public Input Meetings

Help Chart Our Course

Thursday, November 12, 2026

SESSION 1 **2:00 – 3:30 PM** SESSION 2 **5:30 – 7:00 PM**

Sunset Beach Community Center · 200 Station Trail

Both sessions cover the same information — attend whichever works for you.



Thank you!

SUNSET BEACH 2040
CHARTING THE COURSE

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