



CITY OF BEAUFORT

DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** 5/29/2025
FROM: Alan Eisenman, Finance Director
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Short-Term Rental Program Regulations
MEETING DATE: 6/10/2025
DEPARTMENT: Finance

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

During the May 13, 2025, Council Worksession, there was discussion regarding the City's short term rental program. The City's Business License Inspector Justin Rose will present a short-term rental program regulations presentation that will include an overview of the current short-term rental program to include rules, application process, current capacity and caps by neighborhood and enforcement actions and penalties.

Please see referenced documentation for short-term rental overview, associated development code and ordinances, and neighborhood map.

PLACED ON AGENDA FOR: Discussion

REMARKS:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type	Upload Date
Short Term Rental Presentation	Presentation	5/29/2025
Short Term Rental Overview	Backup Material	5/29/2025
Short Term Rental Code	Backup Material	5/29/2025
Suspension or Revocation of License Code	Backup Material	5/29/2025
Remedies and Penalties Code	Backup Material	5/29/2025
City Neighborhoods Map	Backup Material	5/29/2025

City of Beaufort, South Carolina



SHORT TERM RENTALS PRESENTATION

JUNE 10, 2025

Codes and Ordinances

- Beaufort Development Code - Sec. 3.6.2 Short Term Rentals
- Beaufort Development Code – Sec 12.3.2. Other Remedies and Penalties
- Code of Ordinances – Sec. 7-1016 Suspension or Revocation of License

What is a Short-Term Rental?

- Residential unit rented for less than 30 days
- Requires compliance with city zoning, permits, and licenses
- Subject to Accommodations Tax and Business License requirements

Background of the Ordinance

- 2016: Task Force formed to study STR impacts
- 2017: Ordinance adopted (amended in 2018)
- Goals: Regulate density, preserve neighborhood integrity, enforce compliance

Key Ordinance Provisions

- STR cap: 6% of lots in T3-S, T3-N, T4-HN zones
- Non-owner-occupied STRs regulated by neighborhood cap
- Requirements include:
 - Parking and noise compliance
 - Monitored fire alarm system
 - Safety inspection

Application Process – Step 1

- Application & fees (\$100 standard, \$50 inspection, \$1000 post-facto)
- Unit & site details
- Contact list
- Rental agreement (min. stay, guest cap, parking rules, pet policy, etc.)

Application Process – Step 2

Safety Inspection

- Posted emergency contacts
- Fire escape plan
- Working smoke & CO detectors
- Safe structure & exits
- Visible address
- Fire alarm system

Application Process – Step 3

Obtain Business License

- Issued post-inspection
- Must collect and remit 3% accommodations tax
- Due monthly by the 20th

STRs in Beaufort (as of May 2025)

Neighborhood	Current Number of STRs	6% Cap Residentially-Zoned Parcels	STR Units Toward Cap	Neighborhood Capped
Hundred Pines	22	19	19	Yes
Mossy Oaks	22	30	20	No
Broad St	3	3	3	Yes
NorthWest Quadrant	36	16	16	Yes
Old Commons	28	7	7	Yes
Pigeon Point	30	21	21	Yes
Royal Oaks	30	35	22	No
Bluff	11	3	3	Yes
The Glebe	3	3	2	No
West End	32	24	24	Yes
Boundary St	1	0	0	No
Core Commercial	2	0	0	No
Lady's Island	3	0	0	No
Spanish Point	5	9	5	No
Higginsonville	10	15	10	Yes
Dixon Village	4	3	2	No
Stone Marten	1	2	1	No
Jerico Woods	0	6	0	No
Trask Farm Rd	2		0	No
Point	3	0	0	No
Live Oaks	0	9	0	No
Battery Point	0	19	0	No
Battery Shores	0	12	0	No
Total	248	236	155	No

Current Pending STRs As of May 2025

Neighborhood	Number	Counts Toward Cap	Does Not Count Toward Cap	Neighborhood Capped
Broad St	1	0	1	Yes
Hingginsonville	5	5	0	Yes
Mossy Oaks	4	4	0	No
Northwest Quadrant	4	0	4	Yes
Old Commons	1	0	1	Yes
Pigeon Point	3	1	2	Yes
Royal Oaks	7	7	0	No
Total	25	17	8	

Monitoring & Enforcement – Host Compliance

- Tracks listings across Airbnb, Vrbo, etc.
- Identifies unregistered STRs
- Uses geo-location and address matching
- Provides real-time data and market analytics

Business License Suspension or Revocation

- Fraud, misrepresentation
- Violations of conditions
- Criminal convictions
- Nuisance or unlawful activity
- Delinquent payments

Due Process:

- Written notice + hearing before Council or it's designee

Enforcement Actions & Penalties

Stop Order:

- Issued by the Administrator.
- Requires all illegal activities (e.g., unauthorized work or occupancy) to cease immediately.
- **Permits/approvals may be revoked if:**
 - There's non-compliance with terms or plans.
 - The permit was obtained by false representation.
 - It was issued in error.

Summary

- STRs must comply with zoning, safety, and licensing rules
- Enforcement is active via Host Compliance software
- Ongoing monitoring helps maintain neighborhood character and public safety

Overview of Short-Term Rentals in the City of Beaufort

What is a Short-Term Rental?

A short-term rental is defined as a rental of a residential unit or an accessory building for a period of less than 30 days. Short-term rentals are subject to the city's zoning ordinances and require permits and licenses.

Background of the Current Short-Term Rental Ordinance:

In 2016, the City of Beaufort formed a Short-Term Rental Task Force to examine and report on issues related to the increasing presence of short-term rentals in residential areas.

The Task Force presented its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council in April 2017. The report covered key topics including the location and types of rentals, visitor demographics, crime rates, citizen complaints, economic impact, and the City's capacity to regulate and enforce policies.

Based on these recommendations, the Mayor and Council adopted an ordinance in July 2017 to govern short-term rentals within city limits. This ordinance was subsequently amended in July 2018.

The ordinance establishes a limit on the percentage of short-term rental units allowed in each designated city neighborhood. It also requires a Business License and the collection of Accommodations Tax. Specifically, the ordinance restricts non-owner-occupied short-term rentals to no more than 6% of the lots within neighborhoods zoned T3-S, T3-N, and T4-HN, as identified on the City of Beaufort Neighborhood Map.

In addition, the ordinance outlines requirements related to parking, rental agreements, property management plans, and monitored a fire alarm. A safety inspection must also be completed before a business license can be issued.

Short-Term Rental Process:

Step 1: Submit the Short-Term Rental Application

The application must include all the required documents and applicable fees.

Application Form & Fees

- **Standard Application Fee:** \$100
- **Inspection Fee:** \$50

- **Post-Facto Application Fee:** \$1,000 (for STRs operating without prior approval)

Note: All submission requirements listed in the application form must be included, including the following:

Required Documentation

- **Unit Information:**
 - Number of bedrooms, beds, and guest capacity.
- **Site Information:**
 - Site plan or survey showing the dwelling's location and parking areas.
- **Contact List:**
 - Names and contact details for property owners and property managers.

Rental Agreement

Include a copy of the rental agreement to be used. It must address the following:

- Minimum stay requirement (2-night minimum)
- Maximum number of guests (based on number of beds)
- Maximum number of vehicles allowed
- Parking instructions (where guests may and may not park)
- Compliance with the city's noise ordinance (9:00 PM – 8:00 AM)
- Prohibition of large events (e.g., weddings, reunions) unless explicitly approved by the City
- Pet policy, including a statement that pets may not be left outside unattended

Monitored Fire Alarm System

Short-term rental units must have a monitored fire alarm system installed on each floor.

- This requirement takes effect after the Conditional Use Permit is approved.
- After installation, submit proof such as:
 - An invoice from the installer
 - A certificate of coverage or monitoring

Step 2: Schedule and Complete a Safety Inspection

A safety inspection will be conducted by the Building Official.

Inspection Checklist

- Emergency contact information posted in a visible location:
 - Property manager
 - Emergency services (911)
 - Non-emergency dispatch: (843) 524-277
- Fire escape plan displayed:
 - Simple floor plan with labeled rooms and red arrows indicating exits
- Clearly visible property address from the street
- Functional fire alarm system
- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Safe and secure stairs, handrails, and guardrails
- Proper bedroom/sleeping room egress (must have an operable window or door to the exterior)
- General safety compliance:
 - Structural integrity
 - Electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and gas systems

Step 3: Obtain a Business License

After passing the inspection, applicants must obtain a Business License before renting the property. The licensee is also required to collect a 3% accommodations tax that is based on the monthly rental income and must be submitted to the city by the 20th of each month.

Current Number of STRs by Neighborhood/Area as of May 2025

A*

Neighborhood	Current Number of STRs	6% Cap Residentially-Zoned Parcels	STR Units Toward Cap	Neighborhood Capped
Hundred Pines	22	19	19	Yes
Mossy Oaks	22	30	20	No
Broad St	3	3	3	Yes
NorthWest Quadrant	36	16	16	Yes
Old Commons	28	7	7	Yes
Pigeon Point	30	21	21	Yes
Royal Oaks	30	35	22	No
Bluff	11	3	3	Yes
The Glebe	3	3	2	No
West End	32	24	24	Yes
Boundary St	1	0	0	No
Core Commercial	2	0	0	No
Lady's Island	3	0	0	No
Spanish Point	5	9	5	No
Higginsonville	10	15	10	Yes
Dixon Village	4	3	2	No
Stone Marten	1	2	1	No
Jerico Woods	0	6	0	No
Trask Farm Rd	2		0	No
Point	3	0	0	No
Live Oaks	0	9	0	No
Battery Point	0	19	0	No
Battery Shores	0	12	0	No
Total	248	236	155	No

A* May Exceed Cap Due to Zoning

Current Pending STRs As of May 2025

B*

C*

Neighborhood	Number	Counts Toward Cap	Does Not Count Toward Cap	Neighborhood Capped
Broad St	1	0	1	Yes
Hingginsonville	5	5	0	Yes
Mossy Oaks	4	4	0	No
Northwest Quadrant	4	0	4	Yes
Old Commons	1	0	1	Yes
Pigeon Point	3	1	2	Yes
Royal Oaks	7	7	0	No
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**B*Zoned Residential C*Zoned Mixed-Use or
Owner Occupied**

Business License/Accommodations Tax Enforcement

In 2017 the City of Beaufort contracted with Host Compliance which provides software tools and services to help monitor and enforce STR regulations.

Key Features of Host Compliance

Online Rental Activity Monitoring

- **Track Listings Across Platforms:** Monitors multiple short-term rental platforms like Airbnb, Vrbo, and Booking.com to identify listings.
- **Identify Unregistered Listings:** It helps identify properties being rented out without a proper permit or registration.

Address Identification & Matching

- **Accurate Address Verification:** The software helps match online rental listings with physical addresses, even when the full address isn't publicly listed on the platform.
- **Geo-Location Tools:** Identifies the specific location of each listing to ensure proper enforcement of zoning laws.

Real-Time Data and Reporting

- **Analytics Dashboard:** Gives access to real-time data and reporting tools to track rental activity.
- **Market Insights:** Provides insights into the short-term rental market, including the number of listings, average pricing, and occupancy rates.

Suspension or Revocation of a Business License

The license official may suspend a business license if any of the following conditions are met:

1. **Improper Issuance:** The license was mistakenly issued, improperly issued, or issued in violation of the law.
2. **Violation of Conditions:** The licensee has violated any condition of the license or failed to comply with the provisions of Sec. 7-1017 of the City code of Ordinances
3. **Fraud or Misrepresentation:** The license was obtained through fraud, misrepresentation, false or misleading statements, or concealment of a material fact.

4. **Criminal Conviction:** Within the past 10 years, the licensee has been convicted of:
 - A business-related law or ordinance violation,
 - A crime involving dishonesty or moral turpitude related to business,
 - An unlawful sale of merchandise or prohibited goods.
5. **Unlawful or Nuisance Activity:** The licensee has engaged in unlawful activity or has created a nuisance related to the business.
6. **Delinquent Payments:** The licensee is delinquent in paying any tax or fee owed to the municipality.

If any of the above apply, the license official will issue written notice either by personal service or mail to the licensee or the person in control of the business. The notice will state that the license is suspended pending a hearing before the council or its designee. The purpose of the hearing is to determine whether the suspension should be upheld, and the license revoked.

The notice will include:

- The **time and place** of the hearing,
- A **brief explanation** of the reasons for suspension and proposed revocation,
- A **copy** of the relevant sections of the City Code of Ordinances

2. **Short Term Rental:**

- a. **Specific to T3-S, T3-N, and T4-HN:** Short term rentals, where the owner does not live on the premises, are limited to 6% of the lots in the neighborhood as shown on the City of Beaufort Neighborhoods Map zoned T3-S, T3-N, and/or T4-HN with the following exceptions:
 - i. Structures on the City's List of Vacant and Abandoned Structures being rehabilitated for use as a short term rental; and
 - ii. Short term rentals are prohibited in The Point neighborhood, as shown on the City of Beaufort Neighborhoods Map.
- b. **Minimum Stay:** 2 nights.
- c. **Permitted Rental Types:**
 - i. Rental of the primary dwelling.
 - ii. Rental of an accessory dwelling.
 - iii. Rental of a portion of a primary dwelling.
 - iv. Rental of a boat in an approved marina.
- d. **Parking:** Parking shall be provided on-site and located to the side or rear of the dwelling. On-site parking shall be clearly delineated with an improved surface such as pavement, gravel, or another method approved by the administrator. If formalized parking is provided on the street(s) adjacent to the primary or accessory unit, this may be utilized in lieu of on-site parking.
- e. **Rental Agreement:** The applicant shall provide a copy of the rental agreement that will be used. The rental agreement shall specify the following:
 - i. The minimum stay.
 - ii. The maximum number of guests—which shall be based on the number of beds in the unit. For Primary house rentals, the number of adult guests is limited to 2 per bedroom. For Carriage House rentals, the total number of adult guests is limited to 4.
 - iii. The maximum number of vehicles permitted at the unit—which shall be based on the number of bedrooms and the design of the driveway. For Primary house rentals, the number of vehicles is limited to 1 per bedroom. For Carriage House rentals, the total number of adult guests is limited to 2.
 - iv. Where guests are to park. Where no formalized on-street parking is available, the agreement shall specify that guests are to park on-site and not in the street.
 - v. That the City's noise ordinance applies between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.
 - vi. Prohibit large gatherings such as weddings and reunions unless specifically approved by the City.
 - vii. Pets, if permitted, are not to be left outside unattended.
- f. **Property Management Plan:** A property management plan shall be developed and approved by the administrator. The property management plan shall identify a property manager. Where the property owner does not live on the premises, the property manager must be available to appear on the premises to respond a complaint within three hours of

being notified by the administrator. Where the property owner lives on the premises, a back-up property manager must be identified unless the owner certifies the unit will not be rented when the owner is out of town. The administrator shall be notified when management of the unit changes. Failure to comply with the approved property management plan shall result in the revocation of the zoning permit (Section 9.4).

- g. **Signs:** No on-site signs shall be permitted.
- h. **Rental Rules:** Rental rules, including use of the sanitation and recycling roll-carts, and emergency contact information including the police non-emergency number, shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the unit.
- i. **Monitored Fire Alarm:** A monitored fire alarm is required for all units except boats. Boats are required to provide documentation that a Coast Guard Auxiliary Safety Vessel Check has been performed is required. The Vessel Safety Check can be arranged through this link: <http://www.cgaux.org/vsc> . Existing facilities not meeting this requirement shall be brought into conformance within 6 months of the date of adoption of this Code.
- j. **Outside Approvals Required:** For properties located in a neighborhood with a property owners' association, written confirmation from the association president that short-term rentals are permitted in the neighborhood is required. In multifamily structures, written approval from the property management association is required. For boats in an approved marina, written permission from the marina manager is required.
- k. **Safety Inspection and Licensing:** A Safety Inspection shall be conducted before the Business License for the facility is issued. The facility shall comply with all business license, revenue collection, and health laws of the City of Beaufort, Beaufort County and the State of South Carolina.
- l. **Unlicensed Units:** For units that are found to be operating without approval of the City, the short term rental application fee shall be \$1,000. If the property owner chooses not to submit a short term rental application within 60 days of being notified by the City of being in violation of the ordinance, a short term rental application shall not be approved for a period of 2 years.

Sec. 7-1016. Suspension or revocation of license.

When the license official determines:

- (1) A license has been mistakenly or improperly issued or issued contrary to law;
- (2) A licensee has breached any condition upon which the license was issued or has failed to comply with the provisions of this chapter;
- (3) A licensee has obtained a license through a fraud, misrepresentation, a false or misleading statement, or evasion or suppression of a material fact in the license application;
- (4) A licensee has been convicted within the previous ten (10) years of an offense under a law or ordinance regulating business, a crime involving dishonest conduct or moral turpitude related to a business or a subject of a business, or an unlawful sale of merchandise or prohibited goods;
- (5) A licensee has engaged in an unlawful activity or nuisance related to the business; or
- (6) A licensee is delinquent in the payment to the municipality of any tax or fee, the license official may give written notice to the licensee or the person in control of the business within the municipality by personal service or mail that the license is suspended pending a single hearing before council or its designee for the purpose of determining whether the suspension should be upheld and the license should be revoked.

The written notice of suspension and proposed revocation shall state the time and place at which the hearing is to be held, and shall contain a brief statement of the reasons for the suspension and proposed revocation and a copy of the applicable provisions of this chapter.

(Ord. No. O-14-21, 9-28-21)

12.3.1 GENERAL

Any person violating this Code shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall pay such penalties as the court may decide, as prescribed by state law. Each day such conduct continues shall subject the offender to the liability prescribed in this article.

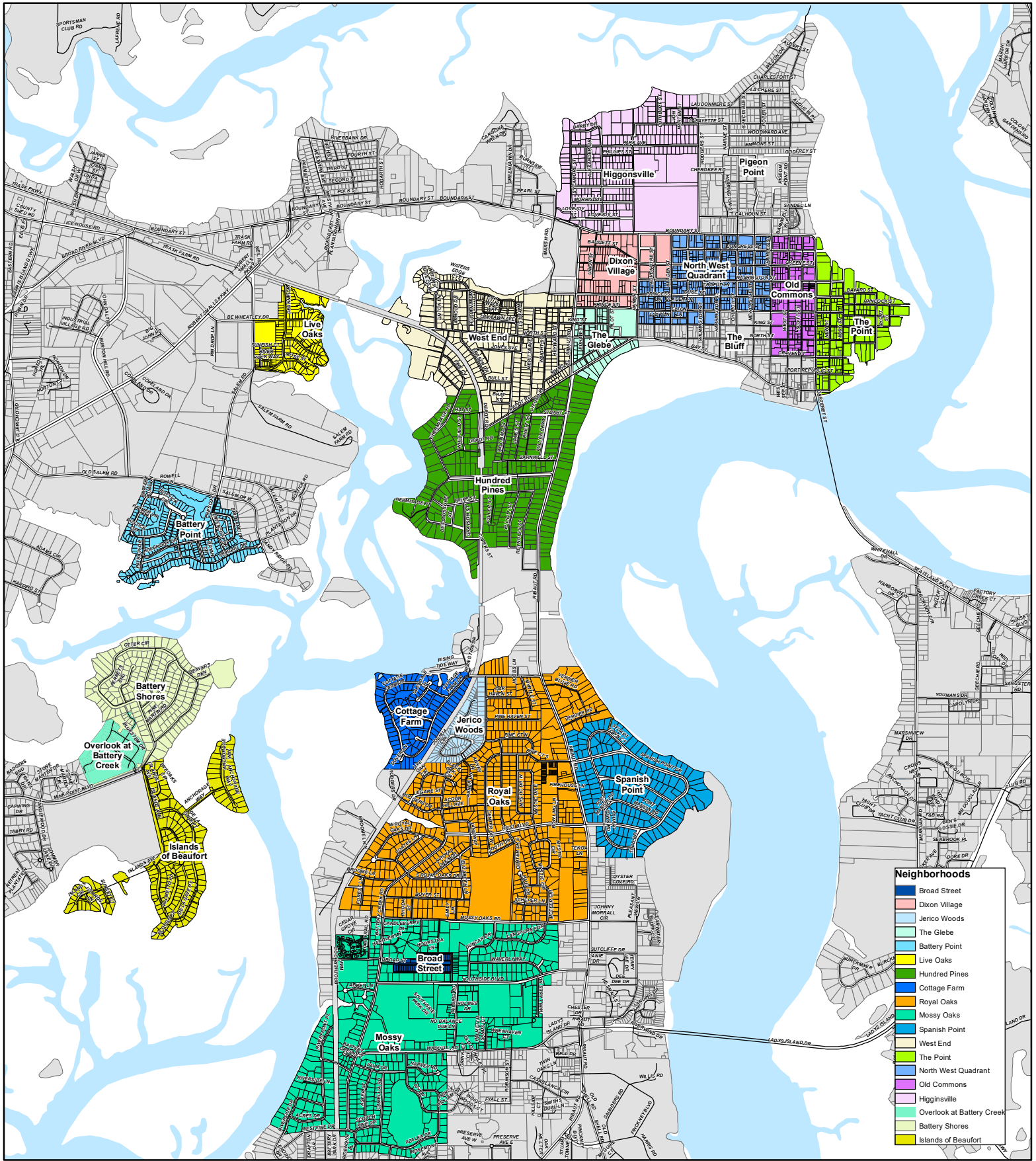
12.3.2 OTHER REMEDIES AND PENALTIES

In addition, the city may use any combination of the following enforcement actions, remedies, and penalties in any particular order to correct, stop, abate, or enjoin a violation of this Code:

- A. **Stop Order:** The Administrator may issue and serve upon a person violating this Code a "stop order" requires the person to stop all actions in violation of this Code, including illegal occupation of a building or structure, performing illegal work, or any other action in violation of this Code.
- B. **Permit Revocation:** Any permit, development approval, or other form of authorization required under this Code may be revoked if the Administrator determines that:
 - 1. There is a failure to comply with the approved permit, development approval, plans, specifications, or terms or conditions required under the permit or development approval.
 - 2. The permit or development approval was procured by false representation.
 - 3. The permit or development approval was issued in error.

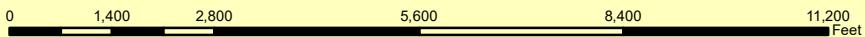
Written notice of revocation shall be served upon the landowner, the landowner's agent, or others to whom the permit or development approval was issued, and such notice may be posted in a prominent location at the place of violation. No work or construction shall proceed after service of the revocation notice.

- C. **Civil Remedies:** In addition to all other remedies and penalties outlined in this article, the administrator may institute an action or proceeding for injunction or mandamus or other appropriate action or proceeding to prevent, abate, or correct a violation of this Code or to prevent the occupancy of a structure or land that is in violation of this Code. Each day a person violates this Code shall be considered a separate offense.



City of Beaufort Neighborhoods

May 9, 2018





CITY OF BEAUFORT
DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

TO: CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** 5/30/2025
FROM: Josh Scallate, Council Member
AGENDA ITEM
TITLE: Operation of Golf Carts in City Limits
MEETING
DATE: 6/10/2025
DEPARTMENT: City Managers Office

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Councilman Scallate would like to lead a discussion of recent changes to golf cart laws and the potential implications for City of Beaufort residents.

PLACED ON AGENDA FOR: Discussion

REMARKS: