

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

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Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Acknowledgments

Town of Seabrook Island Council

Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission

Town of Seabrook Island Officials

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan will guide the public decision making that will affect the quality of life in the Town of Seabrook Island through the year 2019. The Plan identifies the community's Vision for the Town of Seabrook Island, developed through the efforts of the Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission, with input from the public. The Vision articulates the community's sense of what is essential to the quality of life in the Town of Seabrook Island and serves as the touchstone for the Comprehensive Plan. The various elements of the Plan are designed to accomplish the vision by articulating goals for the future regarding the pattern and intensity of land use, the provision of public facilities and services, economic development, availability of housing, and preservation of natural and cultural resources. The Plan also sets forth specific strategies that will guide future Town actions to accomplish the Plan's goals, thereby realizing its Vision for the Future.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan is composed of nine sections:

1. Population
2. Economic Development
3. Natural Resources
4. Cultural Resources
5. Community Facilities
6. Housing Element
7. Land Use
8. Transportation
9. Priority Investment

VISION FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND

To be a residential community where growth is managed, commercial development activities are limited and the natural environment is preserved, while respecting the rights of individuals and their property.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN

The Town of Seabrook Island was officially incorporated on May 26, 1987. The decision to incorporate came after a committee of property owners studied the pros and cons of being annexed by the City of Charleston or incorporating as a separate municipality. Based on their findings, the committee recommended incorporation citing these advantages: 1) the ability to pass and enforce planning and zoning ordinances, 2) controlling future development of the Island.

The first municipal election was held on August 18, 1987, where the first mayor and four council members were named. The first maps of the Town were based on geographic markers, but later negotiations allowed the official state maps to be redrawn and based upon geodetic locations so that the Town's boundaries would be forever stable. This clarified any disputed properties as being firmly within the Town of Seabrook Island.

Shortly after incorporation the Town prepared and adopted a set of codes and ordinances which were incorporated into the Town Code and the Development Standards Ordinances, hereinafter referred to as the "Ordinance" or "DSO" Ordinance.

The Town Code was last codified on February 28, 2007 and covers the following areas: 1) Government and Administration, 2) Public Safety, 3) Public Works, 4) Public Utilities, 5) Planning and Development, 6) Health and Sanitation, 7) Licensing and Regulation, 8) Motor Vehicles and Traffic, and 9) Offenses.

The DSO was established to serve as the guide in controlling development of the Town of Seabrook Island in accordance with existing and future needs. Further, it is intended to protect, promote and improve the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, appearance, prosperity and general welfare; to preserve the environmental character of the Town of Seabrook Island; and to facilitate the timely and adequate provision of water, sewage disposal and other utility services, parks and other public requirements. These two documents have been and remain the core documents used in governing the affairs of the Town and its development.

1: Population

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Population

Introduction

The population element of the comprehensive plan profiles a picture of the residents and nonresident property owners who live in the Town of Seabrook Island. This includes recent trends in demographics such as numbers of persons living in the Town, household, levels of education, race, age and other related information. With an awareness of the trends of population the town is experiencing, it will be easier to determine the type of services that are needed, where and how much growth should occur, employment needs and make projections and predictions for the future.

As it is nearing the end of the decade and time for a new census, the most recent information that can be used to accurately assess the makeup of the residents of the Town of Seabrook is the 2000 Census, 2008 voter's registration and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association.

2000 Census

Summary

As noted in the 2000 Census, there were 1,250 residents, 660 households, and 465 families residing in the town. Approximately 47% of the population was males with 53% being female. The population density was 206.0 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the town was 97% white, 1% African American, and 2% were of other races.

Households

There were 660 households in 2000 out of which 3.6% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 68.2% were married couples living together, 2.3% had a female householder with no husband present, and 29.4% were non-families. 24.8% of all households were made up of individuals and 11.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 1.86 persons and the average family size was 2.14 persons.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

1: Population

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Education

The educational attainment of the residents of Seabrook Island is high, with nearly 45% of the residents having earned college degrees and another 20% having graduate degrees.

Educational Attainment: 2000	#	%
Population 25 Years and Over	1110	100.0
Less Than 9th Grade	4	0.4
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	6	0.5
High School Graduate	137	12.3
Some College, No Degree	153	13.8
Associate Degree	82	7.4
Bachelor's Degree	499	45.0
Graduate or Professional Degree	229	20.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. SF3, Table P37.

2008 Data Updates

Voter Registration

According to the Charleston County Voters Registration, the total number of registered voters in the Town in 2008 was 1,315. This population figure is comprised of resident property owners, long-term renters, and Camp St. Christopher year round residents.

Summer Population

As with other beach communities, the population increases dramatically in the summer. The year 2000 population figure grows to approximately 2,330 when it includes residents and short-term renters (as estimated from gate passes). The estimated peak population is 2,910. The peak population, including daily visitors, is estimated for any single day in July (the peak month for visitors) and reflects the total number of people who would have to be evacuated in the event of an emergency. Source: Town of Seabrook Island, February 2009.

1: Population

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Trends

In the past 20 years, the Town of Seabrook Island has experienced a gradual population growth. The 1990 Census recorded 948 residents in the Town Seabrook Island. In ten years, the resident population grew to 1250 full time residents. With new amenities and residential units anticipated, the growth is expected to continue.

Goals:

To continue to promote a sense of community among the residents.

1. Strategy:
Ensure public facilities and services continue to support the Town's population as it grows.
2. Strategy:
Encourage ways to assist members of the community that have special needs (Planning Commission, Long term).
3. Strategy:
Encourage volunteerism among its residents. (Town Administration, Ongoing).

2: Economic Development

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development

Introduction

The Town of Seabrook is primarily a private island community, although the town does include the Bohicket Marina. The Seabrook Island Club includes two championship golf courses, a tennis center, an equestrian center, a beach club and many other amenities. There is limited commercial development. The main industries are the vacation rental market and the Bohicket Marina commercial area.

Labor Force

In 2000, the total number of employed civilian population 16 years and over in the Town of Seabrook Island was 459 residents. Among the most common occupations of Seabrook Island residents were management, / professional and related occupations, 52%, and sales and office occupations, 29%. Approximately 73 % of Seabrook Island residents worked for companies, 9% worked for the government and 14 % were self-employed.

TABLE OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER

Occupation	2000	% (rounded)
Managerial/Professional Specialty	241	52.5
Technical/Sales/Admin. Support	134	29
Service	51	11
Production, transportation and material moving	12	5
Construction and maintenance	21	3

Source: 2000 Census Data

2: Economic Development

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Charleston Area Major Employers

The leading employers for the region are the Naval Weapons Station, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Hospital, the Charleston Air Force Base, and the Charleston County School District. In addition, Charleston County has attracted business including: the Port of Charleston; the Space and Air Warfare (SPAWAR) Systems command of the U.S. Navy; a vibrant tourism business; the beautiful “Lowcountry” environment and quality of life; and a local culture of historic preservation and conservation which is attracting young professionals.

Businesses

Commercial development is centered in and near the Bohicket Marina and includes a gas station, bank, restaurants, real estate offices and other various businesses.

The Natural Environment as an Economic Asset

The surrounding ocean and marsh, expansive views, and recreational opportunities attract people to Seabrook Island as both vacationers and permanent residents. Economic benefits from these amenities include: beach house rentals, increased property values, and seasonal support of local businesses. These benefits add to the Town’s wealth in two ways. First, they provide the business owner and property owners opportunities to make personal financial gains and assist in protecting their individual investments. Secondly, they also provide the Town increased income through business licenses and higher property assessments. These benefits are unique to towns that have something special to offer and are not available everywhere.

Goals:

Limit commercial development while maintaining a low-density, residential community and accommodate economic growth in an orderly manner while remaining cognizant of our natural resources, lifestyles, and community aspirations.

1. Strategy:
Confine commercial and resort development through zoning controls to what is existing (Planning Commission, Staff, and Council).

3: Natural Resources

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Natural Resources

Introduction

This portion of the comprehensive plan addresses the natural resources in the Town of Seabrook Island. Analysis of natural resources is a critical element in the planning process because knowledge regarding such resources is important to their protection and conservation. Awareness of the resources supporting natural systems allows future development to coexist with critical natural systems in a way that ensures the viability of resources in the Town of Seabrook for years to come.

The natural environment is an aspect of the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Seabrook Island. As a barrier island, Seabrook Island's exposed geography makes the town vulnerable to severe weather including tropical storms and hurricanes whose flooding and high winds have the potential to cause damage across the island. Severe weather however, is just one threat to the island; the impact of human development can also create long-term consequences to the island's natural ecosystem. This element will look at existing studies and plans, as well as giving an account of existing conditions on the island.

The Town of Seabrook Island has taken an active role in protecting the natural habitat of Seabrook Island by adopting laws and regulations concerning the use of the beaches, wetlands, woodlands, and tidal waterways. The Town also works with the South Carolina Office of Coastal Resource Management, Charleston County, and the US Army Corps of Engineers to identify protected beach areas, marshes, and wetlands. Charleston County and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have regulated development to minimize potential flood damage. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the South Carolina Department of Wildlife and Marine Resources have also assisted in efforts to protect valuable wildlife habitat.

Overview

Seabrook Island is a barrier island lying south of Charleston, South Carolina, at the southernmost tip of Johns Island, and boasts a great variety of scenic natural resources. Those include over 3 miles of beach; several hundred acres of maritime forests dominated by ancient live oaks, majestic pines, and palmettos; a vast expanse of tidal marsh and freshwater wetlands. The island supports diverse wildlife including white-tailed deer, gray foxes and bobcats to name a few, as well as abundant waterfowl, and other bird life. Aquatic life is also plentiful. Alligators, otters, and dolphin are year-round residents of our estuaries, waterways, and lakes. Loggerhead turtles, the Eastern brown pelican, the least tern, and a number of other threatened, endangered, and protected species thrive on our beaches, dunes, and marshes.

3: Natural Resources

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Physiographic & Topography

According to the Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 7.1 square miles of which, 6.1 square miles is land and 1.0 square miles (14.39 %) is water. The island is 3.8 miles long and about a mile wide at its widest point. The total area of the town limits is about 2,800 acres, with about 1,100 acres in marshland/conservation. The island's average elevation is approximately 13 feet.

FEMA: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has mapped Seabrook Island locating various areas of flood hazards. Areas located in VE zones are subject to inundation by the 100-year flood with additional hazards due to velocity (wave action). Areas located in AE zones are subject to inundation by the 100-year flood determined in a Flood Insurance Study. Base flood elevations are shown within these zones and flood insurance purchase requirements may apply.

Vegetation

The main vegetation of the marsh is smooth cord grass, with Needle Rush along the edges of the marsh adjacent to land. The main trees on the island are live oak, loblolly pine, and cabbage palmetto. Vegetation in the zone between the wetlands and uplands is very important to controlling the urban runoff into the marsh. After heavy rainstorms, the water quality around the island may decrease dramatically due to the urban runoff quickly being flushed into the marshes. The vegetation slows the runoff and takes up pollutants and nutrients that are flushed with the water.

3: Natural Resources

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Wildlife

The transition area between the wetland area and uplands provides ideal habitat for resting and roosting grounds for many types of birds. Near-arctic migrant birds depend on this area in Charleston County for resting and feeding along their annual migration route. Loggerhead turtles use the beaches of the town as nesting sites.

Beaches

The ocean and beach front areas are critically important to the community. The Beachfront Management Plan was adopted by the Town Council.

Table: Charleston County Endangered and Threatened Species

Status	Name
Threatened	Loggerhead Sea Turtle
Threatened	Peregrine Falcon
Threatened	Piping Plover
Threatened	Bald Eagle
Endangered	Bachman’s Warbler
Endangered	Red-cockaded Woodpecker
Threatened	Sea-beach amaranth
Endangered	Canby's dropwort
Endangered	Wood Stork

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2008

Goal:

To preserve and protect wetlands, sand dunes, wildlife, trees and all vegetation indigenous to the island which contributes to the scenic beauty and healthy conditions of the Town of Seabrook Island.

1. Strategy:
Require site design to identify all natural resources to be preserved and protected. Require replacement-in-kind of trees removed during construction. (Staff, Planning Commission).
2. Strategy:
Enforce the rule of not disturbing or destroying the dunes during the summer months. (Town Beach Patrol during summer months)

4: Cultural Resources

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

The cultural resources element describes the human forces that interact to shape the Island's character and its residents. This element describes the unique areas, entertainment opportunities, and other aspects that give Seabrook Island its cultural assets and recreational opportunities.

Current Events

Seabrook Island has many gifted artists, craftsmen, musicians, and educators, who are avid supporters of the cultural arts in the Charleston area. Many chose to live at Seabrook Island because of its close proximity to vast cultural resources. Residents and visitors alike enjoy outstanding music, dance, theater and films, places of worship, magnificent galleries and museums, incomparable architecture, historic forts, homes and plantations, invigorating sporting events, and programs offered by local colleges and universities. A plethora of social clubs and activities bind Seabrook Island property owners together. Book clubs, singing quartets, history buffs, artisans and sport enthusiasts — anyone with a special interest can find others of like mind within the Seabrook Island community.

Marina/Fishing

Bohicket Marina and Yacht Club, adjacent to Seabrook Island, is a full-service facility that can accommodate yachts up to 200 feet. The marina contains 200 wet slips and 100 dry slips, full electrical power, a ship's store, dining and shopping. This large boating complex is located only three and a half miles from the Intracoastal Waterway and Atlantic Ocean. Each May, Bohicket Marina and Yacht Club hosts South Carolina's Governor's Cup Billfish Tournament. Charter fishing boats, sailboats, ocean cruisers and run-abouts are available for hire.

Goal:

To promote the cultural, educational, and historical resources of the Charleston area.

1. Strategy:
Support cultural events in the Charleston area.
2. Strategy:
Provide residents and visitors with information through display area at Town Hall, for brochures, pamphlets, announcements, etc...covering cultural, educational, and historical resources in the surrounding area. Provide residents and visitors with information concerning opportunities, community services, institutions, organizations and events.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Community Facilities

Introduction

The Community Facilities Element of the comprehensive plan ensures that land use planning is balanced with the availability of public services and infrastructure by coordinating land use decisions with the provision of public facilities and services. This protects the quality of life for existing residents and ensures the ability to provide for future residents. Community facilities include both public and semi-public uses. Facilities such as City Hall, fire stations and libraries are all examples of community facilities. Schools and utilities would also be classified under this category.

There are a number of community facilities in and around the Town of Seabrook Island to serve the needs of the citizens. These facilities provide services such as waste management, emergency response and educational opportunities and include the following:

Water Supply

The Town of Seabrook Island owns its water and sewer facilities. The Seabrook Island Utility Commission, an elected commission of three members, is responsible for the Town's water supply which it purchases from the St. Johns Water Company. St. Johns Water Company is a co-operative non-profit private water company that is federally financed through Consolidated Farmers Home Administration Act of 1961. It is authorized to serve all of Johns Island and Wadmalaw Island. St. Johns' water is purchased from Charleston Water System at a bulk rate. Studies done by the St. Johns Water Co. officials indicated that this purchase will continue to be more cost effective than developing an independent water supply.

St. Johns Water Company's water transmission pipelines connect to the Charleston water System at three points on the Charleston side of the Stono River- an 18 inch pipeline at the Limehouse Bridge, an 18 inch pipeline at the Stono Bridge and a new 24 inch pipeline at Johns Island Airport and traverse Johns Island along Main Road, Maybank Highway, Bohicket Road, River Road and Betsy Kerrison Parkway to Freshfields Shopping Center where the Seabrook Island Utility Commission System connects to it. The capital and operating costs of these transmission pipelines across Johns Island are shared pro rata by the using utilities under the terms of an 80 year water supply contract signed in 1978 by a preceding owner of the Seabrook Island Utility. Water delivered from the transmission system to the Seabrook Island Utility Commission is priced by St. Johns Water Company at the Charleston Water System's bulk rate.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

The Seabrook Island Utility Commission had 220 water taps at the beginning of 2009. Water use at the peak use period (summertime) amounted to just over 1,500,000 gallons per day in 2008. The long term water supply contract has been amended and new and additional transmission capacity (a 24 inch pipeline from the Johns Island airport) is in place and capitalized to provide the Town of Seabrook Island 2,400,000 gallons per day. This volume is slightly more than the Town is projected to need at build-out.

Wastewater

Wastewater treatment services are provided by the Seabrook Island Utility Commission in a service area determined by *Water Quality Management Plan (WQM Plan)*, administered by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. The WQ Management Plan guides the provision of wastewater treatment services by various agencies within the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region. The goal of the *WQM Plan* is to preserve and enhance water quality and to meet the water quality requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act and the South Carolina Pollution Control Act. The Town of Seabrook Island is a Designated Management Agency and assists the BCDCOG with managing and carrying out the provisions of the *WQM Plan* in accordance with DHEC regulations. The service area includes the Town of Seabrook Island, the portion of geographic Seabrook Island outside the Town of Seabrook Island and Kiawah River Estates (formerly Hope Plantation). Current wastewater treatment facilities are projected to accommodate the service area requirements at build-out.

In 2007, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved a total of \$1,605,606 for the State of South Carolina for upgrades to help Seabrook Island storm-proof its wastewater treatment plant and collection system from a 500-year coastal storm surge. The grant was awarded through FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. The \$1.6 million grant represents the federal share of the total project cost of \$2,140,808 million. The remainder will come from non-federal sources.

The upgrades will prevent wastewater overflow and back-up into area homes, businesses, marshes and wetlands, not only preserving the quality of life, but also protecting the ecosystem. Hurricane season coincides with the area's peak tourist season, exposing the plant to possible storm surge just when it is working at its highest volume. The facility processes more than 1.2 million gallons of wastewater daily. The project modifications, designed to prevent prolonged interruption of operations after hurricane surge include converting 12 non-submersible wastewater pumps to submersible pumps, the flood-proofing of 24 existing electrical panels, and the flood-proofing of other components in the wastewater treatment plant.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

The wastewater collection and treatment system operated at close to 50% of its rated capacity at peak periods in 2008. In a study by the Commission in 2008, it was determined that the system would handle the demands, including a reasonable contingency, when the Town of Seabrook Island, the area of geographic Seabrook Island and Kiawah River Estate when all are built out. These build out demands also show that no further commitments can be made for wastewater service using current facilities.

Electricity, Cable and Telephone Service

Electricity to the Town of Seabrook Island is provided by Berkeley Electric Cooperative, Inc. Cable is provided by Comcast; satellite TV is also available. AT&T provides the land line phone service while cellular service is available through numerous national carriers.

Fire Protection

Fire protection service is provided to the Town of Seabrook Island by the St. Johns Fire District; a special tax district created by the governor in 1959 in which the residents of Seabrook pay a fire tax. As of February 2009, the St. John's Fire District employed seven fully staffed fire stations, one of which is located on Seabrook Island. The new two story building is staffed with a minimum of three fulltime firefighters 24 hours a day. The onsite equipment includes a first response 75 foot aerial apparatus (ladder truck) purchased in 1996. There is also a spare pumper for the St. Johns Fire District located at the Seabrook Island station. The district has seven front line pumpers one /tankers, two aerial apparatus, two rescue apparatus. The district has a reserve fleet consisting of three pumper/tankers. The district also has two marine vessels, one hazardous materials trailer, two brush trucks and ten support vehicles consisting of six Chief's vehicles, three maintenance vehicles and the Battalion Chief's truck and one beach rescue vehicle housed at the Town of Kiawah Island.

The St. John's Fire District currently employs 121 personnel of which 106 are fire suppression certified. The district also maintains its own communications center with five personnel, its own maintenance division with three personnel and an administrative staff with four personnel. Rescue divers are provided by Charleston County Rescue. There are no volunteer fire fighters.

The standards by which fire protection services are evaluated are a function of the distances between fire stations and structures served, water availability, and the numbers and types of firefighting equipment, fire stations, and personnel. The most widely used indicator of a fire department's ability to provide fire protection services is its rating assigned by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). The lower the ISO rating the higher the level of protection and the lower the fire insurance premiums for insured properties within the service area. The ISO rating for the island of Seabrook is a 4.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Law Enforcement

The Charleston County Sheriff's Department has jurisdiction over the Town of Seabrook Island. The deputies assigned to the West Patrol District provide services to the unincorporated sections of West of the Ashley, James Island, Johns Island, Wadmalaw Island, Seabrook Island and Kiawah Island. The primary responsibilities of the Patrol Division include preventive patrols, crime prevention initiatives, responses to calls for service, minor investigations, traffic management, state and local law enforcement, the provision of emergency services, and positive community relations.

Emergency Medical Services

The Charleston County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides emergency medical assistance to residents of the urban and rural communities of Charleston County. The purpose of this service is to provide pre-hospital, advance life support and paramedic services to residents and visitors. Services are administered from EMS Headquarters in North Charleston, where dispatching operations are based, and where the EMS Director maintains offices and directs administrative functions.

Medic Unit 10 serves the Town of Seabrook Island. This unit is located just a few minutes away at 4305 Betsy Kerrison Parkway on Johns Island. The Town of Seabrook Island took a leadership role with the County to establish funding and completion of this facility.

Waste Management

The Charleston County Department of Solid Waste (DSW) provides solid waste disposal and recycling services to all residents (incorporated and unincorporated areas) of Charleston County. The Solid Waste Department's responsibilities encompass solid waste collection, processing, disposal, and recycling in order to provide citizens with a clean and healthy environment in which to live. Recycling materials are picked up on the Island every Monday. In addition to the recycling, weekly pick-up of trash is provided by the Property Owners Association through a contract with private contractors. There is a permanent facility in which corrugated box board materials are separated from regular garbage. Yard debris is shredded or removed by private contractors.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

One member of Town Council services as Public Safety Coordinator for the Town. That official has the responsibility of making sure the Town's evacuation plan is current, and for ensuring coordination with the POA Security Force and other state, county and municipal organization in the event of an emergency. The Town follows the Charleston County Emergency Operations Plan and the Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide, in addition to the Town's own Hurricane Plan. The town's Fire and Emergency Command Center is Town Hall; this location as a central location for all emergency operations and is equipped with a generator capable of sustaining operations in the case of a power outage as well as the town's phone system and fax lines, all radio communications, and facilities to handle Town administration. The Town's plan includes provisions for individuals who may require evacuation assistance, weather alerts, and a Code Red phone system alert. Property owners are issued passes to get back on the island. Mutual aid is provided by Charleston County, the Town of Kiawah Island and other jurisdictions, as needed. There is also a consolidated dispatch service available through the county.

Public Schools

The public educational facilities that serve the Town of Seabrook Island fall under the purview of the South Carolina Department of Education and the Charleston County School District. The three public schools that serve the Town are Mt. Zion Elementary School, Haut Gap Middle School and St. Johns Island High School; all schools have a low income minority population.

Private Schools

Private schools are not regulated by the South Carolina Department of Education or by the Charleston County School District. The South Carolina Independent School Association provides accreditation standards for private schools, although private schools are not required to be accredited. There are a total of forty-two private schools in Charleston County educating approximately 8,000 students. Fifteen of these schools meet the accreditation criteria of the South Carolina Independent School Association.

5: Community Facilities

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Library

The Charleston County Library is an independent authority established by the State of South Carolina Legislature to provide library services to the residents of Charleston County. The Charleston County Library operates a new Johns Island branch that services the Seabrook residents.

Town Hall

Construction of the Seabrook Island Town Hall was completed in 2000. The building is approximately 2,400 square feet and is located on six acres of land owned by the Town.

Town Administration

The administrative department is charged with the supervision of the operation of the Town. This department is responsible for the development and implementation of the Town's budget and implementation of the policies established by Town Council. The administrative department includes the Town Administrator, town attorney, town clerks who handle billing and permitting and a building inspector. This department is charged with the management of the general fund.

Website

The Town of Seabrook Island maintains a web page at www.townofseabrookisland.org. Current information is continually available concerning Town Council and commission meetings, utilities, community events, building and zoning application fees and forms, emergency preparedness, and directions to the Town. Also available are many links to web sites featuring area businesses, weather, tourism, real estate, entertainment, and wildlife.

GOALS:

To provide an orderly and safe community.

1. Strategy: Ensure that all municipal facilities and services and fire and law enforcement protection are accessible and maintained for all property owners and visitors. (Town staff, ongoing).
2. Strategy: Plan for and provide adequate emergency evacuation services to all residents and visitors. (Town staff and town council, annual review).

6: Housing

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

HOUSING ELEMENT

Introduction

The housing element of the comprehensive plan must include a review of existing housing conditions, owner and renter-occupied housing, location, type and affordability. The Town of Seabrook Island's housing stock consists of a variety of dwelling types, ages and conditions. Patterns of residential development vary from the large waterfront homes to high density condominiums.

2009 Housing Update

The total number of Single-Family homes in the Town of Seabrook Island is 972. The total number of villas and/or condos in the Town of Seabrook Island is 1,167 for a total of 2,139 housing units. There remain 532 undeveloped residential lots zoned for Single Family housing. Two vacant parcels zoned for Multi-Family still remain undeveloped for a possible maximum of 69 more units.

Source: Town of Seabrook Island, 2009

6: Housing

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Age of Housing

The age of housing in a community can be an important indicator of housing needs and can assist in identifying housing that requires special attention to continue to provide safe and decent shelter.

Age of Housing Units: 2009		
Year of Construction	# of Units	% of Units
Built 1990 – May 2009	826	38.6%
Built 1980 - 1989	777	36.3 %
Built 1960 - 1979	533	24.9 %
Built before 1940	3	.2 %
Total Units	2,139	

Owner/Renter Occupied Home

The value of housing is dependent on several general variables. The first of which is the supply of housing, the second variable is demand, and the third is location. There are other factors which influence a community's housing costs, e.g., economic conditions, vacancy rates, location, quality, style, and community facilities.

6: Housing

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

In the Town of Seabrook Island in 2000, there were 490 specified owner occupied houses with an average median price of \$465,000.

Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units: 2000	
Housing Value	# of Houses
Less than \$50,000	0
\$50,000 - 99,999	7
\$100,000 - 149,999	21
\$150,000 - 199,999	26
\$200,000 - 299,999	94
\$300,000- 499,999	118
\$500,000- 999,999	187
\$1,000,000 or more	37
TOTAL	490

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

6: Housing

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Housing Affordability

The Charleston County Comprehensive Plan notes that the affordability of homes on Johns Island is an area of concern, particularly for working families and low to moderate income residents. The median home value in the unincorporated county is 3.6 times higher than the median household income, putting home ownership out of reach for many County residents.

Goals:

Preserve the residential character of the Island and its natural resources.

1. Strategy:

Adopt and enforce housing requirements and maintain density controls that are aesthetically pleasing and in harmony with the natural resources of Seabrook Island

7: Land Use

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Land Use

Introduction

Developing a vision for future growth and development direction through land use planning is one of the most important aspects of a comprehensive plan. It is the process of looking at the development of a community and the natural resource restraints of the land and developing a vision to effectively accommodate future growth and development. The future land use plan will allow the Town of Seabrook Island to predictably plan and anticipate growth.

Land Use and Zoning

A local government comprehensive plan will likely be more successful if the plan and zoning ordinance are well integrated and if they consider the interests and needs of neighboring communities. This is the case in the Town of Seabrook Island because the land use and zoning plan are the same.

Zoning districts in the Town of Seabrook Island include those districts that existed upon original adoption of the Development Standards Ordinance of the Town of Seabrook Island with the addition of new non-residential zoning districts, PDD districts and sub-districts adopted since 1987, as listed in the DSO.

7: Land Use

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Existing Land Use Map

The Existing Land Use Map (also the Town Zoning Map) was created by using data from the Town of Seabrook Island. Each land use category is designated by standard colors on the Town Zoning Map. The map is intended to categorize all development within the town into specific land use types. The existing land uses identified for the Town of Seabrook Island include:

Single-Family Residential Land Use: Single-family residential land uses are shown in brown on the Existing Land Use Map. There are approximately 1103 acres of Single-family residential development within the town.

Parks & Recreation Area Land Use: Parks and recreation areas are owned by private interests. The parks and recreation areas encompass approximately 358 acres. These areas are shaded in green.

Multi-Family Residential Land Use: A land use designation of multi-family denotes developments such as duplexes and condominiums. High-density residential areas are in tan on the land use map. There are an estimated 71 acres of Multi-Family land use within Town of Seabrook Island.

Commercial Land Use: Commercial and office land use includes retail, office, and service oriented businesses. Commercial land uses are shown in pink. Most commercial areas are located the Bohicket Marina and the Seabrook Island Club. There are estimated 20 acres of commercial land uses currently within the town.

Government Land Use: Institutional land uses are areas used for the provision of government services. Government uses are shaded in gray. There are approximately 6 acres of government land use within the town.

Utility Land Use: Public utilities and services are either partially or fully in place in these areas. There are estimated 20 acres of utility land uses currently within the town.

7: Land Use

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Agricultural Land Use: Recognizes the use of land for agricultural purposes. There are estimated 87 acres of agricultural land uses currently within the town and are indicated by dash lines.

Conservation Land Use: Recognizes limited use of land for recreational but otherwise envisions long term preservation of the land without commercial activity or subdivision. There are estimated 1084 acres of conservation land use currently within the town and are shown as dotted areas. This includes the Marsh Lands Trust and the Property Owners Association residual lands.

Additionally: There are 190 acres of roadway in the Town of Seabrook Island.

Future Land Use

The Planning Commission expressed a desire to preserve the special nature of the Island by maintaining the residential character of the Island.

Goal:

To ensure that future development compliments and enhances the natural beauty and residential character of the community.

1. **Strategy:**
Adopt and enforce land use zoning requirements that are aesthetically pleasing and in harmony with the natural habitat of Seabrook Island. (Staff, Planning Commission, Town Council, ongoing).
2. **Strategy:**
Enforce municipal ordinances regulating density and lot coverage. (Planning Commission, Town Council, ongoing)
3. **Strategy:**
Enforce land use regulations outlining the permitted uses in any undeveloped areas of municipality. (Planning Commission, ongoing)

8: Transportation

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Transportation Element

Introduction

Transportation systems are a foundational element of any community. Without functional and accessible transportation systems, it is essentially impossible for a community to support business and industry, as well as citizens. The transportation systems serving the Town of Seabrook Island include highways, rail, airports, sidewalks, bike paths and helio pad. This element provides an analysis of conditions of the currently existing transportation systems in the Town.

Roadway Functional Classification

The Town of Seabrook Islands road system is comprised of a compact network of local, low-intensity streets typical of a beach community. Keeping an effective network of roads is essential. Care is taken to maintain roads and sidewalks to ensure safe passage of pedestrian and automobile traffic. Funding for such improvements is available through federal transportation enhancement grants, Charleston County Transportation sales tax funding and the Town. Access to the Town of Seabrook is available via two bridges to Johns Island from Main Road and Highway 17, from Maybank Highway to Bohicket Road, and from River Road to Bohicket Road.

Seabrook Island Congestion Management Traffic Count Program Winter 2007

The BCD Council of Governments conducted a survey of traffic volume characteristics over Seabrook Island Road. Total average weekday traffic volume is 4,049 vehicles traveling along Seabrook Island Road. The busiest island bound hour is 12:00 p.m. with 182 vehicles, while the busiest inland bound hour is 12:00 p.m. with 208 vehicles. As a coastal community, Seabrook Island experiences substantial seasonal fluctuation in traffic volumes over the course of the year, averaging up to 40% more traffic traveling onto the island during the summer.

8: Transportation

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Public Transportation

The Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) and Tri-County Link (formally BCD RTMA) are the two major providers of public transportation in the region, with CARTA committed to service in the urbanized area and Tri-County Link providing service to the rural areas of the region. For the most up-to-date information regarding routes please visit the Tri County Link and CARTA websites at www.ridetricountylink.com and www.ridecarta.com.

Goal:

To maintain transportation systems within the Town of Seabrook, and support safer roadways to and from Seabrook Island.

1. **Strategy:**
The Town of Seabrook Island participates with the transportation and local entities in support of the Johns Island Greenway in an effort to improve vehicular safety to and from Seabrook Island.

9: Priority Investment

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Overview

This element addresses recent amendments to the South Carolina Local Government Planning Enabling Act – South Carolina Priority Investment Act.

The purpose of this element is to enhance coordination of local government and public service in the Town of Seabrook, to synchronize public and private investment in land and infrastructure and to conserve cultural, environmental and fiscal resources with surrounding jurisdictions.

In 2006, the SC Priority Investment Act encouraged local governments to develop market-based incentives to reduce unnecessary housing regulatory requirements to encourage development of traditional neighborhood designs and affordable housing. Barrier islands are, by their definition, limited by area and natural boundaries; this lack of land and the desirability of living in the small Town of Seabrook Island make the provision of market based incentives to add affordable housing challenging. In addition, the Town of Seabrook Island supports density control that does not include the addition of high density development. Affordable housing is available, nearby on Johns Island.

Transportation Projects

The Town of Seabrook is a member of the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) and participated in the composition of the CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region.

Goal:

Coordinate with local state and federal government agencies in support of future infrastructure needs.

1. Strategy: The Town of Seabrook should facilitate a productive and ongoing level of dialogue and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, agencies, and public service authorities by increasing intergovernmental coordination to promote and sustain the quality of life enjoyed and shared by the residents of the Town.

Appendix

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

Appendix:

A. LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 1994, the South Carolina General Assembly passed the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-310 through 6-29-1200). Prior to this Act, the General Assembly had granted authority to create and maintain a comprehensive planning process through a series of legislative acts. Zoning authority was first granted to municipalities in 1924 (Title 5, Chapter 23). The General Assembly extended zoning powers to counties eighteen years later in 1942 (Title 4, Chapter 27). Subsequently, local governments relied most heavily on additional enabling legislation included in a 1967 Act of the General Assembly, codified in Title 6, Chapter 7.

In adopting the 1994 Act the General Assembly consolidated existing planning legislation, scattered throughout the Code, into one location. The *Enabling Act* also updated the older provisions with current practices and new methods, tools and procedures for local government planning (MASC 1994). The *Enabling Act* repealed all prior statues with planning enabling legislation, effective May 3, 1999. By that date, all local planning programs, zoning ordinances and other related ordinances must conform with requirements of the *Enabling Act*.

The *Enabling Act* charges the Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission with responsibility for comprehensive planning. The Planning Commission must establish and maintain a planning process that results in the systematic preparation, continuing evaluation and updating of a Comprehensive Plan (S.C. Code Section 6-29-510(A)). The original Comprehensive Plan was adopted on April 27, 1999.

Appendix
Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

B. PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

The *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act* (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-520 and 6-29-530) specifies the process for review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. Five steps compose the process:

Step One – Resolution

By Majority vote of the entire membership, the Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission must adopt a resolution recommending the Plan to the Town of Seabrook Island Council for adoption. The resolution must refer explicitly to maps and other descriptive material intended by the Planning Commission to form the recommended plan. The resolution must be recorded in the official minutes of the Planning Commission.

Step Two – Recommendation

The Planning Commission must send a copy of the recommended Comprehensive Plan to the Town of Seabrook Island Council.

Step Three – Hearing

Before adopting the recommended Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Seabrook Island Council must hold a public hearing. It must give at least 30 days notice of the hearing time and place in a general circulation newspaper in the Charleston Area.

Step Five – Ordinance

The Town of Seabrook Island Council must adopt the Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance.

Appendix
Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

C. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Following adoption of the *Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan* by the Town of Seabrook Island Council, the Town will move forward with a series of implementation actions. These actions will include revisions to ordinances, programs, and routine town operations, as appropriate, to achieve consistency with the Goals and Objectives of the Plan. The Goals included at the end of each of the Plan's nine elements provide direction as to specific actions that will be required to implement the Plan.

D. FUTURE PLAN REVISIONS

In accordance with provisions of the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act*, the Planning Commission must review the Comprehensive Plan at least every five years, and update the Plan when appropriate, or at least every ten years. Aside from the mandated revisions, the Town will review the Plan annually to develop an implementation plan for the upcoming year, prioritizing the specific actions that will be taken to future implement the Plan.