



## PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure is available and properly maintained in order to meet the needs of the Town and its residents.*

### 11.1: OVERVIEW

On May 23, 2007 the General Assembly adopted the Priority Investment Act requiring Planning Commissions to incorporate priority investment analysis in the comprehensive planning process. The Act called for Comprehensive Plans to include a new Priority Investment Element that analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends projects for expenditure of those funds during that time period for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, and roads.

The Priority Investment Element should evaluate the need for public infrastructure, estimate the cost of improvements for which the local government has fiscal responsibility, analyze the fiscal capability of the local government to finance these improvements, adopt policies to guide the funding of improvements, and schedule the funding and construction of improvements when required based on available funding and needs identified in the other comprehensive plan elements. When relevant, the recommendation of projects for public expenditure should be coordinated with the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA), the Seabrook Island Utility Commission (SIUC), the Seabrook Island Club (SIC), Camp St. Christopher, Charleston County, Town of Kiawah Island, school districts, other public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that may be affected by or have planning authority over the public project.

## 11.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Priority Investments

The purpose of this section of the Town's Comprehensive Plan Update is to focus investment on the priorities identified as critical to the sustainability of Seabrook Island. The goal is to coordinate prioritization, planning, and budgeting for these priorities over a ten-year period. The Town of Seabrook Island has identified the following areas as priorities for the community: hazard mitigation and emergency management, infrastructure, and beach management and maintenance. The long term investment requirements associated with each of these priority areas supports the development of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as described later in the element.

### Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines *hazard mitigation* as any action taken to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from natural disasters. For the Seabrook Island community, hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness are addressed in several documents prepared under several entities.

At the regional level, Charleston County prepares the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Town of Seabrook Island adopts this Plan by resolution. The Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is developed and updated as a required element of Project Impact, an ongoing initiative sponsored by the FEMA to assist local communities in the Region to become more disaster resistant through cooperative efforts of the private, public and non-profit sectors. The Plan demonstrates the community's commitment to reducing risks from hazards, and serves as a tool to help decision makers direct mitigation activities and resources. The Plan is also developed and updated to ensure Charleston County



and participating partners' continued eligibility for certain federal disaster assistance. Maintenance of the Plan also earns points for the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) Community Rating System (CRS), which provides for lower flood insurance premiums in CRS communities. The Town of Seabrook Island is ranked 16 out of the top 50 South Carolina NFIP Communities based on the total number of NFIP insurance policies-in-force.

The Town maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Plan with the stated objective of protecting human life and property, minimizing the disruption of the Town's services to its residents, and providing an effective framework to coordinate disaster response and recovery actions between Town officials and other agencies and organizations involved in the overall effort. The Town also maintains an Emergency Preparedness webpage that is continuously updated with vital information related to all aspects of mitigating and preparing for, responding to, and recovering from various disaster events. The Town, SIPOA, SIC, St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center and Bohicket Marina have each developed emergency response plans. Representatives of these organizations comprise a Disaster Recovery Council fostering coordination of emergency response actions and these organizations have entered agreements for mutual aid and cooperation.

As an oceanfront jurisdiction, the Town of Seabrook Island has an increased risk to hurricanes, flooding, and long term impacts related to climate change. Identifying and prioritizing costs associated with the implementation of proposed projects to be undertaken or continued in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Emergency Plan should be a high priority for the Town. As referenced in the Natural Resources Element, the Town should consider consolidating all of the emergency preparedness efforts under one Community Resilience Plan that is periodically updated and identifies the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation efforts necessary to

improve the community's resilience to hazards or changing conditions.

### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure refers to the physical structures or framework needed for the proper functioning of a community. It includes the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, water, sewer and storm drain improvements, refuse disposal facilities, government buildings, and telecommunications. The three primary entities that assume these responsibilities for Seabrook Island residents and visitors are Town Government, SIPOA and SIUC (in cooperation with Charleston Water System and St. Johns Island Water Company). The Town maintains infrastructure outside the gates, primarily associated with Seabrook Island Road and drainage, while SIPOA maintains most of the infrastructure behind the gates. The Town created SIUC with the primary responsibility of the commission being to oversee all drinking water distribution and wastewater treatment on Seabrook Island.

Town Infrastructure. The Town identifies and prioritizes road drainage and stormwater capital improvements in the Town Budget. Items included in the recently approved 2019 Town Budget include capital expenditures for improvements to Seabrook Island Road, Phases 1 & 2 of the Seabrook Island Road Drainage Improvement Project, and design and construction of a detached garage for Town Hall. Also included in the budget are annual expenditures related to the planning and maintenance of infrastructure, such as funding for the completion of the Seabrook Island Road Gateway Concept Plan, funding for exterior maintenance of Town Hall, and funding for the purchase, installation and servicing of trash cans on the beach. The Town would benefit from the creation of a Capital Improvement Plan, which is a short-range plan, usually four to ten years, which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule, and identifies options for financing the plan.



SIPOA Infrastructure. The SIPOA utilizes a periodically updated Replacement Reserve Study to guide its short and long term infrastructure responsibilities. The purpose of this Replacement Reserve Study is to provide SIPOA with an inventory of the common community facilities and infrastructure components that require periodic replacement, a schedule that includes the replacement year for these items (based on the items normal economic life), and an effective financial plan to fund these replacements. The common community facilities and infrastructure components include:

- Asphalt drive and parking;
- Concrete sidewalks, curb, and gutter;
- Retaining walls, lagoons, and ponds;
- Storm drain system and bridges;
- Swimming pools and community buildings;
- Docks and boardwalks; and
- Tot lot and basketball court.

The Replacement Reserve Study, prepared and updated for SIPOA by the capital reserve consulting firm of MillerDodson Associates, consists of four primary sections:

Section A – Replacement Reserve Analysis. This section describes the current funding and the Cash Flow Method (CFM) to calculate Replacement Reserve funding for the periodic replacement of the 486 Projected Replacements identified in the Replacement Reserve Inventory. Included in this section is the CFM Table of Receipts and Expenditures extending forty years from base year 2018. For each year, the table provides the starting year balance, projected replacement costs, annual deposit, and end of year balance. Cumulative expenditures and cumulative receipts are also included in the table.

Section B – Replacement Reserve Inventory. This section identifies 540 inventory items, 486 of which are Projected

Replacements and the periodic replacements of these items are scheduled for funding from Replacement Reserves. A total of 54 items are Excluded Items, and expenditures for these items are not scheduled for funding from Replacement Reserves.

The inventory items are divided into 35 major categories, with each category printed on a separate page. Examples of major categories include Boardwalks/Walkways, Asphalt/Pavement, Gatehouse, and Pump Stations. Information for each of the items under the major categories includes item description, number of units, unit replacement cost, normal economic life, remaining economic life, and replacement cost (unit replacement cost multiplied by the number of units). For example, items under the Gatehouse major category include GH Roof and GH light fixtures.

Section C – Projected Annual Replacements. In this section, the 486 Projected Replacements in the Replacement Reserve Inventory whose replacement is scheduled to be funded from Replacement Reserves are broken down on a year-by-year basis. For example, Projected Replacement Year 2021 lists all of the items requiring replacement for that year, and a 2021 Total Scheduled Replacements Cost.

Section D – Condition Assessment. The final section of the Replacement Reserve Study includes general condition comments pertaining to the larger, more significant components in the Replacement Reserve Inventory and to those items that are unique or deserving of attention because of their condition or the manner in which they have been treated in the Replacement Reserve Analysis or Inventory.

SIUC Infrastructure. In 1995, the Town of Seabrook Island purchased the island's existing private water system, and soon afterward passed an ordinance to create the SIUC. While the utility's infrastructure is described in detail in the Community Facilities Element, details regarding replacement costs and future



expansion plans were not made available in time to include in this update of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Beach Management and Maintenance**

In 2014, the Town of Seabrook Island updated their Comprehensive Beach Management Plan. This Plan update was a joint effort including the Town of Seabrook Island leadership and staff, the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association, the Seabrook Island Club and St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center. Specifics of the Comprehensive Beach Management Plan Update are described in detail in the Natural Resources Element of this document. It is important to note that Federal, State and Local public and private agencies all maintain a level of authority and responsibility for Seabrook Island Beach Management.

Management of the beaches include expensive items such as periodic beach renourishment and maintenance of the stormwater system, as well as less expensive items such as maintenance of public access points, contracting beach patrol, and the purchase and maintenance of bike racks, trash cans, signage, etc. The costs associated with the beach and adjacent facilities are shared among several entities, however the Town and SIPOA provide the bulk of funding, contracting and associated tasks. Both the Town and SIPOA include items associated with beach management and maintenance in their respective annual budgets.

While the Town includes General Fund and Reserve Fund expenditures for items such as beach signs and markers, beach patrol services, beach maintenance, and funding for the five-year update to the Comprehensive Beach Management Plan, SIPOA assumes a much larger role financially. The SIPOA Comprehensive Plan embraces the major planning assumption that local sea level will continue to rise, and identifies, budgets, and includes long-term planning that addresses the associated ramifications. For example, specific application to SIPOA long term plans include new infrastructure, replacing/upgrading existing infrastructure

(excluding roads), and raising/resurfacing roads and upgrading road drains. More importantly, the primary beach management tool to combat ongoing and severe erosion of Seabrook Island beaches is the “soft engineering strategy” of periodic relocation of Cap’n Sams Inlet. It costs millions of dollars to monitor and periodically restore the beaches, and these activities are privately budgeted and paid for through SIPOA.

### **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

The Town of Seabrook Island does not currently maintain a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), however included in this element is a strategy to establish and maintain such a plan. The objective of the CIP is to plan and coordinate the financial resources necessary to prioritize investment. Typically, the CIP covers 10-year period and allows for the following:

- Facilitates coordination between capital needs and the operating budgets;
- Enhances the community's ability to obtain a credit rating in the future and avoid sudden changes in any potential future debt service requirements;
- Identifies the most economical means of financing capital projects;
- Increases opportunities for obtaining federal and state aid;
- Relates public facilities to other public and private development and redevelopment policies and plans;
- Focuses attention on community objectives and fiscal capacity;
- Keeps the public informed about future needs and projects;
- Allows local government to reduce duplication; and
- Encourages careful project planning and design to avoid costly mistakes and help a community reach desired goals.

The CIP is implemented by Town Council during the annual budget process and involves the evaluation of projected fund balances as compared to the 10-year funding requirements for each priority.



After adoption of the 10-year CIP, the Town will review the progress of the plan annually, make adjustments or modifications, and incorporate recommendations from the Planning Commission as deemed appropriate.

The Town should also seek to invest funds and match their maturities so that they coincide with the planned time frame for the construction or renovation of priority investments as outlined in the CIP. As such, the CIP will be a dynamic document that will chart the planning and funding for major capital projects or priorities within the community. Town Council should receive regular financial reporting for the CIP and discuss these findings in open session during Ways & Means Committee meetings.

#### **Coordination**

One of the challenges to the implementation strategies included in this Comprehensive Plan Update is the required coordination and planning across jurisdictions and public/private partnerships. The coordination often involves federal, state and county resources and private entities including the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association, Seabrook Island Club, Seabrook Island Utility Commission, and the Berkeley Electric Cooperative. The coordination involves aligning development plans of the various entities with those of the Town and identifying financial resources to ensure that common priorities are funded in a time frame to prevent detriment to the community.

Coordination also involves evaluation to prevent duplication of effort and the most effective use of resources. Further coordination should be allowed for public-private partnerships to accomplish similar goals to the extent that this is feasible. Lastly, the coordination among these entities would seek to leverage financial support to maximize the benefit to the Seabrook Island community.

### **11.3: PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT GOAL**

#### *Element Goal*

*Ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure is available and properly maintained in order to meet the needs of the Town and its residents.*

#### **Priority Investment Element Needs**

- Identify the actions and associated costs to mitigate the Town's exposure to all types of hazards.
- Introduce a fiscal management tool to coordinate the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period.
- Improved financial and long term planning coordination between the public and private entities critical to the sustainability of Seabrook Island.

### **11.4: PRIORITY INVESTMENT ELEMENT STRATEGIES AND TIMEFRAMES**

The Town should undertake the following strategic actions in support of the Vision and Goals of this Plan. These implementation strategies will be reviewed a minimum of every five years and updated every ten years from the date of adoption of this Plan.

1. Continually identify the Town's exposure to all types of hazards, using the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan as a baseline, and consider appropriate mitigation steps and associated resources or funding needed.



*Chapter 11 - Priority Investment Element*

2. Establish and maintain a Town of Seabrook Island Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Focus the Town's investment on the priorities identified as critical to the sustainability of the Island, including any potential issues related to sea level rise.