



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor Ciancio & Members of Town Council  
**FROM:** Joseph M. Cronin, Town Administrator  
**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan (10-Year Update)  
**MEETING DATE:** July 23, 2019

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Council is asked to review and approve an ordinance amending Sec. 20-70 of the Town Code for the Town of Seabrook Island. The purpose of this ordinance is to adopt a 10-year update to the town's Comprehensive Plan.

Over the last 8 months, the Planning Commission – with the assistance of staff from the Charleston County Planning Department – has prepared draft updates for all 9 elements contained within the Comprehensive Plan, including:

- Population
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Priority Investment

The Planning Commission gave preliminary endorsement to the draft Comprehensive Plan during a special called meeting on March 20, 2019.

The draft plan was then distributed for public view and comment on the town's website. A public drop-in meeting was also held at Town Hall on April 15, 2019, with public comment duly noted. Copies of all public comments received through the website and during the drop-in meeting were forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and consideration prior to making its official recommendation.

Pursuant to Sec. 6-29-520(B) of the SC Code of Laws:

**Recommendation of the plan or any element, amendment, extension, or addition must be by resolution of the Planning Commission, carried by the affirmative votes of at least a majority of the entire membership.** The resolution must refer expressly to maps and other descriptive matter intended by the Planning Commission to form the whole or element of the

recommended plan and the action taken must be recorded in its official minutes of the Planning Commission. A copy of the recommended plan or element of it must be transmitted to the appropriate governing authorities and to all other legislative and administrative agencies affected by the plan.

A copy of the draft plan (as recommended by the Planning Commission), as well as the enacting ordinance, are attached for Council's review.

### **Staff Recommendation**

By law, the town must adopt a 10-year update to its Comprehensive Plan no later than July of 2019. Staff recommends in favor of **APPROVAL** of the ordinance adopting the 2019 version of Comprehensive Plan. Council may, at its discretion, amend the draft plan to incorporate any public comments, or any other recommendations or modifications as Council may deem appropriate.

### **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission considered the draft Comprehensive Plan during its regular meeting on May 1, 2019. By a vote of 5-0, the Planning Commission formally recommended in favor of **APPROVAL** of the draft ordinance adopting the "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan," inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-520(B).

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph M. Cronin  
Town Administrator

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

**PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-01**

**A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING IN FAVOR OF ADOPTION OF THE TEN-YEAR UPDATE TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council for the Town of Seabrook Island adopted the town's current Comprehensive Plan on July 28, 2009 (Ordinance No. 2009-04); and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council for the Town of Seabrook Island subsequently amended the town's current Comprehensive Plan on March 24, 2015 (Ordinance No. 2015-01); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-510(A), the Planning Commission for the Town of Seabrook Island is charged with developing and maintaining a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continual re-evaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction; and

**WHEREAS**, S.C. Code § 6-29-510(E) requires that all planning elements within the Comprehensive Plan must be an expression of the Planning Commission's recommendations to the appropriate governing body with regard to the wise and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development, and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and consideration of the fiscal impact on property owners; and

**WHEREAS**, S.C. Code § 6-29-510(E) further requires that the Comprehensive Plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years; and

**WHEREAS**, following a thorough review process, and in consultation with staff from the Charleston County Planning Department, the Planning Commission has prepared a draft update to the town's Comprehensive Plan, inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-520(B); and

**WHEREAS**, in preparing and recommending the draft Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission incorporated multiple opportunities for public review and comment, including a community survey, stakeholder group meetings, public distribution of the draft Comprehensive Plan and a public drop-in meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has determined that the recommendations contained within the draft Comprehensive Plan will allow for the wise and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development, and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and will minimize the fiscal impact on current and future property owners;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND:**

**SECTION I. Recommendation.** The Planning Commission for the Town of Seabrook Island hereby recommends in favor of adoption of the draft Comprehensive Plan, which document is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference as if set forth fully herein, and which shall be inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-520(B).

**SECTION II. Effective Date.** This resolution shall be effective from and after the date of adoption.

**SIGNED AND SEALED** this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2019, having been duly adopted by the Planning Commission for the Town of Seabrook Island on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2019.

**SIGNED:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Driscoll  
Chair

**WITNESS:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph M. Cronin  
Secretary

**TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2019-06**

**ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TOWN CODE FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA; CHAPTER 20, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT; ARTICLE IV, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; SECTION 20-70, ADOPTED; SO AS TO ADOPT A TEN-YEAR UPDATE TO THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council for the Town of Seabrook Island adopted the "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan" on July 28, 2009 (Ordinance No. 2009-04); and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council for the Town of Seabrook Island subsequently updated and amended the "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan" on March 24, 2015 (Ordinance No. 2015-01); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-510(A), the Planning Commission for the Town of Seabrook Island is charged with developing and maintaining a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continual re-evaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction; and

**WHEREAS**, S.C. Code § 6-29-510(E) requires that all planning elements within the comprehensive plan must be an expression of the Planning Commission's recommendations to the appropriate governing body with regard to the wise and efficient use of public funds, the future growth, development, and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and consideration of the fiscal impact on property owners; and

**WHEREAS**, S.C. Code § 6-29-510(E) further requires that the comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years; and

**WHEREAS**, following a thorough review process in consultation with – and with assistance from – staff from the Charleston County Planning Department, the Planning Commission has prepared a draft update to the "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan," inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-520(B); and

**WHEREAS**, in preparing and recommending the draft "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan," the Planning Commission incorporated multiple opportunities for public review and comment, including a community survey, stakeholder group meetings, public distribution of the draft comprehensive plan and a public drop-in meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has determined that the recommendations contained within the draft "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan" will allow for the wise and efficient

use of public funds, the future growth, development, and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction, and will minimize the fiscal impact on current and future property owners; and

**WHEREAS**, by resolution dated May 1, 2019, the Planning Commission for the Town of Seabrook Island formally recommended in favor of adoption of the draft “Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan,” inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, pursuant to S.C. Code § 6-29-520(B); and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council for the Town of Seabrook Island advertised and held a public hearing on the draft “Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan” during a duly called meeting on July 23, 2019;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, pursuant to the authority granted by the Constitution and the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND:**

**SECTION 1. Amending Section 20-70 of the Town Code.** The Town Code for the Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina; Chapter 20, Planning and Development; Article IV, Comprehensive Plan; Section 20-70, Adopted; is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 20-70. – Adopted.**

The "Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan," ~~adopted by the town council on April 27, 1999, revised March 24, 2015, and any amendments thereto,~~ adopted by the Town Council on July 23, 2019, and inclusive of all maps, graphs, charts, attachments, and other descriptive materials, is hereby adopted and incorporated by reference as if fully set forth in this article, and shall constitute the town's comprehensive plan as required under S.C. Code 1976, § 6-29-510.

**Section 2. Public Record.** A copy of the “Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan,” as adopted by Town Council pursuant to Section 1 of this Ordinance, is attached hereto as “Exhibit A.” Official copies of the “Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan” shall be maintained on file in the office of the Town Clerk and Zoning Administrator, and shall be made available for public inspection upon request. The Town Administrator is hereby directed to post the “Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan” on the town’s website, and to otherwise disseminate the plan for public information as he deems appropriate.

**SECTION 3. Severability.** If any section, subsection, paragraph, clause, or provision of this ordinance shall be deemed to be unconstitutional, unenforceable, or otherwise invalid by the final decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent of Town Council to pass said ordinance without such unconstitutional provision, and the validity of all remaining sections, subsections, paragraphs, clauses, or provisions of said ordinance shall not be affected thereby. If said ordinance, or any provision thereof, is held by the final decision of a court of competent jurisdiction to be inapplicable to any person, group of persons, property, kind of property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the applicability thereof to any other persons, property or circumstances.

**SECTION 4. Conflicting Ordinances Repealed.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 5. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be effective from and after the date of adoption.

**SIGNED AND SEALED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019, having been duly adopted by the Town Council for the Town of Seabrook Island on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

First Reading: June 25, 2019  
Public Hearing: July 23, 2019  
Second Reading: July 23, 2019

TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald J. Ciancio, Mayor

ATTEST

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faye Allbritton, Town Clerk

**EXHIBIT A**

Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan  
(2019)



# **TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND 2019 Comprehensive Plan**

**ADOPTED BY SEABROOK ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2019**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **TOWN COUNCIL**

Ron Ciancio, Mayor  
John Gregg, Mayor Pro Tem  
Skip Crane  
Jeri Finke  
John Wells

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Robert Driscoll, Chairman  
Ken Otstot, Vice Chairman  
Wayne Billian  
Cathy Patterson  
Stan Ullner  
Lori Leary

### **TOWN STAFF**

Joe Cronin, Town Administrator  
Faye Allbritton, Town Clerk/Treasurer  
Lynda Stearns  
Heather Springs  
Tom Strehle



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Foreword	1-1
2.	Profile of Town Government	2-1
3.	Population Element	3-1
4.	Economic Development Element	4-1
5.	Natural Resources Element	5-1
6.	Cultural Resources Element	6-1
7.	Community Facilities Element	7-1
8.	Housing Element	8-1
9.	Land Use Element	9-1
10.	Transportation Element	10-1
11.	Priority Investment Element	11-1

# INTRODUCTION

The *Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan* was initially adopted by the Town Council on April 27, 1999. Among other things, SC State Law § 6-29-510 requires that Planning Commissions review the Comprehensive Plan or elements no less than once every five years to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The *Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan* was last updated in 2009. This 2019 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates the results of the Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission’s complete review of the comprehensive plan and satisfies SC State Law § 6-29-510 requirements.



The Planning Commission completed this 2019 update with input from the public and support and guidance from the professional staff of the Town of Seabrook Island and the Charleston County Planning Department. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to accomplish the Town’s vision – *“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”* - by articulating goals to guide future Town Council actions regarding the pattern and intensity of land use, the provision of public facilities and services, economic development, housing availability, and natural and cultural resources. In this plan, it is important to keep in mind that the Town of Seabrook Island is unique: most of the Town is a private, gated community. Although zoning and development are governed by Town ordinances, the infrastructure inside the gate is owned and maintained by the Seabrook Island Property Owners Associations (SIPOA) and other private organizations.





## PROFILE OF GOVERNMENT

The Town of Seabrook Island, South Carolina, (the “Town”) was incorporated by the State of South Carolina on May 26, 1987. The Town of Seabrook Island operates as a Mayor-Council (“Strong Mayor”) form of government. The Town Council is composed of a mayor and four Council members, and are elected at-large, with non-partisan elections taking place in November of odd numbered years. All terms are for a period of two-years and there is no limit to the number of terms a member may serve. The mayor and Town Council members serve without compensation. The mayor and four Council members comprise the legislative branch of the Town, and it is their duty to set overall policy in matters concerning the operation of the Town’s affairs.

The mayor is the chief administrative officer of the town. He has all the powers prescribed by state law, including the power to:

- Appoint, suspend or remove all municipal employees and administrative officers of the town;
- Direct and supervise the administration of all departments, offices and agencies of the town;
- Preside at all Town Council meetings and vote as a member of the council;
- Act to insure that all laws and ordinances of the town are faithfully executed;
- Prepare and submit an annual budget and capital program to Town Council for review and approval;
- Submit to Town Council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the municipality as of the end of each fiscal year;
- Make such reports as Town Council may require concerning the operations and functions which are subject to the Mayor’s direction and supervision; and



- Appoint, with Town Council’s approval, a Town Administrator to assist the mayor in fulfilling his duties.

The Town is unique among other South Carolina municipalities in that two private, non-profit organizations, SIPOA and Seabrook Island Club (SIC), provide many services that are typically performed by governments. Examples include most road and drainage maintenance, security, and recreation. However, the Town provides several services to its citizens including, but not limited to:

- Public Safety: Town-wide law enforcement through contract with Charleston County Sheriff’s office and code enforcement;



- Street, Landscaping and Drainage Maintenance: Seabrook Island Road from the roundabout at Betsy Kerrison Parkway to the front entry gate;
- Planning and Zoning Administration, Building Permitting and Code Inspections: Through the Town Administrator and agreement with Charleston County;
- Beach Maintenance and Safety: Beach patrol; beach monitoring and enforcement of leash laws; and
- Communications and Emergency Preparedness: The Town maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Plan, and an Emergency Preparedness Webpage on the Town’s website.

The annual budget serves as the foundation for the Town’s financial planning and control. Each year the Town Administrator prepares a draft budget for the mayor to review and present to council. By law, the Town is required to have a balanced budget. The draft budget is accompanied by detail of each revenue and expense item. The Town budgeted revenue sources are identified as both unrestricted and restricted. The latter consist of revenues received from the state accommodations tax, county accommodation tax and state alcohol tax, and may only be spent as mandated by applicable statute or rule. While municipalities are legally empowered to collect taxes on real and personal property, the Town does not currently levy a property tax millage. Additional information regarding the Town’s annual budget is included in the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Boards, Committees and Commissions**

The Town relies heavily on boards, committees and commissions to conduct functions normally performed by departments of a Town government. The Town has boards, committees and commissions as required by statute and also special committees to review and recommend policies, activities, and ordinances. Current and previous agendas and minutes are available on the Town website

([www.townofseabrookisland.org](http://www.townofseabrookisland.org)) These committees include the following:

**ATAX Advisory Committee**

The Seabrook Island Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Advisory Committee is a local advisory committee which was established by Town Council pursuant to Section 6-4-25 of the S.C. Code of Laws. The ATAX Advisory Committee consists of seven members, a majority of whom are selected from the hospitality industry. At least two of the members must be from the lodging industry and at least one member shall represent local cultural organizations. Committee members are appointed by Town Council and serve for a term of two years. The ATAX Advisory Committee meets at least one time per year for the purpose of reviewing and providing recommendations to Town Council on the expenditure of funds generated by the 2% State ATAX. By law, State ATAX funds must be used exclusively for the promotion of tourism, arts and cultural activities within the community.

In FY 2019, the town appropriated State ATAX funds for the following tourism-related events and activities:

- Seabrook Island Beach Patrol (\$40,000)
- Fourth of July Celebration (\$20,000)
- Kick It at Bohicket (\$17,000)
- Billfish Tournament & Dolphin Slam (\$10,000)
- Alan Fleming Tennis Tournament (\$10,000)
- Charleston Regional Visitors Guide Ad (\$10,000)
- Dolphin Education Program (\$10,000)
- SC Women's Golf Association Open (\$5,000)

**Board of Zoning Appeals**

The Seabrook Island Board of Zoning Appeals is a quasi-judicial board which was established by Town Council pursuant



to the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code of Laws Section 6-29-780 et seq). The Board consists of five members, each of whom must be residents of the town. Board members are appointed by Town Council for a five-year term. The Board has three specific powers, duties, and responsibilities:

- To hear and decide appeals for variances from the requirements of the zoning ordinance when strict application of the provisions of the ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship. State law outlines four criteria which must be met in order to qualify for a variance, and it is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate how the request satisfies each of the four criteria;
- To permit uses by special exception when designated within the zoning ordinance; and
- To hear and decide appeals where it is alleged there is an error in an order, requirement, decision or determination made by an administrative official in the enforcement of the zoning ordinance.

### **Planning Commission**

The Seabrook Island Planning Commission was established by Town Council pursuant to the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code of Laws Section 6-29-780 et seq). The Commission consists of five members, each of whom are appointed by Town Council for a term of two years. Each member must be a registered voter of the town and shall either reside or own property within the town limits. No member may hold any other public office in the town or county.

The Commission is responsible for undertaking a continuing planning program for the physical, social and economic growth, development and redevelopment of land within the town. To fulfill this role, one of the primary functions of the Planning Commission is to prepare, review and periodically update the town's official comprehensive plan. In order to implement the recommendations of the plan, the Commission is also charged with preparing and recommending to Town Council specific instruments and measures, including:

- Zoning ordinances, zoning district maps and appropriate revisions thereto;
- Regulations for the subdivision and development of land;
- An official map and appropriate revisions showing the exact location of existing or proposed public streets, highways, utility rights of way and public building sites, with regulations and procedures for administering the official map ordinance;
- A landscaping ordinance providing required planting, tree preservation and other aesthetic considerations;
- A capital improvements program listing projects required to implement the adopted plans; and
- Policies and procedures to implement adopted elements of the comprehensive plan. These policies and procedures may cover such topics as expanding corporate limits, extending public water and sewer systems, dedicating streets and drainage easements, and offering economic development incentive packages.

The Commission is responsible for overseeing the administration of subdivision and land development regulations upon adoption by Town Council, including, but not



limited to, the review and approval of subdivision plats and commercial developments. The Commission may also be tasked by Town Council with reviewing and providing recommendations on any other municipal matter.

**Public Safety Committee**

The Seabrook Island Public Safety Committee is a standing committee of the Town which was established by ordinance of Town Council. The Public Safety Committee is chaired by the member of Town Council who has been designated as the town's Public Safety Official. Additional at-large members may be recommended by the chair and appointed by the full Council. Committee members serve for a two-year term which runs concurrent with the mayor's term.

The Public Safety Committee is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Reviewing and recommending updates to the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan;
- Identifying resources to ensure the safety and well-being of the public;
- Coordinating with outside entities and community organizations on emergency management and disaster response planning;
- Coordinating with emergency service providers (Police, Fire and EMS) to plan for and respond to potentially unsafe or life-threatening situations;
- Reviewing and providing recommendations for on-call service contracts including, but not limited to, debris management and debris monitoring services; and
- Undertaking public relations activities to increase the public's awareness of potential hazards including, but

not limited to, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and earthquakes.

The Public Safety Committee meets on an as-needed basis, as determined by the chair.

**Utility Commission**

Following a successful referendum in 1995, the town acquired the island's water and sewer system from Heater of Seabrook, Inc., a private utility owned by Minnesota Power and Water. The Seabrook Island Utility Commission (SIUC) was established by ordinance of Town Council for the purpose of managing operations and maintenance of the town's water and sewer system. The SIUC provides water and wastewater service to all residents and businesses within the town. The SIUC also provides wastewater treatment to certain areas outside the town limits, including the nearby developments of Cassique, Freshfields Village and Kiawah River Estates. Members of the SIUC are elected by the residents of the town. Each member is elected to a six-year term, and elections take place in November of odd-numbered years. In the event of a vacancy, the mayor and Town Council may appoint a new member to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

The SIUC has been vested by Town Council with the following powers and duties:

- To have full control and management over the town's water and sewer system;
- To supply and furnish water and sewer services, and require payment of such rates, tolls, and charges as it may establish from time to time for the use of such services;
- To have complete authority to service all customers formerly served by Heater of Seabrook, Inc. and to



## Chapter 2 – Profile of Town

assume all contractual obligations of Heater of Seabrook, Inc.;

- To make a full and complete statement in a standard accounting format to the Town Council each month of all receipts and disbursements during the previous month;
- To submit an annual financial report to the Town Council in a standard accounting format;
- To take all actions it deems necessary to establish and operate the town's water and sewer system, unless provided to the contrary by town ordinance or state statute; and
- To expend the funds it receives from the operation of the town's water and sewer system.

However, the SIUC does not have the authority to:

- Incur any indebtedness as evidenced by monetary loans without prior approval of Town Council; or
- Provide service to new customers outside the town limits (or outside of those areas with prior contractual obligations at the time the system was acquired) without prior approval from Town Council and the holding of a public referendum.

### **Ways & Means Committee**

The Ways and Means Committee is a standing committee of the town which was established by ordinance of Town Council. The Ways and Means Committee is a "committee of the whole" and is made up of the mayor and all four members of Town Council. Committee meetings function as a type of "workshop" or "work session" prior to the monthly Town Council meeting. The purpose of the committee is to relax the usual limits on debate, allowing a more open and thorough discussion of matters pending before Town Council. Any item requiring a

final vote will be taken up during a subsequent Town Council meeting.

The Ways and Means Committee holds its regular meeting on the third Tuesday of each month (one week prior to the regularly scheduled Town Council meeting), except in instances when this date, or the date of the Town Council meeting, conflicts with the observance of a town holiday, in which case the meeting may be held on an alternate date.



## POPULATION ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Accommodate the Seabrook Island community in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner, with particular attention to preserving the island's natural beauty while continuing to provide its residents and visitors a healthy and active lifestyle.*

### 3.1: OVERVIEW

The Population Element provides a basic picture of the population characteristics of the Town. This element examines historic trends and projections of the population, household numbers and sizes, educational levels, income characteristics, gender, and racial composition. The majority of the data contained in the Population Element has been extracted from the U.S. Bureau of Census 2000 and 2010, and the American Community Survey 2012-2016 Five-Year Estimates. For 2018 and 2023 projections, an additional data source used is the Town of Seabrook Island community profile. This report was generated in July 2018, using the ESRI's ArcGIS Business Analyst tool, a mapping and spatial analytics software package that utilizes the same U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey base referenced above.

The Town's population characteristics differ from many other communities in that the majority of the property owners in the Town do not live there full-time, and a large portion of the housing is likely used as vacation homes or vacation rentals. With such a large number of available homes to accommodate guests, the Town experiences a large, seasonal tourist influx. Therefore, the Town's population should be recognized as consisting of three distinct groups: residents (including property owners and renters), non-resident property owners, and visitors/tourists. It should be noted that the census data contained in this section only applies to the

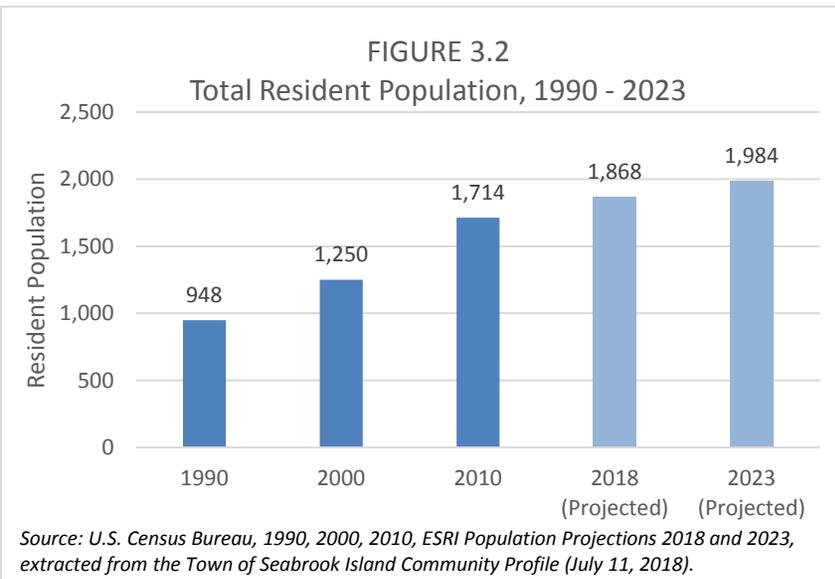
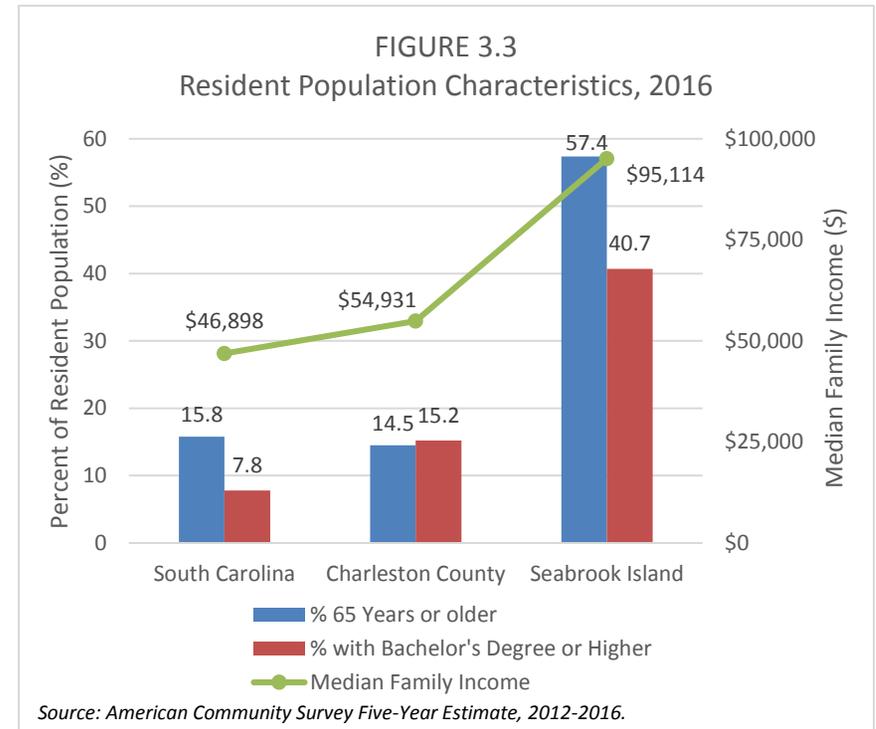
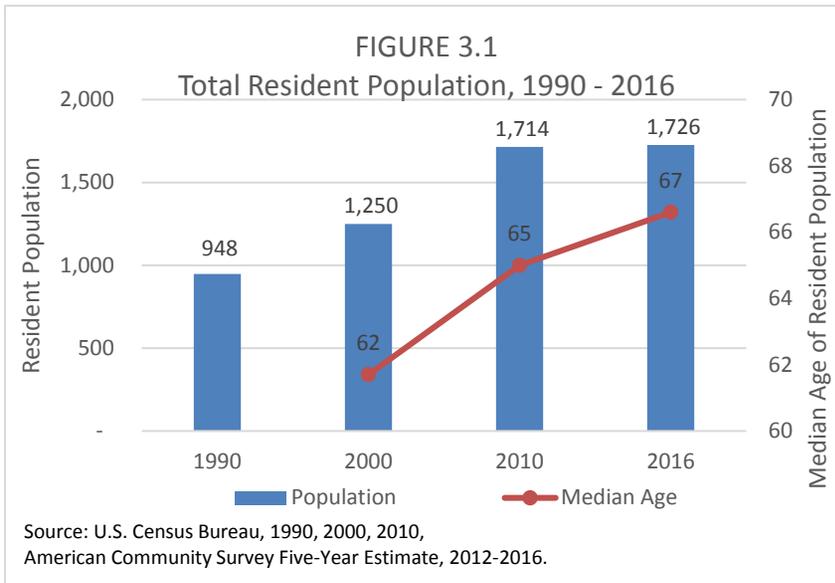
resident population, which is defined by the Census Bureau as "those persons usually resident in that particular area (where they live and sleep most of the time)."

### 3.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Overall Population Analysis

The resident population of the Town, based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate 2012-2016, was at 1,726 in 2016. This is an increase of 476 residents, or 38 percent, from the 2000 census resident population total. However, while the resident population of Charleston County as a whole has continued to grow dramatically since 2010, the Town's residential population growth has essentially leveled off. For Charleston County, the population grew from 351,023 residents in 2010 to 396,570 residents in 2016, an increase of 12.9 percent. Over the same timeframe, the Town's population grew from 1,714 residents to 1,726 residents, an increase of only 0.7 percent. Figure 3.1 shows the Town's resident population growth from 1990 to 2016, and includes the increase in median age (discussed in further detail later in this chapter).

This trend of slow, steady population growth is projected to continue according to the Town of Seabrook Island Community Profile. The projections for the years 2018 and 2023, as shown in Figure 3.2, are derived from current events and past trends. While the general rule of thumb is that the smaller an area, the more difficult it is to provide accurate population projections, there are two important characteristics related to the Town's resident population that support a slow future growth projection. First, according to Town records there are only about 380 remaining vacant residential lots available, some of which are unlikely to ever be developed. Second, the Town is averaging only about 21 new construction building



permits per year (BCDCOG Construction Quarterly). Using the 2010 U.S. Census as an indicator, only about 42 percent of these new homes on Seabrook Island will be owner or renter occupied.

Thus, the Town exhibits resident population characteristics more indicative of communities such as Kiawah Island, than of the countywide or statewide population. Further evidence of this is demonstrated in a comparison of the Town, Charleston County, and the State of South Carolina with respect to three distinct demographic variables: percentage of residents over the age of 65, percentage of residents with at least a bachelor's degree, and the resident population median family income (Figure 3.3).



### Population Trends by Age Groups

While an examination of overall population is insightful in determining “big picture” community needs such as a utility expansion or road widening, a look at the trends of specific age groups can help identify more concise needs such as the specific types of parks or community facilities that would best serve a future population. For the Town of Seabrook Island, two important age groups to analyze are “population under 25” and “population 55 and older”.

In comparing Charleston County as a whole to Seabrook Island, the percentage of the overall population that these two age groups represent contrasts markedly. In 2010, the “under 25” age group made up 33 percent of Charleston County’s overall population, but only 6.3 percent of Seabrook Island’s, while the “55 and over” age group made up 24.9 percent of Charleston County’s overall population, yet represented 77.3 percent of the overall Seabrook Island population (Figure 3.4).

From 2000 to 2010, the Town’s “under 25” age group population grew from 76 to 109, an increase of over 43 percent. However, projections for 2018 and 2023 show that this growth is not expected to continue (Figure 3.5), and in fact this age group is expected to experience a slight decrease. Such small resident populations for these age groups provide little incentive for the establishment of a pre-school or traditional K-12 school on Seabrook Island. However, non-resident and visitor/tourist populations likely greatly increase these age group populations, especially over the summer months, and this should be taken into consideration with regard to future amenities or community facility improvements. For example, should existing bicycle and pedestrian pathways, or access to recreational activities such as swimming and horseback riding, be revised to better accommodate young children and teenagers?

The recent and projected population change for the “55 and over” age group is more significant than that of the “under 25” age group. From 2000 to 2010, the Town’s “55 and over” age group grew from

**FIGURE 3.4  
AGE GROUP COMPARISON, 2010**

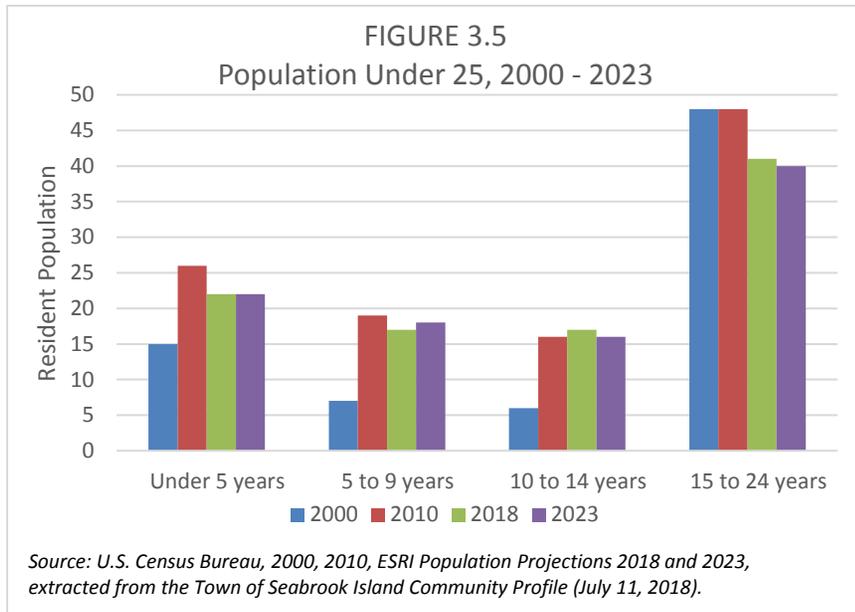
Age Group	Charleston County		Seabrook Island	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5 years	22,886	6.5	26	1.5
5 to 9 years	20,077	5.7	19	1.1
10 to 14 years	18,419	5.3	16	0.9
15 to 19 years	22,528	6.4	17	1.0
20 to 24 years	31,910	9.1	31	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>115,820</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>6.3</b>
55 to 59 years	22,572	6.4	171	10.0
60 to 64 years	20,487	5.8	294	17.2
65 to 69 years	14,850	4.2	359	20.9
70 to 74 years	10,160	2.9	208	12.1
75 to 79 years	7,858	2.2	163	9.5
80 to 84 years	6,011	1.7	81	4.7
85 years and over	5,842	1.7	49	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,780</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>77.3</b>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010*

864 to 1,325, an increase of over 53 percent. More importantly, this age group is projected to continue to grow to 1,691 seniors by the year 2023 (Figure 3.6). Based on these projections, the Town’s median age of 62 in the year 2000, and 65 in the year 2010 (Figure 3.1), will increase to 66.8 in 2018, and 68.7 in 2023.

In addition to the Town’s increase in median age over time, also known as an “aging population”, Americans in general are living longer. According to the Center for Disease Control’s National Center for Health Statistics, in 2018 the average life expectancy for Americans is 78.7 years. Questions regarding the impact of an ageing population are wide-ranging and include:

- Have citizens properly planned for retirement?
- Should housing be closer to service nodes and health care facilities?

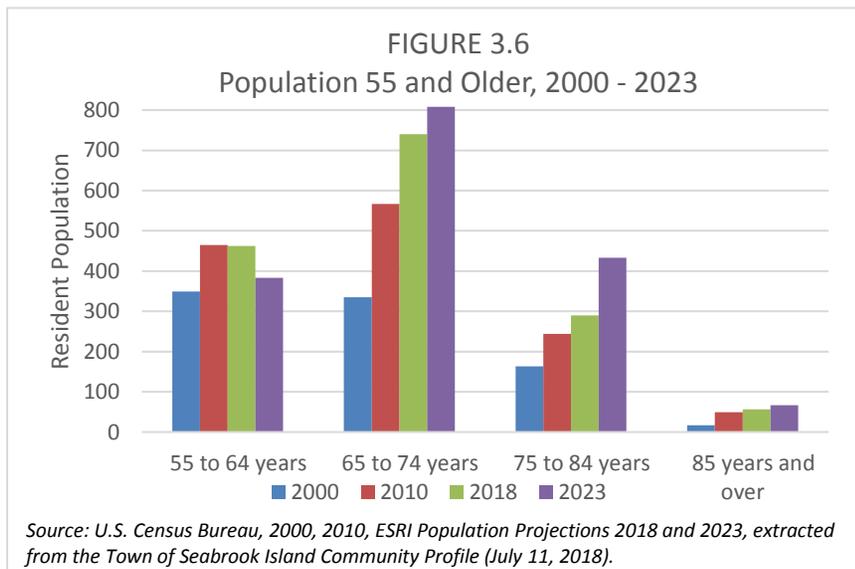


- Should building codes be updated to reflect an ageing population (for example, codes addressing handrails, ramps and street-level entrances)?
- Will there be a change in demand for goods and services?
- What are the associated changing costs to infrastructure as technology and commuter patterns adjust?
- Will there be an increase in sole person households, and what are the ramifications?

The Town should identify the potential community needs of its ageing population, and formulate strategies that can be implemented locally to address them. While some of the strategies could be directly addressed through local government action, others may require a broader community effort.

**Commuter-Adjusted Population**

A final component of population not yet discussed is the commuter-adjusted population. The concept of the commuter-adjusted population, also known as the “daytime population”, refers to the number of people who are present in an area during typical business hours. This is in contrast to the “resident population”, which refers to people who reside in a given area and are typically present during the evening and nighttime hours. The daytime population is calculated based on commuting data (“Journey to Work”) collected by the Census Bureau, and therefore only reflects the daily influx and outflow of workers. According to the Town’s community profile, the 2018 daytime population is 2,072 people of which 1,250 are residents who do not commute off the island during typical business hours, and the remaining 822 people make up the net influx of workers who commute onto the island during typical business hours. These 822 daily workers are in addition to the Town population represented by residents, non-resident property owners and visitors/tourists.



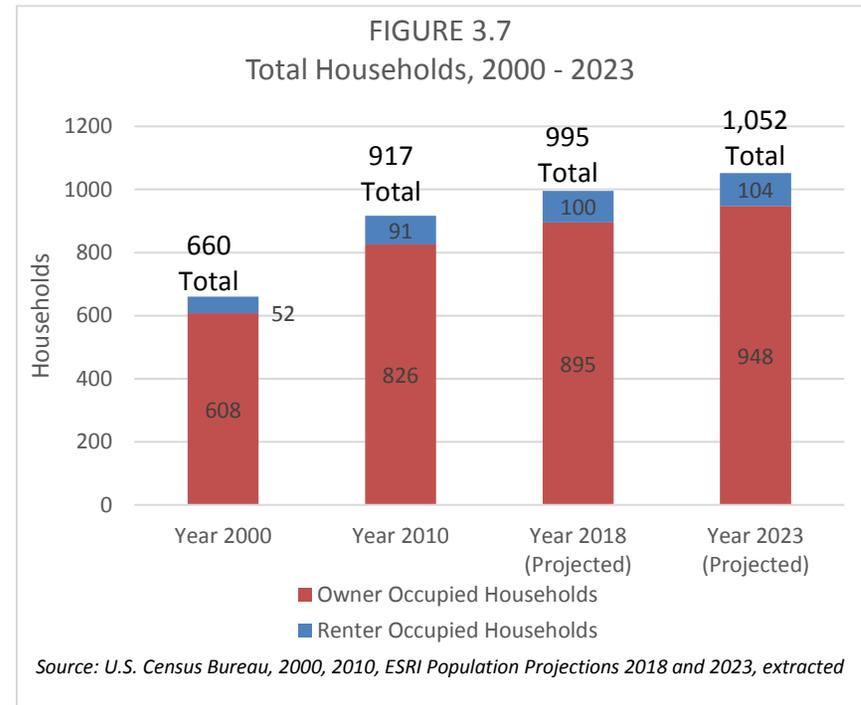


### Households

The Census Bureau defines a *housing unit* as “a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied (or if vacant, intended for occupancy) as separate living quarters”. *Households* are a subset of housing units and represent all occupied housing units. An analysis of Households, household sizes and family households are included in this Population Element, while an examination of housing units including location, type, age, condition, occupancy and affordability are included in the Housing Element (Chapter 8).

While the percentage of total Housing Units that are households increased only slightly from 40 percent in 2000 to 41.6 percent in 2010, the total number of households increased from 660 to 917, or nearly 39 percent. This increase in the number of Households is projected to continue, however at a much slower rate, through 2023: where 257 additional Households were added over the ten-year period from 2000 to 2010, only 135 additional Households are projected to be added for the thirteen-year period from 2010 to 2023 (Figure 3.7). The percentage of Households that are owner-occupied as opposed to renter-occupied remains consistent at about 90 percent in 2000 and 2010, as well as in the 2018 and 2023 projections. It is important to note that the renter-occupied Households being referenced here represent the long-term renter apportionment of the resident population reported by the Census Bureau, and should not be confused with the short-term renters that make up the visitor/tourist population and are not reported by the Census Bureau.

Not all Households contain families. As defined by the Census Bureau, family Households “consist of two or more individuals who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, although they also may include other unrelated people”. Of the 660 Households in the Town in 2000, 466, or 71 percent, were family households. Likewise, of the 917 households in the Town in 2010, 647, or 71 percent were family households. As might be expected in a community where



only 6.3 percent of the 2010 population was under the age of 25, average household size and average family size were relatively small at 1.87 persons and 2.17 persons, respectively. Projections for 2023 show little change in the Town’s Household size and family size; however, these numbers are somewhat lower than the South Carolina average of 2.53 persons per household and 3.02 persons per family. Percent change in the Town’s household data from 2000 to 2010 is shown in Figure 3.8.

### Educational Attainment

The resident population of the Town is more educated than both Charleston County and the State of South Carolina as a whole. Of the 25 years and older population, over 98 percent of Town residents have a high school diploma. This is 12 percentage points higher than the same age group in the overall state population. The



FIGURE 3.8 HOUSEHOLDS BY RELATIONSHIP AND TYPE, 2000-2010			
	2000	2010	% Chg
<b>Households by Relationship</b>			
Total population	1,250	1,714	37%
In households	1,225	1,714	40%
Householder	660	917	39%
Spouse	450	627	39%
Child	63	105	67%
Other relatives	17	26	53%
Nonrelatives	35	39	11%
In group quarters (noninstitutionalized)	25	0	
<b>Households by Type</b>			
Total households	660	917	39%
Family households (families)	466	647	39%
Married-couple family	450	627	39%
Male householder, no wife present	1	5	400%
Female householder, no husband present	15	15	0%
Nonfamily households	194	270	39%
Householder living alone	164	240	46%
Householder 65 years and over	78	146	87%
<b>Households by Age Group and Size</b>			
Households with individuals under 18 years	26	43	65%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	333	563	69%
Average household size	1.86	1.87	1%
Average family size	2.14	2.17	1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010

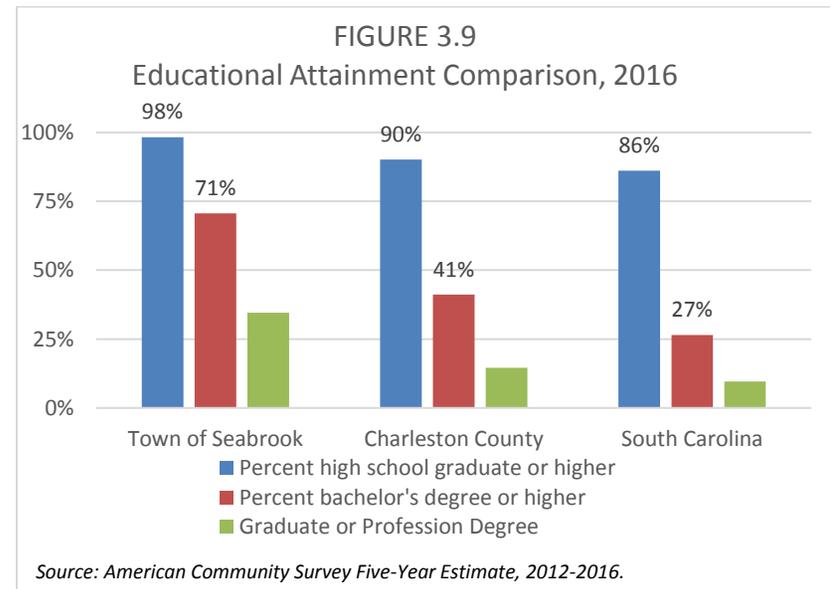
disparity in educational attainment becomes more pronounced regarding postsecondary education. While 71 percent of the Town’s 25 and older population has a bachelor’s degree, and 35 percent have a graduate or professional degree, statewide in this age group, only 27 percent have a bachelor’s degree and 10 percent have a graduate or professional degree (Figure 3.9).

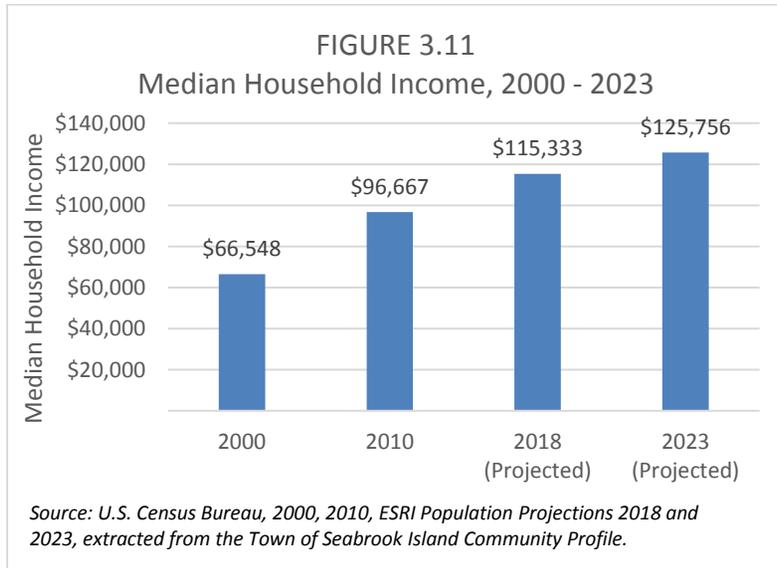
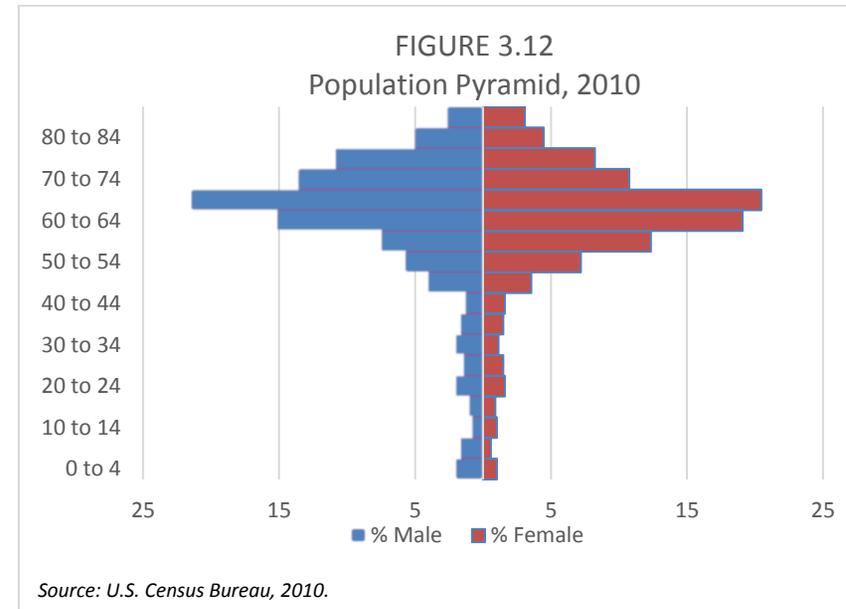
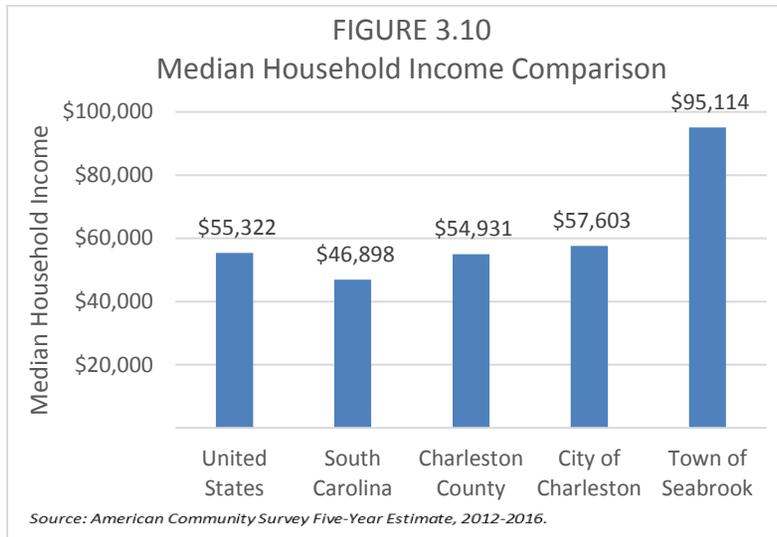
**Gross Income**

The median reported annual gross income for the Town in 2016 was \$95,114, more than double the South Carolina median gross

income of \$46,898 (Figure 3.10). The Town’s median Household gross income has grown over 45 percent from \$66,548 in 2000 to \$96,667 in 2010. From 2010 to 2023, the Town’s median Household income is projected to grow an additional 30 percent, to \$125,756 (Figure 3.11).

As would be expected, a larger percentage of the Town’s population collects social security and a retirement income than does the State of South Carolina as a whole. According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, more than 61 percent of Town residents have received social security income in the last twelve months, as compared to about 34 percent for the entire state. Similarly, over 39 percent of the Town’s population has collected retirement income over the last twelve months, nearly double the 20 percent of South Carolinians overall who receive retirement income.





**Gender and Race**

The 2010 population pyramid in Figure 3.12 shows at a glance how evenly split the Town’s population is with respect to age and gender. Approximately 51.1 percent of the population is female. This population breakdown by gender is consistent with Charleston County (51.5 percent female) and the state of South Carolina as a whole (51.4 percent female).

With regard to race, the Town’s population is much more racially homogenous than both Charleston County and the state of South Carolina. While the Town is approximately 97 percent white, 2 percent black, and the remaining 1 percent other races, Charleston County is approximately 65 percent white, 31 percent black, and 4 percent other races, and the state of South Carolina is approximately 66 white, 28 percent black and 6 percent other races.



### 3.3: POPULATION ELEMENT GOAL

*Accommodate the Seabrook Island community in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner, with particular attention to preserving the island's natural beauty while continuing to provide its residents and visitors a healthy and active lifestyle.*

#### Population Element Needs

- The non-resident population fluctuates dramatically on a seasonal basis creating the need for different facilities and services;
- The resident population tends to be older, more affluent, and better educated than national, state, and local averages, thus creating the need for different services and facilities than seen in other communities; and
- There is a need to improve the communication capabilities of the Town regarding the distribution of both general information and timely emergency information to non-resident property owners, as well as the many visitors to the island.

### 3.4: POPULATION 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. Provide residents, non-resident property owners, and visitors with a safe and secure environment and high quality community facilities.
2. Develop more accurate data on property owner and visitor populations in order to assess and project the need for community services and facilities.
3. Develop strategies that identify and respond to changes in population trends that result in a change in population needs and desires.
4. Enhance the ability to identify and engage non-property owners living on the island, and property owners who do not live on the island.
5. Address issues of aging population.
6. Develop processes to more efficiently disseminate both general and emergency information from the Town to its visitors and non-resident property owners.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Through the coordination and cooperation of all governing entities, implement strategies that promote the economic vitality and financial stability of Seabrook Island while maintaining its residential character and preserving its natural beauty.*

### 4.1: OVERVIEW

The Economic Development Element considers labor force and labor force characteristics, employment by place of work and residence, and an analysis of the community's economic base. This section provides an analysis of the Town's economy and the Town's impact on Charleston County's overall economy.

### 4.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

In 2016, at the request of the Town, five MBA students from the Citadel Graduate School of Business prepared an Economic Impact Study for the Town. The study, prepared under the oversight of two MBA Program professors, utilized two previous economic impact studies as reference tools, and an "insightful tour of its many amenities, commercial centers, residential neighborhoods, and multiple staff teams that work for the island," to document and further detail the value that Seabrook Island brings to the Charleston Area. The executive summary of this study concludes that "the economic impact of Seabrook Island, and their permanent and seasonal residents, is immeasurable and has increased significantly since the previous study was performed in 1996, with a combined economic impact of almost \$344 million supporting over 4,800 jobs." The Town believes these numbers to be conservative, as because of the time of year the study was put together, it

understated the economic impact of the many summer time visitors who vacation on Seabrook Island.

The economic activities associated with the Town of Seabrook Island are not only linked to the overall regional economy, they are also closely associated with the economic vitality of SIPOA, SIC, and SIUC. While each of these three Seabrook Island entities maintain revenue streams and incur costs that are exclusive of the Town, the overall economic success of the community is very much dependent upon the individual financial viability of all four entities. This relationship and financial dependence is recognized by each of the entities. For example, new Seabrook Island property owners become members, and are subject to the rules and regulations of the SIPOA, including the requirement that they also become members of SIC for a specific period of time. The dues associated with this requirement represent an important revenue stream for SIC. Similarly, one routine action identified in SIPOA's Comprehensive Plan is to "continue to look for opportunities to reduce cost and redundancy with the Town and SIC by sharing operations."

Unless specifically noted, all references made to Seabrook Island's "economy" and the island's economic development as a whole, is inclusive of each of the four entities. Data included in the above referenced Economic Impact Study, as well as a review of the Town of Seabrook Island's financial documents, U.S. Census data, real estate sales data, financial data provided by the SIPOA, and other various sources, are used to provide the background and inventory, as well as identify the needs and develop the strategies for this Economic Development Element.

#### **Real Estate Sales**

The Charleston Trident Association of Realtors (CTAR) provides monthly and annual regional and local real estate market reports for the Charleston Region. The most recent annual report is the *2017 Annual Report on the Charleston Area Housing Market*. The CTAR



report makes some general observations with regard to the Charleston regional housing market as a whole, including an increase in average home prices and an increase in pending sales as compared to 2016. The housing market on Seabrook Island follows this regional trend, as the average sale price of single-family detached homes has increased by 3.3 percent from 2016, and the average sale price for townhouse/condos has increased by over 27 percent from 2016. Similarly, year over year there has been a 35 percent increase in single-family detached home sales, and a 48 percent increase in townhouse/condo home sales (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

As would be expected for the community of Seabrook Island, the 2017 average sales price for single-family detached homes exceeds both Johns Island and Charleston County. However, while the average sales price for Seabrook Island townhouse/condos is much higher than Johns Island, it is about the same as Charleston County as a whole (Figure 4.3).

<b>FIGURE 4.1 SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED ANNUAL REAL ESTATE METRICS, 2014-2017</b>				
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>New Listings</b>	125	133	142	161
<b>Closed Sales</b>	66	82	80	108
<b>Median Sales Price</b>	\$497,500	\$525,000	\$615,000	\$608,750
<b>Average Sales Price</b>	\$573,195	\$659,538	\$743,774	\$768,378
<b>% of Original List Price Received</b>	85.7%	88.1%	88.3%	91.0%
<b>Days on Market</b>	223	228	196	142

*Source: Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, Seabrook Island Local Market Updates, 2015 - 2017.*

<b>FIGURE 4.2 TOWNHOUSE-CONDO ATTACHED ANNUAL REAL ESTATE METRICS, 2014-2017</b>				
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>New Listings</b>	83	116	108	149
<b>Closed Sales</b>	51	48	52	77
<b>Median Sales Price</b>	\$290,000	\$196,050	\$216,000	\$270,000
<b>Average Sales Price</b>	\$296,760	\$315,373	\$249,593	\$317,621
<b>% of Original List Price Received</b>	86.1%	91.0%	91.3%	91.2%
<b>Days on Market</b>	191	128	174	133

*Source: Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, Seabrook Island Local Market Updates, 2015 - 2017.*

It is important to note that the comparative real estate data provided

<b>FIGURE 4.3 MEDIAN AND AVERAGE SALES PRICE COMPARISONS, 2017</b>				
	<b>SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED</b>		<b>TOWNHOUSE-CONDO ATTACHED</b>	
	<b>MEDIAN SALES PRICE</b>	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE</b>	<b>MEDIAN SALES PRICE</b>	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE</b>
<b>Seabrook Island</b>	\$608,750	\$768,378	\$246,000	\$304,667
<b>Johns Island</b>	\$311,604	\$356,691	\$210,375	\$198,379
<b>Charleston County</b>	\$359,000	\$476,725	\$224,500	\$304,387

*Source: Charleston Trident Association of Realtors, Seabrook Island, Johns Island and Charleston County Local Market Updates, 2017.*

in the tables above include existing homes sales and new home sales. New home construction is a primary indicator of growth in a region, and is also directly linked to a region's economy, including the stability of construction sector employment and fluctuations in local government revenue. In 2017, new construction represented 21.6 percent of the market share for the Charleston region, indicating strong growth of the area as a whole. Johns Island, with a new construction market share of 46.7 percent, is the fastest growing sub-region in the Charleston area. Seabrook Island's new



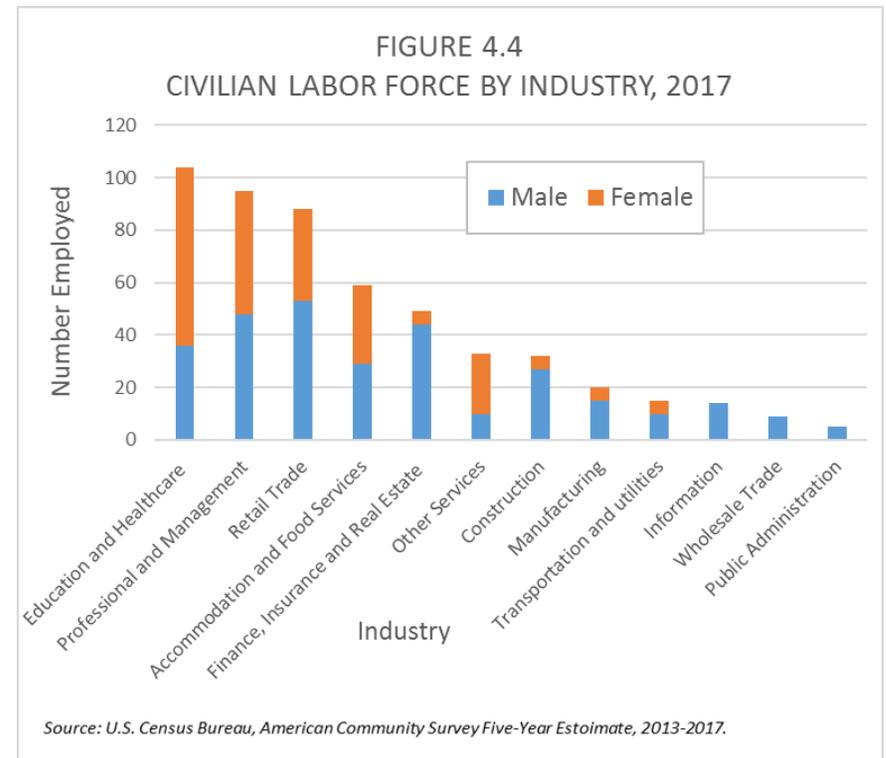
construction market share is only 5.1 percent in 2017, averaging only 3.8 percent over the last three years. This means that the vast majority of home sales on Seabrook Island are in the form of resale of existing homes. As discussed in Chapter 8 – Housing Element, there are less than 400 remaining vacant residential properties on Seabrook Island, and a portion of these properties may never be built on. *This finite number of buildable lots means the Town's future revenue from new home construction will continue to decrease over time.*

### Labor Force Characteristics

The U.S. Census 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) is the most recently published data source reflective of the labor characteristics for the Town of Seabrook Island. In 2017, 523 Town residents, 16 years of age and older, were employed in the civilian labor force, of which 300 were males and 223 were females. This represents 31.6 percent of all Town residents 16 years of age and older (523 out of 1,653 residents). For South Carolina and Charleston County, the percentage of residents, 16 years of age and older, employed in the civilian labor force is 55.5 percent (2,181,046 out of 3,926,466 residents), and 61.5 percent (198,823 out of 317,988 residents), respectively.

The 523 Town residents that are employed include those that commute to a job on or off the island, as well as those who “work from home”. According to the 2016 Gallup Report “State of the American Workplace”, nationwide remote working is on the rise across most industries, including over an 8 percent rise since 2012 in finance/insurance/real estate industries. A similarly themed 2012 CNN article entitled “Work from Home Soars” notes that more than 1 in 10 people working exclusively from home were over the age of 65. With over 60 percent of the Town’s residents over the age of 65 (996 out of 1,653 residents), it would be reasonable to conclude that more than 10 percent of the civilian labor force work from home. As shown in Figure 4.4, the Town’s labor force is employed in a wide array of industries. However, almost 55 percent of the labor force is concentrated in three industry groups: Education and

Healthcare, Professional and Management, and Retail Trade. Employment in several industries are split fairly evenly between males and females, however men make up nearly 90 percent of the finance, insurance and real estate industries, while women make up over 65 percent of the Education and Healthcare industry.



### Seabrook Island Economic Impact on the Charleston Area

Previously referenced in this element was the 2016 economic impact study prepared by the Citadel Graduate School of Business. The purpose of the study was to provide detail on the economic value that Seabrook Island provides to the city and county of Charleston. The project, originally intended to be performed over a three-month period, was truncated by Hurricane Matthew and its



aftermath. Nevertheless, the study did provide insight into the total economic impact generated by the Town for the Charleston area as a whole. The study used 2015 data from various sources, including public records, Town Hall, Charleston County Auditor’s Office, on-island and local real-estate publications, and management and staff of island businesses. A summary of the financial impact and jobs created are included in Figure 4.5.

*“The liquidity of this town is very good. The town has been taking in more than they spend – nothing complicated about it.”*

Each year the Town Administrator prepares a draft budget for the mayor to review and present to council. By law, the Town is required to have a balanced budget. The draft budget is accompanied by detail of each revenue and expense item. The Town budgeted revenue sources are identified as both unrestricted and restricted. The latter consist of revenues received from the state accommodations tax, county accommodation tax and state alcohol tax, and may only be spent as mandated by applicable statute or rule. While municipalities are legally empowered to collect taxes on real and personal property, the Town does not currently levy a property tax millage.

FIGURE 4.5 SEABROOK ISLAND ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE CHARLESTON REGION, 2015			
DESCRIPTION	VOLUME	TOTAL IMPACT	JOBS
ON ISLAND SALES (Residents & Visitors)	\$29,244,315	\$43,281,586	871
OFF ISLAND SALES (Residents)	\$66,677,577	\$100,683,141	1,806
OFF ISLAND SALES (Visitors)	\$5,831,693	\$8,630,906	174
CONSTRUCTION	\$32,342,494	\$48,513,742	443
REAL ESTATE SALES	\$67,500,000	\$91,125,000	712
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS	\$10,175,000	\$10,175,000	276
UTILITIES & CHARLESTON COUNTY TAXES	\$24,790,378	\$36,193,953	550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$236,561,458</b>	<b>\$338,603,328</b>	<b>4,831</b>

Source: Seabrook Island Economic Impact on the Charleston Area, Citadel Graduate School MBA Program, Fall 2015.

**FY 2019 Town Budget – General Fund**

As itemized in the adopted FY 2019 Budget, revenues associated with the General Fund can be categorized into nine revenue groupings. The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the Town. Each General Fund grouping is listed below, excluding the use of fund balance, along with the percentage of the overall FY 2019 General Fund it represents, followed by a more detailed description of each of these revenue streams.

**Town Finances and Budget**

The Town adopts an annual budget each year by ordinance. In addition, the Town’s management prepares and submits financial statements to an independent auditor, currently the local, full service Certified Public Accounting Firm of Glaser and Company, LLC, for the purpose of receiving an independent opinion on whether the financial statements “present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the (Town’s) governmental activities.” The firm has consistently praised the Town on their management of the Town’s finances, noting in a 2017 presentation of the audit to Town Council that:

- Business Licenses (49.2%);
- Local Option Sales Tax (19.5%);
- Franchise Fees (17.2%);
- Interest Income (4.0%);
- Aid to Subdivisions (3.2%);
- State Accommodations Tax (portion) (2.6%);
- Planning and Zoning Fees (2.2%); and
- Other Sources (2.1%).

Description of revenue streams:

Business Licenses Revenue. This revenue includes licensing fees collected from eight classes of business licenses and fee



revenues allocated from the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC). The MASC fees come from three programs administered by the association on behalf of member municipalities; Brokers Tax Collection Program, Insurance Tax Collection Program, and Telecommunications Tax Collection Program.

Local Option Sales Tax Revenue. Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) is a referendum-approved county sales and use tax of one percent levied on the gross proceeds of sales within the county. The overall LOST funds collected are divided into two funds: 71% goes to the Property Tax Credit Fund and 29% goes to the County/Municipal Revenue Fund. From the Property Tax Credit Fund, 33% is distributed to municipalities based on population. From the County/Municipal Revenue Fund, 50% is distributed based on location of sale, and 50% is distributed based on population. All of the funds received by the Town from the LOST allocation are shown under the Local Option Sales Tax line item.

Franchise Fees. The Town has entered into franchise agreements with Berkeley Electric Cooperative, BellSouth, now AT&T U-verse, and Comcast. Each of the agreements require the company to pay a specific percentage of total revenue to the Town. Franchise fees collected through each of the agreements are identified as individual franchise fee line items in the General Fund.

Interest Income. There are two interest income line items in the General Fund, interest accrued from checking accounts and interest income generated from the Town's funds deposited with the South Carolina Local Government Investment Pool. The Pool is an investment trust fund in which public monies in excess of current needs which are under the custody of any county treasurer or any governing body political subdivision of the State, may be deposited.

Aid to Subdivisions. This revenue comes from the Local Government Fund administered by the State Treasurer and is part of the general fund of the State. The amount appropriated to the Local Government Fund is an amount equal to not less than four and one-half percent of the State's general fund revenues. About 83% of the Local Government Fund is distributed to counties, and the remaining 17% is distributed to municipalities based on population.

State Accommodations Tax. In South Carolina, the rental of transient accommodations is subject to a 2% State Accommodations Tax (State ATAX) in addition to the state sales tax, and any applicable local tax. In the town's Budget, the State ATAX is allocated to both the General Fund and a State ATAX Restricted Fund as follows:

*General Fund* - The first 25%, plus 5% of the balance must be put in the Seabrook General Fund and these funds can be used on anything.

*Restricted Fund* - 30% of the balance must be spent on advertising and promotion, and the expenditure(s) must be managed and directed by a nonprofit organization. The remaining balance and any interest must be spent on Tourism.

Planning and Zoning Fees. Permitting fees associated with planning and zoning are directly collected by the Town as well building permit fees indirectly collected by the County and distributed to the Town. Examples include permitting fees collected for sign permits, and building permits for new construction and remodeling.

Other Revenue Sources. Other miscellaneous revenue sources include court fines, facility rentals, credit card convenience fees, and sale of assets.

Use of Fund Balance. Transfer of funds from reserve fund balances can be used to finance specific projects. In the FY2019 Budget, General Fund Reserves and Road



Improvement Fund Reserves were transferred to fund miscellaneous capital improvement projects, Phase 1 and 2 of the Drainage Improvement Project for Seabrook Island Road, and design and construction of a new garage at town hall.

The amount of revenue generated from all sources fluctuates from year to year. For example, revenues from Class 8 Business Licenses (Contractors) and Permits are directly associated with construction, and as the Town has only a finite number of buildable lots remaining, these revenue streams are likely to go down over time. Offsetting these dwindling funds is an increase in both Class 7 Business Licenses (Rentals) and MASC funds. Funds from Class 7 Business Licenses have increased 266% from 2010 to 2018. While MASC funds have increased only 21% over the same timeframe, it is significant because these funds represent almost 14% of the entire General Fund balance (Figure 4.6). Over time, the percentage of total revenue that is represented by business license revenue has increased, further highlighting the importance of this revenue stream to the Town (Figure 4.7). There is current legislation pending in the South Carolina State Legislation that would have an impact on the Town’s business license revenue. This General Bill, titled SC Business License Tax Standardization Act, currently resides in the House Committee on Labor, Commerce and Industry. The Bill distinguishes between license fees and taxes municipalities may levy and collect for risks located within and outside the municipality.

Interest income from the South Carolina Local Government Investment Pool has increased over time, as the Town’s deposits into the pool have increased. Likewise, revenue from the Town’s allocation of County LOST revenue has increased over time as gross sales receipts County-wide have increased. It is worth noting that the Town has never introduced a local property tax to generate additional revenue. Additionally, the FY2019 Budget made no change in business license or permitting fees to generate additional revenue.

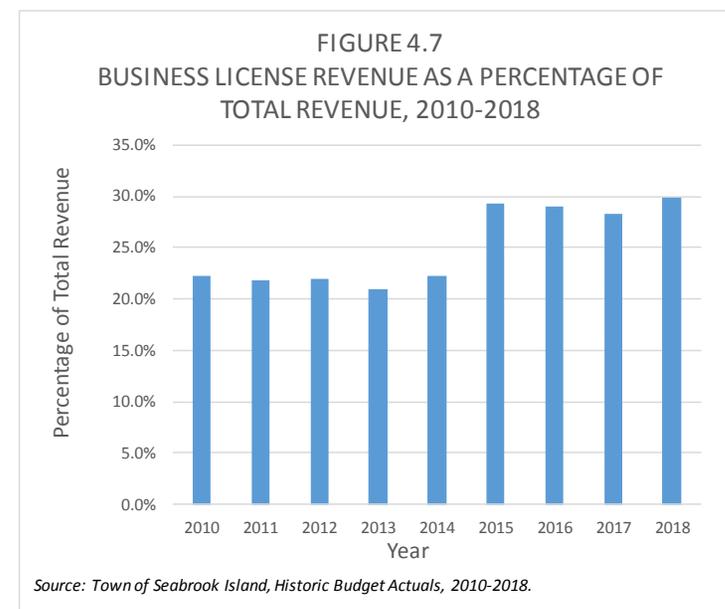
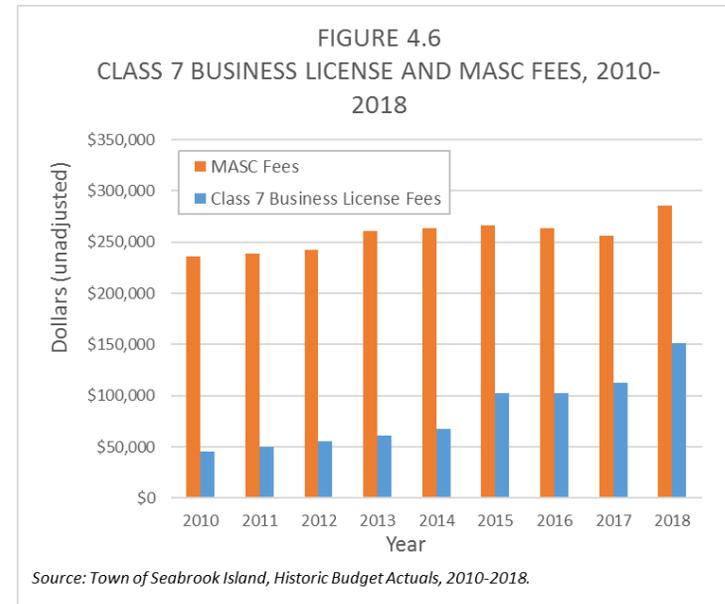
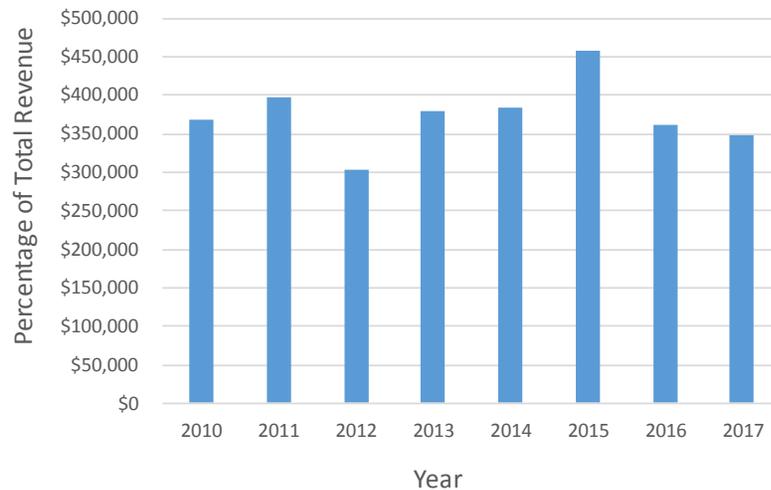




FIGURE 4.8  
GENERAL FUND REVENUES  
IN EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES, 2010-2017



Source: Town of Seabrook Island, Historic Budget Actuals, 2010-2018.

**General Fund Expenditures.** The Town has historically brought in more money than it has spent annually. In recent years, budget records of the General Fund show that the Town’s revenues have consistently exceeded expenditures since 2010 (Figure 4.8). The resulting excess revenues have increased reserve fund balances, as well as allowed the Town to establish an emergency fund and deposit money in excess of current needs into the South Carolina Local Government Investment Pool.

All expenditures not associated with Restricted Funds, as described later in this section, are reflected as General Fund expenditures. Expenditures from the General Fund are categorized in three major groupings: Capital Expenditures, Operating Expenditures, and Personnel Expenditures. A Capital Expenditure is money spent by

the Town on acquiring or maintaining fixed assets, such as land, buildings, and equipment. Operating Expenditures are the ongoing costs necessary to run Town Government, for example contracted services, maintenance costs and insurance costs. Personnel Expenditures are the costs associate with supporting Town Staff, and include salaries, medical insurance, and contributions to the state retirement system.

General Fund capital expenditures in the adopted FY 2019 Budget include funding for Seabrook Island Road drainage improvements and miscellaneous capital improvements, as well as funding for the design and construction of a new garage at town hall. This funding is from reserve fund transfers rather than anticipated 2019 revenues. Additional capital expenditures include the replacement of two Town vehicles, and installation of new signage. Operating Fund expenditures include an increase in contracted landscaping services, rewrite of the Development Standards ordinance (DSO), completion of the Seabrook Island Road Gateway Concept Plan and an update to the Town’s Beach Management Plan. Personnel expenditures in the adopted FY 2019 Budget include cost of living increases for Town employees, and increased contributions to employee medical premiums.

Expenditures that will be made during 2019 from unrestricted revenue will consist primarily of the following:

- Special Projects Roadway (26%);
- Payroll and Benefits (19%);
- Capital Expenditures (16%);
- Contracted Services (14%);
- Roadway Maintenance (6%);
- Professional Services (5%); and
- General Maintenance (3%).

**FY 2019 Town Budget – Restricted Funds**

These special revenue funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue resources that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. The fund includes state



accommodations tax (State ATAX) restricted for promotion and tourism of the Primary Government, county accommodations tax (County ATAX) and state alcohol tax restricted for support of tourism and tourist services or capital projects, and municipal court fines, assessments and surcharges restricted for victims' advocate services and other court expenditures. The unrestricted portion of accommodations tax received from the state is included in the general fund. Some of the restricted fund expenditures identified in the adopted FY 2019 Budget include funding for Beach Patrol services, Fourth of July celebration, the 2019 Billfish Tournament, Alan Fleming tennis tournament, the Charleston Symphony concert, and capital upgrades to beach signage.

### Summary

Most of the economic impact for Seabrook Island is derived from tourism, residents, real estate sales, taxes and fee collections, and construction related activities. The County provides some direct and indirect services to the Town including planning and land use support services, emergency management and flood hazard management. The Town provides for public safety, health and welfare for the community, and contracts for additional services. Island-wide police coverage with the Charleston County Sheriff's department. The Town maintains, and contracts for the landscaping of, Seabrook Island Road. Emergency services are provided by the Charleston County EMS and the St. Johns Fire District.

SIPOA also provides services on the Island including premise security, biking paths and bridge maintenance and the maintaining of all signage as well as landscaping and maintenance of all the private roads and many common areas behind the entry gate. The SIPOA contracts with a private firm for garbage, recycling and yard debris collection on the Island.

## 4.3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT GOAL

### *Element Goal*

*Through the coordination and cooperation of all governing entities, implement strategies that promote the economic vitality of Seabrook Island while maintaining its residential character and preserving its natural beauty.*

### Economic Development Element Needs:

- Support existing business within the Town of Seabrook Island;
- Support the diversification of businesses that provide revenue to the Town;
- Assist in the development of new businesses that support the economy and enhance the lifestyle of residents of the Town of Seabrook Island;
- In coordination with SIPOA, SIC, and the real estate community, develop promotions to expand tourism into the low season, including the enhancement of marketing and public relations in areas where potential visitors/tourists reside;
- Expand beautification efforts that support and promote the commercial areas and Seabrook Island Road outside the gates;
- Address the deficit in employees that support the Town's service-based economy;
- Improve the tracking of revenue generated by tourism; and
- Continue to advocate for local control over business licenses.



## **4.4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 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. Improved public access to promotional materials and tourism information for prospective visitors and homebuyers.
2. Develop strategies to create new revenue streams when and if needed.
3. Use the Town's utility system as a means to promote economic development.
4. Monitor the South Carolina legislature and potential impacts of legislation on Town revenue.
5. Pursue a more business-friendly environment by streamlining the licensing and permitting process.



## NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Maintain Seabrook Island's environmental integrity and natural beauty through the continuation of sustainable actions that ensure that natural systems and built structures protect habitats, create a healthy environment, and promote energy efficiency.*

### 5.1: OVERVIEW

Seabrook Island is a coastal barrier island located in the South Carolina Lowcountry between Johns Island and the Atlantic Ocean. The island is surrounded by saltwater bodies and marshes: to the north is Bohicket Creek and its marshes, to the south is the Atlantic Ocean, to the east is Kiawah River and its marshes, and to the west is the North Edisto River. The Island has a rich variety of maritime habitats and scenic natural resources that include miles of beach, a broad salt marsh with tidal creeks, freshwater wetlands, and extensive maritime forest and shrub thickets.

Human impact has played a large role in the quantity and quality of natural resources on Seabrook Island. Even prior to Spanish exploration in the 1500's and English settlement in the 1600's, native American Indians cleared lands in the Lowcountry to grow maize and other crops. While the Spanish were in search of gold and moved on, the English had a stronger appreciation for working the land agriculturally. English Lord Proprietors of Carolina received their charter from King Charles II of England in 1663, and accepted a collective land grant from the king that encompassed over 850,000 square miles extending from Virginia to Spanish Florida. In the Lowcountry, Native Americans welcomed the English settlement that followed, even showing them how to live off the land. While rice and indigo were the common crops in surrounding areas, Seabrook Island was transformed into a sea-island cotton

plantation. Cotton production on the island remained lucrative until the Civil War, however after the war cotton production declined. Seabrook Island then gradually reforested into the ecosystem found on the island today; a maritime forest of pines, live oaks, hickories, magnolias, sweetgums and palmettos, surrounded by saltwater wetlands, dune fields and sandy beaches.

Today, while most of the geographic Seabrook Island is in the incorporated Town, a large majority is also within the Seabrook Island Development (SID). The SID is a planned unit development that is a gated and privately managed community with a private club, a church/environmental camp operated by the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, and SIPOA. The SIPOA provides many of the community services and facilities typically provided by local government. The area of the Town not within the SID includes several parcels "outside the gates", and flanking the only land-based access to the SID. Through decades of environmentally conscious leadership, Seabrook Island has successfully maintained a spectacular range of wildlife and a thriving ecosystem, while providing its residents and visitors with a wonderful array of both human-inspired and nature-based amenities and activities.

### 5.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

With regard to development, the vast majority of Seabrook Island is substantially "built out". The island has retained much of its rich natural resources thanks to an environmentally conscious regulatory structure provided through Town and SIPOA governing documents.

Town of Seabrook Island Governing Documents. As required by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, the Town's Code, Development Standard Ordinance (DSO), and Zoning Map shall implement, and remain consistent with this Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan. The DSO is the primary document guiding development within the Town, and



does so “in accordance with existing and future needs, and in order 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.”

Seabrook Island Property Owners Association Governing Documents. Most recently modified in February 2017, the Protective Covenants for Seabrook Island Development state that each property owner in the SID “becomes a member of SIPOA with voting rights as set forth in the Bylaws of SIPOA and obligations as set forth in these Protective Covenants and their derivative rules and regulations”. The covenants further declare that “the purpose and business of SIPOA is to preserve the property values and the quality of life in the SID through *development and implementation of programs to protect the environment, to facilitate acquisition and maintenance of green space*, and to provide for the health, safety, security and welfare of property owners”. Additional SIPOA responsibilities that contribute to the preservation of Seabrook Island’s natural resources include a continual update and enforcement of the SIPOA Rules and Regulations Handbook, a security force of commissioned code enforcement officers, multiple all-volunteer special interest groups, and ten standing committees, including an architectural review committee, environmental committee and planning committee.

Other Documents Promoting Environmental Sustainability. There are additional documents and studies related, at least in part, to environmental protection. These documents and studies are sanctioned by the Town, SIPOA, or both, and either serve as regulatory documents in and of themselves, or contribute to the principles and content of the Town and/or SIPOA’s regulatory structure. Below is a list of the Primary and Secondary Seabrook Island Natural Resource Preservation Documents. These

documents directly or indirectly promote the preservation of Seabrook Island’s natural resources.

Primary Documents:

- The Comprehensive Beach Management Plan (Town); and
- The Comprehensive Emergency Plan (Town).

Secondary Documents:

- The SIPOA Architectural Review Committee’s Policies and Procedures for Residential Development (SIPOA);
- The Lake Management Plan (SIPOA);
- The Deer Management Program (SIPOA);
- Stormwater System Rehabilitation Plan (SIPOA);
- Backyard Buffers for the South Carolina Lowcountry (SIPOA);
- The Sustainable Community Baseline Report & Site Assessment (SIPOA): and
- Protective Covenants, Rules and Regulations (SIPOA and Condo, Villa and neighborhood Regimes).

Seabrook Island Green Space Conservancy. In 2000, this Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization began as a response to the SIPOA Board of Directors concern over the permanent loss of green space and wildlife habitat resulting from the “build out” of Seabrook Island. The Conservancy’s objective is to identify, for potential acquisition, high visibility properties that preserve substantial green space and wild life habitat. These properties, once acquired by the Conservancy through charitable donations, bargain sales, or traditional purchase procedures, are transferred, by deed, to SIPOA for permanent preservation and maintenance as green space. The properties are also rezoned to Agriculture – Conservation, and are inspected annually by the Conservancy and the SIPOA Environmental Committee to insure compliance with the green space provisions in the transferring the property to SIPOA.

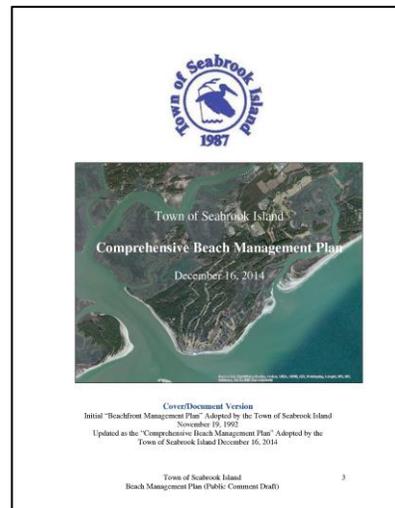


According to the Conservancy's website, a total of 24 acres, or 1 percent of Seabrook Island, has become property that will remain green space in perpetuity through the actions of the Conservancy and donors.

### Beach and Dune Preservation

Oceanfront beach and dunes serve several important functions. These include storm protection for upland areas, habitat for a variety of plant and animal species, nesting habitat for sea turtles and recreation for Town residents, property owners and visitors. The management and preservation of Seabrook Island's beaches and dunes is a continual process, and a recent comprehensive update to the 20-plus year old beach management plan has given the Town, SIPOA, SIC, and the St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center (the "Camp") a better understanding of the issues and needs, and a clear and purposeful set of goals and implementation strategies.

Seabrook Island Town Council adopted the 2014 Update of their Comprehensive Beach Management Plan (referred to hereafter as the "BMP") on December 16, 2014. The BMP is a complete revision of the Town's original Beach Management Plan adopted in 1992. The BMP is consistent with the South Carolina State Beachfront Management Act and was updated in accordance with the guidelines provided by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management. The BMP was a joint effort from the Town of Seabrook Island leadership and staff, the SIPOA, SIC, and the Camp. The BMP cites Dr. Tim Kana, founder



and president of Coastal Science and Engineering, as the primary author. The BMP represents a comprehensive analysis of the island's beach management, including a full review of all Seabrook Island Coastal Erosion Studies and Annual Beach Monitoring Surveys, many of which were conducted over decades of research by the primary author cited above. This Natural Resources Element acknowledges by reference, the findings, needs, goals and implementation strategies contained within the above referenced 2014 Update of the Town of Seabrook Island Beach Management Plan.

While it is not within the context of this Natural Resources Element to fully describe the BMP, a brief overview of its structure and recommendations is warranted. The BMP is a technical document that comprehensively describes all aspects of beach management regarding Seabrook Island in seven detailed sections:

- Section 1 Introduction - describes the purpose and history of the plan, an overview of the municipality and history of beach management practices, and a summary of the current beach management issues impacting Seabrook Island's coastline;
- Section 2 Inventory of Existing Conditions - provides an inventory of existing conditions, including general characteristics of the beach and beachfront structures, and a description of the current state of the shoreline as a natural resource with ecological habitats;
- Section 3 Beachfront Drainage Plan - describes the surface drainage patterns of land along the island's beachfront;
- Section 4 Beach Management and Authorities - includes a thorough description of beach management, and a thorough summary of the multiple authorities that regulate and enforce beach development, shoreline protection, and other regulations regarding the island's beach management;



- Section 5 Erosion Control Management – cites numerous previous coastal erosion studies to support a discussion on shoreline change analysis, then provides an inventory of beach alterations, including previous beach renourishments and various “soft engineering” solutions conducted over the past 30 years, and ends with a discussion of future erosion control alternatives;
- Section 6 Needs, Goals and Implementation Strategies – includes a strategy for preserving and enhancing public beach access and description of the three components of the Town’s “retreat strategy” (the creation of a stable or accreting beachfront that is compatible with the State’s retreat policy):
  - 1) The relocation of Captain Sams Inlet to support the continued migration of sand down the coast from Kiawah Island;
  - 2) Maintaining a “shelf” down to and around the corner of the Edisto River inlet to continue renourishment of the Edisto River shoreline of Seabrook Island; and
  - 3) Supplementing the first two components by sand scraping from sections of excess accretion along the north shore of the island and moving that sand to the south beach area.
- Section 7 Appendix – includes much of the technical data referenced in the previous sections of the BMP.

It should be noted that in May 2015, Seabrook Island, with the cooperation of federal, state, and local authorities and utilizing SIPOA funds, relocated Captain Sams Creek using scientific island inlet relocation methodology. The environmentally-friendly significance of allowing the inlet to migrate naturally over a

designated inlet conservation zone, as opposed to stabilizing the inlet itself or heavily armoring the shoreline, led to the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) awarding the 2016 Best Restored Beach Award to Seabrook Island.

### **Maritime Forest Preservation**

Inland from the beaches and dunes described in the previous section, the interior of Seabrook Island is dominated by a maritime forest ecosystem. As described in the introductory section of this chapter, soon after the Civil War, the sea-island crops that had dominated much of the Seabrook Island landscape since colonial times were abandoned, allowing land on the island to naturally and gradually reforest. Many years later, the forward thinking conservation efforts of early SID leaders has resulted in many of the beautiful characteristics of the maritime forest ecosystem to still remain today.

As noted in the BMP, barrier islands such as Seabrook Island are comprised of habitats that are characterized to varying degrees by instability. The habitat providing the greatest stability is a maritime forest, which is a natural vegetation unique to many parts of the coastal Lowcountry, and more formally identified as the Atlantic Maritime Forest. Within this forest, the tree canopy is dominated by southern live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), laurel oak (*Q. laurifolia*), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), and loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*). Conspicuous understory plants include sabal palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*), southern red cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*), and yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) among others. The maritime forest forms the relatively stable core of Seabrook Island that has endured over long periods of time, as opposed to the maritime shrub thickets, saltwater wetlands, dune fields, and sand beaches that become progressively less stable over time.

The Seabrook Island environment as a whole, and the maritime forest in particular, play an important role in the design of a new home, and this is emphasized throughout the Seabrook Island



Architectural Review Committee's Policies and Procedures manual. The manual's opening paragraph under the section entitled Design Guidelines for New Single-Family Residences illustrates this emphasis well;

*"The sea island environment of Seabrook creates opportunities to design residences which incorporate the natural characteristics of the property, its surrounding environment, and the island into the design. Those residential designs which respond to the nature and character of the individual property become a positive contribution to the island by maintaining the maritime forest and landscape, while at the same time allowing for the residence to take full advantage of its views and surrounding environment. Residential designs which respect and complement the natural surroundings are the most successful designs."*

### **Wildlife on Seabrook Island**

As noted in the Sustainable Community Baseline report and Site Assessment, approximately 33 percent of Seabrook Island is devoted to legally protected green space (22 acres including beach trust), recreational green spaces (horse pasture, golf courses, trails), wetlands, dry beach/dunes, maritime forest (200 acres in Camp St. Christopher), or undeveloped lots (150 acres). This provides an excellent habitat for a diverse mix of flora and fauna.

While the maritime forest, maritime shrub thicket, and even the dune fields provide the ideal habitat for many land animals including deer, fox, squirrel, bobcat, and coyote, the island's tidal creeks and marshes serve as nurseries and food sources for a myriad of salt water species, from microscopic to huge herons, pelicans, raptors, and dolphins.

A webpage created by SIPOA and dedicated to Seabrook Island Wildlife can be accessed from either the Town's website or the Discover Seabrook website maintained by the SIC and SIPOA. The

webpage provides information on the many mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and insects that call Seabrook Island or its surrounding waters home. The webpage also provides direct links to documents of interest, such as the SIPOA Deer Management Program, special informational pages, such as information on dolphin strand feeding, and additional links to SIPOA special interest groups, such as the Seabrook Island Birders Group and the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol. Much of the following information describing the abundant Seabrook Island wildlife has been extracted from this webpage.

Mammals on Seabrook Island. Mammals are abundant on Seabrook Island, and thanks to preservation efforts they are able to thrive in their native habitat while safely coexisting in close proximity to humans.



**Bottlenose Dolphin at Seabrook Island**

*Photo Source: [www.discoverseabrook.com](http://www.discoverseabrook.com)*





**Wildlife Protection.** Protection of the abundant wildlife on Seabrook Island comes in many forms. The first two sections of this chapter detail beach management and maritime forest management, and under both management efforts the unique habitats preserved provides food, shelter, and safety for much of the wildlife listed in this section. Continuation and enhancement of these management efforts is the primary wildlife protection tool available to the Town of Seabrook Island.



Seabrook Island Baby Loggerhead Turtle

Photo Source: [www.siturtlepatrol.com](http://www.siturtlepatrol.com)

In addition, many volunteers are actively involved in wildlife protection. While some serve preservation-related SIPOA committees, such as the Architectural Review Committee, the Environmental Committee, and the Planning Committee, others remain active in wildlife protection-related SIPOA special interest

groups, such as the Seabrook Island Birders Club, the Seabrook Island Natural History Group, and the Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol.

The Town's DSO, and several documents created under SIPOA, also explicitly or inherently protect wildlife. For example, the rezoning review criteria in Section 20.40.10 of the Town's DSO requires consideration of the effect of the proposed rezoning "on environmentally sensitive land or natural features, wildlife habitat, vegetation, and water and air quality". Similarly, Section VI.A. of the SIPOA Rules and Regulations require all members to follow specific procedures to ensure protection of vegetation, stating that "the grassy dunes, maritime forests, and wetlands of Seabrook Island provide food, cover, and nesting for wildlife". Finally, several other SIPOA documents are specifically written with wildlife protection in mind, including a Deer Management Plan and informational brochures providing tips for helping Loggerhead Turtles.

### **Natural Hazards**

As evidenced in recent years, the Charleston area is no stranger to the recurrent burden of flooding and threats of hurricanes. In addition, the Charleston region lies within one of the most seismically active areas in the Eastern United States. As a coastal community, Seabrook Island's housing stock, infrastructure, and topography itself is vulnerable to threats associated with flooding, storm surges, hurricanes, sea level rise, and earthquakes.

Flooding is the most frequent and costly natural hazard in the United States. On Seabrook Island, the most common types of flooding are rain events, tidal, and storm surges. Other issues that enhance the effects and extent of flooding are sea level rise and climate change.

**Rain Event Flooding.** Rain event flooding can be classified by severe rain events, whether associated with tropical weather or not, that cause major flooding in areas that may not have experienced flooding in prior years. Like tidal flooding, these big rain events are



exacerbated by a combination of several factors that result in widespread flooding, including king tides, sea level rise, drainage issues, and storm surges.

Charleston County experienced flooding as a result of continual rain lasting several days in 2015 that caused extensive damage and shut down businesses for days. The storm drainage systems could not handle the amount of rain that fell in the area, and because there was no break in the rain, the drainage systems had no time to recover. In addition, the storm hit during high tide, adding more stress to the already aggravated system.

Tidal Flooding. Tidal flooding, also called nuisance flooding, can shutdown areas of Seabrook Island for hours or days. Sea level rise leads to increases in tidal flooding. Rising seas means higher tides, and more frequent king tides, which are now an issue to formerly non-flood-prone areas. Frequent road closures, property damage, loss of business, and potentially hazardous conditions leave areas affected by tidal flooding in a state of uncertainty all too often. Sea level rise will continue to be a more frequent issue to all coastal areas within the County, and time is of the essence to study and make modifications to alleviate some of the effects that this will have on Seabrook Island. This not only impacts the ability for area residents to get to and from their homes, but also has a large impact on continuity of services for business operations, safety services, including access to area hospitals, and the general functioning of the area and its residents on a normal day-to-day level.

King Tides in November of 2018 resulted in the sixth highest tide on record, leading to several road closures and flooding on a perfectly sunny day. Instances like these are becoming more and more common, and Seabrook Island needs to plan for ways to protect and prepare the community.

Storm Surge. Storm surge is the rise of water level that occurs as a result of high winds pushing onto the coast due to tropical conditions. In combination with regular tides, storm surge can cause

significant flooding in coastal areas, and is exasperated depending on the intensity of the storm. Some problems that storm surge cause include: inland flooding, flooding in advance of a storm, dangerous debris carried by waves, severe beach erosion, and significant property damage.

Advancements in mapping have provided flood inundation maps to inform citizens of potential flood impacts during different categories of storm events where a citizen can simply type in their address on a webpage and have a visual reference of where flooding can occur around them. These tools are very helpful when planning and preparing for an event. It is important to note, however, that storm surge is merely one element of total water level rise, with tides, waves, and freshwater flow making up the other components.

Hurricanes. Records dating back to the 1600's indicate there were about 43 tropical cyclones in Charleston County before official records were started in 1851. Since then, an additional 41 tropical systems: 25 hurricanes, 10 tropical storms, and six tropical depressions, have hit or affected the Charleston region (NOAA). Seabrook Island remains vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical weather, and there is potential for this threat to increase with climate change and warming seas. Hurricanes pose many threats to the area, including wind, rainfall, and storm surge. In addition, tides can also have a major effect on the extent of hurricane-related flooding.

In 2016, the area was hit by Hurricane Matthew, which made landfall near McClellanville, SC as a Category 1 Hurricane. The storm dumped nearly a foot of rain on parts of the County, and the combination of a six-foot storm surge and strong winds led to extensive damage along the coast, despite hitting the area during a relatively low tide. Matthew resulted in water levels three to five feet higher than normal astronomical tides.

In 2017, Seabrook Island felt the effects of Hurricane Irma, which had weakened to a tropical storm before Seabrook Island felt its effects. Tropical Storm Irma swept through Charleston during an



extremely high tide, resulting in a peak storm tide recorded at almost 10 feet in the Charleston Harbor, the third highest on record in Charleston County.

**Sea Level Rise.** Sea level rise is the result of two major causes: the thermal expansion caused by warming of the ocean and increased melting of land-based ice (NOAA). The current global rate of rise is about one-eighth of an inch per year, and scientists are confident that the global mean sea level will rise from 8 inches to 6.6 feet by the year 2100 (NOAA, Climate.gov). Global sea level trends and local sea level trends are different measurements; the sea level is not changing at the same rate across all regions of the ocean. Sea level rise at specific locations may vary from the global average due to many local factors such as: land subsidence from natural processes and withdrawal of groundwater and fossil fuels; upstream flood control; erosion; changes in regional ocean currents; variations in land height; and whether the land is still rebounding from the compressive weight of Ice Age glaciers. NOAA estimates the rate at which sea levels are rising in South Carolina has been increasing, and is now around one inch of rise every two years.

**Earthquakes.** Although Seabrook Island has not had a major damaging earthquake, they regularly occur in South Carolina, and there have been several small scale earthquakes nearby, mainly clustered around Summerville. Additionally, Seabrook Island lies within a "high potential for liquefaction" area. Liquefaction is the transformation of loosely packed sediment or cohesion-less soil to a liquid state, as a result of increased pore fluid pressure and reduced effective stress, and it is caused by the ground shaking during an earthquake.

### **Community Resilience**

Charleston County defines resilience as the ability of a community to respond, adapt, and thrive under changing conditions, including, but not limited to, recurrent burdens and sudden disasters.

The Town of Seabrook Island has numerous existing tools and protective measures already in place that contribute to resilience. As detailed in the Community Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town, SIPOA, and other Seabrook Island entities and residents have addressed emergency preparedness and disaster response through a Comprehensive Emergency Plan, Disaster Recovery Council, a volunteer Community Emergency Response Team, and the preparation of an Emergency Preparedness Homepage on the Town's website. Additionally, the Town's Development Standards Ordinance Article 9.0 sets specific Environmental Performance Standards for sensitive areas.

The Town should continue to utilize the best available data, findings, strategies, and plans to develop a community resilience plan that identifies the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation efforts necessary to improve the Seabrook Island community's resilience to hazards and changing conditions. This should not be a static plan, but rather a plan that is periodically updated to address changing conditions and include the most recent data, findings, and strategies available.



### 5.3: NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT GOAL

#### *Element Goal*

*Maintain Seabrook Island's environmental integrity and natural beauty through the continuation of sustainable actions that ensure that natural systems and built structures protect habitats, create a healthy environment, and promote energy efficiency.*

#### Natural Resources Element Needs

- As the Town is further developed, an increasing amount of the Island's natural habitat is taken away;
- Development also removes the connectivity between natural habitats, putting stress on the Island's wildlife to find alternate routes to move around the Island;
- Continued monitoring and research of the island's ecosystems, and the wildlife species they support, in order to best prepare and revise current and future preservation studies, regulations, policies and procedures;
- Best available data should be taken into account when planning new developments or other projects;
- Determine areas that are at a high risk for natural hazards, evaluate development intensity regulations for these areas, and prioritize projects in these areas;
- Strengthen the Town's partnerships with surrounding jurisdictions in order to combat natural hazard issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries;
- Educate the public about their role in building resilience;

- Encourage property owners and the island entities to eliminate existing invasive plant species and discourage future use of these plants; and
- As they are the Island's key natural resources, the beach, and dunes must be maintained and protected.

### 5.4: NATURAL RESOURCES 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. Pursue the goals and support and promote the implementation of strategies contained in Section 6 of the Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Beach Management Plan.
2. Complete the Island's development in a way that maintains the Island's environmental integrity and natural beauty and is consistent with the Vision of the Town.
3. Maintain the existing quality of the natural resources on Seabrook Island, as well as the waters and marine environment surrounding the Island.
4. Maintain, expand, and support public education, outreach programs, and natural resource preservation volunteer groups.
5. Support the strategies and recommendations included in the Primary and Secondary Seabrook Island Natural Resource Preservation Documents listed in Section 5.2, *Background and Inventory of Existing Conditions*, of this Natural Resources Element.



6. Identify and pursue amendments to existing Town policies and regulations to improve the Town's resilience towards long-term stresses and acute disasters, using the best available data to inform decisions.
7. Work with adjacent jurisdictions to secure funding to perform a regional vulnerability, risk, and resilience assessment and watershed assessment.
8. Develop, adopt, and implement a Drainage Master Plan in coordination with adjacent jurisdictions.
9. Amend applicable Town ordinances to meet the Community Rating System (CRS) standards not currently addressed by the Town.



## CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Support the continuation and expansion of activities and events that ensure the diverse cultural interests of the Town's residents and visitors, including outreach events directed at neighboring communities, and identification, preservation and protection of archaeological and historic resources.*

### 6.1: OVERVIEW

According to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, the Cultural Resources Element “should consider historic buildings and structures, unique commercial or residential areas, unique natural or scenic resources, archeological sites, educational, religious or entertainment areas or institutions, and any other feature or facility relating to the cultural aspects of the community.” Many of the cultural aspects enjoyed by the Seabrook Island community are available within the town limits, while others extend to the rich cultural heritage of the region as a whole. This element identifies both the local and the regional cultural resources, and includes a review of the recreational activities, arts and cultural events, and other cultural opportunities available to the Seabrook Island community. Also included is a review of the historic and scenic areas, as well as the cultural contributions of the local and regional commercial districts. For many who reside in or visit Seabrook Island, it is the “culture” created by the opportunity for healthy recreation and social interaction that serves as the island’s primary attraction.

## 6.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Recreational Activities

These types of facilities include beaches, community pools, golf, tennis, equestrian activities, walking trails, bike paths, and recreation centers. These recreational amenities play an important role in the culture of Seabrook Island. While access to many of these amenities require membership or a SIC Amenity Card, these cards are available to property owners, residents, guests and visitors to the island and can be obtained at the Amenity Office located outside the security gate.

The Seabrook Island Club. SIC facilities include the Island House, Beach Club, Equestrian Center, Racquet Club and golf courses. The Island House includes both a formal dining restaurant overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, and a casual dining restaurant overlooking golf courses, as well as a golf pro shop and a 30,000 square foot special events venue. The Beach Club includes two oceanfront pools, a cafe, gift shop and open air pavilion style dining. The Equestrian Center is a 22-acre facility containing forty-two stalls, miles of trails and an experienced, dedicated staff. Residents of all ages and riding experience can enjoy beach and scenic trail riding all year long. The Racquet Club contains 15 clay tennis courts, pickleball courts, a clubhouse and pro shop. The Racquet Club offers lessons and clinics, as well as Junior Tennis Programs. The Crooked Oaks Golf Course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr., and the Ocean Winds Golf Course designed by Willard Byrd, wind through ocean, marsh and maritime forest surroundings. Coaching sessions and private lessons are available from a staff of PGA golf professionals. SIC also provides six unique indoor and outdoor venues for weddings, receptions, corporate retreats and other special events, including catering and state-of-the-art audio visual equipment.



**SIPOA Amenities.** Amenities offered to property owners and guests through SIPOA include the Lake House, Oyster Catcher Community Center and pool, crabbing dock, boat ramp, and nature trails. The Lake House is a 27,500 square foot community facility overlooking Palmetto Lake. It was constructed in 2009, and includes a fitness center, indoor and outdoor pools, library, and meeting rooms. In addition to fitness equipment, the Lake House hosts many popular wellness classes and events, and is home to many special interest groups that bring together Seabrookers with common interests. The Oyster Catcher Community Center includes meeting space and an outdoor pool. Additional SIPOA facilities include:

- A floating crabbing and fishing dock located in Cap'n Sams Creek for fishing and crabbing;
- A basketball court and volleyball court;
- A boat ramp where canoes, kayaks and small boats can be launched;
- A children's playground; and
- Boardwalks and four nature trails.

**Beach Access.** Perhaps the most enticing natural and cultural resource would be Seabrook Island's three and a half miles of ocean and riverfront beach, one of the longest and widest expanses of beach shoreline in the coastal Carolinas. The Town and SIPOA cooperatively manage Seabrook Island's beaches, and land adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean and portions of the North Edisto River Inlet. The original design of Seabrook Island included a full set of resident/visitor beach access points with boardwalks from the parking areas and bicycle racks onto the beach. Each of these access entry points include signage, trashcans and dispensers for dog waste bags, and both the boardwalks and the associated amenities are maintained by SIPOA.



North Beach

Photo Source: [www.discoverseabrook.com](http://www.discoverseabrook.com)

The Town of Seabrook Island's Comprehensive Beach Management Plan, more fully described in the Natural Resources Element, meets the policies and objectives of the State Beachfront Management Act and provides for the long-term preservation and management of Seabrook Island's coastline. A primary objective of this Plan is "the continuation of a beach access system for Seabrook Island residents and authorized guests that includes twelve access points that are well marked and well maintained by the property owner's association".

As described in the Discover Seabrook Amenity Guide, each of Seabrook Island's beaches has its own personality. For example, Pelican Beach (aka Sunset Beach) is characterized by soft waves, slow current and great views of evening sunsets, while North Beach (aka Atlantic Beach) is large and deep, with rolling dunes and sunrise views. Between these two beaches is The Sands at the Beach Club, which includes sunrise and sunset views, oceanfront pools and a full service bar and restaurant.



St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center. The Camp is an intentional Christian ministry of the Diocese of South Carolina. It is located on over 314 acres of beach, maritime forest and undisturbed salt marsh on Seabrook Island. While it started as a summer camp for disadvantaged boys in 1938, the Camp has grown into a full-fledged, year-round conference facility. Summer camp still continues in the summers and for over thirty years the Barrier Island Environmental Education Program has provided an amazing outdoor education experience for school children during the school year.

The Camp is, at its core, a ministry. The ministry maintains a complete conference center for both large and small groups, as well as individuals seeking personal retreats. The conference center is fully equipped to provide lodging, meeting rooms, worship spaces, audio-visual support and excellent dining, all in a stunning location. A primary function of the conference center is to host ministry events, and the Camp has gifted staff who are ready to serve in leading musical worship, biblical teaching and preaching, and prayer ministry.

Other Recreational Activities. Many residents and visitors to Seabrook Island take advantage of the rental options readily available to enjoy the outdoors. Bikes, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards and electric low-speed vehicles can all be rented by the day, and beach chairs, umbrellas and beach carts can be delivered to residences within the community. For more adventurous outings, the Charter Office located at the Bohicket Marina and Market is a one stop shop for sailing tours, fishing charters, stand-up paddleboard lessons and rentals, and even a kid-friendly pirate adventure cruise on the Black Ghost Pirate Ship.



Bohicket Marina

*Photo Source: www.bohicket.com*

### **Arts and Cultural Events**

Seabrook Island residents and visitors have ample opportunity to enjoy local and regional arts and cultural events unique to the Lowcountry.

Local Arts and Cultural Events. There are a number of recurring local cultural events that take place on or near Seabrook Island. Seabrook Island entities sponsor many of these events, which have included:

- An Easter Service, egg hunt, and brunch;
- Mother's Day Celebration;
- Annual Racquet Club Championships;
- Island-wide Spring Fling and BBQ;
- Memorial Day Weekend Charleston Symphony Orchestra Concert;
- Father's Day Steak Night Dinner;
- Summer Art Show at The Lakehouse;
- Island-wide Independence Day Celebration;
- Alan Fleming Tennis Tournament;
- Island-wide Fall Halloween Festival;



- Veteran’s Day Charitable Golf Outing;
- Thanksgiving Buffet;
- Annual Turkey Trot (5K Race);
- Tree Lighting at The Lakehouse; and
- Annual New Year’s Eve Event

The commercial entities of Bohicket Marina and Freshfields Village provide an impressive list of annual local cultural opportunities, including:

Bohicket Marina

- Annual Oyster Roast
- Annual Dolphin Slam Tournament
- Backpack Buddies Chili Cook-Off
- Billfish Tournament
- Bohicket-Charleston 5K/10K Run
- Family Fall Festival
- Holiday Festival/Boat Parade/Sunset & Santa
- “Kids Fish”
- “Kick It at Bohicket” Marina

Freshfields Village

- Fall Sip & Stroll
- Farmer’s Market
- Memorial Day Weekend Concert Series
- Music on the Green
- Spring Festival Weekend
- Starlight Cinema

Other Local Venues

- Charleston Cup – Steeplechase (Stono Ferry)
- Charleston Symphony Orchestra (Kiawah Island)
- Holiday Kid’s Festival & Photos w/ Santa @ Freshfields

Regional Arts and Cultural Events. Nearby Charleston truly provides the opportunity to experience world class arts and culture. Food is central to Charleston and is served up in high-end restaurants, outdoor cafes, and local hot-spots throughout Charleston. Even the many Charleston food trucks bringing their unique eats to festivals and special events enjoy name recognition. A full spectrum of live music and performing arts are available year-round on stages throughout the Charleston Region, including:

- Charleston Gilliard Center
- Charleston Music Hall
- Charleston Performing Arts Center
- Charleston Pour House
- Flowertown Players
- Music Farm
- North Charleston Coliseum and Performing Arts Center
- PURE Theater
- Sottile Theater
- Theater 99
- Woolfe Street Playhouse

Many annual festivals and special events showcase the rich cultural identity of the Charleston Region and include:

- Annual Lowcountry Oyster Festival (Boone Hall Plantation)
- Charleston Fashion Week
- Charleston Restaurant Week
- Charleston Wine and Food Festival
- Cooper River Bridge Run (10K race)
- Festival of Houses and Gardens
- Flowertown Festival Highwater Festival
- Holiday Festival of Lights
- Lowcountry Cajun Festival
- MOJA Arts Festival



- Piccolo Spoleto Festival
- Southeastern Wildlife Expedition
- Spoleto Festival USA
- Volvo Car Open Tennis Tournament
- World Grits Festival

Downtown Charleston also boasts numerous art galleries, museums, the South Carolina Aquarium, world-class shopping on King Street, and a vibrant and safe nightlife that flourishes throughout the year.

### **Cultural Opportunities through Volunteerism, and Social and Special Interest Groups**

Volunteerism. As noted on the Discover Seabrook Volunteer Opportunities webpage, “part of any great community is its volunteer force”. This webpage lists volunteer opportunities available to Seabrook Island residents, complete with a link to the volunteer organization website (if applicable), the volunteer tasks associated with the organization, the overall mission of the organization and whether the organization/volunteer duties are located on or off the island. From the webpage, community members can also add volunteer organizations and become a contact. Currently, the following volunteer organizations are listed on the volunteer webpage ([www.discoverseabrook.com/live-here/volunteer/](http://www.discoverseabrook.com/live-here/volunteer/)):

- Adopt-a-Highway;
- Backpack Buddies – Seabrook Island
- Barrier Island Free Medical Clinic
- Begin with Books
- Charleston Friends of the Library
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation – SC Chapter
- Darkness to Light
- Edmondston-Alston House
- Exchange Club

- Fields to Families
- Hospice of Charleston
- Johns Island Regional Library
- Lowcountry Orphan Relief
- Meals on Monday
- Mt. Zion Elementary School Volunteer Program
- One80 Place
- Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach
- Pet Helpers
- Reading Partners
- Respite Care Charleston
- Sea Island Habitat for Humanity
- Seabrook Island Turtle Patrol
- Stono Blessing Basket
- Sweetgrass Garden

SIPOA Special Interest Groups. Another Discover Seabrook webpage is dedicated to Seabrook Island’s social and special interest groups. The long list of groups available to Seabrook Island community members truly provide something for everyone. As noted on the webpage, “there are groups for those with a penchant for games (such as Mahjongg Mavens and the Social Bridge club), nature (such as the Seabrook Island Natural History Group, Garden Club and Turtle Patrol), reading (such as the Seabrook Book Club and Exploring Books) and art (such as the Artist Guild, Seabrook Island Photography Club and the Seabrook Stitchers).” The “SIPOA special interest groups contact information” is available from the webpage, and includes the Group names and contacts ([www.discoverseabrook.com/live-here/social-groups/](http://www.discoverseabrook.com/live-here/social-groups/)).

### **Archeological Sites and Historic Places**

While no sites on Seabrook Island were identified to be of historic significance in any of the three historic surveys, several locations/structures in close proximity to Seabrook Island were



identified as historically significant. These historic locations and structures are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- Bass Pond Site, Kiawah Island (Pre-historic).
- Johns Island Presbyterian Church, Johns Island (1719);
- John Seabrook Plantation Bridge, Wadmalaw Island (1782);
- Fenwick Hall Plantation, Johns Island (1787);
- Arnoldus Vander Horst House, Kiawah Island (1802);
- Rockville Historic District, Wadmalaw Island (1860);
- Moving Star Hall, Johns Island (1917);
- The Progressive Club, Johns Island (1963);

### 6.3: CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT GOAL

#### *Element Goal*

*Support the continuation and expansion of activities and events that ensure the diverse cultural interests of the Town's residents and visitors, including outreach events directed at neighboring communities, and identification, preservation and protection of archaeological and historic resources.*

#### Cultural Resources Element Needs:

- Ensuring that the cultural interests and needs of the Town's differing population components are met by providing a diversity of programs;
- Supporting the continuation and expansion of cultural events and programs in the Town, including outreach events directed at neighboring communities; and

- Improve coordination between the groups associated with cultural resources, including the Town and SIPOA special interest groups. A good example of this is the continued coordination and cooperation between the Camp and the Seabrook Island Natural History Group.

### 6.4: CULTURAL RESOURCE 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. Encourage the development of programs and services that improve the delivery of cultural activities to all of Seabrook Island and its visitors.
2. Continue to promote cultural events using the Town's accommodations tax revenue that is allocated to the advertising and promotion special fund.



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Coordinate and cooperate with all public and private Seabrook Island entities to ensure the well-being of residents and visitors through the provision of superior community facilities, the assurance of high quality emergency preparedness, and the promise of a safe and secure island community.*

### 7.1 OVERVIEW

The broad heading of community facilities includes the buildings, amenities, lands and services needed to serve the public health, safety and welfare which comprise things such as adequate fire and police protection, access to health and emergency medical care, emergency preparedness, places for recreation and quality schools. How these community facilities are planned, constructed, operated and maintained greatly impacts the quality of life for the residents of that community.

### 7.2 BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

In most communities, a city or town government is the principal provider of community facilities and services. The Town of Seabrook Island is unique because many of the community services and facilities typically provided by municipal government are provided and maintained by private entities or other governmental entities. The Town coordinates and works with several entities and agencies to sufficiently provide adequate public facilities and services to residents. Many of the facilities and services are provided or administered by Town government or private entities, while others are provided through cooperative agreements with county and state agencies.

### Administrative Facilities

Seabrook Island Town Hall. The Town of Seabrook Island is the municipal governing body, and the Town Hall is located at 2001 Seabrook Island Road. Town Hall holds the administrative offices and functions as the primary location for conducting the official business for the Town of Seabrook Island. Town Hall's council chambers provide meeting space for Town Council, and various Town boards and commissions, and may also be rented out for private events. Functionally, Town Hall is at capacity. In order for the Town to add additional services, such as more permitting and code enforcement, additional administrative space would be required either through the construction of an attached or detached annex facility, or an entirely new Town Hall.



Seabrook Island Town Hall

Some municipal functions are provided by the County on behalf of the Town. The majority of County administration takes place at the Lonnie Hamilton III Public Service Building located at 4045 Bridgeview Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405.



Entry Road and Shared Use Path. Seabrook Island Road is a beautifully landscaped entryway that extends from the Freshfields traffic circle to the gated Seabrook Island community. The road is flanked on one side by a sidewalk with heavy landscaping and open marsh views, and on the other side by a shared use path meandering behind a rustic three-rail fence and tree line. The Town maintains this open space, which is within the right-of-way on the sidewalk side, and contained within easements on the shared path side. This easement has been described on a recorded “Plat of a Variable Width Path Easement to be Acquired by the Town of Seabrook Island.”



Shared Use Path, Seabrook Island Road

Source: ©2018 Google, Image Capture June 2016.

### Utilities and Infrastructure

Utilities include those services that are significant to the residents and businesses of a community, including the provision of water, wastewater disposal, solid waste disposal, and electricity. In addition to the services being essential to residents and businesses, utilities impact the future growth and sustainability of any community.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Services. The original Seabrook Island water system was installed by the initial developers of Seabrook Island in 1971. Soon afterwards these utilities were turned over to the private company Heater of Seabrook, LLC. This company operated and managed the water system until the utility company was purchased by the Town in 1995. This purchase required the simple majority vote of Seabrook Island property owners *who lived on the island*, and many of these Seabrookers helped with the financing by purchasing bonds. Soon after taking control of the utility company, the Town passed an ordinance to create the SIUC, with the primary responsibility of the commission being to oversee all drinking water distribution and wastewater treatment on Seabrook Island. Also in 1995, SIUC contracted with the global professional services corporation, Hawthorn, to provide on-site operations management and employees to operate and maintain all Seabrook Island water and wastewater facilities. The Town currently continues to contract with Louis Berger to provide these services.

The clean water distributed to the Town is initially treated by the Charleston Water System. This water is then pumped onward to the St. Johns Island Water Company located on Johns Island, who then pumps the water to Seabrook Island. Once the clean water makes it to the island, it is held in three 500,000-gallon storage tanks. Two of these tanks are located at the municipal wastewater treatment facility located at 2902 Seabrook Island Road, and the third is located in the elevated tank near the fire station located at 3025 Captain Sam’s Road. The water in this elevated tank provides the pressure necessary for water distribution throughout Seabrook Island.

There is a water master meter located near the roundabout junction of Betsy Kerrison Parkway and Seabrook Island Road. St. Johns Water company bills the Town for all water that passes through this master meter, and in turn, the Town bills its “customers” based on local meters monitoring water use on individual properties. Louis Berger provides the billing services for the Town, including handling



payments, budgeting, accounting, meter-reading, billing and collection services.

The potable water distribution system physical facilities include water storage tanks, pump stations, distribution lines and water meters. The distribution system received a \$2.0 million upgrade in 2006, adding the two 500,000-gallon ground storage tanks, a high service pump station, 20,000 linear feet of 20-inch water main and 17,800 linear feet of 16-inch water main. All wastewater leaving homes and businesses on Seabrook Island is treated at the municipal water treatment facility. While this water is not potable, it meets the standards for irrigation use and is pumped from the treatment plant to ponds on the island to be used in irrigation on the

million-gallon reservoir. In 2008, the wastewater treatment facility received a \$2.2 million FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant that funded upgrades to help stormproof the plant from a 500-year coastal storm surge. In 2013, the treatment plant received a \$1.7 million upgrade and expansion to provide a safer system of wastewater treatment, improve plant performance and protect public health. The system currently provides service to all of Seabrook Island and the off-island commercial and residential developments of Freshfields, Kiawah River Estates and Cassique. According to SIUC, there are many years of capacity left in the current system, which includes taking into consideration any anticipated additional development on Seabrook Island, and to provide service to areas outside of the Town's limits under existing



Seabrook Island Water Tower  
Photo Source: [www.louisberger.com](http://www.louisberger.com)



Seabrook Island Utility Commission Water Reservoir  
Photo Source: Sue Holloman, *Tidelines*, July 2018.

golf courses.

The physical facilities that make up the wastewater treatment system include collection lines, lift stations and the central wastewater treatment plant. The plant contains aeration basins, clarifying tanks, chlorine contact holding basins and a twenty-

contractual commitments.

Stormwater System. Recent hurricanes and flooding have highlighted the important role of stormwater systems in the Lowcountry. SIPOA owns and maintains approximately 71,000 linear feet (LF) of the approximately 127,000 LF of stormwater pipe



on Seabrook Island. This system conveys surface drainage, and is a completely separate system from the wastewater treatment system maintained by SIUC.

The Town of Seabrook Island's Comprehensive Beach Management Plan (BMP) provides a good description of how the system handles stormwater runoff. The BMP notes that Seabrook Island is fortunate that its roads, golf courses, private properties and other surfaces that generate storm water runoff into a system of storm drains empty into marshes and ponds and not onto or across the beaches. Even in the case where properties are adjacent to the beach, such as some residential lots, SIC commercial property, and the Camp facility, most of the runoff from that portion of the property that tilts towards the beach is absorbed by a deep sandy base before it reaches the beach.

SIPOA has been engaged in a stormwater rehabilitation program since 2004. In the past, this program has primarily focused its resources on rehabilitating older corrugated metal pipes that cross roads and are in known poor condition. In 2016, a Stormwater Rehabilitation Program Report was prepared for SIPOA. While the report noted that SIPOA's rehabilitation efforts have served as an effective strategy in previous years, since the condition of all of the pipes in the system vary greatly, future stormwater rehabilitation efforts should be based on two characteristics; pipe condition and impact from failure. The report recommends a new method of pipe rehabilitation based on the use of a prioritization matrix. The new method allows the condition and the impact from failure to be taken into account, and will make the pipe rehabilitation recommendations more accurate than in the past. The report includes prioritized recommendations, including cost projections, and serves as a guide for future stormwater rehabilitation efforts.

SIPOA Properties. The purpose and business of SIPOA is to preserve the property values and the quality of life in the Seabrook Island Development. Many properties within the Seabrook Island Development have been deeded, leased or otherwise conveyed to

or held in trust for the benefit of SIPOA or property owners. These properties include private roads, bridges, parks, playgrounds, open space, rights-of-way, and easements. A primary responsibility of SIPOA is to acquire, construct, manage, maintain and care for these properties, including land, structures, systems and equipment, for the general benefit of the property owners.

Electricity. Berkeley Electric Cooperative is the non-profit electricity provider to Seabrook Island. The utility is the largest electric cooperative in South Carolina, and currently serves the needs of Seabrook Island from its Johns Island District Office located at 3351 Maybank Highway. Construction of a new district office located on Main Road on Johns Island has recently broken ground. The new office will be located on a larger site, and has been designed to meet the future electric needs of the district, including better response times during power outages.

As a non-profit, the primary Berkeley Electric Cooperative goal is to support the growth and economic development of the communities it serves. The utility provides consistent service on a daily basis, and has continued to show improvement in response time to reported power outages. The utility plays an important role in the Town's Emergency Response and Recovery Plan, including communicating directly with the Town's emergency operations official regarding expected power outages and restoration. As a response to increased flooding and hurricane threats in recent years, the Town of Seabrook Island, SIPOA, and Berkeley Electric Cooperative have been working together to identify the necessary steps to improve the Town's emergency preparedness.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling. SIPOA contracts for waste collection and maintains the garbage and yard debris collection schedule for all single family and multi-family dwelling units within the association. Weekly curbside pickup of household garbage, recyclables and yard debris is available to single family homes. Back door service and centralized pickup of household garbage and recyclables is available to multi-family villas and condominiums.



Twelve times per year pick up of brown goods (larger household materials such as furniture and computers) and white goods (heavy consumer durables such as air conditioners and refrigerators) are scheduled for pickup for both single family homes and multi-family villas and condominiums.

Hazardous materials are accepted at the SIPOA Maintenance Facility located at 292 Seabrook Island Road. A garbage compactor is also available at this facility for the convenience of property owners and tenants. In addition, Charleston County staffs a recycling convenience center and drop site at 1558 Liberia Road on Wadmalaw Island. This convenience center accepts a wide range of trash, yard debris and recyclables, and is available to all residents of Charleston County.

In June 2018, the Town awarded a debris management services contract with the Tennessee-based civil contractor Phillips & Jordan to provide timely debris clean up following natural disasters. This is a standby contract, and potential services will include clearing debris from roads and rights-of-way, debris clean-up, separation, removal, processing, and disposal, sand/soil/mud removal from roads and rights-of-way, temporary office space for Town functions, project management assistance, and other services as directed by the Town to eliminate immediate threats to public health and safety and/or threats of significant damage to public or private property.

Rostan Solutions, under a separate contract, will provide the on-call debris removal monitoring services. The services provided by Rostan Solutions is independent of Phillips & Jordan, and this independent monitoring activity is a requirement for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) financial reimbursement for all emergency and major disaster declarations. A similar contract arrangement is in place between Phillips & Jordan and SIPOA with regard to debris clean-up.

Communication. Seabrook Island has two main wired providers: XFINITY from Comcast and AT&T (BellSouth) Internet. Both of

these companies provide residential internet access that covers most areas of Seabrook Island. Comcast Cable and AT&T (BellSouth) have non-exclusive franchise agreements with the Town, and the Town collects a franchise fee for cable and internet services associated with each. HughesNet is an additional residential internet provider. There are five mobile internet providers on Seabrook Island: AT&T Wireless, Sprint, Verizon Wireless, Cricket, and T-Mobile.

**Public Safety and Security**

The Town does not operate its own police or security force. There are three entities that provide security and law enforcement in some capacity for the community: The Charleston County Sheriff's Department, private security contracted by SIPOA, and beach patrol contracted by the Town.

Charleston County Sheriff's Department.

The Charleston County Sheriff's Department provides investigative support, and the Town is within the department's West Patrol District. While the department responds to 911 calls, detects and apprehends offenders, and responds to the law enforcement needs and expectations of the Seabrook Island community, the department does not actively patrol beyond the security gate on Seabrook Island. Security inside the gates is provided by a security firm privately contracted by SIPOA.



Additional Charleston County Contracted Services. The Town also contracts with Charleston County for other public safety and security services. These services include building permitting and code inspections, roads and drainage (outside the gates), and mosquito control. In addition, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) is responsible for issuing water and coastal permits as well as stormwater permits.



SIPOA Security. As stated in the SIPOA Protective Covenants, one primary purpose of the association is to protect property values and quality of life in the Seabrook Island development by “providing for the health, safety, security and welfare of property owners.” The SIPOA Rules and Regulations, which are based on the protective covenants, state that “security is authorized to observe and take reasonable steps to prevent trespass, property damage, personal injury, theft, vandalism, nuisance, disturbance, or failure to adhere to these Rules and Regulations.” As of October, 2017, SIPOA has contracted with the private security firm Norred and Associates to provide these patrol and security services.

The security firm ensures 24-hour security by staffing the security gate and maintaining continuous patrol behind the gate in three daily 8-hour shifts. The security gate serves as the only land-based entrance point onto the Seabrook Island Development, and provides two lanes of access. The “barcode lane” provides access to those property owners, contractors, and other authorized individuals who have been issued a barcode that is automatically scanned to activate the security gate traffic control arm. The “visitor lane” requires a higher level of scrutiny, where visitors with valid gate passes are waved through, while those without gate passes are verified for access utilizing the gates computer software system or by security directly contacting the “sponsors” identified by the visitor.

State law empowers private security officers to make arrests for observed offenses on the property they are protecting for violations of State Laws. Violators of State Laws within the SID are subject to arrest and detention until turned over to Charleston County law enforcement officers. Security may also issue citations for any violation of the SIPOA Rules and Regulations. These citations can be in the form of a warning notice, or for some initial and repeated violations, may result in a monetary assessment ranging from \$50 to \$1,000. Security officers can cite an individual for violating a wide range of rules and regulations, including traffic and vehicle rules,

use of SIPOA Amenities, environmental protections, property maintenance and code of conduct standards.

Seabrook Island Beach Patrol. The Town recently began contracted with Island Beach Services, LLC, to provide beach patrol on Seabrook Island. This company retains trained professionals who have been commissioned as Seabrook Island code enforcement officers. They are responsible for keeping beachgoers safe and enforcing town ordinances and leash laws. In 2018, the patrol season extended from April 1 to September 4. Historically this contract has been partially funded through the Accommodations Tax, and the company provides Town Hall with weekly status reports.



Seabrook Island Beach Patrol  
Photo Source: Sue Holloman, Tidelines, June 2018.

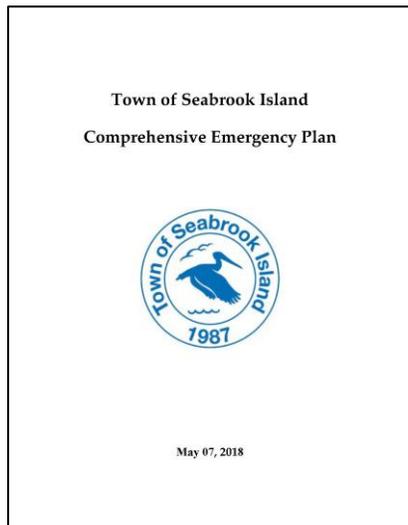
Seabrook Island Public Safety Committee. The Town maintains a Public Safety Committee as a standing committee consisting of one councilmember serving as the Town’s Public Safety Official, plus



additional at-large members to be determined by the assigned councilmember and approved by the town council. The Public Safety Committee meets monthly and reports to Town Council. A primary role of the committee is to periodically review the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Plan and make recommendations to Town Council for updates and improvements to the Plan. Additional information regarding emergency preparedness and the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Plan is provided later in this chapter.

### Emergency Response - Fire and EMS

St. Johns Fire District. The South Carolina Legislative Act 369 created the St. John's Fire District in April of 1959. The District is comprised of four barrier islands (Johns, Kiawah, Seabrook and Wadmalaw) covering a land mass of approximately 185 square miles. The district has seven fully staffed fire stations including Fire Station 2, located on Seabrook Island at 3025 Captain Sam's Road. The St. John's Fire District is under the command of one battalion chief, and is governed by a nine-member commission which is appointed by the Governor based on recommendations by the mayor and confirmed by Charleston County Council.



Seabrook Island has representation on this commission, which participates in monthly commission meetings and other functions as necessary.

The Seabrook Island Fire Station maintains Ladder 702, a 2013 Pierce Impel 75' aluminum ladder truck housed at the fire station, and Marine 701, a 2012 Metal Craft Marine Fire Brand 28 fire boat,

housed at the Bohicket Marina. In responding to emergency calls on Seabrook Island, the crew for Ladder 702 consists of an engineer (driver), two firefighters, and a captain. Approximately 80 percent of these calls are medical related, and at least one member of the responding crew is EMT Certified. The St. Johns fire boat is under the operation of the Seabrook fire station and works closely with the Coast Guard to respond to rescue or fire events on marine craft. There is always one member of the crew at the station certified to operate the fire boat.

The crew works 24-hour shifts, and those not EMT certified are in the process of attaining the certification. Every crewmember receives medical training from the St. Johns Fire District headquarters every three weeks. In addition, each crew member has basic cardiac and trauma training and experience with AEDs (automated external defibrillators), EpiPen® and NARCAN®.

Charleston County Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Charleston County EMS Department is responsible for the provision of EMS throughout Charleston County, which includes the Town of Seabrook Island. In 2018, the system responded to approximately 57,000 9-1-1 calls for service countywide. Services are provided with a fleet of more than 24 paramedic staffed ambulances, 12 paramedic staffed quick response vehicles, and an assigned operational workforce of over 200 EMS personnel. Calls for emergency medical services for Seabrook Island are typically dispatched from the Charleston County EMS Medic Station 10, located at 4305 Betsy Kerrison Parkway. All response units feature Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) equipment, a GPS-based system that allows the Charleston County Consolidated Dispatch Center to dispatch the closest available units to any incident. This equipment includes an integrated application for both navigation and routing. The Charleston County EMS Department has been acknowledged as a leader in the provision of pre-hospital emergency care, receiving the South Carolina's EMS Award of Excellence and being recognized as the 2010 National EMS System of the Year.



Consolidated 911 Center. Based on requests of public safety/community leaders and recognizing response delays inherent in having multiple 9-1-1 call taking and dispatching operations in the County, the Charleston County Consolidated 911 Center was formed through an Intergovernmental Agreement authorized by County Council. The Consolidated 9-1-1 Center is a 38,000 square foot facility housed together with the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and currently has a total call volume of over 1 million calls per year. The center dispatches for nearly twenty agencies, including the following agencies that respond to emergencies on Seabrook Island:

- Charleston County Sheriff's Office;
- Charleston County Emergency Medical Services;
- Charleston County Volunteer Rescue Squad; and
- St. Johns Fire District.

AirMedCare Services. The Town of Seabrook Island has contracted with AirMedCare to provide air ambulance services to its residents. According to the agreement, for a nominal annual cost to the Town, AirMedCare agrees to accept as full payment whatever a resident's medical insurer allows as payment for air transport. Air ambulances most commonly carry patients with traumatic injuries, pregnancy complications, heart attacks, strokes and respiratory distress. On-scene doctors, firefighters or paramedics must make the call on whether air transport is medically necessary.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

The Comprehensive Emergency Plan. The Town maintains and periodically updates a Comprehensive Emergency Plan. This plan, most recently updated in May of 2019, provides strategies and fundamental elements of response and recovery originally prepared through a series of planning meetings with the Mayor, Town Council, Town Administrator, SIC, and others as necessary. The Town's Public Safety Official, along with other members of the

Public Safety Committee, take ownership, maintain and test the plan.

This plan addresses the responsibilities of the Town's personnel, elected and appointed officials, and services provided to its residents. However, as stated in the plan, "this plan does not attempt to address the individual responsibilities and preparations required by the Town's residents or other entities, such as SIPOA, SIC, or the Camp. Those organizations are responsible for their own plans and efforts." While this language clarifies the intended scope of the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Plan, it clearly understates the important work of Seabrook Island's Disaster Recovery Council. This Council's membership includes representatives from Town government, SIPOA, SIC, SIUC, the Camp, the St. Johns Fire District Commissioner, and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Disaster Recovery Council has worked cooperatively for several years to test and improve the Town's Comprehensive Emergency Plan. The council's primary function is to provide an overview of recovery following an emergency. They also focus on improving disaster recovery by conducting training scenarios twice per year and holding "lessons learned" meetings following all emergency recoveries.

The Comprehensive Emergency Plan includes a detailed risk assessment, a business impact analysis, a thorough description of the Town's responsibilities during emergency operations, and detailed reference information that ranges from emergency role assignments and Town Hall shut down procedures, to templates used to communicate with the community. The Plan also includes each of the emergency response memoranda of understanding (MOUs) created between the Town and entities represented on the Disaster Recovery Council. There are various threat-specific plans included in the Comprehensive Emergency Plan, including an Emergency Response and Recovery Plan, Hurricane Plan, Earthquake Plan, Tsunami Plan, and Pandemic Plan. The Town also follows the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The



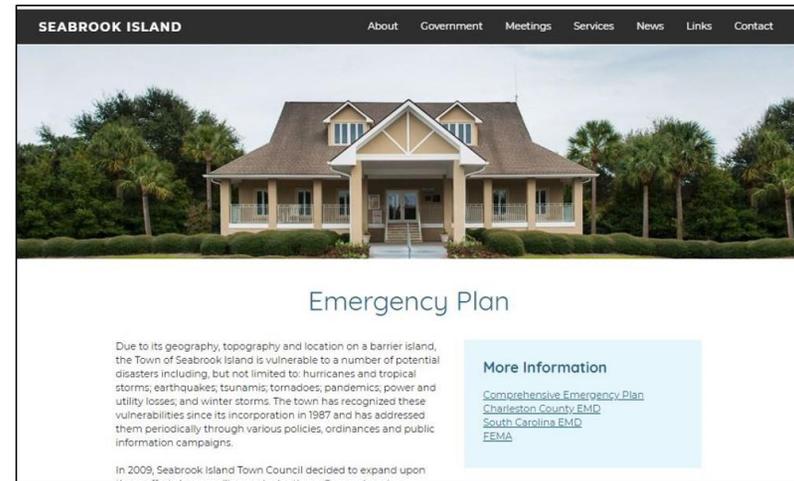
Comprehensive Emergency Plan is available for download from the Town website.

The Emergency Preparedness Webpage. The homepage of the Town’s website provides a direct link to the Town’s Emergency Preparedness webpage, which is specifically designed to provide emergency preparedness information for Seabrook Island residents and visitors. Emergency readiness information available from this webpage includes the specific steps the Town encourages all residents and visitors to take to prepare themselves for threats from various disaster events, including preparing personal emergency supply kits and evacuation plans, how to sign up for the CodeRED community alert system, and the available emergency response-related volunteer opportunities.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Also included on the Town’s Emergency Preparedness webpage is information on how to become a Seabrook Island CERT volunteer. The CERT is comprised of volunteers willing and trained to render first response assistance. Volunteers are trained in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and first response aid for injured persons. This team of volunteers play a critical role in the Town’s emergency response preparedness, as CERT members are ready to deploy following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

**Private Recreational Facilities**

Many of the community facilities on Seabrook Island providing recreational amenities to Seabrook Island residents are maintained and operated by either SIPOA or SIC. These types of facilities include two beaches (Atlantic Beach and Edisto Beach), community pools, golf, tennis, soccer, volleyball courts, basketball courts, equestrian activities, walking trails, bike paths, a small boat ramp for canoes and kayaks, a fishing and crabbing dock, an observation tower, a children’s playground, and recreation centers. As a resort community, these recreational amenities play an important role in



**Emergency Plan Homepage**

Source: [www.townofseabrookisland.org/emergency-plan](http://www.townofseabrookisland.org/emergency-plan)

the culture of Seabrook Island. In recognition of this, the detailed description of recreation-related community facilities is addressed in the Cultural Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

**Off-Island Community Facilities**

In addition to Charleston County Sheriff and EMS, there are other community facilities located off Seabrook Island that provide services available to its residents. These include educational facilities, library facilities, and public parks and recreation facilities.

Educational Facilities. Charleston County School District (CCSD) is divided into eight constituent districts educating a combined total of nearly 50,000 students in 48 elementary schools, 132 middle schools, 12 high schools, four alternative schools, and nine charter schools. All of Seabrook Island is within Constituent District 9, and the home school options for elementary, middle and high school are all located on Johns Island:



- *Mt. Zion Elementary School*, located at 3464 River Road and serving Child Development/Pre-Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- *Haut Gap Middle School*, located at 1861 Bohicket Road and serving 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This school also serves as a partial magnet school with a focus on academic studies in English and the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Program.
- *St. John's High School*, located at 1518 Main Road, and serving 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

There are also private education facilities (K-12) available to Seabrook Island residents. Private educational facilities are not regulated by the South Carolina Department of Education or by the Charleston County School District. Of the 44 private schools in Charleston County educating 9,430 students, 70 percent of the schools are religiously affiliated. The average private high school tuition in Charleston County is \$14,443 per year, as compared to a national average of \$13,524. Sixteen of the private schools in Charleston County meet the accreditation criteria of The South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA), including the Charleston Collegiate School located on Johns Island and serving Pre-school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

There are more than 25 institutions of higher learning in the Charleston region, including five schools with enrollments in excess of 1,000 students:

- *Trident Technical College* – a public school offering 2- and 4-year specialized programs with a current enrollment of 17,489 students;
- *The College of Charleston* – a public school offering liberal arts education, 7 programs of study and 17 masters programs with a current enrollment of 10,000 undergraduate students and 1,500 graduate students.
- *The Citadel* – a public school offering study under a classical military system to 2,300 undergraduate students, and

- another 1,000 students attending the civilian evening and online Citadel Graduate College;
- *Charleston Southern University* – a private school offering 33 majors as well as masters programs in business administration, criminal justice and education with a current enrollment of 3,362 students; and
- *Medical University of Charleston* – providing medical degrees to over 2,600 students through the Colleges of Dental Medicine, Medicine, Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Nursing, and Pharmacy.

Many of these institutions, including Trident Technical College, the College of Charleston and The Citadel, provide Continuing Education (noncredit) programs and courses across an array of fields and disciplines. While some of these courses lead to nationally recognized professional certificates, others are designed to challenge and stimulate lifelong learners. Under broad topics such as healthcare, personal enrichment, and computer information and technology, there are local continuing education classes such as CPR and First Aid, Floral and Interior Design, and Digital Photography.

Library Facilities. The Charleston County Public Library (CCPL) is an independent authority component of Charleston County Government that was established by the State of South Carolina Legislature to provide library services to the residents of Charleston County. A County Council-appointed Board of Trustees directs library activities, and CCPL currently provides resources for every age group, from infants to retirees, at 16 branch locations and through bookmobile and online services. Library branches serve the informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs of the community in which they are located.

The closest CCPL branch library is the John's Island Regional Library located at 3531 Maybank Highway. The 16,000 square foot regional library was opened in 2004. The facility provides an



auditorium, a smaller conference room and a children's story hour room. The collections are comprised of nearly 92,000 volumes, DVDs, videos, books on CD and music on CD. Approximately 40 computers serve the communities of John's Island, Kiawah, Seabrook and Wadmalaw. However, the most convenient library available to Seabrook Island property owners and their guests is the lending library located on Seabrook Island at The Lake House. This wonderful resource has continued to grow over the years thanks to generous donations from the Seabrook Island community.

Public Parks and Recreation. As stated earlier in this chapter, there are many private recreational amenities on Seabrook Island maintained and operated by either SIPOA or SIC, and these amenities are described in detail in the Cultural Resources Element of this Comprehensive Plan. Residents of Seabrook Island also have convenient access to a beach park and regional park provided through the Charleston County Parks & Recreation Commission (CCPRC)

The CCPRC is set up as a special district, meaning it is a separate governmental entity rather than a department or division of Charleston County Government, nor the State of South Carolina. The CCPRC features over 11,000 acres of property and includes four regional parks, three beach parks, four seasonally-lifeguarded beach areas, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, a historic plantation site, 19 boat landings, a skate park, a climbing wall, a challenge course, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, vacation cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting, and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services including festivals, camps, classes, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more. The two parks within the system that are closest to Seabrook Island are Kiawah Beachwalker Park located at 8 Beachwalker Drive, and the Johns Island County Park, which includes the Mullett Hall Equestrian Center.

Kiawah Beachwalker Park, located on the west end of Kiawah Island, offers ocean frontage and a river view, along with the only public beach access on Kiawah Island. The park is operated through a cooperative agreement between Kiawah Development Partners, Charleston County Council, and the Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission. Year-round amenities include a dressing area, vending machines, picnic areas with grills, restrooms, a boardwalk and accessible ramp for people with disabilities. During summer months, amenities are expanded to include beach chair and umbrella rentals, lifeguards, outdoor showers, and a snack bar. The park's access, parking and erosion issues are currently being evaluated, and one capital project identified for the park is the replacement of the existing boardwalk.

The 738-acre Johns Island County Park offers miles of wooded trails for equestrians, walkers, and runners, serves as host site for competitive horse shows at its Mullett Hall Equestrian Center, and offers a six-target archery range and 20-target 3-D course. The park also serves as a venue for weddings, animal exhibitions/shows, festivals, craft shows, and car expositions. Long term plans for the park include more accessible open space, a dog park, and further investment into the equestrian center.



### 7.3: COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT GOAL

#### *Element Goal*

*Coordinate and cooperate with all public and private Seabrook Island entities to ensure the well-being of residents and visitors through the provision of superior community facilities, the assurance of high quality emergency preparedness, and the promise of a safe and secure island community.*

#### **Community Facilities Element Needs:**

- Cooperate and coordinate with all private and public organizations on Seabrook Island for the provision of essential community services and facilities;
- Ensure the health and safety of Seabrook Island residents and visitors through a continuation of the Town's efforts to prepare for future emergency and disaster events;
- Cooperate with SIPOA and SIC to identify and achieve identified community goals;
- Work cooperatively with SIPOA and other entities to continue to ensure quality and dependable security for residents, non-resident property owners and visitors; and
- With town hall at functional capacity, there is a need for increased administrative space to allow for the expansion of Town services. Consideration should be given to a shared facility that is located outside of the entry gate, appropriate to meet the needs of both the Town and SIPOA administrative staff, and also serves as the official Seabrook Island Visitors Center.

### 7.4: COMMUNITY FACILITIES 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. Coordinate with all public and private organizations for the provision of essential community services.
2. Monitor, sustain and revise as necessary, all emergency preparedness plans, and communicate such plans to property owner and visitor populations.
3. Maintain professional development and training for Town Council, boards, committees and staff.
4. Work cooperatively with all public and private organizations in seeking funding opportunities to improve and expand public and private facilities and services.
5. Collaborate with Charleston County Emergency Medical Services and St. John's Fire District emergency personnel to ensure Town residents are serviced efficiently.
6. Encourage medical groups to become permanently established in closer proximity to Seabrook Island to provide adequate medical facilities for residents.
7. Encourage alternative energy sources such as wind and solar energy systems, where appropriate.
8. Evaluate, and improve as needed the accessibility for people with disabilities to all public access facilities in the Town.
9. Appoint a task force or committee to evaluate the feasibility of creating additional administrative space through the construction of an attached annex facility, or an entirely new



administrative building. The evaluation should include consideration of a joint Town/SIPOA administrative facility.

10. Work with Charleston County to improve efficiency and coordination of services provided to the Town.
11. Working in coordination with SIUC, gain a better understanding of the legal commitments associated with extending utilities to areas outside the Town's jurisdiction.



## HOUSING ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Promote the continuation of quality housing and encourage the development of a diverse housing stock, types and styles that meet different needs of the population.*

### 8.1: OVERVIEW

The Housing Element considers location, types, age and condition of housing, owner and renter occupancy, and affordability of housing. Data contained in the Housing Element has been extracted from the U.S. Bureau of Census 2000 and 2010, and the American Community Survey 2012-2016 Five-Year Estimates. For 2018 and 2023 projections, an additional data source used is the Town of Seabrook Island Community Profile, as further described in Chapter 3 – Population Element. Also as noted in Chapter 3, data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey only apply to the resident population and occupied housing units, referred to as households, and representing only about 41 percent of the overall housing stock. The Construction Quarterly, a quarterly report of construction activity provided by jurisdictions and compiled by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG), is a source for recent construction activity. Lastly, SIPOA, SIC, Council of Villas and Regimes (COVAR), recorded documents, and other sources have provided additional data where cited.

This element includes brief chronologic background information leading to land development on Seabrook Island, a description of how housing is governed and regulated, and an assessment of the current housing inventory and capacity for future housing. This assessment is then used to identify the goal, needs and strategies included in this Housing Element.

## 8.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Background

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Jenkins, Seabrook or Andell families owned most of the land that is now the Town of Seabrook Island. The cleared areas on the island were used for farming sea-island cotton, while the rest of the island remained as a natural, forested, ocean-front environment. Adjacent Johns Island was bustling with activity including churches and schools, land being farmed and timbered, and access to the main land and markets by train, ferry and automobile. Many Johns Islanders used Seabrook Island for recreation, including camping, fishing, youth outings, yachting and even driving their automobiles on the hard-packed beach.

In 1937, the New York philanthropists Victor and Marjorie Morawetz purchased several large tracts of land on Seabrook Island, including 560 acres of the southern portion of the Andell family holdings, the 247 acre Jenkins Point Tract, and the tract containing the Kiawato Club House, originally built for the Kiawato Hunting Club organized in 1916. The Morawetzs leased their land to the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina for a penny a year to serve as a summer retreat for disadvantaged boys. Upon Marjorie's death in 1957, the church was deeded the land, totaling approximately 1,300 acres. In 1969, the diocese sold 1,070 acres of their land to Seabrook Island Limited Partnerships (later to become the Seabrook Development Corporation). Today, the 230 acres of land retained by the church makes up the bulk of the 314 acre St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center operated by the Diocese of South Carolina, as further described in the Cultural Resources Element.

The Seabrook Development Corporation added to its initial Seabrook Island holdings through subsequent land purchases from heirs of the original Andell Family. Then in 1971, working with land planning consultants out of Atlanta, Georgia, Seabrook



Development Corporation prepared a master development plan that ultimately became Charleston County’s first planned development, known as Seabrook Island Development (SID) Planned Unit Development. This original SID Master Plan was amended in 1978 and again in 1982. A final revision to the SID Master Plan was approved by Charleston County in September of 1983, and this version was subsequently approved by the newly incorporated Town in November of 1987. Since that time, the SID Master Plan has been updated only once, in April of 1998, and continues to serve as the governing Seabrook Island Development Master Plan.

The current SID Master Plan includes six planning areas and is approved for 1,328 single-family residential lots and 1,690 patio/villa/cluster multi-family units, for a maximum of 3,018 total units. This maximum buildout will not be realized for several reasons, including that many buildable lots are left vacant, multi-family designated areas transition to a lower density single family detached use, or areas within the master plan are not built to maximum density. The Town and SIPOA currently recognize that there are less than 400 remaining vacant residential lots available for home construction.

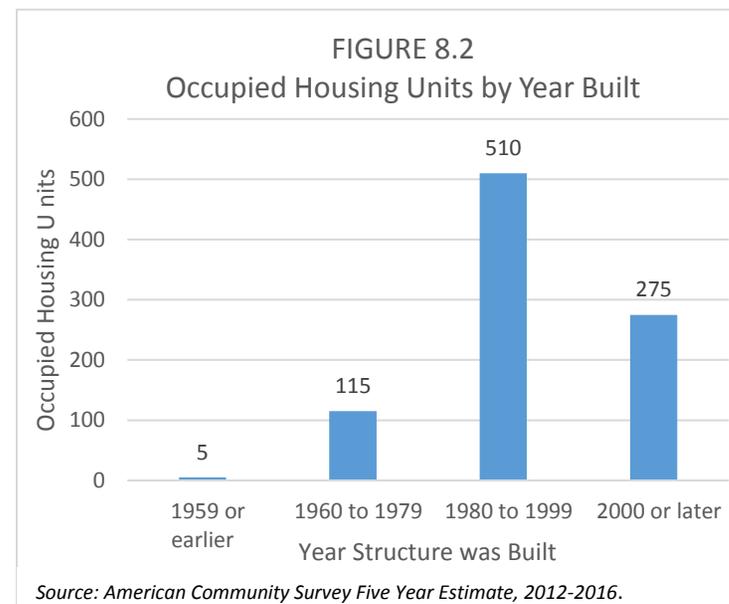
In addition to the SID, there are other residential developments within the town limits. This includes five additional planned development districts located inside the gate of Seabrook Island, and one planned development district and two condominium developments located outside the gates, but within the town limits (figure 8.1). According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, the majority of the occupied Housing Units (referred to as Households) were built prior to the year 2000 (figure 8.2). While this data references occupied housing units only, a review of development activity indicates that the majority of the overall housing stock was built between 1980 and 1999 as well.

### Housing Governance

**FIGURE 8.1  
TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND  
APPROVED RESIDENTIAL UNITS OVERVIEW\***

Name of Development	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached and Multi-family	Total
<b>"Inside" Seabrook Island Road Entry Gate</b>			
Seabrook Island Development PDD	1,328	1,690	3,018
Jenkins Point Plantation PDD	58	0	58
Ocean Pointe PDD	23	0	23
Bohicket Creek Place PDD	6	0	6
St. Christopher Oaks PDD	21	0	21
The Village at Seabrook PDD	101	0	101
<b>Total ("inside" entry gate)</b>	<b>1,537</b>	<b>1,690</b>	<b>3,227</b>
<b>"Outside" Seabrook Island Road Entry Gate</b>			
Bohicket Marina Village PDD	0	90	90
Bay Pointe Villas	7	40	47
Salt Marsh	0	46	46
<b>Total ("outside" entry gate)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Town Total</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>1,866</b>	<b>3,410</b>

\*Based on approved Planned Development Districts and recorded plats as of September 1, 2018. For Seabrook Island PDD units shown are entitled units. For all other developments, units shown are platted units. Actual housing units built varies.





The structure of the overall governance of the Town is described in Chapter 2, Profile of Town Government. The profile describes in detail the three entities that have governance and regulatory control within the Town. For the purposes of this Housing Element, provided here is a brief description of the roles and responsibilities of those entities that have specific governance in some capacity with regard to housing. These entities include the Town, SIPOA, and SIC.

Town Government. Since its incorporation in 1987, the Town has been governed by an elected group of residents who serve as town officials. The mayor serves as the chief administrative officer, with duties that include presiding over council meetings, directing the administration of all departments, and enforcing the Town's laws and ordinances. Except as otherwise provided by statute or ordinance, all powers of the Town, and the determination of all matters of policy, are vested in the Town Council.

The Town has created a Planning Commission and assigned this commission with the power and duty to develop and carry out a continuing planning program for the physical, social, and economic growth, development and redevelopment of the town. Specifically, the Planning Commission prepares and periodically revises development and/or redevelopment plans and programs, and prepares and recommends to the council measures for implementing such plans and programs, including a comprehensive land use plan, zoning ordinance, regulations for land subdivision or development, an official zoning map, and a landscape ordinance.

In the 1990s, the Town purchased the utility company controlling the Town's water supply. Soon afterward, SIUC was created, and both reports to, and serves as an agency, of the Town. By Ordinance, the Town Council is prohibited from interfering with SIUC's functions unless there is a financial default by SIUC. This commission is responsible for providing safe and reliable potable water and efficient and dependable sanitary sewer services to the Town.

Seabrook Island Property Owners Association. SIPOA was first created with the recording of the *Protective Covenants for Seabrook Island Development* on November 13, 1972. All property owners within the SID are, or become, a member of the SIPOA with voting rights as set forth in the bylaws of SIPOA and obligations as set forth in the protective covenants. This includes SID property owners of unimproved lots, single-family residences, villas, condominium units, apartments, and other residential units. No property within the SID shall be subdivided, or its boundary lines changed, except with the written consent of SIPOA. The stated purpose and business of SIPOA is to preserve the property values and the quality of life in the SID, and, as referenced in the protective covenants and summarized here, accomplishes this through:

1. Development and implementation of programs to protect the environment and facilitate acquisition and maintenance of green space;
2. Protection, operation, maintenance and improvement of roads, bridges, parks, playgrounds, beaches, open spaces, easements, and other SIPOA properties;
3. Retention of security forces and enforcement of security measures to limit access to the SID;
4. Acquisition, construction, management, maintenance, and care of SIPOA properties for the general benefit of property owners and others;
5. Adoption, distribution and enforcement of rules and regulations for the common good of property owners; and
6. Establishment of assessments and fees and their collection from the property owners and, as applicable, others who use or have the right or permission to use any or all of the facilities and properties owned and/or operated by SIPOA.

In addition, an Architectural Review Committee (ARC) has been established by and operates under the auspices of the SIPOA. The mission of the ARC is to serve as the duly appointed representative of the SIPOA Board of Directors with responsibility to review all



plans for construction, landscaping and external improvements to residential properties within the SID. The SIPOA *Policies and Procedures for Residential Development* sets forth SIPOA's requirements, design guidelines and processes for development of single and multi-family residences on the island and standards for the modification and maintenance of established properties, and defines the design and development guidelines required for ARC approval.

The ARC derives its authority from *The Protective Covenants for Seabrook Island Development* (Protective Covenants) and the *Bylaws of the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association* (Bylaws). The comprehensive approval authority of the ARC is clearly stated in SIPOA Covenant §19:

*"No building of any kind or description, fence, swimming pool, deck, walkway or other structure shall be erected, placed or the exterior altered on any Property in the SID until the proposed building plans, specifications, exterior color or finish, plot plan (showing the proposed location of such building or structure, drive and parking areas, and accessory buildings), landscaping plan and the construction schedule for such building shall have been approved in writing by the ARC."*

The SIPOA also maintains a current set of bylaws that define how the organization will be governed, and identifies the association's needs, goals and implementation strategies in a periodically updated SIPOA Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive plan includes a short-term (0-2 years) Operational Plan, medium-term (2-5 years) Strategic plan, and a Long Term Plan (2-25 years).

Seabrook Island Club (SIC). The SIC is fully contained within the SID, and is a private club providing amenities for its members and guests. The SIC maintains and operates several facilities including the Island House, Beach Club, Equestrian Center,

Racquet Club and golf courses. Effective January 1, 2005, every person, group, corporation, or entity who becomes a property owner in the SID shall thereupon be required to become a member of the SIC. For improved lots the minimum membership commitment is seven years, and for unimproved lots the membership commitment is until the lot is sold or a certificate of occupancy is issued. This membership requirement does not apply to any individual or entity that has owned property in the SID prior to January 1, 2005. Guests and visitors can purchase SIC Amenity Cards, and the fees associated with these cards serve as an important revenue source for the Club and SIPOA. A more detailed description of SIC amenities is provided in the Cultural Resources Element.

Council of Villas and Regimes (COVAR). Of the approximately 2,600 residential properties on Seabrook Island, about 1,380 are additionally governed by associations or regimes. Each of these forty-one regimes have their own protective covenants and bylaws that regulate items specific to their homeowners, and notably, about 85 percent of the COVAR owners are part-time residents of Seabrook Island. In an effort to simplify and coordinate communication between the many regimes, SIPOA and the Town, the COVAR was established in 2001. While this council does not hold any legal authority, it does effectively serve as an umbrella organization that (1) provides a regular forum for villa property owners to share and discuss common concerns, (2) collaborates with SIPOA in matters of mutual responsibility and interest and, (3) provides a single official voice for villa property owners.

### **Housing Inventory**

The Town of Seabrook Island housing stock can be grouped under four different categories based on building style. Three of these styles are distinctive of regime-managed "communities within a community" and are defined as villas, cottages or townhomes (although Seabrook Islanders commonly use "villas" as a reference to residential units in any of the forty-one regimes).



**Villa Communities.** There are thirteen “villa communities” containing 550 residential units. The building style for these villas is similar to a condominium, in that these residential units are located on more than one floor.

**Cottage Home Communities.** There are fifteen “Cottage Home Communities” containing 602 residential units. These are “stand-alone” structures not sharing any common walls, and therefore provide the privacy of a detached home with the convenience of managed care.

**Townhome Communities.** There are eleven “Townhome Communities” containing 231 residential units. These multi-floor units share a common wall on one or both sides.

**Homes.** The fourth category is the remaining single-family residences that are not within a separate regime-managed community. There are approximately 1,300 homes on Seabrook Island.

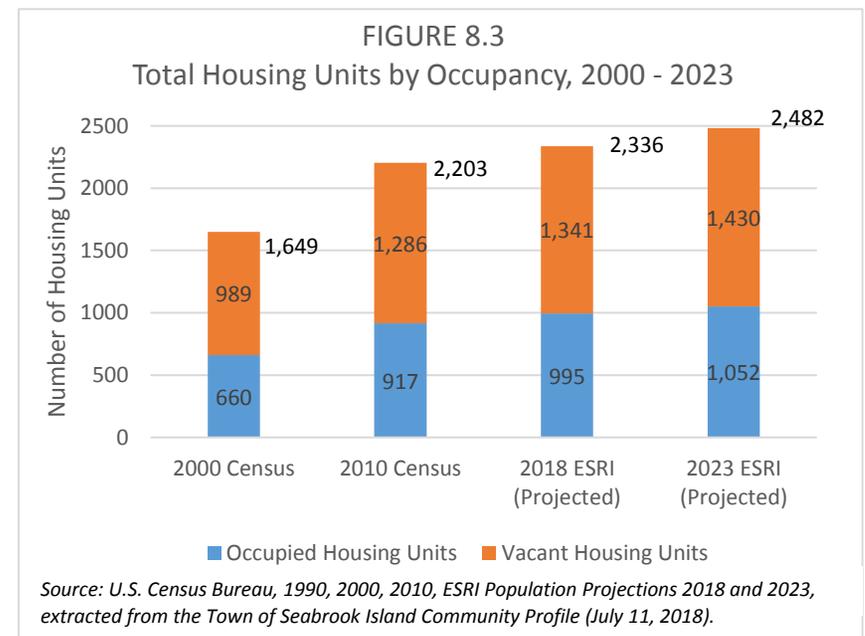
As discussed in Chapter 3 - Population Element, the majority of the property owners in the Town do not live there full-time, and a large portion of the housing is either vacant or used as rental property throughout the year. Figure 8.3 provides a comparison of total Housing Units over time, further delineated by whether the Housing Units are occupied or vacant. Occupied units represent housing permanently occupied by the property owner or a full-time renter, and vacant units represent housing that serves as the property owner’s second home/vacation home and/or property available for short-term rental. Total housing increased from 1,649 units in 2000 to 2,203 units in 2010, or about 34 percent. This included a 39 percent increase in occupied homes, and a 30 percent increase in vacant homes.

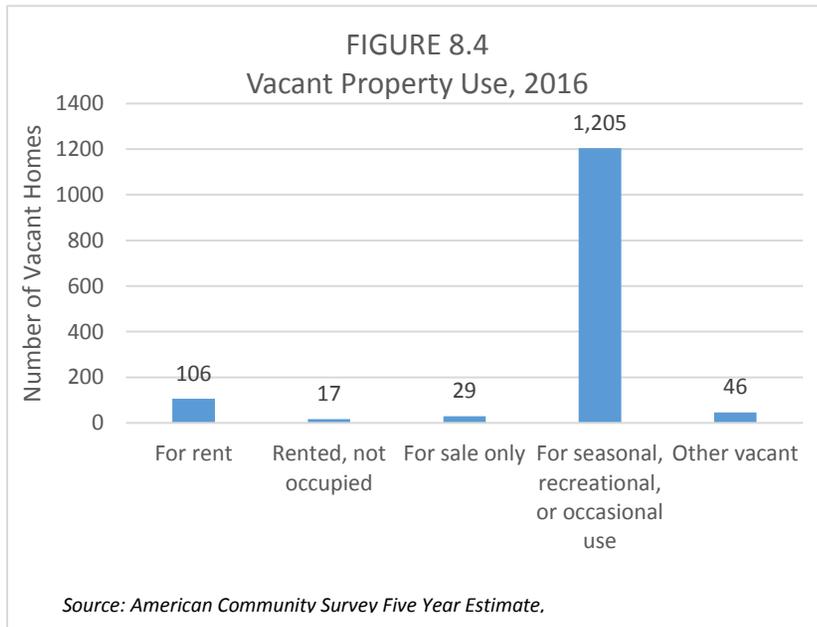
Figure 8.3 also includes Housing Unit projections extracted from the Town of Seabrook Island Community Profile. These projections indicate a slowdown in Housing Unit growth, as is foreshadowed in the data provided in the Construction Quarterly, which shows building permits issued for only 27 detached and attached

residential units, and 2 multifamily buildings in the last six quarters (1-1/2 years).

**Vacant Properties.** As noted in Chapter 3 – Population Element, the number of Housing Units that are occupied by a property owner or long-term renter represents only about forty percent of the total housing stock. This means about 60 percent of the housing stock is considered vacant homes, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The American Community Survey estimates 1,403 vacant homes on Seabrook Island in 2016, with the vast majority of these homes being used for “seasonal recreation or occasional use” (Figure 8.4).

While some of the population using the island for seasonal recreation are non-resident property owners, many are visiting vacationers who stay for a short period, enjoying the natural beauty and the first class amenities. In many cases, these visitors come year after year to enjoy the island, and in some cases, they grow so





fond of the island that they purchase property to serve as a vacation home or new permanent residence. These second homes, and homes purchased specifically as investment properties, not only provide a rental income for the property owner, but for SIC and SIPOA as well, through the visitor’s use of the many amenities.

Visitors to Seabrook Island are not only welcomed, there is an active segment of the local economy dedicated to marketing the island, and there is a symbiotic relationship between the Town, SIPOA, and SIC, with respect to ensuring that Seabrook Island is a great place to visit. It is recognized that all of Seabrook Island benefits when revenue generated from being recognized as a vacation destination is reinvested into the community, including, but not limited to, maintaining and upgrading the island’s infrastructure and amenities (regardless of whether this is considered public or private reinvestment).

The Town is an active partner in marketing rental and vacation properties, including dedicating a significant portion of the Town’s website to providing information and links to rental resources. Several areas on the Town’s website provide links that take you to Discover Seabrook, a collaborative effort of SIPOA, SIC and Seabrook Island Real Estate, where in-depth information specific to guests, buyers and owners is available. Several other real estate companies also market Seabrook Island properties and vacation rentals, and several publications and brochures dedicate space specifically to providing information for those visiting the island.

**Housing Affordability**

As reported by Zillow, the September 2018 median home value in Charleston County is \$325,600. Charleston County home values have gone up 7.3 percent over the past year, and are predicted to rise an additional 3.4 percent in the coming year. The median list price per square foot in Charleston County is \$215, and the median list price of homes is \$429,000.

In comparison, the same source shows Seabrook Island’s median home value as \$489,000, including villas. At 4.0 percent, the increase in home values over the last year was somewhat less than the county as a whole, the values are predicted to increase 5.9 percent over the next year. The median list price per square foot on Seabrook Island is \$375, and the median price of homes currently listed is \$549,000.

The salaries paid for employment to provide services on or near the Town make it difficult for those workers to live in close proximity to their jobs. For many workers, from landscapers and housekeepers to those employed in nearby retail stores and restaurants, transportation costs have a large impact on their take home pay. The obvious solution would be more affordable housing in close proximity to where they work

This dilemma is not new, and it is not exclusive to beach communities. However, with the majority of Seabrook Island being within a private, gated community, there would be difficulty in



implementing affordable housing strategies such as new regulatory and funding mechanisms at the local level. Housing affordability has been successfully addressed in similar areas and these housing initiatives, including housing lotteries, community land trusts, employer assisted housing, inclusionary housing, and others, should be explored by the Town. In addition, the Town should begin a dialogue with the County to discuss options available to encourage affordable housing in the unincorporated areas of the County within close proximity to the Town,

### **Housing Element Summation**

A primary challenge for each of the governing entities on Seabrook Island is to support and collaborate with the other entities in order to maintain a welcoming, yet private, ocean front community focused on preserving its natural beauty while providing a high quality of life. At the core of this challenge is the effort to maintain quality housing stock over time. There is a limited amount of vacant land available for new homes, and this magnifies the importance of renovations and tear-down/rebuilds with regard to the quality of the future housing stock. It is important for all three primary entities sharing the governance of housing within the Town to work collectively toward ensuring a continuation of quality housing for future generations.

## **8.3: HOUSING ELEMENT GOAL**

### *Element Goal*

*Promote the continuation of quality housing and encourage the development of a diverse housing stock, types and styles that meet different needs of the population.*

### **Housing Element Needs**

- Controlling and containing growth and development consistent with the Town's vision and the Comprehensive Plan;
- Renovation and maintenance of the older properties on the Island; and
- Affordability of housing.

## **8.4 HOUSING 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. Encourage development of a diversity of housing stock, types and styles that meet different needs of the population.
2. Work cooperatively with SIPOA to ensure future construction on the island is consistent with the existing quality and character of the island.
3. Ensure policies are in place that support the structural integrity of new construction.
4. Identify and amend any regulatory barriers that prevent the quality rehabilitation and renovation of existing housing.



## LAND USE ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Maintain and enhance the existing residential and commercial character of the Town, and provide for compatible, appropriate, and high quality development and redevelopment.*

### 9.1: OVERVIEW

A Land Use Element considers existing and future land use by categories, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, mining, public and quasi-public, recreation, parks, open space, and vacant or undeveloped. Since Seabrook Island residents share a commitment to the natural environment and wildlife, land use in the Town is oriented toward residential, parks, open space, recreation, and limited commercial development to service residents and visitors. The incorporated boundaries of the Town also include a considerable amount of marsh and water features.

### 9.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Existing Land Use

Most of the land within the Town has been developed. The Housing Element notes that while there remains a limited number of undeveloped residential lots behind the entry gate, some of these have been identified as conservation lots that will never be built on, while others were purchased with the intent of leaving the property undeveloped. Outside of the entry gate and within Town limits there is a large undeveloped parcel currently identified on the Town's Zoning Map as multifamily residential, and there are a few undeveloped parcels within the unincorporated area of Charleston

County that could possibly be annexed into the Town and developed in the future.

Development Standards. Development within the Town has been characterized by large projects within Planned Development Districts (PDDs), pursuant to detailed Master Plans. In the Town's Development Standards Ordinance (DSO) the Town acknowledges that this development pattern has successfully "produced a community of diverse types and densities of development, while maintaining natural resources, recreation opportunities and the high aesthetic quality of the Town." The DSO further notes that it is the intent of Town Council that further development of the Town shall occur within Planned Development Districts, pursuant to approved Master Plans meeting the standards set forth in the DSO. Development standards for PDDs are established during the PDD application process, and this process is further detailed in the Future Land Use section later in this element.

Where specific development standards for these land uses are not specifically identified in approved PDDs (referenced in Article 6 of the DSO), the development standards are provided explicitly in other articles of the DSO, including:

- Article 7 - Lot and Building Requirements;
- Article 8 – General Development Requirements;
- Article 9 – Environmental Performance Standards;
- Article 10 - Buffers, Landscaping, and Tree Protection;
- Article 11 – Parking; and
- Article 12 – Signs.

Zoning Map and Land Uses. The Town's official "Zoning Map" is included at the end of this Land Use Element. With only few exceptions, *this map reflects the existing land uses within the Town's incorporated area, as opposed to these seven zoning districts identified in Article 5 of the DSO:*

- AGC – Agricultural - Conservation District;
- AG – Agricultural – General District;



- SR – Single-Family Residential District;
- PDD – Planned Development District;
- CRO – Commercial-Retail/Office District;
- LI – Light Industrial-Service & Maintenance District; and
- Government (Municipal Property District).

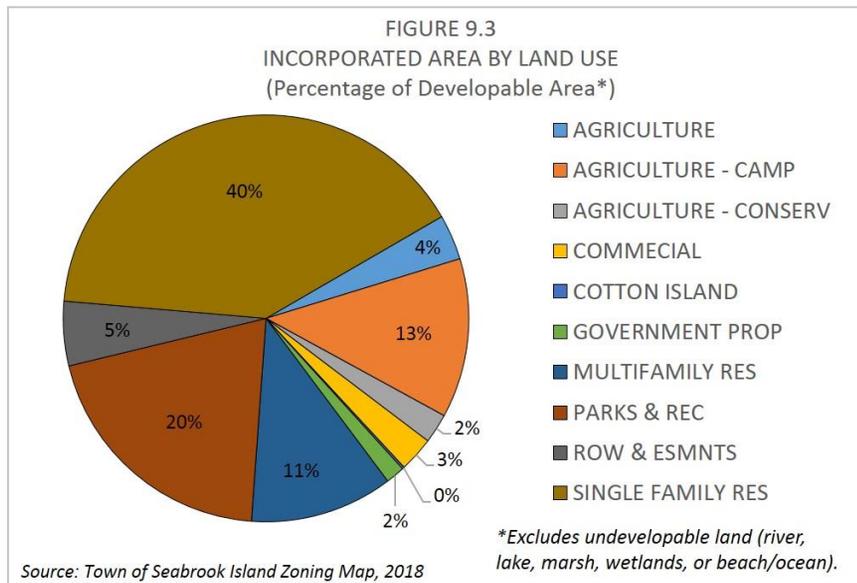
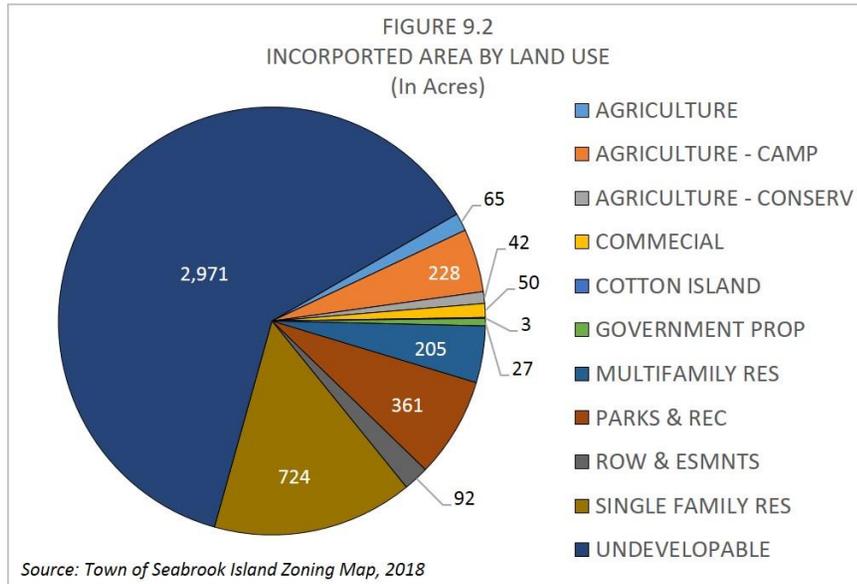
There is not a distinct correlation between the land uses identified on the zoning map and the zoning districts identified in Article 5 of the DSO. In some instances, the land use identified on the zoning map is generalized, for example, the map identifies the land containing the municipal wastewater treatment facility as “Government Property”, a designation also shared by Town Hall. In other instances, the land use may correlate with a zoning district, however the use is governed by development standards set forth in an approved planned development. A total of fifteen (15) land uses are shown on the zoning map:

- Agriculture;
- Agriculture – Camp (St Christopher);
- Agriculture – Conservation;
- Commercial;
- Cotton Island;
- Easements;
- Government Property;
- Multifamily Residential;
- Parks and Recreation;
- Pump Stations;
- Rights-of-Way;
- Single Family Residential; and
- 3 Water Features; River, Lake, Marsh/Wetlands/Beach.

The land uses identified in Figures 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 differ slightly from the zoning map in that easements, pump stations and right-of-way have been combined into the ROW & Easements land use category, and the three water features have been combined into the “Undevelopable” land use category.

The entire area within the Town’s boundaries totals approximately 4,766 acres (7.44 square miles) based on the Town’s Zoning Map. Figure 9.1 identifies the Town’s land use distribution as a percentage of the entire Town and as a percentage of developable land only. Figures 9.2 and 9.3 present the same data in a pie chart format. It should be noted that about 2,971 acres are identified as undevelopable. This means that 62% of the current Town Limits likely will never be developed as they are areas containing river, lake, marsh, wetlands, or beach/ocean land and water features. Also worth noting is that the land use identified as Cotton Island refers to a 3-acre island located just east of Horse Island in the extreme northwest quadrant of the Town. There are special conditions, allowable uses and permanent restrictions placed on Cotton Island by Town Ordinance 2003-09, dated November 18, 2003.

<b>FIGURE 9.1 LAND DISTRIBUTION BY USE (%)</b>			
<b>LAND USE</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>% OF TOWN</b>	<b>% OF DEVELOPABLE LAND</b>
AGRICULTURE	64.6	1%	4%
AGRICULTURE - CAMP	227.6	5%	13%
AGRICULTURE - CONSERV	42.3	1%	2%
COMMECIAL	50.0	1%	3%
COTTON ISLAND	3.1	0%	0%
GOVERNMENT PROP	27.1	1%	2%
MULTIFAMILY RES	204.6	4%	11%
PARKS & REC	360.8	8%	20%
ROW & ESMNTS	91.9	2%	5%
SINGLE FAMILY RES	723.9	15%	40%
UNDEVELOPABLE	2970.6	62%	
<b>TOWN</b>	<b>4766.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Future Land Use (within Town Limits)**

The DSO requires as a mandatory procedure that *any development of any site or area larger than five (5) acres must follow the PDD application process*. This stipulation makes it likely that any future undeveloped land, including land that may be annexed into the Town, would be required to follow the PDD process. The DSO identifies that the intent of the PDD process is to provide a development procedure that has the following advantages:

- a) Allows creative approaches to the development of residential land;
- b) Accomplishes a more desirable environment than would otherwise be possible, by providing for a variety of housing types, designs and arrangements;
- c) Provides for an efficient use of land;
- d) Enhances the appearance of neighborhoods through the preservation of natural features and the provision of recreational and open space areas; and
- e) Provides an environment of stable character compatible with surrounding residential areas.

The PDD application process requires a detailed Master or Concept Development Plan that includes land uses and development standards. The specifications for each designated use area will be enumerated when the master plan is approved in accordance with DSO Article 20 – Amendments to the Ordinance and Map. Article 5.40.40 – PDD Permitted Uses, identifies the permitted uses within the PDD as:

- a) Single-Family Residential;
- b) Multi-Family Residential in those zoning districts that are shown as PD Districts on the Town's Official District Map as of the effective date of this Ordinance. Multi-Family Residential use shall not be permitted upon property that may come to be shown as being within a PD District after the effective date of this Ordinance;
- c) Retail Trade/Professional Services;
- d) General Offices;

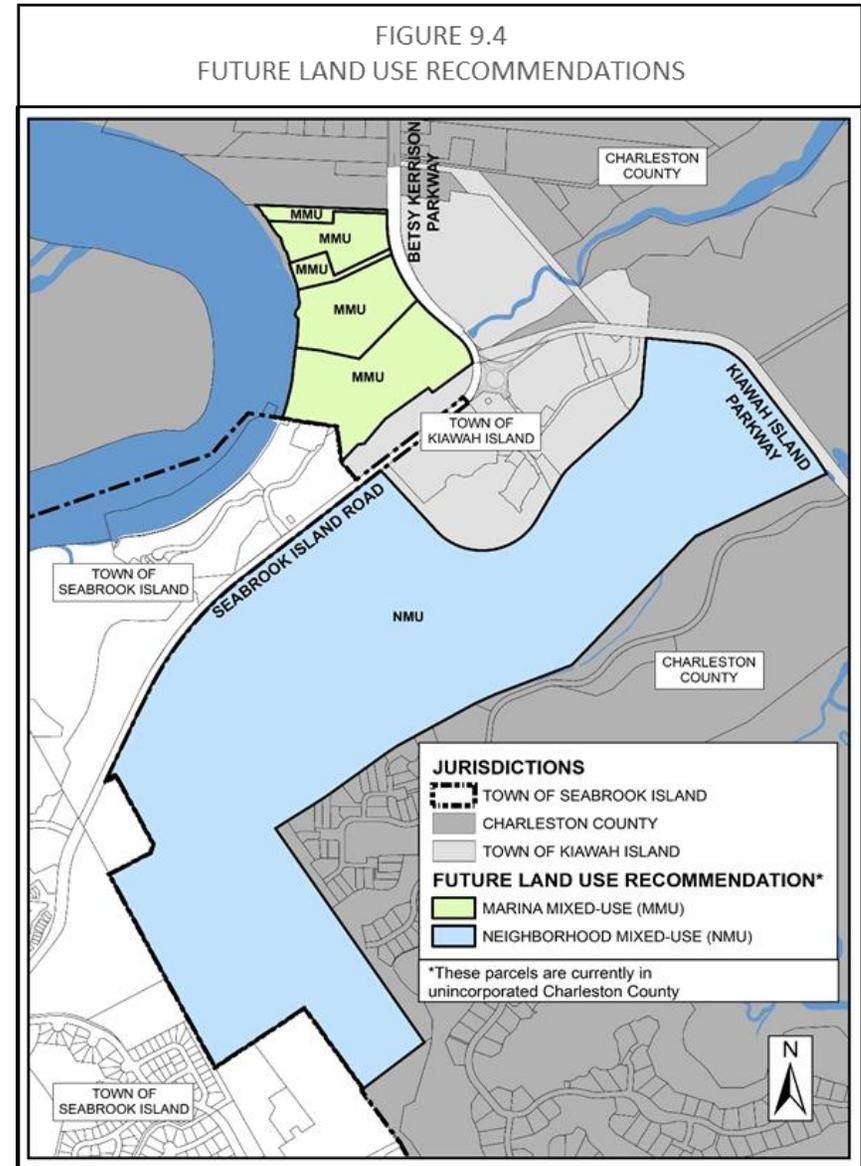


- e) Recreational Facilities (Golf, Tennis, Swimming, Equestrian);
- f) Park;
- g) Municipal Services (Churches, Town Facilities, EMS, Heliport); and
- h) Utility Services.

**Future Land Use Recommendations (Outside Town Limits)**

Several parcels of land adjacent, or in close proximity, to the Town could be annexed sometime in the future. It is in the Town’s best interest to consider what type of development would best serve the needs of the community in the event that these properties were to be annexed. Two future land use recommendations for the extraterritorial parcels identified in Figure 9.4 provide guidance for future development in the event any or all of these properties are annexed:

Marina Mixed-Use (MMU) – The Marina Mixed Use designation is intended to accommodate mixed use development which is primarily commercial in nature. The primary uses envisioned for this designation include commercial activities which are geared primarily toward the support and promotion of tourism, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, entertainment, cultural and recreational uses. Light retail uses, including retail and office, will also be permitted. Though the primary use is intended to be commercial in nature, a limited number of multi-family residential units may also be permitted, and the mixture of residential and commercial uses may be horizontal and/or vertical. Given the proximity to sensitive environmental and ecological areas, development of land within the Marina Mixed Use designation will require great care to minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding marine environment.





Neighborhood Mixed-Use – The Neighborhood Mixed Use designation is intended to accommodate mixed use development which is primarily residential in nature. Residential densities of up to four units per acre will be permitted. Future development is envisioned to be buffered from Seabrook Island Road; however, a limited amount of walkable, neighborhood-scale commercial development, including light retail, professional offices, restaurants and personal services, will be permitted in targeted locations. Given its size and location, this property will provide significant opportunities for greenspace preservation through cluster development. Future development of this property may significantly impact the town’s existing transportation network; therefore, future access to/from Seabrook Island Road will require careful coordination between the Towns of Seabrook Island and Kiawah Island, the property owner and/or developer and the owner(s) of neighboring properties.

planned development process. Future redevelopment and new development will be required to adhere to the same quality threshold, since redevelopment must conform to, or amend, previously approved planned developments, and new development (in excess of five acres) will be required to follow the well-defined planned development process.

### **Land Use Summary**

Many municipalities provide a Future Land Use Map and descriptive development standards in their comprehensive plan to regulate and guide future development and redevelopment in their jurisdiction. The Town, however, has had the opportunity to guide future development in a more orderly and controlled manner through the application of planned developments. *Nearly all of the land uses and development standards guiding both the Town’s built and natural environment are subject to approved planned developments.*

Article 6 of the Town’s DSO describes the currently approved planned developments, and includes the Governing Master Plan and associated zoning and development standards by reference. The Town’s quality of development, unique balance of natural and built environments, and reputation as both a great place to visit and live, are the result of a well-planned community guided by the



### 9.3: LAND USE ELEMENT GOAL

#### *Element Goal*

*Maintain and enhance the existing residential and commercial character of the Town, and provide for compatible, appropriate, and high quality development and redevelopment.*

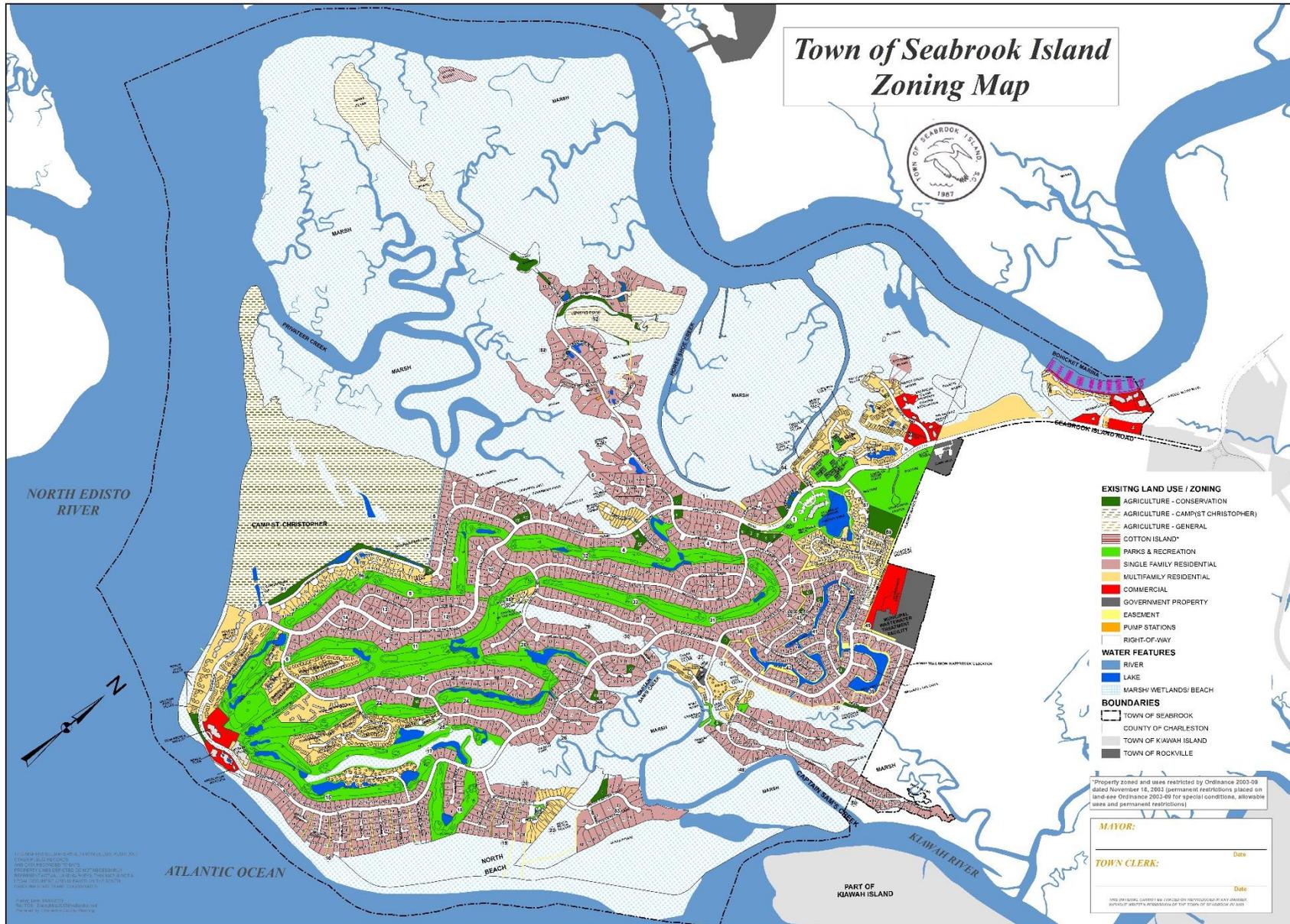
#### Land Use Element Needs

- To maintain the Town's residential character and natural environment;
- Develop criteria and standards that encourage future development and redevelopment consistent with the Town's Vision Statement;
- Assure that continued development is accompanied or preceded by available services and community facilities;
- Zoning and development standards are enforced in a fair and consistent manner;
- Ensure the protection of sensitive and wildlife areas into the future; and
- Maintain and expand the Town's revenue opportunities.

### 9.4: LAND USE 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. Provide for high quality, orderly, controlled development and redevelopment.
2. Encourage expansion of conservation areas, parks, recreation, and open space.
3. Examine options available to the Town for phasing out Planned Development Districts (PDDs) and replacing with the underlying zoning district.
4. Prepare and adopt a Town Future Land Use Map that designates future land use recommendations for properties within Town Limits. As an example, the future land use designation of recreation or open space for current golf course parcels prevents such parcels from being redeveloped as a residential use in the future.
5. Apply future land use designations to extraterritorial properties eligible for annexation.
6. Work with the SIUC to require that all extraterritorial customers agree to be annexed or agree to sign an annexation covenant.
7. In order to ensure that such actions are not construed as "spot zoning", acknowledge and potentially codify *the Town's land preservation and conservation policy of approving rezoning requests of certain properties to the Agriculture-Conservation (AGC) District*. This strategy may require a revision to the current definition of the AGC District.
8. Explore the feasibility of targeted rezoning and annexation opportunities in locations that are conducive to economic development.





## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

### *Element Goal*

*Ensure the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Town's multi-modal transportation system, with a focus on safety, efficiency, and compatibility with land use patterns, community character and the natural environment, while regionally supporting roadway initiatives that improve traffic flow between Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island, Johns Island, and the Greater Charleston area.*

### 10.1: OVERVIEW

The Transportation Element considers transportation facilities, including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network. The majority of the transportation facilities within the Seabrook Island Town limits are privately maintained and not the responsibility of the Town.

### 10.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Seabrook Island's multi-modal transportation system is composed of a road network, and bicycle/pedestrian pathways. SIPOA is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the private roads and bicycle/pedestrian pathways located behind the SID entry gate, and Landfall Way located just outside the entry gate. The Town is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of Seabrook Island Road and the adjacent bicycle/pedestrian pathway extending from the entry gate to the Freshfields Village traffic circle. Each of the remaining five named streets outside of the entry gate are privately owned and maintained by property owners' associations. These private roads are Andell Bluff Boulevard,

Marsh Oak Lane, Sterling March Lane, Turtle Watch Lane, and Emmaline Lane. While the Town is not responsible for the maintenance and replacement of any of these private roads, it is responsible for the safety and welfare of its citizens in driving these roads.

### Road Development Standards

The Town's Development Standards Ordinance (DSO) governs all land development within the incorporated areas of the Town. According to the DSO, all roads and drainage within the Town are to be constructed in conformance with the standards and specifications of the Town of Seabrook Island's Road Code. The DSO further defines these standards and specifications (the Town's "Road Code") through the "adoption of the Charleston County Zoning and Land Development Regulations Road Construction Standards in its entirety."

### SIPOA-owned Roads

As stated in the SIPOA protective covenants, the SID "is a private entity with access thereto on a controlled and limited basis through a private SIPOA owned and operated gate." All roads, right-of-way, walkways, boardwalks, easements and vehicle ways are owned by or, upon completion in accordance with the requirements of SIPOA, are to be deeded or transferred to SIPOA. In order to preserve the property values and the quality of life for the general benefit of its property owners, the organization assumes the responsibility of protecting, operating, maintaining and improving all of the properties under its ownership.

While the SIPOA protective covenants specify the responsibilities for ensuring the economic vibrancy of the organization, the SIPOA bylaws further define how the organization will be governed--via committees and a board of directors which provide oversight of the professional staff and have the responsibility to define further the policies, rules and regulations within the community. A



comprehensive plan is maintained by the organization and includes an operational, short-term and long-term strategic plan. It is important to note that a strategy included in each of these plans is to “embrace the major planning assumption that local sea level will continue to rise. This assumption (and its implications for high tide flooding) will have specific application to the long term plans which the General Operating and Maintenance Committee continues to develop for new infrastructure, replacing/upgrading existing infrastructure (excluding roads), and *raising/resurfacing roads and upgrading road drains.*”

In 2016, SIPOA hired Miller Dodson Associates to update the organization’s 40-year Replacement Reserve Study. According to SIPOA’s 2016 Annual Report, the replacement reserve study provides “an inventory of our community facilities and infrastructure components that require periodic replacement. It also includes a general view of the current condition of these items as well as a financial plan to fund the projected periodic replacement. The report is a valuable tool in SIPOA’s budget planning process, as it provides a guide for SIPOA’s annual capital funding requirements.”

Operating expenses related to infrastructure, and capital expenses related to roads and drainage, are important line items included in each year’s SIPOA annual budget. The strategies included in the SIPOA Comprehensive Plan coupled with recommendations included in the 40-year Replacement Reserve Study provide guidance in developing these annual budgets, including taking into account future transportation network needs and ensuring that the organization is working within a sound financial framework. These efforts are critically important to SIPOA members considering that roughly 75 percent of the annual budget revenue comes from annually-adjusted property owner assessments.

### **Seabrook Island Road**

The public segment of Seabrook Island Road extends from approximately Seabrook Island Town Hall to the Freshfields Village traffic circle, is currently owned by the Town, and serves as the Town’s only road maintenance responsibility. The segment of Seabrook Island Road extending southwestward beyond Town Hall and the entry gate is privately owned by SIPOA and forms a continuous loop road that serves as the primary collector road for the majority of local roads within the SID community. At the northeastern end of Seabrook Island Road is the traffic circle completed in 2005. This traffic circle is owned by the Town of Kiawah Island and merges traffic to and from the Betsy Kerrison Parkway, the Kiawah Island Parkway, the Seabrook Island Parkway and the entrance/exit from the Freshfields Village shopping center.

Traffic Counts and Level of Service. The public segment of Seabrook Island Road is an east-west, two-lane major collector roadway. The volume of traffic that travels this road can be measured in annual average daily traffic (AADT). The AADT represents the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road for a year divided by 365 days. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) provides current and historic AADT based on permanent traffic count stations located throughout the state. The SCDOT Count Station #723 is located on Seabrook Island Road just southwest of Andell Bluff Boulevard. The historic AADT from 2009 to 2017 for this count station has fluctuated in recent years. In fact, traffic volumes for 2014 through 2017 are lower than those for 2012 and 2013. Considering that the SID is “nearly built-out” as discussed in the Population Element, Housing Element and Land Use Element of this Comprehensive Plan Update, it is anticipated that Seabrook Island Road will experience only a moderate increase in overall traffic volume in coming years.

Traffic operations at intersections are typically evaluated in terms of “Level of Service” or LOS. The LOS is a measurement of delay



incurred at an intersection or for a particular movement. LOS is defined by the Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) from which LOS A represents free flow conditions with minimal delays and LOS F represents congested conditions. Generally, a LOS D or better is considered acceptable.

In June 2018, a traffic impact analysis was prepared for a proposed development in the Town of Kiawah just southwest of the traffic circle (Traffic Impact Analysis, Seabrook Island Road, Freshfields Village Senior Living, Prepared for Kiawah Resort Associates, LP, by Thomas and Hutton, June 2018). This report included a capacity analysis for the traffic circle intersection as well as the intersection of Seabrook Island Road and Andell Bluff Boulevard based on peak hour traffic counts and a 24-hour tube count taken in May 2018. The analysis found that the traffic circle's northeast approach (Seabrook Island Road) is currently operating at a LOS C for AM Peak Hour traffic and LOS B for PM Peak Hour traffic. The analysis also found that the intersection of Seabrook Island Road and Andell Bluff Boulevard is currently operating at LOS B for both AM and PM Peak Hour traffic.

Seabrook Island Gateway Improvement Program. In 2016, Town Council approved the Seabrook Island Gateway Improvement Program to upgrade the portion of Seabrook Island Road that the Town maintains from the SIPOA property line at Landfall Way to the traffic circle at Freshfields Village. The two primary objectives of the program are first, to create a gateway to Seabrook Island that provides a safe passage to and from Seabrook Island with emphasis on special weather events and emergencies, and second, to enhance the appearance of the gateway through landscaping, signage and design elements.

While the program has not progressed as quickly as originally intended, much progress has been made over the last year. About half of the infrastructure improvements were aimed at limiting the

flooding of Seabrook Island Road from Town Hall to the traffic circle when high tide levels are at approximately 7.5 feet. Improvements already completed include new concrete piping and flood control valves, as well as cure-in-place (CIP) liners for existing piping. Future flood preventative measures include three additional flood control valves and the cleaning of drainage easements across adjacent properties.

The Town has also recently hired a firm to assist with development of a conceptual master plan for future entrances and exits for adjacent parcels of land. In February, 2019, the consultants presented a draft version of this master plan to the Town's Planning Commission for review and comment. This master plan is provided in this element for conceptual purposes to assist in the review of future development requests, see Figure 10.1. This concept includes a frontage road that would parallel Seabrook Island Road to the south, allowing for more controlled access points for future property development between Town Hall and the currently proposed Freshfields Village Senior Living development. The frontage road would also provide an important secondary route for hurricane evacuation. The landscape buffer between the frontage road and Seabrook Island Road, would ensure long-term sustainability of the bicycle and pedestrian pathway currently held within a revocable easement. The proposed roundabout at the entrance to Bohicket Marina would serve as a formal entrance to the Town, and allow for additional commercial development south of Seabrook Island Road. It should be noted that the Town controls all proposed improvements within Seabrook Island Road, including the proposed roundabout and any encroachments.



FIGURE 10.1  
ENTRY ROAD DRAFT CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Source: ESP Associates, Inc., February 2019.

### The Regional Transportation Network

As mentioned in the Population Element of this Comprehensive Plan Update, although the growth rate of the Town has essentially leveled off, the Greater Charleston area as a whole has continued to grow dramatically over the last decade. This growth has outpaced transportation improvements throughout the region, and has resulted in each of the three counties (Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley) asking for, and receiving, citizen approval of transportation sales tax programs to assist in funding future road

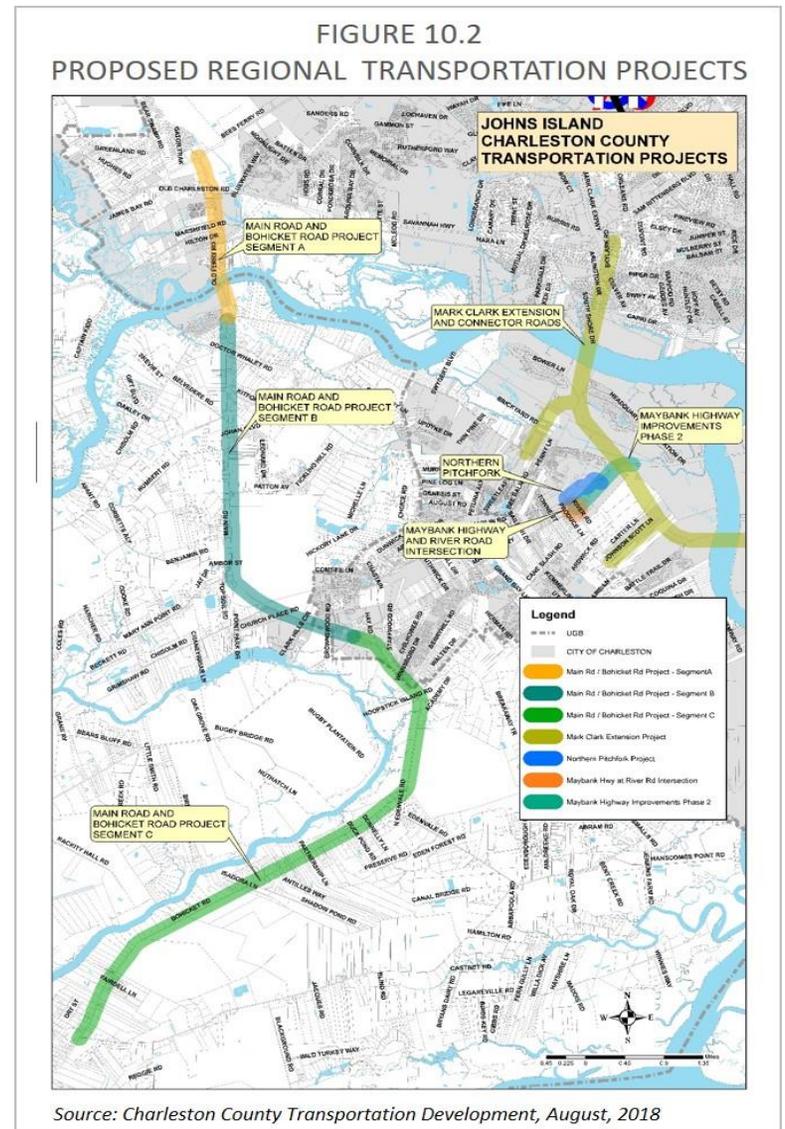
improvements. The long-term revenue received through the increase in local sales tax allows these counties to bond and build important transportation projects in the short term. However, even with the financial boost provided through these programs, the completion of much needed transportation projects continue to be hampered by cost, complexity, environmental, and growth concerns.



Regional travel to and from Seabrook Island traverses the Johns Island road network. The condition of these Johns Island roads are as important to the Seabrook Island community as are the local roads with the town limits. Johns Island is also one of the fastest growing areas in the Greater Charleston area. Many of the residents on Johns Island have expressed concerns that infrastructure improvements, including the road network, have not kept pace with new residential development on the island. As a consequence, road congestion has dramatically increased on Johns Island in recent years. This increase in traffic has resulted in longer travel times for Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island and Wadmalaw Island Residents as well.

Active Johns Island Transportation Improvement Projects. There is currently an increased focus on improving Johns Island roads to address the increased traffic congestion. The two primary chokepoints are access to and from Johns Island to the mainland using Main Road, and access to and from Johns Island to James Island using Maybank Highway. The roads are not only chronically congested during weekday rush hours, but also remain very busy throughout the day on weekends and holidays. While the congestion is further amplified by the continued residential growth on Johns Island, there are several short term and long term transportation improvement projects planned that are designed to address the issue, see Figure 10.2. These road improvement projects are equally as important to the Seabrook Island community, as they too are dependent upon the Johns Island road network for regional travel.

In 2018, phase 2 of the Maybank Highway Improvements Project was completed creating a new westbound lane forming two continuous lanes from Paul Gelegotis Bridge to River Road. This improvement has markedly improved traffic flow onto Johns Island from James Island. At this same chokepoint, additional funded projects include improvements to the Maybank Highway at River





Road intersection as well as construction of a two-lane road connecting Maybank Highway to River Road north of Maybank Highway (also referred to as the “northern pitchfork”).

For the Bohicket Road/Main Road corridor that connects Seabrook Island travelers to the mainland, there is a four-phase road widening project that includes near term improvements as well as longer term improvements. For the near term, there are planned improvements for the US 17 at Main Road intersection, and a widening of Main Road from Bees Ferry Road to Chisolm Road/River Road. Also planned in the near term will be improvements to the Main Road/Bohicket Road at Maybank Highway intersection. The longer term improvements include the widening of Bohicket Road from Maybank Highway to Betsy Kerrison Parkway, and the widening of Main Road from River Road to Maybank Highway.

Proposed “New Corridor” Transportation Projects. Two additional proposed “new corridor” transportation projects have been considered as a means to alleviate congestion on Johns Island and the surrounding area. First is a proposed 7-mile extension of the existing I-526 corridor. The new corridor extension would begin where existing I-526 currently terminates at US 17 in West Ashley, then would proceed southward across the Stono River to Johns Island, then eastward across the Stono River again to James Island, ultimately connecting with the existing James Island Connector at Folly Road. This project would add two additional access points on and off Johns Island, resulting in improved commute times as well as providing an additional route for hurricane evacuation. Opponents to the project feel that while congestion and commute times would be temporarily alleviated, easier access and improved commute times would encourage further development on Johns Island. As of January 2019, Charleston County and South Carolina's State Transportation Infrastructure Bank reached a new funding agreement for the construction of this I-526 extension project. While this allows the

project to begin the 12-18 month permitting process, there is the prospect of the project facing additional legal challenges in the future.

The second proposed “new corridor” transportation project is the Sea Island Parkway. This proposed parkway is planned as a multi-modal arterial to provide congestion relief to Bohicket Road, as well as an alternative hurricane evacuation route for residents of Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island and the southern portion of Johns Island. The vision for this facility is a streetscaped 4-lane divided roadway with planted medians. The roadway would extend approximately 9.4 miles from Betsy Kerrison Parkway northeastward to River Road. While the project is scored and prioritized in the recently approved Charleston Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization (CHATS MPO) 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, the project is ranked 136<sup>th</sup> out of 138 ranked vision projects.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Seabrook Island is a barrier island and, as such, is particularly susceptible to risks associated with severe weather. Natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and earthquakes are potential hazards that need to be addressed not only by organizations like the Town and SIPOA, but also by individual residents and property owners. Evacuation of the Island is called for when one of these natural disasters is judged imminent. If a mandatory evacuation order is issued, the prescribed evacuation route calls for leaving the Island via Seabrook Island Road, and then on to Bohicket Road, Main Road and Highway 17. Highway 17 is then taken south to SC64 and then on to Walterboro. More information regarding the Town's emergency evacuation plan, as well as its Comprehensive Emergency Plan, can be accessed from the Town's website at [www.townofseabrookisland.org](http://www.townofseabrookisland.org)



### Public Transportation

The two primary public transportation systems serving the Charleston Region are the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) and the TriCounty Link (TCL). CARTA is a public transportation system dedicated to providing affordable transit in the Charleston community through local fixed routes, on-demand paratransit service and express commuter routes. The TriCounty Link system is comprised of nine regular fixed routes and six commuter routes providing services to rural residents of Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties.

While no CARTA routes serve Seabrook Island, there currently are two TCL routes serving the Johns Island area. The first is TCL Route C204 (aka Johns Island – West Ashley), which is a 13 stop route that begins at Mt. Zion Elementary School on River Road, ends at Citadel Mall in West Ashley, and includes a stop at Freshfields Village, centrally located to serve both Seabrook Island and Kiawah Island. The second is TCL Route C205 (aka Johns Island – James Island), which is an eight stop route that begins at Mt. Zion Elementary and ends at the James Island Walmart located at the intersection of George L. Griffith Boulevard and Folly Road. Each of these TCL routes have stops that are co-located with CARTA routes, allowing users to access all the urban routes provided by CARTA.

The aforementioned CHATS MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan recognizes a great need for improved public transportation and identifies twelve “recommended transit vision corridor projects”, including high and medium capacity bus rapid beyond Town limits, bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide access to nearby Freshfields Village businesses, as well as a continuous path to Kiawah Island and Kiawah Beachwalker Park. Providing pedestrian access to Johns Island is a continuous asphalt walking path along the west side of Betsy Kerrison Parkway that extends approximately three miles from just north of Haulover Creek to the

intersection of Betsy Kerrison Parkway/Main Road and River Road. transit, additional commuter express bus routes, and even commuter ferry routes. However, since none of these planned future corridor projects extend into western Charleston County, it is likely Seabrook Island residents will not see any substantial public transportation improvements in the near future.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There are both public and private bicycle and pedestrian facilities located within the Town limits. The public facilities include a sidewalk flanking the northwestern side of Seabrook Island Road. This sidewalk and the abutting landscaping is within the Town-owned Seabrook Island Road right-of-way and is maintained by the Town through a landscaping contract. It extends from the Bohicket Marina entrance at Andell Bluff Road southwestward to Landfall Way just outside the entry gate. Similarly, there is a well-landscaped pedestrian/bicycle path that flanks the southeastern side of Seabrook Island Road. While this multi-use path is also maintained by the Town through the same landscaping contract, it is not contained within the Seabrook Island Road right-of-way, but rather located within recorded easements on private property. The path extends from Freshfields Village to beyond the entry gate onto SIPOA-owned property. Beyond the entry gate, this multi-use path extends a short distance, wrapping around the Lake House and continuing only several hundred feet further.

The Seabrook Island Natural History Group (SINHG), in conjunction with SIPOA, maintains four walking trails on Seabrook Island that are designed for foot traffic only. These trails can be hiked from dawn to dusk, and vary in length and difficulty. The Seabrook Island bike routes provide access throughout the Town and come in the form of either paved bike paths or, beyond the entry gates, routes suggested that are for bikes (see Figures 10.3 and 10.4).





Several plans have been prepared by various agencies to address the connection and expansion of the Greater Charleston area's regional bicycle and pedestrian network. These include the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission's *People 2 Parks Implementation Study (2016)* and the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Government (BCDCOG) *Walk+BikeBCD Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2017)*. The purpose of the BCDCOG plan is to guide short and long-term land-use and transportation planning decisions for a safer, more accessible region for people on foot and bike. The Plan includes region-wide recommendations, including Johns Island recommendations that would greatly enhanced the pedestrian and biking opportunities for the Seabrook Island community. The Plan's bikeway presentations for Johns Island are shown in Figure 10.5.

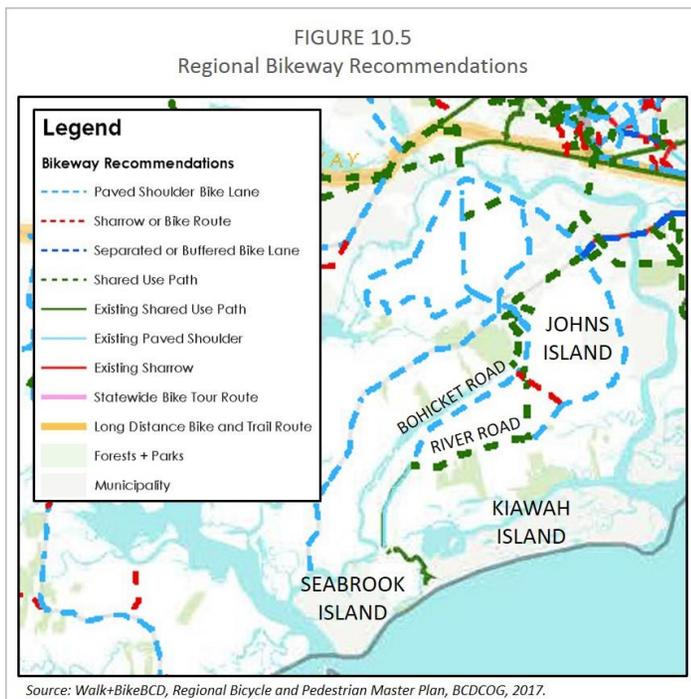
### 10.3: TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT GOAL

#### *Element Goal*

*Ensure the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Town's multi-modal transportation system, with a focus on safety, efficiency, and compatibility with land use patterns, community character and the natural environment, while regionally supporting roadway initiatives that improve traffic flow between Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island, Johns Island, and the overall Charleston region.*

#### Transportation Element Needs

- Cooperating and coordinating with all private and public organizations responsible for the quality, efficiency and safety of the local and regional road network;
- Maintaining the structural integrity and beauty of Seabrook Island Road which serves as the gateway to Seabrook Island; and
- Ensuring the long-term sustainability and usability of existing pedestrian and bicycle paths and providing connections to the larger regional bicycle and pedestrian master plan.





## **10.4: TRANSPORTATION 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. Promote compatibility among roadway improvements, land use patterns, community character and natural environment.
2. Ensure that the Town's roadway system is properly maintained to meet the safe and efficient mobility of residents, businesses, and visitors.
3. Support regional roadway initiatives to improve traffic flow between Seabrook Island, Kiawah Island, Johns Island, and the overall Charleston region.
4. Support the recommendations included in the Town consultant's Entry Road Conceptual Master Plan.
5. Support connecting the Town's bicycle and pedestrian pathways to the regional network included in the Walk+Bike BCD, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master plan.



## 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 SIPOA, SIUC, SIC, the Camp, 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 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 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 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 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, the Camp, 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 community, the Town 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 gate, primarily associated with Seabrook Island Road and drainage, while SIPOA maintains most of the infrastructure behind the gate. 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 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 Cash Flow Method 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 updated its Comprehensive Beach Management Plan. This Plan update was a joint effort including the Town leadership and staff, SIPOA, SIC and the Camp. 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, engaging the 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 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 SIPOA, SIC, SIUC, 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 required;
2. Establish and maintain a Town Capital Improvement Plan; and
3. Focus the Town's investment on the priorities identified as critical to the sustainability of Seabrook Island, including any potential issues related to sea level rise.