

# **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

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**Town of Seabrook Island  
Comprehensive Plan**

*Acknowledgements*

Town of Seabrook Island Council  
Town of Seabrook Island Planning Commission  
Town of Seabrook Island Officials  
Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

# **VISION FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND**

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

## **HISTORY OF THE TOWN**

The Town was officially incorporated on May 26, 1987. The decision to incorporate came after a committee of property owners studied the pros and cons and recommended incorporation citing these advantages: 1) the ability to pass and enforce planning and zoning ordinances; and, 2) controlling future development of the community.

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

Shortly after incorporation the Town prepared and adopted a set of codes and ordinances which were incorporated into the Town Code and the Development Standards Ordinances ("DSO").

The Town Code was last codified on June 26, 2012, with the following chapters:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) General Provisions                     | 20) Planning and Development                     |
| 2) Administration                         | 22) Solid Waste                                  |
| 4) Animals                                | 24) Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Property |
| 6) Buildings and Building Regulations     | 26) Taxation                                     |
| 8) Businesses and Business Regulations    | 28) Traffic and Motor Vehicles                   |
| 10) Court                                 | 30) Utilities                                    |
| 12) Elections                             | 32) Waterways and Beaches.                       |
| 14) Environment                           |  |
| 16) Fire Prevention                       |  |
| 18) Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions |  |

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

## **PLAN ORGANIZATION**

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

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

# **1: Population**

## **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

### **Population**

#### **Introduction**

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

The most recent information that can be used to accurately assess the makeup of the residents of the Town of Seabrook is the 2010 Census, 2014 Voter's registration and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association survey of property owners.

#### **2010 Census**

##### ***Summary***

As noted in the 2010 Census, there were 1,714 residents, 917 households, and 647 families residing in the town. Approximately 49% of the population were male with 51% being female. The population density was 244.8 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the town was 97% white, 2% African American, and 1% were of other races.

##### ***Households***

There were 917 households in 2010 out of which 4.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 68.4% were husband-wife family households, 1.6% had a female householder with no husband present, and 29.4% were non-families. 26.2% of all households were made up of individuals and 15.9% of those were individuals 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 1.87 persons and the average family size was 2.17 persons.

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

## 1: Population Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

### Education

The 2012 estimated educational attainment of the residents of Seabrook Island is high, with nearly 69% of the residents having earned college degrees including 29% having graduate or professional degrees.

<b>Educational Attainment: 2012</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Population 25 Years and Over	1588	100.0
Less Than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8	0.5
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	11	0.7
High School Graduate or GED	85	5.4
Some College, No Degree	256	16.1
Associate degree	121	7.6
Bachelor's Degree	640	40.3
Graduate or Professional Degree	466	29.4

*Source: American Community Survey—5 year estimates 2008 - 2012.*

### 2014 Data Updates

#### Voter Registration

According to the Charleston County Voters Registration, the total number of registered voters in the Town in 2014 was 1,766.

#### Summer Population

As with other beach communities, the population increases dramatically in the summer when it includes residents, non-resident homeowners and short-term renters. During the summer of 2014, estimated peak population grew to 2,713 (as derived from gate passes). *Source: Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (November 2014).*

## **1: Population**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Trends**

In the past 40 years, the Town has experienced a gradual population growth. The 1990 Census recorded 948 residents in the Town Seabrook Island. In twenty years, the resident population grew to 1,714 residents. With new amenities in place and continuing build-out anticipated, growth is expected to continue

#### **Goals:**

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

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

## 2: Economic Development Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

### Economic Development

#### Introduction

The Town of Seabrook is primarily a private island community and includes the Seabrook Island Club (“Club”) and Bohicket Marina and Market (“Bohicket Marina”). Bohicket Marina includes retail shops and restaurants and the Club includes two championship golf courses, a tennis center, an equestrian center, a beach club and many other amenities. The main industries are the vacation rental market and use of amenities of the Club and Bohicket Marina.

#### Labor Force

In 2012, the estimated number of employed civilian population 16 years and over in the Town was 598. Among the most common occupations of Seabrook Island residents were management, business and financial operations related occupations (35%), and sales and office (29%).

<b>TABLE OCCUPATIONS OF EMPLOYED WORKERS 16 YEARS AND OVER</b>		
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>% (rounded)</b>
Management Business and financial	212	35
Sales and office	174	29
Education, training, legal and library	47	8
Healthcare and related technologies	34	6
Service	34	6
Production, transportation and material moving	33	5
Natural resources, construction and maintenance	22	4
Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	19	3
Computer, engineering and science	18	3
Community and social service	5	1

*Source: 2012 American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates 2008 - 2012*

## **2: Economic Development Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

### **Charleston Area Major Employers**

The leading employers for the region are the Joint Base Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the Charleston County School District, Benefitfocus, Boeing South Carolina and Roper St. Francis Healthcare. In addition, Charleston County has attracted business including: the Port of Charleston; the Space and Air Warfare (SPAWAR) Systems command of the US. Navy. A vibrant tourism business, the beautiful “Lowcountry” environment and quality of life, and a local culture of historic preservation and conservation attract young professionals.

### **Businesses**

Commercial activity is centered in and near the Bohicket Marina and includes restaurants, real estate offices and various retail businesses.

### **The Natural Environment as an Economic Asset**

The surrounding ocean and local rivers and creeks with their attendant recreational opportunities together with amenities of both the Seabrook Island Club and Property Owners Association attract people to Seabrook Island as both vacationers and permanent residents. Economic activity derived from tourism and relocation include: short-term residential rentals, residential construction, maintenance and remodeling, and seasonal support of local businesses. The Town derives revenue from these economic activities through distributions from the South Carolina Accommodations Tax, contractor licensing and building permit fees as well as distributions from property taxes.

### **Goals:**

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

#### **1. Strategy:**

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

## **3: Natural Resources**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Natural Resources**

##### **Introduction**

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

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

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

##### **Overview**

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

### **3: Natural Resources**

#### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

##### **Physiographic & Topography**

According to the 2000 Census, the town has a total area of 7.1 square miles of which, 6.1 square miles is land and 1.0 square miles (14.39 %) is water. The island is 3.8 miles long and about 1.5 miles wide at its center. The total area of the town limits is about 2,000 acres, with about 1,100 acres in marshland. The island's average elevation is approximately 13 feet.

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

##### **Vegetation**

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

**3: Natural Resources**  
**Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

**Wildlife**

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

**Beaches**

The ocean and beach front areas are critically important to the community. Beaches have been designated as critical habitat for loggerhead turtles and \_\_\_ for piping plover. The Town has adopted and maintains a Comprehensive Beach Management Plan (last revision adopted 16 December 2014).

**Table: Charleston County Endangered and Threatened Species**

Status	Name
Threatened	Loggerhead Sea Turtle
Threatened	Piping Plover
Threatened	Red Knot
Endangered	Bachman s Warbler
Endangered	Red-cockaded Woodpecker
Threatened	Sea-beach amaranth
Endangered	Canby’s dropwort
Threatened	Wood Stork
Threatened	Frosted flatwoods salamander
Threatened	Green sea turtle
Endangered	Kemp’s ridley sea turtle
Endangered	Leatherback sea turtle
Endangered	Atlantic Sturgeon
Endangered	Shortnose Sturgeon
Endangered	Finback whale
Endangered	Humpback whale
Endangered	Right Whale
Endangered	West Indian Manatee
Endangered	American chaffseed
Endangered	Pondberry

*Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014*

**Goal:**

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

1. Strategy:

Require site design to identify all natural resources to be preserved and protected.  
Require replacement-in-kind of trees removed during construction (Staff, Planning Commission).

2. Strategy:

Enforce Town Code provisions pertaining to beach and dune protection and raise beachgoers awareness of those provisions (Town Beach Patrol during summer months; signage at beach boardwalks).

## **4: Cultural Resources**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Introduction**

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

#### **Current Events**

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

#### **Marina/Fishing**

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

#### **Goal:**

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

1. Strategy:

Support cultural events in the Charleston area.

2. Strategy:

Provide residents and visitors with information through display area at Town Hall, for brochures, pamphlets, announcements, and other printed materials covering cultural, educational, and historical resources in the surrounding area. Provide residents and visitors with information concerning opportunities, community services, institutions, organizations and events.

## **5: Community Facilities**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Community Facilities**

##### **Introduction**

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

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

##### **Water Supply**

The Town owns its water and sewer facilities. The Seabrook Island Utility Commission, an elected commission of three members, is responsible for administration and management of the Town's water and sewer facilities. The Town purchases water from the St. Johns Water Company, a co-operative non-profit private water company that is federally financed through Consolidated Farmers Home Administration Act of 1961 and authorized to serve all of Johns Island and Wadmalaw Island. St. Johns Water Company purchases water from Charleston Water System at a bulk rate. Studies done by the St. Johns Water Company have indicated that this purchase will continue to be more cost effective than developing an independent water supply. St. Johns Water Company contract with Charleston Water System was renewed for forty years in 2007.

St. Johns Water Company's water transmission pipelines connect to the Charleston Water System at three points on the Charleston side of the Stono River (an 18 inch pipeline at the Limehouse Bridge; an 18 inch pipeline at the Stono Bridge; and, a new 24 inch pipeline at Johns Island Airport) and traverse Johns Island along Main Road, Maybank Highway, Bohicket Road, River Road and Betsy Kerrison Parkway to Freshfields Village shopping center. The Town connections to the St. Johns Water Company are at Freshfields Village shopping center. The capital and operating costs of these transmission pipelines across Johns Island are shared pro rata by the using utilities under the terms of an 80 year water supply contract signed in 1978 by a preceding owner of the Seabrook Island Utility. Water delivered from the transmission system to the Town is priced by St. Johns Water Company at the Charleston Water Systems bulk rate. The Town's contract with St. Johns Water Company was renewed in 2009.

## **5: Community Facilities**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

The Seabrook Island utilities currently (2014) serves 2307 water taps and 2350 sewer connections. Water use at the peak use period (summertime) is reported to be just over 1,500,000 gallons per day. The long term water supply contract has been amended and transmission capacity is in place and capitalized to provide the Town 2,400,000 gallons per day. This volume is slightly more than the Town is projected to need at build-out. *Source: Seabrook Island Utility Commission*

#### **Wastewater**

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

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

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

**5: Community Facilities**  
**Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

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

**Electricity, Cable and Telephone Service**

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

**Fire Protection**

Fire protection service is provided to the Town by the St. Johns Fire District; a special tax district created by the governor in 1959 in which the residents of Seabrook pay a fire tax. As of October 2014, the St. John’s Fire District employed seven fully staffed fire stations, one of which is located on Seabrook Island. The two story building is staffed with a minimum of three fulltime firefighters 24 hours a day. The onsite equipment includes a first response 75 foot aerial apparatus (ladder truck) purchased in 1996. There is also a spare pumper for the St. Johns Fire District located at the Seabrook Island station. As of October 2014 the St. Johns Fire district reported apparatus as stated in the following table:

APPARATUS INFORMATION		
Unit	Tank Size	Pump Capacity (GPM)
Engine 701	1000	1500
Ladder 702 75’	500	1500
Engine 703	1000	1500
Engine 704	1000	1500
Engine 705	750	1500
Engine 706	1000	1500
Engine 707	1000	1500
Reserve Engine 751	1000	1500
Reserve Engine 752	1000	1500
Reserve Tender 723	3000	1000
Tower 704 114’	300	2000
Ladder 707 75’	500	1500
Brush 705	225	75
Brush 707	225	75

The district also has two marine vessels, one hazardous materials trailer, two brush trucks and ten support vehicles consisting of six Chief's vehicles, three maintenance vehicles and the Battalion Chief's truck and one beach rescue boat housed at the Town of Kiawah Island.

The St. John's Fire District currently employs 131 personnel of which 123 are fire suppression certified. The district also maintains its own maintenance division with three personnel and an administrative staff with four personnel. Rescue divers are provided by Charleston County Rescue. There are no volunteer fire fighters.

The standards by which fire protection services are evaluated are a function of the distances between fire stations and structures served, water availability, and the numbers and types of firefighting equipment, fire stations, and personnel. The most widely used indicator of a fire department's ability to provide fire protection services is its rating assigned by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). The lower the ISO rating the higher the level of protection and the lower the fire insurance premiums for insured properties within the service area. The community of Seabrook Island has an ISO rating of "3".

## **5: Community Facilities**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Law Enforcement**

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

#### **Emergency Medical Services**

The Charleston County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provides emergency medical assistance to people within urban and rural communities of Charleston County. Services include pre-hospital care and transport, Advanced Life Support and paramedic services. Services are administered from EMS Headquarters in North Charleston where dispatching operations are based, and where the EMS Director maintains offices and directs administrative functions.

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

#### **Waste Management**

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

## **5: Community Facilities**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness**

One member of Town Council serves as Public Safety Coordinator for the Town. That official has the responsibility of making sure the Town's evacuation plan is current, and for ensuring coordination with the SIPOA Security Force and other state, county and municipal organizations in the event of an emergency. The Town follows the Charleston County Emergency Operations Plan and the Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide, in addition to the Town has adopted and maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Plan. Under that plan, Town Hall is the preferred site for establishment of an emergency operations center, providing a central location for all emergency operations. Town Hall is equipped with a 47 KW generator capable of sustaining operations in the case of a power outage as well as the Town's phone system and fax lines, all radio communications, and facilities to handle Town administration. The Town's plan includes provisions for individuals who may require evacuation assistance, weather alerts; dissemination of emergency response information through the Town's website and "800" telephone service; a Code Red telephone notification system for alert messages; and, a "TWITTER" account for notification that the Town has published updated emergency response information. In the event of evacuation, property owners will be allowed to return once the Town has determined that suitable conditions prevail. Mutual aid is provided by Charleston County, the Town of Kiawah Island and other jurisdictions, as needed. There is also a consolidated dispatch service available through the county.

#### **Public Schools**

The public educational facilities that serve the Town fall under the purview of the South Carolina Department of Education and the Charleston County School District. The three public schools that serve the Town are Mt. Zion Elementary School, Haut Gap Middle School and St. Johns Island High School significant student populations of those schools are drawn from communities of Johns Islands.

#### **Private Schools**

Private schools are not regulated by the South Carolina Department of Education or by the Charleston County School District. The South Carolina Independent School Association provides accreditation standards for private schools, although private schools are not required to be accredited. There are a total of forty-seven private schools in Charleston County educating approximately 8,570 students.

## **5: Community Facilities**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Library**

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

#### **Town Hall**

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

#### **Town Administration**

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

#### **Website**

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

#### **GOALS:**

To provide an orderly and safe community.

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

## **HOUSING ELEMENT**

### **Introduction**

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

### **Number of Housing Units**

The number of single unit detached and attached housing structures in the Town in 2014 was 1,528. The number of multiple unit housing structures in the Town was 666 for a total of 2194 housing units (excludes "mobile" housing units). As of November 2014, there remained 450 undeveloped residential lots, mostly zoned for Single Family housing.

*Source: Seabrook Island Property Owners Association*

**6: Housing**  
**Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

**Age of Housing**

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

<b>Age of Housing Units: 2014</b>		
<b>Year of Construction</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>% of Units</b>
Built 2010 or later*	72	0.1
Built 2000 - 2009	370	16.7
Built 1990 — 1999	498	22.5
Built 1980-1989	908	41.0
Built 1960-1979	404	18.3
Built 1940 - 1959	22	1.0
Built before 1940	6	0.3
Total Units	2212	

*Source: 2012 Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates 2008 – 2012; \*Town of Seabrook Island (permits 2010 – 2014).*

**Owner/Renter Occupied Home**

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

**6: Housing**  
**Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

In the Town in 2012, there were an estimated 826 specified owner occupied houses with an average median price of \$745,500.

<b>Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units: 2012</b>	
<b>Housing Value</b>	<b># of Houses</b>
Less than \$50,000	8
\$50,000-99,999	9
\$100,000 – 149,999	6
\$150,000-199,999	17
\$200,000 - 299,999	48
\$300,000- 499,999	163
\$500,000- 999,999	311
\$1,000,000 or more	264
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>826</b>

*Source: American Community Survey – 5 Year Estimates 2008 - 2012.*

## **6: Housing**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Housing Affordability**

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

#### **Goals:**

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

1. Strategy:  
Adopt and enforce housing requirements and maintain density controls that are aesthetically pleasing and in harmony with the natural resources of Seabrook Island
2. Strategy:  
Consider the impact on balance of residential density and green-space in matters involving zoning and re-zoning. (Town Council, Planning Commission: Ongoing)

## **7: Land Use**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Land Use**

##### **Introduction**

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

##### **Land Use and Zoning**

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

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

## 7: Land Use Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan

### Existing Land Use Map

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

**Single-Family Residential Land Use:** Single-family residential land uses are shown in brown on the Existing Land Use Map. There are approximately 692 acres of Single-family residential development within the Town.

**Parks & Recreation Area Land Use:** Parks and recreation areas are owned by private interests. The parks and recreation areas encompass approximately 363 acres. These areas are shaded in green.

**Multi-Family Residential Land Use:** A land use designation of multi-family denotes developments such as duplexes and condominiums. High-density residential areas are in tan on the land use map. There are an estimated 204 acres of Multi-Family land use within the Town.

**Commercial Land Use:** Commercial and office land use includes retail, office, and service oriented businesses. Commercial land uses are shown in pink. Most commercial areas are located within Bohicket Marina and Market and the Seabrook Island Club. There are estimated 49 acres of commercial land uses currently within the Town.

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

**Utility Land Use:** Public utilities and services are either partially or fully in place in these areas. There are estimated 21 acres of utility land uses currently within the Town.

## **7: Land Use**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

**Agricultural Land Use:** Recognizes the use of land for agricultural purposes. There are estimated 305 acres of agricultural land uses currently within the Town and are indicated by dash lines.

**Conservation Land Use:** Recognizes limited use of land for recreational but otherwise envisions long term preservation of the land without commercial activity or subdivision. There are estimated 20 acres of conservation land uses currently within the Town and are shown as dotted areas.

#### **Future Land Use**

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

#### **Goal:**

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

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

## **8: Transportation Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

### **Transportation Element**

#### **Introduction**

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

#### **Roadway Functional Classification**

The Town's road system is comprised of a compact network of local, low traffic density streets typical of a beach community. Keeping an effective network of roads is essential. Care is taken to maintain roads and sidewalks to ensure safe passage of pedestrian and automobile traffic. Funding for such improvements is available through federal transportation enhancement grants, Charleston County Transportation sales tax funding, the Town and SIPOA (roadways within its property boundaries). Access to the Town of Seabrook is available via Johns Island from Highway 17 and from James Island via Maybank Highway (both routes include bridges over intracoastal waterways).

#### **Seabrook Island Congestion Management Traffic Count Program 2013**

The BCD Council of Governments conducted a survey of traffic volume characteristics over Seabrook Island Road. Total average weekday traffic volume is 6,000 vehicles traveling on the ramp to Seabrook Island Road at the Betsy Kerrison Parkway. As a coastal community, Seabrook Island experiences substantial seasonal fluctuation in traffic volumes over the course of the year, averaging up to 40% more traffic traveling onto the island during the summer.

## **8: Transportation**

### **Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

#### **Public Transportation**

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

#### **Goal:**

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

1. Strategy:

Support efforts to improve Johns Island roads and augment existing Johns Island roads with new roads to improve vehicular safety to and from Seabrook Island.

## **9: Priority Investment Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan**

### **Overview**

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

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

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

### **Transportation Projects**

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

### **Goal:**

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

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

**Appendix:**

**A. LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

In 1994, the South Carolina General Assembly passed the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-310 through 6-29-12001)*. Prior to this Act, the General Assembly had granted authority to create and maintain a comprehensive planning process through a series of legislative acts. Zoning authority was first granted to municipalities in 1924 (Title 5, Chapter 23). The General Assembly extended zoning powers to counties eighteen years later in 1942 (Title 4, Chapter 27). Subsequently, local governments relied most heavily on additional enabling legislation included in a 1967 Act of the General Assembly, codified in Title 6, Chapter 7.

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

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

**B. PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS**

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

**Step One — Resolution**

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

**Step Two — Recommendation**

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

**Step Three — Hearing**

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

**Step Five — Ordinance**

The Town Council must adopt the Comprehensive Plan by Ordinance.

**C. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Following adoption of the *Town of Seabrook Island Comprehensive Plan* by the Town Council, the Town will be guided by the Goals and Objectives of the Plan, as appropriate, in its revisions of ordinances, programs and Town operations.

**D. FUTURE PLAN REVISIONS**

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

# Town of Seabrook Island Zoning Map



**EXISTING LAND USE / ZONING**

- COMMERCIAL
- AGRICULTURE
- PARKS & RECREATION
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- GOVERNMENT PROPERTY
- PARKING
- PUMP STATIONS
- RIGHT OF WAY

**WATER FEATURES**

- RIVER
- LAKE
- MARSH/WETLANDS/BEACH

**BOUNDARIES**

- TOWN OF SEABROOK
- COUNTY OF CHARLESTON
- TOWN OF KAWAH ISLAND
- TOWN OF ROCKVILLE

**MAYOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOWN CLERK:** \_\_\_\_\_

PREPARED BY: [unreadable] FOR THE TOWN OF SEABROOK ISLAND

