

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND

Comprehensive Plan Overview

WORKING DOCUMENT

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

kiawahneat

PLAN ELEMENTS

- The ten elements are intended to ensure that all potential community concerns are addressed.
- They are required as inputs into the process but not outputs from the process-- meaning that we have to consider them during our work, but they don't all have to appear in the final plan as a stand-alone section. Think of these elements not as an outline for the document, but instead as a checklist to make sure that we considered all the relevant questions before we start shaping the document itself.
- There are no hard and fast rules on the structure of a comprehensive plan. The State gives freedom in order to allow each municipality to shape a document that best meets their own needs, and best practices tell us that the most effective plans are those that are uniquely structured to their municipality's priorities. In this way, no element is excluded, but they may be grouped together in a more streamlined and beneficial format.
- Many topics are complicated and don't fit neatly into one box, so we will build the document around a structure as it takes form. For now, please know that a few of these strategies may seem like they are organized in the wrong category, but that is only because they are straddling multiple elements.
- The topics we are mandated to consider are:
 - I. Population
 - II. Economic Development
 - III. Natural Resources
 - IV. Cultural Resources
 - V. Community Facilities
 - VI. Housing
 - VII. Land Use
 - VIII. Transportation
 - IX. Priority Investments
 - X. Resiliency

WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT

The rest of this document is organized into sections by the ten elements. Within each section, you will find:

- **The SC State Overview** of each element: A broad definition of the topic, including the many subtopics that it might address. This is included to get the commission thinking about all facets of each element and if we are missing any considerations at this time.
- **Objectives:** The comprehensive plan's proposed objectives at this time. Objectives represent the intended goals and outcomes that the plan hopes to address independent of specific actions or actors. They answer the question WHAT and WHY as a first step, before considerations of HOW and WHO are brought forward. The objectives are organized by ascending number in this document.
- **Strategies:** The proposed strategies to-date represent the means by which the plan would hope to accomplish the objectives. They consider the structure of the municipality and other stakeholders to assign specific responsibilities and tasks that serve as many objectives as possible. There is not a one-to-one between objectives and strategies, as often times, a strategy is an action that can address many objectives. The strategies are identified with alphabetic letters, and their order follows the previous presentation that was structured differently, so they are not always in alphabetic order. We did this for anyone who was trying to track changes from the last presentation to this one.

Working Objectives and Strategies

I. POPULATION

SC State Overview: The population element includes information related to historic trends and projections; the number, size and characteristics of households; educational levels and trends; income characteristics and trends; race; sex; age; and other information relevant to a clear understanding of how the population affects the existing situation and future potential of the area.

Note: Much of this information will be pulled during our next phase, as we are preparing the plan, further fleshing out the strategies, and drafting the existing conditions text. Population data also appears in the existing conditions overview included in the plan.

Population Objectives:

- 1. Continue to gather data on Kiawah's present and future populations.**
- 2. Quantify future development to understand full build-out of the island and its conditions.**
- 3. Develop strategies to consider the needs of an aging population.**

I. POPULATION STRATEGIES

A The Planning Commission will review existing demographic data.

- Understand the various demographics/user groups and related trends, including:
 - › Ownership vs. Rental
 - › Full-time vs. Part-time
 - › Age trends and shifts
 - › Visitors
- Collaborate with Kiawah Island Golf Resort and other Kiawah Island agencies to understand trends in visitors and tourism recognizing the pattern of visitors to future property owners.

I. POPULATION STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Population?

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SC State Overview: The economic element includes historic trends and projections on the numbers and characteristics of the labor force, where the people who live in the community work, where people who work in the community reside, available employment characteristics and trends, an economic base analysis and any other matters affecting the local economy.

Tourism, manufacturing, and revitalization efforts may be appropriate factors to consider.

Economic Development Objectives:

- 4. Safeguard Kiawah's economic viability across changing conditions.**
- 5. Complete the Island's development in a manner that balances the preservation of natural resources with economic development.**
- 6. Develop the zoning framework to support property renovation, rehabilitation, development, and annexation.**
- 7. Support the island's tourism, commercial businesses and employer needs.**

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

B Town Council will review the Town's Annexation Policy Plan and Procedures Manual every five years.

- Ensuring annexation petitions preserve the existing character of Kiawah, controls the character of new development adjacent to Kiawah.
- Review existing regulations that would guide annexation and the present areas in question to determine if any new regulation is necessary.
- Collaborate with external entities and agencies to maintain a gateway compatible to the character of Kiawah.

J Mayor and Town Council will oversee and manage an Economic Development Strategy.

- The includes the whole of all economic development concerns with the goal of supporting economic wellbeing across the island.
- Consider the implications of a reduction in development agreements, new development fees, and the role of Kiawah Partners.
- Encourage future development that is consistent with the Town's vision.

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Economic Development?

III. NATURAL RESOURCES

SC State Overview: This element could include information on coastal resources, slope characteristics, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, unique park and recreation areas, unique scenic views and sites, wetlands and soil types. This element could also include information on flood plain and flood way areas, mineral deposits, air quality and any other matter related to the natural environment of the area.

Natural Resources Objectives:

8. Preserve and enhance Kiawah's existing natural resources.
9. Champion the 'Design with Nature' approach and its successes.
10. Define Kiawah's 'Green Initiative.'
11. Develop tools that can be used to incentivize environmental action.
12. Maintain and expand public education and outreach around environmental programs.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

D Town Council will conduct a Regulatory Incentivization Assessment.

- Determine what if any tools can be used by the municipality to encourage behavioral changes that support Kiawah's goals.
- Engage property owners, property managers, and KICA regimes
- Consider providing incentives that are nested within permitting and/or STR restrictions

L Town Council will support a Design with Nature campaign.

- Support Design with Nature through a range of public relations channels to foster pride in and connection to these central values of Kiawah

III. NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

Q Town Council will define, promote, and regulate the Green Initiative.

- Consolidate goals and tools that represent all of Kiawah's commitment to environmental action
- Establish regulation that is actionable and enforceable
- The stated ambition is to become a leader in the implementation of projects and measures to help protect our island's environment, nature and beach and marsh barriers.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Natural Resources?

- Develop and budget for a beach replenishment program
- Engage with external agencies to support recurring funding for beach replenishment projects
- Continue to engage external partners to support the objectives and initiatives of the Marsh Management Plan
- Explore additional partnerships with conservation organizations.
- Consider appropriate strategies to protect the character of environmentally sensitive properties including Captain Sam's Spit.

IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES

SC State Overview: This element could include historic buildings and structures, unique commercial or residential areas, unique natural or scenic resources, archaeological sites, educational, religious or entertainment areas or institutions, and any other feature or facility relating to the cultural aspects of the community. As with the natural resources element, a separate board may prepare this element. The planning commission can incorporate the work of a separate board into the comprehensive plan by reference.

Cultural Resources Objectives:

- 13. Encourage the development of programs and services that improve the delivery of cultural activities to all of Kiawah Island and its visitors.**
- 14. Champion the history of Kiawah as a compelling facet of the island's culture.**

IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

E Town Council will coordinate with other public and private organizations to encourage the further development of recreational and cultural activities.

- Promote available events and programs for the benefit of the Town's residents, non-resident property owners, visitor population and outreach of events for neighboring communities.

K Town Council will collaborate with Kiawah entities to ensure the assessment of Community Facilities needs.

- A study conducted every five years
- Council will determine the best party or parties to administer the assessment
- Establish a recurring means of identifying gaps, barriers, and needs in the market for the full range of community amenities: commercial, cultural, civic, social, resort, recreational amenities as well as utilities
- Examine underutilized resources and properties to maximize utility and civic value
- Define process as means to serve community needs as well as maintain competitive position in the market
- across future projected conditions

IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

M Town Council will review and support the Arts & Cultural Events Council.

- Review the role and purview of the Arts and Cultural Events Council, empowering it as an organization to oversee Kiawah's cultural vibrancy
- Determine a means to assess the diverse cultural needs of the Town's population and foster creative programming that serves the cultural aspirations of Kiawah

N The Mayor and Town Council will explore the establishment of the Kiawah Historical Society.

- Determine an individual(s) or organization that can research, communicate, and promote Kiawah's history
- Encourage the identification and preservation of archaeological and historic resources located on Kiawah island
- Determine channels to express the island's history in meaningful and engaging ways

IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Cultural Resources?

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

SC State Overview: This element includes many activities essential to the growth, development or redevelopment of the community. The commission should give separate consideration to the following plans:

- a. Water supply, treatment and distribution plan;
- b. Sewage system and wastewater treatment plan;
- c. Solid waste collection and disposal plan;
- d. Fire protection plan;
- e. Emergency medical services plan;
- f. General government facilities (e.g., administrative, court or other facilities);
- g. Educational facilities; and
- h. Libraries and other cultural facilities.

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Facilities Objectives:

9. Systematize inter-agency coordination across all of Kiawah's key stakeholders.
10. Promote a centralized communication channel or channels across entities to reach Kiawah's populations.
11. Establish a process for regularly conducting utility assessments.
12. Increase education and transparency in regulatory and developmental process for everyone involved.
13. Maintain professional development and training for Town Council, Boards, Committees and Staff.

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

G Town Council will regularly assess Town processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

- Determine if there are municipal process which increases transparency, objectivity, and or education to the public
- Create educational resources that allow community members to comprehend all phases of the Town processes.

S Town Council will support oversight of the Kiawah Island Alliance (KIA) / “The Alliance”.

- Establish recognized structure to coordinate across all of Kiawah's stakeholder organizations.
- Systematize inter-agency coordination
- Increase communication and collaboration across organizations
- Share goals and resources in a collaborative and transparent manner

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

- Seek to reduce and/or remove redundant efforts across stakeholder entities
- Establish a better working relationship with Charleston County

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

T KIA will collaborate around the long-term objectives.

- Economic Development
 - › Kiawah population, demographic, and development updates (TOKI)
 - › Kiawah's overall economic wellbeing
 - › Marketing and maintaining Kiawah's competitiveness (TOKI/KIGR/KP)
 - › Organizational economic goals and investments
 - › Means to better support commercial businesses
 - › Means to attract and retain workforce
 - › Means to address workforce housing
- Community Amenities
 - › Shared understanding of needs: commercial, cultural, social, civic, resort, and recreational amenities
 - › Understanding of utility needs (KIU)
 - › Delivering cultural programming (Arts & Cultural Events Council)
- Mobility
 - › Determine island-wide mobility needs and create integrated mobility strategy
 - › Recognize mobility patterns occur across a network and involve all parties
 - › Study shared transit options to consolidate existing efforts

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

- › Encourage and support mobility alternatives, such as walking, biking, and appropriate forms of shared transit
- Environment
 - › Maintain and enhance the protections on natural resources in all of their forms across Kiawah Island
 - › Recognize that environmental issues exist across ecosystems irrespective of man-made boundaries, so protections must be upheld in a consistent manner
 - › Consider where, if anywhere, increased protections serve the island's landscape and its ecosystem (KC)
 - › Deploy Green Initiative (TOKI)
 - › Goals in terms of conservation of additional properties as part of the island's future build-out
 - › Increase environmental education to better reach the general public about goals and concerns on the island (KC)
- Resiliency and Public Safety
 - › Provide residents, non-resident property owners, and visitors with a safe and secure environment
 - › Determine a long-term law enforcement strategy that best protects and serves Kiawah's diverse entities, functions, and needs
 - › Define parties responsible for oversight
 - › Define the roles of specific organizations amid emergency scenarios
 - › Verify that emergency responders have all of the tools and resources available to address potential emergencies
 - › Confirm that plans operate along the Town's identified communication system
- Zoning and Land Use Regulation (TOKI)

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

- › Assess existing regulation and outcomes relative to organizational goals
- › Propose and workshop updates to regulatory tools
- › Regularly provide feedback on ARB standards
- › Regulatory updates or changes
- › Reduce regulatory red tape across organizations
- Communications
 - › Share and align all island-wide messaging
 - › Utilize central communications channel to maximize coverage
 - › Produce summaries of meetings and share as much information as it publicly appropriate
- Capital Improvement Plan
 - › Maintain and update a capital improvement plan to reflect island-wide needs
 - › Consider where shared resources can be applied to shared needs

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

U KIA will establish a Central Communication Channel.

- Establish a centralized communications channel across all of the islands stakeholders entities to reach Kiawah's populations and reduce communication fatigue
- Coordinate across agencies to determine collect, consolidate, and streamline messaging
- Define a beneficial channel or channels that best reaches the greatest Kiawah demographic
- Identify and brand the appropriate channel to ensure awareness

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Community Facilities?

VI. HOUSING

SC State Overview: This element includes an analysis of existing housing by location, type, age, condition, owner and renter occupancy, affordability, and projections of housing needs to accommodate existing and future population as identified in the population and economic elements. The housing element requires an analysis of local regulations to determine if there are regulations that may hinder development of affordable housing. It includes an analysis of market-based incentives that may be made available to encourage the development of affordable housing. Incentives may include density bonus, design flexibility and a streamlined permitting process.

Housing Objectives:

- 14. Review housing demographics and needs to ensure Kiawah remains competitive.**
- 15. Establish guidelines for the redevelopment of aged developments including multifamily residential.**
- 16. Encourage development of housing stock, types and styles that reflect the needs of the population.**

VI. HOUSING STRATEGIES

I Town Council will encourage the provision of workforce housing developed by other stakeholders.

- Advocate for the establishment of workforce housing in the greater Charleston County area
- Provide endorsements when necessary to express verbal support of the efforts of Charleston County and other stakeholders

VI. HOUSING STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Housing?

- Determine a means by which to understand current and future housing needs to remain competitive

VII. LAND USE

SC State Overview: This element deals with the development characteristics of the land. It considers existing and future land by categories including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, forestry, mining, public and quasi-public, recreation, parks, open space, and vacant or undeveloped land. This element is influenced by all previously described plan elements. The findings, projections and conclusions from each of the previous six elements will influence the amount of land needed for various uses.

Land Use Objectives:

- 17. Promote policies which enhance the distinct character across Kiawah which preserves the natural environment while accommodating future needs.**
- 18. Promote the support of Charleston County Urban Growth Boundary.**

VII. LAND USE STRATEGIES

C The Planning Commission will review of land use and zoning designations with to consider future Kiawah needs.

- Review existing regulations that would guide future construction
- Determine if any future goals are better achieved through changes to existing codes
- Considering property age, value, present trends
- Include considerations of resiliency/environmental criteria
- Assess if any additional regulation is desired for new typologies outside the existing municipal boundaries

P The Planning Commission will oversee Land Use and Zoning Code updates.

- Make changes to capture future need in land use and zoning updates.
- Consider codification of Designing with Nature Guidelines.

VII. LAND USE STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Land Use?

- Consider adoption of the ARB standards to codify those guiding principles

VIII. TRANSPORTATION

SC State Overview: This element was originally included in the community facilities element. The transportation element considers transportation facilities including major road improvements, new road construction, and pedestrian and bicycle projects. This element must be developed in coordination with the land element to ensure transportation efficiency for existing and planned development.

Transportation Objectives:

- 19. Maintain the island's roadway system to provide safe and efficient mobility routes for residents, businesses, visitors, and service providers.**
- 20. Consider mobility changes to address the constraints the existing network.**
- 21. Advance and promote mobility alternatives as safe, pleasant, and viable means to get around the island beyond individual vehicular travel.**
- 22. Determine if the need exists for current or future shared transit options.**

VIII. TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

F The Planning Commission will evaluate transportation network to improve island mobility.

- Study the range of opportunities and feasibility of large-scale mobility changes that improve access and connection across the island
- Study roadway and bike network changes, including access points, intersections, and security gates
- Study the feasibility of new vehicular access points to the island, including new bridges and/or ferry connections
- Consider shared transit options that serve all stakeholders, including those that presently exist on the island
- Study potential changes to land use and development patterns that can improve mobility outcomes
- Study strategies for traffic mitigation as a result of new developments.

VIII. TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Transportation?

IX. PRIORITY INVESTMENT

SC State Overview: This element considers funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next 10 years and recommends the projects for those funds. These recommendations must be coordinated with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies (counties, other municipalities, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and any other public group that may be affected by the projects). Coordination simply means written notification by the local planning commission or its staff to those groups of proposed projects and opportunities to provide comment.

Priority Investment Objectives:

23. Establish a Capital Improvement Plan.

24. Focus the Town's investment on the priorities identified as critical to the resiliency of the Island.

IX. PRIORITY INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

R Town Council will oversee the creation of a Capital Improvements Plan.

- Create a singular resource that expresses and prioritizes the capital needs for the Town of Kiawah
- Develop a strategy by which municipal funds are distributed, including clear and transparent logic
- Prioritize those resiliency needs not previously addressed that leave the island vulnerable in any capacity

IX. PRIORITY INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Priority Investment?

X. RESILIENCY

SC State Overview: This element that considers the impacts of flooding, high water, and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, and public health, safety and welfare. This element includes an inventory of existing resiliency conditions, promotes resilient planning, design and development, and is coordinated with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

Resiliency Objectives:

- 25. Provide residents, non-resident property owners, and visitors with a safe and secure environment.**
- 26. Determine a long-term law enforcement strategy that best protects and serves Kiawah's diverse entities, functions, and needs.**
- 27. Monitor the continued adequacy of emergency preparedness plans and communicate regularly such plans to stakeholder entities, residents, property owners, and visitors.**
- 28. Establish a resiliency strategy for Kiawah.**

X. RESILIENCY STRATEGIES

O Town Council will organize and support resiliency efforts through dedicated position roles.

- A dedicated role tasked with creating Public Safety & Resiliency Strategy which:
- Conducts an assessment to identify the town's exposure to all types of potential hazards, shocks, and stresses, assigning a price tag on the costs of potential impacts
- Determines where more resilient practices can be adopted across various systems, such as mobility and utilities
- Creates strategies to regularly test the effectiveness of emergency response systems and plans
- Studies and understand the resilience of utilities in both normal and disaster scenarios
- Determines if Kiawah's existing first responders are adequately addressing safety conditions
- Increases messaging and communication about safety plans in order to raise awareness of and confidence for all users

X. RESILIENCY STRATEGIES

What other strategies, if any, are missing under Resiliency?

- Continue to study and understand suite of options in terms of long-term law enforcement options