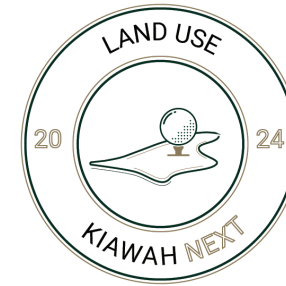


08



landusenext

Identify strategies for smart, sustainable, and controlled growth.

Landuse

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.

Big Ideas

Annexation Policy
Development Standards

Objectives

LU1 - Promote policies that enhance and preserve Kiawah's distinct, natural character.

LU2 - Support Charleston County's Urban Growth Boundary.

Overview

The Town of Kiawah Island guides land development through municipal zoning and future land use codes. As the island nears full buildout, the Town must reevaluate its land use strategies to balance future development, conservation, and resilience.

This Land Use Element will outline Kiawah's unique development conditions and necessary actions for continued prosperity. It aims to guide policies that preserve the Island's character while meeting evolving community needs, ensuring sustainable growth and long-term vitality and natural beauty while accommodating change and meeting the evolving needs of its community.

Through this comprehensive approach, we seek to ensure Kiawah Island's sustainable growth and long-term vitality.

Kiawah Island Buildout Snapshot*

The Kiawah Island buildout status provides an overview of the area’s current residential landscape and future development projections. Currently, there are 4,392 developed residential units, predominantly single-family homes. The plan identifies 366 single-family residential developable properties and projects an additional 536 future residential units across various developments.

When combined with current units, this brings the total potential number of developed units to 5,294. The status also notes potential for further development in specific areas based on remaining developable land and allowed density.

This snapshot illustrates Kiawah Island’s current housing stock and anticipated growth, balancing existing developments with future projects to meet evolving

The following development analysis uses Charleston County parcel data and Town of Kiawah Permitting data as of July 9 2024.

Current Residential Units	
Single Family ²	2972
Multifamily	1173
Proposed Units* (Projects under construction or site plan review)	247
Developed Residential Units	4392
Undeveloped SFR Properties	
Undeveloped Single Family Residential Lots	405
Less Vacant Conservation and Common Properties	-39
Single Family Residential Developable Properties	366
Future Residential Development (Projection)	
Kiawah Island Golf Resort Residential	420
Kiawah Partners Residential	22
Freshfields Village Residential	94
Future Residential Units	536
Total Projected Developed Units	5294
Dwelling Unit Projection	
(KIGR East Beach Ocean, East Beach Center, West Beach, Mingo Point, Ocean Course) based on acreage of remaining developable KIGR holdings and allowed density excludes program from guest rooms	
² Includes COO and SFR projects that are under construction with issued building permit	
*Proposed Units include projects based on submitted site plans under review or construction.	

*The following development analysis uses Charleston County parcel data and Town of Kiawah Permitting data as of July 9 2024

Conservation Through Annexation

Annexation is a request by a private property owner, multiple owners, or a government entity to include their property within the service area and jurisdiction of the Town of Kiawah Island. The Town Council is tasked with approving all applications for proposed annexations. It will fulfill this responsibility by objectively assessing all relevant factors and making informed decisions on each annexation application. The policies and procedures for annexation are detailed in the Annexation Policy Plan and Procedures Manual.

The Town should consider annexing property principally for conservation purposes. Preserving the area’s natural landscape and maritime nature is paramount to maintaining Kiawah Island’s vision.

Zoning and Land Use

The Planning Department uses tools like zoning ordinances and land use regulations to manage and prescribe the type of development occurring on the Island. These tools, when used together, are powerful drivers of new construction, redevelopment, and preservation.

While this plan does not define or impact the Town of Kiawah Island’s Zoning Ordinance, it uses it to enforce its Land Use policy.

Zoning: A regulatory tool for the management of present-day development. The current permissible uses of specific properties within a given jurisdiction.

Land Use: A regulatory tool for the management of future development. Defined in the *Comprehensive Plan* to govern future uses of swaths of properties.

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts

Land Use Categories	Zoning Districts
Low Density Residential	R-1, PR
Medium Density Residential	R-1, R-2, PR
High Density Residential	R-1, R-2, R-3, PR
Commercial	C, PR
Resort	RST-1, RST-2, PR
Community Support	CS, CS-2, PR
Active Recreation	PR
Open Space	KC
Conservation	KC
Planned Development (PD) can be incorporated into any zoning district, subject to criteria contained in the greater TOKI Zoning Ordinance.	

Future Land Use Categories

Future land use guides the location and types of proposed development to align with Kiawah Island’s Land Use Planning/Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission and Council should ensure their recommendations and approvals adhere to this Plan’s Future Land Use Recommendations.

Active Recreation and Open Space:

This category encourages the development of community parks and recreational facilities while preserving lands in their natural state, including those protected by conservation easements or under public/private ownership.

Conservation:

This category aims to protect and preserve natural resources within the Town’s limits, including highland areas surrounded by marsh or water, small islands, and fragile lands. It covers areas outside the critical line, which have been secured through preservation or conservation easements that significantly restrict development.

Low Density Residential:

This category promotes lower density single-family residential areas, with a maximum of three dwelling units per acre. Infill and redevelopment should respect the surrounding character and adhere to the Town’s density requirements.

Medium Density Residential:

This category promotes medium density single-family residential development, allowing up to six dwelling units per acre. It accommodates patio homes and zero lot line homes, unlike the Low Density Residential district. Examples include Inlet Cove and Night Heron Cottages.

High Density Residential:

This category allows higher density residential development, up to 12 dwelling units per acre, including multifamily dwellings, duplexes, and townhouses. Examples include Shipwatch Villas and Duneside Villas.

Mixed Use:

This category promotes combined retail, service, commercial, office, and/or residential development within the same building or site. Freshfields is a typical example.

Resort:

This category promotes high-quality recreational structures for residents and guests, exemplified by The Sanctuary Hotel.

Commercial:

This category promotes small-scale commercial activity (specialty businesses, personal services, restaurants) that complement the community character. An example is Freshfields Retail Village, with a maximum floor area ratio of 0.2.

Civic and Institutional:

This category promotes community facilities and service buildings, both public and private, including churches, schools, utilities, and maintenance facilities. The maximum floor area ratio is 0.25. Examples include fire stations and Kiawah Island Utilities Company.

Urban Growth Boundary

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is a crucial planning tool implemented by Charleston County to manage development and preserve the area’s unique character, including Kiawah Island and its surroundings. Evolving from the Charleston County 1999 Comprehensive Plan’s Suburban/Rural Area Edge, the UGB was formally recognized in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. It serves as a critical demarcation between areas intended for urban development and those designated for rural or natural preservation..

The UGB is particularly significant for the broader region, including Johns Island, where it restricts urban/suburban development to approximately 20% of the island’s area, with the remaining 80% preserved for rural development. For Kiawah Island, a barrier island with a fragile and interconnected ecosystem, the UGB plays a role in maintaining the balance between development and conservation. It helps prevent urban sprawl from encroaching on the natural buffers that protect the island and contribute to its distinctive character.

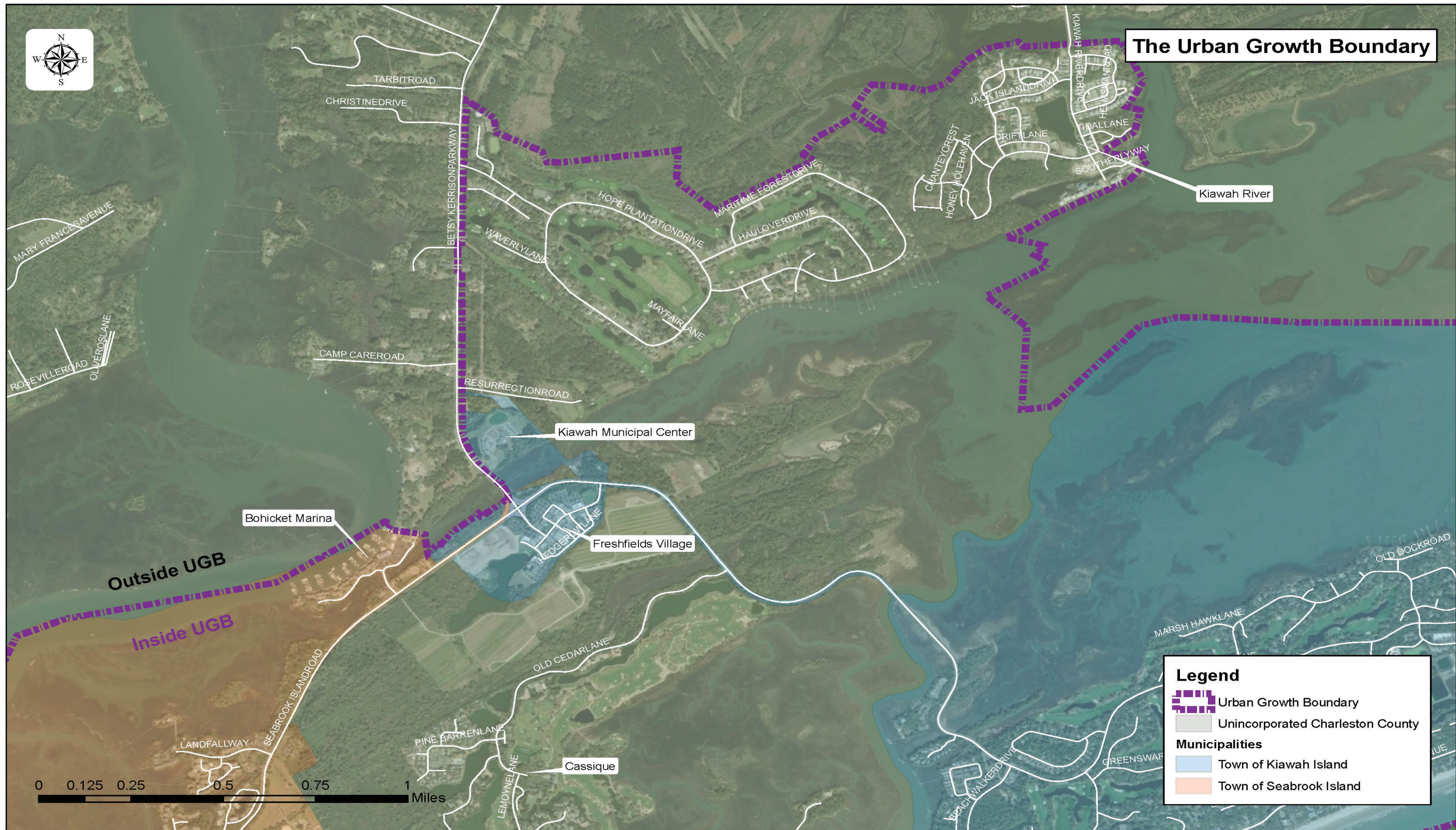
The UGB ensures that the approach to Kiawah Island along the Betsy Kerrison Parkway retains its low-density character. Effective management of the UGB requires active collaboration between Kiawah Island, Charleston County, and neighboring communities such as Seabrook Island. This cooperation is important for creating consistent land use policies that reinforcing the boundary’s effectiveness.

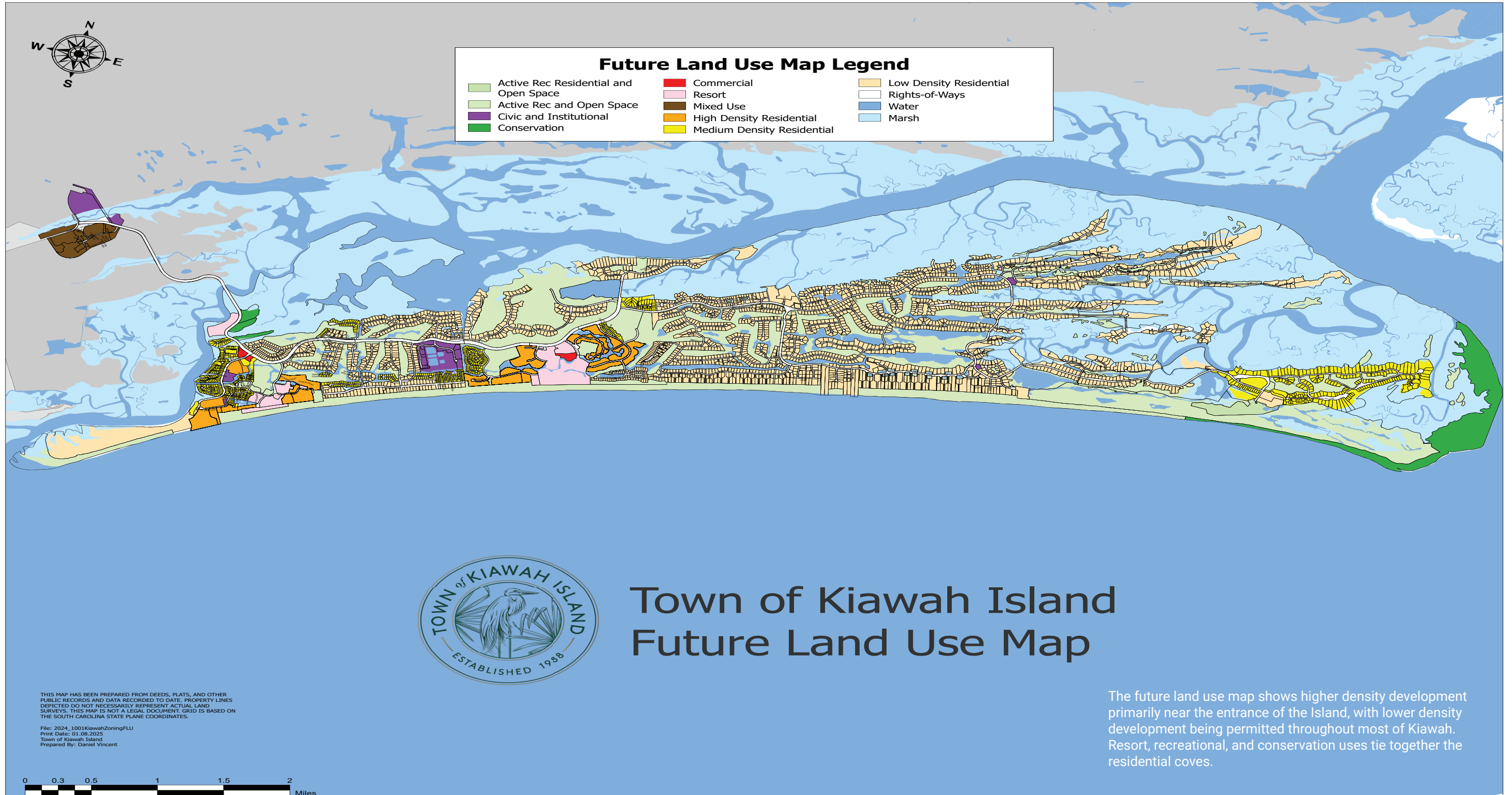
Looking to the future, it’s important to consider how sea-level rise might impact the areas surrounding the UGB, potentially necessitating reassessment to ensure its continued effectiveness. Education and public engagement are key components in maintaining the UGB’s integrity, with community outreach programs playing a vital role in promoting understanding and building stronger support for its preservation.

The UGB is more than just a line on a map; it’s a vital planning tool that helps preserve the natural beauty, ecological integrity, and quality of life that make the Charleston County area unique. It allows the region to thrive as a model of sustainable coastal development for generations to come.



Source: Town of Kiawah Island Planning Department







land use objectives and strategies

GOAL:

Identify strategies for smart, sustainable, and controlled growth.

Objective LU1

Promote policies that balance growth with Kiawah's distinct character and natural environment.

Strategy LU1.1

Review and update land use and zoning designations to support sustainable development.

- Evaluate existing regulations guiding new construction and redevelopment.
- Incorporate resiliency, environmental criteria, and economic sustainability into land use decisions.

Strategy LU1.2

Enhance regulatory tools

- Consider zoning overlays that address specific area needs and environmental considerations.
- Propose permitting incentives for development practices that minimize environmental impact while meeting community needs.
- Establish standards that balance preservation with responsible development.

Objective LU2

Strengthen Charleston County's Urban Growth Boundary.

Strategy LU2.1

Pursue an Intergovernmental Agreement with regional partners pledging continued commitment to maintain current UGB boundaries.

- Collaborate with Charleston County, Seabrook Island, and neighboring jurisdictions to support the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

Objective LU3

Conserve critical natural areas on Kiawah and Johns Islands to protect the health of the Kiawah River and estuaries, salt marshes, and wildlife habitat.

Strategy LU3.1

Develop shared conservation strategies for environmentally sensitive lands with conservation groups.

Objective LU4

Strategic conservation through annexation

Strategy LU4.1

Implement conservation-based annexation

- Develop criteria for evaluating potential annexation areas based on environmental significance.
- Create conservation easement requirements for annexed properties.
- Establish a framework for long-term stewardship of conserved annexation areas.

