



10



priority investmentsnext

Invest in Kiawah's critical and most at-risk infrastructure.

Priority Investment

Analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities.

Big Ideas

*Strength Resiliency of Critical Infrastructure
Assess potential for new public facility at the Municipal Center*

Objectives

- PI1 - Regularly update and circulate the Capital Improvement Plan.*
- PI2 - Establish a process for regular infrastructure assessments.*
- PI3 - Increase transparency of infrastructure regulatory and development processes.*
- PI4 - Secure funding and support for critical infrastructure improvements.*

Overview

The purpose of this section of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is to focus investment on the priorities identified as critical to the resiliency of Kiawah Island. Currently, it outlines the development of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to coordinate prioritization, planning, and budgeting for these priorities over ten years. The plan emphasizes resilience through emergency management, hazard mitigation, natural resource protection, and infrastructure maintenance. It also stresses the need for coordination with adjacent municipalities, public service districts, and other relevant entities in planning and executing public projects.

A more detailed analysis of likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities over the next decade. This analysis should be coupled with specific recommendations for projects and expenditures, prioritizing critical and at-risk infrastructure. New content should include a comprehensive assessment of potential funding sources, from local accommodations taxes to federal grants, and outline key projects such as road elevations, beach restoration, stormwater management improvements, and the potential installation of a town-owned cell tower to address poor cellular service on the island.

Capital Improvement Plan

Town Council adopts a budget each year to allocate funds for the many programs, services, and projects provided for residents and visitors.

A Capital Improvement Plan is to plan and coordinate the financial resources necessary to prioritize investment. The CIP will cover a ten-year period and allow for the following:

- Facilitates coordination between capital needs and the operating budgets.
- Identifies the most economical means of financing capital projects.
- Increase 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.
- Encourages careful project planning and design to avoid costly mistakes and help the community reach its desired goals.

The CIP will be updated by the Town Council during the annual budget process and will involve evaluating projected fund balances compared to the 10-year funding requirements for each priority. After adopting the 10-year plan, the Town should review its progress annually, adjust or modify it, and incorporate

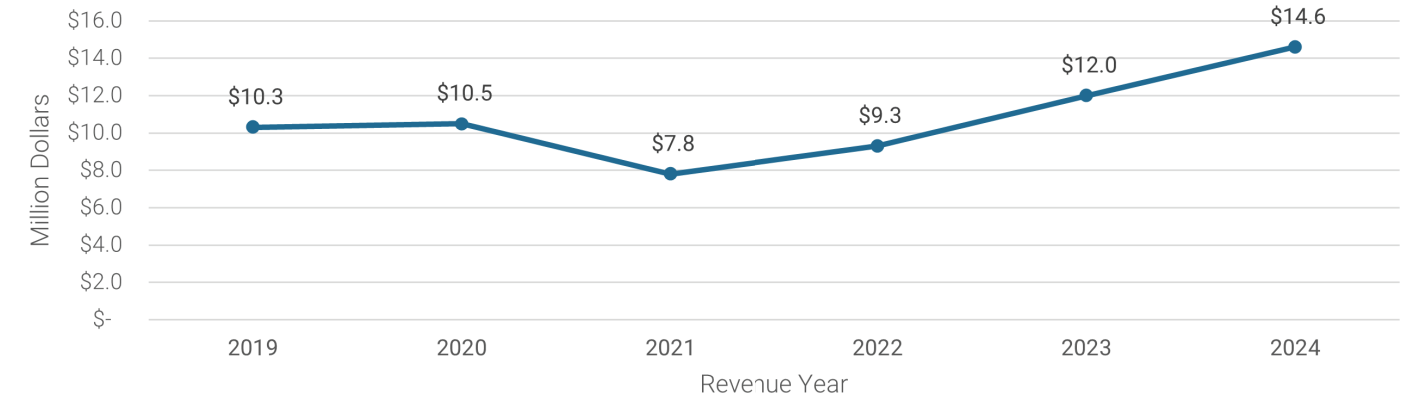
recommendations as deemed appropriate.

The Town will also seek to invest funds and match their maturity to 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 quarterly financial reporting for the CIP and discuss these findings in open session during Town Council or Ways and Means Committee meetings.

Fund Balance Growth by Year

Source: "Budget", Town of Kiawah Island



The Town's Municipal Center Complex

Funding Opportunities

The Town of Kiawah Island maintains a CIP to manage and fund major capital projects, as outlined in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

Transparency and Accountability:

To maintain transparency, the Town Council receives quarterly financial reports on the CIP, which are discussed in open sessions during Town Council or Ways & Means Committee meetings.

Local Funding:

As of the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, the Town’s financial position for capital improvements and emergency preparedness was as follows:

- **Capital Fund Balance: \$6,761,183**
This fund is committed to future capital projects, allowing the Town to plan and execute significant infrastructure improvements and community enhancements.
- **Emergency Fund Balance: \$2,613,916**
This fund is designated for emergency unanticipated expenditures and disaster recovery, demonstrating the Town’s commitment to financial resilience in the face of potential crises.

These dedicated funds, totaling \$9,375,099, reflect the Town’s strategic approach to financial management, ensuring resources are available for planned capital improvements and unforeseen emergencies.

State Funding Opportunities:

The Town explores various state-level funding sources, including:

- South Carolina Department of Transportation grants for road

improvements

- South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism grants for recreational facilities
- South Carolina Office of Resilience funding for environmental sustainability and disaster preparedness projects
- Charleston County C-Funds for local transportation projects

Federal Funding Opportunities:

Potential federal funding sources include:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants for hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers funding for coastal projects
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grants for coastal resilience initiatives
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grants for water infrastructure improvements

Additional Funding Avenues:

The Town also considers:

- Public-private partnerships for projects benefiting both the community and local businesses
- Grants from private foundations and non-profit organizations, especially for environmental conservation, community development, and cultural initiatives
- Regional funding through the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Government and Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Grant Management:

To maximize these funding opportunities, the Town should maintain a proactive approach to grant writing and management, dedicating staff resources to researching and applying for relevant grants and ensuring compliance with all grant requirements.

Future Enhancements:

Opportunities to further enhance the CIP process include:

- Developing more detailed project prioritization criteria
- Increasing public engagement in the CIP process
- Integrating the CIP more closely with other Town plans
- Providing more detailed breakdowns of planned projects and their funding sources
- Establishing performance metrics to evaluate the success of completed capital projects

By leveraging this diverse array of funding sources and continually refining its CIP process, the Town of Kiawah Island aims to implement a robust Capital Improvement Plan that ensures strategic, sustainable investments in infrastructure and community amenities, aligned with the long-term vision for the island’s development and preservation. The combination of dedicated local funds, state and federal grant opportunities, and innovative funding approaches enables the Town to address its planned improvements and potential unforeseen challenges effectively.

Maintaining Resiliency

The Town of Kiawah Island prioritizes investing towards improvements that will ensure the resiliency of Kiawah Island. To ensure adequate measures are taken, it is recommended that the Town of Kiawah Island conduct and publish an Infrastructure Assessment every 5 years. The report will cover strategies and investments related to maintaining the following areas:

Emergency Management:

As a coastal community on a barrier island, the Town acknowledges the critical importance of emergency management and infrastructure. The risk of severe hurricanes and tidal flooding, along with the island's remote location, makes coastal flooding a concern for Kiawah Island and its residents' population.

To prioritize funding for emergency management, the Town will conduct reasonable assessments of its owned infrastructure and identify the replacement costs. Next, the Town will estimate the clean-up or recovery expenses related to restoring the Island to its pre-emergency condition. Lastly, the costs for the resources needed to demonstrate readiness and responsiveness should be assessed. These estimates should serve as the foundation for a target budget for the emergency preparedness component of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Hazard Mitigation:

The Town of Kiawah Island prioritizes hazard mitigation through sustained planning to reduce long-term risks to its people, assets, economy, and community. Since adopting the Charleston Regional Mitigation Plan in 2004, the Town has maintained a high Community Rating System (CRS), resulting

in lower insurance costs for residents. The Town annually updates its Hazard Mitigation Action Plan, focusing primarily on flooding, but recognizing the need to address other hazards such as hurricanes, tornados, fires, earthquakes, explosions, and erosion.

Integrated into the Town's Priority Investment Element, hazard mitigation planning is crucial for identifying, prioritizing, and protecting critical community assets and infrastructure. This integration helps the Town plan, budget, and justify improvements to mitigate various hazards effectively. The success of this plan relies on regular reviews and collaborative efforts among island entities.

By maintaining an up-to-date and comprehensive hazard mitigation strategy, Kiawah Island enhances its resilience and ability to protect its unique coastal community against a wide range of potential threats.

Natural Resources:

The most critical investment priority for Kiawah Island's beach is storm damage recovery capability. Major storms could cause damage that requires years for natural recovery. Quick restoration is essential as the beach contributes significantly to the economy of the Town and County Parks. The Town should continue to budget provisionally for beach restoration to pre-storm conditions.

Local Accommodations Tax Fund reserves have been maintained for beach preservation. A major restoration project worth \$3.6 million was completed in 2006. The Town spent \$115,000 monitoring the beach and wildlife impacts through 2014. Severe erosion was identified in 2014-

2015 near the Ocean Course driving range. A \$530,000 project in 2015 moved 100,000 cubic yards of sand to create a new half-mile inlet.

The Town is continuing to monitor erosion/accretion rates and shoreline changes. The Town is collaborating with KIGR on another east end channel renourishment. The permitting process began in 2025, with a potential project start in 2027/2028. Coastal Science and Engineering conducts observations included in the State-mandated Beach Management Plan. Future priorities should align with the existing Beach Management Plan.

The Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan:

The Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan (CMMP), launched by the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Department in April 2022, is the first document to focus solely on the marsh and consolidate various management tools. It is envisioned as a living document that will be revisited every five years to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

The plan outlines proposals for restoring and protecting the wetlands on Kiawah Island, specifically targeting marsh loss and erosion areas. It is structured around four main goals: Monitor, Protect, Engage, and Restore. The plan recommends establishing a five-year monitoring program to track marsh health indicators, suggests regulatory actions to protect the marsh, emphasizes public education and outreach, and outlines various restoration techniques such as living shorelines and oyster reef construction.

Funding is a critical component of the CMMP. The plan suggests several potential funding sources, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the South Carolina Office of Resilience. Additionally, it proposes the creation of a town marsh mitigation fund as an ongoing source of

match funding when required by federal, state, or private grant entities. This fund could play a crucial role in leveraging external funding opportunities. The CMMP emphasizes the multiple benefits of healthy marshes, including combating the effects of erosion and flooding, improving water quality, providing essential habitats for wildlife, and serving as nursery grounds for marine life. By implementing this comprehensive approach, Kiawah Island aims to ensure its valuable marsh ecosystems' long-term health and resilience.

Other Infrastructure:

As a priority investment, the Town's roads and bridge should be assigned useful lives and maintenance schedules tied to these useful lives. Maintenance should include establishing a baseline or current condition of the roadway, bridge, curb cuts and associated bike paths. Budget funding should be linked to coincide with the replacement schedules.

The Kiawah Island Utility (KIU) Company owns and operates the water and wastewater service to Kiawah Island, where the original water lines servicing the Island require regular maintenance and a new secondary water line was installed to improve services to the island. Additionally, the Seabrook Island Utility Commission (SIUC) provides services not only within Seabrook Island but also extends to Freshfields, Cassiques, and undeveloped lands surrounding Freshfields, with a need for SIUC to service the Kiawah Island Municipal Center as well.

As a priority investment, the Town will seek to work with the KIU to identify funding sources when replacement of the current system is required. The objective is not to manage another entity's responsibility, but to recognize the potential risk of system damage since it is the island's sole water and sewer service supplier. Ideally, the system should be evaluated to ensure that it will be adequate and resilient enough to meet the future needs



of Kiawah as the community continues to grow. This effort would serve as a joint public/private partnership for the health and welfare of the residents.

The Town will seek to identify, locate, and log all storm drains on Town-owned streets or easements. Their condition will be evaluated upon identification and systematically scheduled for maintenance based on their projected useful lives. Additionally, the Town will evaluate and grade the conditions of its 3 miles of road in terms of quality to inform future maintenance needs. Kiawah Island Community Association owns and maintains more than 40 miles of underground pipe that provides drainage for the entire Island. Proactive

maintenance or replacement will be conducted to ensure that these pipes are in working order and do not jeopardize the functionality of the overall stormwater network managed by the KICA.

The Town of Kiawah Island's Municipal Center complex is the single largest facility owned by the Town. Built in 2015, it includes approximately 18,600 SF of conditioned space housing around 30 employees and a 4-bay garage.



priority investments objectives and strategies

GOAL:

Strategically invest in Kiawah's critical and most at-risk infrastructure.

Objective PI1

Create, publish, and maintain a CIP that prioritizes municipal projects and distributes funds effectively.

Strategy PI1.1

- Coordinate with stakeholders to ensure the CIP reflects the needs of all member organizations and identifies shared resource opportunities.

Objective PI2

Conduct and publish an Infrastructure and Marsh Assessment every five years, identifying and prioritizing vulnerabilities.

Strategy PI2.1

- Coordinate with relevant entities (e.g., Charleston County EMS, KIU, BEC, CERT, KICA) to ensure comprehensive assessments.

Objective PI3

Increase transparency in regulatory and development processes regarding infrastructure.

Strategy PI3.1

Regularly communicate with stakeholders on issues related to critical infrastructure.

Objective PI4

Pursue federal and state funding opportunities for infrastructure projects, particularly for raising the Kiawah Island Parkway from the roundabout at Freshfields to the Main gate.

Strategy PI4.1

Conduct feasibility and cost-benefit analyses for major infrastructure projects, such as

raising/widening the Kiawah Island Parkway.

Objective PI5

Implement marsh and beach mitigation strategies to protect these critical natural assets that serve environmental and infrastructure functions.

Strategy PI5.1

Develop and maintain a town marsh mitigation fund to support conservation and restoration efforts.

Strategy PI5.2

Coordinate with Kiawah Conservancy and other stakeholders to identify priority marsh mitigation and restoration areas.

Strategy PI5.3

Integrate marsh mitigation efforts into the broader infrastructure improvement plans to ensure holistic environmental and development approaches.

Strategy PI5.4

Maintain adequate reserves and funding mechanisms for beach restoration and maintenance, including post-storm recovery efforts. Continue comprehensive beach monitoring programs to track erosion rates, accretion, and shoreline changes, ensuring alignment with the State mandated Beach Management Plan.

