

MAYOR:
Bradley D. Belt

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:
Stephanie Tillerson

TOWN ATTORNEY:
Stafford J. McQuillin III



MAYOR PRO TEMPORE:
Russell A. Berner

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
E. Luke Farrell
Madeleine Kaye
Lance Spencer

TOWN COUNCIL
Municipal Center Council Chambers
September 9, 2025, 1:00 pm

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order:**
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. **Roll Call:**
- IV. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - A. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of August 5, 2025 [Tab 1]
- V. **Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):**
- VI. **Presentations:**
 - A. American Red Cross - Meaghan Silsby, Executive Director
 - B. Go Green Subcommittee Report Regarding Gas-Powered and Electric Leaf Blowers
- VII. **Updates:**
 - A. Mayor
 - B. Council Members
 - C. Administrator
- VIII. **Old Business:**
 - A. To Consider Approval of **Ordinance 2025-16** - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning And Zoning, Article II. - Zoning, Division 3. - Use Regulations, Sec. 12-103. – Conditions Of Use, to Modify Standards Regarding Communication Tower Infrastructure to Enhance Public Safety and Quality of Life Issues Regarding Cellular Coverage – **Second and Final Reading** [Tab 2]
- IX. **New Business:**
 - A. To Consider Approval of **Ordinance 2025-18** - An Ordinance for the Town of Kiawah Island to Amend the Town of Kiawah Island's Comprehensive Plan - **Public Hearing and First Reading** [Tab 3]
 - B. To Consider Approval of **Ordinance 2025-19** – An Ordinance To Amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning And Zoning Ordinance Article II. - Zoning, Division 2 – Zoning Map/Districts to Modify Base Zoning Standards, including but not Limited to Lot Coverage, Height, and Setbacks Within Several Zoning Districts - **Public Hearing and First Reading** [Tab 4]
 - C. To Consider Approval of Boat Purchase [Tab 5]
- X. **Citizens' Comments:**
- XI. **Council Member Comments:**
- XII. **Adjournment:**

*Each speaker shall be limited to five minutes. No more than 30 minutes shall be allowed for citizen presentations, comments, and/or questions, and the time shall be divided equally among those requesting to speak.

FOIA: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.



TAB 1

TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item

TOWN COUNCIL
Municipal Center Council Chambers
August 5, 2025, 1:00 pm

AGENDA

I. Call to Order: Mayor Belt called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call:

Present at the Meeting: Bradley Belt, *Mayor*
Russell Berner, *Mayor Pro Tem*
Luke Farrell, *Council Member*
Lance Spencer, *Council Member*

Present Via Zoom: Madeleine Kaye, *Council Member*

Also Present: Mac McQuillin, *Town Attorney*
Craig Harris, *Public Safety Director*
John Taylor, Jr., *Planning Director*
Daniel Vincent, *Planner 1*

IV. Approval of Minutes:

A. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of July 1, 2025

Mayor Belt indicated that Council Members had been provided with a copy of the minutes in advance of the meeting and that he had made an edit, which was provided to the clerk. He asked if there were any other changes or comments.

With that change, the minutes were deemed approved.

V. Citizens' Comments (Agenda Items Only):

None

VI. Updates:

A. Mayor

Mayor Belt provided several updates.

➤ **Captain Sam's Spit Litigation:**

- The matter is under mediation and subject to confidentiality requirements.
- The Town's objective has been to protect public access to Beachwalker County Park and preserve Sam's Spit as a natural habitat in perpetuity.
- A second mediation session has occurred, and there is potential for a framework to solve these objectives.
- The process is complicated, involving multiple stakeholders beyond the plaintiffs.
- There is a separate piece of litigation involving the property owner against the State of South Carolina regarding a 17-year-old takings claim.

➤ **Emergency Debris Management Site:**

- The Town has been using property off Kiawah Island Parkway owned by the Resort or its affiliates for emergency debris management.
- The County has raised issues regarding the use of this site.
- The Town is considering potential alternative sites for debris management in case of a storm. Options include working with the County or potentially acquiring a piece of property on Johns Island that would need to be at least three acres per FEMA regulations.

➤ **Betsy Kerrison Parkway:**

- Preliminary conversations have occurred with the State Department of Transportation and Charleston County about potentially conveying a portion of Betsy Kerrison Parkway adjacent to the Town Hall property to the Town.
 - This would allow the Town to maintain the roadway and right-of-way better, create a turn lane into the Municipal Center Complex, and potentially, without further approvals, add a sidewalk or leisure trail along the right of way to provide greater access to Freshfields Village.
 - The Town would need to take responsibility for the culvert over Haulover Creek.
- **Beach Trash Management:**
- A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been prepared with KICA regarding trash management on the beach, which had been a very informal arrangement up to this point.
 - The MOU would formalize the right for the Town to place trash receptacles on KICA property and establish mutual obligations for monitoring the receptacles and storm preparation.
 - The draft MOU has been submitted to KICA.
- **Runoff from Seafields Construction Site:**
- Complaints have been received from Seabrook regarding runoff and debris from the Seafields construction site onto Seabrook Island Road.
 - The Town had been looking into the complaints, and Mayor Pro Tem Berner has also visited the site. He noted that there appear to be no silt fences or other typical construction site safety measures.
 - The Town will review its ordinances and regulations to ensure appropriate tools are in place to manage construction sites and avoid erosion and sediment runoff.

B. Council Members

Mayor Pro Tem Berner reported on the following:

- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) provided crowd control on July 4th, which went very well despite a couple of individuals who didn't understand restricted areas.
 - The CERT team held a meeting to discuss lessons learned from the July 4th event and the Swim Across America event.
- Regarding the Cultural Center Expansion, he and the other members of the selection committee reviewed 12 architectural submittals, narrowed them to six, interviewed each firm, and selected three firms that have been given notice to proceed with the design competition.
- He attended the recent Captain Sam's Spit mediation in place of Council Member Kaye and spent considerable time researching the issue.
- He toured the Hollings Cancer Center at MUSC, where he learned about the center's cancer research work and discovered that it was the only cancer research facility in the state.

Council Member Madeleine Kaye reported on the following:

- She watched last month's meeting and thanked several Council Members for their time on the phone, which helped her catch up on the topics being discussed.
- She commended the Town for transparency and thoroughness of the compensation report from last month's meeting.
 - She felt the Town was providing a very generous package with a strong pay-for-performance philosophy.
 - She expressed concern that many employees are not taking advantage of the 401 (k) match.
- She highlighted the Kiawah River Marsh Restoration Project, which the Conservancy is conducting with the Town's support, noting that it is a critically important project that yields significant benefits.
- The Resiliency Committee has been working on project objectives and priorities.
 - The Go Green Subcommittee is actively working to revitalize initiatives, including composting and recycling.
 - The Education Subcommittee is updating its project plan, which encompasses a wide range of initiatives, including marsh restoration, native plant projects, and beach health programs.

Council Member Farrell reported on the following:

- The Audit Committee met on July 7th.
- The Town has contracted for an internal controls audit in addition to the regular financial audit.

- The lead auditor for internal controls has extensive experience in building and auditing these processes.
 - Both audits will run in parallel for efficiency.
- The financial audit will be completed by the end of September, with the controls audit following in October.

C. Administrator

In the absence of Town Administrator Stephanie Tillerson, Mayor Belt provided several administrative updates.

- Kiawah Arts Council:
- The kickoff event last Friday on the Freshfields Green featured a reprise of the Will Thompson Band.
 - The next event would be Sean of the South at the West Beach Conference Center after the next council meeting.
- Upcoming Town events:
- The last Friday Food Truck Festival "Bites and Brews" will be on August 15th.
 - Another swing dance event will be on August 21st at Town Hall.

Mayor Belt reported an unfortunate incident of a bobcat killed on the island, likely hit by a car, that somehow made it to Captain Sam's Spit. He stated that the disconcerting thing was that the samples sent off for necropsy showed very, very elevated levels of SGAs (Second-Generation Anticoagulants). Since municipalities are precluded by state law from regulating the use of pesticides, particularly SGAs, the Town has followed up with Clemson, the state regulatory department, in the hope of reconsideration of regulations on second-generation anticoagulants.

A discussion ensued about whether regimes could monitor the use of rodenticides or ban SGAs on their properties, and whether the Town could help with monitoring bait traps. Mr. Jordan indicated that bait boxes are often unlabeled, making it difficult to identify their contents. Still, he noted that pest control companies are required to keep records, so a copy of those records could be requested.

Mayor Belt noted that the summer high season had been relatively smooth and peaceful, and publicly thanked all public safety-related entities on and off the island for their extraordinary cooperation throughout the summer. The Town's Community Service Officers, Beach Patrol, EMS, St. John's Fire District, Resort Security, KICA Security, and CCSO (Charleston County Sheriff's Office).

Director Harris provided updates on the following:

- July was extremely hot, and he commended all workers for their efforts in dealing with the heat.
- An incident on the beach where visitors became aggressive with Beach Patrol was resolved with assistance from the CCSO deputies.
- Preparations are underway for Labor Day, with extra patrol off-duty officers requested for August 29-31 and September 1.
- CCSO deputies conducted speed enforcement last week, issuing 112 citations.
- The Public Safety Department is monitoring tropical weather developments, with increased chances of development in the Southeastern and Central Atlantic regions.

Mayor Belt emphasized ongoing speed enforcement issues, noting that many citations were issued on Betsy Kerrison Parkway and Kiawah Island Parkway, particularly around the problematic Mingo curve. There have been instances of vehicles colliding with each other and running off the road; public safety is the top priority. He indicated that speed enforcement would continue to be emphasized until behavior changes. Additionally, he announced that off-duty deputies who had been issuing written warnings would begin issuing citations.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner stated that at yesterday's meeting, the KICA Board voted to approve Electric Mobility Enhancement devices for the elderly and those needing assistance, clarifying wording in their rules.

A discussion about e-bikes clarified that they are not prohibited in the Town, but are prohibited on any roads or leisure trails owned by KICA. Mayor Belt stated that there is often some confusion because people see e-bikes on the leisure trails going to and from Freshfields Village to Beachwalker County Park, but explained that e-bikes are not prohibited on those Town properties, but are prohibited on the beach.

Council Member Spencer noted several times at recent council meetings that there had been discussions about mobility and accessibility. He suggested that an underlying consideration when passing ordinances, even if it cannot be mandated, might be putting in language encouraging mobility and accessibility.

Regarding the debris management property issue, he noted numerous parcels for sale along Betsy Kerrison and Bohicket Roads. Additionally, he suggested that the Town explore strategic purchases or a land bank to preserve the context of the approach to Kiawah, including the watershed, traffic, and habitats.

He shared an anecdote about fiber optic service, noting that AT&T had indicated it had the investment to bring fiber to Kiawah years ago, but could not make any headway with Kiawah. They also noted the turnaround in Kiawah's interest in bringing fiber and other modern services to the community.

When asked for clarification, Council Member Spencer said that until recent conversations, I am not sure everybody knew the difference between the Town, KICA, and other entities. He emphasized that the difficulty of working with Kiawah was kind of a theme we have heard so many times. He appreciated all the stakeholders who have been part of the process so far, helping to bring a different perspective to introducing those services.

Mayor Belt followed up on Council Member Spencer's comments about confusion between entities, recounting an email exchange with a resident who was concerned about the pace of the Town's activity on enhancing cellular communication. The resident claimed that a service provider stated they wanted to install new equipment on one of the cell towers, but was specifically prohibited from doing so by the Town based on environmental concerns. The Mayor noted there had been no such application, suggesting confusion about whether it was actually KICA, the ARB, or simply an excuse for not investing.

The Mayor announced that he had requested the Town Attorney to begin working with the Town on a franchise ordinance, along with a review of all franchise agreements to gain a better understanding of the critical infrastructure on Kiawah Island.

VII. **Old Business:**

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-11 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Pursuant to Existing Ordinance 2023-23 Removing the 2013 Amended and Restated Development Agreement From the Zoning Code as an Appendix and Clarifying the Setback Standards – *Second and Final Reading*

Mr. Taylor explained that this ordinance clarifies the administration of setbacks. It simplifies the ordinance by including only the exhibits of setbacks that would be constituted after the expiration of the 2013 Development Agreement, which occurred two years ago. It more clearly states which setbacks are applicable to properties that have been developed and those that have not, based on the timing of the 2013 Development Agreement.

Mayor Belt noted that this also resolves a zoning dispute related to a specific property matter.

Council Member Farrell moved to approve Ordinance 2025-11 on second and final reading. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-12 – An Ordinance to Amend the Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan – Land Use Element Future Land Use Categories and – Comprehensive Plan

Map IX.2, Future Land Use; to Change the Future Land Use Designation for the Subject Parcels within or Near the Ocean Park Neighborhood – **Second and Final Reading**

Mr. Taylor explained that Ordinance 2025-12 changes the zoning designation for properties located within and adjacent to Ocean Park, noting the Planning Commission recommended approval. Many parcels are changing from the R-2 designation to the R-1 designation. This includes properties not within the official Ocean Park Homeowners Association (HOA), some of which are owned by the Kiawah Island Golf Resort, which have specific zoning designations.

Mr. Taylor explained that the companion Ordinance 2025-13 updates the future land use map for the parcels discussed in the previous ordinance from R-2 Residential to R-1 Residential.

Mayor Belt confirmed that the changes were approved on first reading and supported by Ocean Park HOA, property owners, and the Resort.

Mr. Taylor noted, for the record, that an inquiry had been received from a property owner on when the process would be complete. Staff shared that today's second and final reading would complete the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner noted that this change reduces the allowed dwelling units per acre from six to three, which he viewed as a positive change.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-12. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

C. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-13 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning and Zoning, Article II. – Zoning, Division 2. – Zoning Map/Districts, Section 12-62. – Zoning Map by Rezoning the Subject Parcels Located within or Adjacent to the Ocean Park Neighborhood – **Second and Final Reading**

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-13. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

D. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-14 – Amending Procurement Policy Ordinance –Second and Final Reading****

Mayor Belt explained that this ordinance contained tweaks to the procurement ordinance to address a gap in the approval process for expenditures under \$20,000 and to clarify language regarding the procurement of artistic services.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the second and final reading of Ordinance 2025-14 as amended. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner commented that this change would increase efficiency in the procurement area.

Council Member Farrell noted that this was the type of issue the Audit Committee examines, and the internal controls audit would review this policy to ensure its efficacy, that it is being implemented correctly, and that there are no gaps.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

VIII. New Business:

A. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-15 – An Ordinance To Establish Noise Standards Within the Town Of Kiawah Island and to Repeal Chapter 8, Sections 15-801 Through 15-807 of the Town Municipal Code – **First Reading**

Mayor Belt provided context for the noise ordinance revision, explaining that it was prompted by recent citizen complaints, particularly those related to construction at Ocean Pines using industrial-sized tree grinding equipment. Upon review, the current noise ordinance was found to be

problematic in terms of interpretation and how its various provisions interact with one another. The Mayor explained that the proposed ordinance aims to streamline and simplify the noise regulations. He invited discussion on several aspects, including decibel levels, hours of operation for specific activities, and activities that are specifically prohibited.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-15. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion.

Council Member Kaye praised the improvement but raised several questions about the definitions of daytime hours and the distinction between residential and commercial areas. She asked about 70 dBA noise levels and quoted a resident calling gas-powered leaf blowers "a hazard and a plague." She also had questions about restrictions on residential noise on weekends, specifically Saturday versus Sunday, as well as concerns regarding construction activity, golf course activity, and enforcement.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner researched noise levels during the discussion, noting that 70 decibels is surprisingly not very loud. Examples given were of a ringing telephone and alarm clock, a noisy restaurant, moderate freeway traffic, and a light assembly plant.

Council Member Spencer interjected based on personal firsthand experience that 70 to 75, especially for a prolonged period, is very loud.

Mayor Belt cited EPA standards that 70 dBA is the maximum level no one should be exposed to during a normal day over the course of the day. He shared his personal view that two-cycle gas-powered leaf blowers are a problem both from a noise pollution and an air pollution standpoint, noting that many other jurisdictions around the country have banned them altogether or at least restricted their hours of use.

Council Member discussion included the impact of the ordinance adoption on landscaping equipment, as well as decibel measurements at different distances.

Council Member Farrell suggested considering the duration of noise in addition to decibel levels, explaining that noise drops six decibels every time the distance from the source is doubled.

Council Member Spencer emphasized the need for more definition around construction activity noise levels and durations.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner pointed out inconsistencies in the ordinance of decibel limits for different activities and areas. Mayor Belt indicated that the differences were intentional, not inconsistencies, further explaining how the different decibel limits were designed to work.

Council Members debated Mayor Pro Tem Berner's suggestion to add definitions or examples of different decibel levels into the ordinance, determining that it should be a separate document that can be referenced to provide guidance.

Further discussion included golf course maintenance, which the ordinance permits to begin at 6:30 a.m., and whether the Kiawah Island Club and the Kiawah Island Golf Resort had been consulted.

Roger Warren, President of the Resort, provided input on the potential impact on golf course maintenance activities, indicating that they were aware of the noise issue and willing to cooperate, but wanted to ensure the opportunity to use the equipment. He expressed willingness to work with the Town on transitioning to quieter electric equipment over time, but could not commit to a time frame.

After extensive discussion, Council Members identified numerous issues, including the duration of sound, decibel levels, measurement locations, commercial noise standards, time restrictions, definitions of violators, and fines, as well as the potential prohibition of two-cycle gas-powered engines. Further discussing voting for or tabling the first reading, Council decided more work was needed on the ordinance before it could be approved on first reading.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to table the first reading of Ordinance 2025-15. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

B. To Consider Approval of Ordinance 2025-16 - An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 – Land Use Planning And Zoning, Article II. - Zoning, Division 3. - Use Regulations, Sec. 12-103. – Conditions Of Use, to Modify Standards Regarding Communication Tower Infrastructure to Enhance Public Safety and Quality of Life Issues Regarding Cellular Coverage – Public Hearing and First Reading

Mr. Vincent introduced the proposed ordinance to amend the regulations governing communication towers.

Council Member Spencer stated that Kiawah is at least a generation behind in cellular and fiber optic communications. The Mayor tasked the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee with investigating cellular infrastructure issues and identifying potential solutions to address them. He outlined the process of working with tower providers and cellular carriers to identify blockers and limiters that prevent the provision of modern communications on Kiawah. He detailed two key drivers: quality of life and public safety, noting coverage gaps where first responders and public safety officials struggle with connectivity for basic forms of communication.

Council Member Spencer explained the technical limitations: The first identified was Kiawah's tree canopy, which hinders cellular coverage, and one has to get above it to achieve the effective radius of the cell signal. The second, the stealth provision or camera concealer, was identified as the main barrier to 5G deployment, which requires a horizontal distance away from the tower to put all the different kinds of radios.

Council Member Spencer stated that the proposal being considered is the result of community input, including input from the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee, the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission subcommittee, and significant participation from several providers. To achieve better coverage, the following technical parameters are required. If we do not support the parameters, then we will have to live with 4G, and someday, 4G will become obsolete, allowing us to replace those radios with 5G when it is two generations behind. However, I believe we need to either follow the recommendations of the experts who have done this tens of thousands of times across the United States, or we can accept what we have.

Mayor Belt commended the work of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee, the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission subcommittee, noting receiving an email from subcommittee member Gene Babinec along with a letter of support from the Resort.

Mr. Vincent provided a timeline overview and outlined the proposed amendments, which include establishing a maximum tower height at 150 feet, clarifying submittal requirements, retaining provisions for expert assistance, and modifying public notice requirements for proposed towers. He displayed a map showing all seven existing towers, noting that six are stealth designs.

Council Member Kaye's questions included the purpose of a balloon test and whether there were any anticipated new towers. She noted that, with the comments received, the work done by the Planning Commission, and support from the community, made it a no-brainer.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner noted that the ordinance requires the tower's fall zone not to extend onto an adjoining property and questioned whether any of the seven locations would be close to the neighboring property if they were to be constructed up to 150 feet. It was noted that all modifications would be subject to an approval process, with Mr. Taylor clarifying that specific metrics must be met during the site review process, along with approval from an engineer that the location is safe.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to enter into the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2025-16. Mayor Pro Tem Berner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Joanne Hennessy, Chair of the Planning Commission, provided additional context from the Planning Commission's deliberations. We flew drones to 120 and 150 feet to get a handle on what this means—no question we need to do away with stealth. Stealth is old technology, and a non-issue. She indicated that there were many questions about the marginal utility of one 120-foot versus one 150-foot tower, explaining that the ordinance would allow 120 feet by right, with 150 feet requiring additional justification, and does not automatically permit 150-foot towers everywhere on the island.

David DeStefano, a member of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee, added perspective, noting that he had questioned all the carriers early on. If we were starting to build Kiawah right now, how many towers and how high would they have to be? They guessed at three towers at 150 feet. If it will take seven 150-foot towers, that will have to be determined by the technical people. He explained the stacking issue, where multiple carriers are at different heights on the same tower.

Kimberly Adams, with Crown Castle, on behalf of the industry, thanked the Town, Council Member Spencer, the various committees, Town staff, and the Resort for finding a balance that modernizes the ordinance. She also confirmed the need for 150-foot towers when multiple carriers must be accommodated at different heights.

During the Public Hearing, various technical discussions took place regarding radio frequencies and future 6G technology.

Mayor Pro Tem Benrer made a motion to exit the Public Hearing and return to regular session. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2025-16. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion.

The Council Member discussion focused on the differences between 120-foot and 150-foot towers, the potential for future technology upgrades, the hurricane resistance of monopole designs, and the balance between improved coverage and aesthetic concerns.

Mayor Belt noted his observation that the amendment was not a separate cell tower ordinance, but rather an antecedent to the use table, with a footnote that is a condition of use for that particular use in the permitted zoning district. He suggested looking at it between the first and second reading.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

At Council Member Farrell's request, Mayor Belt stated that both the letter from the Resort, Mr. Warren, as well as the email from Planning Commission Member and Subcommittee Member Gene Babinec, were entered into the record.

C. To Consider Approval of Resolution 2025-01 – South Carolina Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement for Emergency and Disaster Response/Recovery

Mayor Belt introduced Resolution 2025-01, explaining that this was a standard form of statewide mutual aid agreement between communities in the state and first responder organizations. He noted that the only question he had raised was regarding the liability provision, but it was unlikely to impact the Town because, in almost any event, the Town would be the requesting party, not the responding party, due to its limited resources.

Mr. Harris explained that the agreement essentially served as a framework for addressing pre-, during, and post-event situations, where resources may exceed what was initially needed and would require assistance with additional resources outside of Kiawah.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-01. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner raised concerns about potential liability issues and suggested getting input from the Town's insurance carrier. Mayor Belt noted that the Town would rarely be able to render assistance, as it lacks resources such as public works infrastructure, police and fire departments, or its own emergency management systems. In almost any instance where the Town would utilize this, we would request assistance, and the liability provision addresses who is liable.

Mayor Pro Tem Bener indicated that he would feel more comfortable having comments from the insurance carrier. Mayor Belt indicated that the resolution could be approved with the condition of approval from the Town's insurance company or be tabled. He also noted that a condition for assistance would be the provision of a letter from the insurance carrier.

Mr. McQuillin confirmed this was a standard form agreement from the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, designed to help us rather than to hurt us, and was comfortable with the language.

Council Members discussed whether the agreement was new or a reauthorization. Director Harris indicated that it was a longstanding agreement and that Kiawah was the only municipality listed that had not yet signed on to it.

Following the discussion, the motion was approved by a 4-1 vote, with Council Member Kaye abstaining due to not receiving the materials.

D. To Consider Approval of the CARTA (Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority) Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Council Member Farrell made a motion to approve the CARTA Fiscal Year 2026 Budget. Council Member Spencer seconded the motion.

Matthew Ryan from CARTA explained that due to funding from the 2016 sales tax referendum, they are required to get budget approval from all Charleston County municipalities, regardless of whether they receive service.

Mayor asked what if we were to say at this point, we are not going to approve this budget until there is a CARTA bus that comes down from Maybank Highway down to Freshfields Village at least once a day.

Mr. Ryan responded that, to the best of his knowledge, he had not been advised that the request had been made. In response to Council Member Farrell's question, he indicated that no other municipality had refused to approve the budget, confirming that there are no fiscal consequences to the Town.

Mayor Belt indicated that this was not a Town issue, but rather for its workforce. Mr. Ryan noted that CARTA would conduct a comprehensive system review in the upcoming fiscal year and could consider including that as part of the study as well.

Discussion ensued about the lack of service to Johns Island and Kiawah, with Council members expressing frustration. Mayor Belt stated that lower-cost public transportation is a benefit for those employed by businesses on Kiawah Island, as it reduces the number of cars on the road, thereby improving traffic flow. Mayor Pro Tem Berner indicated he would vote no because they are not servicing us, with Council Member Farrell agreeing. Council Member Spencer suggested the comprehensive study was bureaucratic talk for it is never going to happen. There was a need for CARTA to recognize that a workforce issue exists, which could, in part, be addressed.

Mayor Belt questioned the implications of voting No or tabling the approval. Mr. Ryan and Mr. Harris indicated that if the Town voted No, it would be the only municipality to have voted against the budget approval. Mr. Harris stated that he felt this was something that could be discussed with CARTA to gain a full understanding of their objectives for the next couple of years, rather than taking this route.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to table the approval until next month. Mayor Belt seconded the motion.

Council Member Kaye offered a different perspective, suggesting that if Kiawah has transportation needs, we are a wealthy enough community with a wealthy enough Resort to handle those, especially in comparison to other communities in Charleston County, and did not see a good, solid reason to delay this process.

Mr. McQuillin confirmed that CARTA is only required to get approval of its annual budget from jurisdictions representing 50% of the population within its service area. So a No vote is probably not going to matter.

Council Member Farrell countered Council Member Kaye's comment, stating that it is not providing services for Kiawah; it is providing services for Johns Island and Charleston residents to get to their place of employment, which could be Kiawah, Seabrook, or Freshfields.

Following further discussion about the message it would send and the lack of impact, given Kiawah represents 0% of CARTA's service area population, Council Member Farrell withdrew his motion to table the approval.

Following the discussion, the underlying motion to approve the CARTA Fiscal Year 2026 Budget was unanimously approved.

IX. Citizens' Comments:

David DeStefano - 31 Burroughs Hall

Mr. DeStefano raised concerns about the electronic speed signs lacking posted speed limits and suggested the 25 mph zone at the first subtle curve should remain at 35 mph. He noted anecdotally that he had requested at one point to have the lights flash when going too slow. Ironically, he has not been able to reach 30 mph on Kiawah Island Parkway in a month due to slow traffic, contrasting with the speeding issues on Betsy Kerrison Parkway.

X. Executive Session:

Mayor Belt explained that two matters would be addressed in executive session: the Captain Sam's Spit litigation/mediation and the employment contract for the Town Administrator.

Two years ago, the Council approved a contract for the Town Administrator. Pursuant to the terms of that contract, the Administrator's contract would automatically renew for two years unless the Council took action at least 60 days before its October expiration. He noted there were other matters related to the provisions of that contract and personnel matters that are appropriately discussed in executive session.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to enter into the Executive Session. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

- A. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70(a)(2), to Receive Legal Advice Protected by the Attorney-Client Privilege Concerning Matters Related to Captain Sam's Spit.**
- B. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-70 (a)(1), to Discuss the Employment Contract of the Town Administrator.**

Upon Returning to Open Session, the Council May Take Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner made a motion to exit the Executive Session and return to the Regular Session. Council Member Farrell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Mayor Belt stated that the two matters on the agenda were discussed, but no actions or decisions were taken during the Executive Session.

Council Member Farrell made a motion to approve the extension and renewal of the employment agreement between the Town of Kiawah Island and Town Administrator Stephanie Tillerson on substantially the same terms with minor tweaks advised by the Town Attorney to address issues related to binding future councils, with no substantive changes unless agreed to by Ms. Tillerson. Council Member Kaye seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Berner emphasized that there were no substantive changes. Mayor Belt added, unless otherwise agreed to by Ms. Tillerson. Mr. McQuillin stated for the record that the changes are intended to protect both the Town and Ms. Tillerson, ensuring the agreement is legally compliant.

Following the discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Belt added that he had received feedback from various Council Members. All agree that Ms. Tillerson is a very valued employee of the Town and has done an excellent job as Town Administrator, and we look forward to working with her in her current capacity and as my current capacity so long as it may exist.

XI. Council Member Comments:

No Council Members offered additional comments.

XII. Adjournment:

Mayor Belt adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm.

Submitted by,

Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

Date



Kiawah Island Golf Resort

One Sanctuary Beach Drive

Kiawah Island, SC 29455

05.28.2025

Town of Kiawah Island

Planning Department

4475 Betsy Kerrison Pkwy

Kiawah Island, SC 29455

Subject: Stakeholder Support for Modernizing Communications Tower Regulations (Sec. 12-103)

Dear Planning Director and Members of the Town Council,

On behalf of **Kiawah Island Golf Resort**, I am writing to express our strong support for the Town's ongoing efforts to update and modernize the regulations in **Section 12-103** of the Town Code relating to the siting, construction, and operation of communications towers.

As a premier destination resort that supports over 1,500 employees and welcomes visitors from across the globe, **reliable mobile and wireless connectivity is no longer a luxury—it is an operational and safety necessity.** The existing limitations on tower design and placement no longer reflect the technological or operational demands of modern infrastructure.

Support for Full 150-Foot Tower Height Allowance

We are fully supportive of **authorizing communication towers up to 150 feet in height by default.** In the context of Kiawah Island's natural topography and heavily forested landscapes, this height is essential to **ensure line-of-sight coverage** across large areas, particularly in low-lying or densely wooded zones. Limiting tower height undercuts performance and leads to unnecessary proliferation of low-impact installations.

Additionally, we support **increased flexibility to add new towers where necessary,** especially when doing so addresses gaps in service coverage, supports redundancy, or satisfies demand surges during peak occupancy periods and emergency events.

Request to Eliminate Stealth Tower Requirement

While we understand the original intent behind the stealth tower provision—namely, minimizing visual intrusion—we believe the **requirement to disguise towers as flagpoles,**

trees, or church steeples has become outdated and counterproductive. These installations are:

- **Costlier and slower** to deploy and maintain;
- **Less efficient in terms of signal strength** and carrier capacity;
- Often **less visually appealing over time** due to material degradation or poor camouflage in certain settings.

Instead, we support the use of **tastefully designed, open-structure towers** that are carefully sited and screened using landscaping and setback buffers. This approach better balances performance, aesthetics, and practicality.

Enabling Scalable, Resilient Infrastructure

As the island continues to welcome an expanding number of residents, guests, and digital services, the communications backbone must evolve accordingly. We are particularly aligned with the Town's efforts to:

- Ensure fair, timely, and transparent permitting;
- Establish requirements for structural integrity, removal guarantees, and community notification;
- Encourage carrier collocation where feasible;
- Allow additional towers on the same or nearby parcels when technically justified.

These principles represent a forward-thinking, scalable framework that supports the **long-term connectivity, safety, and economic vitality of Kiawah Island.**

Conclusion

Kiawah Island Golf Resort strongly encourages the adoption of the revised Section 12-103 with the inclusion of these modernization provisions: elimination of the stealth tower requirement, authorization of 150-foot towers, and allowance for additional towers where service demands warrant.

We appreciate the Town's leadership on this issue and remain a committed partner in shaping a more connected, resilient, and guest-friendly Kiawah.

Sincerely,



Roger M. Warren, PGA
President

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Gene Babinec** <babinecgene@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Aug 4, 2025 at 15:09

Subject: Ordinance 2025-16 - Communication towers

To: Bradley Belt <bbelt@kiawahisland.org>, Madeleine Kaye <mkaye@kiawahisland.org>, Russell Berner <rberner@kiawahisland.org>, <lfarrell@kiawahisland.org>, Lance Spencer <lspencer@kiawahisland.org>

CC: JOANNE HENNESSY <hennj@aol.com>, Larry Iwan (<plinyiwan@msn.com> <plinyiwan@msn.com>

Mayor Belt and members of Town Council-

I regret that I am not able to attend this month's Town Council meeting.

I am writing to express my support and to provide background for Ordinance 2025-16. I have been involved with this matter as a member of the subcommittee to review the issue and draft zoning language and as a member of the Planning Commission to further analyze and agree on the proposed language that is now before you.

This is a complex matter that has many impacts to our community. There is no question that we all desire more dependable cell phone coverage. It is also critical to have dependable coverage during emergencies and during periods of time when our existing towers are overcrowded with volume. In drafting the proposed language those needs have been weighed against the impact that higher towers may have on the aesthetics of our community and on nearby property values. The proposed language attempts to balance these priorities by requiring statements from qualified professionals to justify the height of proposed towers that are over 120 feet tall. Further consideration is given to property owners by creating enhanced public notification requirements to increase awareness of the height and design of a proposed tower. Finally, the proposed language contains a provision that enables the Town to hire an engineer to analyze or contest the proposed specifications for a new/replacement tower. This level of oversight and accountability should allow the Town, its property owners and the communication tower companies to enhance our coverage in a transparent and efficient manner.

I hope that the above provides some additional background regarding the draft ordinance. If I were able to attend the meeting I would make these statements during the public comment session.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Gene Babinec
Member of Planning Commission
97 Belmeade Hall



TAB 2

TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item

Town of Kiawah Island Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request
Case AZO25-000005 Case History

Planning Commission Meeting: June 4, 2025
Planning Commission Meeting: July 2, 2025
Public Hearing and First Reading: August 5, 2025
Second Reading: September 9, 2025

CASE INFORMATION

Applicant: Town of Kiawah Island

Application: The Town of Kiawah is requesting to amend the *Town of Kiawah Island Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* to amend Sec. 12-103. – Conditions of Use to modify standards regarding communication tower infrastructure in order to enhance public safety and quality of life issues regarding cellular coverage.

Key Factors of the Proposed Ordinance:

The proposed amendment introduces a tower height provision of up to 150' along with clarifying procedurally tower request greater than 150' in height. The proposed amendment clarifies the submittal requirements and simplifies the retention of expert assistance provisions. The proposed amendment also modifies public notice requirements for proposed towers.

Timeline Overview

- December 2024 Town Council Presentation
- February – May 2025: Stakeholder Meetings with Tower Companies and Providers (Ongoing Workgroup, Stakeholder and Staff Engagement)
- May 1, 2025: Recommendation of Infrastructure and Public Works Committee
- June 4, 2025 Planning Commission meeting – action deferred
- June 25, 2025 Stakeholder Meetings Continued
- July 2, 2025 Planning Commission Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Pursuant to §12-158(3) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* “The Planning Commission shall review the proposed text amendment and/or zoning map amendment and take action, recommending that the Town Council approve or deny the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission may hold a public hearing in accordance with the procedures in section 12-156. The Planning Commission’s recommendation shall be based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. The Planning Commission shall submit its recommendation to the Town Council within 30 working days of the Planning Commission meeting at which the amendment was introduced. A simple majority vote of Planning Commission members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment.”

DECISION ON AMENDMENT BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

Pursuant to §12-158(5) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* “After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Town Council shall hold one or more public hearings, and any time after the close of the public hearing, take action to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. A simple majority vote of Town Council members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment. Zoning map amendments shall not be approved with conditions. Prior to action on a proposed code text amendment, the Town Council may, in the exercise of its legislative discretion, invoke the "pending ordinance doctrine" by ordinance so that no building permits shall be issued for structures which would be affected by the proposed amendment until the Town Council has rendered its decision on the proposed amendment.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

Pursuant to §12-158(6) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance*, (6) Approval criteria. Text and zoning map amendments to the ordinance may be approved if the following approval criteria have been met:

- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan;
- b. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of this article;
- c. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to further the general health, safety and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island;
- d. The proposed amendment corrects an error or inconsistency or meets the challenge of a changed condition.

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

In the Fall of 2024, planning staff begin engaging with tower companies regarding cellular coverage and opportunities for improvement. At the December 3, 2024 Town Council meeting, representatives from tower companies provide a community update on the challenges to improved coverage for Kiawah.

Over the course of several months, an established work group composed of members of the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee, Planning Commission, and Planning and Public Works staff and Kiawah Island Community Association, have met with various providers to include AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile to better understand the opportunities and challenges for Kiawah regarding cellular coverage.

The proposed changes are not solely for residents' quality of life but for public safety. Public Safety officials including utilities, code enforcement, Barrier Island Ocean Rescue have shared acknowledged support and or issues with signal at various points throughout the island.

On May 1st the Town's Infrastructure and Public Works Committee made recommendations regarding modification to the Town communication tower ordinance and broader infrastructure, including support of 150' tower heights. Please note this recommendation within support material. This recommendation follows several meetings and workgroup sessions held with providers and cell tower companies regarding the need for additional height because of Kiawah's tremendous tree canopy. Tangential to the proposed ordinance changes, the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee is engaging with providers for comprehensive strategy to address island wide coverage to include Freshfields Village.

Following this recommendation, the Town began a comprehensive revision of its communications tower ordinance. The proposed changes are attached. The proposed ordinance amendment is one of many prongs that are connected to larger desired outcomes regarding infrastructure, in particular improved cellular coverage island wide.

Planning staff finds the proposed amendment satisfies the approval criteria pursuant to §12-158(6) and recommends approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING JUNE 4, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

Action was deferred for further study by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission after discussion established a subcommittee of Mr. Ryan, Mr. Connolly and Mr. Babinec to further review and return with a recommendation to be shared by the next Planning Commission meeting July 2, 2025.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING JULY 2, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

The subcommittee presented a revised draft. The following is a summary of the main changes that were made to the draft language provide by the subcommittee:

Tower height provision - The maximum height for a new tower is now set at 150 feet, but new towers that will be 120 feet or higher require a report from a SC licensed professional engineer to indicate that the height is required because there are no available alternatives on other towers that are in the proximity of the new tower. The report is to be funded by the applicant and should not pose any significant additional burdens as the analysis may be part of their due diligence in constructing a new communications tower.

Stealth tower provision - This provision has been deleted. Based on our limited understanding of communication towers a stealth tower limits the effectiveness of antennas located on a tower. We recognize the trade off between tower aesthetics and effectiveness and we have chosen to prioritize the effectiveness of new towers in the hope that fewer towers may be needed on Kiawah

Site requirements - Given the new communications towers can be higher than the current towers we have increased the minimum distance requirements for a new tower to be at least 200 feet form a residential structure. We have also increased the height requirement for a security fence from six feet to eight feet.

Antenna requirements - We have eliminated the requirement that a new communication tower must house equipment for four carriers. This is an operational decision for the tower manufacturer. Their decision will be based on tower availability on Kiawah and recommendations from a professional engineer.

Balloon test - We have added language to detail public notice requirements for balloon tests. This is a critical notification requirement so that property owners are fully informed of pending changes in nearby communication towers. We have eliminated the provision in this section to allow alternatives to balloon tests. This is too important to consider an alternative that does not meet the time and visibility requirements for the balloon test.

Planning Staff recommended the Planning Commission consider the following:

A collocation and stealth provision remain as tower companies expect to collocate. Collocation aids in reducing the total number of towers. Additionally stealth provisions accommodate towers sited on structures as buildings as present today sited at the Sanctuary Hotel.

Include a provision for how tower heights are administered to prevent interpretation questions in the future.

Modify professional engineer licensed in the State of South Carolina to designated engineer or radio frequency professional. The design and outputs produced for cell towers function a little differently in the communications industry, this allows for the right personnel to provide and or administer the report as well as relaxes the South Carolina requirements as many of teams for the design may not be local to South Carolina.

Standardizing the proposed public notice requirements for balloon testing to the Town's existing public notification requirements.

Planning Commission discussed the proposed amendment and engaged with industry representatives.

Planning Commission unanimously (7 to 0) recommended approval of the proposed text amendment.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING – AUGUST 5, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

Five (5) public comments received in support of the proposed ordinance, including the Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Eugene Babenic, Martin Skelly, Kim Buck, and Michael Azar

Town Council approved 1st Reading by a vote of 5 to 0.

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SECOND READING – SEPTEMBER 9, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

Proposed Addition to Section 12-103(m)(6) regarding drop and swap provision

The following language is presented by Crown Castle, to the Town Council for consideration. With studies and due diligence underway for new towers at existing locations, the follow provision would grant an applicant the ability to request a wavier, when a new tower is being sited near an existing tower site.

“Consistent with the intent of reducing the number of towers needed through a policy of encouraging collocation as stated in Section 12-103(m)(1)(a), the replacement and upgrade of an existing tower does not implicate the same land use policy considerations as new infrastructure. Accordingly, an applicant may request a waiver from the Planning Director for any of these provisions for replacement of a structure on or near an existing site for which there is already an existing land use approval.”

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND

ORDINANCE 2025-16

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 12 – LAND USE PLANNING AND ZONING, ARTICLE II. - ZONING, DIVISION 3. - USE REGULATIONS, SEC. 12-103. – CONDITIONS OF USE, TO MODIFY STANDARDS REGARDING COMMUNICATION TOWER INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES REGARDING CELLULAR COVERAGE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Municipal Code currently contains *Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning*; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island now finds that, upon further review, it is in the public interest to amend the *Town of Kiawah Island Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* to modify infrastructure standards regarding communication towers; and

WHEREAS, the text amendment would be consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a meeting on June 4, 2025, and July 2, 2025, at which time a presentation was made by staff, and an opportunity was given for the public to comment on the text amendment request; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, after consideration of the staff report, subsequently voted on July 2, 2025, to recommend to Town Council that the proposed amendment be approved; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council held a Public Hearing on August 5, 2025, providing the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND IT IS ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAID COUNCIL.

Section 1 Purpose

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance to modify conditions of use regarding communication towers to modernize standards regarding communication towers.

Section 2 Ordinance

- (1) The Town hereby amends Section 12-103. Conditions of Use, as shown in the attached “**Exhibit A,**” which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

Section 3 Severability

If any part of this Ordinance is held to be unconstitutional, it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent to pass said Ordinance without such unconstitutional provision, and the remainder of said Ordinance shall be deemed to be valid as if such portion had not been included. If said Ordinance, or any provisions thereof, is held to be inapplicable to any person, group of persons, property, kind property,

circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the applicability thereof to any other persons, property, or circumstances.

Section 4 **Effective Date and Duration**

This Ordinance shall be effective upon its enactment by the Town Council of the Town of Kiawah Island.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND ON THIS 5TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2025.

Bradley D. Belt, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
Petra Reynolds, Town Clerk

1st Reading: August 5, 2025

Public Hearing: August 5, 2025

2nd Reading: September 9, 2025

Sec. 12-103. Conditions of use.

(m) *Communications towers.*

(1) *Purpose and legislative intent.* The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 affirmed the Town of Kiawah Island's authority concerning the placement, construction and modification of wireless telecommunications facilities. The regulations of this section are designed to site communications towers on Kiawah Island. It is the intent of this article to allow for the harmonious co-existence of communications towers and other land uses. It is also the intent of this article to reduce the overall negative impact of communications towers. ~~by:~~

~~a. Reducing the number of towers needed through a policy of encouraging collocation; and~~

~~b. Encouraging the following, if collocation is not feasible:~~

~~1. The use of stealth tower design, as defined in subsection (m)(43) of this section;~~

~~2. The clustering of towers (tower farms);~~

~~3. The placement of towers away from roadways;~~

~~4. The provision of effective screening; and~~

~~5. The location of communications equipment on existing structures.~~

(2) *Collocation exemption.* Proposed communications equipment collocating on existing towers and structures without adding to their height shall require only a zoning permit and shall not be subject to the requirements of this section. ~~;~~

(23) Tower height provision.

~~a. New Communications towers that are to be built at an existing communication tower location, may be permitted up to a maximum height of 150 feet subject to the requirements set forth in this section.~~

~~1. The height of the tower shall be measured from the base of the tower to the tower's highest point inclusive of any antennas. For stealth towers placed on buildings or other structures, the height shall be measured from natural grade to the highest point.~~

~~b. Communication towers may exceed the maximum height limits established in this article provided that a special exception is granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals pursuant to the provisions of Section 12-161. Requests for such special exceptions must be submitted and approved prior to the approval of site plan review and any issued zoning permit. Applicants must demonstrate the need for additional height is necessary to meet the service provider objectives, and that no practical alternative location or technology could achieve the same service coverage. If the height of a proposed communication tower that is being built at the location of an existing communication tower will equal or exceeds 120 feet in height its application must be accompanied by a report from an professional engineer, radio frequency engineer or other -licensed or certified professional licensed in the State of South Carolina that states justifies the additional height.;~~

~~c. Communication towers may exceed the maximum height limits established in this article provided that a special exception is granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals pursuant to the provisions of Section 12-161. Requests for such special exceptions must be submitted and~~

approved prior to the approval of site plan review and any issued zoning permit. Applicants must demonstrate the need for additional height is necessary to meet the service provider objectives, and that no practical alternative location or technology could achieve the same service coverage.

(4) *Stealth tower provision.*

- a. For the purposes of this section, the term "stealth tower" means a communications tower not exceeding 1520 feet in height designed to unobtrusively blend into its existing surroundings so as not to have the appearance of a communications tower and is designed to hide, obscure, or conceal the presence of the towers and antennas. Examples of stealth towers include, but are not limited to, antenna tower alternative structures, architecturally roof-mounted antennas, building-mounted antennas painted to match the existing or proposed trees and landscaping, antenna structures designed to look like light poles or electrical utility poles, artificial trees, clock towers, flagpoles, steeples, water towers or water tanks.
- b. All proposed stealth tower designs must be approved by the Planning Director.
- c. A complete zoning permit application for a stealth tower that meets all requirements of this article shall be approved.

(5) ~~_____~~ *Preapplication meeting.* Prior to submitting a formal application for a zoning permit for a communications tower the applicant is required to attend one or more preapplication meetings. The purpose of the preapplication meeting is to address key issues which will help to expedite the review and permitting process. The Planning Director may conduct a site visit at the preapplication meeting.

(6) ~~_____~~ *Zoning permit submittal requirements.* Prior to zoning permit approval, all applications for ~~r~~ ~~e~~ communications towers shall complete the site plan review process as provided in section 12-162. In addition to any site plan review requirements, the application must contain the following items:

- a. A site plan, drawn to engineer's scale, showing the location of the tower guy anchors (if any), existing or proposed buildings and structures or improvements, including parking, driveways or access roads, fences and protected ~~Grand Specimen~~ Trees affected by the proposed construction. If there are no ~~Grand Specimen~~ Trees affected, a surveyor's statement on the site plan must be shown. Adjacent land uses shall also be noted on the site plan, with precise measurements noted between the proposed tower and any residential structures on surrounding properties.
- b. The site plan must show a vegetated buffer with a detailed plant list, either existing or installed, that provides an effective screen from public rights-of-way and adjacent property owners and across view corridors. If a buffer is to be installed, its placement on the site will vary in order to provide the most effective screening from public view as determined by the Planning Director. Required materials will be based on installation of a 25-foot buffer around the fenced area.
- c. Elevation drawings of the proposed building and structures. The height and typical design of the tower and buildings, typical materials to be used, color, and lighting shall be shown on elevation drawings. The applicant shall submit documentation justifying the total height of any communications towers, facility and/or antenna and the basis therefor. In cases where the proposed height of a new communication tower will equal or exceeds 120 feet the applicant must submit a report as described in section 12-103 (m) (2) (b) above.
- d. Additionally, color and material samples shall be provided. The proposed tower must be located no closer to a residential structure than 200 feet, or a distance equal to 1.5 feet for

each foot in height of the proposed tower plus 50 feet as measured from the center of the proposed tower, ~~whichever is greater. At a minimum, there must be a 200150-foot distance between the proposed tower and a residential structure.~~

- e. An ~~eightsix~~-foot nonclimbable fence must be placed around the tower and any associated building. Guy wires may be fenced separately.
- f. The proposed tower must be located such that adequate setbacks are provided on all sides to prevent the tower's fall zone from encroaching onto adjoining properties. The fall zone shall be determined by an engineer certified by the State of South Carolina in a letter which includes the engineer's signature and seal.
- g. For the purposes of collocation review and review of efforts at siting a tower on the same lot near an existing tower, the applicant shall submit satisfactory written evidence such as correspondence, agreements, contracts, etc., that alternative towers, buildings, or other structures are not available or suitable for use within the applicant's tower site search area that are structurally capable of supporting the intended antenna or meeting the applicant's necessary height criteria, providing a location free of interference from other communication towers, or available at the prevailing market rate (as determined by staff communication with persons doing business within the industry). Additionally, the applicant shall make every effort to build the proposed tower in such a manner as may allow other telecommunication users to collocate.
- h. Proposed towers may not be located within 1,000 feet of the center of an existing tower unless the proposed tower is to take the place of an existing tower at the same location and the existing tower is removed pursuant to Sec. 12-103 (m) (11). applicant certifies that the existing tower does not meet the applicant's structural specifications and the applicant's technical design requirements, or that a collocation agreement could not be obtained at a reasonable market rate. In the event of the situation set forth in this subsection, the clustering of new towers on the same parcel near existing towers is permitted.
- i. The proposed tower shall only be illuminated as required by the Federal Communications Commission or Federal Aviation Administration. Nighttime strobe lighting shall not be incorporated unless required by the Federal Communications Commission or Federal Aviation Administration. If lighting is required, the applicant shall provide a detailed plan for sufficient lighting that shall be as unobtrusive and inoffensive as permissible under state and federal regulations, and an artist's rendering or other visual representation showing the effect of light emanating from the site on neighboring habitable structures within 1,500 feet of all property lines of the parcel on which the communications towers are located.
- j. Communications towers shall contain a sign no larger than four square feet to provide adequate notification to persons in the immediate area of the presence of an antenna that has transmission capabilities. The sign shall contain the names of the owners and operators of the antennas, as well as emergency phone numbers. The sign shall be located so as to be visible from the access point of the site. No other signage, including advertising, shall be permitted on any facilities, antennas, antenna supporting structures or antenna towers, unless required by law.
- k. A copy of the tower's proposed search rings illustrating signal strength for each carrier at their heights.
- l. To ensure the removal of towers which do not meet requirements for continued use or proper maintenance, a statement of financial responsibility shall be submitted for each tower and a performance bond for the amount of anticipated removal costs shall be posted. The bond

must be renewed as necessary to ensure that it is maintained at all times during the existence of the tower.

m. Structural drawings for the proposed tower.

n. The applicant shall furnish a visual impact assessment which shall include:

1. A zone visibility map which shall be provided in order to determine locations where the tower may be seen.
2. Pictorial representations and rendering of before and after view from key viewpoints both inside and outside the Town including, but not limited to:
 - (i) Major highways and roads;
 - (ii) State and local parks;
 - (iii) Historic districts;
 - (iv) Preserves and historic sites normally open to the public; and
 - (v) Any other location where the site is visible to a large number of visitors, travelers or residents.
 - (vi) Any other location as determined by the Planning Director.
3. An assessment of the visual impact of the tower base, guy wires and accessory buildings from abutting and adjacent properties and streets.

(76) Retention of expert assistance and reimbursement by the applicant.

- a. The Town, pursuant to its professional services procurement policy, may hire any consultant and/or expert necessary to assist the Town in reviewing and evaluating the application, including the construction and modification of the site, once permitted, and any requests for recertification.
- b. ~~An~~The applicant shall deposit with the Town funds sufficient to reimburse the Town for all be reasonable-responsible for any costs incurred for these services including but not limited to of the consultant and expert evaluation and consultation to the Town in connection with the review of any application, including the construction and structural evaluation and inspection of the tower, and modification of the site, once permitted and any recertification requests. The initial deposit shall be \$8,500.00. The application will not be processed until receipt of this initial deposit. The Town will maintain a separate escrow account for all such funds. The Town's consultants/experts shall invoice the Town for its services in reviewing the application, including the construction and modification of the site, once permitted. If, at any time during the process this escrow account has a balance less than \$2,500.00, the applicant shall immediately, upon notification by the Town, replenish said escrow account so that it has a balance of at least \$5,000.00. Such additional escrow funds shall be deposited with the Town before any further action or consideration is taken on the application. In the event that the amount held in escrow by the Town is more than the amount of the actual invoicing at the conclusion of the project, the remaining balance shall be promptly refunded to the applicant. The applicant shall not be entitled to receive any interest earnings on unused funds.
- c. ~~The total amount of the funds needed as set forth in subsection (m)(6)b of this section may vary with the scope and complexity of the project, the completeness of the application and other information as may be needed to complete the necessary review, analysis and inspection of any construction or modification.~~The applicant shall submit a deposit in the amount of \$5,000 within 15 days of a completed application to be used towards necessary review, analysis and inspection

of any construction or modification. The applicant shall not be entitled to receive any interest earnings or unused funds.

e. Town Council may authorize the waiver of any required costs or deposit pursuant to subsection.

(87) *Surrounding property owner notification.*

a. In order to better inform the public, in the case of a new communications towers, the applicant shall hold a balloon test as follows:

1. Applicant shall arrange to fly, or raise upon a temporary mast, a minimum of three-foot diameter brightly colored balloon at the maximum height of the proposed new tower.
2. The dates, (including a second date, in case of poor visibility on the initial date) shall be provided to the Planning Director ten days after receipt of the complete application notice.
3. The dates shall be set at minimum 15 days prior to the Planning Director making a final decision on the zoning permit.
4. The balloons shall be flown for ten consecutive hours between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

b. Public notice requirements for balloon test shall include:

a. Town wide public notice via the Town's electronic newsletters shall be made at least two weeks prior to the balloon test.

b. ~~Additional~~Written public notice to neighboring property owners -- The Town shall ~~contact~~provide written notice to all property owners within a radius of 500 feet as measured at the site of the center of the new communication tower. -The public notice shall advise property owners of the upcoming ballon test as well as the proposed height and other features of the proposed communication tower.

~~b. The Town may consider alternative plan to a balloon test as appropriate and approved by the Planning Director.~~

~~b.c.~~ Once the application is deemed complete by the Planning Director for a communications tower zoning permit, the Planning Department shall provide parties in interest, personal, posted and newspaper notice in accordance with the requirements of section 12-156. The public notice shall include the dates of the balloon tests as provided by the applicant and the date the Planning Director must make a final decision on the zoning permit.

(98) *Time limit for staff review.* Upon receipt of an application deemed complete by the Planning Director for a communications tower zoning permit, the Planning Director shall have a maximum of 45 days to act on the application. The 45 days begins from the date the applicant is sent written notice of a complete application from the Planning Director. Failure to act on the application within 45 days will result in the applicant being granted a zoning permit.

(109) *Zoning permit approval criteria.*

- a. A complete zoning permit application for a ~~stealth-communication~~ tower that meets all requirements of this article may be approved, approved with conditions or denied. ~~shall be approved.~~
- b. Upon review of a complete application, no zoning permit shall be issued for a communications tower, until the Planning Director determines that the proposed tower complies with the following criteria and standards:

~~1. The location and height of the proposed tower will not substantially impact the character of property listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, other significant environmental, cultural or historical site officially designated scenic roads or rivers and that the tower is designed to blend into the environment and minimize visual impact.~~

~~21.~~ If a completely new tower is necessary, the applicant must provide written proof of attempts at collocation and siting a tower on the same lot near an existing tower were proven not feasible or practical.

~~32.~~ The applicant has pursued any available publicly owned sites and privately owned sites occupied by a compatible use, and if not utilized, that these sites are unsuitable for operation of the facility under applicable communications regulations and the applicant's technical design requirements.

~~43.~~ Staff shall review and approve the color and materials to be used for the proposed tower.

~~54.~~ If the Planning Director finds a proposed communications tower will have a substantially negative impact on a surrounding area or adjoining property, the use shall fall under the special exception (S) provisions of this article.

c. In determining whether the use shall fall under the special exception (S) provisions the Planning Director may consider one or more of the following items:

~~1. The proposed use will be detrimental to adjacent land uses including historical sites;~~

~~2. The proposed use will have a negative aesthetic visual impact;~~

~~13.~~ The proposed use will have an adverse eaffect on the environment (not including radio frequency emissions); and

~~24.~~ The proposed use is contrary to the public health, safety or welfare.

~~(1119)~~ *Tower abandonment.* A tower that is not used for communication purposes for more than 120 days (with no new application on file for any communication user) is presumed to be out of service and the owner of such tower must notify the staff and remove the tower within 50 days. Towers which are not maintained by the owner according to the Town building code shall be removed by the owner within 60 days. To ensure the removal of towers which do not meet requirements for continued use or proper maintenance, a statement of financial responsibility shall be submitted for each tower and a performance bond for the amount of anticipated removal costs shall be posted. Removal costs shall be charged to the tower owner. The bond must be renewed as necessary to ensure that it is maintained at all times during the existence of the tower.

(Code 1993, § 12A-302; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-302, 10-12-2005; Ord. No. 2006-08, § 2.1(12A-302), 11-7-2006; Ord. No. 2016-04, § 1, 9-6-2016; Ord. No. 2023-22, § 2(Exh. A), 11-28-2023)



TAB 3

TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND

ORDINANCE 2025-18

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND TO AMEND THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND’S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, Section 6-29-510 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended, requires that the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission review, and if necessary, update the Comprehensive Plan no less than once every five years; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of adopting a Comprehensive Plan is to guide the development of the Town in accordance with existing and future needs; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the Planning Commission performed a comprehensive review of the Comprehensive Plan and recommended substantial revisions; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island held the required public hearing on September 9, 2025, and October 7, 2025, to receive public input on the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND IT IS ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAID COUNCIL.

Section 1. Purpose

This Ordinance is to amend the Town of Kiawah Island’s Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. Ordinance

The Town of Kiawah Island’s Comprehensive Plan is hereby amended as follows:

Attached **Exhibit “A”** incorporated herein by reference, which shall replace the existing Comprehensive Plan and hereafter be known as the Town of Kiawah Island’s Comprehensive Plan.

Section 3. Severability.

If any part of this Ordinance is held to be unconstitutional, it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent to pass said Ordinance without such unconstitutional provision, and the remainder of said Ordinance shall be deemed to be valid as if such portion had not been

included. If said Ordinance, or any provisions thereof, is held to be inapplicable to any person, group of persons, property, kind property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the applicability thereof to any other persons, property, or circumstances.

Section 4. Effective Date and Duration

This Ordinance shall be effective upon its enactment by the Town Council of the Town of Kiawah Island.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
ON THIS ____ DAY OF _____ 2025.**

Bradley D. Belt, Mayor

Petra S. Reynolds, Town Clerk

First Reading Approval:

Public Hearing:

Second Reading Approval:

**TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND
PLANNING COMMISSION**

RESOLUTION 2025-01

**A RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION OF THE
2025 TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - KIAWAHNEXT**

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (S.C. Code § 6-29-510 et seq., as amended) requires local governments to establish a Comprehensive Plan, the local planning commission review the Comprehensive Plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, and update the Comprehensive Plan at least once every ten years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has guided the preparation and drafting of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan in compliance with the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has ensured that the Comprehensive Plan includes consideration of current and future conditions, public input, data analysis, maps, and goals and implementation strategies consistent with the Town's vision and objectives; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's shared vision for the future, and addresses key elements including governance structure, population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, transportation, land use, priority investments, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Future Land Use Map as amended in the Comprehensive Plan and reflects the community's shared vision for the future, and addresses key elements including governance structure, population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, transportation, land use, priority investments, and resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has held several workshops and reviewed the recommended comprehensive plan and determined that it is in the best interests of the Town and its residents to formally consider and adopt the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Planning Commission has voted to recommend adoption of the 2025 KiawahNext Comprehensive Plan in accordance with applicable statutory requirements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND PLANNING COMMISSION, TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1 Resolution


Consideration and Recommendation of Approval: 2025 The Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan – KiawahNext as referenced in “Exhibit A”. Town Council shall hereby acknowledge receipt and shall consider its formal adoption at the next duly noticed public meeting.

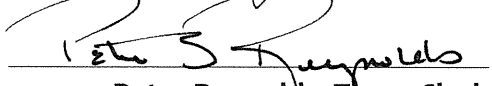
Section 2 Effective Date and Duration

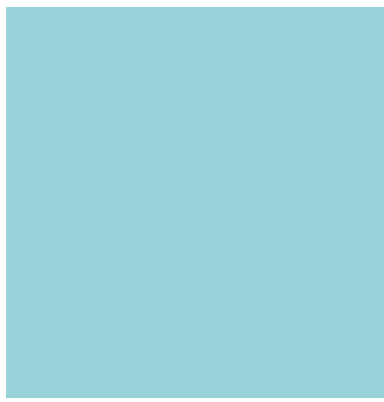
This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Planning Commission.

PASSED, APPROVED, BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND ON THIS 2ND DAY OF JULY 2025.

Joanne Hennessy, Planning Commission Chair


John Taylor, Jr., Planning Director


Petra Reynolds, Town Clerk



TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND | 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

kiawahnext

Revisions as of 8-01-2025

ADOPTED XX.XX.2025

Table of Contents

part one: vision & overview

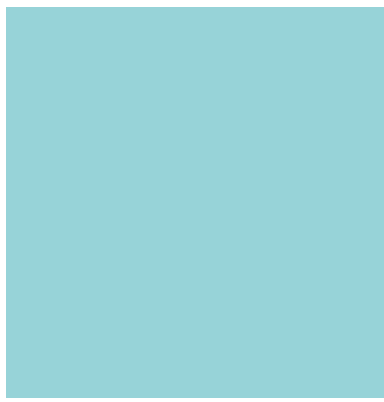
- 09 **glossy of terms**
- 10 **executive summary**
- 14 **kiawah by the numbers**

part two: strategic priorities for kiawah's future

- 18 **development**
- 22 **community experience**
- 26 **infrastructure**
- 27 **resiliency**

part three: appendix

- 31 **process**
- 44 **governance**
- 49 **population**
- 55 **economic development**
- 62 **natural resources**
- 80 **cultural resources**
- 85 **community facilities**
- 93 **housing**
- 99 **landuse**
- 110 **transportation**
- 125 **priority investments**
- 132 **resiliency**



TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND | 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

kiawahnext

ADOPTED XX.XX.2025



Acknowledgements

The planning process was managed by the staff of the Town of Kiawah Island, steered by the Planning Commission, adopted by the Mayor and Town Council, and envisioned by the residents of Kiawah.

TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Bradley D. Belt

Mayor Pro Tempore Russell Berner

Council Member E. Luke Farrell

Council Member Madeleine Kaye

Council Member Lance Spencer

TOWN STAFF

Stephanie Tillerson, AICP, Town Administrator

John Taylor, Jr., Planning Director

Jim Jordan

Brian Gottshalk

Patrea St. John

Bruce Spicher

Dorota Szubert

Daniel Vincent

PLANNING COMMISSION

Joanne K. Hennessy, Chair

Larry Iwan, Vice-Chair

Eugene A. Babinec

John Connolly

Sandra L. Devine

Robert Ryan

Mary E. Schmersal

WITH CONTRIBUTION FROM FORMER PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Andrew J. Capelli

Ronald Curran, MD

William Dowdy

E. Luke Farrell

Madeleine Kaye



a bold vision for
Kiawah's bright future



01 section

part one: vision

01 vision

02 blueprint

03 comprehensive plan elements

kiawahnext

part I: snapshot

Glossary of Terms

Kiawah Governance Entities and Major Stakeholders

Kiawah Island Community Association (KICA) - Kiawah's primary property owners' association responsible for operating the main and secondary security gates, managing its amenities, including bike paths and boardwalks, enforcing community regulations, and maintaining common areas throughout the island.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort (KIGR) - The resort provides lodging and amenities, including five golf courses, tennis and pickleball facilities, pools, restaurants, and special events programming.

Kiawah Partners (KP) - The original master developer of Kiawah Island that owns and operates Kiawah Island Real Estate and the Kiawah Island Club, a membership-based organization providing golf courses, recreational facilities, and dining amenities.

Town - The municipal government of the Town of Kiawah Island, responsible for core governmental functions including public safety, zoning administration, building services, infrastructure maintenance, and municipal policy implementation within the corporate limits.

Other terms

Build-out - The point when an area reaches its maximum development capacity under existing zoning regulations and land use restrictions. For Kiawah, this represents completion of all approved residential, commercial, and recreational development

Choke Points - Traffic bottlenecks that constrain vehicle flow on Kiawah, specifically the Main Gate entrance and

the roundabout connecting Kiawah Island Parkway, Seabrook Island Road, and Betsy Kerrison Parkway.

End-stage Development - The development phase when remaining undeveloped properties reach completion and redevelopment of existing structures becomes the primary development activity rather than new construction on vacant land.

Island - Generally refers to all properties under the jurisdiction and subject to the covenant restrictions of the Kiawah Island Community Association.

Kiawah - The entire municipal boundaries of the Town of Kiawah Island, establishing the legal jurisdictional framework for all municipal government functions and authority.

Living with Nature - Kiawah's foundational philosophy and approach to development that emphasizes harmony between the built environment and natural systems, incorporating environmental stewardship, wildlife protection, and sustainable design principles into all planning and development decisions.

Resiliency - The community's capacity to adapt, prepare for, and recover from environmental challenges including sea level rise and severe weather events, while maintaining essential services and infrastructure functionality.

Executive Summary^{next}

KiawahNext is a comprehensive plan guiding the future of the Town of Kiawah Island (“Town”), advancing its vision of a harmonious residential community with an integrated world-class resort and shopping village within a preserved maritime setting. The plan balances quality development with natural preservation while prioritizing resilience throughout all aspects of implementation.

KiawahNext replaces the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, amended in 2019. It synthesizes the studies, research, and recommendations from a wide variety of recent plans and documents to create a unified strategy for the Town.

Three Critical Factors Shape Kiawah’s Future:

1. Kiawah’s success depends on collaboration and advocacy among key stakeholders. Kiawah’s governance is characterized by a unique dual model consisting of the Town and KICA. Other stakeholders include KIGR and KP, EDENS, property owners, commercial interests and holders of conservation easements on and around Kiawah, including the Kiawah Conservancy and the Lowcountry Land Trust. The Town borders Johns Island, an unincorporated area in Charleston County. Growing development on Johns Island has increased pressure on roads and infrastructure, directly affecting the Kiawah community. Over the coming decade, growth within Kiawah and on Johns Island will require greater levels of collaboration and advocacy to ensure Kiawah’s interests are properly balanced among sometimes competing drivers and objectives.
2. Managing Growth. The next decade will be defined by the build-out of remaining residential and commercial development entitlements and plans, driving continued growth in a tourism-based economy. As Kiawah approaches maximum residential build-out, the focus will shift from new construction to redevelopment of existing properties and amenities. This transition requires updated land use standards, permitting processes, and strategic coordination to ensure redevelopment maintains Kiawah’s character while meeting evolving community needs
3. Sustaining Kiawah’s commitment to Living with Nature is fundamental to the unique Kiawah experience. From its inception, Kiawah’s extraordinary natural environment has shaped the community’s identity and been preserved through careful planning and stewardship. Over the coming decade, maintaining this connection to nature and enhancing environmental resiliency will be essential to preserving what makes Kiawah distinctive as both a residential community and visitor destination.

Four Strategic Pillars for Kiawah's Future

1. Managing Development and Growth addresses the strategic management of Kiawah's remaining development capacity as the community approaches build-out completion, with rResidential units are projected to grow from 4,087 completed units to between 4,800 and 5,221 total units over the next decade, representing a 17 to 28 percent increase. The final number depends on development decisions regarding the optimal mix of residential units and hotel accommodations within planned resort expansions. While the full-time residential population is projected to grow modestly, expansion of multi-family properties will drive increased growth in visitor and seasonal resident populations. This strategic priority focuses on managing remaining development capacity, preparing for the transition from new construction to property redevelopment, and establishing formal coordination mechanisms among key stakeholder.
2. Community Experience focuses on maintaining exceptional quality of life for residents and visitors by preserving natural resources, managing traffic, supporting sustainable tourism growth, and maintaining Kiawah's unique character.
3. Infrastructure ensures that physical systems remain robust and forward-looking, addressing capacity constraints that have emerged as Kiawah has matured and grown to its current state while preparing for emergency

circumstances and environmental challenges.

4. Resiliency prepares the community to adapt to environmental change, continuing Kiawah's 50-year commitment to design and development in harmony with nature while building capacity to address sea-level rise, nuisance flooding, and other climate-related challenges.

Strategic Action Plan_{next}

KiawahNext Implementation Framework

This section presents the highest-priority actions from the four strategic focus areas, establishing a clear implementation framework to achieve Kiawah’s planning objectives through 2035. Section 2 of the Plan, the Blueprint, provides additional detail regarding each of the four priority areas and associated recommendations as follows:

1. Development and Growth

- 1.1. **Establish the Kiawah Island Alliance (KIA)** - Create a structured, formalized mechanism for enhanced coordination, joint planning, policy development, advocacy, and relationship management among Kiawah’s key stakeholders.
- 1.2. **Establish a Redevelopment Task Force** - Create a task force to analyze redevelopment trends across Kiawah properties, identify barriers to strategic redevelopment, and recommend incentives or mechanisms to facilitate redevelopment that align with Kiawah’s long-term vision.
- 1.3. **Enhance Kiawah Advocacy** - Evaluate strategies to advocate more proactively at the county, state, and federal levels regarding issues that directly affect Kiawah, including roads and traffic, planning, infrastructure, and environmental matters.

2. Community Experience

- 2.1. **Evaluate proactive strategies to manage traffic** - Update existing traffic studies and identify mechanisms to better manage traffic flows into and

within Kiawah as a top issue affecting future growth, safety, and community experience.

- 2.2. **Explore creation of a tourism commission** - Actively support tourism development that aligns with the Kiawah brand and experience, including a possible expanded focus on ecotourism.
- 2.3. **Public Amenities** - Identify and evaluate opportunities for strategic investment in public amenities that provide maximum value to Kiawah residents and visitors.
- 2.4. **Maintain and prioritize support for protection of Kiawah’s wildlife** - Support efforts consistent with Living with Nature initiatives.

3. Infrastructure

- 3.1. **Stress Test Emergency Transportation Infrastructure** - Evaluate and periodically review Kiawah’s transportation infrastructure capacity under normal and emergency conditions, including the potential emergency use of leisure trails. This assessment will build upon the foundational work of KICA’s Adaptive Management Plan Task Force.
- 3.2. **Periodically evaluate the capacity, resilience and useful life of Kiawah’s critical utilities** - Review performance and recovery plans under normal and emergency situations.
- 3.3. **Evaluate strategies to adapt existing facilities to support growth, as well as the deployment of new models such as**

EV technologies - Make the best use of existing sites and resources.

4. Resiliency

4.1 Explore creation of a Chief Resilience Officer - Establish a Town position to manage the municipal resiliency committee and coordinate the review and potential consolidation of resilience-related plans and initiatives across the community. This officer would collaborate with other resilience personnel and key stakeholders, including the Kiawah Conservancy, KICA, and potentially the Town of Seabrook Island and the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated resilience planning.

4.2 Implement a comprehensive community resilience education program - Develop targeted outreach initiatives that engage residents, property owners, and visitors in understanding their roles in environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Kiawah by the Numbers

Top Trends Affecting Kiawah’s Next Ten Years

As Kiawah approaches end-stage residential build-out, growth will be centered in multi-family, commercial and mixed-use development. Traffic, roads, resiliency, and other infrastructure concerns are top issues, pressured by multiple factors both within the Town and surrounding areas.

Kiawah Key Facts

- **Incorporated:** September 13, 1988
- **Location:** 25 miles southwest of Charleston, South Carolina
- **Municipal boundaries** encompass Kiawah Island and annexed properties of Freshfields Village and the Town’s Municipal Center.
- **Total Highlands:** ~3,725 acres
- **Land:** ~11 square miles (~7,100 acres)
- **Water/Wetlands:** ~2.4 square miles (~1,536 acres)
- **Beachfront:** ~10 miles of Atlantic Ocean shoreline

Population Trends with Impact on Kiawah Roads, Infrastructure and Amenities

Continued population growth expected, driven by visitors and longer part-time homeowner stays

Type	Key Drivers	Exp. Impact
Full-time Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~ 2,100 current FT residents • Modest growth projected 	
Part Time Property Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~ 6,000 P/T homeowners • More frequent and longer stays 	
“Stay” Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of overnight visitors driven by new development in short term rental and hotel units 	
Day Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned development outside of Kiawah with various forms of permissible access • New Kiawah amenities expected to drive growth in day visitors • Expected growth in daily commercial service providers 	

Total population: 10,000 – 12,000 during peak periods (2025)

The following development analysis uses Charleston County parcel data and Town of Kiawah Island Permitting data as of April 7, 2025. Population, Traffic, and Tourism trends source US Census, Charleston Visitors Bureau South Carolina Department of Transportation, and Kiawah Island Community Association data.

Dwelling Unit Trends with Impacts on Kiawah Resources - Expected

Excluding new hotel capacity, at least 20% increase from 2025 is expected, mostly driven by multifamily

Type	Key Drivers	Exp. Impact
Single Family: ~3,242 Units*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~3,001 current/under construction SFR units • 341 undeveloped lots (2025) • Expected shift to redevelopment 	
Multifamily ~1,879 Units**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~ 1,349 current/under construction units • ~400-500 potential new units^ 	
Hotel up to ~650 units**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 current rooms • ~ 150-300 potential new hotel rooms 	

Total projected residential dwelling units excluding hotels: 5,262 (+ ~20%)

* Includes existing and potential new growth.

^ Some tradeoffs may occur between multifamily residential dwelling units and hotel rooms.

LEGEND: Relative Expected Impact on Kiawah Resources (Roads Infrastructure, Community Facilities, Amenities)

- Highest Expected Impact
- Significant Expected Impact
- Moderate Expected Impact
- Minimal Expected Impact
- Lowest Expected Impact

Top Trends Affecting Kiawah’s Next Ten Years

Significant activity in commercial and mixed-use development both within Kiawah and the surrounding Johns Island community is expected, with impact on Kiawah resources

Commercial / Resort Development – Within Kiawah

Continued growth expected driven primarily by KIGR and Freshfields Village undeveloped properties.

Locations / Expected Use	Scale
KIGR: Undeveloped parcels at zoned / entitled to be developed as hotels, residential and commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 200 – 400 residential units (Tradeoffs may occur between residential DUs and hotel rooms)
Seafields at FFV: Independent and Assisted Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 106 units (90 Independent; 16 Assisted)
MUSC: Freestanding Emergency Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~12,000 sqft likely to draw residents from lower Johns Island
Freshfields Village: Five undeveloped parcels permitted for commercial or residential (Town homes, freestanding units or units above retail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to ~80,000 commercial sqft Up to 96 DUs

Employment Snapshot

More than 3,000 employees from Town-based employers; Kiawah economy also supports 000s of service providers

Employers	# of Employees
Kiawah Island Golf Resort	~1,700
Kiawah Partners / Kiawah Island Club and Real Estate	~ 800
Freshfields Village Businesses	350+
Kiawah Island Community Association (KICA)	100 +
Town of Kiawah Island	28
Barrier Island Ocean Rescue	40 (peak season)
Other daily service providers	~758 unique business licenses; ~16,300 annual commercial passes estimated

Residential / Commercial Development – Beyond Kiawah

Continued growth expected within unincorporated Charleston County, particularly on lower Johns Island.

Locations / Expected Use	Scale
Planned Andell West (Harris Teeter): likely to draw residents from lower Johns Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 160,000 sqft
Kiawah River: Entitled to ~1,200 homes; Dunlin Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 1,200 homes 72 guest rooms
Orange Hill: Access to Kiawah Island Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golf course 128 homes, 68 cottages
Johns Island Junction: Mixed use development at intersection of Betsy Kerrison, River, Bohicket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 128,300 sqft commercial Up to 101 DUs
Kiawah River Estates / Oak Point: Expansion of golf facilities and residential with access to Kiawah via Governors Club (KIGR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [TBD]

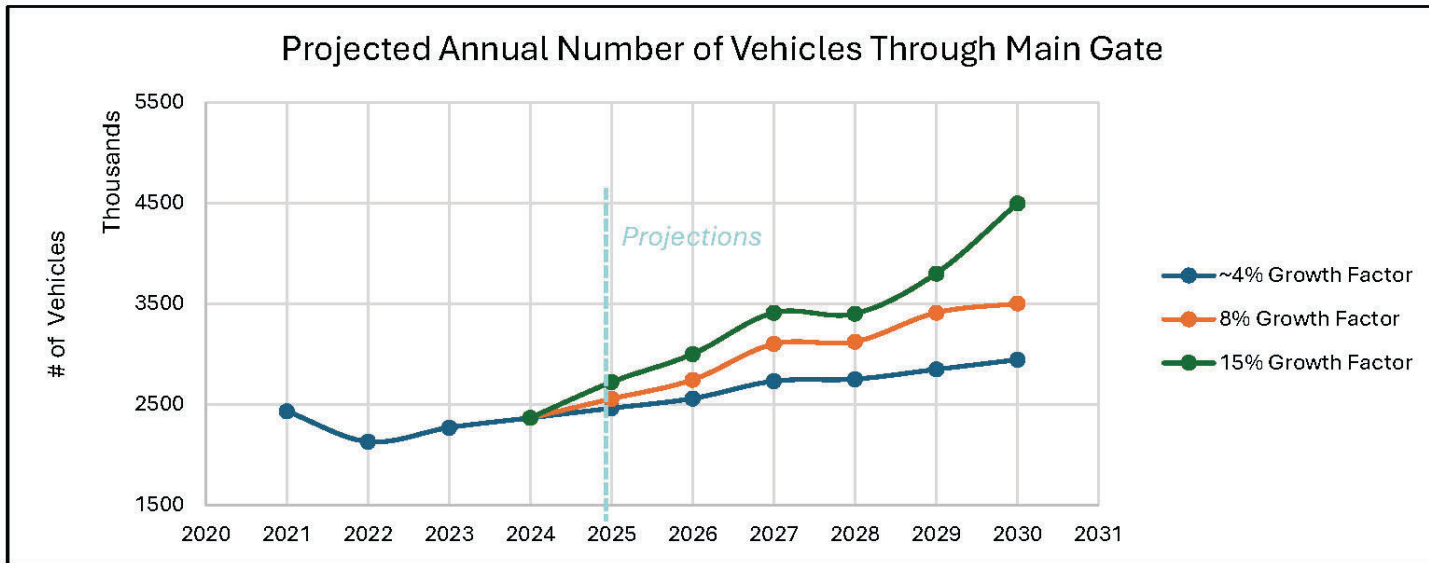
Tourism / Visitor Snapshot

Tourism continues to be strong component to Kiawah’s economy, with time and dollars spent.

Tourism Factors	Trends
Short Term Rentals	1,374 licenses (~1/3 of dwelling units) (2025)
Non-resident stay visitors	~ 300,000 est. annual
Occupancy Rates (Vacation Rentals)	On average ~62%; consistent for past 3 years. (booking pace and average rate for vacation rentals are increasing for the first six months of 2025).
Average Daily Rate (*outpacing inflation)	\$511 – ~28% increase from 2019 (\$366) to 2024
Beachwalker County Park	~122,000 annual visitors (2024) Peak (July – October)

Top Trends Affecting Kiawah's Next Ten Years

Traffic volumes continue to increase. Substantial impact is expected both on island and approaching Kiawah at the traffic circle.



“Since 2021, Kiawah has experienced approximately 4% year-on-year growth in vehicle traffic through the main gate. With 20% growth expected in new dwelling units, a higher growth rate in vehicle traffic can be expected. For this purpose, the plan has modeled potential vehicle growth between 8% - 15%. Projections do not illustrate the extreme seasonality of traffic during peak seasons.”

Expected Growth in Vehicle Traffic

Traffic Indicator	Scale	Exp. Impact
Main Gate <i>Managed by KICA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase ~4% increase from 2023 (2.27M) – 2024 (2.37M) By 2030 projected ~3.5 - 4 million vehicles 	
Employees & Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~758 unique business licenses projected + 3,000 employees contributes to ~16,300+ annual commercial passes 	
Annual Gate Passes: <i>KICA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~49,000+ issued day passes ~14,000 Owner /Guest passes 	
Recurring Gate Access Property owners beyond Kiawah with club memberships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing number of new developments added impact to infrastructure, community facilities and amenities (Orange Hill, Kiawah River Estates, etc.) 	
Kiawah Island Parkway Traffic Traffic volumes are consistently higher during the summer months, reflecting peak tourist and part-time resident activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~7,300 vehicles per day on the KIP during June and July (2024); ~7,900 vehicles peak volume Weekends see consistently elevated traffic—particularly on Saturdays, which tend to show the highest single-day volumes, especially during mid-day hours. 	
Beachwalker County Park Beachwalker Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~50,000-57,000 vehicles annually visit the county park remaining relatively consistent due to parking limitations, however Beachwalker Drive experiences some back up during peak season. 	
Betsy Kerrison Parkway <i>SCDOT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~8,700 Average Annual Daily Traffic (2024) Up ~10% from 2022 (7,800). Great percentage is estimated to route towards Kiawah. 	

- 01 vision**
- 02 blueprint**
- 03 comprehensive plan elements**

kiawahnext

part II: blueprint

Strategic Priorities for Kiawah's Future^{next}

The KiawahNext Plan establishes four interconnected priorities that form the foundation for Kiawah's future evolution. These four strategic priorities address the essential requirements for sustaining Kiawah as a premier residential community and destination while preserving the island's distinctive natural character.

Each priority represents a distinct planning component that requires coordination with the other strategic areas to achieve comprehensive community objectives.

1. **Development and Growth** focuses on strategically managing Kiawah's remaining development capacity as the community nears complete residential build-out and anticipates continued development in remaining commercial areas.
2. **Community Experience** focuses on maintaining the robust economy and exceptional quality of life that defines Kiawah for residents and visitors.
3. **Infrastructure** ensures that physical systems supporting community life remain robust and forward-looking, and capable of supporting both normal and emergency situations.
4. **Resiliency** prepares the community to adapt and thrive to environmental change and challenges.

These priorities provide a comprehensive

framework for balancing economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and community cohesion as Kiawah navigates the next decade of evolution.

1. Development and Growth

Vision: The Town will take a strategic, balanced approach to future development, preserving Kiawah's unique character as a world-class residential and resort community. Core values—Living with Nature, economic sustainability, and climate resilience—will guide all planning and decisions over the next decade.

Context: The following factors directly influence the Town's development planning over the next decade:

Development of Remaining Residential and Commercial Sites:

Growth in new residential developments: Over the next decade, residential units are projected to grow from 4,087 completed units to between 4,800 and 5,221 total units, representing a 17 to 28 percent increase primarily driven by multi-family development.

End-Stage Development: In parallel, Kiawah will approach maximum build-out for residential properties. As the current housing stock ages and new development reaches capacity limits, a shift toward redevelopment will accelerate across multi-family units, single-family homes, and supporting public and private amenities.

Residential Character and Visitor Activity:

Kiawah’s housing patterns reveal a community fundamentally oriented toward visitors and seasonal residents rather than permanent occupancy. According to 2024 KICA membership data, 29 percent of property owners identify Kiawah as their primary residence. Approximately one-third of residential units operate as short-term rentals, indicating that roughly two-thirds of housing stock serves non-permanent residents and visitors.

While short-term rental licenses have remained relatively stable over the past five years, fluctuating between 1,312 and 1,356 units, the intensity of Kiawah use continues to grow. Vehicle traffic has increased 4.2% to 2.37 million vehicles annually, and member amenity usage has risen as property owners extend their stays on Kiawah. This trend suggests that although the number of rental units isn’t expanding, each unit is generating more activity and longer occupancy periods.

These utilization patterns create unique planning challenges for Kiawah. Rather than experiencing traditional seasonal peaks followed by quiet periods, the island now faces sustained year-round pressure on infrastructure and services. The combination of consistent short-term rental activity, secondary home usage, and extended member visits generates continuous demand that municipal services and infrastructure must accommodate.

Tourism as a Key Driver of Kiawah’s Economy: Kiawah enjoys a vibrant economy, making significant contributions to state and county tax revenues and positively the overall economic climate. Overall, Kiawah

supports an estimated 6,500 jobs, with the KIGR serving as Kiawah’s largest employer, employing over 1,700 people and ranking eighth in the Charleston area. Riverstone, parent company of Kiawah Island Golf Resort, owns significant undeveloped property on the island and adjacent to Freshfields Village, positioning the resort as a key participant in Kiawah’s future development decisions.

However, growth in tourism, as well as growth in the surrounding Johns Island area, has placed increased stress on roads and infrastructure, including Kiawah’s main gate. Solving these infrastructure and traffic issues will be essential to balancing the desired growth in tourism and the visitor population, which is crucial to Kiawah’s economic health and vitality, while sustaining the unique character that draws residents and visitors to Kiawah.

Land Use: Several drivers will affect the evolution of permitted land use in the coming decade:

With fewer undeveloped properties remaining on Kiawah, thoughtful planning and collaboration are essential among Kiawah’s stakeholders.

This requirement, combined with commitment to preserve and enhance Kiawah’s natural surroundings, will shape the needs, requirements, and evolving regulations for land use. The goal is to strategically utilize the remaining undeveloped areas for residential, recreational, civic, and commercial purposes while prioritizing the unique connection between Kiawah and nature and building resilience.

Annexation: Annexation can be a viable approach to support both defensive and offensive strategies to preserve, protect, and enhance the Kiawah community. Any future annexation opportunities must be evaluated in the context of the objective to strategically manage Kiawah’s residential density and population while preserving and maintaining the Kiawah experience.

Fiscal Strength and Stability: The Town maintains a strong financial position, with FY26 budgeted revenues of \$17.6 million derived primarily from tourism-related taxes, business licenses, development permits, and municipal fees.

Through conservative fiscal management, the Town has accumulated reserve funds totaling \$46 million as of FY2025, providing financial capacity for resilience investments, emergency response, and infrastructure improvements.

The Town does not impose a property tax. Charleston County receives revenue through real estate taxes from Kiawah property owners, totaling \$96 million in FY2024, which directly supports local fire services, schools, county parks, and Charleston County administrative functions. Due to Kiawah’s unique population characteristics, Kiawah does not have schools, and there are no plans to build them.

Key Relationships: Kiawah’s continued development success relies on effective coordination among several key stakeholders with distinct but interconnected roles. The Town provides municipal services, including public safety, planning and zoning, and beach

management, while KICA manages gate access, infrastructure, ponds, common areas, and property owner amenities. KIGR and KP, as well as EDENS at Freshfields, represent additional stakeholders whose operations intersect with both municipal and community association functions. This multi-entity governance and stakeholder structure requires ongoing communication and strategic alignment to balance municipal priorities, property owner interests, resort operations, and commercial development objectives as these relationships continue to evolve.

Recommended Actions:

The following recommendations support the objective to strategically guide Kiawah’s future development:

1.1. Establish the Kiawah Island Alliance:

Create a formalized mechanism for enhanced coordination, integration, and relationship management among Kiawah’s stakeholders. At a minimum, this encompasses the Town and KICA as Kiawah’s principal governance entities, as well as the major owners and developers, currently KIGR, KP, and EDENS.. Over the next decade, investment plans and priorities among these entities are likely to evolve, further underscoring the need for continued coordination and transparency.

The KIA would serve as a high-level forum for facilitating long-term strategic discussions about Kiawah’s future, identifying opportunities for policy alignment and collaboration, addressing emerging issues and interdependencies among stakeholders, and promoting

open dialogue and understanding among diverse Kiawah entities.

Priorities include working as a group to advocate for the needs of Kiawah and the broader community, especially as it relates to vehicular access to key services such as grocers, medical care, and restaurants, with development that remains consistent with overriding principles of living with nature.

The composition of the KIA may include representatives from KICA, KP, KIGR, KIU, land conservancy groups, EDENS (Freshfields Village), and county or state agency liaisons as needed.

needed investments supporting current and future growth within Johns Island and the Town.

1.2. Establish a Town Redevelopment

Task Force: To prepare for upcoming redevelopment activities, a task force should evaluate current and future plans for single-family residences, multi-family developments, commercial projects, and other properties within the Town. This task force would develop a comprehensive plan to incentivize redevelopment while identifying existing ordinances and determining enablers or impediments that affect Kiawah’s long-term redevelopment goals. The task force should create a comprehensive redevelopment process and toolkit to streamline permitting procedures.

1.3. Enhance Kiawah Advocacy: This Comprehensive Plan identifies multiple issues and dependencies related to improvements to roads and infrastructure outside the direct authority of the Town. This situation underscores the need for the Town to consider strategies for more proactive coordination with county, state, and federal entities to advocate for

2. Community Experience

Vision: Kiawah Island's nature-forward development and world-class amenities have created a destination that attracts both permanent residents and visitors seeking a coastal community experience. With a single access road serving the growing community, maintaining the balance between Kiawah's natural beauty and necessary development is essential for Kiawah's future. This balance requires ongoing collaboration among residents, businesses, visitors, and local government throughout the next decade.

Understanding Our Community:

Kiawah's Audience: With 4,087 existing residential dwellings and 354 hotel rooms available today, a projected 1,000-plus dwellings and approximately 300 hotel rooms are expected to be built in the next ten years. Kiawah's community encompasses three primary population segments with distinct but often overlapping characteristics:

Visitors: Kiawah receives an estimated 300,000 annual visitors, with peak activity from Memorial Day through Labor Day and during major holidays. Kiawah accommodates visitors through 350 hotel rooms and 1,368 short-term rental units. This visitor volume, concentrated during peak periods, creates significant strain on Kiawah's single access road and public facilities. Accurate visitor tracking remains challenging because no single entity monitors comprehensive numbers across all stakeholder.

Residents:

- **Full-time Residents:** Kiawah is home to over 2,000 full-time residents, with an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent.
- **Part-Time Residents:** Approximately 7,000 part-time residents own property on Kiawah. While their usage patterns historically resembled those of short-term visitors, recent trends indicate part-time residents are spending more days on Kiawah and utilizing amenities more frequently.

Preserving Community Experience:

Kiawah's community includes a varied mix of residents and over 300,000 annual visitors. As Kiawah continues to grow, preserving its distinctive character and broad appeal is essential. This calls for a strategic focus on both the challenges and opportunities in key areas:

Traffic: With significant growth in the Charleston region and strong residential development on Johns Island, traffic beyond the Kiawah traffic circle has become a more significant issue. Approximately 60 percent of respondents to the KiawahNext survey, conducted from February to July 2023, cite traffic flow and congestion as either a weakness or a significant weakness.

Natural Resources: Much of Kiawah's allure stems from its natural beauty, including ten miles of beach, maritime forest, ponds, tidal streams, and river frontage. The Town is home to shorebirds, eagles, bobcats, alligators, deer, combined with ocean and river life. The Town works to protect these resources through shoreline protection

measures and wildlife support programs. Appropriately maintaining and supporting existing programs will become increasingly important as the Town's population continues to grow and sea-level rise challenges the shoreline, flora, and fauna.

Dining and Shopping: Dining and shopping options represent an area for improvement. Quality dining and shopping options are important to both residents and visitors, yet approximately 40 percent of KiawahNext survey respondents cite this as a weakness or significant weakness. While Kiawah Island Golf Resort operates numerous restaurants across the island, the broader dining landscape faces ongoing challenges. Freshfields Village has experienced some restaurant turnover since the 2023 survey, with most closures being replaced by new establishments. Kiawah restaurants face seasonal staffing difficulties that affect operations and sustainability.

Near-term dining and shopping capacity is expected to remain constrained. The Andell West retail center has been delayed until 2029 and will be anchored by a large grocery store. While additional restaurants or retail establishments may be included in the initial phase, these components remain uncertain. This development timeline perpetuates existing capacity limitations during peak visitor periods.

Amenities: KIGR, KP, and KICA provide many of the Kiawah's outdoor and active amenities, including golf, court sports, access to docks for boating, and pools. KIGR is redeveloping its court sports facility at the Roy Barth Tennis Center with the addition of a bar and casual dining area. The need for additional and updated amenities

will continue. However, stakeholders are addressing this issue.

Tourism Support: Tourism Support: Kiawah's tourism economy benefits from hosting premier events including the Ryder Cup and PGA Championships, with the 2031 PGA Championship scheduled to return. Kiawah Island Golf Resort and EDENS collaborate to provide year-round programming through resort amenities and Freshfields Village events that serve both visitors and residents. Maintaining sustainable tourism levels remains essential for long-term economic viability while preserving community character and infrastructure capacity.

Recommended Actions:

2.1. Implement Proactive Traffic Management Strategies to Enhance Community Experience:

Establish coordinated check-in and check-out scheduling systems to distribute traffic loads throughout the week rather than concentrated weekend peaks. This approach includes implementing dedicated check-in days or times for short-term rental properties and hotel guests while working with KIGR and property management companies to stagger arrival and departure windows. Additionally, create incentive programs for midweek arrivals and off-peak checkout times to reduce Saturday and Sunday traffic surges at the main gate and throughout Kiawah.

The Town and KICA should collaborate to address traffic choke points through targeted operational improvements at the main gate. Simultaneously, the Town should implement measures to

reduce traffic buildup at the Kiawah and Seabrook roundabout. Furthermore, deploy real-time traffic monitoring technology to provide drivers with current conditions and recommended timing for accessing these critical areas.

2.2. Explore development of a tourism commission to evaluate:

- This commission would focus on maximizing time and dollars spent on Kiawah while developing more formalized mechanisms among stakeholders to support options for visitors and residents in recreation, entertainment, arts, dining, and education.
- The commission should particularly explore ecotourism opportunities to position Kiawah as a world-class, recognized ecotourism destination, leveraging Kiawah’s commitment to the Living with Nature philosophy while focusing on the rich and diverse wildlife population and miles of beach, marshes, river, ponds, and lagoons.
- Additionally, the commission would focus on meeting the needs of residents and visitors by concentrating on peak periods and offering suitable access options to help manage traffic more efficiently when entering Kiawah.

2.3. Public Amenities Strategy: Complete the civic and cultural center addition to Town Hall, then establish a framework for future public amenity development based on community needs assessments

and growth patterns. This strategy should prioritize amenities that serve multiple user groups while maintaining consistency with Living with Nature principles. The Town should develop a capital improvement schedule that phases new public facilities based on identified needs, environmental impact assessments, and available funding over the planning period.

2.4. Maintain support for wildlife in Living with Nature initiatives:

- Continue to support the Town’s efforts related to environmental stewardship and conservation.
- This support includes developing a comprehensive wildlife corridor plan that identifies, protects, and enhances habitat connectivity across the island while better understanding how end-stage development will impact the increasingly concentrated habitats and movement patterns of wildlife.
- The Town should incorporate necessary native vegetation and buffers while considering targeted conservation areas and identifying and prioritizing environmentally sensitive lands on and off Kiawah for conservation. This effort requires continued collaboration with Kiawah stakeholders to protect wildlife and their habitats.

3. Community Infrastructure

Vision: The Town’s infrastructure and privately and publicly owned utilities are essential to the people who work, live, and

visit Kiawah. This infrastructure must adapt to the evolving needs of the community and recover quickly from unforeseen circumstances.

Context: Over the course of this Comprehensive Plan period, Kiawah may potentially reach full buildout, accommodate more visitors, and experience additional commercial development while the environment continues to change. Each of these changes needs to be considered as the Town maintains and improves existing infrastructure.

Recommended Actions:

The following actions should be taken to ensure that the Town’s infrastructure is ready to meet upcoming challenges:

3.1 Transportation Infrastructure

Assessment. The Town should conduct comprehensive evaluation of transportation infrastructure under normal and emergency conditions to ensure reliable access for residents and visitors. This assessment should prioritize roadway capacity for stormwater management during major storms, building upon KICA’s Adaptive Management Plan Task Force work to identify flood-prone areas and environmental vulnerabilities. The evaluation should include alternative emergency uses of the existing leisure trail network and assess expanding trail connectivity to Betsy Kerrison Parkway, which would provide Johns Island access and potential traffic congestion relief.

3.2. Utility Infrastructure Assessment.

Evaluate the capacity, resilience,

and lifespan of all utility systems by reviewing their storm performance and working with providers to encourage comprehensive stress testing. This assessment should include requesting that Berkeley Electric share shutdown and restoration plans with residents while developing coordinated drought response strategies with Kiawah Island Utility and Seabrook Island Utility to address evolving water security challenges.

3.3. Facility Adaptation and Optimization.

As Kiawah approaches full build-out with limited opportunities for new property acquisition, the Town must creatively adapt existing facilities to support population growth and emerging technologies. This approach requires maximizing current space through alternative uses and strategic partnerships while working with stakeholders to strategically locate EV charging infrastructure. These adaptive approaches will ensure continued community accessibility and safety despite existing physical constraints.

4. Resiliency

Vision: Fostering and proactively continuing Kiawah’s 50-year commitment to design and development in harmony with nature requires prioritizing resilience in the face of development growth and environmental change. The focus on resilience needs to foster community adaptation while protecting Kiawah’s long-term health, safety, essential services, and infrastructure.

Context: Kiawah has faced environmental challenges in the past, and these issues are likely to become more pronounced during the next decade. Kiawah’s future resilience plans should consider several critical factors to prepare for these potential future changes.

Kiawah Initiatives: Kiawah Initiatives: Kiawah’s Living with Nature approach addresses nature-based environmental initiatives through existing actions and ongoing efforts in coastal and marsh resilience as well as stormwater management, flooding mitigation, and water quality improvement.

Sea level rise: Sea-level rise represents a significant long-term challenge. Based on data available from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, sea levels in the Charleston area have risen ten inches since 1950. The rate has accelerated over the past decade, with projections showing continued increases of approximately one inch every two years.

Nuisance flooding: Nuisance flooding presents another ongoing concern. Severe storms have caused nuisance flooding across Kiawah, restricting community

access while affecting utilities and critical infrastructure.

Kiawah and Coastal Engagement: Kiawah maintains existing partnerships and alliances with surrounding jurisdictions to monitor and address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Through these collaborative relationships, the Town has monitored and implemented successful strategies that other coastal communities have subsequently adopted.

Recommended Actions:

4.1. Explore the need for a Chief Resiliency Officer role and function to bring all resiliency committees and reporting departments under one office to coordinate resilience-related efforts.

The Resiliency Committee to determine the need for a consolidated Resiliency Plan. This position would work with the Resiliency Committee to determine the need for a consolidated Resilience Plan for the Town that addresses all aspects of resilience, including development, housing, infrastructure, and emergency management, while incorporating current and updated versions of existing plans such as the Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan, Flood Mitigation and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan, and Stormwater Management Plan.

This comprehensive plan will address how the Town can monitor changing environmental conditions to determine the need for new initiatives, create frameworks for collaboration with stakeholders on projects and programs that mitigate damage from severe rain

events, establish resilience efforts as a dedicated budget line item, and explore funding opportunities at all governmental levels to implement resilience initiatives

These collaborative efforts include implementing rain gardens, rain barrels, living shorelines, and pervious surfaces to address stormwater management challenges.

4.2. Develop an ongoing, comprehensive, and collaborative community-awareness program that involves key community stakeholders, including the Town, KICA, KIGR, KIC, Charleston County, and the Kiawah Conservancy.

This program should utilize a wide range of media to reach diverse audiences through streamed content, social media, printed materials, and podcasts while considering the establishment of an Ecotourism Plan to promote Kiawah’s healthy and extensive natural ecosystem and rich wildlife population.

The program should include resilience questions in Town surveys to identify awareness gaps and focus areas, identify additional areas where the community can concentrate on resilience issues, and monitor the effectiveness of education and awareness programs while adapting as necessary to increase impact.

4.3. Integrate cultural resource resilience: Incorporate historic preservation into resilience planning through identifying and protecting culturally significant sites that may be vulnerable to environmental changes.

- 01 vision**
- 02 process**
- 03 comprehensive plan elements**

kiawahnext

part III: elements

What Is A Comprehensive Plan?

The Town of Kiawah Island adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1994. South Carolina State Law § 6-29-510 requires Planning Commissions to review comprehensive plans at least every five years to determine whether changes in development patterns, community needs, or other factors necessitate plan updates or amendments.

The Town most recently updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2020. This document incorporates all required planning elements and fully complies with South Carolina State Law § 6-29-510 through the following components:

Governance Structure: This element addresses municipal governance structure and processes. While not required by state law, the Town has included this element due to Kiawah’s unique dual governance model with KICA

Population: Considers historic trends and projections, household numbers and sizes, educational levels, and income characteristics.

Economic Development: Considers labor force and labor force characteristics, employment by place of work and residence, and analysis of the economic base.

Natural Resources: Considers coastal resources, slope characteristics, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, parks and recreation areas, scenic views and sites, wetlands, and soil types.

Cultural Resources: Considers historic buildings and structures, commercial districts, residential districts, unique, natural,

or scenic resources, archaeological sites, and other cultural resources.

Community Facilities: Considers water supply, treatment, and distribution; sewage systems and wastewater treatment; solid waste collection and disposal; fire protection; emergency medical services and general government facilities; education facilities; and libraries and other facilities.

Housing: Considers location, types, age, and condition of housing; owner and renter occupancy; and affordability of housing.

Land Use: 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 areas.

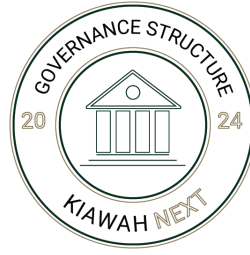
Transportation: Considers transportation facilities, including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network.

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

Resiliency: 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.

PROCESS

KiawahNext adapts the required elements to Kiawah's Vision:



Display and communicate the processes of unique Town and governance.



Understand the diverse populations of Kiawah today and tomorrow.



Analyze trends for the success and prosperity of all Kiawah stakeholders.



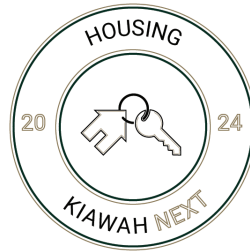
Preserve Kiawah's greatest natural assets and habitat.



Amplify and celebrate Kiawah's unique cultures, customs and heritage.



Maintain and improve Kiawah's world-class amenities, utilities, and services.



Continue Kiawah's excellent reputation as a vibrant coastal village.



Identify and promote strategies for smart, sustainable, and controlled development.



Provide safe mobility options for Kiawah residents, workers and guests.



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



Protecting all Kiawah residents and stakeholders from environmental impacts.

processnext

The KiawahNext Comprehensive Plan was developed through extensive community engagement. The planning process included input from homeowners, seasonal residents, workers, business owners, and visitors, all of whom have an interest in Kiawah's continued success and prosperity.

Overview

The development of the KiawahNext Comprehensive Plan was a two-and-a-half-year collaborative effort that began in early 2023. As documented in the acknowledgments, this planning process was managed by Town staff, steered by the Planning Commission and former Planning Commissioners, and guided by input from Kiawah residents and stakeholders.

KiawahNext replaces the Town's 2015 Comprehensive Plan and its 2019 amendments. This plan synthesizes recent studies, research, and recommendations from various planning documents to create a unified strategic framework for municipal decision-making through 2035.

Recognizing Kiawah's diverse community composition, the Town conducted both in-person and digital engagement activities to gather input from homeowners, seasonal residents, workers, business owners, and visitors. This multi-channel approach was essential given that approximately 71 percent of property owners live elsewhere as their primary residence, creating the need for flexible engagement opportunities that could reach both year-round and seasonal populations.

Project Inputs

The engagement process was designed to reach Kiawah's dispersed population and capture viewpoints from all community segments. The KiawahNext website served as the central information hub throughout the planning process, hosting surveys, project updates, and background materials for public review.

The digital survey became the most far-reaching engagement tool, with the project website attracting 2,832 unique visitors and generating 847 individual survey responses totaling 10,511 question responses. This represented one of the most comprehensive community input processes in the Town's planning history, capturing perspectives from the full spectrum of Kiawah's population including full-time residents, part-time property owners, seasonal visitors, and the local workforce.

The input gathered through these multiple channels informed the development of the four strategic priorities and implementation recommendations that form the foundation of the KiawahNext Plan.

Community Response

From February through July 2023, the KiawahNext planning team conducted community engagement activities through both in-person and digital formats. This section documents responses to digital and in-person surveys and presents examples of community input regarding goals and aspirations for Kiawah’s future.

was the most far reaching of the engagement opportunities and provided the planning team with data on the types of respondents to the survey. The results of these surveys are shown on the subsequent pages.

The project website attracted more than 2,800 unique visitors, with 847 individuals completing the comprehensive survey. This

#2,832

Unique Visitors
to Website

140.7 %

Unique Visitors as a
Percentage of Kiawah’s
2020 census population

3,567

Total Website
Views To-Date

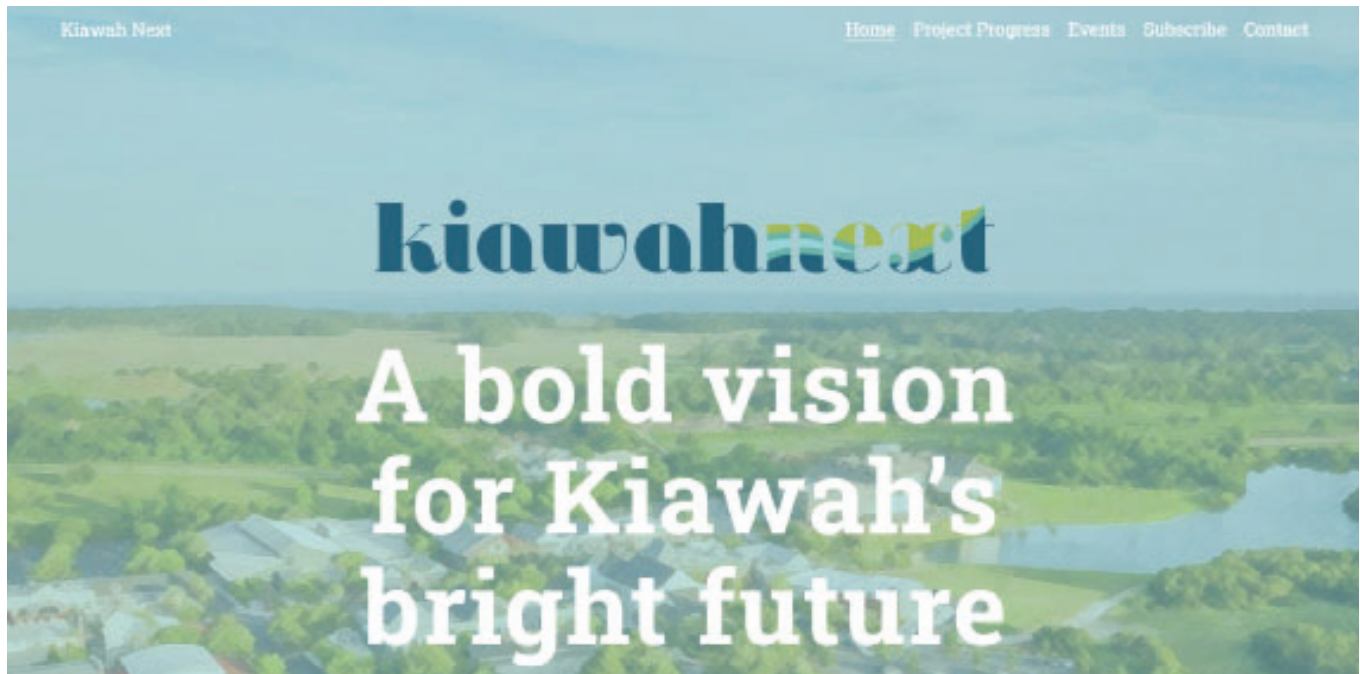
847

Survey Respondents

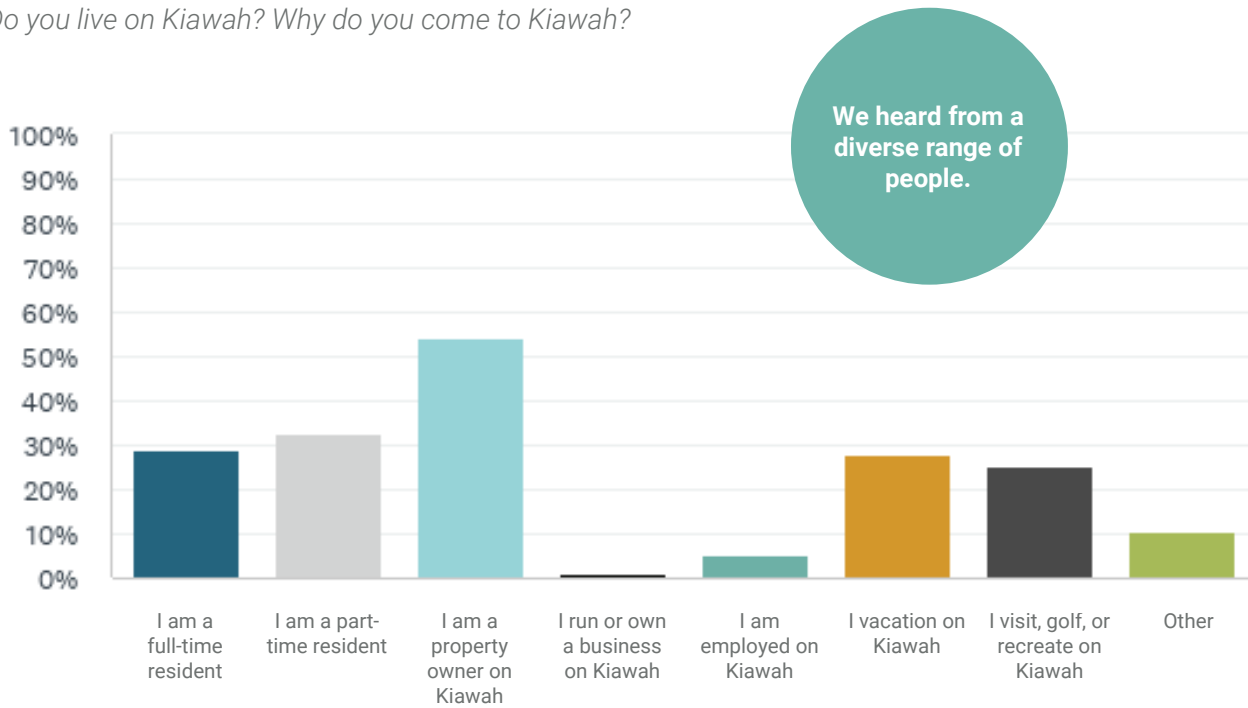
#10,511

Survey Question
Responses

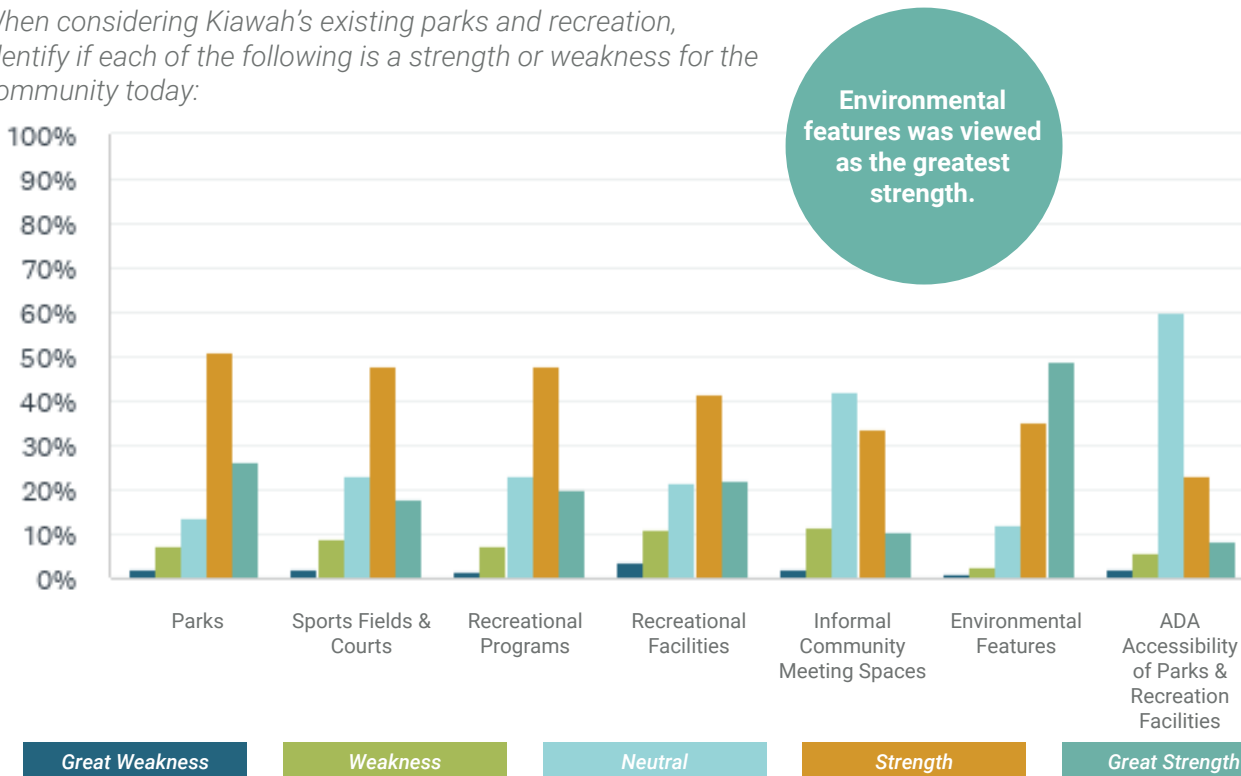
Welcome page to kiawahnext.com for on-line information, surveys, and plan updates.



Do you live on Kiawah? Why do you come to Kiawah?

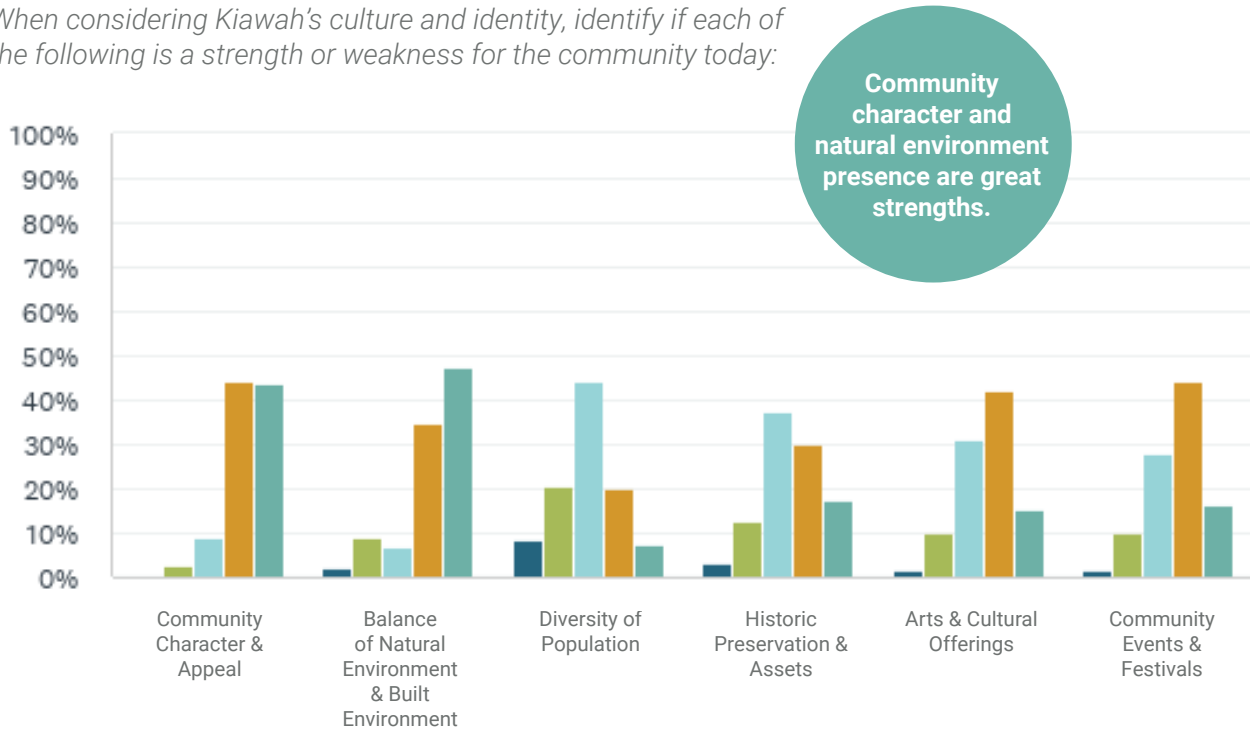


When considering Kiawah's existing parks and recreation, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today:



PROCESS

When considering Kiawah's culture and identity, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today:



Great Weakness

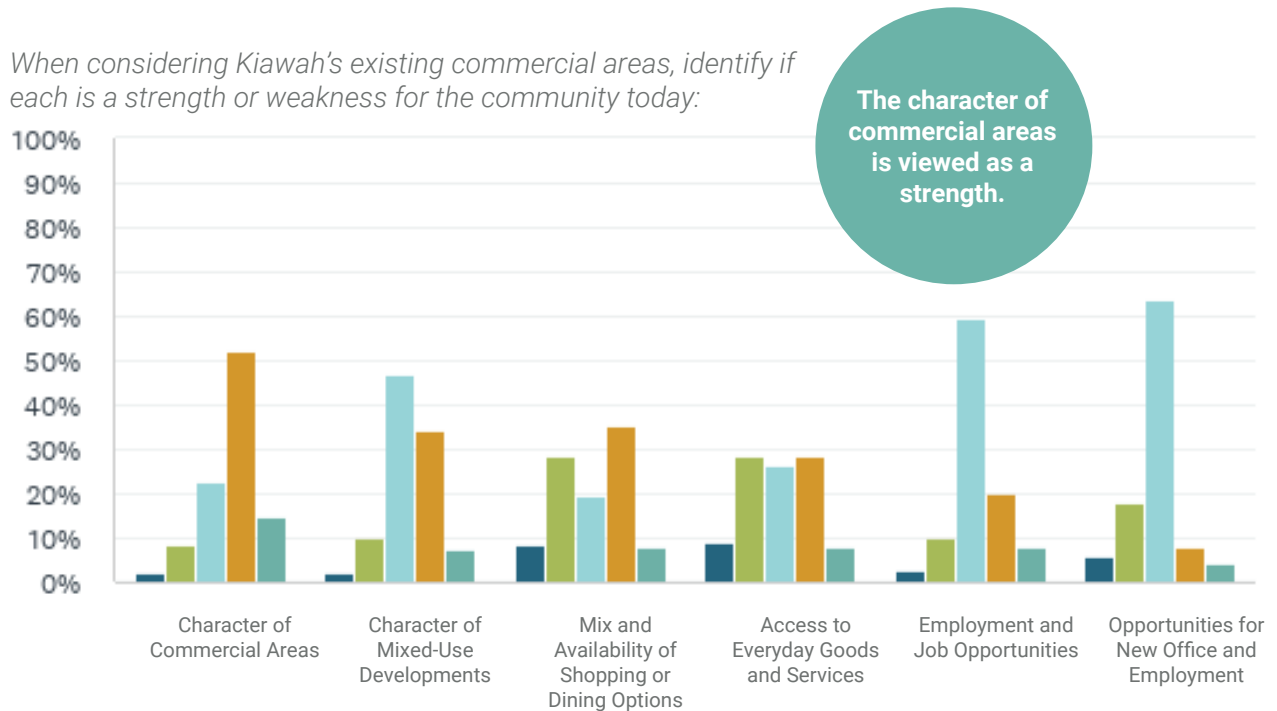
Weakness

Neutral

Strength

Great Strength

When considering Kiawah's existing commercial areas, identify if each is a strength or weakness for the community today:



Great Weakness

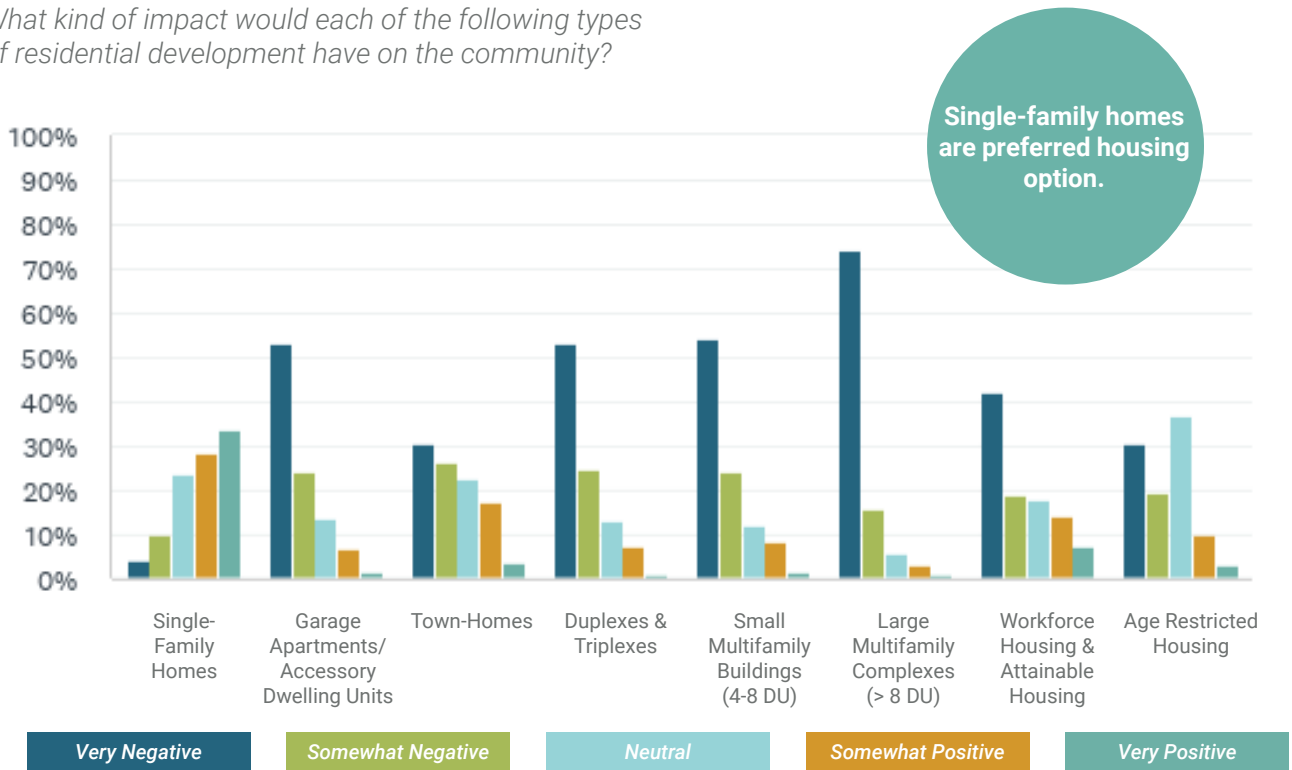
Weakness

Neutral

Strength

Great Strength

What kind of impact would each of the following types of residential development have on the community?

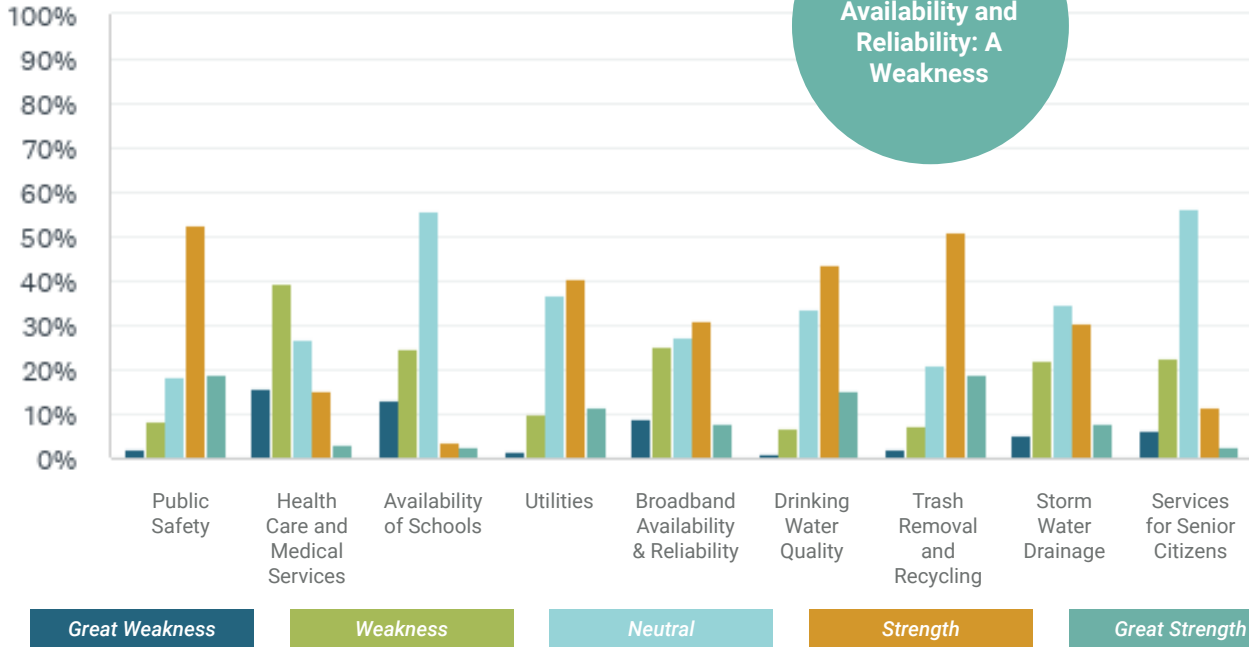


When considering existing housing and residential areas, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for Kiawah today:

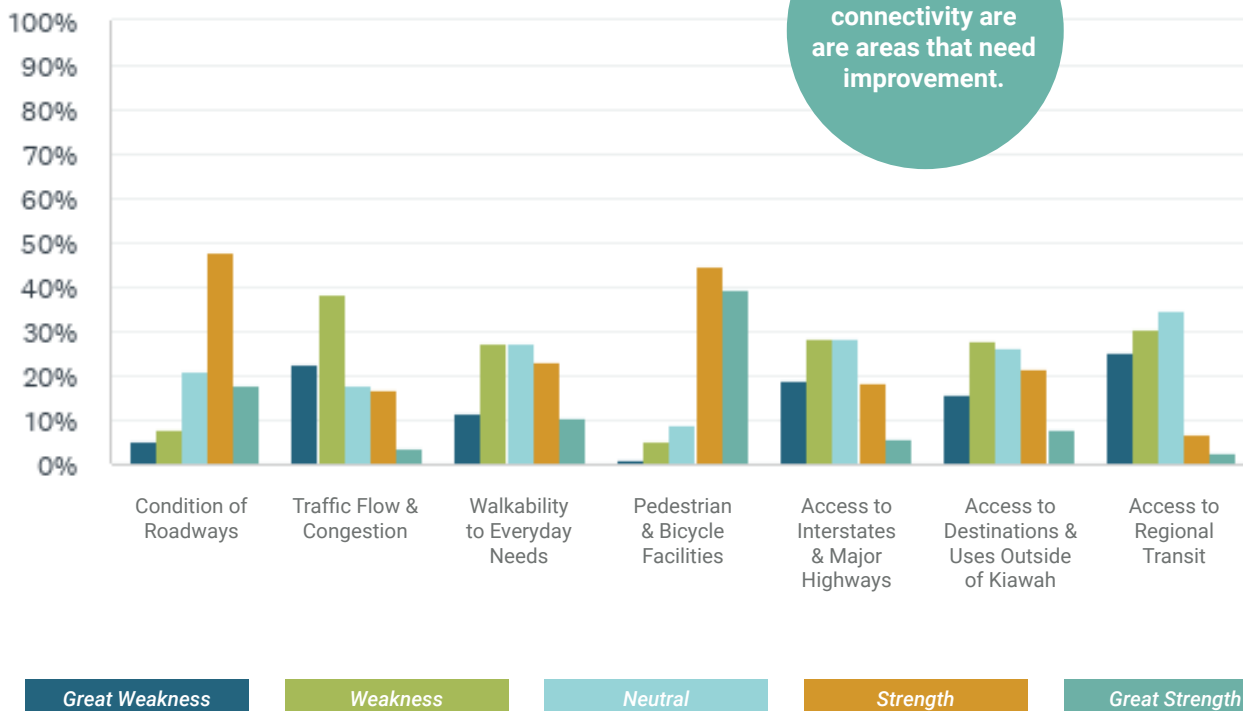


PROCESS

When considering Kiawah's existing community facilities and services, identify if each of the following is currently a strength or weakness:



When considering Kiawah's existing transportation networks, identify if each of the following is a strength or weakness for the community today:



Previous Plans and Efforts

The comprehensive planning process drew upon numerous existing studies, reports, and strategic documents developed by the Town and key stakeholders. The following plans, studies, and efforts were incorporated into the development of KiawahNext:

Town Plans and Efforts

Native Plant Database

An online database of native trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, ferns, and grasses that provides detailed information on growing conditions, size, flowering information, salt tolerance, deer resistance, and the wildlife value for each plant.

The 2020 Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan

This plan serves as a planning and decision-making tool to inform understanding of the past and current state of the beach and guide efforts to maintain and improve its quality.

Bird Research

The Town's biologists conduct research projects involving the Kiawah's diverse bird population. Capturing birds and banding them with unique identifiers provides biologists with insights into the health and demographics of Kiawah's bird population.

White-tailed Deer

Surveys are conducted for two consecutive nights during September and October and again during December and January. The survey route is 18.2 miles long and covers most of Kiawah.

American Alligators

The annual survey covers most of Kiawah's ponds, recording the total number of alligators and estimating their length.

Save Kiawah Bobcats

The Kiawah Bobcat GPS Project is the longest continuous GPS study on bobcats in the world and was developed by the Town in partnership with the Kiawah Conservancy in 2007.

Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan

This plan is envisioned as a living document focusing solely on the marsh ecosystem and integrating various management tools.

Kiawah Island Parkway Traffic Update

The Town collected traffic data and completed intersection and corridor studies in 2022.

Kiawah Island Housing Market Study

The Town engaged HR&A to conduct a market study assessing the long-term health of Kiawah's housing market, completed in August 2020.

Budget at a Glance

The Town's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Town Council adopts an annual budget to allocate funds for the many programs, services, and projects provided for residents and visitors.

Kiawah Goes Green Initiative

This initiative aims to formalize a commitment by Kiawah's major entities, stakeholders, and the community to continue the focus on environmental stewardship, sustainability, and the advancement of eco-friendly public and private practices across Kiawah.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

The risk of severe hurricane effects and



Kiawah’s remote location combine to make hurricanes a double threat to Kiawah and its population.

Flood Mitigation and Sea Level Rise Adaptation

This report identifies ways in which rising seas and changing weather patterns might impact Kiawah, assesses potential vulnerabilities to those changes, and suggests practical actions that Kiawah might take to mitigate vulnerabilities and ensure a prosperous future.

Annexation Policy Plan and Procedures Manual

This plan outlines the process and intent of annexation into the Town.

Kiawah Island Stakeholders Plans and Documents:

Kiawah Conservancy 2030 Strategic Plan

This plan lays a foundation to guide the continued success of Kiawah’s natural beauty and ecological health for generations to come.

Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board Standards and Guidelines

“Designing With Nature”: These guidelines encourage construction with excellent architectural design appropriate to the surroundings, unique climate conditions, and other environmental factors indigenous to Kiawah.

Kiawah Island Property Report

This Kiawah Island Real Estate report documents sales data trends on Kiawah.





West Beach

8b

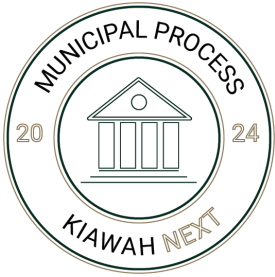
- 01** governance structure
- 02** population
- 03** economic development
- 04** natural resources
- 05** cultural resources
- 06** community facilities
- 07** housing
- 08** land use
- 09** transportation
- 10** priority investments
- 11** resiliency

kiawah**next**

part III: plan elements

A large, leafy tree in the foreground with a building and flags in the background.

01



governance structurenext

Goal: Ensure effective coordination between Kiawah’s governance entities and community partnerships.

Governance Structure

While the State does not require this element, the Town has chosen to include it because of the community’s distinctive governance model. Unlike most municipalities that operate under a single governmental structure, Kiawah functions through a collaborative framework involving the Town and KICA.

Overview

Kiawah operates under a unique governance structure. The Town handles core municipal functions including public safety, planning and zoning, and building services, while KICA serves as the HOA, providing services to its members, managing both security gates, and maintaining community infrastructure and amenities.

Effective cooperation between the Town and KICA is essential to address Kiawah’s key challenges and maintain the community’s quality of life. This collaborative governance model directly impacts decision-making, resource allocation, and community development processes. Understanding how these two entities intersect is critical for successfully implementing the comprehensive plan and ensuring that future Town initiatives align with community needs and aspirations through continued coordination with KICA.

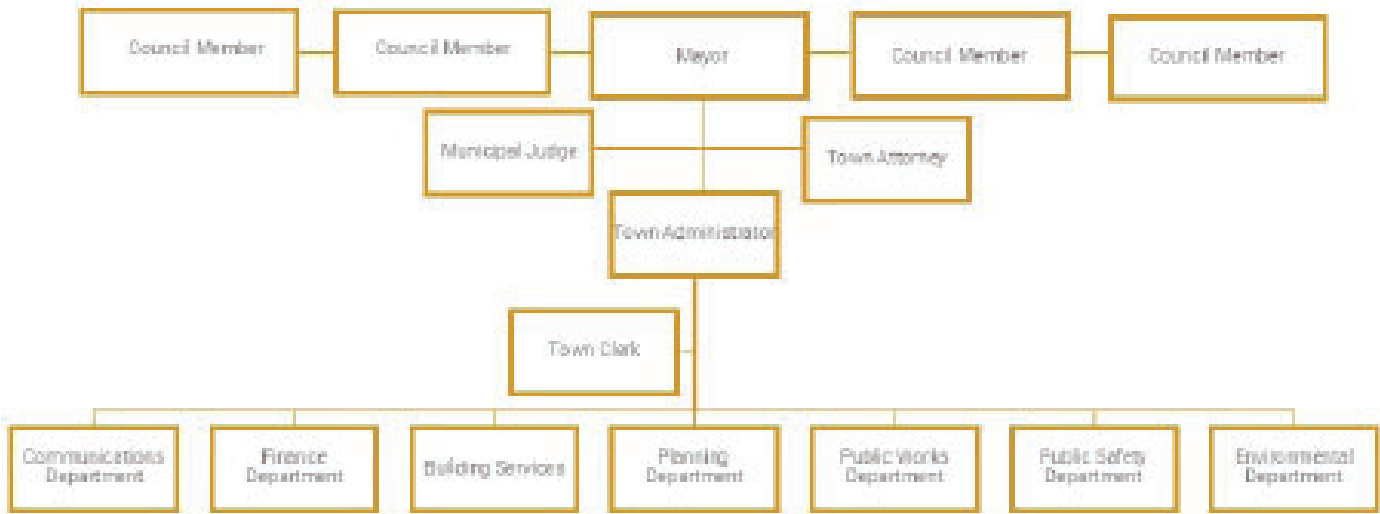
Town Governance Structure

Founded in 1988, the Town operates under the mayor-council form of government. The Town Council, comprising a mayor and four council members, establishes policies that govern the Town’s operations.

The mayor serves as the chief executive, responsible for implementing Council policies and overseeing Town operations. The Town Administrator assists the mayor in managing the Town’s operations.

The Town utilizes both standing and special committees to enhance its governance. These committees review and recommend policies, activities, and ordinances while providing valuable input to the Town Council and supporting informed decision-making.

Town of Kiawah Island Organizational Chart



Town Committees

Public Safety Committee

This committee serves as a coordinator for all public safety-related matters on Kiawah, facilitating collaboration among all public safety entities.

Planning Commission

This committee prepares and updates the comprehensive plan, recommends zoning and land development regulations, and develops capital improvement programs.

Board of Zoning Appeals

This committee oversees administrative review, variances, and special zoning exceptions.

Ways and Means Committee

This committee reviews budget and finance, revenue, accommodations tax, contracts, and procurement.

Arts and Cultural Events Committee

This committee provides diverse cultural

programs for Kiawah residents and visitors.

Environmental Committee

This committee studies, supports, and recommends solutions for environmental issues.

Resiliency Committee

This committee proactively addresses resiliency and sustainability by implementing marsh management and sea-level rise recommendations, supporting ecosystem health, and promoting community engagement.

Landscape and Tree Preservation Board

This committee works to protect Kiawah's natural environment for present and future generations according to established standards.

Infrastructure and Public Works Committee

This committee evaluates and recommends improvements to Town infrastructure, solid waste management, and facility operations..

Kiawah's Unique Governance Model

Kiawah's governance structure sets it apart from traditional communities. Unlike most towns, governance is shared between two primary entities: the Town and KICA. The Town functions as a conventional municipal government, responsible for core public services, policymaking, zoning, building services, beach management, and public safety coordination.

KICA, as the homeowners association, handles many functions that typically fall under municipal purview in other communities. KICA maintains roads and bridges behind the gates, drainage systems, and common areas while operating key amenities and providing security services.

This structure allows for specialized focus and expertise in both municipal affairs and community management. The Town handles overarching governance issues, zoning, building services, beach management, and public safety coordination, while KICA maintains infrastructure behind the gate, operates amenities, and provides essential services like security and landscape maintenance of common areas.

This governance structure requires collaboration to enable Kiawah to maintain high living standards, preserve its natural environment, and address the unique needs of full-time and part-time residents and visitors beyond what a traditional municipal structure alone could achieve. This approach allows for more tailored services, community-driven decision-making, and a balanced approach to development and conservation.

The dual governance model provides multiple avenues for resident involvement through Town Council, KICA board positions, and various commissions and committees, fostering strong community engagement. This structure balances public administration with private community oversight to create a well-managed, environmentally conscious community that serves both residents and visitors.

02





populationnext

Goal: Accommodate projected population growth while preserving Kiawah's character and environmental quality.

Population

Considers historic trends and projections, household numbers and sizes, educational levels, and income characteristics.

Overview

Kiawah's population consists of full-time residents, part-time homeowners, and visitors, including traditional vacationers and emerging day visitors. This composition a dynamic community that expands and contracts seasonally, with pronounced fluctuations during peak tourism periods and holidays.

These natural population rhythms are intensifying as growth is anticipated across all segments over the coming decade. New residential developments outside Kiawah's main gate are contributing to the rise of day visitors as a distinct segment, as these residents gain access to Kiawah amenities through Kiawah Island Golf Resort and Kiawah Island Club. Additionally, Kiawah sits adjacent to Johns Island, whose population

growth rates far exceed Kiawah's, creating additional stress on shared roads and infrastructure that serve both communities.

This unique and evolving demographic composition presents both challenges and opportunities for long-term planning. This Population element examines Kiawah's demographics through historical trends, current data, and future projections. By understanding the needs and impacts of all population segments, this element seeks to guide future development that serves the entire community while preserving Kiawah's natural beauty and quality of life.

Population Growth on Kiawah and Johns Island

Since 2000, Kiawah Island's full-time¹ resident population has grown from 1,163 to 2,066 in 2023, a compound annual growth rate of 2.4 percent. Kiawah's population grew significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic as many people sought less densely populated areas with natural amenities.

In addition to full-time residents, approximately 7,000 part-time² residents who own second homes or vacation properties maintain seasonal residence on Kiawah. These residents significantly impact Kiawah's character and economy, especially during peak seasons.

This blend of full-time and part-time residents underscores Kiawah's attractiveness as both a primary and second-home community while presenting unique challenges for long-term planning and resource allocation.

Nearby Johns Island has experienced even more rapid growth. Its population increased from 8,607 in 2000 to 24,874 in 2023, a compound annual growth rate of 4.72 percent.

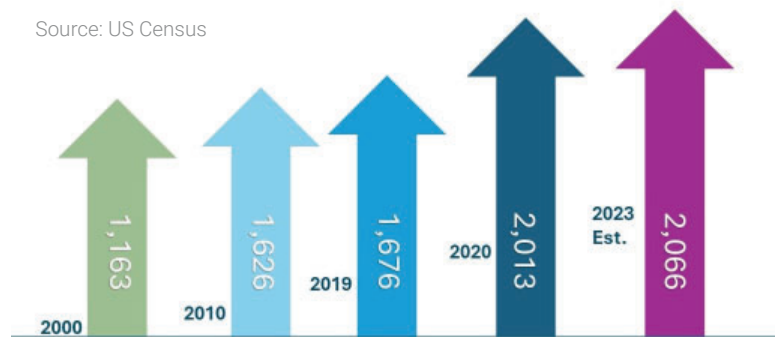
The combined growth patterns of Kiawah and Johns Island emphasize the need for coordinated regional planning to manage development sustainably while preserving the area's unique character and quality of life. Transportation infrastructure demands particular attention, requiring

close collaboration between Charleston County, the City of Charleston, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to address increasing traffic volumes and ensure safe, efficient mobility throughout the area. This multi-jurisdictional approach to traffic management and infrastructure planning is essential for implementing cohesive solutions that serve year-round residents and seasonal visitors.

collaboration between Charleston County, the City of Charleston, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to address increasing traffic volumes and ensure safe, efficient mobility throughout the area. This multi-jurisdictional approach to traffic management and infrastructure planning is essential for implementing cohesive solutions that serve both year-round residents and seasonal visitors.

Population Growth, Town of Kiawah Island, 2000-2023

Source: US Census



¹ Full-time residents:

Individuals who meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Registered to vote in South Carolina and Municipal Elections with Kiawah Island as their address
- Claim Kiawah Island as their primary residence for tax purposes
- Spend more than 183 days per year on Kiawah Island
- Hold a South Carolina driver's license with a Kiawah Island address

² Part-time residents:

Property owners on Kiawah Island who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Spend less than 183 days per year on Kiawah Island
- Have a primary residence elsewhere for tax purposes
- Are not registered to vote in South Carolina and Municipal Elections
- Are captured by the census as having a secondary residence on Kiawah Island

Kiawah's Population Profile

Kiawah is experiencing a demographic shift that will influence long-range planning as its full-time resident population ages in place. The median age has risen dramatically from 63.5 years in 2010 to 68.3 years in 2023, and projections indicate it will surpass 70 years within the next five years. Nearly half of all full-time residents (44.3 percent) are now between ages 65 and 74, underscoring the extent of this demographic transformation according to U.S. Census Bureau data from the decennial Census and American Community Survey.

This aging trend among full-time residents highlights the need for age-friendly infrastructure and services, including healthcare facilities and tailored recreational and cultural amenities. The Town should explore initiatives that enhance the quality of life for older adults, such as implementing shared transit options to improve mobility around Kiawah.

Kiawah exhibits a unique multigenerational dynamic that influences its character and planning needs. While the full-time resident population tends to be older, Kiawah's appeal as a premier vacation destination attracts visitors of various ages throughout the year.

This diverse visitor³ profile includes families with young children on summer beach vacations, young professionals seeking luxury getaways, groups on golf and tennis retreats, retirees exploring potential retirement locations, and multigenerational family groups gathering for reunions or holidays. Day visitors include off-island Kiawah Island Club or KIGR Governor's Club

members who have access privileges to the island.

The interplay between the older resident population and the diverse age range of visitors creates a dynamic environment that requires flexible comprehensive planning. This dynamic may lead to increased demand for amenities and services that cater to a broader range of needs and preferences.

To address these varied demographics, Kiawah benefits from versatile community spaces that serve multiple purposes. Freshfields Village and the proposed Andell West are examples of developments that foster a vibrant community atmosphere while encourage intergenerational interaction. These areas combine residential, commercial, and recreational elements that cater to diverse needs.

The Town's approach to land use planning should aim to create a balanced, dynamic, and vibrant community that addresses the needs of its aging full-time population and the more diverse part-time and visitor demographics. Strategic planning should prioritize age-friendly infrastructure, world-class amenities, enhanced connectivity, and regional collaboration to support the well-being and quality of life for all who enjoy Kiawah now and in the future.

Kiawah's Household and Regional Impacts

Kiawah's residential landscape has experienced moderate growth over the past decade. According to the U.S. Census, the number of households on the island increased from 869 in 2010 to 1,133 in 2023, representing an annual growth rate of about

³ Visitors:

Individuals staying on Kiawah Island for a limited time (e.g., less than 30 consecutive days) who do not own property on the island. This category includes short-term renters and guests of residents.

2.1 percent. One and two-person households overwhelmingly dominate Kiawah’s residential population, accounting for more than 90% of all households. This pattern aligns with the island’s appeal to retirees and empty nesters.

These figures represent only full-time resident households. Kiawah’s housing is also influenced by part-time property owners, who comprise more than three-quarters of Kiawah’s property owners. This mix of full-time and part-time residents has implications for community services, infrastructure usage, and economic patterns. During peak seasons, Kiawah experiences a significant population influx, temporarily altering its household composition and service demands.

According to the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Johns Island grew more rapidly than Kiawah between 2010 and 2023, adding 4,372 households at an annual rate of 4.3 percent. This increase significantly impacts Kiawah by putting pressure on shared resources, including the single access road, beaches, resort amenities, and Freshfields Village.

Kiawah’s residential composition continues to evolve, notably with the scheduled fall 2025 opening of Seafields. This development will offer 106 units, including 90 independent living units and 16 assisted living units. Seafields and the adjacent planned MUSC healthcare facility are located off the island but within the Town limits, adding new dimensions to the area’s service needs.

These developments, both on and off the island, are critical to Kiawah’s future planning. Given Kiawah’s unique geography as a barrier island with limited access, the Town needs to carefully manage existing

infrastructure and services to handle fluctuating demands. This management includes strategic planning for traffic on the single access road, especially during peak seasons and events.

For off-island areas within Town limits, coordinated planning is essential to ensure that services and amenities can effectively serve both year-round residents and seasonal visitors while minimizing the impact on the island’s limited access points. Moreover, sustainable management of these changes requires stronger regional coordination.

By adapting to these dynamics, Kiawah can evolve mindfully, maintaining its unique appeal while meeting the diverse needs of current and future residents.

Household Income Comparison*

Understanding the economic context of a community within its region is an important aspect of comprehensive planning. The following data is based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2022 five-year estimates, providing the most current official information available:

Median Household Income Median household income varies significantly across the region. The Town of Kiawah Island reports \$214,250, compared to Johns Island at \$103,902, Charleston County at \$80,401, and the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area at \$77,460.

These figures offer a snapshot of the economic landscape across the region. Kiawah’s median household income is higher than the surrounding areas, reflecting its unique position within the local economy

Additional economic indicators for Kiawah include a per capita income of \$197,853 and a median home value of \$1,423,900.

For context, Charleston County has a per capita income of \$52,484, and the Johns Island Census County Division reports a per capita income of \$50,833.

While income is just one aspect of a community's economic profile, this comparison provides valuable insight into Kiawah's economic standing within the broader Charleston area.

**Note: Data reflects full-time residents only.*

03





economic developmentnext

Goal: Support the continued vitality of Town's economic ecosystem

Economic Development

Considers labor force and labor force characteristics, employment by place of work and residence, and analysis of the economic base.

Overview

The Town operates a economic model that integrates tourism, residential development, and resort operations into a cohesive and financially robust system. The economy is primarily driven by tourism and service industries, which generate significant revenue and employment opportunities for an estimated 6,500 jobs across all sectors, though employment patterns fluctuate seasonally.

Kiawah's transformation from a primarily seasonal destination to a year-round economic engine reflects its evolution as both a vacation destination and a residential community. Kiawah's appeal attracts visitors who support local businesses and generate regional revenue through accommodations taxes, hospitality spending, and retail activity. A number of visitors become residents, creating a cycle of economic growth and community investment.

The Town maintains a strong fiscal position with \$17.6 million in annual revenues and substantial reserve funds, all achieved without imposing a municipal property tax on residents. This unique fiscal structure, combined with \$96 million in property taxes to Charleston County, underscores the Kiawah's economic impact on the broader region.

This section examines the Town's economic vitality by analyzing trends in tourism taxes, employment growth, and fiscal management. It highlights Kiawah's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship while ensuring economic development aligns with natural resource preservation. This approach maintains Kiawah's distinctive character while enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors and securing its appeal as a premier residential and vacation destination.

Job and Employer Overview

According to 2023 ESRI estimates, Kiawah directly sustains approximately 6,500 jobs across all employers and sectors. The workforce centers on hospitality, with Accommodations and Food Services comprising nearly half of all positions, followed by Retail Trade at 25 percent. As the island's largest employer, KIGR employs 1,700 people and ranks as the eighth-largest private employer in the Charleston region. Kiawah Island Club is another major employer.

Town Revenue

The Town's revenue comprises unrestricted and restricted funds, each playing a crucial role in the Town's financial landscape. The total budgeted revenue for FY25-26 was \$17.6 million, with restricted funds accounting for 41 percent and unrestricted funds for 59 percent.

Unrestricted Funds: General Fund Revenues (59% of total revenue, \$10.3M)

These funds provide greater flexibility in their use:

1. Business License Fees (41% of unrestricted funds, \$4.2M)
2. Building Permits (15% of unrestricted funds, \$1.6M)
3. Solid Waste Fees (12% of unrestricted funds, \$1.3M)
4. Franchise Fees (10% of unrestricted funds, \$1M)
5. Local Option Tax (10% of unrestricted funds, \$1M)
6. Other unrestricted funds (12% of unrestricted funds, \$1.2M): Including court fines, investment income, and

miscellaneous sources.

Restricted Funds (41% of total revenue, \$7.3M)

These funds must be used for specific tourism-related purposes:

1. State Accommodation Tax (SATAX) (42% of restricted funds, \$3.1M): Overnight visitors on Kiawah pay a 2 percent state accommodation tax. Most of this revenue must be used for tourism-related expenses, except for \$25,000 plus 5 percent of the remaining total, which goes to the Town's unrestricted general fund. The SATAX Committee recommends how to allocate these funds, subject to Town Council approval.
2. Local Accommodation Tax (26% of restricted funds, \$1.9M): The Town imposes a 1 percent local accommodation tax. These funds are restricted to tourism-related expenses, including cultural events and maintaining public beach access roads.
3. County Accommodation Tax (11% of restricted funds, \$780K): Charleston County collects a 2 percent accommodation tax, returning about 25 percent to the Town. This revenue must fund tourism-related capital projects or services.
4. Hospitality Tax (15% of restricted funds, \$1.1M): A 1 percent hospitality tax is applied to prepared food and beverages, collected monthly from restaurants and similar establishments. The revenue must fund tourism-related expenses.
5. Other restricted funds (6% of restricted funds, \$440K).

Usage of Restricted Funds

In FY25-26, these funds supported tourism-related activities and expenditures, including beach patrol, public safety initiatives, arts and cultural events, and marketing and regional tourism promotion.

Source: Town of Kiawah Island, Budget-At-A-Glance FY25-26 Budget

Financial Position and Performance

Based on the Town’s FY24 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, the Town maintains a strong financial position:

Financial Highlights

- Total Assets: \$57.7 million as of June 30, 2024
- Total Liabilities: \$5.4 million
- Net Position: \$53.2 million, with \$29.9 million unrestricted

Revenue Performance

- Total revenues reached \$18.5 million in FY24, the highest level in Town history
- Tourism-driven revenues remain strong:
 - Accommodations taxes generated \$5.2 million
 - Business licenses produced \$4.6 million
 - Building permits contributed \$2.6 million

Fund Balance

The Town’s combined fund balance increased to \$40.9 million. This includes:

- \$7.6 million restricted for tourism-related expenditures
- \$9.4 million committed to capital improvements and emergency recovery

funding

This stable financial foundation allows the Town to continue investing in infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and tourism-related amenities while maintaining the high quality of life that attracts visitors and property owners to Kiawah Island.

No Municipal Property Tax

The Town currently does not impose a municipal property tax. All property taxes paid by residents go directly to Charleston County. Should the Town require additional revenue in the future, a mechanism is in place that would require the support of Kiawah residents.

Kiawah’s Property Tax Impact

The property taxes paid by Kiawah property owners have a substantial impact on the regional economy:

- Kiawah generates over \$96 million in property tax revenues for Charleston County:
 - Sixty-five percent (65%) funds the Charleston County School District Budget.
 - Twenty percent (20%) funds the Charleston County Administration budget.
 - Twelve percent (12%) funds the St. Johns Fire District budget
 - Three percent (3%) funds the Charleston County Parks and Recreation, and Trident Technical College

This substantial contribution underscores Kiawah’s critical role as a major revenue source for Charleston County, with property

tax contributions directly supporting education, public safety, county operations, and community services throughout the region.

Source: Charleston County Treasurer's office, Information based on FY23 Collection Information.

Key Financial Trends and Considerations:

1. **Tourism Recovery:** Tourism-related taxes exhibited moderate growth from 2014 to 2019, declined during the 2020 pandemic, and rebounded strongly in 2021-2023. State accommodation tax revenue increased from a pandemic low of \$1.3 million in 2020 to \$3 million by 2023, indicating a shift toward a more consistent year-round tourism economy.
2. **Business License Fees:** Business license fees have shown steady growth since 2014, rising from \$1.9 million to \$3.9 million in 2022, with only a slight 1.5 percent decline in 2023.
3. **Development Fees:** As Kiawah approaches full development, revenue from new construction permits may decline. However, this decline could be offset by an increase in renovation permits for older structures.

The balanced mix of restricted and unrestricted funds allows the Town to support both tourism-related initiatives and essential municipal services. As Kiawah's development landscape evolves, the Town will need to strategically plan for potential shifts in these revenue streams to ensure long-term fiscal stability..

Source: Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, 2015-2023.

Economic Impact of Tourism on the Town's Economy

Tourism plays a pivotal role in Kiawah's economic development, extending far beyond just tax revenues. Its impact is multifaceted and significant:

1. **Job Creation:** The tourism industry serves as a major employer on Kiawah, with employment trends fluctuating based on seasonal demand patterns.
2. **Business Stimulation:** Tourism supports a vibrant retail sector, which represents about a quarter of all jobs on Kiawah through shops, restaurants, and various service providers that cater to both visitors and residents.
3. **Property Values:** Kiawah's desirability as a vacation destination helps maintain and potentially increase property values, benefiting homeowners and strengthening the local real estate market.
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Tourism revenues help fund infrastructure improvements that benefit both visitors and residents, such as beach maintenance, road improvements, and public facilities.
5. **Regional Impact:** Kiawah's tourism industry contributes significantly to the broader regional economy, generating over \$96 million in property tax revenues for Charleston County that fund county-wide services. The economic impact of tourism in the Charleston area, including Kiawah, has grown from \$7.4 billion in 2018 to \$13.1 billion by 2023. This growth has fueled job creation, infrastructure development, and improved amenities throughout the Charleston region.
6. **Year-Round Economy Shift:** Tourism

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

trends suggest movement toward a more consistent, year-round economy rather than a peak season-focused model.

This transition could lead to more stable employment and business opportunities throughout the year.

Understanding these economic patterns helps the Town support and preserve Kiawah's tourism-based economy while maintaining its unique character. By balancing tourism and resident needs, the Town can better ensure long-term sustainability.

Over the past 25 years, the island has transformed its tourism landscape, evolving from a primarily domestic, seasonal destination to a year-round, internationally recognized luxury resort area.

In the 2000s, Kiawah began gaining greater national recognition as its pristine beaches and world-class golf courses attracted a growing number of visitors.

Hosting major golf tournaments, including the 2012 and 2021 PGA Championships at the Ocean Course and the upcoming 2031 PGA Championship, has elevated Kiawah's reputation as a premier golf destination on the global stage. These events have brought immediate economic benefits while enhancing Kiawah's long-term appeal to high-end travelers.

The opening of The Sanctuary, a five-star oceanfront hotel, in 2004 marked a pivotal moment in Kiawah's tourism development. This luxury property elevated Kiawah's accommodation offerings while helping attract a more affluent clientele. Consequently, the average visitor spending per trip has steadily increased, reaching \$1,062 by 2022, up from \$878 in 2019.

This economic resilience is particularly

evident in the vacation rental market, which has become an important component of Kiawah's accommodations.

From 2019 to 2024, vacation rentals on Kiawah demonstrated fluctuating occupancy rates alongside consistent growth in average daily rates. The data reveals several important trends:

Occupancy rates fluctuated significantly during this period, starting at 52.8 percent in 2019, peaking at 79.0 percent in 2021 during the pandemic, and stabilizing around 62-65 percent in recent years. Average daily rates showed consistent upward movement, growing from \$366 in 2019 to \$511 in 2024, representing a 40 percent increase over the five-year period.

As travel patterns normalized post-pandemic, occupancy settled into a new equilibrium around 62 to 69 percent, but the market's evolution toward premium positioning became clear. Average daily rates continued their upward trajectory, reaching \$499 in 2022 and ultimately \$511 in 2024, despite a temporary pullback to \$482 in 2023. This pricing resilience, even as occupancy moderated from pandemic highs, demonstrates that Kiawah has successfully captured and retained a more affluent guest segment willing to pay premium rates.

Charleston International Airport's growth and development enhance Kiawah's accessibility for domestic and international visitors. The airport's expanding services and routes have improved connectivity to Kiawah while contributing to a diverse tourist base. Ongoing improvements in airport facilities, flight options, and passenger experiences benefit Kiawah's tourism industry by easing travel to Kiawah while potentially extending its marketing reach to new markets.

However, this growth has not occurred

without challenges. Kiawah has had to balance tourism development with environmental conservation while maintaining the natural beauty that attracts visitors in the first place. The Town has implemented various environmental programs and regulations to protect Kiawah ecosystems while accommodating tourism growth.

Beyond environmental concerns, tourism has significantly impacted daily life on Kiawah. Traffic congestion has become a critical issue, particularly during peak seasons. The limited road infrastructure connecting the island to the mainland creates bottlenecks, with travel times from Charleston doubling or tripling during high-volume periods. This infrastructure struggles to handle peak traffic volumes, leading to increased maintenance needs while affecting both visitors and residents.

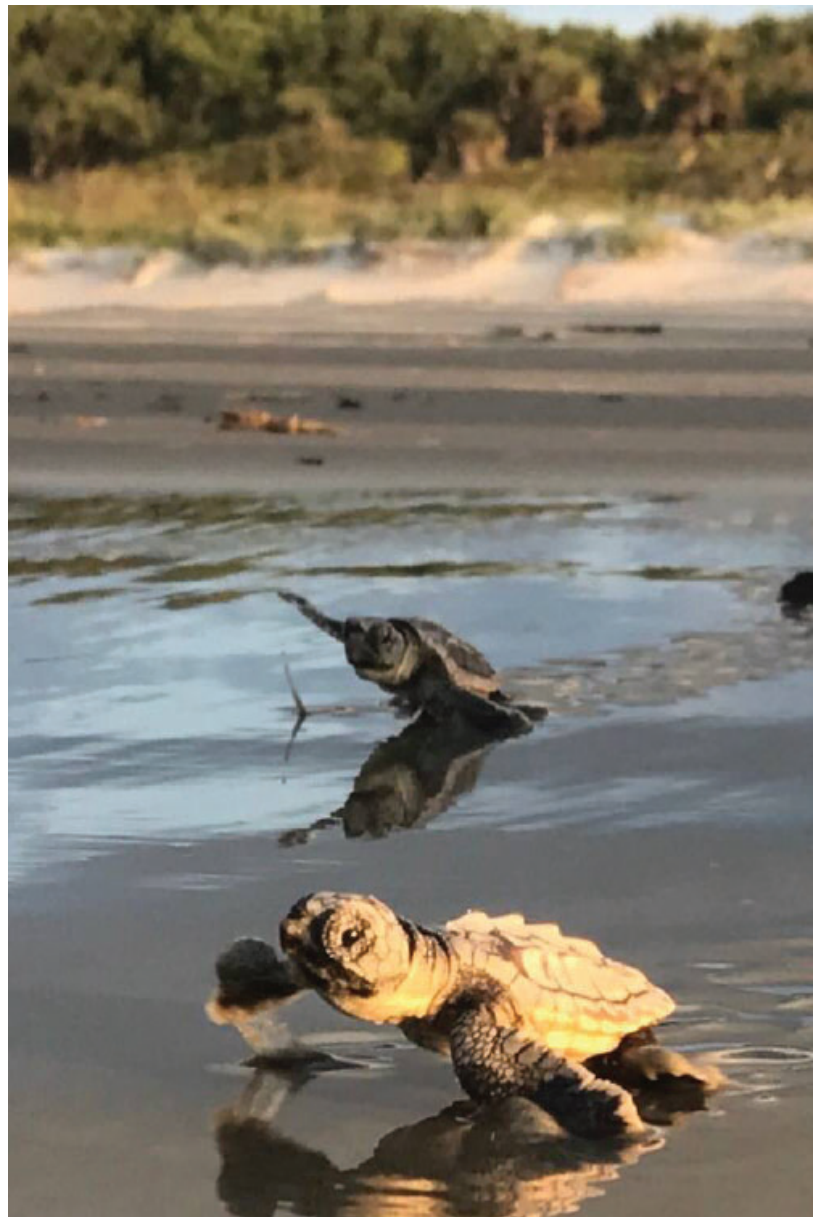
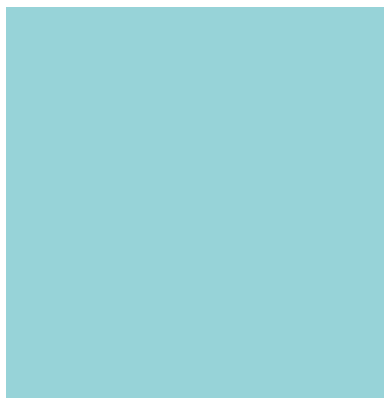
The seasonal nature of tourism has created workforce challenges, as many service industry workers cannot afford housing on or near Kiawah. This situation has resulted in longer commutes for essential staff and occasional workforce shortages during peak periods.

Looking ahead, the Town is focusing on sustainable tourism practices to maximize economic benefits while minimizing environmental, infrastructure, and social impacts. Infrastructure planning now incorporates tourism growth projections, with particular attention to traffic management solutions including potential shuttle services during major events and expanded public transportation options.

Tourism has been a transformative force for Kiawah over the past two decades, driving economic growth, enhancing the island's global reputation, and contributing

to infrastructure and service improvements. The strong performance of the vacation rental market, particularly its resilience during and after the pandemic, underscores Kiawah's appeal as a high-end destination. As Kiawah continues to evolve, the ongoing challenge will be maintaining its distinctive appeal while adapting to changing travel trends and addressing the needs of both visitors and residents.

Source: Charleston Visitors Bureau, Municipal Quarterly Reports, (1999 - Spring 2024)





natural resourcesnext

Goal: Preserve Kiawah’s greatest natural assets and habitat.

Natural Resources

Considers coastal resources, slope characteristics, prime agricultural and forest land, plant and animal habitats, parks and recreation areas, scenic views and sites, wetlands, and soil types.

Overview

Kiawah spans over 4,500 acres of vibrant tidal salt marsh, ten miles of pristine beachfront, 365 acres of tranquil water surfaces, lush shrub thickets, and expansive maritime forests, standing as a testament to the community’s dedication to preserving this extraordinary environment. With 345 acres of conserved barrier island habitat, the Town demonstrates a steadfast commitment to sustainability.

The guiding principle of Living with Nature, embodies a vision where human presence harmonizes seamlessly with Kiawah’s dynamic ecosystems. This philosophy ensures that island landscapes remain resilient and thriving, even in the face of development pressure and rising sea levels.

Living With Nature

Kiawah has consistently strived to balance development with the preservation of natural landscapes, a commitment dating to the community’s inception in 1974. As Kiawah approaches full development, the focus has evolved from designing with nature to living harmoniously within the established natural environment. This philosophy recognizes that residents are stewards of a unique ecosystem that includes maritime forests, the beach, dunes, wetlands, and diverse wildlife habitats.

Kiawah’s commitment to environmental stewardship manifests in several key ways, including protecting critical habitats that support native species ranging from bobcats to loggerhead turtles as they coexist with human residents. These habitat areas are preserved through collaborative efforts among the Town, KICA, and the Kiawah Conservancy.

Water management plays a crucial role in living with nature on Kiawah. KICA's sophisticated drainage systems and pond network are designed to work in harmony with natural water flow patterns, helping prevent erosion while providing essential habitats for wildlife. Regular monitoring of water quality ensures these systems continue to support both human needs and environmental health.

The Town's comprehensive landscape and tree ordinance represents another vital component of this philosophy. These standards aim to preserve and enhance Kiawah's natural environment while protecting significant trees and forests for present and future generations. The ordinance establishes regulations for tree removal, protection, and mitigation, with special emphasis on specimen trees and grand trees. A dedicated Landscape and Tree Preservation Board reviews and approves tree preservation plans while handling special circumstances regarding tree removal.

Educational initiatives and community programs help residents understand and participate in environmental stewardship. These programs include wildlife education, native plant workshops, and citizen science projects that monitor local species populations. This engagement helps create community-wide understanding of how daily decisions impact the island's ecosystem.

During sea turtle nesting season, regulated beachfront lighting prevents hatchling disorientation. The use of amber LED lights and specialized fixtures demonstrates how simple adaptations can protect wildlife.

Using native species in landscaping is strongly encouraged not only for aesthetic purposes but also to support local

biodiversity and maintain the island's ecological balance. Native plants require less irrigation and maintenance while providing essential habitat and food sources for local wildlife.

Environmental adaptability is integrated into Kiawah's Living with Nature approach. Natural systems, such as maritime forests and dunes, serve as critical infrastructure that help protect the island from storms and changing coastal conditions. This recognition influences decisions about infrastructure maintenance and development.

By implementing these comprehensive measures, Kiawah continues to ensure that its human community coexists harmoniously with Kiawah's wildlife and natural beauty. This approach acknowledges that successful stewardship requires ongoing adaptation and commitment from all community members to preserve Kiawah's unique character and ecological integrity for future generations.

Environmental Stewardship: Conservation Initiatives and Community Participation

The Town implements targeted programs to preserve natural resources and protect wildlife across diverse ecosystems through several initiatives:

- **Marsh Management:** Monitoring and preserving the expansive salt marshes, which is critical for protecting against storm surges while providing habitat for diverse species.
- **Beach and Dune System Protection:** Implementing erosion control and dune restoration projects to safeguard ten miles of beachfront, ensuring it remains

a natural barrier against rising sea levels and extreme weather.

- **Natural Environment Preservation:** Maintaining comprehensive landscape and tree protection ordinances to preserve and enhance Kiawah’s natural character, with special emphasis on specimen trees and grand trees.
- **Wildlife Tracking and Research:** GPS technology and banding to monitor the health and movement of local species, including bobcats, alligators, and sea turtles, to better understand and protect their habitats.
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** Promote sustainable building practices and green infrastructure that minimize environmental impact while preserving Kiawah’s natural character.
- **Grow Native Initiative:** Supporting biodiversity by promoting and preserving native plant species throughout Kiawah, creating sustainable habitats for local wildlife.
- **Wildlife Protection Programs:** Implementing specialized initiatives including Turtle Patrol, Shorebird Stewardship, Marine Mammal Dolphin Strand Feeding, and the Bobcat Guardian Program to safeguard the island’s diverse wildlife populations.
- **Flood Mitigation and Sea Level Rise Adaptation:** Comprehensive studies to address the challenges posed by rising sea levels and increased flooding.

Public engagement is at the heart of the conservation mission. Kiawah offers numerous ways to connect with our natural heritage. Residents and visitors can visit the Nature Center at Night Heron Park to learn

about local wildlife and witness the unique phenomenon of dolphin strand feeding.

Virtual resources and interactive initiatives ensure everyone stays informed and involved, fostering a profound connection with Kiawah’s unique ecosystem.

Grow Native Plant Database

The Town is dedicated to educating property owners about Kiawah’s natural resources. The Grow Native Plant Database serves as an invaluable resource for residents and property owners, providing detailed information on native plant species that promote healthy and sustainable habitat unique to Kiawah. This resource provides guidelines for selecting native plants that enhance biodiversity and support local wildlife.

Additionally, the Kiawah Conservancy contributes to the database by offering practical advice on sustainable landscaping practices. The Conservancy provides resources for creating rain gardens designed to capture and filter stormwater runoff, promote water conservation, and reduce erosion. These gardens help maintain the island’s natural beauty and ecological balance.

For more information, visit kiawahisland.gov.

Wildlife Research and Monitoring

The wildlife of Kiawah plays a critical role in the health of the fragile ecosystems cherished by residents and visitors. To protect these habitats, Town biologists must consistently understand and monitor the species on Kiawah.

Bird Research

The Town’s Bird Research program is a comprehensive initiative to understand and protect Kiawah’s diverse avian population. Town biologists conduct various projects, with bird banding serving as a primary research tool. This technique involves capturing birds and attaching unique identifiers, to provide crucial insights into the health, demographics, and movements of different species.

Key components of the program include the following research activities:

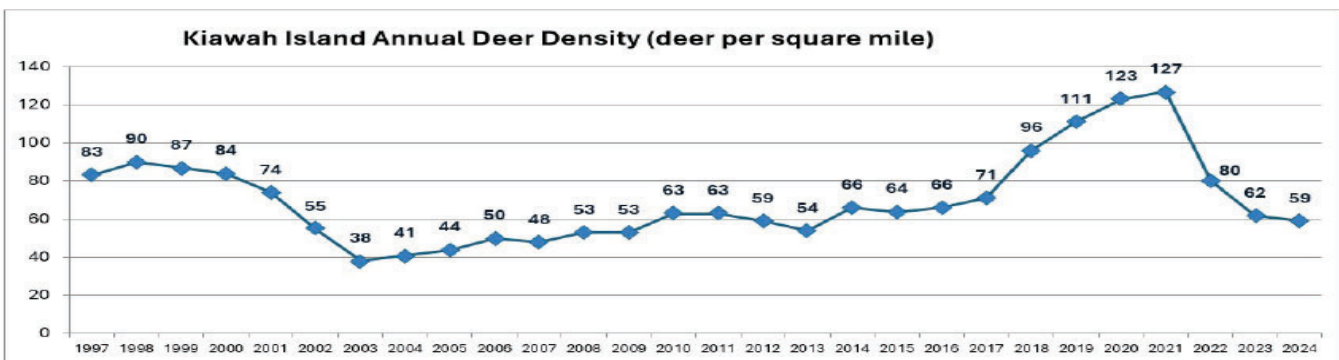
1. Fall Migration Monitoring: Daily banding from August 15 to November 30 at two locations to study songbirds during migration.
2. Winter Banding: Conducted from December through March, focusing on wintering songbird populations, especially Yellow-rumped Warblers.

3. Painted Bunting Banding: A summer project studying these colorful birds’ movements, distribution, and population trends.
4. Marsh Sparrow Banding: This winter project focuses on three species of coastal sparrows while addressing conservation concerns related to habitat loss and sea-level rise.
5. Wilson’s Plover Banding: Tracks movements and nesting success of this beach-nesting species.
6. MOTUS Bird Tracking: Two stations on Kiawah are part of a larger network that uses radio telemetry to track tagged birds, providing data on migratory routes and movements.

These research efforts contribute valuable data to local and national bird conservation initiatives while helping protect avian biodiversity.

White-tailed Deer

Surveys of white-tailed deer population density on Kiawah have been conducted twice yearly since 1997. With the decline of natural predators like bobcats, maintaining the deer population at a target level of 60 to 80 deer per square mile has become crucial. To address this challenge, a deer harvest program was initiated in 2021. This measure



Source: “Wildlife Surveys and Monitoring”, Town of Kiawah Island

is essential for preventing the disruption of Kiawah’s vital habitats, which can occur when deer populations exceed sustainable levels.

Bobcats

The Town Bobcat GPS Project represents a continuous tracking effort started in 2007 by the Town and the Kiawah Conservancy. Five juvenile bobcats wore GPS collars during the 2024 trapping season. This information is used to protect key habitat areas where bobcats are located, which specifically include Captain Sam’s Spit and the eastern portion of Cougar Island. Generally, bobcats use scrub-shrub, forest, and developed areas for hunting while utilizing scrub-shrub and dunes for resting. Bobcat populations since 2017, attributed to second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide poisoning. Public awareness efforts have been implemented to eliminate the use of this deadly rodenticide.

American Alligators

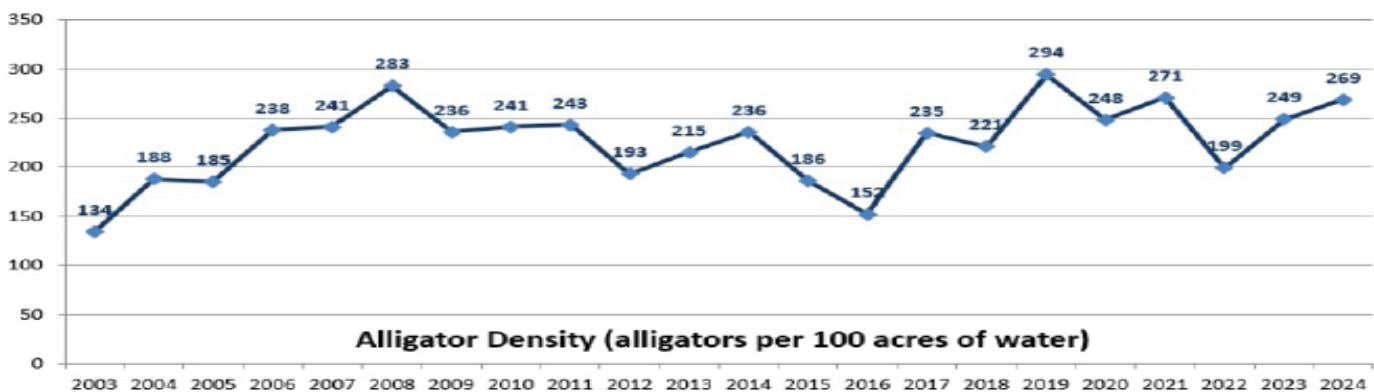
Kiawah is home to a thriving population of American alligators, with estimates suggesting nearly 700 animals inhabiting Kiawah. This significant alligator presence coexists with permanent residents and visitors, creating a unique environment where human-alligator interactions are commonplace.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining safe coexistence, the Town and KICA have implemented a comprehensive research program. This initiative aims to gain better understanding of alligator behavior and movements, thereby enhancing awareness and safety across Kiawah.

A key component of this program is the annual survey of alligators across most of Kiawah’s ponds. These surveys provide crucial data on population density and distribution while helping officials make informed decisions about alligator management.

The research not only contributes to local safety measures but also adds valuable information to the broader understanding of alligator ecology in human-populated areas. By closely monitoring the alligator population and studying their patterns, Kiawah Island continues to set an example for responsible wildlife management in residential communities.

Through these efforts, the Town and KICA strive to ensure that interactions between people and alligators remain as safe as possible while preserving the island’s unique ecological balance and protecting residents and visitors.



Source: "Wildlife Surveys and Monitoring", Town of Kiawah Island

Turtle Patrol

Kiawah is home to extensive loggerhead turtle habitat. With over ten miles of beachfront, Kiawah serves as a vital nesting ground for endangered turtles. The nesting process is especially vulnerable, as turtles emerge from the Atlantic Ocean each spring to nest. Kiawah’s Turtle Patrol, one of the largest turtle patrol volunteer programs in the United States, has monitored these nests since 1973. The Town has supported this group of residents and non-resident volunteers since 1990.

Historically, Kiawah’s beaches have been home to 20 to 25 nests per mile, ranking among the highest in the state for developed beaches. The highest recorded total occurred in 2019, when 574 nests were identified.

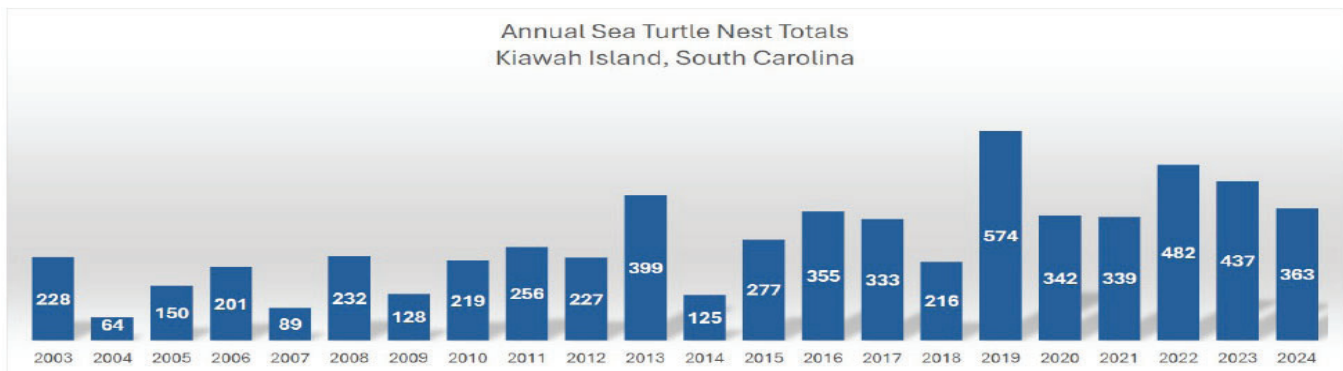
Low-lying nests are relocated to protect against tidal overwash. Volunteers patrol the beach daily during hatching season, monitoring the emergence of hatchlings. After hatching, nests are excavated and inventoried. Detailed records of all activities are reported annually to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Shorebird Stewardship Program

Kiawah’s beaches serve as critical habitat for thousands of shorebirds throughout the year, providing essential areas for foraging, nesting, and resting during long migrations. To protect these vital species, the Town established the Shorebird Stewardship Program in 2017 to minimize disturbance during these critical life activities.

The program operates year-round with targeted seasonal initiatives. During spring, from March through May, efforts focus on protecting Red Knots as they make migration stops. Nesting shorebird protection occurs from April through July when species raise their young on Kiawah’s beach. Fall and winter, from September through February, see increased attention focused on migrant populations using Kiawah’s beach as stopover points.

Shorebird populations have declined 70 percent nationally since the 1970s. The program engages beachgoers about habitat needs through trained volunteer stewards while conducting beach patrols, monitoring critical areas, and promoting wildlife-friendly practices such as leashing dogs and avoiding dunes.



Source: "Loggerhead Sea Turtles", *Town of Kiawah Island*

Dolphin Education Program

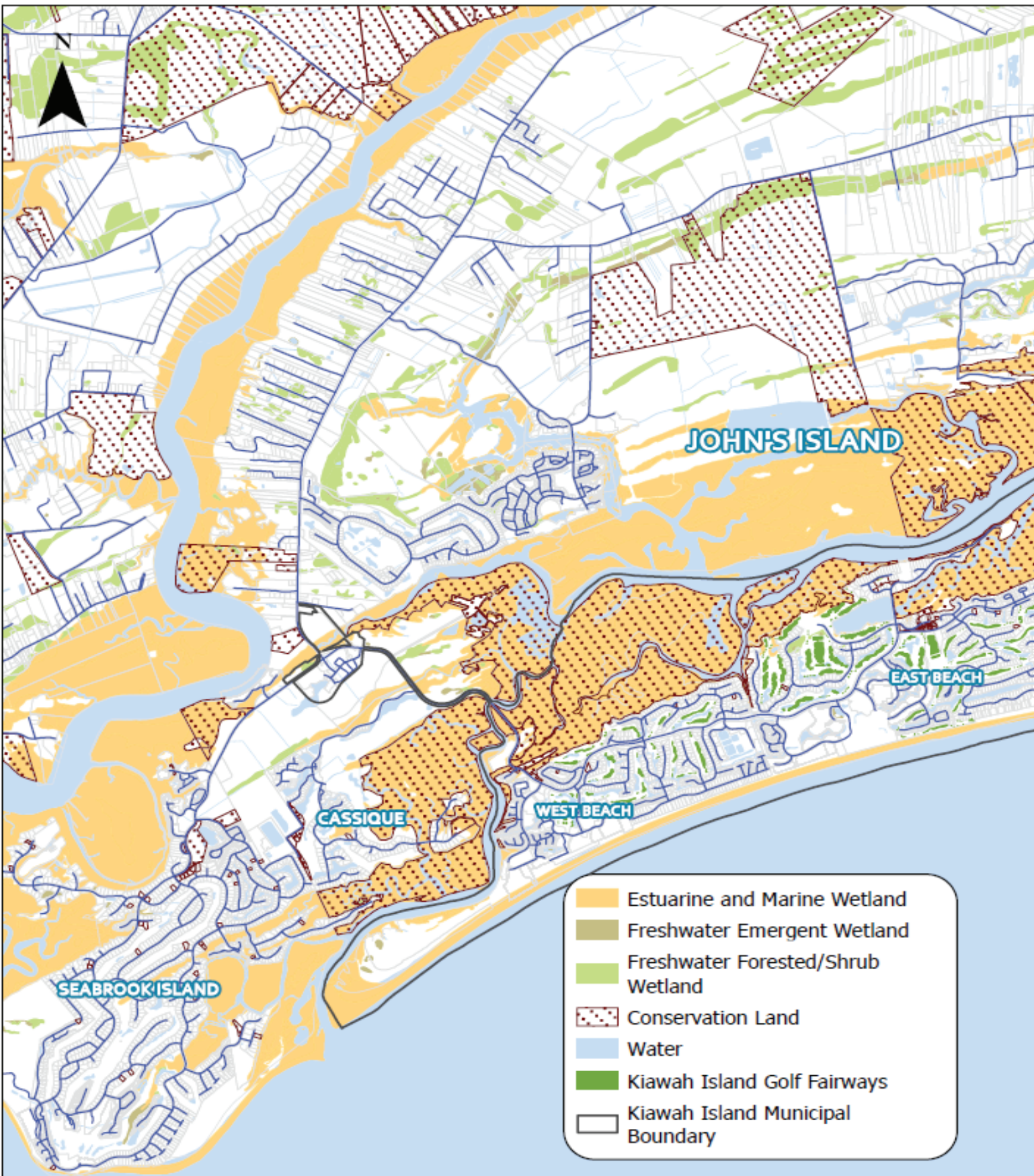
Kiawah is one of few locations in the United States where bottlenose dolphins exhibit strand feeding, a unique hunting behavior where dolphins work together to herd fish onto shore. The Town partners with the Lowcountry Marine Mammal Network to study and protect this rare behavior through a monitoring and education programs.

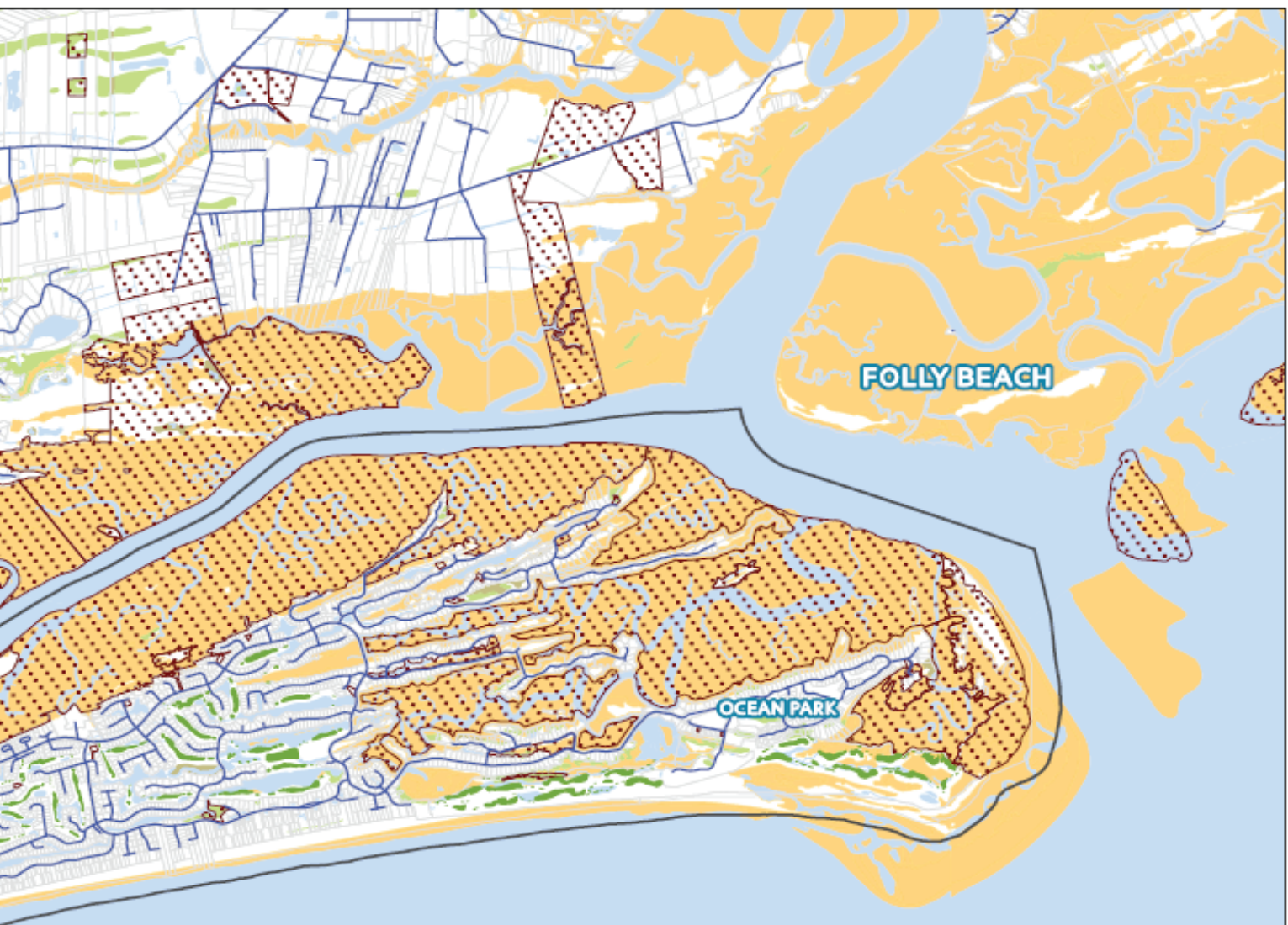
Through this research initiative, twelve individual dolphins have been identified as regular strand feeders in Kiawah’s waters, with some having sighting histories spanning over twenty years. The program has documented critical behaviors, including mothers teaching their young to strand feed while demonstrating the importance of the inlet as essential habitat for the Charleston dolphin population.

The program combines scientific monitoring with public education to prevent harassment while maintaining appropriate viewing distances as mandated by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Trained educators conduct beach monitoring during peak feeding times while engaging with visitors and collecting behavioral data. This

approach has successfully reduced human interference while advancing understanding of this specialized feeding strategy and its conservation needs.







Habitats & Conservation Land

Kiawah Island is rich with diverse habitats, largely comprising a variety of wetlands, including Estuarine and Marine Wetlands, Freshwater Emergent Wetlands, Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands, and Riverine Wetlands. The beach, marsh, and dunes account for the majority of the island's undevelopable land. There are 4,580 acres of Estuarine and Marine Wetlands and 87 acres of Freshwater Wetlands. A total of 3,990 acres are designated as Conservation Lands, with most of these being Estuarine and Marine Wetlands. Kiawah Island's habitat and conservation efforts extend beyond its municipal boundaries, promoting regional ecological health and contributing to the preservation of interconnected ecosystems.

Beach Management

Kiawah's beach and dune system represents a unique coastal environment along the South Carolina shore, distinguished by its natural accretion pattern rather than erosion. This accretional characteristic is particularly noteworthy because it contrasts with many neighboring coastal areas that struggle with erosion challenges. The beach's growth is facilitated by the Stono Inlet shoals, which function as natural barriers while creating conditions that promote sand accumulation and shoreline expansion. These shoals effectively shelter the eastern end of Kiawah from northeast winds and waves while establishing a zone where sand naturally settles and accumulates.

The beach and dune system serve multiple vital functions for Kiawah. As critical habitat, these systems support a diverse ecosystem of plant and animal species, many of which are unique to coastal environments. The dune system protects inland areas from storm surges and extreme weather events while acting as a natural barrier that helps safeguard the island's infrastructure and properties. Additionally, the beach offers recreational opportunities while enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

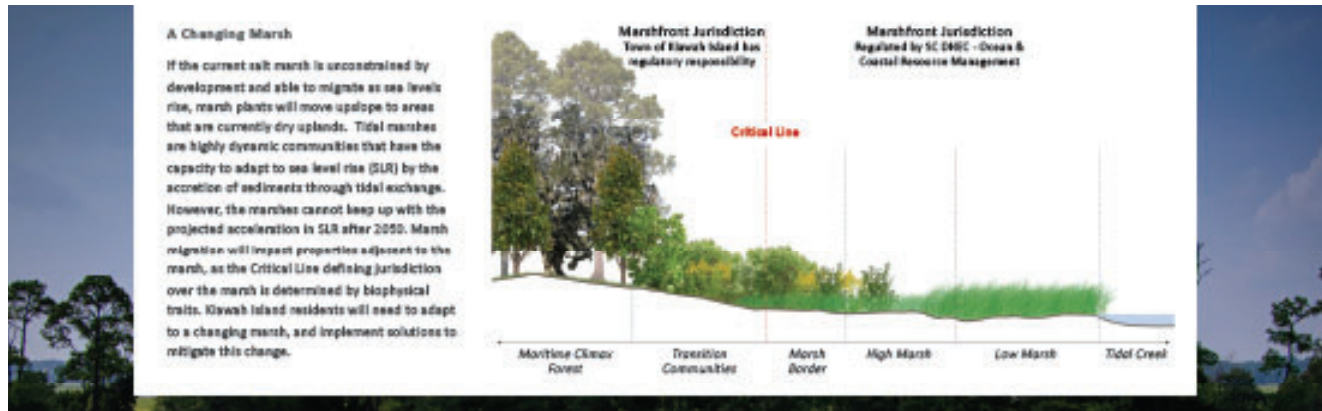
The Town's Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan serves as a crucial planning and decision-making tool, fulfilling the requirements established by the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services - Bureau of Coastal Management (SCDES - BCM) for beachfront municipalities. Since incorporation in 1988, the Town has maintained an active commitment to beach management planning, beginning with its first plan in 1992. Following a 2006 update, the Town conducted comprehensive revisions in 2012

and 2020, with the current plan updated in 2025. The next update is scheduled for 2030.

Through this management plan, the Town maintains a proactive approach with regular monitoring and strategic restoration projects, primarily executed in partnership with Coastal Science and Engineering. Notable interventions include two major restoration projects on East End Beach: the 2006 project, which involved placing 550,000 cubic yards of sand, and the 2015 project, which utilized 100,000 cubic yards of sand. Both projects addressed erosion concerns near residential areas and the Ocean Course. Following Hurricane Irma's impact, the Town completed a sand scraping project from 2017 to 2018 that successfully rebuilding damaged dunes along the beachfront.

Kiawah falls within Phase II of South Carolina's beachfront jurisdictional lines review process, beginning in spring and summer 2026. This process is part of the state's ongoing coastal management strategy. The Bureau of Coastal Management establishes and reviews two critical jurisdictional lines - the baseline and the setback line, every seven to ten years. These lines delineate the state's direct permitting authority for activities within the beach and dune system critical area, with the baseline being the more seaward line and the setback line being the landward line.

The jurisdictional lines create a state regulatory framework in which activities such as construction of habitable structures, pools, erosion control structures, beach renourishment, landscaping, and other developments require review and authorization through SCDES BCM's and Town permitting processes.



Source: *The Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan*

Marsh Ecosystem and Management Plan

Approximately 55 percent of Kiawah consists of marshland and water. These ecosystems serve critical functions by filtering water, absorbing rainwater to slow flooding effects, providing habitat for diverse species, and acting as a protective barrier against storms and flooding.

In April 2022, the Town Planning Department initiated development of a Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan (CMMP), the first document focused solely on marsh management for the Town. Biohabitats and Elko Coastal Consulting assisted in developing the plan, which Town Council adopted on February 7, 2023.

Several studies on water quality and wetland health have been conducted to monitor Kiawah’s natural environment. The Kiawah Conservancy completed a watershed and groundwater table study in 2022, while KICA’s Lake Management Department tests 26 of the 122 stormwater ponds weekly.

Marsh Management Goals

The CMMP establishes four key goals:

1. MONITOR: Detect changes in wetland vegetation species composition and structure over time
2. PROTECT: Prevent or correct

impairments to the marsh through regulations

3. ENGAGE: Educate stakeholders about undesirable marsh changes
4. RESTORE: Manage vulnerable areas and mitigate future issues

Implementation will involve collaboration among the Town, KICA, and the Kiawah Island Conservancy. Potential restoration methods include thin layer placement, prescribed burning, resilience terracing, and oyster reestablishment.

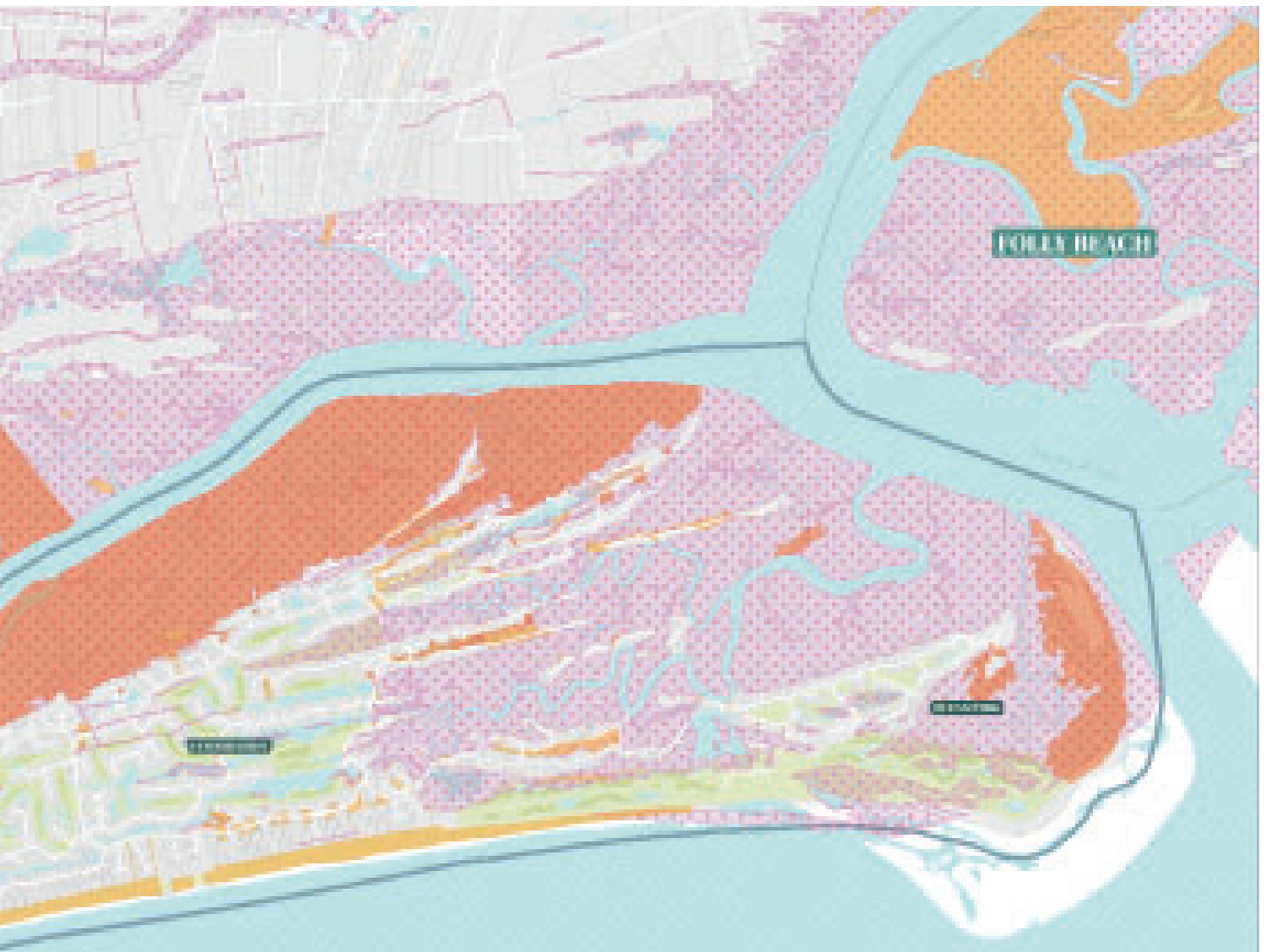
Community engagement is crucial for the success of these efforts, as informed stewards play a vital role in marsh preservation through awareness and active participation.

Key Indicators: UVVR & Shoreline Change



UVVR & SHORELINE EROSION This figure shows two important indicators that are recommended elements of the monitoring plan, the unvegetated to vegetated ratio (UVVR), and current patterns of erosion and accretion. UVVR can be informative about the current trajectory of a marsh. A stable tidal marsh, with intact marsh plains and little deterioration tends to a UVVR of about 0.1. Higher values indicate degradation, usually a result of open water conversion. The other dataset on this figure shows eroding areas in red and newly formed land in yellow.





Wetlands & Protected Land

Kiawah is quickly reaching the extent of lands able to be developed. Much of the remaining landscape contains protected natural resources and habitat. There are approximately 193 acres of park and recreational areas on Kiawah. Undevelopable land includes landscape buffer areas, leisure trails, conservation easements, and preserved natural areas.

Captain Sams Spit

Captain Sams Spit, located at the western end of Kiawah, is an environmentally sensitive and dynamically changing area that plays a crucial role in the island's coastal ecosystem. Captain Sams Inlet bounds this spit, which serves as a critical transition zone between Kiawah and Seabrook Islands. The spit has historically been an area of accretion, acting as a collection site for sand transported by longshore currents from up-coast areas.

The spit's dynamics are heavily influenced by the migration of Captain Sams Inlet. As wave action transports sand westward, it feeds the spit while causing growth into the inlet and forcing it to migrate toward Seabrook Island. This natural process is part of a cyclical pattern that has led to previous inlet relocation projects.

The spit area is of particular environmental importance due to its role as habitat for various coastal species, including shorebirds, dolphins, and sea turtles. The spit's dynamic nature, with its changing shorelines and sandbar formations, provides essential feeding and nesting grounds for these species.

Looking forward, the Coastal Science and Engineering report suggests that another inlet relocation project may be considered within the next five to seven years, highlighting the ongoing management needs of this dynamic area. Continuous monitoring of the spit's evolution is crucial for understanding its changes and planning any necessary interventions.

Captain Sams Spit remains a critical and sensitive environmental area. Its dynamic nature, ecological importance, and role in the broader coastal system of Kiawah

and Seabrook Islands underscore the need for ongoing careful management and conservation efforts to maintain its environmental integrity and natural processes.

East End

The East End of Kiawah represents a critically important and environmentally sensitive area characterized by dynamic coastal processes and diverse habitats. This region, encompassing the Lagoon Reach and Stono Inlet Reach, is significantly influenced by shoal bypassing events from Stono Inlet that play a crucial role in the area's geomorphological evolution and ecological health.

Between November 2022 and October 2023, the Lagoon Reach gained approximately 99,300 cubic yards of sand while the Stono Inlet Reach experienced a loss of about 42,100 cubic yards. These changes are part of an ongoing large shoal bypassing event that began in 2019, with a shoal containing over one million cubic yards of sand currently attaching to the island. This natural process is vital for replenishing beach volumes while maintaining the overall health of the coastal ecosystem.

Marsh habitats and drainage systems further underscore the East End's environmental significance. Two flushing channels that opened after Hurricanes Matthew in 2016 and Irma in 2017 remain active, providing crucial drainage for the east-end marshes. These marshes serve as important habitat for various species while playing a key role in Kiawah's ecological balance.

The area is particularly significant for wildlife, especially threatened species such as the piping plover. The dynamic nature of

the East End, with its shifting shorelines and diverse habitats, provides crucial feeding and nesting grounds for these and other coastal bird species.

The ongoing shoal bypass event is expected to provide sufficient sand volumes to outpace background erosion over the next decade. This natural process is critical for maintaining the beach-dune system, which provides both storm protection and support for a diverse ecosystem.

Continuous monitoring and adaptive management of this area are essential. Experts recommend ongoing observation of the 2015 channel location, closure dike, and shoal attachment area. The natural flushing channel between the shoal and outer beach also requires attention because it may need minor remedial action to ensure proper marsh drainage.

The East End of Kiawah Island is an environmentally sensitive area of paramount importance. Its dynamic coastal processes, diverse habitats, and role in supporting wildlife make it a critical focus for conservation efforts and careful management to ensure long-term ecological health and resilience.

Source: Coastal Science Engineering, Kiawah Monitoring Report, 2023

05





cultural resourcesnext

Goal: Foster community connection and tourism through cultural and historical stewardship

Cultural Resources

Considers historic buildings and structures, commercial districts, residential districts, unique, natural, or scenic resources, archaeological, and other cultural resources.

Overview

This section acknowledges Kiawah’s historical roots from indigenous origins through its evolution as a premier coastal community, while focusing primarily on contemporary cultural offerings.

Kiawah’s cultural foundation rests on a historical narrative that begins with the Kiawah Native Americans as original stewards and continues through colonial plantation agriculture, Civil War and Reconstruction challenges, mid-twentieth century timber operations, and the transformative 1974 development as a world-class resort community. This historical evolution has shaped Kiawah’s current character as both a residential community and premier destination.

Contemporary cultural life centers on several institutions and programs. The Town-funded Arts and Cultural Events Council, established in 2004, provides programming ranging from intimate concerts to events featuring prestigious institutions. The Art Guild of Kiawah hosts annual exhibitions showcasing local resident artists’ work. Recreational and educational opportunities include programming through KIGR Nature Program, the Roy Barth Tennis Center, and the Kiawah Conservancy’s environmental education initiatives.

While Kiawah offers cultural amenities through these various organizations, a significant opportunity exists to enhance public cultural infrastructure through a potential Town civic and cultural center.

Cultural History

Kiawah Island's rich heritage spans centuries, from its early inhabitants to its present-day status as a premier coastal community. The island is named after the Kiawah Native Americans, who were its original stewards before English settlers arrived in 1670.

The colonial era began when John Stanyarne acquired Kiawah Island in two halves in 1717 and 1737. Stanyarne, a prominent planter, established a thriving plantation, setting the stage for Kiawah Island's agricultural legacy. This legacy continued under the stewardship of the Vanderhorst family, who maintained the plantation until the Civil War.

The Civil War marked a significant turning point for Kiawah Island. As the Vanderhorst family sought refuge elsewhere, the island became home to formerly enslaved individuals, many of whom had worked the land under the previous system. The post-war Reconstruction era brought complex changes to Kiawah Island's social and economic landscape.

When the Vanderhorsts returned, they adapted their agricultural practices to new realities. During this period, Quash Stevens, a formerly enslaved person and son of the plantation's previous owner, assumed a managerial role. His position exemplified the evolving social dynamics of the time.

The mid-twentieth century heralded a new chapter for Kiawah. In 1950, C.C. Royal purchased the land for logging and timber production, shifting away from agriculture. The first summer homes, built along Eugenia Avenue in 1954, marked the beginning of Kiawah's transformation into a residential destination.

A pivotal moment came in 1974 when the Kuwait Investment Corporation acquired the island, setting in motion its development as a world-class resort. The opening of Kiawah Island Resort in 1976, complete with its inn, amenities, and golf course, established the foundation for Kiawah's current reputation.

Today, Kiawah stands as a testament to thoughtful development, offering an unparalleled living experience. The island's journey reflects the Lowcountry's broader narrative, making Kiawah a place of both natural beauty and significant historical interest.

Arts and Cultural Activities and Events

Kiawah boasts a carefully curated cultural programming calendar that reflects its status as a premier coastal community. The Town's commitment to artistic excellence is evident in the caliber of events hosted throughout the year. Established in 2004, the Town-funded Arts and Cultural Events Council has been instrumental in elevating Kiawah's cultural landscape. This committee oversees diverse programming designed to engage a wide range of interests. Events range from casual piano bars at the Sandcastle to intimate concerts featuring world-renowned artists and prestigious institutions such as the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.

The Art Guild of the Kiawah Island Community Association hosts the annual Art Guild Members Show and Sale. This event showcases the talents of Kiawah's resident artists through original paintings, photographs, handcrafted pottery, wooden items, jewelry, and home decorations. The show provides an opportunity for the community to appreciate and purchase locally created art in a welcoming island setting.

Civic and Cultural Center

The Town is exploring the possibility of adding a civic and cultural center to the existing municipal property. This potential facility would create dedicated space for cultural events, performing arts programs, and community gatherings while addressing current venue shortages and relieving space constraints in existing facilities.

The concept features an acoustically engineered 250- to 300-seat auditorium, flexible community rooms, and open gathering areas on municipal land with scenic views. As an addition to Town Hall or a standalone facility, it could share infrastructure, boost efficiencies, and combine staffing. The Town is still assessing this concept with no final decision made.

Recreational and Educational Activities

Kiawah has recreational and educational opportunities. The beach, leisure trails, and maritime forests provide natural settings for outdoor activities.

The Sandcastle, an oceanfront facility for Kiawah property owners, offers fitness classes, aquatic programs, and enrichment activities. The facility hosts lectures and workshops catering to property owners' interests.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort offers instruction and excursions for golfers of all skill levels. The resort's Nature Program offers guided experiences, including kayaking excursions and birding walks that showcase the island's ecosystem. The Roy Barth Tennis Center offers facilities and coaching while ranking among the top tennis resorts globally.

The organization engages residents in conservation efforts while enhancing understanding of Kiawah's ecosystems through nature walks, workshops on native flora, resilience and sustainability topics, and citizen science initiatives.

06





community facilitiesnext

Goal: Maintain and improve Kiawah’s utilities and services.

Community Facilities

Considers water supply, treatment, and distribution; sewage system and wastewater treatment; solid waste collection and disposal, fire protection, emergency medical services, and general government facilities; education facilities; and libraries and other facilities.

Overview

Kiawah’s community facilities operate through a multi-entity service delivery model that reflects Kiawah’s geography and governance structure. This collaborative approach involves numerous organizations working together to provide essential services within Town limits.

Utility services are provided through a network of providers: Berkeley Electric Cooperative manages electrical service, Kiawah Island Utility serves on-island water and wastewater needs, and Seabrook Island Utility serves Freshfields and surrounding areas. Telecommunications services are provided by multiple carriers.

Public safety operates under a collaborative model coordinated among Charleston County EMS, Charleston County Sheriff’s Office, the St. Johns Fire District, and Barrier Island

Ocean Rescue for emergency services, while the Town’s Public Safety Department employs Community Service Officers for code enforcement and community safety.

Future infrastructure investments include the Medical University of South Carolina Sea Islands Medical Pavilion opening in late 2025 and planned Trident Health facilities. The Town recognizes opportunities for improvement through proposed initiatives including establishing a Central Communications Channel for unified emergency communications, expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and developing public community gathering spaces to address current gaps in accessible public amenities.



Safety and Health Services

Emergency and Fire Services

Charleston County EMS provides emergency medical services throughout Charleston County, including Kiawah. Fire protection is provided by the St. Johns Fire District, which operates two stations on Kiawah Island. The Kiawah Community Emergency Response Team serves as a Town volunteer group that assists emergency management during hurricane protocols, other emergency events, and special events as needed.

Municipal Public Safety Operations

The Town operates under a collaborative law enforcement model with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. While the Town does not maintain a police force, residents receive sheriff services through county tax contributions. Town Council enhances this baseline coverage through a supplemental partnership that provides additional deputy presence within municipal boundaries using off-duty, sworn personnel.

The Town maintains a Public Safety

Department under the leadership of a Public Safety Director. The department employs Community Service Officers (CSOs), who serve as the Town’s code enforcement officers responsible for ensuring community standards and municipal regulations are consistently maintained throughout Kiawah.

These officers work multiple shifts to provide ongoing coverage while serving as the primary enforcement presence during normal daytime hours. Their responsibilities include:

- Conducting regular patrols throughout Kiawah
- Monitoring compliance with municipal ordinances
- Responding to code violations and incidents
- Managing traffic and community safety concerns
- Providing community safety education and emergency preparedness initiatives
- Collaborating with property owners to resolve issues according to established procedures

Recognizing the need for comprehensive coverage beyond traditional business hours, the Town contracts with Barrier Island Ocean Rescue (BIOR) to provide evening and weekend code enforcement services. This partnership serves dual purposes, as BIOR personnel manage both beach safety operations and code enforcement along the shoreline while supporting the Town’s broader code enforcement efforts during evenings and weekends.

Kiawah Island Community Association provides security services for areas behind the main gate, while KIGR manages security

operations for its respective properties, ensuring comprehensive safety coverage across Kiawah’s various jurisdictions.

Future Healthcare and Emergency Service Infrastructure

Several planned healthcare and emergency service developments will improve access while reducing travel time to essential services for Sea Islands communities. The Medical University of South Carolina Sea Islands Medical Pavilion is scheduled to open in late 2025, marking a significant investment in healthcare infrastructure to serve Kiawah, Seabrook Island, Johns Island, and Wadmalaw Island. Additionally, Trident Health plans to construct a new medical facility on Johns Island, with construction expected to begin in early 2026, providing emergency care and other medical services to the region.

The St. Johns Fire Department plans to build a future station within the Kiawah River development, located off Betsy Kerrison Parkway. These healthcare and emergency service facilities address the growing needs created by substantial residential development in recent years, as geographic distance from existing facilities creates particular challenges for residents who currently face longer travel times to reach emergency and routine medical care.

Utility Service Providers

Various private entities provide utility services. The Town's goal is to ensure the highest quality of service, regardless of which entity is responsible for provision.

To achieve this goal, the Town will conduct a comprehensive review of all utility providers to ensure they maintain high-quality service. This review should ensure that appropriate investment is made to upgrade aging infrastructure while confirming that contingency plans are in place to provide uninterrupted services during storms and other emergencies.

Water and Wastewater Facilities

The Town is served by two utility providers: Kiawah Island Utility (KIU) and the Seabrook Island Utility Commission (SIUC). Each operates independently to serve its communities with essential water and wastewater services. Both utilities purchase water from St. Johns Water Company, which sources water from the Charleston Water System.

Kiawah Island Utility

KIU, a subsidiary of Nexus Water Group, provides water and wastewater services to Kiawah Island. The utility maintains and operates the island's water distribution system while managing the wastewater collection system and treatment facility that serves the island. This facility processes wastewater through an advanced treatment system before using the treated effluent to irrigate the island's golf courses. In 2015, a new water supply line to the island was installed to connect to the down-island pump station on Governor's Drive. This provides redundancy.

Seabrook Island Utility Commission

SIUC, which the Town of Seabrook Island owns, provides water and wastewater services to Freshfields Village, which is located within the Town limits of Kiawah.

Municipal Center Utilities

The Town's Municipal Center operates on a septic system with water service from St. Johns Water Company. Due to its proximity and KIU's service boundary limitations, the Municipal Center explored connecting to SIUC's sewer system, but this request was not approved. As a result, the Municipal Center continues to maintain its independent septic system for wastewater management. The Town will continue exploring sewer options with KIU or SIUC.

Solid Waste Management

The Town provides a comprehensive solid waste program for property owners. This service includes garbage, recycling, yard debris, brown trash, paper shredding, and hazardous waste collection. Garbage service is available through both curbside and back-door collection.

Recycling is available to all single-family homes, homeowner associations, and villa communities. The Town also provides public recycling centers located on Sora Rail Road, at the Municipal Center, and behind the KICA homeowners' association building.

Electric

Berkeley Electric Cooperative (BEC) provides electrical service to Kiawah. All electrical lines are installed underground. Between 2008 and 2010, BEC completed improvements to these lines to minimize outages, though Kiawah continues to experience power outages during severe weather events or when underground lines sustain damage

Communication

Telecommunications services on Kiawah are provided through multiple carriers and infrastructure systems. AT&T serves as Kiawah’s primary network provider, delivering cellular, cable, and internet services. Additional cellular carriers include Verizon and T-Mobile, while internet service options have expanded to include Xfinity, Viasat, HughesNet, Always ON, Starlink, and T-Mobile Home Internet.

Kiawah’s cellular infrastructure consists of seven towers of varying heights, ranging from 65 to 173 feet, operated by different owners including Crown Castle, American Tower, Berkeley Electric, and Kiawah Island Golf Resort. Despite this infrastructure, portions of the island experience significant coverage challenges, particularly in areas east of Turtle Point. Coverage analysis reveals that the limited height of several towers, most under 100 feet, restricts their effectiveness in providing comprehensive cellular service.

The Town is studying revision of its cell tower ordinance to address these coverage gaps. Current regulations emphasize co-location and concealment requirements while limiting tower heights, creating challenges for carriers attempting to upgrade equipment or expand coverage. Updates to the ordinance should carefully balance the need for improved cellular coverage with maintaining the Town’s Living with Nature philosophy.

Central Communications Channel

The Town proposes a Central Communications Channel to coordinate

all key island stakeholders, managed and operated by the Town’s Public Safety or Communications Department. This department would be responsible for overseeing the communication system while ensuring its effectiveness and maintaining its operation.

The proposed system would include a dedicated emergency communications center within Town Hall, a multi-platform approach with mobile app, text alerts, email notifications, and a centralized website, regular training and drills for all stakeholders to ensure familiarity with the system, clear protocols for information dissemination during both routine and emergency situations, and integration with existing emergency management systems at the county and state levels.

By centralizing communication under the Town’s authority, Kiawah would have a unified and direct method of communication while eliminating confusing or conflicting information. This approach would ensure that all stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and visitors, receive timely, accurate, and consistent information. In an emergency, this system could prove critical to the swift response of dedicated personnel and the safety of the island’s population.

The Town would also establish a Communication Liaison Committee comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups to provide input and feedback on the system’s operation and effectiveness. This collaborative approach would help maintain open lines of communication between various entities while ensuring a streamlined and efficient information dissemination process.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

With the growing popularity of electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) nationwide, the Town recognizes the importance of supporting sustainable transportation options for residents and visitors. To contribute to this environmental initiative, the Town should consider implementing a standardized network of EV charging stations throughout the community.

Currently, the Town has installed three public EV charging stations located behind Town Hall, providing a foundation for expanded charging infrastructure.

Amenities

While limited due to its private, gated nature, public amenities on Kiawah play a crucial role in the community. As the Town embarks on long-range planning, it should evaluate opportunities to expand its role in providing public amenities despite current constraints. The beach represents the primary public amenity, managed by the Town to protect this vital natural resource.

Currently, the Town's role in providing public amenities is constrained by its lack of land ownership behind the gate. Beyond the Municipal Center, which serves administrative functions while providing limited meeting space, the Town has limited ability to provide traditional municipal amenities. Looking ahead, the Town should consider strategic opportunities to acquire land or better utilize the Municipal Center complex to enhance public offerings. This approach could include exploring partnerships with private entities for land acquisition, evaluating potential sites for new public facilities, or reimagining the current Municipal Center to incorporate

additional community amenities. Such initiatives need to carefully balance Kiawah's private character with the growing need for public spaces that serve both residents and visitors.

This forward-thinking approach would require careful consideration of funding mechanisms, operational responsibilities, and integration with Kiawah's established character while ensuring any new public amenities meet the evolving needs of the community.

Beachwalker County Park operates under a 99-year lease agreement established in 1976 between Kiawah Partners and Charleston County Government. Managed by the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission, it provides an essential public access point to the beach.

KICA offers property owners access to a network of amenities throughout the island. These amenities include the Sandcastle, three boat or kayak launch facilities, three observation towers, miles of leisure trails, and 26 beach access boardwalks. The Housing Market Study found KICA's amenities to be competitive with those of peer associations.

KIC operates several facilities available to club members, including two golf courses, The Beach Club, The Cape Club, the Marsh House, and Sasanqua Spa. This tiered amenity structure differs from some competitor communities, such as Palmetto Bluff, where all owners have universal access to club amenities. For owners not part of the KIC, amenity access through KICA, while competitive with peer associations, provides fewer options than communities with mandatory club membership.

Freshfields Village, owned by EDENS, is a

village-style shopping center with multiple dining options and various services. Its central green space serves as a gathering area for community events.

Collectively, Kiawah features an array of private recreational facilities, including seven golf courses, restaurants, two luxury spas, multiple sports facilities, and numerous other amenities. This diverse range of high-quality offerings has established Kiawah as a premier resort and residential community, catering to varied interests and lifestyles while preserving Kiawah’s natural beauty. The Housing Market Study emphasized that while these private entities are responsible for their facilities and reinvestment decisions, their continued success contributes to Kiawah’s overall competitive position among peer communities.

As Kiawah evolves, the Town recognizes the need to take a more active role in providing public amenities through potential expansion of the Municipal Center and strategic land acquisition. This forward-looking approach would enhance the island’s amenity offerings while maintaining the successful balance between public accessibility and private facilities that defines Kiawah’s character.

Community Gathering Space

Kiawah currently faces a significant gap in its community infrastructure: the absence of public facilities and gathering spaces. While Kiawah offers impressive amenities, they exist primarily behind gates with restricted access:

- Club members enjoy exclusive facilities
- KICA members (property owners) have access to dedicated amenities
- Resort guests utilize the Resort’s

amenities

This access structure leaves Kiawah without dedicated public spaces that are publicly accessible. The current arrangement creates several challenges for community cohesion and public engagement:

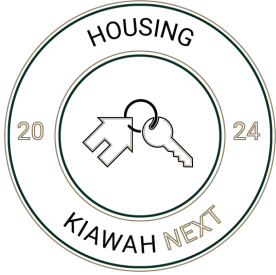
- Limited opportunities for inclusive community gatherings that bring together residents from different parts of Kiawah
- Restricted access for visitors hoping to experience Kiawah’s cultural offerings and community spirit
- Reduced public programming options for Town-sponsored events and cultural initiatives
- Fewer spaces for spontaneous community connection and relationship building among diverse Kiawah stakeholders

A dedicated Town community facility would address these needs by providing an accessible gathering space for residents, property owners, and visitors. Such a space could serve multiple functions by hosting community events, supporting cultural programming, facilitating educational activities, and acting as a welcoming hub for civic engagement and social interaction.

As Kiawah continues to evolve, establishing a public gathering space represents an important step toward creating a more inclusive, connected, and vibrant community beyond the gates. This facility would complement existing private amenities while filling a crucial gap in Kiawah’s public infrastructure and helping to build a more cohesive community identity that encompasses all who live, visit, and invest in Kiawah’s future.

07





housingnext

Goal: Maintain Kiawah's reputation as a vibrant coastal community.

Housing

Considers location, types, age, and condition of housing, owner and renter occupancy, and affordability of housing.

Overview

Kiawah's housing market reflects its function as both a residential community and resort destination. Kiawah's existing 4087 housing units serve permanent residents, part-time property owners, and visitors, with approximately one-third of all residential units operating as short-term rentals and only 29 percent of property owners claiming Kiawah as their primary residence. The real estate market demonstrates stability and strength, achieving record sales volumes of \$1.07 billion in 2024 while maintaining property values, with single-family homes averaging \$3 million and vacation rental rates growing 40 percent since 2019.

As Kiawah approaches full residential build-out, development patterns are shifting from new construction to redevelopment

and renovation of existing properties. This transition presents planning challenges, particularly for multi-family developments where shared ownership models can complicate reinvestment decisions. Additionally, the regional workforce housing shortage creates operational challenges, as many service industry workers cannot afford housing on or near the island, resulting in lengthy commutes that impact both workforce stability and business operations.

Housing Types

Kiawah's housing stock serves permanent and part-time residents as well as short-term renters. As of April 2025, Kiawah comprises 4,087 existing residential units with an additional 263 units currently under construction, bringing the current total to 4,350 residential units. The existing housing inventory includes two primary categories:

Single-family detached homes, representing 71 percent of existing residential units with 2,913 homes. Multi-family properties, primarily cottages and villas that typically offer condominium-style living, account for 29 percent of existing residential units with 1,174 units.

Future development potential includes 341 additional single-family homesites and 530 potential multi-family units across various planned developments. When combined with existing and under-construction units, Kiawah's total residential development capacity reaches 5,221 units, representing potential growth of 871 additional units beyond current inventory, or a 20 percent increase.

Short-Term Rental Accommodations:

Short-term rentals constitute a portion of Kiawah's housing utilization, despite not being a separate category of physical housing. Kiawah's housing landscape is influenced by this trend. In April 2025, the Town reported 4,087 housing units on Kiawah, with approximately 1,400 units granted short-term rental business licenses. This represents 34 percent of Kiawah's total housing stock having

the capacity to serve as short-term rental accommodations, underscoring the impact of this sector on Kiawah's residential and tourism economy.

Short-term rentals present both opportunities and challenges for Kiawah. While they support a robust tourism economy, they may also impact community dynamics and service needs. This pattern contributes to fluctuations in Kiawah's population throughout the year, with peak occupancy during popular vacation periods.

Future housing policies will need to balance the needs of permanent residents, part-time homeowners, and the tourism industry. Given Kiawah's coastal location, future housing development must also consider environmental factors such as sea-level rise, storm surge, and coastal erosion. Sustainable and resilient housing designs will be crucial for the long-term viability of Kiawah's housing stock.

Real Estate Market Overview

The Kiawah real estate market in 2024 demonstrated continued strength, with 447 property closings generating a total sales volume of \$1.07 billion. This represents the highest annual sales volume in Kiawah's documented real estate history, reflecting sustained demand for properties across all market segments.

Property values remained stable across most

Data Sources:

Housing inventory data (total units, single-family homes, villas, and undeveloped homesites) was obtained from the Charleston County Assessor Office Parcel Data Information as of April 2025.

Short-term rental information was provided by the Town of Kiawah Island, based on STR business license information as of June 2025.

segments in 2024. Single-family homes maintained a median price of \$3 million, essentially unchanged from 2023. Homesite values decreased to a median of \$673,000 in 2024 from \$795,000 in 2023, representing a moderation from previous years' pricing levels.

The villa and cottage segment experienced a substantial shift in 2024, with median prices rising to \$1.45 million, up from \$710,000 in 2023. This increase is primarily attributable to sales from The Cape development, which introduced higher-priced villa properties and shifted the overall market profile for this property type.

The transaction volume in 2024, with 447 closings, represents an increase from the 340 and 386 closings recorded in 2023 and 2022, respectively. While below the peak activity of 733 transactions in 2021, current transaction levels indicate sustained market activity and buyer interest. For historical context, Kiawah recorded 656 transactions in 2020 with a sales volume of \$807 million, demonstrating the market's evolution over the past five years.

The real estate market reflects consistently low inventory levels relative to transaction activity. At year-end 2024, available property listings represented approximately 2.6 percent of total island inventory, continuing a pattern of limited supply that has characterized the market in recent years. Historical data show that available inventory

has ranged from 1.3 to 3.1 percent of total island properties between 2020 and 2023.

Market data indicate sustained transaction activity across property types, with sales volumes maintaining high levels compared to historical averages. Property values have remained stable or increased across most segments, reflecting continued buyer interest in Kiawah properties. These trends have planning implications for infrastructure capacity, municipal services demand, and development pattern management.

Redevelopment: A Key Factor for Future Growth

As Kiawah approaches full development, redevelopment of existing properties is becoming increasingly critical for maintaining long-term market health and attracting new buyers. The HR&A study highlights several key factors that underscore the importance of redevelopment:

- 1. Aging Housing Stock:** Redevelopment and renovation are essential to maintaining the competitiveness and value of these properties.
- 2. Reinvestment Trends:** The study showed a positive trend in renovation activity, with renovation permits increasing significantly since 2010.

Note: The Kiawah Island Real Estate Property Report includes data from both Kiawah Island and Cassique. While Cassique is not within Kiawah Island's town limits, it is considered an integral part of the Kiawah real estate market due to its adjacent location and shared amenities. This inclusion provides a more comprehensive view of the area's real estate performance.

HOUSING

Residential renovations:

- 2019: 218
- 2020: 332
- 2021: 453
- 2022: 581
- 2023: 460
- 2024: 286

- 3. Challenges for Villas:** Reinvestment in villas is more difficult under shared ownership models, posing long-term challenges for maintaining property value as these properties age.
- 4. Construction Costs:** Kiawah's high construction costs (about 30% higher than the regional average) make redevelopment and reinvestment decisions more critical and potentially challenging.

To address these factors and encourage redevelopment, the Town should consider several initiatives, including exploring options to encourage reinvestment, particularly in shared ownership properties such as villas, and educating property owners and regime managers on the collective benefits of reinvestment.

By prioritizing redevelopment, Kiawah aims to maintain its competitive edge in the real estate market while ensuring long-term property value growth and continuing to attract new generations of buyers while preserving its unique natural environment and community character.

Workforce Housing

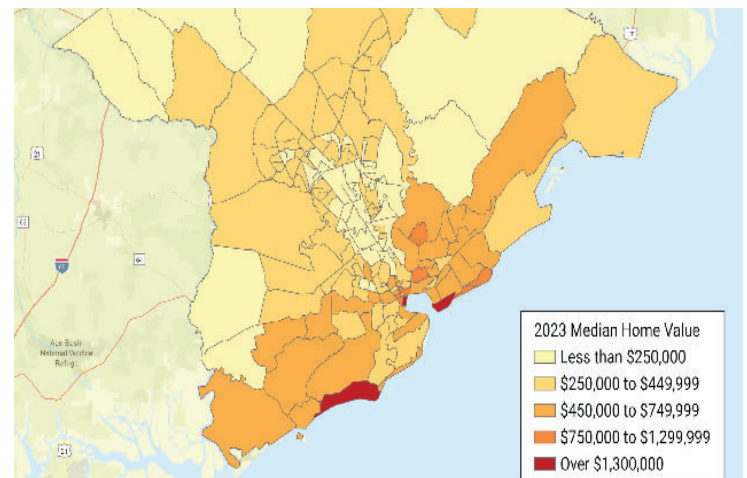
Finding workforce housing represents a regional challenge, with one of the key

issues being the absence of workforce housing options within Kiawah or the surrounding Johns Island area. This situation has led to significant commuting challenges and associated issues for Kiawah's workforce.

Census data reveal that nearly three-quarters of all workers on Kiawah travel more than 25 miles to reach their jobs. This substantial commute results from the scarcity of affordable housing options closer to Kiawah.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that many of these commuters, especially those in entry-level jobs in Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade, earn less than \$50,000 annually. Based on HUD guidelines, which consider households paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing as cost-burdened, these workers are most likely to afford homes under \$250,000.

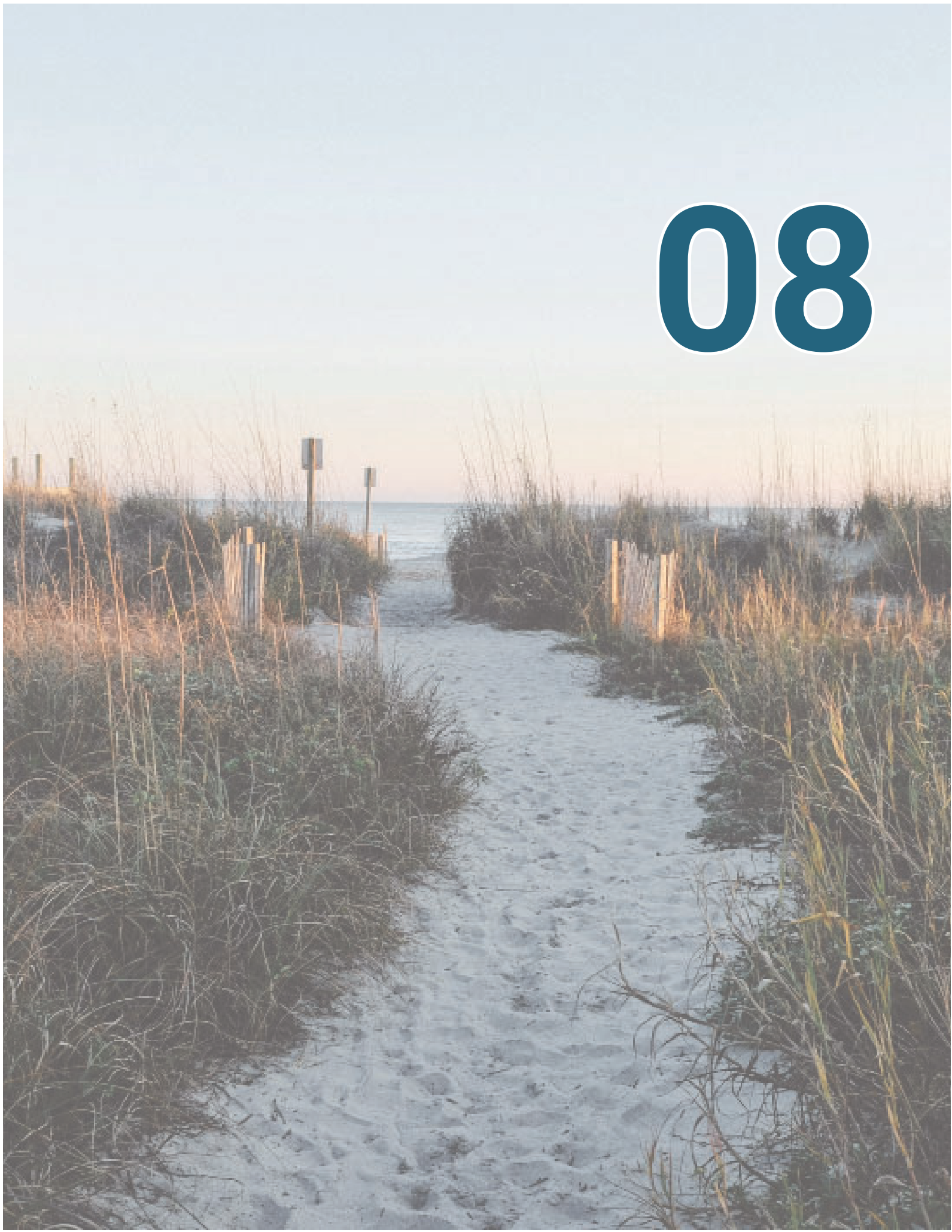
This housing affordability issue forces workers to seek homes in more remote areas of the Charleston region, where median home values fit within their budgets. This situation affects workers' quality of life through lengthy commutes while having broader implications for the region's transportation patterns and economic dynamic.



Median Home Values, Charleston MSA, 2023

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

08





landusenext

Goal: Promote 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.

Overview

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

This Land Use element outlines Kiawah's unique development conditions and necessary actions for continued prosperity. This element aims to guide policies that preserve Kiawah's character while meeting evolving community needs, ensuring environmental protection while maintaining quality of life for residents.

Kiawah's development status reflects significant progress toward full buildout, with 4,087 existing residential units and

263 additional units under construction. The remaining development capacity includes 341 single-family lots and 530 potential multi-family units, bringing total potential residential development to 5,221 units. This approaching buildout condition requires strategic planning that prioritizes conservation of remaining natural areas while managing the transition from new development to redevelopment of existing properties.

Kiawah's Buildout Snapshot

Kiawah's buildout status provides an overview of the area's current residential landscape and future development projections. Currently, there are 4,087 residential units, predominantly single-family homes. There are 263 residential units under construction, with 341 future single family residential lots and potential

530 multifamily residential units.

When combined with current units, this brings the total potential number of developed residential units to 5,221. The potential for further development in specific areas remains based on remaining developable land and allowed density.

The following development analysis uses Charleston County parcel data and Town of Kiawah Permitting data as of April 7, 2025. Analysis include both historical and current land pattern and development assumptions.

Existing Residential Units

Single Family	2913
Multifamily	1174
Total Residential Units	4087

Under Construction Residential Units

Single Family	88
Multifamily (<i>Seafields, Ocean Pines</i>)	175
Total Residential Units	263

Future Single Family Residential

Undeveloped Single Family Residential Lots	380
Conservation and Common Properties	-39
Single Family Residential Potential	341

Future Multifamily Residential

¹ Kiawah Island Golf Resort - Residential	420
² Kiawah Partners (<i>Upper Beachwalker Parcels</i>)	72
³ Freshfields Village - Residential	38
Multifamily Residential Potential	530

Total Potential Residential Units	5221
--	-------------

Current Hotel Rooms

The Sanctuary	255
Andell Inn	99
Total Hotel Rooms	354

Future Hotel Rooms

¹ East Beach	150
West Beach	150
Total Potential Hotel Rooms	300

Total Potential Hotel Rooms	654
------------------------------------	------------

Notes: ¹ KIGR values may have tradeoffs between residential dwelling units and hotel rooms. Remaining undeveloped lands are likely to be developed as multifamily, however may include single family residential. ² Upper Beachwalker parcels include parcels 207050004, 2070500117,-116,-120. ³ Remaining FFV residential development is projected from the balance of up to 200 total residential units, which may only occur on select parcels remaining.

*The following development analysis uses Charleston County parcel data and Town of Kiawah Permitting data as of April, 2025

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. The Town Council is responsible for approving all applications for proposed annexations while evaluating all relevant factors to determine whether any annexation proposal benefits the community. 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 forest is paramount to maintaining Kiawah’s vision.

While this plan does not define or impact the Town’s Zoning Ordinance, the ordinance helps enforce Land Use policies.

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

Land Use: A regulatory tool for for managing future development, as defined in the Comprehensive Plan, to govern future uses of areas of properties.

Zoning and Land Use

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

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, Residential and Open Space	PR-OC
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 Town of Kiawah Island Zonig Ordinance.

Future Land Use Categories

Future land use guides the location and types of proposed development to align with the Town's Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission and Town Council should ensure that their recommendations and approvals adhere to the Future Land Use recommendations outlined in this plan.

Active Recreation and Open Space:

This category provides and is intended to promote the development of community parks and recreational facilities including parks, golf courses, and tennis courts. This category also provides for lands that are intended to remain in their natural state; this includes land that have been protected through conservation easements or that are publicly or privately owned. Some examples include the Tennis Center, Night Heron Park, and The Sandcastle.

Active Recreation, Residential and Open Space:

This category provides and is intended to promote the development of recreational facilities, including golf courses, with limited Residential in varied format, including single family detached/attached, duplexes and multifamily within a natural setting. Examples of this category are the integration of cottages adjacent to the Ocean Course Clubhouse.

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 permits higher-density residential development, with a maximum of 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.

Civic and Institutional:

This category promotes community facilities and service buildings, both public and private, including churches, schools, utilities, and maintenance facilities. Examples include fire stations and Kiawah Island Utility.

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 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.

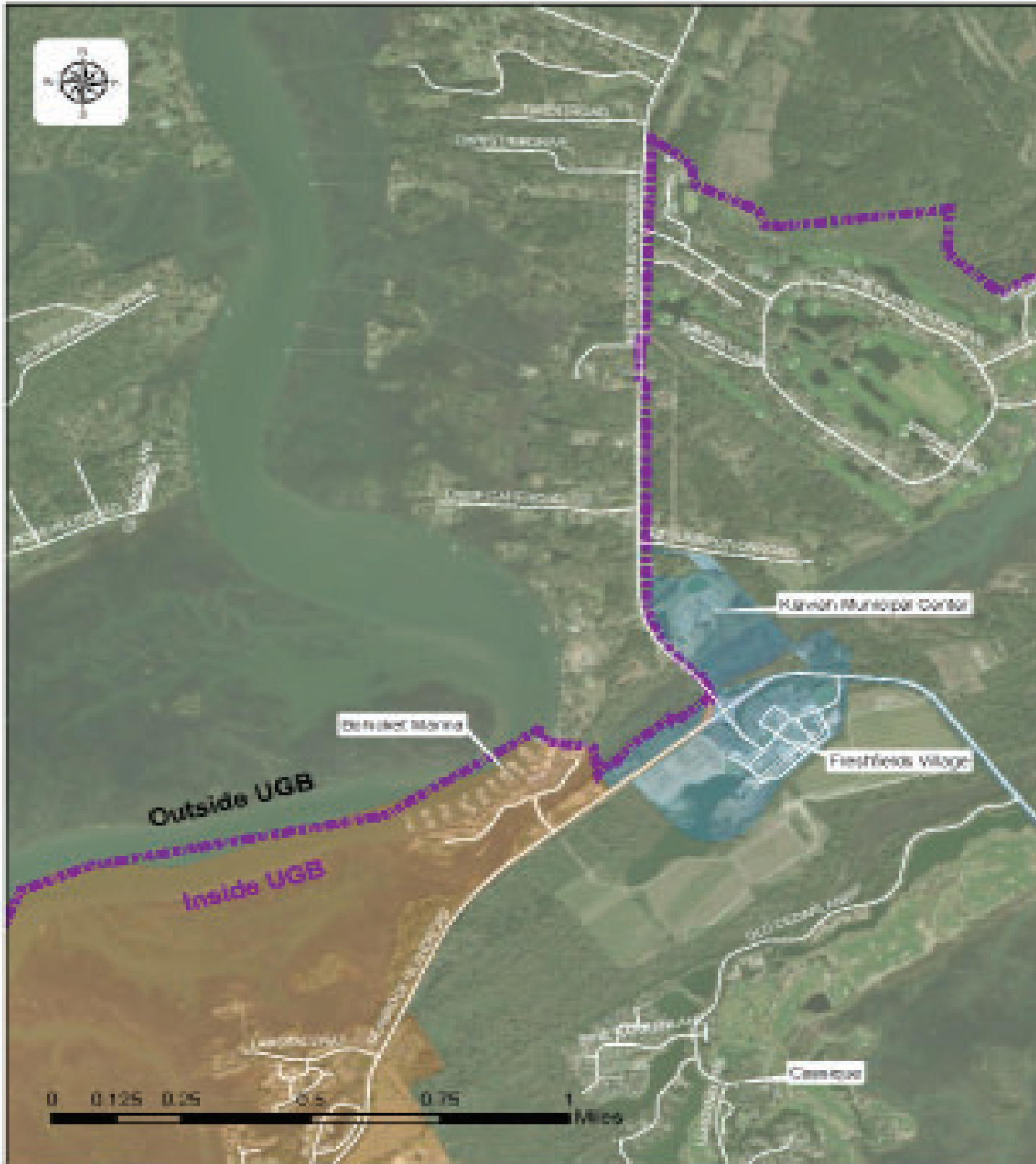
The UGB ensures that the approach to Kiawah Island along the Betsy Kerrison Parkway retains its low-density character. Effective management of the UGB requires active collaboration between Kiawah Island, Charleston County, and neighboring communities such as Seabrook Island. This cooperation is important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



Source: Town of Kiawah Island Planning Department



Future Land Use Map Legend

Open Residential	Commercial
Open Seasonal	Resort
Resort and Open	Mixed Use
Open Institutional	Right-of-Way
Water	Water
Marsh	Marsh



Future Land Use Map of Kiawah Island

Future Land Use Map

The future land use map shows higher density development primarily near the entrance of the Island, with lower density development being permitted throughout most of Kiawah. Resort, recreational, and conservation uses tie together the residential coves.

09





transportationnext

Goal: Provide safe and effective mobility options for Kiawah residents, workers and visitors

Transportation

Considers transportation facilities, including major road improvements, new road construction, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects, and other elements of a transportation network.

Overview

Kiawah's road layout contributes to traffic management challenges. Most roads are privately owned, primarily by KICA, while the Town maintains two public roads.

Regional connectivity is crucial, as almost all workers commute to Kiawah from outside the Town. The transportation element considers ongoing regional improvement projects and their impact on Kiawah accessibility. It sets objectives to maintain efficient routes, explore alternatives to existing constraints, promote viable transportation options, and assess shared transit needs. By addressing these aspects, the plan aims to enhance mobility for Kiawah's residents, workers, and guests while preserving Kiawah's character.



Road Network

The Town is responsible for two roads outside the front security gate: Kiawah Island Parkway and Beachwalker Drive. The Parkway extends approximately two miles from Betsy Kerrison Parkway to the main gate. The Town also owns the roundabout that connects these parkways with Seabrook Island Parkway and the entrance to the Freshfields shopping center.

Additionally, the Town owns Beachwalker Drive, which is just under one mile long and leads to the public beach access at Beachwalker County Park.

To address network challenges and maintain key access routes, the Town has made improvements to the Kiawah Island Parkway and Beachwalker Drive intersection, as explained later in this section.

Kiawah has a unique road network structure. Most roads on the island are privately owned, primarily by KICA, which owns and maintains approximately 60 miles of roads. KICA assesses these roadways every two to five years to ensure proper maintenance.

The road network presents challenges, as only 16 percent of Kiawah's minor roadways provide continuous travel options, concentrating vehicular congestion along major roadways. While the Town is not responsible for private road maintenance, it oversees the safety and welfare of citizens on all roads while requiring coordination with various entities to address traffic flow and congestion issues.



Trails and Bikeways

The Town recognizes the importance of a comprehensive leisure trail network in enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors while promoting environmental appreciation and alternative transportation options. Kiawah's trail system is designed to provide beach access for both public and private users of the Kiawah area.

The Town owns and maintains approximately three miles of leisure trail from Beachwalker County Park to the Freshfields Village entrance. This trail provides a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists while connecting the public beach access at Beachwalker County Park to Kiawah's main entrance area and serving as an important link in Kiawah's transportation and recreation network.

Behind the gate, KICA owns and maintains an extensive network of 19 miles of bike and pedestrian trails. These two systems connect to create a seamless network spanning Kiawah.

The comprehensive trail network on Kiawah

serves as a vital component of Kiawah's infrastructure while supporting multiple strategic objectives. The network promotes alternative transportation methods, reducing vehicular traffic and associated environmental impacts while encouraging active lifestyles and outdoor recreation that contribute to the health and well-being of both residents and visitors. Furthermore, the trails enhance connectivity across Kiawah by linking residential areas, recreational facilities, and natural spaces. The trails also play a crucial role in environmental education and appreciation by providing access to the island's diverse ecosystems. As Kiawah continues to develop, maintaining this trail system will remain a priority while ensuring that it continues to meet the community's evolving needs and preserve Kiawah's natural beauty and ecological integrity.

TRANSPORTATION



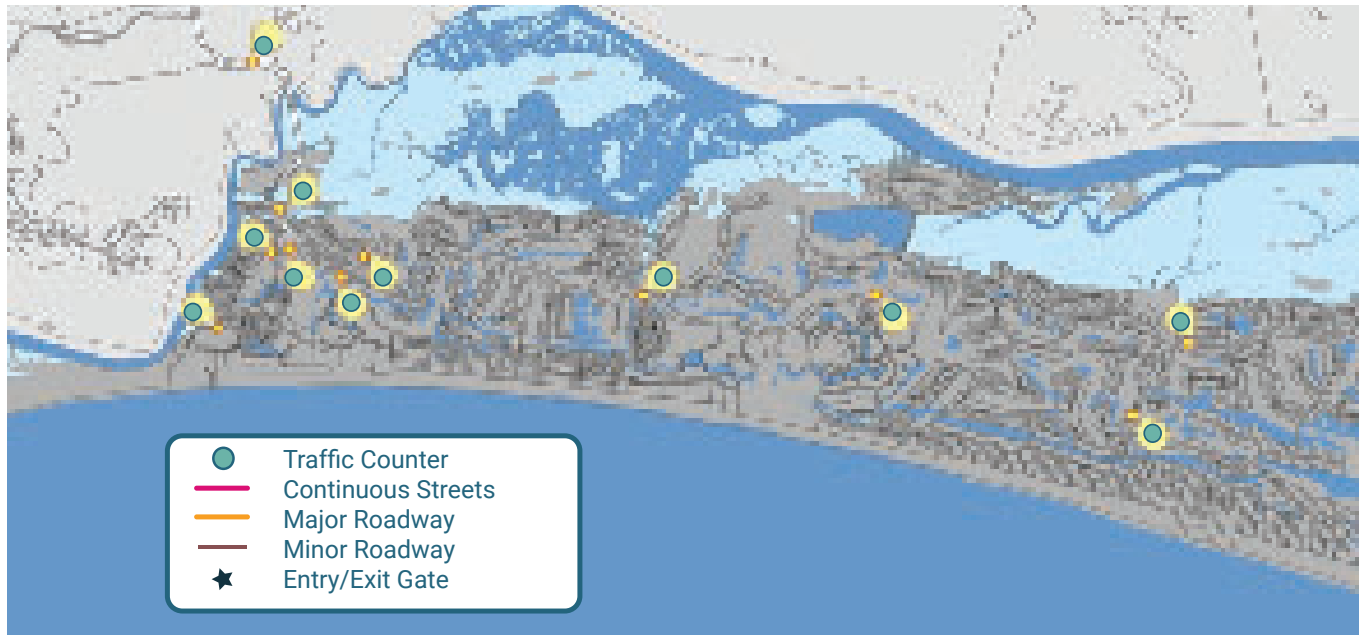


Greenspace Network: Parks, Trails & Open Space

Kiawah’s greenspace network connects precious nature areas for both existing ecosystems and human enjoyment. There is a total of 1,537 acres of parks on Kiawah Island.

Traffic Counting Locations, Town of Kiawah Island, 2022

Source: Kiawah Island Parkway Traffic Update



Traffic Evaluation and Management

In 2023, KICA and the Town collaborated to address traffic concerns, with a primary focus on congestion at the Main Gate. Managed by KICA, the Main Gate has experienced fluctuations in vehicle traffic over the past four years. In 2024, 2,365,567 vehicles passed through, representing an increase from 2,269,320 in 2023, which had already shown growth from 2,129,741 in 2022. This upward trajectory follows a notable decline from the peak of 2,431,383 vehicles recorded in 2021.

To alleviate congestion at the Beachwalker Drive intersection, the Town modified the traffic pattern, eliminated the outbound stop sign, and stationed a community service officer during peak hours to facilitate traffic flow.

These changes significantly reduced inbound traffic backups while virtually eliminating outbound congestion at the main gate.

Looking toward the future, the Town commissioned Kimley-Horn in August 2022 to complete the Kiawah Island Parkway Intersection and Corridor Study. This comprehensive analysis evaluated 13 key intersections along Kiawah Island Parkway, Betsy Kerrison Parkway, and Seabrook Island Road while projecting conditions through 2036.

Key improvement recommendations included:

1. Kiawah Island Parkway at Real Estate Office: Converting to right-in/right-out access with a connection from Beachwalker Drive.
2. Kiawah Island Parkway at Andell West Development: Installing a traffic signal to better serve long-term conditions.
3. Kiawah Island Parkway at Freshfields Drive: Creating an interconnection with

Andell West Development and converting it to right-in/right-out access.

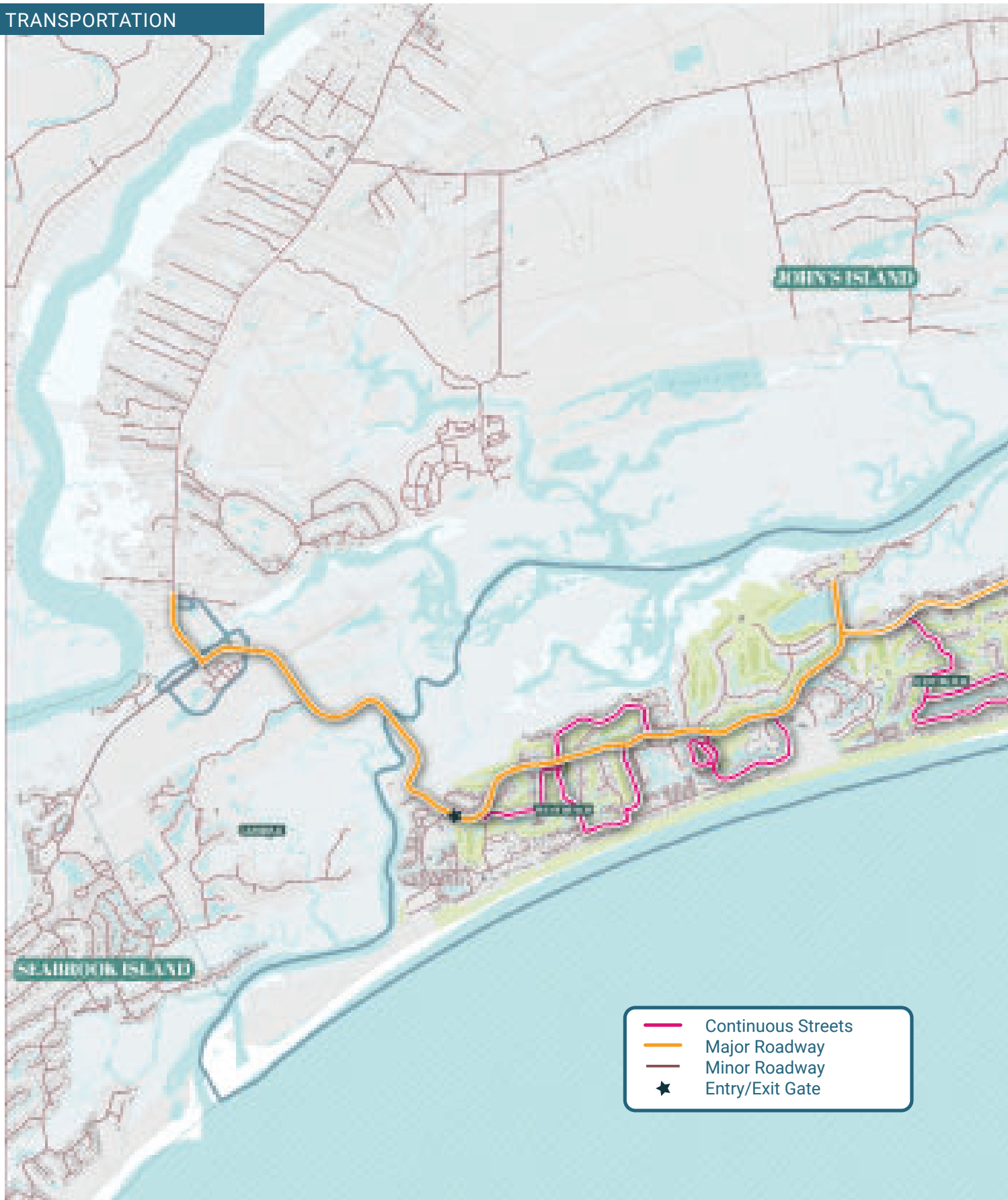
For long-term improvements, the study recommends:

1. Installing a turbo roundabout at Kiawah Island Parkway/Seabrook Island Road and Betsy Kerrison Parkway with a pedestrian bridge across Haulover Creek
2. Constructing turn lanes at Betsy Kerrison Parkway and Camp Care Road.
3. Considering a roundabout at Seabrook Island Road and Andell Bluff Boulevard.

These recommendations address current traffic needs while anticipating impacts from seven identified short-term developments and three potential long-term development sites, ensuring the Town's roadway network can accommodate future growth while maintaining acceptable service levels.

These comprehensive efforts underscore the Town's commitment to managing traffic flow while enhancing safety and improving the overall transportation experience for Kiawah's residents and visitors.

TRANSPORTATION





Street Network

Kiawah’s street network is “tree-like”, meaning it consists of smaller branches stemming from larger arteries. Only 16% of Kiawah’s minor roadways provide a continuous travel option. This increases and concentrates vehicular congestion along major roadways.

Beachwalker Drive and Kiawah Island Parkway Improvements

The Town has implemented improvements to Beachwalker Drive and Kiawah Island Parkway in recent years. On Beachwalker Drive, the Town completed several improvements in 2021, including the addition of a stacking and right-turn lane into Beachwalker County Park as well as the expansion of portions of the bike path to eight feet in width. In 2025, the Town completed improvements to the upper part of the bike path.

In response to the study's findings, the Town implemented strategic infrastructure modifications in 2024. At the intersection, the westbound through lane was converted to a free-flow lane while the westbound left-turn lane was channelized with a stop sign control. At the main gate, a new landscape island was installed to enhance both aesthetics and traffic management. The entire area underwent restriping to create a merge lane while significantly improving traffic storage capacity. Although initial plans included adding a right-turn lane, this improvement was not implemented due to complications with utility infrastructure and land acquisition requirements.

Kiawah Island Parkway and Kiawah Beach Drive Improvements

In December 2021, Kimley-Horn completed a study for KICA focusing on the intersection of Kiawah Island Parkway and Kiawah Beach Drive. This study aimed to improve safety and efficiency for all users, including drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

The study revealed several key findings. Observations revealed that vehicles frequently exceeded the speed limit. Areas with overgrown vegetation obstructed visibility, affecting drivers' ability to see pedestrians and cyclists. The study also projected traffic volumes for 2026, taking into account potential developments and an assumed annual growth rate in traffic.

Based on the traffic study findings, Kimley-Horn explored various design alternatives to improve traffic flow and safety at this intersection, necessitating a roundabout.

Understanding the different ownership and jurisdictions of the roads is crucial when considering these improvements. Kiawah Island Parkway, from the roundabout at Freshfields to the front gate, is owned and maintained by the Town, making it a public road. In contrast, Kiawah Beach Drive is owned and maintained by KICA. This distinction in ownership and accessibility significantly impacts decision-making processes for road improvements, requiring coordination between the Town and KICA for comprehensive traffic management solutions.

Regional Connections

The condition of Johns Island roads is critical to Kiawah while serving as essential arteries for daily commutes. These routes serve workers and residents of all the Sea Islands, including Kiawah, Seabrook, Johns, and Wadmalaw Islands. Contractors, subcontractors, landscape and maintenance personnel, hospitality workers, and others rely on these routes for their transportation needs. Census data reveal that nearly three-quarters of all workers on Kiawah travel more than 25 miles to reach their jobs, underscoring the need for safe, reliable routes extending well beyond the Town's jurisdiction.

These road networks are equally important for outbound travel, as Kiawah residents and visitors regularly journey to Charleston and other off-island destinations. The connection to airports is particularly vital. Measured from the front gate on Kiawah, Charleston International Airport (CHS) is just over 30 miles away, while Charleston Executive Airport (JZI) is 14 miles away.

CHS has significantly expanded its services in recent years, with 13 carriers operating flights on 69 nonstop routes to various destinations across the country. This expansion has greatly enhanced connectivity for Kiawah residents and visitors.

JZI serves as a convenient alternative for private and corporate aviation needs while playing a role for residents and visitors who prefer the flexibility and convenience of private air travel. The airport's proximity to Kiawah makes it an attractive option for those seeking quick and efficient access to Kiawah.

Multiple transportation options are available to reach Kiawah. In addition to personal vehicles, visitors and residents can

utilize rideshare services and alternative transportation methods. Notably, Uber has secured an access agreement with KICA, facilitating easier access to the island.

The importance of these regional connections highlights the need for ongoing collaboration between the Town and surrounding communities. This collaboration is essential to ensuring a safe and efficient transportation infrastructure that meets the needs of residents, workers, and visitors alike. As the region continues to grow and evolve, maintaining and improving these connections will be crucial for Kiawah's continued accessibility and prosperity.

Main Road and US 17 Improvements

The Main Road Corridor improvements project addresses growing traffic congestion in western West Ashley and Johns Island. This critical infrastructure initiative is intended to reduce congestion at the US 17 and Main Road intersection, increase vehicular capacity, improve safety throughout the corridor, and provide efficient access to local commercial and residential properties. The project also enhances bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improves stormwater drainage, and creates a safer route for emergency evacuations, addressing multiple community needs while supporting the area's continued growth.

Charleston County is currently focusing on Segment A of the Main Road Corridor project. This segment includes directional interchange flyover ramps from US 17 to Main Road, a spur bridge over US 17, extensive roadway widening, and a roundabout at Main and River Roads. Recent design modifications have improved access



Source: "Progress on preserving trees, but we're not out of the woods", *The Post and Courier*

along US 17 while minimizing impacts on planned water infrastructure. The project is scheduled for completion in September 2028. Construction began in 2025.

Impact on Kiawah

These improvements will benefit Kiawah residents, workers, and visitors. The enhanced main arteries leading to Kiawah will reduce travel times during peak traffic periods, improve safety along key access routes, provide more reliable access during daily commutes and emergencies, and support the growing number of residents and visitors traveling to and from Kiawah. The completion of Segment A will improve the experience of accessing Kiawah from the Charleston area.

Looking Forward

As the project progresses, Kiawah's stakeholders must stay informed and engaged. The Town will continue to monitor the construction timeline and communicate any significant impacts to residents. By remaining involved in regional transportation planning, Kiawah can ensure its interests are represented as the broader transportation network evolves.

Road Conditions and Land Use

Kiawah's unique geography and development pattern present distinct challenges and opportunities for integrating transportation and land use planning.

As a barrier island with limited access points and a fragile ecosystem, Kiawah requires thoughtful strategies that balance accessibility, environmental preservation, and quality of life for residents and visitors. The following analysis outlines a comprehensive approach to roads and land use integration while addressing current challenges and future needs and preserving Kiawah's character. These strategies aim to optimize traffic flow while enhancing mobility options and aligning transportation infrastructure with sustainable land use practices to ensure Kiawah's long-term vitality and resilience.

- 1. Kiawah's transportation infrastructure** is characterized by limited access points, which present unique challenges for traffic management. Kiawah is served by Kiawah Island Parkway, the main artery connecting Kiawah to the mainland, while Beachwalker Drive branches off from the Parkway to provide sole access to Kiawah's public beach. This limited road network creates a bottleneck effect, particularly during peak tourist seasons and during morning and afternoon periods when contractors are arriving or leaving Kiawah.
- 2. Traffic Flow Optimization**
Addressing Kiawah's traffic congestion requires a multi-faceted approach. Implementing turbo or normal roundabouts at key intersections along Kiawah Island Parkway can help regulate traffic flow more efficiently. Additionally, developing a real-time traffic monitoring system for the Parkway would provide valuable data for planners and residents,

allowing for more informed decision-making.

- 3. Main Gate**
The intersection of Kiawah Island Parkway and Beachwalker Drive is a critical juncture that often experiences heavy congestion. Relocating KICA's gate office to a more suitable location could help reduce traffic backup at the intersection of Kiawah Island Parkway and Beachwalker Drive. Any redesign should consider not only vehicular traffic but also ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4. Public Beach Access**
Managing access to the public beach is crucial for mitigating traffic issues. While Charleston County Park has implemented a reservation system for public beach parking during peak seasons, more parking management ideas, such as implementing a smart parking system, should be explored.
- 5. Alternative Transportation Promotion**
An island-wide electric shuttle system could provide an eco-friendly alternative for getting around the island, reducing the number of car trips made by residents and visitors. The Town or a private entity would own and operate this service.
- 6. Infrastructure Resilience**
Identifying and protecting critical road infrastructure against environmental threats, such as flooding and erosion, is crucial for maintaining access to Kiawah.
- 7. Technology Integration for Traffic Management**
Leveraging technology can greatly enhance traffic management efforts. Developing a Kiawah traffic app to provide real-time updates can help

TRANSPORTATION

residents and visitors plan their trips to avoid peak congestion. Technological solutions should be user-friendly and widely promoted to ensure maximum adoption and effectiveness.

8. Seasonal and KICA Traffic Management Strategies

Develop a comprehensive traffic management plan to address Kiawah's significant seasonal variations and daily congestion. KICA should implement staggered check-ins for visitors and guests during peak times while also addressing delivery hours for rental-related service providers (bike rental, property management, etc.). This includes managing Saturday short-term guest passes through the main gate. By adopting these flexible strategies, Kiawah can work towards improving traffic flow year-round, aiming to better accommodate both peak tourist seasons and off-season patterns.

9. Regional Coordination and Long-Term Planning

Traffic issues on Kiawah are not isolated and require coordination with neighboring areas. Working with Charleston County to improve road conditions leading to Kiawah can help manage traffic before it reaches the island. Coordinating with Seabrook Island on shared traffic management strategies can lead to more comprehensive solutions. Conduct regular traffic studies to inform long-term planning and future land use decisions.

10. Golf Cart Path Network Integration

Explore opportunities to utilize the extensive golf cart path network throughout Kiawah as an alternative transportation system during peak traffic periods or in the event of emergencies.

This approach would create additional evacuation routes and reduce main road congestion, while requiring minimal new infrastructure, as the cart path network already exists.

11. Kiawah Island Parkway Enhancement and Resiliency

Consider improvements to the Kiawah Island Parkway, the main artery leading to the front gate, with a focus on enhancing capacity and resilience. Prioritize enhancing the parkway's resilience to environmental factors such as flooding and sea-level rise. This could involve raising the elevation of the parkway leading to the main gate, incorporating permeable surfaces, and improving drainage systems. These measures would help ensure continued access to the island during extreme weather events while potentially alleviating traffic issues through improved road conditions. While widening the road could accommodate increased traffic flow, it would be a costly endeavor requiring bridge expansion and state regulatory approvals, making it a less favorable option.

12. Evacuation Planning

Develop and implement a reverse lane operations plan for emergency evacuations on Kiawah Island Parkway. This would allow for more efficient outbound traffic flow during emergencies by temporarily converting inbound lanes to outbound lanes. Regular drills and simulations should be conducted to ensure the effectiveness of this plan and familiarize residents with evacuation procedures.

A wooden boardwalk with railings winds through a lush, green marshy area. Tall pine trees are scattered throughout the landscape under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The boardwalk is made of weathered wooden planks and leads the eye into the distance.

10



priority investmentsnext

Goal: Invest in enhancing resiliency and critical 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.

Overview

The purpose of this section of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is to focus investment on priorities identified as critical to Kiawah's resilience. This section discusses the purpose of developing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to coordinate the prioritization, planning, and budgeting of these investments over ten years. The approach emphasizes resilience through emergency management, hazard mitigation, natural resource protection, and infrastructure maintenance while highlighting the importance of coordination with adjacent municipalities, public service districts, and other relevant entities in planning and executing public projects.

A more detailed analysis is needed 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 while prioritizing critical and at-risk infrastructure. New content should include a comprehensive assessment of potential funding sources, from local accommodations taxes to federal grants, while outlining key projects such as road elevations, beach restoration, stormwater management improvements, and the potential installation of a Town-owned cell tower to address cellular service on Kiawah.

Beyond infrastructure and resiliency, priority investments may emerge from future initiatives that the Town elects to pursue related to the recommendations contained in the KiawahNext Plan.

Capital Improvement Plan

The purpose of the Capital Improvement Plan is to plan and coordinate the allocation of financial resources necessary to prioritize investments. The plan will cover ten years while allowing for the following benefits:

- Facilitates coordination between capital needs and the operating budgets.
- Identifies the most economical means of financing capital projects.
- Increases opportunities for obtaining federal and state aid.
- Relates public facilities to other public and private development and redevelopment policies and plans.
- Focuses attention on community objectives and fiscal capacity.
- Keeps the public informed about future needs and projects.
- Allows local government to reduce duplication.
- Encourages careful project planning and design to avoid costly mistakes and help the community reach its desired goals.

The CIP will be updated by Town Council during the annual budget process while involving evaluation of projected fund balances compared to the ten-year funding requirements for each priority. After adopting the ten-year plan, the Town should review its progress annually, adjust or modify it, and incorporate recommendations as deemed appropriate.

The Town Council will update the CIP during the annual budget process, involving an evaluation of projected fund balances against the ten-year funding requirements for each priority. After adopting the ten-year

plan, the Town should review its progress annually while adjusting or modifying it as needed and incorporating recommendations as deemed appropriate.

As such, the CIP will be a dynamic document that will be a dynamic document that charts the planning and funding for major capital projects or priorities within the community. Town Council should receive quarterly financial reports for the plan while discussing these findings in an open session during Town Council or Ways and Means Committee meetings.

Funding Opportunities

The Town maintains a capital improvement fund to manage and fund major capital projects, as outlined in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

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 while 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 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 while 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 while continually refining its CIP process, the Town should implement a robust 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 prioritizes investing toward improvements that will ensure the resiliency of Kiawah. To ensure adequate measures are taken, it is recommended that the Town conduct and publish an Infrastructure Assessment every five 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 Kiawah's remote location, makes coastal flooding a concern for Kiawah and its resident population.

To prioritize funding for emergency management, the Town will conduct reasonable assessments of its infrastructure while identifying the replacement costs associated with it. Next, the Town will estimate the cleanup or recovery expenses related to restoring Kiawah to its pre-emergency condition. Lastly, the costs associated with the resources required 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 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 ranking, resulting in lower insurance costs for residents. The Town annually updates its Hazard Mitigation Action Plan while focusing primarily on flooding and recognizing the need to address other hazards, including hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, explosions, and erosion.

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

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 enables the Town to plan, budget, and justify improvements that effectively mitigate various hazards while relying on regular reviews and collaborative efforts among Kiawah entities for success.

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

Natural Resources:

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

Accommodations Tax:

Reserves have been maintained for beach preservation. A \$3.6 million major restoration was completed in 2006, while the Town spent \$115,000 monitoring the impacts on the beach and wildlife through 2014. Severe erosion was identified in 2014 to 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 continues to monitor erosion and accretion rates as well as shoreline changes while collaborating with KIGR on another east end channel renourishment.

The permitting process began in 2025, with a potential project commencing in 2027 or 2028. Coastal Science and Engineering conducts observations included in the state-mandated Beach Management Plan, and 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 Planning Department in April 2022, is the first document to focus solely on the marsh while integrating various management tools and strategies. It is designed as a living document that will be reviewed every five years to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

The plan outlines proposals for restoring and protecting the wetlands on Kiawah while specifically targeting areas with marsh loss and erosion. 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 while suggesting regulatory actions to protect the marsh, emphasizing public education and outreach, and outlining various restoration techniques, including 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 highlights the numerous benefits of healthy marshes, including mitigating the effects of erosion and flooding, enhancing water quality, providing vital habitats for wildlife, and serving as nurseries for marine life. By implementing this comprehensive approach, Kiawah aims to ensure the long-term health and resilience of its valuable marsh ecosystems.

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 while budget funding should be linked to coincide with the replacement schedules.

The South Carolina Water Utilities parent company to Kiawah Island Utility Company owns and operates the water and wastewater services to Kiawah, where the original water lines servicing the island require regular maintenance. A new secondary water line was installed to improve services to the island while the Seabrook Island Utility Commission provides services not only within Seabrook Island but also to Freshfields and undeveloped lands surrounding Freshfields, with a need for the Commission to also service the Municipal Complex.

As a priority investment, the Town will seek to work with Kiawah Island Utility 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 it is adequate and resilient enough to meet the future needs of Kiawah as the community continues to grow while this effort would serve as a joint public-private partnership to promote the health and welfare of 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 while being systematically scheduled for maintenance based on their projected useful lives. Additionally, the Town will evaluate and grade the quality of its three miles of roads to inform future maintenance needs. The Kiawah Island Community Association owns and maintains more than 40 miles of underground pipes that provide drainage for the island while conducting proactive maintenance or replacement to ensure that these pipes are in working order and do not compromise the overall functionality of the stormwater network managed by KICA.

The Municipal Center complex is the single largest facility owned by the Town. Completed in 2016, it includes approximately 18,600 square feet of conditioned space housing around 30 employees and a four-bay garage.

11





resiliencynext

Goal: To preserve and enhance Kiawah’s natural and built environments in the face of changing environmental conditions

Resiliency

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.

Overview

Kiawah faces unique challenges as a coastal community, including sea-level rise, increased flooding, and shoreline erosion.

This section outlines actions taken and ongoing efforts to address these challenges, including marsh management, stormwater systems, beach sustainability, public safety coordination, emergency operations, and evacuation planning. It details how environmental assets provide critical protection against weather events while describing the Town’s emergency preparedness systems and outlining strategies for enhancing coordination between key stakeholders to ensure comprehensive resilience for current and future generations.

The Town’s approach to resiliency is multifaceted, encompassing both natural and built environment strategies. Environmental initiatives include the Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan with its four-pronged approach to monitor, protect, engage, and restore marsh ecosystems, advanced stormwater management ordinances aligned with Low Impact Development practices, and beach sustainability programs that leverage natural processes for shoreline protection. The Town actively employs real-time flood monitoring systems while testing water sources for contaminants and exploring nature-based solutions such as living shorelines that have proven successful in other coastal communities.

Resiliency

Kiawah is uniquely positioned as a coastal community facing significant environmental challenges, including climate change, sea-level rise, increased flooding, and shoreline erosion. The Town of Kiawah is dedicated to proactively addressing these challenges through thoughtful exploration and consideration of various resilience and sustainability strategies. This section outlines confirmed actions and ongoing efforts, including marsh management, stormwater management ordinances, water quality initiatives, community engagement, and potential future strategies informed by successful practices from other coastal communities.

Environmental and Coastal Resilience

The Town adopted a Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan, which provides a structured approach to monitoring, protecting, engaging, and restoring the island's marsh ecosystems. As part of this plan, the Town conducts regular monitoring and management activities to assess marsh health while addressing concerns such as bank erosion and vegetation changes.

Additionally, the Town may explore implementing nature-based solutions, such as living shoreline techniques utilized successfully in communities such as Folly Beach and Boyd, which involve oyster castles, bagged shell reefs, and manufactured wire reefs. These examples illustrate methods to naturally stabilize shorelines while fostering sediment accretion and enhancing marsh regeneration and marine habitat.

Advanced Stormwater Management and Water Quality Protection

The Town has adopted a robust stormwater management ordinance aligned with Charleston County standards. This ordinance emphasizes reducing impervious surfaces while using pervious paving materials, vegetative buffers, and other green infrastructure methods inspired by Low Impact Development practices.

The Town currently employs a real-time flood monitoring system, which provides vital data for informed decision-making and improved flood preparedness. The Town also actively tests local water sources for contaminants, such as PFAS, to ensure public health and ecosystem integrity while further demonstrating the Town's commitment to proactive water quality management.

Marsh Management and Conservation

Marsh conservation and shoreline stability are priorities within the Town's Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan. The Town is actively managing its marsh ecosystems through regular monitoring programs and targeted restoration efforts to preserve marsh functions, such as sediment accretion and runoff filtration. Additionally, the Town may consider strategies such as wattle fences and wood breakwaters, techniques successfully utilized in regional projects such as those at Boyd and Folly Beach, as potential approaches to further enhance sediment retention while promoting native vegetation growth.

Beach Sustainability and Shoreline Restoration

The Town prioritizes the preservation and sustainability of its beaches, which are essential for maintaining ecological health while promoting recreation and supporting tourism. Recognizing successful regional practices, such as those implemented on Sullivan's Island and Folly Beach, the Town should consider developing a comprehensive coastal resilience strategy

that includes beach nourishment, dune restoration, and erosion control measures. Specific infrastructure projects, such as vegetated dunes and controlled access pathways, will be implemented to minimize erosion while protecting habitats and enhancing the shoreline’s overall health. These projects will be complemented by ongoing monitoring and adaptive management strategies to ensure the continued effectiveness of beach resilience measures.

Community Engagement and Education

Community engagement remains a critical aspect of resiliency planning on Kiawah. The Town may establish outreach programs, such as ambassador initiatives similar to those seen in other coastal resilience projects such as the Boyd Living Shoreline. These initiatives have empowered residents to engage in resilience planning while increasing environmental literacy and supporting community stewardship efforts. Educational signage, community workshops, and structured outreach programs will further strengthen local understanding and involvement in resiliency initiatives.

The Town should also consider adding a section to its existing website dedicated to helpful information such as podcasts, training materials, contact lists, and other resiliency-related resources. Additionally, the Town may hold periodic community outreach and training sessions to raise awareness of emergency resources, such as CERT, evacuation routes, and storm shelters while complementing these sessions with brochures and other materials for visitors to use.

Kiawah Go Green

The Town actively supports environmental

sustainability through various Go Green initiatives while focusing on reducing environmental impacts and promoting sustainable practices. Current key efforts include installing additional electric vehicle charging stations at Town Hall and encouraging broader electric vehicle adoption across the island. Further exploration into renewable energy sources, pursuing partnerships to advance green energy use, and pursuing green tourism certification as a Green Tourist Destination will remain central to Kiawah’s sustainability goals.

Resiliency Committee and Long-term Implementation

The Town established the Resiliency Committee to advise Town Council on resilience and sustainability issues while guiding the implementation of recommended strategies from the Comprehensive Marsh Management Plan, the Sea Level Rise Report, and other relevant plans.

The committee’s role includes monitoring resilience initiatives while promoting community education and awareness, identifying funding opportunities, and ensuring comprehensive coordination across different organizational entities.

Through these structured efforts, Kiawah will continuously adapt while effectively managing resilience initiatives and sustaining the island’s environmental health and community well-being for current and future generations.

Housing and Land Use

The Town should educate existing and new property owners on resilient building practices. As Kiawah approaches full build-out and older housing stock is redeveloped,

it will be important to utilize low-impact development to minimize environmental impact while reviewing and updating Town zoning standards to account for environmental changes and trends.

Infrastructure

Existing community facilities, including utilities, first responders, CERT, and Town buildings, should be evaluated based on both current and projected population levels for Kiawah over the coming years. Road elevation and drainage should be reviewed to account for rising sea levels and increased nuisance flooding.

Emergency Operations

The Town maintains an Emergency Preparedness Plan that is reviewed and updated annually. Its goal is to keep residents and organizations on Kiawah informed about conditions that could pose a threat to safety or property while ensuring that all directives and advice from national, state, or local authorities are effectively communicated to everyone.

To support recovery after natural disasters, the Town has a debris removal contract that covers cleanup of debris resulting from hurricanes or severe weather. This contract also includes damage assessments, debris reduction, barge transport, temporary housing, satellite phone service, and meal provisions in the event of a post-disaster scenario.

The Town uses a telephone notification system called CodeRED to alert residents during emergencies or urgent community issues, such as evacuation orders, boil-water advisories, tornado warnings, and flash floods. This system allows the Town to send status updates while requesting resources

and issuing public notices to the county, fire, law enforcement, medical personnel, and media from a remote location during evacuations.

Previously, an objective under Community Facilities involved establishing an island-wide communications channel. This channel would centralize all outreach while including the emergency and community alerts mentioned above.

Public Safety Committee

The Town's Public Safety Committee serves as the primary liaison while gathering all public safety organizations monthly to discuss relevant issues. It meets the Town's legal requirements under state law concerning the health, safety, and welfare of residents, as outlined in Title 5 of the South Carolina Code of Laws. Acting as the central hub for safety initiatives, the committee works with partners such as the St. Johns Fire District, Charleston County Emergency Medical Services, KICA security, KIGR Security, Town Code Enforcement, Barrier Island Ocean Rescue, and the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. These collaborations ensure thorough safety coverage across Kiawah.

The committee should consider developing a unified Public Safety and Resilience Strategy in collaboration with island stakeholders. This plan would evaluate Kiawah's risks while assessing utility resilience in various scenarios and reviewing existing capabilities of first responders. It would also define organizational roles during emergencies while including regular testing of response systems.

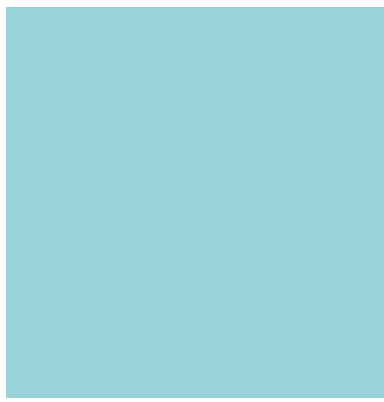
As coastal communities face increasing threats from rising sea levels and extreme

weather events, the committee will focus on enhancing emergency preparedness and response. By adopting best practices from similar communities while maintaining proactive safety measures, the Town aims to develop a resilient community that effectively safeguards residents, property owners, and visitors.

Flooding

Kiawah's natural resources and ecology provide essential protection against weather events. The Flood Mitigation and Sea Level Rise Adaptation for Kiawah Island identifies flooding risks while outlining mitigation strategies. The Flood Mitigation and Sea Level Rise Adaptation Subcommittee emphasizes the importance of maintaining a robust stormwater management system while noting that Kiawah's interconnected ponds can manage rainfall from a 100-year flood but may face challenges with increasing flood frequency. Continuous evaluation and maintenance of this system, along with ensuring critical roadways remain passable for emergency services, are essential for long-term resilience. A recent nor'easter in December 2023 underscored these vulnerabilities by causing severe flooding that affected critical infrastructure and roads.





TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND | 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

kiawahnext

ADOPTED XX.XX.2025

TOKI 2025 Comprehensive Plan

Revisions as of 07.25

Comments 08.29.25

General

This is an excellent document that far surpasses previous versions over the years...the commentary is clear, understandable and well organized...the background information is succinct and helpful in describing the basics of Kiawah Island to those less familiar with scale, magnitude and complexity of community organization...select recommendations of initiatives, such as organizing the Kiawah Island Alliance and a Town Redevelopment Task Force are particularly appropriate for the challenges ahead...with that in mind, please find below additional observations/recommendations to consider prior to advancing for council review

Comments/Recommendations for Consideration

- Pg.9 **Glossary of Terms, KICA:** recommend adding “primary infrastructure behind second gate’ on listing of areas of responsibility...KP: recommend adding “and is responsible for oversight of the Architectural Review Board” on listing of areas of responsibility...
- Pg.10 **Three Critical Factors Shape Kiawah’s Future** 1. Recommend adding “the Town of Seabrook Island” in sentence describing jurisdictions that the TOKI borders
- Pg.12 **1. Development and Growth** Recommend the addition of 1.4 Update Development Standards...assess existing/future development in relationship to outdated development standards and propose new standards based upon lessons learned and evaluation of relevant com-parables
- Pg.15 **Top Trends,** reference to Orange Hill scale should be “maximum of 120 homes”...delete 68 cottages, implication it is base plus cottages is misleading
- Pg.18 **Development of Remaining Residential and Commercial Sites: Growth in new residential developments**...the wording implies the growth from 4,087 completed units to between 4,800 and 5,221 is “primarily driven by multifamily”...depending on choices of whether hotel rooms or multifamily is chosen this may be correct; however, there is no reference to existing single family homesites previously sold which may be developed...as a minimum recommend some reference to scale/magnitude of existing undeveloped homesites, which were 311 as of 08.11.25...this does not include 55 non-buildable or conservancy homesites
- Pg.21 **1.2 Establish a Town Redevelopment Task Force**...this is an excellent idea...recommend restatement of importance of assessing existing development

standards and update as necessary to reflect impact of significant changes in required building standards such as minimum finish floor elevations, ground coverage limits, etc.

- Pg.22 **Understanding Our Community: Kiawah’s Audience:** ...there is reference to “...a projected 1,000 dwellings and 300 hotel rooms are expected to be built...” it is not possible to do both...presently select sites allow for either/or residential dwellings/or hotel rooms...recommend greater clarification for what is possible and probable based upon like-kind assessment of previous choices
- Pg.49 repeat of text in last paragraph
- Pg.58 would some reference to increased accessibility for domestic and international travel include Charleston Executive Airport (JZI) on Johns Island be appropriate?...this has played a vital role on connectivity for annual visits as well as select special island events
- Pg.72 **Natural Resources**...graphic is difficult to read/interpret...recommend either break scale down into several segments (such as Pgs. 68/69) or focus on specific areas to better communicate key information
- Pgs.74/75 **Wetlands & Protected Lands**...graphic difficult to differentiate color for Undeveloped Land with specific callouts for East Beach neighborhood sites, such as Windswept Villas, Parkside Villas, Tennis Club Villas, Turtle Point Villas, etc....recommend removing color from villa areas to focus on Wetlands and Protected Lands
- Pg. 76 **Captain Sams Spit**...reference is made to previous relocation projects...recommend identifying those as 1983, 1996 and 2015 to provide perspective of potential cycle time periods...
- Pg.81 **Recreational and Educational Activities**...general description of island-wide recreational facilities appropriately references KICA and KIGR facilities but does not mention KIClub, which provides additional golf, fitness and pool facilities...recommend some reference to be included in description
- Pg.92 **Housing Types**...within the third paragraph reference is made to “...530 potential multi-family units...”this is technically accurate; however, practically not based upon like-kind historical development on the island...additionally, this is only true if the decision to not build additional hotel rooms is made...recommend integrating additional wording that presents a range depending on the decision to build additional hotel rooms
- Pg.97 **Land Use**...ditto comment as above about expanding description of potential residential development count...
- Pg.100 **Future Land Use Categories, High Density Residential**...Shipwatch Villas (19 DU/ac) and Duneside Villas (5 DU/ac) do not meet the density definition for High Density...recommend using Windswept I (9.2 DU/ac), or Tennis Club I (8.7 DU/ac) as representative of max of 12 DU/ac

- Pgs.104/105 graphic reads poorly...improve resolution
- Pg. 111 **Greenspace Network: Parks, Trails & Open Space**...graphic inaccurately represents "...1,537 acres of parks on Kiawah Island."...should be 193 acres as represented on Pg.75
- Pg.119 **Road Conditions and Land Use, 5. Alternative Transportation Promotion**...the concept of an island-wide transportation system is worthy of greater recognition in the document...although an extreme condition, for those that took advantage of the on-island system in place for both PGA tournaments, it showed evidence of the positive impact on traffic flow...additional examples of such a system are winter resorts that effectively integrate campus/grounds wide systems...ours would be a hybrid (such as connecting two core villages and Freshfields) or seasonal in nature, but recommend this topic should be elevated in importance
- Pg.130 there are several references to project locations at "...Folly Beach and Boyd..." where/what is Boyd?

As noted in the opening paragraph, this is a well-organized and informative document, that presents a proactive plan for continuing the basic principles of Designing With Nature and recognizing, after 50 years, we as a community are best served by Living With Nature...the recommendations are offered within the backdrop of collaboration you have posed to the greater Kiawah community...



TAB 4

TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item

Town of Kiawah Island Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request
Case AZO25-000008 Case History

Planning Commission Meeting: August 6, 2025
Public Hearing and First Reading: September 9, 2025
Second Reading:

CASE INFORMATION

Applicant: Town of Kiawah Island

Application: 1) #AZO25-000008 | Modified Zoning District Standards
An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article II. - Zoning, Division 2 – Zoning Map/Districts to modify zoning standards including but not limited to lot coverage, height, and setbacks within several residential, resort, commercial, community support, and parks and recreation zoning districts.

Key Factors of the Proposed Ordinance:

The proposed amendment begins assessment and review of several base zoning districts subsequently to the comprehensive plan update process. The proposed amendment considers reduction of maximum building heights, lot coverage and modification of setbacks.

The proposed amendments establish consistency between the RST-1 and RST-2 Zoning Districts with regards to setbacks. The proposed amendments would result in several nonconforming structures across several zoning districts.

RST-2 generally applies to properties within the West Beach area, owned by Kiawah Island Golf Resort. (Conference Center, Old Inn Site)

RST-1 Zoning District generally applies to properties within East Beach, owned by the Kiawah Island Golf Resort. (The Sanctuary)

RECOMMENDATION BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Pursuant to §12-158(3) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* “The Planning Commission shall review the proposed text amendment and/or zoning map amendment and take action, recommending that the Town Council approve or deny the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission may hold a public hearing in accordance with the procedures in section 12-156. The Planning Commission’s recommendation shall be based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. The Planning Commission shall submit its recommendation to the Town Council within 30 working days of the Planning Commission meeting at which the amendment was introduced. A simple majority vote of Planning Commission members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment.”

DECISION ON AMENDMENT BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

Pursuant to §12-158(5) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* “After receiving the recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Town Council shall hold one or more public hearings, and any time after the close of the public hearing, take action to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the proposed amendment based on the approval criteria of subsection (6) of this section. A simple majority vote of Town Council members present, and voting shall be required to approve the amendment. Zoning map amendments shall not be approved with conditions. Prior to action on a proposed code text amendment, the Town Council may, in the exercise of its legislative discretion, invoke the "pending ordinance doctrine" by ordinance so that no building permits shall be issued for structures which would be affected by the proposed amendment until the Town Council has rendered its decision on the proposed amendment.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

Pursuant to §12-158(6) of the *Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance*, (6) Approval criteria. Text and zoning map amendments to the ordinance may be approved if the following approval criteria have been met:

- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Town of Kiawah Island Comprehensive Plan;
- b. The proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes and intent of this article;
- c. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to further the general health, safety and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island;
- d. The proposed amendment corrects an error or inconsistency or meets the challenge of a changed condition.

PLANNING STAFF REVIEW

The Planning Commission considered recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan at its August meeting in which the plan highlights pressures and strain on existing infrastructure and amenities. The Town should take some action to consider amended standards which impact remaining development opportunity and redevelopment. The proposed changes reduce overall lot coverage and building heights for zoning districts of greater density.

Planning staff recommends a comprehensive review of the base zoning standards to ensure redevelopment is taken into consideration with proposed changes.

Planning staff finds the proposed amendment satisfies the approval criteria pursuant to §12-158(6) and recommends approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AUGUST 6, 2025

Notifications: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

**The Planning Commission recommended approval
of the proposed zoning text amendments by a vote of 5 to 1.**

TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND

ORDINANCE 2025-19

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 12 - LAND USE PLANNING AND ZONING
ORDINANCE ARTICLE II. - ZONING, DIVISION 2 – ZONING MAP/DISTRICTS TO MODIFY
BASE ZONING STANDARDS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO LOT COVERAGE, HEIGHT,
AND SETBACKS WITHIN SEVERAL ZONING DISTRICTS.**

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island Municipal Code currently contains *Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning*; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Kiawah Island now finds that, upon further review, it is in the public interest to amend the *Town of Kiawah Island Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance* to modify base zoning standards; and

WHEREAS, the text amendment would be consistent with the purposes and intent of the adopted Comprehensive Plan and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare of the Town of Kiawah Island; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a meeting August 6, 2025 at which time a presentation was made by staff, and an opportunity was given for the public to comment on the text amendment request; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, after consideration of the staff report, subsequently voted on August 6, 2025, to recommend to Town Council that the proposed amendment be approved; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council held a Public Hearing on September 9, 2025, providing the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND IT IS ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF SAID COUNCIL.

Section 1 **Purpose**

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance to modify development standards within several base zoning districts.

Section 2 **Ordinance**

- (1) The Town hereby amends Chapter 12 - Land Use Planning and Zoning Ordinance Article II. - Zoning, Division 2 – Zoning Map/Districts as shown in the attached **“Exhibit A”** which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

Section 3 **Severability**

If any part of this Ordinance is held to be unconstitutional, it shall be construed to have been the legislative intent to pass said Ordinance without such unconstitutional provision, and the remainder of said Ordinance shall be deemed to be valid as if such portion had not been included. If said Ordinance, or any provisions thereof, is held to be inapplicable to any person, group of persons, property, kind property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the circumstances or set of

circumstances, such holding shall not affect the applicability thereof to any other persons, property, or circumstances.

Section 4 **Effective Date and Duration**

This Ordinance shall be effective upon its enactment by Town Council for the Town of Kiawah Island.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF KIAWAH ISLAND ON THIS __ DAY OF _____, 2025.

Bradley D. Belt, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
Petra Reynolds, Town Clerk

1st Reading:

2nd Reading:

DRAFT

Proposed Text: Text

Deleted Text: ~~Text~~

Sec. 12-65. R-1, Residential District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the R-1 zoning district is to promote stable residential neighborhoods consisting of low density, detached, single-family dwellings and surrounding parks, golf courses, and open spaces. Activities and endeavors which might serve to mitigate against this purpose shall be prohibited or strictly regulated.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to all dwelling units in the R-1 zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum density for this district is three dwelling units per acre;
 - (2) All required parking shall be enclosed;
 - (3) Open storage is prohibited;
 - (4) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for single-family detached dwellings on existing platted lots that are included in article VII of this chapter, the Kiawah Island Property Setback Requirements Appendix, dated 7-10-2007, incorporated herein by reference and adopted hereto as said article VII shall apply in lieu of the setback requirements in table 2B following subsection (b)(6) of this section;
 - (5) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for single-family detached dwellings not covered by subsection (b)(4) of this section are listed in table 2B following subsection (b)(6) of this section and table 2C following section 12-66(b)(8);
 - (6) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c).

Table 2B. Lot Standards for R-1 Single-Family Detached Dwellings								
Lot Size (square feet)	Maximum Lot Coverage	Depth (feet)	Width (feet) ⁽¹⁾	Minimum Yard Setbacks (feet)			Maximum Height	
				Front ⁽²⁾	Side ⁽³⁾⁽⁵⁾	Rear ⁽⁴⁾	(stories)	(feet)
8,000—11,999	40 percent	100	60	25	10	25	2.5	40
12,000+	33 percent	100	75	25	20	25	2.5	40
⁽¹⁾ For lots on cul-de-sacs or similar circumstances, the minimum width shall apply at the front yard setback line. Cul-de-sac lots shall have a minimum width of 25 feet at the street line. The minimum width of any flag lot may be reduced to 20 feet, provided that the minimum width specified in the table is provided at the front building setback line.								
⁽²⁾ On corner and double-frontage lots, front setback standards will apply to each lot line that borders a street right-of-way. The rear yard setback shall apply to the opposite side of the principal structure's front main entrance. The side yard setback shall apply to the remaining sides.								
⁽³⁾ A minimum of 15 feet must be provided between structures.								
⁽⁴⁾ The minimum yard requirements shall be increased to 30 feet from any lot or parcel boundary which abuts a golf course.								
⁽⁵⁾ Minimum setbacks in side yard for lots currently in existence and reflected on the current zoning map and fronting on Eugenia Avenue the side yard setback shall be ten feet.								

(Code 1993, § 12A-205; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-205, 10-12-2005; Ord. No. 2006-10, § 2, 2-6-2007; Ord. No. 2007-05, § 2(12A-205), 7-10-2007)

Sec. 12-66. R-2, Residential District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the R-2 zoning district is to promote stable residential neighborhoods consisting of medium density residences surrounded by parks, golf courses and open spaces. The district is intended for a variety of dwelling unit types. Activities and endeavors which might serve to mitigate against this purpose shall be prohibited or strictly regulated.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the R-2 zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum density for this district is six dwelling units per acre;
 - (2) All required parking shall be enclosed;
 - (3) Open storage is prohibited;
 - (4) There shall be no more than four dwelling units in any building within this district;
 - (5) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for single-family detached dwellings on existing platted lots that are included in article VII of this chapter, the Kiawah Island Property Setback Requirements Appendix, dated 7-10-2007, incorporated herein by reference and adopted hereto as said article VII shall apply in lieu of the setback requirements in table 2C following subsection (b)(8) of this section;
 - (6) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for patio homes, on existing platted lots that are included in article VII of this chapter, the Kiawah Island Property Setback Requirements Appendix, dated 7-10-2007, incorporated herein by reference and adopted hereto as said article VII shall apply in lieu of the setback requirements in table 2D following subsection (b)(8) of this section;
 - (7) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for patio homes not covered by subsection (b)(6) of this section are listed in table 2D following subsection (b)(8) of this section;
 - (8) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c).

Table 2C. Lot Standards for R-2 Single-Family Detached Dwellings								
Lot Size (square feet)	Maximum Lot Coverage	Depth (feet)	Width (Feet) ⁽¹⁾	Minimum Yard Setbacks ⁽²⁾ (feet)			Maximum Height	
				Front ⁽²⁾	Side ⁽³⁾	Rear ⁽⁴⁾	(stories)	(feet)
6,000—7,999	50 percent	85	55	20	7	20	2.5	40
8,000—11,999	40 percent	100	60	25	15	25	2.5	40
12,000+	33 percent	100	75	25	20	25	2.5	40
⁽¹⁾ For lots on cul-de-sacs or similar circumstances, the minimum width shall apply at the front yard setback line. Cul-de-sac lots shall have a minimum width of 25 feet at the street line. The minimum width of any flag lot may be reduced to 20 feet, provided that the minimum width specified in the table is provided at the front building setback line.								
⁽²⁾ On corner and double-frontage lots, front setback standards will apply to each lot line that borders a street right-of-way. The rear yard setback shall apply to the opposite side of the principal structure's front main entrance. The side yard setback shall apply to the remaining sides.								
⁽³⁾ A minimum of 15 feet must be provided between structures.								
⁽⁴⁾ The minimum yard requirements shall be increased to 30 feet from any lot or parcel boundary which abuts a golf course.								

Table 2D. Lot Standards for R-2 (Patio Homes, Duplexes and Townhouses)

Housing Type	Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Minimum Yard Setbacks (feet)			Maximum Height		Maximum Lot Coverage
		Front	Side ⁽¹⁾	Rear	(stories)	(feet)	
Patio homes, zero lot line homes	4,000	20	0/10 ⁽²⁾	20	2.5	35	50 percent
Duplex	6,500	15	7	20	2.5	40	40 percent
Townhouse	2,000	10	See note ⁽³⁾	20	2.5	40	60 percent

⁽¹⁾ On corner and double-frontage lots, front setback standards will apply to each lot line that borders a street right-of-way. The rear yard setback shall apply to the opposite side of the principal structure's front main entrance. The side yard setback shall apply to the remaining sides.

⁽²⁾ A total distance of 15 feet is required between buildings with ten feet minimum setback being required on one side of each lot.

⁽³⁾ Where the front, interior side and rear setbacks of the underlying zoning district reduces the buildable width of a lot to less than 40 feet, the Planning Director shall be authorized to reduce the required setbacks as much as necessary. However, no setback reduction granted by the Planning Department shall be for more than 15 feet.

(Code 1993, § 12A-206; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-206, 10-12-2005; Ord. No. 2007-05, § 2(12A-206), 7-10-2007)

Sec. 12-67. R-3, Residential District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the R-3 zoning district is to provide for neighborhoods consisting of higher density, residential development for Kiawah Island's residents and guests, surrounded by parks, golf courses, and open spaces. It accommodates multifamily dwellings and other higher density single-family alternatives, such as duplexes or townhouses. Activities and endeavors which might serve to mitigate against this purpose shall be prohibited or strictly regulated.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the R-3 zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum density for this district is 12 dwelling units per acre;
 - (2) Open storage is prohibited;
 - (3) There shall be no more than four dwelling units in any building within this district;
 - (4) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for single-family detached dwellings are listed in table 2F in this subsection;
 - (5) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for patio homes, duplexes, townhouses and multifamily are listed in table 2G in this subsection (b);
 - (6) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c).

Table 2F. Lot Standards for R-3 Single-family Detached Dwellings								
Lot Size (square feet)	Maximum Lot Coverage	Depth (feet)	Width (feet) ⁽¹⁾	Minimum Setbacks (feet)			Maximum Height	
				Front ⁽²⁾	Side ⁽³⁾	Rear ⁽⁴⁾	(stories)	(feet)
2,000—3,999	60 percent	65	20	10	3	10	2.5	40
4,000—5,999	50 percent	75	30	15	7	15	2.5	40
6,000—7,999	50 percent	85	55	20	7	20	2.5	40
8,000—11,999	40 percent	100	60	25	10	25	2.5	40
12,000+	33 percent	100	75	25	20	25	2.5	40
⁽¹⁾ For lots on cul-de-sacs or similar circumstances, the minimum width shall apply at the front yard setback line. Cul-de-sac lots shall have a minimum width of 25 feet at the street line. The minimum width of any flag lot may be reduced to 20 feet, provided that the minimum width specified in the table is provided at the front building setback line.								
⁽²⁾ On corner and double-frontage lots, front setback standards will apply to each lot line that borders a street right-of-way. The rear yard setback shall apply to the opposite side of the principal structure's front main entrance. The side yard setback shall apply to the remaining sides.								
⁽³⁾ A minimum of 15 feet must be provided between structures.								
⁽⁴⁾ The minimum yard requirements shall be increased to 30 feet from any lot or parcel boundary which abuts a golf course.								

Table 2G. Lot Standards for R-3 (Patio Homes, Duplexes, Townhouses and Multifamily)							
Housing Type	Minimum Lot Size (square feet)	Minimum Setbacks (feet)			Maximum Height		Maximum Lot Coverage (percent)
		Front	Side ⁽¹⁾	Rear	(stories)	(feet)	
Patio homes, zero lot line homes	4,000	20	0/10 ⁽²⁾	20	2.5	35	50
Duplex	6,500	15	7	20	2.5	40	40

Townhouse	2,000	10	See note ⁽³⁾	20	2.5	40	60-40
Multifamily	10,000	25	See note ⁽³⁾	20	2	40	60-40

⁽¹⁾ On corner and double-frontage lots, front setback standards will apply to each lot line that borders a street right-of-way. The rear yard setback shall apply to the opposite side of the principal structure's front main entrance. The side yard setback shall apply to the remaining sides.

⁽²⁾ A total distance of 15 feet is required between buildings with ten feet minimum setback being required on one side of each lot.

⁽³⁾ Where the front, interior side and rear setbacks of the underlying zoning district reduces the buildable width of a lot to less than 40 feet, the Planning Director shall be authorized to reduce the required setbacks as much as necessary. However, no setback reduction granted by the Planning Department shall be for more than 15 feet.

(Code 1993, § 12A-207; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-207, 10-12-2005)

Sec. 12-68. C, Commercial District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the Commercial District is to provide for high quality, low-rise commercial development to meet the needs of the Island's residents and guests. Because of the limited population served by the Town's commercial facilities, uses permitted in this district generally are smaller in scale than typical in a regional commercial district.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the C zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum floor area ratio for this district is 0.2;
 - (2) Open storage is prohibited;
 - (3) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) are listed in table 2H in this subsection;
 - (4) Authorized uses are listed below in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (5) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.

Table 2H. Lot Standards for the C, Commercial Zoning District		
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾		20,000
Minimum lot depth (feet)		120
Minimum width (feet)		150
Maximum floor area ratio		0.2
Maximum lot coverage		70 percent
Maximum height		
	Stories ⁽²⁾	2.5
	Feet ⁽⁶⁾	35
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽³⁾		
	Front	25
	Side ⁽⁴⁾	20
	Rear ⁽⁵⁾	25
⁽¹⁾ Smaller nonresidential lots may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.		
⁽²⁾ Buildings shall not exceed the permitted number of stories or height.		
⁽³⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.		
⁽⁴⁾ No interior side yard will be required on contiguous lots.		
⁽⁵⁾ Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from rear property lines.		
⁽⁶⁾ Height in the C zoning district applies to all nonresidential commercial and general office uses, including restaurants, shops, real estate offices, etc., not associated with a hotel.		

(Code 1993, § 12A-208; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-208, 10-12-2005)

Sec. 12-69. RST-1, Resort District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the RST-1 zoning district is to provide for development of high quality resorts and associated uses providing a wide range of activities for guests of Kiawah Island.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the RST-1 zoning district:
 - (1) The density of guestrooms shall be limited to eight rooms per acre;
 - (2) Hotels, and Inns shall provide the following resort facilities:
 - a. Ten square feet of swimming pool and contiguous pool deck area per guestroom;
 - b. Ten square feet of dining/lounge area per guestroom;
 - c. One seat of meeting room capacity per guestroom;
 - d. Shuttles to transport guests to Kiawah Island golf courses, tennis centers, and other amenities;
 - e. Exercise facilities;
 - f. Direct beach access;
 - g. One tennis court per 50 rooms, which may be waived for hotels located within 1,000 feet of existing courts that may be used by hotel guests;
 - (3) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) are listed in table 2I in this subsection;
 - (4) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (5) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.

Table 2I. Lot Standards for the RST-1, Resort Zoning District						
Maximum number of guestrooms (per acre)		8				
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾		20,000				
Minimum lot depth (feet)		120				
Minimum width (feet)		150				
Maximum floor area ratio		0.2				
Maximum lot coverage		70 <u>50</u> percent				
Maximum height ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾						
	Stories	4	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	Feet	70 <u>55</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>10</u>
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽³⁾						
	Front	100	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
	Side ⁽⁴⁾	100	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
	Rear ⁽⁵⁾	150				
	<u>Oceanfront</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>40</u>
	<u>Non oceanfront</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>20</u>
⁽¹⁾ Smaller nonresidential lots may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.						
⁽²⁾ Buildings shall not exceed the permitted number of stories or height <u>in feet</u> .						
⁽³⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.						
⁽⁴⁾ No interior side yard will be required on contiguous lots.						
⁽⁵⁾ Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from rear property lines.						
⁽⁶⁾ Height in the RST-1 zoning district applies to hotels and associated activities, such as a conference or convention center, meeting rooms, gift shops or restaurants associated with a hotel.						

(Code 1993, § 12A-209; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-209, 10-12-2005)

Sec. 12-70. RST-2, Resort District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the RST-2 zoning district is to provide for development of high quality resorts and associated uses providing a wide range of activities for guests of Kiawah Island.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the RST-2 zoning district:
 - (1) The density of guestrooms shall be limited to nine rooms per acre;
 - (2) Hotels and inns shall provide the following resort facilities:
 - a. Ten square feet of swimming pool and contiguous pool deck area per guestroom;
 - b. Ten square feet of dining/lounge area per guestroom;
 - c. One seat of meeting room capacity per guestroom;
 - d. Shuttles to transport guests to Kiawah Island golf courses, tennis centers, and other amenities;
 - e. Exercise facilities;
 - f. Direct beach access;
 - g. One tennis court per 50 rooms, which may be waived for hotels located within 1,000 feet of existing courts that may be used by hotel guests;
 - (3) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) are listed in table 2J in this subsection;

Notation: Accessory uses include pools, changing rooms, restrooms, gazebos, shade structures, food and beverage services, poolside-beachside retail sales, meeting facilities, fitness and other similar uses related to hotel guest services.
 - (4) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (5) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.

Table 2J. Lot Standards for the RST-2, Resort Zoning District						
Maximum number of guestrooms (per acre)		9 ⁽¹⁰⁾				
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾		20,000				
Minimum lot depth (feet)		120				
Minimum width (feet)		150				
Maximum floor area ratio		0.2				
Maximum lot coverage		70-50 percent				
Maximum height ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾						
	Stories	4	3	2	1	0 ⁽⁷⁾
	Feet	55	55	45	35	10
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽³⁾						
	Front	50	50 ⁽⁸⁾	50 ⁽⁸⁾	50 ⁽⁸⁾	25
	Side ⁽⁴⁾	50	40 ⁽⁸⁾	30 ⁽⁸⁾	25	25
	Rear ⁽⁵⁾					
	Oceanfront ⁽⁹⁾	120	120	60	40	20
	Lagoon—Wooded	50	40	25	25	20

Created: 2025-06-20 14:56:49 [EST]

(1) Smaller nonresidential lots may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.
(2) Buildings shall not exceed the permitted number of stories or height <u>in feet</u> .
(3) Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.
(4) No interior side yard will be required on contiguous lots.
(5) Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from rear property lines.
(6) Height in the RST-2 zoning district applies to hotels and associated activities, such as a conference or convention center, meeting rooms, gift shops or restaurants associated with a hotel.
(7) Grade level structures such as pools, decking, parking and other site improvements that minimize vertical massing
(8) Building setback may be reduced to 25 feet for structures adjacent to local or minor streets. Section 12.64(2) (formerly section 12A-204) "Setbacks on corner and double frontage lots" does not apply where one of the two streets is a minor (or local) street.
(9) Hotel rooms and meeting rooms shall not be closer to rear oceanfront property line than 120 feet regardless of height.
(10) With respect to a parcel under a development agreement comprised of more than one tax map parcel, the maximum number of rooms per acre shall not be determined based upon individual tax map basis, but instead on the total acreage of the entire parcel under the development agreement.

(Code 1993, § 12A-210; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-210, 10-12-2005; Ord. No. 2017-14, § 1(Exh. A), 7-11-2017)

Sec. 12-71. CS, Community Support District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the CS, Community Support District is to provide for supporting community facilities and services including, but not limited to, utilities, street maintenance facilities and other necessary uses that may not otherwise be compatible with uses permitted in other districts in the Town of Kiawah Island.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the CS zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum floor area ratio for this district is 0.25;
 - (2) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) are listed in table 2K in this subsection;
 - (3) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (4) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.

Table 2K. Lot Standards for the CS, Community Support Zoning District		
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾		20,000
Minimum lot depth (feet)		120
Minimum width(feet)		150
Maximum floor area ratio		0.25
Maximum lot coverage		70 percent
Maximum height ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾		
	Stories	2.5
	Feet	40
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽³⁾		
	Front	25
	Side ⁽⁴⁾	25
	Rear ⁽⁵⁾	25
⁽¹⁾ Smaller nonresidential lots may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.		
⁽²⁾ Buildings shall not exceed the permitted number of stories or height.		
⁽³⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.		
⁽⁴⁾ No interior side yard will be required on contiguous lots.		
⁽⁵⁾ Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from rear property lines.		
⁽⁶⁾ Height in the CS zoning district applies to uses which will not fit within the categories in this table. Example: clubhouses or other recreation-oriented structures, public buildings, churches, etc.		

(Code 1993, § 12A-211; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-211, 10-12-2005)

Sec. 12-71.1. CS-2, Community Support District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the CS-2, Community Support District is to provide for supporting community facilities and services including, but not limited to, residential use, office, recreational and other necessary uses that may not otherwise be compatible with uses permitted in other districts in the Town of Kiawah Island.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the CS-2 zoning district:
 - (1) The maximum floor area ratio for this district is 0.25;
 - (2) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) are listed in table 2K in this subsection;
 - (3) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (4) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.
 - (5) Residential uses standards are given in section 12-67.
 - (6) Parks and recreation standards are given in section 12-72.

Table 2K.1. Lot Standards for the CS-2, Community Support Zoning District	
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾	20,000
Minimum lot depth (feet)	120
Minimum width(feet)	150
Maximum floor area ratio	0.25
Maximum lot coverage	70 percent
Maximum height ⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾	
Stories	2.5
Feet	40
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽³⁾	
Front	25
Side ⁽⁴⁾	25
Rear ⁽⁵⁾	25
⁽¹⁾ Smaller nonresidential lots may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.	
⁽²⁾ Buildings shall not exceed the permitted number of stories or height.	
⁽³⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.	
⁽⁴⁾ No interior side yard will be required on contiguous lots.	
⁽⁵⁾ Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from rear property lines.	
⁽⁶⁾ Height in the CS-2 zoning district applies to uses which will not fit within the categories in this table. Example: clubhouses or other recreation-oriented structures, public buildings, churches, etc.	

(Ord. No. 2016-04, § 1, 9-6-2016)

Sec. 12-72. PR, Parks and Recreation District.

- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the PR, Parks and Recreation District is to provide community parks and recreation facilities, including parks, open spaces, golf courses and tennis courts. This district provides for both active and passive use of land. Accessory structures which support or compliment the parks/recreation use may be permitted as conditional or special exception uses.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the PR zoning district:
 - (1) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for accessory structures in this district are listed in table 2L in this subsection (b);
 - (2) Authorized uses for this district are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c);
 - (3) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.

Table 2L. Lot Standards for Accessory Structures in the PR, Parks and Recreation Zoning District		
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾		20,000
Minimum lot depth (feet)		120
Minimum width (feet)		150
Maximum floor area ratio		0.2
Maximum lot coverage		70 60 percent
Maximum height		
	Stories	2
	Feet	35
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽²⁾		
	Front	25
	Side	25
	Rear	25
⁽¹⁾ Smaller lots for accessory structures may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.		
⁽²⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.		

(Code 1993, § 12A-212; Ord. No. 2005-08, § 12A-212, 10-12-2005)

Sec. 12-72.1. PR, Parks and Recreation—Ocean Course District.

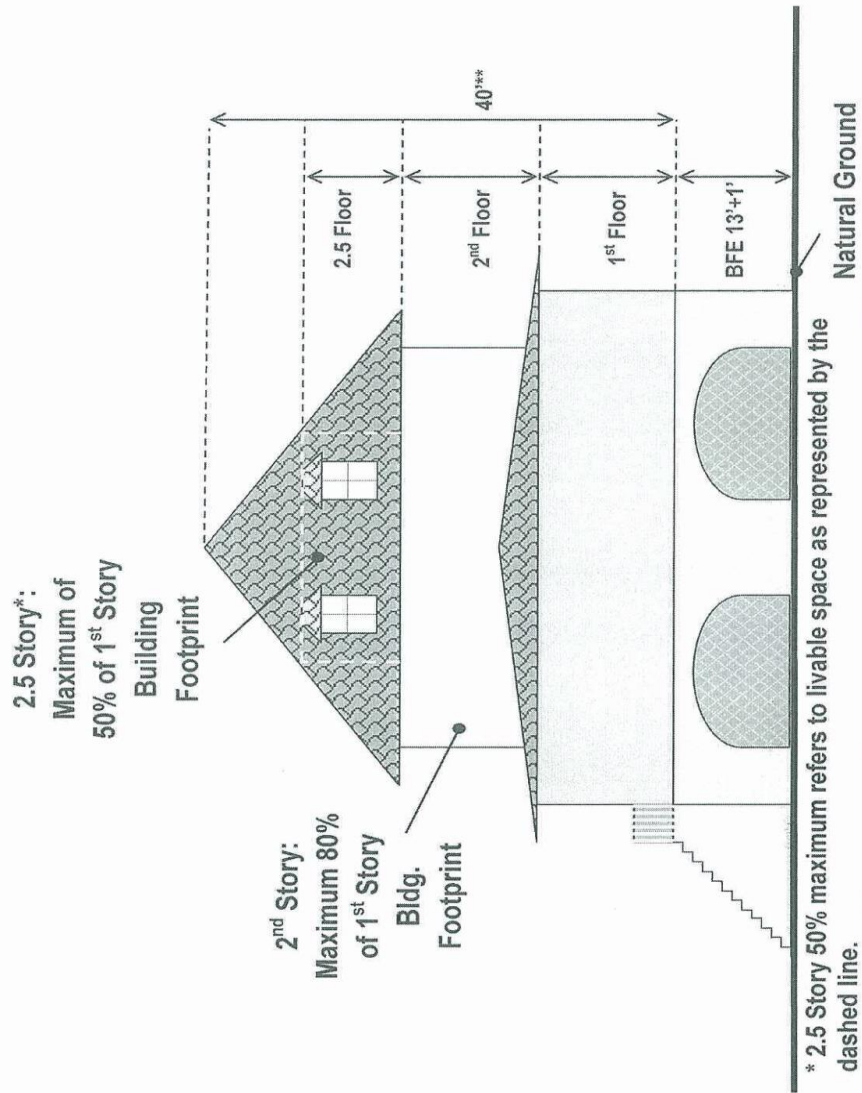
- (a) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose of the PR, Parks and Recreation District is to provide community parks and recreation facilities, including parks, open spaces, golf courses, tennis courts and limited residential associated with the golf course operation. This district provides for both active and passive use of land. Accessory structures which support or compliment the parks/recreation use may be permitted as conditional or special exception uses.
- (b) *District regulations.* The following apply to the PR zoning district:
 - (1) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for accessory structures in this district are listed in table 2L in this subsection (b);
 - (2) Authorized uses for this district are listed in table 3A in subsection 12-102(c);
 - (3) Parking standards are given in section 12-128.
 - (4) Maximum dwelling units for this district shall be no greater than 26 dwelling units total, of which no more than six may be single-family attached, duplexes or multi-family.
 - (5) Maximum residential density shall be no more than one dwelling unit per 1.1 acres.
 - (6) Up to six dwelling units may be attached to and integrated with non-residential buildings, but there shall be no more than four dwelling units in any building within this district.

Table 2L. Lot Standards for Accessory Structures in the PR, Parks and Recreation Zoning District, and PR-OC Zoning District	
Minimum area (square feet) ⁽¹⁾	20,000
Minimum lot depth (feet)	120
Minimum width (feet)	150
Maximum floor area ratio	0.2
Maximum lot coverage	70 60percent
Maximum height	
Stories	2
Feet	35
Minimum setbacks (feet) ⁽²⁾	
Front	25
Side	25
Rear	25
⁽¹⁾ Smaller lots for accessory structures may be permitted by the Town Council as part of a planned development.	
⁽²⁾ Canopies connected to the main building shall be set back a minimum of 20 feet from any property line.	

(Ord. No. 2018-05, § 1(att. A), 5-1-2018)

Sec. 12-80. R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District.

- (a) *Definition.* For purposes of this section, the term "major renovations" means costs of repair or restoration that exceed 50 percent of the appraised value of the structure at the time of zoning and building permit application. Refer to sections 12-192 and 12-193.
- (b) *Purpose and intent.* The purpose and intent of the R-2-O Residential Overlay Zoning District is to promote stable residential neighborhoods consisting of medium density single-family detached residences and patio homes surrounded by parks, golf courses and open spaces. Additionally the purpose and intent is to ensure that new dwelling units and major renovations to existing dwelling units are compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods located within the overlay by permitting consistent dwelling types through the implementation of the R-2-O development standards. Activities and endeavors which might serve to mitigate against this purpose and intent shall be prohibited or strictly regulated.
- (c) *Effect of overlay zoning district.* The R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District regulations of this section apply in addition to the underlying (base) zoning district regulations to impose different development rules for properties within the R-2-O district. In case of conflict between the regulations of this section and other regulations in this article, the regulations of this section shall control.
- (d) *Applicability.* The R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District is illustrated on the attached map. The standards of this section shall apply to all development within the R-2-O district.
- (e) *Development standards.* The following apply to the R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District:
 - (1) The maximum density for this district is six dwelling units per acre;
 - (2) All required parking shall be enclosed;
 - (3) Open storage is prohibited;
 - (4) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for single-family detached dwellings on existing platted lots that are included in article VI of this chapter, the Kiawah Island Property Setback Requirements Appendix dated July 10, 2007, incorporated herein by reference and adopted hereto as article VI of this chapter shall apply in lieu of the setback requirements in table 2C, section 12-66;
 - (5) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for patio homes, on existing platted lots that are included in the Kiawah Island Property Setback Requirements Appendix dated July 10, 2007, incorporated herein by reference and adopted hereto as article VI of this chapter shall apply in lieu of the setback requirements in table 2D, section 12-66;
 - (6) Lot standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) for patio homes not covered by subsection (e)(5) of this section are listed in table 2D, section 12-66, excluding duplexes and townhouses;
 - (7) Authorized uses are listed in table 3A in section 12-102(c) except that townhouses and duplexes shall not be permitted uses in the R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District;
 - (8) Nonconforming structures and nonconforming uses that were lawfully erected within this overlay district prior to adoption of the R-2-O, Residential Overlay Zoning District, shall comply with sections 12-192 and 12-193; and
 - (9) The term "height" means the elevation from ground floor level as measured in feet and stories to the highest point of the roof. The term "building height" does not include chimneys, antennas or ventilation pipes. Height in stories is the number of habitable floors (stories) exclusive of the area below the first finished floor. One-half story is a habitable floor which has heated square footage that is no greater than one-half the heated square footage of the largest story;



**Patio Homes, Zero Lot Line Homes shall have a maximum height of 35' as identified in Table 2D.

(Ord. No. 2011-06, § 2(12A-221), 10-4-2011)

Town of Kiawah Island
Written Public Comments

Town of Kiawah Island
Planning Commission Meeting August 6, 2025

08.06.25

Comments regarding proposed revisions as described in various attachments to the planning commission agenda for wednesday, august 6 are outlined below:

Old Business:

Tab 2 Zoning Text Amendments: DIVISION 3. USE REGULATIONS

- Pg. 6 of 22, **Sec.12-102.Principal Uses and Use Regulations...**Parking Lot is a new use that is proposed to be allowed as a Conditional (C) use or Special Exception (S) use within non-residential districts except Community Service (CS)...**recommend Parking Lot be added as a permitted use within CS zoning classification...**CS is applied to the utility tract and recommendation takes into account ability to have a dedicated parking area independent of active uses within the utility tract, for employee parking

Tab 3 Update Establishing Town of Kiawah Island Architectural Review Controls

- No exhibit was attached to website

Tab 4 Proposed Beachfront Overlay District (BOD) Framework

- Proposes layered buffer zones of 100' (Zone A) and 50' (Zone B) from the state Baseline...structures within Zone A limited to max height of 10'....no structures within Zone B....has this framework been tested along the beachfront to determine impact on existing development (i.e. will this result in non-conforming conditions?)
- Reference to development within BOD "...shall have modulated building heights..."...this is a term not defined
- All development within BOD will require coordination with TOKI Environmental / Natural Resources Department...it is unclear whether this department has authority to alter or reject proposals
- **Recommend proposed standards be tested against all existing development in advance of future near-term Baseline update**

New Business:

Tab 5 Proposed Text Amendments: Modify Zoning District Standards

- General comment that several proposed revisions will increase the number of nonconforming uses within the R-2, R-3, RST-1 and RST-2 zoning classifications...over 90% of the existing multifamily within the R-3 classification will be rendered nonconforming...have the proposed standards been tested with existing conditions to determine impact?
- General comment that all required parking within residential uses shall be enclosed...the majority of existing R-2 and R-3 development does not meet the standard
- Pg.4/5 of 16, **Sec. 12-67. R-3 Residential District...**existing standard limit of four DUs per building inconsistent with majority of existing development...height limit of 2 floors for multifamily inconsistent with a substantial percentage of existing development...2 floor limit is less than single family, attached and townhouse standards, which is 2 ½ floors...**proposed reduction of lot coverage from 60 to 40% will result in the overwhelming majority of existing multifamily development being nonconforming...**

- Pg.6 of 16, **Sec.12-68.C Commercial District**...existing maximum FAR of 0.2 is low for high-end community type...0.25 would be more appropriate ...**proposed maximum lot coverage reduction from 70 to 50% is inconsistent with normal high end development practice...**
- Pg.7 of 16, **Sec.12-69.RST-1 Resort District (East Beach)**...there is no allowance for standards for the existing hotel to expand based upon all existing support facilities being built for expansion as presently permitted in DA...**recommend inclusion of DA allowance of 40 rooms per acre if tied to existing hotel...separate freestanding hotel will be limited to 8 rooms per acre as proposed...proposed maximum lot coverage reduction from 70 to 50% is inconsistent with high-end resort development standards...reduction of height limit from 70 to 55' will result in existing hotel being nonconforming and would adversely impact expansion of existing hotel (wing) in manner consistent with massing...proposed layered standards for height in relationship to number of floors are acceptable ...proposed new minimum setbacks for Oceanfront should be assessed based upon existing building conditions...**
- Pg.8 of 16, **Sec.12-70 RST-2 Resort District (West Beach)**...**DA allowance for maximum room count of 150 established for prior improvements within grounds (Conference Center, Villa Checkin, Clubhouse and Recreation Pool) is not referenced...recommend stating absolute limit of no greater than 150 rooms...proposed elimination of 4 storey height allowance reduces alternatives for reduced ground coverage and contrast in “modulated” building mass...recommend retention of 4 stories with 70’ limit...proposed layered standards for height in relationship to number of floors are acceptable... proposed new minimum setbacks for Oceanfront should be assessed based upon existing building conditions...**
- Pg. 13 of 16, **Sec.12-72.1 PR, Parks and Recreation-Ocean Course District**...**proposed reduction of maximum lot coverage from 70 to 60% acceptable**

Summary Comment

The principal area of concern is increasing number of existing buildings being deemed non-conforming and alignment of standards for the RST-1 and RST-2 Districts based upon existing DA standards...each District is unique to the East and West Beach Resort areas...these are not general districts that would be applied to any other area of Kiawah Island...proposed revisions to the Zoning Ordinance Districts should be consistent with the standards of the existing DA as amended in 2017



TAB 5

TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item



Request for Town Council Action

TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Jim Jordan
SUBJECT: Request to Recommend Purchase of a Boat for Town Staff
DATE: 9 September 2025

BACKGROUND:

Town staff have recognized the need for a boat as a resource to support various duties and responsibilities across different departments. In the past, staff have had to coordinate with other entities that have access to boats to be able to perform duties in the waterways around Kiawah Island. Having a Town boat will allow staff to easily access the waterways and fulfill duties in a more detailed and timely manner.

A Town boat would be utilized by the Wildlife and Natural Resource Department to observe and monitor conditions in the river and creeks, as well as track changing conditions of the marshes. In addition, the boat would be used by the Public Works, Zoning, and Public Safety Departments, for duties including bridge and bulkhead monitoring and accessing Sandy Point for periodic patrol.

ANALYSIS:

Town staff spent considerable time researching different boats that balanced the needs of all Town departments and settled on 2 options as detailed below.

1. Xpress XR21B – Aluminum center console with bimini top. Cost would be \$62,405 and would take 4-6 weeks. We could pick the color.
2. Cayman – Fiberglass center console with hard top. Longshore Marine has a 2024 model in stock in Seafoam Green. Cost would be \$70,000. <https://longshoreboats.com/product/2024-robalo-206-cayman-124j/>

Both boats are bay-style boats with shallow drafts and have comfortable seating for 5-6 people. They are both fitted with trolling motors and a depthfinder/GPS. The Robalo is 21'6" and the Xpress is 21'2". Beams are both 8 feet. Both boats have shallow drafts and 25" gunnels. The Robalo has a nicer hard top vs the bimini top on the Xpress. The Xpress is 700 pounds lighter than the Robalo and constructed out of aluminum. Aluminum is lighter and more durable than fiberglass.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Town staff is requesting that the Town Council approve the purchase of the Robalo Cayman 206 as described in the attached quote for the price of \$70,000.

BUDGET & FINANCIAL DATA:

If approved, this funding will come from the budgeted \$80,000 allocated in the General Fund of the FY 25-26 budget that was approved by the Town Council.

Longshore Boats
 2650 Clements Ferry Road
 Charleston SC 29492
 (843)216-4700

Town Of Kiawah Island Mayor

Buyer's Order

Order No. _____
 Salesman **TYLER HANNA**

843-670-1533

jjordan@kiawahisland.gov

I hereby agree to purchase the following unit(s) from you under the terms and conditions specified. Delivery is to be made as soon as possible. It is agreed, however, that neither you nor the manufacturer will be liable for failure to make delivery.

Unit Information

New/U	Year	Make	Model	Serial No.	Stock No.	MSRP
New	2024	ROBALO	206 CAYMAN	ROBF0124J324	124J	\$72,865.00
New	2023	YAMAHA	F150XC	6MA- 1002790	2790	\$0.00
New	2024	COYOTE	CMC-206S-ALU	5001B2111RN394899	4899	\$1,700.00

Options:

Wide Band Sea Foam Green Hull	\$1,020.00 M
Cockpit Interior - Harbor Gray	\$0.00 M
T-Top White Powder Coated Aluminum with 4 Rod Holders	\$5,500.00 M
Dual Battery System	\$365.00 M
Simrad NSS7 EVO3 Chartplotter/Multifunction	\$1,910.00 M
Trolling Motor with Dual Bank Charger - Minn Kota Riptide 24V 70lb Thrus	\$2,910.00 M
Seadek Helm Mat	\$155.00 M
Stainless Steel Drink./Rod Holders (2)	\$320.00 M
Leaning Post - White Powdercoated	\$1,280.00 M
Removable Bow Seating Backrest	\$1,255.00 M
Starboard Dive Swim Platform with Boarding Ladder	\$720.00 M
Custom Anchor	\$130.00 M
5 Year Premier Level Limited Component Warranty	\$0.00 M
Standard Trailer	\$0.00 M
Water Ready	\$1,495.00 D

Manufacturer Base Price	\$54,595.00
Manufacturer Options (M)	\$15,565.00
Freight	\$2,995.00
Dealer Prep / Rigging Fee	\$1,410.00
Manufacturer Sugg Ret Price	\$74,565.00
Dealer Discount	\$4,807.00
Customer Sale Price	\$69,758.00
Dealer Added Options (D)	\$0.00
Customer Added Options	\$2,194.00

Unit Subtotal	\$71,952.00
Registration	\$395.00
Special Credits	\$0.00
Customer Rebates	\$0.00
Extended Warranty	\$0.00
UCC	\$0.00
Loan Processing	\$0.00
Service Contract	\$0.00
Property / Liability	\$0.00
Title/License/Registration Fees	\$0.00
Loan Processing	\$0.00
UCC Filing Fees	\$0.00
Document or Administration Fees	\$0.00
Sales Tax	\$653.00

Cash Price	\$73,000.00
Trade Allowance	\$0.00
Payoff	\$0.00

Net Trade	\$0.00
Net Sale (Cash Price - Net Trade)	\$73,000.00
Credit Life Insurance	\$0.00
Accident & Disability	\$0.00

Sub Total (Net Sale + Other Charges)	\$73,000.00
Cash Down Payment	\$0.00
Manufacturer Rebate	\$3,000.00
Amount to Pay/Finance	\$70,000.00

COAST GUARD KIT R206 \$699.00

D

Notes:

Trade Information

Monthly Payment of \$0.00 For 0 Months at 0.00% Interest

NOTICE TO BUYER: (1) Do not sign this agreement before you read it or if it contains any blank spaces to be filled in. (2) You are entitled to a completely filled in copy of this agreement. (3) If you default in the performance of your obligations under this agreement, the vehicle may be repossessed and you may be subject to suit and liability for the unpaid indebtedness evidenced by this agreement.

TRADE-IN NOTICE: Customer represents that all trade in units described above are free of all liens and encumbrances except as noted.

*With Approved Credit. Interest rates and monthly payment are approximate and may vary from those determined by the lender.

Buyer Signature _____ Date _____ Dealer Signature _____ Date _____

Co-Buyer Signature _____ Date _____ Thank You for You Business!