

**TOWN OF SULLIVAN’S ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Meeting was held at 5:00PM, this date, at Town Hall, 2056 Middle Street, all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act satisfied. Present: Committee members Gary Visser (Chair), Sydney Cook (Vice-Chair), Charlie Cole, Hal Currey, Carl Hubbard and Manda Poletti. Staff members: Zoning Administrator Henderson and Asst. to Administrator Darrow.

Call to Order. Chair Visser called the meeting to order, stated press and public were duly notified pursuant to state law and all Committee members present except Tim Watterson (excused absence); special guest Ryan McClure (Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester County of Government aka BCD-COG); and four (4) audience members present (to include Councilmember Rita Langley and Design Review Board members Linda Perkis and Duke Wright); no media.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – approved as presented

Commission reminded audience that any preliminary approval of Comprehensive Plan material would occur in the regular Planning Commission meetings and the series of Steering Committee meetings serve as workshops.

II. CORRESPONDENCE-PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Consultant McClure (BCD-COG) – Reported no specific correspondence received; noted survey feedback will be embedded in staff report of respective Plan elements.

Chair Visser opened floor to general public comment (5:30PM-approx 6:00PM). This initial public comment included dialogue between the invited Steering Committee guests from the Design Review Board and Planning Commission. Comments focused on the Zoning Ordinance and Design Review Board, and components of the Housing Element.

Public Comments

John Winchester (2720 Brooks Street, SI)

- Addressed problems with the current Zoning Ordinance, submitting it is unwieldy and “broken.” Requested Planning Commissioners include review/overhaul of current Zoning Ordinance (last re-written in 2005) as a Need & Goal in the new Comprehensive Plan.
 - Specifically expressed concern with trend to maximize home size and impervious surface coverage on lots (homes, pools, hardscape, etc.). Noted a better Zoning Ordinance would help curb this trend, should the Town want a different vision for the Island than “McMansions.”

- Design Review Board: praised members of the DRB but submitted that the Town allows generous building standards and too much flexibility for the DRB to give construction variances/allowances.
 - Noted the DRB can make allowances based upon subjective standards, like “neighborhood compatibility.” Submitted there is no concrete definition of a “neighborhood compatibility” standard.
 - DRB sets a precedent for other homeowners when it provides allowances for subjective reasons. He cited an example of a home under construction on Brownell Avenue that recently received four (4) variances from the DRB.
- Winchester further submitted that neighbors are pitted against neighbors when DRB is allowed to grant variances/allowances for subjective reasons like “personal design” or “neighborhood compatibility.” Submitted variances should be given only for concrete reasons, such as historical preservation, lot size issues, etc. The applicants should have to clearly state the logic for the relief sought, not for personal convenience such as breezeway attachments to avoid rain.
- Reiterated the DRB’s historic review does not concern him, but it is the DRB’s habit of issuing allowances that is of concern.

Linda Perkis, DRB Member (2871 Brownell Avenue, SI)

- Supported Mr. Winchester’s comments and opinions.
- Submitted DRB should avoid the mindset of “how can we help the homeowner get what he wants (with his design/construction plans)?”
- Trend she has witnessed: everyone wants a pool, owners are maximizing development on the lot (either house footprint, accessory structures, or other hardscape), and, architects almost always request a square foot allowance, no matter the reason.

Commissioners questions:

1. What is typically allowed for primary home square footage on a half-acre lot? What is the DRB square footage allowance?

Zoning Administrator Henderson: Square footage calculation is based on the lot size and dimensions, so it can vary from lot to lot. Generally, a half-acre lot allows for 3,500-4,000 sf development. DRB can give up to a twenty-five (25%) percent square footage allowance (could allow a 1000’ square foot increase in heated area).

2. Asked for the reasoning behind DRB allowing for variances or allowances/modifications. Questioned how DRB could render allowances and modification requests in a non-arbitrary fashion. Questioned how DRB sets precedent with modifications and allowances (variances) and how it would deny a future owner something asked for, and granted to, a neighbor.

Zoning Administrator Henderson: The spirit and intent of the code was to provide allowances for changes that would encourage contextual compatibility to the neighborhood (i.e. historic structure, architectural consideration). Problems can arise if the underlying Town design standards are too lax. The current Zoning Ordinance identifies standards for neighborhood compatibility and design guidelines that are intended to be used to negotiate better design in order to receive these discretionary square footage increases.

3. Commissioners discussed historic properties on the Island, questioned historic homes are identified and how DRB could tighten its review and approval for modifying an historic home, particularly given the accessory dwelling unit (ADU) special exception for specific sized, smaller historic homes (allows for second residential home on the one lot).

Zoning Administrator Henderson:

- DRB can require an applicant to provide, at owner's expense, supporting recommendation from a certified historic preservationist for requests to modify/remove portions of an historic property.
- Town conducted historic survey of properties on the Island in the late 1990's with a resurvey of work between 2005-2008.
- Zoning Ordinance was last revamped/re-written in 2005.
- He noted a DRB subcommittee is developing administrative process changes to tighten this application process. A new DRB application should streamline the review process and ensure that better designs and presentations are received by the applicant.

Mr. Currey noted that much has changed on the Island in the last 13 years since the 2005 Zoning Ordinance re-write.

Zoning Administrator Henderson reiterated administrative changes to the DRB process can make an immediate impact on the DRB review/decision process. Noted that a Zoning Ordinance re-write should be a policy decision outside of the Comprehensive Plan and would be a stand-alone project subject to Council direction and Town financing.

4. Asked for composition of DRB

Zoning Administrator Henderson: DRB is comprised of a professional seat (architect) and six (6) at-large positions. Current board includes contractors, architects and interior designer, plus interested residents.

Duke Wright, current DRB member, commented that he has been on the DRB since 2004 and the current board composition is a good mix of skills sets and what the Town needs on this Board. Regarding the Zoning Ordinance, he would recommend the Town review the formula used for determining allowable square footage on a lot.

Chair Visser summarized Council comments/feedbacks as follows (potentially add to Housing Element as a Needs/Goals strategy):

- 1. Review and align Zoning regulations and limits on structure size and lot coverages**
- 2. Evaluate administrative processes for variances**
- 3. Review ordinances related to historic properties to evaluate compatibility regulation and ensure limits are exercised**

Other Comments:

Mr. Cole observed that Sullivan's Island is a unique place that continues to draw new residents to the Island, and, it is human nature to want change and potentially larger homes/development. As such, the Town should embrace strategies to clarify its vision for residential land development and corral changes that are incompatible to that vision.

Zoning Administrator Henderson noted that changes to FEMA maps for Sullivan's Island might also be a positive change as it relates to massing of new homes and historic additions. These new maps are due for ratification in 2018 and would reduce new building heights 4-5 feet from base flood elevation. Noted that administrative changes to the DRB application and review process should aid the Board with issues related to design change and neighborhood compatibility. Regarding accessory structures as attached additions, the DRB task force is currently examining these trends with the goal to render potential Zoning Ordinance change recommendations.

Chair Visser thanked members of the DRB for attending tonight and participating in this helpful dialogue. At present the Committee turned to the regular order of business on the agenda.

III. ITEMS FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- 1. Community Facilities Element: Consider revised *Community Facilities Element* draft language with goals and objectives (per Committee review comments from February 15, 2018 meeting)**

Staff (Zoning Administrator Henderson) & Consultant McClure

Zoning Administrator Henderson presented to Committee the Staff overview/report regarding revised Community Facilities Element/Needs & Goals. Thereafter Committee reviewed, discussed and modified language on the draft Community Facilities Element/Needs & Goals (**Exhibit A**).

Committee Discussion/Modifications:

Regarding specific Needs & Goals that were included from February meeting – present

- CF1.3 Strike adaptive reuse of historic structures for governmental/municipal purposes.**
CF 1.4 Retain Entrance Signs at Breach Inlet and Ben Sawyer Bridge

CF 1.5 Modify to explore opportunities for additional restroom facilities (strike “at public beach paths”).

Motions regarding changes above:

MOTION: Chair Visser moved to retain CF1.3 (outlined above) in Community Facilities Needs & Goals; seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION FAILED FOUR (4) TO TWO (2) [CF1.3 will be removed from Needs & Goals]

MOTION: Chair Visser moved to modify CF1.5 (as outlined above) in Community Facilities Needs & Goals; seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Questions/Comments

Councilmember Langley questioned whether the SCANA building known as Sand Dunes Club (1735 Atlantic Avenue) was considered an historic property, and, what would happen should SCANA sell it.

Mr. Cole clarified that SCANA employees, not the company, own the Sand Dunes Club.

Zoning Administrator Henderson: Sand Dunes Club is historic and a legal non-conforming use owned by SCANA employees and eligibility for continuation of that non-conforming use would be generally available to a new owner.

MOTION: Chair Visser recommended to the Planning Commission conceptual approval for the revised Community Facilities Element/Needs & Goals in Exhibit A (attached) with the changes approved at this meeting; seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

- 2. Housing Element: Consider proposed *Housing Element* draft language with goals and objectives**

Staff (Zoning Administrator Henderson) & Consultant McClure

Consultant McClure presented to Committee the Staff overview/report regarding Housing Element/Needs & Goals (**Exhibit B**).

Thereafter Committee reviewed, discussed and modified language on the draft Housing Element/Needs & Goals (**Exhibit C**).

Committee Discussion/Modifications:

P1.4 “Revised and update....” Instead of “revised and updating...” (scrivener error)

ADD:

Recommend establishment of a zoning ordinance task force to review potential guidelines that Council could include in a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a zoning ordinance consultant.

ADD: Review and align Zoning regulations and limits on structure size and lot coverages
ADD: Evaluate administrative processes for variances
ADD: Review ordinances related to historic properties to evaluate compatibility regulation and ensure limits are exercised.

Following Committee discussion, Committee made the following recommendation/motion:

MOTION: Chair Visser moved to recommend to Planning Commission conceptual approval of the Housing Element Needs & Goals as outlined in Exhibit C herein, and with the aforementioned Needs & Goals changes, reiterated below:

- 1. P1.4 “Revised and update....” Instead of “revised and updating...” (scrivener error)**
- 2. ADD: Recommend establishment of a zoning ordinance task force to review potential guidelines that Council could include in a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a zoning ordinance consultant.**
- 3. ADD: Review and align Zoning regulations and limits on structure size and lot coverages**
- 4. ADD: Evaluate administrative processes for variances**

Seconded by Mr. Cole. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY PASSED.

IV. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Committee to review and potentially move to Planning Commission:

1. Cultural Resources Element Need & Goals

Committee to receive from Staff for April 2018 meeting discussion (deliverables):

1. Transportation Element/Needs & Goals
2. Economic Element/Needs & Goals

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Darrow
Asst. to Administrator

Approved at the April 10, 2018 Planning Commission Meeting

How we function...

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How we function...

Introduction

The Community Facilities element describes the activities and services that support the overall quality of life on Sullivan's Island. This chapter will summarize the function of Town government, including emergency services, public works and water and sewer infrastructure. Other community assets such as libraries, parks and educational facilities will be incorporated as well. Evaluating the current state of Town facilities and public infrastructure is critical in addressing existing needs for services and how those services will be provided to meet future needs.



Town Government and Departments

Town Council

Town Council serves as the governing body for the Town of Sullivan's Island. Operating under the council-administrator form of government, the Town's system of governance combines the political leadership of an elected mayor and council members with the managerial experience of a professionally trained administrator to oversee the day-to-day delivery of public services. The Council is a seven-member elected body, including a voting mayor.¹ Each council member serves a staggered four-year term with regularly held meetings at the Town Hall, located at 2056 Middle Street.



Town Administration

The Town's municipal complex is located in the center of the Island and serves as the epicenter of Town government operations. The campus includes the newly constructed Town Hall, Fire Station, Water and Sewer facilities, and Stith Park.

Town Hall is the newest addition to the municipal campus, which held its ribbon cutting in the fall of 2016. Town Hall is a 10,000-square foot, state of the art construction housing a majority of the Town administrative departments, Police

¹ Municipal Association of South Carolina, 2014
Sullivan's Island Comprehensive Plan 2018

Department, municipal court functions, and serves as the meeting venue for all regularly held community boards and commissions.

The Town Administrator serves as the chief executive officer for all Town business, and works to implement the various policies and decisions adopted by Town Council. The Administration Department includes the Town Administrator, Deputy Administrator/ Comptroller, Assistant to the Town Administrator/ Personnel Administrator, Town Clerk, Accounting Clerk and Town attorney.

With the expansion of Town facilities in recent years, several administrative positions have been added to the Town's staff. A front counter receptionist position was created upon the opening of Town Hall to assist the public with daily Town services.

Building and Zoning Department

The Building and Zoning Department is located in Town Hall and is comprised of a Building Inspector, Zoning Administrator and one permitting and licensing specialist who manage all planning and development related services.

The department's primary responsibilities are handling the day-to-day building and permitting activities such as issuing building permits, business licenses, performing plan review, and performing zoning and building code enforcement.

Additionally, the Building and Zoning Department is responsible for all long-range planning activities.

Long-range planning activities include writing zoning text amendments, policy creation, implementation of special projects, and management of long-range planning studies such as the Comprehensive Plan, Beachfront Management Plan, Island-wide Parking Plan and assisting Town Council with the crafting of other policies. The Department also staffs all standing Boards and Commissions:

- Board of Zoning Appeals: Appeals of staff decisions, considers dimensional variances
- Design Review Board: Historic preservation board, design reviews for new construction and renovations (within commercial and residential districts)
- Planning Commission: Writing and updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan, writing text amendments, approving subdivisions and rezoning
- Tree Commission: Handles review of large specimen removals, tree related policy, special projects with Tree Funds



- o Construction Appeals Board: Appeals of staff decisions related to Building Permits, Building Code interpretations.

Court Services

The Sullivan's Island Municipal Court system is comprised of a Town Council appointed municipal judge, one part-time substitute judge and is staffed by the Clerk of Court. The Town retains the services of a part time prosecuting attorney for professional legal assistance with various court proceedings. Court is held in Town Hall on the first and second Tuesday of the month.

Water and Sewer Utilities

Drinking water supply and wastewater treatment are managed under the Town's Water and Sewer Department. The Department consists of six (6) full-time employees, including one departmental manager and one full time billing clerk who operates from Town Hall. There are five licensed water and sewer operators holding South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) certifications in the area of water treatment, water distribution and wastewater treatment. All employee certifications are maintained through continuing education, training and meet the facility's state permitting requirements.

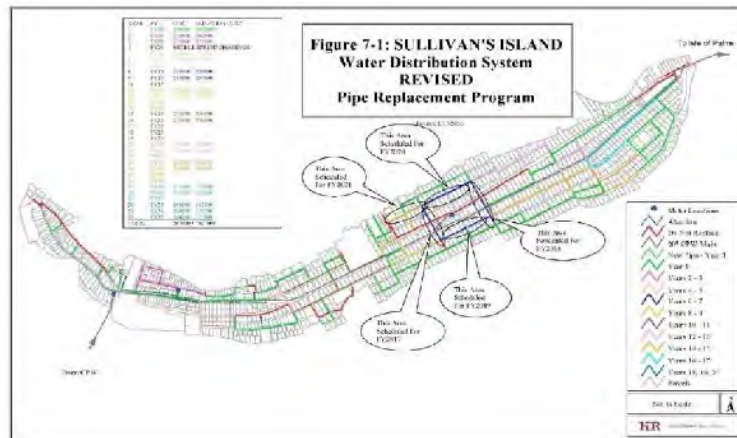
Water Supply

Since the Town's inception, shallow and deep-water wells served as the primary water supply to Island inhabitants. However, following Hurricane Hugo in 1989, and the widespread water quality problems in the early 1990's, the Town initiated a \$1.9 million-dollar contract to begin purchasing water from Charleston Water System (CWS), the primary water distribution agency for the greater Charleston area. Charleston Water System currently supplies Sullivan's Island and the Isle of Palms by way of a 24-inch water line that runs under the Charleston Harbor and is accessed from the western tip of Sullivan's Island. This water main runs along the Middle Street right-of-way for the length of the Island.

The water discoloration problems experienced in the late 1990's and into the early 2000's led to a long-term phased program for replacing the Island's 80,000 linear feet of water distribution system at a cost estimated to be more than \$7 million dollars. The first phase of the water line replacement program was completed by hired contractors in 2004, which accounted for nearly half the system. The remaining portion of the initial 20-year program is being completed "in-house" by the Town's Water and Sewer Department. To date, the Department has completed the replacement of 18,000 feet of pipe, 30 valves and 15 hydrants. Taking these steps have successfully mitigated the discolored water issue along with the long overdue need to begin the replacement of aged and failing water pipes. These efforts have increased fire flow to all hydrants island-wide resulting in better

insurance rates for homeowners and increased public safety. In recent years the Department has approved a new 32-year water line replacement plan. The map to the right shows the Department's five-year focus area, as of 2017.

The Town's current contract with the Charleston Water System provides a limit of 750,000 gallons of water per day for Sullivan's Island use. However, the Island maintains an emergency water agreement with the Isle of Palms water treatment facility in the event of a CSW failure from the Charleston Harbor pipeline. Additionally, the Town maintains two deep wells for water pressure in the event of an emergency.



Residents' water usage data is maintained by a touch read computerized meter reading system that allows meters to be read easily and downloaded for automatic billing. The Town uses a progressive rate structure, meaning that the unit cost of water increases as more water is used. Current water and sewer rates and fees are passed by Council via resolution. Water testing is accomplished on a regular basis in accordance with DHEC standards. Annually, a report is mailed to all users summarizing the water tests and results in compliance with regulations.

Wastewater

The Town owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility and its associated gravity collection system. This collection system consists of nearly 80,000 linear feet of gravity collection mains, 25,000 feet of service lateral lines, over 325 manholes and six pump stations. In 1968, construction was completed on the wastewater treatment facility that is still in operation today. Currently, the plant has a capacity of 0.57 million gallons per day (MGD) and a daily average flow of 0.58 MGD, which meets current DHEC operating and discharge standards. The plant is located on Gull Drive with a permitted effluent discharge point into the Intercoastal Waterway (ICWW) via an unnamed creek.

Although a plant upgrade was made in 2003, the main oxidation ditch and its associated structures have deteriorated over the years, resulting in an antiquated tank which is at a high risk of failure. Town Council has long recognized the realities of repairing and replacing this critical yet vulnerable community facility.

In 1996, the Town committed resources to performing a three-phase Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) upgrade project and even considered pumping

wastewater off Island to be treated, which was ultimately deemed to be cost prohibitive. The Town then passed a local referendum that supported the Town remaining an independent WWTP operator. In 2017 the Town approved a plan for the reconstruction of a new oxidation ditch and associated structures that will comply with all state and federal regulatory standards.

Perhaps the most significant concern for the Town's wastewater system relates to the occurrence of Inflow and Infiltration (I&I). I&I occurs when groundwater and stormwater enter the sanitary sewer system through a variety of ways. Inflow refers to water that enters the sewer collection system through improper connections, such as downspouts and groundwater sump pumps and infiltration is ground water that enters the system through damaged or leaking pipes. (www.rdn.bc.ca) In 2015 the Town began the first phase of a \$3 million dollar I&I reduction program, resulting in a 36% reduction of I&I. This process included the grouting of 13,000 feet of the existing system. The second phase of the project will be completed as part of the 2017-2021 Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Program and will utilize both in-house and contracted services.



Potential I & I sources (www.rdn.bc.ca)

Water and Sewer Planning Reports & Projects

The following list of projects and planning reports have been developed by various consultants and the Town's Water & Sewer Manager as part of the *2017-2021 Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Program*. This program considers the current, and projected water and wastewater needs for the Town.

- Water Distribution Replacement Program- Continuation of 2004 study to replace remaining 22,000 linear feet of unlined cast iron pipe, valves, hydrants.
- Wastewater Treatment Facility Replacement- 2017 Town Council approved plan to reconstruct existing oxidation ditch, treatment plant headworks, treatment plant generator, drying beds, and other associated accessory structures.
- Pump Station improvements- Retrofit all six pump stations to submersible pumps which will make them flood proof.
- Poe Avenue Sewer Replacement- Relocate 1,400 linear feet of 8-inch pipe and install five new manholes in Poe Avenue right-of-way.
- Station 17 to Citadel Sewer Replacement- Relocate 382 linear feet of 8-inch pipe and install two new manholes in Middle Street right-of-way.
- Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Rehabilitation Project- Phase II will address the remaining sewer collection system subsections via the process of

chemical grouting and *cured in place point repair* (CIPPR) and cured in place liners (CIPPL).

- Phase I- Completed. Two of the most damaged sections of I&I areas \$1.6 million.
- Phase II- Replace remaining subsections \$4.5 million estimated.

Public Safety & Emergency Services

Public Safety Services are offered through the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Department maintains animal control, fleet management, beach patrol services and parking enforcement. The Fire Department includes full time fire fighters on permanent rotating shifts and public works personnel who handle Island-wide maintenance activities. The Department also maintains large volunteer fire fighting force of over 50 individuals.

Police Department

The increasing popularity of Sullivan's Island's beaches can be attributed to both the explosive population growth of the Charleston region and the area's limited access to public beaches. What was once a seasonal increase of beachgoers has now become a year-round presence of visitors to the Island's restaurant district, its beaches and other cultural tourist attractions such as Fort Moultrie. The year-round impact of traffic congestion and other law enforcement activities has subsequently led to a need for both seasonal beach security and parking enforcement personnel as well as regular patrol officers. In the fall of 2016, a public parking plan was implemented by the Town which increased the Department's need for additional technical equipment, patrol vehicles, and all-terrain vehicles.

Currently, the department is comprised of ten (10) full-time uniformed officers, one (1) full-time animal control officer and two (2) part-time seasonal beach services officers. The uniformed officers consist of a Police Chief, an Assistant Chief, Capitan, four (4) Sergeants, one (1) Corporal and three (2) Patrol Officers, typically working 12-hour shifts. The Department occasionally uses reserve officers and constables during the peak of tourist season.

The department has also attempted to keep abreast of technological advancements in the field of law enforcement through the acquisition of updated Police vehicles adapted with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) guided laptop

Table 2.1
Police Department's anticipated Needs (10-year horizon)
Personnel Needs
One new full-time officer (Part time investigative/part school resource officer)
Four seasonal officers (two beach patrol officers, two parking enforcement officers)
Equipment Needs
Two new Kubotas (all-terrain vehicles for beach and parking enforcement)
Continue vehicle replacement program
Taser replacement 3 -5 years
Radio replacement (Motorola 800 will be obsolete in 3-5 years)
Weapon replacement 5-10 years
Body cameras replacement every 5 years
Body armor replacement every 5 years
Continue emergency helicopter evacuation program
Continue consolidated 911 dispatch program

computers and updated radio equipment. Body cameras, tasers and body armor, now considered standard issue local government law enforcement, will now require ongoing maintenance and regular replacement. Table 2.2 identifies the various projects and capital improvements for the Police Department.

Fire Department

The Fire Department holds the responsibility of providing two separate and distinct public services: 1) Fire protection and emergency first responders 2) Public works and facility maintenance.

The Sullivan's Island Fire and Rescue Department consists of eleven (11) paid full-time shift firefighters: one (1) Chief, one (1) Assistant Chief & Training Officer, two (2) Captains, three (3) Lieutenants, one (1) Engineer and three (3) Firefighters. The full-time staff is supported by 43 on-call volunteer fire fighters who are available for structure fires as well as disaster recovery from emergency weather events. The Department provides emergency first response to all areas of Sullivan's Island and provides fire protection for the Fort Sumter National Park and associated structures. Assistance is provided from the Town of Mt. Pleasant and the City of Isle of Palms by way of a consolidated 911 dispatch service operated by Charleston County. Fire hydrants are maintained regularly by the department and are available throughout the Town.

The Town's fire station is located at the corner of Station 20 ½ and Middle Street and is a cornerstone of the Town's municipal complex. The fire station was constructed during the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo with the intent of serving as the Island's Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) in the event of an emergency storm event. The building is an elevated, steel-frame construction and is powered by two generators.

The facility is fully equipped with phone and fiber optic connections to serve as an emergency support facility to Town Hall with the capacity and space to house all emergency response operations. Currently, the building houses the Town's Fire and Rescue and Public Works Departments.

In 2016, the Fire Department received the highest possible protection rating of a Class 1, which is determined by the Insurance Service Office (ISO). The ISO is a nationally recognized entity that evaluates a community's firefighting preparedness on a scale of 1 to 10, with Class 1 being the highest possible rating.

Table 2.2
Fire Department's anticipated needs (10-year horizon)
Fire Department Needs
Maintain all firefighter certifications and training
Construct new building & shop for the Maintenance Department
Replace 2 fire engines
Architectural up-fit of fire station, incorporate similar design to Town Hall
Maintain watercraft
Maintain boat landing- emergency water response
Maintain adequate firefighter staff
Maintain volunteer staff and training facilities
Public Works Needs
Four new lawn mowers (\$10,000-\$12,000 apiece)
Replace Kubotas (all-terrain vehicles for beach maintenance and enforcement)
Replace tractors
Construct new public works building
Continue vehicle replacement program

Many rural areas and small towns in Charleston County maintain a relatively low rating of Class 9 due to response times and general level of service. The Sullivan's Island Fire and Rescue Department has received the Class 1 by continually updating its firefighting equipment, water supply and distribution, maintaining trained personnel and through a dedication to timely responses during emergency events.

Additionally, the fire department maintains a boat landing at Station 9 and Osceola Avenue. Membership is sold to Town residents and non-residents, with residents' fees being less than half of what non-residents pay. The fire department also operates and maintains a training center at Battery Thomson, which is also used by Mt. Pleasant and the Isle of Palms Fire Departments.

Table 2.2 lists the various departmental needs within a 10-year planning horizon. Being a coastal community, the Sullivan's Island Fire and Rescue Department is not only charged with fire protection, but also water rescue. An offshore fire rescue boat was purchased in 2014

Public Works (Maintenance Department)

The Public Works Division is managed by the Fire Department's leadership and is charged with assisting with the regular maintenance of public parks and rights-of-way. The staff consists of one (1) full time supervisor and three (3) full time maintenance workers. Seasonal part-time employees are retained as needed.

With increased building and development in the past 10 years there has been an increased citizen demand for park maintenance, recreational courts and availability of open spaces for special events. This increased demand in facilities and services has led to more frequent use of Public Works equipment by departmental staff with an increased demand on maintenance staff. The Public Works Division currently lacks a permanent facility for storage of maintenance equipment and operation of personnel. A new facility will be needed in the coming years.

Emergency Operations Center

As a barrier island Sullivan's Island shares a unique set of challenges when beset with emergency storm events. It is essential that community residents and visitors understand the fact that the entire Island is located within a flood hazard area and prone to catastrophic damage and loss of life if confronted with extreme weather events. Town government must continually stress the importance its evacuation plans and the importance of heeding emergency public directives if confronted with tropical storms, hurricanes, tsunamis, floods and fires.

The primary Municipal Emergency Operations Center (MEOC) is located within Town Hall at 2056 Middle Street and is equipped with an elevated generator capable of sustaining operations in the event of a power outage. Town Hall also

maintains all phone, radio and internet communications necessary to handle the function of Town government.

Emergency services have greatly expanded for the Island in the past 10 years. In 2011 the Sullivan's Island Remote Emergency Notification System (SIRENS) was implemented and is comprised of two (2) sirens located at Station 24 and Station 15. This audio notification will activate should residents become unresponsive to telephone, mobile devices, and internet. The Town also manages an emergency alert system through "Nixle," (www.nixle.com), which allows residents to register phones and mobile devices to receive text messages and emails from the Police and Administration Departments.

Annually, the Town participates in the Charleston County Emergency Operations Plan and the Charleston County Hurricane Preparedness Guide in addition to the Town's Hurricane Plan.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Both passive and active recreational opportunities are found throughout Sullivan's Island. Passive recreation is generally defined as an undeveloped space or environmentally sensitive area that requires minimal development. Active recreation, on the other hand, includes structured or organized recreational activities, most often associated with developed sports fields, playgrounds, marinas, theaters and skateparks. The recreational activities on Sullivan's Island can be divided into these two distinct areas of recreation.

Active Recreation Areas: Parks, Sporting Facilities

Town Hall Municipal Campus. The Town Hall municipal campus is a host to multiple recreational opportunities, listed below.

- *J. Marshall Stith Park*. Located in the heart of Town, the park includes three tennis courts (one practice court), one full basketball court, younger and older children's playground, historic bandstand (community gathering place)
- *Fishing Pier*. Located behind the water treatment facility, this small pier extends 160' into the creek and is open to the public.
- *Multipurpose Sports fields*. Used year-round for general public use, soccer, lacrosse, and other organized sports.
- *Battery Capron/Butler*. Better known as "the mound," this hill top is the highest elevation on Sullivan's Island. Battery Capron/Butler is located behind Stith Park and was originally an Endicott Period military fortification that was filled for being a danger to public safety due to its

forty-foot deep mortar pits.² Occasionally, special events are held on the grass plateau atop the mound and is well known for its “bamboo forest,” growing on the eastern face of the mound. In 2017 Town Council established a maintenance program for re-grading the hill facing Stith Park and containing the proliferation of bamboo to just the eastern face of the mound.

- *Historic Bandstand.* Located in the J. Marshall Stith Park adjacent to Town Hall at 2056 Middle Street. The U.S. Army built the bandstand in 1905 to complement the parade ground. When the U.S. Army withdrew from the Island in 1947, the bandstand was sold to a resident who used it as an apartment structure. In the mid-1980's, the structure was donated to the Town. The Town restored the structure to its original design and relocated it to J. Marshall Stith Park where it serves as a gathering place for picnics, birthday parties, musical concerts, and community activities.

Poe Park. Located on Middle Street between Artillery Drive and Citadel Street, Poe Park underwent multiple renovations in 2016-2017, including resurfacing of two tennis courts, adding new fencing, adding one basketball goal, and installing new playground equipment.

Fish fry shack. Used as a training and fundraising facility for the Sullivan's Island Volunteer Fire and Rescue organization.

Island Club. Used as a venue for various community events.

Battery Gadsden Community Facility. The Battery Gadsden Cultural Center is a local organization comprised of residents and nonresidents who host an array of community and civic events annually:

Farmers Market. Operating from April through June, the Farmers Market hosts 25-30 vendors, food trucks and live entertainment.

Poe Library. In March 1977, the Sullivan's Island Library --located in Battery Gadsden--was named The Edgar Allan Poe Library in honor of the author, who was stationed on Sullivan's Island as a U.S. Army private from 1827 and 1828. Poe used the island setting as the background for his famous story, “The Gold Bug.” Many of the Island's streets are similarly named after Poe's stories and literary themes.

Arbor Day. Sullivan's Island was awarded Tree City USA status in 2016 and has held regular Arbor Day celebrations and tree giveaway events at Battery Gadsden.

² Sondermann, Karl 2013

Thompson Park Interpretive Memorial. Small interpretive pocket park at Breach inlet on Middle Street, initially dedicated in June 2011. The Park's purpose is to commemorate historic military event that occurred at Breach Inlet during the Battle of Sullivan's Island during the American Revolution on June 28, 1776 (Carolina Day). During the Battle of Sullivan's Island, Colonel William "Danger" Thomson and his 780 forces on the bank of Breach Inlet repulsed the British Army's attack on Sullivan's Island from Ocean and land invasion from the neighboring island, which is now the Isle of Palms. This battle at Breach inlet, in concert with Colonel William Moultrie and his forces' actions inside Fort Sullivan's (now known as Fort Moultrie), defeated the British force, with its superior firepower and man power, and protected Charles Towne and its important port from British occupation at an early, critical time in the Revolutionary War. Primarily private funds developed and currently maintain the Park, but it is available to the public for free. (Data Source: Thomson Park Website, <http://thomsonpark.wordpress.com>)

Fort Moultrie Visitor's Center and Fishing Pier. Located at 1214 Middle Street, Fort Moultrie is an historic National Monument site with various recreational activities. Touring the monument is primarily self-guided through the various interpretive wayside exhibits however daily tours and programs are available depending upon the season. A fishing pier and open space with picnic shelters are open to the general public.

Passive Recreation Areas:

Old Dump Kayak Launch. The old dump is a deed restricted property located at Station 19, which now serves as an open space for general public use. Mainly serving as a wildlife viewing area and canoe and kayak access to Cove Creek, this property is held in a perpetual conservation easement through the East Cooper Land Trust. <http://eastcooperland.org/conserved-land/>

Old Trolley Bridge. The trolley bridge predates the Revolutionary War and served as Sullivan's Island's only connection to the mainland. Also held in a perpetual conservation easement through the East Cooper Land Trust the remnants of the bridge are open to the public and accessible by a short trail the opens to a scenic overlook of the Charleston Harbor, Mount Pleasant, and Cove Inlet. <http://eastcooperland.org/conserved-land/>



Trolley Bridge- Late 1800's

Town Protected Land & Beach Access Paths. There are 26 public access paths to the Island's beaches, of which there are seven ADA (accessible) and 10 emergency access enabled. Two beach wheelchairs are available at the Fire Department and may be used for beach access throughout the day.



Station 16 Nature Trail. The trailhead is located off of the Station 16 beach access. Opened in June 2015, the 650-foot nature trail offers two observation decks and benches along a partially elevated boardwalk.

Other Utilities

Electric

Electric power is provided by South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G) however, natural gas is currently unavailable to Island residents. Natural gas must be purchased from private vendors. SCE&G provides tree pruning maintenance on a three-year cycle, and cable television is provided by Comcast Cable.

Phone, Cable and Internet Services

Primary cable and internet service providers are AT&T U-verse, Comcast Xfinity, Dish network, Direct TV and Verizon.

The Town has also considered the merits of establishing a municipal wireless network, which would offer broadband services to island residents. This type of system would require multiple wi-fi access points throughout the Town.

Solid Waste

Sullivan's Island contracts with a third party, privately held company to provide weekly solid waste collection. This service includes house hold trash and garbage collection via roll container, bulk waste (large furniture, appliances, carpet, mattresses, etc.) and yard waste. During the three summer months, when beach traffic and rentals are at the highest, the regular household trash is picked up twice a week and bulk trash/yard debris once per week. The refuse is taken to the Charleston County landfill.

In 2015, Charleston County Environmental Management Department (CCEMD) began providing all-in-one (single stream) residential recycling services to the Island. This allows the convenience of placing all recycled materials into one container instead of pre-sorting. Recyclables are picked up once every two weeks by way of 55-gallon roll carts.

Emergency debris collection from major storms and extreme flooding events has long been a critically important issue for Island residents. Because the Town does not operate its own solid waste collection authority, debris collection following these events must be retained by private contractors which is often seen as an unfunded liability from a budgetary standpoint. The Town must rely on FEMA reimbursements for these expenditures and assistance from CCEMD.

SCDOT Traffic Cameras

Two traffic cameras were installed in 2017 providing live video streaming of traffic flow conditions on both the Sullivan's Island side of the Ben Sawyer Boulevard (Highway 703) and Mount Pleasant sides of the Causeway. This feed can be viewed from a smart phone or other mobile device at <http://www.511sc.org/>.

Health Care and Emergency Services

Medical Offices

There is one primary care facility on Sullivan's Island offering a wide range of family care services including pediatric, adolescent and adult medicine. Additional medical facilities are located in Mt. Pleasant, Isle of Palms, and downtown Charleston. Three major hospitals are easily accessible from the Island including East Cooper Regional Medical Center, Roper Saint Francis Hospital, and the newly opened Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) East Cooper facility, offering a wide array of clinical and same day (outpatient) services. All facilities are located within 10 miles of Sullivan's Island, the closest being East Cooper Medical Center at a distance of 6 miles by way of the Isle of Palms connector.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The Fire and Rescue Department has long provided first responder services to the Island since its founding in 1948. Initially organized as a volunteer fire department, today's firefighters are cross-trained in emergency first responder care and work 24-hour shifts. Additional emergency first responders are provided through the Charleston County 911 Consolidated dispatch service consisting of a nine (9) member intergovernmental agreement, of which Sullivan's Island, IOP and Mount Pleasant are a part.

In 2016 Town Council also initiated an agreement with Air MedCare Network (Meducare) to provide citizens and Town employees with ambulatory air service. Any insured resident of Sullivan's Island may receive paid air medical transport, if they are within Charleston County.

Educational Facilities

Schools

Charleston County School District completed construction of the new Sullivan's Island Elementary School in 2015 and maintains an annual enrollment of approximately 500 students, serving the Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island. The school offers pre-kindergarten through fifth grade and is one of the top ranked public elementary schools in South Carolina. In 2011, Sullivan's Island Elementary earned the Palmetto Gold Award for student achievement and maintains the highest achievable rating on its School Report Card.

In the 2011-2012 school year, Sullivan's Island Elementary achieved partial magnet status, focusing on math and science, with an emphasis on the coastal environment.

Other public schools that serve Sullivan's Island include Laing and Moultrie Middle Schools for grades 6, 7 and 8, and Wando High School for grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Libraries

The Edgar Allan Poe/Sullivan's Island Library, located in Battery Gadsden, is a branch of the Charleston County Public Library system. The library is located at 1921 l'On Avenue in the renovated military installation dating to the Spanish-American War. The library is named for author Edgar Allan Poe, who was stationed on Sullivan's Island as a private in the United States Army in 1827 and 1828, and who used the island setting as the background for his famous story, "The Gold Bug."

The 2,000-square foot branch houses a collection of more than 6,800 materials, including fiction and non-fiction, juvenile and young adult books, periodicals, books on CD and DVDs. Library cardholders also have access to downloadable materials including e-books, audiobooks, magazines, music, and more and can request more than 250,000 additional titles from other branches. The branch

circulated 25,919 materials in FY 2017 and provides its visitors with four Internet-connected computers and free Wi-Fi. The branch also hosts hundreds of educational and entertaining programs throughout the year. In FY 2017, more than 9,000 patrons attended nearly 500 events. These included children's programs, lectures, games, writing groups, book club discussions, and crafts.

	Circulation	Programs	Program Attendance
2017	25,919	491	9,458
2016	20,037*	310	5,932*
2015	28,254	433	8,934

**Note: The decrease in circulation, number of programs and program attendance in FY 2016 is attributed to the two-month closure of the library branch, which was caused by the severe flooding in October of 2015.*

Stormwater Management

In 2007, the Town entered into an inter-governmental agreement with Charleston County to administer and enforce all Island stormwater utility regulations. These regulations are codified under Chapter 25, Sections 1-12 of the Town Code of Ordinances. In addition to serving as the regulatory authority for enforcement, billing and collecting the Town's stormwater fees, the Charleston County Stormwater Management Division is charged with conducting regular maintenance of all inlets, conduits, manholes, channels, ditches, waterways and infiltration facilities.

Although the Town does not operate its own stormwater utility, Town officials have taken great strides to lessen the impact of stormwater inundation during rain events by implementing various policy and regulatory initiatives. Many of these stormwater management initiatives are part of the larger strategy for mitigating the future effects of sea-level rise and are discussed in greater detail as part of the sea-level rise awareness section of the *Natural Resources Element*.

In response to the catastrophic flooding events of 2015 (Hurricane Juquin), the Planning Commission performed a detailed study of the effects of Island development at the neighborhood scale, and subsequently created a Zoning Ordinance regulation requiring an onsite stormwater management system for any residential or nonresidential development. This regulation can be found in Section 21-17 of the Zoning Ordinance and mandates that a plan be developed with any substantial construction project that prevents adverse impacts to adjacent or downstream properties. This plan must be developed by a professional engineer or landscape architect.

Town staff also received approval of a FEMA grant in 2017 to study the existent stormwater drainage deficiencies Island-wide. This grant authorized a Two phased approach of first, identifying the problematic areas and secondly, improving the drainage infrastructure along Station 18, one of the worst areas affected during heavy rain events.

Although stormwater conveyance and drainage systems are owned by SCDOT, Town staff and County officials continue performing regular maintenance of ditches and providing jet-vac services on an as needed basis.

Community Facilities Goals and Strategies (Text in 'red' indicates changes from 2-15-2018 PC)

The Town anticipates an increased demand for recreation facilities, maintenance and expansion of existing community facilities. The Town is committed to managing the development and expansion of its infrastructure to serve current and future residents as well as providing a diversity of recreation facilities. It is also committed to providing an exceptional level of safety and security for its residents. As such, the Town has adopted the following goal, policies and strategies:

Community Facilities Goal: Maintain essential Town government facilities and other community assets to meet the future needs of the Island's citizenry, including Town Hall services, maintenance, recreation, and expansion of public infrastructure.			
<i>Administration- Policy 1: The Town will continue to explore opportunities for expanding community facilities.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF1.1 Identify areas for expanding recreational opportunities.	Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF1.2 Consider the following when locating and improving community facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to all citizens and visitors • Protecting the character of neighborhoods • Preserve natural resources • Cost effectiveness of improvements (Continue to assess Town-owned property as needed) 	Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF1.3 Explore the adaptive reuse of historic military support buildings for the operation of Town facilities	Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF1.4 To improve the safety and aesthetic of the Town's primary entrance corridors on Ben Sawyer Boulevard and Jasper Boulevard, maintain and improve lighting, signage, landscaping, etc.	Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF1.5 Explore opportunities for offering restroom facilities at public beach paths.	Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
<i>Administration- Policy 2: Maintain a fully staffed, capable and professional workforce with primary objective of keeping citizens as informed and as engaged as possible.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe

	CF2.1 Continue to provide adequate staff support to all boards, commissions and committees.	Building Department Town Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF2.2 Implement new Town website. Periodically assess new website and mobile application technology to keep citizens as informed as possible. Ensure emergency alerts correspond with the Town’s website and written notices.	Town Administration	Ongoing
<i>Water and Sewer- Policy 3: Maintain and improve the existing water distribution and wastewater collection systems.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF3.1 Continue pursuing the various goals of the Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Program. The program is periodically reviewed and updated through the oversight of the Council Committee for Water and Sewer.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Ongoing
	CF3.2 Continue pursuing replacement of critical facilities at the wastewater treatment plant.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Ongoing
	CF3.3 Continue pursuing repair of wastewater collection system to avoid I&I.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Ongoing
	CF3.4 — Maintain deep wells to serve as an effective back-up emergency water supply in the event of disruptions of Charleston Water services to the Island due to weather events and treatment failure.	Planning Commission Town Council	Mid-term
<i>Water and Sewer- Policy 4: Explore methods to educate citizens on water usage and encourage conservation of water sources.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF4.1 The Town should evaluate use of advanced meter reading technologies to enhance consumer access to water usage information.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Short-term

	CF4.2 Explore rate structures that reflect water infrastructure and foster conservation.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Short-term
	CF4.3 — Establish an advisory committee to Council, comprised of residents, whose role is to identify challenges and opportunities regarding rate changes with primary focus on maintaining sufficient funding to meet needs of Town's water/wastewater infrastructure.	Water and Sewer Dept. Town Council (W&S Committee)	Ongoing
<i>Public Safety- Policy 5: Maintain an excellent track record in Police and Fire protection. Ensure that all personnel are trained and equipment needs are met according to state and federal guidelines and regulations.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF5.1 Ensure appropriate staffing levels are maintained and that all staff, volunteers and reserve officers are adequately trained.	Police and Fire Dept. Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF5.2 Ensure all equipment and supplies are appropriate and up to date and evaluated on an annual basis. Reconstruction of Fire Station	Police and Fire Dept. Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF5.3 Continue to explore innovative approaches to shared services through intergovernmental mutual aid agreements and pursue service excellence through technological advances.	Police and Fire Dept. Administration Town Council	Ongoing
<i>Maintenance- Policy 6: Continue to support other governmental and private entities providing community facilities.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF6.1 Construct a new public works building	Administration Town Council	Short-term

<i>Other Facilities and Assets- Policy 7: Continue to support other governmental and private entities providing community facilities.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF7.1 Continue regularly scheduled solid waste collection service to ensure a visually attractive for living environment for residents and visitors.	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF7.2 Continue support for Sullivan’s Island Elementary School.	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF7.3 Continue to support the operation of Poe Library.	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF7.4 Continue to support and keep a U.S. Post Office on Sullivan’s Island	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF7.5 Continue to support projects and initiatives for burying utility powerlines where economically feasible. (SCE&G power lines, cable, etc.)	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
<i>Emergency Preparedness and Services- Policy 8: Enhance the existing community-wide emergency reaction training program and communication system.</i>			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
	CF8.1 Prepare appropriate informational sessions for community residents, providing particular focus on new coastal residents.	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF8.2 Assist vulnerable members of the Island’s populations during emergency situations. Ensure an up to date list is maintained for outreach.	Administration Town Council	Ongoing
	CF8.3 Continue to improve community-wide system of notification in case of emergency situations (consider all forms of mobile technology)	Administration Town Council	Ongoing

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Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table- 2016

Goal/ Project	Implementation					Responsibility	Estimated Cost & Funding Source	Actions To Date	Success Measure
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: red; width: 20px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> NEEDS WORK <div style="background-color: yellow; width: 20px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> STEPS TAKEN <div style="background-color: green; width: 20px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></div> IMPLEMENTED </div>									
WATER & SEWER									
Maintain and improve the existing water distribution and wastewater collection systems.			X	X		Town Council; Town Administration; Long Term	Staff time	Pipe grouting project: Phase 1- complete Phase 2- 2017 completion	Pipe grouting project: Phase 1- complete Phase 2- 2017 completion
➤						Water & Sewer Dept.	Staff time	Studies completed in 2016	Conduct study: rate structure, capital improvements, wastewater plant, cost recovery, adjacent jurisdictions/ CWS
➤						Water & Sewer Dept.	Staff time		Consider old shallow wells and other potential sources.
➤			X	X	X	Water & Sewer Dept.	Staff time	FEMA grant under review 2015-2016	Funding sources for wastewater treatment facility improvement and/or reconstruction
➤				X	X	Water & Sewer Dept.	Staff time	Town Council consideration 2016	Continue to explore rate structure
Explore methods to educate citizens on water usage and encourage	X	X	X	X		Town Council;	Staff time	Use of GIS and meter reading technologies to enhance consumer access to water usage	Use of GIS and meter reading technologies to enhance consumer access to water usage information. Conducting rate structure project.

conservation of water resources						Town Administration; Long Term		information. Conducting rate structure project.	
➤			X	X		Town Council; Town Administration; Long Term	Staff time	Ongoing	Employ advanced meter reading technologies to inform customer access and usage information
UTILITIES									
Continue oversight of street lighting services to include provisions for turtle protection	X	X	X	X	X	Town Council; Town Administration; Long Term	Staff time	Ongoing Staff	Enforce Zoning Ordinance violations for lighting violations.
Continue maintenance and continuous upgrade of telecom		X	X	X		Town Council; Town Administration; Long Term	Staff time	Ongoing work with utility companies.	Permits issued annually to allow upgrades to cell tower equipment.
➤						Town Administration; Short Term	Staff time	No action taken	Island-wide wi-fi services
STORMWATER									
Identify and implement measures to improve stormwater management			X	X		Town Council; Town Administration; Long Term	Staff time	Working with Charleston County to maintain existing system. SCDOT hazard mitigation grant for 2016	Working with Charleston County to maintain existing system. SCDOT hazard mitigation grant for 2016
➤				X		Town Council; Town Administration;	Staff time	Require stormwater regulations for all properties when developed/ fill added	All development required to maintain stormwater management plan/ infrastructure.
➤			X	X		Town Council; Town Administration;	Staff time	Work with Charleston County and SCDOT to maintain their systems	Requested more frequent maintenance work following 2015 and 2016 storm events.



HOUSING ELEMENT

Town of Sullivan's Island
Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
March 14th, 2018

Housing Element

Public Input

Throughout the planning process there have been public comments provided by the citizens through emails, an open house, and online surveys. Here are some of the comments that have been used to inform the writing of the Housing Element.

1. “I think it important to retain the essentially single family home predominance.”
2. “Please don't allow the island to become all McMansions. There are some charming house, please try to keep some of them.”
3. “We need to continue to encourage single family housing on the island, with emphasis on the retention of the historical feel of the island, while recognizing each property owner's right to utilize their property in a manner they deem appropriate for them.”

Online Survey - <https://bcdcog.com/publicinput/>

Website - <https://bcdcog.com/sullivans-island-comprehensive-plan/>

Review Changes Requested by Steering Committee

The Steering Committee has reviewed the Housing Element and requested the following changes and or instigated dialogue regarding different aspects of the chapter. The following items represent the committees work on the plan.

1. Page 21: People who have licenses for short term rental-How can the number of licenses go down one year and go up another year? – corrected 2016 showed 54 and it was adjusted to 53 (which matches 2014/2015)
2. Page 1: Explain an ADU "special exception" – corrected to show that an ADU is a special exception, not that it is a special exception in addition to the ADU
3. Page 1: Why did Housing units go down from 2010-2016? – sampling causes fluctuations Total Housing Units. Even though it goes down from 1,138 in 2010 to 1,116 in 2016, that is a fairly accurate attempt at a year over year over sample. Now if 2016 dropped to 800 units, then we should be concerned.
4. Page 1: What time of the year did ACS monitor the "vacant" homes? – First, the misnomer of "vacant" was addressed. Vacant DOES not mean that a home is abandoned. It means that those who conducted the sample did not get in touch with a resident OR the resident lived in the unit for 2 months or less. Second, to address the question specifically, we do not know when the ACS surveyed the residents in these homes. We could, of course, add a table like this:

Year	Response Rate	Reasons for Noninterviews – Housing Units			
		Refusal	Unable to Locate	No One Home	Temporarily Absent
2016	96.8	1.2	0.0	0.7	0.1
2015	97.6	1.0	0.0	0.6	0.0
2014	98.6	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.0

But I wouldn't want to water down the document with any type of statistical methodologies. I believe that the ACS data is highly defensible if the event arises as such.

5. Page 6: DRB...should there be anything in there regarding encouraging Interior Standards for historic preservation? - We left this as-is, but can discuss.

Housing Element

Review Changes Requested by Steering Committee Continued

Table 3.1: Assessed Parcels	
4% Assessment	610
6% Assessment	524
Total Assessed Parcels	1,134
Single Family Residential	882
Mult-Family	172
Total Dwelling Units	1,054
Vacation Rentals	51
Long Term Rentals	82
Total Confirmed Rentals	133
ADU Special Exceptions	15

Figure 3.2: Total Housing Units

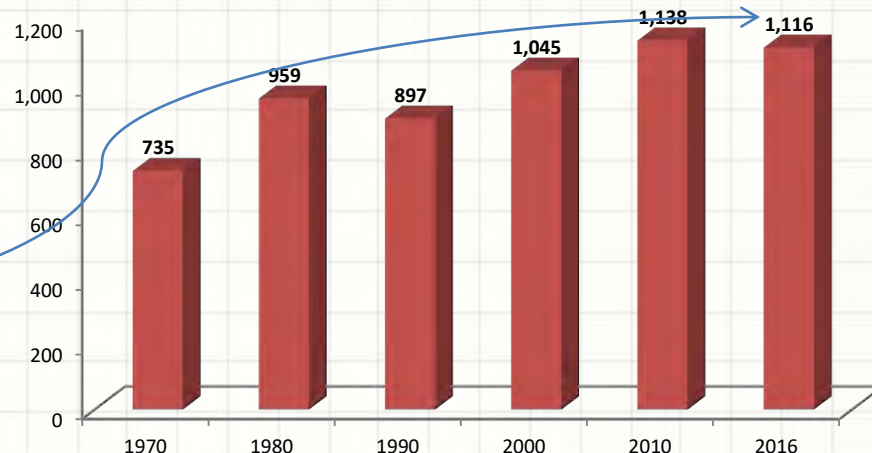
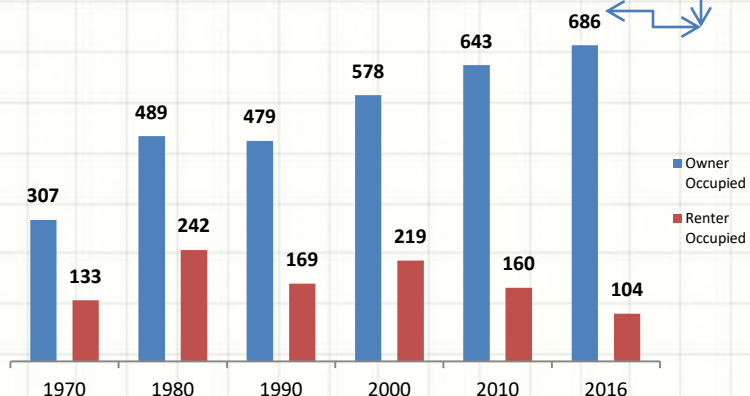


Figure 3.3: Housing Tenure (1970-2016)



Workforce Housing

Workforce housing may be achieved through a number of differing policy recommendations. The basic concept from a market perspective is to increase the supply of housing units in an effort to lower the costs of housing. This is a very arduous task in a coastal town that has a very limited supply of land to offer. However, residential densities may be increased by allowing more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or mixed-use businesses (ground floor retail with residential units built on top). Either scenario may work to help with workforce housing, but they do not seem to be politically feasible for the Town as most of the communication received from public input for this plan seems to be geared towards keeping the business district the same, as well as limiting the number of ADUs island-wide. The existing character and fabric of the Island is therefore valued more importantly than an egalitarian ideal for workforce housing.

An idea that would seem to be most logical would be for the Town to work with a local jurisdiction such as Mount Pleasant which has more developable land available to develop workforce housing. However, this too, during the current writing seems to be a long shot as Mount Pleasant has implemented several moratoriums on building apartments which are limiting the supply of housing and driving up rents simultaneously. Infrastructure concerns are certainly a driving force for slowing the pace of development until infrastructure can be improved that can handle new developments.

Housing Goals and Objectives

The Town strives to retain its character as a single-family oriented community that serves the residents with an exceptional level of resources and services. As such, it has adopted the following goals, policies and implementation strategies:

Housing Goal: Preserving the single-family lifestyle while promoting a diverse style of housing character on the island.			
	Objectives	Responsible Parties	Timeframe
<i>Housing Policy 1: The Town will promote and foster single family development.</i>			
	P1.1 Low Density – Maintain half-acre lot sizes and other regulations.	Planning Commission; Town Council; Town Staff	Ongoing
	P1.2 Vacation/Short Term Rentals – Regulate restrictions that address number of tenants, parking, permitted activities, licenses, etc.	Planning Commission; Town Council; Town Staff	Ongoing
	P1.3 Preserve/encourage the diversity of structure styles on the Island.	Town Council; Design Review Board	Ongoing
	P1.4 Revise and updating zoning policies as needed to maintain a sense of place while being respectful of the Island’s traditional mass, height, and scale within each neighborhood.	Planning Commission; Town Council; Town Staff	Ongoing
<i>Housing Policy 2: The Town will monitor the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System.</i>			
	P2.1 Monitor changes in federal policy.	Town Staff	Ongoing
	P2.2 Monitor and adjust the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance as needed.	Town Staff	Ongoing
<i>Housing Policy 3: Examine opportunities for Workforce Housing.</i>			
	P3.1 Create a Workforce Housing Committee.	Planning Commission; Town Staff	Short-term
	<i>P3.2 Explore opportunities with Mt. Pleasant to build workforce housing.</i>	Planning Commission; Town Council; Town Staff	<i>Long-term</i>

Upcoming Elements – Economic and Transportation

You will be receiving drafts for the Economic & Transportation Elements in the next few days. Please try to have edits back one week before next Town Planning Commission meeting. We will send out notes and deadlines within the email. Thanks all the hard work!

How we live...

Introduction

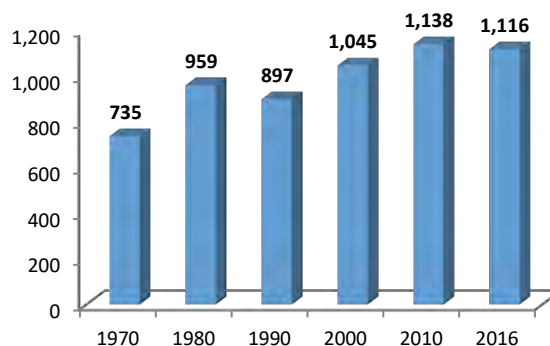
Sullivan's Island has remained successful in maintaining the unique single-family character of a quaint, small beach town since its inception. One of the methods used in the Housing Element to identify how the single-family character will remain is by examining multiple sources of data with regards to primary owner occupied units and those with second homes or rentals. Since differing data sources will be used, not all counts for housing units will be exactly the same (ex. Table 3.1, Figure 3.1, and Figure 3.3). These differences are minor and should not be looked as negative. In addition, the historical buildings on Sullivan's Island give the Island architecture a variety and richness that is not found on many of the surrounding barrier islands. In an effort to maintain the character of the Island, the Housing Element will provide details on existing conditions and future considerations.

Housing

Housing Stock

Sullivan's Island has a total of 1,116 housing units, of which, 790 were surveyed as occupied and 326 were vacant. Occupied housing thus represents approximately 71% of the total housing units, whilst vacant units represent approximately 29%. Housing units are considered vacant by the American Community Survey (ACS) after a three month contact period by regular mail (1st month), phone (2nd month), and in person (3rd month). If they are unsuccessful at reaching the resident during the three-month correspondence period, they will declare the unit vacant. It should be noted that vacant does not mean abandoned. There is room for error in this methodology, but the three-month period allows for a concerted effort in confirming who may be a part-time resident or full-time. The difference between the ACS data and Charleston County data will be examined further within this section.

Figure 3.1: Total Housing Units



Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2016

Further analysis regarding full-time and part-time residents in the Town has provided a few data points of value. Table 3.1, provided to the Town by the Charleston County Tax Assessor, shows the number of parcels that have been assessed with a 4% tax versus those with a 6% tax. The 4% assessment represents residents who live full-time on the Island, while 6% represents those who are part-time residents. Approximately 54% of the Island residents are considered full-time while 46% are part-time residents.

Both the ACS and the Charleston County Assessor's office data present similar information that has some noticeable variability between the two data sets. As stated before, the ACS shows that 29% of the homes are vacant, which can be tied to part-time residential status (Figure 3.1) Likewise, the Assessor data shows a greater number of part-time residents on the Island (46%). A possible explanation for this discrepancy would be that the ACS does not do a good job of communicating with part-time residents in their three month contact period. The main question asked by the ACS, if the resident is in the home more than two months of the year, shows where the ACS would consider the home is occupied. This would drastically increase the amount of full-time residents as a result, so the numbers seem to be nearly correct.

Table 3.1: Assessed Parcels	
4% Assessment	610
6% Assessment	524
Total Assessed Parcels	1,134
Single Family Residential	882
Mult-Family	172
Total Dwelling Units	1,054
Vacation Rentals	51
Long Term Rentals	82
Total Confirmed Rentals	133
ADU Special Exceptions	15

Source: 2017 Charleston County Assessor / Sullivan's Island

The Town also keeps records on the types of units (single-family and multi-family), vacation rentals and long term rentals, as well as Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) which are considered Special Exceptions and not granted by right. Single-family residential represents roughly 84% of the dwelling units on the Island (Table 3.1). Through various public input opportunities for the Comprehensive Plan, the general consensus has been geared toward maintaining the single-family home character of the Island. Below are a few public comments from online surveys that were collected throughout the planning process.

“I think it important to retain the essentially single-family home predominance.”

– Raymond Sweigart

“We need to continue to encourage single-family housing on the island, with emphasis on the retention of the historical feel of the island, while recognizing each property owner's right to utilize their property in a manner they deem appropriate for them.”

--Dennis Lovell

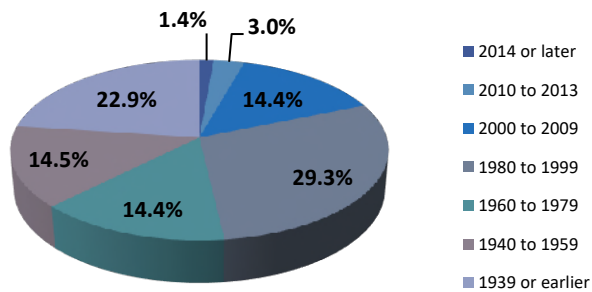
Table 3.2 is data collected by the Town of Sullivan's Island for those properties that report whether they are short or long term rentals. This table helps to show average monthly rents for each category across the Island.

Table 3.2: Average Rents	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Long Term Rentals	89	92	85	64	79
Average Monthly Gross	\$2,424.93	\$2,364.26	\$2,551.93	\$3,079.07	\$2,912.29
Short Term Rentals	60	54	53	53	53
Average Monthly Gross	\$3,443.53	\$3,687.69	\$4,336.56	\$5,009.71	\$4,898.96

Source: Sullivan's Island

Overall, Sullivan's Island has built homes at a fairly consistent rate, with the exception of this current decade (2010+). Compared to other municipalities in the region who are currently experiencing large housing booms, the trend is an anomaly. However, the limited supply and overall high cost of land are most likely what affects the trend. There were two main eras on Sullivan's Island where housing was built. From the period 1939 or earlier, approximately 23% of the current housing stock was built. However, the largest bulk of existing housing stock (29.3%) was built from 1980 to 1999 (Figure 3.2). The spike in growth from 1939 or earlier could either be from a housing stock that just accumulated over the Town's layered past or the military presence that was built up over time around Fort Moultrie. The larger spike, 1980 to 1999 is due to Hurricane Hugo, which decimated the Island in 1989. The remaining three periods, 1940 to 1959, 1960 to 1979, and 2000 to 2009, all had roughly the same growth rate (approximately 14.5%).

Figure 3.2: Year Structure Built

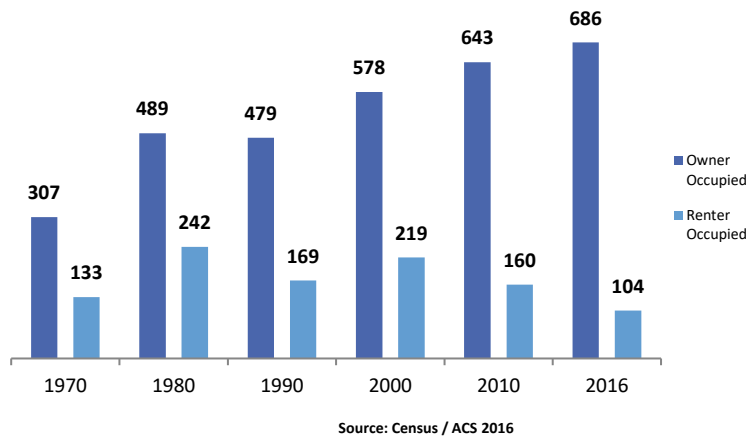


Source: ACS 2016

Housing Tenure

Housing tenure is defined by the U.S. Census as a binary status, which means a housing unit is either owner-occupied or renter-occupied. Of the 790 occupied-housing units, 686 units (86.8%) are owner-occupied. The remaining 104 housing units (13.2%) in the Town are renter-occupied.

Figure 3.3: Housing Tenure (1970-2016)



Household Type

The majority of household types on the Island are comprised of family households (70.1%) as shown in Table 3.3. The U.S. Census defines family households as a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage or adoption who reside together. Of the total family households, the largest age range of married householders (39.4%) are those who fall between the ages of 35 to 64 years old.

There are household types in the Town that are considered non-family households and make up almost 30% of the category. Non-family households are defined by the Census as households that consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals. Of the total non-family households, the largest age range percentage (13.2%) is the same as married householders, ages 35 to 64. These are householders whom live alone. For a more detailed breakdown see Table 3.3.

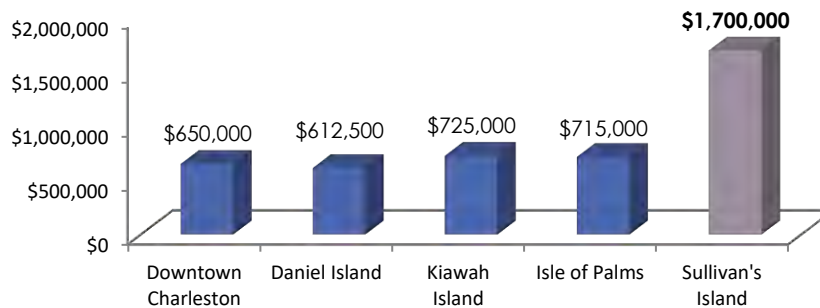
Family Households		70.1%	29.9%		Non-family Households	
Married-couple family	57.5%		25.8%	Householder living alone		
Householder 15 to 34 years	3.0%		2.5%	Householder 15 to 34 years		
Householder 35 to 64 years	39.6%		13.2%	Householder 35 to 64 years		
Householder 65 years and over	14.8%		10.1%	Householder 65 years and over		
Male householder, no wife present	3.8%		4.1%	Householder not living alone		
Householder 15 to 34 years	0.4%		0.3%	Householder 15 to 34 years		
Householder 35 to 64 years	2.7%		3.0%	Householder 35 to 64 years		
Householder 65 years and over	0.8%		0.8%	Householder 65 years and over		
Female householder, no husband present	8.9%					
Householder 15 to 34 years	1.3%					
Householder 35 to 64 years	5.1%					
Householder 65 years and over	2.5%					

Source: ACS 2016

Median Home Price

According to 2016 ACS data, the median home price in the Town is \$1.21 million. More updated real estate sources, such as the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors' (CTAR) Annual Report (2017), estimate the median home price as closer to \$1.7 million. Compared to other select Multiple Listing Service (MLS) areas in the Trident Region, Sullivan's Island maintains the highest median home price (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Median Home Prices in Charleston Area (2017)

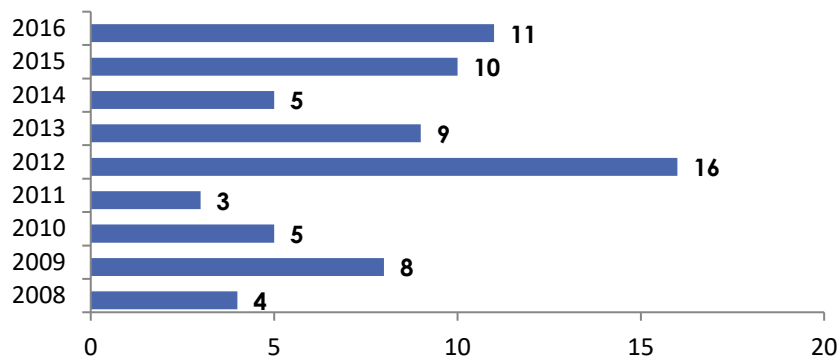


Source: Charleston Trident Association of Realtors 2017

Building Permits for New Home Construction

From 2008 to 2016, the Town has averaged 7.8 newly constructed homes on the Island (Figure 3.5). Within this time period, the year with the most residential construction was 2012, followed by 2015 and 2016. The rest of these years have all maintained similar levels. Given the relatively small size of the Town and its geographical constraints, these construction activity levels are normal.

Figure 3.5 New Home Construction (2008-2016)



Source: 2017 Town of Sullivan's Island

Design Review Board

Convened for the first time in 2004, the Sullivan's Island Design Review Board (DRB) was created with the intent to "enhance the Island's character, preserve property values and protect the unique island identity of Sullivan's Island" (Town Ordinance Section 21-106). Board members are appointed by Town Council and chosen from those in the community who exhibit knowledge and interest in a variety of fields related to architecture and design as spelled out in the ordinance section cited above. To achieve this goal, the DRB maintains jurisdiction with respect to 1) certain new construction and alteration to existing structures, 2) design appeals, 3) implementation of the historic overlay district, and 4) enforcement of design regulations.

In these areas, the DRB is charged with more specific objectives. Among these responsibilities, the Board considers "neighborhood compatibility" (Sec. 21-111) in regard to allowing elements inconsistent with zoning and design standards outlined in Sec. 21-11 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance; maintains updated historic overlay districts on the Official Zoning Map, and initiates all applications to nominate town structures for consideration on the National Register of Historic Places. The DRB may submit their comments to the State Historic Preservation Office for consideration by the State Board of Review.

Maintaining a well-trained and vibrant local historic preservation board is also a requirement of the Town's membership in the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, overseen by the SC State Historic Preservation Office.

Future Housing Needs and Opportunities

Chapter 2 (Population) delineates a slow, but steady population growth in 2030 (1,811) and 2040 (1,843). Given the rate of growth, as well as the small-town character of the Island, accommodating for future housing needs will not be needed in a large-scale, coordinated effort. An incremental approach will be sufficient for future growth patterns on the Island. With the data given being projections, population growth in conjunction with housing stock capacity will need to be closely monitored and is brought to task in the Goals and Objections section for Chapter 2. One area of concern for the Town is the increased costs of rents for housing on the Island. Workforce housing is affordable housing for those who work on the Island. Demonstrable benefits of workforce housing would include lower traffic congestion, lower parking congestion, better quality of life, diversity among residents, and the ability to get exercise by either walking or biking to work.

Workforce Housing

Workforce housing may be achieved through a number of differing policy recommendations. The basic concept from a market perspective is to increase the supply of housing units in an effort to lower the costs of housing. This is a very arduous task in a coastal town that has a very limited supply of land to offer. However, residential densities may be increased by allowing more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or mixed-use businesses (ground floor retail with residential units built on top). Either scenario may work to help with workforce housing, but they do not seem to be politically feasible for the Town as most of the communication received from public input for this plan seems to be geared towards keeping the business district the same, as well as limiting the number of ADUs island-wide. The existing character and fabric of the Island is therefore valued more importantly than an egalitarian ideal for workforce housing.

An idea that would seem to be most logical would be for the Town to work with a local jurisdiction such as Mount Pleasant which has more developable land available to develop workforce housing. However, this too, during the current writing seems to be a long shot as Mount Pleasant has implemented several moratoriums on building apartments which are limiting the supply of housing and driving up rents simultaneously. Infrastructure concerns are certainly a driving force for slowing the pace of development until infrastructure can be improved that can handle new developments.