

PLANNING COMMISSION
October 8, 2025

The public may view the public meeting at:
www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms

Public Comment: Citizens may provide public comment here:
<https://www.iop.net/public-comment-form>

AGENDA

The Isle of Palms Planning Commission will hold its regular meeting on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of City Hall, 1207 Palm Boulevard.

- A. Call to order and acknowledgment that the press and the public were duly notified in accordance with state law.
- B. Approval of minutes August 13, 2025
- C. New business Review of lighting ordinance amendments
- D. Old business Review of Recommendations Matrix
- E. Miscellaneous business
- F. Adjourn



**Planning Commission Meeting
4:00pm, Wednesday, August 13, 2025
1207 Palm Boulevard, Isle of Palms, SC and
broadcasted live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofisleofpalms>**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Present: Sandy Stone, David Cohen, Sue Nagelski, Tim Ahmuty, Ron Denton,
Jeffrey Rubin, Rich Steinert

Staff present: Administrator Kerr

2. Approval of minutes

MOTION: Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2025 meeting. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion.

Ms. Nagelski questioned whether or not recommendation #21 needed to be included in those that were to be changed green. The City Clerk researched the question, and according to the transcript of the July 9 meeting, Administrator Kerr indicated that #21 was already green.

VOTE: The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. New Business -- none

4. Old Business

Review of Recommendations Matrix

Administrator Kerr said he will be meeting with COG shortly and will discuss recommendations 36 and 38 with them.

Discussion ensued about recommendation 151 regarding native tree protections. Mr. Cohen noted a loophole in the tree removal process that does not stop a homeowner from removing a newly planted tree after one year. He also suggested expanding the tree protection zone and requiring an arborist to "make the call" about building within the tree protection zone.

Administrator Kerr noted the Commissioners desire to expand the tree preservation zone and "potentially giving protection to trees that were required to be replaced." No more restrictions will be added than what currently exists in the ordinance. He added that replacement trees are planted with intention and done by a landscape architect. He will share proposed language change to the ordinance to the September meeting. The status will be changed to "needs action."

Administrator Kerr said he will change the language of recommendation 213 to “purchase or otherwise acquire” and change its status to actionable/aspirational.

Commissioners briefly discussed recommendation 240 and the best ways in which to collect such historical data.

Recommendation 263 is already in progress and its status will change to green.

Administrator Kerr will research the context of recommendations 241 and 269 so they can be discussed at a later meeting.

5. Miscellaneous

The next meeting of the Planning Commission will be Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 4:00pm.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Stone made a motion to adjourn, and Dr. Rubin seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:17pm.

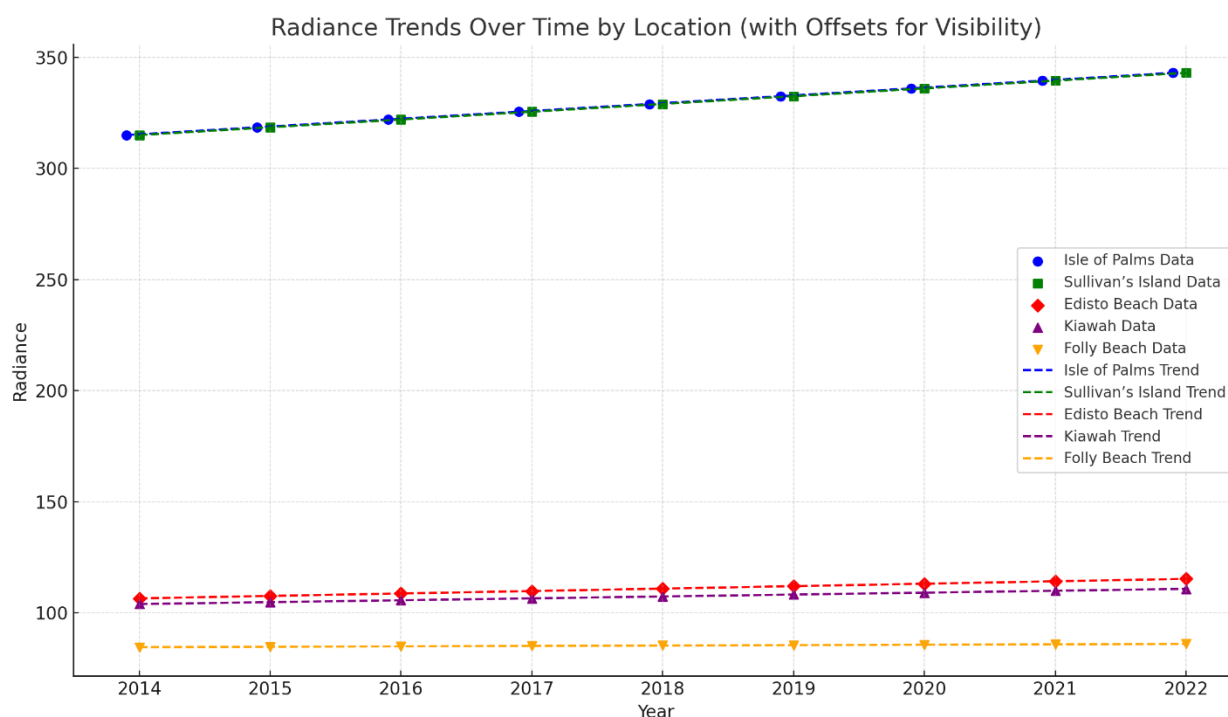
Respectfully submitted,

Nicole DeNeane
City Clerk

Light Pollution on IOP

Light pollution is a growing problem nationally, and Isle of Palms is not immune. We have experienced substantial development across IOP, which is exacerbated by the fact that high intensity blue-white LED lights have become the new standard for inexpensive outdoor lighting for residences and commercial properties.

NASA uses Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) to observe & collect global satellite data on infrared & visible wavelengths. Using this data, we know that IOP is seeing a 4% increase per year (since 2013) of light radiance produced across the island. Using this VIIRS data, we are able to compare our light radiance levels with other nearby island communities:



While, IOP does have a lighting ordinance in place today, it is very limited – focusing on beachfront properties for the protection of Sea Turtles. Neighboring island communities have taken additional steps to manage light pollution on rivers and the intercoastal waterway, which helps protect other forms of wildlife. Additionally, many of our neighbors have also implemented ordinances and practices that eliminate the negative impact that light pollution has on residents and visitors staying on the island. The American Medical Association has published articles and papers showing that excessive exterior lighting negatively impacts human sleep cycles and is directly linked to breast cancer and other severe health issues. **It's time for IOP to extend our current ordinance to make the island safer for all wildlife, especially for the "two legged locals".**

EAC Recommendation

The EAC studied ordinances and practices in place today in other barrier island communities, and we found that we are the laggard. Of the communities we studied, Folly Beach has the most extensive exterior light restrictions, and not surprisingly their light radiance is substantially lower than IOP's. Here are some of the key differences in ordinances across these municipalities:

IOP	Kiawah / Edisto	Folly Beach
Light cannot shine on or source of the light be seen from the beach	lighting must be shielded so that it does not shine onto neighboring residential properties, natural areas or on the bodies of water internal to or behind the island	Lighting Plans are required as part of the building permit application; Lighting greater than 60 watts / 100 Lumens must have a shield that forces the light downward Lights cannot be located within 10 feet of property lines Folly has a fairly technical ordinance that measures the ratio of maximum to minimum lighting levels on a given site or parcel of land as measured in foot candles at ground level with maximums set for residential and non-residential land use

After reviewing our neighboring community's ordinances, **the EAC is recommending minor additions to our existing ordinances, specifically targeted at exterior lighting for residential properties.** Rather than try to fully embrace the ordinances Folly Beach has in place today, the EAC is recommending a few additional requirements that is low hanging fruit that helps mitigate light pollution without putting a significant burden on IOP homeowners. In summary, the proposed ordinance additions require homeowners to ensure that their exterior lights are not excessively bright, and that these lights do not illuminate natural areas or residential areas that are adjacent to their property.

Supporting Documents

US Fish & Wildlife article

- Wildlife, plants and insects evolved to co-exist with the natural night sky
- In a matter of decades, humans transformed the dark and naturally lit night sky to one that is glowing and brightened by artificial lights
- Light pollution's negative impact to birds and sea turtles has been known for a while now, there is starting to be more focus on the negative impact to pollinators.
- Pollinators are critical to the ability for plants to produce fruit and reproduce
- Light pollution disrupts the natural sleep-wake cycle that repeats every 24 hours, known as the circadian rhythm. It also distorts natural rhythms in seasonal lighting that provide important cues to all life on earth – such as when to begin hibernating or migrating. It also changes the time that plants and animals spend awake or asleep, and the activities they typically carry out during waking hours.

American Medical Association article

- The primary human concerns with nighttime lighting include ... potential carcinogenic effects related to melatonin suppression, especially breast cancer. Other diseases that may be exacerbated by circadian disruption include obesity, diabetes, depression and mood disorders, and reproductive problems
- These may seem to be bold statements by the AMA, but they are not without substantial scientific support that has been building for several decades.
- Exposure to bright light after sunset is an entirely unnatural occurrence that confuses our internal regulation and how we interact with the external environment.

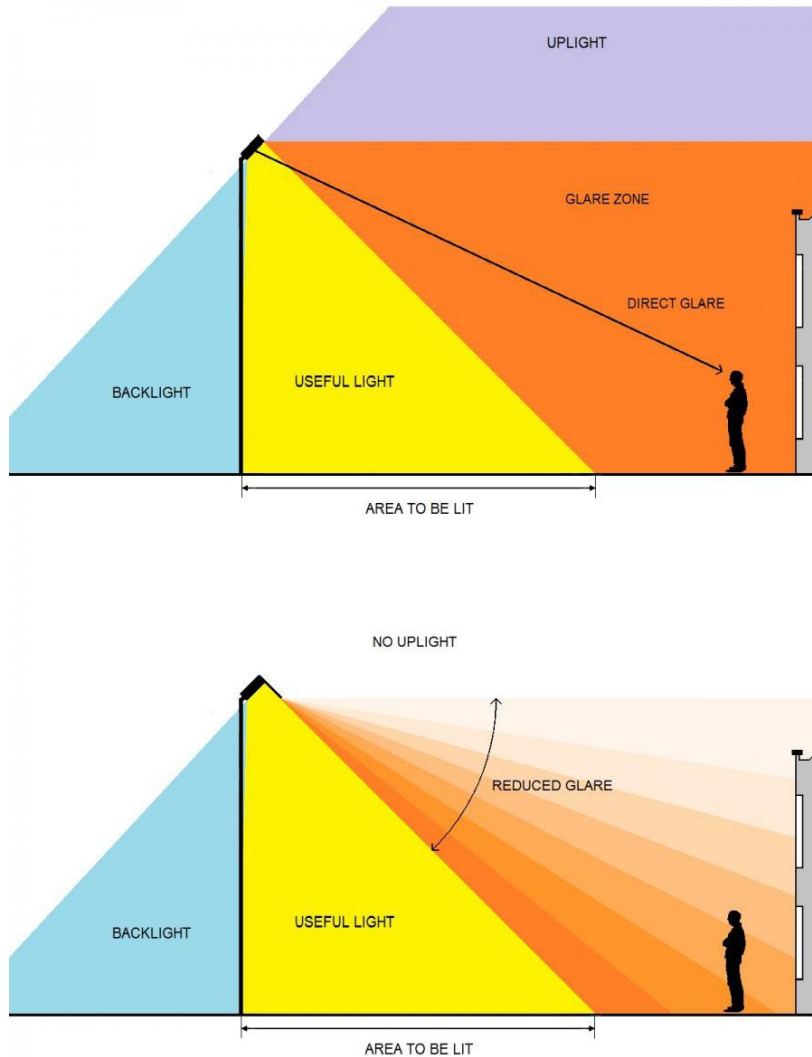
Kelvin Light Temperature Scale

Light bulb color temperature is represented in the unit of absolute temperature, Kelvin, noted by the symbol K. Generally speaking, the higher the Kelvin, the whiter the light.

< 2000K	gives off a dim glow of light, similar to what you might find from candlelight; best for low-light areas where ambient illumination is welcomed
2000K – 3000K	gives off a soft white glow, often yellow in appearance ; best for living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms and outdoor spaces
3100 – 4500K	gives off a bright amount of white light; best for kitchens, offices, work spaces and vanities where task lighting is needed
4600K-6500K	gives off a bright amount of blue-white light, similar to that of daylight; best for display areas and work environments where very bright light is needed
6500K and up	gives off a bright bluish hue of light, often found in commercial locations; best for task lighting.

Additional Steps by EAC

One of the initiatives the EAC is working on is a Good Neighbors flier. We plan to include EAC recommended “best practices” to help protect the enjoyment of IOP. For the light pollution topic, we may include suggestions on how to install lights and light shields to ensure that the light doesn’t shine beyond the intended target area. See illustration:



Sec. 5-4-17. Sea turtle protection; outdoor lighting regulations.

- (a) *Definitions.* The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:
- (1) *Artificial light* means any source of light emanating from a manmade device, including, but not limited to, incandescent, mercury vapor, metal halide, or sodium lamps, flashlights, spotlights, streetlights, vehicular lights, construction or security lights.
 - (2) *Floodlight* means reflector-type light fixture which is attached directly to a building and which is unshielded.
 - (3) *Low profile luminary* means a light fixture set on a base which raises the source of the light no higher than forty-eight inches (48") off the ground, and designed in such a way that light is directed downward from a hooded light source.
 - (4) *Development* means any existing structure for which a building permit has been duly issued and any new construction or remodeling of existing structures when such remodeling includes alteration of exterior lighting.
 - (5) *Person* means any individual, firm, association, joint venture, partnership, estate, trust, syndicate, fiduciary, corporation, group or unit, or Federal, State, County or municipal government.
 - (6) *Pole lighting* means a light fixture set on a base or pole which raises the source of the light higher than forty-eight inches (48") off the ground.
- (b) *Development.* No artificial light shall illuminate any area of the beach other than in compliance with this section. Building and electrical plans for construction of single-family or multifamily dwellings, commercial or other structures, including electrical plans associated with parking lots, dune walkovers or other outdoor lighting for real property if lighting associated with such construction or development can be seen from the beach, shall be in compliance with the following:
- (1) Floodlights shall be prohibited. Wall-mounted light fixtures shall be fitted with hoods so that no light illuminates the beach.
 - (2) Pole lighting shall be shielded in such a way that the point sources of light will not be visible from the beach. Outdoor lighting shall be held to the minimum necessary for security and convenience.
 - (3) Low-profile luminaries shall be used in parking lots and such lighting shall be positioned so that no light illuminates the beach.
 - (4) Dune crosswalks shall utilize low-profile shielded luminaries which shall be turned off from sunset to sunrise during the period of May 1 to October 31 of each year.
 - (5) Temporary security lights at construction sites shall not be mounted more than fifteen feet (15') above the ground. Illumination from the lights shall not spread beyond the boundary of the property being developed and in no case shall those lights illuminate the beach.
- (c) *Use of lighting.* It is the policy of the City for both new and existing development to minimize artificial light illuminating any area of the beach. To adhere to this policy, lighting of structures which can be seen from the beach shall be in compliance with the following:
- (1) Lights illuminating buildings or associate grounds for decorative or recreational purposes shall be shielded or screened such that they are not visible from the beach, or turned off from sunset to sunrise during the period of May 1 to October 31 of each year.
 - (2) Lights illuminating dune crosswalks of any area oceanward of the primary dune line shall be turned off from sunset to sunrise during the period of May 1 to October 31 of each year.

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- (3) Security lights shall be permitted throughout the night so long as low-profile luminaries are used and screened in such a way that those lights do not illuminate the beach.
- (d) *Publicly owned lighting.* Streetlights and lighting at parks and other publicly owned beach areas shall be subject to the following:
- (1) Streetlights shall be located so that most of their illumination will be directed away from the beach. These lights shall be equipped with ~~low-pressure sodium bulbs and~~ shades or shields that will prevent backlighting and render them not visible from the beach.
 - (2) Lights at parks or other public beach access points shall be shielded or shaded or shall not be utilized during the period of May 1 to October 31 of each year.
- (e) *Enforcement and penalty.* Violation of any provision is hereby declared to be a misdemeanor, punishable and enforceable pursuant to the provisions of section 1-3-66.

(Code 1994, § 5-4-17)

Section 5-4-18. New and Existing Residential Development.

The purpose of this section is to control light spillage and glare so as not to adversely affect motorists, pedestrians, natural areas, vistas, and land uses of adjacent properties. More specifically, this section is intended to:

- Control lighting to assure that excessive light spillage and glare are not directed at adjacent properties, neighboring areas, and motorists;
 - Protect livability and enjoyment for residents and visitors;
 - Filter and reduce glare from artificial light sources, preventing “sky and neighborhood glow”; and
 - Avoid negative impacts to wildlife from exterior lighting.
- (a) Outdoor lighting on residential structures is prohibited ~~must be shielded so that light is directed downward and does from not shining e~~ directly onto ~~any natural including~~ the Intracoastal Waterway, marsh, or other natural areas outside of the owners property.
- (b) Outdoor lighting on residential structures shall not shine directly into the yard or windows of adjacent residential uses.
- (c) Light fixtures in excess of 60 watts or 100 lumens shall use full cut-off lenses or hoods to prevent glare or spillover onto adjacent ~~lands~~properties and natural areas.
- (d) Upwardly-directed lighting shall not be used to illuminate structures, except for low-wattage architectural lighting. These lights ~~should~~must be on a timer such that they are turned off by 10:00pm every day
- (e) ~~It is recommended that A~~all exterior lighting must be rated at or below 3000 Kelvin. ~~While exceptions may exist, this limitation provides a balance of safety and security with a more amber tone of light being emitted.~~

Recommendations	Source	Category/Focus Area	Assigned Committee	Initiative	Timeline of Implementation	Type of Recommendation	Budgetary Cost	Initiative2	Rec #	Recommendation	Status
Consider adding more crosswalks and sidewalks island wide based off data from walkability study with emphasis on 27th, 28th, 29th streets surrounding the recreation center. Possible funding may come from the infrastructure funds.	Community Enrichment Plan	Public Safety	Planning Commission		Long	Exploratory	\$\$\$	Infrastructure Improvements	31	Consider adding more crosswalks and sidewalks island wide based off data from walkability study with emphasis on 27th, 28th, 29th streets surrounding the recreation center. Possible funding may come from the infrastructure funds.	Underway with COG walkability study
Create a clear path off the connector to bike to Front Beach/County park incorporating the existing path from 14th to Breach inlet.	Community Enrichment Plan	Public Safety	Planning Commission		Long	Actionable	\$\$\$	Cycling Enhancements	36	Create a clear path off the connector to bike to Front Beach/County park incorporating the existing path from 14th to Breach inlet.	
Determine feasibility for a bike route off the main roadways and sidewalks through neighborhoods or other lower traffic areas. i.e. Waterway Boulevard on the east bound side.	Community Enrichment Plan	Public Safety	Planning Commission		Long	Exploratory	\$\$\$	Cycling Enhancements	38	Determine feasibility for a bike route off the main roadways and sidewalks through neighborhoods or other lower traffic areas. i.e. Waterway Boulevard on the east bound side.	Underway with COG walkability study
Focus on the acquisition of properties to increase our public space: Contact The Beach Company to identify small pocket parcels they own. Monitor real estate listings of properties located between the current Recreation Center property and Waterway Boulevard; evaluate purchases that could enlarge the recreation footprint.	Community Enrichment Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Long	Aspirational	\$\$\$	Infrastructure Improvements	57	Focus on the acquisition of properties to increase our public space: Contact The Beach Company to identify small pocket parcels they own. Monitor real estate listings of properties located between the current Recreation Center property and Waterway Boulevard; evaluate purchases that could enlarge the recreation footprint.	
Explore recommendations for zoning, retrofitting, setbacks for new construction.	Community Enrichment Plan	Environmental Stewardship and Management	Planning Commission		Long	Exploratory		Zoning Ordinances	100	Explore recommendations for zoning, retrofitting, setbacks for new construction.	DONE
Evaluate and modify the city's tree ordinances to elevate conservation of native tree species such as palmetto, live oak, pine and wax myrtle.	Community Enrichment Plan	Environmental Stewardship and Management	Planning Commission		Short	Exploratory		Environmental Sustainability	151	Evaluate and modify the city's tree ordinances to elevate conservation of native tree species such as palmetto, live oak, pine and wax myrtle.	Needs Action - Code Change - Different Language - have more information for planning meeting in September
Update zoning ordinances for redevelopment.	Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	191	Update zoning ordinances for redevelopment.	DONE
Begin Development of Redevelopment Design Tool.	Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	192	Begin Development of Redevelopment Design Tool.	
Launch a pilot program for private Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management.	Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Stormwater Management	197	Launch a pilot program for private Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management.	considering incetives for LID
Update and enforce zoning ordinances	Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	201	Update and enforce zoning ordinances	DONE - Planning Commision modified storm water regulations in 2024
Purchase flood-prone property to preserve and or demonstrate conservation practices.	Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Long	Actionable	\$\$\$	Stormwater Management	213	Purchase flood-prone property to preserve and or demonstrate conservation practices.	Actionable - Purchase or Acquire flood prone property
Support commercial development only within the parameters set by the existing zoning regulations and consistent with the City's established character as a residential community	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Short	Aspirational		Zoning Ordinances	216	Support commercial development only within the parameters set by the existing zoning regulations and consistent with the City's established character as a residential community	Ongoing
Encourage business development commensurate with the needs of the local community	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Short	Aspirational		Forecasting	220	Encourage business development commensurate with the needs of the local community	Ongoing
Pursue improving the CRS rating when feasible	Comprehensive Plan	Stormwater Management	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Stormwater Management	227	Pursue improving the CRS rating when feasible	Ongoing
Explore the possibility of establishing a commemorative exhibit online and/or in one of the City's buildings including the collection of historic photographs and documents compiled in 2003 for the City's 50th Anniversary celebration	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Long	Exploratory	\$\$\$	Recreational Offerings	240	Explore the possibility of establishing a commemorative exhibit online and/or in one of the City's buildings including the collection of historic photographs and documents compiled in 2003 for the City's 50th Anniversary celebration	to be done - scan in photos, exhibits - ongoing
Investigate the possibility of permanently marking sites of historical significance on the island and ensuring their preservation	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Long	Exploratory		Recreational Offerings	241	Investigate the possibility of permanently marking sites of historical significance on the island and ensuring their preservation	check into this - DK

Consider ways of restricting the construction of structures at the ends of docks working in conjunction with the OCRM and the U.S. Corps of Engineers	Comprehensive Plan	Environmental Stewardship and Management	Planning Commission		Short	Exploratory		Marsh Preservation	251	Consider ways of restricting the construction of structures at the ends of docks working in conjunction with the OCRM and the U.S. Corps of Engineers	Staff to discuss with OCRM juridictaion - DK to do work on his end
Continue to track construction trends including: the number of houses demolished each year and the number of square feet, bedrooms and bathrooms of new houses	Comprehensive Plan	General Administration	Planning Commission		Short	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	263	Continue to track construction trends including: the number of houses demolished each year and the number of square feet, bedrooms and bathrooms of new houses	Done with existing software
Continually assess ordinances which limit the size and width of houses and the amount of impervious surface on the island	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Medium	Exploratory		Zoning Ordinances	264	Continually assess ordinances which limit the size and width of houses and the amount of impervious surface on the island	DONE
Amend the zoning ordinance to limit the density of development allowed on property not serviced by a public wastewater system	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	265	Amend the zoning ordinance to limit the density of development allowed on property not serviced by a public wastewater system	DONE
Monitor the amount of impervious surface on residential lots. The City defines impervious material as any material through which water cannot penetrate, including buildings, roads, and parking lots	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Medium	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	267	Monitor the amount of impervious surface on residential lots. The City defines impervious material as any material through which water cannot penetrate, including buildings, roads, and parking lots	DONE - Planning Commission modified storm water regulations in 2024
Make appropriate amendments to the zoning ordinance which reflect the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Short	Exploratory		Zoning Ordinances	268	Make appropriate amendments to the zoning ordinance which reflect the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan	
Develop plans and policies which use public improvements to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts of commercial development upon residential properties	Comprehensive Plan	Quality of Life	Planning Commission		Long	Actionable		Zoning Ordinances	269	Develop plans and policies which use public improvements to prevent or mitigate adverse impacts of commercial development upon residential properties	look at this - DK

\$ (< \$50,000)
\$\$ (\$50,000 - \$100,000)
\$\$\$ (> \$100,000)

Short (< 1 year)
Medium (1 - 5 years)
Long (> 5 years)

Aspirational: long-term vision with no clear policy or action recommended
Exploratory: policy or action to explore and consider further
Actionable: clear policy or budgetary action that can be taken immediately
Maintenance: upkeep of existing practices, policies, or activities