



IOP THRIVES! COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT PLAN

To enhance the quality of life and overall experience for all who live, work, and play on the island.

February 2025

Letter from the Mayor



Dear Residents of Isle of Palms,

I am proud to present the final Community Enrichment Plan, a culmination of the hard work and dedication exhibited by our Community Enrichment Task Force. Over the course of one year, this group met regularly to assess our community's needs and develop thoughtful recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality of life for all residents and visitors on the Isle of Palms. Their work is rooted with substantial community input, including a community wide survey and two community listening sessions.

The insights and recommendations generated by the Task Force are anchored in the belief that our community thrives when we prioritize collaboration and proactive engagement. Their recommendations encompass a variety of initiatives from enhancing public safety, to balancing tourism with quality of life, and environmental stewardship, while also fostering initiatives that promote connection and engagement among residents.

These recommendations are for Council to act upon in alignment with the city's strategic plan. I encourage every member of our community to take the time to review this report. Your feedback is invaluable as we move forward with the implementation of these recommendations. Together, we can ensure that the Isle of Palms becomes the most sustainable, family-friendly beach community in South Carolina.

Thank you to the members of the Task Force and to The McNair Group, who facilitated our process, for their unwavering commitment to our community. I am excited about the future and the positive changes that lie ahead.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phillip Pounds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phillip Pounds

Executive Summary

In late 2023, city Council appointed a Task Force to develop a **Community Enrichment Plan** as part of the island's strategic planning and the **IOPThrives!** initiative. This Task Force was charged with providing recommendations to city Council to ensure Isle of Palms continues to thrive as one of the leading island communities of South Carolina and the Southeast. Key outcomes for this plan were to ensure the Island continues its strong reputation as:

- A safe, sustainable, and friendly beach community;
- A place that welcomes residents and visitors to enjoy unparalleled amenities and natural resources;
- An island that is a leader in environmental preservation and sustainability; and
- An island community committed to balancing the “live, work, play” values: residential neighborhoods, thriving businesses and active visitors.

Community Input: Substantial community input and data were collected to guide the city on how to proactively respond to the complex challenges of regional population and tourism growth while ensuring that Isle of Palms thrives. An island-wide survey with over 750 respondees set the priorities for planning. The city hosted two open forum listening sessions to enhance the survey information. Additionally, interviews were held with a number of city staff members to further inform the process.



Island Priorities: Utilizing this primary and secondary data, the task force organized the work in four focus areas:

- Environmental Leadership
- Safety Assurance
- Seasonal Impacts: Parking & Traffic
- Quality of Life (including all general aspects regarding social, recreational, short-term rentals, and safeguarding island-life values - family friendly live, work, play)

It was determined that enhanced communications, island education, strong partnerships with neighboring communities, along with use of advanced technology and innovative approaches would be central to meeting collective goals. The Task Force submits this work as a ‘living plan’ for consideration to be monitored by IOP Council and Staff at least semi-annually for progress reporting.

Our Partners: The project is funded by Explore Charleston through Isle of Palms accommodations tax funds. Research was conducted by The McNair Group and College of Charleston Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities.

The Community Enrichment Task Force: Task Force members were selected by city Council, based on their engagement within the community and expertise in their respective areas of livability and tourism management.

Maryanne Chalmers
Paige Grimball
Patsy Hindman
Ben Marks
Beverly Miller

Joe Ready
Bill Skeens
Susan Hill Smith
Alex Stone
Hugh Swingle

Linda Tucker
Rod Turnage
Sarah Vega

Thank you: This Task Force worked tirelessly, volunteering more than 2000 hours of time to help chart a plan forward. The members wish to thank all residents and businesses who provided input throughout the process. A special thanks goes to the IOP staff who attended all meetings, provided timely and helpful support, and made themselves available for any needs.



ENVIRONMENTAL

Purpose: To protect the future of our island community and natural ecosystems by prioritizing environmental conservation, sustainability, resiliency and adaptation. In the face of dramatic challenges that include pollution, threatened natural resources and forecasted sea-level rise of one (1) foot by 2050, the city must act urgently and mindfully while engaging residents, visitors and organizations in solutions.

Vision: To be a welcoming, environmentally conscious and resilient coastal community committed to enhancing the quality of life for those who come here to live, work and play.



Priority: Leadership

Strengthen leadership on environmental challenges – including those that threaten the livability and economic health of our island – inspiring and earning the respect of citizens, visitors and other communities.

Goal 1: Natural Resource Management

Focus on resiliency and natural resource management, exploring adding STEM-trained staff devoted to these areas, as other coastal communities in the region already have.

Recommendations:

- Preserve, protect, manage and enhance the island's natural resources – including the beach, salt marsh and natural areas in the island's interior.

- Secure grants, provide community education, and collaborate with neighboring communities and state agencies.
- Have in-house, STEM-focused staff ready for conversations on environmental policy and practices.
- Protect the city's best interests with cost-effective planning and increased oversight of contractors for resiliency initiatives, including beach preservation and drainage projects.

Goal 2: Ordinances

Use ordinances related to environmental issues more effectively.

Recommendations:

- Proactively enforce and track violations to environmental ordinances, including those related to beach lights, litter, building, development and tree protections.
- Evaluate whether more resources (ex. staff) are needed for proper enforcement.
- Coordinate with property managers and cleaning companies on proper garbage disposal and beachfront lights out policies.
- Require acknowledgement of city's beach rules as part of the online parking checkout process.

Goal 3: Data Collection & Usage

Collect and use environmental data to inform decisions and educate the public.

Recommendations:

- Develop consistent data collection that includes water quality testing for the ocean, creeks, marsh and interior; surveys of related wildlife and ecosystems; and sea level rise measurements.
- Make environmental data easy to understand, access and share.

Goal 4: Resiliency & Adaptation

With Planning Commission leadership and involvement of the Environmental Advisory Committee, develop a unified plan for resiliency and adaptation.

Recommendations:

- Advance recommendations from city's developing Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan.
- Model, map & monitor areas most susceptible to sea level rise, flooding & storm surges.
- Predict social and economic impacts of climate changes, including cost calculations.

- Explore recommendations for zoning, retrofitting, setbacks for new construction.
- Determine and articulate long-term goals for Adaptation plan that are proactive and transparent.
- Communicate these elements effectively to the public.

Goal 5: Energy Practices

Adapt city's energy practices as a model for residents, visitors, businesses and other communities.

Recommendations:

- Add solar panels to city buildings when it makes sense for sun exposure and roof replacement schedules.
- Explore transition to battery-powered landscaping equipment to reduce carbon emissions, air & noise pollution.
- Consider requesting sustainable practices in city's request for proposals and bids.
- Encourage fuel efficiency as a consideration when buying new vehicles.
- Evaluate feasibility of safety of adding electric vehicle charging stations.

Goal 6: Promotion

Promote Isle of Palms' natural resources and positive environmental practices.

Recommendations:

- Make IOP's environmental leadership a clear and consistent part of the city's brand.
- Highlight related wins and best practices through the city's communication channels, including the developing environmental section of iop.net.
- Secure more related media coverage.
- Add signs to public dock to highlight the location's natural resources, geography and history.
- With IOP Cleanup Crew, pursue IOP Conservation Station exhibit at Front Breach.

Goal 7: Effective Communication

Deepen stakeholder engagement through effective communications.

Recommendations:

- Develop plan to increase awareness of challenges and solutions that includes "Do No Harm" messaging for residents, visitors, developers and businesses.

- Provide QR codes in city signage and required messaging for STR's that direct visitors to environmental rules and best practices.
- Explore ways to better share rules with non-English speaking visitors.
- Create a guide – available electronically and in print form – for residents, developers, contractors and property managers to promote IOP native plants, trees, eco-friendly landscaping and lighting practices.
- Add an annual eco-themed event to the Recreation Department's annual calendar.
- Involve public in South Carolina Aquarium's Searise sign project.

Priority: Beach Restoration & Preservation

To maintain a healthy, wide sandy seven miles of beach to support and protect property, public use, ecosystems and the economy.

Goal 1: Monitor

Monitor the health of the entire beach.

Recommendations:

- Be proactive rather than reactive in beach preservation with quarterly surveying and monitoring.
- Consistently track, project and evaluate the impact of sea level rise, king tides and storms.

Goal 2: Be Prepared

Be prepared for action.

Recommendations:

- Pursue promising "natural defense" strategies.
- Have standing permits for agreed-upon projects for beach restoration, shoal management and emergency situations.

Goal 3: Informed Decision Making

Make informed decisions, striving to "Do no harm."

Recommendations:

- Be fiscally responsible without letting the lowest immediate expense drive decisions.
- Involve Environmental Advisory Committee in review of beach preservation efforts.

- Develop consistent signage policies on dune preservation, with approved options that residents can deploy on their property.
- Include acknowledgment of beach rules as part of the permitting process for events.

Goal 4: Funding Model

Firmly establish a fiscally sound funding model for beach renourishment.

Recommendations:

- Create a collaborative sense of shared responsibility with the state, local communities and county governments, beach users, and property owners.
- Annually fund beach restoration and maintenance in the city’s budget.
- Continue to explore ways to increase consistent revenue streams for beach renourishment.
- Lobby SC legislators to take on greater fiscal responsibility for maintaining state’s beaches, which they maintain jurisdiction over.
- Consider a policy to only use city funds in conjunction with granted property easements and funding from shared stakeholders – unless a disaster has been declared.

Priority: Flooding/Storm Resiliency

Become more disaster resistant by embracing solutions to increased flooding and storm risks.

Goal 1: Drainage Projects

Accelerate already existing comprehensive list of city drainage projects.

Recommendations:

- Pinpoint and generate more funding for the remaining major projects, including grant opportunities, to cover estimated costs.
- Put more projects in the pipeline, rather than 1-2 at a time.

Goal 2: Septic Systems and Grinder Pumps

Support transition away from septic systems and grinder pumps.

Recommendations:

- Work with Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission to aggressively pursue grant funding – possibly engaging a federal lobbyist – to support extension of public sewer system.

- Encourage neighborhoods to work collaboratively to facilitate connection to the public system without grinder pumps.
- Routinely collect floodwater samples to pinpoint problems and help prioritize areas where individual onsite disposal systems should be replaced.
- Explore funding to aid elderly and fixed income residents in connecting their residences to the public sewer system.
- Inspect septic systems upon transfer of ownership to create an inventory of existing systems, collect data on system failures and educate new owners.

Goal 3: Underground Power Lines

Advance underground power line projects to protect power use and trees.

Recommendations:

- Work with energy provider to accelerate already requested projects.
- Develop master plan for converting all remaining areas to underground lines.
- Consider location of at-risk palmettos – important to our community’s identity & resiliency – and other significant native trees in setting priorities.
- Press energy provider to drop use-it-or-lose-it provision of its annual contributions to the non-standard service fund for Isle of Palms, which can help pay for underground projects but currently must be used within five to six years.

Priority: Building an Eco-Corridor

Establish IOP and surrounding natural ecosystems, including salt marsh, as a thriving eco-corridor that also supports flooding resiliency.

Goal 1: Collaboration

Engage and work with conservation organizations and neighbors.

Recommendations:

- Join the South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative (SASMI).
- Consult with groups like Charleston’s M.A.R.S.H. project, Charleston Waterkeepers, Charleston Climate Coalition, South Carolina Aquarium, Barrier Island Eco Tours, Coastal Expeditions and Audubon Society.
- Partner with neighboring coastal communities, especially Mount Pleasant & Sullivan’s Island.

Goal 2: Maximizing Native Plants & Trees

Maximize opportunities for native plants throughout the island.

Recommendations:

- With guidance from local experts, emphasize native plants and gardens at all city parks and properties.
- Include in Request for Proposals (RFPs) for landscaping.
- Target city properties at risk of flooding for adding examples of “rain gardens” and dry ponds.
- Encourage and provide incentives for residents, businesses, developers, Wild Dunes Resort and Homeowner Associations (HOA’s) to increase native plants on residential and commercial properties.
- Pursue grants to support re-wilding, rain gardens, and salt marsh retreat in vulnerable residential areas.
- Involve residents in planting and monitoring vegetation to help stabilize drainage ditches/canals.

Goal 4: Tree Ordinances

Review and establish ordinances that are friendly to native trees.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate and modify the city’s tree ordinances to elevate conservation of native tree species such as palmetto, live oak, pine and wax myrtle. Explore funding a city-wide tree survey to document all native trees on the island.

Priority: Litter

Strive for zero litter in public places and natural spaces.

Goal 1: Removal

Remove litter routinely with paid personnel and volunteers.

Recommendations:

- Recruit volunteer neighborhood captains for regular cleanups of non-commercial sections of beach and island’s interior.
- Create paid IOP Conservation Team to target litter in busy beach and commercial areas by adding seasonal, part time positions geared to students interested in eco/civic careers. (Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew & SC Aquarium’s conservation team can guide educational component.)
- In addition to existing Front Beach setup, explore adding the following to high-traffic beach access paths, with placement closer to the street than dunes:
 - Cleanup bucket tree
 - "No Toys Left Behind” bin

- Bench for visitors to help them collect their things

Goal 2: Beach Trash Collection

Reconsider and improve city's beach trash collection system.

Recommendations:

- Consider transitioning to a new system with **covered** trash receptacles to prevent trash from turning into litter.

Goal 3: Sustainable Practices

Support sustainable practices in island businesses and restaurants.

Recommendations:

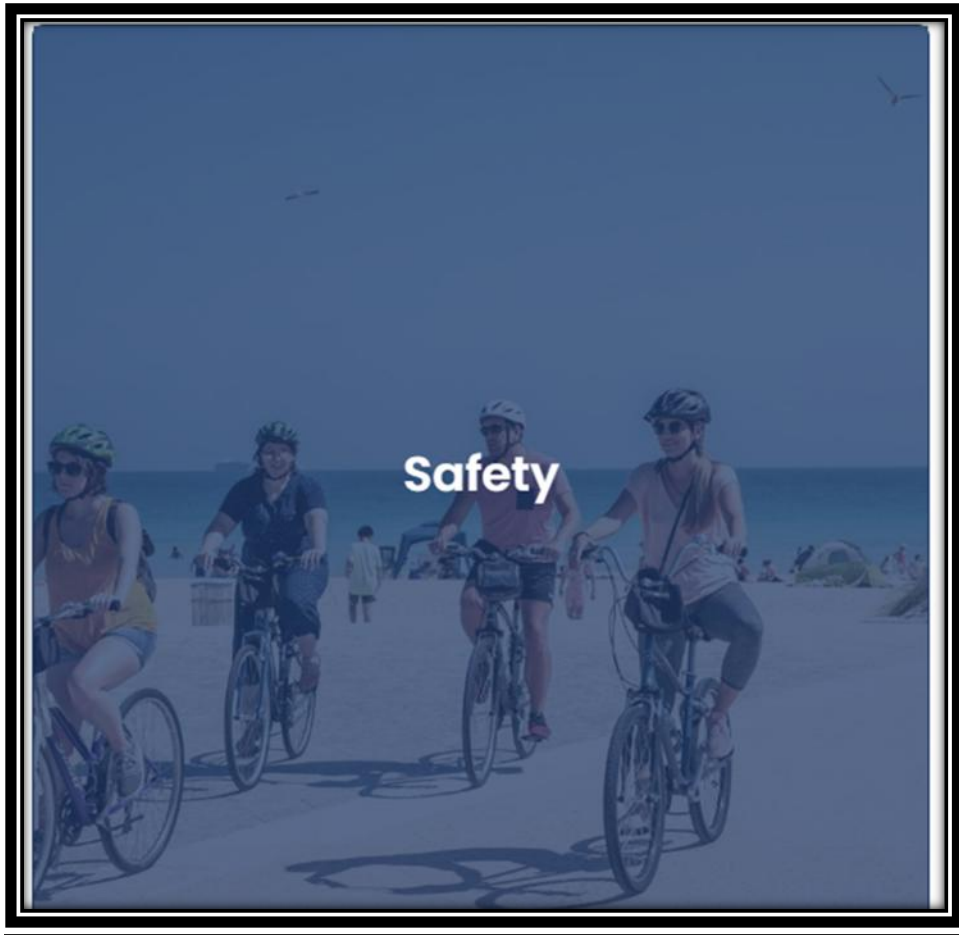
- Adjust packaging ordinances to close loopholes and align with neighboring municipalities.
- Partner with Chamber of Commerce and Isle of Palms Cleanup Crew on workshops for businesses on sustainability practices.

Goal 4: Messaging

Provide more consistent and effective litter messaging.

Recommendations:

- Consistent message on welcome signs to “Leave Only Footprints” and “See Beach Rules at www.iop.net.”
- Signage at ALL public beach access points with No Smoking message + QR code or complete list of restrictions for beachgoers.
- More local promotions with links/QR codes pointing to iop.net “Beach Rules” – including tie-ins with Beach Shuttle.



SAFETY

Purpose: To provide the safest possible environment in which residents, visitors and workers can live, work and play. Promote collaborative efforts, education and proactive safety initiatives. Fully provide fire and police services for the city's needs to enforce laws that prioritize safety for all.



Priority: General Safety

Ensure safety for all residents, businesses and visitors.

Goal 1: Communication Channels & Key Partnerships

Utilize new and existing communication channels, as well as partnerships with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and island businesses, to further enhance safety for residents, visitors, and employees on Isle of Palms.

Recommendations:

- Explore creating an electronic means (text or web-based form) of contacting police and generating incident reports for non-emergency issues, which includes acknowledgement of receipt and notification of next steps.
- Identify and promote an electronic process for residents, property owners, and businesses to proactively provide background information about their property and special needs of individuals living there to assist Public Safety personnel when they respond to an emergency.
- Monitor safety conditions and rule compliance at the public dock daily, confirming the presence of a life-saving ring, and evaluating the condition of dock surfaces and railings.
- Frequently incorporate safety-related information in messages from multiple city communication channels; place particular emphasis on increasing use of Sunnie for real-time communication. Suggested topics include but are not limited to, paramedics on the island, importance of reporting non-emergency situations,

emergency preparedness, Coffee with a Cop, emergency/incident notification (e.g. Connector closed due to accident, avoid an area due to fire, etc.), and personal property safety (locking doors, etc.).

Goal 2: Education and Enforcement

Increase education efforts & enforcement of golf cart/Low Speed Vehicle (“LSV”) operating rules.

Recommendations:

- Work with golf cart rental companies to develop a communication piece for distribution to each renter, a placard/sticker to be posted in each cart, and/or a pledge to be signed by all renters that emphasizes state and local laws.
- Consider passing an ordinance adding a requirement for golf cart and LSV owners/users to read and agree to a golf cart/LSV safety pledge emphasizing state and local laws.

Goal 3: Speed Limit Signage & Monitoring

Identify areas on the island to improve or reinstall speed limit signage and add speed monitoring to improve overall safety for residents and visitors.

Recommendations:

- Advocating to appropriate state agencies, ex. South Carolina Department of Transportation (“SCDOT”), to reinstall speed limit signs removed from Waterway Boulevard, Palm Boulevard, and any other interior streets that experience frequent speed limit violations.
- Request permission from SCDOT to install permanent speed monitoring/reporting mechanism near Waterway Boulevard & 29th Avenue to collect real-time data, informing the need for more frequent traffic enforcement.
- Identify locations on the island with the most repetitive parking violations that impact safety and evaluate the need for signage.

Goal 4: Coyote Management

Improve coyote management efforts.

Recommendations:

- Given the increased activity, assess the costs, risks, impacts to public beach access, and benefits of taking more aggressive measures, such as depredation on public property; seek appropriate state agency, ex. Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) and state support, if it is determined to be necessary to protect the public’s safety.
- Adapt existing Coyote Management Plan to add color-coded threat levels defining triggers for moving between levels AND actions that the city will take at each level.
- Establish a notification process that would communicate: 1) color-coded threat levels and 2) den locations or reported sighting/incidents so appropriate precautionary measures may be taken. Notify property owners of their right to

- set traps and depredate coyotes on their private property, per DNR guidelines.
- Notifications should occur via multiple communication channels to include text.
- Consistently add temporary warning signs to beach paths where coyotes are active.

Priority: Beach Safety

Provide a safe beach for all to enjoy and enforce ordinances.

Goal 1: Police Staffing & Presence

Increase police staffing and presence during the beach season.

Recommendations:

- Explore ways to increase police officer and beach safety officer staffing during peak summer hours.
- Recruit from areas that have high demand in winter months.
- Recruit semi-retired officers.
- Create a beach safety lane, where necessary, by maintaining a corridor from the dune for emergency access.

Goal 2: Public Awareness

Increase public awareness of beach safety issues.

Recommendations:

- Restore, update and improve signage for dune protection, coyotes and beach rules.
- Increase public media messages regarding all safety matters.

Goal 3: E-Bikes & Electric Skateboards

Increase safety on the beach with regards to E-Bikes and Electric Skateboards.

Recommendations:

- Restrict e-bike usage with speed limitations on beach accesses.
- Extend restriction of e-bikes to April 1st through September 14th

Goal 4: Firearms

Ban firearms from the beach.

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with other beach communities to request state officials to ban firearms from the beach.
- Get community/resident support to change state laws to designate the beach as a no firearms zone.

Goal 5: Overnight Items

Better control over items which are allowed to be left on the beach overnight.

Recommendations:

- Require registration of any Hobie Cat and volleyball nets that might be left on the beach (similar to Myrtle Beach and Hilton Head).

Priority: Pedestrian Safety

Enhance pedestrian safety with improved infrastructure, education, and enforcement.

Goal 1: Prioritize in Key Areas

Prioritize pedestrian safety throughout the island with emphasis in key areas such as Palm Boulevard, Waterway Boulevard and commercial areas surrounding the connector.

Recommendations:

- Explore installing “in-pavement lighting” on existing crosswalks on Palm Boulevard for increased visibility to advancing cars with brighter paint to designate pedestrian space.
- Maintain 4’ off pavement chalk line on Palm Boulevard more than just weekends.
- Request new, more accurate renderings of Palm Boulevard including existing driveways, beach paths, mailboxes and drainage ditches prioritizing safety of residents and beachgoers. Engage the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) to study and supply technical data to improve pedestrian safety.
- Increase the width of the existing sidewalk on Palm Boulevard landside between 21st and 40th and trim all overgrown vegetation. Consider marking cross streets to indicate pedestrian crossing.
- Increase enforcement of speed limit along Palm Boulevard 21st-41st in the off season.
- Consider adding more crosswalks and sidewalks island wide based off data from walkability study with emphasis on 27th, 28th, and 29th streets surrounding the recreation center. Possible funding may come from the infrastructure funds.
- Program intersection at IOP connector and Palm Boulevard that emphasizes the pedestrian right of way with use of lead pedestrian intervals (all-way stop) and raised materials that designate pedestrian space.
- Request updated traffic study to help direct makeover of Palm Boulevard that focuses on pedestrian safety along with traffic and seasonal adjustments.
- Revisit wayfinding signage plan and improve throughout the island.

Priority: Bike Safety

Ensure bicyclists are safe as they navigate on the island.

Goal 1: Bike Lanes

Improve bike safety by encouraging bikers to areas of the island with less traffic and

parking by leveraging the existing bike lane and improving it.

Recommendations:

- Clean, better mark, maintain, increase signage and possibly enlarge existing bike lanes on Palm Boulevard from 14th Avenue to Breach Inlet.
- Create a clear path off the connector to bike to Front Beach/County park incorporating the existing path from 14th to Breach inlet.
- Encourage bikers in the direction of the existing bike lane from 14th Avenue to Breach Inlet with improved signage and education of local bike groups to avoid the areas of Palm 21-41st Avenues where there is more parking and traffic.
- 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.
- Install bike repair/air station at the public safety building and recreation center

Priority: Public Safety

Ensure Isle of Palms can attract and retain public safety talent.

Goal 1: Continuous Improvement & Workforce

Support public safety departments by ensuring best practices through a robust Continuous Improvement Program while offering public safety positions designed to attract and retain employees.

Recommendations:

- Consider hiring independent consultants to assess performance and departmental needs periodically.
- Combat attrition by performing an annual review of compensation packages and adjusting to make and keep IOP public safety positions competitive. Match or exceed those of comparable roles.
- Consider post-retirement health care options for public safety personnel, possibly with the assistance of state/county organizations.
- Provide training budgets that meet the ever-changing needs of the Police and Fire Departments.
- Modify the court schedule to have less impact on work shift schedules. Investigate virtual options.
- Explore ways to compensate for the lack of affordable local housing. Look at cost of living increases, housing allowances, and/or incentives for IOP property owners to rent to public safety personnel. Explore using city-owned property to provide housing alternatives for city employees. Assess/survey if this would be desirable to city staff to determine if the market for this exists.

Priority: Supplementation & Growth

Ensure island safety at all times of year, including when there are seasonal peaks.

Goal 1: Emergency Personnel & Equipment

Evaluate our emergency personnel and equipment based on the seasonal peak demands to ensure adequate response times due to regional population growth.

Recommendations:

- Evaluate partnerships with Wild Dunes Resort and Wild Dunes Community Association to establish a staffed and equipped public safety building inside of Wild Dunes reducing response times, providing much-needed training space, and providing respite for police officers following traumatic experiences or waiting between court appearances and the start of their shift.
- Hire seasonal, part-time police officers, recruiting retired police officers when possible; one such position to serve as a transport officer.
- Require local businesses hosting events to pay for additional police support to avoid having to pull scheduled patrol officers away from patrolling the rest of the island.

Priority: Tools & Equipment

Ensure the island has the tools and equipment to provide a safe environment.

Goal 1: Worst Case Scenario Planning

Provide needed equipment to maintain safe conditions on the island during worst case scenarios.

Recommendations.

- Conduct annual review of equipment needs to include considerations for things like a high-water vehicle for the Fire Department and more diverse patrolling options for the Police Department (bicycles, motorcycles or all-terrain vehicles, etc.). Explore resource sharing.
- Consider how to best acquire an accelerant and explosive detection canine for large events, which may include a mutual aid agreement and/or shared use with other jurisdictions.
- Ask the Police Department to present a plan for a formalized drone program utilizing licensed volunteers to supplement the police force. Ensure the plan clearly defines public spaces where drone use can help monitor activity and identify when this type of surveillance is needed (i.e., proactive vs. reactive monitoring, special events, seasonal, emergencies only, etc.).



SEASONAL IMPACTS: PARKING AND TRAFFIC

Purpose: Enhance the quality of life for residents and improve the visitor experience by identifying optimal parking and traffic solutions given increasing tourism and population growth.

Vision: By June 2026 Isle of Palms will have an updated Beach Visitor Parking Study, with a thorough and forward-thinking approach to beach visitor parking. This plan would be aimed at improving parking efficiency and traffic flow while adhering to an updated parking count as outlined in the Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan (“LCBMP”). The plan would identify immediate changes that can be implemented quickly while ensuring they align with the broader, longer-term plans outlined in the study.



Priority: Parking

Ensure a sustainable plan for the future which addresses visitor demand and rising costs associated with increasing visitor growth.

Considerations

Successfully welcoming day visitors to the beach and ensuring everyone's enjoyment of the island's natural resources begins with safe and effective traffic flow. Given rapid population growth in Charleston County and recent holiday traffic counts surpassing 25,000 vehicle trips, evaluation of current traffic patterns are needed to avoid traffic gridlock on high season days (ie, July 4th, Memorial Day, etc).¹ Our parking expense far

¹ Charleston County's population in 2024 is 429,384, a 22.33% growth rate since 2010; projected population for 2029 is 455,323, assuming a 1.18%/yr. growth rate. Mt. Pleasant's population in 2024 is 96,600, a 42.39% growth rate since 2010; projected population for 2029 is 103,200.

outweighs the income from parking, given both direct (maintenance of SCDOT property) and indirect costs (public safety personnel, increased garbage collection, etc.). While SCDOT owns and controls the majority of roads on Isle of Palms, the city is responsible for maintenance.

Goal 1: Explore Solutions

Identify and develop near-term solutions and ongoing processes which protect residential neighborhoods and provide an enjoyable experience for residents and visitors alike.

Recommendations:

- Update the 2013 Stantec Beach Visitor Parking Study.
- Engage Charleston County for help with the increasing expenses of tourism resulting from population growth, increased demand for beach access, and the finite land mass of the island.
- Lobby the state Legislature to assist coastal municipalities with the increasingly burdensome impacts of tourism.
- Develop a plan for the city to acquire residential roads from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (“SCDOT”).

Goal 2: Accurate Data & Reporting

Formally recognize parking spaces and encroachments that are not included in the current LCBMP.

Recommendations:

- Determine the number of spaces and, where appropriate, formally add the following free spaces to the Parking Plan when the LCBMP is updated:
 - Public right of way adjacent to the IOP Post Office
 - Unregulated public right of way at IOP Recreation Center on Hartnett Boulevard between 28th and 29th Avenues
 - Designate a certain number of spaces for IOP Recreation Center use ensure adequate spaces for visitors and residents using the Recreation Center.

Goal 3: Parking Optimization

Provide efficient, safe parking that steers visitors toward the city’s Front Beach lots and other designated visitor parking spaces on the island to accommodate seasonal visitor access and community preference.

Recommendations:

- Hire a consultant to develop a plan which may include:
 - Adjusting parking footprint that optimizes both the number of spaces in the LCBMP and traffic flow
 - Registered/monitored parking along state highway - if feasible and supported by the community - which satisfies state law and does not add to the traffic or congestion issues in the neighborhoods

- Free beach parking in a city lot to encourage parking at Front Beach

Goal 4: Palm Boulevard

Expedite the parking process for visitors by establishing intentional, managed parking along Palm Boulevard to enable drivers to readily identify a parking space.

Recommendations:

- Revisit the Palm Boulevard streetscape proposal.
- Request SCDOT fulfill its commitment to replace the “temporary” concrete markers on the landward side of Palm Boulevard with aesthetically-pleasing, low-profile markers.
- Clearly delineate the spaces on the Seaward side of Palm Boulevard.
- Continue maintaining the 4' chalk parking line along Palm Boulevard each week, and ideally reapply after a significant rain event during high season.
- Continue supporting the SCDOT-approved Parking Plan, especially the residential parking zones.

Goal 5: Communication

Effectively communicate parking availability for residents and visitors during the high season.

Recommendations:

- Provide real-time data on parking availability via parking registrations/payment
- Promote parking resources through Sunnie, Beach Reach app, and <https://parkiop.org>.
- Continue to promote alternative means for driving to the beach: use of the Beach Shuttle from Mount Pleasant or cycling, for example.

Priority: Traffic

Ensure optimal flow of traffic, which meets demands of accelerating visitor growth.

Goal 1: Isle of Palms Connector

Efficiently move traffic on the Isle of Palms Connector (SC-517), especially during high-demand periods such as weekends and holidays.

Recommendations:

- Manage traffic on the Isle of Palms Connector during specific time periods within the course of the year with seasonal police personnel for traffic management.
- Investigate the possibility of re-stripping the Isle of Palms Connector to accommodate:
 - Two lanes of traffic exiting the island
 - Dedicated Bike lane on one side
 - A pedestrian lane that is compliant with SCDOT standards; any additions to the bridge structure should preserve the views that exist today.

- Ensure traffic lights at Palm and Rifle Range are timed correctly during high volume times/days.
- Continue to build relationships with surrounding municipalities and state leaders to effectively manage parking and traffic challenges.

Goal 2: Routing Traffic

Efficiently route traffic to available parking island wide to keep traffic flowing.

Recommendation:

- Hire a consultant to develop a plan which may include:
 - Adjusting parking footprint that optimizes both the number of spaces in the LCBMP and traffic flow
 - Registered/monitored parking along state highway - if feasible and supported by the community - which satisfies state law and does not add to the traffic or congestion issues in the neighborhoods
 - Free beach parking in a city lot to encourage parking at Front Beach

Goal 3: Long Range Plan

Develop a long-range plan given the greater Charleston area's growth and impact to the island.

Recommendations:

- Annual review of identified "opportunity areas."
- Continue working with a traffic engineer consultant to devise solutions to manage traffic efficiently, minimize congestion, and support funding and implementation of priority recommendations.

Goal 4: Real-Time Communication

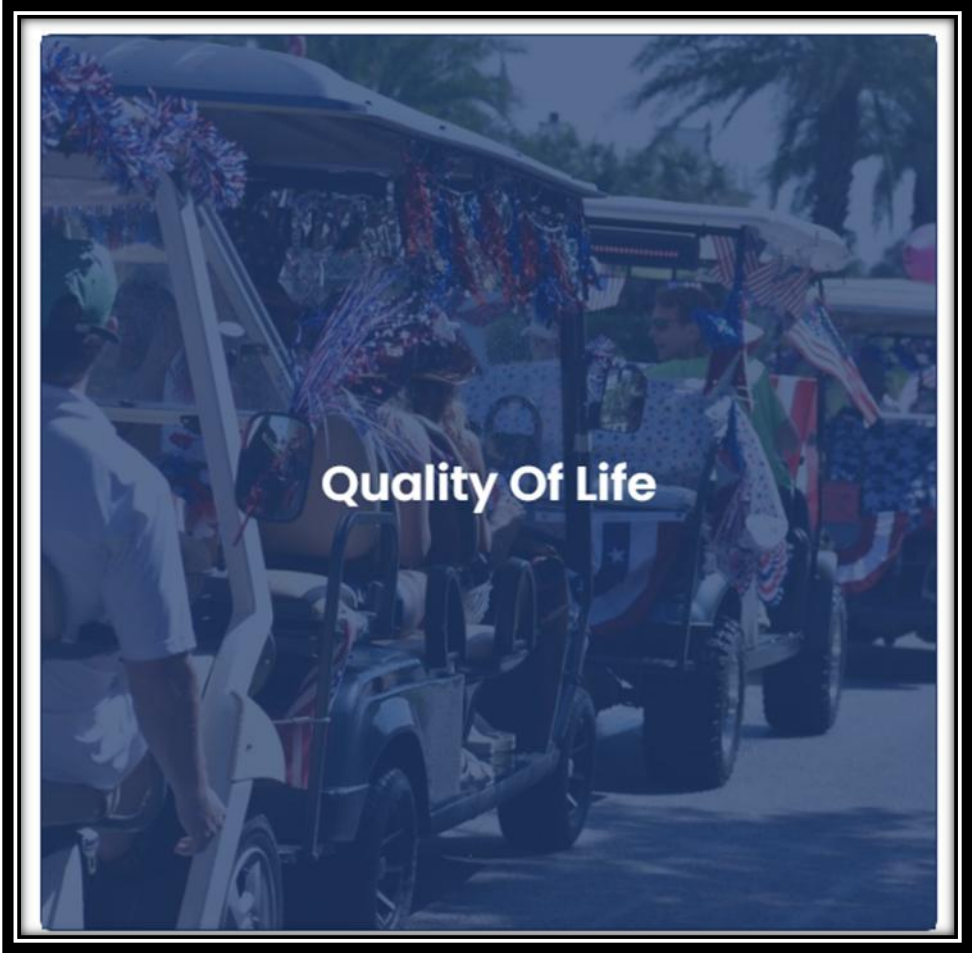
Communicate parking and traffic conditions in real time for residents and visitors, especially for high season, high demand days/weekends/holidays.

Recommendations:

- Ensure promoting of traffic resources through use of Sunnie, Beach Reach app, and <https://parkiop.org>.
- Consider a "Text to Park" model.
- Utilize technology to monitor parking availability.
- Communicate parking alternatives, such as the Beach Shuttle, when approaching full capacity.
- Establish a parking webpage that offers interactive maps and clear information including, but not limited to, available parking lots and parking areas, number of spaces, prices (seasonal and regular, if applicable), and violations.

Examples:

- Wrightsville Beach website for navigation and content
- North Myrtle Beach website for an interactive map



QUALITY OF LIFE

Purpose: Enrich the quality of life on Isle of Palms by embracing our natural resources and promoting an active lifestyle and good social health, all while balancing livability and sustainable tourism.



Priority: Recreation & Social

Provide facilities and programs that emphasize community connections, lifelong learning, active lifestyles, our barrier island environment, support for people of all ages and overall quality of life for residents and visitors.

Goal 1: Facilities & Spaces

Continue to provide well-equipped, thoughtfully designed spaces supporting the recreational, educational, social, and artistic interests of the community.

Recommendations:

- Assess the Recreation Center property and facilities to determine the options for expansion or reconfiguration to support demand and growth in program participation, adequate indoor & outdoor storage, and diverse programming that can include educational events, public meetings, the arts, and library.
- Explore partnerships with Wild Dunes, Charleston County Parks, and the IOP Exchange Club to utilize their facilities in the off-peak season (e.g. pool activities and youth golf lessons for courses at Wild Dunes, use of Exchange Club dock for programming)
- Upgrade Recreation Center interior spaces.
 - Give primary attention to cabinetry, fans, audio visual, sound and lighting equipment, storage, paint, and ceiling repairs. Include equipment necessary to live stream and record events held in the Magnolia Room.
 - Install charging stations and workspaces in the lobby.

- Explore upgrades to outdoor spaces at the Recreation Center and Mayor Carmen R. Bunch Park..
 - Utilize native plants.
 - Add swings, benches, picnic tables, etc.
 - Create a community garden at the Recreation Center.
 - Expand Recreation Center’s outdoor shelter to support diverse programming and events, providing fans, electricity, and a stage for music.
 - Explore options for providing an expanded electrical grid throughout the Recreation Center property to support large community events and athletics.
 - Create a WIFI hotspot at the Recreation Center and its surrounding property.
- Consider using existing City properties to increase public access to the water for paddle sports, fishing, etc., or more passive uses (benches/swings). Update indoor and outdoor facilities to create a safe and welcoming space for teens. Consider comfy furniture in the Recreation Center lobby, umbrella tables with charging stations, updated porch furniture, rock wall, and/or ropes course.
- 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.
- Emphasize sustainable/environmentally friendly practices at the Recreation Center.

Goal 2: Programming

To provide diverse programming for all ages that reflects community interests, maximizes connections to our natural environment, and is inclusive.

Recommendations:

- Assess equipment needs to support growing athletic programs.
- Identify unmet recreation needs for which people often leave the island (e.g. youth golf lessons, lacrosse, flag football, gym, year-round swimming, indoor tennis/pickleball, minigolf). Evaluate if there is sufficient demand to expand programming or facilities.
- Develop programming connected to the water (e.g. kayaking, water safety, beach exercise, paddle boarding, paddle board yoga, eco tours, seining, SCUBA).
- Facilitate more programming focused on understanding and protecting our natural environment (e.g. beach/saltmarsh/waterways, native plants, native and endangered species).
- Sustain the speaker series by identifying willing presenters with unique skills, knowledge, and life experiences.
- Explore opportunities for teen programming (e.g. babysitter/CPR course, video game tournament, coffee house karaoke/open mic night, community service projects, rock climbing).
- Explore bringing in food trucks on youth sports nights and/or once a week on a weeknight from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

- Make our special events autism- and neurodivergent-friendly by offering a calming space/tent and/or special sensory-friendly times to attend.
- Explore potential of fee based reservations of key facilities.

Goal 3: Awareness & Participation

Maximize awareness of and participation in Recreation Department programs through multi-channel, two-way communication.

Recommendations:

- Feature activities and events more prominently in monthly City e-newsletter with departments cross-posting special events on social media.
 - Consider creating a monthly email or e-newsletter just for the Recreation Center to share upcoming key events and deadlines with links to the online registration portal.
- Use Sunnie to communicate about more than special events (e.g. youth sports registration dates, new classes, educational programs); add an option for people to specifically sign up for Recreation Department alerts.
- Ensure staff are facilitating two-way communication on social media by responding to comments and inquiries within 24 hours.
- Create a separate calendar for Recreation Center activities on City website and enable a click feature for users to add to their personal calendars.
- Coordinate with Wild Dunes and Wild Dunes homeowners' associations (HOAs) to share monthly/quarterly updates on programs and events through their communication platforms.
- Emphasize “we are more than just sports and exercise classes” in communications.
- Invest more in online marketing of Recreation Department opportunities to ensure residents are fully aware of what is available to them through the City.

Priority: Noise & Light Mitigation

Consider Best Practices in Noise & Light Mitigation.

Goal 1: Data & Opportunities

Accurately track noise and light concerns to identify opportunities and partner with other communities to consider best practices.

Recommendations:

- Identify communities to learn and evaluate what they have done for noise/light ordinances to see what IOP could explore.
- Track noise and light complaints across geographical grids to evaluate levels of complaints for targeted mitigation efforts.
- Recognize that complaint data may not include Wild Dunes Community Association Security, Wild Dunes Resort Security or other island entity data. Work towards consistent data capture.

Priority: Short Term Rentals (“STRs”)

Enhance enforcement efforts of STRs.

Goal 1: Enforcement & Data

Enhance enforcement efforts of STRs and monitor data to ensure livability on the island.

Considerations:

- Management companies have a consortium, formed as a subgroup of the Chamber, represented by 16 companies that cover 96% of STRs on the island. They are to be commended for their work to enforce, regulate policies and communicate with renters, neighbors, and the City.

Recommendations:

- Continuously assess the mix of full-time residential, part-time, and STRs to maintain a balance that enhances the livability on the island.
- Create a ‘Good Neighbor’ program to incentivize and recognize those properties that exemplify desirable rentals.
- Develop metrics of predetermined thresholds of STR complaints to become a ‘trigger’ for review of total number of licenses.
- Use the Business License application as a vehicle to encourage rental companies to join consortium meetings for consistent regulation.
- Explore adding an online portal for residents to submit STR complaints and follow the response by property managers and the City. This is available through the City’s current STR monitoring service.

Priority: Communication

Provide residents, businesses and visitors with proactive communication on quality-of-life issues.

Goal 1: Proactive Communication

Ensure there is proactive communication to residents, businesses and visitors regarding ordinances, processes, signage and education on quality-of-life issues.

Recommendations:

- Additional communications to residents and visitors regarding noise and light ordinances, best practices, and process for proper notifications if concerns exist.
- Educate more of the positives of the STRs and publish data tracking to residents.
- Collaborate with the STR companies to update required signage with quick access to policies/regulations/fines as well as to update on local efforts, i.e., QR Code.
- Educate public of rental companies’ consortium success.