



Our Plan

Hilton Head Island
South Carolina

guide
book



2020 to 2040 Comprehensive Plan
for the
Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Adopted by Planning Commission Resolution
September 16, 2020
Peter Kristian, Chairman

Adopted by Town Council Ordinance 2020-25
October 20, 2020
John J. McCann, Mayor

The Town of Hilton Head Island's mission is to promote the health and vitality of the community we serve through ethical and inclusive programs, policies and actions.



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Prepared by the Town of Hilton Head Island
Community Development Department

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Our Plan Key Definitions

Best-in-Class: A term used throughout **Our Plan** as a description for the aspirational vision of the Island as state-of-the-art, and having high achievement and recognition, world-class environments, and embodying the three tenets of sustainability.

Community Fabric: Community fabric is the many environmental, social, and economic characteristics, interests, qualities, and values that are important to building trust and binding a community of people and places together.

Goal: The direct application of the **Our Plan** Vision to the key ideas and opportunities identified for each Core Value, Our Parks + Recreation, and Our Priority Investment; an aspiration; a desired outcome.

Multi-dimensional: Implies the referenced topic is inclusive of all levels and types of income, culture, age ranges, familial preference, race, gender, ethnicity, ability, life stages, and interests.

Public Services: Includes safety, emergency, planning, maintenance, and administrative services provided by the Town for the public.

Quality of Life: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Quality of Life as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment.”

Resilient; Resiliency: associated in **Our Plan** with disaster recovery and planning, sea level rise, climate change, and natural disasters; descriptive of the ultimate goal in sustainability to go beyond ensuring the needs of the future are met by building, planning or establishing conditions of the present which are resistant to external forces that could be permanently damaging to the environment, economy, or society.

‘Right-sized’: As a modifier for infrastructure, being ‘right-sized’ anticipates future or trending changes in community needs or interests, level of service capabilities, capacity demands, or methods for delivery of services (Vision Plan). This approach to infrastructure is intended to preserve or enhance Island character.

Strategy: The primary implementation approach offered in **Our Plan**; a plan of action.

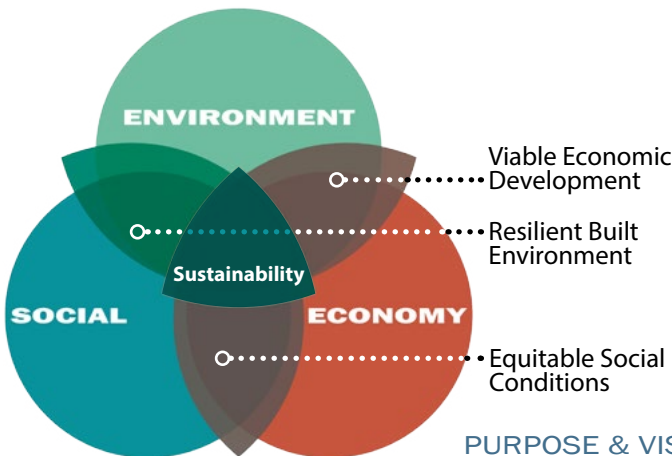
Tactic: The secondary implementation approach offered in **Our Plan**; a tool or action item.

Our Plan Purpose & Vision

This guidebook provides an overview of the organization, key ideas, and goals for **Our Plan**, the 2020 to 2040 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. **Our Plan** is a dynamic and informational policy guiding document that reflects integral components of the Island community fabric. In serving as a tool for the Town and community leaders to strengthen and preserve the Island character, it is foundational for the Island's growth and development.

The Town's Our Future community engagement initiative developed the Vision for **Our Plan: Reinventing Sustainability... Again!** This means the Town will focus on the revitalization and modernization of its economy and infrastructure while building an inclusive and diverse community. A cross section of the environment, society, and the economy defines sustainability for **Our Plan**, where a community balanced in these three things has viable economic development, a resilient built environment, and equitable social conditions.

This is a plan built by the Island community towards reinventing sustainability again from here to 2040. Our first step will be to use **Our Plan** together to expand or re-imagine valued aspects of the Town and the community: its history of leading innovative and sustainable development, care for the environment, great recreation facilities and pathways, historic and cultural preservation, tourism, volunteerism, and fiscal stewardship.



Document Organization

The content in **Our Plan** includes a community vision and baseline of existing conditions, with goals and implementation strategies to provide guidance for policy and planning for the Town and Island community into the future.

South Carolina's Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 requires that all Planning Commissions develop a Comprehensive Plan to guide development and redevelopment of its municipality. It requires that the plan include nine elements.

While past Comprehensive Plans for the Town have been centered around ten elements, the presentation of statements of need, goals, and strategies for **Our Plan** is structured around two elements, *Parks + Recreation* and *Priority Investment*, and seven Core Values. The other eight elements are defined in *Section 2.0, Our Community*. All of the elements are tied to goals and strategies for each Core Value through a series of comparative tables throughout the document. The Core Values are derived from the Vision and represent the Town and Island community's priorities and future aspirations.

The presentation of goals, strategies, and tactics in each core value chapter in *Section 3.0* and in *Sections 4.0* and *5.0* supports the purpose of **Our Plan** as a policy guiding document. The goals define aspirations for the community into the future. Strategies and tactics for each goal provide more specific action items or plans for accomplishing the goals.

- **Goal:** an aspiration; a desired outcome
- **Strategy:** a plan of action
- **Tactic:** a tool or action item

Many hours of volunteer and community dedication went into the formulation of these important and foundational components of **Our Plan**.

Section 1.0, Our Purpose and Process presents the details about the genesis of **Our Plan**, the Vision, key contributors, and its purpose.

Section 2.0, Our Community defines eight of the ten elements for the Town while presenting existing conditions, informational maps, tables, and data. Within this section, the information and data is structured around the elements in order to provide a direct link between **Our Plan** and older versions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Section 3.0, Our Core Values presents the main goals, strategies and tactics content of **Our Plan**. It is organized around seven chapters — one for each Core Value: Excellence, Environment, Economy, Inclusive, Connected, Regional, and Infrastructure.

Section 4.0 Our Parks + Recreation replaces the former Recreation element. It summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with Town Action Items, and includes goals, strategies, and tactics for the future of parks and recreation.

Section 5.0, Priority Investment addresses the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process and presents a framework for achieving capital infrastructure described in **Our Plan**. Goals, strategies, and tactics cover ways the Town's priority investments and capital improvements can continue to align with the community Vision and Core Values.

Section 6.0, Definitions and Index highlights terminology used throughout the plan with definitions pertaining specifically within context of the Town and the plan. The index can be utilized to quickly find key topics and keywords used throughout the document.

Section 7.0, Appendix contains further resources, a list of adopted plans referenced throughout, and links to the companion documents related to **Our Plan**.

10 Key Community Themes

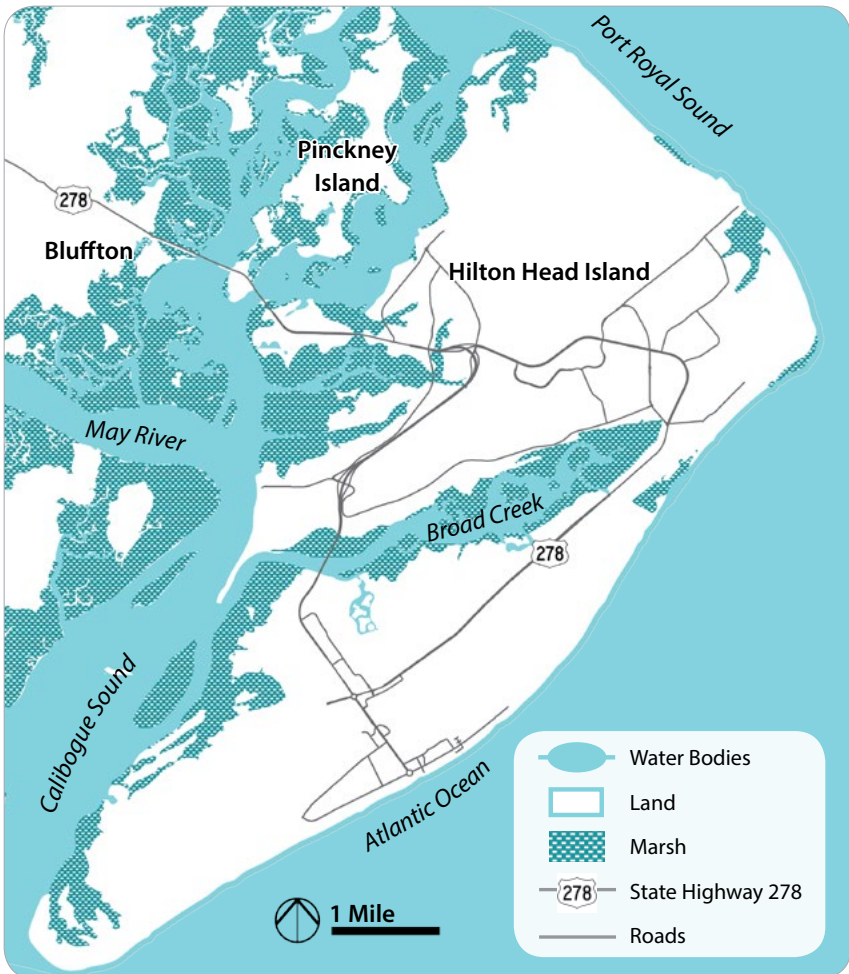
Based on the extensive community input received throughout the process, reoccurring themes emerged. The following ten goals and themes from throughout **Our Plan** are representative of these key community values.

1. Adopt and pursue Our Ideals of Excellence.
2. Protect and preserve the natural environment.
3. Manage evolving growth while maintaining the Island's unique aesthetic.
4. Provide exceptional quality of life offerings in arts, culture, and recreation with best-in-class facilities and programming.
5. Develop creative revenue sources to fund the delivery of capital services, maintenance, operations, and projects meeting the needs of the Town, residents, and visitors.
6. Recognize, respect, and promote multi-dimensional diversity on the Island.
7. Promote efficient and secure public services to meet current and future needs.
8. Plan for and mitigate the effects of climate change, environmental or health concerns, and natural disasters.
9. View the region as partner, not a competitor.
10. Foster a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic, cultural, and demographic diversity.

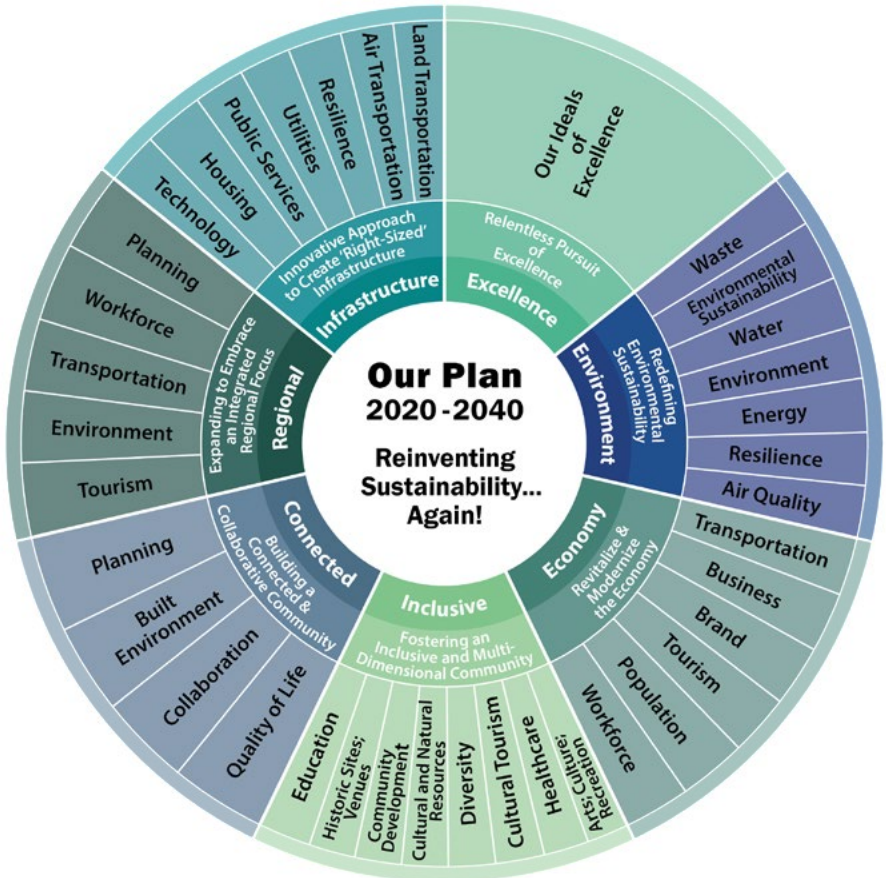
Hilton Head Island

Hilton Head Island is the largest barrier island in the southeastern United States and home to almost 40,000 residents. Located in the Lowcountry, at the southern boundary of South Carolina, the island has a beautiful natural environment and rich cultural history stretching back from Native American habitation and through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

The Island is approximately 12 miles long and 5.5 miles wide, with 34.5 square miles of area above the mean high tide water line. Thirteen miles of pristine beach fronts the Atlantic Ocean and Port Royal Sound. Vehicular access to the Island is via U.S. Highway 278.



Core Values



Excellence Goal

Relentless Pursuit of Excellence

According to the community, the Island is a unique and beautiful place that is worth protecting. It is evident the Town and the community seek and expect *Excellence*. The emphasis for this Core Value is community-focused and in celebration of the Island history, cultural and socio-economic diversity, and natural resources. The goal is centered on *Our Ideals of Excellence* and how to sustain excellence for our place, our people, and our planning and process.

1. OUR IDEALS OF EXCELLENCE

Adopt and pursue Our Ideals of Excellence.

Our Ideals of Excellence

To be a community that...

1. Is welcoming, inclusive, values diversity, safe, and people-focused
2. Is recognized as an excellent place to live, work, and visit
3. Preserves, values, and recognizes its history
4. Attracts businesses and residents who identify with and appreciate the Hilton Head Island community's *Ideals of Excellence* and Core Values
5. Is recognized as a best-in-class destination where visitors are welcomed and the economic impact of tourism is valued
6. Protects the natural environment as a unique quality of our identity
7. Prioritizes the greater good
8. Attracts and maintains a diverse and multi-dimensional residential population, providing a competitive live-work option
9. Recognizes the benefit and value of arts, culture, recreation, healthy living, and education for the community
10. Fosters a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive environment when resolving concerns or planning for the future
11. Considers sustainability as foundational to the Island's development and redevelopment of environmental and economic projects and policies
12. Fosters a spirit of inspiration and leads by example
13. Uses innovation and learning to continually develop and apply best practices and standards for processes and projects
14. Continually adapts the Core Values and Comprehensive Plan to meet the needs of the present and the future



Environment Goals

Redefining Environmental Sustainability

The environment and sustainability are foundational values of the Island community. As concerns grow over current or future conditions and environmental impacts, the Town is working towards a more resilient approach in policy and planning. A balance of environmental action is necessary to support all facets of sustainability.

1. WASTE

To work towards a Town-wide zero waste model.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

To become a recognized leader in environmental protection and sustainability.

3. WATER

To monitor our water resource so that it is clean, abundant, and available.

4. ENVIRONMENT

To protect and preserve the natural environment of Hilton Head Island.

5. ENERGY

To maximize the efficiency of energy usage and expand the use of renewable energy.

6. RESILIENCE

To prepare a plan for and to mitigate the effects of climate change or other natural disasters.

7. AIR QUALITY

To improve air quality by reducing/minimizing emissions.

Economy Goals

Revitalizing and Modernizing the Economy

Destination tourism and retirement are two of the biggest drivers for the Island economy. Changes in generational preferences for travel and work have started to affect many aspects of the economy. There is a renewed drive to build on the current strengths in the economy and show that the Island is a place for people of all ages, cultures, and income levels to visit, or live and work.

1. TRANSPORTATION

To continue to improve access to and around Hilton Head Island.

2. BUSINESS

To attract more diverse businesses, specifically those with high intellectual capacity and a small footprint.

3. BRAND

To manage evolving economic growth while maintaining Hilton Head Island's unique aesthetic.

4. TOURISM

To explore, understand, prepare for, and adapt to the future of tourism.

5. POPULATION

To attract a diverse and dynamic local population.

6. WORKFORCE

To have a high-quality, sustainable workforce.

Inclusive Goals

Fostering an Inclusive Multi-dimensional Community

Fully grasping the Vision of **Our Plan** entails addressing socio-economic trends of present day Hilton Head Island that could be more sustainable and equitable. The *Inclusive* Core Value takes a closer look at these challenges and considers education, health, quality of life, the arts, and recreation. It encourages the Island's progression into the future with a multi-dimensional, equitable, and diverse society.

1. EDUCATION

To create an environment that fosters equitable, high-quality education options, where Hilton Head Island is recognized as an epicenter of life-long learning.

2. HISTORIC SITES; VENUES

To identify and re-imagine historic places and venues so that they are inviting and accessible.

3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To foster creation of sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and innovative community development on the entire Island.

4. NATURAL RESOURCES; CULTURAL RESOURCES

To create awareness and respect for our core community and environmental values, promoting inclusiveness and equality for all residents and guests.

5. DIVERSITY

To recognize, respect, and promote multi-dimensional diversity on the Island, now and into the future.

6. CULTURAL TOURISM

To promote and expand cultural tourism equitably to improve the quality of life for all stakeholders.

7. HEALTHCARE

To foster a quality healthcare system and health education that are available, accessible, affordable, innovative, and beneficial for all.

8. ARTS; CULTURE; RECREATION

To build diversity and provide exceptional quality of life offerings in arts, culture, and recreation.

Connected Goals

Building a **Connected and Collaborative Community Fabric**

Achieving a high status of connectivity for the Island entails investigation into the many facets that create community. This includes aspects of physical connectivity in the built environment, the human connection with others and through social capital, the natural environment, and recreational and cultural experiences. Community unification, with a commitment for progressive change, is important to the future growth and attraction of living, working on, and visiting the Island.

1. **PLANNING**

To foster a planning process that is inclusive, collaborative, on-going, and responsive to changing circumstances and stakeholder priorities.

2. **BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

To promote designs for the built environment that capitalize on our natural beauty and community strengths, reinforcing our unique sense of place.

3. **COLLABORATION**

To enable residents and visitors to collaborate around common values and celebrate the realization of shared objectives.

4. **QUALITY OF LIFE**

To foster an exceptional quality of life for residents, outstanding experiences for visitors, and economic opportunity for our workforce.



Regional Goals

Expanding to Embrace an Integrated Regional Focus

The Island's shape and size control available space for development and land-based growth, while environmental, social, and economic influences extend beyond the physical bounds. The economy, workforce, and population influences expand beyond Bluffton and southern Beaufort County into Savannah. Issues the Island faces as it looks forward to 2040 require a regional perspective with regional solutions, and an openness to continue and expand collaboration with regional partners.

1. PLANNING

To enable innovation and excellence in regional planning and coordination for the Town of Hilton Head Island as a built-in part of the everyday process.

2. WORKFORCE

To improve and expand opportunities for workforce development and housing on Hilton Head Island and in the region.

3. TRANSPORTATION

To increase access between Hilton Head Island and the region through a viable multi-modal transportation system.

4. ENVIRONMENT

To lead the region in environmental protection and eco-friendly practices.

5. TOURISM

To expand tourism focus in order to promote diverse offerings across the region.

Infrastructure Goals

Innovative Approach to Create 'Right-Sized' Infrastructure

The increasing popularity of the Island has generated increased demands on its infrastructure. Climate change, advancements in technology, and economic and residential growth impact it as well. Developing sustainable solutions to address these demands and adapt to changes requires taking an innovative and holistic look at infrastructure through the economic, environmental, and social arms of sustainability. The innovation will be in the ability to discern and measure what is right-sized infrastructure for the Island.

1. TRANSPORTATION (LAND)

To establish an integrated, Island-specific transportation network.

2. TRANSPORTATION (AIR)

To 'Right-Size' the airport's capabilities and operations.

3. RESILIENCE

To plan for physical, social, and economic resilience from climate change and environmental challenges.

4. UTILITIES

To foster safe, effective, and resilient utility systems for the Island.

5. PUBLIC SERVICES

To promote efficient and secure public services to meet current and future needs.

6. HOUSING

To promote housing options to meet the needs of all current and future populations on the Island.

7. TECHNOLOGY

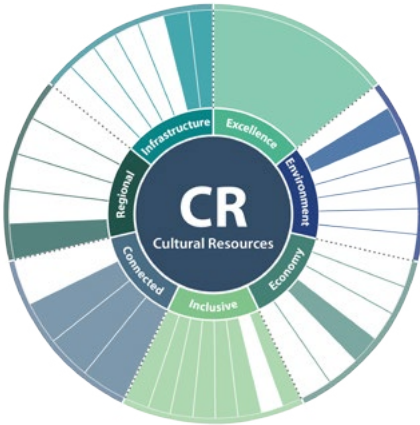
To anticipate policy implications and resource investments needed to embrace emerging technologies.

Elements

Traditionally, the Town’s Comprehensive Plan has been structured around ten elements to present the plan’s baseline data, conditions, goals, and strategies. Instead, **Our Plan** is primarily organized around the Core Values. To define how the elements are related to the Core Values, they are keyed in a series of comparative matrix tables and diagrams throughout the document.

Below, each element is briefly defined with its relationship to the Core Values signified by color on a wheel. The color wedges within each wheel are a visual representation of the extent to which the Core Value goals are distributed for each Element.

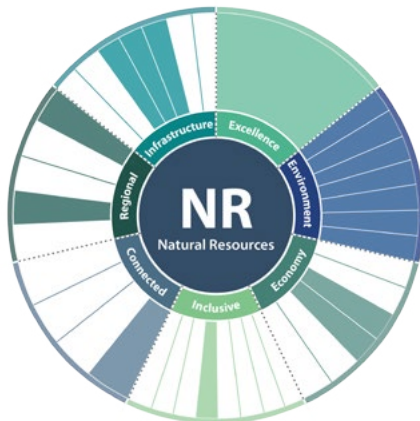
Cultural Resources



The cultural heritage and history of the Island are very important resources the Town continually seeks to preserve and protect.

The *Cultural Resources* element presents Island cultural and historic resources, public art, and venues.

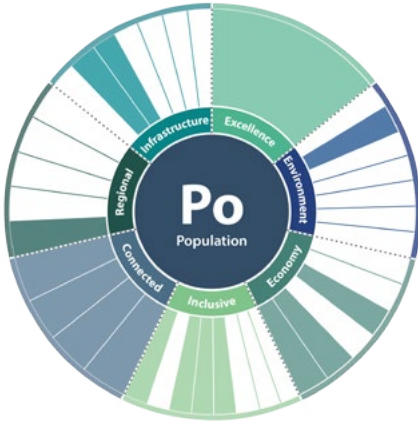
Natural Resources



The Island’s natural resources contribute significantly to its character and appeal. The Town seeks a balance of human impact with respect for nature.

The *Natural Resources* element presents visual references pertaining to the Island’s environmental and natural areas, impervious cover, and water quality.

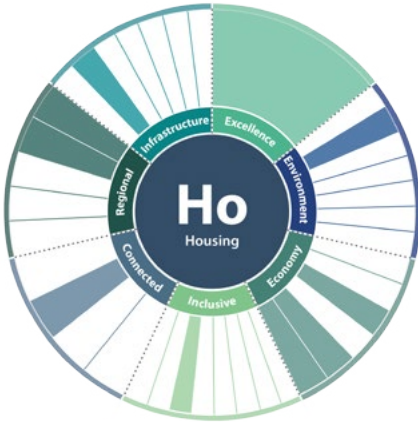
Population



The Island is home to an estimated 40,000 people on a permanent, full-time basis.

The *Population* element presents the most recent data available from the U.S. Census and American Community Surveys for the Island's population, with historic trends and comparisons to Beaufort County and the State of South Carolina.

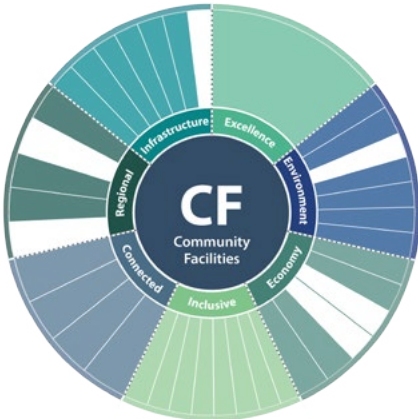
Housing



The Town is actively seeking opportunities to foster an increase in housing to accommodate the needs of existing and future populations.

The *Housing* element presents housing information that will be useful towards the discussion, goals and strategies presented about housing in **Our Plan**.

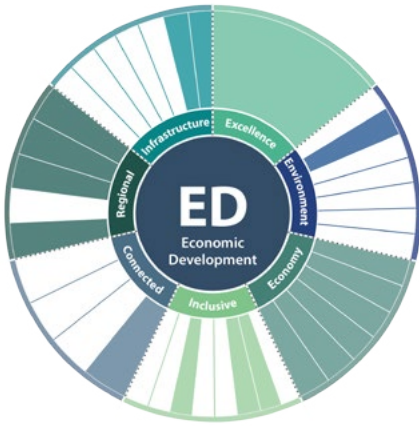
Community Facilities



Community Facilities are defined as major capital services, such as transportation, potable water, educational facilities, and public safety.

This element presents an overview of the Town and Island community facilities.

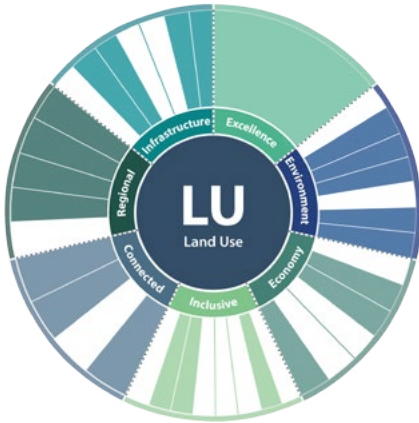
Economic Development



As the Island looks towards the future, there is growing interest in diversifying the economy in order to attract different professions and age groups, and to ensure sustainable growth into the future.

The *Economic Development* element presents an overview of the Island's jobs profile, employment, tourism, sales, commercial property, and laborshed.

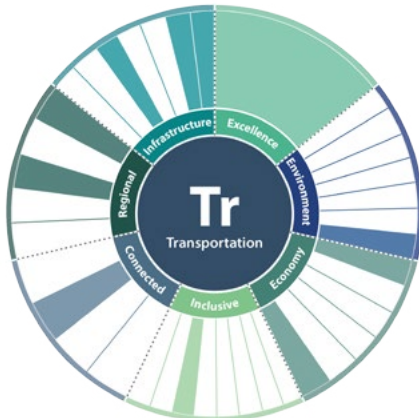
Land Use



The *Land Use* and zoning on the Island are the foundation of all development within Town limits. Looking into the future, managing growth will continue with a focus on redevelopment including creative strategies to adapt to unique conditions.

This element presents an overview of the Island's land use patterns and zoning.

Transportation



Transportation is a big part of land use development, mobility, public safety, capital expenses, environmental preservation, and the aesthetics and economic viability of Island communities.

The *Infrastructure* chapter explores the topic of transportation and transit extensively with reference to information presented by this element.

Parks + Recreation Goals



The *Parks + Recreation* element ties the **Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Part 1** into **Our Plan**. It presents an overview of the Island's parks and recreation system with goals, strategies, and tactics. Town Action Items officially convey, with the findings and final recommendations from the Master Plan, what will best serve the interests of the Town for current and future parks and rec planning.

1. COMMUNITY VALUE

To continue to promote and prioritize the value parks and recreation add to the Island community.

2. BEST-IN-CLASS

To provide best-in-class recreation facilities and programs in the Island's public parks.

3. PROGRAMMING

To celebrate the unique natural amenities and cultural assets of the Island through education facilities and programs in public parks.

4. WATER

To continue to improve and increase opportunities for water access.

5. PATHWAYS

To continue to improve and enhance the multi-use pathway network on the Island for recreation and transportation.

6. SPORTS

To continue to provide opportunities for sports tourism on the Island.

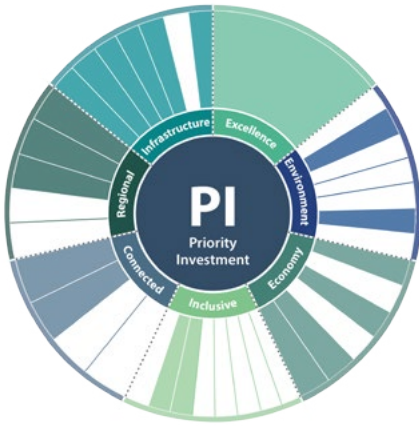
7. FUNDING

To generate sufficient funds to construct new, redevelop as needed, and maintain all parks in best-in-class condition.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

To promote multi-dimensional inclusion and access for all parks, facilities, and recreation programming.

Priority Investment Goals



The purpose of *Priority Investment* is to tie the capital improvements needs identified in **Our Plan** and other adopted Town plans to forecasted revenues for the current and upcoming fiscal years.

The goals, strategies, and tactics address ways the Town's priority investments and capital improvements can continue to align with the community Vision and Core Values into the future.

1. CIP PROCESS

To develop and review the Town's annual CIP and Ten-Year CIP based on recommendations of projects from adopted and approved Town plans and community input where feasible.

2. COLLABORATION

To prioritize public infrastructure projects to the extent practical through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

3. GROWTH; RESILIENCE

To provide the community with necessary services and facilities, and maintain sufficient flexibility to meet the challenges associated with growth or natural disasters.

4. CIP REVENUE

To develop revenue sources to fund the delivery of capital services, maintenance, operations, and projects meeting the needs of the Town, residents, and visitors.

5. CIP EXPENDITURES

To expend funds in order to meet the capital needs of the Town, residents, and visitors through review, planning, and implementation of the CIP.



A special thank you...

**To the members of this
community and the region
for their contributions in
meetings and education
sessions,**

**To our citizens for their
participation at public
meetings, and**

**To Town staff from
all Departments
for their input
throughout the
process.**

