



Town of Hilton Head Island

Town Council Meeting

Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 3:00 PM

**1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge to the Flag**
- 3. Invocation – Rabbi Brad Bloom, Congregation Beth Yam**
- 4. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 5. Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2025
 - b. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2025
 - c. Workshop Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2025
- 6. Presentations and Recognitions**
 - a. Town of Hilton Head Island Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) FY25 Metrics Report for Quarters 1 and 2 - Ariana Pernice, Vice President of the Visitor and Convention Bureau
- 7. Reports from Members of Town Council**
 - a. General Reports from Town Council
- 8. Unfinished Business**
 - a. Consideration of a Joint Resolution of the Town Council of Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Beaufort County Council of Beaufort County, South Carolina providing direction and response to the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank related to Project Scope and Funding Strategy for the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project - Shawn Colin, Assistant

Town Manager

- b. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend Title 17 of the Municipal Code, Chapter 4, Noise Control, to Add Additional Requirements for Construction Hours for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date - Second Reading - Shawn Leininger, Assistant Town Manager

9. New Business

- a. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Long-Term Lease between the Town and the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry of Town-Owned Property on Augusta Lane - First Reading - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager

10. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

11. Executive Session

- a. Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements and Discussions for the Proposed Sale or Purchase of Property [Pursuant to South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)] related to:
 - 1. William Hilton Parkway - Stoney Area
- b. Discussion of Legal Advice from Town Attorney on Matters Covered under Attorney-Client Privilege [Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)] related to:
 - 1. Project located on Main Street, also known as Diamond Cove

12. Action from Executive Session

13. Adjournment

FOIA Compliance: Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Hilton Head Island will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Hilton Head Island ADA Coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Civility Pledge:
"I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town."



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 3:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor, Alex Brown, Ward 1, Mayor Pro-Tempore; Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Steve DeSimone, Ward 3, Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Melinda Tunner Ward 6

Invocation - Pastor Michael Carr, Central Church

Pastor Carr delivered the invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Approval of the Minutes

Workshop Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2025

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Regular Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025

Ms. Tunner requested the minutes contain more detail regarding discussion on two items that were on the agenda which were the Accommodation Tax Grants and the RBC Heritage Agreement. It was the consensus of Council to remove the minutes from this agenda for editing and place them on an upcoming agenda for consideration of approval.

General Reports from Town Council

Mayor Perry invited Shawn Colin to the podium to update Council on the meeting held with the South Carolina Department of Transportation regarding the Bridge/Project options. Mr. Colin delivered the following update:

Attendees:

Meeting Attendees:

- SCDOT:
 - Justin Powell, Secretary of Transportation

- Rob Perry, PE, Deputy Secretary for Engineering
- John Boylston, Chief Engineer for Program Delivery
- Maggie Hendry, Chief Administrative Officer
- Craig Winn, PE, Lowcountry Program Manager
- Town of Hilton Head Island:
 - Alan Perry, Mayor
 - Alex Brown, Councilman
 - Steve Desimone, Councilman
 - Marc Orlando, Town Manager
 - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager
- Beaufort County:
 - Alice Howard, County Council Chair
 - Tab Tabernik, County Council
 - Michael Moore, Administrator
 - Jared Fralix, Assistant Administrator

1. Bridge/Project Options Overview:

- ☐ Option 1: \$257.7M – Lifeline option without multiuse pathway. Includes a 3-lane bridge with breakdown lanes. The bridge would be stripped for two-lanes. Cost Comparison: The costs of half the project may not necessarily be half the total cost.
- ☐ Option 2: \$319.3M – Lifeline option with multiuse pathway. Includes a 3-lane bridge with breakdown lanes and a protected multiuse pathway.
- ☐ Option 3: \$273.7M – Lifeline option without multiuse pathway. Includes 3 lanes eastbound from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells Road.
- ☐ Option 4: \$340.8M – Lifeline option with multiuse pathway. Includes 3 lanes eastbound from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells Road, a protected multiuse pathway on the bridge, and a pathway connection to Moss Creek and Jenkins Island.
- ☐ Option 5: \$466.8M – Full project cost anticipated for 2024.
- ☐ Option 6: \$88.6M – Replacement of only the Mackay Creek eastbound bridge.
- ☐ Option 3 or 4 may take longer to move through the process and construction phases.

2. Projects beyond the bridge scope may be included in the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study for programming and funding considerations. SCDOT is considering a Design Build approach to the project to help with pricing.

- ☐ A design-build option will consider design alternatives, including bike and pedestrian connections.

- ☐ SCDOT has seen a 70 percent project cost escalation over the past few years.

3. Tolls and Reversible Lanes:

- ☐ Tolls: Tolls are prohibited on existing free facilities (as per South Carolina Statute).
- ☐ Tolls for express routes (e.g., to Cross Island Parkway) would require extended evaluation, including a toll study, environmental review, and permitting.
- ☐ Reversible Lanes: SCDOT opposes reversible lanes due to safety, compliance issues, and the high cost of operation and maintenance. SCDOT is not in the business of reversible lanes.

4. Utility Relocation and Funding:

Utility relocation costs are part of the project; SCDOT will pay per South Carolina code Act 36.

SCDOT will cover utility relocation costs in accordance with the Utility Relocation Act, and additional funding could come from local funds.

5. Pinckney Island/Skull Creek Bridges:

The preference is for a new eastbound bridge to be elevated over Pinckney Island. Touching down on Pinckney Island would increase costs and reduce safety by having at grade movements.

6. Skull Creek Bridge Substructure:

- ☐ The existing substructure supports both the eastbound and westbound bridge decks. The eastbound deck must be kept if the westbound deck remains. The existing eastbound bridge over Skull Creek would provide two-way traffic between Jenkins Island and Pinckney Island.

7. On-Island Grade Separation and Relocation:

- ☐ Grade Separation for Squire Pope Road/Spanish Wells Road would require multiple residential relocations, dramatically increasing costs.
- ☐ The Windmill Harbor signal will remain as part of the project regardless of the option, excluding Option 6.

8. Mitigation Elements and Community Impact:

9. Costs for Stoney Community mitigation are only funded if the project extends into the Stoney area. If Option 3 or 4 is selected, funding for Stoney mitigation (as outlined in the Environmental Assessment) would be included:

10. Project Timing:

- ☐ Timeframe for project changes:
 - ☐ Updates to environmental documents would take 6+ months.
 - ☐ Design/build project process will take 14 months.
 - ☐ Right-of-way (ROW) phase takes 12 months.
 - ☐ Construction will span 24-36 months.
 - ☐ Estimate is +/- 32 months to get to construction and 24-36 months for construction.

11. Project Coordination and Scope:

- ☐ Coordination: SCDOT emphasized the need to coordinate efforts.
- ☐ Meeting with SIB: SCDOT suggested a with the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) chairman and executive director after local coordination to ensure alignment.
- ☐ Project Scope Considerations:
- ☐ A joint resolution by the Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County outlining approved project scope and funding strategy is suggested to resolve concerns and allow SIB consideration.

12. Steps Forward:

- ☐ The Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County need to continue discussions to reach an agreed-upon position and preference for project advancement.
- ☐ A joint resolution approved by the Town and County to address concerns raised by the SIB was recommended to be delivered before the March 31, 2025, deadline.
- ☐ This will provide clarity to SCDOT regarding the local preference for advancing the project.
- ☐ Beaufort County would need to revise its Intergovernmental Agreement with the SIB as well as its agreement with SCDOT for project scope.

Mayor noted the update was provided and would be addressed with a question and answer period during the joint meeting to be held with Beaufort County Council scheduled for Wednesday, February 12.

Mayor Perry stated the Strategic Action Plan Workshops are scheduled for February 26 and 27, 2025.

Ms. Brison congratulated the MLK Committee on the Walk and Program at Hilton Head Island High School. She noted February is Black History month with many Gullah Celebrations scheduled to be held throughout the month. There was a Freedom Day held at Mitchelville Freedom Park on Saturday. She encouraged all to go to Historical Bentonville Freedom Park to view the travelling Harriet Tubman Sculpture.

Ms. Becker encouraged all attending the meeting to sign up to speak on various items on the agenda.

Report of Greenspace Advisory Committee - Peter Kristian, Town of Hilton Head Island Representative

Mr. Kristian noted he is not only a representative for Hilton Head Island, but he represents Southern Beaufort County.

Mr. Kristian reported the Committee did their due diligence and obtained a third appraisal of the Mitchellville Tract as requested by Town Council. He stated the appraisal will be considered at a full meeting of Beaufort County Council on February 10 and hopefully something positive will come about to provide the Town with additional funding.

Mr. Kristian announced the request from the Town for \$250,000 reimbursement for the Beach City Road tract received a favorable recommendation from the Greenspace Committee along with several tracts across from the Crazy Crab on William Hilton Parkway are just about to close. He complimented the Town on the land Acquisition Program which should be emulated by other municipalities.

Unfinished Business

Consideration of an Ordinance of the Town of Hilton Head Island Granting Easements to South Island Public Service Districts for Infrastructure Installation - Second Reading - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager

On August 20, 2024, the Town Council reviewed SIPSD's request for easements during Executive Session and requested additional information regarding tree impacts.

On November 12, 2024, the Town Council further discussed SIPSD's request for easements during Executive Session and provided the following feedback:

1. Identify the affected properties on Attachment 1 as "Town-Owned Property."
2. Require a project schedule and pathway detour plan.
3. Require live oak trees as mitigation for all tree removal.
4. Require mitigation for understory vegetation in the William Hilton Parkway and Dunnagan's Alley easement.

On January 14, 2025, the Town Council approved first reading of the requested easements with the condition that the following information be provided before second and final reading:

1. Tree removal and mitigation plans (Attachments 2 & 3).
2. An explanation of why open trench digging is proposed on the William Hilton Parkway and Dunnagan's Alley easement, as opposed to directional boring.

The Town's development review team is working with SIPSD to ensure compliance

with these conditions through the Development Plan Review (DPR) process. SIPSD has indicated a preference for open trench digging along the drainage canal in the William Hilton Parkway and Dunnagan's Alley easement, as the equipment necessary for directional boring is large and would require additional tree removal to operate. Open trench digging requires a narrower construction footprint. SIPSD provided the attached tree removal and mitigation plans, which include the removal of up to 23 trees (one of which is dead). The tree removal plan details the removal of four oak trees, including two 15" water oaks (one of which is diseased), an 8" water oak, and a 20" live oak. The tree mitigation plan outlines the planting of 14 live oak trees, which are at least 4 caliper inches in diameter and approximately 10 feet tall at installation.

Easement Requests:

1. Pope Avenue (R552 015 000 0395 0000):
 - **Description:** This easement includes a 10-foot-wide strip along Town-owned property adjacent to Pope Avenue, in front of St. Luke's Church.
 - **Method of Installation:** Directional boring, which will avoid impacting trees.
2. Corner of Arrow Road and William Hilton Parkway (R550 015 000 0007 0000):
 - **Description:** This easement includes a 10-foot-wide strip along Town-owned property, along William Hilton Parkway.
 - **Method of Installation:** Directional boring, which will avoid impacting trees.
3. William Hilton Parkway (R550 015 000 0324 0000):
 - **Description:** This easement spans the entire William Hilton Parkway frontage of the Town Hall property, with a consistent width of 10 feet.
 - **Method of Installation:** Directional boring, which will avoid impacting trees.
4. William Hilton Parkway and Dunnagan's Alley (R550 015 000 0323 0000):
 - **Description:** This easement is located between the Village at Wexford and Town Hall, with a varying width: 40 feet at William Hilton Parkway, narrowing to 20 feet through the property, and expanding to 60 feet at Dunnigan's Alley. Additionally, there is a 20-foot-wide temporary construction easement proposed adjacent to the permanent easement.
 - **Method of Installation:** This portion of the project requires an open trench installation, which will impact trees and understory bushes.
 - **Tree Mitigation:** Town staff will continue working with SIPSD to minimize tree removal and require tree mitigation.

The proposed easements are necessary to facilitate the upgrade of SIPSD's potable water system. Three of the four easements will avoid tree impacts through the use of

directional boring, while the fourth easement will require tree removal and mitigation.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: clarification of the location of the 15", 8", 5" and the 20" live oak trees to be removed; clarification of a total of fourteen 4" live oak trees will be replacing the removed trees; inquiry and confirmation private property owners requirements are not as high as these specific requirements for mitigation; clarification buffers will be added on the Dunnagan's Alley side and the William Hilton Parkway side; confirmation plantings will screen any open corridor; confirmation it will take 6 months before the PSD is at that specific site and once they begin the project it will take approximately 2 months to complete; confirmation it will be done in the fall as opposed to summer; and a statement of appreciation for the size of the trees being planted as replacements along with a request to consider even larger replacements.

Motion carried 7-0.

New Business

Consideration of Adoption of 2025 Meeting Schedules for Finance and Administrative Committee and Community Services and Public Safety Committee - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager

Ms. Becker moved to approve the following dates for the Community Services and Public Safety Committee:

February 10, 2025
March 17, 2025
April 21, 2025
May 19, 2025
June 16, 2025
July 21, 2025
August 18, 2025
September 15, 2025
October 20, 2025
November 17, 2025
December 15, 2025
Regular meetings are held at 10:00 A.M. on the third Monday of the month unless otherwise notified*.

Mr. Alfred seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Brown moved to approve the following meeting dates for the Finance and Administrative Committee:

MEETING DATES
February 24, 2025
March 18, 2025
April 29, 2025
May 27, 2025
June 24, 2025
July 29, 2024
August 26, 2025
September 30, 2025
October 28, 2025
November 25, 2025
December 30, 2025
Regular meetings are held at 10:00 A.M. on the last Tuesday of the month unless otherwise notified*.

Ms. Brison seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend Title 17 of the Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island, to Amend Chapter 4, Noise Control, to add Additional Requirements for Construction Hours - First Reading - Missy Luick, Director of Planning

Ms. Luick stated she was present to discuss the first reading of this priority amendment to the noise ordinance. She stated they have been working on a Land Management Ordinance (LMO) amendments project that is identified in our strategic action plan. As part of that project we have conducted an analysis of our land management and created this LMO amendments plan to incorporate policy and bring our LMO into alignment with our comprehensive plan and to incorporate those changes anticipated to our district plans.

The effort has been divided into two parts the LMO full overhaul and the priority amendments include incremental changes to both the LMO and portions of the Municipal Code that are related to land management seeking to address those important and urgent issues. In advance of the LMO overhaul we did have a workshop with council last September to review the LMO amendments plan including the priority amendments we discussed an amendment to construction management standards and we did have some discussion with Council including direction to amend the noise ordinance as of that priority amendment.

Current noise ordinance regulations allow construction activity on any day of the week during the daytime defined at 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The proposed amendment to align construction activity hours with those hours that are enforced by our local major owners associations in the planned development communities as well as best practices to have a more standardized schedule that minimizes disturbance to nearby properties. The proposed amendment limits construction hours to Monday - Saturday excluding several major holidays that are listed and also limits construction activity from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or sunset whichever comes first .

She stated this has been discussed this at a Town Council workshop where we received some feedback as it relates to our construction hours and construction management standards. It was discussed at that time or the feedback that we that we heard from Council that construction projects do have impacts that spill over into adjacent properties that do cause disruptions including noise vibrations, dust, traffic congestion and other. These impacts are sometimes frustrating, and they affect our daily routines and operations. And on the flip side, construction projects also create jobs, stimulate our economy with new develop that developments that result in positive impacts to our community. It was suggested time to research the hours of construction our planned development communities as well as some other best practice is when proceeding with this noise amendment.

The Island's major planned development communities were evaluated and their regulations as it relates to construction noise and activity . There are several variations in the chart that follows and identifies all of their regulations as it relates to construction noise but generally the construction activity is permitted Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with some activity permitted on Saturdays typically with pre-authorization from that planned community. In most cases construction is prohibited on Sundays and major holidays.

In closing, the amendment is a modification to simply address that priority that was identified at that September workshop which was to align construction noise.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Becker seconded.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: confirmation the ordinance addresses not only construction work but landscapers and blowers; confirmation permit holders and landscapers will have to adhere to the ordinance; confirmation the amendment changes the definition of daytime from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or sunset; confirmation that a non-commercial activity is an exception; confirmation this is consistent with what happens behind the gates; confirmation property owners can cut their grass if they keep the noise level below 95dba; confirmation the emergency and special considerations will continue and the process that provides exemptions will not change; confirmation the PUD's could have regulations that are more stringent; discussion to take into consideration making the

hours 7am to 7pm and remove the wording “or sunset”; concern with overstepping some PUD regulations by extending it to sunset or whichever comes first; and a recommendation that as Council has items coming forward to make it clear whether it impacts the PUD regulations so Council members can reach out to their constituents.

Mr. Alfred amended his motion to clarify the hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. as opposed to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. or sunset, whichever comes first. Ms. Becker, seconder of the motion was in agreement with the amended motion.

Mr. DeSimone asked for clarification as to why the change is needed. It was the consensus of council to invite Peter Kristian, General Manager of Hilton Head Plantation, to the podium to explain the need for specific hours. Mr. Kristian proceeded to explain the Hilton Head Plantation process

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: confirmation the ordinance provides an outlet for emergency situations inside and outside the PUD’s; and confirmation staff will review any discrepancies in the proposed language, and they will be brought forward at second reading.

The amended motion carried 7-0.

Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Town Manager to sign the Permits Required to Execute the Beach Renourishment Project - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager

The purpose of this report is to inform Town Council of the environmental permitting condition mandated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) and the South Carolina Department of Environmental services (SCDES) as part of the Town’s beach renourishment efforts, specifically the requirement of a year-round dog ban on portions of public beach. This condition is being applied to the Town’s permitting process for the beach renourishment project. The Town of Hilton Head Island is in the process of permitting and executing its fourth major Beach Renourishment project. In past projects, the Town and regulatory agencies have been effective partners, balancing the necessary beach maintenance with wildlife protection. As part of the permitting process, the United State Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is issuing a Biological Opinion (BO) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

This year, for the first time, USFWS is mandating a year-round ban on dogs, with the initial draft BO, dated August 8, 2024, imposing restrictions at Fish Haul Beach Park, portions of Port Royal Plantation, and Pine Island Beach. The BO cites concerns about the potential disturbance to birds from the presence of dogs, even when leashed. The applicable sections of the Biological Opinion that require this restriction are outlined below under Reasonable and Prudent Measure#4 as well as Terms and Condition#4.

Shorebirds – Reasonable and Prudent Measures:

RPM#4. The Town must implement the revised and approved Town of Hilton Head Shorebird Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) from 2015 before project construction begins. The Plan will include beach management measures aimed at reducing human recreational disturbance to offset the anticipated take resulting from the proposed Action.

Shorebirds Terms and Conditions:

T&C#4. The Town will implement the revised and approved *Town of Hilton Head Shorebird Conservation and Management Plan* (Plan) from 2015 before project construction begins unless another written agreement between the Town, Service, and Corps is reached in the interim. The Plan will include permanent, year-round dog restricted access areas along Pine Island and the Fish Haul Creek area shorelines of Port Royal Sound to minimize existing human recreational disturbance to piping plovers, red knots, and other shorebirds. These areas fall within the Town's jurisdiction and align with beach access points. The Town or its contractor will install signage at beach access points and above the spring high tide line to delineate where the restricted area(s) begin. The Town will also install marked buoys at the mid-tide and low-tide lines to delineate the area(s) when the tide is below the high-tide line.

While the Town supports conservation efforts, Town staff strongly objected to this blanket dog ban, as it does not reflect the current needs or practices of our residents and visitors, who frequently use these areas to walk their dogs. The Town staff coordinated discussion and consideration of these requirements with a request to remove or reduce the areas impacted, based on the actual presence of protected bird species during migration periods, rather than imposing year-round restrictions.

As a result of these efforts, USFWS has issued an amended BO to the USACOE. The amended BO includes revised language for Terms and Condition #4 as outlined below which reduces the area where the restrictions must apply by removing Pine Island Beach and reducing the area of restrictions near Fish Haul Beach Park.

T&C#4. The Town will implement the revised and approved Town of Hilton Head Shorebird Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) from 2015 before project construction begins unless another written agreement between the Town, Service, and Corps is reached in the interim. The Plan will include one permanent, year-round dog restricted access area along the Fish Haul Creek shoreline of Port Royal Sound to minimize existing and future human recreational disturbance to piping plovers, red knots, and other shorebirds. The specific location will be finalized in coordination with and approved by the Service. This area falls within the Town's jurisdiction. The Town or its contractor will install signage at nearby beach access points and above the spring high tide line to delineate where the restricted area begins. The Town will also install signage and/or marked buoys at the mid-tide and low-tide lines to delineate the area when the tide is below the high-tide line.

This revised BO still maintains the Reasonable and Prudent Measure #4 which means the Town will need to amend the Municipal Code before the construction activity for the Beach Renourishment project begins. Therefore, an amendment to Section 8-1-211(8) of the Town's Municipal Code will be advanced to codify the required restrictions in the coming months.

It is recommended that the Town Council approve a Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to sign the permits required for the Beach Renourishment project, ensuring that the Town can accept the State and Federal permits for the project and ensure the project can proceed while we draft and bring forward required amendments to the Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment. There was none.

Ms. Brison moved to approve. Mr. Alfred seconded.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: the need for clarification regarding the permanent year-round dog restriction has been changed by removing Port Royal Proper; clarification the restriction applies to human activities inclusive of dogs; clarification beachgoers can utilize that portion of the beach without dogs; confirmation signage will designate restriction areas as well as placement of buoys in the water; confirmation the Town is responsible for making citizens and visitors aware of the restricted area; clarification the Town s required, as part of the Beach Renourishment, Project to survey and monitor migrating birds; inquiry and confirmation the terms and conditions are what we've agreed to in the past; and the need to protect animals so they continue to have the enjoyment they've had in the past.

Mr. Orlando stated there are mandates through the permitting process that the Town will be required to fund. He proposed that the February 25, 2025, Town Council Workshop centered around Beach Renourishment.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: confirmation the residents of ward 6 have been contacted by Ms. Tunner and while respondents were disappointed, they understand this needs done to get the permitting; inquiry into time frame for beginning the project and confirmation the code amendment regarding dog activities in the area noted need to be in place before construction can begin; clarification when the permit is signed the code change takes place; appreciation to the Town Manager and staff for pushing back on restriction and getting a revised biological opinion; encouragement to move forward with 2nd reading on February 18; and a note that timing is of the essence due to at least five other communities looking to conduct Beach Renourishment within the next 12 months.

Motion carried 7-0.

Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend Title 16 of the Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island, the Land Management Ordinance, to amend Chapter 16-4, Use

Standards, to add a new Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion Program as Section 16-4-106 - First Reading - Missy Luick, Director of Planning

Missy Luick conducted a presentation with the following information:

On December 11, 2024, applicant Chris Breen, with Blue Hour Housing, submitted a proposed text amendment to LMO Sections 16-4, Use Standards, and 16-10, Rules of Measurement, to allow for a new use to be established called Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion, and to establish minimum unit sizes for the use.

On September 16 and 24, 2024, Town Council held workshops to review the LMO Amendments Plan, including an amendment to allow the adaptive reuse of hotels/motels for multifamily housing. Currently, properties that are developed as hotels/motels and are no longer suited for such use have limited reuse options. These reuse options are limited to the zoning of the property and generally include other commercial, retail, or office uses, group living, and residential allowances of varying densities depending on the zoning district.

Based on comments and direction provided by Town Council at the workshops, Town staff has drafted a proposed code amendment to allow the adaptive reuse of hotels/motels for multifamily housing. This Town staff proposal has been introduced to the Planning Commission and is pending a public hearing review at their February 19, 2024, meeting.

Recently, representatives of Blue Hour Housing advised their desire to submit their own proposal for a hotel/motel adaptive reuse amendment. As expressed to Town staff, doing so would allow Blue Hour Housing to propose regulations meeting their needs and allow more control of the review schedule.

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT:

The proposed amendment would create a new use called Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion that is permitted on properties located within the:

1. Low to Moderate Density Residential (RM-4) District;
2. Moderate Density Residential (RM-8) District;
3. Moderate to High Density Residential (RM-12) District;
4. Community Commercial (CC) District;
5. Light Commercial (LC) District;
6. Main Street (MS) District;
7. Sea Pines Circle (SPC) District;
8. Medical (MED) District;
9. Mitchelville (MV) District;
10. Planned Development Mixed Use (PD-1) District;
11. Waterfront Mixed-Use (WMU) District; and
12. Stoney (S) District.

Further, the proposal would allow and require the following:

1. Allow the conversion of existing hotels and motels to a Multifamily Residential Use at a 1 guest room to 1 dwelling unit density conversion ratio.
2. Existing guest rooms are not permitted to be reduced or increased in size in order to increase the number of units; however, it is permitted to combine multiple dwelling units into a singular dwelling unit.
3. 6% maximum required building square footage dedicated as interior communal space requirements. Elevators, hallways, stairwells, and other areas used exclusively for ingress and egress cannot be counted towards the square footage for this requirement.
4. Maximum required open space shall be provided at a rate of 10% of the building square footage.
5. No less than twenty-five (25%) percent of the dwelling units in the development shall be occupied by at least one person that is a full-time employee of a lawfully licensed business located within the Town of Hilton Head.
6. Minimum unit sizes are as follows:

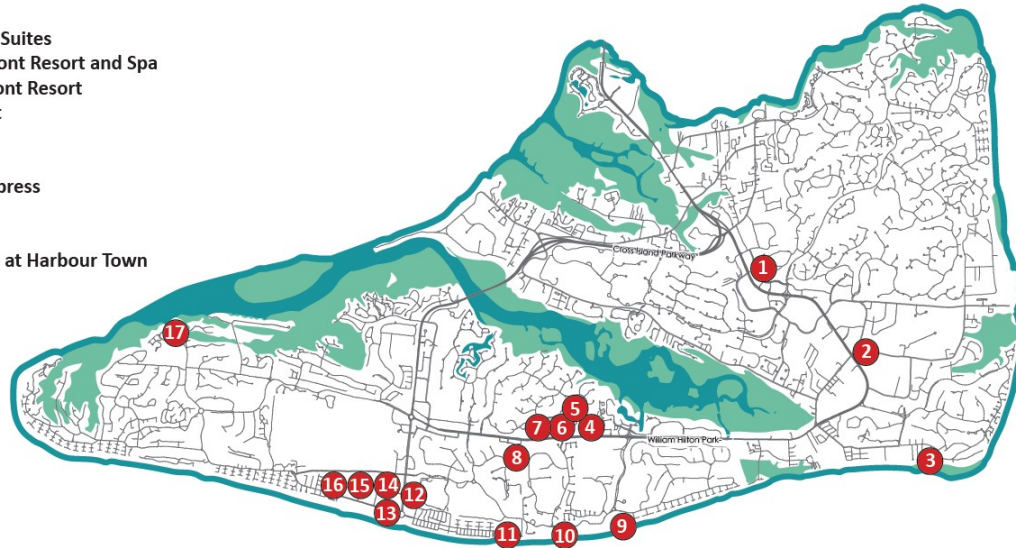
Unit Type	Adaptive Re-Use Hotel Motel Conversion Program Minimum Unit Size
Micro Efficiency	210 square feet
Studio	300 square feet
1-bedroom	420 square feet
2-bedroom	562 square feet
3-bedroom	698 square feet

ANALYSIS:

The use is proposed in the twelve (12) zoning districts as previously listed. All of the districts currently allow multifamily development, some with conditions, with the exception of the PD-1 District. Further, hotels are currently not permitted uses in 7 of the proposed 12 districts proposed for this Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion. Hotels are not permitted uses in the RM-4, RM-8, RM-12, CC, MED, PD-1 and SPC Districts.

Below is a map depicting Hilton Head Island hotel properties.

- 1 Simple Rewards Inn
- 2 Hampton Inn
- 3 The Westin
- 4 Hotel Carolina A Days Inn
- 5 Home 2 Suites
- 6 SpringHill Suites Hilton Head Island
- 7 Red Roof Inn
- 8 Palmera Inn & Suites
- 9 Hilton Beachfront Resort and Spa
- 10 Omni Oceanfront Resort
- 11 Sonesta Resort
- 12 Courtyard
- 13 Beach House
- 14 Holiday Inn Express
- 15 Spark
- 16 Doubletree
- 17 The Inn & Club at Harbour Town



The Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion proposes a 1 guest room to 1 dwelling unit density conversion ratio with conditions. Hotel density is 35 rooms per net acre. Existing residential density varies within the 12 districts proposed for this Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion and ranges from 4 to 16 dwelling units per net acre. An Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion will likely result in residential densities that exceed the existing residential density allowances per district. The proposal calls for a minimum off-street parking requirement of 1 off-street parking space for each guest room. The LMO requires multifamily off-street parking as follows:

1.4 spaces for a 1-bedroom dwelling unit; 1.7 spaces for a 2-bedroom dwelling unit and 2 spaces for 3-or more bedroom dwelling units.

There is no minimum amount of interior communal space or exterior open space required in the proposed amendment. These amenities provide quality to the living space, similar to requirements for other residential development. Adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion is proposed to require a maximum of 6% of the building square footage to be dedicated as interior communal space, which excludes elevators, hallways, stairwells, and other areas used exclusively for ingress and egress from being counted towards the square footage for this requirement. Also proposed is a maximum open space requirement calculated at a rate of 10% of the building square footage.

Although the proposed amendment does not require compliance with the Town

Workforce Housing Program, 25% of the dwelling units in the development shall be occupied by at least one person that is a full-time employee of a lawfully licensed business located within the Town of Hilton Head Island.

PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION:

On January 15, 2025, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing to consider the Blue Hour Housing text amendment application to allow an adaptive Re-Use Hotel/Motel Conversion. During the public hearing, Town staff and the applicant made presentations to the Planning Commission, the public was provided an opportunity to make public comment, and after deliberation, the Planning Commission, on a 5-3 vote, made a recommendation of denial to Town Council with a request that the applicant and Town staff come together for a solution.

APPLICANT PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS:

On January 17, 2025, Blue Hour Housing, submitted an email with proposed modifications to the Text Amendment as reviewed and recommended by Planning Commission. This email is included as Attachment 3. These amendments include:

1. Amend text to “No less than 75% of the dwelling units in the development shall be occupied by at least one person that is a full-time employee of a lawfully licensed business located within the Town of Hilton Head.”
2. Add “Laundry facilities” to excluded communal space areas.
3. Add line of text that says “existing hotel and motel lobbies are permitted as communal space if they are renovated to be dedicated as communal living space dedicated for tenant use.”

TOWN COUNCIL ACTIONS:
Section 16-2-103.B.2.e of the LMO provides review and decision procedures for Text Amendments and states the following:

1. The Town Council shall review the application, staff report, and Planning Commission recommendation, and make a final decision on the application. If the applicant proposes a change or departure from the text amendment that is different than what was reviewed by Planning Commission the change or departure shall first be submitted to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation in accordance with State law. The Town Council's decision shall be one of the following:
 - a. Adopt an ordinance approving the Text Amendment; or
 - b. Adopt a resolution denying the Text Amendment.
2. If the applicant proposes a change or departure from the text amendment that is different than what was reviewed by Planning Commission, the application shall be remanded to the Planning Commission for review of and a recommendation on the proposed changes and departures. The Planning Commission shall deliver its recommendation on the proposed changes and departures to the Town Council

within 30 days after the remand; if the Planning Commission fails to do so, it is deemed to have recommended approval of the proposed changes and departures.

Town Council has the following options when considering this agenda item. These include:

1. Approve First Reading, allowing the ordinance to advance to Second Reading.
2. Adopt a resolution denying the text amendment.
3. Adopt a motion remanding the text amendment application to the Planning Commission for review of and a recommendation on the proposed changes and departures. Should this be the will of Town Council, the item will be placed on the February 19, 2025, Planning Commission agenda and then will be placed on the March 4, 2025, and March 18, 2025, Town Council agendas.

Mayor Perry invited the applicant to speak.

Chris Breen of Blue Hour Housing addressed Council and reviewed the process to date. He stated the developers believe that the tax amendment will fulfill the comprehensive plan's goal of attaining additional housing, supply obtainable efficiency units through commercial redevelopment which is hotel conversions using zoning Town funding. These studio and one bedroom units focused on the island's workforce will allow essential and hospitality and all sorts of workers live affordably on the island which is an opportunity that is increasingly unavailable. Increased housing availability will reduce commute times, living conditions increase satisfaction for the islands, work workforce, ultimately reducing worker shortages and improving living conditions and he referenced slides they had prepared to show Council

Shawn Leininger, assistant Town Manager stated that staff had not yet had a chance to review the slides and wanted to make sure that was clear for the record. Mayor Perry stated he would not permit the slides to be shown due to the fact Town staff has not had a chance to review them.

Mr. Breen introduced Alan Wolf to address Council. Mr. Wolf explained background of how he was contacted by Blue Hour Housing and how they have worked together in trying to work through this request.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment:

Megan Fitzpatrick addressed Council stating Blue Hour is not experienced. They only have two other proposed projects and neither have been approved. She also stated they do not have funding.

Ashleigh Phillips addressed Council stating the request doesn't fit into the land use plan for the Island. This proposal does not require compliance with the workforce housing program which means market rate rents among other things. She asked Council to vote against this request.

Larry Boyle addressed Council expressing concerns as to what type of people would

be brought in to live in the residences as well as the need for additional law enforcement. He asked council to conduct a study on how communities like this affect municipalities.

Gray Smith addressed Council asking questions from the residents' perspective. He stated Blue Hour doesn't have the experience. His questions consisted of why would Hilton Head Island want to be a guinea pig for this type of project; why is an external group writing Town code; why would it be in all 12 districts; reference to the one in Bluffton with a high crime rate and why did it come forward to Town Council when the Planning Commission voted against it?

John Zmarzly addressed Council state this request is inconsistent with the way of living on the Island. He stated he doesn't agree that the project provides quality of life.

Kenneth Campbell addressed Council encouraging them to look at every aspect of the project and all types of housing are needed. He added they should look at it in an expedited manner as these types of opportunities do not come along every day.

Chris Ruffner addressed Council stating her opposition to this type of project being built on the Island. She suggested maybe further out in the area of Hardeeville would be a better fit.

Mr. Alfred moved to remand the item back to the Planning Commission for further consideration. He stated they have already indicated that as a Town that we think it is desirable to convert motel operations and rather than leave them as they are in a decaying situation. We have an application here where the applicant proposals the staff's proposals are not the same and I have been led to believe that. the staff has more in the way of potential changes that they would like to consider There are certainly, as indicated, an opportunity for further discussion and negotiation of the terms. It is premature to do anything other than just send this back to the Planning Commission and Council will have further opportunities to consider it later on. Nothing that we do by remaining would preclude anything been discussed tonight so I would move to remand.

Ms. Brison seconded.

Ms. Becker moved to amend a current motion and moved that the Town Council deny the application made by Blue Hour for a text amendment to the change in the LMO Section 16-4 for Use and Setbacks and 16-10 Rules of Measurement allowing for a new use called Adaptive Reuse Conversion and to establish a minimum unit size. Ms. Tunner seconded.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: comments that Blue Hour has no documentation as to who would live in these units and the need for requirements as to employment and income; comments that in 2024 the applicant attended a pre-application meeting and was informed by staff this would ultimately be denied; confirmation the applicant still came forward with the application with no

changes; inquiry as to whether there was a public notice completed as required when the Planning Commission reviewed the application; confirmation the required public notices were completed; confirmation letters to property owners within 350 feet of the project are not required for a text amendment; comments staff needed to state to Council the recommendation of denial to the Planning Commission; concern that an outside investor writes a text amendment; inquiry into capacity in the units and how it is determined; concern that 210 square feet is considered livable conditions; concern over parking for the facility; the need for documentation with compliance to all requirements; inquiry as to whether the conversion is equal to a lockout unit; the need to be mindful of unintended consequences and make sure what is approved aligns to the Island values; concern of overcrowding the units; the need to look at the 15 strategies in Workforce Housing; the need to convert commercial spaces that are no longer in use; the need for staff to work with Planning Commission and the applicant in identifying districts where this text amendment might be recommended; the need to look at suae footage requirements and put them in place; inquiry into priorities of town Council and where this item fits due to timing; inquiry as to whether the site being discussed is operation at this time; inquiry if there was a precedent in sending back to the Planning Commission for further discussion for a solution; inquiry into the time frame needed by staff to review and make further recommendations; confirmation there is a capacity issue with this topic along with other priorities; and confirmation the Planning Commission would deliver its recommendation in the proposed change and departures to Town Council within 30 days of the remand.

Mayor Perry called for a vote on the amended motion to deny. The amended motion failed by a vote of 3-4 (Brown, Brison, Alfred, Perry opposed).

Mayor Perry called for a vote on the original motion to remand the item back to the Planning Commission. Motion carried 4-3 (Becker, Tunner and DeSimone opposed).

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Frank Babel addressed Council expressing his disagreement that the Bridge Option 2 is a bridge to nowhere. He stated his support for a bicycle/pedestrian pathway to be included in the design.

Linda Harrington addressed Council stating applicants do not have the right to write a text amendment for the Town Land Management Ordinance. She stated they should just provide necessary documents for their applications.

Executive Session

Discussion of Appointments to Boards, Commissions, and Committees (Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70[a],) related to:

1. Lowcountry Area Transportation Study
2. Lowcountry Council of Governments
3. Beaufort County Airports Board

4. Southern Lowcountry Regional Board
5. Island Recreation Association Board
6. Northpoint Public- Private Partnership Housing Committee
7. Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Board of Directors
8. South Carolina Flood Commission
9. Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation
10. Beaufort Housing Authority
11. Beaufort County Solid Waste and Recycling Board
12. Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust
13. Beaufort County Sales Tax Advisory Committee
14. Greenspace Advisory Committee
15. Design Review Board
16. Planning Commission
17. Board of Zoning Appeals

Discussion of Legal Advice from the Town Attorney on Matters Covered Under the Attorney- Client Privilege (Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 [a]) related to:

1. Project located at 12 Main Street, also known as Diamond Cove Action from Executive Session

Motion to appoint the following Town Council members to external Boards & Commissions

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study: Tamara Becker
 Lowcountry Council of Governments: Steve Alfred
 Beaufort County Airports Board: Melinda Tunner
 Southern Lowcountry Regional Board: Patsy Brison
 Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation: Alan Perry
 Northpoint Public-Private Partnership Housing Committee: Alan Perry
 Northpoint Public-Private Partnership Housing Committee: Patsy Brison

Mr. Orlando stated the need for an executive session for the reasons listed above.

At 6:30 p.m. Ms. Brison moved to enter into Executive Session for the reasons cited by the Town Manager. Mr. Alfred seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

At 7:55 p.m. Mr. Brown moved to come out of Executive Session. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Perry asked if there was any action to be taken as a result of executive /session.

Mr. Brown moved to make the following appointments to external boards and commissions:

Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) – Tammy Becker
Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) – Steve Alfred
Beaufort County Airports Board – Melinda Tunner
Southern Lowcountry Regional Board – Patsy Brison
Gullah Geechee Historical Neighborhoods Community Development
Corporation – Alan Perry
Northpoint Public-Private Partnership Housing Committee – Alan Perry
Northpoint Public-Private Partnership Housing Committee – Patsy Brison

Ms. Brison seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Adjournment

Mr. Brown moved to adjourn. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

**The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's
website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov**



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 3:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor, Alex Brown, Ward 1, Mayor Pro-Tempore; Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Steve DeSimone, Ward 3, Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Melinda Tunner Ward 6

Invocation – Pastor Todd Cullen, Hilton Head Community Church

Pastor Cullen delivered the invocation.

Adoption of the Agenda

Ms. Becker moved to amend the agenda and change Item 8a, to a discussion item. Mr. DeSimone seconded. Motion failed 2-5 (Tunner, Alfred, Brown, Perry, Brison opposed).

Ms. Brison moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Alfred seconded. Motion carried 6-1 (Becker opposed).

Approval of the Minutes

Regular Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Brison seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Workshop Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2025

Mr. Alfred moved to approve. Ms. Brison seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Report of the Town Manager

Mr. Orlando announced there will be a Town Council Workshop held on February 25, 2025, regarding the Beach Renourishment Project. He added that Town Council will hold their Strategic Plan Workshops on February 26 and 27, 2025 at the Westin on Hilton Head Island. He expressed his thanks to Shawn Colin and the entire team for putting everything together for the workshops.

Mr. Orlando provided an overview of the joint meeting which took place with Beaufort County Council and Hilton Head Island Town Council. He stated besides the Councils, Beaufort County Administrator Michael Moore, Beaufort County Assistant Administrator Jared Fralix, Hilton Head Island Assistant Town Manager Shawn Colin, and he were present at the meeting.

Beaufort County staff reviewed the South Carolina Department of Transportation

proposals and funding available for the project. In addition, they provided a joint resolution for Town Council consideration. Mr. Orlando stated that Mr. Moore had contacted him stating that Beaufort County Council will be meeting soon to review the Town's responses and forward a revised resolution for Council to consider. Mr. Orlando stated he is also working on edits to incorporate Council's concerns and wants. He said the key is for him to wait and review the changes made by the County so he can make his suggested changes. Members of council proceeded to provide their input regarding reimbursement to the Public Services District for pipeline relocation and funding for Stoney, as well as engineering costs being deducted from their funding that they were unaware of. Also, there was discussion of the number and size of the lanes on the bridge.

Mr. Brown suggested coordinating an additional joint meeting with the two Councils. It was also suggested that Council add this item to their workshop planned for February 25, 2025.

It was requested that the Mayor reach out to Chair Howard of the Beaufort County Council asking her to delay any vote on this subject until Hilton Head Island Town Council has more opportunity to exchange ideas and perhaps come to a consensus. Mayor Perry stated he would definitely reach out to her and make that request.

Board of Zoning Appeals Annual Report - Kathryn Bayless, Board Vice - Chair

Ms. Bayless addressed Council stating the Board of Zoning Appeals met three times in 2024 and heard four variance requests, no appeal requests and no special exception requests. She reviewed the variance requests and stated three of them were approved by a vote of 4-2 and the fourth was denied by a vote of 6-0.

Ms. Bayless stated they were provided with an update on the Land Management Ordinance Rewrite and an update regarding the approved Floor Area Ratio Amendment to the Forest Beach Neighborhood Character Overlay. She added that the Board was provided with a one hour continuing education course entitled Floodplain Management for Local Elected Officials.

Ms. Bayless, on behalf of the entire Board, extended appreciation to staff for it's professionalism and assistance provided.

Planning Commission Annual Report - Bruce Siebold, Board Chair

Mr. Siebold addressed Council stating the Commission conducted ten meetings during the year to recommend and consider the following: a recommended amendment to the comprehensive plan to include housing impact analysis; recommended priority projects for the fiscal year 2025 capital improvement program, which included some modifications in the Spanish Wells and Jonesville areas; a recommended amendment to the Land Management Ordinance concerning the floor area ratios in the Forest Beach Neighborhood Character Overlay District.

Mr. Siebold explained the Commission reviewed and made recommendations on four public projects for your consideration. He added that at the request of Hilton Head Fire Rescue, the Commission named seven streets so to provide exact locations when they are responding to emergencies. They reviewed three major development plans proposed for the island.

Mr. Siebold stated that looking ahead, the Commission has been actively participating in the recent community engagement events that the Town has been conducting as they are getting ready to engage in the district planning process. He unfirmed Council the Commission will begin considering the first of ten priority amendments to the Land Management Ordinance in advance of the complete rewrite next year.

Mr. Siebold stated it is the Commission's intent to be a helpful resource to Town Council, and they hope Council will let them know if there are additional ways they could offer support.

General Reports from Town Council

None.

Report of the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study – Councilmember Tamara Becker

No report.

Report of the Lowcountry Council of Governments – Councilmember Steve Alfred

No report.

Report of the Beaufort County Airports Board – Councilmember Melinda Tunner

No report.

Report of the Southern Lowcountry Regional Board – Councilmember Patsy Brison

No report.

Report of the Island Recreation Association Board – Mayor Pro Tempore Alex Brown

Mr. Brown stated the Island Recreation Center is reporting there are over 40 teams, in youth basketball and they had a successful swim lesson program in January offering both water babies and general beginner lessons inside the dome.

He reported senior fitness programs are full-fitness classes at rec center and they are busy and outdoor rec is offering afterschool program this spring at the sailing and rowing center.

He informed Council Wing Fest is going to be Saturday, March 22nd. And lastly, the Snow Day for 2025 was canceled due to the snow.

Report of the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation - Mayor Alan Perry

Mayor Perry reported the Development Corporation held their converged meeting in January and there is another meeting this Thursday.

Report of the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation - Mayor Pro Tempore Alex Brown

Mr. Brown stated the CDC has employed the Executive Director, Mr. Boxley, to, move forward with a use of technology that will help continue to identify Historic Gullah Neighborhoods through their cultural assets. He stated some places and spaces within the Gullah Community are no longer standing, but they want to make sure that they are remembered and there is the opportunity to do that through technology. The CDC has engaged a vendor to move forward with that process.

Mr. Brown explained that one of the important factors of doing such an exercise was to make sure that the youth of our community were involved as well. So, there's been an internship program that has launched with this. Youth are helping to build this virtual experience that you will see very soon because the beta testing is happening as we at this time they are looking for a go live in March of 2025.

Report of the Community Services and Public Safety Committee – Councilmember Tamara Becker

Ms. Becker reported the Committee met last week and held open dialogue, and the Committee looks forward to future meetings and continuing in that same manner. She encouraged all to attend for any discussion that they are interested in talking about and for the Committee will listen and hopefully find some answers and solutions for the Community.

Ms. Becker added there are a number of openings on our boards and commissions, and applications are being accepted at this time. Ms. Becker encouraged everyone who is interested in filling out an application and submit it as soon as possible.

Ms. Becker stated the Committee will be meeting in the coming months to conduct interviews and make appointments.

Report of the Finance and Administrative Committee – Mayor Pro Tempore Alex Brown
New Business

No report.

Consideration of an Ordinance of the Town of Hilton Head Island Amending, § 10-2-10, Et Seq., Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (1983), Short-Term Rentals, to Add Additional Requirements for Occupancy, Fire and Safety Alarms and Equipment, Parking of Vehicles, Enforcement, Fines, Definitions and Other Text Amendments, and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date - First Reading - Shawn Leininger, Assistant Town Manager

Mr. Leininger stated that on May 17, 2022, Town Council adopted a Short-Term Rental Ordinance to address the impacts of short-term rentals on neighborhoods by establishing expectations for their management and operation, specifically regarding safety, trash, noise, and parking. Implementation of the Ordinance began by establishing an operational program for administration of the Ordinance. This included securing necessary software and equipment; recruiting, hiring, and training new employees; creating and testing application and complaint portals; and creating and executing an education and communications plan.

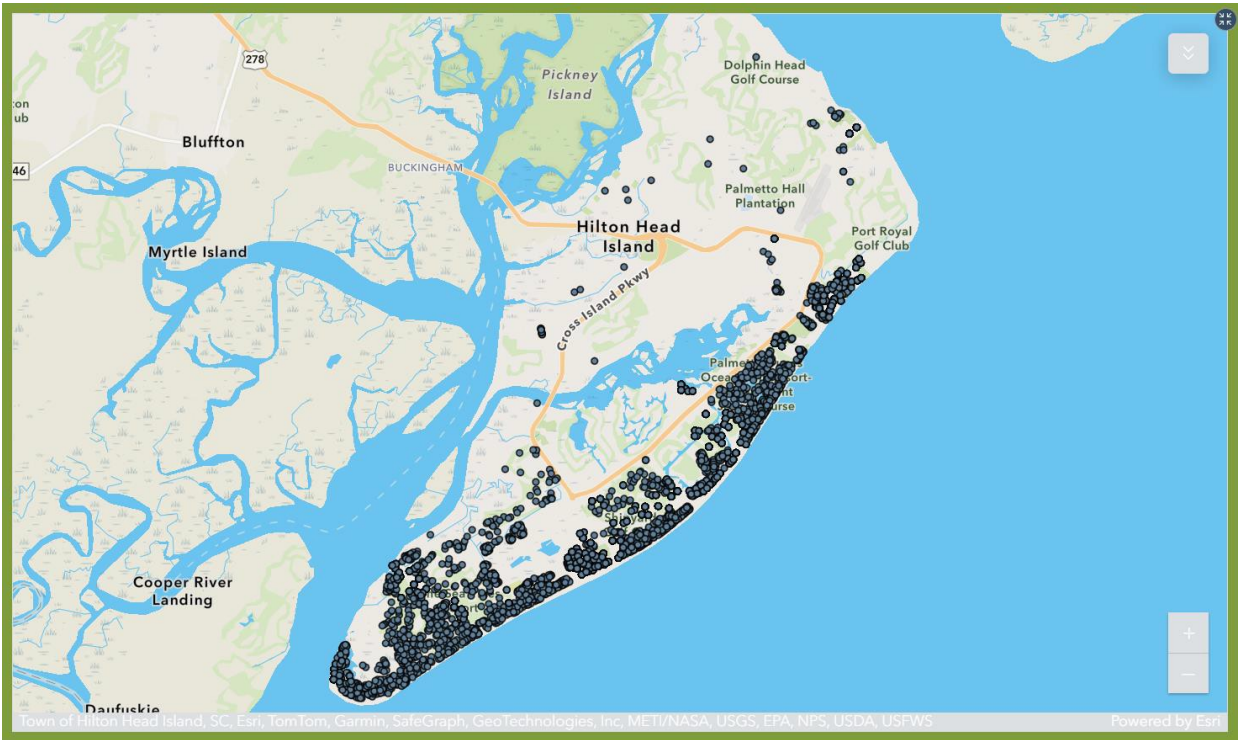
The effective date of the Short-Term Rental Ordinance began January 1, 2023, and is handled by the Town's Revenue Services Division and Public Safety Department who work proactively to educate owners, agents, and renters of the requirements and enforce compliance.

Pursuit of Excellence is a focus area in the adopted Town Council 2023-2025 Strategic Action Plan. In fulfillment of this focus area, Strategy #12 Short-Term Rental Assessment and Program Implementation states the Town will:

“Conduct a short-term rental program assessment that evaluates the short-term rental program effectiveness on addressing the negative impacts to neighborhoods including environmental impacts, demands on Fire and Rescue services, impacts to public utilities and infrastructure, and impacts of land use intensity. Program assessment will include data on the volume, location, type, and size of short-term rentals on Hilton Head Island in order to better understand, plan, and manage short-term rentals, and to determine if further regulation is necessary.”

On September 16 and 24, 2024, Town Council held workshops to review numerous priority amendments to the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) and Municipal Code that seek to address important and urgent issues in advance of a full LMO Overhaul. This review included an assessment and proposed amendment to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance to address parking, occupancy, and enforcement and fee regulations.

As of January 31, 2025, the Town has 7,112 short-term rental permits. These permits are located generally in proximity to the island’s beaches and are depicted on the following map.



The properties subject to these permits range in size from studio units to ten (10) bedroom homes and are more specifically described in the table below:

**Short-Term Rental Permits - Summary of Key
Data January 31, 2025**

Number of Bedrooms	Number of Permits	Percent of Total Permits	Reported Average Square Feet	Reported Average Max Occupancy
Studio	12	0.2%	533	3
1	1,037	14.6%	652	4
2	3,033	42.6%	1,146	6
3	1,444	20.3%	1,762	8
4	720	10.1%	2,593	10
5	397	5.6%	3,527	13
6	311	4.4%	4,216	17
7	120	1.7%	4,984	19
8	26	0.4%	5,202	22
9	7	0.1%	5,589	22
10	5	0.1%	4,235	23
Total	7,112	100.0%		

The Public Safety Department responds to complaints regarding short-term rentals. Complaints are related to the trash, noise, parking, and permit status. In 2024, the Public Safety Department responded to 272 complaints. Additional details on the type of complaint and how it was resolved can be found below.

**Short-Term Rental Code Enforcement Violations
January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024**

Issue	Verbal	Written	No Violation	Citation	Total
Trash	31	1	2	0	34
Noise	86	4	38	0	128
Parking	66	20	14	0	100
Permit	4	3	0	3	10
Total	187	28	54	3	272

The Fire Rescue Department began mandatory reporting of short-term rental emergency response calls in September 2024. In the period beginning September 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024, the Fire Rescue Department responded to 47 EMS calls and 117 fire calls (164 total calls) at short-term properties.

In addition to analysis of short-term rental permit data, Town staff held meetings and discussions with Town Council, members of the public, and representatives of the short-term rental industry. This assessment of the short-term rental program resulted in the following key findings

1. Need the ability to manage property owners who violate short-term rental regulations through escalating fines instead of criminal charges;
2. Need the ability to manage property owners who operate a short-term rental property without a valid permit with fines that are greater than the cost of a permit;
3. Short-term rental properties and over occupancy can inconvenience permanent residents who have expressed concerns about parking, noise pollution, trash

- collection, and other consequences;
- 4. High occupancy homes do not have adequate fire safety mechanisms; and
- 5. Homes are being built for the purpose of short-term rental resulting in structures that are out of scale and context with existing neighborhoods.

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP:

At a workshop held on September 16, 2024, Town staff shared the assessment of the short-term rental program and Town Council provided the following comments as it is related to potential amendments.

1. *Parking and Enforcement*
 - a. Parking is a critical issue.
 - b. Address parking regulations specifically within the Short-Term Rental Ordinance.
 - c. There needs to be limits on the number of vehicles associated with a short-term rental.
 - d. It needs to be clear where vehicles can and cannot park.
2. *Occupancy*
 - a. Define occupancy clearly for consistent regulation and enforcement.
 - b. Consider if the size of the home should be factored into occupancy regulations.
 - c. Occupancy enforcement presents challenges.
3. *Fire Safety*
 - a. Ensure adequate fire safety measures are required in short-term rentals.
 - b. For larger homes (3,600 square feet or greater), require monitored automatic smoke detection systems with manual fire alarms.
4. *Short-Term Rental Permits and Regulations*
 - a. Increase the short-term rental permit fee based on the number of bedrooms in the property.
 - b. Require short-term rental owners and agents communicate key regulations during the rental process and at time of occupancy.
5. *Compliance, Fines, and Penalties*
 - a. Allow for administrative citations as a tool to penalize and remedy violations.
 - b. Establish a clear directive for escalating fines based on the number of offenses.
 - c. Maintain ability to suspend or revoke permits for repeat offenders.
 - d. Consider a municipal court to handle short-term rental related issues.
 - e. Continue to enhance the Town relationship with gated communities to support enforcement of short-term rental regulations.
6. *Implementation*
 - a. Provide additional time for existing short-term rentals to comply with new regulations, while ensuring new short-term rentals are compliant at the time of permit issuance.
7. *Balance Business and Community Needs*

- a. Strive for a balance between maintaining the island's character and supporting business practices related to short-term rentals.

PROPOSED AMENDED ORDINANCE:

The proposed amendments generally include:

1. Grammatical and clarity of language clean-ups to help support understanding and readability;
2. Key definition additions and refinements that support the existing and proposed regulatory framework;
3. Requirement that owners must be compliant and current on all licenses, permits, fees, taxes, fines, and other materials;
4. For short-term rental properties 3,600 square feet and more, a monitored automatic smoke detection system and manual fire alarm must be installed;
5. Any exterior gas grill must be equipped with an automatic shut-off timer;
6. The short-term rental permit number must be included in any advertisement for the property;
7. Establish a maximum occupancy based on the number of bedrooms to which the short-term rental property can be rented;
8. Require that the location of parking be identified and not allow more than six (6) vehicles to be parked on the property;
9. Prohibit vehicles from being parked off-site, on-street and access easements, in a required buffer, or any unimproved surface; and
10. Establish a procedure to issue administrative citations and appeal process.

Below is a section-by-section summary of the proposed ordinance and what it intends to accomplish and regulate:

1. *Purpose and Intent (Sec. 10-2-10)*. The ordinance aims to:
 - a. To regulate privately owned residential properties rented to transient occupants for less than 30 consecutive days.
 - b. Focus on promoting the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors.
 - c. Minimize potential adverse effects on surrounding neighborhoods.
 - d. Clarify that this ordinance does not apply to hotels, motels, or other similar uses.
2. *Definitions (Sec. 10-2-20)*. Key definitions (paraphrased) include:
 - a. Agent: An individual authorized to act on behalf of an owner for a short-term rental property.
 - b. Bedroom: A designated sleeping area meeting safety code requirements.
 - c. Maximum Occupancy: The maximum number of occupants for which a short-term rental property can be rented.
 - d. Owner: Any individual or entity owning one or more short-term rental properties.
 - e. Short-Term Rental: Rentals of residential property for periods of less than thirty (30) consecutive days.
 - f. Short-Term Rental Permit: An annual permit required for short-term rental operation.
 - g. Short-Term Rental Tenant: Individuals occupying a short-term rental property.

- h. Official: The Town Manager's designated officer for short-term rental administration and enforcement.
 - i. Written Notice: Legal notices provided in writing or electronically per short-term rental regulations.
3. *Permit Requirements (Sec. 10-2-30)*. Owners must obtain a short-term rental permit to advertise, offer, or operate short-term rental properties. Permit requirements include:
- a. Validity from January 1 to December 31.
 - b. Non-transferrable and non-refundable permits.
 - c. Notification of any changes to contact information.
 - d. Submission of an application form, including a site plan for single-family residences.
 - e. Review by the designated Official to ensure compliance.
 - f. Penalties for false or inaccurate information.
4. *Licenses, Fees, and Taxes (Sec. 10-2-40)*. To operate short-term rental properties, owners must:
- a. Maintain a valid short-term rental permit and business license.
 - b. Pay all applicable fees and taxes, including sales, use, and ad valorem taxes.
 - c. Address any delinquent fees, with payment plans and penalty waivers authorized by the Official.
5. *Operational Regulations (Sec. 10-2-50)*
- a. General Regulations. Owners or Agents must:
 - i. Be available during rentals to respond to complaints within one (1) hour.
 - ii. Display contact information and safety notices prominently.
 - iii. Maintain operable smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.
 - iv. Install monitored fire alarm systems for properties with 3,600 square feet or more of finished space.
 - v. Equip exterior gas-fired grills with automatic shut-off timers.
 - vi. Ensure unobstructed escape routes and safety notices for pools and hot tubs.
 - vii. Display the short-term rental permit number in advertisements.
 - b. Occupancy Regulations. Occupancy limits are determined by using the average occupancy of short-term rental properties as reported on over 7,000 short-term rental permits collected over two (2) years:

Number of Bedrooms	Maximum Occupancy
Studio	3
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	13
6	17

7	19
8	22
9	22
10	23

c. Noise Regulations. Owners or Agents must:

- i. Display noise regulations prominently.
- ii. Notify prospective short-term rental tenants of noise regulations before agreements are made.
- iii. Ensure compliance with Town noise regulations, including nighttime hours from 10:01 p.m. to 6:59 a.m.

6. *Compliance and Enforcement (Sec. 10-2-60)*. To ensure adherence to short-term rental regulations, the Town will:

- a. Monitor compliance through permit reviews and code enforcement inspections.
- b. Issue administrative citations for violations with fines beginning at \$500 for the first offense and \$1,000 for each subsequent offense. Retain the ability to issue remedies allowed by the Municipal Code.
- c. Suspend or revoke permits for non-compliance.

ANALYSIS:

These proposed amendments aim to balance the growing popularity of short-term rentals with the needs and quality of life of residents, providing a framework for responsibility, protection of quality of life, enforcement, and compliance while supporting a vital industry in our community.

In addition to limiting the number of vehicles associated with a short-term rental, there are two key elements of the proposed amendments that will impact short-term rental properties. The first is the requirement for all owners of short-term rental properties 3,600 square feet or greater to provide a monitored automatic smoke detection system and manual fire alarm. Existing building and fire codes do not require the kind of safety equipment that is necessary in structures where:

1. There is high occupancy;
2. The occupants are unfamiliar with the structure and the exit routes in the case of an emergency; and
3. There is a need for monitored fire and smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and alarm systems over and above what the building and fire codes require for a residential structure.

Evidence of the need for this requirement is provided by having one death and one rescue in a short-term rental property resulting from a fire. This will result in large, high occupancy having an interconnected and monitored smoke detection and fire alarm system. A total of 577 properties or 8.1% of all short-term rental properties will be impacted by this requirement and required to install the required system for issuance of future short-term rental permits. Additional details can be found on the table below.

Short-Term Rental Permits - Fire Safety Analysis January 31, 2025

Number of Bedrooms	Number of Permits	Reported Average Square Feet	Number of Properties 3,600 Square Feet or Greater	Percent of Bedroom Category	Percent of Total Permits
Studio	12	533	0	0.0%	0.0%
1	1,037	652	0	0.0%	0.0%
2	3,033	1,146	1	0.0%	0.0%
3	1,444	1,762	1	0.1%	0.0%
4	720	2,593	57	7.9%	0.8%
5	397	3,527	166	41.8%	2.3%
6	311	4,216	209	67.2%	2.9%
7	120	4,984	110	91.7%	1.5%
8	26	5,202	23	88.5%	0.3%
9	7	5,589	6	85.7%	0.1%
10	5	4,235	4	80.0%	0.1%
Total	7,112		5778.1		8.1%

The second is the establishment of a maximum occupancy requirement. A total of 1,851 or 26% of short-term rental permits exceed the prescribed maximum occupancy limits. Short-term rental permits can continue to be issued for these properties provided the maximum occupancy limits are met as prescribed in the proposed ordinance. Additional details can be found on the table below.

Short-Term Rental Permits - Maximum Occupancy Analysis January 31, 2025

Number of Bedrooms	Number of Permits	Maximum Occupancy	Number of Properties Exceeding Max Occupancy	Percent of Bedroom Category	Percent of Total Permits
Studio	12	3	5	41.7%	0.1%
1	1,037	4	344	33.2%	4.8%
2	3,033	6	609	20.1%	8.6%
3	1,444	8	275	19.0%	3.9%
4	720	10	238	33.1%	3.3%
5	397	13	189	47.6%	2.7%
6	311	17	113	36.3%	1.6%
7	120	19	58	48.3%	0.8%
8	26	22	14	53.8%	0.2%
9	7	22	4	57.1%	0.1%
10	5	23	2	40.0%	0.0%
Total	7,112		1,851		26.0%

Given these proposed changes, the fact that many rental agreements have been entered into for 2024, and the need to communicate and prepare for the implementation of these changes, **these amendments, if adopted, will go into effect on January 1, 2026.**

NEXT STEPS:

If adopted by Town Council, Town staff will submit short-term rental permit fee increases as part of the FY26 budget. These fees were discussed and supported by Town Council at the September 16, 2024, workshop and include the following:

1. \$250 for studio – four (4) bedrooms;

2. \$1,000 for five (5) – seven (7) bedrooms; and
3. \$2,500 for eight (8) – ten (10) or more bedrooms.

More immediately, Town staff will implement a communication strategy with short-term rental permit owners and agents to prepare for the 2026 permit cycle that begins on January 1, 2026.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Dru Brown addressed Council stating the proposed changes to the ordinance have mixed reviews with some good and some not so good. He expressed concern with homeowners having to pay for the cost of upgrading the items and increased fees for the permits. He stated they may not be full-time residents, but they are homeowners.

Robert Guthrie addressed Council stating the Town should reach out to property management companies for input. He added that he is called constantly regarding the lack of trash pick-up. He suggested the trash collectors should be the ones that are contacted. Mr. Guthrie stated no one is enforcing the non-compliance with parking. He stated the renter should always receive the citation, not the owner. He concluded stating that with 7,000 permits issued there are probably 4,000 to 5,000 people not complying and the Town should go after them first.

Elizabeth Petro addressed Council stating the parking requirement is not enforceable and the occupancy is listed on the rental and if it is violated the renter should be fined, not the owner. She questioned the expectations of the fire alarm requirement and noted the formula for occupancy is not clear.

Christopher Cliffe addressed Council and congratulated staff on their excellent work on the short-term rental program. He emphasized the fine line between the economic issue and the quality of life issue. He inquired as to how Council proposes involving the public before approving a joint resolution with the County regarding the bridge project. He emphasized the importance for Council to seek a traffic bridge solution and trying to sustain the 120 million dollar grant from the State Infrastructure Bank is secondary.

Richard Ross addressed Council stating the ordinance needs to have a mechanism to fairly enforce the rules and have an application of the enforcement for all concerned. He stated the violator is the one that needs to be fined.

Mr. Brown moved to approve. Mr. Alfred seconded.

Members of Council had questions, comments and discussion regarding: clarification who actually receives the fine; confirmation that the tenant receives a Municipal Summons Citation for violations regarding noise and parking and the owner gets an Administrative Citation to make the owner aware so they know the citation exists which allows accountability; a confirmation meetings were held with property managers; confirmation input as provided and utilized when creating the ordinance; confirmation average occupancy and parking were considered when calculating recommendations' a suggestion the deposit should be utilized when properties are cited; concern of number of public safety calls placed from September, 2024 to December, 2024; inquiry as to how to expedite safety requirements before January, 2026; confirmation short-term rental units are required to have smoke detectors; inquiry in regards to the

delineation of square footage in requirements for fire alarm units; the need for inspections of all short-term rental units no matter the size; clarification shut off adapter are required for gas grills; suggestion for the need for an Island-wide inspection program for all short-term rental units; inquiry in to accelerating the deadline for parking requirements; clarification if the implementation date is effective immediately, the permits issued through December, 2025 would be considered invalid which is not acceptable; inquiry as to whether any new applicants going forward would have to comply with the changes immediately; suggestion to consideration of changing effective date and enforcement standards on second reading; confirmation of definition of approved parking spaces; the need for cooperation and communication between short-term rental communities and the Town; the need for quality of life for residents and visitors alike; and the need for a better process of collecting data.

Mr. Brown moved to amend his motion to move forward with the amendments as proposed and address effective date and enforcement at 2nd reading. Mr. Alfred seconded the amended motion.

Further discussion took place by Council encompassing all of the items discussed listed above.

Ms. Becker moved to amend the motion to add that the updated Fire Code would apply to all permitted units. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Brown requested that Mayor Perry call for a vote on the motion as amended. Mayor Perry called for the vote. Amended motion failed 3-4 (Tunner, Perry, Becker and DeSimone opposed).

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Sally Lippmann addressed Council in support of Sandalwood. She stated they have developed a community that benefits many and she encouraged Council to assist Sandalwood in obtaining funding by extending their lease with two five year additions.

Executive Session

Discussion of Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements and Discussions for the Proposed Sale or Purchase of Property [Pursuant to South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 (a)(2)] related to:

1. Squire Pope Road
2. Pembroke Drive

Discussion of Legal Advice from the Town Attorney on Matters Covered Under the Attorney- Client Privilege (Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act Section 30-4-70 [a]) related to:

1. Project located on Main Street, also known as Diamond Cove
2. Property located on Summit Drive

Action from Executive Session Adjournment

Mr. Orlando stated the need for an executive session for the reasons listed above.

At 6:07 p.m. Ms. Brison moved to enter into Executive Session for the reasons cited

by the Town Manager. Ms. Tunner seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

At 7:02 p.m. Mr. Brown moved to come out of Executive Session. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

There was no action taken as a result of Executive Session.

Adjournment

Ms. Brison moved to adjourn. Ms. Becker seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov



Town of Hilton Head Island TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 1:00 PM Minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Perry called the workshop to order at 1:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Alan Perry, Mayor, Alex Brown, Ward 1, Mayor Pro-Tempore (Mr. Brown had to leave the meeting at 2:48 p.m.); Patsy Brison, Ward 2; Steve DeSimone, Ward 3, Tammy Becker, Ward 4; Steve Alfred, Ward 5; Melinda Tunner Ward 6

Also present: Marc Orlando, Town Manager; Kim Gammon; Town Clerk; Curtis Coltrane, Town Attorney; Frannie Heizer, Burr & Forman Law Firm; Chris Creed, P. E., Foth Olsen

Adoption of the Agenda

moved to approve. seconded. Motion carried 7-0.

Beach Renourishment Project Overview

Shawn Leininger conducted a presentation regarding the project. He stated the presentation would be done in two segments with one being a project update that he will conduct and the other being funding options which Adriana Burnett will conduct.

Mr. Leininger explained this is in follow-up to the October 30, 2024, Town Council Workshop, where Town Council reviewed and discussed the project scope and requested more information related to the funding options for the project.

As shown in the presentation, the following items were discussed.

1. **Beach Renourishment Project Update:**
 - a. Project Overview, Scope, Status & Schedule

Overview:

The proposed project will include:

The project is being implemented per the Town's Beach Management Plan with scheduled renourishment every 8 to 10 years.

Placement of approximately 2.2 million cubic yards of sand, and

Installation of six rip-rap breakwaters on the Port Royal Sound shoreline at Pine Island

The sand will be sourced from up to four nearby borrow areas located roughly 3 to 8 miles offshore

Disruptions at individual properties generally last one week or less as the moving operation progresses

Once the operation is up and running, the project will advance along the beach at a rate of 200 to 300 feet/day

The project schedule was developed to avoid significant impacts to nesting turtles and migratory shorebirds, including piping plovers and red knots.

Construction windows are set by US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Scope:

Permit 1 (Approved February 21, 2025)

South Beach: place 750,000 cubic yards of sand

Central Atlantic: place 700,000 cubic yards of sand

The Heel/Port Royal: place 500,000 cubic yards of sand

Fish Haul: place 50,000 cubic yards of sand

Permit 2 (Pending Approval)

Pine Island: place 200,000 cubic yards of sand

Pine Island: install 6 breakwater structures to mitigate sand erosion

Permit Requirement: Dog Restricted Area

Per a requirement of permit from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Town must amend its municipal code to restrict dog activity adjacent to Fish Haul Creek.

No other beach areas will be affected.

Seeks to protect endangered shorebird species who migrate and nest in an area about the size of three football fields.

Dogs can be disruptive to this habitat.

Restriction will go into effect upon adoption of the amended municipal code.

The area will be marked with signage.

Project Status & Schedule:

US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion (BO)

Issued on August 8, 2024

Included in State Permit Terms and Conditions

Permit is currently being reviewed by the State and USACE

Project Schedule

Preconstruction

Bid Phase: March – April 2025

Contract Awards: May 1, 2025

Amend Beach Park Rules: April – May 2025

Construction (3 Phases)

Phase 1 (Renourishment): Summer 2025 to Oct 2025

Sand placement on the Island's north end

Phase 2 (Renourishment): Sept/Oct 2025 to May 2026

Sand placement on south beach and central island

Phase 3 (Breakwater Structures): To Be Determined

Rock breakwater structures at Pine Island

b. Communication Plan Update

Plan Goals:

Create widespread awareness and engagement related to the project.
Share timely information about the projects prior to and throughout each phase.

Target audiences include:

- Island residents and visitors
- The Chamber of Commerce and business owners
- HOAs and property management firms
- Partner groups (Shore Beach Services, Island Rec, and others)
- School Groups
- Environmental Groups
- Media

Outreach will be managed by the Communications Team:

- social media,
- website updates,
- news releases,
- and interactive, real-time mapping during implementation.

Mr. Leininger concluded his segment of the presentation and asked for questions from Council.

Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: inquiry as to Fiush Haul or Port Royal will be addressed first and confirmation it will be up to the contractor; inquiry as to the \$3 million dollar amount predicted for Phase 3 and confirmation it is an order of magnitude for estimates; inquiry as to whether there is a contingency plan and confirmation there could be disruptions that will need reassessed at the time and amendments to the permits will be required; inquiry regarding the timing of the assessment of migrating birds and inquiry as to whether the decision of disallowing dogs in the restricted area can be reassessed; confirmation this is a migrating area for piping plovers and the existence of a deep data base of known activities regarding the piping plovers; confirmation the decision to restrict dogs in that specific area was a long established goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service but they are very reasonable with their requirements; confirmation that predictions of future requirements is difficult to determine; clarification on the number of permits needed which is two; confirmation of timing on Pine Island and it will be part of Phase 1; confirmation bids can go out before the permit is received; confirmation that the amendment to the Municipal Code needs to come forward to Council in April with approval in May; confirmation this process is standard; inquiry into Phase 2 of construction and confirmation the construction will be complete by January or February of 2026; and clarification that by letting the contractor choose areas to work on should be favorable in the results on the bids.

Ms. Burnett began her segment of the presentation providing the following information:

2. **Finance Current Financial Outlook:**
 - a. Current Fund Balances as of 1/31/25
 - b. Investment Interest Income Received for Prior Years
 - c. Current Debt Balance
3. **Finance Funding Options:**
 - Major Topics

- Measures of the Town of Hilton Head Island's Financial Strength
- Fund Balances Available to Fund Beach Renourishment Project
- Interest Income by Year
- Annual Debt Service by Source of Payment (graphic / table representation)
- Town of Hilton Head Island's High Current Bond Ratings Reflect Our Financial Strength
- Beach Preservation Fee Revenue as a Source of Funding
- Town of Hilton Head Island Debt Options: General Obligation Vs. Special Obligation Bonds
- Beach Preservation (Special Obligation) Fee-Backed Debt Service Payments; \$10,975,000 in Principal Remaining
- Annual Beach Preservation Fee Collections Far Exceed Annual Debt Payments
- Beach Preservation Fund Cash Balances Have Grown Steadily Since FY2017
- FY2026 Beach Renourishment Project Funding Options
- Items to Consider Since the October 30th Town Council Workshop
- Potential Beach Preservations Fee-Backed Debt Issuance Options to Fund FY2026 Project
- Key Outcomes for Each Option
 - a. Cash Option – 100% Cash Funding
 - b. Debt Option – 100% Debt Funding
 - c. Hybrid Option – Partial Cash with Debt Financing

NEXT STEPS:

The following are the next steps related to the project:

1. Coordinate with the State and the US Army Corps of Engineers to obtain project permits.
2. Successfully bid and award the project for implementation during the summer of 2025.
3. Update the Project Funding Options Model with final cost estimates to provide Town Council with recommendations.
4. Continue implementation of a robust and comprehensive communications plan.

Beach Renourishment Funding Strategy

Items to consider from the October 30th Town Council Workshop:

Overall construction industry costs are expected to continue upward, thus estimated project costs range from \$42.5 million to \$48.5 million.

During FY2006, Town Council passed a Beach Preservation Fund Reserve Ordinance to maintain a \$12 million minimum balance.

1-10 year Tax-exempt borrowing rates have increased 20-30 basis points since 10/30/24.

The Town, as of August 1, 2025, has the option to redeem callable bond principal payments (FY2027: \$3.655M; FY2028: \$3.84M) with funds from Beach Preservation Fund and/or other sources.

Proposed Carry Forward of approved Beach Renourishment Project costs of \$14.5M to the FY2026 Budget



Potential Beach Preservation Fee - Backed Debt Issuance Options to Fund FY2026 Project

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
	All Cash	Cash/Debt Mix	All Debt
<u>FY2025</u>			
Approximate Cash Balance as of June 30, 2024	\$ 39,000,000	\$ 39,000,000	\$ 39,000,000
Expected Revenues FY25	\$ 13,800,000	\$ 13,800,000	\$ 13,800,000
Budgeted Non-Beach Renourishment CIP & Operating Expense FY25	\$ (6,500,000)	\$ (6,500,000)	\$ (6,500,000)
Estimated Beach Renourishment CIP FY25	\$ (2,000,000)	\$ (2,000,000)	\$ (2,000,000)
Projected Balance as of June 30, 2025	\$ 44,300,000	\$ 44,300,000	\$ 44,300,000
<u>FY2026</u>			
Expected Revenues FY26	\$ 13,800,000	\$ 13,800,000	\$ 13,800,000
FEMA Past Storms Reimbursement Grants (80% of Anticipated Payments)	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 7,000,000
Budgeted Non-Beach Renourishment CIP & Operating Expense FY25	\$ (6,500,000)	\$ (6,500,000)	\$ (6,500,000)
Remaining FY26 Series 2017 Debt Service Payments (payable 8/1/25 & 2/1/26)	\$ (3,941,750)	\$ (3,941,750)	\$ (3,941,750)
Cash Payment to Call 8/1/27 & 8/1/28 Principal Payments	\$ (7,495,000)	\$ (7,495,000)	\$ (7,495,000)
Proceeds from potential August 2025 Bond Issue to pay for Capital Projects*	\$ -	\$ 26,000,000*	\$ 48,500,000*
Budgeted Beach Renourishment CIP FY26	\$ (46,500,000)	\$ (46,500,000)	\$ (46,500,000)
Projected Balance as of June 30, 2026***	\$ 663,250 **	\$ 26,663,250	\$ 49,163,250
*Potential FY2026 Bond Issuance would be paid back via Level Debt Service Payments for 10 years (with an 8-year call) with principal payback beginning approximately Aug, 2026 (FY 2027): Option 2: \$3,100,000 per Year; Option 3: \$5,800,000 per Year.			
**Would require town ordinance to allow balance under \$12M.			
***Projected Balances do not include potential additional interest earnings on unused cash balances associated with Options 2 & 3.			



Key Outcomes for Each Option

	Option 1 - All Cash	Option 2 - Hybrid	Option 3 - All Debt
Projected Cash Balance on 6/30/2026	\$697,250 (well below \$12 million minimum balance)	\$26,697,250	\$49,197,250
Estimated Annual Debt Service Payments FY2027 -2036	\$0	\$3,100,000 (Lower than Current Debt Service)	\$5,800,000 (Higher than Current Debt Service)
Estimated Coverage Ratio*	-	4.48	2.39
Estimated Effect on Bond Ratings	GO- Likely none Beach Preservation Bonds -None	GO –Likely none Beach Preservation Bonds – Potential Upgrade	GO- Likely none Beach Preservation Bonds – Likely none
Natural Disaster Preparedness	Weak, especially in first few years after project completion	Stronger, especially in first few years after project completion	Stronger than Option 2, especially in first few years after project completion
Financing Costs (Tax-exempt)	None	Higher than using cash, though lower than taxable debt	Highest total financing costs, though lower than taxable debt
Spread costs of capital project over useful life of the improvements?	No	Yes, partially	Yes
Investment Income on Remaining Cash Balances & Bond Proceeds (until spent on project)	Very Low	Medium	Highest

*Coverage Ratio = Pledged Revenue/Debt Service Payments

23

Council members made comments, asked questions and had discussion regarding: confirmation of the call date of August 1 for existing bonds; clarification that bonds can be called any time after August 1 with 30 day notice; clarification that interest on the bonds would be pro-rated after August 1; confirmation revenue for the Town spike in 2020 due to COVID; confirmation revenue surpassed debt services; inquiry as to the benefits of the hybrid option; clarification of the need to look at interest rates and rate of return on invested funds to make a

decision; confirmation there are restrictions on uses for certain funds; a suggestion the conservative approach would be the hybrid option due to uncertainty in what nature will bring forward; inquiry into the need for bonds for other projects; inquiry into what the interest rate would be and what interest and principal payments would be; confirmation bids need to be awarded before actual numbers are used; confirmation that Phase 3 is included in the estimated costs; confirmation the current rate on bonds is around 2%; confirmation the interest rate range for August of 25 is 3.53%; clarification and explanation of installment purchased revenue bonds; clarification that the set aside emergency funds are not included in the available funds; an expression of the full cash funding preference; and the need to have actual contractor costs in order to make a decision.

Mayor Perry asked for public comment.

Amber Kuehn addressed Council regarding sea turtle nesting and what will be required during the beach renourishment as well as her input that she did not get much negative input during past renourishments which is positive.

Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Dee Anthony addressed Council commending the Community Services and Public Safety Committee on their last meeting. She questioned protocol during Town Council meetings and whether Town Council members have a limit on speaking, and she feels it's rude to time how long a Council member speaks.

Ashleigh Phillips addressed Council stating the behavior during meetings is dysfunctional and should be addressed. She challenged Council to ask themselves if they are working to the best of their ability for all the people of Hilton Head Island.

Adjournment

Mayor Perry adjourned the workshop at 3:01 p.m.

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

The recording of this Meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Town Council

TO: Town Council
FROM:
DATE: March 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Town of Hilton Head Island Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) FY25 Metrics Report for Quarters 1 and 2 - Ariana Pernice, Vice President of the Visitor and Convention Bureau

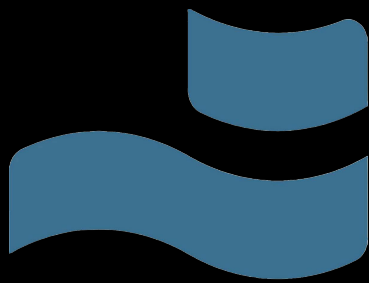
RECOMMENDATION:

SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. HHI FY25-Q2 Report
2. HHI400-2262_HHI FY 2025 Q1 Quarterly Report
3. 2025 0218 Staff memo- FY25 DMO report_Q1Q2 2025-02-20
4. Destination Marketing Plan FY 2024-2025



Hilton Head Island & Bluffton Chamber of Commerce

QUARTERLY REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2025-Q2

OCTOBER 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2024

DESTINATION VALUES

In partnership with the town and in alignment with our community,
our destination's core values support our out-marketing efforts.



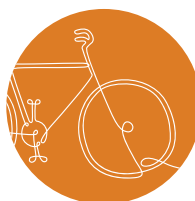
ECOTOURISM



HISTORY



ARTS & CULTURE



RECREATION



WELLNESS

AMERICA'S FAVORITE ESCAPES CAMPAIGN

WHY IT MATTERS

Listening to our partners is a cornerstone of our approach and the America's Favorite Escapes campaign exemplifies our shared commitment to showcasing Hilton Head Island as a premier destination. By highlighting the unique travel opportunities available during our shoulder and off-season months, we aim to inspire potential visitors to discover the island during a time they might not typically consider. This initiative encourages increased visitation and provides significant benefits to local businesses, fostering a thriving community year-round.

Working closely with our hotel & resort partners, the America's Favorite Escapes campaign was launched to promote island visitation during our shoulder months. The multi-channel advertising campaign has proven to be successful in only a few short weeks, leveraging audio, high-impact video, search, and social ad creatives, and is something we will continue to pursue over the coming years.

RESULTS

*Full results will be available at the close of the campaign in March



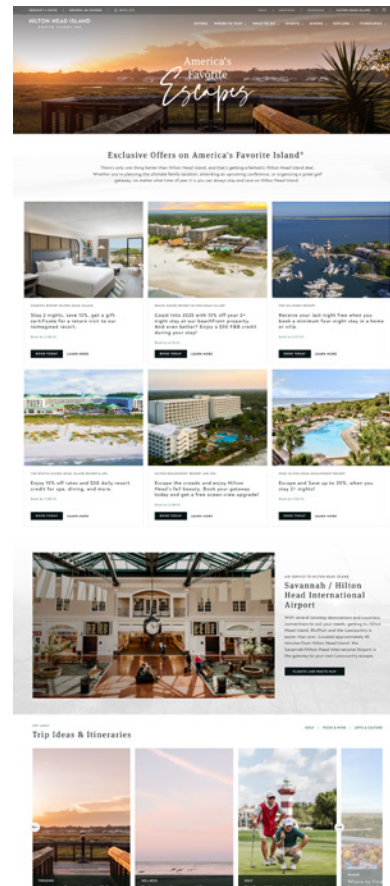
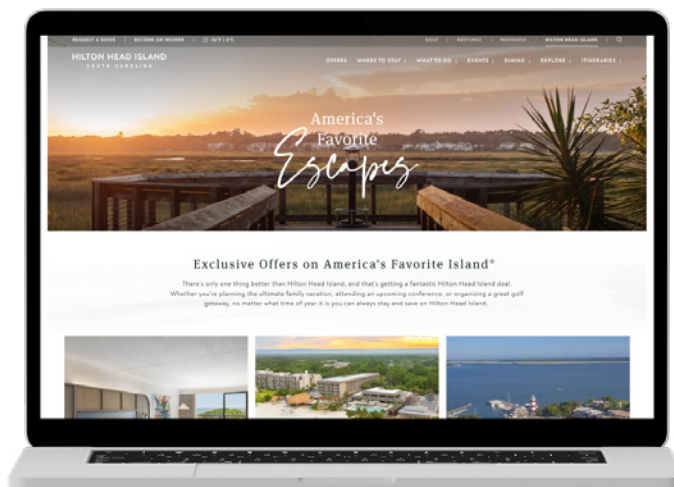
67K
SESSIONS



12K
PARTNER REFERRALS



338K
IMPRESSIONS





WHY IT MATTERS



Aligning the Hilton Head Island brand with top luxury publications and their readership ensures we're consistently creating awareness of the destination amongst our target audience of \$250K+ Household Income, averaging 3 to 4 trips per year.

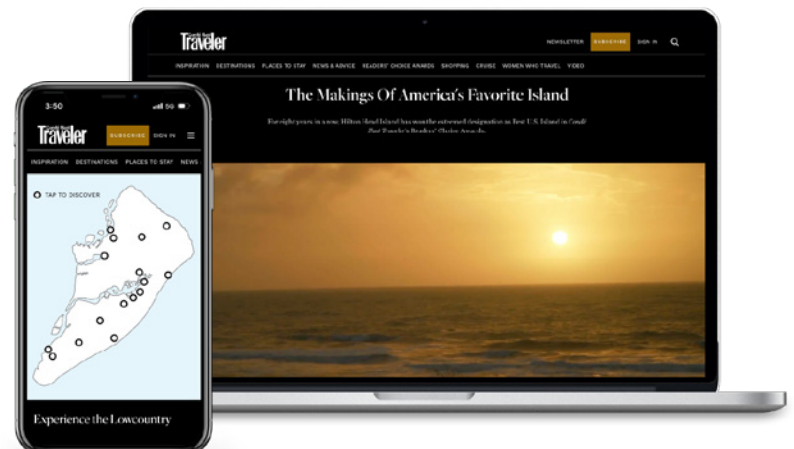


BEST U.S. ISLAND 8 YEARS IN A ROW

For the 8th year in a row, readers of Condé Nast Traveler have voted Hilton Head Island The Best Domestic Island. This year after year recognition celebrates our timeless destination, and solidifies Hilton Head Island as a premier destination in both the U.S. and global markets.



This accolade was promoted in collaboration with Condé Nast Traveler on a strategic media campaign surrounding the November Readers' Choice Awards issue, including print, social, and digital activations and dedicated PR initiatives to showcase what makes Hilton Head Island so special. We proudly claimed the No. 1 spot, surpassing Kiawah Island, SC (No. 2) and Maui, Hawaii (No. 3)—a testament to the unmatched experiences, natural beauty, and hospitality that make Hilton Head Island truly exceptional.



PUBLIC RELATIONS MEDIA COVERAGE

HILTON HEAD ISLAND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024



WHY IT MATTERS



PR builds awareness by showcasing our destination through the voice of national media outlets with substantial reach. This third-party endorsement highlights our island's appeal and commitment to culture and sustainability, inspiring value-driven travelers.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT US



285
MENTIONS



3.46B
IMPRESSIONS



\$4M
AD VALUE

QUARTERLY EARNED MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER

LONELY PLANET (UVPM: 4,478,719)
[2025 BEST IN TRAVEL](#)

WINE ENTHUSIAST
(UVPM: 903,902) [HAVE A VERY
CAFFEINATED CHRISTMAS WITH
EGGNOG ESPRESSO MARTINIS](#)

NOVEMBER

TRAVEL & LEISURE (UVPM:
14,373,688)
[30 BEST BEACHES ON THE EAST
COAST](#)

DECEMBER

HGTV (UVPM: 8,129,017)
[LOWCOUNTRY CHRISTMAS:
STYLE, DESIGN AND TRADITIONS
THAT MAKE THIS REGION
SPECIAL](#)



“ I can look out the window of the store and look across the street and see where my dad was actually born and where my great-grandfather built his home. It's where the store's supposed to be. I love where I am and the meaning of it – the legacy I'm building here.”

– HGTV story featuring Lola Campbell, Native Gullah Islander and owner of Gone Gullah and Binya

DESTINATION OFFICIAL VACATION PLANNER

WHY IT MATTERS

The official Vacation Planner brings our destination into the homes of our visitors, further instilling our core values and key attributes while serving as a planning tool for those looking to travel to Hilton Head Island.



TOTAL PRINTED **80,000**

QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTION **4,500**

DISTRIBUTION TOUCHPOINTS

- Online requests
- Phone inquiries
- Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
- Hilton Head Island Airport
- South Carolina Welcome Centers
- AAA offices nationwide
- Hotel partners
- Tradeshows » Events
- Media

[2024 VACATION PLANNER](#)



DESTINATION WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA



WHY IT MATTERS



The combination of website analytics and social media insights empowers data-driven decision-making, ensuring adaptability and responsiveness to digital out-marketing efforts.

HILTONHEADISLAND.ORG WEBSITE PERFORMANCE



Our primary goal for HiltonHeadIsland.org is driving qualified traffic that translates into tangible results for our partners. While overall website visitation was down for the quarter compared to last year, the traffic we did attract proved far more valuable. This is evidenced by a higher conversion rate to our partners and improved engagement metrics like time on site. Although budget fluctuations can influence overall traffic volume, our focus remains on maximizing the impact of each visitor. This strategic approach is reflected in our partner referral numbers, which remained nearly flat year-over-year despite the reduced overall traffic.

Source: Google Analytics and VERB Interactive

HILTONHEADISLAND.ORG WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

TOP VISITED WEBSITE PAGES

THE HOMEPAGE
63K
SESSIONS

AMERICA'S FAVORITE
ESCAPES
57K
SESSIONS

EVENTS
32K
SESSIONS

CO-OP
29K
SESSIONS

TOP REGIONAL WEBSITE TRAFFIC

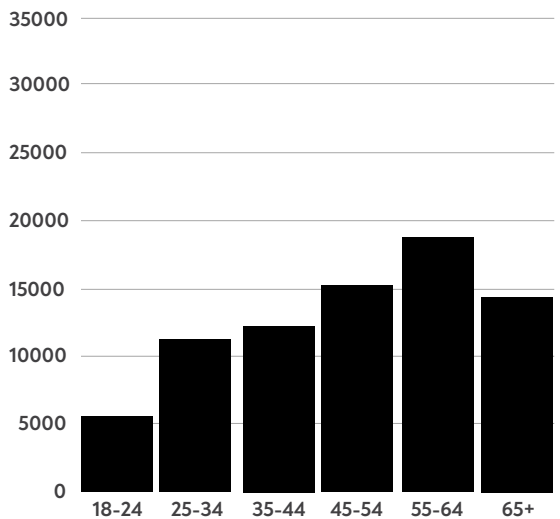
GEORGIA | FLORIDA | NEW YORK | SOUTH CAROLINA | NORTH CAROLINA



WEBSITE DEMOGRAPHICS GENDER AND AGE BREAKDOWN



Based on available data within GA4, we're able to see women made up the largest percentage of visitation, while users within the 55-64 age range visited the website most frequently.



Demographic information is collected based on user-provided data and may be incomplete due to privacy preferences and limitations in data collection.

HILTON HEAD ISLAND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL
SESSIONS

47K

✓ -68% YOY

SOCIAL
REFERRALS

471

^ +20% YOY

SOCIAL TOTAL
AUDIENCE

356K

^ +3% YOY

Our enhanced content strategy has driven a significant year-over-year (YoY) increase in our social media audience. In Q4 2023, we shared 351 posts, which grew to 448 posts in Q4 2024. By prioritizing Instagram, we utilized a diverse mix of reels, carousels, static images, and stories to optimize platform visibility and attract new followers. The shift towards video content has been particularly impactful, as videos consistently generate higher impressions and shares, further expanding our reach.

The YoY growth in social referrals can also be attributed to the strategic use of links in captions and engaging Instagram Stories, which direct users to offers, blogs, and landing pages. Notably, the number of stories increased from 74 last year to 93 this year, boosting engagement and audience interaction.

The decrease in social sessions is due to strategy changes designed to increase the engagement with our audience, and more strategic allocation of dollars pushing users to the site. As evidenced by the YOY increase in partner referrals and total followers, we were able to drive a much more qualified audience to HiltonHeadIsland.org from our social efforts.



HiltonHeadIslandofficial



VisitHiltonHeadSC



VisitHiltonHead



HiltonHeadSC



HiltonHeadSC



VisitHiltonHead

Source: Sprout Social

HILTON HEAD ISLAND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT BREAKDOWN

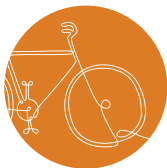
CROSS-CHANNEL TOP PERFORMING POSTS

ORGANIZED BY CONTENT PILLAR



WELLNESS

of Posts: 184
Total Engagements: 63,595
Total Impressions: 941,730



RECREATION

of Posts: 45
Total Engagements: 10,171
Total Impressions: 189,181



ARTS & CULTURE

of Posts: 23
Total Engagements: 4,057
Total Impressions: 72,209



ECOTOURISM

of Posts: 28
Total Engagements: 8,525
Total Impressions: 130,398

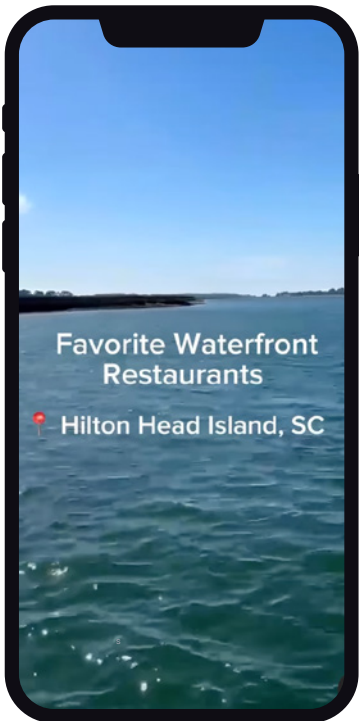


HISTORY

of Posts: 15
Total Engagements: 4,143
Total Impressions: 59,511

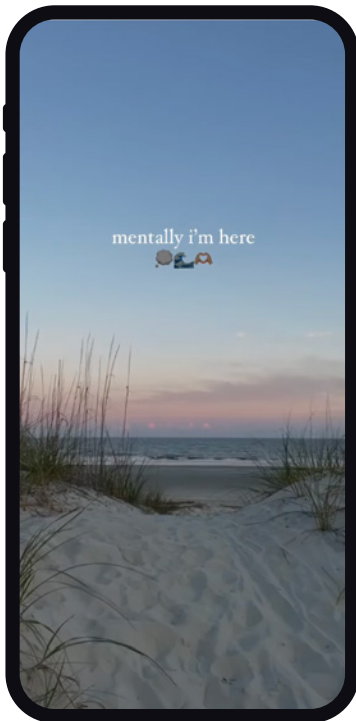
CROSS-CHANNEL TOP PERFORMING POSTS

RANKED BY OVERALL ENGAGEMENTS



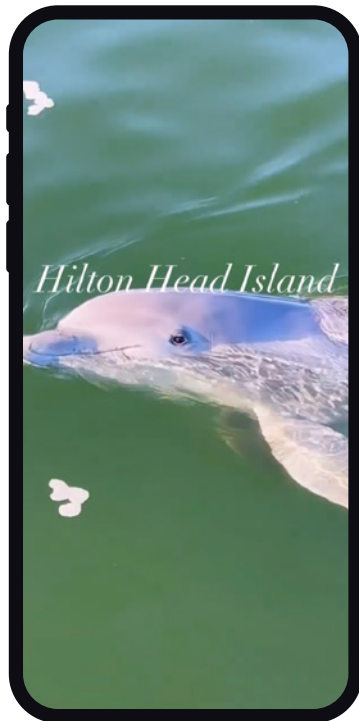
**WATERFRONT
RESTAURANTS ON HHI**

DEC 23
3,773 Engagements



**AESTHETIC
BEACH REEL**

DEC 26
2,313 Engagements



**CNT WINNER
ANNOUNCEMENT**

OCT 1
2,166 Engagements

HOTEL, HOME & VILLA OCCUPANCY

WHY IT MATTERS

Our analysis of Hilton Head Island accommodations, Hotel, Home & Villa, for a specific quarter. KeyData, provides metrics such as occupancy rates, average daily rates, and revenue per available room. This data-driven approach details actionable insights to inform strategic decisions.

OCCUPANCY

37%

^ +3%

ADR

\$224

^ +2%

REVPAR

\$83

^ +5%

Hilton Head Island experienced a strong quarter across all of the lodging metrics. Occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR each increased year-over-year, indicating strong demand as we move deeper into the shoulder season.

Source: KeyData

Quarterly Report Fiscal Year 2025-Q2 (October 1 – December 31, 2024)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FULFILLMENT

Fulfillment - The number of physical vacation planners distributed from requests throughout multiple platforms: online, media and home inquiries. In addition, we also distribute the planner to state and local welcome centers, airports, along with tradeshow and promotional events.

HOTEL, HOME & VILLA OCCUPANCY

Occupancy - Used within the accommodations industry to gauge the health of tourism. Occupancy percentage is calculated by dividing the occupied rooms by total room supply.

ADR (Average Daily Rate) - Metric widely used to indicate the average realized room rental per day. ADR is calculated by dividing the room revenue by the total rooms sold.

RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) - Used to gauge industry health and is calculated by dividing the total room revenue by total room supply within a specific time period.

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

Paid Media - Paid promotional efforts, such as advertising and sponsored content, where payment is made to third parties for placement across various channels.

HHI - Household Income noted in Media Partnership section.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Media Coverage - Refers to the instances when a destination or brand is featured in content without direct payment.

Impressions - This metric quantifies the number of times destination content has been viewed.

WHY IT MATTERS: The importance of earned media is its role as a third-party endorsement for a destination. Integrating both earned and paid media plays an important role in enhancing a brand's ROI and credibility.

Ad Values - Sometimes known as AVE, or ad value equivalency, it's a calculation that estimates the value of a story or mention by comparing it to the cost of a comparable ad in the outlet for that coverage.

WHY IT MATTERS: It helps confer the value of content, however it should be used alongside other metrics of understanding with the knowledge that a news article holds different value than a paid ad.

Mentions - Any instance where a brand or individual is discussed in various media, including news articles, social media posts, blogs, and interviews. These mentions contribute to overall visibility and help assess the impact of communication efforts.

UVPM (Unique Visitors per Month) - This metric represents the number of visitors to a media outlet.

WHY IT MATTERS: The higher the UVPM, the greater the likelihood that the destination will be read about by a larger audience.

REPORTING PLATFORMS

2-Source Report - The 2-source report is an aggregated report of both Home and Villa and Hotel data.

Keydata - Keydata is a real time home and villa platform that allows users to view on the books and historical villa data.

STR - Smith Travel Research (STR) is the platform used to monitor weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually hotel occupancy, average daily rate and revenue per available room.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Impressions - The amount of times your content was seen across a feed or in search terms.

Engagements - A measurement on how much your audience interacts with your content. This can be measured in likes, comments, shares, etc.

Total Audience - Number of followers across each platform combined.

UGC (User Generated Content) - Content captured by users online, who have given permission to have their content reposted.

Social Sessions - This measures the number of times users visit the website from social media. This includes all visits to the website that originate from social media, regardless of whether it's the user's first visit or a return visit. It accounts for all the times users engage with the website after coming from social platforms.

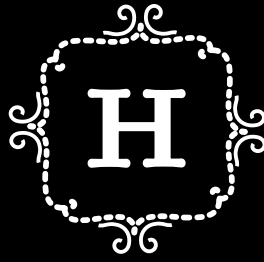
Social Referrals - This focuses on the source of the traffic. It tracks how many visits or interactions were initiated by users coming from different social media platforms. This tells us how many times social media has directed users to the website, but not the total number of users visits.

WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

Visits - A website visit in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) refers to a period of user interaction with a website. Visits help measure user engagement and interactions on a website within a specific time frame.

User - Website users in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) represent individual visitors or devices that access a website within a specified time period. Each user is identified by a unique identifier, allowing GA4 to track and analyze the behavior of distinct individuals or devices interacting with the site.

Partner Referrals - This metric refers to external link clicks to partner websites from ads or partner listings throughout the Hilton Head Island website. This helps quantify how many potential visitors we are connecting to local businesses.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

QUARTERLY REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2025-Q1

JULY 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

DESTINATION VALUES

In partnership with the town and in alignment with our community,
our destination's core values support our out-marketing efforts.



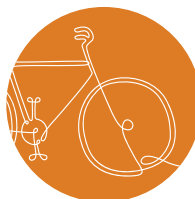
ECOTOURISM



HISTORY



ARTS & CULTURE



RECREATION



WELLNESS

HILTON HEAD ISLAND SPOTLIGHT IN VOGUE



WHY IT MATTERS

VOGUE

Landing coverage in Vogue is a significant media achievement for Hilton Head Island, showcasing the destination to an affluent, trend-conscious audience. As a globally recognized luxury publication, Vogue's digital and social platforms amplify the Island's appeal, reinforcing Hilton Head Island's status as a premier destination for high-end travelers.

Vogue senior editor Corey Seymour spotlights Hilton Head Island's tennis legacy, family-friendly charm, and Stan Smith's lasting influence in his article *An Endless Summer in South Carolina's Lowcountry—With a Guest Appearance by Stan Smith (the Man, Not the Shoe)*. His visit was part of our targeted NY media outreach, with the feature reaching Vogue's 10.3 million digital readers and 15.1 million Twitter/X followers.



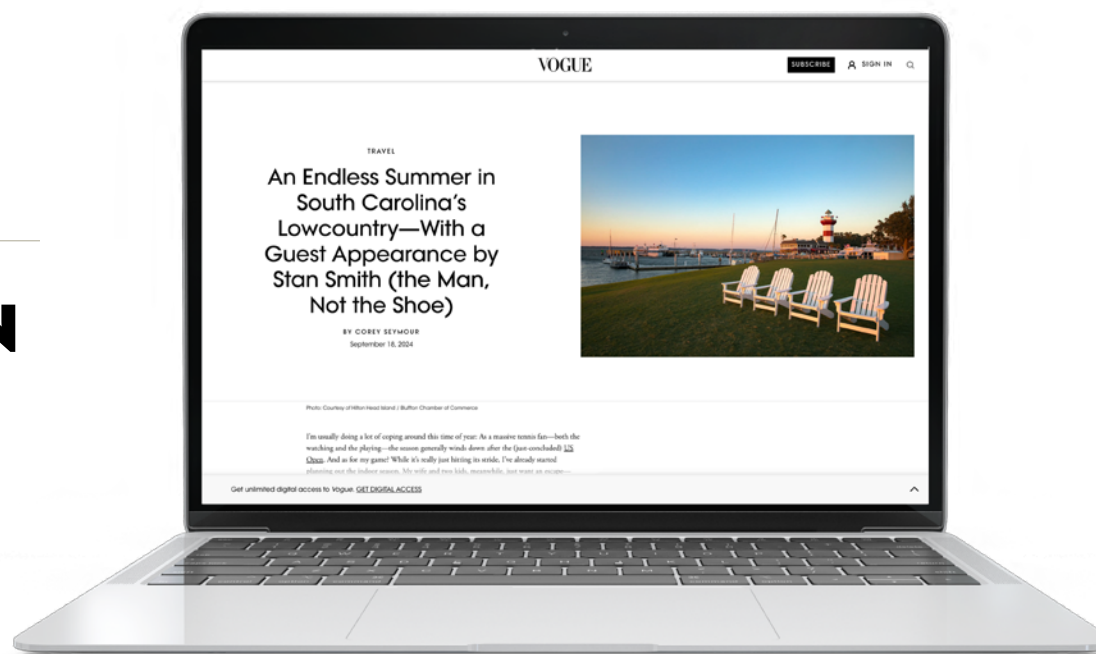
RESULTS

10,276,909

DIGITAL AUDIENCE

15.1 MILLION

TWITTER/X AUDIENCE



MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

PAID

WHY IT MATTERS

Aligning the Hilton Head Island brand with top luxury publications and their readership ensures we're consistently creating awareness of the destination amongst our target audience of \$250K+ Household Income, averaging 3 to 4 trips per year.

Kingdom

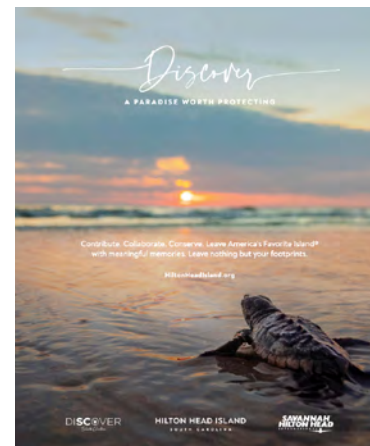


AMERICA'S FAVORITE ISLAND®:
From arts and culture to the great outdoors: Local experts share five ways to explore Hilton Head Island.

A 10-page booklet promoting Hilton Head Island and highlighting all of our destination values.

CAMPAIGN DATES
AUGUST - NOVEMBER 2024

DISTRIBUTION 205,000+
READERSHIP 780,000+



Boat to Table

Sourcing locally is key to Hilton Head Island's sustainability — and to the fresh flavors of its famed Lowcountry cuisine.

As more Americans realize the importance of where their food comes from, they're turning to local sources for fresh, seasonal ingredients. And Hilton Head Island is a natural fit for this trend. The island's Lowcountry cuisine is a testament to the region's rich culinary heritage, and it's all thanks to the local producers who make it possible. From the fields to the fork, the island's food scene is a true reflection of its natural beauty and the hard work of its residents.



MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

PAID



UNCOVER THE SURPRISING HISTORY OF
HILTON HEAD ISLAND'S 16TH CENTURY CAPITAL

This native article drives awareness of Hilton Head Island
and highlights partners in the arts, culture, and history
sectors combined with a digital campaign.

[ACCESS LINK HERE](#)

RESULTS

2.1M+ DELIVERED IMPRESSIONS

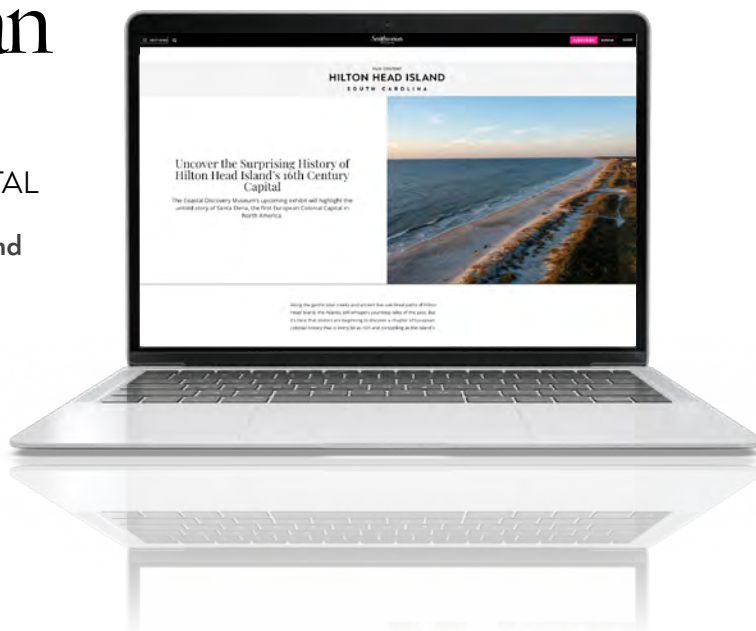
2:15 TIME ON PAGE

29,530 PAGEVIEWS

CAMPAIGN DATES

MAY 13 - AUGUST 31, 2024

7.3M DIGITAL AUDIENCE



“One of the best performing native
articles that has run on our site!”

- Jaime Duffy, Travel Sales Director



WALLPAPER* MAGAZINE THE TRAVEL ISSUE

Wallpaper* is an international publication focused on design
and architecture, fashion, travel, art, and lifestyle.

RESULTS

Performance results will be finalized at the conclusion
of the campaign and published in the next report.

CAMPAIGN DATES

AUGUST 2024

1.7M DIGITAL AUDIENCE

100K+ PRINT DISTRIBUTION



MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

PAID

Kingdom



KINGDOM CUP

Hilton Head Island hosted the third annual Kingdom Cup Golf Tournament with Kingdom magazine and Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport. This luxury event brought top PGA talent, including Tom Watson, Brian Harman, and Annika Sorenstam, representing 20 states and seven countries. This year's courses included Harbour Town Golf Links and Heron Point. At the Awards Ceremony, we announced next year's dates: September 11-14 at The Sea Pines Resort, featuring Heron Point and Atlantic Dunes.

EVENT DATES

SEPTEMBER 12 - 15, 2024

RESULTS

72 GUESTS

41 NEW GUESTS

56 REPEAT PLAYERS



PUBLIC RELATIONS MEDIA COVERAGE

HILTON HEAD ISLAND STORY HIGHLIGHTS JULY 1 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024



WHY IT MATTERS



PR builds awareness by showcasing our destination through the voice of national media outlets with substantial reach. This third-party endorsement highlights our island’s appeal and commitment to culture and sustainability, inspiring value-driven travelers.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT US



512

MENTIONS



3,946,588,511

IMPRESSIONS



\$3,009,283.39

AD VALUE

HILTON HEAD ISLAND STORY HIGHLIGHTS JULY-SEPTEMBER

JULY

FORBES (UVPM: 75,781,066)

[20 Delicious Ways To Honor National Oyster Day](#)

AUGUST

TRAVELPULSE (UVPM: 405,329)

[Very Demure, Very Mindful, Very Cutesy Travel Destinations](#)

CNBC (UVPM: 49,530,757)

[The 10 most popular summer travel destinations in the U.S.—from “Myrtle Beach to Panama City](#)

TODAY SHOW (VIEWERSHIP: 6,558,870)

[Today 3rd Hour](#)

SEPTEMBER

VOGUE (UVPM: 10,276,909)

[An Endless Summer in South Carolina’s Lowcountry-With a Guest Appearance by Stan Smith \(the Man, Not the Shoe\)](#)

USA TODAY (UVPM: 66,342,020)
[8 incredible golf courses in the US you can build a whole vacation around](#)

SCARY MOMMY (UVPM: 3,514,304)

[14 Best U.S. Destinations To Book For Your Next Moms’ Trip](#)

IN-PERSON MEDIA MEETINGS TOUTING HILTON HEAD ISLAND HIGHLIGHTS:

Head of Hospitality Editorial - Travel, Food & Beverage, Trends, Good Morning America (UVPM: 4,421,112)

Associate Editor, Condé Nast Traveler (UVPM: 4,696,597)

Home and Travel Editor, People (UVPM: 65,602,386)

Lead Producer, TODAY (UVPM: 22,376,682)

DESTINATION OFFICIAL VACATION PLANNER

WHY IT MATTERS

The official Vacation Planner brings our destination into the homes of our visitors, further instilling our core values and key attributes while serving as a planning tool for those looking to travel to Hilton Head Island.



TOTAL PRINTED **85,000**

QUARTERLY DISTRIBUTION **12,684**

DISTRIBUTION TOUCHPOINTS

- Online requests
- Phone inquiries
- Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
- Hilton Head Island Airport
- South Carolina Welcome Centers
- AAA offices nationwide
- Hotel partners
- Tradeshows
- Events
- Media

[2024 VACATION
PLANNER](#)

Winner of the U.S Travel Association
ESTO 2024 Destiny Award.



DESTINATION WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

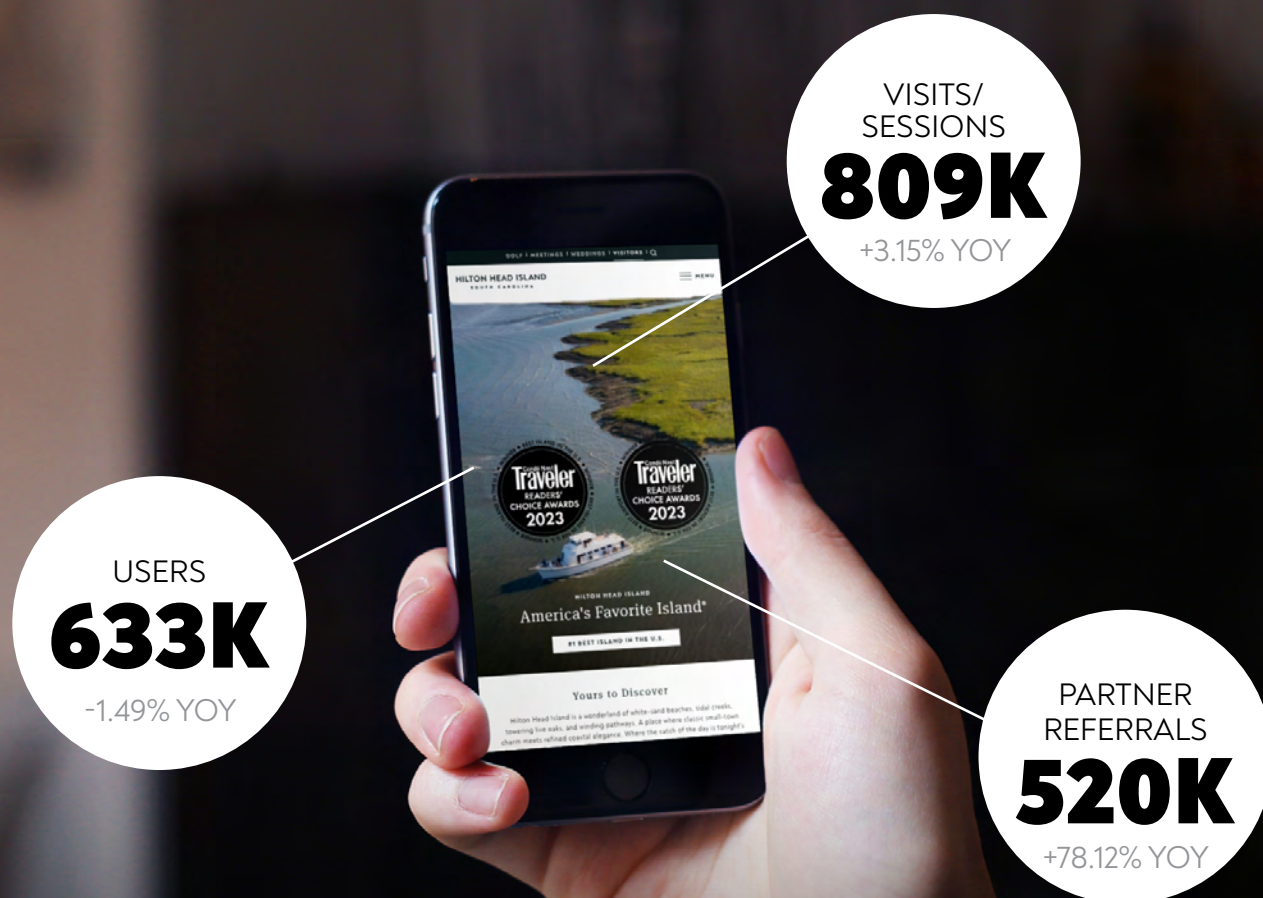


WHY IT MATTERS



The combination of website analytics and social media insights empowers data-driven decision-making, ensuring adaptability and responsiveness to digital out-marketing efforts.

HILTONHEADISLAND.ORG WEBSITE PERFORMANCE



Source: Google Analytics and VERB Interactive

Quarterly Report Fiscal Year 2025-Q1 (July 1 - September 30, 2024)

HILTONHEADISLAND.ORG WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

TOP VISITED WEBSITE PAGES

THE HOMEPAGE

241K
SESSIONS

OFFERS

82K
SESSIONS

GOLF GETAWAY

66K
SESSIONS

THINGS TO DO

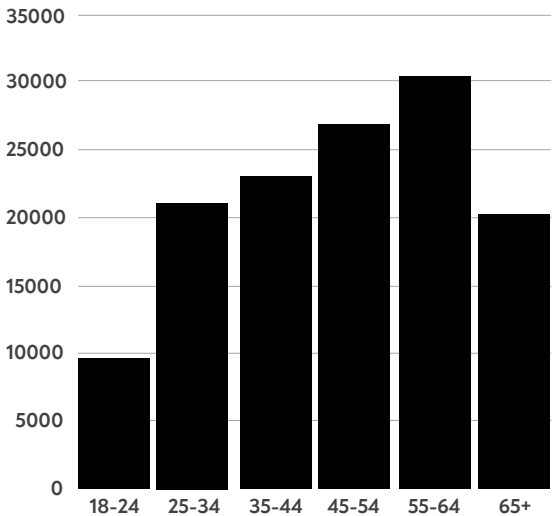
64K
SESSIONS



WEBSITE DEMOGRAPHICS
GENDER AND AGE BREAKDOWN



Based on available data within GA4, we're able to see women made up the largest percentage of visitation, while users within the 55-64 age range visited the website most frequently.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL
SESSIONS
50K

SOCIAL
REFERRALS
615

SOCIAL TOTAL
AUDIENCE
356K

-  HiltonHeadIslandofficial
-  VisitHiltonHeadSC
-  VisitHiltonHead
-  HiltonHeadSC
-  HiltonHeadSC
-  VisitHiltonHead

Source: Sprout Social

HILTON HEAD ISLAND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT BREAKDOWN

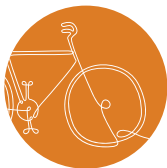
CROSS-CHANNEL TOP PERFORMING POSTS

ORGANIZED BY CONTENT PILLAR



WELLNESS

of Posts: 154
Total Engagements: 44,266
Total Impressions: 761,172



RECREATION

of Posts: 129
Total Engagements: 17,033
Total Impressions: 418,420



ARTS & CULTURE

of Posts: 35
Total Engagements: 4,048
Total Impressions: 110,940



ECOTOURISM

of Posts: 52
Total Engagements: 12,370
Total Impressions: 192,102

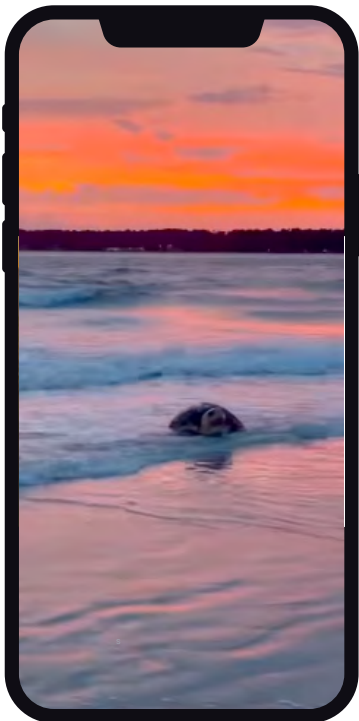


HISTORY

of Posts: 20
Total Engagements: 4,846
Total Impressions: 103,589

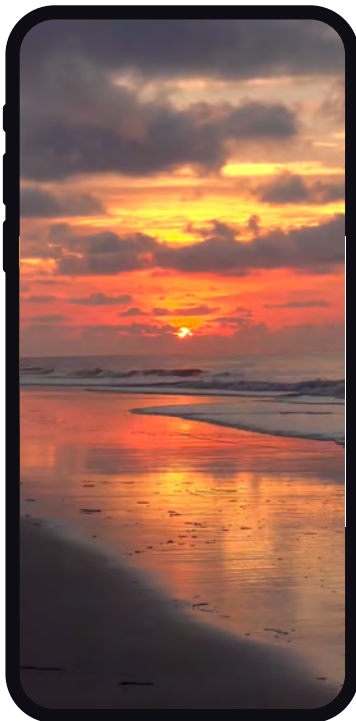
CROSS-CHANNEL TOP PERFORMING POSTS

RANKED BY OVERALL ENGAGEMENTS



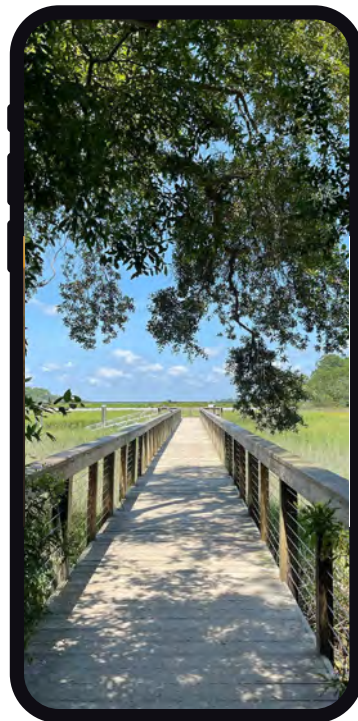
SEA TURTLE REEL

JULY 25, 2024
71,460 Engagements



SUNRISE REEL

JULY 12, 2024
2,846 Engagements



WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

AUGUST 19, 2024
2,305 Engagements

HOTEL, HOME & VILLA OCCUPANCY

WHY IT MATTERS

Our analysis of Hilton Head Island accommodations, Hotel, Home & Villa, for a specific quarter, Smith Travel Research (STR) and KeyData, provides metrics such as occupancy rates, average daily rates, and revenue per available room. This data-driven approach details actionable insights to inform strategic decisions.

OCCUPANCY

63%

▼ -7%

ADR

\$382

▲ +1%

REVPAR

\$241

▼ -7%

Hilton Head Island experienced a decline in occupancy during FY25-Q1, driven by slowing demand and rising costs of goods and services. Despite the drop in occupancy, the Average Daily Rate (ADR) saw an increase compared to the previous year. This uptick in ADR was largely due to a relatively calm mid-hurricane season, allowing for more protracted demand as we move out of peak season. However, the 1% increase in ADR was insufficient to offset the lower occupancy rates during this period.

Source: KeyData

Quarterly Report Fiscal Year 2025-Q1 (July 1 - September 30, 2024)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FULFILLMENT

Fulfillment - The number of physical vacation planners distributed from requests throughout multiple platforms: online, media and home inquiries. In addition, we also distribute the planner to state and local welcome centers, airports, along with tradeshow and promotional events.

HOTEL, HOME & VILLA OCCUPANCY

Occupancy - Used within the accommodations industry to gauge the health of tourism. Occupancy percentage is calculated by dividing the occupied rooms by total room supply.

ADR (Average Daily Rate) - Metric widely used to indicate the average realized room rental per day. ADR is calculated by dividing the room revenue by the total rooms sold.

RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) - Used to gauge industry health and is calculated by dividing the total room revenue by total room supply within a specific time period.

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

Paid Media - Paid promotional efforts, such as advertising and sponsored content, where payment is made to third parties for placement across various channels.

HHI - Household Income noted in Media Partnership section.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Media Coverage - Refers to the instances when a destination or brand is featured in content without direct payment.

Impressions - This metric quantifies the number of times destination content has been viewed.

WHY IT MATTERS: The importance of earned media is its role as a third-party endorsement for a destination. Integrating both earned and paid media plays an important role in enhancing a brand's ROI and credibility.

Ad Values - Sometimes known as AVE, or ad value equivalency, it's a calculation that estimates the value of a story or mention by comparing it to the cost of a comparable ad in the outlet for that coverage.

WHY IT MATTERS: It helps confer the value of content, however it should be used alongside other metrics of understanding with the knowledge that a news article holds different value than a paid ad.

Mentions - Any instance where a brand or individual is discussed in various media, including news articles, social media posts, blogs, and interviews. These mentions contribute to overall visibility and help assess the impact of communication efforts.

UVPM (Unique Visitors per Month) - This metric represents the number of visitors to a media outlet.

WHY IT MATTERS: The higher the UVPM, the greater the likelihood that the destination will be read about by a larger audience.

REPORTING PLATFORMS

2-Source Report - The 2-source report is an aggregated report of both Home and Villa and Hotel data.

Keydata - Keydata is a real time home and villa platform that allows users to view on the books and historical villa data.

STR - Smith Travel Research (STR) is the platform used to monitor weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually hotel occupancy, average daily rate and revenue per available room.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Impressions - The amount of times your content was seen across a feed or in search terms.

Engagements - A measurement on how much your audience interacts with your content. This can be measured in likes, comments, shares, etc.

Total Audience - Number of followers across each platform combined.

UGC (User Generated Content) - Content captured by users online, who have given permission to have their content reposted.

Social Sessions - This measures the number of times users visit the website from social media. This includes all visits to the website that originate from social media, regardless of whether it's the user's first visit or a return visit. It accounts for all the times users engage with the website after coming from social platforms.

Social Referrals - This focuses on the source of the traffic. It tracks how many visits or interactions were initiated by users coming from different social media platforms. This tells us how many times social media has directed users to the website, but not the total number of a user's visits.

WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

Visits - A website visit in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) refers to a period of user interaction with a website. Visits help measure user engagement and interactions on a website within a specific time frame.

User - Website users in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) represent individual visitors or devices that access a website within a specified time period. Each user is identified by a unique identifier, allowing GA4 to track and analyze the behavior of distinct individuals or devices interacting with the site.

Partner Referrals - This metric refers to external link clicks to partner websites from ads or partner listings throughout the Hilton Head Island website. This helps quantify how many potential visitors we are connecting to local businesses.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Staff Memo

TO: Town Council Members
FROM: Heather Woolwine, MA, *Communications & Marketing Director*
CC: Marc Orlando, ICMA-CM, *Town Manager*
Kimberly Gammon, *Town Clerk*
DATE: February 18, 2025
SUBJECT: Presentation of the Destination Marketing Organization mid-year metrics report (Q1 & Q2)

RECOMMENDATION:

The Town Council is requested to receive as information the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) FY25 mid-year metrics report (Q1 & Q2).

BACKGROUND:

The DMO presents performance metrics as outlined in their current contract each quarter as part of their obligation to keep Town Council apprised of the FY25 marketing plan's performance and to note any possible real-time adjustments to the marketing plan as a result of this data analysis. For FY25 to date, the DMO was asked to present both Q1 and Q2 data at the March 4, 2025 meeting due to a busy fall meeting schedule and election year activity. The report will be given by Visitor & Convention Bureau Vice President Ariana Pernice and Research Manager Chase O'Dell. Vice President of Communications for the Hilton Head Island & Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Charlie Clark will also attend the meeting and be available to answer questions as appropriate.

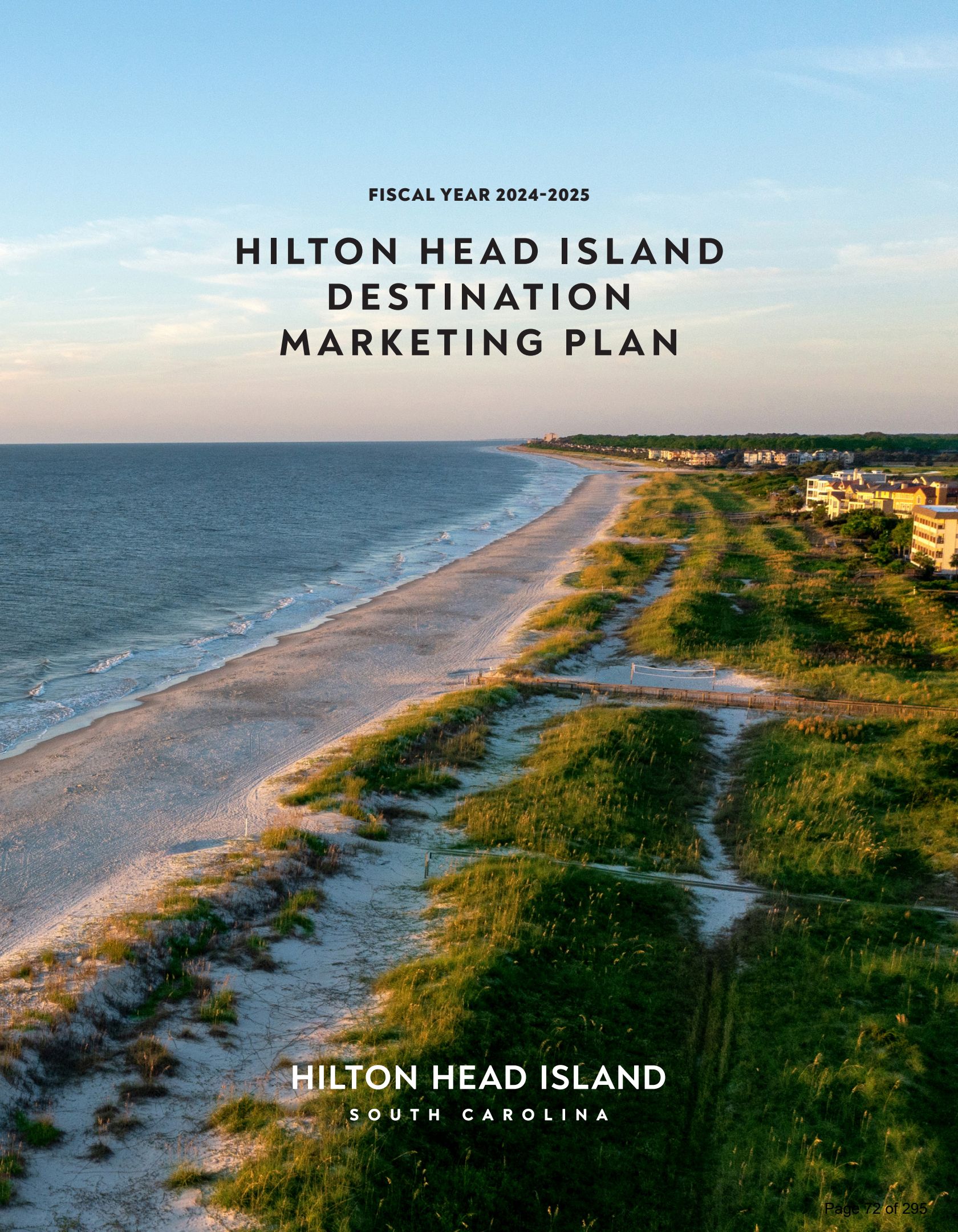
NEXT STEPS:

Town Council members are encouraged to ask clarifying questions about the data and provide any feedback to the DMO and Chamber representatives, as well as the Communications Director.

The Town-wide marketing Council, which includes Town Council member Alex Brown, Town Manager Marc Orlando, and Town staff (Heather Woolwine -Communications, Kelly Spinella- Communications, and Natalie Harvey-Office of Cultural Affairs), has met twice since November 2024 and received the first draft of the FY26 Marketing plan for review on Feb. 17 with feedback required by Feb. 24. The Council will meet in March to finalize and vote on the plan. The plan is then presented to the Town's A-Tax committee (April 3), the F&A Committee (April 29), and then for a vote from Town Council as part of the Town's budget approval process (May 6).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DMO Q1 Report
2. DMO Q2 Report

An aerial photograph of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, showing a wide sandy beach, green dunes, and coastal buildings under a clear sky.

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

HILTON HEAD ISLAND DESTINATION MARKETING PLAN

HILTON HEAD ISLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It Starts With A Visit	4
Defining Our Cornerstone	6
Destination Values	7
Demonstrating Our Values	8
Destination Goals	10
Goal, Tactics, and Key Performance Indicators Chart	11
Marketing Roadmap	14
Budget	16
Target Leisure Traveler	18

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

Marketing Plan Strategies & Tactical Details	22
Social Channel Priorities	25
Leisure Media Partnerships	26
Destination Public Relations	28
Meetings & Group Sales	32
International Marketing	34
Collateral and Fulfillment	35

APPENDIX

Glossary of Terms	40
Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors & DMO Marketing Council	42
Community Cornerstone Plan 2023 Performance, Goals 1-5	44
Demographics	54
MMGY Intelligence Community Sentiment Survey Executive Summary, Wave 3	70
Office of Tourism Analysis, College of Charleston 2023 Visitor Profile Study	92
Office of Tourism Analysis, College of Charleston 2023 Estimated Total Impact of Tourism in Hilton Head Island on Beaufort County	131
VERB Interactive 2023 Digital and Social Media Marketing Recap	142
Weber Shandwick 2023 Public Relations Recap	147



IT STARTS WITH A VISIT

As a community built upon tourism it is imperative to ensure the destination for the next generation of residents, business owners, and visitors.

As the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) we are experts in this space, constantly working to ensure the community's priorities and stewardship of the brand that ultimately ensures the destination and quality of life for all.

The FY 2024-2025 Destination Marketing Plan ladders into our organization's three-year Strategic Plan and ultimately into our community-centric 10-year Destination Management Plan. Our approach

to long-term tourism success sits alongside the Town of Hilton Head Island's 20-year comprehensive plan. Our efforts complement and support a vibrant and collaborative partnership with the Town of Hilton Head Island to ensure the future of the destination for residents and visitors.



VISION

A welcoming, world-class community embracing nature, culture and economic vibrancy for residents and visitors.

MISSION

Stimulate the regional economy while enhancing the quality of life for all.



DEFINING OUR COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

Our community is the heart of who we are and how we present ourselves to the world. Tourism is a competitive landscape. Every destination must compete with every other tourism destination for its share of the world's attention, visitation, and investment. A destination needs to integrate the community into marketing efforts to create the desire amongst travelers to experience the destination, meet its people, and experience its authentic offering.

For any destination to ensure its competitive advantage and increase visitor revenue, there must be a clear strategic framework for developing, articulating, and promoting the destination brand. That is why destination marketing and management organizations exist. They have the unique mandate to

steward the community's identity and reputation in the global visitor marketplace daily.

A destination brand is rooted in the community's priorities. It is a common good and a shared value. Promoting the destination is for the benefit and well-being of everyone in the community. Therefore, the stewardship of the brand is an essential investment for enhancing the quality of life and increasing opportunities for all residents.

The Chamber warrants and represents that the marketing plan shall include a "Community Cornerstone plan" which engages the community with public relations, education, and social media strategies.



DESTINATION VALUES

In partnership with the town and in alignment with our community, our destination's core values support our out-marketing efforts.



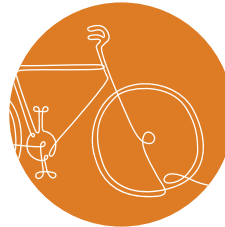
Ecotourism



History



Arts & Culture



Recreation



Wellness

DEMONSTRATING OUR VALUES

ECOTOURISM

We will continue to educate and inform residents and guests about the importance of protecting our delicate ecosystem, and the role each individual can play in that. Our efforts throughout Sea Turtle Season to bring awareness to preservation and conservation, continuing to build on the sustainability section of our website, and certifying more island businesses as Sea Turtle Friendly are some of the few ways we continue to educate our residents and visitors about the importance of preserving our delicate ecosystem and the role each individual can play in that effort.

ARTS & CULTURE

In partnership with the Town of Hilton Head Island's Culture HHI, we are dedicated to promoting the Island's unique arts and culture in a way that can inspire a traveler to visit, through continued digital and social campaigns. With some of the finest art galleries, live music venues, and dance and theater productions happening year-round, Hilton Head Island's arts and culture scene is second to none.

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

As we look to further establish the destination as a place for heritage travel we will work alongside the community to gather assets, collecting the rich history it holds and documenting it through various touchpoints for visitors to explore. We will also engage our partners within the community and tour operators to document and preserve the rich history of the island through visual storytelling, robust itineraries, and digital campaigns.

WELLNESS

We will build upon our strong foundation as a wellness destination and work closely with our community partners to develop digital and social media campaigns, build itineraries and programs to drive overnight visitation, and capture new content to showcase Hilton Head Island as an ideal wellness destination.

RECREATION

Recreation imagery, copy and storytelling will be woven into all of our destination touchpoints, website, digital, social, email and public relations and more. The approach allows us to connect on a deeper level with our visitors regarding our rich recreational assets, our local businesses and community business owners. Utilizing our website, social media, display campaigns, and search engine marketing, we can promote seasonally appropriate activities to ensure consistent visitor engagement year-round.





DESTINATION GOALS

A PLAN OF ACTION. A VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Through digital, paid and earned media, and print channels, we will compel our potential visitors to explore Hilton Head Island's natural beauty, culture, heritage, arts, culinary, and outdoor experiences. Woven into everything we do is the fabric of our community and a commitment to empowering them to tell the Hilton Head Island story, and helping them be good stewards of the Island.

GOALS 1-5

The following goals outline our continuous efforts to market our destination to potential visitors, and our successes in our out-marketing efforts support our overarching mission of defining and implementing our Community Cornerstone Plan.

1

**CONNECT THE MARKETING PROMISE WITH
THE ON-ISLAND EXPERIENCE.**

2

**CREATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF, AND RESPECT FOR OUR
DELICATE ECOSYSTEM (RESIDENTS AND VISITOR).**

3

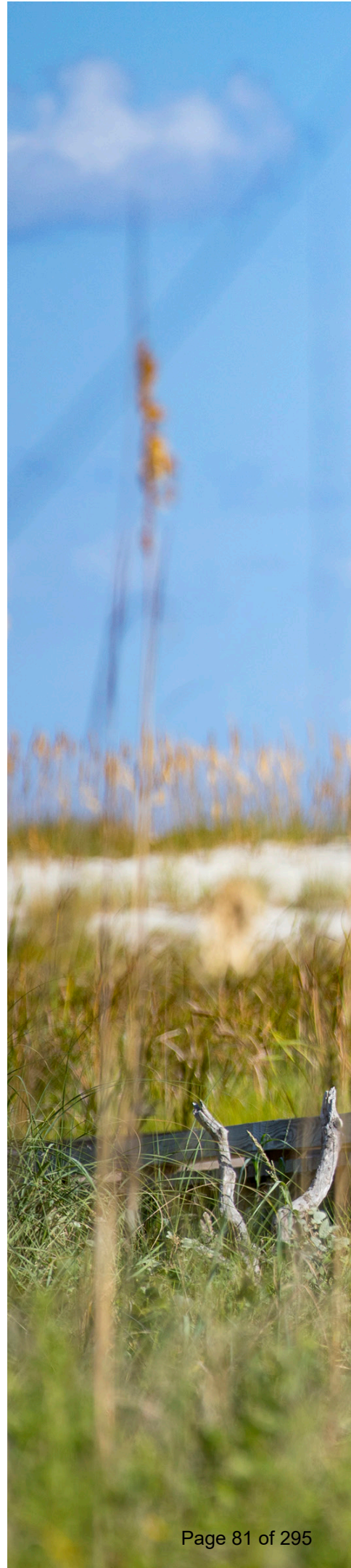
**DRIVE DEEPER DISCOVERY AND
EXPLORATION OF OUR DESTINATION.**

4

BUILD BRAND AWARENESS.

5

**ENHANCE LEISURE & GROUP BUSINESS
THROUGH QUALIFIED VISITATION.**





GOALS 1-5

GOALS		STRATEGIES
1	CONNECT THE MARKETING PROMISE WITH THE ON-ISLAND EXPERIENCE	Community campaign and brand bootcamp Resident and visitor surveys Put the Beach to Bed campaign
2	CREATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF AND RESPECT FOR OUR DELICATE ECOSYSTEM	Eco Campaign
3	DRIVE THE DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION OF THE DESTINATION	Lead generation ads Island Time Blog Paid social media Search optimization Social media video/Reels/stories User generated content Chatbot evolution and optimization Digital experience personalization
4	BUILD BRAND AWARENESS	Digital display Connected TV and traditional broadcast Programmatic advertising Audio advertising Traditional ad placements (print and digital) Social media marketing (Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, Pinterest, Twitter) User generated content curation Public relations (media outreach, partnerships, influencers, and earned media placements)
5	ENHANCE LEISURE AND MEETING AND GROUP BUSINESS BY SUPPORTING QUALIFIED VISITATION	Email marketing Social and display remarketing advertising Search engine marketing Search engine optimization and local search Digital experience personalization LinkedIn (organic and paid) Networking Meetings and groups paid digital media

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Community sentiment survey and continued benchmarking
Visitor Profile study

Campaign landing page visits

Increase email signups
Increase time spent on blog
Increase social referrals
Increase in content engagement metrics
Chatbot AI development

Brand lift study
Website traffic
Paid media impressions

Website traffic
Partner referrals
Home and villa occupancy
Hotel occupancy
Direct solicitation for meeting/group (phone, email, social media)
Sales appointments (sales calls, trade shows, virtual)
Leads sent to properties

2023 RESULTS

Community sentiment survey completed, analysis can be referenced in the Appendix
Visitor Profile Study completed, analysis can be referenced in the Appendix

Turtle landing page metrics:
Sessions: 33,499
Partner Referrals: 2,762
Bounce Rate > Change to Engagement Rate: 62.37%
Time on Site > Change to Avg Session Duration: 2:23
Pages per Visit > Views per Session: 1.58

Email list growth of 143,826 (8.9%)
Time spent on blog 3:04 (flat)
Social referrals 345,816 (+12.4%)
Bounce rate 46% (-8.8)
Time on site 1:50 (+2.1%)
Pages per visit 1.8 (+2.2%)
Chatbot engagements 2,685 (+60.3%)

Brand lift study being conducted spring 2023
Website traffic 3,064,623 (-10.2%)
129 million paid partner media impressions

Website traffic 3,064,623 (-10.2%)
1,610,210 partner referrals (-5.2%)
Home and Villa
Occupancy 45% (+4%) ADR \$496.00 (+13%) RevPar \$221.00 (+18%)
Hotel
Occupancy 59.7% (-2.2%) ADR \$246.82 (+2.9%) RevPar \$147.39 (+0.7%)
Direct solicitations 535 (phone calls, emails, social outreaches)
Sales appointments 352
101 (+73.2%) leads sent to properties

2024-2025 MARKETING ROADMAP

Our strategic roadmap outlines the key milestones across strategies and tactics that will help the destination maintain momentum and drive results.

JUL-AUG

CAMPAIGNS

Southern Living
South's Best Voting

CONTENT THEMES

Lowcountry Living/Summer
Fall Travel

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

SEP-OCT

CAMPAIGNS

Oyster/Dining Digital Campaign
Concours d'Elegance
Crescendo

CONTENT THEMES

Weekend Getaways
Lowcountry Dining (Oyster Season)

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

NOV-DEC

CAMPAIGNS

Holiday Travel
Giving Tuesday
Seafood Festival
Wine + Food
Crescendo
Oyster Festival
Lantern Parade

CONTENT THEMES

Thanksgiving
Holidays

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

*Traditional media placements are examples of partnerships and publications that have been successful for the destination in the past, and remain as opportunities in the future.



JAN-FEB

CAMPAIGNS

Foodie February
Gullah Celebration
Wine + Food
Seafood Festival
Bravo! Piano Competition
Restaurant Week
Travel + Leisure Voting
Darius Rucker Golf Tournament

CONTENT THEMES

Fresh Start
Lowcountry Love

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
American Express
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

MAR-APR

CAMPAIGNS

RBC Heritage
Travel + Leisure Voting
Condé Nast Traveler Voting
WingFest

CONTENT THEMES

RBC Heritage
Spring in Swing: Golf, Fishing, Biking

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
American Express
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

MAY-JUN

CAMPAIGNS

Sea Turtle Conservation
Condé Nast Traveler Voting
NTTW Summer Campaign
Pedal Hilton Head Island

CONTENT THEMES

Wildlife/Conservation
Ready for Summer

TRADITIONAL MEDIA PLACEMENTS

Travel + Leisure
Condé Nast Traveler
Full-Time Travel
American Express
Garden & Gun
Kingdom Magazine
Departures
Martha Stewart Living, Weddings

BUDGET

HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau Schedule of Functional Revenues and Expenditures
FY 2024-2025 BUDGET

	Revenues						
	VCB	Town of HHI DMO	VCB Private Sector	SCPRT Dest. Specific	SCPRT Co-ops	Town of Bluffton DMO	Beaufort Co Membership DMO
TOTALS	4,000,000	4,000,000					
Town of HHI DMO	4,000,000						
Private Sector	475,000		475,000				
SCPRT Destination Specific	625,000			625,000			
SCPRT Coop	625,000				625,000		
Private Match Coop	2,600,000				2,600,000		
Town of Bluffton DMO	350,000					350,000	
B/C Bluffton & Daufuskie	365,000						365,000
Total Revenues	9,040,000	4,000,000	475,000	625,000	3,225,000	350,000	365,000
Memberships Revenue							
Total Revenues with Memberships	10,990,000						1,950,000
	Expenses						
	VCB	Town of HHI DMO	VCB Private Sector	SCPRT Dest. Specific	SCPRT Co-ops	Town of Bluffton DMO	Beaufort Co Membership DMO
TOTALS	960,000	776,107	49,337	134,556			
Media Partnerships	960,000	776,107	49,337	134,556			
Media Buys							
Social Media							
Partner Promotions	60,000	48,507	3,084	8,410			
Paid Brand Social Media	170,000	137,436	8,737	23,828			
Social Media Management	76,317	61,698	3,922	10,697			
Sub-total	306,317	247,640	15,743	42,934			
Digital Marketing							
Digital Strategy, Web Maintenance & Support	80,000	64,676	4,111	11,213			
Technology Improvements	60,000	48,507	3,084	8,410			
SEO	24,000	19,403	1,233	3,364			
SEM / Display	569,754	460,614	29,281	79,858			
Managed Web Hosting and Content Delivery Network	1800	1,455	93	252			
eNewsletter/Drip Campaign	30,000	24,253	1,542	4,205			
Digital Contingency	0	0	0	0			
Sub-total	765,554	618,908	39,344	107,302			
Destination PR							
PR Strategy, Maintenance & Support	276,000	223,131	14,184	38,685			
Journalists/Influencers/Partnerships	50,000	40,422	2,570	7,008			
TOTALS	18,300	14,795	940	2,565			
Monitoring Services (Print/Online/Broadcast Tracking)	50,000	40,422	2,570	7,008			
PR Contingency	394,300	318,770	20,264	55,266			
Sub-total							
Group Sales & Marketing							
Promotional Giveaways	50,000	40,422	2,570	7,008			
Program Incentives	2,000	1,617	103	280			
VCB Dues, Subscriptions and Training	90,000	72,760	4,625	12,615			
Tradeshows	35,000	28,296	1,799	4,906			
In-Market Events	15,000	12,127	771	2,102			

Focused Service	1,000	808	51	140
SEM	40,000	32,338	2,056	5,607
Social Media	49,630	40,123	2,551	6,956
Sub-total	282,630	228,491	14,525	39,614
International				
International Promotions and Events	150,000	121,267	7,709	21,024
International Trade Shows	40,000	32,338	2,056	5,607
Sub-total	190,000	153,604	9,765	26,631
Destination Photography & Video				
	75,000	60,631	3,854	10,512
Collateral/Fulfillment				
Vacation Planner	300,000	242,533	15,418	42,049
Fulfillment	120,000	97,013	6,167	16,820
Toll-Free Phone	4,000	3,234	206	561
Sub-total	424,000	342,780	21,791	59,429
Research & Planning				
	214,075	173,068	11,002	30,005

VCB Sales, Mkt. Services & Ops:

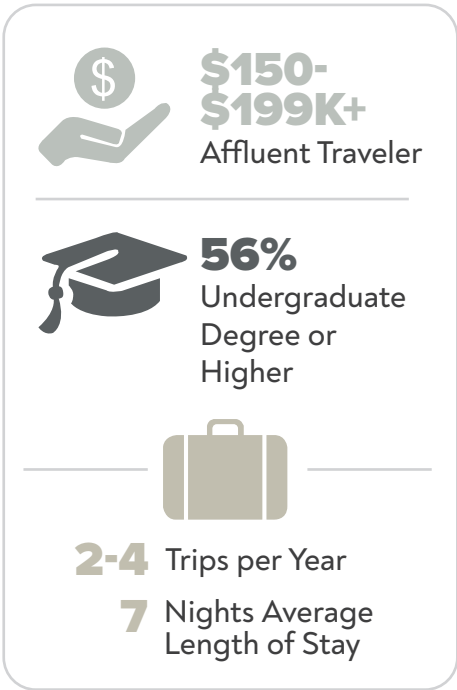
Personnel	1,295,000	756,000	202,563	83,125	65,625	91,875	95,813
Benefits	185,000	108,000	28,938	11,875	9,375	13,125	13,688
Operations	370,000	216,000	57,875	23,750	18,750	26,250	27,375
Sub-total	1,850,000	1,080,000	289,375	118,750	93,750	131,250	136,875

	VCB TOTALS	Town of HHI DMO	VCB Private Sector	SCPRT Dest. Specific	SCPRT Co-ops	Town of Bluffton DMO	Beaufort Co Membership DMO
SCPRT							
SC PRT - Leisure	1,300,000				1,300,000		
SC PRT - Sports	1,002,749				1,002,749		
SC PRT - Meetings & Groups	828,500				828,500		
Sub-total	3,131,249				0	3,131,250	
Town of Bluffton DMO						218,750	
Promotions	218,750						
B/C Bluffton & Daufuskie DMO							228,125
Promotions	228,125						1,950,000

TOTAL VCB EXPENSES	9,040,000	4,000,000	475,000	625,000	3,225,000	350,000	1,950,000	10,990,000
Difference b/w Revenue & Expense	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses with Membership	10,990,000							
Revenues Minus Expenses :	0							
	Revenues & Expenses for HHI-related marketing programs							
	Revenues & Expenses for other marketing programs							

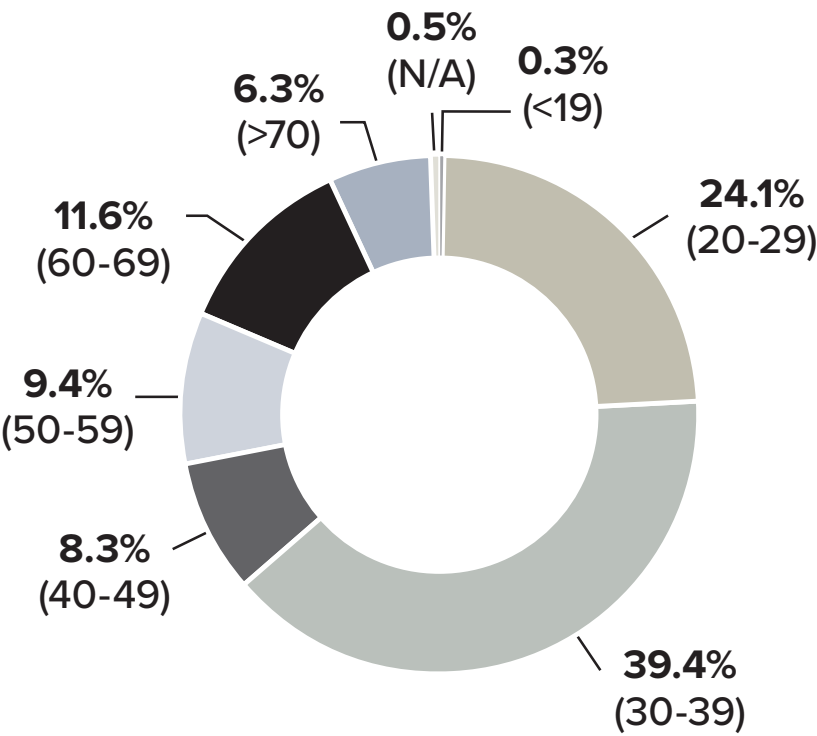
OUR TARGET LEISURE TRAVELER

2023 VISITOR PROFILE STUDY



**2023 Visitor Profile Study:
Office of Tourism Analysis,
College of Charleston*

AGE DISTRIBUTION



DEMOGRAPHICS AND PERSONAS



Weekenders



Families



Snowbirds

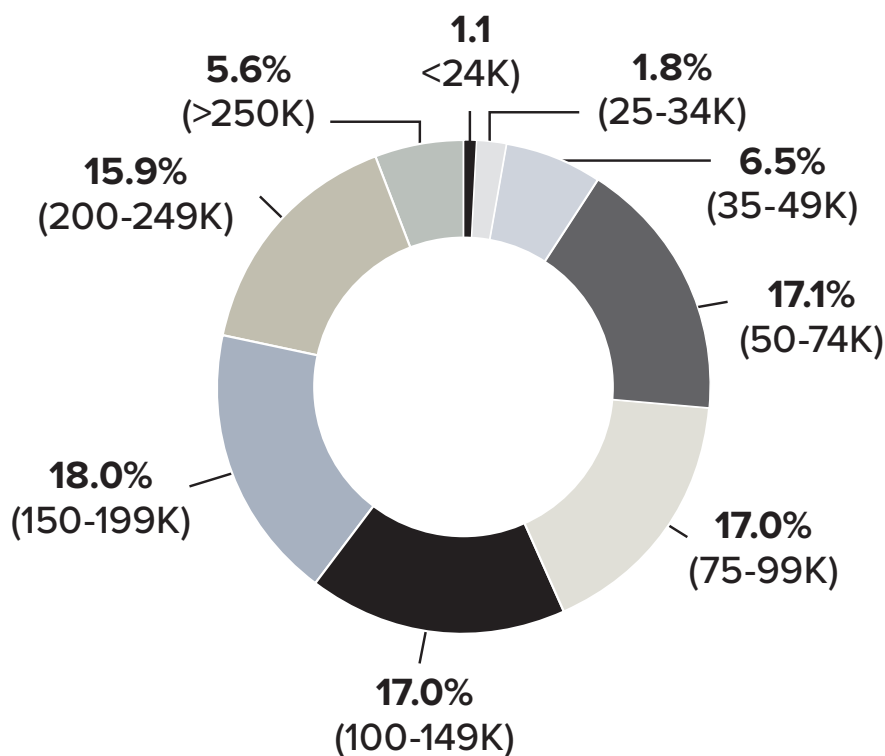


Sports Enthusiasts

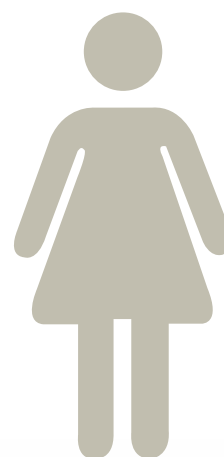


Culinary Explorers

HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION



**45%
MALE**



**55%
FEMALE**



Wellness
Traveler



Arts, History &
Cultural Enthusiasts



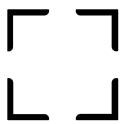
International
Travelers



STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

MARKETING PLAN STRATEGIES & TACTICAL DETAILS

The ultimate goal of the marketing strategy is to connect like-minded visitors with the destination through an “always on” approach with a series of media touch points that bring our destination values forward.



AREAS OF FOCUS

LEADING WITH COMMUNITY IN MARKETING

We will highlight, celebrate, and feature our locals, their businesses, offerings, and unique identities across all our marketing channels and touchpoints. We will strive to add layers of additional authenticity by engaging with the Gullah community, sustainability and conservation partners, and others.

This will be done through organic integration across our social, blog, and email channels in the form of copy, photos, and videos.



DESTINATION WEBSITE PLATFORMS

In the upcoming year, following the launch of our new website, we are committed to further enhancing and optimizing the platform to prioritize our destination marketing values. As we continue to make updates, our goal is to ensure that these priorities remain at the forefront of the user experience.

With the release of our new website, we have laid the foundation for a more immersive and engaging online presence. Now, our focus shifts to refining and fine-tuning the user journey, ensuring that visitors are seamlessly guided towards exploring the unique aspects of our destination.

From showcasing family-friendly attractions to highlighting our renowned golf courses and rich cultural experiences, every aspect of our website will be designed to captivate and inspire our audience. Through strategic optimizations and enhancements, we aim to create a platform that not only informs but also evokes a sense of excitement and curiosity about Hilton Head Island.

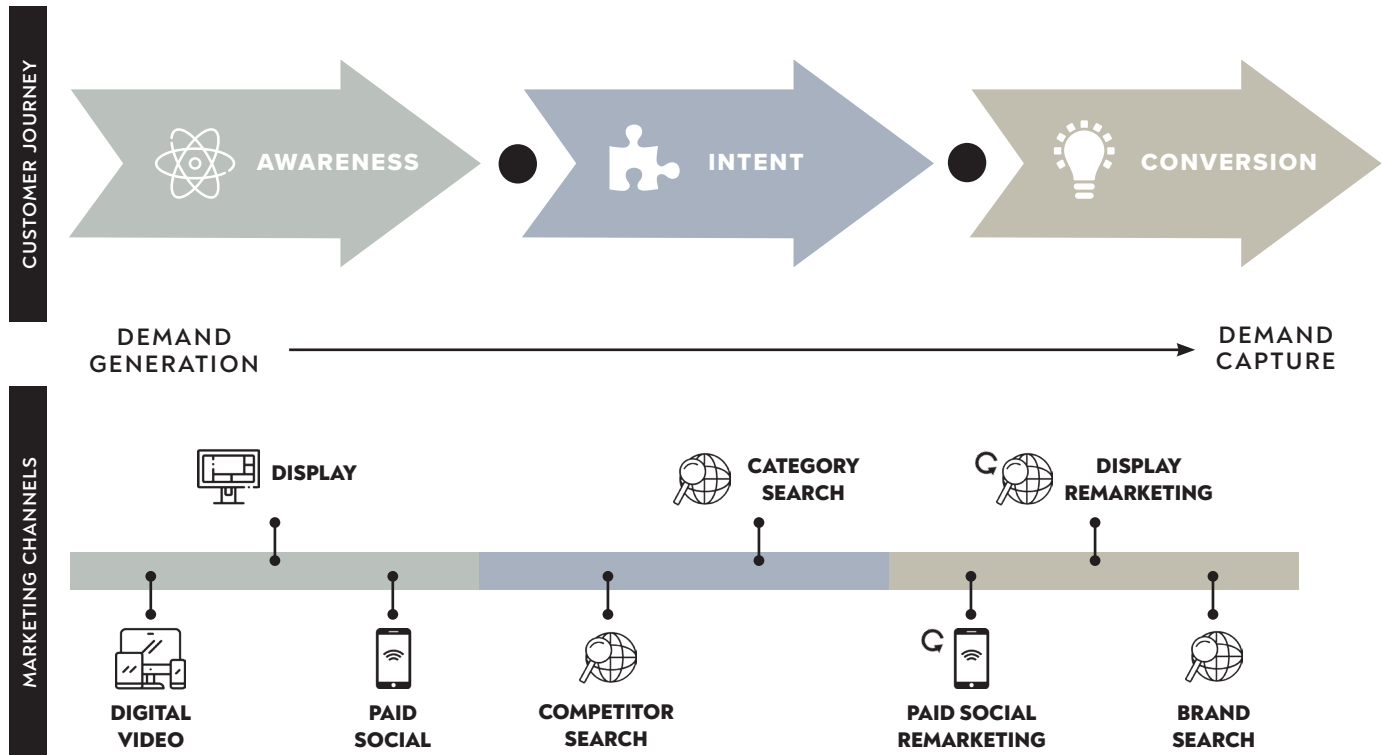
As we embark on this journey, our commitment to excellence remains unwavering. We will continue to listen to feedback, analyze data, and implement innovative solutions to deliver an exceptional online experience that truly reflects the essence of our destination.



RESIDENT AND VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEYS

The Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, under the Destination Marketing Organization contract, will report on resident and visitor satisfaction annually through surveys. Using these insights, they'll craft a comprehensive plan to engage the community. Regular tourism updates will enhance residents' awareness of tourism's benefits, stimulating the regional economy and improving quality of life. Campaigns will be strategically deployed based on defined goals aligned with the overarching marketing plan, ensuring alignment with the customer journey at every stage.

AUDIENCE TARGETING WITH DIGITAL MEDIA



Our efforts begin with awareness and intend to move potential visitors down the funnel to eventual conversions. Potential visitors will see our destination videos and ads across social media, and through targeted remarketing efforts will eventually start to search for Hilton Head Island directly.

The 2024-2025 marketing plan will consist of the following marketing channels:

- » Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- » Organic & Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- » Digital Video (YouTube, Social)
- » Connected TV and Broadcast
- » Social Media Advertising
- » Email Marketing and CRM Programmatic Display & Remarketing
- » Audio Advertising on Digital Streaming Platforms (DSP)
- » Trade Marketing
- » Traditional Print, Radio
- » Public Relations and Influencer Marketing



VIDEO IN CONTENT MARKETING

Seasonal highlights, color-driven Reels, and trend-setting TikToks have helped Hilton Head Island's social media evolve past previous years' activities and tactics.

Our priority across all social channels will be focused on video content first, whether that's through 15-second clips or in-depth community interviews.



DIGITAL ADVERTISING

The focus on qualified yet efficient digital media channels continues to be a core focus of the 2024-2025 digital advertising strategy. Our digital marketing efforts will focus on performance marketing channels that will enable the destination to purchase and connect with highly qualified audience targets on a cost-effective basis to drive maximum performance for the destination.

Working media dollars will be heavily allocated toward performance channels (Brand Search, Category Search, Performance Max, and Social Remarketing). This will be supported by digital video and streaming audio advertising efforts to build awareness of the destination.

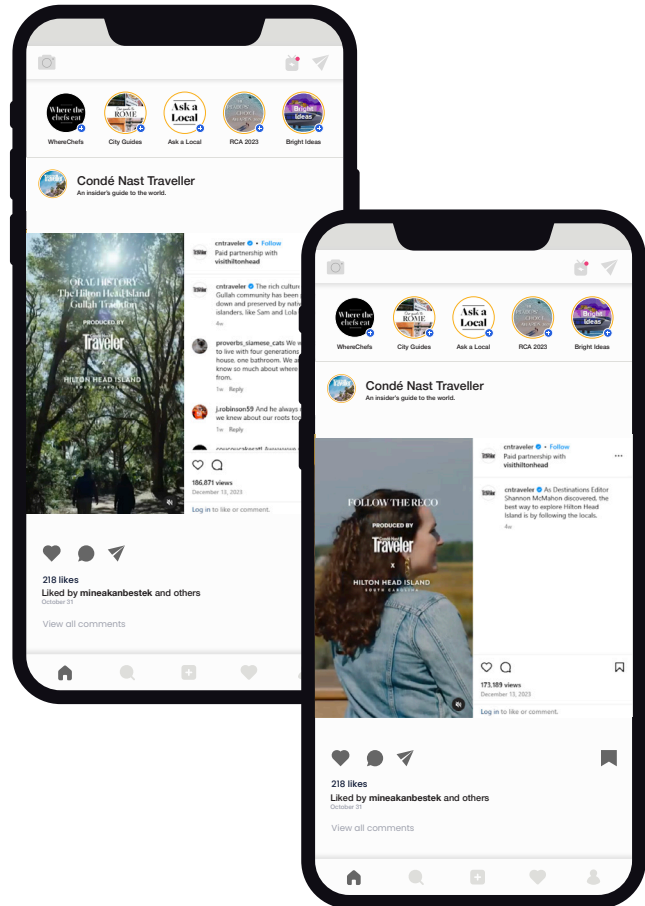


EMAIL

Going forward, we aim to leverage interest in the destination by delivering personalized emails tailored to their preferences and interests. To facilitate this, we will update our email preference center to include the destination's marketing pillars, ensuring that subscribers receive content that aligns with their priorities. This change will also include leveraging a new email service provider, Campaigner, to help us optimize the delivery of our communications.

We'll curate content-specific emails that resonate with audiences passionate about these areas. Additionally, we'll run general email campaigns for the broader subscriber list. New subscribers will be welcomed with an automated journey introducing them to the destination, while those requesting a visitor's guide will receive automated emails guiding them further through the customer journey.

Our email strategies will be guided by SEO research and continuously refined through testing and optimization efforts throughout the year.



EVENT CONTENT

We will work closely with our partners to understand the goals for their event and incorporate our assets and promotion to best fit their needs and KPIs. .

BEFORE

Pre-promotion: content shared to promote and drive referrals to the event partner across email, website, digital, and organic and paid social.

DURING

Real-time coverage: content shared “live” across social and boosted where applicable.

AFTER

Wrap-up content: content that shares highlights and photogenic moments about the event and showcases the destination to build awareness for the following year.

SOCIAL CHANNEL PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2025

These are the social channels that best support Hilton Head Island’s strategic efforts and where we will focus our priorities for FY 2024-2025.

f FACEBOOK

With 3.05 billion monthly active users, Facebook remains our top social channel. Our page boasts 234.8K likes and growing. In FY 2024-2025, we’ll enhance our community by sharing fresh photo and video content, focusing on partner experiences, sustainability initiatives, marquee events, co-op partnerships, and campaigns.

Instagram

As Instagram evolves, we’ll stay ahead with Reels, the leading content format. Our goal is to share authentic, engaging content that resonates with current trends and keeps us at the forefront of users’ feeds.

🎵 TIKTOK

With over a billion users, TikTok is a key platform for travel tips and experiences. We’ve seen strong growth on our Hilton Head Island channel and will leverage TikTok’s evolving features to reach new audiences, repurposing content from Instagram’s Reels.

P PINTEREST

Pinterest is a hub for inspiration and planning. We’ll continue to showcase destination experiences through itineraries, wellness options, and sustainable activities, driving traffic to our website with optimized SEO.

Spotify

Through playlists, collaborations, and ads, Spotify offers unique ways to connect with customers. We’ll share trending, feel-good music and wellness-themed playlists to engage both new and existing audiences.

📺 YOUTUBE

YouTube’s Shorts emphasize the importance of short-form video. We’ll produce content that highlights our destination’s key pillars, catering to the platform’s engaged audience.

in LINKEDIN

Our LinkedIn account is the go-to for destination updates and industry news. We’ll continue sharing relevant updates and content to engage meeting planners and industry professionals.

TOTAL ORGANIC AUDIENCE 357,284

ISLAND TIME BLOG

Our Island Time Blog drives qualified, engaged traffic to HiltonHeadIsland.org. It’s a landing place to bring people in from our social feeds, and a great jumping off point to show users what is happening on Hilton Head Island. Tied closely to search engine results, our goal with the Hilton Head Island blog is to create a useful tool for fun, inspiration, informational, travel tips, news, and more.

Over the past several years we have developed a strong bank of evergreen content for our audience, and now we can focus on deeper storytelling for specific audiences.

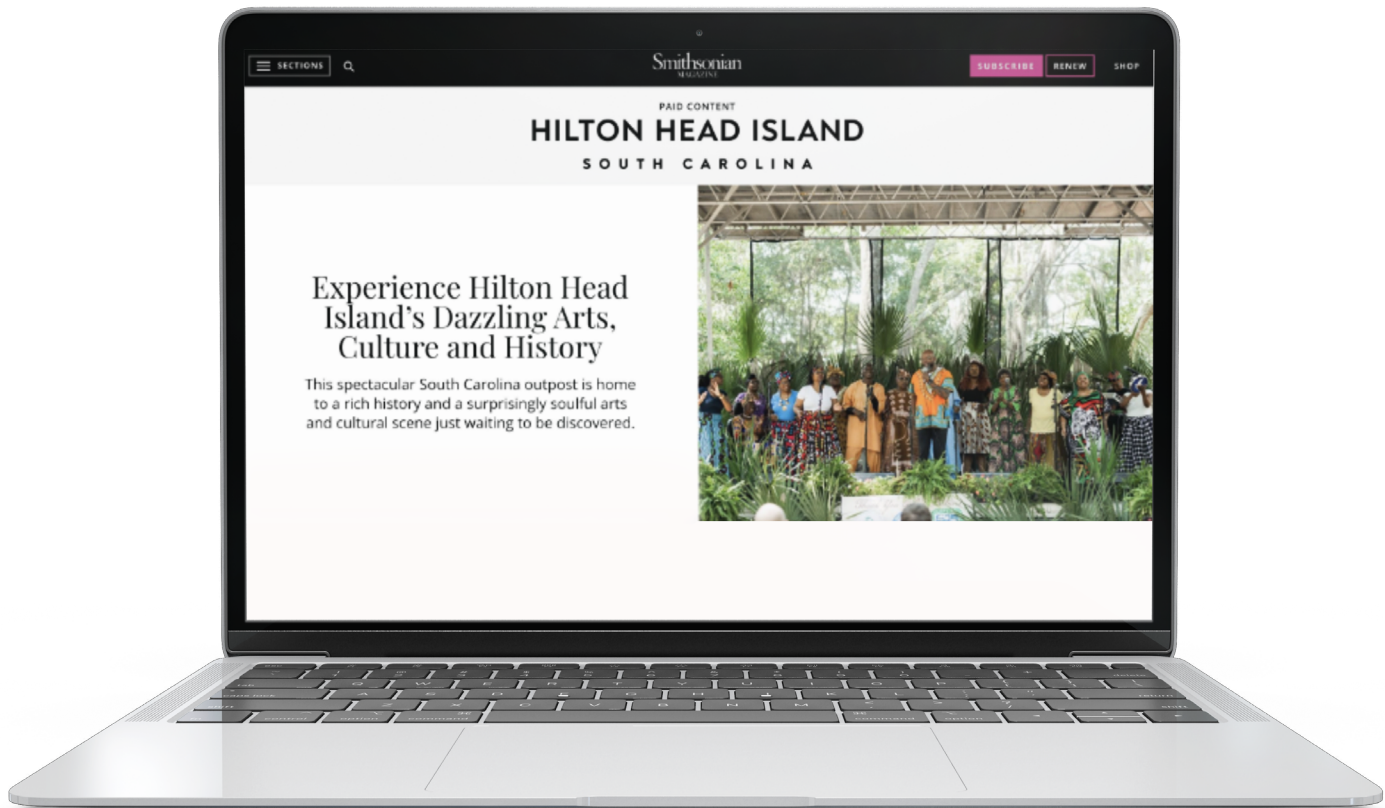
- » For Different Demographics
- » For Different Interests
- » For Different Vacation Lengths

LEISURE MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

It is no secret that the popularity of Hilton Head Island as a destination continues to increase. Hilton Head Island is well positioned with the product travelers are looking to experience. Recent accolades from *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Southern Living* are proof that Hilton Head Island is a global brand in regards to visitors wishing to experience the Lowcountry. Accolades earned by the destination bring our brand to the top which helps to enhance the overall awareness of Hilton Head Island as a “must-visit” destination. We will continue to infuse the local community into our media efforts that allows the consumer to connect with the destination and inspire them to travel to Hilton Head Island to discover more.

Travel + Leisure and *Condé Nast Traveler*, with their recognizable and highly coveted Reader’s Choice Award accolade platforms, assist in the destination’s efforts to cut through the ever increasing noise within the global travel sector. Securing a third party endorsement, at this level further solidifies the destination and establishes Hilton Head Island top of mind of a traveler’s consideration set.

Today’s travelers, specifically seeking upscale, shoulder-season travel, have a myriad of destination choices. By utilizing these platforms and endorsements to further amplify our voice, we are able to tell our brand story and leverage our overall marketing to help differentiate the destination from the competitive set and drive awareness and visitation to Hilton Head Island.



MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

Below are examples of media partnerships we will continue to leverage. As additional opportunities arise throughout the year with cooperative partnerships these efforts could be expanded into other media brands.

DEPARTURES

BY THE NUMBERS

95.4B
TRAVEL

\$19.4B
FASHION &
ACCESSORIES

\$13.9B
AIRLINES

\$2.4B
WINE & SPIRITS

\$18B
LODGING

\$383.6B
OVERALL CARD
MEMBER SPEND

35-64
CARD MEMBER
AGE RANGE

\$5.7B
JEWELRY & WATCHES

NY | LA | MIA | ATL | SF
TOP FIVE CITIES

AUDIENCE

BY THE NUMBERS

9.9MM
AFFLUENT AUDIENCE

962,867
CIRCULATION

11.3MM
DIGITAL UVS

15.7MM
SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

BY THE NUMBERS

12.8MM
UNIQUE VISITORS

2:00-5:00+
AVERAGE MINUTES
SPENT WITH NATIVE
CONTENT

27.7MM
VIEWS

3:13
AVERAGE MINUTES
SPENT ON A PAGE

CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER

BY THE NUMBERS

\$11B
SPENT ON TRAVEL

1.2X
LUXURY TRAVELERS

1.5X
CULTURE SEEKERS

1.3X
CULINARY TRAVELERS

3.2M
PRINT READERS

4.6M
AVG. MONTHLY
DIGITAL UNIQUES

22M
AVG. MONTHLY
VIDEO VIEWS

9M
SOCIAL FOLLOWERS

KINGDOM

BY THE NUMBERS

761K
TOTAL READERSHIP

171K
SOCIAL FOLLOWERS

205K
PRINT DISTRIBUTION

60K
EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL

DESTINATION PUBLIC RELATIONS

In 2024-2025, the Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce will employ a forward-looking strategic and thoughtful public relations plan that is designed to distinguish Hilton Head Island (HHI) from competitors and convert first-time visitors to repeat guests.

Despite economic challenges, travel has returned to pre-pandemic levels, confirming consumers' priorities and importance on travel. However, new consumer behaviors have emerged, and the media landscape remains ever-changing. Travelers are looking to vacation where they can truly embrace the destination—both physically and culturally—through “slow travel.” Plus, consumers continue to prioritize affordability and accessibility via shoulder season opportunities. These preferences align with HHI's offerings, and we'll work to elevate the Island's Lowcountry appeal to attract travelers.

Along with executing our tried-and-true PR tactics, we'll leverage our strong media relationships and trends to ensure HHI remains in consideration as a must-visit domestic Island destination.

MEDIA LANDSCAPE

We continuously monitor industry changes and trends that dictate the ever-evolving landscape to adapt accordingly. Key factors driving current changes across the industry include:

MEDIA LAYOFFS: As of 2024, there have been multiple walk outs and rounds of media layoffs at national media publications, such as Conde Nast Traveler, VOGUE, Forbes, National Geographic, Business Insider and more. As such, we anticipate that on-staff writers will endure more competition for stories and be strapped for time as they take on additional beats and assignments. We'll see an increased reliance on freelancers and contributors, as well as fewer original stories and more syndication.

CROWDED MEDIA ENVIRONMENT: Grabbing consumer attention is harder than it's ever been, with audiences overloaded with content, so much so that the average person scrolls through an average of 300 feet of digital content every day.

We'll ensure that HHI breaks through culturally across mediums by engaging print, digital, broadcast and social platforms, and focus on garnering stand-alone feature stories that differentiate the Island amongst competitors.

BOOKED AND TRAVELING: Journalists are back on the road and their calendars are often booked up 6 months in advance. As such, we'll need to continue to look ahead to secure IPTs and additional media visits earlier than usual.

TRENDS TO CONSIDER FOR HILTON HEAD

Shifts in consumer habits present opportunities for HHI to leverage existing assets and tap into current and anticipated trends, such as:

SLOW TRAVEL: Consumers are opting to slow down, enjoy the present and immerse themselves in a destination's daily rhythms instead of rushing from one tourist spot to the next.

SHOULDER SEASON POPULARITY: Consumers are choosing to travel during shoulder seasons to avoid crowds and costs

DESTINATION DUPES: Travelers are looking for “destination dupes” that allow them to swap out more expensive and far-flung destinations to save money and avoid the crowds.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL: Younger demographics want to make an impact on the destination they visit, and plan to continue prioritizing sustainable and travel.

TARGET AUDIENCES

While our targets are familiar, we'll find new and engaging verticals to reach audiences that are most likely to travel and return to Hilton Head Island:

FAMILIES AND GROUPS: Family travel will remain top of mind, especially considering new travel trends such as skip-gen travel, where grandparents are taking their grandkids on vacation.

REGIONAL DRIVE MARKETS: As consumers prioritize affordability and accessibility, we'll engage media in local drive markets such as Atlanta and Florida.

HIGH VALUE CONSUMERS: We'll connect with consumers with more disposable incomes by targeting luxury publications to promote the Island's bespoke experiences.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

We've aligned with Weber Shandwick on priority angles across key verticals that we believe provide potential for growth opportunities, high consumer interest and strong mediability, to highlight HHI's unique culture, allure, and more:

HISTORY/GULLAH CULTURE: Elevate the Gullah-Geechee community via compelling storytelling angles and spokespeople to comment on their past, present and future.

ECOTOURISM: Leverage the Island's history as the country's first eco-planned community and showcase the efforts to support the local community, such as turtle conservation and oyster reclamation.

ARTS AND CULTURE: Encourage visitation to museums and marquee events including on-Island experiences, such as:

- RBC Heritage PGA TOUR Tournament
- Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance
- Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival

WELLNESS AND RECREATION: Position the Island's variety of recreational offerings including but limited to its miles of bike paths, white sand beaches, sports such as pickleball and tennis. Highlight the variety of wellness experiences available to travelers, including properties such as Hilton Head Health.

CULINARY: Spotlight robust culinary scene from Gullah cuisine to local seafood and local chef stories.

2024-2025 PR TACTICS

We'll employ a variety of PR tactics to seamlessly spread destination news far and wide throughout the year. Efforts will include:

VISITING JOURNALIST/INFLUENCER PROGRAM:

Craft narratives that will meaningfully resonate with travelers by customizing media and influencer itineraries that highlight priority verticals and evergreen offerings.

PAID INFLUENCER PROGRAM: Strategically identify influencers with dedicated audiences for paid influencer partnership opportunities that will inspire travel to HHI across Instagram and TikTok.

ALWAYS-ON MEDIA RELATIONS: Develop timely news bureau engine to pitch HHI's diverse offerings as well news jack larger consumer moments and incentivize travel to the destination.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND SPECIAL

PROJECTS: Encourage travel by partnering with like-minded brands that will engage new and existing audiences and elevate HHI in cultural conversations with multiple touchpoints and scalable executions.





MEETINGS & GROUP SALES

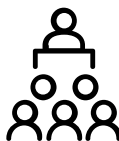
The meetings and group industry continues to recover, and Hilton Head Island offers a unique opportunity for groups of all sizes.

Hilton Head Island is well positioned to provide the ideal environment as a destination that leads with sustainability and ecotourism as one of its key core values. Following the vision of Charles Fraser, the forward-thinking developer that came to the island establishing the highest land planning standards: to keep this lush sea island clean and vibrant for the thousands of residents and visitors who enjoy it every year.



Corporate Hosting

Whether you're hosting a small executive meeting or a large conference, our versatile facilities can be tailored to suit your requirements, ensuring a seamless and successful event.



Association Events

Inspire and energize your attendees. Collaborate, build relationships, innovate, and create in our one-of-a-kind atmosphere.



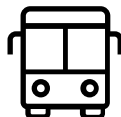
Reunions

The Lowcountry landscape was made for reunions. Accessible, affordable, and delightfully different, along with all the must-haves for a perfect get-together.



Family & Military Groups

Operation Unwind. From a weekend getaway for two, large family gatherings and everything in between, affordable fun and relaxation awaits.



Motorcoach Tours

Our dynamic destination is a short drive from Beaufort, Savannah, and Charleston—with wonderful accommodations, amenities, and experiences for everyone.



Religious Groups

Welcoming, warm, and relaxed settings create the perfect destination for spiritual nourishment, a sense of belonging and connection with like-minded individuals.



Government Groups

Host representatives from various government organizations to discuss policies, initiatives, and challenges, in order to seek innovative solutions.





INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

OUR STRATEGY

The international market is open, potential guests from Canada and Europe eager to visit our shores. Internationally, we see potential guests booking travel further ahead, while a desire for luxury and experiences continues to dominate the landscape. Those in the international, upper-tier household income bracket we are already targeting, are ready to travel and splurge.

With strong partnerships with the U.S. Travel Association and Brand USA, we will continue to tap into the international market through tradeshows, working closely with our accommodation partners for packaged opportunities to secure desirable rates to assist with promoting our destination. Available offers and packages will focus on key travel timeframes for this segment and include curated programs and events of this lost business segment due to COVID-19.

COLLATERAL AND FULFILLMENT

The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau develops and produces the Official Hilton Head Island Vacation Planner. This print and digital publication is our primary fulfillment piece and a comprehensive guide to what to see and do, where to stay, dining, activities and more on Hilton Head Island and in our region.

As travel trends have shifted and domestic travel to new destinations has increased, the Vacation Planner is a critical first touchpoint with potential visitors. Telling a story through stunning photography and compelling content is an imperative component to the travel journey process that ultimately leads to a conversion with our partners. This “coffee table” piece allows our visitors to visualize their vacation and discover the destination, the reason for our many accolades, and imagine themselves here vacationing on America’s Favorite Island®. In addition to working with a publisher, our in house marketing staff provides the business directory, event calendar, local photography, editorial content management, editorial review and proofreading for this asset.

PROMOTIONS AND BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION

Included in our budget is a dedicated campaign for the promotion of the Vacation Planner for visitors to request a guide as well as for fulfillment and distribution costs.

The books are distributed through:

- » Online requests
- » Phone inquiries
- » Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
- » Hilton Head Island Airport
- » South Carolina Welcome Centers
- » AAA offices nationwide
- » Hotel partners
- » Tradeshows
- » Events
- » Media



In partnership with the Lowcountry Golf Club Owners Association (LGCOA), we also include their Official Golf Vacation Planner with our planner when requested.



OUR COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE

The details outlined above map our consistent effort to promote Hilton Head Island as a destination suitable for anyone who wants to experience it, while ensuring preservation and conservation is at the forefront of everything we do. Our execution of our goals and the integration of our destination values throughout all out-marketing efforts are done in support of our Community Cornerstone Plan.



APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Board of Directors & DMO Marketing Council

DEMOGRAPHICS

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN

2023 Performance, Goals 1-5

MMGY INTELLIGENCE

Community Sentiment Survey Executive Summary, Wave 3

OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS, COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

2023 Visitor Profile Study

OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS, COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

2023 Estimated Total Impact of Tourism in
Hilton Head Island on Beaufort County

VERB INTERACTIVE

2023 Digital and Social Media Marketing Recap

WEBER SHANDWICK

2023 Public Relations Recap



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

FULFILLMENT

Fulfillment - The number of physical vacation planners distributed from requests throughout multiple platforms: online, media and home inquiries. In addition, we also distribute the planner to state and local welcome centers, airports, along with tradeshow and promotional events.

HOTEL, HOME & VILLA OCCUPANCY

Corporate Housing - Lodging created by local businesses and organizations specifically to house seasonal workers.

Occupancy - Used within the accommodations industry to gauge the health of tourism. Occupancy percentage is calculated by dividing the occupied rooms by total room supply.

ADR (Average Daily Rate) - Metric widely used to indicate the average realized room rental per day. ADR is calculated by dividing the room revenue by the total rooms sold.

RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) - Used to gauge industry health and is calculated by dividing the total room revenue by total room supply within a specific time period.

Corporate Hosting - A corporate event is an event that is sponsored by a company within a destination. The event focuses on either the employees or the clients of the company. Corporate events can be anything from a holiday party to an award ceremony.

Association Events - A group of people who work in the same industry. They aim to promote their profession, the interests of people and organizations in that profession, and the public interest. They gather regularly, e.g. monthly, quarterly, annually.

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

Paid Media - Paid promotional efforts, such as advertising and sponsored content, where payment is made to third parties for placement across various channels.

HHI - Household Income noted in Media Partnership section

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Earned Media - Refers to the instances when a destination or brand is featured in content without direct payment.

Impressions - This metric quantifies the number of times destination content has been viewed.

Ad Values - Sometimes known as AVE, or ad value equivalency, it's a calculation that estimates the value of a story or mention by comparing it to the cost of a comparable ad in the outlet for that coverage.

Mentions - Any instance where a brand or individual is discussed in various media, including news articles, social media posts, blogs, and interviews. These mentions contribute to overall visibility and help assess the impact of communication efforts.

UVPM (Unique Visitors per Month) - This metric represents the number of visitors to a media outlet.

Heritage Travel - A form of tourism in which individuals or groups visit destinations primarily to explore and connect with their cultural, historical, or familial heritage. This type of travel often involves visiting ancestral hometowns, landmarks, museums, historical sites, and other places significant to one's cultural or familial background.

Sustainable Travel - Refers to responsible travel practices that minimize negative impacts on the environment, preserve cultural heritage, and benefit local communities economically and socially.

Shoulder Season - Refers to the period between the peak and off-peak seasons in travel and tourism. During this time, there is a decrease in tourist activity compared to the peak season, but it's still more active than the off-peak season.

REPORTING PLATFORMS

2-Source Report - The 2-source report is an aggregated report of both Home and Villa and Hotel data.

Keydata - Keydata is a real time home and villa platform that allows users to view on the books and historical villa data.

STR - Smith Travel Research (STR).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Impressions - The amount of times your content was seen across a feed or in search terms.

Engagements - A measurement on how much your audience interacts with your content. This can be measured in likes, comments, shares, etc.

Total Audience - Number of followers across each platform combined.

UGC (User Generated Content) - Content captured by users online, who have given permission to have their content reposted.

WEBSITE PERFORMANCE

Demand Generation - The strategic efforts aimed at creating interest and awareness among potential customers for a product or service. It involves utilizing various digital channels and tactics to attract, engage, and ultimately convert prospects into leads or customers.

Demand Capture - The strategic efforts aimed to target individuals who are already actively seeking your brand with the goal of converting those individuals.

Visits - A website visit in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) refers to a period of user interaction with a website. Visits help measure user engagement and interactions on a website within a specific time frame.

User(s) - Website users in Google Analytics 4 (GA4) represent individual visitors or devices that access a website within a specified time period. Each user is identified by a unique identifier, allowing GA4 to track and analyze the behavior of distinct individuals or devices interacting with the site.

Partner Referrals - This metric refers to external link clicks to partner websites from ads or partner listings throughout the Hilton Head Island website. This helps quantify how many potential visitors we are connecting to local businesses.



2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIR

Jay Wiendl

The Beach House,
Hilton Head Island

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Susana Cook

Hilton Garden Inn

VICE CHAIR, BLUFFTON REGIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

Mary Lee Carns

VP Advancement & Workforce
Development

VICE CHAIR, BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Bob Cosgrove

Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island

VICE CHAIR, BUSINESS WORKFORCE COALITION

Lola Campbell, Esq.

Binya Boutique, LLC

VICE CHAIR, FINANCE

Ray Warco

Center for Strategic Planning -
USCB

VICE CHAIR, MEMBERSHIP

Diana McDougall

Coastal States Bank

VICE CHAIR, PUBLIC POLICY

Ahmad Ward

Historic Mitchelville
Freedom Park

VICE CHAIR, VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

Mike Tighe

Westin Hilton Head Island
Resort & Spa

PRESIDENT & CEO

William G. Miles, IOM, CCE

Hilton Head Island-Bluffton
Chamber of Commerce

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jean Beck, RCE

Hilton Head Area REALTORS®

Steve Birdwell

The Sea Pines Resort

Wayne Boutwell

Encompass Health Rehab.
Hospital of Bluffton

Andrea Bragg

Forsythe Jewelers

Joel Braun

Hargray

Joe Caruso

Disney's Hilton Head
Island Resort

Andrew Carmines

Hudson's Seafood House
on the Docks

Chris Corkern

Prudential Services

Berl Davis

Palmetto Electric
Cooperative

Caleb Graham

Ocean Oak Resort by
Hilton Grand Vacations

Greg Kelly

Savannah/Hilton Head
International Airport

John McGaunn

Montage Palmetto Bluff

Walter Nester

Burr & Forman

Jon Rembold

Hilton Head Island Airport

Andrew Schumacher

Palmetto Dunes P.O.A.

Joel Taylor

Hilton Head Regional Healthcare

Steve Wilmot

Heritage Classic Foundation

Alan Wolf

SERG Restaurant Group

FY 2024-2025 MARKETING COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Hilton Head Island Marketing Council serves as an advisory and advocacy committee to the Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau. The Council represents cross sections of the island's diverse travel and tourism industry and guides the planning and execution of the annual Destination Marketing Plan. The committee monitors the plan's effectiveness and results making recommendations for improvements and enhancements when needed.

Vice Chairman, Visitor & Convention Bureau

Mike Tighe

Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa

Arts Seat

Natalie Harvey

Director of Cultural Affairs
Town of Hilton Head Island

Attractions Seat

Rex Garniewicz, Ph.D.

President & CEO
Coastal Discovery Museum

Convention Property Seat

Teresa Manzolillo

Director of Sales and Marketing
Hilton Beachfront
Resort and Spa

Convention Property Seat

OPEN

Cultural/ Historical Seat

Ahmad Ward

Executive Director, Historic
Mitchelville Freedom Park

Ecotourism Seat

Mike Overton

Founder & CEO
Outside Brands

Entertainment Seat

Ryan Larson

Director of Marketing
SERG Group

Festival & Event Seat

Chris Brewer

President
Hilton Head Island Concours
d'Elegance & Motoring Festival

Golf Seat

Brad Marra

Chief Operating Officer
Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort

Home & Villa Seat

Dru Brown

Managing Partner
Island Time Hilton Head

Outdoor Recreation/ Sports

Julie Jilly

Vice President
Professional Tennis Registry

Restaurant Seat

Catherine Reilley

Director of Marketing
and Operations
Coastal Restaurants & Bars (CRAB)

Retail Seat

Beth Patton

Marketing Manager
Forsythe Jewelers

Transportation & Tours Seat

Lori Lynah

Director of Marketing and
Air Service Development
Savannah/Hilton Head International
Airport

Transportation & Tours Seat

Jon Rembold

Airports Director
Hilton Head Island Airport/Beaufort
Executive Airport

Town Council

Councilman Alex Brown

Ward 1

Town Representatives

Angie Stone

Assistant Town Manager
Town of Hilton Head Island

Andrew Davis

Marketing & Communications Director
Town of Hilton Head Island

Kelly Spinella

Marketing & Brand Manager
Town of Hilton Head Island

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN

2024-2026

FOSTER EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Aligning the priorities of residents, industry stakeholders, small business, community groups and government organizations that balance and enhance resident quality of life and overall destination performance.

INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Develop social, cultural and environmental sustainability initiatives to engage locals and visitors.	Continue to build out and promote The Promise campaign, a VCB initiative that promotes the importance of our environment and efforts to protect and preserve our delicate ecosystem. Bring awareness to environmental programs; e.g. Loggerhead Sea Turtles, Dolphins, Piping Plovers through The Promise campaign, through touchpoints such as a Sustainability Tool Kit and e-Commerce platform. Partner with Coastal Discovery Museum, Outside Foundation, Sea Turtle Patrol, & Office of Cultural Affairs creating in-depth programming to further emphasize the importance of our environment.
Continue ongoing resident sentiment survey program that measures and tracks support for the local visitor economy. Publish the results on a regular basis for ongoing conversation.	Implement annual resident sentiment survey. Present findings to key stakeholders; Town, residents, businesses partners, etc. Benchmark and update resident sentiment results annually.
Conduct live and virtual community speaking engagements, community updates regarding tourism and surveys on a regular basis to gain resident feedback on quality of life.	Host bi-annual community engagement events. Regular cadence of Chamber driven communications to local businesses, e.g. Monthly Power Hour, Monday Briefing, Chamber social, Chamber website, email campaign, regional and local media outlets. Designated resident & community communications, outreach and informational meetings. Deployment of annual resident sentiment surveys.
Develop community-wide programs to increase awareness and support of tourism & hospitality as a key economic driver providing growth opportunities for all.	Connect with USCB and develop a Brand Boot Camp program. These could be extensions of the existing Island Ambassador Program or a hybrid program. In partnership with USCB, create a Brand Tool Kit to complement the program. Once a business engages with the program, the BrandTool Kit would be a leave behind local businesses could use to showcase through their channels. Tourism economy health check -town integration/ cadence 1x per year.
Further invest in data management platforms and community crowdsourcing tools to ensure intelligent, data-driven decision making, and resident priorities across all levels of the public and private sector.	Data management platform examples: Zartico, Simpleview, Keydata. Hiring dedicated headcount to support these new platforms and analytics. Liaise with community counterparts to share insights and promote a data-driven ecosystem for the destination.

TIMING



LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber		•		15% of local businesses featuring promise seals (all businesses).
Town/Chamber/ Businesses		•		Number of Sustainable Toolkit downloads/engagements.
Chamber		•		Create programs with partners with budget to support.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber	•	•	•	Growth in number of surveys completed YoY.
Chamber	•	•	•	Completion of presentations to stakeholders annually.
Chamber	•	•	•	Monitor YoY increase/ decrease in sentiment and address accordingly.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber	•			Event participant numbers.
Chamber	•			Impressions & engagement, and open rate.
Chamber	•			Number of meetings held. Number of attendees, reach and open rate.
Chamber	•			Number of surveys sent. Number of surveys completed.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber		•		Development of Brand Boot Camp Program in partnership with USCB.
Chamber			•	10% of island businesses have engaged with the Brand Boot Camp program and are using the Brand Tool Kit.
Chamber/Town	•			Contract deliverable, 1x per year.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber	•			Establish platforms and set up reporting efforts (internal to Chamber).
Chamber		•		Hiring completed.
Chamber		•		Create comprehensive reports and discuss and establish cadence for reporting out and sharing insights.

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN (CONTINUED)

2024-2026

ATTRACT EXTRAORDINARY TALENT

Resident quality of life and a positive visitor economy and brand are directly proportional to the quality of the local workforce. This must be prioritized more than ever before to ensure quality of life for residents and a positive visitor experience.

INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Assist in the awareness of career opportunities and recruitment of talent for all residents and throughout the region.	Start a local job sourcing platform pulling in local career opportunities. Simultaneously position the Lowcountry lifestyle and real estate opportunities within this framework. e.g. aggregate all real estate listings, pull in VCB channels to showcase lifestyle. Showcase the diversity of career opportunities that exist throughout the destination.
Assess availability of existing structures and government-owned land to potentially develop workforce housing on/off island.	Chamber to establish a working relationship with the Affordable Housing Committee to understand current efforts in place, plan for future efforts, and overall need that Hilton Head Island can support. Town and Chamber representatives work closely to understand the private initiatives on island that are, or have implemented, workforce housing for their employees. exp: The Sea Pines Resort Town works to identify grants and other funding opportunities to support affordable workforce housing efforts on island.
Work in partnership and enhance industry workforce development initiatives with the public sector, area schools, and industry partners.	Introduce new, formalized internship programs within the Lowcountry that include diverse offerings and hiring opportunities postinternship. Work to enhance presence with TCL/ Culinary Institute/ USCB/ high school guidance counselors/ career fairs in an effort to build support for tourism and hospitality as a long-term viable career. Chamber's continued support of SC Apprentice Program, Chamber Junior and Senior Leadership programs that support the retention efforts regarding workforce and the tourism industry for this region.
Develop strategic understanding of requirements for hiring senior and strategic talent to support local businesses in their talent search.	Survey large, local hospitality businesses (The Sea Pines Resort etc.) and compile resourcing roadmap for required senior-level and strategic talent. Conduct salary analysis and competitive hiring practices in comparable communities. Understand and support collaborative efforts to ensure a competitive landscape on salaries, benefits and lifestyle opportunities.
Enhance and promote awareness of hospitality and cultural training programs in collaboration with local educational institutions and industry partners.	Establish a joint social media campaign between the Town and Chamber that speaks to the Live, Work, Play opportunities on Hilton Head Island. Create and promote a tourism & hospitality industry recruitment video.

TIMING



LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber/Town		•		Successful launch of job portal.
Town/Private Partner		•		Establish relationships with local realtors / communities and work to pull in their listings and community detail to the site.
Town		•		The platform shows many different types of job options with a filter feature.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/ Chamber		•		Relationship established between the Town, the Chamber, and the Committee.
Town/Private Partner/ Chamber		•		Town and Chamber have identified and established relationships with island partners.
Town/ Chamber		•		10% of funding opportunities identified to support overarching plan.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Beaufort County/ Town/ Chamber		•		Social impressions and engagements
Beaufort County/ Town/ Chamber	•			
Chamber	•			Social impressions and engagements

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/Private Partner/ Chamber		•		Establish base understanding and create a Hilton Head Island senior-level recruitment handbook.
Town/Private Partner/ Chamber		•		Report on comparable towns/cities and their hiring efforts.
Town/Private Partner/ Chamber			•	Report out on partner offerings/ packages in efforts to establish competitive effort for recruitment.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber/Town		•		Create and implement program. Establish key metrics for measurement.
Chamber/Town		•		Confirm creation of video and plan to support promotion.

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN (CONTINUED)

2024-2026

DIVERSIFY THE VISITOR & LOCAL EXPERIENCE YEAR-ROUND

More varied and integrated culinary, arts, cultural, historical, wellness, active, retail and evening experiences will attract high-value visitors who spend more, stay longer, and explore more of the destination.

INITIATIVES

Develop and promote the entirety of Hilton Head Island as a connected and easily navigable ecosystem of parks, beaches, and other outdoor spaces, as outlined in the Parks & Rec Master Plan and dispersion tactics.

Develop a local culinary, arts & cultural network/ trail to improve regional connectivity, showcase small businesses and unique local history, drive visitor dispersal, and provide suggestions for inclement weather days.

Enhance and support the historic and cultural locations on the island-programming and promotion.

Diversify the visitor by sharing different perspectives and representation across marketing touchpoints.

TACTICS

Onsite QR code or App mapping technology designed to lead visitors deeper into the destination and to help them discover new-to-them experiences.

Influencer partnerships designed to showcase itineraries based on visitor interest. Work with partners to make these experiences plannable, bookable, and part of a cohesive itinerary.

Immersive itineraries distributed through personalized media and technology platforms.

Develop mapped itineraries that can be filtered by interest/topic.

Sister partnerships/exchanges and sharing of ideas to create a FIC product.

Continue to bring forward Gullah cuisine and highlight locations, chefs and dishes that represent the rich history of our area/region.

Continued partnership with Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park through paid media, creative campaign strategy, and marketing roadmap.

Continue to develop art, culture and history tour programming with interactive interpretive panels that can be used to build awareness for the artist, their products and the importance of their role in enhancing the culture of the destination.

Continue the promotion of performing arts and cultural programming.

Increase diversified representation in marketing materials through a new photoshoot showcasing diverse talent.

Amplify local voices who can tell potential visitors about our culture and unique experiences in authentic ways through digital videos, email newsletters, and blogs.

Work with content creators and influencers who provide unique and diverse perspectives on travel.

TIMING



LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber/Private Partner/Town		•		Partner with Town on QR code platform, content creation and strategy for partner placement.
Chamber/ Private Partner		•		Influencer partnership secured and itinerary efforts in place for capture.
Chamber/ Private Partner			•	Itinerary page sessions, engagement and conversions.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber		•		Details on how many itineraries have been developed. Report out on number of engagements/sessions for this program.
TCL/ Private Partners		•		Development of a FIC product.
Chamber/Gullah Community		•		Impressions and engagement on platforms where content is placed.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Stakeholder/Town/ Chamber		•		Develop a robust marketing campaign. Measure and report out on earned media coverage. Report out on website sessions.
Stakeholder/Town/ Chamber		•		Partner with the Office of Cultural Affairs to identify, outreach and confirm partners for this program.
Chamber		•		Report out on website sessions to arts & culture content.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber	•			Completion of shoot Q1 FY23
Chamber	•			Number of locals involved in program/sessions to their content
Chamber		•		Establish an Influencer program: details of campaign, identify talent and budget

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN (CONTINUED)

2024-2026

MODERNIZE MEETING & EVENT CAPABILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Meeting and event planners today have a vast array of new technologies to drive audience engagement and business development. Destinations and their industry partners must have the required infrastructure and shared vision to deliver the event experience that today’s attendees expect.

INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Develop an arts, cultural & entertainment district with recreation and event facilities appropriately designed to fit our community and development aesthetic.	Bring the Parks and Rec Master Plan forward and learn about upcoming integration touchpoints and opportunities. Develop branding and marketing approach for an arts, cultural & entertainment district.
Partner with the Town of Hilton Head Island on building out a strategy for Island branding.	Collaborate with the Town of Hilton Head Island to create a cohesive branding strategy for the island.
Seek a 5-star property or resort designation to further elevate the Hilton Head Island brand in the luxury leisure and group marketplace.	Develop outreach plan and strategy for hospitality brands that align with Hilton Head Island's current offerings and existing corporate presence on-island. (For example, this initiative would be designed to plan and pitch Hilton Head Island to corporations such as Marriott to consider an Autograph Collection property on-island).
Evaluate current incentives for investment in new and existing venue capital to compete with other like-size coastal destinations.	Conduct competitive assessment to evaluate our destination compared to other like-minded destinations and competitive product offerings. Collaborate with our local and state representatives to inform, educate and influence decisions as it relates to capital investment and infrastructure funding. Work to develop holistic economic development strategy influenced by the 10-year destination management plan.

TIMING

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/ Chamber		•		Schedule time with the Town Staff/ Lead POC to walk through the Parks & Rec Plan.
Chamber/Town			•	Scope of work established that includes timing, assets and budget.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/ Chamber		•		Identify Town Staff POC and work with them to understand and determine the scope of work and budget for this project.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/Private Partner			•	Support the development/ redevelopment of a 5-star property.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber/ Town/ Private Partners	•			Competitive assessment presentation.
Chamber/ Town/ Private Partners	•			Demonstrable influence on infrastructure decisions.
Chamber/ Town/ Private Partners			•	Economic strategy developed.

STRATEGY 1

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONE PLAN (CONTINUED)

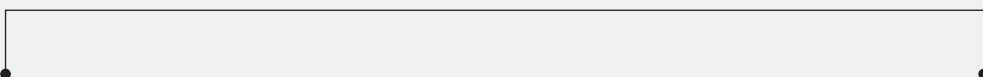
2024-2026

IMPROVE MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Mobility and connectivity support greater opportunities for residents, visitors, and industry stakeholders. Continue to connect visitors and local businesses, both physically and digitally, to drive resident satisfaction, higher conversion, and increase incremental sales.

INITIATIVES	TACTICS
Upgrade broadband infrastructure with 5G/ Ultra wideband capacity across gated, non-gated communities, business plazas, and public spaces.	Conduct needs assessment by evaluating current infrastructure. Evaluate solutions through collaboration with partners throughout the destination. Develop and implement strategy for delivering 5G/ Ultra wideband throughout the destination.
Promote multimodule access to public transportation in support of local resident and visitor movement to/ from the island as well as throughout the island.	Develop dedicated marketing campaign for visitors promoting the trolley system/ integration in market.
Increase rideshare and airport transportation options.	Set up meetings with rideshare companies to discuss driver recruitment strategies and partnership opportunities. Prepare and release RFP for official regional shuttle/bus services. Work with key stakeholders and the community to influence current rideshare regulations and constraints that limit cross-state transportation opportunities.

TIMING



LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber		•		Scope, budget, implement and report out on an assessment.
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber			•	Identify top three viable options to bring forward for further review.
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber			•	Strategy and rollout plan.

LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Chamber/Town/ Palmetto Breeze			•	Marketing campaign launch Campaign impressions and sessions Ridership increase

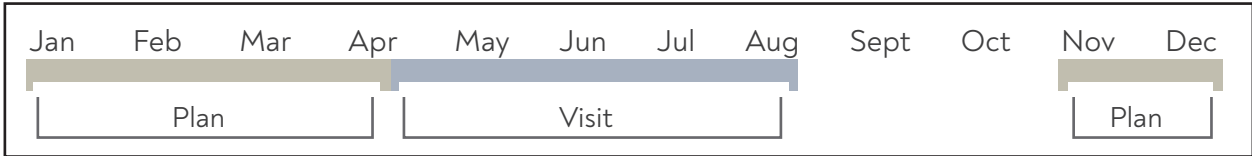
LEAD	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	KPIs
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber		•		Engage three rideshare partners.
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber	•			RFP responses and successful bidding process.
Town/ Private Sector/ Chamber			•	Identification of ways to work alongside rideshare regulations and serve residents and visitors.



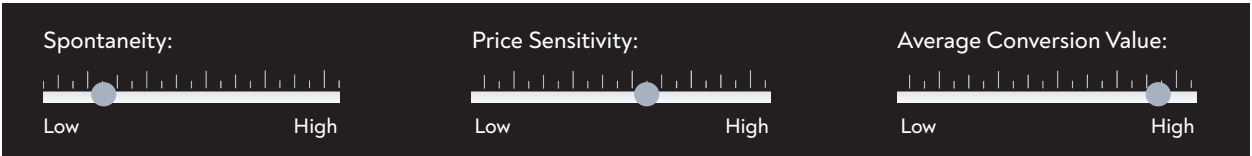
FAMILY

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a vacation spot that will please everyone during the school holidays.



FAMILY TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE

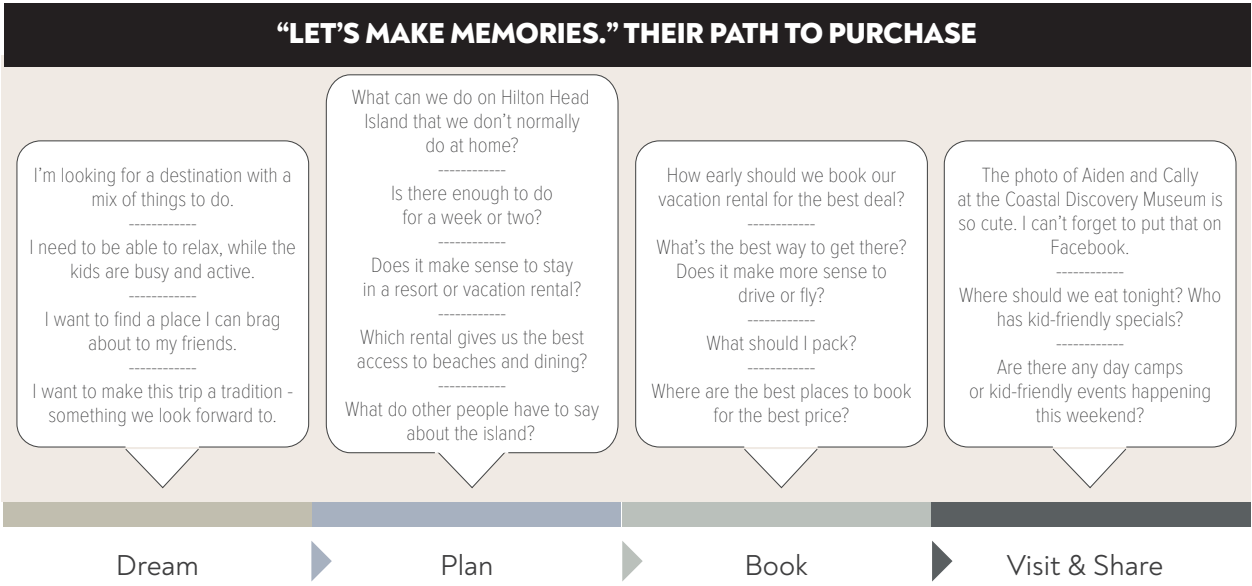
- ★ Upscale & Status Oriented
- 🏠 Values Family Time
- ❤️ Creating a Legacy
- 🍏 Active & Health Conscious

PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

- Vacation Rentals & Resorts
- Beach & Water Activities
- Biking & Hiking
- Tennis & Pickleball
- Festivals & Events
- Kid-friendly Dining
- Museums & Day Camps

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

- Facebook Videos
- Instagram
- TripAdvisor
- TV
- Online Video
- Forums & Blogs
- Pinterest

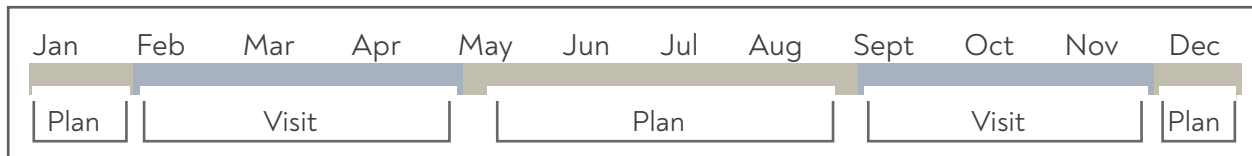




ARTS, HISTORY & CULTURE

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

To explore cultural attractions, historical sites and the local arts scene.



ARTS, HISTORY & CULTURE TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE


Values
Learning
& Authenticity


Image
Conscious


Seeking an
Immersive
Experience


Upscale
& Status
Oriented

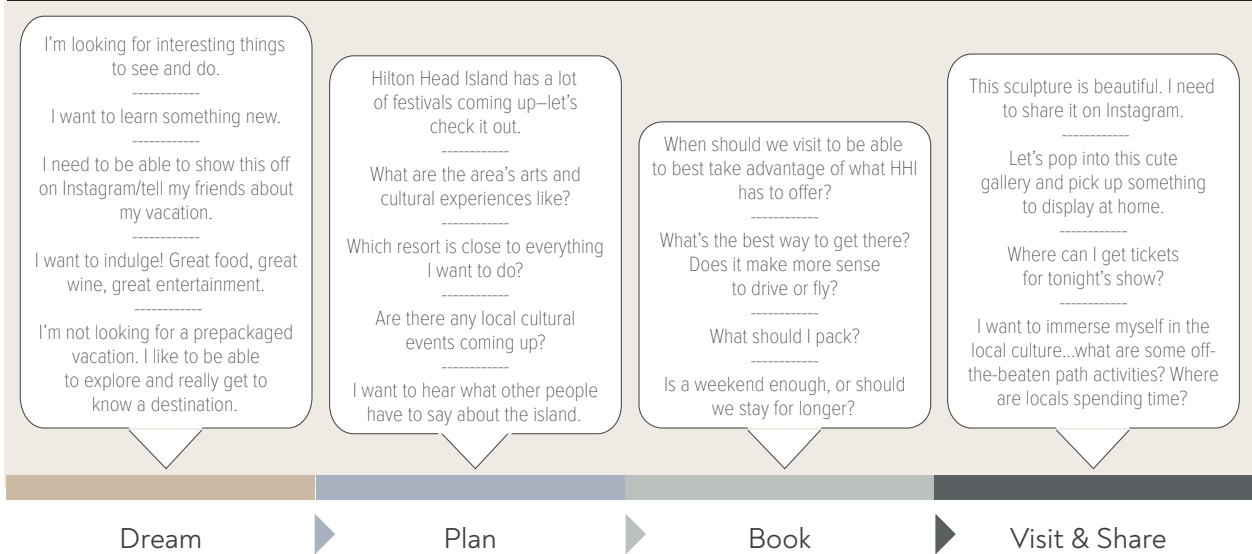
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Historical Attractions
Art Galleries
Local Culture
Culinary Experiences
Festivals & Events
Theater
Music

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

Facebook Videos
Instagram
TripAdvisor
Online Video
Forums & Blogs
Pinterest
Earned Media (Print/Digital)

"EXPERIENCES ARE GREATER THAN THINGS." THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE

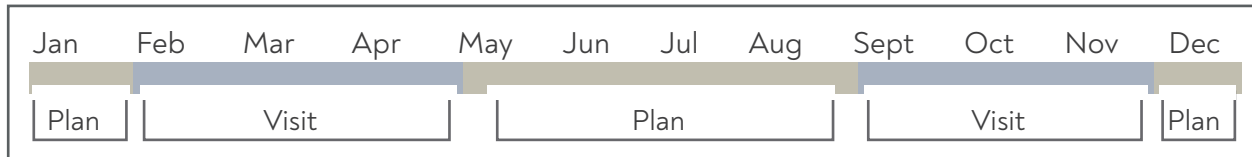




WELLNESS TRAVELER

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a getaway that will accommodate relaxation and rejuvenation, and allow them to prioritize their healthy lifestyle.



ARTS, HISTORY & CULTURE TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE



Upscale
& Status
Oriented



Active & Health
Conscious



Enjoys the
Finer Things



Leisure
Lovers

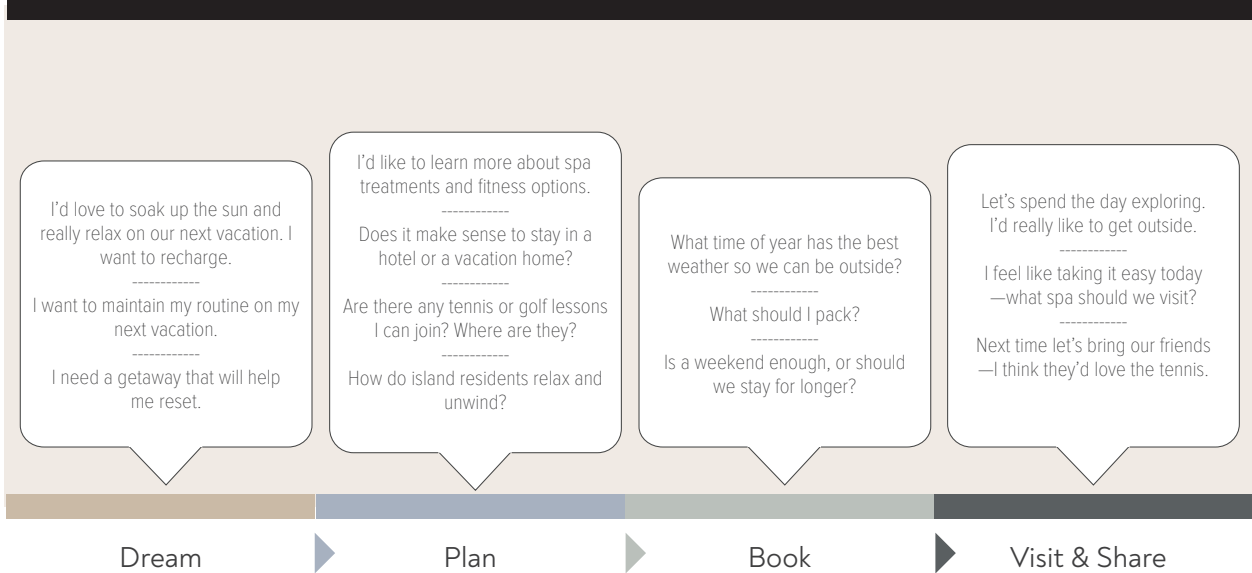
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Vacation Rentals & Resorts
Golf
Tennis & Pickleball
Biking
Spas

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

Facebook
Instagram
Forums & Blogs
TripAdvisor
Pinterest

“EXPERIENCES ARE GREATER THAN THINGS.” THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE

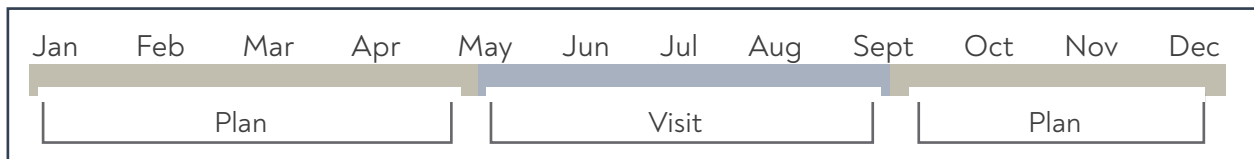




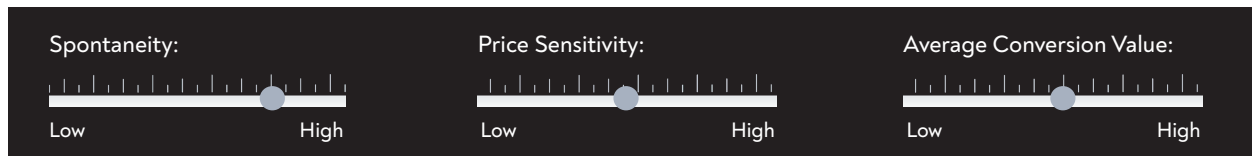
SPORTS ENTHUSIAST

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a destination where they can pursue their interests on their downtime.



SPORTS ENTHUSIAST TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE


Sports Fans
(Golf & Tennis)


Leisure
Lovers


Spontaneous
& Social


Active & Health
Conscious

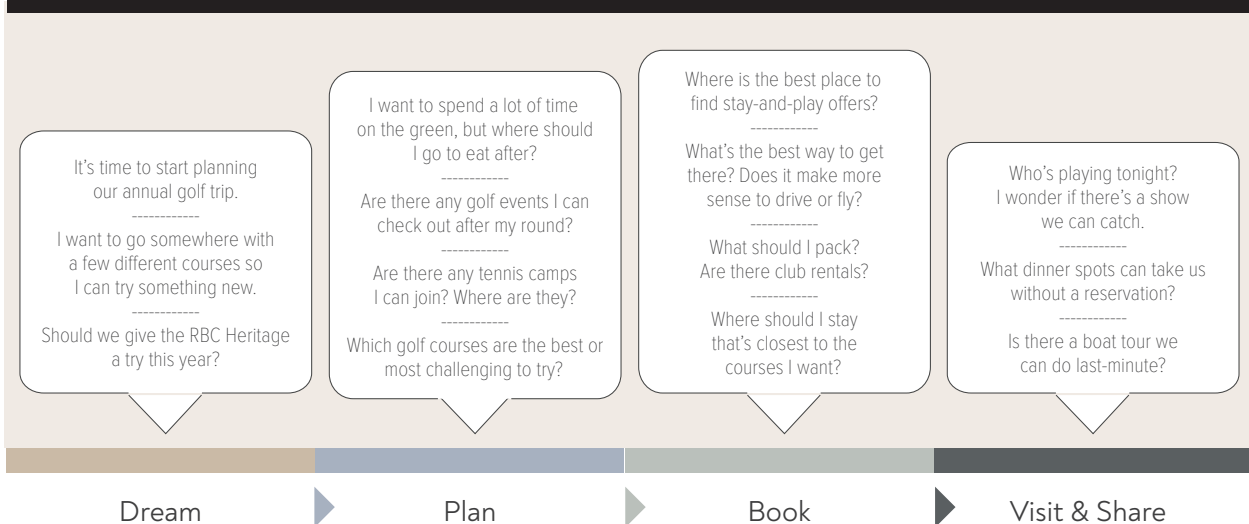
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Golf
Tennis & Pickleball
Boating & Water Activities
Hiking & Biking
Nightlife

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

Facebook Videos
Instagram
Twitter
TripAdvisor
TV
Online Video
Forums & Blogs

"LET'S EXPLORE." THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE

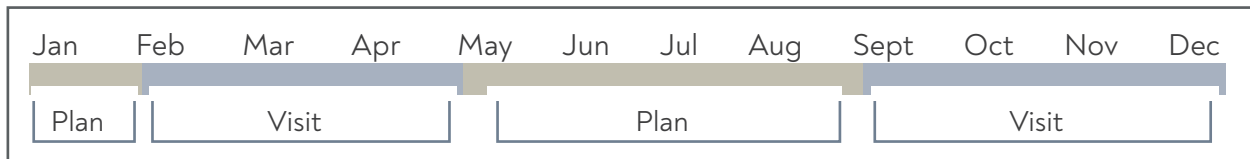




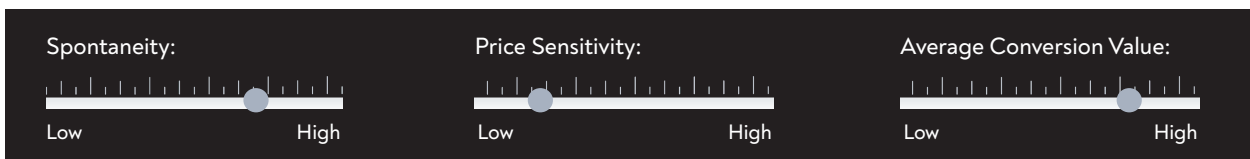
CULINARY

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

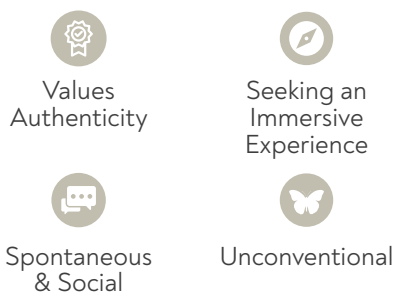
Be immersed in a new destination (or an old favorite) by exploring the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences.



CULINARY TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE



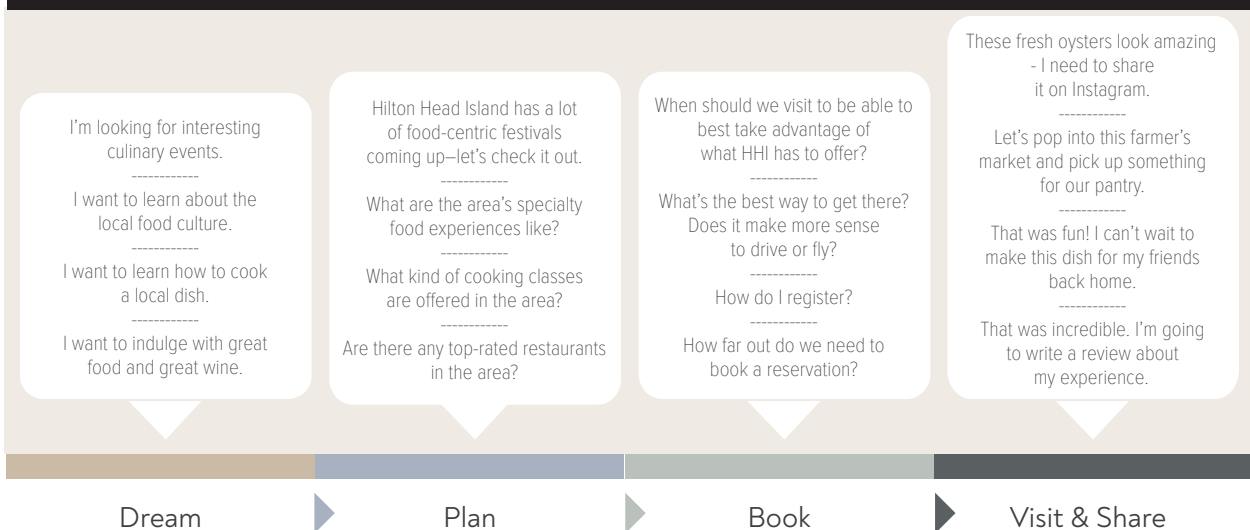
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Cooking Classes
Food Tours
Wine, Beer, and Food Festivals
Specialty Dining Experiences

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

Facebook Videos
Instagram
TripAdvisor
Forums & Blogs
Pinterest

“EXPERIENCE AUTHENTIC, LOCAL CUISINE.” THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE





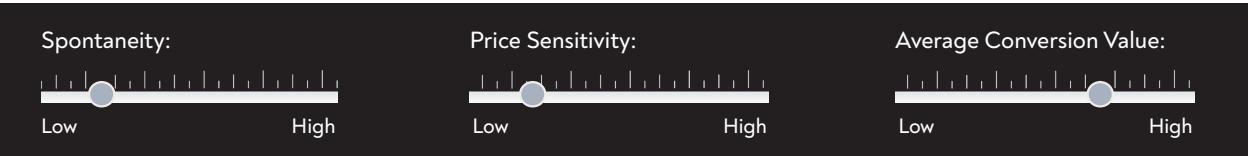
SNOWBIRDS

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a warm destination that feels like home for the winter, where they can welcome family and friends for visits.



SNOWBIRD TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE



Traditional



Values
Family Time



Enjoys the
Finer Things



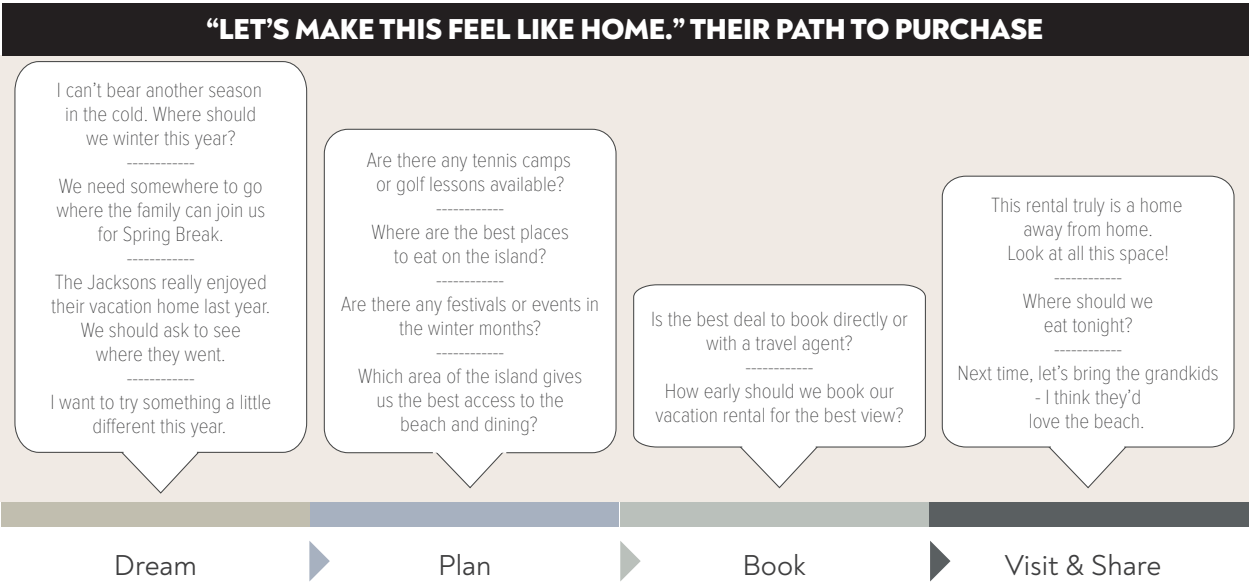
Active & Health
Conscious

PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

- Vacation Rentals & Resorts
- Dining
- Golfing
- Tennis & Pickleball
- Biking

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

- Facebook
- Print
- TripAdvisor
- Radio
- TV
- Online Video





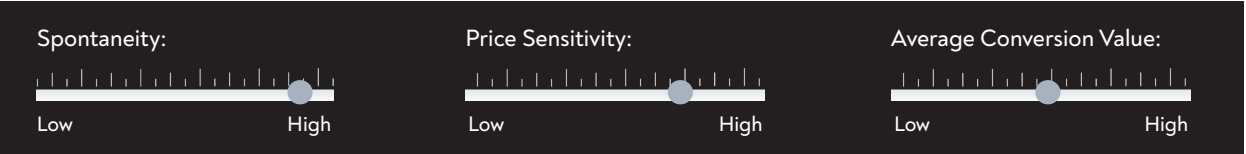
THE WEEKENDERS

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a fairweather weekend escape from work and city life.



THE WEEKENDERS TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE

- Upscale & Status Oriented
- Urban Dwellers
- Spontaneous & Social

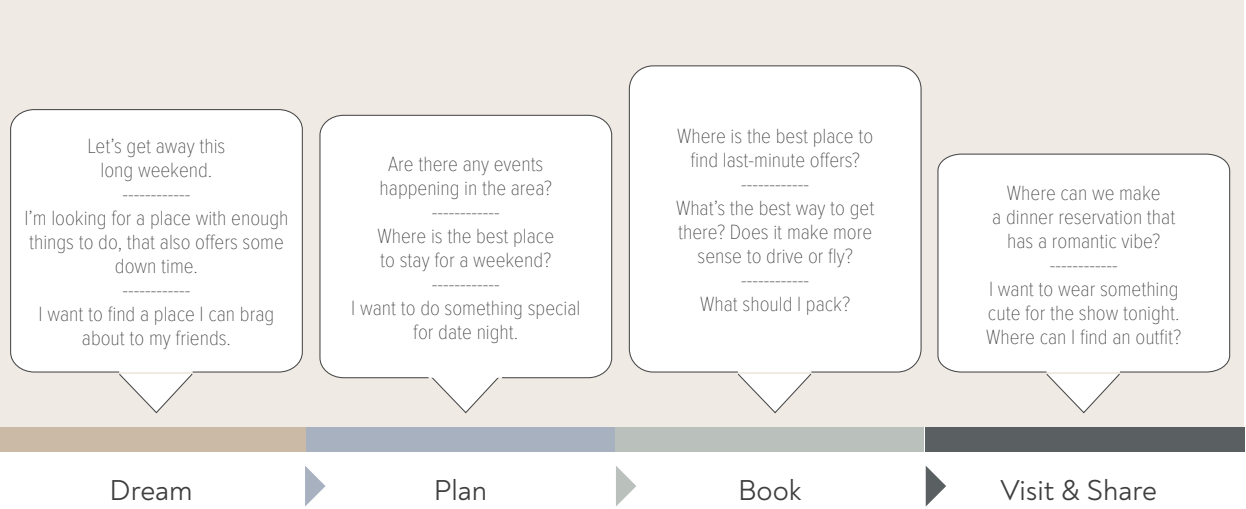
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

- Vacation Rentals & Resorts
- Beach & Water Activities
- Dining & Shopping
- Romantic Things to Do
- Festivals & Events
- Weddings

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

- Facebook Videos
- Instagram
- TripAdvisor
- TV
- Online Video
- Forums & Blogs
- Pinterest

“LET’S GET AWAY.” THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE

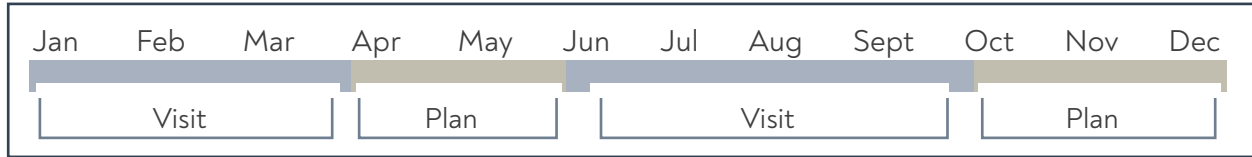




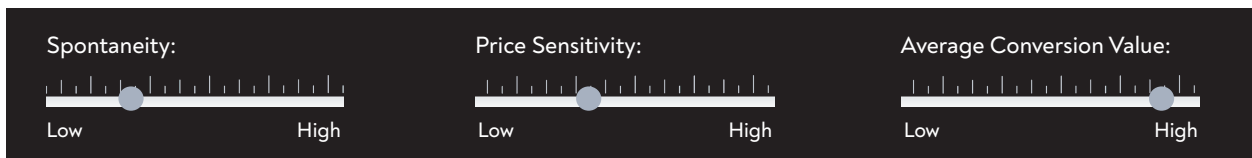
INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

TRAVEL OBJECTIVE

Find a vacation spot that will inspire and that offers something different than where we're from. Escape the everyday, relax and recharge in a destination that's fresh, and different from home.



INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL HABITS



WHO THEY ARE



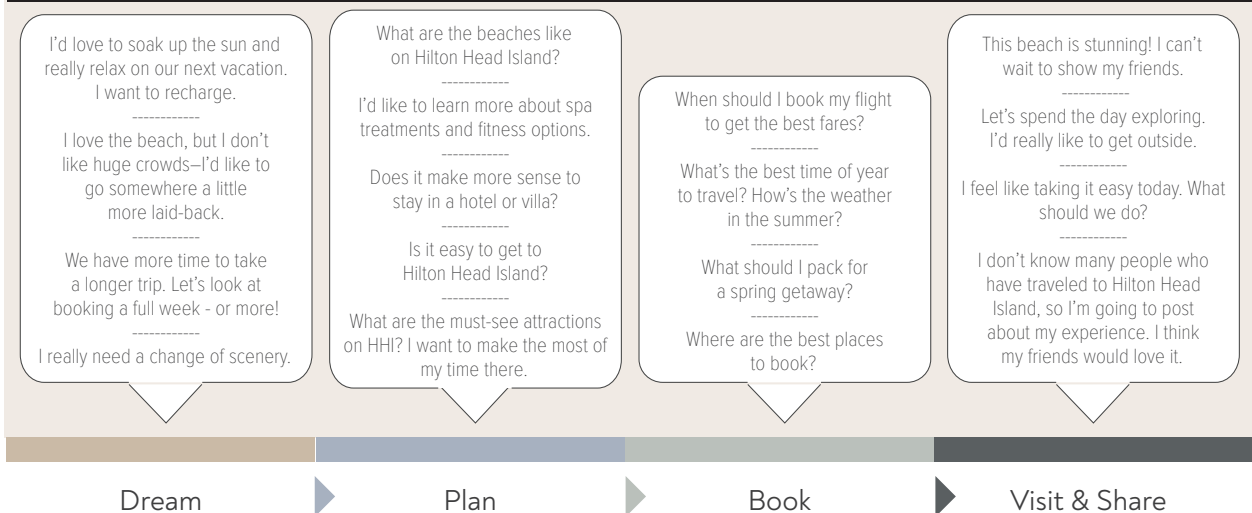
PREFERRED ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS

Homes & Villas
Beach & Water Activities
Biking & Hiking
Food & Drink
Festivals & Events

MARKETING CHANNELS & FORMATS

Facebook Videos
Instagram
TripAdvisor
TV
Online Video
Forums & Blogs
Pinterest

"IT'S TIME TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL." THEIR PATH TO PURCHASE



MMGY INTELLIGENCE

Community Sentiment Survey Executive Summary, Wave 3

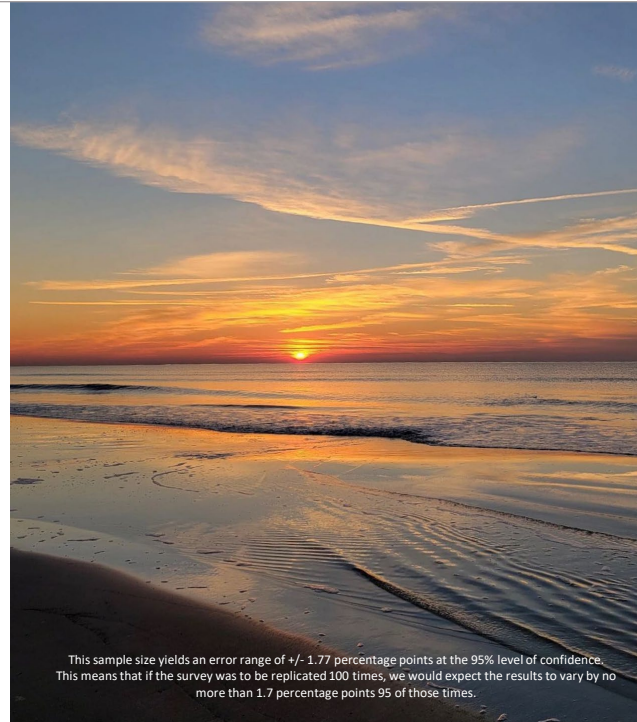


Survey Methodology

- MMGY Travel Intelligence conducted an online survey of 2,830 Hilton Head Island residents.
- Residents were invited to complete the online survey through the Chamber website, social media channels, and email outreach.
- The survey was fielded August 28, 2023 – September 17, 2023. Data were tabulated and analyzed by MMGY Travel Intelligence.
- The participants met the following criteria:
 - / Must be a resident or property owner of Hilton Head Island;
 - / 18 years of age or older.

Comparisons in this report were made to Wave 1, as well as some comparisons across length of residency and employment status.

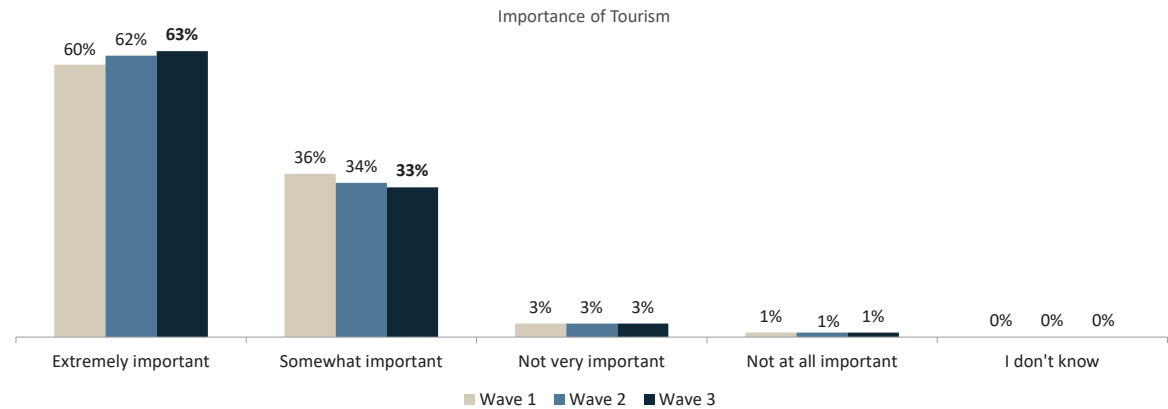
Throughout this report, data in bold indicates a significant difference.



Key INSIGHT #1

Perceptions of the importance of tourism are up slightly from Wave 1 and fewer residents indicate it has a negative impact on their lives. While the majority of residents continue to feel that Summer is too crowded, fewer feel that each season is too crowded compared to Wave 1.

63% of residents believe tourism is extremely important to the local economy.



Key Insight #1

- 5 -

/ Question: How important do you believe tourism is to the local Hilton Head Island economy?



More of those who have moved to Hilton Head Island within the last 5 years find tourism to be extremely important than those who have lived here longer.

By Length of Residency	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Extremely important	70%	60%	59%	61%
Somewhat important	27%	36%	36%	34%
Not very important	2%	3%	4%	4%
Not at all important	0%	1%	1%	1%
I don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%

Key Insight #1

- 6 -

/ Question: How important do you believe tourism is to the local Hilton Head Island economy?

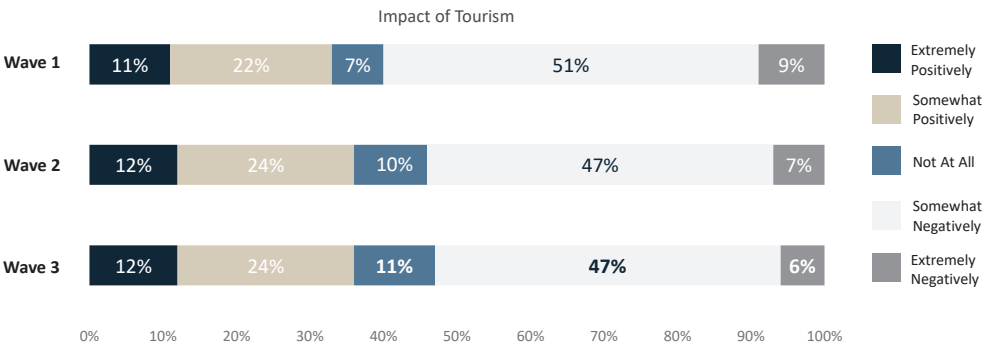


Those who work off-island are more likely to find tourism to be extremely important to the Hilton Head Island economy than those who are retired or currently work on Hilton Head Island.

By Employment Status	Currently work on Hilton Head Island	Currently work elsewhere	Retired
Extremely important	63%	71%	62%
Somewhat important	33%	26%	35%
Not very important	3%	3%	3%
Not at all important	1%	0%	1%
I don't know	0%	0%	0%

Key Insight #1

Compared to Wave 1, fewer residents feel tourism impacts them negatively.



Key Insight #1

Those who have lived here longer are more likely to feel that tourism impacts them negatively than those who moved here in the past 5 years.

By Length of Residency	Less than 5 years	5–10 years	11–20 years	More than 20 years
Extremely positively	15%	9%	9%	13%
Somewhat positively	28%	24%	21%	23%
Not at all	14%	9%	11%	8%
Somewhat negatively	41%	52%	52%	48%
Extremely negatively	3%	6%	7%	9%

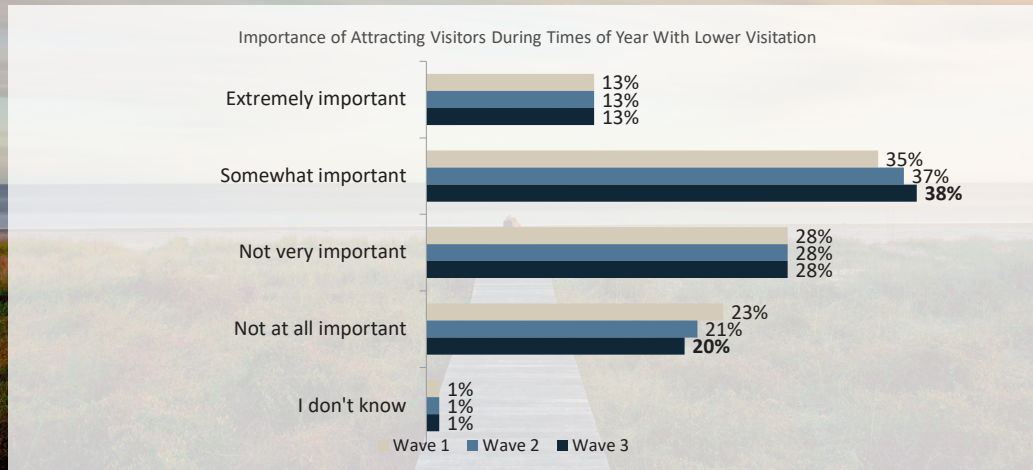
Key Insight #1

Retirees are more likely to feel tourism impacts them negatively than those who currently work.

By Employment Status	Currently work on Hilton Head Island	Currently work elsewhere	Retired
Extremely positively	16%	17%	9%
Somewhat positively	25%	27%	24%
Not at all	8%	14%	11%
Somewhat negatively	43%	39%	51%
Extremely negatively	8%	3%	6%

Key Insight #1

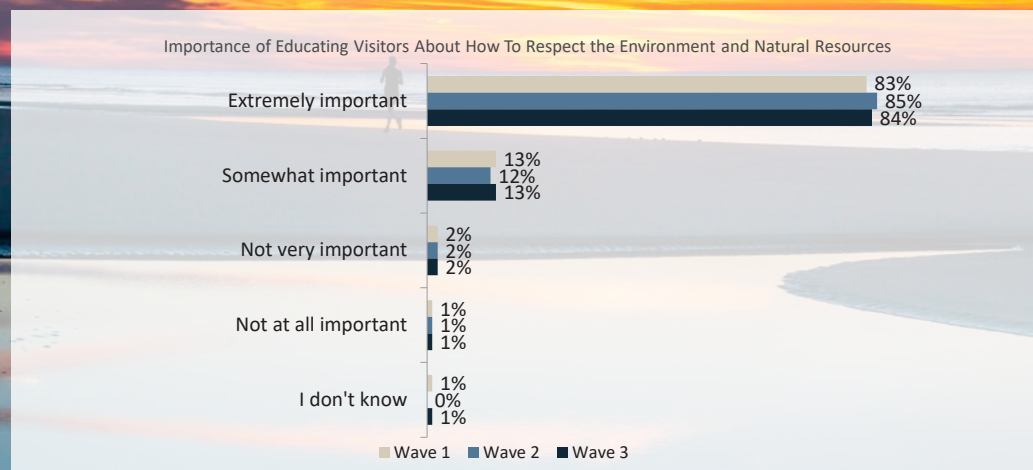
Half of residents believe that it is important to attract visitors during times of the year with lower visitation, up slightly from Wave 1.



Question: Please indicate how important you believe it is to attract visitors to Hilton Head Island during times of the year that usually have lower visitation (October – March)?

Key Insight #1

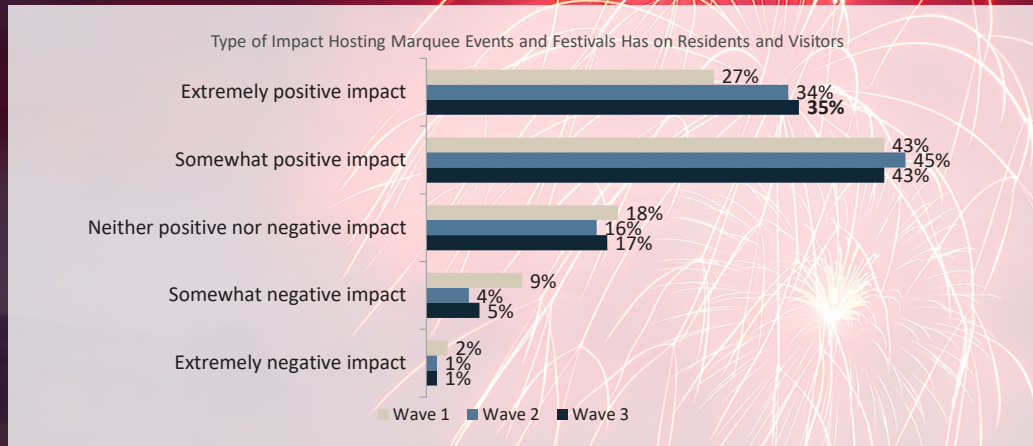
Nearly all residents believe it is important to educate visitors about how to respect the environment and natural resources when they visit, unchanged from previous waves.



Question: In your view, how important is it for Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to educate visitors about how to respect the local environment and natural resources when they visit?

Key Insight #1

8 in 10 residents believe events have a positive impact on residents and visitors, up from Wave 1.



Key Insight #1

Question: One of the Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce’s objectives is to promote marquee events and festivals (e.g., Concours d’Elegance, Seafood Festival, Wine & Food Festival, etc.). Please indicate the type of impact you believe these activities have on the quality of life for local residents and visitors.

Compared to Wave 1, significantly more residents support efforts to fund art and cultural attractions, to promote attractions and festivals on Hilton Head Island, and in branding and marketing Hilton Head Island for tourism.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
I support efforts by the Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce in educating visitors about how to be responsible in protecting and preserving our natural resources when visiting Hilton Head Island	87%	87%	87%
I support efforts by our town in the funding and installation of local public art, exhibits, and cultural attractions	67%	70%	70%
I support efforts by the Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce in promoting attractions, festivals, exhibits and similar on Hilton Head Island	57%	67%	67%
I support efforts by the Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce in branding and marketing Hilton Head Island for tourism	47%	51%	50%

Key Insight #1

Question: Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:





Residents were asked their level of agreement with a few statements related to tourism in Hilton Head Island.

For organizational purposes, these statements have been grouped and labeled as “positive” or “negative.”

Positive: Tourism on Hilton Head Island...

- Creates jobs for area residents
- Provides amenities and attractions that residents can also enjoy
- Provides restaurants that residents can also enjoy
- Supports local business creation
- Generates tax revenues for state, county and local governments.
- Supports existing small businesses throughout the year
- Helps create a positive ambiance/vibe in the local community
- Is an important factor in making our community a great place to live
- Helps to offset the costs for public safety personnel, streets/roads, schools
- Reduces taxes for residents (ex. property taxes, county and city sales taxes, school taxes etc.)
- Covers the cost of beach renourishment
- Increases real estate values

Negative: Tourism on Hilton Head Island...

- Creates traffic congestion problems for residents
- Causes local restaurant & entertainment prices to rise
- Negatively impacts our natural resources
- Brings too many people to Hilton Head Island

Key Insight #2

The most agreed with statements continue to be related to how tourism provides the opportunity for "creation" – new amenities, new jobs, new restaurants and new businesses.

▲ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these positive statements, a green, up arrow indicates a more **positive perception** (more people agree). ▼ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these positive statements, a red, down arrow indicates a more **negative perception** (more people disagree).

Positive Statements (% Agree) – Top 6	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Generates tax revenues for state, county and local governments	76%	80%	81% ▲
Creates jobs for area residents	71%	73%	74% ▲
Provides restaurants that local residents can also enjoy	63%	68%	71% ▲
Supports local business creation	64%	68%	69% ▲
Increases real estate values	64%	66%	67% ▲
Provides amenities and attractions that local residents can also enjoy	56%	62%	64% ▲

/ **Question:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
Tourism on Hilton Head Island...



Key Insight #2

Compared to Wave 1, significantly more residents agree with the least agreed upon positive statements.

▲ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these positive statements, a green, up arrow indicates a more **positive perception** (more people agree). ▼ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these positive statements, a red, down arrow indicates a more **negative perception** (more people disagree).

Positive Statements (% Agree) – Bottom 4	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Reduces taxes for residents (ex. property taxes, county and city sales taxes, school taxes etc.)	51%	55%	56% ▲
Covers the cost of beach renourishment	50%	53%	54% ▲
Is an important factor in making our community a great place to live	39%	45%	46% ▲
Helps create a positive ambiance/vibe in the local community	33%	37%	38% ▲

/ **Question:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
Tourism on Hilton Head Island...



Key Insight #2

Compared to Wave 1, significantly more residents feel that tourism causes prices to rise while fewer residents agree with the remaining negative statements.

▲ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these negative statements, a red, up arrow indicates a more negative perception (more people agree). ▼ Indicates a significant difference from Wave 2. For these negative statements, a green, down arrow indicates a more positive perception (more people disagree).

Negative Statements (% Agree)	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Creates traffic congestion problems for residents	86%	82%	82% ▼
Brings too many people to Hilton Head Island	65%	59%	58% ▼
Causes local restaurant & entertainment prices to rise	49%	52%	58% ▲
Negatively impacts our natural resources	61%	57%	57% ▼

/ **Question:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
Tourism on Hilton Head Island...



Key Insight #2

Tourism on Hilton Head Island...

All Statements (% Agree)	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Creates traffic congestion problems for residents	86%	82%	82%
Generates tax revenues for state, county and local governments	76%	80%	81%
Creates jobs for area residents	71%	73%	74%
Provides restaurants that local residents can also enjoy	63%	68%	71%
Supports local business creation	64%	68%	69%
Increases real estate values	64%	66%	67%
Provides amenities and attractions that local residents can also enjoy	56%	62%	64%
Helps to offset the costs for public safety personnel, streets/roads, schools	53%	58%	61%
Supports existing small businesses throughout the year	56%	59%	60%
Brings too many people to Hilton Head Island	65%	59%	58%
Causes local restaurant & entertainment prices to rise	49%	52%	58%
Negatively impacts our natural resources	61%	57%	57%
Reduces taxes for residents (ex. property taxes, county and city sales taxes, school taxes etc.)	51%	55%	56%
Covers the cost of beach renourishment	50%	53%	54%
Is an important factor in making our community a great place to live	39%	45%	46%
Helps create a positive ambiance/vibe in the local community	33%	37%	38%

/ **Question:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
Tourism on Hilton Head Island...



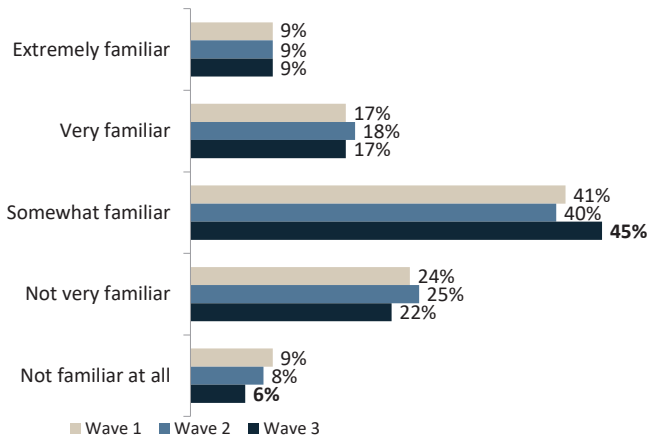
Key Insight #2

Key INSIGHT #3

Familiarity with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce is relatively unchanged from Wave 1. The Chamber continues to be one of the top sources of information residents suggest to their visitors.

Familiarity with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce is relatively unchanged from previous waves.

Familiarity with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce



Key Insight #3

/ **Question:** To what extent, if at all, are you familiar with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, the local organization responsible for marketing tourism for Hilton Head Island?

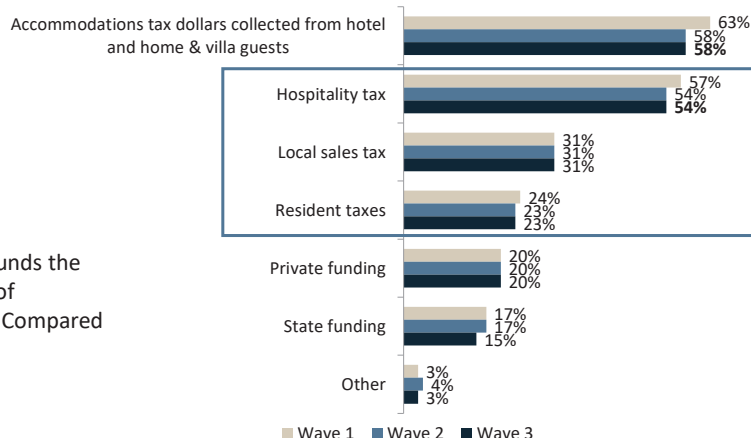


- 23 -

Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Funding

74%
Wave 3

of residents believe they know what funds the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce tourism marketing efforts. Compared to 76% in Wave 1 and 74% in Wave 2.



Key Insight #3

Question: Which of the following do you believe funds the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce tourism marketing efforts? Please select all that apply.

MMGY Travel Intelligence

Resources Provided to Family and Friends When Visiting.

34%
Wave 3

of residents provide resources to family and friends for trip planning when visiting Hilton Head Island. Compared to 29% in Wave 1 and 34% in Wave 2



Key Insight #3

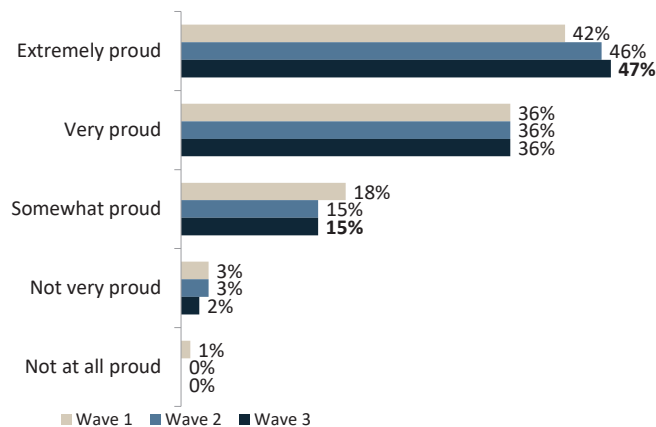
Question: When you are expecting out of town family or friends to visit you on Hilton Head Island, do you provide them with links to webpages and resources for their trip planning? / Which webpages and resources do you provide?

MMGY Travel Intelligence

Key INSIGHT #4

Pride in residency is up from Wave 1 while and perceptions of safety are down slightly. Perceptions of the airports, outdoor public spaces, community parks, shopping, road quality, sports facilities and museum/cultural attractions increased from Wave 1, as well as culinary experiences such as breweries/wineries/distilleries, food trucks, and walk-up stands.

83 percent of residents are proud to be residents of Hilton Head Island, up from Wave 1.



Key Insight #4

- 27 -

/ **Question:** Please indicate the level of pride you feel in being a resident of Hilton Head Island.

MMGY Travel Intelligence

Those who have lived here less than 5 years are more likely to be extremely proud in their residency than those who have lived here longer.

By Length of Residency	Less than 5 years	5–10 years	11–20 years	More than 20 years
Extremely proud	56%	42%	39%	46%
Very proud	34%	37%	40%	34%
Somewhat proud	8%	19%	17%	17%
Not very proud	1%	2%	4%	2%
Not at all proud	1%	1%	0%	1%

Key Insight #4

- 28 -

/ Question: Please indicate the level of pride you feel in being a resident of Hilton Head Island.



Those who work off-island are more likely to be extremely proud in their residency than retirees and those who work on-island.

By Employment Status	Currently work on Hilton Head Island	Currently work elsewhere	Retired
Extremely proud	47%	57%	44%
Very proud	35%	32%	38%
Somewhat proud	15%	10%	16%
Not very proud	3%	1%	2%
Not at all proud	0%	0%	1%

Key Insight #4

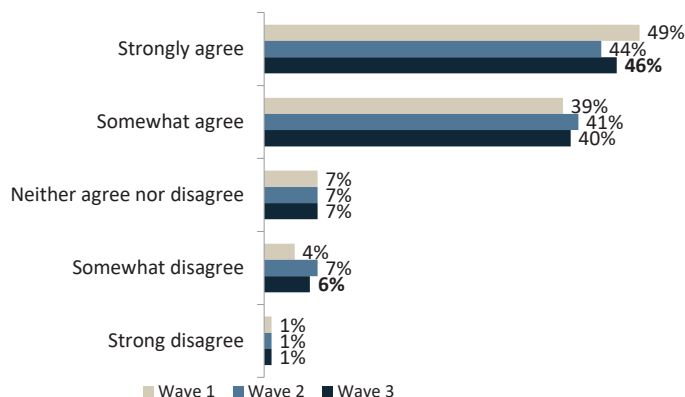
- 29 -

/ Question: Please indicate the level of pride you feel in being a resident of Hilton Head Island.



86 percent of residents believe Hilton Head Island is a safe place to live, down slightly from Wave 1.

"I believe Hilton Head Island is a very safe place to live."



Key Insight #4

- 30 -

/ **Question:** Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:



Perceived Quality of Hilton Head Island Experiences

Top 2 Box	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Beaches	91%	92%	92%
Golf courses	91%	91%	92%
Leisure pathways and bike trails	86%	86%	87%
Outdoor/nature activities	80%	82%	82%
Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport	79%	80%	82%
Outdoor public spaces for festivals and events	69%	77%	81%
Water sports/activities	77%	79%	79%
Community parks	70%	77%	78%
Surface street bike paths	70%	70%	72%
Hilton Head Island Airport	55%	57%	58%
Retail shopping	49%	54%	52%
Road quality	42%	44%	51%
Playing fields for sports leagues, tournaments and competitions	44%	48%	50%
Museums/Cultural attractions	38%	43%	47%
Public pools/aquatic centers	27%	32%	31%
Indoor facilities for sports leagues, tournaments and competitions	18%	22%	23%

- The highest perceived Hilton Head Island experiences continue to be its beaches, golf courses, and leisure pathways and bike trails.
- Compared to Wave 1, significantly more residents perceive the following Hilton Head Island experiences to be good quality:
 - Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport
 - Outdoor public spaces
 - Community parks
 - Hilton Head Island Airport
 - Retail shopping
 - Road quality
 - Playing fields
 - Museums/cultural attractions
 - Public pools
 - Indoor sports facilities

Key Insight #4

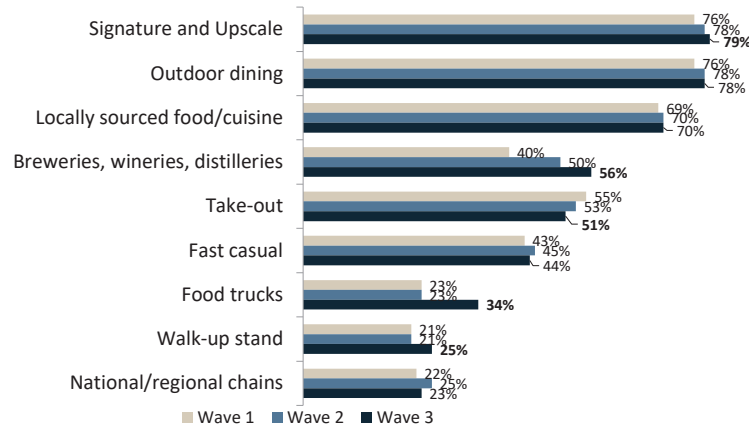
- 31 -

/ **Question:** Please indicate your perception of the quality of the following services, products and infrastructure on Hilton Head Island to serve visitors and residents alike.



Nearly 8 in 10 residents believe Hilton Head Island has quality signature and upscale dining and outdoor dining.

Dining Options in Hilton Head Island Perceived To Be High Quality



Key Insight #4

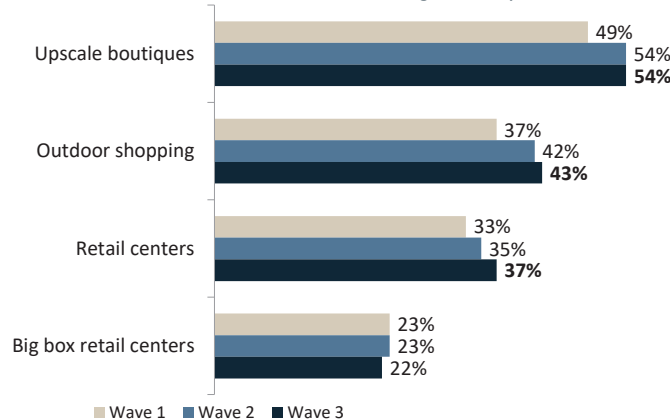
- 32 -

Question: Please indicate your perception of the quality of each of the following categories of dining and restaurant options on Hilton Head Island.

MMGY Travel Intelligence

After displaying increases in Wave 2, we're seeing a similar percentage of residents reporting that they believe Hilton Head Island to have high quality upscale boutiques and outdoor shopping.

Shopping Options in Hilton Head Island Perceived To Be High Quality



Key Insight #4

- 33 -

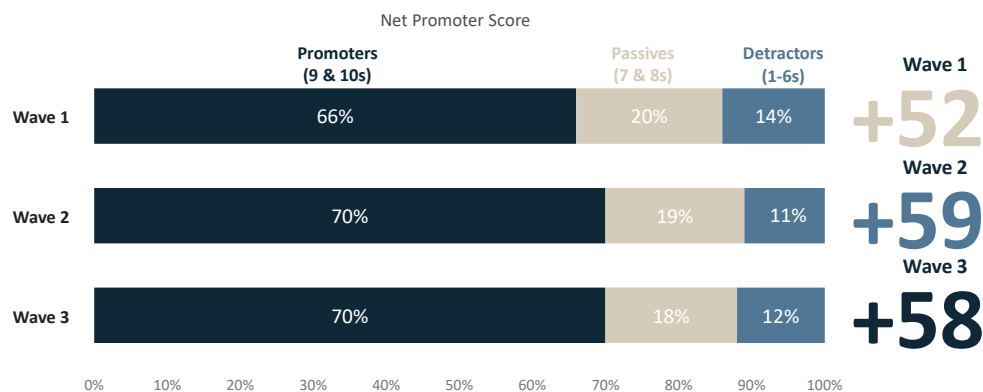
Question: Please indicate your perception of the quality of each of the following categories of shopping on Hilton Head Island.

MMGY Travel Intelligence

Key INSIGHT #5

The Net Promoter Score of residents is up from Wave 1 and slightly more consider themselves passionate advocates. The most cited positive and negative aspects of tourism were similar to those reported in previous waves with economic benefits and amenities cited as positive impacts and overcrowding, overdevelopment, and the quality of the current visitor cited most frequently as negative aspects.

Residents report a higher Net Promoter Score for Hilton Head Island than they did in Wave 1.



/ **Question:** On a scale from 1-10, where 1 = Not Likely at All and 10 = Extremely Likely, how likely are you to recommend Hilton Head Island as a place to visit when talking to trusted friends and family members who do not live on Hilton Head Island?

MMGY Travel Intelligence

Key Insight #5

Net Promoter Scores decrease as length of residency increases, although all scores are still extremely positive.

By Length of Residency	Less than 5 years	5–10 years	11–20 years	More than 20 years
Promoters (9+10s)	79%	69%	67%	63%
Passives (7+8s)	15%	19%	20%	20%
Detractors (1-6s)	6%	12%	13%	17%
NPS	+73	+57	+54	+46

Key Insight #5

Question: On a scale from 1-10, where 1 = Not Likely at All and 10 = Extremely Likely, how likely are you to recommend Hilton Head Island as a place to visit when talking to trusted friends and family members who do not live on Hilton Head Island?

- 36 -



Net Promoter Scores are higher for those who work off-island than those who work on-island or are retired.

By Employment Status	Currently work on Hilton Head Island	Currently work elsewhere	Retired
Promoters (9+10s)	65%	82%	69%
Passives (7+8s)	21%	11%	19%
Detractors (1-6s)	14%	7%	12%
NPS	+51	+71	+57

Key Insight #5

Question: On a scale from 1-10, where 1 = Not Likely at All and 10 = Extremely Likely, how likely are you to recommend Hilton Head Island as a place to visit when talking to trusted friends and family members who do not live on Hilton Head Island?

- 37 -



83%
Wave 3

[illegible]

Negative Aspects to Tourism on Hilton Head Island

Overcrowding

The most cited negative aspects of tourism relate to overcrowding, congestion, and traffic. Residents feel that the infrastructure on the island can not keep up with the number of tourists. They cite lack of parking, traffic on the bridge, and the inability to go to restaurants during the Summer.

Overdevelopment

Residents also cited overdevelopment as a negative aspect of tourism. They feel that the natural aspects of the Island are being destroyed in order to accommodate more tourists. They worry about becoming too commercialized like Myrtle Beach rather than keeping the charm and natural focus that Hilton Head Island has always been known for.

Quality of Visitor

Residents believe that the quality of visitor has decreased in recent years. They believe the current visitors have a lack of respect for residents and for the Island's natural resources. They say many of these visitors leave litter on the beaches, are disorderly, disrupt the ecosystem of the wildlife, and disobey biking and driving laws.

Rising Prices

Residents also cited the rising prices as a negative aspect of tourism, specifically in restaurants and stores. Many are also concerned about the lack of affordable housing for residents and Island workers which results in more traffic and a shortage of service industry workers to accommodate the number of visitors.

Top Concerns Facing The Community

	Wave 2	Wave 3
Workforce shortage	48%	44%
278 Corridor project	38%	39%
On-island workforce housing	36%	35%
Overall development	29%	34%
Environmental/open spaces protection	26%	27%
General infrastructure needs (e.g. water/sewer, roads, other utilities)	20%	18%
Short-term rental noise and parking	16%	18%
South-end traffic	16%	17%
Repurposing/modernizing Island commercial buildings	14%	14%
Mid-island initiative and redevelopment (Northridge Plaza, Port Royal Plaza, Mid-Island Park)	12%	12%
North-island traffic	11%	12%
Bike safety	9%	7%
Arts and development of cultural assets (e.g. Mitchelville Freedom Park)	4%	4%
Other	9%	10%
None of the above	0%	1%

- The top concerns residents feel are facing their community are the workforce shortage, the 278 Corridor project, on-island workforce housing, and overall development. Compared to Wave 2, fewer residents are concerned about the workforce shortage, infrastructure needs, and bike safety, while more are concerned about overall development, and short-term rental noise and parking.

This question was not asked in Wave 1 so comparisons have been made to Wave 2.
 / **Question:** What are your top three concerns facing our community?

What can Hilton Head Island do to make the town more attractive?

Host more arts, festivals and cultural events.

Stay true to its character.

Bring in more dining and shopping options.

Continue preservation and protection efforts.

Provide more workforce housing.

Continue to develop family-friendly offerings.

Modernize the airport and offer more direct flights.

Have stricter controls on rental properties.

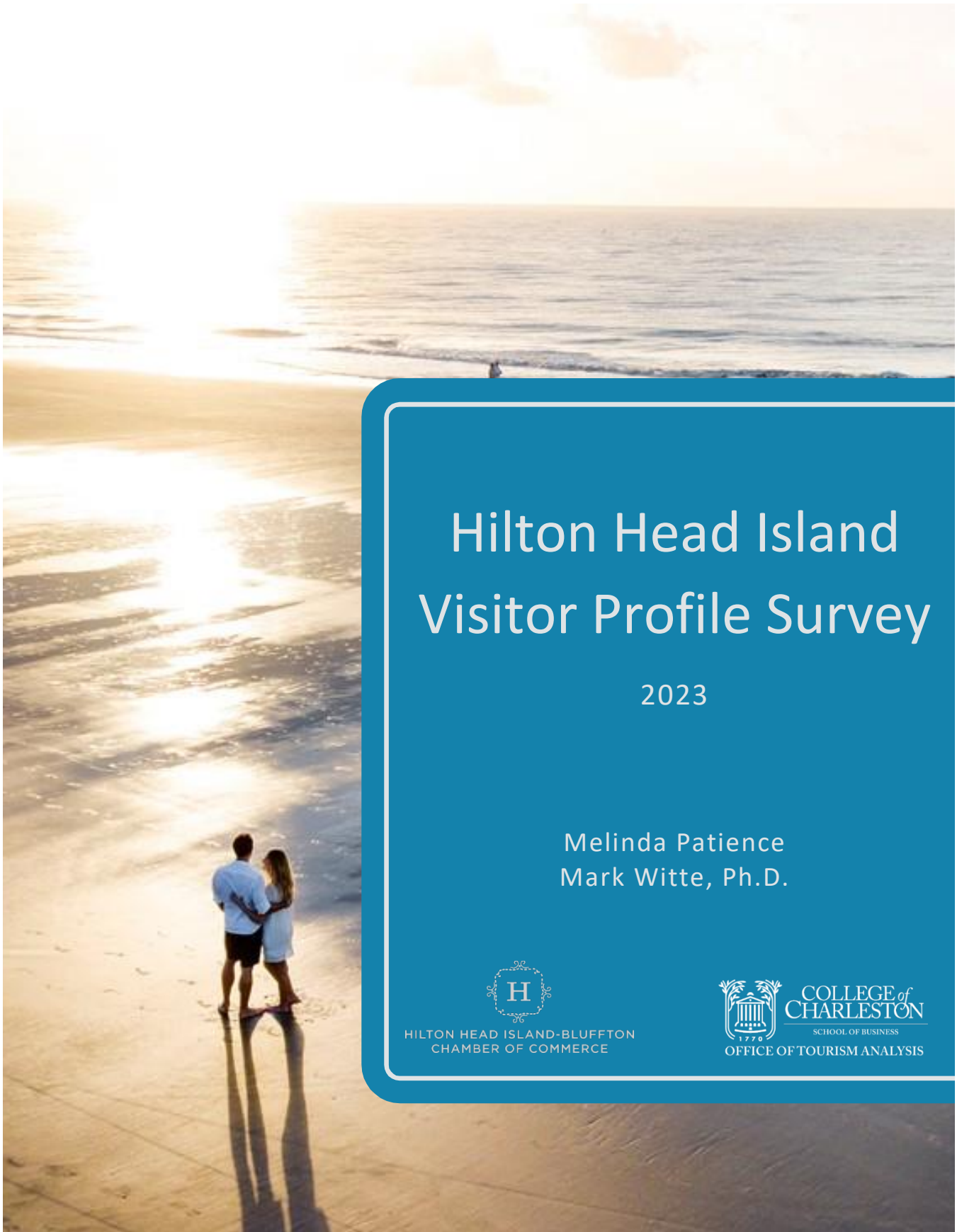
Ease traffic flow.

Advertise to a higher income traveler.

Key Insight #5



**OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS,
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON**
2023 Visitor Profile Study



Hilton Head Island Visitor Profile Survey

2023

Melinda Patience
Mark Witte, Ph.D.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS

PREPARED FOR:
HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BY:
OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
66 GEORGE STREET | CHARLESTON, SC 29424
843.953.1996 | OTA.COFC.EDU | PATIENCEM@COFC.EDU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 2

Methodology 6

Survey Findings..... 8

 Sample Demographics 8

 Sample Point of Origin 9

 Travel to the Hilton Head Island / Bluffton Area 11

 Hilton Head Island Visitors..... 12

 Travel Planning 24

 Non-Visitors 27

 Travel Behavior – All Respondents 29

Appendix 33

 All ZIP Codes Collected by MSA 33



1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS**

Millennials represented 61% of the respondents, followed by Gen X (17.7%), and then Baby Boomers (17.9%). Over 56% of those surveyed had a Bachelor's degree or higher, and more than 57% had an annual household income of \$100,000 or more per year. Also, nearly 90% of the respondents were married.

POINT OF ORIGIN

The respondents resided in 140 geographical areas / MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas) throughout the U.S., stretching from east to west coast. More respondents resided in California than any other state (13.0%). Second was Texas (7.8%), followed then by Pennsylvania (7.1%), New York (6.5%), Ohio (5.5%), and Georgia (5.1%). In-state visitors did not make up a significantly large portion of the respondents (4.8%).

According to a market penetration analysis, the following MSAs were major markets amongst respondents: Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA; New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ; Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA; Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD; San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA; Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV; and Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN.

Canada was the top international origin market amongst respondents (38.0%), followed by the Middle East (26.8%), and Europe (16.9%).

THOSE WHO TRAVELED TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND

The top three reasons for choosing Hilton Head Island as a destination continue to be visiting beaches (40.7%), relaxation (31.7%), and spending time with family (22.2%), followed by nature-based activities (19.5%), biking (17.4%), culinary experiences (14.3%), and shopping (14.3%). The activities in which visitors actually participated are similar to the previously mentioned activities, and also include water excursions, museums, and wellness activities.

Amongst Hilton Head Island's overnight visitors, 70.6% indicated they had visited Hilton Head Island, SC for the first time, suggesting that the destination continues to appeal to new visitors.

TRIP CHARACTERISTICS

The average group size of those surveyed was 4.7 for overnight visitors and 5.3 for day trip visitors. While the main mode of transportation around the island continues to be personal/family car (31.7%), transportation to the saw significant increase in flying into the destination from the prior survey (36.9% to 52.8%), with the majority of visitors flying into Hilton Head Island Airport.

The average length of stay for those surveyed varied by segment; those staying in villa rentals stayed approximately 8.1 nights, hotel visitors stayed 6.5 nights, timeshare visitors stayed 8.0 nights, and second homeowners stayed 9.7 nights. The overall average was 6.9 nights.

Resorts stood out as the most popular choice of paid accommodation for overnight visitors (56.1%), followed by home/villa rentals (15.6%), hotels (13.7%), timeshares (6.1%), and second homes (3.0%).

**TRAVEL PLANNING**

VRBO remains by far the most popular online booking platform for villas/homes (32.2%), followed by local vacation rental companies (22.2%) and the local resorts' online booking platforms (e.g., Sea Pines, Palmetto Dunes) (10.8%). The percentage of respondents booking via Airbnb remains steady year-to-year at around 11%.

Other destinations like Gulf Shores, Alabama Golf Trail, Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the Outer Banks were the top competitors for Hilton Head Island as alternative beach destinations. The top competing market was Gulf Shores..

Top reasons for choosing to visit Hilton Head Island were beach destination (32.6%), wanting to visit nature-based attractions (23.4%), previous visitation (20.4%), wanting to visit heritage attractions (18.2%), and word-of-mouth/recommendation (12.2%).

Of those visitors surveyed, 80.2% indicated an intention to return to visit Hilton Head Island, which signals a high degree of trip satisfaction.

NON-VISITORS

Of those who indicated not to have traveled at all or not to have traveled to the Hilton Head Island / Bluffton area in the past 12 months (N=169), 33.7% had never visited the Hilton Head Island / Bluffton area before, and 50.3% had visited one to five times before.

Of those non-visitors, 47.0% traveled elsewhere, 26.0% plan to visit in the future, 4.0% were hesitant because of unpredictable weather events, 3.0% mentioned health reasons, 2.0% did not find what they were looking for, and 2.0% did not travel at all. Of those who did not visit the Hilton Head Island / Bluffton area, alternative destinations in the Southeast (42.0%) and South (27.0%) were the most popular. Nonetheless, 48.8% of the non-visitors indicated they had plans to visit the Hilton Head Island / Bluffton area within one year.

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

Looking at the travel behavior of both visitors and non-visitors together, the majority (50.6%) take two to four leisure/vacation trips per year, and they are most likely to travel between May and October. The top five most appealing experiences for leisure trips/vacations were: relaxation & rejuvenation (72.2%), beaches (71.2%), passive outdoor adventures (63.7%), historic attractions (60.9%), and romantic couple getaways (60.8%).

The following attributes were most important in choosing a leisure vacation: natural beauty of the destination (76.9%), quality of dining options (74.6%), ease of access (73.3%), affordability (73.0%), quality of lodging options (72.6%), diversity of dining options (70.4%), and diversity of lodging options (65.9%).



5

METHODOLOGY

The 2022 Visitor Profile Study (VPS) for the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton Area was conducted electronically. Between mid-January 2022 and January 2023, emails were sent on a rolling basis to invite individuals to participate in the VPS. These individuals had previously visited www.hiltonheadisland.org or www.visitbluffton.org and submitted their email addresses, and they were contacted following their anticipated dates of visitation. In addition, invitations to complete the survey were posted multiple times during the same time period on the social media channels of the Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau and Explore Bluffton.

A total of 2,918 completed surveys were collected. This report is based largely on the 1,913 respondents who visited Hilton Head Island as an overnight or day trip, along with individuals who did not travel at all or did not travel to Hilton Head Island / Bluffton.

This report presents the results of the present study, together with comparative results from the last two times this study was completed, examining visitation in 2019 and 2021. When 2019 data is not presented, it is because the question was not asked in that survey.

The table below shows the visitor estimates for Hilton Head Island by segment for 2021, and 2022. The estimates are based on secondary data for hotel, timeshare, and villa visitors, as well as primary data collected regarding second homeowners, their guests, and day trippers.

Visitor Segment	2021	2022	Change (%)
Villa/Home Rentals	962,686	951,126	-1.2%
Hotels/Resorts	508,977	497,574	-2.2%
Timeshares	481,934	481,461	-0.1%
Second Homeowners	719,302	710,673	-1.2%
Non-paying Guests	186,667	184,428	-1.2%
Day trippers	267,290	264,083	-1.2%
Total Visitors	3,126,856	3,089,346	-1.2%

Table 1: Visitor Estimates for 2021 and 2022



7

SURVEY FINDINGS

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Gender				
Female	67.4%	62.5%	48.8%	54.1%
Male	32.6%	37.4%	51.1%	45.7%
Self-identify	-	0.1%	-	0.3%
Marital Status				
Married	76.7%	76.7%	77.3%	86.4%
Single	8.5%	9.2%	9.9%	6.7%
Divorced	7.4%	7.7%	5.8%	3.4%
Living as Married	3.8%	-	-	-
Widowed	3.1%	5.3%	5.9%	2.8%
Separated	0.5%	1.1%	1.1%	0.7%
Education (highest level completed)				
Grade School	0.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.9%
High School	8.0%	8.0%	6.5%	3.8%
Some College	19.6%	20.9%	21.5%	22.6%
Associates Degree (2 years)	13.1%	13.6%	13.2%	16.0%
Bachelor's Degree (4 years)	31.5%	32.9%	32.3%	33.0%
Graduate Degree (Post degree/MA)	26.9%	23.8%	26.1%	23.7%
Age				
19 years or younger	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
20 to 29 years	0.9%	10.5%	23.8%	24.1%
30 to 39 years	5.9%	16.5%	28.8%	39.4%
40 to 49 years	15.3%	12.6%	13.1%	8.3%
50 to 59 years	26.8%	18.7%	10.9%	9.4%
60 to 69 years	34.4%	25.8%	14.2%	11.6%
70 years and over	15.9%	14.5%	8.6%	6.3%
Not Applicable	0.6%	1.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Household Income				
Under \$24,999	1.4%	2.3%	1.5%	1.1%
\$25,000-\$34,999	1.8%	6.3%	4.1%	1.8%
\$35,000-\$49,999	5.5%	7.7%	8.0%	6.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	12.6%	15.7%	12.2%	17.1%
\$75,000-\$99,999	14.6%	17.7%	17.2%	17.0%
\$100,000-\$149,999	22.1%	24.6%	21.8%	17.0%
\$150,000-\$199,999	11.3%	13.0%	17.1%	18.0%
\$200,000-\$249,999	5.8%	5.9%	9.4%	15.9%
\$250,000 or more	6.2%	6.8%	8.6%	5.6%
Not Applicable	18.8%	-	-	-
N	1,682	1,884	1,913	1,154

Table 2: Demographics

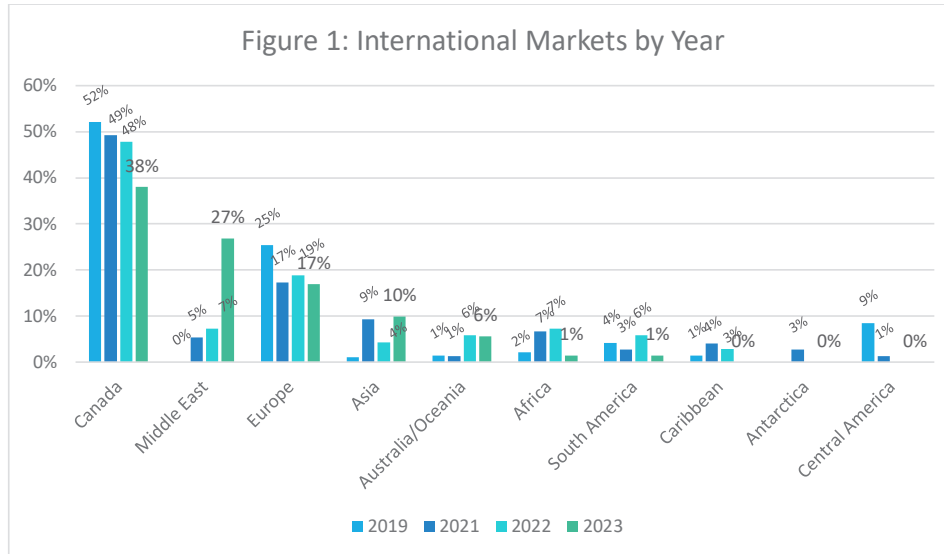
SAMPLE POINT OF ORIGIN

ZIP Code Analysis – Top 30 MSAs

	Metropolitan Area	Sum MSA	Percent MSA Share
1	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	106	9.3%
2	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ	79	6.9%
3	Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	44	3.9%
4	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	41	3.6%
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	39	3.4%
6	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	38	3.3%
7	Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN	34	3.0%
8	Pittsburgh, PA	33	2.9%
9	Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	23	2.0%
10	Columbus, OH	23	2.0%
11	Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	20	1.8%
12	Charleston-North Charleston, SC	17	1.5%
13	Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	17	1.5%
14	Rural OH	16	1.4%
15	Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	15	1.3%
16	Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	15	1.3%
17	Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX	15	1.3%
18	Kansas City, MO-KS	15	1.3%
19	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	14	1.2%
20	Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	14	1.2%
21	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	13	1.1%
22	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	13	1.1%
23	San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA	13	1.1%
24	Jacksonville, FL	12	1.1%
25	Wisconsin Rapids-Marshfield, WI	12	1.1%
26	Greenville-Anderson-Greer, SC	11	1.0%
27	St. Louis, MO-IL	11	1.0%
28	Akron, OH	10	0.9%
29	Columbia, SC	10	0.9%
30	Rural TX	10	0.9%
	Other	408	35.8%
	Total	1,141	

Table 3: ZIP Code Analysis – Top 30 MSAs

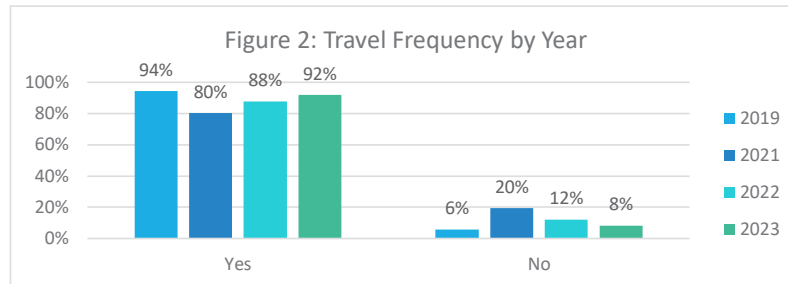
International Markets



	2019	2021	2022	2023
Canada	52.1%	49.3%	47.8%	38.0%
Middle East	0.0%	5.3%	7.2%	26.8%
Europe	25.4%	17.3%	18.8%	16.9%
Asia	1.0%	9.3%	4.3%	9.9%
Australia/Oceania	1.4%	1.3%	5.8%	5.6%
Africa	2.1%	6.7%	7.2%	1.4%
South America	4.2%	2.7%	5.8%	1.4%
Caribbean	1.4%	4.0%	2.9%	-
Antarctica	-	2.7%	-	-
Central America	8.5%	1.3%	-	-
N	71	75	69	71

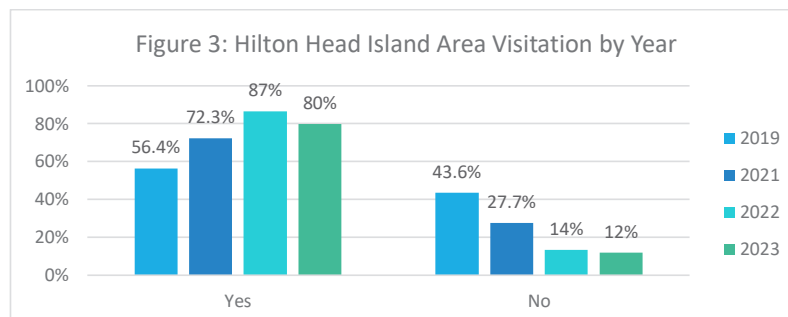
Table 4: International Markets by Year

TRAVEL TO THE HILTON HEAD ISLAND / BLUFFTON AREA

Within the last 12 months have you traveled or taken a vacation?¹

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Yes	94.3%	80.4%	87.8%	91.8%
No	5.7%	19.6%	12.2%	8.2%
N	1,684	2,084	2,918	1,710

TABLE 5: Travel Frequency by Year

Did you visit Hilton Head Island, SC or Bluffton, SC in the last 12 months?¹

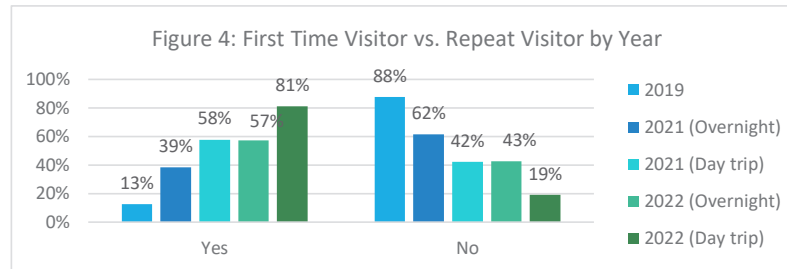
	2019	2021	2022	2023
Yes	56.4%	72.3%	86.5%	79.8%
No	43.6%	27.7%	13.5%	12.0%
N	1,713	1,675	2,547	1,570

TABLE 6: Hilton Head Island Area Visitation by Year

¹ For the 2019 report, these questions asked about the last 18 months instead of the last 12 months. Also, in 2019 the second question was asked of all respondents, whereas in 2021 and 2022 it was just asked of those who had travelled.

HILTON HEAD ISLAND VISITORS

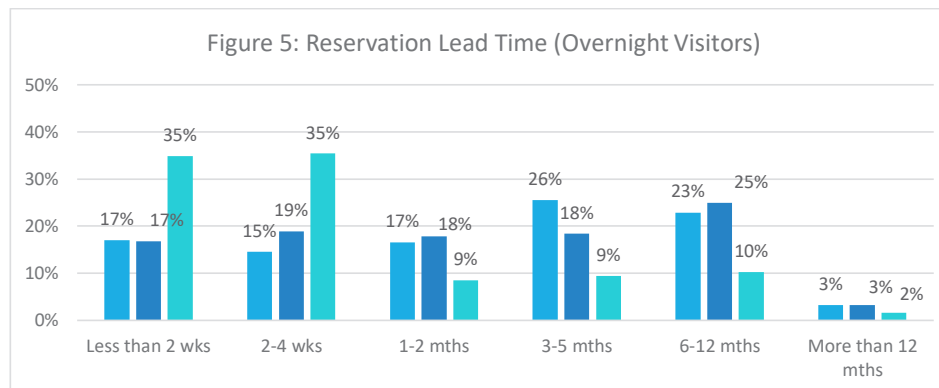
Was that your first time visiting Hilton Head Island?



	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Yes	12.5%	38.5%	57.8%	57.4%	81.0%	28.0%	70.6%
No	87.5%	61.5%	42.2%	42.6%	19.0%	72.0%	29.4%
N	946	991	45	1,477	79	1,077	34

TABLE 7: First Time Visitor vs. Repeat Visitor by Year

Approximately how long before your trip to Hilton Head Island did you make your first reservation (e.g., accommodation, transportation, etc.)?



	2021	2022	2023
Less than 2 weeks	17.0%	16.8%	34.9%
2 weeks to 4 weeks	14.6%	18.9%	35.4%
1 to 2 months	16.6%	17.8%	8.5%
3 to 5 months	25.5%	18.4%	9.4%
6 to 12 months	22.9%	24.9%	10.2%
More than 12 months	3.3%	3.2%	1.6%
N	991	1,479	1,076

TABLE 8: Reservation Lead Time

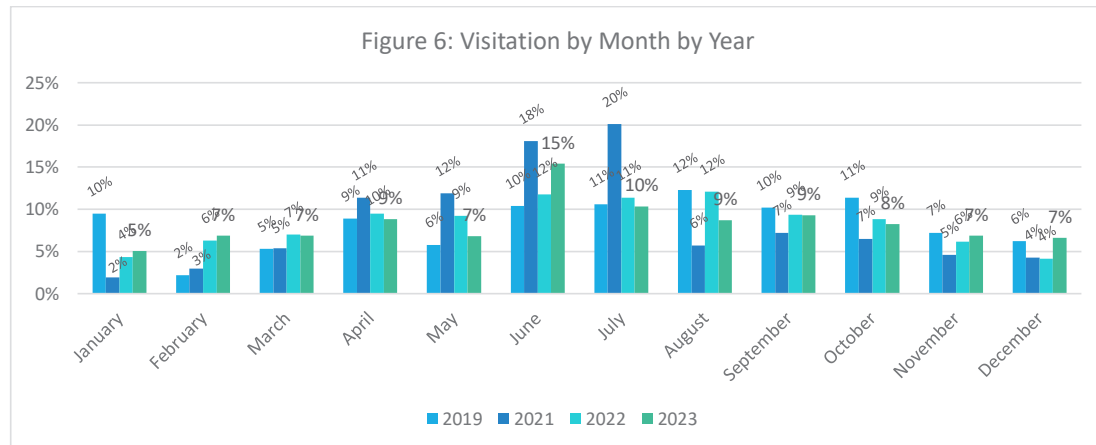
When did you make your most recent trip to Hilton Head Island?

	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
2018	12.9%						
2019	77.8%						
2020	9.3%	14.1%	26.5%				
2021		85.9%	73.5%				
2022				100.0%	100.0%		
2023						100.0%	100.0%
N	951	1,040	34	1,477	79	1,044	33

TABLE 9: Visitation Year by Year

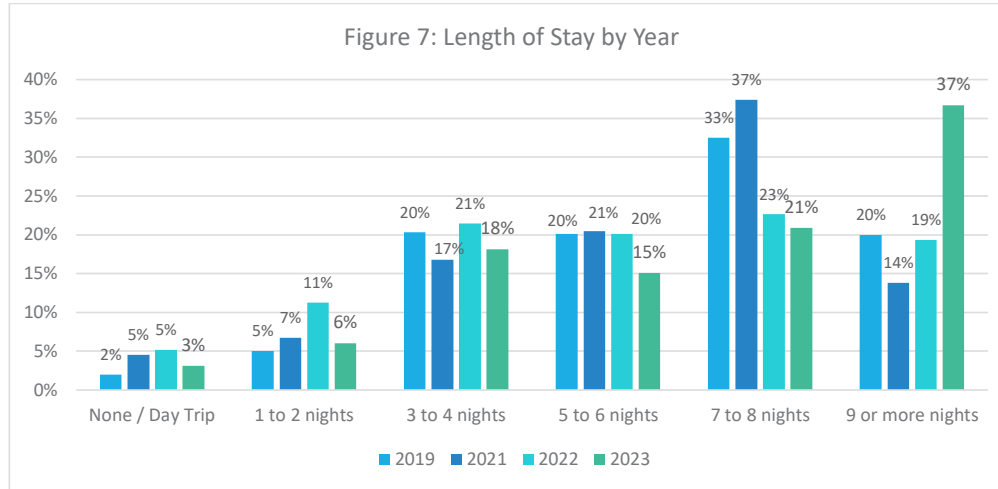
	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
January	9.5%	1.9%	0.0%	4.3%	4.3%	5.1%	3.0%
February	2.2%	3.0%	2.9%	6.4%	4.3%	6.9%	0.0%
March	5.3%	5.3%	8.6%	6.8%	11.4%	6.9%	3.0%
April	8.9%	11.5%	5.7%	9.6%	7.1%	8.8%	15.2%
May	5.8%	12.0%	5.7%	9.5%	4.3%	6.8%	12.1%
June	10.4%	17.8%	31.4%	11.7%	12.9%	15.4%	18.2%
July	10.6%	20.0%	25.7%	11.4%	11.4%	10.3%	12.1%
August	12.3%	5.8%	2.9%	11.4%	25.7%	8.7%	12.1%
September	10.2%	7.2%	5.7%	9.3%	11.4%	9.3%	6.1%
October	11.4%	6.5%	8.6%	9.2%	1.4%	8.2%	9.1%
November	7.2%	4.7%	0.0%	6.3%	2.9%	6.9%	0.0%
December	6.2%	4.3%	2.9%	4.2%	2.9%	6.6%	9.1%
N	951	1,504	34	1,361	70	1,044	33

TABLE 10: Visitation by Month by Year



Note: For the 2019 survey, data collection occurred exclusively in January/February; for the 2021 survey, data collection occurred on a continuous basis from June onwards; and for the 2022 survey forward, data collection occurred on a continuous basis throughout the year.

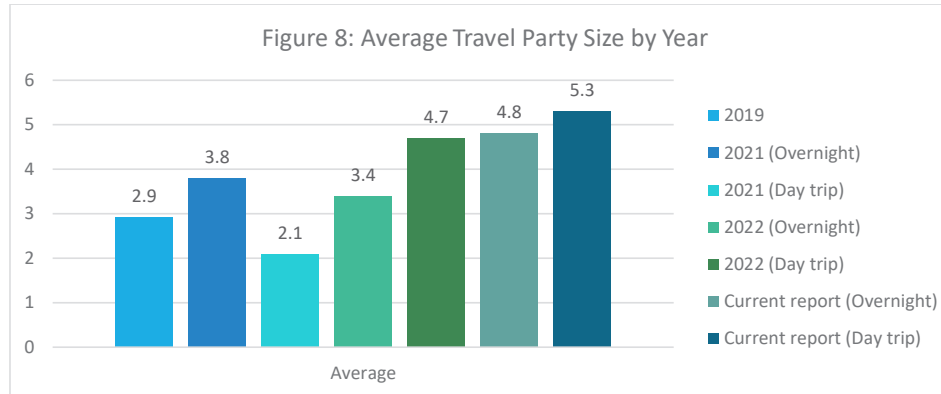
Approximately how many nights was your trip to Hilton Head Island?



	2019	2021	2022	2023
None/day trip only	2.0%	4.5%	5.2%	3.1%
1 night	1.9%	1.8%	2.4%	0.4%
2 nights	3.1%	4.9%	8.9%	5.6%
3 nights	10.3%	7.5%	11.3%	10.2%
4 nights	10.0%	9.3%	10.2%	7.9%
5 nights	7.7%	9.6%	10.5%	7.5%
6 nights	12.4%	10.9%	9.5%	7.6%
7 nights	30.4%	34.0%	19.3%	15.4%
8 nights	2.1%	3.4%	3.4%	5.5%
9 nights	2.3%	2.6%	1.8%	3.7%
10 nights	3.4%	3.1%	3.2%	3.7%
11 nights	0.5%	0.4%	1.3%	2.6%
12 nights	0.8%	0.9%	1.4%	3.7%
13 nights	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	2.9%
14 nights	4.8%	4.2%	3.6%	4.4%
15 nights	0.5%	0.8%	1.1%	2.9%
More than 15 nights	7.1%	1.1%	6.2%	12.8%
N	950	996	1,519	1,103

TABLE 11: Length of Stay by Year

Please indicate how many people (including yourself) were in your travel party.



	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Average	2.9	3.8	2.1	3.4	4.7	4.8	5.3
N	951	995	45	1,477	79	1,042	30

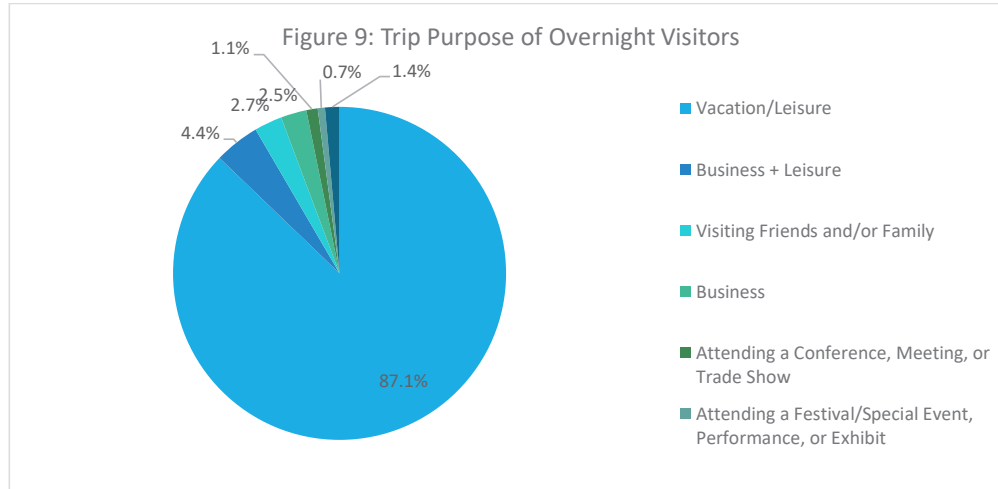
TABLE 12: Travel Party Size by Year

Please indicate by age category how many people were in your travel party.

Age		0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more
Overnight	Under 18	35.3%	25.6%	20.0%	15.7%	1.1%	0.5%	1.7%
	18-24	85.8%	6.9%	3.4%	1.1%	0.1%	0.1%	2.5%
	25-34	35.3%	6.5%	16.8%	13.0%	11.7%	13.6%	2.9%
	35-44	35.3%	21.5%	21.3%	17.9%	0.6%	0.6%	2.8%
	45-54	86.8%	5.6%	5.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	1.8%
	55-64	84.4%	7.7%	5.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.1%	1.7%
	65+	83.3%	5.4%	9.2%	0.6%	-	0.2%	2.4%
Day Trip	Under 18	64.7%	14.7%	14.7%	-	-	2.9%	2.9%
	18-24	67.6%	14.7%	5.9%	-	-	5.9%	5.9%
	25-34	44.1%	14.7%	8.8%	5.9%	5.9%	5.9%	14.7%
	35-44	64.7%	14.7%	8.8%	-	2.9%	2.9%	5.9%
	45-54	79.4%	11.8%	5.9%	2.9%	-	-	-
	55-64	79.4%	5.9%	2.9%	2.9%	-	2.9%	5.9%
	65+	82.4%	11.8%	5.9%	-	-	-	-

TABLE 13: Travel Party Ages by Year

What was the main purpose of your overnight visit to Hilton Head Island?



	2021	2022	2023
Vacation/Leisure	82.1%	74.3%	87.1%
Business + Leisure	6.7%	6.9%	4.4%
Visiting Friends and/or Family	3.9%	5.0%	2.7%
Business	2.1%	5.3%	2.5%
Attending a Conference, Meeting, or Trade Show	2.3%	4.2%	1.1%
Attending a Festival/Special Event, Performance, or Exhibit	0.9%	2.5%	0.7%
Other ²	1.9%	1.7%	1.4%
N	995	1,491	1,081

TABLE 14: Trip Purpose of Overnight Visitors

Day Trip Visitors:

Was this visit part of an overnight vacation or a day trip from home?

	2021	2022	2023
Part of a vacation	57.8%	72.2%	76.5%
Day trip from home	42.2%	27.8%	23.5%
N	45	79	34

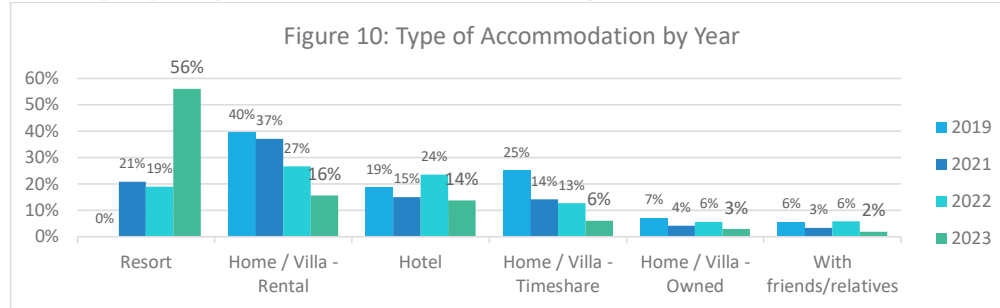
TABLE 15: Day Trip as Part of a Vacation or Day Trip from Home

Where did you stay overnight?

	2021	2022	2023
Charleston	19.2%	50.9%	26.9%
Savannah	42.3%	19.3%	23.1%
Tybee Island	7.7%	10.5%	19.2%
Beaufort	19.2%	14.0%	15.4%
Jacksonville	3.8%	3.5%	11.5%
Fripp Island	3.8%	-	-
Other	3.8%	1.8%	3.8%
N	26	57	26

TABLE 16: Day Trip Visitors' Overnight Location

² Other responses for trip purpose include research for relocation to HHI, golf or tennis tournament, birthday, or anniversary trip.

Overnight Visitors:**What was your primary form of accommodation while visiting Hilton Head Island?**

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Resort	-	20.9%	19.0%	56.1%
Home / Villa - Rental	39.5%	37.2%	26.6%	15.6%
Hotel	18.6%	15.0%	23.6%	13.7%
Home / Villa - Timeshare	25.2%	14.2%	12.7%	6.1%
Home / Villa - Owned	7.1%	4.3%	5.6%	3.0%
With friends/relatives	5.6%	3.4%	5.9%	2.0%
RV park	1.1%	0.4%	1.5%	0.4%
Other	1.4%	0.3%	0.1%	-
None – Day Trip only	1.7%	4.3%	5.0%	3.0%
N	951	1,040	1,570	1,115

TABLE 17: Types of Accommodation by Year

What was the name of the Hotel/Resort where you stayed?

Hampton Inn & Suites Bluffton-Sun City	14.7%
Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island	10.5%
Hilton Beachfront Resort & Spa	10.0%
The Westin Hilton Head Island Resort	7.9%
Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort	5.8%
Sea Pines Resort	3.7%
Barony Beach Club	3.2%
Beach House Hilton Head Island	3.2%
Comfort Suites Bluffton-Hilton Head Island	3.2%
Grand Hilton Head Inn	3.2%
N	190

TABLE 18: Top 10 Hotels or Resorts

Which of the following online platforms did you use to make your home/villa reservation?

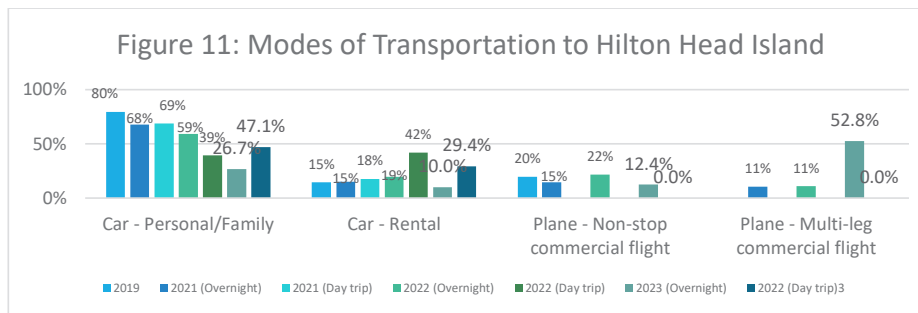
	2019	2021	2022	2023
Directly with owner	-	6.2%	6.0%	-
VRBO	32.8%	34.2%	29.2%	32.3%
A Local vacation rental company	22.7%	22.9%	24.7%	22.2%
Directly with the resort	11.2%	15.1%	13.0%	10.8%
Airbnb	2.4%	10.0%	12.0%	10.2%
Vacasa	-	4.9%	5.5%	6.6%
HomeAway	-	2.2%	3.5%	4.2%
TurnKey	-	1.3%	-	3.0%
I don't remember	3.5%	0.8%	3.0%	1.2%
Booking.com	-	0.3%	2.2%	0.6%
None	-	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Other	23.5%	1.6%	0.5%	8.4%
N		371	401	167

TABLE 19: Booking Platforms for Home/Villa Rental

What type of transportation did you use to travel to Hilton Head Island?

	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Car - Personal/Family	79.5%	67.6%	68.9%	59.3%	39.2%	26.7%	47.1%
Car - Rental	14.7%	15.0%	17.8%	19.4%	41.8%	10.0%	29.4%
Plane - Non-stop commercial flight	19.5% ³	14.8%	-	21.5%	-	12.4%	-
Plane - Multi-leg commercial flight	-	10.7%	-	11.0%	-	52.8%	-
Plane - Private	0.2%	0.7%	13.3%	3.4%	10.1%	1.5%	17.6%
Personal RV	1.1%	2.2%	-	4.9%	1.3%	1.9%	17.6%
Motor Coach/Tour bus	0.0%	1.5%	6.7%	3.9%	15.2%	5.9%	11.8%
Other	0.6%	0.6%	-	0.1%	-	0.2%	-
N	953	995	45	1,477	79	1,115	34

TABLE 20: Modes of Transportation to Hilton Head Island



Visitors Arriving by Plane:

At which airport did you land?

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Hilton Head Island	12.8%	39.8%	33.8%	81.6%
Savannah/Hilton Head International	69.5%	40.6%	38.1%	12.1%
Charleston	9.2%	8.8%	12.7%	3.3%
Atlanta	2.8%	5.6%	6.1%	1.4%
Jacksonville	1.4%	2.0%	5.5%	1.1%
Charlotte	1.4%	2.0%	3.3%	0.3%
Other	2.8%	1.2%	0.4%	0.3%
N	114	251	488	728

TABLE 21: Arrival Airport by Year

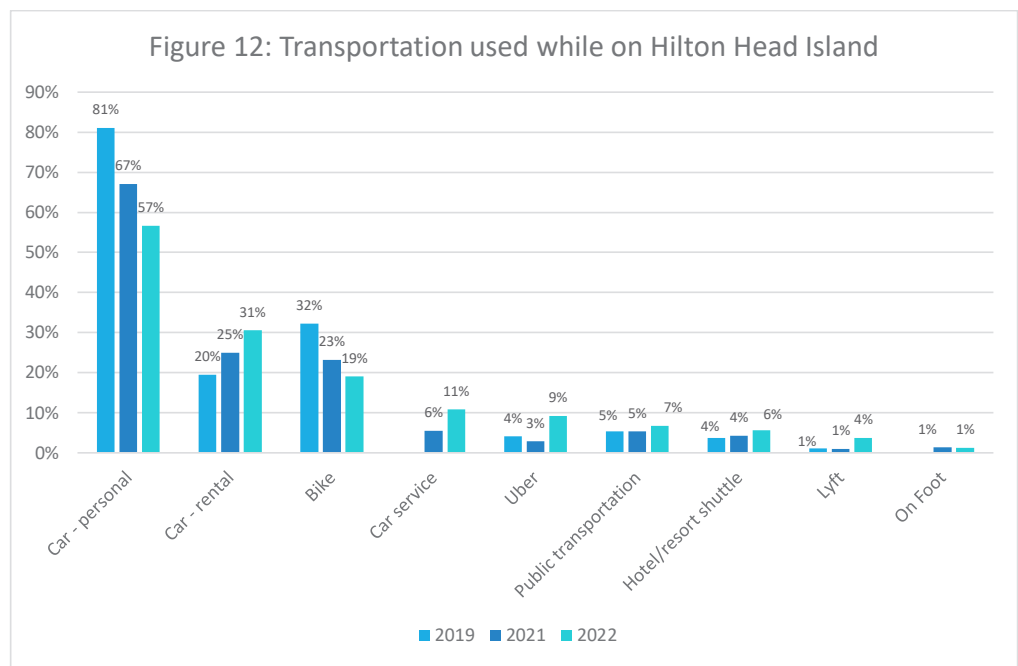
Which commercial airline did you use?

	2021	2022	2023
American Airlines	38.9%	44.8%	25.4%
Southwest	8.1%	9.0%	14.2%
Silver Airways	0.8%	1.8%	14.2%
Air Canada	5.3%	6.8%	12.8%
JetBlue	6.5%	3.6%	12.2%
Frontier	1.6%	2.3%	11.9%
Frontier	0.4%	2.3%	11.9%
Delta	16.6%	7.0%	2.6%
Allegiant	10.1%	8.1%	2.1%
Alaska	2.8%	10.4%	1.7%
Breeze	1.2%	3.2%	1.4%
Sun Country Airlines	0.4%	0.9%	0.1%
United	6.9%	1.8%	-
Spirit	0.4%	0.2%	-
N	247	442	720

TABLE 22: Commercial Airlines Used

³ The 2019 survey did not divide commercial flights into non-stop and multi-leg, so stated percentage is for all commercial flights.

Once on Hilton Head Island, what mode(s) of transportation did you use?



	2019	2021	2022	2023
Car - personal	81.1%	67.1%	56.7%	31.7%
Car - rental	19.5%	25.0%	30.5%	19.4%
Bike	32.2%	23.2%	19.1%	15.2%
Car service	-	5.5%	10.9%	14.5%
Public transportation (HHI Trolley, etc.)	5.4%	5.4%	6.8%	12.5%
Shuttle offered by the hotel/resort	3.7%	4.2%	5.7%	11.1%
Uber	4.1%	2.9%	9.2%	8.5%
Lyft	1.1%	1.0%	3.7%	5.8%
On Foot	-	1.4%	1.3%	0.8%
Other	-	0.1%	0.1%	-
N	948	995	1,477	1,115

TABLE 23: Transportation Used While on Hilton Head

Please indicate the approximate total amount of money that was spent by your party/group for each category while in the Hilton Head Island area.

	Villa Rental	Hotel	Timeshare	Second Homeowner	Non-paying Guests	Day Trip	Overall
Transportation	\$201	\$335	\$185	\$107	\$162	\$57	\$274
Lodging	\$2,834	\$1,004	\$1,229	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,315
Food - Dining	\$606	\$833	\$907	\$579	\$401	\$166	\$763
Food - Grocery	\$338	\$692	\$251	\$314	\$171	\$107	\$573
Shopping	\$485	\$795	\$274	\$415	\$479	\$157	\$684
Spas	\$29	\$276	\$25	\$46	\$49	\$73	\$187
Golf	\$54	\$260	\$72	\$96	\$150	\$29	\$189
Biking	\$69	\$74	\$39	\$16	\$37	\$20	\$63
Performance/Visual Arts	\$35	\$272	\$18	\$12	\$57	\$71	\$183
Festivals	\$12	\$260	\$6	\$18	\$37	\$45	\$168
Museums/Historical Tours	\$42	\$242	\$32	\$12	\$33	\$74	\$163
Boating/Sailing/Fishing	\$137	\$288	\$203	\$31	\$175	\$91	\$231
Nature-based Activities	\$18	\$258	\$17	\$15	\$38	\$41	\$169
Dolphin Tours	\$56	\$272	\$34	\$8	\$48	\$58	\$187
Tennis	\$13	\$259	\$3	\$159	\$11	\$55	\$173
Other Expenses	\$55	\$288	\$64	\$75	\$161	\$13	\$204
Total Expenditure	\$4,864	\$5,890	\$3,352	\$1,894	\$1,917	\$1,414	\$5,241

Table 24: Average Per Travel Party Trip Expenditures by Category and Visitor Type

What are the three primary reasons why you visited Hilton Head Island?

	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Beaches	73.5%	75.4%	55.6%	62.0%	38.0%	40.7%	44.1%
Relaxation	58.6%	51.5%	31.1%	34.1%	12.7%	31.7%	20.6%
Time with family/friends	48.4%	46.6%	24.4%	32.6%	10.1%	22.2%	26.5%
Nature-based activities (dolphin/turtle tours, fishing, etc.)	11.3%	12.0%	2.2%	13.3%	3.8%	19.5%	23.5%
Biking	15.7%	16.4%	11.1%	21.3%	27.8%	17.4%	11.8%
Culinary	13.9%	12.2%	31.1%	14.2%	27.8%	14.3%	20.6%
Shopping	11.7%	10.9%	24.4%	10.7%	8.9%	14.3%	20.6%
Golf	16.3%	13.7%	8.9%	10.4%	13.9%	14.1%	2.9%
Business trip (convention, meeting, etc.)	1.2%	5.1%	4.4%	10.5%	24.1%	13.1%	2.9%
Health/wellness/fitness	2.1%	3.4%	11.1%	5.9%	6.3%	13.1%	8.8%
Boating / Sailing / Kayaking	1.6%	7.5%	11.1%	13.6%	16.5%	12.3%	26.5%
Festivals	4.0%	3.6%	6.7%	8.2%	3.8%	11.6%	8.8%
Attend sporting event	0.6%	4.7%	15.6%	11.2%	10.1%	11.3%	2.9%
Parks	1.4%	1.8%	6.7%	4.9%	5.1%	11.1%	2.9%
Heritage attractions / Museum / Historical tours	3.3%	6.5%	20.0%	10.6%	16.5%	6.1%	32.4%
Tennis	2.1%	1.7%	6.7%	2.6%	11.4%	3.9%	2.9%
Other	8.1%	4.1%	-	3.9%	2.5%	1.8%	5.9%
Wedding	-	1.2%	-	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%	2.9%
N	953	995	45	1,477	79	1,115	34

TABLE 25: Three Primary Reasons for Visitation

Which of the following activities did you actively participate in?

	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Beaches	83.2%	81.8%	42.2%	69.4%	51.9%	46.6%	44.1%
Biking	37.3%	40.5%	6.7%	38.4%	24.1%	31.2%	17.6%
Relaxation	78.0%	68.7%	40.0%	45.6%	15.2%	28.1%	8.8%
Shopping	69.1%	58.1%	46.7%	42.3%	13.9%	25.9%	29.4%
Time with family/friends	70.5%	59.0%	37.8%	40.8%	20.3%	25.1%	20.6%
Water excursions	24.4%	17.6%	17.8%	11.3%	29.1%	17.8%	17.6%
Attend sporting event	2.3%	4.9%	8.9%	13.5%	16.5%	15.3%	11.8%
Nature-based activities (dolphin/turtle tours, fishing, etc.)	30.3%	26.3%	8.9%	24.6%	7.6%	14.9%	23.5%
Culinary	40.1%	29.1%	31.1%	27.5%	16.5%	14.3%	20.6%
Museum / Historical tours	17.8%	15.7%	11.1%	17.9%	8.9%	9.9%	14.7%
Health / Wellness / Fitness	12.6%	12.8%	4.4%	14.8%	12.7%	7.8%	14.7%
Golf	23.8%	18.7%	8.9%	14.6%	6.3%	6.7%	5.9%
Music or theatrical performance / Visual arts exhibit	16.7%	6.2%	8.9%	10.4%	3.8%	6.5%	8.8%
Festivals	13.4%	6.5%	6.7%	12.1%	8.9%	5.8%	17.6%
Business/work	2.5%	7.1%	13.3%	11.8%	11.4%	5.4%	2.9%
Spas	8.0%	5.1%	6.7%	9.5%	5.1%	3.9%	5.9%
Tennis	5.9%	4.9%	-	3.2%	1.3%	3.9%	2.9%
Sports activities	8.1%	4.4%	8.9%	5.8%	5.1%	2.8%	91.2%
Other	3.9%	2.0%	-	2.6%	6.3%	1.8%	5.9%
University visit / Education / Intellectual programs	0.6%	1.4%	2.2%	2.0%	1.3%	1.6%	2.9%
N	950	995	45	1,477	79	1,115	34

TABLE 26: Activities Visitors Participated In

Which shopping locations did you visit?

	2019	2021 (Overnight)	2021 (Day trip)	2022 (Overnight)	2022 (Day trip)	2023 (Overnight)	2023 (Day trip)
Coligny Plaza	68.8%	64.7%	26.7%	54.4%	32.9%	31.6%	23.5%
Harbour Town	60.2%	55.8%	26.7%	44.2%	39.2%	29.2%	23.5%
Shelter Cove Harbour	47.8%	42.0%	17.8%	36.9%	21.5%	23.0%	20.6%
Shelter Cove Towne Centre	40.4%	33.4%	20.0%	25.0%	8.9%	21.2%	29.4%
Downtown Bluffton	30.5%	25.4%	28.9%	31.1%	34.2%	20.4%	38.2%
Tanger Outlets	53.2%	34.9%	37.8%	26.1%	22.8%	19.6%	5.9%
Shopping areas off 278 (Target, Kroger, Best Buy, etc.)	42.0%	30.7%	22.2%	21.7%	20.3%	18.3%	20.6%
The Shops at Sea Pines Center	32.6%	30.3%	8.9%	25.5%	6.3%	18.1%	35.3%
Main Street Village	25.0%	20.2%	8.9%	24.6%	25.3%	14.9%	20.6%
South Beach Marina	25.2%	21.5%	11.1%	17.7%	15.2%	14.9%	23.5%
Village at Wexford	16.4%	10.9%	6.7%	12.8%	11.4%	10.9%	11.8%
Buckwalter shopping areas	2.9%	4.9%	11.1%	8.3%	10.1%	10.1%	8.8%
Other	5.5%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	1.3%	2.1%	67.6%
None	2.1%	1.5%	2.2%	0.7%	1.3%	0.7%	23.5%
N	945	995	45	1,477	79	1,115	34

TABLE 27: Shopping Locations Visited

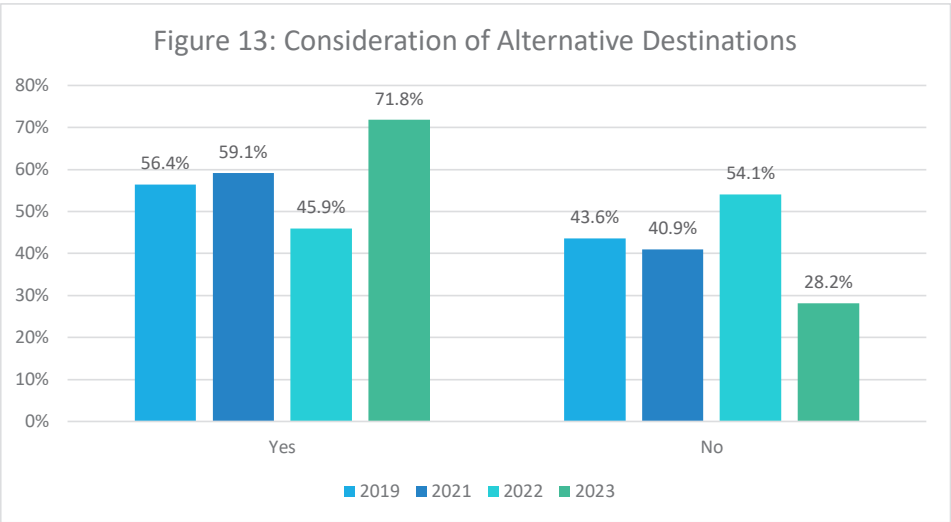
Did you visit any of the following cities while staying on Hilton Head Island?

	2021	2022	2023
Bluffton	37.0%	37.4%	66.2%
Tybee Island	7.3%	10.0%	51.1%
Savannah	29.3%	26.0%	16.0%
Charleston	15.7%	20.8%	10.5%
Beaufort	17.7%	23.2%	9.4%
Daufuskie Island	13.0%	17.1%	7.8%
Jacksonville	5.4%	11.3%	4.8%
Other	0.9%	0.5%	0.9%
I did not visit any other cities.	28.8%	20.1%	12.2%
N	995	1,477	1,115

TABLE 28: Other Cities Visited While on Hilton Head

TRAVEL PLANNING

Before deciding to visit Hilton Head Island, did you consider any other destinations?



	2019	2021	2022	2023
Yes	56.4%	59.1%	45.9%	71.8%
No	43.6%	40.9%	54.1%	28.2%
N	1,691	1,039	1,570	1,114

TABLE 29: Consideration of alternative destinations by year

Which of the following destinations did you consider visiting?

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Gulf Shores, AL	14.9%	19.8%	28.1%	18.3%
Alabama Golf Trail	1.6%	23.8%	31.9%	15.1%
Hawaiian Islands	4.8%	15.8%	24.4%	14.4%
Other	11.3%	13.2%	13.6%	12.4%
Outer Banks, NC	22.6%	28.9%	20.0%	12.3%
Caribbean	12.5%	23.1%	20.4%	12.1%
Marco Island/Naples, FL	12.1%	14.4%	18.2%	11.8%
The Florida Keys	19.4%	12.5%	8.5%	11.6%
Savannah, GA	33.9%	20.0%	19.3%	11.3%
Aspen, CO	2.0%	11.5%	10.1%	10.4%
Jekyll Island, GA	12.5%	13.2%	10.1%	10.4%
Telluride, CO	0.8%	7.8%	12.4%	10.3%
Orlando, FL	12.1%	19.3%	15.0%	9.5%
Sea Island, GA	4.8%	10.4%	12.5%	9.4%
Charleston, SC	45.2%	24.2%	19.3%	8.5%
Sandestin, FL	8.5%	9.2%	13.1%	8.4%
Reynolds Plantation, GA	1.2%	8.9%	10.7%	8.3%
St. Simons Island, GA	-	10.1%	10.4%	7.6%
Kiawah Island, SC	14.1%	15.5%	10.8%	7.5%
Sanibel Island, FL	13.7%	13.4%	13.8%	7.5%
Myrtle Beach, SC	37.5%	20.5%	12.9%	7.0%
Pinehurst, NC	3.2%	9.9%	12.2%	7.0%
Isle of Palms, SC	12.5%	18.1%	16.1%	6.9%
Sarasota, FL	6.9%	7.3%	9.6%	6.9%
Napa/Sonoma, CA	2.8%	8.5%	8.9%	6.4%
Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL	10.1%	9.6%	6.5%	6.3%
Tybee Island, GA	18.2%	14.6%	8.8%	6.3%
Ponte Vedre, FL	3.6%	8.5%	8.9%	5.5%
Santa Fe, NM	1.6%	2.8%	4.0%	5.4%
Bluffton, SC	0.0%	1.9%	4.4%	1.5%
Total	248	425	720	800

TABLE 30: Alternative Destinations by Year

How did Hilton Head Island make it to your list of places to consider for your vacation?

	2019	2021	2022	2023
Wanted to visit a beach destination.	48.3%	49.7%	45.7%	32.6%
Wanted to visit because of the nature-based attractions.	10.9%	14.5%	23.3%	23.4%
Had visited in the past and wanted to return.	80.3%	60.0%	42.5%	20.4%
Wanted to visit heritage attractions.	4.6%	7.8%	20.3%	18.2%
It was recommended by friends/family.	18.2%	24.1%	26.2%	12.2%
Wanted to visit someplace new.	8.6%	18.1%	17.8%	10.6%
Wanted to visit some place within driving distance.	22.7%	23.9%	19.4%	7.9%
Discovered/learned about it on the internet/display ads/search engines.	3.0%	7.5%	10.1%	4.7%
Saw an advertisement in a magazine or website/social media about the area.	2.1%	4.0%	9.9%	4.4%
Safe place to visit during or after COVID-19 pandemic.	-	19.0%	9.3%	4.2%
Wanted to attend a cultural/performing arts event.	1.9%	2.7%	6.3%	3.2%
Wanted to attend a sporting event.	1.7%	2.9%	4.3%	1.9%
Other	14.2%	8.5%	5.1%	2.9%
Total	953	1,039	1,570	1,288

TABLE 31: Reasons for Visiting Hilton Head Island

How likely are you to return to Hilton Head Island?

	2021	2022	2023
Very likely	74.3%	62.7%	44.4%
Likely	15.0%	22.5%	24.3%
Neutral	7.6%	9.5%	17.2%
Unlikely	1.9%	3.7%	13.4%
Very Unlikely	1.3%	1.7%	0.6%
Total	1,027	1,510	1,027

TABLE 32: Likelihood of Visiting Hilton Head Island Again

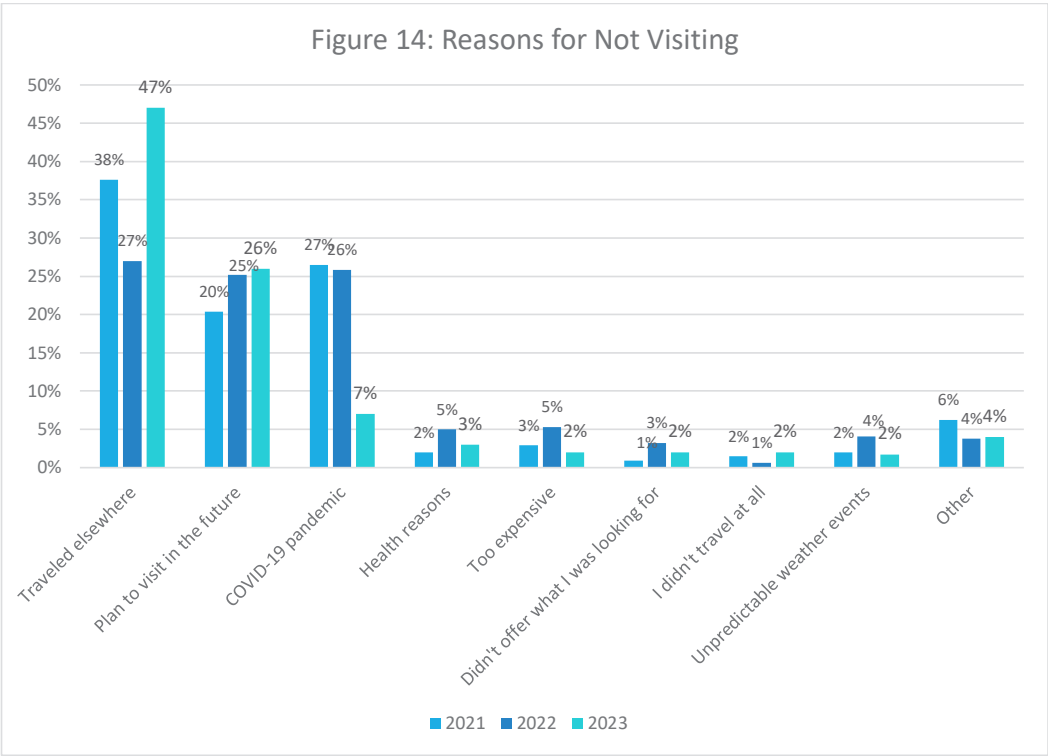
How likely are you to recommend visiting Hilton Head Island to a friend or family member?

	2021	2022	2023
Definitely Recommend	79.7%	70.2%	48.4%
Probably Recommend	14.9%	21.8%	22.8%
May or May Not Recommend	4.9%	6.2%	14.1%
Probably Not Recommend	0.5%	1.5%	14.4%
Definitely Not Recommend	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
Total	1,034	1,522	1,039

TABLE 33: Likelihood of Recommending a Visit to Hilton Head Island

NON-VISITORS

Which of the following most accurately reflects why you did not visit Hilton Head Island-Bluffton during the last 12 months?



	2021	2022	2023
Traveled elsewhere	37.6%	27.0%	47.0%
Plan to visit in the future	20.4%	25.2%	26.0%
COVID-19 pandemic	26.5%	25.8%	7.0%
Health reasons	2.0%	5.0%	3.0%
Too expensive	2.9%	5.3%	2.0%
Didn't offer what I was looking for	0.9%	3.2%	2.0%
I didn't travel at all	1.5%	0.6%	2.0%
Unpredictable weather events	2.0%	4.1%	1.7%
Other	6.2%	3.8%	4.0%
Total	860	341	100

TABLE 34: Reasons for not visiting

Please indicate the region(s) that you traveled to in the past 12 months.

	2021	2022	2023
USA - Southeast (GA, FL, NC, SC)	26.9%	33.7%	42.0%
USA - South (AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX)	9.0%	22.3%	27.0%
USA - Northeast (CT, MA, MA, NJ, NH, NY, PA, RI, VT)	9.1%	18.5%	24.0%
USA - West (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY)	9.8%	19.6%	22.0%
USA - Midwest (IA, IN, IL, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)	10.5%	20.8%	17.0%
USA - South Atlantic (DE, DC, MD, VA, WV)	8.0%	17.0%	16.0%
Canada	1.4%	10.9%	16.0%
Europe	1.2%	7.3%	10.0%
Asia	0.5%	4.4%	8.0%
Latin America and Caribbean	2.1%	6.5%	6.0%
Australia/New Zealand	0.2%	3.2%	6.0%
Africa	0.3%	1.2%	1.0%
USA - Southeast (GA, FL, NC, SC)	26.9%	33.7%	42.0%
Total	860	341	100

TABLE 35: Regions Visited by Non-Visitors in the Past 12 Months

How many times have you visited Hilton Head Island-Bluffton in the past 10 years?

	2021	2022	2023
Never visited	38.9%	42.9%	33.7%
1	18.6%	14.0%	9.5%
2 to 5	30.2%	36.4%	40.8%
6 to 10	9.8%	5.0%	13.6%
11 to 20	1.9%	0.9%	1.2%
21 or more	0.9%	0.5%	1.2%
Total	860	341	169

TABLE 36: Visitation Frequency in the Past 10 Years by Non-Visitors

Do you have plans to visit Hilton Head Island-Bluffton in the near future?

	2021	2022	2023
Yes, within one year	49.2%	50.1%	48.8%
Yes, but not sure when	42.5%	49.0%	47.0%
No	8.3%	0.9%	4.2%
Total	859	341	168

TABLE 37: Plans of visiting Hilton Head Island in the Future by Non-Visitors

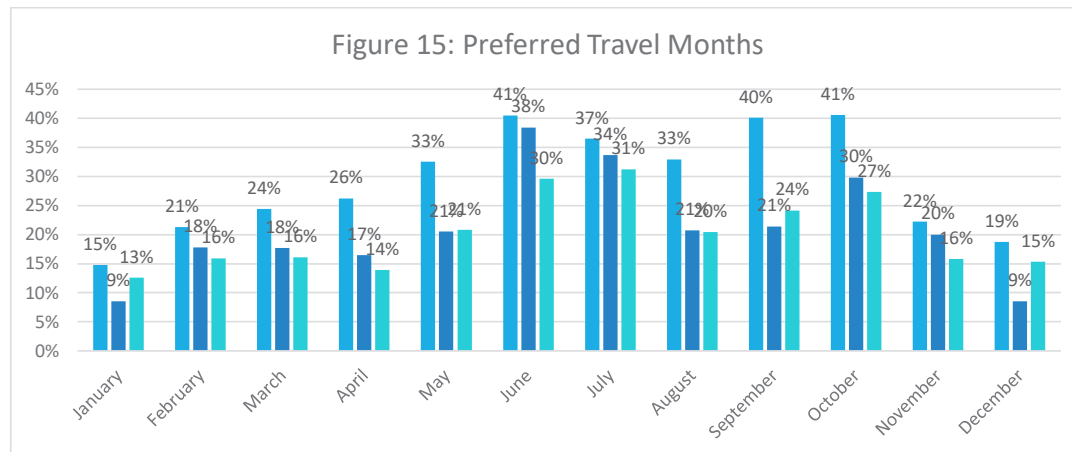
TRAVEL BEHAVIOR – ALL RESPONDENTS

On average, approximately how many leisure/vacation trips do you take each year?

	2021	2022	2023
0 to 1	15.3%	10.0%	7.3%
2 to 4	55.1%	47.3%	50.6%
5 to 7	19.2%	29.9%	23.4%
8 to 10	6.3%	8.2%	15.8%
More than 10	4.1%	4.7%	2.9%
Total	1,042	984	1,625

TABLE 38: Frequency of Leisure/Vacation Trips

Which month(s) are you most likely to travel for vacation purposes?



	2021	2022	2023
January	14.8%	8.5%	12.6%
February	21.3%	17.8%	15.9%
March	24.4%	17.7%	16.1%
April	26.2%	16.5%	13.9%
May	32.5%	20.5%	20.8%
June	40.5%	38.4%	29.6%
July	36.5%	33.7%	31.3%
August	32.9%	20.7%	20.4%
September	40.1%	21.4%	24.1%
October	40.6%	29.8%	27.3%
November	22.2%	20.0%	15.8%
December	18.7%	8.5%	15.3%
Total	1,042	984	1,625

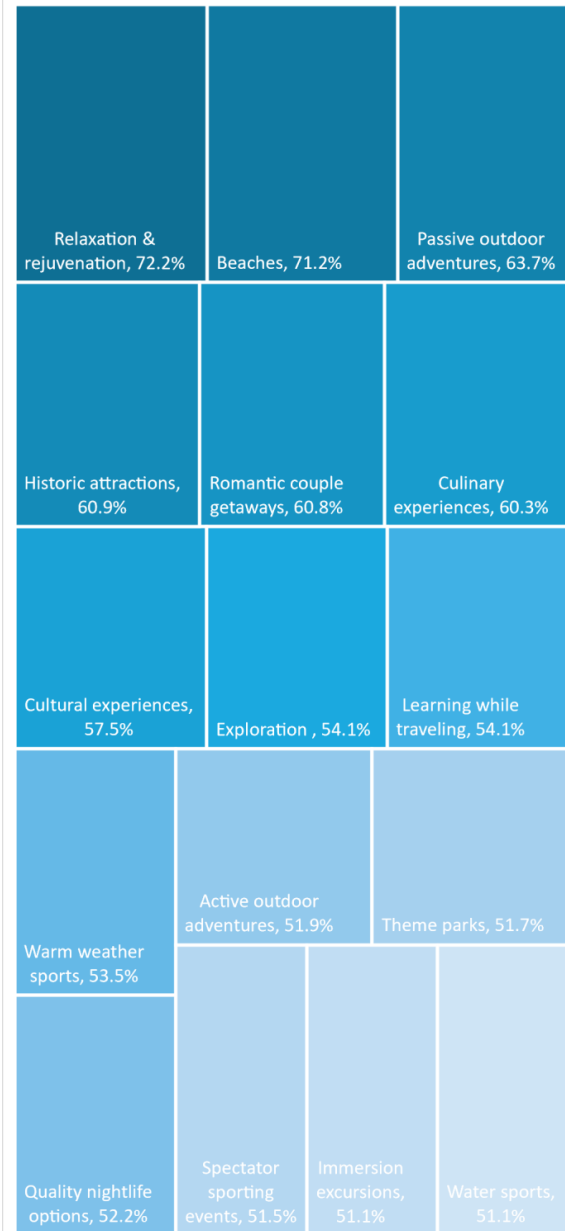
TABLE 39: Preferred Travel Months

To what extent do the following types of vacations/leisure trips and/or travel experiences appeal to you?

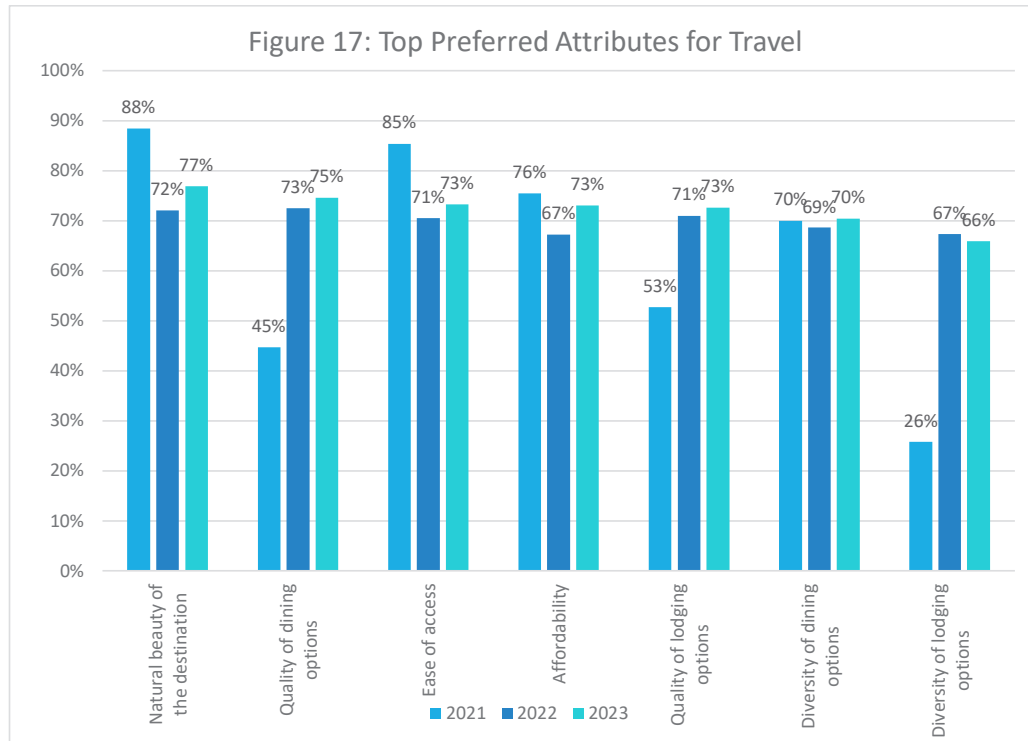
"Appealing" + "Very Appealing"	2021	2022	2023
Relaxation & rejuvenation	85.4%	66.9%	72.2%
Beaches	88.4%	65.1%	71.2%
Passive outdoor adventures	72.6%	64.4%	63.7%
Historic attractions	75.5%	64.4%	60.9%
Romantic couple getaways	70.0%	65.0%	60.8%
Culinary experiences	70.1%	63.7%	60.3%
Cultural experiences	70.7%	62.9%	57.5%
Exploration	57.5%	59.8%	54.1%
Learning while traveling	60.9%	56.3%	54.1%
Warm weather sports	52.7%	61.2%	53.5%
Quality nightlife options	52.6%	60.3%	52.2%
Active outdoor adventures	46.8%	59.6%	51.9%
Theme parks	44.7%	58.7%	51.7%
Spectator sporting events	49.2%	57.0%	51.5%
Immersion excursions	49.6%	57.4%	51.1%
Water sports	48.8%	60.4%	51.1%
Luxury camping	39.9%	55.0%	50.7%
Performing/cultural arts getaways	51.2%	58.6%	50.5%
Art	49.8%	57.1%	49.2%
Urban getaway	48.4%	58.5%	48.0%
Medical/wellness	40.8%	55.5%	47.9%
Waterparks	40.3%	54.4%	47.9%
Winter sports	30.2%	53.9%	42.5%
Golf getaways	37.4%	50.6%	41.9%
Voluntourism	29.5%	49.9%	40.8%
Tennis getaways	25.8%	48.5%	36.2%
Total	949	1,005	1,625

TABLE 40: Preferred Vacation/Leisure Travel Experiences

Figure 16: Preferred Travel Experiences



How important are the following attributes to you in choosing a leisure vacation?



"Important" + "Very Important"	2021	2022	2023
Natural beauty of the destination	88.4%	72.1%	76.9%
Quality of dining options	44.7%	72.5%	74.6%
Ease of access	85.4%	70.5%	73.3%
Affordability	75.5%	67.2%	73.0%
Quality of lodging options	52.7%	71.0%	72.6%
Diversity of dining options	70.0%	68.6%	70.4%
Diversity of lodging options	25.8%	67.3%	65.9%
Low traffic congestion	60.9%	64.8%	63.6%
Travel distance	70.7%	63.1%	63.3%
Environmental/ecological sensitivity	72.6%	67.6%	59.2%
Access to other cities in the surrounding area	46.8%	58.8%	57.8%
Activities like events/festivals	49.6%	64.2%	55.4%
Nightlife activity options	48.4%	61.4%	53.2%
Medical/wellness	37.4%	60.4%	52.6%
Public transportation	57.5%	57.0%	49.2%
Total	949	1,005	

TABLE 41: Preferred Attributes for Vacation/Leisure Travel

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would rather rely on a travel agent or tour operator than make my own travel arrangements.	10.6%	21.7%	29.9%	26.4%	11.3%
I try to support the local economy of places that I visit.	22.9%	42.8%	19.4%	12.3%	2.5%
N 973					

TABLE 42: Travel Preferences

APPENDIX

ALL ZIP CODES COLLECTED BY MSA

MSA	Count	Percent
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	106	9.3%
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ	79	6.9%
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	44	3.9%
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	41	3.6%
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	39	3.4%
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	38	3.3%
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN	34	3.0%
Pittsburgh, PA	33	2.9%
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	23	2.0%
Columbus, OH	23	2.0%
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	20	1.8%
Charleston-North Charleston, SC	17	1.5%
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	17	1.5%
Rural OH	16	1.4%
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	15	1.3%
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	15	1.3%
Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX	15	1.3%
Kansas City, MO-KS	15	1.3%
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	14	1.2%
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	14	1.2%
Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	13	1.1%
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	13	1.1%
San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA	13	1.1%
Jacksonville, FL	12	1.1%
Wisconsin Rapids-Marshfield, WI	12	1.1%
Greenville-Anderson-Greer, SC	11	1.0%
St. Louis, MO-IL	11	1.0%
Akron, OH	10	0.9%
Columbia, SC	10	0.9%
Rural TX	10	0.9%
Indianapolis-Carmel-Greenwood, IN	9	0.8%
La Crosse-Onalaska, WI-MN	9	0.8%
Rural KY	9	0.8%
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	9	0.8%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	8	0.7%
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	8	0.7%
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	7	0.6%
Buffalo-Cheektowaga, NY	7	0.6%
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	7	0.6%
Clarksburg, WV	7	0.6%
Denver-Aurora-Centennial, CO	7	0.6%
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR	7	0.6%
Milwaukee-Waukesha, WI	7	0.6%
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	7	0.6%
Rochester, NY	7	0.6%
San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	7	0.6%

MSA	Count	Percent
Dayton-Kettering-Beavercreek, OH	6	0.5%
Fresno, CA	6	0.5%
Jackson, MS	6	0.5%
Johnstown, PA	6	0.5%
Lancaster, PA	6	0.5%
Las Vegas-Henderson-North Las Vegas, NV	6	0.5%
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	6	0.5%
Sacramento-Roseville-Folsom, CA	6	0.5%
Beaumont-Port Arthur, TX	5	0.4%
Birmingham, AL	5	0.4%
Fayetteville, NC	5	0.4%
Killeen-Temple, TX	5	0.4%
Lansing-East Lansing, MI	5	0.4%
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	5	0.4%
Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ	5	0.4%
Rural IA	5	0.4%
Rural ME	5	0.4%
Rural NY	5	0.4%
Savannah, GA	5	0.4%
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	5	0.4%
Toledo, OH	5	0.4%
Anchorage, AK	4	0.4%
Boise City, ID	4	0.4%
Brainerd, MN	4	0.4%
Calhoun, GA	4	0.4%
Findlay, OH	4	0.4%
Lafayette-West Lafayette, IN	4	0.4%
Ocala, FL	4	0.4%
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	4	0.4%
Richmond, VA	4	0.4%
Rural CO	4	0.4%
Rural ND	4	0.4%
Asheville, NC	3	0.3%
Athens-Clarke County, GA	3	0.3%
Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ	3	0.3%
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	3	0.3%
Erie, PA	3	0.3%
Greensboro-High Point, NC	3	0.3%
Gulfport-Biloxi, MS	3	0.3%
Omaha, NE-IA	3	0.3%
Panama City-Panama City Beach, FL	3	0.3%
Roanoke, VA	3	0.3%
Rockingham, NC	3	0.3%
Rural AK	3	0.3%
Rural FL	3	0.3%
Rural KS	3	0.3%
Salinas, CA	3	0.3%
Stevens Point-Plover, WI	3	0.3%
Sumter, SC	3	0.3%

MSA	Count	Percent
Tucson, AZ	3	0.3%
Virginia Beach-Chesapeake-Norfolk, VA-NC	3	0.3%
Warner Robins, GA	3	0.3%
Albany, GA	2	0.2%
Augusta-Waterville, ME	2	0.2%
Chambersburg, PA	2	0.2%
Ellensburg, WA	2	0.2%
Fergus Falls, MN	2	0.2%
Keene, NH	2	0.2%
Kendallville, IN	2	0.2%
Maryville, MO	2	0.2%
Merced, CA	2	0.2%
Mobile, AL	2	0.2%
Modesto, CA	2	0.2%
Natchitoches, LA	2	0.2%
Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL	2	0.2%
Port St. Lucie, FL	2	0.2%
Raleigh-Cary, NC	2	0.2%
Redding, CA	2	0.2%
Reno, NV	2	0.2%
Rural LA	2	0.2%
Rural MI	2	0.2%
Seneca, SC	2	0.2%
South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI	2	0.2%
Tallahassee, FL	2	0.2%
Terre Haute, IN	2	0.2%
Texarkana, TX-AR	2	0.2%
Torrington, CT	2	0.2%
Tulahoma-Manchester, TN	2	0.2%
Victoria, TX	2	0.2%
Cambridge, OH	1	0.1%
Decatur, IN	1	0.1%
El Paso, TX	1	0.1%
Jamestown-Dunkirk, NY	1	0.1%
Lake Havasu City-Kingman, AZ	1	0.1%
Las Vegas, NM	1	0.1%
Liberal, KS	1	0.1%
Manhattan, KS	1	0.1%
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	1	0.1%
Pullman, WA	1	0.1%
Russellville, AR	1	0.1%
Rutland, VT	1	0.1%
Sebastian-Vero Beach-West Vero Corridor, FL	1	0.1%
St. Cloud, MN	1	0.1%
Thomasville, GA	1	0.1%

**OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS,
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON**

2023 Estimated Total Impact of Tourism in
Hilton Head Island on Beaufort County

ESTIMATED TOTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM IN

Hilton Head Island

ON BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA 2023



MARCH 2024

CONDUCTED BY:

MELINDA PATIENCE
MARK WITTE, PH.D.



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS

66 GEORGE STREET | CHARLESTON, SC 29424
OTA.COFC.EDU

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	1
RESULTS.....	2
APPENDIX	4

Introduction

This study estimates the economic impact generated by tourism to the Town of Hilton Head Island in the year 2023. It examines the impact of such tourism on the broader economy of Beaufort County, South Carolina, and takes into account the direct spending of the visitors along with the positive secondary effects of such expenditures. The analysis entailed individually estimating the economic impacts associated with various tourist segments, as classified by the visitors' lodging type – villa rental, hotel, timeshare, second homeowners and their non-paying guests, and same-day visitors – and then summing them together for an overall total.

This analysis was conducted by Dr. Mark Witte and Melinda Patience of the Office of Tourism Analysis, which is part of the School of Business at the College of Charleston.

Methodology

The economic impact estimations undertaken for this analysis involved various steps and diverse data. Initially, visitor volume estimates for each lodging type were produced using data on lodging demand, as provided by various third-party entities (e.g., CoStar and Key Data), combined with visitor behavior data that is collected via a Visitor Profile Survey. The estimated total number of visitors in each segment for 2023 can be observed in Table 1. These figures then were used to estimate the total direct visitor spending associated with each segment. Such spending estimates also relied upon visitor expenditure data collected as part of the previously mentioned Visitor Profile Survey, which asks respondents about their spending in over a dozen categories (e.g.,

lodging, food, transportation, and activities). The list of expenditure categories, and the total estimated direct expenditure in each category for 2023, can be observed in Table 2.

The previously described data subsequently were used to determine average per-person expenditures. These figures were combined with the estimated visitor counts and used as inputs for a regional economic impact modelling tool, IMPLAN. IMPLAN is an input-output (I-O) model that uses regionalized economic data and other information to determine economic output that accounts for direct expenditure and the secondary benefits of such expenditure (i.e., indirect and induced impacts). The model further estimates labor impacts and tax revenues.

Table 1. Number of HHI Visitors

Segment	Visitors
Villa Rental	920,345
Hotel	481,328
Timeshare	477,628
Second Homeowner	674,278
Non-Paying Guests	174,983
Day Trip	255,358
Total Visitors	2,983,919

The following metrics, as estimated by the economic impact model, are covered within this report:

- **Employment:** The number of jobs in the region supported by the economic activity, which involves an industry-specific mix of full-time, part-time, and seasonal employment. Seasonal jobs are adjusted to annual equivalents.

Table 2. 2023 Estimated Total Expenditure by Spending Category

Category	Totals
Transportation (around the destination)	\$125,971,387
Lodging	\$900,075,506
Food – Dining Out	\$450,188,097
Food – Groceries	\$237,565,102
Shopping	\$309,837,707
Spas	\$52,742,751
Golf	\$82,444,207
Biking	\$36,645,071
Performance/Visual Arts	\$44,619,961
Festivals	\$37,384,228
Museums/Historical Tours	\$45,162,778
Boating/Sailing/Fishing	\$112,463,225
Nature-based Activities	\$39,205,349
Dolphin Tours	\$53,253,515
Tennis	\$63,269,618
Other Expenses	\$76,625,335
Total Expenditure	\$2,667,453,836

- **Labor income:** All forms of employment income, including employee compensation (wages and benefits) and proprietor income.
- **Output:** The total value of industry production, which for the service sector represents total sales, for the retail sector represents gross margins, and for the manufacturing sector represents sales minus inventory change.
- **Direct:** The initial effects to local industries that are directly receiving the expenditures of interest.
- **Indirect:** The secondary effects resulting from business-to-business purchases in the supply chain occurring throughout the region, as triggered by or in support of the direct expenditure activity.
- **Induced:** The ripple effects in the region resulting from household spending of income, after the removal of taxes, savings, and commuters.
- **Taxes:** These revenues take into account a variety of taxes, including sales tax, property tax, and income tax. These figures do not account for tourism taxes, such as accommodation taxes.

Results

After a record high number of visitors in 2021, the total number of visitors slightly declined in 2022 and 2023. Notably, while villa rental visitors, timeshare visitors and hotel visitors waned, there was an increase in second homeowner stays, non-paying guests and daytrippers. Even as the “paying” clientele may have decreased in total number, the total spent on lodging increased. Indeed, the decline in total visitors did not create a contraction in total expenditures and total economic impact.

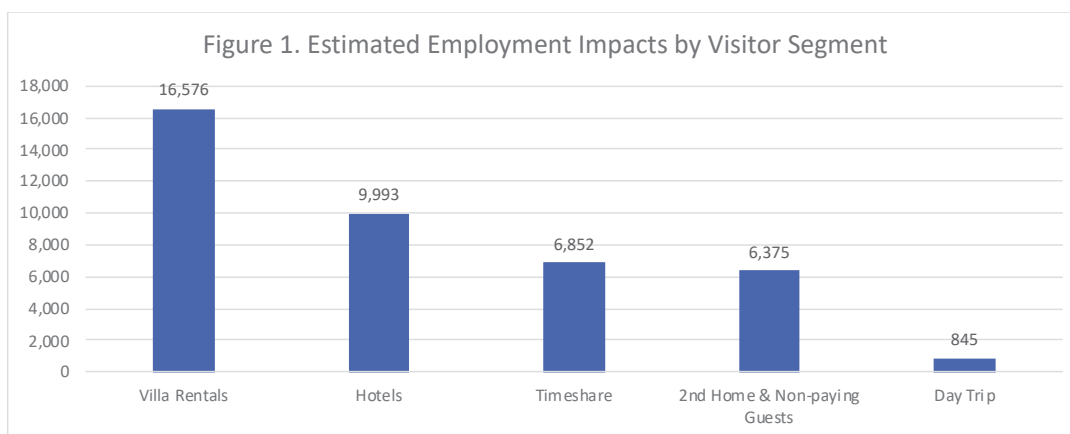
Why? Simply, there were increased expenditures by fewer visitors. Particularly, greater direct visitor spending accrued to boating/sailing/fishing, dolphin tours and nature-based activities; roughly \$128 million of the \$206 million increase in year-over-year direct expenditures (61%) were earned by these industries. And this increase in direct expenditures led to an overall increase in economic impact.

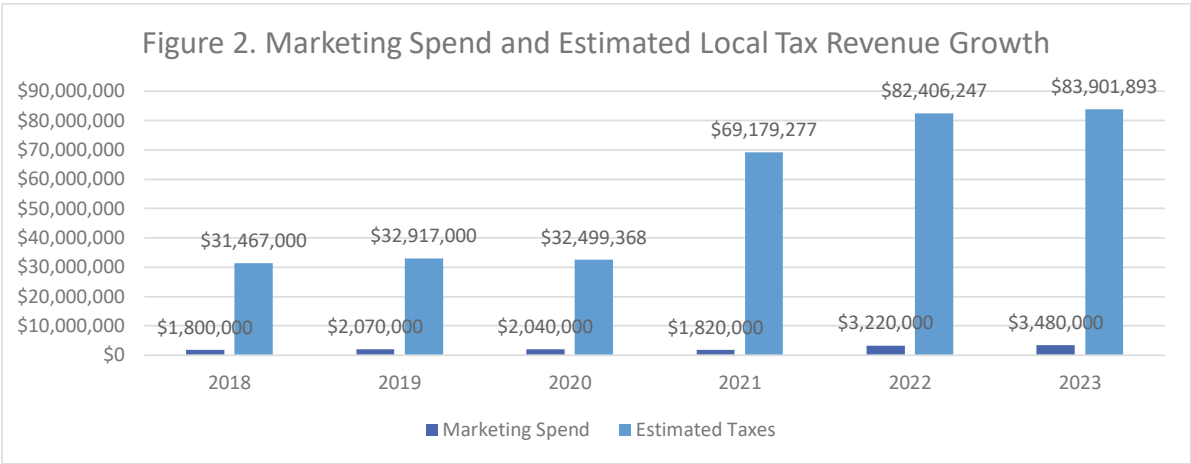
A total of **2.98 million visitors** came to Hilton Head Island in 2023, down 3.4% compared to 2022, down 4.6% compared to 2021, up 14.4% compared to 2020, and up 111.2% compared to 2019. The overall economic impact of this tourism for Beaufort County was **\$3.61 billion**, up 13.5% compared to 2022, up 27.7% compared to 2021, up 162.9% compared to 2020, and up 139.0% compared to 2019. This economic impact represents not just the direct expenditure by visitors, but also the secondary ripple effects of such economic activity that occur as tourism businesses spend operating funds and as tourism dollars are re-spent within the region. Hilton Head Island tourism also supported an estimated **40,641 jobs**, which represent 33.3% of all jobs in Beaufort County, as per employment data provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Similar to the economic impact figure, this employment figure does not refer solely to jobs within the tourism sector, but rather to a combination of full-time, part-time, and seasonal jobs that are

both directly and indirectly supported by the broader tourism economy and its secondary effects on non-tourism industries and enterprises. Impact estimates for each of the visitor segments are presented in the Appendix (Tables A1 - A6), and the employment impacts are presented in Figure 1.

A total output multiplier for tourist spending was calculated using the model estimates. This multiplier represents the ratio of total economic impact to direct spending. The estimated output multiplier for Hilton Head Island tourism on Beaufort County was **1.35**. This signifies that every dollar spent by tourists on Hilton Head Island increased output in the overall Beaufort County economy by a total of \$1.35.

The tourist expenditures generated an estimated **\$39.31 million** in tax revenues for local Beaufort County governments. The Town of Hilton Head Island earned an additional **\$44.59 million** in accommodations tax, hospitality tax, and beach preservation fees, as reported by the Town of Hilton Head Island Revenue Services. Together, this **\$83.90 million** in tax revenue represents a Return on Tax Investment (ROTI) of 24.11, based on the \$3.48 million that was spent on destination marketing in 2023. In other words, each dollar spent by the Visitor & Convention Bureau yielded an estimated return of **\$24.11** in local tax revenue.





Appendix

Table A1. Villa Rental – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	13,398	\$532,560,202	\$985,790,272
Indirect	1,490	\$69,650,074	\$224,864,209
Induced	1,687	\$78,295,036	\$278,711,172
Total	16,576	\$680,505,312	\$1,489,365,653

Table A2. Hotel – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	7,982	\$238,231,162	\$557,654,579
Indirect	1,179	\$52,613,736	\$189,837,592
Induced	832	\$38,583,898	\$137,357,950
Total	9,993	\$329,428,796	\$884,850,122

Table A3. Timeshare – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	5,475	\$188,671,793	\$412,291,086
Indirect	747	\$35,002,352	\$116,462,503
Induced	630	\$29,239,830	\$104,087,729
Total	6,852	\$252,913,976	\$632,841,318

Table A4. Second Homeowner & Non-Paying Guests – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	5,163	\$145,845,761	\$333,156,603
Indirect	705	\$32,115,330	\$116,983,739
Induced	507	\$23,535,055	\$83,783,008
Total	6,375	\$201,496,146	\$533,923,349

Table A5. Day Trip – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	672	\$19,429,091	\$43,545,413
Indirect	104	\$4,591,891	\$16,690,979
Induced	69	\$3,197,778	\$11,384,320
Total	845	\$27,218,759	\$71,620,711

Table A6. Total, All Segments – Estimated Economic Impact on Beaufort County

	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct	32,691	\$1,124,738,008	\$2,332,437,953
Indirect	4,225	\$193,973,383	\$664,839,022
Induced	3,725	\$172,851,597	\$615,324,178
Total	40,641	\$1,491,562,988	\$3,612,601,153
Estimated Local Tax Revenue			\$39,311,249
Local Tourism Tax Revenue (ATax, HTax, and Beach Preservation Fees)			\$44,590,644
Total Estimated Local Tax Revenue			\$83,901,893

Table A7. Top 50 Industries Impacted by HHI Tourism

	Industry	Output
1	Non-hotel accommodations	\$807,597,480
2	Full-service restaurants	\$481,808,252
3	Other real estate	\$184,932,587
4	Miscellaneous store retailers	\$184,899,693
5	Fitness and recreational sports centers	\$182,488,285
6	Transit and ground passenger transportation	\$127,765,129
7	Owner-occupied dwellings	\$117,721,364
8	Water transportation	\$113,547,739
9	Hotels and motels, including casino hotels	\$99,855,058
10	Food and beverage stores	\$96,549,029
11	Scenic and sightseeing transportation and support activities for transportation	\$94,733,851
12	Museums, historical sites, zoos, and parks	\$81,425,303
13	Personal care services	\$55,360,322
14	Performing arts companies	\$46,764,182
15	Other amusement and recreation industries	\$39,575,925
16	Other local government enterprises	\$35,144,058
17	All other food and drinking places	\$34,555,753
18	Monetary authorities and depository credit intermediation	\$34,373,087
19	Management of companies and enterprises	\$32,290,629
20	Insurance agencies, brokerages, and related activities	\$29,559,500
21	Legal services	\$28,042,044
22	Employment services	\$26,227,830
23	Nonstore retailers	\$25,573,272
24	Services to buildings	\$24,097,285
25	Limited-service restaurants	\$23,914,117
26	Offices of physicians	\$23,707,668
27	Securities and commodity contracts intermediation and brokerage	\$21,799,352
28	Management consulting services	\$21,035,158
29	Advertising, public relations, and related services	\$20,292,263
30	Other financial investment activities	\$18,215,169
31	Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and payroll services	\$16,945,483
32	Maintenance and repair construction of nonresidential structures	\$16,303,522
33	Nondepository credit intermediation and related activities	\$14,208,414
34	General merchandise stores	\$12,849,479
35	Automotive repair and maintenance, except car washes	\$12,831,984
36	Tenant-occupied housing	\$12,698,137
37	Landscape and horticultural services	\$12,068,274
38	Internet publishing and broadcasting and web search portals	\$11,404,456
39	Postal service	\$11,384,978

Impact of Tourism in HHI on Beaufort County, 2023

	Industry	Output
40	Electric power transmission and distribution	\$10,588,935
41	Waste management and remediation services	\$10,509,716
42	Travel arrangement and reservation services	\$10,448,081
43	Hospitals	\$10,341,644
44	Gasoline stores	\$9,594,428
45	Insurance carriers, except direct life	\$9,149,583
46	Building material and garden equipment and supplies stores	\$9,041,051
47	Clothing and clothing accessories stores	\$9,039,248
48	Truck transportation	\$8,908,954
49	Car washes	\$8,597,883
50	Radio and television broadcasting	\$8,520,030

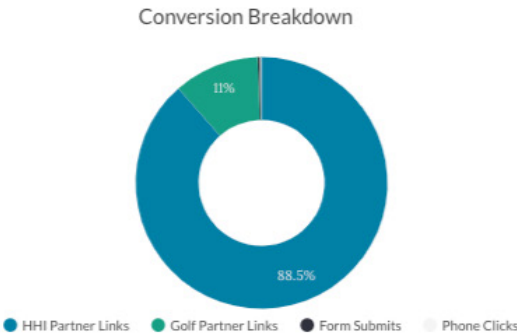
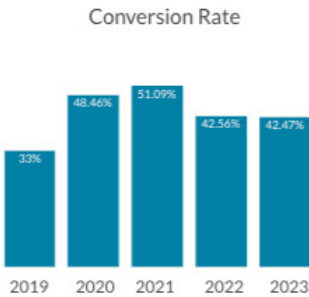
VERB INTERACTIVE

2023 Digital and Social Media Marketing Recap

HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

CONVERSION RATE OVERVIEW

- Compared to 2022, our overall conversion rate remained flat.
- The majority of conversions are outgoing links to partners (88.5%). Golf accounts for 11% of conversions. Form Submits and Click to Call actions drove 0.48% between the two.

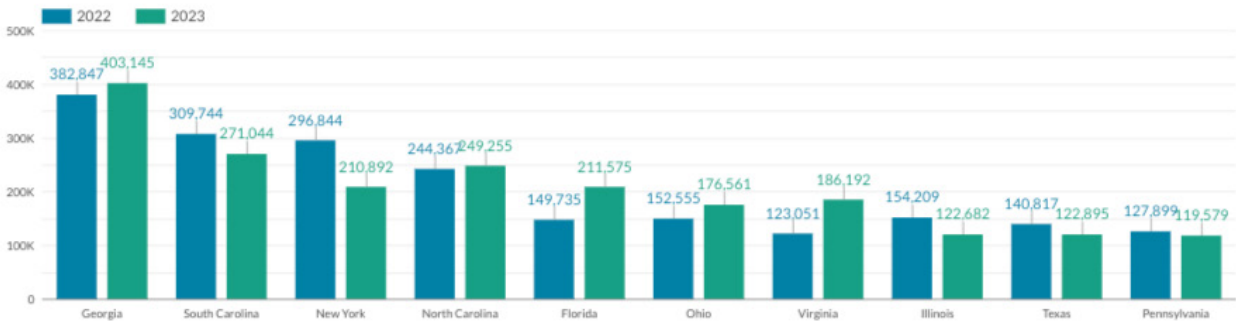


HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

DMA

- In 2023, the top 10 DMA traffic remained fairly steady compared to the PY. The top 5 DMAs drive 64% of all traffic to the website. We saw the largest YoY decreases from New York and Illinois. However we increased traffic by +41% for Florida and +51% Virginia

Top 10 Markets



HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

PAGE PERFORMANCE

- Other than the homepage, the See & Do page is the most popular page by pageviews. After the See & Do page, Offers page comes close to with total pageviews equalling 431,209

Top Pages

	Page path and screen class	Pageviews	% of Total Pageviews	Avg Session Duration	Bounce rate
1.	/	999,948	19%	01:25	41.23%
2.	/see-do	485,789	9%	01:05	50.29%
3.	/offers/hilton-head-island-escapes	431,209	8%	01:19	53.11%
4.	/stay/hotels-inns-resorts	213,315	4%	02:58	52.88%
5.	/events	134,130	3%	01:56	49.44%
6.	/stay	115,371	2%	01:11	57.71%
7.	/taufuskie	113,577	2%	01:13	43.81%
8.	/stay/vacation-homes-villas	97,933	2%	02:42	60.46%
9.	/see-do/beaches	95,468	2%	01:47	78.09%
10.	/golf/golf-courses	88,521	2%	02:35	46.32%
11.	/golf/golf-getaway	71,426	1%	01:25	32.79%
12.	/hilton-head-island-airport	61,363	1%	01:00	39.11%

HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

GOOGLE PAID METRICS

- Comparing 2022 and 2023, the cost per click decreased from .87 to .62 cents. Under \$1 CPC is under the average benchmark. These ads drove over 1.3M users to the destination website.

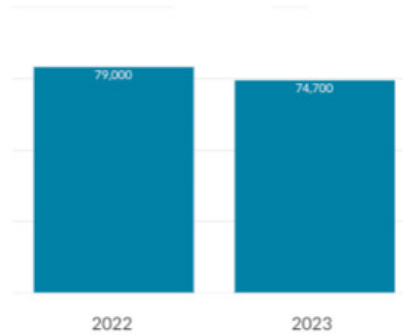
This data includes HHI, HHI Co op, and SCRPT (when applicable).



HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

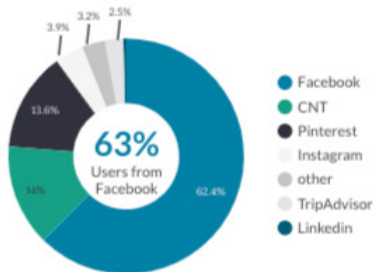
SEARCH INTEREST

- In 2023, global monthly search volume decreased slightly by 5.4% vs PY. Search interest reached a peak in late June and the first week of July.
- Top terms used to search for Hilton Head Island were hilton head, hilton head island, hilton head weather, hilton head south carolina, hilton head island sc, hilton head hotels, hilton head resorts, hilton head golf courses, and things to do in hilton head.



HILTON HEAD ISLAND

SOCIAL TRAFFIC



- Facebook is the key driver for the majority of the social traffic to the website, accounting for 63% of the social sessions.
- We saw an overall decrease in Facebook sessions with Pinterest and Instagram showing relatively same volume

Social Traffic Engagement

	Social Network	Sessions	% Sessions of Total	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
1.	Facebook	25,795	62%	10.31	07:14
2.	CNT	5,777	14%	1.03	00:23
3.	Pinterest	5,634	14%	28.51	19:45
4.	Instagram	1,625	4%	7.61	10:24
5.	other	1,311	3%	51.00	10:42
6.	TripAdvisor	1,050	3%	15.44	04:05
7.	LinkedIn	163	0%	1.34	02:06

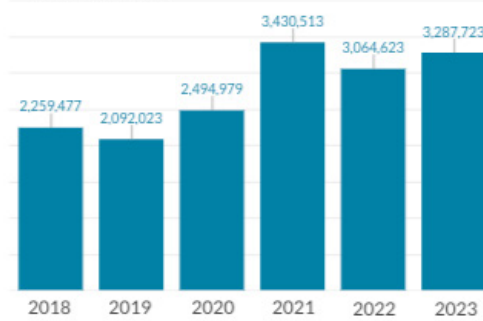
4 / 7 / 7

HILTON HEAD ISLAND PROPER

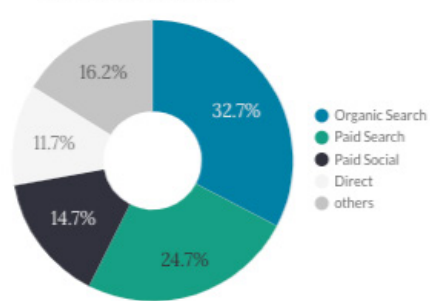
TOTAL WEBSITE VISITATION

- In 2023, there were 3.28M visits to the hiltonheadisland.org website. Search traffic (organic and paid) contributed the majority of traffic to the website (69.3%). Traffic to the website increased by +7.27% vs. PY.
- 67.98% of users navigated to the site from a mobile device, followed by 26.67% on a desktop and 5.36% from a tablet.

Website Visits



Visitors by Channel



WEBER SHANDWICK

2023 Public Relations Recap



HILTON HEAD ISLAND 2023 COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS

COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS
 HISTORY/GULLAH CULTURE

TRAVEL+LEISURE

This Island in South Carolina Has the First Self-governed Town of Formerly Enslaved People in the U.S.



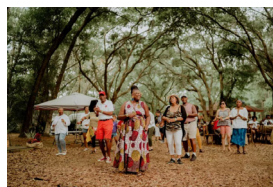
FROM LEFT: A replica homesteaded entrance, Mitchelville Freedom Park, in South Carolina, a historic marker.
 PHOTO: FRANK HANSEN/THAT BULLOCK/COMPOSITE OF HISTORIC MITCHELVILLE FREEDOM PARK



During the Civil War, in late 1861, the Union Army captured Hilton Head. While plantation owners fled the advancing troops in boats, hundreds of enslaved people, then considered "contrabands of war" by the Union Army, remained on the island. Because of Hilton Head's remoteness (the first bridge to the mainland wasn't built until 1956), not to mention the thousands of Union soldiers, the Confederate Army was unable to retake the land. In 1862, Union general Ormsby Mitchell worked with the community to establish the town of Mitchelville on the grounds of what had previously been the Fish Haul Creek Plantation. Some 3,000 formerly enslaved people lived in freedom there — a notable feat, considering slavery wasn't abolished until 1865. After the war ended, the departure of the Union Army created a dearth of jobs, causing many residents to leave the island in search of work. The land was returned to the heir of the former owner. By the 1930s, there was nothing left of Mitchelville.

My parents taught me that sharing Black American stories of ingenuity and joy — not just despair and hardship — is powerful, and I pass this message on to my four-year-old son, Langston. One of those stories is about Mitchelville, a town that once stood on South Carolina's Hilton Head Island.

Mitchelville's legacy remains largely unknown outside the Lowcountry. It was the first self-governed town of formerly enslaved people in the United States. From the first time I heard about it, I knew I had to see it, so I flew down from New York for a four-day trip last July.





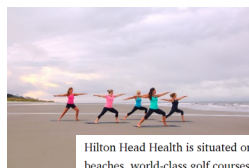
The 21 Best Wellness Retreats in the U.S.

Hilton Head Health: Hilton Head, South Carolina

Hilton Head Health offers vacations with a purpose, with wellness education, fitness classes, a rejuvenating spa, beaches and gourmet dining. The property's holistic approach to better health equips guests with the knowledge to continue the plan once they return home. During your stay you'll work with trainers, coaches, dietitians and counselors to gain a new perspective on living a healthy lifestyle. These steps to well-being include increased mobility, a nutritional meal plan, meditation and other ways to achieve longevity. And you can plan to stay for just a few days – or a week – to reach your goals. The property also offers weight loss retreats with an all-inclusive residential stay and an extended four-week comprehensive LoseWell program. Guests can reserve accommodations at the new on-site 30-room Lowcountry-inspired Sweetgrass Inn or book a one-, two- or three-bedroom private villa.

woman's day

14 Best Women's Wellness Retreats to Nurture Your Mind and Body in 2024



8

Hilton Head Health on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Hilton Head Health is situated on Hilton Head Island, which is famed for its incredible beaches, world-class golf courses, and Southern charm. Hilton Head Health offers three different wellness retreat programs for women to enjoy:



DIY Wellness Retreat: A Treat for Your Mind and Body at Home

WebMD reached out to experts at Hilton Head Health, a renowned wellness resort in Hilton Head, SC, for tips on re-creating the wellness retreat experience at home.

Anne Poirier, director of behavioral health at Hilton Head Health, defined self-care as any activity you do on purpose to preserve or improve your physical, emotional, or mental health. "Taking time to listen to what your body and mind need – and then *taking action* on that – is what self-care is all about," said Poirier, noting how it eases stress, increases energy, and improves mood.

Southern Living

The Best Off-Season Trips To Plan Now



Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Everyone dreams of ice cream cones and long bike rides on sunny summer days on this resort-ready island but the best time to visit isn't actually in the dog days of summer. Instead try April or May (right before school lets out) or September or October (right after its back in session). You'll still enjoy mild temperatures and everything the beloved beach town has to offer.

TRAVEL+LEISURE

Charleston, South Carolina, to Savannah, Georgia

10 of the Best U.S. Road Trips for Families



Explore two popular southern cities on one trip with this short-distance getaway. The drive from Charleston straight to Savannah takes just under two hours, but we'd recommend taking a few days for this itinerary so you can stop to enjoy the outstanding hotels and beaches along the way. You can stay at [The Sanctuary on Kiawah Island](#) just an hour south of Charleston, or fill up the tank for a beach day at [Hilton Head](#), which is only an hour further. Once you've passed through Savannah, drive one more hour south for a stay at [The Oyster at Sea Island](#). This five-star resort is another good option for families, with plenty of swimming, fishing, and nature walks.

PHOTO: JORDAN BARNES/GETTY IMAGES

VOGUE

The Best Bachelorette Party Destinations: 15 Places for the Ultimate Bridal Party Trip

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina



Hilton Head proves that the best bachelorette weekends are often the unexpected ones. Consider an oceanfront Airbnb rental, so you can spend your days soaking up the sun. Later, partake in a wine tasting experience at Island Winery, or grab [happy hour](#) at Skull Creek Boathouse. Before going home, make a final stop at Posidon's rooftop bar for a digestif and live music. —B.C.

Southern Living

The Best South Carolina Beaches For A Relaxing Lowcountry Getaway



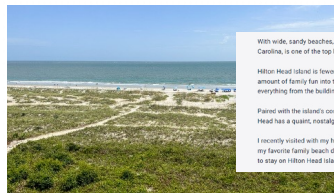
01 of 15 Hilton Head Island

Hilton Head feels like a grown-up beach town, which isn't to say it doesn't still embrace what made it so beloved in the first place: tranquil beaches, real-deal seafood joints, excellent golfing, and Carolina marshes. You might even recognize it as having been awarded the honor of [South's Best Beach](#). There's more than one, which is part of many of Hilton Head's best attributes, like how HH has "matured into a collection of gated neighborhoods surrounded by live oaks, magnolias, and palmettos, linked by mesh-free boulevards bordered by bike paths, and boasting clusters of markets, bars, boutiques, and more than 250 restaurants." Doesn't sound half bad, huh?

MORE ON HILTON HEAD

THE POINTS GUY

Hilton Head for families: What to do and where to stay



With wide, sandy beaches, gentle surf and endless outdoor activities, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, is one of the top beach destinations for families.

Hilton Head Island is fewer than 5 miles wide and only 12 miles long, but it packs a surprising amount of family fun into that small area. The first thing you'll notice about Hilton Head is that everything from the buildings to the signage to the marshes blend with its surroundings.

Paired with the island's compact size and beautiful natural beaches, rocks and swamps, Hilton Head has a quiet, nostalgic feel that you don't often find in popular beach destinations.

I recently visited with my husband and three sons, and it immediately went on the short list of my favorite family beach destinations. Here are my recommendations for what to do and where to stay on Hilton Head Island.

BESTLIFE

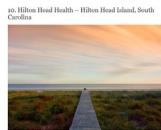
The 11 Best Adults-Only All-Inclusive Resorts in the U.S.

LEAVE YOUR KIDS AND YOUR WORRIES AT HOME WHEN STAYING AT THESE PLACES.

If you're looking for a getaway that will also bolster your physical health, you can head to South Carolina for a revitalizing spa experience.

[Hilton Head Health](#) is a wellness getaway in an island setting, where guests have personalized experiences designed to rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. [Spa Retreats](#), travel packages, and [Hilton Head Health](#) offers a number of all-inclusive wellness experiences designed to cater to specific guest needs from "weekend" to all-year retreats.

You can opt for different all-inclusive experiences, including the [Wellness program](#), which starts with a one-on-one meeting with a licensed therapist, who then helps you design your own goals and address "all personal barriers, from stress to diet."



10. Hilton Head Health - Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

TOWN&COUNTRY

The 40 Best Beaches on the East Coast

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

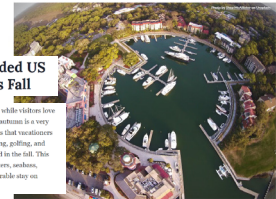


While Hilton Head Island features a variety of beautiful beaches, including the popular Folly Beach, keep in mind that a few are private. Find free parking at Coligny and Mitchellville, and paid parking at many other spots. With warm, clear water and white sand, these beaches seem almost tropical.



THE TRAVEL

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina



These Are The 10 Most Less-Crowded US Destinations You Should Visit This Fall

Hilton Head Island is one of the best [hidden gems](#) in the U.S. in the fall, and while visitors love to enjoy the island's pristine beaches, hiking, and boat rides in the summer, autumn is a very special time to explore it. The island is surrounded by brilliant autumn colors that visitors can explore through biking and taking sunset and sunrise walks. Birdwatching, golfing, and shopping are other fun activities to enjoy during a visit to Hilton Head Island in the fall. This island is known for its incredible seafood scene, which provides shrimp, oysters, sea bass, crabs, and more. Book a room at [Grand Sands Resort by Pelicans](#) for a memorable stay on Hilton Head Island in the fall.

PHOTO: JORDAN BARNES/GETTY IMAGES

TRAVEL+LEISURE

11 All-inclusive Resorts Perfect for a Girls Trip

04 of 11 Hilton Head Health

Located on idyllic [Hilton Head Island](#), guests at [this wellness resort](#) can enjoy a handful of amenities. Between soaks in the hot tub and services at the spa, you and your girlfriends can take cooking demos, sign up for dance classes, go kayaking, or practice pickleball. When it's time to refuel, head to the on-site restaurant and enjoy dishes like lobster tacos, flatbreads, quiches, and even cupcakes. When your day is done, you can retreat to your room at the Sweetgrass Inn, or choose one of the private cottages or villas for even more space.

Parents

11 Best Family Beach Towns for Your Next Vacation



SEAN RAU/CORBIS OUTLINE

1. Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Oceanfront Fun: You can't really go wrong with any of Hilton Head's 12-plus miles of white-sand beaches. "Driessen Beach and Islanders Beach parks are particularly good choices for families because they also have playgrounds and picnic shelters," says Steve Riley, town manager. While you'll probably spot tiny ocean critters, sea-turtle nests, or even dolphins at any of the beaches, Driessen Beach's wooden boardwalk actually takes you over a tidal marsh and sand dunes, so it's home to the most creatures. And Coligny Beach Park, which has a splash fountain, also stands out for its shallow, calm water. "You'd have to walk out 30 yards for it to get above 3 feet deep," says Riley. On the other side of the island, don't miss the candy-striped lighthouse—it's a manageable 114 steps to the top—in the Harbour Town area.

TRAVELPULSE

2023 Travel Guide to the United States

Best Places for Couples

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

There are tons of fun, relaxing and romantic things for couples to do on South Carolina's Hilton Head Island, a treasure of the Lowcountry. The island boasts miles of gorgeous and pristine beaches and even opportunities to view dolphins in the wild. Couples can sample some of the best dishes in the region, partake in local wine tastings and perhaps book a rejuvenating couples massage at one of the destination's many excellent spa resorts.



OUTDOORS WIRE

Celebrate National Lighthouse Day with these 20 US lighthouses

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Climb 114 steps to the top of this candy-striped tower for island views.

redbook

The Best Road Trips from Florida



6

Hilton Head, South Carolina

Hilton Head is a beautiful island town located in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. It is known for its stunning beaches, world-class golf courses, and upscale resorts. Aside from golf, other activities include kayaking, hiking, fishing and simply sunbathing on the beach with a margarita in hand. This is a mandatory stop for seafood lovers as cuisine is freshly caught hours before it is served to your table. With many hotels, travelers also rent beachfront properties equipped with full kitchens to feel right at home.



Where to Go on the Perfect South Carolina Lowcountry Vacation

Beaches, Golf, and More on Hilton Head Island



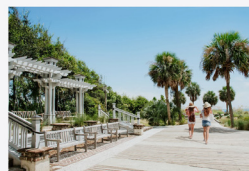
©3 View of Hilton Head in South Carolina's Lowcountry (Photo: Hilton Head Island)

Many people know **Hilton Head** as a world-class [family beach vacation spot](#) and [golf destination](#), but there's much more to do while on island time. You can soar to new heights and catch panoramic views from above with a parasailing flight at [LGO Seals](#), or take the [Gullah Heritage Trail Tour](#) featuring guides of Gullah heritage that share the important history and stories of this West African-based culture. There's also [The Gullah Museum of Hilton Head Island](#) to visit.

THE POINTS GUY

The 10 best road trips to take with your family this summer

The South Carolina coast



Coligny Beach Park, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. MARGARET W. GETTY IMAGES

Start in Hilton Head Island and catch some rays at the popular Coligny Beach Park, or if you like a quiet scene, try Alder Lane or Burkes Beach.

Learn about South Carolina's Lowcountry and Gullah history and culture at the Coastal Discovery Museum and enjoy the area's natural beauty at the Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge and Sea Pines Forest Preserve.

Later, chow down on authentic Gullah cuisine at Ruby Lee's, or enjoy seafood at Skull Creek Boathouse. Book a night at an amenity-filled beach resort like Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort (from \$280 per night), or if you have Marriott Bonvoy points to burn, check out the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa (from \$339 or 40,000 points per night).

BAZAAR^{Harper's}

Try These Affordable Summer Getaways In The US

Enjoy your vacation without shattering the bank.

6
Hilton Head, South Carolina



Whether travelers are looking to enjoy the island's natural beauty, relax, or sample Lowcountry fare, [Hilton Head Island](#) and its abundance of sun-filled excursions allow for an accessible domestic island getaway that won't break the bank. [Palmera Inn & Suites](#) and [Courtyard by Marriott Hilton Head](#) are affordable and quality options for accommodations.

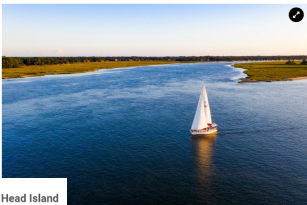
For waterfront views and local history, dine at [Hudson's on the Docks](#), a waterfront restaurant which is one of the only two remaining local fishing fleets on the island that brings in fresh-caught seafood from the docks to the table. [Rant](#) a lily or many hotels provide one for you to navigate 60 miles of trails and hidden routes in the lowcountry.

Travelers can also do good and volunteer with [Oyster Reclamation](#) where volunteers recycle used oyster shells to restore the mud shores near the island's Shelter Cove Marina. The reef acts as a home to 150+ species!

Fodor'sTravel

12 Classic American Summer Towns That Are Also Perfect Winter Escapes

4 OF 12
Hilton Head Island



Hilton Head Island is a great summer getaway—but this spot can also serve as a charming, less crowded winter escape. In the chillier months, the island's natural beauty shines bright alongside the festive holiday lights. The Historic Holidays on Hilton Head Island allows visitors to support local authors and artists while also doing the double deed of shopping for unique holiday gifts.

At the annual [Deck the Halls](#), [A Christmas Boat Parade](#), enjoy the spirit of the season as the waterfront neighborhood transforms into a spectacular holiday celebration. Active explorers can rent bikes and explore on [two wheels](#), traversing the 60 miles of multi-use trails that are emptier in the off-season. Or, embark on one of the Island's many dolphin tours to encounter one of the island's most chipper inhabitants, the [bottlenose dolphin](#), since [these playful creatures](#) can be spotted year-round. Be sure to visit [Hudson's on the Docks](#), a waterfront restaurant known for its fresh and locally sourced seasonal seafood. One of the island's many festive beachfront resorts can be a great place to spend the night—including [Beach House](#), [Sonesta Resort Hilton Head](#), or [Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa](#), all of which each offer easy proximity to the island's dozen miles of surf and sand.

redbook

Check Out These Underrated Spring Break Destinations

12
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina



Home to world class golf courses, beautiful beaches, nature preserves and treasured historical sites, [Hilton Head Island](#) is a majestic coastal destination overflowing with Lowcountry adventures. For seafood enthusiasts, you may just try some of the freshest dishes you've ever tasted.

Where to stay: [Beach House Hilton Head Island](#) features rooms with ocean views, a lagoon style pool and live events at the iconic Tik Hut. It's the only toes-in-the-sand bar on the entire island.

TRAVELPULSE

Hilton Head Island: Golf Traveler's Paradise, Foodie Traveler's Delight



Golf Traveler's Paradise

Golf enthusiasts will be in heaven on Hilton Head Island, as the destination is home to 24 world-class golf courses. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, there is a course suited to accommodate your skill-set ability.

Of course, some courses certainly stand out more than others. [Harbour Town Golf Links](#): Located in the Sea Pines Resort, this course is home to the PGA Tour's RBC Heritage and is consistently ranked as one of the best courses in the country. The course features stunning views of the Callegochee Sound and challenges golfers with its narrow fairways and strategically placed bunkers.

Parade

Happy International Women's Day!
13 of Our Favorite Female Chefs
Share Their Go-To Off-Duty Meals

[Orchid Paulmeier](#)

Owner, founder, and chef at [One Hot Mama's](#), Hilton Head, South Carolina

"My dish is 'Filipino Fried Rice' or Tapsilog. I learned from my dad and Lola Virgie (she knew how to stretch a meal—she had 10 kids) how to make it through straight repetition. I had it at least once a week! We would take the Filipino house staples: day-old rice, leftover protein (not enough to be a meal by itself), onions, garlic, and of course, season with garlic salt and black pepper. If we had the extra ingredients, it was served with a fried egg on top and sliced tomatoes. As an adult, it soon became the standard in my house as no one wanted to eat BBQ after working in the restaurant all week. Because my three kids grew up on it, they now crave it while they are away at college. Always quick and easy by using all the leftovers in the house, and a reminder of our Filipino Heritage."



Hilton Head Island: Golf Traveler's Paradise, Foodie Traveler's Delight

Foodie Traveler's Delight

When dining on vacation, you want each meal to be memorable, you want to savor the flavors and carry them home with you.

Hilton Head Island has a plethora of delicious eateries, with seafood spots of course dominating the scene. After all, when you're by the water, you want that fresh catch.

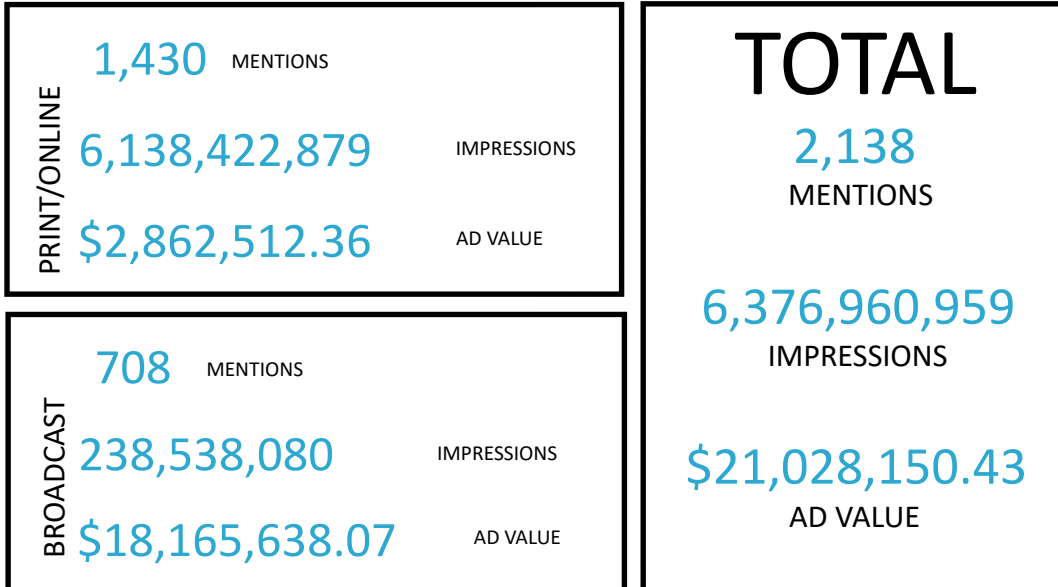
Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks, an acclaimed seafood restaurant is located on the waterfront, is known for its fresh catch options, the seafood favorites, and Lowcountry-style dishes. Hudson's is also one of the best restaurants to catch the sunset. Dining with sunset views is a must when visiting Hilton Head Island.



Sunset dinner at Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (photo by Eric Bowman)

2023 MEDIA MENTIONS

*Represents 2023 calendar year mentions



7





HILTON HEAD ISLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Town Council

TO: Town Council
FROM: Shawn Colin, AICP, *Assistant Town Manager*
CC: Marc Orlando, ICMA-CM, *Town Manager*
DATE: March 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Consideration of a Joint Resolution of the Town Council of Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Beaufort County Council of Beaufort County, South Carolina providing direction and response to the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank related to Project Scope and Funding Strategy for the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project

RECOMMENDATION:

Consideration of a Joint Resolution of the Town Council of Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Beaufort County Council of Beaufort County, South Carolina providing direction and response to the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank related to Project Scope and Funding Strategy for the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project.

BACKGROUND:

This memorandum serves as an update on the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project, providing relevant information for your review prior to the consideration of a Joint Resolution with Beaufort County to provide direction and response to the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank related to Project Scope and Funding Strategy for the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project. Below is a summary of events and developments related to the project that have occurred starting with the January 9, 2025 workshop of Town Council. In this regard, please see the following:

1. January 9, 2025, Town Council Workshop:

At the January 9th Workshop, Town Council reviewed the availability of project funding and examined recent correspondence from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank, Beaufort County, and Senator Tom Davis. These correspondences are included as **Attachments 1, 2, and 3.**

Town Council assessed potential funding sources, project decision timelines and deadlines, and the proposed project alignment, ultimately discussing the next steps.

At the Workshop, Town Council directed staff as follows:

- ☐ Align project with adopted Guiding Principles.
- ☐ Confirm sources and uses of project budget funds.
- ☐ Analyze project costs by segment and element and report the findings accordingly.
- ☐ Provide clarification regarding the 2018 Beaufort County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Referendum.
- ☐ Develop a project timeline with key milestones to ensure alignment with the March 31, 2025, deadline.
- ☐ Establish a Stoney Corridor Master Plan.

2. January 27, 2025, Town Council Workshop:

Town staff provided an update on items requested from Town Council above. These included: a project update: project guiding principles, a budget overview, sources and uses of project funds, and various next steps that must be resolved prior to the project advancing. These items were as follows:

- ☐ **Align Project with Guiding Principles adopted by Town Council on February 18, 2020:**
 - Fix the transportation issues in the corridor in a way that improves the safety and quality of life for all residents, workers and visitors to Hilton Head Island.
 - Address transportation needs for natural disasters and resiliency of Island access.
 - Consider future transportation alternatives.
 - Improve the safety and quality of life for the residents of the neighborhoods and businesses directly impacted by the US 278 corridor.
 - Stoney.
 - Neighborhoods on Jenkins and Hog Island (including but not limited to Windmill Harbor).
 - Have a gateway to and from Hilton Head that the region that will be proud of.
 - Aesthetically pleasing and reflecting the Hilton Head/Low country values.
 - Safe and functional pathways for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Minimizes environmental impacts and enhances the wonderful asset of Pinckney Island.
- ☐ **Sources and Uses Project Funds:**
 - The William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project is a major infrastructure initiative with a total budget of \$298.53 Million. The project is funded through the following sources:
 - Beaufort County Referendum: \$80 Million
 - Beaufort County Impact Fees: \$21 Million
 - Hilton Head Island Right-of-Way (ROW) Donation: \$3.3 Million
 - Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) Guideshare: \$2 Million
 - SCDOT Bridge Funds: \$72.5 Million
 - South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SCSIB): \$120 Million

- As the project refinement progresses, project funding sources and uses per the above must be confirmed with Beaufort County, South Carolina Department of Transportation, and South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank.
- Town staff must validate the appropriate use of 2018 Referendum funds as they apply to the project.
- 2018 Transportation Sales and Use Tax Referendum:
 - The sales tax proceeds will be used for the following projects as described and for which an estimated capital cost is stated.
 - Hilton Head Island - US 278 Corridor Traffic Improvements: Repair and/or replace the existing spans of the bridges to Hilton Head Island and other improvements between Moss Creek Drive and Squire Pope Road ... \$80,000,000.
- **Bridge and Corridor Scope and Cost Alignment Determination:**
 - To align project funding, review SCDOT Engineers' Opinion of Probable Costs (EOPC) for key project components.
 - Town Council and Beaufort County must concur with the bridge, corridor, lane, and intersection designs. This detail will be further discussed and assessed at the Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, and SCDOT meeting referenced above.
- **Stoney Corridor Master Plan:**
 - **The Stoney Area Master Plan** is being developed to provide a comprehensive framework for guiding future design, infrastructure improvements, and strategic investments within the Stoney community corridor. This plan is essential to ensuring that development efforts align with the Town's vision and priorities, as outlined in the previously approved Stoney Area Initiative Plan, adopted in 2003. The Master Plan serves as a blueprint to:
 - Identify and prioritize essential infrastructure improvements, such as roadways, utilities, pedestrian pathways, open space and other public infrastructure investments to support the Stoney Historic Community.
 - In conjunction with the Skull Creek District Plan, encourage responsible growth that balances economic opportunities with the preservation of the area's character and community identity.
 - All proposed strategies and improvements are intended to align with the goals and recommendations set forth in the Initiative Plan to maintain consistency with community aspirations.
 - Establishing a clear vision for the area will better position the Town and Beaufort County to secure grants and funding for critical infrastructure and community projects.

3. January 30, 2025 meeting with SCDOT, Beaufort County and Town of Hilton Head Island in Columbia, SC:

A meeting was held to obtain information and options for the project. Here's a summary of the information as well as answers obtained from the SCDOT are included below:

1. Meeting Attendees:

- SCDOT:
 - Justin Powell, Secretary of Transportation
 - Rob Perry, PE, Deputy Secretary for Engineering
 - John Boylston, Chief Engineer for Program Delivery
 - Maggie Hendry, Chief Administrative Officer
 - Craig Winn, PE, Lowcountry Program Manager
- Town of Hilton Head Island:
 - Alan Perry, Mayor
 - Alex Brown, Councilman
 - Steve Desimone, Councilman
 - Marc Orlando, Town Manager
 - Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager
- Beaufort County:
 - Alice Howard, County Council Chair
 - Tab Tabernik, County Council
 - Michael Moore, Administrator
 - Jared Fralix, Assistant Administrator

2. Bridge/Project Options Overview:

- Option 1: \$257.7M – Lifeline option without multiuse pathway. Includes a 3-lane bridge with breakdown lanes. The bridge would be stripped for two-lanes. Cost Comparison: The costs of half the project may not necessarily be half the total cost.
- Option 2: \$319.3M – Lifeline option with multiuse pathway. Includes a 3-lane bridge with breakdown lanes and a protected multiuse pathway.
- Option 3: \$273.7M – Lifeline option without multiuse pathway. Includes 3 lanes eastbound from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells Road.
- Option 4: \$340.8M – Lifeline option with multiuse pathway. Includes 3 lanes eastbound from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells Road, a protected multiuse pathway on the bridge, and a pathway connection to Moss Creek and Jenkins Island.
- Option 5: \$466.8M – Full project cost anticipated for 2024.
- Option 6: \$88.6M – Replacement of only the MacKay Creek eastbound bridge.
 - Option 3 or 4 may take longer to move through the process and construction phases.
- Projects beyond the bridge scope may be included in the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study for programming and funding considerations.

3. SCDOT is considering a Design Build approach to the project to help with pricing.

- A design-build option will consider design alternatives, including bike and pedestrian connections.

- SCDOT has seen a 70 percent project cost escalation over the past few years.
- 4. Tolls and Reversible Lanes:
 - Tolls: Tolls are prohibited on existing free facilities (as per South Carolina Statute).
 - Tolls for express routes (e.g., to Cross Island Parkway) would require extended evaluation, including a toll study, environmental review, and permitting.
 - Reversible Lanes: SCDOT opposes reversible lanes due to safety, compliance issues, and the high cost of operation and maintenance. SCDOT is not in the business of reversible lanes.
- 5. Utility Relocation and Funding:
 - Utility relocation costs are part of the project; SCDOT will pay per South Carolina code.
 - SCDOT will cover utility relocation costs in accordance with the Utility Relocation Act, and additional funding could come from local funds.
 - Timeframe for project changes:
 - Updates to environmental documents would take 6+ months.
 - Design/build project process will take 14 months.
 - Right-of-way (ROW) phase takes 12 months.
 - Construction will span 24-36 months.
 - Estimate is +/- 32months to get to construction and 24-36 months for construction.
- 6. Pinckney Island/Skull Creek Bridges:
 - Elevated Intersection: The preference is for a new eastbound bridge to be elevated over Pinckney Island. Touching down on Pinckney Island would increase costs, and reduce safety by having at grade movements.
 - Skull Creek Bridge Substructure: The substructure must support both the eastbound and westbound bridge decks, The eastbound deck must be kept if the westbound deck remains. This would provide two-way traffic between Jenkins Island and Pinckney Island on the existing eastbound Skull Creek Bridge.
- 7. On-Island Grade Separation and Relocation:
 - Grade Separation for Squire Pope Road/Spanish Wells Road would require multiple residential relocations, dramatically increasing costs.
- 8. Mitigation Elements and Community Impact:
 - Costs for Stoney Community mitigation are only funded if the project extends into the Stoney area. If Option 3 or 4 is selected, funding for Stoney mitigation (as outlined in the Environmental Assessment) would be included.
- 9. Project Coordination and Scope:
 - Coordination: SCDOT emphasized the need to coordinate efforts.
 - Meeting with SIB: SCDOT will meet with the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) to ensure alignment.
 - Project Scope Considerations:

- A joint resolution by the Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County outlining approved project scope and funding strategy is suggested to resolve concerns and allow SIB consideration.
10. Steps Forward suggested at the January 30, 2025 meeting:
- The Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County need to continue discussions to reach an agreed-upon position and preference for project advancement.
 - A joint resolution approved by the Town and County to address concerns raised by the SIB was recommended to be delivered before the March 31, 2025 deadline.
 - This will provide clarity to SCDOT regarding the local preference for advancing the project.
 - Beaufort County would need to revise its Intergovernmental Agreement with the SIB as well as its agreement with SCDOT for project scope.

4. February 12, 2025, Joint Workshop of Beaufort County and Town Council:

A joint workshop of Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County Councils was held at the Buckwalter Recreation Center, at 5pm, on Wednesday, February 12th. In attendance were Town of Hilton Head Island Council members, Beaufort County Council members, Beaufort County Administrator, Michael Moore, Assistant Administrator, Jared Fralix, Town Manager, Marc Orlando, and Assistant Town Manager, Shawn Colin. Many members of the Beaufort County public also attended.

At the meeting Beaufort County staff overviewed the following:

1. Reviewed various SCDOT proposals that were received on January 30, 2025, **included as Attachment 4.**
2. Reviewed funding available for the project.
3. Beaufort County provided a DRAFT joint Resolution for review, consideration and reaction, **included as Attachment 5.**
4. Elected officials discussed next steps, to include a Joint Town Council and County Council Resolution.
5. Beaufort County staff will provide a revised draft Resolution based upon feedback and recommendations that were proposed at the meeting.
6. There was an opportunity for all elected officials to comment.
7. A Public comment period was also held.

With consideration of design, and funding, most elected officials selected the SCDOT proposed Option 1 with specific concerns and suggestions addressed, particularly related to the safety of the travel on the bridge and through the Stoney Historic Neighborhood, bike/pedestrian options, funding, and project scope.

- Next Steps: Next Steps taken or remaining to take after the February 12, 2025 joint Workshop:
 - ✓ Beaufort County staff provided an updated draft joint Resolution to Town staff.

- ✓ Town staff drafted modifications to the joint Resolution reflecting input from Town Council, which were reviewed by the Town Attorney, and provided to Beaufort County that included:
 - ✓ Changed wording of unspent reserve funds from "may" to "shall".
 - ✓ Specified a prioritization of project scope and funding allocation for the Stoney Historic Community Corridor as follows:
 - Squire Pope intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - Sidewalk enhancements
 - Signage – safety/wayfinding
 - Spanish Wells intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - ✓ Included an increase in Stoney Historic Community funding from \$3.5 million to a minimum of \$5.0 million.
 - ✓ Clarified that full funding for utility relocation was the top priority for use of local funds.
 - ✓ Included agreement that Windmill Harbor signal to be turned over to the Town with mast arms and with an ability to function as part of the Town's adaptive signal system.
 - ✓ Included agreement to explore providing a bike lane on the new eastbound bridge structure, as part of the built 3rd lane, until a later date.
 - ✓ Requested clarification of Town donated land through Jenkins Island.
 - ✓ Included a reduction of William Hilton Parkway Corridor Speed to 40mph.
 - ✓ Included a provision that a mutual agreement that a Stoney Neighborhood Plan/Master Plan will be developed and that the Town and County will work cooperatively to fund and implement.
 - ✓ Beaufort County revised the draft joint Resolution to include input provided by the Town.
 - ✓ The draft joint Resolution was included in the Beaufort County Council Agenda packet for their February 24, 2025 meeting and is **included as Attachment 6**.
- ✓ Town Attorney to review and prepare for your consideration.

5. February 12, 2025, Joint Workshop of Beaufort County and Town Council:

Beaufort County Council approved the Joint Resolution as drafted for their February 24, 2025 meeting without any revisions. The Joint Resolution, approved by Beaufort County Council, with minor edits is **included as Attachment 7**.

- ☐ If the Joint Resolution is approved, Town staff, along with Beaufort County, must also:
 - ☐ Meet with SCDOT to confirm project variables and joint Resolution.
 - ☐ Meet with SC SIB to confirm project variables, joint Resolution, and SC SIB funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Letter from South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank to Beaufort County, dated November 7, 2024
2. Letter from South Carolina Department of Transportation to Beaufort County, dated November 18, 2024
3. Press Release Providing Project Status from Beaufort County, dated December 9, 2024
4. SCDOT Proposed Project Option, delivered January 30, 2025
5. Original Draft Joint Resolution Discussed during February 12, 2025 Joint Workshop
6. Draft Joint Resolution included in the February 24, 2025 Beaufort County Council Agenda Packet
7. Joint Resolution Approved by Beaufort County Council on February 24, 2025, with Minor edits from Hilton Head Island.



Justin P. Powell
Secretary of Transportation
803-737-0874 | 803-737-2038 Fax

November 18, 2024

Mr. Michael Moore
County Administrator, Beaufort County
PO Drawer 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901

Dear Mr. Moore:

I appreciate the ongoing partnership between Beaufort County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) on the development of the US-278 project between Bluffton and Hilton Head Island.

SCDOT has had the US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek on its priority lists for several years. This structure was built in 1956 and is reaching the end of its design life. Recent bridge inspections have rated the bridge as a 4 (out of 10), or poor. Due to the advanced age and current condition of the structure, SCDOT inspects the bridge annually rather than biannually like most other bridges in the state's inventory.

The present US-278 project initiated out of a desire from Beaufort County to replace all of the bridges and improve traffic operations between Bluffton and Hilton Head Island. In lieu of a separate project for the Mackay Creek bridge only, SCDOT entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Beaufort County to serve as project manager of the US-278 bridge and improvement project.

Through this partnership, this project has progressed through many steps up to this point, including obtaining municipal consent from the Town of Hilton Head Island. SCDOT anticipates a Federal Decision (Finding of No Significant Impact) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the first half of 2025 and is prepared to move into right of way acquisition in late 2025. This would put the project on track to go to construction in 2027.

As was communicated by former Secretary Hall earlier this year, the project's current estimated budget is \$488 million, which is approximately \$190M short of the amount presently committed to the project from Beaufort County, the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (SCTIB), and SCDOT. I am aware that there is a pending request to the SCTIB to cover \$90 million of the shortfall that will be discussed at the SCTIB's meeting on November 20. I am also aware that the referendum to fund Beaufort County's portion of the shortfall did not pass on November 5.

The condition of the US-278 eastbound bridge concerns me, especially in the harsh environment affected by saltwater and tides. The bridge is at risk in the future of being load posted which could limit the ability of emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, and school buses to go onto access the island. Rehabilitation is an undesirable option with a current estimate of \$50 million being needed to add just 10 years to the bridge's lifespan.

While a comprehensive solution of replacing all structures and improving traffic operations is the



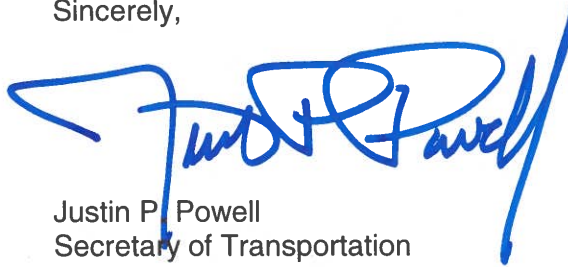
Post Office Box 191
955 Park Street, Room 309
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

www.scdot.org
An Equal Opportunity
Affirmative Action Employer
855-GO-SCDOT (855-467-2368)

most ideal path forward, we are approaching a point where time is of the essence on the US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek. In the professional opinion of SCDOT's Engineering team, a decision must be made by March 31, 2025 if the US-278 project is to continue with funding identified for construction. If not, SCDOT will be prepared to move forward with terminating existing agreements between SCDOT and Beaufort County so that there is sufficient time to design and permit a new bridge solely to replace the existing US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek.

As always, my team is available to assist as you consider options. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me as both Beaufort County and SCDOT consider next steps on this project.

Sincerely,



Justin P. Powell
Secretary of Transportation

CC: John B. White, Jr., Chairman of the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank
SCDOT Commission



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John B. White, Jr., *Chairman*

Ernest Duncan, *Vice Chairman*

Representative Chris Murphy

Senator C. Ross Turner, III

Pamela L. Christopher

David B. Shehan

André Bauer

South Carolina
Transportation Infrastructure Bank



955 Park Street
Room 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201
P: (803) 737-2825
Fax: (803) 737-2014

November 7, 2024

Michael Moore
Beaufort County Administrator
100 Ribault Road
Beaufort, SC 29201

Re: Beaufort County US 278 Project

Dear Mr. Moore:

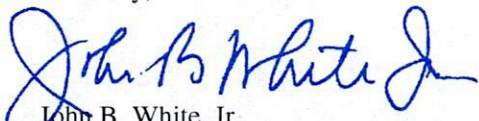
In your July 3, 2024, letter to me, you informed the Bank the estimated funding shortfall for the US 278 Project was approximately \$190 million. You indicated the County intended to fund approximately \$90 million from a transportation sales tax referendum to be placed on the November general election ballot. On November 5, 2024, this bond referendum failed by a substantial margin of 55% to 45%.

As you know, the Intergovernmental Agreement between Beaufort County and the Bank provides that Beaufort County is responsible for any overages over the total cost of the Project. The total project cost referenced in the IGA is \$292,350,000. The Bank's commitment is a grant of \$120 million. An updated total project cost now ranges between \$425 million and \$480 million depending on the design of the project. Your letter indicated Beaufort County would allocate \$90 million toward the overage with funding coming from the transportation sales tax. Now that the transportation sales tax has been soundly rejected, please provide a detailed and complete explanation how Beaufort County intends to fund its approximately \$200 million requirement. Your letter requested the Bank provide an additional grant of \$90 million to go toward the funding shortfall. As you can imagine, the Bank Board must obtain better information from Beaufort County how it intends to fund the shortfall before the Bank can contemplate whether to provide additional grant dollars to the project.

Please respond within 15 days so the Bank Board can make a decision on how best to proceed with this Project.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Charles Cannon at (803) 737-1225.

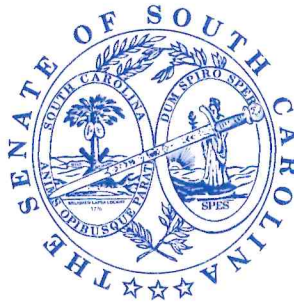
Sincerely,


John B. White, Jr.
Chairman

Cc: Board Members

SENATOR TOM DAVIS
SENATE DISTRICT 46
BEAUFORT AND JASPER COUNTIES

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
BANKING AND INSURANCE
FINANCE
LABOR, COMMERCE, AND INDUSTRY
LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT
MEDICAL AFFAIRS



COLUMBIA OFFICE:
613 GRESSETTE SENATE BLDG.
POST OFFICE BOX 142
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29202
PHONE: (803) 212-6056
FAX: (803) 212-6299
TOMDAVIS@SCSENATE.GOV

BEAUFORT OFFICE:
POST OFFICE DRAWER 1107
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29901-1107
PHONE: (843) 252-8583
FAX: (843) 524-6401
EMAIL: TOM@SENATOR TOMDAVIS.COM

January 9, 2025

Mr. Michael Moore
Administrator, Beaufort County
100 Ribaut Road
Beaufort, South Carolina 29902

VIA HAND-DELIVERY

Mr. Marc Orlando, Manager
Manager, Town of Hilton Head Island
1 Town Center Court
Hilton Head Island, South Carolina 29928

Re: 278 Corridor Improvements from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road (the "Project")

Mr. Moore and Mr. Orlando:

I have discussed the status of the Project with the three other members of the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation who represent areas directly impacted by the Project – Representatives Jeff Bradley, Bill Herbkersman, and Weston Newton – and we respectfully submit the following recommendations for consideration by your respective councils.

Following the failure of the Local Sales Tax Referendum on November 5, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Transportation ("SCDOT") and the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank ("SIB") asked Beaufort County (the "County") to explain (see SIB Chairman John White's letter to Mr. Moore dated November 7, 2024, copy enclosed) how it intended to fund the approximately \$190 million difference between the current \$488 million estimated cost of the Project (see SCDOT Chairman Justin Powell's letter to Mr. Moore dated November 18, 2024, copy enclosed) and the \$298.85 million in committed funds, a breakdown of these committed funds being set forth in a summary provided on July 22, 2022, by then-SCDOT Chairwoman Christy Hall, copy enclosed.

[Note: For our analysis we need to know the amount of cash available, so the \$3.335MM shown on the funding summary provided by former SCDOT Chairwoman Hall as coming from the Town of Hilton Head Island (the "Town"), which is a monetized land contribution, must be subtracted, as does the \$4.18 million spent by the SCDOT, the \$6.89 million spent by the County, and the \$2 million spent by LATS. However, Secretary Powell advised us yesterday that the SCDOT is willing to commit an additional \$16.1 million to the Project, so this sum must be added, thus making the current total of (cash) committed funds \$298.53 million – \$204.42 MM in state funds and \$94.1MM in local funds (figures rounded to the hundredth decimal). The revised funding summary provided to us yesterday by SCDOT Secretary Powell is enclosed.]

109
113

Messrs. Moore and Orlando

January 9, 2025

Page 2

Initially, the deadline for providing that explanation was November 22, 2024, but it was extended until March 31, 2025. This explanation was requested because officials for the County had proposed to the SCDOT and the SIB on May 29, 2024, that: 1) the County pay \$90 million of the \$190 million Project shortfall using funds from a sales tax to be approved by the voters via the Referendum; and 2) the state agencies cover the remaining \$100 million. The state agencies didn't refuse that proposal, but SIB Chairman White has stressed that SIB funds are limited and that demand for those funds far outstrips supply. We must therefore caution you that, even with a substantial local contribution, the ability to secure additional state funding to help defray the \$190 million shortfall is not certain. Once the Referendum failed, of course, the County's proposal became moot, leading to the state agencies' pending request for a backup plan.

At a public meeting held on November 12, 2024, Beaufort County Council discussed ways to fund this shortfall. (SIB Chairman White correctly notes in his letter to Mr. Moore that the Intergovernmental Agreement makes the County responsible for the entire \$190 million) At that council meeting there seemed to be no political will by members to either generate new revenue through higher taxes or to postpone other planned projects to free up existing revenue, and from this we have inferred that the County was (and still is) either unwilling or unable to make a significant contribution to the shortfall.

If a plan acceptable to the state agencies to fund the \$190 million shortfall is not in place by March 31, 2025, the SCDOT will proceed to replace the existing eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek, no other aspect of the Project will be pursued, and the \$120 million SIB grant will be revoked. We think that is a suboptimal outcome and that it would be better for the County and the Town to propose to the SCDOT and the SIB a way to spend the \$298.53 million in committed funds that best satisfies the objectives of all the stakeholders: the County, the Town, the SCDOT, the SIB, the Federal Highway Administration (the "FHWA"), and our constituents. In other words, to propose to do the best we can with the money we have. Here are our thoughts on what that might look like:

1. Propose that the SCDOT and the SIB allocate the \$204.42 million in committed state funds to build a new three-lane eastbound span from Moss Creek Drive to Windmill Harbor to the south of and parallel to the existing two-lane eastbound span, with the latter to be removed once the new span is completed. SCDOT Secretary Powell advised us yesterday that the estimated cost this new three-lane span is \$257.7 million; therefore, \$53.28 million of the \$94.1 million in existing committed local funds would also need also to be allocated to building this new three-lane eastbound span. In this proposal, the existing two-lane westbound spans from Windmill Harbor to Moss Creek, which includes bridges that are structurally sound with a useful life of at least another 20-plus years, would be left in place. Importantly, Secretary Powell believes this scaling down of the Project would qualify as a Categorical Exclusion in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

We think this first proposal would accomplish several important objectives: 1) the structurally impaired eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek would be replaced; 2) access to the island would be increased; and 3) safety would be improved. Importantly, too, it would result in physically separated eastbound and westbound spans; the combination of these two spans into one single large span is widely resisted by many of our constituents.

Ted
2 1 3

Messrs. Moore and Orlando
January 9, 2025
Page 3

2. Propose that the SCDOT and the SIB allow the remaining \$40.82 million in existing committed local funds to implement a master plan for improvements extending from Windmill Harbor to the Cross Island Parkway, the specifics to be provided by the County and the Town by March 31, 2025. This would involve an extension of the Project's scope beyond the current eastern terminus of Spanish Wells Road.

This second proposal would require the County and the Town to come up with an on-island master plan. SCDOT believes a reasonable argument can be made to have the FHWA treat this on-island component as a separate project distinct from the building of a new three-lane eastbound span from Moss Creek Drive to Windmill Harbor. However, even if it is, we urge the County and the Town to finalize the master plan by March 31, 2025, since what that plan ends up looking like may impact the design of the new three-lane eastbound span as it approaches Windmill Harbor and may also necessitate modifications to the existing two-lane westbound span as it leaves the island. A binding agreement as to how the remaining \$40.82 million in local funds will be spent may also be necessary to discharge the SIB's "local match" obligation.

In the development of an on-island master plan, we respectfully suggest that deference be provided to the Town and the residents of Hilton Head Island, in that they are the most directly impacted parties. There are several important island-specific quality-of-life issues to be sorted out in the master plan: mitigating impacts on the Stoney Community, facilitating the free flow of traffic, reducing the number of accidents that occur at the signalized intersections, and providing for an aesthetically pleasing entrance to the island.

The approach we suggest would require that approvals be obtained from the SCDOT, the SIB, and the FHWA. Complications in addition to the ones we have identified may also arise. That said, given the financial constraints, we believe this is a reasonable path forward. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,



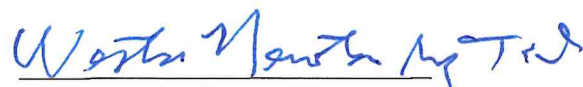
Tom Davis



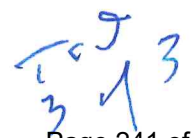
Representative Jeff Bradley



Representative Bill Herbkersman



Representative Weston Newton



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John B. White, Jr., *Chairman*

Ernest Duncan, *Vice Chairman*

Representative Chris Murphy

Senator C. Ross Turner, III

Pamela L. Christopher

David B. Shehan

André Bauer

**South Carolina
Transportation Infrastructure Bank**



955 Park Street
Room 120 B
Columbia, SC 29201
P: (803) 737-2825
Fax: (803) 737-2014

November 7, 2024

Michael Moore
Beaufort County Administrator
100 Ribault Road
Beaufort, SC 29201

Re: Beaufort County US 278 Project

Dear Mr. Moore:

In your July 3, 2024, letter to me, you informed the Bank the estimated funding shortfall for the US 278 Project was approximately \$190 million. You indicated the County intended to fund approximately \$90 million from a transportation sales tax referendum to be placed on the November general election ballot. On November 5, 2024, this bond referendum failed by a substantial margin of 55% to 45%.

As you know, the Intergovernmental Agreement between Beaufort County and the Bank provides that Beaufort County is responsible for any overages over the total cost of the Project. The total project cost referenced in the IGA is \$292,350,000. The Bank's commitment is a grant of \$120 million. An updated total project cost now ranges between \$425 million and \$480 million depending on the design of the project. Your letter indicated Beaufort County would allocate \$90 million toward the overage with funding coming from the transportation sales tax. Now that the transportation sales tax has been soundly rejected, please provide a detailed and complete explanation how Beaufort County intends to fund its approximately \$200 million requirement. Your letter requested the Bank provide an additional grant of \$90 million to go toward the funding shortfall. As you can imagine, the Bank Board must obtain better information from Beaufort County how it intends to fund the shortfall before the Bank can contemplate whether to provide additional grant dollars to the project.

Please respond within 15 days so the Bank Board can make a decision on how best to proceed with this Project.

If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Charles Cannon at (803) 737-1225.

Sincerely,


John B. White, Jr.
Chairman

Cc: Board Members

November 18, 2024

Mr. Michael Moore
County Administrator, Beaufort County
PO Drawer 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901

Dear Mr. Moore:

I appreciate the ongoing partnership between Beaufort County and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) on the development of the US-278 project between Bluffton and Hilton Head Island.

SCDOT has had the US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek on its priority lists for several years. This structure was built in 1956 and is reaching the end of its design life. Recent bridge inspections have rated the bridge as a 4 (out of 10), or poor. Due to the advanced age and current condition of the structure, SCDOT inspects the bridge annually rather than biannually like most other bridges in the state's inventory.

The present US-278 project initiated out of a desire from Beaufort County to replace all of the bridges and improve traffic operations between Bluffton and Hilton Head Island. In lieu of a separate project for the Mackay Creek bridge only, SCDOT entered into an intergovernmental agreement with Beaufort County to serve as project manager of the US-278 bridge and improvement project.

Through this partnership, this project has progressed through many steps up to this point, including obtaining municipal consent from the Town of Hilton Head Island. SCDOT anticipates a Federal Decision (Finding of No Significant Impact) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the first half of 2025 and is prepared to move into right of way acquisition in late 2025. This would put the project on track to go to construction in 2027.

As was communicated by former Secretary Hall earlier this year, the project's current estimated budget is \$488 million, which is approximately \$190M short of the amount presently committed to the project from Beaufort County, the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (SCTIB), and SCDOT. I am aware that there is a pending request to the SCTIB to cover \$90 million of the shortfall that will be discussed at the SCTIB's meeting on November 20. I am also aware that the referendum to fund Beaufort County's portion of the shortfall did not pass on November 5.

The condition of the US-278 eastbound bridge concerns me, especially in the harsh environment affected by saltwater and tides. The bridge is at risk in the future of being load posted which could limit the ability of emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, and school buses to access the island. Rehabilitation is an undesirable option with a current estimate of \$50 million being needed to add just 10 years to the bridge's lifespan.

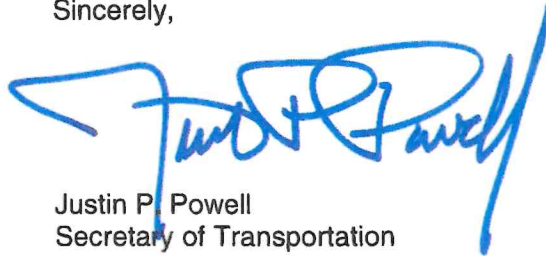
While a comprehensive solution of replacing all structures and improving traffic operations is the



most ideal path forward, we are approaching a point where time is of the essence on the US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek. In the professional opinion of SCDOT's Engineering team, a decision must be made by March 31, 2025 if the US-278 project is to continue with funding identified for construction. If not, SCDOT will be prepared to move forward with terminating existing agreements between SCDOT and Beaufort County so that there is sufficient time to design and permit a new bridge solely to replace the existing US-278 eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek.

As always, my team is available to assist as you consider options. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me as both Beaufort County and SCDOT consider next steps on this project.

Sincerely,



Justin P. Powell
Secretary of Transportation

CC: John B. White, Jr., Chairman of the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank
SCDOT Commission



Available Funding				
	PE	ROW	Construction	Total
Beaufort County	\$13,000,000	\$1,490,000	\$86,510,000	\$101,000,000
LATS (SCDOT)	\$2,000,000			\$2,000,000
SCDOT Bridge Funding	\$7,000,000	\$500,000	\$65,000,000	\$72,500,000
State Infrastructure Bank	\$0	\$0	\$120,000,000	\$120,000,000
Town of Hilton Head		\$3,350,000		\$3,350,000
Total	\$22,000,000	\$5,340,000	\$271,510,000	\$298,850,000

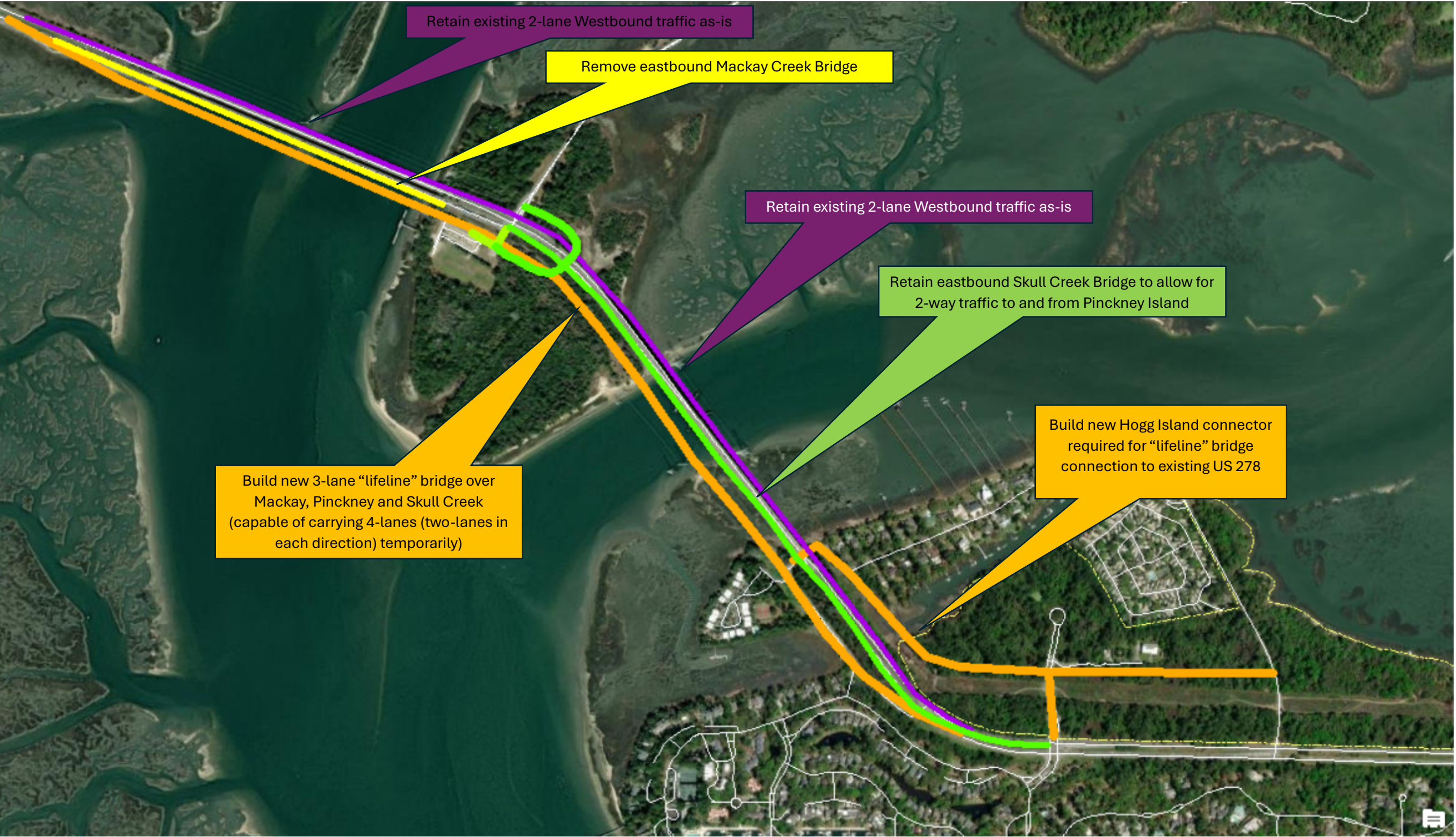
*Summary of committed
funding provided by
SCDOT Secretary Chisley
Hall on July 22, 2022*

	Budget	Expense	Remaining	Proposed Additional	TOTAL AVAILABLE
SCDOT Bridge	\$ 72,500,000	\$ 4,180,718	\$ 68,319,282	\$ 16,100,000	\$ 84,419,282
SCTIB	\$ 120,000,000	\$ -	\$ 120,000,000	\$ -	\$ 120,000,000
Beaufort County	\$ 101,000,000	\$ 6,892,780	\$ 94,107,220	\$ -	\$ 94,107,220
LATS	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ 295,500,000	\$ 13,073,498	\$ 282,426,502	\$ 16,100,000	\$ 298,526,502

*Revised Summary
of committed funding
provided by SCDOT
Secretary Justin Powell
on January 8, 2025*

ATTACHMENT 4

3-lane Bridge (capable of accommodating 4th lane) with using portion of Westbound bridge for off island and one of the old Skull Creek for access to Pinckney Island



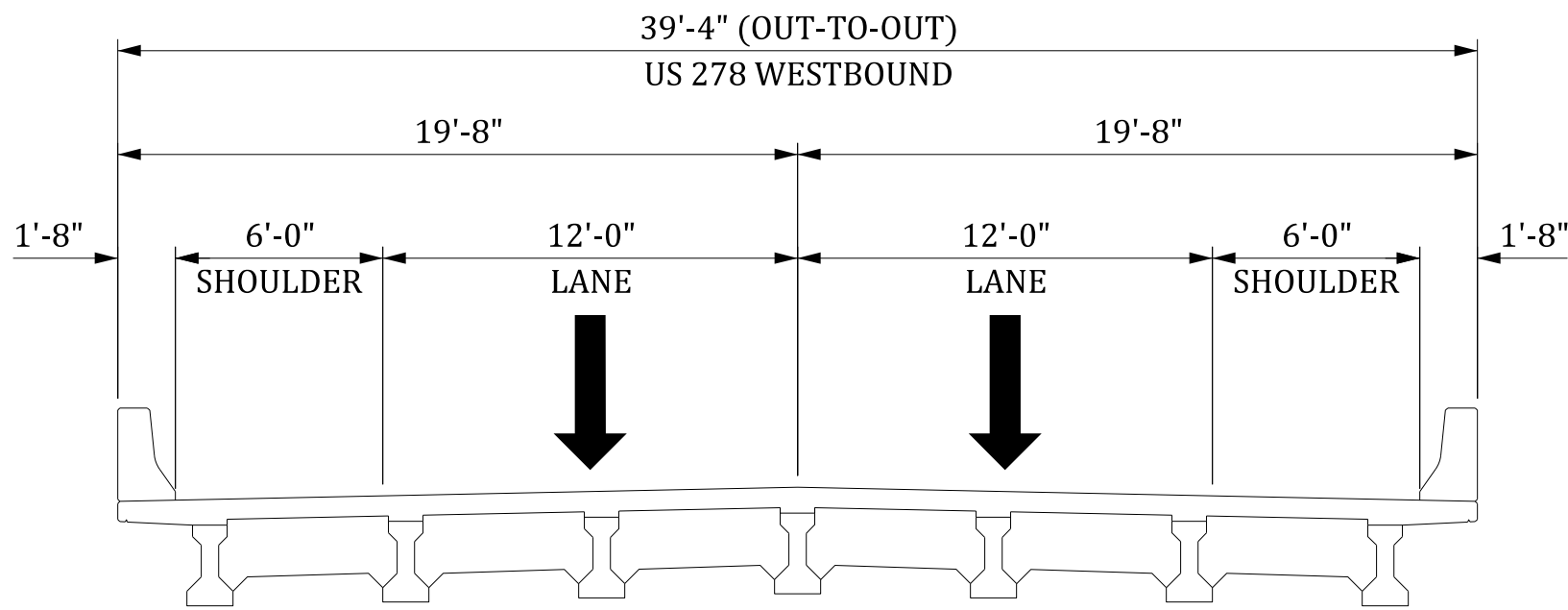
3-lane roadway from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells – lifeline bridge (3-lanes with accommodations for 4th lane)



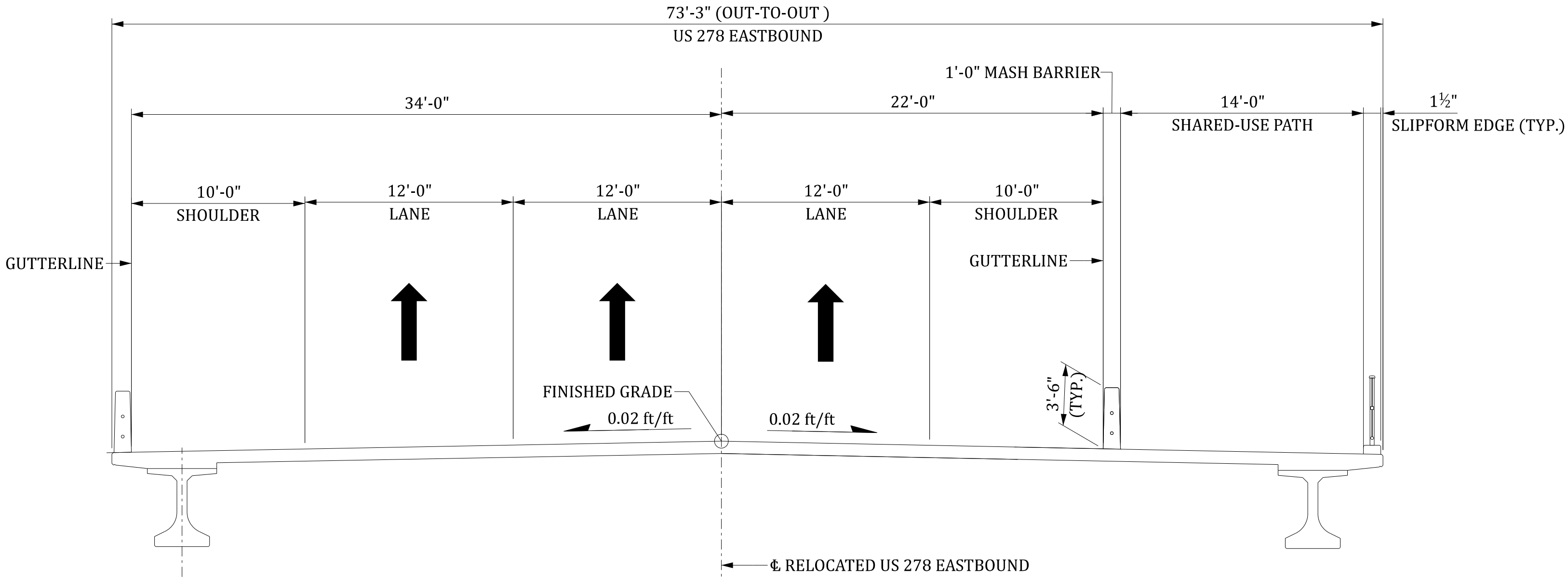
Adam.Lansing 1/8/2025 9:22:38 AM US 278 Alt-Typical Sections.dgn

REV.									

QUAN.									

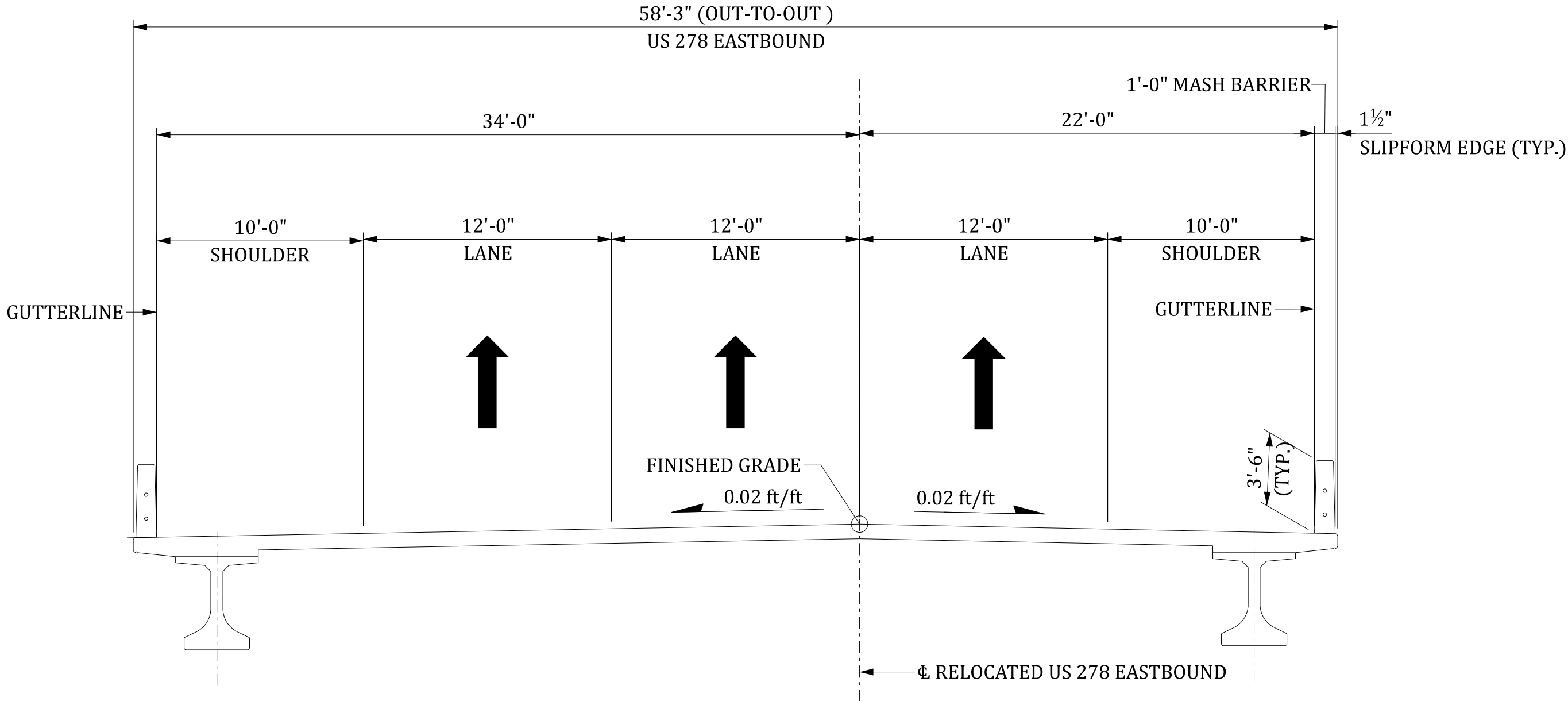


EXISTING WESTBOUND MACKAY CREEK BRIDGE - TYPICAL SECTION



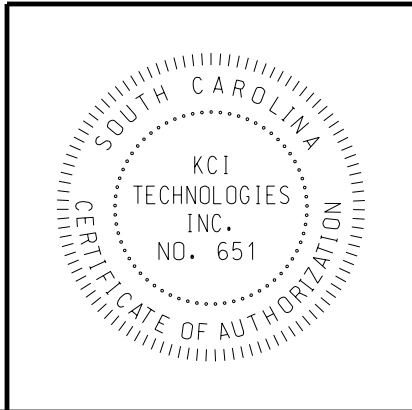
TRAFFIC PATTERN ON NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION - TYPICAL SECTION WITH SHARED-USE PATH

OPTION 2 & 4



TRAFFIC PATTERN ON NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION - TYPICAL SECTION WITHOUT SHARED-USE PATH

OPTION 1 & 3





KCI TECHNOLOGIES
3014 SOUTHCROSS BOULEVARD, ROCK HILL, SC 29730

SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC PATTERN OVER
MACKAY CREEK

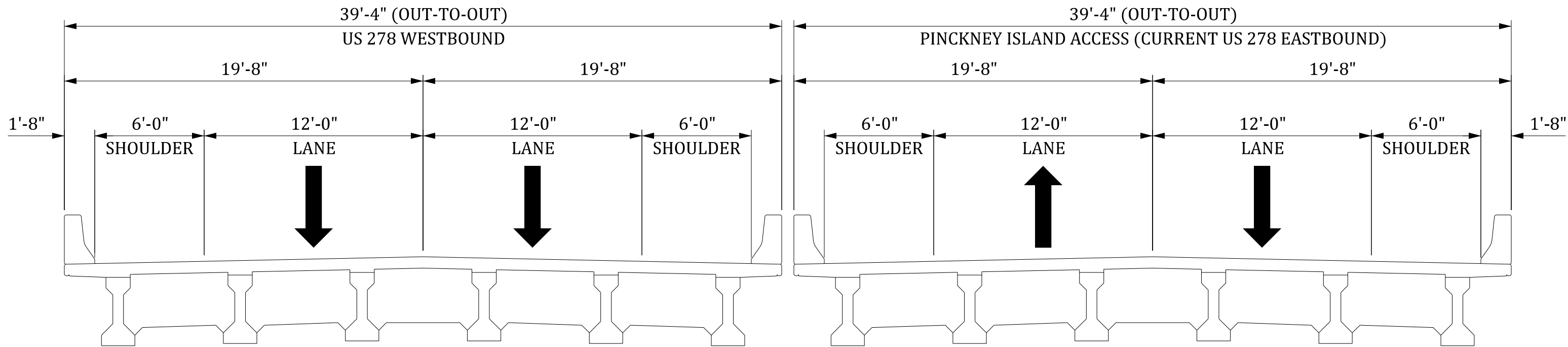
COUNTY: BEAUFORTROUTE: US 278

Adam.Lansing 1/8/2025 9:22:38 AM US 278 Alt-Typical Sections.dgn

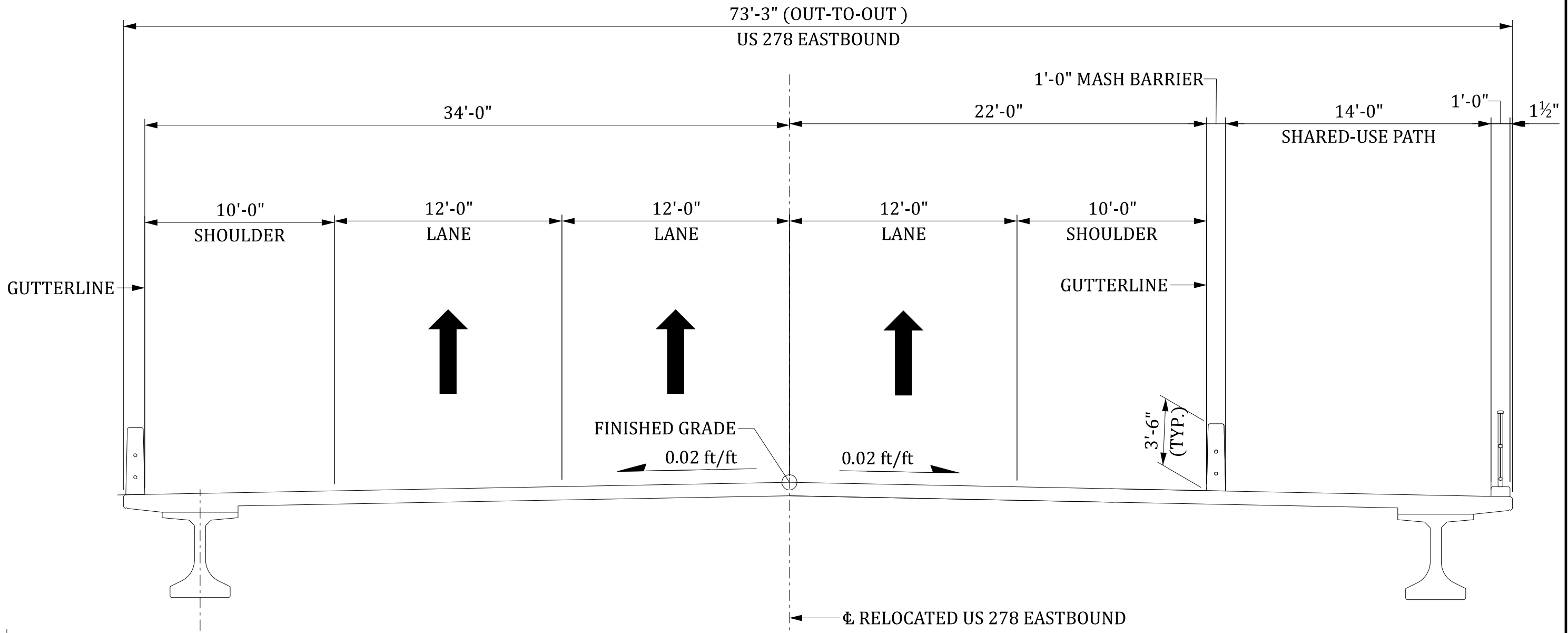
REV.	BY	CHK.	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION

QUAN.	DR.	DES.	BY	CHK.	DATE

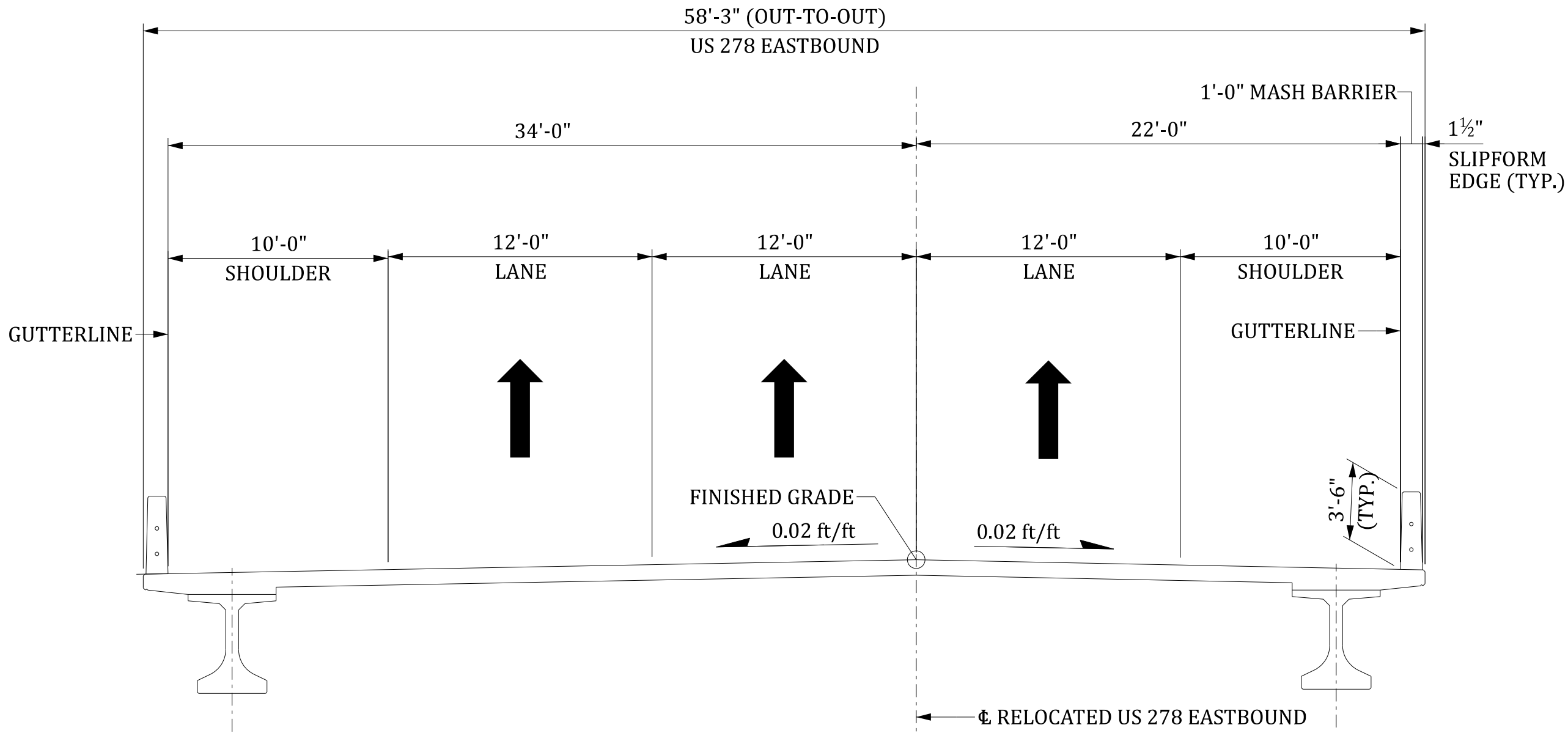
BRIDGE PLANS ID	SH
P030450-B02	####



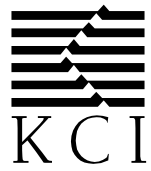
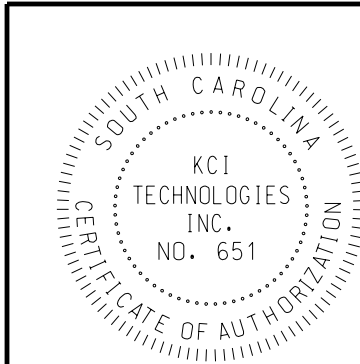
ALTERNATE TRAFFIC PATTERN ON EXISTING SKULL CREEK BRIDGE - TYPICAL SECTION



TRAFFIC PATTERN ON NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION - TYPICAL SECTION WITH SHARED-USE PATH
OPTION 2 & 4



TRAFFIC PATTERN ON NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION - TYPICAL SECTION WITHOUT SHARED-USE PATH
OPTION 1 & 3



KCI TECHNOLOGIES

3014 SOUTHCROSS BOULEVARD, ROCK HILL, SC 29730

**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

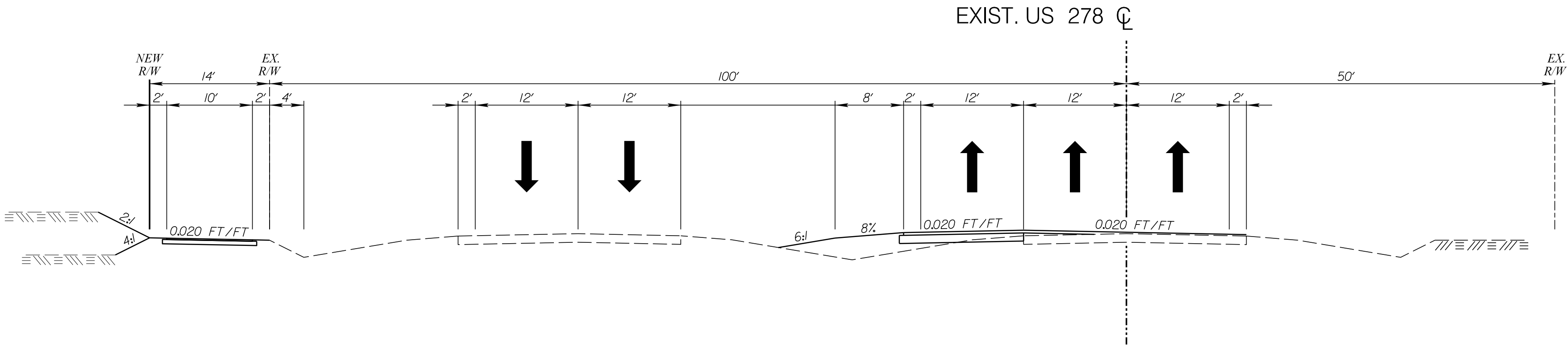
**TRAFFIC PATTERN OVER
SKULL CREEK**

COUNTY: BEAUFORT

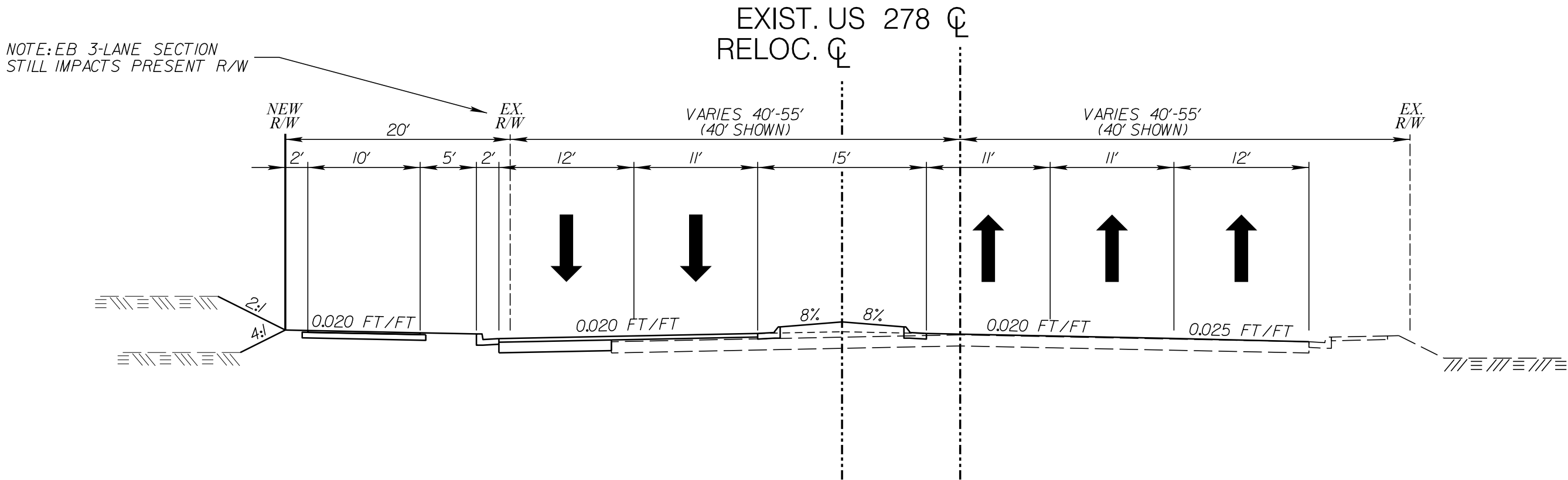
ROUTE: US 278

FED. RD. DIST. NO.	STATE	COUNTY	PROJECT ID	ROUTE NO.	SHEET NO.
3	S.C.	BEAUFORT	P030450	US 278	3

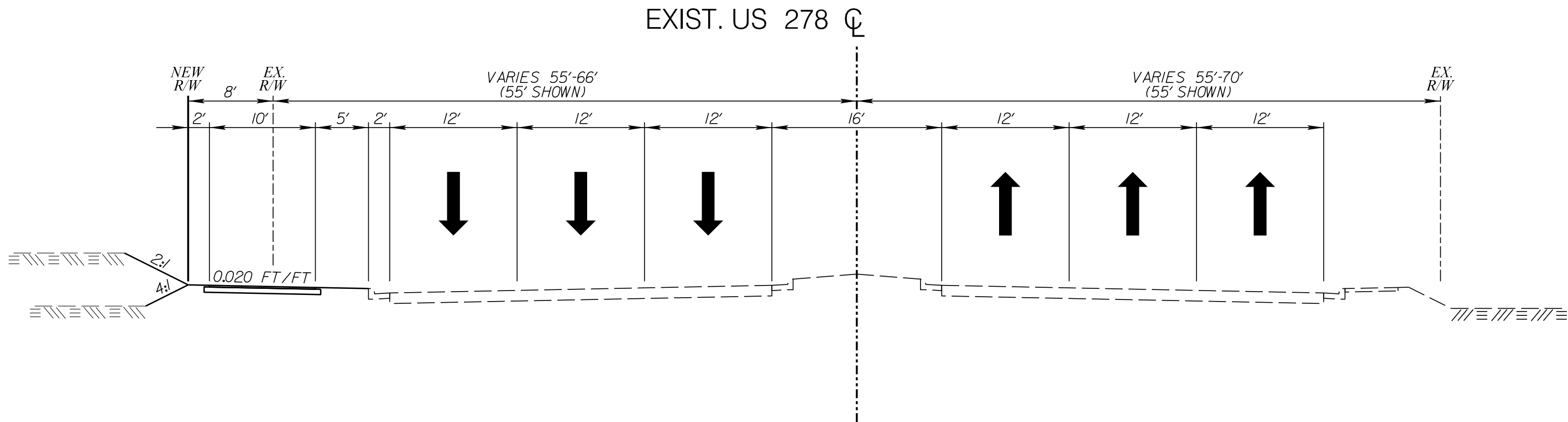
TYPICAL SECTION OF IMPROVEMENT
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
COLUMBIA, S.C.



TYPICAL SECTION ON JENKINS ISLAND - OPTION 4



TYPICAL SECTION IN STONEY COMMUNITY - OPTION 4



TYPICAL SECTION BETWEEN SQUIRE POPE & SPANISH WELLS - OPTION 4

PLANS PREPARED BY: CDM Smith	TYPICAL NO.	FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION	DESIGN SPEED			PAVEMENT DESIGN	RIGHT-OF-WAY PLANS NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION	SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION COLUMBIA, S.C.
			MPH	FROM STA.	TO STA.			
SCALE 1"V = NTS SCALE 1"H = NTS RTE./RD.								

Options:

	Bridge	Roadway	R/W	Mitigation	Utility	Subtotal	CEI	Total
1. Lifeline option w/o MUP (roadway only to tie in)	185.0	14.7	1.5	9.8	23.3	234.3	23.4	257.7
2. Lifeline option w/ MUP (roadway only to tie in)	240.0	15.7	1.5	9.8	23.3	290.3	29.0	319.3
3. Lifeline option w/o MUP (roadway w/ 3-Lane EB from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells)	185.0	22.8	2.9	11.2	26.9	248.8	24.9	273.7
4. Lifeline option w/ MUP (roadway w/ 3-lane EB from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells)	240.0	24.4	4.0	12.6	28.8	309.8	31.0	340.8
5. 2024 anticipated cost for full project	331.3	43.8	5.8	14.0	29.5	424.4	42.4	466.8
6. Replace only Mackay EB Bridge	45.0	14.7	0.8	7.5	12.5	80.5	8.1	88.6

RESOLUTION 2025 / __

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF BEAUFORT COUNTY & TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND TO REDEFINE THE US 278 CORRIDOR PROJECT (ALSO KNOWN AS THE WILLIAM HILTON PARKWAY GATEWAY CORRIDOR PROJECT) TO ALIGN WITH THE AVAILABLE FUNDING

WHEREAS, the current proposed project includes a six-lane bridge with a multi-use pathway and roadway improvements spanning from Moss Creek Road to Spanish Wells Road; and

WHEREAS, the current available funding totals \$298.85 million, consisting of \$101 million from Beaufort County (sales tax and impact fees), \$3.35 million from the Town of Hilton Head Island (right-of-way donations), \$74.5 million from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and \$120 million from the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB); and

WHEREAS, in February 2024, SCDOT provided an updated project cost estimate, increasing the projected cost from \$305 million to \$488 million; and

WHEREAS, this updated cost estimate was reflected in our following quarterly report to the SIB, and upon receipt, the SIB requested a meeting with the County to address the project status and funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at a meeting on May 29, 2024, between SIB, SCDOT, state representatives, and Beaufort County, the County proposed a pro-rata cost-sharing arrangement between SIB, SCDOT, and the County to cover the \$190 million shortfall; and

WHEREAS, in a follow-up letter to SIB dated July 3, 2024, the County formally requested \$90 million from SIB to match a \$90 million contribution from the County, contingent upon voter approval of a proposed Transportation Sales Tax Referendum in November 2024; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2024, the Transportation Sales Tax Referendum was defeated by a 55% margin, rendering the County's proposed match unavailable; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2024, SIB issued a letter to the County requesting a response within 15 days regarding the County's plan to address the \$190M funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at its November 12, 2024, County Council meeting, the Council voted to not allocate additional funds to the project; and

WHEREAS, in a letter to Beaufort County dated November 18, 2024, SCDOT reiterated the deteriorating condition of the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge, which its condition has been rated a 4 out of 10, and emphasized that a decision on a viable project must be made by March 31, 2025, to proceed with construction by 2027; and

WHEREAS, at the November 20, 2024, SIB meeting, an extension was granted to Beaufort County until March 31, 2025, for the County to provide a revised funding plan; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2025, Senator Tom Davis, with support from the state delegation, presented a proposal to redefine the project to match available funding; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has provided six project options along with cost estimates for each option, including the proposal endorsed by Senator Tom Davis; and

WHEREAS, only two of the six options, (excluding the standalone Mackay Creek Bridge replacement) fall within the available \$298.85 million budget.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA hereby adopt a revised scope for the US 278 Corridor Project (also known as the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project) to align with the available funds. The revised project includes the following elements:

Revised Project Scope:

1. Replacement of the two eastbound bridges over Mackay Creek and Skull Creek, while retaining the existing two-lane westbound bridges.
2. Construction of a three-lane eastbound lifeline bridge without a multi-use pathway.
3. Striping the new bridge for two lanes, with only necessary road tie-ins included.
4. Designing the bridge width to accommodate temporary four-lane use in the future if westbound bridge replacement is required.
5. No access to Pinkney Island from the new bridge; the existing eastbound Skull Creek bridge will be repurposed for two-way access to Pinkney Island.
6. Removal of the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge.
7. Construction of a Hog Island connector road/bridge to provide access to Mariner's Cove, Blue Heron Point, and Hog Island, linking back to US 278 at the Windmill Harbor intersection.
8. Retention and improvement of the Windmill Harbor traffic signal with mast arms.

*These project elements are identified in SCDOT's "Option 1," attached as Exhibit A.

Funding Elements:

Funding Source	Amount (in millions)
Current Project Funding	\$295.50M
Additional SCDOT Funding	\$ 16.10 M
Spent to Date	- \$ 13.07 M
Total Available Funding	\$298.53M

Planned Project Costs	Amount (in millions)
Revised Project Costs	\$257.70M
Reserve Funds	\$ 25.83M
Local PSD Relocation Funds	\$ 10.00M
Stoney Community Safety Project	\$ 5.00M
Total Costs	\$298.53M

1. Reserve funds will cover potential project overruns. If unspent, they may be used for other local road improvements along the corridor between Moss Creek Rd and Spanish Wells Road.
2. The project will fund the replacement of the 24” waterline up to the limits defined in State Act 36. The \$10 million appropriation will assist with the difference between the actual relocation costs and the costs covered by the project. Any relocation cost above the project funds and this appropriation would be the responsibility of the Public Service District (PSD).
3. To address immediate safety concerns in the Stoney community, \$5 million in local County funds will be allocated to a local road project, with the Town overseeing design and construction.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: _____
Alice Howard, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

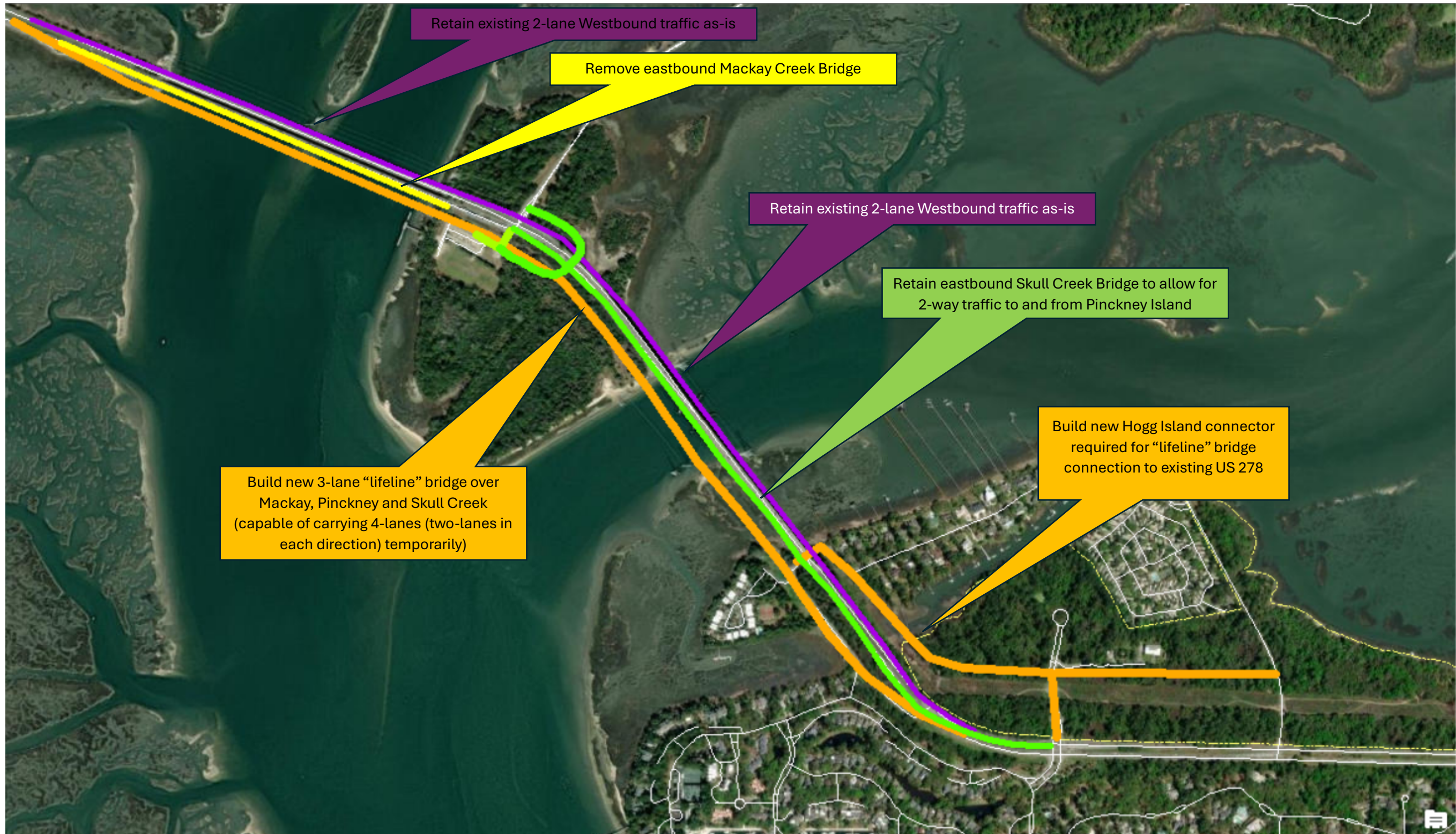
BY: _____
Alan Perry, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Gammons, Clerk to Council

Exhibit A

3-lane Bridge (capable of accommodating 4th lane) with using portion of Westbound bridge for off island and one of the old Skull Creek for access to Pinckney Island



Options:

	Bridge	Roadway	R/W	Mitigation	Utility	Subtotal	CEI	Total
1. Lifeline option w/o MUP (roadway only to tie in)	185.0	14.7	1.5	9.8	23.3	234.3	23.4	257.7
2. Lifeline option w/ MUP (roadway only to tie in)	240.0	15.7	1.5	9.8	23.3	290.3	29.0	319.3
3. Lifeline option w/o MUP (roadway w/ 3-Lane EB from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells)	185.0	22.8	2.9	11.2	26.9	248.8	24.9	273.7
4. Lifeline option w/ MUP (roadway w/ 3-lane EB from Moss Creek to Spanish Wells)	240.0	24.4	4.0	12.6	28.8	309.8	31.0	340.8
5. 2024 anticipated cost for full project	331.3	43.8	5.8	14.0	29.5	424.4	42.4	466.8
6. Replace only Mackay EB Bridge	45.0	14.7	0.8	7.5	12.5	80.5	8.1	88.6

RESOLUTION 2025/14

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF BEAUFORT COUNTY & TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND TO REDEFINE THE US 278 CORRIDOR PROJECT (ALSO KNOWN AS THE WILLIAM HILTON PARKWAY GATEWAY CORRIDOR PROJECT) TO ALIGN WITH THE AVAILABLE FUNDING

WHEREAS, the current proposed 278 Corridor Project (also known as the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project["Project"]) includes a six-lane bridge with a multi-use pathway and roadway improvements spanning from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road; and

WHEREAS, any Funds expended from the 2018 Referendum as per the referendum will solely be expended within the originally defined project area from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road, and funds spent for improvements between Squire Pope Road and Spanish Wells Road will be sourced solely from Local Impact Fee Revenue; and

WHEREAS, the current available funding for the Project totals \$298.85 million, consisting of \$101 million from Beaufort County (sales tax and impact fees), \$3.35 million from the Town of Hilton Head Island (right-of-way donations), \$74.5 million from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and \$120 million from the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB); and

WHEREAS, in February 2024, SCDOT provided an updated Project cost estimate, increasing the projected Project cost from \$305 million to \$488 million; and

WHEREAS, this updated Project cost estimate was reflected in our following quarterly report to the SIB, and upon receipt, the SIB requested a meeting with the County to address the project status and funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at a meeting on May 29, 2024, between SIB, SCDOT, state representatives, and Beaufort County, the County proposed a pro-rata cost-sharing arrangement between SIB, SCDOT, and the County to cover the \$190 million Project funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, in a follow-up letter to SIB dated July 3, 2024, the County formally requested \$90 million from SIB to match a \$90 million contribution from the County, contingent upon voter approval of a proposed Transportation Sales Tax Referendum in November 2024; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2024, the Transportation Sales Tax Referendum did not receive voter approval thereby rendering the County's proposed match unavailable; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2024, SIB issued a letter to the County requesting a response within 15 days regarding the County's plan to address the \$190M Project funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at its November 12, 2024, County Council meeting, the Council voted not to allocate additional funds to the Project; and

WHEREAS, in a letter to Beaufort County dated November 18, 2024, SCDOT reiterated the deteriorating condition of the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge, stating that its current condition is rated a 4 out of 10, and emphasized that a decision on a viable project must be made by March 31, 2025, to proceed with construction by 2027; and

WHEREAS, at the November 20, 2024, SIB meeting, an extension was granted to Beaufort County until March 31, 2025, for the County to provide a revised funding plan for the Project; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2025, Senator Tom Davis, with support from the state delegation, presented a proposal to redefine the Project to match available funding; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has provided six project options along with cost estimates for each option, including the proposal endorsed by Senator Tom Davis; and

WHEREAS, only two of the six options, (excluding the standalone Mackay Creek Bridge replacement) fall within the available \$298.85 million budget; and

WHEREAS, a joint meeting of the Beaufort County Council and the Hilton Head Town Council was held on February 12, 2025 to discuss the options for the Project presented by SCDOT and the funding for the Project.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, hereby adopt a revised scope for the Project to align with the available funds. The revised Project includes the following elements:

Revised Project Scope:

1. * Demolition of the existing eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek, construction of a new bridge extending from the mainland to Jenkins Island (“New Bridge”), and retaining the existing two lane eastbound bridge over Skull Creek and the two existing two lane westbound bridges over Mackay Creek and Skull Creek.* Construction of the New Bridge will be a three-lane eastbound lifeline bridge without a multi-use pathway.
2. * Striping the New Bridge for two lanes, with only necessary road tie-ins included.
3. Designing the New Bridge width to accommodate temporary four-lane use in the future if westbound bridge replacement is required.
4. * The New Bridge will be designed so that there is no access to Pinkney Island from the New Bridge. The existing Skull Creek bridge, either the eastbound or westbound lanes, will be repurposed for two-way access to Pinkney Island.
5. * Construction of a Hog Island connector road/bridge to provide access to Mariner’s Cove, Blue Heron Point, and Hog Island, linking back to US 278 at the Windmill Harbor intersection.
6. * Retention and improvement of the Windmill Harbor traffic signal with mast arms.
7. The Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County agree to work cooperatively on the following:
 - i. Transfer ownership of Windmill Harbor Traffic Signal to the Town of Hilton Head Island. Funding for mast arms and installation of adaptive technology consistent with

- that installed on existing Town of Hilton Head Island Signals will be eligible for the use of Reserve Funds if they remain at the end of the bridge project.
- ii. Explore providing a bike/pedestrian lane on the new eastbound bridge structure, as part of the built third lane, until the third lane is needed for traffic operations.
 - iii. Request that DOT reconsider the reduction of the speed limit of the William Hilton Parkway Corridor to 40mph.

*These project elements are identified in SCDOT's "Option 1," attached as Exhibit A.

Funding Elements:

Funding Source	Amount (in millions)
Current Project Funding (SIB, DOT, Local)	\$295.50M
Additional SCDOT Funding (DOT, Local)	\$ 16.10 M
<u>Spent to Date (DOT, Local)</u>	<u>- \$ 13.07 M</u>
Total Available Funding	\$298.53M

Planned Project Costs	Amount (in millions)
Revised Project Costs (SIB, DOT, Local)	\$257.70M
Remaining Engineering Costs (DOT, Local)	\$ 15.00M
Reserve Funds (Local)	\$ 14.33M
PSD Relocation Funds (Local)	\$ 6.50M
<u>Stoney Historic Community Safety Projects (Local)</u>	<u>\$ 5.00M</u>
Total Costs	\$298.53M

Use of Local Funds:

1. Reserve Funds will cover potential project overruns.
2. The Project will fund the replacement of the 24" waterline up to the limits defined in State Act 36, plus the allocated \$6.5 million in Local Funds Costs for the waterline relocation not covered by the combination of State Act 36 and Local Funds will be funded using Reserve Funds as the top priority.
3. To address immediate safety concerns in the Stoney Historic Community, a minimum of \$5.0 million in Local Funds will be allocated to a local road project, with the Town overseeing design and construction, prioritized as follows:
 - i. Squire Pope intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - ii. Sidewalk enhancements
 - iii. Spanish Wells intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - iv. Signage – safety/wayfinding
4. Any remaining Reserve Funds, not spent on the above, shall be used for other local road improvements along the corridor between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road.

Adopted this 24th day of February 2025.

ATTEST:


 Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: 
 Alice Howard, Chair

Adopted this 24th day of February 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: _____
Alan Perry, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Gammon, Clerk to Council

RESOLUTION 2025 / __

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF BEAUFORT COUNTY & TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND TO REDEFINE THE US 278 CORRIDOR PROJECT (ALSO KNOWN AS THE WILLIAM HILTON PARKWAY GATEWAY CORRIDOR PROJECT) TO ALIGN WITH THE AVAILABLE FUNDING

WHEREAS, the current proposed 278 Corridor Project (also known as the William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project[("Project")]) includes a six-lane bridge with a multi-use pathway and roadway improvements spanning from Moss Creek Drive to Spanish Wells Road; and

WHEREAS, any Funds expended from the 2018 Referendum as per the referendum will solely be expended within the originally defined project area from Moss Creek Drive to Squire Pope Road, and funds spent for improvements between Squire Pope Road and Spanish Wells Road will be sourced solely from Local Impact Fee Revenue; and

WHEREAS, the current available funding for the Project totals \$298.85 million, consisting of \$101 million from Beaufort County (sales tax and impact fees), \$3.35 million from the Town of Hilton Head Island (right-of-way donations), \$74.5 million from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and \$120 million from the State Infrastructure Bank (SIB); and

WHEREAS, in February 2024, SCDOT provided an updated Project cost estimate, increasing the projected Project cost from \$305 million to \$488 million; and

WHEREAS, this updated Project cost estimate was reflected in our following quarterly report to the SIB, and upon receipt, the SIB requested a meeting with the County to address the project status and funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at a meeting on May 29, 2024, between SIB, SCDOT, state representatives, and Beaufort County, the County proposed a pro-rata cost-sharing arrangement between SIB, SCDOT, and the County to cover the \$190 million Project funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, in a follow-up letter to SIB dated July 3, 2024, the County formally requested \$90 million from SIB to match a \$90 million contribution from the County, contingent upon voter approval of a proposed Transportation Sales Tax Referendum in November 2024; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2024, the Transportation Sales Tax Referendum did not receive voter approval thereby rendering the County's proposed match unavailable; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2024, SIB issued a letter to the County requesting a response within 15 days regarding the County's plan to address the \$190M Project funding shortfall; and

WHEREAS, at its November 12, 2024, County Council meeting, the Council voted not to allocate additional funds to the Project; and

WHEREAS, in a letter to Beaufort County dated November 18, 2024, SCDOT reiterated the deteriorating condition of the eastbound Mackay Creek Bridge, stating that its current condition is rated a 4 out of 10, and emphasized that a decision on a viable project must be made by March 31, 2025, to proceed with construction by 2027; and

WHEREAS, at the November 20, 2024, SIB meeting, an extension was granted to Beaufort County until March 31, 2025, for the County to provide a revised funding plan for the Project; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2025, Senator Tom Davis, with support from the state delegation, presented a proposal to redefine the Project to match available funding; and

WHEREAS, SCDOT has provided six project options along with cost estimates for each option, including the proposal endorsed by Senator Tom Davis; and

WHEREAS, only two of the six options, (excluding the standalone Mackay Creek Bridge replacement) fall within the available \$298.85 million budget; and

WHEREAS, a joint meeting of the Beaufort County Council and the Hilton Head Town Council was held on February 12, 2025 to discuss the options for the Project presented by SCDOT and the funding for the Project ~~therefore~~.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, hereby adopt a revised scope for the ~~-~~Project to align with the available funds. The revised Project includes the following elements:

Revised Project Scope:

1. * Demolition of the existing eastbound bridge over Mackay Creek, construction of a new bridge extending from the mainland to Jenkins Island (“New Bridge”), and retaining the existing two lane eastbound bridge over Skull Creek and the two existing two lane westbound bridges over Mackay Creek and Skull Creek. * Construction of the New Bridge will be a three-lane eastbound lifeline bridge without a multi-use pathway.
2. * Striping the New Bridge for two lanes, with only necessary road tie-ins included.
3. Designing the New Bridge width to accommodate temporary four-lane use in the future if westbound bridge replacement is required.
4. * The New Bridge will be designed so that there is no access to Pinkney Island from the New Bridge. The existing Skull Creek bridge, either the eastbound or westbound lanes, will be repurposed for two-way access to Pinkney Island.
5. * Construction of a Hog Island connector road/bridge to provide access to Mariner’s Cove, Blue Heron Point, and Hog Island, linking back to US 278 at the Windmill Harbor intersection.
6. * Retention and improvement of the Windmill Harbor traffic signal with mast arms.
7. The Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County agree to work cooperatively on the following:
 - i. Transfer ownership of Windmill Harbor Traffic Signal to the Town of Hilton Head Island. Funding for mast arms and installation of adaptive technology consistent with

- that installed on existing Town of Hilton Head Island Signals will be eligible for the use of Reserve Funds if they remain at the end of the bridge project.
- ii. Explore providing a bike/pedestrian lane on the new eastbound bridge structure, as part of the built third lane, until the third lane is needed for traffic operations.
 - iii. Request that DOT reconsider the reduction of the speed limit of the William Hilton Parkway Corridor to 40mph.

*These project elements are identified in SCDOT's "Option 1," attached as Exhibit A.

Funding Elements:

Funding Source	Amount (in millions)
Current Project Funding (SIB, DOT, Local)	\$295.50M
Additional SCDOT Funding (DOT, Local)	\$ 16.10 M
<u>Spent to Date (DOT, Local)</u>	<u>- \$ 13.07 M</u>
Total Available Funding	\$298.53M

Planned Project Costs	Amount (in millions)
Revised Project Costs (SIB, DOT, Local)	\$257.70M
Remaining Engineering Costs (DOT, Local)	\$ 15.00M
Reserve Funds (Local)	\$ 14.33M
PSD Relocation Funds (Local)	\$ 6.50M
<u>Stoney Historic Community Safety Projects (Local)</u>	<u>\$ 5.00M</u>
Total Costs	\$298.53M

Use of Local Funds:

1. Reserve Funds will cover potential project overruns.
2. The Project will fund the replacement of the 24" waterline up to the limits defined in State Act 36, plus the allocated \$6.5 million in Local Funds. Costs for the waterline relocation not covered by the combination of State Act 36 and Local Funds will be funded using Reserve Funds as the top priority.
3. To address immediate safety concerns in the Stoney Historic Community, a minimum of \$5.0 million in Local Funds will be allocated to a local road project, with the Town overseeing design and construction, prioritized as follows:
 - i. Squire Pope intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - ii. Sidewalk enhancements
 - iii. Spanish Wells intersection enhancements – (pedestrian safety, turn movements, etc.)
 - iv. Signage – safety/wayfinding
4. Any remaining Reserve Funds, not spent on the above, shall be used for other local road improvements along the corridor between Moss Creek Drive and Spanish Wells Road.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: _____
Alice Howard, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2025.

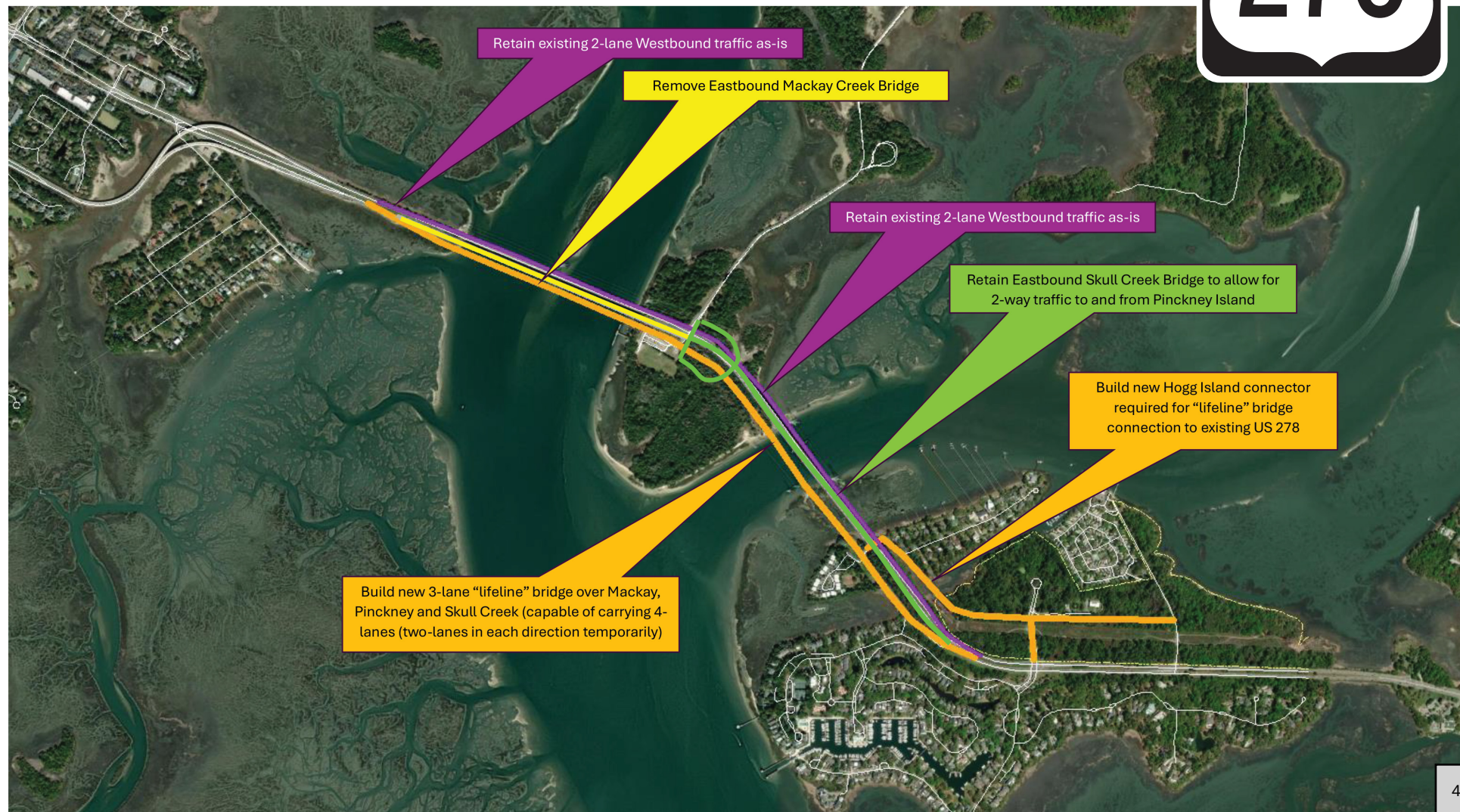
COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: _____
Alan Perry, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Gammon, Clerk to Council

3-lane Bridge (capable of accommodating 4th lane) with using portion of Westbound bridge for off island and one of the old Skull Creek for access to Pinckney Island





TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Town Council

TO: Town Council
FROM: Shawn Leininger, Assistant Town Manager
CC: Marc Orlando, Town Manager
DATE: March 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Consideration of an Ordinance of the Town of Hilton Head Island to Amend Title 17 of the Municipal Code, Chapter 4, Noise Control, to Add Additional Requirements for Construction Hours for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Council consider Second Reading of an Ordinance of the Town of Hilton Head Island to amend Title 17 of the Municipal Code, Chapter 4, Noise Control, to add additional requirements for construction hours for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina and providing for severability and an effective date.

UPDATE SINCE FIRST READING:

On February 4, 2025, Town Council approved First Reading of this Ordinance. The motion approving First Reading made clear the intent of the Ordinance was to align with the private restrictions of the Town Planned Unit Development (PUDs), to not be more restrictive, and clarify the permitted hours of construction be from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday.

In this regard, Town staff took the following actions:

1. In the Ordinance, removed the reference to sunset, to permit construction between the hours of 7:00 am and 7:00 pm Monday through Saturday.
2. Contacted all ten (10) PUD Property Owners Associations (POAs) and confirmed the permitted construction hours and days for each.
3. Aligned with the PUD POAs the Holidays during which construction is prohibited to New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day (removed Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day).

These changes establish permitted construction hours that are aligned with and not more restrictive than all PUDs as directed by Town Council.

BACKGROUND:

Revitalize and Modernize the Economy is a focus area in the adopted Town Council 2023-2025 Strategic Action Plan. In fulfillment of this focus area, Strategy #1 Establish a Growth Framework Strategy states the Town will:

“Successfully manage increasing and evolving future growth patterns in a manner that will ensure sustainability of Hilton Head Island’s unique character. Additionally, the Town must monitor economic and demographic trends, undertaking a comprehensive list of future planning activities, and proactively protecting the Island’s rich natural resources through appropriate design, regulation, and capital investment practices.”

In this regard, Town Council directed Town Staff to advance amendments to the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) in the 2024 Strategic Action Work Plan. The effort has been divided into two separate projects, the full LMO Overhaul and the priority amendments. The priority amendments include incremental changes to both the LMO and portions of the Municipal Code related to land management that seek to address important and urgent issues in advance of the full LMO Overhaul. These priority amendments aim to address pressing community development issues with the best short-term solution while minimizing unintended outcomes. Issues that require additional analysis and research or are more complex are recommended to be further explored during the full LMO Overhaul.

At the September 24, 2024, Town Council Workshop, Town staff was provided the following comments and direction as it relates to this proposed Noise Ordinance amendment.

- Construction projects often spill over into commercial and residential areas, causing disruptions including noise, vibrations, dust, traffic congestion, parking issues, and restricted access to properties.
- Construction impacts are frustrating and affect daily routines and operations.
- Construction projects create jobs and stimulate the local economy with new developments that can result in positive impacts such as improved buildings, public spaces, and infrastructure that can benefit the community.
- Change the hours of construction from 7:00 am – 10:00 pm every day of the week to align with POAs and other best practices.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENT:

Section 17-4-114 Prohibited Acts currently prohibits general construction, repair work, and landscaping activities outside of “daytime” hours, which is defined as “that portion of each day beginning at 7:00 am and ending at 10:00 pm” (Sec. 17-4-113). The proposed ordinance amendment intends to further limit commercial construction and landscaping

activities to a timeframe from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm and prohibits such activities completely on Sundays, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The earlier stop-time reflects the Town Council's desire for noise restrictions to generally align with the PUD POAs to ensure a more standardized schedule of noise limitations across the Town, to minimize night and early morning disturbances, and to preserve the general welfare of the community.

Proposed amendments to Section 17-4-115 Exceptions reinforce hours and days allowable for commercial general construction, repair work, and landscaping activities. Paragraphs (6) and (7) reconfirm these activities as acceptable exceptions during the same timeframes included in Section 17-4-114 Prohibited Acts. Additionally, the proposed text ensures that "excepted" activities are subject to the maximum noise level (95 dBA) along property lines in the same manner as Section 17-4-114.

To be clear, general non-commercial yard work is unchanged by these amendments and remains allowable on a daily basis from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm (referenced as "daytime"). This means that the flexibility for a resident to maintain their property remains unchanged and allowable, even on Sundays and observed holidays.

ANALYSIS:

The limitations in Chapter 4, Noise Control, are not intended to repeal, annul in any way, impair, or interfere with any private restrictions placed upon property by covenant, deed, or other private agreement. If private PUD restrictions are stricter, they will supersede Town requirements, but they will be enforced by private security or other association arrangements and procedures. The Town does not enforce private restrictions.

Town Staff have researched all ten (10) Town PUDs and confirmed the proposed ordinance is not stricter than those rules currently enforced by private restrictions of the PUDs. While there are variations, generally construction activity in the PUDs is permitted Monday through Friday from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm, permitted on Saturdays with pre-authorization, and is typically prohibited on Sundays and major holidays.

On the following pages are a summary of the PUDs construction activity policies compared to what is being proposed in the Town's Noise Ordinance amendment:

[intentionally left blank, see next page]

PUD	Day of Week	PUD Requirement	Town of Hilton Head Island Proposal
1. Hilton Head Plantation	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (3)	Aligned
2. Sea Pines	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except emergency work)	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day (9)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
3. Palmetto Dunes	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	No commercial construction work allowed (except by special approval and emergency work)	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except emergency work)	Aligned

	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day (6)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
4. Port Royal	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 6:00 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Saturday	No commercial construction work (except by special approval and emergency work)	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day (11)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
5. Shipyard	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	No commercial construction work allowed (except by special approval and emergency work)- "quiet work only"	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed	Aligned

	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day (11)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
6. Wexford	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 6:00 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Saturday	No commercial construction work allowed (except by special approval and emergency work between 8:00 am and 3:00 pm)- "quiet work only"	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day (11)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
7. Indigo Run	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm, Monday-Thursday 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Friday	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm on Friday
	Saturday	8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except emergency work)	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day (6)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
8. Long Cove Club	Monday-Friday	7:30 am to 6:30 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Saturday	8:00 am to 4:30 pm	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except for emergency work with special approval)	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day (6)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
9. Palmetto Hall	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	No commercial construction work allowed (except by special approval or for emergency work between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm)- "quiet work only"	Commercial construction work allowed from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except emergency work)	Aligned

	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day (6)	Town restricts commercial construction work on three holidays (New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas)
10. Spanish Wells	Monday-Friday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Saturday	7:00 am to 7:00 pm	Aligned
	Sunday	No commercial construction work allowed (except emergency work)	Aligned
	Holidays	No commercial construction work on New Year's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (3)	Aligned

Based on the direction provided by Town Council, Town staff reviewed each PUD community's construction regulations and has proposed amendments to Title 17 of the Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island, Chapter 4, Noise Control, to establish more consistent requirements for construction hours island-wide.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance
2. Text Amendment

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND TO AMEND TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE, CHAPTER 4, NOISE CONTROL, TO ADD ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION HOURS FOR THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town Council for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, has identified a continued need for the adoption of Municipal Code Amendments to address needs and issues in the Town as such arise; and,

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that noise created by construction, excavation, demolition, alteration or repair work on buildings or other structures, the operation and the operation tools or equipment used in construction, excavation, drilling, demolition, alteration or repair work and commercial landscape maintenance and the operation of tools and equipment used for commercial landscape maintenance has negative effects and lessens and impairs the peace, quiet and quality of life of those persons in the vicinity of the activity creating the noise; and,

WHEREAS, the Town Council finds that the health, safety and welfare of citizens, residents and visitors of and to the Town are promoted and improved by limiting the activities that create such noise to the hours beginning at 7:00 AM and ending at 7:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, excluding New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY AND UNDER AUTHORITY OF SAID TOWN COUNCIL, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Amendment. That the Municipal Code is amended as shown on Exhibit "A" to this Ordinance. Newly added language is illustrated with double underline and deleted language is illustrated with ~~strikethrough~~.

Section 2. Severability. If any section, phrase, sentence, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions thereof.

Section 3. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be effective upon its adoption by the Town Council of the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

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

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD
ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

First Reading:

Second Reading:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Curtis L. Coltrane, Town Attorney

TITLE 17 - GENERAL REGULATIONS

Chapter 4 - NOISE CONTROL

Sec. 17-4-114. Prohibited acts.

The following acts are declared to be nuisances hereunder and are hereby declared to be unlawful and in violation of the provisions hereof:

- (1) The willful creation or causing of any excessively loud sound. The creation or causing of any excessively loud sound shall be deemed to be "willful" if upon notice to the emitter of any excessively loud sound, the emitter fails or refuses to cease the creation or causing of the excessively loud sound.
- (2) The erection, including construction, excavation, demolition, alteration or repair work, or the permitting or causing thereof, of any building or other structure, or the operation or the permitting or causing the operation of any tools or equipment used in construction, excavation, drilling, demolition, alteration or repair work; or the performance of landscape maintenance and the operation of tools and equipment customarily used in connection with landscape maintenance:
 - a. Other than ~~during the daytime~~ between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, excluding New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day; or
 - b. In such a manner as to create noise levels greater than 95 dBA at the property line of the property where such activity occurs.
 - c. This section shall not apply in cases of extreme and urgent necessity in the interest of public safety and convenience, and then only by permit obtained from, and issued by, town manager.
- (3) The operation of any automobile, motorcycle, boat, vehicle, machine, machinery or equipment with a nonfunctioning or disabled muffler.
- (4) a. On any property located within the following zones: RSF-3, RSF-5, RSF-6, RM-4, RM-8 and RM-12, as defined in title 16, specifically section 16-3-104, Residential Base Zoning Districts, the making of any noise during the daytime, wherein the sound level from any operation, use or occupancy exceeds the sound level limits specified in the octave band or the A-scale measurement indicated in the following table when measured from any other property under separate ownership.

Octave Band Center Frequency (Hertz)	63	125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	A- Scale
Sound Level Limit (dB re: 0.0002 microbar)	76	66	59	54	50	47	44	42	60

- b. The daytime sound level limits are to be reduced by five (5) dB during the nighttime.
 - c. The sound level limits set forth in subsections (4)a. and (4)b. above are to be reduced by five (5) dB in the case of impulsive sound.
- (5) a. On any property located within the following zones: NC, PD-1, S, MF, WMU, CR, and RD, as defined in title 16, specifically section 16-3-105, Mixed-Use and Business Districts, the making or allowing or causing to be made of any noise, wherein the sound level from any operation, use or occupancy exceeds the sound level limits specified in the octave band indicated or the A-scale measurement indicated in the following table when measured from any other property under separate ownership.

Exhibit A to the Ordinance
Attachment 2 – Text Amendment Noise Control

Octave Band Center Frequency (Hertz)	63	125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	A- Scale
Sound Level Limit (dB re: 0.0002 microbar)	81	71	66	61	57	54	52	49	67

- b. The daytime sound level limits are to be reduced by five (5) dB during the nighttime.
 - c. The sound level limits set forth in subsections (5)a. and (5)b. above are to be reduced by five (5) dB in the case of impulsive sound.
- (6) a. On any property located within the following zones: LC, MS, MED, MV, SPC, CC, IL, and PR, as defined in title 16, specifically [section] 16-3-105, Mixed-Use and Business Districts, and the Shelter Cove and Harbour Town multiple use areas (as defined on the maps which are found at the end of this chapter), the making or allowing or causing to be made of any noise, wherein the sound level from any operation, use or occupancy exceeds the sound level limits specified in the octave band or the A-scale measurement indicated in the following table when measured from any other property under separate ownership.

Octave Band Center Frequency (Hertz)	63	125	250	500	1000	2000	4000	8000	A- Scale
Sound Level Limit (dB re: 0.0002 microbar)	83	74	69	64	62	57	54	52	69

- b. The daytime sound level limits are to be reduced by five (5) dB during the nighttime.
 - c. The sound level limits set forth in subsections (6)a. and (6)b. above are to be reduced by five (5) dB in the case of impulsive sound.
- (Ord. No. 94-22, § 1, 7-19-94; Ord. No. 95-25, § 1, 11-8-95; Ord. No. 04-42, § 1, 12-21-04; Ord. No. 2009-08, § 1, 3-17-09; Ord. No. 2015-14, § 1(Exh. 1), 6-16-15)

Sec. 17-4-115. Exceptions.

- (a) The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to:
 - (1) The sounding of an alarm, or the utilization of a siren or other emission of sound for the purpose of alerting persons to the existence of an emergency or the approach of an emergency vehicle;
 - (2) Sound produced by an aircraft approaching, landing at, taking off from or utilizing the taxiways or runways of the Hilton Head Airport;
 - (3) Sound produced by a vehicle (not including sound produced by an emitter within any such vehicle) while the vehicle is moving on a public right-of-way or public waterway, or is otherwise being lawfully operated;
 - (4) Sound produced by a governmental body in the performance of a governmental function; or
 - (5) Sound produced by church bells or chimes, whether produced by the striking of a church bell or chime, or a recording thereof.
 - (6) Sound produced by non-commercial persons and machinery engaged in landscape maintenance, cleanup, grinding or chipping of tree trunks or branches, or tree shaping or removal, at the location

Exhibit A to the Ordinance
Attachment 2 – Text Amendment Noise Control

where the vegetative material was generated, during the daytime; and sound produced by commercial persons and machinery engaged in landscape maintenance, cleanup, grinding or chipping of tree trunks or branches, or tree shaping or removal, at the location where the vegetative material was generated, between the hours of 7:00 am and ~~6~~7:00 pm on Monday through Saturday, excluding New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, provided however that such activity shall not create noise levels greater than 95 dba at the property line on the property that the activity occurs.

- (7) Sound produced by persons and machinery engaged in the lawful and permitted construction, excavation, renovation or demolition of any structure, including the installation of utilities and paving, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Saturday, excluding New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day, provided however that such activity shall not create noise levels greater than 95 dba at the property line on the property that the activity occurs.
 - (8) Sounds produced by parades or athletic events, and permitted fireworks.
 - (9) Sounds produced by maintenance or repair activity within boat yards, during the daytime.
 - (10) Sounds produced by commercial persons and machinery engaged in sawing or grinding of tree trunks, branches or other organic matter into mulch, at a location other than where the vegetative material was generated (generated off site), between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays; and sounds produced by non-commercial persons and machinery engaged in sawing or grinding of tree trunks, branches or other organic matter into mulch, at a location other than where the vegetative material was generated (generated off site), during the daytime on Monday through Saturday.
 - (11) Sounds produced by golf course or tennis maintenance or watering equipment.
 - (12) Sounds produced by the commercial persons and machinery engaged in loading or unloading of tree trunks or branches between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays; and sounds produced by the non-commercial persons and machinery engaged in loading and unloading of tree trunks or branches, during the daytime on Monday through Saturday.
- (b) Applications for a semi-annual permit for relief from the noise restrictions designated in this chapter on the basis of undue hardship may be made to the town manager or his duly authorized representative. The relief requested may be granted upon a good and sufficient showing:
- (1) That additional time is necessary for the applicant to alter or modify his activity or operation to comply with the provisions of this chapter;
 - (2) That the activity, operation or noise will be of temporary duration and cannot reasonably be done in a manner that would comply with this chapter; or
 - (3) That no reasonable alternative is available to the applicant.
- (c) The permit application shall be responded to conclusively within five (5) business days from the receipt of the application. If granted, the permit shall be in writing and contain all conditions upon which such permit is granted, including, but not limited to, the effective dates, and any time of day, location, sound pressure level or equipment limitation. The town manager or his duly authorized representative may prescribe any reasonable conditions or requirements deemed necessary to minimize adverse effects upon the community or the surrounding area.

(Ord. No. 94-22, § 1, 7-19-94; Ord. No. 2019-07, § 1, 4-2-19)



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Town Council

TO: Mayor Alan R. Perry & Town Council Members
FROM: Shawn Colin, Assistant Town Manager of Strategic Initiatives
CC: Marc Orlando, Town Manager, ICMA-CM
Curtis Coltrane, Town Attorney
DATE: March 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Negotiations Incident to Proposed Contractual Arrangements and the Purchase of Property in the Pembroke Drive Area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Town Council is asked to consider a request from the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry (SCFP) to extend the current lease agreement for Town-owned land at 8 Augusta Lane from 15 years with two 5-year renewal options to 40 years with two 5-year renewal options.

BACKGROUND:

Pembroke Drive Area – 8 Augusta Lane (Sandalwood Community Food Pantry)

This property is a vacant parcel of Town-owned land on the north end of the Island that was previously known as the Otter Hole Transfer Station. The site is comprised of 1.64 acres, flag-shaped and mostly wooded.

On June 4, 2024, the Town executed a 15 lease with the SCFP, with two five-year renewals, to develop and operate a food pantry on the property. Based on challenges obtaining funding to support the development and construction of the property, SCFP is now requesting to extend the lease term to 40 years with two 5-year renewals.

On January 14, 2025, Town Council discussed SCFP's request during Executive Session and provided the following direction:

- Request a letter from SCFP's lender that states the minimum term for the length of the ground lease.
- On January 17, 2025, Paul Walter, Senior Vice President of Pinnacle Financial Partners, provided a letter to SCFP that states that they do not see ground lease terms for less than 40 years (Attachment 4).

On February 18, 2025, Town Council further discussed SCFP's request during Executive Session and directed the Town Attorney to amend the lease term to 40 years with two 5-year renewals for Town Council's consideration.

Summary of the Property

- Zoning: Parks and Recreation District (PR), which allows Community Services Uses
- Acres: 1.64
- Height: 35' maximum
- Density: 6,000 ft² per acre, for a maximum yield of 9,840 ft²
- Appraised Value: \$443,000 dated January 25, 2024

CONCLUSION:

Town Council is requested to consider a request from the SCFP to extend the current lease agreement for Town-owned land at 8 Augusta Lane. The proposal is to modify the lease from its current term of 15 years with two 5-year renewal options to 40 years with two 5-year renewal options.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 8 Augusta Lane Map
2. Ordinance and Amended Lease
3. SCFP Pantry Email (12.10.2024)
4. SCFP Lease Term Letter (01.17.2025)

Address	8 Augusta Lane
PIN	R510 007 000 0244 0000
Acres	1.64
Zoning	PR
Asking Price	Long-Term Ground Lease
Appraised Value	\$443,000

Town Owned Property

8 Augusta Lane



R510 007 000 0244 0000

AUGUSTA LANE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE LONG TERM LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO THE SANDALWOOD COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF S. C. CODE ANN. § 5-7-40 (SUPP. 2023), AND § 2-7-20, *MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, (1983)*; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, and the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry entered into a Long Term Lease of real property located on Augusta Lane that is owned by the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, on June 4, 2024 (the “Long Term Lease”); and,

WHEREAS, the Long Term Lease had an initial term of fifteen (15) years with two five (5) year renewals; and,

WHEREAS, the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry has advised the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, that a longer lease term for the Long Term Lease is needed in order to secure financing for a new facility to be built on the Augusta Lane property to support its mission and operations; and,

WHEREAS the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry has requested that the Initial Lease Term in the Long Term Lease be extended to a period of forty (40) years, with two five (5) year renewals; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Hilton Head Island finds that the mission and work of the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry will be aided by extending the term of the Long Term Lease to assist the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry in its effort to obtain

financing for a new facility to be built on the Augusta Lane property to support its mission and operations; and, long term lease of the Augusta Lane property; and,

WHEREAS, the form of a proposed Amendment to the Long Term Lease is attached hereto as Exhibit “A;” and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Hilton Head Island finds that the mission and work of the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry promotes the health, safety and welfare of disadvantaged citizens and residents of the Town; and,

WHEREAS, the Town of Hilton Head Island finds that the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and residents of the Town generally will be benefitted by the establishment of a construction of a facility on the Augusta Lane property for the operations of the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry, and the proposed Amendment to the Long Term Lease is in the best interests of the Town and its citizens and residents; and,

WHEREAS, S. C. Code Ann. § 5-7-40 (Supp. 2024) and § 2-7-20, *Municipal Code of the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina*, (1983), require that any lease, conveyance or granting of an interest in real property owned by the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, must be authorized by Ordinance.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA; AND IT IS ORDAINED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAID TOWN COUNCIL, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Execution and Delivery of a Long Term Lease of Town Property:

The Mayor and the Town Manager are authorized to execute and deliver the Amendment to the Long Term Lease of Town Property on Augusta Lane. The

Amendment to the Long Term Lease will be in the form and substance as the document attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

Section 2. Severability.

If any section, phrase, sentence, term or part of this Ordinance is, for any reason, held or deemed to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, then such section, phrase, sentence, or portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent part and shall not affect the remaining parts of this Ordinance.

Section 3. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption by the Town Council for the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR
THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA, ON THIS
_____ DAY OF MARCH, 2025.**

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kimberly Gammon, Town Clerk

First Reading: March ____, 2025.

Second Reading: March ____, 2025.

Approved as to form: -----
Curtis L. Coltrane, Town Attorney

Introduced by Council Member: _____

EXHIBIT “A” TO ORDINANCE 2025-___

AMENDMENT TO LONG TERM LEASE
BY AND BETWEEN
THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA,
AND
THE SANDALWOOD COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY
DATED
THIS ___ DAY OF MARCH, 2025

Whereas, the Town of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina (herein the “Town”) and the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry (herein, “Sandalwood”), entered into a Long Term Lease of real property owned by the Town located on Augusta Lane, dated June 4, 2024 (herein, “Lease”); and,

Whereas, Sandalwood has requested an amendment to the Long Term Lease to extend the term of the Lease; and,

Whereas, the Town and Sandalwood have agreed to amend the Lease as stated in this “Amendment to Long Term Lease.”

Now Therefore: for and in consideration of the sum of One and no/100 (\$ 1.00) Dollar by Sandalwood, and the performance of the mutual promises, conditions, and covenants herein set forth, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is acknowledged by the Town and Sandalwood, the Town and Sandalwood agree to amend the Lease as follows;

1. The text of Articles 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 is deleted in its entirety and is replaced with the following text:

4.1 *Initial Term of The Lease:* Subject Article 9, below, the Initial Term of the Lease shall be for a period of forty (40) years with such term commencing on June 4, 2024, and ending on June 3, 2064 (the “Initial Lease Term”), provided that Sandalwood shall have complied with all terms and conditions of the Lease. Thee Lease may be extended for up to two Renewal Terms as set out in Articles 4.2 below.

4.2 *Renewal Terms of the Lease:* The Lease may be renewed for two Renewal Terms, as follows:

(a) *First Renewal Term:* Upon the expiration of the Initial Lease Term, the Lease shall renew for a term of (5) five years (the “First Renewal Term”), provided that all

terms and conditions of the Lease have been complied with by Sandalwood, unless either party hereto shall give the other a Notice of Termination as set forth in Article 4.3 below.

(b) *Second Renewal Term:* Upon the expiration of the First Renewal Term as provided in Article 4.2 above, the Lease shall renew for a term of (5) five years (the "Second Renewal Term"), provided that all terms and conditions of the Lease have been complied with by Sandalwood, unless either party hereto shall give the other a Notice of Termination as set forth in Article 4.3 below.

4.3 *Termination of the Lease:* The Initial Lease Term shall expire on June 3, 2064 (hereinafter, the "Initial Termination Date"). In the event the Lease is renewed for the First Renewal Term, the Lease shall expire on June 3, 2069 (the "First Renewal Termination Date"). In the event the Lease is renewed for the Second Renewal Term, the Lease shall expire on June 3, 2074. Should either party hereto, not less than twelve (12) months preceding the Initial Termination Date or the First Renewal Termination Date, give the other Party written notice of its intention not to renew the Lease, then the Lease shall expire on the Initial Termination Date or the First Renewal Termination Date, as the case may be.

2. Except as is expressly stated in this "Amendment to Long Term Lease," there are no other changes to the Lease, and all other terms of the Lease remain in force and effective according to their terms.

In Witness whereof, the Parties hereto, by and through their duly authorized officers, have set their hands and seals as of this ___ day of March, 2025.

WITNESSES:

SANDALWOOD COMMUNITY FOOD
PANTRY

By:_____

Nanette Pearson

THE TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND,
SOUTH CAROLINA

By:_____

Alan R. Perry, Mayor

By:_____

Marc A. Orlando, Town Manager

Ben Brown

From: Shawn Colin
Sent: Friday, December 20, 2024 1:49 PM
To: Ben Brown
Subject: FW: Nannette- Sandalwood Pantry. Please let me know you received.

For 1/14/2024 Exec Session.

**Shawn Colin, AICP**

ASSISTANT TOWN MANAGER
 OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Office: (843) 341-4696

Mobile: (843) 816-3949

Website: hiltonheadislandsc.gov

Address: Town of Hilton Head Island
 1 Town Center Court
 Hilton Head Island, SC 29928

From: Nannette Pierson <nononannette@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2024 10:07 PM
To: Marc Orlando <marco@hiltonheadislandsc.gov>
Cc: Shawn Colin <shawnc@hiltonheadislandsc.gov>
Subject: Nannette- Sandalwood Pantry. Please let me know you received.

THIS MESSAGE ORIGINATED OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION

December 20, 2024
 Town Manager

Dear Mr. Marc Orlando,

I am reaching out as a follow up to our conversation regarding the Sandalwood Food Pantry and the lease of the 1.6-acre parcel of Town Owned land on Hilton Head Island. I would like to thank you and the Town Council members for all their support in helping to formulate a long-term solution for the Sandalwood Food Pantry's permanent location. We appreciate the partnership with you and the Town. The Sandalwood Food Pantry is an integral part of the Hilton Head Island community for the past 16 years, providing not only food but also clothing, basic needs, bedding, school supplies, nutrition education, voter registration, counseling services and more for the community.

We previously signed a lease on June 4, 2024 with the Town of Hilton Head to lease the 1.6-acre parcel. Unfortunately, since signing the lease we have received negative feedback from our larger Pantry donors and the lease is not an acceptable option for the Pantry. These donors provide the Pantry with most of our yearly operating expenses, and we cannot afford to lose these funds. Due to the terms in the lease, we

have had major Grants put on hold or changed to non-committal until a more favorable option is agreed upon between the city and the Pantry.

After further consulting with my advisors, board members and attorneys we have concluded that the best and only way for this property to work is for the Food Pantry to purchase the parcel as was the initial proposed request at the Town's recommendation. The Pantry cannot have land use restrictions nor have uncertain lease expirations or terminations.

I respectfully request that you call a meeting with the Town council members to discuss voiding the lease and offering to sell the property to the Sandalwood Food Pantry at a reasonable price. I am more than willing to attend any meetings or answer any questions. I also invite you and all council members to come out to the Pantry on any Tuesday from 9 am – 11 am to see all the good work of the many volunteers, local residents, as well as all the families in need that we provide services to.

Again, the Sandalwood Food Pantry is an integral part of the community on Hilton Head Island that provides goods and services to many underserved residents of our beautiful island that we all call home. Without an acceptable long-term land solution, the Pantry will be limited and unable to continue to provide this very valuable service.

Thank you in advance for helping us to resolve this issue and move forward so we can continue to serve our community,

Peace & Grace, Rev. Dr. Nannette Pierson
Founder & Executive Director
Sandalwood Community Food Pantry
Because Hunger Hurts

Ben Brown

From: Shawn Colin
Sent: Sunday, January 5, 2025 1:42 PM
To: Ben Brown
Subject: FW: Rev. Dr. Nannette Pierson-Sandalwood CommunityFood Pantry

Ben,

Please see additional information below from Nannette related to Sandalwood land transaction.



Shawn Colin, AICP

ASSISSTANT TOWN MANAGER
OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Office: (843) 341-4696

Mobile: (843) 816-3949

Website: hiltonheadislandsc.gov

Address: Town of Hilton Head Island

1 Town Center Court

Hilton Head Island, SC 29928

From: Nannette Pierson <nononannette@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 9:20 PM
To: Shawn Colin <shawnc@hiltonheadislandsc.gov>
Subject: Rev. Dr. Nannette Pierson-Sandalwood CommunityFood Pantry

THIS MESSAGE ORIGINATED OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION

Please let me know you received

Dear Shawn,

January 3, 2025

First, we would like to thank you for your consideration of the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry and for the initial lease agreement from Town Council signed on June 4, 2024 for 15 years with a first renewal term of 5 years and a 2nd term for 5 years. We have had a chance to engage our funders and they are excited to support our efforts to establish a permanent future Pantry home. With this being said, given our initial assessment of the land including feedback from our landscape architect and engineer, the land would need a significant amount of investments to make our resilient pantry vision a reality. The reason for this email today is that several potential

major funders stated that given the current short lease term that they would not feel comfortable providing major funding for the project. Given the potential sizable investment needed for site development having funders state that the current lease term is a barrier provides a major hurdle. I am writing to ask if the Town Council would consider returning to their initial offer February 22, 2024 allowing us to purchase the land for \$50,000 up to \$100,000. This would allow us to give our potential funders confidence that their funding would support an effort that would have longevity and stability over longer time period. If Town Council is not willing to entertain a sale of this property we are asking for a lease term of at least 50 years. Presently we have the land insured and have invested a good amount of funds into the land and wetland surveys with Surveying Consultants and Newkirk Environmental and our architects and engineers at SURCULLUS in Charleston. We thank you for considering this request and continuing your support of the Pantry and the community residents that we serve these past 16 years.

Sincerely, Dr. Nannette Pierson, Founder and Joyful Servant
Sandalwood Community Food Pantry
Because Hunger Hurts

Sent from my iPad

January 17, 2025

Sandalwood Community Food Pantry
Rev Dr Nannette Pierson
PO Box 5061
Hilton Head Island, SC 29938

Re: Sandalwood Community Food Pantry - Ground Lease Term – 1.64 acres Augusta Lane

Dear Dr Pierson,

I am writing to share my opinion based on experience as a commercial banker on Hilton Head for over 30 years. From our conversations, I understand that the Town of Hilton Head has agreed to a ground lease with Sandalwood Community Food Pantry for a Town owned 1.64 acres parcel of land off of Augusta Lane. The ground lease terms as I understand it are for a 15-year period with two 5-year renewals.

It has been our bank's experience in reviewing ground lease terms as a part of a financing request that we do not see ground lease terms for less than 40 years.

Further, in my opinion as a banker, the large investment by Sandalwood Community Food Pantry into a building on leased land would seem to not match with limited term of 15 years with two 5-year renewals. If Sandalwood is to make a large investment to improve the leased land, the lease should be for a significantly longer in term.

In addition, a potential donor to Sandalwood may have similar thoughts as to why would they donate funds to an organization that has such a limited term in years on their ground lease.

These are my opinions based on experience as a banker and community member.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Paul R Walter
Senior Vice President
843-686-1540