

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND





MISSION, VISION AND COMMUNITY GOALS

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

MISSION

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

VISION

Our 2020–2040 vision: To reinvent sustainability... again. To focus on revitalization and modernization, and to build an inclusive and diverse community.

COMMUNITY GOALS



Adopt and pursue our Ideals of Excellence.



Protect and preserve the natural environment.



Manage evolving growth while maintaining the island's unique aesthetic.



Provide exceptional quality of life offerings in arts, culture and recreation with best-in-class facilities and programming.



Develop creative revenue sources to fund capital services, maintenance, operations and projects meeting the needs of residents and visitors.



Recognize, respect and promote multidimensional diversity on the island.



Promote efficient and secure public services to meet current and future needs.



Plan for and mitigate the effects of climate change, environmental or health concerns, and natural disasters.



View the region as a partner, not a competitor.



Foster a healthy, self-sustaining community that encourages economic, cultural and demographic diversity.

Source: Our Plan Hilton Head Island 2020–2040

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HEAD ISLAND'S HISTORY



WELCOME

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MAYOR ALAN PERRY

Hilton Head Island holds a powerful charm unlike any other place I've known. Here, the natural environment inspires our identity, guides the preservation of our past, and centers our efforts to conserve the future.

The intricate tapestry of residents, cultures, history and businesses that distinguish us from other parts of the Lowcountry serves us in many ways; it makes us strong, capable, resilient, and innovative. These characteristics hallmark our successes to date and bode well for where we want to go as a community.

This past year marks the beginning of a new era for Hilton Head Island. Our 2024 accomplishments illuminated a clear path forward to reaching our community's full potential. Navigating that path requires an understanding that the journey itself will continue to require our fortitude and civility as we prioritize our strategies, programs and initiatives in the years to come.

So, let's celebrate all that was achieved this past year. Let's rejoice in our community of resilient spirits, deep-rooted traditions, and optimism stemming from generations of islanders. There's nothing we can't accomplish when we do it together.

Along with my fellow Town Council members, our Town Manager and staff, we thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve you.

Alan Perry

Alan Perry
MAYOR



TOWN MANAGER MARC ORLANDO

In the pages that follow, this annual report provides a snapshot of the dynamic and significant progress made within the Hilton Head Island community in 2024. Our Town staff spent the past year working diligently on many strategic initiatives that produced tangible results.

At the heart of everything that we do is our steadfast commitment to improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors to Hilton Head Island. This pledge guides our efforts to listen to and collaborate with you, our community, to generate new approaches to solving long-standing and new challenges. It also serves as a testament to our unwavering belief that our public service is an honor and privilege. We are here for YOU.

I believe that in reviewing the depth and breadth of accomplishments shared in this year's annual report, you will be pleasantly surprised at just how much was achieved, the positive impact we're having in so many areas of island life, and how these wins are setting the stage for what I predict will be considered one of the most influential periods of time in Hilton Head Island's collective history.

On behalf of our Town staff, I extend our gratitude to Mayor Perry and the Town Council for entrusting us to bring the will of this community to fruition, and I thank you for the opportunity and responsibility to serve our community, neighbors, and families.

Marc Orlando

Marc Orlando, ICMA-CM
TOWN MANAGER



OUR TOWN COUNCIL IS COMPRISED OF A MAYOR ELECTED AT-LARGE AND SIX COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECTED FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE WARDS.

Hilton Head Island has a Council-manager form of government. In this form of government, Town Council appoints a manager to implement Town Council's direction and oversee the day-to-day operations of the Town, while Town Council sets policy, establishes priorities, approves the budget and addresses issues facing our community. The mayor presides over Town Council meetings.

Town Council also appoints the Town attorney and residents who serve on Town boards, committees and commissions.



Mayor - Alan Perry
Elected November 2022



Mayor Pro Tempore - Alex Brown
Ward 1 Town Council Member
Elected November 2020



Ward 2 Town Council Member
Patsy Brison - *Elected November 2022*



Ward 3 Town Council Member
Steve DeSimone - *Elected November 2024*



Ward 4 Town Council Member
Tamara Becker - *Elected November 2018*



Ward 5 Town Council Member
Steve Alfred - *Elected November 2022*



Ward 6 Town Council Member
Melinda Tunner - *Elected November 2024*

TOWN COUNCIL 2024 POLICY ACTIONS

Adopted the \$166.9M FY25 consolidated budget with no property tax increase.

Accepted the 2024 Repetitive Loss Analysis report.

- › Required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the analysis guides property owners in safeguarding their property against future floods and qualifies them for a 25% discount on flood insurance premiums through FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- › Currently, the community has 23,697 NFIP flood insurance policies with more than \$3 million in savings.

Advanced William Hilton Parkway Gateway Corridor Project / Hwy 278 Bridge.

- › Adopted a joint resolution with Beaufort County to advance the project scope and funding strategy.

Enhanced Public Safety.

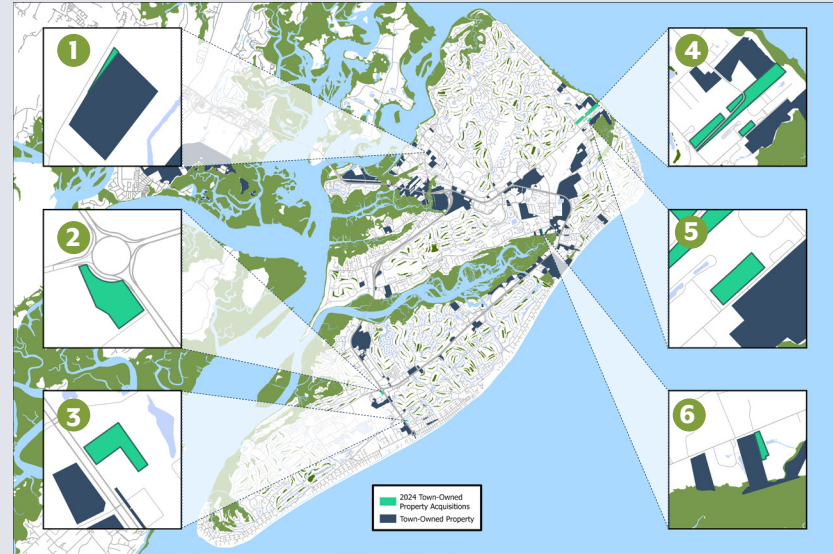
- › Authorized an intergovernmental agreement with Beaufort County for safety and pedestrian improvements from Beach City Road to Dillon Road and along Palmetto Bay Road.
- › Obtained a 45 mph to 40 mph speed limit reduction from SCDOT on William Hilton Parkway between Beach City and Dillon roads.
- › Obtained a 30 mph to 25 mph speed limit reduction from SCDOT on Jonesville Road.

Approved an integrated pest management policy.

- › Town-owned or managed properties prioritize non-pesticide controls before considering the use of pesticides. When pesticides are needed, organic solutions are championed and the use of glyphosate are prohibited. These actions reduce risks to human and animal health and the environment.

Approved Memorandums of Understanding:

- › Island Recreation Association (Parks and Recreation operations).
- › University of South Carolina - Beaufort (Island Ambassador Program).
- › Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity (workforce housing).
- › Coastal Community Development Corporation (workforce housing).



LAND + PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Acquired **31.71 acres** with a total investment of **\$18,810,000** to protect areas from redevelopment misaligned with the Town's character.

Funding sources included Real Estate Transfer fees, State Accommodations Tax, Land Sale Proceeds, Hospitality Tax, and Beaufort County Green Space Sales Tax Program.

- 1** 0.169 acre parcel on Wild Horse Road for Taylor Family Park.
- 2** 2.3 acres with 11,368 sq ft of office space for Town operations.
- 3** 1.29 acres at 69 Pope Avenue, the former Aunt Chilada's Easy Street Cafe.
- 4** 26 acres in the Mitchelville area through the Beaufort County Green Space Sales Tax Program.
- 5** 1.89 acres of land adjacent to the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park.
- 6** 0.639 acre parcel on Marshland Road for Patterson Family Park.



POLICY ACTIONS

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TOWN COUNCIL 2024 POLICY ACTIONS

Advanced Workforce Housing:

- > Approved OneStreet Residential, LLC as the development partner for the Northpoint Public-Private Partnership.
- > Adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment to add Housing Impact Analysis.
- > Approved use of funds from SC Accommodations Tax dollars for workforce housing.

Approved Ordinances and Resolutions

- > Approved an ordinance outlining new parking fees for Town-managed beach parks to enhance parking management. Hilton Head Island residents with a parking permit can enjoy free parking at all Town beach parks. Visitors pay for parking at all locations except Coligny Beach Park.
- > Approved Land Management Ordinance amendments to floor area ratio requirements within the Forest Beach Neighborhood Character Overlay District.
- > Adopted an ordinance addressing the removal of abandoned watercraft.
- > Expanded No Smoking ordinance to include vaping.
- > Amended the Town Code to update public comment rules and procedures for agenda and non-agenda items. The new guidelines ensure each speaker is heard and meetings remain orderly. Public comments remain limited to three minutes per speaker, per agenda item. Speakers may comment on non-agenda items when the Town Council concludes its business.
- > Approved a resolution to support the Rotary Community Center Proposal.
- > Approved a resolution to support new, best-in-class, and accessible playground equipment at Shelter Cove Community Park.
- > Approved master plans for Chaplin and Crossings Parks.

Approved General Contracts

- > Approved a long-term lease for Sandalwood Food Pantry.
- > Adopted a non-exclusive commercial beach franchise agreement with Shore Beach Services.

WORKFORCE HOUSING

Town Council signed a Workforce Housing Development Agreement for a public-private partnership with OneStreet Residential LLC for an 11-acre tract of Town-owned land at Northpoint Circle. This marks a critical step towards creating a new, sustainable workforce housing neighborhood on Hilton Head Island.



Northpoint is slated to offer 160+/- units and residents must work on Hilton Head Island to live there.



ONE
BEDROOM
APARTMENTS



TWO
BEDROOM
APARTMENTS



THREE
BEDROOM
APARTMENTS

The Northpoint Workforce Housing Project will offer rental rates attainable for households with incomes ranging from 60 to 150 % of the Area Median Income (AMI).



\$57K - \$143K

Based on Beaufort County's 2024 AMI, a family of three could earn between this amount to qualify to live at Northpoint.

The Northpoint neighborhood will consist entirely of workforce housing, targeting Hilton Head Island's workers.

At least 50 % of the units will cater to households earning between 60 and 80 % of the AMI.

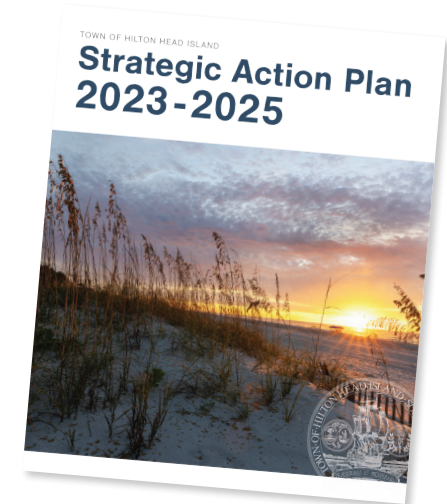
- > Teachers
- > Hospitality workers
- > Law enforcement
- > Health care providers



This eligibility criteria ensures accessibility for a wide range of essential workers on the Island.

OUR VALUES, FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIES

Building from the foundation of Our Plan, the Town's Comprehensive Plan created from the community's input to prioritize resources, projects and initiatives, our core values outlined below are the overarching framework that guide the actions of the Town's strategic plan. To review the Strategic Action Plan in its entirety, please visit hiltonheadislandsc.gov/strategicplan/.



PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Require and sustain excellence in place, people, planning and process.



REVITALIZE AND MODERNIZE THE ECONOMY

Create an island-appropriate economy that has sufficient depth and breadth to attract and support a diverse resident, visitor and business population.



“RIGHT-SIZED” INFRASTRUCTURE

Align the community's physical, environmental, and social values with the Capital Improvements Program and infrastructure planning.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Create a resilient and sustainable environment through planning and policy.



PARKS & RECREATION

Implement the Parks and Recreation Plan.



REGIONAL FOCUS

Evaluate how regional expansion will impact immediate and future social, economic, and political planning and policy development.



CONNECTED, INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Facilitate true connectivity in island physical, social, and cultural environments, as well as foster a multi-dimensional, equitable and diverse community.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT



TOURISM IS THE CURRENT #1
ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR HHI

**\$2.8
BILLION**
BY 2.8 MILLION
VISITORS

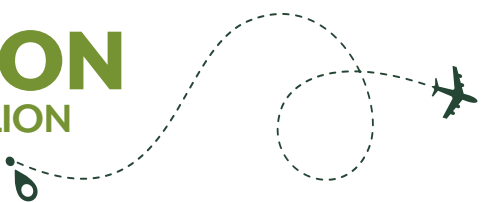
Source: HHI-Bluffton
Chamber of Commerce



RBC HERITAGE

\$134.9M
GENERATED IN ONE
TOURNAMENT WEEK

Source: rbcheritage.com



HILTON HEAD ISLAND AIRPORT

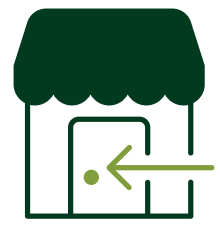
**9.5%
INCREASE**
IN TRAFFIC SINCE 2023

Source: HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce



TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

2,514



**160 NEW
BUSINESSES
OPENED IN 2024***

53 PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	26 RETAIL	27 FOOD & BEVERAGE	5 REAL ESTATE	20 HEALTH CARE	18 RECREATION	9 CONTRACTORS	2 WHOLESALE
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(* Excludes short-term rentals, in-home businesses, Homeowners' Associations and entertainers)

Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

COMMUNITY PROFILE

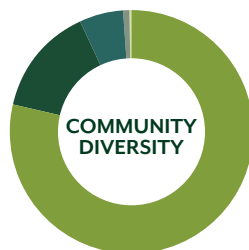
DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: 2020 Census Data

POPULATION
37,661



58 MEDIAN AGE



White – **77.2%**
Hispanic – **14.1%**
Black/African American – **5.7%**
Asian – **0.8%**
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander – **0.2%**

POPULATION UNDER 18
13%

37%
POPULATION OVER 65



\$86K
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

BELOW POVERTY LINE
7.6%

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



- > Hilton Head Early Childhood Center
- > Hilton Head Island Elementary
- > Hilton Head Island Middle School
- > Hilton Head Island High School

PRIVATE SCHOOLS



- > Sea Pines Montessori Academy at Hilton Head Preparatory School: Preschool – 6
- > The Island Academy of Hilton Head: Preschool – 12
- > St. Francis Catholic School: K–8
- > Heritage Academy: 6–12
- > Hilton Head Preparatory School: Pre-K–12

HIGHER EDUCATION



- > University of South Carolina Beaufort Hilton Head Campus

HOUSING

34,665 TOTAL HOUSING UNITS



16,882 multi-family units



16,590 single family detached homes



1,193 mobile homes



NATURALLY OCCURRING AFFORDABLE HOUSING
1,700-2,475 units

SHORT-TERM RENTALS
1 in 5 residential properties is a short-term rental unit



HOUSING UNITS FOR SALE

Source: December 2024 Market Report – Hilton Head Area Realtors Association

316 condos/villas for sale
(median price \$515,000)

206 detached homes for sale
(median price \$1,275,000)



QUALITY OF LIFE

GOLD-LEVEL BICYCLE FRIENDLY

The League of American Bicyclists honored the efforts of the Town of Hilton Head Island to build better places for people to bike.

10-MINUTE WALK TO A TOWN PARK

for more than half of the Town's residents.

180 OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

PUBLIC DEBRIS CLEAN-UP

site was opened at Honey Horn after hurricane/tropical storm.

BUSINESS SEMINARS

were launched by the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation called "Money Talks".

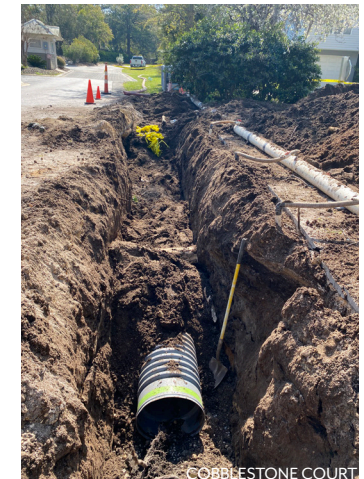
SUMMER SEASON PROGRAMS

were launched including enhanced Community Code Enforcement presence on beaches, Beach Ambassadors, remote parking for Coligny Beach, and beach shuttles.

STORMWATER RESILIENCY

Improved ability to manage floodwaters and storm impacts through active management of island-wide stormwater infrastructure:

- > Installed the third new pump at Lawton Pump Station (Sea Pines).
- > Completed drainage system improvements on Arrow Road.
- > Installed an emergency spillway at Lake Russell (Town-owned pond on Jonesville Road).
- > Completed Folly Field Beach Park pond rehabilitation.
- > Completed drainage system improvements at Driessen Beach Park, Bristol Sports Arena, and Cobia Court.



- > Completed pipe replacements at Cobblestone Court and Queens Folly.
- > Cleared 100% blockage of primary drainage system at Helmsman Way.

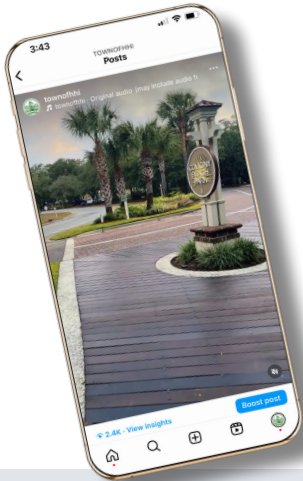
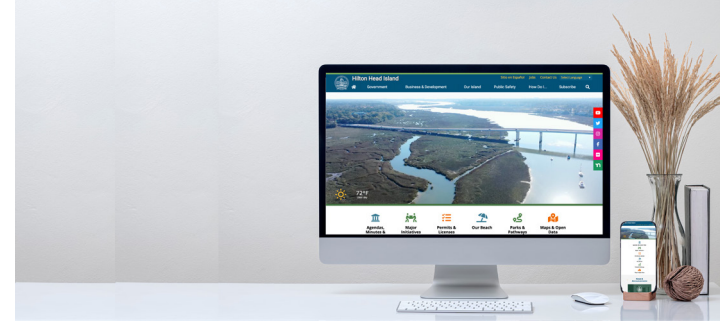
ENHANCED COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE ON BEACHES



2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

- Released the Town's first annual report in English + Spanish.
- Launched a biweekly newsletter with a 75% average open rate.
- Web page views increased by nearly 64%, from 13,651,410 (2023) to 22,371,995 (2024).
- E-subscription service increased by 36,577 to 37,562 subscribers - \uparrow 2.69%.



INCREASED REACH ON ALL SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

FOLLOW US #TOWNOFHHI



FACEBOOK

increased by 4,652 to
43,279 followers
 \uparrow 12.04%.



X

increased by 217 to
8,943 followers
 \uparrow 2.49%.



INSTAGRAM

increased by 803 to
2,960 followers
 \uparrow 37.23%.



LINKEDIN

increased by 662 to
3,800 followers
 \uparrow 21.10%.



YOUTUBE

increased by 298 to
1,339 subscribers
 \uparrow 28.63%.

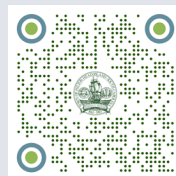
STAY CONNECTED

YOUR GOVERNMENT ON THE GO!

Get Connected. Get Involved. Get Results.

MyHHI is the fastest, easiest way for you to submit non-emergency requests to the Town.

Our mobile app is designed to be user-friendly and provide important Town services and information in the palm of your hand. Submit and follow non-emergency requests to the Town from your smartphone, tablet, or computer.



Download the App now



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

E-SUBSCRIPTION & AGENDA NOTIFICATION SERVICES

Subscribe to our e-subscription service to stay in touch and get involved!



Sign up here! \uparrow

- Emergency Alerts
- News Releases
- Job Opportunities
- Hurricane Season Information
- Initiative & Project Updates
- Traffic & Roadway Updates
- Culture Hilton Head Island
- Licensing & Taxation Information
- And much more!



PERMITTING PROCESS TEAM

Pictured L-R: Kisha O'Donnell, Wendy Posey, Katie Kabala, Chris Lewis

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ISSUED PERMITS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

- > 127 single-family (↑ from 75)
- > 33 Commercial (↑ from 20)
- > 0 Multi-family permits (↓ from 5)
- > Performed 18,931 building inspections (↓ from 21,896)
- > Performed 7,618 stormwater inspections (↑ from 4,084)
- > Reviewed 1,344 building plans (↑ from 1,263)

LATERAL SEWER CONNECTION PROGRAM

- > 48 applications received approval
- > 32 completed at a cost of \$355,588
- > 4 projects under contract with estimates totaling \$32,800
- > 5 projects pending at a cost of \$90,940
- > Launched proactive compliance efforts through enhanced community presence and education, including 1,217 building/land management site checks.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS

- > 7,158 short term rental permits (-0.001%)

HOME AND SAFETY REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM

- > 113 applications approved (↑ from 95)
- > 21 projects in progress (\$203,447)
- > 85 projects completed (\$1,291,834)
- > 63 homes repaired (\$1,244,459)
- > 22 tree removal or pruning (\$67,375)



- > With a \$500,000 GRANT from the Town of Hilton Head Island, Habitat for Humanity of the Lowcountry purchased 1.53 acres of land off Spanish Wells Road for \$625,000. The organization plans to build five single-family homes on the property.
- > Through the Town's affiliated agency funding process, Town Council endorsed a resolution facilitating a memorandum of understanding with the Coastal Community Development Corporation to further support its workforce housing endeavors and funding totaling \$600,000.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION

VISITORS TO HILTON HEAD ISLAND IN 2024:

2.8

MILLION

Source: HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce

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



8TH YEAR

for America's Best Island (Conde Nast Readers' Choice).

\$24.11

RETURN ON STATE-MANDATED TOURISM INVESTMENT OF ACCOMMODATIONS TAX DOLLARS

2024 OCCUPANCY RATES: HOTEL & HOME & VILLA

Source: Smith Travel & Research

- > Occupancy – **55%** (58% in 2023, -4% YoY)
- > Average daily rate – **\$313** (\$308 in 2023, +1% YoY)
- > Revenue per Available Room – **\$173** (\$177 in 2023, -3% YoY)

HOME & VILLA

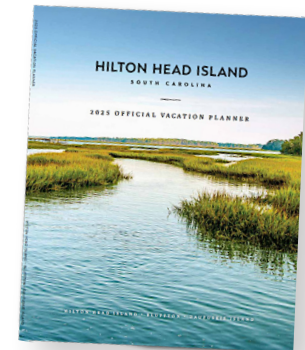
- > Occupancy – **53%** (56% in 2023, -5% YoY)
- > ADR - **\$364** (\$353 in 2023, +3% YoY)
- > RevPAR - **\$194** (\$198 in 2023, -2% YoY)

Source: Keydata

HOTEL

- > Occupancy – **58%** (59% in 2023, -3% YoY)
- > ADR - **\$248** (\$251 in 2023, -1% YoY)
- > RevPAR - **\$143** (\$149 in 2023, -4% YoY)

Source: Keydata



Hilton Head Island 2025 Official Vacation Planner prominently features arts & culture, ecotourism, history, recreation and wellness.

Visit: hiltonheadisland.org

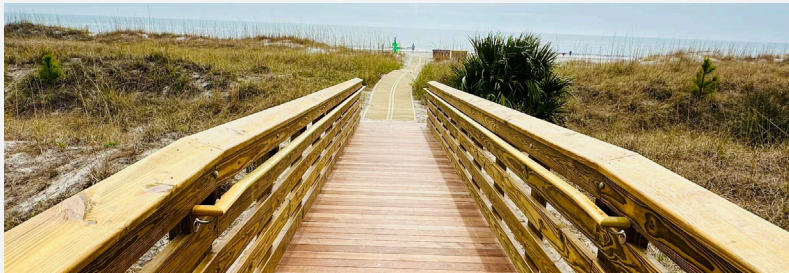


TECHNOLOGY + INNOVATION

COMPLETED IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE WI-FI AT ALL PUBLIC PARKS.



- > Connected all Town buildings, including Fire Rescue, with a dark fiber loop for connectivity redundancy.
- > Helped Emergency Dispatch implement a new Computer-Aided Dispatch system, a crucial technological advancement for communications and data management.



PARKS + RECREATION

- > Completed Driessen Beach Park boardwalk replacement and park enhancements.
- > Completed fencing, sidewalk, and ADA parking enhancements at Greens Shell Park.
- > Completed landscape, parking, and pathway improvements at Town Hall.
- > Completed new pathway segment on Shelter Cove Lane including new lighting, pathway markings, and signage.
- > Completed phase one of Islanders Beach Park master plan including a new pathway through the center of the park, raised crosswalk on Folly Field Road, new benches, lighting, pathway markings, and signage, and landscape improvements.
- > Completed installation of a kiosk about the history of the Hilton Head Fishing Cooperative and a mural in honor of the group at the Rowing & Sailing Center at Squire Pope Community Park.

COMMUNITY + PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- > Completed landscape enhancements on the median approaches of Pope Avenue, Palmetto Bay Road, and William Hilton Parkway at Sea Pines Circle.
- > Upgraded pathway fencing along Palmetto Bay Road and Point Comfort Road.
- > Completed initial roadway maintenance projects on Main Street.
- > Completed Squire Pope Road and Gum Tree Road crosswalks restriping and installation of new signage.

ADDED NEW FENCING ALONG MARSHLAND ROAD AND CROSS ISLAND.

- > Upgraded Mathews Drive pathway segment from Palmetto Parkway to Beach City Road.
- > Paved Dove Street from North Forest Beach to Lagoon Road.
- > Repaved Union Cemetery Road multi-use pathway.
- > Completed new pathway along Cordillo Parkway between Pope Avenue and the entrance to Shipyard.
- > Completed demolition and removal of the former Cross Island Parkway Toll Plaza.

COMMUNITY CODE ENFORCEMENT

356 short-term rental complaints received

BEACH PATROL – 21,712 violations addressed:

11,766 – Alcohol

4,761 – People/bikes in dunes

1,484 – Metal shovels/holes

1,464 – Glass on the beach

992 – Dogs on the beach

181 – Fishing license

207 – Other



Source: Town of Hilton Head Island

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Revamped the Town's Corporate Social Responsibility program. Employees completed 1,540 community volunteer hours. Local projects and organizations served: oyster reef building, the Deep Well Project, Heritage Foundation, Hilton Head Firefighters Association, Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park, Main Stage Community Theatre, MLK Committee, Outside Foundation, and Pockets Full of Sunshine.
- Held a Home Displacement Support Workshop with non-profits, government agencies, faith-based organizations, and staff.
- Facilitated Town participation and presence at the Gullah and Juneteenth Celebration events with Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park staff.
- Held community engagement sessions related to neighborhood, district and park planning. Residents met with Town staff from several departments, including Planning, Engineering, Fire Rescue, Public Safety, Administration, and the Gullah Geechee Community Development Corporation.
- Facilitated a public input meeting for the Bristol Sports Arena improvements and the proposed pump track.
- Coordinated community input meetings for the Jonesville Community and Muddy Creek Communities.
- Partnered with the Gullah and Latino Advisory Council and the Hispanic Business Association to host a Town Hall open house for minority business owners and residents.
- Held the 3rd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and 3rd Annual Menorah Lighting and Hanukkah Celebration at Lowcountry Celebration Park.
- Provided in-person weekly updates on arts, culture and entertainment to timeshare and resort visitors.
- Developed and produced Crescendo 2024 program including identification of events, marketing, permitting, and production.
- Hosted the 2nd Annual Hilton Head Island Jam – 2024 Songwriter Festival, with renowned Nashville singer songwriters and emerging artists, including a free concert at Lowcountry Celebration Park.
- Assisted with several public art projects and public park installations, including a mural at Hilton Head Island Middle School and community art events in cooperation with Beautiful Island Square.

FIRE RESCUE

- Placed in service a fleet of 8 new fire trucks.
- Launched a new summer camp to introduce young women to careers in firefighting.
- Published Hilton Head Island Fire Rescue 2023 Annual Report.
- Recognized as a Fire Safe SC Community by State Fire Marshal's Office.
- Implemented ride-along program to showcase the hard work of the team.
- Awarded the Silver Mission Lifeline.
- EMS award from the American Heart Association for care of heart attack patients.
- Launched a student-focused educational effort about Fire Rescue technology and equipment.
- Held the 2nd annual 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony at Veterans' Memorial Park to pay tribute to the bravery of first responders, the resilience of survivors, and the strength of communities coming together in the face of adversity.



- **154** total employees
- **10,015** emergency responses
- **7,267** EMS calls
- **2,533** fire calls
- **215** HazMat / Rescue
- **1,289** attendees at fire & life safety education events
- **29** Community Events

2024 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Michael Visokay, Facilities Maintenance Program Manager, was named the 2024 Scott Liggett Employee of the Year for the Town of Hilton Head Island.

"It's truly an honor to be named Employee of the Year... this award isn't just for me; it reflects the hard work and support of the incredible team I work with every day. I'm deeply grateful to them and to everyone who nominated me for this incredible recognition."
- Michael Visokay

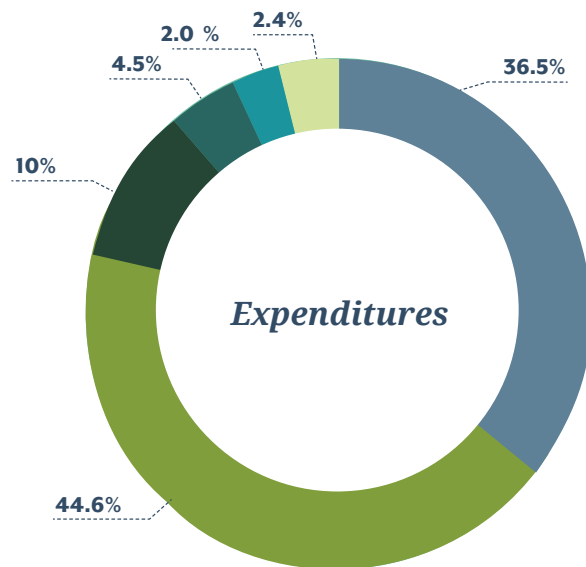




BUDGET

Adopted FY2025 Budget = \$166,936,866

■ General Fund \$60,924,381	■ Stormwater Fund \$7,525,525
■ Capital Improvements Program Fund (CIP) \$74,381,459	■ Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation Fund \$3,405,501
■ Debt Service Fund \$16,700,000	■ Housing Fund \$4,000,000



Visit: hiltonheadislandsc.gov/Budget/ for more details.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 01** The Town received a clean, unmodified opinion with the following notes:
 - > The Town goes "above and beyond required reporting."
 - > Several awards received annually for excellence in financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association.
- 02** The Town demonstrates a strong cash position, with revenues exceeding operating expenses and a healthy general fund with a net increase in fund balance since the previous audit along with a solid liquid ratio of 3.2:1.
- 03** The independent auditor said that the Town's reinvestment of revenues, cash position, mature assets, and mix of new and older assets were strong indications of excellent financial health, placing the Town in the "top tier" of the more than 700 municipalities that his firm serves.
- 04** The budget keeps Hilton Head Island millage rates low - currently at 21.4 mill - while advancing the Town Council's priorities of beach renourishment, growth management, workforce housing, solutions for traffic and transportation, infrastructure enhancements, economic development, resilience, recreation, and public safety.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH

BOND RATINGS:

Achieved a Fitch Ratings upgrade of the Town's general obligation bonds to the highest possible designation, AAA.

Achieved a higher bond rating from Moody's Ratings for the Town's Hospitality Fee Bonds (Aaa) and Beach Preservation Bonds (Aa2).



AWARDS

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for Annual Comprehensive Financial Report every year from 1989 - 2024.



34
YEARS
in a
ROW!



PRESERVE THE PAST, CONSERVE THE FUTURE

As we reflect on the past year's achievements, we must remember and honor the rich history that shaped our Island into the world-renowned place it is today. Hilton Head Island, a one-of-a-kind jewel on the South Carolina coast, boasts a history as rich and captivating as its natural beauty.

Initially inhabited by Native American tribes, notably the Yemassee, the Island's first European contact was made in 1521 by the Spanish explorer Francisco Gordillo. Named "Hilton's Head" after Captain William Hilton, who identified the headland in 1663, the Island evolved through eras of plantation agriculture,

particularly indigo and cotton, underpinned by the tragic history of slavery. The Civil War brought significant change, with Hilton Head Island becoming a strategic Union outpost. During this time, the country's first self-governed town of formerly enslaved people, Mitchelville, was established. Post-war, the Island's overall population dwindled, but the Gullah Geechee culture, a vibrant blend of African and American traditions, continued to thrive, leaving a lasting impact on Lowcountry cuisine, art, and ways of life by the water. Planned development on Hilton Head Island began in the 1950s with visionary developer Charles Fraser, who transformed it into a premier resort destination.



His commitment to environmental stewardship set a new standard for blending nature with thoughtful growth on the island and beyond.

Incorporated in 1983, the Town of Hilton Head Island of today seeks to continue to balance growth with environmental preservation, offering residents and visitors alike a variety of signature experiences marked by stunning

natural landscapes, world-class golf courses and outdoor recreation, and a commitment to cultural richness and our unique community character. Nurturing the legacies of those who contributed to the Island we cherish requires diligence, strategic thought leadership and a promise to the community that we understand the great responsibility before us, always.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

NATIVE AMERICAN

2000 B.C. – 1400 A.D.

Remnants of oyster shells discarded by Native Americans can be found in present-day Sea Pines Forest Preserve and the Green's Shell Ring Enclosure Heritage Preserve.

SETTLEMENTS

1717

Hilton Head Island's first European settler, "Tuscarora Jack" Barnwell, founded Point Place Plantation.

1766

Starting in the mid-1700s, West Africans were enslaved and brought to Hilton Head Island to tend rice and cotton fields. By 1766, indigo was the primary crop, and there were 25 plantations on the Island.

EARLY AMERICAN

1775 – 1783

The Revolutionary War: Hilton Head Islanders sided with colonists and skirmished with the British Loyalists from nearby Daufuskie Island. Four Revolutionary War soldiers are now buried or memorialized at the Zion Cemetery.

1790

William Elliot grew the first successful crop of sea island cotton at Myrtle Bank Plantation, formerly Point Place Plantation.

1861

On April 12, the Civil War began with Confederates firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. In November, 12,653 Union troops came ashore on Hilton Head Island.

1862

General Ormsby Mitchel set aside land for Mitchelville, America's first self-governing town of formerly enslaved people.

1868 – 1950

When the Army left, so did the jobs for the Mitchelville citizens. Surviving through fishing and farming, Gullah people, direct descendants of enslaved people, moved from their half-acre Mitchelville lots to other parts of the Island.

1889 – 1930

Tracts of land were purchased by private citizens for hunting preserves. In 1912, the Hudson and Toomer families began operating oyster factories.

MODERN AGE

1950

Lumbermen from Hinesville, Georgia, built sawmills and purchased 8,400 acres on the Island to harvest sea pines.

1950s

Sea Pines, Hilton Head Island's first planned community, was imagined by Charles Fraser.

1956

Byrnes Bridge was the first bridge constructed to connect the Island to the mainland. Hilton Head Inn opened on South Forest Beach. The Island's first grocery store opened at Coligny Plaza.

1998

Cross Island Parkway was completed.

2024

Hilton Head Island's permanent population: about 40,000. Hilton Head Island's annual visitors in 2024: 2.8 million. The vacation destination continues to uphold Charles Fraser's vision by prioritizing sustainability and environmental protection.

