The maps, policies, goals, and action statements in this document provide a blueprint for growth and development over the next decade. Although it is not a regulatory document, it will serve as the foundation for decision making in the City of Folly Beach at all levels.
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Plan Statement
The Comprehensive Plan will drive consistent decision-making that allows Folly Beach to preserve natural resources, protect community character, and to improve public services.

Introduction
The 2015 City of Folly Beach Comprehensive Plan 2015 will guide growth and development in the City of Folly Beach for the next ten years. The document contains both long range and short term recommendations based on a review of current conditions and public input. It is a complete rewrite of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update. Together with previous versions, the plan traces the evolution of the ideas presented in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan which was adopted as required by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994. The Planning Enabling Act requires that a comprehensive plan be adopted before any municipality can regulate development activity through zoning, subdivision regulations, floodplain regulation, wetland protection, historic preservation, or any other type of regulation concerning development activity. The plan must then be updated every 5 years and rewritten every 10 years.

The Comprehensive Plan: 2015 is the primary tool for translating the Plan Statement into policy and procedure. It will:

- Provide guidance for the future based on existing and projected conditions, best practices in planning, and the Plan Statement.
- Provide specific recommendations to turn abstract goals into concrete results.
- Provide a future land use map which informs citizens, elected officials, city staff, and developers of the type, location, and scale of new development expected over the next decade.
- Provide a basis to create consistency between other plans and policy documents.
- Provide for the protection of the community's character and improve the community's quality of life.
- Provide strategies, alternatives, and solutions to address community issues and weaknesses.
- Provide a strong legal basis for future decisions.

The Planning Process
Development of the comprehensive plan is divided into three primary areas:

1) Inventory of Existing Conditions. The inventory of existing conditions includes analysis of data and identification of trends in specific subject areas. It provides a snapshot of the current state of affairs and is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a community.

2) Public Participation. Development of the plan hinges on both formal and informal public participation. Input is gathered from surveys, testimony at public meetings, and postings on social media.
3) **Statement of Needs and Goals and Implementation Strategies.** The statement of needs and goals serves as a visioning exercise and is meant to guide the direction of the community for the next decade. It also includes implementation strategies. Implementation strategies are meant to be specific, actionable items for staff, the Planning Commission, and elected officials to complete in order to bring about desired outcomes.

**Comprehensive Plan Elements**

The *Planning Enabling Act* requires that the comprehensive plan deal specifically with nine subject areas. These subject areas address both the physical and intangible resources of the community.

1) **Population.** The population element includes demographic information related to historic trends and projections; number, size, and characteristics of households; income characteristics and trends; race, sex, age, and other information.

2) **Economics.** The economic element includes information about the labor force and an economic analysis and discussion of the major revenue sources for the City of Folly Beach.

3) **Natural Resources.** The natural resources element includes information about plant and animal habitats, unique park and recreation areas, unique scenic views and sites, wetlands, and any other information related to the natural environment of the area.

4) **Cultural Resources.** The cultural resources element serves to identify the existing cultural resources of the community, establish the character and uniqueness of historic areas, and project the future needs of the population.

5) **Community Facilities.** The community facilities element includes information on water supply, treatment, and distribution; sewage system and waste water treatment; solid waste collection and disposal; fire protection; emergency medical services; general government facilities; educational facilities; libraries and other cultural facilities; and public safety and emergency preparedness.

6) **Land Use.** The land use element reviews and evaluates development characteristics in the City. It considers existing and future land use by categories including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, public, parks, open space, and vacant or undeveloped land.

7) **Housing.** The housing element contains housing data related to the number of units, type of units, age of housing, and occupancy of units. It also includes a housing affordability assessment which reviews opportunities for and impediments to affordable housing in the community.

8) **Transportation.** The transportation element considers transportation facilities including major road improvements, new road construction, parking, and planning for pedestrians and bicycles.

9) **Priority Investment.** The priority investment element requires an analysis of projected federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years and recommends possible coordination of town projects with available funds.
Relationships

City of Folly Beach Comprehensive Plan: 2015 builds on previous planning efforts and aims to bring consistency to decision making in many different areas. It incorporates elements from:

1) 2015 Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan. A summary of issues related to beach management including current challenges, future planning, funding, managing for competing uses, and long term beach restoration alternatives.

2) 2014 Parks and Recreation Five Year Plan. A summary of existing park facilities and identification of future parks and recreation needs, potential sites, and funding.

3) 2015 Economic Impact Study. An analysis of the economic impact of Folly Beach. Specifically the value of the beachfront as an economic engine for the City and State. Review of taxes and employment generated in the community.

4) 2015 Center Street Task Force. A recommendation for traffic pattern alternatives for Center Street as well as beautification projects.

5) 2013 Action Plan for Mid Block Rights of Way. A comprehensive inventory of all mid block rights of way on the island with recommendations for each section.

6) 2015 Folly Road Corridor Study. An engineering, traffic, and land use study for the entire Folly Road Corridor from the Wappoo Bridge to Folly Beach.

7) 2015 Strategic Communications Plan. A document developed by the Tourism and Visitor’s Promotion Committee to serve as blueprint for marketing efforts related to the use of State Accomodations Tax money to promote Folly Beach as a tourism destination.

Conclusion

The Comprehensive Plan 2015 is a roadmap for the future. It provides a foundation for day to day, incremental decisions made by staff and elected officials that will create a final result representing a unified vision for Folly Beach. It ties together discussions of development regulations, budgeting, beach management, traffic planning, sustainability, and livability issues. All new regulations should be consistent with the goals laid out in the comprehensive plan to ensure that development and redevelopment complies with the stated goals of the community.
Section 1: Existing Conditions
Element: Land Use
This element provides an overview of existing major land use classifications, important developments since the completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update, and discussion of various development standards that apply to all zoning classifications.

Current Land Use Classifications

Residential
Residential growth in the City of Folly Beach since the completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan has been primarily single family units. The rapid development of multifamily housing during the early 2000s allowed much of the commercial property in the center of the island to be converted to multifamily housing. Since 2005 this growth was halted first by a prohibition of new multifamily housing and then by economic factors during the Great Recession. Single family growth slowed but did not stop during this period. In 2012, the number of single family permits began to increase and has continued unabated.

Residential Single Family
The primary zoning district in the City of Folly Beach is Residential Single Family (RSF). This use classification extends to roughly 85% of the City.

Folly Beach has taken several actions to limit the scale and impact of residential development since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was adopted. In 2013, the City codified regulations that require homes in the RSF district that are nonconforming to adhere to the 50% rule. This limits improvements to nonconforming structures over a 10 year period. Any homeowner who wishes to exceed this limit must bring his property into conformity with current zoning. Since many of the parcels currently zoned RSF were developed as multiple unit properties, this would mean abandoning all but one of the units.

The City also changed the dimensional standards governing single family development. In 2010, the maximum size of a home allowed on a standard Folly Beach lot was reduced from 4,500 heated square feet to 3,600 heated square feet. Maximum lot coverage was reduced from 50% to 35% of the lot’s high ground. Also, the setback from the OCRM Baseline was increased from 0’ to a minimum of 5’ (maximum 10’) and the critical line setback was increased from 5’ to 10’. In 2014, the City increased side setbacks from 5’ to 10’ and required all new driveways to be constructed with pervious surfaces. Finally, the City passed an ordinance which requires that all new construction be built to V-Zone flood standards even if located in A-Zones.

Residential Two Family
The Residential Two Family (RTF) zoning district comprises a handful of parcels in the center of the island. Allowable uses in this zone are limited to single and two family homes. It serves as a buffer between the downtown commercial area and the RSF zone and is located primarily in the second half of the 1st block between Center Street and 2nd Street East and West. One notable development in the RTF zone since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan is an amendment to the zoning code that allows owners to develop two individual structures rather than one combined duplex. Prior to this amendment, owners wishing to construct the allowable maximum of two units were forced to build large duplexes which
were out of scale with the older surrounding homes. Now owners have the option of building two smaller, detached units which more closely match the size of the older existing development. Relatively little new development has taken place in this zone.

**Residential Multi Family**
Residential Multi Family (RMF) is the highest intensity residential zone in Folly Beach. Growth in this zoning district since the last update to the Comprehensive Plan has occurred primarily in the Preserve, a previously approved project at the intersection of Folly Road and Bowens Island Road. This project was approved for approximately 60 units in 2006. Construction continued at a very slow pace for several years and has recently resumed for the remaining phases. Properties zoned RMF are located along the causeway to the island with two exceptions. Little Oak Villas is located on Little Oak Island and is surrounded by an RSF district. Palmetto Pointe, which takes up the entirety of Peas Island, is also zoned RMF. Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, there have been no new developments approved in the RMF District and there are currently no vacant parcels in the City that have this designation.

**Commercial**
Folly Beach is fortunate in that the original layout of the island, combined with having only one route on and off the beach, resulted in a primary commercial district that is compact and concentrated in the center of the City. This allows for a main street feeling that is often lacking in other communities. The Center Street area is a lively, pedestrian oriented district that reinforces the small town feel that draws many people to Folly Beach. The concentration of retail, office, and eating establishments in the downtown area was reinforced when other commercial areas in the City were developed as multifamily housing. Today new multifamily housing is prohibited in the commercial areas located on the island proper.

**Downtown Commercial**
The Downtown Commercial (DC) District forms the commercial core of the island. It is comprised of parcels located along Center Street and extends for ½ of the first block in either direction. The exception to this boundary is East Ashley where the DC District extends along one side of the street to include one parcel in the second block. Any new construction or alteration to buildings in this zone must be reviewed by the Design Review Board.

Architecturally, the DC area contains an eclectic mix of mostly one and two story buildings with simple roof lines and little formal ornamentation. On Center Street single story, flat roofed buildings made of concrete or brick are located alongside two story wood buildings with pitched roofs. Buildings generally are built to the property line along the street. Moving away from Center Street, the remaining structures in the commercial district tend to be more representative of the beach vernacular, mostly owing to their past or present use as residences. The Tides Hotel (technically in the Island Commercial district) is the largest building on the island is located at the end of Center Street adjacent to the downtown area. At nine stories it is the tallest building on Folly Beach by a significant margin. It defines the skyline and is highly visible approaching the island by land or by sea.
The current mix of commercial uses in the DC district along Center Street consists of mostly restaurants/bars and souvenir shops. Only a handful of other use types are represented. Government uses consume just over a full block in the form of City Hall, Public Safety, and the Community Center. The Baptist Church occupies a large parcel at West Indian and Center Street with the Catholic Church across the street. Real estate companies represent the remaining offices/professional services located along the corridor. There are approximately a dozen residential units located above existing businesses. Land uses in the DC District located off of Center Street consist of professional offices, religious uses, scattered residences, and a few restaurants.

The Center Street Task Force was created in 2014 to study and implement changes to the traffic patterns along Center Street as well as beautify the area. The Task Force has worked with local civic groups and the City government to make recommendations on travel lane realignment and other traffic measures to be brought online in conjunction with the new bridges. The new traffic pattern will help eliminate some of the congestion that occurs during the busy summer season. After the traffic realignment is complete, the task force will focus on beautification. This will include benches, planters, sidewalk improvements, and other street fixtures.

**Island Commercial**

The Island Commercial District (IC) is made up of two distinct areas. The first is the area located roughly between 3rd Street West and 2nd Street East from the ocean to the seaward side of Ashley Avenue. The second is at the rear of the Island from Center Street to Sandbar Lane along Indian Avenue. The IC District historically allowed the development of multifamily housing at densities similar to those allowed in the Residential Multifamily District. During the rapid development from the 1990s until 2007, most of the development in the oceanfront IC District was multifamily housing. The 2010 zoning code removed multifamily development as an allowable use in the IC District. This effectively prohibited the development of any new purely multifamily development on Folly Island proper. The change was also intended to preserve Island Commercial as a viable district for commercial uses. However, there have been very limited new commercial uses introduced. The most common new use is commercial parking. Several formerly vacant lots have been converted into paid parking to serve the high demand for both the beach and the Downtown Commercial area.

**Marine Commercial**

There are two Marine Commercial Districts (MC) in the City. The first is the Mariners Cay Marina. The second is the Sunset Cay Marina. The Mariners Cay Marina District has only one small associated highland parcel while the Sunset Cay Marina District extends beyond the actual marina to a larger area. The parcels in this area have developed as single family residences and a small inn. The inn was developed after an amendment to the zoning code which allowed tourist accommodations in the Marine Commercial District. The City has prohibited the expansion of existing MC Districts and the creation of any new areas with this zoning designation.

**Corridor Commercial**

The Corridor Commercial (CC) District was created in response to annexations that extended the City limits up the causeway and onto James Island. These annexations included property previously
developed as a large shopping center with a grocery store, gas station, and several smaller parcels. The CC District is intended to be developed with the most intensive commercial uses in the City. It is located primarily at the intersection of Folly Road and Sol Legare Road. Notable exceptions are Turn of River, Marshwinds, and a vacant parcel immediately behind the development. Although the rear parcel has no direct access to Folly Road and abuts a residential development on either side, it is still zoned for intensive commercial use. The CC District contains the last large commercially zoned property in the City. This parcel, known as the Edwards Property, contains approximately 4 acres located at the corner of Folly Road and Terns Nest Road.

**Planned Development**

The zoning rewrite of 2010 reintroduced the option for Planned Developments (PD) within the City. In 2014 a PD was approved for the Toll Booth Property at the corner of Sol Legare and Folly Road. The agreement calls for a mix of single and multifamily uses with a small park as well as a parcel donated to the City of Folly Beach. The donated parcel will be used to place a welcome sign for Folly Beach as well as sign for the historic Sol Legare neighborhood which the City agreed to place several years ago. The PD calls for 32 units on this 4.5 acre parcel. This represents a decrease of 23 units from the maximum number allowed under the previous Corridor Commercial zoning.

**Development Ordinances**

There are a number of general development ordinances which affect land use in some or all of the zones in the City. Tree protection, landscaping, design review, and subdivision requirements all work to determine the character of development and redevelopment. All of these ordinances were modified during the 2010 zoning code rewrite. At the time, a weak economy limited new growth on Folly Beach and there was limited opportunity to apply the new code and measure the effects on development. In the last two years, the pace of building on Folly Beach has accelerated and the limitations of the 2010 zoning code are beginning to appear. This is especially true in terms of tree protection rules, off street parking regulations, rules for short term rentals, and landscaping/screening of commercial parking lots.

**Tree Protection**

The tree protection laws as presented in the 2010 zoning code were cumbersome and difficult to apply. Canopy protection requirements contradicted other measures and the required mitigation drove tree replacement costs into the tens of thousands of dollars. As a result, the Planning Commission engaged in a full reworking of the tree protection ordinance in 2012. The final version made several significant changes. Pine trees of all types and all sizes were removed from the list of protected trees. The minimum protected size was changed from 5” diameter at breast height to 12” diameter at breast height. Also, protection laws were rewritten to reference only native or valuable species. This removed protections for ornamental and invasive species. Finally, the option to pay a fee in lieu of mitigation was codified with the resultant monies directed to a dedicated tree fund.

**Landscaping**

Minor changes made in the 2010 code have resulted in positive changes in property development. All new fences along a public street are required to provide new plantings along the street frontage. Visual
screening or buffers are required for all new parking lots, trash and service areas, and between different land uses.

**Subdivision Ordinances**
The subdivision regulations in Folly’s code mandate a minimum lot size that does not take into account the need for very small subdivisions of a technical nature (such as the deeding of private parking spaces, or the creation of legal townhomes). The minimum lot size of 10,500 square feet means that technical subdivisions of this type must go through the variance process. It also ignores the potential for very large subdivisions that could result in a large number of new lots on Long Island, the largest undeveloped tract of land within the City. Although past efforts to subdivide the property have failed due to lack of access, it may be possible to somehow create a viable access to the island in the future. If they do, the current minimum lot size, applied uniformly over Long Island, would create a new neighborhood with up to 100 lots on an environmentally and historically important site.

**Outdoor Retailers**
The City recognizes that outdoor retailers are a valuable addition to the ambience of downtown Folly. These vendors offer a variety of goods and services that complement the offerings of brick and mortar businesses. However, after the completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the City experienced rapid growth in the number of outdoor retailers operating in the Downtown Commercial District. These vendors were operating with little to no oversight. A comprehensive set of ordinances for vendors was developed and put into place in 2012. These rules limit the areas in which vendors may operate as well as the number of vendors allowed on each lot.

**Parking**
Parking, both as a land use type and as an area of regulation, is of major importance to Folly Beach. As a land use type, commercial parking lots represent all of the growth in the Island Commercial District. As the demand for paid parking continues to grow, more lots in this zoning district may be converted into commercial parking rather than developed with other uses. Also, requests have been made to allow temporary commercial parking lots on undeveloped residential property. Although these requests have been turned down by City Council, they illustrate the potential for future increases in the number of paid parking lots. It is important that these lots be regulated more closely to preserve the character of the area. There are no current requirements for landscaping, general maintenance, and the overall appearance of commercial parking lots.

General parking regulations are in a current state of uncertainty. In 2014, Council agreed not to enforce the prohibition against private no parking signs on the island. This decision was based on the high number of existing signs and the lack of an objective measure to determine which signs should be grandfathered in. Also, the current untimed parking on Center Street allows the limited on street parking in this area to be occupied by one car for the entire day. This makes it difficult for customers of the businesses located on Center Street to find parking.

Parking requirements may also be stifling development in the commercial core of the island. The general assumption is that the current mix of uses, which is tilted heavily towards eating/drinking
establishments and gift shops, is purely market driven and simply a result of economics. However, changes in the zoning code during the 2010 zoning code rewrite have the potential to greatly impact the mix of uses in the DC District. A significant change in the code was the establishment of parking regulations for the DC District. This requirement has made it difficult to establish any new commercial development because of the generally small lot sizes. Also, the parking requirements are triggered by a change of any existing use type. This means that the current mix of uses on Center Street will remain in place as long as no viable means of meeting increased parking requirements becomes available.
Element: Economics
Traditionally, the Economics Element focused on data and analysis related to unemployment, employment by industry, and labor force characteristics of a community. For the Comprehensive Plan 2015, these items will be discussed less extensively. This is because the economy of Folly Beach is relatively static when viewed in terms of major industry, number of employees, and labor force. The City has very little physical space or market opportunities to attract major new employers or industry. Rather than repeat the conclusions of prior plans, the Comprehensive Plan 2015 will focus on the primary municipal revenue sources and the economic impact of Folly Beach beyond its borders.

Employment
According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates by the US Census Bureau, approximately 1,650 (67.8%) of the residents of Folly Beach aged 16 years or older are considered to be in the labor force. The unemployment rate is calculated at 2.8% which is significantly lower than both the state and national averages.

The majority of workers on Folly Beach commute to work alone in their personal car. Only 2.5% of workers reported carpooling and 6.1% reported walking to work. Of note is a 0% response rate for commute by public transit. This reflects the unavailability of convenient, regular transit from Folly Beach to regional employment centers.

The labor force on Folly Beach trends towards professional level occupations with 44% of the workers listed as working in management level positions. Just over 10% are employed in the service industry and 23% work in sales or office positions. Natural resources, construction, and transportation trades complete the employment picture with 22% of the workers.

Income
The median household income of $57,734 on Folly Beach outpaces the county, state, and federal averages ($50,133, $44,163, and $52,250 respectively).

Municipal Revenues
Property Taxes
In Folly Beach, owner-occupied homes are assessed for property tax at 4% of their fair market value and second homes or investment properties are taxed at 6%. The millage rate that Folly Beach sets for property tax is based on the total market value of all properties. Although the millage rate paid by Folly Beach residents is higher than Sullivan’s Island and the Isle of Palms, a simple comparison doesn’t take into account the fact that millage rates are based on total tax value. The total taxable property value in those communities is much higher than Folly Beach. As a result, they are able to lower the millage rate but still collect more in property taxes. Property tax payments on Folly Beach are also offset by a credit that is generated by the local option sales tax. The sales tax credit on Folly Beach is higher than both Sullivan’s Island and the Isle of Palms.
Since 2012, property taxes have held steady at approximately 35-38% of total revenues for the City. In 2015 property taxes paid by full time residents on owner occupied homes are projected to account for approximately 40% of the total property tax collected. This means that property taxes paid by owners equal approximately 15% of total revenues coming into the City.

Although property taxes remain a major revenue source, property taxes as a source of revenue growth for municipalities have generally diminished since 2007 due to the South Carolina General Assembly ratifying a property tax assessment cap approach. The law allows the City to raise property taxes by a certain amount each year (calculated based on population growth and the Consumer Price Index). Since the passage of this law, property tax collections as a percentage of total local government revenue have declined while the local government expenditures have generally increased. In 2015, the City slightly raised the millage rate for the first time in many years.

**Sales and Other Taxes**

Sales and Excise taxes (most importantly A-tax) are a major revenue source for both the General Operating Fund of the City and the Beach Preservation Fund which pays for beach renourishment. The share of total revenue generated by these taxes has steadily increased since 2005. In 2009, A-tax accounted for 21.5% of the total City revenue. This increased to 35.3% in 2014 which means that sales and excise taxes now account for as much revenue as property taxes. This reflects both the increase in total visitors and the increase in the underlying prices that determine the taxes. Although the City has benefited greatly from steadily climbing tax receipts, the increases cannot be guaranteed in the future. The collection of these taxes is highly dependent on factors such as weather and the economy. Unlike property taxes, which are generally steady and can be adjusted through millage rates, these taxes cannot be adjusted to compensate for off years. The City already relies to a high degree on this money to fund ongoing, tourism related expenses. Without high collection rates, these services would need to be cut or funded from other sources. The following is a brief description of the tax rates of Folly Beach and the services or goods subject to the tax.

**State Accommodation Tax (SC A-tax)**

All accommodations are subject to a statewide sales tax rate of 5% plus a 2% State Accommodations tax. This 2% tax is returned to the counties/municipalities in which they are collected and can only be spent on advertising, promotion, and tourism related expenditures, which can include funding of beach renourishment and access projects. The City of Folly Beach has a history of disbursing State A-tax money to local organizations for tourism related expenditures. However, over the last few years, the City itself has applied for an increasing amount of the State A-tax funds to pay for city services that are tourism related. In 2014, distributions to the City for various services totaled almost half of all applications for State A-tax distributions.

**Local Accommodation Tax (Local A-tax)**

This tax is imposed on the short term rental of any accommodation within the City and is also legally restricted to advertising, promotion, and tourism related expenditures. After a referendum in December 2014 the City’s Local A-tax was increased from 1% to 2%. The additional money collected by the new A-
tax must be earmarked for beach preservation. Money collected from the 1% A-tax is given to the Tourism, Visitors, and Promotion Committee. The TVPC is a registered nonprofit that acts as the designated marketing agency for the City.

**Hospitality Tax**
This is a 2% excise tax that the City levies on prepared meals and beverages. Currently the hospitality tax is used to fund a $40,000 annual contribution to the City’s capital reserve account and a $150,000 annual contribution to the Public Safety Department. Any money collected beyond these allocations is allocated to beach preservation.

**Local Option Sales Tax (LOST)**
This general 1% sales tax is levied on all retail sales. Unlike other taxes, the Local Option Sales Tax does not result in significant revenue for the City. Instead, it is credited back to the residents as a break on property taxes. State law requires that at least 71% be used for this purpose. The amount of tax credited can change from year to year by vote of Council and can range from the 71% required by law to 100%.

**Short Term Rentals**
Short term rental accommodations are the highest taxed service in Folly Beach. As noted, a majority of RSF and multiple family units are rentals. The following breakdown shows the total taxes paid on accommodations in the City.

- 5.0% State Sales Tax
- 1.0% Local Option Sales Tax
- 1.0% Charleston County School Board Sales Tax
- 0.5% Charleston County Transportation Tax
- 2.0% State Accommodations Tax
- 2.0% Charleston County Accommodations Tax
- 2.0 % City of Folly Beach Accommodation Tax (As of January 1, 2015)
- Total: 13.5%

Justification for these taxes is based on the theory that they are paid by tourists and other visitors and not by permanent residents. The high number of visitors is what causes the need for increased services. This allows the City to partially recoup the expenses they cause. Moreover, these tax revenues can also be used to enhance tourism related economic development including amenities such as beach renourishment that both attract and benefit visitors.

**Economic Impact of Folly Beach**
The beachfront is the primary economic asset of Folly Beach. The costs to maintain the beach in the face of increased erosion is daunting. The City realizes that it will need to secure money from other agencies as part of the total cost sharing. In order to quantify the economic benefit that Folly provides, the City commissioned the 2015 *Folly Beach Economic Impact Study*. Highlights of the study, prepared by the College of Charleston Office of Tourism Analysis are included below.
- The City of Folly Beach’s economy has had an average annual growth rate of about 11% since the end of Great Recession in 2009; a robust rate much higher than that of similar Charleston area beach communities as well as that of Charleston County.

- Based upon an analysis and subsequent extrapolation of data from a periodic Charleston area visitor survey conducted by the Office of Tourism Analysis (OTA) at the College of Charleston, the number of annual Charleston area visitor trips that included visiting Folly Beach was estimated to be nearly 1 million and this total represented about 21% of all Charleston area visitor trips during 2014. The overall average traveling party size of 2.5 adults remained consistent with recent OTA survey results. Moreover, beach activities remained among the important reasons to visit as well as one of the most enjoyable aspects of a Charleston area visit.

- Estimated spending by Charleston visitors attributable to the Folly Island beach area generated approximately $117 million in business revenues that supported about 1,200 jobs and provided nearly $40 million in income including employee benefits for South Carolina residents in 2014.

- It was also estimated that Charleston area visitor spending attributable to the City, including its beach areas, generated approximately $22 million in annual tax revenues for the federal, state, and local governments during 2014. These tax revenues not only include the usual tourist type taxes (e.g. accommodation taxes, etc.) but include various property taxes and other indirect taxes paid by tourism oriented businesses.

- Just as important as economic impacts, beaches also generate other benefits with values that can be monetized. For example, the economic value of one recreational beach day was conservatively estimated at about $6.15 per person, and the extrapolation of this value leads to an estimated annual total economic recreational value of the City’s beach area as being $4.5 million in 2014, which includes both non-resident and resident recreational beach users.

- It is projected that Charleston area households would collectively place an annual $4.2 million value on protecting the marine turtle species that depend upon Folly Island’s front beach area as nesting habitat.

- Additional economic values related to Folly Island beach renourishment projects include providing storm damage reduction/protection of oceanfront properties and structures that had an approximate total market value of $465.2 million (2013 dollars). This total value includes important government infrastructure assets vital to public beach access, such as Charleston County’s popular Folly Beach County Park and the Folly Beach Fishing Pier,
and oceanfront parking lots, restrooms, changing facilities and walkovers that the City has been proactively maintaining.

- The periodic renourishment of the Folly Island front beach area has helped maintain, if not improve, appreciation rates of the City’s front beach private property value.

The study’s findings clearly indicate that substantial economic impacts and related tax revenues are generated by Folly Beach. These economic impacts flow far beyond the City’s jurisdiction and therefore benefit Charleston area, South Carolina, and Folly Beach residents alike.

**Charleston County Parks and Recreation Properties**

As previously noted, the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission owns several important properties on Folly Beach. Four of these properties, (the Pier, the Coast Guard Base, the County Park, and the Boat Landing) draw significant numbers of visitors to Folly Beach. The undeveloped oceanfront property that the Parks and Recreation Commission owns near the Pier has the potential to become another heavily visited site. The existing impact of these properties in terms of daily traffic is notable. While, these properties contribute greatly to the community as amenities, they bring in very little money directly to the City. Currently the CCPRC contributes $70,000 per year towards the Beach Preservation Fund which pays for renourishment and other beach management expenses. The agreement which determines this contribution amount has not been renegotiated in several years despite the increased presence of CCPRC on the island.
Element: Natural Resources

Natural resources are an important factor in the quality of life on Folly Beach. The unique and distinctive natural features and ecosystems that are found in our community are irreplaceable components of the City’s character both physically and philosophically. The Natural Resources Element examines the challenges faced in managing Folly Beach’s shorelines, water resources, and the protected species that call our island home.

Beachfront Management

The Comprehensive Plan 2015 recognizes that the primary natural resource on Folly Beach is the beach itself. Management of the shoreline is interwoven into many areas of City operations and services. The first plan for beach management on Folly was the 1992 Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan. The plan had no significant updates or changes in the 20 years since it was adopted. The City of Folly Beach has now completed and adopted the 2015 Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan which addresses several important issues related to beach management. The 2015 Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan is currently being reviewed by the State for final approval.

Beach Erosion and Accretion

Erosion management is a primary beach management objective of the City. The 3-mile long Charleston Harbor jetties were built in the late 1800’s, and cause Morris and Folly Islands to experience severe erosion. Sand that formerly bypassed Charleston Harbor and was transported to Folly Beach now either accumulates on the north side of the jetties or is dredged from the entrance channel and disposed offshore. Historically, both beach renourishment and erosion control structures have been used to combat the ongoing erosion of Folly Island. Beach renourishment is conducted by the City and the federal government through a 50-year commitment laid out in the 1992 Local Cooperation Agreement. The original 50-year commitment expires in 2042. One option for continued renourishment after the expiration date is an extension of the original contract terms. Numerous erosion control structures are also in place on Folly Beach. Forty-eight timber and rock groins are spread along the length of the island. Additional private armoring structures have been constructed along nearly all the beachfront. Armoring continues today in the form of seawalls being constructed on private property landward of the jurisdictional area of State regulating agencies and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Dune Protection

In addition to its aesthetic and recreational value, the beachfront on Folly serves the very practical purpose of buffering inland areas and properties during storm events. The renourishment of the beach creates a protective berm of sand which is vital to protecting the island. During the interim between the most recent projects, Folly experienced severe erosion beyond the areas that were replenished by the Army Corps. This erosion wore away the dune areas. It resulted in higher costs to the City and also threatens the integrity of the renourished beach by allowing water to intrude behind the frontline dunes. Moving forward, the City desires to proactively manage the beach in an effort to maintain the dune system. This involves monitoring beach performance and managing erosion issues as they occur. Keeping the dunes in place will lessen the impacts of high tide flooding and storm events.
Beach Accessibility
Folly Beach is the closest beach to the City of Charleston, and prides itself on being the most accessible in the Tri-County Area. The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments reports that the daily average of vehicles that pass the traffic station at Sol Legare and Folly Road is 10,300. There are currently 56 platted public beach accesses, 44 beach walkovers, and parking areas for 5,000 cars within 1,000 feet of the beach available to visitors arriving in these vehicles. In 2014, the City received grant money from OCRM to complete a second ADA compliant restroom facility at the east end of the island. The new restrooms compliment existing ADA facilities at 3rd Street West. As the population of the greater Charleston area (and James Island in particular) continues to expand at very high rates, Folly Beach must plan accordingly for resultant rise in local visitors.

Beachfront Land Use
Beachfront land uses on Folly Island fall into three zoning districts. At either end of the island are large parcels zoned Conservation (CN). The CN zoning allows for very limited development of boardwalks and other structures and is intended to maintain property in an undeveloped state. The CN properties are currently owned and operated by Charleston County Parks and Recreation and account for approximately 20% of the total shoreline of the island. Property between either end of the island and the central commercial district is exclusively zoned Residential Single Family (RSF) and consists of only single family housing. Home sizes on the front beach range from small cottages to large estate sized houses. The current maximum allowable square footage is 3,600 heated square feet. A handful of homes are built to the prior maximum allowable size of 4,500 square feet, but the majority of the houses on front beach are still 3,000 square feet or less. The RSF properties account for approximately 70% of the beachfront. The remaining 10% percent of the beachfront area is zoned Island Commercial (IC). The IC district consists primarily of multifamily developments. Individual properties range from 96 to 4 units. This area is also the location of the largest commercial structure on Folly Beach, the nine story Tides Hotel.

Wildlife and Protected Species
Threatened and endangered species in South Carolina that have been listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service are shown in Table 1. Any major project in the City (beach nourishment, construction of the new bridges) requires consultation with these federal agencies to ensure no adverse effects on these listed species or on their listed or proposed critical habitat.
Fishing and bird watching are popular pastimes for residents and visitors alike. Several community facilities, natural areas, and private establishments provide venues for these activities. These include the Folly Beach Fishing Pier, Folly Beach County Park, Folly River Boat Landing, the Coast Guard Station site, the Washout, local marinas, and waterfront restaurants, in addition to any stretch of beach, creek, or marsh edge throughout the city.

Sea Turtles
Folly Beach is designated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as critical nesting habitat for federally protected endangered and threatened sea turtles. The Folly Beach Turtle Watch Program was organized in 1997 to aid in the protection and monitoring of these turtles. This dedicated group of volunteers are trained and permitted by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Endangered Marine Turtle Conservation Program to identify, access, relocate, monitor, inventory, and report data for nests. Since its inception, volunteers in the Turtle Watch program have assessed over 1300 sea turtle crawls, found over 800 nests, and relocated over 500 of those nests. The lowest number of nests (20) were laid in 2007, and the highest number (108) in 2013.
The City of Folly Beach has enacted several long-standing ordinances that help to reduce negative impact on nesting. These include ordinances pertaining to the destruction of sea oats, storage of watercraft on the beach, dune protection during construction, maintenance of public walkovers, artificial light associated with pre-existing and new construction, the planting of invasive beach vitex, construction and maintenance of seawalls, and vehicular traffic on the beach. The Folly Beach Code also requires that a summary of pertinent local ordinances are included in rental agreements and posted in rental units. In 2010, after additional training and management from SCDNR Endangered Marine Turtle Conservation Program, Folly Beach nest protection volunteers began participation in a sea turtle genetics study conducted by the University of Georgia. In its fifth year, the study is providing important answers to the size, health and distribution of the loggerhead sea turtle nesting population in SC.

Protected Bird Species
Folly Beach is a designated Bird Sanctuary and is home to several protected species. The City has protected both ends of the island by prohibiting off leash dogs on the beach in front of the County Park and the Coast Guard Station. This prevents disturbance of habitat for the Piping Plover and other shore birds. Bird Key, a significant rookery for Brown Pelicans, is located just off Folly Beach in the Stono Inlet. It is currently being extensively monitored for any changes resulting from the renourishment of the County Park in 2013. As part of this project Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission committed $250,000 to monitor Bird Key and mitigate any damage to this vital habitat.

Water Quality
Since 2007, The City of Folly Beach has required residents and developers to adhere to the guidelines and best management practices described in the Charleston County Stormwater Program. These include utilizing simple, structural and nonstructural methods along with or in place of traditional stormwater management structures when applicable. This program of permitting standards and procedures was adopted to address regulations pertaining to the Clean Water Act and specifically the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The water quality from Folly’s beaches is monitored on an ongoing basis. This monitoring system tests for Enterococcus levels at eight sites semimonthly at locations within the City. Folly currently has no stormwater outfalls and there is a policy prohibiting future outfalls or other means of direct discharge to the beach. Also, the City has reviewed its site development requirements and adopted building codes that minimize the amount of impervious cover to 35% of the high ground in an effort to reduce the amount of runoff produced.

The management of septic systems is an ongoing concern for the City of Folly Beach. Septic failure may result from several burdens, the most basic of which is maintenance, which should be performed at least every ten years by a certified professional. Other problems include the following:

- Improper site planning, for instance, the location of impervious surfaces or persistent flooding above the septic tank;
- Vehicles traveling or parking above the tank;
- Insufficient tank capacity to meet demand, which may occur when short-term rental units become overcrowded; and

- Inadequate soil conditions and/or lot size. Typically, the minimum lot size that should be considered to support a septic tank and its field is ten to fifteen thousand square feet, exclusive of wetlands.

Septic failure is not only a threat to water quality but is also a direct health hazard to animals or even young children. Moreover, sewage bubbling to the surface is clearly a nuisance to all; visitors and residents alike. Currently, failing septic systems have not been a major issue because soil conditions on the island are generally favorable. However, as the systems age and higher occupancy increases pressure, maintenance concerns will become more pressing.

**Scenic and Unique Areas**

**The Washout**
The Washout is a narrow stretch along Ashley Avenue that consists of little more than the road and the adjacent beach. Ashley Avenue is reinforced by rock revetments to secure access to the northern end of the island. It has very little available beach at high tide, but its on-street parking and beach profile make it popular with surfers. Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the City has carried out several improvements in this area. The beach walkovers were landscaped and a viewing platform was installed at the north end for the numerous surf contests held there. More recently, work has been completed on an additional restroom and changing facility just beyond the Washout.

**River and Marshfront**
The majority of the marshfront on the backside of Folly Island, as well as smaller islands in city limits, is privately controlled. There is limited public access to the marshes and the Folly River beyond the County operated boat landing and the fishing dock at the Folly River Park. The 2014 Five Year Plan completed by the Folly Beach Parks and Recreation Committee calls for increasing both physical and visual access to the rear of the island. The first step includes small pocket parks located in City owned rights of way. Future plans also include a canoe/kayak launch in the footprint of the old bridges. In addition to providing access, the City recognizes the value of protecting the marsh from development. In 2010, the marsh setback was increased to 10’. However, there have been no further discussions of buffers or required vegetation to stop runoff. Another issue related to management of the river is the consideration of what types of commercial uses will be allowed in the river itself. In recent years, private services have set up kayak and canoe rentals, and other water based services.

**Wetlands**
Wetlands are generally low-lying areas regularly saturated by water. Although wetlands may be located at the beach or the marsh, they also can be found in other isolated areas. The State’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) is responsible for delineating exact boundaries of tidally influenced wetlands, which are known as critical areas per the State’s Coastal Zone Management Act. Wetlands have tremendous value to the City. This value includes filtration of stormwater run-off, flood
control, protection of shorelines from wave action, and habitat for numerous species. More widely appreciated are the roles Folly Beach's wetlands play in outdoor recreation. The Folly River and its tributaries harbor several species of finfish and shellfish sought by visiting and resident fisherman. Flounder, oysters, and shrimp are some of the more popular and more reliant species on the tidal marsh for sustenance, habitat, and spawning grounds.

Marsh Islands
The numerous marsh islands located between Folly Beach and James Island present a unique challenge for management. Only Long Island, the largest of the islands, is technically within the limits of the City of Folly Beach. The other islands scattered in the marsh remain in the jurisdiction of Charleston County. This mixed jurisdiction is the result of the annexation of the area between Folly and James Island which was written to only include the areas below the critical line. All the high ground of the islands (and also parcels along Sol Legare Road) was excluded. This means that these parcels are all currently split between the jurisdictions. Folly Beach has no authority over the use and dimensional standards on the high ground.

County Park and Coast Guard Base
These two properties bookend the island with natural, preserved land that is permanently protected from development through Conservation zoning. The County Park is located at the south end of the island and is a popular area for beachgoers. It has limited facilities including a picnic shelter and restrooms as well as parking. The Coast Guard Base has no facilities and is earmarked for preservation in its natural state; it is accessible by footpath and frequented by walkers and beachgoers, particularly to view the Morris Island Lighthouse. Both facilities are owned and regulated by the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission.
Element: Transportation

The Transportation Element provides an overview of the transportation system in the City of Folly Beach. The movement of people, goods, and services is crucial to the economic and social vitality of any community. Transportation decisions affect the character of the community by influencing the accessibility of land for various uses, the density of development, and the location of various commercial uses. The adequacy and future maintenance of existing roads and streets, and alternative modes of transportation should be considered in evaluating the impacts of proposed development.

Existing Transportation Methods

Vehicular
The primary mode of transportation in the City of Folly Beach is by car. The majority of the population on the island, as well as visitors, relies on personal vehicles for their transportation. This reliance on automobiles creates major congestion during peak visitation times. In the tourist season the daily population increases, and streets and roadways on and into the City become congested. In particular, the route on to and off of the island often becomes backed up during busy days. This congestion leads to a domino effect as the feeder streets also fill with cars waiting to turn on Center Street/Folly Road. Congestion off the island along Folly Road is also a problem for islanders who are commuting to the surrounding communities for work and also during hurricane evacuations.

Pedestrian
Pedestrian travel is vital for providing access to the business district and the beach. Currently, pedestrians on Folly Beach have limited space to walk to their destinations. Because of this, they are forced to walk in the street creating a potentially dangerous situation. Several solutions for the limited number of sidewalks or pathways are being considered. The key focus points for improving pedestrian access are along Arctic Avenue, Ashley Avenue, and from side street parking near beach access points. The City has also started work on a plan to remove obstructions and open pathways through the existing mid block rights-of-way that are found throughout the island.

Sidewalks in the business district and residential areas of the City are limited. The City is attempting to address the lack of sidewalks by installing less costly improvements that allow pedestrians to walk along the side of the street. The first project was completed in 2014 and consists of a gravel shoulder along three blocks of West Ashley Avenue between Center Street and 3rd Street West. There are plans to extend this shoulder path to West Beach Court and, eventually, the County Park. A second shoulder improvement is planned for East Ashley between Center Street and 2nd Street East.

Bicycling
Bicycling on Folly Beach is a popular recreational activity. Residents and tourists ride their bikes around the City and on the beach. Until recently, bicycling was considered a recreational activity and not a major mode of travel. However, as gas prices rise and environmental awareness increases, so does the popularity of travel by bike. Due to the limited number of bike lanes, bicyclists have to travel on the road with cars. Although there are bike lanes along Folly Road and on the new bridges, there are no bike lanes on the island itself. Bicyclists and motorists both have to share the road with each other.
throughout the remainder of Folly Beach. At times this becomes difficult when cars are parked along the narrow shoulders leaving little room for bicyclists to move over and for vehicles to pass. There are currently no plans for the provision of bike lanes on any island streets. However, the City is a participating member of the Battery to Beach Route. This bike and walking route will eventually connect the Isle of Palms, Sullivan’s Island, Mount Pleasant, Charleston, James Island, and Folly Beach as part of a 22-mile bike and walking trail. The portion of the route on Folly Beach will utilize bike lanes from Sol Legare to Center Street and road sharing for West Ashley Ave. Signage marking the route will be installed now that the new bridges are complete. The rise in popularity of cycling has coincided with the numbers of large cycling groups visiting Folly Beach. At times, these groups add to already congested streets.

**Golf Carts**
Many residents drive golf carts and visitors frequently rent them during their stay at Folly Beach. Golf carts may be driven on most streets in Folly Beach. They may cross, but may not be driven on Center Street or Folly Road. A golf cart may not be operated more than four miles from the address to which it is registered with the SC Department of Motor Vehicles. Golf carts must also have a City of Folly Beach Permit. They may not be driven in the rain or at night. They must comply with all traffic rules and regulations and parking laws. The driver must possess a driver’s license, proof of insurance, and the registration certificate issued by the SC Department of Motor Vehicles.

**Low Speed Vehicles**
Vehicles that are licensed as low speed vehicles may be driven on a highway or street for which the posted speed limit is 35 miles or less. They may be driven in the rain and at night. They must comply with all traffic rules and regulations and parking laws. The driver must possess a driver’s license, proof of insurance, and the registration certificate issued by the SC Department of Motor Vehicles. Some low speed vehicles are being operated as taxis in Folly Beach.

**Existing Transportation Infrastructure System**
The transportation infrastructure of the City includes state highway facilities, local street systems, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These facilities connect with the regional transportation network. Regional transportation networks are important to Folly Beach because the City is located literally at the end of one of the primary traffic routes in the greater Charleston area. The City has a voice in regional transportation planning as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, known as Charleston Area Transportation Study or CHATS. CHATS is comprised of committee members who oversee transportation planning and programming of improvements for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester urbanized area in coordination with SCDOT, the City of Charleston, Town of James Island, as well as Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties/municipalities.
As illustrated on Map 1, the primary feature of the transportation system in the City of Folly Beach is Folly Road, which becomes Center Street as it crosses onto the island. Center Street is connected to a system of local streets. According to the Charleston County GIS data, there are approximately 32 miles of roads on Folly Beach. The majority of the roads (24 miles) are maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). The City has responsibility for the remaining 8 miles.

Map 1 also gives data about traffic counts at various locations throughout the City. These numbers represent the daily average number of trips. Based on the different traffic count stations along the local roads, it is evident that the number of cars traveling to different locations on the island is fairly dispersed. It is important to note that these numbers represent averages and do not reflect the extreme variations between summer and winter months.

**Center Street**
Center Street serves as the main corridor that ushers traffic on and off the island and throughout the City from the business district. Traffic becomes congested along Center Street due to the high volume of cars during the summer months. The Center Street Task force has proposed a new traffic pattern for Center Street, which will change the current four lane configuration to two lanes with an added center
A turn lane. This proposal is currently out for engineering work and will be implemented (pending funding) in the upcoming year.

Roads and Bridge Improvements
The Planned Road Improvement Projects as noted on Map 2 depict the road improvement projects that are being planned for or are under construction in or near the City of Folly Beach. These improvements are projects that have been funded by SCDOT, CHATS and Charleston County. Projects noted on the map include the following:
- Bridges over Folly River and Folly Creek (Completed in 2015)
- Folly Road at Camp Road Intersection Improvements (Construction in 2015-16)
- East Ashley at Second Street intersection enhancement project (Completed in 2014 – stamped crosswalks)

MAP 2: PLANNED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Another project that impacts residents and visitors to the City of Folly Beach are the transportation improvements on Folly Road at the intersections of Camp Road and River Point Row. These improvements consist of the construction of double left turn lanes on southbound Folly Road, a
dedicated right turn lane on the south approach to the Camp Road at Folly Road intersection, and dedicated left turn lanes on both Camp Road approaches. Improvements are also proposed at the River Point Row intersection with Folly Road to eliminate the intersection offset.

In addition, a corridor study of Folly Road is being conducted by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments in 2015. This study will include stakeholders who will create a vision for Folly Road which includes greater vehicular capacity, friendly spaces and environments for walking and bicycling, innovative storm water management techniques, and convenient and efficient mass transit options. The plan will address land use and devise a landscape and urban design concept for the roadway that encourages pedestrian activity. The City anticipates adoption of the Folly Road Corridor Study in January of 2016.

Public Transit
There is no public transit that comes directly to Folly Beach. The closest transit route to the City of Folly Beach is Route 31 on Folly Road. This route has two pick up locations downtown at Meeting/Mary Street and Spring/President Street, and travels down Folly Road along Route 31 where it stops on James Island at Central Park/Folly Rd. and ends at Battery Creek Island Rd. Buses travel this route multiple times throughout the day.
Element: Community Facilities

The Community Facilities element examines infrastructure, property, buildings, and spaces that are owned, maintained and operated for the benefit of the general public. The City of Folly Beach must ensure that its community facilities keep pace with redevelopment inside the City limits. It must also provide the services demanded by new visitors as a result of growth outside of its boundaries. Ideally, the City of Folly Beach will have a well documented, well maintained water and sewer system, provide adequate parks and recreational facilities, ensure that services for its youth are well organized and coordinated with other public and private entities, and provide adequate police and fire services.

City Owned Buildings

The City owns and operates several buildings including City Hall, Public Safety Headquarters, the Community Center, and the water plant. These structures represent a significant portion of the City’s capital assets. They also represent significant ongoing expenses for depreciation and maintenance. Maintaining and properly caring for city owned structures is essential to extending their lifespan and reducing operational costs.

- City Hall. City Hall was completed in 1997. In the eighteen years since, the building has served its purpose well. However, it is beginning to show its age both functionally and structurally. Currently there is evidence of water intrusion around several of the windows. Furthermore, the City has requested funding for an analysis to determine an action plan for the removal and replacement of the exterior stucco covering. On a functional level, the arrangement of offices limits the placement of new staff and there are no meeting rooms in City Hall for the public other than Council Chambers, although additional space is available in the Public Safety Training Room. City Hall is elevated to current FEMA flood standards.

- Public Safety. The Public Safety Headquarters was completed in 2011. There are currently no major structural or functional issues with the facility. The Public Safety Headquarters is flood proofed to meet current FEMA flood standards.

- Community Center. The Community Center currently serves a dual purpose. It is partly operated as a branch of the Charleston County Library System and is also used to host community events and meetings by various Folly Beach groups. It was significantly remodeled less than a decade ago. A major overhaul of the adjacent public garden was performed in 2013. This project replaced an existing koi pond with a simulated dry river bed and other xeriscaping. The community center is not elevated above Base Flood Elevation.

- Water Plant. The water plant is the operational base for the Public Works Department. It is also used as a general storage facility for the City. The building needs a new roof; but is structurally sound otherwise. It is not elevated above Base Flood Elevation.
Parks and Recreation Facilities

Recreational facilities on Folly Beach are provided by the City of Folly Beach and the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission (CCPRC).

The CCPRC operates the Folly Beach County Park, the Folly Beach Fishing Pier, and the Folly Beach Boat Landing and also owns the former Coast Guard Station property and several lots on East Arctic. These holdings make CCPRC the largest landowner on Folly Beach.

- **Folly Beach County Park.** In 2013 the park was subject to extreme erosion which resulted in closure and a complete loss of parking, office, and restroom facilities. Since then, CCPRC has completed construction of a groin and renourishment project which rebuilt the beach and parking areas. The park has begun replacing the picnic, office and other support structures that were washed away.

- **Folly Beach Fishing Pier.** In 2013 CCPRC completed a major renovation project which replaced and strengthened the pilings that support the pier. This facility has now been returned to full operating capacity.

- **Folly Beach Boat Landing.** The Folly Beach Boat Landing is currently operating at full capacity. Although it is adjacent to the bridge replacement project, there has been no major interruption in service. The removal of the old Folly River Bridge created additional space for public use adjacent to the existing boat ramps. CCPRC, in conjunction with the City of Folly Beach, is pursuing a plan to turn this additional space into a passive launch area for kayaks, stand up paddle boards, and canoes.

- **East Arctic Properties.** CCPRC owns two oceanfront lots and two second row lots at the corner of East Arctic and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street East. These four lots total approximately one acre. They are currently undeveloped and serve as overflow parking for CCPRC employees. CCPRC has not yet developed a master plan for this property.

- **Coast Guard Station.** This large property comprises the entire northern end of Folly Island. It is currently open to the public but has not been developed as a park facility. A master plan from 2007 calls for maintaining the site as a passive sanctuary for sea birds and protected species. Parking at the site is limited and the primary access is for bikes and pedestrians only. The property is the best place for viewing the historic Morris Island Light house.

The City of Folly Beach also operates parks and playgrounds on the island. Currently the City is responsible for Ocean Park at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street West, the Folly River Park, the Folly Bark Park, Wave Watch and Pirates Cove Playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, as well as the new Folly Skate Park.

- **Ocean Park.** Ocean Park is approximately ¼ acre and consists mostly of parking for beach access. It has an ADA compliant beach walkover and restroom facilities. The restrooms were completely renovated in 2013 with the aid of a Coastal Access
Improvement Grant. The original landscaping has become overgrown and is beginning to revert to a natural state.

- **Folly River Park.** The Folly River Park is approximately 1 acre in size. It features a central lawn, crabbing dock, gazebo, restrooms, and sheds for vending of fruits and vegetables. The park is well maintained and heavily used. It is rented frequently for private events and also used in conjunction with many of the festivals and events held throughout the year.

- **Folly Bark Park.** The Folly Bark Park was developed in 2012 with a grant from the Charleston Greenbelt Program. The park is approximately ¼ acre in size and consists of a fenced central lawn. A water fountain is provided for pets.

- **Wave Watch and Pirates Cove.** These two playgrounds are located at 5th Street West and 510 East Erie respectively. They provide picnic tables and play structures. They are available by reservation for private functions as well as for daily use by the public.

- **Tennis/Basketball Courts.** Directly next to Pirates Cove Park, the City maintains one tennis court and 2 half-sized basketball courts. There is a public restroom on site.

- **Folly Skate Park.** This is the newest park facility on Folly Beach. It consists of several ramps for skateboarding and is located on the back half of the basketball courts. The Skate Park was funded by a grant from the South Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation.

- **Washout Facilities.** In 2015, the City completed construction of an ADA compliant restroom and changing station facility located at the East end of the island just past the Washout. The changing station is located in an unopened right of way between 1563 and 1565 East Ashley.

In 2013, the Folly Beach Parks and Recreation Committee began to take a more active role in planning for future parks and open spaces on Folly Beach. Their work culminated in the *City of Folly Beach Park and Recreation Five Year Plan* which was adopted by Council in 2014. The plan calls for the funding and creation of multiple new park sites as well as enhancements to existing facilities. New park sites are primarily envisioned as pocket parks located in unopened right-of-ways with visual access to the marsh or the ocean. The first recommendations of the plan to be funded for the 2014 Fiscal Year were the installation of benches along the Erie Canal and construction of a pocket park in the right-of-way at 1585 East Ashley. The City has applied for state funding to aid in the development of this site.
Map 3: PARKS FACILITIES WEST END

Map 4: PARKS FACILITIES ISLAND CORE
Map 5: PARKS FACILITIES EAST END

Map 6: PARKS FACILITIES BEYOND WASHOUT
Public Works
The Public Works Department is responsible for the provision of water and sewer service, solid waste collection, and stormwater management. The provision of these services is one of the primary responsibilities of City government.

Water
The City buys its water from Charleston Water System. Although Charleston Water is responsible for the water delivery system up to the Folly River, the City is responsible for water infrastructure on the island. In recent years the system has experienced an increasing number of breaks and interruptions in service. This is because the majority of the pipes in the system are reaching the end of their service lifespan. The City has limited reserves in place for replacement of the water distribution system. Additionally, lack of documentation for pipe locations, size, and age makes managing the system difficult.

The City has taken action to remedy these problems. In 2014 a rate study was approved by City Council that reworked the rate structure for water and sewer billing. The new rates encourage water conservation and also build in an allowance for the accumulation of a reserve account for repairs and replacement. Additionally, the City is working with the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium to update and field verify the location and size of existing water pipes. This project should translate information from outdated paper files to a computer based GIS management system.

Sewer
Sanitary sewer service on the island has had no major expansion since the construction of the Sunset Point subdivision in the 1990’s. Currently, expansion of the sewer system is prohibited beyond the central commercial district without a vote of Council. Although a handful of lots outside this area have received approval to tie into the system, the customer base remains small and the rates remain high. The sewer infrastructure faces the same problems as the water infrastructure. In 2014 there was one major failure of the sewer system. There is currently only a limited replacement or repair reserve. Comprehensive accounting of the location and condition of the system is in the beginning stages.

Stormwater and drainage
Stormwater management on the island is split between the City, Charleston County, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation. The majority of the ditches and other drainage structures are maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). Stormwater outfalls along Center Street are owned by the City and maintained by Charleston County Stormwater. In 2013 and 2014 multiple heavy rain events led to significant flooding and failure of stormwater removal systems. The City has been working extensively with both Charleston County and the SCDOT to perform backlogged maintenance and system improvements. The City received $50,000 in Transportation Sales Tax funding for a drainage study to cover the areas between 2nd and 5th Street East. The City also completed projects at 10th Street East and 4th Street West and is working with Charleston County on a drainage project to relieve flooding along 9th Street West. The City is also in talks with the Sea Grant Consortium to provide mapping of the natural drainage basins on Folly Beach. Currently there is no treatment of stormwater runoff from the island.
Solid Waste Management
In addition to regularly scheduled, twice weekly garbage collection, the City provides additional trash collection on summer weekends and major holidays. Curbside recycling is provided by Charleston County on a bi-weekly basis. The City is beginning to place more emphasis on recycling and related activities. An ordinance passed in 2014 now requires that some types of events on City property provide recycling containers. Also, an agreement was reached with Charleston County to provide large recycling containers at beachfront parking lots and some multifamily dwellings that are serviced on a weekly basis. A third major development was the county wide roll out of single stream recycling. This service allows residents to place all recyclable materials into one container without sorting. This has resulted in a large increase in participation. In the summer of 2015 the City participated in a weekly recycling trial that had positive results. The City currently provides no on island facilities for the recycling of cooking oil or composting of food waste. The City also places no additional regulations on high volume businesses for either recycling or solid waste management. A new garbage truck was purchased in 2013, but there is currently no reserve account for the replacement of the existing 2 trucks.

Other Utilities

Electric
South Carolina Electric and Gas provides electric service to the island as well as providing leased street and yard lighting. SCE&G is subject to a franchise fee for operation in the City and a portion of this fund is reserved for special projects within the City. The current balance of this account is roughly $200,000. Folly Beach increased the franchise fee from 3% to 5% beginning in 2015. This will raise approximately $50,000 additional dollars annually.

Cable
Cable service is currently provided by Comcast, Dish, and Verizon.

Internet
There are a variety of internet providers on the island including Verizon, Comcast, and Dish. The City provides no municipal wireless coverage.

Public Safety
Folly Beach Police and Fire Departments are combined into a Public Safety Department. In this type of organization, police personnel are cross-trained and certified in fire-fighting, and fire-fighters are cross-trained and certified in policing. Regular staff is supplemented by the use of citizen volunteer firefighters as well as firefighters from neighboring jurisdictions working part-time on Folly Beach. The Public Safety Department also maintains a dispatch center, animal services, beach patrol, and parking enforcement.

Police Services
The Police Department employs 16 sworn officers, 1 animal services officer, 2 part time officers, 4 part time ordinance officers, 6 part time seasonal beach patrol, and 6 part time seasonal parking enforcement officials. There is also 1 full time civilian secretary/records clerk.
Fire Services
Folly Beach is a combination department that includes paid, part time, and volunteer firefighters. Volunteer firefighters can operate as support personnel or as emergency responders while 3 full time Fire PSOs are on permanent duty in rotating shifts. As a reflection of the number of visitors to Folly Beach, medical responses now make up 75 - 80% of the department’s call volume. The City currently has an ISO classification of 4 and an emergency response time of less than 5 minutes. There is one fire station housing 2 pumpers, an aerial ladder truck, service unit, beach rescue vehicle, and jet skis used in water rescues.

Emergency Services
Emergency services are provided by the City of Folly Beach, and appropriate County agencies. The City has secured emergency landing sites for medical helicopters at the old Coast Guard Base and the new bridge.

Court Services
The Folly Beach Municipal Court is staffed by a Clerk of Court, a part time prosecutor, and 2 part time judges. Court is held once weekly to deal with a multitude of issues including traffic tickets and parking tickets.

Schools
There are no schools in the City of Folly Beach. The community is part of the Charleston County School District. Most students on Folly attend either public or private schools on James Island.

Beach Walkovers and Accesses
The increased provision of beach accesses is an ongoing area of interest for the City of Folly Beach. In the last decade, the City renovated 7 walkovers, constructed 3 new walkovers, provided approximately 60 new parking spaces and completed major renovations of our Ocean Park restrooms. The City strives to remain one of the most accessible beach communities on the East Coast. Currently, the City maintains approximately 55 beach access points located at the cross streets and in the middle of each block. While the majority of these accesses have walkovers, there are several accesses that do not. Many of the existing walkovers are in need of maintenance due to the severe erosion prior to the most recent renourishment. In 2014 the City received grants to complete a major overhaul of the 13th Street Walkover and to build a new ADA compatible walkover in the 15th block of East Ashley. Additional grant money was received to construct a second beachfront bathroom facility at the same access. There are currently only two public restroom facilities located at beach access points.

Mid Block Rights of Way
The 2010 Comprehensive Plan Update carried forward recommendations from the 2005 Comprehensive Plan for the improvement of the mid-block rights-of-way. Although there are some exceptions, these rights-of-way are ten foot wide segments of publicly owned land that are platted generally in the middle of each block and run from the ocean to the rear of the island. Most of the rights-of-way along the beachfront streets are open, accessible, and marked by signage and crosswalks. A majority of these oceanfront rights-of-way are complimented by walkovers that allow access to the beach. The condition
of the rights-of-way on the back streets varies considerably. Some are overgrown and inaccessible for foot traffic while others have been blocked by owners of adjacent properties. Others are cleared, accessible and offer easy access for pedestrians between streets. In 2013, the Planning Commission and City Council unanimously approved the Action Plan for Mid Block Rights of Way as a comprehensive program to guide the City’s long-term management of the rights-of-way. Since the completion of the plan, the City has cleared mid block rights-of-way in the 2nd, 7th, and 9th blocks of West Ashley, the entire 1st block on the East Side, 5th, 6th, and 7th and 10th blocks of East Ashley. The City also opened a path along a closed portion of 3rd Street West.
Element: Cultural Resources

Generally speaking, cultural resources are the various distinct features and attractions in a community that have significant meaning or social value. Cultural resources may be natural or man-made sites, events, activities, historic sites or structures, and other points of interest that are identified within the community. These resources are important because they enhance opportunities for community interaction and cooperation. They also offer opportunities for visitors and residents to be exposed to valuable learning experiences, leisure events, and other activities which lead to a greater appreciation of the local community. For a small community, Folly Beach has a rich array of cultural resources. While historic buildings are few in number, there are a multitude of events and festivals as well as social and civic groups which act as cultural outlets in the community.

Civic and Volunteer Groups

- **Civic Club.** The Folly Beach Civic Club meets throughout the year and regularly contributes funds to City projects such as the Pirates Cove Playground and the new Folly Skate Park. The Civic Club produces the Folly Beach City Calendar each year as its primary fundraising event and sponsors the annual family Halloween carnival. The Civic Club is also responsible for publishing and distributing *The Sandspur*, Folly Beach’s local newsletter.

- **Eastern Surfing Association.** The ESA is the largest amateur surf organization in the United States. In 2014 they held the Mid Atlantic Regional Championship on Folly Beach. Local ESA members are active in Folly Beach throughout the year and hold regularly scheduled surf competitions.

- **Folly Beach Anglers.** The Folly Beach Anglers host an annual free “Take A Kid Fishing Day” to provide opportunities for children to experience saltwater fishing. In 2014 the event was attended by 220 children and approximately 175 adults making it the largest saltwater kids fishing event in South Carolina.

- **Folly Association of Businesses (FAB).** The Folly Association of Businesses is made up of local business representatives and works for the promotion and improvement of the Folly Beach Community. In 2011, FAB hosted a 40th anniversary celebration for the City of Folly Beach. The event was a great success and featured carnival rides, a carousel, a ferris wheel, and swings as well as local vendors selling food, arts, and crafts to commemorate Folly’s history. FAB also supports several festivals during the off season.

- **Folly Beach Exchange Club.** The Folly Beach Exchange Club works to make Folly Beach a better community by promoting the core values of family, community, and country. The Exchange Club has received the prestigious National Outstanding Community Service
Award two years in a row. In 2014 they were awarded for their work on the free Skin Cancer Screening project in conjunction with MUSC.

- **Folly Beach Fine Arts & Crafts Guild.** The Arts Guild is a diverse group of artists and craftsmen who live, create, and exhibit on Folly Beach. This talented group of individuals represents the strong creative undercurrent of life on Folly Beach. They are represented at many of the festivals and events held on the island throughout the year.

- **Folly Beach Garden Club.** The Folly Beach Garden Club was originally organized in 1950. Today the group meets regularly and has worked on various beautification projects on the island. Each month, the Garden Club announces a Yard of the Month winner in the Sandspur to draw attention to noteworthy properties.

- **Folly Beach Senior Citizens Club.** The Folly Beach Senior Citizens Club meets monthly and its members are active participants in the many Folly Beach activities held throughout the year.

- **Go Folly Green Task Force.** The task force was established by a Resolution of the Folly Beach City Council in August, 2014. The Team’s mission is to create and implement attainable, sustainable and earth-friendly initiatives that will improve the well being of Folly Beach, its residents and visitors, today and for the future.

- **Save the Light.** Save the Light is a non-profit organization created to preserve the Morris Island Lighthouse. Save the Light retains all responsibility for planning, engineering, fund raising, and the execution of all aspects of the preservation of the Morris Island Lighthouse.

- **Surfrider.** The Surfrider Foundation is a national non-profit organization working to preserve our oceans, waves, and beaches. Last year the local chapter hosted a Barefoot Wine Folly Beach Sweep which consisted of a one day beach cleanup. The Charleston Surfrider chapter is very active on Folly Beach and can often be seen volunteering to remove litter and improve the conditions on the beach.

- **Surfers Healing.** Each year Surfers Healing hosts a free, one day camp for children with autism. This event drew over 250 children and families to the island last year from across the country. The goal is to foster understanding and acceptance of autism through the transformative experience of surfing.

- **Turtle Watch.** Folly Beach Turtle Watch was organized in 1998 and is licensed by the SC Department of Natural Resources to protect sea turtles, their nests, and hatchlings on Folly Beach. Today, about 25 volunteers contribute their time and energy each turtle
season to protect an average of 45 nests. Turtle Watch members play an important role in enforcing the City’s Lights Out campaign which ensures that nesting sea turtles and hatchlings can find the ocean without interference from artificial lighting.

Festivals and Events
Folly Beach has a long history of annual festivals. Both the Sea and Sand Festival and the Tides of March are a quarter of a century old or more. However, in the ten years since the last Comprehensive Plan was written, the number of yearly festivals and events has increased. The primary driver behind the increased number of activities has been a desire to bring business to the island during the off season. Many of the newer festivals and events are sponsored in whole or in part by the Folly Association of Businesses. Each event on Folly brings its own challenges in terms of traffic management, crowd control, and trash removal. Other areas of concern are cost to city government and the marketing demographics. In addition to the large annual festivals, there are a number of smaller, regularly recurring programs offered on the beach.

- **Art in the Park.** This event is held several times over the course of the year (often in conjunction with other major festivals) as a weekend long showcase of the work of Folly artists and craftsmen. Art in the Park is held in the Folly River Park. It is sponsored by the Fine Arts Guild.

- **Christmas Parade.** The city sponsored Christmas parade is held shortly before Christmas each year and is one of the most popular and well attended events on the island. Local bands perform and residents and local businesses drive floats down Center Street. The highlight of the parade is Santa on the fire truck.

- **Easter Promenade.** This city sponsored annual procession consists of men, women, and children in their Easter finest marching down Center Street on Easter Sunday.

- **Festival of the Arts.** Sponsored by the Arts Guild, this weekend long event features a juried competition and awards ceremony for Folly Artists. It is held in October as the busy tourist season begins to wind down.

- **Folly Beach Farmers Market.** This weekly gathering was started in 2013 as a means to connect local food and craft vendors with residents and visitors on Folly Beach. The event has been very successful.

- **Flip Flop Drop.** The Flip Flop Drop is Folly’s alternative to Times Square on New Year’s Eve. An evening of festivities is capped off when a giant pair of flip flops is lowered at midnight.
- **Folly Beach Jazz Festival.** This multi day series of concerts in public and private spaces was held for the first time in 2014. All events were free and focused on highlighting the ties between Folly Beach and the surrounding areas to the history and culture of jazz.

- **Folly Gras.** 2015 marks the eighth annual Folly Gras celebration. A local version of Mardi Gras, Folly Gras features a street parade, food and craft vendors, bands, and family entertainment.

- **Folly Pallooza.** Also entering into its eighth year, Follypalooza is an annual street festival on Folly Beach which is held as a fundraiser for local cancer patients. To date, organizers count over $30,000 raised which has been used to help 22 individuals alleviate financial stress caused by treatment related bills.

- **Halloween Carnival.** The Civic Club sponsored Halloween Carnival will turn 40 years old in 2015. It remains one of the most popular and well attended events. The Carnival includes costume contests, games, food vendors, and other activities.

- **Tides of March.** This annual festival began as a renaissance themed event and has evolved into a major arts show featuring live performances, bands, and over 30 regular vendors and exhibitors.

- **Sea and Sand Festival.** The Sea and Sand festival is one of the major yearly events on Folly Beach. It is a 3 day affair featuring vendors, artists, a silent auction, and even a beauty pageant. 2015 will mark the 25th anniversary of this festival.

- **Taste of Folly.** The FAB sponsored Taste of Folly is designed to highlight the offerings of Folly Beach’s restaurants. It is held annually and consists of live music, food vendors, and other family oriented activities.

- **Charleston County Parks and Recreation Programs.** Charleston County hosts a number of regularly scheduled programs on Folly Beach. These include bird watching walks, dances at the Pier and kayak and paddleboard clinics.

**Historic Sites**

Although there are not many sites in Folly Beach that are listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, there are several buildings and places that are historically valuable. Additionally, the numerous existing beach cottages from the Island’s early years remain as an important link to the past. They also serve as examples of local, vernacular architecture that developed in response to the unique challenges of living on a barrier island.

- **Folly North Site.** The Folly North Site is significant as an intact portion of the batteries and fortifications built as part of the Union effort to capture Charleston during the Civil
War. Archaeological excavations have revealed the remains of fortifications and remarkably preserved artifacts such as faunal bone, wood, and cloth, as well as numerous other features associated with daily military life on the island. The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, won considerable acclaim for its bravery at this site. It was listed in the National Register October 2, 2003 (South Carolina Department of Archives and History).

- **Porgy House.** This house in the 7th block of West Ashley was a second home of Dubose Heyward whose work inspired George Gershwin’s opera Porgy and Bess. It was extensively renovated in 1998 and is currently open for private tours.

- **Morris Island Lighthouse.** Morris Island Lighthouse stands north of the former Coast Guard Station. It was listed on the National Register in 1982. In 1876 the light was approximately 1,200 feet inland, today it is several hundred feet out to sea due to severe erosion. Save the Light, a nonprofit formed to preserve the lighthouse, has completed structural work to reinforce the foundations of the structure. They are currently working to raise additional money to begin exterior renovations.

- **Historic Beach Cottages.** Despite the numerous hurricanes that have hit Folly Beach, the island is still home to a number of simple beach cottages. These cottages were constructed in the 1920’s and onward and are examples of a distinct vernacular style. They are often simple structures with only 2 or 3 interior rooms and wide porches.

In the mid 2000s the City inventoried all beach cottages built prior to 1960 in an effort to document them before they were destroyed or demolished. Since then, no action has been taken to protect these structures. Increasingly, old beach houses are being replaced by new, larger structures, that do not reference traditional beach architecture. However, there have been several examples of successful rehabilitation.

**Figure 1: UNRESTORED BEACH COTTAGES**
Funky Folly

Ultimately, the greatest cultural resource of any community is its character. The character of a community is the combination of the natural and built environments with the accumulated history of the people who live there. The character Folly Beach has long been one associated with tolerance and non-conformity. Since its earliest days, the people who have chosen to live here have resisted the trends that have reshaped other coastal communities. Other beach towns in the Charleston area have become exclusive enclaves of the wealthy or crowded with condominiums and multifamily housing. Folly Beach has managed to maintain its predominately single family, and predominately middle class, identity. Here, the understated commercial district, accessible beaches, surf, music and art culture, public festivals, and laid back atmosphere have combined to create a way of life that is often described as Funky Folly. The Funky Folly approach can be seen in the vibrantly painted cottages of the island and the ever changing messages on the Folly Boat. This widely accepted and strongly felt idea of Folly as a special place has proven very difficult to define. The lack of consensus and definition on what exactly it means to be funky has allowed the deterioration of some of the very characteristics that make Folly a special place. Small beach homes are not protected and are being replaced by larger structures. Rising real estate prices have made buying a house on the island increasingly difficult. Long term tenants have been replaced by short term tenants who are willing to pay higher prices. All of these things must be addressed in order to maintain the laid back atmosphere that Folly is famous for.
Element: Housing

The Housing Element provides information and analysis of the housing stock of Folly Beach. Homes on Folly Beach have a wide variety of styles, sizes, colors, and materials. New construction in the City should respect existing architecture but also maintain diversity. The City must do all that it can to offset the high cost of insurance. While vacation rentals are a necessary and important part of the economy of Folly Beach, the City must work to maintain the balance between needs of rental property owners and permanent homeowners.

Housing and Ownership Types

Although the Residential Single Family District is geographically much larger than all the other zoning districts combined, the number of single family homes on the island is only slightly larger than other housing types (this includes duplexes, triplexes, and other larger multifamily buildings). According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, there are 2,640 housing units in Folly Beach; 43% percent of these are two or multifamily units and fifty seven percent are single family units. There is very little room left in the City for either new single family or new multifamily units. The island proper is mostly built out and there are only two tracts off the island, totaling approximately 5 acres, eligible for multifamily development.

TABLE 2: HOUSING TYPES BY NUMBER OF UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>City Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total housing units</td>
<td>2,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-unit, detached</td>
<td>1,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-unit, attached</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 units</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or 4 units</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 units</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19 units</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or more units</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 or more units</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile home</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat, RV, van, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The American Community Survey also examined the status of people living in the homes they surveyed to determine whether the homes where rented, owner occupied, or used only seasonally. The data shows the ratio between full time owner occupied and rental/seasonally occupied units to be approximately 28% to 72% respectively. The non owner occupied units break down further to show that approximately 36% of the homes on the island are known rentals and 36% of the homes are seasonally occupied.

Vacation and Short Term Rentals

Short term rentals are rentals that are for periods of less than 30 days. In 2015, the City issued approximately 618 rental registrations for short term rental units. These units are scattered throughout all areas of the island.
Although the majority of the rental licenses are issued for properties in the first and second rows from the beach, rentals can be found in all the neighborhoods of Folly. At times, the use of homes for short term rentals can create challenges for neighbors including noise, septic overflow, and increased competition for parking.

**Housing Costs**

When the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* was written, data from the 2000 Census showed that the median value of a single family home on Folly Beach was $283,100. As of 2013 the median value was $607,000. This huge increase is the result of many factors including the rapid appreciation of property value leading up to 2007, the shift to larger, more expensive new home construction, and the lack of new land available for housing in the City. In 2013, the mean income for Folly was $76,607. The rule of thumb for housing affordability is that no more than 30% of income should go towards housing costs. The median actual sales price for 2014 in the City was $450,000. In order to afford this price, an income of $148,000 (or 194%) of the area median income is needed. Not surprisingly, approximately 41% of the full time residents pay more than thirty percent of their incomes toward mortgages and rents.

**Flood and Hazard Insurance**

Insuring a home on Folly Beach remains an expensive proposition. The costs for wind and hail insurance, general homeowners insurance, earthquake insurance, and flood insurance continue to rise. Flood insurance in particular carries a great level of uncertainty. The main sources of this uncertainty are the Biggert Waters Flood Act and the possibility of significant changes to FEMA issued flood maps. The Biggert Waters Act contained major changes to the National Flood Insurance Program. The changes that affect Folly Beach the most are the reduction of subsidies for houses that once met flood code but are no longer compliant, the removal of subsidies for non primary residences, and the gradual increase in rates for all properties to reflect true actuarial risk. Upcoming changes to the FEMA flood maps which identify flood zones on Folly Beach could also drastically affect homeowners. The maps, which have been in development for several years, could possibly raise base flood elevations across the island as well as move many properties from the lower risk A zones to higher risk V zones.

**Housing Age**

Similar to other coastal and higher land value communities in the nation, tear-downs, the demolition of smaller, older, economically obsolete structures is a growing trend in Folly Beach. The aforementioned rustic cottages are sometimes removed to make way for larger, more modern structures since little land remains for new housing development. Pre-WWII units constituted only ten percent of the 1,788 homes in Folly Beach in 2000. Exact figures do not exist for the number of demolitions since 2000, but there have been at least a dozen documented examples. Homes built before 1974 are also under greater threat from future hurricanes. Floodplain regulations took effect on Folly Beach in that year, requiring habitable space to be elevated above 100-year flood levels – fourteen feet or more above mean low tide here. The storm surge of Hurricane Hugo was eleven feet or higher throughout Folly Island. Structures built prior to 1974 were claimed by the 1989 storm at a much greater rate than those elevated. Some pre-existing homes were elevated in the reconstruction of the island after Hugo, but many remain vulnerable.
Element: Population

The Population Element provides descriptive data and analysis of the residents of the City of Folly Beach. This information can be utilized by the City, utility providers, and other levels of government, as well as private interests, to determine the types and levels of services demanded in Folly Beach. Currently the daily population of Folly Beach is mostly transient. The vast majority of the people on the island during most of the year are tourists. The long term population of Folly is made up of mostly full time, resident homeowners. However, there is also a large group of full time, resident renters. Over the next ten years, the City seeks to promote a balance between full time residents and visitors, maintain demographic and socio economic diversity, and attract families to live on Folly Beach.

Demographics

The permanent population of Folly Beach was listed at 2,617 at the time of the 2010 Census. This represents a growth of 501 people or 23% over the population counted in the 2000 Census. The growth in permanent population continues a trend that began in 1970 and accelerated in the 1990’s as Folly Beach began to grow and redevelop. Although growth of the permanent population has been steady, it has not met the projections laid out in the original 1998 Comprehensive Plan which predicted a total 2015 population of 2,981. Future increases in the number of permanent residents may be limited by the lack of land to build new housing units and the increasing cost of property and insurance on the island.

TABLE 3: Population By Age breaks down the population of Folly Beach by age groups in five year intervals. Although Folly Beach is generally considered to have an older population, the numbers show that 11.4% of the permanent residents are under the age of 19. This number highlights the importance of planning for youth activities and recreational facilities on the island. Young adults and young professionals aged 20 to 39 make up 27.0% of the population on Folly Beach. At just under 1/3 of the population, this age group represents a substantial bloc. Although the population in these age groups represents the most likely ages of young families, the number of children and teenagers on the island has decreased since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan when the 17 and under age group represented 15.2% of the population. Another significant change from the 2005 Plan occurred in the 20-24 year old subgroup. In 2005 this group numbered 248. In the latest census there were only 140. This drop of 44% is most likely attributed to the decline in college aged residents as rents and property values have increased. It is interesting to note that the age distribution of adults over 20 seems to be relatively even. 27% of the population is aged 20 to 39, 32.4% of the
population is aged 40-59, and 28.4% of the population is aged 60 and above. The largest age groups are 60 to 64 and 55 to 59 representing 10.3% and 9.9% of the population, respectively. The median age is 47.7 years, a sharp increase from the 2000 Census which reported a median age of 41.1 years old.

The male and female gender breakdown on Folly Beach is roughly equal with males representing 51.3% of the population and females 49.7%. The median age for females is 49.1 and for males 47 years old. Both genders are very similarly distributed across age groups with the exception of 15 to 24 year olds where females outnumber males almost 2 to 1. The situation is reversed in the over 60 population with a slightly less than 2 to 1 ratio of males to females.

TABLE 4: Population By Race presents a count of the different racial groups on Folly Beach. The population of the City continues to be overwhelmingly White with only a 3.7% of the population listed as non white. Black or African Americans constitute 1.5% of the population, with no other racial group exceeding 1%. These numbers are consistent with the 2005 Plan and illustrate that there has been little to no increase in racial diversity on Folly Beach in the last 10 years. Folly Beach remains a community whose racial demographics are drastically different from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester region which has a non white population of well over 50%.

The 2010 Census also presents data about the households on Folly Beach and the relationships between the people living here. The latest data shows that 72.7% of the people living in Folly Beach households are either homeowners or spouses of the homeowner, 13.5% are children of the homeowner, 2.4% are other relatives of the homeowner, and 11.5% are non related. When households are broken down by type 47% are labeled as families (two or more people related by blood or marriage) and 53% as non family households. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan showed a family to non family ratio 46% to 54%. This means that the number of families as a proportion to the total population is growing. However, the size of the families is shrinking. The average household size is 1.92 and represents a continuation in the trend of decreasing household size on Folly Beach. In 1980 the average household size was 2.07. The decrease in household size can be attributed to the decrease in the number of families with children on the island. The lack of convenient schools and the high cost of ownership may be partly responsible. Another trend that has continued on Folly is the increase of single person households. A very high

TABLE 4: POPULATION BY RACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>2,617</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Race</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>Asian Indian</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
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<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Black or African American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Some Other Race</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
percentage of the non family households on Folly are single member households. In 2010, 522 households were reported as having only one member. This is an increase of 46% from the 2000 Census report of 355 single households.

**Seasonal Population**

Discussion about the population of Folly Beach is incomplete without an acknowledgement that the total population of Folly Beach should consider the sum of both the permanent population and the seasonal population. Seasonal population growth occurs primarily between March and October and peaks between June and September. The City maintains a list of rental registrations, which provides information on 618 homes that are registered as short-term rentals. These rentals have an average listed maximum occupancy of 8.5 people. Assuming even a modest 75% total occupancy, the short term rentals on the island have the potential of adding 5,253 people to the resident population on any given day. This is almost 200% more than the total number of permanent residents. This number is increased even further by the large numbers of day trippers to the island. No exact figures exist, but estimates given by the Public Safety Department are in the range of 8,000 and 11,000 thousand people on a typical summer day and between 15,000 and 20,000 on holiday weekends. The extreme difference between the permanent population and the actual daily population presents challenges for planning and operating the City. In particular, Public Works and Public Safety must be funded and staffed in such a way as to be able to scale up operations from June to September and then wind down during the slower months.

**Population Projections**

TABLE 5 Projections summarizes information provided by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. It is based on projections covering the period between the 2010 and 2020 US Census. If the predictions in this chart hold true, Folly Beach will continue to grow in a manner consistent with the past. There will be a slow and steady increase in the number of households and families, the median age will rise as the population gets older, the average size of households will decrease, and the city will remain a predominately White community.
Element: Priority Investment
The goal of the Priority Investment Element is to set a path for the prioritized expenditure of available Federal, State, and local funds over the next 10 years. It should evaluate the need for public infrastructure, estimate the cost of improvements for which the local government has fiscal responsibility, analyze the fiscal capability of the local government to finance these improvements, adopt policies to guide the funding of improvements, and schedule the funding and construction of improvements when required based on available funding and needs identified in the other comprehensive plan elements.

Coordinated Planning
Coordinated planning is a necessary component of the Priority Investment Element. Through coordination between local municipalities and government agencies the City of Folly Beach can minimize the disruption to its citizens, insure cost effectiveness, and eliminate the possibility of duplication of effort. These measures aide in reducing money and time through shared costs and responsibilities with State, Federal, and neighboring communities.

In 2015, the City of Folly Beach participated in the Folly Road Corridor Study undertaken by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments to address the ability of Folly Road to serve travelers, provide access to parcels, and reflect on the character of the community. The study involved participation from Charleston County, the City of Charleston, and the Town of James Island. These types of projects help strengthen the communication between Folly Beach and neighboring communities that will aide in future planning.

Revenue Sources
The City of Folly Beach has two general revenue sources that are available for consideration for their capital expenses as follows:

- Local Revenues: The City could utilize existing local revenue sources as a source of funds for these projects. Accommodation tax revenue and the general fund are two examples. Accommodation tax revenue is restricted to tourism related activities but the general fund has no restrictions. The City could explore using tax-increment financing (TIF) along the Center Street business district. TIF funds, however, must be prepared and planned through a redevelopment plan before implementing it.

- State/Federal Funds: The City could examine funds that are not currently being utilized but could be evaluated as alternative funding sources such as Federal or State funding programs. These funding sources are outlined below.

Federal Transportation Funding Sources
- Federal Highway Administration: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) is the funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending that addresses the challenges facing the transportation system today. It focuses on challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. MAP-21 promotes more efficient and effective federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving state and local transportation
decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities. These funds are administered locally by the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) on a competitive basis.

- United States Department of Transportation (USDOT): Under the U.S. Department of Transportation Livability Initiative, funding can be provided to state and local governmental authorities in the financing of capital projects including the acquisition of real property, the acquisition of rights-of-way, and for street relocation.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) / Department of Homeland Security**
- Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMP): The purpose of the HMG program is to help communities implement hazard mitigation measures following a Presidential major disaster declaration. Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or eliminate long term risk to people and property from natural hazards. The HMPG is authorized under *Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act*.

- Fire Department Grants: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awards grants to fire departments to enhance their ability to protect the public and fire service personnel from fire and related hazards. Three types of grants are available: Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), the Station Construction Grant (SCG), and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER).

- AFG: To meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services organizations.

- SCG: To provide financial assistance for fire departments to build or modify fire stations, that will enhance the department’s response to their community.

- SAFER: To provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained firefighters available in their communities.

- The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): The USACE provides funding for beach renourishment projects to states and local municipalities. In prior years Folly Beach has been successful in receiving these funds despite heavy competition from other municipalities in Florida.

**State Funding Sources**
- Coastal Access Improvement Grant: In 2015, funding for the coastal access improvement grant was made available through a state budget proviso that allows DHEC to expend a portion of available beach nourishment funds on coastal access improvement. Typical project awards range between $10,000 and $50,000; applicants are encouraged to submit all eligible projects for consideration. Each municipality is required to provide matching local funding for each project.

- Ocean & Coastal Resource Management: (OCRM) provides funding for beach access repair and maintenance. These funds are awarded competitively.
- SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Grants: The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism administers several federal grant programs that promote conservation.

- Recreational Trails Program (RTP): Created in 1991 under the ISTEA Act and currently authorized under the MAP-21 Act. The first project awarded in 1993 with oversight by FHWA. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a Federal-aid assistance program designed to help States provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants (LWCF): In South Carolina, the LWCF is administered by the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT). Project requirements vary each year. The LWCF is limited to outdoor public recreation and to indoor facilities which support adjacent outdoor public recreation activities. Associated support facilities and infrastructure such as lighting, sewer/water and restrooms are eligible. Property acquired or developed under the LWCF program must be restricted to public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity.

- Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD): PARD grants are administered by SCPRT and are awarded to assist for permanent improvements of park and recreation facilities which will be open to the general public. PARD is a matching grant program and all projects must be matched in an amount of at least 20%. Eligible development projects include new outdoor or indoor public recreation facilities including support facilities, utilities, and other infrastructure.

- South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank: The South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure bank selects and assists in financing for major qualified projects (in excess of $100 million in construction costs) by providing loans and other financial assistance to government units and private entities for constructing and improving highway and transportation facilities necessary for public purposes including economic development.

- South Carolina Department of Commerce: Coordinating Council of Economic Development awards grants for job creation and economic development. Eligible projects include: access roads, turn lanes, on-site improvements (parking), and water and sewer improvements.

- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP): TAP projects are federally-funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and improve the transportation experience by enhancing the cultural, historic, and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure.

County/Regional Funding Sources

- Charleston County Transportation Committee C Funds: C Funds are allocated to each county by the South Carolina Department of Transportation for the purpose of transportation improvements. C funds are derived from the South Carolina tax on gasoline. In 1994, the C Fund statutes were revised by removing the legislative delegation’s control and creating County Transportation Committees (CTCs). The responsibilities for each CTC include the formation of a county transportation plan as well as the approval and use of C funds for local transportation projects. Project funding is awarded annually.
Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax Funding: In the fall of 2004, Charleston County voters agreed to add a half-cent sales tax on purchases made in the county. The collection of Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax began in May of 2005 and will continue for 25 years or until the $1.03 billion is collected for transportation, transit, and greenspace projects. There is $500,000 available annually through the course of this funding initiative for bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements and connections; this would include sidewalk and multi-use pathway construction. There is also $1 million for drainage projects, $2 million for intersection projects and approximately $6 million for paving and resurfacing projects available annually.

Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) Complete Streets Funding: CHATS includes the designation of the specific road and intersection projects, transit facilities and services, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will be funded through the Federal MAP-21 Program. One of CHATS’s objectives is to coordinate transportation improvements for modes other than automobiles, such as bicycle, transit and pedestrian facilities.

Capital Improvement Planning
Capital improvement planning is used by governments to identify needed capital projects and to coordinate the financing and timing of improvements to maximize the return to the public. Ideally funding should be prioritized to provide the capital items and public facilities required to accommodate the future demands and growth of the City. Each budget year, all previously identified projects should be reviewed, new projects added, and adjustments made for future years depending on funding.

Table 6 lists the capital needs of the Police Department. The primary expense is the ongoing replacement of police vehicles. The City plans to replace a police vehicles and in-car cameras on a three year cycle with new in car camera and mobile data terminals. The city is also seeking to purchase 15 to 18 body cameras with assistance from the state.

**TABLE 6: PROJECTED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES: PUBLIC SAFETY (POLICE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Year Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police Cars with upfit</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$32,000</td>
<td>$960,000</td>
<td>3 Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Car Camera</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
<td>3 Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>6 Per Year Until 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Cameras</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$650</td>
<td>$11,700</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Data Terminals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
<td>3 Per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causeway Camera</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$1,412,660</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in Table 7, the Folly Beach Fire Department plans to replace several critical pieces of equipment. Due to the harsh salt water, the department will need to replace one vehicle, one jet ski and two golf carts. The department relies on its jet ski to perform search and rescue operations.

### TABLE 7: PROJECTED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES: PUBLIC SAFETY (FIRE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Year Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Carts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Rescue Jet Ski</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladder Truck Replacement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$950,000</td>
<td>$950,000</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Engine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** $1,404,000

Capital needs of the Public Works Department are shown in Table 8. The City has indicated that it will need to purchase one new garbage packer truck every three years. The City will also be hiring an engineering firm to assess all water lines and calculate the replacement and depreciation schedule as the City will need to replace old fire hydrants.

### TABLE 8: PROJECTED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES: PUBLIC SAFETY (FIRE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Capital Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Year Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refuse</td>
<td>Garbage Truck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>1 every 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility (Water)</td>
<td>Fire Hydrants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redundant Water Line</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GIS Software &quot;valves &amp; hydrants&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** $524,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Capital Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>Year Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utility (Sewer)</td>
<td>20 HP Pumps</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
<td>$19,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCADA for three (3) stations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force Main Relocation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$420,000</td>
<td>$420,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** $1,958,000
Beach Access Points & Walkovers

The walkovers are a critical component of infrastructure of Folly Beach. Proper design and maintenance of these walkovers provides beachgoers with easy access to the beach while protecting the natural state of the dunes. These walkovers also increase the likelihood that Folly Beach will continue to acquire renourishment funds from the Federal Government. In prior years the City was in competition with other municipalities in Florida for beach renourishment funds. The number and quality of the walkovers helped Folly Beach compete for the funds.

The total funds necessary to complete all renovations and repairs is $772,676. The renovations and repairs will take place over several years in conjunction with future beach re-nourishment projects.
Section 2: Public Input
Summary of Public Input

Public input for the City of Folly Beach Comprehensive Plan: 2015 was gathered primarily through public meetings and a Citizen Survey. A series of twice monthly workshops was held beginning in December of 2014. These workshops, along with the regularly scheduled monthly Planning Commission meetings, allowed the public to offer input and suggestions on the Plan as it evolved. Formal public presentations were made at the completion of the each stage: Existing Conditions, Survey Review, and Needs and Goals. The Citizen Survey was distributed online and made available for approximately two months (paper copies were available to those who requested them). The survey was publicized extensively in both the Sandspur and the Folly Current. It was also linked to various City operated online accounts and sent to several large privately maintained email list serves. The input received from the public was combined with the analysis of existing conditions to develop the Needs, Goals, and Implementation strategies for the City.

Analysis of Citizen Survey

The Citizen Survey for the 2015 Plan set a record for formal public participation in any Comprehensive Plan survey conducted on Folly Beach. Highlights of the survey response analysis and the responses to the survey questions are below.

- 502 responses were received.
- 52.5% of respondents are full time residents, 47.5% are part time or non-residents.
- 68% of respondent own property, the remaining 31% do not.
- 29% of respondents are full time residents who rent.
- 15% of respondents own businesses the remaining 85% do not.
- 45.8% of respondent are male, 49.6% of respondent are female. The remaining 4.7% did not wish to provide that information.
- Age of respondents ranges from 22-81 with a Mean age of 52.

Survey Responses

How did you hear about Folly Beach? 486 people responded to this question. 9% of respondents claimed they grew up in the area, the remaining 91% indicated that they learned about Folly Beach from somebody they know: friend, relative, partner, etc. Due to the nature of open response text analysis this summary is not necessarily representative of the information. Individual responses can be found in Appendix A.

What are six words to describe Folly Beach? 477 People responded to this question. ‘Beautiful’ is the most commonly used term featured in 25.8% of responses. ‘Laid Back’ is in second place, making an appearance in 20.9% of responses. ‘Beach’ and ‘Relaxing’ are tied for third with 19.3%. ‘Funky’ comes in fourth place with 17%. ‘Community’ places fifth with 15.3%. Individual responses to this question can be found in Appendix A.

Is Folly Beach a resort with residents or a community with visitors? A majority of both residents (86.3%) and non residents (89.1%) answered that Folly Beach is a community with visitors.

How would you describe the frequency of street closings for festivals? Street festival street closings were described as “just enough” by 69.5% of residents and 78.4% of non residents.
What can Folly Beach be most proud of? (resident/nonresident answers combined)

**Answer Choices**

- Natural beauty
- People, community spirit, and civic pride
- Security, safety, police, & fire protection
- Parks/recreational facilities
- Historic buildings and/or sites
- Volunteer organizations Quality
- of streets and roads
- Availability of/accessibility to jobs
- Quality of residential development
- Churches, civic groups

**# of Responses**

- Natural beauty: 402
- People, community spirit, and civic pride: 361
- Security, safety, police, & fire protection: 270
- Parks/recreational facilities: 293
- Historic buildings and/or sites: 109
- Volunteer organizations Quality: 133
- of streets and roads: 130
- Availability of/accessibility to jobs: 67
- Quality of residential development: 175
- Churches, civic groups: 112

What are the most important issues facing the City? (average of resident/nonresident answers)

**Answer Choices**

- Preserving the small town character
- Beach renourishment
- Traffic control
- Adequate police, fire, and rescue services
- Housing affordability
- Maintaining the existing tax base
- Adequate recreational facilities
- Adequate parks
- Recruiting businesses

**#Rank**

- Preserving the small town character: 1
- Beach renourishment: 2
- Traffic control: 3
- Adequate police, fire, and rescue services: 4
- Housing affordability: 5
- Maintaining the existing tax base: 6
- Adequate recreational facilities: 7
- Adequate parks: 8
- Recruiting businesses: 9

How important are the following on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest? (average of resident/nonresident answers)

- Protecting Sensitive Natural Areas: 3.86
- Protecting Scenic Views/Rivers/Roads: 3.81
Protecting Natural Waters: 3.78

Preserving Wildlife Habitats: 3.72

Preserving Open Space: 3.64

Managing New Construction: 3.55

Improving Public Safety Services: 3.33

Improving Fire and Rescue Services: 3.33
Section 3: Needs, Goals, and Implementation Strategies
Organization of Needs, Goals, and Implementation Strategies

The input received from the public comment in the Citizen Survey, and throughout the planning process, combined with the analysis of existing conditions drives the development of the needs, goals, and implementation strategies for the City. The needs and goals that are identified in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan were developed to match those program areas that were deemed most important by Folly’s citizens. The 2015 Comprehensive Plan Identifies 38 Needs that the City must address for the nine elements: Land Use 2; Economics 6; Natural Resources 8; Transportation 5; Community Facilities 5; Cultural Resources 3; Housing 4; Population 5. Prior versions of the comprehensive plan dealt with each of the nine elements independently. Separating content areas creates difficulties in prioritization of limited budgets and resources. It also fails to take advantage of complementary goals and objectives. The 2015 Comprehensive Plan draws connections between the 38 Needs and the associated goals and implementation strategies by organizing them into three thematic areas.

1) Protecting Natural Resources. In the next decade Folly Beach must be prepared to adapt to the effects of sea level rise, decreasing federal and state funding, and increased tourism. The Plan recognizes the need for proactively managing the beach, the river and marsh areas, and wildlife habitat within the City.

2) Protecting Community Character. Folly Beach has long celebrated its status as an eclectic, welcoming community that has a distinctly different feel from other beach towns in Charleston County. The Comprehensive Plan: 2015 is a proactive document providing strategies for encouraging and maintaining the distinct social and physical atmosphere of the City.

3) Enhancing Public Services. Folly Beach is both a residential and a resort community. Each year residents, vacationers, and local businesses compete for limited resources. This document contains recommendations for projects and policies that address the level of service provided for each of these groups.

Protecting Natural Resources

10 Needs: Land Use 1; Economics 2; Natural Resources 7

Needs

1) Development has encroached on Property in Folly Beach includes beach front, marsh and wetland environments, and historically important lands and structures which must be protected through sensitive development. (Land Use)

   Goal: Eliminate existing encroachments upon sensitive water fronts, marshes, wetlands, and riparian areas while encouraging environmentally sensitive development to protect historical lands, structures, and features and preserve the aquatic environments that define the beauty of Folly Beach.

   Implementation: Vigorous enforcement of ordinances such as setbacks, sand dune disturbance, and impervious surfaces. Incorporate recognized Green Building Practices into the Folly Beach Building Code.

2) The City must develop and fund long term strategies to combat beach erosion including alternatives to renourishment in anticipation of the end of the current agreement with the Army Corp’s of Engineers. Funding must be secured for increasing expenses related to renourishment and also beach erosion during the duration of the contract with the Army Corps of Engineers and beyond. (Economics)
Goal: Research and evaluate alternatives to renourishment while developing, budgeting, monitoring, and implementing a systematic method of building beach preservation funds to assure the availability of the City’s portion of costs for future beach renourishments or future alternative methods of erosion management.

Implementation: Prepare to fund the worst case scenario while working toward the lowest possible cost. Budget so that funds will be available for potential renourishment projects taking place every six (6) years (or as needed) while also setting aside money for property acquisition. Work with the Sea Grant Consortium and other competent authorities to conduct a survey of current best practices for shoreline management and a review of current legal issues related to beach preservation. Review and assess both short and long-term alternatives to renourishment.

3) The 2015 Economic Impact Study identified a need to further document and study the number and frequency of beach visitations. This information could be crucial when the city approaches the Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal and State officials to secure future funding. (Economics)

Goal: Develop and implement a city program to collect and analyze data to systematically estimate quarterly and annual beach visitations.

Implementation: Task the Folly Beach Tourism and Visitor Promotion Committee with devising a method to more accurately measure quarterly and annual beach visitation statistics.

4) Severe erosion and the structures built to combat erosion limit access to the beach. The City currently has limited policies in place to limit erosion control structures built behind the Baseline. Shore-parallel hard structures, such as sea walls, exacerbate beachfront erosion and inhibit natural dune building; thus, public access and critical turtle nesting access are both reduced. As a net result of seawall-induced beach erosion, a critical local and state economic generator is also reduced. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Reduce the effects of erosion by allowing the beach to migrate more naturally.

Implementation: Mirror State law by prohibiting Consider regulations regarding the rebuilding of seawalls that are damaged beyond 50%. Prohibit or limit the construction of new seawalls.

5) The City must protect the dune system from erosion and also development. The dunes are the first line of defense against erosion. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Prevent the destruction and degradation of the dune system to protect the integrity of the renourishment project.

Implementation: Create buffer zones on top of setbacks to require the planting of sea oats and/or sand fencing during development and redevelopment. Create a management plan for the dune areas.

6) Folly Beach is home to threatened and endangered wildlife that needs to be protected from pressures related to development and increased crowding on the beaches and waterways. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Increase efforts to protect rare, endangered, and threatened wildlife.
Implementation: Enforce sea turtle lighting ordinances by working with lighting issues related to large oceanfront parcels such as the Tides and Oceanfront Villas. Develop an educational program to increase public awareness of wildlife issues. Create development standards that focus on maintaining natural habitat.

7) The Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission owns very large parcels on either end of the island. The City should coordinate with the PRC to maximize the protection of these parcels. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Increased coordination with CCRPC in the management and future planning of County owned property in the City of Folly Beach.

Implementation: Meet with CCPRC to determine potential conflicts with existing Master Plans and Folly Beach Planning efforts. Work with CCPRC to implement its long range plan for the Coast Guard station to develop the property as a passive access, educational facility. Reassess the amount of yearly financial contribution from CCPRC to the City.

8) The City must engage more fully with the river and other sensitive areas to balance access with protection. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Increase access to the river for nonmotorized boating and also restrict waterfront development.

Implementation: Create buffer zones on top of setbacks to require the planting of vegetation during development and redevelopment. Create kayak accesses in the footprints of the old bridges.

9) The City’s tree regulations have been amended from over restrictive to perhaps overly permissive. A better balance must be found. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Protect trees on Folly Beach with concise, easily understandable, and complete standards.

Implementation: Planning Commission review of tree ordinance revisions to include reinstituting tree coverage regulations.

10) Undeveloped, environmentally sensitive lands in the marsh behind Folly Island are not protected from intense development. (Natural Resources)

Goal: Protect marsh islands from inappropriately intense development.

Implementation: Create a new lower density zoning classification for Long Island. Work with Charleston County to insure that marsh islands out of Folly’s jurisdiction are regulated.

**Protecting Community Character**

12 Needs: Land Use 1; Economics 2; Transportation 2; Cultural Resources 2; Housing 3; Population 2

Needs

1) The character of Folly Beach’s residential and commercial districts is changing. (Land Use)
Goal: Protect and promote the small town character of Folly Beach that makes our town different from other barrier island communities.

Implementation: Promote construction design and uses that enhance the character of Folly Beach and offers desirable and attractive places for residents and visitors to live and for businesses and their customers to utilize and enjoy.

1) Ultra short term rentals (less than one week) are proliferating in the residential districts of the City. (Land Use)

Goal: Eliminate and/or Better Regulate business activities that degrade may affect the livability of both commercial and residential areas and increase efforts to identify rentals operating outside of current requirements.

Implementation: Review ordinances for rentals and consider limiting and regulating this type of activity.

2) Folly Beach is a seasonal destination and revenue falls drastically as the weather cools, negatively impacting local businesses. (Economics)

Goal: Make Folly Beach an attractive, year-round destination for residents, locals, and visitors.

Implementation: Add a seasonal component to the Folly Beach marketing program to specifically target off-season visitors based on year-round availability of activities, and creative off-season benefits, etc. Also add an off-season local marketing component in cooperation with Folly Association of Businesses to attract residents and nearby locals to patronize Folly Beach businesses.

3) There are currently no known metrics to measure the effectiveness of our local marketing program. (Economics)

Goal: Work with the TVPC to re-evaluate the current marketing program for Folly Beach and revise as needed to maximize positive returns. Consider concentrating marketing efforts regionally to increase off-season visitations and business.

Implementation: Work with marketing professionals and city stakeholders to develop metrics for analyzing the effectiveness of our current marketing program and determine appropriate improvements to be implemented to attain the stated, desired goals.

4) Increased demand for parking has led to the proliferation of paid parking lots. These lots limit the amount of commercial land available for other uses and detract from the streetscape and neighborhood character. (Transportation)

Goal: Commercial parking lots should be regulated to minimize visual impacts as well as study the location of new commercial parking lots.

Implementation: Develop requirements such as buffers and other visual screening for commercial lots that are similar to the requirements for other commercial uses. Limit the location of new lots to the areas closest to Center Street.

5) Parking requirements in the zoning code for the Downtown Commercial district stifle growth and prevent changes in use because of lack of land for required parking. (Transportation)
Goal: Amend the ordinances for DC parking.

Implementation: Remove or lessen the requirement for businesses to provide parking in the DC District. Businesses in the district were historically not required to provide on street parking.

6) There are several sites of local, state, and national importance in the City that need to be preserved and protected, and could be marketed for tourism. (Cultural Resources)

Goal: The City should offer continual municipal support of preserving our historic landmarks and older commercial and residential structures that contribute to the history of Folly Beach.

Implementation: Consider using A-Tax funds or other sources to make annual financial commitments to local groups and organizations whose efforts are directed towards maintaining Folly landmarks.

7) There are very limited offerings for Folly Beach-related tours and tour operators. (Cultural Resources)

Goal: The City should continue support of existing tours (boat, kayak, etc) but also development tools for bike, walking, and vehicle tourism with special attention to offseason opportunities.

Implementation: Create a database of existing historic sites, scenic views, places of interest, trails, and other attractions. Place this information on a map/brochure that can be distributed online and to the public.

8) The wide variety of housing styles in the City is in danger of being lost as new development maximizes zoning allowances. (Housing)

Goal: New development should be encouraged to embrace a wider variety of architectural forms, elements, and materials. If possible, older structures should be referenced or incorporated into new buildings.

Implementation: Create incentives for the use of existing structures and vernacular design in new construction. Encourage owners of older homes to elevate vs. demolish. Develop and publish an inventory of typical forms, materials, and elements to be used as reference for new construction.

9) Affordable home prices and rents remain elusive. (Housing)

Goal: The City should examine its zoning ordinances and make changes needed to allow for the construction of units that could be sold or rented for a wider variety of price ranges.

Implementation: Allow auxiliary residential structures units, small houses or rooms attached or unattached to the main structures. These units would be restricted from being used for short term rental and subject to other conditions.

10) Short term rentals are vital to the economy of Folly Beach, but sometimes create challenges for the community. (Housing)

Goal: The City should continue to actively address proper licensing of rentals and document short term rental issues by monitoring calls to Public Safety, SC DHEC, or other departments related to short term rentals to determine the impacts of these uses.
Implementation: Conduct an annual review of rental related issues. Develop a map of short term rentals. Place list of rental properties on the City webpage.

11) The City has a marketing program for tourists, but no similar program to attract future residents or businesses. (Population)

Goal: The TVPC is limited by law to only marketing for tourism. The City should take an active role in marketing itself to potential new residents and businesses.

Implementation: Develop a marketing brochure to post on the City’s website and distribute to rental agencies and units to promote City as a residential choice.

12) The existing program for marketing to tourists primarily focuses on summer tourism which results in overburdening the City during the high season. (Population)

Goal: The TVPC should adjust its tourism marketing plan to attract visitors in the winter rather than during the crowded summer months.

Implementation: Enact the recommendations in the 2015 Strategic Communications Plan created by the Tourism and Visitor’s Promotion Committee.

Enhancing Public Services

16 Needs: Economics 2; Natural Resources 1; Transportation 3; Community Facilities 5; Cultural Resources 1; Housing 1; Population 3

Needs

1) It is vital that the distribution of accommodation tax fund be used for a maximum benefit. (Economics)

Goal: Continue periodic reviews of local accommodations tax fund distribution to assure the maximum benefit for the City.

Implementation: Review the application process for city “A-tax” funds and monitor the performance and evaluate the impact of distributed funds. Assure that “A-tax” funds are being used to attain goals deemed important to the city and residents as outlined in the 2015 Comprehensive Plan.

2) The City has limited reserve funds for its long terms needs. (Economics)

Goal: Assure that city permits, licenses, parking fees, and other sources of revenue are adequate to fund necessary city functions. Re-examine contributions from various revenue sources to assure that contributions meet or exceed the cost of required city services and allow for the city’s funding of its part of future matching grants.

Implementation: Review all sources of revenue to ensure that fees and charges are at competitive rates. Create and fund reserve accounts for items identified as priorities.

3) Water quality is threatened by lack of stormwater facility maintenance and construction. (Natural Resources)
Goal: To reduce potential and actual pollution of ground and surface water.

Implementation: Map all drainage facilities on the island, establish regular monitoring to ensure proper functioning, and improve existing drainage systems and components, and work with Charleston County and DOT to identify and construct new drainage infrastructure where needed.

4) There are only partial inventories of parking spaces island wide, and known parking spaces are not actively maintained. (Transportation)

Goal: Create a program to manage on street parking on the island.

Implementation: Inventory and define all parking spaces. Open existing spaces to facilitate parking, focusing on the first 3 blocks from Center Street and along Ashley and Arctic. Investigate the future use of paid on street parking in the right of way. Use Public Works to maintain ROW parking. Enforce DOT and City prohibitions against private no parking signs.

5) Commercial Parking lots are not adequately regulated in terms of attractiveness or efficiency. (Transportation)

Goal: Ensure that commercial parking lots are attractive, well maintained, and user friendly.

Implementation: Enact landscaping and screening ordinances for commercial parking lots. Monitor parking lots to remove encroachments into the right of way.

6) Traffic volumes on the island are increasing and creating dangerous situations for cyclists and pedestrians. (Transportation)

Goal: Improve traffic flow and make Folly safer for all users including cyclists and pedestrians.

Implementation: Pursue public transportation options through a partnership with CARTA, including a special route during festivals and other special events. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to implement the Folly Road Corridor Study. Create alternate pathways for pedestrians. Enhance road shoulders to allow for use by pedestrians. Study the conversion of Arctic Avenue to one lane. Explore financing options for sidewalks. Task Public Works with cleaning intersections for visibility. Pursue an island wide 25mph speed limit.

7) There is a need for an increase in the number and type of parks and other recreational facilities in the City. The City wishes to provide safe places for children to play, increase opportunities for walking by the water and other water based recreation, provide additional picnic areas, and create well maintained areas in which to exercise and relax. (Community Facilities)

Goal: Full implementation of the 5 Year Parks and Recreation Plan as well as maintenance and improvement of existing recreation facilities.

Implementation: Continue annual budget allocations for Parks and Recreation to build facilities described in 5 Year Plan. Review options for the provision of seasonal restroom facilities along the beachfront.
8) At present there is no updated map or inventory of the water and sewer infrastructure. There are vulnerabilities that need to be assessed as well as limited reserves for replacement. (Community Facilities)

**Goal:** Continued funding for future water/sewer system infrastructure replacement reserves. Locating, mapping, and evaluating the existing water/sewer lines.

**Implementation:** Make yearly contributions to appropriate reserve accounts for water and sewer. Work with Sea Grant Consortium on mapping infrastructure as part of an overall resiliency effort. Hire an outside engineering firm to assess the system and develop a depreciation schedule. Involve the Utilities Advisory Board with infrastructure planning.

9) Youth services are not widely advertised or coordinated with local nonprofits, agencies, and organizations. (Community Facilities)

**Goal:** Centralizing information about youth services and programs offered by the City as well as other public and private entities. This information is useful to both residents and visitors.

**Implementation:** Add a youth services page to City website.

10) There is a continuing need for opening and maintaining mid block rights of way. (Community Facilities)

**Goal:** Continued funding and implementation of the mid block rights of way program.

**Implementation:** Create an “adopt-a-right-of-way” program to encourage residents/businesses/non-profits to take responsibility for specific sections of the mid block easements. Continue to apply for Coastal Access Grants for ocean front mid block walkovers and beach accesses.

11) The island remains mostly dependent on onsite septic systems for waste management. (Community Facilities)

**Goal:** Coordination with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control regarding septic system monitoring and regulation.

**Implementation:** Consider ordinances to require regular pumping and inspections of septic tanks that service rental properties. Explore alternate strategies related to waste management to reduce reliance on septic systems.

12) There is no public collection, exhibition, or facility dedicated to Folly Beach’s history. (Cultural Resources)

**Goal:** The City should work to create a Folly Beach Museum or reading room.

**Implementation:** Start a central drop-off and collection center at City Hall or the Community Center to gather literature, memorabilia, etc. As the creation grows, task a City Hall intern with archiving and developing a plan for display.

13) Many residents and property owners are unclear on or unaware of the impacts of changes to federal legislation which result in increased insurance premiums for most property owners on Folly Beach. (Housing)
Goal: The City should increase communication with property owners about potential changes to flood insurance and wind and hail programs.

Implementation: Hold an annual town hall meeting or public work session devoted to insurance issues. A meeting summary should also be sent to out of town property owners.

14) The City must provide services to accommodate an increasing number of visitors as a result of population increases in the tri county region. (Population)

Goal: Provide adequate public safety and other services to handle daily, transient population levels.

Implementation: Create a database of calls to Public Safety to track seasonal increases in volume. This database can be used to justify funding levels as well as the adjustment of services such as beach and parking patrols.

15) The City does not offer a wide variety of government sponsored/provided social and recreational programming. (Population)

Goal: Partner with outside agencies to promote programming available through other local governments, non-profits, and social organizations.

Implementation: Dedicate space on the City’s website for a centralized database of local programs and activities.

16) The City has no regular schedule for communicating important issues to nonresident property owners. (Population)

Goal: Increased dialogue between the City and out of town property owners.

Implementation: Conduct at least one annual outreach, such as the State of the City, to property owners.
Maps
Land Use Maps

Current Zoning

Existing Land Use

Future Land use