

SIPOA  
Strategic  
Plan

January 1

2021

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## ***Introduction***

The Seabrook Island community is idyllic in many ways but is also a very complex organization. Complex organizations require structure and planning to ensure they remain environmentally, economically and culturally vibrant. The structural framework of our organization is provided by the Seabrook Island Property Owners Association (SIPOA) Protective Covenants (our Constitution) and Bylaws. These governing documents lay the foundation for effective governance and economic and environmental sustainability.

Among other things, one of the primary purposes of SIPOA is to preserve the property values and the quality of life in the Seabrook Island Development. Our Covenants specify responsibilities for ensuring the economic vibrancy of the organization, maintaining a secure community, protection of the natural environment, acquisition and preservation of green space, and the maintenance of our infrastructure.

The SIPOA Bylaws further define how the organization will be governed--via committees and a board of directors which provide oversight of the professional staff and have the responsibility to define further the policies and rules and regulations within the community.

These governing documents provide the frame and canvas for the picture. The Board and Committee members and staff then apply the colors and textures to create the portrait of modern-day Seabrook Island.

In 2017 SIPOA became just the sixth worldwide and the first private community in South Carolina to be certified as an Audubon International Sustainable Community. To become certified, communities must develop and implement management practices and policies according to a community-driven Long-Term Sustainability Plan (LTSP). The plan has timelines and measurable goals addressing 14 focus areas, including wildlife conservation and habitat enhancement, water conservation, energy efficiency, health, and transportation. As a sustainable community, SIPOA makes decisions underpinned by the 3 Essentials - economic vitality, a healthy environment and quality of life.

In 2016, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) named Seabrook Island as one of the nation's best restored beaches. There are three main

reasons for beach restoration:

- **Storm protection** – A wide sandy beach helps separate storm waves from upland structures and infrastructure.
- **Habitat restoration** – Numerous species rely on wide, healthy beaches as a place to live, feed, rest and nest.
- **Recreation** – America’s beaches are its largest national park with 2.2 billion visits in 2010 – more than twice the numbers of visitors to all our federal and state parks combined.

According to ASBPA officials, “The Seabrook Island restoration project clearly demonstrates the importance of developing a **long-term management plan** that works with the natural processes to overcome severe erosion.” This project shows that a beach restoration can be successful in a dynamic environment if you clearly understand the coastal processes and develop a **plan** that works with the coastal processes to achieve the restoration of the beach.”

Input from property owners consistently shows that the natural environment remains a major reason for their purchase of property on Seabrook Island. Also, the maintenance of the natural environment is a contributing factor to the economic vitality of our community. Recognition by the Audubon International Sustainable Communities and ASBPA indicates that SIPOA maintains a planning process that not only respects who we are but also continues to move us in a positive direction for the future.

Further validation of our focus on the three “Essentials” is shown by SIPOA’s designation as a “Blue Ribbon Community” by the Community Associations Institute. This program recognizes communities that develop and maintain standards, encourage community participation, maintain fiscal stability and positively impact quality of life for residents.

SIPOA’s Strategic Plan defines the long-term goals and objectives that are set by the SIPOA Board of Directors, the Standing Committees of SIPOA and the SIPOA Administrative Staff. Each of these long-term goals has been put forward by one of these three entities and finalized by SIPOA Board of Director approval. Each Goal is fleshed out with a Context statement describing the background and rationale behind the Goal. Each Goal also elaborates Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) that clearly identify the main milestones for achievement during the coming calendar year. These KPI’s reflect the long-term strategic direction of the Goal and point the way down the path to achievement with shorter term milestones to provide for on-going measurement of progress.

The annual SIPOA operating budget incorporates inputs from the Standing Committees and Administrative Staff and is aligned with Strategic Plan Goals by reflecting approved KPI’s. Once the operating budget is approved by the SIPOA Board of Directors and by the Seabrook Island Property Owners at the annual meeting the SIPOA Staff is responsible to execute the Operational Plan during the current year.

## Strategic Plan Drivers

### *Seabrook Island Vision Statement – A shared Vision of SIPOA and the Seabrook Island Club*

Seabrook Island is a private residential community with lifestyle amenities for all ages where homeowners control their own destiny and, with their guests, share a unique sense of belonging in a natural, forested, ocean-front environment. Recreation and leisure facilities are provided for the use and enjoyment of the Seabrook Island Community.

### *SIPOA Mission Statement*

SIPOA will strive to preserve property values and to enhance the quality of life for SIPOA Property Owners and their guests by:

- Providing for sustained economic vibrancy of the organization
- Being proactive stewards of the natural environment
- Ensuring a secure and architecturally attractive community
- Constructing and maintaining high quality infrastructure, facilities and amenities
- Striving for excellence in all operations
- Communicating openly; maintaining a culture of professionalism and transparency

### *The 3 Essentials for Sustainability on Seabrook Island (Our 3 Essentials mirror the 3 Pillars of the Audubon International Certifiable Sustainable Community)*

- I. Quality of Life
- II. Healthy Environment
- III. Economic Vitality

## SIPOA Strategic Goals / Responsibilities and KPI's - 2021

This section of the Strategic Plan identifies the key long-term goals that the Standing Committees and the Board have approved for this year's Strategic Plan update. Each Strategic Goal is accompanied by an assignment of responsibility – where there is shared responsibility the "Lead" Committee or entity is identified. Each Strategic Goal has been rated in terms of importance – i.e. STRATEGIC, HIGH or MEDIUM. Also included for each Strategic Goal are Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) or Milestones that are targeted during the coming 1-2 years. Each Strategic Goal has a multiple year, or indefinite, timeframe. The KPI's / milestones are

specific targets that can be tracked and reported on with regularity. Since our Strategic Plan is updated annually we will have the ability to update these KPI's each year to keep them timely and relevant. The management of the KPI's is a shared one between SIPOA Committees, the SIPOA Board and SIPOA Administration. The operational work is with SIPOA Administration. The oversight and management of the long-term vision is with SIPOA Standing Committees and the SIPOA Board.

The Strategic Goals themselves flow from the Shared Vision Statement and the SIPOA Mission Statement. The achievement of some goals is not wholly within the purview of SIPOA. Where it is not possible to take unilateral action SIPOA works with other stakeholders, like the Seabrook Island Club (SIC) and the Town of Seabrook Island (TOSI). As it can, SIPOA generates solutions, action plans, contingency plans or, at the very least, closely monitors important issues that are beyond our control.

There is an appendix to this year's plan where the Strategic Goals are populated into a spreadsheet that can be sorted digitally in any way that a reader might wish – i.e. in terms of importance, responsible entity, etc.

The Strategic Goals are presented below in order of rated Importance – Strategic / High / Medium

### [Strategic Goals for the 2021 Strategic Plan \(10+ years\)](#)

#### **GOAL #1: Comprehensive flooding and drainage management**

**CONTEXT:** The biggest ongoing issue facing Seabrook is flooding (and its associated flooding mitigation efforts). The ongoing rehabilitation of the existing drainage infrastructure and the infrastructure improvements proposed in the Drainage Study are very important to both SIPOA and SIC

**IMPORTANCE: Strategic Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: GOMC (Lead); SIPOA Board liaison with SIC**

#### **MILESTONES:**

1. Implement the recommendations of the 2020 Drainage Study as outlined in the implementation schedule.
2. Accelerate the implementation of the Drainage Study as regulatory approval and budget allow

**GOAL #2: Study the capabilities and utilization of the Lake Houses and Oyster Catcher facilities and propose enhancements / upgrades to reflect forecasted demographic changes on Seabrook Island and maintain the competitiveness of Seabrook Island to comparable private beachfront communities.**

**CONTEXT:** Demographics of Seabrook Island residents is forecast to change with larger numbers of younger buyers purchasing homes on the Island. We need to ensure that SIPOA facilities remain attractive to these prospective buyers. Beach parking is becoming an increasing issue during peak summer rental periods. The Board authorized the Long-Range Planning Committee to establish a subcommittee to evaluate needs, based on study of projected demographics, future activity trends and recreational, social and educational needs of the community.

**IMPORTANCE: Strategic Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long Range Planning; Facilities Subcommittee (Lead)**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Explore options for upgrades to the Lake House and the Community Center
2. Engage outside expertise for recommendations and future expectations
3. Develop a proposal for the Board's consideration by November. Proposal to include "ballpark" cost estimates for several alternatives

**GOAL #3: Broader participation of Seabrook Island residents in SIPOA affairs – both at Board and Committee levels.**

**CONTEXT:** It is in the best interest of SIPOA and all Seabrook Island residents to have active participation of homeowners in affairs that affect all of us. There are many very knowledgeable and extremely capable homeowners on Seabrook Island and it is vital to the long-term well-being of our community to leverage the skills and capabilities of our residents. Committee membership affords a great opportunity for homeowners to participate in Island affairs and to contribute in a meaningful way to on-going management and development. Board level participation is a more time-intensive undertaking but with commensurate greater opportunity to participate in key decision-making that defines the future of Seabrook Island. With greater participation in Committees it is only natural that there will be broader and more uniform appreciation of all Island resident in SIPOA affairs and initiative as each participant will have greater knowledge and enhanced capability to explain these affairs to their friends and family.

**IMPORTANCE: Strategic Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long Range Planning, Volunteerism Subcommittee (Lead)**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Determine the causes and reasons hindering property owner volunteering and participation at the SIPOA Board and committee levels;
2. Determine the causes and reasons hindering property owner voter participation in Annual Meetings; and
3. Establish recommendations for improvements in volunteerism and Annual Meeting participation

**GOAL #4: Comprehensive Plan to upgrade and develop the front end of Seabrook Island – the area stretching from Town Hall to the Lake House.**

**CONTEXT:** Upgrades to the front of Seabrook Island have been considered in the past (i.e. Sense of Place report, Mobility Subcommittee of LRP) and preliminary efforts have been made to show concepts for development. This is a potentially major project that would have far-reaching benefits for all stakeholders in SI. Referred to as “Entry Redesign” in the SOP report the scope of this project is one of the first things that would need to be defined (to include such things as traffic calming, road crossing safety, new bike paths, enhancement of SI gate access at peak periods, potential new amenities at the Entry to Seabrook Island, etc.) as it would be undertaken at the same time there are other important demands for capital investments.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: SIPOA Board – Lead; Safety & Security; GOMC; LRP**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Initiate discussions with TOSI and SIC to involve all three parties in discussions about development in areas where all three parties have property ownership / responsibilities (initial meeting already held)
2. Establish a regular working group to share development plans already in place
3. Within the group initiate discussions regarding comprehensive, shared development of the front end of the Island, including development of a timeline plan for accomplishment

**GOAL #5: Improved traffic safety throughout Seabrook Island (pedestrian, bicycle, vehicle).**

**CONTEXT:** Traffic on Seabrook Island remains an important issue requiring continual monitoring. Modes of mobility continue to expand with improvements in technology including

LSVs and electric powered vehicles. At the same time, our population continues to grow and expands significantly on a seasonal basis. Whether we think about the potential impact on full time residents, part timers, family guests or vacationers, traveling around the island, whether as a necessity or for pleasure, is vital. To date we have been fortunate with a minimum number of serious accidents, however, the risk remains and multiplies with the increasing number of people and vehicles on our roads. Safety remains a principal concern for everyone on the island. Our ongoing, aspirational goal remains “zero critical incidents”.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Safety and Security**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Research what other communities are doing to maintain and improve vehicle/bike/pedestrian safety in their communities
2. Establish a subcommittee to work with a traffic consultant to develop recommendations for improving vehicle/bike/pedestrian safety on the island
3. Coordinate the above recommendations with GOMC and the team working on Goal #4, upgrade the front end of the Island to ensure the recommendations are in sync
4. Work with the communications committee to develop a communication plan to prepare and get buy-in from Seabrookers on changes in how our roads will be used (more stop signs? speed bumps? bicycle paths to encourage bikers to get off SIR, etc.)

**GOAL #6: Manage native wildlife species by striving for appropriate predator / prey ratios using such approaches as habitat modification and improvements.**

**CONTEXT:** Surveys of Seabrook Island’s property owners and visitors consistently show a high degree of appreciation for our natural attributes - our flora and fauna. Wildlife sightings routinely delight viewers of all ages. A healthy, well balanced wildlife population requires a healthy habitat. Unfortunately, this habitat shrinks with each new property development, so it is critical that we professionally manage that which remains. We must monitor the vitality of our wildlife population and habitat and recommend steps to protect it from degradation. A specific part of this endeavor must focus on our bobcat population, which has the added benefit of assisting in the control of the deer, squirrel and rat population

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Environmental Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Monitor Green Space properties donated to SIPOA for invasive species and tag for

- removal (in progress)
2. Develop articles for publication to help educate SIPOA community on the importance of balanced wildlife populations and importance of predators in controlling excess populations (on- going)
  3. Continue to monitor second generation rodenticide use on Seabrook Island and work to reduce or eliminate its' impact to critical predators such as owls and bobcats (in progress/future coordination with Kiawah Island biologists)
  4. Develop opportunities with Camp St. Christopher to further the habitat restoration/management objectives for Seabrook Island wildlife populations (in progress)

**Goal #7: Create a long-term waterfront (lakes, creeks, lagoons, marsh areas) plan for maintaining / enhancing attractiveness with clear responsibilities (SIPOA in coordination with SIC and TOSI) for addressing the issues likely to arise from silting, tidal flooding, erosion, sea level rise, etc. considering the current / potential impacts of climate change.**

**CONTEXT:** Water management is important to SIPOA's maintenance of lakes, marshes, and lagoons. Maintenance includes monitoring adequate and recommended water levels, reducing nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen entering these bodies of water from runoff or human activity, and maintaining proper oxygen levels to support fish, amphibians, turtles and other aquatic organisms.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Environmental Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Review the current SIPOA Lake Management Report for possible revisions, additions, and future action items (in progress)
2. Work with other SIPOA committees (GOMC) to ensure proposed drainage and flooding projects do not impact critical aquatic habitat and water quality (future)
3. Develop articles for publication to help educate SIPOA community on the importance of maintaining water quality in our lakes and lagoons to support healthy fish and wildlife populations (future)

**GOAL#8: Education of Community on issues related to flooding and on-going flooding mitigation efforts and programs.**

**CONTEXT:** As Lowcountry residents, we accept the fact that flooding is an environmental reality. No matter what form of property residents own, they owe it to themselves to be fully aware of the breadth of issues and related implications on their investment impacted by flooding. Local sea level rise will continue to slowly increase the incidence of nuisance tidal

flooding. In addition, nuisance tidal flooding in concert with rainfall events will also exacerbate fresh water flooding. Currently, a significant multiple year program of capital projects has been and will be rehabilitating and upgrading Seabrook's drainage infrastructure. Our ability as a community to address flooding, related issues and decisions being made for the benefit of our residents will be enhanced by our having a solid understanding of the environmental realities with which we co-exist.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Communications Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Establish a Board Member Sponsor Committee (done)
2. Define scope (done)
3. Design program deliverables (done)
4. Establish close liaison with GOMC to obtain and to review educational materials
5. Introduce program to community (August 2021)
6. Evaluate program effectiveness for input to 2022 deliverables (November 2021)

**GOAL #9: SIPOA staffing levels commensurate with providing high levels of service.**

**CONTEXT:** SIPOA staffing has not kept pace with the growth in the volume of work required over a long period of time. We have been underinvesting in our organization. As a result, there is little organizational back-up capacity, no redundancy and no organizational depth. We have struggled, and continue to struggle, to recruit staff. Normal operations strain the organization as Seabrook Island continues to grow. For example, we have had limited capacity to continue to upgrade SIPOA's communications channels and generate/process SIPOA communications content. We have on-going needs such as maintenance and development of the SIPOA website requiring on-going attention. The capacity to undertake or support Board or Committee-commissioned projects has been extremely limited. We have a talented management team that needs help with implementation

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Board; SIPOA Admin (Lead)**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Fill vacancies in Admin office
2. Relocate Commercial Access annual pass office to Admin building
3. Add to ARC staff for improved enforcement and customer service/response time
4. Coordinate with Norred to review gate coverage/patrols during peak times

**GOAL #10: Improve and maintain safe beach access (to and from) for all Seabrook Island residents and guests. Improve beach parking (especially during peak periods), rest room facilities and showers.**

**CONTEXT:** The beach on Seabrook Island is viewed by a majority of residents and visitors as our most important asset. The number of access points to the beach has declined in number in recent years. While there is a lack of property on which to construct new access points (boardwalks or paths) it is important to be alert for opportunities that may arise in the future to add access points. We also want to continually improve the parking situation, especially during summer months, which is also difficult given availability of space / property. Beach amenities such as rest room facilities and showers should be further developed, as possible, on an on-going basis.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: GOMC (Lead); Long-Range Planning Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Make all beach accesses ADA compliant where beach topography and regulatory agencies permit
2. Establish shower stations at repaired Beach Accesses 3B and 9.
3. Test LSV Parking at Beach Access 7

**GOAL #11: Monitor the amount / intensity of rental activity on Seabrook Island over time to establish trend lines and directions and to learn as much as possible from other similar communities.**

**CONTEXT:** Seabrook Island is a balance of residential community and resort. However, rental activity on Seabrook Island may well be trending up. If so, that might well impact things like parking, gate access, facilities usage, peak traffic, etc. Monitoring will enable identification of any trends. Understanding the experiences of other communities may help anticipate potential issues.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long-Range Planning Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Contact key Rental Companies for data sharing
2. Establish information sharing with TOSI regarding business licenses for short – term

rentals

3. Identify key metrics for practical monitoring of rental activity and begin monitoring

**GOAL #12: Develop and include in current and future planning documents Milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to enable greater transparency for measurement of progress at Committee, Board and Administration levels. Each responsible group (Committee, Board, Administration) will develop their own Milestones for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.**

**CONTEXT:** Strategic Plans need to be living documents in order to be effective management tools. The Strategic Plan takes a long view to identify desired direction for development and management of Seabrook Island. If there are no short / medium term KPI's associated with the long-term goals that are articulated in the Strategic Plan it becomes difficult to track progress down what can be a long road to completion. Some Strategic Goals may not have a defined end-point but define critical activities that need to be managed at a high level and on an on-going basis. SIPOA Standing Committees all have a charter that defines their responsibilities and areas of focus. Strategic Goals are in addition to the "everyday" working of Standing Committees and these KPI's should be designed in such a way, by each Committee / Group of SIPOA, that assigned Strategic Goals are not lost in the minutia of "everyday" activities. The KPI's provide a means to keep an eye to the long-term while managing the demands of the short-term.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Each SIPOA Committee and SIPOA Admin to develop KPI's for assigned Strategic Goals; Long-Range Planning for consolidation and reporting / tracking**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Board approval for 2021 Strategic Plan (done)
2. Development of KPI's / Milestones by each Committee / Admin (Q2 2021)
3. Bi-annual review of progress (June, 2021)
4. Bi-annual review of progress (December, 2021)

**GOAL #13: Community-wide access to state-of-the-art communication infrastructure (video, voice, data, wired and wireless options, 5G connectivity, etc.)**

**CONTEXT:** Communications infrastructure and technology are important competitive characteristics of high-end private communities. In order for Seabrook Island to remain competitive with comparable communities it is important to pay attention to this rapidly developing area and take steps to ensure that residents have access to emerging improvements. Infrastructure (i.e. 5G) is expensive and it may be necessary to join with other

interested communities / organizations to provide sufficient incentive for providers to include Seabrook Island in their planning.

**IMPORTANCE: High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long-Range Planning (Lead); Communications Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Contact service providers to learn about their planning (Comcast done)
2. Explore joint efforts with other interested and relevant communities
3. Develop an on-going program to monitor key technologies and service providers

**GOAL #14: On-going measurement and benchmarking of Seabrook Island property values, demographics and amenities relative to comparable private beach front communities.**

**CONTEXT:** Seabrook Island considers itself an upscale private beach front community. There are other such private communities, with and without beach access, that compete with Seabrook Island for investment by new property owners. Residents on Seabrook Island have the expectation that property values on Seabrook Island will maintain their position relative to these competing communities over time and perhaps even improve. In order to accomplish that it is necessary to understand on an on-going basis the services and amenities offered by competing communities, trends in those services and amenities and changing demographics in order to develop effective plans to maintain Seabrook Island's competitive positioning.

**IMPORTANCE: Medium / High Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long-Range Planning**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Develop a template for benchmarking reporting (done)
2. Agree a list of "comparable communities" for on-going benchmarking reporting (done)
3. Reach out to "comparable communities" to enlist their participation in the benchmarking reporting
4. Prepare initial benchmarking report by the end of the year. Decide frequency of subsequent reporting

**GOAL 15: Monitor and recommend, as appropriate, incorporation of alternative energy technologies (solar, wind, etc.) for Seabrook Island.**

**CONTEXT:** Sustainably managed communities make wise choices about energy usage. In addition to seeking gains in energy efficiency, a sustainable community considers the source of

its power. Options for electricity generated by solar, wind are becoming increasingly cost competitive with fossil fuel-based power. SIPOA should stay abreast of developments in these areas, consider their applicability to our facilities and homes and make our POs aware of opportunities to obtain power from renewable sources.

**IMPORTANCE: Medium Importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: Long-Range Planning (Lead); Environmental Committee**

**MILESTONES:**

1. Invite a leading solar energy installer to visit Seabrook Island and report on opportunities for solar energy to augment existing electricity sources
2. Consider solar water heating and cooling in SIPOA pools (support from GOMC)
3. Obtain feedback from existing users of home solar collectors on Seabrook Island and from those enrolled in the BEC solar share program

**GOAL 16: Educate residents on the challenges/opportunities associated with housing in disrepair and develop a plan to encourage residents to upgrade/renew homes and villas in disrepair.**

**CONTEXT:** A common denominator for all property owners here on Seabrook Island, whether full time residents, part timers, or rental property owners is that we have all chosen to invest in Seabrook Island. With that premise in mind, we all share the responsibility for continuing to maintain our properties not only for our potential individual benefit, but for the Seabrook Island community overall. Living in the Low Country, where our climate can play havoc with building materials, infrastructure, etc. puts continuous pressure on property owners to attend to their investment for our mutual benefit.

**IMPORTANCE: Medium importance**

**RESPONSIBILITY: ARC**

**MILESTONES:**

Following discussions with ARC it has been agreed that due to the current unprecedented level of activity on Seabrook Island both in terms of new housing construction as well as home re-modelling the ARC Committee (and support Staff) are completely "maxed out" of capacity. The activity now underway should have a meaningful impact on the "housing in disrepair" issue and no further initiative will be undertaken this year beyond the ARC's "normal" work. This Strategic Goal will be maintained and the milestone question will be revisited following the 2022 Annual Meeting

# Appendix 1

## Data Gathering

Data Gathering is an important and essential activity of the Long-Range Planning Committee. To ensure that the SIPOA is responsive to the needs of the community and continues to move in a positive direction, data must be collected and evaluated.

Collection of information and data from the island population and sub-groups is vital in any planning process. The following plan helps to ensure that information is gathered from as many varied groups on Seabrook Island as possible.

Single-issue “pulse” surveys can be conducted at any time to gather more specific information for the board and/or any SIPOA committee.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Frequency	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Size	2-3 Groups	Full		Full	2-3 Groups
Process	Focus Groups	Survey	Retreat	Survey	Focus Groups