

Version 8.6
06/19/2023

SIPOA
Strategic
Plan

2023

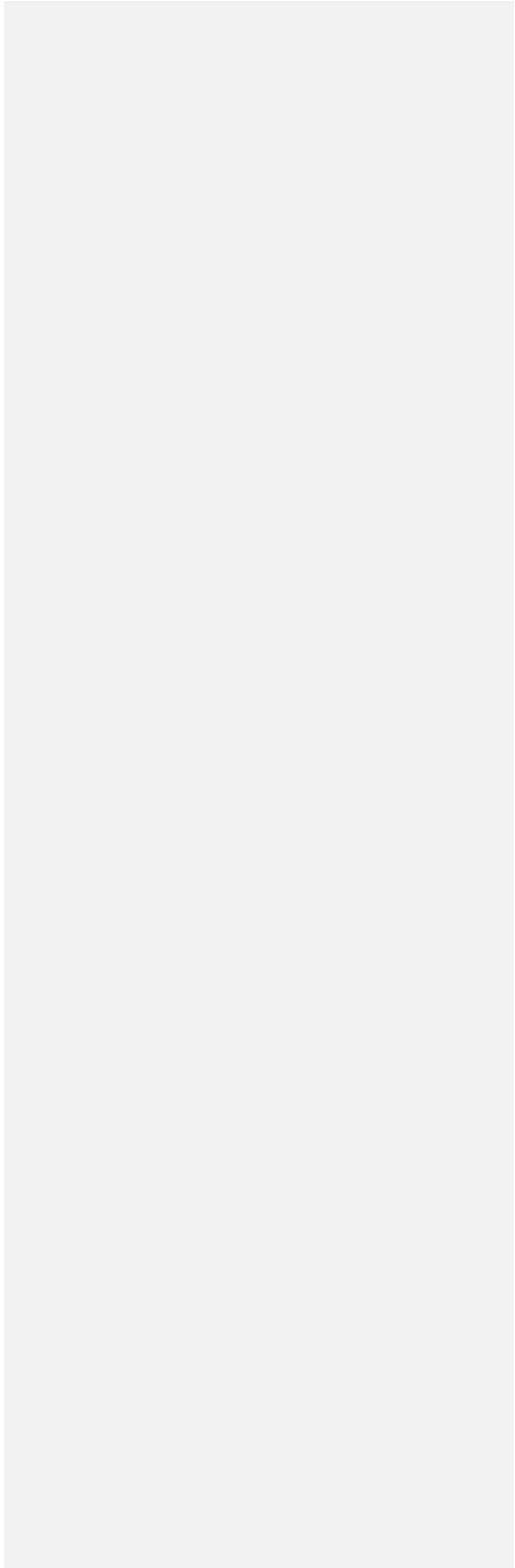


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Introduction

The Seabrook Island community is idyllic in many ways and has a complex governance structure of which our Property Owner Association (SIPOA) is a part. The framework of our organization is provided by the SIPOA Protective Covenants (our Constitution) and Bylaws. These documents lay the foundation for effective governance and our economic and environmental sustainability.

There are three separate and distinct entities on Seabrook Island.

1. SIPOA. The “Planned Development District” (PDD) of Seabrook Island was initially approved by the Charleston County Council in 1971. The original PDD called for 1200–1600 single family homesites with 1400-1600 multi-family residences. In 1972, the Articles of Incorporation for SIPOA were filed. SIPOA is a 501C4 non-profit association governed by a 12- member Board of Directors that provides municipal-type services and association governance for properties within the Seabrook Island Development (SID). Facilities include the Lake House, Community Center, Gatehouse, Admin Building and Maintenance Area, plus roadways, stormwater drainage systems, common property, etc.
2. The Town of Seabrook Island (TOSI) is a municipality governed by a Mayor and Town Council. TOSI’s jurisdiction includes areas within the Town boundaries including areas both inside and outside the gate. The Town was incorporated in 1987 which allowed for important changes from the past: it created TOSI’s ability to enact its own zoning and design standards, wresting control from Charleston County, and put an end to the then-developer’s County-approved plan to build high-rise structures along Seabrook Island Road. Incorporation also shut down commercial development behind the gate. TOSI’s 2019 Comprehensive Plan calls for 1537 single family homes and 1690 single family attached and multi-family residences.
3. The first beach club, the Seabrook Island Beach and Cabana Club (1973/74) was created for private membership. Now known as the Seabrook Island Club (SIC), it is a private club (mutual benefit non-profit corporation) which is governed by a Board of Governors. Seabrook Island Real Estate (SIRE) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Club. Club facilities include golf, Racquet Club, Equestrian, Island House, Ocean Terrace, Beach Club and the Real Estate office. The 2006 Island One referendum amending the SIPOA Restrictive Covenants required all new property purchasers on Seabrook Island, (unless grandfathered) to become members of SIC. Most, but not all, Property Owners are members of the Club.

This Strategic Plan addresses the long-term goals and objectives of SIPOA, as distinct from TOSI and SIC. SIPOA's 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. Article II, §2.3 of the SIPOA Bylaws defines the purpose of SIPOA, and the document further defines how the organization will be governed. The SIPOA Board of Directors has the responsibility to define community policies, rules and regulations, take action for the mutual benefit of Property Owners and SIPOA, and support strategic objectives.

For all of its existence, the residents of Seabrook Island have valued Seabrook Island's natural beauty and have always had a strong impetus to preserve and renew its environment. In 2017, reflecting this strong environmental orientation, SIPOA became the first private community in South Carolina and the sixth worldwide 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) based on *3 Essentials* - economic vitality, a healthy local environment, and quality of life. The plan has timelines and measurable goals addressing 14 focus areas, including wildlife conservation, habitat enhancement, energy conservation, sustainable practices and health/wellness/education. SIPOA demonstrated achievement of many of the goals and earned recertification from Audubon International in 2020. As a Sustainable Community, SIPOA continues to make decisions and plans based on the *3 Essentials*.

One of the unique and most prized elements of the Seabrook Island environment is our beautiful beach. 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 and remains the best protection from encroaching seas and storm driven waves.
- **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 visitor volume more than 40% higher than the number of visitors to all our federal, state parks and theme parks combined. Beaches are the leading US tourist destination for both national and international visitors. Beaches generate \$225 billion/year for the national economy (2020).

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 and ASBPA indicates that SIPOA maintains a planning process that respects who we are and continues to move us in a positive direction for the future.

Further validation of our focus on the three "Essentials" (see below) is given by SIPOA's designation as a "Blue Ribbon Community" by the Community Associations Institute (CAI). This CAI 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 (10+ years) set by the SIPOA Board of Directors, Standing Committees, and the SIPOA Administrative Staff. Each of these strategic goals has been incorporated into the Plan by SIPOA’s Long Range Planning Committee (LRP) and approved by the SIPOA Board of Directors. Figure 1 below summarizes the SIPOA Strategic Planning lifecycle as supported by the Long-Range Planning Committee as of the 2023 Strategic Plan:

Figure 1.



In parallel to the LRP lifecycle, the annual SIPOA budget incorporates inputs from the Standing Committees and Administrative Staff and is aligned with Strategic Plan Goals. Once the operating budget is approved by the Property Owners at SIPOA’s Annual Meeting, the SIPOA Staff is responsible to execute the Operational Plan during the year.

Strategic Plan Drivers and SWOT

SIPOA Vision Statement Approved by the SIPOA Board of Directors in December 2021.

To be an idyllic ocean-front environment where neighbors collaborate to sustain and renew our island’s natural beauty and experience a wonderful quality of life.

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*
- *Maintaining a culture of professionalism and open communications*

The 3 Essentials for Sustainability on Seabrook Island (The 3 Essentials mirror the 3 Pillars of Sustainability for an Audubon International Certified Sustainable Community)

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



The Strategic Goals themselves flow from the SIPOA Vision Statement, Mission Statement, 3 Essentials and data gathered from Property Owners (see Appendix 4 - Data Gathering). 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.

SWOT Analysis

The LRP has organized the external and internal forces which could impact the vision and mission of SIPOA into strengths, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT) assessment.

Appendix 2 provides additional background on the SWOT framework which is commonly used by organizations as a tool for strategic planning. This framework will be updated by LRP at least annually as part of the strategic planning lifecycle.

Appendix 3 provides the 2023 SWOT analysis considered in development of this Strategic Plan.

2023 SIPOA Strategic Goals / Responsibilities and Milestones

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.

Each Goal contains a Context statement describing the background and rationale behind the Goal and Milestones that clearly identify targets for achievement during the next 1-2 years. These Milestones represent steps along the path to Goal achievement and provide a means for ongoing measurement of progress. All of the Milestones are prepared and implemented by the Responsible Committee with support as indicated from other Committees and the SIPOA Board.

The timeframe for each Strategic Goal is variable – a Goal may be completed in a single year, or it may continue for multiple years. Some of the Goals from prior years' plans have been completed and replaced with new Goals. Other Goals remain intact as they were or have been continued with some modification. The management of the Milestones is a shared one between the SIPOA Committees, the SIPOA Board, and SIPOA Administration. The operational work of our organization is with SIPOA Administration. The oversight and management of the long-term vision is with SIPOA Standing Committees and the SIPOA Board through the Policy Based Governance structure.

There is an appendix to this year's plan which provides a summary table listing 2022 goals that were completed and designated by the Board as closed.

Strategic Goals for the 2023 Strategic Plan (10+ years)

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

GOAL #1: Comprehensive flooding and drainage management

CONTEXT: The biggest ongoing issue facing Seabrook Island 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 high priority drainage and flood mitigation projects identified in the 2020 Island Wide Drainage Study, including coordination and cost-sharing with SIC on joint projects.
2. Continue implementation of the stormwater pipe rehabilitation program for effective repair and replacement of aging stormwater piping infrastructure.
3. Collect and analyze tidal data for Seabrook, focused on the current and anticipated impacts of tidal flooding.

GOAL #2: Advance and execute Renew 50 Project based on utilization studies and Property Owner growth projections. Evaluate options to accommodate additional meeting, fitness and wellness space.

CONTEXT: Seabrook Island continues to grow in population and in utilization of our existing facilities. We need to ensure that SIPOA facilities remain attractive to current owners and prospective new Owners. In 2020, the Board authorized the Long-Range Planning Committee to establish a Facilities subcommittee to evaluate facility needs, based on studies of current usage, projected demographics, future activity trends, and recreational, social and educational needs of the community. In 2022, the subcommittee was renamed the “Renew50 subcommittee” in honor of the 50th anniversary of SIPOA in 2024.

The subcommittee released its initial concept for a new Oyster Catcher facility in February 2023 for Property Owner feedback. The committee considered input and SIPOA has retired the specific Oyster Catcher proposal as of June 2023. The subcommittee is focusing on the Lake House facility as the preferred location. Options for expansion of the Lake House are being researched. Considerations regarding the scope of the options will be based on additional Property Owner input and usage data. The Oyster Catcher facility will no longer be considered as an option for major redevelopment, but improvement options will be considered as part of a comprehensive facilities plan.

IMPORTANCE: Strategic Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: Long Range Planning (Lead)- Renew50 Subcommittee, GOMC

MILESTONES:

1. Partner with North American Land Trust to develop a mutual understanding of the Lake House options and expansion of the conservation value of the Lake House property. June 2023

Commented [HP1]: The drainage study addresses SIPOA and SIC pipes only.

2. Solicit Property Owner input on facilities/programming that will enhance recreational, social and educational value to the community, now and in the future – Summer 2023
3. Based on input received, develop recommendations for facility improvements to be presented to the s - Fall 2023

GOAL #3: Achieve broader participation of Seabrook Island Property Owners in SIPOA governance – 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 Property Owners in community governance. There are many very knowledgeable and capable Property Owners 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.

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.

Committee membership affords a great opportunity for Property Owners to participate in SIPOA affairs and to contribute in a meaningful way in community development. With greater participation in Committees, it is only natural that there will be broader and more uniform appreciation of SIPOA work and initiatives, as each participant gains greater knowledge and enhanced perspective of SIPOA governance. Property Owners may also have an opportunity to provide their insight and expertise on select topics and projects that are focused on shorter term, yet important, SIPOA actions. These options will also serve to maximize resident contributions and promote greater connection with Seabrook Island’s Property Owners.

IMPORTANCE: Strategic Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: Nominating and BOD Volunteerism Subcommittee

MILESTONES:

1. TBD

GOAL #4: Complete a comprehensive plan to upgrade and develop the front end of, and the approach to, Seabrook Island – the area stretching from Town Hall to the Gatehouse.

CONTEXT: Develop a plan for the entry to Seabrook Island, specifically at the intersection of Seabrook Island Road and Landfall Way to improve safety. The plan should be consistent with the lane changes and landscaping already completed inside the Gate. Because the roadway between Landfall Way and the traffic circle is under TOSI jurisdiction, TOSI and SIPOA have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to collaboratively consider alternatives to reduce traffic delays into the gate and increase safety. SIC has also engaged consultants to develop new concepts for their “North Campus” accessed from Landfall Way in 2023.

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: GOMC (lead); Safety & Security

MILESTONES:

1. Continue ongoing discussions with TOSI and SIC to ensure comprehensive development of the front end of the island, including the sharing of development plans where these parties have property ownership or responsibilities.
2. Identify and implement high priority infrastructure projects for areas of the front end of the island for which SIPOA has responsibility, including the bicycle and pedestrian pathway running in to the island from Landfall Way, traffic calming on Seabrook Island Road adjacent to the Lake House, and enhanced aesthetics in this area.

GOAL #5: Enhance 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 vehicles. At the same time, our population continues to grow and expand significantly on a seasonal basis. To date we have been fortunate with few serious accidents, however, the risk remains and multiplies with the increasing number of people and vehicles on our roads. Our ongoing, aspirational goal remains “zero critical incidents”

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: Safety and Security

MILESTONES:

1. Communicate to Property Owners the Mission Statement of Safety and Security.
2. Enhancement and Enforcement of SIPOA Rules & Regulations is a big concern to Property Owners. The committee will ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to this effort.
3. Seabrook Island is a “Recreational Island”. Accordingly, we have “shared roads” with pedestrians, dog walkers, bicyclists, cars and trucks. The Committee will look for opportunities to enhance safety measures.
4. After almost 2 years of study, the Committee has collected and studied data about the speed of traffic and we have identified areas which need mitigation to control speed. This can be accomplished through the use of digital speed enforcement trailers and the placement of observation vehicles either on patrol or at rest.
5. The Committee knows that the traffic islands past the Gate House have slowed down traffic considerably and that the bicycle and pedestrian crosswalk has made us safer. At this point the Committee thinks that a traffic island (Island #2) in front of the Lake House and the addition of another pedestrian crosswalk is warranted. We will continue to monitor speed and evaluate if additional traffic islands are warranted.
6. As a Bike Path is not an option, we will continue to look for ideas to re-route bicycle traffic off of SIR.

GOAL #6: Manage the Island’s Natural and Developed Environments to sustain/increase the Island’s Species Diversity and Enhance Habitat.

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. Objectives are to remove invasive plant species and encourage native plantings, while continuing efforts to maintain wildlife habitat for a healthy, well balanced wildlife population.

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: Environmental Committee (lead), ARC

MILESTONES:

1. Determine the efficacy of the removal of the two dominant invasive plant species (Chinese Tallow, *Elaeagnus Pungens*) on SIPOA-owned greenspace properties. Collaborate with SIGSC in the continued identification and eradication of invasive plant species on properties donated by SIGSC to SIPOA. Approach SIGSC about allocating funds for this purpose.
2. Eliminate invasive species in the landscaping on SIPOA’s Landfall Way property and replace with native plant species with the goal of creating a demonstration garden for Property Owner (and contractor) education in creating their own landscapes.
3. Identify ways for existing homeowners to naturalize the landscape in their yards and wildlife corridors to minimize the impact of development on the natural habitat.
4. Develop articles for publication to help educate the SIPOA community:
 - a. balanced wildlife populations and the importance of predators in controlling excess populations.
 - b. the importance of protecting the Beach Trust/Beach Area – why it is protected by law and SIPOA governing documents.
 - c. the importance of wildlife corridors and why we need to maintain them.
5. Develop visual/tangible reminders that the Beach Trust area is a fragile and protected area. Ex. QR code signs.
6. Review existing procedures that address beach access and use by the Seabrook Island population. Make recommendations for changes to ensure compliance with regulations and a safe environment for wildlife, ex. Beach fire permit rules education.
7. Work with Camp St. Christopher to identify common objectives and areas of habitat restoration and management. Develop a plan with CSC to eliminate invasive plant species in these areas.
8. Following a 2023 water quality survey, determine what steps may be needed to maintain and improve water quality in SIPOA’s lakes, ponds and lagoons.
9. Periodically sample stormwater management system discharge with a goal of sustaining and enhancing the productivity of area salt marshes.
10. Complete the annual Deer Survey and develop a management recommendation that supports the long-term health of our deer population.

GOAL#8: Support the communication needs of the SIPOA Board of Directors, and SIPOA Committees, and Property Owners:

CONTEXT: This committee is a Special Committee as defined in the SIPOA Bylaws. It is chaired by a member of the SIPOA Board of Directors, and serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. The committee’s mission is to improve information availability to increase owner engagement and two-way communication with SIPOA, identify technologies and other methods to improve timely access to information, and streamline information flow for a positive owner and visitor experience.

Goals proposed for 2023 are the ones shown above.

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

LEAD RESPONSIBILITY: Communications Committee

MILESTONES:

1. Assist new Property Owners in understanding and enjoying all aspects of community life on Seabrook Island
2. Develop educational materials on SIPOA Policies and Procedures responsive to questions and

concerns of Property Owners

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

CONTEXT: SIPOA staffing has been lean for many years. Although staffing levels increased in 2022, further staff additions are needed for back-up capacity, redundancy, and organizational depth. As with other area employers recruiting staff continues to be a challenge. Normal operations strain the organization as Seabrook Island continues to grow. We have a talented management team that needs additional members.

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: SIPOA Administration (Lead)

MILESTONES:

1. Provide adequate budget funds to recruit and retain staff at local market levels.

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: Improve and maintain safe beach access (to and from) for all Seabrook Island residents and guests. Where feasible, consistent with prioritizing the integrity and preservation of sand dunes, beach accesses should be wheelchair accessible where possible, and equipped with shower stations. 2023 beach access improvements include Beach Access 4 and Beach Access 7.

IMPORTANCE: High Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: GOMC (Lead); SIPOA Administration

MILESTONES:

1. Prioritize and implement repair and replacement of boardwalks on an ongoing basis.
2. Assess and monitor the condition of the seawall for which SIPOA has responsibility.
3. Provide additional parking where possible for low speed vehicles (LSV's).

GOAL #11: Stay abreast of emerging technologies that could improve the Property Owner experience.

CONTEXT: Monitor technology tools and innovations that could improve the Property Owner digital experience

IMPORTANCE: Medium Importance

RESPONSIBILITY: LRP, Communications, SIPOA Administration

MILESTONES:

1. Continue to monitor technology available from local providers.

Appendix 1 – What is a SWOT Analysis?

What is a SWOT analysis?

12/19/2022

- SWOT analysis is a framework for identifying and analyzing an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- The primary goal of SWOT analysis is to increase awareness of the top-down factors that go into establishing a strategic plan.
- To do this, SWOT analyzes the internal and external environment and the “helpful and harmful” factors that can impact an organization's mission and it's plans

Internal	Strengths - Helpful What are the reasons property owners choose and then stay on SBI?	Weaknesses - Harmful What are property owners' pain points and SIPOA related shortcomings?
	Opportunities - Helpful What are opportunities to improve the quality of life and property values on the island ?	Threats - Harmful What are risk areas that could impact the quality of life and property values on the island ?
External		

Appendix 2 – 2023 SWOT Analysis

The LRP has organized the external and internal forces which could impact the vision and mission of SIPOA into strengths, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT) assessment.

Appendix 2 provides additional background on the SWOT framework which is commonly used by organizations as a tool for strategic planning. This framework will be updated by LRP at least annually as part of the strategic planning lifecycle.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural environment: beaches, trees, wildlife, marshes, ponds and creeks • Strong income, fund balances and reserves • Sense of Community • Property Owner led, policy driven, governance model for the SIPOA scope • SIPOA owned amenities for Property Owners and their guests 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of the SIPOA rules and regulations • Safety risks increase with a greater number of vehicles, bike, e-bikes, LSVs, joggers, and pedestrians on the shared roads and paths • Annual engagement of qualified volunteers for Board and Nominating Committee
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Center and Lake House improvements • Continued leadership, professional staff and committee collaboration across the TOSI, Club, and SIPOA • Improve SIPOA meeting technology, document sharing, calendar sharing, communications and identity management to foster property owner digital experience • Improving ARC communication and engagement with property owner² 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBI residence and visitor growth • Businesses purchasing properties to resell to multiple owners • Increased flooding potential from climate change impacts • Invasive species

Appendix 3 - Data Gathering

Data Gathering remains an important and essential activity of the Long Range Planning Committee. To ensure that 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 important in any planning process. The Data Gathering and Analysis Subcommittee of the LRP has been charged with these activities. The following plan helps to ensure that information is gathered from as many varied groups on Seabrook Island as possible. However, single-issue surveys can be conducted at any time to gather needed information for the Board and/or any SIPOA committee.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Frequency	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Process	Focus Groups	Survey	Focus Groups	Survey	Focus Groups

Benchmarking:

As a component of SIPOA’s data gathering efforts, SIPOA performs a biannual benchmarking comparison with comparable private beachfront communities.

In 2021 SIPOA worked with four other communities to study demographics, services and amenities offered in those communities as they compared to SIPOA. This resulted in the 2021 “Coastal Community Benchmarking Report.” SIPOA’s intent is to continue benchmarking efforts with the four original communities. Seabrook Island is unique, and if in the future other comparable communities are discovered, it may be possible to expand the number of communities studied.