



# Accomplishments Report

2023

[www.iop.net](http://www.iop.net)

# Who we are

City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina



The Isle of Palms is a seven-mile-long barrier island located eight miles east of Charleston on the South Carolina coast. The island is bounded on the north by Hamlin Creek and the Intracoastal Waterway, on the east by Dewees Inlet and Dewees Island, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by Breach Inlet and Sullivan's Island.

Isle of Palms is primarily a residential community with resort amenities and a relatively large commercial base when compared to other barrier island communities in the area.

According to the 2020 US Census, the City has a population of 4,347 with a median age of 52. The City has a highly skilled and educated citizenry, with 72% of the City's population having a bachelor's degree or higher.

The median property value in Isle of Palms is \$883,000 which is double than the national average. The median household income is \$160,417, more than double the median household income in South Carolina.

Isle of Palms has a total of 4,610 housing units, 36% of which are occupied by year-round residents (Charleston County 2023 Property Tax Records).



Mayor Phillip Pounds



Councilmember Jan Anderson



Councilmember John Bogosian



Councilmember Blair Hahn

# Isle of Palms City Council



Councilmember Katie Miars



Councilmember Scott Pierce



Councilmember Kevin Popson



Councilmember Rusty Streetman



Councilmember Jimmy Ward

# Managing pressure from areas population growth

- Participated in the “Know B4 you Go” Campaign, a partnership with the Town of Mount Pleasant, Town of Sullivan’s Island, Charleston County Parks and ABC News 4 to raise awareness and promote beach information for visitors to better plan their trips to the beach. The 2023 campaign had a total 14.7M impressions, a 28% increase from 2022, and a value of \$300,615.
- Collaborated with the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments and the Town of Mount Pleasant to continue the seasonal operation of the CARTA beach shuttle, a free service to alleviate parking and traffic congestion on the island. Ridership increased from 415 trips in 2022, to 795 in 2023, a 92% increase.
- The City, in collaboration with Explore Charleston, the College of Charleston, and The McNair Group, began the development of a community enrichment plan using residents’ voices as the main driver of the process. The first step is to gather as much information as possible from the community. A total of 735 stakeholders responded to the survey asking residents, visitors, business owners how the City can improve its balance of resident’s quality of life and tourism.



## Effective, consistent and timely communications

- Hired a Public Relations and Tourism Coordinator position to have a dedicated resource to support City's communications efforts aimed at increasing trust levels and enhancing citizen engagement. This position is being cost shared between the City and the Charleston Area Visitors Bureau.
- Began implementation of Citibot, a citizen engagement tool that allows residents and visitors get immediate answers to questions, make service requests, send personalized messages, and get real-time alerts anytime. Sunnie will launch in January 2024.
- Began development of a quarterly e-newsletter launching in 2024.

**Connect with Sunnie!**  
Visit [www.iop.net](http://www.iop.net) to chat with Sunnie

The graphic shows a hand holding a smartphone. The phone screen displays the 'SUNNIE' logo at the top, followed by three buttons: 'ASK QUESTIONS' (blue), 'REPORT ISSUES' (yellow), and 'MESSAGE STAFF' (blue). To the right of the phone is a QR code. At the bottom right is the official seal of the City of Isle of Palms, South Carolina, established in 1953, with the motto 'SOPERA - DISCIPLINA'.

# Financial sustainability



Ended Fiscal Year 2023 with \$39.7M in cash reserves, of which \$17M are restricted funds.



Maintained the highest credit rating possible and have a manageable debt load with rates ranging from 1.6% to 4.14% with a significant portion maturing in the next five (5) years.



Received a clean opinion from the auditors for FY23.



Hired a new Finance Director, Debra Hamilton, and had a successful transition.

# Financial Sustainability

## CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS FY23 ACTUAL

### Where the Money Came From .....

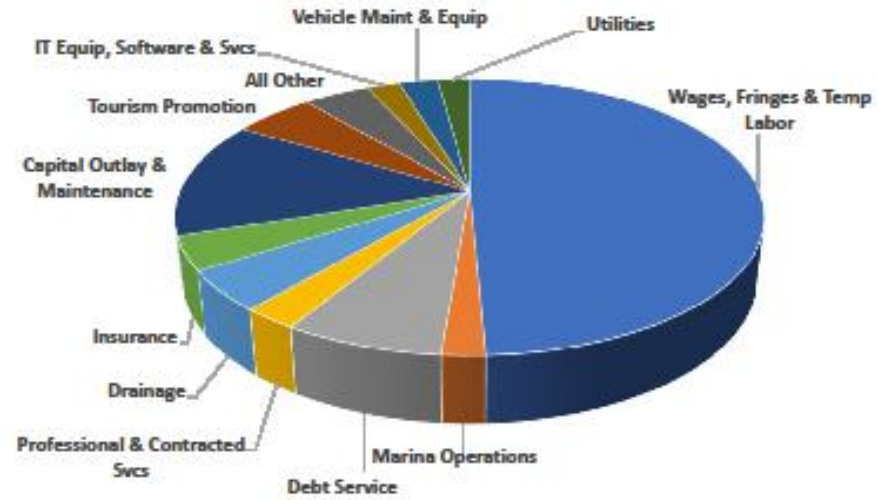


FY 2023 Revenue Summary - All Funds		
Property Taxes	5,176,672	19%
Local Option Sales Tax	1,184,906	4%
Permits/Licenses/Fees	6,629,253	24%
Parking	1,292,279	5%
All Other	2,397,896	9%
Accommodations Tax	6,280,419	23%
Hospitality Tax	1,411,167	5%
Beach Preservation Fee	2,143,194	8%
Grants	140,854	1%
Marina	705,929	3%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>27,362,570</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Financial Sustainability

## CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS FY23 ACTUAL

### Where the Money Went ....



FY 2023 Expenditure Summary - All Funds		
Wages, Fringes & Temp Labor	10,248,372	49%
Marina Operations	417,929	2%
Debt Service	1,534,300	7%
Professional & Contracted Svcs	534,087	3%
Drainage	980,894	5%
Insurance	814,738	4%
Capital Outlay & Maintenance	2,837,931	14%
Tourism Promotion	1,105,340	5%
All Other	903,667	4%
IT Equip, Software & Svcs	443,935	2%
Vehicle Maint & Equip	526,120	3%
Utilities	442,490	2%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>20,789,803</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Total Increase in Fund Balances**    \$    6,572,767



# Impact of STR's on resident's quality of life

- Transitioned to Rentalscape, a new residential rental license monitoring system which facilitates more effective compliance monitoring and reporting.
- Created and hired a dedicated Short Term Rental Coordinator position to coordinate the residential rental license program and monitor compliance.
- Created and hired a second Code Enforcement position to increase enforcement focus on livability ordinances.



# Environmental protection efforts

- Continued a glass recycling program in partnership with Harris Teeter and IOP Marina tenants. The IOP community recycled over 8 tons of glass in 2023.
- Implemented a new residential composting program. Staff hosted a composting workshop in April, where over 20 attendees received a free composting bucket, tools and tips for their own composting at home. The IOP community has composted over 8 tons of food scraps in 2023.
- After rigorous training and a testing process, the City's Zoning Administrator obtained an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist credential. He is well trained in tree health, pest management, soil fertility and proper pruning techniques.
- Initiated the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan to steer policy focused on resiliency and funding decisions for the foreseeable future.
- SCDHEC approved the revised Local Comprehensive Beach Management Plan in compliance with the South Carolina Beachfront Management Plan.



# Employee retention and succession planning

- Held the annual Employee Appreciation Event where employees were recognized for their longevity.
- The City awarded the Employee of the Year award to Robert Asero, Assistant Public Works Director. Robert oversees stormwater and facilities maintenance. Robert's efforts in effectively managing stormwater, minimizing flood risks, and maintaining our city's infrastructure have made a significant impact on the lives of our residents.
- Held a Holiday party for all city employees, Councilmembers and volunteers who serve on Boards and Commissions.
- Police Department held an Annual Awards ceremony where FTO Santulli was recognized as the Officer of the Year, Patrol Officer Mize as Rookie of the Year, Sergeant King as Supervisor of the Year, and Beach Service Officer Wyman as Professional Staff of the Year. Sgt. Storen and FTO Sanders were presented the Life Saving Award and Lt. Forsythe and FTO Santulli were presented the Medal of Valor. Cpt. Swain, Sgt. Storen, Cpl. Postell, Det. Tumminelli, MPO Hammond and Officer Griffin were awarded the Certificate of Merit. Additionally, the Citadel Beach House was presented with the Community Partnership Award.
- Performed a review of the wage and compensation study and made recommendations for adjustments to ensure we remain leading in Public Safety and competitive in all general positions.
- Completed the renovation of employee fitness centers at Public Safety Building and Fire Station 2.
- City appointed Karrie Ferrell as the new Recreation Director.



# Community Enhancements- Drainage

- Completed a comprehensive drainage masterplan to identify storm water management needs and priorities into the future.
- Completed outfall improvements at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue and began construction at 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue to stop tidal intrusion and improve storm water and tidal drainage across the island.
- The City received a \$2.7M grant from the SC Office of Resilience for the construction of outfall improvements at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue to stop tidal intrusion and improve storm water drainage. Construction is scheduled to begin January 2024.
- Acquired a jet-vac system to improve in-house capabilities to maintain drainage systems. In 2023, approximately 4,300 linear feet of drainage systems were cleaned and restructured by the Public Works stormwater management team. Public Works also oversaw the maintenance of approximately 5,400 linear feet of drainage infrastructure by the city's drainage maintenance contractor.
- Public Works stormwater management team installed tide valves at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Merritt Boulevard, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Driftwood Lane.



# Community Enhancements- Marina

- New marina operator completed renovations to the Isle of Palms marina store and parking lot. Residents now enjoy free parking anywhere in the marina with a properly credentialed vehicle.
- City made improvements to the bulkhead along the Intracoastal Waterway and installed a new 6' boardwalk.
- City offered free weekly meditation classes in the public dock and in partnership with local operator, Coastal Expeditions, developed a series of free itineraries exclusively for Isle of Palms residents. In 2023, 240 residents participated in this program.
- City obtained permits and selected a contractor for the construction of the renovations to the Public Dock. The public dock will include a 16' wide pier with a covered area with benches and swings, a new ADA compliant gangway and new floating dock with accessible kayak launching area. Construction expected to begin early 2024.



# Community Enhancements- Recreation Center

- Constructed two dedicated pickleball courts at the corner of Hartnett Boulevard and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Began improvements to the Dog Park on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which includes new fence, new hardscape areas and new play equipment for dogs.
- Installed an outdoor fitness court to support healthy outdoor wellness programs.
- Renovated the outdoor basketball courts.
- Installed new LED lighting in the gymnasium.
- Added the following new adult programs: Self-Defense, Zumba, RXFit Mobile Gym, Move It, Wild Roll Wednesday led by city staff, Yogalates, CPR/AED Certification classes, Watercolors, Drawing and Acrylic Art classes and Bridge Social Club.
- Added the following new youth classes: Pokémon Club, Twirling, Creative Writing, Youth Art Show to showcase participants work, College Application Bootcamp, Capital Kids and Home Economics.



# Community Enhancements:



- Completed construction of ADA compliant beach access path and two handicap parking spaces at 34A beach access path.
- City continued the Beach Wheelchair Program which offers daily use of beach wheelchairs at no charge. This service was used 90 times by beach visitors – usage increased 21% from 2022.
- Installed audible pedestrian crosswalk at the intersection of Palm Boulevard and the IOP Connector.
- Completed construction of a new concrete compactor enclosure at the Municipal Parking Lot to improve functionality, aesthetics and sanitation in the commercially used trash site.
- In partnership with Dominion Energy, completed the overhead to underground power line conversion at 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Dominion Energy began the design and easement acquisition process of the next undergrounding project planned for 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Construction expected to begin in 2024.

# Public Safety – IOP Police Department

- IOP Police Department reduced the average response time by almost a minute bringing the response time down to 4 minutes and 39 seconds. This is about a two-minute reduction over the last two years.
- IOP Police Department added a new member to its force, Police Canine Sandy. With her exceptional training and skills, Sandy will play a vital role in enhancing public safety strengthening the department's commitment to serving and protecting the community.
- IOP Police Department conducted multiple traffic operations to address traffic violations on the Isle of Palms and has made almost 100 DUI charges in 2023.
- IOP Police Department held several community meetings to share police department statistics, hear from residents and to build partnerships with the residents of Isle of Palms.
- IOP Police Department was honored with a National Award for the 2023 National Night Out hosted in October at the Isle of Palms Recreation Center. This is the second year in a row that the department has received this recognition.
- Lieutenant Forsythe attended and graduated from the Charleston Executive Leadership training in November of 2023.
- Captain Swain attended and graduated from the FBI National Academy at the beginning of 2023.
- Sergeant Thompson attended and graduated from the FBI Carolina Command College in March of 2023.

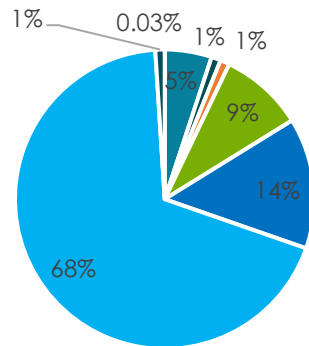




# Protecting our City – IOPPD Stats

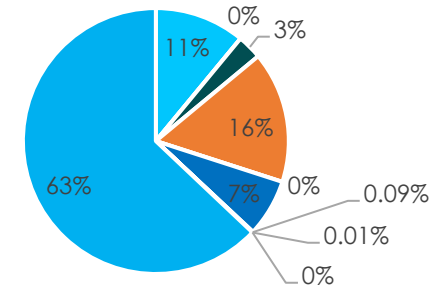
- The Police Department responded to 12,169 calls for service between January 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023, compared to 10,339 calls during the same period in 2022.
- Between January 1, 2023, and November 30, 2023, the Police Department conducted 4,796 traffic stops, issued 4,743 parking citations, served 97 warrants and made 591 arrests.

Select 2023 Charges Made Through 12/14



- Attempted Murder
- Disorderly Conduct
- Drug Violations
- Other Traffic
- DUI
- Weapon Law Violation
- Speeding
- Resisting/Hindering/Evading

2023 Offense Report Type through 12/14



- Alcohol Crimes
- Assaults
- Homicide Crimes
- Vandalism/Damage
- Other Money Crimes
- Arson/Suspicious Fire
- Drug Crimes
- Larceny Crimes
- Prostitution
- Other Crimes

# Public Safety – IOP Fire Department

- Isle of Palms Fire Department began working with The College of Charleston to develop a five-year Strategic Plan for Department.
- Signed auto aid agreement with 6 other fire departments in the greater Charleston area to enhance service delivery in Fire, Technical Rescue, Haz mat and Marine Firefighting. The Department adopted and trained on new Charleston County Area Structural Firefighting Standard Operating Guidelines and performed various multiagency training events with the fire departments in the automatic aid group and Sullivan’s Island Fire Department.
- Joined the Charleston Area Metro Marine group which allows the department to take advantage of free grant funded training opportunities for personnel.
- Began the implementation of a paramedic program to improve medical response and provide Advanced Life Support. As of early December, three of six paramedics have been hired.
- Partnered with Isle of Palms Water and Sewer Commission (IOPWSC) to facilitate the installation of cost-effective home fire sprinklers. IOPWSC recently adopted changes to the sprinkler system policy, which makes it easier for property owners to install a home sprinkler system. The recommended sprinkler system is more cost-effective as it only requires a licensed plumber to install and uses the same plumbing currently in the house.
- Developed a Fire Safety Checklist for owners of short-term rentals to submit as part of the residential rental license application process to ensure owners are complying with Fire Code requirements aimed at ensuring safe environments for visitors and guests.
- Hosted 12 community risk reduction activities, reaching approximately 503 people.
- Offered the community CPR and First Aid Certification and Narcan Training to teach how to recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and administer the opioid overdose reversal drug.
- Hosted a Hurricane Expo at the Recreation Center for residents to learn how to prepare their families and their home in the event of a storm.

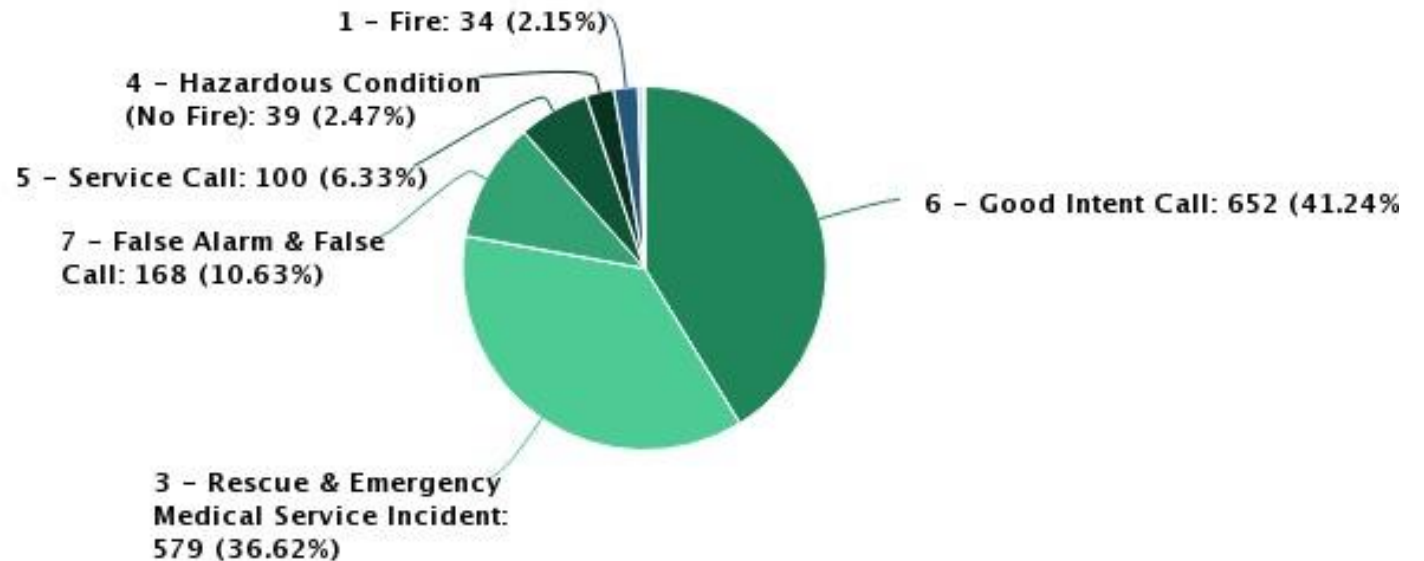


# Protecting our City – IOPFD Stats

- Fire Department responded to 1,555 calls for service through November 2023 - 510 were resident calls and 1,045 nonresidents.
- In 2023, the Fire Department responded to 579 rescue and emergency medical calls, 34 fires and 100 service calls.
- Fire Department personnel completed 9,662 accumulative training hours.

## Incident Type Categories

Jan 01, 2023 to Dec 31, 2023



# Special Community Events

The Recreation Department successfully planned and executed the following programs, events and activities:

- Camp Summershine
- Youth Basketball, Soccer and Volleyball summer camps
- Youth Gymnastics and Cheer summer camps
- Youth Spring Break Soccer Camp
- Youth Basketball, Baseball and Soccer leagues
- Adult 3 on 3 Basketball, Table Tennis, Pickleball and 6 vs 6 soccer Leagues
- Variety of Fitness Classes
- Free Beach Yoga between May and October
- Free Beach Stroll & Learn between May and November
- Doggie Day at the Rec
- Easter Egg Hunt & Festival
- Annual Yard Sale
- Music in the Park
- Front Beach Fest
- Sand Sculpting Competition
- IOP Beach Run
- IOP Farmer's Market June through October
- Annual Half Rubber Tournament
- IOP Connector Run & Walk
- Ghostly Tide Tales
- Halloween Golf Cart Parade & Drive through Haunted House & Carnival
- Holiday Street Festival
- Wellness Fair and Blood testing and Flu Vaccines
- Welcome Wednesdays Coffee Socials



# Community Partnerships

- City Council awarded the Spirit of the Island award to the following island residents and partners:
  - Ted Kinghorn for his dedication to the Exchange Club community projects, including the Law Enforcement Neighborhood Support (LENS) Program
  - ACME Lowcountry Kitchen for their generosity to Isle of Palms first responders and city employees; provides free meals and discounts.
  - Susan Hill Smith for her devotion to preserving the island's natural beauty and helping to solve the pollution crisis through the efforts of the IOP Cleanup Crew.
- Supported the IOP Chamber of Commerce's Light Up Front Beach Project with a grant of \$10,000.
- Supported the IOP Exchange Club with a grant for improvements to their bulkhead and construction of pedestrian boardwalk.
- City Council approved a donation of \$100,000 to the Emmanuel Nine Memorial.



# Grants

- \$2.7M grant from the South Carolina Office of Resilience for the design and construction of outfall improvements at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue outfall.
- \$1M State budget allocation for ongoing drainage improvements identified by Comprehensive Drainage Master Plan.
- \$850,000 from the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Beach Renourishment Funding Assistance Program for the emergency dune and beach restoration project between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Breach Inlet.
- \$500K State budget allocation for the design, installation of two ADA compliant beach walkovers to improve and expand handicap accessibility to the beach.
- \$260K grant from the Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax to repair, widen and expand the pedestrian sidewalk at 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue.
- \$43,518 grant from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the purchase of exercise equipment to support and complete the Fire Department's Wellness and Fitness Program.