



Population 2

Demographic characteristics and population trends help to understand a community. Information on both existing residents and those moving into the area can identify opportunities and future needs. This section of the Comprehensive Plan includes data related to the historic trends and future projections, size and characteristics of households, educational attainment, race, sex, age and other information pertaining to the Town of Bluffton's population. This information can guide planners and local leaders to assure that a high quality of life is maintained and the appropriate services are available.

Vision

We acknowledge and accept our diverse population and strive to offer a high quality of life for all residents, visitors and workers.

All elements of this plan are interconnected. Population and employment in Bluffton and surrounding area influence land use patterns, community facilities, and transportation needs. Changes to land uses, facilities, and roads to address predicted growth can also place stress on natural resources. It is important that a demographic balance be maintained in order for the community to remain vibrant

2.2 Density

Population Density

Bluffton encompasses approximately 53.6 square miles (approximately 34,280 acres) in land area, approximately 9.25% of Beaufort County's 579 square miles. This was a significant change from the one square mile town in 1990. The 1990 population density was 1.15 persons per acre. Once the rest of the land was annexed, the population density dropped to 0.19 persons per acre because little of the annexed area was developed. But population projections from development agreement schedules would support a "build-out" population of 47,310 by 2025, resulting in a density of 1.38 persons per acre for the land currently with Town limits.

By comparison, Hilton Head Island encompasses 36 square miles, with a 2000 population density of 1.47 persons per acre that the US Census Bureau estimates increased slightly to 1.50 persons per acre by 2005. For the sake of comparison, the Town of Hilton Head Island is a more densely populated municipality than Bluffton and at maximum build out, Hilton Head Island's population density will be 8.7% greater than Bluffton's density.

Dwelling Unit Density

The density of approved development also affects population and population density. Figure 2.4 indicates the number of dwelling units approved for each development tract, as well acreage and the resulting density at the time the Comprehensive Plan was prepared (see Map 2.1 for development locations). Actual densities are subject to change, as developers currently have the option to convert commercial building rights to residential units, purchase development rights for residential units from other developments, or present requests to the Development Agreement Negotiating Committee.

Figure 2.4

Town of Bluffton Approved Developments

Development	Acres	Residential (du)	Density (du/acre)
Bluffton Old Town	640	146	3
Bluffton Village	29.31	38	1.30
Buck Island/Simmons ville	1,142	517	.45
Buckwalter Tract	6,035	7,540	1.25
Hidden Lakes	111.69	190	1.70
Jones Estate	4403	2,844	.65
Kent Estate	130.76	449	3.43
New Riverside	3,641	4,731	1.30
Palmetto Bluff Tract	20,660	2,920	.14
Shults Tract	616.278	1,600	2.60
Village at Verdier Plantation	125.512	510	4.06
Willow Run	162.636	500	3.07
Wellstone Property	42.28	206	4.87
Total	37,739.466	22,191	--

Source: Town of Bluffton Planning and Growth Management Department, Development Agreements (updated with Bluffton Permitted Density Summary Sheet- 2007)

The decisions made by this committee and ultimately Town Council will have an impact on the future density. Densities may also decrease with purchase or donation of development right or in situations where no potential buildable land is left within a planning tract. In addition, the actual number of persons per household will impact the density. Nationally, the number of persons per household continues to decrease as the population ages and more households have fewer members than in the past. However, as noted in Figure 2.14, Bluffton's average household size has increased from 2.74 to 2.84 between 2000 and 2005.

Population Density		
Need: Maintenance of a sustainable and reasonable population density.		
Goal: Maintain density that allows for a high quality of life and ensures the sustainability of our rich natural and cultural resources.		
Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Adopt set policies or criteria that must be considered when adjusting the approved densities.	Bluffton Development Negotiating Committee, Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	Short
2. Develop strategies to reduce the permitted number of dwelling units.	Bluffton Development Negotiating Committee, Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	Short