

Executive Summary

Blueprint Bluffton is a new Comprehensive Plan for the Town intended to guide decision making for the next ten years. The plan presents broad direction for where and how the Town should invest over this horizon. The goals, strategies, and recommendations are the product of a community-wide conversation culminating in 2022. This summary highlights key elements from the plan.

Starting in late 2020, Bluffton began a process to develop its next Comprehensive Plan named Blueprint Bluffton. A blueprint represents a vision. It assumes a plan of action that, taken together and in the right sequence, leads to a desired outcome. Similarly, effective community planning requires coordinated action or investment. These steps are incremental, but collectively drive the Town in the direction desired by the community.

Through Blueprint Bluffton, the community has come together to develop its plan for growth, investment, and stewardship. The plan represents Bluffton's values and ideas to improve the qualities of life, place, and opportunity.

PROCESS

Public engagement is an essential component of the comprehensive planning process and the long-term success of the plan. Several methods of community outreach and engagement were utilized in this process to reach as many residents and stakeholders as possible. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessary reliance on digital format meetings, more than 700 people contributed their ideas to the process. In addition to the public's input, the Working Group engaged an 18-member Steering Committee to guide and direct the plan's development.

730+

People engaged
in the Blueprint
Bluffton process



OUTCOMES

The public engagement and Working Team research analysis revealed a series of opportunities and needs to be addressed by the plan. The themes from this process (fully presented in *Chapter 1: Introduction*) informed the ten sections of the plan and helped the Working Group to focus its research and analysis. Major themes from the process centered around issues like housing affordability, community character, growth pressures, congestion, environmental stewardship, resilience, economic diversification, equity and inclusion, service and facility capacity, along with many others. The objectives of the plan (listed by section in this summary) present the Town's point-of-view with respect to these themes. Collectively, these statements define the vision for Bluffton's future.

FOCUS

The State of South Carolina requires comprehensive plans to include nine topical sections and a tenth focused on implementation and priority investments. The Blueprint Bluffton plan assigns a broad goal for each section and a series of targeted objective statements to focus the plan’s recommendations.

| Section and Goal | Section Objectives | Plan Page |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|  <p>CULTURAL RESOURCES: CELEBRATE BLUFFTON’S PEOPLE AND CULTURE</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C1. Preserve the Town’s Historic and Cultural Resources C2. Pursue Expansion of the Bluffton National Register Historic District to Align with the Old Town Bluffton Historic District C3. Continue and Expand Community Engagement and Education Regarding Historic Preservation C4. Celebrate Native and Gullah Geechee Heritage C5. Pursue Inclusion of Eligible Properties into the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network C6. Rehabilitate Town-owned Historic Resources C7. Seek Intergovernmental Partnerships C8. Update Old Town Master Plan C9. Promote Arts and Culture in Bluffton | P. 26 |
|  <p>PEOPLE: SERVE THE NEEDS OF A DIVERSE POPULATION</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P1. Coordinate the Provision of Human and Social Services Within the Community P2. Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in All Town Functions P3. Continue to Provide High-Quality Community Programming | P. 46 |
|  <p>ECONOMY: CULTIVATE A STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> E1. Spur Local Entrepreneurship and Innovation E2. Attract New Businesses and Employers to Bluffton E3. Diversify the Town’s Tax Base E4. Improve Workforce Development to Attract and Retain Employees E5. Continue to Promote Tourism & Hospitality in Bluffton | P. 58 |
|  <p>RESILIENCY: CREATE A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE FOR ALL</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R1. Mitigate and Adapt to a Changing Climate R2. Protect and Improve Water Resources & Quality R3. Conserve Sensitive Ecological Resources and Natural Habitats R4. Promote Renewable Energy Sources to Power Bluffton | P. 74 |
|  <p>HOUSING: DIVERSIFY HOUSING OPTIONS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H1. Add Affordable and Workforce Housing in Bluffton H2. Expand the Availability of Housing Types to Become a Lifecycle Community H3. Protect Existing Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing | P. 94 |
|  <p>NATURAL RESOURCES: CONSERVE, PROTECT, RESTORE, ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N1. Increase the Amount of and Access to Public Parks and Green Space N2. Improve Existing Recreation Facilities N3. Increase Public Water Access N4. Continue to Conserve Open Space and Ecologically Sensitive Natural Areas | P. 108 |

Executive Summary

Section and Goal



LAND USE: ENVISION A MORE BALANCED BLUFFTON

Section Objectives

- L1. Improve the Town's Regulatory Development Framework
- L2. Identify Areas for Additional Development or Redevelopment to Better Meet Community Needs
- L3. Continue to Foster Inter-Jurisdictional and Regional Relationships

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Principles for Growth, Development, and Conservation

Land use planning is an essential component of Blueprint Bluffton. It is a physical realization of the plan and the regulatory base on which the built environment is constructed. The principle statements present the Town's preference for "how" and "where" Bluffton will invest in the future. These statements reflect key priorities from the community and their relationship to the built and natural environments. To read more about the principles and the land use recommendations reference *Section 7: Land Use*.

- » Recognize that authentic places change and evolve over time, and stewardship and management of Bluffton's growth is at an important stage
- » Acknowledge Bluffton as a living community and a Town of many eras
- » Maintain the authenticity of Bluffton
- » Ensure building types and forms are appropriate to their use
- » Examine and assess the existing auto-oriented development patterns that have spread outside of the Old Town
- » Realize the gravitational pull of Old Town
- » Encourage an expanding variety of housing types and architectural formats
- » Plan for growth
- » Learn from the authentic principles of Old Town
- » Recognize and reinforce continuity with past planning initiatives
- » Carry forward the principles of the Old Town Master Plan with intentionality
- » Keep the Old Town Master Plan First Principles in the forefront of planning: preserve & protect the legacy, foster connectedness in all things, and nurture memorable streets
- » Forge new connections
- » Preserve the rural corridors and gateways

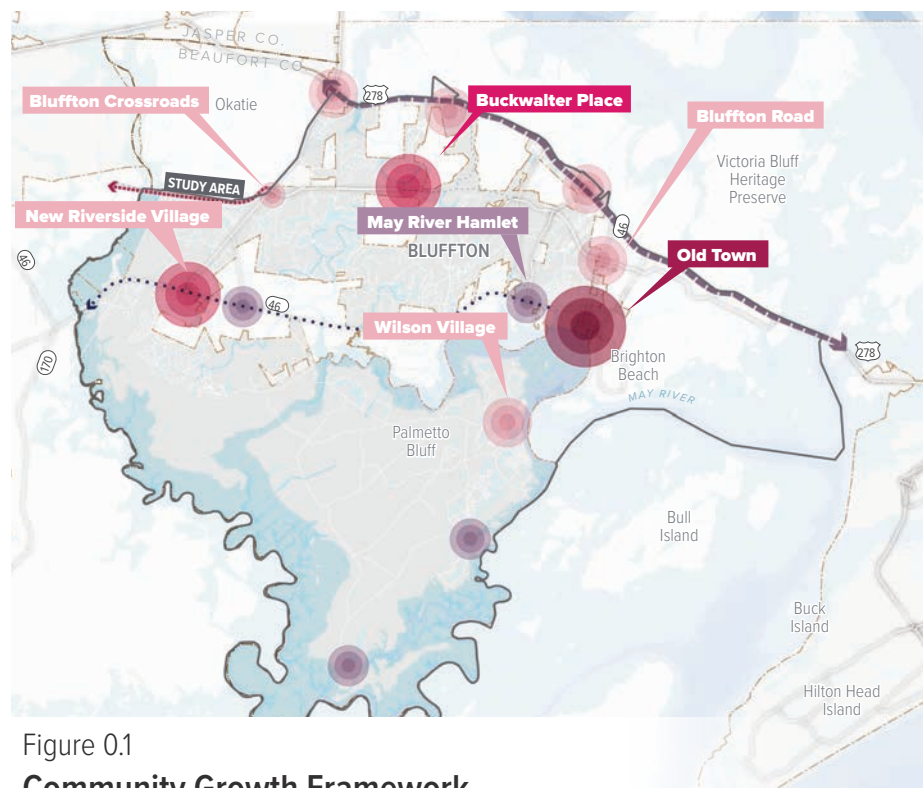


Figure 0.1
Community Growth Framework
 Read more in the Section 7: Land Use

Section and Goal

Section Objectives

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**TRANSPORTATION:
CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH
DESTINATIONS**

- T1. Expand the Integrated Active Transportation Network of Sidewalks, Multi-Use Paths, and On-Street Bicycle Connections
- T2. Expand Public & Water Transportation
- T3. Manage Parking and Access Management
- T4. Influence Regional Transportation Systems
- T5. Expand Priority Connections

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**COMMUNITY FACILITIES:
UNITE THE COMMUNITY
THROUGH SHARED
FACILITIES**

- F1. Maintain Enabling Utilities & Infrastructure
- F2. Reduce Solid Waste & Litter

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**PRIORITY INVESTMENTS:
REALIZE COMMUNITY
PRIORITIES THROUGH
CONSISTENT AND
RESPONSIBLE FUNDING**

The final plan section is intended to connect the action implied by the Comprehensive Plan to the current and future funding sources. The section also details the Town's regular Capital Improvement Planning program, an essential component of implementation.

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What's Next? Implementation and the Road Ahead

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is only the beginning of the implementation process. The plan presents an agenda of community actions and investments. These projects, policies, or programs were identified for their potential to move Bluffton, incrementally, toward its vision. These recommendations vary in terms of scale, timing, needed resources, and needed partnerships. They are organized by section and presented completely in the full plan. Below is a selection of key recommendations elevated through the process.

C2.1 Pursue the expansion of the Bluffton National Register District

P1.1 Foster alignment between local non-profits to inventory community and social services

E5.3 Encourage and support ecotourism as well as cultural and historic tourism

R3.8 Maximize function of open spaces through a continuous connecting network of wildlife corridors

H1.6 Continue to dedicate funding to acquire property to be made available to local groups to construct affordable housing units

N3.3 Identify and assess river access points and investigate potential boat launches, shoreline and preserved scenic areas

L1.6 Revisit and update the Old Town Master Plan

F2.2 Eliminate the trash-cycle containers at Town-sponsored events

+ Dozens of additional recommendations