

About this Plan

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Blueprint Bluffton Comprehensive Plan serves as the vision for the Town of Bluffton and its partners in successfully guiding future development and improvements to preserve the Town's Lowcountry character and improve the quality of life. The plan provides an assessment of the current state of the Town, evaluates opportunities for public infrastructure investments and private development, and provides a roadmap for future decision making.

Comprehensive plans are recommended for adoption by Planning Commission and adopted by Town Council. The Comprehensive Plan will guide planning and policy decision making over the next ten years. It will serve as a foundational document for other regulatory tools used by the Town, such as the zoning code, subdivision regulations, and area plans.

Blueprint Bluffton is intended to be used by Town staff, Planning Commission, and Town Council on a regular basis to shape short- and long-term decision and policy making.

It also serves as a reference for residents, community organizations, local businesses, non-profit organizations, other jurisdictions, and developers. These community members and groups can use the plan as a tool to discuss collaboration, to reduce redundancy in community services, to encourage interjurisdictional cooperation, and to shape development proposals.

Per the 1994 State Comprehensive Planning Act (SC Code Title 6, Chapter 29), the State of South Carolina mandates that municipalities audit their comprehensive plan every five years and update it every ten years to ensure it accurately reflects the community's values. In accordance with the State Comprehensive Planning Act, Blueprint Bluffton addresses the existing conditions, community needs, goals, and recommendations for the following required plan elements:

- Cultural Resources
- People
- Economy
- Resiliency
- Housing
- Natural Resources
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Priority Investment

PLAN ALIGNMENT

In addition to being aligned with the 1994 State Comprehensive Planning Act, this document is aligned with relevant local and regional plans and expansive policies. In April 2022, Town Council adopted the Fiscal Years 2023 – 2024 Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan, which outlines seven key focus areas:

- Affordable and/or workforce housing;
- Community quality of life;
- Economic growth;
- Fiscal sustainability;
- Infrastructure;
- May River and surrounding rivers and watersheds; and
- Town organization.

Whereas the Comprehensive Plan is a broad policy document for the Bluffton community that is updated every ten years, the Strategic Plan is a short-term vision document directly related to the Town and its functions. The Strategic Plan includes distinct objectives and actions that address each of these focus areas within the Recommendations chapter (see p. 25). Additionally, the Town Strategic Plan identifies desired outcomes or actions over the next couple years:

Growth Management:

- Comprehensive Plan Update (Blueprint Bluffton)
- Old Town Master Plan Update
- Neighborhood Plan Updates for Buck Island/ Simonsville and Goethe-Shults

Watershed & Resilience

- May River Watershed Action Plan
- Green Alternatives
- Land Acquisition to Preserve Green Space & Reduce Density

Capital Improvement Program:

- Historic District Sewer Connections
- Squire Pope Carriage House Stabilization and Rehabilitation
- Bridge Street Streetscape
- Park Improvements

- » New Riverside Barn Park
- » Dubois Park
- » Field of Dreams
- » Oyster Factory Park
- Pedestrian Safety
 - » Sidewalks
 - » Lighting
 - » Crosswalks

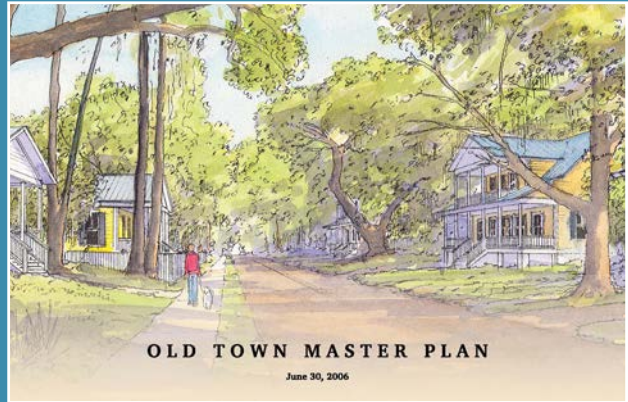
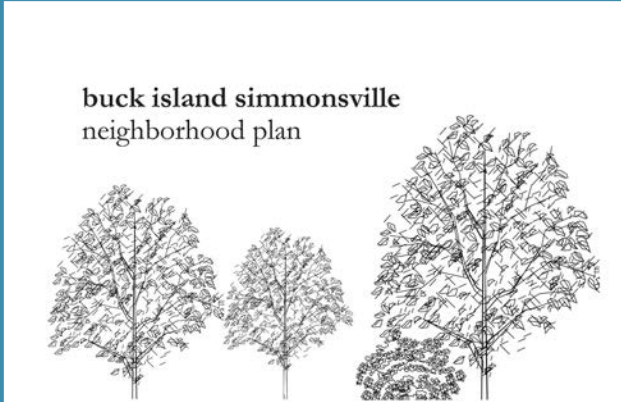
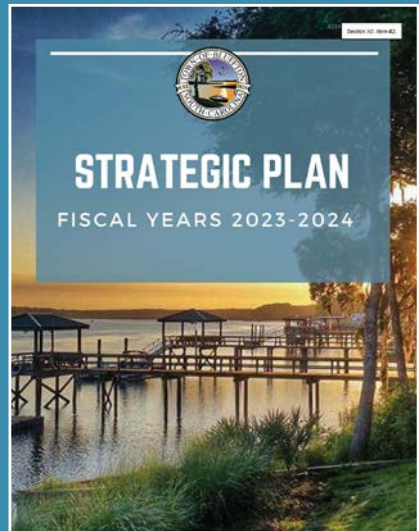
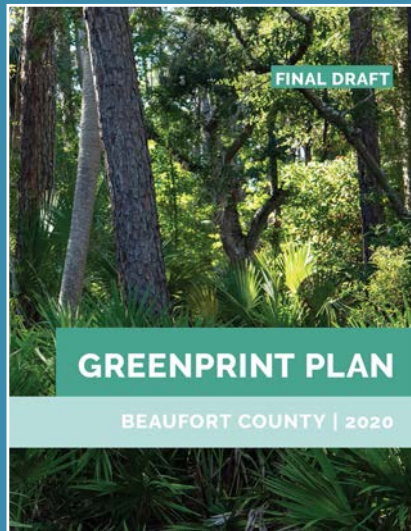
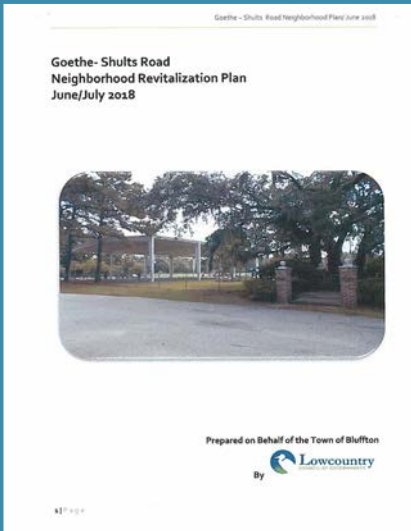
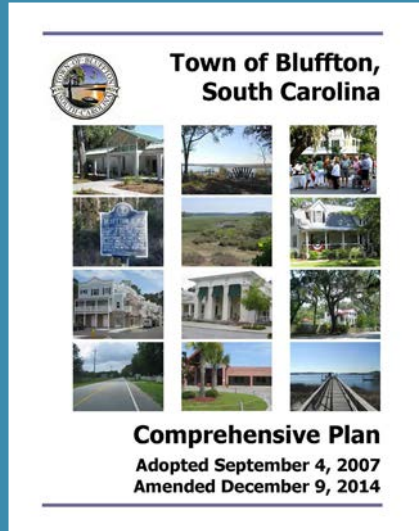
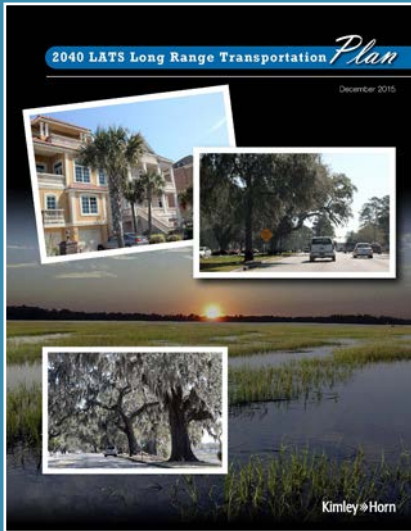
Many of these Strategic Plan outcomes are aligned with actions in the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan. Agreement among Town leadership on these priorities will ensure that both of these plans lead to action.

Finally, the Planning Team also reviewed a number of past Town of Bluffton plans as well as other relevant regional plans at the beginning of this process. The plans reviewed included the following:

- State of Mind Charrette (2000)
- Old Town Master Plan (2006)
- SC 46 Corridor Management Plan (2006)
- Buckwalter Access Management Plan (2007)
- Comprehensive Plan (2007)
- Buck Island Simonsville Neighborhood Plan (2009)
- Bluffton Parkway Access Management Plan (2013)
- Comprehensive Plan Audit (2014)
- 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (2015)
- Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan (2015)
- Goethe-Shults Plan (2018)
- 2021 -2022 Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan (2020)
- Beaufort County Greenprint Plan (2021)
- May River Watershed Action Plan Update (2020)
- 2023 - 2024 Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan (2022)

Where applicable, the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan reference complementary plans and programs, including those listed above.

Figure 0.2
 Relevant Plans and Studies



Planning Context

The Town of Bluffton has experienced continued growth and development over the past three decades. By planning strategically, the Town can anticipate growth rather than react to it. Comprehensive planning allows Bluffton to prioritize community needs, prudently allocate Town resources, guide private development, and generate revenue to support services and infrastructure needs while fulfilling the community's shared vision for the future.

Initially adopted by the Town in 2007, the Comprehensive Plan was last amended in 2014. Since the initial 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Bluffton has become one of the fastest growing communities in the state of South Carolina. Just one-square mile prior to the late 1980's, annexation has expanded the Town's boundaries to more than 54 square miles. The physical growth (see figure 0.4) presents challenges as Bluffton navigates its future while retaining its natural, historic and eclectic character as one of South Carolina's few remaining coastal villages.



Figure 0.3

Bluffton Population Growth Over Time

Source: US Census Bureau (2021)

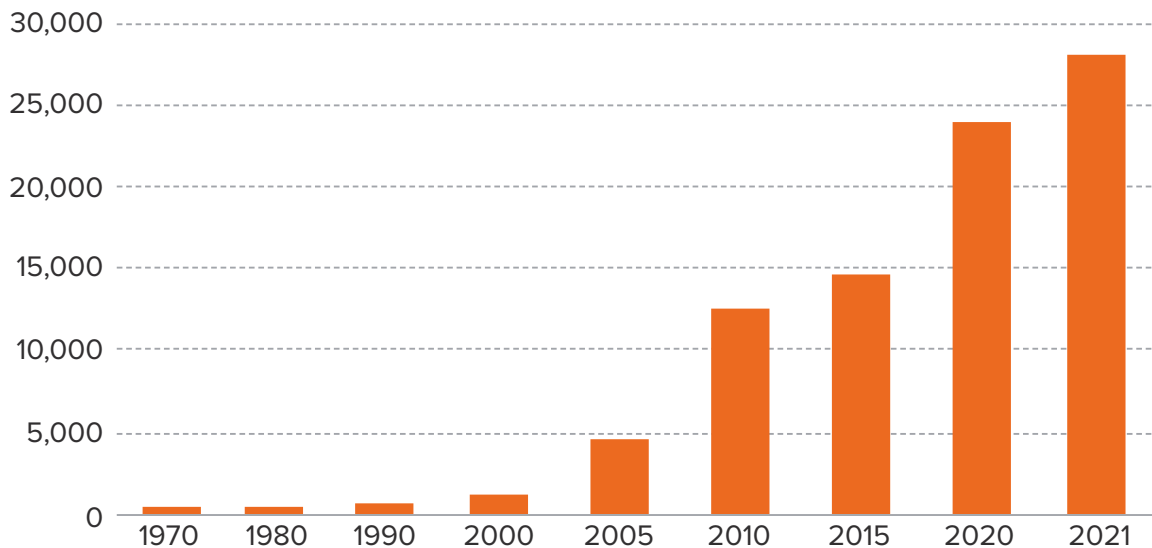


Figure 0.4
Bluffton Annexation over Time

