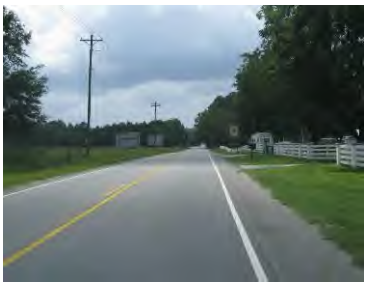
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina



Comprehensive Plan

Adopted September 4, 2007
Amended December 9, 2014

Growth Management Department
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Municipal Building
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www.townofbluffton.sc.gov

Adopted September 4th, 2007
Amended December 9th, 2014

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LSL Planning, Inc.

ORDINANCE NO. 2014-19

AN ORDINANCE FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2007 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POPULATION, CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATURAL RESOURCES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY FACILITIES, LAND USE, PRIORITY INVESTMENT CHAPTERS AND APPENDIX A

WHEREAS, the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (the "Act") requires municipalities to adopt a Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan acts as a guide for policy concerning population needs, cultural resources, natural resources, housing, economic development, community facilities, land use, transportation and priority investment; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires that the Comprehensive Plan be updated every 10 years and audited every 5 years; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bluffton, South Carolina, (the "Town") adopted its latest Comprehensive Plan on September 4, 2007 through Ordinance 2007-14; and

WHEREAS, the Town later adopted a revision to the Comprehensive Plan's land use element on August 19, 2008 through Ordinance 2008-14; and

WHEREAS, the Town began an assessment of the Comprehensive Plan in 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Town completed its 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Audit (the "Audit") in accordance with the Act; and

WHEREAS, on June 10, 2014, the Town of Bluffton Town Council adopted a Resolution accepting the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Audit as presented; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Audit, the Town has revised the Population, Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Housing, Community Facilities, Land Use, Priority Investment Chapters and Appendix A to incorporate updated statistics, maps, and other data as well as ensure compliance with the Act; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Audit, the Town has updated several Chapters, also referred to as Elements per the Act, including Chapters/Elements to ensure compliance with the Act; and

WHEREAS, on October 22, 2014, the Town of Bluffton Planning Commission voted unanimously to forward Town Council a recommendation of acceptance of the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments as presented.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED AND ORDAINED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA:

The Town of Bluffton Town Council hereby adopts the amended chapters of the 2007 Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan, which are attached and incorporated to this Ordinance as Exhibit A.

THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON ADOPTION.

DONE, RATIFIED AND ENACTED this 9th day of December, 2014.

This Ordinance was read and passed at first reading on November 18, 2014.

Lisa Sulka

Lisa Sulka, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

ATTEST:

Sandra Lunceford

Sandra Lunceford, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

A public hearing was held on this Ordinance on December 9, 2014.

Lisa Sulka

Lisa Sulka, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

ATTEST:

Sandra Lunceford

Sandra Lunceford, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

This Ordinance was passed at final and second reading held on December 9, 2014.

Lisa Sulka, Mayor
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

ATTEST:

Sandra Lunceford, Town Clerk
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

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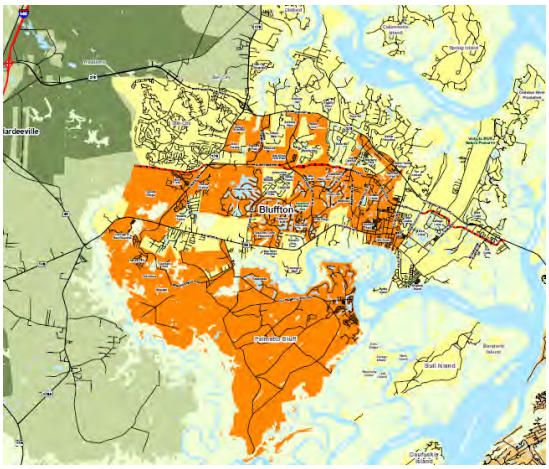
Introduction 1

Welcome to Bluffton!



The Town of Bluffton is located in the heart of the Lowcountry, conveniently situated between Hilton Head, Savannah and Beaufort in southeastern South Carolina. Bluffton has quickly grown from a quaint "One Square Mile" coastal town to a rapidly growing community of over 53 square miles that an increasing number of people come to live, work, and visit.

It is important that as development continues, Bluffton takes advantage of the opportunities provided with this growth while managing the challenges associated with it. A key reason for this Comprehensive Plan is to do just that, to help ensure the right amount and location of land uses while managing impacts to the environment, transportation system, public services, and existing development. Most importantly, it is essential that as Bluffton grows, the Town maintains its unique character or "state of mind."

1.1 What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Purpose and Scope

The Comprehensive Plan is a document created to guide the future growth and development of the community. A sound Comprehensive Plan helps ensure that Bluffton remains a highly desirable community in which to live, work, and visit. This can be accomplished by preserving and enhancing the qualities of the community that the residents, businesses, and property owners consider important. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to:

- Provide a pattern for land use which will provide a sustainable community with a diversified tax base to support the desired facilities and services with reasonable tax rates.
- Provide a legal basis for zoning and other regulations for the type, intensity, and timing of development.
- Ensure that as development occurs, the most significant cultural and natural features are preserved or enhanced.
- Recommend improvements to the transportation system including roadways that need upgrading, traffic management tools to preserve roadway capacity, access management standards, and non-motorized options.
- Address the desires and needs of the residents, businesses, and property owners to preserve and enhance the community and its natural aesthetics.
- Coordinate land use recommendations with anticipated land use changes, infrastructure improvements, and surrounding communities.

There are a number of ways this Comprehensive Plan can help meet these expectations. The Town Council, Planning Commission, the public, various agencies, businesses and prospective developers can all use the plan to help guide and coordinate decisions, such as:

- To describe the desired future land use pattern and land use types to both guide expectations of those involved in new development and redevelopment and to give the public some degree of certainty about the plans for the future.

- To identify where regional coordination is needed along borders, along road corridors or natural features that run through several communities and to meet mutual goals.
- As a reference to identify and recommend public improvements to roads, streetscapes, entryways, pathways, parks, infrastructure, and public facilities.
- As a standard for reviewing development proposals – to confirm the proposal meets the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- As a criterion for reviewing annexation and rezoning requests – to confirm the request is consistent with the existing conditions, the future land use map, the appropriate timing of the change, consistency with the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, and potential impacts on Bluffton.
- As a basis for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map - to help realize plan goals.

Enabling Authority

This plan has been developed under the authority of Title VI, Chapter 29, Sections 310 through 1200 of the 1976 Official Code of South Carolina, 1994 Cumulative Supplement. In the preparation of this plan update, the Planning Commission has met or exceeded all requirements contained in Chapter VI of the State Code. This study has been conducted in full compliance with public input requirements.

1.2 Comprehensive Plan Process

The Comprehensive Plan is the essential first step in the overall community planning process. While Bluffton's original Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1999, this update will serve as a base for future planning efforts during the upcoming years.

An assessment of the accuracy of the Plan's originally inventoried data was first addressed. The next step was the development of preliminary visions, needs, goals, and implementation steps. Next, staff received input from the public and officials. From this input, the Plan was refined to state Bluffton's vision on important issues and to serve as a guide for future development and policies.

Throughout the planning process, Planning and Growth Management Staff held a series of public meetings with the Planning Commission and Town Council throughout 2006 and during seven public joint workshops in 2007. Once the complete Comprehensive Plan was prepared, the Planning Commission recommended its approval and was then adopted by Town Council in September of 2007.

1.3 Comprehensive Plan Components

The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of nine main components in accordance with State code:

Chapter 2 Population
Chapter 3 Cultural Resources
Chapter 4 Natural Resources
Chapter 5 Housing
Chapter 6 Economic Development
Chapter 7 Community Facilities
Chapter 8 Land Use
Chapter 9 Transportation
Chapter 10 Priority Investment Act

Within each chapter there is an inventory and analysis of the existing and projected trends. The results of this analysis were used in the establishment of the needs for the community, goals and implementation strategies to achieve those goals. These strategies identify responsible parties and an estimated time frame for completion as identified in the following table.

Implementation Strategies Timeframe	
Timeframe	**Length of Time for Completion**
On-going	Continuous in its efforts
Short	No more than one year after adoption of the plan
Medium	1-3 years after adoption of the plan
Long	3-5 years after adoption of the plan

In addition to the chapters discussed above, the Plan also contains a technical appendix. Appendix A Technical Data includes a more detailed inventory than is provided in each chapter. The appendix includes additional background data, which may be of interest, but are not essential to the recommended implementation strategies.

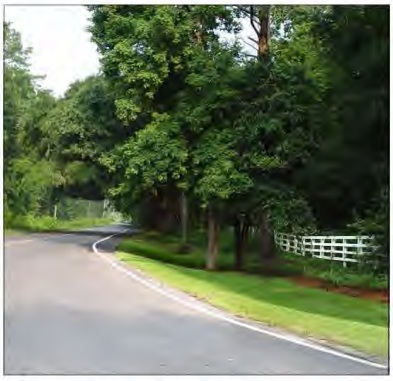
Relationship to Other Plans

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, there are separately published documents that have been adopted by ordinance or resolution that are considered supporting documents to this Plan.

The SC 46 Corridor Plan: A corridor plan developed specifically for the SC 46 Corridor was adopted in early 2007. The plan presents an inventory of six intrinsic qualities of SC 46: natural, scenic, historic, cultural, recreational, and archaeological with recommendations on techniques to preserve the character of the SC State Scenic Byway for future generations. This plan will also assist the Town in its effort to apply for Nation Scenic Byway Designation of SC 46.

The Old Town Master Plan: This sub-area plan focuses on the preservation of the original one square mile of Bluffton and guides future redevelopment. The plan considers the unique issues facing this original settlement including Land Use Schematic; Streetscape and Aesthetics Plan; Development and Infill Development and Redevelopment Strategies; a Directional and Location Signage Plan, a Parking Plan, Pedestrian Access Plan, and associated policies and guidelines.

Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan: Bluffton was heavily involved with the development of this regional plan to address land use patterns and trends, the cost of growth, transportation, parks and recreation, and pubic schools within Southern Beaufort County. To ensure these topics of regional concern are adequately addressed on a continual basis, Bluffton has developed an on-going relationship with the County and participating jurisdictions to implement the plan.



Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan

It is important to note that in addition to the plans discussed above, additional plans may be developed for sub-areas, corridors, or topics that require further study. Resolutions or Ordinances for adoption of these plans will identify them as supporting documents of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan.

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 the 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

and sustain its unique characteristics, which are the essence of Bluffton.

Two key factors contributed to Bluffton's significant population changes: the attractiveness associated with a coastal community and annexations of large tracts of land. In 2000, 41% of South Carolina's population was located within its 22 coastal counties. This is consistent with national trends as coastal areas are among the most crowded and developed in the nation, accounting for over one-half (53%) of the nation's population and housing supply.
Annexation has also played a large part in Bluffton's rapid population increase. Since the first annexation, which took place in 1987, Bluffton has increased from one-square mile to approximately 54.04 square miles (34,584 acres), as described in the Land Use Chapter. In addition to the development potential on the acres annexed into Bluffton's municipal limits, it is important to consider the impact of the population in regard to density, housing needs, traffic impacts and demands for municipal services.

2.1 Population

Information presented in this section includes data from the 2000 and 2010 Census, the Special Mid-Decade 2005 Census, current estimates and projections from the 2006 Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan. In addition to census data, demographic data estimates and projections are presented. The figures within this section provide information about Bluffton's population with comparisons to Beaufort County, certain geographic areas in the County (called "planning areas"), Lowcountry Region, and the State of South Carolina overall. Map 2.1 Bluffton Regional Map illustrates Bluffton's location and surrounding areas.

Figure 2.1
Planning Areas in Beaufort County

Source: Beaufort County SC website, http://www.bcgov.net/

Recent Growth

The Beaufort County Planning Areas are divisions of Beaufort County used by the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) and the Beaufort County Planning Department to analyze county demographics. These areas can be seen on Figure 2.1. Figure 2.2 conveys the population trends of the aforementioned planning areas, as well as for the municipal limits of Bluffton, the County, and the State. On the whole, the Bluffton Township planning area has experienced the a significant rate of growth of nearly 177% between 2000 and 2010 and 1,345% since 1980.

According to 2010 Census figures, Bluffton's total population was 12,530 persons. In August 2012, Bluffton submitted a challenge to the official population count through the US Census Bureau's Count Question Resolution program. As a result, the US Census Bureau increased the Town's official population by 363 people resulting in a new updated total population of 12,893. Although the Town's total population increased, the US Census Bureau did not incorporate the demographic profiles of the additional 363 people within their data. Therefore, for the purposes of this Plan, the initial population count of 12,530 is utilized for consistency with the data available. The 2010 population represented an 882.7% growth rate since the 2000 Census. During the years of 1980-2010, Bluffton experienced an overall growth

rate of 1,995%. As denoted in Figure 2.2, the Town of Bluffton population experienced the greatest rate of growth when compared to the other County planning communities during that 30 year period.

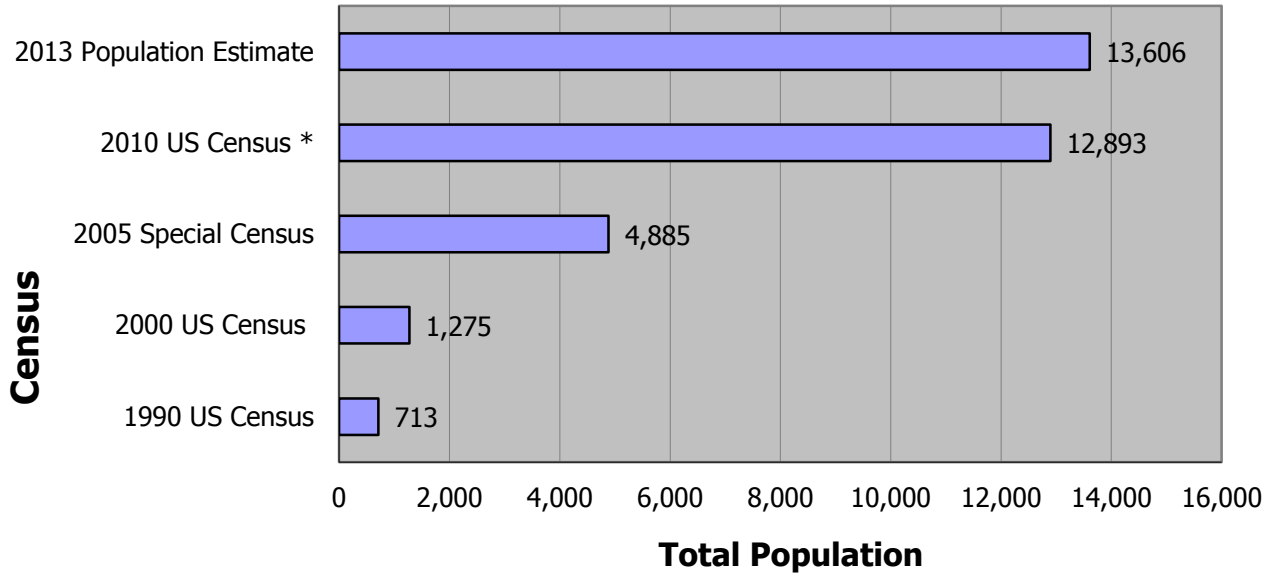
Figure 2.2
Population Change: 1980-2010

Community	1980	1990	% Change (1980-1990)	2000	% Change (1990-2000)	2010	% Change (2000-2010)	% Change Overall (1980-2010)
Beaufort/Port Royal Island Planning Area	39,017	40,710	4%	44,563	9%	45,343	1.8%	16%
Sheldon Planning Area	2,994	3,194	7%	4,116	29%	4,269	3.7%	43%
St. Helena Planning Area	5,091	6,579	29%	9,486	44%	11,259	18.7%	121%
Lady's Island Planning Area	3,094	5,046	63%	9,321	85%	10,792	15.8%	249%
Bluffton Planning Area	3,652	7,084	94%	19,044	169%	52,777	177.1%	1,345%
Town of Bluffton	598	738	23%	1,275	73%	12,530*	882.7%	1,995%
Town of Hilton Head Island	11,344	23,694	109%	33,862	43%	37,099	9.6%	227%
Beaufort County	65,364	86,425	32%	120,937	40%	162,233	34.1%	148%
South Carolina	3,121,820	3,486,703	12%	4,012,012	15%	4,625,354	15.3%	48%

Source: Beaufort County Planning Department, Beaufort County Demographic Handbook 2012, US Census 1980-2010
* The US Census Bureau approved an increase of the Town's population count through the CQR program on December 21, 2012 which resulted in the Town's population count increase from 12,530 to 12,893.

As indicated in Figure 2.3, the current population estimated from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2013 indicates Bluffton has a population of 13,606.

Figure 2.3
Town of Bluffton Population Counts and Current Estimate



Source: US Census 1990, US Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010, US Census Bureau Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April1, 2010 to July 1, 2013

* The US Census Bureau approved an increase of the Town's population Count through the Count Question Resolution (CQR) Program on December 21, 2012 which resulted in an increase of the Town's population count from 12,530 to 12,893.

2020 Census

The next official Census count will take place in 2020. It is important for the Town to take part in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for the count to be as accurate as possible. LUCA is a decennial census partnership program that allows tribal, state and local governments to review and update the Census Bureau's residential address list which is used to conduct the Census. The resulting Census data is used in the following ways:

1. Apportionment of Congressional seats;
2. Appropriation of Federal funds to state, tribal and local governments;
3. State funds distribution; and
4. Accurate local statistical data.

Bluffton's continued involvement is essential to ensure the Census Bureau's address list is complete in order for the 2020 count to be as accurate as possible. Efforts by the community and public officials to increase awareness about the importance of the Census and increase the response rate are critical to an accurate count. Bluffton's efforts for

the 2010 Census such as involvement with the Beaufort County Complete Count Committee, resulted in an increase of Bluffton's Census participation rate from 56% to 71%.

Seasonal Population

The seasonal or tourist population group is more difficult to document than permanent, year round residents. But this seasonal population still has needs, and has impacts on roads, infrastructure, and housing. The 2010 Census reported that 6.9% (373 housing units) of the vacant housing stock was dedicated for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. According to the 2000 US Census, only 2.0% of Bluffton's housing stock classified as vacant (10 housing units) was used for seasonal use. This information indicates that the seasonal population is increasing.

The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan estimates that in 2007 the County had the capacity to support as many as 50,653 seasonal residents. Seasonal population is expected to increase to 72,038 by 2020.

Population		
Need: Recognition of the Town of Bluffton's high rate of population growth.		
Goal: Respond to the rapidly increasing size of the population.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Provide Town Council with annual population estimates.	Planning	On-going
2. Request frequent census counts to receive rightful amounts of state and federal funding based on accurate population figures. Conduct cost/benefit studies to determine financial feasibility of requesting special census counts.	Town Council, Administration, Finance, Planning	Short
3. Participate in the LUCA process.	Administration, Planning, IT/GIS	Short

2.2 Density

Population Density

Bluffton encompasses approximately 54.04 square miles (approximately 34,584 acres) in land area, approximately 10.71% 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 a majority of the land was annexed, the population density dropped to 0.19 persons per acre because little of the annexed area was developed. At the time of the 2010 Census, Bluffton's geographical boundary was 51.03 square miles resulting in 244.2 persons per square mile. Assuming Bluffton's current 54.04 square mile geographic boundary and an estimated "build-out" population of 63,653, the Town's resulting population density is calculated at 1,178 persons per square mile within the Town's limits. 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 nearly 34.2 square miles, with a 2010 population density of 896.9 persons per acre that the US Census Bureau estimates increased slightly to 927.61 persons per acre by 2012.

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 this section of the Comprehensive Plan was updated. (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 and purchase development rights for residential units from other developments.

Figure 2.4
Town of Bluffton Approved Developments

Development	Acres	Residential (du)	Density (du/acre)
163 Bluffton Road	1.97	0	0
70 Davis Road	52.77	0	0
Able Street	0.49	3	6.12
Bluffton Old Town	640	146	0.23
Bluffton Village PUD	29.31	38	1.30
Brown	12.8	12	0.94
Buck Island/Simmonsville	951	605	0.64
Buckwalter PUD	6,207	8,642	1.39
Buckwalter School Campus	95.84	0	0
Cahill's Market	27.35	0	0
Callison Lane	13.97	13	0.93
Garvey Preserve	87.17	0	0
Giddy-Up	1.67	5	2.99
Goethe/Schults Road	170	136	0.80
Hidden Lakes PUD	111.69	190	1.70
Jones Estate PUD	1,885	2,438	1.29
Kent Estate PUD	130.8	449	3.43
Lee	2.49	3	1.20
Linear Park Trailhead	10.43	0	0
Maye River Baptist Church	17	0	0
New Riverside PUD	4,006	4,731	1.18
Oakley	0.89	1	1.12
Old Carolina PUD	171	254	1.49
Palmetto Bluff PUD	19,217	2,920	0.15
Sauls	22.2	0	0
SCE&G	14.32	0	0
Shults Tract PUD	620	887	1.43
St. Mathews Baptist Church	1.02	0	0
Stroup Lane	10	40	4.00
Tulifinny PUD	43.31	258	5.96
Ulmer	10.03	30	2.99
Vaux	0.84	2	2.38
Village at Verdier Plantation PUD	125.512	404	3.22
Wellstone PUD	42.28	206	4.87
Total	**34,733.33**	**22,413**	**--**

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

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 2.16, Bluffton's average household size has increased from 2.74 to 2.84 between 2000 and 2010.

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.	Negotiating Committee, Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	Short
2. Develop strategies to reduce the permitted number of dwelling units.	Negotiating Committee, Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	Short

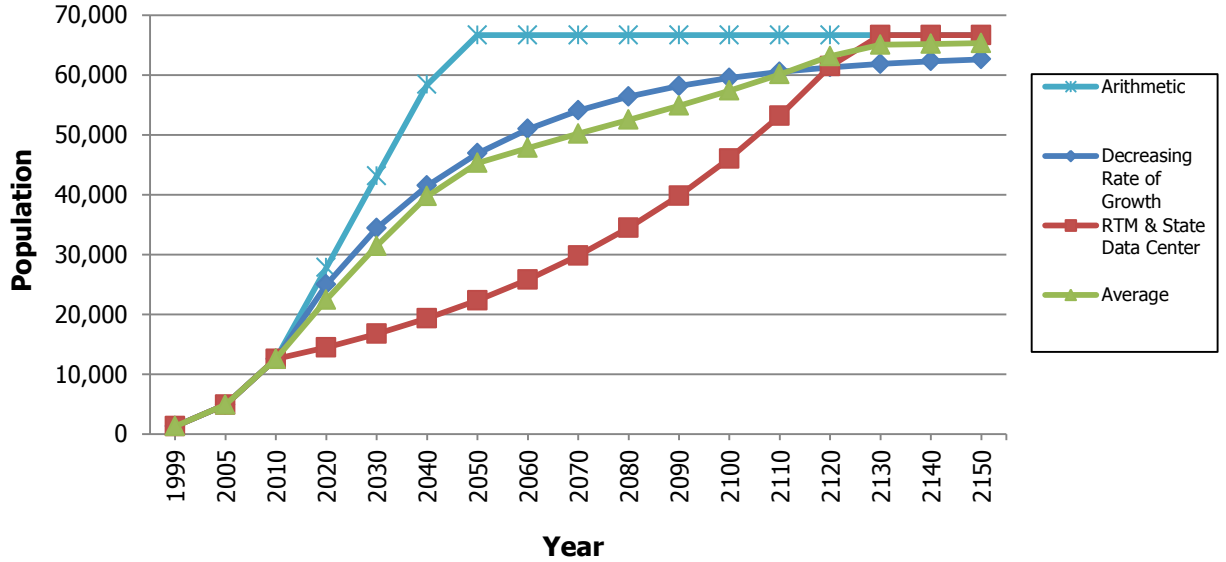
2.3 Population Projections

Anticipating population growth and studying trends are essential to any long-range planning effort. A combination of various projection methodologies was used to predict the future population.

The accuracy of population projections depends upon the accuracy of existing population figures and the sensibility of assumptions underlying those projections. Methods used to calculate present population consist of 2000, 2005, and 2010 Census data as well as Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department development agreement and building permit data. Projections by the Growth Management Department include the arithmetic and decreasing rate of growth. Regional Transportation Model (RTM) data projections from Beaufort County and South Carolina State Data Center projections are also used as guides to determine future population counts by applying the same rate of growth.

Figure 2.5 compares the different methods graphically. The methods assume that all residents will be full time residents and do not separate seasonal or part time from full time residents. These projections are intended as general indicators of the future magnitude of growth rather than as specific predictions of population values.

Figure 2.5
Town of Bluffton Population Projection, 2150



Source: Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, Census 2010, South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics Population Projections 2000-2030, Regional Transportation Model (RTM)

Projection Sources and Techniques

A number of factors relate to the process of estimating or projecting population. Unlike many other communities, Bluffton possesses a certain present-day knowledge of its build-out population (carrying capacity) based upon approved development agreements and densities linked to respective annexations into the Town. The estimated build out population is calculated using total estimated residential units from Figure 2.4 and applying the 2010 US Census Bureau's average household size of 2.84 persons. Based upon the estimated 22,413 total households at 2.84 persons per household, the resulting estimated build-out population for Bluffton is 63,653.

The actual population is variable because it is uncertain is how much of this housing will be dedicated to year-round residents versus seasonal occupants and whether the average household size will shift because of the type of housing built. This plan assumes the average will remain relatively even and homes will be occupied, either by the owner or a renter.

Figure 2.6 exhibits the results of the three projection methods/ techniques used in establishing population projections. 2000 Census figures were used to develop the base (1999) population, while the 2009 population is based upon the assumed population growth rate of Bluffton Five-Year Revenue Forecast. This ten-year period was utilized in the population projections, as a growth rate between the previous ten-year period (1989-1999) would not be indicative of future growth patterns.

Figure 2.6
Town of Bluffton Population Projections

Year	Arithmetic	Decreasing Rate of Growth	Regional Transportation Model & State Data Center	Average
1999	1,275	1,275	1,275	1,275
2005	4,885	4,885	4,885	4,885
2010	12,530	12,530	12,530	12,530
2020	27,820	24,966	14,479	22,422
2030	43,110	34,377	16,730	31,406
2040	58,400	41,498	19,332	39,743
2050	66,653	46,887	22,338	45,293
2060	66,653	50,966	25,812	47,810
2070	66,653	54,052	29,826	50,177
2080	66,653	56,387	34,465	52,502
2090	66,653	58,155	39,825	54,878
2100	66,653	59,492	46,018	57,388
2110	66,653	60,504	53,175	60,111
2120	66,653	61,270	61,445	63,123
2130	66,653	61,850	66,653	65,052
2140	66,653	62,288	66,653	65,198
2150	66,653	62,620	66,653	65,309

Source: Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, Census 2010, South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics Population Projections 2000-2030, Regional Transportation Model (RTM)

The following methods were used to project population:

Arithmetic: Assumes the average annual increment observed between the years of 1999-2010 continues at a constant rate. In this case, the resulting rate of increase used is 1,529 persons per year. This method neglects fertility and death rates, economic conditions affecting growth, and exponential population growth. Simple arithmetic projections are used for quick and easy, but not necessarily accurate, projections.

Decreasing Rate of Growth: As a general rule, as a municipality's population becomes larger, the rate of growth from year to year is reduced. Growth also subsides as the saturation population (ie. "carrying capacity") is approached. The saturation population is the theoretical population who can live in a municipality based on the physical constraints of buildable land, zoning regulations and infrastructure available. The carrying capacity used for this scenario is 63,653 persons.

Regional Transportation Model and State Data Center:

The Regional Transportation Model and South Carolina State Data Center projections are based on assumptions about the continuation of birth, death and migration trends measured from two census points into the future. In this case, the resulting rate of increase is 7.495% at 5-year intervals. The accuracy of projections depends on the extent to which future events unfold in a manner that mirrors these past observations. The population trends from 2000 to 2010 include the collapse of the housing market in 2008 and the lingering effects of the worst economic crisis since the 1930's. Population growth will likely be at very low levels for the next few years, according to the State Data Center.

Projection Population in Beaufort County

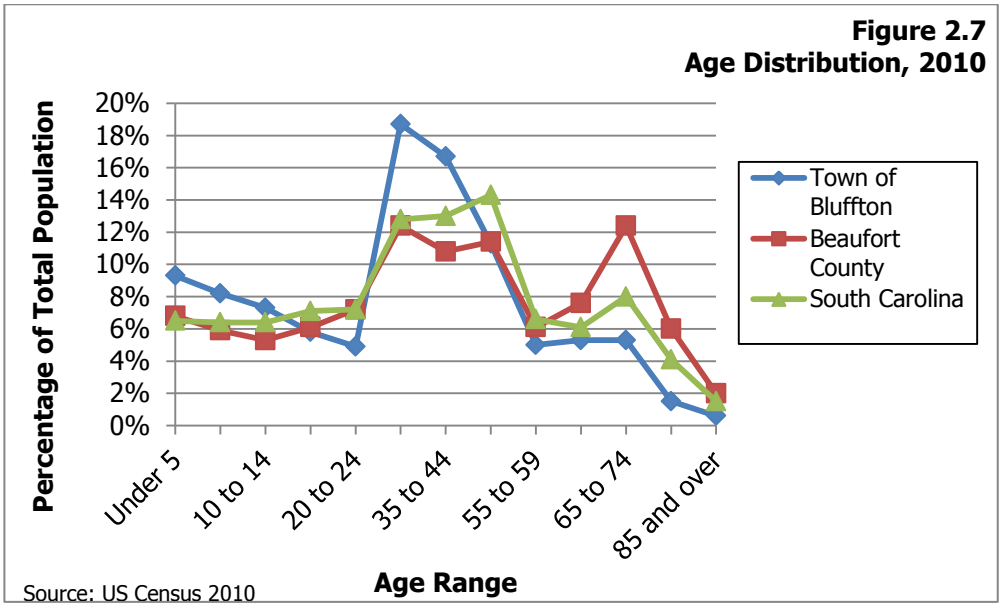
A regional plan of southern Beaufort County conducted with the partnership of the Town of Bluffton, Hilton Head Island and Southern Beaufort County is a valuable resource which focused on growth of the region over the next two decades. This plan identified two different sets of population, permanent and seasonal population. There are also constraints and build-outs which indicate how much population this area can accommodate before we reach the land's carrying capacity.

Based on research completed as a part of this regional plan, a build-out date of approximately 2020 is assumed for the Town of Hilton Head Island and 2018 for southern Beaufort County. The term 'build-out' is applied when the land's capacity to support more development is depleted, all available land is used making it more scarce and expensive to acquire.

Southern Beaufort County should be served by a centralized regional information system that monitors and tracks planned land uses; provides ongoing population and employment forecasts; measures and predicts regional impacts of growth; and is integrated with other regional models such as environmental and transportation models. A regional demographic model of existing and forecasted population, including permanent and seasonal population, could be carried out through a multijurisdictional effort. Planning staff from the Town, Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head Island have collectively agreed to coordinate and provide data to Beaufort County to maintain this system.

Population Projections		
Need: Preparation for population growth over the next 20-25 years.		
Goal: Plan for a minimum two-fold increase of permanent population over the next 20-25 years.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Provide demographic and development data to Beaufort County representatives for their efforts to maintain a regional demographic model of existing and forecasted population, including permanent and seasonal population.	Planning, Beaufort County, Hilton Head	Short

2.4 Age Distribution



Age distribution for Bluffton is generally consistent with Beaufort County and South Carolina trends. However, Bluffton has a higher proportion of younger residents in the under 14 years of age and 25 to 44 age groups and a lower percentage of those aged 20-24 and 55 and up, as shown in Figure 2.7. These statistics may represent a migration of families to the area and illustrate that the area has become attractive to families. A more detailed of age breakdown for Bluffton, Beaufort County and the State of South Carolina in 2010 can be found in Figure 2.8 below.

The 2010 Census shows age groups with the greatest population increase from 2000 were in the 34 and under categories (see Figure 2.9). The numbers imply that Bluffton has had a large increase of households with younger parents and children. The major increase in residents from 25 to 34 indicates an increase in the potential workforce, and therefore an increased need for workforce housing. The increase in children under 18, and especially ages 9 and younger, continues to place mounting stress on the school system and may require more daycare services.

According to the US Census, the median age for Bluffton, was 35.9 years in 2000 which decreased to 32.7 by 2010. This is lower than the ages in Beaufort County and the State, with median ages of 40.6 and 37.9 respectively.

Age Distribution

Figure 2.8
Age Distribution, 2010

Age Category	Town of Bluffton		Beaufort County	South Carolina
	No.	Pct.		
Under 5 years	1,171	9.3%	7%	7%
5 to 9 years	1,032	8.2%	6%	6%
10 to 14 years	914	7.3%	5%	6%
15 to 19 years	733	5.8%	6%	7%
20 to 24 years	618	4.9%	7%	7%
25 to 34 years	2,354	18.7%	12%	13%
35 to 44 years	2,089	16.7%	11%	13%
45 to 54 years	1,417	11.3%	11%	14%
55 to 59 years	622	5.0%	6%	7%
60 to 64 years	660	5.3%	8%	6%
65 to 74 years	665	5.3%	12%	8%
75 to 84 years	180	1.5%	6%	4%
85 years and over	75	0.6%	2%	2%

Source: US Census 2010

Figure 2.9
Town of Bluffton Age Distribution Table: 2000, 2005 & 2010

Age Category	Census						Percent Change		
	2000		2005		2010		2000-2005	2005-2010	2000-2010
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.			
Under 5 yrs	86	6.7%	456	9.3%	1,171	9.3%	430.2%	156.8%	1,261.6%
5 to 9 yrs	93	7.3%	431	8.8%	1,032	8.2%	363.4%	139.4%	1,009.7%
10 to 14 yrs	135	10.6%	403	8.2%	914	7.3%	198.5%	126.8%	577.0%
15 to 19 yrs	94	7.4%	328	6.7%	733	5.8%	248.9%	123.5%	679.8%
20 to 24 yrs	49	3.8%	248	5.1%	618	4.9%	406.1%	149.2%	1,161.2%
25 to 34 yrs	161	12.6%	1,050	21.5%	2,354	18.7%	552.2%	124.2%	1,362.1%
35 to 44 yrs	288	22.6%	810	16.6%	2,089	16.7%	181.3%	157.9%	625.3%
45 to 54 yrs	157	12.3%	546	11.2%	1,417	11.3%	247.8%	159.5%	802.5%
55 to 59 yrs	52	4.1%	182	3.7%	622	5.0%	250.0%	241.8%	1,096.2%
60 to 64 yrs	46	3.6%	154	3.2%	660	5.3%	234.8%	328.6%	1,334.8%
65 to 74 yrs	51	4.0%	174	3.6%	665	5.3%	241.2%	282.2%	1,203.9%
75 to 84 yrs	49	3.8%	80	1.6%	180	1.5%	63.3%	125.0%	267.3%
85 yrs & over	14	1.1%	23	0.5%	75	0.6%	64.3%	226.1%	435.7%
Total population	**1,275**	**100%**	**4,885**	**100%**	**12,530**	**100%**			
Median age	**35.9 years**		**30.6 years**		**32.7 years**				

Source: US Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010

Age Distribution		
Need: Consideration of the high growth rate of specific population groups (young adults and school age children).		
Goal: Prepare to meet the needs of an increasing population in target age groups.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Work in conjunction with the school district to ensure awareness of major increases in school aged children. Future school expansions and new schools should be planned accordingly.	Planning, Planning Commission, School District	On-going
2. Coordinate with the County representatives to ensure adequate recreational services and facilities for the increasing younger population.	Planning, PALS, Engineering	Medium
3. Encourage economic development and industry recruitment that addresses the creation and retention of jobs for young adults.	Planning, Economic Development Committee	Medium
4. Ensure multiple housing options for the working class.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning, local non-profits	On-going

2.5 Racial Composition and Ethnicity

Racial composition in Bluffton in the 2010 Census is shown in Figure 2.10. The two largest groups were white (71.4% of the population) and black or African American (16.2% of the population). The white population percentage is slightly less than the County and greater than the State as a portion of the total population. The black or African American population percentage is lower than the County and the State as a portion of the total population.

Figure 2.10
Racial Composition, 2010

Race	Bluffton		Beaufort County	South Carolina
	No.	Pct.		
White	8,950	71.4%	71.9%	66.2%
Black or African American	2,025	16.2%	19.3%	27.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	34	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	245	2.0%	1.2%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	6	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Some other race	911	7.3%	5.2%	2.5%
Two or more races	359	2.9%	2.1%	1.7%

Source: US Census 2010

Bluffton's Racial Composition: 2000, 2005 Special Census & 2010 Census

As shown in Figure 2.11, the racial composition changed as the population grew from 2000 and 2010. However, in 2010, the proportion of white residents was lower than in 2005.

Figure 2.11
Town of Bluffton Racial Composition Table: 2000, 2005, 2010

Race	2000		2005		2010	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
White	806	63.2%	3,735	76.5%	8,950	71.3%
Black or African American	414	32.5%	783	16.0%	2,025	16.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6	0.5%	18	0.4%	34	0.3%
Asian	5	0.4%	66	1.4%	245	2.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	6	0.0%
Some other race	40	3.1%	221	4.5%	911	7.3%
Two or more races	4	0.3%	60	1.2%	359	2.9%
Total	**1,275**	**100.0%**	**4,885**	**100.0%**	**12,530**	**100.0%**

Source: US Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010

Hispanic or Latino Origin and Ethnicity

For Census 2010 and the American Community Survey (ACS), people who identify with the terms "Hispanic" or "Latino" are those who classify themselves in one of the specific Hispanic or Latino categories listed on the Census 2010 or ACS questionnaire, "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," or "Cuban," as well as those who indicate that they are "other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino." Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.

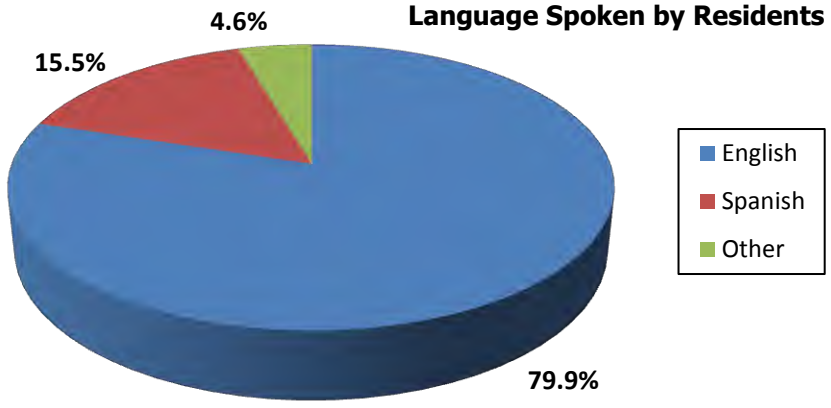
Figure 2.12
Town of Bluffton: Hispanic or Latino Origin, 2005 & 2010

Origin	2005		2010		2005-2010 Total Change	2005-2010 Pct. Change
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.		
Hispanic or Latino	553	11.3%	2,355	18.8%	1,802	325.9%
Non-Hispanic or Latino	4,332	88.7%	10,175	81.2%	5,843	134.9%
Total	**4,885**	**100.0%**	**12,530**	**100.0%**	**7,645**	**156.5%**

Source: Special Census of Bluffton town, South Carolina: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010

Bluffton experienced an increase in residents of Hispanic or Latino origin of 326% from 2005-2010 compared to 135% for Non-Hispanic or Latino residents. Residents of Hispanic or Latino origin made up 11% of the population in 2005, while this percent grew to nearly 19% of the total in 2010.

Figure 2.13
Language Spoken by Residents



Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Figure 2.13 indicates the percentage of Bluffton's population that speaks English, Spanish, or a different language only. Another indicator is student enrollment in Bluffton public schools. As indicated in Figure 2.14, enrollment for the 2014-2015 school year shows that an average of 28% of students were identified as Limited English Proficiency (LEA). These LEA students are those who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This indicates a need for an increased availability of English as a second language courses and cooperation from Literacy Volunteers of the Lowcountry and other organizations.

Figure 2.14

Percentage of Limited English Proficency (LEP) Students Attending Bluffton Public Schools, 2014-2015 School Year

School Name	% of LEP Students per School	School Classification	Average % of LEP Students per School Classification
Bluffton Elementary	25%	Elementary School	33%
Michael C. Riley Elementary	54%		
Okatie Elementary	11%		
Pritchardville Elementary	25%		
Red Cedar Elementary	51%		
Bluffton Middle	23%	Middle School	23%
H. E. McCracken Middle	22%		
Bluffton High	16%	High School	16%
Average	**28%**		

Source: Beaufort County School District

Racial Composition and Ethnicity

Need: Acknowledgement and appreciation of the Town's diverse population.

Goal: Support the diversity of our population through acknowledgment or festivities.

Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Recognize and support heritage appreciation days, holidays, festivals and other events.	Town Council	On-going
2. Support heritage and diversity through the future development of interpretive centers and museums.	Town Council, Administration , Planning	Medium

Need: Consideration and acknowledgment of language barriers.

Goal: Ensure communication between English speaking and non-English speaking population.

Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Support English as a Second Language (ESL) courses with non-profit organizations such as Literacy Volunteers of the Lowcountry.	Town Staff, Literacy Volunteers of the Lowcountry	Medium
2. Provide basic Town information both in English and Spanish, or offer a translation service for residents.	Town Staff	Long

2.6 Gender Composition

The 2010 Census indicated a slight decrease in the discrepancy of number of females to males with approximately 48.9% of the population being male and 51.1% being female. Gender composition in the 2000 Census identified 48.5% of Bluffton's population as male and 51.5% of the resident population as female. In comparison to Beaufort County data, the percentage of female residents is higher within the Town, but it is on par with South Carolina data.

Figure 2.15
Town of Bluffton Gender Distribution, 2000, 2005 & 2010

Gender	2000		2005		2010	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Male	619	48.5%	2,321	47.5%	6,122	48.9%
Female	656	51.5%	2,564	52.5%	6,408	51.1%

Source: US Census 2000, Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010

2.7 Households

According to the US Census, a "household" consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. "Size of family" includes the family householder and all other people in the living quarters that are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. The total number of households in Bluffton in 2010 based on census information is 4,417, with the average household size being 2.84 members and the average family size being 3.2 members (Figure 2.16). Beaufort County's average household size is 2.42 and average family size is 2.84, while the State of South Carolina's average household size is 2.49 and average family size is 3.01.

As indicated in Figure 2.16, the portion of households that are families with children under 18 years of age is 15.1% higher than Beaufort County's. For married-couple families with children under 18 years, Bluffton has a 12.3% higher percentage than Beaufort County and a 11.9% higher percentage than the State of South Carolina. Bluffton, as indicated in Figure 2.13, has a higher percentage of households with individuals less than 18 years of age than either Beaufort County (28.5%) or the State of South Carolina (32.8%). The percentage of households with individuals 65 years and over in Bluffton is lower than either Beaufort County (-18.9%) or South Carolina (-9.9%).

Figure 2.16

Household Distribution Table, 2010

Households by Type	Bluffton		Beaufort County		South Carolina	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total Households	4,417	100.0%	64,945	100.00%	1,801,181	100.00%
Family households (families)	3,323	75.2%	45,322	69.80%	1,216,415	67.50%
With own children under 18 years	1,793	40.6%	16,573	25.50%	509,699	28.30%
Married-couple family	2,568	58.1%	35,966	55.40%	849,959	47.20%
With own children under 18 years	1,308	29.6%	11,214	17.30%	319,204	17.70%
Male householder, no wife present	200	4.5%	2,388	3.70%	85,354	4.70%
With own children under 18 years	117	2.6%	1,236	1.90%	39,023	2.20%
Female householder, no husband present	555	12.6%	6,968	10.70%	281,102	15.60%
With own children under 18 years	368	8.3%	4,123	6.30%	151,472	8.40%
Non-family households	1,094	24.8%	19,623	30.20%	584,766	32.50%
Householder living alone	762	17.3%	15,809	24.30%	477,894	26.50%
Householder 65 years and over	168	3.8%	6,710	10.40%	166,356	9.30%
Households with individuals under 18 years	1,949	44.1%	18,499	28.50%	590,942	32.80%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	688	15.6%	22,431	34.50%	459,418	25.50%
Average household size	**2.84**	---	**2.42**	---	**2.49**	---
Average family size	**3.20**	---	**2.84**	---	**3.10**	---

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Figure 2.17 shows the increase in families with children from 2005 to 2010 as well as the average annual increase. The percentage of family households has remained steady in Bluffton since the 2000 Census remaining around 75% through the decade to 2010. The number of family households with children under 18 years decreased between 2005 (44.2%) to 2010 (40.6%). Most significantly, the number of householders in Bluffton aged 65 and over increased from a modest 44 persons (2.6% of the population) in 2005 to 168 (3.8% of the population) in 2010. Average household size did not change between 2005 and 2010, remaining at 2.84.. Average family size in Bluffton decreased slightly from 3.22 in 2005 to 3.2 in 2010.

Figure 2.17
Town of Bluffton Household Distribution Table: 2005 & 2010

Households by Type	2005		2010		2005-2010	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Pct. Change	Avg. Pct. Change
Total Households	1,719	100.0%	4,417	100.0%	157.0%	39.2%
Family households (families)	1,313	76.4%	3,323	75.2%	153.1%	38.3%
With own children under 18 years	759	44.2%	1,793	40.6%	136.2%	34.1%
Married-couple family	1,021	59.4%	2,568	58.1%	151.5%	37.9%
With own children under 18 years	568	33.0%	1,308	29.6%	130.3%	32.6%
Male householder, no wife present	N/A	N/A	200	4.5%	N/A	N/A
With own children under 18 years	N/A	N/A	117	2.6%	N/A	N/A
Female householder, no husband present	219	12.7%	555	12.6%	153.4%	38.4%
With own children under 18 years	150	8.7%	368	8.3%	145.3%	36.3%
Non-family households	406	23.6%	1,094	24.8%	169.5%	42.4%
Householder living alone	276	16.1%	762	17.3%	176.1%	44.0%
Householder 65 years and over	44	2.6%	168	3.8%	281.8%	70.5%
Households with individuals under 18 years	807	46.9%	1,949	44.1%	141.5%	35.4%
Households with individuals 65 years and over	208	12.1%	688	15.6%	230.8%	57.7%
Average household size	**2.84**	**---**	**2.84**	---	**0.0%**	**0.0%**
Average family size	**3.22**	**---**	**3.20**	---	**-0.6%**	**-0.2%**

Source: Town of Bluffton Special Census: August 18, 2005, US Census 2010

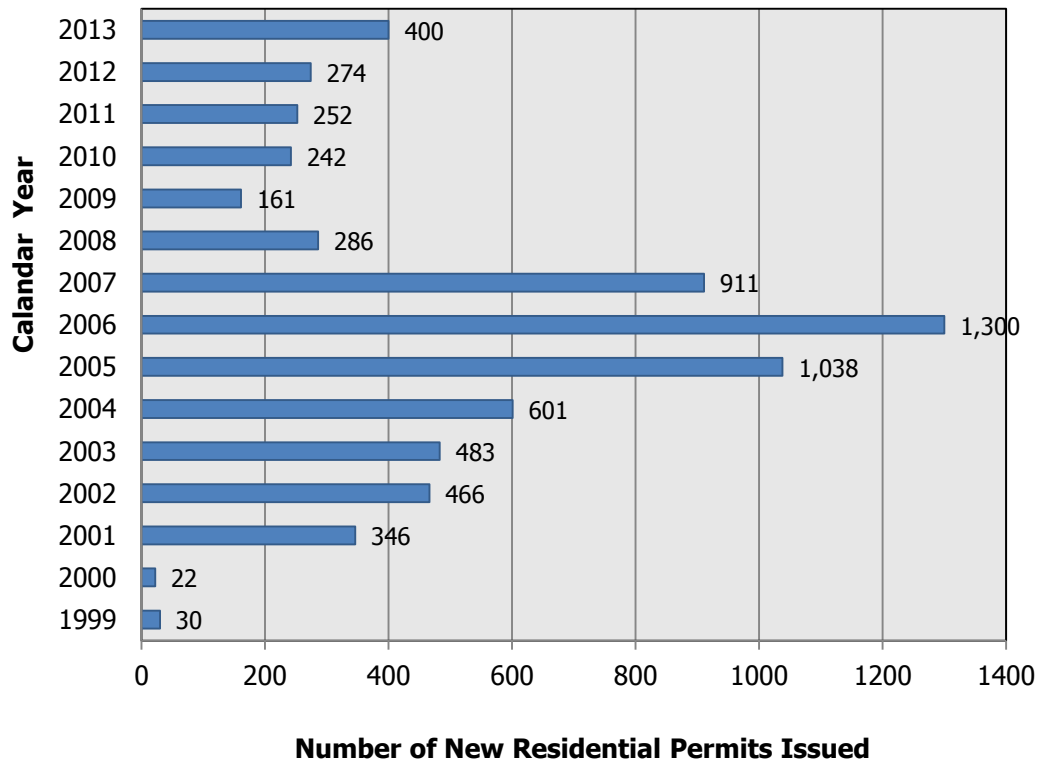
Need: Consideration and acknowledgement of the increasing number of households, particularly the large increase in the number of households with children.		
Goal: Recognize the annual increases in the number of households and the type of households within the Town in order to address specific housing and other needs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Encourage developments and housing options directed at families and households with children.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	On-going
2. Develop a method to accurately monitor the increase in housing units, type and selling prices.	Planning	Medium

2.8 Residential and Commercial Growth

Housing Growth

As Bluffton's population continues to grow, so does the need for housing. Figure 2.18 represents a summary of recent building permit data for new construction in Bluffton. Starting with just 30 permits issued for new homes in 1999 growing to over 1,300 in 2006.. The latter half of the last decade saw a drastic decline in number of permits issued for residential construction as similar to the experiences of many communities across the United States during the same period. However, new residential permits increased from an 8-year low of 161 in 2009 to 400 in 2013.

Figure 2.18
Town of Bluffton New Residential

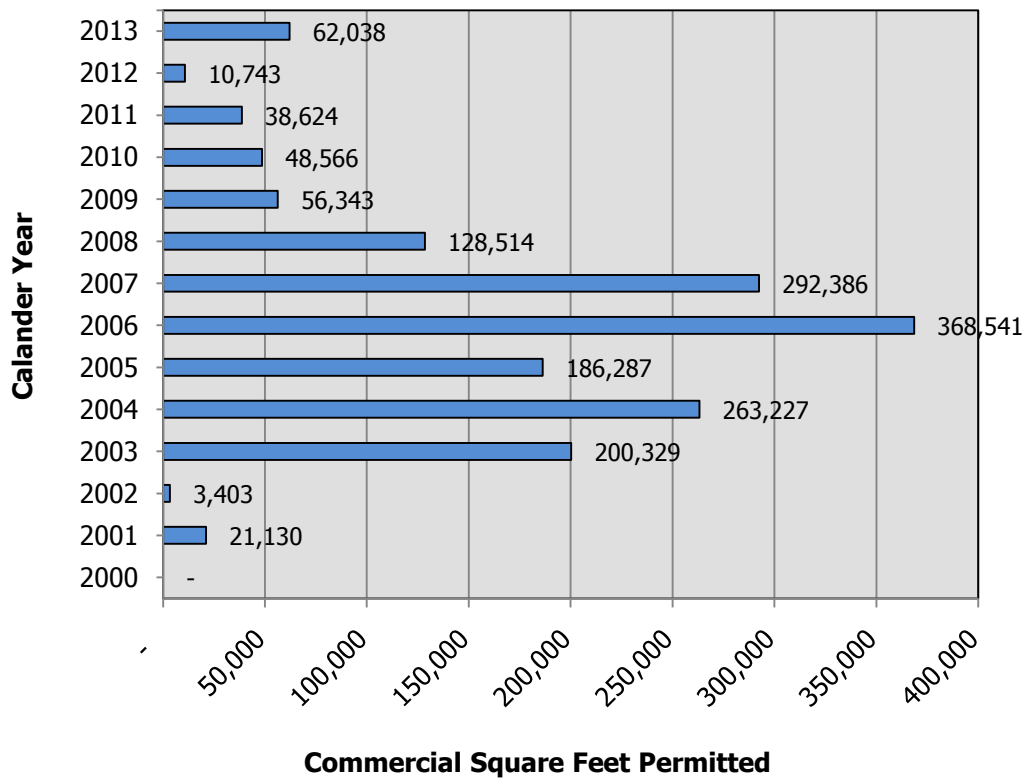


Source: Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department, Beaufort County Building Permit Department

Commercial Growth

New commercial space was triggered by the increase in housing and market demands to serve the larger population. Based on permit data, commercial square footage in Bluffton grew slowly until a major burst in 2003, followed by lower, but still robust growth in 2004 and 2005 (see Figure 2.19). A major increase in new commercial space also occurred in 2006.

Figure 2.19
Town of Bluffton New Commercial Space



Source: Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department, Beaufort County Building Permit Department
Note: "Commercial space" includes a variety of land uses other than retail, such as office and services

Commercial "need" is based on many factors including population, trade area, seasonal or pass through traffic, and the availability of commercial in nearby communities. Some towns import a lot of commercial spending beyond what their population alone would be expected to support, whereas others export much of the dollars spent on commercial goods. Still, a general benchmark can be added as a guide. One computation often used by professional planners and the Urban Land Institute (ULI) is to assume that one person can absorb or support 40 square feet of all types of retail space, including regional

business. Additional information relating to the commercial activity within Bluffton is addressed in the Economic Development Chapter. Figure 2.20 shows the difference between local, general and regional commercial uses and market areas.

Figure 2.20
Retail Types

	Local Business	General Business	Regional Business
Potential Uses	Small scale, pedestrian oriented, personal service establishments, convenience retail, sit-down restaurants	Moderate scale, auto-oriented, grocery stores, moderate scale gas stations, all types of restaurants, retail	Large scale shopping centers/malls, home improvement centers, one-stop shopping centers and businesses, accessory commercial that serve shoppers such as restaurants, hotels/motels, gas stations
Approximate Market Area	2 mile radius	Most customers from city & nearby communities within 2-10 mile radius along with pass-by arterial and expressway users	These destination users serve the county and beyond (up to 30 mile radius) as well as expressway users

Source: Urban Land Institute

Residential and Commercial Growth		
Need: Preparation for the increasing number of service demands.		
Goal: Employ adequate and qualified staff to accommodate an increasing number of requests.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Review the departmental needs on a regular basis in terms of staffing and assigned responsibilities based on the number of development permits, building permits, certificates of compliance, Police calls for service, businesses licenses, maintenance requests, court cases and other service demands.	Administration, Department Heads	On-going

2.9 Educational Attainment

Educational attainment levels of Bluffton's residents are generally similar to Beaufort County and South Carolina figures. Bluffton boasts a greater percentage of residents receiving degrees from high school and higher levels than the State of South Carolina. However, in most categories, Beaufort County outperforms Bluffton by a small margin. The lower educational levels achieved by Bluffton residents may effect the types of jobs which then affects earned income. Educational levels can thus influence land use by the types of industry and employers who can be attracted, and the amount of income available to purchase goods and services.

Figure 2.21
Educational Attainment, 2012

Type of Education	Bluffton		Beaufort Co. Pct.	South Carolina Pct.
	No.	Pct.		
Population 25 years and over	8,298	100%	---	---
Less than 9th grade	305	3.7%	3.3%	5.6%
9th grade to 12th grade, no diploma	569	6.9%	5.8%	10.3%
High school graduate (include equivalency)	2,310	27.8%	24.8%	30.3%
Some college, no degree	1,675	20.2%	21.0%	20.6%
Associate's degree	861	10.4%	8.0%	8.6%
Bachelor's degree	1,708	20.6%	22.6%	15.8%
Graduate or professional degree	870	10.5%	14.4%	8.7%
Percent high school graduate or higher	---	89.5%	90.8%	84.0%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	---	31.1%	37.0%	24.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment		
Need: Increased educational achievement.		
Goal: Support area educational organizations to exceed the State's average education attainment level.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support college enrollment efforts through college fairs and other informational workshops.	Town Council, Local Universities and Colleges	Medium
2. Encourage local scholarship opportunities to encourage higher education.	Town Council	Medium
3. Coordinate a partnership with the School District to discourage high school drop outs and encourage graduation through incentives and other educational resources.	Town Council, School District	Long
4. Support adult education courses to encourage high school equivalency diplomas.	Town Council, School District	Long
5. Support area Tech schools.	Town Council, Area Tech Schools	Medium

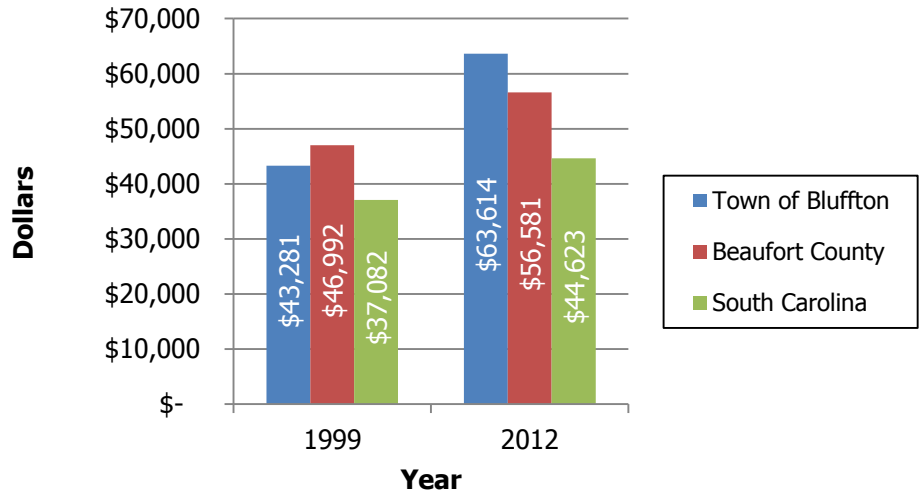
2.10 Income

Income is addressed in this section in terms of the median household income, per capita income, household income distribution, and the source of income. Income is also addressed in terms of jobs and other economic impacts in the Economic section of this plan.

Median Household Income

Median household income refers to the average of all household incomes within an area. Bluffton's median household income, $63,614, was slightly greater in the 2012 ACS in comparison with Beaufort County ($56,581) and the State of South Carolina ($44,632). Bluffton enjoyed a 46.98% increase in median income between 1999 and 2012, greater than the increase experienced in Beaufort County (20.41%) and South Carolina (20.36%) during the same time period.

Figure 2.22
Median Household Income 1999 & 2012



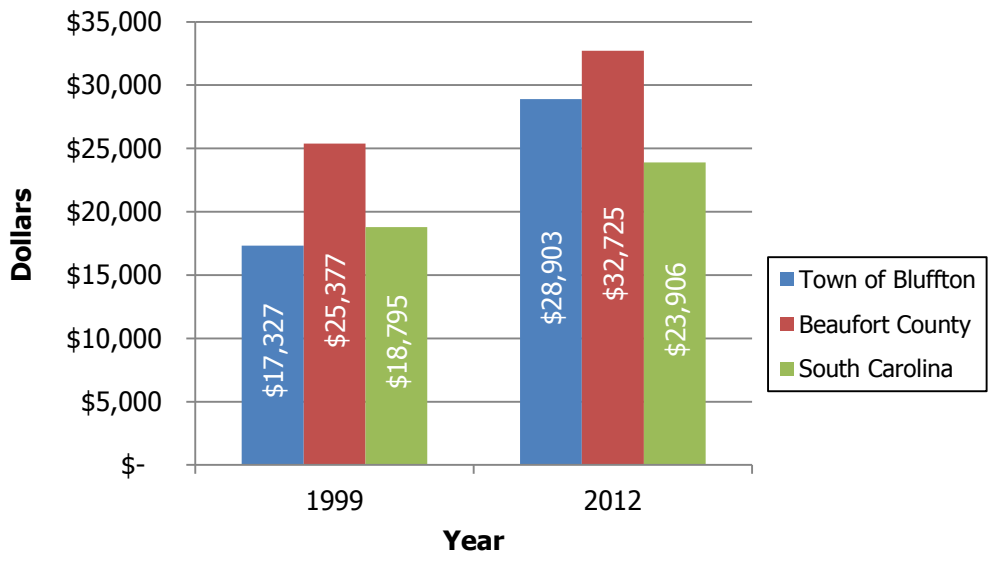
Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

Per Capita Income

Per capita income is a measure of the average income per person in a population. By 2012, Bluffton's per capita income rose to $28,903, a 67% increase, far greater than Beaufort County's 29% increase or the State's 27% increase. In 1999, the per capita income of the Town of

Bluffton was $17,327, slightly lower than the State of South Carolina ($18,795) and significantly lower than Beaufort County's per capita income of $25,377.

Figure 2.23
Per Capita Income 1999 & 2012



Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

Household Income Distribution

Bluffton's household income distribution consists of 65.5% of all households earning over $50,000 in 2012. Within this percentage, 40.5% earned incomes between $50,000 and $99,999 and 25% of households earned over $100,000, a significant increase from 5.5% in 2000. This distribution of all households earning over $50,000 is greater than Beaufort County (56.1%) and much higher than the State of South Carolina (45.3%). Bluffton's income distribution included 10.3% of households with incomes of less than $25,000 compared to 17.6% in Beaufort County and 28.3% in South Carolina.

Figure 2.24
Household Income Distribution, 2012

Income Range	Households Bluffton	Pct. of Households		
		Bluffton	Beaufort County	South Carolina
Total	4,513	100%	100%	100%
Less than $10,000	90	2.0%	5.4%	9.1%
$10,000 to $14,999	129	2.9%	4.2%	6.6%
$15,000 to $24,999	242	5.4%	8.0%	12.6%
$25,000 to $34,999	589	13.1%	11.5%	11.7%
$35,000 to $49,999	508	11.3%	14.8%	14.8%
$50,000 to $74,999	1,036	23.0%	19.7%	18.2%
$75,000 to $99,999	792	17.5%	12.8%	11.1%
$100,000 to $149,000	711	15.8%	12.8%	10.3%
$150,000 to $199,999	253	5.6%	4.4%	3.1%
$200,000 or more	163	3.6%	6.4%	2.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Income

Need: Additional jobs and educational opportunities to increase per capita income.

Goal: Support the Economic Development Committee to recruit high tech and higher paying employers.

Implementation Steps	Responsible Parties	Time Frame
1. Engage in business recruitment of high tech industries.	Town Council, Greater Beaufort-Hilton Head Economic Partnership Inc.	Long
2. Support local schools and colleges on job training to increase the workforce capabilities and therefore increase the per capita income.	Town Council, School District, USCB, TCL	Long
3. Develop methods for tracking per capita income, household incomes and wages.	Administration, Planning	Medium

2.11 Poverty

Poverty is the deprivation of essential goods and services, the necessities of daily living such as food, clothing, shelter or health care. Poverty status is determined by the US Census Bureau by using a poverty threshold. This is a set dollar amount that is used to determine poverty status; it is dependent on the number of people in the home, age, and the number of children. In 2012, the poverty threshold for a one person family unit, less than 65 years old was $11,945 annual income; for a family of four (parents and two children) it was $23,364. Figure 2.25 shows the percentage of persons living below the poverty line in 2012.

Figure 2.25
Poverty Status, 1999 & 2012

Poverty Status	1999			2012		
	Bluffton Pct.	Beaufort Co. Pct.	South Carolina Pct.	Bluffton Pct.	Beaufort Co. Pct.	South Carolina Pct.
Below Poverty Level	12.6%	10.7%	14.1%	14.1%	11.6%	17.6%
Above Poverty Level	87.4%	89.3%	85.9%	85.9%	88.4%	82.4%

Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Bluffton's percentage of population living below the poverty level in 2012 is 14.1%, which is higher than the County's percentage of 11.6%. It is also lower than the State's percentage of 17.6% of the population living below the poverty level.

On January 27, 2005, the first statewide documentation of homeless persons was conducted. Homelessness is defined as possessing a lack of permanent housing. On that day, the Low Country Consortium, which includes, Beaufort, Berkeley, Dorchester, Charleston, Jasper, Hampton, and Colleton Counties, reported a total of 688 homeless persons, compared to the State's total of 6,480 and Beaufort County at 25. A recent 2013 study conducted by the South Carolina Coalition for the Homeless showed an increase of homelessness in Beaufort County with a total of 136 homeless persons, 127 of which were classified as unsheltered (not temporarily staying in an emergency shelter, winter shelter, or domestic violence shelter).

Poverty		
Need: Reduction of the number of residents living in poverty.		
Goal: Plan for the number of persons living in poverty.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Promote and encourage various housing and employment options for persons of various incomes and backgrounds.	Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	On-going

2.12 Human Services

Bluffton is a limited services government which does not provide the community with a wide array of human services. However, the Town supports the Together for Beaufort organization and the regional network of human services known as the Alliance for Human Services. Bluffton serves on the Alliance Leadership Council and supports the following goals of Together for Beaufort.

1. We will, with our Lowcountry neighbors, build an economy that supports a sustainable quality of life.
2. We will break the cycle of illiteracy by exceeding national educational standards.
3. We will break the cycles of poverty that impact children, elderly and the working poor.
4. We will balance growth in a manner that promotes and protects the health of our residents and our environment.

The Town plans to stay active and support of the Alliance and its goals and objectives.

Human Services		
Need: Provision of basic social services.		
Goal: Coordinate with area Human Services organizations to ensure the Town's residents receive the services they require.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support Together for Beaufort and remain active in the Alliance for Human Services to help achieve its goals.	Town Council, Together for Beaufort, Alliance for Human Services	On-going

Cultural Resources 3

The Town of Bluffton is a product of its unique location in time and space and while any town must evolve, its heritage and identifiable character should be preserved. Therefore, it is important that Bluffton safeguards its cultural identity because if it is lost, so too will a part of the community's sense of place.

Vision

We strive to maintain our sense of community, diversity and individuality by preserving our cultural resources.

3.1 Early History

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the area comprising southern Beaufort County was known as Granville County of St. Luke's Parish. As the Yemassee Indians had established ten towns with over 1,200 inhabitants in that area, it was considered "Indian Lands." In 1715, the Yemassee War broke out and after several years of fighting, the Yemassee tribe migrated to Florida, opening the lands to European settlement. In 1718, the Lords Proprietors carved the area into several new baronies, including the Devil's Elbow Barony that contained the future Town of Bluffton.

Photos courtesy of Emmett McCracken

Bluffton was eventually built on two adjoining parcels in the Devil's Elbow Barony purchased by Benjamin Walls and James Kirk. The first homes were constructed during the early 1800s by area plantation owners seeking high ground and cool river breezes as an escape from the unhealthy conditions present on Lowcountry rice and cotton plantations. Easy access by water provided more incentives for expansion and the many tidal coves afforded excellent locations for residences. The first streets were formally laid out during the mid-1800s, and the name Bluffton was decided upon during the same period.

In 1852, Bluffton was officially incorporated by an act of the South Carolina General Assembly and comprised approximately one square mile, which is currently referred to as Old Town. A steamboat landing was constructed at the end of Calhoun Street during this period, which allowed Bluffton to be a stopover for travelers between Savannah and Beaufort or Charleston.

Within one year of the capture of Fort Sumter, Bluffton became a safe haven for residents fleeing Union occupation of the South Carolina barrier islands. Bluffton was a headquarters for Confederate forces until Union forces on Hilton Head Island ordered its destruction in 1863. While approximately 60 structures stood in Bluffton prior to the attack; only two churches and fifteen residences remained standing after.

Photos courtesy of Emmett McCracken

Rebuilding came slowly, as few local landowners could afford the luxury of a summer home and Bluffton did not experience a true rebuilding until the 1880s, when it emerged as a commercial center for Beaufort County. Bluffton remained a commercial center until the Coastal Highway (US 17) and the bridge at Port Wentworth over the Savannah River were completed, making riverboat trade and travel less attractive. The Great Depression, beginning shortly thereafter, brought the finality to Bluffton's prosperity and commercial importance; however its popularity as a vacation spot remained even after the loss of its commercial stature. The growth of Hilton Head Island, nearby Sun City, and related development has resulted in a resurgence of commercial activity.

Due to recent large-scale annexations, Bluffton has experienced tremendous growth and prosperity, having expanded its territory from one square mile to approximately fifty-four square miles. However, its heart and historic center has always been the Old Town. This area is also recognized as a National Register District by the National Parks Service. Old Town is characterized by a variety of building styles and scales and is home to many residents, artists, and merchants.

Unfortunately, there is a great deal of local oral history that remains undocumented. It is important that individuals possessing this local knowledge are interviewed to compile and archive these histories, and Bluffton should support all efforts striving to preserve them.

Early History		
Need: Preservation of local knowledge and oral history.		
Goal: Support the preservation of local knowledge and oral history.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society in conducting interviews of local residents through workshops or the solicitation of information during festivals and other community gatherings.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium
2. Coordinate videotaping of oral history and local knowledge.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, South Carolina Educational Television	Medium

3.2 Historical Surveys and Assets

Contributing Resources

Several surveys have been conducted over the past twenty years to identify Bluffton's historic resources. The direct result of a 1994 survey of 84 sites was the creation of the Bluffton National Register Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. A full description of the study can be found in Appendix A. The boundary of this district is shown on Map 3.1 National Register District and a listing of contributing properties to the National Register District is included in Figure 3.1.

A contributing property is a building, structure, object, or site within the boundaries of the district that adds to the historic associations, historic architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which the historic district is known. A contributing property must also retain its "integrity," or enough of its historic physical features to convey its significance as part of the district. The Church of the Cross is the only building within Bluffton that is currently listed individually on the National Register.

These surveys have documented Bluffton's important historical assets, specifically structures, in the first steps towards a broad preservation effort. Therefore, it is imperative that the Town supports the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society in its efforts to create and maintain an archive that includes all significant historical assets located in the community and research funding methods to protect and preserve this archive.

Unfortunately, not all development and annexation applications currently include an historic resources survey with their application. In the future, development should follow all State and Federal regulations and any survey material that is required by responsible agencies should be forwarded to Bluffton. This would ensure that resources are catalogued and that Town staff know what exists on property before being lost to development.

Figure 3.1
Contributing Structures

Map No.	Structure Name	Map No.	Structure Name
1	Guerrard's Bluff	26	Whitney Cottage
2	Hancock House	27	Graves House
3	Milford	28	Boundary Street House
4	Bridge Street House	29	Guilford House
5	Austin House	30	Boundary Street House
6	Bridge Street House	31	Heyward House
7	Garvey Houses	32	Bridge Street House
8	Bridge Street House	33	Card House
9	Bluffton Oyster Company	34	The Rate
10	Bridge Street House	35	Pine House
11	Cypress Bluff	36	The Bluff
12	Planters' Mercantile	37	Pritchard House
13	Patz Brothers' House	38	Rowell or Walker Cottage (no longer standing)
14	Carson Cottage	39	Colcock-Teel House
15	Hasell Heyward, Sr. House	40	Colcock Street House
16	Calhoun Street House	41	Colcock Street House
17	Lawrence Street House/Mulligan House	42	Calhoun Street Commercial Bldg
18	John A. Seabrook House	43	Water Street House
19	Peeples' Store	44	Huger Gordon House
20	Peeples' House	45	Water Street House
21	Fripp-Lowden House	46	Water Street House
22	Seven Oaks	47	Bluffton United Methodist Church
23	Allen-Lockwood House	48	Bridge Street Commercial Bldg
24	Church of the Cross	49	Fripp House
25	Pope Carriage House	50	Campbell Chapel AME Church

Source: Bluffton Historic Resource Survey Report, 1994 and Town of Bluffton Preservation Manual

Historic Sites and Archeological Resources

Structures are not necessarily the only contributing cultural elements; trees, natural features, and sites where important events occurred also contribute to a community's cultural identity. Bluffton's "Secession Oak", located on private property across from Highway 46 on Verdier Cove Road, may already have been two centuries old on July 31, 1844, when as many as 500 people met beneath its canopy. According to Janice Hunter Cantrell (in the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society's No. II: A Longer Short History of Bluffton, South Carolina and Its Environs), they had come to hear their congressman, Robert Barnwell Rhett, "who had been so vociferously agitating since the 1820s for Secession". And so began "The Bluffton Movement", which "led to

South Carolina's withdrawal from the Union on December 20, 1860 – the first state to secede." The "Secession Oak" is significant to our history, as it is an important historic location as well as a beautiful contemporary focal point.

The natural features and archeological sites in the Town of Bluffton also contribute to the cultural heritage of the community in ways that are not always easily recognized. The three coves of Bluffton's Old Town have provided wonderful viewscapes to the residents throughout Bluffton's history, but they also played a critical role in the Lowcountry culture. The coves were commonly used for religious ceremonies such as baptisms, were the footing for the local economy as the site of an oyster factory, and became a source of recreation as the favored playground of many of the children who spent their summers here.

The archeological sites scattered throughout the region play an important role in revealing the history as well. They are the repository for historic artifacts that tell the stories of the Native American tribes who inhabited these lands before European settlement. They hold secrets to skirmishes of the Civil War. The plantation burial sites stand as memorials of the enslaved Africans who spent their lives on those lands. The architectural ruins show the unique way that this area of the country was colonized by unveiling historic construction techniques, architectural styles of the day, and the ingenious use of local materials.

While mostly structures are currently inventoried, all cultural sites, including those beneath the surface, should also be inventoried and recognized.

Historic Surveys and Assets		
Need: Preservation of valuable cultural assets.		
Goal: Support the creation of an all-inclusive archive documenting all significant structures and assets.		
Implementation Steps:	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Partner with the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society to maintain a one-stop clearinghouse and archive for all Town historical and cultural records at the Caldwell Archives.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium
2. Partner with the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society to identify grant funding opportunities for improvements to the Caldwell Archives to adequately protect historical documents and records.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium
3. Partner with the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society to maintain an inventory of not only historic structures, but all historic sites and cultural resources, being both natural and man-made.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium
4. Require development proposals to provide a copy of any information submitted and received by state and federal agencies, particularly the SC Department of Archives and History pertaining to historical and/or architectural resource surveys conducted in conjunction with development permits.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium

3.3 Cultural Facilities

Bluffton's cultural identity will be fostered and expanded by recognizing and enhancing the community's cultural facilities. As its population continues to grow, additional meeting, exhibit, and performance space may be needed to accommodate cultural events. Therefore, Bluffton should explore various funding sources to support the arts, to assist in satisfying future cultural needs, as well as to assess the need to improve existing facilities.

Cultural Resources

Educational Facilities: Museums are fundamental community structures that promote the dissemination of local historical knowledge and give a glimpse into how a community's cultural identity has progressed through time. The Heyward House, ca. 1840, is the official welcome center for Bluffton. It was originally built as a summer home for the owner of Moreland Plantation, John Cole and is one of only 12 remaining antebellum homes in Bluffton. It is the fourth oldest structure remaining in southern Beaufort County. The home is open to the public and is a clearinghouse for information on Old Town merchants and walking tours. In addition, local libraries provide immense benefits for the community by serving as an archive for resources and information, both of the local and worldly varieties.

Religious Facilities: Both churches and their ancillary buildings, such as gymnasiums, fellowship halls, and cemeteries, foster a great sense of community. These buildings are often some of the most valuable cultural assets within a community and are housed in historically and culturally significant structures. There are nine churches located in historic Old Town, with Church of the Cross individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The church, located on Calhoun Street, was originally established in 1767 and the existing building was built in 1854. There is also a historically significant cemetery located in close proximity to the Old Town, just outside of the municipal limits on May River Road.

Entertainment Facilities: There are numerous art galleries, studios, and antique shops located throughout the community, particularly within the Old Town, which contribute to the unique and eclectic character of Bluffton. The May River Theater operates in the same building as Town Hall (Ulmer Auditorium) on Bridge Street and is the venue for numerous plays and other shows. School auditoriums and gymnasiums may be used to house a variety of theatrical events, lectures, and sporting events. Local parks may also serve as venues for cultural events.

Cultural Facilities		
Need: Development and promotion of cultural facilities for residents and tourists.		
Goal: Maintain and enhance existing cultural facilities and adequately accommodate future cultural activity needs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Evaluate existing facilities to determine possible improvements to the structures.	Planning	Medium
2. Assess the need for additional cultural facilities that may be demanded by a growing population.	Planning	Medium
3. Research opportunities for funding of the arts to assist in the promotion and maintenance of cultural facilities.	Planning	Medium

3.4 Heritage Tourism

The National Trust defines cultural heritage tourism as traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic and natural resources and is a partnership between the culture, heritage, and tourism. In 2002, Miley and Associates published a report, Smiling Faces Historic Places, a comprehensive assessment of the preservation and heritage activity in South Carolina that included the impact of the Historic Rehabilitation Incentives Act of 2002. The report states that heritage tourism results in $325.6 million annually in direct spending in South Carolina, resulting in the direct creation of 9,097 jobs and another 2,300 jobs created indirectly.

When supporting heritage tourism activities and efforts, it is important to follow five general principles as indicated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

1. Collaborate with all partners and groups involved in cultural and historical preservation activities and efforts;

2. Find the appropriate fit by balancing the needs of the residents and the visitors so that it benefits everyone;

3. Make the sites and programs come alive, making the destination worth the drive;

4. Focus on quality and authenticity by telling the true story which adds real value and appeal; and

5. Preserve and protect the resources. It is tragic to lose buildings and structures, plaques and markers cannot tell the true story. It is equally tragic to lose the traditions and the story of the people within the community.

It is important that Bluffton support heritage tourism efforts for preservation as well as economic development purposes, while acknowledging the above principles and safeguards for the future. A more detailed discussion on development pressure and area partnerships to promote heritage tourism can be found in Appendix A.

Heritage Tourism		
Need: Promotion and support of Heritage Tourism.		
Goal: Market the cultural and historical amenities of the Town to bolster Heritage Tourism.		
Implementation Steps:	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Erect monuments and other markers to clearly identify and honor Bluffton's historic people, sites, and structures.	Town Council	Medium
2. Utilize media programming, the internet, newspapers and television to promote Bluffton's heritage.	Administration	Medium
3. Implement the Old Town Master Plan Signage Plan.	Planning	Short

3.5 Community Events

Community events and activities help foster a true sense of community, engaging residents, visitors, shop owners, and other merchants in unified activities. Events are also a valuable tool to attract visitors to the area. Bluffton has numerous festivals and events throughout the year many are family-oriented where attendance is free. Bluffton, the Old Town Merchants Society and Bluffton Historical Preservation Society are several of the event and festival sponsors. The Community Calendar, the local newspaper and the internet are effective methods of promoting these and they should be advertised in various media outlets and on Bluffton's website.

A detailed list of community events can be found in Appendix A.

Community Events		
Need: Involvement of residents and local businesses in community events.		
Goal: Support community events and festivals.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Partner with the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society and the Chamber of Commerce for the maintenance of the Community Calendar. Display the Community Calendar on the Town's website in order for the information to be properly dispersed.	Administration, Chamber of Commerce	Short
2. Maintain a close relationship with the Bluffton Historic Preservation Society to encourage continued joint activities, tours, and lectures.	Town Council, Administration, Planning	On-going

3.6 Awards and Recognition

Bluffton should continue to strive to be recognized for promoting broad preservation and cultural initiatives. These efforts should help increase the public's awareness and understanding of preservation and the regulations necessary to guarantee its success.

A more detailed discussion on awards and recognition that Bluffton has received can be found in Appendix A.

Awards and Recognitions		
Need: Recognition for the community's historical and cultural efforts.		
Goal: Gain formal recognition and acknowledgement for our cultural resources and preservation efforts.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Apply for any applicable awards and recognitions for historical or cultural community efforts.	Planning	Medium
2. Apply for the Distinctive Designation award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.	Planning	Medium

3.7 Historic Preservation

The historical and cultural integrity of Bluffton is the key identifying attribute of the community. Among the major issues it is facing are the preservation and maintenance of its historic properties and character. A number of historic properties are in poor condition, badly in need of rehabilitation, and are at risk of being lost. While property owners should be required to maintain them, financial assistance and incentive programs may be needed to help prevent their loss or deterioration. Other options include adopting and enforcing a "demolition by neglect" ordinance, which should be considered as a proactive step in preserving our historically significant structures. In terms of building size, scale and design, as well as landscaping and tree cover, new development should blend with the surroundings or the result may be the alteration and destruction of Bluffton's historic context. This can be countered through careful planning and regulation as well as, negotiation with individual property owners.

Bluffton also needs to capitalize economically on its history and historical areas. As demonstrated in nearby Savannah and Charleston, historic preservation that includes neighborhoods and public areas can be a significant tourist attraction. Bluffton should work with local cultural advocacy groups, such as the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, the Bluffton-Okatie Business Council, Historical Beaufort Foundation, and Old Town Merchants to examine ways to embrace heritage tourism. A plan to enhance Bluffton's historic properties and marketing it as a tourist destination should also be formulated. This program could easily be combined with nature-based tourism for week-end "experiences", the latest trend in the leisure industry.

Bluffton should also continue to increase public awareness of historic preservation issues and integrate preservation activities into day-to-day planning and development. Staff, as well as boards and commissions, should attend regular workshops, conferences, and training sessions that are geared toward historical and cultural resource planning and

preservation. It is important that the information gained through this professional interaction is shared with the residents, increasing their knowledge and education regarding the benefits of preservation and the available tools and programs. It is Bluffton's responsibility to take the first step in rehabilitating, renovating, and reusing its assets.

Historic Preservation		
Need: Education of historic property owners on the availability of State and Federal programs and services.		
Goal: Encourage the participation of historic property owners in State and Federal preservation programs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Solicit the SCDAH to conduct a local workshop on the available historic property tax incentives, grant opportunities, and advantages on being listed on the National Register.	Finance, Planning	Medium
2. Consider adopting a local ordinance, for the Town and County, for special tax assessment for rehabilitated historic properties.	Finance, Planning	Medium
3. Encourage the attendance of staff and commissioners to workshops and conferences related to MASC Commissioner training and historic preservation.	Planning	On-going
4. Research and document local structures eligible for National Register of Historic Places designation and assist and educate the property owners on the advantages of the listing.	Planning, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	Medium

3.8 Controls and Regulation

Three historic overlay districts apply to Old Town: the National Register Historic District, the Bluffton Preservation District, and the Bluffton Conservation Neighborhood District. The three represent various levels of protection for the community's cultural and historical heritage.

Surveys were instrumental in their development and creation of the districts. Any development or property alteration in each district should follow state and federal guidelines for documenting historical attributes and protection.

National Register Historic District

A National Register Historic District is a concentration of historic buildings, structures, sites, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Any one of the properties in a historic district may not have particular historical, architectural, engineering, or archaeological distinction, but the collection must have significance in one of these areas. Boundaries for historic districts are drawn to include a significant concentration of historic properties, while excluding properties that do not contribute to the character of the historic district due to the fact that they are less than 50 years old or have been substantially altered. Although most historic districts include noncontributing properties, their number and scale must not overwhelm a district's sense of time and place and historical development.

Figure 3.2
Town of Bluffton
National Register

The Town of Bluffton National Register Historic District was listed June 21, 1996 as a result of a historic resources survey that was conducted within the area. At that time it had 48 contributing properties and 17 noncontributing properties. The district includes portions of

Boundary St., Bridge St., Calhoun St., Colcock St., Lawrence St., Pritchard St., and Water St. Figure 3.2 shows the location of the National Register District.

Historic Preservation Overlay District

The Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD) includes properties within the National Register District, plus several adjacent parcels. The HPOD is an all encompassing district that includes parcels deemed supportive of the district plus those in the National Register and the Preservation Districts. The Conservation Neighborhood District (CND) is located just outside HPOD boundaries. The properties in these districts are visible reminders of Bluffton's cultural heritage and Map 3.1 Historic Structures illustrates their location. Both the HPOD and the CND have been absorbed into the newly adopted Old Town District Code.

Preservation Manual

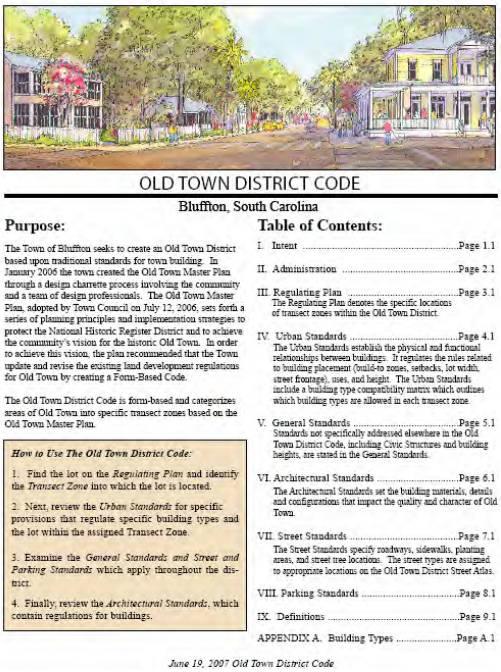
Produced in 2002, the Preservation Manual is used when reviewing the design of structures in the Historic Preservation Overlay District. This easy-to-use manual was adopted by Bluffton to provide consistent design standards within the HPOD. The manual promotes building types that perpetuate Bluffton's distinctive architectural heritage and discourages building types that may be detrimental to its character. It addresses factors such as building placement, compositional principles, and appropriate materials. This manual has recently been absorbed into the newly adopted Form-Based Code.

Old Town Master Plan

The Old Town Master Plan is a valuable resource that describes Bluffton's historical and cultural assets. It includes an action plan that is integrated into the needs, goals and implementation strategies portion of this plan.

The Old Town Master Plan is a guide that establishes policies and priorities for coordinated development or redevelopment, land use planning, and budgeting. It includes policy statements, goals, objectives, guidelines, maps and graphics that serve as a foundation for future land use decisions. It also provides strategies and goals to encourage economic development,

quality residential and commercial growth, and general improvements that protect the quality of life for Bluffton's residents and businesses. It incorporates elements such as a Land Use Schematic; Streetscape and Aesthetics Plan; Development and Infill Development and Redevelopment Strategies; a Directional and Location Signage Plan, a Parking Plan, Pedestrian Access Plan, and associated policies and guidelines. It will also help guide and be the impetus for an update to Bluffton's Land Use and Development Ordinances.



OLD TOWN DISTRICT CODE

Bluffton, South Carolina

Purpose:

The Town of Bluffton seeks to create an Old Town District based upon traditional standards for town building. In January 2006 the town created the Old Town Master Plan through a design charrette process involving the community and a team of design professionals. The Old Town Master Plan, adopted by Town Council on July 12, 2006, sets forth a series of planning principles and implementation strategies to protect the National Historic Register District and to achieve the community's vision for the historic Old Town. In order to achieve this vision, the plan recommended that the Town update and revise the existing land development regulations for Old Town by creating a Form-Based Code.

The Old Town District Code is form-based and categorizes areas of Old Town into specific transect zones based on the Old Town Master Plan.

How to Use The Old Town District Code:

1. Find the lot on the *Regulating Plan* and identify the *Transect Zone* into which the lot is located.
2. Next, review the *Urban Standards* for specific provisions that regulate specific building types and the lot within the assigned Transect Zone.
3. Examine the *General Standards and Street and Parking Standards* which apply throughout the district.
4. Finally, review the *Architectural Standards*, which contain regulations for buildings.

Table of Contents:

I. Intent ....Page 1.1

II. Administration ....Page 2.1

III. Regulating Plan ....Page 3.1
The Regulating Plan denotes the specific locations of transect zones within the Old Town District.

IV. Urban Standards ....Page 4.1
The Urban Standards establish the physical and functional relationships between buildings. It regulates the rules related to building placement (build-to zones, setbacks, lot width, street frontage), uses, and height. The Urban Standards include a building type compatibility matrix which outlines which building types are allowed in each transect zone.

V. General Standards ....Page 5.1
Standards not specifically addressed elsewhere in the Old Town District Code, including Civic Structures and building heights, are stated in the General Standards.

VI. Architectural Standards ....Page 6.1
The Architectural Standards set the building materials, details and configurations that impact the quality and character of Old Town.

VII. Street Standards ....Page 7.1
The Street Standards specify roadways, sidewalks, planting areas, and street tree locations. The street types are assigned to appropriate locations on the Old Town District Street Atlas.

VIII. Parking Standards ....Page 8.1

IX. Definitions ....Page 9.1

APPENDIX A. Building Types ....Page A.1

June 19, 2007 Old Town District Code

Old Town District Code

The Old Town Master Plan also recommended a new set of land use regulations for Old Town called a Form-Based Code. Recently adopted, it is known as the Old town District Code and serves as a guide to existing and future land uses. It categorizes areas Old Town into specific zones based on intensity of land uses. The document includes a complete set of regulations addressing urban, architectural and streetscape standards.

Controls and Regulation		
Need: Preservation and enhancement of identifying characteristics of Old Town Bluffton through proper control and regulation.		
Goal: Implement the strategies set forth in the adopted Old Town Master Plan.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt the form based code to replace the traditional zoning for the Old Town.	Planning	Short
2. Implement the streetscape project for May River Road and Bruin Road.	Planning	Short
3. Adopt a demolition-by-neglect ordinance to encourage the maintenance and protection of historic properties.	Planning	Medium
4. Encourage the infill of the Old Town with historically valid projects.	Planning	On-going
Goal: Recognize the architectural and historical attributes of parcels to be developed or altered.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Ensure development and construction projects stay consistent with all federal and state guidelines in regard to statute requiring historical and archeological inventories, surveys and protection.	Planning	Short

Natural Resources 4

The Town of Bluffton is located in southern Beaufort County and is the mainland's easternmost coastal town. It is bordered by the New River to the west, the Okatie River to the north, and the Cooper River to the south. The May River runs to the south of Old Town and north of Palmetto Bluff. These four water bodies help form fragile ecosystems that are located in Bluffton and its surrounding environs.

Vision

We will inventory and protect critical resources in a manner which sustains the vitality, function, and beauty of Bluffton's natural heritage.

Bluffton's quality of life is based on the fundamental principal that healthy ecosystems support healthy people, which in turn, promote a healthy economy. While quality of life can be preserved by protecting and enhancing the area's natural resources, unchecked development pressure may negatively affect local ecology and result in a wide range of environmental and economic problems.

In order to grow economically, preserve our natural heritage, and promote a high quality of life, there is an overarching desire to achieve

a balance between economic development and natural resource preservation. This section summarizes Bluffton's critical natural resource issues, which help guide the development of applicable needs, goals and implementation strategies.

4.1 Climate and Weather

Data from the South Carolina Climatology Office for the years 1930-2004, reports that Bluffton's annual average temperature is 76.3 degrees Fahrenheit. The area's average annual rainfall is 48.97 inches and the mean snowfall is 0.2 inches. The largest snowfall ever recorded was 6 inches in 1973.

Bluffton has avoided most major hurricanes in recent years. The last one was Hugo, which made landfall at the Isle of Palms on September 21, 1989. It had winds at 140-160 mph and a storm surge in excess of 20 feet. A description of other extreme weather events can be found in Appendix A.

4.2 Water Resources

Watersheds

Successful habitat, open space, and water quality plans are supported by watershed analysis and planning because relationships between prime habitats and ideal regional stormwater management techniques and facilities should be determined at this level. Therefore, in order to maintain the integrity of local streams and critical habitats, Bluffton should base planning and land use decisions, including stormwater treatment, on the potential impacts to its watersheds.

A watershed is the land basin that drains into a body of water through runoff, recharge and subsurface water movement above the normal groundwater zone. This process is affected by soil, slope, and surface cover. Bluffton has three main watersheds:

- New River Watershed - 67,697 acres
- Okatie River Watershed - 15,744 acres
- May River Watershed - 25,582 acres

Watershed planning is founded on three principles:

- Plan with a regional focus, based on surface and ground water drainage areas.
- Use sound management techniques, based on proven methods and accurate data.
- Implement plans through partnerships with various stakeholders including local, state, and federal governments, resource users, environmental groups, and the general public.

As a first step, Bluffton should establish extraterritorial land management authority within the May River watershed and in conjunction with Beaufort County, create a joint action agency. This agency should then designate a May River Overlay Protection District that clearly identifies authority over all land and water related activities. Bluffton should have authority to oversee zoning and land use decisions and could also deal with emergency situations. A similar plan could be expanded to include the New and Okatie River watersheds.

To help gain public understanding and support for water quality protection Bluffton should organize a watershed education campaign. Signs could announce entry into a community watershed similar to those seen across North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Also, to foster community accountability, storm drains should be marked with statements or symbols such as "This flows into the May River."

Coastal Resources

The three major watersheds in Bluffton's jurisdiction are highly productive grounds for shellfish such as shrimp, crabs and oysters, as well as numerous finfish species. They include the May, New, and Okatie Rivers as shown on Map 4.1 Bluffton Water Resources.

The rivers' mix of salty ocean water and fresh water inputs from artesian wells and stormwater runoff, coupled with the widespread presence of smooth cord grass (*Spartina alterniflora*), creates a system which supplies shelter and nutrients to the area's wildlife. Thus, the tidal creeks are sensitive and are critical nursery habitats for fish and crustaceans, while open water is crucial to their later stages of life.

The numerous natural resource populations that are recreationally and commercially harvested from all three rivers contribute to the quality of life of Bluffton residents. In fact, each river carries specific water classification and standards from the SC Department of Health & Environmental Control (SCDHEC).

Both the May and Okatie Rivers are designated as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) by SCDHEC. According to SCDHEC, an ORW is either a freshwater or saltwater system that is recognized as an outstanding recreational or ecological resource.

Additionally, both the May and Okatie Rivers support recreational and commercial oyster harvesting which is a great economic and ecological value for Bluffton and all of South Carolina. According to SCDHEC shellfish harvesting waters are tidal saltwaters protected for shellfish harvesting as well as recreational contact, crabbing, and fishing.

The New River is classified as Class SA defined by SCDHEC to be "tidal saltwaters suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation, crabbing, and fishing, except harvesting of clams, mussels, or oysters for market purposes or human consumption."

Rivers

May River (Hydrologic Unit Code – 030601100301): The May River is comprised of oyster bars, inter-tidal marshes, small and large tidal creeks and shallow bays or mud flats. According to the report, "Environmental and Ecological Assessment of the May River," thirty percent (30%) of the oysters consumed in the state come from here. The Bluffton Oyster Factory, dating back to the early 1900's, is the oldest shucking facility in continuous use in South Carolina. Furthermore, it was recognized in 1999 as one of the ten oldest businesses in the state and holds state business permit #10. Not only are oysters a local food favorite, but they are also highly effective water filters, recycling nutrients, and controlling phytoplankton blooms. Preserving May River's water quality is a high priority for the Town.

As a result of rising fecal coliform levels in the headwaters of the May River, shellfish monitoring stations 19-19, 19-19A, 19-19B, and 19-19C are included in the 2012 SCDHEC 303(d) list of impaired waterbodies. The Town has adopted the May River Watershed Action Plan in 2011 as a restoration and prevention plan to protect the river and shellfish harvesting into the future. A more detailed description of the May River can be found in Appendix A.

New River (Hydrologic Unit Code – 030601100201): The New River is the natural boundary between Beaufort and Jasper Counties and empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Due to high mercury and fecal coliform levels,he river's water quality is not as high as that of the May River; however, the majority of the watershed has a diverse and valuable landscape. There is a fish consumption advisory due to high mercury levels for a portion of the New River north of SCDHEC water quality monitoring station MD-118, located where the New River and SC170 intersect. Additionally, recreational contact is limited due to high fecal coliform levels at SCDHEC RT-06021, located 3.4 miles south-southeast of the SC170 bridge over the New River. A more detailed description of the New River can be found in Appendix A.

Okatie River (Hydrologic Unit Code – 030502080606): According to the Okatie River Baseline Study, the Okatie is a narrow tidal creek which flows into the Colleton River. Tides can fluctuate 8.5 feet every six hours and is considered one of the highest along the southeast coast. The Okatie has great historic and ecological significance. The river once supported a healthy and prosperous

shellfish population but agriculture and development have reduced its overall harvest. The Okatie was part of a five-year, multidisciplinary research and outreach program funded by the NOAA Coastal Ocean Program, South Carolina and Georgia Sea Grant, known as LUC-ES. Scientists from South Carolina and Georgia are working collaboratively to examine how changes in land use affect marine resources. In addition, the headwaters of the Okatie River have been an area of great interest to Beaufort County. The purchase of development rights from property adjacent to its headwaters is a tool that can help restore water quality.

Due to high levels of fecal coliform in the headwaters of the Okatie, SCDHEC developed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for shellfish monitoring stations 18-07, 18-08, 18-16, and 18-17. The Town must work, in cooperation with Beaufort County, to reduce levels of fecal coliform to meet this regulatory requirement.

Floodplains

Floodplains are flat or nearly flat lands adjacent to a stream or river that experience occasional or periodic flooding, particularly during wet seasons. It includes the floodway (the stream channel and the area adjacent carrying flood flows) and the flood fringe (the area inundated by flood waters but not experiencing strong currents). The May, New, and Okatie floodplains provide benefits that are essential to a healthy community and must be protected. These include: enhancing stormwater management, water quality, control of flooding and erosion, and preservation of biological productivity and wildlife habitats.

In 1993, Bluffton adopted a Flood Prevention Ordinance to promote public health, safety and welfare by minimizing losses resulting from floods. The floodplain map referenced in the Ordinance is from the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and is used to calculate flood insurance ratings, land use regulations and for lenders, to determine where flood insurance must be purchased. Bluffton should use the latest information, collected as part of local developments and from Beaufort County, to prepare an official floodplain map. This map can be adjusted as necessary to reflect collective development impacts. The Floodplain Ordinance should also be revised to promote floodplain conservation for environmental and ecological benefits.

In 2003, Bluffton participated in the creation of the Beaufort County Hazard and Flood Mitigation Plan. While floodplain management is conducted by Beaufort County, agencies such as SCDNR and FEMA have strongly recommended that Bluffton be certified in a qualified program for floodplain management.

Wetlands

Wetlands are a vital link between land and water and are among the most productive of environments. Their economic benefits include: fish and shellfish production; waterfowl habitat; maintenance of water tables; water storage and flood control; shoreline stabilization; water purification; and recreational opportunities. Despite great strides in their preservation by the Center for Oceanic Engineering (COE) and SCDHEC, Bluffton is experiencing an annual loss of wetlands. While the majority of these are smaller in scale, commonly referred to as isolated wetlands, nevertheless, they serve as important reproductive grounds and nurseries for amphibians. Often, due to past logging and tree removal practices, they also contain the few remaining wooded areas and trees on a development site. This makes them even more valuable. Gum-Tupelo and Pond Pine depressions comprise a majority of Bluffton's freshwater wetlands.

Approximately 400 acres of the Great Swamp, draining into the New River, are also found in Bluffton. Historically, it was a cypress swamp, but unfortunately, clear cutting occurred in the late 20th century and new growth is primarily maple and gum trees instead of native cypress. An ordinance that is based on national standards should be implemented to regulate and manage these wetlands so that disturbed areas are replenished with cypress and restored to their original habitat. To help mitigate development impacts on the other side of the county line, Bluffton should collaborate with neighboring Jasper County to address the future of the Great Swamp.

The practices associated with harvesting forest products have also had a large impact on Bluffton's wetlands. Drainage ditches, dug during the

process to harvest trees, have resulted in changing the area's hydrology and rarely is it ever restored, except in cases where additional impacts associated with future development are being mitigated. A great need to monitor wetlands is emerging because of these past activities.

The impacts associated with new, adjacent urbanization can further stress wetlands, resulting in increased amounts of fertilizer and insecticides in stormwater runoff, altered drainage patterns, and an invasion of exotic and aggressive plant species. The health and continued function of preserved wetlands should be monitored by conducting plant, bird and animal inventories. Volunteers organized from the area could accomplish this task with proper training.

Ground Water

Groundwater saturates geologic or soil formations and is a valuable source of potable water. The subsurface area saturated with groundwater is known as the saturation zone. The top of this zone is the water table, which is confined by a low permeable material such as clay. When water levels rise, artesian or free-flowing wells are formed. Historically, the Old Town has had several artesian wells and two have recently been reported along the high bluff adjacent to Alljoy Road.

Various studies addressing groundwater recommend using strict best management practices in the Stony and Rose Dhu Creek sub-watersheds. These include large vegetated buffers, lining stormwater lagoons and limiting septic system use. Bluffton should also apply recommendations from recent USGS and SCDNR groundwater studies.

The May River Baseline Study recommends quantifying ground water contributions to the May River and the results would also be very useful in revealing groundwater levels and quality. These should be analyzed and, if appropriate, used as an additional reference guide for groundwater conservation policies.

Water Quality

Excellent water quality is a benchmark for a healthy community. Long time Bluffton residents know how important it is to preserve water quality and are concerned with possible development threats and impacts. That is why preserving the quality of Bluffton's rivers while accommodating development is such a tremendous task and obligation and it is precisely why a baseline study for the May River was requested by the community. It was done to monitor water quality in the watershed. Additional information and recommendations from the study can be found in Appendix A. All development in Bluffton must adhere to the provisions outlined in the Beaufort County Best Management Practice (BMP) Manual, which is discussed in more detail in Appendix A. However, despite the County BMP Manual and implementation of the previously identified Watershed Plan, stormwater management, with respect to water quality, will continue to be a point of strong contention and debate.

Bluffton's Stormwater Ordinance should be used to guide stormwater management based on the community's desire to protect, maintain, and enhance its environment and to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens. It establishes requirements and procedures to control potential adverse effects of increased stormwater runoff associated with future development, re-development, and existing developed land. Further, it articulates proper methods to control stormwater runoff to minimize property damage, ensure functional drainage systems, reduce erosion, attain and maintain water quality standards, reduce flooding, reduce pollutant loading and balance economic benefits while minimizing pollutant, flooding, and drainage impacts.

Water Resources		
Need: Preservation of water quality in the May River and enhancement of water quality in the Okatie and New Rivers.		
Goal: Facilitate the new population's ownership in protecting Bluffton's rivers and estuaries.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop an interactive watershed website	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Establish volunteer monitoring programs for the May, Okatie, and New Rivers.	Environmental Protection	Medium

Water Resources		
Goal: Provide greater protection for floodplains.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Revise Floodplain Ordinance to include protection of floodplains for purposes of habitat conservation and water quality functions.	Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Complete Staff floodplain management certification.	Environmental Protection	Medium
Goal: Preserve and increase wetlands to the greatest extent possible.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt a wetlands preservation ordinance.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
2. Use the national standard of rating to determine wetland values.	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Increase man-made engineered wetlands to mitigate the effects of wetland loss to development.	Environmental Protection	Medium
Goal: Use available information to monitor ground water levels and quality.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Analyze the recent USGS and SCDNR ground water study and adopt recommendations if applicable.	Environmental Protection	Long
Goal: Protect the hydrologic and habitat components of local watersheds.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt standards which maintain integrity of intermittent and epherial streams and wetlands.	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Use watershed planning tools to preserve and connect critical habitats.	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Post signs which denote watershed boundaries on major highways.	Environmental Protection, Public Works	Short
4. Mark stormdrains which signify connection to rivers.	Environmental Protection	Short
5. Develop watershed and drainage basin plans. Begin with drainage basins that identified as releasing high levels of pollutants.	Environmental Protection	Short
Goal: Establish authority over all land and water related activities impacting the May River.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop a protocol for emergency situations i.e. oil spills, illicit discharges, sediment plumes, etc.	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Establish local authority over planning and development within the May River watershed.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short

Water Resources		
Goal: Protect shellfish resources for ecological and economic value.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Complete recommendations of Environmental and Ecological Assessment of the May River Report.	Environmental Protection	Long
2. Assist County in implementing recommendations of the Okatie Baseline Study.	Environmental Protection	Medium
3. Support Stormwater Utility efforts to complete Beaufort County Special Area Management Plan recommendations.	Environmental Protection	Medium
4. Support establishment of a local SCDHEC certified laboratory.	Environmental Protection	Medium
5. Assist Stormwater Utility with establishing water quality protocol.	Environmental Protection	Short
6. Continue monitoring efforts which target and identify point sources.	Environmental Protection	Short
7. Develop additional shellfish beds near outfalls into rivers to increase water quality.	Environmental Protection	Medium
Goal: Adopt the most efficient and effective stormwater best management practices.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support the monitoring for all pollutants of concern (fecal coliform, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, turbidity).	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Adopt a Stormwater Ordinance to regulate stormwater controls	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Continue frequent construction site inspections and enforcements by staff.	Environmental Protection	Short
4. Update the Stormwater Ordinance Design Manual at least once every 18 months.	Environmental Protection	On-going

4.3 Geology and Soils

Bluffton lies in the Coastal Zone of the Atlantic Coastal Plain between two large river basins, the Savannah and Broad Rivers. Bluffton's soils can be characterized as sandy and clayey coastal sediment, which have a tendency to be strongly acidic. The abundant moisture and thick vegetative cover enhance the replenishment of any minerals that are lost to normal weathering. Soil wetness varies from well-drained to very poorly-drained. The best-drained soils are found on elevated sandy marine deposits in the Upper Coastal Plain. The most poorly drained soils are found near the coast where broad expanses of muddy marsh and floodplain deposits are barely above the water table.

Soil characteristics can greatly impact the type of development that the land will support. They can also influence engineering and construction practices that are used in the development process. Development in some areas of Bluffton may be challenging due to the following limitations: soils are unsuitable for urban development, high water tables are present and soils percolate slowly. While the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides a soil suitability guide to help determine development capability, individual sites should be proactively tested to ensure that proper soils are present. Additional discussion on the geology and soils found in Bluffton is located in Appendix A.

Prime Farmland

Prime farmland is defined as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for agricultural production. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to sustain high crop yields efficiently and economically. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) categorizes the soil types by their value for agricultural applications. The four most valuable soil types and listed as prime farmland are Cecil sandy loam, Georgeville silt loam, Herndon silt loam, and Hiwassee sandy loam.

While the majority of the soil in the Town of Bluffton is not considered optimal for prime farmland applications, there are a few isolated areas that contain sufficient soils for agricultural use and therefore are zoned Agriculture as depicted on Map 4.2.

Slope Characteristics

The majority of land in Bluffton is relatively flat with elevations ranging from mean sea level to 80 feet above mean sea level. The lowest points in the Town are found along the May River and adjacent to the various coves. The highest point is found along the east side of Route 170 with elevations ranging between 50 and 80 feet above mean sea level. (See Map 4.3)

Geology and Soils		
Need: Usage of soil characteristics information for the basis of stormwater treatment and development practices.		
Goal: Use local soil classifications to maximize benefits and understand limitations of soil types.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Extrapolate existing Beaufort Jasper Soil Classification information onto a Town map which designates the ideal stormwater treatment practice for the soil conditions.	Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Publish document which provides maintenance instructions and option for retrofitting an older septic system.	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Continue assisting BJWSA to complete sewer coverage of the entire Town.	Environmental Protection	Short
4. Use soil data to locate prime habitat for conservation.	Environmental Protection	Short
5. Use soil data to identify appropriate vegetation to use in development landscaping.	Environmental Protection	Medium
6. Use soil classifications to help identify and purchase land that contains well drained soils to allow for the regional infiltration of stormwater runoff.	Town Council, Administration, Environmental Protection, Planning	Medium

4.4 Flora and Fauna

Bluffton is in the process of completing a Critical Resources Survey and Map, which will be used to record, monitor, and protect its critical ecosystems, habitats and species. It will also serve as an excellent planning tool to insure that proposed developments are compatible with and sensitive to adjacent environments.

In addition, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is creating a State Conservation Master Plan with local participation from Bluffton and Beaufort County. The plan will include species of concern, their associated habitats and federal and state listed, threatened and endangered species.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the measuring stick of a community's natural health and includes the full range of ecosystems and ecological processes and their constituent plants, animals, and microorganisms. The term biodiversity relates to the full range and variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms, the ecosystems found in an area, and the ecological interactions and processes which enables them to exist. A healthy ecosystem can have a positive influence on air and water quality, soil stability and fertility, insect control, and the decomposition of waste.

Habitats

Bluffton is fortunate to have a variety of habitats, which support an abundance of wildlife. An adequate balance, food supply, and habitat are needed for the survival of individual species. Therefore, to help maintain a balanced and healthy community these unique habitats must be preserved. A list of the habitats found in Bluffton can be found in Appendix A.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The previously mentioned Critical Resources Map will identify and record locations of threatened and endangered species, as well as species of concern. This information will be distributed to US Fish and Wildlife and SCDNR to assist them with research and project review within Bluffton. The collected data will be used to target land for

habitat preservation. A list of the threatened and endangered flora and fauna that are found in Bluffton can be found in Appendix A.

Exotic and Invasive Species

Exotic and invasive species are non-native species that have been intentionally and/or unintentionally introduced. Because they may lack natural predators or have faster growth rates they can wreak havoc on native habitats and animal populations by crowding them out. In 1996 the Nature Conservancy reported that invasive species have contributed to the decline of 42% of the endangered and threatened species in the United States. The Zebra mussel, Japanese Climbing Fern, Wisteria, Kudzu, Ligustrum, and the Tallow Tree are a few notorious species. Some have caused considerable damage to national landmarks and local state heritage sites.

To avoid losing our native heritage, citizens and landscaping companies must be educated on the benefits of landscaping with indigenous species. To assist with that, a list of exotic and invasive plant species has been added to the Bluffton Landscape Ordinance. Bluffton should also require that all landscaping plans include at least 85% indigenous species and the use of exotic and invasive species should be restricted. The Town Hall landscaping plan and Pritchard Street Park are examples of plants that are appropriate for the community.

Prime Forest Lands

Forestry practices have eliminated most of Bluffton's pristine hardwood and pine forests. There are only sparse remnants of the maritime, bottom hardwood, cypress, and longleaf forest stands that once prevailed. Currently, Palmetto Bluff is executing a forestry management plan that replenishes and preserves unique habitats for wildlife conservation and research. This effort provides an excellent example of environmental stewardship.

By preserving existing stands, managing urban forests and by natural or assisted forest succession, Bluffton can regain these important habitats. In support of this goal, Bluffton can purchase the CITYgreen software program, which enables the environmental and economic benefits of forests to be analyzed. Bluffton can also help educate landowners about the benefits of establishing and maintaining Longleaf Pine forests and provide incentives.

A more detailed description of the types of forests located in Bluffton and a discussion on silviculture can be found in Appendix A.

Flora and Fauna		
Need: Preservation of the health, function, and aesthetic value of Bluffton's ecosystems to support a diverse range of plant and animal species. Protection of trees and forests which serve to stabilize values of improved and unimproved property through buffering, noise abatement, oxygen generation, habitat, and aesthetic function.		
Goal: Create a critical resources map which is the basis for a fish and wildlife habitat conservation ordinance.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Inventory and assess the remaining undeveloped areas and prioritize based on attributes such as size, connectivity, quality, value, and compatibility with community needs.	Environmental Protection, Planning	Medium
2. Utilize CIB funds, grants, and incentive programs to secure preservation of priority areas.	Environmental Protection, Planning	Short
Goal: Provide protection for remaining threatened and endangered species and associated habitats.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Habitat Conservation Program.	Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Pursue grants and other funds to purchase habitat.	Environmental Protection	Medium
3. Expand Bluffton's existing Critical Resources Survey.	Environmental Protection	Medium
Goal: Provide citizens assistance in landscaping with natives or non invasive species.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Enhance list of native trees to indicate growth characteristics and needs.	Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Conduct workshops to demonstrate creating transition areas between yards and wetlands.	Environmental Protection	Medium
3. Educate the public on ecologically-friendly landscaping practices.	Environmental Protection	Medium

Flora and Fauna		
Goal: Enforce forestry best management practices.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Distribute summary of silviculture practices allowed within the Town.	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Supplement silviculture areas with native hardwoods or Longleaf Pine to replenish function of original forests within areas such as road and PUD buffers, recreational sites, and community open spaces.	Environmental Protection	Short
Goal: Maintain and generate healthy urban forests.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish landscape standards which designate landscaping which thrive in urban settings.	Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Assess and monitor existing and new tree cover.	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Adopt a replanting program which targets areas in need of tree cover along highway corridors using native species.	Environmental Protection	Short
4. Work with POAs to increase the number of trees and shrubbery.	Environmental Protection	On-going

4.5 Open Space

Open space includes undeveloped, public or private land that is used to preserve or protect natural resources. Open space may include passive and/or active recreational areas, wetlands, and stormwater lagoons. Planned unit developments (PUDs) currently require that at least 35% of a site be maintained as open space. For individual developments the minimum is 10%.

To address the national campaign encouraging children, adults, and senior citizens to be active, Bluffton needs more usable open space. Unfortunately, in PUDs, wetlands typically comprise the overwhelming majority of open space. While it is important to preserve them, wetlands should comprise only a small percentage of a development's total open space area. When connected and located outside of fragile and dynamic systems like wetlands, useable open spaces are more effective for recreation purposes. Therefore, Bluffton should research and establish a standard that requires a minimum percentage of upland open space based on acres per household, which is higher than the national average. A campaign to eliminate "Nature Deficit Disorder" in children could generate public enthusiasm and support for securing adequate upland open space.

Financing Open Space, Land Acquisition

As the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources develops a statewide conservation plan, federal funds to buy land will become available. Bluffton has established a Community Infrastructure Bank, which contains $1 million to purchase land. This resource should also be considered for grants where matching funds are required. Bluffton must employ several methods to preserve land including: outright purchase; purchase of development rights; acquisition by installments; lease development rights; and/or a combination of these. In addition, Bluffton could utilize multi-year tax revenues, bonds, and special taxes for this purpose.

The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) has been retained by Beaufort County to help plan, prioritize, negotiate and purchase land for public purposes. Among the supporting objectives are:

- Reduce traffic impacts

- Protect water quality
- Provide opportunities for public enjoyment and recreation

Since TPL funds are relatively limited, Bluffton will end up competing with the entire county for financing. Therefore, for the long-term, successful completion of a viable open space and habitat conservation plan, and to offset increasingly limited federal, state, and county funds, Bluffton must plan for and employ local control and funding to acquire land.

Habitat Conservation

Wildlife habitat conservation can help prevent unpleasant interfaces between wildlife and residents. This can be accomplished by providing wildlife with the essentials of water, shelter, and food. In support of this, the fragmentation of their habitats must be minimized by establishing interconnected open space areas and corridors. Whenever possible, it is extremely important that large, contiguous, undisturbed tracts, similar to the Palmetto Bluff conservation easements within the Headwaters Tract, the Managed Forest, and Phase Two, be protected. Connecting these areas to the Jones and Buckwalter tracts would result in conserving prime habitats and corridors.

The Critical Resource Survey provides a preliminary list of areas and habitat types and should be prioritized based on attributes such as:

- Size
- Connectivity
- Habitat quality
- Local habitat diversity
- Local ecological importance
- Compatibility with existing and anticipated needs

Once the Critical Resources Survey and Map have been completed, Bluffton should focus on protecting the priority areas and incorporating them into the Land Use Map.

Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors are interconnected land and landscape features that support and facilitate effective animal movement between their habitats. These are transitional areas with sizes that vary from 50 to

200 feet wide. They facilitate different kinds of animal traffic, such as frequent foraging, seasonal migration and dispersion of juveniles.

The Jones Tract Development Agreement requires designating corridors at the time of wetland permitting and Bluffton should require a connection to the Palmetto Bluff conservation areas, as well as promote interconnections between corridors. The existing land use map should also be examined to determine how connections between corridors can be made using techniques such as buffers, open space, and conservation easements.

Scenic Resource Viewsheds

Scenic resource protection of certain marsh, water and rural views from public roads, bridges, and pedestrian pathways strengthen and preserve Bluffton's unique environmental heritage and character. Aesthetic, scenic resources can be directly related to increased property values, economic development, tourism, and quality of life. A scenic resource or vista is a defined angle of perception within the landscape, which limits the view to a particular part of the landscape. The viewer is provided with an unobstructed sight line to distant land, water, historic or culturally significant structures.

Significant forests, wildlife habitats, and areas of steep slope add to the natural beauty and foster civic pride in the community. Because of their significance, Bluffton should inventory, map, and designate the following as scenic corridors to be protected by limiting structures and variances. Collectively, they contribute to Bluffton's sense of place, are highly unique and distinctive resources and are valued by the community. These resources are vulnerable and subject to change if not formally recognized. In addition, communication towers and docks should be carefully located so as not to interrupt the scenic quality of the landscape.

Natural Scenic Corridors include the following:

- Huger/Verdier/Heyward Coves
- SC Highway 46 and 170
- Rose Dhu & Stoney Creek
- New River and Trail
- Cooper River
- Trees and Stands of Undisturbed Forests
- Existing vegetation along steep ridges and bluffs (May River, Hwy 170 in Jones Tract and in Okatie watershed)

Parks and Recreation Areas

Bluffton and Southern Beaufort County's active and passive parks and recreation facilities are an important component of the region's quality of life. They are also an important component of the region's economy. Natural amenities such as coastal waters, salt marshes, beaches, trees and local wildlife are an integral component of the region's attractiveness to both tourists and newcomers. Parks and recreation facilities are an important means of making these natural amenities accessible to both residents and tourists.

A full description and listing of parks and recreation areas can be found in Chapter 7 Community Facilities, Section 7.7.

Open Space		
Need: Sustainability through open space diversity.		
Goal: Determine types of open space needed to meet community needs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt clear definitions of the types of open space.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
2. Require minimum sizes of all types of open space based on acres per household.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
3. Maximize function of open spaces through a continuous connecting network of wildlife corridors.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
4. Preserve open spaces to ensure water quality.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
Goal: Establish and protect areas which hold high scenic value.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop a scenic resources overlay district inventory and map.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Short
2. Limit exposed structures and buffer variances within the view corridors.	Planning, Environmental Protection	Ongoing
3. Complete application to designate the New River as a National Wild and Scenic River.	Environmental Protection	Medium
4. Complete application to designate the New River and associated wetlands as a RAMSAR site.	Environmental Protection	Medium

4.6 Air Quality

While so often taken for granted, Bluffton has excellent air quality and has been ranked in the top 10 urban places in the United States known for high air quality. To preserve that standing techniques to reduce vehicle travel will be required since that generates air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. These include development patterns that provide mixed use communities, street trees, and sidewalks and paths that connect commercial and residential areas. These patterns can help reduce the need to drive and as a result can also reduce air pollution.

While air pollution does not dramatically affect Bluffton, it can still be addressed locally by:

- Prioritizing pedestrian modes of transportation
- Promoting mixed-use communities
- Preserving freshwater wetlands
- Insuring an abundance of tree cover within urban areas
- Planting a diverse assemblage of trees with different growth patterns to create a continuous canopy
- Develop urban forest management plans to maximize carbon sequestering and provide needed shade, habitat, and aesthetically pleasing spaces

Air Quality		
Need: Preservation of existing high air quality.		
Goal: Preserve the existing high air quality by reducing vehicular trips and preserving ambient cooling of shade trees.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt standards which specify viable multi-modal transportation systems.	Environmental Protection	Short
2. Reduce vehicular trips by providing safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways.	Environmental Protection	Short
3. Establish appropriate specifications to maximize carbon dioxide sequestering and shading of the built environment.	Environmental Protection	Medium

Housing 5

Of all the Comprehensive Plan elements, housing best describes the lifestyles and lifestyle choices available in Bluffton. This section describes Bluffton's housing supply and its strategies to promote affordable and safe housing, and quality neighborhoods. These issues are extremely important because housing not only has community-wide tax implications but it can also affect the social and physical health of residents and overall community character. To attract new residents and businesses to Bluffton, as well as retain current ones, there must be an adequate housing supply to satisfy a variety of incomes and lifestyles.

Vision

We will work to ensure that every resident has decent, safe and affordable housing.

5.1 Housing Stock

Bluffton's future housing needs are discussed throughout this chapter with a particular focus on its workforce population and affordable housing. Bluffton grew significantly between 2000 and 2007, from 34.5 square miles to approximately 54 square miles. Annexation was the driving force behind an expanding geography and population since entire neighborhoods were absorbed during this period, resulting in a significant growth spike (see Figure 5.2). That growth, however, skewed housing data because it reflects an almost instantaneous change in population and other demographic characteristics. The percentage of single-family detached housing units within Bluffton and the County increased.

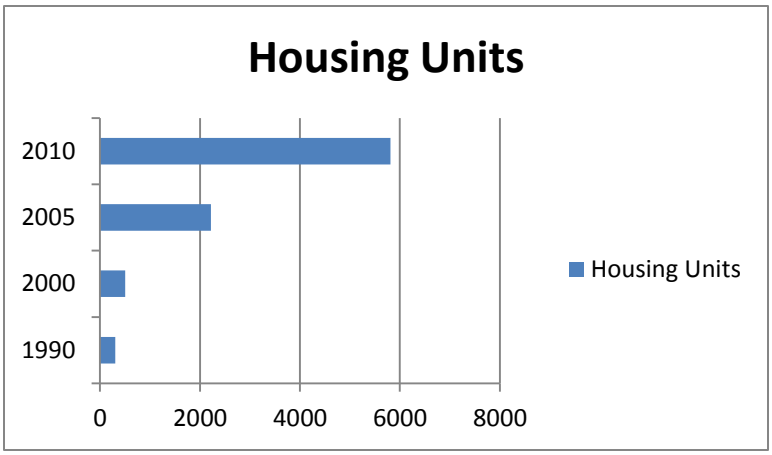
Figure 5.1
Housing Characteristics

Characteristics	Bluffton			Beaufort County	
	2000	2005	2012	2000	2012
Total units	501	2,222	5,809	60,509	93,023
Occupied units	465	1,719	4,513	45,532	64,042
Percent owner occupied	81.0%	83.0%	77.70%	73.0%	70.60%
Percent renter occupied	19.0%	17.0%	21.4%	27.0%	29.30%
Vacant units	36	503	1,296	14,977	28,331
Median value	$155,900	-	$229,900	$213,900	$279,400
Median gross rent	$718	-	$1,282	$690	$1,020
Single family detached	66.9%	-	78.90%	63.3%	67.90%
Multi family	0.6%	-	5.70%	14.6%	20.00%
Mobile home	32.1%	-	6.10%	17.3%	12.10%
Single family attached	0.4%	-	9.30%	4.9%	4.40%

Source: US Census 2000, Bluffton 2005 Special Census, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

To address the housing needs of all its resident's, Bluffton must offer varied housing choices. However, the cost of land makes it very prohibitive to construct housing for populations with fixed or lower incomes. As an example, Bluffton currently does not have special needs housing available; however, there is such housing in Beaufort and on Hilton Head Island. Therefore, non-traditional housing types, and forms of ownership and tenure must be considered, inventoried and assessed to reflect the needs and desires of Bluffton's various population groups. These include affordable, handicap accessible, elderly and transitional housing.

Figure 5.2
Total Housing Units, 1990-2010



Source: US Census 2010, 2000, 1990, Special Census of Bluffton Town, South Carolina: August 18, 2005

Future Housing

Based on the population projections described in Chapter Two, Figure 5.3 indicates the number of anticipated housing units by the year 2030. Given an assumed average of 2.84 persons per household, there does not appear to be a projected housing shortage in Bluffton. However, these figures do not indicate whether homes will be available at market rates that are supported by local incomes. That determination will require more detailed analysis and study.

Figure 5.3
Town of Bluffton Projected Housing Units, 2030

Projection Method	Population	Housing Units
Arithmetic	43,110	15,179
Decreasing Rate of Growth	34,376	12,104
Regional Transportation Model	16,730	5,890
Average	31,405	11,058

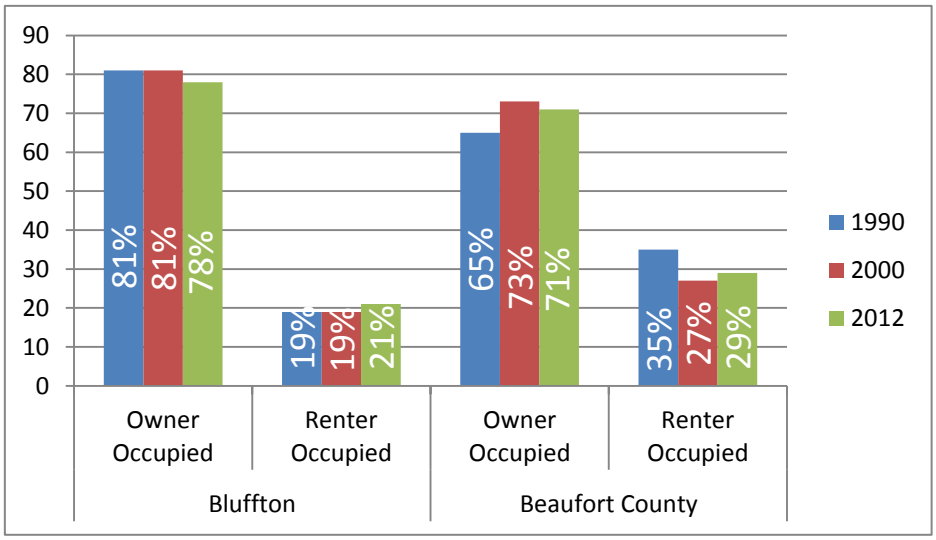
Source: Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department

Housing Stock		
Need: Diverse housing options to accommodate various income levels and lifestyle choices.		
Goal: Ensure a diverse housing supply to accommodate a variety of household incomes and lifestyle choices.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support educational workshops focusing on housing options and home ownership.	Planning, Home Builder's Association, LCDC	Medium
2. Inventory, assess and consider non-traditional housing options.	Administration, Planning	Medium

5.2 Tenure and Occupancy

An increase in home ownership is an important goal in most places because it is a key indicator of overall community stability and commitment. In 2012, Bluffton had a higher owner-occupancy rate than Beaufort County (see Figure 5.4). Renter-occupied housing units in Bluffton also increased slightly by approximately 2%. Meanwhile, the County also experienced a slight increase in the number of renter-occupied units between 2000 and 2012. This suggests that Bluffton continues to have a very strong tradition of homeownership and is being increasingly viewed as a good place to settle down and buy a home.

Figure 5.4
Owner-Occupancy Rate 1990-2012



Source: US Census 2000, 1990, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

Tenure and Occupancy		
Need: Continuation of the high home ownership percentage within Bluffton.		
Goal: Support the education of potential home buyers of the benefits of home ownership through partnership with the appropriate agencies and non-profit organizations.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Foster a relationship with the Lowcountry Community Development Corporation and other groups that provide resources on home ownership education and assistance.	Planning, local non-profits, State Housing and Finance, Beaufort County	Medium
2. Partner with local lending agencies and mortgage brokers to offer assistance on home ownership programs and education.	Local lending agencies, non-profits	Medium

5.3 Age and Condition

The age of housing stock in Bluffton and Beaufort County is generally very new, particularly in Bluffton, with the majority of homes built just in the last decade (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5
Year Home Was Constructed (Bluffton & Beaufort County)

Year Structure Built	Bluffton		Beaufort County	
	2000	2012	2000	2012
2010 or later		0.9%		0.3%
2000-09	-	76.0%	-	29.8%
1990-99	35%	10.3%	40%	24.9%
1980-89	27%	1.9%	27%	23%
1970-79	13%	3.5%	16%	12.2%
1960-69	8%	3%	8%	3.9%
1940-59	10%	2.8%	8%	4.7%
1939 or earlier	8%	1.1%	2%	1.2%

Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

Unfortunately, a walking and riding tour of Bluffton indicates that numerous lots are overgrown with weeds and grass and/or contain debris, garbage and abandoned vehicles. This is not only an aesthetic, but also a health and safety issue. The importance of the day-to-day maintenance of housing units cannot be overemphasized. To ensure the preservation and maintenance of existing housing by property owners, Bluffton should use a variety of basic strategies and programs to improve the appearance and value of existing neighborhoods, as described below.

- **Codes and Ordinances:** Bluffton should review its building codes and ordinances to determine the extent to which maintenance issues may be addressed by existing regulations. Where regulatory deficiencies exist, Bluffton should consider stricter requirements.
- **Enforcement Practices:** In the event sufficient regulations exist, Bluffton should review its enforcement policies and procedures to identify ways in which to improve regulatory enforcement of existing laws. This review should include an analysis of Bluffton's violation management procedures and penalty (fine) structure.
- **Annual Neighborhood Beautification Programs (Spring and Fall Clean-up Programs):** Bluffton should host annual or

bi-annual beautification efforts providing for the "free" curbside removal of large-scale trash, debris, appliances, etc. Hazardous waste collection sites should be designated as part of this effort for the disposal of household products such as paints, vehicular fluids, and the like.

- **Housing Rehabilitation Programs:** Bluffton should assist homeowners to rehabilitate existing dwellings, to make housing repairs, to undertake emergency repairs and to continue basic maintenance. Possible programs that could be offered include housing rehabilitation, housing façade, emergency repair grants, tax abatements, free paint and free smoke alarm programs.
- **Support Programs to Encourage Ownership:** Support programs to encourage homeownership in areas with increased renter-occupied dwellings with first time homebuyer down payment assistance.
- **Education Programs:** Conduct community awareness programs on blighting influences, annual refuse collections, and comprehensive code enforcement efforts throughout residential neighborhoods and adjacent nonresidential areas.

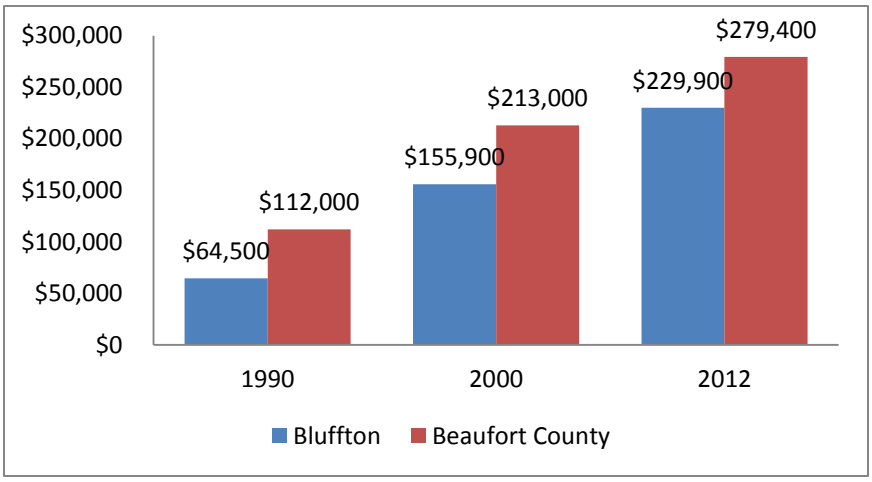
Ordinances dealing with substandard housing and minimum property maintenance requirements should be used to assist Bluffton in either removing poor quality housing to allow infill opportunities, or rehabilitation. Refer to Appendix A for additional discussion on substandard housing.

Age and Condition		
Need: Availability of safe and decent housing for all residents.		
Goal: Rehabilitate recoverable housing and increase the aesthetic appearance of the community.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt property maintenance standards and enforcement provisions to ensure the maintenance and upkeep of property, for both the structure and the property. Review building codes and ordinances to determine the extent to which maintenance issues may be addressed by existing regulations.	Town Council, Planning, County Building Department	Medium
2. Review enforcement policies and procedures to identify ways in which to improve regulatory enforcement of existing laws.	Administration	Short
3. Adopt more stringent mobile home standards to ensure the safety of the unit as well as to maintain the aesthetic character of the town.	Town Council, Planning	Medium
4. Support community efforts to assist home owners to clean up properties and neighborhoods.	Town Council, local non-profits, community groups	On-going
5. Conduct community awareness programs on blighting influences, annual refuse collections, and comprehensive code enforcement efforts	Town Council, Administration, Planning	Medium
6. Develop programs to encourage home ownership.	Town Council, Administration, Planning	Medium
Goal: Identify and repair or demolish the structures which are in critical need of repair or demolition to ensure the safety of the residents and the community.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Adopt a demolition by neglect ordinance to ensure that structures are not neglected to the point of demolition, ensuring the preservation of significant structures.	Town Council, Planning	Medium
Goal: Obtain grants for infrastructure or housing rehabilitation projects.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Complete grant applications and successfully obtain water and sewer for housing units currently lacking these services.	Town Council, Planning	Medium
2. Complete grant applications and successfully obtain funding for homes needing rehabilitation.	Town Council, Planning	Medium

5.4 Home Values and Rents

Median home values (see Figure 5.6) in both Bluffton and the County increased significantly between 1990 and 2012. However, home values remained higher in the County although Bluffton is gaining ground.

Figure 5.6
Median Home Value 1990-2012

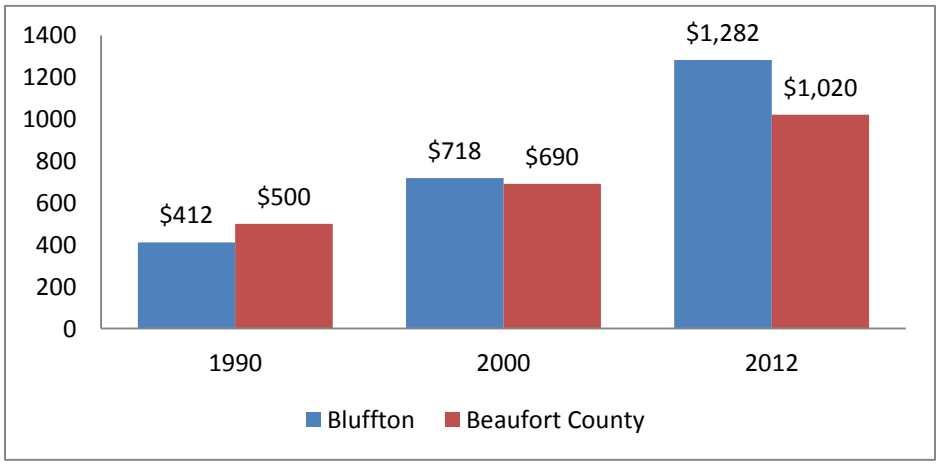


Source: US Census 2000, 1990, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

In 2000, Bluffton's gross median rent (see Figure 5.7) increased and exceeded County rents. This trend continued up to 2012 as gross median rent in Bluffton exceeded the County by 25%. This may be a particular concern for those residents seeking affordable rental housing in Bluffton.

According to information from Home Gain, local realtors, and the US Census, the average home sales price in Bluffton was significantly higher than for all of South Carolina and may have implications for local housing affordability.

Figure 5.7
Gross Median Rent 1990-2012



Source: US Census 2000, 1990, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates

Home Values and Rent		
Need: Consistency between income and wage and the rising value of housing and rent.		
Goal: Support economic development efforts.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support economic development efforts to increase wages and income to stay with the pace of rising home values and rental costs.	Town Council, Economic Development Subcommittee	Short

5.5 Affordable Housing

Increased housing costs, coupled with relatively low wages, make home buying difficult for lower income families, young couples and single persons. These households are often concerned with saving money for down payments and closing costs, as well as other monthly incidentals for such items as taxes, insurance and maintenance. For some previous homeowners, life cycle changes may also bring about decisions to rent rather than own. Therefore, to fulfill the housing needs of all residents, Bluffton will need an adequate supply of housing for all incomes and lifestyles. A primary concern for both existing and prospective residents is that the housing supply, whether for sale or rent, is affordable. A standard definition of the term "affordable housing" is as follows:

> *Housing for which the total cost (including utilities, taxes, insurance, and rent or mortgage payments) is not more than 28% of the household's monthly gross income.*

Because affordability is determined primarily by individual household income, it is difficult to define a single housing "price" that is affordable to everyone. What may be affordable to a single person may not be affordable to a family of four with two working adults. Figure 5.8 breaks down housing costs for homeowners and renters in Bluffton as a percent of household income. Those paying 28% or more of their income on housing costs can be defined as not living in "affordable" housing.

Figure 5.8
Town of Bluffton Owner & Renter Housing Cost as Percentage of Income

	Bluffton 2000		Bluffton 2012		Bluffton (2000-2012)	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Difference	Pct. Change
Total Specified Owner-occupied units	288	77%	3,110	88%	3,431	1191.32%
***Monthly Owner Cost (1999):**						
Less than 20% of income	108	37.5%	781	25.1%	366	338.9%
20 to 24.9% of income	48	16.7%	418	13.4%	370	770.8%
25 to 29.9% of income	48	16.7%	255	8.2%	207	431.3%
30 to 34.9% of income	7	2.4%	370	11.9%	363	5185.6%
35% or more of income	77	26.7%	1,286	41.4%	1,209	1570.1%
***Median Mortgage Payment**	$1,140	-	$1,793	-	$653	57.2%
Total Specified Renter-occupied units	85	23.0%	866	89.6%	781	918.8%
***Monthly rental cost (2009):**						
Less than 20% of income	29	34.1%	113	13.0%	84	289.7%
20 to 24.9% of income	10	11.7%	193	22.3%	183	1830.0%
25 to 29% of income	9	10.6%	185	21.4%	157	1744.4%
30 to 34% of income	6	7.1%	156	18.0%	150	2500.0%
35% or more of income	18	21.2%	219	25.3%	201	1116.7%
***Median rent**	$718	-	$1,282	-	$564	78.6%

Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five Year Estimates
Note: *All units were not used in computation of percentages
The Standard is 30% of income

While in 2000 the majority of homeowners lived in "affordable" housing, the percent of homeowners spending greater than 28% of their income on homeowner costs increased from 29.1% in 2000 to 53.3% of homeowners in 2010. This figure may likely be skewed by the drastic downturn in the housing market during the recent recessionary period. Rents increased by 78% between 2000 and 2010, and 56% of those renting met "affordability" standards since they fell below the 28% threshold.

Affordable housing must not just focus on those families with low or poverty level incomes or be concentrated in a single location so that "pockets of poverty" develop. Rather, Bluffton seeks a mixed and balanced housing supply that is well integrated into overall fabric of the community so as to attract families with varying income levels.

Making land available to accommodate a wide range of housing types and densities is one option to encourage an adequate supply of affordable housing. Bluffton's existing zoning ordinance includes two

single family residential zoning districts (General Residential and Single Family Residential) that, taken together, permit a variety of housing, ranging from single-family detached homes on large lots, to mobile homes and apartments. Bluffton should take advantage of its full range of residential zoning districts to help meet the housing needs of residents.

Another strategy is "infill" development within existing residential neighborhoods. "Infill" encourages development on empty lots in existing urban areas rather than on outskirts and, therefore, discourages sprawl. Infill development can result in more efficient use of existing infrastructure, trigger an increased neighborhood-wide reinvestment, and help rejuvenate older neighborhoods. Removing dilapidated structures to allow infill may be one way to promote new housing within Bluffton.

Mobile homes are not considered to be a viable long term option to address the community's affordable housing issues; nonetheless, as indicated by recent permit data, there are a significant number of them in Bluffton. While mobile homes may need special consideration they should also promote quality residential areas by conforming to standards that result in safe and attractive housing. Some factors to consider include: density, setbacks, access, site location (parallel as opposed to perpendicular to the road), lot coverage, open space, buffering, landscaping, streets, sidewalks, parking and outdoor storage. To achieve quality residential neighborhoods Bluffton's zoning standards for mobile homes may need to be reviewed for clarity and strengthened, if necessary.

Workforce Housing

Workforce jobs are essential front-line jobs that include service and construction workers, teachers, government employees, police officers, fireman, and restaurant or retail workers. Bluffton has identified the need for workforce housing by analyzing its population. The Workforce Housing Needs Assessment produced by GVA Marquette Advisors in 2004 for the Beaufort County Council. This working document was conducted to address workforce housing needs and forms the basis of this section of the plan. It is also used by non-profit organizations to review applications for housing assistance.

Workforce households are defined as those whose members collectively earn 80% of the median family income, adjusted for household size as defined by HUD. In 2010, median family income in Bluffton was $67,344; therefore, workforce housing income, as previously defined, was $53,875. In the same year, the US Census Bureau determined that of the 2,927 families in Bluffton, 63% (1,086) met the definition of a workforce family.

This report also identified annual housing demand for the region for 2004-2009. Accordingly, the southern Bluffton area (SC-46 is the dividing line) will need 14 subsidized rental units, four owner occupied units and repairs made to 426 substandard units. The northern Bluffton area will require 11 rental units, three owner occupied units, plus repairs made to 117 substandard units.

Affordable Housing Organizations

There are many resources for information on affordable housing programs, including grant and loan programs, and many non-profit organizations, which are each described in Appendix A. Partnering with area organizations is essential to achieve affordable housing options within Bluffton.

Affordable Housing Incentives

Inclusionary Zoning: Inclusionary zoning is a land-use concept under which zoning ordinances require a certain amount of housing for low and moderate income households. In many cases, a developer may pay a fee in-lieu of providing this housing. The details of inclusionary zoning are numerous and there are many options which can be explored in more detail with community leaders and citizens to determine which techniques may be more desirable and workable in Bluffton.

Some of the important variables in an inclusionary zoning ordinance are: set aside requirements or percentages of land or units that must be dedicated to a defined population in need of affordable housing, cost offsets or developers incentives, a development target size that triggers required set asides, affordability control periods, mechanisms to insure that the set asides remain affordable for a certain period of time, and alternatives such as in-lieu payments. Many communities in states across the country are using such creative tools to help meet

their specific housing needs. These include Boston, Chicago, Colorado, Maryland, New Mexico and California.

Inclusionary zoning, if properly applied, can have other benefits such as preventing sprawl into undeveloped land away from urban centers and utilities. It can also be used to combat gentrification where there is the potential to displace existing residents from rehabilitated neighborhoods. A mix of housing units, at various scales and prices, can also help support a healthy community that does not separate, concentrate or isolate poorer population groups and gives all residents equal access to schools, infrastructure, and community services.

Moderately Priced Dwelling Units: Montgomery County, Maryland has been a national leader in affordable housing and requires a percent of all homes to be moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs) in residential developments of a certain size. This blend of variably priced housing accommodates home owners earning 80% of the median county household income. Given its long history and apparent success, Bluffton should explore the viability of a MPDU program. When drafting such an ordinance, not only is it important to include specific definitions for qualifying units, it is also important to control resale prices for a period of time and set rent levels. If not, market forces will prevail and affordable units will be quickly resold at market rates and lost.

Affordable Housing Fund: An Affordable Housing Fund could be established using fees paid in-lieu of providing affordable housing in inclusionary zoning districts or funds from other contributions. Such a pool could help support affordable housing by funding impact fees associated with affordable housing development, acquire land or subsidize affordable housing efforts.

Developer Bonuses: For inclusionary zoning or workforce housing ordinances to work effectively, incentives should be provided to developers. These incentives can be used in conjunction with the previously described ordinances, or on their own as tools that are applied to conventional zoning districts. These incentives include, but are not limited to: density bonuses, setback or parking variances, fees paid in-lieu, reduction in permit fees, or expedited application processes.

Housing Authority: Bluffton may wish to consider establishing a future non-profit housing authority. Typically, a housing authority

builds and provides safe and secure living environments for low and moderate income residents. While Bluffton's current efforts are to support non-profits and secure land for affordable housing development, additional research must be done to assess the feasibility of forming this authority.

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives: While there are federal and state income tax credits available equal to a percentage of the rehabilitation costs associated with a contributing historic structure, Bluffton may want to consider a special local property tax abatement for the rehabilitation of structure's that meet the Town's criteria for historic designation as permitted by the "Bailey Bill".

Barriers to Affordable Housing

Cost

There are currently many barriers that must be addressed to help solve affordable housing issues. Several strategies have been discussed in this chapter; however, the biggest hurdle is the high cost of land. High land prices constrain non-profit organizations in their ability to construct affordable housing and they further impact populations with fixed or limited incomes. Along with the high cost of land is the high cost of property insurance. Bluffton may wish to become actively involved or knowledgeable about the South Carolina Department of Insurance and make its needs and concerns known.

As growth occurs it impacts a community's ability to provide key infrastructure such as libraries, roads, and parks. This is why impact fees are imposed on new construction, to cover the resulting direct impacts and costs associated with development. To address potential community costs, an option may be to use fees paid in-lieu or an impact fee bank to help offset the cost of affordable housing units to a developer or to persons of a certain income level.

Ownership

Another barrier to land purchases is heirs' property. Much of the land in Bluffton has been deeded to various family members for well over one hundred years. In fact, one parcel of land may have many different owners, which makes it very difficult to obtain a clear title. These hurdles may be cleared with cooperation, coordination and

effective action described in the goals, needs and implementation strategies identified in this plan.

Regulatory

A perusal of the Unified Development Ordinance found that there are no regulations that would be considered as barriers to affordable housing or non-essential, including complicated administrative and permitting procedures, unreasonable or expensive building code requirements for rehabilitation projects, complex public review requirements or large lot single-family zoning. In fact, the Town of Bluffton recently revised the review process for manufactured homes in the Historic District to enable an expedited review of a conforming application. Although there are no regulatory barriers for affordable housing, there may be room for improvement to encourage more affordable housing in Town including the following:

- Consider permitting multifamily housing in additional districts; and
- Better define special needs housing and ensure there are not excessive requirements associated with the use.

Although there is a need for affordable housing throughout the region, the natural swings of the development and housing markets must not be ignored. It is imperative that any required affordable housing units do not cause a large discrepancy in project profitability. A possible concern may be that developers choose to build the required affordable units and then, rather than build within a middle price range, maximize profit and build only upper scale, expensive homes. This would result in leaving a gap in middle class housing choices.

Affordable Housing		
Need: Availability of affordable housing for the low income and workforce population.		
Goal: Increase affordable housing options and allow and encourage it throughout the community.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Create and foster relationships with non-profit groups to assist in the development, construction, and/or purchase of affordable housing units.	Planning, local non-profits, Beaufort County	Short
2. Adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance, workforce housing ordinance, or moderately priced dwelling unit program.	Town Council, Administration, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
3. Establish an "affordable housing fund" that would fund affordable housing efforts. Funds could come from "fees in lieu of" providing affordable housing from future inclusionary zoning.	Town Council, Administration, Planning Commission, Planning	Medium
4. Consider the exemption of affordable housing projects from impact fees. Consider paying impact fees with funding from a future "affordable housing fund" or other sources.	Town Council, Administration, Planning Commission, Planning	Medium
5. Research and consider developer incentives to construct affordable housing units.	Town Council, Administration, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
6. Continue to support the Affordable Housing Subcommittee to assist with coordination and facilitation of affordable housing efforts.	Town Council	Short
7. Acquire property to be made available to local groups to construct affordable housing units.	Town Council, local non-profits	On-going
8. Research the feasibility of establishing a Housing Authority to build affordable housing units.	Town Council, Administration	Long
9. Ensure affordable housing rental options.	Town Council, Administration	Ongoing
10. Support efforts that provide affordable housing for mixed income families.	Administration, Planning, Home Builder's Association, Housing Corporation	Ongoing

Economic Development 6

As Bluffton has grown in the last decade from one square mile to almost fifty-four square miles, with accompanying residential and commercial development and an increasing population, so too has its economy grown and changed. Over time it has undergone a transition, from a vital commercial center in the 1880s to a vacation destination for many families through the 1970s. Hilton Head Island, nearby Sun City, and other related development have also led to a resurgence of commercial activity. Bluffton is looking to the future with plans to maintain familiar local industries while attracting and developing new ones that will add to the diversity and sustainability of the local economy.

Vision

We strive to create a vital, diverse and sustainable local economy that enhances Bluffton's community resources: human, natural, and economic.

6.1 Labor Force and Employment

As Bluffton and its population have grown, its labor force has changed. During 2012 (see Figure 6.1), which is the most recent detailed data available, 6,279 of its residents were reported to work in the regional labor market; an increase of 5,544, or 754%, from 2000. Most were employed in the education (17.5%) and arts sector (15.3%) while other top industries were retail trade (13%) and construction (11.9%).

These drastic increases are the result of natural population growth, in-migration, and most of all, annexations that took place prior to 2010.

Figure 6.1
Industry for the Employed Population 16+ Years, 2000 & 2012

Industry	2000	%	2010	%	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3	0.4%	144	2.3%	141	4700%
Construction	182	24.8%	747	11.9%	565	310%
Manufacturing	46	6.3%	201	3.2%	155	337%
Wholesale trade	12	1.6%	135	2.2%	123	1025%
Retail trade	125	17.0%	815	13.0%	690	552%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	28	3.8%	418	6.7%	390	1393%
Information	8	1.1%	151	2.4%	143	1788%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	40	5.4%	515	8.2%	475	1188%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	50	6.8%	374	6.0%	324	648%
Educational, health and social services	75	10.2%	1,101	17.5%	1026	1368%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	97	13.2%	960	15.3%	863	890%
Other services (except public administration)	41	5.6%	197	3.1%	156	380%
Public administration	28	3.8%	521	8.3%	493	1761%
Total	**735**	**100%**	**6,279**	**100%**	5,544	754%

Source: Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

The most current data, though, indicate that the majority of Bluffton's workers are employed in, what are not typically, high wage sectors. In accordance with income and housing information (see the Population and Housing chapters), it is apparent that the provision of workforce

housing should be an important goal for the community. As Bluffton grows and property values increase, we must ensure that current residents and its workforce can continue to live and work here. More detailed information on housing, a workforce housing analysis and related goals are included in the Housing chapter of this Plan.

Labor Force and Employment		
Need: Understanding of the labor market and the needs of area workers.		
Goal: Ensure that current residents and the workforce can continue to live and work in the Town.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Ensure affordable housing options.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	On-going

6.2 Commuting Patterns

In 2012, most Bluffton workers lived and worked in Beaufort County and over three-quarters commuted alone. The percentage of residents driving alone was higher in 2012 than in 2000 and the percentage participating in carpools dropped. This trend indicates that an increasing amount of Bluffton's residents are commuting alone instead of carpooling or using alternative means of transportation.

Figure 6.2
Means of Transportation to Work, Ages 16+, 2000 & 2012

Means	2000	%	2012	%
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	538	74.4%	5,024	81.3%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	114	15.8%	748	12.1%
Public transportation (including taxicab)	6	0.8%	0	0.0%
Walked	23	3.2%	188	3.0%
Other means	3	0.4%	53	0.9%
Worked at home	39	5.4%	166	2.7%
Total	**723**	**100%**	**6,179**	**100%**

Source: Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Most of Bluffton residents drove less than 34 minutes to work in 2012 which is similar to 2000 commuting patterns.

Figure 6.3
Population and Time to Work, 2000 & 2012

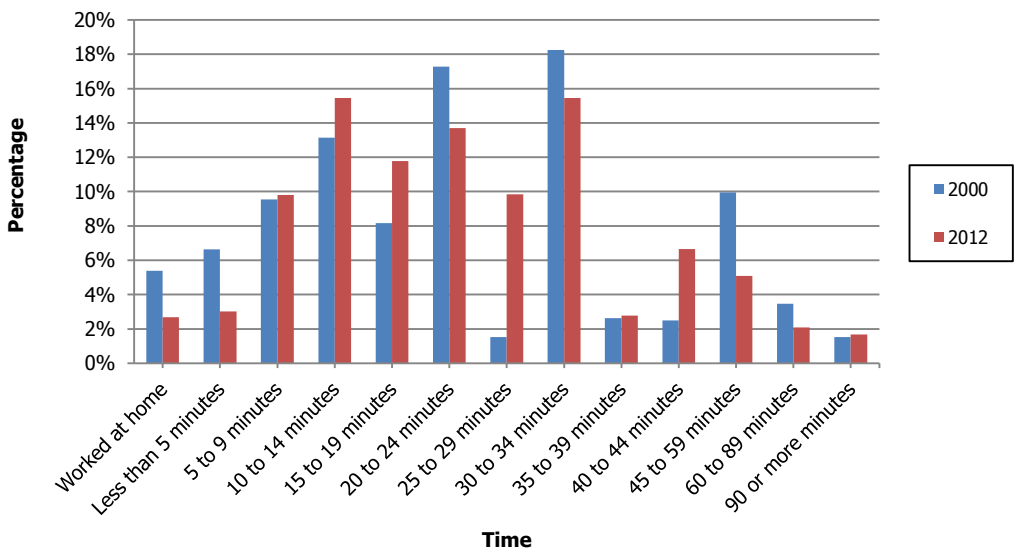
Time	2000	%	2012	%
Worked at home	39	5.39%	166	2.69%
Less than 5 minutes	48	6.64%	187	3.03%
5 to 9 minutes	69	9.54%	606	9.81%
10 to 14 minutes	95	13.14%	955	15.46%
15 to 19 minutes	59	8.16%	728	11.78%
20 to 24 minutes	125	17.29%	846	13.69%
25 to 29 minutes	11	1.52%	608	9.84%
30 to 34 minutes	132	18.26%	955	15.46%
35 to 39 minutes	19	2.63%	171	2.77%
40 to 44 minutes	18	2.49%	411	6.65%
45 to 59 minutes	72	9.96%	314	5.08%
60 to 89 minutes	25	3.46%	129	2.09%
90 or more minutes	11	1.52%	103	1.67%
Total	**723**	**100%**	**6,179**	**100%**

Source: Census 2000 American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

While most residents are working close to home, with commutes of 34 minutes or less, Bluffton should encourage the use of alternative means

of transportation. As Bluffton continues to grow it should, therefore, encourage the expansion of public transportation, pathways, and mixed use development to reduce the necessity of commuting alone by car.

Figure 6.4
Travel Time to Work, 2000 & 2012



Source: Census 2000 American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Figure 6.5 illustrates that a majority of Bluffton residents work within the South Carolina and Beaufort County.

Figure 6.5
Place of Work: State, County and Place (Bluffton) Level, 2000 & 2012

Place of Work	2000		2012	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Total Workers:	723	100%	6,179	100%
State				
Worked in state of residence:	691	95.6%	5,681	91.9%
Worked outside state of residence	32	4.4%	498	8.1%
County				
Worked in county of residence	683	94.5%	5,193	84.0%
Worked outside county of residence	8	1.1%	488	7.9%
Place (Bluffton)				
Worked in place of residence	123	17.0%	1,418	22.9%
Worked outside place of residence	600	83.0%	4,761	77.1%

Source: Census 2000, American Community Survey 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

6.3 Local Economy

When Bluffton was one square mile the only commercial area was along May River Road between Pritchard Street and Pine Oak/Thomas Heyward streets. May River Road was home to a gas station and a grocery store and a number of businesses to meet the daily needs of its residents. The only activity that could have been considered industrial was the Bluffton Oyster Factory.

According to US Census Bureau Zip Code Business Patterns Program data the greatest number of commercial establishments in Bluffton continues to be in the Construction and Retail Trade industries. This is consistent with expectations for an area known for tourism that is also experiencing growth in residential and commercial development.

Figure 6.6
Number of Establishments by Industry, 2004 & 2012

Industry Code	Industry Code Description	Total Establishments	
		2004	2012
11	Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Agriculture	1	1
22	Utilities	2	1
23	Construction	217	203
31	Manufacturing	20	15
42	Wholesale Trade	30	41
44	Retail Trade	196	221
48	Transportation & Warehousing	8	16
51	Information	10	13
52	Finance & Insurance	33	51
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	44	57
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	67	105
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	3	5
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	53	95
61	Educational services	5	12
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	49	90
71	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	15	18
72	Accommodation & Food Services	54	89
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	40	76
99	Unclassified Establishments	2	0
Total		**849**	**1,109**

Source: US Census Bureau Zip Code Business Patters Program for Zip Code 29910, 2004 and 2012

Bluffton also analyzed its 2012 business license list in table 6.7. Although any organization conducting business in Bluffton is required to have a business license, all licensed businesses are not within the Town limits. The table below provides an interesting overview of the range of organizations doing business in the Bluffton area. As with the US Census Bureau Zip Code Business Patterns Program data, the greatest number of business licenses were issued to the Construction industry in 2012. Also similar to 2012 information, the second greatest number of business licenses was issued to Retail businesses. Third and fourth in number of business licenses were the Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services industry and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry respectively.

Figure 6.7
Number of Bluffton Business Licenses by Industry, 2012

NAICS Industry Code	Industry Code Description	Number of Town of Bluffton Business Licenses Issued		
		In-Town	Out of Town	Total
23	Construction	151	539	690
44-45	Retail Trade	204	53	257
56	Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services	75	194	269
54	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	125	39	164
53	Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	58	50	108
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	127	33	160
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	118	3	121
72	Accommodation & Food Services	143	11	154
52	Finance & Insurance	28	2	30
71	Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	41	9	50
42	Wholesale Trade	17	3	20
51	Information	8	4	12
33	Primary Metal Manufacturing	5	3	8
48	Transportation & Warehousing	13	11	24
61	Educational Services	20	2	22
32	Wood Product Manufacturing	8	1	9
92	Public Administration	1	1	2
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2	3	5
49	Transportation & Warehousing	4	0	4
55	Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	0
Total		**1,148**	**961**	**2,109**

Source: Town of Bluffton Business License Database

Commercial Density

There are currently 1,990 acres of existing and permitted commercial development in Bluffton, which includes those approved through development agreements.

Figure 6.8
Town of Bluffton Permitted Commercial Area, 2012

Planning Area	Commercial Acres
Bluffton Village PUD	21
Buck Island/Simmonsville Area	155.23
Buckwalter PUD	758.361
Goethe/Schults Road Area	4
Jones Tract PUD	150
Kent Estates PUD	12
Mindstream Academy PUD	26
New Riverside PUD	390
Old Town	23
Palmetto Bluff PUD	180
Schults Tract PUD	230
Village at Verdier PUD	40
Total	**1,990**

Source: Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department.
* Commercial square footage was converted to acreage for the purpose of this Figure. The conversion utilized the average square feet of development per acre within the Town at a rate of 10,000 square feet = 1 acre.

Light industrial is currently allowed in limited locations and these include some of the commercial areas under Development Agreements. There is little interest to attract industrial business to the area, either from residents or local business and economic development leaders. However, Bluffton intends to maintain a few light industrial sites to allow for some clean industries that are compatible with the Lowcountry's natural environment. Bluffton must determine how to balance retail with non-retail commercial business areas, such as business parks and research and development facilities. Zoning and

development standards should also be flexible enough to allow for the kind of mixed use development that is appealing to technology and knowledge-based businesses.

Local Economy		
Need: Balanced local economy.		
Goal: Ensure a balanced local economy through commercial development monitoring.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Monitor conversions from commercial to residential uses and the effect it has on the local economy.	Planning	On-going
Goal: Ensure a balanced local economy through revisions to zoning and land use regulations.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Balance retail with non-retail commercial business areas such as business parks and research and development facilities.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
2. Ensure zoning and development standards are flexible enough to allow for the kind of mixed use development that is appealing to technology and knowledge-based businesses.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Medium
3. Maintain few light industrial sites, but allow for some clean industry that is compatible with the Lowcountry's natural environment.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short

6.4 Retention

Efforts to retain existing businesses ensure a dynamic economy by encouraging its continued health and expansion. Therefore, Bluffton will maintain and strengthen relationships through the Bluffton Public Development Corporation and regional partners and continue to seek additional opportunities to market and support existing businesses. These regional partners include the South Carolina Department of Commerce's Entrepreneurship and Small Business Services division, the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Bluffton's Old Town Merchants Society, the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society and The University of South Carolina (USC) Small Business Development Center and the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

Long-range plans, such as the Old Town Master Plan the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan, and the SC 46 Corridor Management Plan, recommend enhancing Bluffton's unique character to encourage tourism, expand retail clusters such as the artisans of the Old Town, and increase public awareness of locally-owned and operated businesses. These plans reflect the resident's dedication to protect Bluffton's character, while allowing it to be revitalized in a way that is consistent with its history and eccentricity. The implementation of the Old Town Master Plan specifically includes revitalizing streetscapes and maintaining a pedestrian scale through the addition and improvement of sidewalks, street lighting, benches and other amenities. Such projects enhance the economy and health of existing businesses as well as civic appearance. There are a number of State and federal programs that can assist efforts to develop programs for revitalizing or improving the appearance of downtown areas such as Downtown Development Association of the South Carolina Department of Commerce.

Retention		
Need: Preservation of existing businesses.		
Goal: Ensure a dynamic economy by encouraging the continued health and expansion of existing businesses.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Maintain and strengthen relationships with regional partners and seek additional opportunities for the marketing and support of existing businesses.	South Carolina Department of Commerce's Entrepreneurship and Small Business Services division, Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Bluffton's Old Town Merchants Society, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, University of South Carolina (USC) Small Business Development Center, Service Corps of Retired Executives.	On-going
2. Enhance the Town's unique character and appearance to encourage tourism, expand retail clusters such as the artisans of the Old Town, and increase public awareness of locally-owned and operated businesses.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Committee, Planning, local businesses, Downtown Development Association of the South Carolina Department of Commerce.	Medium

6.5 Tourism

Tourism is a naturally occurring business cluster in the Lowcountry's coastal counties and lovely landscapes and weather, combined with a rich history and Southern charm, seem to bring a steady flow of visitors through the Bluffton area. In recent years local organizations such as the Bluffton Historic Preservation Society, the Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and the Old Town Merchants Society have worked together to capitalize on Bluffton's historic resources, increasing its draw as a tourist destination and making tourism an increasingly important part of the economic base. Therefore, Bluffton should continue to seek additional National Register nominations for individual structures in its Historic District, pursue the creation of a demolition by neglect ordinance and continue to improve the overall environment of Old Town to further preservation efforts.

The implementation of the Old Town Master Plan includes a number of projects that will enhance Bluffton's charm. Among these are the May River/Bruin Road Streetscape, designing streets for walkability, enhancing connections to the May River, clustering retail, and investing in maintaining and enhancing Bluffton's tree canopy. Not only will these objectives result in attracting visitors to the area, but they will also improve the quality of life for its residents.

The Bluffton Historic Preservation Society and the Old Town Merchants Society are working well in marketing Old Town as a tourism destination and the Hilton Head Island–Bluffton Chamber of Commerce has demonstrated their ongoing support through the Bluffton Branding Project and the opening of a Bluffton satellite office at the Hwy 46 four-way stop. Bluffton will continue to support these organizations and others in enhancing and promoting its historical assets. Guided walking tours are provided by the Bluffton Historic Preservation Society or visitors can take a self-guided tour using the numerous informational kiosks installed around the Old Town as part of the Town's Wayfinding project. The Wayfinding project included not only informational Kiosks, but coherent street signs throughout the Old Town as well as installation of directional signage at major intersections to guide visitors to Old Town. Bluffton should continue to seek new ways to educate and entertain visitors by a variety of tours, interpretive signs and other creative means.

Another aspect of tourism that is becoming popular, and for which Bluffton is well suited, is known as eco-tourism. Bluffton's beautiful natural environment and pristine waterways are inviting to outdoor enthusiasts seeking opportunities to walk, bike, kayak and observe birds and wildlife. To support this, Bluffton intends to expand and improve public parks and access to the May River for residents and tourists alike and will also encourage the development of outdoor experience businesses and guided tours, as well as create a system of interpretive signs for natural features, as recommended by the SC 46 Corridor Management Plan. To implement historic and eco-tourism projects Bluffton will seek support from state programs and grants for capital projects, interpretation and education, training of tourism workers and others.

Tourism		
Need: Capitalization on the great amount of visitors and lowcountry tourists.		
Goal: Capitalize on the Town's historic resources by increasing Bluffton's draw as a tourist destination.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Continue to seek additional National Register nominations for individual structures in the Historic District.	Town Council, Historic Preservation Committee, Planning	On-going
2. Adopt a demolition by neglect ordinance.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning, Engineering	Medium
3. Implement the Old Town Master Plan.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
4. Market the Old Town as a tourist destination.	Town Council, Historic Preservation Committee, Old Town Merchants Society, Planning	On-going
5. Develop new methods to educate and entertain visitors through a variety of tours, interpretive signage, and other creative means.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Committee, Planning	Medium
6. Encourage and support ecotourism.	Town Council, Administration	On-going
7. Seek grant funding for grants for capital projects, interpretation and education, training of tourism workers and other projects.	Town Council, Administration	Medium

6.6 Economic Development and Diversification

Bluffton Public Development Corporation

The Town of Bluffton's Public Development Corporation (Corporation) is a 501(c)(3) community driven organization that was established in 2012 by Town Council. The Corporation's mission is to enhance the business climate for investment and development and attract new business to Bluffton by facilitating and brokering economic and real estate development opportunities.

Governed by an eight-member Board of Directors, comprised of community and business leaders, the Bluffton Public Development Corporation meets monthly to discuss and pursue business recruiting and expansion activities to grow and diversify Bluffton's economy.

The Corporation touches a wide array of initiatives aimed at bringing primary jobs to Bluffton. and Board members of the Corporation come from a variety of industries and offer their time and talents in service to the community at large and provide unique insights into the process of attracting and retaining businesses.

The Bluffton Public Development Corporation's 2018 Goals include:

1. Develop a high performing Public Development Corporation;
2. Develop Buckwalter Place - A Multi-County Business/Industrial Park;
3. Support a positive climate for business development investment; and
4. Increase the number of diverse businesses and job opportunities within Bluffton.

Economic Diversity

In the pursuit of economic diversity, the Corporation focuses on the development of the knowledge-based business sector. This sector is about creativity and knowledge, characterized by innovation and the application of technology and paying higher wages.

Knowledge-based businesses are found in the information and the professional, scientific and technical services industry sectors. Knowledge based businesses could include magazine publishing

companies, software development, architectural or engineering services, and scientific research and development. In a coastal location, like Bluffton's, maritime and water quality research and development could be an ideal knowledge-based sector to target.

Manufacturing and traditional industrial businesses have not had a significant presence in Bluffton and these industries may be in conflict with its desire to preserve the natural environment as a prime asset. At the same time, retail, hospitality and food service, and construction industries dominate, making most available jobs lower wage. The attraction of technical/professional businesses that support regional industries provides a means to create a sustainable, higher-wage economic future for Bluffton.

Target Industries Study

The Lowcountry Economic Alliance (LEA), a strategic partner with the Bluffton Public Development Corporation, released its economic development study in 2012. That study is the framework for Lowcountry business recruitment as it recommends targeting four industry clusters which would be ideal for the Lowcountry's pro-business environment while balancing the needs of the region's natural resources and include healthcare/biomedical, administrative/information technology, light manufacturing/assembly and logistics/distribution.

The study indicated Beaufort and Jasper Counties were strategically positioned for strong economic growth due to the region's ideal geographic location, pro-business/entrepreneurial climate, educated workforce, proximity to universities and technical colleges and its fast-growing population. Beaufort and Jasper Counties are also close to transportation hubs such as I-95, airport, train service, ports and major cities.

In addition to recommending specific industry clusters, the study also recommends the following to continue the region's economic growth momentum:

- Regional investments to enhance infrastructure.
- Collaborate with the University of South Carolina at Beaufort (USCB) and the Technical College of the Lowcountry to target curricula to deliver specific workplace skills to specific industries.

- Advance workforce development initiatives to enhance and target skill sets of young professionals and high-skilled former military employees.

Target Industries

Based upon the LEA's Targeted Economic Development Strategy for the Lowcountry, Bluffton has identified three target markets:

1. **Health Care/Biomedical**

   The healthcare industry is one with a proven track record in the Lowcountry and specifically in the Town of Bluffton. In 2004, CareCore National, the nation's largest specialty benefit management company, relocated its headquarters to Bluffton. It is now the town's largest employer with more than 474 employees at its Bluffton headquarters and 1,500 employees nationwide.

   The Town of Bluffton is actively recruiting like-minded healthcare and biomedical companies. This sector includes healthcare headquarters, healthcare service providers, biosciences research and manufacturing such as equipment, devices and pharmaceutical companies.

   The Town of Bluffton's average age of its residents is 33 years old. However, there is an aging population which surrounds the Town. The region's demographics provide healthcare and biomedical companies with a young workforce and a growth market of those needing healthcare services in the same region.

   In addition, the Lowcountry and its surrounding areas boosts of a robust healthcare industry with several hospitals in the region. Those hospitals include: Beaufort Memorial Hospital, Hilton Head Hospital, Coastal Carolina Hospital, Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center/Beaufort Clinic and several hospitals in nearby Savannah, Georgia. In the past decade, Beaufort County's healthcare jobs have increased by 70%.

   Bluffton is an ideal location for regional medical companies seeking an inspirational campus setting and a high-quality of life for their employees. Likewise with biomedical supply firms, the

proximity to transportation hubs such as the Ports of Charleston and Savannah, I-95, airports, train service and major cities is an added bonus.

As this sector grows, economic development organizations will facilitate collaboration among private companies, local universities' research and development departments, educators and local service providers to promote sector expansion as well as advancing the economy as a whole.

2. Corporate Headquarters

The corporate headquarters industry cluster is a perfect complement to Bluffton's business environment. This cluster includes providing the central location where corporate employees are employed and where the majority of the company's or the company's business units such as financial, human resources, legal, planning, information technology are physically-based.

The region's largest employer in the field, CareCore National, provides a boost to the cluster's future potential. The company helps large health insurance companies manage their customers and services. The company has grown to more than 400 employees in the Lowcountry in just three years and is located in Buckwalter Place, the heart of the Bluffton's commercial area.

The Town of Bluffton has partnered with CareCare CareCore to recruit more corporate headquarters and innovative companies to the area. In 2012, CareCore National donated the office space for the Town's business incubator, the Don Ryan Center for Innovation. The Town, with CareCore's donation, also partnered with Clemson University to create the first Clemson Technology Village in South Carolina. The Town of Bluffton and the Don Ryan Center for Innovation have mentored other centers and towns in non-metropolitan areas of the state as they also established their Technology Villages or innovation centers.

Bluffton pioneered the concept of establishing an innovation center in a non-metropolitan area. Because the Town offers companies a pro-business environment in an area where their executives and employees can enjoy a high quality of life.

Bluffton's ability to offer access to waterways, abundant natural resources, small-town culture and desirable climate is unmatched.

In addition to Bluffton's beautiful surroundings, it also offers a highly-skilled workforce. Due to CareCore being the town's largest employer, the company has been instrumental in creating a workforce in Beaufort County which possesses skill sets complementary to more corporate headquarters. The workforce has skills sets such as cost management, record maintenance, customer service and back office technologies. These skills are highly transferable and would support a number of other vertical industries. CareCore offers a seed for expanding the fast-growing medical-related back office and records management niche in the Lowcountry.

3. Back Office & IT

The "back office" industry cluster includes companies' call/customer service centers, technical support, processing facilities and data centers. Bluffton's largest employer, CareCore National, operates an expansive call center in its Bluffton headquarters as hundreds of employees evaluate healthcare insurance claims. This type of "clean industry" is the Town of Bluffton's perfect match; it provides high-quality jobs for the local economy while producing no environmentally-damaging byproducts.

These are the type of companies the Town of Bluffton is actively recruiting. Among the industries which would complement Bluffton's high-quality lifestyle is the financial services industry. This industry has historically outsourced support operations to third-party firms specializing in back office support. More industries are exploring this concept as a cost-saving measure.

The information-technology, payroll, accounting and other administrative functions of companies are additional sectors which are ideal to locate to Bluffton.
The Lowcountry has a relatively strong, current concentration in the back-office functions. Employing more than 4,300 workers in the Lowcountry, the sector grew 7.7% from 2005-2010.

CareCore National's success provides a boost to the cluster's future potential. The company has added hundreds of employees in just three years and is located in Buckwalter Place, a large commercial park dedicated for similar companies. CareCore's willingness to partner with Clemson University and the Town of Bluffton to create the Don Ryan Center for Innovation, has positioned Bluffton as a statewide competitor for entrepreneurial companies.

In addition, CareCore has created a local workforce which possesses specialized skills in cost management, record maintenance, customer service and information technologies. These skills are highly transferable and would support a number of other vertical industries. CareCore offers a seed for expanding the fast-growing medical-related back office and records management niche in the Lowcountry.

Target Industry Growth Factors

Several factors supporting the growth of all the target industies in the Lowcountry are:

- An exiting military workforce, which is a good match for process-oriented support services and customer-orientation;
- A greatly expanded Computational Science program at USCB, especially in applied studies related to other target industries such as logistics, light manufacturing, and aerospace;
- A tourism-oriented workforce, which has been trained in customer service;
- A growing college population in neighboring Savannah and Beaufort;
- Increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship as an economic development engine, creating firms that will increase demand for local technical and IT support services;
- Low cost of doing business;
- The Lowcountry's appealing natural environment and attractiveness to executive visitors and retirees, making the region an ideal setting for corporate campuses and regional headquarters;

- A regional distribution cluster will make logistics-related back office and IT an emerging opportunity; and
- Lowcountry Economic Alliance committed to encouraging development and training of qualified Back Office employees.

Back Office and Information Technology Niche Targets include:

- IT and Technical Services;
- Records Management;
- Medical-Related Back Office; and
- Regional Headquarters.

Back Office and Information Technology Emerging Opportunities:

- Logistics-Related Back Office and IT.

Buckwalter Place MCIP

Buckwalter Place, a 94-acre knowledge-based, technologically advanced mixed-use development, is the focus and nexus of economic, institutional, commercial, governmental, educational, entertainment, residential, social and cultural activity in southern Beaufort County. The goal of Buckwalter Place, a Multi-County Business/Industrial Park (MCIP), is to expand the economic base of the Town of Bluffton and region by attracting knowledge-based industries and providing a vibrant quality of life. A streamlined development strategy with customized economic development incentives, advanced technology, urban lifestyle, quality private investment, community leadership, access and connection to a trained workforce, and a concentration of knowledge based-employees, differentiates Buckwalter Place from other regional sites.

Buckwalter Place development is led by the Buckwalter Place Leadership Group, a collaboration of public and private strategic partners from the region who are focused on the success of the project and the advancement of regional economic development initiatives. Bluffton will continue to work with these strategic partners and pursue state and local programs including grants for infrastructure, workforce training, and multi-county park development. It is possible that other

mixed-use technology villages will be developed if Bluffton and its partners are successful in the marketing the region.

Don Ryan Center for Innovation

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is a public-private partnership between the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development, Care Core National and the Town of Bluffton. The Center's mission is to advance regional economic development by offering a technology/innovation incubator program that provides the resources entrepreneurs, inventors and small business people need to assist them in their quest for success.

The Bluffton-based center offers space and resources and links participants with support in intellectual property, technology evaluation, and product development services as well as seed financing, business mentorships, corporate relationships and hands-on consulting support. Located in the May River Technology Park at Buckwalter Place in Bluffton, the Don Ryan Center for Innovation is the catalyst innovators need to make their concept a reality.

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is supported by the Town of Bluffton, Clemson University's Institute for Economic and Community Development, CareCore National and Buckwalter Tech Park along with additional private sponsors including: St. Joseph's/Candler, Nexsen Pruet, Regions Bank and Hargray Communications. Other sponsors are Bank of America, McNair Law Firm, Custom Audio Video, WebsterRogers LLP and BFG Communications.

This 501(c)(3) community-driven organization reports to an experienced seven-member board appointed by the Town Council of Bluffton that works in cooperation with Clemson University's Institute for Economic and Community Development to create, accelerate, expand and incubate jobs for our region. Known as a "Clemson Technology Village," this program is currently exclusive to Bluffton, Hartsville and Rock Hill with plans to expand to Conway and other rural communities throughout South Carolina.

Talent Development & Workforce

Bluffton has a diverse and growing workforce marked by competitive wages and ample skilled employees representing diverse demographics from retired executives to young professionals. However, to compete with other regions Bluffton needs to continue to attract and provide well-educated and highly-trained employees. Therefore, the creation and support of an environment that promotes the expansion of available training and education is crucial.

Talent development may be one of the most challenging aspects of the Town's efforts. Competing for knowledge-based businesses is about attracting knowledge workers, since in this model, where knowledge is the raw material, businesses follow workers. Workers are then left to make location decisions based on quality of life factors, which is one thing Bluffton has in abundance. That message needs to be marketed. In addition, Bluffton needs to encourage a creative culture, mixed use villages, recreational resources, entertainment, and other amenities that contribute to quality of life.

However, attracting qualified workers is only a part of the challenge. The other aspect of talent development is to educate the local workforce, thereby, increasing their skills and marketability. This task requires a collaborative effort of educational partners from middle and high schools, technical schools, colleges, universities, other educational institutions, and professional associations. Bluffton, or associated economic development organizations, need to partner with local educational institutions to identify and develop knowledge based and skilled workers, and to create curricula that develop the personnel resources needed by existing and new industry clusters and businesses. South Carolina state programs such as the Workforce Investment Act, training and grant opportunities such as ReadySC, and military contacts may also contribute to this task.

Economic Development and Diversification		
Need: Diversification and development of the local economy.		
Goal: Facilitate economic opportunities for Bluffton and the Greater Bluffton area. Enhance Bluffton's human, natural, and economic resources and yield results that are sustainable and promote economic diversity.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Attract technical/professional businesses that support regional industry and provide a means to create a sustainable, higher-wage economic future for Bluffton.	Economic Development Subcommittee	Medium
2. Create an environment that promotes recruitment.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Economic Development Committee	Medium
3. Establish Bluffton as center with infrastructure to support technology businesses and create a Wireless Community, providing hotspots in appropriate places throughout the Town.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Economic Development Committee	Medium
Economic Development and Diversification		
4. Develop plan for promoting the region and a strategy to recruit targeted companies to relocate or develop businesses in Bluffton.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Economic Development Committee	Medium
Goal: Facilitate economic opportunities for Bluffton and the Greater Bluffton area. Enhance Bluffton's human, natural, and economic resources and yield results that are sustainable and promote economic diversity.		
Responsible Parties	**Responsible Parties**	**Responsible Parties**
1. Connect with and utilize supporting efforts at the state level.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Palmetto Institute, SCRA, Technology Alliance, multi-county park development, other regional initiatives	Medium
2. Partner and support education of the local workforce to increase skills and marketability.	Colleges, Universities, Educational institutions, professional associations, Workforce Investment Act, Town Council, Administration, Planning	Medium

3. Encourage the creative culture, mixed use technology villages, recreational resources, entertainment, and other amenities that contribute to quality of life.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	On-going
4. Establish public corporations for economic development, real estate management, and marketing.	Town Council, Administration	Medium

6.7 Regional Economic Development Partners

Communication and cooperation are critical among local agencies and governments involved with economic development. This requires acknowledging that economic development benefits are regional in nature, a belief that Bluffton has demonstrated to be an important part of its development activities. In addition to increasing the potential for funding multi-jurisdictional projects, regional economic development programs can eliminate duplicated efforts and can result in better coordinated services. Bluffton should establish closer ties to Beaufort County development groups to ensure that its commercial locations are most effectively marketed and so that it can become an active participant in county-wide economic development projects and programs.

Regional Economic Development Partners

In addition to increasing the potential for funding multi-jurisdictional projects, regional economic development programs can eliminate duplicated efforts and can result in better coordinated services. A description of programs that Bluffton should maintain on-going communication with is as follows:

South Carolina Department of Commerce: The Department of Commerce implements a number of state and federal programs for economic development. Technical assistance includes leadership programs, the South Carolina Economic Developer's School, and workforce training programs. The department supports product development of industrial parks and speculative buildings, and community development through downtown development and rural infrastructure programs. The department also administers a variety of federal and state grants.

Lowcountry Economic Alliance: The Lowcountry Economic Alliance (LEA), a business development and recruitment network, is a public-private partnership whose primary purpose is to provide comprehensive business/industrial development and recruitment services. The LEA's mission is "to promote and assist with quality, sustainable economic development and growth through an alliance with the private sector as it creates career path opportunities and expands the business tax base of the Lowcountry Region."

The LEA is a fully connected resource that fosters and manages current and future economic prosperity while maintaining the Lowcountry's unique environment and lifestyle. They also consult with local municipalities to implement policies, procedures and ordinances which make the region more appealing to prospective business. It also serves the organizations seeking to relocate or expand their business in the Lowcountry Region as they deliver quality jobs in a quality lifestyle.

LEA Goals and Objectives:

- To improve the strength and stability of the Lowcountry economy;
- To provide good quality, sustainable, value-added jobs for residents; and
- To reduce the burden of residential property taxes within the counties by strengthening and expanding the business tax base all while promoting and protecting the region's sustainable, natural lifestyle.

Services provided include:

- Regional marketing to promote the Lowcountry's pro-business economic policies;
- Gathering and providing information regarding demographics and statistics;
- Site location consulting including available land, existing buildings and build-to-suit facilities;
- Regional site visits for business site selection;
- Incentive analysis, guidance and preparation;
- Planning and permitting assistance and direction;
- Workforce development support; and
- Advocacy for economic development and business.

The Creative Coast Initiative: The Creative Coast Initiative (TCCi) works to improve the quality of life in the Savannah area by building a diverse, innovative and higher-wage economic future that greatly increase opportunities for everyone. The organization works to foster a dynamic business climate for creative, knowledge-based jobs. The organization's focus area includes the Bluffton area, Hilton Head Island and Beaufort. TCCi works to raise the profile of the

Lowcountry as a smart place to work, live and play, and to make the connections that bring knowledge-based jobs and workers to the region. Bluffton could benefit from a more formalized partnership with this organization.

Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce: The mission of the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce is to lead the enhancement, expansion and diversification of the business community throughout the Beaufort region. The Chamber provides its 950 members with several services, including networking opportunities, training for small businesses, advocacy for local businesses with local, state and federal governing bodies, and tourism services. The Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce is the designated marketing organization for tourism to the City of Beaufort, the Town of Port Royal and the unincorporated areas of Beaufort County. The Chamber partners with a wide variety of non-profit organizations and businesses to market the hospitality industry and to attract visitors through Destination Beaufort, Travel Guide and other publications. The Beaufort Regional Chamber is an ally of Bluffton's in business retention and tourism efforts.

Hilton Head Island - Bluffton Chamber of Commerce: An organization of over 1,750 members and 25 staff, held the honor of National Chamber of the Year in 2000 and 2006. The Chamber serves its members and the area through several divisions. Membership Development provides programs and services to members and continually works to increase membership. The Visitor & Convention Bureau cultivates convention business and tourism. The Workforce Development & Education division implements initiatives to prepare students and jobseekers for the workplace and assists members to recruit, retain and develop their workforce. Government Relations serves as a liaison between the business community and local, state and federal officials, working cooperatively to ensure a healthy business environment. Communications coordinates local and national public relations and oversees special events, and Finance & Administration manages the operations of the organization. The Chamber also staffs and organizes a number of committees to promote and coordinate the efforts of local businesses, such as the Bluffton Marketing Committee which focuses on the branding of Bluffton and cooperative marketing to increase tourism to the Bluffton area.

Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society: This group's mission is to establish Old Town Bluffton as a destination for residents and tourists by highlighting its unique historical, cultural and shopping opportunities. The organization's area of focus spans north to south from the Bluffton Parkway to the May River and east to west from Burnt Church Road to Buck Island Road, although as Bluffton expands so does the focus area. The group partners with and leverages the resources of the Chamber of Commerce including direct marketing funding, cooperative marketing, town festivals and events. Members of the organization include restaurants, banks, realtors and churches as well as retail merchants. The group has created a shopping map that identifies the locations of shops, restaurants, as well as other members of the society. The group works in cooperation with the Heyward House as their Welcome Center, including the Heyward House in events and marketing materials.

Bluffton Historical Preservation Society: The mission of the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society (BHPS) is to protect, preserve, and promote the cultural heritage and history of St. Luke's Parish (est.1767) through education, marketing, hands-on preservation of buildings and sites, maintenance of an historical archive, and operation of Heyward House Historic Center. Over the past two and a half decades, the Society's efforts have led to a whole host of achievements such as the creation of the Bluffton National Register Historic District and a recent passage of a historic preservation ordinance protecting the historic resources, character, and sense of place of Old Bluffton. The Society also marks important buildings throughout the District and presents the annual Calwell Award for excellence in individual preservation efforts in Bluffton. The Society will continue to serve the community by educating the residents and its' visitors about the historical and architectural legacy of Bluffton and working toward the preservation of its historic built environment. BHPS is a valuable partner of Bluffton's in promoting historical tourism.

Educational Partners: A significant factor for business development is local education and training opportunities. Bluffton is fortunate to be close to many educational institutions, some of which are listed below:

- Beaufort County School District (PreK-12);

- University of South Carolina – Beaufort and New River (USCB);
- Technical College of the Lowcountry;
- Savannah College of Art and Design;
- Georgia Tech at Savannah; and
- Academy of Career Excellence.

Bluffton should support local educational institutions, establish close ties with them and knowledge of their curricula, and create mutually beneficial partnerships. The presence of colleges and universities can create a creative and innovative culture in a town that should be encouraged. Satellite classrooms and internship opportunities could be created to encourage the integration of the colleges and universities and their students into the town. Bluffton should explore the potential relationships between the curricula of the schools with industries targeted for attraction to the area, such as Information Technology, Mariculture, Economic Development, Medical Imaging and other professional and technical programs.

Others: As the region grows and changes, Bluffton will need to expand its economic development network to include the City of Hardeeville's economic development staff, and other potential regional, state and federal partners.

Regional Economic Development Partners		
Need: Partnerships and coordination for economic development.		
Goal: Support and coordinate a region-wide economic development effort.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Ensure communication and coordination among local economic development agencies and jurisdictions to avoid duplication of efforts.	SC Dept. of Commerce, Greater Beaufort- Hilton Head Economic Partnership, Creative Coast Initiative, Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, Hilton Head- Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Old Town Merchants Society, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, Educational Partners	Short

Community Facilities 7

The Community Facilities Chapter includes the facilities, services and activities essential to the growth, development or redevelopment of the community. An inventory and analysis of the Town's community facilities and services are presented. The information in the Community Facilities Chapter represents the Town's position regarding efficient use of public funds, future growth, development and redevelopment. As the chapter is revised, it is important to review and possibly amend the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and ensure Town ordinances conform to the Comprehensive Plan. Map 7.1 Community Facilities Map and Figure 7.1 show southern Beaufort County's community facilities.

Vision

We share a commitment to provide efficient and reliable facilities and services for the residents and visitors of the Town of Bluffton and to meet level of service standards to ensure a high quality of life.

Figure 7.1
Community Facilities

Map Location	Facility	Street Address
Bluffton Fire District Stations		
Circle-1	Station 32	155 Callawassie Dr
Circle-2	Station 35	357 Fording Island Rd
Circle-3	Station 34	25 William Pope Dr
Circle-4	Station 31	178 May River Rd
Circle-5	Station 30/ Hq	2 Bridge St
Circle-6	Station 33	12 Buckingham Plantation Dr
Circle-7	Station 36	2 Oak Tree Rd
Circle-8	Station 37	Big House Landing & Laurel Oak Bay Rd
Educational Facilities		
Circle-A	Okatie Elementary School	53 Cherry Point Rd
Circle-B	Bluffton High School	12 He Mccracken Cir
Circle-C	Bluffton Elementary School	160 He Mccracken Cir
Circle-D	H.E. Mccracken Middle School	250 He Mccracken Cir
Circle-E	M.C. Riley Elementary School	200 Burnt Church Rd
Government Facilities		
Square-1	Beaufort County Recycling Center	270 Gibbet Rd
Square-2	Town of Bluffton Town Hall	20 Bridge St Unit-A
Square-3	Town of Bluffton Maintenance Office	67 Lawrence St
Square-4	Town of Bluffton Engineering Office	1261 May River Rd
Square-4	Town of Bluffton Environmental Protection Office	1261 May River Rd
Square-4	Town of Bluffton Police Substation	1261 May River Rd
Square-5	Bluffton Branch Library	120 Palmetto Way
Square-6	United States Post Office	25 Thurmond Way
Square-7	Beaufort County Bluffton Government Center	4819 Bluffton Pky
Square-8	Town of Bluffton Police Headquarters	39 Persimmon St
Square-9	Beaufort County Recycling Center	104 Simmonsville Rd
Recreational Facilities		
Triangle-A	Edgar Glenn Boat Landing	305 Okatie Hwy
Triangle-B	H.E. Trask Boat Landing	325 Sawmill Creek Rd
Triangle-C	Oscar J. Frazier Park	77 Shults Rd
Triangle-D	M.C. Riley Recreation Complex	185 Goethe Rd
Triangle-E	Bluffton Oyster Factory	63 Wharf St
Triangle-F	Bluffton Public Dock	113 Calhoun St
Triangle-G	Old Mccracken Football Stadium	172 Burnt Church Rd
Triangle-H	Bluffton Recreation Center	61 Ulmer Rd Unit B
Triangle-I	Alljoy Boat Landing	265 Alljoy Rd
Triangle-J	Buckingham Boat Landing	55 Fording Island Rd Ext
Triangle-K	Cc Haigh Jr Boat Landing	1640 Fording Island Rd

Source: Town of Bluffton

7.1 Government Facilities and Functions

Government Functions

The Town of Bluffton follows the council-manager form of government. The key players in this form of government are the Mayor, four members of the Town Council and the Town Manager. The powers of each are examined in Appendix A.

Elections and Representation

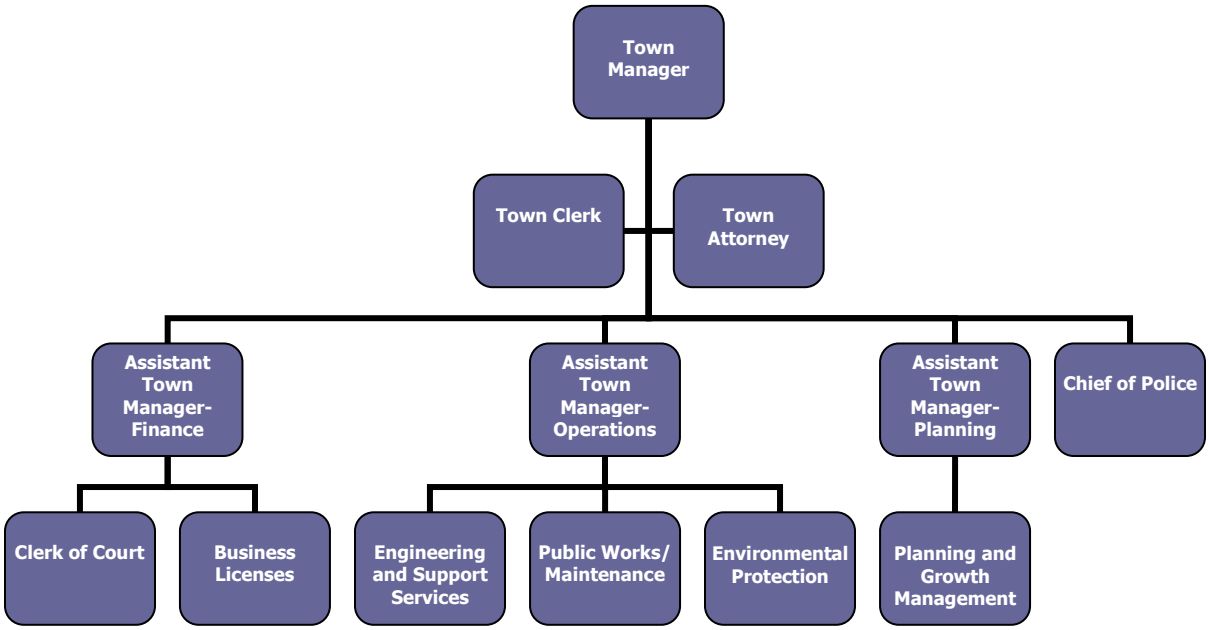
Bluffton's Town Council make up, terms, and elections are consistent with many communities in South Carolina and is described in Appendix A. As Bluffton's services expand and the population increases, expanding to a seven-member Council may be necessary to adequately represent its residents. Bluffton's population is projected to increase significantly in the upcoming years (see Chapter Two) which may be the basis for increasing the amount of council members from the minimum allowed by State law. Research is necessary to determine a threshold population for the addition of two council members.

Since municipal limits have expanded and distinct neighborhoods have formed, a ward system of election may be another option for Bluffton. A ward is an electoral district used in local politics to delineate Bluffton for administrative purposes. In this system, registered voters would vote for a single council representative for their respective ward. The benefit of this system is that neighborhoods or sections of Bluffton have a specific Council member to represent its residents. The current at-large system of election may be changed by referendum.

Town Organizational Structure

Bluffton's services are managed by a professional staff under the leadership of the Town Manager. Three Assistant Town Managers oversee Finance, Planning and both Environmental Protection and Engineering Support Services. The current administration is organized into seven departments as depicted in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2
Bluffton Staff Organizational Structure



Town Hall and Facilities

Bluffton's town hall is located in an old elementary school leased from the Beaufort County School District for an annual fee of $1. The facility is lacking in size and in some cases quality. However, construction of a new Town Hall is not financially practical at present. As Bluffton expands, it will be necessary to either relocate or make further improvements to the existing facility. At the present time, Bluffton's policy is to maximize the use of this facility.

The recently adopted Old Town Master Plan recommends that if a new Town Hall is built, it should remain within Old Town. The plan recommends the day-to-day operations of government stay within the original one-square mile of Old Town Bluffton. Presently, the size of the current Town Hall limits the number of staff who can reasonably fit within the structure. However, construction of a new Town Hall is not financially practical at present. Because of this, a "distribution of government" along with leasing office space in various locations within Bluffton limits for departmental use may be necessary to satisfy space needs. Potential locations will need to be identified and assessed, while department space needs and functional relationships will be examined.

Other Town structures should be assessed as to their condition and quality. To date, a full renovation of the 1261 May River Road building

was completed in early 2007. This updated building now houses the Engineering and Operations Department. However, the maintenance building on the corner Boundary and Lawrence Streets is in disrepair and in need of attention.

Town Property and Acquisitions

Bluffton owns several parcels of land in and near Town limits, which are identified Map 7.2 in the Town Owned Property Map. Given the Town's need for additional office space, a careful analysis of existing Town property and potential future needs for land acquisition and disposal should be conducted.

Bluffton's guiding document for land acquisition is the Land Acquisition Plan. The Land Acquisition Plan begins with the identification of properties for potential acquisition. Recommendations for land to acquire are forwarded to the Town Manager. The Manager uses a specific criterion to make his/her recommendation to Town Council. Land acquired must advance one of the following general goals:

1. Reduce future development levels
2. Preserve open space
3. Provide public access and/or view to the water
4. Further the Town's Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents
5. Place restrictive covenants on property and resell where appropriate

If a property is proven to be a future asset to the community, the Town Manager brings forth a recommendation to Town Council and the property is acquired with Council's approval and authorization. Present priorities to meet these goals include acquisition for Town departments and services, potential sites for affordable housing and location to meet parking needs in Old Town.

United States Postal Service

Providing efficient postal service is difficult because of the high rate of development in southern Beaufort County. While increased personnel will be needed to provide efficient service, there is no set industry standard guiding the increased hiring of mail carriers. The office bases personnel needs on the ability to meet delivery deadlines. Additional

information on the post office and postal service in Bluffton can be found in Appendix A.

Bluffton can assist the USPS in its goal to provide service to a development as soon as the first resident arrives in several ways:

- **Provide the USPS information such as permitted densities and development mapping:** When the USPS is informed of future developments earlier in the process, it can prepare to expand its services. Information on permitted densities and development mapping can also assist USPS planning efforts.
- **Facilitate communication between USPS and developers:** While the USPS attempts to provide convenient curbside services, the challenges of rapid growth make service to individual mailboxes increasingly difficult. Early communication between developers and the USPS can help with coordination on types of service, such as delivery to a central neighborhood pick-up center, shared posts or individual posts.
- **Involve USPS in Development Review Committee Meetings:** The USPS can stay current with Bluffton's future developments by involvement Bluffton's development permitting process meetings, the Development Review Committee.

Government Facilities and Functions		
Need: Modification of the method of election and size of Council as the Town expands in size and population in order to sufficiently represent its residents.		
Goal: Assess and modify the size and election method of Town Council.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Research the appropriate size of Council while taking into consideration the Town's population projections.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Beaufort County Elections Commission	Medium
2. Research the proper delineation of wards within the Town's boundaries and change to a ward system of election and representation.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Beaufort County Elections Commission	Medium
3. Expand to a seven-member Town Council.	Town Council, Administration	Long

Government Facilities and Functions		
Need: Adequate departments and personnel to meet the needs of a growing population.		
Goal: Provide the staff and requisite facilities to maintain effective administration of all Town government functions as the community's needs increase.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop a long-range plan to address staffing levels of existing and potential new departments, and to consider the facility needs of the Town staff for the next twenty years.	Town Council, Administration, Department Heads	Short
Need: Relocation or further improvements to existing Town facilities.		
Goal: Obtain sufficient office space for Town departments.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Identify and assess locations for Town departments and services.	Administration, Department Heads, Planning	Short
2. Assess department space needs.	Department Heads	Short
3. Maximize the use of the current Town Hall.	Administration	On-going
4. Develop a rolling five-year staffing forecast to assist the evaluation of space needs.	Administration, Department Heads.	On-going
Goal: Renovate Town structures to provide adequate places of work for employees and secure locations for Town equipment and supplies.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Renovate and maintain the maintenance building on Lawrence and Boundary Streets.	Administration, Building & Grounds	Short

Government Facilities and Functions		
Need: Acquisition of land for town services, affordable housing and parking.		
Goal: Finalize policies regarding land acquisition and acquire land for Town priority projects.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Finalize Town Land Acquisition Plan	Town Council, Administration, Finance, Planning	Short
2. Acquire land for addition Town Departments and services	Town Council, Administration, Finance, Planning	On-going
3. Acquire land for affordable housing efforts.	Town Council, Administration, Finance, Planning, Habitat for Humanity	On-going
4. Acquire land for parking in the Old Town.	Town Council, Administration, Finance, Planning, Engineering and Operations	Medium
Need: Reliable and dependable mail delivery.		
Goal: Partner with the Bluffton USPS to ensure the effective provision of mail delivery.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Provide USPS with Permitted Density Figures and demographic information and projections.	Planning	On-going
2. Facilitate communication between USPS and developers to coordinate and agree upon types of delivery service.	Planning	On-going
3. Invite USPS representatives to all Development Review Committee Meetings.	Planning	On-going

7.2 Information Technology

Bluffton contracts with a private company to carry out information technology (IT) services. Considering the fast pace of technological innovation and the diversity of need, outsourcing allows Bluffton economy of scale in purchasing and implementing technological solutions. As Bluffton grows the formation of IT, Communications and/or Management Information Services departments may become advantageous. Bluffton should continue IT advances in regard to the following, all of which are further described in Appendix A:

- Recurring 3-Year Plans
- Fiber-Optics
- Data Storage
- State Reporting
- Security and Accessibility
- Security
- Automated Solutions
- Staff Training
- Strategic Visioning

Geographic Information Systems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services are based in the Planning and Growth Management Department. Bluffton's GIS capabilities can aid the distribution of information by presenting information graphically through cartography.

The Beaufort County GIS Department supplies Bluffton's base data. Files such as addresses, parcels and roads are an integral part of the GIS database. The GIS database will need further development to address increasingly complex tasks related to natural resources, crime analysis, transportation management and other issues.

Further development of data-sharing relationships between the area municipalities and counties could benefit all jurisdictions in the region. Each municipal and county government has developed its own GIS database and therefore works from separate systems. However, data is frequently shared and the Town and County are in the process of establishing a formal intergovernmental agreement. Multiple GIS systems lead to a great duplication of efforts. This issue could be

solved by a shared database from which numerous jurisdictions and organizations could benefit.

Information Technology		
Need: Modernized Information Technology and technical support services as Town services and functions progress.		
Goal: Conduct advances in networking, backup, software, reporting, technology and coordination.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish a 3-Year Recurring IT Plan for replacement of obsolete equipment.	IT, Department Heads	On-going
2. Maintain fiber optic connection when new facilities are acquired when feasible.	IT	On-going
3. Create a data management system with triple redundancy (tape, on-site storage, remote location backup).	IT	Short
4. Partner with other jurisdictions in an effort to offer reciprocating service agreements activated by the occurrence of worst case scenario acts of terrorism or natural disasters.	Admin, IT	Short
5. Digitize and report data according to state standards.	IT, Town Clerk	On-going
6. Continue advances in the server-based network and network security.	IT	On-going
7. Assess and consider automated solutions. Pursue e-commerce and interactive solutions.	IT, Department Heads	On-going
8. Create and maintain training programs designed to increase efficiency.	IT, Department Heads	On-going
9. Develop a strategic plan that includes specific and measurable goals.	Administration, IT, Department Heads	Short
10. Establish mission, vision, and value statements.	Administration, IT, Department Heads	Short
11. Establish a GIS Department.	Planning	Short
12. Continue to develop and maintain the Town GIS system which enhances customer service and provides decision-making support to Town staff.	Planning	On-going
13. Develop file-sharing relationships with intergovernmental agreements.	IT, Planning, Administration	On-going
14. Partner with area agencies and jurisdictions and assess the potential of a shared GIS base-mapping files and database.	Administration, Planning, BJWSA, Hilton Head, Beaufort County, Jasper County, Hardeeville	Medium

7.3 Utilities

Utilities include water and wastewater treatment, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and stormwater management. It is important that Bluffton and area utility providers have consistent long-range plans and on-going communication to ensure that area residents have reliable utility services.

Each utility provider negotiates a franchise agreement with the town it serves. These agreements cover the costs and types of services provided. At this time, Bluffton is in a position to re-negotiate these franchise agreements to better position itself as a choice location for development.

Water and Wastewater

The Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) provides water and sewer to the majority of Bluffton's residents, as well as water for fire protection for all residents of the Town. Map 7.3 BJWSA Water Coverage Area shows the BJWSA water distribution system. BJWSA has commissioned a Water and Wastewater Master Plan to develop a plan for meeting customer needs which is summarized in Appendix A.

Within Bluffton's original municipal limits, many residents are not connected to public sewer and rely on septic systems. Areas un-served by sewer can be seen on Map 7.4 BJWSA Sewer Coverage Area. Many septic systems fail without notice, causing a threat to human health and to the environment. Some failed systems cannot be repaired and require new drainage fields for proper functioning. When lots are small, finding a replacement field can be difficult.

However, BJWSA is proposing a major expansion of its wastewater service area. All of Bluffton is within the proposed wastewater service area for BJWSA. Proposed improvements in the upcoming years include lift station improvement and expansions, as well as proposed forcemains. Bluffton should continue to work with BJWSA toward the provision of public sewer and water to all homes within its limits. Coordination will ensure Bluffton residents receive reliable utility service. For BJWSA to efficiently and effectively provide services to Bluffton, it needs:

Discretionary Project Proposals: Discretionary projects are sought by BJWSA from municipalities every three years. Discretionary projects are extra system improvements funded with left-over BJWSA funds. Once a list of discretionary projects is compiled, BJWSA representatives will rank projects and fund as many as possible.

Development Review Committee Involvement: BJWSA representatives seek increased involvement in the Development Review Committee (DRC) meetings. A BJWSA engineering representative should attend each DRC meeting.

Community Development Block Grant Project Awareness (CDBG): BJWSA representatives seek increased awareness of future CDBG grant proposals to ensure their involvement.

Aid and Assistance in Facilitating Community Involvement Processes: BJWSA seeks assistance in coordination of community participation in future system improvement projects.

Insight into Demographic and Development Figures and Projections: Area population, permitted densities and projections are essential for BJWSA to provide adequate and efficient water and sewer service in Bluffton. Agree upon figures will ensure accurate projections for system needs.

Electricity

Electricity is supplied to Bluffton by South Carolina Electric & Gas (SCE&G) and Palmetto Electric. Bluffton is divided into three service areas: SCE&G, Palmetto Electric and undedicated service areas as depicted on Map 7.5 Electricity Service Areas. In undedicated service areas, it is the consumer's choice to choose a service provider. A more detailed description of Bluffton's electricity suppliers is located in Appendix A. The utility providers and Bluffton can both benefit by partnering on the following:

Coordination During Facility Planning: SCE&G and Bluffton also need to coordinate for substation locations and design. There are approximately 4,200 customers on the main Bluffton circuit, while the standard is 1,500. Without additional substations to limit the amount

of customers per circuit, many customers could potentially lose power with a problem in a single area.

Coordination During Major Town Projects: Coordination during major road widenings and improvement projects.

Coordination to Develop Design Guidelines: Coordination to develop general/preferred utility system design guidelines in new developments. Model design guidelines are sought by Palmetto Electric for Town concurrence. Guidelines can be developed during Town Development Review Committee meetings.

GIS Coordination: Continuation of GIS coordination and file transfer (Town Limits Shapefile).

Natural Gas

SCE&G is the sole gas provider within Bluffton. One primary gas line travels into the Bluffton area from the South, entering Town limits at the New River Bridge. Gas lines are primarily installed to new developments. It is less common to extend gas lines into existing neighborhoods since households are already equipped with electric appliances. However, SCE&G can extend gas lines anywhere within its service area, as long as the utility provider can economically justify the provision of service. When planning for gas line extensions, it is important to assess development potential between the source and destination. Developments along the line can also benefit from gas line extensions, in addition to the end development served by the project.

Partnering and communication between Bluffton and the SCE&G gas division is essential. SCE&G's gas division would like to coordinate with Bluffton during road projects when it would be ideal to install gas lines during construction phases. This coordination would increase the likelihood of natural gas availability to Bluffton's residents and businesses. The Streetscape Project is an opportunity for extending gas lines along May River Road to serve existing and new businesses and Old Town residents, as well as the Calhoun Street Promenade. SCE&G needs the following from Bluffton:

Coordination During Capital Improvement Projects:
Coordination during major road widenings and improvement projects, especially during the upcoming May River Road/Bruin Road Streetscape

Project. An important connection of gas lines can be made along May River Road during this project.

Involvement in the Development Review Committee and Planning Commission: SCE&G Gas representatives would like to become involved in DRC and Planning Commission meetings to be aware of new development projects.

GIS Coordination: GIS file sharing and transfer is sought by the SCE&G Gas Division.

Telecommunications and Cable

Telephone and cable services in Bluffton are provided primarily by Hargray, which provides a wide range of telecommunications services within Beaufort County. Hargray's current effort is to provide fiber-optic connections to individual homes. As additional telecommunications, cell towers and cable services expand to meet the need of an increasing population, Bluffton must ensure services are available are reliable while negative visual impacts are minimized.

Because Hargray shares utility trenches with SCE&G and Palmetto Electric, the company's engineers have difficultly with telecommunication line planning and design when developer plans change during the permitting process, or when approved plans are revised. Hargray could benefit from an awareness of a developer's intent to revise development plans through Bluffton's Planning and Growth Management Department's Development Review Committee meetings before a revised permit is issued.

Because of the fast pace of development and annexation in Southern Beaufort County, Hargray may at times have difficulty determining the proper payment of franchise fees. Bluffton could possibly be losing out on franchise fee revenue if the provider is not aware of up to date Town boundaries. Bluffton should increase its GIS responsibilities to share Town boundary shapefiles, as well as GIS mapping, after each annexation. Specifically, Hargray needs:

Awareness of Development Plan Revisions: Hargray would be able to operate more efficiently and provide better service if it were aware of the intent of a developer to revise plans. Involvement in

Development Review Committee meetings will allow Hargray to be better informed of development plans and revisions.

Updated Town Boundaries: Hargray needs updated Town boundaries to pay accurate franchise fees to the Town and County.

Stormwater Management

As sites are cleared for new development and new structures are built, increasing stress is put on Bluffton's stormwater management system. Stormwater Management practices and procedures, as well as water quality issues (addressed in the Natural Resources Chapter), need to address stormwater ditch upgrades and widening. There is a need to upgrade and repair Bluffton's drainage system which will require a survey of the existing system, an analysis of its effectiveness, a listing of needed improvements, and identification of potential funding sources. In addition to this, a recently initiated study by B.P. Barber will identify stormwater problem areas.

The Clean Water Act, signed into law in 1973, requires local governments to manage storm water pollution. As a result of this federal mandate, Beaufort County established a Stormwater Management Utility (SMU). The utility is responsible for protecting the health of waterways and for reducing flooding due to storms in vulnerable low-lying regions. The purpose of the Stormwater Management Utility is to:

- Determine appropriate levels of public stormwater management services for residential, commercial, industrial and governmental entities within Beaufort County.
- Recommend appropriate funding levels for provision of services in the aforementioned sectors.
- Advise the staff of the stormwater management utility on master planning efforts and cost of service/rate studies; and d) support and promote sound stormwater management practices that mitigate non-point source pollution and enhance area drainage within Beaufort County (Beaufort County Department of Public Works).

Utilities		
Need: Efficiency and reliability in utility service.		
Goal: Partner with local utility companies in order for the most effective and reliable provision of services.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Provide BJWSA with a list of discretionary projects and inform them of future CDBG projects.	Planning, Engineering, BJWSA	Medium
2. Assist BJWSA in future community involvement projects.	Planning, Engineering, BJWSA	On-going
3. Continue to work with property owners to provide public sewer and water to service areas in the Town that are not currently served, but reasonably could be, served by public sewer and water.	Planning, Engineering, BJWSA	On-going
4. Provide all utility companies with demographic information, projections and permitted densities.	Planning	On-going
5. Ensure consistency between plans approved by utility companies and those approved by the Town.	Planning	On-going
6. Coordinate with utility companies for future placement of substations.	Planning, Engineering, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric	On-going
7. Coordinate with utility companies during major roadway projects.	Planning, Engineering, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric, BJWSA	On-going
8. Partner with utility companies to develop general/preferred utility design guidelines. Develop general guidelines through Development Review Committee Meetings.	Planning, Engineering, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric, BJWSA, Hargray	Short
9. Transfer updated GIS Town boundary files to all utility providers after annexation approvals.	Planning	On-going
10. Further coordination and involvement in DRC and Planning Commission (BJWSA, Hargray, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric).	Planning, BJWSA, Hargray, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric	On-going
11. Provide utility companies with advanced notice of development plan revisions.	Planning	On-going
12. Re-negotiate franchise agreements with utilities serving Bluffton: sewer, water, natural gas, electricity, telephone.	Planning	Short
13. Seek underground wiring where appropriate.	Planning, Engineering	On-going

		Utilities
14. Develop a plan and refine the Town's Zoning Ordinance to ensure that telecommunication towers, satellite dishes, and related facilities are sensitively located and designed to minimize visual impacts.	Planning	Short
Goal: Maintain the stormwater drainage system.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop and implement a Town plan for upgrade and repair of Bluffton's drainage system.	Engineering, Environmental Protection	Medium
2. Pursue grants and other funds for infrastructure and sewer.	Engineering, Environmental Protection	On-going
3. Seek LCOG assistance in infrastructure funding.	Engineering, Environmental Protection	On-going
4. Identify infrastructure projects for CIP list through a needs study.	Engineering, Environmental Protection, Planning	Short

7.4 Solid Waste and Recycling

Collection and Disposal

Waste Management Corporation is contracted by Bluffton to collect solid waste and recyclables. All residents have curbside garbage collection and curbside recycling, which is hauled to the Hickory Hill Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Landfill in Jasper County, SC. The landfill is permitted by DHEC to accept 307,000 tons of waste annually, and it is expected to reach capacity by 2024. Waste management has extra space and has future plans to expand its capacity and lifespan.

Recycling

The county offers curbside recycling services, as well as 13 drop-off recycling centers. Waste prevention and recycling can result in a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emission. According to DHEC's Solid Waste Management Annual Report (FY 2005), Beaufort County recycled 43,590 tons of MSW resulting in an environmental impact equivalent to: eliminating electricity usage by 9,455 households for one year; growing 1,888,615 tree seedlings for 10 years; or conserving 8,389,066 gallons of gasoline.

Bluffton should increase recycling opportunities, especially at public areas such as parks and Town facilities. Public education can help to increase awareness of the importance of recycling and locations of facilities.

Solid Waste and Recycling		
Need: Minimization of the amount of waste sent to landfills to preserve natural resources.		
Goal: Increase public participation in recycling programs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Apply for SC Department of Health and Environmental Control grant funding for recycling, solid waste reduction, education and travel costs, as well as increased public participation.	Engineering, Planning	Medium
2. Continue to promote and encourage residents, businesses, industries and institutions to reduce, reuse and recycle products.	Town Council	On-going

7.5 Public Safety and Emergency Services

Law Enforcement

Bluffton's Police Department strives to improve the quality of life for citizens and visitors by impartially and courteously maintaining order and public safety and preventing and solving crime. The vision of the department is to: "strive for excellence in all we do as a professional, well-trained, and respected police agency." The Bluffton Police Department provides crime prevention and investigation, traffic control, and general law enforcement.

One Police Department program that can aid in Plan goals is a Community Policing program that incorporates a partnership among the department, local government and community members through participation in neighborhood group meetings, civic and business events, and other community programs. Integrating officers into the fabric of the community can reduce neighborhood crime, provide comfort and enhance the quality of life by involving members of the community in safeguarding the Town.

Another Bluffton Police Department initiative is to become accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA).

CALEA's Accreditation Program seeks to improve the delivery of public safety services by:

- maintaining standards developed by public safety practitioners covering a wide range of up-to-date public safety initiatives;
- establishing and administering an accreditation process;
- recognizing professional excellence.

To achieve and maintain accreditation, the Bluffton Police Department will need to satisfy the following criteria developed by the Chief of Police:

- **Increase Personnel:** The Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation recommend a ratio of 2.8 officers per 1,000 citizens. The population estimate in the next five to eight years is between 25,000-35,000 Town residents,

which would require approximately 75-100 sworn officers and potentially 10-20 civilian support personnel. Community policing requires more officers than traditional 911 driven policing but has proven to be much more effective in reducing crime and fear of crime.

- **Training Facilities:** To train officers, classroom environments, physical training environments, and indoor and outdoor shooting ranges will be required.
- **Efficiency of Services:** A full service department is required to meet the needs of the community and to achieve and maintain accreditation. The department will need to serve citizens 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Facilities:** A maintenance facility south of the Broad River is needed to guarantee efficiency of services. Currently, vehicles are taken to the County Maintenance Garage in the northern part of the county for service.
- **Headquarters and Ancillary Facilities:** While a proper headquarters is required, ancillary facilities such as Squad Rooms and Substations will need to be located throughout Town limits.
- **Technologically Advanced IT Systems:** Advanced crime-mapping and crime analysis system advances will be necessary.

Headquarters are located at 39 Persimmon Street in a leased building that is undersized for the number of officers and the mission of the department. In recent years, the department has significantly upgraded its technology and equipment and increased its number of employees. While growing in personnel, the department is experiencing a large increase in the volume of calls for service. In addition, the department is attempting to transition to a community oriented police agency that focuses on crime prevention and customer service. Due to personnel shortages and training needs, the agency is still unable to provide necessary services, such as forensic analysis, drug investigations, and community services. Future growth must account for these functions.

- **Facility Needs:** The following facilities are required to satisfy the previously listed criteria needed to achieve and maintain CALEA national accreditation:
- **Headquarters:** A headquarters building is the 24 hour, seven day a week main facility for the department. The headquarters

facility must be large enough to accommodate officers and functions including room for a number of specialty areas.

- **Squad Rooms:** A squad room, although not a 24-hour facility, is a staging area and meeting room for a patrol group or unit. Squad rooms would be located throughout the Town and would be the reporting place for some Bluffton Police Officers. Squad rooms should be geographically located based on call volume and population trends.
- **Substations:** In addition to a main facility and squad rooms, the department should attempt to secure several small substations in select areas throughout the Town. A sub-station is simply a place for officers to stop and perhaps prepare a report or use the restroom during a work day. A sub-station does not house a patrol or specialty unit on a regular basis. A sub-station is typically co-located with another facility. Similar to squad rooms, substations should be geographically located based on call volume and population trends.

Fire Protection

The Bluffton Township Fire District, created by Beaufort County Council in 1978, provides fire protection to the Town as well as 280 square miles of southern Beaufort County. The Fire District presently has six fire stations located throughout its boundaries, staffed with around-the-clock career firefighters Fire protection equipment includes two aerial trucks, 10 front-line triple combination pumpers, and five support vehicles.

Bluffton has a Class 5/9 fire rating (5 in watered areas and 9 in non-watered areas), according to the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). A lower rating means better overall service. This rating number is subject to change soon; the Fire District is receiving its 10 year ISO inspection in January 2007. The ISO rates fire districts for their ability to provide fire protection services. ISO ratings are then used to establish fire insurance rates for given areas. The rating criteria include distance between structures and fire stations, composition of structures, and numbers and types of fire fighting equipment, training and personnel.

As Bluffton grows, the need for additional fire protection will increase and it should ensure the Bluffton Township Fire District is included in planning and annexation discussions to allow the District to plan in

advance for adequate growth. To maintain efficient service, the Fire District is working with Bluffton to identify potential sites for future fire stations.

Co-location

Co-location of resources is a concept that should be explored for Town and County Law Enforcement and Fire Districts. Training areas and maintenance garages can be jointly used to save money and increase cooperation and coordination.

Emergency Medical Services

Three of eight EMS stations throughout the County (stations 6, 8 and 9) are located within the same facilities as the Bluffton Fire District. Each station has a minimum of two emergency medical technicians and a minimum of one paramedic with South Carolina Advanced Paramedic Certification. All stations are equipped to provide advanced life support services.

Health Facilities

Three hospitals serve the Bluffton area: Beaufort Memorial Hospital, Coastal Carolina Medical Center and Hilton Head Regional Medical Center. Each offers a full range of medical services. Additional medical services are available at three hospitals and medical centers in Savannah. The concentration of retirees in southern Beaufort County has resulted in a growth in medical services and facilities. The location of additional medical care providers Bluffton would be a benefit to the residents and should be encouraged.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) provides health services to citizens throughout state. DHEC works with individuals, families, other agencies, institutions and health care providers to promote and protect the health of the public and environment in South Carolina. Services and programs are designed to keep South Carolina residents safe from disease or physical harm wherever they live, eat, seek healthcare, work, or play. DHEC operates public health facilities in Beaufort County. The Bluffton Public Health Center is located at 4819 Bluffton Parkway.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation and Preparation

Pre-disaster mitigation planning is preparation to lessen the effects of natural hazards or terrorism. Pre-disaster mitigation project development should be carried out to ensure critical facilities are functional within 72 hours of a major natural disaster or other event (South Carolina Emergency Management Division). Further involvement with Beaufort County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning Process is recommended. Identifying and protecting the Town Hall, Police Station, and the three Bluffton Fire/EMS District Stations critical facilities within Bluffton is essential.

The County is preparing an update to the 2003 Hazard Mitigation Plan. Involvement in this process is essential to remain eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant funding.

Pre-hurricane preparation will also involve coordination with the County's Emergency Operations Center and OPCON (Operational Conditions) preparations. Further coordination is needed to finalize pre-hurricane preparation with Beaufort County.

Post-Disaster Operations and Recovery

Hurricanes, tropical storms and other hazardous events produce a potentially significant threat to Bluffton and require planning to protect the health, safety and welfare of Town employees and residents. As a result Bluffton is developing an Emergency Operations Plan with the goal to implement a sound and coordinated plan that encompasses actions before, during and after a natural or man-made disaster. The plan will help to ensure Bluffton is operational as quickly as possible following a disaster. Post-disaster operations and recovery requires close contact and coordination with Beaufort County officials.

Public Safety and Emergency Services		
Need: Reliable public safety and emergency services. Access to sufficient equipment, training and facilities.		
Goal: Obtain CALEA Accreditation of the Bluffton Police Department.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish a new Police Department Headquarters.	Police Department	Medium
2. Identify and assess potential locations for Squad Rooms. Establish Squad Rooms at strategic locations.	Police Department, Planning	Short
3. Identify and assess potential locations for Substations. Establish Substations at strategic locations.	Police Department, Planning	Short
Goal: Proper placement of fire & EMS facilities.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Cooperation and coordination to identify and assess potential locations for fire stations.	Planning, Bluffton Township Fire District	Short
2. Partnership and use of GIS to locate fire stations based on response time and distance.	Planning, Bluffton Township Fire District, Beaufort County GIS	Short
3. Finalize and secure deeded land within the Jones Tract for fire and EMS facilities.	Town of Bluffton, Bluffton Township Fire District	Short
Goal: Support and encourage the joint planning, siting, development and use of public facilities and services with other governmental or community organizations in areas of mutual concern and benefit in order to maximize efficiency and reduce costs.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate between the Bluffton Police Department, Beaufort County Sheriff's Office and the Bluffton Township Fire District to assess the co-location of facilities (classrooms, outdoor training facilities, firing ranges, maintenance garages).	Police Department, Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, Bluffton Township Fire District	Short

Public Safety and Emergency Services		
Need: Adequate health care facilities to serve Bluffton's increasing population.		
Goal: Promote and support continued expansion of health care facilities within the Town.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Encourage the health care providers and facilities to locate in southern Beaufort County.	Administration	On-going
2. Increase community health care education	Administration	On-going
Need: Preparation for natural and man-made hazards and preparation for recovery.		
Goal: Prepare for hazards and plan for post event operations.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Continue involvement and support for the Beaufort County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.	Planning, Administration, Beaufort County.	On-going
2. Increase communication with the South Carolina Emergency Management Division concerning Pre-Disaster Mitigation planning.	Planning, SCEMD.	Medium
3. Prepare by planning for recovery. Finalize Bluffton Post-Disaster Recovery Operations Plan and continue coordination with Beaufort County.	Planning, Administration, Beaufort County.	On-going
4. Identify top priority critical facilities and their structural shortfalls in natural hazard resistance. Apply for SCEMD Pre-Disaster Mitigation funding to strengthen top priority structures.	Planning, Administration, Beaufort County.	Medium
5. Ensure that all potential hazard mitigation projects are documented in the Beaufort County Hazard Mitigation Plan in order for FEMA grant funding project eligibility.	Planning, Administration, Beaufort County.	Medium

7.6 Educational Facilities and Libraries

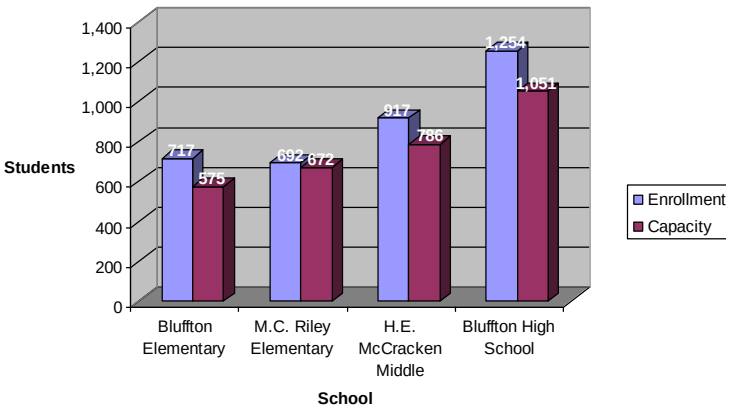
Schools

The presence of a strong school system in or near a town contributes to the Town's quality of life. Four schools are located within the Town of Bluffton: Bluffton Elementary School, M.C. Riley Elementary School, H.E. McCracken Middle School and Bluffton High School. While new schools have been built, population increases have already resulted in an overcrowded school system. As seen in the Population Chapter, the increase of school-aged children has increased significantly in recent years, resulting in student enrollment exceeding school capacity. Figure 7.2 shows enrollment versus capacity in the 2004-2005 school year.

Additional schools and expansions to existing facilities are needed. According to the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan, the following options are preferred:

- Five new elementary schools (500 students each)
- Two new middle schools (750 students each)
- Additions to McCracken and Hilton Head Middle Schools (300 students each)
- One new high school (1,200 students)
- Complete third floor build-out of Bluffton High School (450 students)

Figure 7.2
School Enrollment vs. Capacity



Source: Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan

The Five Year Plan for New Schools Construction for Southern Beaufort County was completed for the Beaufort County Board of Education in the spring of 2006. This study addresses facility needs discussed in the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan and recommends beginning a two-stage construction program within the next five years. The study objective was threefold:

- Identify appropriate locations for a new elementary and a new middle school.
- Project the five-year construction needs for schools.
- Develop an implementation plan for the recommended construction, including construction stages, school zoning transitions, and related organizational matters.

Phase one of the program is the construction of one new elementary school and one new middle school. Both of these projects are to be funded by a bond issue that was authorized in a referendum in May, 2006. Both schools are recommended to be in close proximity to the Buck Island/Simmonsville area. The report also states that exact sites could possibly be identified through a "co-venture with land developers or with the Town or County for some mutual benefits in site acquisition, provided that the sites meet the present and long range needs peculiar to public schools." Sites have been identified near the Buck Island/Hyon Road area, as well as in Bluffton Park.

Phase two of the program proposes the construction of two additional elementary schools funded by a future bond referendum. The report recommends one elementary school located on the Jones Tract near the intersection of SC 46 and SC 170 (note: as a result of the Jones Tract Development Agreement negotiated by Bluffton, the School Board owns 25 acres of land near this intersection) and another elementary school south of US 278, east of SC 170, west of the Buckwalter Parkway, and north of the planned Bluffton Parkway extension.

Numerous opportunities exist in which Bluffton can provide assistance during school siting. Town Staff expertise is essential in issues concerning traffic, access and permitted uses, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Most importantly, communication between parties (Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, Beaufort County Parks and Leisure Services, Bluffton Fire District) is essential to "co-locate" important community facilities (e.g., public parks, fire stations) on a fast decreasing amount of buildable space.

Library

A new County Library was built in Bluffton in 2002, located within Bluffton Village, off of SC 46 (Bluffton Road). This new addition to the Town benefits the residents of Bluffton and Southern Beaufort County. However, the Beaufort County Library Master Facilities Plan states that 4,518 additional square feet of space is needed by 2020 to add to the present 25,000 square feet of library space at the Downtown Bluffton Library. The cost for this addition will be approximately $1 million. Two new 29,518 square-foot libraries are needed in Okatie and Pritchardville by 2020 and will cost approximately $8 million each. The future additions and new construction of library facilities will help to achieve the State Library per capita minimal base.

Town representatives have been involved in pinpointing the Pritchardville-area library location. Discussions have already occurred regarding the possibility of locating within the Jones Tract. The Planning and Growth Management Department will continue to assist in this process and stay involved in determining the exact placement of the Okatie-area library facility as well

Cultural Facilities

Bluffton's cultural identity will be fostered and expanded by recognizing and enhancing the community's cultural facilities. As its population continues to grow, additional meeting, exhibit, and performance space may be needed to accommodate cultural events. Therefore, Bluffton should explore various funding sources to support the arts, to assist in satisfying future cultural needs, as well as to assess the need to improve existing facilities. Please refer to Chapter 3 for a full description of Bluffton's cultural facilities.

Educational Facilities and Libraries		
Need: Adequate facilities and services for the increasing amount of school-aged children, as well as others seeking educational resources.		
Goal: Maintain involvement with planning and locating school and library facilities.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate with School District Planners during the planning and site-location of future school facilities within the Town limits and southern Beaufort County.	Planning, Beaufort County School District	Short
2. Provide the School District with updated demographic information and projections.	Planning, Beaufort County School District	On-going
3. Coordinate with the School District to annually monitor enrollment and to develop enrollment projections.	Planning, Beaufort County School District	On-going
4. Incorporate education planning, including projected enrollments and infrastructure needs in all local growth management programs.	Planning, Beaufort County School District	On-going
5. Coordinate with Beaufort County Libraries during the planning and site-locating of library facilities identified in the Libraries Master Plan.	Planning, Beaufort County Libraries, Beaufort County Planning.	Short
6. Promote the clustering of schools, libraries, parks and residential areas. Ensure a walkability between facilities and neighborhoods.	Planning, Beaufort County Libraries, Beaufort County Planning, School District, PALS.	On-going
Goal: Support local schools and students.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Support early education programs by organizing promotional campaigns concerning programs available for preschool age children.	Administration	On-going
2. Encourage educational activity in the Town and recognize student achievements.	Administration	On-going

7.7 Parks and Recreation

Bluffton and Southern Beaufort County's active and passive parks and recreation facilities are an important component of the region's quality of life. They are also an important component of the region's economy. Natural amenities such as coastal waters, salt marshes, beaches, trees and local wildlife are an integral component of the region's attractiveness to both tourists and newcomers. Parks and recreation facilities are an important means of making these natural amenities accessible to both residents and tourists.

Parks and Leisure Services

Beaufort County Parks and Leisure Services (PALS), a division of county government, is responsible for park planning and the operation of the county's recreation programs. Park maintenance is the responsibility of the Beaufort County Public Works Department. The PALS Board, which has countywide representation, is appointed by and acts as an advisory body to County Council. Bluffton coordinates with Beaufort County for the maintenance of its parks. PALS also runs countywide recreation programs including soccer, baseball, and summer camp programs. Bluffton provides parks planning assistance, but primarily relies on Beaufort County for the construction and maintenance of park facilities. It is anticipated that as Bluffton grows, it will play a greater role in parks and recreation, similar to Hilton Head Island.

Because PALS is the major provider of recreational activity in Bluffton, the Town should cement its relationship with PALS staff and coordinate plans for future parks and recreation facilities, maintenance of existing parks, and publicizing recreation programs. This will reduce the potential for duplication of effort and better provide the types of facilities and activities most desired by residents. The Town should also support regional programs for recreation, such as the Bluffton area greenways project. Communication and coordination has commenced, as discussion has begun between the County Planning Department, PALS and Bluffton concerning the Oyster Factory Park.

Inventory and Needs

Southern Beaufort County has a total of 3,786.4 acres of parks and recreational facilities; Bluffton has 769.4 acres of parks and recreational

facilities. According to the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan (SBCRP), 940 acres of park land are needed to accommodate southern Beaufort County's build out population of 134,842. The participating local governments (Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, and Beaufort County) currently own approximately 431 undeveloped acres of land that can be used for future parks. This figure leaves southern Beaufort County with a shortfall of approximately 509 acres, estimated to cost $17,822,000. According to the plan, the future park land need is entirely within the Greater Bluffton Area. While the SBCRP has identified needed acreage of park land, it is essential for Bluffton to keep lines of communication open to PALS and Beaufort County. It will be the responsibility of Bluffton to coordinate the placement and location of park land.

Water Access

Bluffton was created as a summer community on the bluffs overlooking the May River and the River has always played an important part in the lives of the residents. Many of Bluffton's homes are located along the rivers and have water views and access. When Beaufort County was largely rural, there were many informal places that served as boat landings, picnic spots, and swimming areas. As southern Beaufort County became more developed, these informal water access areas have disappeared, placing greater importance on the public sector to provide boat landings, beach access, and other public facilities. There is a need for additional public access to the water. To address this need, Bluffton will need to assess the feasibility of water access within its current and future jurisdiction.

Beaufort County owns and maintains seven boat landings in Southern Beaufort County. An additional boat landing is under construction on the south side of Broad Creek on Hilton Head Island under the Cross Island Parkway. In addition to Beaufort County's landings, another public boat launch is available at the Oyster Factory in Bluffton. Several of the boat landings are currently over capacity, especially on holiday weekends and during shrimp baiting season. Within Bluffton, there is also a public dock located at the end of Calhoun Street. Water access is also available at Palmetto Bluff. Bluffton may consider

improvements to its facilities, such as benches, trash receptacles and additional parking.

Historically, "skids," or small bridges, also allowed for additional water access to the coves in the Old Town. The 1913 Survey Map of Bluffton shows a crossing over Heyward Cove, which was an extension of Water Street. Bluffton should consider re-opening the original water access by rebuilding pre-existing crossings to satisfy the need for additional water access.

Private Developments with Public Water Access

Several private developments in southern Beaufort County offer opportunities for the public to enjoy views of the water. Palmetto Bluff Village is an example of a private development offering public access to the waterfront. Bluffton may assess the provision of incentives to encourage private developers to construct pathways along the waterfront for public access and enjoyment.

Parks and Recreation		
Need: Adequate parks, public recreation facilities and water access to meet the needs of an increasing population.		
Goal: Determine locations of facilities to meet level of service requirements of the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate with PALS to locate parks and recreation facilities to meet level of service needs.	Planning, PALS, Beaufort County Planning, Engineering	Short
2. Develop a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan assessing present facilities and land as well as future needs.	Planning, PALS, Beaufort County Planning, Engineering	Medium
3. Maximize existing opportunities for public water access with attention to specific water access needs, such as beach access, boat landings, and fishing piers.	Planning, PALS, Beaufort County Planning, Engineering	Medium
4. Coordinate County park design to ensure compatibility with the Town's land use regulations and compatibility with the Town's character.	Planning, PALS, Beaufort County Planning, Engineering	On-going
5. Identify and access river access points and investigate potential boat launches, beaches and preserved scenic areas.	Planning, PALS, Beaufort County Planning, Engineering	Medium
6. Develop incentives for future water-front developers to provide public water access.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering	Short
7. Consider opening the historical water access points in the Old Town.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering	Medium
8. Coordinate collaborative efforts with area organizations to leverage the Town's capital assets.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering, PALS	Short

Land Use 8

Bluffton's existing development patterns and its vision for future land use are described in this chapter. The future land use plan is an important tool used to assist government officials, developers, property and business owners and citizens in making key decisions about the proper use of land. It will also help guide development and will serve as a foundation on which amendments to the zoning ordinance and map must be based. It will further help determine appropriate zoning designations for future annexed areas, new districts, development standards and other implementation tools.

Vision

We will plan for a balance of land uses that ensure a high quality of life, business opportunity, environmentally protected areas and proper placement of residential uses.

History

Bluffton began as a summer retreat for local plantation owners and, therefore, it was not laid out in a traditional manner with a courthouse square and a formally delineated downtown. Residences were established along the May River and its three deep coves: the

Verdier, Huger and Heyward. Commercial activity grew along Calhoun Street and industry was located at the water's edge on Calhoun and Wharf Streets in the form of oyster and shellfish harvesting operations. While land use patterns have changed over time, some commercial activity is still located on Calhoun Street and one shellfishing establishment remains on Wharf Street.

Water features can geographically define a community's growth boundaries and can also result in environmental constraints that affect land uses. The Bluffton area is generally framed by the Colleton River to the North, the New River to the South and West and the Intercoastal Waterway to the East. The May River actually divides Bluffton into two parts. Much has changed since Bluffton's original settlement and a significant amount of that change has occurred in recent years. Since adopting the original Comprehensive Plan in May of 1999, Bluffton has annexed over 19 square miles. These major annexations have expanded its geography and have resulted in major population increases (see Chapter 2)

Recent Observations

In recent years, intense development has altered the landscape of southern Beaufort County and Bluffton and has shaped the following land use patterns and development trends:

1. Large, amenity-based, low-density master planned communities dominate the developed landscape of southern Beaufort County. This phenomenon has been possible because large historic plantations and lands consolidated by timber companies have been sold for development.

2. These communities have been primarily planned by the private sector with great care given to internal road networks, the delivery of services, and private covenants that ensure quality development standards.

3. Planned unit development (PUD) has been the preferred zoning tool because it provides greater flexibility in site design.

4. Outside master planned communities, local government has been challenged with providing roads, infrastructure, and land use

regulations that will result in connecting these areas with the rest of Bluffton.

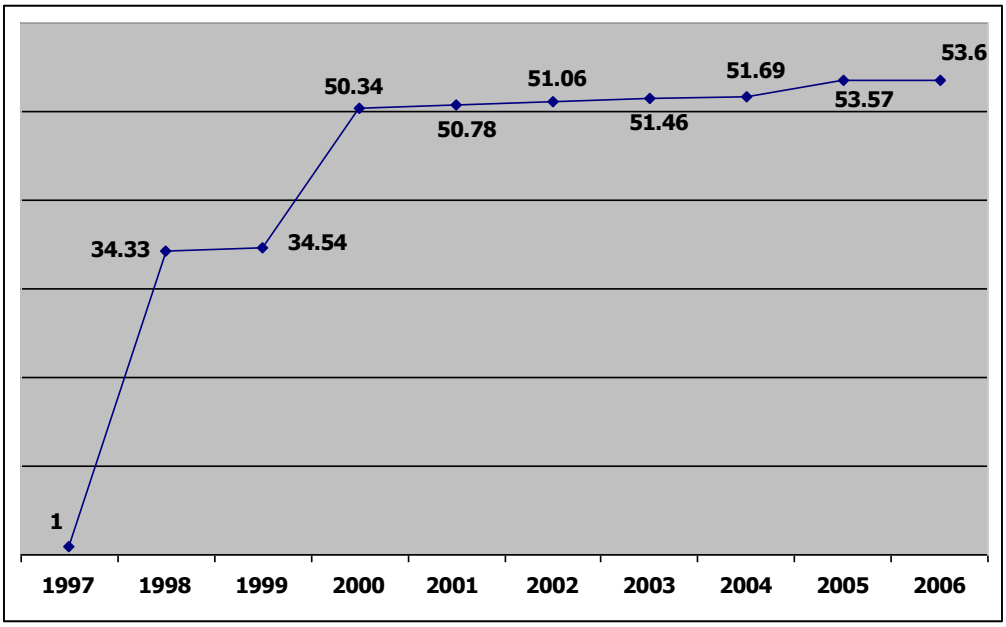
5. Many of the region's current transportation problems result from poor road connections between master planned communities and insufficient land for an adequate community-wide road network.

6. Development is spreading west. Modern development began on Hilton Head Island, spread to the greater Bluffton Area (Bluffton and unincorporated county lands in the region), and is now moving toward Jasper County and the City of Hardeeville.

8.1 Town Limits and Annexation

Beaufort County is 579 square miles in area and Bluffton accounts for 9.3%, or approximately 53.6 square miles. In 1990, Bluffton was just one square mile and was characterized by very low density development. Conditions have changed since then, and Bluffton has annexed over 50 square miles. The result in 2007 is a 53.6 square mile community with, approximately 90% zoned PUD. A complete list of annexed lands can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 8.1
Town of Bluffton Annexations 1997-2006



Source: Town of Bluffton

Bluffton has been targeted by numerous annexation requests, from large and small landowners, as well as existing subdivisions. While there is a history of large-tract annexation, much less advertised are annexations of a number of smaller tracts. Since many area residents consider themselves part of Bluffton they wish to annex as town limits continue to expand. Creating a planned and scheduled program to annex small, developed properties will allow Bluffton to define a more cohesive and less fragmented boundary that should result in the delivery of more cost-effective community services. However, any annexation requests should be guided by the Future Land Use Map, fiscal implications should be assessed and appropriate zoning designations determined. As a condition of annexation, property owners must also be willing comply with Bluffton's land use ordinances.

For larger annexed tracts, PUD may be the most suitable zoning designation since it allows flexibility yet ensures that Bluffton will get the type of land development it desires. There must also be a physical and, as much as possible, a design correlation between existing and new development including walkway connections that promote alternate means of transportation such as walking and biking between developments. Accommodating these connections as part of the development review and approval process will make it easier to integrate large parcels into a regional trail system that connects destinations such as neighborhoods, schools, parks and recreation facilities. Annexed tracts should also incorporate a desired community character into their design to ensure a "Bluffton look" for new development.

Future Annexation Area

Based on its history and its willingness to entertain further annexation requests, it is reasonable to assume that Bluffton's boundaries will continue to expand. A guiding principle for continued annexation should be the continuity of Bluffton's boundaries and its geographic limits. If petitioned, it is also logical for Bluffton to annex unincorporated areas along the SC 46 corridor and other "donut" holes within its borders.

Bluffton gained commercial land north of US 278 after the Buck Island/Simmonsville annexation. It is recommended that land north of US 278 for non-residential uses only be annexed into Bluffton so that the corridor becomes part of the community in accordance with Map 8.1 Future Annexation Area. This area is already perceived to be part of Bluffton and it is in the community's best interests to have jurisdiction over non-residential corridor land use and aesthetics.

Recommended annexation boundaries are Jasper County and the eastern Sun City border to the west, the New River to the south, the Intercoastal Waterway to the east, and the northern boundary be defined as approximately 2,500 feet north of US 278. These borders are logical limits for growth and development (see Map 8.1 Future Annexation Area) given the existing levels of municipal services, particular, from a public safety perspective. .

Town Limits and Annexation		
Need: Sustainable and orderly Town expansion.		
Goal: Achieve orderly growth while developing a more cohesive and less fragmented Town boundary.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Draft a schedule or set of conditions for the future annexation of developed properties close to Bluffton.	Administration, Planning Commission Planning	Short
2. Review annexation policies and future annexation area periodically.	Administration, Planning Commission Planning	On-going
3. Establish future annexation area limits: New River to the South, Jasper County and Sun City to the West, Colleton and Okatie Rivers to the North, and the Intercoastal Waterway to the East.	Administration, Planning Commission Planning	On-going
4. Annex land within the future municipal growth boundary and zone it consistent with the Future Land Use Map.	Administration, Planning Commission Planning	On-going
5. Ensure interconnected streets, trails and open spaces throughout and within large scale annexations and planning tracts.	Planning Commission, Planning	On-going

8.2 Land Use

Existing Land Use

Bluffton's 2007 inventory of existing land uses is based on a "windshield survey" and it shows locations, amounts and types of land uses in the community. The land use categories for both the existing and future land use maps are general in nature so that analysis can be made simpler. However, they do still provide an overall development picture that is useful for general planning purposes. While an existing land use inventory has been conducted for Bluffton, as depicted on Map 8.2 Existing Land Use, it is important to develop one in close coordination with the County for southern Beaufort County. Both jurisdictions should merge GIS databases so that a single, shared regional inventory is available that can benefit decision making especially during regional planning efforts and future land use planning. The following land use categories apply:

Residential: *Land area used for residential structures with a single, self sufficient dwelling unit that is not attached to any other dwelling unit, residential structures which contain two or more attached dwelling units, mobile home parks and subdivisions developed for manufactured homes.*

Residential land uses are the predominant uses throughout the Old Town, Goethe Road, PUDs and the BIS annexation areas. Residential uses are primarily single-family attached homes, with mobile homes dispersed throughout.

Mixed Use: *The development of a tract of land, building, or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to, residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment, in a compact urban form*.

Very few mixed uses exist in Bluffton and only two structures in Old Town accommodate residents and small businesses. However, the Calhoun Street Promenade is close to completion and will include a mix of residential and commercial use. Mixed uses help promote pedestrian oriented neighborhoods and reduce reliance on the automobile.

Commercial: *Activity involving the sale of goods or services carried out for profit; land area used to conduct business, trade, administrative and professional activities and services.*

From Bluffton Commons to Sheridan Park, US 278 serves as the community's primary commercial corridor. However, less intense commercial uses are scattered throughout uncommitted lands. Within Old Town, commercial uses are located along May River/Bruin Roads, SC 46, and the Calhoun and Boundary Street corridors. These areas serve the area's need for goods and services and they also provide employment opportunities for residents.

Light Industrial: *Any parcel of land containing an industrial use that involves construction, manufacturing, production, wholesale trade, and storage.*

Industrial uses are scattered throughout uncommitted lands, but are generally concentrated in the southern BIS area. The Bluffton Oyster Company, also an industrial use, is located on the south end of Wharf Street in Old Town and still remains in operation. Industrial uses provide employment opportunities for Bluffton's residents and unobtrusive, clean industrial uses are encouraged in appropriate areas as long as they are compatible with the character of surrounding uses and they meet the community's vision.

Civic/Institutional: *A non-profit, religious, or public use, such as a church, library, public or private school, hospital, or government owned or operated building, structure, or land used for a public purpose. Any activities that provide for the social, cultural, educational, health or physical betterment of the community. Any parcels that contain roads and rights-of-way, railways, utility easements, parking areas, airports, and marine craft transportation*

Institutional uses such as schools, health centers, churches and government facilities are located throughout uncommitted lands and several churches are clustered on the east side of Old Town. Transportation, communications and utilities are located throughout Bluffton and are essential for mobility and reliable service.

Recreation/Open Space: *A tract of land, designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation.*

There are two active parks in the survey area; however, there are several undocumented public rights-of-way, pocket parks, docks and scenic overlooks.

Conservation/ Preservation: *Areas in which human activities are very limited and where the natural environment is protected from man-made changes. Land area protected to preserve and enhance environmental resources while allowing few, if any, structures.*

There are many areas considered Conservation/ Preservation, many as part of PUDs or naturally sensitive lands along the coast line. A significant amount of land within Palmetto Bluff has been dedicated as Conservation/ Preservation in addition to the Victoria Bluff Nature Preserve located northeast of Bluffton's municipal limits.

Vacant or Undeveloped: *Unoccupied and undeveloped land*.

There are a number of vacant lots and undeveloped areas which allow for infill opportunities.

Planned Unit Development: *A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a district that encourages flexibility in land planning with a goal of improved design, character, environmental preservation and quality of new homogenous and mixed use developments.*

PUDs are "committed" lands with future land uses already determined at a conceptual level.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Maps, Map 8.3 and 8.4, and the Growth Framework Map, Map 8.5 guide development in Bluffton and southern Beaufort County. They were prepared through public and staff-level workshops, regional planning efforts, and also from Planning Commission and Town Council input. The maps will assist Bluffton when determining the proper use of land and will serve as a basis for zoning code and map amendments and zoning designations for future annexation areas. The Future Land Use Maps include areas outside of Bluffton's municipal limits to help guide development within current or

future Town boundaries.
Future land use categories were developed during staff meetings, a public Town Council and Planning Commission workshop and also through input from Beaufort County staff. Future land use categories are essential to define and develop a plan and to order the placement of uses. To allow a more precise guide for development and redevelopment the following future land uses have been developed:

Low Density Residential

Description: Low density residential land uses are used to maintain existing rural character and decrease environmental and traffic impacts. This designation is a rural-residential land use that also includes estates and family compounds. Category densities are based on current densities which range from one unit per three acres to one unit per acre under existing County zoning. Densities at the higher end of the scale should be considered only if a developer provides substantial amenities and holds the project to design standards above and beyond current zoning district regulations. Lower densities outside of the proposed range are encouraged and would be recognized as voluntary conservation-oriented actions. Examples include the following:

- Applying cluster principles to protect and preserve water resources, environmentally sensitive areas, continuous open space, habitat, viewsheds, and rural character.
- Increasingly preserving or enhancing natural resources such as significant trees stands, and employing site reforestation or afforestation techniques.
- Incorporating unique design features and techniques that promote and encourage energy conservation and sustainable development, such as green buildings, innovative stormwater management such as permeable pavement, and low impact design.
- Committing to use energy saving methods and applying LEED principles to projects.
- Providing interconnected open space and trail systems, both on and off-road, that link with key destinations in Bluffton.
- Improving public roads and infrastructure to mitigate anticipated impacts, or paying fees in lieu of actual improvements.

- Providing sites to accommodate or financially contributing to support schools, public safety, local government, parks and recreation, and other community services and facilities.
- Contributing to support community wide efforts for public art, or accommodating it on-site.
- Applying the vernacular of low-country architecture with its symmetry and deep porches.
- Preserving rural and/or corridor character using techniques such as increased buffers, farmland preservation, and saving existing farm buildings and features and incorporating them into the design of a development.

Location: Low density residential land uses are proposed for properties along SC 46, Malphrus Road, and various lands between US 278 and the Colleton River.

Medium Density Residential

Description: This category consists of single family homes, with accessory multiple family units and densities can range from one to three units per acre. However, densities within Old Town may vary based on the Old Town District Code. Multi-family uses could be allowed as long as overall density is not exceeded.

Location: Medium density residential uses are the most predominant in Bluffton, and are proposed for properties to the south and east of Kent Estates and to the north of the SC 170 and Bluffton Parkway intersection, east end of US 278, along and between Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads, both sides of Goethe Road, south of Bluffton Parkway, west of Malphrus Road, the Alljoy area, and various lands between US 278 and the Colleton River.

High Density Residential

Description: High density residential includes both single family homes and multi-family structures such as townhouses, attached condominiums, apartments,

loft complexes, and senior housing. Densities exceeding three units per acre should be considered only if a developer provides substantial amenities above and beyond what is required in relation to the scale of the project. Examples include the following:

- Including affordable and/or workforce housing, at mixed price ranges that are distributed throughout a development.
- Integrating mixed land uses, including non-residential ones that provide neighborhood services and/or employment opportunities.
- Providing a blend of architecture styles with an overall character that is integrated and compatible with the entire community.
- Increasingly preserving or enhancing natural resources such as significant trees stands, and employing site reforestation or afforestation techniques.
- Incorporating unique design features and techniques that promote and encourage energy conservation and sustainable development, such as green buildings, innovative stormwater management such as permeable pavement, and low impact design.
- Committing to use energy saving methods and applying LEED principles to projects.
- Providing interconnected open space and trail systems, both on and off-road, that link with key destinations in Bluffton.
- Improving public roads and infrastructure to mitigate anticipated impacts, or paying fees in lieu of actual improvements.
- Providing sites to accommodate or financially contributing to support schools, public safety, local government, parks and recreation, and other community services and facilities.
- Contributing to support community wide efforts for public art, or accommodating it on-site.

Location: Careful consideration should be given to the impact of high densities to the area as it pertains to traffic and impacts to existing residents and landholders.

Low Intensity Commercial

Description: Low intensity commercial includes small scale retail establishments, services and businesses that have a rural-character and that typically serve the immediate neighborhoods within a one to two mile radius. These could include farmer's markets, bed and breakfast inns, home based businesses, and very limited retail and commercial uses that preserve and enhance the current character of an area. Low density residential uses would also be permitted. In general, uses in the Low Intensity Commercial designation should be consistent with the following:

- Be local in nature to help support the local economy rather than be a national or franchised business.
- Not generate extensive peak hour traffic.
- Sites should be significantly landscaped and include increased buffers along road frontages to reflect natural and rural views.
- Lighting should be minimized and shielded to reduce light pollution and impacts to the night sky.
- Signs, architecture and site features such as fences, should be compatible with the rural character of an area and reflect a rural or agricultural vernacular.
- Parking lots should be gravel rather than paved and should be screened from roadside views.
- The number of allowed parking spaces should be minimal to avoid a commercial appearance.
- Operations and activities such as loading and unloading should be limited after dark.

Location: Rural-natured business uses are proposed for the Gibbet Road and SC 46 intersection, as well as at existing commercial near the intersection of Sandy Run Road and SC 46.

Medium Intensity Commercial

Description: Medium intensity commercial uses including village commercial scale uses include: moderate scale, auto-oriented, grocery stores; moderate scale gas stations; restaurants; services; light, unobtrusive, small scale manufacturing and assembly; and general retail. These uses should be integrated into surrounding residential development to serve residents of nearby neighborhoods, generally within two to five miles. Medium intensity commercial uses also include medium density residential uses.

Location: Medium Intensity Commercial is proposed for land north of Island West, east and west sides of Bluffton Road, for the area east of Goethe Road, north of the Bluffton Parkway and the south end of the BIS area. However, commercial uses in the BIS area should be less intense than commercial uses allowed on the US 278 corridor.

High Intensity Commercial

Description: High intensity commercial is a regional commercial land use which allows intense commercial activity, services, light industrial, and some accessory high density residential. Uses include large scale shopping centers, home improvement centers, one-stop shopping centers and businesses, accessory commercial that serve shoppers such as restaurants, hotels/motels, and gas stations to address the needs of Bluffton, neighboring areas, and for those who pass through Bluffton. The high intensity commercial designation provides for commercial development, employment opportunity and economic diversification.

Location: Primarily along the US 278 corridor, the US 278 & SC 170 intersection, and on the north end of the BIS annexation.

Civic/ Institutional

Description: A non-profit, religious, or public use, such as a church, library, public or private school, hospital, or government owned or operated building, structure, or land used for public purpose. Activities provide for the social, cultural, educational, heath or physical betterment of the community. Any parcel of land that contains roads and rights-of-way, railways, utility easements, parking areas, airports, and marine craft transportation. Any proposed change in use for a civic/institutional use must be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine its appropriate reuse to be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Location: Civic/Institutional uses are proposed at all existing institutional facilities, for the land north of US 278, across from Willow Run, and at the proposed SCE&G substation located in the Pritchardville area.

Mixed Use

Description: The development of a tract of land, building, or structure with a variety of complementary and integrated uses, such as, but not limited to: residential; offices; light, unobtrusive, and small scale manufacturing and assembly; retail; public use or facilities; or entertainment, in a compact urban form. This category can include medium intensity commercial and variety residential uses. Lands designated Mixed Use are intended to be used for a variety of compatible uses to accommodate a mix of business and residential uses in a way that provides easy access to both vehicles and pedestrians and which can serve as an "activity node." Mixed Uses can reduce the overall number of vehicle trips by providing the opportunity for live-work arrangements and convenient walking access from higher density residential, senior and group housing developments.

Location: Mixed Uses are proposed in Old Town as described in the Form Based Code, north of Old Town to the south end of the BIS area, the east and west sides of Burnt Church Road. And the east side of Goethe Road, north of the Bluffton Parkway.

Recreation/ Open Space

Description: A tract of land, designated and used by the public for active and passive recreation such as sports fields, playgrounds, docks, boat landings and open space areas. A mixture of passive and active recreation is encouraged.

Location: Recreation /Open Space uses are scattered throughout Bluffton to best serve residents.

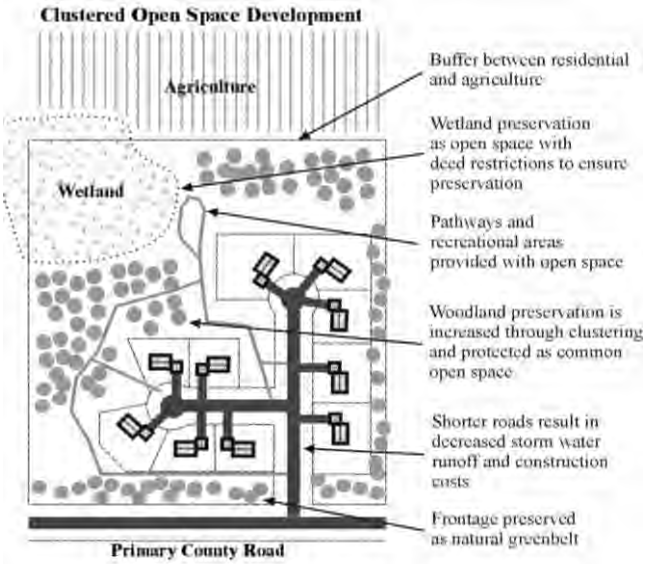
Conservation/ Preservation

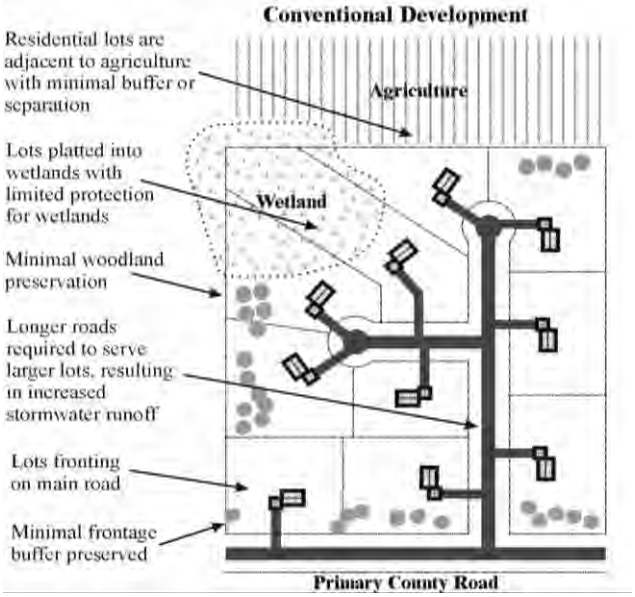
Description: Areas in which human activities are very limited and where the natural environment is protected from man-made changes. Land area protected to preserve and enhance environmental resources while allowing few, if any, structures.

Location: Preserved areas are located throughout Bluffton as indicated on the Future Land Use Map. Existing preserves include lands adjacent to US 278, on the north side, in many of the approved PUD's such as Palmetto Bluff, as well as at the Okatie River headwaters.

Planning

Cluster Development: One approach to preserve natural features and rural character that is desired in some parts of Bluffton, is to concentrate less on restricting property development and work instead on the efficient use of land. Cluster development allows this as it permits rural character, natural features and other desirable site attributes to remain, even as other parts of the property are developed.





While clustering concentrates development in a limited area of a site, it does not increase the overall, or "gross density". The gross density must conform to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. In most zoning ordinances a conventional plan meeting all zoning and other ordinance requirements must first be prepared to demonstrate the number of allowed homes or dwelling units. This establishes the base line of units which may then be clustered. Again, clustering does not increase the number of allowed units rather it controls and limits the amount of land disturbed by grading, tree removal, structures, streets, and drives. This concept can apply to all residential areas because of its ability to preserve rural character, natural systems, and continuous open space.

Neighborhood Planning: While the Future Land Use Map addresses the use of uncommitted land, more detailed neighborhood plans should be prepared for the BIS and Goethe Road areas. An assessment of these neighborhoods and community visioning and planning are needed to develop master plans for these two remaining unplanned areas within Bluffton. While the Future Land Use Map can serve as a basis for planning, an in-depth study of development and redevelopment

must be completed with participation by area residents.

Corridor Character Planning: Bluffton has a distinct set of roadway corridors that are defined by common characteristics. These include the Old Town area with streets that are very residential in character and that carry low traffic volumes, rural corridors such as State Route 46 with its two lane configuration and overarching tree canopy, US 278, parts of which have a distinctive commercial character, the median of Bluffton Parkway, and local roads such as Burnt Church that still carry significant volumes of through traffic. One key Comprehensive Plan strategy is to characterize roadway corridors in Bluffton by type, not by just traffic characteristics, and to develop specific standards for these corridor categories based on surrounding neighborhood or natural character and by land use. This implies that the character of a corridor may change depending on its context and this context is clearly affected by adjacent land uses, natural features, right-of-way constraints and by the character of the area through which a corridor passes.

See also "Corridor Planning" in the Transportation Chapter for a description of corridor planning efforts.

Road width and scale, presence of on-street parking and sidewalks, block length, building setbacks, design speed, street trees and even pavement markings and signs all contribute to how streets function and driver perceptions. Driver perceptions can affect vehicle speed and care used in driving and the character of a roadway corridor, as viewed by a motorist, can also impact the image of a community.

Successful commercial corridors should be free of unsightly clutter and yet be easy to navigate to find destinations. Streets in residential neighborhoods should make one intuitively drive at low speeds. In some cases, road design elements can reinforce a desired image. In other cases, improvements may need to be considered. This section generally describes a wide range of concepts that can be used to help ensure the future transportation system operates safely and efficiently, but also in context with Bluffton's character.

- **Entryways:** Entryway features can be used to announce key community gateways. Key gateways may include expressway interchanges, bridges, or along select major streets at or near Bluffton's corporate limits. Entryway features may also be associated with natural features such as river inlets, the numerous wetlands in and around Bluffton and street tree canopies. Entryway features could also be used in conjunction with major development projects in Bluffton. A key entryway should be explored at the bridge crossing near the interchange of 278 and 170 and could include features such as welcome to Bluffton signs with landscaping or sculptures or other structural elements. The key is to develop a design and use it consistently, though not every element must be used at every entryway. In some cases, an entryway feature could be at the first major intersection along an entrance route.

- **Major Road Corridors:** Travelers along the major roads encounter a diverse mixture of land uses and a range of physical characteristics. The range extends from the tree-lined residential street with sidewalks to commercial areas with a complexity of signs, parking, traffic controls, and many turning movements. Consistent with the approach of linking land use and transportation, the evaluation of the major streets must be made from a corridor-wide perspective. A corridor is defined as not only the road, but also sidewalks, streetscape and the adjacent sites extending from building face to building face. A "zone of influence" that extends beyond those boundaries also affects the corridor, such as nearby major land uses with their primary access to the corridor.

Using a "character" approach, corridors could be classified into categories. While some corridors could be placed in one category others may exhibit varying characteristics and may change category from one segment to another. The categories used to identify a major thoroughfare corridor or segment thereof is particularly important in identifying and programming planned actions to address problems. The following are examples of thoroughfare corridor categories.

- **Residential Conservation Corridors:** Streets which are residential in character, even where there are non-residential uses along the street, such as Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. Generally, these are corridors with land use consistency and relatively low levels of activity/intensity. The streets in this category are of a quality that should be conserved, for what exists should be maintained and enhanced. Improvements to these corridors should complement the adjoining residential area and include landscaping, streetscape and street design amenities that reflect residential neighborhoods. Land use or other changes which would alter the current balance of activity and/or physical characteristics by increasing the intensity of use should be discouraged.

  Residential Conservation Corridors typically should have two travel lanes with a turn lane at major intersections or access points. These streets should have bikeways and at a minimum five foot wide walkways along both sides which may be widened at locations that warrant more activity such as schools or parks. Traffic volumes along certain Residential Conservation Corridors may have experienced increases in traffic to a point where limited roadway improvements are desirable to improve traffic flow and safety. Where some type of widening is justified, a maximum of three lanes should be used.

- **Preservation Corridors:** Streets which pass through areas not yet fully developed, or where the potential for significant redevelopment or conversions from one land use to another exist (such as May River Road). These parcels should be reviewed with an eye toward preventing land use and thoroughfare conflicts by applying zoning and access management standards. Streets in this category have an opportunity to contribute positively to a well coordinated transportation system in a setting consistent with the desired corridor character.

- **Correction Corridors:** Streets that may be bounded primarily by commercial uses or that carry high traffic volumes through yet undeveloped or lightly developed areas, such as US 278. Traffic volumes may be well above the capacity envisioned when the roads and right-of-way were conceived. Many times such

corridors have developed over a period of years under old street, subdivision, and zoning/site plan design standards that did not contemplate today's volume and did not reflect a community's current design philosophy. These corridors are complex, with traffic congestion, intensive activity and/or an incomplete transportation network. These corridors are in need of multiple actions to correct the problems that have resulted from cumulative change over time. Corrective actions for these corridors can include road widening, intersection improvements and installation of medians. Medians increase capacity and typically have significantly fewer crashes than roads with a center turn lane. Attention to road design elements should also be considered with construction projects to improve the corridor appearance such as roundabouts, mast arm traffic signals, street trees, ornamental lighting, an improved environment for pedestrians and bicyclists and attractive public signs.

Corrective actions also include improvements to sites that line the road. These may include access management such as closure or redesign of driveways and connection of uses through service drives, addition of landscaping, replacement of signs and lighting, on-site pedestrian improvements, screening of waste receptacles and loading areas and so forth. Some of these corrective actions will occur gradually over time as land uses change. The zoning ordinance should assure site plans are reviewed when uses change or expand so that upgrades to the site features can be applied.

Corridor Enhancements: Enhancements will often depend on the type of corridor and its location and they may vary even along a particular corridor. They should, however, promote a consistent and defined streetscape. Recommended improvements within a road right-of-way are described below.

- **Street Trees:** A consistent row of street trees should be provided along most road corridors. Where possible, the trees should be located between a sidewalk and the street curb and planted at a rate of one every 25 to 30 feet. Spacing and location will ultimately depend on the type of corridor. Street trees help to frame the roadway and provide a comfortable pedestrian-oriented environment. The defined roadway's assistance in slowing traffic is particularly important along the

local road corridors.

- **Greenspace:** All road cross-sections should accommodate greenspace between the sidewalk and the road where trees, lawn areas and landscaped planting beds can be installed. This space should be a minimum of 10 to 15 feet wide to allow ample foundation for tree planting, for easy maintenance, and to provide for an adequate separation between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

- **Street Lighting:** Consistent street lighting is important for safety and as a decorative element to unify the corridor. Street lighting also enhances pedestrian scale by creating a safer walking environment. Street lighting along the local road corridors can be designed to be at a lower height than lighting found along the key road corridors.

- **Pathways:** Where development exists along a key corridor, a 10-foot wide asphalt pathway should be provided. In other cases, in more residential settings sidewalks at a minimum five feet wide should be provided.

Land Use		
Need: Understanding of current development status and inventory of land uses.		
Goal: Maintain an existing land use inventory.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Partner with Beaufort County to maintain a current joint southern Beaufort County land use inventory.	Planning, Beaufort County Planning	On-going
Need: Understanding of future land uses.		
Goal: Develop a guide for development, redevelopment and future land uses.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Use the Future Land Use Map as a guide to future development in Bluffton. The map should serve as a foundation for zoning map amendments, zoning code revisions, zoning designations for future annexation areas and the creation of future zoning districts.	Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	On-going
2. Undertake a corridor study that designates the character of roadway corridors in Bluffton by type and develop specific corridor standards based on surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent land use.	Planning, Planning Commission, Town Council	Short

		Land Use
3. Develop a future land use map for unincorporated lands in southern Beaufort County in collaboration with surrounding communities and units of government.	Planning, Beaufort County Planning, Hilton Head Planning, Hardeeville Planning, Jasper County Planning, SBCRP Land Use Working Group	Short
Need: Development and diversification of the local economy.		
Goal: Maximize sustainable economic development.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Plan land uses that further regional economic development goals that are developed through future economic development planning efforts.	Administration, Planning	On-going
2. Develop areas for clean and sustainable light industrial uses.	Planning Commission, Planning	Short
Need: Protection of Bluffton's irreplaceable natural resources.		
Goal: Preserve open space and plan for low-intensity development to protect critical lands.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Set aside critical lands for resource conservation and nature preserves.	Town Council, Environmental Protection, Planning Commission, Administration, Planning	Short
2. Classify lands as rural in order to lessen the effects of development on the natural landscape.	Planning	Short
3. Revise zoning code to permit cluster development to preserve natural resources and rural character.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
Need: Neighborhood Planning.		
Goal: Conduct neighborhood plans for uncommitted lands within Bluffton.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Carry out a neighborhood needs assessment and land use plan for the Buck Island/Simmonsville area.	Planning Commission, Planning	Medium
2. Carry out a neighborhood needs assessment and land use plan for the Goethe Road area.	Planning Commission, Planning	Medium

8.3 Zoning and Regulation

Zoning delineates districts and establishes regulations that govern the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings. A zoning ordinance is adopted to implement the Comprehensive Plan and to guide development in accordance with the existing and future needs of a community. In addition, zoning acts to promote and protect a community's public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, appearance, prosperity and general welfare (S.C. Code § 6-29-710). These purposes are similar to those for local government police power regulations.

A zoning ordinance is the primary tool available to help implement Bluffton's plans for the future growth; however, before that can happen, the land use element of the comprehensive plan must be adopted by the governing body (S.C. Code § 6-29-720). Therefore, the Land Use Chapter is the foundation for a zoning ordinance and any revisions to the current code.

Current Zoning

A zoning ordinance consists of two parts, text and a map. The text describes the zoning districts, the uses permitted in each district, general and specific standards, and procedures for administration and enforcement. The zoning map describes the location and boundaries of the zoning districts. Bluffton currently has sixteen zoning districts (including a Form-Base Code) and three overlay districts and includes standards and permitted uses for each district. A list of current zoning districts is included in Appendix A.

Planned Unit Developments

The most common development techniques used in southern Beaufort County have been flexible, negotiated tools like PUDs and development agreements. PUDs grant developers greater leeway and flexibility in exchange for greater community benefits than can be normally required. Each PUD contains a unique, negotiated set of standards covering a whole range of items, including uses, densities, building form and appearance and open space. PUDs have been used extensively in the region to create high-quality and unique master-planned developments.

Development Agreements

Development agreements are negotiated to help guarantee long-term predictability for both the community and developer by allowing existing land use regulations to be locked in for an extended time period. In exchange, a developer commits to fund and provide community benefits such as open space and public infrastructure improvements. Under state law, development agreements must conform to local development standards, so they are often combined with PUDs. Bluffton has relied on these during recent large scale annexations.

The private sector favors PUDs and development agreements because they potentially allow a great deal of flexibility and can guarantee that the rules of the game and key development requirements will not change over time. Bluffton has relied on these tools because negotiations have typically resulted in a higher level of community amenities (such as parks and open space, road improvements or fees for infrastructure or other community benefits) than otherwise could be obtained under traditional zoning approvals. Further, the tools lock in decisions that may appear sound today but may not adequately address a community's future needs, such as off-site infrastructure.

Because so much land in southern Beaufort County is already committed to development and is subject to existing PUDs and development agreements, code changes that require new minimum baseline standards for these tools will have less of an impact in Bluffton than they would in communities with more uncommitted land.

Non-Conforming Uses

Non-conforming uses are existing uses that do not comply with current codes and ordinances. Non-conformities are exempt from current ordinance provisions except if the use is changed to another non-conforming use, if the use is discontinued and abandoned, or if it is significantly damaged or altered.

One non-conforming use that has triggered discussion is the Bluffton Oyster Company on Wharf Street. This is the last oyster processing plant in Bluffton and it is located in a low-density residential zone and Historic Preservation Overlay District on the May River. In the past

there was wide disagreement over its future use, but through the recent Old Town Master Plan and SC 46 Corridor Management Planning Process the goal is to preserve and to surround it with public recreation uses.

Zoning Ordinance Review and Revision

The State of South Carolina adopted the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act in 1994 that describes and requires comprehensive planning for jurisdictions with land use regulations and it specifies the "functions, powers, and duties" of planning commissions, boards of appeal, and boards of architectural review. Zoning ordinances are required to conform to the 1994 Act and Bluffton's was last revised in October of 2005. It should, however, be revised on a set schedule to ensure that it is consistent with present conditions, recommendations of this Plan and state enabling requirements. A further discussion of recommended zoning revisions can be found in Appendix A.

The content of Bluffton's ordinance, its districts, the activities allowed within each district, and the rationale supporting current uses and zoning are in need of review and change. However, the universally perceived need for stronger design standards is partially addressed by the newly adopted Form-Base Code that applies to Old Town. The design standards it contains not only address structures and signs, they also include requirements for parking, landscaping, and other factors that combine to create a neighborhood or downtown shopping area. Improving the appearance and function of "old" Bluffton will help support an increase in history-based tourism, improve the quality of life for its residents, and strengthen economic viability.

Future Zoning District Recommendations

Bluffton needs new zoning districts to implement the Future Land Use Map and to guide development. Four potential districts should be explored: Rural, Rural Cluster, Rural Commercial and Multi-Family.

Rural: A Rural Zoning District could help preserve the rural character of the areas identified on the Future Land Use Map as Low Density Residential. These include the SC 46 and SC 170 (north of 278) corridors, land along the Malphrus Road area and uncommitted land north of US 278.

Rural Cluster: As discussed earlier, would allow for the clustering of development and an opportunity to "earn" the higher end of the density range as discussed in the Low Density Residential Future Land Use Category.

Rural Commercial: A low intensity "rural" Commercial Zoning District could allow rural businesses in the areas designated on the Future Land Use Map as Low Intensity Commercial. Using a "floating zone" concept, those uses, such as farmers' markets or a bed and breakfast inn would not be specifically designated on a zoning map. Rather, this "special land use" could float and be located anywhere within a Rural Commercial Zoning District as long as it met stringent approval standards and was deemed to be compatible with rural character.

Rural Planned Unit Development: A Rural Planned Unit Development would allow for flexible design in return for greater environmental and rural-character protection.

Multi-Family: A Multi-Family district, with higher densities, could support the need for affordable housing in Bluffton. A specific zoning designation accommodating these higher densities would achieve multiple benefits for the community. These include drawing needed attention to the link between increased densities and affordable housing, highlighting the importance of choice by providing yet another housing category clearly designated in the zoning ordinance, and providing areas within Bluffton to accommodate multi-family homes. However, when crafting this new code section it will be important to establish clear design standards to address such things as architectural character, maximum building length, rooflines, landscape and parking lot design, open space and requirements for public amenities such as recreation and play areas and tot lots.

Zoning and Regulation		
Need: Regulation protecting the health, safety and welfare of Bluffton's residents.		
Goal: Develop uniform regional standards.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Undertake a technical evaluation of the current Ordinance and update it to be consistent with current practices and so that it reflects the recommendations of this plan.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
2. Establish Baseline Standards for Planned Unit Developments and Development Agreements. Work cooperatively with participating Local governments to establish minimum standards for Planned Unit Developments and Development Agreements that can serve to guide the development review and approval process. These include establishing minimum requirements for open space, the provision of public facilities, interconnectivity, mixed land uses, and environmental protection.	Planning, Beaufort County Planning	Short
3. Establish uniform baseline standards between the county and Bluffton for PUDs and Development Agreements.	Planning, Beaufort County Planning	Short
Goal: Create zoning districts in order for the Future Land Use map to properly guide development and land use decision making.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Create a Rural Zoning District.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
2. Create a Rural Cluster Zoning District	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
3. Create a Rural Commercial Zoning District. Develop specific requirements within the Rural Commercial Zoning District that accommodate commercial activities consistent with the present rural environment.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
4. Create a Rural Planning Unit Development District.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short
5. Create a Multi-Family Zoning district to encourage and support efforts to provide affordable housing in Bluffton.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning	Short

8.4 Regional Planning

Joint Regional Planning and Research

The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan was adopted by Bluffton in July, 2006 and is significant because it was created in a collaborative spirit. The plan's land use goals and objectives are best implemented by staff level coordination through a Land Use Working Group. This group will consist of staff representatives from Bluffton, Beaufort County, Jasper County and the City of Hardeeville. The Group's initial task should be to develop a joint land use plan for uncommitted land in southern Beaufort County and a land use map that defines areas of mutual planning interest for all concerned local governments. Its other responsibilities include:

1. Developing a corridor management plan and uniform standards for Bluffton-area regional travel corridors.

2. Developing connectivity standards for all Participating Local Governments.

3. Assisting in the preparation of a regional economic development plan.

4. Assisting Beaufort County in establishing regional demographic and land use information systems.

Beaufort County Land Use Ordinances

It is important for Bluffton to be aware of and participate in land use and planning decisions along its borders and when appropriate, comment on those to ensure compatible development; specifically on parcels identified for potential annexation. This is particularly important should the County initiate a special area planning study. Conversely, County officials and planners should be invited to participate in Bluffton's zoning review and development process. Bluffton should also identify all agencies with responsibilities to prepare area-wide or regional studies or land use plans to ensure that its interests and needs are identified and that it is aware of regional development trends to better predict local impacts.

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Planning

Bluffton has established a seven-member local planning commission whose authority is limited to its corporate limits. However, if approved by the county and municipality, a municipal planning commission can exercise planning authority in adjacent areas outside its corporate limits. To do so, the two councils must adopt an ordinance setting forth the following:

1. The affected geographic area (recommended to be Bluffton's Future Annexation Area)

2. The number or proportion of commission members to be appointed from that area.

3. Limitations on the authority of the municipality in that area.

4. Representation on the municipality's boards and commissions which affect the unincorporated area. The ordinance may provide for appointment of members of the planning commission from the area outside the municipal limits by either the municipal council or county council. The commission must have five to 12 members.

Regional Land Use Planning		
Need: Prevention of jurisdictional "shopping."		
Goal: Increase coordination between Bluffton, Beaufort County, and other agencies on land use issues. Develop compatible land use policies and regulations.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop a system of extraterritorial planning and zoning.	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Medium
2. Develop and implement joint review of major development proposals and annexations prior to their approvals.	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Medium
3. Coordinate with Beaufort County to develop compatible land use regulations on adjacent lands.	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Medium

Regional Land Use Planning		
Need: Coordination and cooperation on land use planning efforts at a regional level, recognizing the fact that planning in each jurisdiction has regional implications.		
Goal: Increase coordination between Bluffton, Beaufort County and other agencies during land use planning.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Participate in area-wide studies on land use and planning issues with all appropriate agencies.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, City of Hardeeville, Jasper County	On-going
2. Prepare a joint land use plan for uncommitted lands within the Town of Bluffton and southern Beaufort County that addresses the pattern of land use, density and intensity of development and redevelopment, environmental protection, the relationship of land use to public facilities, and fiscal impacts.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, City of Hardeeville, Jasper County	Short
3. Participate in coordinated regional planning with Jasper County in the areas of future land use, public facilities (especially transportation and the planned new port), and environmental protection.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, City of Hardeeville, Jasper County	Short
4. Formalize regional planning cooperation and collaboration with the Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, Jasper County, and the City of Hardeeville to plan on a wider regional basis.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, City of Hardeeville, Jasper County	Short

Regional Land Use Planning		
Need: Benefits from data-sharing relationships and regional database development.		
Goal: Regional Planning Information Systems		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate the maintenance of a regional demographic model of existing and forecasted population, including permanent and seasonal population, through a multi-jurisdictional effort.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County	Medium
2. Coordinate the establishment of a regional demographic and land use information system.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County	Medium
3. Coordinate to maintain a regional land use model to monitor remaining growth capacity relative to population forecasts along with the collective regional impacts of land use plans.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County	Medium
4. Ensure compatibility of local comprehensive and land use planning efforts with regional forecasting and land use models.	Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County	Medium

Transportation 9

One of the first visible impacts of growth in and around Bluffton is the increase in traffic. Traffic volumes on some roads doubled or tripled from 2000 to 2006. This increase is related to new residents, visitors and commuters. Widenings and intersection improvements to meet the needs of projected volumes are well beyond the anticipated funding available, and in some cases would significantly alter the desired character of the major corridors. Therefore, the transportation system must be carefully managed in coordination with land use changes to accommodate needs, ensure safety and meet Bluffton's overall vision.

Vision

We will plan an efficient, adequate and safe transportation network for all users, including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Recommendations in this chapter go beyond simple road improvements and include management tools (access management, technology, connectivity, pathways, and mixed uses) to reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, and maximize the efficiency of the current system. This chapter will assess those elements including roadways, sidewalks and pathways, parking, and regional public transportation.

9.1 Jurisdiction over Roads

Effective management of the transportation system is complicated by the array of groups with some level of responsibility for road improvements and maintenance. Most roads in Bluffton, with the exception of Calhoun Street, are under jurisdiction of the State of South Carolina DOT (SCDOT), Beaufort County or private development associations as follows. A more detailed discussion and a full list of roads by jurisdiction can be found in Appendix A.

State Highways: There are a number of State highways within Bluffton. Map 9.1 Roadway Maintenance Responsibility shows State roads within the Old Town, an area which previously presented a dilemma when determining road maintenance responsibility.

Beaufort County Roads: The County acknowledges maintenance for 28 road segments.

Town Streets: The Town of Bluffton acknowledges that it is responsible for the maintenance of Calhoun Street. The Town claimed Calhoun Street during the lighting and sidewalk improvement projects which took place in 2002.

Private Roads: Many of the new Planned Unit Developments in Bluffton have privately built and maintained roads. While these roads can be publicly accessed, maintenance is not the responsibility of the State, County or Town.

There are unclassified roads in Bluffton referred to as orphan and ghost roads. Orphan roads exist, but remain unclaimed by the State, Beaufort County and Bluffton. Ghost roads may have existed at one time, but can no longer be recognized.

Orphan Streets: Orphan streets are existing unclassified streets that are in use by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, but have not been claimed by SCDOT, Beaufort County or the Town. Bluffton is to decide what is to be done, from seeking county acceptance of the road or accepting it as a Town street.

Ghost Streets: Ghost streets are shown on various maps and surveys of the Old Town, but no longer appear on the ground as public ways. These streets are not in use.

While the State, County and Town maintain most roads in Bluffton's transportation network, action must be taken on unclassified roads, or "Orphan" or "Ghost" roads. Bluffton must formally adopt or abandon unclassified roads. Adopting several roads in the Old Town could benefit Bluffton and could be improved to implement the recommendations presented in Bluffton's Old Town Master Plan and Form Based Code. A full inventory should be carried out and should include the following information:

- Street name
- Segment
- Length
- Right-of-way width
- Pavement width
- Surface
- Condition
- Photographs
- Notes and recommendations

Once this survey is completed; recommendations should be brought to Town Council for review and adoption.

Jurisdiction over Roads		
Need: Understanding of Old Town road responsibility and future maintenance.		
Goal: Study unclassified road segments and take action to adopt or abandon.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Develop and inventory and set of recommendations for unclassified roads in Old Town. Formally adopt or abandon unclassified roads.	Town Council, Planning Commission, Planning, Engineering	Short

9.2 Road Classification

Southern Beaufort County includes 63 miles of principal arterials, minor arterials, major collectors and minor collectors. Both the state and county classify roads based on the national function classification system. These classifications categorize roads based on the primary intended use and function of the road, the types of travel accommodated, and physical factors such as length, travel speeds, and number of lanes and are illustrated on Map 9.2 Roadway Functional Classifications. For Bluffton, roadways are further distinguished by their corridor character (see Land Use Chapter). Together, functional classification and corridor character describe road "typologies." Roads in Bluffton and the surrounding area are classified into the following categories (a full list of roads by classification can be found in Appendix A):

Principal Arterials: Move vehicles over relatively long distances, such as across town or between towns Principal Arterials typically have the highest traffic volumes and speed limits, and more lanes than other roads. Since the emphasis is on through traffic, these roads typically have more signal green time at signalized intersections than side streets, and access points should be spaced far apart to limit disruption on traffic flow.

Minor Arterials: Interconnect and augment the principal arterial system. Roads in this classification typically accommodate shorter trips than associated with Principal Arterials, and thus have lower traffic volumes, lower speed limits and fewer lanes. Compared to Principal Arterials, these offer a balance between through traffic and access to adjacent land uses.

Major Collectors: Connect arterial roads and local roads. This type of road serves locally oriented traffic, such as circulation between residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Minor Collectors: Connect local roads to major collectors and arterials.

Local Roads: All the other roads, public and private, in Bluffton, such as residential streets within neighborhoods.

Three major routes that make up the Bluffton transportation network are US 278, SC 170 and SC 46 (Jasper County line to SC 170). These routes are principal arterials that move vehicles to and from area municipalities such as Beaufort, Hardeeville, Hilton Head Island and Savannah. While the principal arterials help to move traffic in high volumes, SC 46 (SC 170 to US 278) and Bluffton Parkway are minor arterials that allow increased accessibility to adjacent land uses. Buckwalter Parkway, Burnt Church, Simmonsville, Buck Island and Bruin Roads are major collectors that connect arterials and local roads and provide access and traffic circulation between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Old Miller Road Gibbet Roads are minor collectors that connect local roads to collectors and arterials

9.3 Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes, the number of vehicles traveling along a road or through an intersection, are the major influence on traffic operations and the level of congestion. Traffic volumes are counted on typical days to determine the average over 24 hours (Average Annual Daily Traffic or AADT) and the peak morning and evening hours. Recent traffic counts (AADT) in Bluffton are presented in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1
Town of Bluffton: Road Average Annual Daily Traffic 2000-2006

Road Name	Location	AADT				% Change 2000-2006
		2000	2004	2005	2006	
Buck Island Road (S-29)	S-474 to US 278	1050	2300	3100	5500	423.81%
Simmonsville Road (S-474)	US 278 to S-29	2,700	3,200	4,200	10,100	274.07%
Gibbet Road (S-34)	SC 170 to SC 46	1,050	2,200	2,400	2,500	138.10%
Buck Island Road (S-29)	SC 46 to S-474	5,300	7,300	8,100	9,200	73.58%
Fording Island Road (US 278)	SC 170 to SC 46	30,900	34,800	40,900	47,800	54.69%
May River Road (SC 46)	S-29 to Rd-13 (Old Town)	8,900	12,300	13,300	13,600	52.81%
Burnt Church Road (S-163)	S-13 to S-120	3,700	3,900	4,100	5,100	37.84%
Bluffton Road (SC 46)	Rd-13 to US 278	7,900	10,600	10,800	10,000	26.58%
May River Road (SC 46)	SC 170 to S-29	7,900	8,500	9,300	9,600	21.52%
Okatie Highway (SC 170)	SC 46 to SC US 278	8,100	8,800	9,400	9,700	19.75%
May River Road (SC 46)	Jasper County Line to SC 170	12,200	12,000	13,400	13,800	13.11%

Source: Beaufort County

Like volumes, roadway capacities are determined for both a daily and peak hour basis. Roadway capacity is based primarily on the number of lanes and speed limits, with adjustments up or down in consideration of other factors like geometric design and the number of driveways or traffic signals along the road that disrupt through movements. Computer models are used to compare existing or expected traffic volumes to the capacity to determine the level of delay or congestion

for both 24 hour periods and peak hours. A 24 hour comparison provides a good initial indicator of congestion suitable for long range planning. Once potential capacity issues are identified, more detailed data based on peak hours and specific movements at intersections (right, left, through) is used to determine the level of service and extent of improvement that may be needed.

US 278 had the highest traffic volume, almost 48,000 vehicles daily in 2006, an increase of about 55% since 2000. This is a significant amount of traffic which equals the approximate amount of traffic on Interstate 95 in the year 2000. Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads also both had significant increases in traffic within the past six years. Segments of Buck Island Road increased between 74% and 424% between 2000 and 2006. Similarly, Simmonsville increased by 274%. Another road with significant recent increases has been Gibbet Road (partially within the Town's limits), that serves as a shortcut between SC 170 and SC 46, where traffic more than doubled in the last six years. Traffic increases along SC 46 have been less dramatic, but generally continues to increase. Trips in the Old Town have increased significantly, from just under 9,000 vehicles per day in 2000 to 13,600 in 2006, almost a 50% increase. Higher traffic is an important factor to consider when planning for Old Town.

Level of Service

Comparison of existing and projected traffic volumes to the capacity of the roads and intersections is an indicator of existing and future deficiencies. The nationally accepted measurement of this volume to capacity ratio is level of service (LOS). Six LOS letters designate each level of quality of vehicular flow, from A to F, with LOS "A" representing the least delay and LOS "F" the longest delay. The Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan Participating Local Governments decided as a matter of policy that the goal through the region should be that conditions on the Regional Road Network should not fall below LOS "D." As a general policy, Bluffton has adopted a minimum LOS D system-wide. However, when specific road improvements are considered, impacts on the environment, land uses, corridor character, and harmony with pedestrians/bicyclists should also be considered. In some cases, a LOS below D may be tolerable for certain turning movements or in particular areas within Bluffton (such as in Old Town and for SC 46 from SC 170 to Old Town).

A segment of US 278, from SC 46 to the Hilton Head bridges, was considered failing (below LOS D) until it was recently widened to six lanes. It is now a considered an acceptable LOS "D." As of 2007, the county indicated no roads in Bluffton had a deficient level of service (LOS E or F). LOS is illustrated on the Map 9.3 Roadway Level of Service, however it is not updated to reflect the recently widened section of US 278 and its effects on the entire system.

With increasing traffic volumes (as seen in figure 9.1), the LOS of area roads will begin to reach failing levels in the near future. New roads, as well as widening and improvements to existing roads, will be needed in order to handle the traffic of approved developments, increasing population and increases in vehicles traveling on Principal Arterials through Bluffton.

Future Conditions Map

The Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County Engineering and Planning representatives continue to collaborate to gather traffic data and update the future road conditions information. This information helps evaluate conditions at buildout of all the development to determine the amount of predicted capacity deficiencies once all the programmed road improvements are constructed. The list of planned and programmed construction projects at the time this plan was prepared is included in Appendix A.

Existing and Proposed Traffic Volumes		
Need: Understanding of future road conditions resulting from development and road improvements.		
Goal: Develop a future roadway conditions map.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate with Beaufort County to develop a future roadway conditions study and map that considers new development and future roadway improvements and develop a traffic count and crash monitoring program to identify potential projects.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering	Medium

9.4 Recent and Planned Road Improvements

The Roads Impact Fee Update Support Study for the South Beaufort County Service Area (September, 2006) lists road improvements needed to address expected future demand from 2006 to 2025. The improvements, shown in Map 9.4 Needed Roadway Capital Improvements, include: capacity and safety improvements to US 278, a US 278 frontage road and connections between parcels along US 278 as part of access management implementation, and capacity improvements along certain arterials and new collector roads.

In addition to these major improvements, there will likely be many smaller scale improvements to be determined based on actual traffic conditions and accident patterns (such as intersection reconstruction, new traffic signals, or roundabouts). These planned major capital road improvements are expected to meet the future traffic demands consistent with maintenance of a LOS D or better, based on predicted traffic volumes. These improvements need to be periodically evaluated as actual traffic counts are taken. Overtime, the timing of development, funding availability and other factors may change the needs and priorities. Therefore, it is recommended that Bluffton, the county and the state continue to share information and monitor needs. As road projects are funded, the county or state should involve Bluffton in the design development process to help ensure improvements are consistent with the intended character of a particular corridor.

The construction of Bluffton Parkway is the most recent major roadway improvement in Town. This will add another major east-west route to provide an alternate to SC 46 and US 278. While the Bluffton Parkway has been designed generally parallel to US 278 and SC 46, the alignment is not continuous; there is an offset that requires motorists to travel along the North/South Buckwalter Parkway within the central Buckwalter Tract, therefore lengthening the travel time and mileage between SC 170 and Bluffton Road. This Plan recommends a realignment to provide a more direct parkway.

In addition to the major capital improvement projects, future road construction and improvement projects need to promote and enhance physical connectivity within and between neighborhoods.

Intersection Improvements

As traffic continues to increase in Bluffton, delay at intersections will become more frequent. In some cases, improvements will be needed along a corridor, but in other cases, improvements just at key intersections may be sufficient. The most common improvements are installation of a traffic signal, possibly in conjunction with additional through or turning lanes, or a modern-type roundabout (not a traffic circle). Both intersection types are used in Bluffton and the Southern Beaufort County area. Determination of the best alternative depends on the physical conditions at the intersection (natural features, proximity of buildings, available right-of-way, etc.) and the nature of the traffic flow. A general comparison of the two options is shown in Figure 9.2 below.

Figure 9.2
Intersection Improvement Alternatives – General Comparison

Factor	Roundabout	Traffic Signals
Operations	Can have higher capacity and fewer delays	Capacity depends upon approach volumes and timing
Safety	Typically fewer and less severe accidents	Accidents can go up with a signal but the type and severity vary greatly
Pedestrians	Roundabouts perceived as less pedestrian friendly	Pedestrians may have separate signals to ease crossing
Proximity	Roundabouts can be placed in close proximity to each other	Traffic signals spaced closer than 1 mile or ½ mile apart can cause congestion
Design	Operations highly sensitive to design, expensive to change	Can more easily be adapted to changes in traffic flow by changing signal timing
Ease of use	Relatively easy to maneuver but may be confusing for visitors	Visitors are accustomed to traffic signals
Right-of-way Required	More at intersection, perhaps less along road	Typically fits within existing r.o.w.
Cost	Typically more expensive to construct, less to maintain	Typically less expensive to construct unless additional lanes are needed (r.o.w.) but higher maintenance costs
Environmental Impacts	Typically less impact unless construction impacts a key natural feature, because less vehicle delay reduces pollution	Typically more delay for the average vehicle equates to more air pollution. Poor intersection operations may cause need for disruptive road widening
Community Character	More opportunity to create an image through the design	Typical signals are not attractive but this can be improved with mast arm signals, signs and well designed pedestrian crossings

Safety

In addition to capacity issues, safety is a prime consideration both in the identification of road improvement projects and their design. Specific safety related issues to monitor and address include:

Road Maintenance: Maintenance of pavement conditions, striping and signs.

Truck Traffic: The speed and volume of truck traffic can create conflicts with others using the roads, especially pedestrians. Through truck traffic should be diverted away from residential areas and the Old Town. In addition, commercial and other sites should be designed to ensure truck maneuvering does not conflict with internal circulation or access.

Speed and Traffic Calming: Travel speed inappropriate for the setting can cause safety concerns, for example speeds over 25 miles per hour along a residential street. Where speed limits are a concern, posted speed limits can be monitored. In some cases traffic calming measures should be considered, especially for areas heavily populated by children, or frequented by visitors, pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic calming could include measures such as traffic circles, curb bump outs, speed humps or tables (not speed bumps), and well defined pedestrian crossings. Many of the more recent developments have integrated traffic calming measures as part of the road design, a trend that should continue.

Lighting: Lighting at major intersections should be studied to ensure safety and minimize potential for accidents. Similarly, appropriate lighting levels along certain streets or at major development access points may improve safety and convenience for motorists.

Street Connectivity: With any new roadway development, roads should be required to tie into the existing road network. This maintains a system of interconnected streets, which maintains the efficiency of the overall road network. The use of cul-de-sacs and other dead end streets should be discouraged except in areas where natural features, such as wetlands, or existing adjacent development patterns precludes through streets. With a connected street system, motorists are provided with multiple routes, which help to reduce driving distances and diffuse traffic. Providing road connections between adjacent

subdivisions allows for the movement between neighborhoods without the need to access major roads. It also provides alternative means for residents within the subdivisions to access the major road network at locations that are most efficient for traveling to their destination, shortening trips and thereby minimizing traffic impacts to the major road network. Connected streets also provide continuous routes that enhance non-motorized transportation. With connected streets, special consideration needs to be given to network design to discourage use by through traffic that does not have an origin or destination within the local neighborhood.

Access Management: One of the many benefits of access management is the reduction in the potential for crashes (see more detailed discussion later in this chapter). Refer to page 9-20 for a more detailed discussion of access management standards.

Signage/Wayfinding: Way-finding quite literally refers to 'finding your way around' and can apply to finding your way to Town Hall, parks, or schools. A comprehensive wayfinding system is recommended in order to improve accessibility for residents and visitors alike. Typically, wayfinding is provided by a consistent signage system that points travelers in the direction of their destination. It is important that all these signs maintain a similar appearance that can become a "brand" for Bluffton where the user quickly learns what to look for to find the next piece of information. Bluffton recently began an initiate to develop a Wayfinding design for Old Town, which will likely include recommendations that can be applied community-wide.

Recent and Planned Road Improvements		
Need: Interconnectivity for transportation system efficiency.		
Goal: Enhance and promote connectivity.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Design, construct and maintain roadways and rights-of-way to promote and enhance physical connectivity within and between neighborhoods.	Planning, Engineering	On-going
2. Establish minimum land use design principles to promote better road and non-motorized connections within and between land uses and master planned communities.	Planning, Beaufort County	Medium
3. Develop connectivity standards that will be adopted and applied by all the participating Local Governments in their development codes.	Planning, Beaufort County	Medium

Recent and Planned Road Improvements		
Need: Safe and efficient routes of travel.		
Goal: Plan and build safe roadways for all users.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Continue to review and prioritize the Town's inventory of streets for paving and maintenance.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering	On-going
2. Limit impacts of commercial trucking in Old Town by establishing and signing a truck route alternative to SC 46 and prohibiting truck intense uses in Old Town or make them a condition use with locational standards.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering	On-going
3. Set up a system to respond to neighborhood concerns with vehicular speeds that could include evaluation of traffic calming measures where conditions may be improved.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering	Short
4. Ensure intersections and major access points are well lit.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering	On-going

9.5 Planning

Since the highways and principal arterials run through more than one community and are under state or county jurisdiction, a collaborative approach to management is essential. This section describes the array of Corridor and Regional Planning efforts underway or desired for coordination with Beaufort County and other agencies for effective transportation planning.

Corridor Planning

See "Corridor Planning" in the Land Use Chapter for further discussion.

Effective corridor planning within Bluffton and southern Beaufort County will result in coordinated review, administration and enforcement of development to maintain the desired community image and function along the following regional travel corridors: US 278, SC 170, SC 46, Buckwalter Parkway, Bluffton Parkway, and Burnt Church Road. Coordination will help preserve or achieve the desired views and images of the Lowcountry created along the SC 46 and SC 170 scenic corridors. Corridor planning strategies include overlay districts, corridor management plans and context sensitive design, as explained below.

Highway Corridor Overlay District: The main method of corridor planning and enforcement is the Town's Highway Corridor Overlay District. The Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCOD) was created to; provide for the safe and efficient use of highways; minimize congestion and conflict points; enhance the quality of development; protect and enhance the area's unique aesthetic character and natural environment; reduce unnecessary visual distractions; and encourage architecture, signage, landscape and lighting harmonious with the natural and man-made assets of the Low Country. The Highway Corridor Overlay District generally applies to a depth of 500 feet along US 278, SC 170, Buckwalter Parkway, Bluffton Parkway, SC 46 and Burnt Church Roads (for specifics, see the Zoning Ordinance).

Continued development pressures increase in southern Beaufort County require coordinated review, administration and enforcement by the communities, county and state. While the Town Planning Commission administers the HCOD, Beaufort County administers corridors (in

unincorporated areas) through the Corridor Review Board (CRB). Effective corridor planning which crosses municipal boundaries may be achieved by establishing more formal joint boards for consistent review, consistent application of access management, monitoring of traffic conditions and needs, and enforcement.

Corridor Management Plans: Bluffton has a separate Corridor Management Plan for SC 46, that is considered a supporting document to this Plan. The plan presents an inventory of six intrinsic qualities of SC 46: natural, scenic, historic, cultural, recreational and archaeological with recommendations on techniques to preserve the character for future generations.

The first implementation step will be an application for National Scenic Byway designation. While roadways similar to SC 46 can be designated as National Scenic Byways, federal regulations have been created to declassify routes that lose the original character which qualified the route. Therefore, implementation of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and the Corridor Management Plan are important to preserve National Scenic Byway Status, if the designation is approved.

Similar corridor plans may be conducted for other major corridors where the Town and County identify specific populations and community features to preserve. Areas of focus could be SC 170, Simmonsville and Buck Island Roads, or other corridors as appropriate.

Context Sensitive Design: Context Sensitive Design (CSD) is among the most significant concepts to emerge in highway project planning, design, and construction in recent years. CSD recognizes that the way a highway or road is integrated within the community can have far-reaching impacts (positive and negative) beyond its primary traffic or transportation function. The term CSD refers as much to the design approach or process as it does to an actual outcome.

> *Context sensitive design asks questions first about the need and purpose of the transportation project, and then equally addresses safety, mobility, and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental, and other community values. Context sensitive design involves a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach in which citizens at large, and those*

most impacted by the project are involved in the design process, not just reacting at the end of the process.

CSD marches a key goal in Bluffton, that roads serve all users, not just cars but also pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, ensure road design complements the distinct desired natural and built physical character of the various key corridors. Examples to a CSD approach to SC 46, SC 171, US 278 and other corridors are described in the future land use chapter.

CSD is another transportation element that requires coordination between the Federal Highways Administration, DOT, Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton. Communication and partnership between these agencies can ensure that preservation and enhancement each corridors cultural and natural resources is emphasized through the design process for road improvements This may include elements such as mast arm signals with highly visible cross street signs, wayfinding, medians, roundabouts, elaborate pedestrian crossings, formal or more natural landscaping along the road edge to match the desired character, and distinct architectural elements along bridges and roads to alert motorists that they are in Bluffton.

Regional Planning

Since transportation systems cross through many communities, regional transportation planning is important to properly plan and program transportation improvements. Regional communication should cross political boundaries and ensure each community and agency plan is in concert with each other. Bluffton's The Town's involvement in the regional planning processes is of high importance because the shared regional transportation network is not confined to the limits of the Town or southern Beaufort County. For the Town of Bluffton, regional planning can be examined by assessing Beaufort and Jasper Counties, or a larger area such as the Lowcountry Region. Recent efforts in regional planning are described below:

The Lowcountry Regional Transportation Plan: The Lowcountry Regional Transportation Plan is one such planning process in which the Town should actively be involved. The Lowcountry Region includes Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton and Colleton Counties. The regional plan influences the projects and priorities identified in the State's Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan which is the basis for

allocation of State funds. Bluffton should be active in regional and county transportation planning projects and processes to be adequately represented as well as informed of transportation planning efforts.

Southern Beaufort County Transportation Planning Team: Within the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan, the existing informal cooperation that already exists as part of the "Southern Beaufort County Highway Improvement Team" has formalized with the Southern Beaufort County Planning Team (SBCPT) as part of a regional planning effort. This staff-level working group was formed at the suggestion of the local mayors and council members, and it is beginning to make solid progress in addressing regional transportation issues. The SBCPT will consist of staff representatives from all the Participating Local Governments. Staff representatives from Jasper County and Hardeeville will also be invited to be a part of the SBCPT. The responsibilities of the SBCTPT under this regional plan include:

- Preparing a regional transportation plan for the Regional Road Network, based on the adopted LOS.
- Assisting in the development of a joint funding strategy to address the funding gap for transportation capital improvements on the Regional Road Network.
- Coordinating planning for the multi-use trail systems between the Participating Local Governments to maximize reductions in VMTs.
- Developing an access management plan and standards for adoption by the Participating Local Governments.
- Developing a plan for the County's existing ITS system to enable its extension onto appropriate roads on the Regional Road Network.
- Serving as the key entity in the region responsible for: data collection related to transportation (including the collection of traffic counts); and
- Preparing transportation demand management principles and standards for adoption by the Participating Local Governments.

Beaufort County Transportation Advisory Group: The Beaufort County Transportation Advisory Group (BTAG), a policy advisory group, adopted the Roadways Capital Improvement Plan for Southern Beaufort County. The plan lists 33 priority road projects totaling $180 million and includes existing and potential funding sources. The plan was developed by the Southern Beaufort County Highway Improvement

Team composed of planning and engineering staff from Beaufort and Jasper Counties, SCDOT and the municipalities of Bluffton, Hilton Head and Hardeeville. The team has been meeting monthly for the past year to identify priorities and funding opportunities.

Access Management Standards: Management of the spacing, placement and design of access points, major roads improves the efficiency of those roads, effectively increasing the capacity and decreasing the potential for accidents. Well designed access management can also benefit businesses along the roadway, especially if the land use and transportation planning are coordinated.

Currently, access management standards applied by the different local governments and road agencies are not consistent. A uniform set of access management standards in southern Beaufort County would be beneficial. Bluffton has several opportunities to utilize access management. Access management can be designed into new roads, as part of road improvement projects and as part of the development review process. Bluffton has developed Access Management Plans for Buckwalter Parkway North and Bluffton Parkway to identify appropriate locations and signalization of intersections. The Buckwalter Parkway Plan is complete and ready for adoption, while the Bluffton Parkway Plan is in final draft form and will soon be finalized for adoption. Elements of access management should be applied as part of road design, road improvements and during the development review process. Opportunities include decisions on the following:

- Number of access points (generally the fewer the better).
- Driveway spacing (generally the wider spacing the better).
- Driveway placement near intersections, especially signalized ones (generally the farther away the better).
- Driveway placement in proximity to roundabout approaches.
- Driveway offsets or placement in relationship to driveways across the street (generally line up or space far apart to avoid left turn lock ups).
- Driveway design (width, deceleration tapers or lanes).
- Shared driveways, frontage roads and backside access roads so multiple developments can be served with fewer access points.
- General road connectivity to avoid turns onto roads that can be better accommodated internally.
- Efficient spacing of traffic signals and their timing/coordination.

- Medians to restrict or channel left turns (left turns cause the most disruption in traffic flow and a high percentage of access related traffic accidents).

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): ITS involves the use of technology to improve the efficiency of the transportation system. ITS includes techniques to allow traffic signals to adjust to actual conditions (rather than fixed phasing), link operations of traffic signals along a corridor, provide information to motorists to help avoid congestion, and alert emergency service providers about incidents along a road that may delay traffic.

Beaufort County's Intelligent Transportation System includes three components: video surveillance, response vehicles, and radio advisory broadcasts. The County operates 26 surveillance cameras along SC 170 and US 278, with images updated every five seconds. Based on the images, the County's Emergency Management Department can send vehicles to remove wrecked or stranded vehicles, place electronic message boards to alert drivers to detour options, and broadcast over designated AM radio stations. The system helps officials respond quickly to unforeseen events, and thereby minimize delays for motorists (and, accordingly, helps maintain traffic-carrying capacity). In addition, when accidents and congestion occur, the county may notify SCDOT to send incident management vehicles to remove wrecked or stranded vehicles, dispatch law enforcement officials, update electronic message boards to notify drivers of detours, or broadcast traffic information over designated AM radio stations. Images from the cameras are also placed on the county's web site allowing motorists the ability to assess traffic situations before leaving home.

The ability of safety officials to respond quickly to congestion issues is important to minimize delays on major roads such as US 278. For this reason, the County's ITS system should be expanded to targeted road on the Regional Road Network throughout the region.

Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinances: Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinances require a developer to have a qualified firm prepare an evaluation of the impact of the proposed development on the road network and identify the improvements necessary to retain acceptable traffic operations (LOS D). Typical improvements recommended and potentially funded through a traffic impact analysis include new roads,

road widenings or intersection improvements, turning and deceleration lanes, traffic signals, and shared access with adjoining developments.

Computer Simulation Models: Various computer simulation models are used to evaluate traffic operations. These include simple models for intersection operations, corridors-wide models to evaluate traffic flow and models for the entire road network that are used to identify potential long range capacity deficiencies and the performance of alternatives. Both by Beaufort County and Hilton Head Island use a network model (TRANPLAN) to estimate future traffic volumes on the road network based on current volumes and expected development. Bluffton planning staff provides information on approved new developments so the model can be updated to reflect changes. This enables the Town and County identify where improvements may be needed to meet projected demand and plan for road projects in a timely manner. The TRANPLAN model can also help determine the transportation impacts and ultimately the decision of whether to approve large projects, such as a PUD or large-scale zoning amendments.

Planning		
Need: Protection of the environment during roadway planning and construction.		
Goal: Protect natural resources along transportation corridors.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Incorporate Context Sensitive Design into roadways. Build, maintain and upgrade roadways as needed, to promote the efficient movement of traffic within and through Town, without undermining the unique historic and natural character and pedestrian safety in high growth areas. Partner with Beaufort County, SCDOT and Federal Highways.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Engineering, SCDOT	On-going
2. Utilize the SC 46 Corridor Management Plan as a guide for development and transportation improvements along SC 46.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, SCDOT	On-going
3. Develop a tree replanting plan and schedule to replace tree canopy and natural buffers along transportation corridors.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County.	Short

Planning		
Need: Regional coordination and partnership during transportation planning.		
Goal: Develop a coordinated approach to transportation planning in southern Beaufort County.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish coordinated review, administration and enforcement of development to maintain strong community aesthetics and function along the following regional travel corridors: US 278, Buckwalter Parkway, Bluffton Parkway, Burnt Church and Bluffton Roads.	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Short
2. Establish coordinated review, administration and enforcement of development to maintain the views and images of the Lowcountry created along the following regional scenic corridors: SC 46 (May River Highway) and SC 170 (Okatie Highway).	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Short
3. Participate in the Regional Transportation Planning Process to ensure Bluffton's transportation improvements are on the State Infrastructure Improvement Program list.	Planning, LCOG	On-going
4. Pursue a coordinated regional transportation process that: a. coordinates transportation planning with land use planning and forecasts b. regularly collects and monitors data c. prepares network-wide corridor and intersection models to help evaluate short and long term priorities such as pathways, r.o.w. preservation/ acquisition, and promote funding opportunities d. Maintain a joint regional transportation improvement map to create increased awareness of future road projects throughout the area	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County Planning, Beaufort County Engineering, Town of Hilton Head Island, Jasper County, The City of Hardeeville, Town of Ridgeland, City of Beaufort.	Short
5. Formalize regional transportation planning through the development and implementation of joint review of major development proposals prior to their approvals to ensure that proposals do not have an adverse impact on the regional road network.	Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County	Short
6. Create partnerships to carry out studies on areas where specific populations and features should be preserved. Areas of focus could be SC 170, Simmonsville and Buck Island Roads, or other corridors, as appropriate.	Planning, Beaufort County Planning	Short
7. Carry out Access Management Plans for Buckwalter Parkway North and Bluffton Parkway to identify appropriate locations and signalization of intersections.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County	Short
8. Coordinate with Jasper County officials during the planning of 278A and its connection to the Jasper County Segment.	Planning, Engineering, Jasper County	Short

9.6 Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

When planning future sidewalk projects, consideration must be given to provide safe pedestrian access to parks and schools, where children walk, and along streets that connect major activity centers or where pedestrian comfort is impacted by heavy vehicular traffic. Sidewalks and pathways accommodate safe and convenient travel for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as for providing the residents of Bluffton with alternative means of transportation and opportunities for exercise and recreation. Improving the sidewalks and pedestrian connections within Bluffton will help draw regional trails and bike paths through the Town, which can in turn increase commerce and tourism. Bluffton should continue its efforts to create a walkable and bicycle-friendly community by using American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AAASHTO) sidewalk, pathway and bike lane guidelines as a guide for facility improvement. Coordination with Beaufort County as well as other agencies and advocacy groups can help in this process. Map 9.5 Conceptual Pathways depicts existing, proposed and future pathways.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities are especially important in the Old Town because the walkable character is threatened by increasing traffic. The Old Town can be navigated by foot or bicycle, so it is essential to build upon its pedestrian scale. Several streets are without sidewalks, but are safe for foot travel because of low traffic counts and speed. Several roads within the Old Town have an increasing amount of traffic and increasing traffic speed, which results in unsafe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians. Deficiencies in the Old Town bicycle and pedestrian networks need to be identified, and proposed recommendations to fill network voids need to be presented. This can be accomplished by a sidewalk inventory and plan.

Sidewalks are incorporated in new developments in Bluffton. While Beaufort County does not have specific requirements for pedestrian facilities, it is a requirement for new developments. Several new developments can serve as models for pedestrian facilities and connectivity. Future sidewalks should increase connectivity between neighborhoods and to key destinations to enhance walkability throughout Bluffton.

Sidewalks are proposed in the May River Road/Bruin Road Streetscape Project that will result in a significant upgrade to the Town's overall pedestrian system. The conceptual plan proposes wide sidewalks along the entire length of the project, from Stock Farm to Burnt Church Road. Close to the Old Town's four-way stop, 15 foot wide sidewalks with trees, waste receptacles, benches and lighting are proposed. The portions of May River Road and Bruin Road which are considered less of the urban center have proposed eight foot wide sidewalks with a 7 foot wide green planting strip separating the sidewalk from the on-street parking.

Pedestrian Connections and Amenities

In addition to pedestrian facilities along the roads, convenient links are needed between the roadside sidewalk or pathway and the development. Sidewalks and well marked pedestrian crossings between the road and a building entrance, for example, are much more pedestrian friendly and safe than walking through a busy parking lot. Street trees, benches, plazas and places to sit make the environment much more welcoming for pedestrians.

Pathways

Pathways are non-motorized facilities that are usually along, but separated from the road. Pathways can be multi-use facilities, or be striped or use a physical separation between different non-motorized uses. Pathways differ from trails, because they perform primarily a transportation function rather than a recreation function.

In the Old Town, an existing pathway in the Old Town is the Tabby Roads pathway connecting M.C. Riley Elementary School to the Tabby Roads development. Generally, sidewalks serve the Old Town instead of separated multi-use pathways for pedestrian and bicycle travel. Sidewalks serve the area because of the Old Town's density and mixed-use character, where separated pathways would not be appropriate. However, the existing pathway from the elementary school to Tabby Roads should be extended northward along the power line easement to Bluffton Village.

Outside of the Old Town, pathways currently in existence within the Town of Bluffton are on the Buckwalter Parkway, McCracken Circle, as well as the Bluffton Parkway. The constructed and planned pathways range from 8 to 12 feet wide. The New River Trail is another Town project that includes a 3.2 mile trail which will link a 40 acre park and several residential developments.

Bicycle Lanes

Bicycle lanes are designated bicycle facilities that provide a separated travel lane for bicycles. Bicycle lanes are attractive to avid bicyclists who want the ability to travel without interruption from pedestrians and are comfortable with the proximity to vehicular travel lanes. The combination of bicycle lanes and off-road multi-use pathways are preferred to appeal to those who are not comfortable using bicycle lanes, such as younger children.

Pathway Plan

Proposed pathways are presented in the Town of Bluffton Pathways Plan. This plan should be updated to further plan pathways to create linkages that result in a safe and efficient network for pedestrian and bicycle use. Partnerships with utility companies should be developed to share right-of-ways for pathway development. Map 9.5 shows a conceptual pathway network that follows major roadways and utility right-of-ways.

An updated pathways plan should be developed which provides more detail in terms of the design and location of pathways that addresses key issues such as:

- Identification of the desired users of the pathways (joggers, bicyclists, horseback riders, etc.).
- Identification of roadways needing pathways.
- Separation width between pathways and right of ways.
- Boardwalks to protect key natural features.
- Pathways materials: asphalt, concrete or a combination of both.
- Pathway width.
- Types of amenities are appropriate along pathways.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities		
Need: Adequate and safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities.		
Goal: Develop a bicycle and pedestrian transportation system that effectively serves the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, encourages non-motorized travel and provides a continuous network of attractive sidewalks, multi-use trails and bike lanes throughout the Town that also connect to regional systems.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Update the Town of Bluffton Pathways Plan. Develop an interconnected network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout southern Beaufort County that includes interconnectivity between multi-use pathways, bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Develop a map of existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities by type to guide future construction and to publicize routes.	Planning, Engineering	Short
2. Continue to review and prioritize the Town's sidewalk and pathway system for improvements and additions, with attention to usage of utility right-of-ways. Partner with utility companies to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities along right-of-ways.	Planning, Engineering, BJWSA, SCE&G, Palmetto Electric	Short
3. Require all new developments accommodate pedestrians within in their site. Plan bicycle and pedestrian interconnectivity to adjacent roadways and future and existing nearby developments.	Planning, Engineering	On-going
4. Apply for grants for bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvement and expansion.	Planning	Medium
5. Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are designed to connect schools, community services, and destinations.	Planning, Engineering	Short
6. Work with Beaufort County and other agencies to develop links with area bicycle and walking trails.	Planning, Beaufort County	On-going
7. Pursue development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities on publicly owned (unopened) rights-of-way, street ends, utility corridors and other lands available for public use. Dedicate them permanently for non-motorized use where appropriate. Man-made obstructions in existing public rights-of-way shall be required to be removed.	Planning, Engineering	Medium

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities		
Need: Adequate and safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities.		
Goal: Ensure the safety of all users of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Improve the safety of all travelers by using such techniques as wide pathways, raising crosswalks, wider striping, providing pedestrian islands, providing disability access, modifying lighting, installing hand or bicycle activated sensors, traffic calming measures and other appropriate methods.	Planning, Engineering	On-going
2. Coordinate with public and private groups, including the Bluffton Police department and area advocacy groups, to promote the education and awareness of personal safety while using bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	Planning, Engineering, Bluffton Police Department, advocacy groups	On-going
3. Investigate safe routes to schools and funding. Provide well designed and constructed pedestrian and bicycle access within a reasonable travel distance around schools.	Planning	Short
4. Use AASHTO as a guide for constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities of sufficient width to accommodate expected pedestrian use, including safe roadway crossings and, wherever feasible and appropriate, access provisions will accommodate people with the widest range of mobility. Use AASHTO as a guide to effectively and safely accommodate commuters, recreational users and children.	Planning, Engineering	On-going
5. Assess and accommodate pedestrian crossing options at major intersections, especially US 278 and Simmonsville Road.	Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County	Short
Goal: Promote economic development through an extensive bicycle and pedestrian network.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Assess the incorporation of the East Coast Greenway though the Town of Bluffton.	Planning, Engineering, East Coast Greenway, advocacy groups.	Short
2. Plan for a bicycle-friendly Town to attract eco-tourists and others to visit the Town's businesses and strengthen the local economy.	Planning	On-going

9.7 Parking

Adequate on-street and off-street parking is required for residents, visitors and workers to carry out their daily activities and business. Parking needs and regulations need to be monitored to determine if changes are needed to the supply, location, and design of Bluffton's regulations. Several topics should be considered.

- **Environmental Issues:** Parking lots should have an increased amount of pervious surface in order to minimize stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution. Landscaped islands within off-street parking lots should be required.
- **Aesthetics:** Parking lots should be developed behind buildings for aesthetic and design. As structures in the Old Town are encouraged to be set closer to the street, lots should be placed toward the rear of the lots.
- **Partnerships:** The Town should develop partnerships and coordinate with area churches and institutions to share parking facilities when services or events are not in session. Partnerships would decrease costs of constructing new lots, as well as decrease environmental impacts from new lots.
- **Land Acquisition:** While some new lots will need to be developed, the Town should assess lands to acquire for this use. A number of smaller lots may be more aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sustainable and more appropriate in Bluffton's Old Town.

May River/Bruin Road Streetscape Project

The May River/Bruin Streetscape Project increases the Town's parking capacity significantly. Parallel parking is proposed on both sides of May River and Bruin Roads. Proposed eight foot parking spaces will increase the convenience of parking for residents, consumers and tourists. Sufficient parking requirements should be a priority in future planning projects.

Parking		
Need: Adequate parking for residents and visitors to carry out daily activities and business.		
Goal: Provide adequate on-street and off-street parking which will meet the needs of residents and visitors while protecting the aesthetic quality of the Town.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Encourage the location of parking lots at the rear of buildings, where possible.	Planning	On-going
2. Encourage landscaping islands in the design of parking lots.	Planning	On-going
3. Acquire land for downtown parking.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering	Short
4. Ensure parking areas have pervious surfaces.	Planning, Engineering	On-going
5. Encourage a number of small downtown parking areas instead of one large lot.	Planning, Engineering	Short
6. Develop partnerships with religious institutions for use of parking areas when services and events are not in session.	Administration, Planning, Engineering	On-going

9.8 Public Transportation

Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority (LRTA)

The Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority (LRTA) provides public transportation in Beaufort County, as well as Jasper, Colleton, Hampton and Allendale Counties. LRTA's primary area of focus is to transport residents in surrounding rural areas to and from jobs in Beaufort County. Low-density residential development, decentralized commercial uses, scattered employment centers, and lack of consistent pedestrian connections create obstacles for efficient public transportation. However, efforts are being examined to expand transit service and make Bluffton more "transit friendly." Like other transportation actions, support and coordination between Bluffton and other communities and agencies is important for success.

Currently an effort is underway to establish a fixed-route bus service along US 278 from the Coastal Carolina Medical Center in Hardeeville to Coligny Plaza on Hilton Head Island. The program is currently unfunded, but the proposed bus service is planned to run on regularly scheduled times. Initiating and expanding a fixed-route service along US 278 can help alleviate peak hour traffic congestion and provide residents with an alternative form of transportation. While the route will increase options for public transit, it may be necessary to expand the planned route to loop through the Old Town and Bluffton Parkway to increase potential ridership.

In addition to system improvements, Bluffton can help ensure its development is designed to support transit by incorporating elements such as:

- Nodes of development.
- Park and ride lots.
- Pathways to connect development to transit stops.
- Site design that connects buildings and neighborhoods to roadside pathways.

Ferry Service

Given the region's many navigable waterways and Bluffton's position on the May River, private or public/private ferry service could add a unique service and potentially reduce travel demands on US 278, SC 170, and other roads. Effective ferry terminals would require sizable waterfront property for parking and multi-modal facilities to transport people from the terminal to key destinations such as tourist attractions, beaches, key shopping and entertainment areas, as well as places of employment. Funding and commute times are also obstacles that need to be overcome to make ferry service viable. Given the transportation constraints under which the region is operating, however, this option may be worth additional discussions with other communities in the region.

Public Transportation		
Need: Low-cost, safe and reliable public transportation.		
Goal: Coordinate with LRTA and LCOG for expansion of the public transportation system.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate with LRTA to expand transit options for residents, particularly with respect to meeting the needs of the elderly, handicapped and low income persons.	Administration, Planning, LRTA, LCOG	Short
2. Provide support, input and partnership during future US 278 bus service planning, with attention to potential loops and spurs to serve the residents along the Bluffton Parkway and Old Town.	Administration, Planning, LRTA, LCOG	Short
3. Examine and assess the possibility of ferry service or water taxis.	Planning, Engineering, Administration	Medium
4. Provide support to school district bus route planners in order to minimize left-turns on routes.	Planning, Engineering, Administration, School Board	On-going

Priority Investment Act 10

Establishment of the Priority Investment Chapter results from the passage of the 2007 Priority Investment Act. The Priority Investment Chapter addresses the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools.

Planning for public expenditure on infrastructure projects must be carried out through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies. Coordination is required between counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies, and other public entities that are affected by or have planning authority over the public project.

Vision

We share a commitment with our neighboring jurisdictions and agencies to work together to plan and construct the public infrastructure needed by the residents of Bluffton and Beaufort County.

10.1 Capital Improvement Program

Bluffton's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies, plans and constructs public infrastructure. By providing adequate community facilities and services, growth and development can be sustained within Bluffton. Therefore, careful infrastructure planning is a key component in implementing long-range goals and objectives. The best approach in planning for community facilities lies in managing public investment in infrastructure wisely. Through the identification and prioritization of community facility needs, Bluffton can work toward meeting both existing deficiencies and long-term demands in a timely and efficient manner. To accomplish this, Bluffton has developed a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The CIP includes the planning and prioritizing of capital projects within a six-year plan (FY 2006-2012). Bluffton's CIP project list is dynamic and may change throughout the six-year timeframe. Significant intergovernmental cooperation has occurred to plan for capital projects. Projects are prioritized within the seven categories listed below.

- Roadways
- Pathways
- Drainage improvements
- Parks
- Land Acquisition
- Facilities
- Planning Initiatives

CIP projects are funded primarily through Bluffton's Community Infrastructure Bank (CIB). Another funding source is the General Fund. While some projects may be paid for exclusively by Bluffton, other methods for funding include:

Grant Matching: Bluffton can use CIB or General Funds as match funding for grant opportunities.

Partnerships: Bluffton can partner with other entities, such as Beaufort County, to jointly fund capital projects that benefit Bluffton, as well as Southern Beaufort County as a whole.

Through the CIP, accomplishments have been achieved during CIB capital project planning. The Town has implemented a monthly program for reporting project status. Summary level project tracking and cash flow for all CIP projects has been established, as well as standard project filing.

Recommended public infrastructure projects such as water, sewer, roads, pathways and facilities is detailed in the CIP program. Below please find a list of capital improvement projects contemplated through fiscal year 2019. For additional detail on the capital improvement projects including general descriptions, associated Comprehensive Plan goals, costs and funding, please refer to the Technical Appendix.

1. Pathways
    a. General
    b. Buck Island Simmonsville Road
2. Sewer and Water
    a. Buck Island Simmonsville Road
    b. Jason-Able
    c. General
3. Roadway
    a. May River/Bruin Road Streetscape
    b. Bluffton Parkway Phase 5B
4. Old Town
    a. Calhoun Street
    b. Old Town Streetscape, Lighting and Parking
5. Park Development
    a. General Improvements
    b. Oyster Factory Park
6. Town Facilities
    a. Buckwalter Place Tech Park Infrastructure
    b. Town Hall and Municipal Court

Capital Improvement Program		
Need: Completion of capital improvement projects to meet the needs of an increasing population.		
Goal: Plan, secure funds and complete major roadway, pathway, drainage, park, land acquisition and facility projects.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Complete all capital projects at or under budget.	Engineering	On-going
2. Continue partnerships to jointly fund projects.	Engineering	On-going
3. Maximize leveraging of available funds.	Engineering	On-going
4. Complete the Tech Park to support Care Core occupancy.	Engineering	Short
5. Finalize capital project processes and procedures.	Engineering, Finance	Short
6. Establish project financial reporting and tracking with the Finance Department to improve accuracy, control and predictability	Engineering, Finance	Short

10.2 Official Map

The Official Map is a tool to help implement the Comprehensive Plan. During the Comprehensive Planning process and other Bluffton efforts, ROWs and other public uses have been discussed and potential locations for public infrastructure have been identified. The Official Map is a tool to reserve future locations of existing or proposed public street, highway, and public utility rights-of-way, public building sites (where a building is to be constructed for public use with public funds) and public open spaces.

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the primary prerequisite for creating and adopting an Official Map. Bluffton must adopt the Comprehensive Plan or at least the transportation element before showing the exact locations of new, extended, widened and otherwise improved streets and highways on an Official Map. Adoption the full Comprehensive Plan is essential before mapping the future locations of:

- Public buildings
- Public parks
- Public playgrounds
- Public utilities
- Public open spaces

Adoption of the Official Map gives Bluffton the opportunity to acquire property needed for public purposes before the owner changes the land use or develops the property in such a way as to make impractical its future acquisition for public use. Once locations for public use are identified on the map and the adoption process is carried out, permits cannot be issued for construction, improvement, repair or moving of any building or structure on the reserved property. Permits cannot be issued for any change in land use on property reserved on the Official Map. However, property owners have the right to an appeal process or file for exemption from Official Map restrictions.

Given the complex nature of the Official Map, the process will require coordination between all Bluffton departments, as well as:

- County Departments (Planning, Engineering, Rural and Critical Lands Board, Law Enforcement, PALS, Libraries, etc)
- SCDOT
- Bluffton Township Fire District
- BJWSA
- SCE&G
- Palmetto Electric
- Beaufort County School Board

The Comprehensive Plan addresses issues such as the future planning and locations of schools, libraries, police stations, fire stations, etc, but does not address specific locations. The plan presents ideas for coordination of efforts through co-location, partnerships and coordinated planning. A coordinated approach is will be required to reserve properties during the Official Map creation process.
It is Bluffton's intention to create an Official Map, and update/revise it as necessary, to reserve lands for public use as identified in this plan. It is also Bluffton's intention to jointly establish the map while formally including the Town of Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County in the process. The end result will be one map that is adopted by all participating jurisdictions. While a coordinated approach is already recommended, a Joint Official Map would allow for an effective, efficient and financially and politically feasible planning and adoption process. It is Bluffton's intention to partner with adjacent jurisdictions to encourage co-location, coordination and healthy inter-governmental relationships.

Official Map		
Need: Reserved land for public infrastructure and community facilities.		
Goal: Reserve future locations of existing or proposed public street, highway, and public utility rights-of-way, public building sites (where a building is to be constructed for public use with public funds) and public open spaces.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish a Joint Official Map.	Administration, Planning, Engineering, Beaufort County, Town of Hilton Head	Medium

10.3 Priority Investment Zone

Through the Priority Investment Act, Bluffton is able to adopt priority investment zones in which the governing authority adopts market based incentives or relaxes or eliminates certain housing regulatory requirements, to encourage private development in the priority investment zone. Bluffton also may provide that traditional neighborhood design and affordable housing must be permitted within the priority investment zone. Traditional neighborhood design means development designs are intended to enhance the appearance and functionality of the new development so that it functions like a traditional neighborhood or town. These designs make possible reasonably high residential densities, a mixture of residential and commercial land uses, a range of single and multi-family housing types, and street connectivity both within the new development and to surrounding roadways, pedestrian, and bicycle features. Bluffton will study the feasibility and benefits of establishing Priority Investment Zones within municipal limits, especially in regard to the provision of affordable housing.

Priority Investment Zones		
Need: Designation of areas for affordable housing efforts and private development and investment.		
Goal: Designate areas for affordable housing. Designate areas for private development and investment to strengthen Bluffton's economy.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Establish Priority Investment Zone(s)	Administration, Planning, Engineering	Medium

10.4 Communication and Coordination

Communication and coordination will be required to plan for public infrastructure improvements. Coordination means written notification by the planning commission or staff to adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies of the proposed projects and the opportunity to provide comment concerning the proposed projects. Bluffton, Beaufort County, and Hilton Head Island officials frequently meet to implement the Southern Beaufort County Regional Plan. Elected officials within the Southern Beaufort County Implementation Committee, as well as staff coordination through working groups have already begun the process of joint review of projects of regional significance. It is the intention of the Bluffton to expand the effort to include joint review of all public infrastructure projects and CIPs. Appropriate agencies and adjacent jurisdictions will be involved in this process.

Communication and Coordination		
Need: Communication and coordination between multiple jurisdictions during infrastructure planning and development.		
Goal: Establish a coordinated approach to public infrastructure planning		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Coordinate multi-jurisdiction review meetings to review projects of regional significance. Use the Southern Beaufort County Implementation Committee to implement this effort.	Town Council, Administration, Planning, Engineering, Environmental Protection, Beaufort County Planning, Town of Hilton Head Planning.	On-going

10.5 Funding for Public Infrastructure

There are federal, state and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities. These sources, as well as other potential sources, will be examined to fund public infrastructure projects within Bluffton.

Federal funds are available for Bluffton's infrastructure. Congressional earmarks through adopted amendments to federal legislation are available for transportation system improvements. The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is a flexible federal program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1,180 general units of local government and States.

Several state funding sources for public infrastructure also exist. Through SCDOT, the county receives funds from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program funds for roads. Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) grant funds are available to Beaufort County and Bluffton which can be used for parks, public facilities and infrastructure. Each municipality also receives an allotment of these funds based on population.

Local opportunity for public infrastructure exists through impact fees, sales tax, hospitality tax, accommodation tax, developer fees, property tax and tax increment financing. There are county impact fees charges on buildings permitted in the counties and municipalities for roads, libraries and parks. The county has also enacted a 1% capital projects sales tax for infrastructure. Local hospitality and accommodations tax, and a state accommodation tax are used for tourism related capital projects. Developer fees and land set aside for parks and infrastructure are available to local governments. Property tax revenue is a major factor for schools and local government. Other funding methods for funding include Tax Incremental Financing, Municipal Improvement District Funding and Assessment Districts.

Funding for Public Infrastructure		
Need: Sufficient funding for adequate public infrastructure.		
Goal: Fund infrastructure improvement and construction needs identified through the capital improvement planning.		
Implementation Steps	**Responsible Parties**	**Time Frame**
1. Identify and assess federal, state and local funding sources for public infrastructure. Secure funding for public infrastructure.	Administration, Finance, Planning, Engineering, Environmental Protection	Ongoing

Technical Data A

Each chapter contains an inventory and analysis of the existing and projected trends. The results of this analysis were used in the establishment of the needs for the community, goals and implementation strategies to achieve those goals.

This Appendix includes a more detailed inventory than is provided in each chapter. It includes additional background data, which may be of interest, but are not essential to the recommended implementation strategies.

3 Cultural Resources

Contributing Resources

The 1994 survey evaluated 84 sites, primarily on Calhoun and Bridge Streets, in which 45 percent of the total number of significant structures are located. No sites were identified as having been constructed prior to 1800. Twelve were identified as being antebellum structures: the Huger-Gordon House, Seven Oaks, the Allen-Lockwood House, the Pope Carriage House, the Heyward House (including the two outbuildings), the John Seabrook House, the Card House, the Fripp House, the Church of the Cross, and the Campbell Chapel. The Isaac Garvey House is estimated to date back to 1860 and 1880. The remaining sites were estimated to have been constructed between 1880 and 1930. The Town has updated the documentation and has included additional contributing structures, which are a result of the 2001 PRESCON Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report. The structures numbered 1-38 in Figure 3.1 are those that were used in the consideration of the National Register District. The additional numbered buildings were considered "contributing structures" based upon age alone, 50 years or older.

In October 2001, PRESCON conducted a Historical Architectural Resource Survey to identify and document all historic architectural resources located within the Bluffton Conservation District. Properties identified as historic were photographed and catalogued to accompany the written documentation of the specifics of each structure. The PRESCON survey documents 33 structures considered historically significant within the Bluffton Conservation District.

Historic resources surveys were also prepared on the Shults and Palmetto Bluff tracts prior to their annexation into the Town. These reports indicated that there are no known cultural resources located within the Shults Tract, and there is little potential for the Shults Tract to contain significant cultural resources. The survey conducted on the Palmetto Bluff Tract identified 22 archaeological sites and 18 associated finds on a sampling of 10 surveyed separate parcels (502 total acres). While 18 of the 22 archaeological sites were considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, none of the associated finds were considered eligible. From these results, surveyors determined that the Palmetto Bluff Tract could be divided into areas of high and low potential for cultural resources with a high

degree of accuracy. Care must be taken with future development in the Palmetto Bluff Tract to ensure that appropriate approvals have been obtained and recommendations have been fulfilled prior to developing sites.

Heritage Tourism

The pressures associated with the area's rapid development, in which the Town of Bluffton has become the fifth largest town in South Carolina (by land area), threaten the perpetuation of the Town's cultural heritage. The community will seek to achieve a balance between economic vitality and development/ redevelopment to ensure that Bluffton's community character and historical heritage are preserved. The goal is to ensure that the community preserves its historic integrity while laying out a vision for the future.

A partnership was formed between the Town of Bluffton and the Bluffton Historical Preservation Society, Inc. (BHPS) which has made the Town a significant player in this region's heritage tourism industry. Bluffton possesses a diverse group of historic structures, but tourism was virtually non-existent due to under use and lack of promotion of the Town's historic resources. Before the two entities began to work together, the Town was simply passed through by visitors traveling between Savannah, Georgia and Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. This successful partnership between a small non-profit group and a governmental entity has produced a new burgeoning, low-impact industry that is now an integral component to this area's successful heritage tourism industry. For Bluffton, it has become an industry that will continue to provide a positive economic impact, both directly and indirectly, with benefits to all residents of the Town. Furthermore, the local historic preservation movement, with the Heyward House Historic Center as its centerpiece, unequivocally benefits all of the Town's residents by improving the community's intangibles, such as its quality of life and a retained sense of place.

The Hilton Head Island /Bluffton Chamber of Commerce have coordinated to create the South Carolina's Treasured Coasts campaign, which offers sample itineraries for activities visitors might partake in while vacationing in Bluffton and the surrounding area. The Town, Beaufort Historical Preservation Society and the Chamber work closely in promoting heritage tourism and representatives of each organization currently participate in the Bluffton Marketing Committee, a committee

of the Chamber intended to promote tourism and raise Bluffton's community profile as a destination for visitors. The BHPS worked closely with the Chamber in the development and printing of the Bluffton Walking Tour Map. The pamphlet guides visitors through the Bluffton National Register Historic District and gives historical information on the Town and its existing structures. The BHPS also leads guided walking tours through the Old Town by appointment.

The partnership between the Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society and the Town of Bluffton has only grown stronger over the last half decade as the Town government and staff of the Historical Society have worked together to establish the foundation of a healthy heritage tourism industry.

Community Events

The following are regular community events:

- Christmas Parade
- Annual Bluffton Flower Show
- Every 3rd Friday: The Old Town Merchants Society sponsors this event that occurs every 3rd Friday with live music, food, and street performers.
- Fall Lecture Series: This is sponsored by the Preservation Society.
- Preservation Classic Golf Tournament: This tournament is held in October.
- Various Oyster Roasts
- Arts and Seafood Festival: This is held in the spring and is sponsored by the Rotary of Bluffton

Other events and activities include walking tours of the historic Old Town, as well as native guide tours, or eco-tours of the local marshes, creeks, estuaries, and rivers. There are also Civil War roundtable discussions and lectures, numerous art and photography galleries, and shows.

Awards and Recognition

The Town of Bluffton and organizations within the Town have been acknowledged for cultural enhancement efforts:

Corporate Stewardship Award: This award recognizes a corporation that has made significant achievements or landmark efforts in support of historic preservation. It is given by the Office of the Governor, the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH). In 2005, this award was given to Palmetto Bluff, LLC, the developers of the Palmetto Bluff development. Surveys revealed that there are more than 150 archeologically significant sites on the property, including cemeteries. This spurred the developer to employ an on-site archeologist and develop a cemetery master plan. Palmetto Bluff provides hands-on educational opportunities for the boy and girl scouts, local school groups, and the general public.

Palmetto Bluff also received a 2005 Stewardship Development Award from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. This annual award recognizes residential, public and/or commercial-industrial projects in the State which exhibit the highest level of thoughtful stewardship of the environment through careful planning and construction.

Preserve America Community: In 2006, First Lady, Laura Bush designated Bluffton a Preserve America Community. Bluffton joins other communities with this designation that are committed to preserving their heritage while ensuring a future filled with opportunities for learning and enjoyment. This provides strong incentives for continued preservation of the cultural and natural resources. The goals of this initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased participation in preservation, and support for the economic vitality of communities. By receiving this designation, Bluffton receives National recognition for their efforts. The benefits of the designation also include: appropriate use of the Preserve America logo on promotional materials; notification to media, State tourism offices and visitor bureaus; and a listing in a directory to showcase preservation efforts and highlight heritage tourism destinations. It also allows Bluffton to apply for grants under the Preserve America grants program administered by the Department of the Interior.

There are other awards and acknowledgements that should be applied for which, if obtained, will only help to achieve the historical and

cultural goals of the community. The Distinctive Designations declaration from the National Trust for Historic Preservation is one such recognition. The communities who earn this designation much meet the following criteria: criteria: well-managed growth, a commitment to historic preservation with a protected historic core and meaningful context, interesting and attractive architecture, cultural diversity, activities for families with children, an economic base of locally-owned small businesses, and walkability for residents and visitors. Another recognition includes listing of more contributing structures on the National Register of Historic Places.

This section inventories existing natural resources, including the water resources, soils, flora and fauna, air quality and other aspects of our natural environment.

Weather and Climate

Other extreme weather events within Beaufort County include tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, lightning, and storms involving, hail and wind. Through September 2000, the SC Climatology Office reported the following statistics for extreme weather events for the County:

- 14 Tornadoes, costing $1.612 million, resulting in 5 injuries and 1 death
- 40 Wind Events (winds exceeding 60 mph)
- 31 Hail Events
- 24 Lightning Events, costing $804,000, resulting in 12 injuries and 2 deaths

Water Resources

New River: It contains an abundance of brackish tidal marshes. Some of these waterways hold historic and cultural significance, as they were used in the early 1900's for rice production. Bluffton's New River Trail is the dividing line between the fresh and salt environs and the only public site to view the now abandoned rice fields. The New River watershed originates from the Great Swamp Watershed, a significant system containing 2,851.4 acres of estuarine waters. The associated salt, brackish, and fresh water ecosystems provide essential habitat for aquatic and bird species. The largest component, the saline ecosystem, contains three intermediately developed oxbow lakes.

May River: According to the May River Baseline Study, a substantial influx of either surface flow or shallow ground water was evident at the Pritchardville gauge station due to high annual runoff rates recorded during a period of drought. According to the Environmental and Ecological Assessment of the May River Report, the sandy soils of Bluffton may allow for more efficient transport of water through shallow groundwater. Water losses to deeper aquifers are limited, as more water flows to the receiving stream.

Two key recommendations from the May River Baseline Study are:

1. Delineate sub-watersheds in the May River Watershed. This was completed as a part of the County watershed study. The

subwatersheds are illustrated in the May River Watershed Analysis draft, dated May 22, 2004.

2. Organize a watershed education campaign, including watershed and storm drain identification.

Water Quality: The following are recommendations from the May River Baseline Study which directly impact water quality. The two-year baseline study was completed in April 2003. The study was supported by NOAA, Beaufort County, Hilton Island Foundation, Beaufort County SAMP, and the Town of Bluffton.

1. Seasonal sampling of fecal coliform in conjunction with SCDHEC. SCDHEC currently monitors eight sites. Bluffton should request additional monitoring for Rose Dhu and Stony Creeks and the headwaters area. Analysis should also be performed to track the source of fecal loadings.

2. Test for atrazine as an indicator of surface runoff in future water quality testing. Other areas in the United States have been successful in requesting home improvement, hardware stores, and garden centers to discontinue the stocking of products containing atrazine which is harmful to shellfish.

3. Developments should monitor their stormwater lagoons effectiveness and the receiving waterways for fecal, nitrogen, and phosphorus loadings.

4. Water quality monitoring should be conducted more frequently than sediment and biotic sampling. Monitoring should be in conjunction with completion of developments and stormwater lagoon monitoring. Parameters should include dissolved oxygen, salinity, turbidity, chlorophyll-a, pH, nutrients, fecals, and organic carbon.

5. Every five years, sediment and biotic conditions should be assessed.

6. Continue and increase education campaign for vegetated buffers, pet waste disposal, proper hazardous waste disposal, stormwater pond maintenance, and proper lawn care.

In addition, Bluffton needs to continue protecting water quality with existing activities such as the following:

1. Work with the Stormwater Utility and the USC New River Campus to support a local, SCDHEC certified laboratory and the creation of a County protocol for water quality testing which may be cross referenced with state and national data.

2. Support environmental groups such as Lowcountry Institute, Friends of the Rivers, the Port Royal Sound Conservancy, Clemson Extension Service, and Beaufort Conservation District.

3. Strictly enforce buffers along waterways and wetlands.

4. Support the SCDNR SCORE project which replenishes oyster shell onto local mud bars and established beds and sponsors a volunteer monitoring program.

All development within Bluffton must adhere to the provisions outlined in the Beaufort County Best Management Practice (BMP) Manual. In December 2003, the manual was revised to address four important issues:

1. Fecal coliform, a pollutant in urban and wilderness stormwater runoff which impacts shellfish harvestability;

2. Littoral shelves and native plantings;

3. Maintenance agreements for stormwater facilities; and

4. Addition of the latest innovative technologies in stormwater treatment.

The revised manual was adopted with the caveat that monitoring of stormwater lagoons would occur to test the effectiveness of fecal coliform removal. The monitoring and evaluation was slated to be completed before August 2005.

Also in 2003, the South Carolina SeaGrant Consortium and Friends of the Rivers sponsored a program titled Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO). Representatives from the Town Council and Planning Commission as well as Beaufort County staff and officials participated in the program. This program was offered again in 2007.

Recently, research has shown a relationship between bacteria loadings and turbidity. The state currently regulates erosion and sediment control standards. The Town has been advised to adopt standards to allow regulation at the local level. As the state of stormwater science progresses, the Town should assess needed improvements to its control standards.

Geology and Soils

On a broad geologic scope, Bluffton is situated on the Pamlico terrace. The Pamlico's elevations vary and lie below 25 feet, though higher elevations may be found along the ridge parallel to Hwy 170. Soil classifications include Santee (loamy surface and clayey subsoil), Buncombe (sandy throughout), Argent-Okeetee (loamy surface with clayey subsoil), Bladen-Coosaw-Wahee (combination of loamy surface with clayey subsoil and thick sandy surface with loamy subsoil), Wando-Seabrook-Seewee (sandy throughout), Coosaw-Williman-Ridgeland (sandy throughout), and Bohicket-Capers-Handsboro (mineral and organic soil of the salt and brackish marshes).
The limitation of the Buncombe, Wando, and Coosaw series is the elevation of ground water. When site-specific data shows the ground water elevation is low, these soils are appropriate for stormwater infiltration. Infiltration is a preferred method of stormwater treatment due to recent studies which report that the distribution of stormwater back into the land is more sustainable than funneling it through stormwater pipes and collection into lagoons. Therefore, Bluffton should develop a map which highlights more specific areas where infiltration can be used for stormwater treatment.

Unsuited for urban development are Santee, Bohicket-Capers-Handsboro, and Argent-Okeetee soils due to wetness, proximity of water table, and continuous flooding. As soil data is a fundamental tool for planning urban development, it should also be used as a guide for selecting areas suitable for stormwater infiltration (permeability), wildlife habitat, and forest preservation and regeneration. The Town should use existing Beaufort Jasper Soil Classification information to develop a map to aid in designating specific stormwater practices for specified areas, as well as locate ideal areas for conservation.

Bluffton has been progressive and addressed a water table elevation limitation on development within the Wando-Seabrook-Sewee and Coosaw-Williman-Ridgeland, by eliminating the use of septic systems.

The Town requires all new development to be connected to the BJWSA system. Yet, many residences in Southern Beaufort County are utilizing septic systems that are not functioning properly or are in disrepair. A request from the public during the presentation of the May River Baseline Study was the distribution of a publication relaying information on maintenance and retrofitting existing septic systems with innovative, cost effective technologies to reduce seepage.

Flora and Fauna

Habitats: The following habitats assemble Bluffton:

1. Bay Forest
2. Beech and Magnolia Hammock
3. Bottomland Hardwoods
4. Brackish Marshes
5. Depression Meadow
6. Intertidal Mud/Sand Flat
7. Maritime Forests
8. Middens
9. Oak Hickory Forests
10. Oyster Reefs
11. Pine Flatwoods
12. Pine-Saw Palmetto Flatwoods
13. Pine Savannah
14. Pocosin Shrub Pineland
15. Pond Cypress Pond
16. Pond Pine Woodland
17. Salt Flat
18. Salt Marsh
19. Salt Shrub Thicket
20. Tidal Freshwater Marsh
21. Upland Pine-Wiregrass Woodland
22. Urban/Suburban Forests
23. Non-native tree and shrub associations
24. Meadows – Vacant Lots

Threatened and Endangered Species: Bluffton recorded the following observations and occurrences of threatened and endangered flora and fauna:

1. Bald Eagle
2. Bird-voiced Tree Frog
3. Northern Yellow Bat (Verification needed)
4. Eastern Coral Snake
5. Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake
6. Little Brown Myotis (Verification needed)
7. Carolina Pygmy Sunfish
8. Bluebarred Pygmy Sunfish
9. Eastern Woodrat
10. Swallow Tail Kite
11. Woodstork
12. Gulf Coast Mud salamander
13. Flatwood Salamander
14. Eastern Fox Squirrel
15. Loggerhead Sea Turtle
16. Manatee
17. Pondspice
18. Elliot's Milkpea
19. Lobelia
20. False Foxglove
21. Grape Fern
22. Rusty Lyonia
23. Large Stem Morning Glory
24. Needle Palm

Forest Resources

Maritime Forests: Several professionals believe there is very little if any maritime forest within the Town limits. There is much evidence which suggests that Longleaf Pinelands dominated up to the waters edge in Bluffton except for the Coves. Therefore, for the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the reference to "maritime forest" should be interpreted as the range of Live Oaks, Sabal Palms, Holly, Red Bay and Slash Pine, etc which lie along the perimeter of salt water bodies within Bluffton.

Maritime forests are increasingly rare due to development pressures. These unique forests grow along bodies of saltwater and include species which are adapted to sandy soil, salt spray, calcium rich soil and strong winds. Associated plants include Live Oaks, Sabal Palms, Yaupon Holly, Red Bay, and Slash Pine. The maritime forest provide rich habitat for wildlife and protect property from ocean storms. The

maritime forest of Palmetto Bluff flourishes over the May, Cooper, and New Rivers. Preservation efforts have included compliance with the River Protection Overlay District and selecting a large estate lot type of development for the headwaters region. This would be an excellent site for a "School Forest" which would be available for education of Bluffton Students and environmental groups on this unique habitat. Another important educational element could be proper forestry management practices.

Though Palmetto Bluff has preserved much of its maritime forest, very little exists on the northern banks of the May River. Bluffton should work with the County to promote an educational campaign with a single purpose of replenishing the scenic and functional buffers of the northern banks of the May River. It proposes a challenge to replicate the forested banks which exist south of the May River. Planting trees and vegetation and complying with established buffer requirements could restore the scenic and functional forested buffer properties.

Longleaf Pine Forests: Longleaf Pine forests once dominated the Coastal Plains of South Carolina. The combination of soils, hydrology, and most importantly periodic burning, created this Longleaf and wiregrass habitat. The few remaining stands of Longleaf are primarily under the management of private landowners. The Longleaf pine forest supports a large and diverse plant and animal population. Over 40 species can be found in a 10 square foot area and well over 100 species may occur in a quarter of an acre. Many species are endemic to this habitat and once prevalent species are now extremely rare. Restoration and maintenance of the few remaining tracts should be a priority whenever possible given the necessity of periodic burning. By preserving this ecosystem, the Town is maintaining the one of the most significant elements of its natural heritage.

Bottomland Hardwood Forests: In Bluffton, pockets of bottomland hardwood forests are dominated by Water Oak, Cherrybark Oak, Laurel Oak, Red Maple, Magnolia, Black Willow, and Water Tupelo. Understory vegetation often consists of Dwarf Palmetto, deciduous holly, Yaupon, and many others. Within the Okatie watershed, bottomland hardwood forests consist of Pecan, Hickory, American Elm, Water Oak, Live Oak, Magnolia, Sycamore, and Hackberry/Sugarberry. Animals utilizing this unique habitat include bald eagles, wading birds, ducks, woodpeckers, warblers, frogs, salamanders, turtles, snakes, alligators, bats, rabbits, beaver, squirrels, bobcats, foxes, river otters,

raccoons, and deer. West of Hwy 170, the forested hardwood bottoms in the New River watershed were destroyed by timbering and silviculture activity. East of Hwy 170, just south of Hwy 278, large expanses of hardwood bottom forests remain and should be protected.

Silviculture: Silviculture is the science and art of cultivating forests based on the knowledge of the life history and general characteristics of forest trees; the principles, theories, and practices for protecting and enhancing the establishment, growth, development, and utilization of forests for multiple benefits. Good stewardship during forestry activity will protect water quality and some practices can be used to enhance wildlife habitats. Silviculture and forestry management should take into account ecological factors such as successional role of species, the potential for regeneration, the effects of competing vegetation, and the potential for damage from insects, pathogens, or weather. The South Carolina Forestry Best Management Practices protects the public realm from the visual and physical impacts of harvesting. Requirements include leaving buffers along waterways and roadways, preserving overstory trees, and protection of the forest floor. Bluffton's Tree Ordinance and all Development Agreements require either a permit or notification that states a minimum of fifteen trees per acre, at eight inches and greater in diameter at breast height, will remain in the disturbed area. Property located outside of areas under development agreements requires a two-year period before any development can commence after harvesting is complete.

The majority of Bluffton's annexed land was previously owned and managed by Union Camp for timber, not wildlife enhancement or sustainable development. The Town should educate developers and land owners on the importance of managing the forest to produce a sustainable environment for development. There are many examples of good forestry management coinciding with development in Southern Beaufort County, including places like Rose Hill and Belfair.

Urban Forest: Bluffton's Urban Forest is a unique form of habitat, harboring wildlife which have adapted to anthropogenic impacts. Bluffton needs to develop an urban forestry management plan which will provide instruction and guidance for the following:

1. Planting and mitigating for absence or loss of trees;
2. Establishing of a formalized tree replanting program;
3. Providing guidance for emergency situations;

4. Partnering with Beaufort County on funding for trees
5. Planning for the preservation and health of historically significant trees and stands; and
6. Enhancing the inherited managed silviculture pine forests with native hardwoods or preferably Longleaf.

5 Housing

Age and Condition

Substandard housing is defined as dwelling units that do not provide adequate shelter. Figure A5.1 shows several factors measured by the US Census Bureau that can be used as indicators of substandard housing conditions. The most direct Census indicator of substandard housing is the incidence of incomplete plumbing and/or kitchen facilities. Of the 4,985 housing units in 2010, only 30 units had incomplete plumbing and 30 had incomplete kitchens. Housing conditions data for Beaufort County reflected low substandard housing figures as well (A5.2), with less than 1%. These figures are well below state and national figures. However, surveys of homes completed during a Community Development Block Grant application process by the Low Country Council of Governments resulted in the discovery of a number of homes with incomplete or very dysfunctional plumbing facilities.

Figure A5.1
Town of Bluffton Census Indicators of Substandard Housing

	2000		2012		2000-2012	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Difference	Pct. Change
Total units	501	100%	4,513	100%	4,012	801%
Incomplete Plumbing	2	0.0%	0	0%	-2	100%
Incomplete Kitchen	2	0.0%	0	0%	-2	100%
Source of Heat						
Utility gas	7	1%	720	1%	713	10,185%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	79	16%	108	16%	29	37%
Electricity	428	85%	3,634	81%	3206	749%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc	0	0%	0	0%	0	-
Wood	0	0%	0	0%	0	-
None	0	0%	44	0.9%	44	-

Source: US Census 2000, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Another factor that may indicate the adequacy of housing is the source of heat for a dwelling unit. According to the American Community Survey, most units in Bluffton relied on electricity for heating (81%). While Beaufort County had 134 units without sources of heat as shown in Figure A5.1, all units in Bluffton reported a source of heat.

Figure A5.2
Beaufort County Census Indicators of Substandard Housing

	2000		2012		2000-2010	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	Difference	Pct. Change
Total units	60,509	100.0%	64,042	100%	3,533	5.8%
Incomplete Plumbing	139	0.0%	242	0.4%	103	74%
Incomplete Kitchen	130	0.0%	391	0.6%	261	201%
Source of Heat						
Utility gas	5,559	12.0%	9,567	15.0%	4,008	72%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	3,170	7.0%	1,722	2.7%	-1,448	-45.7%
Electricity	36,103	79.0%	52,141	81.4%	16,038	44.4%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc	281	1.0%	213	0.3%	-68	-24.2%
Wood	186	0.0%	235	0.4%	49	-26.3%
None	213	3.8%	134	0.2%	-79	-37%
Other	-	-	30	0.04%	-	-

Source: US Census 2000, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Recent housing surveys conducted for Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) and HOME programs show that some homes in Bluffton need repair work so that they can meet acceptable standards. Others must be demolished because they are beyond repair and water and sewer must be provided to those units that are lacking. There may also be unidentified homes in need of repair or public services. Because low incomes make it difficult for many families to afford necessary repairs or to move to better housing, there are several grant programs available to address both the rehabilitation of substandard housing and the replacement of dilapidated dwellings.

The two programs mentioned above, CDBG and HOME are administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through funds passed through the State and administered locally through the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG). These programs are specifically targeted to families of low

and moderate income. The Town should aggressively seek CDBG, HOME and other housing-related grants and become a clearinghouse for the information needed for applications.

In ten years, Bluffton's median home value increased by 54% while gross median rent increased by 38%. Median home value for homes within the Town of Bluffton was considerably less than the County's, the median gross rent for 2010 for the Town was proportionally less than in the County.

Affordable Housing Organizations

Bluffton should consider ways to promote the development of new housing, with special consideration given to affordable units. Non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, which builds affordable homes, should be approached to complete additional projects in the Town. These organizations are extremely knowledgeable in providing homes for low income families and may be willing to assist and or partner with the Town in rehabilitation projects.

There are many resources for information on affordable housing programs, including grant and loan programs, and many non-profit organizations. The Town should maintain a close relationship with members of the Beaufort County Housing Authority and consult with them on a regular basis. In addition, the following organizations are instrumental in their lead on affordable housing programs. It is imperative that the Town build relationships with these groups and others in order to most efficiently and appropriately deal with the issue of affordable housing options in the community. The groups all listed below have complementing interests in affordable housing. The groups offer different services and programs, applicable to different income levels and groups. All are vital in accomplishing affordable housing efforts.

Federal Agencies

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):
HUD's mission is the expansion of the supply of affordable housing for low-income families. HUD has designated the Office of Community Planning and Development, the Office of Housing, and the Office of Public and Indian Housing as the administrators of all programs

designed to increase the stock of housing affordable to low-income households.

Office of Affordable Housing Programs (OAHP): This office under HUD administers three separate programs:

- **HOME Program:** This program provides funds to PJs (Participating Jurisdictions). The PJs can use these funds to help renters, new home buyers, or existing homeowners. PJs have a great deal of flexibility in designing their local programs.
- **SHOP Funds:** SHOP provides funds for non-profit organizations to purchase home sites and develop or improve the infrastructure needed to set the stage for sweat equity and volunteer based homeownership programs for low income families.
- **Homeownership Zone:** This program allows communities to reclaim vacant and blighted properties, increase home ownership, and promote economic revitalizations by creation entire neighborhoods. Money has not been allocated to this program since 1997; however, the program is still listed.

State Agencies

South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority: This agency administers a number of state and federal programs, distributing the funds to the appropriate agencies. One such program is the First Time Home Buyers program, which is available for low to low-moderate income families and persons. It includes a fixed, below market rate interest rate mortgage loan and down payment and closing cost assistance up to $4,000.

Local Agencies

Town of Bluffton: The Town of Bluffton will support the affordable housing efforts by acquiring property within the Town that should be used for affordable housing efforts. This also includes encouraging developers to donate to various groups or developers dedicated to building affordable housing. Bluffton will also be an information source as to the available community programs. An affordable housing bank should also be managed by Bluffton to cover impact fees incurred for construction of new affordable housing units.

Beaufort County Housing Authority: The Beaufort County Housing Authority is the local office for the State Housing Authority. They administer the Section 8 housing program and public housing. The Section 8 housing program is tenant based housing, it follows the tenant, and is not considered to be public housing. Approximately 250-280 vouchers are distributed to qualifying families each month. It is up to the individual to find a landlord who is willing to accept the voucher. At this time there is no public housing in Bluffton, there is on Hilton Head Island and in Beaufort. There are currently no plans to construct any new public housing units in the area.

Beaufort County Community Services: Within the Community Services Division in Beaufort County, a staff person is designated as the Housing Coordinator. This person oversees all affordable housing projects and initiatives within the County. The various municipalities, towns and cities have on-going housing related activities. Therefore, constant communication between the local government entities is imperative. The County Housing Coordinator's essential job functions are to:

- work with developers and others in identifying and analyzing potential affordable housing projects;
- disseminate and present program information on housing to elected officials, community organizations, developers and the general public;
- plan, develop and implement strategies to seek and secure funding to assist in the development of affordable housing;
- research and analyze housing rehabilitation needs when appropriate to enhance the affordable housing program;
- facilitate and conduct public meetings with federal, state and local housing officials, private sector organizations, the media, and the general public on issues involving affordable housing.

Non-Profit Organizations

Habitat for Humanity: Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate substandard housing and homelessness, and to break the cycle of poverty that inadequate housing fosters. The local office for Habitat is the Hilton Head Island (HHI) Regional Habitat for Humanity, which was founded in 1990. Hilton Head Regional Habitat is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry that has built seventy six (76) homes in the Hilton

Head and Bluffton areas, providing affordable housing to over 250 people in need. It depends on local banks, skilled workers, landowners, faith-based organizations, and Habitat home owners and other volunteers working in partnership to provide the means, land, and materials to build homes for carefully screened applicants. Habitat does not simply 'give away' homes, but requires that applicants put in 300+ hours of labor and pay closing costs, attend eleven (11) mandatory workshops, and zero interest loans.

The Brendan Woods development is an example of a Habitat for Humanity Community in the Town of Bluffton. By spring 2007, there will be 61 affordable homes within the Brendan Woods community. The only other Habitat community located in Southern Beaufort County is New Hope Village, located just outside the town limits, with a total of 12 homes. Habitat for Humanity would like to continue to construct more homes as well as rehabilitate existing dilapidated housing within the community; however, they are facing the hurdle of high land prices and acquisition.

Low Country Community Development Corporation (LCDC):
The Lowcountry Community Development Corporation, Inc. (LCDC) is a non-profit organization with a primary focus on affordable housing. Their programs include housing repair grants; homebuyer education/financial literacy classes; and down payment assistance grants. They are a five-county regional agency assisting the entire Lowcountry community to achieve a better quality of life. LCDC has helped numerous families in the Lowcountry, including Bluffton, to purchase homes and maintain their homes in good repair. LCDC receives funding from the State Housing Finance and Development Authority's Housing Trust Fund, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, banks, and private investors. The LCDC averages 20 new homeowners, 200 homebuyer program graduates, and 12 completed rehabilitation projects each year, since 2000.

7 Community Facilities

Government Functions

Bluffton follows the council-manager form of government. The powers of each are as follows. (Forms and Powers of Municipal Government, University of South Carolina, MASC, 2004).

Mayor: The Mayor presides over meetings (by tradition), calls special meetings, designates a temporary judge and acts and votes as a member of council. In this system, the mayor has no administrative powers and has no additional statutory authority beyond that of other council members.

Council: In the council-manager form of government, the council has all legislative and policy powers. It employs a manager, an attorney and a judge, elects the mayor pro tempore, establishes departments and functions, and adopts a balanced budget. The council also authorizes bond issues, investigates departments, adopts the official map, provides for an annual audit, exercises general police powers, appoints boards, appoints a temporary manager and may require surety bonds.

Manager: The Town Manager is the chief executive and head of the administrative branch. He or she appoints and removes employees and sets salaries. The manager also prepares and administers the annual budget, makes financial reports, advises council on departments and appointments, and designates a manager during temporary absence.

Elections and Representation

Bluffton Town Council includes a mayor and four council members who serve staggering four-year terms. Town elections take place every two years and council members serve at-large, instead of a by ward representation. In an at-large election, all registered voters in the Town may vote for one candidate for each open seat.

In South Carolina, the terms of office (two or four years), type of election (partisan or non-partisan), times for filing and times for primaries, elections and runoff elections are set by ordinance. Elections

are conducted by a three-member election commission appointed for six-year terms, or, with the consent of the county, a municipality may transfer authority to conduct elections to the County Elections Commission. Bluffton has transferred this authority in 2006 and will also change to odd-year elections effective in 2009.

United States Postal Service

The Bluffton branch of the United States Post Office (USPS), located in Bluffton Village, serves the residents of southern Beaufort County with the exception of Hilton Head Island and areas along SC 170. Within the service area, the office delivers mail to 19,027 households and 937 businesses. Of the 19,027 residential deliveries, 2,832 are delivered to neighborhood central pickup locations. The Bluffton Branch USPS also houses 2,205 post office boxes within its main office, with almost 99% currently rented.

Information Technology

Recurring 3-Year Plans: A series of 3-Year IT Plans are needed to provide systematic replacement of obsolete equipment. In an effort to increase productivity by the reduction of the use of obsolete equipment a significant portion of Bluffton's technological equipment should be replaced within any three year period.

Fiber-Optics: As a result of a cooperative effort between Bluffton, its consultants and Beaufort County, the major Town facilities are connected via fiber-optic cable. Fiber-optic cable has increased the Town's capabilities to share and manage data. Accessibility to fiber-optic services should be a primary consideration in evaluating the viability of all future governmental locations.

Data Storage: Bluffton's data is backed-up nightly. This information is stored on digital tapes at offsite locations. To protect against possible loss by breach of security or natural disaster a second copy of the data should be transferred nightly to a second remote location. Additionally, Bluffton should look to partner with other cities in an effort to offer reciprocating service agreements activated by the occurrence of worst case scenario acts of terrorism or natural disasters.

State Reporting: State required procedures for digitizing and reporting records are currently beyond Bluffton's capabilities. Scanning

equipment and additional server capabilities will be necessary in the short term to digitize, submit, access and safely store archival data.

Accessibility: Added productivity and communications should be developed by increasing the capabilities of Bluffton's network and Ethernet based services. Within the Town's network, staff files are stored on Bluffton's servers. This allows staff to access files from any computer in the network. Local files are automatically synchronized with Bluffton servers to provide automatic an instantaneous backup. Data is readily available and accessible from any workstation. Continuing advances in network services should continue to be explored. Bluffton's website should continue to develop as the Town's clearinghouse for information. Ecommerce and other interactive solutions should be actively pursued to engage and service the citizens of Bluffton.

Security: Security has become increasingly important. Bluffton should continue to include new security measures in every annual budget. IT Policy documentation should be revised on an annual basis to best reflect effective and safe, computer and phone usage. Specific security measures should be kept confidential as allowable by law.

Automated Solutions: In an effort to maintain an efficient municipal government, a number of automations will be required to stay current with best practice solutions for public safety, governmental finance, record keeping, and public information. Software and/or custom databases for financial control, inventory, licensing, permitting, computer forensics, Police Records Management (RMS), Computer Aided Dispatch, and Geographic Information Systems should be considered. Bluffton should pursue solutions which integrate in real-time and actively interface with the internet and other new handheld electronic services.

Staff Training: New technologies have the potential to revolutionize the way government functions. In the near future many cost-saving solutions will become available. It is important that Bluffton creates and maintains training programs designed to increase the efficiency of staff. At the same time, it is equally important to create a culture of computer-users where use of technology increases fellowship and accomplishment directly relates to personal and professional advancement.

Strategic Visioning: Bluffton should develop a strategic plan that includes specific and measurable goals to implement a collective vision for Information Technology and Information Services. All elements of mission, vision values and charter should be considered.

Utilities

Water and Wastewater: The Beaufort Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) provides water and sewer to the majority of Bluffton's residents, as well as water for fire protection for all residents of the Town. BJWSA has commissioned a Water and Wastewater Master Plan to develop a plan for meeting customer needs. The key points of the Master Plan are to:

- Optimize infrastructure investments in BJWSA's capital improvements program
- Enhance the efficiency of overall operations
- Establish additional criteria to guide developers who propose adding local infrastructure for conveying proposed demands and loads through BJWSA's distribution and collection systems.

The Master Plan divides the areas served by BJWSA into corridor allocation areas (CAAs) to facilitate planning. The CAAs that are within or partially within the Town are Palmetto Bluff, Cherry Point, Buckwalter, Bluffton Area and Route 278 West. Population projections in the CAAs are the basis for which future water demands and wastewater loads are estimated. Accurate projections are essential for a valid system-wide needs plan. The Town's assistance with providing demographic projections, permitted densities and local insight can aid this process.

Currently, BJWSA has a number of projects listed in the Water and Wastewater Master Plan (November 2005). The following are water distribution system projects planned for Bluffton:

1. 2005 Transmission Main Project in New Riverside/Palmetto Bluff (Palmetto Bluff)
2. 2015 Transmission Main Project along SC 46 (Palmetto Bluff, Buckwalter, Bluffton Area)
3. Proposed/Expanded EST- 2010 (Cherry Point)
4. Proposed ESTs 2015 (Cherry Point)
5. Proposed/Expanded EST 2010-2030 (Buckwalter)

6. Proposed ESTs 2020 (Route 278 West)
7. Proposed ESTs 2015 (Bluffton Area)
8. (2) Proposed/Expanded EST 2010

Electricity: Electricity is supplied to Bluffton by South Carolina Electric & Gas (SCE&G) and Palmetto Electric.

- **SCE&G:** SCE&G is the principal subsidiary of SCANA Corporation, a $9 billion Fortune 500 energy-based holding company whose businesses include regulated electric and natural gas utility operations, telecommunications and other non-regulated energy-related businesses. SCE&G serves close to 300,000 natural gas customers in a service area of more than 22,000 square miles in central and southern South Carolina.

  The company also generates, transmits, distributes and sells electricity to approximately 620,000 retail and wholesale customers throughout South Carolina. SCE&G's major projects impacting Bluffton are proposed utility substations to increase reliability in the provision of electricity.

  SCE&G and Bluffton need to continue coordination and communication to ensure long-range plans and goals are consistent. Problems can arise when development plans change from their original approval, so SCE&G should be consulted during review of proposed revisions.

  SCE&G and Bluffton also need to coordinate for substation locations and design. There are approximately 4,200 customers on the main Bluffton circuit, while the standard is 1,500. Without additional substations to limit the amount of customers per circuit, many customers could potentially lose power with a problem in a single area.

- **Palmetto Electric Cooperative:** Palmetto Electric Cooperative is another provider of electricity in the Town of Bluffton. Palmetto Electric is one of South Carolina's customer-owned utilities.

8 Land Use

Town Limits and Annexation

Figure A8.1
Town of Bluffton Annexations and Area 1997-2014

	Annexation Name	Annexation Date	Acreage of Annexation	Town Acreage after Annexation	Town Square Miles
0	Old Town	N/A	640	640	1
1	Reeves	August 4, 1987	14.78	654.78	1.02
2	McCracken/McRiley School	November 1, 1988	34.61	689.39	1.08
3	McCracken	July 8, 1998	25	714.39	1.12
4	Folan/Burr	September 9, 1998	26.38	740.77	1.16
5	Palmetto Bluff	November 23, 1998	20,660	21,400.77	33.44
6	Schults	November 23, 1998	620	22,020.77	34.41
7	Hodge	April 4, 1999	0.72	22,021.49	34.41
8	Hidden Lakes	June 9, 1999	111.69	22,133.18	34.58
9	Clark	September 8, 1999	1.35	22,134.53	34.59
10	Sauls	September 8, 1999	22.2	22,156.73	34.62
11	Buckwalter	April 19, 2000	5,682	27,838.73	43.5
12	Jones	June 21, 2000	4,400	32,238.73	50.37
13	Bluffton Village	November 18, 2000	3.92	32,242.65	50.38
14	Vaux	November 18, 2000	0.84	32,243.49	50.38
15	SCE&G	November 8, 2000	14.32	32,257.81	50.4
16	Maye River Baptist Church	May 9, 2001	17	32,274.81	50.43
17	School District	July 11, 2001	95.84	32,370.65	50.58
18	Schults/Goethe Rd	July 11, 2001	170	32,540.65	50.84
19	Robertson	June 12, 2002	11.72	32,552.37	50.86
20	Village at Verdier	September 11, 2002	125	32,677.37	51.06
21	Able St Lot 26	September 11, 2002	0.49	32,677.86	51.06
22	Johnson	September 13, 2002	43.48	32,721.34	51.13
23	Willow Run	March 12, 2003	163	32,884.34	51.38
24	Ulmer	April 9, 2003	10.03	32,894.37	51.4
25	Wellstone	June 11, 2003	22.98	32,917.35	51.43
26	Graves Tract	October 8, 2003	58.85	32,976.2	51.53
27	Brown	February 11, 2004	12.8	32,989	51.55
28	St. Mathews Baptist Church	April 14, 2004	1.02	32,990.02	51.55
29	Kent Estates	August 11, 2004	130.76	33,120.78	51.75
30	Rose Dhu Creek Phase 3	December 29, 2005	59.91	33,180.69	51.84
31	Oakley	December 29, 2005	0.89	33,181.58	51.85
32	Buck Island/Simmonsville	December 29, 2005	1,142	34,323.58	53.63
33	Callison Lane	April 12, 2006	13.97	34,337.55	53.65
34	Jacoby	May 10, 2006	2.69	34,340.23	53.66
35	Giddy-Up	June 14, 2006	1.67	34,341.9	53.66
36	Right-of-Ways *	September 13, 2006	0	34,341.9	53.66
37	Cahill's Market	September 18, 2007	27.35	34,369.25	53.7
38	University Investments	September 18, 2007	6.5	34,375.75	53.71
39	Lee - Burnt Church Rd	April 15, 2008	2.49	34,378.24	53.72
40	Linear Park Trailhead	May 20, 2008	10.43	34,388.68	53.73
41	Garvey Preserve	January 6, 2009	87.17	34,475.85	53.87

42	163 Bluffton Rd	January 27, 2009	1.97	34,477.82	53.87
43	Stroup Lane	April 21, 2009	10	34,487.82	53.89
44	Tullifinny, LLC	July 30, 2010	43.31	34,531.13	53.95
45	70 Davis Rd/ School District	January 22, 2014	52.77	34,583.9	54.04

Source: Town of Bluffton Growth Management Department

* Note: Right-of-Way acreage is included in the total acreage for each annexation. The September 13, 2006 annexation incorporated all of the Right-of-Ways abutting property within Town Boundaries.

Figure A8.1 shows how, as a result of the annexations between 1997 and 2014, Bluffton has changed.

Within the BIS annexation, there is a mix of General Residential, Light Industrial, Village Commercial, Regional Commercial and Planned Unit Development. Other traditionally zoned parcels are north of the Old Town where the classifications are predominantly General Residential, Single-Family Residential and a small section of Light Industrial. Spaced throughout the remainder of the Town are small areas of Community Preservation, General Residential, Office Commercial and Village Commercial.

There are several Planned Unit Developments within Bluffton as approximately ninety (90%) is within PUD zoning classification. Several large annexations have significantly increased the sized of the town and have been zoned PUD. Major PUD Concept Plans have been produced for Shults Tract, Hidden Lakes, Buckwalter, Willow Run, Village at Verdier, Kent Estates, Jones Estate, New Riverside and Palmetto Bluff.

Zoning and Regulation

Zoning Ordinance Review and Revision: The State of South Carolina adopted the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act in 1994. This Act not only describes and requires comprehensive planning for jurisdictions with land use regulations, it also specifies the "functions, powers, and duties" of planning commissions, boards of appeal, and boards of architectural review. It also prescribes some aspects of zoning ordinances, specifically instituting the use of special exceptions rather than conditional uses. Zoning Ordinances are required to conform to the 1994 Act. The Zoning Ordinance was revised in October of 2005, and should be revised on a set schedule to ensure regulations are consistent present conditions.

Zoning can be considered as the Town's tool by which it implements its vision of land use within the Town's boundaries. Land use does not always completely conform to this vision or to zoning. Some land uses are in existence at the time of the Town's zoning is developed and approved. These "grandfathered" uses are allowed to continue with restrictions on future growth and replacement. Sometimes an existing zoning district has become inappropriate due to changes in the Town, which is usually apparent by numerous requests for rezoning in a specific area. At other times, a zoning ordinance may need to be reviewed to keep up with changing lifestyles and regional development trends. Or, as in Bluffton's case, a new planning enabling act developed by the State which requires changes to the ordinance so that the Town will be in compliance with the new regulations.

9 Transportation

Jurisdiction over Roads

The categorizing of the Old Town roads results from extensive interviews with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), as well as Beaufort County Administration, Engineering and GIS departments. Categorization also resulted from close examination of maps of the Town of Bluffton at various points, starting with the official survey map of 1913. Map (9.2) shows road responsibility and unclassified roads. Because of the high amount of unclassified roads in the Old Town, it is the focus of the map. The following roads make up Bluffton's transportation network.

State Highways: There are a number of State highways within Bluffton. SCDOT acknowledges the streets listed in Figure A9.1 as a part of its system.

			Figure A9.1 **State Roads in Bluffton**
1	Able St	18	Hilderbrand
2	Allen St	19	Jason St
3	Alljoy Rd	20	Lawrence St
4	Bluffton Rd	21	Lawton St
5	Boundary St	22	May River Rd
6	Bridge St	23	Okatie Hwy
7	Bruin Rd	24	Palmetto Bluff Rd
8	Buck Island Rd	25	Pin Oak St
9	Burnt Church Rd	26	Pritchard Farms Rd
10	Cecil Reynolds Dr	27	Pritchard St
11	Church St	28	Red Cedar St
12	Confederate Ave	29	Shults Rd
13	Dr Mellichamp Dr	30	Simmonsville Rd
14	Drayson Cir	31	Thomas Heyward St
15	Fording Island Rd	32	Ulmer Rd
16	Gibbet Rd	33	Water St
17	Goethe Rd	34	Whispering Pine St
Source: SCDOT			

Beaufort County Roads: The County acknowledges maintenance of the following road segments:

			Figure A9.2 **County Roads in Bluffton**
1	Ballfield Rd	15	Lake View Ct
2	Baylor Dr	16	Laurel Ct
3	Bluffton Pky	17	Old Miller Rd
4	Brendan Ln	18	Palmetto Bluff Rd
5	Buckeye St	19	Phoenix Rd
6	Buckwalter Pky	20	Pritchard St
7	Bush Ln	21	Quinn Ct
8	Davis Rd	22	Sassfras St
9	Fifth Ave	23	Stock Farm Rd
10	Fourth Ave	24	Taylor Ct
11	Goethe Rd	25	Third Ave
12	Grande Oaks Dr	26	Tower Rd
13	He Mccracken Cir	27	Windrush Ln
14	Kitty Rd	28	Hilderbrand
Source: Beaufort County			

One area of inconsistency is the segment of Goethe Road between Dr. Mellichamp Drive (S-586) and Hilderbrand (S-40). The County claims Goethe from May River Road north to Dr. Mellichamp while the State claims Goethe from Bluffton Road south to Hilderbrand. This small segment will need to be claimed by one of the entities.

While Beaufort County maintains its own roads, it does in fact perform maintenance on other roads within the Old Town through a "rocking program." Counties in South Carolina have traditionally performed limited maintenance of roads (gravel, scraping, ditch maintenance, etc.) that are not accepted as part of the county system. A number of Old Town roads have received service under this program. The number of roads still receiving this type of county maintenance must be determined through additional communication with county officials.

Town Streets: Bluffton acknowledges that it is responsible for the maintenance of Calhoun Street. The Town claimed Calhoun Street during the lighting and sidewalk improvement projects which took place in 2002.

Private Roads: Many of the new Planned Unit Developments in ~~the~~ Bluffton have privately built and maintained roads. While these roads can be publicly accessed, maintenance is not the responsibility of the State, County or Town.

Orphan Streets: Orphan streets are existing unclassified streets that are in use by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, but have not been claimed by SCDOT, Beaufort County or the Town. The Town is to decide what is to be done, from seeking county acceptance of the road or accepting it as a Town street. Orphan streets within the Old Town are the following:

Figure A9.3
"Orphan Roads" in the Old Town Area

	Name	Segment (if applicable)
1	Stone Street	Entire Street
2	Guerrard Avenue	Entire Street
3	Wharf Street	Entire Street
4	Robertson Street	Entire Street
5	Colcock Street	Entire Street
6	Dubois Lane	Entire Street
7	Pope Lane	Entire Street
8	Allen Street	West of Calhoun
9	Water Street	West of Calhoun, East of S-66
10	Green Street	Entire Street
11	Hickory Trace	Entire Street
12	Lawton	East of S-66

13	Maiden Lane	Entire Street
14	Bridge Street	West of S-31
15	Red Cedar Street	North of S-754
16	Whispering Pine Street	North of S-754
17	Pin Oak Street	North of S-754
Source: Town of Bluffton		

Ghost Streets: Ghost streets within the Old Town also warrant Town action. Ghost streets are shown on various maps and surveys of the Old Town, but no longer appear on the ground as public ways. These streets are not in use. Bluffton acknowledges these streets, but will not abandon them unless petitioned. Further identification and research should be carried out on ghost streets. The following are considered ghost streets.

Figure A9.4
"Ghost Streets" in the Old Town Area

	Name	Segment (if applicable)
1	Robertson Street	West end
2	Colcock Street	North end
3	Jason Street	East end
4	Maiden Lane	South of turn
5	Able Street	West end
Source: Town of Bluffton		

Road Classification

Figure A9.5 presents road network information, including functional class, number of lanes and medians.

Figure A9.5
Road Network and Functional Class

Road Name	Limits	Functional Class	Lanes	Median
SC 46- May River Road	County Line to SC 170	Principal Arterial	2	no
SC 46- May River Road	SC 170 to Bruin Road	Minor Arterial	2	no
S-120- Bruin Road	Burnt Church to SC 46	Major Collector	2	no
SC 46- Bluffton Road	Calhoun St. to US 278	Minor Arterial	2/4	no
SC 170- Okatie Highway	SC 46 to US 278	Principal Arterial	2	no
US 278- Fording Island Rd.	County Line to Simmonsville	Principal Arterial	4	yes
US 278- Fording Island Rd.	Simmonsville to Moss Creek	Principal Arterial	6	yes
S-29- Buck Island Road	US 278 to SC 46	Major Collector	2	no
S-474- Simmonsville Road	US 278 to Buck Island Rd.	Major Collector	2	no
S-163- Burnt Church Road	Alljoy Rd. to Burnt Church Rd.	Major Collector	2	no
Buckwalter Parkway	SC 46 to US 278	Major Collector	2	no
Bluffton Parkway	SC 170 to Burnt Church	Minor Arterial	4	yes
S-34- Gibbet Road	SC 170 to SC 46	Minor Collector	2	no
Old Miller Road	SC 46 to Grande Oaks	Minor Collector	2	no

Source: Town of Bluffton

Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes

A list of planned and programmed construction projects at the time this plan was prepared is included on Figure A9.6 on the following page.

Figure A9.6
Needed Road Capital Improvements And Cost To Address Future Demand, 2006-2025

Recommended Projects	Description	Costs	Added Lane Miles	Added Lane Capacity	Added Vehicle Miles Capacity
US 278 Capacity and Safety Improvements					
Buck Island Rd. to McGarveys Corner	Widening to 6 lanes with median	$22,500,000	8.26	9,000	74,340
US 278/SC 170 interchange	Interchange Re-configuration	$10,000,000	1.46	5,000	7,300
McGarveys Corner to Jasper Co. line	Widening to 6 lanes with median	$15,000,000	4.37	9,000	39,330
	Subtotal	**$47,500,000**	**14.09**		**120,970**
US 278 Frontage Road and Parcel Interconnectivity					
Meggett Tract Commercial to Buckwalter Parkway	Frontage Road, South Side	$900,000	0.42	5,450	2,289
Berkeley Hall to Bluffton Fire District Station	Frontage Road, North Side	$1,600,000	0.91	5,450	4,960
Graves Road Re-alignment	Re-alignment of intersection with Hampton Parkway	$1,000,000	0.58	5,450	3,161
Rose Hill to Buck Island Road	Parcel interconnectivity, South Side	$1,100,000	0.46	5,450	2,507
	Subtotal	**$4,600,000**	**2.37**		**12,917**
Other Arterial Road Network Capacity Improvements					
SC 170- McGarveys Corner to Tide Watch Dr.	Widening to 6 lanes with median	$6,000,000	1.76	9,000	15,840
SC 170- Tide Watch Dr. to SC 462	Widening to 6 lanes with median	$5,000,000	4.37	9,000	39,330
SC 170- SC 46 to McGarveys Corner	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$20,000,000	8.83	12,250	108,168
SC 46/SC 170 to Jasper County	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$10,000,000	4.17	12,250	51,083
SC 46- Bluffton Village to US 278	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$6,000,000	2.08	8,010	14,581
Bluffton Parkway- Simmonsville Road to SC 170	New Construction, 4-lanes with median	$17,380,000	22.73	8,000	181,840
Bluffton Parkway Ext.- Burnt Church Road to Mackays Creek & Buckwalter to Buck Island	New Construction, 4-lanes with median	$60,000,000	19.77	8,000	158,160
	Subtotal	**$124,380,000**	**63.71**		**569,002**
Collector Road network Capacity Improvements					
Bruin Rd. Ext. Burnt Church Rd. to Buckingham Plantation	New Construction, 2-lane Connector	$15,000,000	5.49	5,450	29,921
Buckwalter Parkway, US 278 to Bluffton Pkwy	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$5,700,000	3.26	8,050	26,243
Buckwalter Parkway, Bluffton Parkway to SC 46	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$7,600,000	3.3	8,050	26,565
Simmonsville Road- US 278 to Bluffton Parkway	Widening to 5 lanes	$8,000,000	1.59	8,500	13,515

Foreman Hill Road Extension	New Construction, 2 lane connector	$2,800,000	1.97	1,500	2,955
Burnt Church Road- Bluffton Pkwy to Bruin Road	Widening to 4 lanes with median	$5,000,000	1.67	8,500	14,195
Old Miller Road Extension	New Construction, 2 lane connector	$1,000,000	1.17	5,450	6,377
Buck Island Road- US 278 to Bluffton Pkwy	Widening to 5 lanes	$8,000,000	2.08	8,500	17,680
	Subtotal	**$53,100,000**	**20.53**		**137,451**
	Total Cost to address Needs, 2006-2025	**$176,480,000**	**80.17**		**702,889**
Source: Beaufort County Roads Impact Fee Update Support Study: South Beaufort County Service Area					

10 Priority Investment Act

CIP Fund
Project: General Pathways

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	Karen Jarrett - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Pathways	Recurring	30070618-XXXXX-00029

Project Description

This project provides funding for the design and construction of sidewalks and pathways, including both new sidewalks and extensions of existing sidewalks, with a focus on connectivity and pedestrian safety.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

According to the Comprehensive Plan, consideration must be given to provide safe pedestrian access to parks and schools, where children walk, and along streets that connect major activity centers or where pedestrian safety is impacted by heavy vehicular traffic. Sidewalks and pathways accommodate safe and convenient travel for bicyclists and for pedestrians, as well as providing the residents of Bluffton with an alternative means of transportation and opportunities for exercise and recreation. A planned implementation step is to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are designed to connect schools, community services, and destinations as well as provision of well designed and constructed pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Finally, the Town Council identified "Transportation & Pedestrian Safety" as one of their top priorities in the most recent Community Needs Assessment.

Method for Estimating Costs

Internal cost estimate based on construction bids and related data from prior projects.

O&M costs include maintenance only on installed sidewalks and related hardscape.

Project Status

Survey work completed on Goethe Road, Shults Road, Hildebrand Road, 8th Street, and 9th Street for possible sidewalks.
Conceptual plan for sidewalks in project work area completed.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00029	$ 375,000	$ -	$ 375,000	$ -	$ -	$ 375,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
Recurring	$ 375,000	$ 50,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 500,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE	$ 1,000	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 11,000
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ 1,000	$ 2,500	$ 3,500	$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 11,000

CIP and Stormwater Funds
Project: Buck Island-Simmonsville (BIS) Sewer (Phase 3)

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	John Hutchinson - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Sewer & Water	FY 2011 - FY 2015	30070618-XXXXX-00031

Project Description

Installation of sewer lines, extension of water lines and 1,200 linear feet of sidewalk in the southern portion of the Buck Island-Simmonsville neighborhood.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapter 7 of the Town of Bluffton's Comprehensive Plan identified the provision of sewer & water infrastructure as an important component of Community Facilities. This project also conforms to the direction in Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan in which Federal and State funding (e.g., CDBG funds) should be sought for public infrastructure. The construction of sewer & water infrastructure was identified as a key recommendation in Chapter 6 of the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. Finally, the Town Council's annual assessment of community needs identified "BIS Sewer & Water" as one of their top priorities.

Method for Estimating Costs

Construction cost estimates prepared using current unit price information from the latest bid information received for the BIS Sewer Phase II project and quantities based on conceptual master plan prepared by Engineering. Operations & maintenance costs expected to be zero because the system will be turned over to the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA) upon completion of construction.

Project Status

The Town received an award of $500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Surveying and engineering work completed including surveyed easement plats, civil engineering design, and preliminary construction documents. Appraisals and review appraisals underway as needed for easement acquisition in accordance with State and Federal regulations. Bidding and construction phases will be scheduled upon completion of easement acquisition and State approvals.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00031	$ 300,000	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -	$ -	$ 300,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 1,365,003	$ 300,000				$ -	$ 1,665,003

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Note: No O&M costs for the Town as Beaufort-Jasper Water Authority (BJWSA) is responsible for O&M costs upon system acceptance.

CIP Fund
Project: Buck Island-Simmonsville (BIS) Sewer (Phase 4)

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	John Hutchinson - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Sewer & Water	FY 2014 - FY 2016	30070618-XXXXX-00041

Project Description

Installation of sewer lines and extension of water lines in the BIS Sewer Phase 4 work area including Simmonsville Road from its intersection with Douglis Lane north to the southern boundary of Windy Lakes; plus Douglis Lane, Little Possum Lane, and Possum Point Lane.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

In accordance with Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan, the provision of infrastructure such as public sewer and water would be considered an important component of Community Facilities. Chapter 10 reviews priority investment topics, and this project fits in appropriately, especially considering its use of leveraging to fund the work. In addition, Town Council identified the provision of sewer and water as one of its Top Community Needs and these services were consistently noted in the list as top priorities in the Buck Island-Simmonsville neighborhood planning process.

Method for Estimating Costs

Actual cost data from BIS Sewer Phase 2 and BIS Village Renaissance projects plus supplemental data from the Engineer for BIS Sewer Phase 3. Operations & maintenance costs expected to be zero because the system will be turned over to the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA) upon completion of construction.

Project Status

The Town received an award of $320,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.
Surveying and engineering work in progress.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00041	$ 160,000	$ -	$ 160,000	$ -	$ -	$ 160,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 120,000	$ 160,000	$ 970,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,250,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Note: No O&M costs for the Town as Beaufort-Jasper Water Authority (BJWSA) is responsible for O&M costs upon system acceptance.

CIP Fund
Project: Buck Island-Simmonsville (BIS) Sewer (Phases 5-7)

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	John Hutchinson - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Sewer & Water	FY 2015 - FY 2016	30070618-XXXXX-00044

Project Description

Installation of sewer lines in the remaining portions of the Buck Island-Simmonsville neighborhood currently unserved by public sewer.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapter 7 of the Town's Comprehensive Plan identified the provision of sewer and water infrastructure as an important component of Community Facilities. The construction of sewer and water infrastructure was identified as a key recommendation in Chapter 6 of the Buck Island-Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan. Finally, the Town Council's annual assessment of community needs identified "Sewer & Water" as one of their top priorities.

Method for Estimating Costs

Construction cost estimates prepared using current unit price information from the latest information received for nearby sewer projects and quantities based on conceptual master plan prepared by Engineer. Operating and maintenance costs expected to be zero because the system will be turned over to Beaufort-Jasper Water Authrority (BJWSA) upon completion of construction.

Project Status

The BIS Sewer Master Plan has been updated to identify remaining households not served by public sewer.
Meeting with Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority to review service options including gravity sewer and alternatives such as grinder stations.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00044	$ 150,000	$ -	$ 150,000	$ -	$ -	$ 150,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ -	$ 150,000	$ 1,850,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 2,000,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

CIP Fund
Project: Jason-Able Sewer

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	John Hutchinson - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Sewer & Water	FY 2015 - FY 2016	30070618-XXXXX-00045

Project Description

Installation of sewer lines in the Jason-Able neighborhood.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapter 7 of the Town's Comprehensive Plan identified the provision of sewer and water infrastructure as an important component of Community Facilities. The May River Watershed Action Plan envisioned the provision of sewer service to replace septic tanks within the watershed as a key activity, and the Jason-Able neighborhood falls within the watershed boundary. Finally, the Town Council's annual Community Needs Assessment identified "Sewer and Water" as one of the top priorities.

Method for Estimating Costs

Construction cost estimates prepared using current unit price information from the latest information received for nearby sewer projects and quantities based on conceptual master plan prepared by Engineer. Operating and maintenance costs expected to be zero because the system will be turned over to Beaufort-Jasper Water Authrority (BJWSA) upon completion of construction.

Project Status

The conceptual plan for Jason-Able was completed originally in the BIS Sewer Master Plan and updated in the May River Watershed Sewer Master Plan.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00045	$ 100,000	$ -	$ 100,000	$ -	$ -	$ 100,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ -	$ 100,000	$ 1,000,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 1,100,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Note: No O&M costs for the Town as Beaufort-Jasper Water Authority (BJWSA) is responsible for O&M costs upon system acceptance.

CIP Fund
Project: May River/Bruin Road Streetscape (Phases 3-Final)

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	Karen Jarrett - PM	Design

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Roadway Improvements	FY 2013 - FY 2016	30070618-XXXXX-00013

Project Description

The final phase of the May River Road Streetscape project includes the reconstruction of the roadway and installation of curb/gutter and sidewalks from Pin Oak Street to Whispering Pine Street. In addition, sidewalks will be installed on the north side of the roadway from Whispering Pine Street and Buck Island Road. Finally, street lights and landscaping will be installed between Pin Oak Street and Whispering Pine Street.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Improvement of the May River/Bruin Road corridor is an implementation step of the Old Town Master Plan supported by the Comprehensive Plan and the SC 46 Corridor Management Plan. The provision of sidewalks and on-street parking will improve the appearance of the downtown area while increasing safety for pedestrians. Sidewalks and pedestrian amenities are especially important in Old Town because the walkable character is threatened with increased traffic. The Old Town can be navigated by foot or bicycle, so it is essential to build upon its pedestrian scale. When planning future sidewalk projects, consideration must be given to provide safe pedestrian access to parks and schools, where children walk and along streets that connect major activity centers or where pedestrians comfort is impacted by vehicular traffic. Improving sidewalks and pedestrian connections within Bluffton will help draw regional trails and bike paths through the Town, which can increase commerce and tourism. In keeping with the vision of a walkable community, Phase 2 and 3 will provide additional sidewalk from the terminus of the roadway construction at Whispering Pines to Buck Island Road.

Method for Estimating Costs

Consultant unit price estimate of concept scope.
O&M costs reflect maintenance of hardscape/landscape, stormwater and related improvements. No reserves in operating costs due to SCDOT road ownership.

Project Status

The Town was awarded a $400,000 grant by the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT). Additionally, the Town has been approved as a Local Public Agency (LPA) by SCDOT for grant administration purposes. The grant participation agreement has been prepared, negotiated and executed between the Town and SCDOT. The project has passed the NEPA Environmental Review Process. Currently, 90% of the construction drawings are completed by Engineer and under review by SCDOT.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00013	$ 200,000	$ -	$ 200,000	$ -	$ -	$ 200,000

Total Project Costs

PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 1,500,000	$ 200,000	$ 200,000	$ 275,000		$ -	$ 2,175,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE			$ 3,125	$ 6,250	$ 6,250	$ 15,625
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						

CIP Fund
Project: Parks & Recreation Improvements

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	James Ayers - PM	Planning

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Park Development	Recurring	30070618-XXXXX-00016

Project Description

Planning, design, and/or construction of improvements at parks and related facilities.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapters 7 and 10 of the Comprehensive Plan identify the provision of parks and recreation as an important part of the Town and it quality of life. Also, this on-going work supports Goal 5 (Upgraded Town Infrastructure and Facilities) in the Strategic Plan.

Method for Estimating Costs

Historical cost data from previous Town-related projects and activities.

Project Status

Staff reviewed needs of local parks and recreation facilities and related information.
Staff held a series of meetings with local stakeholders including Beaufort County officials, School District officials, and recreational program providers.

For O&M, operating costs cover well, electricity and related costs. Maintenance costs cover landscape/hardscape and related maintenance.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00016	$ 50,000	$ -	$ 50,000	$ -	$ -	$ 50,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
Recurring	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$ 250,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS	$ 1,200	$ 1,200	$ 1,200	$ 1,200	$ 1,200	$ 6,000
MAINTENANCE	$ 500	$ 1,000	$ 1,500	$ 2,000	$ 2,500	$ 7,500
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ 1,700	$ 2,200	$ 3,900	$ 3,200	$ 3,700	$ 13,500

CIP Fund
Project: Oyster Factory Park (Next Phase)

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	John Hutchinson - PM	Design
Project Type	**Start/Finish Date**	**Account number**
Park Development	FY 2014 - FY 2016	30070618-XXXXX-00017

Project Description

Improvements to Bluffton Oyster Factory Park are based on a conceptual plan drawn by Wood & Partners and based on public input as gathered at a series of charrette meetings and coordinated with Beaufort County. The next phase in this multi-year project includes the completion of parking areas and the next phase of preservation for the historic Garvin House.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapter 7 of the Comprehensive Plan proposed improvements to Oyster Factory Park including, but not limited to, the provision of improved parking and related activities. Chapter 4 of the Old Town Master Plan envisions the enhancement of connections to the May River with a special call-out to Oyster Factory Park with its access to the river as well as the need to preserve the Garvin House. Finally, the Town Council's current Strategic Plan places a priority on the proposed improvements under this project.

Method for Estimating Costs

Preliminary cost estimates based on expenditures in prior years with existing studies performed under previous phase.

O&M costs include the grading and maintenance of new drive aisles (aggregate material) and parking areas.

Project Status

Surveying work completed on parking lot, and civil engineering work 90% complete.
Dock permit received and working with SC Department of Natural Resources on authorization for grant expenditures and ADA accessibility.
Completed procurement of Garvin House consulting team with preliminary work underway; temporary stabilization received new cribbing support.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00017	$ 240,000	$ -	$ 240,000	$ -	$ -	$ 240,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 225,000	$ 240,000	$ 185,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 650,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE	$ 4,000	$ 6,000	$ 6,000	$ 6,000	$ 6,000	$ 28,000
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ 4,000	$ 6,000	$ 10,000	$ 6,000	$ 6,000	$ 28,000

CIP
Project: Calhoun Street and Adjacent Area Improvements

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	Karen Jarrett - PM	Planning

Project Type	Start/Finish Date	Account number
Old Town Improvements	FY 2014 - FY 2018	30070618-XXXXX-00042

Project Description

Calhoun Street is part of a mixed-use district with commercial, residential, and institutional (both school and church) components. Identified needs include, but are not limited to, parking, congestion during peak hours, school routing, pedestrian access, emergency vehicle access, property access, connectivity, streetscape and landscape elements, and stormwater issues. Initial phase of this project included the Calhoun Street and Adjacent Area Study, and work will transition from the Planning Phase to the Design Phase during FY 2015.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Plan envisions the provision of parking and promotion of connectivity, pedestrian access, and other matters related to the study work area. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the Old Town Master Plan reinforce these guiding principles including the need to "nurture your memorable streets" and "foster connectedness in all things." Finally, Town Council identified this project as a "top priority" in its Strategic Plan.

Method for Estimating Costs

The estimate for the study was based on previous studies of this nature performed in Bluffton.

O&M cost estimates based on road reserves (operations) and landscape/hardscape maintenance.

Project Status

Calhoun Street and adjacent area study underway with lead consultant Thomas & Hutton and subconsultant Sottile & Sottile.
Preliminary work included surveys, data gathering, site visits, public meetings and hands-on workshop.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00042	$ 200,000	$ -	$ 200,000	$ -	$ -	$ 200,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 125,000	$ 200,000	$ 1,000,000	$ 500,000	$ 500,000	$ -	$ 2,325,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS			$ 40,000	$ 60,000	$ 80,000	$ 180,000
MAINTENANCE			$ 10,000	$ 12,500	$ 15,000	$ 37,500
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ 50,000	$ 72,500	$ 95,000	$ 217,500

CIP
Project: Buckwalter Place Tech Park Infrastructure

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	James Ayers - PM	Planning
Project Type	**Start/Finish Date**	**Account number**
Town Facilities	FY 2014 - FY 2019	30070618-XXXXX-00040

Project Description

Planning, design, and construction of infrastructure improvements at Buckwalter Place Tech Park.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

In accordance with Chapters 6 and 10 of the Comprehensive Plan, the Buckwalter Place Tech Park is envisioned as a key center for economic development in the Town of Bluffton. Bluffton Town Council, Beaufort County Council, and Jasper County Council previously joined together to designate this site as a Multi-County Industrial Park (MCIP). In the Strategic Plan, Buckwalter Place Infrastructure was included as a priority item.

Method for Estimating Costs

Cost data from recent infrastructure projects in the local area.

For O&M costs, operating costs are based on road reserve for 20-year life, and maintenance costs are for landscape, hardscape, and related maintenance items.

Project Status

Staff reviewed project base map, data, conceptual plans, and information on the built environment.
Staff prepared cost estimates for multiple phases of perimeter roadway, connector roads, and related infrastructure improvements.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00040	$ 1,125,000	$ -	$ 1,125,000	$ -	$ -	$ 1,125,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 1,000,000	$ 1,125,000	$ 2,050,000	$ 1,215,000	$ 845,000	$ 500,000	$ 6,735,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS		$ 20,000	$ 70,000	$ 100,000	$ 120,000	$ 310,000
MAINTENANCE		$ 12,000	$ 24,000	$ 30,000	$ 36,000	$ 102,000
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
$	$ -	$ 32,000	$ 94,000	$ 130,000	$ 156,000	$ 412,000

CIP
Project: Bluffton Parkway Phase 5B

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	James Ayers - PM	Planning
Project Type	**Start/Finish Date**	**Account number**
Road Improvements	FY 2014 - FY 2015	30070618-XXXXX-00007

Project Description

Bluffton Parkway Phase 5B is the proposed east-west roadway connecting Bluffton Parkway from the Buck Island Road intersection to the intersection with Buckwalter Parkway. The work contemplated in FY 2015 includes planning work such as an assessment of funding options, applications for funding, and related activities.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

In accordance with Chapters 9 of the Comprehensive Plan, Bluffton Parkway Phase 5B is an important project designed to provide a direct east-west route on the Parkway and improve the traffic network. Town Council identified this project as a priority in its current Strategic Plan. Finally, Town Council identified "Transportation & Pedestrian Safety" as a priority in the most recent Community Needs Assessment.

Method for Estimating Costs

Cost estimate with Beaufort County.

O&M costs are not shown as this roadway is only in the planning phase at present.

Project Status

Beaufort County offered, and the Town accepted, an Intergovernmental Agreement for the preparation of an application to the State Infrastructure Bank.

The contract with the designated preparer has been executed and internal work is underway to gather necessary plans, data, and other pertinent information for the application.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00007	$ 25,000	$ -	$ 25,000	$ -	$ -	$ 25,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ 33,264	$ 25,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 58,264

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

CIP
Project: Land Acquisition

Department	Contact Person	Status of Project
Engineering & Public Works	James Ayers - PM	Planning
Project Type	**Start/Finish Date**	**Account number**
Land Acquisition	FY 2015 - FY 2017	30070618-XXXXX-00020

Project Description

Place holder for acquisition of land for municipal purposes as directed by Town Council.

Project Justification (Including Relationship to Town Strategic Plan Goals/Objectives)

In accordance with Chapters 7 and 10 of the Comprehensive Plan, the potential for land acquisition is to be assessed by the Town Manager with direction from Town Council as appropriate. Town Council has identified the need to access the possibility of acquiring land for municipal purposes. In the most recent Strategic Plan from Town Council, potential needs for land acquisition (e.g., community park, parking, etc.) were listed in either the moderate, high, or top priority categories.

Method for Estimating Costs

Current year land acquisition values estimated via public record searches, listing prices, and related data.

No O&M costs are shown as land acquired would be undeveloped. Future improvements to land would be in the form of a separate CIP project at which time O&M will be estimated.

Project Status

Target properties for potential land acquisition identified.

Project Finance - Current Fiscal Year

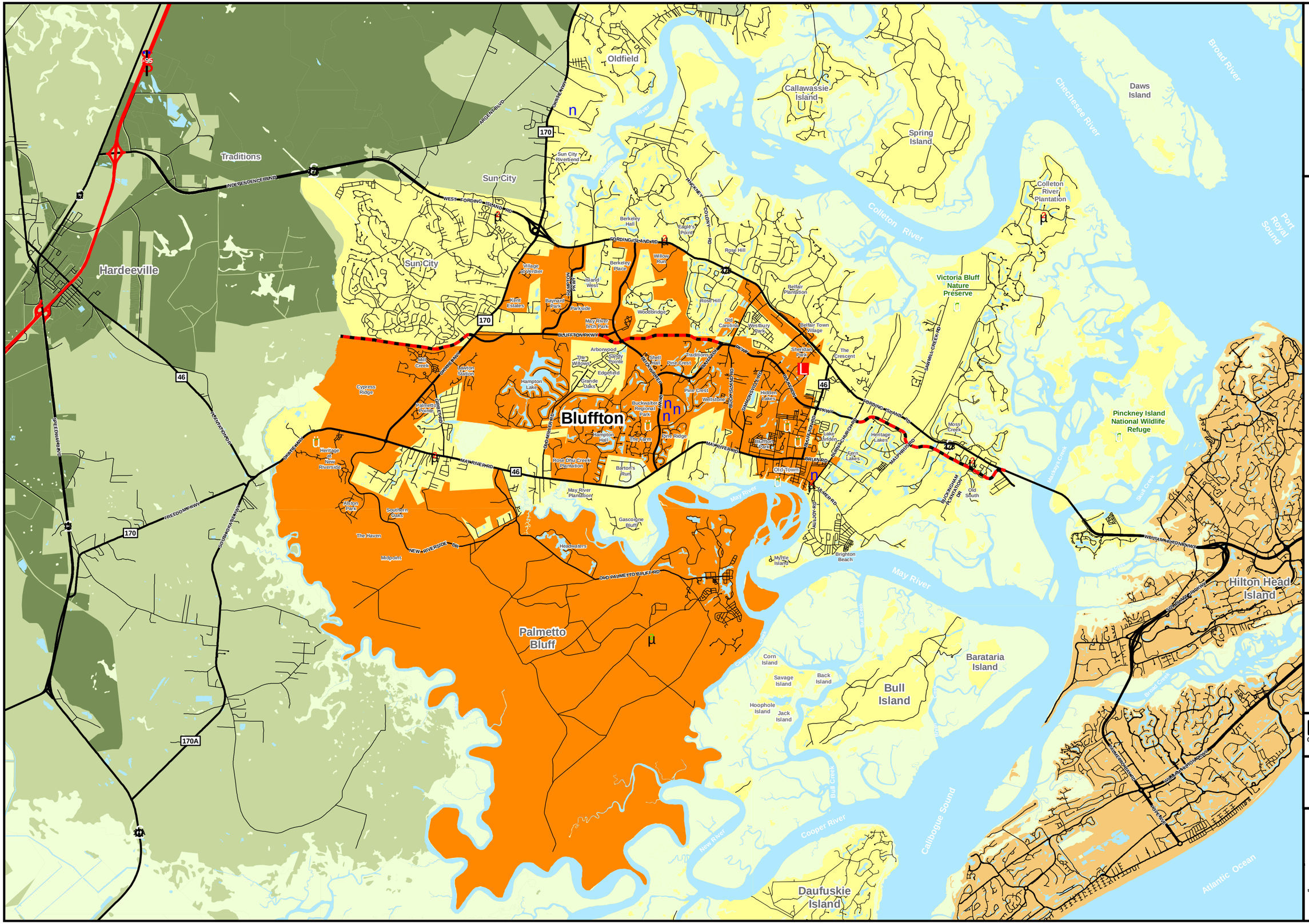
PROJECT NUMBER	ORIGINAL BUDGET	ADJUSTMENTS/ TRANSFERS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBERED	REMAINING
00020	$ 1,000,000	$ -	$ 1,000,000	$ -	$ -	$ 1,000,000

Total Project Costs

*PRIOR YEARS' COSTS	FY 2015 BUDGET	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL PROJECT FORECAST
$ -	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,500,000	$ 1,500,000		$ -	$ 4,000,000

Operations & Maintenance (O&M)

	FY 2015 FORECAST	FY 2016 FORECAST	FY 2017 FORECAST	FY 2018 FORECAST	FY 2019 FORECAST	TOTAL FORECAST
OPERATIONS						
MAINTENANCE						
ADDITIONAL FTE's						
OTHER						
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -



Town of Bluffton

Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

BLUFFTON REGION

Map 2.1

August 21, 2007

Legend

JURISDICTION

- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Interstate
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

FACILITIES

- Park/Recreation
- Fire Station
- Fire Station (Proposed)
- Police Station
- School

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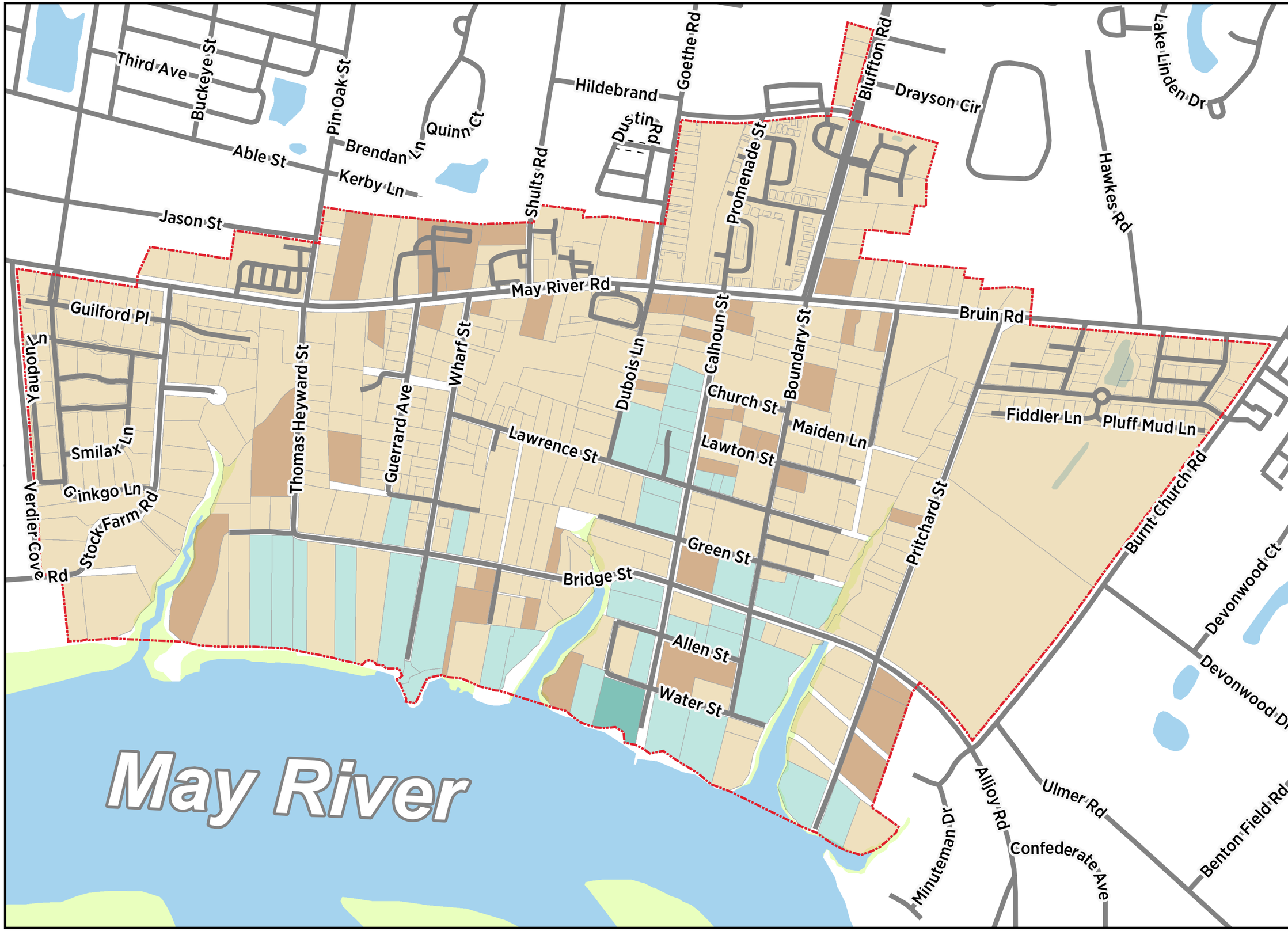

Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

Growth Management Department

Historic Structures

Map 3.1

Legend

- Historic Preservation Overlay District
- Street

Historic Parcels

- National Register of Historic Places
- Recognized Locally and Nationally
- Recognized Locally
- Old Town Historic District

Water

- Water
- Marsh

Effective 2014-10-08

Map Prepared By: GIS Office

0 1,250 2,500 5,000 7,500 10,000
Scale in Feet

NORTH

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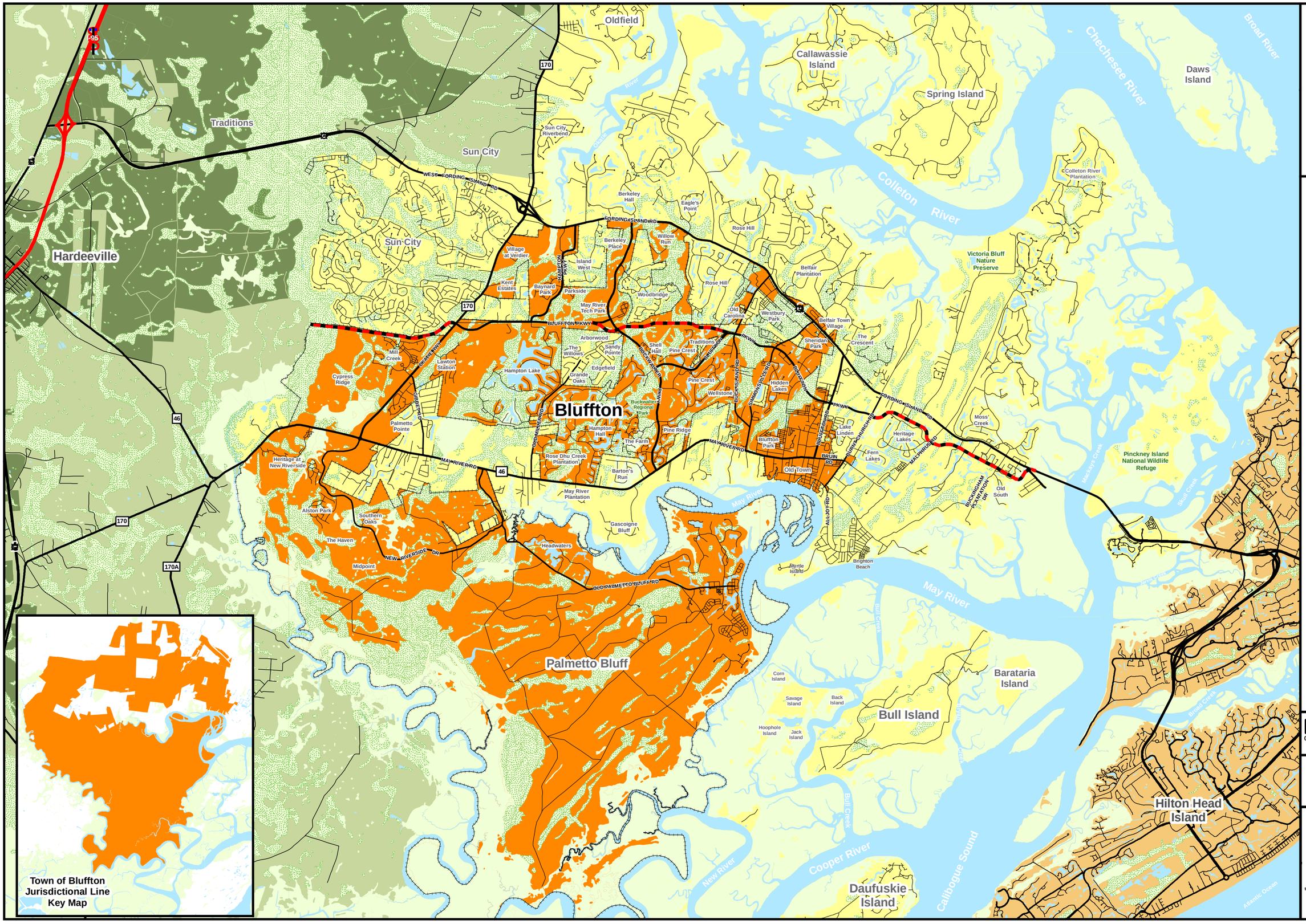
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

BLUFFTON WATER RESOURCES

Map 4.1

August 21, 2007



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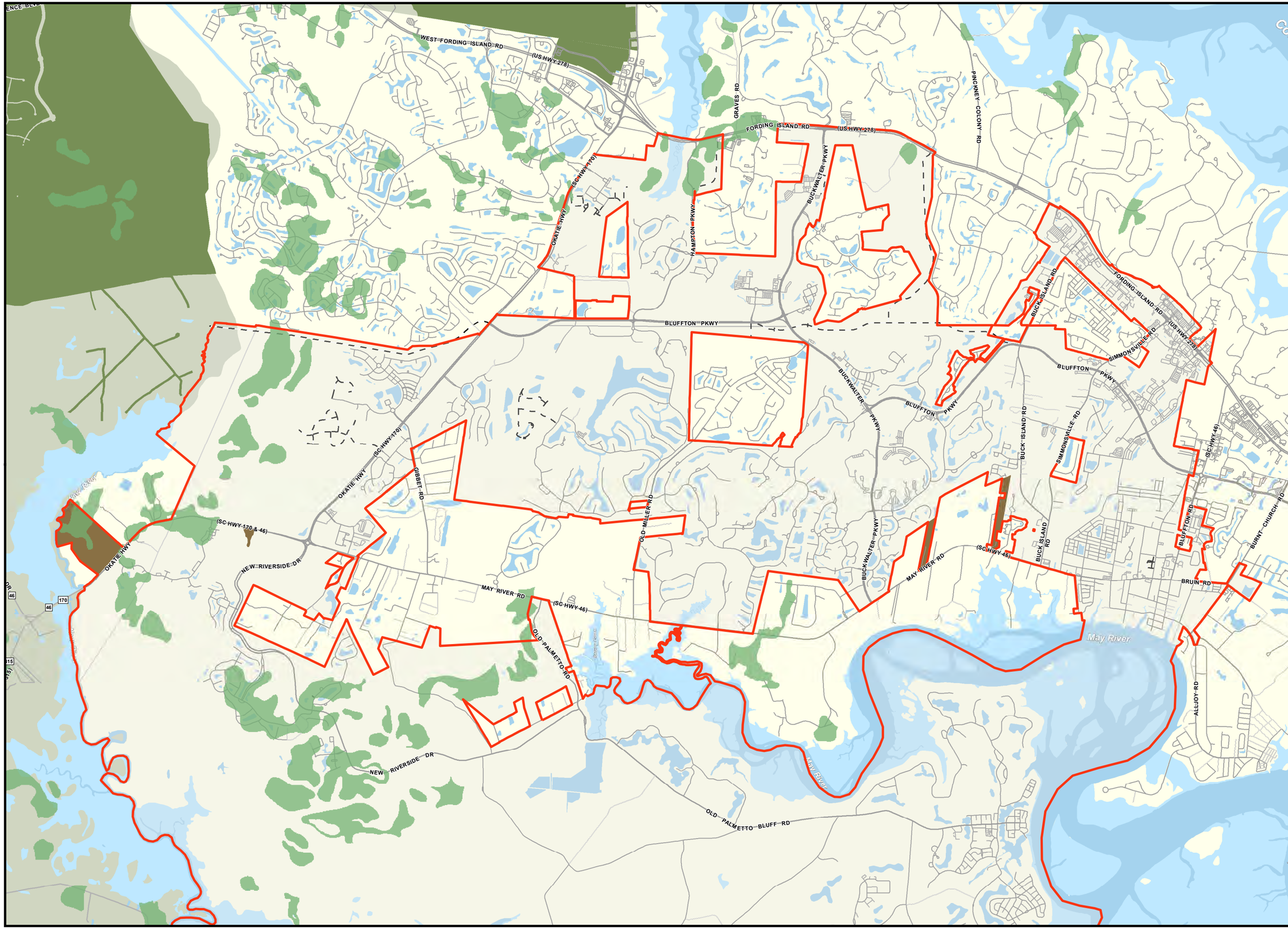
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

Growth Management Department

Agricultural Land Map 4.2



Legend

Prime Farmland Soils

ZONING

Agriculture

JURISDICTIONAL

Hardeeville

Beaufort County

Jasper County

Town of Bluffton

TRANSPORTATION

Paved Roads

Proposed Roads

HYDROLOGY

Marsh

Water

Effective 2014-09-18	Map Prepared By: GIS Office

Prime Farmland Layer
Credits: UTC SEWF

NORTH

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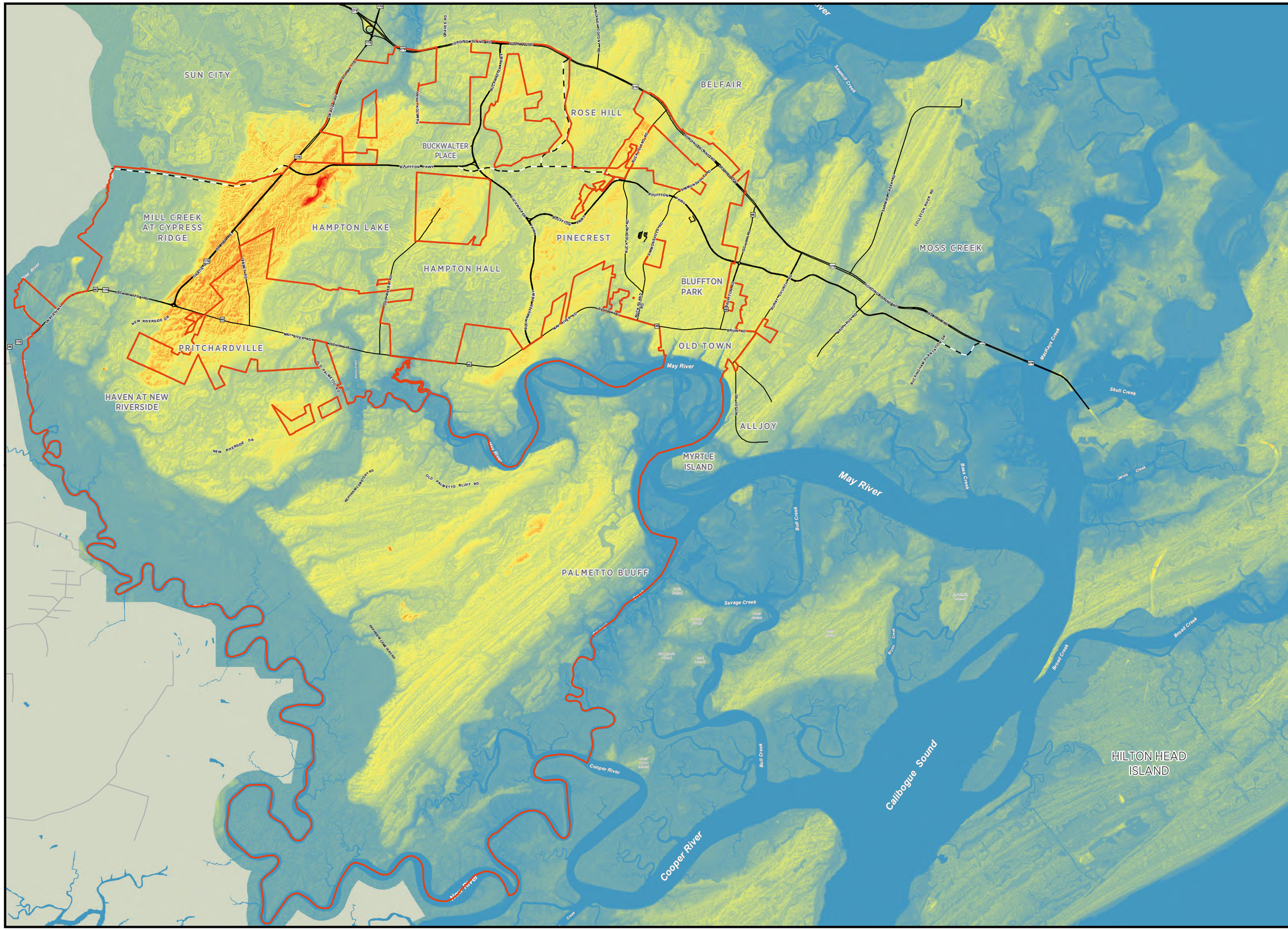

Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

Growth Management Department

Slope Characteristics Map 4.3

Legend

Elevation

Value

- 80 ft
- 72 ft
- 66 ft
- 59 ft
- 52 ft
- 46 ft
- 39 ft
- 32 ft
- 26 ft
- 19 ft
- 12 ft
- 6 ft
- Sea Level
- Water

Town Limits

Streets

Roads

Future

Effective	Map Prepared By:
2014-09-18	GIS Office

NORTH

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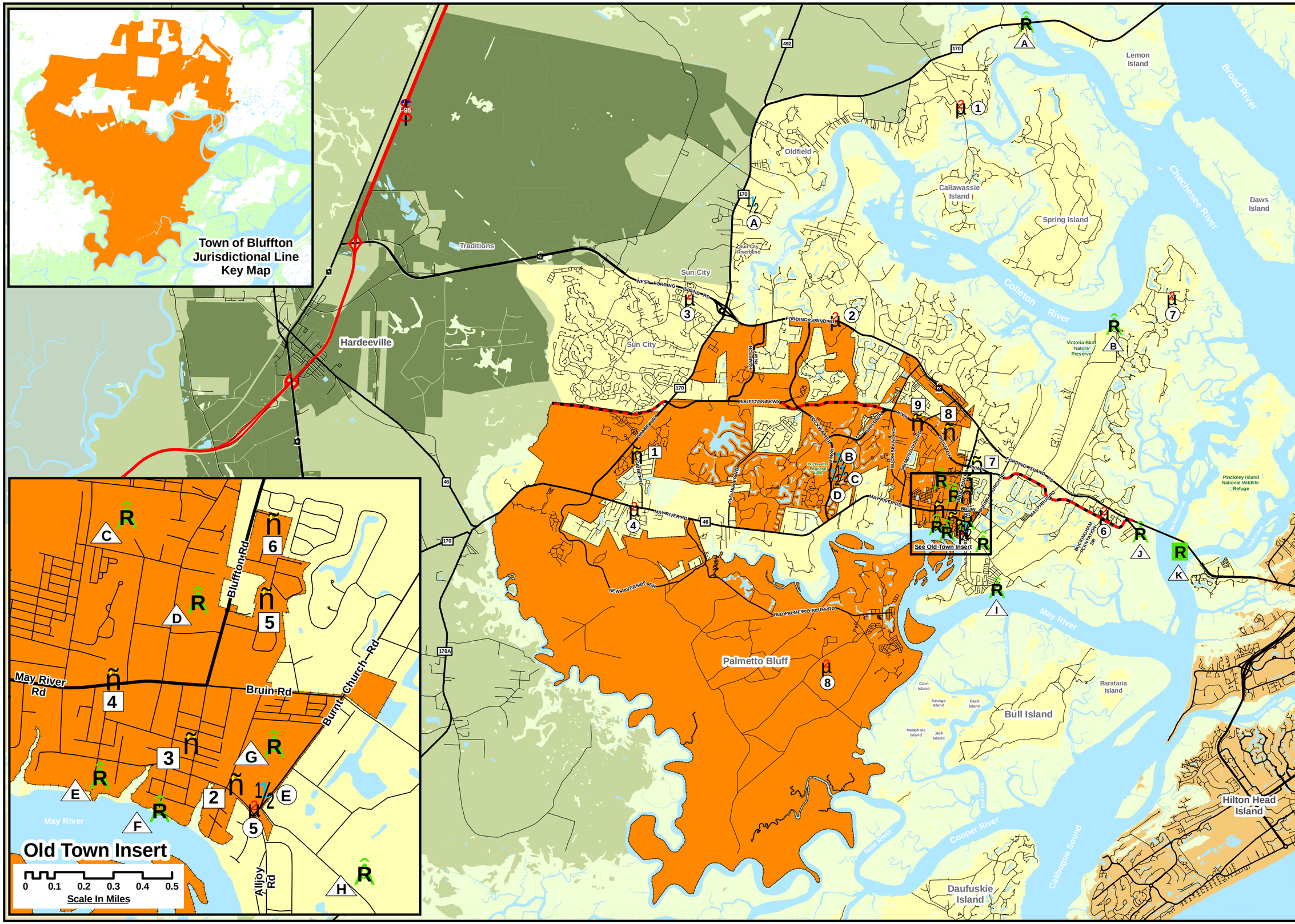
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Map 7.1

August 21, 2007



Legend

- Education
- Government
- Recreation
- Fire Station

JURISDICTION

- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County
- Bluffton Town Limits
- Effingham County

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Interstate
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

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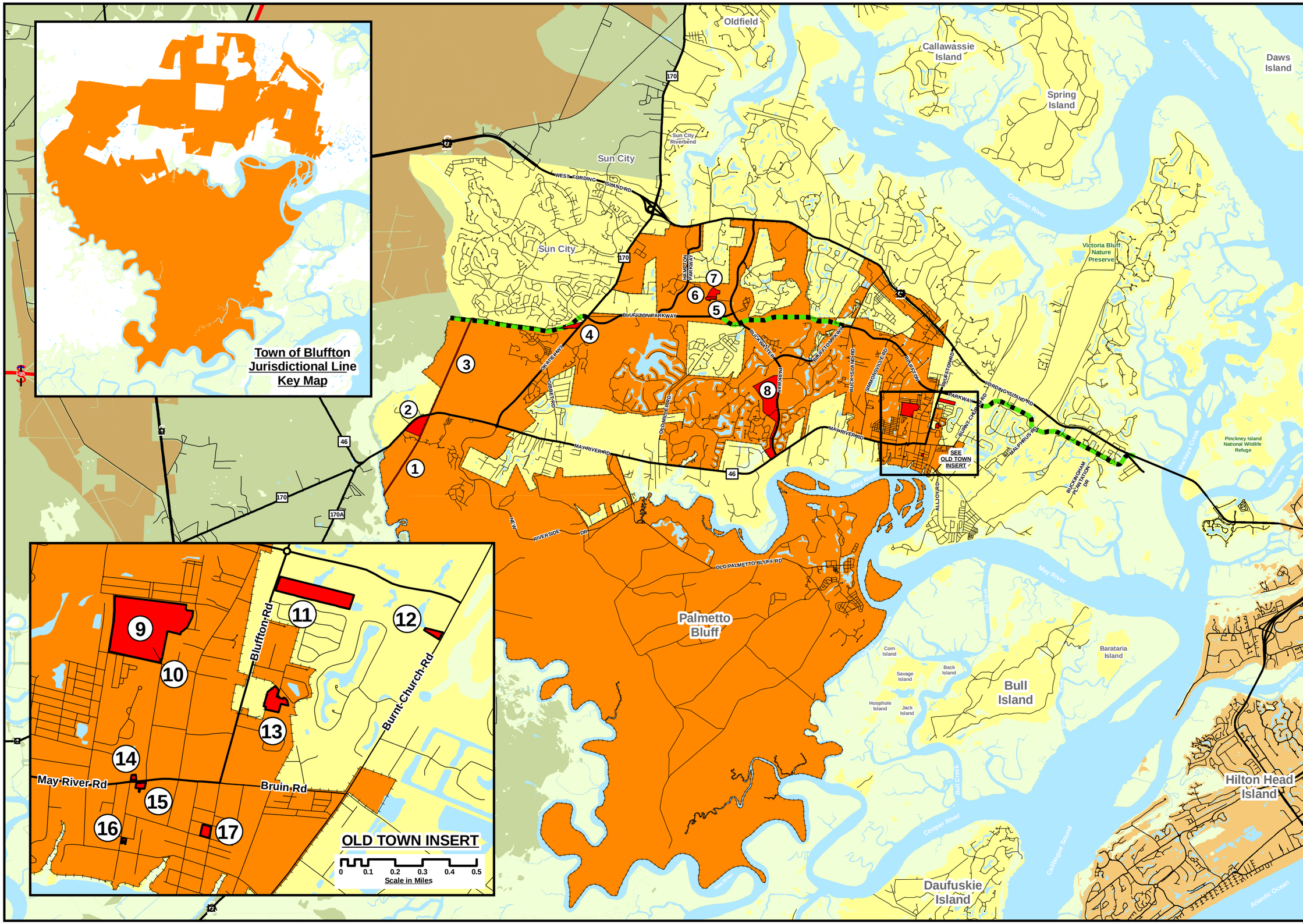
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

TOWN OWNED PROPERTY

Map 7.2

August 21, 2007



Legend

Property Name/ (Parcel #)

1. Linear Park Tract A (R610 028 000 0018 0000)
2. Park Site (R610 035 000 0016 0000)
3. Linear Park Tract B (R614 035 000 0011 0000)
4. Sun City Parcel 8C (R600 028 000 1006 0000)
5. Bluffton Tech Park (R610 030 000 1651 0000)
6. Bluffton Tech Park (R610 030 000 1650 0000)
7. Bluffton Tech Park (R610 030 000 1649 0000)
8. Buckwalter Regional Park (R610 038 000 0053 0000)
9. Shults Community Park (R610 039 000 0427 0000)
10. Sign Easement (R610 039 000 0556 0000)
11. Old Landfill (R601 039 000 0050 0000)
12. Bluffton Heights Open Space (R601 040 000 0200 0000)
13. Bluffton Village - Library (R613 039 000 0732 0000)
14. 1261 May River Road (R610 039 00A 0004 0000)
15. Community Building (R610 039 00A 0148 0000)
16. Wharf Street Building (R610 039 00A 169A 0000 or R610 039 00A 0276 0000)
17. Public Works/Old Library (R610 039 00A 0096 0000)

Jurisdiction

- Bluffton
- Hilton Head
- Beaufort County
- Hardeeville
- Jasper County
- Bluffton Town Limits

Transportation

- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

Hydrology

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Scale in Miles

north

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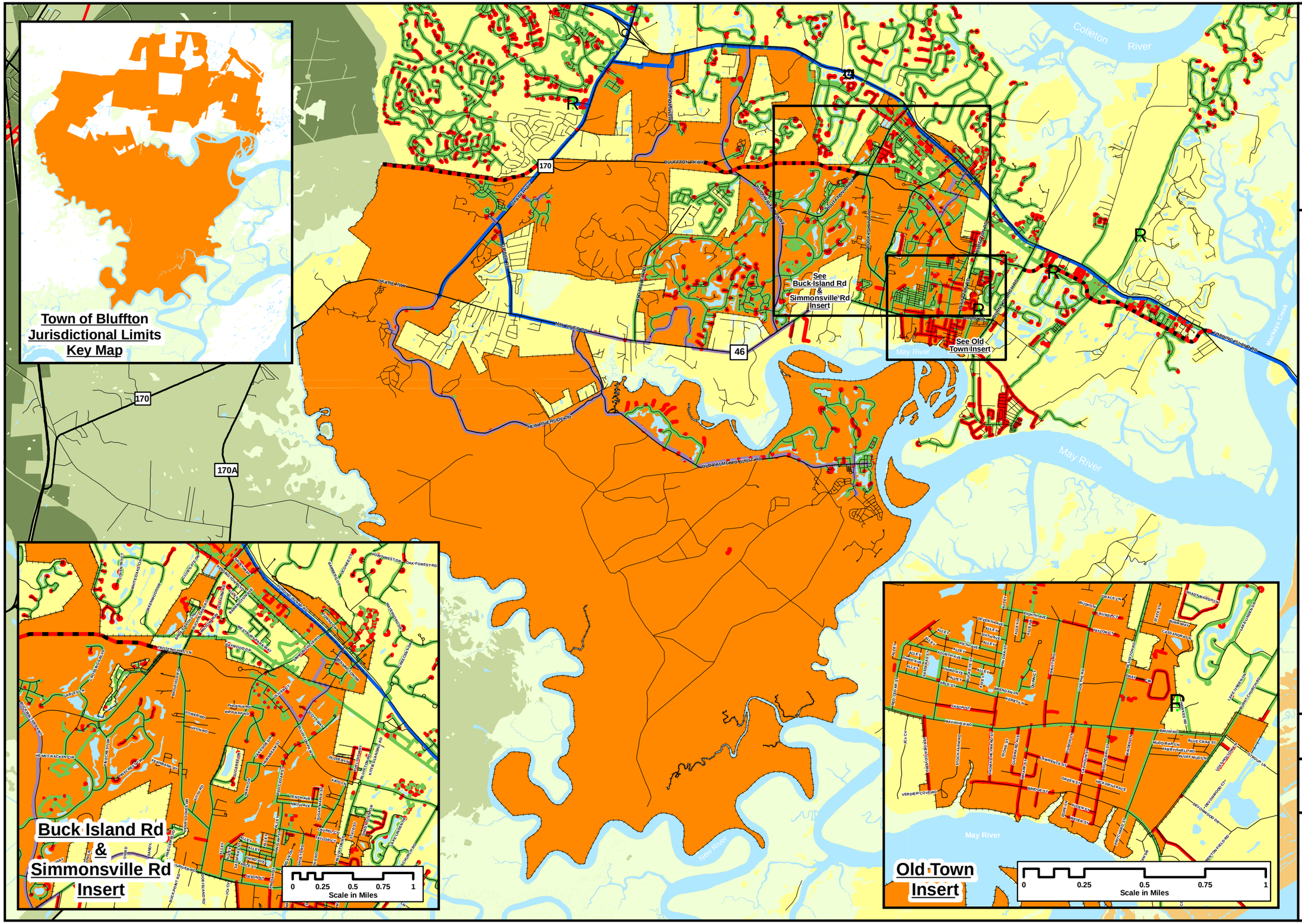
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

BJWSA WATER SERVICE

Map 7.3

August 21, 2007



LEGEND

WATER LINE PIPE DIAMETER

- 0 - 6" Dia
- 8" - 12" Dia
- 16" - 20" Dia
- 24"- 36" Dia
- Water Tank
- Water Treatment Plant

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton
- Beaufort County
- Hilton Head Island
- Jasper County
- Hardeeville
- Town of Bluffton Jurisdictional Line

TRANSPORTATION

- Road Centerline
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Data Source:
Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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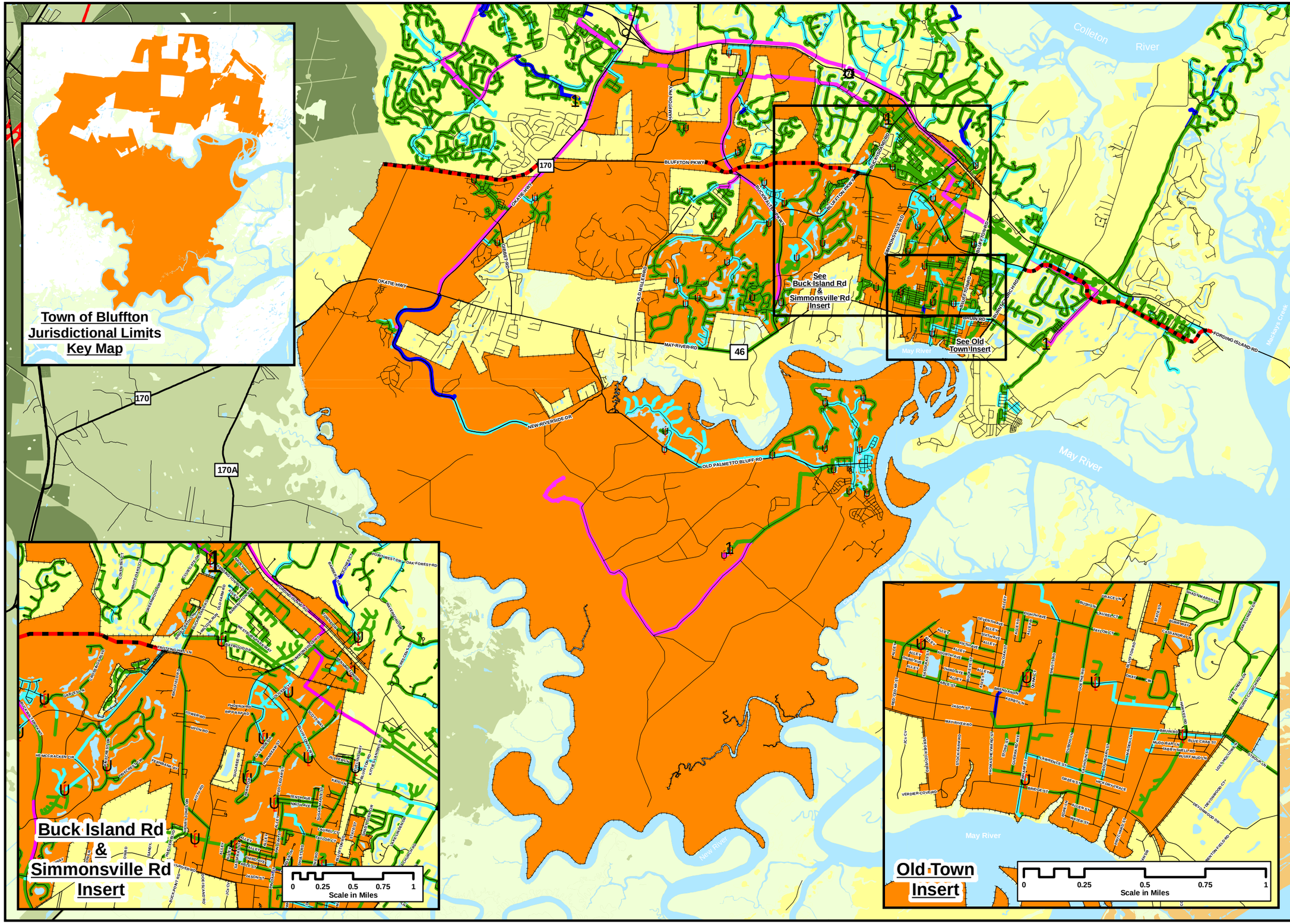
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

BJWSA SEWER SERVICE

Map 7.4

August 21, 2007



LEGEND

SEWER LINE PIPE DIAMETER

- 0 - 6" Dia
- 8" - 12" Dia
- 14" - 16" Dia
- 18" & Up Dia
- Sanitary Sewer Pump station
- Sanitary Sewer Treatment Plant

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton
- Beaufort County
- Hilton Head Island
- Jasper County
- Hardeeville
- Town of Bluffton Jurisdictional Line

TRANSPORTATION

- Road Centerline
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Data Source:
Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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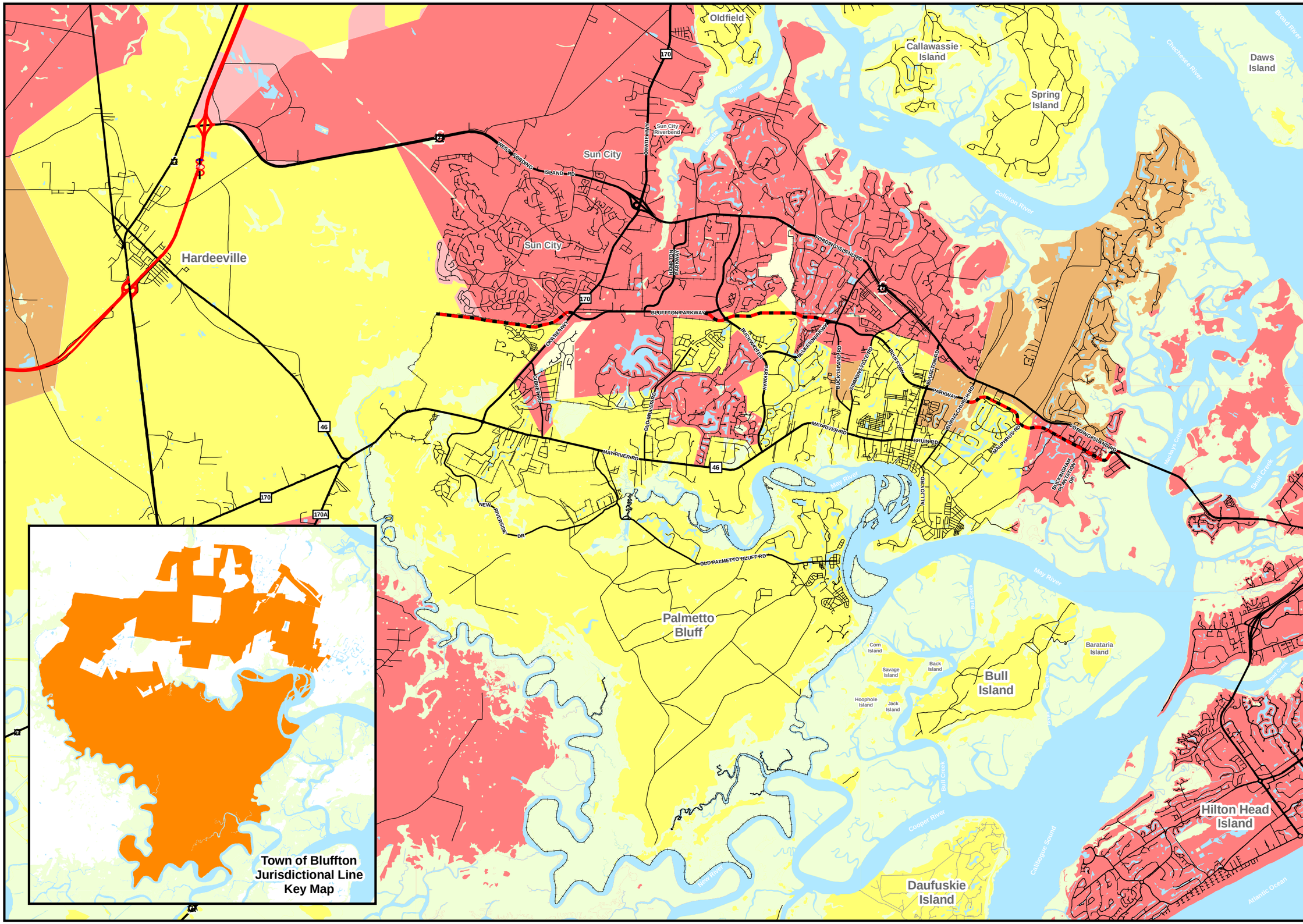
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

ELECTRICITY SERVICE AREAS

Map 7.5

August 21, 2007



Legend

- Palmetto Electric Service Area
- Negotiated by Palmetto Electric Service Area
- SCE&G Service Area
- Negotiated by SCE&G Service Area
- Unassigned by the State and opened to negotiation

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton Town Limits

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)
- Interstate

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Data Source:
Palmetto Electric Cooperative, Inc.

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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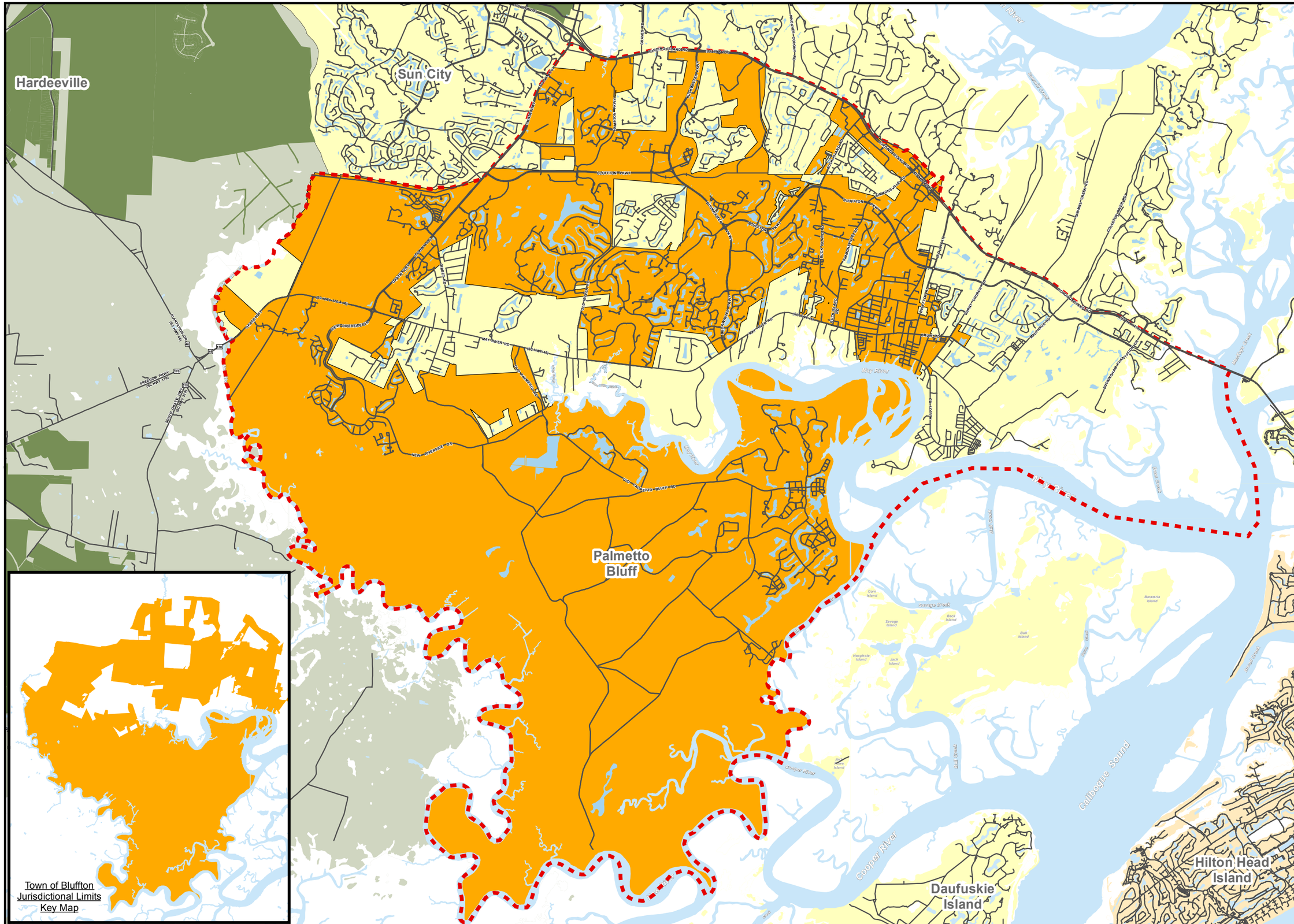
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

Growth Management Department

Future Annexation Area
Map 8.1



Legend

JURISDICTIONAL

- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County
- Town of Bluffton
- Town of Bluffton Future Limits

TRANSPORTATION

- Paved Roads
- Proposed Roads

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Effective 2014-11-13

Map Prepared By: GIS Office

NORTH

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Town of Bluffton

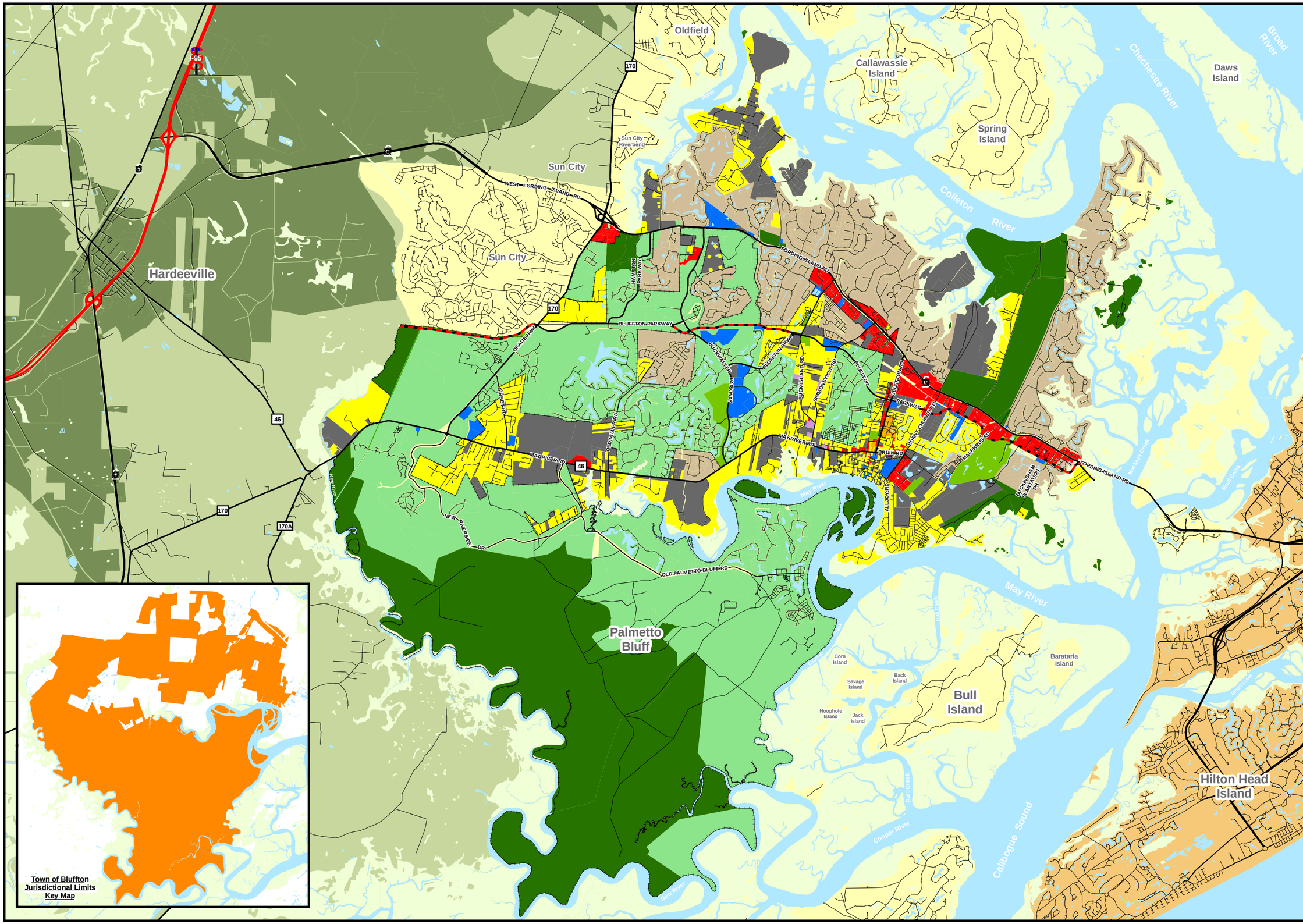
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

EXISTING LAND USE

Map 8.2

August 21, 2007



Town of Bluffton
Jurisdictional Limits
Key Map

Legend

EXISTING LAND USE

- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Civic/ Institutional
- Recreation/ Open Space
- Conservation/ Preservation
- Vacant/ Undeveloped
- Town PUD
- County PUD

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton Town Limits
- Beaufort County
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Jasper County

TRANSPORTATION

- Interstate
- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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Town of Bluffton

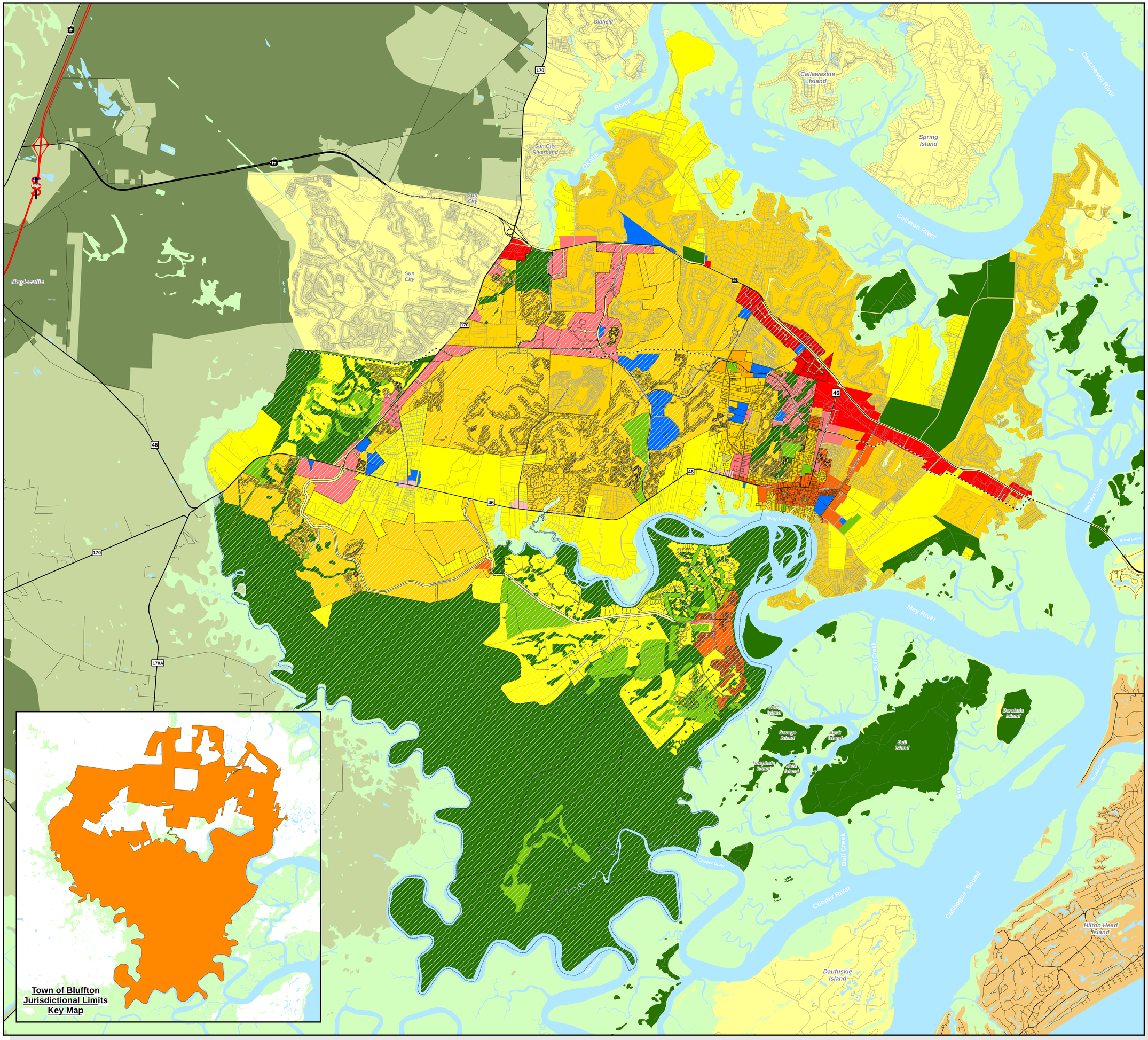
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

FUTURE LAND USE

Adopted September 4, 2007*
Updated May 22, 2008**

NOTICE: THIS MAP SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Legend

FUTURE LAND USE

- High Intensity Commercial
- Medium Intensity Commercial
- Low Intensity Commercial
- Mixed Use
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Civic/ Institutional
- Recreation/ Open Space
- Conservation/ Preservation

MISCELLANEOUS

- Parcel Line
- In PUD

JURISDICTIONAL

- Beaufort County
- Hilton Head Island
- Jasper County
- Hardeeville
- Bluffton Town Limits

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

*Adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan
**Parcels, Hardeeville Limits, Town Boundary Updated

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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Town of Bluffton

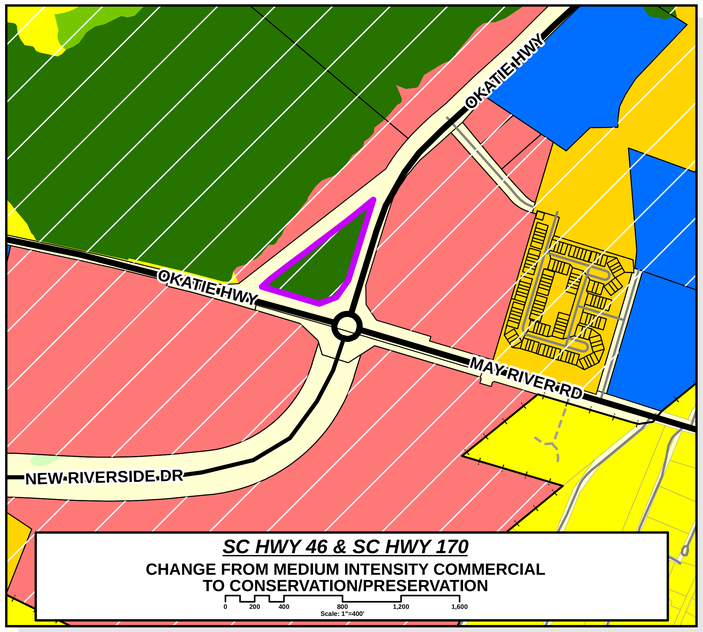
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE

(BLOWUP)

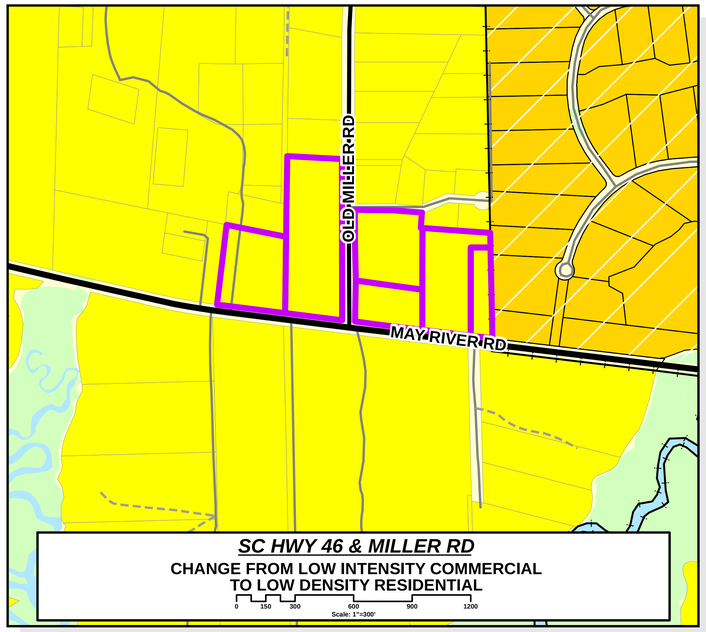
July 10, 2008



SC HWY 46 & SC HWY 170

CHANGE FROM MEDIUM INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION

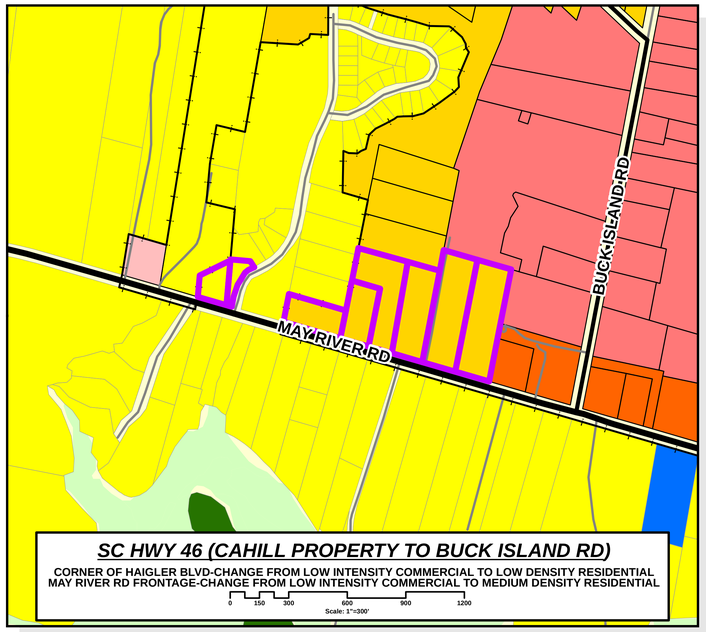
0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600
Scale: 1"=400'



SC HWY 46 & MILLER RD

CHANGE FROM LOW INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

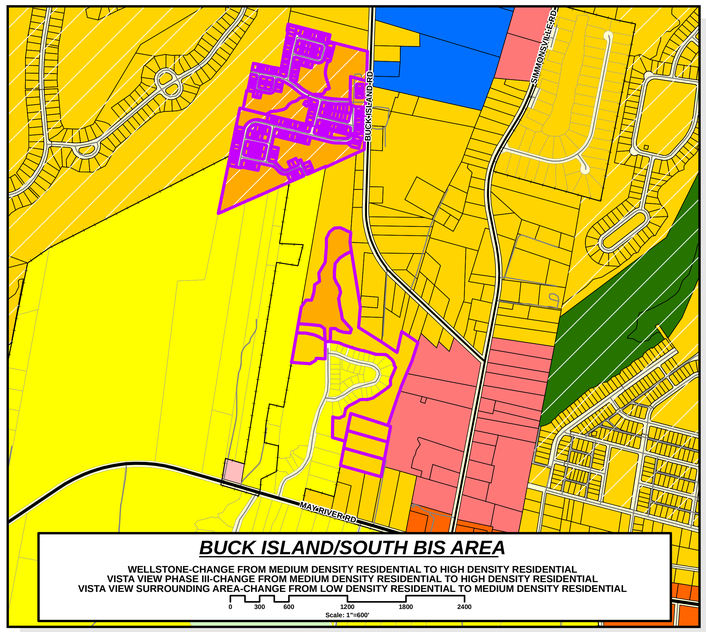
0 150 300 600 900 1200
Scale: 1"=300'



SC HWY 46 (CAHILL PROPERTY TO BUCK ISLAND RD)

CORNER OF HAIGLER BLVD-CHANGE FROM LOW INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
MAY RIVER RD FRONTAGE-CHANGE FROM LOW INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

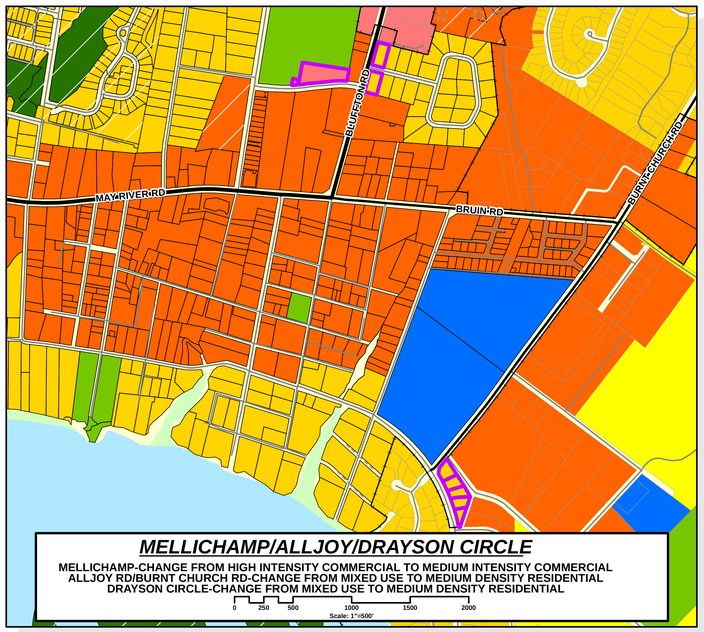
0 150 300 600 900 1200
Scale: 1"=300'



BUCK ISLAND/SOUTH BIS AREA

WELLSTONE-CHANGE FROM MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
VISTA VIEW PHASE III-CHANGE FROM MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
VISTA VIEW SURROUNDING AREA-CHANGE FROM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

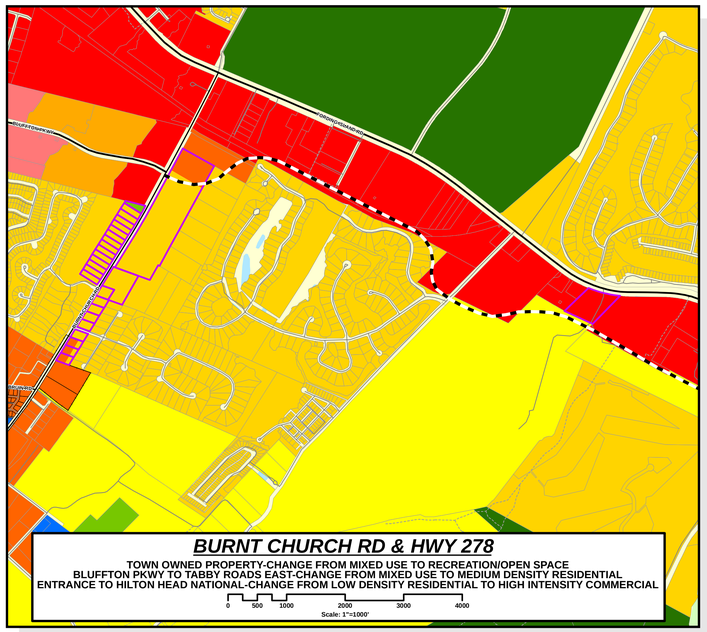
0 300 600 1200 1800 2400
Scale: 1"=600'



MELLICHAMP/ALLJOY/DRAYSON CIRCLE

MELLICHAMP-CHANGE FROM HIGH INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO MEDIUM INTENSITY COMMERCIAL
ALLJOY RD/BURNT CHURCH RD-CHANGE FROM MIXED USE TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
DRAYSON CIRCLE-CHANGE FROM MIXED USE TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

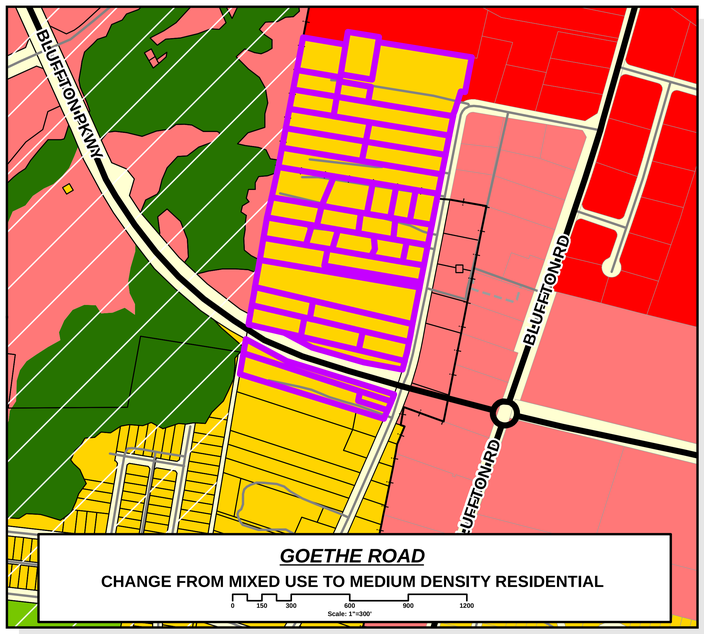
0 250 500 1000 1500 2000
Scale: 1"=500'



BURNT CHURCH RD & HWY 278

TOWN OWNED PROPERTY-CHANGE FROM MIXED USE TO RECREATION/OPEN SPACE
BLUFFTON PKWY TO TABBY ROADS EAST-CHANGE FROM MIXED USE TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
ENTRANCE TO HILTON HEAD NATIONAL-CHANGE FROM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO HIGH INTENSITY COMMERCIAL

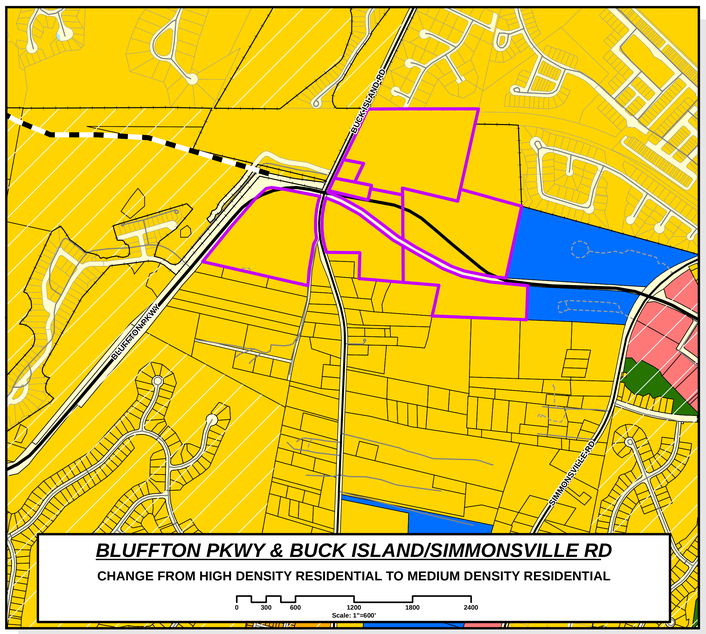
0 500 1000 2000 3000 4000
Scale: 1"=1000'



GOETHE ROAD

CHANGE FROM MIXED USE TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

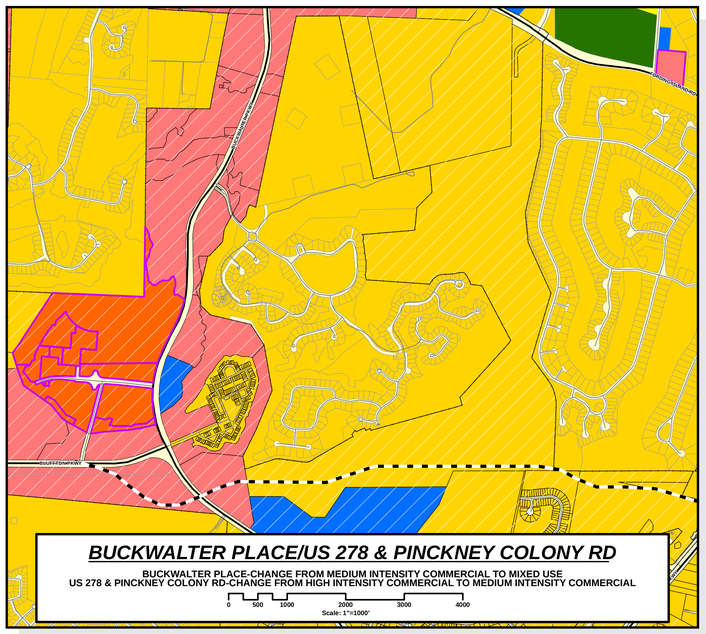
0 150 300 600 900 1200
Scale: 1"=300'



BLUFFTON PKWY & BUCK ISLAND/SIMMONSVILLE RD

CHANGE FROM HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

0 300 600 1200 1800 2400
Scale: 1"=600'



BUCKWALTER PLACE/US 278 & PINCKNEY COLONY RD

BUCKWALTER PLACE-CHANGE FROM MEDIUM INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO MIXED USE
US 278 & PINCKNEY COLONY RD-CHANGE FROM HIGH INTENSITY COMMERCIAL TO MEDIUM INTENSITY COMMERCIAL

0 500 1000 2000 3000 4000
Scale: 1"=1000'

Legend

Proposed Changes

FUTURE LAND USE

- High Intensity Commercial
- Medium Intensity Commercial
- Low Intensity Commercial
- Mixed Use
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Civic/ Institutional
- Recreation/ Open Space
- Conservation/ Preservation

MISCELLANEOUS

- Parcel Line
- In PUD

JURISDICTIONAL

- Beaufort County
- Hilton Head Island
- Jasper County
- Hardeeville
- Bluffton Town Limits

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

SCALE VARIES
(SEE INDIVIDUAL INSERTS)

www.townofbiltonhead.com

north

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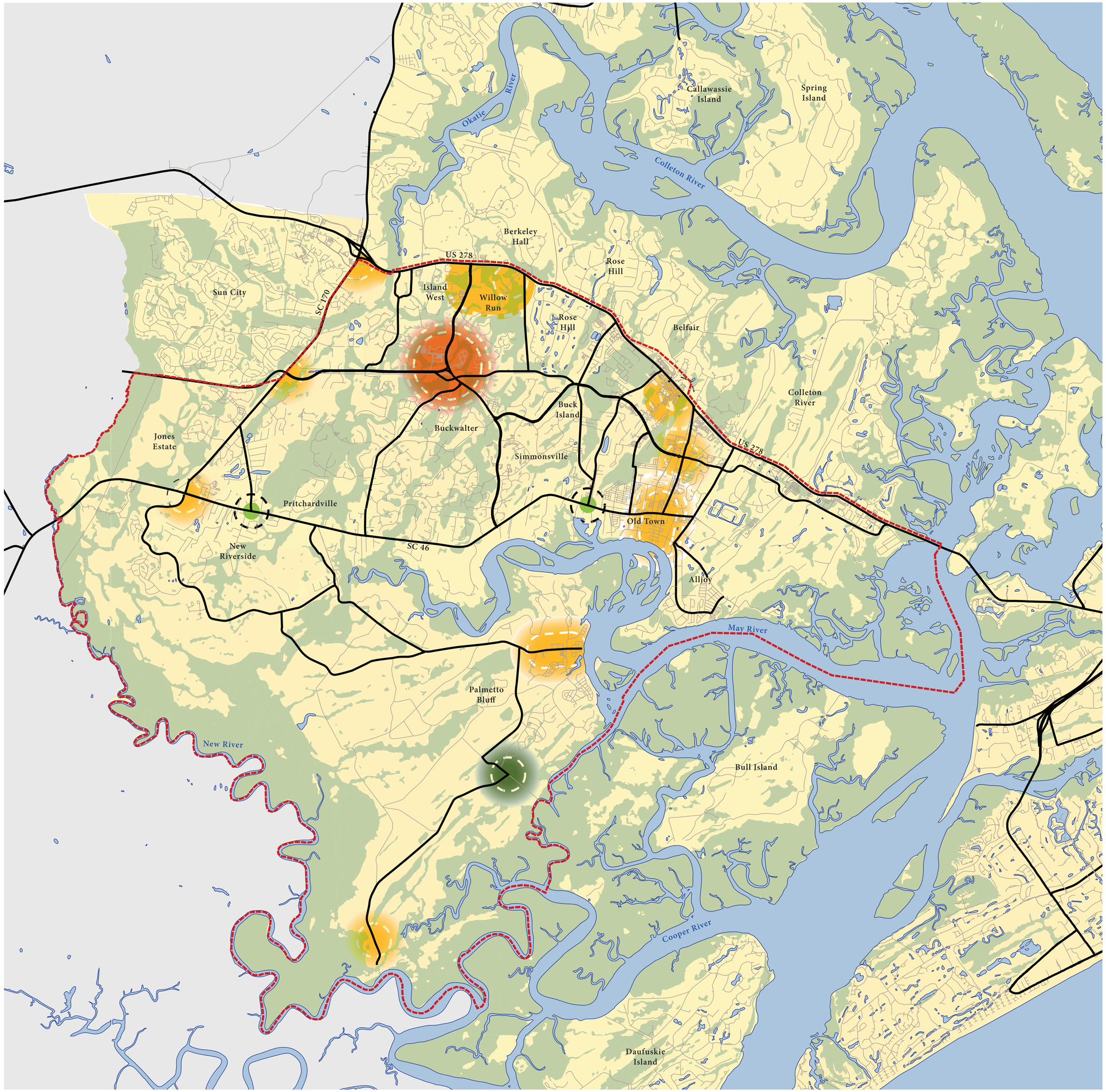
Town of Bluffton

Beaufort County, SC

GROWTH MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

GROWTH FRAMEWORK



Map Legend

- Water
- Municipality or Community Plan Boundary
- Marsh/Wetlands
- Town Center Place Type Assembly
- Village Place Type Assembly
- Hamlet Place Type Assembly
- Rural Crossroad Place Type Assembly
- Future Town of Bluffton Annexation
- Land Outside Beaufort County

OPTICOS LEEMAN GROUP

north

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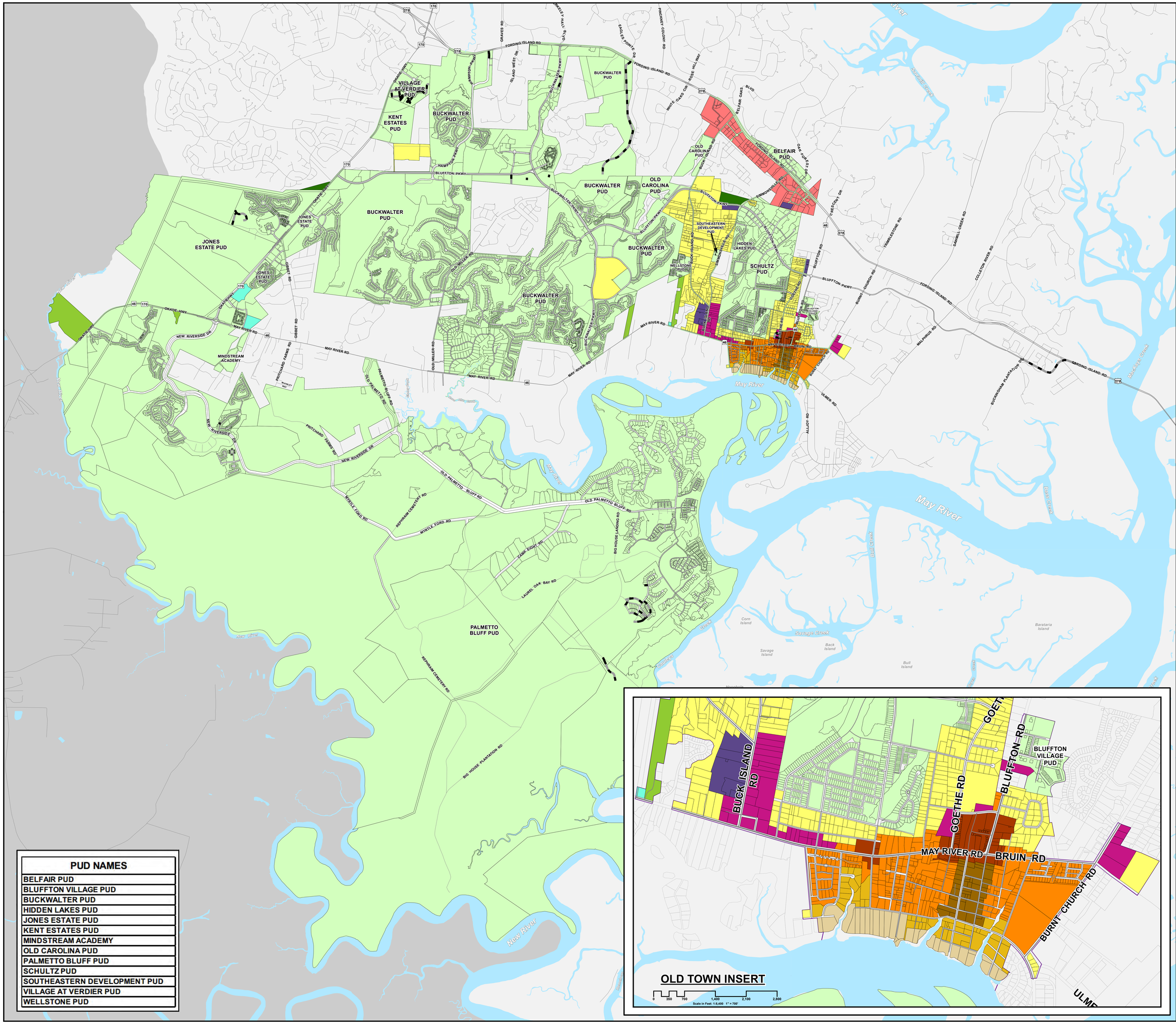
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

Growth Management Department

OFFICIAL ZONING MAP

Map 8.6



PUD NAMES
BELFAIR PUD
BLUFFTON VILLAGE PUD
BUCKWALTER PUD
HIDDEN LAKES PUD
JONES ESTATE PUD
KENT ESTATES PUD
MINDSTREAM ACADEMY
OLD CAROLINA PUD
PALMETTO BLUFF PUD
SCHULTZ PUD
SOUTHEASTERN DEVELOPMENT PUD
VILLAGE AT VERDIER PUD
WELLSTONE PUD

Legend

JURISDICTIONAL

- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

ZONING DISTRICT

- Preserve
- Agriculture
- Rural Mixed Use
- Residential General
- Neighborhood Core
- General Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Riverfront Edge-HD
- Neighborhood Conservation-HD
- Neighborhood General-HD
- Neighborhood Center-HD
- Neighborhood Core-HD
- Planned Unit Development

MISCELLANEOUS

- Parcel Lines

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Proposed Parkways

HYDROLOGY

- Water

Effective 2014-10-14	Map Prepared By: GIS Office

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 6,000 8,000

Scale in Feet: 1:24,000 1" = 2000'

NORTH

www.townofbluffton.sc.gov

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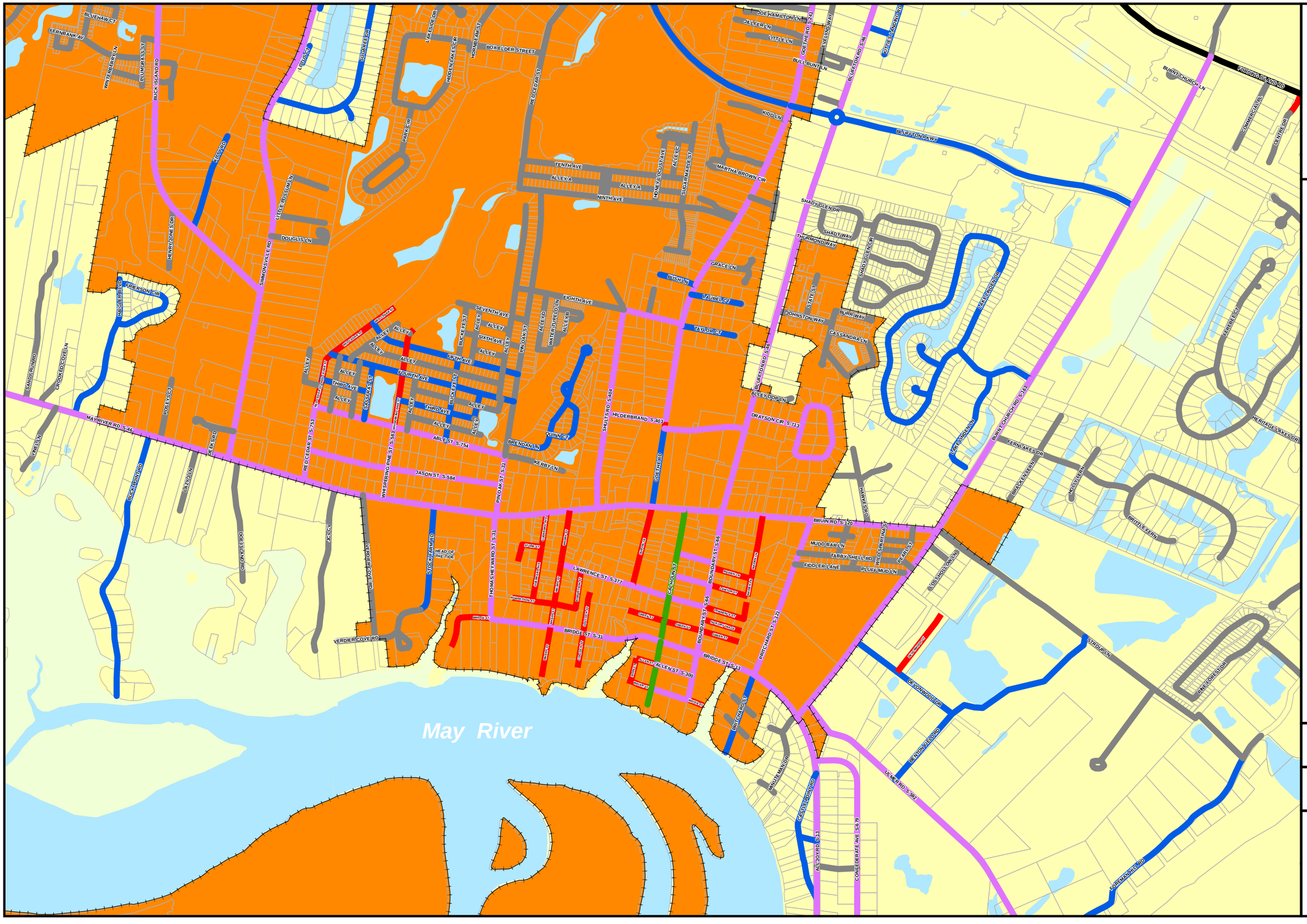

Town of Bluffton

Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

ROAD MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Map 9.1

August 21, 2007

Legend

ROAD RESPONSIBILTY DESIGNATION

- Unknown
- State
- County
- Private
- Municipal
- US (State)

MISC

- Parcel Lines

JURISDICTIONAL

- Town of Bluffton
- Beaufort County
- Town Limit Line

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

Sources:
Tony L. Chapman -
SC State Highway Dept. Engineer.
Robert E. Klink -
Beaufort County
Engineering Director .
Eddie Bellamy -
Beaufort County
Public Works Director.
Dan Morgan -
Beaufort County
GIS Director.

0 250 500 750 1,000
Scale in Feet

north

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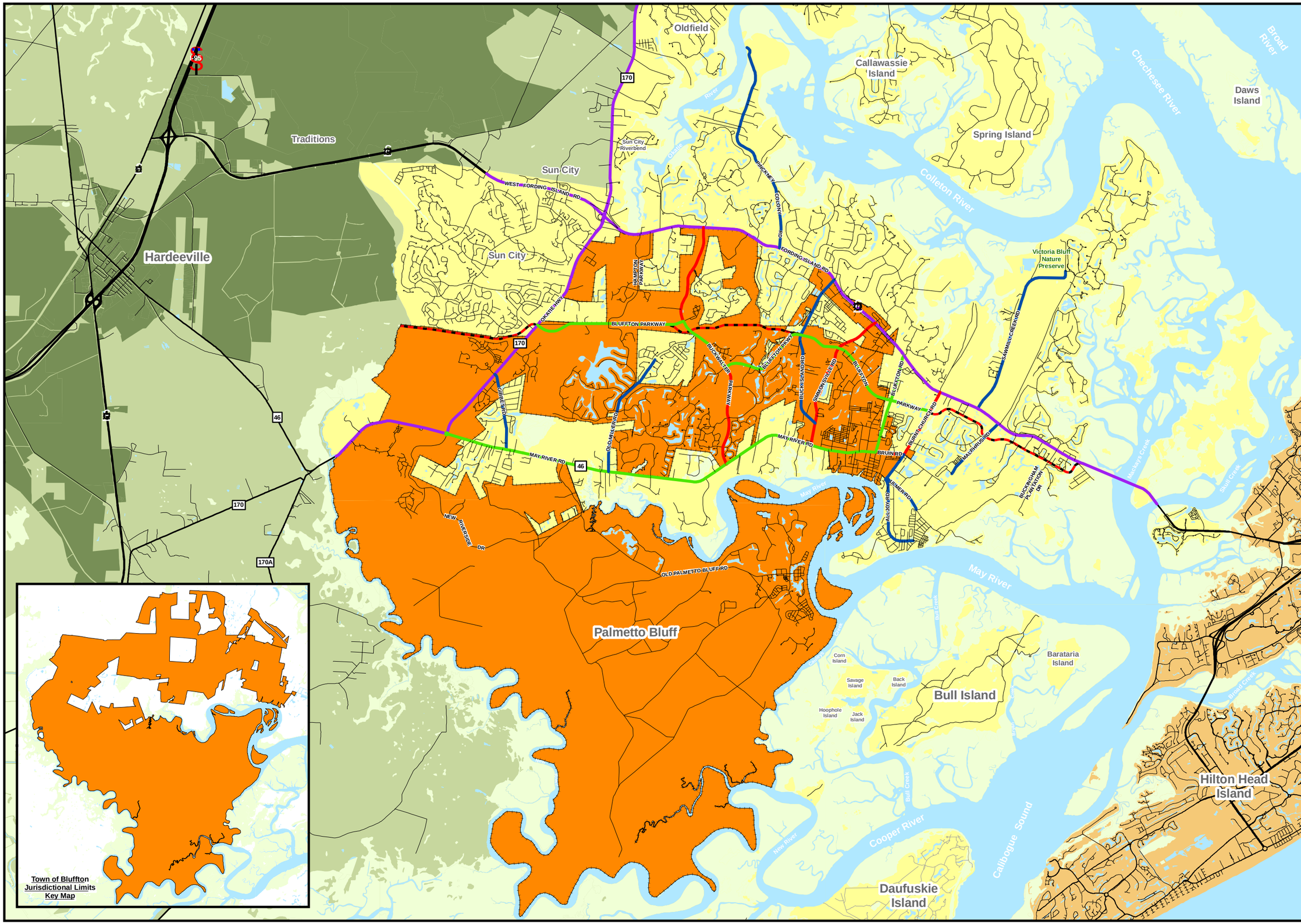
Town of Bluffton
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

ROAD FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Map 9.2

August 21, 2007



Legend

ROADWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton Town Limits
- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

TRANSPORTATION

- Interstate
- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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Town of Bluffton

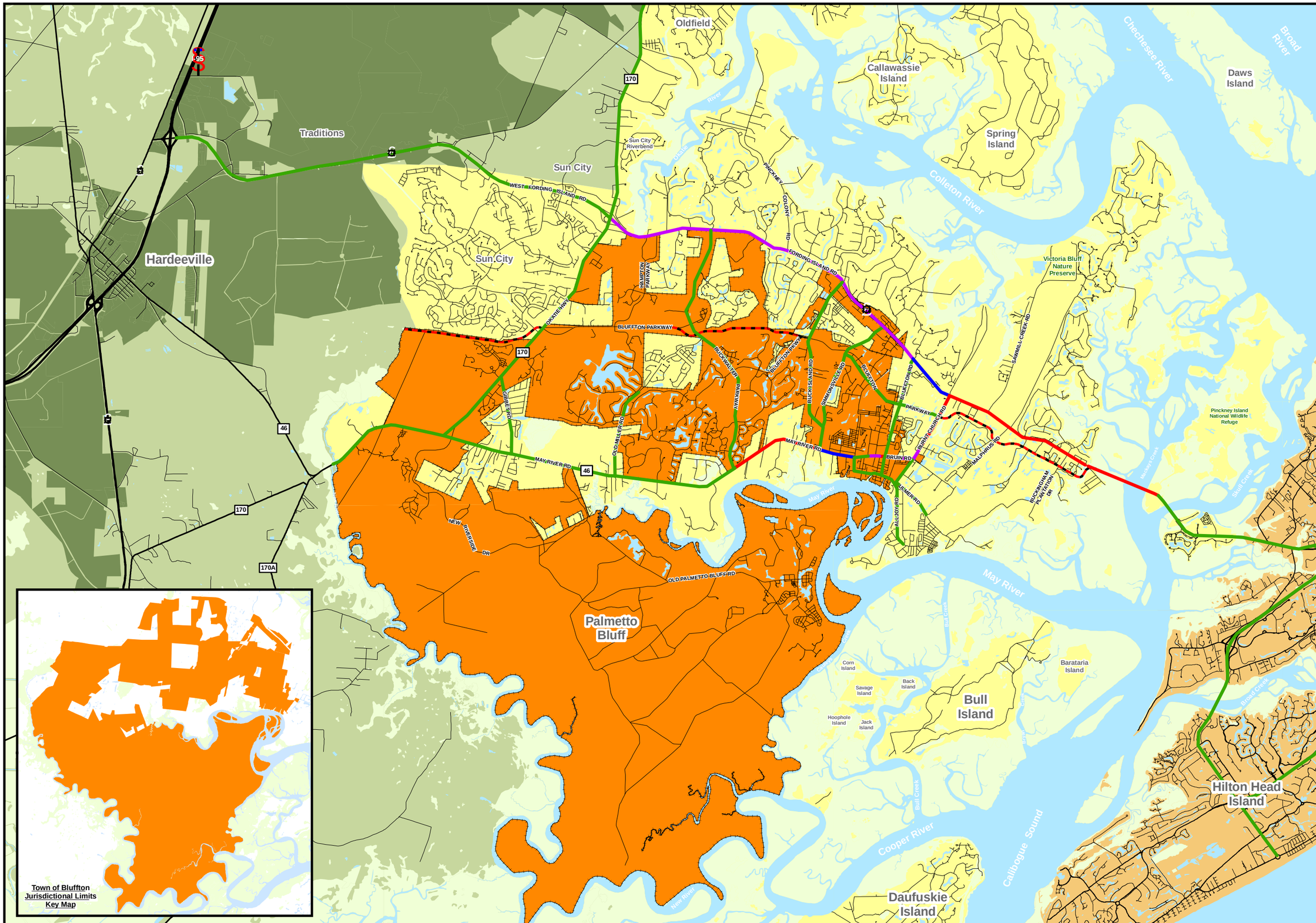
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

ROAD LEVEL OF SERVICE

Map 9.3

August 21, 2007



Legend

LEVEL OF QUALITY OF VEHICULAR FLOW

- A, B or C
- D
- E
- F

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton Town Limits
- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

TRANSPORTATION

- Interstate
- Roads
- Bluffton Parkway (Proposed)

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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Town of Bluffton

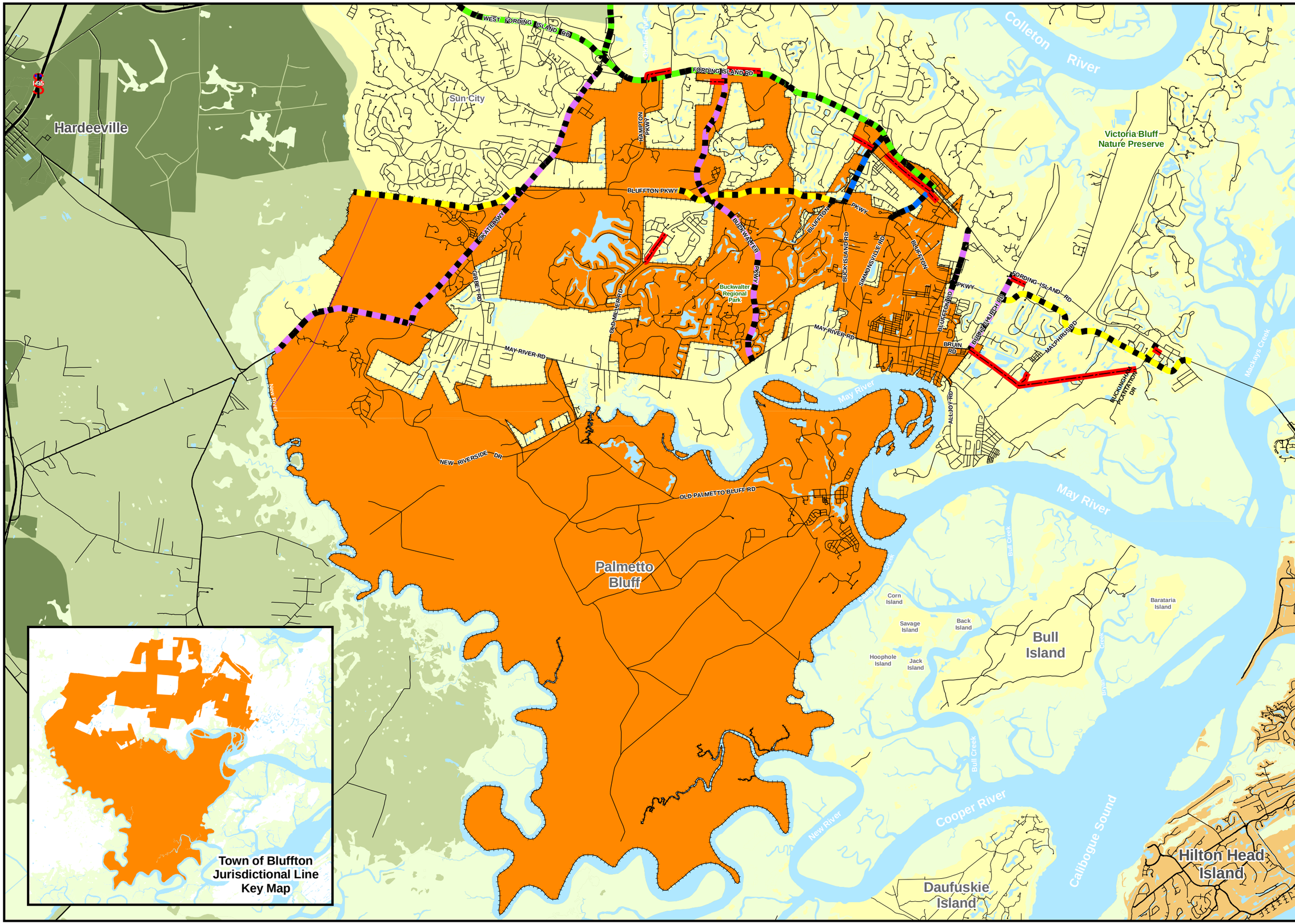
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

NEEDED ROADWAY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Map 9.4

August 21, 2007



Legend

- 2 Lane New
- 4 Lane New
- 4 Lane Widen
- 5 Lane Widen
- 6 Lane Widen

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County
- Bluffton Town Limits

TRANSPORTATION

- Roads
- Interstate

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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Town of Bluffton

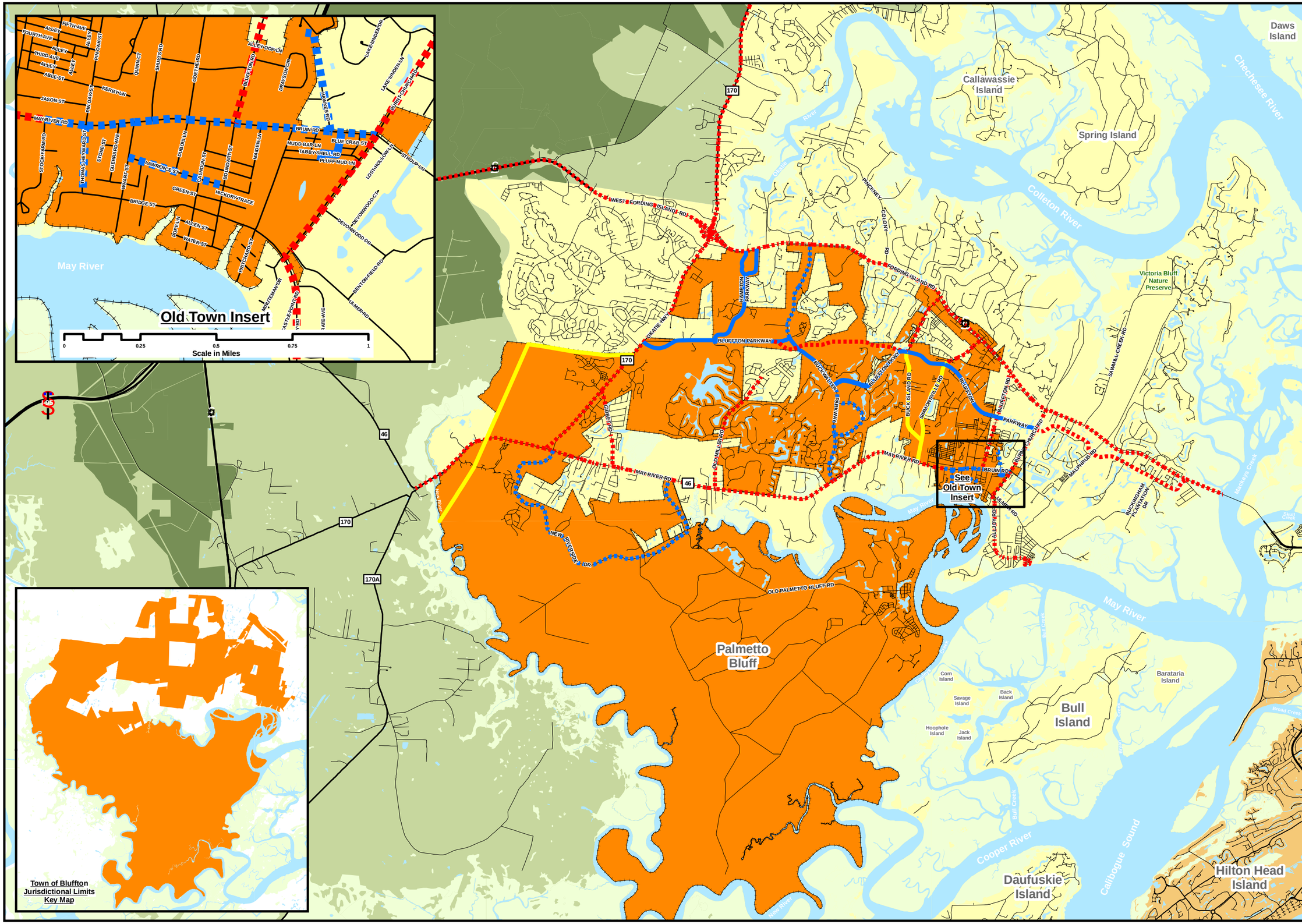
Beaufort County, SC

PLANNING
&
GROWTH MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT

CONCEPTUAL PATHWAYS

Map 9.5

August 21, 2007



Legend

PATHWAY CLASSIFICATIONS

- Existing
- Under Construction/ Under design
- Proposed
- Future

TRANSPORTATION

- Interstate
- Roads

JURISDICTIONAL

- Bluffton Town Limits
- Bluffton
- Hilton Head Island
- Hardeeville
- Beaufort County
- Jasper County

HYDROLOGY

- Marsh
- Water

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Scale in Miles

north

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