

For Immediate Release
CONTACT: Casey Fields
803.933.1256 or cfields@masc.sc

Municipal Association of South Carolina honors Bluffton with Achievement Award

The Town of Bluffton received a Municipal Achievement Award for two streetscape projects. Officials accepted the award during the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Annual Meeting on July 20. The town won in the 10,001 – 20,000 population category. Twenty-nine cities and towns submitted their projects and initiatives.

Bluffton has grown rapidly in recent years. Counting 750 residents in 1998, it now has nearly 20,000. With this growth, the downtown core known as the Bluffton Historic District has surged in popularity, underscoring the need for the town to improve its walkability, accessibility and connectivity.

The town completed two streetscape projects in 2018: one for May River Road and another for Dr. Mellichamp Drive, which parallels May River Road to the north. These projects established the two locations as gateways, adding 220 parking spaces, 98 street lights, nearly 5,000 linear feet of sidewalks, benches and improved stormwater drainage. The projects also help provide safe pathways compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act from one end of the district to the other. Additionally, the town installed a device known as a Stormceptor to prevent hazardous materials like oil, grit and other pollutants from reaching the May River.

Of the \$6.3 million cost of the streetscaping, the town used a combination of hospitality and accommodations taxes, stormwater utility fees, municipal improvement development funds, general fund money and capital improvement program funds. The project also included a grant from the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

In its next steps, the town will enact a streetscaping project for Calhoun Street, the town's primary street, and will also complete the year-long renovation of Bluffton Town Hall.

"The project shows how infrastructure improvements can improve a downtown and bring more residents and visitors to the town's core," said Eric Budds, interim executive director for the Municipal Association.

These winning entries represent innovative projects undertaken by Municipal Association member cities and towns. Information and a video about the project are available on the Association's website www.masc.sc (keyword: Achievement Awards).

The Municipal Association of South Carolina initiated the Achievement Awards in 1987 to recognize and encourage innovations and excellence in local government.

###