



Proposed Amendments to Southern Lowcountry Stormwater Design Manual and Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance

Presentation to May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee

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Request



Staff requests that the May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC) recommend approval to Town Council of Certain Amendments to various sections of the regional Southern Lowcountry Design Manual and Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance, as presented.

What does the Design Manual do?



- The Town of Bluffton's Stormwater Design Manual (SWDM) standardizes how stormwater elements of projects are designed, submitted, reviewed, approved, and inspected.
- This Manual's purpose is to:
 - Improve water quality through runoff reduction to the maximum extent practicable (MEP);
 - Prevent downstream stream bank and channel erosion;
 - Reduce downstream overbank flooding; and
 - Safely pass or reduce the runoff from extreme storm events.

Background



- Staff are proposing the following amendments to the Manual to align with UDO language and Beaufort County stormwater standards.
 - Provide clarifications on implementation of stormwater practices,
 - Enhance enforcement capabilities for post-construction maintenance of pre-MS4 communities,
 - Promote the use of Better Site Design principles through credits towards meeting stormwater retention volume requirements,
 - Establish mechanism for stormwater retention volume Fee-in-Lieu, and
 - Multiple housekeeping edits that do not change regulatory requirements.

Design Manual and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments



- Provide clarifications on implementation of stormwater practices
 - Includes refining design standards to ensure the intent of the manual agrees with field application. Examples include:
 - Amend 10% Analysis language to prioritize protection of the overall watershed, even if that results in lessened on-site detention requirements
 - Amends design specifications for bioretention areas (rain gardens) to remove seasonal high-water table as a limiting factor so that these practices can be utilized more frequently

Design Manual and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments

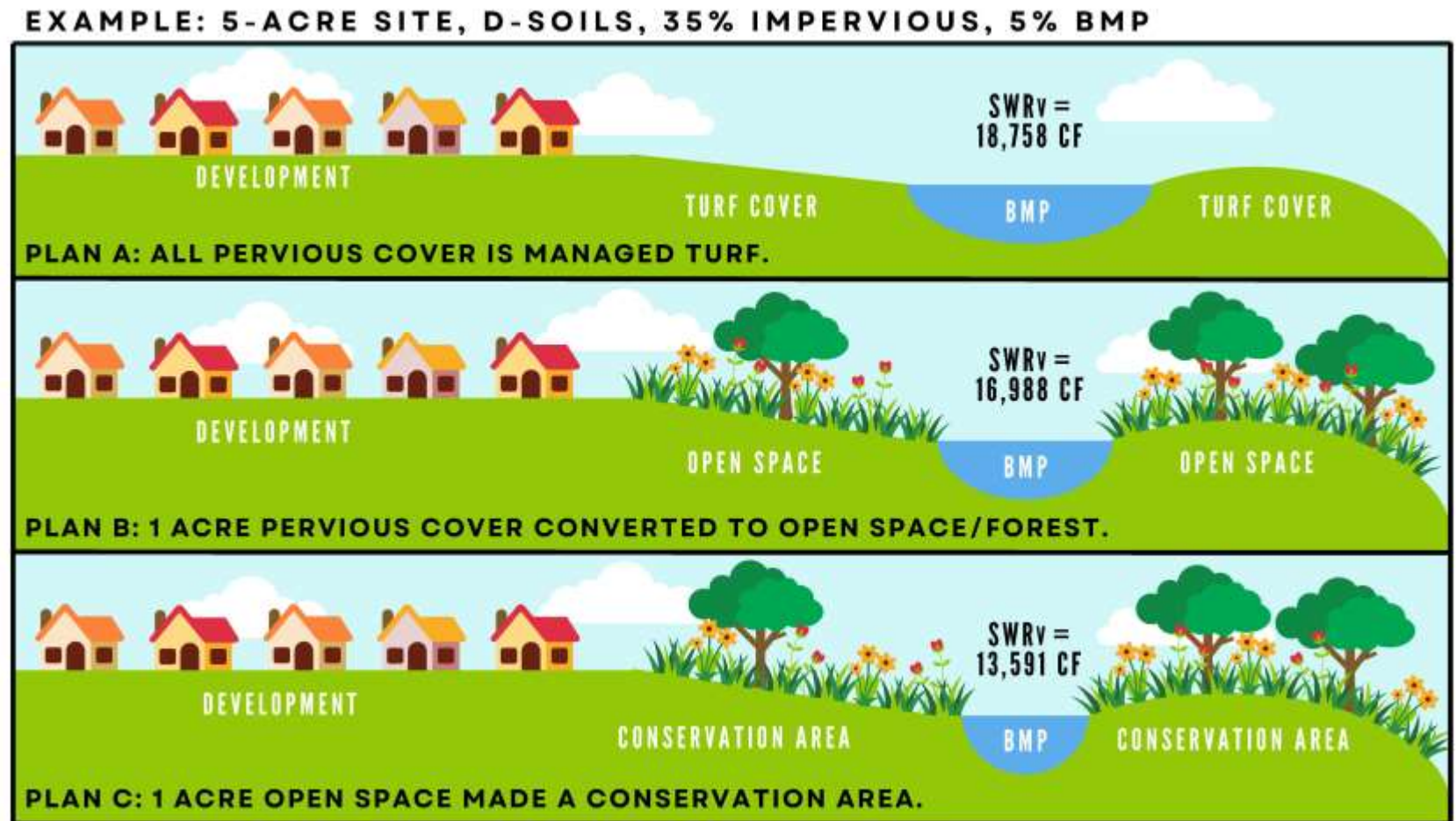


- Enhance enforcement capabilities for post-construction maintenance of pre-MS4 communities
 - Examples of pre-MS4 Communities (Larger common plans) – Hampton Hall, Hampton Lake, and the Farm
 - Edits expand the Town’s current post-construction program to inspect and enforce maintenance of stormwater practices in communities built after 1992 via the 1991 SC Sediment and Reduction Act
 - Gives us the ability to inspect older lagoons to make sure they are functioning properly
 - Don’t have to meet new code, but the Town can make the communities maintain
 - Hampton Lake and the Farm are not required to provide inspections currently; however, they do provide them. Under proposed Manual changes, they will be required.

Design Manual and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments



- Promote the use of Better Site Design principles through credits towards meeting stormwater retention volume requirements
 - Provide a credit in the calculation for preserving natural landcover (previously not in there). Credit is towards volume requirements.



Design Manual and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments



- Establish mechanism for stormwater retention volume Fee-in-Lieu
 - When a development project cannot accommodate the required stormwater retention volume due to approved on-site constraints, the developer could opt to pay a fee-in-lieu for the shortfall
 - Fee-in-lieu payment will be based on a unit of stormwater retention volume (SWRv)
 - This unit cost will include average cost of current land acquisition, cost of design, permitting, and construction and maintenance of BMPs that would have been necessary to meet stormwater requirements
 - Funds collected through fee-in-lieu payments would then be used by the Town to install green infrastructure practices in the same watershed

Design Manual and Stormwater Ordinance Amendments



- Multiple housekeeping edits that do not change regulatory requirements
 - Scribner's errors (example below)

Chapter 2. Design, Review, & Permitting Process

2.1 Satisfying the Stormwater Management, Site Planning, & Design Criteria

2.1.1 Overview

This chapter presents a comprehensive set of site planning and design and post-construction criteria that must be applied to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) to new development and redevelopment activities occurring within the Southern Lowcountry region. Satisfying these criteria promotes the systematic development of acceptable stormwater management plans, and a successful integration of natural resource protection and stormwater management through the site planning and design process (Example, Figure 2.1). Application of Better Site Design (BSD) principals within the jurisdictional limits of the Town of Bluffton shall be to the ~~Maximum Extent Practicable~~ MEP. In the event of a conflict between requirements ~~between~~ among ~~Better Site Design~~ BSD principals and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the requirements of the ~~Unified Development Ordinance~~ UDO shall prevail and have precedence.



Project Timeline

- 4/1/2024 – 5/31/2024 – Proposed Amendments available online for Public Comment
- 6/3/2024 – 8/2/2024 – Staff and Consultant review of Public Comments
- 6/28/2024 – SoLoCo technical subcommittee and Consultant team technical meeting
- 8/12/2024 – 9/13/2024 – Proposed Amendments available online for Public Comment
- 9/16/2024 – Staff and Consultant review of Public Comments
- 9/17/2024 – Final documents provided to all partners
- 10/8/2024 – Town Council Workshop
- 11/20/2024 – Planning Commission Meeting
- 12/5/2024 – May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee recommendation to Town Council

Next Steps



- 2/11/2025 – Town Council Adoption by Resolution
- 3/1/2025 – Implementation of proposed Certain Amendments to regional Southern Lowcountry Stormwater Design Manual and Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Proposed Motion



“I move to proceed with certain amendments to the Southern Lowcountry Stormwater Design Manual and Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance, as presented.”