



## Public Involvement Materials

For the Town of Bluffton  
Historic Resources Survey  
Update

June 27, 2025

Prepared for:  
Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Prepared by:  
Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.



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Town of Bluffton Historic Resources Survey Update

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bluffton, South Carolina (Town), engaged Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. (Stantec) to complete a historic resources survey update of the locally designated Old Town Bluffton Historic District. This effort will include a windshield survey of the survey area and intensive-level documentation of resources built in 1986 or earlier with historic significance and integrity.

This document contains draft social media content, email content, a press release, and a flyer, for the Town to finalize and post/distribute. It also includes questions for oral history interviews. The primary objectives of the outreach are:

- Distribute information about the survey and its goals,
- Gather information about the resources in the survey area and the history of the community, and
- Promote an appreciation for the historic built environment.





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## 2.0 COMMUNICATION METHOD

### Social Media Posts

*Draft text for social media posts is provided below. Raw images are provided under separate cover.*

#### Post 1



*Timing: August 13, 2025.*

#### Facebook, Nextdoor, and Instagram

The Town of Bluffton is conducting a study to document historic places in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The results of the study will help Bluffton plan for the future, while honoring and celebrating its history. You can contribute to the project by emailing [BlufftonHistory@stantec.com](mailto:BlufftonHistory@stantec.com) to tell us about important historical places, people, and events in Old Town. If you want to learn more about this important project, we encourage you to attend the Historic Preservation Commission meeting on September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6pm at Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street. Can't make it? Watch it [live or on demand](#).



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Photo Credit: Jennifer D. Brown, Bluffton Historic District National Register Nomination, Bluffton, Beaufort County, South Carolina, 1995.

## X (formerly Twitter)

Passionate about Bluffton history? Us too. Learn more about our latest public history project at the Sept. 3 Historic Preservation Commission meeting. If you can't make it, watch it [live or on demand](#). Photo: Jennifer D. Brown 1995

## Post 2



*Timing: September 2, 2025, day before public meeting.*

## Facebook, Nextdoor, and Instagram

Our study of historic places in the local Old Town Bluffton Historic District is underway! Make sure to email [BlufftonHistory@stantec.com](mailto:BlufftonHistory@stantec.com) to tell us about important historical places in Old Town by September



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5<sup>th</sup>. Your responses will be used as part of the ongoing study to identify and document historic places in Bluffton. If you want to know more about the project, attend **tomorrow's** Historic Preservation Commission meeting at 6pm at Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street. If you can't make it, watch it [live or on demand](#).

Photo Credit: Facebook.com, Bluffton Then and Now.

X

Learn about our Old Town Bluffton Historic District documentation project tomorrow at the Historic Preservation Commission meeting (4pm, Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street). Can't make it? Watch it [live or on demand](#). Photo: Facebook.com, Bluffton Then and Now.

## Stakeholder Email Blast

*The Town will distribute emails to identified stakeholders and stakeholder groups for this project (e.g., Historic Preservation Commission members, the Historic Bluffton Foundation, the Bluffton Gullah Cultural Heritage Center, Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, etc.). Draft text is provided below.*

### Email

*Timing: August 13, 2025, when the first social media post is published.*

**Subject:** Help us prepare for a historic resources survey of Bluffton's Old Town Historic District

The Town of Bluffton is conducting a historic resources survey of the local Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The town has retained professional historians and architectural historians from Stantec Consulting Inc. to complete the project. Historic resource surveys are an important planning tool. This project will ensure the town has a full inventory of its historic resources in Old Town, help the town prepare for future preservation projects, and honor and celebrate Bluffton's heritage. This study will focus on properties built in or before 1986 that are still standing. Survey fieldwork is planned for September 2025 and will consist of taking photographs, noting architectural features, and mapping properties in Old Town, all from the public right-of-way.

As an initial step, we ask community members to email [BlufftonHistory@stantec.com](mailto:BlufftonHistory@stantec.com) to tell us about the important historical places, people, and events in Old Town. You can contribute to the success of the project by helping us identify places that we should know about. We want to tell the full story of our community, so we are particularly interested in places that may not have received much attention from historians in the past. Community input is essential to documenting historic resources, and we encourage you to share the [BlufftonHistory@stantec.com](mailto:BlufftonHistory@stantec.com) email with other community members. We will be receiving emails until September 5, 2025.



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If you would like to learn more about the project's purpose and scope, we encourage you to attend the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Historic Preservation Commission meeting. The meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street, Bluffton. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can watch it live on Beaufort County TV (BCTV) or view a recording on demand at: <https://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/bctv/>. Following the completion of the survey, the project's results and recommendations will be presented at the February 4, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

**Glen Umberger**

Historic Preservationist

Town of Bluffton

20 Bridge Street

Bluffton, SC 29910

[gumberger@townofbluffton.com](mailto:gumberger@townofbluffton.com)

### Newspaper Press Release

*The Town will publish a press release in local newspaper(s) before the first public meeting and fieldwork. Draft text is provided below.*

The Town of Bluffton (Town) has initiated a survey of the local Old Town Bluffton Historic District. The project will update two prior surveys of the historic district, completed in 2008 and 2019, and provide the Town with an updated inventory of historic properties built in 1986 and earlier. The goal of the project is to document Old Town's important historical trends, people, and events and the surviving places that tell Bluffton's story. Ultimately, the project will help the Town prepare for future historic preservation projects and honor and preserve Old Town Bluffton's heritage.

The Town contracted Stantec Consulting Inc. (Stantec) to conduct the survey of the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. Architectural historians from Stantec will conduct survey fieldwork in September 2025. They will take photographs of properties from the public right of way and record details about architectural style, exterior materials, and alterations on tablet computers. The team will be wearing neon vests and will have business cards and a project flyer to present to interested members of the community.

Stantec architectural historians will give a short informational presentation about the project during the Town's September 3<sup>rd</sup> Historic Preservation Commission meeting. The meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street, Bluffton. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can watch it live on Beaufort County TV (BCTV) or view a recording on demand at: <https://www.beaufortcountysc.gov/bctv/>. Following the survey, Stantec will present their results and recommendations at the February 4, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission meeting.



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## Fieldwork Flyer

*During fieldwork, Stantec's team of architectural historians will carry a flyer to distribute to interested members of the community. The flyer will include a brief overview of the project's purpose, tasks, and schedule, and provide contact information for questions and comments from the public. A draft flyer is provided below.*





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## Documenting Old Town Bluffton's Historic Places

The Town of Bluffton is conducting a study to document historic places in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District. To identify important historical places in the district, our consultant, Stantec Consulting Services Inc, has produced a history of Old Town and gathered information from public outreach.

Stantec's team will conduct fieldwork in Old Town between September 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Fieldwork consists of driving and walking public roads, photographing properties, and taking notes on architectural features. All fieldwork will be completed from the public right-of-way.

This project is funded by the Town of Bluffton. If you have questions, reach out to: Glen Umberger, Town of Bluffton Historic Preservationist, [gumberger@townofbluffton.com](mailto:gumberger@townofbluffton.com).

### May to August 2025

Prepare draft history of the study area and conduct public outreach

### September 3, 2025 | 6:00 PM Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Introduce the project  
Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC 29910

### September 8 to 12, 2025 Fieldwork

### October to November 2025 Prepare draft report of the study results

### February 4, 2026 | 6:00 PM Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Present study findings  
Town Hall, 20 Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC 29910

### January to February 2026 Submit final report

Scan here to watch the  
Historic Preservation  
Commission Meeting on  
Beaufort County TV



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## Oral History Interviews

*Stantec will conduct up to five (5) oral history interviews approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length with candidates identified by the Town. Participants will be asked a predetermined list of questions, drafted below, focusing on local history, the survey area, and important places, people, and events in Bluffton's history. The predetermined question will be augmented to ensure each interview is tailored to the individual participant.*

### Introduction:

The Town of Bluffton contracted Stantec to conduct a study of historic buildings and places in Old Town Bluffton. The project will update two prior studies of Old Town and will help the town prepare for future historic preservation and public history projects. As part of the project, we are conducting oral history interviews with residents. We will be asking about your experiences in Bluffton generally, as well as questions focused on Old Town Bluffton before 1986. Part of our study is to document historical buildings; when we discuss a specific place, it will be helpful to know its location, such as the street corner or address if you know it. This ensures we know where a building is and can document it during the next phase of the project. Our interview will be approximately 30 to 45 minutes long and will be recorded so that we can just chat and I don't have to slow things down by taking notes. I will ask you a list of questions, but this is an informal interview, so we can skip any questions you don't wish to answer.

### Interview Questions:

1. Can you please introduce yourself? [Full name and the years in which you have lived in Bluffton]
2. What is your connection to Bluffton; were you born in Bluffton, or did you move here? [Follow up questions: Tell me about your family's origins and ties to Bluffton. OR: In what year did you move here? Why did you move here?]
3. How has Bluffton changed during the time you've lived here?
4. What drove the town's economy when you [grew up here OR first moved here]?
5. What did you/Bluffton residents do for fun when you [were growing up here OR first moved here]? Were there any places that were popular for recreation, like clubhouses, parks?
6. Who were the important people in Bluffton [when you were growing up here OR during your time here]? (e.g., an influential teacher, pastor, civic leader, etc.)
7. Can you think of any major events that took place in Bluffton during the time you've lived here?
8. If you were to walk me around Old Town Bluffton, what places would you point out to me and why?
9. Can you think of any places in Old Town Bluffton that people wouldn't realize were once very important to the community?
10. *If of age*, do you remember when places were segregated in Bluffton?



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- a. Thinking of Old Town Bluffton specifically, were there places where segregation was enforced? What about places Black people could visit?
  - b. Were there people or groups in the community that fought against segregation?
- 11. Do you know of historical events, people, buildings, or places associated with Bluffton's Black or Gullah Geechee community?
- 12. Is there anything else you'd like to discuss or buildings in Old Town you think are important to document during our survey efforts?

