

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Projects and Watershed Resilience Department



MEETING DATE:	August 8, 2023
PROJECT:	May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Recommendation to Establish a Policy to Reduce and Minimize the Extent of Impervious Area
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

REQUEST: The May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC) requests Town Council consider their recommendation to establish a Town of Bluffton policy that reduces and minimizes the extent of impervious area as outlined in the attached Memorandum (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND: At the February 10, 2022 meeting, WAPAC unanimously voted on a list of recommendations for Town Council's consideration to include in the Strategic Plan Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024. During the February 15, 2022 Town Council Strategic Planning Workshop, Staff provided Town Council with a Memo summarizing these recommendations. Council agreed to add the Memo of WAPAC's recommendations into the FY 2023-2024 Strategic Plan and to consider each WAPAC recommendation once prioritized and fully developed.

At the June 23, 2022 meeting, WAPAC prioritized "Evaluate the regulatory framework to codify that each development permit does not surpass the 10% impervious surface "rule" in the Unified Development Ordinance stormwater regulations" as a Town Strategic Plan recommendation. The Committee unanimously voted to recommend Town Council Establish a Policy/Ordinance that Reduces and Minimizes the Extent of Impervious Area as outlined in Attachment 1 at their June 22, 2023 meeting.

NEXT STEPS: If Council agrees to implement WAPAC's recommendation:

- Staff will evaluate impervious cover mapping needs for the May River Watershed and determine if there are future budgeting implications for completion.
- Staff will evaluate existing Town policies and develop, if necessary, a policy with the elements outlined in the attached Memorandum titled "WAPAC Recommendation to Establish a Town of Bluffton Policy that Reduces and Minimizes the Extent of Impervious Area."
- Staff will prepare for a third-party review of the stormwater regulations and Design Manual in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), with the goal of ensuring the SoLoCo Stormwater Ordinance remains consistent regionally and improvements continued to be made.

- Town Council considers policy items to reduce and minimize the extent of impervious area to protect and restore shellfish harvesting and water quality in the May River and achieve broader community and conservation benefits and address growth challenges.

SUMMARY: This project originated from the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan and WAPAC recommendations. It is supportive of the following guiding principles of the Town:

- Community Quality of Life #5. Foster town policies and practices that encourage environmentally conscious initiatives, policies and town codes that support a clean, well-maintained, sustainable community that protects our natural resources including the May River.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #1. Support initiatives, such as the May River Watershed Action Plan, to improve water quality of the May, Okatie/Colleton and New Rivers and their watersheds.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #2. Seek collaboration and partnerships that protect and improve the May, Okatie/Colleton and New Rivers and their watershed.
- May River & Surrounding Rivers and Watersheds Guiding Principle #4. Support active planning and management for resilience of natural resources and our response to weather events, future disasters and changing environmental conditions.

Consistent with these Guiding Principles, WAPAC is recommending Town Council establish a Town of Bluffton a policy that reduces and minimizes the extent of impervious area to protect and restore shellfish harvesting and water quality in the May River and achieve broader community and conservation benefits and address growth challenges.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WAPAC Memorandum “Recommendation to Establish a Policy/Ordinance that Reduces and Minimizes the Extent of Impervious Area.”
2. Proposed Motion