

# TOWN OF BLUFFTON RESILIENCY PLANNING FROM DATA TO DECISIONS



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# 01 BACKGROUND – THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



- The Town's Comprehensive Plan, known as Blueprint Bluffton, is intended to guide decision making for the next ten (10) years. It serves as the vision for the Town of Bluffton.
- In 2022, the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (S.C. Code Section 6-29-510) required local governments to add a resilience element to comprehensive plans.
- Blueprint Bluffton was adopted in November 2022.
- For the first time, it included a Resiliency Chapter to meet this requirement and prepare the Town for a more resilient future.

# 01 BACKGROUND - THE STRATEGIC PLAN



- The Town of Bluffton uses strategic planning to implement the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Town Council, the Town Manager, and Town staff develop the Town's Strategic Plan every two (2) years, with annual reviews.
- The Strategic Plan uses Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies to:
  - Develop the operating budget.
  - Consider revisions to capital improvement projects.
  - Develop new projects and assign them to Staff for execution.
  - Implement projects and initiatives already approved in existing town plans.
  - Determine an agreed upon process and schedule to prioritize projects and revise priorities as necessary.

# 01 BACKGROUND- STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



Affordable and/or Workforce Housing



Community Quality of Life



Economic Development



Fiscal Sustainability



Infrastructure



May River and Surrounding Rivers  
and Watersheds



Town Organization

# 01 BACKGROUND - MAY RIVER AND SURROUNDING RIVERS AND WATERSHEDS



## Guiding Principal 4:

Support active planning and management for resilience of natural resources and our response to weather events, future disasters and changing environmental conditions.

## Action Agenda Item:

Develop a resiliency plan focused on the Town's natural resources, sustainability, wetland ordinance/restoration and environmental principals.

02 WAPAC  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
PRIORITY  
FY25-FY26

Establish a Climate Resiliency Plan for adaptation to coastal impacts from changing environmental conditions (“rain bombs” and sea level rise) on stormwater runoff water quality and quantity. Assess the environmental resilience of stormwater ponds to changing climate conditions for retrofit opportunities, e.g. ensuring ponds have capacity to hold rain events instead of being pumped full with ground water.

## 03 RESILIENCY ANALYSIS

- Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), included funding for a Resiliency Analysis.
- In February 2024, the Town contracted with the College of Charleston and the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium to develop resiliency-focused scientific models and engage community members.
- This project focuses on observing current impacts and anticipating future challenges related to climate change and associated vulnerabilities.
- To mitigate potential damage and maintain critical infrastructure functionality, Bluffton is developing reliable information to guide policy and planning decisions.

## Project Area



## DATA COLLECTION – RESILIENCY ANALYSIS OUTCOMES

Identify opportunities to implement elevation-based zoning in low-lying areas, enhance the Town's Flood Management Policies, and strengthen the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program. Explore financial incentives to encourage more resilient development, and leverage conservation tools and funding strategies to expand Bluffton's Land Acquisition Fund, with a focus on prioritizing high-impact parcels.

The background image is a landscape photograph of a body of water, likely a lake or a large pond. In the foreground, there are tall, green reeds or grasses growing out of the water. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. On the left side, there are dark, leafy trees. In the distance, across the water, there is a building with a dark roof, possibly a house or a small structure. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. Overlaid on this image is a white rectangular box containing the text 'COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE STUDIES' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

# COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE STUDIES

## 04 DATA COLLECTION – COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Identify & determine stormwater infrastructure conveyance systems by type, condition, size, and owner.
- Identify stormwater infrastructure conveyance systems in need of maintenance, repair, upgrade in size or type.
- Identify areas of inundation from storms of different magnitudes.
- Provide information to guide policy and program recommendations for implementation.

## DATA COLLECTION – COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE STUDIES TIMELINES

- Will include all subwatersheds within the Town's jurisdiction, not just the May River.
- Successfully completed the Heyward Cove Watershed Comprehensive Drainage Study in October 2023. Serving as a model for on-going and future Comprehensive Drainage Studies.
- Work associated with the Crooked and Guerrard Cove Watersheds underway.
- Rose Dhu Creek Phase 1 Internal Procurement Process underway.
- Studies include 2D H/H Model development and preparation of the Master Planning Report.
- Submitted HGMP grant application for planning work associated with the Verdier and Huger Cove Watersheds. Pending.



# OTHER DATA SOURCES

## 05 DATA COLLECTION OTHER DATA SOURCES

- May River Baseline Assessment Update Final Report
- SC Forestry Commission Technical Assistance for Tree Canopy Mapping – Final report expected in first quarter of 2026
- Furman University Sustainability Practicum Heat Mapping Outcomes - Final report expected in first quarter of 2026
- Current work underway with McCormick Taylor, Inc. for Wetland and Resilience Protections
- Town Planning Documents
- Regional and Statewide Plans

THANK YOU

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