

# RESILIENCE PLANNING AND WAPAC STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY DISCUSSION



WAPAC  
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# CONTENTS

01 Background

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02 Anticipated Planning Work

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03 Next Steps

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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.

## FY25-FY26 Action Agenda Item:

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

# 01 BACKGROUND - 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.*

- The committee voted to carry this initiative forward into the FY27–FY28 Strategic Planning cycle.
- Town Council will consider proposed FY27-FY28 WAPAC Strategic Planning initiatives.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH

- Synthesize Data
- Additional Vulnerabilities and Gap Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach
- Draft Plan Development
- Finalize Resilience Plan Development, Presentations, and Adoption

## 02 RESILIENCE PLANNING GOALS

- Protect and restore natural systems—including wetlands, waterways, and tree canopy.
- Elevate community voices and local knowledge in every phase of planning.
- Advance equitable outcomes for minority and disadvantaged communities.
- Focus on implementable strategies with clear steps, responsible entities, and timelines.
- Strengthen Town capacity with training, tools, and transparent data stewardship.
- Coordinate regionally to address shared risks and opportunities.
- Use best available science and clearly explain assumptions, uncertainty, and trade-offs.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: SYNTHESIZE DATA



- Comprehensive review of existing Town documents, ordinances, watershed and stormwater studies, GIS datasets, and relevant regional initiatives.
- The consultant team must have the ability to thoroughly review and evaluate all relevant Town, regional, and state documents, datasets, policies, and studies pertaining to natural hazards, stormwater, resilience, and land use.
- This approach will uncover data gaps, identify opportunities for greater integration and consistency across initiatives, and promote alignment while maximizing potential cost savings with regional resilience efforts.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: HAZARD PROJECTIONS & VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS



- Prioritizes the Town's natural systems such as wetlands, tidal marshes, riparian corridors, tree canopy, and ecological connectivity as the cornerstone of long-term resilience.
- Evaluates how current and future conditions, along with stressors, impact these environmental assets. Ensures that future strategies maintain or restore natural system function while proactively preparing for projected changes in environmental conditions.
- Vulnerability profile development will include natural system assessment, hazard projections, modeling analyses, and operational evaluations into a comprehensive vulnerability profile.
- Vulnerability work will clearly distinguish between near-term and long-term risks and will inform strategy development, project prioritization, and investment decisions in subsequent phases.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- Structured Engagement Plan:
  - Develop a structured engagement plan that aligns with the Town’s internal processes, priorities, and strategic goals. Will define objectives, methods, timelines, and key stakeholders. Will ensure transparent and effective collaboration across the Town’s departments, elected officials, and the public.
- Leadership and Council Engagement:
  - Conduct targeted surveys, interviews, or facilitated discussions with Town Council and executive leadership to capture their priorities, concerns, and vision for the project.
- Community Engagement:
  - Host public workshops, listening sessions, and focus groups to gather input from residents and stakeholders, encouraging active participation and dialogue.
  - Conduct targeted outreach to vulnerable communities, such as within the Climate Disaster Resilience Zone (CDRZ Zone), through specialized initiatives to ensure inclusive representation.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- Regional and Agency Coordination:
  - Coordinate with regional and federal agencies such as the South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR), South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES), US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), utilities, and county partners through scheduled meetings. Facilitate interagency data sharing, policy coordination, and operational integration.
- Internal Coordination:
  - Identify opportunities to better understand completed work, processes, existing barriers. The goal is to strengthen the Town's organizational workflows in all areas.
- Multi-Sector Technical Advisory Board:
  - Convene a pro-bono technical advisory group comprising of representatives from local, state, and federal government, community organizations, scientific institutions, and academia to provide strategic policy guidance, validate assessment assumptions, review findings, and guide prioritization of project elements.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: DRAFT RESILIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT



- Transform all insights from prior tasks into a comprehensive, actionable DRAFT Resilience Plan that equips the Town of Bluffton with clear strategies for long-term adaptation.
  - Includes collaboration with Town leadership, departmental staff, and stakeholders.
  - Will include vulnerability and data synthesis, integration of all stakeholder and community input, strategy development, alternatives analysis, and prioritization, and a DRAFT Resilience Plan.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: FINAL RESILIENCE PLAN



- Refine and finalize the DRAFT Resilience Plan based on Town feedback and regional partner comments to produce a polished, comprehensive FINAL Resilience Plan.
  - Town Revisions and Integration of Feedback
  - Final Resilience Plan Compilation
  - Presentation and Stakeholder Engagement
  - Support of Plan Adoption

## 03 ANTICIPATED NEXT STEPS



DATE	ACTION
April 2026	Town Council Consideration
May or June 2026	Resilience Planning Work Commences

THANK YOU



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Questions?