

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Growth Management Department



MEETING DATE:	October 14, 2025
PROJECT:	Consideration of the Acceptance of Hilton Head Medical Center, LLC's ("Novant Health or Novant") One Hundred Percent (100%) Annexation Petition to Annex Certain Real Property Contiguous to the Town of Bluffton's Corporate Boundaries Consisting of a Total of 1.58 Acres, More or Less, Located at the Southwest Corner of the Buckwalter Parkway and Lake Point Drive Intersection and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map No. R600-029-000-2409-0000, and Referral to the Town of Bluffton Negotiating Committee if Deemed Necessary
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kevin P. Icard, AICP Director of Growth Management

REQUEST: Town Staff requests that Town Council consider the following:

1. Consideration of the Acceptance of Hilton Head Medical Center, LLC's ("Novant Health or Novant") One Hundred Percent (100%) Annexation Petition to Annex Certain Real Property Contiguous to the Town of Bluffton's Corporate Boundaries Consisting of a Total of 1.58 Acres, More or Less, Located at the Southwest Corner of the Buckwalter Parkway and Lake Point Drive Intersection and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map Nos. R600-029-000-2409-0000; and
2. Referral of the request to the Town of Bluffton Negotiating Committee if deemed necessary.

INTRODUCTION: On September 3, 2025, in accordance with Section 5-3-150 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina and the *Town of Bluffton Annexation Policy and Procedure Manual* ("Annexation Manual"), the property owner, Hilton Head Medical Center, LLC (also referred to as "Novant Health"), submitted a 100% Annexation Petition Application for the parcel totaling 1.58 acres located at southwest corner of the Buckwalter Parkway and Lake Point Drive intersection ("Property") into the Town of Bluffton's municipal boundary (Attachment 1).

Pursuant to the Annexation Manual, the Applicant will submit concurrent, Zoning Map Amendment application requesting the Property's incorporation into the Buckwalter Planned Unit Development ("Buckwalter PUD") should Town Council vote to accept the application. Additional concurrent applications include amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, Buckwalter PUD, Development Agreement, and Concept Plan to incorporate the property, add requested development rights, be placed into the Grande Oaks Land Use Tract, amend the current Parkway Corners Master

Plan and specify any additional terms. An application to amend the Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map will also be necessary.

Per the Annexation Manual, the initial step in the public review process is an initial briefing, or “intent to annex”, to Town Council for general discussion of the request and its associated applications such as the appropriate zoning classification and possible negotiation items. At the conclusion of the discussion, Town Council votes on the approval of Intent to Annex of the Annexation Ordinance.

BACKGROUND: The Property contains approximately 1.58 acres located within Unincorporated Beaufort County as shown on the Vicinity Map (Attachment 2). The Property contains a stormwater detention pond that is installed at the time of the construction of the Buckwalter Parkway and is otherwise vacant.

The Property is zoned as Grande Oaks PUD and designated as part of the Village Commercial V-1 Land Use Tract as shown on the Grande Oaks Master Plan (Attachment 3) which allows a mix of residential and commercial uses such as:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Single Family Residential | 9. Gasoline Service Stations |
| 2. Multi-Family Residential | 10. Office Use |
| 3. Neighborhood Commercial | 11. Restaurants |
| 4. Bed and Breakfast | 12. Civic |
| 5. Commercial Lodging - Hotels, Motels, etc. | 13. Church |
| 6. Hospitals | 14. Storage |
| 7. Conference Center | |
| 8. Drive Through Restaurants | |

The immediately adjacent properties vary as to jurisdiction and zoning as follows:

Direction	Jurisdiction	Zoning District	Current Use
North	Town of Bluffton	Buckwalter Planned Unit Development	Grande Oaks II LLC - Parcel 12A-1 - Vacant
	Town of Bluffton	Buckwalter Planned Unit Development	Beaufort County – Buckwalter Parkway - Road Right-of-Way
South	Beaufort County	Grande Oaks Planned Unit Development	Beaufort County - Lake Point Drive - Road Right-of-Way
	Town of Bluffton	Buckwalter Planned Unit Development	Hilton Head Medical Canter LLC – No Address – Applicant’s Property
East	Beaufort County	Grande Oaks Planned Unit Development	Beaufort County – Lake Point Drive – Road Right-of-Way

	Beaufort County	Grande Oaks Planned Unit Development	Grande Oaks II, LLC – No Address – Common Property
West	Town of Bluffton	Buckwalter Planned Unit Development	Hilton Head Medical Center LLC – No Address – Applicant’s Property

The Applicant proposes to annex into the Grande Oaks Land Use Tract within the Buckwalter PUD for the Property, which is similar to the existing Buckwalter Commons Land Use Tract, the most permissive land use designation which allows a broad mix of residential and commercial uses. A comparison of current Grande Oaks PUD and the Buckwalter PUD Grande Oaks Land Use Tract uses is provided as Attachment 4.

Novant recently purchased the adjacent properties to the west which are within the Town’s jurisdiction and zoned as Buckwalter PUD and designated as part of the Grande Oaks Land Use Tract which follows the regulations set by the Buckwalter Development Agreement. They currently own the two parcel (Tax Map ID R610 029 000 2487 0000 & R600 029 000 2410 0000) which total 17.75 acres.

The proposed annexation would allow Novant to consolidate the properties to allow for more flexibility while creating continuity of jurisdiction, zoning, and development standards. Currently, the Property is subject to different zoning and development standards and requires review and approval by Beaufort County. If development of a site consisting of property within the Town and the proposed annexation Property were to occur today, the plans would have to adhere to different regulations and require the Town and Beaufort County’s approval.

The Applicant’s associated request for an amendment to the Buckwalter Development Agreement and Concept Plan will include the addition of development rights consisting of 1.58 acres of general commercial and no increase in residential dwelling units.

The Applicant has submitted preliminary development plans for the construction of a three-story 243,000 SF hospital with associated infrastructure.

The Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (Attachment 5) shows the Property is designated as Suburban Living which is defined as:

The Suburban Living category is intended to include low-density single-family neighborhoods. Much of this category includes portions of large Planned Unit Developments that are under active construction or are built-out. Allowable density is up to three dwelling units per acre and must be at least one dwelling unit per acre. Community amenities such as trails, parks, and centralized swimming pools are encouraged.

To permit the uses allowed within the Buckwalter Commons Land Use Tract, the future land use designation will need to be changed to Neighborhood Center which is defined as:

*The **Neighborhood Center** category is intended to guide emerging neighborhood-focused retail clusters throughout the community. These centers, such as Buckwalter Place, provide the opportunity for residents to be within walking distance of grocers, restaurants, retailers, and medical offices. These centers help establish neighborhood identity and are best served when supported by a mix of middle housing and single-family residences within walking or biking distance. These centers are best designed to provide automobile access within a pedestrian-oriented environment. Inclusion of public green space is encouraged.*

Neighborhood centers are based on the same foundation as the Town Center, to create a pedestrian-oriented environment, but the overall design is open for interpretation / adaptation to localized design guidance. Plentiful pedestrian connections ensure long-term health of the neighborhood and anchors the community around the public spaces within the neighborhood center. While neighborhood-serving commercial uses are predominant within the designation, appropriately scaled commercial office space is encouraged to strengthen the mix of uses within the overall community.

Development within the district is pedestrian scaled. Buildings up to three stories are appropriate so long as they are properly buffered and screened from any lower intensity uses in the area. Out-lot parcel development should address the street, and parking should be consolidated to the greatest extent possible to enhance the pedestrian environment.

The Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Figure 7.7 – Growth Framework (Attachment 6) shows the Property within a Town Center Node which the Unified Development Ordinance, Section 6.1.2.C defines as:

Located in the most intensely developed areas or those areas to be intensely developed, Town Centers consist of compact, complete, and highly connected neighborhoods that support a larger, most intense mixed-use development condition. Buildings within the Town Center are usually larger, attached, and may be up to five stories in height.

Lastly, all future development of the Property would be required to be reviewed through the applicable Town of Bluffton planning processes including an Initial Master Plan, Development Plan review and Building Permits.

SCHEDULE: The proposed schedule for the applications is provided as Attachment 7.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application Submittal
2. Vicinity Map
3. Grande Oaks PUD Master Plan Map and Text
4. Land Use Comparison

5. Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map
6. Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Growth Framework Map
7. Draft Schedule
8. Proposed Motion