May River Action Plan Implementation

Project Implementation Status Report

Presentation to May River Watershed Action Plan Committee (WAPAC)
July 24, 2025
Department of Projects & Watershed Resilience
Dan Rybak, Project Manager

Septic to Sewer Projects

- **Stoney Creek/Palmetto Bluff Sewer Partnership:**
  - BJWSA's 2022 updated cost-estimate for the project from BJWSA increased to $7.2 million + contingencies.
  - BJWSA is the Project Manager as the awardee of the Rural Infrastructure Authority - South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (RIA-SCIIP) grant.

- **Next Steps**
  - BJWSA continues with community outreach and design of the system. BJWSA updates can be found at: https://bjwsa.org/251/Go2Sewer-for-a-Cleaner-Stoney-Creek

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

Background:

Within the 2020 May River Watershed Action Plan Update & Modeling Report (MRWAP), eleven (11) project sites (incorporating various individual BMPs) were selected in consultation with the Town (prioritizing subcatchments with fecal coliform (FC) bacteria hotspot and/or large impervious areas). These sites were evaluated in terms of the potential benefits gained by retrofitting to meet the 95th percentile storm retention, to the maximum extent possible, under the proposed Impervious Area Restoration/Stormwater Retrofit Program.

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

Task 1 : MRWAP Update 11 Site Locations

- Eleven (11) proposed project sites Rose Dhu Creek (6 projects) and Stoney Creek (5 projects)
  - All geotechnical work, evaluations, site assessments, planning, engineering, and preliminary designs for the 8 original sites is **complete**.

- **Next Steps:**
  - Final Draft of the IRP Policy Document has been submitted and under review for final edits and comments.
  - Upon completion and approval of the IRP Policy Document, staff will collaborate with the Town's Director of Procurement for an agreement with BCSD and other property owners to construct proposed impervious restoration projects.

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

Task 2 : Identify 15 new project sites for Town of Bluffton Impervious Restoration/BMP Retrofit Projects.

- **Background:**
  - The Town wishes to identify an additional 15 project sites located within the municipal limits of Bluffton for the Impervious Restoration/BMP Retrofit Program. However, the criteria for site selection will be considered to be more “low hanging fruit” based on the following:
    - Within Town of Bluffton Municipal limits.
    - Soils – sandy soils with high infiltration rates offer the biggest bang for the buck for water quality treatment/improvement. Utilizing soil survey and other information target sites where infiltration can be maximized on-site.
    - Public or governmental agency land/property owner (not SCDOT RoW).
- Concept design development for the 15 the sites that did not decline to participate is ongoing.
- **Next Steps:**
  - Finalize Concept designs and proposed SWrv/Water quality benefit.

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

- **Task 3 : Policy Document Formulation**
  - **TOB Fee-in-Lieu Program Policy Document** –Adopted into the FY26 Master Fee Schedule at the July 2025 Town Council Meeting.
  - **As adopted:**
    - When a development project cannot accommodate the required SWRv due to on-site constraints identified in the approved MEP analysis, the developer could opt to pay a Fee-In-Lieu (FIL) to the Town of Bluffton for the shortfall according to the FIL fee schedule to be adopted as part of the FY26 budget Master Fee Schedule. Funds collected through FIL payments would then be used by the Town to fund other qualified uses that protect water quality within the same watershed as the original project including:
      - The construction and maintenance of impervious restoration program water quality BMPs;
      - Purchase of land for increased conservation areas, application of Better Site Design to the approved Master Plan, buffers, undisturbed open space, and natural resource of significance areas, and
      - Purchase of development rights.

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

- **Task 3 : Policy Document Formulation (Cont.)**
  - FIL payment would be based and equal to a unit of SWRv in cubic feet or designating a conservation area/easement area that protects a qualified natural resource that would otherwise require the same SWRv treatment if developed. The monetary value for a unit of SWRv would be based on the current and typical costs for land as well as associated costs for design, construction, construction management, Town program management, post-construction inspection, and ongoing maintenance of water quality BMPs. The SWRv FIL rate would be found as part of the Town's Master Fee Schedule, under Section VII "Stormwater Management Fees," allowing for annual review and updates as needed based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or based on updated information regarding the cost of water quality BMP construction and maintenance, changes in the construction industry, availability of supplies, etc. If the developer and/or private property owner take responsibility for maintaining the BMP or provide land, then the associated cost for a unit of SWRv could be lessened accordingly.

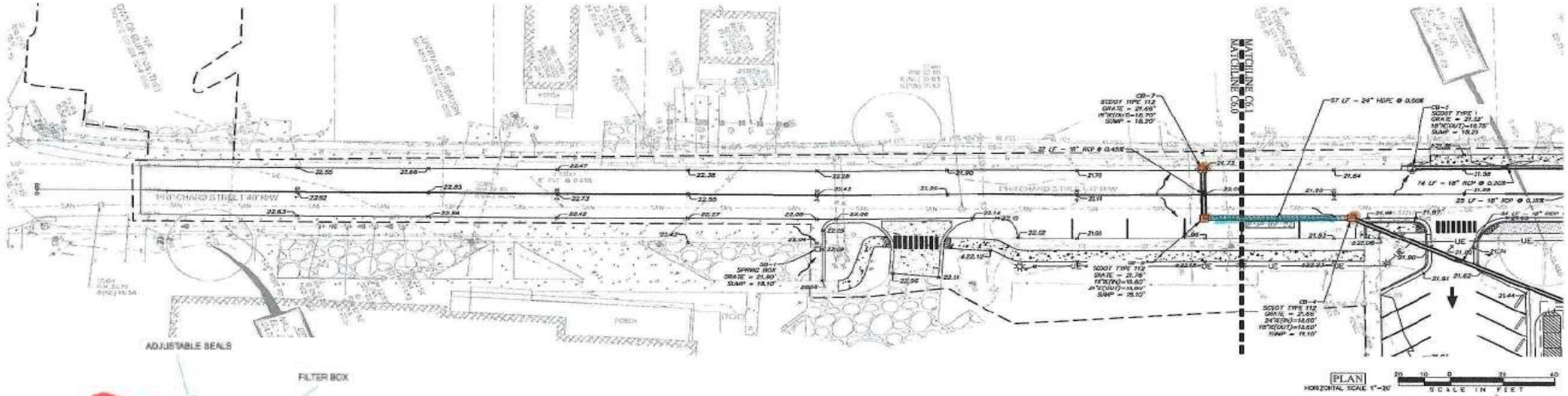
Item/Description	Fee
Fee-In-Lieu (FIL) **For projects with an approved Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) submittal, the FIL amount is calculated based on an applicant's shortfall, in cubic feet (CF), of the required Stormwater Retention Volume (SWRv).**	$151.92/CF of SWRv

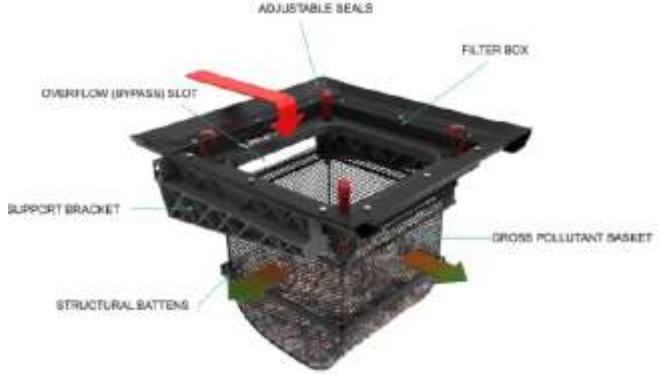
  - Other Policy Document Development Status:
    - ToB CIP Project Impervious Restoration Program & Incentives – **Draft document in process.**
    - ToB SWrv Credit Trading Program - **(under evaluation)**

Impervious Restoration Program Projects

- **Other, Related MRWAP Update Recommendations**
  - Town is in progress of incorporating volume reduction BMPs within existing and future CIP projects to the MEP. Specific projects currently in progress include:
    - **Bridge Street Streetscape Project**
      - Water quality monitoring has been completed.
    - **Pritchard Street Streetscape and Drainage Improvement Project**
      - Incorporated Infiltration BMPs within the project to capture and treat 1.95” of rainfall over impervious surfaces within the project area, prior to discharge into Heyward Cove.
      - Submitted Section 319 Grant proposal to DHEC to cost-share cost of construction of proposed BMPs. Pre-proposal was accepted, and Full Proposal was requested by DHEC. Under Review.
      - Coordinated approval for proposed improvements with Beaufort County School District and Beaufort County on pool operation impacts. Updated Bid Ready submittal from consultant 7/9/25 pending.
      - Easement acquisition documents have been finalized, and easement acquisitions have been initiated.
      - Follow-up/complete permitting submissions.
      - Project anticipated to be advertised for construction in July 2025.

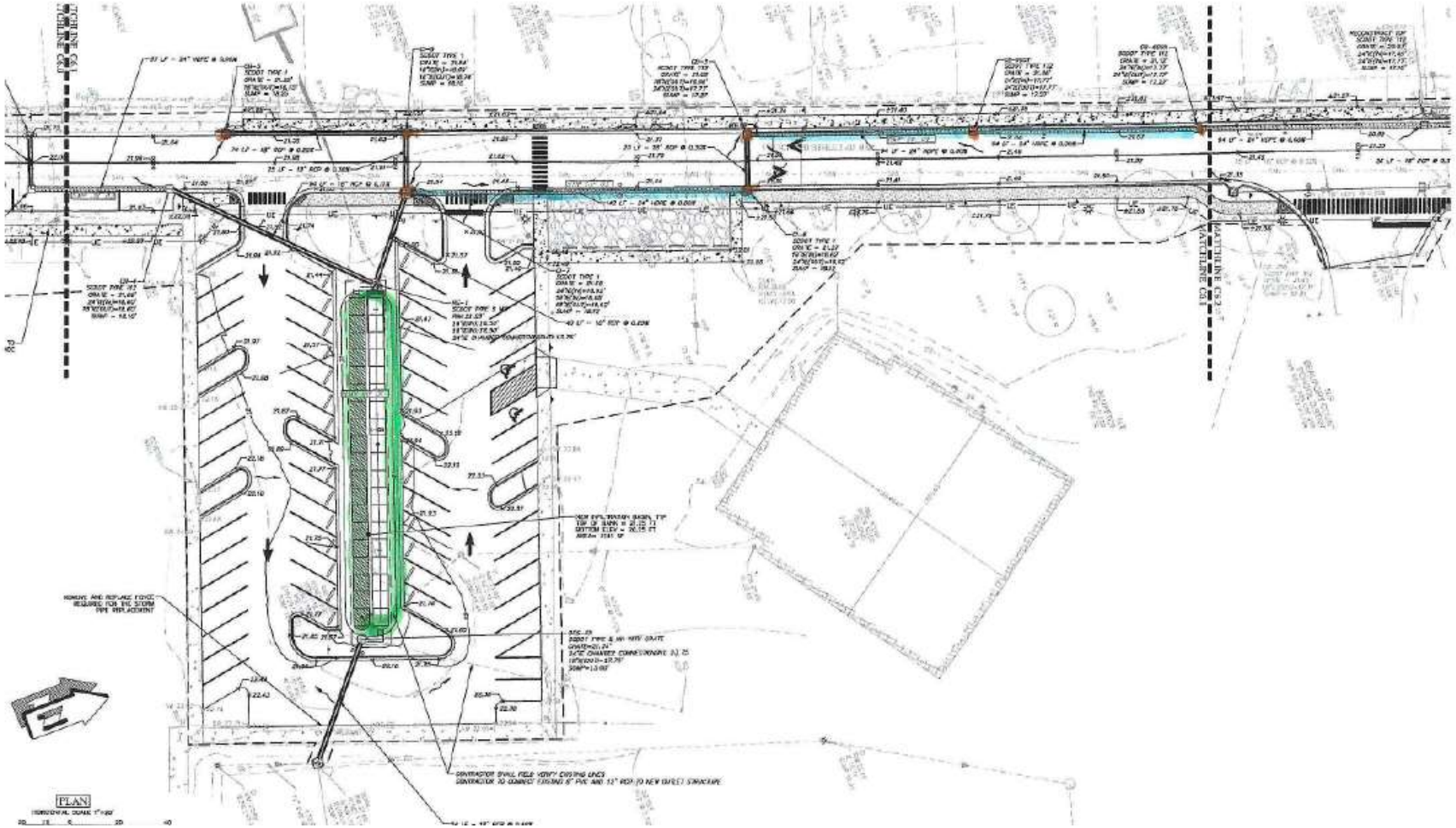
Pritchard Street Streetscape and Drainage Improvement Project





- Conveyance & Infiltration
- BMP Pre-Treatment
- Hybrid Underground Detention with Infiltration & Bioretention

Pritchard Street Streetscape and Drainage Improvement Project



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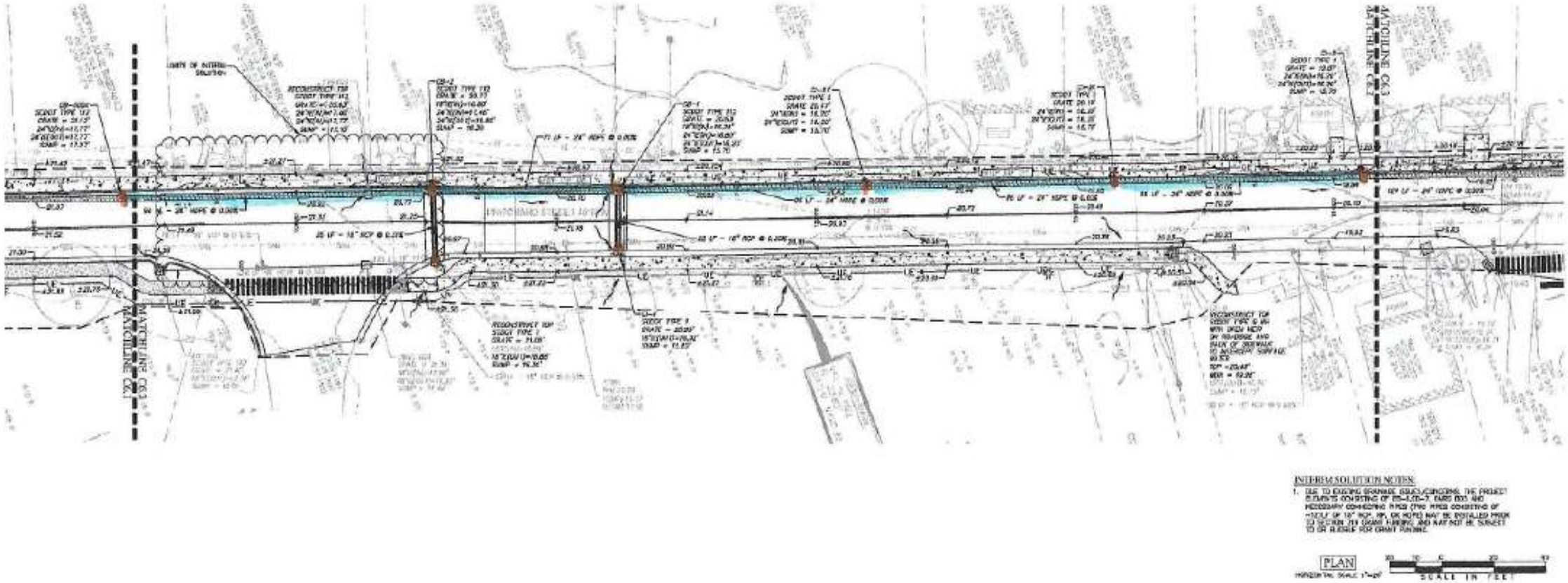

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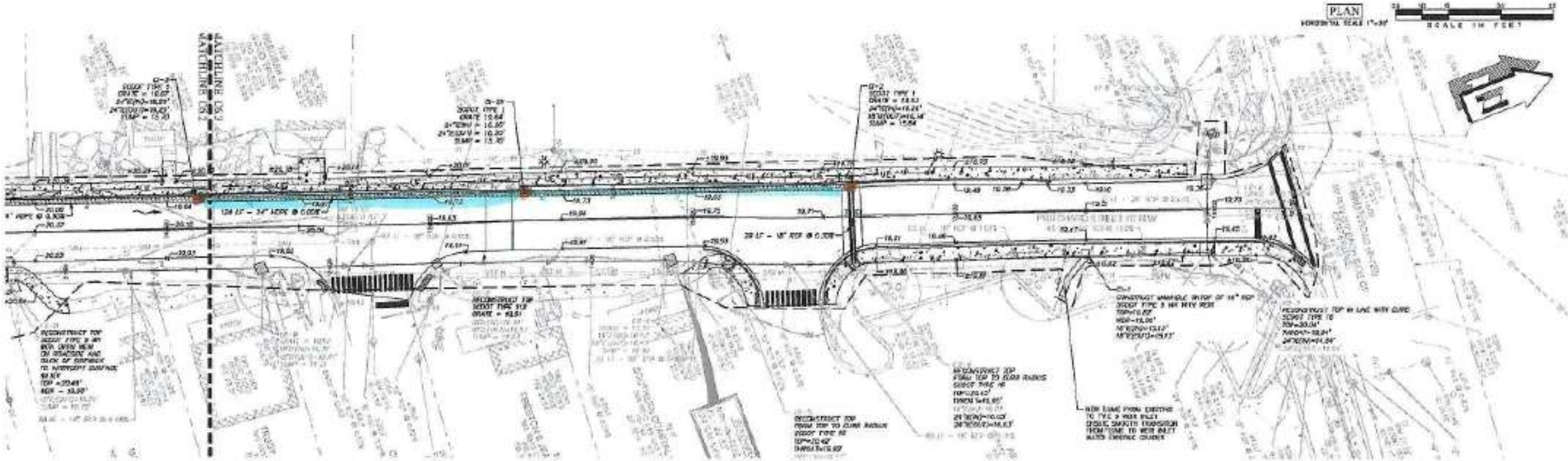

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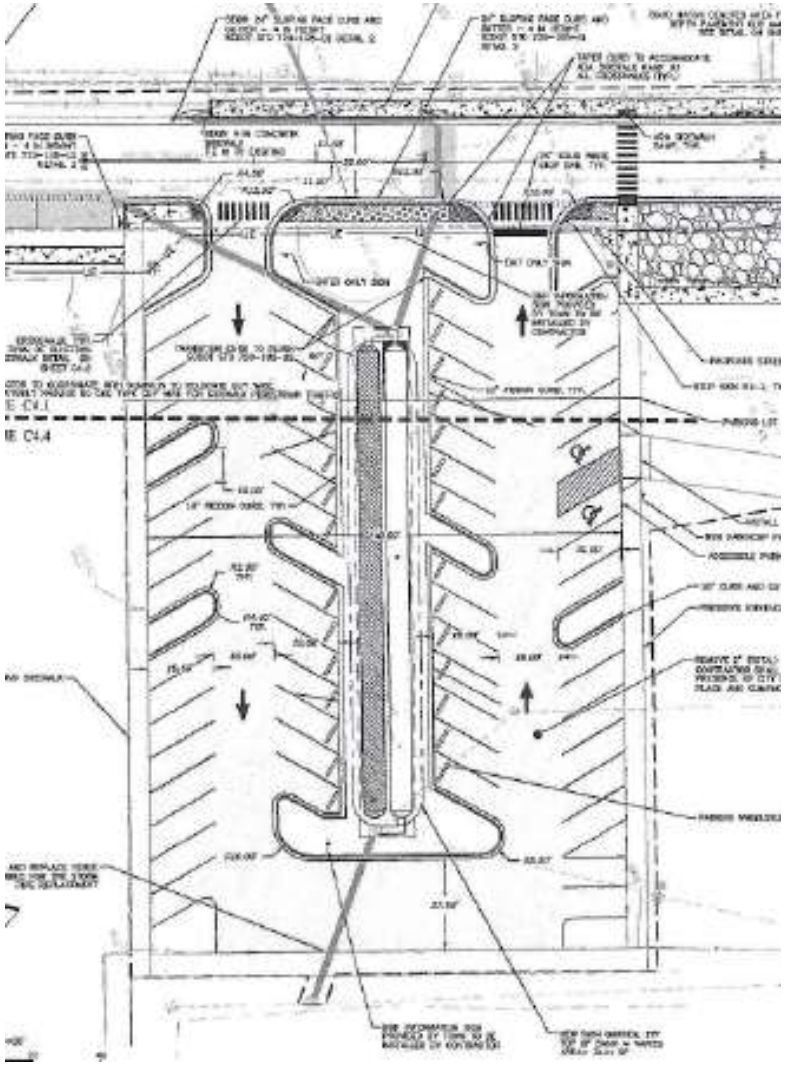
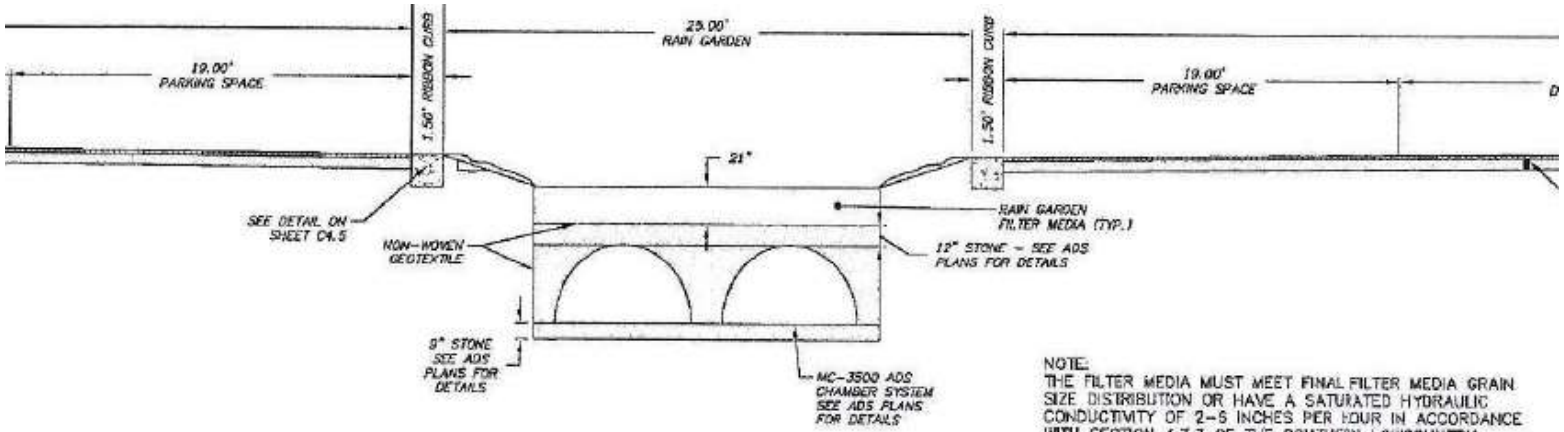




PARKING LOT CROSS SECTION

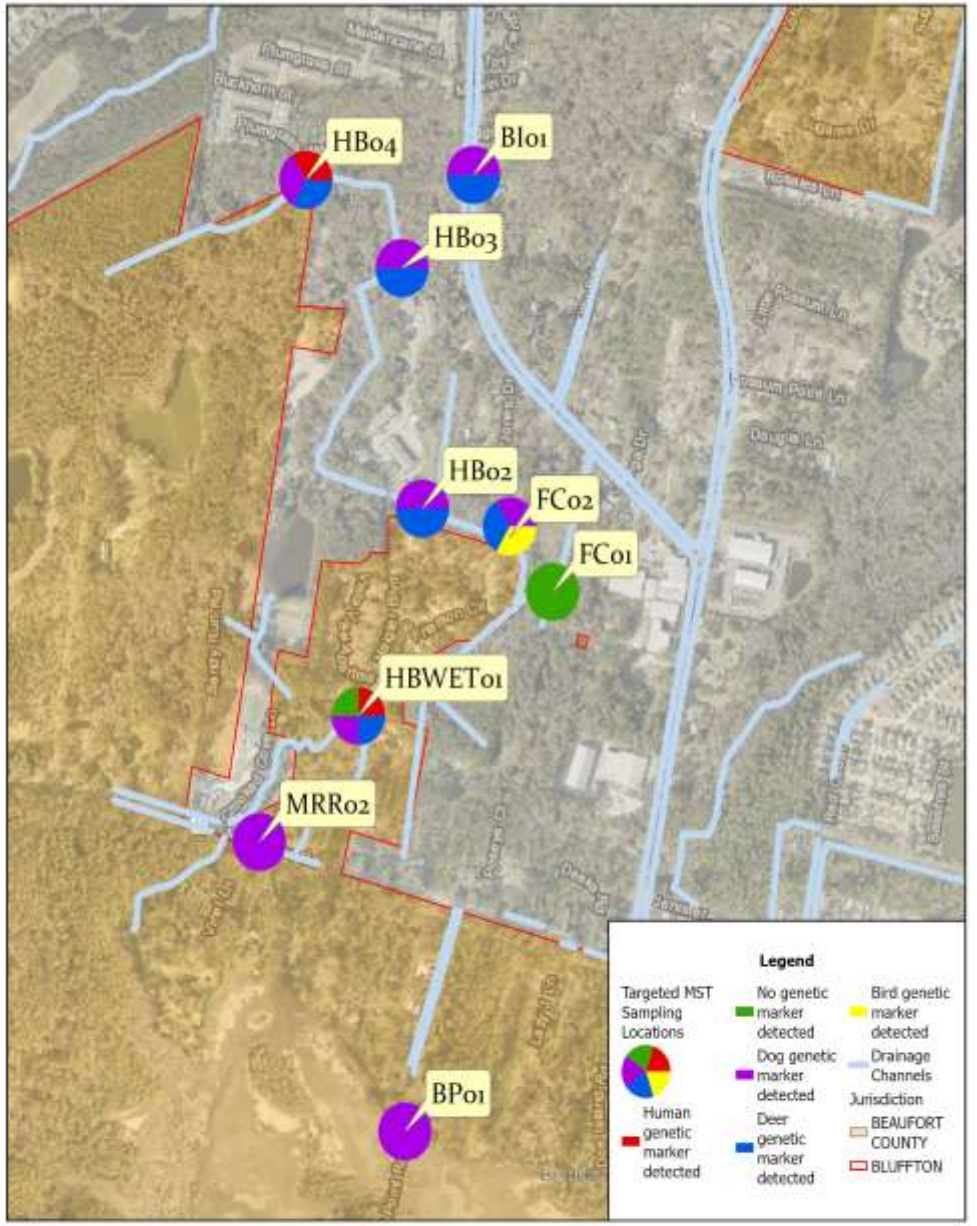
May River Action Plan Update & Modeling Report

5.0 Recommendations

- **5.1.1. In-House Microbial Source Tracking**
  - Staff have collaborated with Dr. Tye Pettay and the USCB Microbial Source Tracking (MST) Laboratory to develop new markers for tracking fecal contamination in the May River Watershed. The primary goal is to identify the sources of bacteria and establish effective mitigation plans. The human genetic marker remains the main focus of the Town's MST sampling program, as it poses the greatest risk to human health.
  - With the introduction of the new MST markers, Town staff have initiated a targeted MST sampling program, starting with the Crooked Cove subwatershed. This area was chosen due to its proximity to the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) Shellfish Harvesting Station 19-24, which has experienced increasing levels of fecal coliform concentrations. The Town has since expanded this program to include the Heyward, Huger, and Verdier Cove subwatersheds. The MST Program examines various potential sources of contamination, including human, dog, deer, horse, and bird waste. Staff are collecting samples during five wet weather events and five dry weather events to characterize each subwatershed.
  - Based on the results of this MST sampling, staff have begun targeted education efforts in these sub-basins focused on dog bacteria.

Targeted MST Sampling

- Crooked Cove Targeted MST Sampling Results:
  - Staff have completed five dry and two wet (<0.5 inches of rain in 24 hours) sampling events for this sub-basin
  - 53 samples taken, 21 of them had the dog genetic marker
  - The dog genetic marker was found at eight of the nine sites



Cumulative Crooked Cove Targeted MST Sampling Results

Targeted MST Education

- Dog Genetic Marker Education:
  - Staff designed a door hanger to specifically target dog waste bacteria.
  - These door hangers were distributed to residences in the Crooked, Huger, and Heyward Cove sub-basins near where the dog genetic marker was found.
  - Staff are developing a new Pet Waste Station Program that will be rolled out later this fiscal year (FY26).

May River Action Plan Update & Modeling Report

5.0 Recommendations

- **5.1.2. Future (new) Bacteria Monitoring Locations &**
- **5.1.3. Future (new) Water Flow Monitoring Locations**
  - Town staff have finalized all bacteria and flow monitoring data collection efforts recommended in sections 5.1.2 and 5.13 of the May River Watershed Action Plan Model Report. These efforts aim to improve/calibrate the Town's stormwater model with a comprehensive dataset.
  - Town staff are working with the Director of Compliance and Contracts.
    - Staff distributed a Request for Qualifications (RFQu)
    - Staff have reviewed RFQu proposals
    - Staff have requested FY25 funds for this project be rolled over to FY26 as part of the budget amendment process that Town Council will consider in the fall.
    - Work is expected to begin in FY26.

Supporting Documents

Attachment 1. MRWAP Implementation Summary

- Summary document outlining updates to the May River Watershed Action Plan Project Implementation

Attachment 2. Pritchard Street Streetscape Design and SoLoCo Compliance Narrative

- Summary document of the Pritchard Street Streetscape Project

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION