

Development of WAPAC Strategic Planning Recommendations for Fiscal Years 2027-2028



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 Resilience Chapter to meet this requirement and prepare the Town for a more resilient future.

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.

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

Guiding Principals

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.
2. Seek collaboration and partnerships that protect, improve the May, Okatie/Colleton and New Rivers and their watersheds.
3. Celebrate the May River, its heritage and importance to the community.
4. Support active planning and management for resilience of natural resources and our response to weather events, future disasters and changing environmental conditions.

WAPAC

- The WAPAC has been a part of this process by providing recommendations on May River Watershed Action Plan initiatives to be included as Strategic Plan recommended priorities for Town Council's consideration.
- To provide context for WAPAC's discussion on the priority recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2027-2028 (FY27-FY28) Strategic Plan, staff have compiled a list of suggested priorities for consideration that will be reviewed today.
- This list includes initiatives from the Town's May River Watershed Action Plan Model Report, targeted Water Quality Program results, and outcomes related to the Town's Comprehensive Drainage Studies, May River Watershed Baseline Assessment Update, and Resilience Analysis.

Process

- 07/24/25 WAPAC Meeting (Today):
 - Review proposed list of WAPAC FY27-FY28 Strategic Plan Priorities,
 - Agree upon WAPAC FY27-FY28 Strategic Plan Priorities,
 - And begin prioritizing WAPAC FY27-FY28 Strategic Plan Priorities.
- **Next Steps**
 - October 23, 2025 WAPAC Meeting: Discussion and vote on Fiscal Year (FY) 2027-2028 WAPAC Strategic Plan recommended priorities for Town Council's consideration
 - November 6, 2025 Town Council Strategic Planning Meeting: Town Council discussion.
 - Budgeting and prioritization of work plans for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027-2028.

WAPAC Priorities

1. Evaluate the recommendations and projects that arise from the Town's stormwater model XPSWMM to PCSWMM conversion. This will include examining the 2021 May River Watershed Action Plan Model Report Impervious Surface Restoration Water Quality projects and locations to help demonstrate their effectiveness for both water quality and water quantity. (May River Watershed Action Plan Model Report)
2. Advance the development of targeted best management plans, both structural and non-structural, tailored to the needs of each sub-basin within the May River Watershed. These plans should utilize insights from the May River Baseline Assessment Update, Resilience Analysis, Comprehensive Drainage Studies, Town Water Quality Program data, and other relevant sources. The objective is to develop specific solutions for each sub-basin that include but are not limited to seeking public-private partnerships, exploring education and outreach solutions, and strengthening ongoing collaborations with local governments and universities aimed at improving water quality and reducing flooding. (May River Baseline Assessment Update, Resilience Analysis, Comprehensive Drainage Studies, and Town Water Quality Program data)

WAPAC Priorities

3. Establish a Resilience Plan for adaptation to coastal impacts from changing environmental conditions (“rain bombs” and sea level rise) on stormwater runoff water quality and quantity. Develop strategies, policies, and ordinances aimed at increasing resilience and reducing long-term risks. Assess the environmental resilience of stormwater ponds to changing climate conditions for retrofit opportunities, e.g. ensuring ponds have capacity to hold rain events. (Town Fiscal Year 25-26 rollover)
4. Examine public-public partnership (PuPs) opportunities with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to focus on capturing stormwater runoff from bridges. Prioritize the SCDOT overpasses on Bridge Street at Heyward and Huger Coves, based on findings from the May River Baseline Assessment Update. Maintain communication with SCDOT to implement additional stormwater retrofits within the constraints of roadway improvement or maintenance projects. (May River Baseline Assessment Update and Town Fiscal Year 25-26 rollover)

WAPAC Priorities

5. Complete annual reviews of the stormwater regulations and Design Manual in the Unified Development Ordinance, particularly the Better Site Design element, to ensure intended outcomes are being met and modify the regulations if necessary (Town Comprehensive Plan, R2.1).
6. Examine opportunities at the time of Intergovernmental Agreements involving the Town of Bluffton, the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority, Beaufort County Government, and any other parties to safeguard zoning densities of the May River Community Preservation (referred to as MRCP or the CP District). The aim is to preserve the low density and rural character of the existing corridor. Also, examine opportunities at the time of each agreement for bacteria source-reduction from septic systems (sewer extension & connection) and from the wastewater system, e.g. asset inventory, inspection, maintenance and prioritization for replacement plan. (Town Comprehensive Plan, R2.2 and Town Fiscal Year 25-26 rollover)

WAPAC Priorities

7. Establish a policy to guide public-private partnerships to implement Action Plan projects/retrofits within neighborhoods, utilize stormwater ponds for irrigation, and coordinate with property management companies to capitalize on forecasted private improvement projects to incorporate stormwater retrofit opportunities. (May River Watershed Action Plan and Town Fiscal Year 25-26 rollover)

Prioritization

XPSWMM Model to PCSWMM & Action Plan Project Evaluation	Targeted Best Management Plans for each sub-basin within the May River	Public-Public Partnership Opportunities with SCDOT	Annual Reviews of SoLoCo	Intergovernmental Agreement Opportunities with BJWSA & County	Public-Private Partnership to Implement May River Watershed Action Plan	Public-Private Partnerships
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Recommended Motion

*"I move that WAPAC recommend the list of Fiscal Year 2027-2028
Strategic Plan priorities as discussed."*