

Goethe- Shults Road Neighborhood Revitalization Plan June/July 2018



Prepared on Behalf of the Town of Bluffton



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Executive Summary

The Goethe-Shults Road Neighborhood Plan addresses comprehensive strategies for revitalizing the neighborhood in order to promote a more healthy and sustainable community and increase economic competitiveness of the residents of the neighborhood, community stakeholders, Town Council and staff, and LCOG staff.

This first phase began as a citizen driven process that involved residents through community meeting, polling of residents, and ongoing communication with staff that resulted in initial ideas regarding long term improvements. This document does the following:

- Describes the location, significance and existing conditions of the Goethe – Shults Road Neighborhood;
- Identifies and prioritizes the current conditions and needs, including public infrastructure, public facilities, crime and safety, and economic and housing conditions;
- Develops strategic goals created as a result of the data collection, and input from residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and county staff; and
- Makes recommendations for implementing revitalization strategies and long-term solutions including time frames, responsible parties/partners and opinions of costs.

Because initial strides have been made in this neighborhood the plan represents a final phase that will tie all of the previous work together.

Findings: Plan Implementation

Town of Bluffton CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Improvements: Cost Estimates and Timelines			
Final Phase			
Timeframe	Activity	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
2018-	Sidewalk Construction	\$609,210	CDBG/Match
	Lighting	\$28,875	SCE&G
2020	Acquisition	\$79,200	Match
	Engineering	\$139,142	Match
	General Administration	\$45,000	CDBG
Total Improvements		\$901,427	\$500,000/CDBG
			\$401,427/Match

Section I: Introduction

Neighborhood Revitalization

As early as 2007, the Town of Bluffton began to systematically look at a number of older neighborhoods adjacent to the Old Town that were densely populated, high pedestrian areas that feed to the commercial center of the Town. These areas were older established neighborhoods that were in place before many of the planned developments were established. As such they did not always have the kind of infrastructure in place that the newer neighborhoods have which left the areas at a disadvantage. The hope was by taking an in depth comprehensive approach to address the needs of these areas, that they would become more sustainable, safer, vibrant and appealing. After several years with the completion of multiple projects in the first neighborhood Bluffton pursued in this manner (Buck Island-Simmonsville), the efforts were initiated in earnest at the beginning of 2018 to start the neighborhood planning and development effort in the Goethe and Shults Road area as a second existing neighborhood where there are some real opportunities for us to make a difference for residents.

The Town ran newspaper advertisements and a social media campaign asking for participation from the public in a community meeting for the areas which make up the Goethe Road and Shults Road Neighborhood to get some beginning feedback related to the activities residents believed the Town should be invested in. The end result of this being that the Town would be able to identify some goals/strategies for the area that would hopefully achieve the following:

- Improve neighborhood involvement and participation
- Address inadequate infrastructure and public facilities;
- Provide safety and facilitate neighborhood pride;
- Identify opportunities for in-fill housing;
- Improve aesthetics of neighborhood and increase property values.
- Promote sustainability and conservation.

Goethe Shults Neighborhood: Location/Significance

The project area (called Goethe – Shults Road Neighborhood) is located partially inside the Town limit of Bluffton and adjacent to the limit within Beaufort County. The neighborhood is a critical concern due to its proximity to the downtown commercial center of the Town and is a cut through to the Old Town District. There are a number of commercial interests connected to it as well. This area is being looked at due to pedestrian traffic, population density, and increased criminal activity. It is identified as a priority area by the Town of Bluffton's Growth Management Department and through the comprehensive planning actions of the Town that have taken a long term look at using pathways to tie residents into the Town and to the existing resources of the area. Goethe Road itself serves as an important thoroughfare for residents to tie to the commercial areas of the Town and as a pass through to exit the Town in a more expedient manner.

The neighborhood for the most part represents an older neighborhood that has always identified with the Town of Bluffton despite portions of it being in the unincorporated area of the County. The area is substantially built out and modestly maintained but for the most part is not in any kind of

formalized subdivision with the exception of the Dustin Loop area. There is a mix of stick built homes and mobile homes as well as a mix of rental and owner occupied residences.

As illustrated on the subsequent map the Goethe-Shults Road Neighborhood encompasses portions of US census tracts 21.07 block group 2 and 21.07 block group 3 and has a low to moderate income population of 60% based on door to door survey information from the area. Based on data provided from the US Census Bureau, 2016 ACS, there was a total population of 4,160 people in the block groups, consisting of 1,374 households, and 1,486 housing units. The neighborhood has a median household income of \$58,770 which is slightly below the Town's MHI of \$67,157 and that of Beaufort County as a whole (\$59,227). However it is higher than the national median household income for all U.S. households (\$53,889).

Some of the issues identified by residents and staff alike that need to be addressed in this neighborhood include:

- Traffic Control
- Street Lighting
- North of Parkway Improvements
- Speeding /Signage
- Drainage
- Road resurfacing/repair on SC 46
- Pedestrian Signs for safe crossing
- Traffic – Taylor/Goethe
- Streetscape/Landscaping
- Security Cameras
- Sidewalks
- Noise/Litter
- Water/Sewer in pocket areas
- Community Center – renovation and programming
- Housing Rehab
- Code Enforcement/Clearance
- Police presence

The overarching goal of the neighborhood plan is to form a blueprint for establishing/maintaining a stable community adjacent to the Town's business corridors and to connect it with the present and future successes of the County and Town's development plans.

Planning Process

Community involvement is crucial to any planning process to make implementation of neighborhood plan recommendations a success. Successful involvement is based on collection of information and dialogue with the community so that residents are informed and can be a part of the decision- making process. Only informed involvement will lead to sustainable results.

While there are many ways to involve the public in the planning process, we have relied specifically on:

- Neighborhood meetings (initially and to garner feedback once a drafted plan was developed)

- Polling of residents at meetings
- Newsprint advertising of meetings along with flyers distributed to local churches in the neighborhood and door to door
- Town website and social media outreach
- Ongoing communications with active residents and stakeholders involved

Community Outreach:

To prepare this plan, reliance was placed on existing sources of data as well as input from members of County and Town staff, residents and stakeholders. Print ads in the local newspaper and public service announcements via media releases (through traditional channels and social media) and local government channel were the primary outreach mechanism for the initial meeting along with door to door flyers that were left in the neighborhood. Any follow up meetings will utilize similar methods to reach out to the initial meeting participants.

Community Meetings:



Figure 1- Community Meeting April 30th, Rotary Community Center

To encourage resident participation in the planning process a community meeting was held to gauge needs in the neighborhood and then once a draft set of recommendations were established, a meeting was held to see if the priorities from the original meeting still held.

The first meeting was held on April 30, 2018 after being advertised on the Town's website, Facebook page and in local newsprint for two weeks

prior to the meeting. This Open Forum was held at the Rotary Community Room at Oscar Frazier Park as the nearest location to the neighborhood that was easily accessible. With approximately 30 residents present staff began with a brief overview of the Neighborhood Revitalization Grant program, the process and timeline for the program and the importance of getting community feedback during the process.

Staff provided large maps of the geographic area the plan would encompass and outlined areas that were initially seen from a staff perspective as possible items that needed attention. There was an open comment period during which a straw poll of general improvements was conducted and specific items were mentioned as real concerns. The group was encouraged to ask questions and staff received valuable feedback from which to begin the work of addressing the concerns of residents.

A second public meeting will be held July/August 2018 to present a draft plan to the public and garner feedback on the proposed improvements and project activities.

If desired a third public meeting will be held to present any changes that are incorporated into the document as a result of the feedback during the second meeting.

Section II: Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Prioritization

The comprehensive needs assessment is a process for identifying and addressing needs, or gaps, between the current conditions and desired conditions or outcomes. This section covers land use, demographics, public infrastructure and facilities, and public safety and services. In addition to identifying the needs for each of these areas, this section also prioritizes these needs and offers an analysis of alternative solutions.

Land Use

The Goethe-Shults Road Neighborhood is predominately comprised of single family residential homes, with some civic and commercial uses along the periphery of the study boundaries. There are also a few mixed use areas and some open space but very little undeveloped land within the boundaries of the area. The businesses on the periphery of the neighborhood are varied but include a mix of commercial and light industrial uses. There is a neighborhood church and a community center that has served multiple functions over the years. As described in the existing zoning the neighborhood is zoned mostly residential with some commercial and with a few areas being described as mixed use, civic/institutional, recreation/open space and vacant undeveloped. Uses that are in the neighborhood that predate the current zoning are considered legal non-conforming uses. (Attached please see Appendix C – Goethe-Shults Road Land Use)

Neighborhood Demographics

Based on the 2016 ACS data for the neighborhood, the majority of the residents (80.4%) are reported as being White with 10.7% reporting as Black or African American and 7.5% identifying as two or more races. Also according to the 2016 ACS 37.5% of the residents identified themselves as being Hispanic or Latino. Additionally, 45% of the residents are between the ages of 25 and 54, and 3% were found to be elderly (age 65 or over).

The neighborhood has a median household income of \$58,770 which is slightly below the Town's MHI of \$67,157 and that of Beaufort County as a whole (\$59,227). However it is higher than the national median household income for all U.S. households (\$53,889).

Housing

The Goethe -Shults Road Neighborhood has an aging housing stock. The area was built out over time mostly not as a part of a formal subdivision. There is one exception to this with the Dustin Loop area of the neighborhood. According to information from the US Census, ACS 2016, the median

year structures in the neighborhood were built is 2003. However the neighborhood as defined by our boundary map based on a field review tells a different story. Most of the original homes to the neighborhood are modest rural development type homes and in some cases mobile homes. While most of the stick built structures have good bones and are modest homes, some of them could require attention, minor repairs and maintenance. While housing repair work was not identified during the community meeting as a concern, LCOG as well as Town staff do receive calls that express some interest in trying to qualify for repair work on individually owned homes. One obstacle faced is related to the calls we receive for mobile homes as most of our resources are restricted in terms of the types of homes we can repair. As these homes continue to age and the residents in the project area are mostly low to moderate income, this indicates that there is a lack of financial resources available in most situations to maintain properties particularly when more expensive maintenance issues occur.

The need for individual repairs was mentioned during the initial community meeting as well as there being an expressed interest in removing vacant/dilapidated homes and noting that there were significant litter problems that should be addressed. While this was not the most talked about need, there is probably a correlation between this condition and expressed concerns regarding safety.

Code Enforcement

As part of the Neighborhood Revitalization efforts the Town and County are committed to continuing to enforce all applicable zoning codes and land use regulations in the neighborhood. This includes:

- monitoring trash dumping
- vacant buildings/lots becoming overgrown
- enforcement of any noise ordinances
- other applicable code violations that contribute to any blighted conditions in the area.

Continued code enforcement will help achieve desired and sustainable improvements in the physical appearance of the neighborhood.

Demolition Procedures

The Town of Bluffton has a defined code enforcement process that allows for voluntary or involuntary removal of vegetation and demolition of attractive nuisance structures under a public nuisance ordinance. Public nuisances can include but are not limited to dilapidated buildings, mobile homes, discarded materials, and overgrown lots. Through code enforcement the Town can issue citations when violations are identified to have owners abate (or correct) the nuisance. If individuals voluntarily correct violations, the Town can assist by waiving permit fees. If individuals fail to voluntarily correct cited violations then the Town can clean the property and place a lien against it to collect the cost of the clearance.

Based on the field review of the area there appeared to be very little evidence of vacant dilapidated structures that were in need of demolition. There was more of an issue with overgrown vegetation on lots, inoperable vehicles and/or materials that needed to be cleared from properties. Moreover,

the Town is currently kicking off a survey to inventory contributing structures in the old Town area of which Goethe and Shults is included.

Vacant Lots

The vacancy rate of the study area is minimal based on information from the parcel maps developed for the plan. Based on the mapping information available, it appears that the vacant land for the most part are privately owned pieces that have not been subdivided in any formal way. The area that is currently vacant is on the visual survey of the area. The vacant areas in the neighborhood may have good long term viability for future residential infill, passive parks, community gardens or other public/civic uses for the good of the community.

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

For a comprehensive strategy to truly encompass all the revitalization needs of a neighborhood, an analysis of the current infrastructure and facilities conditions has to be conducted. Additionally current service provision has to be reviewed too. The physical foundation of a neighborhood is its infrastructure. Poor road conditions, street lighting, pedestrian pathways, drainage and water and sewer lines impact not only the physical condition of a neighborhood but the economic health of it as well. Improved infrastructure can improve other issues in the neighborhood such as promoting healthier living.

There are two considerations when looking at infrastructure and facilities, what is actually present “on or in the ground” and neighborhood perception of the conditions. It is not uncommon for there to be disconnects between the perception and reality. When these discrepancies exist regarding the perception of the quality of services or facilities, a discourse between residents and staff at the county and/or city needs to occur so that an understanding or a resolution can be attained. Bringing all groups to the table can help local agencies and local government staff tailor their services and resources to more effectively meet the community needs and help the residents see the value in the resources that are provided in the neighborhood.

Open Forum participants were asked to vote for the public improvements they were most interested in. The highest interest by far was in improving traffic control, street lighting, and improvements north of the parkway. Behind this followed lot clearing/demolition, traffic signage, repaving/widening SC 46 and pedestrian signage for safety. There was minimal interest in sewer and water improvements or housing indicated at the meeting.

Beyond the input of the open forum, staff has consulted with Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority as the water and sewer provider, the County DOT engineering department regarding roads, drainage, and pedestrian pathways to identify necessary improvements to the neighborhood. The input from residents combined with staff recommendations identify strategic locations for infrastructure improvements for phases of Neighborhood Revitalization of the area.

Water, Sewer, Drainage, Roads

The Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority (BJWSA) is the water and wastewater provider for the Goethe-Shults Road Neighborhood. The existing system in the neighborhood was built in various

phases by BJWSA through a number of Community Development Block Grant projects that date back to 1990. Since then BJWSA has continued to expand water and sewer services in the area through several different means and for the most part existing water and wastewater infrastructure is in good condition. BJWSA has approximately 170 customers in the system that serves the neighborhood. The area is completely served with water and wastewater; BJWSA maintains sufficient capacity to continue to serve the area.



Figure 2- Pump Station that serves neighborhood

With regard to the current needs to address with water and wastewater, BJWSA maintains that there are no new service or general upgrades and improvements needed to the current infrastructure that is serving the customer base in the neighborhood. There have been no indications of water pressure issues that may be a consideration as the current system continues to age and new customers are added onto the system. Because wastewater collection systems are designed with the intent of having a use of life of 20 years or more it is the feeling that there are no wastewater collection system needs based on the age of the infrastructure that serves the neighborhood.

Roads and the associated storm water drainage within the neighborhood are primarily owned and maintained by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) with the exception of a portion of Goethe Road that is County maintained. The existing condition of the roads and the drainage are clearly a concern; however, based on the local staff review of the infrastructure, the matters here are a combination of sizing issues and of maintenance that needs to be addressed. Consequently, the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort work jointly on issues as they are identified through the storm water management staff with both local governments.

There was also a public safety concern related to the streets being used as a “cut through”. Goethe and Shults are both high traffic streets and serve as a significant local traffic artery within the Town. There is a need to address ways that pedestrian and vehicular traffic can coexist in a safe way on



Figure 3- Example of existing drainage issues

these streets as a result. These streets have a higher volume of traffic. This combined with the fact that pedestrian paths and/or bike paths are not fully completed creates a risk for residents making their way to the commercial areas, the school, the library and the park. The Town in coordination with Beaufort County and SCDOT, have made a number of improvements that are designed to calm traffic but more improvements may

be necessary to assist in this effort particularly in the area where Bluffton Parkway bisects Goethe Road, at the intersection of Goethe and Shults and also at the turn onto 9th Street that takes residents into Oscar Frazier Park. Long term, if a review of traffic volume determines that more aggressive improvements be made there may be opportunities to partner in some of those efforts at that time.

Pedestrian Oriented Infrastructure, Parks and Recreation

The Town of Bluffton has extensive pedestrian pathways that network the town; however the Goethe Shults Neighborhood and participants in the open forum expressed significant interest in the need for sidewalks and lighting in the neighborhood. Portions of Goethe and Shults have had some initial phased work done to have sidewalks installed in the rights of way however this work needs to be completed to tie the neighborhood into the existing network of pathways. The finished work will make the area much more pedestrian friendly. Additionally because the neighborhood itself extends beyond the existing town limits there is a need to continue this network in conjunction with the County as those individuals that live in this area do identify with the Town and utilize the commercial and recreation areas that are within a reasonable walking distance.

Sidewalks

There are existing sidewalks in portions of the neighborhood that are closer to the Old Town and a first phase of sidewalk work is underway as this plan is being developed; however, to completely tie the neighborhood into the existing sidewalk and pathway system there needs to be additional sidewalks installed on portions of Goethe Road south of Bluffton Parkway and all of Goethe Road north of Bluffton Parkway as well as along the length of Shults Road. There is a desire at a minimum to have sidewalks completely along both Goethe and Shults as they are high traffic streets that are heavily populated. These improvements would tie into the existing sidewalk system and long term trail plan of the Town. Also in the longer term may be the need for dedicated paths for some of the interior streets that could be accomplished through repairing existing roadways and striping them in a manner that would allow for bike lanes or bicycle boulevards. Traditional sidewalk may not be the best option for some of the more traveled interior streets because of narrow public right of ways.

Street Lighting

The street lighting that exists is passive from existing security lights located on private property on a number of the streets in the neighborhood although Goethe Road and Shults Road do have sporadic traditional street lighting.

Residents at the open forum expressed interest in having more lighting for security purposes and to give the neighborhood more of a feeling of having arrived at a location. There are several key intersections staff believes could benefit from having more lighting available as well as having more lighting directly on some key intersections so that people who use the area as a cut through more easily identify the area as a neighborhood.

Parks and Recreation

The Goethe Shults Neighborhood has extensive recreation opportunities within walking distance adjacent to the neighborhood specifically at Oscar Frazier Park and the MC Riley Sports Complex. Residents that are interested in park activities typically use the recreational facilities and ball fields located at Oscar Frazier Park and at the MC Riley Sports Complex. While no park exists in the neighborhood we believe that the adjacent facilities provide many opportunities for residents and the more important issue is to have safe pathways to reach both locations. There may be some opportunities to give consideration to having more passive parks and/or trails within the neighborhood as long as they are consistent with existing town plans but these would be minimal.

Public Safety and Services

Law Enforcement

Because the Goethe Shults Neighborhood crosses Town Limit boundaries the responsibility for public safety is shared by the Bluffton Police Department and the Beaufort County Sheriff's Department.

While crime itself was not identified as a high concern of Open Forum participants based on our straw poll, speeding specifically was. Crime statistics provided by the BPD and BCSD would seem to echo that concern and would support developing some measures and possibly providing some infrastructure to address crime concerns. In the neighborhood during the 2017 calendar year there were 333 calls responded to in the neighborhood that were not hang ups, welfare checks, extra patrols or warrant/civil service related. These calls included activities that ranged from larceny and vandalism to suspicious activity, assaults, shootings and domestic disputes. The largest percentage of calls were for traffic issues at 35% (115 combined calls), followed by domestic disputes and disturbances at 20% (65 combined calls), burglary/theft/larceny calls at 10% (34 combined calls), and suspicious incidents/persons/vehicles at almost 10% (32 combined calls). There have been six hit and runs in the neighborhood, six narcotics incidents, and twelve incidents where shots were fired in the area in the past 12 months. *(Due to the limited number of streets in the neighborhood, we are not listing table data in order to protect anonymity.)*

Fire

The Goethe Shults Neighborhood is served by the Bluffton Township Fire District through Beaufort County. The fire district operates 8 stations. The Burnt Church Road Station 30 serves the Goethe and Shults Neighborhood. According to the BTFD call data there were 2 fire responses, 8 medical responses and 13 motor vehicle accidents within the neighborhood.

Social Services

Goethe and Shults Road residents have access to a number of organizations that have programs dedicated to improving the quality of life of residents that include but are not limited to Beaufort County Social Services, Senior Services of Beaufort County, Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission, Beaufort Jasper Hampton Comprehensive Health, Lowcountry Habitat for Humanity,

Volunteers in Medicine and United Way as well as area churches that have ministry missions that assist those in need.

Education

Beaufort County has twelve (12) public schools and four (4) private schools to serve residents in the Bluffton area. Schools that serve the neighborhood are listed in the table below.

Educational Facility	Grades
Bluffton Early Childhood Education Center	Pre K – 1 st Grade
Michael C. Riley Early Childhood Education Center	Pre K – 1 st Grade
Bluffton Elementary	2 nd - 5 th Grade
Michael C. Riley Elementary	2 nd - 5 th Grade
Okatie Elementary	Pre K - 5 th Grade
Pritchardville Elementary	Pre K - 5 th Grade
Red Cedar Elementary	Pre K - 5 th Grade
River Ridge Academy	Pre K – 8 th Grade
Bluffton Middle School	6 th – 7 th Grade
H. E. McCracken Middle School	6 th – 8 th Grade
Bluffton High School	9 th -12 th Grade
May River High School	9 th -12 th Grade
Beaufort Jasper Academy for Career Excellence	9 th -12 th Grade
Cross Schools	K – 8 th Grade
John Paul II Catholic School	7 th – 12 th Grade
May River Montessori	Pre K – 6 th Grade
St. Gregory the Great Catholic School	Pre K – 6 th Grade

The Bluffton Library is also within a reasonable walking distance of the neighborhood. There are also satellite campuses of Technical College of the Lowcountry (New River) and the University of South Carolina (New River) that are within a reasonable commuting distance.

Section III: Neighborhood Resources and Alternative Solutions

Many resources exist and will be relied upon throughout the development and the implementation of this Revitalization plan. There are many local, regional, state and federal resources that exist within the community at large. Many of the organizations are already committed to the efforts in the neighborhood and will continue to play a role during implementation of the plan.

Residential Resources

Organizations with an established presence in the area are key to the success of a revitalization strategy. Not only do these organizations have a vested interest in the well-being of the residents and businesses of the neighborhood, they also benefit from early involvement in the process by increasing their visibility and bringing the neighborhood together. Also some of the organizations can increase their capacity by remaining engaged in the process.

Housing: Alternative Solutions

There are several agencies from which the Town can pursue rehabilitation funds to correct identified problems with the existing housing stock. The South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) has minimal options for assistance with housing rehabilitation. SCDOC will consider some minimal exterior housing rehabilitation as part of neighborhood revitalization either utilizing grant funds for materials and labor or materials only encouraging the use of volunteer labor. Using the program for materials does give the Town the opportunity to partner with volunteer groups such as Mission Serve (a faith based non-profit formerly called World Changers) or other local volunteer groups if identified.

Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) also has programs designed to assist qualifying homeowners with needed repairs to their homes through the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium (LRHC) and the Human Services Department. This includes:

- Owner Occupied housing rehabilitation for qualifying homeowners that are in stick built homes and meet program criteria to bring homes up to a minimum building code. (LRHC program)
- New construction of homes when partnering with a Certified Housing Development Organization (CHDO), typically local Habitat groups to provide materials for construction to occur. (LRHC program)
- Home Safety Program grants for qualifying senior citizens that need funds to address emergency repairs or accessibility issues that will allow them to safely age in place. (LCOG Human Services)

The Town of Bluffton has a direct program that staff manages as well called the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) that provides some limited funding to address emergency housing issues. Because there is local control over the programs it gives the Town more flexibility in terms of the types of homes they can address (ex. mobile homes) which allows them to address a real need in specific ways.

Beaufort Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission (BJEOC) manages the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) to provide weatherization assistance to qualifying low income families, particularly focusing on the elderly, the disabled and homes with children by improving the energy efficiency of the homes while ensuring the health and safety of residents.

Jasper County Neighbors United, an active non-profit housing development group that serves the Bluffton area conducts several different housing activities not unlike the ones previously mentioned as well as providing housing counseling to people who are looking to move into homeownership activities.

The Greater Hilton Head Habitat for Humanity also works in Bluffton to develop affordable housing stock and serves this area with a number of different housing resources as well as managing several Habitat developments in the area.

Additionally USDA-Rural Development has grant and loan programs to assist income qualifying individuals in repairing their homes, building homes and purchasing homes. USDA-RD has a regional office located in the City of Walterboro where individuals can be assisted directly with their needs.

Demolition, Vacant Lots and Code Enforcement: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

Through Code Enforcement procedures and neighborhood beautification efforts much can be done to make vacant lots and attractive nuisance properties less attractive. Currently the Town is conducting a survey to identify and inventory structures that are contributing to the area and are at risk to be demolished. Assistance for the removal of residential structures that are determined to be condemnable can be sought through CDBG funds.

Public Infrastructure and Services

Water and Wastewater: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

BJWSA as the water and wastewater provider has an ongoing capital improvements plan that directs them in the pursuit of their most critical needs in their system. This assessment allows them to target funding via grants and/or loans for qualifying areas and projects. They continually do this through a variety of sources which include but are not limited to: USDA- RD, US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, SC Rural Infrastructure Authority, SC Department of Commerce – Grants Administration, SC State Revolving Fund and local sources. BJWSA independently and in cooperation with the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County, can utilize (and has utilized) the programs offered in ways to partner and leverage sources to accomplish the long term improvements in a way to offer continued long term viability, sustainability and capacity for the Town of Bluffton. BJWSA, the Town of Bluffton and the County also work on these efforts jointly when opportunities present themselves for the greater good of the residents of the areas where service provisions overlap.

Drainage: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

The Town can pursue grants to improve drainage facilities where needed in this neighborhood and other areas through the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT), SC Rural Infrastructure Authority, and possibly through "C" funds with the assistance of the legislative delegation. For low to moderate income areas CDBG funds through SCDOC can be a resource as well.

The Town can also continue to coordinate with SCDOT, encouraging better maintenance of existing drainage structures by SCDOT and by setting a public information campaign to make residents aware of things they can do on their own property that will alleviate some drainage issues (ex, not burning trash in drainage ditches). The drainage improvements recommended in this plan will be minimal and tie to proposed sidewalk work. Beyond this any final recommendations related to drainage will come through continued coordination with Beaufort County Storm Water Management and local SCDOT officials so that work is completed in a systematic manner and that efforts are not duplicated while trying to address any drainage issues in the neighborhood.

Pedestrian Oriented Infrastructure: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

The Town of Bluffton can pursue potential grants and partnerships, including Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program that is funded by SCDOT. Funding cycles and guidelines are distributed in the spring. For areas that are predominately low to moderate income, CDBG funds are again a potential source as well.

Currently, the Town of Bluffton is in the process of completing an initial phase of sidewalk work in the neighborhood that was part of their capital improvements plan for the Town. There are plans being developed to continue phased work of sidewalks in the neighborhood that would completely connect the neighborhood to the nearby schools, parks, Historic District and town center and would improve pedestrian safety in the neighborhood.

Street Lighting: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

Street Lighting to promote pedestrian safety can be accomplished through a number of different sources. Lighting could be partnered with SCDOT transportation program improvements, or sidewalk construction. Lighting could also be addressed in low to moderate income areas with CDBG funds. Materials could be secured cooperatively as well, in coordination with local electrical service providers.

Roads: Alternative Solutions

The Town of Bluffton can look at local “C” funds to address road improvements, along with SCDOT’s programs to assist in correcting road conditions.

Parks and Recreation: Alternative Solutions

The Town of Bluffton can pursue funds through the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (PRT) to provide assistance with park upgrades and new park improvements. Additionally in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods CDBG can serve as a resource on a limited basis.

Public Safety: Alternative Solutions and Ongoing Efforts

The Goethe Shults Neighborhood has had an active crime watch program for certain streets in the neighborhood. This needs to be reactivated and with other improvements that will make areas of the neighborhood safer and will increase community pride. Local law enforcement will meet with any groups that have a desire to begin or reinstitute a neighborhood watch program.

Other solutions could include having personnel to locate in the neighborhood through a workforce housing initiative if this is not already the case.

Section IV: Conclusions

The Goethe Shults Road Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was created through a collaborative process that included residents and stakeholders. The process presented challenges as well as

opportunities to pool resources and think strategically about the long term improvements that are needed to make the area sustainable. We believe we have achieved the following through this process:

- Effectively described the location, significance and condition of the Goethe Road-Shults Road Neighborhood;
- Identified and prioritized current conditions and needs related to public infrastructure, facilities, public safety, economic conditions and housing conditions;
- Articulated goals created as a result of data collection, resident input, stakeholder input, and staff input; and
- Made implementation recommendations for revitalization strategies and long term solutions that include time frames, responsible parties, and opinions of cost.

While all the revitalization strategies are important, it was necessary to prioritize a list of capital needs for future funding consideration through CDBG. These needs have to be both essential for revitalization to occur and comprehensive in scope while being eligible for program funding. When looking at the neighborhood holistically and listing the items that need improvements, the real need capital projects totaled approximately \$901,427. Our recommendations are to address the needs through a single phase of work that ideally can be accomplished over a single grant period of two years, possibly sooner depending on funding streams. A table with the outlining the work is located in the Executive Summary as well as more detailed costing in the appendices with an accompanying map.

Section V: Appendices

PLEASE COME !

COMMUNITY MEETING

Seeking Input Regarding

Improvements to the

Goethe and Shults Road area

When? Monday, April 30, 2018

Where? Bluffton Rotary Community Room

Time? 6:00 p.m.

Streets include: Goethe Road from Hilderbrand (including all offshoots) crossing Bluffton Parkway to Bluffton Road (SC 46) and the entirety of Shults Road (including all off-shoots)

Michelle Knight

From: Szpanka, Debbie <dszpanka@townofbluffton.com>
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2018 10:32 AM
To: Colin, Heather; Icard, Kevin; Michelle Knight
Subject: Goethe-Shults Neighborhood Meeting/Facebook Event Post

To All:

FYI: The Facebook event has been posted for the Goethe-Shults Neighborhood Meeting.

I have paid \$30 to "boost" the event to ensure audience reach.

Let me know if you need any further assistance with this project.

Thanks!

Debbie Szpanka
Public Information Officer

Town of Bluffton
20 Bridge Street
Bluffton, SC 29910
(Office): 843-706-4534
(Cell): 843-540-2274
www.townofbluffton.sc.gov



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Michelle Knight

From: Szpanka, Debbie <dszpanka@townofbluffton.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 4:59 PM
To: Michelle Knight
Cc: Colin, Heather; Icard, Kevin
Subject: FW: Media Release: Town of Bluffton Hosts Goethe-Shults Neighborhood Meeting to Develop Infrastructure Plan

Michelle,

FYI: I just distributed this media release to the Town's media list, residents' list (about 300 folks), Mayor, Town Council, all Town employees, all members of the Town's boards, commissions and committee, all town property owners associations.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks for your input in this release.

Debbie Szpanka
Public Information Officer

Town of Bluffton
20 Bridge Street
Bluffton, SC 29910
(Office): 843-706-4534
(Cell): 843-540-2274
www.townofbluffton.sc.gov

bluffton
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

From: Szpanka, Debbie
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2018 4:58 PM
To: Debbie Szpanka.Town of Bluffton <dszpanka@townofbluffton.com>
Subject: Media Release: Town of Bluffton Hosts Goethe-Shults Neighborhood Meeting to Develop Infrastructure Plan

Media Release



bluffton
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

April 12, 2018

For more information:

Debbie Szpanka

Public Information Officer

Town of Bluffton

20 Bridge Street

Bluffton, South Carolina 29910

(Office) 843-706-4534

(Cell): 843-540-2274

(Email): dszpanka@townofbluffton.com

Town Hosts Goethe-Shults Neighborhood Meeting to Develop Infrastructure Plan

The Town of Bluffton, along with the Lowcountry Council of Governments, will host a public meeting Monday, April 30 at 6:00 p.m. to seek community stakeholder input into developing a neighborhood infrastructure plan. The meeting will be held at the Rotary Community Center for residents and business owners of the Goethe-Shults Neighborhood. The neighborhood plan will help identify capital improvement project needs such as public facilities, sewer, roads, sidewalks, lighting and other elements which will add infrastructure, features and possibly amenities to the neighborhood.

The homes and businesses within the Goethe-Shults neighborhood boundaries are not a part of a planned community and do not have the benefits of pre-planned infrastructure and amenities.

“This meeting is the first step to developing a neighborhood plan. It allows residents and business owners to voice their vision and opinions on what’s good for the neighborhood,” Town Manager Marc Orlando said. “Once the neighborhood plan is in place, town staff can apply for state and federal grants to help fund identified projects.”

Orlando said this plan may need multi-years and phases to accomplish, however, the first step is to develop the overall plan and implement as much as each year’s budget and grants allow.

“There are only about 4% of the Town’s residents and businesses who aren’t in a planned community,” Town Councilman Fred Hamilton said. “Many of the families who live in the Goethe-Shults area were there long before other communities were and established their homes while Bluffton was still considered rural. These families are now surrounded by planned neighborhoods and business parks.

“The Town can now help mobilize these residents and help design, implement and find funding to support additional infrastructure for this area. In addition, improvements to this area will improve the quality of life for these residents as well as connect and complement the sidewalks, parking and other public safety features which are happening all around them adding to the overall walkability and safety of the entire town,” Hamilton said.

The streets within the Goethe-Shults Neighborhood include the following:

- Dustin Loop
- Hilderbrand Drive
- Shults Road
- Goethe Road
- May River Road (Portion between Wharf and DuBois)
- Taylor Court
- Laurel Court
- Bush Lane
- Grace Lane
- Kidd Lane
- Benjamin Miller Lane
- Martha Brown Lane

Attachment 6

- Derf Lane
- Little Lane
- Jillfer Lane
- Joe Hamilton Lane
- CM Ellis Lane
- Tamarack Lane

The April 30 meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will be facilitated by Michelle Knight, director of community and economic development, for the Lowcountry Council of Governments. Knight will present the steps involved in developing a neighborhood plan and ask residents and business owners to participate in a brainstorming session to gather ideas for the plan.

If you are unable to attend the meeting and wish to offer your opinions and ideas, please email Michelle Knight at (mknight@lowcountrycog.org).

#####

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Serving **Beaufort • Colleton • Hampton • Jasper Counties**

**Goethe Road-Shults Road Neighborhood Planning Meeting
Town of Bluffton
Rotary Community Room ~ April 30, 2018 ~ 6pm**

AGENDA

Welcome

Background

Neighborhood boundary – see maps

Vision of Improvements – Good, bad, how to change

Wrap up/ Next Steps

Lowcountry Council of Governments

PO Box 98 | 634 Campground Road
Yemassee, South Carolina 29945
P: 843.726.5536 F: 843.726.5165
www.lowcountrycog.org

Attachment 6

Goethe / Shults Road Neighborhood Planning Survey April 2018

Town of Bluffton is seeking public input regarding an area of town referred to here as the Goethe/Shults Road Neighborhood. Please help us by completing this survey with your opinions in a way to help plan the future of this area. In order for the town to apply for grant assistance, we need you to complete the income survey to determine if this is a low-to-moderate income area.

A planning meeting will be held on **April 30th at 6:00 pm at the Bluffton Rotary Community Room**. These forms can be turned in at the April 30th meeting or mailed to Jessica Dailey, Lowcountry Council of Governments, PO Box 98, Yemassee, SC 29945. All answers will remain confidential.

Street Name: _____

Of the items listed below, please rate if they are Good or Bad in your area.

<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>		<u>What/Where needs to be improved?</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crime	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crime Watch Programs	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drainage	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing conditions	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Litter	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road conditions/maintenance	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sewer service	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sidewalks	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Street Lighting	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water service	_____

Do you have a concern about a house that needs to be torn down? If so, where?

Do you have any other services that need to be improved? Where? Please explain.

Thank you!

Encuesta de planificación del vecindario de Goethe / Shults Road

Abril de 2018

Town of Bluffton está buscando opiniones del público con respecto a un área de la ciudad que se conoce como Goethe / Shults Road Neighborhood. Ayúdenos a completar esta encuesta con sus opiniones para ayudar a planificar el futuro de esta área. Para que la ciudad solicite asistencia financiera, necesitamos que complete la encuesta de ingresos para determinar si se trata de un área de ingresos bajos a moderados.

Se llevará a cabo una reunión de planificación el 30 de abril a las 6:00 p.m. en la sala Bluffton Rotary Community. Estos formularios pueden entregarse en la reunión del 30 de abril o enviarse por correo a Jessica Dailey, Consejo de Gobiernos de Lowcountry, PO Box 98, Yemassee, SC 29945. Todas las respuestas serán confidenciales.

Nombre de la calle: _____

De los artículos enumerados a continuación, califique si son buenos o malos en su área.

Qué bueno / Qué debe mejorarse?

• • Crimen _____

• • Programas de vigilancia del crimen

• • Drenaje _____

• • Condiciones de la vivienda _____

• • Camada _____

• • Condiciones de la carretera / mantenimiento _____

• • Servicio de alcantarillado _____

• • Aceras _____

• • Alumbrado público _____

• • Servicio de agua _____

¿Tiene alguna preocupación sobre una casa que necesita ser demolida? ¿Si es así, donde?

¿Tiene algún otro servicio que deba mejorarse? ¿Dónde? Por favor explique.

{Gracias!

Attachment 6

Town of Bluffton Goethe Road- Shults Road Neighborhood Meeting

April 30, 2018 ~ 6:00 PM ~ Bluffton Rotary Community Room

	Name	Address/Email	Phone #
1	Very Anna	34 Dustin Loop	520-730-9796
2	ROBERT CHABALA	38 Dustin Loop	610 360 4206
3	Kathi & Jerry O'Shea	43 Dustin Loop	843 422-4920
4	Eunice Hamilton	6 Bush Ln	(843) 227-1440
5	Elysdette Miller	15 Bush Lane	(843) 227-8791
6	MIKE RAYMOND	MIKE.RAYMOND@TOWN	843-540-9471
7	Michele Martini	31 Shults Rd.	843-247-11810
8	BLACK BUSH	91 Goethe Rd	843 338-8347
9	Caura Bush	5 Bush Lane	843-757-2638
10	Cynthia Ellis	7 CM Ellis Ln	
11	Laurie Knight	2 Taylor Ct	
12	Suzan Obermier	14 Dustin Loop Rd	843 706 0617
13	Martha Barnes	8 Dustin Loop	252-412-0174
14	Georgia Ellis	9 CM Ellis Lane	843-816-6722
15	Patricia Rivers	35 Shults Rd	757-3459
16	Tammie Rivers	45 Shults Rd	864-441-8378
17	Juel Salar	40 Joe Hamilton Ln	(843) 298-1286
18	Blanca Piopedre de la Garza	28 Goethe Rd L	(813) 368-7819
19	Mika Thayer	51 Campbell Ct	843 757 5702
20	Blanca Rodriguez	104 Goethe Rd	
21	Oscar Rodriguez	133 Goethe Rd	
22	Jammy Lewis	7 Taylor St.	843 384-9013
23	Costa D Brown	11 Bush Lane	
24	Fred Hamilton Jr.	def2427@cdl.com	843-384-8801
25	Kevin Icard	kicard@townofbluffton.com	STAFF
26	DEBBIE SZPANKA	dszpanka@townofbluffton.com	"
27	BRAD MOLE	bmole@townofbluffton.com	"
28	Heather Glin	hglin@townofbluffton.com	"
29	Kimberly Mullinax	kmullinax@lcccountrycog.org	473-396
30			
31			
32			
33			
34			
35			

Attachment 6

Goethe/Shults Neighborhood Revitalization		
ISSUE	NOTES	VOTES
Traffic Control		16
Street Lighting		14
Parkway N. Improvement		10
Lot clearing & Demo		6
Speeding Signage		6
Drainage	Ditches	4
Road Paving Hwy. 46	Re-paving to widen road, more roadside park	4
Pedestrian Signs	Safety crossing, Right of Way, Bike Path	3
Taylor/Goethe Traffic		3
Streetscape/Landscaping		2
Security	Cameras	2
Sidewalks	Both sides of Goethe	2
Noise	Music late at night	1
Litter	Cans, trash cans, junk cars/boats	1
Water/Sewer		0
Water/Sewer	Pockets	0
Community Center	Renovations and Programs	0
Housing Rehab		0
Police	Enforcement	0

Proj. Name: Goethe/Shults neighborhood sidewalks, phase II & III

Client: Town of Bluffton

Item #	Cost Code	Description	Contract			
			Qty.	Unit	Unit Price	Total Price
Lump Sum						
1		Clearing and Grubbing, incl. street R/W, easements & other areas as shown on the plans	1	LS	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
2		Grading and Project Miscellaneous shall include all grading, including off-site removal and replacement of unsuitable material, to meet the finished grades shown on the plans, and project staking, testing, insurance, bonds & all miscellaneous items not included elsewhere in this bid schedule to complete the project in accordance with the plans & specifications.	1	LS	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
3		Remove Fencing	1	LF	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
4		Replace Chain link Fencing	900	LF	\$ 10.00	\$ 9,000.00
5		Replace concrete fencing	0	LF	\$ 25.00	\$ -
6		Inlet Protection - Type "A"	5	EA	\$ 100.00	\$ 500.00
7		Sediment tubes	75	LF	\$ 65.00	\$ 4,875.00
8		Tree Protection (As Directed by Owner)	10,000	LF	\$ 1.80	\$ 18,000.00
9		Grassing	1	LS	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
10		5' Sidewalk (4" Thick Concrete)	4,494	SY	\$ 29.25	\$ 131,449.50
11		5' Sidewalk (Paver - Budget 100 LF)	75	SY	\$ 96.00	\$ 7,200.00
12		Sawcut/remove existing driveways	887	LF	\$ 10.40	\$ 9,224.80
13		Reconstruct 6" concrete driveways	887	SY	\$ 46.00	\$ 40,802.00
14		Repair asphalt edges	887	SY	\$ 11.00	\$ 9,757.00
15		Remove existing curb	250	LF	\$ 8.00	\$ 2,000.00
16		Tapered curb	150	EA	\$ 26.00	\$ 3,900.00
17		SCDOT 4'x4' drop inlet	1	EA	\$ 2,425.00	\$ 2,425.00
18		JB (SCDOT)	5	LF	\$ 2,525.00	\$ 12,625.00
19		15" RCP	787	LF	\$ 40.40	\$ 31,794.80
20		18" RCP	138	EA	\$ 48.00	\$ 6,624.00
21		Structural backfill	300	LS	\$ 50.00	\$ 15,000.00
22		Detectable warning tiles	4	EA	\$ 525.00	\$ 2,100.00
23		Stop bars & crosswalk striping	2	EA	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
24		Raise water meters	17	EA	\$ 150.00	\$ 2,550.00
25		Raise sewer cleanouts	16	EA	\$ 125.00	\$ 2,000.00
26		Relocate guy wires	2	EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
27		Cable TV pedestal relocation	5	LS	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
28		Telephone pedestal relocation	4	LF	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
29		Powerpole relocation	3	EA	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
30		New directional/pedestrian	1	LS	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
31		Landscaping allowance	1	LF	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
32		Ditch cleaning	1	LF	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
32a		Light poles installed	15	EA	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 26,250.00
33		10% contingency	1	LS	\$ 58,007.71	\$ 58,007.71
34		Contract subtotal				\$ 638,084.81
35		Just compensation costs	66	EA	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 79,200.00
36		Engineering design (Pre-application)	1	LS	\$ 23,090.00	\$ 23,090.00
37		Engineering design (Post-application)	1	LS	\$ 116,052.00	\$ 116,052.00
38		Administration	1	LS	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00

TOTAL **\$901,426.81**