

A scenic view of a harbor at sunset. Two fishing boats are docked on the left, their names 'DADY'S WIFE' and 'DADY'S WIFE' visible. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange, with clouds catching the low sun. The water reflects the sky and the boats. The text 'bluffton' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font in the center.

bluffton

HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Tracked Items Since the Last Strategic Planning Workshop:

- Items mentioned during Council Meetings
- Items from meetings with staff

Receive Guidance and Input from Council:

- Review initial research or designs
- Ensure staff proposals include all Council priorities

Strategic Plan Action Agenda:

- Items for FY 26 Budget
- Prioritization for staff
- Ensure that Council and staff have a shared vision on projects

Overview

KEY TOPICS

- Land Acquisition
- Pedestrian and Safety Improvements
- Green Initiatives
- Resiliency Initiatives
- Affordable Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Buck Island Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan Implementation
- Noise Ordinance

Land Acquisition

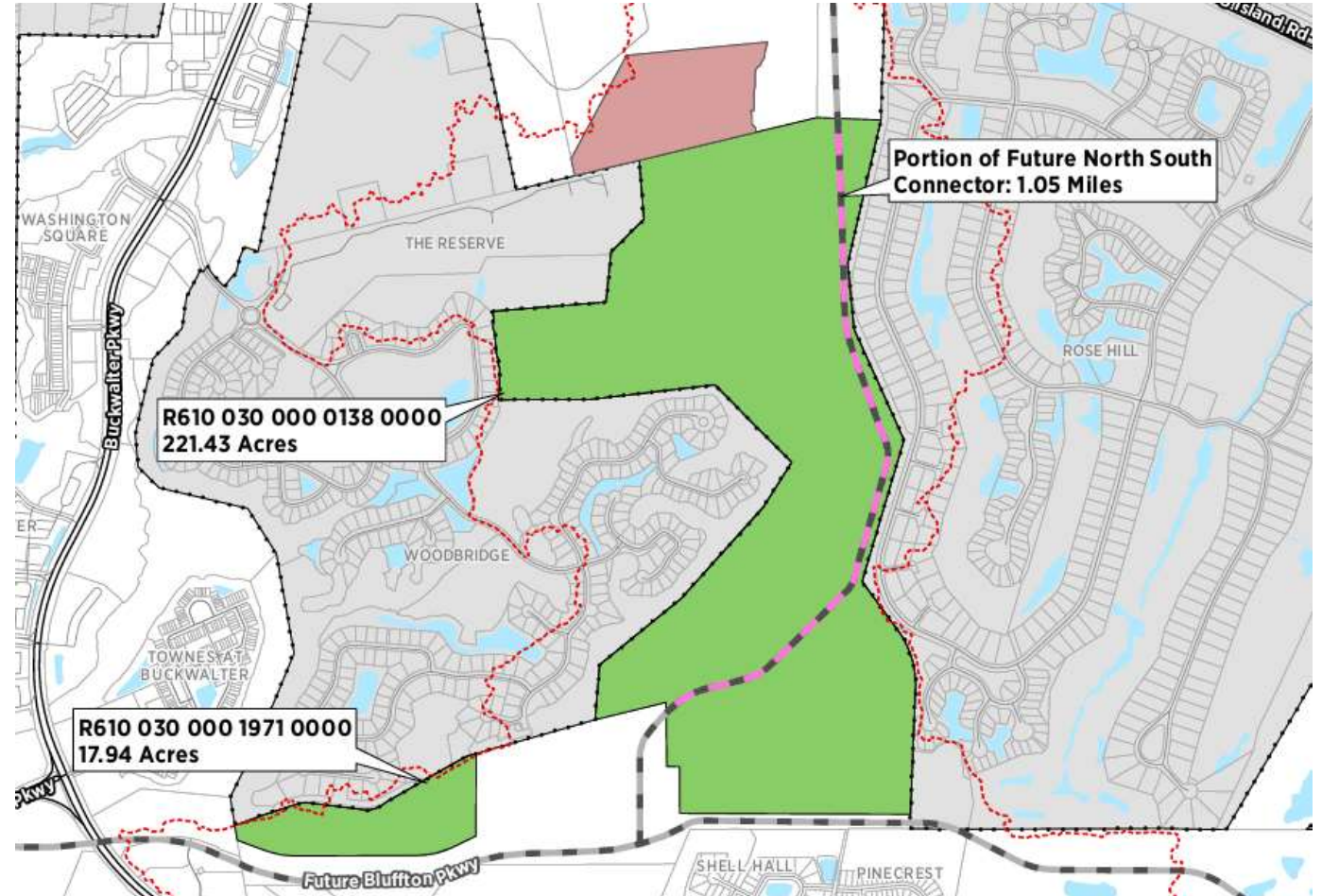
Under Consideration

Beaufort County Green Space Application

Two Parcels totaling approximately 240 acres (221.4 and 17.9 acres)

Estimated value \$2,240,000

Application will be considered by the Committee at their December meeting. Recommendations go to Beaufort County Council for final consideration.



Memorandum of Understanding

MOU between Town of Bluffton
and Beaufort County School District
on July 10, 2024

Partnership to include acquisition,
land swap and the purchase of
development rights, which includes:

- land swap of a minimum of 10 acres of upland;
- 162 acres of commercial;
- 2 (150 room) hotels; and
- 260 residential dwelling units



Recent Acquisition

Community Quality of Life Focus Area Strategic Initiative: Neighborhood Plans

- Closed on March 4, 2024
- 15.5 Acres
- Zoned Residential General
- Will work with the Community to Plan for Future Park/Community Space



Pedestrian and Safety Improvements

Transportation

PATHWAYS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Historic District Improvements Update

- 12 locations along Goethe Road, adjacent to Kirks Bluff and MC Riley sports complex, were part of the 2022 Historic District analysis and have been improved with upgrades to meet current ADA standards.
- A contract awarded for design of 18 locations throughout the historic district. Construction to be completed in FY25.
- 11 additional locations require easements or are proposed to include rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) and are planned for completion in FY26.



Transportation

PATHWAYS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Bluffton Town-wide Improvements Update

- Analysis completed identifying 56 possible locations throughout Bluffton, beyond the historic district, that require upgrades to meet current ADA standards.
- 19 locations were identified as high priority for completion by the end of FY26.
- The remaining locations of the Town-wide analysis will be reviewed and prioritized for inclusion in the CIP 5-year plan.



Transportation

RED DETECTABLE WARNING SYSTEM PAVERS, SPEED HUMP AND LIGHTED CROSS WALKS

Red pavers in the Historic District area (Martin Family Park)



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
Pedestrian Crosswalk



Bluffton Middle School Speed Hump



Palmetto Breeze Partnership

BUS STOPS, SHELTERS



- Construction Assistance
 - Easement and/or right-of-way acquisition
 - Maintenance and/or cleaning
- Stops, location
 - Benches, solar lighting, bicycle repair, public art
 - Design is flexible, recommendation is no glass
- Funding for Bus Stop Purchase or Construction
 - Any assistance, such as shovel ready plans to maximize grant requests
- Bus Stop Amenities Plan



Green Initiatives

Single Use Plastic Bag Ban

- Effective date: November 1, 2018
- Restricts the use of disposable and non-reusable bags with some exceptions
- May 13, 2024 the Community Services and Land Use Committee of Beaufort County Council considered modifications to the Ordinance to include the elimination of plastic straws and polystyrene/plastic foam (Styrofoam)
- County Council denied a motion to approve the Ordinance on the May 28, 2024
- Coastal Conservation League made a presentation to SoLoCo on July 23 requesting that there be more public engagement and discussions with municipalities.



Green Initiatives

NATURAL PESTICIDES



Transition To regenerative Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- Solidify Bluffton's position as a leader in Ecotourism
- Safeguard the community's well-being
- Preserve Bluffton's natural beauty for generations to come
- Prioritizing the safety of our children, pets, pollinators and our environment

Working with Kim Konte of **Non-Toxic Neighborhoods** in conjunction with Eric Maurer from Neudorff, we secured donations of organic, non-selective alternatives for us to demonstrate proof of concept.

Goals

- Use DuBois and Martin Family Park as a trial area
- Prove that these alternatives work
- Do a cost analysis comparing labor & materials of what we presently use verse these alternatives.
- Develop Policy & Procedures for an Integrated Pest Management(IPM) Program



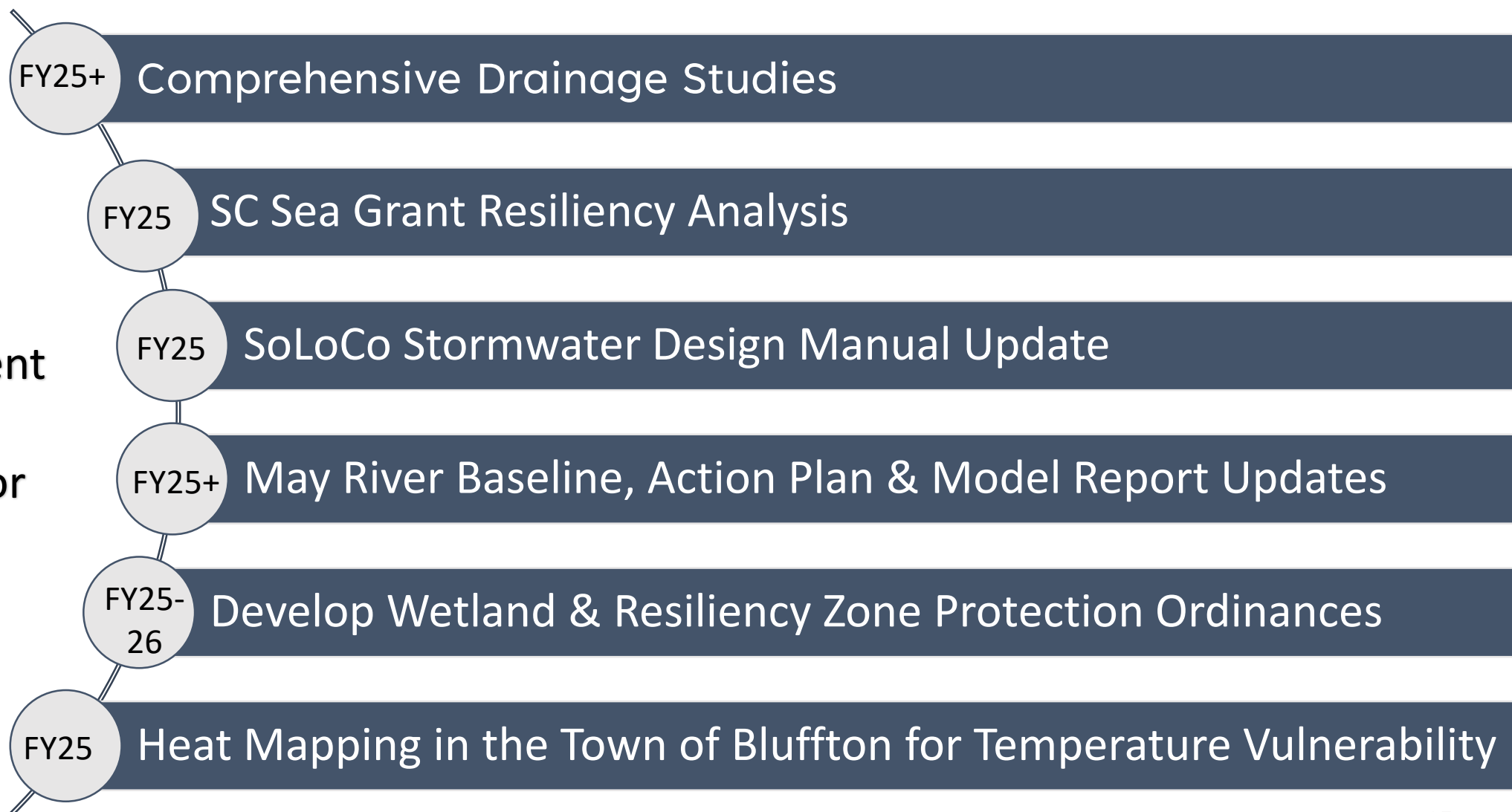
"Protecting our environment is good business"

- Rep. Bill Herbkersman

Resiliency Initiatives



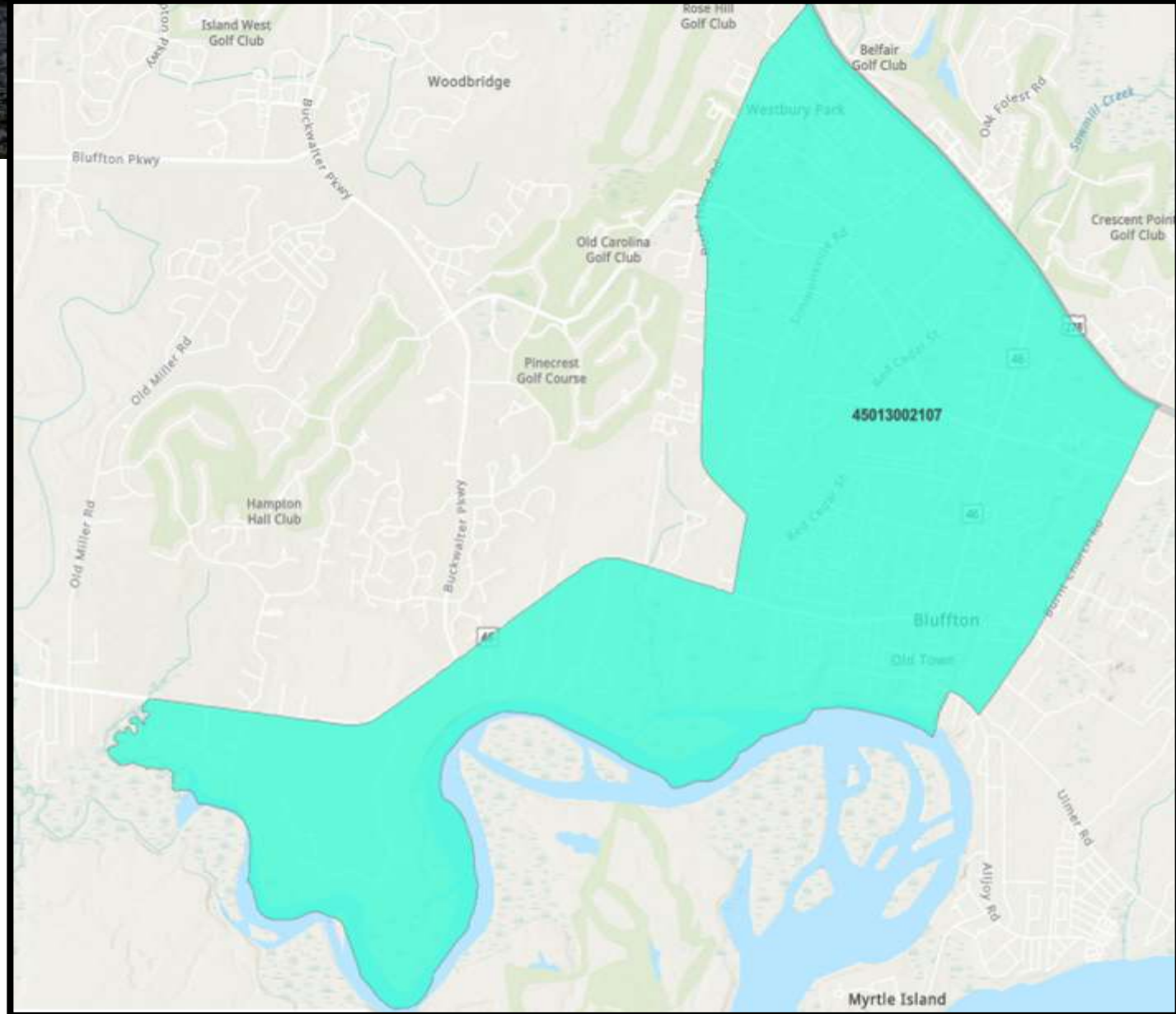
Current
Watershed
Management
Resiliency
Priorities for
FY25-26



CDRZ TRACT IN BLUFFTON

BACKGROUND:

- Enacted in December 2022, the **Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) Act** identifies areas/communities most at risk to natural hazards and climate change, focusing on modern, resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions.
- CDRZ Tract in Bluffton (census tract number 45013002107) includes Buck Island and Simmonsville areas as well as portions of the County.



COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE STUDIES



Purpose

Identify & determine stormwater infrastructure conveyance systems by type, condition, size, and owner.

Identify stormwater infrastructure conveyance systems in need of maintenance, repair, or upgrade in size or type.

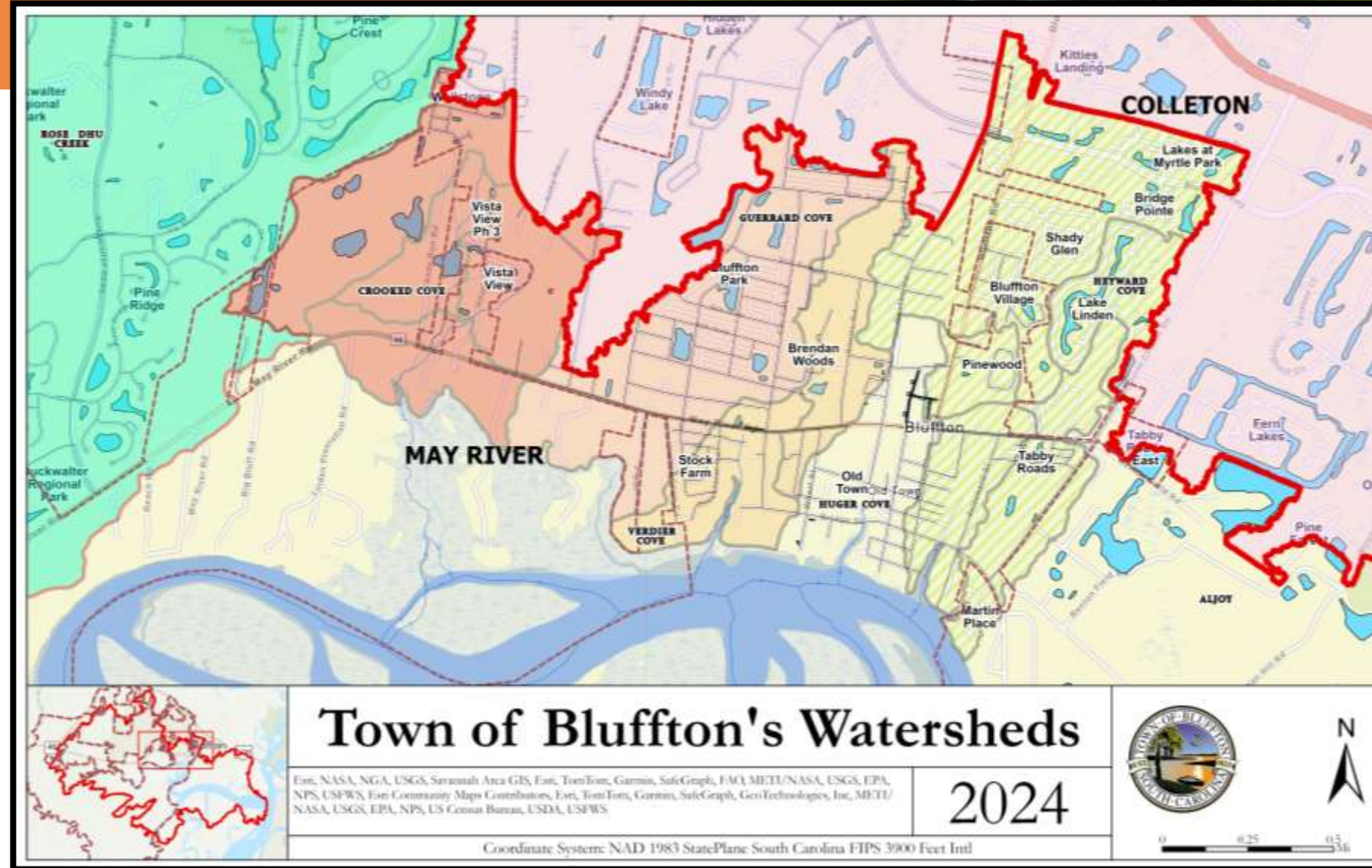
•Town asset improvement construction will be proposed as individual CIP projects in future Fiscal Years.

Identify critical stormwater storage areas and primary conveyance systems for protection.

COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE NEXT STEPS

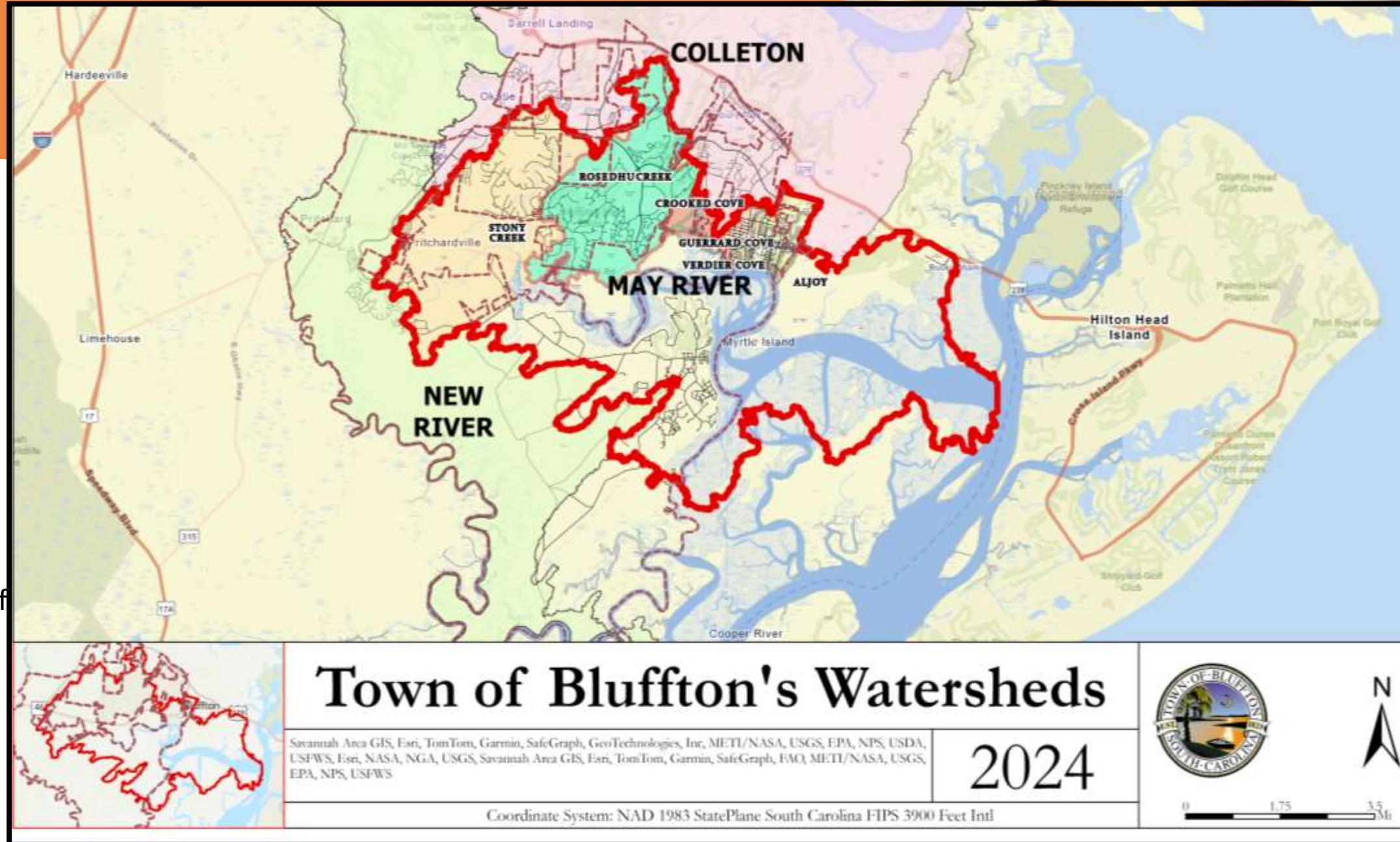


- Completed Heyward Cove in October 2023.
- Completed infrastructure assessment in Crooked and Guerrard Coves. Modeling underway.
- Verdier and Huger Coves proposed in FY25 includes portion of CDRZ. Potential BRIC Grant(~\$278,000) under FEMA review.



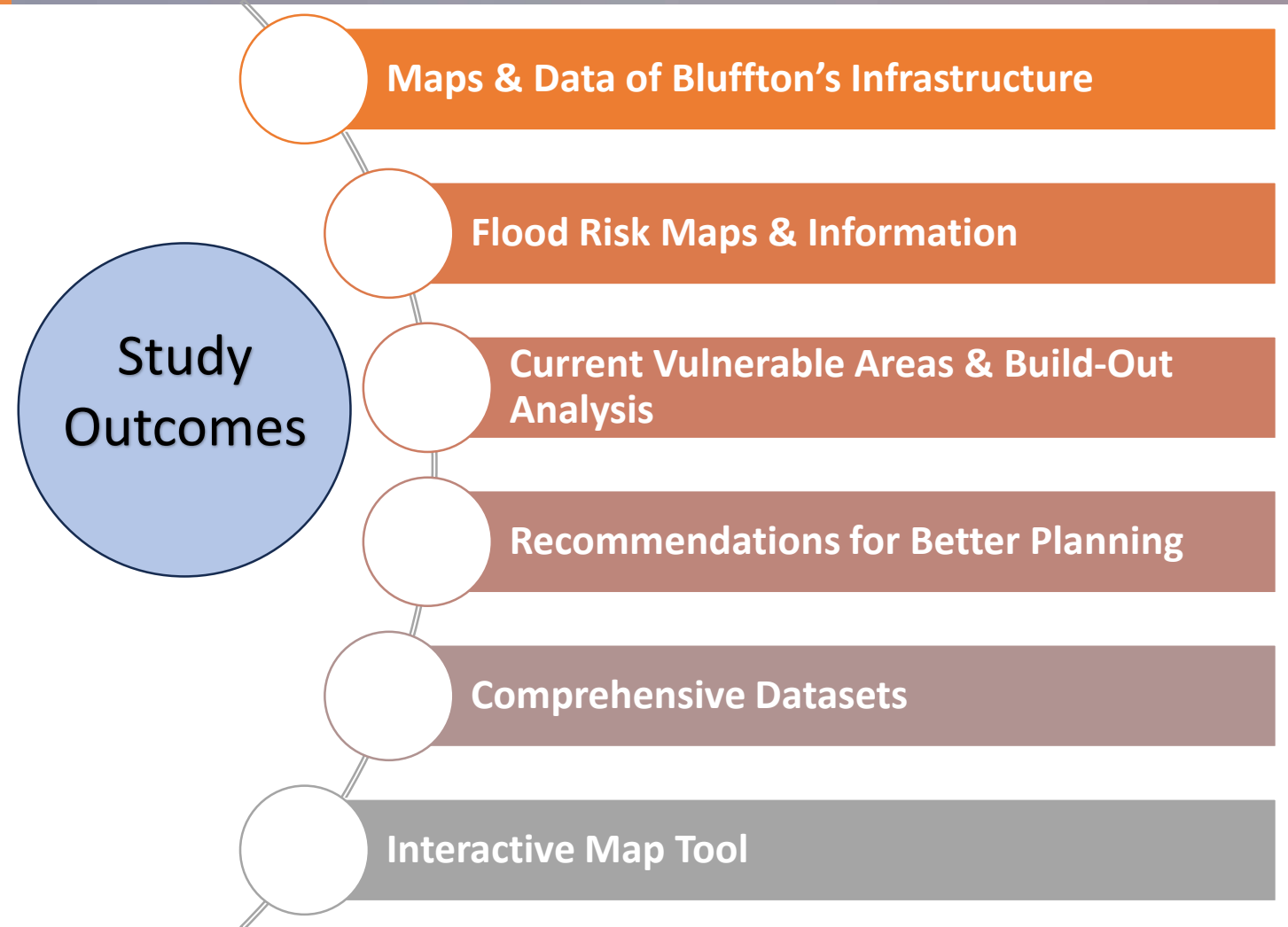
COMPREHENSIVE DRAINAGE NEXT STEPS

- Propose continuing analyses throughout Town watersheds.
- Council direction on prioritization of analyses.



SC SEA GRANT RESILIENCY ANALYSIS

- College of Charleston and the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium are developing resiliency-focused scientific models with community members' engagement.
- Anticipated final report in January 2025.
- Data findings to be shared regionally because of large project area.





- **Proposed Edits:**

- Provide clarifications on implementation of stormwater practices;
- Enhance enforcement capabilities for post-construction maintenance of pre-MS4 communities;
- Promote the use of Better Site Design principles through credits towards meeting stormwater retention volume requirements; and,
- Minor text edits.

- **Next Steps:**

- Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee and Planning Commission review prior to end of calendar year 2024.
- Town Council consideration for Resolution to amend SOLOCO Design Manual first quarter of 2025.

MAY RIVER BASELINE ASSESSMENT, ACTION PLAN & MODEL UPDATES



May River Baseline Assessment

- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) completing updates.
- SCDNR interim report prior to end of 2024.
- Final report anticipated in first quarter of 2025.

2021 May River Watershed Action Plan & Model

- May River headwaters water quality model:
 - FY25 - 26 calibrate model with additional data. Staff currently drafting scope of work.
 - Calibrated model will provide better estimates of bacteria loadings, hydrologic processes, water quality assessment and evaluation.
- Impervious surface restoration projects:
 - Completed eight (8) sites' geotechnical evaluations and began initial design work.
 - Completed a BMP Scoring matrix to rank feasibility and effectiveness of proposed BMPs.
 - Identified an additional fifteen (15) sites for future restoration projects.

WETLAND & RESILIENCY ZONE PROTECTION ORDINANCES



BACKGROUND:

US Supreme Court's May 2023 decision changed the definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) and federal wetlands protections. There are no State wetland regulations currently in place.

FY25 NEXT STEPS:

Contract award anticipated for Town Council consideration in January 2025 for creation of both ordinances.

Wetland Protection Ordinance

- Intended as an immediate act of protection to create:
 - A map of wetland areas within the Town,
 - Town of Bluffton wetland regulations, and
 - An opportunity for potential regional approach to wetland protection.

Resiliency Zone Protection Ordinance

- Protect primary conveyance systems and critical stormwater storage areas (identified through Comprehensive Drainage Studies).
- These areas may exceed Federal and Town wetland protection areas to provide flood prevention and mitigation opportunities.

Current Partnerships

- Working with the South Carolina Environmental Law Project (SCELP) and the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) to ensure applicability throughout Town's jurisdiction.
- On-going conversations with Beaufort County Government.



Proposed FY26 Wetland Restoration Program

- Classify and evaluate wetlands within the Town's municipal limits.
- Develop a condition assessment of all mapped wetlands in the Town to:
 - ⑩ Select priority restoration and conservation opportunities,
 - ⑩ Identify where water quality services may be vulnerable,
 - ⑩ Identify potential areas for stormwater storage expansion, and
 - ⑩ Assess potential impacts of projects on wetlands.

HEAT MAPPING IN THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON FOR TEMPERATURE VULNERABILITY

- Furman University's Shi Institute's Applied Research Team has completed a **free** heat mapping analysis for the Town of Bluffton to identify areas/neighborhoods that may be more vulnerable to future increasing temperatures.
- This heat mapping analysis will be used in course-based projects for a Furman course.
- Student groups will draft narratives that depict what futures may be possible for Bluffton based on what mitigation actions the Town may choose to implement.

FURMAN UNIVERSITY *DRAFT* HEAT MAP FOR TOWN OF BLUFFTON

Municipal boundary



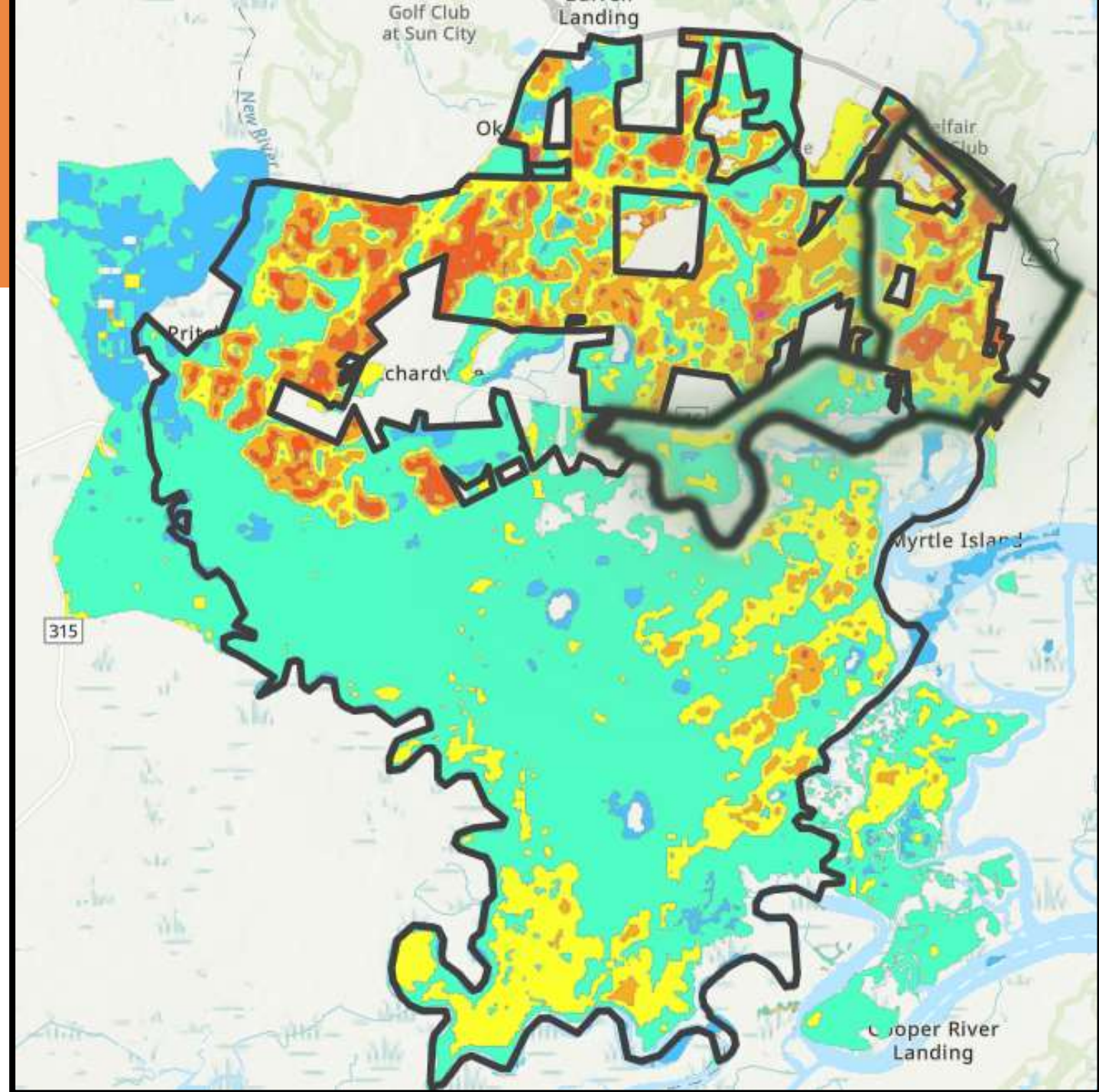
FEMA Community Disaster Resilience Zones



Heat contours

Temperature contours (regions)

Lower-bound land surface temperature



FY26 & BEYOND PROPOSED RESILIENCY NEXT STEPS



Resiliency StoryMap:

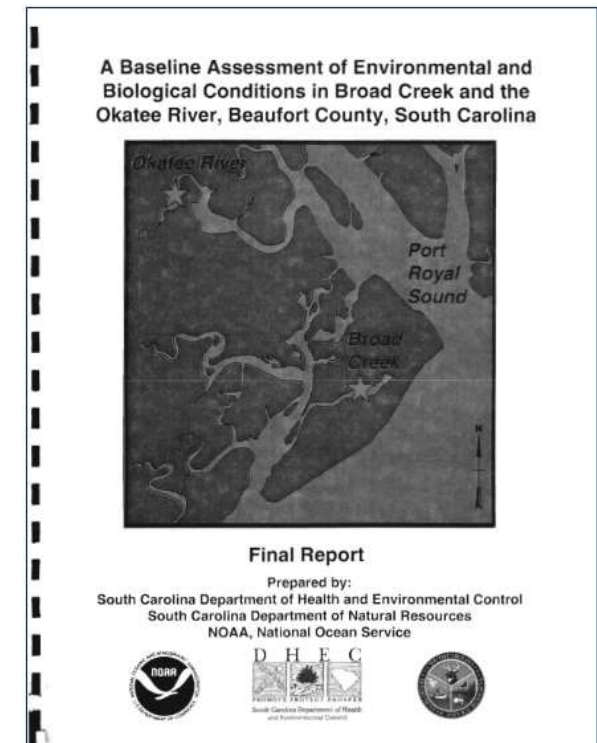
- Staff development in progress to provide community awareness and educational opportunities.

Resiliency Plan:

- Draft a Town of Bluffton Resiliency Plan utilizing recommendations from all ongoing studies, federal and statewide data, and the USCB water quality statistical review of Town monitoring data.

Okatie River Baseline Update:

- Partnership with Beaufort County to update SCDNR's 2000 *"A Baseline Assessment of Environmental and Biological Condition in Broad Creek and the Okatee River, Beaufort County, South Carolina."*



Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing

KEY TOPICS



Fee In Lieu

- Consideration of including a fee in lieu for the future construction of affordable housing.
- It was previously discussed in 2020 when affordable housing (AH) was added as a requirement for new or amended PUDs; however, removed prior to second reading.

Incentives

- Provide pre-approved building plans
- Expand allowable housing types
- Consider increasing height/density and other flexible zoning incentives
- Continue to identify financial incentives that Town and other agencies may be able to provide to reduce expenses
- Consider increasing the required affordability time period (>30 years)
- Continue researching and consideration of Town purchases of land to lease for AH construction

Historic Preservation

Inclusion of Tiers in the Contributing Resources List

- **Tier One:** Resources that are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Tier Two:** Resources that are “contributing” to the Bluffton (National Register) Historic District (1996).
- **Tier Three:** Resources that are “non-contributing” to the Bluffton (National Register) Historic District (1996) and “contributing” to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District (2007) as determined by Town Council, updated May 10, 2022.
- **Tier Four:** Resources that are only “contributing” to the Old Town Bluffton Historic District (2007) as determined by Town Council, updated May 10, 2022.

Buck Island Simmonsville Neighborhood Plan Implementation

Buck Island Simmonsville NGHD Plan

KEY TOPICS



Community Involvement & Identity

- Action Item #7 Incorporate art into the community on both public and private property.
- Scheduled a neighborhood meeting for early next year to update on projects, private developments, police, fire, NAP, etc.
- Begin park planning process—with input from the community.

Land Use & Zoning

- Action Item #3 Explore the potential to purchase land and develop a community park.
- Land purchased, community input underway (last neighborhood meeting included opportunity, could be included in 2025 tabling events)

Public Services

- Action Item #6 Plan at least one “fun day” neighborhood event with the Police Department and residents.
- Scheduled a neighborhood meeting for early next year to update on projects, private developments, police, fire, NAP, etc. Begin park planning process—possibly start with a survey of residents.

Other

- During steering committee meetings, it was requested that Town Staff research a Gullah-Geechee Committee, similar to Hilton Head Island’s. This has been completed.

Noise Ordinance

Noise Ordinance

The Noise Ordinance was approved April 8, 2014.

Recently public comments were stated during a Town Council meeting concerning noise generated from Special Events in Old Town.

Before Staff moves forward with additional research and feedback, staff requests feedback on the following questions:

- Is the noise level too high?
- Is the issue associated with permitted special events?
- Should staff revisit the approved hours of noise at events?
- Should the number of events be limited as well as the capacity?
- Is the concern the type of noise emitted from special events, such as vibration or bass?



Additional Topics



bluffton

HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

Thank You