

An aerial photograph of a park area. In the center, there is a large, colorful playground with various slides and climbing structures. To the left, there are several sports fields, including what appears to be a baseball field and a soccer field. The surrounding area includes parking lots, roads, and some trees. The overall scene is a mix of developed park infrastructure and natural landscape.

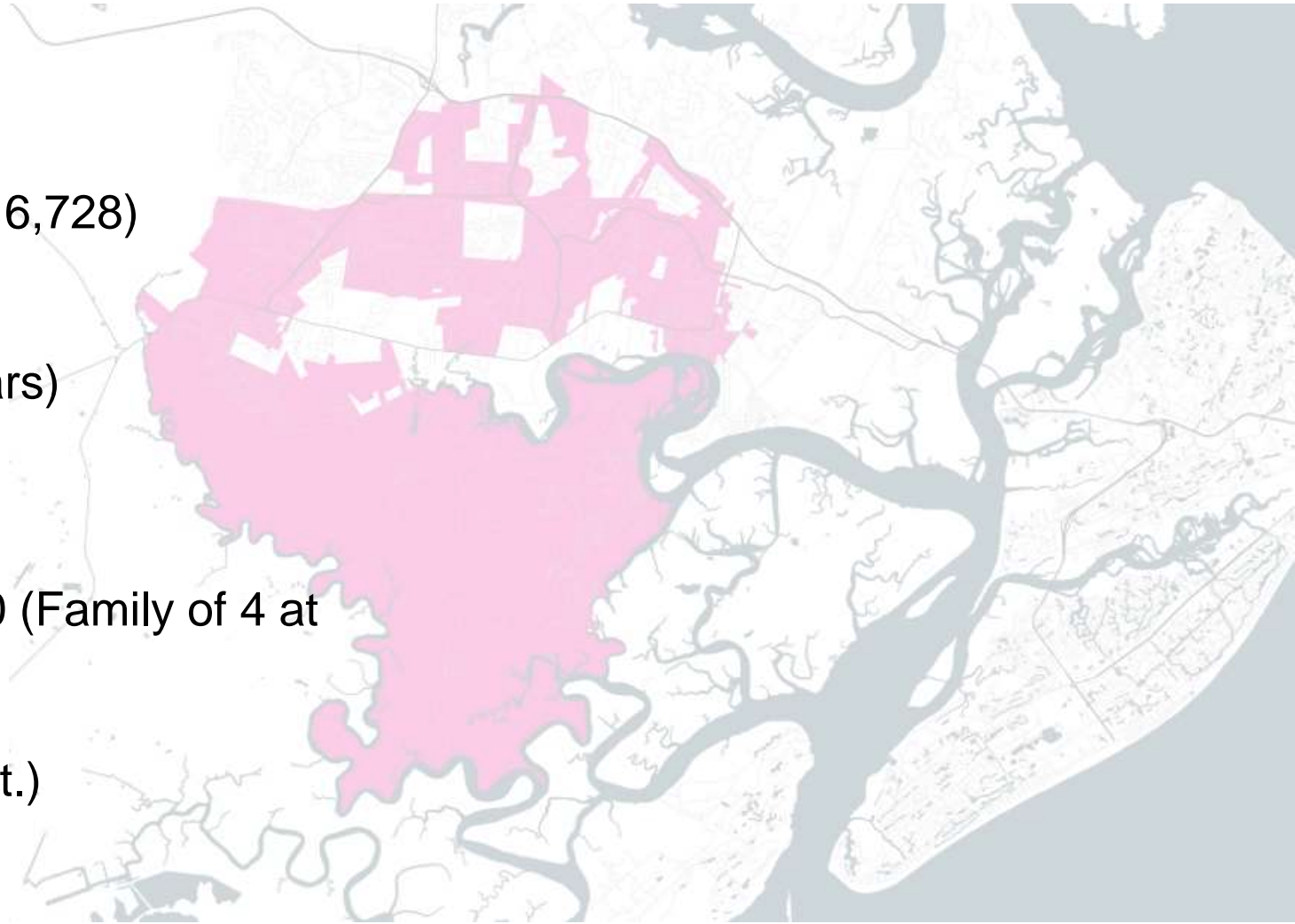
Town of Bluffton Strategic Planning Workshop

October 31, 2024

History of Bluffton – Present Day



- 54 Square Miles
- Population Estimate: 35,243
 - More than Doubled since 2015 (16,728)
- Median Age: 40
 - 17% increase since 2015 (33 years)
- Median Per Capita Income: \$74,480
- Median Household Income: \$106,400 (Family of 4 at 100%)
- Average Rent: \$2,050 (3 bedroom apt.)
- Median Home Value: \$390,200



Development Agreements

Bluffton Village - 78% build-out total *(Expired as of 10-17-2024)*

- 84% residential build-out
- 72% non-residential build-out

Schultz Tract - 81% build-out total **(+2%)**

- 95% residential build-out **(+3%)**
- 66% non-residential build-out **(+1%)**

Village at Verdier - 39% build-out total

- 98% residential build-out
- 18% non-residential build-out

Buckwalter - 35% build-out total **(+1%)**

- 75% residential build-out **(+1%)**
- 29% non-residential build-out

Jones Estate - 68% build-out total **(+1%)**

- 80% residential build-out **(+3%)**
- 57% non-residential build-out

New Riverside - 61% build-out total **(+2%)**

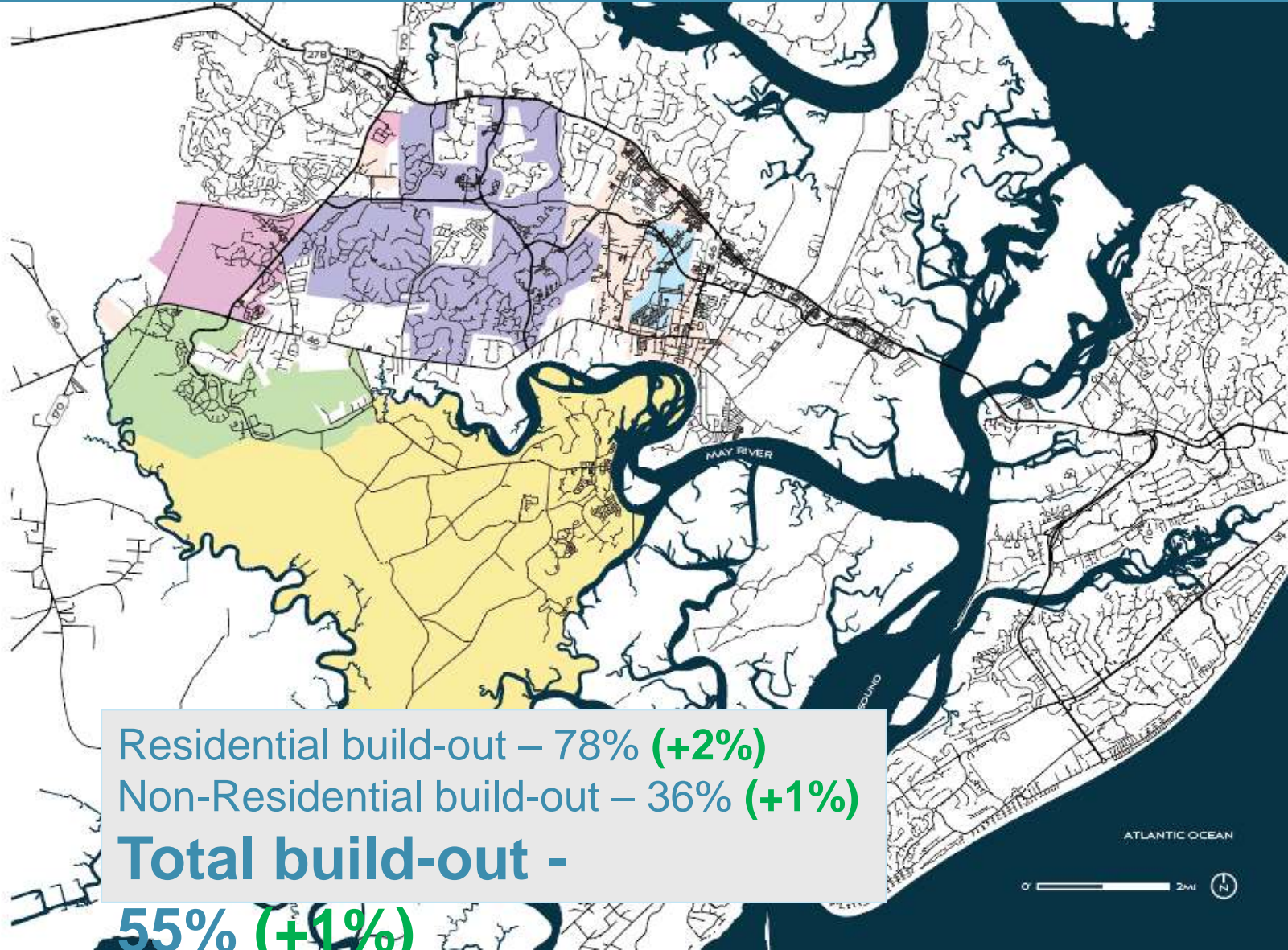
- 77% residential build-out **(+6%)**
- 5% non-residential build-out

Palmetto Bluff - 21% build-out total **(+1%)**

- 35% residential build-out **(+3%)**
- 8% non-residential build-out

% Increase Over Last Year

92% of Bluffton is planned & governed by
PUD development agreements.

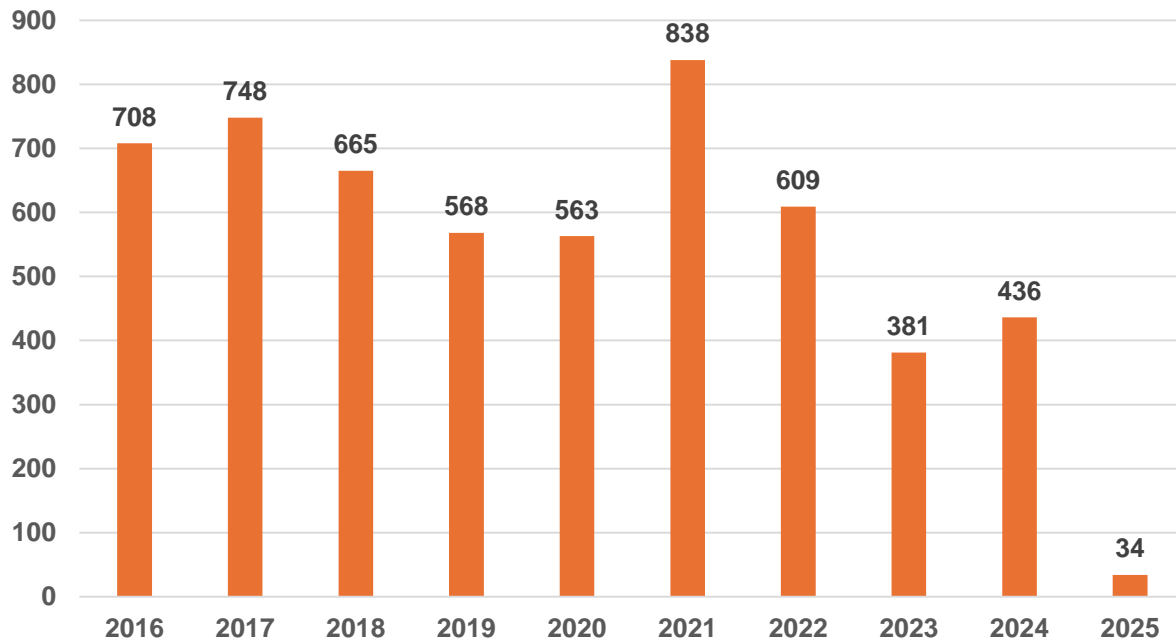


Residential build-out – 78% **(+2%)**
Non-Residential build-out – 36% **(+1%)**
Total build-out -
55% (+1%)

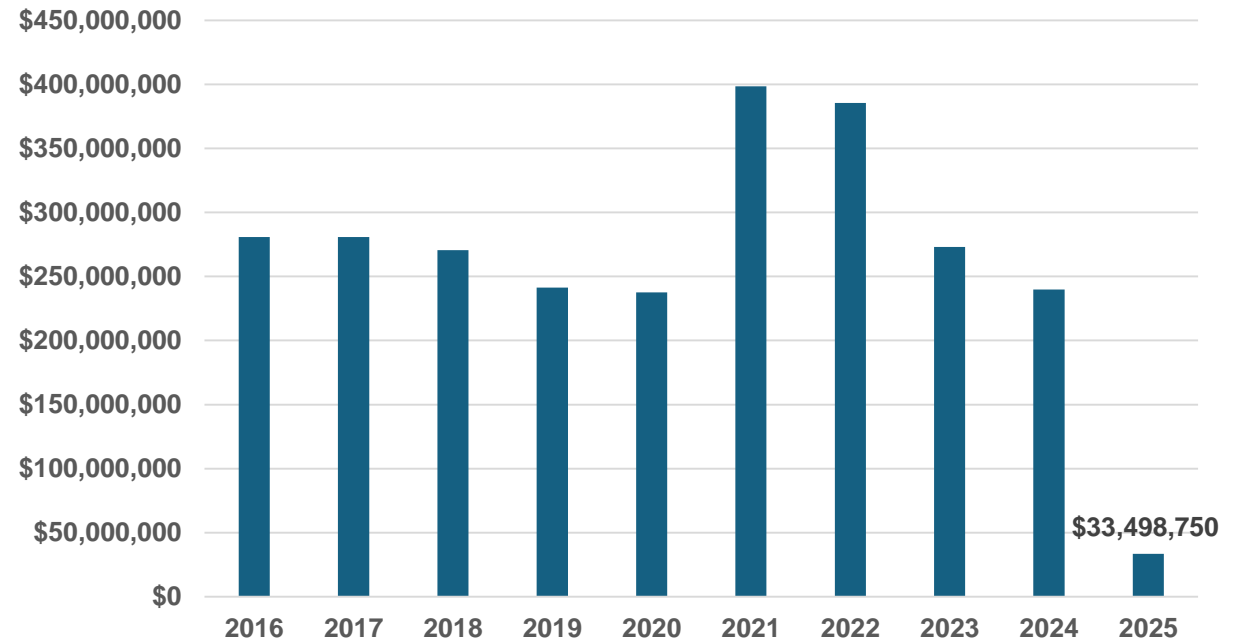
Single Family Residential



Permits Issued

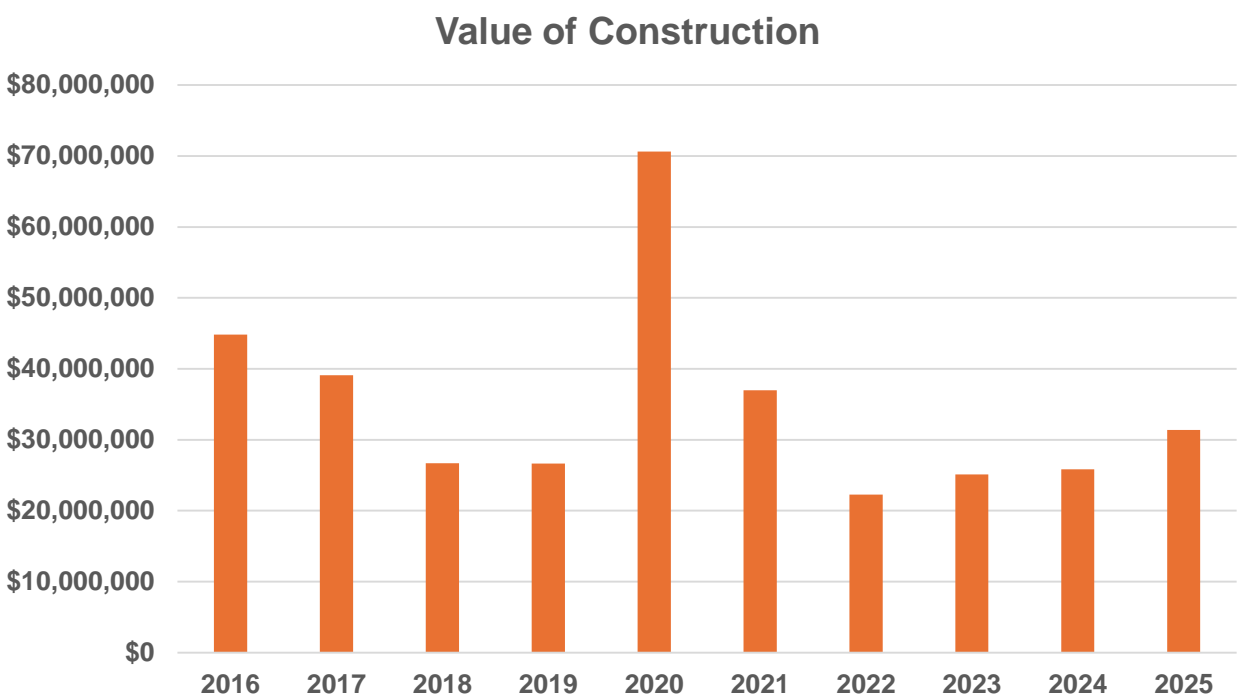
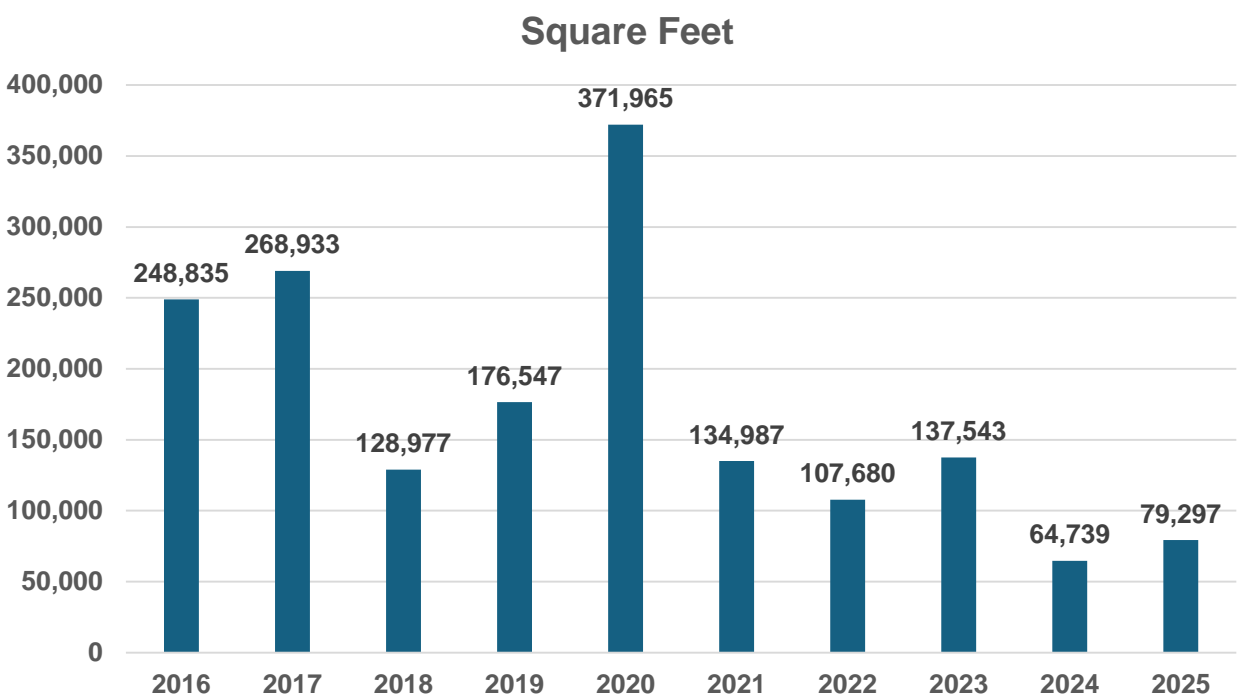


Value of Construction



Years are Fiscal Years
2025 is Quarter 1

New Commercial Square Feet

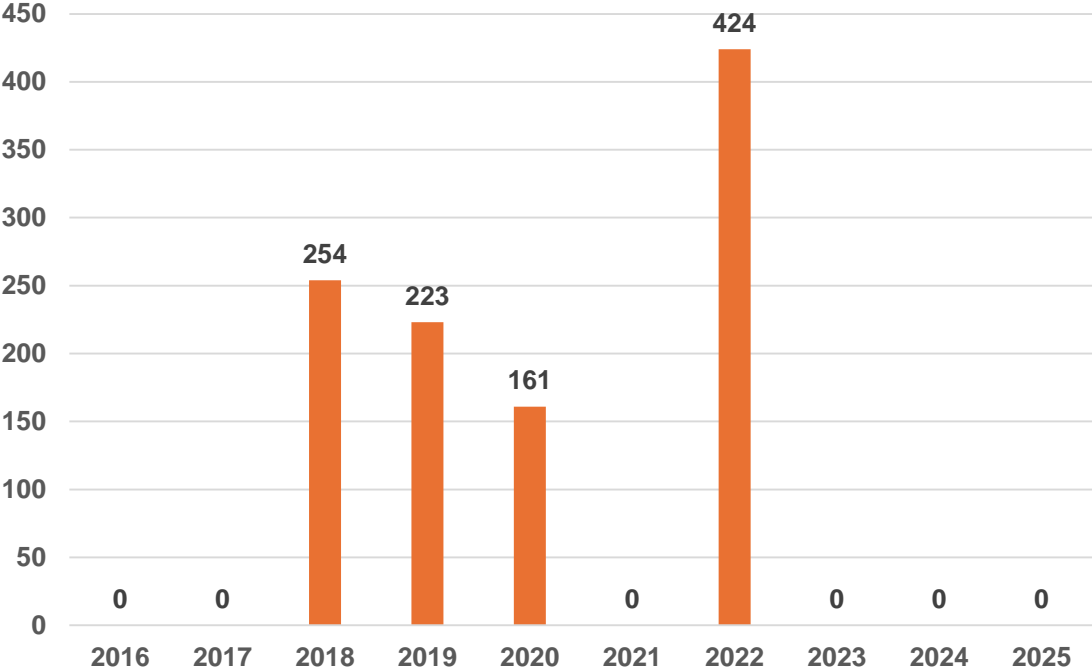


Years are Fiscal Years
2025 is Quarter 1
Includes New Commercial and Commercial Additions

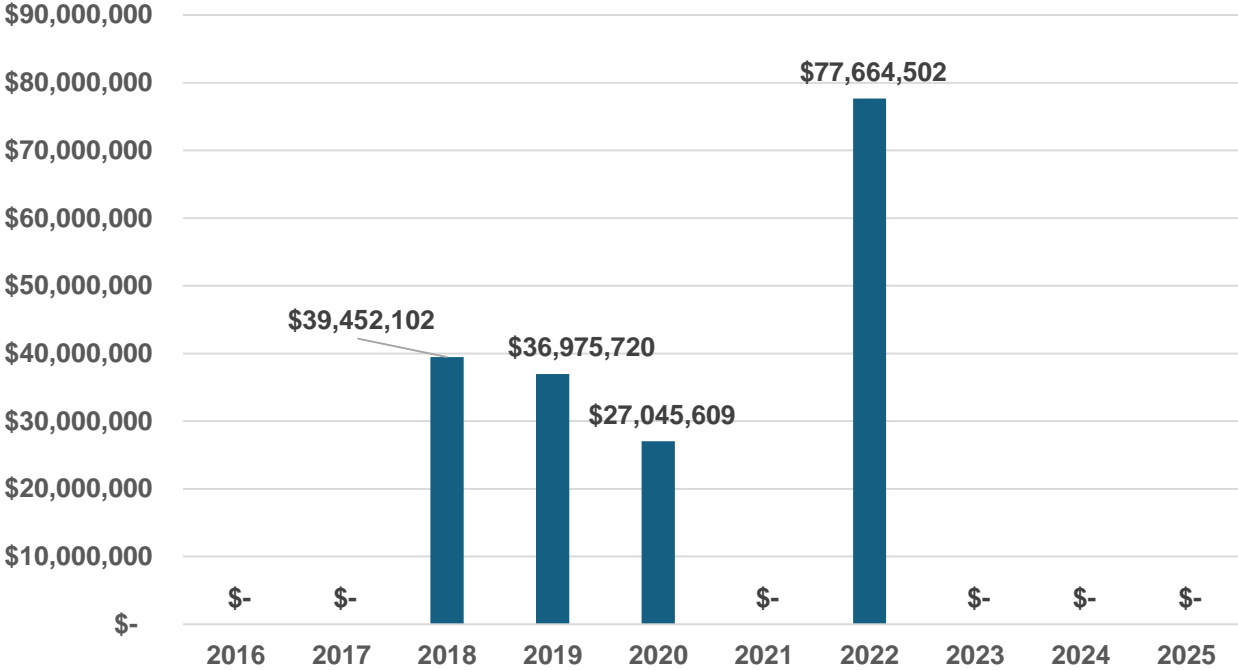
New Multi Family Building Permits



Units



Value of Construction



Years are Fiscal Years
2025 is Quarter 1

Neighborhood Assistance Program



- On July 9, 2024, Town Council approved an amendment to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, "Blueprint Bluffton," to include a Housing Impact Analysis. This analysis allows local governments to utilize up to 15% of Accommodations Tax (ATAX) revenue to support affordable housing efforts.



- In FY24, 38 low to moderate income households were assisted with \$278,010.41 in repairs.
- The Beaufort-Jasper Housing Trust awarded the Town of Bluffton and 7 other organizations dedicated to home repair and homebuyer assistance programs in Beaufort and Jasper counties. Bluffton was awarded \$144,000 to go towards home repairs.

THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON

**HOUSING IMPACT
ANALYSIS**

Town of
Bluffton
Department
Highlights

Don Ryan Center for Innovation Highlights



Entrepreneur Program and Economic Development Initiatives

Entrepreneur Program Highlights:

- Startups:** A diverse range of innovative startups has joined, including Hardee Greens, ChangePoint, Petitek, OPFOB, and others. New additions such as Mencias and Dance Canapé reflect the ongoing vitality of the program.

- Growth Companies:** Established companies like Beachside Tire, Bluffton Electric, and LaSource are scaling up, contributing significantly to Bluffton's economy.

Key Efforts and Strategic Initiatives:

- AI Thought Leadership:** The Don Ryan Center (DRCI) is positioning itself as a leader in artificial intelligence (AI) education in the Lowcountry, with multiple speaking engagements to more than 750 people and AI workshops held across the region.

- Partnerships:** Collaborations with key stakeholders, including the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation, Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber, and Hardeeville, ensure support for local businesses and startups.



Operations, Marketing, and Future Plans

Ongoing Economic Development Projects:

- Buckwalter Place: Development of *Building A*, which will house the DRCI landing pad, childcare center and other tenants and contribute to long-term financial sustainability. The project is progressing and expected to play a significant role in Bluffton's economic growth.
- Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP): A new marketing strategy and dedicated website (www.blufftonbusiness.com) are helping attract participants for economic growth initiatives.

Operational Growth and Recognition:

Awards and Achievements: The DRCI was awarded the Golden Oyster Award for Chamber Member of the Year, a testament to its contribution to the community.

Expansion Plans: New programs like THRIVE, EVOLVE, and TRADEUP are being developed to support business.



Human Resources Department Highlights



Strategic Initiative: Employee Benefits and Satisfaction

- Institute Paid Parental Leave
 - Established July 1, 2024
- Institute PTO Donation Policy
 - Established July 1, 2024
- Create a Home Buying Assistance Program
 - Town Council approved this July 9, 2024
- Implement the Town's First Annual Wellness Fair Event
 - This was held September 12, 2024

Human Resources Department Highlights



Strategic Initiative: Talent Acquisition and Retention

- Increase Employee/Family Events
 - Ghost Pirate Hockey in February 2024 – 140 attendees
 - Employee Family Day – April 2024 – Buckwalter Park – 80 attendees
- Expand HBCU Outreach
 - Attend HBCU career fairs in February and September 2024
- Create e-mail distribution list to local organizations to advertise open positions
- Classification and Compensation completed May 2024
- Formalize Internship program to be completed

Municipal Court Highlights



- Bluffton Municipal Court is in full compliance; therefore, no further obligation to the ACLU
- Ministerial Recorder is certificated for another ten years after passing examination
- A 2% increase in getting cases disposed within the fiscal year

Fiscal Sustainability

- Action Item: Digital Budget Book
 - Successfully implemented an interactive digital budget book for FY2025 budget
 - Town was awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its FY2025 budget
 - Received special recognition for the long-range operating financial plans for the 2nd year in a row
 - [Town of Bluffton Digital Budget Book FY2025](#)

Finance Department Highlights



Fiscal Sustainability

- Action Item: Finance Process Improvements
 - Implemented new Business License Software - Evolve
 - Applications, renewals, payments, reminders, and correspondence are all done electronically through Evolve
 - Created an increase of 237% in renewals issued in April and 220% in revenue recognized than the year prior
 - Significantly reduced backlog of renewals to be processed and number of refunds to be issued
 - Allowed for Business License Division to work more efficiently and respond to the business community more effectively resulting in more businesses licensed in a timely manner

Information Technology (IT) Department Highlights



Cybersecurity Training

- Employees receive monthly security awareness trainings, including "The Inside Man" which delivers key cybersecurity awareness principles and best practices in each episode.

Document Management System (DMS)

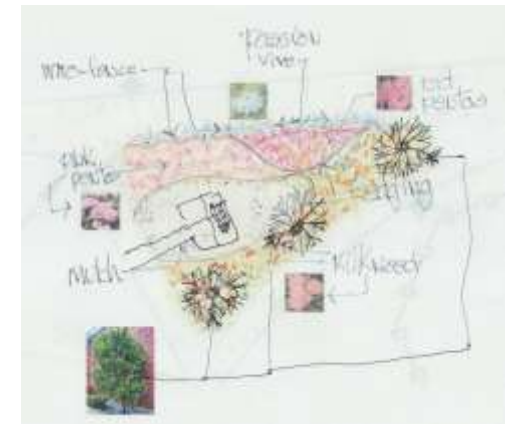
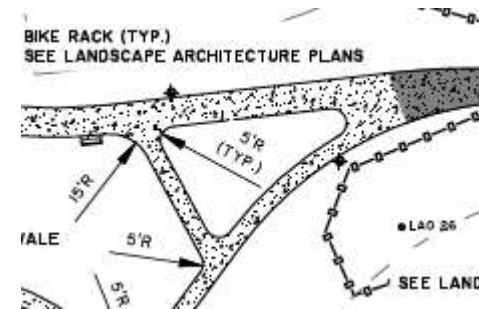
- Project began in 2022 to transfer all Town of Bluffton departmental paper files to a digital platform. To date, eleven (11) of the thirteen (13) departments have been completed. Users are able to access files from any location.

bluffton
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

- Perform Visual Assessment & Inventory of all trees larger than 4" in stem diameter
- Oscar Frazier, Martin Family, Wright Family, Oyster Factory & Town Hall
- Field Work last week & this week
- Should see Management Plan in report form by the end of the month



- Working with CIP to have a new Butterfly Garden installed at the New Riverside Park
- Working on a flower enhancement program to add seasonal flowers at all Park signs and the 3 Welcome to Bluffton Signs
- Palm tree and additional flowerpots at Town Hall



Public Services Department Highlights



Training

- Implementing a new weekly safety training program starting November



Maintenance

- Within Public Services we are now operating with three division: Grounds Maintenance, Facility Maintenance & Roads & Drainage
- Staff has been set up in teams of two allowing for help with tasks throughout the day and efficiency.

Public Services Department Highlights



Storm Prep, Damage & Recovery

- Through 3 named storms Public Services prepared, repaired & recovered
- Reconstruction of the DuBois Pavilion
- Quick response and recovery opening roads over the course of the first 12 hours & opening Town Hall to normal operation
- Efficient coordinated efforts with other Town agencies



Police Department Highlights



Awards

- Medal of Valor- Azahel Young
- 40 Under 40- Lt. Michelle Mayers
- FBINA- Lt. Fazekas
- Town of Bluffton voted as one of the safest cities in South Carolina per the violent crime statistics for 2023.
- Life saving medal awarded to 7 officers for their quick actions during a medical call.



Police Department Highlights



New programs/partnerships

- BPD Mentorship to Hire Program - a program to hire a more diversified staff from members within our community
- Traffic Stop Awareness Program taught in area high schools
- Partnership with NAACP. Monthly meetings to discuss any topic that is of concern from the community.



Growth Management Department Highlights



Historic Preservation

- Squire Pope Carriage House rehabilitation
- Presented at the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH)

Growth Management Department Highlights

LEAN Process

- Participated in a multi-department weeklong exercise to improve the Commerical permitting process, 'Dirt to Home'
- Proposed Implementation Strategies



Growth Management Department Highlights



Buck Island Simmonsville Plan

- Adopted April 2024
- Included purchase of property on corner of Buck Island Rd/Bluffton Pkwy for future community park
- Recommend the rezoning of two residential properties to the appropriate commercial designation
- Currently in the Implementation Phase



Communications and Community Outreach Highlights



Movie Nights in the Park



Jump Into Summer (Waterslide Event)



Town of Bluffton Independence Day Celebration



Communications and Community Outreach Highlights



Annual Tree Lighting & Christmas Parade



Communications and Community Outreach Highlights



Spooktacular



Concert Series



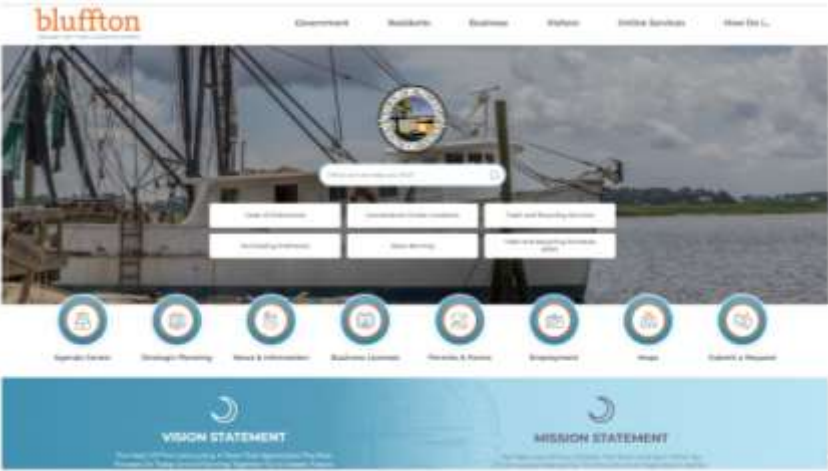
Welcome Center



Communications and Community Outreach Highlights



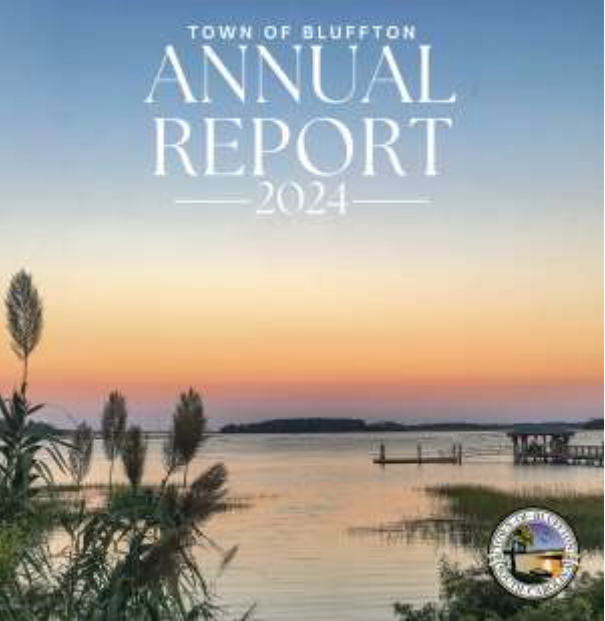
Website Redesign



Semi Annual



Annual Report



Watershed Management Division Highlights



- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is updating the May River Baseline Assessment. Final report anticipated in first quarter of 2025.
- SoLoCo Stormwater Regulations and Design Manual Review edits currently proposed. Anticipated for Town Council consideration (by resolution) in first quarter of 2025.
- College of Charleston and SC Sea Grant completing a Resiliency Analysis.
- Established new partnerships with the South Carolina Environmental Law Project (SCELP), Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), Furman University's Shi Institute, and Beaufort County's Regional Resiliency Accelerator Initiative for on-going resiliency-related work.
- 2021 May River Watershed Action Plan Update & Model Report
 - Town's Water Quality Program has completed all data collection needs for stormwater model calibration. Calibration funded by Town Council in FY25 operating budget anticipated Council contract approval in first quarter of 2025.

FY 25-26 Action Agenda Items

Master Park/Pathway Plan. A Parks and & Recreation Master Plan study will be conducted to determine needs for new parks (neighborhood/regional/passive/recreational trails/green ways and blue ways) and needed improvements/renovations to existing parks. This includes capital improvements to Town Parks outside of general maintenance and repairs.

Facilities Study and Space Needs. The Town contracted with Creech & Associates to do a detailed space needs analysis, facility conditions assessment, and facility master plan. The study includes Town Hall, the Law Enforcement Center and Substation, along with Watershed and Public Services.

Potential Action Items. The results of the plan and study may spur future Capital Improvement Projects and Strategic Plan Action Items.

Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan FY 2025 - 2026