

# TOWN COUNCIL

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## STAFF REPORT

### Department of Growth Management

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	February 9, 2021
<b>PROJECT:</b>	Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 – Application Process and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretations to Amend the Definition of “Contributing Structure”, add the “Inventory of Contributing Resources” to the UDO, and Change “Historic Structure” References to “Contributing Structures – Workshop
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Heather Colin, AICP Director of Growth Management

**BACKGROUND:** As part of the FY 21/22 Strategic Plan, Town Council sought to “more closely align” the boundaries of the local historic district (Old Town Bluffton Historic District) and the National Register Historic District (Bluffton Historic District), which is a small portion of Old Town Bluffton as shown on Attachment 2.

To determine the possibility of a closer alignment, an updated historic resource survey was conducted by Brockington and Associates, Inc. in 2019. Based on this survey, some additional properties in Old Town appear eligible to be included in a nomination to expand the National Register Historic District. The possible expansion area is shown in Attachment 2. Related to this, a review of the existing Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) requirements for designation and review of contributing structures was undertaken by Town Staff.

Based on the review of the UDO, highlights of the amendments proposed by Town Staff include:

- Updating the term for and definition of “Contributing Structure”: The term would become “contributing resource” and the definition would be expanded to include structures, buildings, objects, and sites. Two of the Town’s coves (Heyward and Huger), for example, are contributing sites rather than structures.
- Establishing the list of contributing resources in the UDO for easier accessibility. Presently, the most recently adopted historic resource survey must be consulted; however, not all surveyed properties are contributing resources. All existing contributing resources would be included in the list, with no new resources proposed (nor are any existing resources proposed to be eliminated). If the list is adopted, any resource on the list approved for de-listing or demolition by Town Council at a later date would be removed from the list, not the historic resource survey.

- Refining the review criteria for Certificates of Appropriateness-Historic District (COFA-HD), which are required for new construction in Old Town Bluffton, as well as for certain modifications to existing contributing and non-contributing structures, as well as for demolition of a contributing structure.
- “Housekeeping” items, such as replacing the term “contributing structure” for “contributing resource,” where necessary in the UDO, is also proposed.

Previously, Town Staff presented a workshop on Pro-Active Preservation and Maintenance of Contributing Structures. The ordinance proposes to re-establish what was previously titled the “Maintenance of Contributing Structures” ordinance but did not carry over into the UDO.

The next steps for these amendments are provided in the below timeline and acknowledge the property owner and public notification process for both the Planning Commission and Town Council.

No action by Town Council is required on this item at this time.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

Steps	Anticipated Dates
Step 1. Town Council Workshop	February 9
Step 2. Historic Preservation Commission Workshop	March 3
Step 3. Public Notice (Certified Letter / Property Posting)	Send March 15; Allow 30 days for pick-up by property owner
Step 4. Planning Commission Public Hearing and Recommendation	May 26
Step 4. Town Council – 1st Reading	July 13
Step 5. Town Council Meeting – Final Reading and Public Hearing	August 10 [Note: Notice must be provided 30 days before this meeting]

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Presentation
2. Old Town Bluffton and National Register Historic District Map



***Workshop - Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 – Application Process and Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretations to Amend the Definition of “Contributing Structure,” add an “Inventory of Contributing Resources” to the UDO, and Change “Historic Structure” References to “Contributing Structures”***

**Presentation to Town Council**

**February 9, 2021**

**Department of Growth Management**

**Heather Colin, AICP, Director of Growth Management**

# Strategic Plan

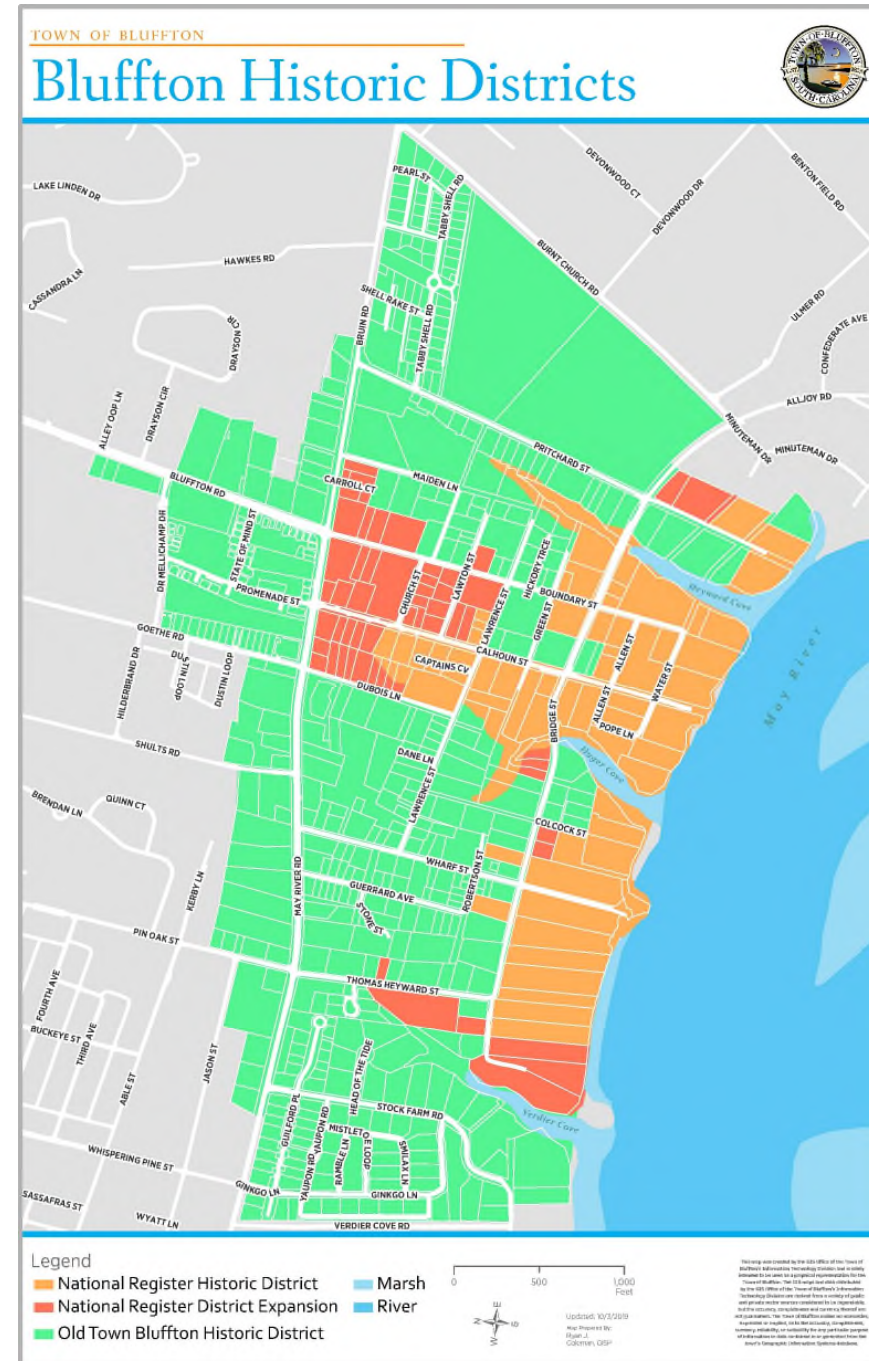


The proposed amendments have a relationship to the desire of Town Council to “more closely align” the boundaries of the local historic district (Old Town Bluffton) and the National Register Historic District, which is a small portion of Old Town Bluffton as shown on the Historic District Map. *[See Slide 3]*

An updated historic resource survey was conducted in 2019. Based on the survey, some additional properties in Old Town appear eligible to be included in a nomination to expand the National Register District. Based on this possibility, a review of the existing UDO requirements for designation and review of contributing structures was undertaken. The definition of ‘contributing structure’ was also examined. This workshop provides an overview of possible UDO amendments.

# Historic District Map

- Green, Red and Orange Areas:  
The entire Old Town Bluffton Historic District
- Orange Area: Existing National Register Historic District
- Red Area: Properties eligible to be included in a nomination for an expanded National Register Historic District



# *Overview of UDO Amendments*



Amendments are proposed to the following sections of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

- Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms): Revising the definition of “Contributing Structure”
- Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness – Historic District): Streamlining review criteria
- Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature) – “Housekeeping” items, including revising terminology
- Sec. 3.25 (Designation of a Contributing Structure): Streamlining the criteria to be applied for designating contributing resources and for the de-listing or demolition of existing contributing resources
- Sec. 3.26 (Pro-active Preservation): To create an intervention process for maintenance of contributing structures (discussed at a previous workshop)



## *Sec. 9.2: Current UDO Definition of “Contributing Structure”*

“Any property, structure, or architectural resource which was designated as “contributing” in the Bluffton Historic District’s 1996 nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, or in the most recent Bluffton Historic Resource Survey[\*], or any other structure designated as a Contributing Structure as provided for in Section 3.25. The complete demolition of a ‘Contributing Structure’ or removal of a ‘Contributing Structure’ from the Bluffton Historic Resource Survey shall cause the structure to no longer be considered ‘contributing’.”

[\*] The 2008 Historic Resources Survey

# *Why is an Updated Definition Proposed?*



- To change “Contributing Structure” to “Contributing Resource” to be a more encompassing term that includes buildings, structures, objects and sites (e.g., the coves)
- To reference the list of contributing resources in the UDO, which will provide for easier accessibility (i.e., adopted historic resource survey will not have to be consulted to determine contributing status). Not all resources in a historic resource survey are contributing.
- If contributing status is removed or demolition approved, the resource would be removed from the resource list appearing in the UDO (and not the resource survey).

# Current Contributing Structure Map



- All Contributing Structures shown on 'Historic Resource Map'
- Resources include buildings, structures, objects and sites
- 84 total resources: 82 structures; 2 sites (Huger and Heyward Coves)
- 5 lots shown where a contributing structure previously existed (*does not include all contributing structures that have been demolished*)
- Map is available on the Town's website



# Working Definition



- **Contributing Resource:** “Any building, structure, object, site or property which meets the criteria for a Contributing Resource, as outlined in Section 3.25 (Designation of Contributing Resource), and that is designated as a “contributing resource” in Table 9.7, Town of Bluffton Contributing Resources.”

*Note: Table 9.7 would be a new addition to the UDO and include the address and a resource number for each of the Town’s 84 resources. As new resources are designated, or existing resources de-listed or demolished, the resource would be removed from this Table.*

## *Sec. 3.18: Review Criteria*



- The Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District or COFA-HD review criteria is proposed to be revised to refine the following: 1) the 'Applicability' language; and 2) the application review criteria for new construction, alterations and demolition.

## *Sec. 3.19: Site Features*



- Site Features are site elements not related to a structure (except for minor exterior alterations that do not affect the architectural character). Features include but are not limited to signage, and modifications to site elements like parking, landscaping and lighting.
- Proposed changes relate to ‘housekeeping’ items, such as rewording “historic structures” to “contributing resources.” No substantive changes are proposed.

## *Sec. 3.25: Designation of Contributing Structure*



Proposed revisions include:

- Changing “Structure” to “Resource”
- The designation criteria are refined and less redundant (See next slide - Slide 12)

# *Sec. 3.25: Designation of Contributing Structure*



## Possible Criteria for Designation:

1. The resource is at least 50 years old unless Town Council determines that a resource less than 50 years old is of exceptional significance; and
2. The quality of significance to the Town, Region, State or National history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in resource that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and
3. The resource meets at least one of the following, as applicable to the Town, Region, State or Nation:
  - a. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
  - b. Associated with lives of persons significant in our past; or
  - c. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
  - d. Have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

# Possible Next Steps



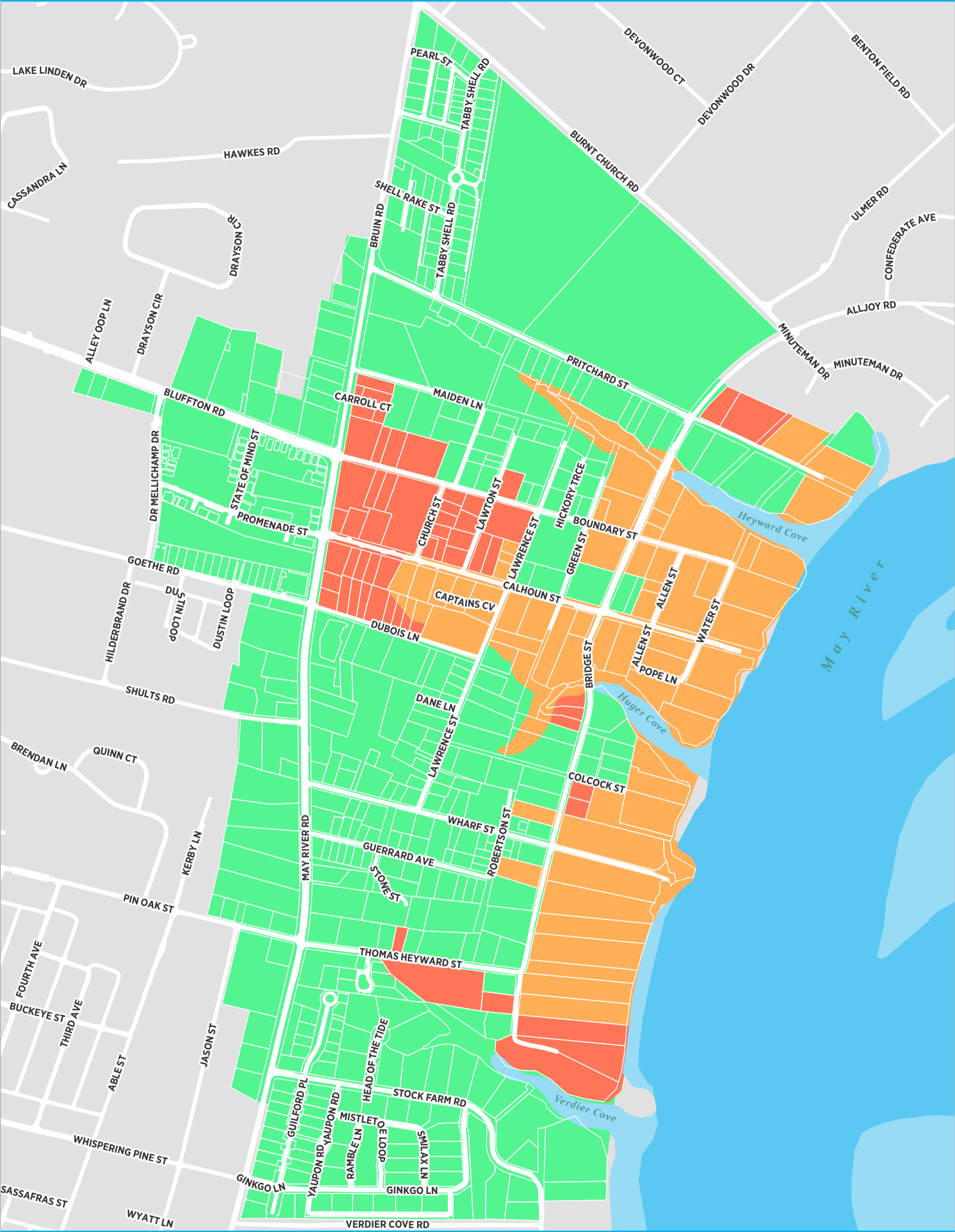
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# *QUESTIONS*



# Bluffton Historic Districts



Legend

National Register Historic District

National Register District Expansion

Old Town Bluffton Historic District

Marsh

River

0

500

1,000

Feet

N

E

S

W

Updated: 10/3/2019

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This map was created by the GIS Office of the Town of Bluffton's Information Technology Division and is solely intended to be used as a graphical representation for the Town of Bluffton. The GIS maps and data distributed by the GIS Office of the Town of Bluffton's Information Technology Division are derived from a variety of public and private sector sources considered to be dependable, but the accuracy, completeness and currency thereof are not guaranteed. The Town of Bluffton makes no warranties, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness, currency, reliability, or suitability for any particular purpose of information or data contained in or generated from the town's Geographic Information Systems database.