

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Growth Management Department



MEETING DATE:	April 7, 2026
PROJECT:	Consideration of the Acceptance of Bush Family Properties, LLC, One Hundred Percent (100%) Annexation Petition to Annex Certain Real Property Contiguous to the Town of Bluffton’s Corporate Boundaries Consisting of a Total of 8.94 Acres, More or Less, Located at the Southeast Corner of Highway 170 (Okatie Highway) and Davis Road Intersection and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map No. R600-029-000-0006-0000, and Referral to the Town of Bluffton Negotiating Committee if Deemed Necessary
PROJECT MANAGER:	Kevin P. Icard, AICP Director of Growth Management

REQUEST: Town Staff requests that Town Council consider the following:

1. Consideration of the Acceptance of Bush Family Properties, LLC, One Hundred Percent (100%) Annexation Petition to Annex Certain Real Property Contiguous to the Town of Bluffton’s Corporate Boundaries Consisting of a Total of 8.94 Acres, More or Less, Located at the Southeast Corner of Highway 170 (Okatie Highway) and Davis Road Intersection and Bearing Beaufort County Tax Map No. R600-029-000-0006-0000; and
2. Referral of the request to the Town of Bluffton Negotiating Committee if deemed necessary.

INTRODUCTION: On March 30, 2026, in accordance with Section 5-3-150 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina and the *Town of Bluffton Annexation Policy and Procedure Manual* (“Annexation Manual”), the Applicant, The Marian Group, on behalf of the property owner, Bush Family Properties, LLC, submitted a 100% Annexation Petition Application for the parcel totaling 8.94 acres located at southeast corner of Highway 170 and Davis Road intersection (“Property”) into the Town of Bluffton’s municipal boundary (Attachment 1).

Pursuant to the Annexation Manual, the Applicant will submit concurrent, Zoning Map Amendment application requesting the Property’s incorporation into the Buckwalter Planned Unit Development (“Buckwalter PUD”) should Town Council vote to accept the application. Additional concurrent applications include amendments to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map, Buckwalter PUD Development Agreement, and Concept Plan to incorporate the property, add requested development rights, create a new Land Use Tract titled Bush Planning Tract, and specify any additional terms.

Per the Annexation Manual, the initial step in the public review process is an initial briefing, or “intent to annex”, to Town Council for general discussion of the request and its associated applications such as the appropriate zoning classification and possible negotiation items. At the conclusion of the discussion, Town Council votes on the approval of Intent to Annex of the Annexation Ordinance.

BACKGROUND: The Property contains approximately 8.94 acres located within Unincorporated Beaufort County as shown on the Location Map (Attachment 2). The Property contains approximately five (5) manufactured homes.

The Property is currently zoned as T2 Rural (T2R), as shown on the Zoning Map (Attachment 3) which allows a very limited mix of residential and commercial uses such as:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Single Family Residential (0.34 DU/Acre) | 12. Mining & Resource Extraction |
| 2. Family Compound | 13. Gasoline Service Stations |
| 3. Group Home | 14. Civic |
| 4. Home Business | 15. Church |
| 5. Cottage Industry | 16. Agriculture |
| 6. General Retail 3,500 SF or Less | 17. Recreation |
| 7. Gas Station/Fuel Sales | 18. Education |
| 8. Animal Services: Kennel | 19. Safety |
| 9. Day Care: Family Home (up to 8 clients) | 20. Public Assembly |
| 10. Lodging: Short-Term Housing Rental (STHR) | 21. Infrastructure |
| 11. Lodging: Inn (up to 24 rooms) | 22. Transportation |
| | 23. Communications |

The Property is currently allowed one (1) dwelling based upon the T2 Rural (T2R) Zone’s allowed density of 0.34 DU/Acre.

The T2 Rural (T2R) Zone is intended to preserve the rural character of Beaufort County. This Zone applies to areas that consist of sparsely settled lands in an open or cultivated state. It may include large lot residential, farms where animals are raised or crops are grown, parks, woodland, grasslands, trails, and open space areas. The T2 Rural (T2R) Zone implements the County’s Comprehensive Plan goals of preserving the rural character of portions of Beaufort County.

The immediately adjacent properties vary as to jurisdiction and zoning as follows:

Direction	Jurisdiction	Zoning District	Current Owner, Address & Use
North	Town of Bluffton	Kent Estates Planned Unit Development	The Palmettos of Bluffton LLC – 3035 Okatie Hwy – Nursing/Retirement Home
South	Beaufort County	T2R - Rural	Stewart William Reynolds – 3105 Okatie Hwy – Vacant

	Beaufort County	T2R - Rural	Tgj Properties, LLC – 40 Davis Court – Vacant
East	Beaufort County	T2R - Rural	David Dominguez – 18 Davis Road – Single-Family Residence
	Beaufort County	T2R - Rural	Juan Soriano – 17 Davis Court – Vacant
	Beaufort County	T2R - Rural	Marion Davis, Jr. – 29 Davis Court - Vacant
West	Beaufort County	HWY 170 Right of Way	South Carolina Dept. of Transportation
	Beaufort County	Sun City – Planned Unit Development	St. Lukes Methodist Church – 3080 Okatie Hwy – Church and Cemetery
	Beaufort County	Sun City – Planned Unit Development	Sun City – HOA – 820 Sun City Blvd. – Common Open Space
	Beaufort County	Sun City – Planned Unit Development	Beaufort County – No Address – Open Space

The Applicant proposes to annex into the Buckwalter Planning Unit Development “PUD” subject to a new Land Use Tract which will be known as the Bush Planning Tract.

The new Bush Land Use Tract proposes the following permitted land use categories:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Community Recreation. | 6. Roads. |
| 2. Institutional Civic. | 7. Setbacks and Buffers. |
| 3. Maintenance Areas. | 8. Silviculture. |
| 4. Multifamily Residential. | 9. Wetlands. |
| 5. Open Space. | 10. Utilities. |

The proposed annexation would allow for the development of, among other things, apartments that are targeted for moderate to low incomes families. The Applicant’s associated request for an amendment to the Buckwalter Development Agreement and Concept Plan will include the addition of development rights consisting of 72 Residential Dwelling Units “RDUs” and no increase in commercial rights.

As part of the increase of the 72 RDUs, the Applicant is requesting Town Council to allow for 100% density bonus of the 72 RDUs as their development will consist of 100% workforce and affordable housing. The density bonuses are allowed pursuant to Section XIII.3 of the Buckwalter Development Agreement as an incentive for affordable housing as follows:

“Affordable Housing. Owner and the Town recognize the increasing need for affordable housing in the Bluffton area. Owner will encourage and use best efforts to promote affordable

housing within Buckwalter Tract and in consideration therefore, the Town will define affordable housing and develop reasonable incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing within Bluffton. Reasonable incentives may include but not be limited to the elimination of Development Fees on affordable housing, and density increases within any given tract to allow developers to offset any negative economic impacts as a result of the development of affordable homes. Owner will consult with Town regarding incentives to encourage and promote affordable housing which would include but not be limited to price discounts, and land and density adjustments.”

As the Buckwalter Development Agreement does not provide guidance on the approval of density bonuses, the Town determined that Unified Development Ordinance, Section 6.5.4.C identifying the incentive ranges for a qualified project which allows a 100% density bonus to projects providing 100% affordable housing as follows:

Percentage of Workforce/Affordable Housing Units	Density Bonus
Minimum 25%	25%
26-50%	50%
51-75%	75%
76+%	100%

The Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (Attachment 4) shows the Property is designated as Suburban Living which is defined as:

The Suburban Living category is intended to include low-density single-family neighborhoods. Much of this category includes portions of large Planned Unit Developments that are under active construction or are built-out. Allowable density is up to three dwelling units per acre and must be at least one dwelling unit per acre. Community amenities such as trails, parks, and centralized swimming pools are encouraged.

To permit the uses allowed within the new Bush Land Use Tract, the future land use designation will need to be changed to Neighborhood Center which is defined as:

*The **Neighborhood Center** category is intended to guide emerging neighborhood-focused retail clusters throughout the community. These centers, such as Buckwalter Place, provide the opportunity for residents to be within walking distance of grocers, restaurants, retailers, and medical offices. These centers help establish neighborhood identity and are best served when supported by a mix of middle housing and single-family residences within walking or biking distance. These centers are best designed to provide automobile access within a pedestrian-oriented environment. Inclusion of public green space is encouraged.*

Neighborhood centers are based on the same foundation as the Town Center, to create a pedestrian-oriented environment, but the overall design is open for interpretation / adaptation to localized design guidance. Plentiful pedestrian connections ensure long-term health of the neighborhood and anchors the community around the public spaces within the neighborhood center. While neighborhood-serving commercial uses are predominant within the designation, appropriately scaled commercial office space is encouraged to strengthen the mix of uses within the overall community.

Development within the district is pedestrian scaled. Buildings up to three stories are appropriate so long as they are properly buffered and screened from any lower intensity uses in the area. Out-lot parcel development should address the street, and parking should be consolidated to the greatest extent possible to enhance the pedestrian environment.

The Town of Bluffton's Comprehensive Plan's Section 5 Housing recommends the following objectives.

H1.4 Foster relationships with non-profit groups and developers to assist in the development, construction, and/ or purchase of affordable housing units.

Staff Response: Because market forces often work against housing affordability in high-growth areas, the Town must continue to leverage subsidies—such as land, materials, and permitting relief—to bridge the gap.

H1.8 Identify and eliminate regulatory and financial barriers that can inadvertently discourage the development of affordable housing.

To mitigate the impact of rising labor and material costs, the Town is prioritizing the identification and relief of regulatory barriers for this project. By streamlining the permitting process for this affordable project, the Town is improving the development margins that remain tight despite external subsidies. This administrative support is essential to ensuring this project will be viable.

The Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Figure 7.7 – Growth Framework (Attachment 5) shows the Property on the periphery of Village Place Type Node which the Unified Development Ordinance, Section 6.1.2.C defines as:

Located in highly developed areas or those areas to be developed, a Village consists of a single center surrounded by compact, complete and connected neighborhoods providing support for a mixed-use area with moderate intensity. The mixed-use development occurs at the intersection of larger neighborhoods and along corridor connecting multiple neighborhoods

Lastly, all future development of the Property would be required to be reviewed through the applicable Town of Bluffton planning processes including an Initial Master Plan, Development Plan review and Building Permits.

SCHEDULE: The proposed schedule for the applications is provided as Attachment 7.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Application Submittal
2. Location Map
3. Zoning Map
4. Future Land Use Map
5. Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plan Growth Framework Map
6. Draft Schedule
7. Proposed Motion