



# May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, March 09, 2026 at 10:00 AM

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry "Emmett" McCracken Jr. Council Chambers,  
20 Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

## AGENDA

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- [1.](#) Adoption of January 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

**IV. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**VIII. DISCUSSION**

- [1.](#) Town Resilience Planning and WAPAC Strategic Plan Priority Discussion - Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**NEXT MEETING DATE: APRIL 23, 2026**

*“FOIA Compliance – Public notification of this meeting has been published and posted in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Bluffton policies.”*

*In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Bluffton will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. The Town of Bluffton Council Chambers are ADA compatible. Auditory accommodations are available. Any person requiring further accommodation should contact the Town of Bluffton ADA Coordinator at 843.706.4500 or [adacoordinator@townofbluffton.com](mailto:adacoordinator@townofbluffton.com) as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.*

*Executive Session – The public body may vote to go into executive session for any item identified for action on the agenda.*

*\*Please note that each member of the public may speak at one public comment session and a form must be filled out and given to the Town Clerk. To submit a public comment online, please click here:*

*<https://www.townofbluffton.sc.gov/FormCenter/Town-15/Public-Comment-60>*

*Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker.*

# May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20  
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

January 22, 2026

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## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rogers called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

## II. ROLL CALL

### PRESENT

Chris Shoemaker  
Amber Kuehn  
Vice Chair Al Stokes  
Chair Stan Rogers  
Jessie White  
Chris Kehrer

### ABSENT

Larry Toomer

## III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

### 1. Adoption of October 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to adopt the October 23, 2025, meeting minutes made by Chairman Rogers, Seconded by Mr. Kehrer.

Voting Yea: Shoemaker, Kuehn, Vice Chair Stokes, and White.

## IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

## V. OLD BUSINESS

### 1. Update on Town Wetland Ordinance – Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Ms. Lewis gave the committee a brief update on ongoing work related to the Town’s wetland protection ordinance and the anticipated timeline moving forward. She noted that staff’s tentative plan is to present proposed modifications to the current wetland protection ordinance at the January 2026 Town Council Workshop. The committee is expected to review these proposed changes at the April 2026 meeting, although the timeline may be subject to change.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Establishment of a Town Resilience Plan, WAPAC Strategic Plan Priority, Update – Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Ms. Lewis provided the committee with a brief update on the Town’s ongoing resilience planning efforts. She reminded members that developing a Climate Resiliency Plan is one of

the committee's FY25-FY26 Strategic Plan priorities. Ms. Lewis then asked if the committee felt comfortable making a recommendation to Town Council. Given the timeline of the current planning process, the committee requested a special meeting before the contract award is presented to Town Council.

Motion to meet ahead of their regularly scheduled April meeting to further discuss the Town's resilience planning efforts, made by Mr. Kehrer, Seconded by Ms. White.

Voting Yea: Shoemaker, Kuehn, Vice Chair Stokes, and Chair Rogers.

2. Implementation of a SECOORA Water Elevation Meter – Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Ms. Lewis provided the committee with a brief update regarding the Town's new SECOORA water elevation meter at the Calhoun Street Dock, noting that it was installed on January 20, 2026.

3. Introduction of New Stormwater Technician – Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager

Ms. Lewis introduced Hannah Quast, the Town's new Stormwater Technician, to the committee and provided her biography. The committee welcomed Ms. Quast to the Town.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 4:10 PM made by Mr. Kehrer, Seconded by Ms. White.

Voting Yea: Shoemaker, Kuehn, Vice Chair Stokes, and Chair Rogers.

**NEXT APPROVED MEETING DATE: APRIL 23, 2026**

# RESILIENCE PLANNING AND WAPAC STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY DISCUSSION



WAPAC  
March 09, 2026

Beth Lewis, Watershed Resilience Manager, CEPSCI,



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01 Background

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02 Anticipated Planning Work

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03 Next Steps

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# 01 BACKGROUND – THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



- The Town’s Comprehensive Plan, known as Blueprint Bluffton, is intended to guide decision making for the next ten (10) years. It serves as the vision for the Town of Bluffton.
- In 2022, the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (S.C. Code Section 6-29-510) required local governments to add a resilience element to comprehensive plans.
- Blueprint Bluffton was adopted in November 2022.
- For the first time, it included a Resiliency Chapter to meet this requirement and prepare the Town for a more resilient future.

# 01 BACKGROUND - THE STRATEGIC PLAN



- The Town of Bluffton uses strategic planning to implement the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
- Town Council, the Town Manager, and Town staff develop the Town's Strategic Plan every two (2) years, with annual reviews.
- The Strategic Plan uses Strategic Focus Areas and Strategies to:
  - Develop the operating budget.
  - Consider revisions to capital improvement projects.
  - Develop new projects and assign them to Staff for execution.
  - Implement projects and initiatives already approved in existing town plans.
  - Determine an agreed upon process and schedule to prioritize projects and revise priorities as necessary.

# 01 BACKGROUND- STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Section VIII. Item #1.



Affordable and/or Workforce Housing



Community Quality of Life



Economic Development



Fiscal Sustainability



Infrastructure



May River and Surrounding Rivers  
and Watersheds



Town Organization

# 01 BACKGROUND - MAY RIVER AND SURROUNDING RIVERS AND WATERSHEDS

## Guiding Principal 4:

Support active planning and management for resilience of natural resources and our response to weather events, future disasters and changing environmental conditions.

## FY25-FY26 Action Agenda Item:

Develop a resiliency plan focused on the Town's natural resources, sustainability, wetland ordinance/restoration and environmental principals.

# 01 BACKGROUND - WAPAC STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY

## FY25-FY26

*Establish a Climate Resiliency Plan for adaptation to coastal impacts from changing environmental conditions (“rain bombs” and sea level rise) on stormwater runoff water quality and quantity. Assess the environmental resilience of stormwater ponds to changing climate conditions for retrofit opportunities, e.g. ensuring ponds have capacity to hold rain events instead of being pumped full with ground water.*

- The committee voted to carry this initiative forward into the FY27–FY28 Strategic Planning cycle.
- Town Council will consider proposed FY27-FY28 WAPAC Strategic Planning initiatives.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH

- Synthesize Data
- Additional Vulnerabilities and Gap Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach
- Draft Plan Development
- Finalize Resilience Plan Development, Presentations, and Adoption

## 02 RESILIENCE PLANNING GOALS

- Protect and restore natural systems—including wetlands, waterways, and tree canopy.
- Elevate community voices and local knowledge in every phase of planning.
- Advance equitable outcomes for minority and disadvantaged communities.
- Focus on implementable strategies with clear steps, responsible entities, and timelines.
- Strengthen Town capacity with training, tools, and transparent data stewardship.
- Coordinate regionally to address shared risks and opportunities.
- Use best available science and clearly explain assumptions, uncertainty, and trade-offs.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: SYNTHESIZE DATA



- Comprehensive review of existing Town documents, ordinances, watershed and stormwater studies, GIS datasets, and relevant regional initiatives.
- The consultant team must have the ability to thoroughly review and evaluate all relevant Town, regional, and state documents, datasets, policies, and studies pertaining to natural hazards, stormwater, resilience, and land use.
- This approach will uncover data gaps, identify opportunities for greater integration and consistency across initiatives, and promote alignment while maximizing potential cost savings with regional resilience efforts.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: HAZARD PROJECTIONS & VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Section VIII. Item #1.



- Prioritizes the Town's natural systems such as wetlands, tidal marshes, riparian corridors, tree canopy, and ecological connectivity as the cornerstone of long-term resilience.
- Evaluates how current and future conditions, along with stressors, impact these environmental assets. Ensures that future strategies maintain or restore natural system function while proactively preparing for projected changes in environmental conditions.
- Vulnerability profile development will include natural system assessment, hazard projections, modeling analyses, and operational evaluations into a comprehensive vulnerability profile.
- Vulnerability work will clearly distinguish between near-term and long-term risks and will inform strategy development, project prioritization, and investment decisions in subsequent phases.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



- Structured Engagement Plan:
  - Develop a structured engagement plan that aligns with the Town’s internal processes, priorities, and strategic goals. Will define objectives, methods, timelines, and key stakeholders. Will ensure transparent and effective collaboration across the Town’s departments, elected officials, and the public.
- Leadership and Council Engagement:
  - Conduct targeted surveys, interviews, or facilitated discussions with Town Council and executive leadership to capture their priorities, concerns, and vision for the project.
- Community Engagement:
  - Host public workshops, listening sessions, and focus groups to gather input from residents and stakeholders, encouraging active participation and dialogue.
  - Conduct targeted outreach to vulnerable communities, such as within the Climate Disaster Resilience Zone (CDRZ Zone), through specialized initiatives to ensure inclusive representation.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Regional and Agency Coordination:
  - Coordinate with regional and federal agencies such as the South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR), South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES), US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), utilities, and county partners through scheduled meetings. Facilitate interagency data sharing, policy coordination, and operational integration.
- Internal Coordination:
  - Identify opportunities to better understand completed work, processes, existing barriers. The goal is to strengthen the Town's organizational workflows in all areas.
- Multi-Sector Technical Advisory Board:
  - Convene a pro-bono technical advisory group comprising of representatives from local, state, and federal government, community organizations, scientific institutions, and academia to provide strategic policy guidance, validate assessment assumptions, review findings, and guide prioritization of project elements.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: DRAFT RESILIENCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Section VIII. Item #1.



- Transform all insights from prior tasks into a comprehensive, actionable DRAFT Resilience Plan that equips the Town of Bluffton with clear strategies for long-term adaptation.
  - Includes collaboration with Town leadership, departmental staff, and stakeholders.
  - Will include vulnerability and data synthesis, integration of all stakeholder and community input, strategy development, alternatives analysis, and prioritization, and a DRAFT Resilience Plan.

## 02 ANTICIPATED APPROACH: FINAL RESILIENCE PLAN



- Refine and finalize the DRAFT Resilience Plan based on Town feedback and regional partner comments to produce a polished, comprehensive FINAL Resilience Plan.
  - Town Revisions and Integration of Feedback
  - Final Resilience Plan Compilation
  - Presentation and Stakeholder Engagement
  - Support of Plan Adoption

# 03 ANTICIPATED NEXT STEPS



DATE	ACTION
April 2026	Town Council Consideration
May or June 2026	Resilience Planning Work Commences

THANK YOU

Beth Lewis  
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Questions?