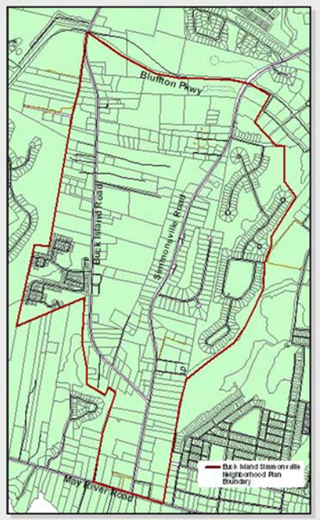
APPENDICES

BUCK ISLAND ROAD AND SIMMONSVILLE ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY PROFILE SHEET*



BACKGROUND HISTORY

- Annexed into the Town on December 29, 2005.
- 473 Parcels were annexed through the BIS annexation process.
- The boundaries for the neighborhood planning area are: to the north, Bluffton Parkway, Simmonsville Road to the East, Buck Island Road to the west and May River Road to the south. (The current neighborhood planning area does not include entire annexation area).

Existing Conditions

Population

- According to the 2000 Census, approximately 1,492 people reside within the entire Buck Island/Simmonsville Road annexation area. (Source: 2000 Census).
- The population is 53.5 percent non-white, compared with a non-white population of 36.8 percent for the town as a whole. (Source: 2000 Census).
- The average number of persons per housing unit within the annexation area, or average household size is 3.05, compared with the current Town household size of 2.68. (Source: 2000 Census).

Land Use

- Predominantly residential in nature.
- Some commercial and light industrial developments also exist in the community.
- The residential communities of Hidden Lakes, Windy Lakes and Wellstone are within the community and are Planned Unit Developments. These three communities will not be included in the planning area, although residents will be informed of meetings and welcome to participate.

Housing

- 311 properties were surveyed during February and March 2008.
- 268 residential properties in the area were surveyed and 15 commercial.
- Main purpose of the inventory was to verify addresses for the local census update.
- There were a total of 92 single family detached homes inventoried and two (2) single family attached.
- Mobile homes are the most common homes within the area, occupying over 56% of the properties in the area.
- Of the 174 mobile homes in the subject area, 34 appear to be either in fair or unsafe condition, 17 of those are believed to be currently occupied.

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Transportation

- Road network within the area consists of mostly state roads with road maintenance provided by SCDOT. There are also a few county roads and private roads in the community.
- Existing roads are two lane roads and are heavily traveled by both pedestrians and vehicles. Speed limits are as follows:

Buck Island Road	40MPH
Simmonsville Road	40MPH
Bluffton Parkway	45MPH
May River Road	30MPH

- Limited number of sidewalks available or pedestrian connections, which make travel for pedestrians unsafe.
- 2007 Traffic Volumes (Average Annual Daily Traffic)

Buck Island Road from SC 46 to Simmonsville Road	7,700
Buck Island Road from Simmonsville Road to US 278	3,300
Simmonsville Road from Buck Island Road to US 278	4,400

(Source: SCDOT)

Public Facilities

- Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority provides water and sewer service to town residents.
- Due to the rural nature of some properties in the area, residents currently use a septic system for sewer needs.
- During the community survey, 82% of the properties that were found to have drainage issues were located in the BIS area.

Public Safety

- Currently Bluffton Police Department has a department of 38 staff: one (1) chief of police, two (2) support employees and three (3) part time crossing guards.
- Top five types of crimes in the Buck Island and Simmonsville Road area have been identified as: 1) Domestic, 2) Drugs, 3) Vandalism, 4) Burglary, and 5) Shootings.
- Based on data received from the Police Department, crime during 2007 had declined but rose 10% from January 1, 2008 – March 31, 2008.

**Inventory gathered for Data Inventory Sheet is a draft and is not finalized.*
Source: Town of Bluffton Planning Growth & Management.

Buck Island & Simmonsville Roads Neighborhood Plan:
KICK-OFF - COMPILED GROUP SUMMARIES
JUNE 2, 2008 - TOWN HALL - 6PM

Years of Residency?

YEARS	NUMBER OF RESIDENTS
1-10	11
10-20	8
20-30	16
30 OR MORE	15
OTHER (OUTSIDE OF AREA)	2
TOTAL	**52**

What do you like about the community?

1. Single-family housing (no apartments)
2. Trees and aesthetically pleasing landscaping
3. Peaceful and quiet neighborhood
4. Rural residential setting and low density environment
5. Privacy
6. Quaint character
7. Off Rte. 278, off parkways, neighborhood with kids and yards
8. Space, large lots and houses
9. Location
10. Affordable area

What do you dislike about the community?

1. Traffic and congestion
2. Traffic light at Simmonsville and the Bluffton Parkway (going north on Simmonsville, there is no left arrow to turn on the Parkway- dangerous)
3. Trash on streets (especially from vehicles going to the County convenience center)
4. No vegetative buffer around the dump
5. Crime (especially around apartments)
6. Planning geared toward developers
7. Lack of safety at Buck Island and SC 46 intersection
8. No lights
9. Unfinished circle at SC 46 (Bluffton Road) and Bluffton Parkway (out of project area)
10. Clear-cutting
11. New high-impact development
12. Dirt roads – maintenance and condition of existing dirt roads, access to property using dirt roads
13. Drainage problems with dirt roads
14. School and related traffic
15. No sidewalks for pedestrians
16. Run-down condition of Eagles Field
17. Specimen trees being removed.
18. Housing - lack of maintenance, rundown condition, some residences vacant and unoccupied.
20. Proposed school is coming before sidewalks
21. There is hope for Buck Island, but not Simmonsville – Simmonsville Road houses are closer to street, not allowing as much room for widening, sidewalks and turn lanes

Buck Island & Simmonsville Roads Neighborhood Plan:
KICK-OFF - COMPILED GROUP SUMMARIES
JUNE 2, 2008 - TOWN HALL - 6PM

dislikes continued -

22. Town needs to listen to what community wants instead of developers
23. Issues with drainage along roadways when it rains or storms
24. Lack of recreation/open space within the community
25. Litter
26. Lack of enforcement of Town Codes

Desired Changes you'd like to see in the community?

1. Maintain low density housing
2. Prevent clear-cutting
3. Ensure landscape buffers, increase width and ensure restoration with existing development and proposed
4. More landscaping and higher percent of open space
5. Housing improvements – improve appearance and maintenance. Clean up abandoned and unsafe housing.
6. Grants and financing for improvements – would like to know what grants, funding mechanisms, cost-sharing, creative financing opportunities, etc. are available to improve housing, run sewer, and pay for other infrastructure needs.
7. Sidewalks
8. Notice about new development in the neighborhood along with an opportunity for input.
9. Improve and upgrade the ballpark. Identify areas for parks and open spaces
10. Trees – preserve
11. Pave the dirt roads
12. Community Center
13. Dog Park
14. Remain residential, no more commercial
15. No more development until roads are widened - Moratorium
16. Town listens to what community wants instead of developers
17. Updated infrastructure - sewer
18. Improve traffic along corridors
19. Litter control
20. Look into programs that deal with property maintenance/up-keep to encourage those that can not afford to do so.
21. Better address or identify affordable housing mechanisms for the community
22. Identify areas for bike paths, sidewalks & signage
23. Sensitive placement/ integration of commercial development within the community
24. Police Department should provide more of a community presence
25. Better enforcement of Town Ordinance
26. Better landscaping of new & existing developments; recycle facility needs better landscaping.
27. Town Services - provide equal services for all residents
28. More traffic lights (timing, safety and reconfiguring)

Are you planning to stay in the community?

1. Yes, most participants
2. Yes, more affordable than other areas in the town

Buck Island & Simmonsville Roads Neighborhood Plan: Workshop I - GROUP VISIONING SUMMARIES **JUNE 16, 2008 - OSCAR FRAZIER COMMUNITY CENTER - 6PM**

	LAND USE	***HOUSING***	***TRANSPORTATION***	***IDENTITY BRANDING****

GROUP I	• Keep the neighborhood residential
	• Maintain current zoning
	• Consider commercial on a case by case basis (suggested only by Paul Hamilton and William Bennett)
		• Assist with the physical condition of existing homes
		• Pave streets, create bike paths and parks
		• Mix up the density (low density can create sprawl)
		• Mobile homes are ok; maybe add modular home/small series homes
		• Create residential buffers
		• Create an incentive to hook into sewer for LMI
		• Heirs property; fixed income assistance
		• Create more SF market rate and affordable homes
		• Provide loan interest loans for owner occupation
		• Habitat infill
		• Provide free paint and septic maintenance
		• School traffic is impacting the residents
			• Install sidewalks on both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads
			• Would like to see bicycle lanes and/or a pathway along Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads (not as much interest compared to sidewalks, but still important).
			• Provide a bicycle lane or path along Hyon Road
			• Southeast Property Development - w/ a proposed gas station, concern expressed about children walking and bicycling down Simmonsville Road, to and from school and homes (Need sidewalks and a pathway).
			• Install street lights
			• Install either a traffic signal or roundabout at SR 46 and Buck Island Road. People were concerned about congestion at that intersection and the difficulty of making left turns from Buck Island Road onto SR 46.
			• Concerned about traffic speeding through neighborhood
			• The posted speed limits on both roads are too high; people would like to see them reduced to either 35mph or 40 mph maximum
			• Bluffton Parkway & Goethe Road – difficulty making left turns from Goethe Road onto Bluffton Parkway, part of this problem is caused by traffic using the roundabout at Bluffton Road.
			• People wanted to know about the proposed improvements that would be constructed as part of the school, the scope of the work and the schedule.
				• Gateways
				  • Locations
				  • May River Rd & Buck Island Rd
				  • Buck Island Rd & Bluffton Parkway
				  • Simmonsville Rd & Bluffton Parkway
				  • Split of Buck Island Rd & Simmonsville Rd
				  • Most Important Gateway: Buck Island Rd & Bluffton Pkwy
				  • Strong need to enhance the ball field since it is the main gateway
				  • All groups agreed this is the main gateway
				  • BIS is a gateway to Old Town Bluffton
				  • Gateway Improvements
				  • Bellfield enhancements
				  • Screen Dump
				  • Streetscape extended to BIS neighborhood
				  • Better Signage to identify the roads
				• Neighborhoods within the BIS area
				  • Few residents named Wellstone, Windy Lakes, & Hidden Lakes. Most agreed there are no neighborhoods within the neighborhood. Only parcels defined by Family names, but they are all one family/neighborhood.
				  • No need to rename/brand Buck Island Simmonsville Community (unanimous)
				• Miscellaneous Facts
				  • Simmonsville Rd named after property owner William (Billy) Simmons
				  • Buck Island Rd named after Buck Island Plantation where many families were employed in the past
				  • Laundry facility might not be beautiful but is very important to the community due to the number of jobs it provides
				  • Community members interested in working with school to hold annual gathering to raise money to be used within the community for improvements.
				
				*All four groups are summarized as one due to the responses being so similar for every group.

GROUP II	• Keep the neighborhood residential • Improve roads • Maintain current zoning • Keep the neighborhood family-oriented • Acquire land for open space and recreation • Visually buffer county dump • Consider transportation before any development	• Waive the mobile home impact fee • Provide incentives to get residents into "better" housing • Provide housing improvement funds • Remove junk • Offer grants and loans • Offer tax incentives/rebates • Elderly and long-term residents are a priority • Get renters into their own home • Section 8 is ok for SF homes • No more density • Provide sewer fee assistance • Provide more detached SF homes • Improve Eagles Field; provide a park at Buck Island & Simmonsville Road	• Install sidewalks on both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. • Would like to see bicycle lanes and/or a pathway along Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. • Southeast Property Development – would like to see a bus stop at that location. • Would like to see LRTA use the smaller buses and have more stops in the neighborhood. • Install street lighting • Install either a traffic signal or roundabout at SR 46 and Buck Island Road. As in Group 1, people were concerned about congestion at that intersection and the difficulty of making left turns from Buck Island Road onto SR 46. • Concerned about traffic speeding through neighborhood • The posted speed limits on both roads are too high; people would like to see them reduced to either 35mph or 40 mph maximum. • Bluffton Parkway & Goethe Road – difficulty making left turns from Goethe Road onto Bluffton Parkway, part of this problem is caused by traffic using the roundabout at Bluffton Road. • Build new road south of Centerfield Road • People wanted to know about the proposed improvements that would be constructed as part of the school, the scope of the work and the schedule.	

	LAND USE	***HOUSING***	***TRANSPORTATION***	***IDENTITY BRANDING***
GROUP III	• Ensure compatibility between future land uses and zoning (especially between the school and Southeastern Property) • Improve roads • Protect home based business and ensure legal continuation of existing businesses • No additional gas stations • Commercial north of Southeastern Properties (Renty Kitty)	• There are too many apartments-too much density • Provide affordable housing • No mixed-income (the upper income residents push the lower income residents out) • Provide down payment assistance to get people into their own homes • Section 8 for SF, but not MF (no more Bluffton House examples) • Stabilize existing income base • Install a police substation • JV with property owner & small developer for infill, I including JV commercial	• Install sidewalks on both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. • Want pathways and NOT bicycle lanes on Buck Island and Simmonsville • Install street lights • Install either a traffic signal or roundabout at SR 46 and Buck Island Road. People were concerned about congestion at that intersection and the difficulty of making left turns from Buck Island Road onto SR 46. • Concerned about traffic speeding through neighborhood. • The posted speed limits on both roads are too high; people want to see them reduced; traffic speeding problems. • People wanted to know about the proposed improvements that would be constructed as part of the school, SED, the scope of the work and the schedule. • Bluffton Parkway and Buck Island/Simmonsville Road intersections – problems making left turns from the side streets onto the Parkway (poor sight distance). • Traffic signal timing for left turns needs from the Parkway onto the side streets needs to be checked. • Add roundabouts to SR 46/Buck Island Road and to Buck Island/Simmonsville Road intersection. • Check street curvature - difficulty seeing around curves. • Widen the streets sparingly	
GROUP IV	• No new commercial development (because of property tax hikes) • Improve roads • Upgrade and enhance community- housing rehab and restoration	• No more apartments • SF affordable • Modular homes are ok • Provide repair assistance • Long standing residents are a priority/provide subsidies on a need basis • Emphasize owner occupation • Provide tax rebates • Promote assistance to neighborhood • Assist with septic maintenance • Stabilize existing income base • Clean up existing property/remove junk	• Install sidewalks on both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. • Want pathways and/or bicycle lanes on Buck Island and Simmonsville • Install street lights • Install either a traffic signal or roundabout at SR 46 and Buck Island Road. People were concerned about congestion at that intersection and the difficulty of making left turns from Buck Island Road onto SR 46. • Concerned about traffic speeding through neighborhood • The posted speed limits on both roads are too high; people want to see them reduced; traffic speeding problems. • People wanted to know about the proposed improvements that would be constructed as part of the school, SED, the scope of the work and the schedule. • Add roundabouts to SR 46/Buck Island Road • Add connecting streets near the Parkway • Add street furniture, benches • How will drainage be handled?	

Buck Island/Simmonville Q&A

Workshop II & III Follow Up

Infrastructure—Roads, Sewer, Sidewalks

Q. Will a new road be constructed using utility easement from Bluffton Parkway to go south to the school?

A.The current entrances to the middle school site have been approved by the county and state DOT agencies. The District does not believe a single entrance along the route discussed to be a practical solution. In addition to the land purchase that would be required, this solution would provide only a single entry point for the school site.

Q. How much of an easement will be necessary for installing the sewer?

A.Tentatively about a 20 foot easement.

Q. Will there be only one (1) lift station?

A. Yes and it will be sized to accommodate the entire lengths of Buck Island/Simmonsville Rd.

Q. Have we identified easement areas?

A.The town has identified 23 easements. There will be a workshop with the community in the future to discuss these easements.

Q. Should parental traffic be moved to Simmonsville Rd because it's closer to the actual school area? What about school buses? Can decision be changed?

A.School will be submitting to SCDOT for review by their Traffic Engineering office in Columbia. There are state guidelines that must be followed regarding turn lanes, bus traffic, and other traffic to make sure it's constructed safely and correctly. If the plans are approved by SCDOT, then the school applies for an Encroachment Permit.

Q. Is the sidewalk on Hwy 46 & Buck Island going to service the school?

A.The sidewalk will stop at the parkway. To connect the existing sidewalks someone would need to apply for an Encroachment Permit. The Town would have to build the sidewalk and apply for the encroachment permit.

Q. What about bicycle lanes? Are there going to be bicycle lanes for the middle school students to use? Would the town purchase property for pathways to connect pathways to thoroughfares and provide safe ways for children and avoid traffic congestion?

A.The SCDOT has no plans to widen Buck Island Road or Simmonsville Road beyond the Bluffton Parkway. Therefore SCDOT will not be pursuing any bicycle lanes for those facilities at this time.

Q. Is there a road or public access through Hidden Lakes for access to the school?

A. A public access connection as part of the overall approval of the master plan is proposed thru the neighborhoods; plans go back to 1985. The Initial Master Plan for Bluffton Park and Hidden Lakes were designed for interconnectivity and planned for the community before the school.

Q. Studies have shown that wider roads (designed to SCDOT standards) always encourage higher speeds despite posted speed limits. Will this not increase the danger to pedestrians and residents in this area?

A. SCDOT adheres to widely accepted design and construction guidelines on its facilities. These guidelines take into account safety of motorists and pedestrians and efficiency of the facility. The portion of Simmonsville Road that is being widened will have 11' travel lanes which is a foot narrower than the common 12' travel lane most commonly seen.

Q. It's difficult to make left turns off of Bluffton Parkway onto Burnt Church Rd. Will there be a signal prior to the extension of Bluffton Parkway?

A. A signal is currently being installed and should be finished in the next couple months. When the parkway is extended, the light will be modified accordingly.

Q. It's difficult to make left turns off of the parkway onto both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads. Are there any proposed signal modifications?

A. Signal modifications are proposed to add left turn arrows and to protect the left turns. This may be done in conjunction with some proposed developments coming into town on the corners.

Q. Is Simmonsville Rd going to be widened and will a traffic light be added?

A.To date no other traffic improvements are proposed.

Q. The concrete curbing on the side of the road makes it difficult to get broke down vehicles off safely. Can this be changed?

A. Vertical face curbing is used for drainage; urban vs. rural section does not have curbing. SCDOT does not use vertical face or roll back but use a 45 degree mountable curbing along bike lanes so people can "bail out". This option will be used on Simmonsville Rd.

Q. When do you expect to begin the future expansion of Bluffton Parkway to the bridge?

A.The right of way acquisition will begin in the fall and construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2009.

Q. What is the status of the roundabout on 46? What's its time frame?

A. Construction of the roundabout will be a part of the widening of Highway 46. It will be a two lane roundabout.

Q. Will there be a multi-use pathway connecting to the school? Bicycle lanes?

A. A 5 foot sidewalk on the school property will be provided; school cannot afford to do both. The sidewalk will be on one side of the road.

Middle School

Q. When will construction on the school begin?

A. Construction is expected to begin early August.

Q. What is the length of the left turn lane?

A. The length of the turn lane will be dictated by DOT. The turn lane may possibly be 300 feet?

Q. When is the school expected to open?

A. The construction will take about 18 months and is expected to open mid-year in 2010.

Q. What will be the start time of the school? Will it be later because studies have shown middle schoolers need more sleep?

A. No calendar or schedule has been established for the school.

Q. Will the school cause the traffic problems that MC Riley has caused?

A. Traffic studies have been prepared and reviewed by the Town and County for this project site.

Q. A lot of wetland areas exist on the property, is there room for outdoor activity?

A. A ball field, playfield, tennis courts are all proposed.

Q. Why did the school choose this site?

A. It is located in the center of where the students are. 12 sites were considered, but this was the one that provided adequate area. 45 acres were needed for the school.

Q. Why build one big school on 45 acres? Why not build smaller schools, 5 schools on 9 acres and include them into neighborhoods?

A. State dictates what you must have, parking, fields, separate areas for buses and cars. Most of the acreage is for parking and fields.

Q. How will bus traffic and parental traffic be circulated? Which roads will be used?

A.The school has not made a final decision on this yet. They will separate bus and parental traffic, but allow traffic to use both Buck Island and Simmonsville Roads to disperse it better.

Q. Will the school cause drainage problems for the surrounding residents?

A. All Stormwater designs must be approved by several government agencies including the Town of Bluffton. The approved Stormwater plans for the school included a review of the pre-development versus post-development peak runoff rate to prevent downstream flooding. No issues should be created as a part of the construction.

Q. Will the school recreational facilities or playfields be available for community use?

A.The school will work with the community for joint use like any other school.

Police Department

Q. Where are calls for service concentrated?

A. They vary by grid, but there are 3 top calls for service.
1. Traffic Related Calls
2. Disorderly Conduct (fights, drinking, etc)
3. Domestic Violence

Q. What does a resident do when a resident calls and is treated unfairly or there is a lack of service?

A. A resident may file a complaint in a number of ways. They may file a complaint online, come to the police station, or call chief on his cell phone. The police department is using several new methods to prevent poor service. Methods include:
1. Early warning software – logs all calls about an officer (good and bad) and sends an alert when necessary
2. A brochure will be given to every person who calls for service. The brochure will include a returnable survey about service.
3. Supervisors will randomly choose 5 people a month to call to survey about their call for service.

Q. Are employees of the police department subject to random drug tests?

A. Yes, the police department just signed with Dr's Care to conduct drug tests. At this time all employees will be tested at the same time.

Q. What is the time frame to start a neighborhood watch program?

A. It is a national program and the local accreditation will be complete in January. The residents will need to be trained prior to the actual start of the program locally. If interested, residents should contact Sergeant Norberg.

Q. What are the plans for controlling drug trafficking locally?

A. Drug trafficking is tracked and processed by the Beaufort County Sheriff Department. Our town police department can work to make it difficult for local drug houses to conduct business. They may be cited for traffic, loud noise, etc.

Q. How can we keep kids involved, educated, and out of trouble?

A. There is a program called Explorer Post. 30 kids have graduated and we are working on an incentives program to keep them involved. The department is also working on a new program for classroom guidance for juniors and seniors. The final method at this time is to work on a youth core initiative/alternative for troubled youth. This would give alternatives without taking away all of their rights during the first offense.

Building Safety

Safe Home Program: Comprehensive, hurricane & severe storm damage mitigation program (www.scsafehome.com) provides -$25 inspections through grants (would typically cost $150)

- Eligible homes - homes under $300,000 in value
- Homes between $150,000- $300,000 in value would get matching funds for up to $5,000
- Homes under $150,000 in value would get up to $5,000 towards repairs
- Requirements for inspection:
  - Resident of the town
  - Home must be owner-occupied
  - Home valued under $300,000
  - Current on taxes
  - Proof of insurance

Q. Could the town host a community information workshop or education classes?

A. The town cannot assist the resident on the grant application, but can speak with a resident about the program.

Q. Are there any circumstances where the fee for the inspection is waived?

A. Not at this time. Council has already approved to waive $125 of the fee. The inspection requires 1 hour to complete as well as a 7 page in office report.

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