

Bluffton selected for EPA growth program

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Bluffton is one of 32 communities nationwide selected for a new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency program to help towns and cities plot growth in a way that protects sensitive natural areas.

As a participant in the program, Bluffton will play host to EPA officials and urban planners at a public workshop at 5:30 p.m. May 12 at Oscar J. Frazier Park's community center.

The aim of the workshop is to pinpoint where development should go and where it shouldn't based on the watershed, according to the town.

The EPA program, called Sustainable Communities Building Blocks, coincides with Bluffton's effort to update its development code.

Outdated codes can keep residential and retail areas too far apart and thereby prevent communities from attracting the development they want, according to program director Kevin Nelson.

The latest smart-growth zoning trend promotes walkable neighborhoods with a mix of homes and businesses, he said.

The EPA selected communities from more than 350 applicants.