

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XLII No. 49

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ May 16, 2024

\$1.00

Study outlines plan for 'engineered beach' at Litchfield



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A private project placed offshore sand on the south end of Litchfield Beach in 2022.

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A study prepared for Georgetown County as part of its update of its beachfront management plan recommends creating a fund to pay for up to \$20.3 million of renourishment along the Litchfield Beaches to create an "engineered beach" that would qualify for federal disaster aid.

At Garden City, which is part of a 50-year renourish-

ment project by the Army Corps of Engineers, the study says the county should find a way to supplement that work, with estimated costs ranging between \$5 million and \$20 million.

The study also recommends the county partner with private communities that have funded beach renourishment projects in the past to make them eligible for disaster aid.

The feasibility study was completed last month by Coastal Science and Engineering,

which prepared a similar plan for the town of Pawleys Island. The firm also designed renourishment projects on the island and for the Peninsula development on the south end of Litchfield Beach and DeBordieu.

Georgetown County last year proposed an update of the beachfront management plan that is required by state law as an element of its comprehensive plan. The county's current plan was adopted in 1992.

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Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer

Shoulder to shoulder, back to back | The Waccamaw High girls soccer team celebrates with the Class 3A state championship trophy after their win over Powdersville last week. The WHS boys were runners-up after a 1:30 a.m. loss to Daniel. **STORIES, SECOND FRONT**

SALES TAX

Top capital projects cover wide area as panel closes in on ballot question

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

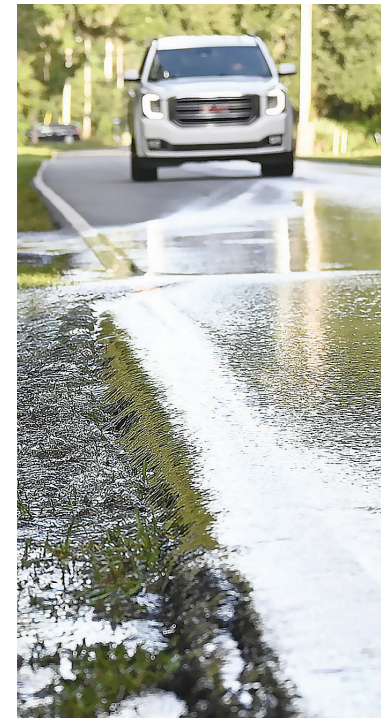
A bike path on Martin Luther King Road, outdoor pickleball and basketball courts at the regional rec center, a rebuilt park in Murrells Inlet and a new fire station at DeBordieu are among the top projects being considered for a share of a proposed capital projects sales tax.

But nine of the top 20 projects are for water and sewer improvements in the western part of Georgetown County. Two of those are in the town of Andrews along with a new public works building for the municipality that once feared the lack of a resident member on the Capital Project Sales Tax Commission would leave them out in the cold.

"It looks like we've got a decent balance," Mark Hawn, who chairs the commission, said after the first review of the project rankings.

The commission is due to meet again today to review the project list, and some of the positions could change. But members said they were pleased with the scale and scope of the initial results.

The commission received 61 requests totaling over \$251 million for a share of a 1-cent sales tax that will be voted on in a referendum during the November general election. Some of those were found ineligible and others were scaled back, bringing the final total to \$174 million. The commission will present a proposed ballot question to



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A bike path on Martin Luther King Road will include work to fix drainage problems that caused this flooding in 2020.

County Council this month that contains a list of projects for funding in order of priority along with a list of projects that will be funded if there is additional revenue or if those higher up the list drop out.

The tax is estimated to generate \$10 million a year and can be imposed for up to eight years. The commission's top 20 projects total \$72.3 million. The water and sewer projects add

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LAND USE

Draft plan dials back density, but group says future still looks crowded

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Changes to future land use maps under review by Georgetown County could add over 5,000 homes to the Waccamaw Neck over what the current maps envision, according to a study by a citizens group that was shown to about 200 people who packed the Waccamaw Library conference room last week.

Members of Keep It Green encouraged residents to show up today when the Planning Commission is scheduled to review the draft in a meeting moved from the old county courthouse to the Howard Center to accommodate a larger audience.

But this week, the consultants who have worked with the county over the past year to update the land use element of the county's comprehensive plan

revised the maps and reduced the number of dwellings that are envisioned in some areas to reduce future density.

That cut the number of potential dwellings by about 1,000, said Cindy Person, chief counsel for Keep It Green Advocacy.

"These tweaks are fine, but they still haven't captured the essence of public input," she said.

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BIKE THE NECK | Willbrook Boulevard

County will turn over path to road district to end golf cart ban

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Golf carts will return to the multi-use path along Willbrook Boulevard under an agreement that will return ownership of the route to area property owners.

"The majority of folks really wanted carts back on the path and not on the road," said Mark Curtiss, president of the Willbrook Plantation Road Maintenance District.

Last August, Georgetown County put up signs banning motorized vehicles from the path, which is part of the Bike the Neck route from Murrells Inlet to Pawleys Island. The

county took ownership of the road and path in 2005 from the Litchfield Co., which developed the property in the 1990s. The path allowed residents in the neighborhoods easy access to the beach at Litchfield by the Sea.

Although motorized vehicles were banned by county ordinance from other sections of the Bike the Neck route, the Willbrook path was considered an exception. That changed after a cyclist was injured in a collision with a golf cart and filed suit in 2021.

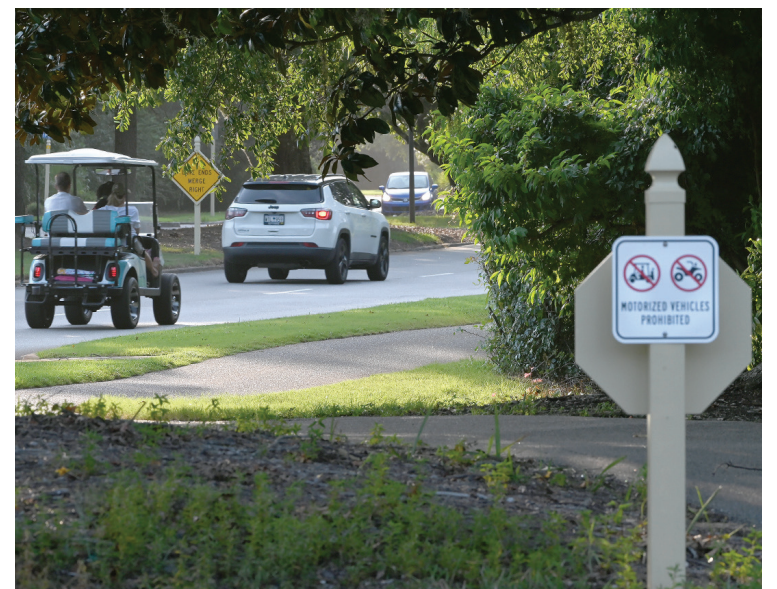
The case was settled before going to trial. Signs went up along the Willbrook path 10 months later saying motorized

vehicles were prohibited. The county offered to let the road district take back the path last fall. The district board declined.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

The district is made up of residential and commercial property owners within the Willbrook "planned development." The commercial

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