



Town of Hilton Head Island

Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force Meeting

Monday, August 4, 2025, 1:00 PM
1 Town Center Court, Hilton Head Island, SC
Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

The meeting can be viewed on the [Town's YouTube Channel](#), the [Beaufort County Channel](#), and Spectrum Channel 1304.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Adoption of the Agenda**
3. **Approval of the Minutes**
 - a. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2025
 - b. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 2, 2025
4. **Staff Report**
 - a. Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods
 - b. Home Safety and Repair Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods
 - c. Sewer Connection Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods
 - d. Land Management Ordinance Update – Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager
 - e. District Planning Update – Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager
5. **Discussion Items**
6. **Public Comment - Non Agenda Items**
7. **Adjournment**

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Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Civility Pledge:

"I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town."



Town of Hilton Head Island GULLAH GEECHEE LAND AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION TASK FORCE MEETING Monday, February 3, 2025, 1:00 PM Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present were: Chairman Stevens, Vice Chairman Simmons, Mr. Henz and Mr. Abdul-Malik. Ms. Green, Mr. Campbell and Ms. Wright were excused.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Henz moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Simmons seconded. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025

The meeting minutes of January 6, 2025 were not approved as there was not a quorum of members present at that meeting. They will be presented for approval at the March 3, 2025 Meeting.

4. Staff Report

a. Introduction to Land Management Ordinance Priority Amendments to include Workforce Housing Density Bonus, Single-Family Home and Commercial Mass & Scale, Subdivision Regulations, Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Hotels & Motels, Major Subdivision & Development Plan Review Process, Transportation Impact Analysis Plan, Common Open Space, Tree Protection, Sign Regulations, and Construction Management Standards - Missy Luick, Director of Planning

Missy Luick, Director of Planning, noted that there are several Priority Amendments to review and introduce with the Task Force today. As part of the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) Amendment Project, the Task Force is one of the key bodies involved in reviewing the Code as updates unfold.

The broader Priority Amendments Project is a key initiative within the Town's Strategic Action Plan and is being implemented under the Growth Management Strategy. The LMO Amendment Project consists of two primary components: the comprehensive LMO Overhaul and the LMO Priority Amendments. The Priority Amendments focus on incremental changes that address critical and time-sensitive issues that cannot wait for the full overhaul. These amendments provide immediate, effective solutions to pressing community development challenges while minimizing unintended consequences. More complex issues requiring additional research and analysis will be considered as part of

the full LMO Overhaul.

To date, several amendments have already been adopted within the Priority Amendments framework. In 2023, three phases of amendments were implemented, followed by an additional amendment in 2024 related to floor area ratio. In September 2024, ten amendment topics were reviewed by Town Council during a Workshop. These same topics will be discussed with the Task Force today. We are hosting a Public Hearing on these Amendments with the Planning Commission on February 19th. These Amendments are for introduction, review and your feedback.

Ms. Luick reviewed the 10 Priority Amendments with the Task Force, as follows:

- 1) Workforce Housing Density Bonus
- 2) Single-Family Home & Commercial Mass & Scale
- 3) Subdivision Regulations
- 4) Adaptive Re-Use of Existing Hotels & Motels
- 5) Major Subdivision & Development Plan Review Process
- 6) Transportation Impact Analysis Plan
- 7) Common Open Space
- 8) Tree Protection
- 9) Sign-Regulations
- 10) Construction Management Standards

Ms. Luick answered questions and concerns from the Task Force and indicated that if the Task Force has additional comments or questions after this meeting, please email staff so that we can incorporate those as we bring these Amendments through to completion. Chairman Stevens and the Task Force thanked Ms. Luick for her report.

b. Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that two new requests were received during this reporting period. Staff provided guidance to applicants on zoning regulations, land use considerations, and pathways for property development. Additionally, staff continued to collaborate with applicants to ensure their projects align with established guidelines while preserving historical and cultural integrity.

To date, a total of 97 Design Studio requests have been received. Of these, 67 have been completed, 22 remain active, and 8 have either been withdrawn or become inactive.

c. Home Safety and Repair Program Update - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonic Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that over the past 30 days, eight projects have been successfully completed, positively impacting eight families within our community. The program teams remain committed to

finalizing the remaining contracted projects while actively exploring additional funding opportunities.

Since the program's inception in July 2022 through January 2025, a total of 147 applications have been received. Of these, 113 were fully completed applications, resulting in 82 permitted projects being successfully completed, 26 currently under contract, and seven awaiting additional program funding. Additionally, applicants who were not eligible for this program have been referred to other available resources for assistance.

d. Sewer Connection Program Update - Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Sharonic Stewart, Principal Planner for Historic Neighborhoods, informed the Task Force that 32 sewer connections have been successfully completed to date. Town staff continues to collaborate closely with the Hilton Head Island Public Service District to complete the remaining projects, ensuring that more residents gain access to essential sewer services.

To date, 48 applications have been received, with 32 projects completed, four currently under contract, and five awaiting additional funding.

As previously mentioned in the last meeting, staff remains committed to identifying additional funding opportunities for these programs. I have shared details regarding program funding via email and would like to provide further insight into our ongoing efforts. At this time, I would like to invite Missy Luick to speak further on this topic.

Missy Luick advised that our current program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Following last month's Task Force Meeting, Sharonica shared the total allocations for both the Home Safety and Repair Program and the Sewer Connection Program. Notably, the Home Safety and Repair Program received an award of just under \$1.5 million, while the Lateral Sewer Program was allocated \$369,000. The data reflects the significant number of community members who have applied for and received assistance through these programs, demonstrating their substantial impact on improving residents' quality of life.

Recognizing the importance of these initiatives, we have been actively exploring additional funding sources to sustain them beyond the exhaustion of ARPA funds, which have been fully encumbered through the end of calendar year 2024. Potential funding sources under consideration include the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), South Carolina Housing, and other grant opportunities. Since these programs were originally established by Town Council with ARPA as the designated funding source, any continuation will require additional funding and further direction from Town Council.

As we evaluate available funding sources and explore other entities now offering similar

services—many of which were not in place when our programs began—we will compile these options and present them for future consideration. Most importantly, I want to emphasize our deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication that has gone into these programs. Sharonica has devoted significant time and effort to their implementation, and we have witnessed firsthand the meaningful improvements made to homes and, most critically, the positive impact on residents' quality of life.

I want to extend my gratitude to our team, the contractors performing the work, and everyone involved in making these programs a success. Their commitment has been instrumental in delivering these essential services to our community. As we move forward, we remain committed to identifying opportunities to sustain and expand these programs, as well as guiding applicants toward other entities providing similar support. We will continue to provide updates as we explore potential funding avenues, whether through Town-initiated projects or partnerships with agencies such as the Beaufort Jasper Housing Trust, which is making a significant impact in the home safety and repair sector.

Mr. Henz asked if in the future they could receive two separate reports for the Home Safety and Repair Program and the Sewer Connection Program. Mr. Henz also asked if it was possible to receive a report of the properties that are not hooked up to sewer so we can see the magnitude of what is left to do on the Island. Missy Luick stated they would have to work with our PSD Partners to do that.

e. Introduction of Community Planning Manager - Michelle Mealer, Community Planning Manager

Michelle Mealer, the Town's new Community Planning Manager introduced herself to the Task Force and mentioned she is very excited to help define and support the critical path and priorities of the Planning Department. The Task Force welcomed Ms. Mealer and looks forward to working with her.

5. Discussion Items

6. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

Chet Williams, Esquire stated he recently represented a couple of clients before the Planning Commission on an amendment of a previously recorded subdivision. When you look through the Code, almost invariably where the Planning Commission has review and approval authority, they have three options - they can 1) approve the application submitted, 2) they can approve with modifications or conditions or 3) they can deny it. This one section of the Code on amendments to previously platted subdivisions doesn't explicitly give the Planning Commission the authority to approve an application with conditions or modifications. I think that is something that needs to be included in the Code. This rewrite that is going on is the perfect time to do that. I think it is inherent in the Planning Commission's authority and it is clearly stated throughout the Code in numerous places that they have the authority to approve with conditions or modifications.

Chairman Stevens asked Ms. Stewart if she could provide an update on District Planning. Ms.

Stewart thanked the members of the Task Force who have been attending the District Planning meetings. It is great to have you as members of the Task Force joining and helping and assisting with these meetings. This week, the Marshes District meeting is Wednesday, February 5th at 5:00 p.m. at Grace Community Church. Typically, the meetings are from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. We encourage all those within the specific districts to come out and share their input. Each meeting includes a presentation overview of the District, followed by breakout stations which include District themes, character, vision, aspirations as well as focus areas. Upcoming meetings that will include historic neighborhoods are our Forest Beach District Planning Meeting which will be February 20th, as well as our Chaplin District Meeting on February 27th.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

APPROVED:

The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov



Town of Hilton Head Island
GULLAH GEECHEE LAND AND CULTURAL
PRESERVATION TASK FORCE MEETING
Monday, June 2, 2025, 1:00 PM
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present were: Chairman Stevens, Vice Chair Simmons, Mr. Abdul-Malik and Mr. Campbell.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Simmons moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Campbell seconded. The Agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the Minutes

a. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 6, 2025.

Mr. Abdul-Malik moved to approve the Minutes of January 6, 2025. Mr. Campbell seconded. The Minutes of January 6, 2025 were unanimously approved.

b. Regular Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2025.

The Minutes of February 3, 2025 were unable to be approved due to today's attendance.

4. Staff Report

a. Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Ms. Stewart advised that from the last reporting period (February 2025), nine new requests were received through the Historic Neighborhood Permitting and Design Studio, with four of the cases completed to date. These requests focused on the following topics:

- Density allowances and their impact on proposed development
- Allowances for property development
- Manufactured housing placement process
- Dirt road paving program

These cases included information as well as guidance regarding density allowances and their impact on proposed development, allowances for property development, the manufactured housing placement process, as well as additional information and the status of our road paving program.

To give you a little more insight regarding the program data overall, from the inception of this program, in October 2021 to May 2025, we have had a total of 106 Design Studio

Cases. Of those 106 cases, 71 have been completed, 27 are active projects, of which three are on hold and 24 are in progress, active, under review, working with applicants. Eight are withdrawn or inactive.

Ms. Stewart agreed to provide a report focusing only on the current year's projects to give a more accurate assessment of ongoing work as requested by a Task Force member.

b. Home Safety and Repair Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

Ms. Stewart advised that the last reporting period for this project was February 2025 and, since that time, multiple projects have been successfully closed out, positively impacting families here within our community. Our program's team remains focused on completing the remaining projects under contract while, of course, researching funding avenues to ensure the program's sustainability as well as continued success. From the time of the inception of this program, to May of 2025, we have received about 162 applications.

Of those 162 Applications Received:

- 9 Applications did not meet the income qualifications
- 4 Applications were withdrawn
- 19 Applications received currently awaiting funding
- 22 Applications need additional information

108 Approved Projects:

- 105 permitted jobs have been completed for a total of \$1,479,323.52
 - 21 tree pruning or removal - \$60,975.35
 - 84 home repairs - \$1,418,348.17
- 3 permitted jobs currently under contract but not completed for a total of \$20,417.48

The total amount allocated to the program is \$1,499,741.00. Currently, there is no additional funding to execute the program. We are actively attempting to find additional funding.

c. Sewer Connection Program Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

The Lateral Sewer Connection Program has successfully completed 35 connections to date. Town staff continue to actively collaborate with the Hilton Head Island Public Service District (PSD) to complete the remaining projects, ensuring that more residents gain access to essential sewer services.

51 Applications Received

- 35 jobs have been completed and paid in the total amount of \$352,748.08

- 1 job under contract with estimates totaling \$15,640.00
- 4 jobs pending with estimates totaling \$58,560.00 (awaiting additional program funding)
- 4 applications were withdrawn
- 2 applications were not qualified
- 5 applications awaiting funds to request estimates from PSD

The total amount allocated to the program is \$369,417.00. Currently, there is no additional funding to execute the program.

d. Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force Recommendations Update – Sharonica Stewart, Principal Planner Historic Neighborhoods

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Preservation Project Report presentation highlighted significant progress with 23 of the 37 recommendations already activated to preserve Gullah Geechee heritage on Hilton Head Island. These actions span cultural preservation, public policy, and heirs' property efforts. Several additional recommendations are actively advancing through the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) rewrite and District Planning initiatives. The remaining items, particularly those tied to cultural tourism, economic empowerment, and landowner support, are being transitioned to the Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation to carry forward implementation and sustain momentum.

Chairman Stevens thanked Ms. Stewart for her thorough presentation and mentioned we need to celebrate all the positive achievements and accomplishments we have made to this point.

5. Discussion Items

6. Public Comment - Non Agenda Items

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

The full recording and a transcript of this meeting can be found on the Town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah Geechee Land & Cultural Preservation Task Force

TO: Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force
FROM: Sharonica Stewart, Project Manager Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
VIA: Thomas Boxley, Executive Director Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
DATE: August 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio Report

SUMMARY

Monthly Update:

From the last reporting period (June 2025), two new requests were received through the Historic Neighborhood Permitting and Design Studio. These requests focused on the following topics:

- Density allowances and their impact on proposed development
- Allowances for property development
- Manufactured housing placement process
- Conceptual Site Design

Program Overview:

Since the program's inception in October 2021, the Historic Neighborhood Permitting & Design Studio has provided assistance to numerous property owners and applicants within the historic neighborhoods.

The table below presents a year-by-year summary of the program's performance and overall impact from 2021 to July 2025. It outlines the number of requests received, completed cases, and active projects for each calendar year.

Year	Total Request	Completed Cases	Active Projects
2021	19	19	0
2022	18	17	1
2023	36	34	2
2024	21	14	7
2025	13	6	7
Total	107	90	17

Over the five-year reporting period, the program has received 107 service requests. Of these, 90 have been completed, while 17 projects remain active.

Issues Addressed:

Staff have assisted residents with a wide range of issues:

- Drafted conceptual site designs.
- Discussed resolutions to access issues, including access relocation.
- Discussed application requirements for Family Subdivision, Family Compound, and Small Residential Plan Review applications.
- Discussed density requirements.
- Assisted with street name applications.
- Discussed property line boundary adjustments and the Plat Stamp application process.
- Discussed flood elevation requirements.

COLLABORATION

Providing these services requires collaboration with Town staff from several departments, including Stormwater, Engineering, Natural Resources, Building, Capital Improvement Projects Division, and Fire Rescue.

Staff also collaborate with outside agencies and nonprofits, including Hilton Head Public Service District, Heritage Library, and Lowcountry Gullah Foundation.

Note: To preserve residents' anonymity, details of the services provided are described generally.



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force

TO: Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force
FROM: Sharonica Stewart, Project Manager Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
VIA: Thomas Boxley, Executive Director Gullah Geechee Historic Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
DATE: August 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Home Safety and Repair Program Update

SUMMARY

The Home Safety and Repair Program has successfully utilized its full funding allocation of \$1,499,741.00, resulting in the completion of 108 critical home repair projects. Since its inception, the program has addressed critical repairs, enhanced livability, and ensured compliance with local building standards for homeowners in need. Effective implementation of the program required close collaboration within the Town's Planning Department, including coordination with planners, permitting staff, building inspectors, and administrative personnel. This teamwork ensured projects met all necessary codes and standards.

Program Data (July 2022 – July 2025):

162 Applications Received

- 9 Applications did not meet income qualifications
- 4 Applications withdrawn
- 19 Applications awaiting funding
- 22 Applications pending additional information

108 Approved Projects Completed

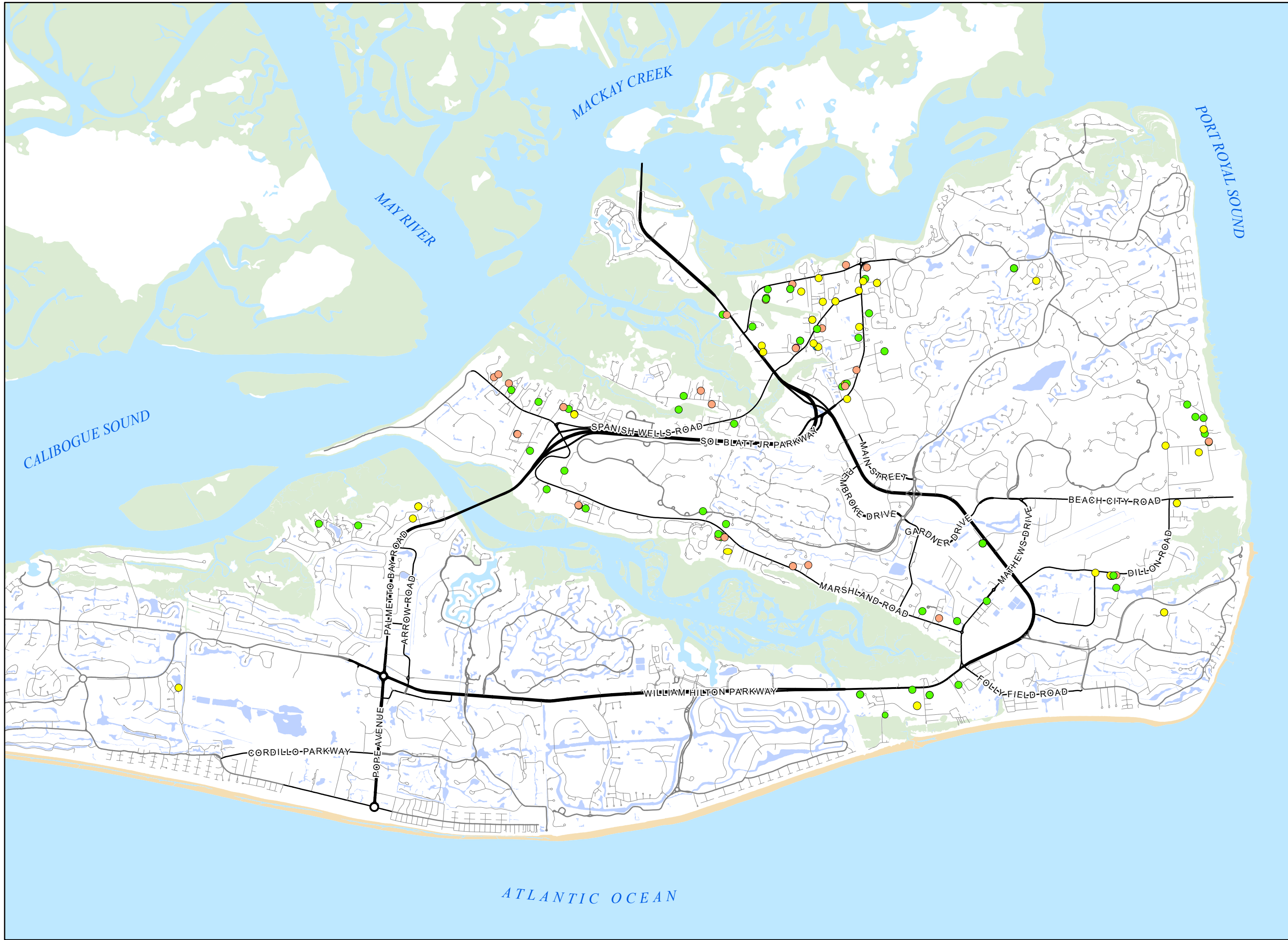
- Total Investment: \$1,499,741.00
- Breakdown:
 - 21 Tree-pruning or removal projects - \$60,975.35
 - 87 Home repairs projects - \$1,438,765.65

STATUS

The program has exhausted all allocated funding and cannot approve additional projects until new funding is secured. As a result, the acceptance of new applications has been paused.

ATTACHMENT

1. Home Safety and Repair Project Locations



**Home Safety Repair
Project Locations**

Legend

Home Safety Repair
Application Status

- Complete- 108
- Under Contract- 0
- Awaiting Funding- 19
- In Review- 0
- Additional Info- 22

*Colored markers indicate areas of program utilization, signifying multiple applicants.

Updated: August 4, 2025



TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
 ONE TOWN CENTER COURT
 HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. 29928
 PHONE (843) 341- 4600

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TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force

TO: Gullah Geechee Land and Cultural Preservation Task Force
FROM: Sharonica Stewart, Project Manager Gullah Geechee Historic
Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
VIA: Thomas Boxley, Executive Director Gullah Geechee Historic
Neighborhoods Community Development Corporation
DATE: August 4, 2025
SUBJECT: Sewer Connection Program Update

SUMMARY

The Lateral Sewer Connection Program has successfully completed 35 connections to date. Town staff continue to actively collaborate with the Hilton Head Island Public Service District (PSD) to complete the remaining project, ensuring that residents gain access to essential sewer services.

Program Data (July 2022 – July 2025):

51 Applications Received

- 35 Connections Completed - \$352,748.08 spent
- 1 Connection Under Contract – *Estimated cost \$15,640.00*
- 4 Pending Connections - *Estimated cost \$58,560.00 (awaiting funding)*
- 4 Applications Withdrawn
- 2 Applications Not Eligible
- 5 Applications Awaiting Funds to Request PSD Estimates

STATUS

The program was allocated \$369,417.00, which has now been expended. As a result, the acceptance of new applications has been paused.

ATTACHMENT

1. Sewer Connect Project Locations

**Sewer Connection
Program
Project Locations**

Legend

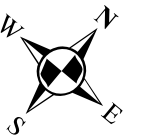
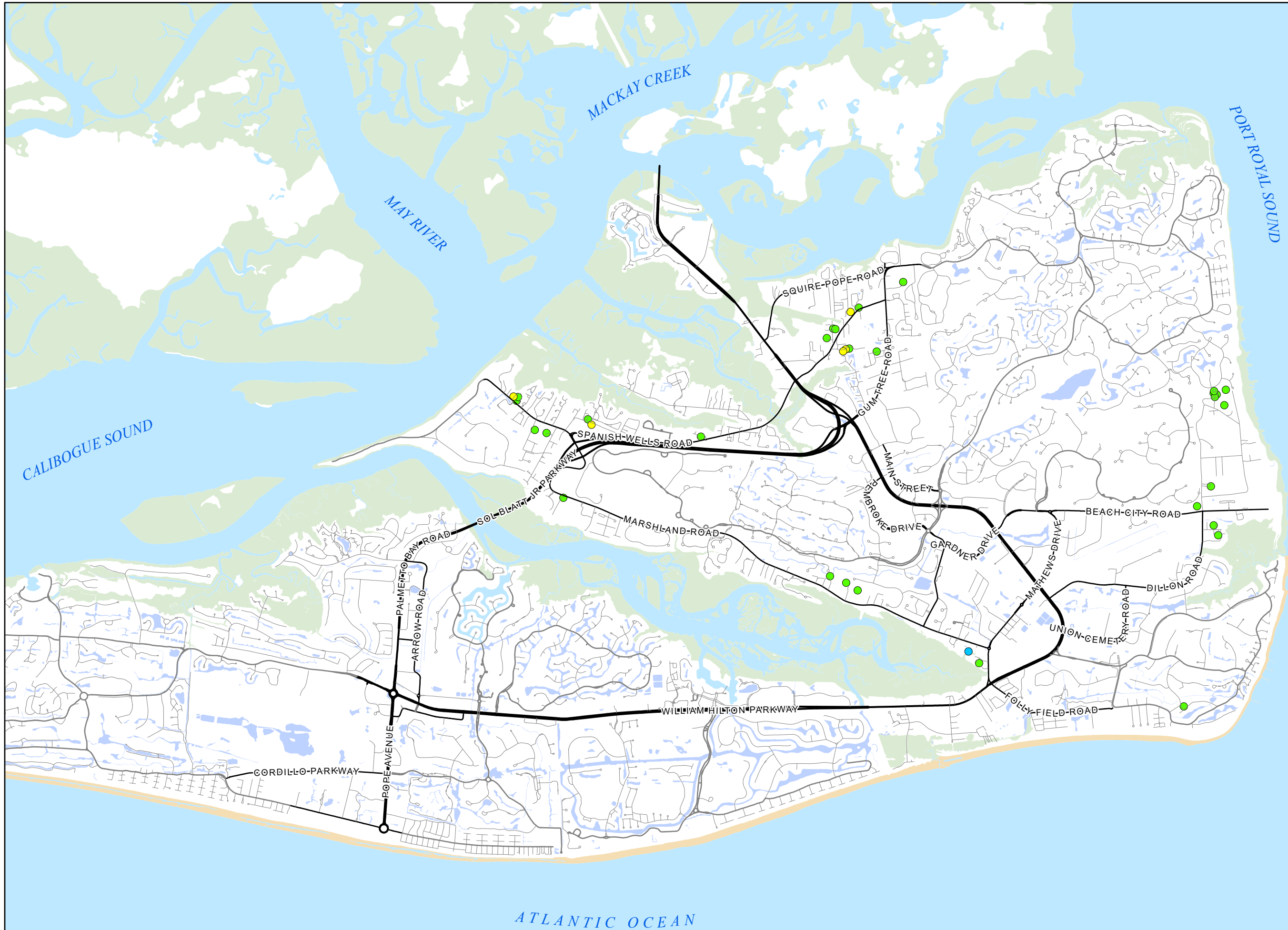
Sewer Connection

Application Status

- Complete- 35
- Under Contract- 1
- Pending- 9

*Colored markers indicate areas of program utilization, signifying multiple applicants.

Updated: August 4, 2025



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