



## **Comprehensive Plan Update 2016**

Approved by Town Council on July 11, 2016

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The following information has been developed to serve as a basis on which meaningful land-use planning can be carried out in the Town of Lexington. This Plan describes the framework for the arrangement of land use, public services, and transportation that will help the town continue to be a distinct and desirable community in the region. Through knowledge of basic policy formation, existing services and prospective needs as well as fundamental location standards for various land uses, the Planning Commission and Town Council will work toward creating a better ordered and a better arranged community. This proposed plan of land uses is not a fixed and never changing goal but rather a guide to policy making. It is a consolidation of existing knowledge of the community, an assessment of the evolution of social and economic conditions in the urbanized area, in the County, and above all, one interpretation of acceptable land use development that can be encouraged and promoted by the activities of the Planning Commission and the Town Council.

The town adopted its first comprehensive plan under South Carolina's 1994 Planning Enabling Act in 1998. The town completed a five-year review of that plan in 2003. In 2008 a 10-year update to the plan was completed. In 2013 a five year review of that plan was completed. Due to rapid growth resulting from increased construction activity and annexations, the Town completed an additional review of the plan in 2016.

The goal of this plan is to establish a set of guidelines and procedures for implementing the development objectives of the Town of Lexington, and to provide direction for the conservation, identity and growth of the town. The plan is intended for use by government agencies, citizens, and both public and private organizations concerned with planning within the town.

***Our goal is to be aesthetically appealing and preserve our small-town charm, while making enhancements that will continue to attract visitors and new economic development – Mayor Steve MacDougall, The State Newspaper February 2016***

## CHAPTER 2

### POPULATION ELEMENT

#### 2.1 Inventory

Since the mid-70s, the Town of Lexington has seen a substantial increase in its population. At the time of the 1980 Census, 2,131 people resided in the town limits. By the 1990 Census, the Town's population had nearly doubled to 4,046 residents. At that time the Town was the second fastest growing municipality in South Carolina. During the next decade the Town's dramatic growth continued and by the 2000 Census the population of Lexington had grown by 142% to 9,793. By the 2010 Census the Town's population had again shown strong growth increasing to 17,870 residents. In 2013 the US Census Bureau estimated that the Town's population had increased to 18,526 people. Significant home building and annexations since these estimates were created have likely increased the figure to over 19,000 people.

Demographically, the Town has remained fairly stable although the 2000 Census did record some minor shifts in the demographic makeup of the community.

#### Population Figures

**Race:** The 2010 Census recorded that 80.8% of the Town's population is Caucasian. As a percentage of the overall population this statistic shows slight growth of the minority population since the 2000 Census. During that Census, the minority population comprised 16% of the overall Town population. In 2013 the Census Bureau estimated that 82.1% of the Town's population was Caucasian. This represents a slight decrease in the overall percentage of the minority population.

**Gender:** According to the Census Bureau's 2013 population estimates females make up a slight majority of the population. This is a slight increase over the 2000 Census. There does not appear to be any change between the 2010 census and the 2013 population estimates.

**Age:** Due to the significant population growth, the town has not experienced the trend of an aging population that other municipalities have experienced. The percentage in each of the age categories remains fairly stable. During the 2010 Census the median age in Town was 34.8 years with the median age for women in Town being slightly higher than men. By 2013 the median age in Town had increased to 35.3 years with the median age of women again being slightly higher than men

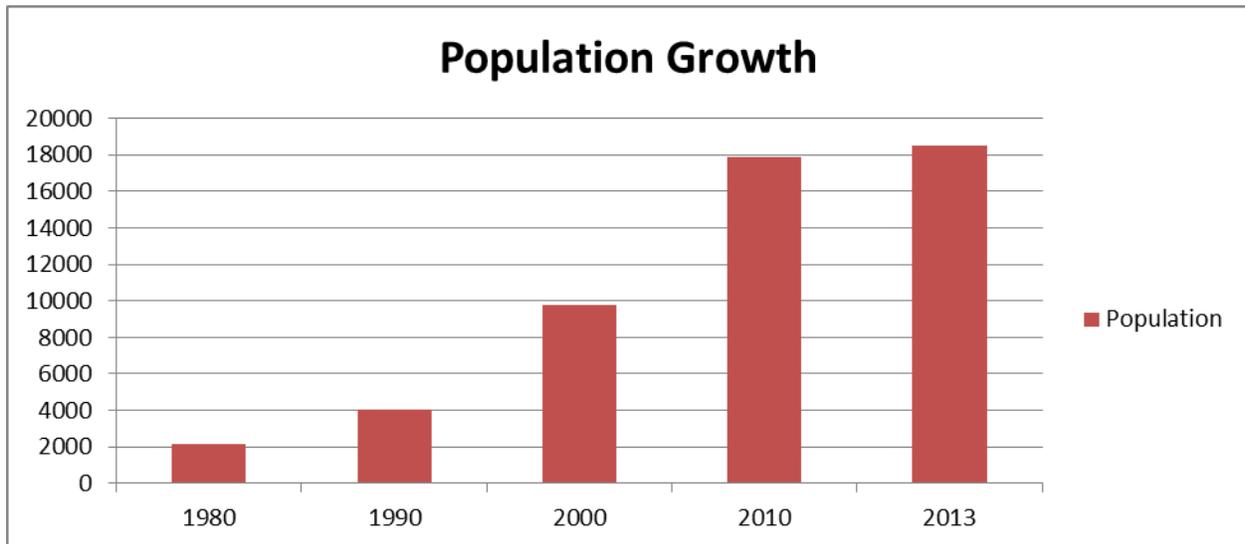
**Education:** According to the 2010 Census, 39.5% of the population 25 and older has attained at least a bachelor's degree. This is a 4.5% increase over the education attainment recorded during the previous census. According to the 2013 Census estimates the percentage of this segment of the population increased to 42.8%.

Since the Town of Lexington continues to rapidly annex property, projected population for a study area that represents possible areas of annexation is an important factor to consider in making decisions, particularly regarding land use and service needs.

Using 2035 population projections developed for the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS) transportation model, the 2035 population for the area is 44,619. This is more than double the year 2000 population for the same study area. This phenomenal increase is a result of several factors. First, the study area is located in one of the best school districts in South Carolina, which draws many families with school-age children. Second, a significant amount of land is available for development, and most of it is located close to a major road or roads. Third, the increase in employment opportunities, and the proximity of these jobs to the town, will encourage people to locate in or close to the town.

## 2.2 Need

For the past two decades, the Town of Lexington has been in the enviable position of having rapid growth. While the growth the Town has seen has been positive, the Town should make sure that future growth does not negatively impact the character and services of the town.



## CHAPTER 3

### ECONOMIC ELEMENT

#### 3.1 Inventory

According to the 2000 Census, there were 7,110 people age 16 years or older living in the Town. From this labor pool, 72.5% were in the labor force. The 2000 Census also showed that the number of people in Town working in the Managerial/Professional and Sales/Office employment categories had significantly increased between 1990 and 2000.

The 2010 Census showed that the number of people age 16 or older increased by approximately 95% to 13,900. However, the Census also showed that the percentage of people in the labor force had declined to 64.6% over the ten year period.

The 2010 Census also showed that the percentage of the Town's labor force working in several important categories had dramatically increased. The category with the highest percentage growth was Educational, Healthcare and Social Assistance. This category increased by 133%. Other areas that recorded significant increases were Retail Trade (63%), Professional, Scientific and Management and Administrative and Waste Management (75%), and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (100%.) A notable decline that occurred was in the construction industry. The number of residents employed in this industry decreased by 61% between 2000 and 2010. This decline seems to be consistent with the condition of the construction industry after 2008.

The 2010 Census also shows a breakdown of various occupation categories. According to the data, 49.1% of the Town's civilian employed population over sixteen years of age work in Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations. The data also shows that 30.1% of the population works in Sales or Office occupations. During the 2000 Census, a similar percentage of the population worked in Sales or Office occupations but only 44.5% of the population worked in the Management, Business, Science and Arts category.

With respect to incomes, there was an 8.7% increase in median household income in the Town between 2000 and 2010. Another interesting fact is that, in 2000, 26.7% of households recorded incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999. At that time, this was the largest percentage of households in a single income category. By 2010 the largest segment of households in a single category had shifted to a higher income bracket. During that year 19.6% of households fell into the \$100,000 to \$149,000 category.



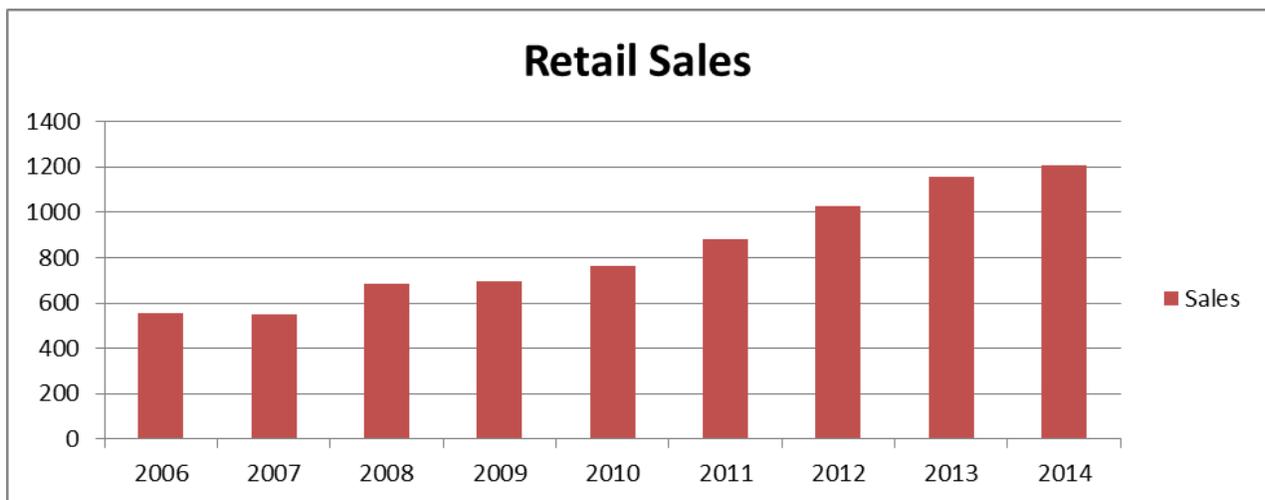
***The Town of Lexington issued  
14,760 business licenses  
between 2010 and 2015.***

Finally, it is important to note the continual growth in the number of business licenses issued in Town as well as the growth in retail sales. Between 2010 and 2015 the Town issued 14,760 thousand annual business licenses. This is 22% more licenses than the number issued between 2007 and 2012. Additionally, between 2010 and 2014 (the last year data was available) annual retail sales grew by 58%. These facts combined with continued economic growth through construction and annexation support the notion that the Town continues to evolve from the bedroom community that it once was into a vibrant commercial and industrial center.

**3.2 Needs**

It is important that the Town continue to position itself as a regional destination, but not let development overshadow the character of the town.

Employer	Number of Employees
Lexington Medical Center	6000
Lexington County School District 1	3403
Lexington County School District 5	2354
Michelin North America, Inc.	2040
SCANA Corporation	1973
Amazon	1200
Lexington County School District 2	1083
Time Warner Cable	1000
House of Raeford Farms, Inc	857
Southeastern Freight Lines	587



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

#### **4.1 General**

The Town of Lexington is the county seat of Lexington County and is centrally located at the junction of US 1, US 378, and SC 6.

#### **4.2 Inventory**

##### **4.21 Soil and Slope**

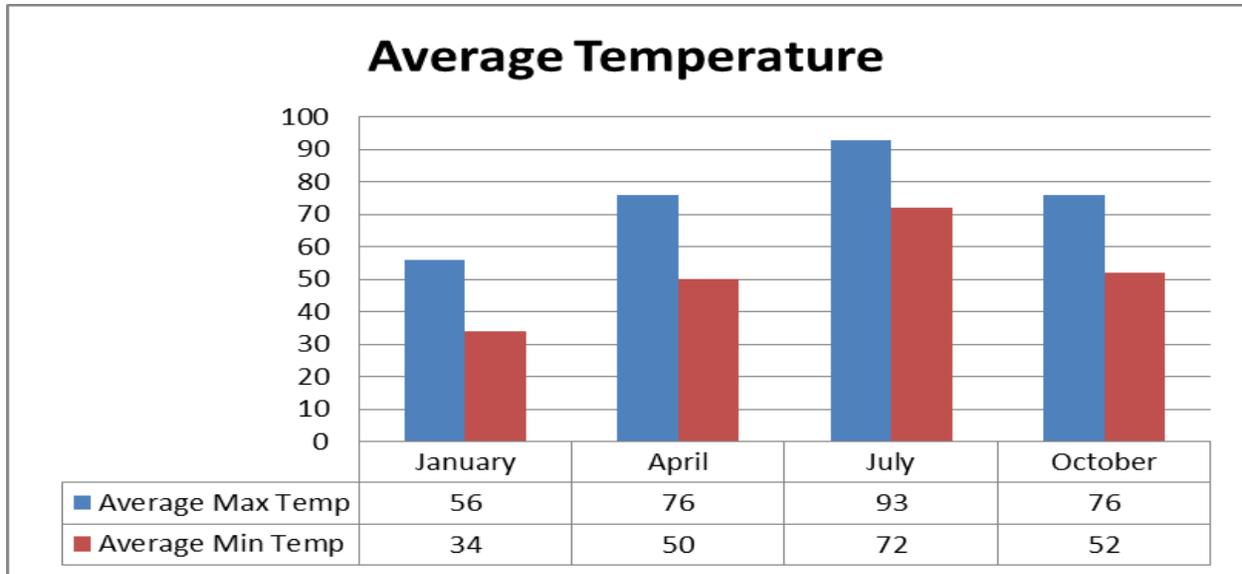
Two soil associations are prominent in the Town: the Georgeville-Nason and the Lakeland-Blaney.

The Georgeville-Nason Association is a gently sloping to moderately sloping topography; the steeper slopes being adjacent to streams. Limitations are moderate to severe as foundation material for roads, building sites and septic-tank absorption fields, although limitations vary with individual soils and locations.

The Lakeland-Blaney Association is found on broad ridge tops where the landscape is irregular and gently sloping, and on long side slopes that range from 2 to 25 percent. The range of ridge top slopes is from 0 to 6 percent. Many streams and drainage ways dissect the areas. Limitations for road locations, building sites, and septic-tank disposal systems are moderate to severe, but specific limitations and suitability for uses vary with individual soils.

##### **4.22 Climate**

The temperate climate provides hot and usually humid summers due to warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean. The winters are moderately cold but short. They are tempered by the Appalachian Mountains to the northwest, which impedes cold air movement from the north. The average annual precipitation is 48 inches with peak precipitation during June, July and August. Prevailing winds are from the southwest with an average wind speed of nine miles per hour.



**4.23 Streams, Wetlands and other areas**

The heart of Lexington is situated between Twelve Mile and Fourteen Mile creeks, an area known as the Twelve and Fourteen Mile Creek Basin. Most of the wetlands in the town that are listed in the National Wetlands Inventory are located along Twelve and Fourteen Mile creeks. Exhibit 1 shows the wetland areas as well as the 100-year floodplain in the study area.

**4.24 Natural Hazards**

In 2004, Central Midlands Council of Governments prepared *An All Natural Hazard Risk Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Central Midlands Region of South Carolina*. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the South Carolina Emergency Management Division approved this document on January 19, 2005. The document identifies potential hazards within the region, which sets the stage for a vulnerability assessment and later an Action Plan to mitigate the effects of high priority hazard events when they occur. Given the detail contained within the plan, for the purposes of this comprehensive plan, it will be included as reference.

**4.3 Needs**

The study area has a significant inventory of natural and scenic features available. To preserve and protect the natural and scenic features the town should encourage development that is sensitive to the natural resources. The town should also develop a program to preserve the natural and scenic resources

## CHAPTER 5

# CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

### 5.1 Historic Background

As the City of Columbia developed in the early 1800s, the Village of Granby simultaneously declined. By 1837 the Village of Granby was virtually deserted primarily because of its generally unhealthy location due to the number of mosquitoes and the frequent flooding that occurred in the area. This situation prompted the General Assembly to change the county seat to a new location called Lexington on December 18, 1818. The new location was near the geographic center of the county on a hill near Twelve Mile Creek. The village of Lexington grew, but eventually large numbers of its citizens departed during the first half of the 19th Century in the huge westward migration that followed the expansion of the southern cotton kingdom. Later population growth and the need to create a municipal corporation around the new county courthouse resulted in the citizens forming the Town of Lexington in 1861.

The town continued slow growth during the reconstruction period. It expanded to assume its historical urban morphology during the prosperous decades from 1893-1920. (The town and environs benefited from the Depression and the coming of the boll weevil, when the rural population moved to the urban areas.) After World War II, the town grew slowly and the county gained in population.

In 1970, the town recorded a population of 969 persons. New subdivisions grew as developers took advantage of the town's ability to provide water and sewer services as well as the proximity of Interstate 20 to the Town. These factors contributed to the beginning of a rapid growth period that continues today.

**The physical Lexington of today is characterized by three main elements: an eclectic mix of residential styles, representing most of the architectural styles of the past two centuries, the coordination of the commercial and government buildings in the nucleus of the town, and the interspersing of water bodies and wooded lots in and around residential and commercial areas.**

***Town of Lexington, South Carolina Historic Resource Inventory Update, page 3***

## **5.2 Inventory**

### **Historic Sites**

Between July and September 2005, a study of the historic sites in and around the Town of Lexington concluded. The resulting “*Town of Lexington, South Carolina Historic Resource Inventory Fall, 2005*” documented 469 sites with digital photographs. It categorized each site based on the following criteria:

1. Historic and/or cultural associative values
2. Architectural merit
3. Architectural incidence in the community
4. Effect of alterations and impairment of the original fabric
5. Evidence of structural soundness as a condition of possible preservation success.

For the purpose of the comprehensive plan, the data in this study as well as its findings and recommendations are incorporated by reference.

### **FESTIVALS, THEATRES**

The Town of Lexington hosts a Wine Walk, an Oktoberfest, and a Snowball Festival. The Town also participates in parades celebrating, Martin Luther King Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Veterans Day and the Snowball Festival.

The Town of Lexington also is home to productions by the Village Square Theatre as well as various religious and school groups.

The Town is also currently constructing a 900-seat amphitheater in the heart of the downtown area. The amphitheater is located at the corner of Main and Church Streets. It is scheduled to be completed in 2016 and will serve as a focal point for a variety of cultural events in the area.

## **5.3 Needs**

The town has already taken steps to identify and protect historic significant sites and structures. These activities should continue to be supported as the town grows and as new sites and structures become eligible. Additionally, the town should consider other activities that increase the number of cultural opportunities for its citizens.

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

#### 6.1 Inventory

##### WATER AND SEWER

**Water:** The Town currently owns 5.5 million gallons a day (MGD) of water capacity at West Columbia's Water Treatment Plant and pumps an average of 3 MGD.

**Sewer:** The Town's Coventry Woods plant was recently decommissioned increasing the average flow that is diverted to the City of Cayce regional treatment plant to 4 MGD. With an eye to future capacity needs, the Town paid for 12.5 MGD in this facility and continues to complete hydraulic modeling on various portions of the collection system to accommodate future growth.

##### SOLID WASTE

**Residential:** The town currently contracts residential solid waste collection to a private company. The town uses 90-gallon roll carts and picks up once a week at the curbside. This service is financed through property tax collections.

**Commercial:** The town has no responsibility for the collection of commercial solid waste, with the exception of businesses that yield no more than one 90-gallon roll cart of solid waste in a week.

**Recycling:** Recycling service is available through curbside pickup bi-weekly, and is currently contracted out to the same company that picks up residential solid waste. Items currently being recycled are plastic bottles #1-7, corrugated cardboard, glass bottles or jars, metal or aluminum cans, newspapers, magazines and Christmas trees. Where appropriate and feasible, the town should seek or assist in expansion of these programs to foster and maintain a "green community."

##### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Fire:** Fire services for the Town of Lexington are provided by the Lexington County fire service from four different fire stations. The stations serving the Town of Lexington are the Lexington, Lake Murray, Red Bank and Corley Mill stations. There are a total of thirty four (34) career staff and fourteen (14) volunteer staff with ten (10) total vehicles assigned to these four stations. Vehicles assigned to service the Town of Lexington include one (1) Tower, three (3) engines, two (2) tankers, two (2) service vehicles and two (2) reserve engines. The fire service has a total of two hundred and twelve (212) career staff, fifty three (53) volunteer staff with ninety one (91) vehicles. These assets are stationed throughout the County.

**EMS:** Emergency Medical Services in the Town are provided by the Lexington County EMS which has one hundred forty one (141) total certified personnel that provides 24-hour-a-day initial response to an incident. During peak times, the County has up to nineteen (19) ambulance units with forty (40) personnel available. This includes two (2) captains per shift, who respond to incidents in Quick Response Vehicles (QRVs). The Division uses dynamic deployment to maximize coverage throughout Lexington County.

Lexington County EMS is also the host agency for the Midlands Regional Medical Assistance Team (SC-RMAT-03). This team can provide surge capacity to local hospitals, or can be a free standing treatment facility in the case of a Mass Casualty Incident (MCI). This team is comprised of Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics from Lexington County and augmented by nurses and emergency room physicians. SC-RMAT-03 is capable of being self-sustaining for seventy two (72) hours and treat up to three hundred (300) patients, prior to state and federal assets arriving at an incident.

**Police:** In 1999, the Lexington Police Department was accredited by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Association in recognition of its policies and practices regarding accountability, internal management, and operations. In 2009 the Department received International accreditation and has maintained this standard since then.

The Lexington Police Department has 50 sworn officers and two civilian positions. The Department is broken down into four divisions: Administration, Patrol, Criminal Investigations, and Special Operations.

*Administration:* Administration includes the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief of Police, and two civilian employees. This division is responsible for the maintenance of records, administration of day-to-day operational activities, and the oversight of standards and compliance activities.

*Patrol Division:* The Patrol Division consists of 25 employees. It is responsible for providing general police protection and service to the community including the enforcement of criminal and traffic laws, response to calls for service, and protection of property. The town also has one Reserve Officer that adds much-needed personnel to the Department without increasing its budget.

*Criminal Investigations Division:* The Criminal Investigations Division consists of nine certified personnel who are responsible for the investigation of reported crimes. This division also includes one certified officer who is the Department's Victim Advocate. This officer provides services to victims and witnesses of crime.

*Special Operations Division:* The Special Operations Division consists of four traffic unit officers, two school resource officers, and two Community Action Team officers. This division under the supervision of a Lieutenant and Corporal, coordinates community programs and special events, and administers the Department's training sessions.

*Multi-jurisdictional involvement:* The Department has several ongoing multi-jurisdictional efforts. First, the Department collaborates with other local law enforcement agencies to complete homeland security training and to share information about readiness resources. Second, the Department participates in the Lexington/Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council's Alcohol Enforcement Team, which implements programs designed to combat underage drinking in the greater Midlands area. Third, the Department also participates in the Lexington County Narcotics Enforcement Team, a multi-agency task force that targets the manufacture, transportation, distribution, and sale of illegal narcotics.

*Citizens' Academy:* The Department holds a Citizens' Academy in the spring and fall to provide citizens with an inside look into all aspects of its work.

*Substations:* The Department operates two substations. The first one is located at Hardees on Sunset Boulevard near Interstate 20 and the second one is a joint substation operated in conjunction with the Lexington County Sheriff's Department. This substation is located in the Hope Ferry Station shopping center.

## **RECREATION**

**Parks:** Currently, eight public parks are located in the town limits: Virginia Hylton Park, Corley Street Park, Gibson Pond Park, Willie B. Caractor Park, Lexington Square, the Palmetto Collegiate Institute, the 14 Mile Creek Trail and the Lexington Paw Park.

*Virginia Hylton Park:* With the recent addition of the Boozer property (2.03 acres), the Roof property (2.21 acres) and the Aldridge property (2.03 acres), Virginia Hylton Park now encompasses 16.83 acres. It has numerous amenities including three gazebos, a large stage, a playground, a horseshoe pit, Koi ponds, and several gardens. Additionally, the Virginia Hylton Park has a special needs section for wheelchair bound persons. This area contains a wheelchair accessible swing and picnic table, a raised sandbox, and various other amenities. It is a first of its kind within the region. The park is located alongside both Town Hall and the Palmetto Collegiate Institute.

*Corley Street Park:* The Corley Street Park was previously leased by Lexington County, but the town regained control of it in 1998. The Town expanded the park in 2004 and added amenities to it in 2006; the park now encompasses 6.5 acres and contains a playground, picnic tables, restrooms, and a monument to honor veterans buried under Lake Murray. The town has ongoing efforts to preserve the historic cemetery area and to improve equipment, landscaping, and parking.

*Gibson Pond Park:* In July 2007, the town held a grand opening for Gibson Pond Park. This park consists of 15.24 acres of land and 45.36 acres of water surface. The park contains two family-size picnic shelters with grills, a large shelter (1,700 square feet) with a barbecue hut and fireplace, restrooms, and a walking trail.

*Willie B. Caractor Park:* In June 2009 the town opened the Willie B. Caractor Park between Hendrix and Grey Street. The park features three picnic shelters, a fountain, a playground and a spray fountain. It is located on a .49-acre site.

*Lexington Square Park:* The Town recently completed development of the Lexington Square Park located at the corner of Main Street and South Lake Drive. This park was created in cooperation with Lexington County to provide a beautiful location for community events such as the Farmers Market and Snowball festival to be held. The park is also the home of the Lexington County Law Enforcement Memorial.

*The Palmetto Collegiate Institute* served as the primary school for the town until 1907. Located on the corner of Church and Hendrix Streets it was renovated and rebuilt by the Town in 2007. Today the building provides approximately 1500 square feet of indoor meeting space as well as landscaped outdoor areas appropriate for a variety of public and private events.

*The Lexington Paw Park* is a newly created dog park in Town. The park is located on approximately four acres of land. It provides amenities appropriate for residents to enjoy the outdoors with their pets.

*The 14 Mile Creek Walking Trail* is a passive park that was opened in 2014. It is located along property bordering 14 Mile Creek near the intersection of Old Cherokee Road and North Lake Drive. The park includes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long walking trail that is wheel chair accessible, has numerous benches and an outdoor classroom for environmental education sessions.

*The Icehouse Amphitheater* is currently under construction at the corner of Main and Church Streets in the heart of downtown Lexington. Once the project is completed it will feature a 900 seat amphitheater that will be used for a variety of cultural and community events.

*The Old Mill Walking Trail* is a public/private partnership to develop a walking trail around the Old Mill Pond. The project is currently in the development stages but, when completed it will provide a 6800 foot walking trail for public use.

*Potential park sites:* The Town owns the following land that may provide opportunities for future park development: the old town landfill on Railroad Avenue (22.18 acres); a Twelve Mile Creek parcel between the Mallard Hills and Woodcreek subdivisions (58.09 acres.) For years, the town has been acquiring parcels in the flood zones along both Twelve Mile Creek and Fourteen Mile Creek in the hope of connecting them to form a large park there in the future. These future parks may consist of hiking and nature trails, playground equipment, water recreation, picnic areas, basketball courts and other amenities.

**Facilities:** The only available public recreation facilities in the town limits are those of the Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission. A leisure center, located at 108 Park Road, offers aerobics, crafts, racquetball, basketball, weight training, and more, and also may be rented for meetings and dances. A soccer complex is located off Gibson Road and Hendrix Street.

**MEETING FACILITIES**

The Lexington Municipal Complex houses a state-of-the-art Conference Center and additional meeting spaces, which are available to the public to rent for social or business events. The 3,500-square-foot Conference Center offers a catering kitchen and an integrated, multi-presentational projection and sound system.

**SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES**

**Schools:** The Town of Lexington is home to one of the best public school systems in the state of South Carolina: Five schools are currently located in the town limits: Lexington Elementary School, Meadow Glen Elementary school, Lexington Middle School, Meadow Glen Middle School and Rosenwald Community Learning Center. Other schools in the Lexington area include Midway Elementary School, Lake Murray Elementary School, New Providence Elementary School, Oak Grove Elementary School, Pleasant Hill Elementary School, Rocky Creek Elementary School, Pleasant Hill Middle School, Lexington High School and River Bluff High School.

According to the school district, Lexington District One is the largest school district in Lexington County both geographically and in student enrollment. During the 2013-14 school year the district recorded a 1.9% increase in average daily population with an average of 22,935 students. It also continues to be one of the fastest growing school districts in the State with the student population increasing by an average of 510 students per year over the last ten years.

Residents of the Town of Lexington have numerous institutions of higher learning and technical training opportunities from which to choose. These include Midlands Technical College, The University of South Carolina-Columbia, Benedict College, Allen University and Columbia College. These institutions provide Lexington with a well-educated and well-trained work force available to fill both low- and high-tech jobs.

**Libraries:** The current Lexington County Library headquarters is located in the Lexington branch at 5440 Augusta Road. This is a move from the long-time location of the headquarters in Batesburg. The Lexington branch is 48,000 square feet and has a maximum capacity of 150,000 books.

**6.2 Needs**

The tremendous growth that the town has experienced can place tremendous stress on the infrastructure and services in the town. As a result, the town should develop level-of-service standards for the services in the town. Once those standards are established, the town should monitor the level of services and develop strategies designed to meet and maintain those standards.

## CHAPTER 7

### HOUSING ELEMENT

#### 7.1 Inventory

According to the 2000 Census, 3,924 dwelling units existed in the town with an average of 2.51 persons in each home. Additionally, the 2000 census showed that almost 60% of the housing units in the town were built after 1990 and 65% of the owner-occupied units in town were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

A Census Special Count that occurred in 2006 showed that the number of dwelling units in Town had increased by 56% over the six year period. At that time there were a total of 6,133 dwelling units in Town with an average occupancy rate of 92%. The 2006 Census also showed that owner-occupied homes had an average of 2.57 occupants and rental units had an average of 2.08 occupants.

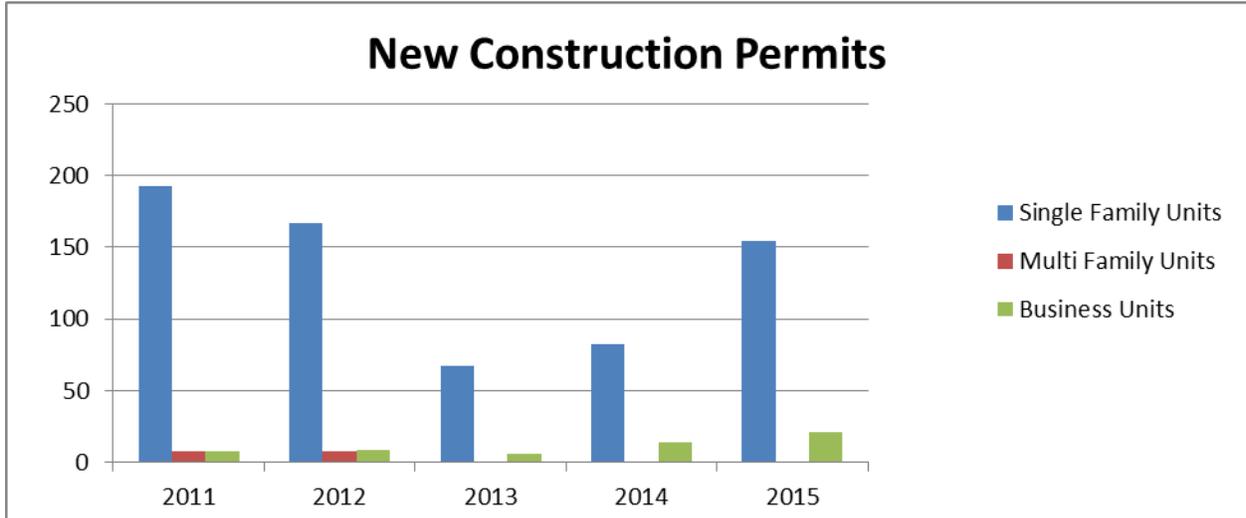
The 2010 Census showed that the total number of housing units in Town increased to 8,101. This is a 32% increase over a 4 year period. However, there was a slight decrease in the occupancy rate as it slipped to 90%. Additionally, the average owner-occupied unit in Town decreased from 2.57 persons back to 2.51 persons and the average rental unit decreased from 2.08 persons to 2.01 persons.

Using the projected population of 44,619 discussed in Chapter 2, at 2.51 persons per household, the town will need 17,776 housing units by 2035. This is 9,675 more housing units than the number of units recorded in the 2010 census.

In 2005, the average construction value for a new single family home was \$149,062. This figure increased to \$179,904 in 2006. As a result of the economic downturn that began in 2008 the average construction value for a new home in Town bottomed out to \$121,422 by 2010. In 2012, the value began to rebound increasing by 5% to \$127,679. By 2015 the average construction value rose to \$167,938 or 28% higher than the value recorded in 2010. These statistics are a strong indicator of the change in the housing market that began during the 2008 recession and the strong growth that the Town has experienced over the last couple of years.

#### 7.2 Needs

The Town has seen a tremendous building boom over the past two decades and this trend has continued over the past five years even though the broader housing market in the country has declined. The resulting housing stock in Town is a mix of housing types and prices. To help ease traffic congestion and to also provide alternative access, the town should encourage residential development that provides a mix of compatible uses as well as a mix of housing types.



## CHAPTER 8

### LAND USE ELEMENT

#### 8.1 Inventory

##### Existing Land Uses

**Commercial:** The commercial pattern for the Town of Lexington is predominately along US 1, US 378 and SC 6. The Town's zoning ordinance favors commercial development along these arterial roads. While much of the development along US 1 and US 378 is automobile-oriented North Lake Drive is poised for significant growth as a result of the recent widening of the road from two to five lanes. Fortunately, the inclusion of sidewalks and bike lanes as part of the road improvements has helped to make North Lake Drive a more multi-modal corridor than US 1 or US 378.

One area in Lexington that accommodates mixed use and even pedestrian-oriented development is the historic Main Street area. In this area commercial activity is located within walking distance of the town's historic neighborhood.

**Residential:** The majority of the original homes along US 1, US 378 and SC 6 have given way to other commercial uses. A small section of original downtown housing remain located within the triangle created by the intersection of the three major routes.

Conventional subdivisions have become the predominant style of residential development in the town. With road-frontage land at a premium, residential developers have chosen to create "Lolly Pop" developments, which have long access drives that reach the development from the highway. Single-family subdivision developments tend to sprawl outward from town, but remain close to the major routes as the availability of land in town decreases.

While the majority of developments in Town are still traditional single-family, detached units, the town has begun to see a trend away from patio, cluster, and townhouse developments to larger homes that utilize smaller lots with smaller yards. The trend toward this type of housing has increased over the last few years as a result of changing demographic housing preferences that prefer smaller lots with lower maintenance requirements.

The town also has seen an increase in the development of senior facilities including full nursing care, assisted living and retirement facilities. One reason for this increase is that older adults are selling their family homes and moving into communities that do not require the level of maintenance that a private home does.

**Industrial:** The predominant corridor for industrial development is along the Norfolk/Southern Railway Systems line. This line runs east-west along the Town's southern border, parallel to I-20. The industrial corridor extends primarily from the I-20 - U.S. 1 interchange to the I-20 - S.C. 215 (Long's Pond Road) interchange with Industrial

Drive and Glassmaster Roads being primary access roads in the industrial corridor. There is a significant amount of land that remains available for development along this corridor. This area has become the unofficial industrial park for Lexington, primarily due to the location of the interstate and the railway but also the availability of utilities in the area.

### **Existing Zoning**

The Town of Lexington's zoning ordinance is a hybrid between performance and Euclidian zoning. The more commonly used Euclidian zoning divides a geographic area into different types of uses such as general commercial, limited commercial, single-family residential, multi-family residential, industrial, and so forth. In performance zoning, the performance standards required in the zoning districts are designed to protect existing residential development from incompatible commercial and industrial development. Euclidian zoning ordinances seldom have a mechanism for this protection and the result is often the creation of use incompatibilities. In the Town for a particular activity to take place on a particular parcel, the parcel must be zoned with a zoning district that allows the use and have access to a road with a classification that allows the use.

### **8.2 Need**

The town has taken recent steps to accommodate a greater variety of uses and developments that provide for a mixture of uses. These activities should be furthered along with guidelines that require a greater relationship among uses such as neighborhood centers and greater connectivity between developments.

## CHAPTER 9

### TRANSPORTATION

#### 9.1 Inventory

The Town of Lexington is conveniently located on several major highways (U.S. 378, U.S. 1, and S.C. 6) and an interstate (I-20), near a major airport and two additional interstates (I-77 and I-26), and on a major rail line. In recent years, the Lexington area has seen substantial expansion of transportation options.

**Air:** Air transportation is available through a number of major airlines at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. A 60-acre cargo terminal, a 480-acre airport industrial park, and a new parking deck point to the continued expansion and enhancement of this important asset. United Parcel Service has a major hub at the airport that provides direct access to next-day airfreight service. Federal Express as well as several smaller freight carriers also operate facilities at the airport. In 2015 the number of passenger enplanements at the airport increased by over 6% with 546 thousand passengers. Cargo landed weight also continues to increase with a 1.4% increase in 2015.

The regional airport continues to improve its infrastructure through a variety of projects both related to the terminal and air operations. It can handle the largest aircraft, and has significant land availability for future expansion.

**Roads:** The Town of Lexington is intersected by three major highways: U.S. 378, U.S. 1, and S.C. 6. Being located at the intersection of these arterial roads has benefited the town by providing it with tremendous access. However, congestion on these roads has been a significant issue for many years. In 2014, the Town completed phase-one of the Unified Traffic Plan which provided intersection improvements along Columbia Avenue near the intersection with West Main Street. This cost of this project exceeded 10 million dollars and has helped to improve the traffic flow through the heart of Town.

Also in 2014 the Town hired a full time Transportation Director to assist with traffic planning, project management and development of future transportation improvement projects.

In 2015, the Town undertook two additional projects to ease traffic congestion. The first was to install an adaptive traffic signalization system on all intersections within the Town. The total cost of this project will exceed 5 million dollars. When completed it is expected to increase intersection efficiency by as much as 30%. The second program that began in 2015 was the adoption of the Hospitality Tax. This tax will be used to pay for needed improvements at three major intersections in the Town. Exhibits 7 thru 10 show additional detail on the proposed projects that will be funded with the Hospitality Tax revenue.

The Town has been very successful in interconnecting commercial developments, particularly along Sunset Boulevard. This interconnection allows shoppers to travel from one commercial development to another without having to get back onto a major thoroughfare. The town is also working to create more connectivity between neighborhoods.

**Railroad:** Norfolk Southern Corp. services the Lexington area with a major line that runs through the town. Passenger service is available through Amtrak in Columbia.

**Public Transit:** Currently, the town does not have public transit service. The Town is also along a potential commuter rail line from the City of Columbia to the Town of Batesburg-Leesville.

**Bike/Pedestrian:** The town continues to add to its extensive sidewalk network through commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Adding these connections between the commercial and residential components is necessary to complete the sidewalk network. Bike lanes were included in the SC 6 (North Lake Drive)/SC 60 (Lake Murray Boulevard) widening to the Town of Irmo, which was a significant addition since a considerable number of residential subdivisions access North Lake Drive and Lake Murray Boulevard.

## **9.2 Need**

As discussed, traffic congestion continues to be a growing problem in the Town. Traffic improvement plans from the mid 1970's identified the need for an alternate route around the town for east-west traffic. There has been very little support or funding available for a long-term solution which has resulted in minimal action to solve the problem.

Relieving congestion in the town requires a series of steps including land use policies facilitating bicycle/pedestrian trips; development that is compatible to the infrastructure and transit access. The town should continue to encourage and facilitate a multi-step approach to solving the congestion problem.

## CHAPTER 10

### PRIORITY INVESTMENT

#### 10.1 Existing

As a full-service municipality, the town has considerable influence over most of the infrastructure items that impact development. With that being said, the town still relies upon outside agencies for significant infrastructure items such as roads, schools and fire protection.

##### **Roads:**

As was discussed in Chapter 9, the town continues to work with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to identify short-term and long-term solutions for the road congestion in the town. Many of the east-west trips in the county pass through the town of Lexington on either US 1 or US 378. The congestion not only impacts those commuter trips, but also impacts the local trips in town

##### **Schools:**

The relationship between schools and residential development is clear, regardless of which one drives the other. Over the last few years, Lexington School District One has made significant investments in the area to address growth with new schools being constructed on Corley Mill Road and Ginny Lane. These schools have impacted the development of new housing as well as a variety of other planning related issues such as traffic, utility expansion, law enforcement needs, or fire/EMS service needs.

##### **Fire Service:**

Unlike police service which is operated by the town, fire service is operated by the County with a combination of full-time and volunteer fire fighters. In the past rapid growth in Town raised the question of whether the Town should absorb this service but, recent enhancements to the fire service as well as the strategic location of fire service facilities seems to indicate that the County is well positioned to continue this service.

#### 10.2 Needs

**Corridor Development:** Major corridors through Lexington such as Sunset Boulevard and Highway 6 represent a significant concern and a significant opportunity for the Town. Developing these corridors to be safer, more efficient and more welcoming will have a positive impact on the greater Lexington community. Some strategies that should be considered include expanding the landscaped “front porch” areas, continuing to improve connectivity and expanding sidewalk installation.

The North Lake Drive section of Highway 6 from the town limits to the Lake Murray Dam was widened to 5 lanes with the addition of sidewalks and bike lanes. A significant portion of this corridor is underdeveloped or has the potential for redevelopment. Most

of this corridor is currently not in the town limits, so it offers the potential for significant annexation

**Economic and Community Development Management:** Filling a downtown development position with the Town to coordinate activities in the new amphitheater project as well as other activities in the downtown will provide significant opportunity to advance the goals of the Town’s Vision Plan.

**Downtown/Historic Triangle:** The town has already placed significant interest in the redevelopment of the historic downtown including streetscape projects, implementing design guidelines, creating a façade improvement program, and developing Lexington Square. Efforts in this area need to continue focusing on improving connectivity, promoting the unique characteristics of the area, and supporting development that will draw people to this vital area of Town.

**Improve Connectivity and Walkability:** The Town should continue to facilitate projects that improve the connectivity and walkability by providing more transportation choices through the development of safer streets, walking trails and travel ways.

***A vision is a statement of the kind of place the residents, business owners, and community leaders want for the town to become in the future. This Vision describes the community’s values and aspirations for the Town.***

## CHAPTER 11

### THE PLAN

#### Introduction

The vision is based on the premise that the Town of Lexington has evolved from a bedroom community to a regional destination as a result of large-scale residential and commercial developments. The town has grown beyond Main Street and adjacent historic neighborhoods. Increasingly, the town is more characterized by commercial development on Sunset Boulevard and subdivisions with little or no relation to each other or with the other areas of the town. This growth has had a significant impact on the road network, but the town has been able to maintain a high level of services in other areas impacted by growth. A primary concern has been how the Town can maintain its small town character and important natural features while continuing to grow at a steady pace. To address these concerns the town has taken several steps, including the adoption of historic preservation guidelines, architectural and appearance design guidelines, and timber harvesting regulations, as well as the amendment of the zoning ordinance to accommodate multiple scales of development. Moreover, the town has collaborated with Lexington County on regional development guidelines

#### The Vision

*The Town of Lexington has taken actions to ensure that development is sensitive to its impact on the fabric of the community, the built environment and the natural environment. Additionally, the town continues to strive for a high quality of life, a diverse population and a mix of residential, employment and cultural opportunities that address the needs of the citizens. Finally, the town recognizes that it is a mosaic of distinct areas; each one distinct in its needs, yet important to the community as a whole.*

The vision was developed based on the Town of Lexington Vision Plan adopted in 2012. This plan was developed through a collaboration of Town Council, Town Staff, a Steering Committee appointed by Town Council, a Planning Team provided by the Boudreaux Group and a series of public meetings held throughout the Town.

#### Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles were developed to address specific issues and are intended to provide guidance for decision making.

- **Quality design of development**  
Commercial and residential development will be designed to standards that reinforce the beauty of the community.

- **Compact growth**  
Future growth in the town will be compact, fostering the efficient location of infrastructure and supply of services, and balancing development with the conservation of natural resources.
- **A strong economy**  
The town will encourage a growing economy to ensure that its residents have employment opportunities of a high nature.
- **Coordination of development with capital improvements**  
The town will help coordinate new development with needed capital improvements including water, sewer, public safety, education and recreation.
- **Sustainable development**  
The town will encourage sustainable and “green” development and will preserve important natural resources, scenic vistas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Lexington will also promote improved connectivity intended to support a more walkable community making the Town a cleaner more sustainable and environmentally-friendly town.
- **Parks and recreational opportunities**  
The town will provide recreational facilities and programs that meet a broad range of interests—indoor and outdoor, passive and active. A sidewalk system will traverse the town, connecting neighborhoods and commercial areas with each other and with parks and other public amenities, such as schools and libraries.
- **A strong downtown**  
The town will have a vibrant, mixed-use, downtown district that is compact, pedestrian friendly and sensitive to the historical significance of the Triangle District.
- **A comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system**  
The town will have a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system that safely and efficiently connects all areas of the town, and connects the town with the greater Central Midlands region. This will foster a greater sense of connectedness among community members and a greater sense of connectedness between the town and the greater Central Midlands region.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Population:**

***Goal: The town will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of the residents of the town.***

### **Objectives:**

**1. Quality of Life**

The town should continue to enhance the quality of life for current and future residents.

**2. Sound Annexation Policies**

The town should continue to coordinate with Lexington County and other service providers to identify potential areas for annexation so that possible nonconformities are reduced and infrastructure decisions are made efficiently.

### **Economic:**

***Goal: The town will continue to promote itself as a significant economic player in the region.***

### **Objectives:**

**1. Enhance downtown development**

The town will continue to support the location of new businesses in the downtown area, particularly restaurants, small retail stores, galleries and other uses that enhance the vibrancy of the area. The town will foster appropriate infill development on nearby vacant or underutilized parcels and will encourage the revitalization of existing houses in the surrounding neighborhoods. The Town will also promote developments intended to draw people to the downtown area such as the “Icehouse” project and accompanying amphitheater.

**2. Identify suitable areas for commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development**

The Future Land Use map identifies suitable areas for commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development. The existing Zoning Ordinance was designed to encourage the appropriate location of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development in order to promote compatibility of uses and the efficient provision of infrastructure and public services.

**3. Continue economic development coordination**

The town will continue to work with the Central SC Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce, Lexington County and related partners to promote and bring business to the community.

**4. Create Lexington Development Corporation**

The Town should create the Lexington Development Corporation to advocate for and shepherd new projects that will support the recently completed Lexington Vision Plan

**Natural Resources**

***Goal: The town will continue to take steps to preserve and protect the natural resources from the impacts of development.***

**Objectives:****1. Encourage development with the least amount of disruption to the environment**

The town should work with developers to identify strategies to minimize the impact of projects to the environment.

**2. Prohibit development in hazardous areas**

In areas where development could cause potential loss in terms of life or property, such as floodplains and steep slopes, the town will work with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, FEMA and other regulatory agencies to prohibit or at least discourage development.

**3. Encourage development based on sustainable design**

The town will encourage development that includes the principles of sustainable design. Developments can reduce energy and resource consumption and their impact on the environment by:

- Minimizing resource consumption, energy use and water use;
- Using renewable energy sources and locally produced materials;
- Minimizing use of toxic products, pesticides, herbicides and chemicals, and
- Using technological resources and standards such as LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design) and the US Department of Energy, as well as Energy Star and other standards for energy efficiency.

**4. Identify and preserve significant views**

As part of the development process, the town should work with developers to identify significant views (whether due to varied topography or the existence of natural scenic features on the site) and implement development strategies to preserve those views. This will protect the visual character of the community.

**5. Identify and implement water conservation principles**

The town will identify and encourage the use of low-impact development standards as part of the site planning process. These standards may include xeriscape principles (for example, the use of drought resistant plants in drought-prone areas), the use of rain barrels for landscape irrigation, and more.

**6. Provide access to community facilities**

Facilities intended to serve large groups of people, such as recreational facilities, schools, or other public gathering places, should have direct access to major roadways and should connect to sidewalks and, in the future, mass transit stations.

**7. Participate in activities to improve air quality in the region**

The town should participate in regional activities developed to improve air quality by reducing mobile source pollution. Additionally, the town should implement land use policies to encourage compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development to reduce vehicle trips.

**8. Continue to seek opportunities to improve existing parks and add new parks**

The town will seek opportunities to identify new parks that fit within the broader community and make improvements to existing parks that meet the changing needs of the residents. Parks are important because they enhance quality of life by providing community members with opportunities for active and passive recreation and by serving as a gathering place for people to connect with one another in a relaxing or recreational environment.

**9. Support and encourage an iconic presence on Lake Murray**

The town should support a multi-use development for residents and visitors that improves connectivity and access between the town and Lake Murray.

**10. Create a welcoming atmosphere with landscaped “front porches”**

The Town should continue to design and construct unique and beautiful “front porches” that welcome all to this historic town with landscaping that provides beauty and shade.

**Cultural**

***Goal: The town will continue to identify and protect the significant cultural resources in the community.***

**Objectives:****1. Ensure appropriate infill development in the downtown area**

Infill development in the downtown area should be compatible with the existing commercial buildings, which are often of a historic nature, and with nearby residential neighborhoods. Infill development in the downtown area should comply with the zoning ordinance’s requirements and, where applicable, the town’s architectural and appearance design guidelines. Projects should be compatible with existing structures in terms of building scale, mass, roof form and other elements.

**2. Encourage cluster development**

The town should encourage residential cluster development as an alternative to conventional, large-lot residential subdivision development. Residential cluster developments allow a reduction in lot size from the normal standards, with the reserved land set aside as permanent open space. This encourages the preservation of open space, the protection of natural features, and allows for a more efficient use of infrastructure and developable land. A homeowner's association should maintain the open space in such a way that optimizes it as an amenity for community residents.

**3. Protect historic neighborhoods**

Protect and preserve older neighborhoods such as "the Triangle" by encouraging infill development that respects the residential character of the area and by maintaining the character of the public facilities in the area.

**4. Establish downtown gateways**

The intersections of North Lake Drive/Columbia Avenue, West Main Street/Columbia Avenue, and North Lake Drive/East Main Street serve as the primary gateways to downtown. Developments in these locations should be designed to emphasize the gateway through site design adherence to the architecture and appearance standards and the use of additional landscaping.

**5. Encourage high quality site planning and building design standards**

The town should work with developers to encourage site planning of a high quality and design techniques of a high standard. With respect to commercial development, the town should rely on its architectural and appearance standards, Sign Ordinance, and Landscaping and Tree Ordinance to achieve this objective, focusing on areas such as buffers between different land uses, parking areas, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, and sign standards.

**6. Preserve historic and cultural resources**

The town will support the preservation of structures and districts with historic and cultural value in the community.

**7. Develop street enhancement standards**

The town will develop street enhancement standards that improve both appearance and safety of traffic corridors. These standards should cover landscaping, crosswalks, signs, lighting (pedestrian and vehicular), setbacks, and parking and service area screening.

**8. Develop Projects that Support the unique cultural and community features of the downtown area:**

The Town should continue to support projects that bring people and activity to the downtown area such as expanding downtown events, continuing Main Street

revitalization and seeking new ways to improve connectivity between downtown and the surrounding residential areas.

**9. Provide for the social and recreational needs of residents:**

The Town should undertake activities designed to meet the needs of all residents particularly youth and young professionals by encouraging more in-town opportunities for entertainment, dining, and cultural activities.

**10. Preserve and Celebrate the Origins of Lexington:**

The Town should work to preserve and celebrate the treasured history of Lexington through signage, tourism opportunities, design standards, community events and local businesses.

### **Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

***Goal: The town will establish and maintain a level of service that efficiently and effectively meets the needs of the citizens of the town.***

#### **Objectives:**

**1. Encourage water conservation activities**

The town will identify water conservation activities and use public awareness techniques to encourage these activities and reward those who implement the techniques. This will help the town conserve its water resources.

**2. Continue to provide a high level of public service**

The town's various departments should continue to ensure that they will be able to provide new development with adequate service while maintaining an acceptable level of service for the current residents. In order to accomplish this, the town may need to work with other providers of public services, such as the county fire department and the school district.

**3. Ensure that development does not outpace schools**

The town will coordinate with Lexington School District One to identify the impact that new developments will have on existing schools and identify possible sites for new schools based on future development. The town should consider the capacity of existing schools as part of its review of new development projects.

**4. Ensure that adequate public facilities are in place at the time of development**

As part of the development process, the developer and the town should work to identify the need for any public facility improvements that would arise due to the new development. The town should then mandate that the improvements to the public facilities be made within a reasonable time period after the approval of the development.

**5. Improve Traffic Flow**

Implement transportation strategies that are innovative, progressive, provide options and enhance quality of life.

**Housing**

***Goal: The town will encourage neighborhoods that have a mix of uses, housing types and densities.***

**Objectives:****1. Encourage neighborhood centers**

When practical, neighborhoods should be designed around a clear neighborhood center that provides retail, service and/or civic uses on a scale that is appropriate for the neighborhood. Specific examples include places of worship, schools, day cares, and parks and open space. Neighborhood centers may be designed to serve more than one neighborhood.

**2. Encourage neighborhood focus for new development**

When practical, new developments should have a mix of commercial and residential uses, including a variety of housing types and commercial endeavors. The developments should include a range of commercial services that operate in harmony with the residential components of the community.

**3. Encourage mix of housing types and densities**

The town will encourage a variety of housing types and densities as a means to meet the needs of a diverse community. The town will also encourage cluster development.

**4. Encourage neighborhood connectivity**

Neighborhoods should provide connections to other neighborhoods, nearby commercial centers or other points of interest through open space, bike paths, and sidewalks. This will encourage people to use non-motorized transportation when traveling to nearby locations.

**5. Encourage the incorporation of natural features**

The town should work with residential developers to preserve natural features such as wetlands, drainage features, and mature trees as part of the common open space in neighborhoods. These features should serve as neighborhood amenities or should help create or define the neighborhood's character and identity.

## Land Use

### Goal:

### Residential

#### *I. Urban Residential Policies*

**A. Variety of housing types:** The town should continue to encourage a variety of housing types that address a wide range of housing needs.

**B. Emphasis on Neighborhoods:** The town should encourage a variety of housing types in each new neighborhood. The town should encourage the incorporation of neighborhood centers within new neighborhoods and strive to ensure that nearby commercial uses are compatible with residential use.

**C. Street Patterns:** Neighborhoods should have a system of interconnected collector and local streets, and, where possible, detached sidewalks and bicycle paths. Connections to future development should be provided when practical. Pedestrian connections should be made between cul-del-sacs and other common areas to promote connectivity within the neighborhood.

**D. Street design:** Neighborhoods should respect the natural features and slope to minimize land disturbances and protect the natural resources of the land. Access should be along arterials or collectors and the number of curb-cuts should be limited to promote safety and preserve traffic capacity.

**E. Open space:** Developers should provide open space in large, useable common areas. These large swaths of open space should be connected via trails or sidewalks to areas of open space outside the neighborhood in order to create a comprehensive network of connected open space throughout the town.

#### *II. Low-density Residential Policies*

**A. Characteristics:** Suburban-style development consisting primarily of single-family detached housing but also including townhomes and patio homes. Complimentary land uses within the neighborhood include neighborhood-scale commercial, retail and office uses. Small multi-family developments are possible as part of a planned development district if the desired densities can be maintained. Civic uses such as schools and churches may also be permitted.

**B. Density Range:** Two to six dwelling units per acre, with typical averages four dwelling units per acre or less

**C. Location:** Low-density residential neighborhoods should be located in close proximity to schools, shops, offices, and community facilities so that residents have the opportunity to walk to these locations. When possible, neighborhoods should be bound by arterial and/or collector roads to provide direct connection to employment, shopping and leisure destinations.

#### *III. Medium-Density Residential Policies*

**A. Characteristics:** Medium-density residential developments should include a mix of housing types organized around clear neighborhood centers that may include components such as a park, open space, or limited commercial operations. Open space areas should be connected in order to unify the development and provide

a transition between different types of uses. Commercial centers should be of a neighborhood scale that is compatible with the residential component of the area. Housing types should range from single-family detached on small lots to duplexes and townhomes on individual lots. Larger multi-family developments are possible as part of a planned development district if the desired densities can be maintained. Civic uses such as schools and churches may also be permitted

- B. Density:** Six to twelve dwelling units per acre; however, typical projects will not exceed eight dwelling units per acre.
- C. Location:** Medium-density residential development should be located to provide a transition from commercial activities to low-density residential neighborhoods. Access should be from arterial or collector streets in order to provide direct connection to areas of employment, shopping, and recreational activities.

#### *IV. High-Density Residential Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** High-density residential areas provide for residential development of a high density such as apartments, townhomes and condos, along with a variety of low-density residential development and compatible non-residential development including schools, places of worship and other civic uses as well as offices, retail centers, and other commercial uses. Mixed-use buildings that combine residential and non-residential uses are appropriate if of a compatible scale compared to the other uses in the area. Site design should include shared parking and recreational facilities, and should address signage, landscaping and building design. Access to employment, shopping and recreational centers should be convenient and allow for alternative modes of transportation.
- B. Density range:** Twelve to twenty units per acre in order to allow for a variety of housing types; however, typical projects will not exceed sixteen dwelling units per acre.
- C. Location:** High-density residential should be located on U.S. 378, U.S. 1 or S.C. 6 near the interstate interchanges. They should not be located in the center of town, but rather they should have close and easy access to Columbia, the primary employment market in the Midlands. High-density neighborhoods should not be located in settings where the only access provided consists of local streets passing through lower-density neighborhoods. New high-density residential uses should not be allowed to locate where they will have an adverse impact on traffic safety and congestion, nor where they will have an adverse impact on existing development.

### **Mixed-Use**

#### *I. Downtown Special Overlay District Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** The Downtown Special Overlay District in the Town of Lexington's Zoning Ordinance includes the historic downtown commercial core along Main Street. This area has traditionally consisted of a variety of civic, retail, commercial and office uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly setting central to the town's older residential neighborhoods.

- B. Infill and redevelopment:** Infill and redevelopment within the Downtown Special Overlay District should respect the historic and design characteristics of existing structures in the area. Additionally, consideration should be given to the impact that development will have on the adjacent neighborhoods.
- C. Mix of uses:** A mix of retail, restaurants, commercial, office and civic uses should continue to be encouraged in the Downtown Special Overlay District. Retail and restaurant uses should be encouraged at the street level to promote pedestrian activity with residential uses above the ground floor to further increase activity in the area.
- D. Renovation and reuse:** When feasible, existing structures in the Downtown Special Overlay District area should be renovated and reused.
- E. Outside seating:** To foster a vibrant Main Street, the town should encourage outdoor dining and seating along the sidewalk. These areas should not be located in a manner that impedes pedestrian activity.
- F. Design and Location of Parking Facilities:** New parking areas should be compatible with the downtown district and the adjacent neighborhoods. Where feasible, parking areas should be located to the side or the rear of the structure and screened with a low masonry wall and landscaping.

## *II. Mixed-Use Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** Mixed-use developments include residential and commercial uses in a compact, pedestrian-oriented area. Design elements should address the following components in a manner that creates a pedestrian-friendly environment: location, scale and orientation of parking areas, driveways, sidewalks and trails, public plazas and storefronts.
- B. Location:** Mixed-use developments typically are located near the intersections of arterial and collector streets, but they may also serve as a transition between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.
- C. Integration of uses:** Mixed-development can either occur within a single building, where one might find a retail store or restaurant on the ground level and living quarters on other floors (commonly referred to as vertical mixed use) or within separate buildings, where each structure contains one particular use, as part of a larger development (commonly referred to as horizontal mixed use). In both cases, the uses should be designed in concert with each other, sharing features such as parking, pedestrian connections and other similar design features.

## **Commercial**

### *I. General Commercial Policies: All Categories*

- A. Circulation and access:** Parking lots should provide direct pedestrian access from the parking areas to the building entrance. Where appropriate, pedestrian connections should also extend to the street and adjacent residential areas. The main driveway or entrance should connect with the established street pattern with clear connections for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.
- B. Parking design and location:** Large, uninterrupted parking areas should be avoided. Instead, parking lots should be divided into smaller areas separated by

landscaping and pedestrian walkways that are physically separated from vehicular traffic. When possible, parking areas should not be located solely in the front, but should be distributed around the building including the side and rear. Parking areas should promote safe walking, biking and public transit through the appropriate placement of landscaped islands and facilities that support non-motorized transportation.

- C. Architectural character:** New development and redevelopment should meet the architectural guidelines adopted by the town. The guidelines should respect the context of each commercial corridor.
- D. Gateway corridors:** Commercial development located along an identified gateway corridor should be subject to additional development standards.

## *II. Regional Commercial Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** Regional commercial centers provide for more intense commercial development that serves the region. Uses may include general retail activity, retail with outdoor storage, “big box” retail, office complexes and regional malls. Sites are generally between 20 and 50 acres in size. To minimize the impact of traffic on the street network, regional commercial centers should have connected parking facilities.
- B. Location:** Regional commercial centers may be located on U.S. 1, U.S. 378 or S.C. 6 at the I-20 interchanges or at the intersection of two arterial roads.
- C. Unified site design:** Regional commercial centers should have a unified site plan that includes buildings, landscaping, signage, and parking and pedestrian connections. The site plan should include all phases of the development. Consideration should be given to creating visual interest and providing for a more pedestrian-oriented scale.
- D. Transitions:** Where large-scale commercial uses abut other land uses, particularly residential areas, buffering and transition spaces should be designed to minimize visual and noise impacts.

## *III. Community Commercial Policies*

- A. Location:** Community commercial centers should be limited to the intersections of one or more arterial roads. They may be located next to urban residential neighborhoods and as part of as the redevelopment of a primary corridor. “Big box” retail should only be permitted where sufficient access can be provided.
- B. Unified site design:** Community commercial centers should have a unified site plan that includes buildings, landscaping, signage, and parking and pedestrian connections. The site plan should include all phases of the development. Consideration should be given to creating visual interest and providing for a more pedestrian oriented scale and connection to adjacent neighborhoods.
- C. Organization of uses:** Community commercial uses should be concentrated within planned activity centers in the community. Within each concentrated activity center, uses that complement each other should be clustered within walking distance in order to minimize the need to drive between the different areas of the center and to encourage “one-stop shopping.” “Big box” retail may be included but “strip” commercial development should be discouraged.

#### *IV. Neighborhood Commercial Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** Neighborhood commercial centers should provide a range of uses and activities, including small retail and personal and professional services intended to serve the adjacent residential areas. Examples of appropriate uses include grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, and professional offices. Neighborhood commercial centers can range in size and scale from small commercial centers fully integrated into neighborhood and primarily accessed through non-motorized transportation to larger commercial centers that serve more than one neighborhood in order to achieve economies of scale.
- B. Location:** Neighborhood centers should generally be located at the intersection of two arterial streets or a collector and an arterial street. However, smaller centers with limited uses may be appropriate within a residential area at the intersection of two collector streets, or at the intersection of a collector and a local street, provided they are designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
- C. Size:** Typically one to twenty acres, with typical tract size not exceeding ten acres.
- D. Architectural character:** Building height, material, and scale should be compatible with the character of adjacent neighborhoods.
- E. Transition between uses:** Appropriate transitions should be made between neighborhood centers and the surrounding residential areas without limiting the connection between the two. Transition features may include stepping down the commercial building heights to meet the residential structures or landscape buffers and screen. However, walling off residential neighborhoods from commercial areas is discouraged.

#### **Employment (Business/Industrial)**

##### *I. Business Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** The business land-use designation includes areas suitable for professional employment such as corporate office headquarters, research and development facilities, and educational campuses. These areas should be of a campus-like nature, be incorporated in a planned development along with residential uses, or located adjacent to residential development. Most activities occur indoors, with outdoor storage and industrial activities not permitted. Small office development not usually associated with campus-like business parks may also be permitted as long as they meet the other policies of this section.
- B. Location:** Business uses should have direct access to existing or planned arterial and collector streets and should not rely on local or residential streets for access.
- C. Site layout and design:** Business uses should be developed in a campus-like setting with heavy landscaping. While site configuration and topography will vary with each development design, buildings should be organized to form outdoor gathering spaces.

- D. Unified architectural character:** Features such as rooflines, materials, colors and signage should be of a similar nature to establish uniform design within the business park. Other details such as landscaping and screening should also be used to unify the appearance of the business park.
- E. Gateway corridors:** Business parks located along an identified gateway corridor will be subject to additional development standards.
- F. Common areas:** While each development will vary based on topography or other physical constraints, the buildings should be arranged to form outdoor gathering spaces such as quads, courtyards, patios, and plazas.
- G. Circulation and access:** Pedestrian walkways should be used to link building entrances with outdoor gathering spaces and parking lots.
- H. Outdoor storage:** Outdoor storage should be limited to accessory use, and where used, should be completely screened. The principal business activities should be conducted indoors.

## *II. Industrial Policies*

- A. Characteristics:** The industrial designation permits a wide variety of industrial, manufacturing warehousing and storage activities.
- B. Screening:** Outdoor activities and storage should be screened from adjacent non-industrial uses and from the public street.

## **Transportation**

***Goal: The town should participate in the development of a multi-modal transportation system that allows travelers to move safely and efficiently***

### **Objectives:**

- 1. Coordinate land-use decisions with transportation needs:** The town should work with regional planning groups, Lexington County, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation to identify future transportation needs ranging from the creation of new roadways and the expansion of existing roadways to the installation of sidewalks, bike paths, and public transit facilities. Once those needs are identified, the town should revise land-use regulations to ensure that the infrastructure needed for new projects is provided through the development process. The town has been instrumental in reducing congestion on the arterial roads, particularly along Sunset Boulevard, through interconnections between commercial developments. Further interconnections should be pursued as opportunities present themselves.
- 2. Encourage interconnectivity between neighborhood streets and sidewalks:** Neighborhoods should be designed with a series of interconnected streets and sidewalks. Residential collector roads should have sidewalks on both sides, while local streets should have sidewalks on at least one side. Missing connections from existing neighborhoods should be established, but new developments should have those connections established as part of the review process.

**3. Participate in regional transportation planning activities**

The town should continue to participate in discussions with the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS), the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority and the surrounding jurisdictions to ensure that the town's plans and standards with respect to transportation are compatible with the efforts of these groups. The town should also work with these groups to identify locations for mass transportation facilities.

**4. Promote connectivity and continuity on local and regional roads:** The town should promote a roadway system that meets the future needs of the town. In doing so, the town should work with developers to ensure that development does not overwhelm the functional classification of the roads on which it takes place. The town should also create access control criteria for development so that development over time does not create undue congestion.**5. Support a multi-modal transportation system:** While multi-modal access is currently limited, the town should take steps to promote multi-modal activity with development standards that encourage multi-modal connections, and in future road improvements that accommodate a variety of transportation facilities.**6. Promote transportation safety:** The town should work to ensure that all transportation improvements meet local, state and federal safety requirements.

**Promote bicycle and pedestrian mobility:** The town has a long history of improving sidewalks, particularly in the commercial area, as well as requiring sidewalks in residential developments. Additionally, the improvement of S.C. 6 from the town to the Lake Murray Dam has established a bike lane that can serve as a "spine" for future bikeway improvements. The town should continue to identify connections between existing activity centers, both residential and commercial, while still requiring new development to connect to the system. The town should also identify "pedestrian districts" that have a greater focus on pedestrian activities and developments, and encourage appropriate development or redevelopment therein. The Town should create a comprehensive trail system that connects people to venues in town and throughout the region

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Project One: Comprehensive Plan**

##### IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for all other land use activities pursued by the Town of Lexington. The Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by the Town Council as policy and must be periodically reviewed and revised in accordance with the State Planning Enabling Act. For adoption to take place the Planning Commission must recommend by resolution the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by Town Council and then Town Council must officially adopt it. Once adopted, the staff and the Planning Commission should periodically review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it is being implemented and recommended revisions as needed.

##### COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: ALL

##### TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommend the Comprehensive Plan by April 2016
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by June 2016
- Monitoring for implementation: continuous
- Planning Commission develops and recommends a revision by 2021

##### RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Planning Commission
- Town Council
- Town Staff

#### **Project Two: Zoning Ordinance**

DISCUSSION: One of the most powerful tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan is the Town's Zoning Ordinance. It is important that the zoning ordinance implement a long-term view of the plan. However, recognizing that Town Council enacted a completely new zoning ordinance in October 2007, the immediate changes that need to be made to the zoning ordinance to reflect this long-term view are few. Some revisions that may be considered in the future include:

- A mechanism for better protecting downtown gateways
- The creation of improved cluster development standards
- The creation of Neighborhood Center standards
- The creation of a pedestrian district downtown
- The encouragement of sidewalk cafes in the downtown area
- The phasing out of mobile homes

##### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: All

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:** With staff assistance, the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for adoption by the Town Council.

**TIMETABLE:**

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to the zoning ordinance by December 2017
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2018
- Enforcement by the appropriate town departments: continuous

### **Project Three: Land Development Regulations**

**DISCUSSION:** The Town of Lexington's Land Development Regulations provide design standards for residential subdivisions and large group residential and commercial developments. Therefore, these standards have a significant impact on the development of the town. Recognizing that Town Council adopted significant revisions to the Land Development Standards in August 2007, few changes need to be made to them at this time. However, the town may consider amendments on the following topics in the future:

- Sustainable development
- Open space standards
- Street design and appearance

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED:** All

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:**

With staff assistance, the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend amendments to the Land Development Regulations for adoption by the Town Council.

**TIMETABLE:**

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to the land development regulations by December 2017
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2018
- Enforcement by the Planning Commission and by the appropriate town staff

### **Project Four: Coordination**

**DISCUSSION:** The Town of Lexington has the opportunity to work with various state and local agencies to further some of the goals of the town. Some such opportunities include:

- Future transit connections to the City of Columbia and the Town of Irmo
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide logical connections
- Economic development activities to encourage commercial and industrial development

- Coordination of annexations with Lexington County
- Joint efforts to lobby the state legislature to amend the annexation laws
- Coordination of regional planning efforts with Lexington County
- Coordination with private entities and Lexington County to enhance development downtown
- Coordinate with other town departments to continually seek opportunities to improve existing parks and to add new parks
- Coordinate with the state Department of Transportation on the promotion of transportation safety and access
- Coordination with Lexington County regarding timbering requirements
- Coordination with Lexington School District One to ensure future development does not negatively impact area schools and to assist where appropriate with the location of new schools

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: community facilities, land use, transportation, natural resources.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

The town should work with service providers to identify the changing needs of the town and coordinate infrastructure changes that comply with town policies.

TIMETABLE:

- Town staff identifies all service providers in the community by January 2017
- Town staff and Town Council schedules coordination meetings with the service providers by July 2017
- Town staff and the Planning Commission review and make comments on plans by the service providers: continuous

### **Project Five: Sign Ordinance**

DISCUSSION: The Town of Lexington's Sign Ordinance has had a great impact on the community since it was implemented. However, due to the passage of time, some components of it need to be updated to reflect the continuous needs of the business community while emphasizing the aesthetic impact of signage. The Board of Zoning Appeals sees many requests for variances from the Sign Ordinance every year; the number of these requests could be significantly reduced in number with some minor revisions to the Sign Ordinance.

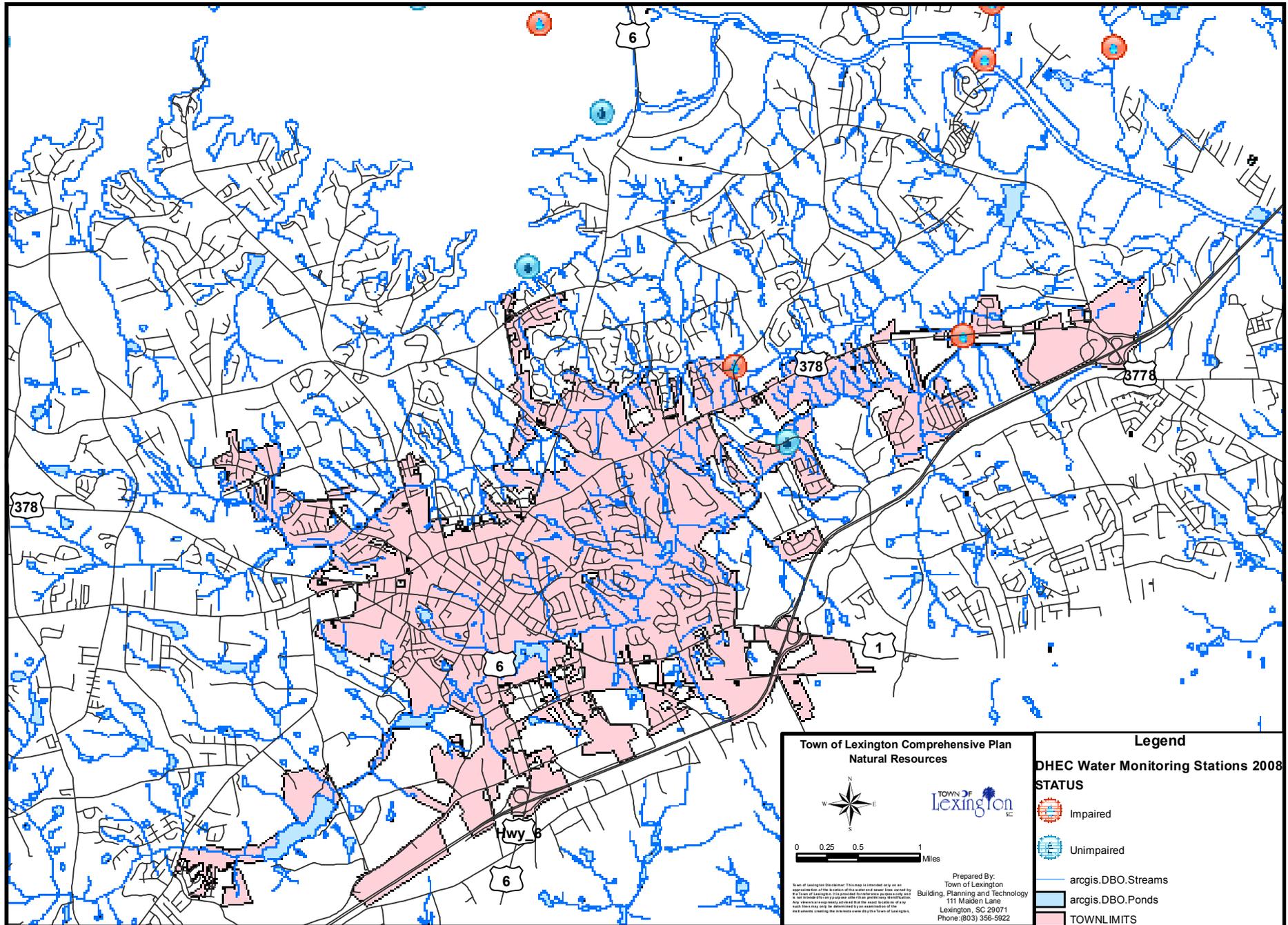
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: Land Use, Economic

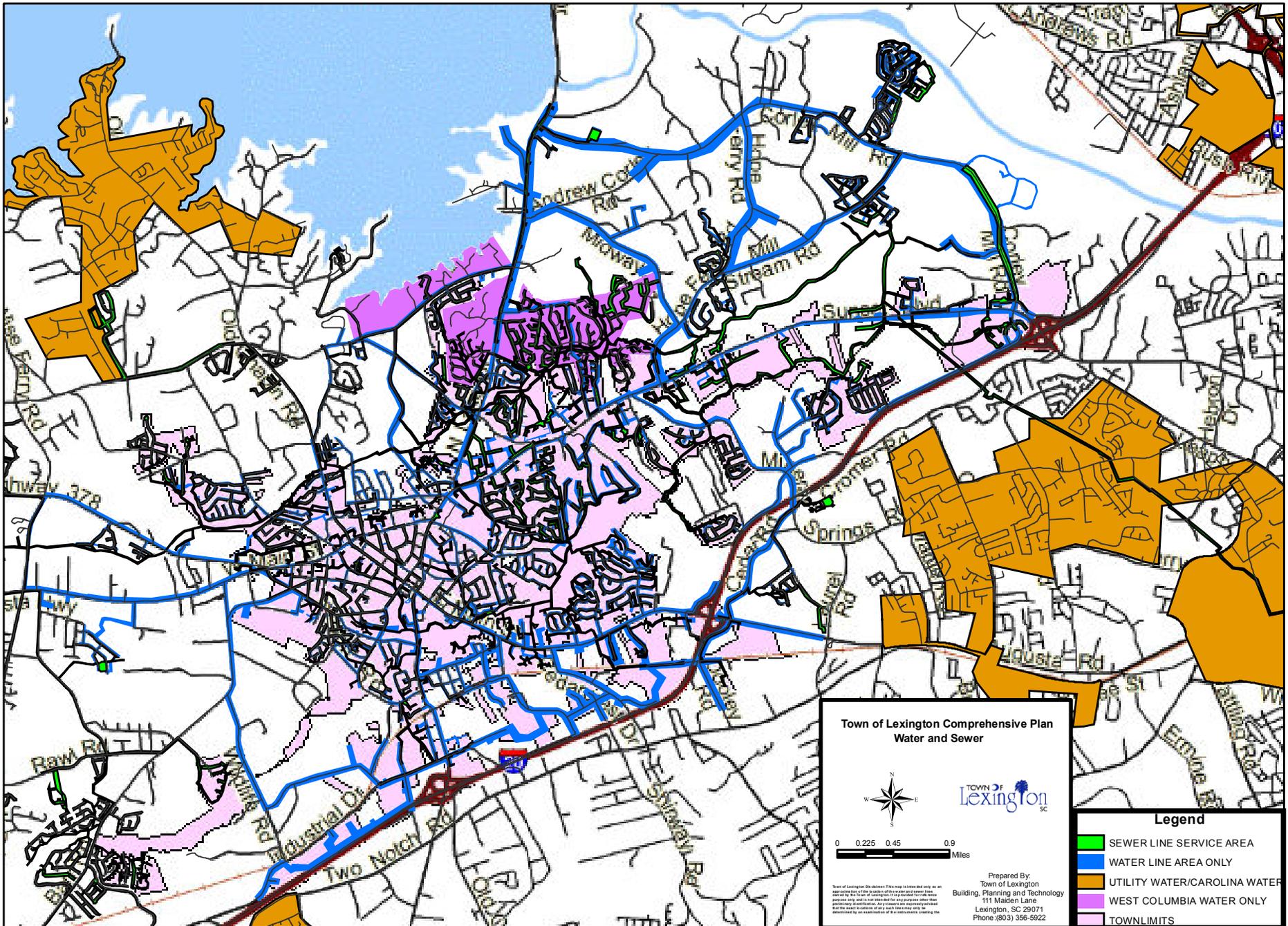
IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

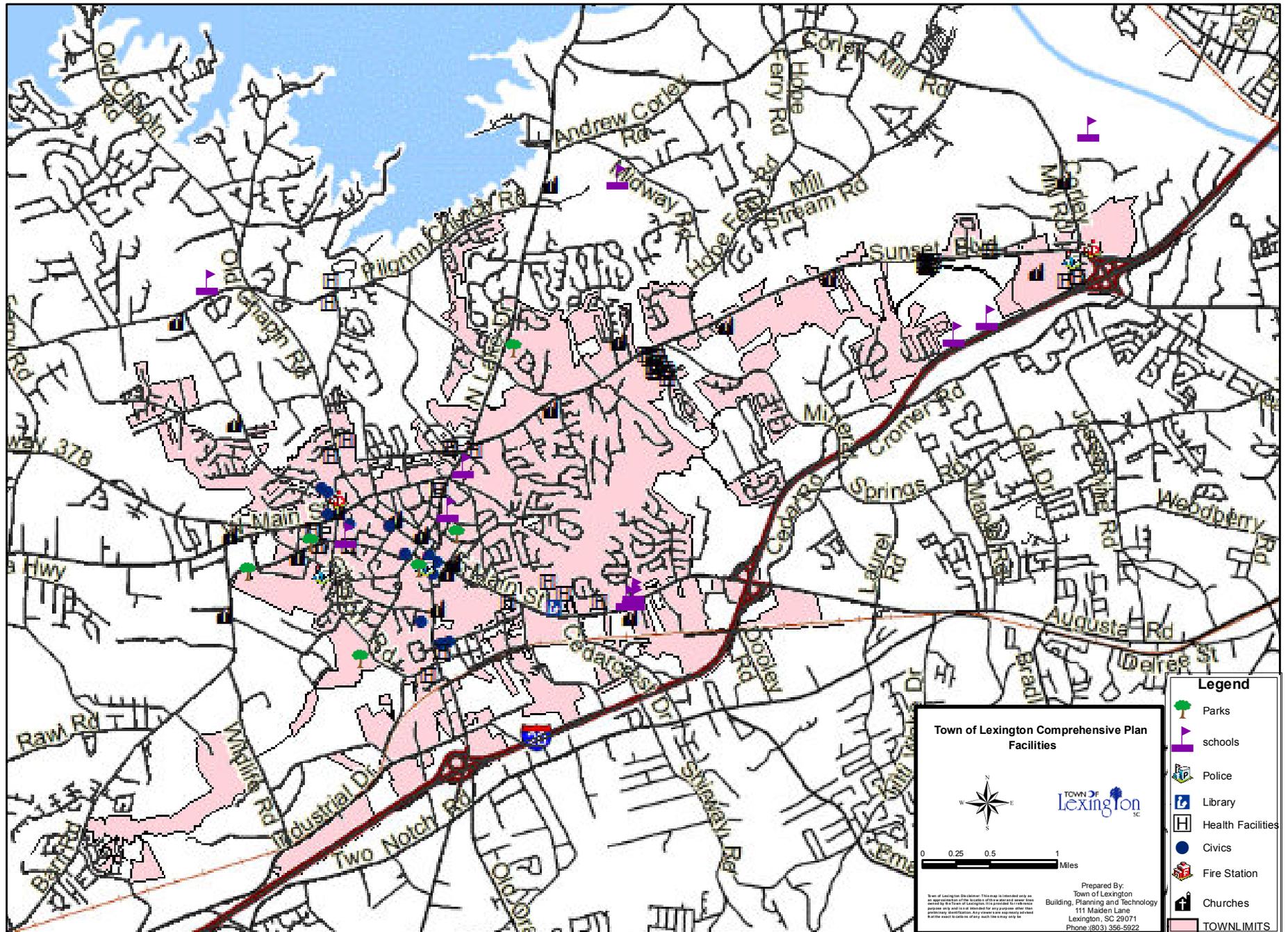
With staff assistance, the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend amendments to the Sign Ordinance for adoption by the Town Council.

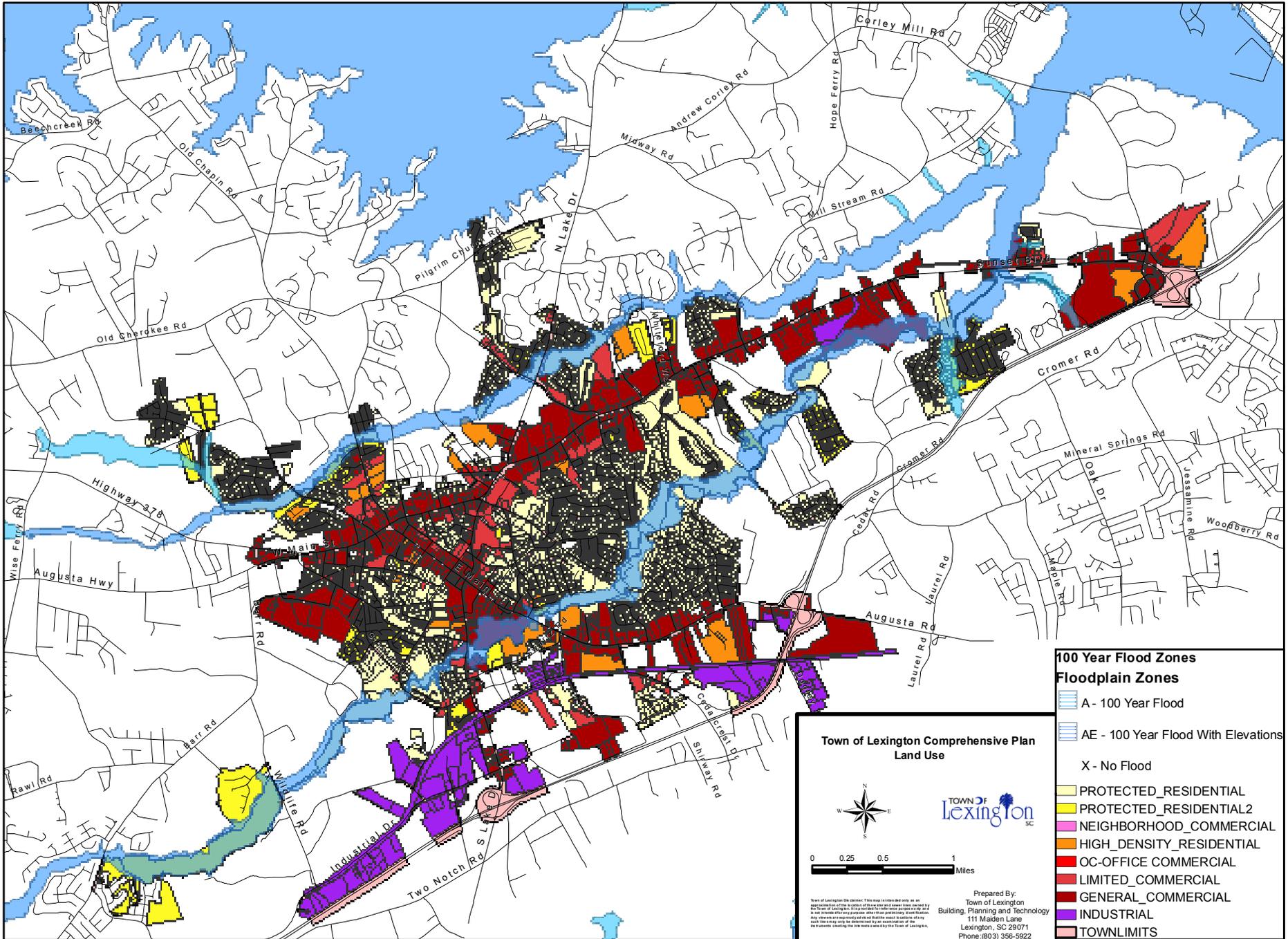
TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to Sign Ordinance by January 2018
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2018
- Enforcement by the Planning Commission and by the appropriate town staff









**Town of Lexington Comprehensive Plan  
Land Use**



TOWN OF  
**Lexington**  
SC



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Miles

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