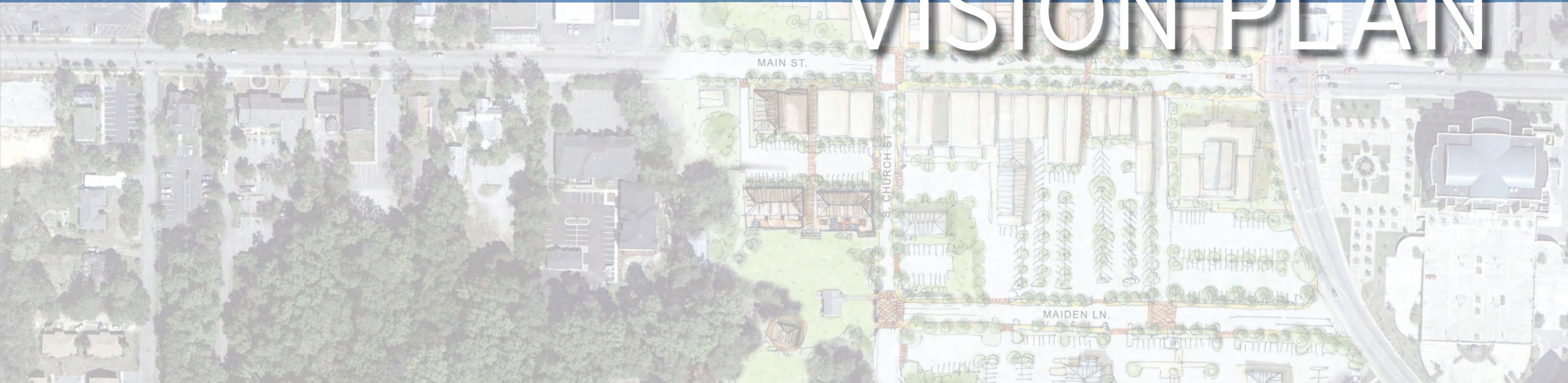


TOWN *of* LEXINGTON



VISION PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Giving a voice to and painting a picture of the vision for the future of the Town of Lexington has been an honor for our team. Those who live and work in Lexington share a love for the town and a great hope in its future. We thank each person who gave their time to this vision planning process for sharing this love, their ideas and their stories of living in Lexington.

The residents of Lexington are ready to move forward as evidenced by the new Farmers Market that opened on Main Street and a very willing, cooperative spirit for the Town and County to work together on memorials to honor Fallen Officers, Judge Westbrook and Randall Davis. The Vision Plan banks on this cooperative spirit, which is necessary to achieving the desired results.

The town is in good hands. Mayor Halfacre, Town Council and the administration are tireless in their advocacy for the town, and each one has generously shared their ideas and time with the team. Equally important are the members of the vision plan steering committee who donated their time to crafting this vision, providing candid and thoughtful comments and critique along each step of the way. Britt Poole and Johnny Jeffcoat, in particular, have been devoted shepherds of this plan and have been a pleasure to work with over the past year. We thank each of these community leaders for this opportunity and for the heart, wisdom and ideas that they contributed to this Vision Plan.

Respectfully Submitted,

The **Boudreaux** Group

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TOWN OF LEXINGTON

Town Council

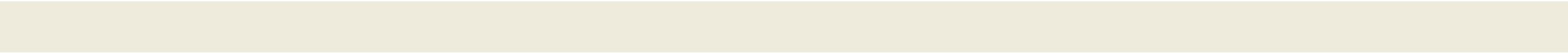
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose OF VISION PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to provide a roadmap for development in the Town of Lexington over the next 20 years by prioritizing and leveraging public investments.

The essence of Lexington, as gleaned through months of listening, analyzing and observing, is this: Lexington is a wonderful small town with a unique history and an amazing future due to its exemplary schools, caring neighbors, safe and affordable neighborhoods, active faith communities, healthy business and industry environment, Lake Murray and the beautiful natural environment. The recommendations of this Vision Plan seek to preserve this essence while enhancing and sustaining these blessings for generations to come. Even with the very real challenge of improving traffic flow in the face of consistent growth, the residents of the town treasure the community values and have great hope in the future. Addressing these challenges will require some new thinking and actions. But, there is an abiding and strong community spirit to be tapped and new voices to engage in order to reach this vision, which came from over 400 voices strong of shared ideas and opinions. The Town of Lexington is worthy of this vision, which will ensure that the essence of Lexington is even better in ten, fifteen, twenty-five years than it is today. ■

GOALS OF THE VISION PLAN

- ◆ **Improve Traffic Flow**
 - Implement transportation strategies that are innovative, progressive, provide options and enhance the quality of life; diminish traffic from being Lexington's story; work in concert with the county.
- ◆ **Create a Vibrant Destination Main Street**
 - Host regular and diverse events for all ages; recruit local and national businesses and retail shops to invest in Main Street (improve local economy), support free WiFi hot spots throughout town (business establishments and public places); encourage alternate truck routes.
- ◆ **Support and Encourage an Iconic Presence on Lake Murray**
 - Support a multi-use development for residents and visitors that improves connectivity and access between the town and Lake Murray.
- ◆ **Preserve and Celebrate the Origins of Lexington**
 - Many feel as if the history of Lexington is slipping away. Work to preserve and celebrate the treasured history of Lexington through signage, tourism opportunities, design standards, community events and local businesses.
- ◆ **Create a Welcoming Atmosphere with Beautiful, Landscaped "Front Porches"**
 - Design and construct unique and beautiful "front porches" that welcome all to this historic town with landscaping that provides beauty and shade; install signage (I-20 interchanges, in town and throughout the county) that directs people to places in Lexington; work in concert with the county.
- ◆ **Improve Pedestrian and Bike Access and Connectivity**
 - Create a comprehensive trail system that connects people to venues in town and throughout the region (Lake Murray, Saluda Shoals Park, Three Rivers Greenway, Palmetto trail, etc.); work in concert with the county.
- ◆ **Remain a Charming Small Town in the Face of Exponential Growth**
 - Adopt planning districts throughout town with appropriate design and development standards that reflect the unique character and use/activity of each district; enforce/encourage authentic efforts that celebrate the spirit of Lexington; connect and enhance what's here.
- ◆ **Provide for the Social and Recreational Needs of Residents**
 - Meet the needs of all residents, but particularly youth and young professionals, beyond organized sports by encouraging more in-town opportunities for movies, entertainment, food, cultural activities, access to Lake Murray, social and passive recreation, etc.
- ◆ **Respect the Unique Rural Character of Lexington**
 - Institute rural development standards that are sustainable while encouraging continued economic activity; work in concert with the county.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE VISION



The following principles support the Vision Statement and should be used as a guideline for all new developments, projects and policies. For example: Does the development reflect the history of Lexington as well as the progressive nature of the community? Do the policies support the revitalization of Main Street? Does the project enhance the sense of community and the small town feel? Is the development intentionally designed to be authentic to Lexington? Is the project sustainable (financially and environmentally)? Does the project increase the connectivity of its neighborhood to the larger context of the town? Does the project or policy advance the implementation of the Vision Plan? These principles are timeless and should guide the town for generations to come.

- **Sustain Main Street and downtown as the heart of Lexington** from the Old Mill to Sunset Boulevard, historic Triangle area, the original boundaries of the town and the government center.
- **Sustain Lexington's sense of community**, its most important and endearing quality, which is exemplified through family values, award-winning schools, neighbors helping neighbors, safe, welcoming, natural beauty, unique history and preservation of historic resources, natural resources, and economic prosperity.
- **Enhance Lexington's small town feel** in concert with continued development while respecting and maintaining the rural nature.
- **Strive for intentional, sustainable and authentic development** that enhances Lexington's natural beauty, sense of community, history and opportunities for prosperity.
- **Increase connectivity** by creating places and connections within town that engage people with people and people to places (transportation, communication, civic activities), which is paramount to retaining an authentic small town appeal.
- **Strive for innovation and sustainability** in all developments and programs in order to increase Lexington's prosperity.
- **Require the highest quality design and development** in all projects and developments in order to reflect the spirit of Lexington and the intent and values of the Vision Plan.

When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, "See, this our fathers did for us."

John Ruskin, 1880

English critic, essayist, and reformer (1819 - 1900)

Vision Plan

WHAT CAN THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON BECOME IN THE FUTURE?

What is the desired future for the town? What do residents value most for the well-being of future residents?

The following vision statement represents a consensus of community values, ideas and ideals, wishes and wonderings as shared throughout the vision planning process. This Vision Plan seeks to give a voice and empower and engage the residents of Lexington to own this plan while working together to achieve this vision.

This vision is possible.

Where there is no vision, the people perish...

Proverbs 29:18



What a beautiful autumn day! Last night's Lexington High School Wildcats victory in the state championship football game has set the perfect tone for the beginning of the third annual Lake Murray Century. The 1,200 cyclists will have a spectacular ride around the lake with gorgeous foliage, rolling rural hills and beautiful pastures. Boaters have been out early to grab advantageous spots to watch and to cheer on the cyclists. The cyclists from all over the country enjoyed the welcome dinner and expo at the new conference center at the Lake Murray Piazza. Not only was there plenty to see and do with the expo, but the talk at the starting line is that several hundred enjoyed strolling from place to place listening to live music and sitting in the parks along the shore until the wee hours.

The cyclist will finish in the heart of downtown Lexington, the historic Triangle, crossing the finish line at the County Courthouse, welcomed by Lexington's Finest next to the Fallen Officer's Memorial. The new Lexington Square is a beautiful place for watching the end of the race and truly represents the love for nature and community that is so important to each resident. After the race, Main Street will remain closed for a street party with several bands throughout the Triangle - the amphitheatre at the Palmetto Collegiate Institute, at the Market Green on Main, at the Courthouse Square Park and at the Old Mill Pond. The Courthouse Concert Series in the renovated old courthouse is kicking off the season with Danielle Howe and Edwin McCain.

Downtown will be alive with music and art showcased in the two new galleries. Lucky for those who live throughout downtown and in the historic neighborhoods to be able to walk to and from the festivities; however, each inn, bed and breakfast and hotel throughout town and on Lake

Murray will shuttle guests to and from the party.

The cyclists in the century will not be the only ones enjoying the outdoors today. Lexington's award winning trail system will be full of other cyclists, walkers and runners out for exercise, going to Lake Murray, Saluda Shoals Park, Riverbanks Zoo or visiting one of the town parks. City and town planners from throughout the southeast make frequent visits to Lexington to study how the town corralled its growth and legendary traffic into a town now known for its trails, parks and creative transportation planning while bolstering downtown economic and retail activity one hundred fold.

It was not easy, but the town and county leaders remain steadfast in their commitment to revitalizing downtown by supporting authentic and unique local businesses, the rehabilitation and reuse of their treasured historic buildings, by capturing and celebrating Lexington's unique history, by creating a pedestrian-friendly core that is connected to neighborhoods and districts throughout town, and by attracting high tech entrepreneurs and companies to Main Street with progressive infrastructure, places for social interaction and a vibrant art scene. The Triangle is regularly featured in *Southern Living*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Garden & Gun*, *Bon Appétit* and *The Oxford American* as one of the best small towns for stellar restaurants and as a weekend get-a-way destination for the creative class, foodies, outdoor enthusiasts, and history buffs. The signs along Interstate 20 draw and welcome dozens of new visitors

to the "Historic Town of Lexington" each day.

North Lake Drive is a beautiful corridor that connects downtown with Lake Murray and has extended and enhanced the use of and activity along the Johnny Jeffcoat Walkway. On any given day, hundreds of walkers, runner and cyclists ride from downtown or any of Lexington's neighborhoods on North Lake to the dam and over to Saluda Shoals. In addition, students at Lexington Middle School are able to safely ride to and from school because of the wide, dedicated bike path. North Lake Boulevard has truly added a beautiful connection from the town to the lake and has established architectural and landscape standards that have influenced development adjacent to the boulevard and throughout town.

Sunset Boulevard, once the whipping child of transportation planning, is now a model for redevelopment focused on creating a sustainable pedestrian and business friendly community. Smart signaling and new guidelines for access have lessened traffic congestion. New landscaped medians, lighting and sidewalk buffers have provided more and safer access for pedestrians and cyclists. People no longer dread their time on Sunset Boulevard because traffic now flows and the boulevard is more beautiful with trees, landscaping and appropriately designed buildings. Sunset Boulevard remains a vibrant, commercial corridor for the town and is a major economic engine. Now, Sunset Boulevard is a destination more than a necessity.

West Lexington has become a jewel by retaining its rural character. Numerous organic farming enterprises are enjoying great success by supplying the restaurants in town and throughout the region that feature local produce and meats. New development adheres to design guidelines that respect and enhance this rural character. Augusta Highway and Sunset Boulevard are tree-lined parkways with bike paths that connect residents and visitors to farms, businesses and the southern shores of Lake Murray. Also in West Lexington, the long leaf pine industry is enjoying a resurgence in popularity as a sustainable and historic building material. The University of South Carolina, Clemson University and South Carolina State University have started a joint program on sustainable rural development and farming (agriculture and forestry) that focuses on sustainable design and development of farms (land and buildings), sustainable business and marketing practices, food security, agricultural entrepreneurship and mentoring high school students in agricultural careers. Other southeastern public institutions are beginning to follow suit.

The K-12 schools continue to excel. The Town of Lexington, Lexington County and Lexington One School District are completing a 12 year master plan for school expansion and improvements with a commitment to neighborhood schools, pedestrian connectivity to residential areas and low impact on area traffic. The town has become a true laboratory for the schools - history, natural sciences, health and wellness, design and construction, and sustainability. Students use the town and its resources as real-life case studies and research. And because of the town's investment in infrastructure, students

(and all residents) are able to access the internet (therefore, the world) anywhere in town.

The intangible gift of the town's commitment to this vision is that the residents of Lexington are happier, healthier and have become stewards for the future. They have realized the value of public investment in the arts, preservation, conservation and in creating an environment that welcomes and inspires private investment. On any given weekend, a festival will be happening downtown, a regional soccer tournament will be taking place and a concert will be opening at the Lake Murray Piazza. Lexington is a center of culture and of people coming together. The public investments made over the past five years and the revenue generated by the Triangle Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District have yielded millions of dollars in private investments. Each neighborhood in town is flourishing due, in large part, to the systems of sidewalks and trails throughout town that connect residents to parks, downtown, grocery stores, restaurants, recreation and entertainment venues and to the region. Because of the renewed quality of life in town, the Saxe Gotha Industrial Park and the Lexington County Industrial Park were built out in 2013. Plans are underway to expand options. The diversity and authenticity of Lexington's economy provides jobs for all ages and skills and educational levels.

Within a couple of weeks, the town will kick-off the holiday season with its annual Snowball Christmas Festival. This festival begins with the lighting of the Christmas tree at Courthouse Square Park and the running of the Triangle Christmas 5K. The festival celebrates the German Christmas and New Years traditions, a

connection to Lexington's beginnings, and has become a destination during the holidays for thousands to walk the Triangle at night under twinkling lights, to look at unique Christmas displays in storefront windows and civic spaces, to shop and dine, meet friends, listen to traditional carols along the street, and to sample the Saxe Gotha Brewing Company's Holiday IPA. It's just not Christmas until you've walked the Triangle during the Snowball Christmas Festival!

The Town of Lexington has grappled with change, but made the decision in 2011 to commit to the revitalization of the heart of the town, to celebrate all that makes Lexington a unique place and to perpetuate a wonderful quality of life that focuses on the prosperity and the well-being of its people. This required tough and not always popular decisions. The Town of Lexington is a vibrant town that many are honored to call home.



Executive Summary

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Lexington is a unique, small town ideally situated near Lake Murray, across the river from the state's capital city, Columbia, and on the edge of rural land that has a rich agricultural history. Access to natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as direct access to Interstate 20, make Lexington a popular place for living and working. The public school system is one of the best in the state and is a major reason for young families establishing their homes in Lexington. According to the 2010 Census, the Town of Lexington's population grew from 9,793 in 2000 to 17,870 - an 83% increase. This positions Lexington (as well as Lexington County) as one of the fastest growing towns in the State of South Carolina.

However, success brings challenges. Over the past decade, new development and the increase in population have contributed to significant traffic issues and concerns about land uses, conservation, development, and loss of rural character. The town is becoming a city; yet, the residents want to remain a small town in every aspect of the word.

Throughout the past several years, the Town of Lexington has conducted various planning exercises that addressed downtown and Main Street, resolution of traffic issues, trails and parks, and providing an account of historic structures. Some of the projects were implemented with limited success. The planning team's standpoint is that past efforts were good but lacked a systemic and comprehensive approach. For example, the 2004 Main Street streetscape project resulted in a new design for one block of Main Street, but did not address the systemic challenges to bringing downtown back to life: economic development, administrative structure, design, management, promotion and marketing, and understanding the context of Main Street relative to the entire town (transportation patterns, land use, connectivity, and the impact of other commercial centers).

Additionally, the Town of Lexington has not capitalized on the history and sense of place that makes the town unique. For a small town to have a vibrant and prosperous downtown adjacent to commercial strip USA, the town must value and promote its authenticity, its history, and its natural and built resources. Research from the National Main Street Center (NMSC) in Washington, DC, validates the power of authenticity and history to create a vibrant economy. According to the NMSC, *"Our Main Streets tell us who we are and who we were, and how the past has shaped us. We do not go to bland suburbs or enclosed shopping malls to learn about our past, explore our culture, or discover our identity. Our Main Streets are the places of shared memory where people still come together to live, work, and play."*

The recommendations of this Vision Plan present a systemic and comprehensive approach to creating the ideal future for the Town of Lexington. This plan does not address one block or one neighborhood of the town or one issue; instead, the plan addresses key areas of town that have the most potential to influence and encourage development that is authentic, to fuel new investments and to improve the wonderful aspects of living throughout the Town of Lexington.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A vision plan without strategies to implement is nothing more than eloquent prose and beautiful illustrations. The following pages provide recommended strategies for making this vision real. The administrative and financial management of the plan are critical to success. To begin, the Town of Lexington needs to create the administrative structure to shepherd each project, the promotion of the plan, the leveraging of resources and to serve as the champion for staying on purpose.

Each element of the vision plan - design, beautification, economic prosperity, transportation, cultural development - should work together, not as isolated entities. Each element supports the whole and will drive the comprehensive success of the plan. For example, improving the Main Street corridor from Lake Drive to the Old Mill will not be sustainable or have any impact if improvements are not made to pedestrian access at key intersections or there is no campaign to market a new shopping and dining experience in downtown Lexington or a comprehensive effort made to recruit the additional businesses that will make the Triangle District a popular destination. Corridor improvement projects must be planned and constructed with the dual purpose of vehicular *and* pedestrian safety and connectivity that support the Town of Lexington becoming a more pedestrian friendly community. In addition, all corridor improvements should be well-designed and continue to elevate the beauty of Lexington's natural and built environment.

Focusing on strategic areas are vital to the success of achieving this vision. These strategies have taken into account all areas of town and all ideas shared with residents; however, they focus on specific recommendations for specific areas of town that have the most potential to impact development and investments for the entire town. Also, the strategies are prioritized and phased over a five year period. At the end of five years, the Town should evaluate progress and update the Vision Plan to reflect the progress and new opportunities born from the plan.

The three strategic development areas of the Vision Plan are 1) corridor development; 2) economic and community development management; and 3) downtown. This is not meant to exclude other areas of town, but signifies that these three areas are key to jump starting the successful implementation of the vision.

1. Corridor Development

The major corridors into and through Lexington represent the majority of concerns and criticism from residents who participated in the public input sessions, yet they also represent areas of significant potential to create a new first impression and to increase connectivity and enhancements of existing assets. The vision of each participant was that the corridors would be beautiful, safe, and build excitement for what is in town.

According to the Vision Plan Steering Committee, *"Highway 378/ Sunset Boulevard looks awful now with the traffic and the trash. This is not a good first impression for the Town of Lexington. 378 feels long because of the way it looks. Sunset Boulevard should project the image of what we want to attract and what we want to be."*

Other thoughts shared by the steering committee include:

- The way into Town is not beautiful or interesting (negative appearance) and does not inspire visitors to want to go downtown. Sunset Boulevard is a route of necessity, not choice - not excited about being there.
- There are too many cars and a fear of becoming a used car lot corridor or becoming Two Notch Road in Columbia.
- There is a lack of connectivity along Sunset Boulevard.
- Start with the corridors: make the drive more interesting to get into town, a drive that makes you want to go to downtown. Don't focus all on Main - need to take care of the way *into* Main Street.
- Without a lot of money, fashion the 378 corridor to be beautiful with lighting, banners, and landscaping in the medians and sides of the road.

Vision Plan Strategies

- Adaptive Signaling
- Front Porches
- Alternate Routes
- Corridor Partnership
- Pedestrian Connectivity

The Vision Plan corridor recommendations, when implemented, will have a positive impact on improving traffic.

The installation of adaptive signaling in concert with Phase I construction (SCDOT Unified Transportation Plan) and the proposed improvements in the Corley Mill/Sunset Boulevard area to address new school construction and new commercial development can address many of the traffic challenges and, potentially, eliminate and change the need for future phases of the SCDOT UTP. The SCDOT plan should be updated as the adaptive signaling is implemented and the new schools are constructed.

2. Economic and Community Development Management

Successful economic and community development requires a comprehensive planning and management approach. There is no silver bullet to revitalizing a commercial area. Instead, success is born from a palette of programs that is well-managed in concert with government and private entities. Phase I of the Vision Plan focuses heavily on strengthening the management structure (the Economic and Community Catalyst position) in order to advocate for and shepherd the successful implementation of the Vision Plan projects. Creating new revenue streams is necessary and will require a team to manage. While this may not be outward and visible signs of progress, this management structure will establish the foundation for success.

Vision Plan Strategies

- Lexington Development Corporation
- Town and County Collaborations
- Tax Increment Finance District
- Municipal Capital Projects Sales Tax or Hospitality Tax
- Incentives for Downtown Development

3. Downtown

When asked where the heart of the Town of Lexington is, unanimously, everyone said downtown - the area known as "The Triangle." The opinions of exact boundaries varied, but there is no mistake: **downtown is the heart of Lexington**. This Vision Plan addresses, to some extent, the entire town. However, the majority of recommendations support the revitalization of downtown. The heart of Lexington has an opportunity to beat stronger in order to continue healthy growth and development throughout the entire town and to sustain a unique local economy.

The map on page 9 illustrates the original boundaries of the Town of Lexington (1861). This historic core means something to



for this is what will truly sustain Lexington for generations to come. The following are key qualities of livability that should be pursued through this Vision Plan: a strong core, connectivity and walkability, and a high quality civic realm.

Strong Core

Strengthening the heart of Lexington, the core, is a bit like doing Pilates. Pilates is a form of exercise, developed by Joseph Pilates, which emphasizes the balanced development of the body through core strength, flexibility, and awareness in order to support efficient, graceful movement. Pilates focuses on six principles, which can be applied to the balanced development of a vibrant and prosperous town. By having a stronger core, other areas of town will be stronger and more flexible to meet the needs of a growing community. These principles are explained below.

- 1. Centering: bringing the focus to the center, the powerhouse area** *The center of the Town of Lexington is downtown, the Triangle area. This should be the powerhouse area in respect to economic vitality, cultural vitality and civic spirit.*
- 2. Concentration: bringing full attention and full commitment, maximum value will be obtained from each movement** *In order for downtown to reach its maximum potential and value, the leadership (elected, business, residents) should focus its full attention and commitment to revitalizing downtown.*
- 3. Control: No body part is left to its own devices.** *No area of town is an island and cannot be addressed as a singular project. All areas of town are integrated and impact one another.*
- 4. Precision: appropriate placement, alignment relative to other body parts.** *Projects in downtown must be planned and designed in concert with other projects, leveraging resources and schedules to mutually benefit other parts of town.*
- 5. Breath: room and places to breathe.** *Green space, parks, trails, sidewalks and paths for walking and riding bikes are essential to a strong core. Plan for these places, commit to them... provide the beautiful places for breathing, catching your breath, slowing down a bit, visiting with neighbors.*
- 6. Flow: fluidity, grace, and ease of connecting all parts.** *Recognize that downtown is part of the fabric of the Town of Lexington. The strength of downtown makes the entire town stronger and a more beautiful and useful fabric.*

This Vision Plan focuses on balanced development and core strength so that the entire town develops with grace, efficiency and beauty.

Connectivity and Walkability

The United States Department of Transportation defined six

Principles of Livability that support the department's vision of sustainable communities. These principles address the elements necessary to sustain communities and their quality of life for all residents: housing, transportation and environmental investments, protect public health and the environment, promote equitable development, and help address the challenges of climate. These principles complement those set forth in the Town of Lexington's *Comprehensive Plan 2008 Update* and are supported by the recommendations of this Vision Plan. They are as follows.

1. Provide more transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our dependence on oil, improve air quality and promote public health.
2. Expand housing choices (location and energy-efficiency) for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicity to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
3. Improve economic competitiveness of neighborhoods by giving people reliable access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs.
4. Target federal funding toward existing communities – through transit-oriented and land recycling – to revitalize communities, reduce public works costs, and safeguard rural landscapes.
5. Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the effectiveness of programs to plan for future growth.
6. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods, whether rural, urban or suburban.

Principles 1 and 6 are most relevant to the Vision Plan recommendations: 1) provide more transportation choices, 2) and enhance the unique characteristics of all communities. These principles are inherent in the Vision Plan's call to focus on strengthening the core of town, increasing connectivity and walkability, and enhancing the civic realm.

Transportation choices rely on connectivity and walkability. The walkability of a place is determined by a commitment to pedestrian-oriented amenities such as sidewalks, crossings at intersections, street trees, on-street parking, lighting, and furnishings. Walkability positively contributes to an enhanced quality of life - prosperity, beauty and community health. By enhancing pedestrian access throughout town with improved vehicular traffic management, the Town of Lexington will dramatically increase transportation choices: walking, biking, trails, sidewalks, improved corridors, and navigating alternative routes.

If a street is designed to be safe for a child, then the street will be

right for everyone. Being safe for a child means protecting the pedestrian or cyclist from traffic. The thoughtful and appropriate design (and improvements) of streets, streetscapes and public space can enhance livability and the unique characteristics of Lexington and have continuously proven to be effective ways to create and maintain desirable places to live, work and play. These elements address the basic human need to feel welcomed and to connect with people and place.

By enhancing Lexington's unique characteristics and providing more transportation choices (more sidewalks and trails, safer streets and travelways, more connectivity), the Town of Lexington will become more livable than it is today and, therefore, one of the state's most desirable places to live.

High Quality Civic Realm

Civitas: citizenship, especially as imparting shared responsibility, a common purpose, and sense of community.

The civic realm is where people come together as a community... places of beauty and civic pride that represent the values and history of a community. The civic realm, whether a square, a plaza, a small park or landscaped boulevard or pathway, provides places for festivals, community celebrations, parades and markets, places for children to play, places to honor and celebrate the history and significance of the community, places for art, for socializing and for sitting in the shade. The civic realm should be located where people can conveniently gather in small or large groups. The civic realm symbolizes civitas and is fundamental to Lexington's livability.

A high quality civic realm is extremely important in creating long-lasting value for the whole. As one activity attracts another, real life is breathed into the community. Lexington has a beautiful civic realm - Virginia Hylton Park, neighborhood parks, Gibson Pond Park, the Palmetto Collegiate Institute, Main Street and the new Lexington Square. Creating more will strengthen civic pride and livability.

Third Places are also important aspects of the civic realm. As defined by Ray Oldenburg in his seminal book, *The Great Good Place*, "Third places are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place." Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those with whom one lives. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend most of their time. "Third Places," then, are anchors of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction between people. In modern times, people intentionally seek out these informal meeting places. Oldenburg suggests the hallmarks of a true

residents - government center, historic commerce area, places of memories; it is the identifiable heart of town. Therefore, the Vision Plan recognizes these historic boundaries as downtown.

Vision Plan Strategies

- Lexington Square
- The Triangle District
- Connectivity and Streetscaping
- Promotion of unique historical and cultural assets
- Public Art
- Expanding downtown events
- Farmers Market
- Main Street revitalization

KEY QUALITIES OF LIVABILITY

Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park, all without having to get into your car. Livability means building the communities that help Americans live the lives they want to live - whether those communities are urban centers, small towns, or rural areas.'

Secretary Ray LaHood

U.S. Department of Transportation

Livability is a product of sustained economic viability, environmental integrity and community well-being. **The bottom line of these recommendations is to increase the livability of Lexington**

Executive Summary

“third place” are: free or inexpensive; food and drink (not essential, but important); highly accessible (within walking distance for most); involve regulars who habitually congregate there; welcoming and comfortable; both new friends and old.

Historically, downtown was the essence of a Third Place - where people shopped, met friends for coffee or ice cream, ran into friends on the sidewalk and enjoyed conversations. This is the spirit that is desired in Lexington’s downtown: an environment that encourages people to congregate and interact with others outside of the home or workplace. Main Street Cafe is an example of a current, popular Third Place. Amenities that will attract people to use downtown as a Third Place include free WiFi, shaded seating, sidewalks that are buffered from passing vehicles allowing patrons to converse and watch the world go by, coffee shops, art studios, and ale houses and wine bars that are open past 5:00 in the evening.

William Hollingsworth (Holly) Whyte (1917 - 1999) was an American urbanist, organizational analyst, journalist and people-watcher who did extensive research throughout his life on streets and public places. One of the profound, yet very simple things he documented is that people are drawn to and use public places where they are encouraged to make it their own: sitting alone or with a group, moving chairs to sit alone or with others or to move in the sun or out of the sun, the ability to change views. Public gathering places, such as Lexington Square, Virginia Hylton Park and the Farmers’ Market as well as cafes and coffee shops can become these vibrant places - true Third Places that welcome people to sit for a while and are intentionally designed places for people to be together.

Lexington will truly benefit from supporting more Third Places, which are typically locally-owned businesses. Third Places will provide the critical mass to support existing and additional businesses in town, invite more people to be on the streets and sidewalks, all of which elevate the perception of safety, and build a stronger sense of community, particularly with young professionals.

Other Important Elements

There are several elements that are not addressed in detail through this Vision Plan: infrastructure, parking, codes and ordinances, and public art. Also, traffic is addressed but not as a long-term transportation plan. A brief explanation follows.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure needs as they relate to water supply and distribution and sewer service within the Town limits are handled by the Town of Lexington. The existing infrastructure seems well suited for the needs of the Town. In spite of its growing population, the existing infrastructure seems to be in good shape to handle anticipated demands. Furthermore, the Town has continued to take a responsible course in maintaining the infrastructure needs through proactive approaches such as the new joint treatment plant and supply agreements with the City of Cayce. Continued support of these infrastructure needs will be required for successful implementation of the Vision plan.

Parking

Currently, there appears to be adequate parking to meet the needs of downtown activity. While court date traffic utilizes a majority of the available parking, the challenge is to provide appropriate signage to existing parking. The town and the county should work with downtown merchants and business owners to develop a plan to maximize all downtown parking. As the Vision Plan is implemented, increases in commercial and cultural activities will require more parking in the immediate vicinity of the Main Street. Existing parking areas may be improved (accessibility, efficiencies in flow and shared usage, beautification) in the short-term. The town should conduct a detailed parking study to determine long-term actions (such as parking decks) to meet future needs.

Traffic Concerns

During each public session, the unanimous negative issue for the town was traffic. Population growth throughout the county as well as commercial development along Sunset Boulevard and a lack of alternative routes around the town have contributed to the increasing traffic problems. The Vision Plan recognizes these challenges and provides several recommendations for improving traffic; however, this is not a transportation plan. A systemic and comprehensive approach to Lexington’s traffic problems must be approached collaboratively with all levels of government and in concert with the Town’s Unified Traffic Improvement Plan. Immediate priority should be given to improved signal timing and corridor development projects that can be implemented quickly with the existing infrastructure and rights-of-way.

Existing Ordinances and Design Standards

The existing ordinances promote the preservation of Lexington’s

historic architecture and its natural resources by encouraging originality, flexibility, innovation and harmonious design while respecting the Town’s natural beauty, visual character and charm. This is working, particularly as demonstrated through the sign ordinance. However, the town should work to include standards that encourage new development to meet the vision and the principles of the Vision Plan, particularly to make Lexington a more pedestrian-friendly community. Requiring sidewalks (landscaped buffers where possible), appropriate scaled buildings and signage and appropriate set-backs to create vibrant public space are elements to include. Consider the adoption of Complete Streets guidelines in order to promote connectivity, wellness and active public space.

The *Architectural and Appearance Design Manual* provides a good, illustrative guide to the design and appearance of buildings, landscapes and signage. Presenting visual examples is user-friendly and creates a common ground for discussing proposals. This manual should be updated to reflect the Vision Plan principles and recommendations and expanded standards and examples.

Items to expand in the Architectural and Appearance Design Manual include the following.

- Building placement requirements in the commercial corridors: Consider one bay of parking (60’ max with 90° parking) in front buildings. The required landscaped buffer and sidewalk will separate the parking from the corridor. The remaining parking should be to the rear. This gives an appropriate edge to the corridor, a safe pedestrian path, and balance of exposure for retailers.
- Encourage round-a-bouts in street and corridor designs in order to allow flow while slowing down traffic. If planned properly, they can enhance mobility, safety, and aesthetics.
- Encourage alleys in new developments (residential and commercial): Alleys foster street presence and pedestrian environments in dense locations and can serve as screened locations for utilities, mailboxes, trash and other things that sometimes detract from a great street aesthetic. The front of the properties should have standup curb, planted strips with trees, and sidewalks. This makes for a great pedestrian environment.
- Curbing and sidewalks with street trees should be required in order to foster pedestrian movement and safety as well as beauty and enhanced value.
- Parking: Consider incorporating shared parking standards (available through the Urban Land Institute) in downtown and all commercial areas. This will help to dimension the amount of asphalt, openness, and blight. This is more environmentally friendly and fosters clustering and walkability.
- Provide more photographic examples of quality designed

parking, landscape design and downtown architectural standards.

- Landscape: Provide explicit, good examples of pedestrian amenities in order to encourage greater connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Also, provide more examples of landscaped buffers with an emphasis on street trees and sidewalks separated by the landscaped buffers.
- Public Art: Expand the section on public art to include sculpture, monuments, memorials and streetscape amenities such as bike racks, lighting, and gardens.

In short, the town’s codes, ordinances and guidelines need to reflect the Vision Plan principles, and in all things, require the highest quality - building for generations to come.

Public Art

Establish a public art program for the Town of Lexington. Lexington has a rich art environment and will benefit culturally and economically from the inclusion of art throughout the town. The program should be administered by the town with an advisory commission to plan and recommend specific pieces of art to be placed in the public realm throughout the town. Evaluate public art programs in Greenville, Asheville, Charlotte and Columbia to determine funding procedures and processes for art selection, funding, and installation. The South Carolina Arts Commission is another resource to tap when developing the program. The most successful programs operate with a public art ordinance, with most ordinances creating a consistent and reliable funding stream for public art, such as a percentage of CIP funds. These funds can be leveraged with private funds and other sources such as grants.

The incorporation of art in our public space helps give expression to our community values. When we encourage art, we also encourage creativity and thoughtfulness.

— Mayor Kevin Foy, Chapel Hill, NC

Why Is Public Art Important

According to Americans for the Arts: “Imagine, if you can, a world devoid of public art: no Statue of Liberty, no Eiffel Tower, no Vietnam Veterans Memorial, no Tribute in Light. No murals, memorials, or monuments. What would life be like without fireworks displays, puppet parades, sculpture parks, and visionary roadside folk art? These landmarks and special events enhance our experience of a place and our quality of life. They engender a sense of pride and community identity. They reach audiences outside museums, galleries, and theaters, and they add

to the beauty of everyday life. They declare the worth of a place and a time in our shared culture.

How important is the design of our shared public realm? What is the value of a park or plaza, or of a free exchange in a welcoming environment? Public art projects offer us a way to participate in the planning, design, and creation of communal space. For this reason, many refer to public art as a democratic art form. And while democracy can be a messy process, public art is an integral part of the fabric of American culture. Public art does many things, most of which can be divided into four areas. It can:

- engage civic dialogue and community;
- attract attention and economic benefit;
- connect artists with communities; and
- enhance public appreciation of art.”

Successes to Date

- **Conceptual Design of Lexington Square at the County Courthouse**
Construction of the Square began in March 2012. Celebrate this project as a key success in the implementation of the Vision Plan and of Town and County collaboration.
- **Creation of the Lexington Farmers Market**
Continue to host the market in downtown, possibly at the old Liverman Hospital property. Increase the promotion of the market with new signage and advertisements, consistency in operation schedule and quality of vendors.
- **Initial discussions with the SC Truckers Association on management of truck routes**
Continue regular meetings with the town, county and truckers association in order to develop and implement policies that are mutually beneficial to create a vibrant, walkable Main Street corridor and to efficiencies in truckers’ needs.
- **Collaborative transportation meetings between the Town and County**
Formalize a town and county task force to meet regularly on transportation challenges that will impact the implementation of the Vision Plan and to build mutual support for the long-term success of the Vision Plan.

We’re at one of those moments when we are being called to step up. It is time to make something real of this vision plan.

Mike Crapps
Vision Plan Steering Committee Member

It is important to start with smaller projects that can be quickly completed, such as signage, beautification and planning for the Lexington Development Corporation and a tax increment finance district (TIF), while rallying support for the larger projects (funding and schedule). The Town should focus on completion of one project from the outset in order to build community support and excitement for the Vision Plan.

A prioritized list is critical to guide the town’s decisions on capital projects and to discern opportunities for leveraging resources. What is within reach right now with a focus? What project can provide the most immediate bang for the buck? Where does the town start: core or front porches? The biggest issue is funding, but prioritizing the projects will allow opportunities for leveraging resources and creativity in planning. Initial success will be achieved by making progress on the periphery while working on the core... the historic downtown. The following prioritized projects phasing will have immediate impact while building support for future projects.

PHASE 1 : APRIL 2012 - DEC. 2012

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Construct Lexington’s first front porch at the Sunset Boulevard/1-20 interchange (Beautification Foundation Project - #1 interchange)
- Develop implementation plan for adaptive signaling within the town limits
- Create a Corridor Partnership to serve as the advocate for corridor improvements that support the Vision Plan, with a priority focus on the Corley Mill development and new school construction and meeting a least twice yearly
- Explore potential partnerships with the County and SCANA Front Porch and development opportunities at North Lake Drive and the Lake Murray dam
- Seek funding for corridor projects through the proposed Municipal Capital Projects Sales Tax
- Design Lexington’s front porches at the following locations: Sunset Boulevard at Corley Mill, Sunset Boulevard and Columbia Avenue split, and Old Cherokee at North Lake
- Seek funding for the I-20 and Main Street interchange (#2)
- Construction of Fourteen Mile Creek Park

ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Create a graphic identity for vision plan projects
 - Install signs at each project, such as “Vision Lexington: Front Porch Project.” This will build public trust and excitement.
- Develop a public relations plan to promote the Vision Plan
- Implement a TIF district at the Sunset/Corley Mill area by August 2012 in order to capture the new theater development, investing in the necessary staff to accomplish
- Charter the Lexington Development Corporation
 - Responsibilities may include:*
 - Coordination with a Downtown Merchants organization
 - Manage the TIF district(s)
 - Create a bank consortium to provide financial support to downtown property owners and businesses
 - Implement a facade improvement program
 - Implement a business incentives program (recognition, grants, etc.)
 - Implement a best practices education program (marketing, security, design, window displays, etc.)
 - Implement a Main Street incubator program for technology and creative entrepreneurs
 - Manage Town and County collaborative planning
 - Create a tourism plan in collaboration with the Chamber, Lexington County Museum and the Lake Murray Visitors Center that promotes Lexington’s historic resources and unique experiences
- Adopt a Municipal Capital Projects Sales Tax (potential fallback - reinstate a Town hospitality tax to support the implementation of the Vision Plan projects)
- Formalize Town and County cooperative planning
 - Work with Lexington County to analyze the potential best use of the Old Courthouse
 - Regular meetings with the SC Truckers Association to optimize technology for transportation efficiencies

- Adaptive Signalization coordination
- Create, adopt, and enforce rural development guidelines
- Oversight of Corridor Partnership
- Coordination of front porches and I-20 interchanges design and construction
 - Analyze potential for a regional sports complex (programming,
- Create a Public Art Program to establish a plan for the funding, creation, selection and installation of public art
 - Charge of the appointed Public Art Commission:*
 - Evaluate and recommend specific pieces of art for placement throughout the town
 - Develop, adopt and periodically revise a master plan for public art placement
 - Establish strategic partnership and funding opportunities for public art
 - Serve as stewards of the arts in the Town of Lexington
- Update the *Architectural and Appearance Design Manual*
- Work in collaboration with Lexington County, the Lexington County Recreation Commission, Lexington One School District, the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission and the YMCA of Columbia to analyze the potential for a regional sports complex (considerations include programming, market analysis, site selection, operations, financial models)

DOWNTOWN

- Complete Lexington Square
- Develop a façade improvements program and enhance five to seven existing buildings on Main Street
- Reorganize the Town’s Christmas events as the traditional Snowball Festival to include the Christmas tree lighting and caroling, the Christmas Parade, a concert in the Old Courthouse, and the SnowBall
- Formally define and designate the Triangle District
 - Create graphic identity and marketing plan, i.e. “Meet Me in the Triangle” campaign
- Acquire land and/or easements around the Mill Pond in order to create a public greenway (2008 Comprehensive Plan Update project)
- Analyze, in collaboration with the County, the potential best use of the Old Courthouse with a focus as a performing arts venue
- Explore, in collaboration with the County and the school district, possible sites for a regional YMCA Aquatics Center in downtown Lexington

PHASE II : JAN. 2013 - DEC. 2013

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Install an Adaptive Signalization System within the town limits
- Conduct study for potential Main Street alternate routes
- Construct 1-20 and Main Street interchange (#2)
- Develop plans for enhancements to Sunset Boulevard in the Sunset Boulevard/Corley Mill area to build on existing and proposed plans and to leverage multi-jurisdictional resources
- Complete plans for enhancements to Sunset Boulevard
- Complete plans for enhancements to North Lake Drive
- Design new wayfinding signage (branding) and installation plan for town
- Complete intersection enhancement plans for Old Cherokee at Sunset Boulevard and at North Lake
- Install new signage on Interstate 20 that welcomes to “Historic Downtown Lexington”
- Seek funding for the I-20 and South Lake Drive interchange (#3)

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Create a downtown TIF district
- Develop, approve and implement a Public Art master plan for the Town
- Continue diversified park development, such as a dog park, pocket parks and trailheads – install signage to all parks and the museum

DOWNTOWN

- Complete plans for and construct the public greenway around the Mill Pond (2008 Comprehensive Plan Update project)
- Enhance five to seven existing buildings on Main Street through the façade improvements program

PHASE III : JAN. 2014 - DEC. 2014

Based on available funding and completion of Phase I and Phase II projects.

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Construct intersection improvements on Old Cherokee at Sunset Boulevard and at North Lake Drive
- Landscape retention area on Sunset Boulevard between Butler and Main Streets per SCDOT’s Unified Transportation Plan Phase I (small front porch)
- Construct first phase enhancements to North Lake Drive and Sunset Boulevard
- Construct Lexington’s front porches at the following locations: Sunset Boulevard at Corley Mill, Sunset Boulevard and Columbia Avenue split, and Old Cherokee at North Lake
- Incorporate new wayfinding signage into all corridor improvements

ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Establish a higher education presence on Main Street

DOWNTOWN

- Complete a detailed master plan for the Triangle District
- Complete construction documents for Triangle District projects prioritized in the master plan

PHASE IV : JAN. 2015 - DEC. 2015

Based on available funding and completion of other projects

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Continue corridor construction projects

ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Design and Install new wayfinding signage

DOWNTOWN

- Construct first phase Triangle District projects

PHASE IV : JAN. 2015 - DEC. 2015

Based on available funding and completion of other projects

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Complete second phase enhancements to North Lake Drive and Sunset Boulevard

ECONOMIC and COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Update Vision Plan

DOWNTOWN

- Construct second phase Triangle District projects

SCHEDULE *of* PUBLIC INPUT

LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK OF VISION PLANNING.

During the past year, over 400 people gave their voices to this Vision Plan. We are grateful for their input and time and hope that this Vision Plan reflects their hopes for the future. The following meetings were held throughout the vision planning process.

November 3, 2010
December 7
December 8
December 15
January 24, 2011
February 1

February 3
February 7
February 9
February 10
February 11

February 15
February 22
March 1
March 4, 14
March 14, 17
March 14
March 15
March 22
March 23
April 19
May 24
June 29
August 9
August 16
August 23
October 12
October 19
January 5, 2012
March 25-27

Kick-Off Meeting
 Public Input Sessions (3 focus groups)
 Town Commissions and Committees focus group
 Focus Group, Chamber Board and Lexington One School Board
 Team Work Session
 Focus Group: Trails and Complete Streets, Sue Green (Community Open Land Trust) and Jay Daniels (SCDHEC, Healthy Communities) Meeting with Cindy Smith, Chair Lexington One School Board
 Focus Group: Economic Development
 Home Owners Associations
 Interviews Chuck Corley, Hugh Rogers, Jewitte Dooley, Doug Jones, Ashby Jones
 Meeting with Hazel Livingston and Richard Thompson
 Case Study/Mentor Towns: Travelers Rest, Greenville and Simpsonville
 Mayor Halfacre, Kathy Maness, Britt Poole, Johnny Jeffcoat, Leah Youngblood, Steve Dudash, Jamie Pruitt, Irene Dumas Tyson
 Focus Group: Faith Community (12 ministers)
 Town Council Update
 Steering Committee Review Meeting
 Presentations to Steering Committee Members
 Meetings with the County Memorial Group
 Meeting with Tim Driggers, tour of Lexington County Museum with J.R. Fennell
 Meeting with Ted Stambolitis
 Presentation to Planning Commission
 Lexington Young Professionals
 Transportation Planning with County
 Vision Plan Update to Town Council and Steering Committee
 Town and County Meeting on the Clemson University Technology Village
 Presentation to Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce
 Meeting with Main Street Merchants
 Public Presentation and Review
 Steering Committee Review
 Meeting with Downtown Business Owners
 Vision Plan Review with Town Staff
 Vision Plan Review with Town Council

The Town of Lexington undertook a comprehensive approach to promoting the Vision Plan and the numerous public meetings. Following is the public notice timeline.

Round One Public Input Session

Press release: November and December 2010

Round Two Public Input Session

Press release: August 2011

Town Topics*

November 2010 – Mayor’s Message (unveiling)
 December 2010 – Mayor’s Message and Schedule for Public Input Session – Round One
 January 2011 – Mayor’s Message
 March 2011 – Mayor’s Message/State of Town Address
 October 2011 – Mayor’s Message

*Note: Town Topics is placed on website and Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) each month

*Note: The Mayor’s Message is placed on Channel 2, Website and Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) and in utility bills each month

State of Town Address: March 7, 2011

- Live at Council meeting, replayed on Channel 2 and Website
- Covered by all local media (given copies)

Channel 2

- First Round Public Input Session Slide Ran (December 7th Meeting)
- Second Round Public Input Session Slide Ran (August 23rd Meeting)

Website

- Press releases with both Public Input Sessions (Highlights Section)
- Placed on Website Calendar on Main Page
- Power Point Presentation from Round Two placed on website – live again and downloadable

Lexington Life Magazine

Full Article in August 2011 Issue

Monday with the Mayor

107.9 WLXM Lake Murray Radio – Monday’s at 10am

Lexington Woman Magazine

"Talk of the Town" – Mayor’s article, Vol. 5, No. 4

Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce

- Vision Plan Presentation, August, 2011 members breakfast by Irene Dumas Tyson, The Boudreaux Group
- Chamber Website: e-blast and calendar of events

Other Media

- Municipal Association of SC, Cities Mean Business, Summer 2011
- Coverage from WIS, The State Newspaper and The Lexington County Chronicle
- Postings on Social Media – Facebook and Twitter

Analysis

Understanding existing conditions is an important step in creating a viable plan. Throughout the vision planning process, the planning team studied, researched and analyzed the built and natural environment, developed an understanding of residents' desires, the relationships between land uses, and the diverse areas of town. The following pages provide photographic analysis, which illustrates the potential and inspired the recommendations.

The foundation of this Vision Plan and its recommendations is the desire of residents to capitalize on and to improve and celebrate the numerous assets that make the Town of Lexington such a wonderful place in which to live, work, play, learn and worship. The Vision Plan recommendations seek to accomplish this with a comprehensive approach in connecting these assets. In order for this to be successful, the town should welcome and direct people strategically and aesthetically to these places. In short, the Town of Lexington has a very unique story to tell, which is important to achieving this vision. This vision is about celebrating the town's history and building a new economy and zeitgeist that will ensure Lexington remains a viable, beautiful, interesting, innovative and culturally significant place to call home for generations to come.

Many of the Town's assets and neighborhoods are not mentioned specifically in the Vision Plan. The focus areas and priority projects presented in this plan are ones that were unanimously shared and supported throughout the vision planning process and ones that are key to driving success. In addition, the priority projects are ones that will impact, most directly, the quality of life and economy throughout the Town of Lexington, setting the stage for more successful implementation of projects in other areas of town.



Oktoberfest



Wine Walk

ASSETS

▲ TRIANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

- Main Street Commercial Area
- Lexington Square
- Old Mill and Pond
- Lexington County Museum
- Historic Homes, Buildings and Churches
- Civic Center: Town Hall, County Administration, Old Courthouse, Lexington County Library
- New Chamber of Commerce Building
- Virginia Hylton Park
- Palmetto Collegiate Institute
- Gibson Pond Park
- German Heritage
- Farmers Market
- Wine Walk
- Oktoberfest

◎ SMALL TOWN AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Safe Neighborhoods
- Award-winning Schools
- Churches
- Parks
- South Lake Drive historic homes
- Cultural Opportunities
- Family Values
- Health Care
- Recreational and Organized Sports



VIBRANT COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR ON SUNSET BOULEVARD

- Retail (national, regional and local)
- Service and industries
- Areas to develop in more sustainable and beautiful ways



LAKE MURRAY

- Recreation
- Johnny W. Jeffcoat Walkway
- Natural Resources
- Beauty



RURAL CHARACTER

- Old Cherokee Road
- West Lexington (Sunset Boulevard, Augusta Road)

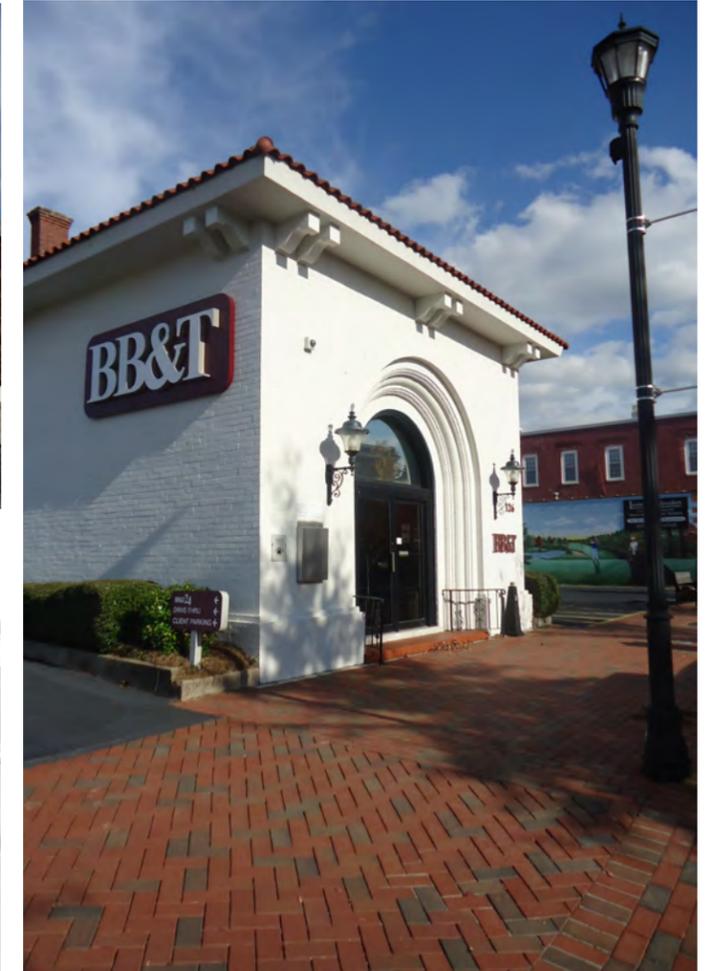


LOCATION

- Direct access to Interstate 20
- Close proximity to Interstate 26
- Lake Murray
- Central location in the State
- Close proximity to a major airport and a major research university



Main Street and downtown are home to many unique local businesses. This is downtown's strong suit, which should be, in all ways, supported, promoted and enhanced with direct efforts to open more businesses. Celebrate the existing architecture, expand opportunities to sit and enjoy being downtown, create an environment of easy access and excitement to shopping downtown. Main Street has a strong foundation. Build on this.





Old Courthouse



Redesign alleyway as a beautiful connection (accessibility and visual) between Main Street, Town Hall parking and Virginia Hylton Park: landscaping with shade trees, lighting, signage, seating, possibly burying power lines.





Palmetto Collegiate Institute



Lexington County Museum

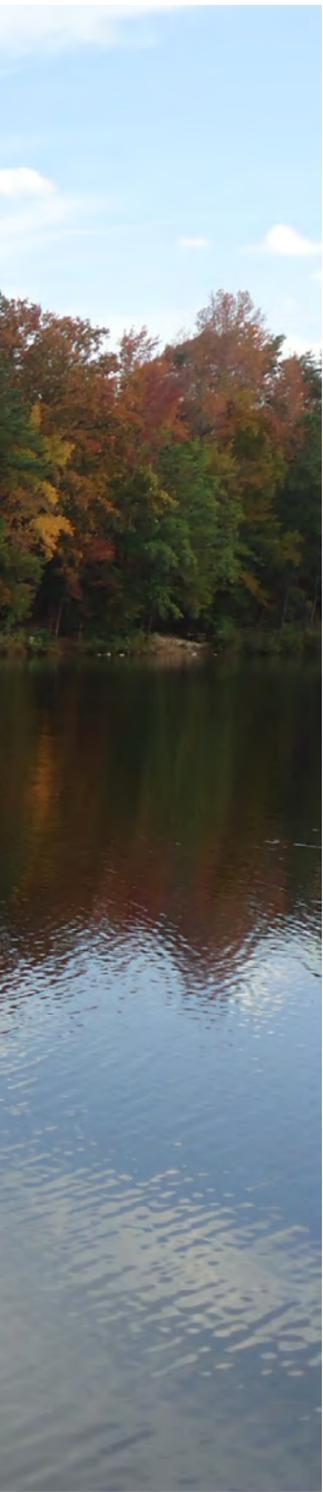


The Lexington County Museum is a hidden treasure. While there are a few signs alerting visitors, there is no concerted effort to promote and direct people to it. This is particularly true along Sunset Boulevard: one passes right by without knowing what a valued resource is tucked behind the businesses. The museum should be one of the key elements of a Triangle

District walking tour; therefore, streetscape improvements should clearly mark, direct, and welcome to the museum. Fox Street should be clearly defined as a special walk zone marked by different paving material, signage and landscaping. Signage on Sunset Boulevard should be more prominent and include unique landscaping.

Analysis





The Old Mill and pond area is a beautiful park-like setting that can be a popular destination for residents and visitors. The area should be comprehensively master planned to address safe and inviting access to the site, creating an asset out of the dam and waterfall, creating a multi-use path with seating around the pond, linking the mill area to other parts of town such as the library, the shops on Main Street and Virginia Hylton Park . This will increase the commercial viability of the entire mill area.

Analysis



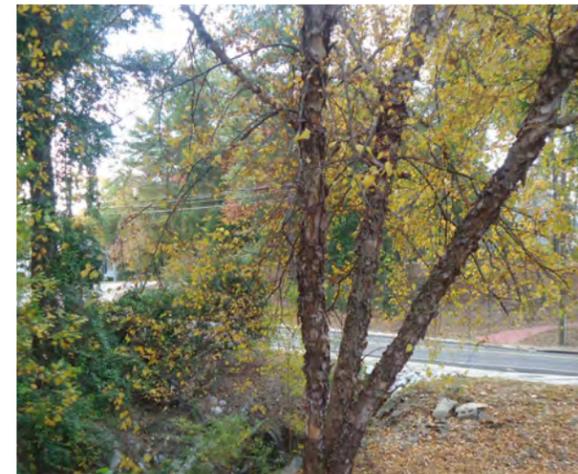
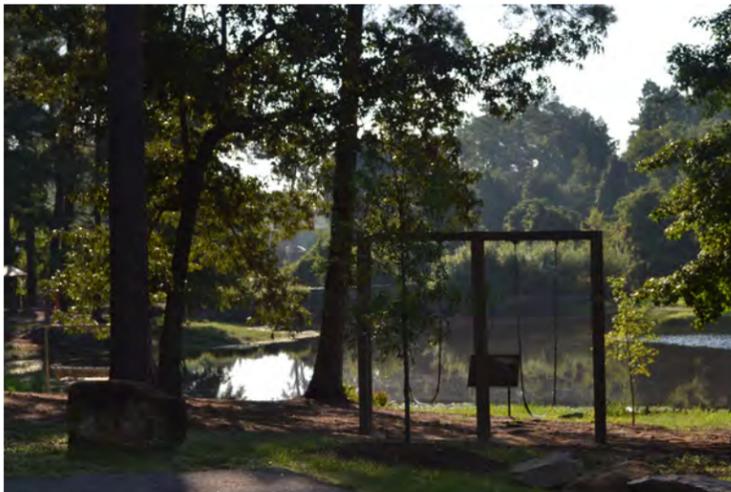
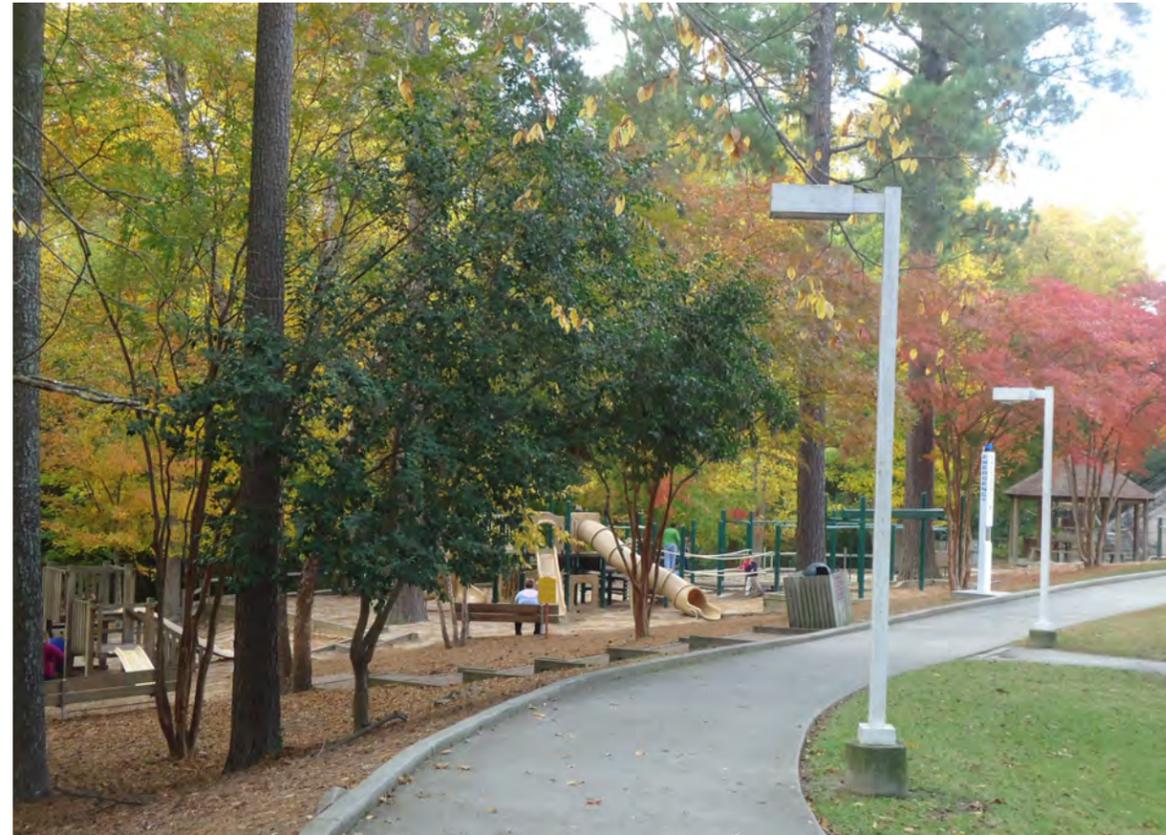
The history of Lexington is unique and interesting and should inspire one of the most authentic economies of place. The beautiful historic homes, buildings and landscapes, the Lexington County Museum, and civic buildings and monuments are very compelling and should be celebrated. Lexington's history will establish it as a wonderful destination.



Opportunity to improve pedestrian access in the historic district.



Gibson Pond Park and Virginia Hylton Park are two wonderful civic assets. Both provide areas to meet, play and rest. Connecting these parks with wide, multi-use paths will increase the value of both parks and enhance Lexington's quality of life..



Gibson Pond Park (left) and Virginia Hylton Park (above)



During input sessions, Lake Murray was the unanimous choice as the Town's major asset. Many view Lake Murray as part of the town's identity; yet, the Town has no property on the Lake. The popularity of the dam walk, connectivity to the regional pathway system and the potential for North Lake Drive to become a parkway from the lake into town hint at the rationale for the town to support a multi-use development on the lake that will provide increased access to Lake Murray and spur more tourism and economic development activity for the town.



Example of the positive impact of design and signage standards



Opportunities for improved corridor development

Sunset Boulevard, currently viewed as a necessity for traveling through town, can become a more beautiful corridor. Residents unanimously desire that Sunset Boulevard be improved as a landscaped boulevard (street trees, lighting, landscaped medians, well-designed signage, improved sidewalks and pedestrian crossings) into Lexington that communicates the Town's values and that Lexington is a progressive community.



Opportunities for improved corridor development



Opportunities for improved corridor development



Rural Character

Being rural is something that is very special to Lexington - it is part of the town's heritage. With the ever-increasing growth and development, the town (and county) should do all that it can to preserve this heritage. Corridors such as Old Cherokee between North Lake and Pilgrim Church Road should be protected as scenic byways or parkways. East Sunset Boulevard and Augusta Road will develop; however, ensure that the rural viewsheds are preserved along with the growth, working hard to celebrate the authentic rural character and spirit.



Old Cherokee



East Sunset - Opportunities for improved corridor development that preserves rural character.

Analysis



The South Lake area is a beautiful historic neighborhood that should be celebrated and enhanced as a major front porch into the "Historic Town of Lexington." As much as possible, South Lake should be a local route for residents and visitors, not a preferred truck route.



Greenville Comparison

During a field trip to Greenville, many similarities were discovered between Main Street Lexington and Main Street Greenville. Greenville is an appropriate model for taking the first step in revitalizing downtown Lexington due to the city's long-term commitment to planning and development, rebuilding a robust downtown core and similar starting points, such as state highway as Main Street, truck traffic, parking, improving streetscape amenities. Greenville's downtown, consistently lauded over the past 20 years for its vibrant downtown, started with a plan, a vision and a commitment by community leaders to focus on bringing people back to Main Street every day and every night to enjoy working, playing, art, music, shopping, dining, meeting friends and living. Lexington can enjoy the same success with a commitment to the vision.

Main Street Greenville and Main Street Lexington have the same right-of-way (ROW) dimension, +/- 70', the distance measured from facade to facade. Using Greenville as a model, Lexington can

create the same vibrancy along the public realm - outdoor dining, landscaped buffers between pedestrians and cars and substantial shade trees.

VISION PLAN



Greenville : +/- 70' Row

LEXINGTON, SC



Lexington: +/- 70' Row

The scale of buildings (height) differs; however, Lexington can increase the depth of sidewalks and fill in the gaps along Main Street with buildings (maximum height 3-4 storeys) and plant major

trees to create the same density that encourages street life and the creation of Third Places.

Analysis

SUMMARY *of* PUBLIC INPUT

Q: What do the people of Lexington want for their town?

- Enhance the small town atmosphere and sense of community where people truly care about each other
- Enhance the exemplary schools
- Celebrate Lexington's history
- Support an iconic connection (mixed-use development) to Lake Murray
- Support and promote a vibrant downtown (retail, recreation, cultural events, entertainment)
- Create a network of sidewalks and bike paths throughout town that connect to the Central Midlands Pathways Plan
- Alleviate traffic congestion through town, particularly on US 378 and Main Street
- Create and support an organizational structure to promote and recruit activity and investment in downtown
- Create beautiful entries into town and landscaped corridors throughout town
- Create a cultural/arts center in downtown and integrate the arts into economic development activities
- Preserve the rural character in concert with sustainable and progressive development
- Develop more passive and active recreational opportunities in town
- Build on what is uniquely and authentically Lexington
- Create a beautifully landscaped boulevard with sidewalks and bike paths from town to Lake Murray
- Capture local spending capacity in order to strengthen the local economy while attracting outside dollars (retail, recreation, cultural events, entertainment) - keep revenue in town rather than Harbison or the Vista
- Continue collaborative planning with Lexington County

Goal: Vibrant Downtown

Q: What are the goals for Lexington?

- Direct people to downtown and what is there
- Create the nucleus of activity - get people downtown for a variety of activities
- Commit to pedestrians first in downtown
- Create a municipal structure to market, enhance and cultivate downtown, such as community development corporation
- incentive program for facades, improvements to property and businesses
- Create a marketing campaign that sells downtown, cultural, retail, and recreation
- Create a Center for the Arts

Goal: Small Town Atmosphere

Connect people... neighbors to neighbors, merchants to customers, people to the unique places in Lexington, building societal bridges with the faith community

Goal: Set Lexington apart

- Beautiful entrances and corridors
- A commitment to pedestrian safety and community wellness
- Access to Lake Murray
- Celebrating Lexington's history
- Exemplification of small town qualities... taking care of your own



- Promote the culture of Lexington - history, the arts, outdoor recreation, the faith community
- Wayfinding - signage to places in town, not directing people to places out of town
- Every town has a 378 commercial corridor: it is a necessary formula mixture of national and local retail and service businesses. The formula works.
- Unique history or downtown that can establish Lexington as a destination and as an even more wonderful place to live, to do business and to visit.

Goal: Alleviate Infamous Traffic Woes

- Prioritize centers for redevelopment and enhancements
- Commit to being uniquely Lexington, not just a stock SCDOT plan
- Make decisions that support the Town's vision to improve connectivity between downtown, parks, schools, neighborhoods and retail and that improve vehicle efficiencies

- Embrace innovative tools for managing traffic flow
- Traffic congestion relief is dependent on addressing the issue within a broad context, not a singular corridor, intersection or neighborhood.

Goal: Connection to Lake Murray

- Residents feel that Lake Murray is part of the Town's identity, yet there is limited access on the Lexington side.
- Provide a unique public place on the Lake - physically connect the town to Lake Murray with a beautiful boulevard, safe trails for pedestrians and cyclists.

Relationship of Vision Plan to the *Comprehensive Plan 2008 Update*

To be successful, the Vision Plan must have support of the residents, but it must also have political support. This plan incorporates the ideas and recommendations of hundreds of Lexington residents and community and business leaders. On the political side, the Vision Plan does mirror and complement the town's *Comprehensive Plan 2008 Update*. This is an important relationship. The Comprehensive Plan, which has been adopted by Town Council, provides policy direction. In turn, the Vision Plan can provide a systemic approach for accomplishing the vision as well as meeting the requirements of the comprehensive plan. Following is a brief overview of the relationship between the two plans. In short, both documents share the same mission. This Vision Plan provides avenues for achieving the mission of the Comprehensive Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan provides the political grounding for the Vision Plan.

TOWN OF LEXINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE OF 2008

Comprehensive Plan

Mission Statement

The Town of Lexington exists to efficiently and effectively provide essential public services for its citizens, businesses, and visitors. The Town further strives to:

preserve its identity and character,

- Small town atmosphere
- Front porches
- Wayfinding and signage
- Recognition and celebration of distinct neighborhoods and areas of town
- Connection to Lake Murray
- Historic buildings
- Parks
- Transportation management

promote recreation and the arts,

- Trails - wellness and connectivity (within town and regionally)
- Arts center
- Public art
- Community events
- Public access to Lake Murray

support excellence in education,

- Connectivity
- History of Lexington
- Historic district as a downtown educational laboratory
- Quality of life that will continue to attract families

thereby, ensuring a vibrant future for the Town.

- Public/private investments
- Economic viability and diversity
- Municipal structure to manage investments, incentives and development
- Long-term plan that enhances beauty, sustainability, and efficiency of services and transportation
- Appropriate development as the town grows that maintains its unique character
- Wellness - walking, running and cycling
- A town that attracts the brightest and the best (people, commerce and development of the built environment)

VISION PLAN

Comprehensive Plan

Vision

The Town's vision is to be a great place to live, work, play and visit in a clean, green, safe, thriving, economically sounds, easily accessible and inviting community.

The vision statement, as written on page 7, shares this vision.

Comprehensive Plan

Guiding Principles

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

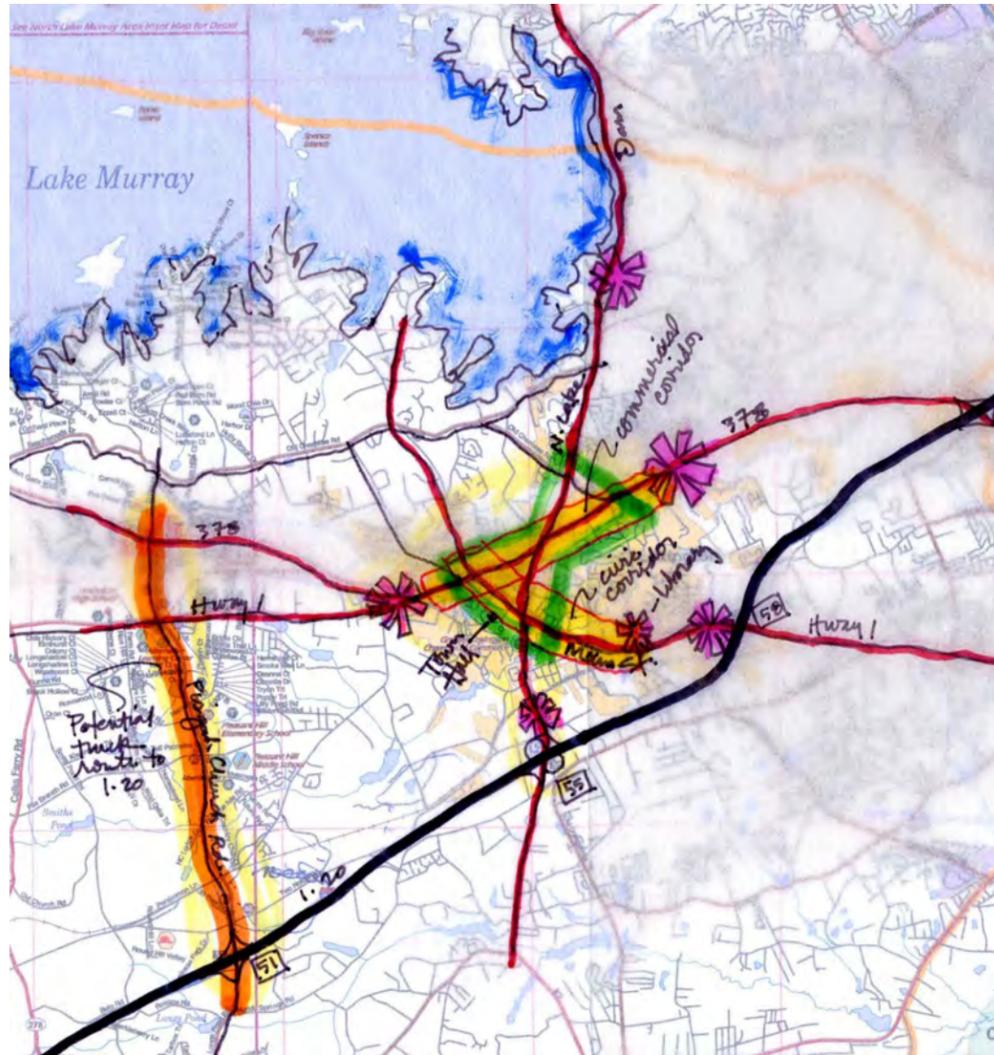
- Quality design of development
- Compact growth
- A strong economy
- Coordination of development with capital improvements
- Sustainable development
- Parks and recreational opportunities
- A strong downtown
- A comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system

Vision Plan

Guiding principles

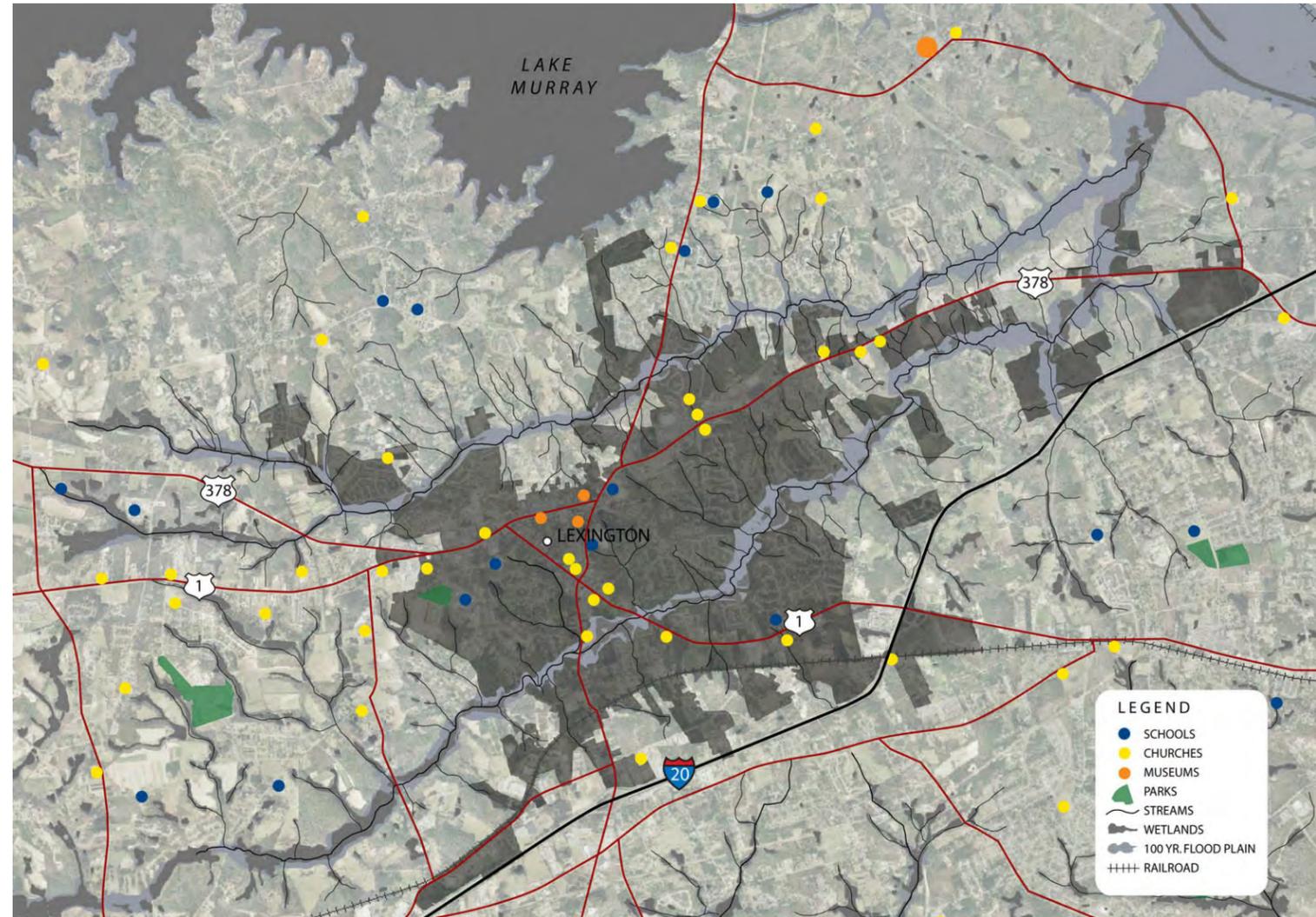
- Sustain Main Street and downtown as the heart of Lexington
- Sustain Lexington's sense of community
- Enhance Lexington's small town feel
- Strive for intentional, sustainable and authentic development
- Increase connectivity
- Strive for innovation and sustainability in all developments and programs
- Require the highest quality design and development

Site Analysis



Initial Analysis: Civic and Commercial Corridors

Strategic Location: Lexington enjoys a strategic, central location with direct access to Interstate 20 and Interstate 26, to air and rail, and to the shores of Lake Murray and the Saluda River. Furthermore, Lexington sits at the confluence of major US and SC highways within a few miles of the University of South Carolina, Columbia College, Midlands Technical College and other higher education institutions. Lexington's location positions the town to remain a viable and profitable choice for commerce, educational, recreational and cultural development.



Composition diagram



Surrounding areas



The following images illustrate the vision, providing the pictures of what can be as imagined in the vision statement and expressed by numerous residents. Each illustration is conceptual and does not represent real projects, just the potential as the town moves forward with the implementation of the Vision Plan.

Site Analysis



The master plan for downtown focuses on creating a pedestrian friendly Main Street. Models from around the country and Greenville, in particular, prove that appropriate design and planning for pedestrians can revive Main Street.

Main Street will benefit from a major destination or anchor business. The corner of West Butler Street and South Church Street is a valid site to consider for development as well as other vacant lots along Church and Main. Located on the corner, an active retail anchor can become a destination and encourage pedestrian traffic throughout the Triangle District for dining, shopping and other activities.

The Town of Lexington should manage the parking areas (security, signage, lighting, landscaping) rather than each individual establishment, thereby creating more efficient parking. Eventually a parking deck could be built to accommodate the cars associated with increased retail and cultural development in downtown Lexington.

The Main Street historic district (Triangle District) should begin at the Old Mill across from Harmon Street and extend to Sunset Boulevard. Enhance the pedestrian experience along the area leading up to Main Street by adding street trees, new sidewalks, curbing, and crosswalks will enhance the value

of everything. Along East Main Street, consider creating gathering points with gazebos, benches, and small gardens to invite and welcome people to enjoy downtown.

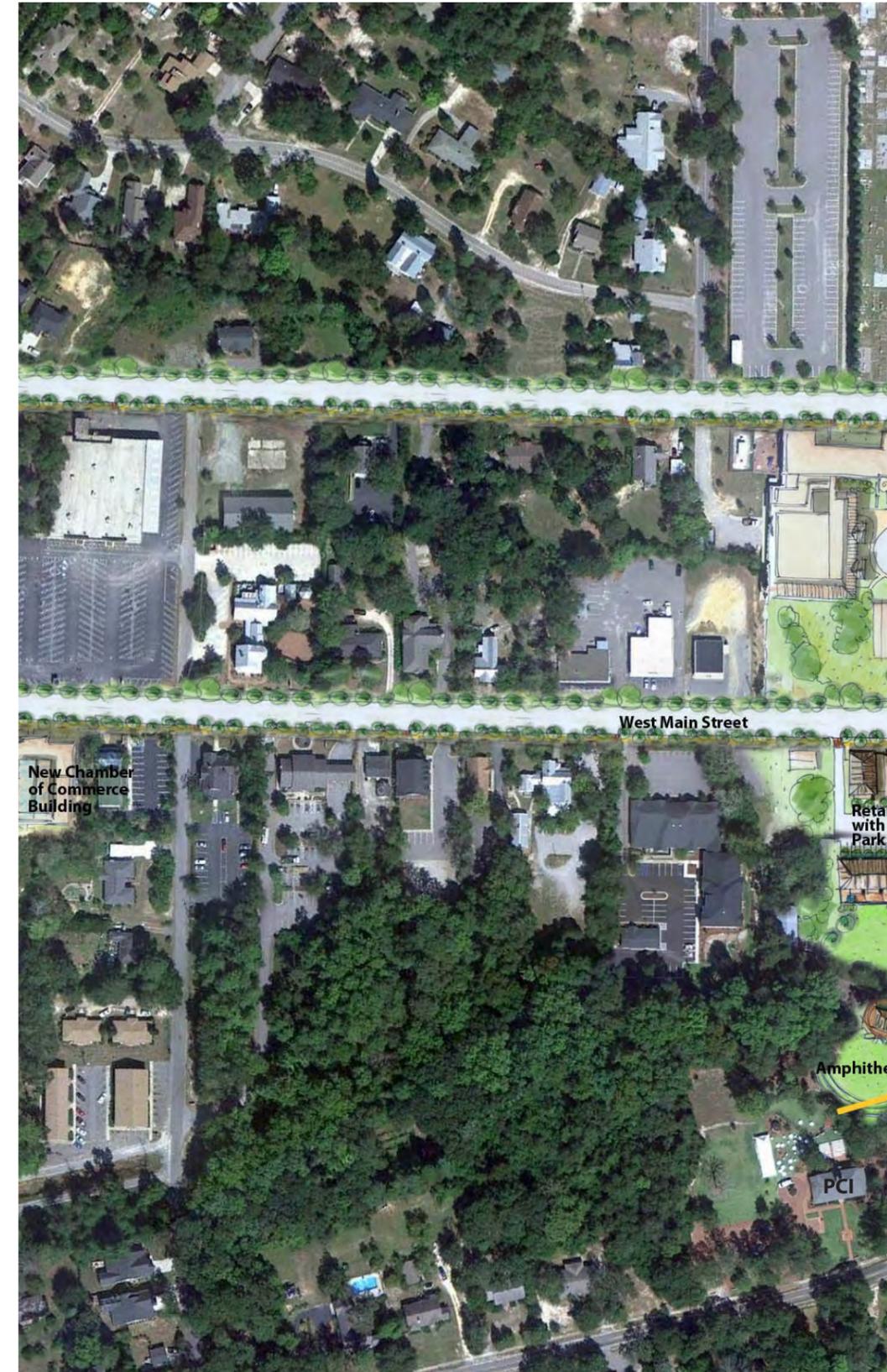
The Main Street corridor from the Old Mill to the new Chamber of Commerce office site is the heart of the Triangle District. Improvements to this corridor (sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, signage, facade enhancements, parking) can be phased but should be leveraged with the construction of the new Chamber office and planned site work that will affirm and support beautifully the vision plan. The Old Mill pond area and the new Chamber building are unique anchors to this central area. What happens in between these anchors should be the critical mass of activities - retail, social, cultural - that drives the energy and the beautification on Main Street.

The topography behind the Palmetto Collegiate Institute creates an ideal setting for a natural amphitheatre, which can serve as the terminus of Maiden Lane. The amphitheater will complement and increase events and programs at the Palmetto Collegiate Institute and throughout downtown. Offices, upper-story housing and outdoor dining could be located along Church Street, connecting Main Street to Maiden Lane and the Palmetto Collegiate Institute with an active pedestrian way.

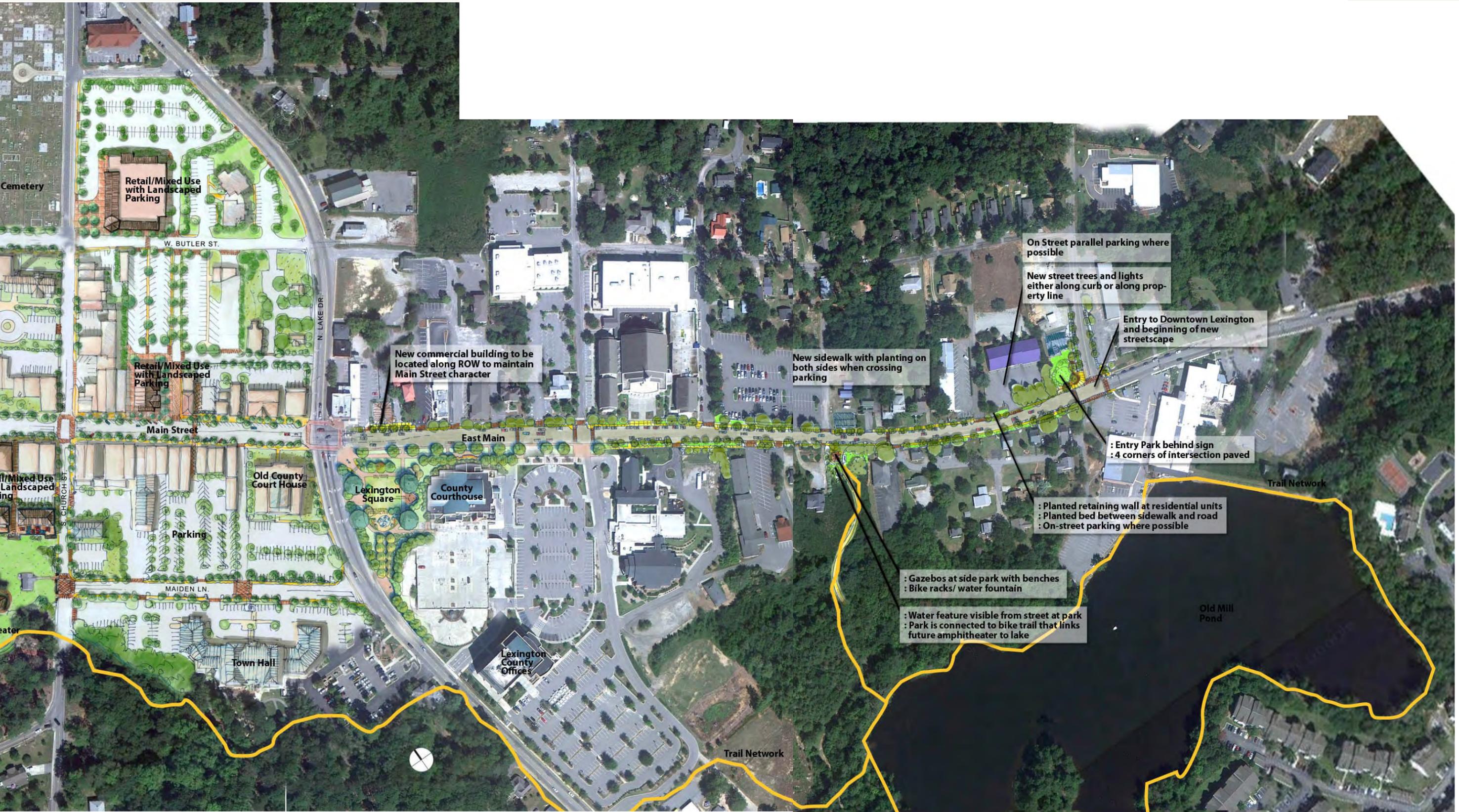
Key buildings and current projects to consider for leveraging as success stories to attract and recruit new projects and activity on Main Street include:

- Lexington Square
- Chamber of Commerce building
- Existing Main Street businesses
- Old Mill pond area
- Old Courthouse
- Virginia Hylton Park
- Palmetto Collegiate Institute
- Existing Parking

These buildings and projects, when viewed on a macro level, are beginning to create the critical mass and fertile ground for new economic activity in vacant buildings and lots. By connecting these assets through improved sidewalks, signage and landscaping, the Town is on the path to success. Collectively, these assets create a mass of activity and a firm foundation for moving forward.



Illustrative Plans



New commercial building to be located along ROW to maintain Main Street character

New sidewalk with planting on both sides when crossing parking

On Street parallel parking where possible

New street trees and lights either along curb or along property line

Entry to Downtown Lexington and beginning of new streetscape

: Entry Park behind sign
: 4 corners of intersection paved

: Planted retaining wall at residential units
: Planted bed between sidewalk and road
: On-street parking where possible

: Gazebos at side park with benches
: Bike racks/ water fountain

: Water feature visible from street at park
: Park is connected to bike trail that links future amphitheater to lake

Illustrative Plans



Main Street Core



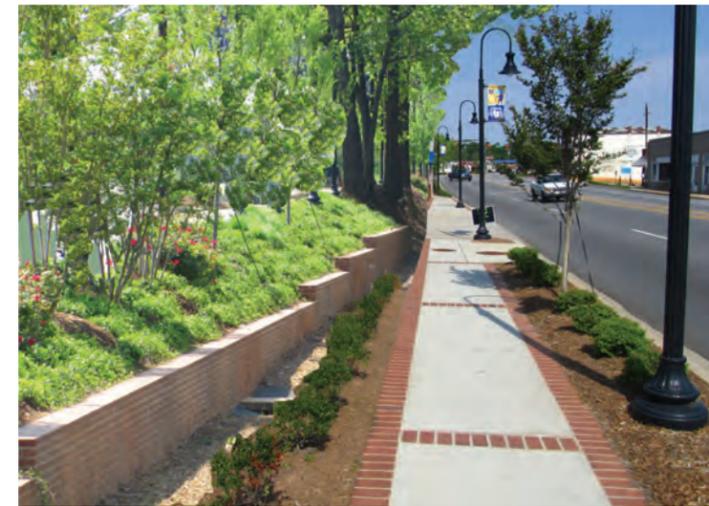
Main Street



East Main



West Main

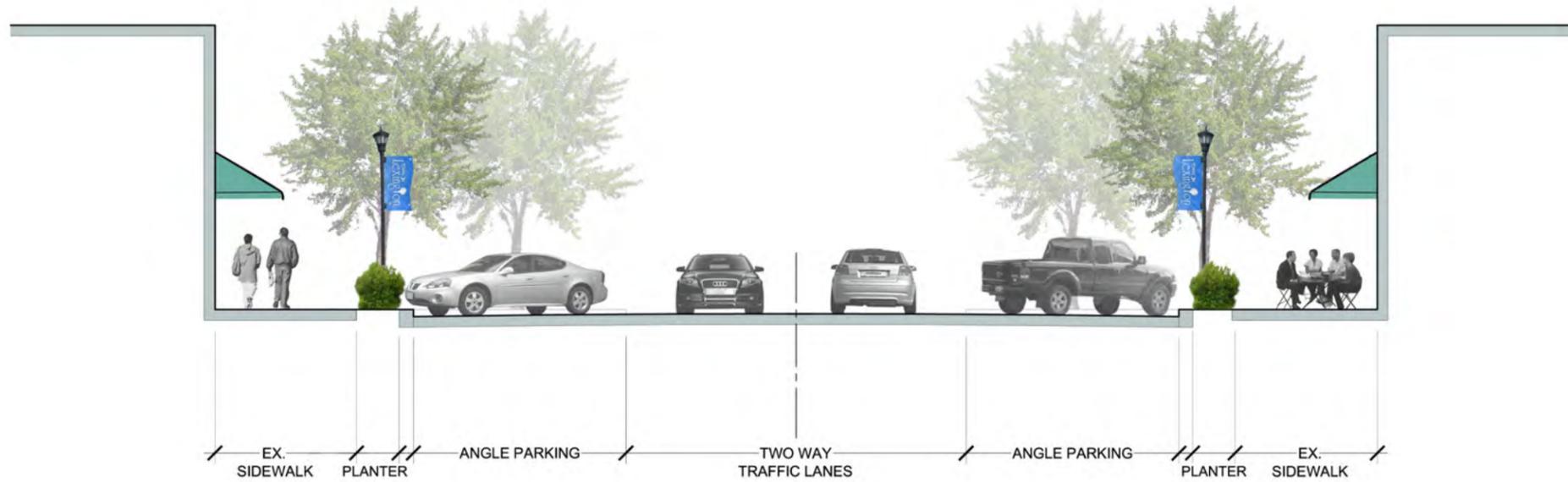


Travelers Rest

These photographs show improvements to Main Street in Travelers Rest that have created a downtown environment that invites people to visit, to sit, to shop and raises the bar on aesthetics (design and beautification).

These photographs of Main Street illustrate potential areas to create unified, well-designed entries into the heart of Lexington - the Triangle District. Consistency in landscaping, lighting, signage, sidewalk treatments and a focus on creating a pedestrian friendly district will increase the perception (and reality) that the Triangle is a vibrant district, will bolster the economic activity and retail viability, and will encourage more to use the Triangle as a third place. People will want to be in the Triangle District for pleasure, shopping, dining, living.

Illustrative Plans



Main Street Section, proposed

Main Street should maintain two-way traffic. This Vision Plan does not support the SCDOT plan to make Main and Butler Streets one-way pairs. **Long-term recommendations** for Main Street include removing the median on Main Street and rebuilding angled parking on both sides, as illustrated above.

This creates safer access and visibility for retail shops and increases the width between the curb and the buildings, thereby creating sidewalks more conducive to outdoor dining, seating, and other gatherings. Landscaped alleys connect Main Street to West Butler Street and Maiden Lane, physically and visually, which enhances traffic flow and the convenience of parking.



Maiden Lane Existing



Maiden Lane Proposed

Maiden Lane, landscaped and tree-lined, becomes a beautiful civic corridor that connects Town Hall, Virginia Hylton Park, the County offices, Lexington Square and the Palmetto Collegiate Institute and directs people to park in the Maiden Lane parking lot.

Maiden Lane should remain a two-way street, not a one-way thoroughfare out of town. The lane should be enhanced with street trees and other landscaping, designated pedestrian crosswalks connecting Town Hall to parking and Main Street, pedestrian-scaled signage and lighting. Maiden Lane should become a beautiful, safe lane that enhances pedestrian connectivity and can serve as a beautiful space for festivals and events.

▲ Main Street/Church Street



Church Street Existing

The intersection of Main and Church is a major corner for welcoming one to Main Street shopping. The recent renovation to the Craig Reagin building and the eclectic architecture of The Needler are examples of authenticity and unique Lexington retail experiences. Additional improvements to the streetscape will tie Main Street together as a district.

This illustration shows potential infill development along Main Street with additional streetscaping.



Church Street Proposal

Illustrative Plans

▲ Main Street

It is important to have density on Main Street with a mix of green space. The success of downtown depends, in significant measure, on buildings and streets that provide a sense of intimacy through density and respect for the human scale. This intimacy, created with a mix of building, landscaping and green space, conveys a sense of comfort and a sense of economic well-being that supports the activities and businesses on Main Street.

There are several potential development sites in downtown such as the Town's properties along Butler and Church and vacant lots and buildings along Main Street. Developing these sites will fill the gaps and increase the necessary density that defines a vibrant downtown.



Main Street Existing



Main Street Proposed



Church Street, Existing



Church Street, Proposed

Church Street has potential to connect Main Street to Maiden Lane and the Palmetto Collegiate Institute and proposed amphitheatre with new buildings and landscaping, extending the unique experience of downtown.

Illustrative Plans

PURPOSE OF LEXINGTON SQUARE

To create a place of beauty for the residents of Lexington County to honor those people who have dedicated their lives to the community and those events that exemplify the history of and influence the future of Lexington County.

Lexington Square, located at the civic and governmental center of Lexington County and the Town of Lexington, represents the heart of the community. As the center of town, Lexington Square will serve as a commemorative public space - a place for the community to gather, a place for celebrations, a place to reflect and a place of honor for memorials and monuments. This conceptual plan for Lexington Square illustrates recommendations for the location of planned memorials and for future memorials, integrated into a beautifully landscaped, public garden. Lexington Square also will unify the existing memorials (POW/MIA, Civil War, WWI, 9/11, Veterans Memorial Tree) with the planned memorials on the Square (Fallen Officers, Judge Westbrook and Randall Davis) and future memorials.



Birds Eye View of Lexington Square



Existing Courthouse Park



Plan View

FRONT PORCHES

Lexington needs to improve its *first impression*.

To most visitors, Highway 378 - sprawl, traffic congestion, billboards, lack of amenities and beauty - is the defining impression of the town. Lexington needs to clean up its entries and present a positive face - landscaping, sidewalks, management of powerlines, billboards and curbcuts (excessive access points to Sunset Boulevard). This will take time and a significant investment of public resources. However, the improvements can be phased and will have a tremendous impact on the quality of life and beauty in Lexington. Residents no longer want their hometown to be recognized for its traffic and suburban growth. Their vision is to be recognized as a beautiful small town that develops with respect to and for the sustainability of its assets.

WHY FRONT PORCHES?

Residents were unanimous in their desire to remain a welcoming, small, southern town. Nothing conveys this more than a front porch. Any town or city can have gateways, but Lexington deserves more. The front porches will welcome visitors and will say "Welcome Home" to residents.

The design of the front porches will reflect the small town charm and the rural, yet progressive character of Lexington.

The front porches will be the Town of Lexington's first impression - welcoming, inviting, and sharing a bit of the character and the values that make Lexington such a great hometown. The front porches will be beautifully landscaped with new curbing, planted buffers that separate improved or new sidewalks on each side of the boulevard. New, raised medians will divide the boulevards and streets. Street trees, flowers, shrubbery, streetlamps, and banners will give a pedestrian scale to the front porches as well as enhance the aesthetic appeal and quality of life for the town. As the town expands its boundaries, the front porches can evolve and move. Paying attention to entrances into town - the front porches - will nurture the vision plan by providing reason and confidence for more investments in the Town of Lexington.

Recommended Phasing for the Front Porches

1. Beautification Foundation Interchange Design at Sunset Boulevard and Interstate 20

Work together with the Foundation to implement the current design, mutually beneficial to the goals of the Foundation and to the Vision Plan.

2. Sunset Boulevard and Corley Mill

Coordinate design and construction with the current transportation planning at this intersection that is addressing changes in traffic levels and patterns due to the new schools.

3. Old Cherokee at Sunset Boulevard and North Lake Drive

Create iconic intersections that announce entry into town from Lake Murray and from Interstate 20 while providing safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings and pathways (connectivity), connecting large residential neighborhoods to the retail along Sunset Boulevard and to the planned regional pathways system.

4. Interchange Beautification at East Main street and Interstate 20

5. Sunset Boulevard/Augusta Road Split

The western doorway into town and out into the rural areas of Lexington County

6. Interchange Beautification at South Lake Drive and Interstate 20

7. East Main at Town Limits

Eastern doorway to the historic downtown area.



The front porch at Sunset Boulevard and Corley Mill will welcome all to the Town of Lexington through a beautiful, tree-lined boulevard, banners and generous pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. This will complement the new schools, cinema complex and other future development.



Sunset Boulevard and Corley Mill, Existing



Sunset Boulevard and Corley Mill, Proposed

Illustrative Plans



I-20 / 378 Interchange - Conceptual Planting Plan
 Designed by Green Earth | Funded by the Lexington Beautification Foundation

This project will set the standard for future Vision Plan projects and will welcome people to the Town. The I-20 interchanges at Main Street and South Lake should be enhanced with a similar design as funding is available.



Interstate 20 and Highway 378 / Interchange, Existing

Illustrative Plans

CORRIDORS

If a street is designed to be safe for a child, then the street will be right for everyone. Designing a safe environment for children to walk and to bike will create a preferred environment for all residents. This means providing, everywhere possible, a landscaped buffer between the roadway and the areas of pedestrian and cyclist movement. This is not always feasible due to recently installed sidewalks, but the town and county should commit to this principal for all new roadways and as existing corridors and roadways are improved.

There is potential to enhance traveling through town by creating traffic release points. These release points allows traffic to be disbursed rather than concentrated or as concentrated as it is now. Improving existing corridors, streets and key intersections along with improved signalization will allow for better disbursement of traffic. Constructing bike lanes and sidewalks along every corridor will increase mobility, safety, beauty and the general quality of life for residents.

The following figures reference projects that have been completed or proposed in other South Carolina counties that incorporate Complete Streets ideals. In Figure 1, a signalized intersection is shown on US Highway 278 in Hilton Head Island. This is a good example of what is possible for the US 378 corridor in select locations and the North Lake Drive corridor leading to Lake Murray. All elements, from aesthetics to pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, are blended to provide a well-rounded signalized intersection. Similar possibilities exist along the roadway corridors as shown in Figures 2 , 3 and 4. These figures show the possibilities of providing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access in a context sensitive manner. In narrow corridors, Figure 2 shows the use of landscape islands and dedicated bike lanes along the roadway as well as sidewalks. In areas where more room is available, Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the ability to incorporate landscape design elements as well as separated recreational use paths. These figures illustrate the numerous possibilities that exist throughout the Lexington's major corridors.

Case Studies by Dennis Corporation
Figure 1



US 278, Hilton Head Island

Figure 2



SC 802

Figure 3



SC 170

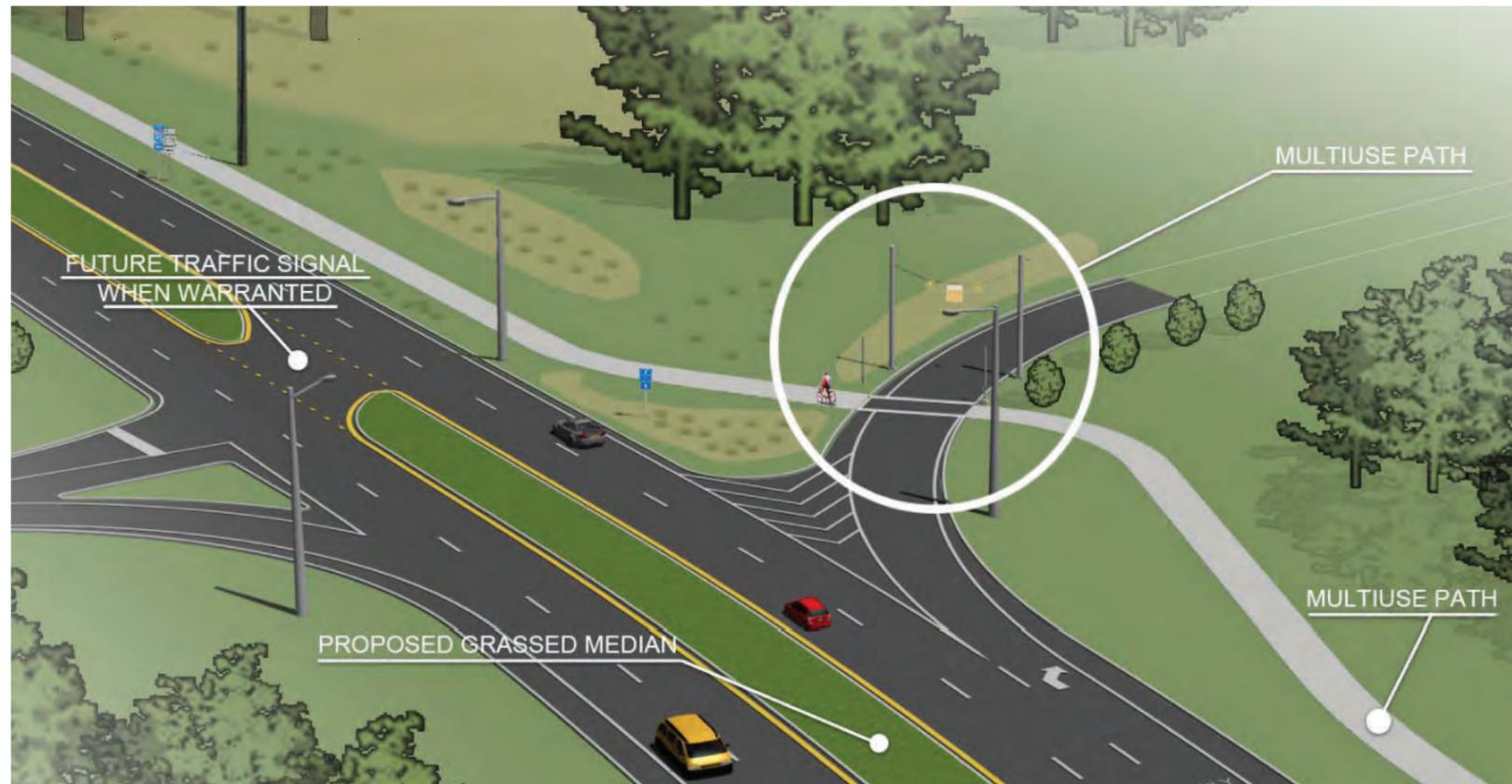


Figure 4

Proposal for SC 170
Dennis Corporation

Illustrative Plans



Old Cherokee at North Lake



Old Cherokee at North Lake



Old Cherokee at North Lake



Old Cherokee at North Lake



Old Cherokee at North Lake, Proposed

Illustrative Plans



Old Cherokee at Sunset



Old Cherokee at Sunset, Existing



Old Cherokee at Sunset, Proposed



Old Cherokee at Sunset, Proposed

This intersection should be one of the first improvements for it can establish a standard for pedestrian crossings and landscaping. This intersection can become a major threshold for crossing over into the Triangle Historic District.



East Sunset Boulevard



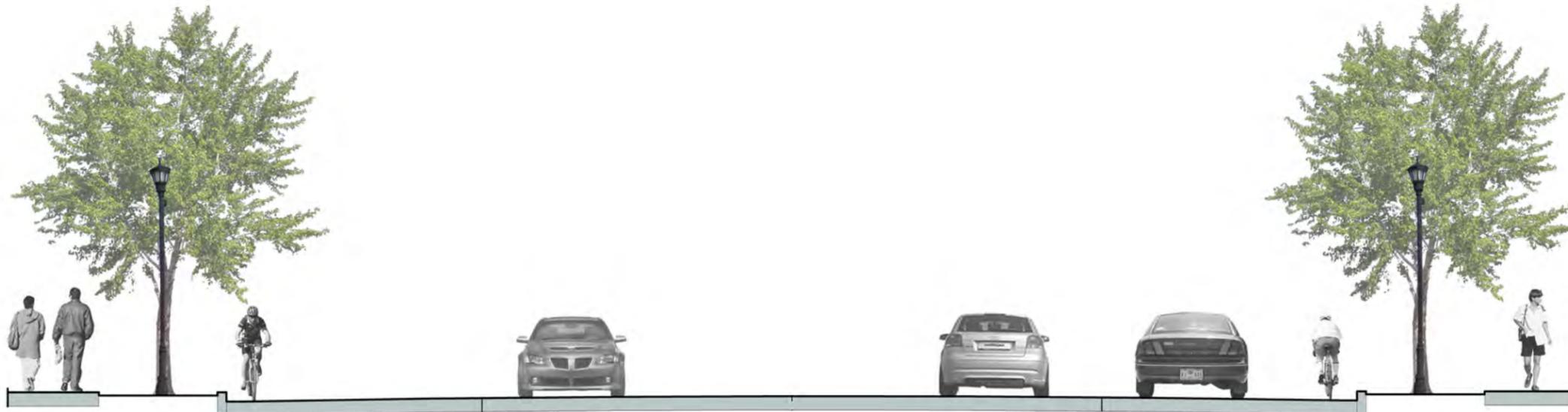
East Sunset Boulevard



West Sunset Boulevard



West Sunset Boulevard



East and West Sunset Boulevard, Proposed

This section illustrates how Sunset Boulevard can be enhanced with landscaping and improved sidewalks. These improvements, which can be phased, will make Sunset Boulevard a more enjoyable and beautiful commercial corridor, establishing a positive image for the town.



North Lake Drive



North Lake Drive

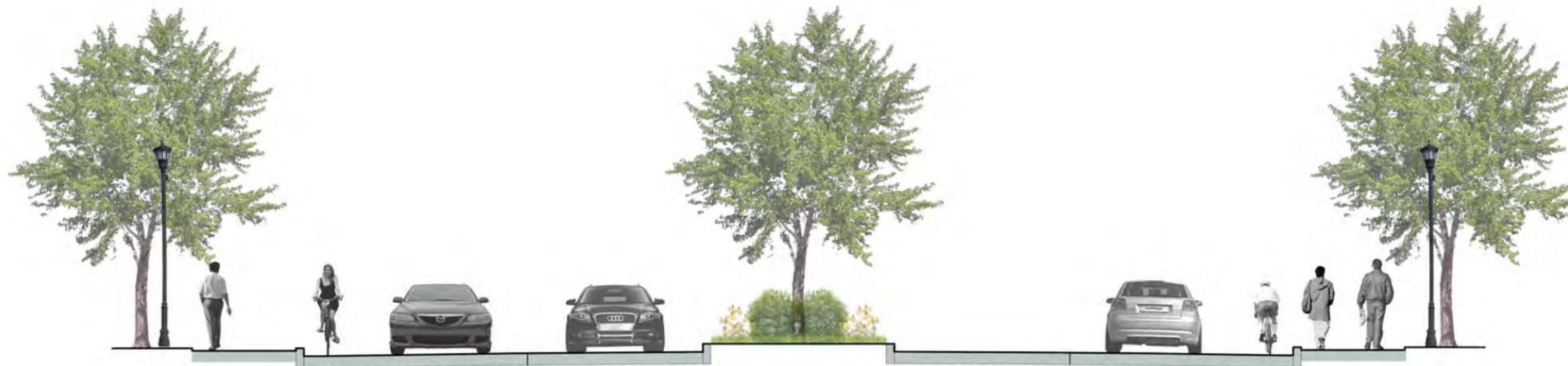


North Lake Drive



North Lake Drive

North Lake Drive is the “Parkway to Lake Murray” and should reflect this through its design. By building on the recent improvements to North Lake, landscaped medians could be constructed, which will improve the aesthetics as well as safety of pedestrians and cyclists. This will improve the livability for those living in this area and provide greater multi-modal access to and from the Lake.



North Lake Drive, Proposed

Illustrative Plans



South Lake Drive



South Lake Drive



South Lake Drive



South Lake Drive



South Lake Drive, Proposed



South Lake Drive

South Lake Drive could become the primary entrance into the Triangle Historic District due to the historic buildings that line the drive. Maintaining this historic character is very important.

Illustrative Plans

Implementation

RECOMMENDATIONS



Make No little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood...make big plans, aim high in hope and work.

- Daniel Burnham

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Town of Lexington's economic development goal is to promote policies that encourage new and expanded business activity within the town, and especially in the downtown area, that results in growth in employment, income and the tax base in the town.

While the town is committed to promoting economic development throughout the entire town, the planning team was given clear direction to focus attention on the downtown area. The following strategies are comprised of both immediate-term tasks and mid-to-long-term tasks, focused on the downtown area.

There is one critical underlying factor necessary for the Town to successfully implement each of these strategies: **the political will and continued commitment to aggressively pursue these strategies.** Some will be more easily accomplished than others, but the Town leadership will need to make the political and financial commitment to see them through to completion.

The strategies included on the following pages are recommended for implementation within the next three years in order to support the Vision Plan.

1 CREATE ACTIVITY DOWNTOWN, STARTING WITH A FARMERS' MARKET ON MAIN STREET

During a mentor town field trip to Travelers Rest, Greenville and Simpsonville, one key effort became apparent in the success of revitalizing downtown and Main Street: get people coming back to Main Street for social and cultural events - get people to fall in love with Main Street again. Where Greenville's Main Street had declined into a Monday through Friday, 8 to 5 place, the city of Greenville was desperate to turn the tide, so started by instituting a downtown farmers market. Other efforts followed the success of the market: Thursday night parties with live music and libations, hotels, the Peace Center, upper story apartments, new businesses. The simple act of getting people back to Main Street on Saturday mornings to buy local produce, arts and crafts spurred downtown Greenville's renaissance.

Lexington has followed suit. In May 2011, the town hosted its inaugural Farmers Market. The Lexington Farmers Market got off to a strong start and is expected to not only spur economic activity for vendors in the area, but just as importantly, it is expected to draw more and more people to the downtown area. While the market by itself may not create the necessary critical mass of new activity in the area, it is an important step forward and a visible sign that the Town is serious about promoting more commerce in the Downtown area - achieving the vision for the downtown area.

The Wine Walk, Oktoberfest and the Christmas Parade are successful examples of the types of events that will welcome residents and new visitors to Main Street. The town and civic organizations should work together to create more activity, which will only make downtown more marketable and attractive as a place to do business.

The town should create a new annual event within the next 18 months to celebrate and promote Lexington's culture and assets such as history, natural resources, community passion for sports, the arts (visual and performing), and family and faith-based activities. One possibility is to revive the former tradition of the Snow Ball Festival into a larger event that can include the lighting of the Christmas Tree and caroling on Lexington Square, the Christmas Parade, a concert in the old Courthouse and the Snow Ball. This will revive tradition and build on something that is uniquely Lexington.



Wine Walk



Oktoberfest

2 CREATE THE TRIANGLE DISTRICT

In order to focus attention on and to market the downtown area, the town should define and designate the Triangle District (the Triangle). The Triangle will have designated boundaries and can be marketed similar to other commercial districts such as the Vista, Five Points, and Old Town. Designation creates an identity and a place to promote as a destination... "Meet me in the Triangle." Recommended boundaries (outlined in yellow) are illustrated on the map to the right.

WHY THE TRIANGLE?

The purpose of the Triangle is to promote awareness of this historic area and to encourage cooperation among businesses and individuals who have a mutual interest in promoting commerce in the downtown area. Unique signage and other means could be used to help clearly identify the Triangle from the rest of the town. The Triangle would help create the sense of being part of the downtown experience for both visitors and businesses.

The formation of the Triangle would create substantial opportunities for the town to encourage businesses to locate within the Triangle by providing special promotions, advertising, or incentives such as facade grants. The Triangle boundaries should be consistent with the boundaries of a Community Development Corporation, as discussed in a following section.

Two steps toward creating and promoting the Triangle are installing signs to invite people to the Triangle and to create an organization to shepherd its promotion.

First, install Signage (3) on I-20: "Welcome to Historic Downtown Lexington." There are no signs along I-20 to indicate that there is a wonderful, historic town to experience. Grab travelers' attention and

welcome them to *Historic Downtown Lexington* - to the Triangle. This is the first step in telling the town's unique story.



Sample Interstate Signage

Secondly, consider joining the South Carolina Main Street Program. This program is associated with the Municipal Association of South Carolina and is well respected throughout the state. It is designed to provide technical assistance to small towns and cities through a wide array of services including organization, design, promotion, and economic development. Main Street South Carolina provides intensive on and off-site technical assistance and training to communities competitively selected for the Main Street South Carolina program.

3 CREATE THE LEXINGTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDC)

The town should form a community development corporation (CDC) to help implement the economic development strategies specifically for the area within the boundaries of the Triangle. A CDC focused on economic development is a non-profit 501(c)(3) community-based organization that helps promote economic development in a community.

A CDC can be created by individuals, businesses, and others. A CDC would be a critical partner in promoting and implementing various economic development strategies for the town for many years. The CDC would have greater flexibility to work with private sector partners and new and expanding businesses in the Triangle. A CDC can buy, sell, hold land and develop



Triangle District, proposed

property. It can receive grants from Federal, State and local governments as well as private sources.

There are modest legal fees that are necessary to create the CDC, but there are several sources of technical assistance available to the Town to help form the CDC. The South Carolina Main Street Program through the Municipal Association of South Carolina offers technical assistance as does the South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations (SCSCDC -- <http://www.communitydevelopmentsc.org>).

The staffing and initial funding could be relatively modest to start. The town could utilize existing office space and staff to assist the CDC. First year funding could be as little as \$25,000. Once the CDC is fully operational, dedicated staff and resources might be required. Many CDC's start out with initial funding in

the form of donated land and/or buildings. The CDC could use these assets to leverage funds for additional economic development projects. Many CDC's create loan pools to use as revolving loans for downtown businesses. For example, the Columbia Development Corporation has a revolving loan pool with about \$3 million in assets.

The CDC requires a board of directors and by-laws that are created at the beginning of the process. While there is already a Lexington County CDC, it is recommended that the town pursue creating its own, separate entity: the Lexington Development Corporation (LDC). The two CDC's may have many similar goals and missions; and if so, they can cooperate as needed. However, given the relative size of the Triangle compared to the size and the needs of the County, the LDC will focus solely on the Triangle.

Town Council should take the lead in this task and create an ad hoc steering committee of Town officials, leading business owners and property owners within the downtown area to begin discussions on creating the LDC. One of the first tasks of this committee should be to contact the Municipal Association and the Columbia Development Corporation for advice on the process.

Once created, the town, through the LDC and within the Triangle, can create a menu of various programs to encourage new businesses to locate in the Triangle and to assist existing businesses in the Triangle. The following is the initial group of potential programs recommended for consideration by the town.

A. FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The buildings facing Main Street are in generally good condition, but several can be improved. The LDC can create a pool of funds to assist businesses with facade improvements. The guidelines and requirements for eligibility can be determined by the board of the LDC and the Town of Lexington planning staff. In many communities, these funds range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per facade, consisting of grants and low interest loans.

B. DIRECT GRANT PROGRAM

The LDC can create an aggressive grant program to encourage new businesses to locate in the Triangle District and to help existing businesses grow and prosper. Guidelines will need to be developed like the façade program, but several communities in South Carolina have direct grant programs and have experienced good results. The amounts of these grants would vary and could be tied to job creation and/or capital investment.

C. INCUBATOR PROGRAM

New technology and the new economy present ever-changing challenges to small towns and economic development efforts. A business and technology incubator program can help grow new, home-grown small businesses, which are key to the growth and vitality of a community. Locating an incubator on Main Street will be a testament to the town's commitment to downtown and help recruit people and new businesses.

Consider partnering with higher education institutions such as the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development at Sandhill. Clemson has presented a potential program to the town and county leadership and appears to be a very viable opportunity. Discussions should continue with Clemson or similar programs at USC in order to pursue small, start-up high tech firms and to build a higher education presence in downtown.

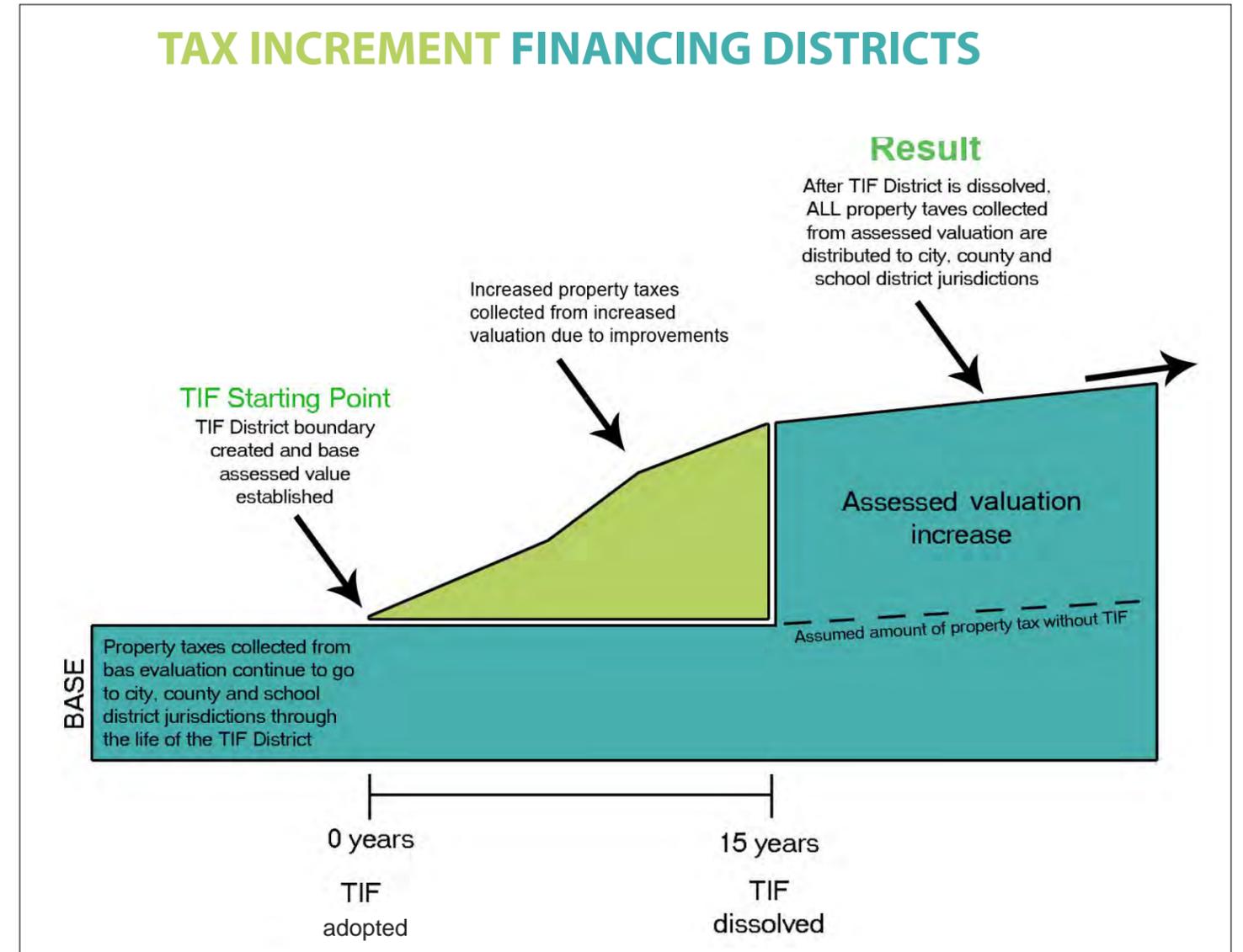
D. BANK CONSORTIUM

The LDC should help create a consortium of local banks to finance the incentive programs adopted by the town. Substantial interest was expressed by numerous business owners in a program that could help businesses find suitable local financing. Several communities, in particular Sumter, South Carolina, have developed consortia of local banks. These consortia establish their own procedures and guidelines but, in general, they help locate and underwrite local economic development projects supported by the local CDC or downtown development program.

4 CREATE A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) DISTRICT

It is well known that the tool bag of economic development incentives is very limited at the municipal level. The state and counties have vastly greater tools and pools of funding to utilize in economic development projects.

One of the few tools that the town has at its disposal is the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a tool that allows municipalities and counties in South Carolina to promote economic development by earmarking property tax revenue from increases in assessed values within a designated TIF district. The general idea is that assessed property value within the TIF district will grow much faster than in the rest of the jurisdiction. The incremental tax funds (from increased tax revenues) are then used to off-set the costs of public improvements within the TIF boundaries. All TIF projects must be for capital improvements (not operating expenses) and must be owned by the Town. The graph to the right illustrates the TIF process.



It is recommended that the town create a TIF task force to identify developing areas for establishing TIF districts. Two areas to seriously consider are 1) the Triangle Historic District and 2) the Corley Mill /Sunset Boulevard area. However, the task force will determine those areas that will benefit most from a TIF and have the most potential for increased tax revenue generation.

The creation of a TIF will require the development of a Redevelopment Plan that outlines the goals and purposes of

the TIF. It is typical for legal assistance to be required by the town in the creation of the TIF.

A brief excerpt from the South Carolina Code of Laws details the components of the Redevelopment Plan:

SC code of laws, Title 31, Chapter 6

- (a) a copy of the redevelopment plan containing a statement of the objectives of a municipality with regard to the plan;

- (b) a statement indicating the need for and proposed use of the proceeds of the obligations in relationship to the redevelopment plan;
- (c) a statement containing the cost estimates of the redevelopment plan and redevelopment project and the projected sources of revenue to be used to meet the costs including estimates of tax increments and the total amount of indebtedness to be incurred;
- (d) a list of all real property in the redevelopment project area;
- (e) the duration of the redevelopment plan;
- (f) a statement of the estimated impact of the redevelopment plan upon the revenues of all taxing districts in which a redevelopment project area is located;
- (g) findings that:
 - (i) the redevelopment project area is an agricultural, blighted, or conservation area and that private initiatives are unlikely to alleviate these conditions without substantial public assistance;
 - (ii) property values in the area would remain static or decline without public intervention; and
 - (iii) redevelopment is in the interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the municipality.

The time required to create a TIF varies with the community and the complexity of the TIF plan, but a realistic goal for the town is to create a TIF by early 2013. Legal counsel would be needed to advise the Town on the exact process and procedures necessary to adopt a TIF.

The potential funding capacity of the TIF would depend on the level of capital investment in the TIF. In addition, the potential public projects to be built using TIF funds are yet to be determined. Potential projects would include but are not limited to the following:

- Public parking facilities in the Triangle District
- Performing Arts Center study for the old Courthouse
- Public infrastructure such as lighting, parks, streetscapes, signage
- Streetscaping and construction of front porches, particularly in the Corley Mill/Sunset Boulevard area

- Redevelopment of the mill pond area into a public park and greenway

In short, the town needs new revenue streams to support the recommendations of the Vision Plan as well as other capital projects to fuel new investments. A TIF, when developed with support from all relevant jurisdictions, is an effective tool for generating new revenue.

5 SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF THE MUNICIPAL CAPITAL PROJECTS TAX OR REINSTATING THE HOSPITALITY TAX IN THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON

The town - its leadership and its residents - should support the adoption of the municipal capital projects sales tax or the reinstatement of the hospitality tax in the Town of Lexington. As mentioned previously, the "tool bag" for economic development available for the town is limited by State law. These tax options are effective tools available to the town.

Many of the initiatives recommended in this plan will require new funds and would be eligible for using tax funds. This includes initiatives such as:

- a feasibility study of the old Courthouse as a performing arts venue,
- public trails such as around the Mill Pond and to expand the Central Midlands Trailways,
- additional corridor improvements on North Lake Drive to create a parkway connection to Lake Murray, and
- developing graphic identities and promotional materials for the Triangle Historic District and new civic events.

If passed by the Legislature, the municipal capital projects tax would allow the Town of Lexington residents to vote to impose a capital projects sales tax for funding specific municipal infrastructure projects. According to the Municipal Association of SC (MASC), this is not a new tax. Counties currently have this revenue source available to them. This bill would allow cities the same option to provide an alternative method of funding critical projects, such as infrastructure and road improvements, that would be

designated specifically on the ballot. The referendum would be held during a November general election.

As shared by the MASC, a county or municipality may impose a hospitality tax on the sales of prepared meals and beverages. The cumulative total of the tax may not exceed 2 percent. A county may impose a 1 percent hospitality tax within the municipal limits, without the municipal council's consent if the municipality has not already imposed the maximum 2 percent. The municipal council must consent, by resolution, for the county to impose a local hospitality tax more than 1 percent within the municipal limits.

Council must use the revenue generated by the local hospitality tax exclusively for the following purposes:

- tourism-related buildings including, but not limited to, civic centers, coliseums and aquariums;
- tourism-related cultural, recreational or historic facilities;
- beach access, beach renourishment or other tourism related lands and water access;
- highways, roads, streets and bridges providing access to tourist destinations;
- advertisements and promotions related to tourism development; or water and wastewater infrastructure to serve tourism-related demand.

While the tax was eliminated in the past, it has been argued by many town leaders and residents that they would like to see the tax re-instated, if a viable plan was adopted for the use of the funds. This Vision Plan and prioritized recommendations provide the viable plan for capital projects.

6 PROMOTE THE CONCEPT OF THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER DOWNTOWN

While the center may be several years in the future, it is recommended that the town and its leadership support efforts to locate the proposed performing arts center in the THD. The arts center would add to the reasons for visiting downtown and provide the critical mass for new retail and restaurants,

increasing pedestrian activity and the number of new visitors. It would add to the excitement and the "feeling of community" in the town. Additional feasibility studies would need to be conducted before finalizing a site. The old courthouse is a worthy option for considering as a performing arts venue due to its central location and potential for redevelopment. A feasibility study can determine the viability.

7 INVESTIGATE THE POTENTIAL OF DEVELOPING A REGIONAL SOCCER COMPLEX

The growth of youth and adult soccer in South Carolina over the last 30 years has been substantial. There is strong demand for more and more soccer fields (and fields to support lacrosse, baseball, softball) and sports complexes in Lexington as well as other areas of the Midlands. In addition to providing adequate facilities for play, large sports complexes can provide an attractive economic development and tourism opportunity. The revenue generated by large-scale state, regional and national tournaments can help a local economy such as Lexington's. The town, in partnership with the County and possibly the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission, should consider investigating the potential of a large-scale soccer/multi-purpose field complex. Several organizations have been evaluating the potential of such a facility, and Lexington could possibly team with one or more of these entities to develop such a complex. Potential partners could be the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission, the local YMCA, the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission, and the South Carolina United Futbol Club (SCUFC). Regional complexes require a minimum of approximately 30 acres, but 50 is preferred in order to maximize use and provide a high level of flexibility.

Rock Hill has had great success with the large Manchester Meadows complex. The 70-acre facility has eight soccer fields and has hosted several regional tournaments as well as local play.

8 OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING VACANT PROPERTY ON MAIN STREET

Developing vacant property (sites and buildings) on Main Street should continue to be a driving force in recruiting new businesses and revitalizing downtown. Vacant sites, such as the Sessions property, can present a negative impression of a street or block that should be filled with cultural and commercial activity.

The town should undertake a deliberate, rigorous process to identify the appropriate use of this property and other vacant sites. The process should incorporate a decision matrix that includes criteria most important to the long-term success of the Town. For example, potential property tax generation would most likely be one of the criteria. However, care should be taken not to focus solely on property tax generation. Other factors such as compatible use, traffic generation, parking needs, seasonal as well as day time/night time use should also be criteria for the town's decision makers.

Incentives provided by the town can be very effective in recruiting desired retail and cultural venues to downtown and in keeping existing businesses. Learning from other towns and cities, the Town of Lexington should explore ways to leverage public funding to attract anchor businesses. The City of Columbia created tax incentives, grants and other incentives to support the Columbia Museum of Art, Mast General Store and the Nickelodeon Theatre opening on Main Street. The impact has been significant in new revenue, new activity on the streets and in attracting other businesses to open.



Sessions Property



Liverman Hospital

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The efficient and safe movement of traffic through the town limits is critical to the success of the Vision Plan and should, in all ways, enhance the safety, livability and connectivity (pedestrian, vehicular and cycling) throughout town. The following recommendations address the existing challenges through a long-term, multi-pronged approach.

1. Minimization of larger vehicles through the Triangle Historic District
2. Implementation of new signalization technology
3. Development of improved in-town routes
4. Corridor development and enhancements
5. Cooperative planning with Lexington County

Each of these primary focus areas are important to the overall success of the Vision Plan. Furthermore, the ideas presented offer the ability to range from easily implemented short-term projects to longer-term more complex projects allowing the town to stay on the path set forth in the *2008 Comprehensive Plan Update*, "...to encourage and facilitate a multi-step approach to solving the congestion problem." There is not one, singular solution. The long-term efficiency of traffic management to support the recommendations and implementation of the Vision Plan requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach.

1 MINIMIZATION OF LARGER VEHICLES THROUGH THE MAIN STREET CORRIDOR AND TRIANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Purpose: to create an environment that is more conducive to the type of activities (retail, recreational, pedestrian, cultural) presented in the Vision Plan. The implementation of truck restrictions is one alternative for achievement of the goal. However, a truck restriction has a number of difficulties that would make both implementation and enforcement difficult. The more practical solution has both a short-term and a longer-term potential solution.

Members of the project team met with representatives of the SC Trucking Association and a local trucking company to investigate why large trucks use the Main Street corridor as a through route. Many of these trucks use the route for deliveries to local businesses. For those not delivering locally, most of the drivers are following a pre-set route with a GPS unit. These routes are programmed with the most efficient time and fuel usage in mind.

In the short-term, better communication between the community and the local trucking and transportation industry can help influence the types of vehicles that utilize Main Street for local deliveries. Furthermore, local businesses can recommend alternative routes for access and alternative times for deliveries.

2 ADAPTIVE TRAFFIC SYSTEM (SIGNALIZATION)

Current signals throughout the corridor are programmed or "timed" by traffic engineers with the SCDOT. The current signals are timed about once every five years. Due to the rapid growth of the town, this timing sequence may not be effective toward the end of the time period.

A possible solution to this cyclical problem would be the implementation of an adaptive traffic system through the Town of Lexington, particularly along the US 378 corridor toward Columbia. This type system uses signal technology to "adapt" signal sequences based on the current traffic conditions in order to optimize efficiency in the movement of traffic through the intersections. In short, the signals adjust throughout the day and evening to maximize and improve efficiencies in traffic flow based on differentiation in peak traffic; i.e., school schedules, rush hours and shift changes in local industries. Similar systems have been implemented in a number of cities and towns throughout the region.

One example is within the Town of Mount Pleasant in Charleston County. Mount Pleasant recently installed an adaptive traffic system on the major corridor through Town, US Highway 17. A recent analysis of the impacts to the route found that over the study area, which is 1.67 miles, an average reduction of 25% in travel time was achieved due to installation of the adaptive system. A major roadway widening project is underway on US 17 in Mount Pleasant; yet many residents have reported to Town staff that their commute is shorter with construction than it was before implementation of the system.

Figure A shows Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes at key intersections in the town. As an example, for the US 17 project mentioned above, the average daily traffic volumes were 53,000 vehicles per day. The annual daily traffic volumes are slightly lower at the priority intersections in Figure B. It is anticipated that Lexington would receive equal if not better results due to the similarities between this project corridor and the example.

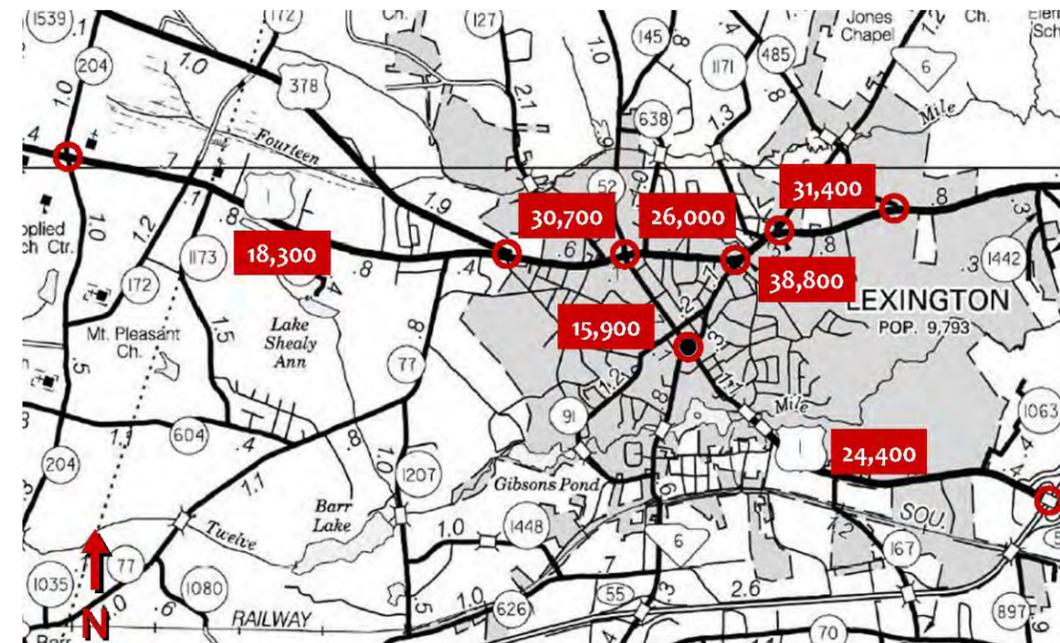


Figure B 2009 SCDOT AADT Traffic Volumes

3 DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVED IN-TOWN ROUTES

In the longer term, alternative in-town routes may be enhanced and designated during certain times of the day. These routes (outside of the Main Street corridor) could include limited access points that would provide safer routes for the traveling public and more fuel/time efficient routes for trucks.

The project team is aware that plans are currently underway for implementation of a four-phase plan for traffic through the town and that the town has identified the need for alternative routes in the comprehensive plan. The Vision Plan, however, does not encourage the creation of one-way pairs (Phase IV) through the town as shown in the proposed Unified Transportation Plan by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). The project team believes that the implementation of one-way pairs as presented in the center of town would not be beneficial for the creation of pedestrian, cycling and vehicular connectivity or the retail, recreational and cultural activity desired by the town. The creation of one-way pairs would further divide the town and the

areas that are most conducive to creating a vibrant downtown.

Phase I, which is currently underway, will be beneficial regardless of the implementation of the subsequent phases due to the consolidation of access points and the minimization of potential conflicts in the vicinity of the US 1 (Main Street) and US 378 (Sunset Boulevard) intersection.

Any alternative route to Main Street within the Town limits should be consistent with the goals of the Vision Plan. These alternative routes should be improved as parkways with the primary goal of providing safe, effective, multi-modal routes with access control through landscaped, raised medians. Multi-use paths to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, separated from the road by landscaped buffers, should line the parkways. A typical parkway section of improvement can be seen in the Figure B illustration below.

These parkway improvements can be implemented through phasing as budget allows. Specific routes are not offered within the Vision Plan since there are many factors to consider within the development of these routes. Conducting detailed feasibility studies

4 CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENTS

All corridors should become multi-modal corridors, linking people to different areas of town and improving safety, movement, and aesthetic appeal. If livability is the goal, then the corridors that link the livable places need to be safe and appealing as well. The same standard of high quality should apply to the corridors as it does with the places created.

Multi-modal corridors are major transportation facilities that accommodate auto, bus, bicycle and pedestrian travel. These corridors connect the town to the regional area and transportation system. The ultimate goal of multi-modal corridors are to protect and enhance the environment, promote safety, and support sustainable growth. Historically, roads and streets have been used for the primary purpose of vehicular traffic. This has presented difficulties as space becomes more limited and population grows. In many communities, this has led to the development of a *Complete Streets* policy.

The *Complete Streets* program is comprised of numerous elements that can be customized by community. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, the following are ten elements of a comprehensive Complete Streets policy, which can be implemented within the community development code to enhance the transportation facilities throughout the community.

1. Includes a vision for how and why the community wants to complete its streets.
2. Specifies that 'all users' includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and

abilities, as well as trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, and automobiles.

3. Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes.
4. Is understood by all agencies to cover all roads.
5. Applies to both new and retrofit projects, including design, planning, maintenance, and operations, for the entire right of way.
6. Makes any exceptions specific and sets a clear procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions.
7. Directs the use of the latest and best design criteria and guidelines while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
8. Directs that Complete Streets solutions will complement the context of the community.
9. Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes.
10. Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy.

Travel efficiency can increase based on the integration of land uses along these multi-modal corridors. In the future, these corridors will link different modes together, giving people choices on how to travel. Because available transportation funds are insufficient to fully fund all corridors improvement, projects can be phased, as illustrated in Figure C. Corridor improvements include the following.

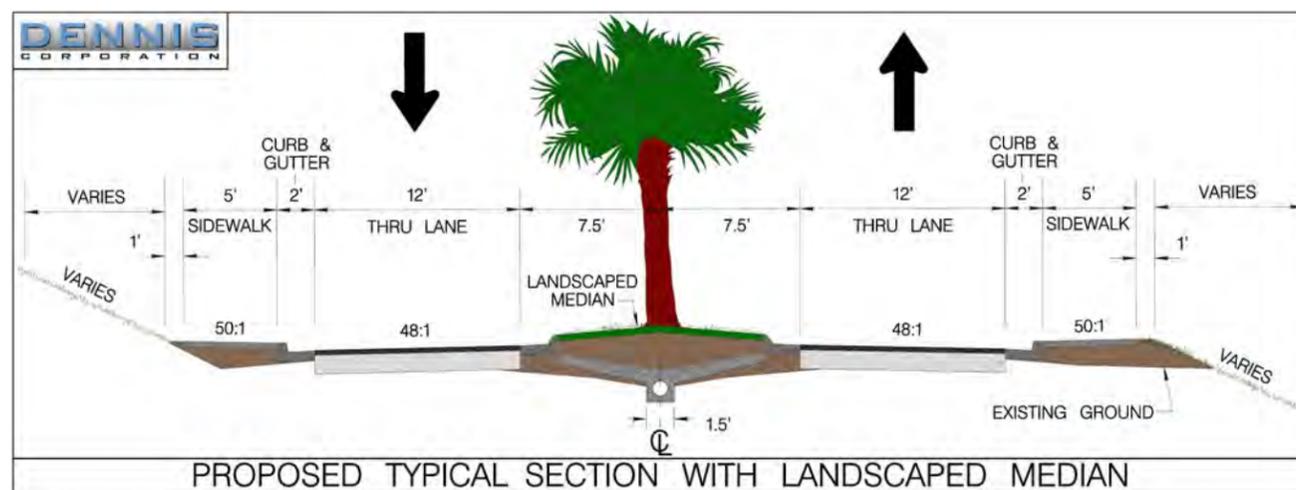


Figure A

RECOMMENDED PHASING OF CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Roadway

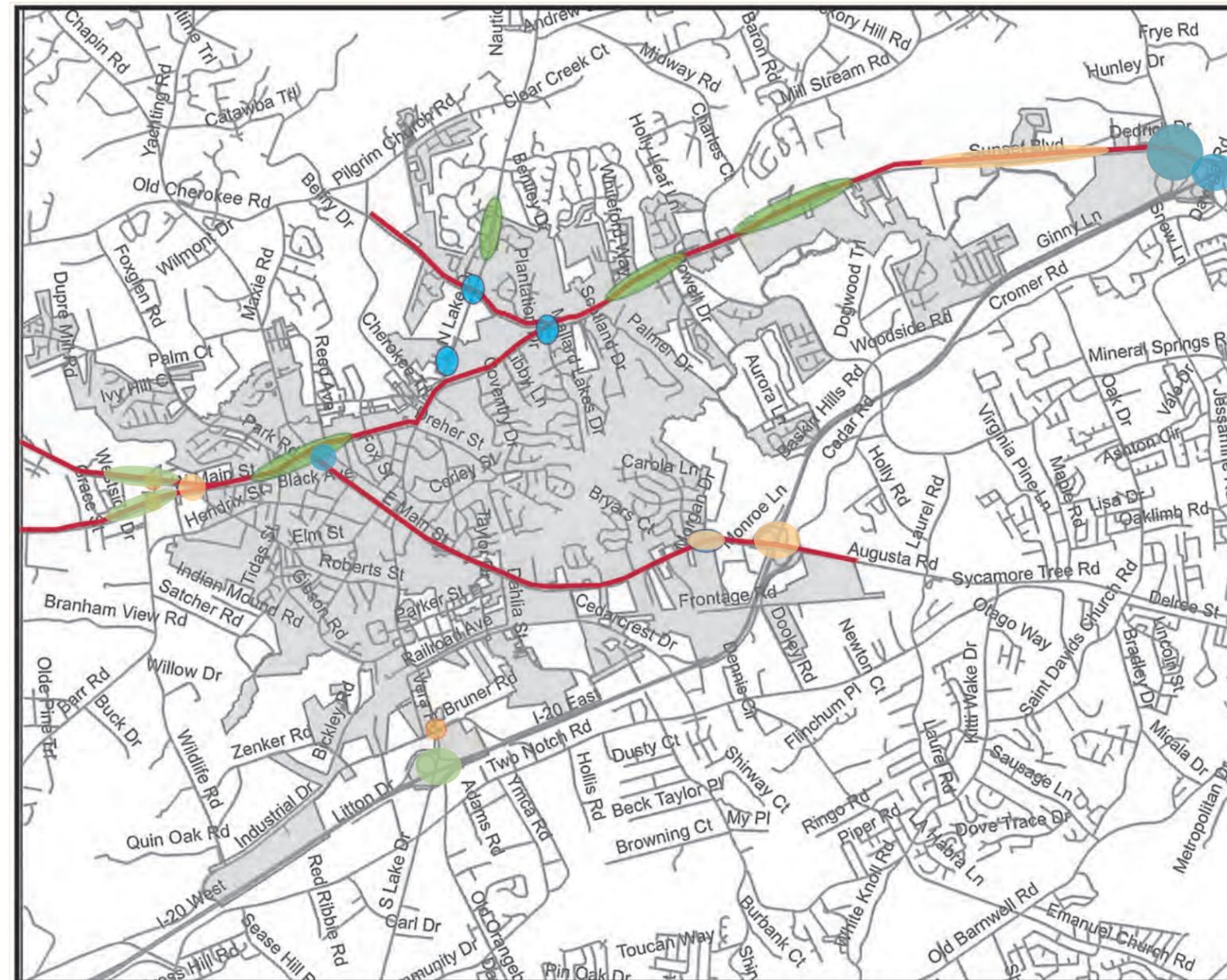
- Improved operational and traffic flow through intersection enhancements focusing on system inefficiencies
- Roadway-related improvements in priority corridors (i.e. Intersection improvements, turn lanes, control access, signalization optimization)
- Signal coordination optimization based on current traffic flow patterns

Pedestrian

- Complete segments of missing sidewalks through the Triangle and along major corridors to provide direct and continuous connections between destinations.
- Add separation strips (landscaped buffers) between high traffic and pedestrians by moving sidewalks away from the travel ways where room allows
- Continue adding enhanced pedestrian crossings at strategic locations
- Continue installation of pedestrian signals

Bicycle

- Complete missing bicycle trails and bicycle lanes to provide direct and continuous connections throughout town
- Construct safe connections between sidewalks and greenway trails
- Provide bicycle route signage
- Institute a long-term bike safety education program for the town (Share the Road)



Phase I

- I-20 interchange at Sunset
- Corley Mill and Sunset
- North Lake at Old Cherokee
- Sunset at Old Cherokee
- North Lake near intersection of Sunset
- Sunset at Main and Butler

Phase II

- I-20 interchange at East Main
- East Sunset Boulevard
- West Sunset and Augusta Road split
- East Main at Town limits
- South Lake at Town limits

Phase III

- I-20 interchange at South Lake
- East Sunset
- North Lake
- Columbia Avenue and Sunset
- West Sunset

Implementation Recommendations

Trails

Nature and wellness trails are key to improving connectivity throughout town and are extremely desirable and valuable to a community. Recommended trails, as illustrated in Figures D and E on pages 58 and 59, utilize existing infrastructure and connect with the proposed Central Midlands Pathways Plan, the Lower Saluda Trails plan, and the trails proposed by the Community Open Land Trust. Proposed trails connect to natural corridors that are perpendicular to the existing nature trails and watershed system. These trails would give access for exercising, hiking, photography, and other nature-based activities.

These plans are conceptual and illustrate the potential to enhance the existing trailways and plans to create an extensive trail system.

Public Transit

Public transit is an important element in providing accessibility for all and in sustaining the long-term quality of life for a region growing such as Lexington County. In future planning for public transit, the town should continue to pursue and support transit in concert with the Midlands region. Future transit stops should reflect the character of the town, enhance connectivity within town and provide access to the THD, schools, civic centers, major retail areas and recreational areas.

5 COOPERATIVE PLANNING WITH LEXINGTON COUNTY

The Town of Lexington is intersected by three major arterials: US 1 (Main Street), US 378 (Sunset Boulevard), and SC 6 (Lake Drive). Furthermore, the close proximity of Interstate 20 provides major opportunities for enhanced access both from within town and as alternative travel through town. These out-of-town, alternative access routes have the ability to dramatically improve the traffic conditions within town. Numerous ideas have been offered regarding access outside of town limits to Interstate 20, such as improvements to Pisgah Church Road, Longs Pond Road and Old Cherokee Road. These ideas are not addressed in this Vision Plan since they are outside of the town's jurisdiction; however, it is noteworthy that the planning of alternate routes outside the limits of town will significantly impact traffic conditions within the town limits. For this reason, that continued coordination between county and town officials is vital and should continue.

Transportation Feasibility Studies

The first important step to addressing individual transportation or road improvements is to complete feasibility studies of the proposed area. A transportation feasibility study is conducted for two primary reasons: 1) to determine cost; and 2) to determine the benefits of the

proposed improvement. A feasibility study will determine the order of magnitude for each project and help coordinate multiple projects for leveraging resources and schedule efficiencies. These studies help quantify the costs associated with the improvement, such as construction and environmental costs and the potential impacts to property. For transportation studies, existing traffic counts may be used and projections made to anticipate current traffic conditions and projected volumes with and without the proposed improvement. These findings can then be examined by all interested parties to determine whether the project has merit or is feasible.

Upon determination that the project is indeed feasible, the project moves to a preliminary design then, ultimately, a final design phase. The consultant will begin to acquire detailed information on the project site such as survey data, environmental data (such as wetlands), traffic data as well as geotechnical conditions and potential utility conflicts. During this process, engineers will begin detailed design from which the plans are drafted. Project coordination will begin with all concerned parties. The necessary property will be acquired, and environmental, traffic, and geotechnical reports will be prepared. The project will progress towards final approval and, once all permits and agreements are in place, the project will move toward construction.

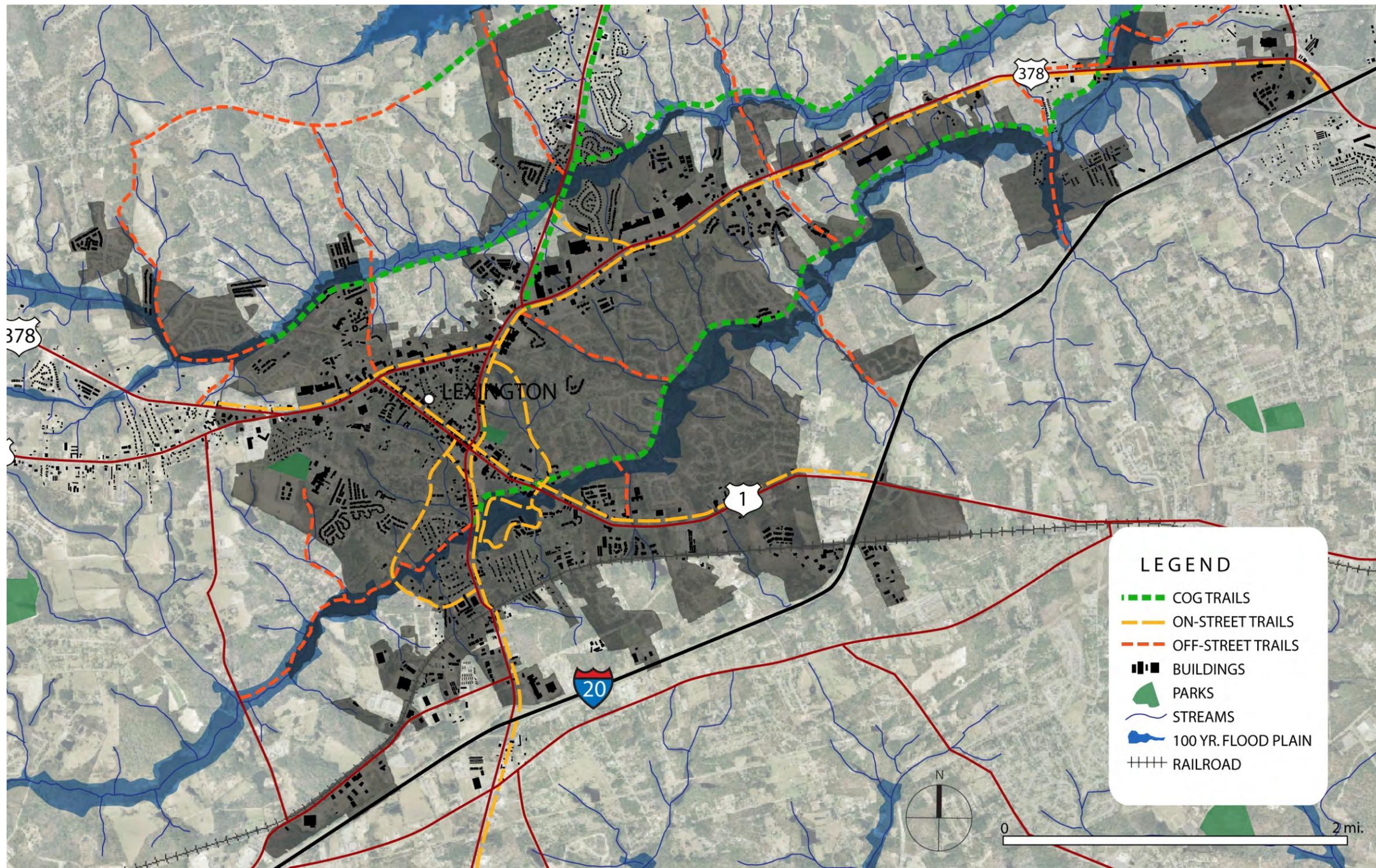
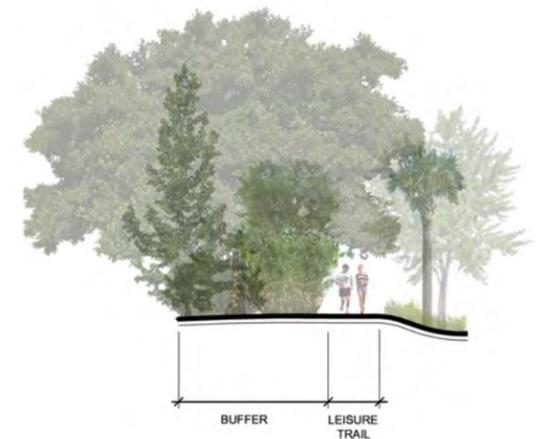


Figure D

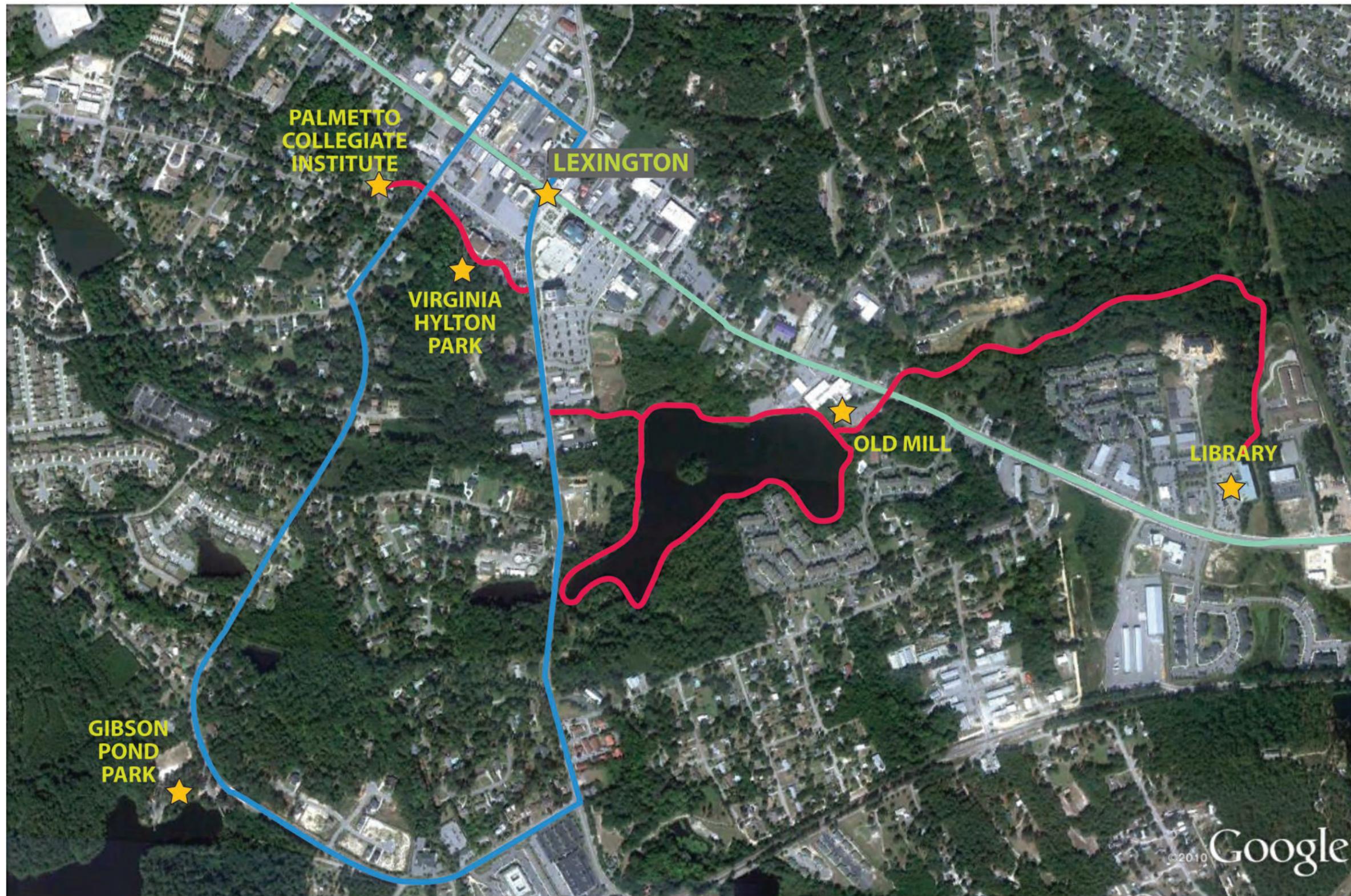
Proposed Trails Plan



Typical Trail Section

The proposed trails connect to the Central Midlands Pathway system as developed by the COG. These will create, long term, a more livable town, increase wellness and recreation opportunities and will connect Lexington to assets to one another and to the region.

Implementation Recommendations



Within downtown, trails and sidewalks can be extended to better connect downtown assets and to connect downtown to the Central Midlands Pathway plan. These trails also can become unique paths for wellness and recreation.

- 5K Route
- East Main Street / Highway 1
- Off Street Trails

Figure E

Proposed Downtown Trail System

Implementation Recommendations

The Athenian Oath

The Athenian Oath was recited by the citizens of Athens, Greece over 2,000 years ago. It is frequently referenced by civic leaders in modern times as a timeless code of civic responsibility.

We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of dishonesty or cowardice. We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this City not only, not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.