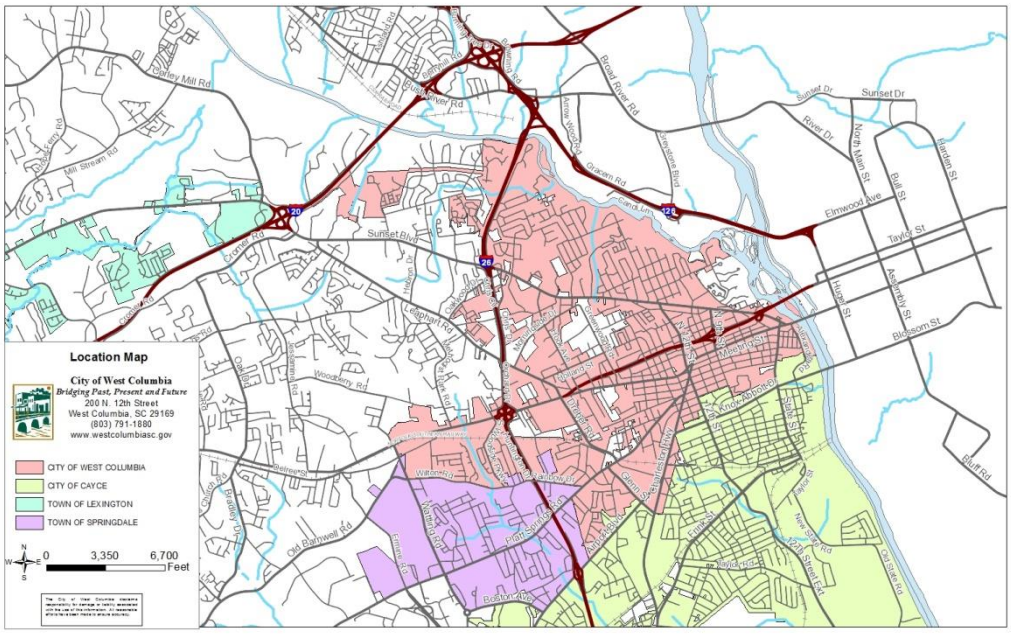
DRAFT CITY OF WEST COLUMBIA COMPRHENSIVE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The City's first land use plan was written in 1965. Since then, there have been six revisions to the original plan, the most recent in 2011. The 1996 plan focused "...on preserving unique sections of the City, beautification, growth, economic development, land use, the City's image, and how land use goals can be achieved through various implementation techniques.". The 2007 update furthered the goals of the 1996 plan, providing "…direction for conservation, identity and growth of the City." The 2011 review was intended to reaffirm the guidelines and procedures for implementing the development objectives of the City of West Columbia. Since the 1996 plan, the city has made tremendous strides to improve its image Some of the projects that have been accomplished include implementing the River Alliance plan for riverfront development, streetscape enhancements along State and Meeting Streets, the establishment of the Gateway Overlay District, the installation of beautification projects in Triangle City and at the Gervais Street Bridge, and the opening of access to the Riverbanks Botanical Garden from Sunset Blvd.

On September 6, 2016, the city annexed property along US 1, west of the I-26 interchange. It was the largest annexation in the city's history, increasing the area of the city by 15% and the population of the city by an estimated 10%. Due to the timing of the annexation, much of the demographic data for the city included in this update will not reflect the additional area. This version of the comprehensive plan serves as an incremental update before a complete rewrite of the plan.



2. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The City of West Columbia is located in the eastern portion of Lexington County along the Congaree and Saluda Rivers, within the Columbia metropolitan area. It is bounded on the south by the City of Cayce, on the west by the Town of Springdale, on the north by the Saluda River, and on the east by the Congaree River and the City of Columbia.

CLIMATE

West Columbia generally experiences hot and humid summers and mild winters. While the city is not susceptible to climate change affects such as sea-level rise or increased storm surge, the region has experienced periods of drought, with a severe drought being declared as recently as September, 2015. Exhibit 2.1 provides a summary of the climate data for the City of West Columbia.

Exhibit 2.1

Month	Avg. High	Avg. low	Avg. Precip.	Days with Precip.	Hours of Sunshine
Jan	56	34	3.54	9	173
Feb	60	37	3.58	9	183
March	68	43	3.7	8	238
Apr.	76	50	2.6	8	270
May	84	60	2.95	7	291
June	90	68	4.69	10	279
July	93	72	5.43	11	285
Aug.	91	71	5.24	10	263
Sep.	85	64	3.5	7	240
Oct	76	52	3.15	7	235
Nov.	67	42	2.72	7	195
Dec.	58	35	3.19	9	173

Source: U.S. Climate Data (http://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/south-carolina/united-states/3210)

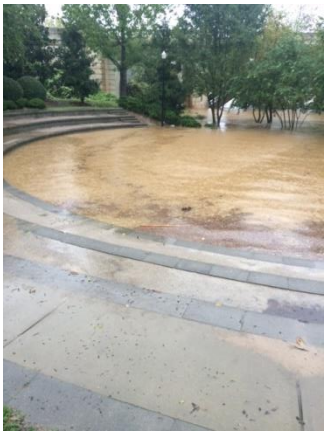
Note: temperature in degrees Fahrenheit, rainfall in inches

STREAMS, WETLANDS AND HAZARDS

Eastern Lexington County has a relatively small percentage of land area with slopes that limit development; however, there are several other important factors to consider when examining topography and land use. For instance, low lying areas that are subject to poor drainage and flooding should be protected from development. An alternative for areas with excessive slops and flooding is the possibility of preserving them for uses such as recreation or open space. In addition to the designated flood hazard areas, there are locations in the city that are susceptible to flash-flood events during heavy rain events. Green infrastructure implementation would help reduce excess storm water run-off.

Flood hazards are found in the floodway and floodplains of both rivers, and along Double Branch Creek and Senn Branch Creek. While the floodway should be reserved for open space or low impact recreation like the Riverwalk, the floodplain can be developed using construction standards approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The areas along the Congaree River have played an important role in the development of the city, and if development is done properly, can play an important role in the future of West Columbia. Exhibit 2.2 shows flood plain and wetlands in West Columbia. The recent annexation along US 1 added several areas of flood plain to the city limits.

Flooding at the Riverwalk Amphitheatre



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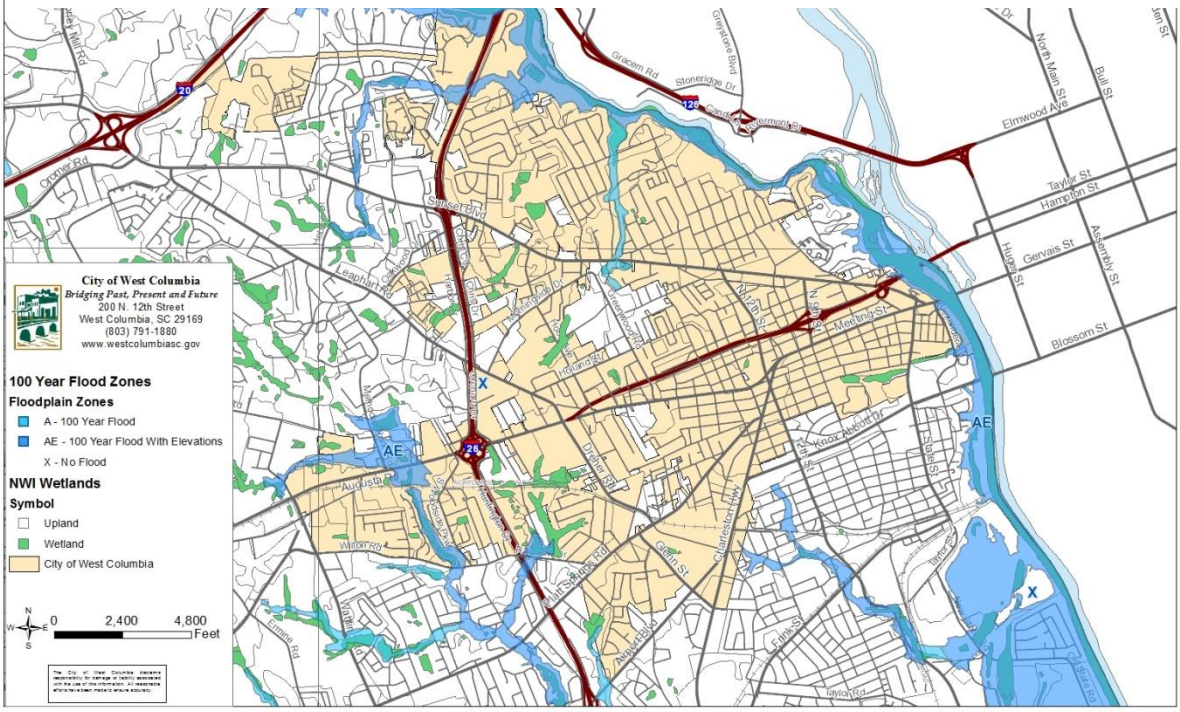
Flood damage on the Botanical Parkway

The City of West Columbia participated in the update to the *An All Natural Hazard Risk Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Central Midlands Region of South Carolina* 2016 Update. The plan identified the following natural hazards by priority that affect the city:

1. Tornados
2. Flooding
3. Winter Snow and Ice Storms
4. Thunderstorms/Summer Storms with accompanying hail, wind & lightning
5. Hurricane

As part of the planning process, a list of implementation strategies was developed to mitigate the impact of the hazards listed above.

Exhibit 2.2



AIR QUALITY

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates local air quality because it directly contributes to public health problems (e.g. cardiopulmonary problems like heart attacks, as well as respiratory conditions like asthma and bronchitis). In early October, 2015, the EPA set the new ozone NAAPQS at 70 parts per billion (ppb); based on the 2015 ozone NAAQS, the Columbia area has not seen any exceedances since 2012. Additionally, since 2005, there has been a 35% decrease in the Columbia area ozone design values (from 80 ppb in 2005 to 59 ppb in 2015).

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

From the fall of 2010 to the spring of 2012, Central Midlands COG participated in the development of the *Sustainable Energy Plan for the Central Midlands Region*. While the plan was developed to address the specific needs of Lexington County, Richland County and the City of Columbia, many of the recommendations in the plan were designed to be applicable to most, if not all, of the jurisdictions in the region.

The plan addressed sustainable energy issues in four general topics:

Residential solar rooftop installation

- Energy Efficiency: When looking for ways to conserve energy, the first place the local governments should look is in areas they have the greatest control, specifically their facilities and policies. South Carolina lacks a statewide energy efficiency resource standard, but even in the absence of a statewide standard, there are many actions available to the Central Midlands local governments to improve the energy efficiency of the built environment.
- Broader Initiatives: Regional policies such as actions on land use, transportation, procurement, waste management, and drinking/wastewater while still under local government control, require a level of regional cooperation to see significant energy efficiency. The plan focuses on reducing the region's energy footprint through areas over which local government possesses considerable control and expertise but looks at the cooperative nature of these activities.
- Renewable Energy: Renewable energy can improve local air quality and energy security by offsetting the use of conventional energy sources and diversifying the energy portfolio. In addition, alternative energy development positively impacts the region's economic development by generating green collar jobs and keeping spending on energy within the region. The Central Midlands is blessed with a reasonably good endowment of renewable resources. Yet renewable energy projects are relatively rare.
- Economic Development: If local governments are successful in their efforts to reduce the energy footprints of Richland and Lexington Counties, then some green jobs will surely be created, but other economic activity might get curtailed. Likewise, the alternative to implementing a sustainable energy plan may also cause some jobs to be created and others to be lost. On balance, pursuing energy sustainability produces greater net benefits for a local economy than the alternative.

The private sector is taking the lead on the issue of sustainability to benefit in some of the cost savings. For example, there has been a significant increase in the installation of rooftop solar panels for houses, with 43 permits issued 2016.

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NEEDS:

- Encourage green infrastructure implementation to reduce run-off.
- Find opportunities to implement recommendations of the regional HMP.
- Find opportunities to implement recommendations of the Sustainable Energy plan.

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3. CULTURAL RESOURCE

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

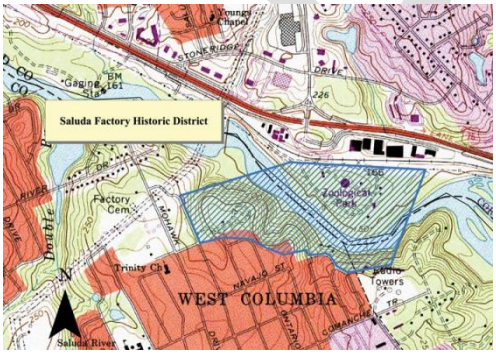
In the second half of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century, the Granby village (at the current site of the City of Cayce) flourished. In 1790 Granby suffered severe flood damage, and by 1837 Granby had disappeared. The materials from the demolished houses of Granby were used to build houses for the workers of the Saluda Manufacturing Company. The construction of the mill meant an influx of people to fill the jobs – and soon a town developed. The scattered dwellings that first appeared grew into a village on the river's west side after the opening of the Columbia Duck Mill in 1890; eventually Meeting and State Streets became business districts for the town. The growth of the area was enhanced by its resources– its people, its transportation arteries, and prime commercial land. On November 24, 1894, the community was named Brookland by Mrs. Mary Guignard, whose family remained the largest land holders in the area since the early 1800's. It was later called New Brookland and was re-chartered as West Columbia in 1938. In 1964, the community was designated the City of West Columbia.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

As a reflection of its rich heritage, there are two areas in West Columbia listed on the National Register of Historic Places – the Saluda Factory Historic District, now the location of Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens, and the New Brookland Historic District near the Congaree River.

New Brookland Fire Insurance Map

In addition to the two districts listed above, the Central Midlands Historic Preservation Survey identified 6 other sites of historic significance that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Saluda Factory Overseer's House – c. 1840, Corley–Shull House – c. 1870, Graves of Gabriel Fridig & Wife, Crockett–Arehart House – c. 1840's, Green's Hill Site – 1865 and the Old Temperance Hall – c. 1835.



To help encourage the preservation of historically significant structures, the City of West Columbia does offer a tax credit program to encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings. While the tax credit program provides incentives to rehabilitate buildings, it only serves to protect the historic character of the building if the owner is willing to participate in the program. Historic buildings can be rehabilitated without using the tax credit program but without protection of their historic character.

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With the passage of time, “historic” West Columbia has expanded beyond the mill village and the Saluda Factory. Triangle City is a historic shopping district with a distinct commercial vernacular, and the “Avenues” south of Meeting Street is an historic residential area with tree-lined streets and bungalow-style houses. These and other "emerging" historic areas, should be cataloged to record their historic characteristics. Doing so will help expand the opportunity for financial assistance to rehabilitate buildings in the city.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Art on State

The city has a young but growing art community. State Street and Meeting Street have several art galleries and studios, restaurants such as Café Strudel display artwork for sale from local artists, and there are several venues offering live music. Public art projects include the city sponsored “…Before I Die Wall” at the Riverwalk and the “See Me…On State” interactive art project on State Street. Art districts can contribute to economic development and neighborhood revitalization; however there are issues that need to be resolved such as the types of uses to be included and how to address conflicts, if any, with adjacent residential uses.

While the city's Riverwalk was under repair from the damage caused by the October, 2015 flood, the city used the opportunity to hold community events in other parts of the city. One example is the Fall Back Fest on State Street held in conjunction with the State Street Art Crawl. As the photograph to the right shows, State Street was not closed off, which limits pedestrian mobility during the event. The city should explore the option of designating a “festival street” to temporary close the street to vehicle access, expanding the area for the event and making it safer for pedestrians.

To help plan and coordinate community events, the city made staffing changes to give greater focus on events planning. Upcoming events include the spring State Street Art Crawl, the spring concert series Rhythm on the River, the grand re-opening of the Riverwalk and Solar West Fest in conjunction with the solar eclipse on August 21st, 2017.

NEEDS:

- Catalogue historic sites and districts in the city.
- Adopt historic guidelines for at-risk historic areas in the city.
- Create funding assistance for at-risk historic residential properties.
- Develop more community events held in a variety of locations in the city.
- Designate a "festival street".

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4. ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Historically, the City of Columbia has dominated the economy of the Central Midlands region. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, Columbia was the center of most manufacturing activities in the region. With the decline of manufacturing jobs in the urban core, the role of public sector jobs play a more significant role. The City of West Columbia, like the other municipalities in the area, was once very dependent upon the employment opportunities provided by the Columbia economy, and served as a bedroom community to support the residential needs of the people working in Columbia.

While Columbia's center city continues to play a significant role in the economy for the region, suburbanization has created arteries and nodes of commercial activity outside the urban core. Future growth in the region will be the result of the economic development of the entire metropolitan area as opposed to any individual jurisdiction. The Three-Rivers Greenway along Broad, Saluda and Congaree Rivers, the convention center and the recruitment of the Amazon distribution center illustrate how the region can work together on regional economic development projects.

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION AND INDUSTRY

One indicator of the economic health of a jurisdiction is the type of jobs the residents have. For example, higher skilled jobs and jobs with higher education requirements tend to have higher salaries, increasing the overall wealth of the community. Figure 4.1 shows the 2013 American Community Survey estimate of occupation data for the City of West Columbia, City of Cayce and Town of Springdale. Given the proximity of the three jurisdictions, it is not surprising that the findings are similar, with Management, Business, Science and Art Occupations being the highest percentage in all three municipalities. The top three occupations are relatively high income contributing to the slightly high income of the city when compared to the region. Despite the relatively high income, there are areas of the city that are below the poverty threshold.

Exhibit 4.1

Employment by Occupation

	West Columbia		Cayce		Springdale	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	7849		6794		1323	
Management, business, science and arts occupations	2870	37	2597	38	418	32
Service occupations	1384	18	1332	20	280	21
Sales and office occupations	1651	21	1755	26	312	24
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	1262	16	547	8	136	10
Production, transportation, and material mining occupations	682	9	563	8	177	16

Source: 2010-2015 American Community Survey

EDUCATION AND INCOME

Supporting the skilled labor force is the educational attainment of the residents. Almost one-third of the work force has at least a bachelor's degree and almost 40% has at least an associate degree. Exhibit 4.2 shows the education attainment for the residents of the city.

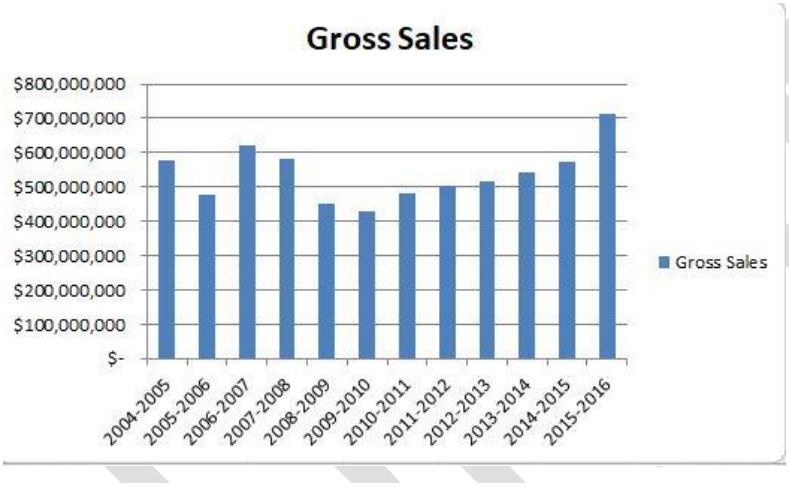
Exhibit 4.2

Education Attainment	2015 Est	Percent
Population 25+	11,547	
less than 9th grade	825	7%
9-12 no diploma	890	8%
HS Grad (includes equivalency)	2,687	23%
Some college, no degree	2,630	23%
Association's degree	747	6%
Bachelor's degree	2,446	21%
Graduate or professional degree	1,322	11%

Source: American Community Survey 2015

GROSS SALES

Exhibit 4.3



Source: South Carolina Department of Revenue

Exhibit 4.3 shows the gross sales reported in the City of West by the South Carolina Department of Revenue. Over the past 10 years the peak gross sales occurred in 2006-2007; however, the peak was followed by the economic recession from 2008-2010. Since 2010, the city has shown a steady recovery in gross sales, with 2015-2016 providing the highest amount during the period. Part of the increase is due to the annexation of the Highway 1 corridor which occurred in September of 2016

COMMUTING

Per the 2010-2015 American Community Survey, approximately 49% of the residents of the city work in Lexington County and the mean travel time to work is 19.4 minutes. Exhibit 4.4 shows how the residents of the city are getting to work, with approximately 81.5% of commuters driving alone in a car, truck or van. By comparison, only 64.7% of the residents of the City of Columbia drive alone. The difference appears to be the result of those who walk to work. 21.4% of the residence of Columbia walk to work, while only 2.1% of the residents of West Columbia walk. The opportunity to walk to work is the result of compact mixed-use districts, like the Vista, where a

Exhibit 4.4

	Estimate
Workers 16 Years and Over	7,707
Car, Truck or Van	
Drive Alone	81.5%
Carpooled	8.4%
Public Transportation (excluding taxicab)	.1%
Walked	2.1%
Other means	5.5%
Worked at Home	2.3%

2011-2015 American Community Survey

person can live and work. In addition to reducing the number of vehicles on the road, a mixed-use district encourages activity over a 24-hour period compared to a commercial district that is busy during the day but not at night when everyone is home. Brookland, which is a compact, mixed-use development proposed on Meeting Street in the River District, will enhance the activity at the intersection of State and Meeting Streets and provide opportunities for walking trips, both for those who live at Brookland as well as those who live near the development.

NEEDS:

- Encourage redevelopment of distressed areas.
- Aggressively recruit a wider variety of restaurants, retail and office space.
- Encourage development with live/work units.
- Encourage development with a wider variety of commuting options.

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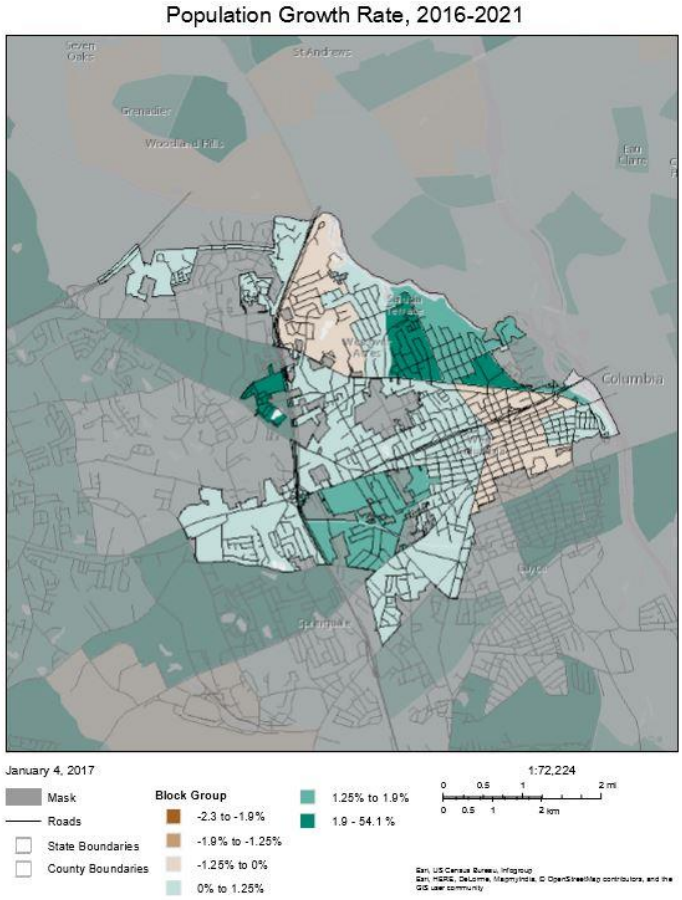
From 2010 to 2015, the estimated rate of grown for the City of West Columbia was 5.1%. The rate of growth was slightly less than the City of Cayce, but higher than the Town of Springdale. While the city did experience population growth, of particularly note is the significant loss in population in both the Under 5 and the 5-15 age groups. Although some of the loss can be attributed to aging out of the cohort, it also indicates that families with young children are not moving into city in numbers to offset the “aging process”.

Twenty-six percent of the estimate 2015 population is age sixty and over; many of which are long-time residents of the community. The quality of life in West Columbia is attractive to retirees. which encourages them to "age in place". In addition to the long-time residents, South Carolina is an attractive location for retirees from northern states looking for warmer areas to live. Many move to Florida but in a few years, move half-way back, settling in South Carolina. There are many reasons for the "halfback retirees" to choose a second relocation, including greater changes in seasons, greater variety in types of communities (mountains to the sea), and financial reason such as insurance and taxes. As more people age in place, the need to "age in community" will become greater.

Exhibit 5.1



In September, 2016, the city annexed almost approximately 730 acres along US 1, west of I-26. The annexation increased the area of the city by 15% and the estimated population by 10%. The population increase is not reflected in the ACS data below. When factored into the ACS estimate, the rate of growth since 2010 was over 15%. The city should take steps to ensure that the US Census Bureau has the most accurate boundary possible leading to the 2020 Census. Exhibit 5.1 shows the projected population growth over the next 5 years; the well-established neighborhoods in the city are projected to have little population growth. Significant population growth will have to come from annexation.

Based on ACS estimates, the City of West Columbia saw an increase in the number of households, but most of that increase was in non-family households which are defined as either a person living alone or with someone who is not related. Even though the total number of

households has increased, the number of families has decreased, particularly families with children which contributes to the aging population. During the six-year period from 2010 to 2015, the median age has risen from 36.4 to 38.6.

Exhibit 5.2

	West Columbia			Cayce			Springdale		
	2010	2015	Difference	2010	2015	Difference	2010	2015	Difference
Total Population	14,988	15757	5.13%	12,528	13554	8.19%	2,636	2727	3.45%
White	10,186	11614	14.02%	8,522	10454	22.67%	2,256	2369	4.04%
Black	2,769	2860	3.29%	3,150	2403	-23.71%	303	191	-31.79%
Hispanic	2,174	2161	-0.60%	539	470	-12.80%	95	192	76.15%
Male	7,329	7856	7.19%	6,007	6838	13.83%	1,256	1311	1.55%
Female	7,659	7901	3.16%	6,521	6716	2.99%	1,380	1416	3.36%
Under 5	1,027	876	-14.70%	688	954	38.66%	139	151	-9.58%
5-14	1,349	1284	-4.82%	1,237	1076	-13.02%	272	293	19.59%
15-59	9,379	9492	1.20%	8,174	8831	8.04%	1,438	1487	-0.60%
60-64	787	1162	47.65%	672	810	20.54%	160	156	20.00%
65+	2,446	2943	20.32%	1,757	1883	7.17%	627	640	2.73%

Source: 2010 Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey

The estimated average household size for 2015 was 2.12 persons per household. Exhibit 5.4 shows that the city is uniform in household size, with the area between Meeting Street and Sunset Boulevard slightly higher than the rest of the city.

Exhibit 5.3

Households			
Category	2010	2015 Est	Percent Change
Total	6,645	7,365	11%
Family	3,498	3,380	-3%
Married Couple	2,240	2,325	4%
W/Children	1,334	742	-44%
W/O Children	906	1,583	75%
Single Headed	1,258	1,055	-16%
W/ Children	605	435	-28%
W/O Children	653	620	-5%
Males, No Wife	357	282	-21%
W/ Children	145	56	-61%
W/O Children	212	226	7%
Females, No Husband	901	773	-14%
W/ Children	460	379	-18%
W/O Children	441	394	-11%
Non-Family	3,147	3,985	27%

2010-2015 American Community Survey

Exhibt 5.4

Average Household Size, 2016

NEEDS:

- Implement universal design in city facilities.
- More universal design features in housing.
- Actively encourage new families to move into the city.
- Provide Census Bureau accurate boundary for the 2020 Census.

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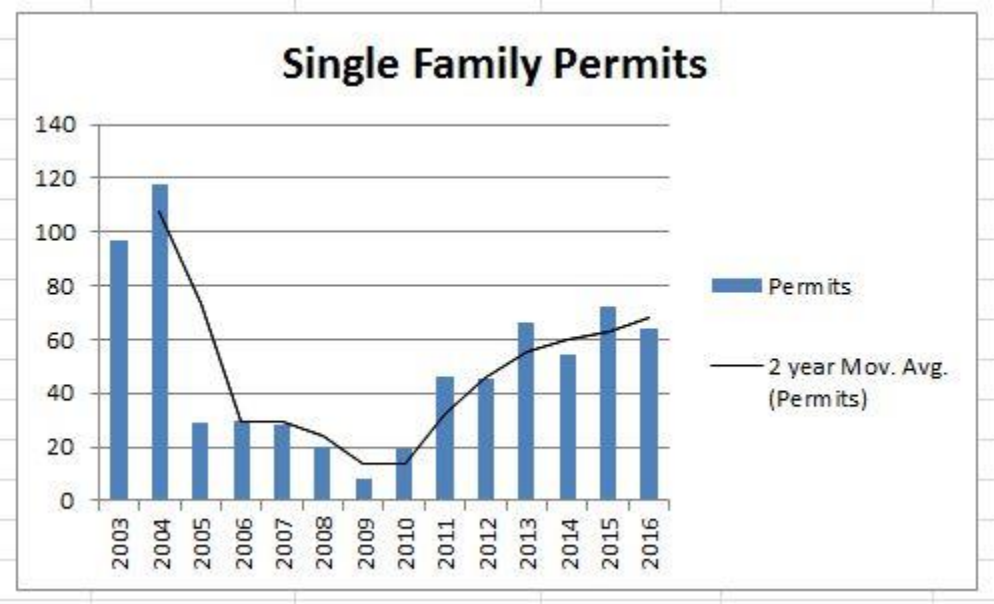
6. **HOUSING** RESOURCE

One major influence on future population growth is new housing development. In 1995, there were only 2 permits issued for residential construction; both permits were for single family homes. In the early 2000's, the region experienced a housing boom; from 2001 to 2010 there were a total of 491 single family permits issued, however 324 of those permits were issued during the three-year period from 2002 to 2004. The entire Columbia region saw a decline in housing permits because of the Great Recession, lasting from 2008 to 2010. The housing recovery began in 2011; since then, there has been a steady increase in the number of single family permits issued. Figure 6.1 shows the number of single family building permits issued from 2001 to 2015. As of December 31, 2016, there were seventy-two single family permits issued in the city. One lasting result of the recession is the increase in rental housing. Many jurisdictions saw a conversion of owner-occupied units into rental units. The 2015 ACS estimates shows that renter-occupied units comprise 46.3% of the total housing units in the city, which is a six year high.

The residential building economy has changed over the decade- influenced by the availability of property, the recession and finally by annexation. The spikes in 2002-2004 reflect development along Botanical Parkway once the property became available for development. At the end of the decade, the “economic downturn” beginning in 2008 resulted in a regional decline in new housing permits. As the recovery began, the increase in new residential construction starting in 2009 was the result of developments such as Brookland Mill, Congaree Park, Oakwood Park, Oakwood Commons and Harvest Glen.

Exhibit 6.1



As was discussed early, the city's growth will come mostly from annexations. Exhibit 6.2 shows the inventory of rural parcels and vacant residential, those mostly likely to be developed for

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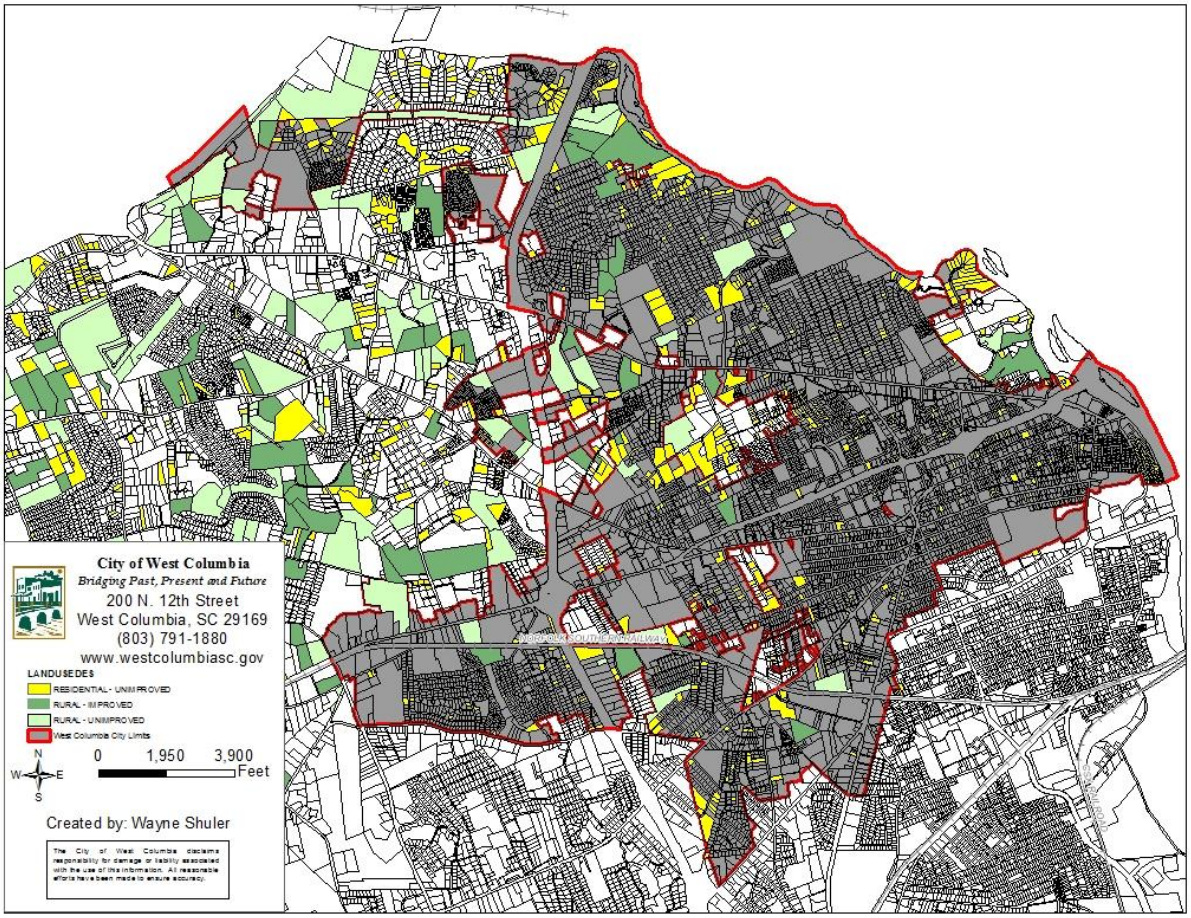
residential uses. There is a relatively limited supply of large tracts of land within the current city boundary. Significant additions to the housing stock will come from annexing residential areas and large tracts of land that can be developed.

Exhibit 6.2



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For the purpose of this document, "affordable housing" is defined as:

> Residential housing that, so long as the same is occupied by lower or very low income households, requires payment of monthly housing costs of no more than thirty percent of one-twelfth adjusted annual income.

The exhibits below depict two alternative ways to determine affordable housing thresholds for the City of West Columbia. Exhibit 6.3 is based on the median household income reported based on a 2013 estimate. Exhibit 6.4 is based on the 2013 Census estimates for the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The mortgage amounts shown in both exhibits assume a

30-year mortgage at 4% interest. It should be noted that this does not include taxes or insurance. 2013 was used since that is the most recent data available for the MSA.

Exhibit 6.3

City of West Columbia 2013 est.	Income	30% housing cost per month	Mortgage amount
Median Family income	$56,858	$1,421	$295,000
Moderate (80%)	$45,486	$1,137	$235,000
Low (50%)	$28,429	$711	$148,000
Very low (30%)	$17,057	$426	$88,000

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Exhibit 6.4

Columbia MSA 2013 est	Income	30% housing cost per month	Mortgage Amount
Median income	$61,906	$1,548	$324,000
Moderate (80%)	$49,525	$1,238	$259,000
Low (50%)	$30,953	$774	$162,000
Very low (30%)	$18,572	$464	$97,000

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Based on 2013 estimates, almost 61% of the single family housing units fell within the low-income threshold. Exhibit 6,5 shows the distribution of home values in the city. Most of the city has a home value less than $137,000. In 2014, the estimated median rent for apartments was $824 which was just above the threshold for low income families. Most of the new houses constructed during the past 12 months fall within the threshold for moderate and low income families. Exhibit shows the distribution of home values based on the 2016 ACS estimates.

7. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES** RESOURCE

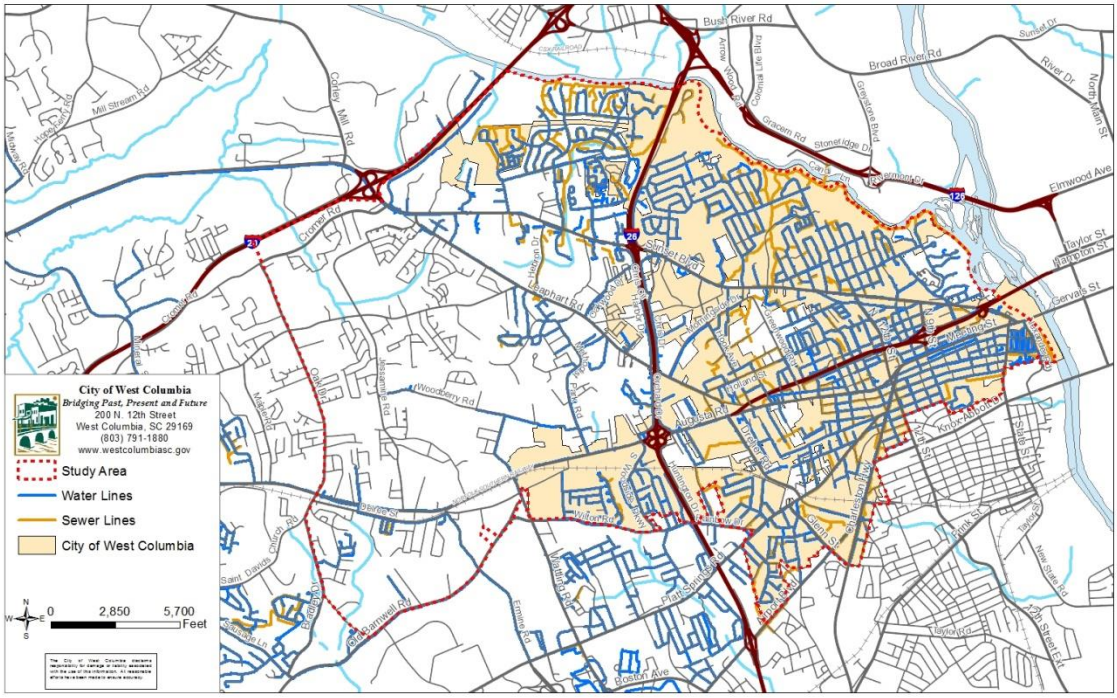
WATER AND SEWER SERVICE

The City of West Columbia is the major water provider in Lexington County. Besides providing water for city residents and businesses, West Columbia provides water for the Town of Springdale, Town of Lexington, Lexington County Joint Municipal Water and Sewer Commission and several private utilities. To provide water to such a large area of Lexington County, West Columbia operates two water treatment plants. The Sunset Blvd plant, with a capacity of 6 million gallons per day (MGD) draws raw water from the Lower Saluda River and distributes it through the area east of I-26. The Lake Murray plant, with a capacity of 22 MGD, draws water from Lake Murray and distributes it to the central and western portions of Lexington County. The city is in the process of implementing a 13-million-dollar capital improvement plan to upgrade the water system and the water plants.

West Columbia does not have its own wastewater treatment plant. The city's sewage collection lines transport effluent to the City of Columbia Metropolitan Sewage Treatment facility for tertiary treatment. The City of West Columbia has purchased equity in the treatment plant.

Exhibit 7.1 shows the extent of the water and sewer systems in the plan study area. Having accurate mapping data is critical in the decision-making process for future annexations. The city recently hired a GIS Supervisor to accurately map both systems.

Exhibit 7.1



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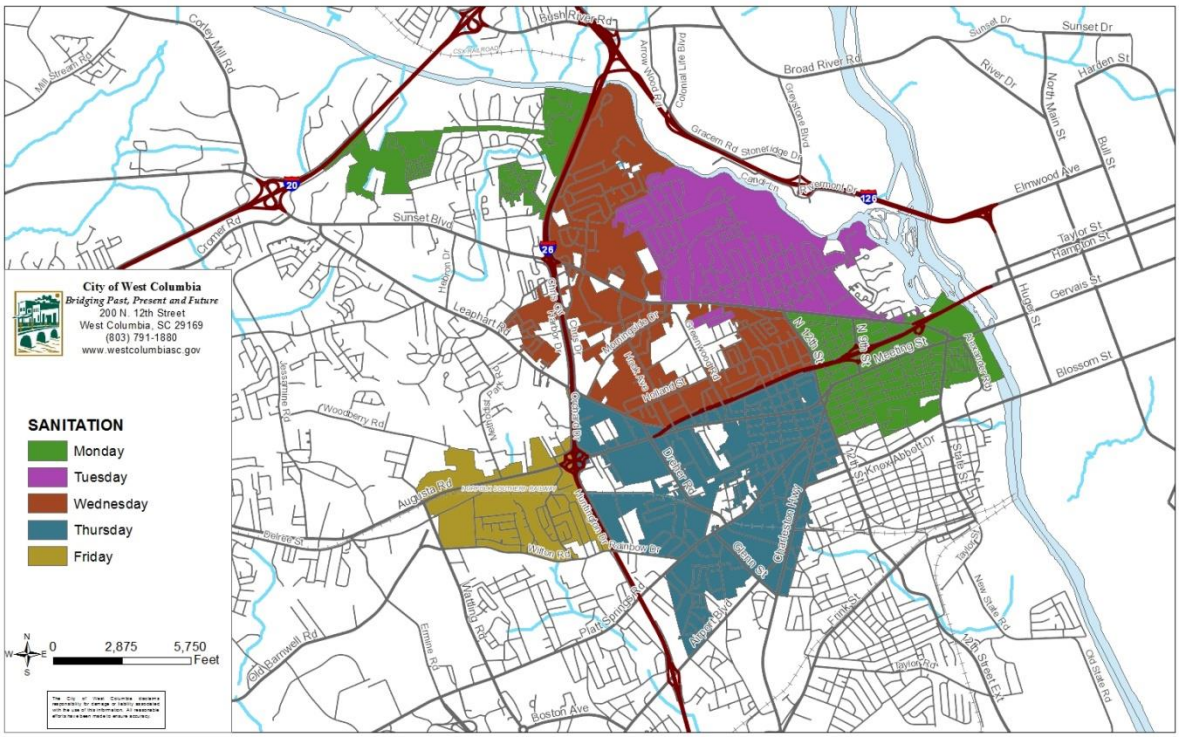
SOLID WASTE

The City of West Columbia provides once-a-week residential curbside collection of garbage, yard trash and recyclable items. City-provided roll-carts are used for household garbage collection and the city recently switched from recycle bins to larger capacity carts for recycled items. The cost of this service is included in the property tax levy. In September, 2016, the Sanitation Department added the Friday route to accommodate the area along US 1 that was annexed into the city. Exhibit 7.2 shows the current pick-up schedule.

The city no longer provides commercial solid waste collection. Commercial establishments must contact directly with a service provider for garbage collection.

Exhibit 7.2



PUBLIC SAFETY

The City of West Columbia operates one fire station located at 610 N. 12th Street. The City of West Columbia Fire Department is a career, urban fire department that is ready to respond to emergency calls 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. The WCFD provides fire protection to the City's 16,000 citizen and the WCFD also has automatic aid agreements with each of its surrounding municipal fire departments (Columbia Fire Department, Cayce Public Safety, and Lexington County Fire Service). In addition to fire suppression, the WCFD also provides a

variety of operation to technician level rescue services, Basic Life Support (BLS) medical care, along with swift water rescue response to the Lower Saluda and Congaree Rivers, which runs between downtown Columbia and the City of West Columbia. The City currently possesses an ISO rating of 3. Ninety percent of the time, the average response time for the Fire Department is 4 minutes.

The West Columbia police department is located in the municipal complex at 200 N. 12th Street. The West Columbia Police Department is a full-service department except for a jail. It currently has a staff of 52 officers, 4 dispatchers, 2 reserve officers, one animal control officer, and 6 administrative personnel. There are seven officers on a shift with one dispatcher. Recently the West Columbia Police Department implement its 911 system to better respond to emergency calls in the city. The average response time is 5 minutes.

RECREATION

There are several parks located in the city, offering its residents a wide variety of recreational activities. In addition to the parks listed below, residents can take advantage of the recreational facilities of the public schools in the city.

Park	**Location**
• C.M. "Jack" Caraway Community Park*	212 Hudson Street
• Douglas Reeves Community Park*	761 B Avenue
• Rosemounda Percell-Butler Community Park**	1100 Raleigh Street
• Eric L. Fowler Community Park*	1800 C Avenue
• Howard Sports Complex**	200 Cougar Drive
• B Avenue Park**	815 B Avenue
• Tri-City Leisure Center**	700 Dreher Road
• Three-Rivers Greenway*	Riverfront

* Maintained by the City of West Columbia

** Maintained by the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission

The city is working to upgrade the equipment at Caraway Community Park, coordinating with the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission to secure funding for upgrades to the commission's parks and is looking to add a park to the Highway 1 annexation area for the residents recently annexed into the city.

The award-winning Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens' botanical garden is located in the City of West Columbia and has direct access from US 378 via Botanical Parkway. A pedestrian bridge provides access to the zoo located across the Saluda River. The botanical gardens is located in the Saluda Factory Historic District and incorporates many of the historic landmarks including covered bridge abutments and the Saluda River Factor ruins. A children's play area was recently added to the botanical garden.

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SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

The City of West Columbia is located in Lexington School District Two, which has the following public schools located within the West Columbia city Limits

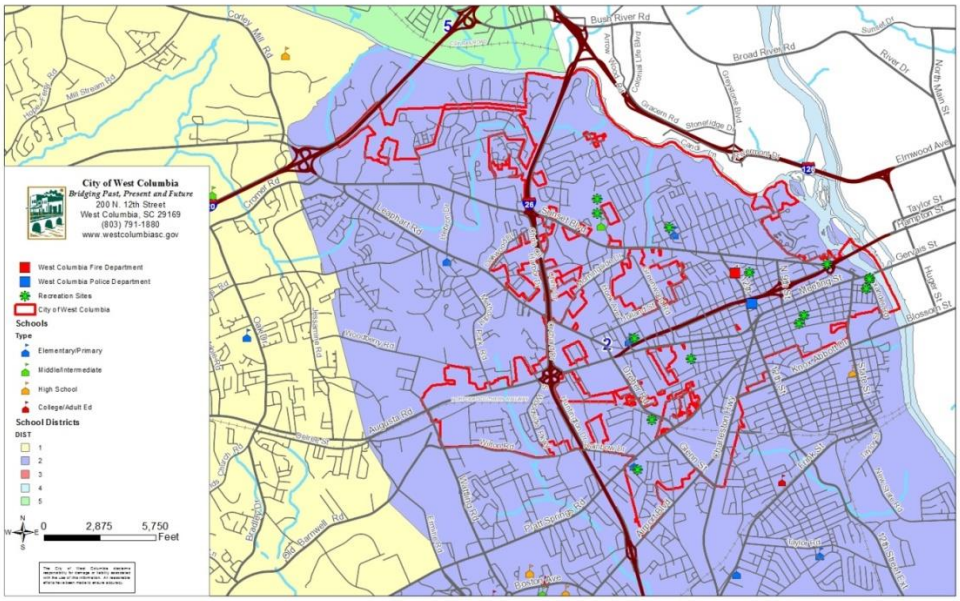
Public School	**Location**
Saluda River Academy for the Arts	1520 Duke Avenue
George I. Pair Alternative School	2325 Platt Springs Rd.
B.C. Grammar School #1	114 Hook Avenue
Northside Middle School	157 Cougar Drive

Students in the city also attend Pinveview Elementary School, Springdale Elementary School, Fulmer Middle School, Brookland-Cayce High School and Airport High School. Two new elementary schools are locating in the city. East Point Academy, a charter school, is locating on Chris Drive, and a new elementary school is locating on Courgar Drive, near Northside Middle School.

There are no colleges or universities within the city, but higher education can easily be obtained at Midlands Technical College's Airport campus, or at the University of South Carolina's main campus and several small colleges and universities located just across the river.

The Cayce–West Columbia Branch of the Lexington County Public Library is located at 1500 Augusta Rd. The 20,000 sqft facility is a recent addition to the library system, so there are no plans for expansion. The library circulates approximately 70,000 items per year.

Exhibit 7.3



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NEEDS:

- A comprehensive analysis of service levels before attempting another large annexation program.
- A policy of concurrency for new development in the city.
- Develop an impact fee scheduled to off-set the cost of expanding city services for new developments.

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8. **TRANSPORTATION** RESOURCE

AIR

Air transportation is available through a number of major airlines at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. Currently the airport is accessed either via Airport Boulevard or Platt Springs Road There are plans to extend the Airport Connector from Airport Blvd (302) to I-26. The addition of an interchange on I-26 would greatly improve access to the airport.

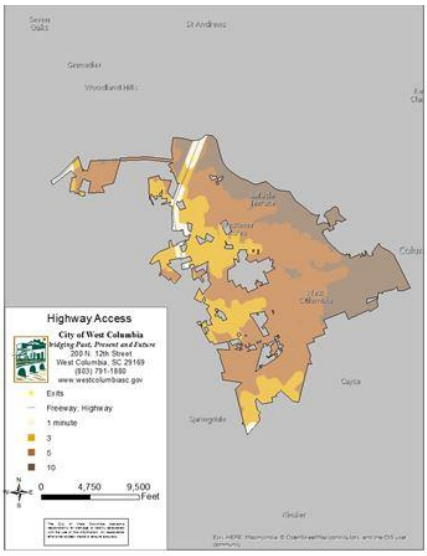
Lexington County maintains a general aviation airport near the town of Pelion. Per the county's website:

The runway is 4,335 feet long by 60 feet wide and currently supports small single and twin-engine piston aircraft (less than 12,500 pounds) and is equipped with a parallel taxiway (Taxiway A), a 100 Low Lead (100LL) self-service fueling facility, aircraft tie-downs, 10 T-hangars, 2 corporate hangars, and a terminal building.

HIGHWAYS

West Columbia is served by an extensive network of highways, including five federal highways, which provide easy access to the rest of the Columbia metropolitan region and areas beyond. Of primary importance is I–26 which can be accessed at three interchanges and provides a link to Greenville and Spartanburg to the west and Charleston to the east. It also provides a link to I–20 and I–77. 12th Street Extension via the City of Cayce, also provides direct access to I-77, and Charlotte and Charleston beyond. As Exhibit 8.1 shows, prior to the US 1 annexation, most of the city was within 5 minutes of interstate access.

Exhibit 8.1



As of this writing, there are no projects for the City of West Columbia listed in the COATS Transportation Improvement Plan and there are no road widening projects in the COATS Long Range Transportation Plan located within the City of West Columbia.

Table 9.2 shows traffic counts for a selection of the stations in the city. While the traffic counts have remained steady over the last 5 years, the counts do not reflect the peak-hour congestion along some of the corridors. The 2015 Congestion Management Plan developed by Central Midlands COG showed that a portion of US 1 west of the I-25 interchange had a Level of Service (LOS) F, while a portion of US east of the I-26 interchange and a portion of Jarvis Klapman Blvd near Sunset Blvd had a LOS of E. Most of the road network in the city functions well but there is peak hour congestion on US 1 and US 378, particularly at the I-26 Interchange.

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Exhibit 9.2

Station Number	Location	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
122	Augusta Road	32000	32000	32800	33600	31900
129	Augusta Road	14400	14400	14700	15000	13500
135	Charleston Hwy	23300	23300	23900	24500	24900
191	Sunset Blvd	21700	21700	22200	22700	21800
193	Sunset Blvd	15100	15100	15500	15900	14600
195	Sunset Blvd	9200	9200	9400	9600	9200
235	Jarvis Klapman Blvd	15200	15200	15600	16000	16100
236	Jarvis Klapman Blvd	21300	21300	21900	22500	20800
287	Airport Blvd	11600	11600	11900	12200	12700
309	Platt Springs Road	16600	16600	16900	17200	17400

Source: SCDOT

The South Carolina Department of Transportation has identified the I-20/26/126 interchange, known as the "Carolina Crossroads", as the number one interstate priority in South Carolina. The only portion of the study area within the city is I-26 from US 378 to the Saluda River. SCDOT is evaluating alternatives to the interchange along with mainline interstate improvements. SCDOT is also considering an I-126/I-20 East-West Connection which would be a new segment. One alternative under consideration is called the "Direct Interchange", and would have a significant impact on several neighborhoods in the city.

PUBLIC TRANSIT:

Central Midlands Transit (COMET) provides two bus routes in the city. Route 26 serve Meeting Street, City Hall, Augusta Road, Walmart and Lexington Medical Center. Route 28 Serves the Midlands Tech College airport campus. Both routes also serve downtown Columbia.While ridership has steadily increased, service is offered only three times a day which limits transit access in the city.

DART (Dial a ride transit) is a public transit system which provides rides on a demand basis.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN

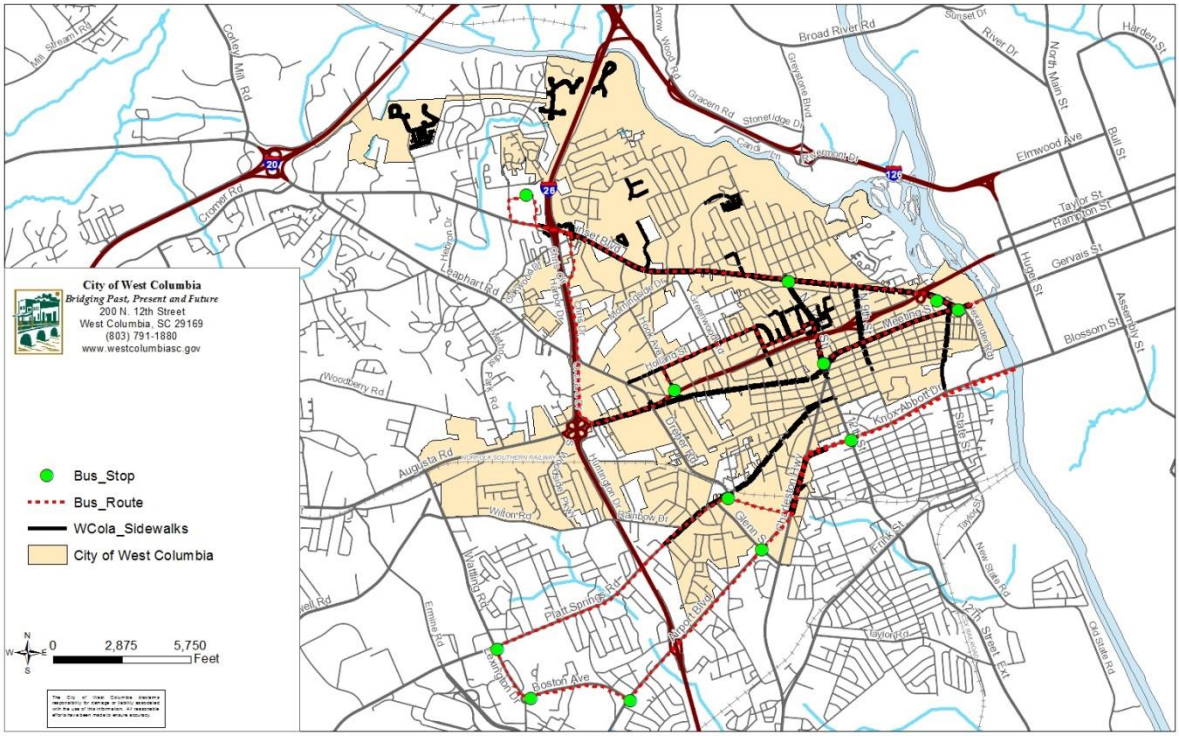
The most significant bike and pedestrian facility is the West Columbia Riverwalk, which is a nearly two-mile portion of the larger Three Rivers Greenway. West Columbia's portion runs from Knox Abbott Drive to Moffatt Street. The greenway has become more than just a walking trail along the river. It has opened up economic opportunity by providing a destination in West Columbia and it has fostered an "outdoor" economy that caters to hiking and paddling. In recent years, new residential development has occurred along the greenway, taking advantage of the open space the greenway provides. The greenway also plays a civic role with the amphitheater at the Meeting Street entrance. The amphitheater serves as the location for plays such as the annual

"Legend of Sleepy Hollow" held on the weekends leading to Halloween, but also seasonal concert series and other outdoor events.

The city made landscape improvements in Triangle City to separate the sidewalks from the travel lanes making the area more pedestrian friendly. The major corridors like Meeting Street, Sunset Boulevard and State Street have sidewalks, but they do not extend into the adjacent neighborhoods, limiting the benefit of having the connections to the commercial districts. The few examples of sidewalks in residential neighborhoods are found in the newer developments such as the ones along Botanical Parkway.

The only marked bike lanes in the city are along Platt Springs Road which were installed as part of a widening project. West Columbia is partnering with the City of Cayce, Town of Springdale and Central Midlands COG for a multi-jurisdictional bike a pedestrian plan which will provide a list of projects that the city can implement. In 2016 the city was awarded a TAP grant to implement a bike lane on B Ave. The 1-mile facility will link State Street to Triangle City, providing a safe place for bicyclists to ride.

Exhibit 9.3



NEEDS:

- Encourage development with multi-modal connections.
- Implement the recommendations from the bike/pedestrian plan.
- Establish a circulator bus between Triangle City and the Congaree Vista.

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CURRENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

GENERAL FUND

The General Fund accounts for all funding resources in the City not otherwise devoted to specific activities. This funding source includes revenues from ad valorem taxes (real estate and personal property), licenses and permits, charges for services, intergovernmental funding, other taxes, and miscellaneous revenue and other funding sources. These funds are generally spent on general government services, public safety, public works and utilities, and health and human services. Expenditures include, but are not limited to, salaries for department employees, supply and fuel costs, and building improvements. Capital and infrastructure are funded in part through the General Funds.

The FY 2016-2017 General Fund Budget for the City was $16,852,000.

GRANTS

In 2016, the City hired a grants administrator to expand the opportunity for using grant funds. Grants represent discretionary, lump-sum funding secured by the City for specific one-time projects. There is no assurance that previous grant monies will be made available again in the future; however, the Comprehensive Plan assumes some growth will continue to be funded with grants. In many cases, receiving grant monies obligates the City to spend additional dollars to meet local match requirements for the grant received.

C-FUNDS

C-Funds are allocated to each County within the State by the South Carolina Department of transportation (SCDOT) for the purpose of transportation improvements. The source of the funds is the State gasoline tax and State law requires that these improvements be tied to the transportation system and that at least 25% of the funds be spent on the state highway system. Funds are awarded through a competitive process by a committee designated by the State Legislature, referred to as the County Transportation Committee (CTC). These funds reimburse the City and County for specified projects approved by the CTC. As a result, C-Funds are restricted for specific uses and cannot be used for all capital projects. More often than not, C-Funds are used for street/road paving and repaving projects.

The city recently used C-Funds as part of a public/private partnership with the House of Raeford to install cross walk signals on Sunset Boulevard to help improve pedestrian safety for those crossing the road. C-Funds were also used as match for the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant to install the B Avenue bike lane.

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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) GUIDESHARES

Guideshare funding is available for each of the South Carolina Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Councils of Government (COG) for system upgrade projects. This dollar amount is calculated by taking the MPO‟s or COG‟s specific proportion of the state population and applying it to the total available funds for system upgrades. The funds are allocated in the Federal Highway Appropriation Bill.

The City of West Columbia is located in The Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS) MPO. COATS receives approximately $18 million per year in Guideshare to fund transportation projects in the federal system.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDS

TAP funds are available for environmentally related activities that improve the transportation experience, including landscaping, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, historic preservation and other visual amenities related to the transportation system. These funds are administered through COATS.

The city recently applied for TAP funds to add a bike lane on B Ave from 12th Street to State Street.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

General Obligation Bonds (GO Bonds) are backed by the “full faith and credit” of the City and County, and are usually considered a safe investment for bondholders. The principal and interest on general obligation bonds are normally paid through a property tax levy.

As of June 30, 2016, the City had issued $1,246,261 in General Obligation Bonds.

REVENUE BONDS

Revenue bonds are used when the City issues a bond and pledges the revenues received from services provided as payments for the debt service. This revenue is used to pay both principal and interest on the bond. While revenue bonds incur slightly higher interest costs than general obligation bonds, they do not use up the City’s bond capacity.

As of June 30, 2016, the City had total revenue bonds outstanding in the amount of $33,373,210. The outstanding balance of revenue bonds is secured by a pledge of the gross revenue of the Water and Sewer utility System as well as a line against the system.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (LIDS)

Counties and municipalities in South Carolina are authorized to create a local improvement district for capital projects. Provisions for assessing and levying property taxes in different areas and at different rates are set forth in the Code of Laws of South Carolina, Section 4-9-30(5)(a). A local improvement district links together the costs and benefits resulting from new or upgraded capital facilities. Generally, property owners in the new tax district must agree to the new

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assessment. Capital projects in the special benefit tax district can be bond-financed and paid over time by the benefitting property owners to expedite implementation.

As of June 30, 2016 the City had $1,120,000 in TIF Bonds secured by the incremental tax revenue of the Tax Increment Finance District and by a junior pledge of the water and sewer system.

LEASE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

Lease-Purchase Agreements allow a local government to acquire capital assets by making a series of lease payments that are considered installments towards the purchase of the asset. Under a lease-purchase agreement, the local government acquires full ownership of the property covered by the lease by making all of the lease payments over the full term of the lease.

The city has used lease-purchase agreements for the following items:

- A ladder truck,
- A pumper truck,
- Air packs for the fire department;
- 3 sanitation trucks;
- A flatbed truck for the streets department;
- The roll cart system for garbage collection;
- Police vehicles and equipment

CITY OF WEST COLUMBIA WATER ENTERPRISE FUND

The City operates a public water utility, sometime referred to as an Enterprise Fund. For FY 2016-2017 the Water and Sewer budget was $15,500,000.

LOCAL HOSPITALITY TAX

A local hospitality tax is levied on consumers purchasing prepared foods and beverages from vendors located within the jurisdiction enacting the tax. Jurisdictions in South Carolina are authorized to levy a hospitality tax of up to 2% if approved by a majority of the governing body. This tax limit is reduced to 1% if a hospitality tax is approved by and county and a municipality within the county (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-700).

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Additional revenue sources are available to the City and County for funding large-scale planning initiatives or capital improvements. Some of these sources require action by City or County Council in accordance with the Code of Laws of South Carolina as amended. A summary of potential funding sources available for recommended projects in the comprehensive plan follows. Individual limitations or conditions for each option have not been reviewed for this document.

LOCAL ACCOMMODATION TAX

A local accommodation tax is levied on the rental of rooms, lodging, or sleeping accommodations. Local governments in South Carolina are authorized levying an

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accommodation tax of up to 7% of the gross proceeds derived by business owners renting rooms, lodging, or sleep accommodations. An accommodation tax also imposes a sales tax of up to 5% on additional guest services offered at facilities not otherwise taxed under South Carolina law (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 12-36-920).

REAL ESTATE TRANSFER FEES

A real estate transfer fee is a charge on the transfer, sale, or conveyance of real property. It is applied against the purchase price of the property, and can be restricted to certain types of capital expenditures. The South Carolina Legislature has strictly forbidden the implementation of a real estate transfer fee without expressed authorization from the state legislature (see S.C. Code of Laws, Section 6-1-70).

STATE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

The South Carolina State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) selects and assists in financing major qualified projects by providing loans and other financial assistance for constructing and improving highway and transportation facilities. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a prioritized list of transportation projects prepared by the South Carolina Department of Transportation to be implemented statewide in appropriate stages over several years. The City of West Columbia provides comment on the STIP through participation in the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS) the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); and through participation in the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG).

DEVELOPER IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In some instances, the owner(s) of property seeking entitlements for their land may elect during the development review process to donate right-of-way or construct certain “oversized“ capital projects simply for the public good as well as to serve their development. The type and/or magnitude of these contributions vary greatly from location to location and owner to owner.

IMPACT FEES

Impact Fees are intended to enable new growth to pay for the services it generates a need for such as schools, recreation, and public safety. These fees are established based on the capital and operating impacts of new development and are paid by the developer or ownership interest.

CIP PROJECTS

The city does not adopt a Capital Improvement plan as part of its budget process, but its departments do identify long-term capital projects.

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PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS

RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

The City has sponsored several improvements in the River District to complement the riverfront park, including landscaping along Meeting Street, sidewalks, decorative street lighting and a new entrance sign. Future plans include a road diet along Meeting Street, reducing the number of travel lanes to accommodate additional landscaping and bike lanes, extending the greenway along the Saluda River to I-26 and working with private developers to develop city owned property at the intersection of Meeting Street and State Street and between Bridgepoint and the water plant.

TRIANGLE CITY

Recent façade improvements and sidewalk work along 12th Street have helped to improve the appearance of this significant commercial district. Possible additional improvements include:

- additional landscaping
- street furniture
- bike lanes
- pedestrian crossing

These improvements would help make the area a more pedestrian friendly commercial district and destination.

BOTANICAL PARKWAY

One of the newer residential areas in the city, Botanical Parkway provides direct access from the botanical gardens and Sunset Blvd. The resulting corridor opened land for residential development. Aside from the sidewalks directly along the houses (at the far end of Botanical Parkway), there are no bike/pedestrian facilities along the corridor linking the entrance to Rivervbanks Zoo and Botanical Gardens to Sunset Blvd. Extending the sidewalks in conjunction with a bike lane or possibly a multi-use trail along with formal landscaping would make the corridor a more “complete street.”

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The city has already demonstrated intergovernmental coordination through its work with the City of Cayce and the Town of Springdale in a streetscape project along Airport Blvd, but the city works with many jurisdictions at the local, regional and state level including:

Lexington School District
Lexington County
The River Alliance
Central Midlands COG
Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS)
City of Columbia
Various State and Federal agencies

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10. LAND USE

LAND USE

The existing land use map shows a pattern of typical auto–oriented suburban development in West Columbia. The major traffic arteries of Meeting Street, Sunset Boulevard, Augusta Road, Charleston Highway and Airport Boulevard are lined with individual stores, restaurants and typical "strip" shopping centers. Triangle City, located at the intersections of 12th Street, Charleston Highway and Augusta Road, serves as the hub of this auto–oriented commercial activity, most of which are either retail or service establishments.

While most of the residential areas are protected from commercial development, there are some areas of the city where residential and commercial uses are mixing. One example of the mixture of uses is along Center Street. The northern side of Center Street is zoned commercial; however, much of the property is still residential in use. The southern side of Center Street and beyond is a well-established neighborhood of both single and multi-family units.

Another area that has a mix of commercial and residential uses is a triangle shaped area bounded by Sunset Boulevard, Meeting Street/Augusta Highway and Brown Street. Of particular note is the industrial property adjacent to the residential area near Batchelor Street and North Street.

Most of the mobile homes are found in mobile home parks, most of which are located in the southwestern part of the City. There is a small number of mobile homes located in individual lots throughout the City.

ZONING

It is not surprising that the city's Zoning Map mirrors the mixture of land uses on the major corridors. Along Sunset Boulevard, there are areas zoned R1, R2, C2 and LM. Platt Springs Road has areas zoned R1, R2, R3, R4, C2, C3 and HM. While a large percentage of the commercial property in the city is zoned C2 (General Commercial), with C-1 (Intensive Commercial) and C-3 (Restricted Commercial) in specific locations.

The majority of the City's residential parcels are zoned R4 (Single Family Residential, minimum lot size of 13,125 square feet), with R3 (Single Family Residential, minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet) the next most prevalent designation. R2 (Single Family and Duplex) and R1 (Single Family, Multi Family and Duplex) also can be found throughout the City.

LM (Light Manufacturing and Distribution) and HM (Heavy Manufacturing) are located primarily in the area between Sunset Boulevard and Augusta Road, but there is manufacturing property along Sunset Boulevard near the Congaree River, as well as along the railroad tracks on Williams Road and Dreher Road.

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FUTURE LAND USE

The comprehensive plan's Future Land Use Map should be used in making zoning decision in the city and during the annexation process for property currently outside the city.

A. Residential Zones

The current zoning ordinance divides residential uses into three zoning districts. The number of dwelling units per lot and lot size are the distinguishing characteristics between zoning districts. Below are the land use classifications on the Future Land Use map and the compatible zoning district(s) for each of the classifications

1. Low Density Residential: This area covers low density neighborhoods with single family detached dwellings on separate lots. This category covers over half of all residential areas in the City, but is primarily located in the area between Hwy. 378 and the Saluda River. Single Family areas should be buffered from intensive commercial and industrial uses.

Compatible zoning designation: R–4 and R-3 Single Family Residential

2. Medium and High Density Residential: Included in both categories are the small lot single family uses, duplexes, mobile homes (parks only), and multi–family uses.

Compatible zoning designation: R–2 single family and duplex and R–1 single family, duplex and multi–family.

B. Commercial Zones

The current Zoning Ordinance divides the commercial uses into three zoning districts. Even though all the districts are represented on the zoning map, they have been ineffective in preventing strip development and commercial encroachment into single family residential areas. The Future Land Use Map identifies commercial areas in the city. Staff and the Planning Commission should use the following descriptions, along with factors such as prevailing development pattern and road access, to determine the appropriate zoning district when making decisions on how to zone property

1. General Commercial: Auto-oriented commercial uses are recommended for concentration in major nodes away from the residential uses along more heavily traveled routes. Under no circumstances should such uses be allowed to encroach on protected residential areas. Examples include Triangle City and major intersections along Highway 378

Compatible zoning designation: C-2, General Commercial

2. Intensive Commercial: The intensive commercial areas are intended for commercial uses that have a pedestrian scale, but are intensive enough to have a regional service area. Examples include State Street and "Triangle City".

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Compatible zoning designation: C-1

3. Restricted Commercial: The restricted commercial areas are neighborhood serving commercial areas recommended for sites on collectors or arterials accessible to one or several residential areas. These districts are intended as commercial nodes for nearby neighborhoods.

Compatible zoning designation: C-3

C. Mixed use: The current Zoning Ordinance has two mixed-use districts, however, some of the areas identified as Mixed Use on the Future Land Use map can be considered areas of transition from commercial to residential. Staff and the Planning Commission should use factors such as prevailing development pattern and road access, to determine the appropriate zoning district when making decisions on how to zone property in the mixed-use areas.

Compatible zoning designation: All

D. Industrial Zones: The current Zoning Ordinance divides the industrial uses into three zoning districts. The intensity of uses permitted distinguishes the two zoning districts.

1. Light Industrial: These areas are intended for wholesaling, distribution, light manufacturing use and general commercial uses. Light manufacturing uses are those processes that do not create a nuisance such as noise, dust, fumes or odor. The plan recommends that care be taking to assure that general commercial uses do not overtake areas more appropriate for light manufacturing uses.

Compatible zoning designation: LM, Light Manufacturing

2. Heavy Industrial: These areas are intended for uses of a manufacturing and industrial nature and uses related to heavy manufacturing operations. As with the light industrial districts, the plan recommends that care be taken to assure that general commercial uses do not overtake areas more appropriate for heavy industrial uses. Additionally, under no circumstance should heavy industrial-type uses be allowed to encroach upon protected residential uses.

Compatible zoning designation: HM, Heavy Manufacturing

D. Special Districts

1. Gateway District: To correspond with the Gateway District in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

2. Planned Development District: The Planned Development District to provide for improved design, character, and quality of new mixed use developments and preserve natural and scenic features of open spaces. A planned development district can be located anywhere in the city following guidelines adopted in the City of West Columbia zoning ordinance and land development regulations.

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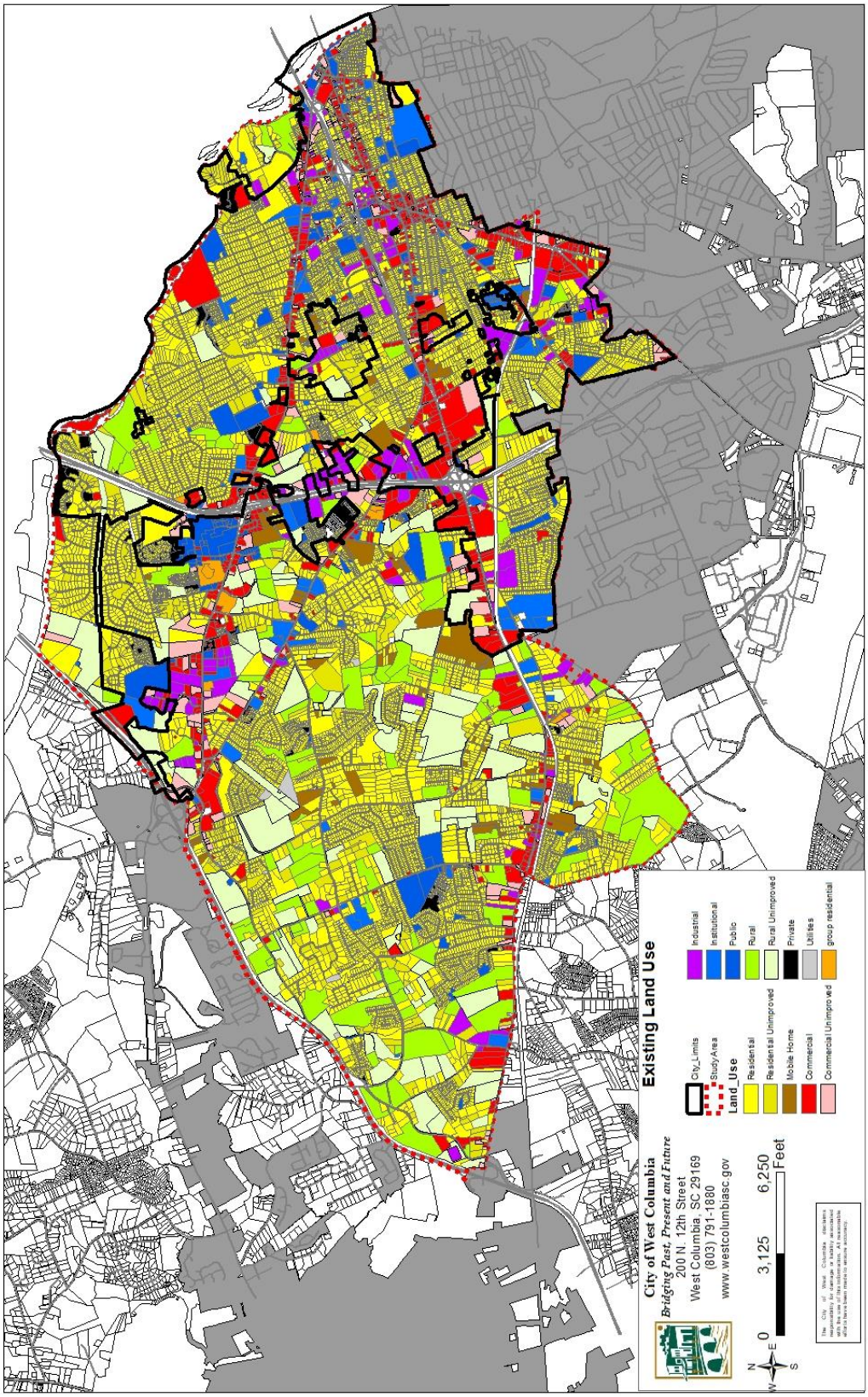
Existing Land Use
City_Limits
StudyArea
Land_Use
Residential
Residential Unimproved
Mobile Home
Commercial
Commercial Unimproved
Industrial
Institutional
Public
Rural
Rural Unimproved
Private
Utilities
group residential
City of West Columbia
Bridging Past, Present and Future
200 N. 12th Street
West Columbia, SC 29169
(803) 791-1880
www.westcolumbiasc.gov
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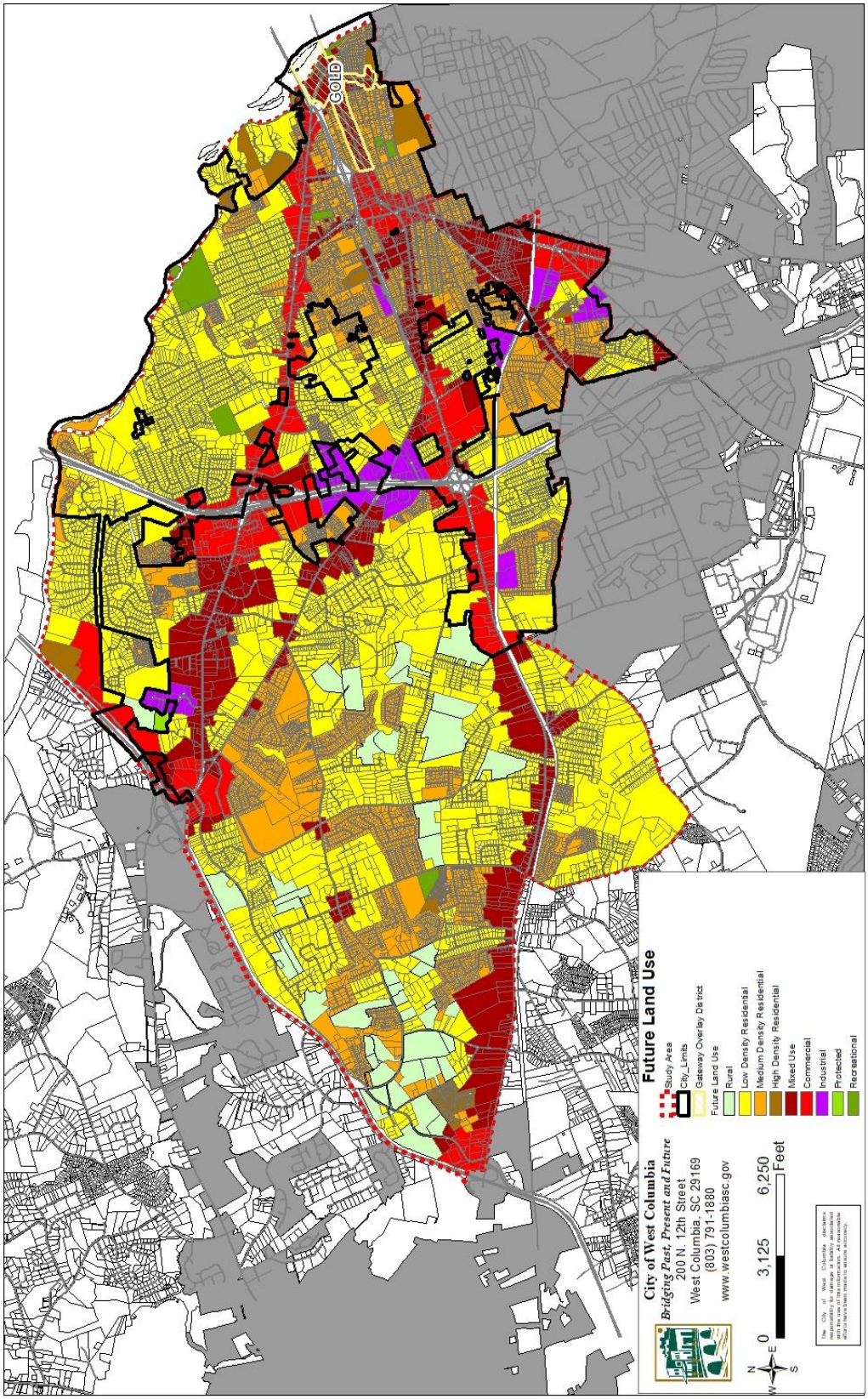
GOLD
Future Land Use
Study Area
City_Limits
Gateway Overlay District
Future Land Use
Rural
Low Density Residential
Medium Density Residential
High Density Residential
Mixed Use
Commercial
Industrial
Protected
Recreational
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11. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICIES

1. **Continue a sense of place:** Communities with a strong "sense of place" have several characteristics in common: compact, mixed-use districts; pedestrian facilities providing a pleasant and safe walking environment for daily activities; an active civic community; strong link between transportation and land use, and higher residential density.

2. **Appearance:** The visual appearance of the community is important to the general health of the community Attractive roadway corridors, neighborhoods, commercial areas and public spaces contribute to improving the appearance of the community. Examples of ways to improve the appearance of the community include design guidelines, beautification projects and code enforcement.

3. **Growth and economic development:** Characteristics of orderly growth include infrastructure to meet future demands, municipal services provided in a cost efficient manner, new development compatible with existing development, and preservation of open space and natural areas. The city should balance the need for redevelopment with growth through annexation.

4. **Land use:** Mixed-use development allows for residential, commercial, and even some industrial uses to be located adjacent to each other. One result of a good mixed-use district is the reduction of automobile trips since the mixture of uses allow for alternative modes of transportation such as walking and bicycles. Compact mixed-use development also allows for the preservation of natural areas not suitable for development. In areas where a mix of uses is not practical, existing residential development should be protected from the negative impact of incompatible uses.

5. **Transportation:** As the link between land-uses in the community and the community to the region, a good transportation system is vital. The transportation system should accommodate multiple modes of travel, both motorized and non-motorized. Those modes should be given safe and pleasant facilities that provide recreational opportunities in addition to options for people to walk or bicycle to daily activities, resulting in an active lifestyle.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Creating a sense of place

THE CITY HAS SEVERAL DISTRICTS WITH DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS. THE GOAL IS TO IDENTIFY THE CHARACTERISTISCS OF THE DISTRICTS AND IMPLMENT POLICIES THAT SUPPORT THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISTRICTS.

OBJECTIVES:

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I. Improve major gateways: Since West Columbia shares much of its boundary with the City of Cayce and the town of Springdale, and is directly across the Congaree River from the City of Columbia, it is difficult to distinguish West Columbia from its neighbors. To create a sense of place and arrival for travelers entering the City, West Columbia should continue to improve the major and minor gateways into the City identified on the future land use map. Minor gateways are areas, due to traffic flow or the ambiguous nature of the City limits, the traveler may reenter the City or a significant segment of it (such as Triangle City) and are given visual cues that they are entering a special area.

II. Investigate establishing historic guidelines for the New Brookland Historic District: Within the city limits are unique areas which should be highlighted to create a sense of place. One such area is the New Brookland Historic District**,** which is on the National Register of Historic Places; however, according to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History Fact Sheet: National Register of Historic Places:

Listing does not require owners to preserve or maintain their properties unless they apply for and accept federal funding or a federal license, an OCRM permit or certification, a federal preservation tax credit, or a state–funded preservation grant.

Since the boundaries of the historic neighborhood have been established, the Plan recommends identifying this area as a conservation district and writing a preservation or landmarks ordinance which would establish a Landmarks Commission and accompanying guidelines. These guidelines could take the form of either advisory or binding, depending on the interest of the community, and could cover demolitions and the style, materials, and color of new construction and alterations, or could simply cover new construction.

III. Identify Distinct Districts in the City and Encourage Compatible Development within Those Districts: The city should undertake a study to identify areas with distinct characteristics and encourage development that is compatible with those characteristics. For example, the River District is evolving into a dining and entertainment area, the development within the River District should be compatible and encourage those uses.

IV. Identify Triangle City as the Central Business District and encourage the creation of the Triangle City Merchants Association: Triangle City for many years has been the center of commercial activity in West Columbia. Just as with “5 Points” in Columbia, Triangle City is located at the intersection of several major thoroughfares. Unlike “5 Points” however, Triangle City does not have the "little village atmosphere." As the "heart of the City" and one of only a few places in the area where people can park their cars and walk to a variety of stores and restaurants, the Comprehensive Plan recommends identifying this area as the commercial core of the City and encourages pedestrian friendly standards along with a mix of residential and compatible commercial development in the area. As a means to garner involvement and support from the merchants in the areas the Plan also recommends the creation of the Triangle City Merchants Association.

V. Identify other historic districts in the city: As the city evolves, neighborhoods will become "historic" due to their age and characteristics. The city should investigate the historic

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status of the older neighborhoods and pursue historic status for those eligible. One impact is that the inventory of buildings eligible for historic rehabilitation special tax assessment would increase since the buildings must be on the Nation Register or is deemed significant to a historic district or property on the National Register.

VI. Designate a "festival street": The city holds events along State Street but does not close the street due to traffic flow. The city should look at street location for select events that, on a temporary basis, can be closed fully to vehicle traffic to encourage more pedestrian access and safety.

B. Appearance

THE GOAL IS TO PROMOTE AN OVERALL APPEARANCE WHICH ENHANCES THE IMAGE OF WEST COLUMBIA AND BEAUTIFIES THE NATURAL AND MAN-MADE LANDSCAPE OF THE CITY

OBJECTIVES

I. Review and strengthen signage and landscape requirements citywide to create a more distinctive appearance for the City: In the commercial areas, signage and landscaping should be evaluated to strengthen appearance and application. Particular interest should be paid to the Triangle City area, Meeting Street, 12th Street and Hwy. 378, where enhanced landscaping should be required.

II. Continue to aggressively address overgrown lots, junk cars, deteriorating buildings and litter through code enforcement and required ordinance action: The City recently made changes to the Code Enforcement Department to place an emphasis on addressing complaints and being more proactive investigating code violations. The city should continue to enhance code enforcement with tools to help investigate, enforce and track incidents to determine patterns and detect "hot-spots".

III. Investigate implementing design guidelines where appropriate: The Gateway Overlay District has architectural standards that reflect the purpose and intent of the district. These guidelines should be reviewed to ensure that they are fully meeting the needs of the district. Other corridors in the city should be considered for guidelines that reflect their unique needs.

IV. Prepare a master streetscape plan for targeted roadways: The Future Land Use map identifies key transportation corridors. To build upon the work that the West Columbia Beautification has done by planting trees on Sunset Boulevard, the city should develop and implement streetscape plans in the right-of-way and were possible, private property, to provide for a safe a pleasant pedestrian environment.

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C. Growth and Economic Development

THE GOAL IS TO PLAN FOR THE CONTINUED ORDERLY ANNEXATION, REDEVELOPMENT, AND INFILL OF LAND WITHIN THE CITY OF WEST COLUMBIA'S CORPORATE LIMITS

OBJECTIVES

I. Create and implement a revitalization plan: There are pockets in the city that lag behind in key socio-economic indicators. The city should Identify those areas with redevelopment potential and create plans that address the critical needs.

II. Develop an annexation program for future growth: The significant opportunity for growth for the city is through annexation, however, those annexations should not negative impact the ability to provide services to the citizens. A study of the impact that the proposed annexation area will have on city services should be done prior to the annexation.

III. Develop a strategic plan to improve the quality of life indicators: Quality of life items play a key role in job recruitment, and attracting and maintain residents. The city should identify current quality of life indicators, and identify those items the city should add or improve to be more competitive in the region.

IV. Implement a policy of concurrency for new developments: The City should evaluate new development to determine if existing services such as public safety, water, sewer and the transportation system are sufficient to handle the additional demand. If not, then the City should work with the developer to determine a suitable alternate site, or find ways to increase service capacity.

V. Develop an impact fee scheduled to off-set the cost of expanding city services for new developments: As the city grows through annexation, there will be opportunities to annex large tracts of land suitable for development. To ensure that the city can meet its service levels, the city should develop impact fees to be assessed on new development to compensate for the development's demand on city services.

D. Land Use

THE GOAL IS TO PROVIDE FOR A LAND USE PATTERN THAT FACILITATES MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT WHILE PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND.

OBJECTIVES:

I. Periodic zoning ordinance review: As economic conditions change, new types of businesses emerge, new economic developments are proposed, and in some case, new economic needs must be addressed. The recent amendments to allow for artisan manufacturing and food

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truck courts are examples of being flexible and addressing missing needs in the zoning ordinance. Other opportunities such as allowing accessory dwelling units should be considered.

II. Promote a variety of residential densities for the development of affordable, quality housing while blending with the character of the surrounding area. The City should encourage higher density residential development along the major corridors to provide a wider choice of housing opportunities, in areas that have sufficient infrastructure for the higher density development. Another way to increase density is to permit accessory dwelling units in areas where appropriate. ADU's provide alternate forms of income for property owners and alternatives for multi-generation families to live on the same property.

III. Identify environmentally sensitive areas and develop standards for conservation: The city should work with land owners and developers to identify environmentally sensitive lands and develop a program to preserve those areas. One key protection that should be addresses is prohibiting the clearcutting of commercial lots for speculative purpose to preserve the tree cover in the city.

IV. Encourage the development of targeted quality commercial centers through land use control and design standards. To shift from the proliferation of strip commercial development, the City should adopt development standards that require quality commercial development emphasizing New Urbanist principles such as walkabilty, a mixture of uses and open space preservation.

E. Transportation

THE GOAL IS TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WHICH REDUCES CONGESTION, INCREASES ACCESS, AND ENSURES PUBLIC SAFETY.

OBJECTIVES:

I. Amend the city's land use ordinances to encourage and enhance public transit: The city participates in a Lexington County public transit work group to for public transit in the county. The city should continue to participate in the work group to ensure that public transit is continued in the city, and when possible, enhanced beyond the current level of service. One possible enhanced service is a circulator bus along Meeting Street that would extend into the Vista.

II. Amend the city's land use ordinances to encourage bicycle and pedestrians facilities as an alternate mode of transportation: The City should develop the infrastructure and land use guidelines to encourage bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the City. Full bike lanes may be difficult in some areas, but wayfinding devices such as bike route signs and map kiosks would help encourage alternative modes of transportation by clearly marking routes throughout the city and linking residential area to commercial and civic destinations. The city should implement the recommendations of the West Metro Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

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III. Investigate a road diet for portions of Meeting Street and Sunset Blvd.: The Gateway Overlay District identifies portions of Meeting Street and Sunset Blvd and possible locations for "road diet" projects. "repurposing the excess roadway capacity to promote other odes of travel and/or beautification initiatives."

IMPLEMENTATION

A.I. Identify major and minor gateways and develop beautification plans for each

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - West Columbia Beautification Foundation
    - City Council

A.II. Work with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History to identify other historic areas in the city.

- Timeframe: Long
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - City Council

A.III. Amend the city's zoning ordinance to include historic overlay district

- Timeframe: Long
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

A.IV. Amend the city's zoning ordinance with zoning districts tailored to meet needs of specific areas in the city.

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

A.V. Amend the city's zoning ordinance to include Central Business District standards for Triangle City.

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:

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    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

A.VI. Designate a "festival street"

- Timeline: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - SCDOT
    - Lexington County
    - City Council

B.I. Review landscape and sign requirements in the zoning ordinance and make changes to enhance the appearance of the city.

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

B.II. Continue to aggressively address overgrown lots, junk cars, litter and deteriorating buildings through code enforcement and required ordinance action.

- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff

B.III. Implement design guidelines where appropriate

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

B.IV. Prepare a master streetscape plan for targeted roadways

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - West Columbia Beautification Foundation
    - City Council

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C.I. Create and implement a revitalization plan

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - City Council

C.II. Develop an annexation program for future growth

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

C.III. Develop a strategic plan to improve quality of life indicators

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - City Council

C.IV. Implement a policy of concurrency

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - City Council

D.I. Conduct periodic ordinance reviews

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission
    - Zoning Board of Appeals
    - City Council

D.II. Promote a variety of residential densities for the development of affordable, quality housing while blending with the character of the surrounding area.

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
    - Staff
    - Planning Commission

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- City Council

D.III. Identify environmentally sensitive areas and develop standards for conservation.

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
  - Staff
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council

D.IV. Encourage the development of targeted quality commercial centers through land use control and design standards

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
  - Staff
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council

E.I. Amend the city's land use ordinances to encourage and enhance public transit

- Timeframe: Medium
- Responsible parties:
  - Staff
  - Central Midlands Transit
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council

E.II. Amend the city's land use ordinances to encourage bicycle and pedestrian facilities as an alternate mode of transportation

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
  - Staff
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council

E.III. Investigate a road diet for portions of Meeting Street and Sunset Blvd.

- Timeframe: Short
- Responsible parties:
  - Staff
  - SCDOT
  - City Council

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