



Comprehensive Plan Update 2008

Approved by Town Council on October 6, 2008

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The following information has been developed to serve as a basis on which meaningful land-use planning can be carried out in the Town of Lexington. This Plan describes the framework for the arrangement of land use, public services, and transportation that will help the town continue to be a distinct and desirable community in the region. Through knowledge of basic policy formation, existing services and prospective needs as well as fundamental location standards for various land uses, the Planning Commission and Town Council will work toward creating a better ordered and a better arranged community. One proposed model towards which the town can work is shown on Exhibit 2. This proposed plan of land uses for the year 2020 is not a fixed and never changing goal but rather a guide to policy making. It is a consolidation of existing knowledge of the community, an assessment of the evolution of social and economic conditions in the urbanized area, in the County, and above all, one interpretation of acceptable land use development that can be encouraged and promoted by the activities of the Planning Commission and the Town Council. Since land development in the urbanized area cannot be examined or interpreted separately nor in a vacuum, the plan's study area includes parcels outside the current municipal boundaries.

The town adopted its first comprehensive plan under South Carolina's 1994 Planning Enabling Act in 1998. The town completed a five-year review of that plan in 2003, and this 2008 revision constitutes a 10-year update.

In 2007, the state amended the Planning Enabling Act to require a Transportation Element and a Priority Investment Element. Since the governor signed the amendment during the development of this update, the town added only the transportation element at this time. By the next comprehensive plan update, staff should have a better understanding about what the Priority Investment Element entails and will emphasize the development of that component.

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

Due to the nature and scope of this plan, it approaches some items on a broad basis and others on a more specific basis. Broadness allows individual departments to meet the needs of the population as situations arise, and within their allotted budgets. Specification is necessary to guide town officials in making decisions regarding land development.

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION ELEMENT

2.1 Inventory

Since the mid-70s, the Town of Lexington has seen a substantial increase in its population. At the time of the 1980 Census, 2,131 people resided in the town limits. By the 1990 Census, the population had dramatically increased to 4,046, an 89.9% increase in population. Throughout the 1990s, population counts were taken in the town. In May of 1994, the town's population was 5,148, a 27% increase in only four years. In June of 1996, another count was taken, reflecting 6,180 people in the town, resulting in a 20% increase in just two years. Some of this growth can be attributed to annexation.

The 2000 Census showed that the population of the Town was 9,793, a 142% increase over the 1990 Census. At the time, the town was the second-fastest growing municipality in South Carolina, and was 21st overall in the state among municipalities and Census Defined Places (CDP). The most recent count of the town conducted by the US Census in 2006 resulted in a population of 14,547.

Demographically, the Town of Lexington has stayed virtually the same over the past two decades.

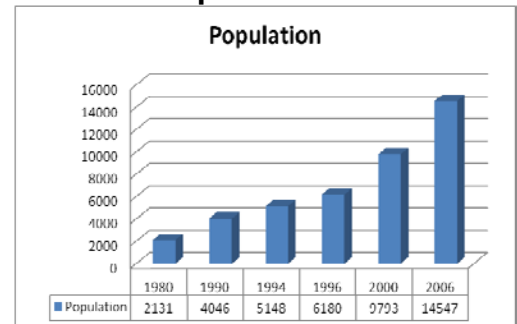
Race: A large majority of the population is made up of Caucasians, with only 16% minorities being Black, Asian, or Hispanic. This ratio has been consistent since the 1990s. However, persons of Hispanic origin have increased from 5 in 1990 to 426 in 2006.

Gender: Females make up a slight majority of the population, with a little more than 50%. This is a decrease from the previous Census.

Age: Due to the significant population growth, the town has not experienced the trend of an aging population that other municipalities in the region have experienced. The percentage in each of the age categories has remained stable over the past two decades, with the 15-59 age group having the largest percentage of the population at 64%.

Education: 35% of the population 25 and older has a least a bachelor's degree.

Exhibit 1 Population



Source: Bureau of the Census, Central Midlands COG

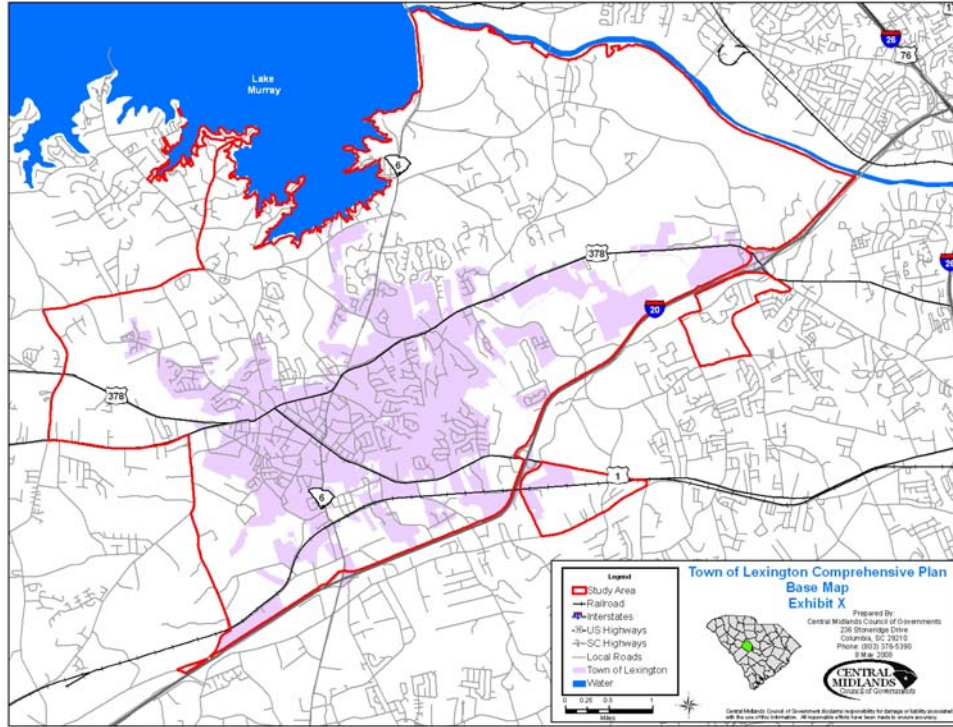
Since the Town of Lexington has rapidly annexed property during the past decade, projected population for a study area that represents possible areas of annexation is an important factor to consider in making decisions, particularly regarding land use and service needs.

Using 2035 population projections developed for the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS) transportation model, the 2035 population for the study area depicted in exhibit 2 is 44,619; more than double the year 2000 population for the same study area. This phenomenal increase is a result of several factors. First, the study area is located in one of the best school districts in South Carolina, which draws many families with school-age children. Second, a significant amount of land is available for development, and most of it is located close to a major road or roads. (While much of this land is located outside the Town limits, it has potential for annexation.) Third, the increase in well paying employment opportunities, and the proximity of these jobs to the town, will encourage people to locate in or close to the town.

2.2 Need

For the past two decades, the Town of Lexington has been in the enviable position of have rapid population growth. Over the same period, several jurisdictions in the region have seen only modest growth or even declining population. While the growth that the Town of Lexington has seen is enviable, there are issues that ht town should address. The town should make sure that future growth does not negatively impact the character and services of the town

Exhibit 2 Study Area Map



CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

3.1 Inventory

Mid-census employment and income statistics are limited and should be updated for the 2010 Census. According to the 2000 Census, 7,110 people age 16 years or older lived in the town. From this labor pool, 72.5% were in the labor force. When broken down by occupation, two professions showed significant increases: Managerial/Professional (+1,599) and Sales/Office (+805). Another increase important to note is in the field of Services (+350).

When broken down by job sectors, again, two stand out: Retail Trade (+531) and Professional and Related Services (+452). Other gainers to note were Wholesale (+273), Personal/Entertainment/Recreational Services (+368) and Financial/Insurance/Real Estate (+497).

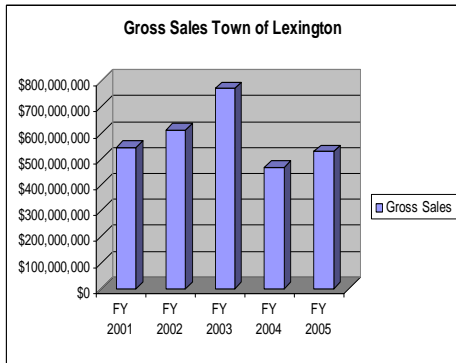
Exhibits 4, 5 and 6 show the top employers based on location in the study area using data collected for the COATS 2035 Long-range Transportation Plan. Public Sector employment is significant, with Lexington County and the school district accounting for four of the top nine overall employers in the study area. The school district transportation facility is the top industrial employer, and grocery stores account for four of the top 11 retail employers.

As the population grows, supporting jobs will be created to provide basic services. Such change is already evident in the job sectors of Retail, Financial/Insurance/Real Estate, Professional and Related Services, and Public Utilities. As core sector jobs (manufacturing, business, and construction) increase, an increase in support services is almost guaranteed. These support services include banks, grocery stores, gas stations, doctors' and dentists' offices, churches, restaurants, and utility companies; and for each of these jobs, other jobs are also needed to provide support.

According to the Town of Lexington, 6,896 business licenses have been issued since 2004.

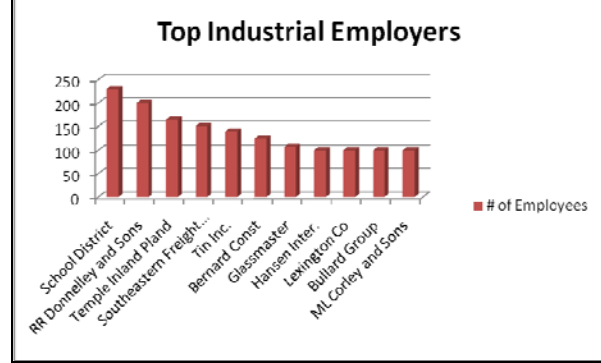
From 2000 to 2007, the Town saw a 25% increase in the number of businesses.

Exhibit 3 Gross Sales



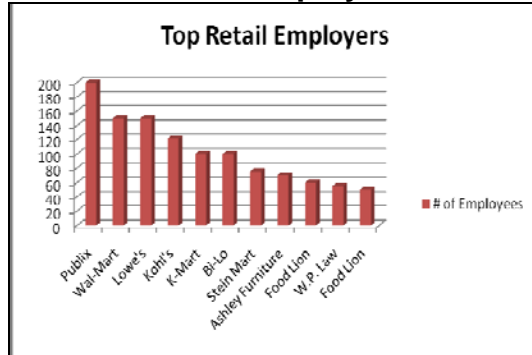
Source: SC Department of Revenue

Exhibit 4 Industrial Employers



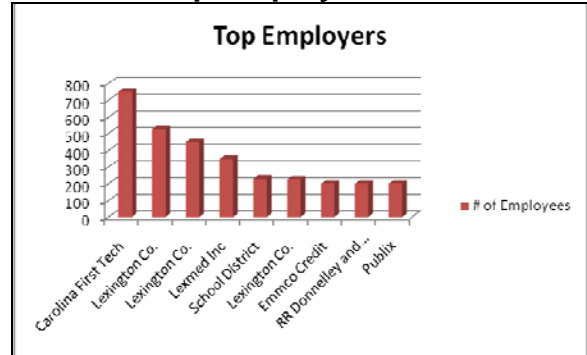
Source: Central Midlands COG

Exhibit 5 Retail Employers



Source: Central Midlands COG

Exhibit 6 Top Employers



Source: Central Midlands COG

3.2 Needs

The town has evolved from a bedroom community to a regional destination. It is important that the town continue to position itself as a regional destination, but to not let the development overshadow the character of the town. Emphasis should be placed on well designed, mixed-use developments.

CHAPTER 4

NATURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

4.1 General

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

4.2 Inventory

4.21 Soil and Slope

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

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

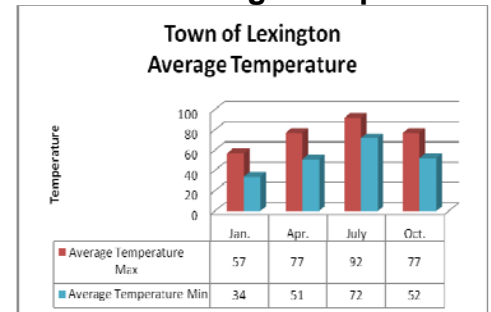
The Lakeland-Blaney Association is found on broad ridge tops where the landscape is irregular and gently sloping, and on long side slopes that range from 2 to 25 percent. The range of ridge top slopes is from 0 to 6 percent. Many streams and drainageways dissect the areas. Limitations for road locations,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

4.22 Climate

The temperate climate provides hot and usually humid summers due to warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean. The winters are moderately cold but short. They are tempered by the Appalachian Mountains to the northwest, which impede cold air movement from the north. Exhibit 7 shows the average high and low temperatures throughout the year. The average annual precipitation is 48 inches with peak precipitation during June, July and August.¹ Prevailing winds are from the southwest with an average wind speed of nine miles per hour.

On September 5, 2007, the State Climatologist Office’s Drought Response Committee issued a statement upgrading most of the counties in South Carolina, including Lexington County, to “Severe

Exhibit 7 Average Temperature



The Weather Channel

¹¹ The Weather Channel

Drought Status.” While no mandatory restrictions were associated with this designation, the Committee hoped it would raise awareness of the situation and encourage appropriate planning.

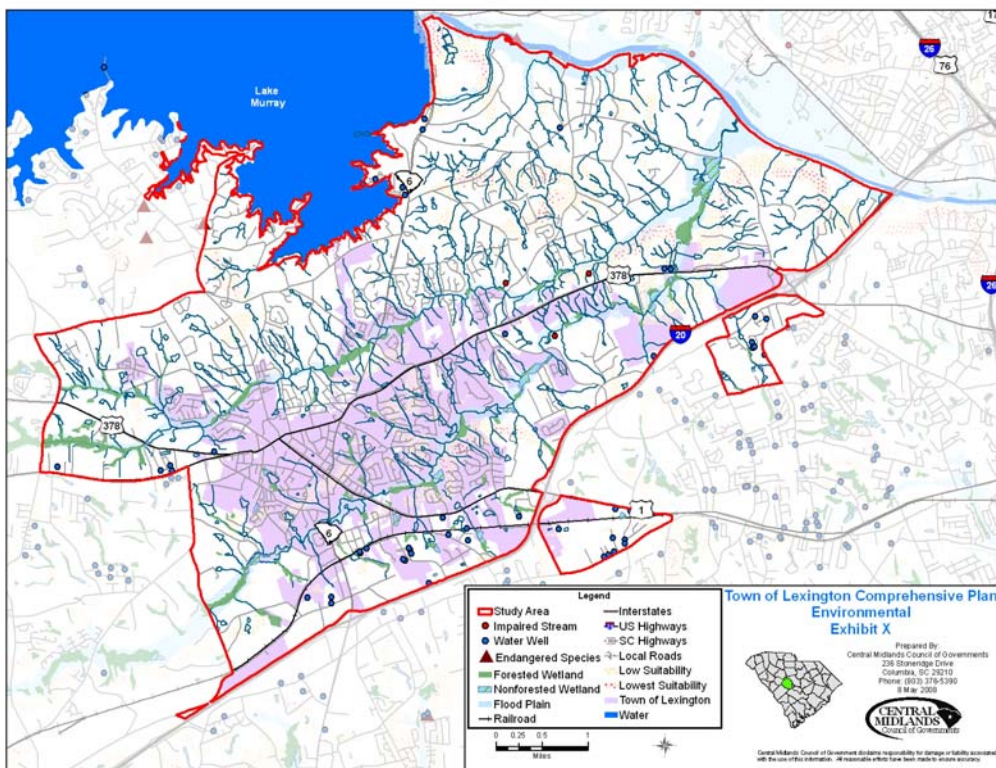
4.23 Streams, Wetlands and other areas

The heart of Lexington is situated between the Twelve Mile and Fourteen Mile creeks, an area known as the Twelve and Fourteen Mile Creek Basin. Most of the wetlands in the town that are listed in the National Wetlands Inventory are located along Twelve and Fourteen Mile creeks. Exhibit 8 shows the wetland areas as well as the 100-year floodplain in the study area.

4.24 Natural Hazards

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

Exhibit 8 Natural Resources Map



4.3 Needs

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

CHAPTER 5

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

5.1 Historic Background

As the City of Columbia developed in the early 1800s, the Village of Granby, located across the Congaree River, simultaneously declined and by 1837 was virtually deserted. Besides being in an unhealthy location principally due to the number of mosquitoes prevalent in the area, Granby was often damaged by river floods. This prompted the General Assembly to change the county seat on December 18, 1818. The new location, called Lexington, was near the geographic center of the county on a hill near Twelve Mile Creek. The village of Lexington grew, but eventually large numbers of its citizens departed during the first half of the 19th Century in the huge westward migration that followed the expansion of the southern cotton kingdom. Because of later population growth and the need to create a municipal corporation around the new county courthouse, the citizens of Lexington received a municipal charter in 1861.

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

In 1970, the town recorded a population of 969 persons. New subdivisions grew as developers took advantage of the town's ability to provide water and sewer services, causing rapid growth in the county. The location of I-20 south of town in the early 1970s also helped promote growth that continues to this day.

5.2 Inventory

Historic Sites

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

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

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

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

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

FESTIVALS, THEATRES

Every year, the Town of Lexington hosts a FunFest festival, Kids Day, the Carolina QueCup (a barbecue festival), and a series of Concerts in the Park and additionally participates in parades celebrating the winter holidays, the Fourth of July, and Martin Luther King Day.

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

5.3 Needs

The town has already taken steps to identify and protect historic significant sites and structures. These activities should continue to be support as the town grows and as new sites and structures become eligible. Additionally, the town should consider other activities that add to the cultural opportunities of it citizens. The town should continue plans to develop an Arts Center, not just as a cultural center but also as a positive economic impact venture on the town. The proposed size should be reviewed and enlarged if possible. An effort should be made to secure funds from all available public and private sources to assist in this project.

² Town of Lexington, South Carolina Historic Resource Inventory Update, page

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

6.1 Inventory

WATER AND SEWER

Water: The Town currently owns 5.5 million gallons a day (MGD) of water capacity at West Columbia's Water Treatment Plant and pumps an average of 2.3 MGD.

Sewer: The Town's Coventry Woods plant currently treats an average of 810,000 gallons a day, although the Town is undergoing preparations to take that treatment plant out of service. The Town currently diverts an additional 1.2 MGD to the City of Cayce.

With an eye to future capacity needs, the Town has paid for 6.4 MGD at the City of Cayce treatment plant and soon will purchase an additional 6 MGD of capacity. Additionally, the Town will complete a hydraulic model on the Highway 378 sewer system to gain a better understanding about the type of updates that the system would need to undergo in order to accommodate continued system growth.

Town Hall has been preparing for the boom for 15 years.

Then, town leaders agreed Lexington would become the main supplier of water and sewer service to the area in the center of the county.

To prepare for growth they believed would cluster near I-20, they installed a sewer network on the community's largely undeveloped east side in 1997. Now, they're preparing a \$40 million expansion that will double wastewater disposal and keep pace with growth.

Lexington Marches East
By TIM FLACH
The State August 5th, 2007

Exhibit 9 Water Lines Map

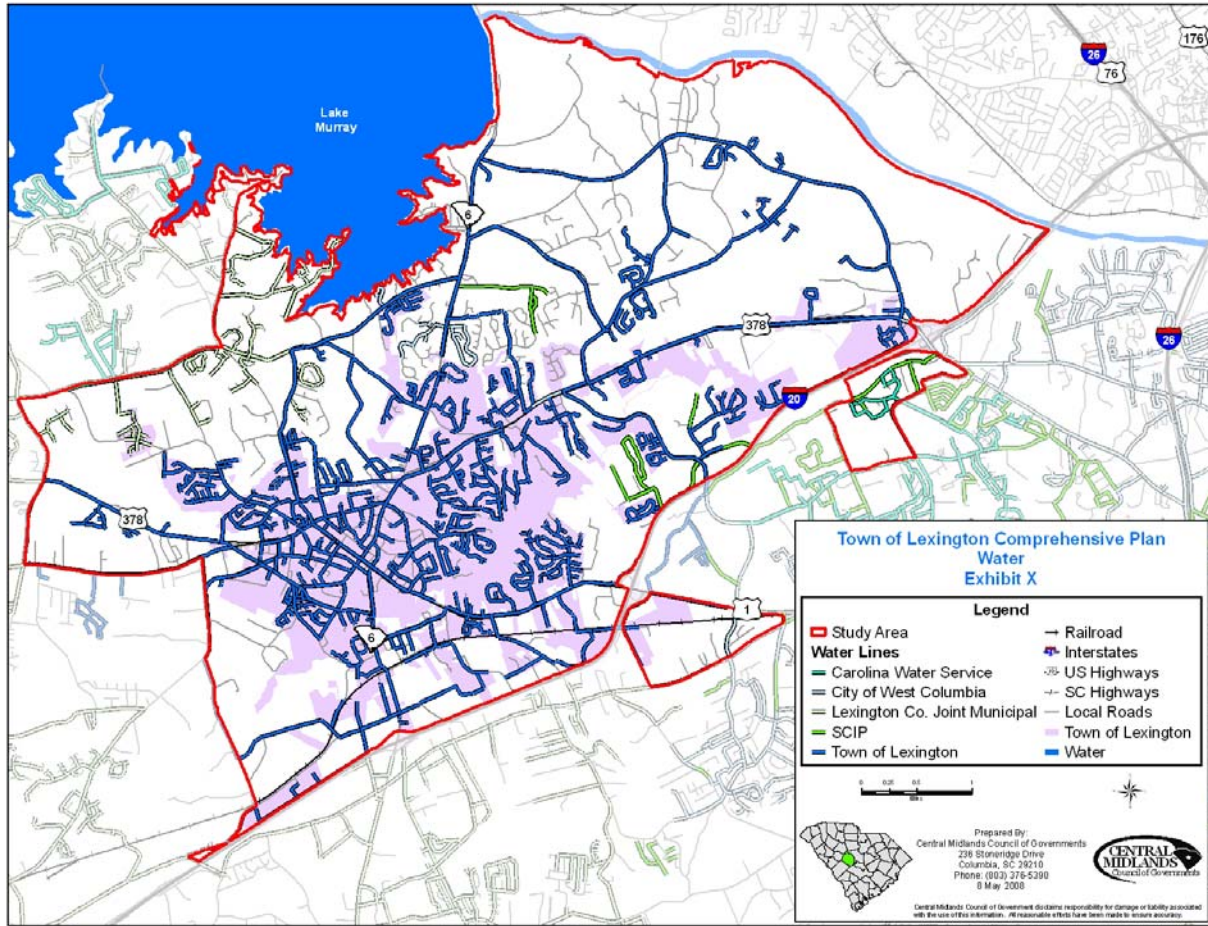


Exhibit 10 Sewer Lines Map

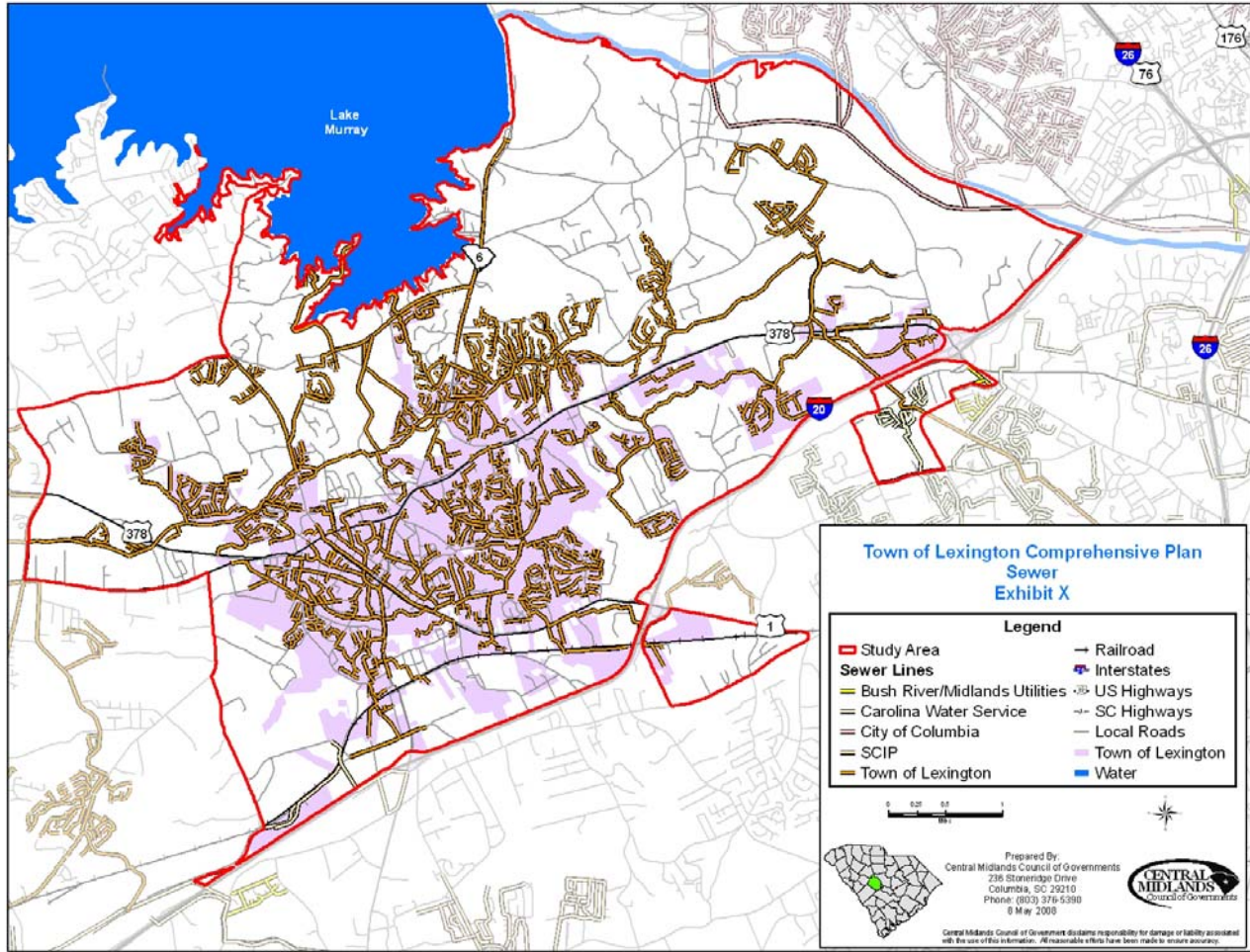
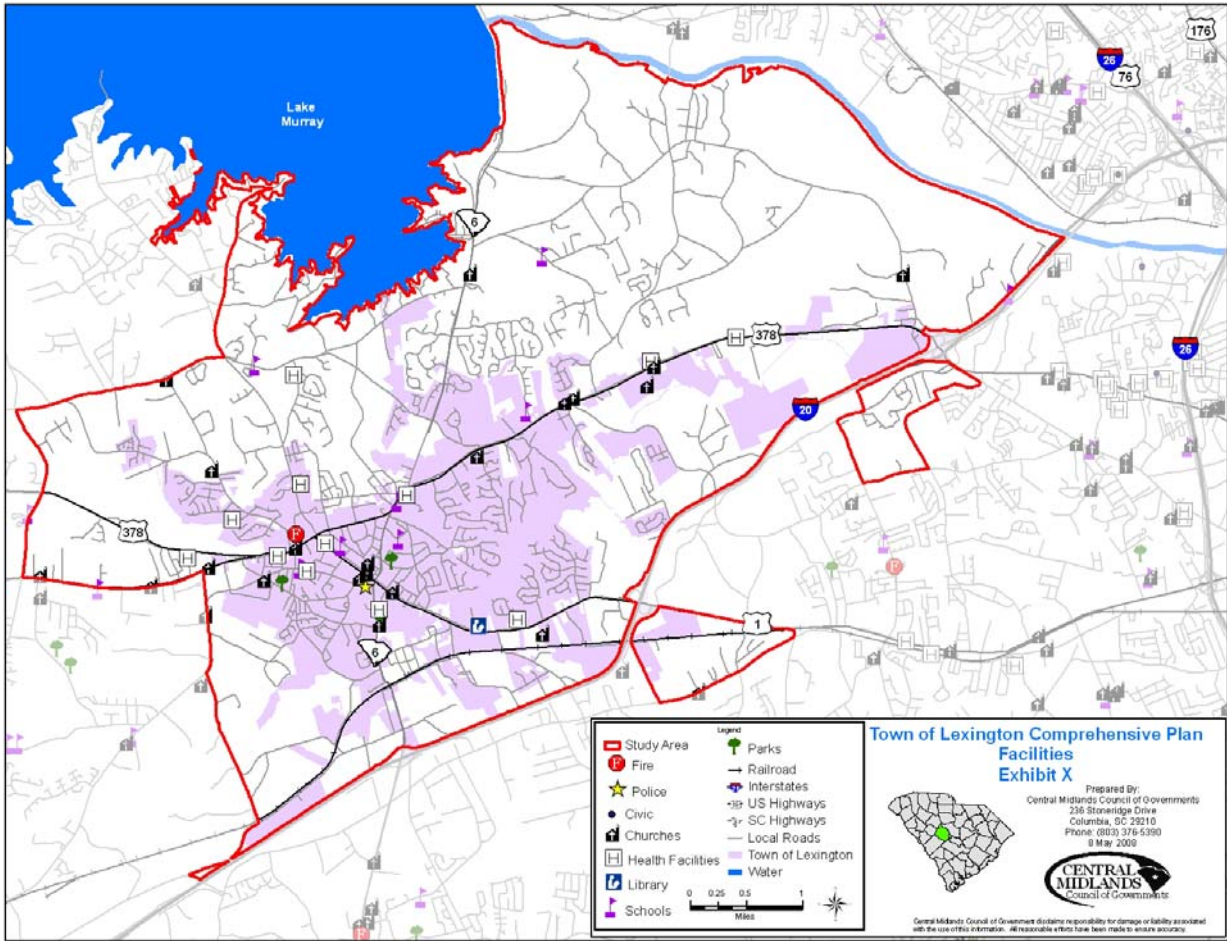


Exhibit 11 Community Facilities Map



SOLID WASTE

Residential: The town currently contracts the job of residential solid waste collection to a private company, Southland Sanitation. The town uses 90-gallon roll carts and picks up once a week at the curbside. The town does not charge residents for this service, which is financed through the general fund.

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

Recycling: Recycling service is available by curbside pickup once a week, and is currently contracted out to a private company, Southland Sanitation. Items currently being recycled are newspaper, magazines, aluminum, metal, and plastic bottles #1-7. The town should increase its efforts to foster and maintain a “green community” by focusing on and improving recycling programs. Where appropriate and feasible, the town should seek or assist in expansion of these programs, such as the S & T Recycling Center off U.S. 378.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire: Lexington County provides fire services from a station at 112 Park Road in the Town of Lexington as well as four other stations near the town. The Fire Department staffs 35 paid firefighters and 80 volunteers at this fire station, and 117 paid and 320 volunteer firefighters who work out of 21 stations countywide. The Department has six pumper trucks, five tanker trucks with a capacity of 1,500 gallons, one 75-foot ladder truck and four service trucks. The Fire Department is building a new station that will serve the newly annexed areas of Highway 378 in the Town of Lexington.

EMS: The Lexington County EMS Department has an eight-person staff available 24-hours-a-day at the Lexington fire station located at 112 Park Road. It employs 120 full-time and 30 part-time EMTs with 14 trucks available countywide.

Police: In 1999, the Lexington Police Department was accredited by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Association in recognition of its policies and practices regarding accountability, internal management, and operations. The Department has since maintained this accreditation and is in the process of becoming a nationally accredited agency.

The Lexington Town Police Department has 43 sworn officers and four civilian positions. The Department is broken down into four

divisions: Administration, Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division, and Special Operations Division.

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

Patrol Division: The Patrol Division consists of 24 employees. It is responsible for providing general police protection and service to the community including the enforcement of criminal and traffic laws, response to calls for service, and protection of property. The town is in the process of expanding its Reserve Program to include a Sergeant and four Patrol Reserve Officers, which will add much-needed personnel to the Department without increasing its budget.

Criminal Investigations Division: The Criminal Investigations Division consists of five certified personnel who are responsible for the investigation of reported crimes. This division also includes one civilian employee, the Victim Advocate, who provides services to victims and witnesses of crime.

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

Multi-jurisdictional involvement: The Department has several ongoing multi-jurisdictional efforts. First, the Department collaborates with other local law enforcement agencies to complete homeland security training and to share information about readiness resources. Second, the Department participates in the Lexington/Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council's Alcohol Enforcement Team, which implements programs designed to combat underage drinking in the greater Midlands area. Third, the Department also participates in the Lexington County Narcotics Enforcement Team, a multi-agency task force that targets the manufacture, transportation, distribution, and sale of illegal narcotics. Finally, the Department collaborates with nine community-based organizations to host an after-school and summer program (the KEYS Program) for at-risk youth who live in Lexington.

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

Substations: The Department has a substation at the Park North apartments, which is a federally subsidized housing development, and at Hardees on Sunset Boulevard at Interstate 20. Moreover, the Department is considering the addition of a substation at Lexington Pavilion (better known as the Target shopping center).

RECREATION

Parks: Currently, four public parks are located in the town limits: Virginia Hylton Park, Corley Street Park, Gibson Pond Park, and Willie B. Caractor Park.

Virginia Hylton Park: With the recent addition of the Boozer property (2.03 acres), the Roof property (2.21 acres) and the Aldridge property (2.03 acres), Virginia Hylton Park now encompasses 16.83 acres. It has numerous amenities including three gazebos, a large stage, a playground, a horseshoe pit, Koi ponds, and several gardens. Additionally, the Virginia Hylton Park has a special needs section for wheelchair bound persons. This area contains a wheelchair accessible swing and picnic table, a raised sandbox, and various other amenities. It is a first of its kind within the region. The park is located alongside both Town Hall and the Palmetto Collegiate Institute. The Palmetto Collegiate Institute, the primary school for the town until 1907, was rebuilt to its former glory in 2007.

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

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

Willie B. Caractor Park: The town is currently in search of funding to complete plans for a playground, picnic shelter, and fountain at this .49-acre park, which is located between Hendrix Street and Grey Street.

Potential park sites: The town owns the following land with the hope of future park development: the old town landfill on Railroad Avenue (22.18 acres); Barr's Pond on Wild Life Road (124.23 acres of surface water); a Twelve Mile Creek parcel between the Mallard Hills and

Woodcreek subdivisions (58.09 acres); and numerous parcels along Fourteen Mile Creek (totaling 72.19 acres). For years, the town has been acquiring parcels in the flood zones along both Twelve Mile Creek and Fourteen Mile Creek in the hope of connecting them to form a large park there in the future. These future parks may consist of hiking and nature trails, playground equipment, water recreation, picnic areas, basket ball courts and other amenities. Additionally, the town is also in negotiations with property owners along 12 Mile Creek near the Old Mill at Main Street for a park there.

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

MEETING FACILITIES

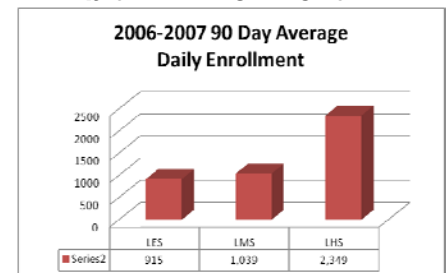
The Lexington Municipal Complex houses a state-of-the-art Conference Center and additional meeting spaces, which are available to the public to rent for social or business events. The 3,500-square-foot Conference Center offers a catering kitchen and an integrated, multi-presentational projection and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

Additionally, the Town of Lexington has recently entered a public-private partnership to construct a building on Main Street that will house a convention center, hotel, restaurant, parking deck, and retail shops. The Town has obligated \$2 million toward this project.

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

Schools: The Town of Lexington is home to one of the best public school systems in the state of South Carolina: Lexington School District One. The district has three divisions: Lexington, Gilbert, and Pelion. The town is located in the Lexington division. Three schools are currently located in the town limits: Lexington Elementary School (PK-5), Lexington Middle School (6, 7 & 8), and Lexington Intermediate School (5 & 6). Other schools in the Lexington division include Midway Elementary School (K-4), Lake Murray Elementary School (K-5), New Providence Elementary School, Lexington Intermediate School (5-6), Oak Grove Elementary School (K-5), Pleasant Hill Elementary School (K-5), Pleasant Hill Middle School (6-8) and Lexington High School (9-12). According to the school district, the projected 2007-08 enrollment for the entire district is 20,210. Lexington School District One has been one of the fastest growing school district in the state for more than 10 years. To help

Exhibit 12 Enrollment



Lexington County School District 1

address the growth, a Facilities Committee formed by the school district has recommended 2 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school for the Lexington Division. The School Board approved the recommendations of the Facilities Committee at its June 17, 2008 meeting. The estimated cost for all of the improvements recommended is \$336 million. Funding for the improvements would come from a November 2008 bond referendum.

Residents of the Town of Lexington have numerous institutions of higher learning and technical training opportunities from which to choose. These include but are not limited to Midlands Technical College, The University of South Carolina-Columbia, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. These institutions provide Lexington with a well-educated and well-trained work force available to fill both low- and high-tech jobs.

Libraries: The current Lexington County Library headquarters is located in the new Lexington branch at 5440 Augusta Road. This is a move from the long-time location of the headquarters in Batesburg. The new Lexington branch is 48,000 square feet and has a maximum capacity of 150,000 books. This is a dramatic increase from the old branch building that was only 3,000 square feet. Currently the Lexington branch has 65,000 books in stock; all told, the library system has 475,000 books.

6.2 Needs

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

CHAPTER 7

HOUSING ELEMENT

7.1 Inventory

In 1996, when the Census Bureau conducted a special Census in the Town of Lexington, a total of 6,229 housing units existed in and around the town. At the time, the rapid construction of new homes and annexation left the town with a surplus of homes. However, new families that are moving into the area to benefit from the excellent school system, well paying jobs, and small-town atmosphere quickly bought these homes.

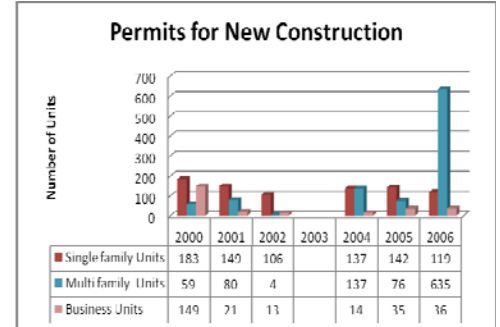
By the 2000 Census, 3,924 dwelling units existed in the town, resulting in 2.51 persons per household. This is consistent with how the demographics depict Lexington—as a family-oriented place.

According to the 2000 Census, almost 60% of the housing units in the town were built since 1990, compared to only 26% in the entire state for the same period. As exhibit 13 shows, the building boom that the Town of Lexington has experienced since the year 2000 has significantly added to the supply of new dwelling units. Additionally, in the 2000 Census, 65% of the owner-occupied units in the town were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000.

The 2006 Census Special Count showed 6,133 dwelling units, with only 478 vacant. In 2006, the average size of an owner-occupied unit was 2.57 persons. For rental units, the average household size was 2.08. In 2005, the average permit price for a single family home was \$149,062. This figure increased to \$179,904³ in 2006.

Using the projected population of 44,619 discussed in Chapter 2, at 2.51 persons per household, the town will need 17,776 housing units. This is 10,306 more housing units than the number of occupied housing units in the year 2000. Several housing developments are under way to meet this demand. These include single-family homes in large subdivision developments, duplexes, and several apartment communities.

Exhibit 13 New Construction Permits



Central Midlands Region Building Permit Study, 2006

³ Central Midlands Region Building Permit Study, 2006

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 Town of Lexington. Exhibit 14 is based on the median household income reported in the 2000 Census (1999 income figures). Exhibit 15 is based on the Department of Housing and Urban Development FY 2006 income levels for the Columbia Area. This data is used by the Community Development Block Grant for income verification. The mortgage amounts shown in both exhibits are based on the assumption of a 30-year mortgage at 7% interest. It should be noted that this does not include taxes or insurance.

According to the 2000 Census, of the 2,086 housing units with mortgages, 433 units had housing costs greater than 30% of their income.

Exhibit 14 Town of Lexington Income Thresholds

Town of Lexington 1999	Income	30% housing cost per month	Mortgage amount
Median income	\$68,861	\$1,721	\$257,000
Moderate 80%	\$55,088	\$1,377	\$205,000
Low 50%	\$34,430	\$860	\$128,000
Very low 30%	\$20,658	\$516	\$77,000

Exhibit 15 Columbia Area Income Thresholds

Columbia Area FY 2006 Family of 4	Income	30% housing cost per month	Mortgage Amount
Median income	\$58,900	\$1,472	\$220,000
Moderate 80%	\$48,500	\$1,212	\$180,000
Low 50%	\$30,300	\$757	\$113,000
Very low 30%	\$18,200	\$455	\$68,000

Several factors, such as down payment, interest rate and length of the loan determine what the actual mortgage amount is for a particular house. Using the “Value for Specified Owner Occupied Units” reported in the 2000 Census, roughly 57% of the total 2,356 units reported exceeded the mortgage amount for low-income residents as shown in exhibit 14. The percentage jumps to almost 75% when using the standard set by HUD in exhibit 15.

The availability of rental units, particularly apartments, has significantly increased in the past three years, providing additional opportunities for affordable housing. According to the 2006 Multi-Family Housing Survey published by CMCOG, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the Lexington submarket was \$617 per month. For a three-bedroom apartment, the average rent was \$797 per month.

7.2 Needs

The town has seen a tremendous building boom over the past two decades, and the resulting housing stock is a mix of housing types and price. To help ease traffic congestion and to also provide alternative access, the town should encourage residential development that provides a mix of compatible uses as well as a mix of housing types.

CHAPTER 8

LAND USE ELEMENT

8.1 Inventory

Existing Land Uses

Commercial: The commercial pattern for the Town of Lexington is predominately along US 1, US 378 and SC 6. The Town's zoning ordinance favors commercial development along these arterial roads, so this pattern is not surprising. While much of the development along US 1 and US 378 is automobile-oriented with very little mixed use, North Lake Drive is undergoing a transition. While several residential subdivisions access North Lake Drive, the recent widening of the road from two to five lanes, and the fact that the corridor is the primary access between the Town of Lexington and the Town of Irmo, makes North Lake Drive a likely candidate to attract commercial development. Fortunately, the inclusion of sidewalks and bike lanes as part of the road improvements will help make North Lake Drive a more multi-modal corridor than US 1 or US 378.

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

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

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

While most residential developments are still traditional single-family, detached units, the town has seen an increase in patio, cluster, and townhouse developments, particularly on the smaller infill parcels.

"It's coming at us, whether we like it or not," said Randy Halfacre, the town's mayor and executive director of the Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce. "A development explosion is taking place, much of it high-end and desirable."

Lexington Marches East
By TIM FLACH
The State

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

Industrial: The predominant corridor for industrial development is along the Norfolk/Southern Railway Systems line. This line runs east-west along the Town's southern border, parallel to I-20, and fronts the frontage road. It is appropriately named "Industrial Way." This corridor extends approximately from the I-20 - U.S. 1 interchange to the I-20 - S.C. 215 (Long's Pond Road) interchange. Much land remains available for development here. This area has become the unofficial industrial park for Lexington, primarily due to the location of the interstate and the railway but also the availability of utilities in the area.

See Map 8 (Existing Land Use) for current uses.

Existing Zoning

Zoning within the study area is administered by Lexington County in unincorporated areas around the town and by the Town of Lexington within the corporate limits.

Lexington County uses performance zoning, which allows development by both access and road classification. For example, the county has only two zones, each of which permit all uses. Use is managed by the classification of the road accessing each tract. If land is in a Restricted Development Zone and accessed by an RL4 street, then only residential detached uses at four units to the acre and a few other uses, such as group assembly, will be permitted there.

Performance zoning is different from the more commonly used Euclidian zoning, which divides a geographic area into different types of uses such as general commercial, limited commercial, single-family residential, multi-family residential, industrial, and so forth. In performance zoning, the performance standards required in the zoning districts are designed to protect existing residential development from incompatible commercial and industrial development. Euclidian zoning ordinances seldom have a mechanism for this protection and the result is often the creation of use incompatibilities.

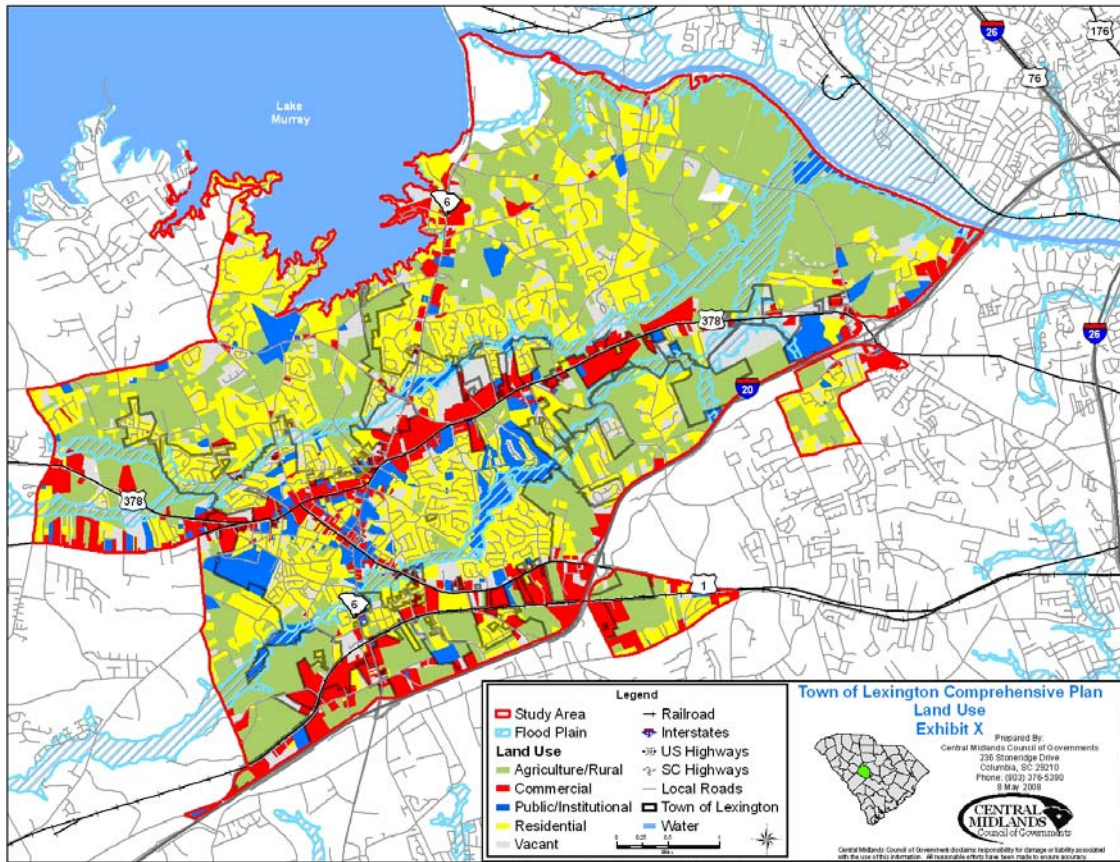
The Town of Lexington's zoning is a hybrid between performance and Euclidian zoning. In order for a particular activity to take place on a particular parcel, the parcel must be zoned with a zoning district that allows the use and have access to a road that has a classification

that allows the use, which is how it is performance in nature. But the town uses eight regular zoning districts and four special overlay districts to create some certainty about the type of development that is allowed in each area, which is Euclidian in nature. This allows it to have the primary benefit provided by Euclidian zoning (certainty about uses allowed in each district) as well as the primary benefit provided by performance zoning (protection of existing residential development from incompatible commercial and industrial uses).

8.2 Need

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

Exhibit 16 Existing Land Use Map



CHAPTER 9

TRANSPORTATION

9.1 Inventory

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

Air: Air transportation is available through a number of major airlines at the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. A 60-acre cargo terminal, a 480-acre airport industrial park, and a parking deck under construction point to the continued expansion and enhancement of this important asset. United Parcel Service has located a major hub at the airport, providing direct access to next-day airfreight service. Federal Express, Bankair Courier, Emery Worldwide, Dyn-Air Services, DHL Worldwide Express, and Burlington Air Express also operate facilities at the airport. The regional airport was recently remodeled inside as well as outside, with improved runways, aprons, and guidance equipment. It can now handle the largest of aircraft, and the availability of land for future expansion is enormous.

Roads: The Town of Lexington is intersected by three major highways: U.S. 378, U.S. 1, and S.C. 6. Being at the intersection of three arterial roads has benefited the town by providing it with tremendous access. However, congestion on these three roads has increased dramatically over the last few years.

The town has made some road improvements that have helped alleviate the congestion. One example is the recent automation of the traffic light system, which greatly improved the flow of traffic around town. Additionally, the South Carolina Department of Transportation recently reconfigured the intersection of U.S. 378 and S.C. 6 (North Lake Drive) to improve traffic flow and reduce accidents. It also is expanding S.C. 6 and S.C. 60 between the Town of Lexington and the Town of Irmo, which will require the widening of the Lake Murray Dam as well as the two roads.

The town is considering other projects that would allow for less congested arterial and collector streets. One possible long-term solution is a beltway on the west side of town to provide better access to I-20. A mid-term solution is the creation of a one-way pair in the downtown area, using Main Street and West Butler Street. In the short-term, the South Carolina Department of Transportation is

making intersection improvements along US 378 at Park Road, US 1, and West Butler Street .

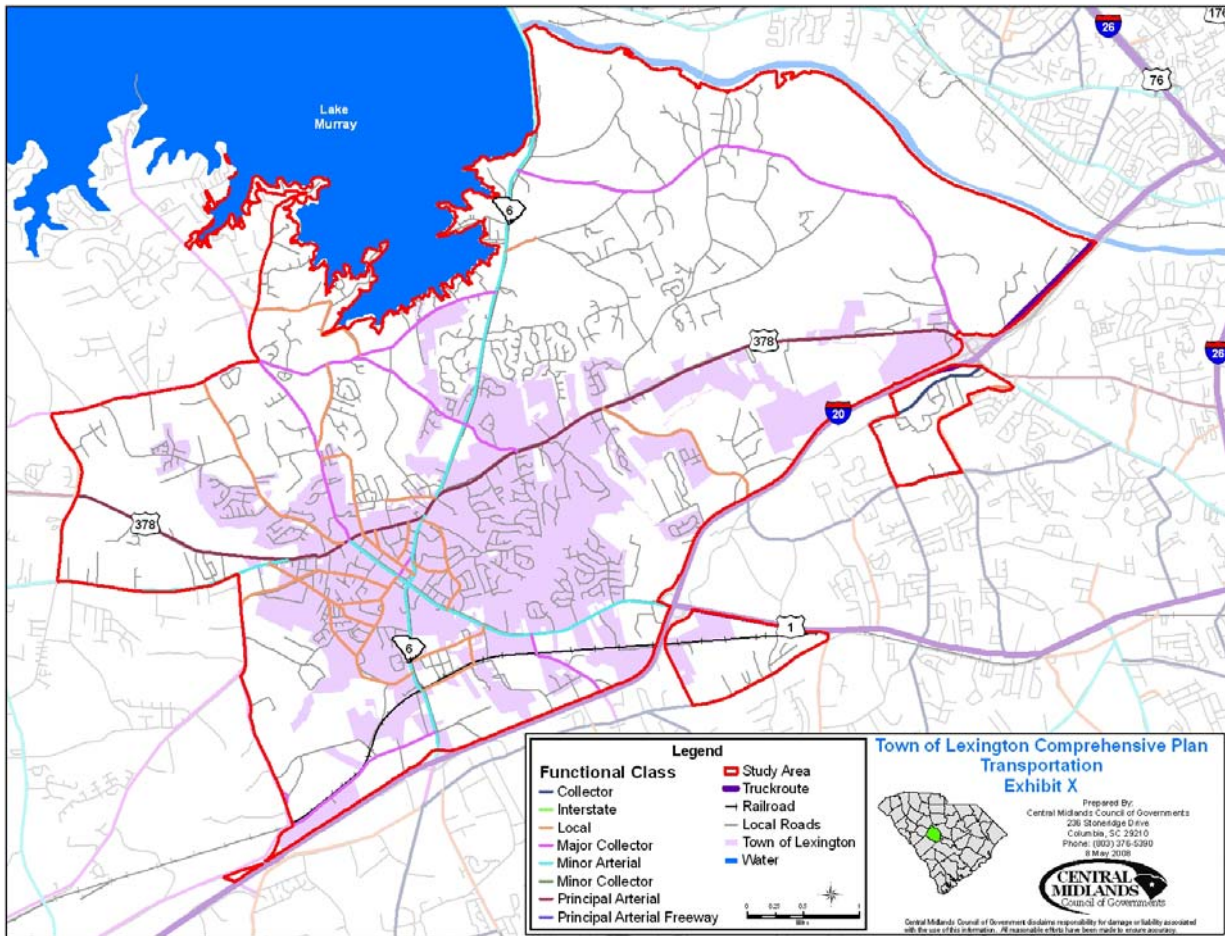
In the area commonly known as “the Triangle,” the oldest part of the town, a modified grid pattern still exists. The grid extends to the west of Main Street and ends at Gibson Road. The town has been very successful in interconnecting commercial developments, particularly along Sunset Boulevard. This interconnection allows shoppers to travel from one commercial development to another without having to get back into traffic. The town is also working to create more connectivity between neighborhoods.

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

Public Transit: Currently, the town does not have public transit service, but does have a representative on the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Board. The Town is also along a potential commuter rail line from the City of Columbia to the Town of Batesburg-Leesville.

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

Exhibit 17 Transportation Map



9.2 Need

As discussed, traffic congestions has been a growing problem over the past two or three decades. Plans from the mid 1970’s identified the need for an alternate route around the town for east-west traffic. There has been very little support for a long-term solution resulting in no action to solve the problem. The town has recently put support behind a relatively short-term solution resulting a set of one-way streets in the downtown area, but this project is not fully funded as of the writing of this document.

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

CHAPTER 10

PRIORITY INVESTMENT

10.1 Existing

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

Roads:

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

Schools:

The relationship between schools and residential development is clear, regardless of which one drives the other. Lexington School District One has already identified needed improvements to address growth in the district. While only the Corley Mill Road site for the new high school has been selected, the impact that all of the sites will have on the immediate area around the schools will be significant.

Fire Service:

Unlike police service which is operated by the town, fire service is operated by the county with a combination of full-time and volunteer fire fighters. The combination of rapid growth in the town and a couple of recent deadly fires has raised the question of whether the town should absorb the responsibility of fire service.

10.2 Needs

Given the timing and scope of this update, a detailed analysis of priority investment areas was not conducted. However there are opportunities the town should pursue as part of an update to this plan.

Downtown/Historic Triangle: The town has already place significant interest in the redevelopment of the historic downtown including a streetscape project, development of a master plan and discussions of design guidelines.

North Lake Drive/SC 6: The section of SC 6 from the town limits to the Lake Murray Dam was widened to 5 lanes with the addition of sidewalks and bike lanes. A significant portion of this corridor is underdeveloped or has the potential for redevelopment. The corridor is currently not in the town limits, so it offers the potential for significant annexation.

CHAPTER 11

THE PLAN

Introduction

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

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

The Vision

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

The vision was developed based on a series of work session with the Planning Commission, the Downtown Development Committee, previous planning efforts and a public meeting conducted on August 28, 2007.

Guiding Principles

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

- **Quality design of development**
Commercial and residential development will be designed to standards that reinforce the beauty of the community.
- **Compact growth**
Future growth in the town will be compact, fostering the efficient location of infrastructure and supply of services, and balancing development with the conservation of natural resources.
- **A strong economy**
The town will encourage a growing economy to ensure that its residents have employment opportunities of a high nature.
- **Coordination of development with capital improvements**
The town will help coordinate new development with needed capital improvements including water, sewer, public safety, education and recreation.
- **Sustainable development**
The town will encourage sustainable and “green” development and will preserve important natural resources, scenic vistas, and environmentally sensitive areas. Lexington will strive to be a clean, sustainable, and environmentally-friendly town.
- **Parks and recreational opportunities**
The town will provide recreational facilities and programs that meet a broad range of interests—indoor and outdoor, passive and active. A sidewalk system will traverse the town, connecting neighborhoods and commercial areas with each other and with parks and other public amenities, such as schools and libraries.
- **A strong downtown**
The town will have a vibrant, mixed-use, downtown district that is compact, pedestrian friendly and sensitive to the historical significance of Main Street and to the adjacent neighborhoods.
- **A comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system**

The town will have a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation system that safely and efficiently connects all areas of the town, and connects the town with the greater Central Midlands region. This will foster a greater sense of connectedness among community members and a greater sense of connectedness between the town and the greater Central Midlands region.

Goals and Objectives

Population:

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

Objectives:

1. Quality of Life

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

2. Sound Annexation Policies

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

Economic:

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

Objectives:

1. Enhance downtown development

The town will continue to support the location of new businesses in the downtown area, particularly restaurants, small retail stores, galleries and other uses that enhance the vibrancy of the area. The town will foster appropriate infill development on nearby vacant or underutilized parcels and will encourage the revitalization of existing houses in the surrounding neighborhoods.

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

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

3. Continue economic development coordination

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

Natural Resources

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

Objectives:

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

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

2. Prohibit development in hazardous areas

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

3. Encourage development based on sustainable design

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

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

4. Identify and preserve significant views

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

5. Identify and implement water conservation principles

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

6. Provide access to community facilities

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

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

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

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

The town will seek opportunities to identify new parks that fit within the broader community and make improvements to existing parks that meet the changing needs of the residents. The town will have a “park pipeline,” meaning that it will always have at least one new park in mind for future development. Parks are important because they enhance quality of life by providing community members with opportunities for active and passive recreation and by serving as a gathering place for people to connect with one another in a relaxing or recreational environment.

Cultural

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

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

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

2. Encourage cluster development

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

3. Protect historic neighborhoods

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

4. Establish downtown gateways

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

5. Encourage high quality site planning and building design standards

The town should work with developers to encourage site planning of a high quality and design techniques of a high standard. With respect to commercial development, the town

should rely on its architectural and appearance standards, Sign Ordinance, and Landscaping and Tree Ordinance to achieve this objective, focusing on areas such as buffers between different land uses, parking areas, landscaping, pedestrian facilities, and sign standards.

6. Preserve historic and cultural resources

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

7. Develop street enhancement standards

The town will develop street enhancement standards that improve both appearance and safety of traffic corridors.

These standards should cover landscaping, crosswalks, signs, lighting (pedestrian and vehicular), setbacks, and parking and service area screening.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

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

Objectives:

1. Encourage water conservation activities

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

2. Continue to provide a high level of public service

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

3. Ensure that development does not outpace schools

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

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

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

Housing

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

Objectives:

1. Encourage neighborhood centers

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

2. Encourage neighborhood focus for new development

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

3. Encourage mix of housing types and densities

The town will encourage a variety of housing types and densities as a means to meet the needs of a diverse community. The town will also encourage cluster development (see standard relating to cluster development in above section).

4. Encourage neighborhood connectivity

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

5. Encourage the incorporation of natural features

The town should work with residential developers to preserve natural features such as wetlands, drainage features, and mature trees as part of the common open space in

neighborhoods. These features should serve as neighborhood amenities or should help create define the neighborhood's character and identity.

Land Use

Goal:

Residential

I. Urban Residential Policies

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

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

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

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

E. Open space: Developers should provide open space in large, useable common areas instead of in a multitude of small, disconnected parcels that provide no benefit to the community members or the larger community. These large swaths of open space should be connected via trails or sidewalks to areas of open space outside the neighborhood in order to create a comprehensive network of connected open space throughout the town.

II. Low-density Residential Policies

A. Characteristics: Suburban-style development consisting primarily of single-family detached housing but also including townhomes and patio homes. Complimentary land uses within the neighborhood include neighborhood-scale commercial, retail and office uses. Small multi-family developments are possible as part of a planned development

district if the desired densities can be maintained. Civic uses such as schools and churches may also be permitted.

- B. Density Range:** Two to six dwelling units per acre, with typical averages four dwelling units per acre or less
- C. Location:** Low-density residential neighborhoods should be located in close proximity to schools, shops, offices, and community facilities so that residents have the opportunity to walk to these locations. When possible, neighborhoods should be bound by arterial and/or collector roads to provide direct connection to employment, shopping and leisure destinations.

III. Medium-Density Residential Policies

- A. Characteristics:** Medium-density residential developments should include a mix of housing types organized around clear neighborhood centers that may include components such as a park, open space, or limited commercial operations. Open space areas should be connected in order to unify the development and provide a transition between different types of uses. Commercial centers should be of a neighborhood scale that is compatible with the residential component of the area. Housing types should range from single-family detached on small lots to duplexes and townhomes on individual lots. Larger multi-family developments are possible as part of a planned development district if the desired densities can be maintained. Civic uses such as schools and churches may also be permitted
- B. Density:** Six to twelve dwelling units per acre; however, typical projects will not exceed eight dwelling units per acre.
- C. Location:** Medium-density residential development should be located to provide a transition from commercial activities to low-density residential neighborhoods. Access should be from arterial or collector streets in order to provide direct connection to areas of employment, shopping, and recreational activities.

IV. High-Density Residential Policies

- A. Characteristics:** High-density residential areas provide for residential development of a high density such as apartments, townhomes and condos, along with a variety of low-density residential development and compatible non-residential development including schools, places of worship and other civic uses as well as offices, retail centers, and other commercial uses. Mixed-use buildings that combine residential and non-residential uses are appropriate if of a compatible scale compared to the other uses in the area. Site design should include shared parking and recreational

facilities, and should address signage, landscaping and building design. Access to employment, shopping and recreational centers should be convenient and allow for alternative modes of transportation.

- B. Density range:** Twelve to twenty units per acre in order to allow for a variety of housing types; however, typical projects will not exceed sixteen dwelling units per acre.
- C. Location:** High-density residential should be located on U.S. 378, U.S. 1 or S.C. 6 near the interstate interchanges. They should not be located in the center of town, but rather they should have close and easy access to Columbia, the primary employment market in the Midlands. High-density neighborhoods should not be located in settings where the only access provided consists of local streets passing through lower-density neighborhoods. New high-density residential uses should not be allowed to locate where they will have an adverse impact on traffic safety and congestion, nor where they will have an adverse impact on existing development.

Mixed-Use

I. Downtown Special Overlay District Policies

- A. Characteristics:** The Downtown Special Overlay District in the Town of Lexington's Zoning Ordinance includes the historic downtown commercial core along Main Street. This area has traditionally consisted of a variety of civic, retail, commercial and office uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly setting central to the town's older residential neighborhoods.
- B. Infill and redevelopment:** Infill and redevelopment within the Downtown Special Overlay District should respect the historic and design characteristics of existing structures in the area. Additionally, consideration should be given to the impact that development will have on the adjacent neighborhoods.
- C. Mix of uses:** A mix of retail, restaurants, commercial, office and civic uses should continue to be encouraged in the Downtown Special Overlay District. Retail and restaurant uses should be encouraged at the street level to promote pedestrian activity with residential uses above the ground floor to further increase activity in the area.
- D. Renovation and reuse:** When feasible, existing structures in the Downtown Special Overlay District area should be renovated and reused.
- E. Outside seating:** To foster a vibrant Main Street, the town should encourage outdoor dining and seating along the sidewalk. These areas should not be located in a manner that impedes pedestrian activity.

- F. Design and Location of Parking Facilities:** New parking areas should be compatible with the downtown district and the adjacent neighborhoods. Where feasible, parking areas should be located to the side or the rear of the structure and screened with a low masonry wall and landscaping.

II. Mixed-Use Policies

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

Commercial

I. General Commercial Policies: All Categories

- A. Circulation and access:** Parking lots should provide direct pedestrian access from the parking areas to the building entrance. Where appropriate, pedestrian connections should also extend to the street and adjacent residential areas. The main driveway or entrance should connect with the established street pattern with clear connections for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.
- B. Parking design and location:** Large, uninterrupted parking areas should be avoided. Instead, parking lots should be divided into smaller areas separated by landscaping and pedestrian walkways that are physically separated from vehicular traffic. When possible, parking areas should not be located solely in the front, but should be distributed around the building including the side and rear. Parking areas should promote safe walking, biking and public transit through the

appropriate placement of landscaped islands and facilities that support non-motorized transportation.

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

II. Regional Commercial Policies

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

III. Community Commercial Policies

- A. Location:** Community commercial centers should be limited to the intersections of one or more arterial roads. They may be located next to urban residential neighborhoods and as part of as the redevelopment of a primary corridor. “Big box” retail should only be permitted where sufficient access can be provided.
- B. Unified site design:** Community commercial centers should have a unified site plan that includes buildings, landscaping, signage, and parking and pedestrian connections. The site plan should include all phases of the development. Consideration should be given to creating visual interest and providing for a more pedestrian oriented scale and connection to adjacent neighborhoods.

- C. Organization of uses:** Community commercial uses should be concentrated within planned activity centers in the community. Within each concentrated activity center, uses that complement each other should be clustered within walking distance in order to minimize the need to drive between the different areas of the center and to encourage “one-stop shopping.” “Big box” retail may be included but “strip” commercial development should be discouraged.

IV. Neighborhood Commercial Policies

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

Employment (Business/Industrial)

I. Business Policies

- A. Characteristics:** The business land-use designation includes areas suitable for professional employment such as corporate

office headquarters, research and development facilities, and educational campuses. These areas should be of a campus-like nature, be incorporated in a planned development along with residential uses, or located adjacent to residential development. Most activities occur indoors, with outdoor storage and industrial activities not permitted. Small office development not usually associated with campus-like business parks may also be permitted as long as they meet the other policies of this section.

- B. Location:** Business uses should have direct access to existing or planned arterial and collector streets and should not rely on local or residential streets for access.
- C. Site layout and design:** Business uses should be developed in a campus-like setting with heavy landscaping. While site configuration and topography will vary with each development design, buildings should be organized to form outdoor gathering spaces.
- D. Unified architectural character:** Features such as rooflines, materials, colors and signage should be of a similar nature to establish uniform design within the business park. Other details such as landscaping and screening should also be used to unify the appearance of the business park.
- E. Gateway corridors:** Business parks located along an identified gateway corridor will be subject to additional development standards.
- F. Common areas:** While each development will vary based on topography or other physical constraints, the buildings should be arranged to form outdoor gathering spaces such as quads, courtyards, patios, and plazas.
- G. Circulation and access:** Pedestrian walkways should be used to link building entrances with outdoor gathering spaces and parking lots.
- H. Outdoor storage:** Outdoor storage should be limited to accessory use, and where used, should be completely screened. The principal business activities should be conducted indoors.

II. Industrial Policies

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

Transportation

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

Objectives:

- 1. Coordinate land-use decisions with transportation needs:** The town should work with regional planning groups, Lexington County, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation to identify future transportation needs ranging from the creation of new roadways and the expansion of existing roadways to the installation of sidewalks, bike paths, and public transit facilities. Once those needs are identified, the town should revise land-use regulations to ensure that the infrastructure needed for new projects is provided through the development process. The town has been instrumental in reducing congestion on the arterial roads, particularly along Sunset Boulevard, through interconnections between commercial developments. Further interconnections should be pursued as opportunities present themselves.
- 2. Encourage interconnectivity between neighborhood streets and sidewalks:** Neighborhoods should be designed with a series of interconnected streets and sidewalks. Residential collector roads should have sidewalks on both sides, while local streets should have sidewalks on at least one side. Missing connections from existing neighborhoods should be established, but new developments should have those connections established as part of the review process.
- 3. Participate in regional transportation planning activities**
The town should continue to participate in discussions with the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS), the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority and the surrounding jurisdictions to ensure that the town's plans and standards with respect to transportation are compatible with the efforts of these groups. The town should also work with these groups to identify locations for mass transportation facilities.
- 4. Promote connectivity and continuity on local and regional roads:** The town should promote a roadway system that meets the future needs of the town. In doing so, the town should work with developers to ensure that development does not overwhelm the functional classification of the roads on which it takes place. The town

should also create access control criteria for development so that development over time does not create undue congestion.

5. **Support a multi-modal transportation system:** While multi-modal access is currently limited, the town should take steps to promote multi-modal activity with development standards that encourage multi-modal connections, and in future road improvements that accommodate a variety of transportation facilities.
6. **Promote transportation safety:** The town should work to ensure that all transportation improvements meet local, state and federal safety requirements.
7. **Promote bicycle and pedestrian mobility:** The town has a long history of improving sidewalks, particularly in the commercial area, as well as requiring sidewalks in residential developments. Additionally, the improvement of S.C. 6 from the town to the Lake Murray Dam has established a bike lane that can serve as a “spine” for future bikeway improvements. The town should continue to identify connections between existing activity centers, both residential and commercial, while still requiring new development to connect to the system. The town should also identify “pedestrian districts” that have a greater focus on pedestrian activities and developments, and encourage appropriate development or redevelopment therein.

CHAPTER 12

IMPLEMENTATION

Project One: Comprehensive Plan

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

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

COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: ALL

TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommend the Comprehensive Plan by September 2008
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by October 2008
- Monitoring for implementation: continuous
- Planning Commission develops and recommends a revision by 2018

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Planning Commission
- Town Council
- Town Staff

Project Two: Zoning Ordinance

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

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

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: All

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

TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to the zoning ordinance by December 2009
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2010
- Enforcement by the appropriate town departments: continuous

Project Three: Land Development Regulations

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

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

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: All

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

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

TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to the land development regulations by December 2009
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2010
- Enforcement by the Planning Commission and by the appropriate town staff

Project Four: Coordination

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

- Future transit connections to the City of Columbia and the Town of Irmo
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide logical connections
- Economic development activities to encourage commercial and industrial development
- Coordination of annexations with Lexington County
- Joint efforts to lobby the state legislature to amend the annexation laws
- Coordination of regional planning efforts with Lexington County
- Coordination with private entities and Lexington County to enhance development downtown
- Coordinate with other town departments to continually seek opportunities to improve existing parks and to add new parks
- Coordinate with the state Department of Transportation on the promotion of transportation safety and access
- Coordination with Lexington County regarding timbering requirements

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

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

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

TIMETABLE:

- Town staff identifies all service providers in the community by January 2010
- Town staff and Town Council schedules coordination meetings with the service providers by July 2010
- Town staff and the Planning Commission review and make comments on plans by the service providers: continuous

Project Five: Sign Ordinance

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

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: Land Use, Economic

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

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

TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommends amendments to Sign Ordinance by January 2009
- Public hearing and adoption by Town Council by March 2009
- Enforcement by the Planning Commission and by the appropriate town staff