TOWN OF

SUMMERVILLE

VISION PLAN

CODE & POLICY REPORT

ADOPTED: 7.9.2014

Town of Summerville

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An example of Infill housing in Downtown Summerville

CODE ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulatory tools to support desired development outcomes

As part of the Vision Plan process an assessment of the town's Zoning and Planning and Development Ordinances (ZDO) was completed. As the primary rules for land development in Summerville, the ZDO determines the form and design of all construction in the town. This assessment allows the town to identify and fix shortcomings in the development process, and ensure that the rules for development fit the Vision Plan's recommendations.

FIVE GOALS

» **Structure & Organization:** Make the development ordinance a cohesive, accessible document that is easy to read and understand.

» **Process & Administration:** Align de facto practices with de jure regulations by clearly establishing application and decision-making procedures so that approvals are made by an appropriate authority.

» **Districts & Uses:** Develop new districts that would allow downtown and other walkable areas to be built today by-right.

» **Building & Site Design:** Adopt standards that focus on public frontages to ensure a high-quality public realm.

» **Streets & Infrastructure:** Adopt infrastructure requirements that alleviate traffic congestion and flooding.

1: Structure & Organization

1.1.1: Combine all development-related provisions of the ordinance into a unified development ordinance.
1.2.1: Use short, clearly-named, topic-driven chapters.
1.2.2: Use a consistent, hierarchical numbering system.
1.3.1: Use an easy-to-read digital format with illustrative diagrams.

2: Process & Administration

2.1.1: Standardize administrator responsibilities and naming conventions throughout the ordinance.
2.1.2: Establish a threshold (e.g., based on square footage of project) for which projects must undergo the discretionary design review process, and allow administrative review of smaller projects.
2.2.1: Consider combining the Commercial Design Review Board and the Board of Architectural Review, and charge this group with performing design review for projects above a set threshold (e.g., based on square footage), all projects within the Historic District, and all PUDs.
2.2.2: Create design standards to be enforced administratively, and design guidelines to be enforced through a discretionary design review process (see Sections 4.1-4.3).
2.3.1: Fix instances of "Board of Adjustment" to read "Board of Zoning Appeals" in the ordinance.
2.4.1: Establish a tiered approach for the approval of tree removal whereby small trees do not require a removal permit, larger trees require staff review, and Grand Trees require review by the full TAP committee.

3: Districts & Uses

3.1.1: Reduce front setbacks to encourage development flexibility and walkable neighborhoods.
3.1.2: Eliminate setbacks and establish build-to lines in urban districts and certain mixed-use areas to support a consistent walkable character.
3.2.1: Convert minimum lot size requirements to gross density requirements to allow for greater development flexibility in residential districts.
3.2.2: Allow smaller, narrow lots and attached buildings in urban commercial districts.
3.3.1: Create a comprehensive, consolidated use table that references definitions and supplementary standards in separate subsections.
3.3.2: Allow accessory dwelling units in all residential districts.
3.4.1: Establish transect-based districts that permit mixed-use development by right.
3.5.1: Create clear standards and guidelines for PUDs that establish town expectations for development and create more pragmatic and predictable outcomes.
3.6.1: Eliminate the Central Business District to avoid confusion in the ordinance or merge its standards into new, more appropriate districts.

4: Building & Site Design

4.1.1: Integrate design standards and guidelines for commercial and multifamily buildings within the ZDO.
4.2.1: Adopt design guidelines for civic buildings.
4.3.1: Adopt design guidelines for the historic district to support the board's decisions.
4.4.1: Reduce off-street parking requirements by eliminating minimums and/or allowing reductions through shared parking.
4.4.2: Require or incentivize the use of pervious paving materials for parking areas.
4.4.3: Remove off-street loading requirements.
4.4.4: Require parking to be located behind or to the side of buildings depending on the context.
4.5.1: Revise buffer requirements to emphasize a walkable pedestrian environment over separation of uses.
4.6.1: Adopt open space dedication and design requirements that will ensure the distribution of high-quality public facilities throughout town.
4.7.1: Reduce permitted sign size and height near interstate highway interchanges.

5: Streets & Infrastructure

5.1.1: Provide a range of detailed, context-sensitive street section design options in the ZDO.
5.2.1: Require a minimum connectivity index for new development.
5.3.1: Require dedication and construction of proposed trail and greenway segments in conjunction with new development based on a trails and greenways master plan.
5.4.1: Reduce flooding by decreasing stormwater flow through on-site and block-level mitigation requirements.
5.4.2: Establish context-sensitive standards for stormwater management.
5.5.1: Develop policies to conserve and restore environmentally-sensitive land throughout town as a comprehensive green infrastructure network.

1 CODE STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION

An accessible document makes development easier.

As part of the Vision Plan process an assessment of the town's Zoning and Planning and Development Ordinances (ZDO) was completed. As the primary rules for land development in Summerville, the ZDO determines the form and design of all construction in the town. This assessment allows the town to identify and fix shortcomings in the development process, and ensure that the rules for development fit the Vision Plan recommendations. The ZDO today is fairly short and easy to find online. There are, however, several shortcomings in the way that development-related information is spread over several chapters, regulations are difficult to pull out of long narrative paragraphs, and information is not clearly organized. This first chapter of the assessment focuses on the document structure and organization. The following chapters will address the development review process, as well as the substance of the development regulations.

Goal for Structure & Organization:

Make the development ordinance a cohesive, accessible document that is easy to read and understand.

READABLE CODES

Readable codes should be easily understood by all users, including planners, elected officials, developers, and the general public. In order for technical regulatory documents to be accessible to this wide range of users, they should have a clear organizational structure and a simple page layout (see "Typical Format for a 'Readable' Code," following page). Readable codes also use graphics to explain the application of standards that may be confusing in written form. For example, the diagram below shows a requirement that buildings are constructed along 60% of the width of the lot facing the right-of-way.

Typical format for a "readable" code

a

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR ALL DISTRICTS
4.5 ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES | 4

b

4.5 ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES

The purpose of this section is to establish standards for accessory uses and structures in the City of Wilson's land use jurisdiction. Except as provided elsewhere in this chapter, it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, construct, enlarge, move or replace any accessory use or structure without first obtaining a Certificate of Zoning Compliance from the Administrator.

c

4.5.1 GENERAL

A. Accessory uses and structures may only be used for purposes permitted in the district in which they are located.

B. Not for Dwelling Purposes: Accessory structures shall not be used for dwelling purposes except as approved Accessory Dwelling Units (see Section 3.2.1).

d

C. Building Permits May Be Required: Depending on the size of the structure and the incorporation of various improvements (e.g., electrical, plumbing), a building permit may also be required.

4.5.2 LOCATION, MAXIMUM NUMBER AND MAXIMUM AREA

e

Standards	Single-Family/Two-Family Lots – 2 Acres or Less	All Other Uses and Lots Larger than 2 Acres
1. Permitted Location	Side/rear yard only	Permitted in all yards – may not be closer than 30 ft to right-of-way
2. Maximum Number Permitted	2	No maximum

4.5.3 INTERPRETATION OF DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

f

A. Yard Requirements

1. **General:** A building, structure or lot shall not be developed, used or occupied unless it meets the minimum yard requirements for the district, and any applicable overlay district, in which it is located.
2. **Calculating Yards:** The minimum yard is the area defined by measuring perpendicularly from, and along the entire boundary of, the lot line (property line) to the building line as shown in the diagram below:

g

B. Irregular Lot Setbacks

1. **General:** The location of required front, side and rear yards (or setbacks) on irregularly shaped lots shall be determined by the Administrator. The determination will be based on the intent and purpose of this ordinance to achieve an appropriate spacing and location of buildings and buildings on

h i

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE | *Adoption Draft – 11.06.12*

j 4-3

a prominent chapter & section reference

b prominent section header

c white space for readability

d bold regulation description for ease in locating

e use of tables to condense narrative

f consistent numbering & identification

g graphics & illustrations

h document title

i revision or adoption date

j page number

1.1: **Unified Development Ordinances**

Most of the provisions related to development in Summerville are in Chapter 32 Zoning and Chapter 20 Planning and Development. There is also vital information for land development in Chapter 22 Stormwater, and Chapter 6 Buildings and Building Regulations (Article III Floods). This fragmented structure makes it difficult for developers and landowners to access the information necessary to conform to the town's development regulations, and can lead to losses of time and money if the user is not aware of critical requirements.

Many South Carolina municipalities (including Charleston, Columbia, and Bluffton) use a unified development ordinance, which consolidates all development-related requirements into one document. Standards can be grouped in thematic chapters, but the procedures, terminology, and definitions are standardized across the document. Cross-referencing within a UDO is a common practice as a means to remind the user of related regulations and to reduce redundancies.

In general, UDO's include all of those regulations that are under local control by the community and are authorized under the community's general zoning and land development authority. Building codes, fire codes, minimum housing codes, construction details and specifications, and application forms and fees are typically left out.

→ 1.1.1: Combine all development-related provisions of the ordinance into a unified development ordinance.

1.2: **Document Organization**

While many of the current development review and approval procedures are in "Article II - Administration and Enforcement" of the Zoning chapter of the ZDO, a number of permit and approval processes are located either with the regulatory content (e.g., sign permits are explained in Chapter 32, Article VII "Signs"), or within one of the catch-all sections, Chapter 32, Article I "In General" or Article III "Zoning District Regulations." This can make finding the relevant process confusing for ZDO users.

The first step to clarifying the process for ordinance users is to define all of the development review procedure types. With each type, listing the process requirements, including reviewing agencies, approval bodies, and public notice requirements, will give ordinance users a definitive sense of what to expect.

To simplify the structure of the code, all topic-specific regulations should be grouped in short, easy-to-identify chapters that allow the user to easily flip from lot standards to landscaping to lighting and find the applicable regulations.

Currently, some sections of the ZDO are easier to find based on article titles than others, but the numbering system of chapters, articles, and sections is not intuitive. For example, Chapter 32, Article IV includes sections 32-171 to 32-183; article numbers do not seem to correspond to section numbers at all. Development processes inherently include a number of different types of interrelated requirements, and a clear numbering system will allow users to quickly find referenced sections.

→ 1.2.1: Use short, clearly-named, topic-driven chapters.

→ 1.2.2: Use a consistent, hierarchical numbering system.

1.3: **Document Presentation**

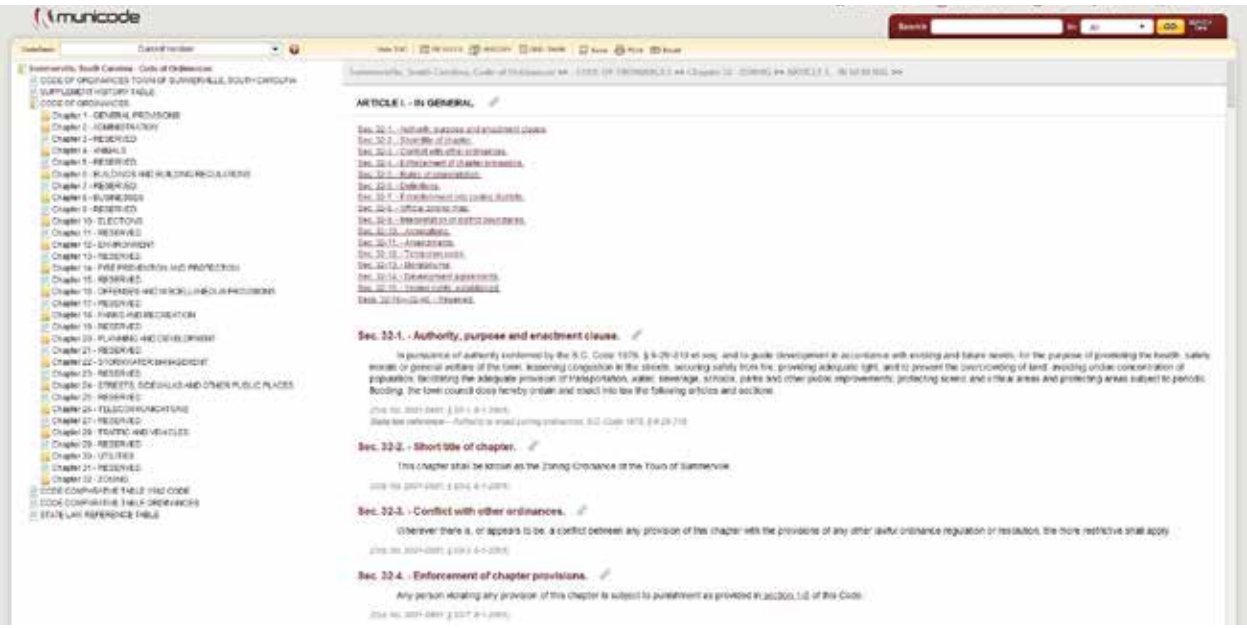
Today, the ZDO is accessed in an online, interactive format via Municode. There are benefits to this format, in that it is easy to update, and allows users to access all of the town's laws in one place. The Municode interface also uses hyperlinks within sections so that users can access cross-referenced sections directly.

There are drawbacks to using Municode— the most significant of which is the program's lack of graphic capabilities. Tables and graphics within a code can often summarize detailed information more clearly than writing all regulations in narrative form. Similarly, the use of graphics can be a quick and effective way to show how regulations are measured or enforced.

Municode's website advertises the ability to integrate graphics or use an InDesign format as the basis for putting codes online, which may be an ideal solution for Summerville.[1]

➔ 1.3.1: Use an easy-to-read digital format with illustrative diagrams.

1 Municode, 2014. http://www.municode.com/Planning



Online Municode Interface

2 PROCESS & ADMINISTRATION

Clear expectations facilitate the development process.

According to staff, the Planning, Building Codes, and Engineering Departments work together throughout the review of development applications and are able to provide a fairly-streamlined review process with concurrent reviews of application elements when possible. Staff recommends informal pre-application meetings for applicants, and these are regularly completed with all three departments present.

Staff is able to complete development review efficiently; simple administrative permits like tree removal or sign permits can be granted in a few days. More involved processes, like Commercial Design Review and rezonings, take two to three months.

While staff has been able to enforce efficient processes, development review steps and requirements are not clearly defined in the ordinance.

Goal for Process & Administration:

Align de facto practices with de jure regulations by clearly establishing application and decision-making procedures so that approvals are made by an appropriate authority.

PROCESS TYPES

Administrative Processes: Development approvals based on measurable standards (i.e. do not require subjective interpretation) can be completed at the staff level.

Example: **A sign permit application for a proposed 18-square foot sign either meets or does not meet the following standard: "Signs shall be no greater than 20 square feet."**

Discretionary Processes: Development approvals that are based on an interpretation of guidelines in the ordinance must be completed by a review board. The board must make findings of fact based on guidelines in the ordinance.

Example: **A development application for a three-story office building may meet the following guideline, "The sidewalk story of a multistory building should be articulated," depending on whether or not the review board finds that the molding and material details in the proposed design meet the guideline.**

Legislative Processes: Ordinance changes that require legislative action by the Board of Commissioners or a Planning Commission, per the South Carolina Code of Laws.

Example: **An application for a re-zoning to a higher-density commercial zoning district requires public notice, a public hearing, and a decision by the Board of Commissioners based on an interpretation of whether the rezoning would be in line with adopted plans.**

The table on the following pages summarizes the town's development review processes as they are currently written in the ZDO.

Summary of Existing Development Review Processes						
Permit/Process	Decision Type	Public Notice	Reviewing Entities	Decision-making Authority	Appeals	Permit Period
Amendments (32-11)	Legislative	Newspaper, Property Posting; Public Hearing	Planning Commission	Council	n/a	n/a
Development Agreement (32-14)	Legislative	Newspaper; ≥2 Public Hearings	At Council's discretion	Council	n/a	SCCL §6-31-40
Vested Rights (32-15)	Administrative	n/a	n/a	Council or Staff (depending on development process)	n/a	2 years (up to five 1-year extensions)
Building Permit (32-42; 6-38)	Administrative		Building Official Zoning Engineering	Building Official		6 months to start work
Certificate of Occupancy/ Occupancy Permit (32-42)	Reference to Chapter 6		Building Official (also Zoning and Engineering, if applicable)	Building Official		
Appeal of Zoning Administrator Decision (32-91 to 32-93)	Administrative	Newspaper; Property Posting, Public Hearing		Board of Zoning Appeals	Circuit Court	n/a
Variance (32-91 to 32-93)	Discretionary	Newspaper; Property Posting, Public Hearing		Board of Zoning Appeals	Circuit Court	n/a
PUD Planned Development District (32-125)	Legislative	Follows process of zoning amendment (32-11) or development agreement (32-14) as applicable				
Special Exception for Electronic signal receiving stations (32-139)	Discretionary	Newspaper; Property Posting, Public Hearing	Board of Zoning Appeals	Board of Zoning Appeals	Circuit Court	n/a
Commercial Design Review (32-141)	Discretionary	Per state law	Commercial Design Review Board	Commercial Design Review Board	Circuit Court	per vested rights
Certificate of Appropriateness (32-181)	Discretionary	Posted in Town Hall, Mailed to Adjacent Property Owners if >700sf; Public Hearing	Board of Architectural Review	Board of Architectural Review	Circuit Court or Application of Economic Hardship	6 months
Determination of Economic Hardship (32-181(e))	Discretionary	none	Board of Architectural Review	Board of Architectural Review	Circuit Court	n/a

Summary of Existing Development Review Processes

Permit/Process	Decision Type	Public Notice	Reviewing Entities	Decision-making Authority	Appeals	Permit Period
Demolition of Historic Structure (32-182(b))	Discretionary	Newspaper; Public Hearing	Board of Architectural Review	Board of Architectural Review	Circuit Court or Determination of Economic Hardship	n/a
Special Use Permit (32, Article V/32-211)	Administrative	None	Zoning Administrator and Planning Director	Zoning Administrator and Planning Director	Board of Zoning Appeals	n/a
Conditional Use Permit for Bed and Breakfast Establishments (32-212)	Administrative	Property Posting	Zoning Administrator Building Official Fire Marshall	Zoning Administrator	Board of Zoning Appeals	
Sign Permit (32, Article VI/32-241)	Administrative	None	Commercial Design Review Board	Department of Planning and Development	Board of Zoning Appeals	
Administrative Variances (32-253)	Administrative	None	Zoning Administrator	Zoning Administrator	Board of Zoning Appeals	n/a
Site Plan Review (32, Article VIII/32-321)	Administrative	None	Zoning Officer; Commercial Design Review Board (as applicable)	Zoning Officer; Commercial Design Review Board (as part of Commercial Design Review)	Board of Zoning Appeals	
Special Exception to Buffer Area Requirements (32-322(c))	Administrative	None	Board of Zoning Appeals	Board of Zoning Appeals	Circuit Court	
Tree Removal Permit (32-324(l))	Discretionary	None	Tree Advisory Protection Committee member or full Committee	Tree Advisory Protection Committee member or full Committee	Tree Advisory Protection Committee or Circuit Court	6 months
Land Disturbance Permit (32-325)	Not applicable - permit not used					
Warranty Inspection (20-71(b))	Administrative	None	Engineering	Engineering		
Final Plat (20-71(c)(2)a	Administrative		Town Engineer	Town Engineer		
Variance from Road Requirements (20-71(f))	Administrative	None	Town Engineer	Town Engineer		
Street Plans for Subdivisions of 5 or more Lots (20-71(g))	Administrative	None	Town Engineer	Town Engineer		
Stormwater Concept Plan (22-23(d)(1))	Administrative	None	Town Engineer	Town Engineer		
Final Stormwater Plan (22-23(d)(6)			Town Engineer	Town Engineer		

2.1: **Administrative Procedures**

As shown in the accompanying "Summary of Existing Development Review Processes," town staff review and make decisions in a significant number of the development processes. Using a standard generic title for staff responsibilities across the entire ordinance, such as "Administrator," permits the internal assignment and reassignment of staff responsibilities on an as-needed basis without making text amendments to the code.

→ 2.1.1: Standardize administrator responsibilities and naming conventions throughout the ordinance.

In general, administrative processes are preferred by developers because they are relatively low-risk; the process is fast and the criteria are objective. While discretionary review processes are necessary for large and complex projects, many more small-scale developments—including small multifamily and commercial buildings—could be reviewed administratively through a by-right process.

→ 2.1.2: Establish a threshold (e.g., based on square footage of project) for which projects must undergo the discretionary design review process, and allow administrative review of smaller projects.

Administrative Processes: The town's planning and engineering departments are the main reviewers of administrative regulations in the code.

2.2: **Design Review Process**

Commercial Design Review Board (CDRB): Currently, all commercial, multifamily, and industrial development proposals in Summerville must undergo Commercial Design Review (§32-141). This is a discretionary procedure wherein the CDRB reviews the application and makes the final decision. As it is written, the ZDO provides very little guidance to the CDRB, and many of the review criteria are standards rather than guidelines, meaning they could be approved administratively.

The CDRB has been able to work through an ad hoc process that has yielded fair results, with the process usually taking two to three months (meaning two to three rounds of drafts with the CDRB).

Planning Commission: All Planning Commission powers, duties, and procedures are identified through reference to SCCL 6-29-310- et seq (Chapter 20, Article II). According to staff, in practice the Planning Commission's only duty related to the development process is to review and provide recommendations for rezonings, including the adoption of proposed planned unit developments (PUDs). Because rezonings are a legislative action, the final decision and adoption is by the town's Board of Commissioners.

In its current role, the Planning Commission only reviews applications, and is not charged with any decision-making authority. The CDRB, on the other hand, is a fairly powerful board in the current process and requires a range of expertise for membership. Given the importance of PUDs and rezonings—these have a significant impact on large portions of the town development—a board with requisite development and design expertise should be charged with this review.

→ 2.2.1: Consider combining the Commercial Design Review Board and the Board of Architectural Review, and charge this group with performing design review for projects above a set threshold (e.g., based on square footage), all projects within the Historic District, and all PUDs.

→ 2.2.2: Create design standards to be enforced administratively, and design guidelines to be enforced through a discretionary design review process (see Sections 4.1-4.3).

Design review criteria in the ordinance should cover the following:

1. Administrative standards for all new development to be administered by staff. This includes requirements that can be objectively determined as either fulfilled or unfulfilled (Section 4.1).

2. Discretionary guidelines for commercial and multifamily buildings to be administered by the proposed Commercial Design Review Board/ Architectural Review Board (Section 4.1).

3. Discretionary guidelines for civic buildings to be administered by the proposed Commercial Design Review Board/Architectural Review Board (Section 4.2).

CDRB REQUIREMENTS

From §32-141 (c): Membership of the CDRB shall be as follows: One architect or architectural designer; one landscape architect or recognized landscape designer; one civil engineer or commercial developer/contractor; one commercial real estate agent, registered land surveyor, commercial appraiser or a private planning consultant, and the remaining seats will be at large.

4. Additional discretionary guidelines for all development within the Historic District to be administered by the proposed Commercial Design Review Board/Architectural Review Board(Section 4.3).

2.3: Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) consists of five members appointed by council; the membership is not related to any other board. All powers, duties, and procedures are established through reference to SCCL 6-29-780 et seq; the board has decision-making authority in applications for variances and appeals to administrative decisions. This board was previously called the "Board of Adjustment," and was changed based on revisions to the enabling legislation.

→ 2.3.1: Fix instances of "Board of Adjustment" to read "Board of Zoning Appeals" in the ordinance.

2.4: Tree Advisory Protection Committee

The Tree Advisory Protection (TAP) committee is made up of three staff members (one each from the Planning Department, Parks and Recreation, and Code Enforcement) and four citizens, including at least one certified arborist.

The TAP committee's only defined duty in the ZDO is to issue tree removal permits. As it actually operates, the TAP member from code enforcement issues permits for trees of less than 16 inches DBH (trees of 16 inches DBH or greater are considered "Grand Trees.") Removal of Grand Trees requires a majority vote by the full TAP committee.

The Town of Summerville issued over 600 tree removal permits in 2013. This results in a significant expenditure of staff time that is not commensurate with the fees collected and the oversight needed to protect Summerville's outstanding tree canopy. Many other cities and towns use a tiered approach, where small trees do not require a permit to remove, while larger trees require staff review or review by a full tree protection committee, depending on their size.

→ 2.4.1: Establish a tiered approach for the approval of tree removal whereby small trees do not require a removal permit, larger trees require staff review, and Grand Trees require review by the full TAP committee.

Ashley River

3 DISTRICTS & USES

The designation of districts determines city form.

Today, most development in Summerville is of two types: commercial strip centers along major arterial roads and medium- to large-lot single-family detached residential housing subdivisions tucked between these corridors.

There is one significant exception: the historic district in and around downtown. This area is laid out on a 500-foot grid of blocks that contains a mix of shops, offices, civic buildings, and historic homes centered on Main Street and Hutchinson Square.

The historic district is widely considered the heart of the town and hosts events throughout the year that draw Summerville residents together. While the majority of residents live in the newer subdivisions closer to the town's perimeter, Summerville residents identify themselves with the traditional, walkable, small-town character and form of downtown.

The differences between historic Summerville and the more recent suburban development are stark. Currently, the town's zoning and development ordinances prescribe the commercial strip development and winding single-family subdivisions that have been built over the last several decades. The only way a developer could build downtown today would be to use a planned unit development process that allows exceptions to all of the current zoning district standards by legislatively rezoning the land.

Goal for Districts & Uses:

Develop new districts that would allow downtown and downtown neighborhoods to be built today by-right.

District Development Provisions

District	Minimum Lot Size	Minimum Lot Width	Front Setback	Maximum Impervious Surface	Maximum Height	Perimeter Buffer
R-1 single-family residential	20,000 square feet	40 feet	30 feet	30%	35 feet	none
R-2 single-family residential	8.500 square feet	20 feet	25 feet	35%	35 feet	none
R-3 single-family residential	8,500 square feet or 21,780 square feet site size for single-family attached (1/2 acre)	40 feet	20 feet	50%	35 feet	none
R-5 mixed residential	4,000 square feet	20 feet	20 feet	50%	35 feet	none
R-6 multifamily residential	None	50 feet	Perimeter buffer required on all sides	65%	55 feet	Buffers required on all sides
R-7 mobile home and trailer parks	Minimum of 7,500 feet per mobile home site	50 feet	Front buffer per Sec. 32-323	65%	55 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
B-1 residential business	The most restrictive of the abutting residential property or a minimum of 7,500 feet	50 feet	30 feet	50%	35 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
B-2 neighborhood business centers	n/a	50 feet	30 feet (exceptions available through commercial design review)	65%	35 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
B-3 general business	n/a	50 feet or 100 feet	30 feet (exceptions available through CDRB)	80%	55 feet (may be waived if site fronts Hwy 78, is north of Hwy 78, is within a block of Hwy 78, or through design review)	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
I-1 industrial	n/a	100 feet	30 feet	80%	55 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
I-2 industrial	87,120 square feet (2 acres)	100 feet	40 feet	80%	55 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
AC agricultural conservation	217,800 square feet (5 acres)	100 feet	40 feet	20%	55 feet	Buffers required at side and rear of lot
PL public lands	As approved by council	50 feet	As approved by council	As approved by council	As approved by Council	As approved by council
PUD planned development district	As determined by council to meet the intent of 32-125 through zoning amendment process					
Central business district (not assigned to any property)	may be waived	may be waived	may be waived	100%	per zoning district	

3.1: **Front Setbacks**

The smallest front setback in Summerville zoning districts is 20 feet (in the R-3 and R-5 districts), and most districts require a 30-foot setback. This approach provides little flexibility in site design, limiting the building footprint and amount of usable yard space. The front yard is typically the least used portion of a single-family lot, and in commercial sites large front setbacks mean less revenue-producing floor space. By prioritizing parking and buffering, deep front yard setbacks and shallow rear yards all but ensure the complete grading of an individual lot, particularly if they are smaller than 1/4 acre in size.

The current deep front setbacks, while necessary to protect a house from noise and vibrations if located on a major road , is not necessary in most neighborhoods. Deep setbacks also tend to be less attractive for pedestrians since they remove the feeling of enclosure and proximity to human activity that people desire for interest and sense of security.

→ 3.1.1: Reduce front setbacks to encourage development flexibility and walkable neighborhoods.

→ 3.1.2: Eliminate setbacks and establish build-to lines in urban districts and certain mixed-use areas to support a consistent walkable character.

Small Front Setbacks: The small-lot single family homes above, in Beaufort, South Carolina, were built under regulations that allow a maximum front setback of 3 feet from the back of the sidewalk. Additionally, the code allows a porch of up to 12 feet in depth that provides an elevated transitional area between the sidewalk and the front door.

FUTURE HOUSING DEMAND

The demand for large-lot homes over the next several decades will decline below 2011 levels. Instead, half of all demand for new housing construction through 2030 will be in the form of attached single-family homes, while the other half will be for small-lot single family homes.[1]

50% Attached homes

50% Small lot homes

1 Arthur C. Nelson via Kaid Benfield (January 30, 2014). "Ten things planners need to know about demographics and the future real estate market." NRDC Switchboard. http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/ten_things_planners_need_to_kn.html

3.2: **Lot Size and Density**

Residential districts require at least an 8,500 square foot lot for R-1, R-2, and R-3 single family housing. This precludes the development of a missing housing type in Summerville: small-lot, single-family housing.

While single-family attached housing is permitted in R-3, a site of at least a half-acre (21,780 square feet) is required. This type of housing could be developed on much smaller sites; e.g., four park-under townhouses could be built on a site as small as 6,000 square feet.

For nonresidential development, commercial lots in the B1 district require a minimum lot size of 7,500 feet. On a typical 100-foot depth lot, this means a 75-foot width is required. Additionally, none of the commercial districts (B-1, B-2, or B-3) permit attached buildings.

Commercial Lot Size Comparison: The top photograph shows commercial buildings on Old Trolley Road, set back from the street on large parcels. The lower photograph shows traditional zero lot-line buildings on Short Central.

In contrast, on Main Street and Short Central in Downtown Summerville, many of the existing buildings are just 20 feet wide and nearly all are attached structures with a 0-foot side setback. Summerville's current standards make replicating and/or redeveloping these treasured areas very challenging if not impossible.

→ 3.2.1: Convert minimum lot size requirements to gross density requirements to allow for greater development flexibility residential districts.

→ 3.2.2: Allow smaller, narrow lots and attached buildings in urban commercial districts.

3.3: **Use Provisions**

As summarized in the table on the following page, the ZDO lists 49 use categories in pyramidal organization (e.g., "all uses allowed in R-1 and R-2") within the narrative of the district requirements. The code lists primary uses, then accessory uses, then special uses in list form. This format makes figuring out which use is permitted in which district a chore for ZDO users, and should be changed to a comprehensive use table.

→ 3.3.1: Create a comprehensive, consolidated use table that references definitions and supplementary standards in separate subsections.

One example of a specific use provision that should be addressed is the fact that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are currently only permitted in the R-1 district on lots of at least 20,000 square feet. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Impediments to Fair Housing Study identify this as an obstacle to developing a diversity of housing options in Summerville.

→ 3.3.2: Allow accessory dwelling units in all residential districts.

Accessory Dwelling Unit: A small apartment unit located behind a single-family house can be designed to fit into the neighborhood context, like this one in Davidson, North Carolina. ADUs can provide affordable rental options for smaller households, and extra income to homeowners.

Generalized Summary of Permitted Uses	
Districts	**Primary Uses**
R-1 R-2 R-3 R-5 R-6 R-7	One-family detached dwellings
	One-family attached dwellings (ie townhouses or condominiums)
	Mobile homes or trailers
	Duplexes, triplexes and quadraplexes
	Boardinghouses or roominghouses, group homes
	Apartments and other multifamily dwellings
	Residential mobile home parks
	Servants' quarters, guest cottages, garage apartments and private stables
	Public parks, playgrounds and schools
	Churches and cemeteries
	Home occupations
	Private clubs, golf courses, lodges or social buildings
	Public utility installations
	Community advocacy facilities
B-1 B-2 B-3	Professional, administrative and sales offices
	Medical clinics, testing laboratories and diagnostic centers
	Medical sales or supply offices as a part of a professional office or medical clinic
	Handicraft instructional shops
	Group day care home serving no more than 12 clients
	Generally recognized retail businesses
	Generally recognized personal service establishments
	Limited restaurants and food service preparation facilities
	Day care centers and nursery schools
	Commercial greenhouses and plant nurseries
	Individual storage facilities and mini-warehouses
	All types of business and commercial activity related to retail sales, business and professional offices, financial institutions, gasoline filling stations and repair garages, personal service shops and limited wholesale activity
	Restaurants, bars, limited amusement centers, liquor stores and party shops
	Private clubs, walk-in theaters, assembly and concert halls
	Commercial kennels and veterinary clinics
	New and or used car, truck and machinery sales and or repair
	Funeral homes

Generalized Summary of Permitted Uses	
Districts	**Primary Uses**
B-1 B-2 B-3 (continued)	Major amusement facilities including golf driving ranges, golf courses, roller skating rinks and swimming pools
	Hotels and motels
	Campgrounds and overnight trailer courts
	Wholesale, warehouse and storage facilities including building materials and lumberyards
	Drive-in theaters and restaurants
	Transportation facilities
I-1 I-2	Limited manufacturing and industrial uses
	All types of industrial and manufacturing uses
	Public facilities such as power-generating plants and sewage treatment plants
	Junkyards or automobile wrecking yard
	Landfills, garbage dumps or any type waste disposal
	Sand, clay or gravel mining
	Storage facilities for flammable or potentially hazardous materials
	Adult establishments
	Tattoo facility
AC	All uses pertaining to farming, agriculture, livestock and the husbandry of natural resources
	Certain commercial operations including riding and horse stables and dairy farming
PL	Any governmental function which is legally authorized to the governmental agency proposing the use

3.4: **Mixed-Use Development**

Currently, the zoning ordinance is enforced so that the only way to develop a mixed-use site in the town is through a PUD process. As a result, even site plans which combine different types of residential uses must use a PUD process; however, the town's PUD process requires the designation of commercial uses. This has led to the adoption of false PUDs that designate space for commercial development that is not intended to occur in order to use the flexibility of the PUD process.

There is some minimal mixed-use allowed by right, such as the B-1 and B-2 commercial districts that also allow single-family housing (with required buffering). The commercial districts do not, however, permit the housing type most-commonly incorporated in well-designed mixed-use districts: multifamily housing.

In general, the town's regulations should create more mixed-use districts that include a wide variety of uses but share a common building type or architectural vocabulary. The transect (see accompanying explanation) provides an organizing principle for mixed-use districts. In the code, each transect-level district has detailed provisions for, density, height, street design, the design of parks, the mix of uses, building design, parking, and other aspects of development.

→ 3.4.1: Establish transect-based districts that permit mixed-use development by right.

THE TRANSECT

The transect concept comes from ecology, where a cross-section of land – from the ocean to mountains, for example – may be grouped into habitats based on the characteristics of plants and animals that reside there. In the same way that egrets and cordgrass live symbiotically in tidal marshes, there are building forms, public spaces, and streetscapes that tend to perform well together in the built environment.

For example, a public space at the edge of the city may be a large regional park with hiking trails, and nearby residences may be on large lots with decorative fences in front. At the opposite end of the transect, a public space in the city center may be a more intimate square where markets and events take place, and surrounding residences may be four-story condominium buildings with entrances at the sidewalk.

Source: James Wassell via Center for Applied Transect Studies, transect.org

REQUIREMENTS FOR PUDS
(from Sec. 32-125)

- *The proposed development shall be of such design that it will promote achievement of the stated purposes of the adopted comprehensive plan and is consistent with the plan as well as other adopted plans and policies of the Town of Summerville.*
- *The development will efficiently use available land and will protect and preserve, to the greatest extent possible, and utilize, where appropriate natural features of the land such as trees, streams, wetlands, and topographical features.*
- *The development will be located in an area where transportation, police and fire protection, schools and other community facilities and public utilities, including public water and sewer service, are or will be available and adequate for the uses and densities proposed. The applicant may, where appropriate, make provisions for such facilities or utilities, which are not presently available.*
- *Minimum size of a PUD is one acre.*
- *PUDs less than 25 acres must have at least 50 linear feet of frontage on an existing publicly paved and maintained roadway.*
- *PUDs greater than 25 acres must have at least 100 linear feet of frontage on an existing publicly paved and maintained roadway.*

3.5: **Planned Unit Developments**

According to Sec. 32-125 (b): "Planned developments are intended to promote flexibility in site planning and structure location, to facilitate the provision of utilities and circulation systems, as well as to preserve the natural and scenic features of the parcel."

Apart from these descriptions, the only codified requirements for PUDs are shown in the accompanying bulleted list at left. A few other provisions of the ordinance apply to PUDs, including site plan review elements (Sec. 32-321) and design requirements for streets (Sec. 20-71(g)). However, the design criteria for PUDs are too vague to give the town any leverage to ensure high standards of development design.

→ 3.5.1: Create clear standards and guidelines for PUDs that establish town expectations for development and create more pragmatic and predictable outcomes.

3.6: **Central Business District**

The Central Business District is described—without very few regulations—in the ordinance, and no properties within the town have this zoning designation.

→ 3.6.1: Eliminate the Central Business District to avoid confusion in the ordinance or merge its standards into new, more appropriate districts.

4 BUILDING & SITE DESIGN STANDARDS

Buildings are the scenery of town life.

History shows us that the most valuable, lasting real estate value has been created by building places where people stroll main streets and live on tree-lined blocks with inviting porches, before modern zoning codes and cars changed the way neighborhoods were built. These streets are lined with high-quality buildings, not parking lots; they have tall trees and generous sidewalks, not gravel ditches. These streetscapes provide visual cues as to whether we're in a place to stop and explore, or to lock the doors and keep driving.

One approach to ensuring that new development continues this pattern is to focus on how buildings address the street. Beyond the use that happens within a building, regulating by frontage type ensures that new development completes the streetscape. Frontage types based on universal architectural forms define the fronts of buildings: fences, porches, stoops, storefronts, arcades, and galleries.

Goal for Building & Site Design:

Adopt standards that focus on public frontages to ensure a high-quality public realm.

4.1: Commercial and Multifamily Building Design Standards & Guidelines

Sections 2.1-2.2 of this assessment address the manner in which building and site design review is administered; this section discusses the content of the regulations that are applied through these processes.

In general, design standards and guidelines include: the orientation and placement of buildings; form and massing of buildings; arrangement and expression of building materials; and design/placement of building utilities. Other site design elements—such as landscaping, parking, lighting, and signs—should be administered by staff, as they are in the current ordinance.

The design review guidelines currently used by the CDRB (Sec.32-141(k)) provide a starting point, but are not specific enough to ensure high-quality design. Additional requirements to site buildings along the public frontage, provide a prominent entry from the public frontage, and use façade detailing that relates to the pedestrian scale are key additions to these guidelines. Many of the projects that CDRB has approved demonstrate high-quality design standards, and should be used as a guide in developing consistent guidelines.

Cohesive Design: The above streetscape from Addison Circle in Addison, Texas shows an integrated approach to street and building design that creates a sense of place.

For buildings outside the Historic District, guidelines can require building detailing without imposing a particular architectural vernacular. While many of the un-stylized design principles established for commercial, multifamily, and industrial buildings will also apply to civic buildings and the Historic District, these two development types will require additional design guidance, as detailed in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

→ **4.1.1:** Integrate design standards and guidelines for commercial and multifamily buildings within the ZDO.

Administrative Standards

A number of the guidelines currently in Sec.32-141(k) are not discretionary in nature and could be enforced by staff. For example:

- *Any building exterior elevation shall consist of architectural materials which are equal in quality, appearance and detail to all other exterior elevations of the same structure.*
- *Mechanical equipment shall be shielded and screened from public view.*
- *Light bulbs shall not be visible unless designed as ornamental lighting.*

- *Security lighting shall be provided at all pedestrian walkways.*

Additional, specific requirements should be added that can still be administered by staff, such as the following examples from a model ordinance:

- Primary building entrances must be oriented toward the street.

- Primary façades must be divided into architecturally distinct sections or bays with each section taller than it is wide and no wider than 30 linear feet.

- At least 50% of the primary façades shall consist of one or more of the following materials: Brick or glazed brick; wood; cementitious fiber board; or stone, cast stone, stone masonry units, marble or similar material.

Discretionary Guidelines

Several of the guidelines currently in Sec.32-141(k) state a principle, but do not provide enough guidance for consistent interpretation. For example:

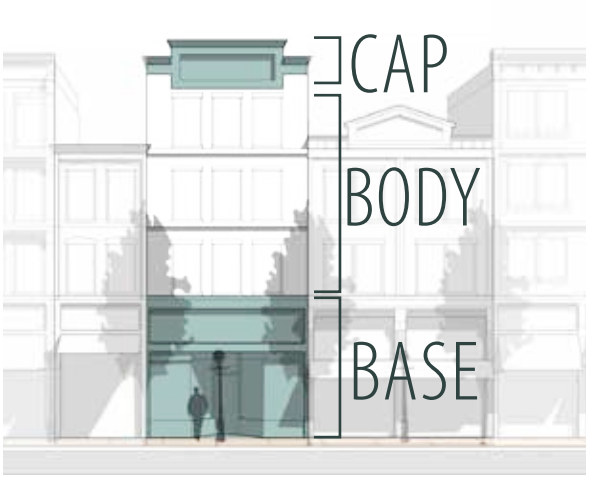
- *Proposed developments shall be located and configured in a visually harmonious manner with the terrain and vegetation of the subject parcel and with that of surrounding parcels.*

- *Long monotonous facade design, including, but not limited to, those characterized by unrelieved repetition of shape or form, or by unbroken extension of line, shall be discouraged.*

The following examples from a model ordinance provide more guidance for the administering board:

- The rhythm and pattern of development along a street should continue patterns of building frontage, placement, size, landscape elements, and open space and avoid configurations that disrupt fine-grained neighborhood or corridor patterns.

- Building walls should create interest and hierarchy in the façade to enrich the pedestrian experience and provide a feeling of safety.



Commercial Building Design: One common commercial building design requirement is that buildings be designed with base, body, and cap components. From these basic components, further guidance about frontage type, transparency, proportion and articulation can be added as well.

4.2: **Civic Building Design Guidelines**

Currently, the town does not distinguish civic buildings or, if they are located in residential districts (such as churches or schools), require any design review process. Civic institutions act as landmarks within a town, and are often intended to spur private investment in the surrounding area. Given this prominent and catalytic role, the siting and architectural quality of these buildings should be given the highest priority.

Civic buildings should be designated as a use type which may include: government agencies, museums, libraries, schools, religious institutions, performance venues, police stations, fire stations, and hospitals. All proposed civic buildings should be reviewed by the proposed Commercial Design Review Board/Planning Commission (see 2.1-2.2). Given the town's history and the number of historic civic institutions (such as the original town hall building and several churches), the adoption of more stringent architectural requirements that reflect a Summerville Lowcountry vernacular should be considered for civic institutions.

Regardless of architectural style, the following examples of civic building design guidelines from a model ordinance demonstrate principles that lend prominence to institutions:

- Civic buildings should be sited to terminate a street vista whenever possible and must incorporate appropriate prominent features, designs, and entrances to celebrate a visual termination.
- In lieu of a required building frontage and minimum setback line, civic buildings may include a pedestrian plaza, courtyard, or similar landscaped area.
- The primary entrance shall face the public frontage and may be raised above the street elevation and accessed via a monumental stair.

→ 4.2.1: Adopt design guidelines for civic buildings.

St. Paul's Summerville

Old Town Hall Building

4.3: **Historic District Design Guidelines**

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) reviews projects in the Historic District and designated historic properties. There are no historic district guidelines specific to Summerville; the only guidance for granting a Certificate of Appropriateness is the (very general) Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

While the design guidelines for commercial, multifamily, and industrial buildings outside of the Historic District should not necessarily dictate a specific architectural vernacular, design guidelines for buildings within the Historic District should ensure the preservation and continuation of the established Lowcountry style. These guidelines should be the most stringent in terms of architectural details and preservation methods without precluding opportunities for future infill and redevelopment.

→ 4.3.1: Adopt design guidelines for the historic district to support the board's decisions.

Historic Commercial Building

Historic Home

4.4: **Parking Requirements**

The ZDO requires more off-street parking spaces than are necessary for most enterprises (32-281), and in fact when exploring town, one finds that most parking lots are largely empty.

While parking lots are necessary for most businesses to accommodate their customers, they do not provide a public benefit. More often, large empty parking lots detract from streetscapes and interrupt continuous building frontages, detracting from the public realm. Eliminating parking minimums and allowing business owners to provide parking as necessary to meet their needs will allow more site design flexibility and reduce dead space devoted to parking in new development.

The ZDO begins to address this by permitting shared parking, but space reductions through shared parking are only permitted on the condition that land on-site is designated for future construction of the remainder of the parking (32-291(f)). This provision only goes halfway to fixing the over-parking situation, because it does not allow landowners to take advantage of extra building square-footage by reducing parking.

Over-sized Parking Lot on Boonehill Road

➔ 4.4.1: Reduce off-street parking requirements by eliminating minimums and/or allowing reductions through shared parking.

The ordinance does have a few more progressive parking policies that should be continued and expanded. For example, Section 32-291 establishes off-street parking maximums and requires that any parking spaces beyond the minimum requirement use pervious paving materials. This policy would be strengthened by lowering maximums and providing incentives for the application of pervious parking materials.

➔ 4.4.2: Require or incentivize the use of pervious paving materials for parking areas.

In addition to these off-street parking spaces, the ordinance requires the designation of loading spaces for all nonresidential development and residential developments of ten or more units (32-289). Similar to minimum parking requirements, loading spaces should be permitted based on the needs of a business, but not mandated for all development.

➔ 4.4.3: Remove off-street loading requirements.

The ZDO dose not specify where parking should be located, and with the large required front setbacks, parking is often located in front of buildings. Without guidance from the ordinance, in recent new construction projects, the CDRB has been requiring that parking is located to the side or rear of buildings. This policy allows a pedestrian entrance facing the front sidewalk and buildings that frame the streetscape, and should be codified in the new ordinance.

➔ 4.4.4: Require parking to be located behind or to the side of buildings depending on the context.

4.5: **Buffer Area Requirements**

Section 32-322 of the ZDO provides narrative and a table that establish buffer requirements based on land use adjacency, and with a few exceptions requires at least a 10-foot buffer between all development except in R-1 and R-2 districts. Additionally, the landscaping provisions in Section 32-323(6) require a minimum five-foot planted perimeter around all sides of every property. A few specific buffer requirements which stand-out as being especially harmful to developing walkable destinations are:

- Buffers are required between single-family residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-5). While R-1 and R-2 districts are limited to single-family detached housing, R-3 and R-5 introduce compatible housing types—townhomes and duplexes/triplexes/quadraplexes—which should be integrated into residential neighborhoods, rather than separated by large tree buffers.

- The R-6 multifamily district requires a buffer of 10-15 feet on all sides of the property. Apartment and condominium buildings should be constructed to address the sidewalk and allow residents the opportunity to walk to nearby businesses and amenities, rather than being hidden from the surrounding neighborhood.

- Ten-foot buffer yards are required between adjoining business districts (B-1, B-2, B-3), including those uses in the same district. Commercial development thrives on clustering, and requiring this physical and visual separation hurts businesses.

Buffers have a role in site design, especially when it comes to separating heavy industrial, highway commercial sites and loading areas, and other

Planted Buffer on Old Trolley Road

potentially noxious uses from residential development. However, context-based building and site design standards are a much more precise way to deal with land use compatibility.

If tree preservation, reduced stormwater runoff, and more attractive streetscapes are desired, the town should devote more emphasis to: detailed tree preservation standards; effective low-impact design requirements to reduce stormwater impacts; and building, site, and streetscape design standards that enable relatively seamless transitions through a transect-based approach.

→ 4.5.1: Revise buffer requirements to emphasize a walkable pedestrian environment over separation of uses.

4.6: **Open Space Requirements**

Currently, the ordinance provides little guidance for the designation and design of open space. While the Development Impact Fee requirements include funds for parks and recreation, they do not require the dedication of open spaces within new developments. According to the town's Parks and Recreation Department, many areas outside Summerville's historic core are not adequately served by park facilities. This is a function of the town's rapid subdivision growth and a lack of onus on developers to dedicate land and construct facilities that would ensure distribution of open space.

The town has used development agreements in the past to ensure the designation of amenities, including the development of Nexton. In order to increase predictability and make expectations consistent, the dedication, construction, and maintenance of open spaces should be established in the ordinance.

→ 4.6.1: Adopt open space dedication and design requirements that will ensure the distribution of high-quality public facilities throughout town.

4.7: **Signs**

The ordinance currently allows signs up to 200 square feet in size and 60 feet in height within 1,000 feet of an interstate highway interchange, and multiple signs of this size for properties adjacent to the I-26 interchange.

While changing the character and aesthetic of the North Main area where the Exit 199 interstate interchange is located requires much larger interventions than sign design revisions, a new I-26 highway interchange is going to be constructed in the next several years. (One focus of the Vision Plan is to make recommendations for the design of the new interchange area). In order to prevent a repetition of the dominant signs at the new interchange, the sign requirements should be right-sized to match the context proposed in the Vision Plan.

→ 4.7.1: Reduce permitted sign size and height near interstate highway interchanges.

North Main Street

5 STREETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

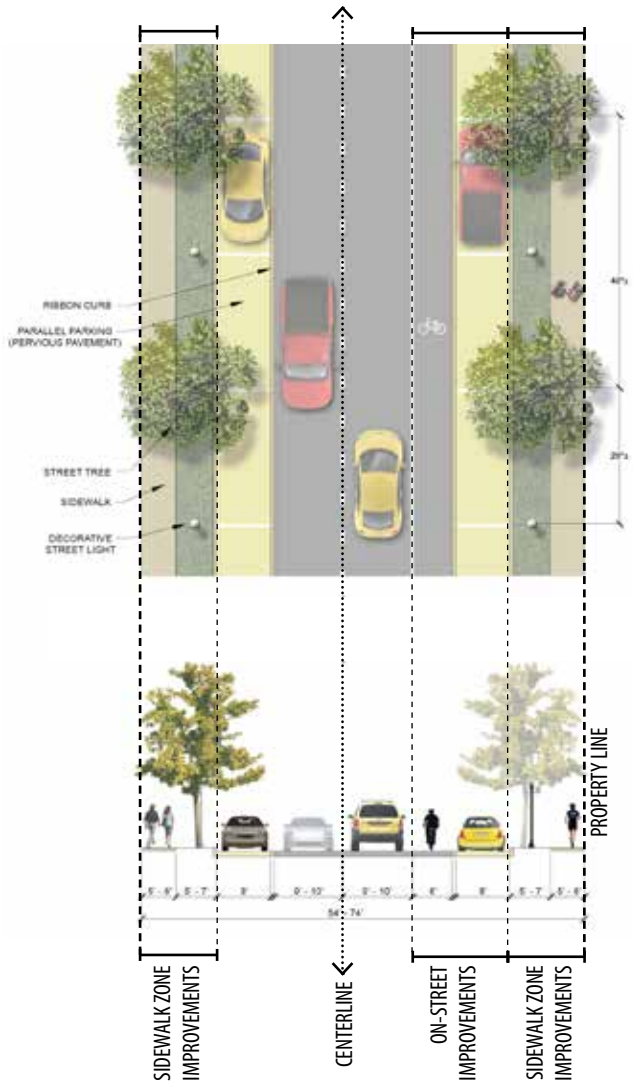
Streetscapes and parks define a town's character.

The building blocks of most American communities are their streets and public spaces – the infrastructure. More than engineered stormwater drainage or truck-turning radii, infrastructure design includes all of the natural and constructed components of the town's public realm. Streets, parks, plazas, and greenways guide most people's experience of a town.

Today, Summerville's development ordinances do not address placemaking: the art of designing spaces, both indoor and out, that invite people to sit down and stay awhile. The key to successful infrastructure design is multi-functionality; for example, streets that carry cars, people, and cyclists while creating a sense of place. High-quality design that performs multiple functions also adds value to nearby properties, driving future growth.

Goal for Streets & Infrastructure:

Adopt infrastructure requirements that alleviate traffic congestion and flooding while adding value to nearby properties.



Street Section Design: This neighborhood street design clearly illustrates the requirements for sidewalk, planting strip, bicycle facilities, and pavement width. It also shows sidewalk zone improvements–those which a fronting property owner would be responsible for completing when a certain development threshold is met.

5.1: **Street Design**

A guiding principle of the Vision Plan is to make streets more family-friendly, so that residents and visitors can walk safely and comfortably on sidewalks to get around town. While the state and county build, own, and operate most major streets within the town's boundaries, the town does have control over the design of streets within private developments, such as subdivisions, shopping centers, and campuses.

The current ZDO requirements (Sec. 20-71) provide right-of-way and pavement width requirements for four broad street types (see table below), and requires 4.5-foot sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Street Type	Pavement	Right-of-Way
Alley	16 feet	20 feet
Local Street	26 feet	50 feet
Collector Street	28 feet	60 feet minimum
Divided Street or Entrance	20 feet	80 feet minimum

The next step from these basic requirements is to provide a wider range of street types as well as more detail for the design of those types. A palette of street section designs appropriate to different Summerville areas was assembled as part of the Vision Plan, (see Part A.4), and should be incorporated into future street designation and design requirements.

→ 5.1.1: Provide a range of detailed, context-sensitive street section design options in the ZDO.

Specific street section designs can also be designated for certain important thoroughfares–such as North Main or Old Trolley Road–where redevelopment is expected in order to require that fronting projects make "sidewalk zone" improvements. Requiring these incremental improvements behind the curb, such as street trees and sidewalks, ensure that private development contributes to the larger infrastructure network.

5.2: **Street Connectivity**

Overwhelmingly, the biggest concern of Summerville residents is traffic congestion. While transportation network improvements are outside the scope of the ZDO, and other policies will be necessary to reduce congestion in established areas, the town should require a high-level of connectivity in all new development. This will mitigate the impact of new traffic in addition to alleviating some congestion in the existing network.

Today, the ZDO encourages T-intersections and allows dead-end streets (cul-de-sacs) if they are less than 1,000 feet in length (20-71(g)(5) – (6)). Both of these policies have contributed to a scarcity of through-streets within neighborhoods, which stresses the main thoroughfares.

One technique that could be used to avoid similar problems in future development is a connectivity index. Connectivity indices measure the density of street networks and are typically calculated as the number of roadway links (segments between intersections) divided by the number of roadway nodes (intersections and dead-ends). A high connectivity index means that travelers have increased route choice and mobility. A low connectivity index means that travelers are forced onto a few major thoroughfares.

This method provides a quantitative measure of connectivity that can be used to establish a minimum connectivity requirement. An connectivity index of 1.4 has been used by other communities in the Carolinas and elsewhere as a minimum standard needed to support a walkable community.

→ 5.2.1: Require a minimum connectivity index for new development.

Street Stub: The ZDO requires street stubs "where possible" for future connections (20-71(g)(3)).

THE BENEFITS OF CONNECTED STREETS

- Fine-grained street networks connect multiple places and people via multiple modes of travel, ultimately allowing places to become successful centers of economic development.
- Networks comprised of frequent narrow streets, as opposed to a few large streets, move cars more efficiently, create a better environment for pedestrians, improve safety and support better public health.
- Less traffic concentration leads to narrower streets which slows traffic, permits shorter pedestrian crossing distances at intersections, and reduces accidents.
- Connected streets improve emergency response times by providing multiple direct routes.
- Encouraging biking and walking improves public health and reduces the risk of many health issues.
- The character and appearance of well-connected, walkable streets, increases the desirability and value of adjacent properties.

Adapted from Congress for the New Urbanism, "Sustainable Street Network Principles" and "Benefits of Connected Streets" 2012.

5.3: **Trails and Greenways**

Interviews with town staff have revealed that plans to extend the popular Sawmill Canal Branch Trail are being completed partially through development agreements with property owners along the designated route. This is a sensible approach, and the town should consider requiring greenway and trail dedication for all new development along proposed trails as an explicit policy, similar to the recommendation for dedication and construction of open space (Section 4.6). This requirement can be established in tandem with the greenway and trail network plan for the town proposed through the Vision Plan process.

The Sawmill Branch Canal Trail is used today not just for leisure activities, but also as a mode of transportation for cyclists. According to staff, recent closures due to flooding led to complaints by residents unable to complete their bicycle commute to work. The extension of the trail and greenway network in Summerville should be considered a viable solution to alleviating traffic congestion by reducing trip demand.

→ 5.3.1: Require dedication and construction of proposed trail and greenway segments in conjunction with new development based on a trails and greenways master plan.

Sawmill Branch Canal Trail Connection at Black Oak Boulevard

Sawmill Branch Canal Trail

Sawmill Branch Canal Trail Connection from Ashborough Subdivision

5.4: **Stormwater Management**

Next to traffic congestion problems, the town's main infrastructure concerns are related to over-burdened stormwater outfall facilities and the protection of water quality. Passive stormwater management techniques that allow for on-site infiltration are the best way to address both water quality and quantity issues.

In addition, the Town lacks context sensitivity in its application of stormwater mitigation techniques. Chapter 22 of the Summerville Code of Ordinances includes a list of stormwater management facilities that can be used to address water quality issues (22-23(g)), but there is no guidance as to the most appropriate development context in which to use the various techniques.

→ 5.4.1: Reduce flooding by decreasing stormwater flow through on-site and block-level mitigation requirements.

→ 5.4.2: Establish context-sensitive standards for stormwater management.

BMP Tool (as listed in the NC BMP Manual)	R/A, OS	MHR, SR4, SR6, GR6	NC, GC, HC, LI, HI, ICD	UR, RMX	NMX, IMX, CCMX
Stormwater Wetland	•	•	•		
Wet Detention Basin	•	•	•		
Grassed Swale	•	•	•		
Restored Riparian Buffers	•	•	•		
Rooftop Runoff Management			•	•	•
Proprietary BMPs			•	•	•
Filter Strips	•	•	•	•	•
Others (as approved by the Administrator)	•	•	•	•	•

Context Sensitive Stormwater Management: The table above from the Wilson, NC Unified Development Ordinance, illustrates a detailed calibration of stormwater management tools to the city's various zoning districts.

STORMWATER AND WATER QUALITY

One of the largest contributors to water pollution is non-point source pollution. Non-point source pollution is the process of stormwater runoff carrying pollutant particles from a variety of locations including construction sites, parking lots and rooftops into streams, rivers and lakes. Factors that affect stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution are generally development-related. With an increase in development, there is an increase in the amount of impervious surface area: the areas which do not allow for filtration of stormwater, such as pavement or roofing. These impervious surfaces cause stormwater to drain more directly into streams and rivers, creating problems with peak-flow volumes, stream bank erosion, and flooding, and allowing unfiltered stormwater (which would have been filtered out through the natural landscape) to be transported into water resources and increase contaminant concentrations.

5.5: Green Infrastructure

The natural, undeveloped environment is a critical element of infrastructure, especially sensitive habitats like wetlands that are prominent in and around Summerville. These lands naturally perform ecosystem services like cleaning the air by absorbing carbon dioxide, reducing heat island effects through evaporative cooling, improving water quality through natural filtration, and preventing flooding through rain absorption.

With the exception of federally-designated undevelopable floodplains, the town does not currently implement any policies—within the zoning and development ordinances or elsewhere—that require environmental protection or the conservation of land. The town does allow conservation through a few tools which could be utilized to conserve land deliberately:

- **Agricultural Conservation District:** Currently within the town, there are 19 properties that total 486 acres that are zoned Agricultural Conservation (AC) district, the majority of which is located along the north side of the Sawmill Canal east of Bacons Bridge Road. While most AC properties are located at the edge of incorporated Summerville, all are surrounded by development. The intent of the AC district is farming, agriculture, or conservation, and the district allows development at the same level as in the R-1 district.

- **Public Lands District:** There are 65 properties totaling more than 650 acres zoned as Public Lands (PL) district within the town. While many of these properties are undeveloped or passive parks, such as land adjacent to the Ashley River and Sawmill Canal, PL properties also include developed town sites such as the Commissioners of Public Works (CPW) Operations Center on Orangeburg Road.

Ashley River: The river ecosystem is an important part of Summerville's green infrastructure

- **Tree Preservation:** 23-324(g) of the code requires the preservation and full replacement of all Grand Trees (greater than 16 inches DBH); preservation and 50 percent replacement of trees six inches DBH or greater; and minimum total coverage of combined DBH of all trees of at least 160 inches for all properties.

- **Conservation Easements:** The State of South Carolina allows the designation of conservation easements by governments and nonprofit organizations (SCCL 27-8).

While each of these tools offers a piecemeal contribution to environmental conservation, they do not add up to a comprehensive habitat conservation strategy for the town. In conjunction with the recommendations in the adopted Ashley Scenic River Management Plan (see Reconnaissance Report, Section 3.5), the town should designate conservation corridors to be set aside with future development.

→ 5.5.1: Develop policies to conserve and restore environmentally-sensitive land throughout town as a comprehensive green infrastructure network.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Fiscally-responsible tools to attract high-quality development

Realization of a vision requires diligence, patience, and the management of change. Accepting a new vision for the Town of Summerville is a commitment to make changes that assure the town's sustainability and adaptability over time while reinforcing its distinguishing characteristics and unique assets. Diligence, patience, and change management, in turn, necessitate a comprehensive approach to implementation by carefully integrating three principles.

THREE PRINCIPLES

» **Leadership:** Strong leadership is critical to effectively coordinate and focus implementation efforts and achieve the recommendations of the Vision Plan.

» **Marketing:** A comprehensive marketing strategy should promote the goals of the Vision Plan and inspire others to help implement them.

» **Financing:** A variety of funding sources and mechanisms will be necessary to support implementation.

6: Leadership

6.1.1: Create a Redevelopment Commission to guide implementation efforts.
6.2.1: Continue to support Summerville DREAM as a key implementation entity for the downtown focus area.
6.3.1: Create Business or Community Improvement Districts (B/CIDs) to manage implementation efforts in Oakbrook.
6.4.1: Engage and support property owners to implement the Vision Plan.
6.5.1: Assemble public and private partners to create a redevelopment fund that will be used to secure key sites and incentivize redevelopment.

7: Marketing

7.1.1: Utilize the Redevelopment Commission and other town leaders to market the Vision Plan to potential implementation partners.
7.1.2: Use a variety of outreach techniques to maintain constant contact with implementation partners and sustain momentum and excitement for the Vision Plan recommendations.
7.2.1: Commission public art that celebrates the history and culture of the focus areas and supports the brand and identity of Summerville.
7.3.1: Clarify expectations for developers and streamline the approval process.
7.4.1: Encourage voluntary annexations by marketing town services and amenities to developers and property owners of unincorporated areas within and near town.

8: Financing

8.1.1: Prioritize capital improvements that support the ten projects outlined in the Action Plan (Infrastructure & Development Strategy: Section C).
8.1.2: Create a funding priority list based on the Vision Plan to address future improvements.
8.1.3: Adopt a dedicated source of revenue to fund critical downtown improvements.
8.2.1: Create special taxing districts to fund improvements in the Oakbrook and Sheep Island Parkway focus areas.
8.3.1: Use tax incentives to attract private developers where appropriate.
8.4.1: Create a "green grants" program to incentivize sustainable development and energy efficiency projects.
8.5.1: Sell naming rights to help fund specific public space improvements.
8.6.1: Charge user fees to support the construction and maintenance of public facilities.
8.7.1: Adopt a Recreation Facility Fee to fund community-wide recreation needs.

6 LEADERSHIP

Strong leadership is essential for any implementation effort.

Leaders of Summerville must come together from a diverse set of interests in a long-term effort to renew the town and assure its stability for the future. Existing leadership organizations must be strengthened even as new ones are created that will address the needs of the town cooperatively and comprehensively. Actions by one group will almost certainly affect the missions of others, so it is crucial that representatives of all relevant organizations coordinate their actions. Coordination can be the responsibility of elected officials or an appointed commission, but an oversight body should be instrumental in setting priorities through comprehensive work plans, assuring that the town has sustainable sources of revenue, and recruiting both volunteer and professional expertise. All town leaders, both individuals and organizations, will have important roles to play in the implementation of the Vision Plan.

Principle for Leadership:

Strong leadership is critical to effectively coordinate and focus implementation efforts and achieve the recommendations of the Vision Plan.

COORDINATED LEADERSHIP

Secure, consistent and coordinated leadership has the following key characteristics:

- → Integrity
- → Vulnerability
- → Discernment
- → Awareness of the Human Spirit
- → Courage
- → Compassion
- → A Sense of Humor
- → Intellectual Curiosity
- → Respect for the Future
- → Regard for the Present
- → Understanding of the Past
- → Predictability
- → Breadth
- → Comfort with Ambiguity
- → Presence

6.1: **Redevelopment Commission**

Create a Redevelopment Commission by ordinance. While chartered by, the elected officials of Summerville and, therefore, answerable to them, a formal structure and commission will enable leaders not only to coordinate citywide implementation but also to privately secure and dispose of selected real estate deemed vital and catalytic to the vision. Such a corporation can also act as an agent of the town in letting contracts for development and related purposes while assuring property owners, residents, businesses, and investors/lenders that there is strong and direct oversight. Eventually, this organization can be phased out as the three focus areas (Downtown, Oakbrook, and Sheep Island) reach self-sustainability.

→ 6.1.1: Create a Redevelopment Commission to guide implementation efforts.

6.2: **Support Downtown**

Provide town support (political, regulatory, administrative, and financial) to reinforce and strengthen the execution of the Four Point Approach of DREAM's Main Street program:

- Organization of downtown interests (particularly merchants);
- Economic restructuring to compete with and complement larger retail/dining forces;
- Design to unify and enhance the public experience and to uniquely "brand" downtown; and
- Promote a consistent market message to attract customers and bolster political unity.

→ 6.2.1: Continue to support Summerville DREAM as key implementation entity for the downtown focus area.

Summerville DREAM: Summerville DREAM will provide key leadership for the implementation of downtown recommendations like the redevelopment of Hutchinson Square and Little Main. Similar organizations should be created to guide redevelopment efforts in Oakbrook.

6.3: **Support Oakbrook**

A similar organizational approach should be created for the Oakbrook area. That is, local organizations in the form of business or community improvement districts (B/CIDs) should be created for Oakbrook and Sheep Island with broad business, property owner, and resident representation to focus attention in these critical and catalytic areas. Enable these areas to hire professional leadership or engage dedicated town staff whose day-to-day responsibility is plan implementation even as a board of directors provides guidance and oversight.

→ 6.3.1: Create Business or Community Improvement Districts (B/CIDs) to manage implementation efforts in Oakbrook and Sheep Island.

6.4: **Property Owner Outreach**

Convene property owners in the three focus areas into special meeting(s) to explain the vision plan and their role in its implementation. Many of the property owners have participated in the planning process, but some have not.

This will allow the town to assess property owners' tolerance for risk relative to the town's efforts. The town must reach out to property owners to determine their willingness to be true implementation partners for the Vision Plan, and prioritize infrastructure investments and related efforts to support those property owners that eager partners.

→ 6.4.1: Engage and support property owners to implement the Vision Plan.

Business/Community Improvement Districts: Special taxing districts may provide the necessary leadership and funding in the Oakbrook and Sheep Island Parkway focus areas to implement the recommendations of the Vision Plan.

6.5: **Create a Redevelopment Fund**

Complete critical, strategic, and early catalytic properties using "patient money" in a special redevelopment fund. The principal purpose of the fund should be to assure that crucial sites are removed from real estate speculation, thus minimizing the potential for lower quality "redevelopment" under as-of-right regulations. To accomplish this, the following strategies should be employed by the town and its partners:

- Organize a public/private partnership of local banks, corporations, developers, and/or wealthy advocates of downtown, Oakbrook, and Sheep Island to create a pool of resources (perhaps a few million dollars).

- Determine crucial properties and secure control of them as soon as possible at a fair and reasonable price. When possible, avoid the use of public dollars in order to avoid public disclosure of purchases, which can artificially raise asking prices.

- Initiate efforts to find developers of these crucial sites who will support the Vision Plan. Land can be "contributed" to the redevelopment, thus reducing developer costs, but can still be leveraged for an acceptable rate of return to the initial funders (e.g., land leases or partnerships). Public realm improvements will also be an incentive to private developers, as will improvements to development regulations (risk reduction).

→ 6.5.1: Assemble public and private partners to create a redevelopment fund that will be used to secure key sites and incentivize redevelopment.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public/private partnerships have become a common method for achieving public needs and goals while encouraging private capital to invest in a town. In towns where public/private partnerships are successful, developers are invited in; they are assisted throughout the process; entitlements are predictable and timely; and the mutual benefits of working together are maintained throughout. Negotiations may be tough, but the public and private sectors become true partners in the blend of capital and the achievement of mutual objectives. Such partnerships are as much a culture of collaboration and mutual respect as a development process.

In many cities and towns, public/private capital structures of four or five private dollars to one public dollar are regularly achieved. Summerville should seek out private development partners that are willing to commit to the goals and recommendations of the Vision Plan, and in return, should offer infrastructure improvements, support for land acquisition, and prompt development approvals. The actors in typical public/private partnerships are often referred to as a four-legged stool.

7 MARKETING

Develop the Summerville brand to help promote the plan.

Successful business organizations know the importance of persistent marketing based on sound market research and on the products and services they sell. Municipalities are, in many ways, no different. Successful cities and towns understand the uniqueness of their assets and the demographic segments they want to attract and retain in their jurisdictions. They develop marketable themes and brands to recruit certain types of businesses, residents, and visitors in order to diversify their economic bases. They promote available sites and buildings in order to maximize occupancy and enhance the market value of their real estate. And they promote an image that is both memorable and distinctive. It is as important for Summerville to market itself to the world as it is to reinvest in itself.

Principle for Marketing:

A comprehensive marketing strategy should promote the goals of the Vision Plan and inspire others to help implement them.

SWEET TEA TRAIL

The recently launched Sweet Tea Trail offers an ideal example of a locally-oriented marketing effort that will help to develop Summerville's identity and brand.

Source: VisitSummerville.com

7.1: Market the Vision Plan

Take the Vision Plan "on the road" early and often. This is a responsibility of both elected and appointed officials of Summerville, but also of business leaders and citizen advocates. One of the primary responsibilities of the Economic Developer and Vision Committee should be to play a significant role in the ongoing marketing of the Vision Plan.

The Vision Committee and other town leaders should make presentations, formal and informal, to appropriate federal, state, regional, and county authorities and agencies. Private and non profit organizations should also be targeted for specific implementation efforts in which they might have a shared interest.

→ 7.1.1: Utilize the Chamber and Vision Committee to market the Vision Plan to potential implementation partners.

Marketing efforts must be frequent and ongoing to maintain momentum for plan implementation. The town should work to ensure that all stakeholders are informed at all times. Techniques to maintain contact with plan stakeholders include the following:

- A Vision Plan web page that is regularly updated with photos and articles of progress on plan implementation.
- Routine (at least quarterly) update reports at Town Council meetings.
- Regular (at least annual) updates on Vision Plan progress to the appropriate federal, state, regional, and county authorities. These updates should be written and in person. Routine updates should also be sent to Congressional and General Assembly delegations as well as to the key executive offices of federal and state governments.
- Town leaders should also arrange regular (annual or bi-annual) project site visits for representatives of the organizations mentioned above. This will allow participants and stakeholder to feel more ownership and attached to implementation progress and opportunities.
- Provide stories to the local, metro, and state news media. Articles can also be placed in any number of trade magazines ranging from professional journals to site selection publications.
- Email blasts to advocates – including those who participated in the visioning plan process.

This frequent contact will assure long-term support for the funding and permitting requests that will be necessary to implement the Vision Plan. This will require data collection and benchmarking, which should be a responsibility of organizations created to oversee revitalization and reinvestment.

→ 7.1.2: Use a variety of outreach techniques to maintain constant contact with implementation partners and sustain momentum and excitement for the Vision Plan recommendations.

7.2: **Support Public Art**

Public art can be a key part of branding and building a positive identity. Summerville has already built a positive brand within the region, and public art may be a powerful way to reinforce and build on that identity.

A local non-profit should commission local and regional artists to create public art objects in downtown, Oakbrook, and Sheep Island. This will draw attention to the Vision Plan focus areas and improve the experience of living in and visiting Summerville. The trail network described in the Vision Plan as well as Hutchinson Square, Sweet Tea Square, and other public spaces offer an ideal location for public art celebrating Summerville's history and culture.

→ 7.2.1: Commission public art that celebrates the history and culture of the focus areas and supports the brand and identity of Summerville.

7.3: **Expedite the Regulatory Process**

The town should initiate or reinforce a pre-development process coordinated through the city planners that brings the various Town departments together to discuss proposals and provide a clear indication of what is needed from developers in order to receive prompt approvals. Assurance of streamlined development approvals will help Summerville to stand out within the regional market. Specific recommendations for streamlining the approval process can be found in Chapter 2 of this report.

→ 7.3.1: Clarify expectations for developers and streamline the approval process.

Source: Charleston City Paper

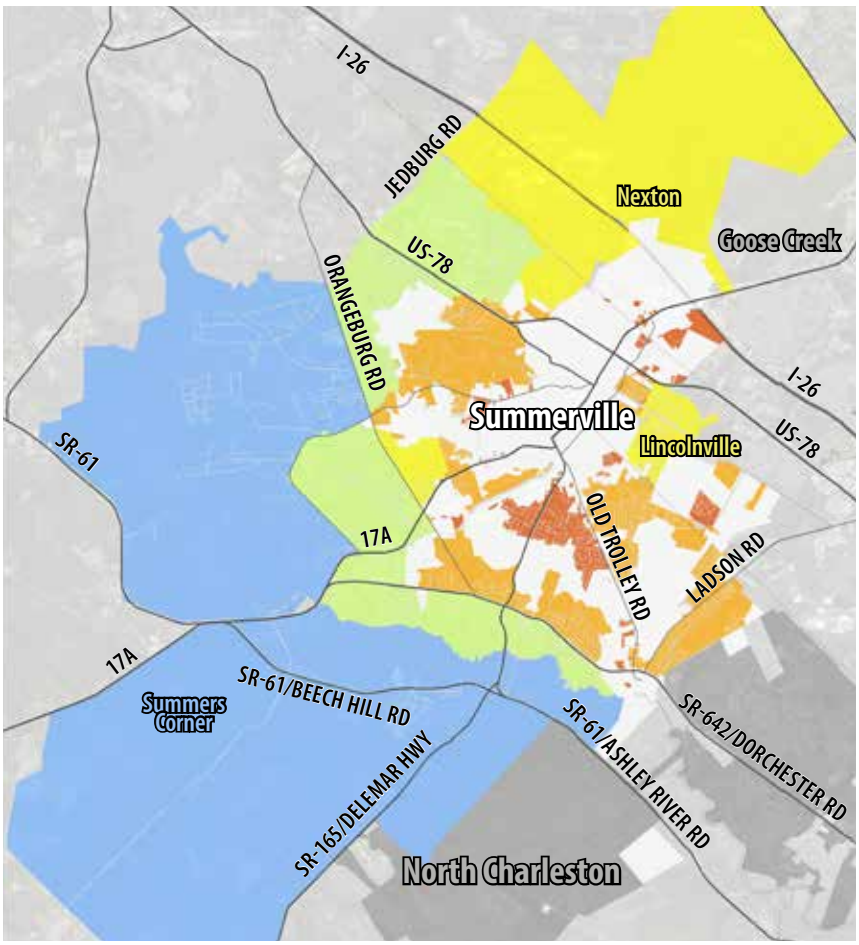
Importance of Public Art: Public art, like the sculpture above in Azalea Park, can be a defining element of the identity within a district or community. Summerville should seek opportunities for public art that celebrates the history and culture of the town and supports a positive identity within each focus area.

7.4: Market for Annexation

One of the most challenging problems facing Summerville is its porous jurisdictional boundary. The town's lack of uniform control of land within its area of influence presents a variety of difficulties for ongoing governance and fiscal strength. A key component of an annexation strategy to address these issues will be marketing and outreach efforts to property owners in unincorporated areas.

The town should supplement its annexation policies with broad marketing efforts to encourage voluntary annexations. The town should not just succumb to encroachment on its borders by other municipalities. Aggressive urban/suburban growth is taking place throughout metropolitan Charleston, and Summerville has an opportunity to capture and manage its share of that growth by marketing town services and amenities to the developers and owners of property in unincorporated areas.

→ 7.4.1: Encourage voluntary annexations by marketing town services and amenities to developers and property owners of unincorporated areas within and near town.



HOLES

INLETS

ADJACENCIES

1ST LAYER

2ND LAYER

Annexation Strategy: The Annexation Strategy outlined in Section A:1.2 of the Vision Plan identifies priority annexation areas for the town to pursue. Marketing efforts that promote the benefits of annexation to developers and owners of properties in these areas will help to encourage voluntary annexations as part of future development.

8 FINANCING $

Find the money to get things done.

Reinvestment, new investment, infrastructure, and operational management all require funding. Creative and focused funding mechanisms are often required, especially when changes are aimed toward specific parts of Summerville as opposed to changes that clearly benefit the entire town. Public safety improvements might be funded by general taxes, but incentives for revitalization of, say, downtown, Oakbrook, or Sheep Island might be more readily funded as special districts. Acceptable financing techniques often rely on the principle of "nexus," residents and businesses that benefit most from certain investments should be expected to fund most of the improvements. Of course, they also expect to reap the investment returns, but a net effect will be an improvement in the quality of life throughout Summerville.

Funding the Vision Plan: Major improvements like the proposed regional park at Sheep Island Parkway will require a variety of funding sources to build and maintain.

Principle for Financing:

A variety of funding sources and mechanisms will be necessary to support plan implementation.

8.1: **Budget for Capital Improvements**

The town must fund public realm improvements to demonstrate progress in plan implementation and to catalyze and reinforce private re-investment. The town should start by determining costs and phasing for the Vision Plan's recommended public realm improvements, especially those improvements associated with the ten projects set out in the Action Plan (Section C of the Infrastructure & Development Strategy).

→ 8.1.1: Prioritize capital improvements that support the ten projects outlined in the Action Plan.

The town should also develop a long-term project cost and priority list to provide direction for capital improvement decisions once Action Plan projects have been completed. This priority list should address the reccomendations for the Vision Plan focus area, but should be careful to address other struggling areas of town and the most promising annexation areas. The town must demonstrate that it is there to help in all of these instances.

→ 8.1.2: Create a funding priority list based on the Vision Plan to address future improvements.

The town should consider a dedicated funding source to create a Vision Plan Fund that will support the capital improvements recommended in the plan. Initial improvements should focus on the widely beloved downtown. Because downtown is "everybody's downtown," a town-wide capital improvement program could have political support and would be fair relative to nexus requirements because downtown improvements benefit the entire town. Such a program should have a "sunset" provision to complete specific projects, but must be of sufficient length to bond the upfront financing. A set of specifically defined and publicized improvements — for example the redevelopment of Hutchinson Square, the construction of Sweet Tea Square, and the extension of Short Central — may generate additional excitement and support for a tax initiative. (See Oklahoma City "MAPS" precedent, below.)

→ 8.1.3: Adopt a dedicated source of revenue to fund downtown improvements.

OKLAHOMA CITY "MAPS"

MAPS was Oklahoma City's visionary capital improvement program centered on downtown. The projects began on December 14, 1993, when voters approved the city-wide MAPS sales tax, and were completed on August 17, 2004.

The tax expired on July 1, 1999. During the 66 months it was in effect, over $309 million was collected and $54 million in interest was earned. A 21-member citizen oversight board reviewed project components including financing and site location and then made recommendations to the City Council. Day-to-day operations were handled by the MAPS office, whose staff members were all Oklohoma City employees.

The great success of MAPS spawned two additional MAPS taxes. MAPS2 funded school improvements and MAPS 3 is underway (tax started in 2010 and will end in 2017) to fund eight more civic projects.

The original MAPS logo represents each of the nine elements of MAPS:

1. AT&T Bricktown Ballpark
2. New trolleys
3. Bricktown Canal creation
4. Ford Center (arena) construction
5. Renovation of the Cox Convention Center
6. State fairgrounds improvements
7. New downtown library/learning center
8. Rebuilding of the Civic Center Music Hall
9. North Canadian River improvements

Source: www.okc.gov/maps/

8.2: **Create Special Taxing Districts**

In the Oakbrook and Sheep Island Parkway focus areas, special taxing districts may be an appropriate tool to fund improvements that will specifically benefit residents and businesses in those areas. The town should create special taxing districts for these areas that are supported by special assessments/taxes on businesses and, maybe, residences. In effect, local and regional shoppers/diners would help pay this assessment if limited to business taxes. As improvements are made, the focus areas will become ever more attractive, luring more outsiders to spend money and, therefore, contribute to the public improvement funding.

→ **8.2.1:** Create special taxing districts to fund improvements in the Oakbrook and Sheep Island Parkway focus areas.

8.3: **Attract Private Funding**

The town should evaluate private investment incentives and funding support opportunities. The town might consider offering local property tax abatements to attract new investment. Dorchester, Berkeley, and Charleston Counties would be potential partners in this approach. The town should be careful to develop a tax incentive approach that attracts private investment, but does not undermine the long-term fiscal health of the town. Local tax abatements should only be offered if the anticipated long term revenue clearly outweighs the temporary tax abatement terms.

Federal and state tax credits may also be available, and the town should help developers apply for these where applicable. The town should create an inventory of redevelopment sites that may qualify for funding mechanisms such as historic and brownfield tax credits and approach developers that have experience leveraging these types of resources.

→ **8.3.1:** Use tax incentives to attract private developers where appropriate.

8.4: **Incentivize "Green" Development**

The town should partner with state environmental authorities and SCE&G to create a "green grants" program for sustainable development and energy efficiency projects. Grant programs can help to bridge any financing gaps on innovative projects that will help establish Summerville as a regional leader in sustainable development.

→ **8.4.1:** Create a "green grants" program to incentivize sustainable development and energy efficiency projects.

8.5: **Sponsorship Opportunities**

The town should identify opportunities for individuals to sponsor certain improvements and donations. Examples could include the Hutchinson Square bandstand, public art, re-use of the armory, facilities at Jessen Boat Landing, brick pavers connecting Short Central to Little Main, and so on.

→ **8.5.1:** Sell sponsorships or "in memory of" pavers and other amenities to help fund specific public space improvements.

Sponsored Pavers: Albemarle, NC

8.6: **Charge User Fees**

User fees are a common mechanism used to fund the construction and maintenance of certain public facilities. User fees include fees like membership to a community pool, admission to a skate park, and the rental of sports fields, picnic shelters, and other public facilities. User fees would be an ideal way to support recommended improvements such as the Jessen Boat Landing facilities, a community aquatic center, and sports fields at the regional park in the Sheep Island Parkway focus area.

→ **8.6.1:** Charge user fees to support the construction and maintenance of public facilities.

8.7: **Adopt a Recreation Facility Fee**

For some public amenities, like a greenway, it may be impractical to charge user fees because it is difficult or undesirable to limit access to such amenities. In 1999 the South Carolina General Assembly authorized the use of impact fees charged to developers as a way to fund public improvements necessary to support proposed development projects. One type of impact fee that Summerville should consider adopting is a Recreation Facility Fee. This fee would be used to support a fund dedicated to the construction of community-wide recreation facilities. Funds from a Recreation Facility Fee offer an ideal way to build and maintain things like the greenway network extending from the Sawmill Branch Canal Trail and the regional park proposed in the Sheep Island Parkway focus area.

→ **8.7.1:** Adopt a Recreation Facility Fee to fund community-wide recreation needs.

Recreation Facility Fees: The photo simulation above illustrates a continuation of the Sawmill Branch Canal Trail as part of the greenway network proposed in the Vision Plan. Recreation Facility Fees offer an ideal way to help fund community-wide recreational amenities like greenways.