

THE RENAISSANCE PLAN

Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area

THE LAWRENCE GROUP
TOWN PLANNERS & ARCHITECTS



Acknowledgements

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Richland County, South Carolina

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We would like to thank Richland County staff and elected officials and the numerous residents and other stakeholders who participated in this exciting small area planning process. This effort is a reflection of the community's vision and serves as the foundation for growth and revitalization in this area. It is intended to guide the leaders of today and the visionaries of tomorrow.

*Craig Lewis
Principal in Charge*



Disclaimer Regarding the Applicability and the Implementation of this Plan:

“The Renaissance Plan (Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area) is a conceptual plan. It’s implementation will require actions and commitments, which in many instances will be related and interdependent upon public sector and private sector cooperation activated and phased over time. Some features and development components referenced or expressed by the conceptual plan may require deferral of implementation pending resolution of specific circumstances.

“Until such time as specific action shall be taken by County Council to codify standards applicable to the developments, uses, or zoning of properties subject to this plan, all features and components of the plan shall be deemed to remain conceptual and suggestive in principle and detail, without enforceable authority.

“Accordingly, adoption or approval of The Renaissance Plan, per se, shall not impose upon properties referenced by and subject of the plan any development or regulatory standards in addition to those duly enacted and applicable pursuant to the Richland County Land Development Code.”

-- Richland County Planning Commission

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Executive Summary

Overview

Beginning in March and continuing through November, 2006, planners and designers with The Lawrence Group, Rose & Associates, Southeast, Inc., Henson-Harrington, Inc., and Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. collaborated with Richland County staff, elected officials and citizens to develop a vision for 731 primarily built-out acres along Decker Boulevard and including the Woodfield Park neighborhood area.

This area was identified by the Richland County Council as one of 10 priority focal areas for Neighborhood/Community Master Planning. The scope of services for the Master Plan effort is for “recommendations that will guide community improvements and growth. The Plan for each of the identified focal areas will be formed through a series of public meetings and workshops. It will include recommendations regarding future land use for residential, commercial, open space, civic, and recreation uses as well as capital improvements that will impact safety, housing, economic development, community access and public services.” (Source: Richland County, Neighborhood Improvement Program)

The conceptual plan that resulted from the visioning effort focuses on four key physical recommendations. First, it suggests the development of new parks and open spaces in the area that is critically underserved in terms of public greenspace. The plan proposes nearly 80 acres of potential new park and open space opportunities, including reclaiming more than 30 acres that are currently in the Jackson Creek floodway.

Second, the plan focuses on opportunities for redeveloping commercial uses along the corridor. While large-scale commercial reinvestment is not expected in the corridor in the near term, there are a number of near term and longer term opportunities for new commercial development and redevelopment of existing properties. The conceptual plan proposes approximately 500,000 square feet of new commercial development, the majority of which would replace existing commercial uses as they redevelop over time. The plan also includes concepts for adaptive reuse of existing vacant or underutilized commercial spaces in the near term such as a semi-permanent public plaza and outdoor festival/market space at the old Decker Mall.

Third, the plan recommends several major neighborhood infill development concepts for the Woodfield Park area that would result

in hundreds of new housing units of varying sizes and types in the existing neighborhood and at the same time provide for nearly 30 acres of public open space and parks for the neighborhood and community. New housing units in the area could compete with new housing developments at the suburban fringes of the region and provide locational advantages in terms of proximity to Fort Jackson and other major employers as well as provide motivation for new commercial investment in the area.

The fourth set of major physical recommendations in the plan are for transportation and streetscape enhancements that would make area transportation networks more efficient, safe, and attractive. The plan includes recommendations for detailed changes to the major roadways and intersections in the area to make them more accommodating to all modes of transportation, especially pedestrians and cyclists. The plan also includes streetscape recommendations to enhance the visual appeal of the streets in the study area.

The plan includes several non-physical recommendations, including recommendations for development of a Community Development Corporation to facilitate housing development and housing programs in the study area; the creation of a marketing and branding campaign for the area; and initiatives that will contribute to crime reduction and the perception of safety in the area.

Finally, the Plan recommends the application of the Redevelopment Overlay (RD) zoning district along with design standards that are keyed specifically to this conceptual plan. Clearly, there should be adequate flexibility to accommodate shifts in market demand, but these standards should ensure a high level of quality for development in terms of both design and environmental sustainability.

Implementation

The Renaissance Plan for the Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area, when adopted, shall become a part of the County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Future development decisions should be guided by the principles outlined in this Plan as well as the general intensity and land use patterns described herein. The Plan recommends creating standards in the County Land Development Code allowing for a mix of uses and new design standards. Such tools may include the creation of new overlay district standards, text amendments to existing districts, or a combination of these methods.

Key Principles of Sustainable Development

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Neighborhoods
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

Adapted from the Principles of Smart Growth - <http://www.smartgrowth.org>

Conceptual Development Opportunity

Residential Units (net new)	~500 units
Commercial Development (net new)	450,000 - 550,000 sq ft
Park/Open Space Opportunities	~80 acres

Development Evaluation

Prior to the completion of any design work, the planning team conducted a “ripe and firm” analysis for all of the properties in the planning area.

“Firm” properties are those that are generally in their final building/use pattern, and are also reflected as the “highest and best use” by the real estate and appraisal community. Little change is recommended to these properties.

Properties that are determined to be “ripe” for development/redevelopment include those that are currently undeveloped, under-developed (additional development opportunities exist on the property including expansion of existing buildings and new construction), or can be redeveloped (such as an old, vacant shopping center).

This type of analysis is necessary to identify both “sacred cows,” those properties that should be left alone, and development opportunities. While most development possibilities were identified through a combination of a windshield survey/walking surveys and a mapping of rental and vacant properties, some properties were classified after interviews with property owners and the community.

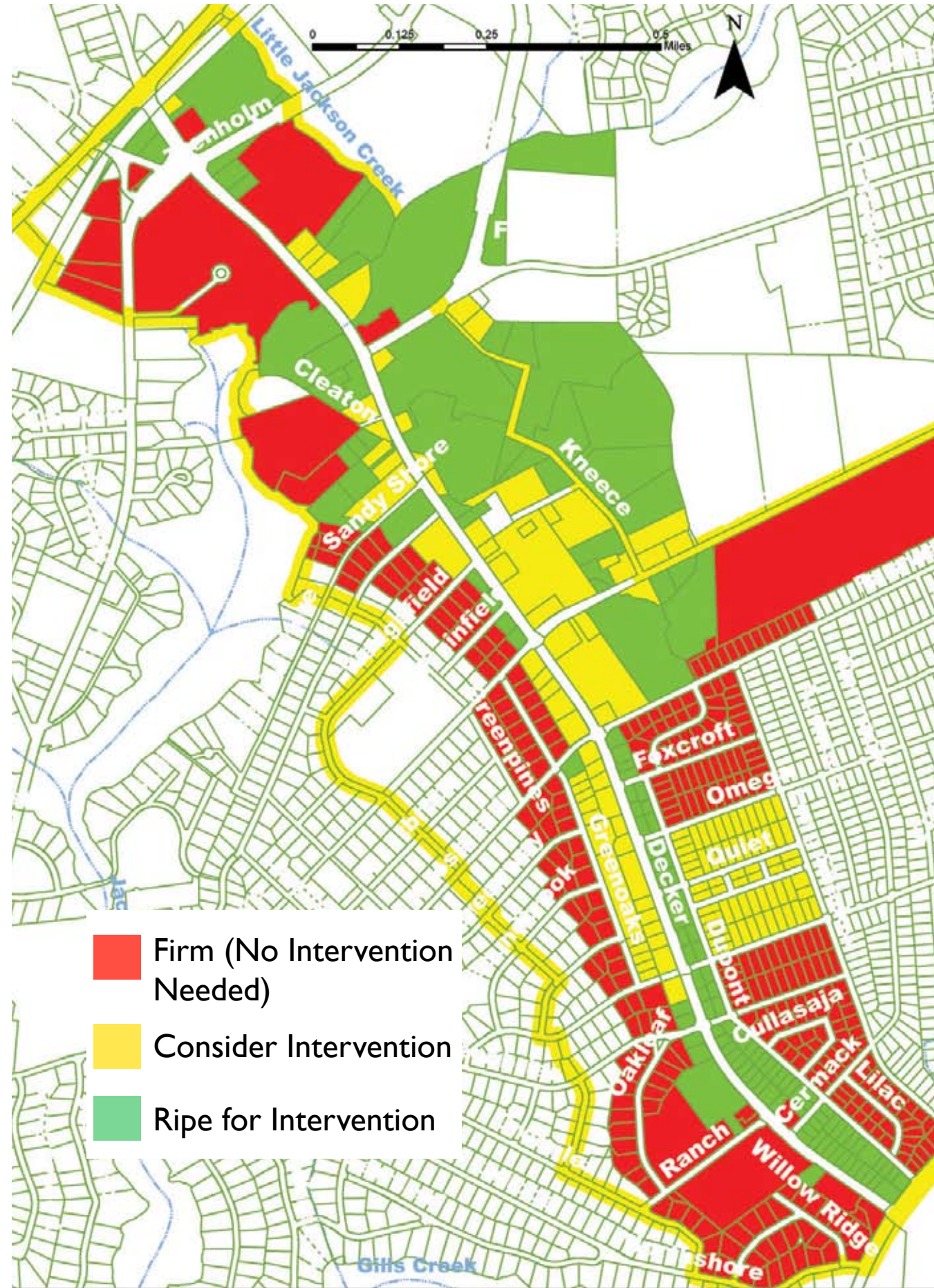
The map shown on this page indicates a significant number of properties that are ripe for development/redevelopment within the planing area.



"Firm" property : Dent Middle School



"Ripe" property: Vacant building at Decker & N. Trenholm



- Firm (No Intervention Needed)
- Consider Intervention
- Ripe for Intervention

Rental Property Analysis

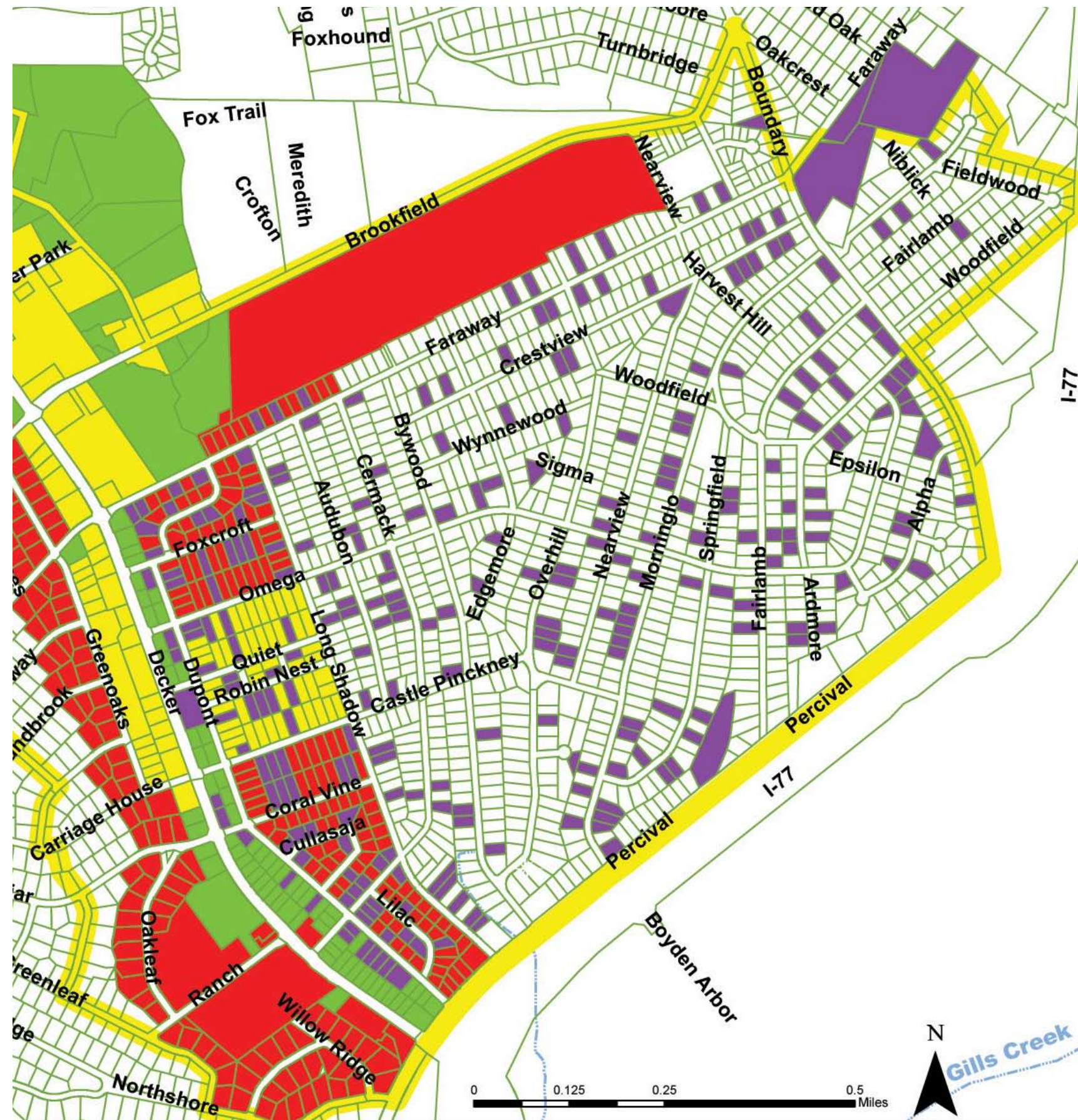
One of the recurring issues mentioned by residents and property owners in the Woodfield Park area was the perceived proliferation of rental units in the neighborhoods. The map at right shows properties (shown in purple) that are assumed to be rentals or investor-owned properties. There are approximately 1550 residential units (1400 single family and 150 multifamily) in the Woodfield Park area. Of these, approximately 350 units are assumed to be rentals based on the analysis described below (as of May, 2006). For the purposes of this report, these rental properties are assumed to be “ripe” for redevelopment or potentially more easily acquired than owner-occupied homes in the area.

This analysis was completed by comparing the property address and the mailing address of each property in the study area. Tax records that had a mailing address that is different than the physical address of the property were assumed to be investor owned and not a primary residence. Several properties in the study area are owned by the Columbia Housing Authority or the City of Columbia.

Also, based on anecdotal evidence from local realtors, at least one in two property transactions in the neighborhood in recent years are completed by investors. These factors underlie the assumption that the current rental rate in the neighborhood is accelerating.

It is estimated that that as many as 42% of the total housing units within one mile of the intersection of Faraway and Decker are renter occupied. (Source: Rose and Associates Southeast, Inc., *Economic and Market Analysis: Final Report -- Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Planning Area*)

Woodfield Park Area Rental Analysis:	
Total Residential Units:	~1550
Rental units (including est. # apts.): (in purple)	~350 (~23%)
Rental Rate for 1 mile area:	42%



Existing Zoning

The study area is comprised primarily of commercial zoning along Decker Boulevard and low-density, single family residential zoning in the neighborhoods adjacent to Decker. There is a scattering of other zoning types, but the primary zoning categories are General Commercial (GC) and Residential, Single Family (RS).

The following is a list of the existing zoning districts in the study area and a summary of their primary provisions:

RS-LD -- Residential, Single-Family, Low Density:
 Minimum lot area: 12,000 square feet (0.28 ac; 3.5 dua)
 Minimum lot width: 75 feet

RS-MD -- Residential, Single-Family, Medium Density
 Minimum lot area: 8,500 square feet (0.2 ac; 5 dua)
 Minimum lot width: 60 feet

RS-HD -- Residential, Single-Family, High Density
 Minimum lot area: 5,000 square feet (0.11 ac; 9 dua)
 Minimum lot width: 50 feet

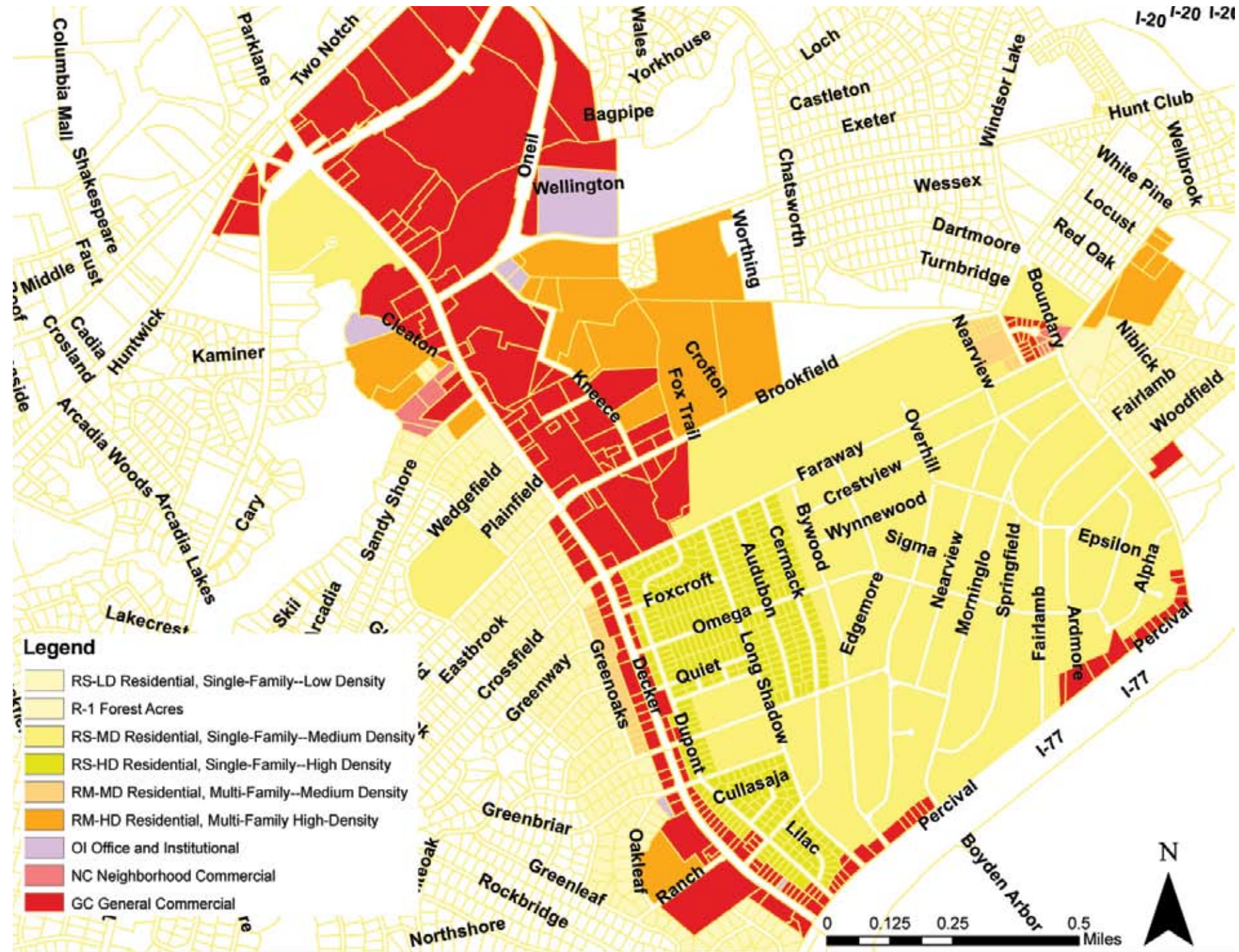
RM-MD -- Residential, Multi-Family, Medium Density
 No minimum lot area
 Maximum density: 8 dwelling units/acre
 Minimum lot width: 50 feet

RM-HD -- Residential, Multi-Family, High Density
 No minimum lot area
 Maximum density: 16 dwelling units/acre
 Minimum lot width: 50 feet

OI -- Office and Institutional
 Permits office, institutional and certain residential uses
 Maximum density: 16 dwelling units/acre

NC -- Neighborhood Commercial
 Permits commercial/service uses oriented to nearby areas.
 Maximum density: 8 dwelling units/acre

GC (formerly C-3) -- General Commercial
 Permits “commercial and non-residential uses characterized primarily by retail, office and service establishments oriented primarily to major traffic arteries.”
 Maximum density: 16 dwelling units/acre



Existing Zoning Map

Market Analysis

Note: This section is excerpted and adapted from the “Economic and Market Analysis -- Final Report: Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Planning Area” by Rose and Associates Southeast, Inc., which is available as a supplement to this plan.

Study Area Summary – Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Planning Area

The study area includes the entire planning area outlined as Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park, with particular focus on Decker Boulevard from Percival Road to Two Notch Road. The study area is located in Richland County, at the edge of the City of Columbia, the third largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in South Carolina. Current land uses are predominately commercial and low-density residential housing.

Factors Impacting the Market & Land Use in the Study Area

Regional Development Patterns

Development has spread from this older established area to the northeast and southwest. Land use has focused new residential, urban, commercial and mixed-use development in outlying areas of the City, and more recently, within its center city core. These areas underscore the importance of planning to provide transitional areas between recreation areas, primary regional clusters of business/employment and retail centers.

Transportation

The regional transportation network is firmly in place, providing access from other areas of the state and the southeast region. This includes highway, rail systems and the Columbia Metropolitan Airport. The study area is bound by Interstates 77, 20 and Highway 1 (Two Notch Road). The challenge is to provide an internal network that connects in and around these major transportation thoroughfares and slows traffic, while defining the study area’s boundaries and character. The purpose of the master plan is to outline specific land use parameters that will assist in defining these areas and improving connectivity.

Economic Development

Most economic development strategies focus on job creation. However, studies have shown that quality of life issues such as recreation facilities, schools and other amenities are pivotal in the success of revitalization. Additionally, creating community amenities such as linear parks and/or greenways have been successful in stimulating both residential and commercial development along their edges.

Adaptive re-uses of the old Decker Mall at O’Neil Court offer the best opportunity for job creation. All adaptive reuses involving the creation of jobs in the area should be considered. For example, medical clinics and/or a satellite hospital could create a significant number of jobs for the area. Relocation and co-location of various government departments in vacant big boxes have also been successful in generating positive growth in other metropolitan areas.

Preliminary Findings

A number of observations were made during preliminary review of the demographic data and during interviews with development officials, county staff and other stakeholders. Preliminary findings suggest the following strategies for land use and economic development that complements the underlying vision of the Decker Corridor Revitalization Task Force:

1. Create areas of focus for re-adaptive use to provide centers for commerce and community interaction

Opportunities exist for the study area to create “gateways” at its edges. This includes streetscape improvements, signage and pedestrian connections to the neighborhoods.

Given the study area’s location within the region and challenges surrounding high volume transportation corridors, the following areas should be given special attention for re-adaptive use. While each is along the Decker Boulevard Corridor, each section has character and connections that provide for areas of differentiation. The three designated areas of focus are:

- Percival Road to Faraway Drive – Neighborhood Zone
- Faraway Drive to O’Neil Court – Transition Zone
- O’Neil Court to Two Notch Road – Gateway Zone

2. Develop economic development strategies to provide tax base and job creation.

Opportunities exist for the area to grow its economic base,

to provide services and uses to complement the surrounding neighborhoods and region.

Consider and review a greenway/bikeway plan along Percival Road to inter-connect with Sesquicentennial State Park to the north. Additionally, this greenway could ultimately connect at the Windsor Lake chain through Jackson Creek to the area along O’Neil Court and Decker Boulevard (see map page 36).

The community should consider a visioning process that supports economic development efforts within the study area, by identifying those things that differentiate the area, while branding and marketing the area’s redevelopment potential. Additionally, a survey should be distributed to residents, businesses and stakeholders to share ideas, frustrations and needs for goods/services. A sample Survey is included in the Appendix of [the Market Analysis report]. Communication of a unified vision for business growth, including benefits, and inter-jurisdictional collaboration is encouraged to support congruent development patterns and avoid internal competition.

3. Create strategy for strengthening existing mature neighborhoods and developing new, more diversified housing stock.

The community presents an opportunity to create a mix of housing types/styles including a variety of housing product in a wider range of

prices to serve young professionals, empty nesters, retired couples and individuals, as well as families.

Multifamily residential development, primarily along the Decker Boulevard corridor as part of mixed-use development (density in a range between 10-16 units per acre) is recommended. Attractively designed apartments and/or townhomes would provide harmony with the adjacent single-family neighborhoods and an appropriate transition from future commercial uses. A mix of residential in both rental and for-sale housing should be considered. Further, disaggregation of the housing stock will serve to further define product size, style and price range. Careful attention should be given to creating pedestrian and vehicular connections between recreational, residential and commercial areas.

Summary of Land Uses and Findings

Below is a summary of the appropriate land uses, which were used to provide guidelines for the design team in drawing concept plans.

Neighborhood Zone - Percival Road to Faraway Drive

In this designated area of study the Woodfield Park neighborhood’s

Quality of life issues such as recreation facilities, schools and other amenities are pivotal in the success of revitalization.

homes primarily consist of older ranch-styles built in the 1950's and 1960's. The landscaping in these neighborhoods is established and provides an attractive streetscape for the residents.

The grid street pattern of the neighborhood assists with all modes of transportation including cars, bicycles and pedestrians. However, the pedestrian environment could be improved with sidewalks, lighting and crosswalks. Adding these streetscape improvements would also help to address safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Furthermore, there is no pedestrian-friendly streetscape infrastructure along Decker Boulevard to assist with movement by either pedestrians or bicyclists. Measures should be taken to address this issue. The commercial area is clearly convenient to the neighborhoods, but getting to these services is problematic even for motorists. Adding crosswalks would enable the pedestrian to safely cross the street and serve as a traffic-slowing measure as well.

Transition Zone - Faraway Drive to O'neil Court

This is the area in which there has been an exodus of business and now a litany of buildings and parking lots sit vacant. This vacancy is not enhancing the desirability of the area from a business or living perspective. However, this same area offers many opportunities to institute the changes needed to give the area a new identity. Removing the old, unused retail/commercial improvements would make way for new mixed-use property to be developed.

Between Faraway Drive and Brookfield Road lies some vacant land that is actually adjacent to Richland Northeast High School property, which could provide a jumpstart of new mixed-use and/or residential construction. A new construction effort in conjunction with an adaptive reuse of the old Decker mall would be a huge catalyst for redevelopment in the area.

The corridor has more retail than its trade area can support as evidenced visually by the high number of vacant storefronts. The changes in this corridor should begin by considering eliminating the abandoned properties and developing a mixture of uses, which would include a higher density residential component.

Gateway Zone - O'neil Court to Two Notch Road

The section of Decker Boulevard between Two Notch Road and O'Neil Court has retail business that appears to be prospering. This successful retail area combined with the attractive additions to Dent Middle School have set the stage for the area as you travel south on Decker Boulevard from the Columbia Place Mall. The

addition of signage in this area as well as along Decker Boulevard and at the intersection of Percival Road should be added to designate the area. This notifies everyone of the identity of the area and assists with the branding of it.

Behind Dent Middle School and the retail frontage in this area lies land available for higher density residential housing product. A potential greenway or linear park beginning from the intersection of O'Neil Court heading in a northerly direction toward Jackson Creek would provide a unique amenity to the area [see Natural Resources and Recreation/Open Space Sections and Transportation Network Improvements Map]. Additionally, this linear park would help to reconfirm the transition from commercial area to a more residential area.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Commercial

While the overall Columbia market is experiencing activity in the retail sector, with improving occupancies, much of the absorption is with existing operators relocating to other positions within in the marketplace. Newcomers to the marketplace are locating in areas where population and income growth is stable or growing, in new developments where new prototypes or formats can be created. Thus, much of the retail activity will continue to create higher vacancy in old or obsolete centers creating challenges and opportunities for adaptive re-use. This is consistent with regional and national trends.

The current excess supply of office space is a result of growth of new developments in the downtown central business district of the City and the suburban fringe, largely driven by the service and/or medical sectors. Much of the absorption is attributable to existing companies within the marketplace either expanding or upgrading their space from old/obsolete product to new/newer (Class A) buildings. From an economic development perspective, competition for large employers is strong thus much of the absorption will depend on the success of recruitment efforts for new companies in the marketplace.

- Property owners should be encouraged to keep properties (buildings and grounds) well maintained, especially during marketing periods when attempting to lease and/or sell buildings. A number of commercial/retail properties along the Decker Boulevard corridor suffer from vacancy and/or neglect. This creates pockets of areas that are perceived to be "unsafe" or failing.

- The addition of well planned, affordable and attractive residential and office/commercial uses within the study area will serve to increase both traffic and population to raise and meet thresholds for new retail and commercial development. Perceptions related to crime and safety, together with low threshold traffic and populations suggest that there is limited opportunity to attract retail and/or restaurant tenants/operators. Additional information and maps regarding crime, compiled by Law Enforcement agencies suggest that perceptions of crime/safety can be overcome with factual data and public relations efforts.
- The ethnic diversity and desire for additional food-related operators, such as restaurants and groceries, provide an opportunity to create a unique and differentiating shopping experience. One such suggestion includes the redevelopment of a portion of the old Decker Mall into an international festival marketplace that can include a public crafts and novelty market and/or farmer's market. While there are a number of farmer's markets in and around Columbia (including the soon-to-be relocated State Farmer's Market), there may be an opportunity to consolidate or joint venture such efforts to provide for expansion. This is a low-cost alternative for the property owners and a chance to create a fun, inviting and destination-oriented venue that can draw customers from outside the immediate trade area. Examples of other such venues include Baltimore, MD; Trenton, NJ; Charlotte, NC; Seattle, WA and Reading Station in Philadelphia, PA. Information on how to create a successful market can be found on the ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service website at: <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmmrkt.html> or, via the USDA at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm>
- Incentives for the redevelopment of obsolete and/or vacant centers have been created by the State of South Carolina, with a new House Bill – Retail Facilities Revitalization Act.
- Public relations and marketing efforts can assist in facilitating renovation, development and absorption of commercial space. A detailed summary is included in a later section of the report.
- Create opportunities for Public/Private Partnerships: An Urban Land Institute report providing the guiding principles of such partnerships can be found in the Appendix of the *Economic and Market Analysis Report*, which is a companion document to this report.

Residential

A variety of housing product types such as "Urban residential" (both attached and detached housing) should be considered to serve young professionals, empty nesters, retired couples and individuals, as well as families. The demonstrated oversupply of single-family homes merits caution with respect to adding

A new [mixed-use or residential] construction effort in conjunction with. . .reuse of the old Decker mall would be a huge catalyst for redevelopment.

additional product to the market until such time as additional demand is created. However, despite the oversupply of single family homes in the region, the study area presents an opportunity to replace some of the older housing stock. Newer product would offer a choice to the consumer and create reasons for people to remain or locate in the study area.

An oversupply of multi-family exists within the region. It should be noted that the apartment vacancy rate has been dropping for the Columbia area for the past four years and is currently 8%. Of the limited amount of apartments supplied to the market in the past four years, none was added to the study area. Again, this presents an opportunity for the study area as new multi-family product would enhance the community and serve as a replacement for some of the existing functionally obsolete units. However, a limited amount of units should be considered to be delivered within the study area as the historically low interest rates continue to make single family home buying affordable for the population at large.

According to a December 2005 report by the Central Midlands Council of Governments the unincorporated areas of Richland County experienced a 7.8% gain in population from years 2000-2004. However, with the exception of Blythewood, growth is not occurring in the other areas. Forest Acres and Arcadia Lakes have witnessed a loss in population.

The highest number of single family permits issued in the county were in three primary areas: Garners Ferry Road had 4% of the new permits in the County; Richland Northeast had 18% and Two Notch Road had 4%. The number of permits issued in the study area has been relatively stagnant compared to other areas of the County.

The population new to the Columbia MSA have been gravitating to the areas with new product and housing choices. These newer neighborhoods are close to new commercial centers, which are also offering more shopping choices. The housing choices do not stop in unincorporated Richland County. There has been expansion of the housing market in downtown Columbia, dominated by construction of condominiums for professionals and others seeking urban life in the downtown core. According to Grubb & Ellis data, 114 apartments were delivered in Downtown in 2005 and another 247 are to be delivered in 2006.

- Some of the functionally obsolete housing stock can and should be replaced. A visual observation of the Decker Boulevard study area indicates the majority of the single family and multi-family product is older stock. This older housing stock shows a predominance of homes built in the 1950's and 1960's. A few pocket areas around the high school contain some newer homes built in the 1990's.

The opportunity for first-time buyers exists [in the Woodfield Park area] and this opportunity should be marketed.

- With an average sales price of \$76,540, the opportunity for first-time buyers exists and this opportunity should be marketed. Pride in ownership is evident in the most of the homes in Woodfield Park. However, to safeguard the current level of home ownership in the neighborhood it is important that improvements continue to be made to the homes as well as the infrastructure. New residents bring energy to restore and enhance the existing homes. These newcomers are essential to ensure sustainability. Owning a home is part of the American dream and Woodfield Park shows that is still possible. Further, incentives can be created to encourage owner occupied housing versus tenancy to facilitate this transition.

- A unified effort among new homeowners could help to promote increased home values. Residents working together to gain sidewalks and lighting for the neighborhood is another way to promote the neighborhood and enhance the community.

- Crime is a concern for many residents. Data provided by law enforcement agencies suggests that the majority of crime occurs at the commercial areas and limited "hot spots" within certain complexes/neighborhoods. The creation of Neighborhood Watch, and other public relations efforts can mitigate this concern. For more

information visit: <http://www.securityworld.com/community/crimewatch.html>

- The study area needs new housing stock in a variety of types to offer the choice today's consumer demands. Since there is a predominance of single family homes in the study area, the development of townhomes and/or condominiums should be considered. Additionally, there has been no addition of new apartment product into the study area. Adding new product for both homeowners and renters is critical to enhancing the community.
- Incorporate parks, playgrounds and greenways to enhance quality of life amenities to support housing efforts.
- Issues around public relations, marketing and quality of life must be addressed to make the housing options and neighborhoods a success.

Relational Review – Demographic Comparisons

To assist in gaining perspective and the relationship of the study area to its environs, the market is evaluated from a macro to micro view. There are three levels at which data is collected to achieve such perspective: MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area), County, and Trade Area (a radius of .5, 1 & 3-miles around the central intersection of Decker Boulevard and Faraway Drive).

Columbia, SC MSA

year / % change	1990	2000	change	2005	2010	change
Households	163,207	203,375	25%	222,471	240,872	8%
Population	453,285	536,772	18%	573,177	607,989	6%

In 2005 the predominant household income category in the MSA was \$50K - \$75K, and the income group that was least represented in this geography was \$150K or more.

Richland County

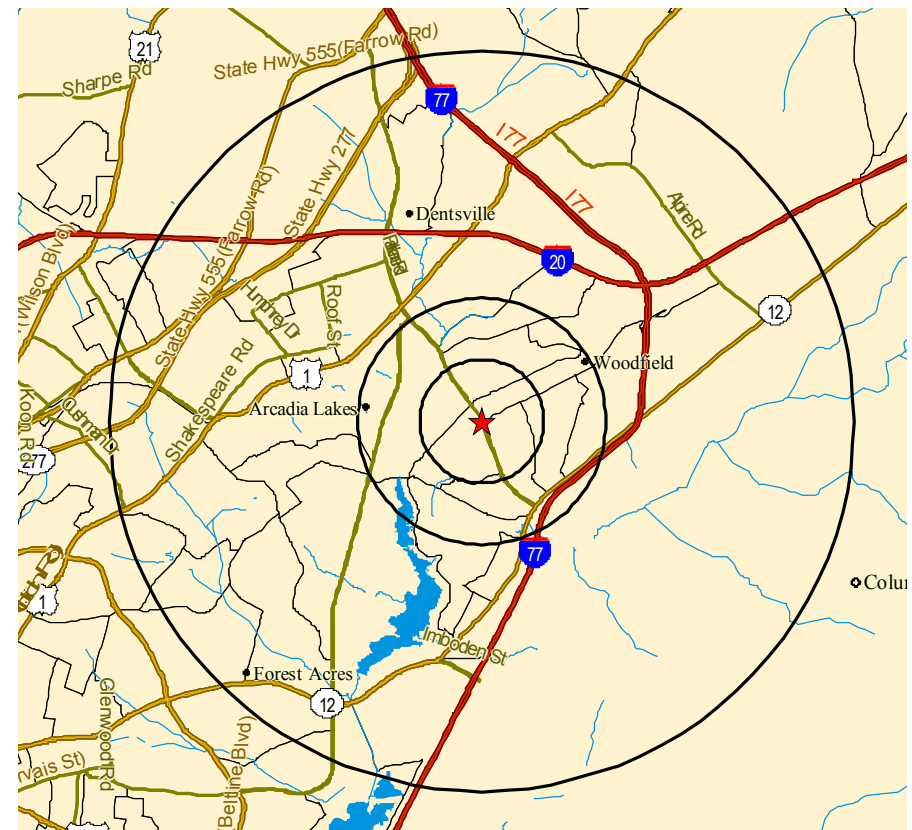
year / % change	1990	2000	change	2005	2010	change
Households	101,590	120,101	18%	137,150	153,547	12%
Population	285,720	320,677	12%	339,115	356,895	5%

In 2005 the predominant household income category in the County was \$50K - \$75K, and the income group that was least represented in this geography was \$150K or more.

Trade Area – Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park

The plan area was reviewed at a 0.5, 1 and 3-mile radius of the central intersection of Decker Boulevard and Faraway Drive.

year / % change	1990	2000	change	2005	2010	change
Households	17,059	18,534	9%	20,645	22,650	10%
Population	49,170	50,067	2%	51,694	53,332	3%



Radii of 0.5, 1 & 3-miles around the intersection of Decker Blvd and Faraway Drive

The profile suggests low density housing in and around the Woodfield Park areas. Average household incomes are highest in the 3-mile boundary, likely due to established neighborhoods around the lakes. Household growth from 1990-2000 was 5.0%, with 5.8% and 8.6% at the 0.5, 1, 3-mile radius, respectively. Population and income also grew during that period. However, 5-year trends shows slow to modest growth in all areas, largely due to transitioning neighborhoods.

Highest & Best Use

The study area was reviewed as to the primary factors for Highest & Best Use, as described herein:

Legal Permissibility – The design charrette addressed issues regarding site master planning and, ultimately, zoning and other land use regulations that would determine legally permissible land uses.

Physical Possibility – Included in this geographic area are two major Interstates, I-77 and I-20. As a result, transportation issues are a critical element of the analysis. The area includes topography that features slight to moderate slopes, and significant wetland/watercourse areas. Therefore, physical constraints create some specific challenges with respect to development, which will vary depending upon land use.

Financial Feasibility and Maximum Profitability – Feasibility is dependent upon many factors, including, but not limited to land costs, site and development costs, the use, market conditions and the economic criteria of the user/developer. The issue of profitability will be addressed in the following sections as they relate to demand and supply. Where there are gaps in the market, then profit opportunities may exist.

Highest & Best Use Conclusions

Based upon the information gathered and resulting findings, the Highest & Best Use of these areas include: service-oriented retail, limited office, and public/civic/recreational facilities, single-family and multifamily residential.

Economic Base Analysis

Economic Base Analysis is utilized to evaluate real estate demand. The underlying theme suggests that jobs drive demand for real estate: in other words, for every (basic) job that is created, a multiplier effect increases overall employment (both basic and non-basic), thus increasing both population and income within an area benefiting from such job growth.

South Carolina's economy continues to expand, posting healthy job gains over the year. The state's non-agricultural job count

advanced 1.5 percent to 1.86 million in 2005, adding 27,400 jobs. The service-providing sector grew by 31,000 jobs. All industries in this sector added jobs over the year. Professional and business services -- occupations ranging from lawyers to computer programmers -- expanded by 8,600 jobs. Within this industry, employment services increased by 3,400. This is a positive sign for a recovering economy. The goods-producing sector lost 3,600 jobs. Manufacturers cut 6,000 jobs from their payrolls. Nondurable goods fell by 7,700, with losses mounting in textile mills (-5,800). Offsetting this loss was Durable goods, up 1,600. Construction expanded by 2,700, on the strength of specialty trade contractors (+2,500).

Of the state's eight MSAs, five experienced job growth over the year. The Columbia MSA grew by 4,600 jobs, primarily in professional and business services (+1,500). Based on preliminary figures for 2006, the Columbia MSA is expected to grow by approximately 10,000 jobs.

The highest MSA annual average unemployment rate was recorded by Florence (9.1%), followed by Sumter (8.8%), Spartanburg (7.7%), Anderson (7.5%), Greenville (6.0%), Columbia (5.8%), Myrtle Beach (5.5%), and Charleston (5.4%).

South Carolina continued to experience an increase in population. Based on U.S. Census Bureau population estimates as of July 1, 2005, the state's population stood at 4.26 million, up 1.4 percent from the July 1, 2004 estimates. This represents a growth of 57,191 residents. The growth rate was the 12th fastest in the United States. Since Census 2000, the state has added over 243,000 residents, representing a growth rate of 6.1 percent. Greenville County was the largest county with a population of 407,383, followed by Richland (340,078), Charleston (330,368), Spartanburg (266,809), and Lexington (235,272).

South Carolinians continue to use their disposable income to purchase essential items such as new homes. A record number of homes were sold in the state, according to the South Carolina Association of Realtors. In 2005, 72,811 new and existing homes were sold, up 23 percent over the previous year and nearly double when compared to 2000. All areas of the state recorded double-digit increases except Columbia (+7.5%). Sales in Aiken surged 49.6%, followed by Hilton Head (43.8%), Myrtle Beach (+35.5%), the Piedmont (+27.3%) and Charleston (23.6%). Statewide, the median value of homes sold was \$148,000.

Economic Base - Commercial Uses

Over the past few years, the Columbia MSA has enjoyed sustained prosperity and growth. The study area benefits from its relationship to Columbia within the MSA, which has shown population and income growth as indicated above. In addition to population growth, job growth in the non-manufacturing sectors has increased, demonstrating a transition from a manufacturing

to a non-manufacturing (service-oriented) economy. As a result of this white-collar job growth, coupled with a quality of life that has attracted professionals, young families and retirees, growth in population and household income has occurred. This directly relates to real estate demand that includes residential (of a variety of types/styles) and commercial (office, service and retail) uses.

The market opportunities for the study area should be viewed from a macro to micro view. The primary economic sectors providing employment in the region include financial institutions, healthcare and retail operations. Of the 45 largest employers in the region, 14 are located in Richland County.

Based upon preliminary findings and aside from the significant number of enlisted and civilian workers at Fort Jackson, Richland County's primary job base is in the health services sectors, followed by Insurance (health related) and financial services. Further, Verizon is located in Forest Acres, employing 1,450 in the telecommunications industry -- which impacts employment opportunity in the study area. The study area benefits from its location along primary transportation corridors including Interstates 77 & 20, Highway 1 (Two Notch Road) and Decker Boulevard.

Rapidly growing regional shopping and entertainment venues are located along these interstate corridors including Columbia Place Mall, Columbiana Centre, East Forest Plaza, Dutch Center and the new Village at Sandhill, a 300+/- acre mixed use development in northeast Columbia.

Health services and the energy industry are strong contributors to the regional job growth. Employment within the study area will continue to be primarily "non-basic" or service-related jobs. However, job growth in basic employment, together with transportation infrastructure, will provide future opportunities for economic development. These sectors will create demand for commercial uses including medical and professional/small business services. Typically, as a result of the multiplier effect of basic job growth, demand for residential housing, retail, recreation, and other support uses would follow. However, in urban revitalization areas it is often necessary to stabilize and/or expand the existing neighborhoods to provide the catalyst for commercial development.

Commercial Uses – Office & Industrial

Market Reports from Grubb & Ellis, indicate that the region is stabilizing and improving from the market cycle fluctuation of 2000/2001. The region has experienced recent surges in activity in both the industrial and office sectors.

Office Market - Currently, there is an estimated 11,394,699 square feet of office space in the Columbia market with approximately 1,812,391 square feet vacant/available comprising 15.9% of the

total office market. The study area includes the submarkets of both Forest Acres and Northeast Columbia. Northeast includes 1,332,348 square feet of office, with approximately 242,956 square feet available (or 18.2% vacancy), with a weighted average lease rate of \$14.69 per square foot. Forest Acres has a total of 951,414 square feet with approximately 185,665 square feet available (or 19.5% vacancy) with an a weighted average lease rate of \$13.31 per square foot.

Industrial Market – Vacancy has decreased over the past 3 years from a high of nearly 10% to a current low of 6%. Warehouse and distribution are the largest contributors to this trend, due to the regions strong transportation links to most major southeast markets. Rental rates have been on the rise to a high of nearly \$4.00 per square foot. Job loss in the industrial sector suggests that activity and absorption of space will be limited in this area unless recruitment efforts result in the location of a site specific manufacturing company in the market.

Employment Base

Economic Base Analysis methodology is described at the beginning of this section. The minimum requirement method specifically compares data based on areas similar to the subject (i.e. metropolitan statistical areas or counties). Given the nature of the geography in the study area, being in the County but adjacent to incorporated municipalities, data comparison can render inaccurate forecasting. Therefore the Columbia MSA was evaluated as compared to other MSAs of similar size. Forecasting total employment and population growth assists in determining forecasted demand for various real estate uses. The Columbia MSA encompasses a number of counties and incorporated townships that surround the City.

The Economic Base for the Columbia MSA includes three primary areas: Services, Retail Trade and Public Administration, which constitute 40, 20, and 12 percent of the employees in the MSA respectively.

Within the services sector, the largest majority is in the hospital and health related areas, followed by education and other business services. Therefore, when determining land use for the study area, it is evident that the commercial uses most appropriate for consideration would include office and retail uses.

The office analysis reflects a current oversupply of space within the MSA, which is reflected in the current vacancy rates. The absorption of the existing supply is expected to occur, thus reducing vacancy, as the economy and job growth continues to improve. However, the rate of absorption is dependent upon additional product in the pipeline in the form of planned and permitted projects, and successful recruitment of company locations by Economic Development officials.

One of the primary thrusts of such economic development of the Central South Carolina Alliance is to promote growth of manufacturing and distribution business within the area, due to the region's transportation network and location within the Southeast. This effort will continue to diversify its economy and grow business within the region. All of these factors will continue drive demand for office and industrial space within the region.

A substantial amount of office space has been built or is planned in the downtown and in the outer suburban markets. However, niche opportunities may exist as employment drivers such as in the medical and education sectors (i.e.; University expansions), which continue to grow. Expansion by these major sectors, together with stabilization and growth of residential housing within the study area, will provide opportunities for renovation/redevelopment of existing properties to service small business and service-related industries.

Retail

The demand for retail space is dependent upon population and income growth, as it relates to average household consumer expenditures. Details of consumer expenditures by category also includes the retail potential within the three trade areas outlined, 0.5, 1 and 3 miles within the primary intersection of the study area.

Market Reports from Grubb & Ellis, indicate that the region continues to demonstrate strong activity in the retail sector, predominately in the Northeast submarket. Currently, there is an estimated 16,505,904 square feet of retail space in the Columbia market with approximately 2,112,729 square feet vacant/available comprising 12.8 % of the total retail market. The study area includes the submarkets of both Forest Acres and Northeast Columbia. Northeast includes 4,417,355 square feet of retail, with approximately 614,164 square feet available (or 13.9% vacancy), with a weighted average lease rate of \$10.74 per square foot. Forest Areas has a total of 2,066,411 square feet with approximately 307,569 square feet available (or 14.9% vacancy) with an a weighted average lease rate of \$14.28 per square foot. Within the study area, it is estimated that approximately 181,547 square feet is vacant with rents ranging from \$5.00 – 13.00.

The largest commercial growth segment of the region has been retail, with a number of shopping venues in the Northeast submarket, including the Village at Sandhill, a 300 acre mixed-use development that includes approximately 1,000,000 square feet of retail located at the intersection of Two Notch (US 1) and Clemson Roads. This submarket now rivals the Harbison/St. Andrews submarket, anchored by Columbiana Center. These areas

The area around the Old Decker Mall offers the best opportunity for retail, based upon forecasted traffic counts.

host a number of local and regional shopping venues dominated by regional and national operators. It should be noted that while population and income within the MSA support the regional malls, the Village at Sandhill will also draw customers from outside the market due to its location and mixed-use foray into the market.

This directly impacts potential retail development for the study area. Forecast demand is based upon additional capital entering the market and the consumer expenditures anticipated for each household in each retail category. While there is an estimated expenditure of over \$20,000 per household in the MSA, much of those dollars are being spent at existing retail locations in the marketplace. The gap is determined by product category, location and trade area expenditures.

The predominance of national and regional retail operators will preclude the development of many additional categories of retailers within the study area. However, the existing housing combined with additional proposed units of housing will create demand for neighborhood shopping and convenience oriented retail to serve the local

population and commuting traffic. Neighborhood retail will also serve the population working in the commercial space proposed within the study area as well. However, it should be pointed out that local, regional and national operators' categories for consumer expenditure patterns and site location choices are based upon threshold criteria and competition determined for retail space.

Threshold Criteria for Retail - A major determining factor in the location of retail combines (drive-by) traffic, population and income. The traffic and design team during the charrette identified transportation planning issues. Current traffic counts on Decker Boulevard range from a low of approximately 21,600 cars (near Percival Rd) to a high of 28,800 cars (between Brookfield Road & O'Neil Court) per day, ADT (average daily traffic), the higher of which just meets the threshold for many retail operators who rely on drive-by traffic, such as restaurants. The area around the Old Decker Mall offers the best opportunity for retail, based upon forecasted traffic counts. However, threshold populations within the immediate trade areas (0.5 and 1 mile) fall short for many retail/restaurant operations.

Market Analysis -- Residential Uses

Demand for housing directly correlates to job growth. Data for 2005 indicates that Richland County gained 3,874 jobs by the end of third quarter. According to Senior Wachovia Economist, Mark Vitner, the expected job growth for the Columbia MSA is approximately 3% for the few years. That would put job growth at approximately 10,000-12,000 annually for the next two years.

Demand for new housing can be benchmarked by review of the

E/P ratio, which is the ratio between employment and building permits for new homes. A ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates a growing housing market with positive demand. The E/P ratio in the Columbia MSA is 1.43, which exceeds the national average of 0.80.

According to data supplied by Consolidated Multiple Listing Service (CMLS), there were 10,215 units sold in 2005 with an average selling price of \$161,008 in the local area (Columbia, SC). So far in 2006 there have been 4,563 units sold with an average sales price of \$169,050.

Peak sales occur during the spring/summer months of May through August, therefore the largest number of sales have not occurred for 2006. As of June 22, 2006 there were 166 units sold in the Forest Acres-Arcadia Lakes indicating for this submarket that it is on par with the past two years. Additionally, the average price of homes in Forest Acres-Arcadia Lakes is comparable to the average price for the entire local Columbia, SC market.

To further delineate the market segments, the multiple listing service data is also defined by area, demonstrating market pricing and activity in submarkets surrounding the study area, including Forest Acres, Sandwood Hills, Rockbridge, and Arcadia Lakes. Woodfield Park is the primary neighborhood of concern regarding the Decker Boulevard study area. Woodfield Park's days on market are in line with the surrounding neighborhoods or better. There is more activity in sales of homes in Woodfield Park with 60 sales for the year. The tables below give a snapshot of residential real estate activity for the year in the neighborhoods surrounding Decker Boulevard as of May 16, 2006.

Woodfield Park – MLS Area 4

	Average days on market	Average price	Average square footage	Total number active/sold
Active	78	\$89,950	1,352	14
Sold	74	\$76,540	1,321	60

Forest Acres/Sandwood Hills/Rockbridge – MLS Area 5

	Average days on market	Average price	Average square footage	Total number active/sold
Active	91	\$199,058	2,334	6
Sold	76	\$193,355	2,420	20

Arcadia Lakes– MLS Area 5

	Average days on market	Average price	Average square footage	Total number active/sold
Active	86	\$348,725	2,638	4
Sold	62	\$355,318	2,698	10

Woodfield Park is the most affordable neighborhood in comparison to the other four areas. Its homes are the smallest in size. Forest Acres, Sandwood Hills and Rockbridge are higher in price but still considered affordable. The average price per square foot of

the recent sales in these neighborhoods is \$80 per square foot. However, in comparing price per square foot, Woodfield Park's average price per square foot at \$68 is a difference of only \$12 per square foot. The homes in Arcadia Lakes, while adjacent to the study area, are in a considerably higher price range. The average price per square foot for homes sold there is approximately \$132 per square foot.

Housing Supply Dynamics

The supply of housing includes both existing (resale) homes and those that are planned or under construction. Housing stock includes single family detached dwellings, attached dwellings such as townhomes, condominiums and patio homes, attached multi-family dwellings (2-4 units), apartments and mobile homes.

DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY AND ABSORPTION SUMMARY		
Product Type	# of Units/ Square Feet*	Absorption Estimates*
Residential: Woodfield Park	356 (net)	1-5 years
Residential: Faraway Drive	118 (net)	5-10+ years
Subtotal Residential	474 (net)	
Commercial: Decker Blvd (renovation and new)	438,000 - 547,000 sf	5-10+ years
Subtotal Commercial (net new +/-)	70,000 - 125,000 sf	

* Estimates are based upon demand data, current estimated supply and absorption, together with concept master plan capacity. Timing and build-out dependent upon infrastructure improvements (i.e. Decker Boulevard) and economic development recruitment.

Housing Forecast

When making a housing choice, the criteria used by the consumer to determine what housing product they will purchase vary widely. With a wide variety of housing options available in the marketplace, consumers can choose between new versus older/resale homes in a variety of price ranges and styles. Given the large number of new construction offerings in the marketplace, the forecast considers new construction as a benchmark for demand for new housing in the County.

The estimated demand for additional housing units is based upon the estimated impact of population and job growth. The need for additional housing is estimated based on a percentage of the total regional job market capture in the Columbia MSA area, as outlined by a regional economic analyst. The projected demand for housing for 2006 is 8,916 units. Of that total, 66% is projected for single family (detached) and 34% is projected for multi-family units,

consistent with current housing trends for the area. Existing supply consists of permitted new construction, available multi-family and re-sales of homes (detached and attached product) within Columbia, SC. Based on this information the forecast suggests that there is an oversupply of both single family and multi-family product.

The rate of absorption becomes important when determining not only how much additional housing should be built, but more importantly, when comparing job estimates to population growth, there are segments of market demand that are not tied to the job market. These include self-employed, unemployed (such as students, seasonal homeowners) and empty nesters and/or retired persons/families entering the housing market. Therefore, absorption of new housing units should take this into consideration, as well as the ratio of population to employment.

Market Analysis -- Fort Jackson

Fort Jackson is the largest and most active Initial Entry Training Center in the U.S. Army, training 34 percent of all soldiers entering the Army each year. This includes in excess of 45,000 basic training and advanced individual training soldiers every year. An additional 14,000 soldiers attend courses at the Soldier Support Institute, Chaplain Center and School, and Drill Sergeant School annually. More than 3,500 active duty soldiers and their 10,000 family members are assigned to the installation and make this area their home. Ft. Jackson employs almost 5,200 civilians and provides services for more than 115,000 retirees and their family members. Anecdotal reports suggest that many retirees live in the Decker Boulevard area.

Much of this fort-related population is not included in the U.S. Census Bureau population statistics. Categorized as "group quarters," this segment of the market includes the military, institutionalized individuals and students. 2000 Census data reports 28,012 group quarters population in Richland County and 3.9% employed in the military.

The Fort has significant economic impact on the local area, according to estimates contributing \$2.6 billion to the local economy (Source: Fort Jackson Community information profile). This would imply additional disposable income for goods (retail) and services (office/commercial) in the Columbia market from the Fort. The Fort also adds potential for off-base housing opportunities in and around the facility. (According to third party reports, the Fort is planning to transition up to 80% of its housing off-base.) In addition, over 100,000 family members visit the Midlands area each year to attend basic training graduation activities, using local hotels, restaurants and shopping areas.

The existing and potential economic impact on the immediate area around the Fort, including the Decker Boulevard area, is certainly great and provides a great asset to build upon.

Public Design Charrette

The consulting team used a 5-day planning and design charrette to guide the Decker Boulevard planning process. This effort began with a public kickoff meeting on the evening of May 4th, consisting of an opening presentation and an interactive workshop with area residents and stakeholders.

Following the kickoff meeting, the consulting team facilitated a public design charrette from May 15 - 20, 2006 in the Columbia Place Mall. A temporary design studio was set up in an unused retail space complete with design tables, meeting areas, computer equipment, and a presentation area. Numerous citizens, business owners and public officials attended this comprehensive workshop during the five day period. Throughout the week, the charrette team held meetings with specific stakeholders to discuss various topics related to the area's future including housing, open space, retailing, transportation, infrastructure, environmental issues, and public safety.

The charrette concluded with a full digital presentation of the plan's recommendations. The vision for the area, which will be used to guide the area's revitalization, is based on the consensus gained by the area's interested residents and stakeholders, Richland County elected officials and staff, and the consulting team during the course of the charrette.

Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Charrette Schedule

MONDAY, MAY 15th	THURSDAY, MAY 18th
10:00 Arrival – Tour of Study Area	9:00 Commercial Property Owners (Walter Taylor & Bill Theus – Old Target + Kroger)
3:00 SC DHEC (Mike Rowe)	10:00 Sandhill Research & Education (Ben Boozer)
4:00 SCE&G (John Cadena)	11:00 Bicycling - Natalie Capachio-Britt - Palmetto Cycling Coalition
5:00 Dinner (Rep. Joan Brady, Councilman Mike Montgomery, Pat Palmer, Sen. Joel Lourie, Chip Land, Lucinda Statler)	11:00 Ed Justice - Property Owner
7:00 PUBLIC WORKSHOP	NOON - LUNCH
TUESDAY, MAY 16th	1:00 Richland County Community Development (Sherry Wright Moore, Jocelyn Jennings, Frank Frierson)
10:00 Glen Barber - Local Business	2:00 Richland County Recreation Commission (Cynthia Robinson, Ronnie Kinnett)
11:00 Residential Real Estate (Rana Peri Davis-Russell & Jeffcoat)	5:30 PIN UP SESSION
NOON - LUNCH	7:00 OPEN PUBLIC WORKSHOP
2:00 Commercial Real Estate (Billy Way – Grubb & Ellis)	FRIDAY, MAY 19th
2:00 Central Midlands COG (Norman Whitaker – Exec Dir)	9:00 Public Works & Environmental Issues (Teresa Smith – Dir. of Richland County Public Works; Shannon Smith, Southeastern Environmental Solutions, Inc.)
3:00 Jim Friend – Property Owner	10:00 Police (Capt. Cole Porter – Richland County Sheriff's Dept)
5:30 PIN UP SESSION	11:00 Fire (Miranda Spivey – Deputy Fire Marshall)
7:00 OPEN PUBLIC WORKSHOP	NOON - LUNCH
WEDNESDAY, MAY 17th	5:30 PIN UP SESSION
9:00 SCDOT (Mark Nolt)	SATURDAY, MAY 20th
10:00 Schools (Elaine Delk – Exec Dir for Planning Richland District 2 + Principal Ralph Schmidt – Richland NE HS)	10:00 CLOSING PRESENTATION
NOON - LUNCH	THURSDAY, JUNE 29th
1:00 Schools (Principal Dr. Kappy Cannon – Forest Lake ES)	7:00 CLOSING PRESENTATION REDUX
3:00 James Carlson – Carlson Realty	
4:00 Schools (Principal Randall Gary – Dent MS)	
5:30 PIN UP SESSION	
7:00 OPEN PUBLIC WORKSHOP	



Charrette studio at Columbia Place Mall



Meeting with local housing agency representatives



Residents and stakeholders at the kick-off meeting



Designers at the charrette



Stakeholders and residents at the charrette

Stakeholder Input

Prior to and during the charrette, the consultant team met with numerous residents, property owners, business owners, and area stakeholders including elected officials, County staff, representatives from various agencies and organizations, as well as utility and service providers. Many of the stakeholders are listed on the charrette schedule on the previous page. The team also met with representatives from Fort Jackson, Columbia Place Mall, and individuals representing real estate and economic development interests in the Columbia area. The team also received significant input from residents and business owners who attended the public meetings and the charrette and who provided feedback via e-mail and a survey that was distributed at the first public meeting.

Survey Responses

48 individuals who attended the initial public meeting submitted responses to a survey entitled “Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Community Survey.” Tabulated responses to the survey are shown at right. The respondents indicated that single family houses, townhouses, and senior living facilities in the \$100,000-150,000 price range were their preferred housing types for the study area. The respondents mentioned restaurants, grocery stores, a pharmacy, and a farmer’s market with the most frequency as services that they desired for the area. “Safety,” “cleanliness,” and “traffic calming” were the items that respondents mentioned most frequently as factors that are most critical to the success of revitalization in the study area. “Strong political and business leadership,” and “Pedestrian access within neighborhoods” also rated highly on the list of critical success factors. “Minimizing parking,” and “Zoning that allows higher density” ranked the lowest on the list of critical success factors with the individuals who responded to the survey. It is worth noting that the majority of the survey respondents were long-time residents of the Woodfield Park neighborhoods. Ranked listing of the survey responses are outlined in the tables that follow.

Number of Responses	Most Critical Elements for Plan Area
23	Safety
14	Cleanliness
12	Traffic calming
9	Strong political and business leadership
9	Pedestrian access in neighborhoods
6	Access to commercial areas on foot/bike
3	Combining old/new architecture
3	Financial subsidies for housing
1	Zoning that allows higher density
0	Minimizing parking
other comments	“plant trees on Decker,” “sidewalks,” “condemn run down property”

Number of Responses	Housing Price Ranges for Plan Area
28	\$100,000-150,000
7	\$150,000-200,000
5	\$75,000-150,000
5	\$250,000-300,000
2	\$200,000-250,000

Number of Responses	Housing Types you’d like to see in Plan Area
31	single family one-story
15	single family two-story
15	senior living facilities
9	two-story townhomes
6	two-story live/work
5	affordable apts (rental)
4	luxury apts (rental)
4	duplex dwellings
2	quad-type dwellings
1	triplex dwellings
0	three-story live/work
0	three-story townhomes
other comments	“greenspace,” “no apartments; no HUD housing”

Number of Responses	Services you’d like to see in Plan Area
31	Restaurants (eat-in style)
28	Grocery store
19	Pharmacy
19	Farmers Market
15	Retail clothing boutiques
11	Dentists offices
10	Fast food restaurants
10	Gas station
9	Dry Cleaners
8	Child care facilities
5	Hair salons
3	Sidewalk vendors
1	coin-operated laundry
other comments	recreation for children; youth center; senior center; parks; doctors offices; bookstore

Other stakeholder input was generated from notes from public meetings and formal and informal meetings with residents and other stakeholders during the planning process. The input fell into the following primary categories: Natural Resources; Recreation and Open Space; Commercial Redevelopment; Neighborhood Redevelopment; Transportation and Streetscape; Corridor Identity; Crime and Safety. These categories were used as the basis for organizing the recommendations of the plan. The stakeholder input was further divided into three primary sub-categories based on whether the input identified an issue or problem to be resolved; a proposed strategy for dealing with an issue; or an opportunity based on existing resources or programs. A listing of this input follows:

Natural Resources

Issues:

- Water quality in lakes
- Sedimentation (in streams/lakes)
- Stormwater run-off/pollution
- loss of trees in the area

Strategies:

- LID (low impact development) for new development
- maximum parking standards; reduce existing parking lots

Opportunities:

- Riverkeeper program for stream systems – partner with schools
- Sandhills mitigation bank funding looking for projects to fund
- SCDOT (SC Dept. of Transportation) mitigation bank for public projects

Recreation/Open Space

Issues:

- Lack of open/green areas
- Need for recreation space (indoor & outdoor)
- Children need parks to play in
- School grounds/facilities closed to public – underutilized existing open space
- “nothing for kids to do”
- No community parks/playgrounds
- Many latch-key kids
- Need soccer fields

Opportunities:

- Greenway projects eligible for enhancements funding
- School Dist. 2 owns vacant property across from high school
- Informal use of fields at Dent Middle School allowed; open to after hours use of school facilities
- Pump station land (lakefront) behind Pep Boys may be for sale
- Richland County Recreation Commission will do programming for any new public parks

Commercial Redevelopment

Issues:

- Vacant buildings
- Retail businesses leaving
- Community desires more/higher quality retail
- Existing retail indicator of community in distress

- Perception of a dying strip
- Bank building at Trenholm Road is an eyesore
- Inappropriate uses at commercial sites: Bingo
- Perception of blight/crime
- “Embarrassing for family coming to visit”

Strategies:

- Tax incentives for businesses
- Farmer’s market

Opportunities:

- SC Bill re: vacant commercial buildings

Neighborhood Redevelopment

Issues:

- Do away with mobile homes
- Multi family housing just outside of study area
- Need for citizen involvement
- How to keep homeowners in Woodfield Park area
- Increase in rentals in Forest Park
- Forest Park n’hoods on the verge of “turning over”: concern re: property values, crime, rental
- “Don’t need more apartments”
- Decker identity/quality affects ability to attract new families to schools/neighborhoods
- A lot of Section 8 housing in Woodfield area
- No unique architectural features to draw young families

Strategies:

- Market amenities in the area: schools, Fort, libraries
- Look at Rosewood neighborhood
- Increase homeownership opportunities
- Townhomes, master down
- Local CDC (community development corporation): homeownership, rehab, new construction programs
- Educational programs through neighborhood associations; focused programs for immigrant families
- Senior housing

Opportunities:

- Strong neighborhood associations
- Ft Jackson is gaining 800 employees for drill sergeant training
- Chaplain school to be expanded
- School District may be willing to help secure Federal, foundation grants
- Active senior population
- CHA (Columbia Housing Authority) owns the Reserve apts.; may be easier to buy/redevelop

- Ft. Jackson may have funding for off-base housing programs
- Growing market of military retirees who want access to Ft. services
- 2008 on-base housing reassessment: transitioning housing off-base

Transportation

Issues:

- Speeding on Decker
- East Boundary Rd. is a cut through
- 100’s who bike to Fort via Decker
- Dangerous intersection for cyclists at Percival
- Crossing Decker at night an issue re: lighting
- Unreported ped/bike crash victims among immigrant population
- Need sidewalks (both sides)
- Speeding/cut through on Faraway
- Need safe crossing(s) at Dent MS: Trenholm & Decker (including mid-block)
- Speeding along Chatsworth

Opportunities:

- SCDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding for improvements near schools
- SC Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (funded by SC Dept. of Health and Environmental Control): promotion of pedestrian issues
- Dept. of Public Safety funding for two-wheeled safety projects (largely unused)

Streetscape

Issues:

- Litter
- Too much signage
- Looks shoddy/looks bad
- Need trees on Decker
- Lack of street lights: safety
- Beautification along Percival needed: plant trees both sides

Strategies:

- “benches and streetlamps FIRST”
- Lamp posts, landscaping, sidewalks
- Encourage tree canopy in neighborhoods
- Storefront improvements/façade grants

Opportunities:

- SCE&G (SC Electric & Gas) matching funds for utility undergrounding/streetscaping projects

Corridor Identity

Issues:

- Community lacks identity/theme

Strategies:

- Gateway features/signage at major entries to neighborhood
- Promotional marketing themes for the corridor
- Spanish/International style theme?
- “The County should provide (from A-tax or H-tax funds) support at a Decker location for such activities as the Columbia International Festival held at the fairgrounds this past April, events by the World Affairs Council, and the Committee of 100 International Committee Reception (held at Sterling Gardens last week).”

Crime/Safety

Issues:

- Major safety concern: perception or reality?
- Lack of enforcement of speeding
- Lack of street lights – people afraid to walk (!!!)
- “corridor of fear”
- Gang activity
- Clubs: noise, liquor
- Vandalism
- Perception of slow response by Sheriff’s office
- Homeless encampments behind TJMaxx, Zorbas/Skating rink
- Significant calls to the Reserve apartments
- Concern re: fire at vacant buildings

Opportunities:

- Significant decreases in all crime stats over past year

The Master Plan

The plans shown in this report are intended to be conceptual build-out visions for the Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park area. Care was taken to envision development alternatives based on property boundaries or known opportunities for parcel consolidation. While the resultant illustrations shown on the Master Plan and in detail on the pages that follow are the preferred build-out alternatives created during this planning process, it is not intended to preclude site-specific modifications.

It is assumed that any modifications will be the result of specific programmatic and market analysis. However, the following elements should be retained:

- General intensity of development
- Urban pattern (i.e. relationship to street and adjacent properties)
- Massing
- Street and pedestrian circulation patterns
- Open space protection

Therefore, the purpose of this Master Plan is not necessarily to require strict conformance to each building or parcel as drawn, but to show general patterns and intensities and potential development/redevelopment opportunities. Development and redevelopment proposals are expected to maintain the general street network, preserve street connections and rights-of-way, protect open space areas, provide usable public spaces, and mix uses both horizontally and vertically, where appropriate.

The details of the master plan are laid out in the sections that follow.



Natural Resources

Current Issues

The plan area, which is almost entirely built out and urbanized, is blessed with a stream corridor and a series of lakes that bisect Decker Boulevard near the intersection of O'Neil Court. There are a few undeveloped parcels of land in the vicinity, especially immediately surrounding the plan area, but most of these are destined to be developed as well. Many of the environmental issues related to suburban-style development are evident in the Decker Boulevard area and are becoming especially manifest in the streams and lakes.

Area residents, elected officials, and County staff are concerned about the water quality of the streams and lakes due to polluted stormwater run-off, erosion, and sedimentation, which is causing the lakes to silt up and become unsuitable for aquatic habitat or recreation. This is a critical issue not only for the health of the natural systems, but for the area's economic vitality as well since the lakes are a major reason for high housing values in the Forest Acres and Arcadia Lakes area. Residents also expressed concern about the loss of trees in the area.

Area residents around the lakes have been organizing around the issue of protecting the water quality in the lakes through educating area homeowners and businesses on measures to improve water quality and monitoring water quality to ensure suitability for recreation.

Recommendations

Reclaim Developed Areas of Jackson Creek Floodway

One of the primary and most significant recommendations for improving local natural resources in the plan area is to reclaim for recreation and conservation areas of the Jackson Creek flood plain that are currently developed. Such an effort would improve water quality and wildlife habitat in and around the creek and downstream lakes; reduce flooding of properties; remove vacant or underutilized buildings from the floodplain and the Decker corridor; and provide much needed green space and recreation space in the plan area as well as educational opportunities for area schools.

There are currently parcels totaling more than 34 acres traversed by the Jackson Creek floodway portion of the floodplain on either side of Decker Boulevard and along O'Neil Court that could be

considered in a first phase for purchase and restoration to a more natural state by removing buildings, fill, and parking areas built in floodway or wetland areas. There are another 20 acres of parcels that fall in the floodway of the Little Jackson Creek (running behind the Fashion Place and former Winn-Dixie shopping centers) that could be considered for future phases of reclamation and restoration as these sites redevelop.

Since the charrette, Richland County has commissioned investigation into the feasibility of restoring wetland areas in the Jackson Creek floodplain. The results of this feasibility analysis look promising and are included in the Appendix.

Demonstration Projects for Water Quality

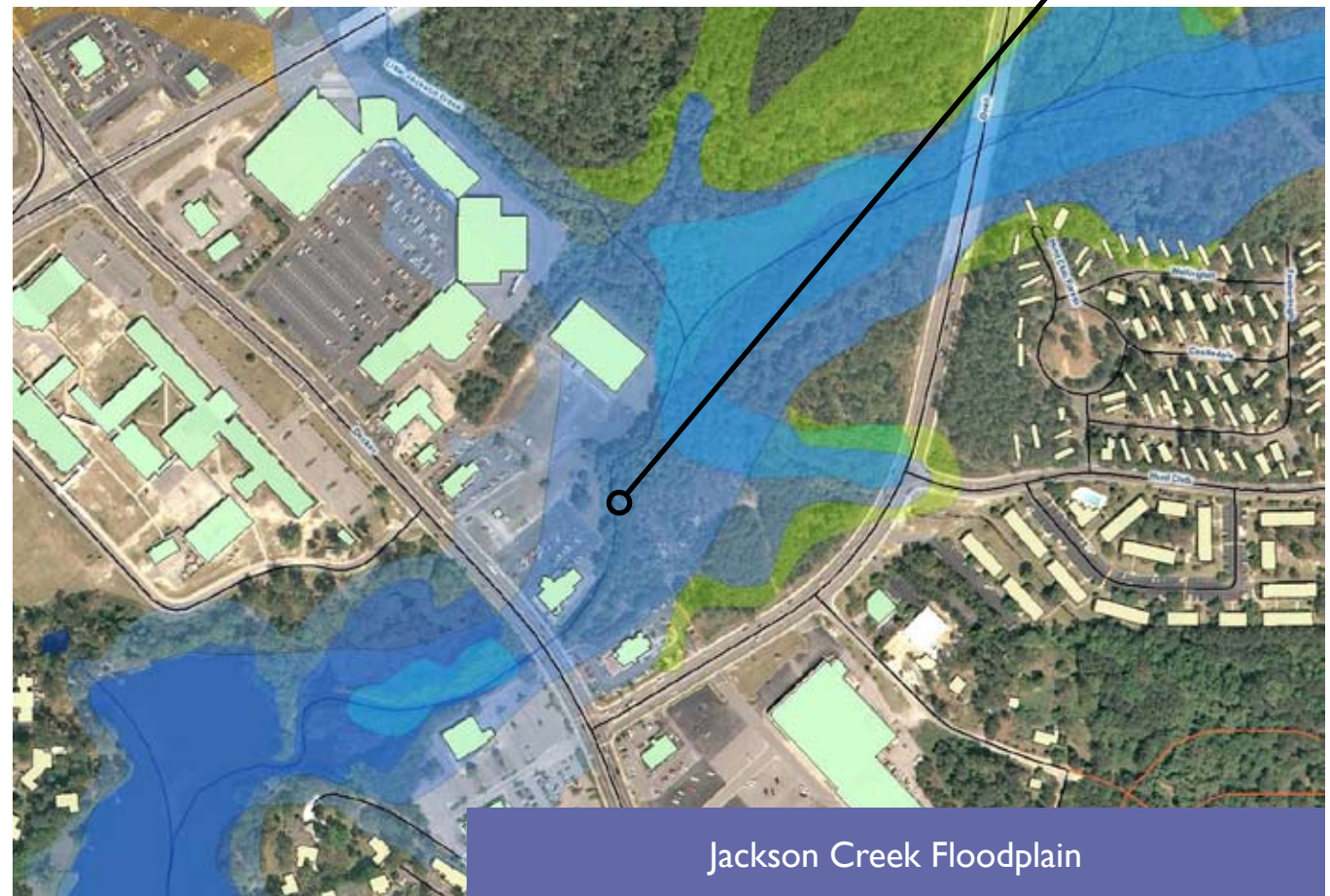
There are many large parking lots in the Decker Corridor that contribute to water quality issues in the plan area by decreasing the amount pervious surface where stormwater can naturally infiltrate into the soil. Some of these are connected to unused or underutilized shopping centers. Prior to these shopping centers being redeveloped, the County may want to consider contributing to retrofit demonstration projects for on-site stormwater retention in parking lots. Such an effort could be completed through an incentive program or matching grant program for commercial property enhancements.

Regulatory Measures

For new development and redevelopment in the study area, the County may want to consider adopting low impact development (LID) and other standards that would reduce the stormwater impact of impervious surfaces. For example, the County may want to require landscaping and design standards for parking lots that would reduce the impact of impervious surfaces.



Jackson Creek behind Zorba's Restaurant



Jackson Creek Floodplain

Recreation/Open Space

Existing Recreation/Open Space Conditions

Over and over again during meetings with residents and area stakeholders, the planning team heard the message that the plan area lacks parks, open space, and recreational opportunities generally, both indoor and outdoor. Residents and stakeholders said: “children need parks to play in;” “[there is] nothing for kids to do;” or “there are no community parks or playgrounds.” Others maintained that the area needs soccer fields. A brief survey of the area reveals that the only public recreation facility in the area is the roughly five acre Forest Lake park and recreation center (technically classified as a “recreation complex”) adjacent to the Forest Lake Elementary School on the west side of Decker Boulevard.

Richland County Recreation Commission’s Needs Assessment Master Plan (2002) recommend 5.75 acres of “close-to-home” parks per 1000 residents, consisting of mini-parks (1/4,000 population; 0.25-2.5 acres; 1/4 mile service radius); neighborhood parks (1/2,700 population; 3.5-15 acres; 1/2 mile service radius); recreation complex (1/ 10,000 population; 20-100 acres; 2 mile service radius); and community parks (1/40,000 population; +/- 20 acres; usually along floodplains or unique land features). By these standards, the plan area is underserved.

The planning team heard many anecdotal reports of informal (and sometimes unwanted or illicit) use of woods and streams on private or undeveloped property in the study area by youth. There were also reports of young people congregating in stores or in parking lots for lack of better options. The Principal of Dent Middle School related that many of his students are “latch-key kids” and need constructive activities or places to go after the school day ends. The planning team also observed many area senior citizens using the Columbia Place Mall as a place to walk for exercise.

Some participants noted that the local school grounds and facilities are closed to the public or are underutilized as public open space. The principals of both Richland Northeast High School and Dent Middle School reported that there is informal use of the school grounds by area residents after hours and that playing fields are formally available for rent by organized sports leagues.

Recommendations

There are a number of significant opportunities for increasing open

space and recreation options in the study area, many of which can be accomplished in the near term.

- There are roughly 34 acres of property in the study area that are traversed by the Jackson Creek floodway on either side of the intersection of Decker Boulevard and O’Neil Court. Portions of this property may be eligible for stormwater mitigation restoration through the Sandhills mitigation bank funding and/or SCDOT mitigation bank funding (see the section on Natural Resources). If acquired, all or a portion of this acreage would be appropriate for a conservation area and active and passive recreation uses including playing fields and trails.

Development of such a park might be eligible for transportation enhancements funding if it included a greenway component. The Richland County Recreation Commission said that they would be in favor of such a “wetland area park” and would do the programming for the park.

- Richland School District Two owns a 19 acre undeveloped tract of land directly across Brookfield Road from the high school. The District has contemplated using this land for additional playing fields for the school, but such fields could potentially be made available to area residents as well through a joint-use agreement with the Recreation Commission.
- Area schools, in conjunction with the Recreation Council if necessary, could publicize, program, and make more accessible the use of school facilities for area residents. For example, at Richland Northeast High School, one of the main points of access to the campus playing fields from the Woodfield Park neighborhood is typically locked. Having a pedestrian accessible entrance might facilitate more casual use of the school’s facilities.
- The East Richland Sewer District owns a 1.9 acre parcel with frontage on Lake Cary (aka Lake Arcadia) and accessible from Sandy Shore Road behind the Pep Boys store. The site currently houses a pump station. The Sewer District is presently trying to determine what to do with the property and is considering the option of selling the land and moving the pump station. If the County were able to purchase the site, a recreation facility could be developed there providing public access to an attractive body of water in the study area that currently has no public frontage.
- The neighborhood redevelopment design concepts in this report include more than 26 acres of new neighborhood parks and squares as amenities for new housing (see the Neighborhood Redevelopment section). As residential development and redevelopment occurs in the study area, developers should be required or incented to provide or contribute to public open space and parks in the area.

~8 acre park concept in Jackson Creek floodplain



19 acre playing fields/park on Brookfield Road



6+ acre park in neighborhood redevelopment concept



Commercial Redevelopment

Existing Conditions

There are currently an estimated 180,000 square feet of vacant retail or commercial space on the Decker Boulevard corridor - roughly the amount of space required for a new Super Walmart. This condition has profound psychological as well as economic impact on the study area and the region at large and is one of the motivating factors for undertaking this plan. The residents and stakeholders in the plan area over and over again mentioned the frustration and the disappointment with the closing of businesses along the corridor, most notably the Kroger and Target stores at the Decker Mall and the Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurants.

The recent closing of these restaurants and their moving to newer growth areas in the northeast Columbia area seems to symbolize for residents and stakeholders one of the primary issues for the corridor. Residents and area employees see the departure of these business as an affront to an area which has had so many long-time and loyal customers and which still has so much potential. These stakeholders are also concerned about the image of a “dying strip” created by vacant buildings and the impact that it has on potential investors in the area, the perception of blight and crime, and the potential for further deteriorating the economic condition of the area.

One Woodfield Park resident described her feelings of embarrassment when bringing family to visit. Several participants



Vacant Olive Garden Restaurant site on Decker Blvd near O'Neil Court

in the plan process mentioned the vacant bank building at the corner of N. Trenholm Road and Decker Boulevard as an eyesore that creates a negative image at the entrance to the corridor. Numerous stakeholders pointed out one of the secondary impacts of deteriorating retail conditions: the proliferation of businesses that are seen as undesirable by many residents, including pawn shops, bingo parlors, and night clubs/bars.

The vacant businesses are also of concern to residents of the region at large. In the recent Northeast Summit facilitated by the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education program, northeast residents mentioned revitalizing older commercial corridors like Two Notch Road and Decker Boulevard as one of four primary issues.

Recommendations

This report details a number of key recommendations for shoring up the appearance and the vitality of the commercial properties along Decker Boulevard. These recommendations include:

- Consolidate properties at Trenholm/Decker intersection to create opportunities for retail redevelopment
- Plan redevelopment options for Bi-Lo center
- Develop new housing and mixed-use developments in the study area that will spur new retail development
- Promote the recent SC Retail Facilities Revitalization Act to owners of vacant retail properties
- Rezone some commercially zoned properties and develop new development standards for mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented redevelopment (See Regulatory Tools section)
- Remove vacant and underutilized commercial buildings from the Jackson Creek floodway (as detailed in the sections above) and market remaining buildable parcels for mixed-use development

10 Principles for Reinventing Suburban Business Districts

-- Urban Land Institute, 2002

1. Realistically assess the market position and potential for a suburban business district.
2. Build community support by developing consensus among citizens, government, and the private sector.
3. Develop a strategic plan that is supported by the community and that draws on professional expertise.
4. Rethink existing zoning regulations to allow mixed uses that can be modified over time as the needs of the community evolve.
5. Create interconnected, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use districts from existing isolated superblocks.
6. Embrace mixed uses that offer the community a wider range of goods, services, and experiences in one location.
7. Create pedestrian-friendly places that encourage interaction.
8. Offer a choice of transportation modes, such as pedestrian, transit, bicycle, and automobile options.
9. Form public/private partnerships to minimize risk, develop strategies, and implement change.
10. Share and manage parking to reduce the number of spaces required and consolidating more uses within buildings to encourage pedestrians.



Vacant Winn-Dixie shopping center at Decker and Trenholm Rd

Trenholm Road Retail Redevelopment

The Trenholm Road intersection is the gateway to Decker Boulevard from the Two Notch Road and Trenholm Road corridors. Currently, there are vacant buildings at the three of the four corners of the intersection, including the mostly vacant Winn Dixie shopping center at the northeast corner. Several participants in the charrette mentioned the vacant bank building at the northwest corner as a particularly frustrating eyesore since the building has been vacant for several years and upkeep on the site has been minimal. The properties at three of the four corners have also been divided by the Trenholm Road extension and the free-flow right turn lane at the northwest corner. This condition provides opportunities, however, to recombine parcels and create new, larger, and more feasible development parcels at the corners.

If recombined, parcels at these corners would make ideal locations for drug stores because of the traffic volumes and the location at a major intersection. Currently, and surprisingly, there are no new drug stores on the Decker corridor. Residents who completed the Community Survey listed drug stores as one of the top three desired services for the area.

Primary redevelopment recommendations for the area around the Trenholm Road/Decker Boulevard intersection include:

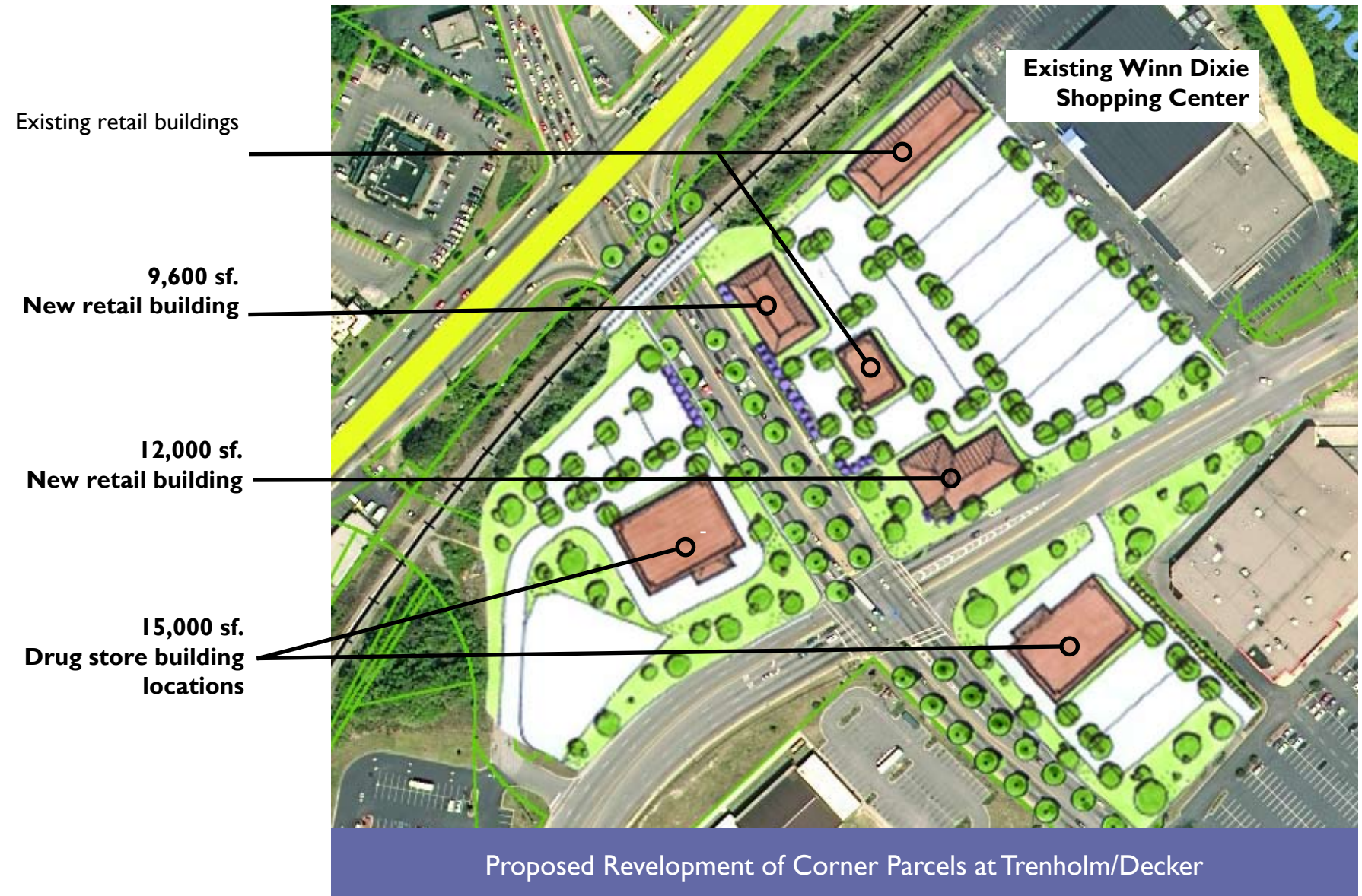
- Remove free flow right turn lane at northwest corner (see Transportation and Infrastructure section for further discussion) to create additional land that could be added to the bank property to create a larger and more developable parcel. This also would provide opportunity for more landscaping at the corner as well as a more pedestrian-friendly intersection.
- Work with property owners to recombine remnant parcels from the construction of Trenholm Road extension at eastern corners to create developable parcels for new retail development. The new parcels may be able to benefit from sharing parking with adjacent retail uses.



Vacant Bank Building at the Northwest Corner



Existing Conditions at Trenholm/Decker Intersection



Proposed Development of Corner Parcels at Trenholm/Decker

Bi-Lo Center Redevelopment Options

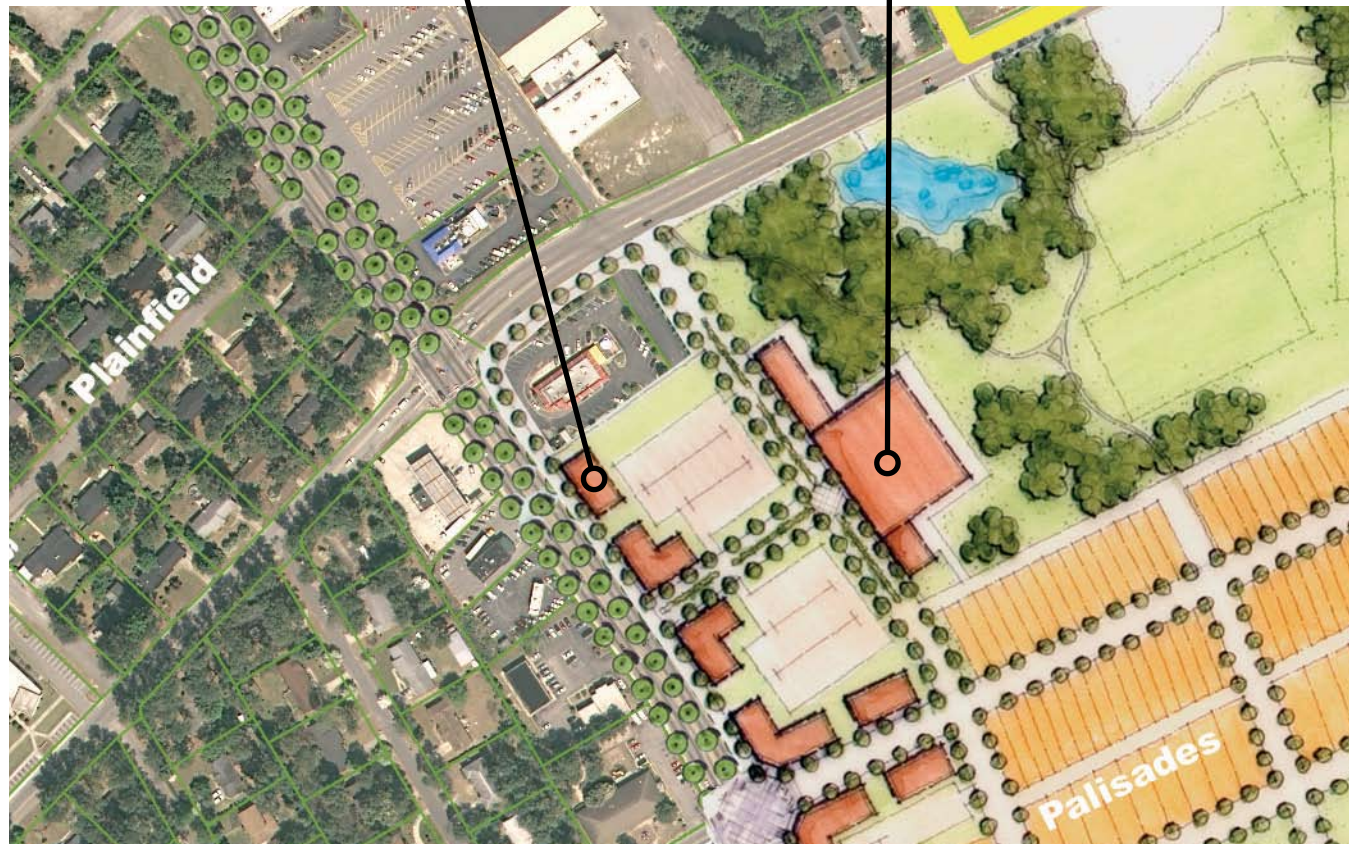
The existing Bi-Lo shopping center (also known as the “Highpoint on Decker” center) is a grocery store-anchored center located at the intersection of Decker Boulevard and Faraway Road. The center is fully leased with neighborhood serving retail uses. The center is aging, however, and is oriented perpendicular to Decker Boulevard, which is contrary to the preferred formats for new grocery stores being built today. Furthermore, the site is on one of the most prominent locations -- the highpoint -- on the Decker corridor and backs up to residential lots on Faraway Road. Based on these factors, this center will eventually be ripe for redevelopment. The concepts on this page and the page that follows show how the center could be redeveloped over time.

The first concept (below left) shows how a new grocery store could be built on the site facing Decker Boulevard and the site wrapped with mixed use buildings on the Decker frontage. The second concept (below right) is for a complete transformation of the site to a new use as a series of mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail and upper story condominiums or apartments adjacent to a greenspace or park. A proposed elevation of the mixed-use condominium building along with development details is shown on the following page.

New Grocery Anchored Mixed-Use Center Development Concept:

**35,000 sf. ground floor retail
+ 35 residential units
(in 5 buildings)**

**45,000 sf.
New grocery-
anchored strip**



Proposed redevelopment of Bi-Lo center with mixed-use buildings on Decker



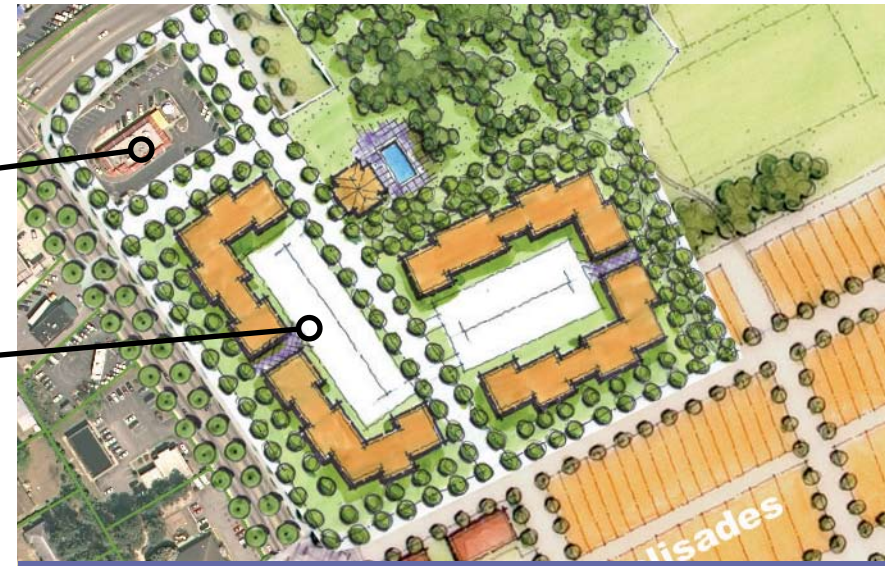
Bi-Lo Center Existing Conditions



Proposed redevelopment of Bi-Lo center with condominiums

Existing McDonald's
Restaurant

250-300 residential units
+ 25,000-50,000 sf. ground
floor commercial space



Site Plan of Proposed Condominium Buildings



Existing Conditions of Hilltop Area



Proposed Condominiums with Ground Level Retail adjacent to Park

Mixed-Use Development: Neighborhood Zone

The area between Faraway Drive and Percival Road on Decker Boulevard is one of the more logical locations for mixed-use development to occur on the corridor because of the existing proximity of residential uses, the lower traffic volumes, and the existing network of relatively small blocks and closely spaced streets. Additionally, the existing blocks are not deep enough to accommodate large commercial uses.

The proposed development concept at right anticipates the redevelopment of several blocks with two to three story mixed use buildings with ground floor commercial uses and upper-story residential units. The concept includes the development of new streets and urban parks/plazas. This concept could be developed incrementally as property becomes available. In general, however, it shows how buildings should relate to the street to create a pedestrian-oriented environment; relate to the existing and proposed residential uses; and, how new blocks can be established. In this concept, the square footage of the building footprints are very similar to existing commercial buildings in this area, but buildings are fronting on the street with parking arranged behind.

The park/plazas show in this concept would provide a community gathering space, which could be the focus of retail activity as well as an attractive space for community events and residential frontage.

The new housing proposed in this concept and other concepts for the area would provide impetus for new commercial investment in the corridor. As the saying goes, “retail follows rooftops.”

2-3 story mixed use buildings:
~200,000 sf. ground floor commercial
+ 50-100 residential units

**2 acres
park/plaza space**



Mixed-use Development Concept on Decker Boulevard



Existing Conditions

Neighborhood Redevelopment

One of the primary impetuses for this planning effort is enhancing the stability and quality of life of the neighborhoods that surround the Decker Boulevard Corridor, especially the Woodfield Park and Forest Park neighborhoods. Residents and County elected officials and staff are interested in strengthening what have traditionally been very strong and stable neighborhoods and ensuring that they remain attractive places to live.

Issues

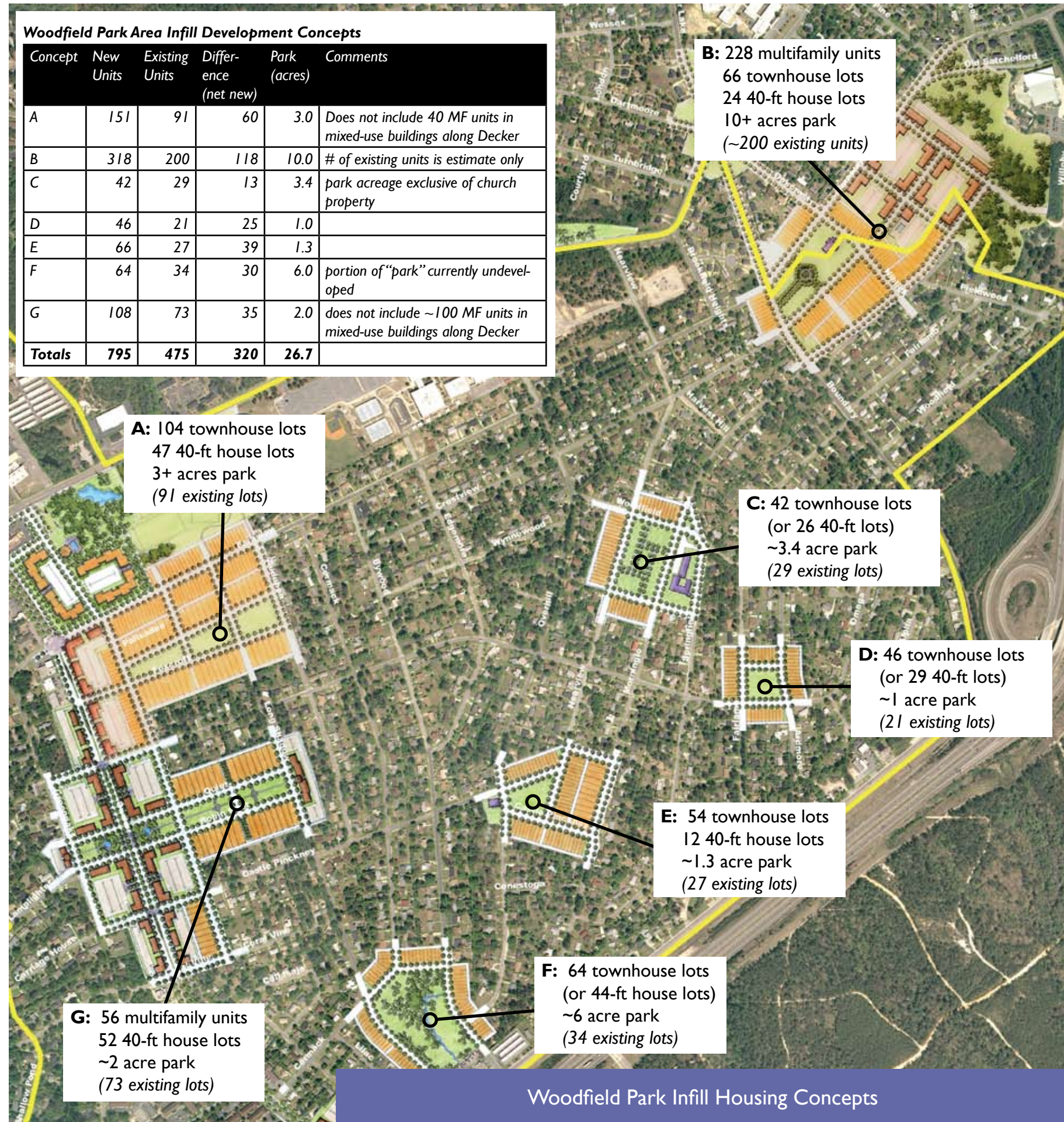
Although the history and character of the neighborhoods along Decker Boulevard differ in terms of types of housing available and demographics, local residents and other stakeholders are experiencing many of the same issues and realize that the well being of their neighborhoods are bound up with the future of the entire corridor. Many of the neighborhood concerns reflect area-wide concerns including: the number of Section 8 rentals in the Woodfield Park neighborhoods; and the concentration of very low-income rental communities (including mobile homes) at the northeast corner of the study area and along the Percival Road edge of the study area. Residents of both the Woodfield Park and the Forest Park neighborhood have expressed concerns with the growing number of rental houses and the ability to attract new families and homeowners to the area due to diminished perceptions of safety and attractiveness in the neighborhoods and along Decker Boulevard. As noted earlier, more than 20% of the nearly 1500 homes in the Woodfield Park area are assumed to be rentals. Many residents also spoke of the need for code enforcement in the neighborhoods to deal with overcrowding of rental properties and unkempt yards.

Opportunities

Despite growing concerns about issues that could lead to neighborhood destabilization and deterioration, local residents and stakeholders were very clear about the opportunities and advantages that benefit area neighborhoods and the planning area generally. Specifically, the area is blessed with the County's most highly rated school district, has strong neighborhood associations, and is proximate to Fort Jackson. Furthermore, the neighborhoods are rich in long-time and active homeowners who take great pride in their homes and neighborhoods.

There are a number of specific opportunities related to Fort Jackson's growth and proximity that have the potential for very

Concept	New Units	Existing Units	Difference (net new)	Park (acres)	Comments
A	151	91	60	3.0	Does not include 40 MF units in mixed-use buildings along Decker
B	318	200	118	10.0	# of existing units is estimate only
C	42	29	13	3.4	park acreage exclusive of church property
D	46	21	25	1.0	
E	66	27	39	1.3	
F	64	34	30	6.0	portion of "park" currently undeveloped
G	108	73	35	2.0	does not include ~100 MF units in mixed-use buildings along Decker
Totals	795	475	320	26.7	



A: 104 townhouse lots
47 40-ft house lots
3+ acres park
(91 existing lots)

B: 228 multifamily units
66 townhouse lots
24 40-ft house lots
10+ acres park
(~200 existing units)

C: 42 townhouse lots
(or 26 40-ft lots)
~3.4 acre park
(29 existing lots)

D: 46 townhouse lots
(or 29 40-ft lots)
~1 acre park
(21 existing lots)

E: 54 townhouse lots
12 40-ft house lots
~1.3 acre park
(27 existing lots)

F: 64 townhouse lots
(or 44-ft house lots)
~6 acre park
(34 existing lots)

G: 56 multifamily units
52 40-ft house lots
~2 acre park
(73 existing lots)

Woodfield Park Infill Housing Concepts

positive impacts on the study area neighborhoods. These include:

- 800 new employees at the Fort for drill sergeant training school
- Plans for expanding the chaplain school at the Fort
- The 2008 on-base housing reassessment, which is recommending that some housing be transitioned off-base
- The growing market of military retirees who want to have access to the type of services offered at the Fort

Recommendations

Neighborhood Infill

One of the primary recommendations of this report is to identify opportunities for and develop infill housing. The existing neighborhoods, especially the Woodfield Park area, have had very limited investment in renovated or new housing over the past few decades and the current housing stock does not compete well with new housing products in terms of size and “curb appeal.”

During the charrette, the design team explored a number of infill redevelopment concepts for the Woodfield Park area. These concepts are shown on the map on the previous page and are explored in greater detail on the pages that follow. These development concepts are simply that -- conceptual designs that explore how existing parcels could be redeveloped if combined. They are not plans for condemnation or government acquisition of private property, but are examples of how properties could be re-subdivided to increase the number and type of housing options in the neighborhood, to provide for opportunities for new construction in an existing neighborhood, and at the same time significantly increase the public parks and open space in the neighborhood. Based on these concepts, more than 800 new housing units including single family homes, townhouses, and condominiums and apartments could be developed, a net increase of nearly 300 units over the existing number of homes in the neighborhood. The concepts also show more than 26 acres of new parks and open space to be added to a neighborhood area that currently has no public parks.

The infill concept locations were chosen based on existing concentrations of rental/investment properties or vacant properties since these types of properties would likely be easier to acquire, but these locations are certainly not the only or definitive sites for this type of infill development. The general development concept could and should be pursued wherever the most feasible opportunities arise. The design concepts are also intended to be developments that could evolve over time as property becomes available and provide a template for private developers who may wish to assemble properties on a smaller scale.

Successful infill of new housing by individual developers/builders

with a few scattered lots at a time has been completed in the Rosewood neighborhood in Columbia where over 100 new homes in have been built in the last five years. This neighborhood has a housing stock that is of a similar age and type to the houses in the Woodfield Park and Forest Acres neighborhoods.

The design concepts are predicated upon the assumption that new zoning and development standards would be adopted for the area to make the designs possible since the designs utilize lot sizes (primarily 40 foot wide for single family) and use types (townhouses and mixed-use buildings) that are not currently permitted under current zoning standards. The smaller lot types and new housing types are intended to maximize the existing infrastructure in the neighborhoods and at the same time provide for a higher level of amenities and improvements, including parks and design and infrastructure that the new developments would be required to provide (lighting, sidewalks, street trees, etc.). Recommended changes to zoning and development standards are detailed in a later section of the report.



Existing house in Columbia's Rosewood neighborhood



New infill house in Columbia's Rosewood neighborhood



Infill Concept D: Existing Conditions with Rental Properties (in red)



Infill Concept D: New Lots and Park



Infill Concept A: Existing Conditions with Rental Properties (in red)



Infill Concept A: Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Infill Housing: View along Parkway

Infill Concept C: Church Park Incremental Infill

This set of drawings show how a redevelopment concept can evolve incrementally. Phase 1 shows how two existing rental properties could be acquired to create new neighborhood park space. (Rental properties shown in red on inset map.) The image in the middle frame shows how the park could be expanded over time to include additional rental properties that exist on the same block. The park could, of course, provide activity space that could be used for church functions. The final frame shows how eventually the park could be expanded and new streets and alleys constructed to create a series of new residences (shown as townhouse lots, but single family lots would be just as feasible) fronting on the park.



Infill Concept C: Phase 1 - Pocket Park (2 Lots)



Infill Concept C: Phase 2 - Neighborhood Park (8 Lots)



Infill Concept C: Phase 3 - Block Redevelopment



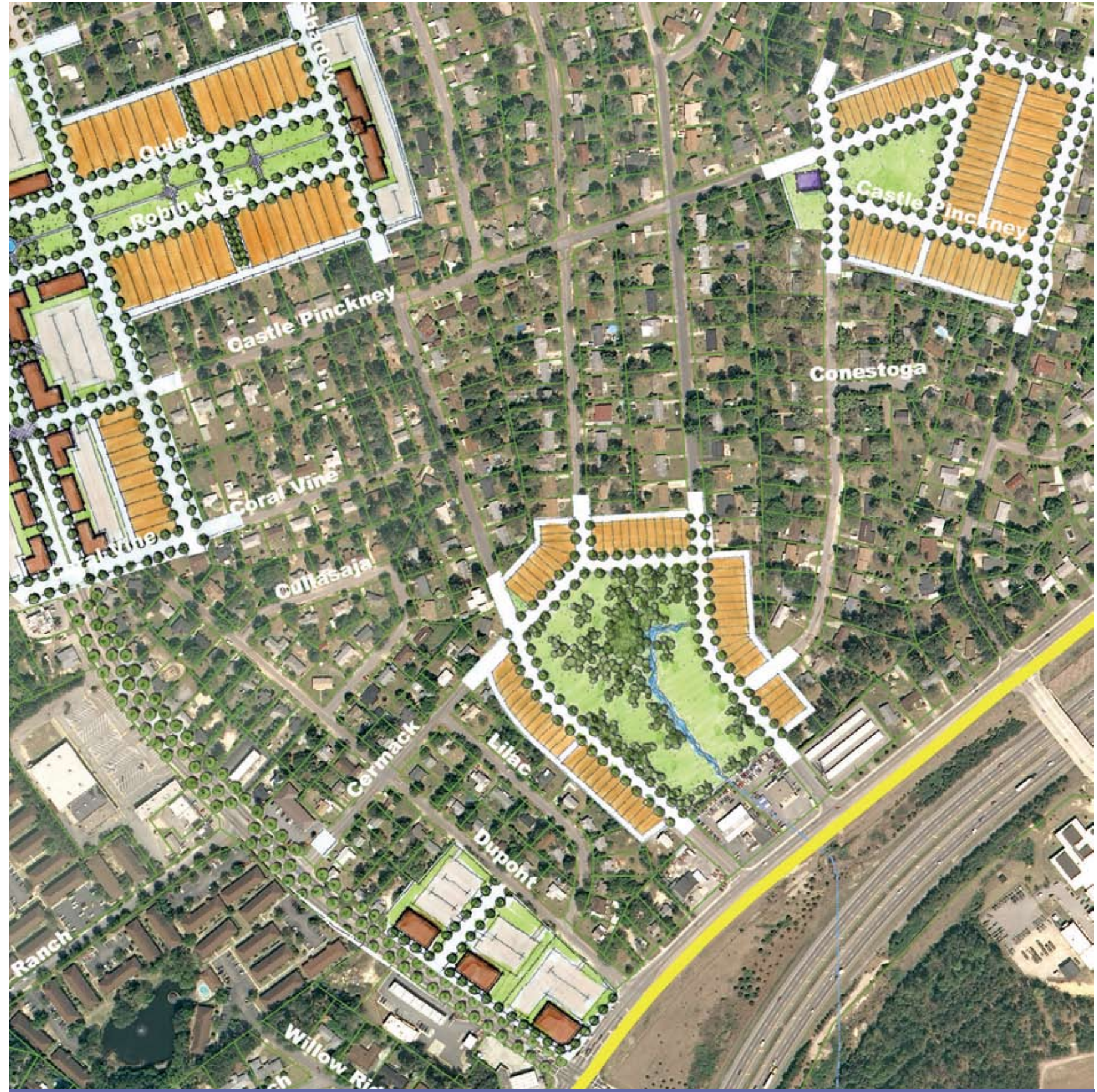
Infill Concept G: Existing Conditions with Rentals (in red)



Infill Concept F: Existing Conditions with Rentals (in red)



Infill Concept E: Existing Conditions with Rentals (in red)



Infill Concepts E, F, & G

THE RENAISSANCE PLAN

Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area

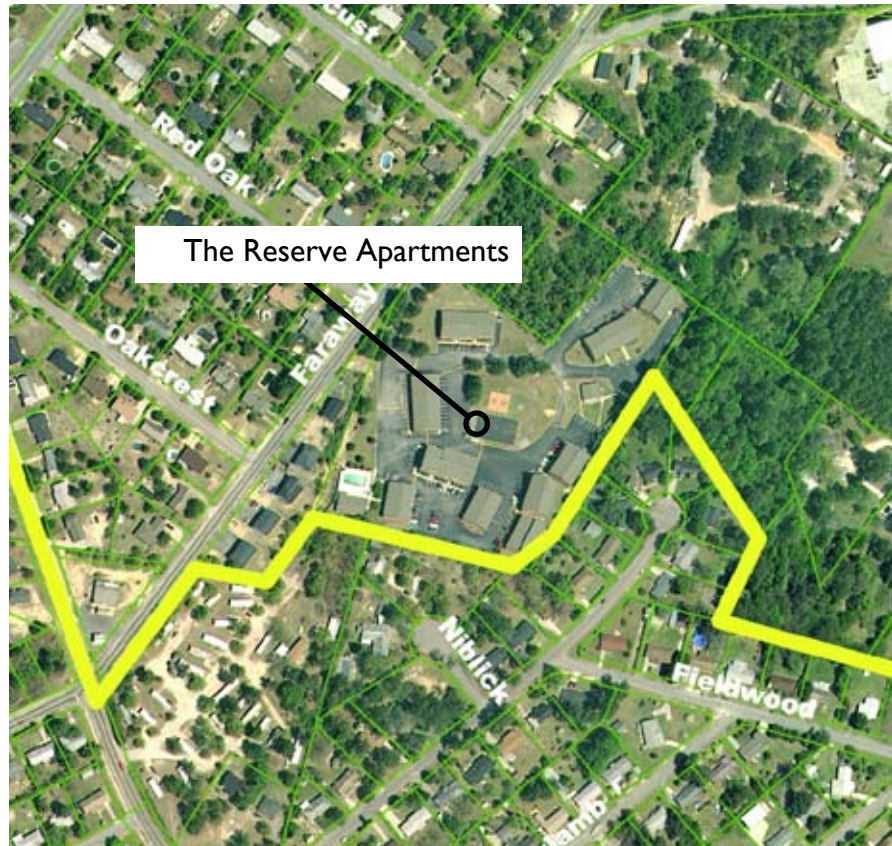
Neighborhood
Redevelopment

Infill Concept B: Redevelop the Reserve Apartments and Vicinity

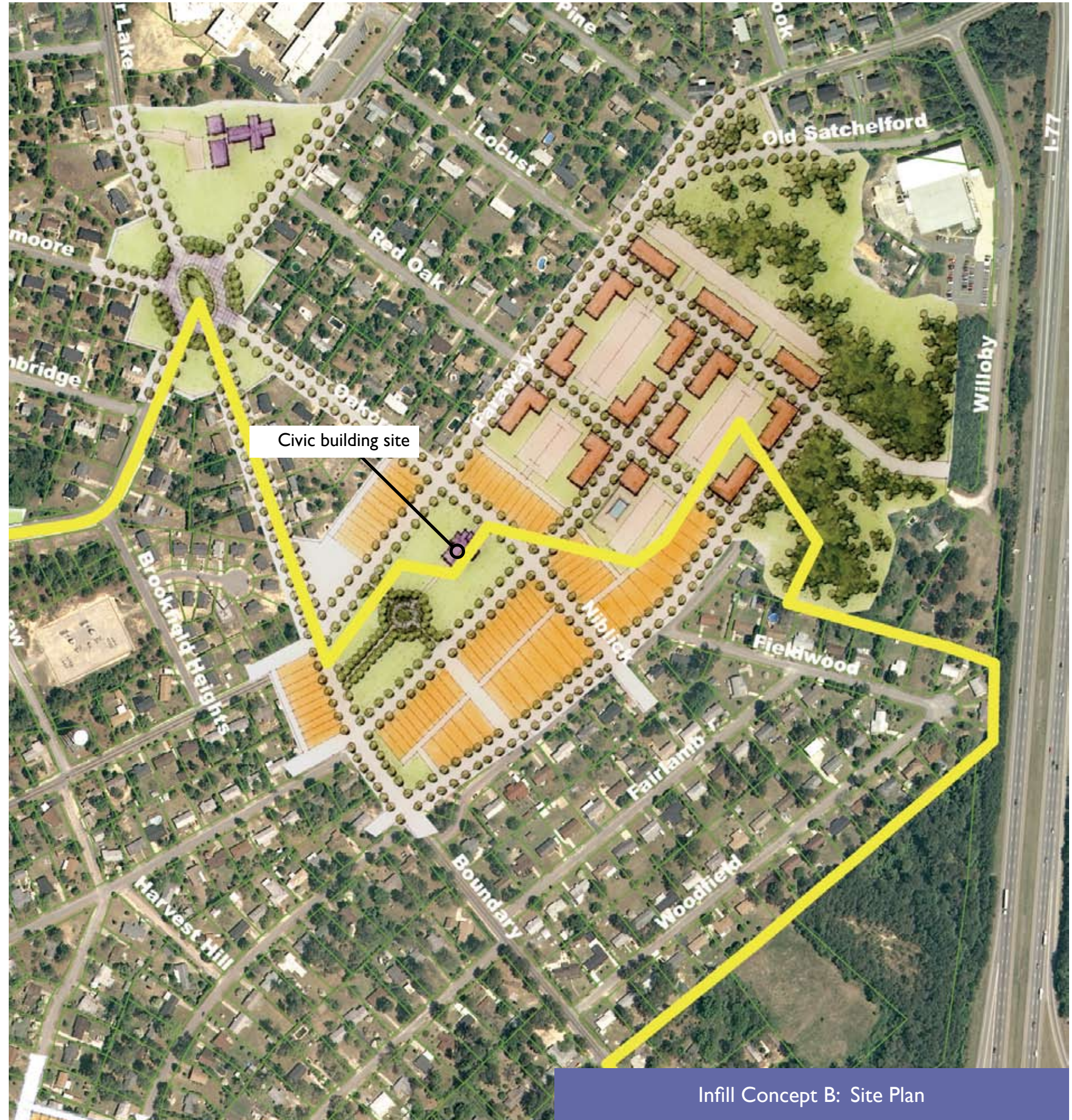
This plan recommends that the County work with the Columbia Housing Authority, other housing providers, surrounding property owners and stakeholders to redevelop the Reserve Apartments and the area along Faraway Drive between East Boundary and I-77 into a mix of housing options including updated rental units and home ownership options.

The Reserve Apartments is a complex of apartment buildings owned by CHA. It is located just outside the study area boundary, northeast of the Woodfield Park neighborhood. The apartments, the surrounding properties that include two mobile home parks to the north and south, and a series of rental tri-plexes along Faraway Drive were cited by a number of stakeholders as being the source of a number of crime and blight issues for the general area.

While these properties provide more than 200 or more affordable rental housing units, they are not well located in terms of access to services or public transit. Furthermore, they represent what appears to be a significant concentration of outdated and marginally maintained low-income rental housing. The fact that the largest and most central of the properties, the Reserve Apartments, is owned by a public authority may provide an opportunity to jump start a redevelopment of the entire area. The site plan shows how a significant public green space and perhaps even a civic building such as a church could be included in the plan.



Infill Concept B: Existing Conditions

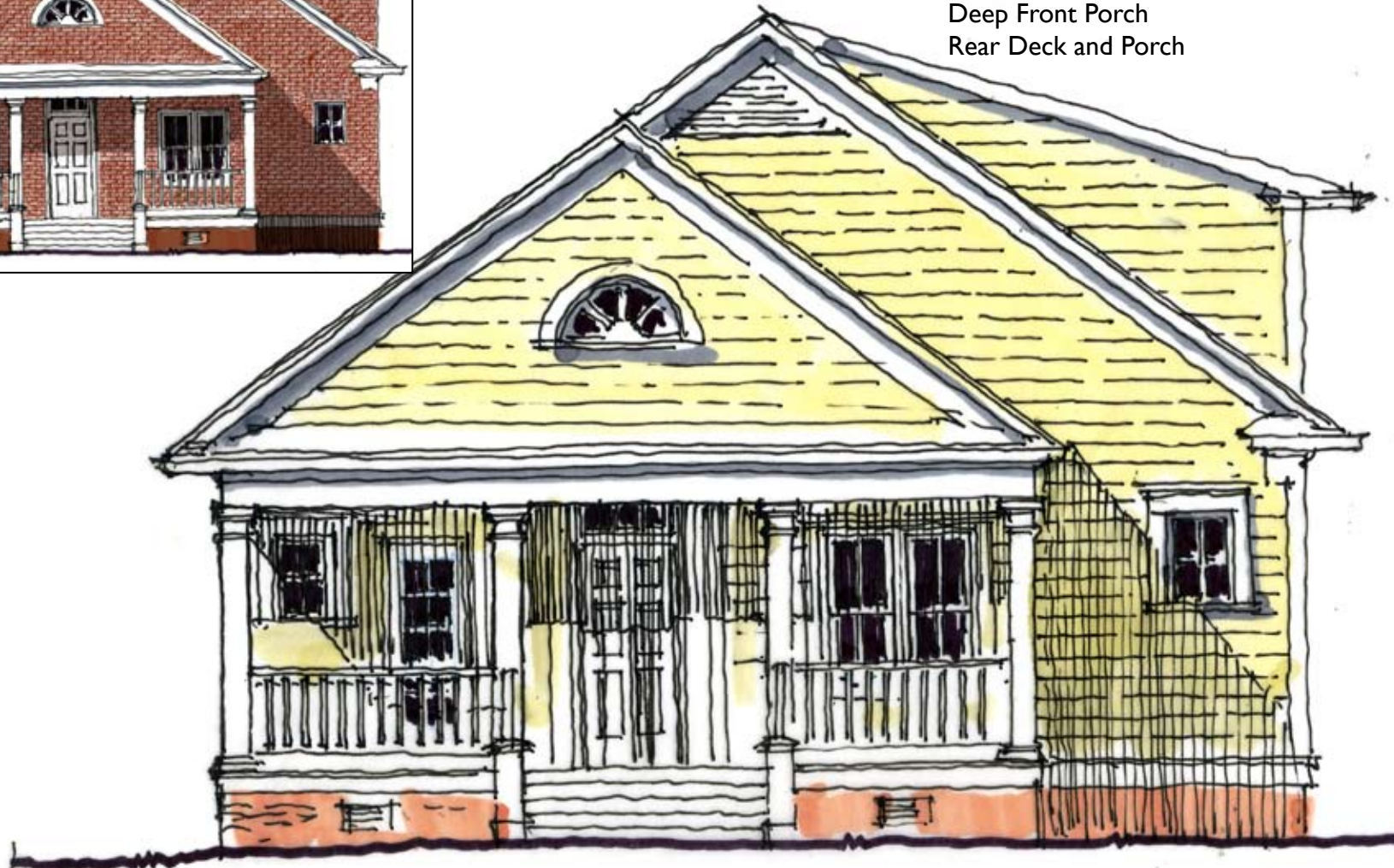


Infill Concept B: Site Plan

Infill Housing Designs

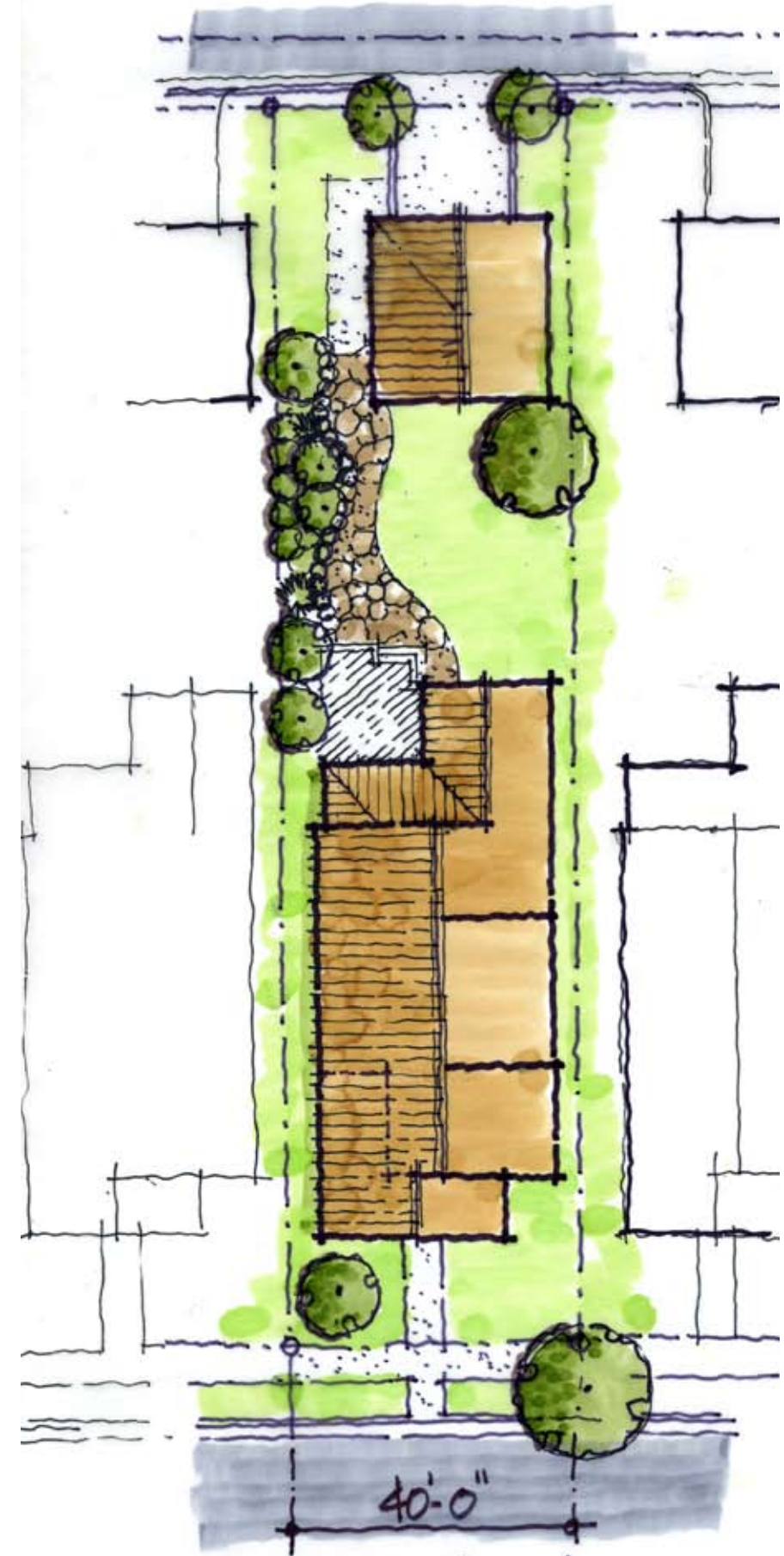
As noted above, the notion of infill in the Woodfield Park area is based on recombining existing lots to create more compact building lots with more public amenities and open space. The house designs on this page and the two pages following pages are intended to show examples of very attractive and functional houses of a size and layout comparable with new construction tract homes that can be built on small lots in existing neighborhoods. *(Note: These home designs are examples only and do not represent a required or expected architectural style or type.)* These designs would be attractive to home buyers who might find the Woodfield Park location attractive, but who might want newer and/or larger homes than are currently available in the neighborhood. These home buyers might be current residents looking for new housing options or first time owners who might otherwise have purchased a home on the newly developing fringes of the region.

The designs show ground floor master bedroom options and one- and two-story options in recognition that many baby boomers and retirees desire to have their living quarters all on one story. Many of the stakeholders who completed surveys indicated a desire for single-story houses and senior living options. While these house designs are not specifically targeted to seniors, houses on small lots or townhouses with “master-down” options are attractive to this demographic because of the desire to reduce yard upkeep responsibilities and potentially to reduce the size of their homes. As noted earlier, the Decker Boulevard area’s proximity and ease of access to Fort Jackson makes the area especially appealing to military retirees who may want to take up residence nearby. New homes like those described here would be attractive to this target market as well as to current and new Fort employees looking for housing options in the vicinity. According to the Fort Jackson representative at the charrette, many of these employees are currently going to Kershaw County to find affordable, new homes of a comparable size to those shown here.

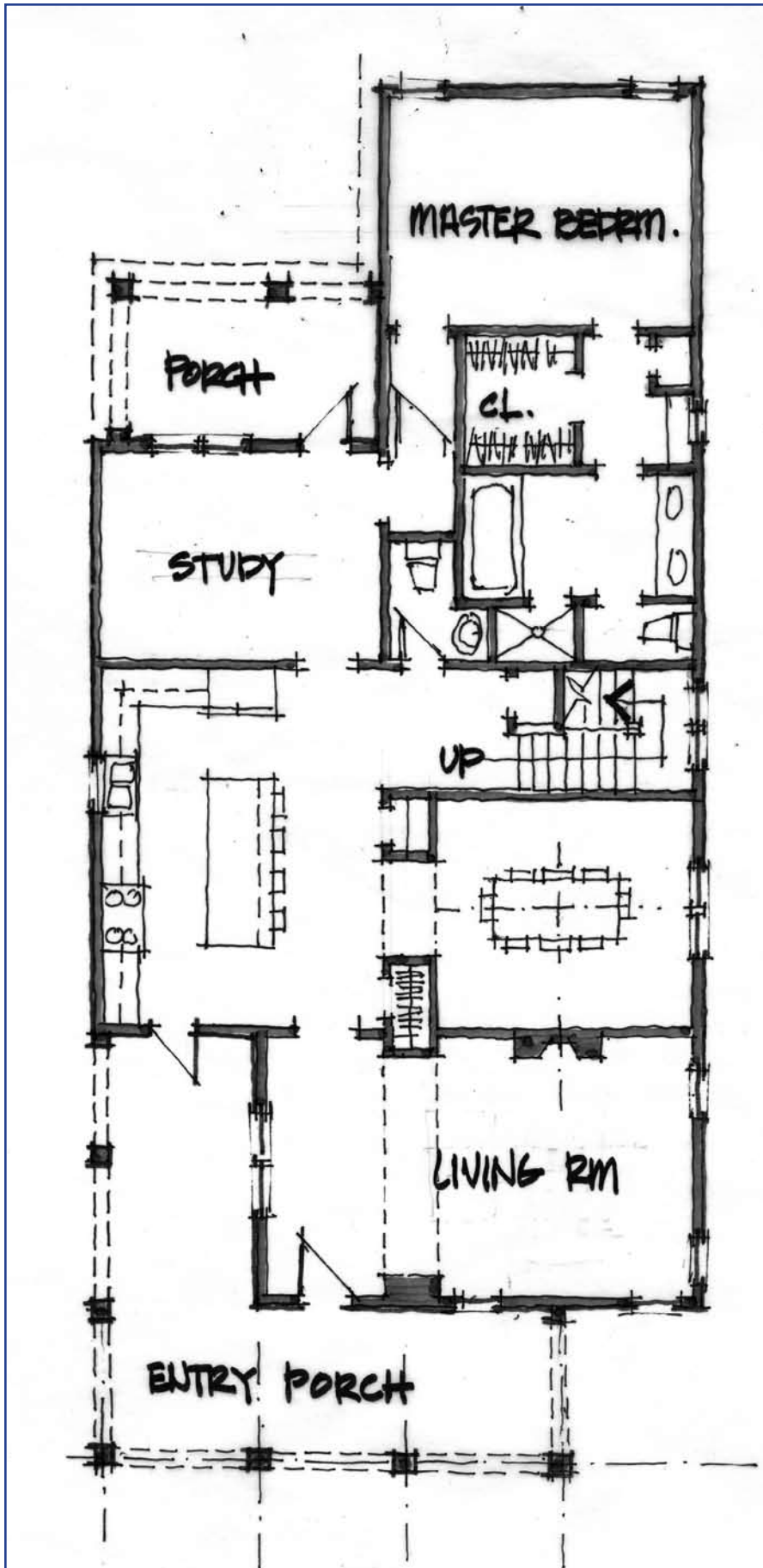


Lot Size: 6,000 Square Feet
Total Floor Area: ~2,200 Square Feet
3 Bedroom + 2 1/2 Bath + Bonus Room
2 Car Garage (on alley) + Bonus Room
Deep Front Porch
Rear Deck and Porch

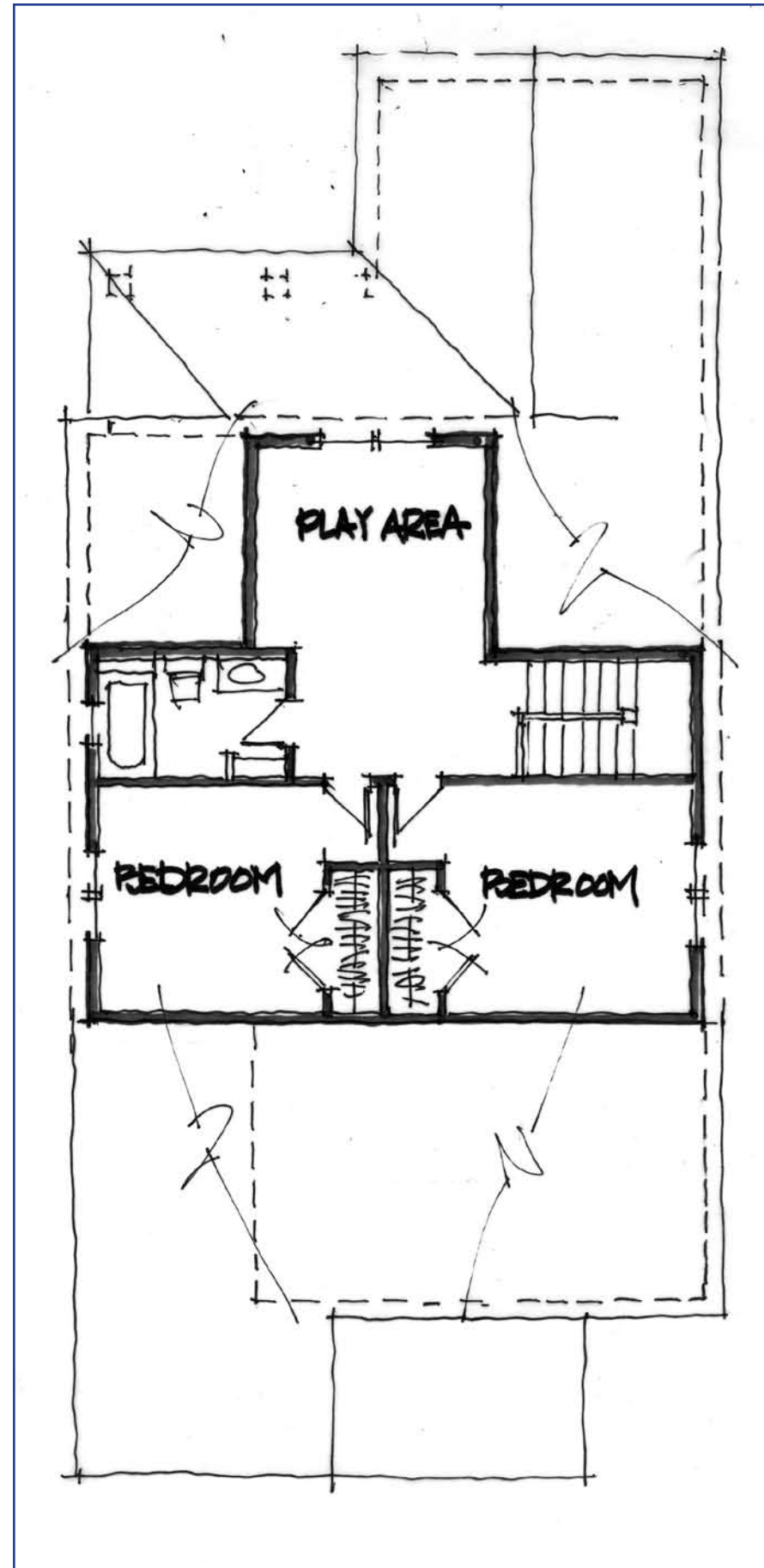
Potential Elevations (Greek Revival Style with siding; inset: brick version)



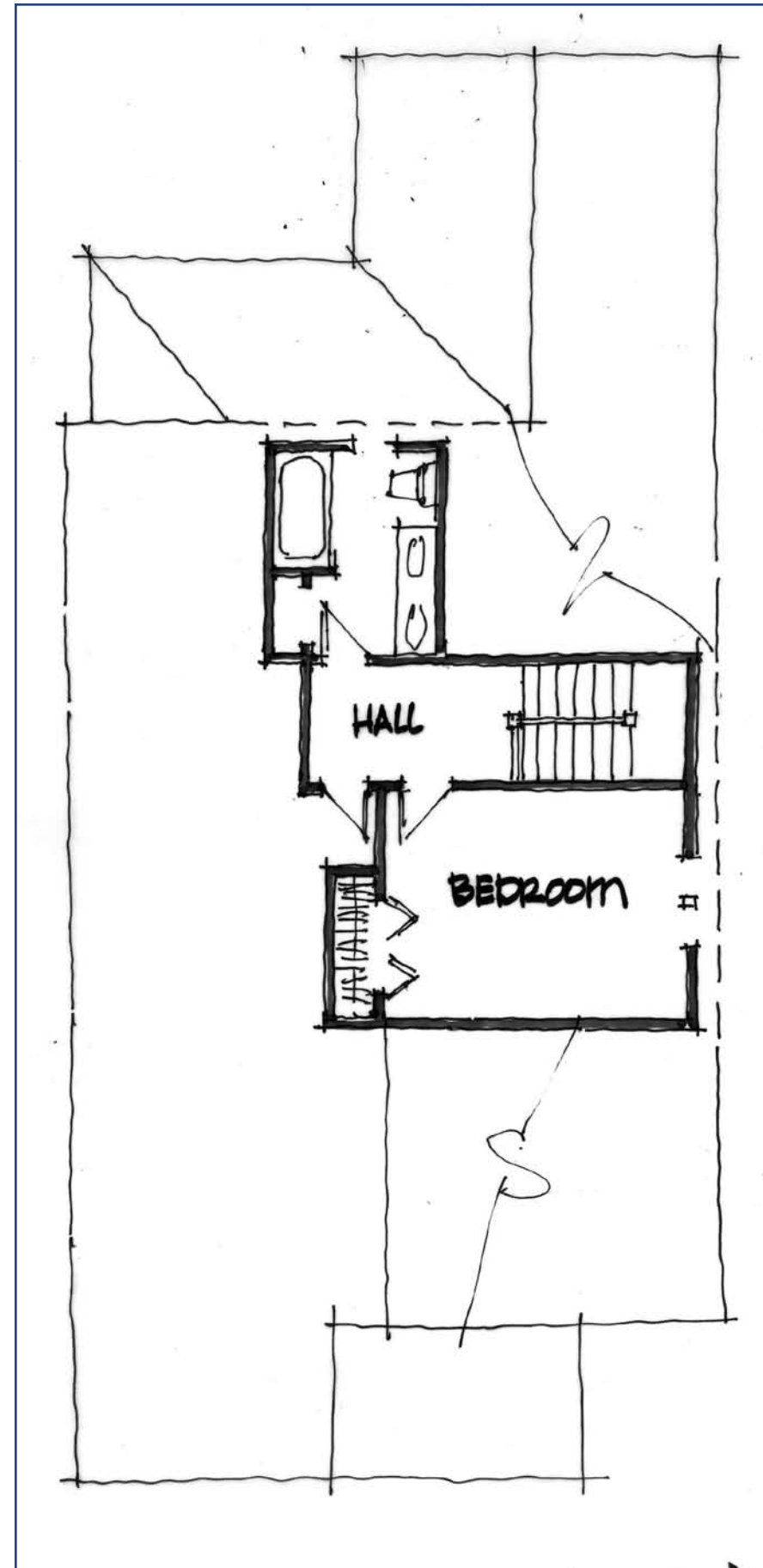
Site Plan for 40 Foot Lot with Alley



40 Foot Lot with Alley - Ground Floor



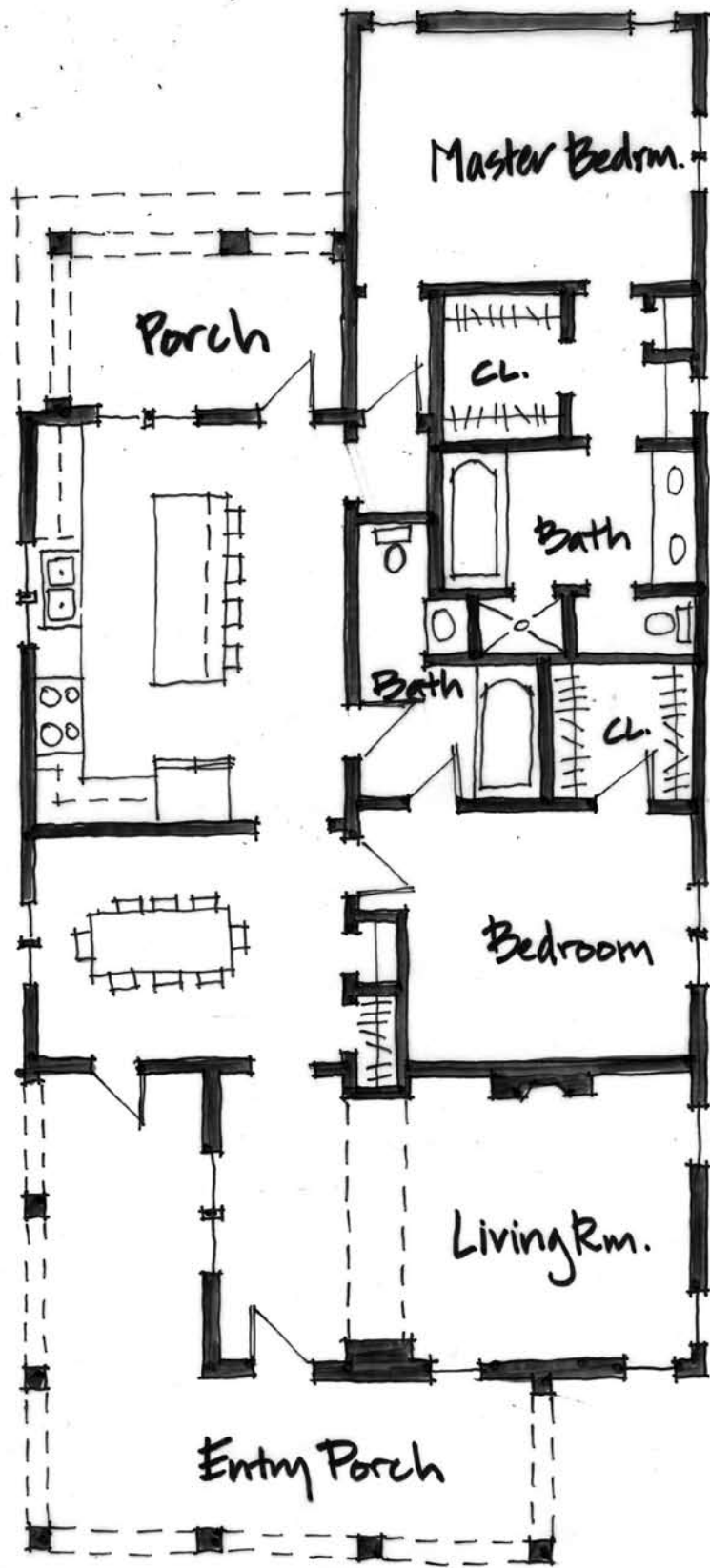
40 Foot Lot with Alley - 2nd Floor



40 Foot Lot with Alley - 2nd Floor Alternate

THE RENAISSANCE PLAN
Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area

Neighborhood
Redevelopment



40 Foot Lot with Alley - 1 Story Alternate (1,600 SF)



40 Foot Lot with Alley - Tudor Style



40 Foot Lot with Alley - Bungalow Style



30 Foot Lot with Alley - 1,600 SF - Ground Floor



30 Foot Lot with Alley - 1,600 SF - 2nd Floor

THE RENAISSANCE PLAN
Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area

Neighborhood
Redevelopment

Develop Local Community Development Corporation

One of the ideas that emerged out of the planning process was the development of a local Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the area that could provide leadership and coordination for housing development and housing programs in the area. Such an organization could be responsible for initiating home ownership educational programs, rehabilitation and renovation programs for existing housing stock, as well as development and construction of new housing.

Plan participants suggested that a local CDC could provide educational programs for current residents and new homeowners or renters as well as focused program for immigrant families. The organization could be an umbrella for area housing agency efforts as well as interested stakeholders such as Fort Jackson, Blue Cross/Blue Shield (which maintains a large employment complex outside of the plan area), Richland County School District Two, and area neighborhood associations. This organization could also serve as a conduit for funding of new housing initiatives and an intermediary for lending organizations.

Work with Area Partners to Fund New Housing Development and Housing Programs

There are a number of sources of funding for new housing development and related programs to promote and stabilize neighborhoods. The case study on the right provides an example of an approach to using CDBG and HOME funds in targeted areas to maximize returns on investment. CDBG and HOME funds are current funding sources that the County already uses for housing programs, but this example suggests a strategic approach to the distribution of those funds.

The representative from Fort Jackson who participated in the charrette indicated that the Fort may have funding for off-base housing. Additionally, CHA, the South Carolina State Housing and Finance Authority, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce may be sources of funding and or support for housing initiatives in the plan area. As noted above, CHA owns at least one apartment complex in the study area. They also own a number of single family properties in the Woodfield Park area and manage the local Section 8 housing voucher program, which provides rental subsidies to a number of rental households in the study area. Representatives from Richland County School District Two indicated that they might be willing to assist in securing government and foundation grants for improvements in the area.

Market the Area to Potential Home Buyers

As noted in the market study, targeted marketing to potential new residents to the area must be part of a comprehensive housing strategy for the area. In combination with the development of new housing, new infrastructure and open space improvements outlined in this plan, as well initiatives to reduce the perception of crime and blight in the area and create a new area brand identity, the area's strengths -- including great schools, great accessibility to regional destinations and transportation options, proximity to Fort Jackson, etc. -- need to be promoted to potential residents of the area. The process for developing a market strategy and campaign are outlined later in the report. The actual implementation of such marketing efforts could be the responsibility of a CDC and local neighborhood and business organizations. Presenting the recommendations and implementation steps in this plan to area realtors would be a simple first step in a marketing and promotions process.

CASE STUDY: "Neighborhoods in Bloom," Richmond, VA

(Excerpted from Planning magazine, May, 2006; Meghan Stromberg, author)

Cities traditionally have used Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership funds, and other federal funding to help as many low- and middle-income residents and neighborhoods as possible, spreading the wealth across the community.

Richmond, Virginia, is trying a different tack: Its Neighborhoods in Bloom program targets six specific neighborhoods to receive most of the City's CDBG and HOME money. The idea is to focus resources in small but strategic geographic areas in a sustained fashion to achieve the **critical mass of public investment needed to stimulate self-sustaining private-market activity**. . . The program, initiated in 1999, is the result of a collaborative process involving the city, neighborhood residents, nonprofit housing developers, and the Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

How it Works

David Sacks, AICP, acting deputy director of the Department of Community Development, says the city looked at 40 neighborhoods before choosing the six currently served by Neighborhoods in Bloom: Barton Heights, Blackwell, Carver/Newtowne West, Church Hill, Highland Park, and Jackson Ward. The city council made its decision based on various criteria, including the neighborhood's existing properties, vacant housing, blight, and other factors that might make housing acquisition feasible. An area's potential for success was a factor as well. Sacks says the council looked for neighborhoods with active civic organizations, existing neighborhood plans, and nonprofit housing providers to partner with.

The program uses several techniques to facilitate neighborhood revitalization and encourage private investment. With help from the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the program acquires abandoned properties, then sells them to non-profit developers, often for \$1, for rehabilitation.

CDBG funds help cover some staff costs associated with the program, but mostly funds are allocated directly to providers for a variety of things: down payment assistance programs, acquisition costs, and demolition, construction, and rehabilitation expenses. The program has received \$26.4 million in CDBG funds in the last six years and another \$14 million from HOME.

Neighborhoods in Bloom initially provided grants of up to \$35,000 to people who would purchase, rehab, and live for seven years in a formerly vacant house, but the grant program is no longer funded. "Our entitlements went down 10 percent this year, and that follows a decrease from the last few years," Sacks explains, noting that construction costs have also gone up substantially. On the positive side, he adds, "with NiB, we've created some success. The market and appraised value has increase significantly."

Results Oriented

By September of last year, **nearly 400 new or renovated houses** were sold or were under development, **more than 130 home owners had repaired their own homes**, and **prices had appreciated in target areas** 10 percent faster than the rest of the city. Last July, the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond and LISC released a study that showed that housing prices in neighborhoods adjacent to NiB targeted areas increased 5.3 percent faster than the citywide average.

The city also found that **code enforcement sweeps** -- combined with consultations to residents from staff and housing counselors -- helped increase code compliance by 64 percent. And **crime in targeted areas decreased by 19 percent**, compared to a six percent reduction citywide.

Transportation and Streetscaping

A key component of the Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Renaissance Plan is an analysis of the existing transportation and streetscape conditions as well as a series of recommendations for improving these conditions. The following is an overview of the transportation and streetscape issues in the plan area and a list of recommendations for improvements.

Existing Conditions

The study area is well served from a roadway transportation perspective. Along its nearly two mile length, Decker Boulevard provides easy regional and inter-state access to major highways and urban arterials including direct access to I-77, Trenholm Road, Percival Road, and Two Notch Road. Additionally, the corridor offers indirect but very proximate access to I-20. The study area is also relatively well connected with collector and minor streets (such as Brookfield Road, Boundary Road, Faraway Drive and Crossfield) that provide access between and within the neighborhoods as well as to destinations and major roadways in the study area. The minor streets also provide alternatives, in some cases, to the major roads.

The street network has the greatest connectivity in the neighborhood areas on either side of Decker between Percival and Brookfield Roads. Between Brookfield and the Trenholm Road area, the street network is intermittent due to the lakes and creeks, newer residential developments that are not interconnected, and significant tracts of land that are still undeveloped on the east side of Decker.

Driving is by far the predominant mode of travel in the plan area because of dispersed, auto-oriented land uses and limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit service. Many of the major roads (Decker, Brookfield, Faraway) do have sidewalks. While the placement of the sidewalks at the edge of the roadway curb is less than ideal, they are heavily used based on the number of school children walking to and from school. Most of the neighborhood streets in the plan area do not have sidewalks.

While there are bike lanes on Trenholm Road south of Decker Boulevard, there are no formal bicycle facilities in the plan area. Stakeholders interviewed through the plan process reported that Decker Boulevard is a major bicycle route for cyclists heading to the trails and roads of Fort Jackson. The relatively well connected street network also provides many non-thoroughfare routes through the area for cyclists.

Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority's (CMRTA) Route 15 Fort Jackson bus provides service along Decker Boulevard. The route runs between Columbia Place Mall and downtown Columbia on half hour to one hour headways between 7 am and 10 pm on weekdays. While the bus provides speedy service along Decker (scheduled time between the mall and Percival Road is six minutes), the infrequency of the buses yields them an inefficient travel option for all but those who have limited travel options and those with fixed travel schedules.

Recent motor vehicle counts (2004) for Decker Boulevard available from the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) indicate that the typical weekday (24 hour) traffic volumes are as follows:

- Southern end (closest to I-77): 21,600 vehicles per day
- Middle section (between Brookfield and Oneil): 28,000 vehicles per day
- Northern end (between Trenholm and Two Notch): 26,400 vehicles per day

The volumes in the middle and northern section are relatively high, which is reflective of the number of major destinations and roadways as well as the lack of alternative routes at the northern end of the study area. However, there is little congestion to be observed on Decker Boulevard, a fact which is further evidenced by the problem of speeding on this roadway.

Stakeholder Issues

Stakeholders in the planning process identified a number of transportation-related issues for the plan area. These issues are listed below in no particular order, but fall into two major categories: speeding and cut-through traffic; and, pedestrian and bicycle safety.

- Speeding on Decker
- Speeding on Chatsworth
- Speeding/cut-through traffic on Faraway
- East Boundary Road is a traffic cut-through
- Dangerous intersection for cyclists at Percival Rd.
- Crossing Decker at night: not enough lighting
- Need safe pedestrian crossings near Dent Middle School (Trenholm & Decker), including mid-block crossings
- Unreported ped/bike crash victims among immigrant population

Safety/Crash Data

A review of safety and crash statistics for the Decker corridor also revealed a number of specific traffic related issues. For the period between 2001 and 2005 the following major crash statistics for the corridor are important to note:

- There were 543 crashes on the corridor
- 50% of the crashes occurred between 1pm and 5pm.
- 31% of crashes were due to speeding
- 28% of crashes were “angled,” indicating a crash occurred while a driver was in the process of turning into or out of a driveway or intersection. (There is an over abundance of driveway cuts along Decker that can contribute to such crashes.)
- There was one fatal crash on Decker in this period.
- At least one fatality involving a middle school student walking home is known to have occurred in recent years.

The worst intersections for crashes during this period are as follows with the total number of reported crashes indicated in parentheses. Crashes at these intersections represent more than 50% of the total crashes on the corridor during the period between 2001 and 2005:

- O'Neil (75 crashes)
- Brookfield (73 crashes; one stakeholder hypothesized that these crashes may be due, in part, to blinding sun at this intersection in the afternoon, which makes seeing the traffic signal heads difficult)
- Trenholm (64)
- Faraway (42)
- Omega (22; this is an unsignalized intersection)

The map, graphics, and text that follows provides an overview of the transportation and streetscape recommendations for the plan area. The map provides an overview of recommendations for the plan area. The intersection and cross section drawings show recommended design elements that will make the Decker corridor safer, more attractive, and more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.



Proposed Transportation Network Improvements

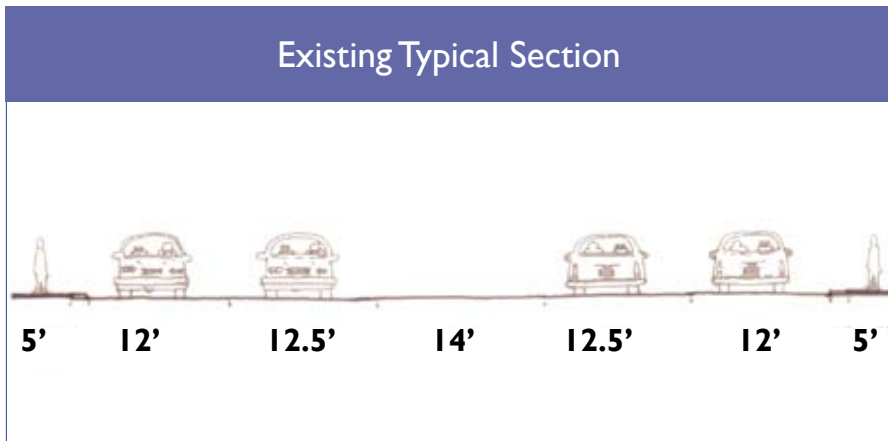
THE RENAISSANCE PLAN

Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Area

Transportation and Streetscaping



Existing Decker Boulevard street section



Existing Decker Boulevard typical section with 2 lanes in each direction, center turn lane, and sidewalk at the back of curb.



Planted median on Rosewood Avenue in Columbia

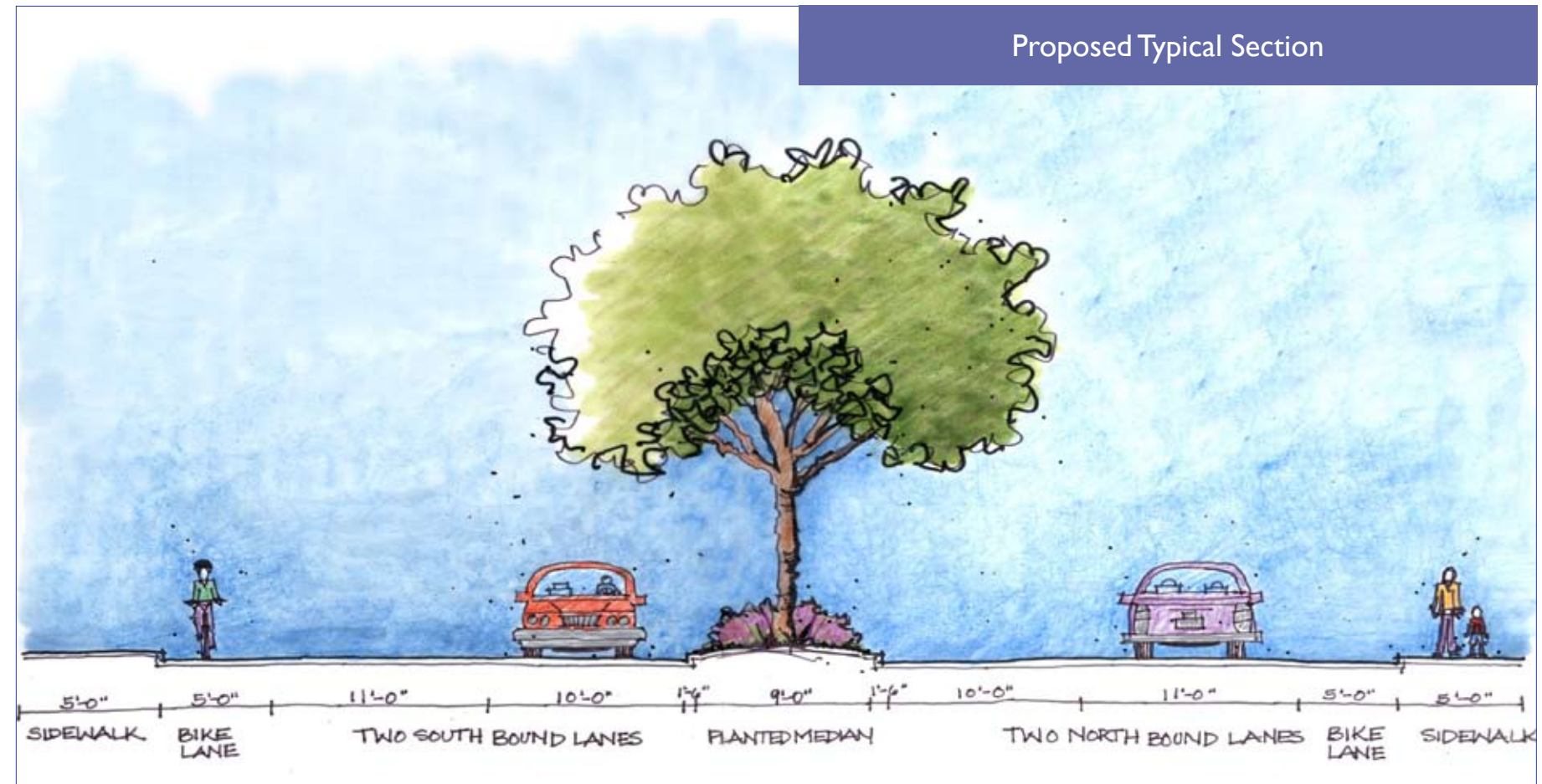
Decker Boulevard Proposed Street Design

One of the key issues raised by stakeholders in the planning process was the appearance of the Decker Boulevard corridor, from the overabundance of signage to the lack of trees and lighting. One very straightforward and yet dramatic way to change the look and the function of the corridor is to change the street itself from an unattractive sea of asphalt that is difficult and dangerous for pedestrians to cross to a boulevard that is aesthetically pleasing, safer, and more comfortable for all users of the roadway -- motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.

The cross-section proposed below would accomplish all of these goals without having to change the width of the existing road by:

- Adding a planted median, which would: add color and beauty to the roadway; reduce impervious surface in the corridor; provide refuge for pedestrians to cross the roadway; and provide a traffic calming effect by adding vertical elements in the roadway.
- Narrowing the travel lanes from 12 feet to 10 or 11 feet, which are more appropriate lanes widths for a 35mph urban roadway, may provide some traffic calming effect and add room for bike lanes.
- Adding bike lanes, which: provide a safer and more formal

space for cyclists on the roadway while removing them from the motor vehicle travel lanes; buffer pedestrians on the existing back-of-curb sidewalks from motor vehicles; provide room for buses and emergency vehicles to pull out of the motor vehicle travel lanes; provide additional sight distance and curb radii for turning vehicles; and offer some additional traffic calming effects.



Brookfield Road Proposed Street Design

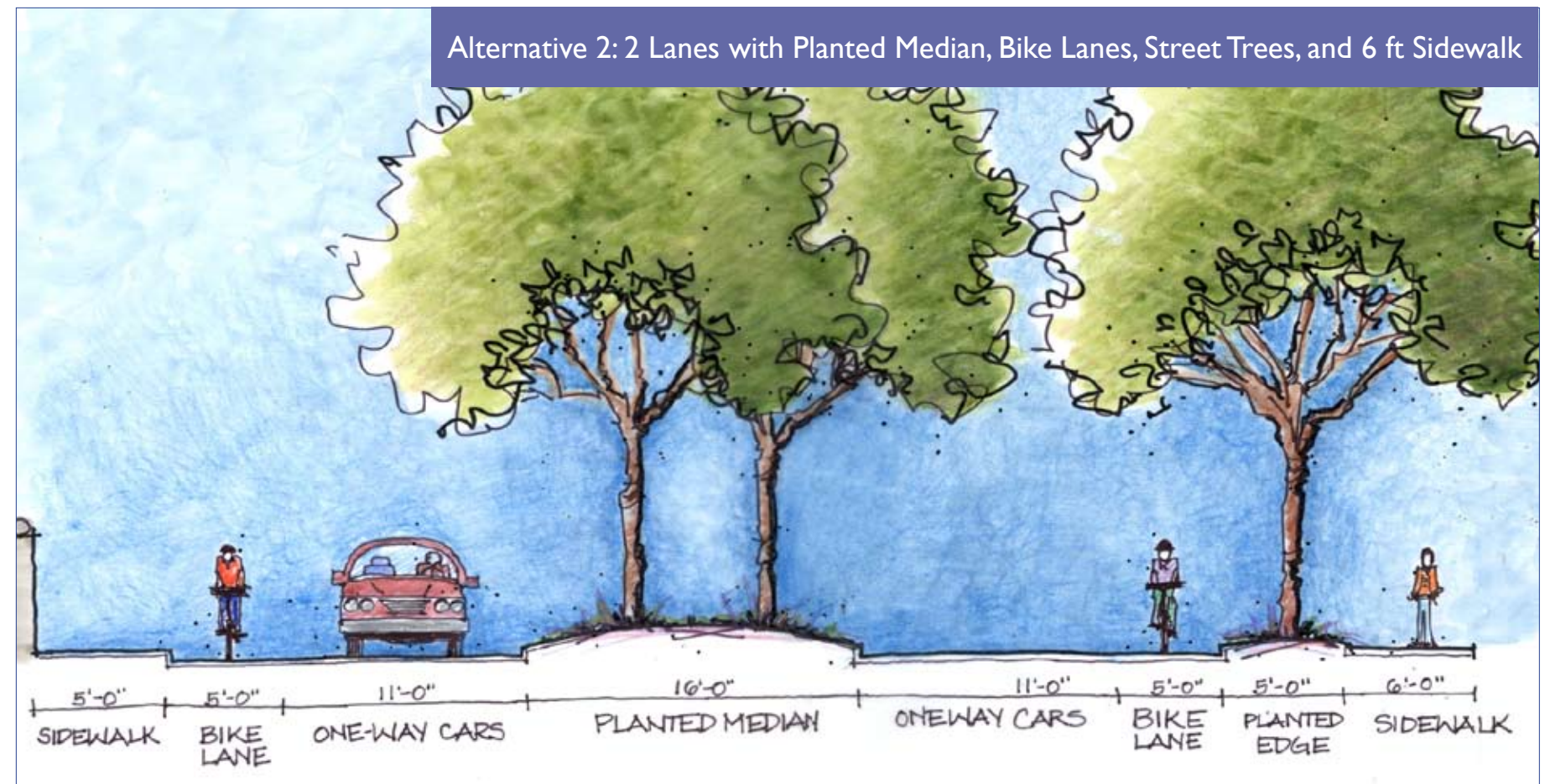
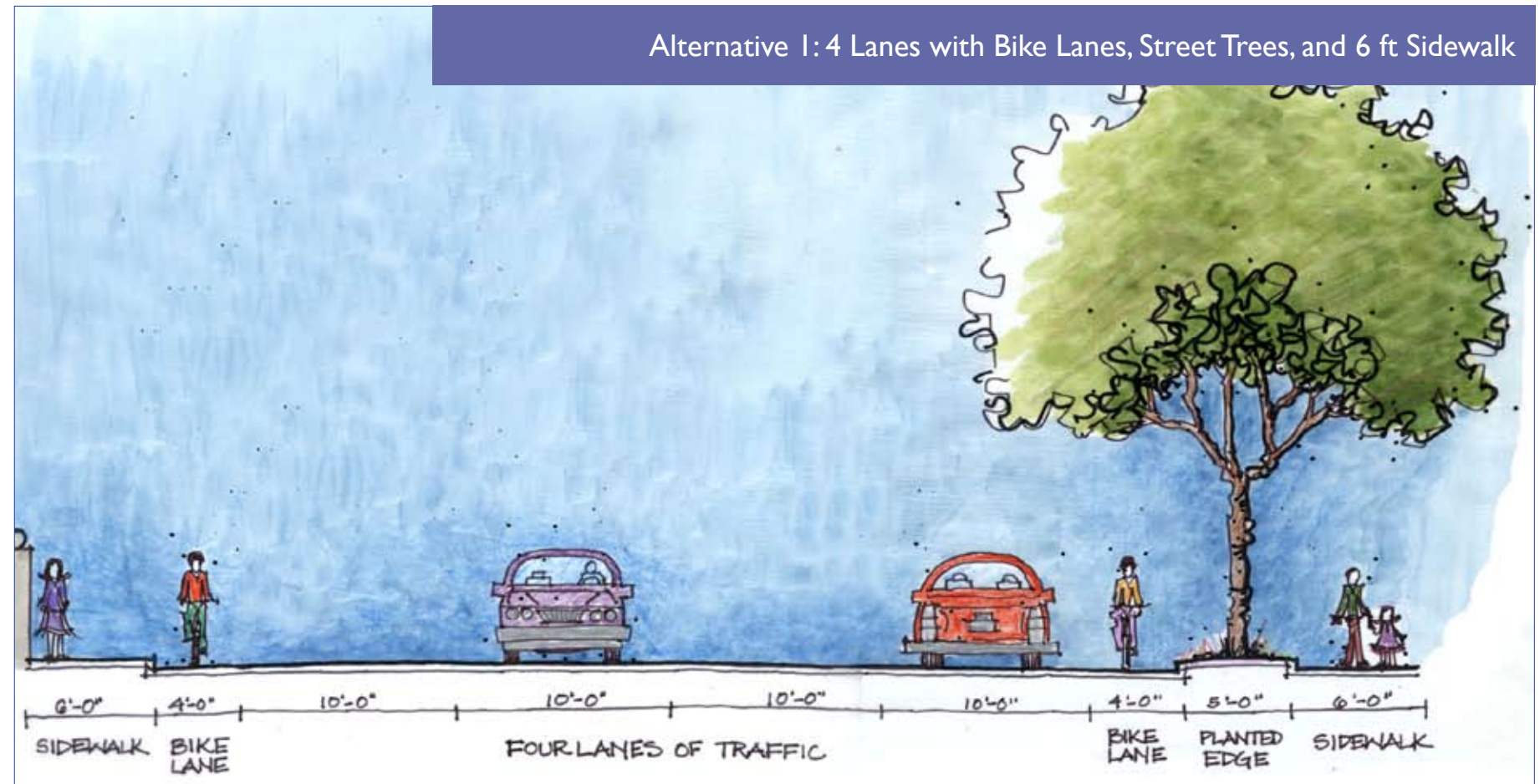
Brookfield Road is another street in the plan area that could benefit from a design treatment to make it safer and more attractive for all users. The current street is four lanes for most of its length, however, it narrows to two lanes as it approaches Nearview Road. The traffic volumes on the road are not high enough to merit four lanes -- most of the day, there is very little traffic on the road at all -- and the existing lanes are wide for an urban street with a 35 mph speed limit. The wide lanes and limited traffic volumes on a straight road are conducive to speeding. The street is also not very pedestrian friendly, despite the fact that there are two major multifamily residential developments on the north side of the road (where there are currently no sidewalks) in walking distance of the shops and services on Decker Boulevard.

This plan recommends two potential alternative cross-sections for Brookfield Road. Alternative (top right), could be implemented through restriping only in the existing roadway and adding sidewalk and street trees on the north side of the street. Alternative 2 (below right) proposes to reduce the number of lanes from four to two and adding a 16-foot wide planted median and bike lanes. Alternative 1 could be implemented almost immediately as an interim cross-section.

Both cross sections would provide benefits including: traffic calming, a safer and more comfortable environment for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, and additional greening of the streetscape, although these benefits are far greater with Alternative 2.



Photo of existing Brookfield Road street section, which includes 4 12-foot lanes, 1 foot gutters, and a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side (high school side) only.



Trenholm Intersection Recommendations

Like all major intersections along Decker Boulevard, the intersection with Trenholm Road could be greatly enhanced in terms of visual appeal and pedestrian friendliness. The Trenholm intersection is especially critical to the overall appearance of Decker Boulevard since it is one of the primary gateways into the corridor. It is also the intersection with the most promise for new commercial development or redevelopment. The location of Dent Middle School on the southwestern corner of the intersection underscores the special need to make this particular intersection safe for the many students that walk to and from the school.

One of the most significant recommendations for this intersection is to remove the free-flow right turn lane onto Trenholm from southbound Decker. This would allow greater redevelopment potential for the parcel at the corner which currently contains a vacant bank building. Other recommendations, noted in the box below, are related to increasing pedestrian and motorist safety and comfort as well as the attractiveness of the intersection.



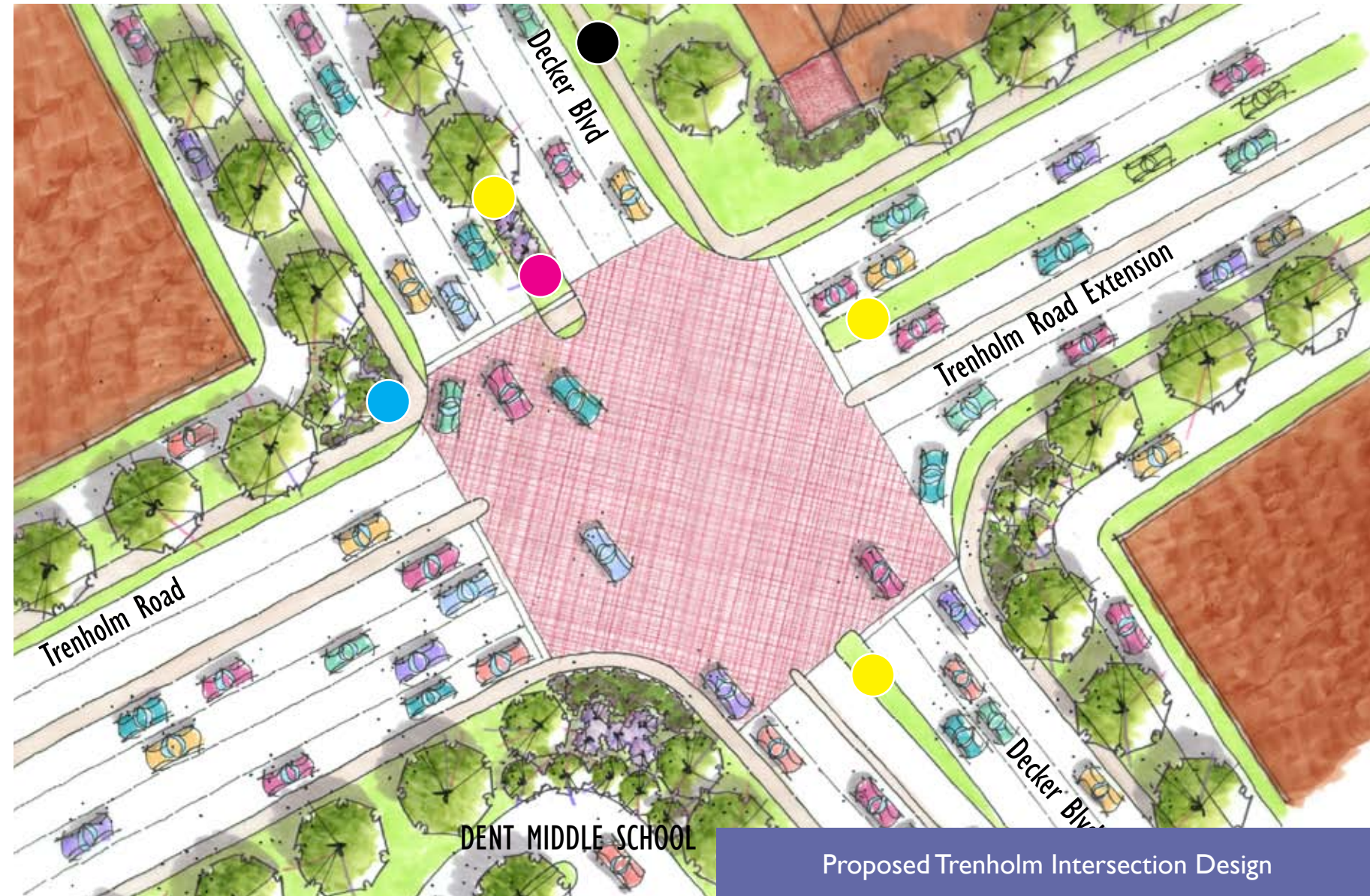
Existing intersection conditions



Existing free-flow right turn lane onto Trenholm Road

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Revise Southbound Right Turn (Bring under signal control) ●
- Extend Concrete Islands for Pedestrian Refuge ●
- Landscape Traffic Islands (Currently Concrete) ●
- Close and Relocate Right-In/Right-Out Driveway at NE Quad of Intersection ●
- Add High Visibility Crosswalks and/or Stamped Asphalt to Delineate Pedestrian Crossings
- Add Sidewalk along Trenholm
- Ped Signal w/Countdown
- Replace Strain Pole with Mast Arm Signals



Proposed Trenholm Intersection Design

O'Neil Court Intersection Recommendations

O'Neil Court is a three-way intersection at a key location in the corridor. The area around the intersection is the focus of great concern to the community because on two sides of the intersection are major vacant or underutilized buildings (the former Target/Kroger stores and the former Olive Garden and Red Lobster restaurants).

The major design recommendations for this intersection focus on creating a more pedestrian-friendly intersection with lighting, high-visibility crosswalks, median extensions, curb ramps, and pedestrian countdown signals.



Existing intersection conditions



Existing intersection as seen from O'Neil Court

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Add High Visibility Crosswalks and/or Stamped Asphalt to Delineate Crossing

Median Extensions for Pedestrian Refuge

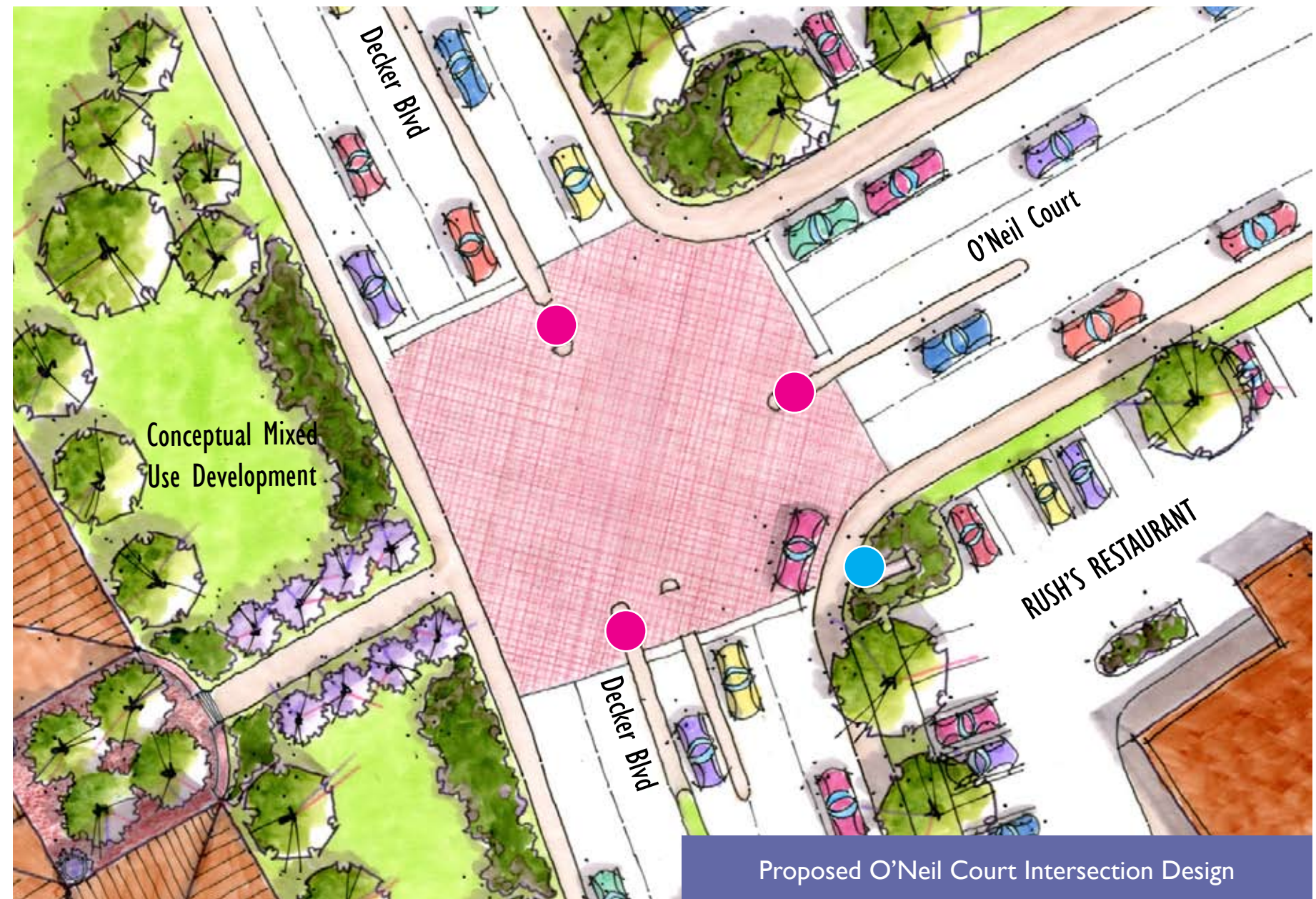
Reduce curb radius on southeast corner

Pedestrian Lighting

Install Curb Ramps

Ped Signal w/ Countdown

Consider Northbound Signal-Head if Needed for Commercial Redevelopment west of Intersection



Proposed O'Neil Court Intersection Design

Brookfield Road Intersection Recommendations

The Brookfield Road intersection sits at the center of the Decker Boulevard Corridor. It is a gateway to Richland Northeast High School, as well as Forest Lake Elementary and the Forest Acres neighborhoods on the west side of the corridor. The intersection is in need of improved pedestrian facilities to serve not only the school students (approximately 1/3 of Richland Northeast students walk to school), but also the surrounding residents. As noted previously, there are two multi-family residential developments on the north side of Brookfield Road within walking distance of the intersection, but no sidewalks on that side of the road. The sidewalks are also lacking on the western side of the intersection (the Forest Acres side). Most of the recommendations for redesigning this intersection involve making it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians.

This intersection had the second highest number of crashes of any intersection on the corridor between 2001 and 2005. One stakeholder attributed the afternoon accidents to the inability to see the traffic signals in the uphill (southern) direction due to the sun glare. A potential solution is to install LED traffic signal heads to increase visibility of the traffic signals and reduce glare.



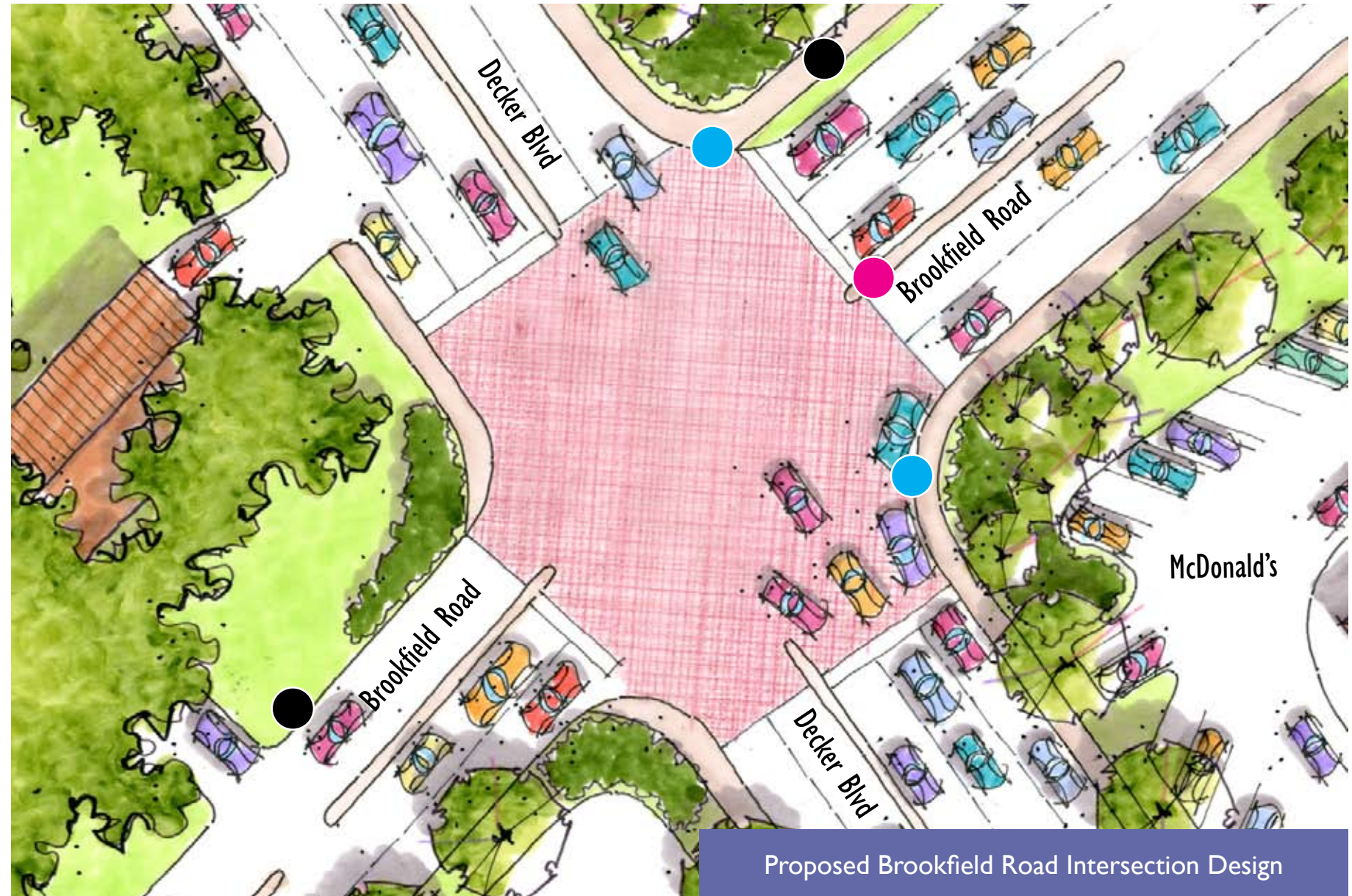
Existing intersection conditions



Existing intersection at Brookfield looking north on Decker

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Narrow Curb Radius ●
- New 5 ft Sidewalks (min) along Brookfield Road ●
- High Visibility Crosswalks
- Median Extensions for Pedestrian Refuge ●
- Ped Signal w/ Countdown
- Pedestrian Lighting
- Wayfinding Signs to Schools
- LED Signal Head and backplate to Reduce Glare



Proposed Brookfield Road Intersection Design

Faraway Road Intersection Recommendations

The intersection of Decker Boulevard with Faraway and Crossfield Roads is the gateway to the Woodfield Park neighborhood area. It also represents the gateway to the area of the Decker corridor that has the most potential to redevelop with a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use style of development.

The design recommendations for this location involve creating a safer and more comfortable streetscape for both pedestrians and motorists. One recommendation that would benefit pedestrians and motorists alike is to eliminate driveways that are too close to the intersection to reduce the number of turning vehicles.



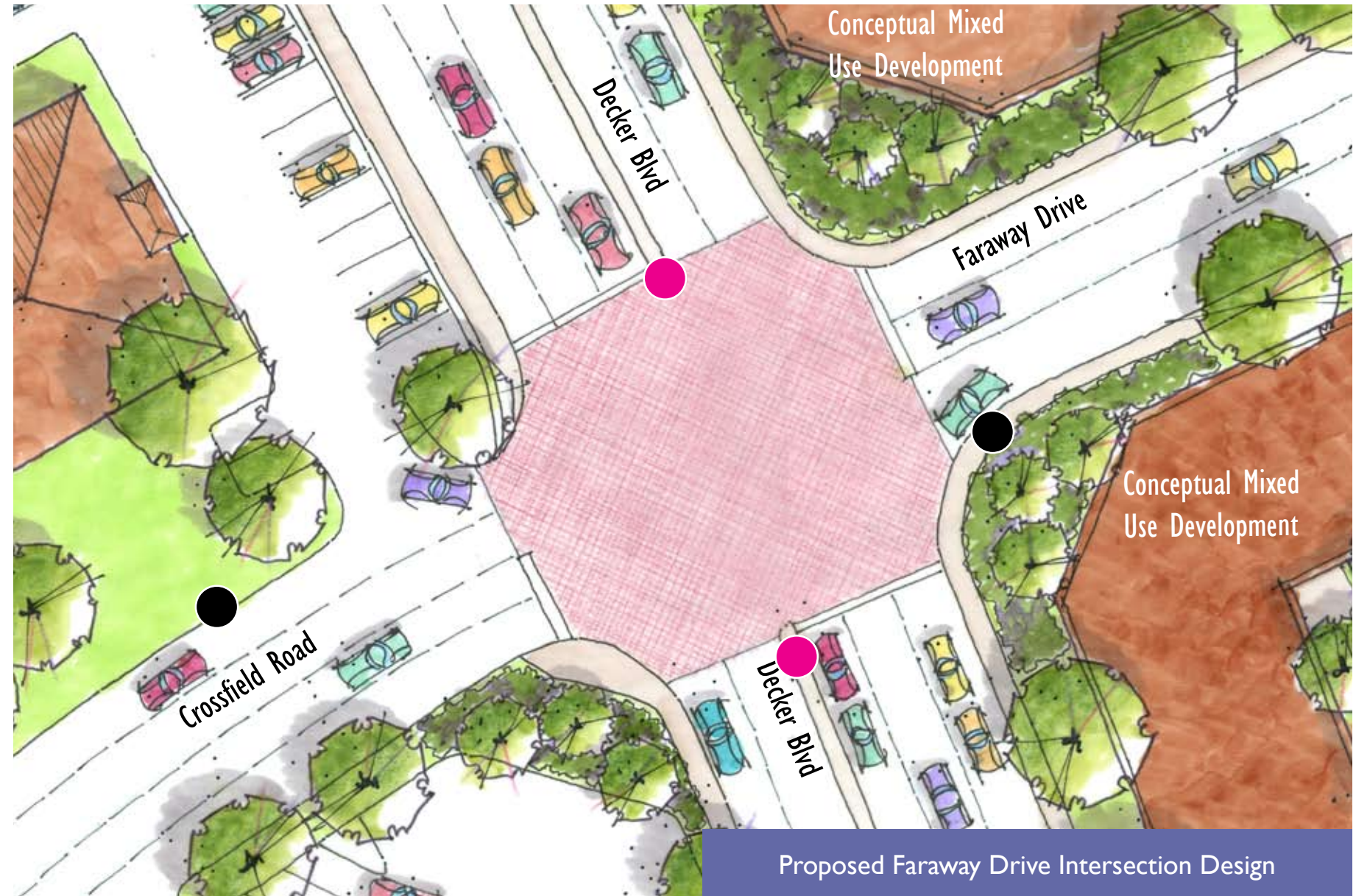
Existing intersection conditions



Existing intersection looking east toward Faraway

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Sidewalks along Faraway and Crossfield ●
- Median Extensions for Pedestrian Refuge ●
- Pedestrian Lighting ●
- Ped-Signal w/Countdown ●
- Close Driveways (where appropriate) ●



Percival Road Intersection Recommendations

The Percival Road intersection is also a critical gateway to the Decker Boulevard Corridor. For those motorists arriving at Decker Boulevard from I-77 North, this intersection is the first view of the Decker corridor. For this reason, special gateway treatments -- including landscaping and signage -- at the intersection are recommended to make the approach to the corridor more attractive. These should be the priority improvements at this location. Currently, the land uses on the corners fronting the interstate off-ramp are a gas station and a used car lot, which at the least should be screened with landscaping, if not redeveloped.

This intersection does not need to provide for pedestrian movement on at least three legs due to the lack of pedestrian destinations on the southern side. However, the northern corners of the intersection should be improved for pedestrian access.

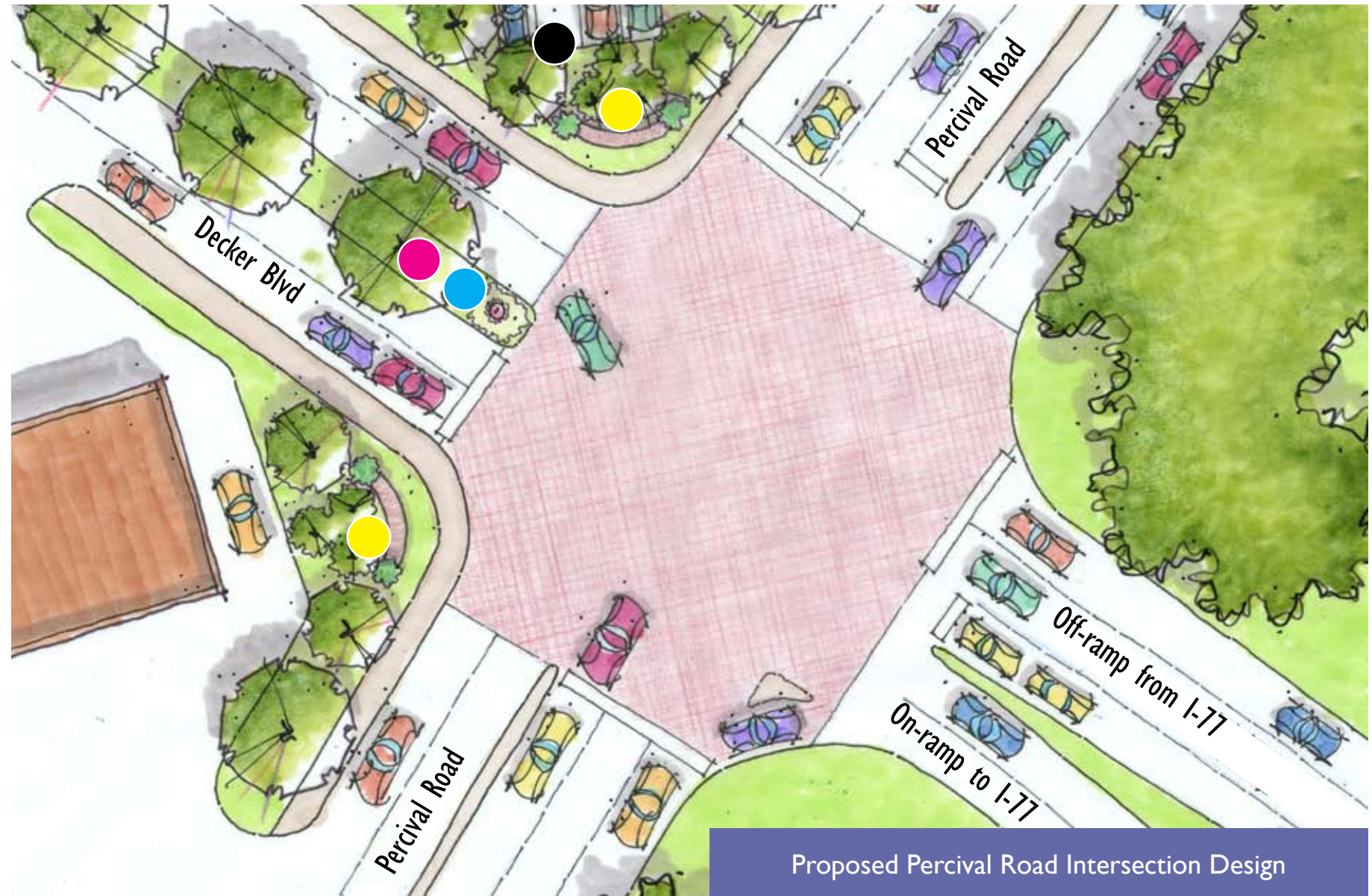
One of the recommendations for this intersection includes evaluating the existing left-turn lane from southbound Decker onto northbound Percival. If this left-turn can be safely eliminated due to low turning volumes, then a full median can be constructed at the southern terminus of Decker, which would provide an opportunity for additional gateway treatment at this location.



Existing intersection conditions



Existing intersection as seen from I-77 off-ramp



Proposed Percival Road Intersection Design

DESIGN ELEMENTS

- Evaluate Southbound Left Turn (Consider Elimination) ●
- Install Median on Decker ●
- Gateway Landscaping ●
- Improved Pedestrian Crossings ●
- Redevelop Northeast Quadrant ●
- Wayfinding Signage to Fort Jackson ●

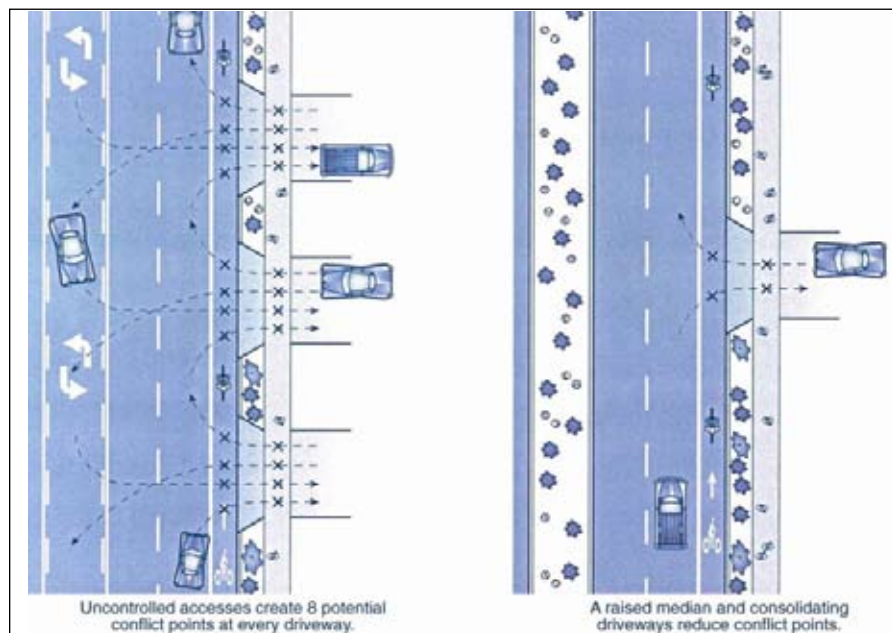
Provide Gateway Treatments

Gateway treatments are recommended for key intersections on Decker Boulevard, especially at the two ends of the corridor at Trenholm Road and at Percival Road. These are the major entrances to the corridor and as such should be enhanced with special landscaping, lighting, intersection treatments (such as mast arm traffic signals) and possibly signage denoting the name of the corridor. Such treatment may also be appropriate, although on a smaller scale, at key neighborhood entrance locations off of Decker Boulevard, such as at Faraway Drive, Omega Drive, or Castle Pinkney.

Currently, the entrances to the Decker Corridor are marked with vacant buildings at one end (the vacant bank building at the northeast corner of Decker and N. Trenholm Road was cited by several stakeholders as being an eyesore) and a car dealership and a gas station at the Percival end.

Improve Access Management on Decker Boulevard

One of the major impediments to safe and comfortable passage along Decker Boulevard for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists alike is the high number of driveways into commercial properties along the corridor. The number of driveways and the unrestricted turning access to and from these driveways contributes to the high incidence of turning crashes cited above. They also contribute to a dangerous and uncomfortable pedestrian and cycling environment because of the number of times that non-motorists have to cross paths with turning motorists (see graphic below)



A median divided roadway and fewer driveways reduces potential conflict points (marked with x's above) with turning vehicles.

One of the primary means to limit the number and location of turning movements -- especially left turns -- is installation of a median, which this plan recommends for key locations along

Decker Boulevard. Other recommended access management treatments include:

- Encouraging shared driveways by working with property owners to close or relocate redundant driveways. One of the potential benefits of closing driveways for property owners is the increased amount of space that can be devoted to parking. To the extent that property access can be directed to side streets rather than directly onto Decker, safety and comfort of all roadway users will be increased.
- Encourage (or require in the case of new development) cross-access agreements between existing non-residential land uses or require such agreements for new, non-residential development. Cross-access between adjacent developments reduces the the number of vehicles that are required to re-enter Decker Boulevard. Keeping additional turning traffic off of Decker enhances safe and efficient conditions for all roadway users.
- For properties on corner lots, primary access via the side street (versus Decker Boulevard) should be required for new development.
- A coordinated signal system: Mobility and quality of life are greatly affected by the efficiency of the traffic signal controls in an area. Improvement in traffic signal controls can make significant contributions to energy conservation, travel time savings, pollution reduction, and vehicle operating costs. Traffic control system improvements are among the most cost effective transportation system management “tools.” One of these tools is the implementation of a closed loop traffic signal system, which links each of the signalized intersections in a corridor together to function as a unified group instead of individually. This grouping allows for signal timings to be coordinated so that a vehicle traveling through the corridor at the appropriate speed has the potential to not stop at any light throughout the corridor. In addition to providing better traffic progression, moving more vehicles efficiently per hour, it also provides an incentive to travel at the posted speed limit.
- Signals should be spaced between 2000 and 2500 feet apart. Currently, the signal spacing meets this criteria except between Faraway and Percival Roads where the signals are 4400 feet apart -- more than 8/10 mile. SCDOT and the County should investigate the possibility of an additional signal in this section for pedestrian access, at least.

Develop New Street/Bike-Ped Connections

The study area is almost completely built out. As a result, the street network is established such that it would be difficult to change or add new street connections. Fortunately, the street network is fairly well connected, especially at the southern end of the study area where there are collector and neighborhood

streets that provide parallel and alternate routes to the major roadways. At the northern end, there are fewer such connections or opportunities for new connections, although Kneece Road does provide a parallel access between Brookfield and O’Neil on the east side of Decker, and the large undeveloped tracts of land at the northeast corner of the plan area provide opportunities to create additional new street connections.

In addition to the built-out nature of the plan area, the lake on the northwest side of Decker and the creeks on the northeast side represent major impediments to supplemental street connections. The Richland Northeast High School property, which extends unbroken almost three-quarters of a mile between Faraway and Brookfield, provides another major barrier to north-south connections in the area.

There are, however, a few opportunities to improve connectivity in the plan area through either new streets or pedestrian/bicycle paths:

- At the western end of the Richland NE High School block, install a new street or a pedestrian/bicycle path that would connect Faraway and Brookfield and line up with the entrance to Kneece Road.
- Extend Chastworth Road -- potentially as a new street, but more likely as a pedestrian/bicycle path -- to connect with Brookfield Road. This alignment is already being used “informally” as a pedestrian path to connect to the high school.
- Open up a piece of unbuilt right-of-way that extends from the end of the existing section of Carriage House Road to Decker Boulevard. The unbuilt right of way is approximately 300 feet long, but if opened to access would provide connection through an uninterrupted frontage on Decker that is almost half a mile long. This connection could provide a convenient connection from the neighborhood to the services on Decker and save a trip of almost a mile for persons travelling from Carriage House to the existing intersection of Decker and Castle Pinckney.
- Open Sandy Shore Road to through traffic near its terminus with Decker. Opening this this street at the Decker Boulevard end would provide convenient access for residents travelling to and from Decker Boulevard, but also for service and emergency vehicles that may need access.

Other street and/or pedestrian/bike connections, conceptual alignments of which are shown on the map on page 36, should also be considered as new development and redevelopment occurs in the plan area or as opportunities arise.

Provide Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Construct Sidewalks in Priority Areas

Sidewalks in the study area are currently limited to a few locations and are not ideally designed to encourage extensive usage. New sidewalks should be prioritized for major streets in the study area, first and foremost. The following major streets lack sidewalks on one or both sides:

- Brookfield
- Faraway
- Boundary
- Percival
- Hunt Club

These streets carry enough motor vehicle traffic volume and/or connect to enough destinations that they should have sidewalks on both sides where development exists. Streets like Brookfield, Faraway, and Boundary, which provide access to schools should have priority in regards to providing sidewalks.

The next level of priority for new sidewalk construction should be for neighborhood collector streets, which carry higher motor vehicle traffic volumes and provide direct connections to the major streets. These streets include: Omega, Long Shadow, Audubon, Bywood, and Morninglo in the Woodfield Park area and Carriage House, Crossfield, Glenfield, Greenoaks on the west side of Decker.

When sidewalks are installed, they should ideally be constructed 6-8 feet or more behind the curb to allow for planting of street trees between the sidewalk and the edge of the curb or street edge.

Furthermore, wheelchair accessible ramps at intersections and driveways (which also benefit persons with strollers and other wheeled conveyances and persons with limited mobility, for example) are necessary on all existing sidewalks in the planning area that do not currently meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (www.adaa.org).

Construct Midblock Crossings/Pedestrian Refuge

Medians on Decker Boulevard and Brookfield Road, in addition to providing benefits for access management and landscaping and beautification, would also provide opportunities for pedestrians to safely cross the street in designated locations. Currently, there are five intersections along the nearly two-mile long Decker corridor where formal crosswalks are provided for pedestrian crossing: Trenholm Road, O'Neil Court, Brookfield Road, Faraway Drive, and Percival Road. While the Brookfield and Faraway intersections are only 800 feet apart, the other intersections are 1900 or more feet apart. In fact, there is approximately 4400 feet between the signals at Faraway and Percival -- more than 8/10 of a mile. Most pedestrians will not go more than 150 feet out of their way to cross

at a formalized crossing, so the need for additional pedestrian crossing locations on the corridor is evident.

When the exact locations of medians are determined, appropriate locations within the medians for formal pedestrian refuges should be designed. Pedestrian refuge medians provide a safe way for walkers to cross the street in locations absent of traffic signals. Medians allow the pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time and then wait in the median while they look for a gap in traffic in the other direction of traffic. One of the key locations for consideration of a pedestrian refuge median is between Trenholm Road and O'Neil Court, across from Dent Middle School, where many students are reported to cross Decker between the school and the shopping center on the opposite side of the street.

Install Bicycle Lanes

The executive director of the Palmetto Cycling Coalition commented during the charrette that the Decker corridor was a popular route for cyclists headed to Fort Jackson. She stated that hundreds of cyclists bike on Decker and Percival to the Fort. In addition, there are numerous cyclists from the surrounding neighborhoods that use bicycles on area streets for recreation and transportation.

The Central Midlands Council of Governments recently completed the *Bike and Pedestrian Pathways Plan for the Columbia Area Transportation Study*, which includes recommendations for beginning to make the greater Columbia area a more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly place. That plan recommends bike lanes for Decker Boulevard and Percival Road and that they be provided on these streets through narrowing the motor vehicle travel lanes and reallocating the roadway space to accommodate bike lanes on either side of the road.

This report concurs in the recommendations above and suggests that bike lanes also be provided for Brookfield Road. Cross-sections for Brookfield and Decker including bike lanes are shown on the pages above. Bike lanes on Decker could eventually connect to an existing and proposed network of bike lanes on Trenholm Road, Two Notch Road, Brookfield Road, and Percival Road.

It would also be appropriate to consider bike lanes for other major thoroughfares or collector streets, such as Boundary Road, O'Neil Court, and Trenholm Road as opportunities arise through resurfacing and roadway improvement projects.

Develop Signed Bicycle Routes

Signed bicycle routes are recommended for streets that are not major roads, but that can provide connections to destinations and other bicycle facilities in the area. These routes would be signed along low volume, neighborhood streets and provide directions to cyclists traversing the neighborhoods on either side of Decker

Boulevard. Recommended bike routes are shown on the map on page 36 including routes on Rockbridge Road, Carriage House Road, Castle Pickney, Long Shadow, Faraway, and Kneece Road.

Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Schools

There are four schools in or near the study area, including Richland Northeast High School, Dent Middle School, Forest Lakes Elementary, and Conder Elementary. The school district provides busing for children who live more than one and a half miles from their school, which means that children who live within that distance have the option to walk, bike, drive, or ride to school with an adult. During the planning team's visits to Decker Boulevard, it was evident that many students, especially from the Middle School, were walking home along Decker Boulevard. According to the principal for the high school, almost 1/3 of the students walk to school.

Given the number of schools in the study area and the fact that many children are already walking to schools in the area, a priority should be placed on bicycle and pedestrian improvements in proximity to the schools and on major routes used by students. This should include improvements to the pedestrian environment along Decker Boulevard including pedestrian crossings, as well as the approaches to the other school campuses, many of which lack adequate sidewalks, secure bicycle parking, and other basic amenities for students who walk or bike to school.

The Richland County School District 2, in conjunction with the County, and SCDOT, should complete a small study to determine priority improvements in and around the school campuses. SCDOT currently has funding available for "Safe Routes to Schools" (SRTS) improvements, which can pay for infrastructure and other initiatives. Many of the infrastructure recommendations outlined in this section may be eligible for SRTS funding if it can be shown that they will benefit pedestrian and bicycle access and safety for school children.

Provide Traffic Calming on Certain Streets

Participants in the charrette cited the issue of speeding motorists and the need for traffic calming on several streets in the plan area, including Decker Boulevard, Faraway Drive, Boundary Road, and Chatsworth Road. Traffic calming can be accomplished in part through a number of specific engineering measures, some of which have been mentioned in earlier sections of the report. For example, narrowing the motor vehicle travel lanes and constructing medians with vertical elements (such as trees) can contribute to traffic calming on Decker Boulevard. Similar measures may be appropriate for Boundary Road.

Faraway and Chatsworth, which are neighborhood streets, may be candidates for more traditional traffic calming measures such as the addition of speed humps along straight road segments and

mini-traffic circles at intersections. Faraway, especially, should be studied for an appropriate series of traffic calming strategies since this street provides an attractive and direct route between Decker Boulevard the Blue Cross/Blue Shield campus through the Woodfield Park neighborhoods.

Traffic calming cannot be accomplished through engineering measures alone. It requires vigilance on the part of neighborhood residents and law enforcement to raise awareness of the issue and to report and ticket speeders. Neighborhood organizations, the Richland County Sheriff's office, and the Department of Public Works should work together to come up with a set of comprehensive strategies, including engineering and enforcement/awareness initiatives, to deal with speeding motorists in the plan area.

Improve Streetscaping

One of the key issues raised by residents and other stakeholders during the plan development process was the need for streetscaping in the plan area. Participants cited a general need to improve the looks of the Decker corridor, saying it "looks shoddy." Specifically, an number of plan participants mentioned the need for "lamp posts and landscaping." Regarding landscaping, stakeholders voiced the need for "trees on Decker," "beautification" on Percival, including trees, and tree canopy in the neighborhoods. Numerous individuals mentioned the need for pedestrian lighting both in the neighborhoods and along Decker Boulevard to improve the appearance of the area, but also to provide a sense of security and greater visibility for people walking at night.

Install Pedestrian-Scale Street Lighting

Pedestrian-scale lighting typically refers to lamp posts that are no taller than 18 feet high and that provide lighting for the pedestrian realm of the street versus street lights designed for motorists. This type of lighting is typically spaced more closely together than street lights and can improve visibility for pedestrians walking along and crossing streets. Pedestrian-scale lighting can be decorative and provide a special ambiance for the streetscape both at night and during the day, as well as providing a convenient location for hanging banners, flags, and planters.

This plan recommends that decorative, pedestrian-scale lighting be considered for the Decker Boulevard corridor and at key locations in the Woodfield Park neighborhoods. Priority for such lighting should be on the section of Decker closest to the residential areas between Faraway and Percival; for pedestrian crossing locations, especially for future mid-block crossings; and along collector streets in the neighborhood areas, especially at intersections.

Plant Street Trees

The streets in the plan area are generally devoid of greenery and

trees, creating barren and harsh looking streetscapes. Street trees, ideally planted between the sidewalk and the street, can provide many benefits both to the appearance of the streetscape as well as to the users of the street, including shade for pedestrians and parked cars, protection of pedestrians from moving cars, retention of stormwater, traffic calming, and shade that can prolong the life of asphalt.

This plan recommends that street trees be planted in the public right-of-way, where possible, along the major streets in the plan area and along major neighborhood collector streets in the Woodfield neighborhoods. Where planting in the right-of-way is not feasible, easements should be sought to plant on private property. New sidewalks in the study area should be constructed six to eight feet behind the back of curb or edge of pavement to provide room for street tree planting. When redevelopment of properties along the major roads occurs, developers should be required to provide street trees along their frontages.

Underground or Relocate Overhead Utilities

Overhead utility lines dominate the streetscape along Decker Boulevard, contributing to the corridor's uninviting appearance. These lines should be undergrounded or moved to the rear of properties where feasible. Priority locations for undergrounding or moving utilities should be at the gateway intersections (Trenholm and Percival) and at other major intersections along the corridor.

Moving and especially undergrounding utilities can be an expensive endeavor, but it can be accomplished incrementally through public and private initiatives. SCE&G will provide matching funds for local governments that undertake undergrounding or streetscaping projects, so this is a potential source of funding. Also, developers can be required or encouraged to move or underground utilities as redevelopment and new development occurs along properties with frontage on Decker Boulevard.

Commuter Rail/Mass Transit Station

The "Final Report: Commuter Rail Feasibility Study for the Central Midlands Region of South Carolina" commissioned by the Central Midlands Council of Governments recommends a potential commuter rail station in the vicinity of the intersection of Decker Boulevard and Two Notch Road. The station would be along a proposed Columbia to Camden commuter rail alignment, which ranked the highest of three potential corridors examined in the study. The study refers to the the potential station location as the "Parklane Road Station" and makes the following assessment of the station area:

The proposed Parklane Road station is near Two Notch Road and existing active CSX Transportation tracks on undeveloped/vacant land. . .With regard to existing land use, commercial development may help to generate

commuter rail ridership, since the area serves as a destination for both shopping and jobs. The large areas of undeveloped/vacant land potentially could be developed in a transit-supportive manner.

The Parklane Road station scores a three [out of five; "good"], because of the development opportunities surrounding the large amount of vacant/undeveloped land. [A good rating that indicates favorable conditions for potential ridership accessibility and transit-supportive land uses. There is some population and employment base nearby, and some developable land.]

The existing large undeveloped tracts and the potential redevelopable properties in the vicinity of the proposed station location provide an excellent opportunity for higher-density, mixed-use (retail, office, and residential) development that is critical for providing transit ridership and supporting investment in future mass transit infrastructure. While commuter rail may be a long term proposition, the development of mixed-use development along the Decker corridor will support other objectives for the corridor and may provide incentive for investment in interim transit improvements in the nearer term, such as enhanced bus service or high-capacity bus-rapid transit service.



Proposed Commuter Rail Station Location

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

Corridor Identity

Issues

The lack of a positive or unifying identity for the Decker Corridor was one of the key issues identified by participants in the planning process. The area is known informally for its stores and churches geared to various national and ethnic groups. By the count of one charrette attendee, there are more than 30 establishments catering to the Korean community on the Boulevard, for example. The corridor was also host to a successful international festival some years back. The festival left a lasting impression on the collective consciousness of the community, although it has not been repeated in recent years.

The corridor also has some negative stereotypes of crime and blight that are exacerbated by media reporting and the sight of vacant retail space and aging commercial offerings. One charrette participant reported being afraid to drive through the corridor for fear of gang activity that had been reported on the local news.

Strategies/Recommendations

Develop Marketing and Public Relations Campaign

One of the first recommended actions in this arena is the development of a marketing and public relations campaign for the area. The community stakeholders should consider a visioning process that supports economic development efforts within the study area, by identifying those things that differentiate the area, while branding and marketing the area's redevelopment potential. A proposed process for such an effort is suggested in the text box at right. Public relations and marketing efforts can assist in facilitating renovation, development and absorption of commercial space and residential units. They can also provide the basis for proactively establishing a positive identity for the corridor rather than having the public's perception of the area be shaped by media reports that are not often flattering.

Once a marketing vision and community identity has been established, logos, slogans, and other identifying elements can be used for print material, banners, websites, signage and the like. The Transportation and Streetscape section has recommended locations for potential gateways to the corridor. The corridor logo and slogan can be featured on signage at these locations, for example. Flags identifying the corridor can also be used, such as the banners that are used to identify the Arcadia Lakes area along Trenholm Road.



Arcadia Lakes banners along Trenholm Road

Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Public Relations & Marketing Strategy

We recommended that the County in coordination with local neighborhood and business groups solicit an RFQ/RFP from qualified Public Relations and Marketing Firms to assist with a Public Relations and Marketing Strategy for the Study Area. The scope of work should include:

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

- To implement a continuity campaign that will allow for maximum exposure to both the residential and commercial consumer.
- To communicate the issues of public safety and mitigate crime perceptions (see Findings and Recommendations in Section 4 and Appendix of the “Economic & Market Analysis for Decker Boulevard/Woodfield Park Planning Area” report dated June 26, 2006 prepared for Richland County).

The primary objective of this campaign is to promote sales/leasing of residential and commercial space within the study area. A secondary objective is to build general brand awareness among consumers of the Decker Boulevard re-development efforts.

TARGET AUDIENCES

- Prospective residential buyers: Individuals who might fall into this category include (but are not limited to) young professionals who are interested in living in or near urban centers, military personnel and families, ethnic families.
- Prospective commercial tenants: Decker Boulevard offers great flexibility to this consumer due to the variety of options available to them depending on their needs and circumstances.

CREATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

- Color: Highly recommended whenever the budget will allow.
- Copy: Recognizing that the copy must speak relevantly to the two target segments, focus on highlighting the amenities and culture as they might appeal to a residential or commercial user.

CLIENT MANDATORIES

- Map: Design a map showing proximity of the area to I-77, I-20 and other important area landmarks. Highlight unique and differentiating issues including cultural diversity.
- Contact information: Address, phone number and website needs to be included on all materials.

Formalize Decker Boulevard Business Coalition

In the Spring of 2003, the Decker Boulevard Revitalization Task Force met with business owners, residents and other stakeholders on the corridor to discuss issues and strategies for the Decker area. One of the early outcomes of that effort was the informal establishment of a Decker Boulevard Business Coalition. This plan recommends that such an organization be formalized as a means for advancing commercial interests on the corridor. The organization would need to establish by-laws, mechanisms for funding including member dues, and other membership requirements.

Such an organization could be responsible for: maintaining communication between corridor business and public agencies; surveying membership; establishing expectations for business appearance; organization of corridor-wide promotions and events; corridor-wide marketing efforts; and other tasks that would benefit all businesses and the Decker Boulevard area generally.

Reestablish Decker Boulevard International Bazaar and Similar Events

Festivals and temporary outdoor market places can provide low-cost opportunities to catalyze economic development, establish community identity, and provide outlets for community commerce and interaction. A farmer's market was one of the top three desired amenities mentioned by residents in the Community Survey for the plan area (see Public Input section). Area residents who participated in the charrette also voiced a desire for centralized space for community gatherings and outdoor entertainment.

As noted in the Market Study, farmers markets specifically can “create a fun, inviting, and destination-oriented venue that can draw customers from outside the immediate trade area.”

[The plan area's] ethnic diversity and desire for additional food-related operators, such as restaurants and groceries, provide an opportunity to create a unique and differentiating shopping experience. While there are a number of farmer's markets in and around Columbia (including the soon-to-be relocated State Farmer's Market), there may be an opportunity to consolidate or joint venture such efforts to provide for expansion. (p. 7)

The corridor already has a successful history with festivals/ marketplaces. Two very successful community festivals complete with food and craft vendors and entertainment were held in November 2003 and 2004 to showcase the area's international flavor. The events, called the “Decker International Bazaar,” were held in the parking lot of of the Decker Mall at O'Neil Court and Decker Boulevard. These events were organized by the Decker Corridor Revitalization Task Force, chaired by Representative Joan Brady.



This plan proposes to continue the tradition of the the International Bazaar and to establish a permanent schedule for such festivals and/or marketplaces on the corridor. There are a number of locations such events could be held, including parking lots of some of the various vacant or underutilized shopping centers on the corridor or other vacant or open land on the corridor. The outdoor market space could be devoted to seasonal sale of local and ethnic foodstuffs and produce as well as for festivals such as the popular International Bazaar. The events could be managed by a private entity or a public-private partnership with a local government agency or community non-profit, such as a Decker Boulevard Business Coalition.



Roanoke, VA Farmer's Market



Images from the Goshen Market in St. Louis, Missouri

Conceptual Vision of Temporary Festival Marketplace on Decker Boulevard



Crime and Safety

Issues

As noted in the previous section and in the community survey, crime and safety are priority issues for the study area -- both the reality of crime as well as the perception of crime. Area residents who completed the Community Survey indicated that “Safety” was the most critical factor in the success of the revitalization of the Decker Boulevard area.

While the Sheriff’s Office reports decreases in all crime statistics over the past year, there is still significant concern from community stakeholders for a range of crime and safety issues:

- Lack of enforcement of speeding on the major roadways, and especially Decker Boulevard, was a concern of a number of plan participants.
- Lack of street lights – Several Woodfield Park neighborhood residents mentioned that the lack of neighborhood street lights made them afraid to walk in their neighborhoods at night.
- At least one plan stakeholder characterized the area as a “corridor of fear.” Whether or not this fear is based in reality, the fact of the matter is that this perception will slow revitalization efforts in the area.
- Some of the fear is based on reports of gang activity in the area.
- At least one long-time resident of the Forest Hills area complained of noise and other related issues from a Club on Decker Boulevard.
- Area residents and other stakeholders see vandalism as a sign of crime in the area.
- One area stakeholder stated that there is a common perception of slow response by the Sheriff’s Office to calls in the area.
- The Sheriff’s Office representative at the charrette cited an issue of homeless encampments in the woods behind some of the commercial establishments.
- This Sheriff’s representative also indicated that there are significant calls to the Reserve Apartments.
- The area Fire/EMS representative cited a concern regarding fire at vacant commercial buildings on the corridor.

Recommendations

Just as there are no silver bullets for revitalization of the plan area, there are no silver bullets for dealing with the reality and perception of crime in the area. The issues of crime and safety must be approached comprehensively and many of the recommendations in other sections of the report will help to alleviate both the perceptions and reality of crime:

- Proposed roadway designs for Decker Boulevard will help to calm traffic speeds and reinforce the posted speed limit. Targeted enforcement efforts regarding speeding may also be warranted.
- Street lighting, especially pedestrian-scale lighting, is recommended along the major roadways in the corridor and in neighborhoods.
- Marketing efforts to present the relative safety of the area, among other community strengths, will help to reduce the perception of fear. These efforts should include proactive efforts to portray positive images in the media as well as guided tours of the area with media representatives, realtors, and other opinion makers. One area business owner reported never having been in the Woodfield Park neighborhood. The unknown is often a source of fear.
- New zoning and development standards to prevent inappropriate land uses, such as bars and clubs, near residential areas is recommended in the Regulatory Tools section of the report.
- Continued proactive and visible efforts by the Sheriff’s Office to respond to calls in the area and “evidence” of criminal activity such as graffiti will help to alleviate community concerns regarding responsiveness.
- Community organizations and proactive citizenry -- including Community Watch-type efforts -- will also be required to carry some of the load of crime reporting and crime prevention.
- Promoting active community uses, such as parks and greenways, in the undeveloped, natural areas of the corridor will help to provide positive activity that will deter criminal activity in these locations that are currently hidden and unobserved.
- Redevelopment of the Reserve Apartment area into a development with a mixture of housing types and incomes will help to eliminate concentrated pockets of poverty in the area, which are often magnets for crime.
- Home ownership programs, code enforcement and education of area residents about property upkeep and tenancy laws will also reduce neighborhood crime.
- Establishing new uses in vacant commercial locations or

removing vacant commercial structures from the floodway will reduce the risk of fire in these buildings.

Regulatory Tools

There are two primary regulatory issues in the Decker Boulevard plan area: the land uses that are allowed and the design standards that are required for new development. The former is regulated through zoning districts. The latter through zoning districts as well as general development standards.

Uses and Zoning

Use Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zoning Near Neighborhoods

As part of the plan implementation, this report recommends that the County consider rezoning the section of Decker between Percival and Faraway to Neighborhood Commercial (NC). The NC zoning district is more appropriate for this section of the corridor as it is “intended to accommodate commercial and service uses oriented primarily to serving the needs of persons who live or work in nearby areas” and “is designed to be located within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods where large commercial uses are inappropriate, but where small neighborhood-oriented businesses are useful and desired.” Application of the NC zoning district would preclude or make non-conforming a number of uses that may not be appropriate adjacent to residential neighborhoods and/or have been cited by area residents as objectionable. The County may also want to consider a sunset clause for certain non-conforming uses (for example, pawn shops, bars, and auto dealers) whereby the uses would have to cease operation within the district within a certain number of years after establishment of the new zoning district.

Currently, the primary zoning district along Decker Boulevard is GC (General Commercial; formerly C-3). Over 164 acres of the study area (or approximately 22% of the study area) are included in this zoning category, which is “intended to accommodate a variety of general commercial and nonresidential uses characterized primarily by retail, office, and service establishments.” As noted in the market study and as evident along the corridor by the large number of vacant retail stores, there is more commercial zoning on the corridor than the area can support. Furthermore, the variety of uses allowed in the GC district may not be in keeping with the goals of the corridor’s residents and stakeholders.

For example, there are a number of uses allowed in GC that may be problematic for a corridor that is trying to improve its image and reduce the perception of crime. This issue is particularly acute in the area between Percival and Faraway where large residential

neighborhoods about the commercial uses on the corridor and where commercial properties are relatively narrow. The following uses, which are allowed in GC, may be especially problematic in this section of the Decker Boulevard corridor:

- Billiard Parlors
- Shooting Ranges
- Automobile Rental or Leasing
- Rental Centers with outside storage
- Truck Washes
- Bars and Other Drinking Places
- Motor Vehicle Sales
- Motorcycle Dealers
- Pawnshops
- Tire Sales
- Truck Stops
- Transportation uses (such as Taxi Terminals)
- Wholesale Trade uses
- Warehouses, Self-Storage
- Manufacturing Uses
- Sexually Oriented Businesses

The pawnshops, used car dealers, and bars/night clubs were specifically mentioned by area residents as objectionable uses along Decker Boulevard.

The section of Percival Road between Decker and East Boundary Road may also be appropriate for this zoning district, if not for a district that allows primarily office or higher density housing such as OI or RM-HD.

Rezone Parcels Interior to Neighborhoods

There are a number of parcels in the Woodfield Park area that are zoned for commercial uses, but are interior to the neighborhood and not on a major roadway. These parcels are concentrated along Dupont Street, which is one block off of Decker Boulevard. The commercial encroachment into the neighborhood at these locations is likely contributing to the deterioration of residential properties in the surrounding blocks. These parcels should be zoned for uses that are more compatible for their neighborhood street location. For example, Office and Institutional (OI) or a higher density residential district would be much more appropriate than General Commercial (GC) zoning at these locations.

Apply the Redevelopment Overlay District (RD)

Richland County’s Land Development Code includes a placeholder district called the Redevelopment Overlay District (RD) that is “intended to promote the revitalization of existing blighted commercial strips and residential areas.” The overlay district is subject to approval of the County Council subsequent to the approval of a Redevelopment Plan for the area. The district provides for Permitted Uses and Development Standards to be

determined through the Redevelopment Planning process.

Permitted Uses -- The application of this district to the study area can be used to augment the use standards of the underlying districts by allowing certain uses which would be complementary to the proposed redevelopment concepts in this report. For example, most residential uses are not permitted in the NC district recommended above. The RD district should permit the development of all dwelling types so that new residential development and mixed use development would be allowed along Decker Boulevard. Furthermore, the RD district could go so far as to encourage new residential development in the primarily non-residential zoning districts along Decker by providing density, height, or other incentives for new residential development on the corridor through the development standards.

Development Standards

There are two primary issues that should be considered in drafting new development standards for the plan area. The first is increasing development potential or development flexibility. This involves allowing greater density, where appropriate, to make efficient use of the existing infrastructure and to allow for additional residential units to support existing and future retail and services in the area. Allowing for greater intensity of development also gives the County leverage to require a greater level of design and infrastructure investment by developers, which is the second issue for consideration in drafting new standards. The following changes are recommended for inclusion in new development standards for the RD district.

Reduce Minimum Lot Width

This plan recommends that lot width be reduced. Smaller lot dimensions will allow for greater flexibility in infill development and will provide for a broader range of housing types to be offered in the plan area. Currently, minimum lot dimensions range from 50 feet in most districts to 75 feet in the RS-LD District (Residential, Single-Family—Low Density). Detached single-family dwellings can be built on lots as narrow as 24 feet wide. This plan recommends that minimum lot width for detached houses be lowered at least to 36 feet.

Reduce Setbacks

This plan recommends that front setbacks be reduced under certain conditions to allow for more pedestrian-oriented buildings and site designs. Most of the current zoning districts require a minimum 25 foot setback from the property line for new buildings. Residential buildings on local streets can be set back as little as 10 to 15 feet to bring front doors and porches closer to the public and pedestrian realm of the sidewalk and to provide more usable private space at the rear of the building.

Mixed-use and non-residential buildings on local and collector streets can have setbacks reduced to zero as long as sidewalks and planting strips with appropriate widths are provided. Building facades on these types of buildings should not be closer than 12 feet from the back of curb, but preferably 15 feet or more. Setbacks as deep as 25 may be appropriate along portions of Decker Boulevard and other major arterials in the study area given the speed and volume of motor vehicle traffic and the surrounding land uses. However, as the nature of these roadways evolve to become more pedestrian-friendly with medians, narrow travel lanes and other features, setbacks as narrow as zero to 10 feet may be appropriate on certain sections of the roadway.

The area between Faraway and Percival Roads on Decker Boulevard may be appropriate for reduced setbacks, for example. Reducing setbacks to these dimensions on Decker should also be predicated on having adequate space (at least 12 feet, but preferably 15 feet or more) for generous sidewalks and planting strips between the building and back of curb. Maximum setbacks on Decker may be a more pressing issue given that most buildings have deep setbacks with parking in front. A maximum setback of 25 feet may be appropriate for Decker Boulevard if parking is not allowed to be built between the building and the right-of-way, which is a condition that this plan also recommends.

Increase Maximum Building Height

The County should consider allowing buildings taller than three stories along the major roadways based on conditions specific to the plan area. Conditions should be based on the goals of this plan or other community goals for the area, including such things as eliminating parking between the building and the street, providing additional public open space, and reducing impacts on area waterways and wetland areas.

Increase Maximum Density

The County should consider increasing the maximum density allowed by-right in the study area. Currently, the maximum densities allowed range from 3.5 dwelling units per acre in the RS-LD District to 16 units per acre in the GC District. Reducing lot widths in the single-family residential areas will increase allowable densities to just under seven dwelling units per acre, assuming that lot depths remain at approximately 150 feet.

Densities of at least four to six dwelling units per acre are the minimum required to support retail, services, and transit in walking distances of residences. Even higher densities are appropriate along the major roadways in the study area. Townhomes can be developed at 16 to 18 units per acre and apartment and condominium buildings of two to four stories can be built at 20-50 dwelling units per acre.

This report suggests that the County use the RD Overlay District to

specify the maximum densities for the underlying non-residential zoning districts in the study area at 25 units per acre at least. Conditions may be specified for exceeding this threshold based on meeting or exceeding certain site design criteria (such as provision of open space, reducing impervious surfaces, building design, etc.) or other considerations that are congruent with the community's goals for the area.

The trade-off for the increased development potential offered by the recommendations above is more stringent requirements on the infrastructure and design details that most directly impact the public environment. These standards should be detailed in the RD Overlay District requirements for the plan area.

Parking Standards

Richland County employs a progressive approach to parking standards by establishing a maximum and a minimum number of parking spaces required for new development. There are a few changes that this plan would recommend for consideration in developing new standards for the Decker Boulevard plan area.

- Use the Parking/Loading Standards adopted for the Town and Country (TC) District that allow for or require: reduced parking requirements; on-street parking to count toward minimum parking requirements; screening of parking; parking located to the rear of buildings; and the connections of adjacent parking lots.
- Require that all parking provided over the minimum be paved with pervious paving materials. This requirement could have many benefits in an area that is suffering severe water quality and flooding issues. (This approach is currently in use in Greenville County and being considered by the City of Greenville.) Currently, pervious paving materials are only encouraged and not required.
- Provide incentives for shared parking such as reduced minimum parking requirements.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities

The County's development standards for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit amenities go farther than the requirements of many jurisdictions in the region. However, there are a number of development standards in this section that should be enhanced in the development of RD District standards for the Decker Boulevard plan area.

- Sidewalks: Sidewalks should be required to be a minimum of five feet in residential districts. This is the minimum width required for two adults to walk side by side. In no case should three foot sidewalks be permitted.

- In an urbanized area such as the Decker Boulevard plan area, sidewalks should be required on both sides of streets in all developments unless the development density is two dwelling units per acre or less.
- Sidewalks for commercial developments and higher density residential developments (over 15 dwelling units per acre) should be required to be at least six feet in width. In mixed-use developments where ground floor retail is present, sidewalks should be at least 8-12 feet.
- Non-residential developments should be required to provide sidewalks from the front entrance to the sidewalk network along public streets.
- Bicycle parking standards should be enhanced to require bicycle parking at all new non-residential developments and multi-family developments based on a percentage (typically five percent) of the motor vehicle parking required. Details on the types of bicycle parking racks and their required location should be provided as well.

Parks and Open Space

The County's current open space requirements are very straightforward and provide attractive incentives for maximizing the amount of open space reservation. The requirements could be enhanced for the Decker Boulevard plan area by requiring that all or a portion of the reserved open space be made available to the public; and/or that a fee-in-lieu option be provided for the provision of public open space and parks in the plan area.

The need for public open space is one of the key issues in the study area. Incentives (such as increased density or increased building height) for the provision of publicly accessible open space should also be considered. The County may also want to consider for the plan area requiring open space based on the number of housing units rather than based on a percentage of a site's acreage. This approach makes more sense especially as development density increases since it relates the amount of open space required to the number of individuals who may access the space rather than to the size of the parcel.

Streetscape Enhancements

The following streetscape enhancements should be required of all new development

- Require planting strips of a minimum 6 to 8 feet wide to provide separation between the sidewalk and the roadway and to provide ample room for the planting of street trees. This requirement may replace the current requirement for "street protective yards," which are required to be outside of the right-of-way, but which provide no separation between moving vehicles and the

pedestrian realm.

- Require large canopy variety street trees to be planted in planting strips along street frontages where no overhead utilities are in the right-of-way. Otherwise, require small canopy trees.
- Require street furnishings for new development including those items listed in the adopted TC District requirements: “pedestrian-scale decorative street lights, decorative street signs, benches, trash receptacles.” Requirements should be appropriate to the street type. For example, benches and trash receptacles may be appropriate for Decker Boulevard and in other high-traffic, mixed-use areas, but not on local streets or along streets where the pedestrian traffic is not likely to be as great.

Landscaping/Buffer Yard Standards

Landscaping and bufferyard standards in the RD Overlay District for the study area should be similar to those adopted for the TC District “in order to provide a continuous pedestrian transition for residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.”

Roadway Design/Traffic Impact Requirements

- Road standards for the RD District should follow the standards set forth for the TC District that allow for variation from the roadway standards in Section 26-181. The TC District encourages “reduced roadway widths. . .for traffic calming.” Typical roadway sections should be provided.
- As required in the TC District, traffic management plans should be required for new developments over certain thresholds, for example developments that have an estimated trip generation of 3,000 vehicles per day or greater. (Typically, 55,000 square feet of retail, 300 single family homes, or 250,000 square feet of office will meet or exceed the 3,000 vehicles per day threshold.)

Signs

New signage standards disallowing freestanding pole signs in the RD District should be developed. Standards for ground mounted and building mounted signage should be developed for the district. A sunset clause requiring the removal of certain pole mounted signs along the Decker corridor should also be considered. The abundance of pole mounted sign clutter was cited by many participants in the plan effort as one of the factors that most detracts from the attractiveness of the corridor.

Distance of Bars from Residential Uses

Special regulations regarding the distance of bars from residential uses should be considered for the RD district. Currently, there are no minimum distances regarding the location of bars within

proximity of residential uses. The presence of bars and nightclubs on Decker Boulevard and their attendant issues – noise, crime, etc. – was cited as problem by residents who live just off of the corridor.

Form-based Standards for Building and Site Design


This plan strongly encourages the County to consider developing and applying some level of design standards for all buildings and development sites in the plan area. If the allowable development densities in the plan area are to be increased, the community will want to ensure that building and site design details are of the highest quality and reflect the community’s aspirations. Furthermore, as density increases, design elements become more and more important.

Site and building design standards should address the following basic elements and should be based on the building type and the context of the development (arterial frontage or interior to neighborhood, etc.). The table below shows the possible application of various design features to certain building types & uses in the land development regulations:

Design Standard	Commercial	Multi-Family	Single-Family (Small Lot)
Building Location	√	√	√
Off-Street Parking Location (behind, in front, or to side of building)	√	√	√
Right-of-way Landscaping	√	√	√
On-Site Landscaping	√	√	√
Frontage of Garage	n/a	√	√
Encroachments	√	√	√
Front Door Location	√	√	√
Roof Form/Pitch	√	√	√
Percent of Windows/Doors	√	√	
Building Materials	√	√	√
Building Color	√	√	

Lastly, these design standards may be graphically depicted to help show both intent and application. A example of commercial design standards combined with graphic explanations from Salisbury, North Carolina is shown at right.

E. Roof Pitch: Roof pitches less than 3/12 and flat roofs will require a parapet wall. A pitched roof shall be profiled by eaves a minimum of 6 inches from the building face or with a gutter.

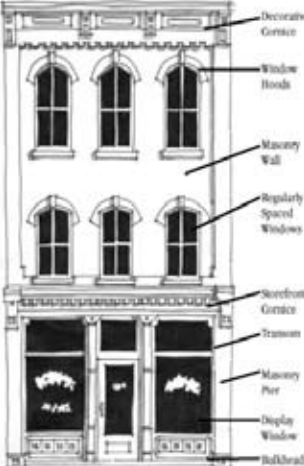


Buildings with pitched roofs should provide eaves

F. Decorative Elements: Decorative elements, such as statues, fountains, and works of art are encouraged, and may encroach into the setback area a maximum of eight (8) feet.

G. Façade Treatment

- Architectural elements like windows and doors, bulkheads, masonry piers, transoms, cornice lines, window hoods, awnings, canopies, and other similar details shall be used on all facades facing public rights-of-way.
- Building wall offsets, including projections, recesses, and changes in floor level shall be used in order to: add architectural interest and variety; relieve the visual effect of a single, long wall; and subdivide the wall into human size proportions. Similarly, roofline offsets should be provided to lend architectural interest and variety to the massing of a building and to relieve the effect of a single, long roof.
- The ground level of the building must offer pedestrian interest along sidewalks and paths. This includes windows, entrances, and architectural details. Incidental signage on buildings (in accordance with Article IX), awnings, and ornamentation are encouraged.



15.10 SIGNAGE

A. Signage in the Gateway Plan area shall comply with the requirements of Article IX-Signs.

B. Non-Conforming Signs To Be Removed: Non-conforming on-premise signs, in accordance with Section 9.10, shall be removed within 5 ½ years of the effective date of this Article. (Effective Date 9.2,2003)

Example of commercial building design standards for a commercial corridor overlay district in Salisbury, NC

Implementation Strategies

In order for the vision and recommendations expressed by this plan to be realized, specific implementation steps will need to be taken by Richland County and the other community stakeholders. Many of the implementation steps seek to provide the conditions under which the vision can be achieved, by way of providing sensible land use regulation, necessary public investments, the development of appropriate programs and policies, and other actions.

The implementation of this Plan will depend on action being taken to:

- Revise existing development regulations;
- Undertake more detailed studies to resolve and explore the opportunities and constraints identified by this Plan;
- Promote and assist specific objectives; and,
- Make infrastructure investments.

The execution of the implementation steps will likely be phased and is subject to a variety of factors, which determine their timing. These include:

- The availability of personnel and financial resources necessary to implement specific proposals;
- Whether an implementation step is a necessary precursor to or component of the rational evaluation of a new development project;
- The interdependence of the various implementation tasks, in particular, the degree to which implementing one item is dependent upon the successful completion of another item; and,
- The relative severity of the challenge which a particular implementation task is designed to remedy.

In view of these factors, it is not possible to put forward a precise timetable for the various implementation items. The priority for implementation will be listed by the period in which items should be completed. Year 1 items are the highest priority while Year 10+ project could be completed as resources allow. It is expected that Year 1 items would be completed during the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year.

Key:

*County - Richland County Government
SC DOT - South Carolina Department of Transportation*

Page Number	Project/Task	Implemented By	Coordination With	Year 1	Year 2-5	Year 5-10	Year 10+
STUDIES, PLANS AND COORDINATION							
46	Develop plans to reestablish Decker International Bazaar and/or other on-going markets or festivals	Business Coalition, neighborhood groups	County, area non-profits and organizations	X	X		
19,37	Consolidate properties at Trenholm/Decker intersection to create opportunities for retail redevelopment	County, Property Owners	SCDOT	X	X		
44	Support planning efforts for a commuter rail/mass transit station near Decker corridor	County, Central Midlands COG		X	X	X	X
POLICY AND ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS							
48	Rezone commercial parcels between Faraway and Percival to Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	County		X	X		
48	Develop new use and development standards for the Redevelopment Overlay District (RD) zoning	County	Property owners, neighborhood orgs.	X	X		
48	Apply the RD zoning overlay	County		X	X		
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS							
16	Reclaim developed areas of Jackson Creek wetlands and Floodway	County	Property Owners, Mitigation banks	X	X		
16	Demonstration projects for on-site retention in area parking lots	County	Property Owners		X		
17	Develop park/greenway/natural areas in reclaimed Jackson Creek wetlands/floodway	County	Richland School District Two		X		
17	Develop joint use park/school playing fields on school district-owned land across from Northeast High School	School District Two; County			X		
17	Purchase lake front property from East Richland Sewer District for lake front park	County	East Richland Sewer Distreit		X		
37	Remove free flow right turn lane at northwest corner of Trenholm Road/Decker intersection	SCDOT	County	X	X		
35	Decker Boulevard proposed street design (planning, design, construction)	SCDOT	County	X	X		

Page Number	Project/Task	Implemented By	Coordination With	Year 1	Year 2-5	Year 5-10	Year 10+
36	Brookfield Road proposed street design (planning, design, construction)	SCDOT	County, Richland District Two	X	X		
37-41	Proposed intersection improvements along Decker (Trenholm, O'Neil Court, Brookfield, Faraway, Percival)	SCDOT	County	X	X		
42	Gateway treatments at key intersections	SCDOT	County	X	X		
42	Access management recommendations for Decker Boulevard	SCDOT	County	X	X		
42	Develop new street and bike/ped connections	County	property owners	X	X	X	
42	Construct sidewalks in priority locations	SCDOT	County	X	X	X	
43	Construct midblock crossings, pedestrian refuge islands on Decker Boulevard	SCDOT	County		X		
43	Install bicycle lanes at identified locations	SCDOT	County		X		
43	Develop signed bicycle routes	County, Forest Acres		X	X		
43	Improve pedestrian/bicycle access to schools	SCDOT, County	Richland School District Two	X	X		
43	Traffic calming on neighborhood streets	County	Neighborhood organizations	X	X		
44	Install pedestrian-scale street lighting	County, developers	SCDOT, SCANA	X	X	X	
44	Plant street trees	County, developers	SCDOT	X	X	X	X
44	Underground/relocate overhead utility lines	Utility providers, developers	SCDOT, County			X	X

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE							
20-21	Plan redevelopment options for Bi-Lo shopping center	Property Owners	County		X	X	X

Page Number	Project/Task	Implemented By	Coordination With	Year 1	Year 2-5	Year 5-10	Year 10+
18	Promote the recent SC Retail Facilities Revitalization Act to owners of vacant retail properties	County	Property Owners, business organizations	X	X		
23-31	Promote and facilitate neighborhood infill development concepts	County, CDC, developers	Housing agencies, property owners	X	X	X	X
32	Develop local Community Development Corporation	County, Housing agencies	Neighborhood Organizations	X	X		
32	Work with Area Partners to Fund New Housing Development and Housing Programs	CDC	County, Housing agencies, lenders	X	X	X	X
47	Develop Community Watch programs in neighborhoods	Sheriff's Office, neighborhood orgs.	County	X	X		

MARKETING, BUSINESS, AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT							
45	Develop marketing/branding campaign	County, CDC, neighborhood orgs.	Fort Jackson, School District, businesses	X	X		
32	Market the Area to Potential Home Buyers and commercial tenants/investors	CDC, business organizations,	realtors, neighborhood organizations	X	X	X	

Appendix: Letter of Findings and Recommendations -- Decker Blvd Wetland Mitigation Study

Southeastern Environmental Solutions, Inc.
1201 St. Andrews Rd. Columbia, South Carolina 29210
Office (803) 731-1718 Fax (419) 715-9073
Mobile (803) 238-9464 e-mail sesirmo@bellsouth.net

Email Transmittal

Date: March 3, 2007

To: Mr. Milton Pope
Richland County
2020 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204

Email: miltonpope@richlandonline.com

From: Shannon Smith, President

RE: Letter of Findings and Recommendations
Decker Blvd Mitigation Study
Richland County, SC

Per your request, Southeastern Environmental Solutions, Inc. investigated the restoration potential of the Decker Blvd/Woodfield Park area within the Planning Department's Gills Creek Watershed Study Area (Figure 1). Several potential wetland and stream restoration/preservation areas along Jackson and Little Jackson Creeks were identified during the field reconnaissance (Figures 2-4); however, several constraints were noted. Large amounts of fill for parking lots and buildings were found in former wetland or floodplain areas, and they would require significant demolition/grading work to be restored to more stable conditions. Streams were also found to have been altered by straightening, and could potentially be restored by adding sinuosity and floodplain area to portions of Jackson and Little Jackson Creeks.

Although the restoration of these wetlands and streams would require significant funding and effort, the project would be of benefit to the surrounding ecosystem, and it could significantly increase water quality of downstream areas. Sediment would be deposited in the wetlands adjacent to the streams, reducing additional sediment transport to Cary's Lake. Setting aside an adjacent upland buffer along all wetlands within this corridor between Decker Blvd and O'Neil Court would also protect existing water quality from future development and prevent damage to restoration measures.

Although the area is too small to become a mitigation bank, mitigation revenues could be produced by the restoration of this stream/wetland corridor as a "project specific mitigation site", and the income could help to offset cost associated with the restoration efforts. Pending Corps of Engineers approval, approximately 2,800 feet of stream could be restored on Little Jackson and Jackson Creeks, between Decker Blvd and O'Neil Court. Similar restoration efforts in North Carolina produce revenues of approximately \$200.00 per foot of stream, and assuming that one could get the same price in South Carolina, approximately \$560,000.00 in gross revenues could be generated to offset restoration costs. Wetland restoration efforts could generate additional mitigation revenues from mitigation buyers. Another option would be to restore this area to meet County mitigation requirements for its own projects, such as the Farmers' Market.

If no mitigation buyer requests credits in the immediate future, then the above opportunities could be realized in a more cost effective and ecologically beneficial manner if they are implemented in conjunction with other restoration projects within the Gills Creek watershed. Last week, I discussed the Decker Blvd restoration opportunities with the Gills' Creek Steering Committee and suggested that the next step be to conduct an inventory of potential restoration and preservation areas within the watershed. Stakeholders could then be asked to help prioritize which areas should be evaluated in greater detail. The group asked me to bring a list of inventory scope items and costs associated with this mapping exercise to the next meeting on March 28.

It has been a pleasure working with you on this project. Please contact me if you need further information.

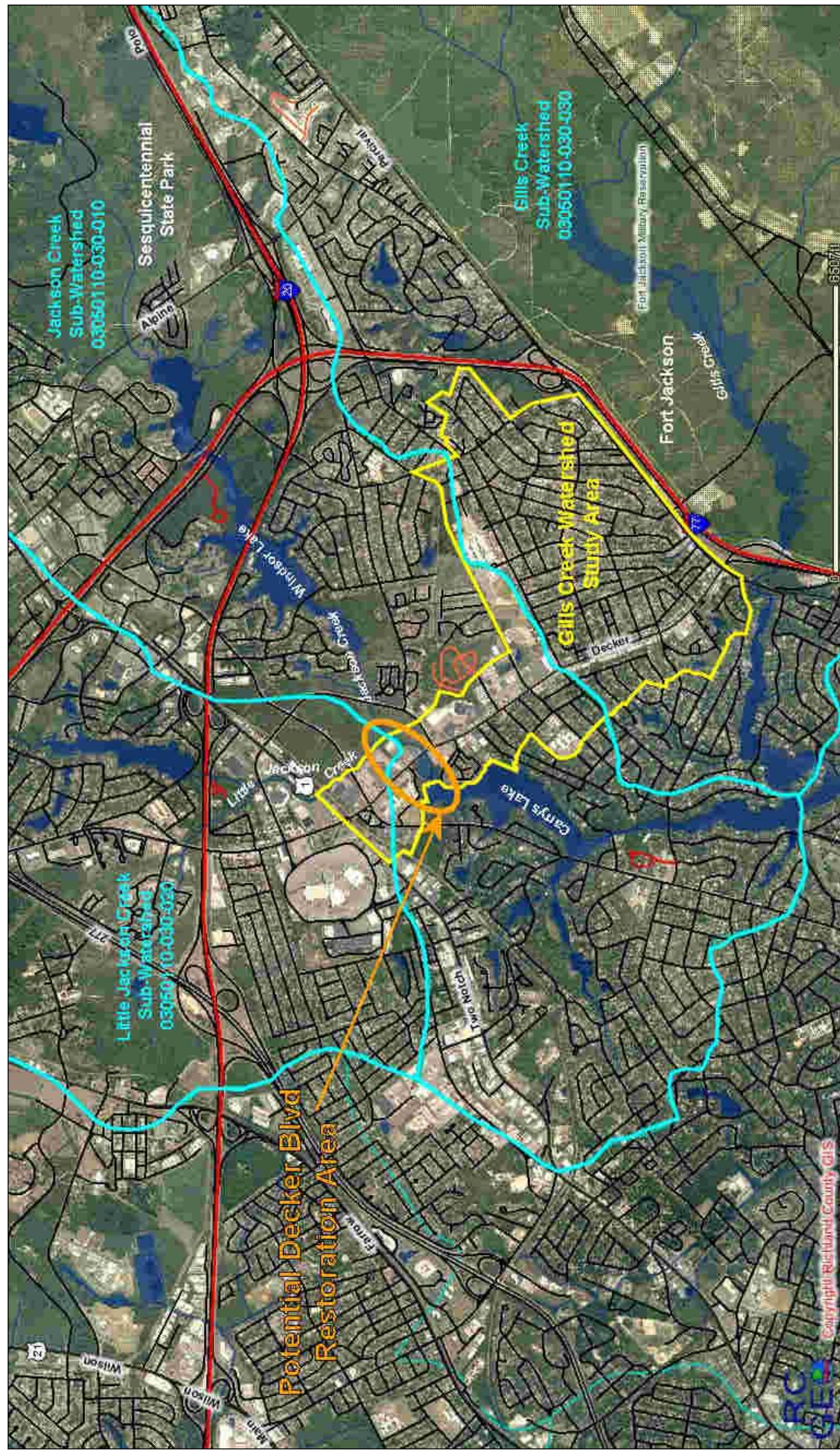


Figure 1. Overview Map

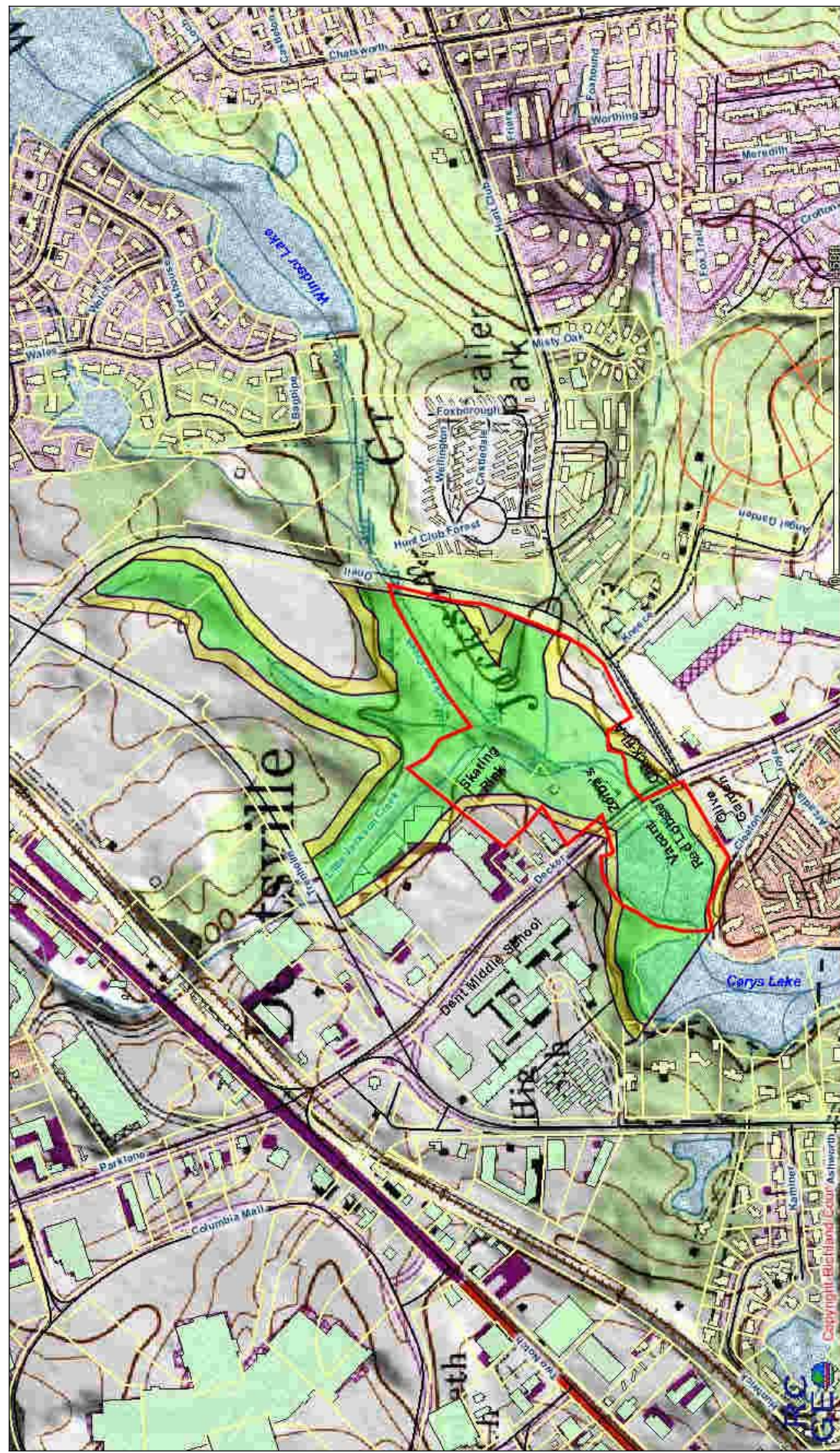


Figure 2. USGS Topographic Map.

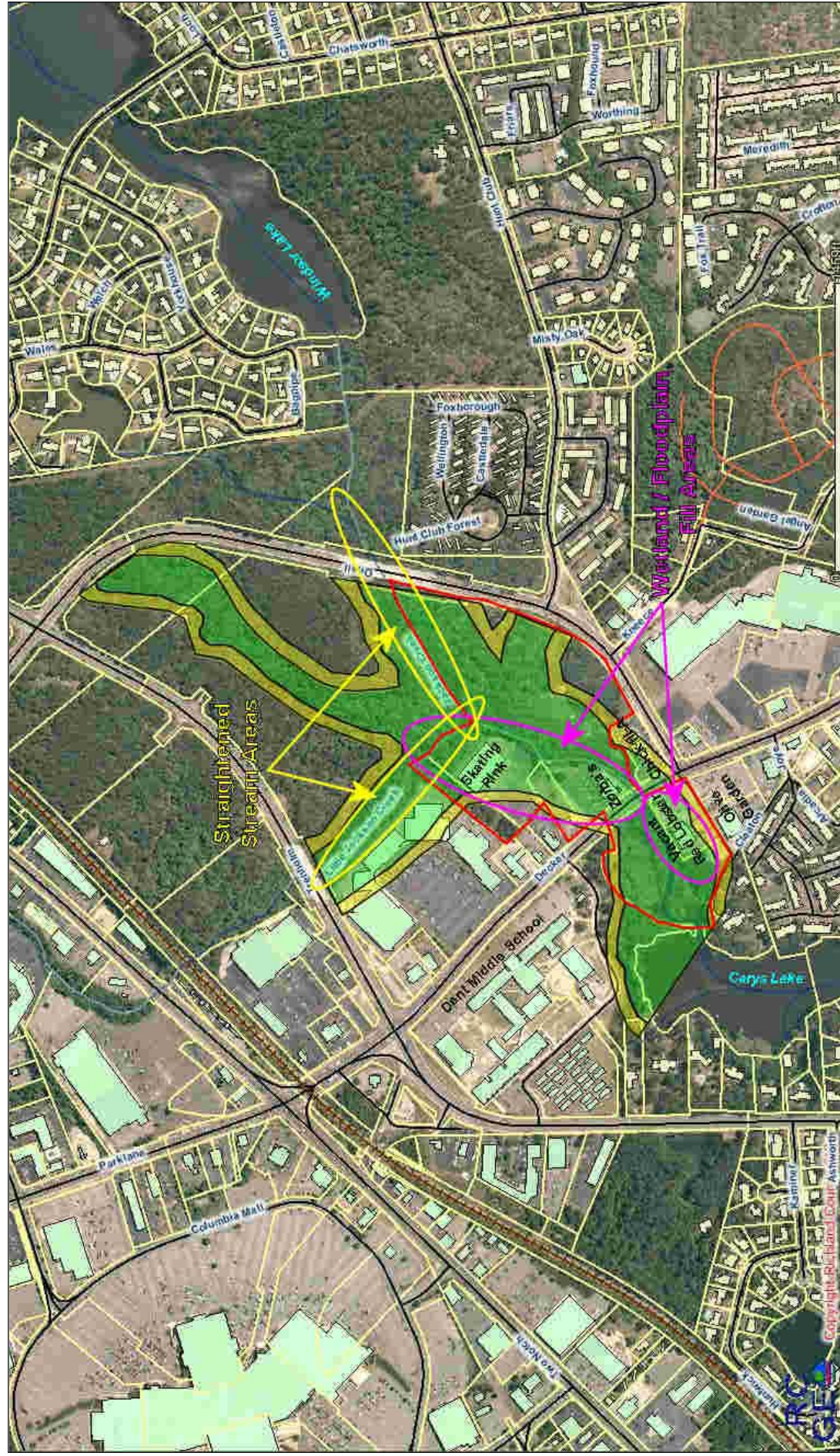


Figure 3. 2004 True Color Aerial Photograph
 Source: Richland County Online Mapping Application

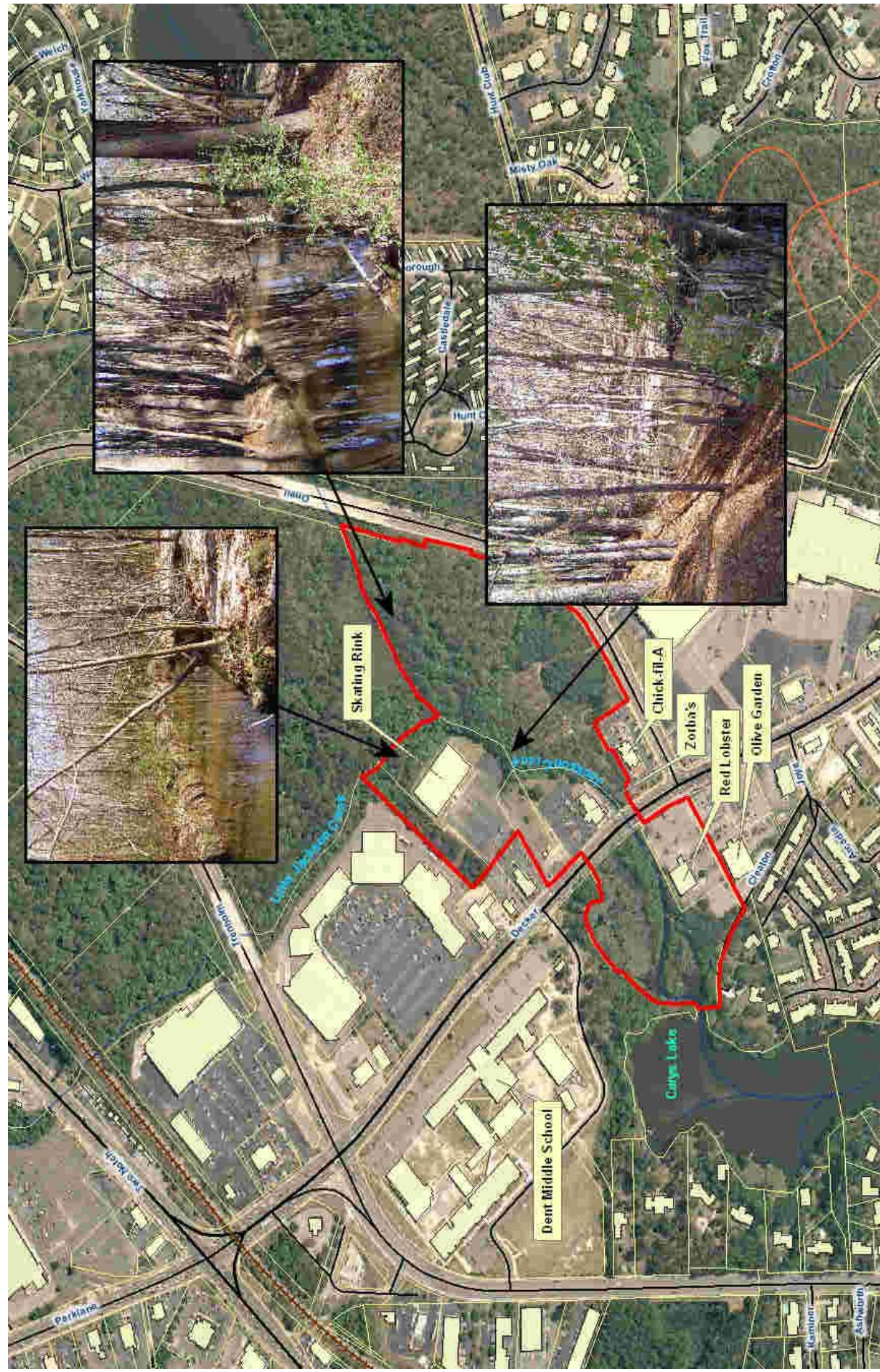


Figure 4. 2004 True Color Aerial Photograph.

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