



# Comprehensive Plan

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## CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

### 1.1 History of Development

In 1785 the state offered land for ten dollars for 100 acres. At this time Thomas Taylor became the owner of all the land where present day Forest Acres is situated. Many notable South Carolina families built antebellum homes in the Quinine Hills area, as this area was relatively mosquito free due to its relatively high ground elevation and was thus attractive to those seeking to avoid the threat of malaria. The water from springs flowing in this area was also reputed to have medicinal benefits.

The City of Forest Acres was incorporated in 1935 in part to facilitate installation of potable water with federal funding available through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Later, the City purchased water wholesale from Columbia and retailed it to residents. The availability of good water helped spur development. The original area of incorporation was two square miles with the municipal limits forming an irregular rectangle that mostly paralleled Forest Drive. The northern and southern boundaries were one half mile on each side of Forest Drive, from Columbia to Fort Jackson (then known as Camp Jackson). The eastern boundary was established a thousand feet beyond Gills Creek with a line drawn due north/south. The western boundary was then established two miles to the west, parallel to the eastern boundary.

Today, Forest Acres is approximately 4.84 square miles in area, with the increase in area having resulted from mostly residential annexations since the original incorporation. The largest individual annexation occurred in 1967, when the existing City of Ravenwood, the Wheeler property, the Satchelford Elementary School area, and other contiguous properties were annexed.

With the limitations imposed by state annexation laws the trend for Forest Acres has been to make annexations voluntary by individual parcels

### 1.2 Physical Setting

A number of factors influence the use of land in any community. Some of the most important of these factors are the natural and physical characteristics of the land and environment. Basic characteristics such as slope, soil types, flood plains, wetlands, and unique natural areas can have a significant impact on the type of development which is possible in an area. This natural resources portion of the plan looks at the natural and physical setting and their impact on future development.

In planning for the future growth of the area, it is important to document significant constraints related to natural resources in order to avoid potential conflict. In Forest Acres there are relatively few natural constraints which would negatively impact development.

#### *Location*

At the time of the 2000 Census, the City of Forest Acres was the second most populous municipality in Richland County, but mid-decade estimates indicate that Forest Acres has lost that distinction to the City of Irmo.

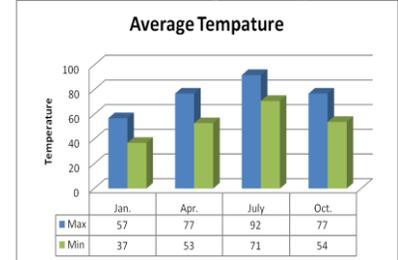
Forest Acres is located near the geographical center of Richland County, bounded on the west and south by the City of Columbia; on the east by Fort Jackson; and on the north and northeast

(partially) by the City of Arcadia Lakes and unincorporated areas of Richland County. Exhibit 1 depicts the general location of Forest Acres and delineates the study area.

***Climate***

Generally hot and humid summers and moderately short cold winters are the norm for the Forest Acres area. Winter weather in particular is moderated by the mountains in the northwest area of the state impeding cold waves from the north. Forest Acres has a mean annual temperature of 64 degrees and an average annual rainfall of 47 inches. The typical 245 day growing season occurs between the last spring freeze (usually in mid-March) and the first fall freeze in late October. The coldest months are December, January, and February (48 degree mean temperature). Warmest months are June, July, and August (80 degree mean temperature). Exhibit 2 shows the temperature variation throughout the year. Rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year with an average monthly amount of 3.9 inches. Winds are predominantly from the southwest at less than nine miles per hour.

**Exhibit 2 Average Temperature**



Source: [weatherchannel.com](http://weatherchannel.com)

***Topography***

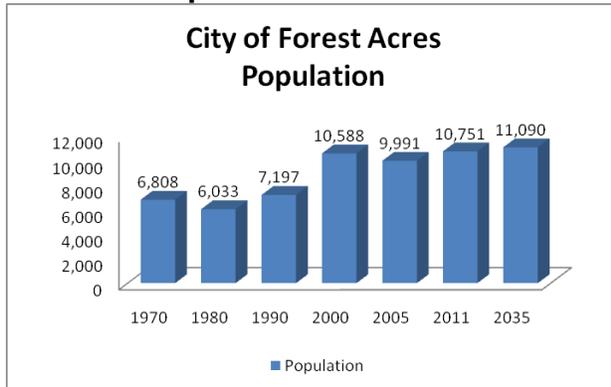
The City's geography is characterized by rolling sand hills common to the region and the watersheds of Gills Creek, Eight Mile Branch, and Penn Branch drain the area towards the Congaree River. Elevations range from a high of 357 feet above mean sea level (MSL) at the top of Quinine Hill to a low of 150 feet MSL along Gills Creek. Area soils are of the Pelion-Johnson-Valcluse associations which are moderately to poorly drained soils that have a sandy surface layer and loamy subsoil. These sedimentary soils of the Coastal Plain are generally satisfactory for urban uses.

## CHAPTER 2 POPULATION ELEMENT

### 2.1 Inventory of Existing Conditions

The following table (Exhibit 3) details the historical and projected population growth from 1970 to 2035.

**Exhibit 3 Population**



*Historical source: US Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments  
Population Projects Central Midlands Regions 2005 through 2035; Central Midlands Council of Governments.*

At its incorporation, the City was largely rural and sparsely populated (343 in 1940). There were significant housing and population increases following World War II. Between 1950 and 1960 the increases slowed to 19 percent but boomed again the 1960-1970 decade. The latter was triggered in part by the following factors: (1) several large annexations; (2) construction of multi-family housing; and (3) growth of retail/commercial areas.

The growth between 1960 and 1970 showed a 77 percent increase followed by a decline between 1970 and 1980. Mid-decade population projections of the US Census Bureau indicate a decline of 5.5 % in City population since the 2000 Census. This projection is derived from a strictly statistical analysis that seems to conflict with anecdotal observation in the growth of the population through new development and annexation since 2000. Population projections for the years 2011 and 2035 indicate an increase from the year 2005. However, Forest Acres is a mature community with little remaining undeveloped land that would significantly add to the population base if it were developed, and growth due to large scale annexations is unlikely.

Geographic size limitation imposed by political boundaries will influence the growth in Forest Acres in the future. Without merging or consolidation of political entities, there is very little unincorporated area open to expansion. Redevelopment of existing residential areas is anticipated during the next twenty years with a boost in demand for homes on smaller lots, continuing or long term care or assisted living facilities as the “baby boom” generation age.

Essentially, the character of the City is expected to remain the same through the next two decades; however, change can be anticipated through annexations and redevelopment of underutilized land uses. Annexation of “doughnut holes” – where Forest Acres has encircled unincorporated areas of Richland County could increase the City’s population and reduce duplication of public services. At present, the City’s policy of annexation is that it should be strictly voluntary but this has led to lot by lot individual annexations that may not be in the community’s best interest. With recent property tax reforms, municipal taxes may not be the impediment to annexation that they once were, and the

City is investigating an annexation campaign to annex the many unincorporated enclave areas of Richland County.

## 2.2 Demography

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) of Redlands, CA conducts market research and collects other data on communities around the world, often providing more current and insightful information than offered by governmental sources, such as the decennial census. By analyzing economic and other data collected by zip codes 29204 and 29206 (shared with the City of Columbia), ESRI offers the following community characteristics about Forest Acres:

### ...Prosperous Empty Nesters



Prosperous Empty Nesters neighborhoods are well established, located throughout the United States; approximately one-third are on the eastern seaboard. The median age is 48.7 years. More than half of the householders are aged 55 or older. Forty percent of household types are married couples with no children living at home. Educated and experienced, residents are enjoying the life stage transition from child rearing to retirement. The median household income is \$70,623. Residents place a high value on their physical and financial well-being and take an active interest in their homes and communities. They travel extensively, both at home and abroad. Leisure activities include refinishing furniture, playing golf, attending sports events, and reading mysteries. Civic participation includes joining civic clubs, engaging in fund-raising, and working as volunteers.

### ...Military Proximity



Military Proximity communities depend upon the military for their livelihood. More than 75 percent of the labor force is in the armed forces, and others work in civilian jobs on military bases. The median household income is \$45,232, and the median age is 22.5 years. Two-thirds of the households are composed of married couples with children. Housing types are mainly townhomes and apartments in small, multiunit buildings; 93 percent are occupied by renters. Residents participate in civic activities and are members of business clubs. Many homes have a pet, most likely a dog. Residents use the Internet to trade stocks and make purchases. For exercise, they snorkel, play tennis, practice yoga, and jog. Families visit theme parks and the zoo, throw Frisbees, and go bowling. Recent purchases include MP3 players, digital cameras, video game systems, cell phones, apparel, and jewelry.

### ...Metropolitans



Metropolitans residents favor City living in older neighborhoods. Approximately half of the households are composed of singles who live alone or with others. However, married-couple families comprise 40 percent of the households. The median age is 37.7 years. Over half of employed persons hold professional or management positions. These neighborhoods are an eclectic mix of single-family homes and multiunit structures, with a median home value of \$215,587. The median household income is \$62,812. Residents lead busy, active lifestyles. They travel frequently and participate in numerous civic activities. They enjoy going to museums and zoos and listening to classical

music and jazz on the radio. Refinishing furniture and playing a musical instrument are favorite hobbies. Exercise includes yoga, using Rollerblades, and hiking/backpacking.

2008 Summary	<u>ZIP 29206</u>	<u>National</u>
Total Population	21,304	309,299,265
Total Households	8,507	116,384,754

	<u>2008 Population by Race</u>	
White Alone	70.8%	72.3%
Black Alone	20.7%	12.6%
American Indian Alone	0.5%	0.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	2.4%	4.6%
Some Other Race Alone	3.7%	6.7%
Two or More Races	2.1%	2.9%
Hispanic Origin	6.9%	15.4%

	<u>2008 Population by Sex</u>	
Male	49.3%	49.1%
Female	50.7%	50.9%

	<u>2008 Households by Income</u>	
Median Household Income	\$56,958	\$54,749
HH Income Under \$50K	43.0%	45.5%
HH Income \$50K-\$100K	37.6%	34.8%
HH Income Over \$100K	19.4%	19.6%

	<u>2008 Average Home Value</u>	
	<u>ZIP 29206</u>	<u>National</u>
	\$254,879	\$260,559

... Retirement Communities



Retirement Communities neighborhoods are found mostly in cities scattered across the United States. The majority of households are multiunit dwellings. Congregate housing, which commonly includes meals and other services in the rent, is a trait of this segment dominated by singles who live alone. This educated, older market has a median age of 51.9 years. One-third of residents are aged 65 years or older. Although the median household income is a modest \$48,889, the median net worth is \$119,873. Good health is a priority; residents visit their doctors regularly, diet and exercise, purchase low-sodium food, and take vitamins. They spend their leisure time working crossword puzzles, playing bingo, gardening indoors, canoeing, gambling, and traveling overseas. They like to spend time with their grandchildren and spoil them with toys. Home remodeling projects are usually in the works.

Segment 33 Midlife Junction

Midlife Junction communities are found in suburbs across the country. Residents are phasing out of their child-rearing years. Approximately half of the households are composed of married-couple families; 31 percent are singles who live alone. The median age is 41.2 years; the median household income is \$49,031. One-third of the households receive Social Security benefits. Nearly two-thirds of the households are single-family structures; most of the remaining dwellings are apartments in multiunit buildings. These residents live quiet, settled lives. They spend their money prudently and do not succumb to fads. They prefer to shop by mail or phone from catalogs such as J.C. Penney, L.L. Bean, and Lands' End. They enjoy yoga, attending country music concerts and auto races, refinishing furniture, and reading romance novels.

Segment 34 Family Foundations

Family is the cornerstone of life in Family Foundations communities. A family mix of married couples, single parents, grandparents, and young and adult children populate these small, urban neighborhoods located in large metropolitan areas, primarily in the South and Midwest. This market represents stability. Hardly any household growth has occurred since 2000; these neighborhoods experience little turnover. The median age is 39.0 years; the median household income is \$46,308. Most households are single-family structures built before 1970, occupied by owners. Many residents are members of church boards or religious clubs and participate in fund-raising. Basketball is a favorite sport; residents play it, attend professional games, watch games on TV and listen to games on the radio. They watch courtroom TV shows, sports, and news programs on TV and listen to gospel, urban, and jazz radio formats.

2008 Summary	<u>ZIP 29204</u>	<u>National</u>
Total Population	20,534	309,299,265
Total Households	8,462	116,384,754

	<u>2008 Population by Race</u>	
White Alone	36.3%	72.3%
Black Alone	60.7%	12.6%
American Indian Alone	0.2%	0.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	0.7%	4.6%
Some Other Race Alone	0.7%	6.7%
Two or More Races	1.4%	2.9%
Hispanic Origin	2.1%	15.4%

	<u>2008 Population by Sex</u>	
Male	45.3%	49.1%
Female	54.7%	50.9%

	<u>2008 Households by Income</u>	
Median Household Income	\$40,158	\$54,749
HH Income Under \$50K	59.3%	45.5%
HH Income \$50K-\$100K	28.2%	34.8%
HH Income Over \$100K	12.5%	19.6%

<u>2008 Average Home Value</u>	
ZIP 29204	National
\$158,654	\$260,559

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## 2.3 Needs and Goals

The City of Forest Acres should pursue policies to protect and enhance the quality of life of its residents. One example is adopting a policy of Universal Design for future development and redevelopment. **Universal design** is a relatively new paradigm that emerged from "barrier-free" or "accessible design" and "assistive technology." Barrier free design and assistive technology provide a level of accessibility for people with disabilities but they also often result in separate and stigmatizing solutions, for example, a ramp that leads to a different entry to a building than a main stairway. Universal design strives to be a broad-spectrum solution that helps everyone, not just people with disabilities. Moreover, it recognizes the importance of how things look. For example, while built up handles is a way to make utensils more usable for people with gripping limitations, some companies introduced larger, easy to grip and attractive handles as feature of mass produced utensils. They appeal to a wide range of consumers.

As life expectancy rises and modern medicine has increased the survival rate of those with significant injuries, illnesses and birth defects, there is a growing interest in universal design. There are many industries in which universal design is having strong market penetration but there are many others in which it has not yet been adopted to any great extent.

Universal design is a part of everyday living and is all around us. The "undo" command in most software products is a good example. Color-contrasted dishware with steep sides that assist those with visual problems as well as those with dexterity problems are another. Additional examples include cabinets with pull-out shelves, kitchen counters at several heights to accommodate different tasks and postures and low-floor buses that kneel and are equipped with ramps rather than lifts. (see [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

Universal Design focuses on products and environments to be as usable as possible by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation. Other policies that City should pursue include a sound annexation strategy to help guide decision-making, mixed-use development, and complete streets.

## CHAPTER 3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 Existing Conditions

The greater Columbia MSA economy clearly dominates Forest Acres but local economic activity is characterized by retail and service sector commerce. Gross sales during the period from 2005 to 2006 totaled \$209,308,372. As a City within the Columbia MSA, many residents are probably employed elsewhere, with a significant percentage employed in state government, the University of South Carolina or medical and other professional sectors. Four large medical centers are located within easy commuting distance of all points in Forest Acres.

The 2000 resident labor force of 5,432 is highly educated, reflecting the many professionals residing in Forest Acres. This would seem to also be true of the more mobile, younger, college-age employees found working in the City's many stores and restaurants.

Unquestionably, the employer in the City with the most employees is the customer service call center belonging to Verizon Wireless. Located in the Midtown at Forest Acres (formerly Richland Mall), this 24/7 operation has over 1,450 employees. The customer service positions with this employer reportedly start at over \$26,000 per year, plus benefits. Other significant employers include the City's public schools, Belk department store, the Kroger, Piggly-Wiggly, and Publix grocery stores, and the Forest Acres City government.

Economic trends in Forest Acres are positive and water and sewer availability is no impediment to business development as it is in some areas. These utilities are respectively available through the City of Columbia and the East Richland County Public Service District.

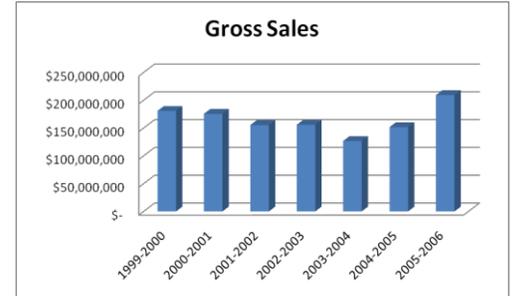
The proximity of Fort Jackson also has an important impact on the economy of Forest Acres, especially for the service and retail outlets in the City. Fort Jackson military families also support the housing in Forest Acres.

#### **Income**

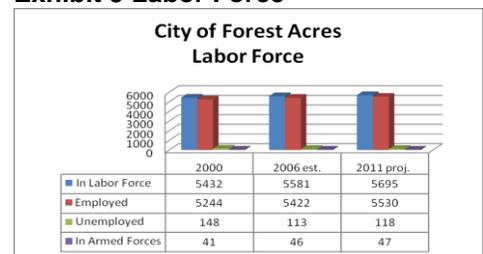
Exhibits 6 and 7 illustrate the per capital median household incomes for the year 1990 and 2000 for both Richland County and Forest Acres. For 2012, the projected Per Capita income is \$37,375 and the projected Median Household income is \$63,162.

#### **Education**

**Exhibit 4 Gross Sales**

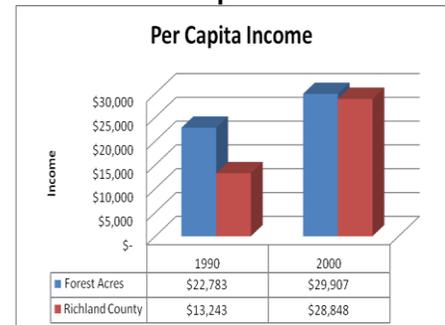


**Exhibit 5 Labor Force**



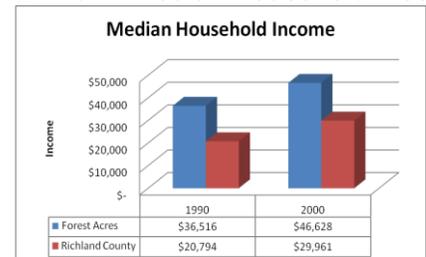
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments

**Exhibit 6 Per Capita Income**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments

**Exhibit 7 Median Household Income**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments

The City of Forest Acres traditionally has had a highly educated population. According to the 1990 Census, over 44% of those age 25 and older had a least a Bachelor's Degree. That percentage increased to 50% in the year 2000 and is projected to reach almost 70% by the year 2011.

### **3.2 Needs and Goals**

Forest Acres should continue to encourage development of low impact commercial interests, as these bring employment opportunities to the community without much of a demand for City services. Future development should be sustainable and compatible with the community.

## CHAPTER 4 NATURAL RESOURCES

### 4.1 Inventory of Existing Conditions

Since most of the geographic area that makes up the City of Forest Acres is developed, there are only a few small forested pockets of undisturbed land. Most of these pockets are of marginal quality, and have not developed already because the lands are either compromised by poor soil conditions, extreme elevations, or drainage limitations. Exhibit 8, "Environmental Map" shows the natural resources in the City of Forest Acres.

The watersheds of Gills and Jackson Creeks are located within Forest Acres which in turn feed the system of Carey Lake, Spring Lake, Upper Rockyford, Lower Rockyford, and Forest Lake. Eight Mile creek and Penn Branch also traverse a portion of Forest Acres and feed into Gills Creek. There are several unnamed ponds found within the City as well. The Gills Creek Watershed Association was formed with the vision to be "a national model for watershed management and planning." According to the association's website, there are four goals of the GCWA:

1. Develop a comprehensive master plan for management of the Gills Creek Watershed.
2. Establish a management body and formalize a coalition to oversee development and implementation of the master plan.
3. Develop a budget and fund raising strategy to implement the master plan.
4. Inform the public through an effective public outreach program on the importance and impacts of watershed management.

The GCWA has partnered with Richland County and Keep the Midlands Beautiful to raise awareness of the impacts of development in the watershed.

The underlying watersheds and the water bodies they feed are considered impaired by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control due to high sedimentation and stormwater runoff, the extent of which is presently being analyzed. A consortium of interested parties has formed to initiate steps to mitigate the water quality in this mostly developed urban environment.

#### ***Plant and Animal Habitat***

Since the area is highly developed, naturally occurring fauna and flora habitat is limited and they tenuously co-exist with humans in an urban environment. There are occasional sightings of deer, foxes, raccoons, possums, and other rarer mammals such as coyotes may inhabit the pockets of undeveloped land around Forest Acres, as do a wide range of indigenous birds. But, while these small areas contribute to the City's appearance, they are not generally large enough to be considered supportable habitats. Recent development has resulted in a diminution of habitat available to wildlife. According to the SC Department of Natural Resources no habitats of threatened or endangered species have been identified in Forest Acres. Animal species present are those that have adapted to life in close proximity to humans. Naturally occurring plants common to the midlands are prevalent although many are of a cultivated variety.

## 4.2 Needs and Goals

As the City grows, consideration should be given to the set aside of natural areas. There is a relatively large tract of undeveloped land under conservation easement located between Trenholm Plaza and the Gregg Park S/D just outside the City limits. There is an opportunity, presently being explored to create a creek side walking trail along a portion of Eight Mile Branch and along Gill's Creek, which would lead to this land parcel. There has been discussion of the possibility of a nature interpretive center being constructed by the SC Nature Conservancy. Central Midlands Council of Governments is developing a regional Green Infrastructure plan and has identified the Gills Creek stream corridor as a potential linkage in the green infrastructure network.

Pocket parks throughout Forest Acres could also represent an opportunity to create further urban "oases" for the benefit of residents and visitors. Riparian buffers could be established along the lakes, wetland, and creeks to help address issues of non-point source pollution; buffers along road shoulders could serve the same purpose.

## **CHAPTER 5 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **5.1 Inventory of Existing Conditions**

Although settled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there are no structures or locations included on the National Register of Historic Places located in the City of Forest Acres. However, Bethel United Methodist Church is of historical significance since it has existed on its present site since the 1850's. A survey of the Forest Acres area by the S.C. Department of Archives and History has found no designated historical sites within the immediate area.

There are no museums, performing art centers, or other specifically cultural venues in Forest Acres, but several important such facilities are only minutes away in Columbia. Serving the greater Columbia area are the Columbia Museum of Art, The State Museum, Edventure Children's Museum, and several lesser similar locales. The performing arts are accommodated at the Koger Center, the Carolina Coliseum, Township Auditorium, and at several smaller venues located throughout the City. The University of South Carolina strongly influences arts and music in the area.

Richland County offers a fine county-wide library system, and the Cooper Branch Library in Forest Acres on Trenholm Rd. is heavily utilized.

### **5.2 Needs and Goals**

As a smaller jurisdiction within a larger metropolitan region, it is difficult for the City of Forest Acres to facilitate the creation of cultural facilities in the City. Opportunity to co-locate facilities such as a school with an auditorium for local theater groups or parks with environmental learning centers should be sought and pursued when opportunities are presented.

## CHAPTER 6 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 6.1 Inventory of Existing Conditions

#### *Utilities (Water, Sewer, ElectriCity and Gas)*

The City of Forest Acres operated and maintained its own water system from the time of incorporation until August, 1998 when it was transferred to the City of Columbia. In the ensuing years the City of Columbia has completed extensive upgrades to the distribution system and Forest Acres residents pay out-of-City rates due to the large capital expense that was required to rehabilitate the system. Water service is available in all areas of Forest Acres with water quality being regarded as good.

The East Richland County Public Service District provides sanitary sewage collection and treatment for most residents of Forest Acres with the exception of a small number of residents served by the City of Columbia. CapaCity is believed to be sufficient to meet the needs of the foreseeable future with enough surplus capaCity to support more intense land uses where permitted by the zoning. The replacement of aging sewer lines is an ongoing initiative of the utility. Such lines contribute to a problem of infiltration and inflow of storm water into the sanitary sewer system which leads to excessive flows into the treatment plant.

Other utility services are provided in Forest Acres by:

ElectriCity	South Carolina Electric and Gas
Natural Gas	South Carolina Electric and Gas
Telephone	Bell South, Nuvox, Time Warner
Cable TV	Time Warner
Direct Broadcast Satellite	Dish Network and Direct TV

#### *Solid Waste Collection and Disposal*

The City of Forest Acres provides all single and two-family residences with weekly curbside collection of household garbage, yard waste and recyclables. The City's crews pick up bulky items as needed, including white goods. Solid wastes are disposed of in a privately operated DHEC approved landfill, as the disposal fees are less than at the Richland County landfill. Eligible materials for curbside recycling include newspaper, corrugated cardboard, mixed plastics, glass, and aluminum. There is also a recycling convenience center located at 3400 Robert Springs Road.

Businesses and multi-family residences contract with private sector collectors for waste disposal.

#### *Fire Protection Services*

Fire services are provided county-wide by Richland County with all units under the direction of the City of Columbia Fire Department. This consolidation of services has resulted in efficient and effective service leading to improved ISO (Insurance Services Office) ratings for Forest Acres. In April 2007 the ISO rating decline from a Class 5 to a Class 2, reflecting better firefighting capability and improved water distribution. For the insurance companies that utilize the ISO rating in premium underwriting, policyholders may see as much as a 5% decline in the cost of property and casualty insurance. A relatively new (operational in 2004) Gills Creek Fire Station (#33) was

established on Old Forest Drive (Forest Drive near I-77) which provides response to Forest Acres with additional assistance if needed from the main Columbia station (#1) on Laurel Street or the fire station located in Dentsville (#14).

***Emergency Medical Services***

These services are operated county-wide by Richland County and provide EMT or first responder medical assistance. The FAPD has begun a program that augments EMS services with patrol units being equipped with AED’s (Automatic External Defibrillators) and personnel trained in CPR. This service was initiated by City Council after observation that FAPD units usually arrive on the scene ahead of EMS and when the call for medical assistance involves a cardiac problem the CPR trained and AED equipped police officers may be able to improve the outcome.

***General Government Facilities***

The City of Forest Acres possesses only two major governmental facilities, a City Hall/Police Station complex at 5205 N. Trenholm Rd. and a Public Works facility at the corner of Covenant and Robert Springs Roads. In addition to housing police and administrative offices of the City government, the building at 5205 N Trenholm includes a meeting room that hosts meetings and public hearings of the City Council, and alternatively, serves as the municipal court room. This public room may accommodate only about 100 people at any given time, and although current space needs seem to be adequate, there is no room for growth and on-site storage space is at a premium. City Hall was substantially renovated in 1992.

The sanitation, streets and recycling services are operated out of the Public Works Facility. It is an area of equipment storage, contains facilities for vehicle and equipment repair and houses a fueling station for heavy trucks, police cars and other City vehicles.

***Education Facilities***

Public schools in Forest Acres are divided into separate school districts of Richland District One and Richland District Two, with most Forest Acres students attending District One schools. The public schools serving Forest Acres are as follows:

<b>Richland District One:</b>			<b>Richland District II:</b>		
<u>Elementary Schools</u>	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High Schools</u>	<u>Elementary Schools</u>	<u>Middle Schools</u>	<u>High Schools</u>
Brockman	Crayton	A. C. Flora	Forest Lake	Dent	Richland Northeast
Satchel Ford		Heyward Career & Technology Center			

A major restoration of AC Flora High School was recently completed. This restoration included the building of a new administrative building and two story classroom buildings. Grounds improvements also included a parking lot behind the new two-story building, a complete fire loop with hydrants around the classroom building and the painting of the existing #400 building (classrooms and hallways). The restoration also included an addition to the media center and to the cafeteria and provided for renovation to the existing east half of C building in order to update all of the science classrooms.

Brockman and Satchel Ford report a combined registration of 920 elementary students, with middle school attendance at Crayton of 1,087 and 1,350 high school students at A.C. Flora and 1,000 students at the Heyward Career & Technology Center, mainly pulled from other area high schools. Forest Lake Elementary reports registration of 606 students; 1,179 students at Dent Middle School and 1,545 high school students at Richland Northeast High School.

Crayton Middle School and Dent Middle School were completely rebuilt and reopened for operation 2007.

Private schools serving Forest Acres and beyond are:

- Cardinal Newman Middle and High School has an enrollment in excess of 400 students
- Timmerman School reports attendance of 457 students
- Harmony School, reports 64 students pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Cardinal Newman School recently announced that it will be moving to a 25 acre site near the I-20 interchange on Farrow Road; eight miles from the current location. While losing the school will be significant for the Forest Drive corridor, it does provide an opportunity for the redevelopment of the 8 acre site. Since the school served as a destination for over 400 students, and their parents, which helped the surrounding retail establishments, having a development that serves a similar function, such as a high density residential/commercial mixed use development should be encouraged by the City.

### ***Libraries***

The John Hughes Cooper Branch of the Richland County Public Library is located in the City of Forest Acres at 5317 Trenholm Road. This building consists of 10,000 plus square feet and houses approximately 50,000 volumes. The main branch of the Richland County Library System is located on Main Street in Columbia is available to the citizens of Forest Acres. Any services unavailable at the Cooper regional branch are available at the Main Branch. This award winning library provides a complete range of library services.

### ***Recreation Facilities***

Public recreation facilities are limited in Forest Acres to several small urban neighborhood parks maintained by the City, Trenholm Park, a multi-use recreational facility owned and operated by the Richland County Recreation Commission, ball fields at Satchel Ford Elementary School and a gymnasium jointly operated by Richland District II and Forest Lake Elementary School.

Although recreation covers a wide range of activities, there are two basic characteristics of open space, active and passive. Passive space is usually defined as wildlife preserves, natural gardens, state and national forests, and other natural areas in which little or no development has occurred. There are no such areas designated in Forest Acres. Active open areas are characterized by development specifically designed to serve one or more recreational facilities such as ball fields, tennis courts, etc. In order to inventory Forest Acres as to open space and recreation facilities, the following classification system has been chosen.

- Urban Parks and Playgrounds
- School Playgrounds

## Forest Acres Comprehensive Plan

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- Private Urban Recreation Areas
- Rural Recreation Areas

*Urban Parks and Playgrounds:* Includes all playgrounds, play fields, swimming pools, neighborhood parks, and community recreation centers in the urban area that are owned by the municipal governing body. Children's' playgrounds and mini-parks also fall into this classification provided they are located in an urban area and are owned by the municipality. Included in this category are:

- Richland County Recreation Commission operates Trenholm Park. Facilities include a gymnasium, swimming pool, four tennis courts, playground, and two baseball fields.
- The City owns and maintains four neighborhood parks identified as Citadel Park, Idalia Park, Pinetree Park and Quinine Hill Park. The latter park is the largest in land area, but is the least developed of the four properties. Playground equipment is installed at Idalia and Citadel Parks and picnic tables are in all four parks.

*School Playgrounds:* Includes all school outdoor recreation areas for public and private schools.

- A.C. Flora High School, multi-use building and joint use program with City of Forest Acres
- Crayton Middle School, playground
- Satchel Ford School, playground
- Brockman School, playground
- Dent Middle School, playground
- Forest Lake Elementary, playground, gymnasium

*Private Urban Recreation Areas:* Includes commercial and institutional sites which are available by membership or enrollment only.

- Forest Lake Club, golf, swimming, tennis
- Rockbridge Club, swimming, tennis
- Timmerman School, playground, gymnasium
- Cardinal Newman High School, gymnasium, track, football, soccer fields

*Rural Recreation Sites:* Includes those publicly owned by either state or local government bodies.

- Sesquicentennial State Park, located near Forest Acres on Two Notch Rd., offers swimming, picnic, softball, walking, and nature trails. It is owned by South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.
- Forest Lake, Spring Lake, and Rocky Ford Lake are privately owned. There is lake access from private homes but no public access.

## 6.2 Needs and Goals

### *Utilities (Water, Sewer, ElectriCity and Gas)*

The City should continue to urge the East Richland County Public Service District to monitor services in Forest Acres to identify the problem areas and engage in repair and rehabilitation to the collection system to reduce infiltration and inflow at the wastewater treatment plant and reduce potential pollution of creeks flowing through the City through wastewater overflows. East Richland Public Sewer District is engaging in collection system upgrades as need and availability of financial resources allow.

More than ten years after transfer of the Forest Acres water system to the City of Columbia, there are still areas that have inadequate water flow. Residents of Florawood Dr. have complained about low flow, which appears to be attributable to their neighborhood being served by a single 2” water line. Minimum water system design guidelines would dictate that this area needs to be served by at least a 6” water main. The City of Columbia has pledged to upgrade the service on Florawood Drive.

ElectriCity and natural gas supplies appear to be adequate to meet the current and future needs of the community, but at an ever increasing cost.

### *Solid Waste*

The City of Forest Acres should increase recycling participation through education and boosting awareness.

### *Fire Protection*

The current arrangement appears to be providing efficient and effective service. The City should continue to support this arrangement while monitoring the level of service to address any drop off. (See page 13)

### *Emergency Medical Services*

The current arrangement appears to be providing efficient and effective service. The City should continue to support this arrangement while monitoring the level of service to address any drop off. (See page 13)

### *General Government Services*

While current space at City Hall appears to be sufficient for the City’s needs, a detail study of facility needs should be conducted. If the relocation of City Hall is contemplated, the co-location of services such as City Hall with a park/recreation facility should be considered.

### *Education*

Neighborhood schools are important to the fabric of the community. They give the neighborhoods a focal point, and the students have a greater opportunity to make friends that live in their neighborhood. Schools physically connected to the neighborhoods encourage the students to walk

to school which benefits the health of the children but also eases traffic congestion around the schools and has a positive impact on the air quality.

While the school districts make decisions on facility needs, the City should encourage the school district to maintain the neighborhood connections with the existing schools and continue the policy of neighborhood schools with any new schools built in the City.

***Libraries***

Library access appears to be adequate to meet the needs of the future.

***Recreation***

The City should develop an open space plan that identifies possible passive recreation space within the City.

## CHAPTER 7 HOUSING

### 7.1 Inventory

Housing conditions are a major factor in the growth and development of an area. In Forest Acres the quality and quantity of the housing units is good and the quantity of the housing stock is generally limited to single-family residential and apartment units. Based on the 2000 Census, 60% of the housing units were built between 1940 and 1960. The median home value for the 2000 Census was \$123,700.

While there are 17 apartment and condominium complexes with a combined 1,312 units, no permits for multi-family units have been issued in the last 7 years. The median gross rent for the 2000 Census was \$598

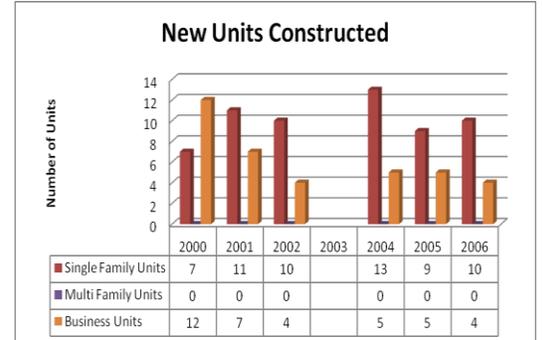
According to the Richland County Assessor’s Office, as of August 2008 there are 3,554 owner-occupied residences in the City of Forest Acres on 4,877 land parcels.

### 7.2 Needs and Goals

The City should continue to encourage a variety of housing opportunities. Mixed-use developments combining both residential and non-residential uses is one way to address housing needs for a broad segment of the populations (singles, young couples and empty nesters).

Preserving the long established single family neighborhoods should be a priority. The City should review its land-development ordinances to prevent encroachment of incompatible uses of all types. Additionally, the City should encourage that property owners maintain their lots and keep their homes in good repair.

**Exhibit 10 Permits Issued**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Central Midlands Council of Governments

## CHAPTER 8 TRANSPORTATION

### 8.1 Existing Conditions

The transportation network, nearly analogous to the human circulatory system, brings goods and people into the community and provides the means by which they can move freely from one location to another. The economic and social well being of Forest Acres is dependent upon such movement with minimum delay, congestion, and hazard. Conditions adversely affecting traffic flow include narrow pavement, poor street alignment or condition, inadequate intersections, or improper parking. Many thoroughfares also serve as corridors for utility installation, sometimes in apparent obvious conflict with transportation concerns. Utility poles located in the rights of way and overhead lines may be impediments to widening of roads for enhanced traffic carrying capacity. These functions are best served by rights-of-way of adequate width and continuous alignment. Thoroughfares and other streets typically utilize between 10 and 20 percent of developed urban land. Only urban single family home development typically uses more land than transportation and represents a large public investment.

The SC Department of Transportation characterizes as major or minor the roads in Forest Acres. Primarily, the major thoroughfares serve traffic passing through Forest Acres and collector routes pick up traffic from minor residential streets, provide circulation throughout the community, and serve as supporting the framework for the major streets by funneling traffic through them. (**See Transportation Map**)

Major thoroughfares are interstates, principal arterials, and minor arterials: Primary purpose of this type of facility is to provide rapid, convenient movement throughout and around the City. Appropriate characteristics of these streets include being designed for heavy traffic; planned to form boundaries that separate developed incompatible land uses; right-of-way and paved width designed according to traffic-carrying demand and desirable speed.

Forest Acres is indirectly served by Interstate Highways 20, 26, and 77, as well as by a network of residential, secondary, and collector streets maintained by the State Department of Transportation and Richland County. Local bus service is available in Forest Acres, and interstate bus service is available in Columbia. Commercial air service is available in Columbia at two locations – Columbia Metropolitan Airport and Owens Field, which is limited to small aircraft.

The three major thoroughfares in Forest Acres are Beltline Boulevard, Forest Drive, and Trenholm Road. Minor thoroughfares in Forest Acres are Harrison Road, Covenant Road, Satchelford Road, a portion of Bethel Church Road and Pine Belt Road. Residential collector streets penetrate the various neighborhoods and provide access to major and minor arterials. Through annexation Forest Acres has become contiguous to the major thoroughfares of Two Notch Road and Decker Boulevard. These two major thoroughfares may begin to play a more prominent role in the transportation patterns of the City.

The outlook is for an increase in traffic volume on the three major thoroughfares, but the amount of the increase is difficult to forecast. Officials of the SCDOT report that the intersection of Forest Drive and Trenholm Rd. is already functioning at 103% of design capacity, leading to DOT levels

of service of “D” or “E” and the prospect is that continuing residential and commercial development in NE Richland County will probably contribute to increasing traffic volumes throughout Forest Acres whenever residents of those areas commute into Columbia for employment or other reasons.

## **8.2 Needs and Goals**

More efficient movement of traffic on Forest Drive would be beneficial to the community but is probably unachievable without further widening of Forest Drive, Beltline Blvd., and Trenholm Rd. However, that is unlikely because virtually all of the additional right of way that would have to be acquired would be prohibitively expensive due to existing development. Additionally, there are no new thoroughfares planned as part of the COATS (Columbia Area Transportation Study) that would be particularly beneficial to the City of Forest Acres, although another east-west travel artery would probably alleviate some of the congestion currently being experienced by motorists.

Increased utilization of the regional bus system could have a positive effect on traffic volumes, but mass transit is not generally regarded as a reasonable alternative to personal vehicle use to meet transportation needs. The bus system is also experiencing service and financial problems and its long term viability is questionable.

New development and redevelopment should be sensitive to the transportation needs of the City by mitigating impacts on the transportation system and offering multimodal connections. Compact, mixed-use development help to mitigate transportation impacts by shortening trips between uses and offering opportunities to use alternate modes such as pedestrian and bicycles. Whenever possible, strip commercial parking lots should be interconnected to minimize use of public roads and streets.

## CHAPTER 9 LAND USE

### 9.1 Existing Conditions

An inventory of land uses was conducted to describe the existing land use patterns; provide identification of the housing within the City based on census data; and to illustrate on a map the various land uses. The inventory categorized active land uses according to the following types:

*Residential-single family:* Conventionally built detached house intended for the occupancy of one family.

*Residential-duplex:* Conventionally built house with two separate dwelling units, usually noted by the presence of two main entrances, two driveways and/or garages, or two mail boxes.

*Residential-multi family:* A development of three or more attached housing units, whether individually owned as condominiums or rented as apartments.

*Manufactured housing unit:* A manufactured home or mobile home, whether on a temporary or permanent foundation. Some mobile homes may have stick built additions.

*Commercial:* Uses involving wholesale or retail trade, service, office, or other business activities.

*Industrial:* Uses involving the manufacturing or processing of materials or products.

*Public and quasi-public:* Uses generally accessible to the public and involving not for profit activities. These include public buildings, parks and designated open spaces, schools, churches, golf courses, fraternal organizations, and other buildings and places open to the public.

*Vacant:* Land on which no structure has been placed and which has no apparent active use. These areas may include vacant lots, forest lands, wetlands and agricultural lands.

The inventory has resulted in the development of the existing land use map (Exhibit 12 “Generalized Existing Land Use Map”). The map depicts the basic land use classifications for the City of Forest Acres.

Forest Acres has a relatively consistent land use pattern which has not varied in over twenty-five years. The commercial areas are generally focused at Trenholm Plaza, Midtown at Forest Acres, and along major traffic routes such as Forest Drive, Beltline Boulevard, Covenant Road, and Trenholm Road. Large areas of single family housing exist without intrusion from other types of land uses. The predominant type of housing is single family residential.

The two primary commercial areas exist in Forest Acres are found at major road intersections of Forest Drive and Trenholm Road, Forest Drive at Beltline Boulevard. Another commercial area is found at the intersection of Covenant Road at Bethel Church Road.

There are few remaining large tracts of undeveloped land in Forest Acres. One 18 +/- acre tract on Two Notch Road is owned by the City and another privately owned 21.59 acre tract south of Trenholm Plaza are the largest undeveloped tracts in the City limits. New growth in Forest Acres will come from infilling development of small parcels.

Pockets of unincorporated Richland County, surrounded by incorporated portions of Forest Acres, have resulted from the City's annexations over the last twenty years. These areas do not receive services from the City which would be more efficiently provided in most cases because of proximity to Forest Acres and could avoid duplication of police and sanitation services. Commercial use in Forest Acres probably accounts for less than 10% of developed land, concentrated around major intersections and along the corridors of Forest Drive, Beltline Boulevard and Two Notch Road.

Redevelopment of residential property can also be anticipated. The remainder of single family residential properties along Forest Drive and Beltline Boulevard between major commercial nodes is likely to redevelop over time into other transitional uses such as higher density residential or limited, low intensity commercial. Because of their proximity to other commercial and/or high traffic areas, their desirability for single family occupancy and use appears to be declining as they become non-owner occupied transient rental property.

Periodic review of master planning elements such as parking, beautification, and traffic management and their implementation in the zoning code and land development regulations should help insure that Forest Acres encourages compatible development where it is best suited for the community.

Other land uses as a percentage of total land use include area utilized in the delivery of public utilities and public streets and other public facilities such as City Hall or public parks. The combined total of these uses probably does not exceed 15%. There is no industrial development within the City, leaving in excess of 60% of the land use occupied by residential uses.

A land survey of the City of Forest Acres was conducted using 2004 data from Richland County. The various land uses were classified as follows:

*Residential:* The predominant land use in Forest Acres is residential. Residential development in the City generally consists of brick veneered single family stick built homes. There are 17 apartment/condominiums/retirement complexes within the City limits which currently represent the highest density residential land use.

On the east and west sides of Trenholm Road, single family residential neighborhoods follow streets contoured around area lakes and streams.

The City south of Forest Drive follows a more conventional grid pattern in the layout of streets, especially in the Clemson Avenue area. Many homes are constructed on relatively large lots. The age of single family housing varies as does its type. Some of the earlier housing constructed in Forest Acres consist of smaller homes on smaller lots. Other housing of another period is represented by larger homes on larger lots. In recent years, due to land cost and desirability, recent residential development has been mostly small to large houses built on relatively small lots.

Several former apartment complexes, Brickyard, Madison, and Williamsburg have been converted to condominiums.

There is an older, small concentration of neighborhood commercial development at the intersection of Bethel Church and Covenant Roads where redevelopment may occur. During the past few years, commercial growth from the Beltline Boulevard and Forest Drive area has moved steadily south along Beltline Boulevard and east along Forest Drive. Growth is also extending westward from the

Trenholm Road/Forest Drive Intersection. Current land use patterns show that from east to west along Forest Drive, land uses cover the complete spectrum allowed in Forest Acres from the most intensive to the least intensive. While there has been a greater intensification of land use along Forest Drive, judicious rezoning and adherence to development standards have helped to ease the transition and promoted compatibility of the land use. Forest Acres has annexed property that abuts Decker Boulevard, and Two Notch Road. These areas are highly commercialized and additional annexations could lead to these being important commercial centers within the City limits.

Outside the malls, commercial uses are primarily the highway-oriented or drive-in types which need the more spacious sites not afforded in malls.

*Industrial:* There is no industry in Forest Acres.

*Public and Semi-Public:* This category is primarily utilized by the schools, public buildings, churches, parks, and cemeteries. Given the limited amount of activity included in this land use category, there is no apparent need for additional acreage through 2010.

*Undeveloped:* With the exception of the protected wetlands, there is limited undeveloped property throughout this planning area as the City is surrounded by developed properties. Tracts of 10 acres or more include an 18 acres parcel owned by the City of Forest Acres bordering Two Notch Road and a 21.59 acres parcel south of Trenholm Plaza along Gills Creek.

## 9.2 Needs and Goals

The two most common tools used by the City to influence land use development are the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Development Regulations (LDR). The Zoning Ordinance includes the text and the zoning map. The text sets forth the zoning districts, the uses permitted in each district, general and specific standards and procedures for administration and enforcement. The zoning map sets for the location and boundaries of the zoning districts. The LDR controls site design, street layout, provision for water and sewer services and other matters related to the development or redevelopment of land.

The City should also amend the Zoning Ordinance and zoning district map to reflect existing and anticipated pressures for changes in use and density (see Exhibit 13 “Projected Generalized Land Use Map 2020”).

The City of Forest Acres should revise the Land Development Regulations to include best management practices for the installation of streets, sidewalks, street trees, and other improvements necessary for development.

## **CHAPTER 10 PRIORITY INVESTMENT**

### **10.1 Existing Conditions**

In 2007 the South Carolina General Assembly enacted the Priority Investment Act, which added two new elements to the comprehensive planning process. The Act provides for a specific transportation element requiring local governments to consider all transportation facilities (including roads, transit projects, pedestrian and bicycle projects) as part of a comprehensive transportation network.

The Act also added a new priority investment element, which requires local governments to analyze available public funding for public infrastructure and facilities over the next ten years and to recommend projects for expenditures of those funds for needed public infrastructure. This element will require more prioritized planning for public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools.

The Act requires that the priority investment element be developed through coordination with “adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.” All governmental entities and utilities - counties, municipalities, public service districts, school districts, public and private utilities, transportation agencies and other public entities - that are affected by, or have any planning authority over the public project identified in the priority investment element, must be consulted in the coordination process. The Act provides for a basic level of coordination requiring written notification to the other agencies and an opportunity for comment on the proposed projects.

Additionally, the Act also provides for two new zoning tools to promote affordable housing and traditional neighborhood design. The Act requires that local governments carefully analyze regulatory requirements affecting the affordability of housing and to identify nonessential regulatory requirements that are not necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare. Local governments must also analyze market-based incentives that may be made available to encourage the development of affordable housing and may identify priority investment zones where such market based incentives may be employed or regulatory requirements relaxed in order to encourage affordable housing.

Market based incentives may include density bonuses, relaxed zoning regulations such as lot area requirements or setbacks, reduced or waived fees, fast track permitting and design flexibility. Nonessential housing regulatory requirements may include requirements like minimum lot size, setbacks, open space requirements, landscaping, impervious surfaces and parking requirements.

The Priority Investment Act was primarily targeted at areas experiencing rapid, often uncoordinated development, with associated expenditure of scarce public resources for infrastructure. By requiring prioritization and coordination with neighboring governments it is anticipated that infrastructure dollars will be spent more wisely and with better accountability to the taxpayers. Bottom up local and regional planning should reduce, and in many cases even eliminate, the land use skirmishes that have inevitably resulted between local governments, potentially curbing haphazard development and even urban sprawl.

## **10.2 Needs**

The impact of certain aspects of the Priority Investment Act on Forest Acres may be negligible as virtually all public infrastructure in Forest Acres is the responsibility of developers or other governments. Capital expended for extension of infrastructure into the few remaining undeveloped areas will not be borne by the residents of Forest Acres. However, coordination of planning and development between neighboring governments may eliminate regulatory “shopping” by developers who attempt to work one government against another in pursuit of more beneficial terms.

Coordination of development that affects Forest Acres, Richland County, or the City of Columbia may be accomplished with interaction between the respective staff and through regional review of projects through the Central Midlands Council of Governments. Forest Acres staff have attended regional informational meetings on stormwater management, traffic management and traffic planning.

## CHAPTER 11 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives portion of this report will concentrate on identifying six specific needs and issues that are vital to the development of the Forest Acres community. Each issue will be developed into objectives followed by a discussion section to understand fully and examine these critical areas.

### AESTHETICS

*Goal:* To present and maintain an aesthetically pleasing environment for residential and commercial sectors of the City and the surroundings.

*Objectives:*

- A. Enforce the adopted building codes or housing standards to assist in enhancing the visual impact on all sectors of the community
- B. Plant more trees, shrubbery, and flowers throughout the City; create corridors along major streets
- C. Define residential areas from commercial areas by enhancing quiet space with park-type benches, decorative street lamps, and underground utilities in the corridor between Trenholm Plaza and Midtown at Forest Acres
- D. Maintain vacant lots
- E. Enforce sanitation and refuse removal ordinances
- F. Create six gateways into the City – two on Forest Drive, two on Beltline Boulevard, two on Trenholm Road – and create corridors of street trees to give each major street a distinctive character
- G. Improve parks
- H. Minimize and eliminate the number of utility poles and encourage the installation of underground utilities
- I. Improve and sanitize all environmentally sensitive areas such as creek beds, lake perimeters, etc.
- J. Create green space
- K. Develop a system of sidewalks
- L. Implement sidewalk requirements in land development regulations
- M. Develop a signage policy that is unique to Forest Acres
- N. Work with the Appearance Commission to assist with implementation of goals and objectives in order to improve aesthetics

*Discussion:*

Aesthetics is one of the most important features of an area. The best possible visual image can assist dramatically with tourism, economic development, and overall pleasing conditions in which to live, work, and play. There are many factors that ruin the aesthetics of an area. These include billboards, salvage yards, portable signs, and smoke/pollution.

Regulations and ordinances would be helpful in controlling existing unsightly areas and potential problem areas. The aggressive enforcement of the building code and housing standards would assist in the visual impact on the community. Code enforcement can create a significant impact on the area if properly addressed by the City. Any ordinance developed by the City needs strength and

substance, and the building official needs the total support of all municipal leaders in enforcement of these ordinances.

The City's visual appeal should be the first item addressed to give the area character and to provide a central core. The "small City" character of the homes, along with the urban nature of the commercial areas, should be preserved to provide a particular environment that will be unique to Forest Acres. The two City centers, Trenholm Plaza and Midtown at Forest Acres, need to be more defined by planting additional trees and shrubbery, adding park-type benches, and decorative street lamps.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

*Goal:* To improve the major and minor thoroughfares through and around Forest Acres for future access.

*Objectives:*

- A.** Improve and/or widen all major arterial roads for greater access
- B.** Improve all major secondary roadways
- C.** Concentrate on the safety aspect of major and secondary roads through improvements to the roads and shoulders, including sidewalks in heavy pedestrian areas, especially around schools
- D.** Examine the signalization of all roads in and around Forest Acres for more efficient traffic flow
- E.** Address the impact of the Forest Drive intersection with I-77 on the traffic patterns within the City
- F.** Address the impact of the Decker Boulevard intersection with I-77 on the traffic patterns of the City
- G.** Sidewalk improvements need to be sought through the South Carolina Department of Highways and Transportation
- H.** Develop a program to maintain all open drainage ditches within the City for the aesthetic and health resources
- I.** Develop bike paths within the City and develop a plan to separate bicycle from automobile traffic
- J.** Require deceleration lanes at significant commercial developments.

*Discussion:*

Because the roads are maintained and controlled by SCDOT and Richland County, Forest Acres is going to have to take a proactive role in requesting aid, grants, and more routine maintenance. Aggressive follow-up may be needed to achieve desired results.

The City has annexed the CSX tracks to the intersection of Two Notch Road and I-20. The City needs to address its goals and objectives in this area and develop an annexation plan to provide necessary services to this area.

## **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Goal:* To accommodate orderly growth within the City and surrounding areas.

*Objectives:*

- A.** Concentrate on increasing businesses in commercial core areas by attracting small retail businesses and new firms to the area through a revitalization program by improving the visual impact of the area and provide in the zoning ordinance to allow for appropriate land uses as anticipated transitional changes occur to residential properties facing on Forest Drive and Beltline Boulevard
- B.** Develop commercial, professional services, and high tech facilities
- C.** Encourage only high-tech industry that is conducive to the environment;
- D.** Ensure that new retail commercial uses are grouped compactly in order to reduce automobile movements from store to store, to facilitate shopping convenience and to promote commercial viability. Where possible, entire commercial areas should be developed as a unit according to a coherent site plan
- E.** Promote interconnectivity of adjacent commercial properties to lessen traffic impact on major streets
- F.** Encourage commercial areas to redevelop and upgrade existing facilities prior to rezoning for future development
- G.** Ensure adequate parking facilities and good access in all commercial developments
- H.** Ensure that commercial developments are located on thoroughfares which are adequate to accommodate additional traffic loads which will be generated
- I.** Make effective use of previously developed commercial centers
- J.** Ensure that existing neighborhood shopping areas remain reasonably compact to provide service within the scope of a neighborhood trade area
- K.** Encourage annexation of enclaves or “donut holes” of unincorporated territory encircled by the corporate limits of the City.

*Discussion:*

The issue of continuing redevelopment in Forest Acres is critical to the future well being of its citizens. The City should concentrate on areas that are currently designated as commercial and that are occupied by existing businesses based with the City limits.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Goal:* To ensure the necessary infrastructure in and around the City of Forest Acres to accommodate projected growth.

*Objective:*

- A.** To promote an efficient transportation network (see Transportation)
- B.** To promote a recreational system for the City (See Aesthetics) that meets the function or actual use. Parkways can be developed in wetland areas along Gills Creek
- C.** To promote cultural facilities for the City with multi-use of facilities
- D.** To support a quality educational system for the City
- E.** To assure that public and semi-public uses are planned to meet the existing and probable future needs of the area’s residents

- F. To assure that public areas are constructed and maintained so they are attractively integrated into the total land area
- G. To identify, acquire, and preserve for public purposes any land suitable for open space
- H. To continually evaluate the adequacy of municipal buildings
- I. To promote adequate community facilities without duplicating efforts by other governmental bodies
- J. To arrange for a balanced, accessible program of recreational facilities for all ages
- K. To promote the highest level of community facilities with an emphasis on the location of facilities, the quality of service, and timing of development
- L. To encourage major public expenditures according to a capital improvements plan and budget which establishes priorities for a five year period based upon projections of need and estimated revenues
- M. To aggressively seek under-grounding of overhead utilities.

### *Discussion:*

The growth rate of Forest Acres will depend greatly on the presence of good infrastructure. Items such as water and sewer lines, roads and bridges, solid waste disposal, adequate recreational facilities, cultural resources, and educational facilities will dictate the growth of any area. Forest Acres will need to examine these areas to prepare for the growth of residential, and commercial, development. The City needs to examine future uses of water and sewer, roads, and solid waste disposal. The City should concentrate on these items so that the existing residents and businesses, well as future developments, n have these in place. The City should work closely with the county, the Department of Highway and Public Transportation and SCDHEC to assist in the upgrading of the present conditions. This will allow growth to occur with a level of consistency instead of at a sporadic rate.

## **CONSERVATION**

*Goal:* To conserve and protect the City's natural resources, historic, and environmental areas.

### *Objective:*

- A. To conserve and to protect the natural resources of the City
- B. To protect the City's waterways
- C. To protect the physical features of the land
- D. To ensure the quality and quantity of potable water
- E. To encourage soil conservation and erosion control
- F. To promote proper drainage to prevent flooding by promoting best available practices
- G. To encourage flood plain planning and zoning
- H. To utilize erosion control methods to preserve valuable topsoil
- I. To promote protection of flora and fauna habitats
- J. To encourage the coordinated construction of water and sewage systems to ensure against pollution of the water table
- K. To promote the quality of air
- L. To ensure that areas identified as lying in a floodway subject to frequent inundation are preserved as natural areas
- M. To develop bicycle and walking paths throughout the City
- N. Encourage additional recycling

*Discussion:*

The major component that is often lost in the growth and development of an area is the conservation and protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas. The City should concentrate on protecting the natural resources so that they will not be damaged or destroyed by future development. These areas should be carefully monitored so that growth will not encroach on them.

Environmental concerns are critical when developing any area. The protection of waterways and lands, especially the lake system, must be maintained continuously. The City should concentrate on more planned open space or park areas to control the direction of development.

**LAND USE**

*Goal:* To provide controlled land use development and redevelopment for orderly growth.

*Objective:*

General Land Use Objectives:

- A. Future urban and non agricultural development should be encouraged to be in a centralized compact pattern that efficiently utilizes natural and manmade resources
- B. Each parcel should be developed according to its optimal use capabilities while restraining and eliminating incompatible uses
- C. Future growth should provide fine aesthetic enhancement and environmental conservation of the land development
- D. Encourage redevelopment and upgrade of existing developed property

Specific land use objectives to examine all forms of land use control and regulations.

- A. Building Heights: The maximum height to which new buildings and structures are built can affect the overall aesthetics of an area. Therefore, the definition and enforcement of the height regulation should be considered for amendment in the City's zoning ordinance
- B. Building Setbacks: Setback and curb cut regulations should be in place to reduce problems associated with future highway widening projects. It can also prevent encroachment by neighboring uses and reduce the number of turning maneuvers
- C. Buffer Zones: This is a means of satisfying the differences between land uses in the same area. Buffers can be an excellent tool to control visual and noise problems within an area. This planning tool can be utilized to the fullest to provide orderly growth and development
- D. Regulation of Land Use: The City should utilize planning tools to protect land values and promote quality developments within the surrounding area. These controls can assure stable land values as well as consistent and orderly growth patterns. This will include the re-evaluation of the current zoning ordinance and Land Development Regulations that contains detailed requirements on the use of each parcel of land within the City and development of modification that will benefit the City

- E. Lot Sizes: Promote Planned Development (PPD) applications where appropriate to encourage property redevelopment

## CHAPTER 12 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### PROJECT ONE ADOPTION OF THE REVISED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#### DISCUSSION

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the foundation for all other land use activities pursued by the City of Forest Acres. As the foundation, the Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by the City as policy in accordance with the State Planning Enabling Act and periodically reviewed and revised.

#### COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED: ALL

#### IMPLEMENTAITON ACTION:

The Planning Commission should recommend by resolution the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by City Council. Once adopted, the staff and the Planning Commission should periodically review the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it is being implemented and recommend revisions as needed.

#### TIMETABLE:

- Planning Commission recommend the Comprehensive Plan by **February 2009**.
- Public hearing and adoption by City Council by **May 2009**.
- Monitoring for implementation: continuous
- Planning Commission develops and recommends a revision by 2019.

#### RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- Planning Commission
- City Council
- City Staff

## **PROJECT TWO UPDATE ZONING ORDINANCE**

### **DISCUSSION**

The current zoning ordinance needs to be updated to incorporate some of the recommendations made to address the goals in the comprehensive plan. These recommendations include:

- Create new zoning classifications to institute transitional districts
- Revise the sign requirements
- Revise the landscaping requirements
- Create overlay zones for primary corridors and gateways that include aesthetic standards
- Create overlays depicting aesthetic and environmental areas
- Incorporate standards for bicycle and pedestrian friendly development
- Incorporate standards for mixed-use developments
- Examine density and intensity standards to ensure that they are appropriate for areas of the City

**COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED:** ALL

### **IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:**

With professional assistance, the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend a new Zoning Ordinance for adoption by the City Council.

### **TIMETABLE:**

- Planning Commission recommends a zoning ordinance by **December 2009**
- Public hearing and adoption by City Council by **April 2010**
- Enforcement by the Zoning Administrator.

### **RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Planning Commission
- City Council
- City Staff
- Zoning Board of Appeals

**PROJECT THREE  
UPDATE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

**DISCUSSION**

The City's Land Development Regulations need to be updated to incorporate some of the recommendations to address the goals in the Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations include:

- Require adequate provision of facilities and utilities as part of the development approval process;
- Require protection of natural areas;
- Require adequate provision of recreation and open space;
- Require the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED:** ALL

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:**

With professional assistance, the Planning Commission should prepare and recommend new Land Development Regulations for adoption by the City Council.

**TIMETABLE:**

- Planning Commission recommends land development regulations by **July 2010**
- Public hearing and adoption by City Council by **January 2011**
- Enforcement by the Planning Commission and appropriate City departments

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Planning Commission
- City Council
- City Staff

**PROJECT FOUR  
GREENWAY PLAN**

**DISCUSSION:**

The Plan identified conservation as a significant goal for the City. To accomplish this goal, the City should develop a Greenway Plan. At a minimum, the Greenway Plan should address the following items:

- A. To conserve and to protect the natural resources of the City
- B. To protect the City's waterways
- C. To protect the physical features of the land
- D. To ensure the quality and quantity of potable water
- E. To encourage soil conservation and erosion control
- F. To promote proper drainage to prevent flooding by promoting best available practices
- G. To encourage flood plain planning and zoning
- H. To utilize erosion control methods to preserve valuable topsoil
- I. To promote protection of flora and fauna habitats
- J. To ensure that areas identified as lying in a floodway subject to frequent inundation are preserved as natural areas
- K. To develop bicycle and walking paths throughout the City
- L. To develop a street tree/gateway plan to create a sense of place

**COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED:** ALL

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:**

The City should hire a consultant to develop a Greenway Plan. Once complete, the recommendations in the Greenway Plan should be implemented by the City through the appropriate mechanisms.

**TIMETABLE:**

- The City should hire a consultant by **July 1, 2010**
- The Greenway Plan should be completed by **January 1, 2011**
- The City should implement the recommendations from the Greenways Plan through appropriate mechanisms.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Planning Commission
- Appearance Commission
- City Council
- City Staff

**PROJECT FIVE  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

**DISCUSSION:**

Many of the recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan will require capital outlay by the City. To help plan for these expenditures in a responsible manner, the City should develop a five-year Capital Improvement Plan that incorporates the recommendations from this plan plus any other capital expenditures the City identifies as needs.

**COMPRHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS IMPACTED:** ALL

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:**

The City should hire a consultant to develop a Capital Improvement Plan. Once complete, the Capital Improvement Plan should be incorporated into the next budget process

**TIMETABLE:**

- The Capital Improvement Plan should be completed by **March 1, 2009**
- The City should implement the Capital Improvement Plan in the next available budget.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- Planning Commission
- City Council
- City Staff