

RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-

AUGUST 2004

PREPARED FOR:



**RICHLAND COUNTY
SOUTH CAROLINA**



Wilbur Smith Associates



Table of Contents

- 1.0 Project Introduction**
- 2.0 Community Perception and Awareness**
 - 2.1 Initial Public Meeting**
 - 2.2 Public Workshop Sessions**
 - 2.3 Announcements and Media Coverage**
 - 2.4 Neighborhood Newsletter**
 - 2.5 Community Survey and Results**
- 3.0 Evaluation of the Ridgewood Neighborhood**
 - 3.1 Introduction to Ridgewood**
 - 3.2 Evaluation of Infrastructure**
 - 3.3 Strengths of Ridgewood**
 - 3.4 Weaknesses of Ridgewood**
- 4.0 Recommendations**
 - 4.1 Community Involvement Improvements**
 - 4.2 Improvements to Community Infrastructure**
 - 4.3 Development of Available Land**
 - 4.4 Ridgewood Community Park**
- 5.0 Action Plan**
 - 5.1 Action Items**
 - 5.2 Funding Options**
 - 5.3 Conceptual Cost Estimates**
- 6.0 Key Community Contacts**





Appendices

Appendix A: Zoning Districts – Purpose Statements

Appendix B: Funding Option Information

List of Exhibits

- Exhibit 1 Study Area Map**
- Exhibit 2 Site Analysis Map**
- Exhibit 3 Zoning Map**
- Exhibit 4 Conceptual Master Plan**
- Exhibit 5 Sign Concept Plan 1: Monticello Road and Elliot Avenue**
- Exhibit 6 Sign Concept Plan 2: Monticello Road and Ridgewood Avenue**
- Exhibit 7 Sign Concept Plan 3: Monticello Road and Lawton Street**
- Exhibit 8 Road Section 1: Neighborhood Gateway**
- Exhibit 9 Road Section 2: Neighborhood Business**
- Exhibit 10 Road Section 3: Neighborhood Retail**
- Exhibit 11 Road Section 4: Ridgeway Road Improvements**
- Exhibit 12 Ridgewood Community Park Improvements**





1.0 Introduction

In an effort to improve the atmosphere and surrounding environment within the Ridgewood Neighborhood north of Eau Clair High School, the Richland County Office of Community Development tasked Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) with obtaining public input and developing a Master Plan for the revitalization of the Ridgewood Neighborhood. The purpose of this Master Plan is to provide those in decision making roles a strategy for revitalizing the area through various projects and procedures. The recommendations contained herein are based upon the renewal of community pride through neighborhood improvements and clean-up efforts, community growth through new business development and community longevity through home ownership and continuing neighborhood maintenance.

Project team members began the master planning process, with the direction of Richland County representatives and the Ridgewood Neighborhood Association, by visiting the neighborhood and collecting available land use data, as well as census demographics for the region. Next, the project team initiated a community involvement and outreach process intended to provide opportunities for discussion and input to community stakeholders. These public discussion meetings and community workshops allowed the residents to directly relay their perception of the neighborhood, as well as the direction they would like for the neighborhood to grow. Lastly, the project team began contacting various organizations and municipalities regarding the upkeep of the neighborhood and potential areas of further interest. Portions of the Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan consisted of consultations with agency representatives, project newsletter updates, media coverage of the meetings and processes and public discussion forums. A profile of the existing area, including its strengths and weaknesses, was developed from the available data. Using this information, coupled with the project team's experience in other communities, recommendations for improving the area were formulated.

The Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan was developed based upon input received from agencies interested in the growth of the neighborhood, public input during community meetings and experience with similar projects. This Master Plan should be considered a “living” document that represents only the first step in the redevelopment and revitalization of the Ridgewood Neighborhood. This plan offers community leaders in the area a plan on how to focus resources and attention to foster positive growth in the community. Like any such master plan, the ultimate success will depend on the implementation and subsequent revisions to the plan to meet an ever-changing environment.

The study area for the Master Plan encompassed existing residential and light commercial areas along a centrally located corridor along Monticello Road between Eau Clair High School and Interstate 20, as illustrated in Exhibit 1: Study Area Map.





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-

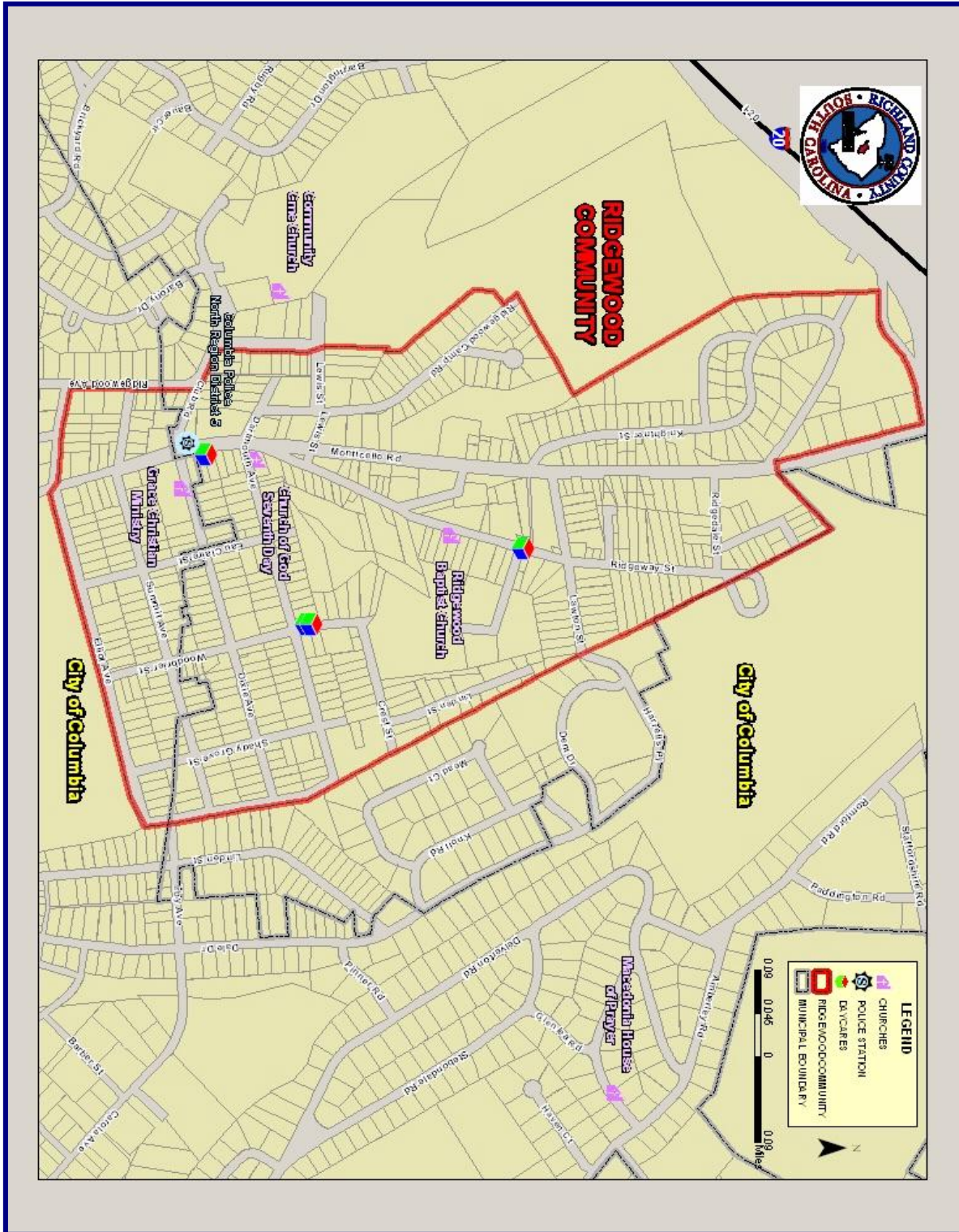


Exhibit 1: Study Area Map



2.0 Community Perception and Awareness

Without a doubt, the most important and informative method of data gathering took place through community involvement. The community played a major role in the development of the Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan, and the community will also be relied on to play a vital role in the implementation of the plan. To promote community involvement, it was imperative to provide sufficient opportunities for local residents, business owners and other property stakeholders to congregate and share their thoughts, ideas and concerns regarding their neighborhood. Ensuring that an optimal number of community stakeholders were given such opportunities was integral to the success of the master planning process. To reach this goal, multiple approaches were initiated to reach all segments of the community, including newsletters, surveys, public meetings and workshops.

The residents of the Ridgewood Neighborhood were surveyed and had the opportunity to express their positions and opinions at open forum sessions and other meetings. Additionally, the Ridgewood Neighborhood Association served as a forum to keep its neighborhood members abreast of project activities through its newsletter and supported the surveying efforts of the project team by submitting additional completed surveys from the residents that were unable to attend the public meetings. The outreach process attempted to be as inclusive and as communicative as possible toward all members of the community.



2.1 Initial Public Meeting

In order to introduce the residents of Ridgewood to the general guidelines followed during the master planning process, as well as the specific scope of the task at hand, a community involvement meeting was held on May 27, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the Ridgewood Baptist Church. The meeting was scheduled to coincide with the monthly Ridgewood Neighborhood Association meetings in order to boost awareness of the Master Plan and to foster additional community involvement. The meeting began by introducing the partnership that would assist in the Master Plan conception and execution, with small introductions of each team members' responsibility. Next, a brief presentation outlining the project and the master plan process was given by Wilbur Smith Associates team members and was followed by questions and comments from attendees. During the meeting, residents were given community surveys that were later used to better determine strengths and weaknesses within the community, as

well as gather an understanding of the direction the residents and stakeholders would like for the community to grow towards. The survey and results are discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5.

The attendance of the initial meeting was good and included positive participation from landowners, residents, business owners, City and County officials, and other affected parties. Although detailed participant demographics were not collected, a total of thirty-eight (38) community members attended the open house. Early evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of the area were presented along with several potential strategies for resolving the weaknesses. The presentation was met with a keen interest on specifically how the plan would affect different segments of the community, both residential and commercial.

2.2 Public Workshop Sessions

A set of stakeholder workshops for the Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan were held on Saturday, July 10, 2004 at the Historical Holloway House, adjacent to Ridgewood Baptist Church. The workshops were scheduled for three timeslots: 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM and lasted between thirty (30) and sixty (60) minutes each. The workshops were based on an informal setting where residents and community stakeholders were welcome to provide additional input into the planning process for the community Master Plan. Due to its historical nature and meaning to the community and its residents, the Holloway House was chosen as the workshop site. Furthermore, the neighborhood association meetings are held there.



At the onset of each workshop session, residents were asked to sign-in as Wilbur Smith Associates representatives began preparing the presentation material. A member of the project team gave a brief introduction to the meeting, reviewed the planning process to date and provided an overview as to the method of data gathering that would occur during the meeting. Residents were informed that the potential level of success for such a meeting would depend greatly on the amount of input received from the stakeholders. Team members indicated that they were seeking community feedback that would be informative of problematic areas, as well as areas of strength within the community.

Available during the workshops were large graphical representations of the existing conditions of the Ridgewood Neighborhood. These maps were used as tools for the residents to graphically understand their surroundings and better illustrate to the project team the areas that may need improvements. Furthermore, the maps allowed residents to pinpoint areas of strength in the neighborhood that needed emphasis. Residents used



color markers and pencils on smaller copies of the maps to emphasize areas of interest within the community, including road maintenance issues, municipal infrastructure problems, areas in need of clean-up, abandoned properties, landscaping needs, sidewalk and lighting needs and fencing issues.



Also on display was a large color map of the area that will be submitted with this Master Plan, as seen in Exhibit 2: Site Analysis Map. Throughout the workshop process, participants were prompted to converse and interact with other community members, as well as project team members in a more controlled, informal environment.

Although detailed participant demographics were not collected, a total of twenty-three (23) community members attended the three (3) workshop sessions. Participants included business owners, out-of-town stakeholders and residents of the Ridgewood Neighborhood.

2.3 Announcements and Media Coverage

The residents and stakeholders of the Ridgewood Neighborhood were kept abreast of public meeting sessions through mailed announcements and radio and television press releases. The announcement for the Initial Public Meeting was a mailed postcard which detailed the meeting time and place. The announcement for the Public Workshops included a more detailed description of the event and was more of a newsletter format.



Furthermore, the media was enlisted to inform the public of the Public Workshop Sessions. A press release was issued to the following media outlets:

- WACH Fox 57
- WIS TV
- WLTX TV
- WOLO TV
- WIS News Radio
- The State Newspaper
- Columbia Metropolitan Magazine
- The Free Times
- 104.7 WNOK Radio
- B-106 WTCB Radio
- 101 FM WWDM Radio
- WVOC Radio
- WSCQ Radio
- WFMV Radio Gospel 95.3 Radio
- The Columbia Star
- Business Monthly Greater Columbia



Of these media sources, representatives from The State Newspaper and WIS TV covered the Public Workshop Sessions on July 10, 2004 and later reported on the revitalization efforts of the Ridgewood Neighborhood.

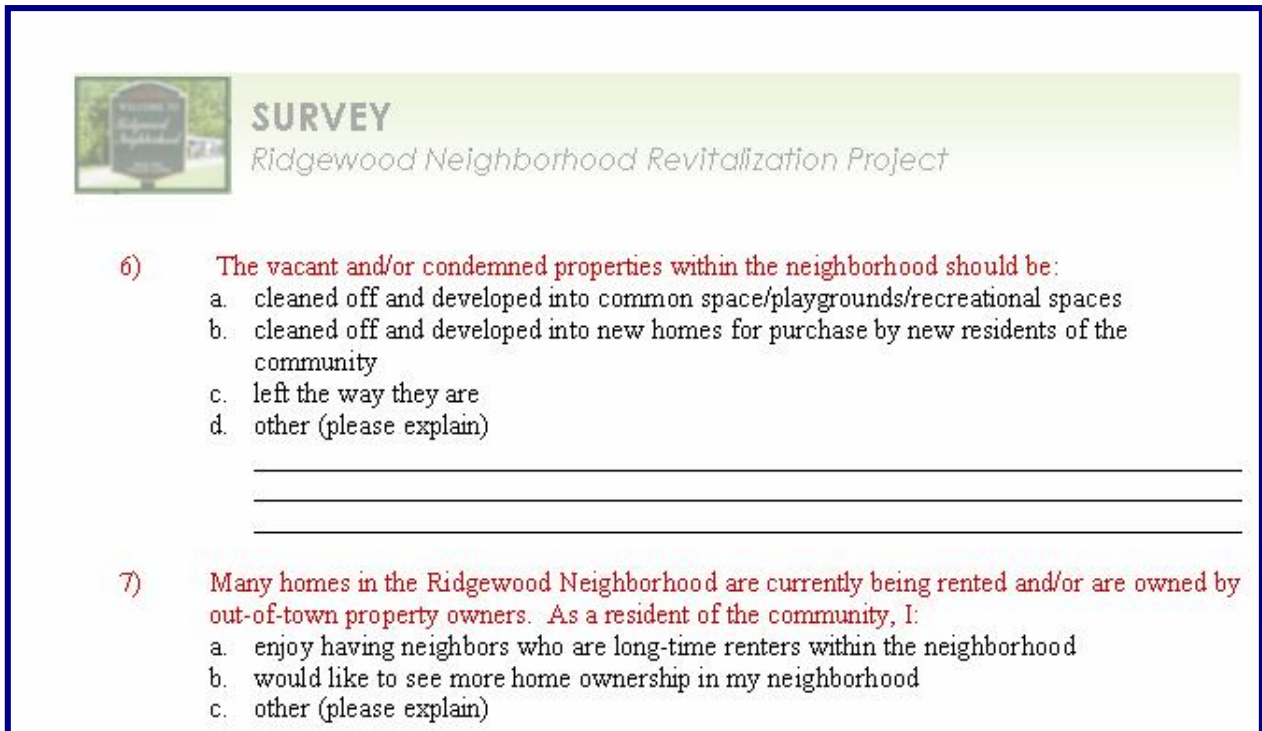
2.4 Neighborhood Newsletter

A project newsletter was developed, published, and mailed first-class on August 2, 2004 to more than 150 stakeholders for the Ridgewood Neighborhood. The newsletter summarized the process that the project team was working through and explained some of the preliminary findings, thus far, in the master planning process. Several pictures of the community meetings and the community in general were included in the newsletter, as seen on the following pages. Also, the preliminary results of the Ridgewood survey were published as part of the newsletter.



2.5 Community Survey and Results

As previously indicated, a survey was administered during the master planning process and was made available to all residents, property owners and businesses within the Ridgewood community via public meetings and copies provided through the Neighborhood Association president. The survey was intended to solicit relevant input on the community’s past positive aspects, current standing and future revitalization. The questionnaire covered many topics ranging from perceived strengths and weaknesses of the community, opinions on how the community is perceived both inside and outside the community boundaries, the residents’ vision of the community, how it should grow and specific project suggestions to aid in the revitalization efforts. The survey-method of data gathering is a method that ensures consistent, confidential suggestions and viewpoints with respect to the Ridgewood Neighborhood and allows the project team members to better understand the desires of the residents for the future growth of the neighborhood.



The survey was comprised of twelve (12) multiple choice questions and eight (8) short answer questions. The majority of the multiple choice questions were intended to understand how some of the existing traits of the neighborhood are viewed by the residents; while the remaining short answer questions centered around understanding what direction the community should grow and some examples of improvement projects the residents would like to see. Provided below are the statistical results for the multiple choice section of the survey; however, answers to the remaining questions were better used in determining our recommendations for community improvements, discussed in



greater detail in Section 4 of this Master Plan Report. Approximately 40 surveys were completed and returned by stakeholders as part of this Master Plan.

1. The chain link fences in the front yards of the neighborhood:
44% responded "keep out unwanted people/animals"
2. The street lighting within the community:
64% responded "makes me feel unsafe walking at night and should be replaced/upgraded/increased"
3. The entrances to the community from Monticello Rd.:
91% responded "should be improved with new signs/plants/trees/street lights"
4. The majority of the property within the neighborhood:
53% responded "is unkempt and unpleasant to look at"
5. As far as I am concerned, the "center" of my community is the:
35% responded "Ridgewood Baptist Church"
6. The vacant and/or condemned properties within the neighborhood should be:
56% responded "cleaned off and developed into new homes for purchase by new residents of the community"
7. Many homes in the Ridgewood Neighborhood are currently being rented and/or are owned by out-of-town property owners. As a resident of the community, I:
92% responded "would like to see more home ownership in my neighborhood"
8. Undeveloped areas within the community along Monticello Road should be:
73% responded "developed into new businesses"
9. The addition of community walking trails and/or sidewalks:
67% responded "is very important to me and my family"
10. The majority of the homes that are lived in within the community:
37% responded "are in need of major repairs (new siding/brick, roofs, porches, etc.)"
11. New recreational spaces within the community (parks, playgrounds):
82% responded "are very important to me and my family"
12. I consider the Ridgewood Neighborhood to be:
60% responded "safe for its residents but uninviting to outside guests"



3.0 Evaluation of Ridgewood Neighborhood

Wilbur Smith Associates evaluated the Ridgewood Neighborhood to better determine and focus on its strengths and weaknesses. This included an evaluation of information obtained during the public input process and an evaluation of the existing infrastructure in the area, including roads, water and wastewater utilities, storm water utilities, electrical utilities, communications, refuse and land management and general land availability. The following sections outline the results of the evaluation.

3.1 Introduction to Ridgewood

Location

The Ridgewood Neighborhood sits just south of Interstate 20 and just north of downtown Columbia, in Richland County, South Carolina. Bordered by Eau Clair High School to the south, and various communities to the east and west, Ridgewood Neighborhood totals just over 300 acres of residential, light commercial and wooded land area. Most of the residential properties exist in the southeast corner and just east and west of the main corridor through the neighborhood. A string of light industrial and business developments exist along the main corridor.

Road Network

Several road networks help make-up the Ridgewood community, most notably SC Highway 215, otherwise known as Monticello Road. Monticello Road is a 4-lane highway that serves as the main arterial through Ridgewood. The road not only serves the neighborhood, but

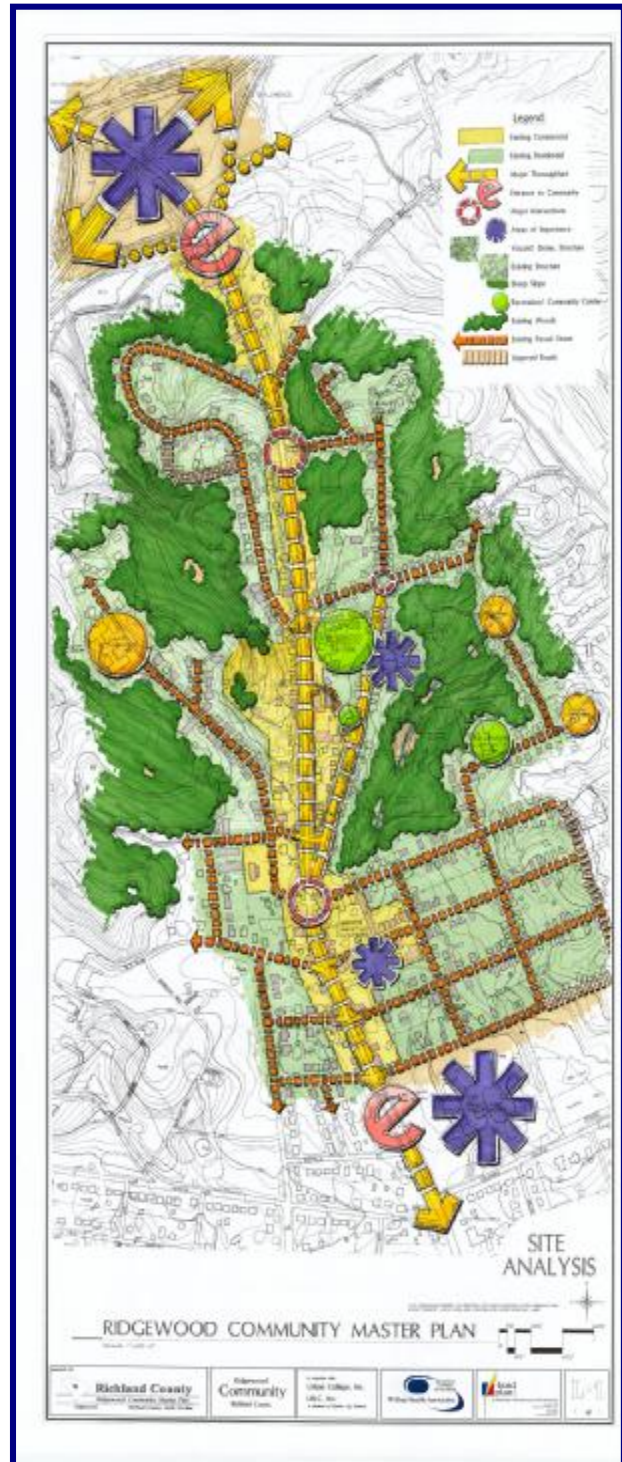


Exhibit 2: Site Analysis Map



RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-



also serves as a dividing line between the two sides of the community. Additionally, mapping obtained from Richland County indicates that Ridgewood further extends to the southeast corner of the neighborhood where there sits a grid network of streets that serve as the main residential portion



of the neighborhood. Portions of the grid network along Elliot Avenue are actually located within City limits. Richland County will meet with City officials about the inclusion of this property into the Ridgewood Revitalization Master Plan. Other streets within the community follow a less organized pattern and most all are directly accessed via Monticello Road. The majority of the streets within the study area are paved, with a select few being unpaved, or overgrown with debris and vegetation.

Key Points of Interest

Wilbur Smith Associates identified several points of interest within the community boundaries, as identified on Exhibit 2: Site Analysis Map. One of two key entrances to the community were identified to be located at the northern end of Monticello Road, just off of Interstate 20, with the other main entrance situated near Eau Clair High School, at the intersection of Monticello Road and Elliot Avenue. Other major intersections include Lawton Street/Ridgeway Street, Ridgedale Street/Monticello Road, and the five-point intersection of Monticello Road/Dartmouth Avenue/Ridgeway Street. Other areas of importance within Ridgewood were noted on Exhibit 2, such as Ridgewood Community Center, Ridgewood Baptist Church, Camp Ridgewood and Ridgewood Community Park.

Zoning Areas

As illustrated on Exhibit 3: Zoning Map, the Ridgewood community is zoned primarily residential/commercial. More than half of the neighborhood area is zoned RS-3 and RG-1, single residential districts and general residential districts, respectively. Approximately one-third of the neighborhood is zoned D-1, development districts. The main corridor of Monticello Road, as it passes through the community, is currently zoned as a mixture of C-1, C-2 and C-3, office and institutional districts, neighborhood commercial districts and general commercial districts, respectively. A more detailed description of the zoning definitions can be found in the Appendix.

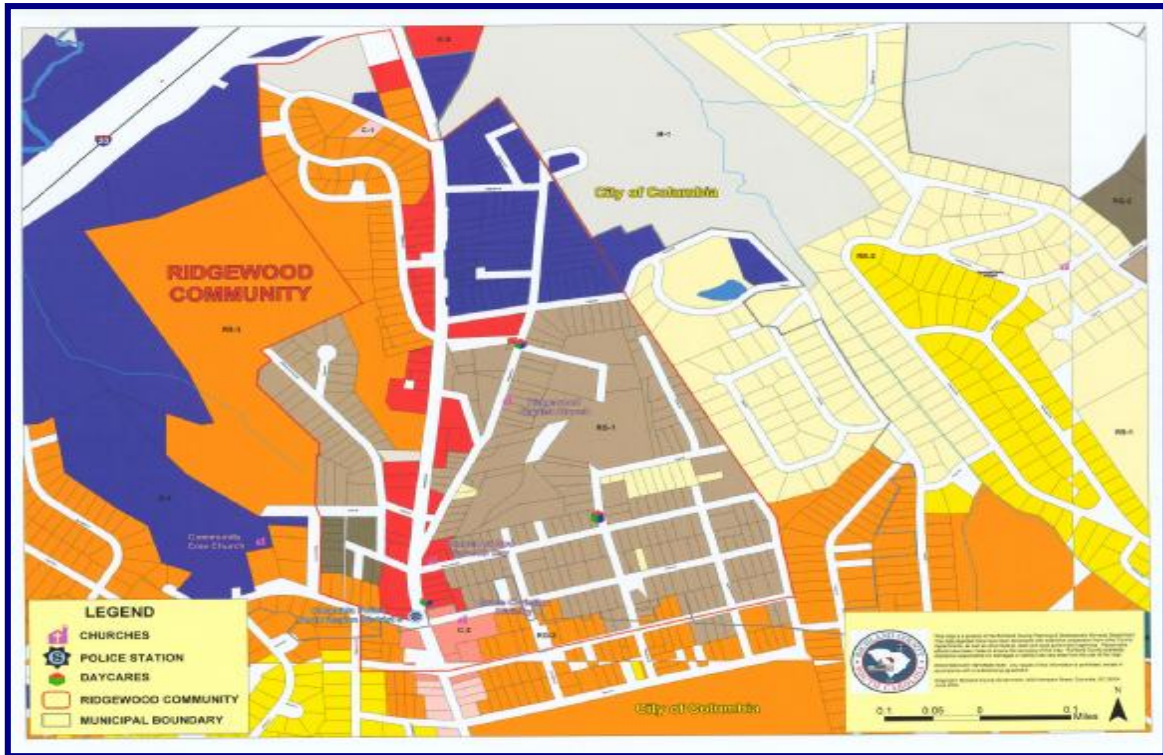


Exhibit 3: Zoning Map

3.2 Evaluation of Infrastructure

Wilbur Smith Associates conducted an evaluation of the existing infrastructure in the Ridgewood community and found most of the infrastructure in the area is adequate to accommodate the residential and business areas already present in the Ridgewood community; however, some of the infrastructure components need attention from their respective responsible agencies. Each aspect of the existing infrastructure is briefly discussed as follows:

Roadways



As stated earlier, most of the roads have access to one of the major intersections of the community, and half of them outfall directly to Monticello Road. The roadways in the Ridgewood Neighborhood are in conditions that range from good to poor. The majority of the roads in close proximity to, and including Monticello Road, are in fair condition with minimal potholes and edge wear. Most other roads, including the grid network in the southeastern portion of the community and the

northwestern portion of the community are in need of minor repairs and resurfacing. The existing internal roads are narrow, tree lined residential streets with residents utilizing the shoulders for on-street parking, when available. The grades, curvature, sight distances and lane widths seem to be adequate for the neighborhood and the traffic flow it experiences. Furthermore, many of the streets currently have problems with trash piles and overgrown vegetation that inhibits traffic flow and limits visibility of street signage.

The roads in the neighborhood are maintained and owned by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), with the exception of Shady Grove Street, which is maintained and operated by Richland County. Most all of the roads are open to public traffic with the exception of portions of Elliot Avenue, Stuart Avenue, Linden Street and Knightner Circle, which have been closed to public access. Additionally, portions of Linden Street are unfit for vehicular traffic and should be designed and constructed to meet industry standards.

Water/Wastewater

The City of Columbia currently provides water and wastewater service to the area. The routes of primary collection and distribution lines run along most roads in the study area. Currently, all residents and businesses have water service, as needed, and no improvements to the infrastructure are expected. With respect to the wastewater service, some residents indicated during the public sessions that they were still on septic tank service and not a part of the City's collection system.

Storm Water

Richland County currently maintains the storm drainage systems in the study area. The existing topography in the study area includes slopes that originate in the southern and eastern portions of the community and gradually slope towards the northern portion of the neighborhood. The residential portions of the area are generally flat, most notably in the southern grid portion of the neighborhood. Areas near Ridgewood Community Park and Knightner Street experience steeper slopes, which will limit future growth and development. When storm water is produced during a rainfall event, it quickly runs off and ponds in the low-lying areas. A large concentration of rooftops and paved areas in portions of the neighborhood add to the run-off problem. Currently, many storm water catch basins have excessive debris and vegetative growth blocking storm water flow from entering the inlet structures, which in turn, causes water to back up and flood portions of the



roadways and properties in the community. As storm water ponds in the area, debris becomes stranded along the roads and rodent and insect growth increases. Improvements to the drainage infrastructure will be required to handle storm water needs. This is vital to the eventual growth of the area.

Lighting

Electrical street lighting service is currently provided by South Carolina Electric & Gas (SCE&G). Most roads in the neighborhood are equipped with standard, industrial-style street lights; however some streets are without any. Adequate lighting within the community is definitely a concern.



Telecommunications

Currently, the area is served with sufficient telecommunication service, via BellSouth. However, to attract additional business to the area along Monticello Road, it would be in the community’s best interest to have fiber optic lines installed along that corridor.

Refuse Collection



Currently, there are numerous sites within the neighborhood in need of trash collection and general land maintenance. There are areas where trash and debris take up most of the right-of-way and also spill over into the travel lanes of the adjacent roadway. Furthermore, the area surrounding Linden Street has a ditch running through it that has become a site used for trash dumping.

3.3 Strengths of Ridgewood

Zoning Consistencies

As stated earlier, Ridgewood is zoned for both commercial and residential use. Zoning in the area is well structured, and for the most part, embraced by the community. Consistent zoning, where land tracts and areas are consistently zoned either residential or commercial, is a necessary feature when recruiting quality small businesses and homeowners.

Most all of the residentially-zoned property is located off of Monticello Road and is considered to be the main corridor of the neighborhood. The advantage of the residential properties, being isolated as they are, is that you have no areas for complaints between residents and property owners due to multi-use patterns within the community.

Additionally, the portion of the neighborhood zoned D-1 (development district) is located in the northeastern portion of the neighborhood – a section of the neighborhood that is slightly less developed when compared to other areas of the community. This should be considered a strength within the community as it allows for future expansion and development for the community. Such areas could potentially accommodate new common areas, public athletic facilities or new smaller business and/or homes.

Finally, the area along Monticello Road serves Ridgewood as the primary commercial district of the community. This area is stationed along a major thoroughfare of the City of Columbia and the main arterial of the Ridgewood area. By limiting the commercial portion of the community to the area along Monticello Road, it allows a more concentrated effort of business development, while at the same time protecting the neighborhood atmosphere of the residential portion of the community.

Ridgewood Community Park/Family Center

Across the street from Ridgewood Baptist Church and the Historical Holloway House sits the newly-constructed Ridgewood Family Center. The center is expected to be complete in the late summer months of 2004 and will house classroom space and indoor sports facilities. Although the Family Center is owned and operated by the Church, a facility such as this is an excellent marketing tool when showcasing the community to prospective new homeowners. Additionally, it may draw more small business to the community that could potentially operate in concert with the efforts and productions that are to take place in the center.



Just around the corner at the former home of the Ridgewood Elementary School is the newly renovated Ridgewood Community Park. Currently, the park consists of a large grassy area for leisurely activities and an area of playground equipment suited for the youth of Ridgewood. Although the park is currently suited for some of the community, it is not in a position to entertain all residents of the community. The community park, with a few modifications, has the potential to cater to all residents of

Ridgewood. Such modifications might include the addition of walking trails, park benches and other sports facilities.

Home Ownership

Currently, over half of Ridgewood is comprised of home owners. This provides for community stability and a sense of neighborhood pride. The residents of Ridgewood are predominantly senior citizens that have spent much of their lives either living in Ridgewood consecutively, or moving back after a few years away. These residents are proud of their homes and neighborhood and would like to see it prosper within the larger community of Columbia once again. With the relative size of Ridgewood, reaching a milestone of 80% homeownership is very feasible and should be considered a goal within the community.



Transportation Access

Residents often choose a location to settle down and raise a family based not only on the positive aspects within the community, but also its relative location to other areas of interest. Furthermore, small business owners choose potential business sites with regard to local transportation networks and facilities to transport goods and attract consumers. The more developed the surrounding facilities are, the more marketable and attractive the properties within the community become to prospective residents of the community.

The proximity of Ridgewood to multiple modes of transportation places it at a comparative advantage regarding attracting and stimulating homeownership, small business owners and consumers of those businesses. The community sits just a few hundred yards from a major intersection with Interstate 20 and only a few miles from downtown Columbia. Furthermore, public transportation is available within the community at multiple stops.

While there are certain challenges with transportation access to the study area, the study area is situated within a well-developed arterial road system, which is a considerable strength. This strength should be utilized by directly marketing the neighborhood to the traffic of Interstate 20 via signs and landscaping.

Available Property

Several portions of Ridgewood are hotbeds for new home construction and/or future development of community spaces and/or businesses, and most of these properties may be currently available for acquisition or lease. Furthermore, many other sites within the neighborhood should be researched and investigated to determine their status as well. The existence of a significant stock of available sites is a strength for several reasons:

- First, if general improvements can be made to the area, the site has something to market and sell. There are few other areas that have a similar proximity to Columbia that have a comparable mix and concentration of developable properties.
- Second, the real estate prices for these available properties are depressed and therefore present a potential investment.
- Third, any future potential in real estate values translates into increased property tax revenues for the local jurisdictions. Some of the additional value in property tax revenue could be captured to finance some portion of needed infrastructure improvements.
- Fourth, the availability of properties opens up the opportunity of attracting new businesses that can provide a fresh impact on the area. If the study area remained in a depressed state, similar to what it has been historically, but without any available sites, there would be no opportunity for attracting new business that would lead to renewal.

Again, the availability of properties is viewed as a solid strength. This availability provides opportunities for targeted growth, the potential for job creation ventures and more homeownership within the community.

Community Interest/Awareness

One of the primary qualities of the neighborhood could be witnessed at the first public meeting for this Master Plan; community awareness and involvement. Residents of all ages and backgrounds took the time to join in the discussions and learning process that comes with such an undertaking, and much of that leadership and interest in the community can be attributed to the local churches and respective congregations. Such dedication to the community can only foster further growth and development through contagious community pride. Once the preverbal ball is rolling, it does not take long for other residents within the community to begin to realize the potential of the area and then become a part of the movement that is to take place. This type of community pride and involvement produces positive and quantifiable change in any environment and can only serve as a strength of the community. Furthermore, the Ridgewood community benefits from its proximity to the Earlwood community. This area has experienced a recent surge of redevelopment and community pride that could potentially spill over into the Ridgewood community.



Commercial Corridor



As mentioned earlier, the corridor of Monticello Road through Ridgewood serves as the primary commercial district of the neighborhood. This section is positioned in a manner in which it could potentially attract business from both the southern end of the corridor, as well as the northern end. Potential customers from both the downtown areas of Columbia, as well as interstate passersby could potentially be targeted as consumers for the community. With redevelopment of current businesses, development of newer businesses and the appropriate marketing tools and strategies, the area through Ridgewood has the potential to prosper economically.

3.4 Weaknesses of Ridgewood

Lack of Access to Available Land

As mentioned earlier, a considerable strength of the Ridgewood community was the availability of land for further growth and development. However, with this strength comes a weakness; access. Over twenty-six (26) tracts of land currently have limited access within the community along portions of Elliot Avenue and Shady Grove Street. Other areas of land exist through the abundance of abandoned and partially damaged buildings/houses within the community that are beyond repair and should be eliminated from the property.



Most all of the properties along Elliot Avenue and Shady Grove Street, as well as tracts along Linden Street, are vacant, with no dwellings present, and are prime areas of real estate for developing growth in the community by fostering new homeownership. Situated back in the residentially-zoned portion of the community and near Eau Clair High School, most of these lots present a major advantage for the community with regards to new home construction. However, the access to these homes is currently blocked with street closings and information is limited, at best, with respect to the current deed holders and property owners. These matters should be investigated and any available land should be placed on the market either dwelling free or after new home construction has begun.

Additionally, other lots within the neighborhood, such as lots with damaged homes, have less “hard access” issues; the properties are on open streets. However, again, the owners of such properties are hard to locate and some of the properties may very well be tied up in probate.

Finally, portions of land near the northwestern portion of the community, most notably near Knightner Street, are positioned on a former adjacent road, Knightner Circle, that connects to Knightner Street at both ends. It appears that this street has become “closed” by years of neglect to

the right-of-way. Currently, the street is treated by residents as a private drive-way, with unused property located along the path.

Lack of Neighborhood Maintenance



Probably the most crucial weakness of the Ridgewood Neighborhood is the lack of community maintenance. With regards to this neighborhood, general household garbage disposal is the responsibility of the residents. Curbside collection of this household garbage is available by contracting directly with a number of local refuse collection companies. If refuse collection does not take place in a timely manner, the Richland County Public Works Department can initiate the clean-up under the County’s litter ordinance. Additional areas of concern are the areas of overgrown vegetation along

streets and at street signs and abandoned and/or damaged buildings within the community. These areas should be routinely maintained by SCDOT. Neighborhood maintenance that can be managed by residents and stakeholders includes private property maintenance and community efforts to improve the visual impact of the community.

Areas specifically along Linden Street have become severely overgrown with vegetation and trash, to the point of reducing the travel way width to five or six feet. Other portions of the study area, although not as severe, also have right-of-way maintenance issues of the same accord. Not only does the overgrown vegetation pose a threat to traffic, but it also serves as a breeding ground for unwanted pests, rodents and other undesirable animals. Such creatures thrive in these areas and can ultimately



infest whole blocks and become a health hazard to the surrounding community. Once infested, the removal and remediation of such sites can be time-consuming and costly to the neighborhood. Furthermore, having such areas within the community can deter future potential home owners from choosing Ridgewood as their next place of residence based on visual impact factors.

Another area of concern regarding rodent infestation is the abundance of damaged and abandoned buildings within the community. With such vacant homes come vacant and neglected lots which, in turn, breed unwanted pests and animals. Furthermore, these sites are eyesores within the community and its surrounding landscape. No resident wants their property beside a vacant lot with an abandoned building on the premises. This only decreases the surrounding property values and begins to “wear down” the positive influences of the surrounding properties, until neglect becomes contagious. Additionally, residents of Ridgewood expressed concerns, via the administered survey, that drug dealers had begun to use the vacant properties to serve their needs. Currently, a few of these sites have been targeted for demolition by Richland County and removal of the dwellings has begun.

The final area of maintenance within the community is personal residence maintenance. Although the majority of the residents of Ridgewood keeps and maintains their property with some regularity,



property maintenance is still an issue. Several sites have unsightly chain link fences that are in need of repairs. Also, some residents have old cars and other refuse taking up valuable landscaping space within their lots. Many of the houses in the community could benefit from some minor cosmetic repairs while some structures are in need of more serious structural repairs. Some of these repairs include fence maintenance, painting of houses and other on-site structures, porch repairs, roof repairs,

landscaping upgrades and general landscaping maintenance.

As pointed out by residents at the public meetings, many properties are littered, full of debris and just generally “shabby.” Of course, appearance has economic development implications. The described areas do not give the impression that local residents and tenants are successful and/or happy with their surroundings. The unfavorable appearance of the commercial zone does not present a vision of success and in fact may appear as a distressed area. Consequently, new and existing investors may be discouraged from creating new opportunities since they sense a general apathy from existing tenants.

Community Security

Crime has historically been an issue in the surrounding neighborhoods of the study area. It is important to point out that much of this market response is based on perception, not facts.

Regardless, perception is a very real factor in the market place, especially when trying to entice new homeowners to join the community and when seeking new businesses to relocate to the area. Investors may be hesitant to build and invest in the area unless something is done to address the need for more robust security. Often the feeling of security is based on an impression of an area. Areas in the neighborhood including poorly maintained ditches, uncontrolled vegetation, poor lighting and other visual factors fuel the negative image that the community is unsafe to outside persons, as indicated by the residents on the completed surveys. A general clean up of the area and encouragement to repair or clean individual buildings and lots will positively impact the perception of lack of safety. After all, most residents indicated on the survey that they feel Ridgewood is safe for its residents, yet uninviting to its guests.

Neighborhood Drainage

Businesses and residences in and around the study area have historically had a significant amount of difficulty with drainage problems. Although the City of Columbia and Richland County has done a considerable amount to improve the situation in the drainage systems, storm water drainage still remains a weakness for the community.



The Ridgewood area is comprised of many portions of multi-sloped terrain that has many flat spots along residential spaces. Because of the impervious nature of the roads, sidewalks, driveways, etc., storm water quickly collects and flows down toward the lower lying areas within the neighborhood. After periods of heavy rains, storm water runs off the higher areas and onto surrounding properties, thus flooding sites and roadways. As

stated earlier, many storm water drainage structures have debris and vegetation inhibiting the storm water flow from entering the neighborhood drainage collection system. This in turn adds to the problem of flooding in the area.

Community Identity/Neighborhood Boundaries

Currently, Ridgewood lacks a sense of community borders and awareness to adjacent areas around Ridgewood. People traveling along Interstate 20 have little to no idea of the businesses and

residential space that sits just off of the interstate off-ramp. Also, the neighborhood lacks sufficient signage and landscape interest along the main community arterial, Monticello Road, to “announce” its presence to passersby. The community is full of so much community pride and internal awareness that it should be extended to the outer boundaries of the area.

Street Lighting

Most all of the streets in the community have some level of street lights, however the residents of Ridgewood have voiced their concerns over the quality of such lighting. The accompanying table shows the results from a recent site investigation. It is important to keep in mind that some of the lights inventoried are actually duplicates, as some lights were located on street corners.

Street Name	Number of Lights
<i>Club Road</i>	3
<i>Crest Street</i>	2
<i>Dartmouth Avenue</i>	7
<i>Dixie Avenue</i>	5
<i>Elliot Avenue</i>	4
<i>Knightner Street</i>	6
<i>Lawton Street</i>	4
<i>Lewis Street</i>	0
<i>Monticello Road</i>	5
<i>Ridgedale Street</i>	0
<i>Ridgeway Street</i>	8
<i>Ridgewood Avenue</i>	2
<i>Ridgewood Camp Road</i>	7
<i>Shady Grove Street</i>	0
<i>Summit Avenue</i>	4
<i>Woodbrier Street</i>	6
<i>Wright Street</i>	2

Table of Existing Street Lights

As seen in the previous table, Lewis, Ridgedale and Shady Grove Streets were without street light fixtures at the time of the site visit conducted on the area. Additionally, the street lights within the community are not aesthetically pleasing and many of the street lights suffer from lower illumination values. Furthermore, the lights along Monticello Road are inadequate for the area of travel since the existing lights are primarily located at the ends of the corridor through the neighborhood. Lighting within the community should be upgraded and the number of light fixtures should be increased.



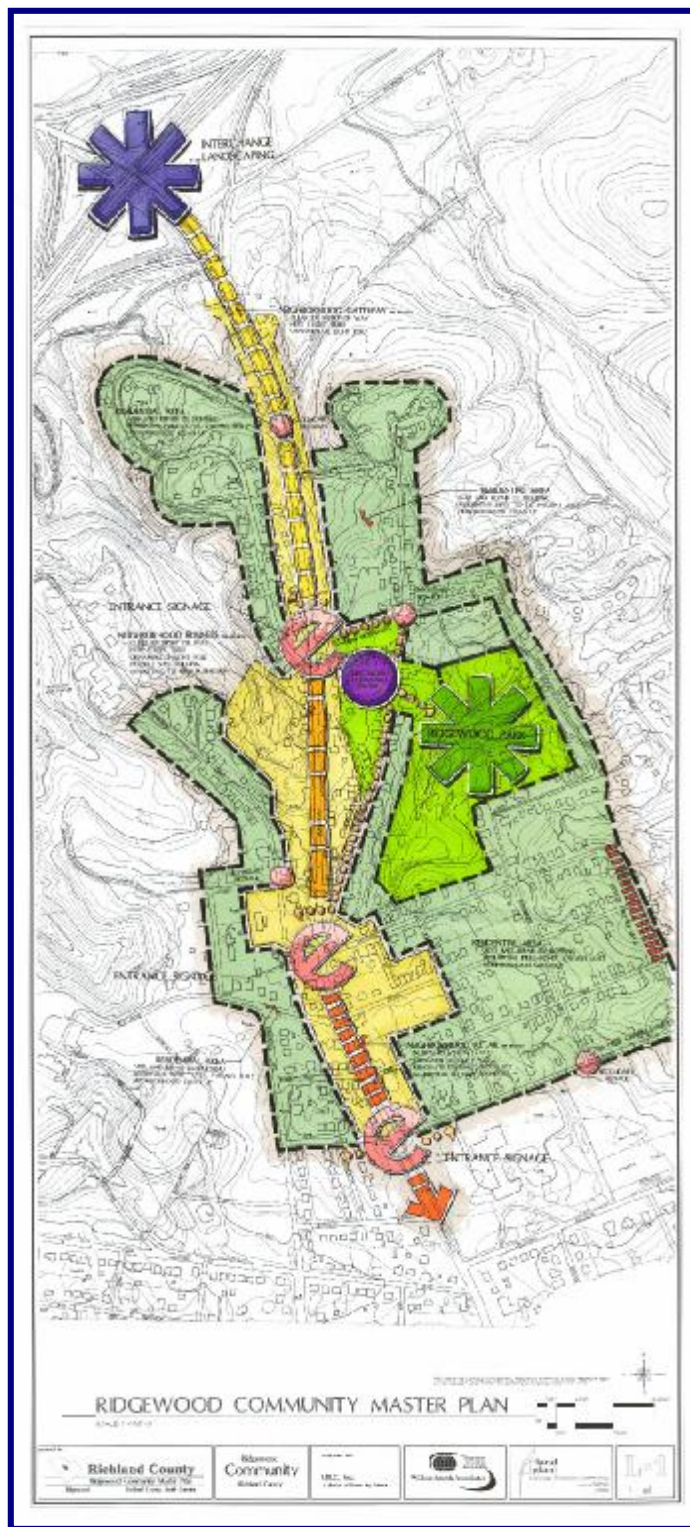
Lack of Neighborhood Sidewalks

Also evident during the many trips to the Ridgewood community was the lack of pedestrian travel ways within the neighborhood, with exception to Monticello Road. Many children live in the neighborhood and must walk on the street shoulders to travel to and from schools, bus stops, businesses and general daily walking ventures. Although many streets have sufficient right-of-way for pedestrian traffic, streets such as Ridgeway Street are narrow in comparison with the houses positioned close to the roadway already. However, there does seem to exist some right-of-way on the western portion of Ridgeway Street for possible future sidewalk improvements.

Lack of Community Common Space

Earlier in this section, the Ridgewood Community Park was noted as a strength of the community; however, the strength of the community space is limited to the youth of the neighborhood. Currently, the park maintains only one set of equipment for park enjoyment, and that playground equipment caters to the needs and desires of toddlers and younger children. The park lacks areas of interest that could potentially draw members of the community together from all age groups.





4.0 Recommendations

After evaluating the Ridgewood neighborhood existing features, identifying the community's strengths and weaknesses and soliciting input from the public, Wilbur Smith Associates has identified several areas of improvement for the community. The majority of the recommendations focus on improving the aesthetics of the community; while other recommendations focus on infrastructure improvement and new development and growth within the community. In order to better understand the areas that the following recommendations pertain to, we need to first breakdown the community into smaller, better defined portions.

The project team determined that Ridgewood was better broken into five sub-groups: Ridgewood Neighborhood Residential Areas, Neighborhood Retail Corridor, Business Corridor, Neighborhood Gateway and Ridgewood Community Park. The residential areas are comprised of all areas of residential population in the general vicinity of Knightner Road, Ridgedale Street, Ridgewood Avenue and Woodbrier Street. The Ridgewood Neighborhood Retail Corridor consists of the area along Monticello Road between Elliot and Dixie Avenues. The Ridgewood Neighborhood

Exhibit 4: Conceptual Master Plan



RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-



Business Corridor is made up of the areas along Monticello Road between Dixie Avenue and Lawton Street. Furthermore, the Ridgewood Neighborhood Gateway is the area along Monticello Road between Lawton Street and Interstate 20. Finally, Ridgewood Community Park is comprised of the areas surrounding the site of the former Ridgewood Elementary School. Based on these areas within the community, the recommendations are broken down into four major categories:

Community Involvement Improvements

Recommendations for improvement that will involve the community directly

Improvements to Community Infrastructure

Recommendations for improvement that pertains to the neighborhood infrastructure and appearance

Development of Available Land

Recommendations for improving land use within the community

Ridgewood Community Park

Recommendations for improvements to the park space and surrounding landscape

4.1 Community Involvement Improvements

Several recommendations in this Master Plan are going to rely on timely responses from various agencies and organizations, with many periods of waiting in between. However, there are several areas of improvement and change that the community can experience almost immediately. As mentioned in Section 3.0, Ridgewood has several strengths as a community, yet, several weaknesses too; weaknesses that need to be overcome.



The residents of Ridgewood can begin the revitalization effort almost immediately by initiating a general community clean-up for the Neighborhood Residential Areas. This can be done one of several ways, which may include community clean-up days and other special clean-up programs managed by local youth organizations, church groups, neighborhood citizens and/or school-related organizations. The efforts should focus on the residential portions of the neighborhood; most notably, the sections predominantly populated by the elderly and other assisted-living residents. These areas should be targeted with focused community clean-up efforts due to the fact that these residents are less able to help themselves due to physical limitations.



In the other residential areas, citizens must begin to gain a new focus of community pride and leadership for their personal property, land and surroundings. The able-bodied residents need to pull together and not only renovate and revitalize their own property, but lend a hand to those unfortunate persons around them. This type of neighborhood spirit is quickly contagious, and other members of the community will soon catch on.

Areas of clean-up improvement that the residents can coordinate themselves should include minor maintenance and cosmetic repairs of homes, general lawn maintenance and landscaping clean-up, general regular grounds maintenance of personal property and local common spaces and the scheduled removal of parked junk cars and other solid waste items located on the premises. With regards to minor repairs of the home, residents should focus on painting and maintaining house facades, porches and other property buildings such as sheds and storage buildings.

Another positive cosmetic property improvement should include the omission of chain link fences. The results of the public survey overwhelmingly stated that the residents appreciate their fences surrounding their property and feel more secure with the fences in place. In the interim, it is recommended that property fences remain a part of the community landscape; however, the type and style should be altered. Residents should remove the rusted chain link style fences from the front portions of their property and replace them with more ornamental and landscape-friendly fencing. Smaller, wooden fences and iron picket fences should be considered as replacements for the less-desirable chain link fences. Prices are very comparable in the marketplace today with respect to various fencing prices, and the wooden and ornamental metal types are much more appealing to the eye and blend better with the surrounding landscape. Over the years, as the community continues to grow and redevelop, it should be considered that the residents remove all fences from the front portions of their property, as it breaks up the community landscape and adds dividing lines within the neighborhood.

By initiating such community changes, although they may seem small in comparison to some of the other recommendations in this report, the community will immediately begin seeing a difference in how the community is perceived and received by surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the residents of Ridgewood themselves. The neighborhood will instantly see a surge in community pride and neighborhood beautification that will definitely be contagious throughout the entire revitalization effort.

In addition to these immediate revitalization efforts, the community should institute a revamped Crime-watch program, in direct coordination with the Richland County Sheriff's Department, to increase awareness throughout the community. As many residents indicated in the neighborhood surveys, the neighborhood experiences some crime, although not as much as other Columbia neighborhoods. Given the relative amount of crime and the apparent small presence of the





community from a crime-watch perspective, any increase in community awareness involving the reduction in crime will be a positive for the future direction of the community.

4.2 Improvements to Community Infrastructure

Signage

As mentioned in the community surveys, Ridgewood lacks a sense of community identity with respect to surrounding areas. In order to bring the neighborhood boundaries into focus, and to visually revitalize the community, new signs should be added to the community. Three different types should be considered; entrance signage, secondary signage and new street signs.

Larger signs placed at the main entrances of the community will better shape the boundaries of Ridgewood. The project team determined the main entrances include the intersection of Monticello Road and Interstate 20 on the northern end of Ridgewood as well as the intersection of Elliot Avenue and Monticello Road. The signs should be lighted, large and set off with the use of landscaping. Possible materials for such signs may include brick or wood.

Secondary signs should be strategically placed in the residential portions of the neighborhood to better reflect the outer boundaries of the community. These signs will be smaller in nature and may or may not be lighted and framed with landscaping. Furthermore, new decorative street signs should be added at all intersections within the community. Examples of all sign concepts can be seen in Exhibits 5, 6, and 7 on the following pages.





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-



Landscaping

Landscaping should be increased in the community to add color, perspective and to “announce” the neighborhood’s presence. Street trees along Monticello Road and Ridgeway Street will add community continuity and unite the neighborhood, as well as indicate to passersby where the neighborhood begins and ends. Furthermore, the increases in landscaping along the main arterial will most likely spill over into the residential portions of the neighborhood and residents will then take the initiative to better landscape personal properties. Several sections utilizing street trees and coordinated ground cover should be detailed for planting along the Neighborhood Retail, Business and Gateway sections. The street trees (i.e. Zelkova, Chinese Elm) shall be planted approximately 50 feet on center with understory trees such as Crapemyrtle or Redbuds being planted under existing overhead utilities. A more detailed description of potential landscaping along Monticello Road is outlined below. Examples of the improvements can be seen in Exhibits 8, 9 and 10 on the following pages.

Neighborhood Gateway – (I-20 to Lawton Street)

This area should receive new street trees and ornamental lighting. Additionally, the existing sidewalks in the area should be routinely cleared, cleaned and maintained in conjunction with the adjacent right-of-way. These changes will enhance the entrance to the neighborhood from the I-20 interchange.

Neighborhood Business – (Lawton Street to Ridgeway Street)

This area should receive new street trees and ornamental lighting along with new sidewalks to enhance the Business District. A possible new speculative building might spur redevelopment in this area and aide in the new marketing of businesses.

Neighborhood Retail – (Ridgeway Street to Elliot Street)

This area should receive new street trees and ornamental lighting along with new sidewalks to enhance the Retail District. Revitalizing and renovating existing structures in this area will also encourage new retail businesses to relocate to this area of the community.

The use of different tree types can further define these areas and provide separation of the districts, while still providing landscaping continuity. It is recommended that Live Oaks be utilized in the Gateway Area, providing evergreen foliage to help screen the residential areas from the traffic visibility and noise of Monticello Road. The Neighborhood Business Area should receive tree plantings of the species Zelkova, a large vase-shaped tree that will leave visibility open to signage, while aide in the screening of some of the large scale uses of the area. The Neighborhood Retail area should receive several Chinese Elms, medium-sized trees with exfoliating bark to enhance the appearance as pedestrians walk along the sidewalks. The Chinese Elm will give this retail area of Monticello Road a pedestrian friendly appearance and not screen retail signage.



RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-



Furthermore, landscaping at the Monticello Road and I-20 interchange should be enhanced to invite traffic along the I-20 interchange to the neighborhood businesses, and retail areas. Examples of this landscaping can be seen at I-26 and Lake Murray Boulevard. It is recommended that the Neighborhood team with the SCDOT Office of Beautification to coordinate the landscaping of the interchange.



Example Interstate Interchange Landscaping

Right-of-Way Clean up and Maintenance

As mentioned earlier, several portions of Ridgewood suffer from lack of vegetation clearing along roads. The SCDOT and Richland County agencies need to be contacted and made aware of the specific areas within the community that require immediate attention, including sections of Elliot Avenue, Shady Grove Street, Linden Street and other portions of the neighborhood. These areas need to have the right-of-ways cleared and the residents should be made aware of the agency’s schedules pertaining to future maintenance of the road right-of-ways. Trees should be cut back from the travel lanes of the roadway, as well as walking limits adjacent to the roadways. Underbrush and grass needs to be properly mowed and vegetation covering local street signs should be removed and maintained by the responsible agencies. Furthermore, the existing sidewalk corridor along Monticello Road needs right-of-way clearing to better provide adequate pedestrian travel space along Monticello Road.

In addition to unnecessary vegetation growth, areas of the residential portions of the neighborhood, most notably Linden Street, are in need of refuse collection. Given that the problem has escalated to an amount larger than any resident can handle, Richland County Department of Public Works should be contacted to remove the large areas of trash from the neighborhood. Several portions of the roadway right-of-way are being used as trash dumps by the residents with no scheduled pick-up by a local trash collection business. Of most concern is the creek bed just off of Linden Street, as



well as portions of Linden Street's right-of-way. The area is riddled with trash and demolition debris that not only devastates the landscape and invites rodents and pests into the areas, but also poses a threat to the environment. The agency should be made aware of the situation and should be scheduled to remove the trash from the premises. As with the vegetation removal, the residents should acquire a schedule of future trash pick-up dates and see to it that the County follows the schedule.

Animal Control

In addition to the right-of-way clean up recommendation, the local department of animal control should be contacted shortly thereafter to rid the community of several unwanted animals. During recent site visits, it was observed that an abundance of stray cats and dogs inhabited the vacant lots and abandoned houses on the premises.

Street Paving

Several areas within the neighborhood would benefit from pavement overlays; however some streets are in need of major repaving. The areas of the neighborhood with the most need have been mentioned previously and suffer from vegetative overgrowth and trash problems; Elliot Avenue, Linden Street, Shady Grove Street and Knightner Circle. All other streets in the neighborhood would benefit from minor resurfacing.

In addition to street resurfacing, several local businesses in the community have parking area concerns dealing with damaged surfaces and ponding during storm events. These areas would benefit from parking lot resurfacing and in some instances new parking lot construction. Residents mentioned a few areas in need, most notably Grace Church.

Lighting

As mentioned earlier in this Master Plan, the lighting in the community is inadequate for several reasons, most notably, security. The lighting in the residential portions of the community should be upgraded to ensure maximum output with necessary repairs to the current lighting systems, as needed. Furthermore, additional lighting should be installed in areas of the neighborhood with insufficient lighting (see Table of Existing Street Lights, Section 3.4). Additionally, decorative light fixtures should be added along the Monticello Road corridor to enhance the community atmosphere and add additional lighting power in the process. Examples of lighting placement with respect to the Monticello Road corridor can be seen in Exhibits 8, 9 and 10. One final area in need of lighting is the updated Ridgewood signage, as part of these recommendations.



Storm Water Drainage

Probably one of the most frequent requests from the residents of Ridgewood would be the need for the community's storm water drainage network to be reviewed and overhauled. Several areas in the neighborhood become unmanageable during storm events, and in most instances, impede traffic flow on various streets in the neighborhood and ultimately flood residents' properties. Project team members quickly identified several portions of the neighborhood that experience severe ponding and storm drainage clogging during rain events. These areas include portions of Dixie Avenue, Ridgeway Street, Ridgedale Street, Knightner Street and large portions of Ridgewood Avenue Street.

As part of this Master Plan, Wilbur Smith Associates recommends that Richland County have a detailed storm water drainage analysis performed for the Ridgewood Neighborhood, complete with a model of the neighborhood flow characteristics, analysis of the current system, designed improvements and construction plans.

Wastewater Service

Currently, most all residents of Ridgewood are connected to the City's municipal wastewater collection system. However, some residents, most notably on the northern most portions of Ridgeway Street and Ridgemont Street, are not connected to the public system and are, instead, still using septic tanks. These residents are allowed connection to the City's collection system; however, will be required to pay future sewer fees, not applicable to residents currently on private septic systems. Furthermore, the City needs to investigate the utility lines as they currently stand and determine those residents of Ridgewood, if any, that do not have access to the County's wastewater collection system and extend such lines for residential use.

Sidewalks

Currently, the only portion of Ridgewood that maintains the use of sidewalks is the section along Monticello Road. As mentioned in a previous recommendation, the right-of-way for those sections of the current sidewalk system should be cleared by SCDOT maintenance personnel for future use by pedestrians. In addition to that section of the neighborhood, residents have requested additional sidewalks within the community. It is recommended that sidewalks be added to areas of the community deemed appropriate by residents according to pedestrian traffic volumes and use by school children, most notably Ridgeway Street. Currently, Ridgeway Street has no sidewalks and is narrow with houses positioned close to the existing right-of-way. Some agreement should be reached between County and SCDOT officials and local residents to extend the right-of-way of Ridgeway Street to the west side, enough for the addition of new street trees and a sidewalk for school children. Exhibit 11 shows a concept illustration of this recommendation. Furthermore, decorative cross walks and sidewalk additions are recommended to the business portions of



Monticello Road as part of this Master Plan. These recommendations are illustratively outlined in Exhibits 5, 6 and 7 shown previously.





4.3 Development of Available Land

As stated earlier, the Ridgewood community has several tracts of land that are either vacant with no dwellings or vacant with unsuitable dwellings. The southeastern corner of the neighborhood, later determined to be within the city limits of Columbia, but will be considered part of this plan, has several areas of interest with respect to further development. As part of this planning process, we identified approximately 26 lots in this area that are currently unused and without dwelling and provided a list to Richland County. The lots should be further investigated to determine ownership rights, and later purchased for future development of single family residential homes.



Other areas in the neighborhood currently have unsafe dwellings on the premises and appear to be abandoned by the owner. The properties exist along portions of Stuart Street, Shady Gove Street and Linden Street, with some properties of this nature on Knightner Circle. Richland County has begun the process of eliminating these dwellings from the properties and this should continue. All abandoned and partially damaged buildings that are beyond sufficient repair should be taken down to make way for new construction of homes within the residential portions of the neighborhood.

With regard to the residential development of the community, most developers today are constantly seeking out new ways to spur residential growth. Many developers in the Columbia area are willing to begin construction immediately, to suit the neighborhood housing needs, if “gifted” the property. This type of relationship ensures quick construction in the needed areas that will blend with the community and foster new home ownership. With these types of development possibilities, we recommend that Richland County investigate this further and begin demolition and new construction on residential properties. It is further recommended that, at least, the County should plan to purchase two tracts of the aforementioned land per year for new home construction and further initiate private development within the community.



Additionally, property along Monticello Road appears to be unused and may be available for new business growth for the community. New, speculative buildings should be considered for these sites and a specific business marketing strategy should be employed to entice new business growth for the Ridgewood area. Such buildings are non-specific in tenant nature and can be built to serve a variety of business needs. Furthermore, existing businesses along the Monticello Road corridor should acquire funding

to update building façades and other exterior elements, along with interior element, to spur business revitalization along the main corridor of Ridgewood. These changes in the business infrastructure, along with the landscaping and signage recommendations will spark the revitalization of the Ridgewood neighborhood.

4.4 Ridgewood Community Park

As stated in Section 3.3, the need for an updated community park is vital to the growth of Ridgewood. Currently, the park is geared towards the needs of young children in the community, yet has room for further expansion. In addition to the existing playground equipment for children, all residents would further benefit from walking trails on the perimeter of the park, weaving in and out of adjacent wooded sections, and park benches along such routes. Furthermore, other residents would benefit from additional recreational complexes in the park.

Walking Trails

It is recommended that light underbrush in the wooded sections be cleared and graded to present a clean, natural feel within the parks; however some areas along the trails should remain undisturbed. Asphalt walking trails should be constructed along the outer portions of the property, extending into the woods and connecting all sections of the park. Given the terrain and sloping nature of the surrounding wooded landscape, the trails will provide a place to gather and maintain good health for the residents of the community. Also, several pedestrian bridges may be required to traverse the creek located in the woods along the recommended trail path.

Connector Trails

In addition to these trails, connector trails constructed of asphalt and decorative concrete sections should be constructed to serve as connector trails between Ridgewood Community Park and other areas of interest in the neighborhood, such as the Ridgewood Baptist Church and its associated Family Center. These connector trails would provide direct access to the park facilities from various sections of the neighborhood and would also allow residents of all ages to use the park without having to walk among neighborhood traffic.

Additional Recreational Spaces

With toddlers having the playground and seniors having the walking trails, the adolescents and young adults of the neighborhood would benefit from youth basketball courts and multi-purpose fields in the park area. The basketball courts would be fenced and asphalt surfaced for recreational use. The multi-sport field could be set-up for use as a football field, soccer field, youth baseball field and adult softball field. Several bleacher sections should also be considered. In addition to the sports complex updates and walking trail additions, public restrooms should be installed in a general maintenance building located on the premises. A conceptual site plan for the park can be seen in Exhibit 12 on the following page.





RIDGEWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

-MASTER PLAN-



5.0 Action Plan

The Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan presented herein provides an overall framework towards the successful revitalization of the Ridgewood community and surrounding areas. The success of this master plan hinges on the implementation of the recommendations, future updates and revisions to the plan to reflect an ever-changing environment and continued involvement in plan implementation processes by residents, stakeholders and governing agencies. Furthermore, successful revitalization of the Ridgewood area is based upon a series of short term and long term actions that should be initiated by interested parties. As part of this plan, we have included certain action items that will aide in the redevelopment of the area and help kick-start the process.

5.1 Action Items

- Explore Funding Options – Research and explore funding options listed in Section 5.3 of this plan and supplement those options with subsequent funding options that have been utilized in the past by Richland County.
- Identify Community Leaders – Meet with the Ridgewood Neighborhood Association to thoroughly review this plan and then identify community leaders/representatives to coordinate the efforts pertaining to specific recommendations stated herein.
- Obtain Storm Water Master Plan – As previously mentioned, a detailed storm water master plan should be conducted. This plan should determine the hydrology of the area and should also include site-specific calculations and recommendations for future engineering design and detailing of an improved system.
- Initiate Community Clean-up Efforts – Institute a community clean-up program, complete with scheduling and trash pick-up locations to be implemented and coordinated by community leaders and residents. Efforts should focus on common land areas within the community, vacant tracts of land not immediately slated for new home construction, and other areas of visual impact within the community.
- Revitalize Neighborhood Crime Watch Program – Contact the Richland County Sheriff Department and begin the process of revamping the neighborhood crime watch program. Name a community liaison and several other community “corridor” participants to assist in the new effort. Obtain new neighborhood crime watch prevention signs and develop a strong relationship between those resident liaisons and representatives from Richland County Sheriff Department.

- Investigate Neighborhood Maintenance Issues – Contact local representatives of the aforementioned governing agencies for the neighborhood to coordinate right-of-way maintenance and trash pick-up within the community, as well as the cleaning and clearing of existing storm water drainage inlets. Obtain schedules for regular maintenance of the roads and their right-of-ways and elect community members to monitor these activities. In reference to home pick-up of trash piles, this can be scheduled by the residents for Richland County Waste Management to pick up the refuse; however, a fee from the residents will be required for these services. The primary area of concern regarding right-of-way maintenance and refuse collection is the entire area along Linden Street. With regard to the creek bed along Linden Street, the problem is larger than any one resident and may have to be handled by Richland County Department of Public Works.
- Pave Roads – Schedule pavement resurfacing for the roads in the neighborhood that are in need of repair/repaving. These roads shall include Knightner Circle, Linden Street, Shady Grove Street and eastern portions of Elliot Avenue, Dixie Avenue, Summit Avenue and Dartmouth Avenue. Meet with the SCDOT in concert with this effort and conduct preliminary meetings with local developers to develop a land use plan for undeveloped areas along the eastern portions of Elliot, Dixie, Summit and Dartmouth Avenues.
- Update Lighting in Ridgewood – Contact SCE&G and meet to discuss lighting upgrades/improvements along Monticello Road and interior streets of the community, most notably Lewis, Ridgedale, Shady Grove and Linden Streets. We recommend this be one of the first completed recommendations as it will add security to the neighborhood.
- Begin Sidewalk Rehabilitation – Coordinate sidewalk construction with Richland County Department of Public Works, SCDOT and local residents along portions of Lawton and Ridgeway Streets to outfall onto Monticello Road.
- Create Entrance Improvements – Meet with local engineers and planners and begin the process of preparing construction plans for landscaping and signage improvements to the main focus areas of the community, as described in this report. Meet with the SCDOT Office of Beautification to coordinate clean-up and landscape efforts at the intersection of Monticello Road and Interstate 20. Costs of this beautification effort will most likely be consumed by the SCDOT as long as residents provide most of the work force labor associated with the planting of new material at the interchange.

- **Initiate New Housing Plan** – Determine the status of abandoned/vacant properties within the community and begin discussions with land owners about development. Meet with the Columbia Housing Authority to gauge their interest in affordable housing projects for the community. Invite developers to evaluate available land and its potential for new development for affordable housing. Coordinate development with these individuals and offer development incentives such as land to start and/or money to begin construction efforts. Richland County should develop these strategies for new residential development based on the intent of purchasing a minimum of five (5) lots/properties per year for this purpose.
- **Create Marketing Strategy for New Business** – Develop and implement marketing strategies for the area to revitalize current businesses and spur new business development within the community. Marketing should focus not only on consumers from within the community, but further extend to surrounding communities and potential consumers from Interstate 20 traffic.
- **Renovate Existing Businesses** – Obtain funding to assist local business owners with renovations of their property and include them in any marketing strategy sessions. Building façades and other exterior elements should be improved first with interior renovations following shortly behind.
- **Revitalize Ridgewood Community Park** – Prepare a complete detailed Master Plan for the Ridgewood Community Park, in association with the Richland County Recreation Commission, including detailed descriptions of adjacent property and steps required for property acquisition. Contact land owners about land lease/obtainment for development of the new park and begin design services after the park has been master planned.

5.2 Funding Options

Additionally, a preliminary list of funding options and sources has been included with this plan to serve as a starting point for the funding search during implementation of certain aspects of this plan. These options should be considered initial starting points of reference and will need to be further investigated and supplemented by other means as necessary. Some of the options have additional information attached in Appendix B of this report.

- C-Funds – Richland County should evaluate the possibility of using C-Funds for improvements to the interior roads of the Ridgewood Neighborhood. Since most all of the streets in the Neighborhood are owned and operated by SCDOT, they should qualify for funding through this option.
- Community Development Block Grant – The South Carolina Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is provided through the South Carolina Department of Commerce and is designed to provide assistance to units of general local government in improving neighborhoods by providing community revitalization funds, particularly for communities with persons of low and moderate income. Richland County should evaluate this fund as a potential option for the Ridgewood Neighborhood revitalization effort.
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program – The South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority developed the HOME program to assist home owners in the ability to maintain home ownership, otherwise not available through conventional means. It also provides local governments the opportunity to design programs that may offer down payment and closing cost assistance to qualified purchasers. These efforts apply to both new construction and rehabilitation to existing structures.
- Park and Recreational Development Fund – The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism developed the Park and Recreation Development Fund for the application of funds to provide permanent improvements to public recreation areas and the development of new public areas by local governmental agencies. Eligible costs will be reimbursed at a rate of eighty (80) percent.

5.3 Conceptual Cost Estimates

Finally, Wilbur Smith Associates has prepared conceptual cost estimates that reflect the potential funding needed to implement the recommended infrastructure improvements based on this Master Plan. It should be emphasized that although great effort has been taken to verify the quantities and potential costs of certain aspects of this Master Plan, more concise values and costs can only be determined after recommended studies and further property assessments have been completed. These costs are based upon the concepts illustrated herein and will vary based on future design recommendations as results of further studies, as well as dictated by the current economy, construction trends and methods, property value assessments, and subsequent revisions to this plan. Detailed cost estimates will be developed during the design phases of each of the recommended infrastructure improvements.

CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE Ridgewood Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan		
Item No.	Description	Total Cost
1	Storm Water Master Plan	\$40,000
2	<i>Subsequent Storm Water Improvements</i>	\$700,000
3	Pavement Improvements	\$225,000
4	Neighborhood Lighting Improvements	\$50,000
5	Sidewalk Rehabilitation Improvements	\$45,000
6	Landscaping/Streetscaping Improvements/Ornamental Lighting	\$550,000
7	Signage/Signage Landscaping/Irrigation	\$42,000
8	New Housing Plan (Property Acquisition)	\$450,000
9	Marketing Strategy Creation	\$25,000
10	Existing Business Renovations	\$700,000
Community Park Improvements		
11	<i>Master Plan of Park</i>	\$15,000
12	<i>Design of Park</i>	\$25,000
13	<i>Property Acquisition</i>	\$150,000
14	<i>Park Construction</i>	\$275,000
Subtotal:		\$3,292,000
Contingency (15%):		\$493,800
Misc. Design & Engineering (10%):		\$329,200
Total		\$3,785,800



6.0 Key Community Contacts

Richland County Office of Community Development

Jocelyn Jennings, Community Development Specialist
2020 Hampton St., Suite 3063
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2055
jocelynjennings@richlandonline.com



Richland County Unsafe Housing Department

Kay Binder
2020 Hampton St.
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 576-2154



Richland County Council

Councilman Paul Livingston, District Four
2308 Park St.
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 765-1192
livingstonp@bellsouth.net



Ridgewood Neighborhood Association

Inez Hicks, President
5231 Woodbrier St.
Columbia, SC 29203
(803) 786-6974
inezmh@netzero.net



Richland County Sheriff's Department

Lieutenant Dennis Dodge, Community Action Team (CAT) Unit Commander
(803) 419-5318
ddodge@rcsd.net



Sergeant Ruben Santiago, Community Action Team (CAT) Unit Supervisor
(803) 419-5331
rsantiago@rcsd.net

<http://rcsd.net/catregs.htm>
Richland County Sheriff's Department: (803) 576-3000

Richland County Planning Department

Anna Almeida, Building Inspector
(803) 576-2168
<http://www.richlandonline.com/departments/planning/planning.htm>
Planning Department: (803) 576-2140



South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)

Phone: (803) 737-2314
955 Park Street
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202-0191
<http://www.dot.state.sc.us/>



Larry Polsley, Richland County SCDOT Mowing Coordinator
(803) 786-0128
7201 Fairfield Road
Columbia, SC 29203



Richland County Department of Public Works

400 Powell Road
Columbia, South Carolina 29203
Phone: (803) 576-2400
<http://www.richlandonline.com/departments/publicworks.htm>



City of Columbia Zoning Division

1225 Laurel Street, 1st Floor
P.O. Box 147
Columbia, SC 29217
Phone: (803) 545-3333
Facsimile: (803) 343-8779
http://www.scdcorp.net/default_pz.asp



Wilbur Smith Associates (Planners, Engineers, and Surveyors)

David Brandes, P.E., Director - Site Development Division
PO Box 92
Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 758-4500
(803) 758-4561 Fax
E-mail: dbrandes@wilbursmith.com
Website: www.wilbursmith.com



ZONING DISTRICTS – PURPOSE STATEMENTS

RU – Rural District

This district is intended to (1) protect and encourage agricultural endeavors and promote the wise use of prime agricultural and forest lands, (2) protect and encourage the integrity of existing rural communities, (3) protect valuable natural and cultural resources, (4) maintain open space and scenic areas contiguous to development area.

D-1-Development District

This district is intended to provide for large tracts of land located primarily n the fringe of urban growth where the predominate character of urban development has not yet been fully established, but where the current characteristics of use are predominantly residential, agricultural, or semi-developed, with scattered related uses. Certain structures and sues required to serve governmental, educational, religious, recreational, and other needs of such areas are permitted outright or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to assure compatibility of uses within the district and adjacent thereto. It is further recognized that future demand for developable land will generate requests for amendments in zone designations to remove land from the D-1 classification and place it into other more intensely developed classifications as a natural consequence of urban expansion.

RR, RS-1, RS-1A, RS-2, RS-3 – Single Family Residential

These districts are intended as single family residential areas with low to medium population densities. Use regulations for the single family districts are identical, but custom has established five classes of lot width and lot area, and these dimensional differences are intended to be preserved. Certain structures and uses required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial recreational, and other needs of such areas are permitted outright within such districts or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to preserve and protect their single family residential character.

RG-1, RG-2 – General Residential

These districts are intended as medium and high density residential areas permitting progressively higher population densities, characterized by single family detached, two family detached, multiple family structures, garden-type apartments, and high rise apartments. Certain structures and uses required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial recreational, and other needs of such areas are permitted outright within such districts or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to preserve and protect the residential character of the districts.

C-1 – Office and Institutional

This district is intended to accommodate office, institutional, and certain types of residential uses in areas whose characteristic is neither general commercial nor exclusively residential in nature. Certain structures and uses required to serve the needs of such areas are permitted outright within such districts or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to best fulfill the intent of this ordinance.

C-2 – Neighborhood Commercial

This district is intended to accommodate commercial and service uses oriented primarily to serving the needs of persons who live or work in nearby areas. Certain related structures and uses required to serve the needs of such areas are permitted outright or area permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to best fulfill the intent of this ordinance.

C-3 – General Commercial

This district is intended to accommodate a variety of general commercial and nonresidential uses characterized primarily by retail, office and service establishments and oriented primarily to major traffic arteries or extensive areas of predominantly commercial usage and characteristics. Certain related structures and uses required to serve the needs of such areas are permitted outright or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to best fulfill the intent of this ordinance.

M-1 – Light Industrial

This district is intended to accommodate wholesaling, distribution, storage, processing, light manufacturing, and general commercial or agricultural uses. Certain related structures and uses required to serve the needs of such areas are permitted outright or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to best fulfill the intent of this ordinance.

M-2 – Heavy Industrial

This district is intended to accommodate primarily those uses of a manufacturing and industrial nature, and secondarily those uses which are functionally related thereto such as distribution, storage, and processing. General commercial uses are allowed but are considered incidental to the predominantly industrial nature of the district. Certain related structures and uses required to serve the needs of such areas are permitted outright or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to best fulfill the intent of this ordinance. In addition, certain uses are permitted only as special exceptions or are prohibited in order to protect such uses from the potentially incompatible characteristics of industrial areas.

PUD-1 – Planned Unit Development – 1 District

The intent of planned unit development – 1 districts is to derive the benefits of efficiency, economy, and flexibility by encouraging unified development of large sites, while also obtaining the advantages

of creative site design, improved appearance, compatibility of uses, optimum service by community facilities, and better functioning of vehicular access and circulation.

The types of residential dwelling units, and the types of nonresidential uses allowed in this district increase with increasing site size, based upon the premise that increased site size will allow proper design including functional interrelations, buffer treatments separating uses with potentially incompatible characteristics of other uses, design of access patterns, and relationships or uses within such planned unit developments with uses in adjacent districts.

PUD-2 – Planned Unit Development – 2 District

The planned unit development – 2 district is intended to permit and encourage the effective, efficient, and economical development of large tracts of land by permitting a variety of residential accommodations and land uses in orderly relationship to one another. In furtherance of such objectives this section shall:

Encourage and allow the development of large tracts of substantially undeveloped land as planned unit development – 2 districts;

Assure for planned unit development – 2 districts the provision of adequate drainage, sewerage, water and other utilities;

Assure for planned unit development – 2 districts the provisions of adequate streets, and of safe and convenient traffic access and circulation, both vehicular and pedestrian;

Assure for planned unit development – 2 districts the provision of adequate public building sites through the dedication or reservation of land for recreational, educational, and other public purposes;

Preserve the natural amenities of the land by encouraging scenic and functional open spaces within planned unit development – 2 districts; and

Provide an environment of stable character compatible with surrounding areas.

PDD – Planned Development District

The intent of the planned development district is to better bridge the inherent difference between residential and nonresidential uses; and to better accommodate change within those areas of the county where due to economics and other factors responsible for change, potentially incompatible development could compromise property values or adversely impact existing land use, transportation facilities, or infrastructure.

Through the planned development district advocated by this district, it is possible to ameliorate differences between potentially incompatible uses by exacting concessions and conditions as necessary to achieve “land use compatibility.”

MH-1, MH-2, MH-3 – Manufactured Home Districts

The intent of these manufactured home districts is to provide a sound and healthy residential environment sufficient to meet the unique needs of inhabitants living in manufactured home subdivisions from encroachment by incompatible uses, and to encourage the consolidation of manufactured homes into manufactured home subdivisions.

LIRP – Light Industrial and Research Park District

This district is intended to accommodate clean industrial and research facilities and related uses established in a landscaped setting.

P-1 – Parks and Recreation District

This district is designed primarily to provide for existing and future religious and recreational facilities. The nature of these facilities require location in areas with good access and near residential areas served.