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I. INTRODUCTION

This West End Comprehensive Redevelopment plan has been prepared on behalf of the City of Georgetown by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG), with assistance from the Planning Commission and residents of the West End neighborhood.

As neighborhood dynamics of the West End continue to change, so too do the demands placed on public services, infrastructure and housing. In order to meet these changes, the City is taking it's first proactive step by creating this comprehensive West End Redevelopment Plan. This plan will serve as a guide to assist City Officials, residents and other community stakeholders, by identifying community issues, common goals and recommend steps to improve the livability of the West End. The plan is based on field research of the existing conditions of the West End, analysis of current trends and community input.

The inception of the West End Redevelopment Plan was the result of discussions between residents of the West End community, City Council and the Planning Commission. Concerned with recent trends in their neighborhood, a group of residents approached the Georgetown Planning Commission with a rezoning request. Residents were seeing trends including the increase of substandard rental housing and absentee landlords, both of which they believed were associated with the influx of mobile homes. The proposed zoning change called for the elimination of additional mobile homes in the West End of Georgetown.

The Georgetown City Council believed that a major rezoning change should be included as part of a comprehensive review and plan that would serve to protect and enhance the West End neighborhood over the next ten years. The Council then requested that WRCOG assist the Planning Commission by preparing a Comprehensive West End Redevelopment Plan.

The term *redevelopment* describes the steps the City can take to protect and enhance a specific area of the City. Examples of the steps include revising zoning ordinances and committing money to improvements. This type of redevelopment is considered informal. A more formal approach would include the creation of service districts, as well as acquiring property for special development projects.

This plan includes a recommended action plan for improvements, mechanisms for implementation and a list of possible funding sources. It also addresses the time frame within which improvements should be accomplished, i.e. which needs can and should be addressed immediately and which ones can be addressed over the next five-and ten-year period.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the West End Redevelopment Plan is to survey, analyze and recommend changes that will improve the safety, well-being and the livability of the West End section of Georgetown.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives were incorporated into the study:

- Analyze the existing infrastructure and make recommendations for needed improvements;
- Review existing zoning regulations and develop alternatives for dealing with the spatial limitations of lotting arrangements;
- Develop recommendations concerning various types of housing and appropriate locations for same;
- Develop a "block-by-block" analysis of the Project area's streetscape and recommend improvements; and
- Develop a listing of funding sources and mechanisms for Project recommendations.

BENEFITS AND EFFECTS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

There are many benefits associated with the implementation of a redevelopment plan. While many of the benefits are those that meet the established goals of the plan, there are often unintended beneficial effects on the neighborhood and its surrounds.

The creation of the redevelopment plan is not initially expected to have an impact on the property values in and around the West End. However, as is typical to neighborhood redevelopment plans that have been implemented, property values do increase in the long term. The increased property values are due to improvements made through the

redevelopment process. This increase is usually seen as a positive effect on both the redeveloped neighborhood as well as its surrounding areas.

Potential home and business owners may find it easier to obtain bank loans on properties located within the West End in the future. This is because local banks are likely to view the West End area as a strong commitment on the part of the City and they know that they will be making a smart investment.

Pride in the community is one effect that is often seen after the implementation of a redevelopment plan. The City's focus on a neighborhood will usually result in increased levels of services from the City. Residents become more focused on their own community as well and increase their own level of civic service. Churches and neighborhood organizations often sponsor days where the public comes out in numbers to better their community.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Community involvement is the most important element in the formation of a community redevelopment plan. On paper, a plan can appear to solve all problems that ail a community. But, if the residents do not like the proposal, it would be fruitless to carry the plan forward. The West End Redevelopment Plan started because residents realized there were issues in the West End that needed to be addressed. Those residents continued to be involved during the process of inventory, analysis and the formation of recommendations.

Public Meetings.
The City and Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council conducted two public meetings at the Saint Stephens AME Church. The meetings were held to help gain insight into the West End residents' and business owners' feelings about various issues that would be addressed in the Redevelopment Plan. Topics addressed included: housing, zoning, land use, recreation, infrastructure, crime and safety, blight, historic and cultural issues. The second meeting was more specific and included a general discussion of preliminary findings on zoning and lot size issues, housing types and specific recreation issues. At this point, most of the analysis was completed and the discussion was used to develop strategies for the Redevelopment Plan. The discussions at both of the meetings were very productive as they were used to determine specific areas of focus in the Action Plan. The expression of the community's concerns also helped in prioritizing the recommended actions.

At these meetings, the predominant topics of discussion from West End residents,

landlords and business owners included:

- the future of mobile homes in the area;
- the desire for an increase of home ownership in the West End;
- storm water drainage improvements;
- street and sidewalk improvements;
- enforcement of existing building and zoning codes;
- reduction in crime;
- drinking water quality;
- lack of recreation and community center facilities;
- street light outages; and
- lack of landscaping on some roads.

Written Comments and Telephone Calls.
Over the period of time the plan was being prepared, the City and WRPDC received letters and telephone calls from residents and other interested citizens. The information provided recommendations that were very specific in nature. Some of the information that was especially helpful were those ideas and recommendations that had evolved as residents witnessed first hand life in the West End.

Informal Discussions.
There were numerous people who contributed to this report. Informal discussions and interviews were conducted with residents, as well as with City and County employees, all helping by providing information for both the analysis and the recommendations sections of this Plan.

Existing Needs Assessment and Plan Review.
For the past few years, WRPDC has sponsored "Need Assessments" for the City of Georgetown as part of a requirement for the City to be eligible for federal grant money. West End residents, business owners, and people who provide human services to

Georgetown residents participated in meetings, which were used to prepare the assessments. These assessments provided information on a variety of topics. The assessment meetings were a little different from the meetings that were held in the West End because the topics of discussion were broader. The discussion areas also included the need for public transportation, the need for better paying jobs and the desire for people to own their own homes.

Various development plans that had been created over the previous twenty years also involved community input in their making. Some of the plans reviewed included: the City's and County's Comprehensive Plans, the County's Recreation Assessment, the region's Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development and the County's Thoroughfare Plan. A review of these plans revealed that some of the current concerns mimic those concerns of years ago, suggesting a continuing need for solutions. However, it is evident that many other issues have since been corrected.

II. STUDY AREA

Georgetown's *West End* Neighborhood, also called *the study area* in this report, is bounded on the north by the railroad serving Georgetown Steel; on the east by South Fraser Street; on the south by Bourne Street; and on the west by the railroad serving International Paper and the State Ports Authority. The study area covers about 350 acres and can be seen below in Figure 2.1.

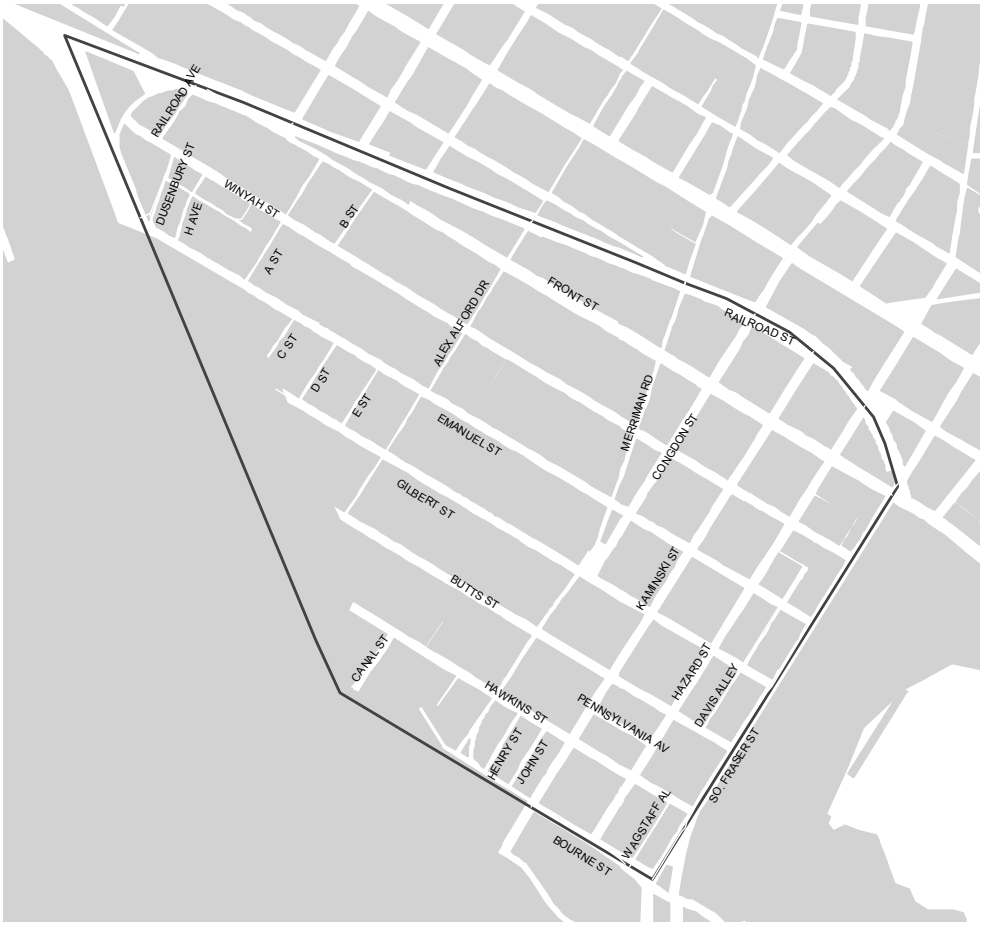

Figure 2.1 West End Study Area.

HISTORY OF THE WEST END

The original development plan for the West End was laid out in 1883 by the Georgetown Land Association. The plan shown in Figure 2.2 refers to the area as *The Suburbs of the Town of Georgetown*. While many of the streets and alleys on the plan were eventually constructed, the axis of the plan was rotated and many of the roadway names were changed. Prior to the land subdivision, the area was owned by J.B. Pyatt and was part of Serenity Plantation. Merriman Road existed some time prior to 1883.

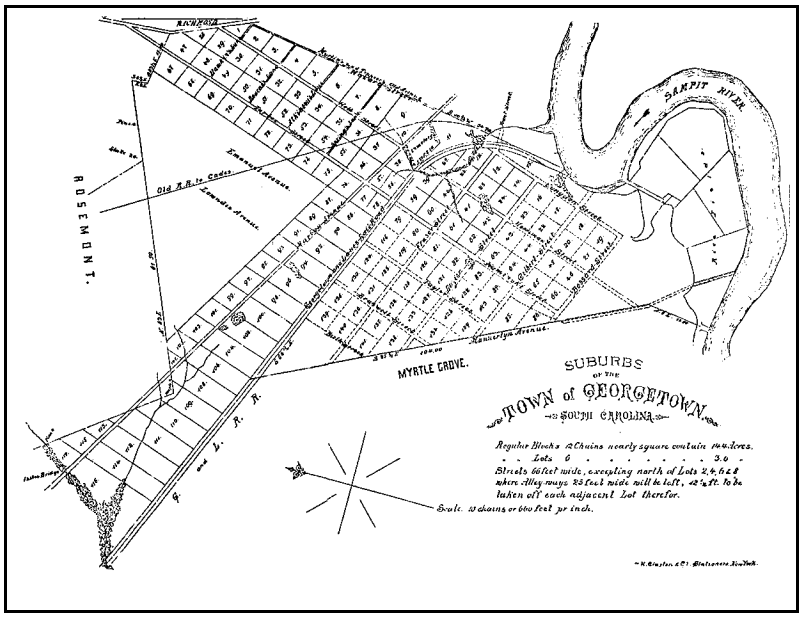

FIGURE 2.2 Georgetown Land Association Plan

Development of the area started in the late 1800's. The Atlantic Coast Lumber Mill Company (ACL) was established in 1899 on the banks of the Sampit River just south of the study area. According to Tamona La Roche in *Georgetown County, Black America Series*, the ACL Co. employed 4,585 people in 1900 and provided housing for many of the employees. A recent survey of historic resources prepared by Circa Inc. credits the construction of houses in a twelve block area between the Sampit River, Front Street Merriman Road and Fraser Street. The ACL purchased twenty acres to construct homes for executives and laborers. This area was then known as "New Town". In 1932, the ACL Mill eventually closed as the demand for lumber dropped due to the onset of the Great Depression. International Paper later opened nearby in 1936. It wasn't until the late 1960's when the Steel Mill opened at the former site of the ACL Mill.

Most of the residential development in the Study Area that exists today was constructed over the fifty year period from the 1920's through the 1970's. There are, however, many buildings in the study area that were constructed prior to 1920. Most of the oldest buildings are located east of Condon Street. A 1908 insurance rate map shows the footprints and other details of structures that were located in the West End at the time.

While many of the structures shown on the 1908 map are gone now, there are still buildings that remain in use today.

The West End developed into a unique community. Churches and neighborhood businesses were located among the growing number of homes in the area. The West End had become a thriving "town center" for African American residents in the Georgetown area. Prior to the 1970's, the West End residents were relying on the City of Georgetown to provide services to the area. In 1971, the West End was annexed into the City of Georgetown.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population.

There were 1,740 residents living in the West End neighborhood of Georgetown, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. This number represents close to 20 percent of the population of the City of Georgetown. Over the ten year period between the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, the City showed a small population decrease of six percent, while the West End saw a similar decrease in population, at five and a half percent.

Population decreases, while small, are remarkable because Georgetown County grew considerably during that same time period. The County saw an overall growth rate of 25.1 percent. While it is recognized that the majority of the County's growth occurred on the Waccamaw Neck, all but one of the County's five census divisions experienced population growth. This includes the Georgetown Census Division in which the City of Georgetown is located. (The one census division that lost population was the Sampit-Santee area.) It appears that not only are people from outside of the region moving to Georgetown County, but it is possible that people are moving from the City of Georgetown to other parts of the County.

Age.

Age is a population characteristic that is important in the evaluation process of a neighborhood because it helps in determining some of the existing and future needs and services of residents. The average age of the residents in the West End is about 27[1]. This age is well below the City average of 35 and the County average of 39 years of age. The age distribution of residents living in the Study Area is shown in Figure 2.3.

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[1] Census information, other than population, is based on U.S. Census Tract 9806, Block group 6 and Census Tract 9807, Block Group 1. This block group data covers all but a very small section of the West End Study Area. The U.S. Census does not make all individual block data available for privacy reasons.

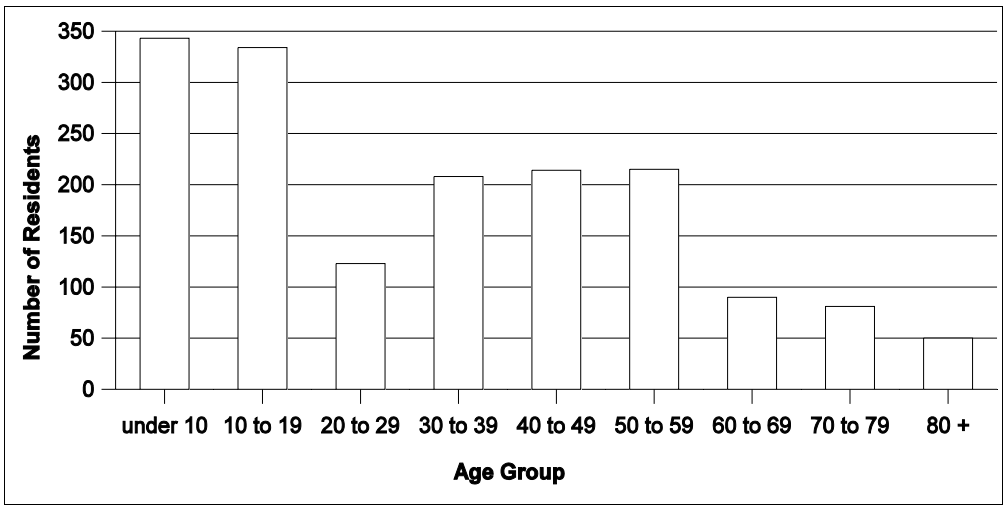


Figure 2.3 Age Distribution

The chart is clearly skewed toward the younger residents. In fact, forty percent of the West End residents are 19 years of age and younger. There are 343 residents under the age of ten and 334 residents that are in the ten to 19 years of age bracket.

There are a fair amount of older residents living in the West End as well. The three highest age brackets show a total of 221 residents that are sixty years of age and older. This number represents 13 percent of the resident population in the study area. The number of residents in the top brackets is expected to increase significantly over the next few decades as people are living longer. The age bracket representing residents 50 to 59 years of age has over 200 people in it. This represents about 12 percent of the study area's population.

It should also be noted that there is a conspicuous drop in the number of residents in the 20 to 29 age group bracket. One reason could be related to the availability of housing that is affordable to newly independent people. The population area the census information is derived from is shown in Figure 2.4.

Sex.

Female to male ratios almost always show more women than men in any given area. This is simply because there are more girls born than there are boys born each day and women, on average, live longer than men. In the United States, the population is 51 percent female and 49 percent male. The West End population is comprised of 56 percent women and 44 percent men. The differences in the percentage of females and males is only slightly higher than the difference in the City which is 45 percent male and

54 percent female. However, the County is closer to the national composition with 52 percent of the population being female and 48 percent being male. There may be a couple of reasons for this gender gap. The first is that there is a higher than average number of older residents living in the West End, most of whom are women. A second possible reason may be attributed to the relationship between areas of household incomes, affordable housing prices in the study area and the gender of the heads of household. There is a large number of single female heads of households in the study area. Of all of the families with children living in the West End, just over half were headed by females without husbands present.

Figure 2.4 Census Area

Income.

According to the 2000 Census sample data, the median household income for each of the two census tracts located in the study area varied. The median household income for those households located in the census tract northwest of Merriman Road (Census Tract 9806) was $26,056 . The median household income for those households located in the census tract southeast of Merriman Road was $40,482 (Census Tract 9807). The City and County each had median household incomes of $29,424 and $37,082 respectively. These numbers are presented only to give an idea of some of the Study Area resident's economic situations, because the two census tracts include areas located outside of the Study Area.

The Census also showed that there were residents living in the study area that had incomes below the poverty level. [Poverty level is considered 50 percent below the median income.] Again, the percentage varied between the two census tracts. About 26 percent of the residents located in the census tract northwest of Merriman Road had incomes below the poverty level and about 14 percent of residents located in the tract southeast of Merriman Road had incomes below the poverty level. These numbers were an improvement from the last Census in 1990, where the percentages of residents were 30 percent in one tract and 15 percent in the other.

III. INFRASTRUCTURE

STREETS

The roads in the West End were laid out in a typical grid pattern. For the most part, roads either run from US 17 and terminate to the northwest at either International Paper or railroad property or the roads run from International Paper at the southeastern section of the study area and terminate at either the railroad tracks on the northeastern edge of the study area or continue through toward Highmarket Street.

Most of the blocks from Congdon Street southeast are square and run about 400 feet. The block lengths vary northwest of Congdon Street. There are also several shorter streets and alleys that span only one or two blocks. The alleys are located in the commercial section of the study area and they provide rear access to some businesses fronting other streets.

The roads that continue through the study area and connect to roads other that Highway 17 include: Front Street, Hazard Street, Congdon Street, Merriman Road and Alex Alford Drive. Because of the connectivity they provide, these streets also have the highest amounts of traffic riding on them. According to South Carolina Department of Transportation, Merriman Road is the busiest street in the study area with 4,500 average daily trips (ADT). Hazard Street has about half that number, with 2,200 ADT and Front Street has 1,350 ADT.

The City has very wide rights-of-way on most of its streets. Front Street, the widest, has a typical right-of-way width of 100 feet (up to 108 feet in some areas and only 50 feet near the western end). Other roads with wide rights-of-way include: Winyah, Emanuel, Gilbert, Butts, Hawkins, most of Bourne, Hazard and Kaminski. The right-of-way for each of these streets is approximately 75 feet wide. All other road rights-of-way are 50 feet or less, including Merriman Road. Located in each right-of-way are roads, sometimes sidewalks, utility poles, street lighting, fire hydrants, water and sewer lines, stormwater drainage and sometimes trees.

The actual roadway widths vary significantly through the project area. Not only do the widths vary from street to street but the widths also vary along different segments of the same roadway. Some segments of the widest roads in the study area, Front Street and Emanuel Street, are greater than 50 wide. Most of the roads are only about 18 to 32 feet wide.

Posted speeds vary from 25 mph to 30 mph in the study area but the traffic appears to to travel faster down the wider roads despite the posted speed limits. There does not seem to be a standard speed for roads with similar characteristics.

There are two areas with blinking yellow lights, one at the intersection of Front St. and Hazard St. and the other at the intersection of Merriman Rd. and Congdon St. These lights do help to remind some drivers to slow down.

The overall condition of the roads in the study area are good. The City has been paving roads never before paved and repaving some other roadway surfaces in the study area. Additional roads are still in need of improvements, however. See Table A-1 in the appendix for individual roadway condition details. While not included in the study area, the roads located between Railroad Street and Highmarket, which include Prince Street., Lee Street, Lafayette Street and Alex Alford Dr. should also be considered for roadway repair.

Patching and Poorly Defined Road Edge

One of the more common roadway surface problems is the eroding of pavement edges. This usually seems to occur most often on curbless streets with drainage problems. The water flows underneath the asphalt, washing the soil out from underneath it and then leaving the edges of asphalt without support, where they eventually crack. This may be exacerbated by heavy trucks parking and turning around on the roadway edges especially in the commercial section of the study area. Other streets in the West End are showing some minor alligator cracking. This type of cracking also allows for future rapid deterioration as water gets under the roadway and further weakens the road, eventually creating pot-holes. There were not that many pot holes as the City is quick to fill them, but this leads to other problems.

There has been a significant amount of repair work consisting of patching cracks and filling potholes in the West End. Many of these repairs have been made over and over again at the same location. In areas where this has occurred, the roads are uneven and provide for a very poor ride. The edges of the roads are also crooked as asphalt has been laid down

without regard of the straightness of the roadway edges. In some cases it is unclear where the road ends and where a sidewalk begins. This inconsistent edge of roadway causes confusion to both drivers as well as to pedestrians. Cars and trucks are often parked at odd angles to the road and to each other along these road segments.

Goal: **Improve Roadway Conditions**

Strategies:

- Continue to repave deteriorating roadways as necessary. Improvements should be made in conjunction with stormwater drainage improvements;
- Reconstruct the roadway subsurfaces as necessary prior to resurfacing;; and
- Add curbs and gutters when possible in conjunction with drainage projects.

Goal: **Improve Driving Safety**

Strategies:

- Post a consistent traffic speed of 25 m.p.h. on all roads in the study area (with the exception of Fraser Street);
- Add landscaped median sections in two areas along Front Street to help slow traffic; and
- Follow sidewalk recommendations.

LIGHTING

The City of Georgetown provides roadway lighting on all streets located in the West End. The illumination of private property is the responsibility of individual property owners. Typical standards for street lighting call for lights to be spaced from 150 feet to 200 feet apart along roadways. While the spacing of the lamps is not even throughout the study area, the spacing between each street light is generally no less than one light every 200 feet. There are roadway segments throughout the study area that have lights spaced much closer than this distance; about one light every 100 feet in some areas. The locations of all existing lights in the study area are shown in Figure 3.1 *.

[*New street lights have been added to the Study Area since this map was produced. An addendum will

include a revised lighting map.]

Lighting is especially important at roadway intersections for pedestrian and vehicular safety. Intersections throughout the study area appear to be well-lighted. Most intersections contained at least one street light and in many cases, two or more lights were located at an intersection. Occasional intersections did not have a street light located directly on the corner but lights were usually located no further than 50 feet away and the lighting appeared to be adequate in most cases.

There are some intersections and road segments that are in need of additional roadside lighting.

- Intersection of Railroad Street and Hazard Street
- Intersection of Front Street and Railroad Avenue
- Front Street, about 100 and 300 feet southwest of B Street
- Intersection of Front Street & Railroad Avenue
- Intersection of Winyah Street and B Street
- Intersection of Winyah Street and Railroad Street
- Intersection of Emanuel Street and Alex Alford Drive
- Emanuel Street, about 200 feet southwest of Alex Alford Drive
- Intersection of Gilbert Street and Kaminski Street
- Butts Street between Kaminiski Street and Hazard Street
- Hazard Street between Butts Street and Gilbert Street
- Alex Alford Drive between Gilbert Street and Butts Street
- Hawkins Street about 200 feet west of Canal Street
- Intersection of Wagstaff Alley and Hawkins Street

One concern voiced by the community regarding street lighting was not necessarily the lack of street lights but rather it was about burnt out (or broken) lights not being replaced in a timely fashion. It was observed during this study that there were a high number of non functioning lights. The City's Electric Operations Department replaces lights but often it is only when residents make the Department aware of a problem. Most of the lights that were not functioning appeared to be in locations away from homes, where residents may be less likely to report an outage.

In locations where there are large street trees, as they are on Kaminski Street and Hazard Street, tree branches obscured much of the street lighting. The lights are located very high on the electric poles within the tree canopy.

Lastly, street lighting in the West End appears to have evolved over time as indicated by the many different lamp styles located throughout the Study Area. The color of the light also varies from white light to a yellow light, according to the lamp style. While this does not affect the quality of road and sidewalk visibility, it does have an effect on the overall appearance of the streetscape.

Goal:	**Improve Roadway Lighting**
Strategies:	■ Develop a regular maintenance schedule for bulb replacement and repair of non-functioning street lights; ■ Additional street lights should be provided at new locations where lighting is currently deficient; ■ Add pedestrian scale lighting where grand street trees obscure light; ■ City employees should be encouraged to report light outages, especially members of the Police Department, as they are patrolling during evening hours when lighting problems are more noticeable; ■ Residents should be encouraged to report lighting problems. A telephone number as well as an annual reminder to residents should be provided with electric bills; and ■ Standardize light fixtures.

SIDEWALKS

Pedestrian travel is a prime mode of movement within the study area. Residents walk for transportation as well as walk for recreation. This method of transportation is not always by choice.

There is no public transportation in Georgetown County and according to the recent Census, there are many residents without access to a vehicle. The percentage of renters without vehicles available was either eleven percent or 34 percent depending on the census tract in the study area. The percentage of households without vehicles was lower in owner occupied households where it was either three percent or eleven percent, again depending upon the census tract.

On busy streets, sidewalks are crucial for a safe pedestrian environment for adults as well as children. Many of the streets located east of Alex Alford Drive have sidewalks located along their sides. The locations of the sidewalks are shown in Figure 3.2.

Most of the sidewalks are either four or five feet wide. Sidewalks, for the most part, are in good condition even though most of them are old and showing some signs of aging. There are small cracks in many of the sidewalks, separation between some of the joints and areas where grass has grown up and over the sidewalks. There are a couple of street segments that looked like there were once sidewalks located along them but the sidewalks had either been dug up or the road had been widened over them. This was the case along parts of Gilbert St. and Butts St.

Only at a very few intersections do the sidewalks provide necessary curb ramps to ensure that people with disabilities can travel through the study area safely or conveniently. Curb ramps provide basic access at intersections and pedestrian crossings.

As a result of the Americans With Disability Act (ADA) , when streets and roads are altered, they must have ramps wherever there are curbs or other barriers to entry from a pedestrian walkway. Likewise, when new sidewalks or walkways are built or altered, they must contain curb ramps or sloped areas wherever they intersect with streets or roads. While resurfacing a street or sidewalk is considered an alteration for these purposes, filling in potholes alone will not trigger the alterations requirements. At existing roads and sidewalks that have not been altered, however, the city may elect to construct curb ramps at every point where a pedestrian walkway intersects a curb, but they are not

necessarily required to do so.

One final issue regarding sidewalks is that there were many automobiles parked over the sidewalks. This would require anyone using them to have to get off the sidewalk and go around the automobiles.

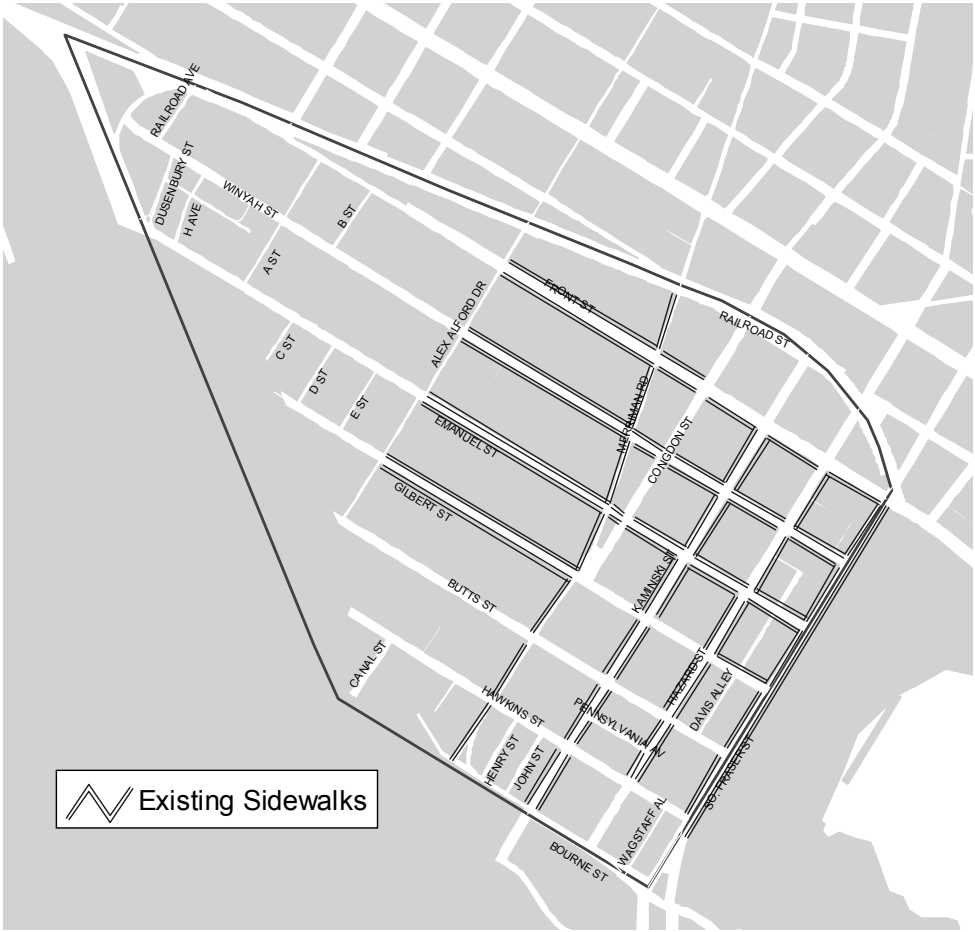


Figure 3.2 Existing Sidewalk Locations

Goal: **Improve the safety for pedestrians and non-motorized modes of transportation throughout the West End**

Strategies:

- Establish a sidewalk improvement program to provide at least one sidewalk on all roadway segments of Winyah St., Emanuel St., Gilbert St., Butts St., Hawkins St., Hazard St., and especially Congdon St. Add a second sidewalk to Front St. (between Fraser St. and Congdon St.) and Merriman Road. Consider providing two sidewalks on Alex Alford Dr. although this may require the City to secure easements from property owners.

- Repair existing sidewalks. Prioritize projects based on the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on each street;.

Goal: **Improve pedestrian and non-motorized modes of transportation throughout the West End**

Strategies:

- Add curb ramps and make sidewalks meet the minimum standards set by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Priority should be made to improve sidewalks first that serve City and County facilities, public places, and commercial areas, followed by walkways serving residential areas.

- Establish an ongoing procedure for installing curb ramps upon request in both residential and nonresidential areas frequented by individuals with disabilities.

- Extend sidewalks to Highmarket Street on Lafayette Street, Alex Alford Drive, Merriman Road, Congdon Street and Hazard Street.

DRAINAGE

Residents of the West End of Georgetown are well aware of the drainage problems in their area. The flooding of West End streets and property has been a problem for many years but with a couple of large storm events during recent years, these problems seemed to have worsened.

The elevation of the land in the West End is fairly low and flat causing natural drainage to flow poorly. Also contributing to the drainage problems is the soil type located throughout the Study Area, called Yemassee. According to the USDA's Soil Conservation Service, Yemassee is considered to be somewhat poorly drained and usually has a water table one to one and a half feet below the surface of the ground during winter and spring.

The West End Study Area is not located within an area the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has identified as land subject to flooding from hurricanes and tropical storms. However, an area prone to flooding is located adjacent to the West End study area.

The City uses a combination of curb and gutter, open ditches or swales and stormwater sewer to help drain the area after a storm event. The roads are crowned to direct water to either side of the roadway as well. This system has limitations, especially when there is a major storm event. Some of the factors associated with these problems are described below.

For the water to drain, it first needs to get into the gutters, ditches and sewer system. Roads with pot holes and other areas that are low on the roadway will trap water and prevent it from getting into the system. Excessive patching will also create dams, preventing water from flowing into the stormwater drainage system.

The components of the drainage system must remain relatively clear of debris for the water to flow properly. This means keeping not only the components clean but also not allowing debris from streets and yards to flow into the system. When it does, the system gets blocked and flooding occurs. There are also some examples of pavement from new driveways and pothole patches, which fill gutters and consequently create a dam in the system.

In some of the grassy area between sidewalks and curbless and gutterless roadways were at one time intended to be used for stormwater runoff and contained a swale. Over time, the swale areas flattened out due to vehicles parking in this area. Drainage in these areas now flows into the street (or sometimes peoples yards) rather than flowing along it.

The drainage problems in the study area are directly related to the very severe drainage problem located just outside the study area. Drainage in the study area is part of two much larger drainage basins. Both of the large drainage basins have major problems. Because the drainage in the Study Area is part of these larger systems, a back up at the outfall causes an entire basin to drain more slowly. This also means that if improvements are made to one drainage basin, areas that flow into the other is will not be affected by improvements.

The areas that are most affected by poor drainage in the study area are: the Hazard and Gilbert Street area, Hawkins Street, Bourne Street, Canal Street and Alex Alford Drive.

The City has two drainage improvement projects underway in the West End. The first drainage project will be making improvements to the area known as the City Hall Drainage Basin. Improvements will include: replacing a culvert beneath the railway with a new 48" pipe, upgrading 2000 ft. of the concrete channel at the Georgetown Steel Mill and lowering two other culverts at road crossings. The second project will be improving the area known as the Hawkins Street Drainage Basin. The preliminary design for the improvements include: replacing pipes that were either poorly designed or undersized and installing a secondary outfall along Hawkins Street, which will discharge into the improved canal. These improvements will move stormwater away from the affected areas at a faster rate and will offer a permanent solution to most drainage problems in the West End.

Goal: **Improve stormwater drainage**

Strategies:

- Continue to expedite drainage improvements and continue to provide maintenance to ditches and storm drains.
- Educate the community that they must take measures to promote a clear stormwater drainage system by removing yard clippings and other debris where it could possibly flow into the drainage system.

WATER AND SEWER

Water.

The City of Georgetown has made efforts to upgrade many of the undersized water lines once located throughout the West End Study Area. Original water lines, some installed as early as 1900, were extended out sporadically to accommodate new development. At that time, it was common practice to install small water mains of 2 inches or less to provide service for a few homes or businesses with each extension. At the time the lines were installed, they were large enough to provide service for a few customers. As the area grew, the small service lines were extended to accommodate additional growth on the perimeters of the West End.

The City upgraded many of the undersized lines running east to west. However, the cost to replace the remaining lines was expected to exceed a million dollars. The City decided to complete the remaining improvement two phases. Under Phase One, which has now been completed, the smallest of the lines (two inches in diameter or less) and the lines that were deemed in the most critical shape were upgraded to six inch mains. The water quality, quantity and pressure have all been improved in most of the West End.

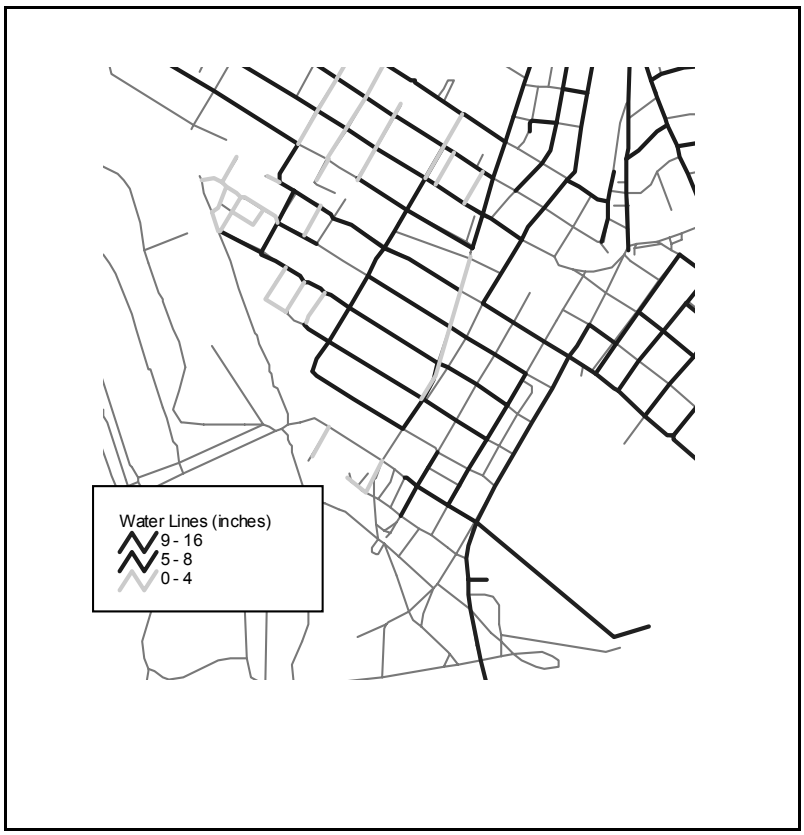


Figure 3.3 Existing Water Lines

Under Phase Two, the remaining lines which are four inches, will be replaced with lines that are at least eight inches in diameter. Figure 3.3 shows the locations of

the existing water lines.

The City recently upgraded their water treatment plant with over $4 million in improvements to provide which will provide safe drinking water to City residence. Additionally, the City has provided fire hydrants in new locations as part of their water system upgrade.

Sewer.

The sewer or wastewater system in the West End is a gravity feed meaning there are no pump stations required to help move the flow of sewage. Most of the wastewater lines are a diameter of eight inches in the West End, although there are a few smaller lines that are located on some of the shorter streets in the Study Area. Figure 3.4 shows the locations of the wastewater lines six inches or greater that are part of the West End Wastewater System.

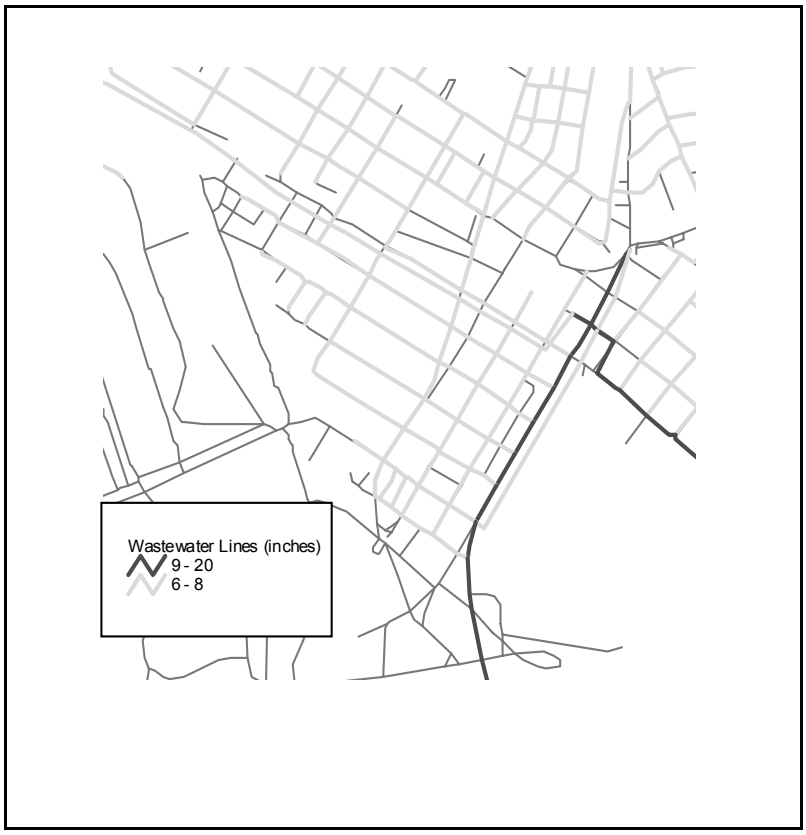


Figure 3.4 Existing Wastewater Lines

Goal: **Improve the Water Distribution System**

Strategies:

- Continue to expedite Phase II improvements to the water distribution system;

Goal: **Improve the Wastewater System**

Strategies:

- Continue to maintain the existing wastewater lines and replace them as necessary;
- Educate the community to deter illegal taps into wastewater lines; and
- Educated the community to deter the dumping of improper (often hazardous) materials into the wastewater collection system.

IV. ZONING

EXISTING REGULATIONS

The City has had zoning regulations in place since the late 1960's. This method of land use planning covers all aspects of siting, sizing and impact of any type of land use. Zoning helps ensure that future development fits in with existing and future needs of the community by promoting the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity and general welfare of a community.

The zoning ordinance is divided into both text and a map. The text lists the provisions for each of the districts and it includes, but is not limited to: the intent of each district, the uses that are permitted in each of the districts as well as the uses allowed providing certain conditions are met. Minimum requirements for parcel area and yards, and maximum height requirements are specified. Exceptions and modifications that may be allowed within the zoning districts is also included. The Zoning District map graphically divides the land into zoning districts.

The City's Zoning Ordinance establishes and divides the City of Georgetown into 15 different zoning districts, six of which can be found in the West End Study Area. The boundaries of the districts within the Study Area can be seen in Figure 4.1- Existing Zoning.

There are two residential districts located within the West End study area, three commercial districts and one industrial district. Most of the West End Study Area is located within one of the two residential zones and a little over ten percent of the study area is located in one of the three commercial districts. The area zoned heavy industrial is a portion of International Paper's (IP) and the railroad's property. Only a small fraction of land zoned industrial falls within the limits of the study area and this review will not go into detail regarding the district as the areas are likely to remain as they are today.

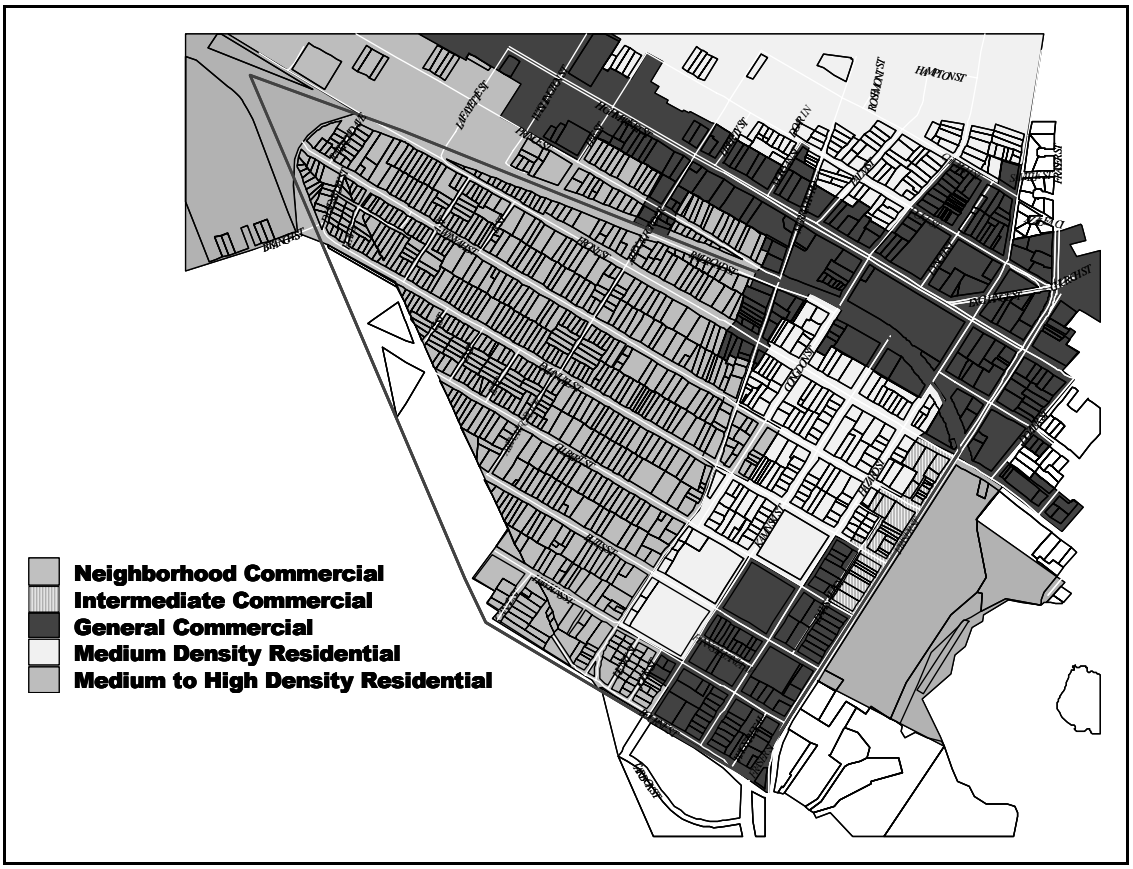


Figure 4.1 Existing Zoning

Residential Districts.

Residential Districts R-2 (medium density) and R-3 (medium to high density) are the two residential districts that are located within the Study Area. The intent of the R-2 district is to establish medium density residential areas which will provide for single family and two family (duplex units) and maintain open space. The permitted uses in the R-2 District are:

- single-family dwellings (other than mobile homes);
- two-family dwellings; and
- garage apartments accommodating no more than two families per lot.

The intent of the R-3 District is to establish medium to high density residential areas. The R-3 District permits the same uses as R-2 but also allows for:

- multi-family dwellings;
- group dwellings; and
- mobile homes (as a conditional use).

Conditional uses are also allowed in both of these districts and include churches, water towers, substations, nursing homes, mini daycare (children and adult), fraternal organizations, and courthouses. Further conditional uses allowed only in R-3 are schools, government offices, and taxi stands.

Lot requirements for each of the residential districts include the minimum lot area required, the minimum front, side and rear yards required as well as the maximum allowable height. The minimum lot requirements for Residential Districts R-2 and R-3 are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 R-2 and R-3 Lot Requirements

District	Minimum Lot Size		Minimum Yard Requirements From Property Line		
	Area in Square Ft.	Lot Width at Building Line	Front	Side	Rear
R-2	8,000[2]	60[3]	30	10	20
R-3	8,000[4]	60[5]	30	8	10

There is an important exception to the minimum lot and yard requirements. When an owner of an existing lot does not own enough land to meet the minimum lot area, yards requirements and/or frontage requirements, the ordinance allows a thirty percent dimensional and frontage waiver. When this exception is still not enough for a lot to be

[2]Additional dwelling units require 4,000 sq. ft. of lot area per unit.

[3] Minimum lot width for a duplex is 70 feet.

[4]Additional dwelling units require 3,400 sq. ft. of lot area per unit.
Buildings shall not cover more than 35 percent of the lot area (including overhangs).

[5]Minimum lot width for a duplex and multi-family unit is 75 feet.

developed, the owner can ask the Board of Zoning appeals for a variance.

Commercial Districts.

The three commercial districts located in the West End study area include: Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Intermediate Commercial (IC), and General Commercial (GC).

The intent of the Neighborhood Commercial District is to establish and reserve appropriate land for local or neighborhood-oriented businesses. The regulations are designed to encourage an environment for neighborhood shopping and services that are conveniently located, reduce traffic congestion and avoid the development of strip business districts. They are also established to discourage industrial and other development that can have a negatively affect commercial character. Uses that are permitted in this area include: single family homes, barber and beauty shops, automatic bank teller machines (ATMs), churches, laundromats, funeral homes, professional offices, day care centers, news and taxi stands, lodges or union halls.

The intent of the Intermediate Commercial District is to establish an area for limited business development which does not create excessive demands for vehicular parking. This district is designed to promote business development and to minimize adverse effects to adjoining properties. Uses included in this area are public uses like armories, courthouses, jails, libraries, museums, police and fire stations and smaller shops like barber and beauty shops, printing shops, repair shops (excluding automotive) and small retail stores. Also permitted are professional offices, parking lots and warehouses.

The intent of the General Commercial District is to establish business areas that encourage the grouping of compatible business activities in which parking and traffic congestion can be reduced to a minimum. There are many permitted uses in this district. Listed are only a small number of uses to provide an idea of the types of uses allowed: Animal hospitals, bowling alleys, bus stations, churches, restaurants, trucking terminals and warehouses. The General Commercial District also allows all uses that are permitted in the Core Commercial District. Core Commercial is a district which promotes business and public uses for the general public and discourages industrial and wholesale developments that do not lend themselves to pedestrian traffic.

Lot requirements for each of the commercial districts include the minimum lot size required, minimum lot width and front, side and rear yards setbacks. These minimum lot requirements are presented in displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Commercial Lot Requirements

District	Minimum Lot Size (Square Feet)	Minimum Lot Width	Minimum Yard Requirements From Property Line		
			Front	Side	Rear
NC - Neighborhood Commercial	6,000	60	25	8	10
IC - Intermediate Commercial	2,500	25	0	0/25	25
GC - General Commercial	10,000	60	25	8	10

Land Uses and Nonconforming Lots.

There are assorted land uses located in the study area. The varied uses in the West End each fall into one of nine different land use categories. As is shown in the Land Use Figure 4.2, the categories include three residential groups (low, medium or high density), commercial, industrial, public/semi-public, recreational, utilities or vacant.

It is important to note that because much of the West End development was long in place prior to zoning. As such, it is inevitable that there would be existing uses that would no longer be allowed. Additionally, many of the lots are considered nonconforming lots as they do not meet current zoning standards for the district in which they are located. If an owner wanted to develop or redevelop a nonconforming lot, their only recourse would be to request a variance by applying to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Zoning Districts could and should not have been written to accommodate every existing use and lot size in an area. To do so would defeat the purpose of zoning.

Lot Characteristics and Limitations of Current Zoning.

There are lots of all shapes and sizes throughout the West End but there are many that would be considered typical as well. Typical lots have frontages such as 40' to 90" wide and are usually around 90' or 100' up to 250‘ deep.

Figure 4.2 Land Use

Many of these lots are not conforming; in fact, *none* of the typical lots shown in Figure 4.3 conform to the R2 or R3 Districts lot and yard requirements and only two (the first and last) meet the requirements when the 30% rule previously mentioned is used. Many of the lots that are non-conforming in the West End are so because they do not meet the minimum lot size (see examples in the Appendix). Even if minimum lot sizes were met, yard requirements would severely restrict the width of a house if one were to be constructed. Many property owners are forced to go before the Board of Appeals if their lot is nonconforming and they still wish to construct a house on the lot.

By law, the Board of Zoning Appeals is only allowed to grant a variance if <u>all</u> of the following conditions apply:

- There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular

piece of property. Extraordinary conditions could exist due to topography, street widening or other conditions which make it difficult or impossible to make an economically feasible use of the property;

- These conditions do not generally apply to other property in the vicinity;

- Because of these conditions, the application of the ordinance to a particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property; and

- The authorization of a variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or the public good, and the character of the district will not be harmed by granting of the variance.

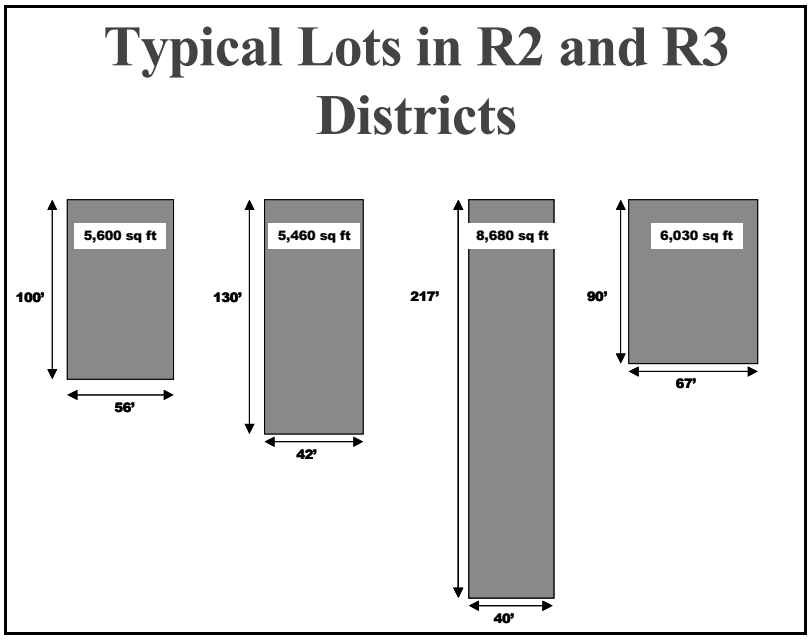


Figure 4.3 Typical West End Lot Sizes

The Board of Zoning Appeals is hearing many requests for variances due to small lot sizes. Because small lot size is a condition that often does apply to other properties in the vicinity, this one condition should prevent the Board of Zoning Appeals from granting variances in these situations.

One other issue related to the narrow lot configuration is that mobile or manufactured homes are the style of housing that is being located on the narrow lots because of a perceived notion that other housing styles would be too wide for the narrow lots. This issue will be discussed in detail in the housing section.

There are additional conditions in the R-2 and R-3 zones that address minimum lot widths at the building line as well as additional yard area requirements. In R-2 the minimum lot width for a duplex is 70 feet and in R-3 the minimum lot width for a duplex as well as for multifamily units 75 feet. Lots in the West End are narrow but many are long. With the required minimum yard area requirement being met, the minimum lot width may be overly restrictive.

There are only a couple of issues regarding the land use of the commercial areas in the West End. First, the intent of the Neighborhood Commercial district is for neighborhood-oriented businesses and the district should encourage an environment for neighborhood *shopping and services* that are conveniently located, reduce traffic congestion and avoid the development of strip business districts. Neighborhood business such as small markets and sandwich shops were once located throughout the West End, especially the area currently zoned as neighborhood commercial. While it is believed that the district is located in a beneficially central and accessible location, the allowed uses in the district appear to be somewhat limited.

A second issue, relating as much to streetscape as it does to zoning, is the fact that many of the land uses in the General Commercial District appear to be warehouse or light industrial uses. Semi-trailers and sometimes only the shipping containers are stored in the district. Many of the buildings in the district are large and the yards often store heavy equipment. Because of the type of industry in the surrounding area, it is understandable that these uses are allowed in this location. However, it would be best if some of these uses were better screened from view.

Goal: **Provide for the development of small lots in the West End.**

Strategies:

- Revise the current R2 and R3 requirements to allow for residential development on additional lots in the district by relaxing setbacks and minimum lot sizes; or
- Consider an alternative West End overlay zone that would allow for building on small and narrow lots in the West End but would prevent changes in R-2 and R-3 zones elsewhere in the City; or
- Create a new district altogether that meets the needs of the West End.

Goal: **Encourage the development of a mix of housing costs and types on narrow lots**

Strategies:

- Offer incentives to profit and non-profit developers to construct new housing that meet the needs of all future residents;
- Offer incentives to develop innovative low cost and low maintenance homes that preserve the character of the West End community; and
- Revise the zoning district requirements to meet the needs of the West End by allowing duplex and multi-family units with narrower lot widths at the building line (but still requiring existing lot area requirements).

Goal: **Encourage the development of the West End Neighborhood Commercial District.**

Strategies:

- Increase the variety of uses allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial District.

Goal: Provide for a neater appearance in the General Commercial Zone.

Strategics:

- Strengthen the screening requirement in the General

V. HOUSING

Housing Growth.

According to the 2000 Census, there were 706 residential units located in West End Study Area. This number is slightly higher than the previous ten years, when the Census showed there were 698 residential units in the area. This change represents a one (1) percent increase in West End housing stock over the ten year period, when the City sustained a small loss in the number of housing units.

The housing growth trend was very different in all of Georgetown County when, during the same time frame, the number of housing units grew by about 34 percent. These numbers correlate with the population changes as well.

Few additional dwelling units are being added to the housing stock in the West End and some of the reasons for this are listed below:

- As previously discussed, many of the vacant lots do not meet the area and yard requirements of the R-2 and R-3 zoning districts . In some cases, lots are inaccurately perceived to be substandard and unbuildable.

- There are not many vacant lots in the study area available for infill housing. While some lots appear vacant because houses are not located on them, some are actually owned by an abutter and treated as though the lot were a side yard.

- Land owners are not selling their land, either because they choose not to, or because they believe it is too difficult to sell. To gain a clear title to heir's property, that is, land which has been passed down from generation to generation, is perceived to be a very difficult and expensive proposition.

Occupancy, Tenure and Value.

Almost ninety percent of the residential units in the study area were occupied during the 2000 Census. Of those occupied, about 69 percent were owner-occupied and the remaining 31 percent were occupied by renters. The median value for owner-occupied units was $57,000 for the Census Tract west of Merriman Road and $85,300 east of Merriman Road compared with the City of Georgetown median value of $78,600. For rental units, the median gross rent was an average of about $422 per month in the study area, compared to the City average of $446 per month.

Affordable Housing.

When discussing affordable housing, a clear definition of the population using this type of housing is necessary. Federal income guidelines are as follows:

Very low income	Up to 50 percent of the area median income
Low income	51 percent to 80- percent of the area median income
Moderate income	81 percent to 120 percent of the area median income

Housing costs (rent or mortgage payments, utilities and other related housing expenditures) are typically calculated at no more than 30 percent of gross monthly income. The 1999 median household income in the City of Georgetown was $29,424, which translates into the following affordable housing thresholds:

Very low income	Up to $ 14,712
Low income	Up to $ 23,539
Moderate income	Up to $ 35,309

These income levels further translate into these affordable housing costs:

Very low income	Up to $ 368/month, or $ 44,140 sales price
Low income	Up to $ 589/month, or $ 70,620 sales price
Moderate income	Up to $ 883/month, or $ 105,930 sales price

The 2000 Census showed that the median housing value for the City of Georgetown was $78,600, which is affordable only to moderate income residents. A new, site-built residential unit consisting of 1,300 square feet with an assumed $5,000 land cost would sell for about $90,000. This figure is affordable to moderate income residents but it exceeds the upper limit of affordability for very low and moderately low income residents.

Heirs property.

There are two situations regarding heirs property. The first is when property has been passed down to one or more family members after someone dies but the property title has yet to be legally retitled in the heirs' names. The property can be legally retitled in the heirs' names by a court order through a probate court. The second situation occurs when the property has been passed down to many family members. Because there are multiple names on the title, it can become difficult to sell the property or even simply getting a home equity loan. The banks may not want to approve a loan when many people are listed as the owner. Also problems arise when one or more of the owners live outside the area and have no interest in the property.

Age.

The age of the housing stock varies. Half of the homes were built before 1970 and about 14 percentage were built before 1950. Many of the oldest homes are located on or east of Merriman Road. Many of these homes were those built as housing for laborers and executives by the Atlantic Coast Lumber Company and later by local developers for workers at the Southern Kraft plant (a division of International Paper) during early part of the last century. The median age of the housing in the study area is 28 years. Many of the older homes have been and are continuing to be replaced by new homes, many of which are older models of mobile homes.

An Historic Resources Survey was presented to the City in May of this year by Circa, Inc. Circa's study provided a reconnaissance level survey of all of the older structures located in the West End. They also completed a more detailed analysis of several selected structures. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) of the S.C. Department of Archives and History reviewed the information and recommended that the concentration

of housing associated with the Atlantic Coast Lumber Company on Winyah, Hazard, and Emanuel Streets as well as Davis Alley should be considered for local historic designation by the City of Georgetown. Based on their evaluation, SHPO believed that none of the structures appear to *currently* meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places due to architectural integrity and the available historical information. However, they pointed out that if changes were made to enhance the property's physical integrity or if historical information was brought to the attention of the National Register Coordinator that confirms a property's historic significance, properties may be determined eligible.

Housing Conditions.

Housing is considered to be substandard when the conditions of a dwelling unit present threats to safety, health or comfort. The categories that are used to evaluate housing usually include: a determination of structural integrity, electrical conditions, asbestos or lead paint assessment, thermal and moisture protection, rodent or insect inspection, and plumbing facility conditions. While a detailed housing analysis was not completed, a "windshield" survey and a review of census records was performed. Overall, the West End faired very well. Most of the occupied homes in the West End appeared to meet the basic needs of residents.

Other than a few homes that have had major damage due to fire , severe neglect or very slow renovation projects, the condition of the homes in need of major repair would not be considered significant. The City has been successful in their efforts to clean up many of the substandard structures but it is a continuous process. The City will need to continue to persuade owners either to remove or repair their structures when they are deemed a hazard.

Many of the homes in the area are likely to contain lead paint and this is something residents should be reminded of from time to time, especially as residents become older. For example, visiting grandchildren may be at risk to ingest dust or paint chips containing lead paint.

There are a number of homes that appear to have suffered poor quality repairs and other

homes where renovations and additions were of substandard construction. Many times, the substandard repairs have been made by the unskilled homeowners themselves or work was performed by unqualified carpenters. Apparently, this was a common problem immediately after the destruction caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

The most typical problems with West End houses are those that are related to normal repair and maintenance, especially since many of the homes built in the 1970's have not had major maintenance work completed on them.

Some of the more common maintenance and repairs needed include:

- repair or replacement of deteriorating wood due to rot and termite damage
- removal and replacement of weathered shutters, storm doors and awnings that are no longer attractive
- roof replacement
- exterior painting (including prep work such as scraping and trim replacement)
- masonry repointing
- window and screen repair or replacement

Other problems were strictly cosmetic; for example: yards that need better maintenance and crooked roof antennas that need to be straightened.

A cursory review of the existing home conditions show that less than 10 percent of the houses in the study area appear to have structural defects, and less than 20 percent appear to have major maintenance issues. Based on these statements, the housing conditions of the area do not seem to indicate a significant problem with substandard housing.

There does seem to be more of a problem with the *appearance* of some of the housing units (and yards) in the West End. Owners of units in need of cosmetic maintenance either may not be able to improve the appearance due to physical limitations, cost limitations or they may not be interested in maintaining the appearance of the dwelling

units as is sometimes the case for rental housing owned by landlords living outside of the area.

Housing Types and Styles.

Most of the housing in the West End study area are single family residential units. There is one large apartment complex, Bethel Apartments on Gilbert Street, that contains 24 units. In addition, there are 28 two-family units and 3 buildings that include four dwelling units each. These smaller multi-family units are all older buildings, most believed to be originally constructed by the Atlantic Coast Lumber Co. in the early part of the last century.

Typical Older Stick-Built Construction

Most of the housing in the West End is "stick-built", i.e. of conventional wood frame construction. East of Merriman Road, the area where the oldest homes are located, are likewise constructed almost exclusively with wood.

Deep Overhangs

Many of the homes have a vernacular style consistent with so many older low country homes. The vernacular features add to the character of the West End neighborhood. Common elements include: single story buildings, deep overhangs often with exposed rafter tails, front porches that are often screened, several feet of crawl space beneath the structures, wood clad siding, gable ends facing the street, decorative vent details and masonry chimneys.

Newer structures located throughout the Study Area are primarily stick built but they are sometimes clad with brick or vinyl siding. Additionally, there are nearly 150 mobile homes located through the West End. The locations of which are shown on a map found in the Appendix.

Many of the mobile homes in the Study Area are also a "manufactured home" or "HUD home". Manufactured homes are a housing type that, since 1976 has been regulated by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards. These standards helped improve the durability and safety of mobile homes and newer mobile homes meeting the standards are called

Manufactured Housing

manufactured housing. While these homes cost less than stick built homes to construct, unfortunately they are not built to the same standards as stick built homes and they usually depreciate in value over time.

Modular Construction

Another type of factory-constructed home is a modular home. This housing can be built with one or more three-dimensional components built at a factory and finished on site. The example shown above includes two covered porches that have been added on site. This type of housing has gained in popularity and is now being used in the West End. Panelized homes are a type of housing that consist of factory made panels that are put together (sometimes "snapped" together) on site. Each panel is made with plywood, insulation and an interior finish. It is not obvious if this type of construction has been used in the West End at this time.

The types of factory-constructed homes mentioned here are sometimes more accepted than manufactured housing because they are constructed according to the same local building code that are required for on-site, stick built homes, rather than national codes that manufactured homes are required to meet. These alternative factory-constructed homes also retain and usually increase in value unlike the manufactured HUD homes.

Goal: **Provide for a variety of housing types to meet the needs of a variety of family needs.**

Strategies:

- Encourage the development of housing that will accommodate single residents as well as larger and sometimes extended families.
- Offer incentives for the construction of housing developed especially to meet the needs of the growing elderly population.
- Provide for rental housing as well as housing for home ownership.

Goal: **Encourage the development of new or renovated housing at a mixed costs to promote a community with mixed incomes.**

Strategies:

- Offer incentives to profit and non-profit developers to construct new housing that meets the needs of all future residents.
- Offer incentives to develop quality affordable and low maintenance homes.

Goal: **Promote the construction of high quality infill housing that will continue to increase in value over time.**

Strategies:

- Offer incentives to profit and non-profit developers to construct new housing that preserves the character of the West End community.
- Offer incentives to landlords to construct stick built houses over manufactured housing

Goal: **Upgrade the under maintained housing to make it more livable**

Strategies:

- Partner with Clemson Extension to provide property maintenance education programs; and
- Work with high schools and local job training programs to train carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other construction trades.

VI. STREETSCAPE

The physical and organizational characteristics of the West End are elements that make the West End so alluring and give the neighborhood a sense of place.

Most block lengths, street widths and lots sizes are "human-scaled"; that is to say that people feel comfortable walking in and around surroundings such as the West End. Pedestrians certainly would get an exactly opposite feeling walking around the industrial areas adjacent to the West End. Likewise, large lot neighborhoods, with irregular street patterns and cul-du-sacs, do not offer the same comfortable human-scale.

A popular trend with new development is a "style" known by several names: New Urbanism, Neo Traditional or Transit-Oriented Development. The reason this is mentioned here is because the West End offers many of the components these new "human-scaled" developments strive to incorporate.

Street Pattern and Scale.

The West End was developed in a traditional grid street pattern where most roads are interconnected, forming distinct blocks.

A general rule for a comfortable or "walkable" block length is 400 feet, which is the length of many of the blocks in the Study Area. Several blocks west of Merriman Road are about three times this length. The shorter blocks allow pedestrians the convenience of a short walk when getting to another residence or business located on a parallel street. A short block length also allows people a greater ability to vary the length of a

recreational stroll. The development pattern of the West End meets an important rule in tying streets together. However, it fails to connect the streets with sidewalks and interconnect open spaces.

Street Trees.

The most significant (and beautiful) element of the West End streetscape is the presence of mature shade trees. The West End benefits from the foresight of previous citizens who cared enough to plant the first live oaks. Continuous rows of shade trees that line both sides of the street, tie the street together visually.

The oldest and largest oak trees line Hazard St., Kaminski St. and sections of Front St., and Winyah St. In addition, segments of Gilbert St., Emanuel St. and Bourne St. also benefit from large street trees.

A mixed variety of trees and large shrubs are located along sections of some of the remaining streets in the West End. Some of the younger trees were provided by the City with the assistance from a S.C. Urban Forestry Grant. These trees were planted in a pattern, but due to a lack of water, some trees did not survive nor were they replaced. Many of the trees are also small and it will be some a number of years before they grown to maturity.

Protected Historic Trees

The majority of the street trees growing in the study area are live oaks. Most of them are significant and even historic according to the City's Zoning Ordinance. A significant live oak is one that is eight inches diameter at breast height (DBH) and a historic live oak tree is 32 inches DBH. Fortunately, all significant trees located in the West End are protected from damage or removal by the City's Tree Protection Regulations. Other types of street trees that have been planted include: Palmetto, London Plane and Red Maple.

Street trees are an important feature to any community, not only for their beauty, but also because their canopy provide much needed shade. The shade provides comfort to

pedestrians and keeps stormwater runoff cooler (high water temperatures in runoff can adversely affect habitats). Tree lined streets also help slow down traffic, act as a perceived barrier between pedestrians and automobiles and screen visually unappealing electric utility poles

Open Space.

Open space adds to the quality of life in a community. It can also help to increase property values if the open space is nicely designed and properly maintained. That being said, the space does not necessarily need to be elaborate, in fact the landscape design can be very simple and easily maintained. Unfortunately, there are no green spaces located in the West End Study Area, except for one small landscaped island located on Fraser Street.

In neighborhoods where there is little land available for a large park or natural area to be set aside for open space, a few small green areas also known as "greens or squares" can provide an illusion of a larger amount of open space. Greens are usually strategically located where they can be seen from a distance and where they can provide a terminal view. These areas can include a small island or median landscaping project or can include a small passive park of about 5,000 sq. ft. It is a common practice to link the green areas together with tree-lined streets or paths. One of the keys to the success of a new green is, if at all possible, place it in an area with mature vegetation.

Housing.

The topic of housing has been discussed previously in the housing section, but it bears repeating. The mix of housing types, the architectural detailing of so many of the homes and the manner the homes address the street most definitely contribute to the quality of the West End streetscape.

Front Porches

The homes enhance the charm of the West End by the high level of visual interest they provide. Most of the homes in the study area are one-story single-family units, especially west of

Decorative Vents

Merriman Road. To the east, there are also one-story homes but more of the homes are two story dwellings. For the most part, homes are stick built. Some have vinyl siding but most are clad with wood. There are also brick houses and mobile homes scattered throughout the area.

Not only do the older homes add to the character but also do many of the newer homes that have been constructed with the same design elements that were used long ago. The houses are varied but by incorporating vernacular features, the new homes can contribute to the appeal of the neighborhood just as much as the older homes.

New Home with Deep Overhangs

There were a number of front and side yards that contained what many would consider trash. However, because of the small and narrow parcels and the lack of garages, ordinary stuff other people have neatly hidden away in garages is sometimes visible from the street. Despite this, most yards in the West End are quite neat.

Businesses.

Most of the commercial establishments that provide service to residents and employees in the West End are centrally located on or near Merriman Road. There are additional neighborhood business scattered throughout the West End. These establishments are not necessarily relying on drive-by business and large signs are not necessary. Most of the commercial buildings and signage is of appropriate design and scale for this residential area. Overall, the appearance of neighborhood commercial businesses is neat and it complements the West End neighborhood.

Additional commercial establishments are located between Hazard Street and Fraser Street. These businesses provide a range of services that support the mills, employees of the mills and the general population in and around the City. Some of the business located in this commercial area are neat in appearance and contribute visually to the area. Many

of the buildings located along Fraser Street are older masonry structures that date back to around 1930. Unfortunately, the majority of the buildings in these commercial area detract from not only the appearance of the West End but the appearance of the City overall. Some of the problems related to their appearance include:

- Lack of landscaping (in areas where landscaping could be provided);
- Weeds growing out of every crack they can find;
- Excessively wide curb cuts;
- Unscreened storage of heavy equipment, materials and shipping containers;
- Lack of proper facade and signage maintenance;
- Boarded up windows;
- Aesthetically unappealing building design treatments;
- Old and unattractive awnings in need of removal;
- Large antennas, towers and satellite dishes are unscreened;
- Chain-link fences unscreened; and
- Historic nature of some buildings ignored by previous renovations.

Goal:	**Provide for the visual enjoyment of the West End through a connected network of green space;**
Strategies:	■ Develop "greens or squares" and one or more small passive parks;
	■ Establish a street tree planting program;
	■ Provide appealing views at the end of a natural focus areas;
	■ Provide safe and accessible access to these areas; and
	■ Replace lighting in the area the historic section of the West End with period lighting and reuse the newer street lights to replace older lights in all other areas of the West End Study area.
Goal:	**Encourage civic and religious buildings to act as visual landmarks**
Strategies:	■ Encourage exterior maintenance and future renovations to be sensitive to the potential historic nature of buildings; and
	■ Remove real and perceived barriers to public access.
Goal:	**Help maintain a strong sense of community identity in the West End**
Strategies:	■ Foster the development of strong West End Residential and Commercial Associations and encourage the two groups to meet regularly;
	■ Promote the historic nature of the West End;
	■ Strongly encourage the use of a residential design guide to help ensure that new residential construction blends into the original streetscape;
	■ Offer incentives to encourage the use of the residential design guide when renovating existing structures;
	■ With the advice of the City's architectural review board and the local historic society, develop a design guide for commercial construction along Fraser Street; and
	■ Strengthen screening requirements in all commercial zoning districts.
Goal:	**Improve the appearance of roadway edges**
Strategies:	■ Install curbs in conjunction with drainage improvement projects;
	■ Remove weeds from cracks in streets and sidewalks;
	■ Repair or replace areas where asphalt appears patchy or is in disrepair;

VII. RECREATION

EXISTING PUBLIC FACILITIES

There are four public recreational areas located in or adjacent to the study area. Unlike a neighborhood or community park, all but one of these areas are considered regional special purpose facilities.

Recreation Area	Facilities
Front Street Tennis Courts	3 tennis courts
Mike Johnson Stadium	1 baseball field (not open to the general public)
Howard Center for Arts and Recreation	two basketball courts one piece of play equipment community center
Prince Street Playground	playground covered tables

Front Street Tennis Courts.

This three-acre County facility is located at the intersection of Front Street and Kaminski Street. It includes three fenced and lighted tennis courts. The courts are in disrepair and they do not appear to be used very often. A large tree is located on this site, under which is a meeting place for formal, as well as, informal gatherings. A "port-a-john" is available on-site. Although originally considered a neighborhood park by the

Front Street Tennis Courts

County, it is now classified as a regional use facility for residents throughout Georgetown County.

Mike Johnson Stadium.

This two acre baseball facility is located on the block between Kaminski Street , Hazard Street, Emanuel Street and Gilbert Street. Owned by the City and leased to the Georgetown County School District, this field is used primarily by the Georgetown High School Baseball Team for their home baseball games. The County Recreation Department will occasionally sponsor special events at this facility. It is of note that this site has had a baseball field located on it prior to 1908, when a baseball field first appeared on maps of the Georgetown area. A tall masonry wall surrounds this facility.

Mike Johnson Stadium

Howard Center for Arts and Recreation.

This facility is located on the block between Merriman Road, Kaminski Street, Hawkins Street and Butts Street. The center has a gymnasium as well as a community center that the County has recently repaired . There are two indoor basketball courts and a small outdoor play area that includes a piece of play equipment. Special classes are also offered at this facility like tae-kwon-do. The County Recreation Department must have staff present at all times for this facility to remain open to the public. Because of staffing constraints, the hours that the Center it is open varies. Basketball courts are usually available in the afternoons and evenings for "free play". These indoor courts are used by West End residents as well residents throughout the county as are Recreation Department's two other basketball facilities that are also located within the City of Georgetown. Unfortunately, the Howard Center is surrounded by a chain-link fence, a portion of which, it topped with razor wire. This is not a very welcoming characteristic for a recreation facility.

Prince Street Playground

Prince Street Playground.

This City facility is located just outside of the study area on the corner of Prince Street and Lafayette Street. This facility has several pieces of playground equipment for children as well as a bench and a covered table area. This facility is nicely landscaped but could use a little more maintenance.

Other Recreation Resources.

Streets and sidewalks - West End residents are walkers. Residents walk for transportation but more often walking is for leisure and exercise. As previously discussed, there are sidewalks located along some road sections in the Study Area. Most of the sidewalks are not barrier free and they do not provide access many of the other recreation resources in the study area.

East Coast Greenway (ECG) - This multi-use trail is being established along the east coast from Maine to Florida. While not yet an existing facility in the City of Georgetown, this linear park has been designated by state and local planners to pass through the City of Georgetown. Some of the goals of the ECG is that it connects communities, allows people to explore the heritage of the historic coastal region and it enhances opportunities for recreation, transportation and exercise. The current master plan shows the route in the West End on Fraser Street.

Other Public and Private Facilities - Several churches and other non profit organizations have playground equipment located on site. These facilities are used by residents but they were not designed or intended to be used by the general public and finally, many residents use portable nets for basketball. These nets are usually moved into streets (sometimes for days) and on vacant lots for use.

Recreation Issues.

A high percentage of children live in the West End. The small and narrow residential lots that are so typical to the West End limit the amount of safe play area available for children. If the West End was developed today, current land development standards would require a developer to provide additional open space for residents. There is really only one small community park that serves West End residents and the facilities are limited. The need for additional park and community facilities for the West End was identified as long ago as 1966 and at that time, there were actually more facilities available to West End residents. The County's special purpose facilities can not be used in place of mini or neighborhood parks.

Children Playing Basketball in the Street

Residents are affected by impacts due to these regional use facilities including noise and traffic, as is the case when the baseball field is in use and residents actually receive little benefit from the City owned park. While the ballpark is very nice inside, West End residents view only a concrete wall surrounding a four acre block.

The County runs recreation programs but most programs are provided with a countywide focus. County staff is limited and so are the opportunities for West End residents. Generally, cities provide recreation facilities and programs in addition to county programs.

Recreation programs and facilities must meet the need for residents of all ages and abilities. Along with active recreation, passive parks are equally important to residents. Sidewalks are located along some streets in the West End, but they are not located where they would provide safe access to the two recreation areas the facilities for small children.

There is no community center nor is there a senior center dedicated to the West End. At one time, a senior center operated out of Saint Cyprian's Church but it was moved to Lincoln Street. Transportation to the Lincoln Street Senior Center is available to West End seniors.

Goal: **Provide for the diverse recreation needs of West End residents.**

Strategies:

- Provide facilities that are suitable for all age groups and abilities;
- Provide new recreation opportunities in the West End; and
- Provide passive as well as active recreation opportunities.

Goal: **Provide a safe and barrier free route to the recreation resources**

Strategies:

- Construct new sidewalks and improve existing sidewalks.
- Add curb ramps to existing sidewalks to meet the minimum standards set by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

Goal: **Provide residents with the best park and recreation facilities possible**

Strategies:

- Develop stronger partnerships with the Georgetown County Recreation Department and the Georgetown County School District; and
- Minimize potential conflicts between recreational uses and surrounding residents.

VIII. CRIME AND SAFETY

The residents of the West End have voiced concerns regarding the issues of crime and their need for a safe neighborhood. The City Police Department does not keep incident records based on neighborhood location but there have been problems reportedly with drug selling in the West End. This problem has apparently improved over recent years, as there have been fewer reports to the Police Department. Obviously, public safety must be controlled continuously.

According to the Community Service Division of the Police Department, there are two groups of residents that participate in neighborhood watch programs. Despite resident's hard work and the program's success, the groups are no longer meeting. Apparently due to the lack of major community participation, those involved were becoming too worn-out from the amount of time and effort the program required from them. The Community Service Division administered a crime survey to West End residents, just over a year ago. The Division received very little response, confirming this low-interest situation.

As is typical in many residential communities, speeding is a common problem. This is of particular concern because there are so many children living in the West End and many streets that without sidewalks. For example, Alex Alford Drive is narrow, has no sidewalk and has had fences installed along the road edge. Resulting from these conditions, is no safe place for people to walk or even an area for people to get out of the way of an oncoming speeding vehicle.

There were no large amounts of litter on streets or pieces of litter located in any particular area, even thought just a few trash cans are provided in public spaces. On several occasions there were large piles of bulk trash that were waiting for City trash pick-up. While these piles were fairly neat, they were located on the same vacant parcel of land near the railroad tracks. One neighbor said that this site is commonly used as a location for people to place their trash for the City to pick up. It was obvious from the type of debris that businesses were using this site as well as residents.

Two prominent civic areas in the West End, the Howard Center and the Mike Johnson Stadium are surrounded by barriers: chain-link fence (with razor wire) and a tall concrete wall. These barriers give the appearance that the West End is crime-ridden. Typically, barriers such as these are not located around civic uses in residential neighborhoods.

Goal: **Provide for the safety of all people residing , working and passing through the West End community .**

Strategies:

- Discourage crime by improving street lighting; and
- Eliminate delapidate housing and other structures; and
- Provide sidewalks for the safety of pedestrians .

Goal: **Discourage speeding.**

Strategies:

- Post a consistent traffic speed of 25 m.p.h. on all roads in the study area (with the exception of Fraser Street);
- Add one or two landscaped median sections along Front Street to help slow traffic; and

Goal: **Encourage safe, cultural and recreational opportunities that enhance the life of West End residents.**

Strategies:

- Provide new recreation facilities for all West End residents;
- Encourage residents of all ages and abilities to become more physically active and to participate in their own community.
- Provide seating at all recreation facilities to allow residents to take part as a spectators.

IX. PLAN OF ACTION

The elements that comprise the make up of the West End have been examined in various sections of this report. The most important element, one that has not yet been discussed, is the sense of community that is so prevalent throughout the West End. This element is less tangible and also more difficult to summarize. Sense of community has to do with residents, how they live and how they interact daily. This Action Plan describes specific ways that the City, residents and others can foster the West End sense of community. This plan provides not only the City of Georgetown with information and resources, but it also provides interested citizens with information and resources that can allow them to participate fully in the planning of the West End and implementation of the recommended actions. It is critical that the goals, the recommended strategies previously discussed, as well as the action plan that follows be accepted and adopted by both the City and the residents of the West End.

Individual goals and recommended strategies presented in previous sections concerned: infrastructure, zoning, housing, steetscape, recreation and crime and safety. This section incorporates many of these established goals and strategies into the action plan below. Those strategies not included in the Action Plan are either currently being undertaken by the City or are strategies that should be considered by the City to be ongoing. The plan below focuses on three primary areas, which will enhance the livability and character of the West End of Georgetown:

- Improvements to West End housing;
- The historic and unique nature of the West End and
- Safely connecting green spaces throughout the West End.

IMPLEMENTATION

Short Term.

The following actions are the first steps that should be taken to initiate the redevelopment of the West End. These actions should be accomplished in the order presented and within the first six months of this initiative.

- The City Administrator should designate a representative to be the point of contact and facilitator for all of the West End revitalization program initiatives.

- City Council should establish an Advisory Committee with key community stakeholders. Members of the group should include representatives that are elected officials; Planning Commissioners; West End representatives (i.e., residents, property and business owners, and church representatives); representatives of the local development community (i.e., bankers, profit and non-profit developers, builders and local architects); the Georgetown Historic Commission and representatives from job training programs as well as local colleges.

- The Residents of the West End should further develop the newly established West End Residents' Association by expanding the number of members and by holding regularly scheduled meetings. This group can have a very effective voice representing Residents of the West End.

- The Planning Commission and City Council should assist potential homeowners, landlords and developers to overcome development constraints by revising the City Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning District Map to include a new R-5 Residential Zoning District. (See the proposed R-5 Residential District Ordinance in the Appendix).

  This new district will allow for the development of many of the existing small and narrow lots located in the West End that are currently undevelopable without a variance. By rezoning the area to the proposed District R-5, the majority of these lots will also allow for wider house styles that are an alternative to mobile homes.

- The City should designate a local West End Historic District or a "New Town"

Historic District that will help to educate and inform citizens of Georgetown and others about Georgetown's long established mill heritage and the value it has provided to the community. See Figure 9.1 for the location of the Proposed West End Historic District.

Figure 9.1 Proposed West End Historic District

The City has clearly recognized that it should act as a steward of historic resources as it recently endorsed a Historic Resources Survey that included the West End. Defining the historic character of the West End was essential because over time, the character of the community is likely to change. A local historic district designation will help provide context and continuity into the future. It will also help provide a basis for interim protection of local historic resources (and potential nationally historic resources).

- The City and the Advisory Committee should strongly encourage local banks to partner in all efforts of the West End Redevelopment Plan.

Financing can be difficult for non-profit, as well as for-profit developers, trying to undertake a project that lacks an exact or close comparable to the type of development they are proposing. Lenders assess the risk and set the terms of a loan. Banks and appraisers should consider the City's commitment to the redevelopment of the West End and approve financing for proposed developments that meet or exceed the design recommendations approved by the City .

Local banks should also provide an increase in access to traditional mortgage and home equity financing to residents of the West End. Factors lenders use to consider a mortgage or home equity applications are credit history, debt-to income ratio, sufficiency of cash and employment history.

Home and home improvement financing can be difficult to secure for residents working in seasonal industries such as tourism (hotels, golf courses, retail and restaurants) and the shrimping industry. While many residents have good jobs most of the year, it is common for workers to be laid off during the slower parts of the year. Additionally, workers in these industries often switch jobs for advancement.

The banks should also provide better outreach by providing mortgage and home equity loan information especially regarding first-time home ownership programs and other low down-payment programs they offer. Many people would qualify for financing but they do not realize they can actually afford a home.

- The City, along with the Architectural Review Board, should review and revise the recommended design guidelines to incorporate any additional features that they believe will promote compatible infill development in the West End.

Mid Term.

The framework for the next set of actions should be developed shortly after the initial steps in the plan have been taken. The projects should begin in the following six months to a year. Most of these recommendations will continue through the next five years or possibly longer, depending upon the recommendation.

- The City should assist residents in gaining clear title to heirs' property located in the West End. A 1998 Housing Market Analysis and Needs Assessment of Georgetown County states that the average cost to clear the title to a property can be as high as $5,000. This cost stems from required property surveys, legal and other fees and costs.

  The City can assists residents by providing low or no cost legal assistance to residents. The City can use the services of local attorneys or they can request the services of the SC Centers for Equal Justice. The SC Centers for Equal Justice is a statewide legal services program that will sponsor Heirs' Property Seminars. They also provide free legal assistance to low-income individuals and families who cannot afford to pay for an attorney.

- The City should assemble and package vacant land to be ready for development. There are many vacant, narrow lots located throughout the West End and the narrow lots are often adjacent to one another. The City should acquire some of these adjacent parcels, dissolve property lines and subdivide them into one or more new larger lots. The City should also prepare the land for development by clearing and rough grading the new lot(s), which would make them much more marketable for future housing. The city owns a few lots in the West End and could start with these parcels as "seed money"

  The City can sell the newly created larger lots and use the money as a revolving fund to purchase additional lots to continue with the process or they can offer the lots at below-market rates to anyone committed to building according to design standards set by the City. In this case, the new owner could use the instant equity (in the land) as a down payment to construct one or more homes, making a new home more affordable.

  The City should consider offering incentives such as providing water and sewer taps and waiving building permit fees for developers (for-profit as well as non-profit) and potential homebuilders who commit to developing the land, not only according to the recommended design guidelines, but also to those who commit a minimum number of residential units to be sold or rented to low and moderate income residents.

  Included in the Appendix are several maps that can be used to assist with the initial screening process for possible lots for the City to assemble and package. The maps include vacant parcels and lot sizes.

- The City should partner with developers who can use the assembled and packaged land as a funding match for potential grants. These inducements will help encourage developers, profit and non-profit, to construct a sufficient number of infill units to meet the demand of homes in the West End.

  These housing development projects will involve many partners, it will be considered a "smart growth" project as it is promoting infill development, it will be tied in to the enhancement of a local historic district and it will involve both profit and not-profit developers. Because of the above, this project may be eligible for special pilot project funding outside of standard grant limitations.

- The City should partner with local technical schools and Clemson Extension to provide instructional seminars devoted to teaching basic home maintenance and repair to home owners and potential homeowners.

- Encourage local technical schools and state/federal work programs to develop special programs that are used educate students and workers in renovation of historic buildings and using new construction methods that can provide new housing in local vernacular style.

  Local technical schools should continue to provide educational assistance for those interested in learning construction skills including:: framing and finish carpentry, masonry, roofing, dry-walling, painting as well as trades like plumbing, electric and HVAC skills.

- The City should encourage the conservation and sensitive restoration of structures *potentially* eligible for the national register of historic places. The City's Architectural Review Board or staff should be available to provide guidance to residential and commercial property owners as well as to other organizations, prior to major renovations, to ensure design compatibility.

Long Term.

This next group of recommendations should be commenced as soon as possible but no later than next year. Unless a time frame is specified below, these projects should be completed within the next five years.

- The City should provide improved pedestrian and vehicular travel in the West End.

  - The City should construct new sidewalks and improve existing sidewalks that will help facilitate pedestrian travel by providing safe connections to parks, churches and between residential and commercial areas. Improvements must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Curb ramps should be retrofitted to existing sidewalks and all future sidewalks should meet current ADA standards.

Provide at least one sidewalk on all roads segments running east/west located west of Alex Alford Drive. This includes segments of Front Street, Winyah Street Emanuel Street and Gilbert Street. Sidewalks should also be added to both sides of Alex Alford Drive, Condon Street and Butts Street. Bourne Street and Hawkins Street (as far north far north as Canal Street) should have sidewalk located along one side. An additional sidewalk should be added to sections of Hazard Street and Front Street to provide connections to existing sidewalks. Also, due to the heavy amount of pedestrian usage, sidewalk should be provided between Front Street and Highmarket along Hazard Street, Congdon Street Merriman Road, Alex Alford and Lafayette Street. Refer to locations shown in Figure 9.2 Proposed "Green" Improvements.

- The City should work with the County to open Butts Street between Merriman Road and Kaminiski Street to improve traffic flow and to encourage pedestrian travel.

- Bicycle lanes should be established on Kaminiski Street as well as on segments of Front and Bourne Streets. These lanes will be included as part of the East Coast Greenway (ECG), and such, these lanes should be painted and be no less than five feet wide and located on both sides of the streets. Ideally, the bicycle path should be separated from traffic by a planting strip but this can be considered in the future.

  This segment of the bicycle route will be located through the heart of the proposed West End Historic District and it will connect with the ECG segments expected to be established along Georgetown's waterfront as well as to the south of the City of Georgetown. This segment of the East Coast Greenway will be important to locals as well as to visitors as the cultural importance of Georgetowns's mill industries will be celebrated .

- The City should provide streetscape improvements that include:

Figure 9.2 Proposed Green Improvements

New tree plantings. Future trees should be able to reach 60 feet in height. They should be planted in intervals of 40 feet or less, between the sidewalk and the street if at least five feet wide when possible. Some of the streets in the west end are only18" feet wide and the homes are located fairly close to the street. Trees in these areas would be nice but they are not essential. Replace trees in areas where there are currently gaps and plant trees that will eventually provide a shade canopy along all road segments with sufficient width.

- The City should improve the appearance of the roadway edges by adding curbs and gutters on roads when possible, in conjunction with drainage improvements. Otherwise, the City should provide clean edges as part of repaving improvements. Also reestablish grass strips between sidewalks and streets that are currently dirt and encourage residents to park in driveways or parallel with roads; discourage angle parking between roads and sidewalks.

- The City should beautify and maintain existing streetscape features by continuing to sweep streets, patching and reconditioning existing streets and sidewalks and carefully prune street trees.

- The City should provide new and improved green spaces. Improvements should provide passive as well as active recreation for all ages and safe pedestrian connections should be provided. These improvements should include:

  - Acquiring the Front StreetTennis Courts from the County and redevelop the site to include two basketball courts with spectator seating. The Georgetown County Recreation Needs Assessment prepared in 1997 sited the tennis facility's poor condition and low use as reasons to recommend that the County relinquish the park. This City is the owner of this site.

  - Acquiring land and develop a mini park that is primarily dedicated for passive use but also includes a small children's play area. The location of this small park would ideally be located in the historic section of the West End, possibly on City owned land at the northeast corner of the Winyah and Kaminiski Street intersection. The park would complement the historic district if it were to be dedicated to Georgetown's mill workers.

  - A feasibility study should be developed to determine if an inter-generational community center with an active recreation component is viable in the West End. Residents have strongly expressed their desire for one to be located at or near the Prince Street Playground or at a location at the end of Emanuel Street. A community center such as this will be expensive not only to construct but also to operate and maintain. This project would take a commitment from many cooperating parties in order for it to become reality.

- Redesign the intersection of Merriman, Congdon and Gilbert Streets to provide a "green" that will provide improved safety but will also provide a terminal vista that will act as the "center" of the West End. This area should include a nice but simple, elegant landscaping plan that includes a small lawn area with shade trees and seating.

- The City should encourage the County and Georgetown County School district to remove the chain-link fence that currently surrounds portions of the Howard Center for Art and Recreation. Residents should feel these buildings are part of the community and not appear as though they are locked away from the public.

  Also, the Mike Johnson Stadium could become neighborhood friendly if large sections of the concrete wall surrounding it were removed. This would be beneficial to the West End community, because the facility is located in the area recommended to be designated as an historic district. Furthermore, the field will likely be a contributing site in the District since a baseball field was located in the same location prior to 1908.

- The City can enforce codes that require property owners to remove dangerous debris and clean over-grown yards. A West End Neighborhood Association can encourage property owners to keep their yards maintained and to offer needed assistance to elderly or disabled residents.

- The City should encourage improvements in commercial areas in the West End by:

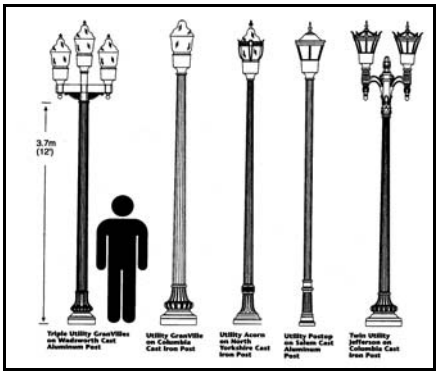
  - Developing a detailed design study of the Fraser Street commercial area. This area contributes to first impressions of visitors coming into Georgetown from the south.

  - Requiring stronger screening requirements for new development in the General Commercial area that provide outdoor storage.

  - Encouraging the development of new businesses and pedestrian activity in this Neighborhood Commercial District. In doing this, the Planning Commission and City Council should consider allowing a greater variety of

permitted uses in the Neighborhood Commercial District. Also, because of the small lot configurations in the area, the City should provide this district the same off street parking flexibility as is allowed in the Core Commercial District.

- The City should consider installing new decorative street lights as part of the overall street scape improvements in the proposed historic area. These lights would contribute to the traditional appearance of the streetscape, while luminaries would be closer to the ground, providing improved illumination in areas with large street trees. The existing luminaries can be used to supplement or replace older lighting fixtures in other sections of the West End.



FUNDING

The following is a list of resources that are available to the city other organizations which may be used to reach the West End redevelopment goals presented in this plan.

HUD.

Two Housing and Urban Development Programs provide funding assistance for housing programs as well as for other community needs. The programs are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME). The City as well as the County are eligible to for both CDBG grants but each is allowed only two projects at one time. The City is currently using CDBG grants to help pay for drainage improvements in the West End. The City, County as well as other organizations are eligible for competitive HOME grants. These programs require a 20% funding match.

TEA 21 - Enhancement Grants.

This funding if for the enhancement of the state's transportation system and includes funding for projects such as bikelanes, sidewalk improvements and beautification projects such as street trees, landscaped greenspaces related to roadway improvements and improved lighting. Georgetown is located in an area where 80% of the enhancement funding will be dedicated to improvements related to the East Coast Greenway. These

funds require the local agency to provide 20% of project funding.

S.C. Urban Forestry Grants.

S.C. Urban Forestry Commission provides annual funding assistance to promote trees as a part of the community infrastructure as well as for other urban and community forestry programs. The City and County are eligible for these funds. The S.C. Urban Forestry Commission may provide 50% of the required funds up to $5,000. This grant is offered annually and it is competitive. The Commission also provides free seminars in educating in-house tree care staff, volunteers and the general public.

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and Special Tax Assessments.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 permits owners and some lessees of historic buildings to take a 20 percent federal income tax credit on the cost of rehabilitating those buildings and allows a period of 27.5 years for improvements to rental residential property, and a period of 31.5 years for nonresidential property in historic rehabilitation tax credits.

State law also allows municipal and county governments to give property owners tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. As long as the County and City adopt a special tax assessments law, the local government can place a temporary ceiling on the property's assessed value. Without that temporary ceiling, the improvements made during the rehabilitation would increase the property's assessed value and therefore increase the owner's property taxes.

S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT).

SCPRT offers several grants programs that can be used to develop recreation opportunities. The programs include Tourism Marketing Partnership Program, Recreation Land Trust Fund, Recreational Trails Program. These programs require a 20% to 50% match depending on the program. Funds can be used to purchase land for public recreation, provide new recreation facilities, create recreation trails and provide funding for projects that will encourage tourism.

The South Carolina Centers for Equal Justice.

This organization is a statewide legal services program that provides free legal assistance to low-income individuals and families who cannot afford to pay for an attorney. Funded by federal, state and other grants, the agency handles cases regarding Heirs' Property. They also offer seminars on the subject. Contact Attorney Willie Heyward at (843)266-

2165 or James Moody at (843)266-2178.

Public Private Partnerships.

A combination of private and public funding is often used for redevelopment projects. Private funds and in-kind donations are often used to leverage all money to maximize government grants.

APPENDIX

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PARK STANDARDS

There are different schools of thought on park standards. Some planners take the approach that there should be a certain number of acres of parkland per person for different types of parks. However, these standards work as general guidelines. The amount of parkland and open space really depends on the community's characteristics, culture and wishes. A common standard for a mini park is .25 acres per population of 500. Another standard is one basketball court for every 500 people.

Below are some of the standards used in the 1980 Georgetown County Facility Plan:

Mini-Park Standards

- .25 acres per 500 population
- Optimum Size is .25 - 2 acres
- Service Area is usually a 1/4 mile to ½ mile in an urbanized area
- Location: A park should be located with continence and safety of access from neighborhood in mind
- Facilities: Earth and/or paved area with imaginative layout of equipment landscaping. Should include either intensive play areas or passive areas

Neighborhood Park Standards

- 2 acres/1000 population
- Optimum Size is 4 acres
- Service Area is usually a ½ mile in an urbanized area
- Location: School or community center building
- Facilities: Should provide activities for all ages, passive as well as active, including: play equipment, open space for games, paved game area, baseball field and landscaped areas. Can include a tennis court or basketball court where desired. Amount of active versus passive facilities should be determined by characteristics of the areas served