



WORKSHOP AGENDA

The Town of Ridgeland

PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, February 27, 2025, 5:30 P.M.

Town Hall, Council Chambers, 1 Town Hall, Ridgeland, SC 29936

STATEMENT OF MEDIA NOTIFICATION: "In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting."

I. Comprehensive Plan Update:

1. Benchmark will be leading a presentation to review and discuss the full draft document.



Background Report & Emerging Themes

FEBRUARY 27TH, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP

Agenda

- Review Draft Vision Statement
- Discuss Draft Guiding Principles and Actions
- Examine Draft Future Land Use Map / Growth Map
- Next Steps

Community Survey - Vision



Draft Vision

Ridgeland is the high point of the lowcountry. We strive to maintain our small-town charm while growing in a manner that respects our traditional development patterns and our valuable cultural and natural resources. We seek to strengthen our downtown, our economy, and our community identity. Moving forward, we will work with our neighbors to ensure that Ridgeland builds off and helps improve the lowcountry as a whole.

Emerging Themes > Guiding Principles

**Growth
Management**

Downtown

**Historic,
Cultural, and
Natural
Resources**

**Economic
Development**

Coordination

Appearance

Guiding Principle 1: Growth Management

Facilitate high-quality growth that is both compatible with the Town's traditional development pattern and respectful of the region's unique cultural and natural resources.

- Direct Growth
- Manage Growth

Guiding Principle 1: Growth Management

- **Direct Growth**
 - Utilize the Growth Map / Future Land Use Map to enforce and direct development in a manner that is consistent with the Town's vision.
 - Identify targeted annexation priorities and utilize the Annexation Priorities / Growth Map to consider future annexation requests. Consider future water and sewer infrastructure as a guidepost for the growth boundaries.
 - Support infill development by reducing barriers on properties surrounded by existing development. Consider marketing infill development opportunities, with particular emphasis on properties with potential to provide commercial amenities or foster downtown activity.
 - Work closely with the County to annex commercial donut holes that are surrounded by the Town.

Guiding Principle 1: Growth Management

- **Manage Growth**
 - Examine infrastructure and service needs as a condition of all new development and annexation requests. Where a proposed major development would generate demand beyond existing government services or infrastructure, the Town should consider requiring a development agreement in which the applicant partners with the Town to construct / fund the necessary improvements (building a fire station, emergency medical service station, police substation, water / sewer improvement, etc.).
 - Regularly assess the Town's utility infrastructure and implement necessary improvements. Examine opportunities to expand capacity of the wastewater treatment plan, as necessary.

Guiding Principle 1: Growth Management

- **Manage Growth**
 - Work closely with property owners to determine the likely future potential buildout of Planned Developments / Special Districts.
 - Coordinate with SCDOT and Jasper County to implement needed transportation improvements.
 - Analyze the potential to implement impact fees, which could help pay for increased service and infrastructure demand.
 - After adopting this Comprehensive Plan, complete an assessment of the Town's Development Regulations. Modify to better meet the vision of the Town, and update inaccurate or outdated sections. (could provide more detail on these)

Guiding Principle 2: Downtown

Continue to support the redevelopment and improvement of downtown, strengthening its place in the region.

- Increase Development Downtown
- Improve the Appearance of Downtown
- Increase Activity Downtown

Guiding Principle 2: Downtown

- **Increase Development Downtown**
 - Consider proactively rezoning all of downtown to T4 to increase densities and permit a mix of residential and commercial uses downtown. Similarly, consider increasing the number of T5-zoned properties downtown.
 - Consider developing a downtown master plan which identifies specific improvements to downtown, including critical infill projects. Work with private enterprises to implement the plan.
 - Encourage the redevelopment and improvement of properties downtown.

Guiding Principle 2: Downtown

- **Improve the Appearance of Downtown**
 - Develop wayfinding signage that is unique to downtown but matches the character of Ridgeland.
 - Examine potential improvement needs on public spaces downtown, including sidewalks, parks, and green spaces.
 - Consider offering a building façade grant for properties downtown.
 - Consider increasing beautification efforts, including seasonal decorations, banners, and flowers.

Guiding Principle 2: Downtown

- **Increase Activity Downtown**
 - Examine feasibility of establishing a downtown management organization. This would be a separate entity, but may rely on support from the Town. It would be responsible for coordinating events, appearances, and similar programming.
 - Identify opportunities to utilize the downtown farmers market space. If the market is no longer feasible, consider alternative uses for this space. Regular activation.
 - Develop regular events downtown and market their presence to increase activity downtown. Consider a weekly event at the farmers market space, seasonal festivals, occasional food truck events, and similar activities.
 - Work with the LCCOG, SCDOT, and Jasper County to identify opportunities to fund the development of bike lanes downtown. Consider adding bike racks in high trafficked areas.

Guiding Principle 3: Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

Promote and protect the unique historic, cultural, and natural resources that exist in Ridgeland.

- Eco-Tourism / Historical Asset-Based Tourism
- Protect Wetlands and Sensitive Areas

Guiding Principle 3: Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

- **Eco-Tourism and Historic Asset-Based Tourism**
 - Work to improve regional trail connections.
 - Identify opportunities to tie into the East Coast Trail and the Lowcountry Revolutionary War Trail.
 - Examine opportunities to include the Honey Hill Battlefield in a trail route.
 - Consider opportunities to connect existing trails and pathways in Ridgeland, and connect them in a unified design and map, similar to the Spanish Moss Trail in Beaufort County.
 - Promote downtown Ridgeland, Honey Hill Battlefield, and other possible tourist attractions.
 - Collaborate with Jasper and Beaufort Counties to expand and market tourism throughout the region.

Guiding Principle 3: Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

- **Eco-Tourism and Historic Asset-Based Tourism**
 - Promote historic preservation efforts and increase information about the benefits of preservation.
 - Consider pursuing national register recognition of eligible structures, including the Centralized Grade School, the Pratt Memorial Library, and R & M Plantation.
 - Identify prime areas to support a new, chain hotel. Examine zoning and land development regulations to ensure a hotel could easily be built, and work to market this potential to hoteliers.
 - Consider similar efforts that could improve hospitality amenities (hotels and restaurants) in Town.
 - Consider the development of a blueway along the Coosawhatchie River and its tributaries.

Guiding Principle 3: Historic, Cultural, and Natural Resources

- **Protect Wetlands and Sensitive Areas**
 - Consider restricting development within floodplains, wetlands, and similar sensitive areas. Establish critical buffer areas. (Maybe make a map of sensitive areas).
 - Consider incorporating Jasper County's and / or Beaufort County's Stormwater Management Master Plan into the Town's Ordinance.
 - Examine zoning and consider rezoning particularly sensitive areas to T1.
 - In order to protect tree canopy, consider strengthening the Town's Tree Protection Ordinance.
 - Examine the potential for establishing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program within the Town. This would require seeking outside assistance for establishing and administering.

Guiding Principle 4: Economic Development

Continue to identify strategies to improve employment, wages, and industry within Ridgeland.

- Workforce Training
- Industry Attraction

Guiding Principle 4: Economic Development

- **Workforce Training**
 - Work with the Jasper County School District, Thomas Heyward Academy, Polaris Tech, the Technical College of the Lowcountry, Jasper County, and the South Carolina Alliance to identify potential workforce training programs that could be implemented in the region.
 - Examine the feasibility and demand for a community or technical college in Ridgeland.

Guiding Principle 4: Economic Development

- **Industry Attraction**

- Work with the South Carolina Alliance to identify potential industries which could be successful in Ridgeland. Consider marketing opportunities.
- Examine Zoning and Land Development Regulations to ensure that target industries could easily be established in ideal locations within Ridgeland. If necessary, consider rezoning and / or subdividing properties to serve target industries. When suitable land exists, market it toward potential industries.
- Consider developing a regional assessment of medical facilities and determine if there is any potential for the Town to attract and support new medical facilities.
- Pursue the marketing and support of agricultural enterprises. Potentially examine ways to coordinate with the County's farmers market and related programs.

Guiding Principle 5: Coordination

Work with our neighbors to improve the greater region.

- Regional Planning
- Leverage Regional Successes to Improve Ridgeland
- Increase Knowledge of Airport and Military Impacts

Guiding Principle 5: Coordination

- **Regional Planning**
 - Improve communication between the Town, County, Low Country Council of Government, and other regional partners.
 - Work with Jasper County to collaboratively plan for the areas around Ridgeland. Ensure the two governments are in alignment on what should happen on the Town's boundaries (annexation, etc.).
 - Participate in SoLoCo and Similar Regional Partnerships so that Ridgeland can take greater advantage of regional planning efforts and projects.

Guiding Principle 5: Coordination

- **Leverage Regional Successes to Improve Ridgeland**
 - Consider building off successful projects in the region, such as Old Town Bluffton, Hardeeville's Recreation Center, and other attractors. Identify opportunities to leverage these successes.
 - Improve marketing of Ridgeland's place within the Lowcountry region. Particular attention should be made to the unique aspects of Ridgeland (downtown, Honey Hill Battlefield, etc.).

Guiding Principle 5: Coordination

- **Improve Knowledge of Airport and Military Impacts**
 - Consider requiring real estate disclosures for properties impacted by the Ridgeland Claude Dean Airport and related overlay, as well as the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort Military Operation Areas and related impacts.
 - Incorporate the South Carolina Airport Compatible Land Use Evaluation (CLUE) Tool and the South Carolina Aeronautics Title 55 Airport Land Use Notification Requirements Table into the Town's Ordinances. Work with Jasper County to update the Jasper County Airport Overlay to match.

Guiding Principle 6: Appearance

Prioritize improving the overall appearance and reputation of
the Town of Ridgeland.

- Public Properties
- Private Properties
- Strengthen Design Standards

Guiding Principle 6: Appearance

- **Public Properties**

- Develop new entrance and wayfinding signage throughout Town. Ensure the signage is clear, modern, and aligns with Ridgeland's desired identity.
- Develop a Downtown Master Plan which includes beautification efforts, and implement this plan.
- Improve maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. Consider increasing the public works budget to accommodate this.
- Examine strategies to increase the appearance and safety at parks throughout Town. This may include police enforcement of loitering and similar crimes.

Guiding Principle 6: Appearance

- **Private Properties**

- Continue to strengthen code enforcement efforts. Consider advertising the ability for residents to report code enforcement issues.
- Use community events to clean up and improve blighted structures, streets, or properties, when applicable.
- Coordinate with private owners and legal experts on the acquisition of blighted properties.
- Coordinate with Town Police in the removal and relocation of squatters and trespassers on blighted or abandoned properties, if necessary.
- Pursue County, State, and Federal funding for the acquisition, demolition, and site remediation of blighted properties.

Guiding Principle 6: Appearance

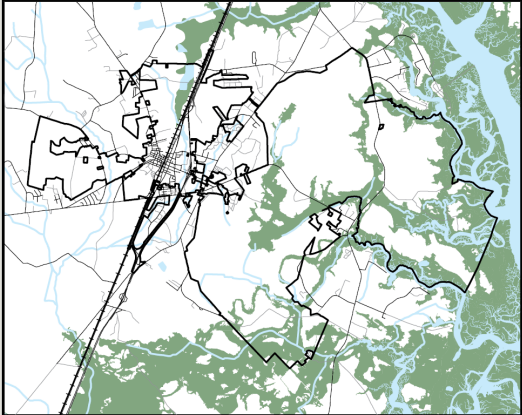
- **Strengthen Design Standards**
 - Include landscaping in design guidelines.
 - Consider developing a tree preservation ordinance.
 - Revise the zoning code so that signs fit the characteristics of surrounding properties and corridors.
 - While revising the zoning code, carefully examine design standards to ensure they meet the needs of the community.

Draft Future Land Use Strategy

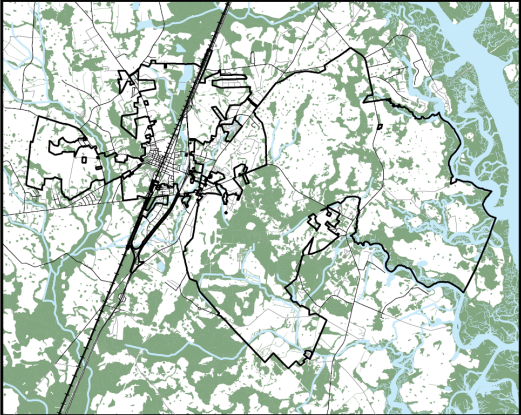
- Consider the impacts of environmental and development limitations on land. Describe how these elements limit development potential and the Town's stance on them (we don't want to develop in floodplains and wetlands; need utilities to support development; while SDs are slated for development, we could create alternative visions for these sites in the instance where the DAs may expire, etc.)
- Consider Town's ability to serve development (utilities, emergency services, etc.)
- Work with County on managing borders

Draft Future Land Use Strategy

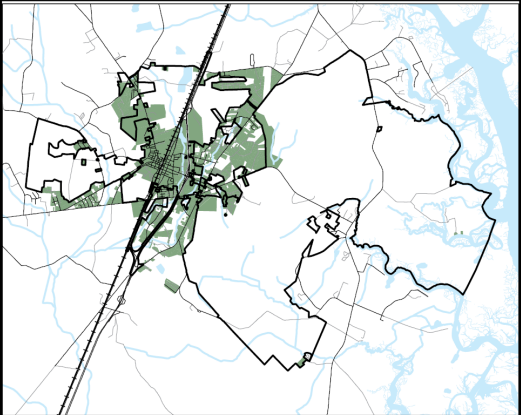
FLOODPLAINS



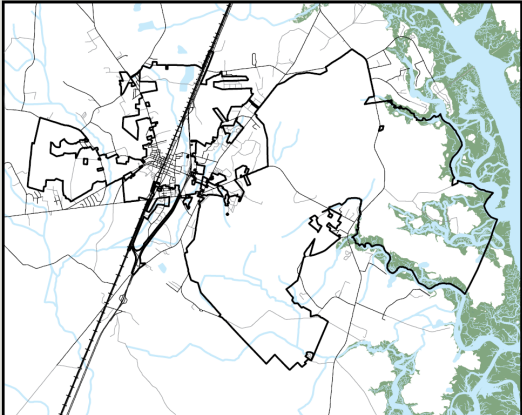
WETLANDS



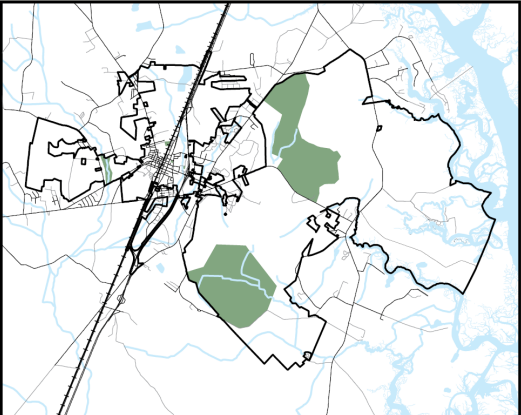
DEVELOPED LAND



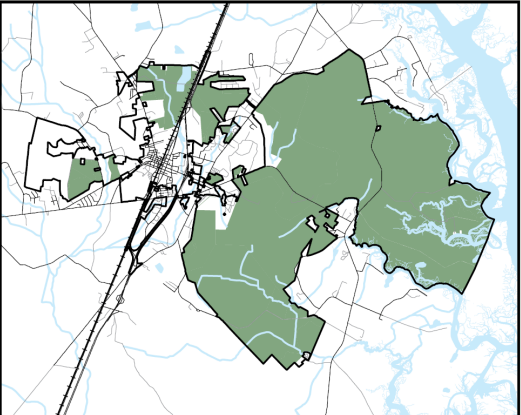
PROJECTED SEA LEVEL RISE (1 FT)



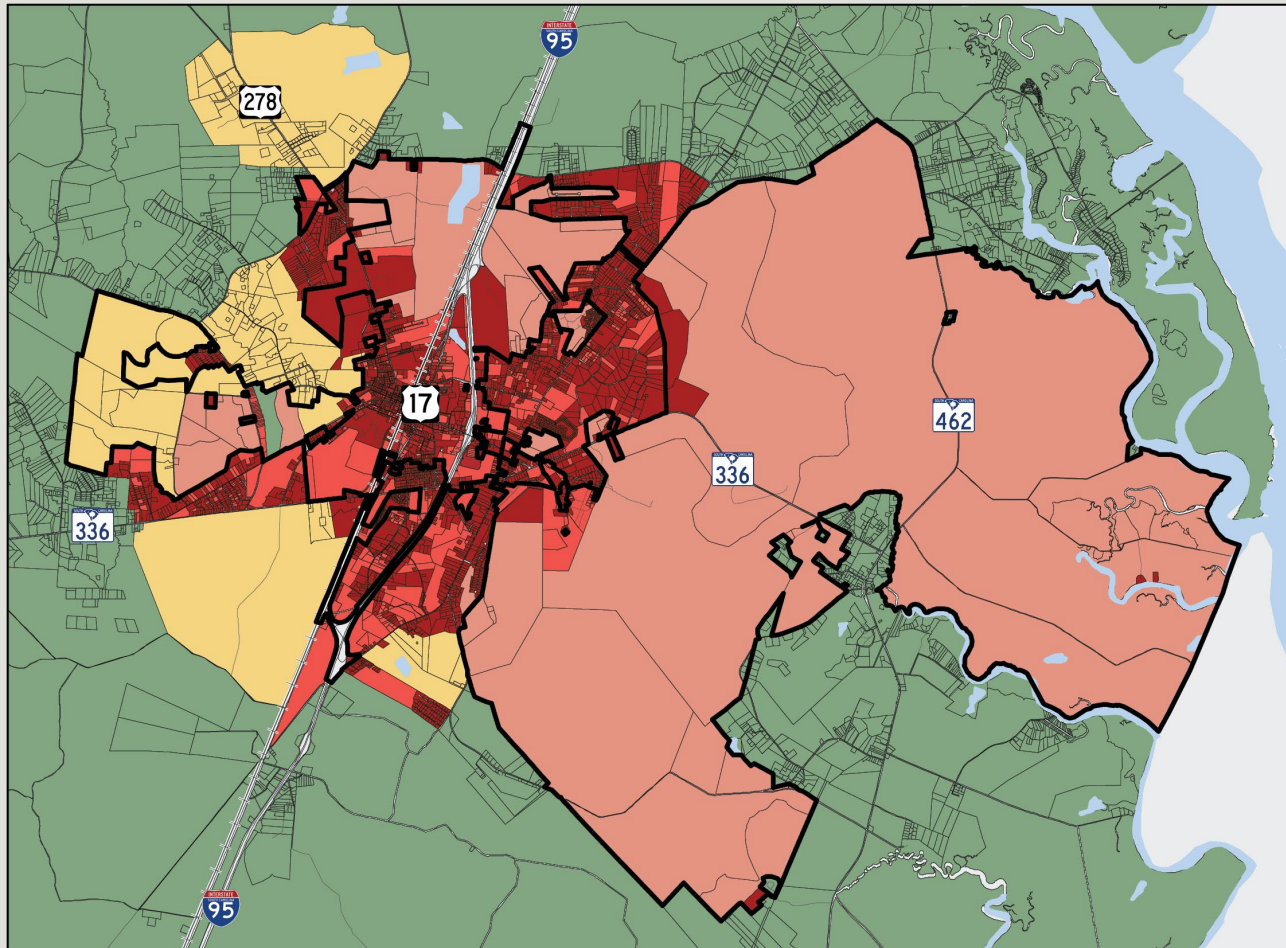
CONSERVED LAND



APPROVED DEVELOPMENT



Draft Growth Map - Future Land Use Strategy



-  Restricted Development (Context Specific / with Exceptions)
-  Strategic Growth Areas
-  Infill / Redevelopment
-  Approved Development
-  Developed Land

Next Steps

- Revise Draft Recommendations
- Public Meeting (March / April?)
- Planning Commission Meeting to Finalize Edits to Plan
- Formal Adoption Process