



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Irmo Municipal Building
7300 Woodrow Street, Irmo, SC 29063

October 14, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Invocation
- III. Approval of the Agenda
- IV. Minutes
 - A. Approval of the minutes of the September 9, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting
- V. New Business
 - A. Consideration of a resolution to recommend approval of the 2024 Town of Irmo Comprehensive Plan
- VI. Comments
- VII. Adjournment

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Town of Irmo will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities based on disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need accommodation to attend the meeting, please contact the Assistant Town Administrator or Zoning Clerk for assistance at (803)781-7050, M-F between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 (closed most Federal and State Holidays).



TOWN OF IRMO PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes

Monday, September 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Municipal Building

7300 Woodrow Street | Phone: 803.781.7050

MEMBERS PRESENT

Edward Wadelington – Chair

Robert Cox – Vice-Chair

Jeff Allen

Judy DeLoach

Edward Greco

Richard Scoggins

Joseph Murphy

MEMBERS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Doug Polen, Assistant Administrator

Kami Layne, Zoning Clerk

Call to Order

Mr. Wadelington called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and called upon Mr. Greco to lead the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Allen made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by Mr. Murphy. Motion passed 7-0.

Minutes

Mr. Murphy made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 12, 2024 meeting, seconded by Mr. Cox. Motion passed 7-0.

New Business

- a. Public Hearing to Consider an ordinance to rezone 11 parcels totaling 65.12 acres along Dreher Shoals Road, Muskrat Run and Salem Church Road from CG, General Commercial; RG, General Residential; and FA, Fringe Agriculture, to MD, Mixed -Use.

Mr. Polen presented the item and discussion was held. Staff recommends Approval of this application.

Mr. Craig spoke for the applicant and presented the application.

Eight individuals spoke, six opposed to Ordinance 24-13 concerning the Water Walk subdivision. Reasons included the density and traffic concerns. One speaker requested a stronger buffer and stated that there was no mention of energy and solar panels.

Speakers from the public were as follows:

- Gerald Gallahar 101 Muskrat Run
- Hugh Smith 267 Emerald Cove Lane
- Connie Turner 200 Hope Trace Way
- Henry Martin 124 Winding Rd
- Melinda Ray 105 Shell Cracker Ct
- David Marmillion 107 Lake Estates Ct
- John Begg 1811 Salem Church Rd
- Brent Chitwood 131 Casco Bay Rd

Mr. Cox had questions concerning the development agreement. He had concerns about the rolling terrain, the density of the RD-1 district, and open space lot size vs acreage. Mr. Polen and Mr. Craig answered those questions. Mr. Greco asked about the two ponds and what adjustments will be made to those ponds. Mr. Craig answered by saying they are wanting to clean up the ponds and retain them due to their natural beauty.

Mr. Wadelington called upon Mrs. Layne for a rollcall vote: Mr. Murphy voted "yes", Mr. Scoggins voted "yes", Mr. Greco voted "yes", Mrs. Deloach voted "yes", Mr. Allen voted "yes", Mr. Cox voted "yes", Mr. Wadelington voted "yes". The vote for approval was unanimous.

Adjournment

Mr. Greco made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Murphy. Motion approved 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20p.m.

ATTEST:

Zoning Clerk / Designee

Chair



Staff Report

Consideration of a resolution to recommend approval of the 2024 Town of Irmo Comprehensive Plan

DATES: October 14, 2024
TO: Planning Commission
FROM:
SUBJECT:
ACTION
REQUESTED:

Background

Analysis

Staff Findings

Attachments

1. Comp Plan Staff Report
2. Comp Plan Resolution
3. Irmo_Plan_Draft_2024_1007_Reduced



Staff Report

Comprehensive Plan

DATE: Planning Commission Public Hearing: October 14, 2024
Town Council First Reading: October 15, 2024
Town Council Second Reading & Public Hearing, November 19, 2024

TO: Irmo Planning Commission
Irmo Town Council

FROM: Douglas Polen, Assistant Town Administrator

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Adoption

Summary

Town Staff, the Planning Commission, and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee have been working on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan for just over a year. After numerous discussions, public presentations, and iterations, the plan is complete and ready for adoption by the Planning Commission and Town Council. This plan will serve as the guiding document for land use and other decision making for five years, at which time it will need to be updated. The original plan and update will serve for ten total years before an entirely new plan is to be composed. That having been said, the plan can be updated at any time by recommendation of Planning Commission and adoption of an ordinance by Council.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that Planning Commission adopt the attached resolution, which recommends adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by Town Council.

**RESOLUTION OF
THE TOWN OF IRMO PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION OF ADOPTION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, the Town of Irmo Planning Commission has revised the Comprehensive Plan which contains all elements required by the *South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994* as amended in 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, pursuant to S.C. Code Sections 6-29-520(B), desires to recommend to the Town of Irmo Council the adoption by ordinance the plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town of Irmo Planning Commission that the Comprehensive Plan, including the text and maps, are recommended to the Town of Irmo Council for adoption by ordinance, after public hearing, in accordance with S.C. Code Section 6-29-530.

Adopted by the affirmative votes of at least a majority of the entire membership of the Planning Commission this 14th day of October, 2024.

Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Secretary



IRMO

— *Vision 2035* —

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Draft Date: October 8, 2024
Adopted: TBD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS

Courtney Dennis, Town Administrator
Doug Polen, Assistant Town Administrator

TOWN COUNCIL

Bill Danielson, Mayor
Erik Sickinger, Mayor Pro-Tem
Dr. Barb Waldman, Town Councilor
Gabriel Penfield, Town Councilor
Phyllis Coleman, Town Councilor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Edward Wadelington, Chairman
Robert Cox, Vice Chairman
Judy DeLoach
Jeff Allen
Richard Scoggins
Ed Greco
Joseph Murphy

STEERING COMMITTEE

Ed Greco
Beach Loveland
Kerry Powers
Dr. Maxine Sumpter
Ed Wadelington
William Bowman

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to the citizens of Irmo who participated in this planning process through taking the survey and attending stakeholder interviews and public meetings. Also, a special thank you to the steering committee members for spending many evenings and hours guiding the development of the plan.

CONSULTANTS

Planning consulting services provided by Stewart and Boudreaux.



Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction. 4

 Project Overview 6

 Study Area 7

 Plan Elements and Organization 9

Part 2: Input & Vision. 10

 Public Engagement 12

 Survey Results. 14

 Vision and Goals. 18

Part 3: Plan Elements. 20

 Population 22

 Land Use. 26

 Economic Development. 46

 Housing 54

 Cultural Resources 58

 Transportation 66

 Community Facilities 78

 Natural Resources. 84

 Resiliency 88

 Priority Investment Element TBD







INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Overview

An up-to-date Comprehensive Plan is a requirement for communities in South Carolina. It is also an essential tool for guiding growth and development in a way that reflects the desires and realities of the community it is meant to serve.

A comprehensive plan is a long-range planning tool designed to guide policy decisions related to growth and development, infrastructure and the natural environment in the Town of Irmo. The comprehensive planning process offers an opportunity to have a community conversation about a shared vision for the future and goals and strategies for realizing that vision.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

To plan is to actively prepare and organize for the future. Land use planning is the collaborative process, typically initiated by local government, to

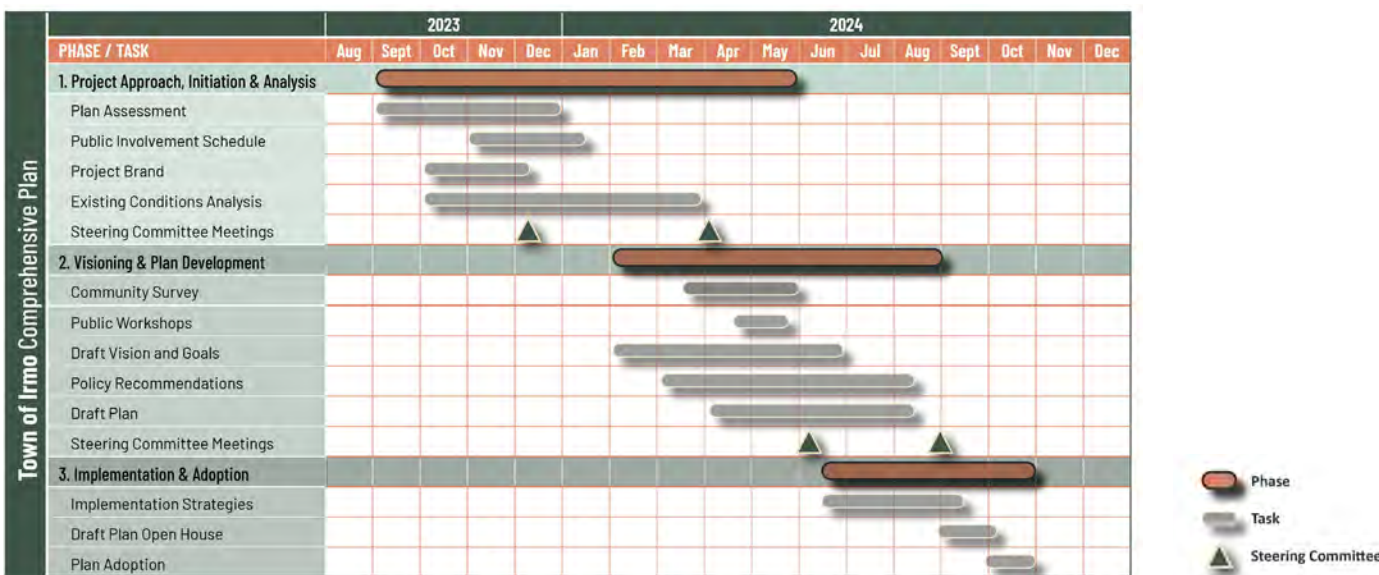
organize and prepare for future public and private land development under the local jurisdiction.

The South Carolina General Assembly enacted the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act (*the Planning Act*) in 1994 to modernize and coordinate local government planning across the state.

The Planning Act (*SC Code Title 6, Chapter 29*) requires all governing bodies that exercise planning authority or enact zoning or land development ordinances must have a current comprehensive plan. Adopted plans must be reevaluated every five years and updated every ten years to remain current with the community's values and current trends. The State also requires ten plan elements and for all plans to adequately address each element. The ten elements must include the following three items within its discussion:

1. Inventory of existing conditions.
2. A statement of needs and goals.
3. Implementation strategies with time frames.

PLAN SCHEDULE



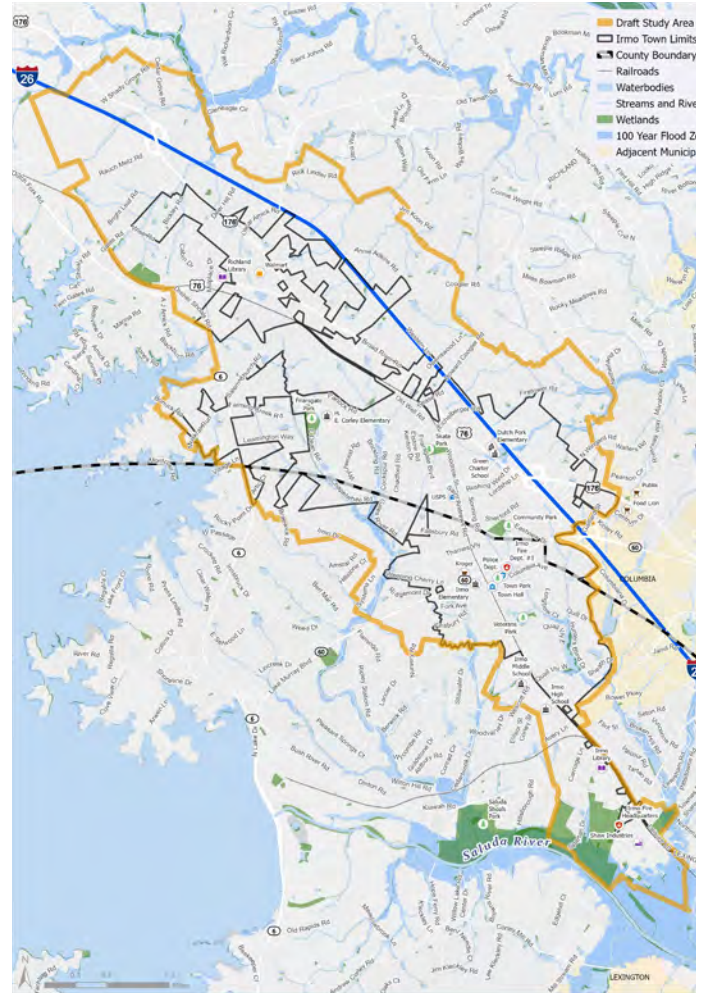
PROCESS

The process to update the Town of Irmo's Comprehensive Plan began in the Fall of 2023 and took about a year to complete. The process was split into three phases. The first phase was the project approach, initiation and analysis phase, where the Town and the project team collected and reviewed data. During this phase, a Steering Committee of local community representatives was created to help guide the planning process. The middle phase was the visioning and plan development phase. This was the longest stage and included the majority of the public events and engagement opportunities which helped to craft the guiding vision for the Town of Irmo and determine priorities that would shape the recommendations for the future. The draft plan and draft recommendations were presented and made available to the public for comment. The last phase of the project was the implementation and adoption phase. Here, the project team, along with the Town and other partners, laid out a broad plan of how, with whom, and when different recommendations should be carried out. Once that was completed and added to the document, the Vision 2035 Plan was presented to the Planning Commission for approval and Town Council for adoption.

STUDY AREA

The Town of Irmo is located in both Lexington County and Richland County, South Carolina. Irmo is also positioned Northwest of Columbia along Interstate 26.

Study Area Map



7.3 square miles
Irmo Town Limits

17 square miles
Study Area

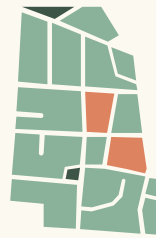
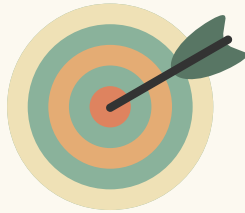
PROJECT BACKGROUND

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

Comprehensive plans can impact the future layout and landscape of a jurisdiction for many years to come. Comprehensive planning is an important tool for planning jurisdictions to guide future development for residential, commercial, industrial, and public activities. In South Carolina, the Planning Enabling Act details the planning process in SC Code § 6-29-510 (2022).

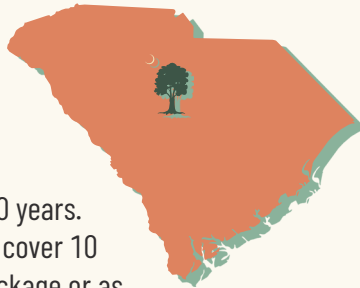


It is an expression of the community's vision for the future with a strategic map to reach that vision.



It is an advisory or guiding document that sets forth a vision and goals for the area's future and provides the overall foundation for all land use regulation. It is a policy document that shapes land use decisions, but it is not a legal ordinance.

It is required by the State of South Carolina for jurisdictions that want to enforce zoning regulations and must be reviewed every 5 years and updated every 10 years. The state also requires all plans to cover 10 plan elements in either a single package or as increments of a complete plan.



The comprehensive planning process helps communities identify issues before they arise, stay ahead of trends in land use development and redevelopment, and anticipate and navigate community trends and land use patterns.



INPUT

Adopting and amending a comprehensive plan should be a dynamic public process with an eye toward implementation. Public participation ensures broad and ongoing support, brings a variety of information and perspectives, and instills a sense of community ownership in the plan.



ADOPTION

The adoption process follows the same requirements as a legislative zoning decision: published notice, public hearing, reference to the planning board, and a motion and vote by governing board to adopt.



PLAN ELEMENTS

A comprehensive plan is required for all jurisdictions with planning programs and zoning laws. The State of South Carolina requires every Comprehensive Plan to address each for the following ten elements:



Population

Evaluates population and demographic trends, and projected growth



Economic Development

Describes the local workforce, and key aspects of the local economy



Cultural Resources

Describes cultural elements that are unique to the community such as historic properties, educational, religious, and entertainment institutions



Land Use

Looks at current and future desired land use patterns



Priority Investment

Identifies available funds for facilities and infrastructure, while also making recommendations for need-based projects

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Part Two includes information on public input gathered during the planning process. Part Three includes analysis and recommendations for each plan element. Part Four includes additional supporting information.



Housing

Evaluates housing types, location, age, affordability, and occupancy of the community



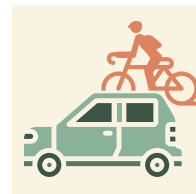
Natural Resources

Discusses natural resources such as wildlife and their habitats, floodplains, wetlands, and beaches



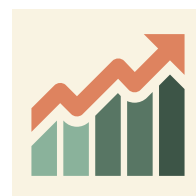
Community Facilities

Evaluates community assets regarding public safety, recreation, government, medical, education, and available public services



Transportation

Analyzes all modes of transportation, including roads, trails and pedestrian facilities



Resiliency

Identifies and analyzes impacts of flooding and other natural hazards the community faces





INPUT & VISION

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Irmo Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan was developed in a process that prioritized community involvement and public input. The process emphasized collaboration between the project team and local planning staff, along with the steering committee and Planning Commission. Community members had an active hand in shaping the Plan's direction and priorities through the Steering Committee, stakeholder interviews, a project survey, pop-up events and public workshops.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The planning process was guided by the project Steering Committee, formed of members of the community. The Steering Committee met four times during the course of the project and provided valuable input on key components of the plan including engagement efforts, the vision and goals, priorities, and recommendations.

OKRA STRUT

To kick off the comprehensive planning outreach process, Town staff and members of the consulting team attended the Okra Strut and gathered input on things attendees love about Irmo and things they hope to see in Irmo's future.



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As part of the early stages of the comprehensive planning community outreach process, the Town of Irmo hosted five stakeholder meetings across two days, February 12th and 13th, in the conference room at the Chamber of Commerce. These sessions were free flowing conversations that allowed those who know Irmo well to discuss with the project team current conditions, future projects, and community priorities. The first meeting consisted of Town staff, and other local and regional government and planning organizations. The second meeting included representatives from local real estate offices, developers, business owners, and economic development leaders. The third meeting consisted of individuals representing parks and recreation, tourism, and historic organizations in the area. The fourth and fifth meetings were made up of non-profits, neighborhood associations, local religious leaders, and residents who are active in the community.



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

As part of the early stages of the comprehensive planning community outreach process, the Town of Irmo hosted a public meeting on May 1st, 2024 in the Irmo Courthouse, and again at Loveland Coffee and Harbison Theatre at Midland Tech on May 2nd, 2024. The public meeting followed an open house format where attendees circulated around the room to different stations and provided feedback on different topic areas using poster boards and maps. Parks and Recreation preferences included greenways and trails, community events and restoration or resiliency projects. Residential development preferences included live-work units in mixed Use buildings and pocket neighborhoods. Some support was shown for traditional neighborhood design, suburban neighborhoods, conservation subdivisions, large-lot residential, small-scale multi-family and accessory dwelling units. Apartments and townhomes were the least supported development types.

Meetings were also held in September of 2024 at Young's Chapel AME Church and the Chamber of Commerce to present draft recommendations and gather feedback.



Things people LOVE and HOPE for in Irmo from the 2023 Okra Strut and Public Meetings.

Love...

- ◆ Warm friendly people
- ◆ Southern hospitality
- ◆ The Okra Man
- ◆ Irmo Schools
- ◆ Free dog park
- ◆ Small town
- ◆ Family-oriented
- ◆ Green space

Hope for...

- ◆ More grocery variety
- ◆ More playgrounds
- ◆ More park benches
- ◆ More events in the park, maybe concerts
- ◆ Live-work units
- ◆ Non-chain restaurants
- ◆ Fewer new apartment buildings
- ◆ An age friendly community
- ◆ Leadership in technology
- ◆ Become a destination
- ◆ Walkable urban center
- ◆ Locally owned, unique, artisan café and similar businesses
- ◆ Irmo town center near Town Park
- ◆ Improved traffic

COMMUNITY SURVEY

A 21-question community survey for the Irmo Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan was developed and responses were gathered in the spring of 2024. The survey ran from April to July and received 642 responses.

The survey was advertised to the community using posted flyers and virtually using the Town website, Town Facebook page and email. Additional outreach was done at the Juneteenth Festival and through churches which resulted in a significant increase in responses from the African American community.

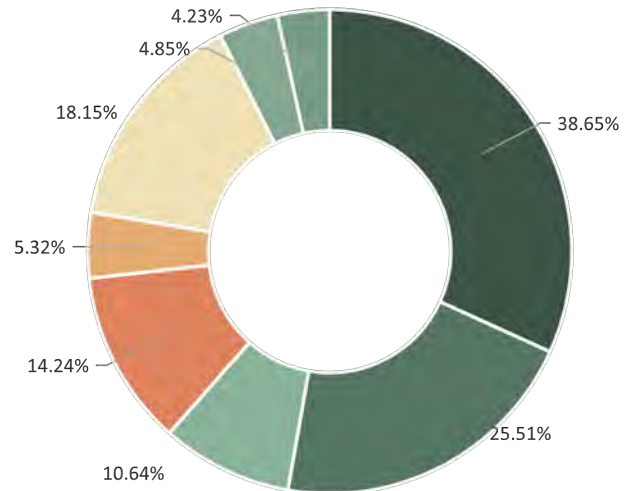
642

Responses to the Community Survey



COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Connection to Irmo



- Live in Irmo town limits
- Live in Richland County near Irmo
- Live in Lexington County near Irmo
- Former resident and/or a longtime visitor to Irmo
- Work in Irmo town limits
- Go to school here or nearby
- Own property within Irmo town limits
- Own and/or operate a business in Town of Irmo

LOVE IRMO? TAKE THE VISION 2035 PROJECT SURVEY!

Lend your voice to the **Vision** —
The project survey for the
comprehensive plan is open!
Use the link or QR code to take
or share the survey.

www.surveymonkey.com/r/IrmoVision



YOUR VOICE MATTERS IN IRMO!

The results from this survey will be used to write and refine recommendations for the Town and help to prioritize the next steps. Take the survey today, and share it with your friends, neighbors, and coworkers of all ages who live, work, or are from the Irmo area!

IRMO
Vision 2035
**COMPREHENSIVE
LAND USE PLAN**

CONCERNS

Respondents to the survey indicated that safety and crime was their #1 concern. The remainder of the top three concerns included traffic and/or road maintenance and quality of public schools and services. Other concerns included the changing character of Irmo and the quality of new residential development.

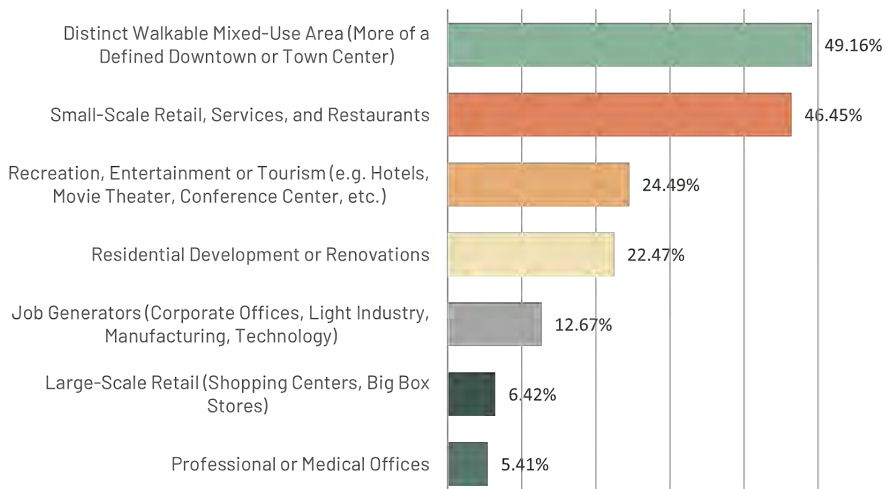
Top 3 Concerns for Irmo

#1 Safety & Crime

#2 Traffic and/or Road Maintenance

#3 Quality of Schools and/or Public Services

Development Preferences



DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES

Responses indicated that a walkable, mixed-use area that could be a more defined Town Center is desired. The majority of respondents are interested in a home with a large yard, but a large percentage (41%) are interested in a house with smaller yard in close proximity to a park, greenspace or other amenities.

Top 3 Housing Preferences

#1 A house with a large yard, even if it's not near anything (e.g., shopping, services, parks, or schools).

#2 A house with a smaller yard within walking distance of a park or shared green space, or other community amenities.

#3 A low maintenance patio home, duplex, or townhome within walking distance or shopping, services, a park, or a school.



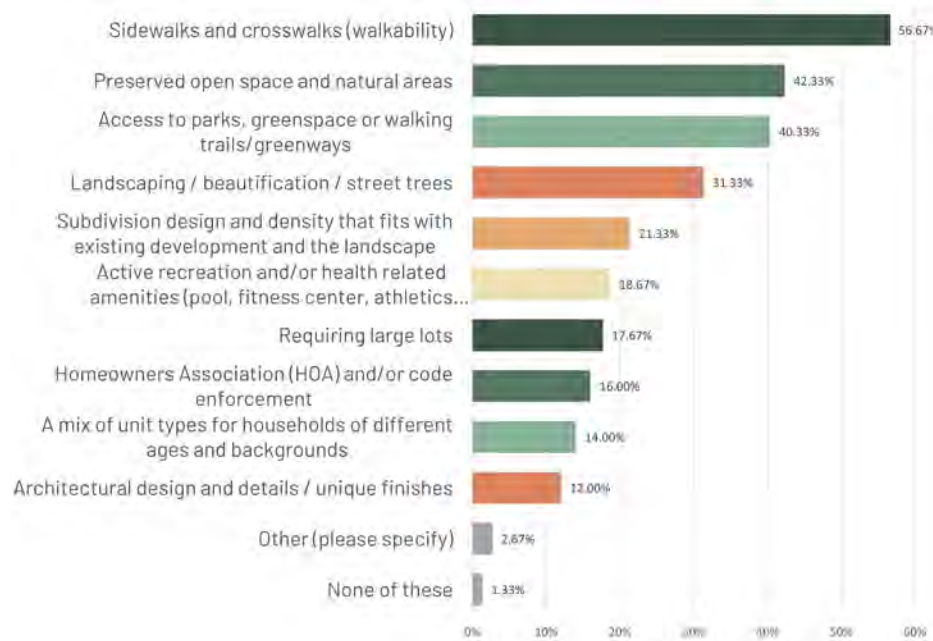
Typical home in Friarsgate

NEW NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

In the Vision 2035 Comprehensive Plan Survey, residents indicated that the most important qualities needed in new neighborhoods were pedestrian facilities for walkability and preserved open space and natural areas.

Access to parks, green space, or walking trails/greenways, landscaping and street trees and subdivisions design and density that fits in with existing development and the landscape were second tier priorities.

Most Important Qualities for New Neighborhoods



TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Road maintenance was the number one transportation priority followed by intersection improvements, road widenings and sidewalks. Open-ended responses to questions about transportation priorities included improvements along Broad River Road, Dutch Fork Road, Highway 6, Irmo Drive, Lake Murray Boulevard, Bush River Road, and safer intersections along St. Andrews Road.

Transportation Priorities

#1 Road Maintenance

#2 Intersection Improvements or Redesign

#3 Road Widenings

#4 Sidewalks

PARKS AND RECREATION FEEDBACK

The survey included a number of questions related to park usage and priorities. The most frequently used Town parks are the Moore Park and Town Park. Priority improvements include an inclusive playground, an outdoor concert series, pollinator habitats and paved trails.



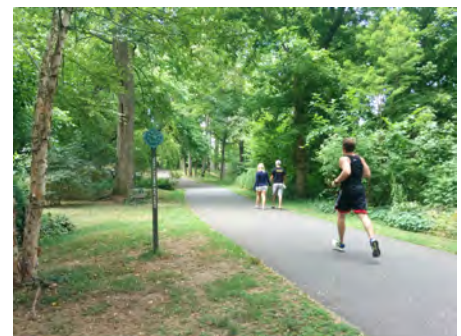
Inclusive Playground



Outdoor Concert Series



Pollinator Habitat



Paved Trails/Greenway Connections

Respondents were asked to give suggestions for improvements they would like to see in Irmo's Parks. Here are a few responses:

- ◆ "The parks should be fully connected as to be more pedestrian friendly."
- ◆ "Covering shades over Irmo Community Park playground sets. They get too hot with direct sunlight in the summer."
- ◆ "Additional cameras and lights at the parks. Would love to see more events at Irmo Park."
- ◆ "A splash pad would be amazing!"
- ◆ "I'd like to see more events like Spin Doctors last year. There was a good turnout and it was a nostalgic band people knew and were excited to see."

Top 5 Programs or Facilities that People want to see in Irmo

#1 Inclusive Playground

#4 Paved Trails

**#2 Outdoor
Concert Series**

**#5 Greenway/Bike
Connections**

#3 Pollinator Habitat

VISION & GOALS

Vision

Irmo is a safe, distinctive and attractive community that offers a blend of small-town and suburban lifestyles.

The Town is poised to grow with the Midlands by maintaining a diverse economic base and employing a balanced approach to growth. With the area's scenic beauty, access to recreational opportunities, cultural resources, and economic opportunity, Irmo is a welcoming place for people and businesses to call home.

Plan Goals

POPULATION

- ◆ Encourage growth in the Town's population and commercial base through infill, adaptive reuse and strategic annexation.
- ◆ Build a Town that allows residents from ages 8 to 80 to flourish.
- ◆ Support Irmo's diverse and dynamic population.

LAND USE

- ◆ Encourage a diversity of uses and infill development.
- ◆ Foster the development of an attractive community that reinforces town character and creates a strong sense of place.
- ◆ Continue to invest in the public realm.
- ◆ Pursue targeted annexation and financial resiliency.

ECONOMY

- ◆ Diversify and grow the economy in the Town of Irmo.
- ◆ Enhance the local economy through the capture of outside tax dollars and minimizing leakage.

HOUSING

- ◆ Promote quality residential development that maintains town character while meeting future needs by allowing a diversity of housing types in key locations.
- ◆ Continue code enforcement activities that maintain and improve the quality of neighborhoods.

HISTORY & CULTURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ Preserve and promote local history and identity.
- ◆ Continue to support local events to reinforce the identity of the Town of Irmo.

TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ Collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to provide a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system.
- ◆ Maximize the efficiency of the existing roadway network.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- ◆ Maintain excellent public safety services.
- ◆ Improve park infrastructure to ensure safety and provide quality recreational opportunities for all ages.
- ◆ Ensure public utility infrastructure meets the future needs of the Town.

NATURAL RESOURCES & RESILIENCY

- ◆ Protect and maintain natural resources, including water quality, tree canopy and connected open space in the Town and surrounding areas.
- ◆ Preserve and protect water quality.
- ◆ Take steps to improve the air quality of the Town.
- ◆ Mitigate impacts of natural hazards and heat exposure.
- ◆ Improve critical facilities and response capabilities.
- ◆ Identify and assist vulnerable populations.
- ◆ Support financial resiliency.







PLAN ELEMENTS

POPULATION

Trends

Since 2000, Irmo's population has been steadily growing at an annual growth rate of 0.2%. In 2000, Irmo's population was 11,108. Since 2000, Irmo's population has increased by 461 people (+4.2%) resulting in a 2020 population of 11,569. Irmo's 2022 population is 11,942, which shows a continuation of growth.

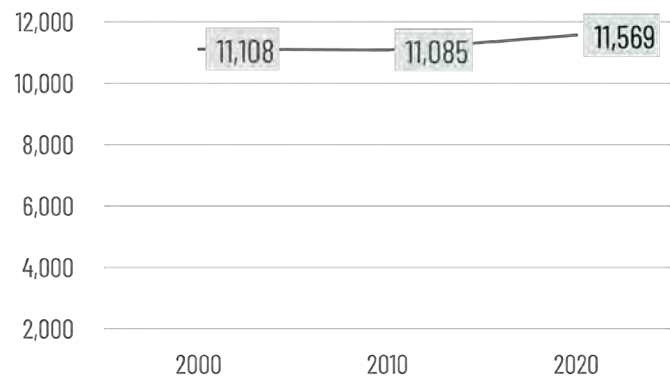
Irmo's study area, which includes town limits and the adjacent unincorporated areas has been growing faster than the Town. The study area population increased from 16,265 in 2000 to 20,239 in 2020, which is an increase of 3,974 people (24.4%). This represents a 1.1% annual growth in the study area population from 2000-2020.

AGE AND RACE

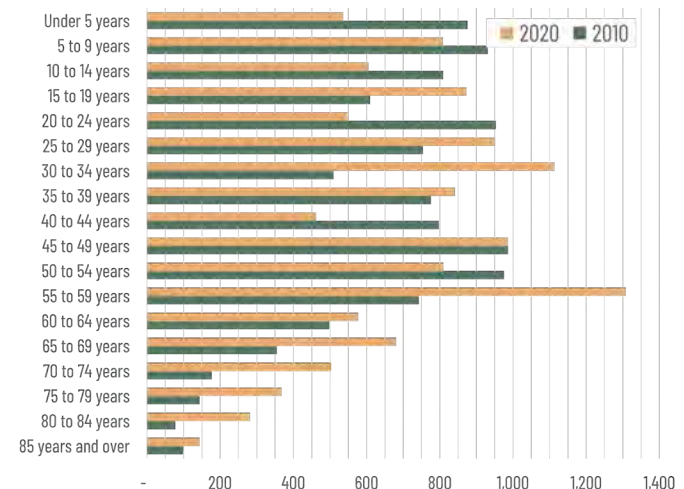
As of 2020, the Town of Irmo's median age was 39.6 years, up from the previous 2010 median age of 35.8 years. Irmo is comparable to the State in terms of median age with South Carolina's median age being 39.7 years. Irmo's largest age cohort in 2020 was individuals aged 55-59 years. The last decade has seen a significant increase in this age cohort as well as ages 30 to 34 years. This likely represents long-term residents remaining in Irmo and new families moving here.

In 2020, 87.73% of Irmo's population consisted of White (6,595) and Black or African American (3,554) identifying individuals. The Town of Irmo also has 663 Hispanic residents. Since 2010, the populations identifying as Black alone, American Indian alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander alone have increased, while the population identifying as White has decreased by 8.03%.

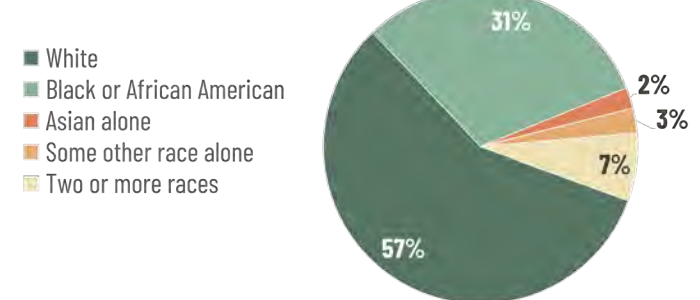
Irmo Town Limits Population, 2000-2020



Age Cohorts, 2020



Racial Makeup, 2020

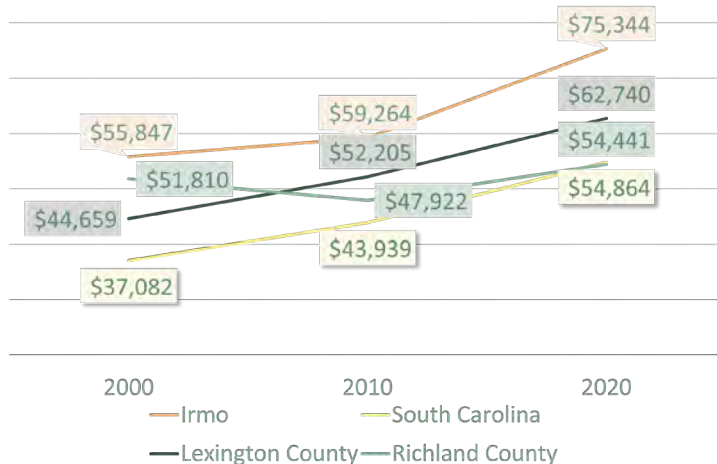




HOUSEHOLDS

As of 2020, there were 5,140 individual households within the Town of Irmo. Households in Irmo average 2.77 people in size, which is higher than both the Lexington and Richland County's averages of 2.51 and 2.45 respectively. Irmo's median household income of \$75,344 is relatively high compared to the State of South Carolina, as well as Lexington and Richland Counties (*see chart below*). The median income in Irmo is also higher than the neighboring towns of Lexington (\$71,850) and Chapin (\$59,514).

Median Household Income Comparison, 2020



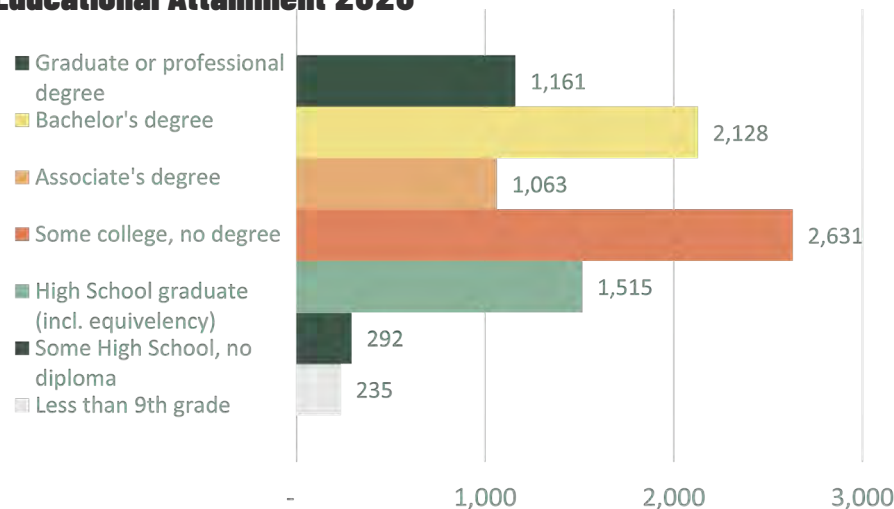
\$75,344

Median Household Income

2.77

Average Household Size*

Educational Attainment 2020



48%

**Adults over 25 with
Associates Degrees
or Higher**

Sources: Decennial Census (2020), *2022 ACS 5-Year Community Survey

POPULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Irmo is poised to grow due to its location, quality of life and local economic and recreational opportunities. Growth can be accommodated through infill, adaptive reuse and strategic annexation. New development and Town investments in infrastructure and services should help to support residents of all ages and backgrounds.

Goal 1: Encourage growth in the Town's population and commercial base through infill, adaptive reuse and strategic annexation.

Strategy 1A: Encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties.

Strategy 1B: Pursue strategic annexations along I-26 and Broad River Road.

Strategy 1C: Consider annexation petitions from commercial and residential areas that would benefit from Town services.

- ◆ Evaluate annexation requests on a case by case basis to determine potential benefits and costs to the Town and existing residents and businesses.



Strategy 1D: Provide informational materials on potential benefits of annexation on the Town's website.

Goal 2: Build a Town that allows residents from ages 8 to 80 to flourish.

Strategy 2A: Assess and improve availability of accessible parking and pedestrian routes at Town facilities, including parks.

Strategy 2B: Identify opportunities to add benches in public spaces and parks.

Strategy 2C: Update playground equipment incrementally to appeal to a broader range of age groups and capabilities.

Strategy 2D: Improve walkability and pedestrian access across major intersections like St. Andrews Road and



"Third places" like Loveland Coffee provide spaces where community members can come together and create connections.

Lake Murray Boulevard and between neighborhoods, schools and parks.

Strategy 2E: Hold an annual Open Streets event that closes off a commercial corridor for pedestrian access to businesses.

- ◆ Evaluate potential of closing streets surrounding Town Park or at another suitable location.

Strategy 2F: Encourage businesses and events that build community connections.

Strategy 2G: Allow a mix of housing types in new communities and as infill on key sites where compatible with the character areas shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Goal 3: Support Irmo's diverse and dynamic population.

Strategy 3A: Support equity and cultural diversity through Town events, including Juneteenth, Irmo International Festival and the Cherry Blossom Festival.

Strategy 3B: Continue to encourage diverse representation on Town boards and Town staff.

Strategy 3C: Ensure Town staff are adequately equipped to refer inquiries for senior and/or translation services to appropriate agencies.

LAND USE

Trends

Existing land use is determined using a combination of parcel data and aerial imagery. As opposed to zoning, it represents an inventory of how the land in an area is used currently. It shows the quantities of individual uses and their spatial patterns.

The map on page 27 shows existing land use. Predominant land use in the study area includes single family residential, vacant/agricultural uses and commercial uses. Single family residential areas represent 40.7% of the study area and include a number of subdivisions including Friarsgate. Commercial areas are located along major roadways including Lake Murray Boulevard, Saint Andrews Road and Broad River Road.

Commercial development is important to the current and future fiscal health of the Town due to the fact that the Town of Irmo currently does not have property taxes and a significant portion of the local budget is funded through sales tax.

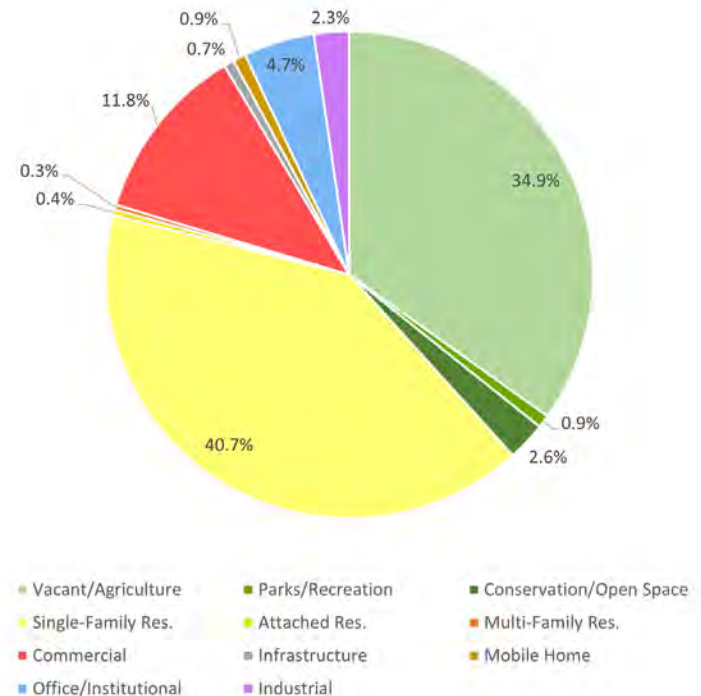
ISSUES

- ◆ Aging housing stock
- ◆ Reliant on commercial development for tax base
- ◆ No "downtown" or walkable area, but there is also controversy around the previous downtown proposal
- ◆ Development pressure across multiple jurisdictions, especially for multi-family
- ◆ Increasing number of new single-family residential homes are rental properties.

OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ Low unemployment and increasing incomes
- ◆ Irmo is a desirable place to live
- ◆ Counties are focusing more on growth management with changes to allowable density, which could lead to more requests for annexation to towns

EXISTING LAND USE STATISTICS



Existing Land Use	Combined Acreage	% of Total Acres
Vacant / Agriculture	3362.8	34.9%
Parks / Recreation	82.4	0.9%
Conservation / Open Space	247.6	2.6%
Single-Family Res.	3920.5	40.7%
Attached Res.	36.7	0.4%
Multi-Family Res.	31.3	0.3%
Commercial	1137.2	11.8%
Infrastructure	65.3	0.7%
Mobile Home	82.0	0.9%
Office / Institutional	453.6	4.7%
Industrial	225.0	2.3%
Total Acres	9644.4	100.0%

The statistics above show existing land use trends in the study area. These values are derived from tax parcel records.

Suitability

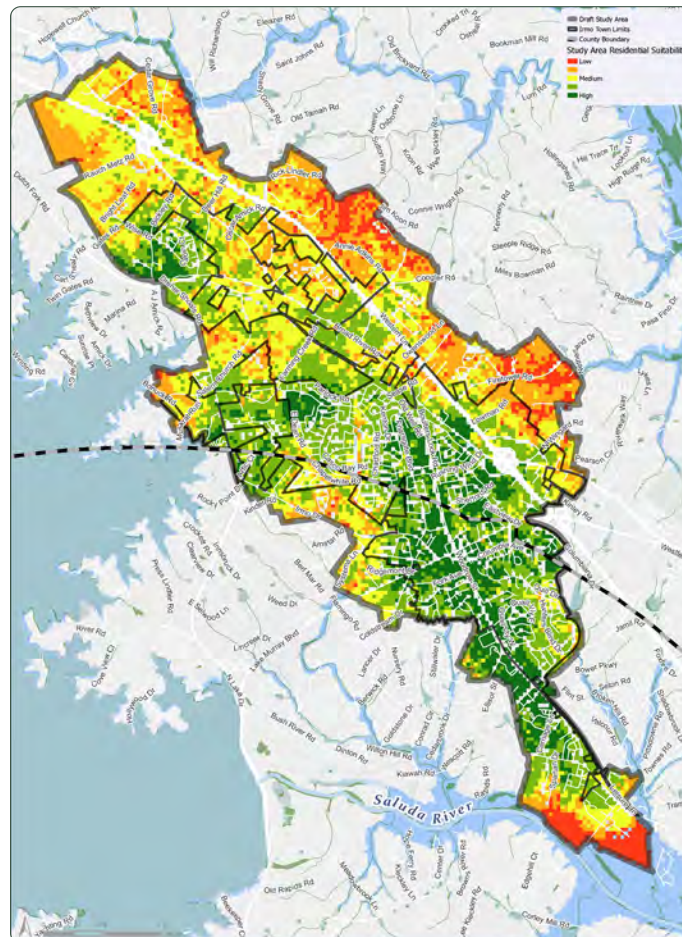
A land use suitability analysis was conducted using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. The analysis took into account environmental and economic factors that make land attractive for different types of development. The analysis was used to create suitability maps for residential, commercial and industrial land uses. These maps were used as an input, along with community and stakeholder input for identifying land use recommendations in the Plan.

The residential suitability map shows many areas of Irmo are suitable for residential development including the core of Town that is mostly developed as subdivisions and the main corridors where much of the existing commercial development is located. This indicates that many older shopping centers and strip commercial developments may be attractive for mixed-use development, including different types of residential in addition to commercial. The map also shows areas along Broad River Road and near the interchanges as being attractive to residential.

The commercial suitability map shows many of the major corridors suitable for commercial use, including Lake Murray Boulevard, Saint Andrews Road, Broad River Road and locations at key intersections and interchanges along I-26.

The industrial suitability analysis results are heavily influenced by property size, access to major roads and areas that are not in conflict with existing residential development. Existing light industrial areas and business parks are shown to be highly suitable, as are large tracts of land near I-26.

RESIDENTIAL SUITABILITY



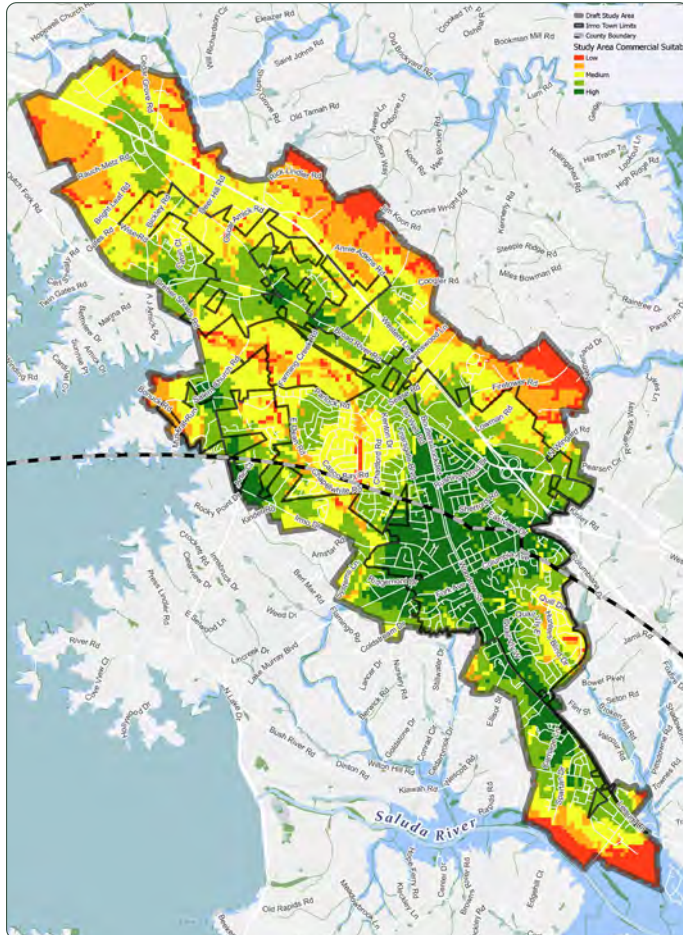
RESIDENTIAL SUITABILITY

ANALYSIS INPUTS

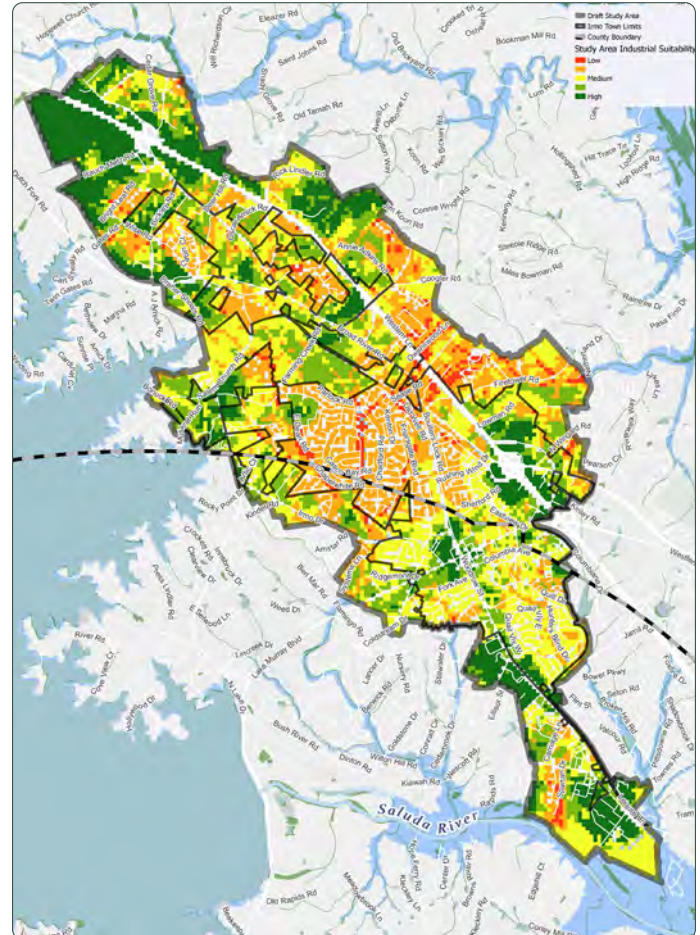
- ◆ Street density
- ◆ Density of existing residential development
- ◆ Proximity to commercial and services
- ◆ Proximity to schools and parks
- ◆ Distance from existing industrial areas
- ◆ Environmental constraints
- ◆ Steep slopes
- ◆ Proximity to major intersections
- ◆ Parcel size



COMMERCIAL SUITABILITY



INDUSTRIAL SUITABILITY



COMMERCIAL SUITABILITY

ANALYSIS INPUTS

- ◆ Density of existing residential development
- ◆ Proximity to commercial and services
- ◆ Proximity to the center of Irmo
- ◆ Proximity to high traffic roadways
- ◆ Proximity to major intersections
- ◆ Environmental constraints

INDUSTRIAL SUITABILITY

ANALYSIS INPUTS

- ◆ Distance from existing residential development
- ◆ Proximity to existing industrial development
- ◆ Proximity to interstate exits
- ◆ Proximity to major intersections
- ◆ Environmental constraints
- ◆ Parcel size

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map and associated character areas represent the Town's desired development pattern for the next 5-10 years. The Future Land Use Map and associated policies strike a balanced approach to growth by encouraging an attractive blend of small-town and suburban lifestyles and a diverse economic base while protecting the area's scenic beauty.

The Future Land Use Map includes nine character areas. These areas are described on the following pages and include the predominant land use or set of uses that exist or are expected in the area. These character areas do not propose a change to existing uses, but indicate shared uses and design characteristics for future development.

The Map is meant to guide land use decisions and overall development design in the Town of Irmo. As development occurs and infrastructure capacity changes, the Future Land Use Map or portions of the map are recommended to be periodically updated.

FUTURE LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS

Institutional & Parks

Low to Medium Density Residential

Mixed Residential

Neighborhood Center

Commercial Mixed Use

Town Center

Office & Employment

Live / Work

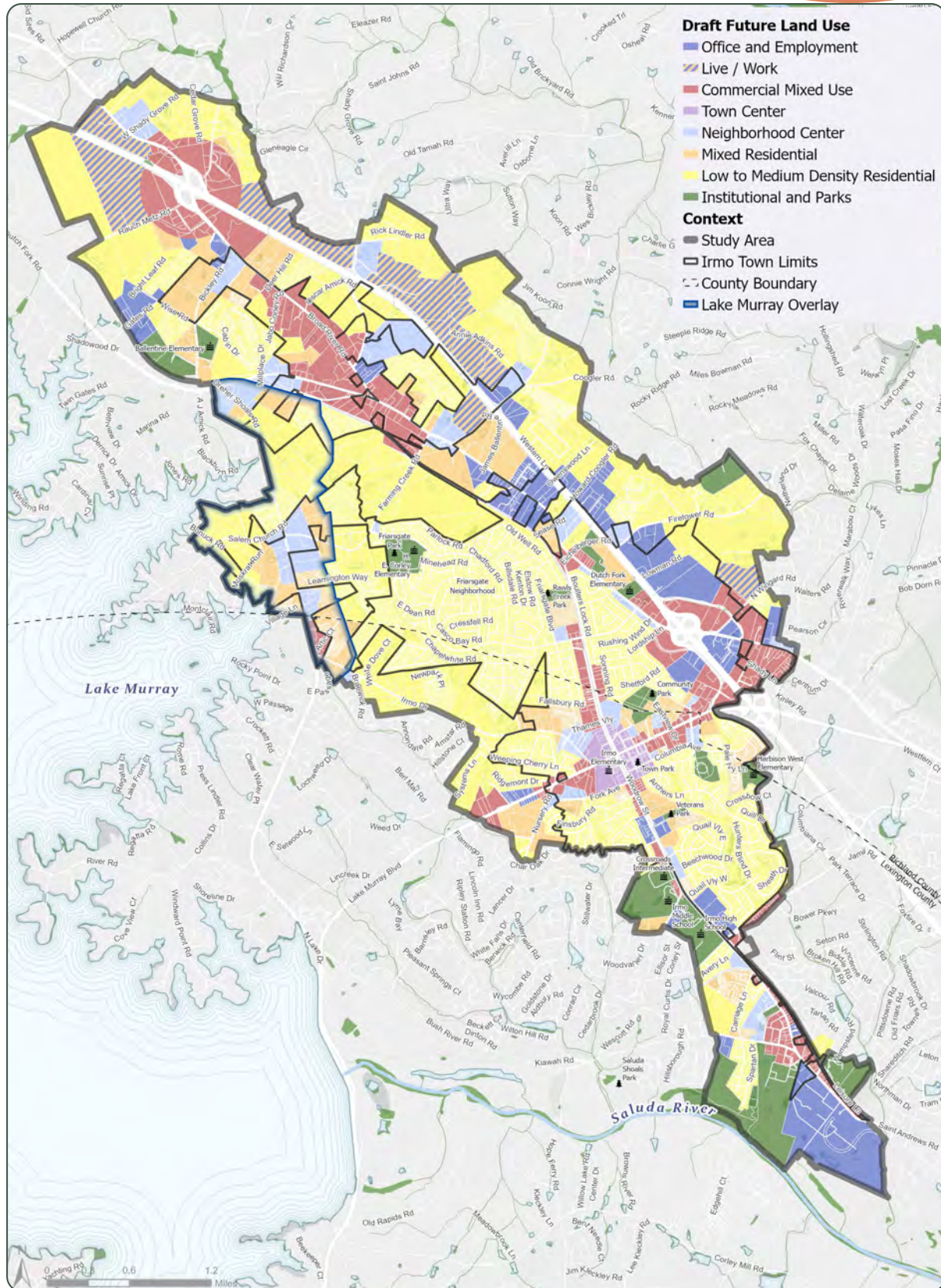
Lake Murray Overlay

FUTURE LAND USE MAP HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Identification of existing and future commercial corridors
- ◆ Acknowledgment of existing residential neighborhoods
- ◆ Guidance for future types of residential, including low to medium density neighborhoods, areas where a mix of residential is appropriate and mixed-use areas
- ◆ Defined Town Center that does not include areas in conflict with existing residential development
- ◆ Descriptions that allow for some flexibility on uses while emphasizing shared design characteristics of future development
- ◆ Lake Murray Overlay that identifies areas where new development should be designed to limit impacts on viewsheds and natural resources



FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Future Land Use Character Areas



Institutional and Parks

- ◆ Public buildings and uses, including government offices, schools and parks. These areas consist of land used for recreation, education and government services.



Low to Medium Density Residential

- ◆ Mostly single family with some attached housing as part of a planned development, negotiated residential district or infill.
- ◆ Density is typically 1-4 Dwelling Units per Acre (DUA), New development typically < 3 DUA. Infill areas may have isolated areas at higher densities.
- ◆ Home occupations and small-scale accessory commercial uses may be appropriate, depending on property and context.
- ◆ Typical subdivisions have curvilinear streets with medium sized blocks and integrated passive open space.



Mixed Residential

- ◆ Residential focus area which provides areas for housing near major transportation corridors and commercial areas.
- ◆ Typically smaller lots and more connected streets with short block lengths, sidewalks on both sides and street trees. Public open space is integrated into developments and includes common greens and plazas.
- ◆ In some areas a higher density mix of housing types (*including townhomes, house-scale attached structures (i.e. duplexes), cottages, etc.*) and senior living serves as a transition between commercial uses and lower-density residential areas.
- ◆ Density is typically 2-6 DUA with occasional higher density areas.
- ◆ Some small-scale professional office, service and retail uses may be appropriate depending on context.



Neighborhood Center

- ◆ Neighborhood Centers are generally located near concentrations of existing or planned neighborhoods, along key roadways or at major intersections.
- ◆ These areas have small-scale commercial, service and office uses that are typically less than 25,000 square feet and have a height of 1-2 stories.
- ◆ Building and parking design and lighting standards limit impact on existing residential development.
- ◆ May include limited areas of residential including a mix of housing types including single family homes, house-scale attached structures (*i.e. duplexes*), townhomes, live/work units and/or apartments.



Commercial Mixed Use

- ◆ Commercial and Mixed-Use areas that include a variety of uses including commercial, service, office and a mix of residential housing types.
- ◆ Commercial uses typically serve a larger area than Neighborhood Centers and include larger buildings and retail anchors.
- ◆ May include taller buildings (*max of 3-4 stories*).
- ◆ Limited areas of multi-family housing opportunities may be integrated as part of a mix of uses. As with residential uses, should be located in close proximity to shopping and services.



Town Center

- ◆ Mix of commercial, office and residential uses with integrated plazas or green space.
- ◆ Pedestrian-scale buildings and site design (*parking to side or behind buildings where possible*)
- ◆ Typical building height is 2-4 stories. Potential for taller buildings (*4-5 stories*) on key sites.
- ◆ Limited parking should be required as on-street parking and shared parking is encouraged.

Future Land Use Character Areas Continued



Office and Employment

- ◆ Mostly located along the I-26 corridor or in areas with a mix of business parks and light industrial uses.
- ◆ These areas are appropriate for offices, light manufacturing, warehousing, research and development, and flex space.
- ◆ These areas may also include a limited amount of supporting commercial uses, such as restaurants and convenience retailers to serve employees.
- ◆ Large-scale residential developments are discouraged in locations that are prime for businesses and non-residential uses.



Live / Work

- ◆ Areas where an existing mix of residential and commercial uses occur and areas of potential voluntary annexation. Annexation requests should be evaluated for their benefits to the Town.
- ◆ A mix of uses may be appropriate: new residential development, commercial and/or offices.
- ◆ A variety of residential types is expected with higher density development near interchanges and highways. Residential density should decrease and transition to single family homes near adjacent single family neighborhoods.

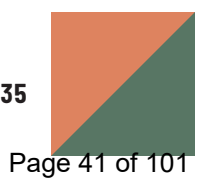


Lake Murray Overlay

- ◆ Areas proximal to Lake Murray where new developments should be designed in an environmentally sensitive manner to limit impacts on water quality and viewsheds.
- ◆ Environmental and open space commitments should include active and passive open space, riparian buffer standards that exceed minimums, and tree protection.
- ◆ New non-residential developments should be small in scale and incorporate architectural details including pitched roofs, quality materials, transparent facades and limited building height.
- ◆ Residential developments should be designed to fit with the land and create walkable neighborhoods with usable front porches, integrated greenspace and access to recreational amenities.



page intentionally left blank



LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Irmo is positioned to grow. Land use recommendations in this element focus on how and where to encourage different types of development. The Town aims to sustain and create an attractive community that offers a blend of small-town and suburban lifestyles. Major land use recommendations focus on how to take advantage of the opportunities to provide businesses and residents a place to call home while reinforcing Town character.



Goal 1: Encourage a diversity of uses and infill development.

Strategy 1A: Encourage quality commercial development and redevelopment in opportunity areas.

- ◆ Primary commercial corridors include Lake Murray Boulevard, St Andrews Road, Woodrow Street, and Broad River Road.
- ◆ Interchange Areas at I-26 and Lake Murray Boulevard and Broad River Road also present opportunity for commercial development.

Strategy 1B: Consider rezonings to commercial in appropriate areas.

- ◆ Encourage rezonings to the General Commercial (GC) zoning district on larger commercial sites on main corridors and at key intersections.

- ◆ Encourage rezonings to the Neighborhood-Commercial (NC) zoning district or the Office-Commercial (CO) zoning district in areas where smaller-scale light commercial uses may be appropriate due to potential conflicts with existing residential uses.

Strategy 1C: Encourage redevelopment of aging shopping centers.

- ◆ Review and revise zoning ordinances where necessary to promote pedestrian-oriented commercial development and facilitate quality infill development.
 - ◆ *Pedestrian-oriented design features include limited parking in front of buildings, windows and architectural details on building facades, street trees and parking lot landscaping, and sidewalk connections along frontages, from parking areas to building entrances and to adjacent residential areas.*



Commercial land uses like the businesses along Lake Murray Boulevard are key to the Town's financial resiliency. Irmo does not have property taxes. However, its sales tax, hospitality tax, licenses and permits made up nearly 50% of town revenue in 2022.

- ◆ Allow for some residential as part of redevelopment, but ensure a minimum percentage of existing commercial is replaced (i.e. 50-75% of existing commercial space).

Strategy 1D: Encourage mixed-use development with active frontages in key areas to create a Town Center.

- ◆ Require new mixed-use development to have retail, restaurants or other active uses fronting key roadways or pedestrian ways.
- ◆ Areas that could contribute to the Town Center include the Town Hall / Town Park Area and frontages along Woodrow Street and Carlisle Street.

Strategy 1E: Consider allowance for Accessory Commercial Units on residential properties that meet defined standards.

- ◆ Standards could include minimum property size, setbacks, parking requirements and/or buffering.

Goal 2: Foster the development of an attractive community that reinforces Town character and creates a strong sense of place.

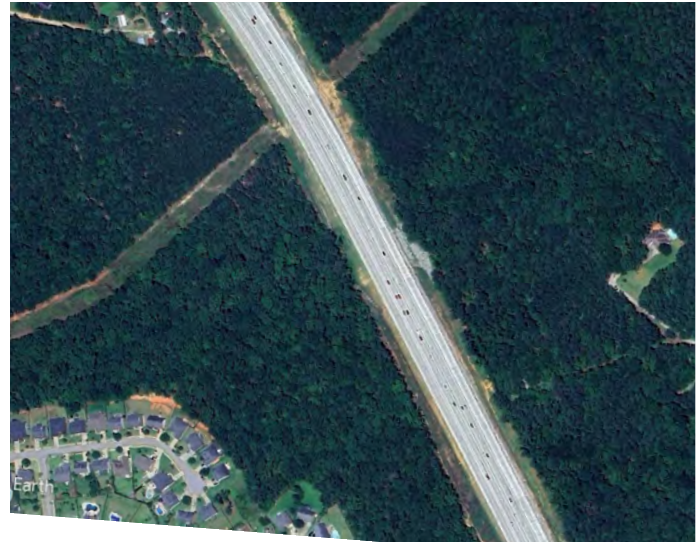
Strategy 2A: Maintain and enhance standards for commercial corridors.

- ◆ Continue to utilize commercial site and landscape standards to ensure development is compatible with the aesthetic of the Town of Irmo.

- ◆ Require connected parking lots, shared driveways and access management along major corridors.

Strategy 2B: Maintain and consider updates to development standards for particular uses or locations.

- ◆ Maintain conditional standards for self-storage units.
 - ◆ *Allow self storage units in the Light Manufacturing (LM) district only via a Special Exception.*
 - ◆ *Require landscape buffers and maintain or establish architectural or material standards.*
 - ◆ *Consider a requirement for a minimum separation or setback requirement from major corridors (i.e. Lake Murray Boulevard, Broad River Road, and St. Andrews Road).*
- ◆ Encourage tree preservation and architectural or site design standards for development adjacent to I-26.
 - ◆ *Require the preservation or planting of trees adjacent to I-26. An incentive based approach could require a planted buffer and provide credit for preservation of existing trees.*
 - ◆ *Limited exceptions could be made to account for large frontages or narrow properties. Visible buildings should meet material standards and/or include architectural details such as a minimum amount of transparency.*



Above: Large sections of the I-26 corridor are flanked by forest. Preserving trees along the highway can reduce noise.

Below: Preservation of tree buffers with a minimum width of 65-100 ft is recommended for noise reduction near residential development. (Conservation Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors and Greenways, U.S. Forest Service)





Strategy 2C: Require appropriate buffering and other transitions for new development near existing subdivisions.

- ◆ Review and update buffer requirements to emphasize noise and light attenuation and use of native plants.
- ◆ Through updates to standards or the rezoning process encourage the scale and intensity of new development to transition to residential uses closer to existing subdivisions.

Strategy 2D: Maintain and enhance design standards for new residential developments especially those of medium to higher density.

- ◆ Review standards related to open space, tree protection, stream buffers, site buffers, sidewalk and street standards, lot width and access to improve design of new development.
- ◆ Encourage a mix of natural and improved open space in new developments.
- ◆ Require multiple accesses and exits in residential developments > 30 units.
- ◆ Require connected roadways and pedestrian connections within the site and to nearby sidewalks, greenways and other destinations.



Recent residential development in Irmo.

- ◆ Continue to discourage “Fanny First” development design where the rear areas of high density housing are facing major roadways. This can be avoided with site design choices that incorporates open space, berms and landscaped buffers.
- ◆ Consider requiring street trees, on-street parking, and/or alley loaded access for a percentage of townhomes and narrow lots. These requirements could come with a reduced setback.

Strategy 2E: Utilize the Negotiated Residential (NR) District and review process to allow design flexibility while encouraging quality new residential development.

- ◆ Consider updates to base standards to address ongoing aesthetic or character concerns with residential development.

Strategy 2F: Establish policies and programs focused on neighborhood preservation and enhancement.

- ◆ Coordinate with community organizations, churches and other non-profits to understand needs of existing communities.

Strategy 2G: Maintain adequate code enforcement staffing and conduct proactive enforcement activities.

- ◆ Continue to enforce rental registration program and monitor occupancy trend shifting from owner to renter.

Goal 3: Continue to invest in the public realm.

Strategy 3A: Pursue streetscape improvements in key areas.

- ◆ Streetscape improvements would depend on location but could include pedestrian improvements, aesthetic improvements (i.e. new mast arms) and/or street trees or on-street parking.
- ◆ Candidate locations include:
 - ◆ *Along streets in the Town Center to complement park and future private development - see Town Center Recommendations for more detail.*
 - ◆ *Along Lake Murray Blvd to improve aesthetics of the principal gateway.*
 - ◆ *At Lake Murray Boulevard and Woodrow Street and Saint Andrews Road.*



Mast arms could be paired with burying of utilities to reduce visual clutter in key areas of Town.

Strategy 3B: Pursue the construction of a new Town Hall near the Town Center area designated on the Future Land Use Map.

- ◆ Work toward identifying a location for a new Town Hall in the vicinity of Town Park.

Strategy 3C: Study improvements to Moore Park and Church Street.

- ◆ Improve signage for Moore Park.
- ◆ Improve pedestrian and vehicular connections to Moore Park.
 - ◆ *This could include a sidewalk / multi-use path along Church Street and/or Moseley Avenue and/or a roadway connection (to Woodrow St.).*



Goal 4: Pursue targeted annexation and financial resiliency.

Strategy 4A: Develop an annexation strategy to identify location and types of properties to target.

Strategy 4B: Support efforts of Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) to lobby for Zero millage cities to establish property tax options.

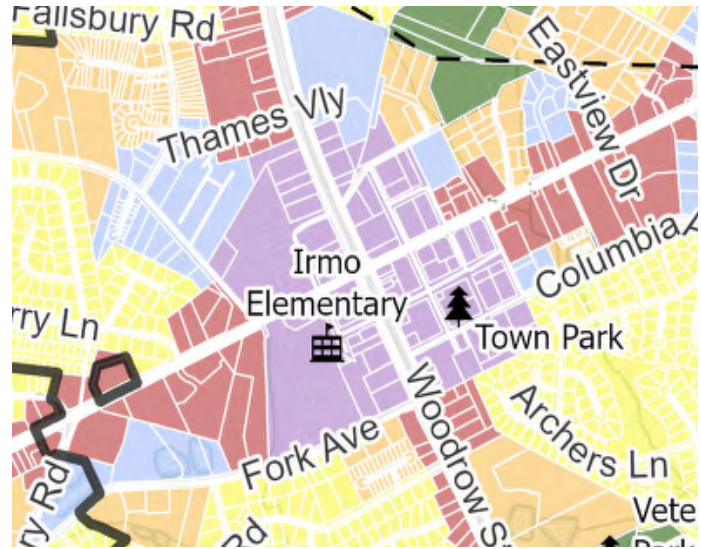
Strategy 4C: Consider long-term financial implications (potential tax revenue) during major development decisions.

Town Center Recommendations

During the public engagement there was significant support for a walkable mixed-use area. There was also concern about a previous proposal for a “downtown” area near Moore Park. The following recommendations outline steps that could be taken to create more of a center of activity while respecting nearby residential areas.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT

- ◆ Continue to maintain and update Town Park.
- ◆ Consider updating the name of Town Park.
- ◆ Plan for new Town Hall site near the Town Center area and coordinate with neighbors on customizing its design.
- ◆ Plan for streetscape upgrades in the vicinity of the Town Center to complement Town Park and new Town Hall and encourage private investment nearby.
- ◆ Streetscape upgrades could include the addition of sidewalks, on-street parking and/or street trees.
- ◆ Candidate streets in the southeast quadrant of the Town Center include
 - ◆ *Woodrow Street: Pedestrian improvements*
 - ◆ *Columbia Avenue (66 ft ROW): Lighting, potentially curb and gutter, drainage*
 - ◆ *Lexington Avenue (100 ft ROW): Streetscape improvements (sidewalks, lighting, angled on-street parking)*
 - ◆ *Childs Street: Sidewalk*
- ◆ Candidate streets in the northeast quadrant of the Town Center include
 - ◆ *Carlisle Street (75 ft ROW): Sidewalk on east side, add on-street parking, curb and gutter*
 - ◆ *Laurens Street (75 ft ROW): Sidewalk, on-street parking*
 - ◆ *Mowers Street (75 ft ROW): Study the addition of a pedestrian connection*
 - ◆ *Moseley Avenue (45 ft ROW): Pave Moseley and create a pedestrian connection to Moore Park*

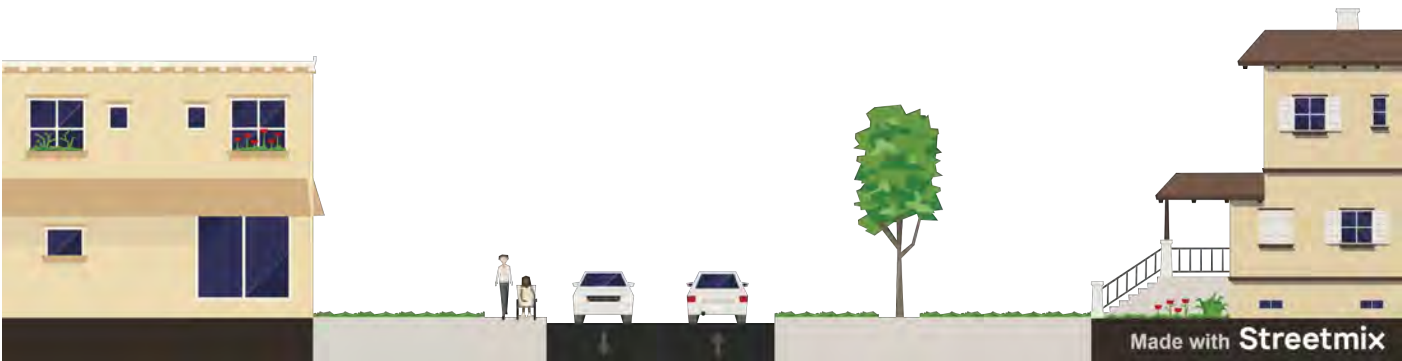


The Town Center is recommended to include incremental public improvements, infill and redevelopment a few blocks in each direction from the center of Town.

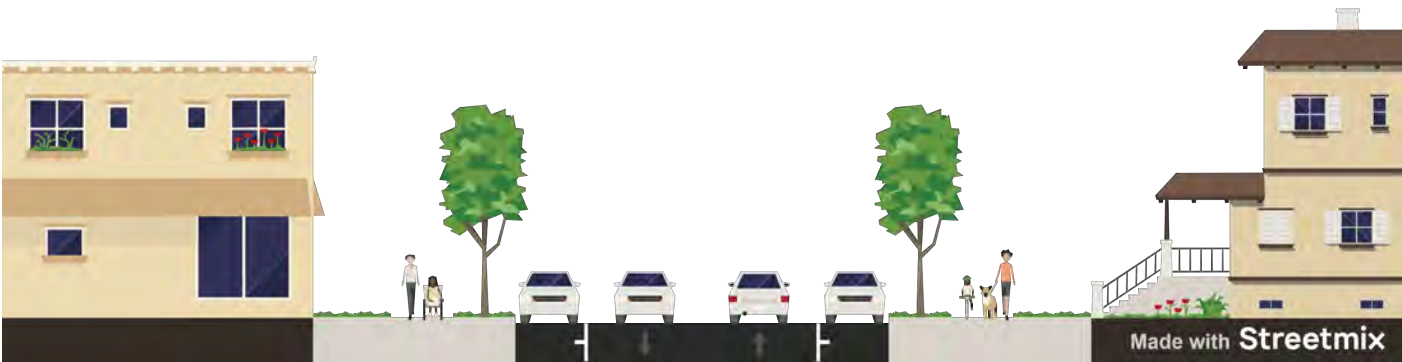


Streetscape Improvement Example

Carlisle Existing



Carlisle Future



Large rights-of-way in the center of Irmo could be utilized to add on-street parking, sidewalks or other amenities. The above example shows the existing condition of Carlisle Street and a potential streetscape improvement where a sidewalk is added on one side and on-street parking is added to provide parking for Town Park or new businesses that could be located in the vicinity.

- ◆ Encourage the use of shared parking and consider locations for centralized parking (long-term).
- ◆ Review and revise zoning ordinances where necessary to promote pedestrian-oriented commercial development and to facilitate quality infill development.
- ◆ Study and address zoning ordinance barriers to redevelopment in the Town Center.
- ◆ Encourage pedestrian-oriented design.
 - ◆ *Consider the use of build-to lines or reduced setbacks*
 - ◆ *Reduce parking requirements in lieu of on-street parking spaces as part of development*
 - ◆ *Orient private parking to the sides or rear of buildings*
 - ◆ *Require ground floor windows on street-facing facades*
- ◆ Analyze the existing Mixed-Use Development District and evaluate if this district is appropriate for new development in the Town Center. Consider a new district or an overlay with form-based standards.



New development in the Town Center could include mixed-use buildings and some residential to activate Irmo's historic center.

INCREASED ACTIVITY

- ◆ Encourage mixed-use development with active frontages in key areas to create a Town Center.
 - ◆ *Key frontages include the Town Hall / Town Park Area and the Woodrow Street Frontage.*
 - ◆ *Allow for residential as part of the mixed-use development, but require a percentage of commercial or office space.*
- ◆ Encourage new food and beverage offerings (not fast food or drive thrus) within the Town Center.
 - ◆ *Where possible encourage outdoor seating that is shaded and protected from vehicular traffic (landscape buffer).*



- ◆ Encourage new residential units in the vicinity of the Town Center area. This could include live/work units, townhomes, small-scale multifamily homes or cottage homes.
- ◆ Continue to utilize Town Park for events and festivals.
 - ◆ *Consider expanding event boundaries to include one or more streets that would be closed to vehicular traffic during the events.*
- ◆ Consider the installation of public art, beautification projects and/or historical/educational signage to complement the existing Town Park or Town Hall site.



The Irmo Town Park is a great amenity for residents, although it is difficult to walk or bike to due to lack of pedestrian crossings on major roads nearby.

IMPROVE WALKABILITY

- ◆ Improve pedestrian safety, accessibility and comfort in the Town Center area through the addition of sidewalks, widening of existing sidewalks, installing crosswalks and/or the addition of pedestrian signals.
- ◆ Key crossings that need pedestrian improvements include Lake Murray Boulevard and St. Andrews Road.
- ◆ Key roadways without adequate pedestrian facilities include
 - ◆ *Woodrow Street (especially north of Lake Murray Boulevard)*
 - ◆ *Columbia Avenue*
 - ◆ *Carlisle Street*
- ◆ Improve pedestrian lighting in the Town Center area.
- ◆ Improve connections to key destinations just outside the Town Center including between Town Park and Moore Park

BRANDING AND DEFINITION OF TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

- ◆ Create a brand identity for the Town Center and celebrate through banners, signage, streetscape and site amenities, placemaking through public art and landscaping.
- ◆ Market and promote the Town Center as the retail and cultural center of Town.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Trends

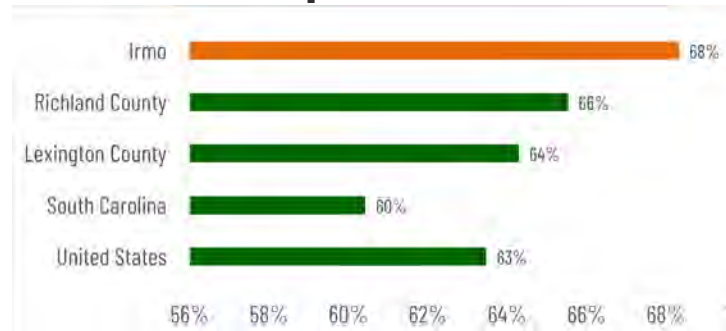
An intentional approach to economic development is vital to the future of Irmo.

Due to local tax structure, a prosperous local business ecosystem plays a critical role in maintaining a high level of community services for Town residents. The local population can be characterized by relatively high median household incomes and high workforce participation; however, very few individuals both live and work inside Town limits. This section advocates supporting local entrepreneurship and a diverse array of businesses and job opportunities alongside strategic infill, targeted annexation, and development of a town center while continuing to capture outside tax dollars to ensure a prosperous economic future.

LABOR FORCE

Labor force participation is a percentage that reflects the proportion of residents aged 16 or older who are employed or actively seeking work. The Town of Irmo's labor force participation rate stands at a robust 68% according to American Community Survey (ACS) data. Irmo's high labor force participation rate surpasses not only the national mean of 63% but also exceeds the rates for South Carolina (60%), Lexington County (64%), and Richland County (66%). This demonstrates a strong and engaged workforce within Irmo.

Labor Force Participation



Lake Murray Boulevard is a primary corridor for retail and services in Irmo's economy



Employment by Sector, 2020



EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

The table above illustrates the primary sectors of employment for Irmo residents. According to 2020 ACS data, the largest sectors by employment include education, health care, and social services with 1,269 individuals employed (21% of Irmo residents), followed closely by retail at 798 individuals employed (13%) and construction with 695 (11% of residents employed).

INDUSTRY GROWTH

Town of Irmo residents experienced an overall increase in employment in the 10 years between 2010 and 2020. The greatest job growth occurred in the construction industry with a 136% increase. Jobs in the information sector experienced 82% growth; however, the industry overall only accounts for 2% of the overall employment for Irmo residents with 144 jobs. Likewise, the wholesale trade and transportation, warehousing and utilities sectors experienced increases of 21% and 16% respectively, accounting for 8% of overall jobs.

GROWING SECTORS 2010-2020



+136%
Construction Jobs



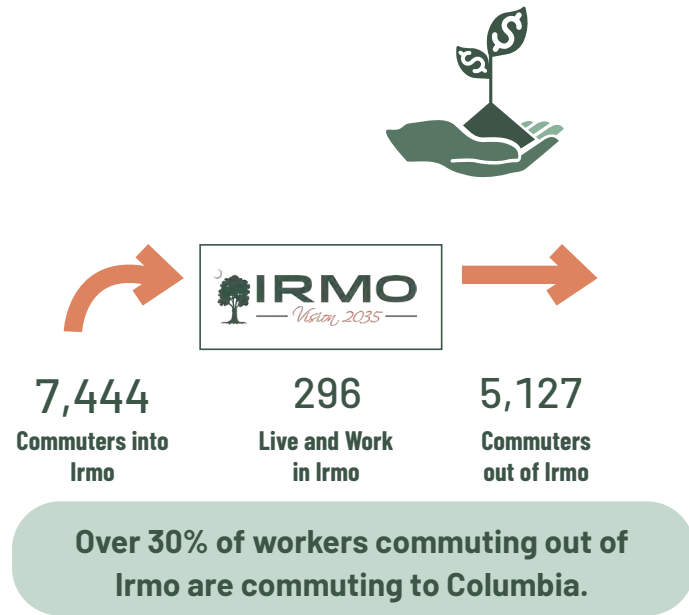
+82%
Information Jobs



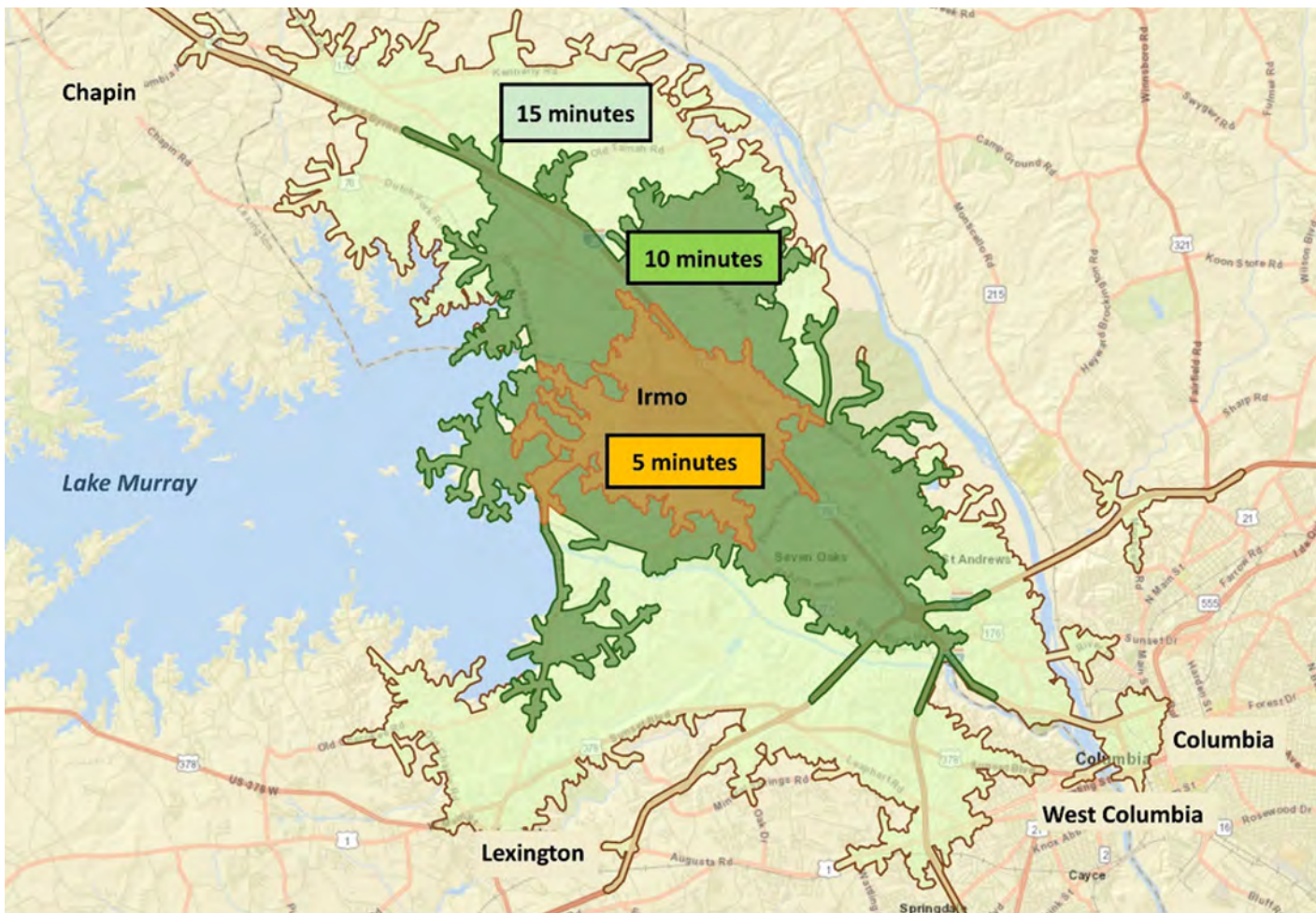
+21%
Wholesale Jobs

COMMUTING PATTERNS

Irmo experiences a significant daily workforce exchange, with 7,444 workers commuting into Town while 5,127 residents commute outside the community for work. Only 296 residents both live and work within Irmo. The mean commute time for Irmo residents is 24 minutes, which is shorter than state and national measures (*25 minutes and 36 minutes, respectively*), indicating good access to employers within the metropolitan area. These commuting patterns highlight Irmo's strong connectivity and contribute to its appeal as a residential and employment hub.



Drive Time Map





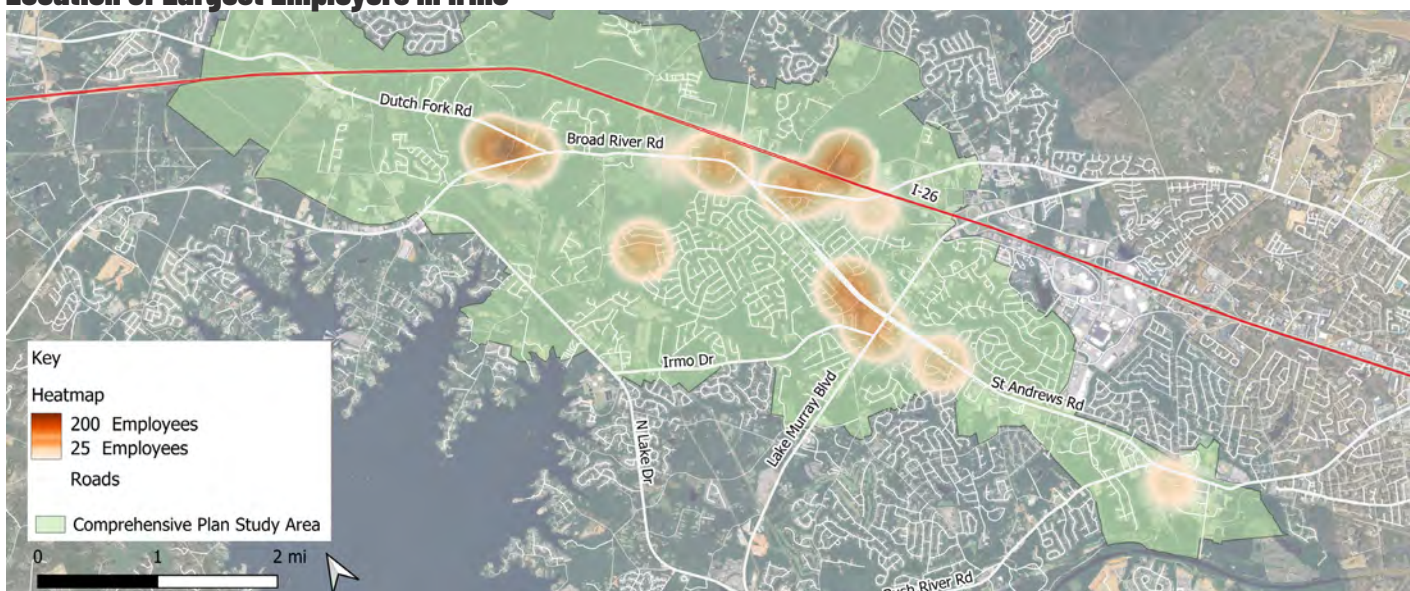
EMPLOYMENT DRIVERS

Economic Base Analysis uses “location quotient” (LQ) to compare local proportion of industry employment to broader areas. The chart shows Irmo’s LQ versus South Carolina’s LQ. An LQ above one (*highlighted in orange*) indicates a higher local employment proportion than the state level. Irmo residents have notably higher proportions of employment in the areas of public administration, services, finance, insurance and real estate, information, and construction.

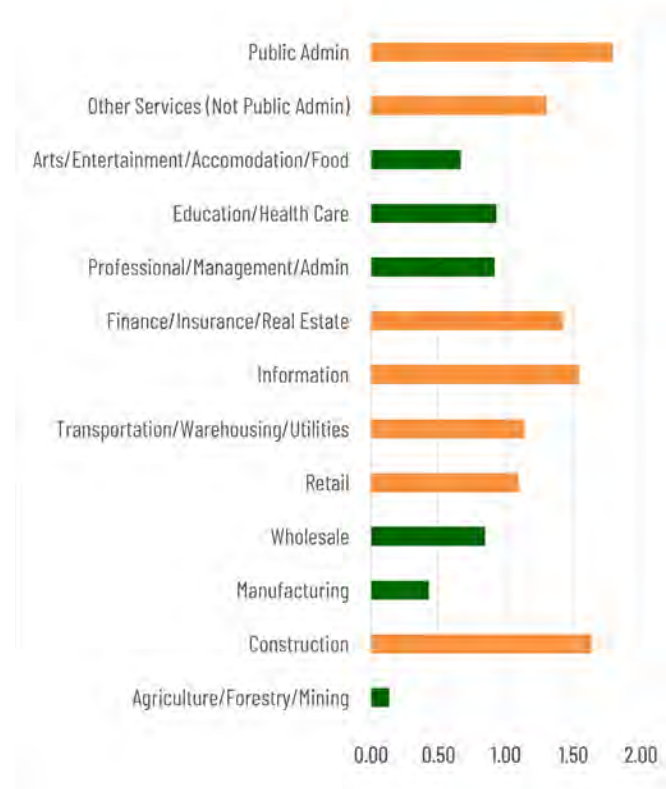
Large Irmo Employers

The map below depicts the location of larger employers (25-200 employees) in Irmo. These businesses generally represent educational institutions, or construction, large retail, and medical businesses, which cluster in three general areas: I-26 on Broad River Road, at the Lake Murray Boulevard and St. Andrews Road intersection, and west of Broad River and Dutch Fork Road. However, most Irmo businesses employ fewer than 25 people, with service and retail uses primarily located along Lake Murray Boulevard and St. Andrews Road.

Location of Largest Employers in Irmo



Economic Base Analysis (LQ), 2020



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Irmo exhibits strong economic health with opportunities for improvement. The economic profile for the community is positive with comparatively high median household income and labor participation. Likewise, mean travel time to work for Irmo residents is lower than that same measure for Lexington County and state-wide, indicating convenient access to jobs. These data reinforce the relationship between the Town of Irmo and the greater Columbia area as workers throughout the Midlands chose Irmo as a place to live.

These recommendations focus on improving the growth and sustainability of businesses and commercial sites within the community. In the absence of local property taxes, town budgets rely significantly on the performance of local businesses through sales tax and business licenses. Consequently, the Town of Irmo will continue to provide low barriers to entry for businesses and employers in the community through responsive customer service and a clear and predictable regulatory environment. Likewise, this plan recommends both quality infill and targeted annexation to facilitate business growth through the built environment to broaden the base. However, data indicate that only 296 individuals both live and work in the Town of Irmo with 5,127 residents leaving the community each day and 7,444 workers commuting into Town. This workforce exchange presents the opportunity to capture tax dollars from outside the community while continuing to strive



to provide well-rounded employment opportunities within Town limits and the ability to live and work in Irmo.

Goal 1: Diversify and grow the economy in the Town of Irmo.

Strategy 1A: Maintain a positive regulatory environment for desirable commercial development through clear regulations, streamlined processes and quality customer service.

- ◆ Review zoning structure and map to ensure sufficient opportunity for a range of economic development activities.
- ◆ Review entitlement processes to promote a low barrier to entry for entrepreneurial activities.



The health care, education, and social services sector is the largest employment cluster for Irmo residents

Strategy 1B: Encourage new commercial development or reinvestment in existing commercial sites through strategic high-quality infill, targeted annexation, and the creation of a mixed-use Town Center.

- ◆ Conduct a study of barriers for pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development and the redevelopment of legacy commercial centers.
- ◆ Identify potential annexation areas along the Interstate 26 corridor and major transportation routes that are suitable for future commercial development.
- ◆ Engage with developers and property owners in potential annexation areas to promote the benefits of annexation into the Town of Irmo.
- ◆ Consider the use of incentives such as reduction in parking standards, facade grants, and landscape incentives to promote

reinvestment in underutilized commercial properties and sites.

Strategy 1C: Provide opportunities for a wide range of businesses, including businesses with higher wage jobs.

- ◆ Encourage employment uses in locations along the Interstate 26 corridor that exhibit the potential for desirable transportation access and adequate utilities or utility expansion.



Example of an accessory commercial unit as part of a single-family residence

What is an Accessory Commercial Unit (ACU)?

ACUs are secondary, smaller commercial spaces located on the same property or within the same structure as a primary commercial or residential building.

- ◆ Utilize performance and/or design standards to ensure compatibility between Neighborhood Commercial uses and accessory commercial uses within residential neighborhoods, including but not limited to maintaining a residential aesthetic, number of employees, and parking standards.
- ◆ Encourage employment uses in locations along the Interstate 26 corridor with potential for transportation access and adequate utilities.

Strategy 1D: Promote Irmo as a balanced community where residents can live, work, and recreate, resulting in reduced commute times while maintaining a high quality of life.

Goal 2: Enhance the local economy through capture of outside tax dollars and minimizing leakage.

Strategy 2A: Ensure land use regulations support a wide range of goods and services for residents and visitors.

- ◆ Continue to promote sales tax- or employment-generating uses for prime commercial sites.
- ◆ Ensure land use regulations can accommodate a variety of business types within the community, including but not limited to retail shops, restaurants and professional services.
- ◆ Ensure land use regulations permit opportunities for business growth, allowing a range in the scale of business from a business start-up to a large business enterprise.
- ◆ Limit low employment and low sales tax generating commercial uses, such as self-storage units, to secondary commercial sites through zoning, performance standards, and limitations on concentration of such activities.

Strategy 2B: Coordinate with local partners to increase recognition of local businesses.



- ◆ Work with local organizations such as the Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce to promote a shop local campaign.
- ◆ Support joint marketing campaigns promoting local businesses to visitors, including joint marketing for businesses participating in local events.

Strategy 2C: Leverage special events to maximize positive impacts on local businesses.

- ◆ Promote a low barrier of entry for local businesses to participate in special events.
- ◆ Encourage sponsorship opportunities for local businesses to sponsor aspects of events, providing visibility and marketing opportunities.
- ◆ Support collaborative advertising campaigns for local events that promote the event and local businesses.
- ◆ Evaluate available funding sources such as Hospitality and Accommodations Taxes to promote local events and businesses.



Moore Park hosts numerous special events throughout the year, bringing visitors into Irmo

HOUSING

Trends

Many of Irmo's established neighborhoods were built over 40 years ago and much of the housing stock is made up of single-family homes. Recently, in the greater Irmo area, more neighborhoods with smaller size lots and multi-family dwellings, including apartments, have been built to accommodate changing housing demands.

HOUSING INVENTORY

Of the homes in Irmo, 67% of the housing stock was built between 1970 and 1989, with less than 500 homes built each decade since then. The housing stock is older, and with older homes come more possible responsibilities for upkeep and repair. Some neighborhoods that have aging homes have presented code enforcement issues due to delayed maintenance of homes and yards. A majority of residential properties are owned, 82%, compared to 18% of residential properties that are rented.



Irmo Fire Starting Salary:
\$35,341 - \$38,171*

** Effective January 2023*



**Richland Lexington 5
School District Starting
Teacher Salary*:**
**\$44,023 - Bachelors
Degree**
\$49,690 - Masters Degree

** Fiscal Year 2023 -2024*

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Limited new housing has driven up prices. In 2020, Irmo's median home value was \$145,100, which was a 12% increase from the 2010 value of \$129,400 (*U.S. Census*). Irmo's median sold home price is \$241,000 according to Realtor.com. Irmo's housing market is described as balanced, meaning that the supply and demand of homes are about the same. On average, homes stay on the market for 36 days.

Housing Affordability: An Exercise

When analyzing salary data for certain careers, we can look at what an individual or a couple may be able to afford and how it matches with Irmo's real estate market.

Let's imagine that a young couple has accepted jobs in Irmo as a firefighter and a teacher with a Masters Degree. This couple has been smart about their finances, has minimal monthly debt payments, and has saved up a fair amount for a down payment for a house. They have worked hard, and are about to work even harder to be active members of the greater Irmo community, but they still can't afford to buy a home despite doing everything "right", and can really only afford a home that is listed almost \$50,000 less than the current median sold price for the Town.

For many households the combination of high interest rates and home prices combined with a lack of for sale inventory and rentals eliminates Irmo from the list of places they can call home.

Annual income ? \$ 87,861 Calculate by payment	Home price Payment Full report
Monthly debts \$ 1,000	You can afford a house up to \$195,131 Based on your income, a house at this price should fit comfortably within your budget.
Down payment \$ 20,000	 
Advanced Calculator disclaimer	 \$1,525/mo

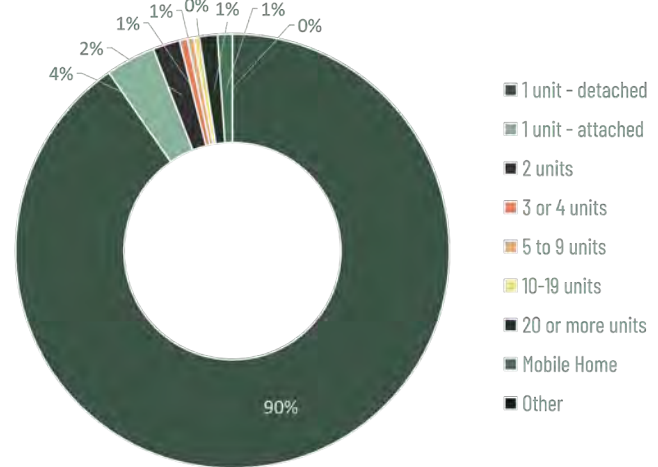
Zillow Housing Affordability Calculator



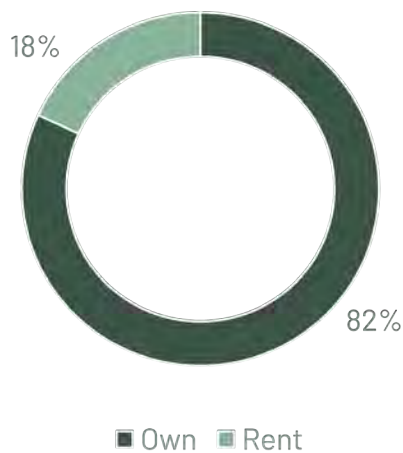
HOUSING TYPE

In 2020, single family homes made up 94% of Irmo's housing stock. Currently under construction, Bickley Station offers smaller single-family homes close to St. Andrews Road. Towards Lake Murray, a number of new multi-family residential units have been built in Lexington County. Housing demands and costs are influencing the types of homes being proposed throughout the Midlands. Demographic changes also influence demand for different housing types.

Housing Stock, 2020



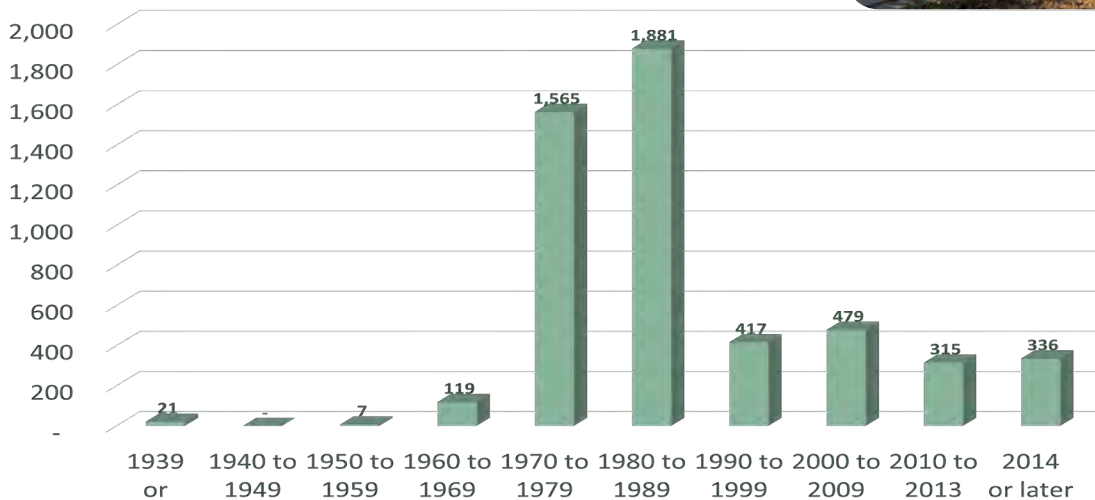
Housing Ownership, 2020



94%
of the current
housing stock are
single family homes.



Housing Year Built, 2020



HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

As Irmo grows in population, the demand for housing will continue to rise. Irmo's goals should focus on maintaining quality of life and Town character while accommodating an increase in housing.

Goal 1: Promote quality residential development that maintains Town character while meeting future needs by allowing a diversity of housing types in key locations.

Strategy 1A: Allow zoning that provides for a mix of housing depending on context.

- ◆ Allow for a variety of housing types to be part of new development in key areas.
- ◆ Consider the allowance of missing middle housing types as infill that match the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood.
 - ◆ *Add missing middle housing types such as duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes as conditional uses in certain districts with defined design standards in the Zoning Ordinance.*



- ◆ Consider revising conditional requirements for accessory apartments to allow for units up to a certain square footage (i.e. 1,000 square feet) regardless of size of primary structure.
 - ◆ *Currently accessory units are capped at 50% of the size of the primary structure regardless of size or property area.*

Strategy 1B: Incentivize diverse housing design.

- ◆ Encourage new planned developments to include a mix of at least two lot sizes or product types.

Strategy 1C: Encourage Habitat for Humanity to build homes in Town where needed, while matching the character of existing neighborhoods.

What is Missing Middle Housing?

Missing middle housing refers to housing in a diverse range of house-scale buildings with multiple units that are compatible in scale and form with single family homes.



The Friarsgate neighborhood has a variety of housing types and styles. Many homes are well kept, although code enforcement issues do arise due to the age of some homes.

Goal 2: Continue code inspection activities that maintain and improve the quality of neighborhoods.

Strategy 2A: Maintain adequate staff for code enforcement activities.

Strategy 2B: Grow the daily presence of code inspectors in neighborhoods through patrolling and community interactions.

Strategy 2C: Enforce property maintenance regulations to ensure the safety of neighborhoods.

Strategy 2D: Evaluate new methods of tracking and reporting code

inspection issues.

Strategy 2E: Evaluate the need for a short-term rental ordinance.

Strategy 2F: Inventory dilapidated structures and establish funding to repair or remove them.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Trends

The Town of Irmo's cultural resources are the foundation for sense of place, community identity, and quality of life.

The town's history, rooted in the immigrant farmers of the Dutch Fork, the railroad, Lake Murray, educational institutions, and particularly African American educational institutions, is reflected in the people and development patterns of the community and provides a link between new and long-time residents. This section also identifies historic places, local and regional cultural resources, and the annual events that add to Irmo's identity and small-town charm. This section's goals focus on leveraging local history to promote community identity and enhance local cultural resources and activities to the benefit of Irmo residents.

HISTORY OF IRMO

European settlement of the broader lands between the Saluda and Broad Rivers, known as the Dutch Fork, began around 1735, primarily by immigrants from Germany and Switzerland. Immigrants continued to settle the area, gradually increasing the population through the American Revolution and up until the Civil War, with farms and agrarian development. However, the Civil War

and Reconstruction significantly disrupted these settlement patterns and slowed area growth in the middle of the 19th century.

The construction of the Columbia, Newberry, and Laurens Railroad in 1881 fueled an era of new economic growth in the area, leading to the incorporation of the Town of Irmo in 1890. Initially, Irmo covered one square mile around the railroad depot. A secondary significant economic boon began in 1927 with the construction of the Lake Murray Dam, which brought approximately 4,000 workers to the area and provided a consistent source of power for the town.

Prior to the 20th century, primary schools in the Irmo area were scattered throughout the county, including a community-run school for black students at the Oak Grove AME Church, dating back to the early 1800s. The 1910s and 1920s marked significant growth in formal educational institutions in the Irmo area, a resource still seen as a community asset today. This era included the construction of Harbison Agricultural College (1911), Richlex School (1918), and Pine Grove Rosenwald School (1923), all serving African American students. Shortly after, Irmo High School was founded in 1928. Harbison Agricultural College operated until 1958, and subsequently the Harbison College campus was donated to Midlands Technical College, under which it is operated today.

Town of Irmo Historic Markers

The Town of Irmo marker (right) is located adjacent to the railroad tracks on Woodrow Street, just south of Columbia Avenue. The other two markers in Town limits are Richlex and Bethlehem Church markers, both located on Broad River Road.

Just outside of Town limits are historical markers recognizing the establishment of St. Paul Church and the historical significance of the World War II Bombing Ranges.





An era of transportation growth from the mid-1900s to the 1970s spurred significant suburban growth in the Town of Irmo, including the construction of Interstates 20 and 26, Highways 60 and 76, along with Woodrow Street and St. Andrews Road. These developments, combined with overall growth in the Columbia metro area, created the Irmo known today for its suburban charm, sense of community, educational and recreational facilities, and overall high quality of life.

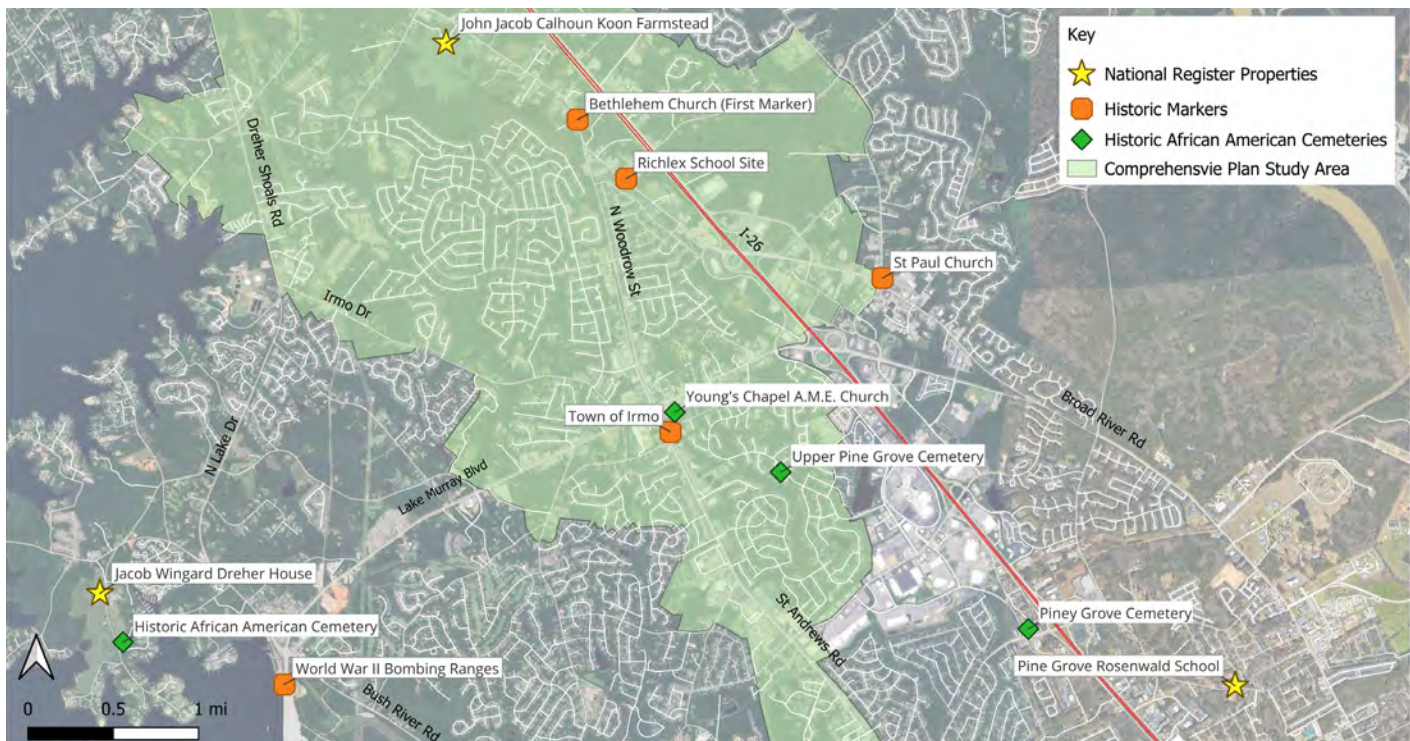
HISTORIC MARKERS AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The community's location between Lexington and Richland Counties contributes significantly to its cultural identity. Lexington County boasts over 60 historic markers and war memorials, as well as more than 50 properties listed on the National

Register. Richland County features over 360 historic markers and war memorials and over 150 National Register listings. The region is dense with historical significance. In the immediate vicinity of Irmo, notable sites listed on the National Register include the John Jacob Calhoun Koon Farmstead, Pine Grove Rosenwald School, and Jacob Wingard Dreher House. These sites serve as tangible links to the past, offering insights into the area's agricultural heritage, educational history, and architectural evolution.

Additionally, the Town possesses an array of historic markers, each highlighting significant events or locations integral to development and identity. These markers commemorate key milestones such as the founding of Irmo, the establishment of St. Paul Church and Bethlehem Church, the legacy of Richlex School, and the historical significance of the World War II Bombing Ranges. The historic markers and National Register sites highlight the history of

National Register Sites, Historic Markers, and Historic African American Cemeteries



the faith and educational facilities around Irmo, reminding residents of Irmo's unique heritage and contributions to the community's collective narrative.

Recognizing and preserving these cultural assets is imperative, as they not only enrich the quality of life for residents but also attract visitors and bolster economic development opportunities. By strategically planning and collaborating with local historical societies and preservation groups, Irmo can continue to honor its past while paving the way for a vibrant and culturally rich future.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Town of Irmo hosts a number of community events that attract residents of the greater Irmo area, and those from all over the state.

Okra Strut

The Okra Strut, a cherished festival hosted each fall by the Town of Irmo, embodies the community's vibrant spirit and agricultural history. The Town Council and Okra Strut Commission oversee this two-day event, which features live music, a Saturday parade, arts and crafts vendors, rides, and food vendors. With an average attendance of 25,000 annually and past peaks of 60,000 visitors, the festival has become a beloved tradition. Beyond entertainment, proceeds from the festival benefit local charities, schools, and public areas, showcasing its commitment to community welfare. Celebrating its 50th year in 2024, the Okra Strut remains a testament to Irmo's heritage and unity.

Cherry Blossom Festival

The Irmo Cherry Blossom Festival, an annual event since 2001, celebrates spring's arrival with pale pink blooms. This family-friendly festival invites attendees to enjoy nature's beauty through picnics and leisurely strolls among the



Public Engagement at the 2023 Okra Strut



Street Performers at the Okra Strut



blossoms. Local artists conduct plein air art demonstrations, showcasing their work available for purchase. Emphasizing community, nature, and artistic expression, the festival fosters a sense of connection and appreciation for Irmo's springtime beauty.

National Night Out

The Irmo Police Department Community Foundation (IPDCF) hosts the annual National Night Out event every August at Moore Park. This free event fosters police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to enhance safety and promote community care. National Night Out strengthens relationships by bringing law enforcement and residents together, offering crime prevention insights, entertainment, and engagement opportunities. Local businesses and vendors actively participate and support the event.

International Festival

The International Festival in Irmo occurs annually in April at Moore Park. This vibrant event celebrates the town's international history and features a walking parade, car show, and cultural booths that showcase the diverse heritage and traditions of the community. The festival originated from a vision to promote positive dialogue on diversity. Collaborating with various stakeholders, including schools, faith groups, artists, businesses, and residents, organizers successfully launched the inaugural festival on April 28, 2019. This collective effort underscores Irmo's commitment to celebrating multiculturalism and fostering unity within the town.

Tree Lighting

The Town of Irmo traditionally holds a holiday tree lighting ceremony in Town Park each December, with food, events, and entertainment from local schools.



Vendors Line the Moore Park Pathways at the Irmo International Festival



Children Perform at the Tree Lighting Event

LOCAL & REGIONAL RESOURCES

Irmo is situated in a region rich in history and cultural resources. Residents enjoy access to diverse cultural activities, museums, organizations, and historic sites both within the community and in the greater Columbia area. These resources include:

Harbison Theater at Midlands Technical College – Harbison Theater is a 400-seat indoor venue located on the Harbison Campus of Midlands Technical College in Irmo. With the mission of connecting the local community through the arts, the venue is programmed with live theater, music, and variety acts throughout the year.

The State Museum – The State Museum of South Carolina is located approximately 11 miles to the southeast of Irmo in Columbia. The State Museum collects, preserves, and showcases the culture, art, and history of South Carolina.

EdVenture Children's Museum – The EdVenture Children's Museum shares a site with the State Museum, offering hands-on and interactive learning experiences that engage children in science, art and history. The museum hosts special events, workshops and school programs to inspire curiosity and learning through play.

Lexington County Museum – The Lexington County Museum, located approximately 8 miles south in the Town of Lexington, is dedicated to showcasing the structures, artifacts, and stories that focus on the timeframe from the colonial period to the Civil War. In recent years the museum has hosted a "Murders and Mysteries" historical walking tour within the Town of Irmo that showcases the history of Irmo and surrounding area of northern Lexington County.

Columbia Museum of Art – Located about 12 miles from Irmo on Main Street in Columbia, the



Harbison Theater at Midlands Technical College's Harbison Campus



Columbia Museum of Art



Columbia Museum of Art (CMA) houses renowned collections and exhibitions, attracting over 150,000 visitors annually. The CMA hosts unique traveling shows and has a permanent collection of Italian Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces, modern and contemporary art, including Botticelli's "Nativity" and Monet's "The Seine at Giverny." The museum also offers interactive art experiences, while the CMA's educational programs provide classes in various artistic mediums.

South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology – The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina in Columbia was founded by the State of South Carolina in 1963. With additional facilities in Aiken and Fort Johnson in Charleston County, the institute is responsible for teaching, research and management of South Carolina's historic and prehistoric past.

South Carolina Department of Archives and History – The Department of Archives and History, located about 17 miles east of Irmo, preserves and promotes the state's cultural heritage through archival care, records management, public access, historic preservation, and education. Notably, it houses the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which manages the National Register of Historic Places and related programs at the state level.

African American Historical Society of Irmo – Established in December 2023, the African American Historical Society of Irmo is an independent local organization formed to chronicle local black history in the Irmo area. The organization sponsors local events such as the Juneteenth Celebration.



South Carolina Department of Archives and History



Representatives from the African American Historical Society of Irmo at the Juneteenth event

CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Irmo's Comprehensive Plan aims to preserve and promote the town's unique history and identity through a variety of strategies. By communicating Irmo's story through art, murals, community activities, and signage, the Town can reinforce its sense of place and community identity.

Collaborations with local businesses, organizations and institutions will enhance these efforts to celebrate Irmo's history. Supporting local preservation efforts and recognizing historic sites will ensure Irmo's heritage is honored and remembered. Additionally, continuing to support and promote local events will help reinforce the Town's identity, bringing residents and visitors together to celebrate all that Irmo has to offer. Through these initiatives, Irmo can foster a vibrant, culturally rich community that values its past while looking forward to a bright future.

Goal 1: Preserve and promote local history and identity.

Strategy 1A: Communicate the story of Irmo through art, murals, community activities, and signage to reinforce community identity and sense of place.

- ◆ Coordinate with local organizations and businesses to promote and pursue public art, signage, murals and community activities to



celebrate Irmo's identity and history.

- ◆ Create interactive installations in Irmo parks and public spaces that commemorate local historical events and figures.
- ◆ Utilize signage, wayfinding, banners and other municipal infrastructure to promote a unified appearance and identity for the Town of Irmo.
- ◆ Pursue funding opportunities to develop and implement a wayfinding and signage plan to facilitate a comprehensive approach to wayfinding signage, banners, street signs, utility wraps, and educational signage.

Strategy 1B: Collaborate with local organizations and institutions to coordinate cultural activities and promote a sense of place.

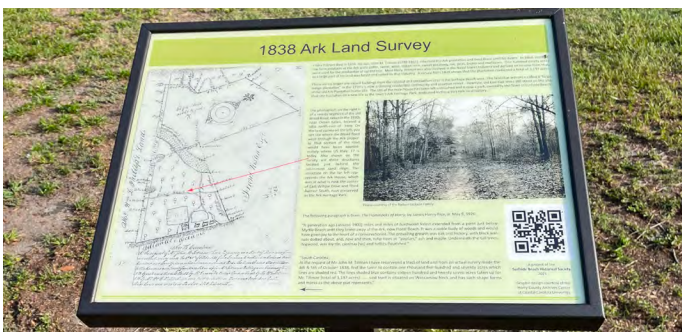
- ◆ Continue to support local historical organizations in honoring the history of Irmo through exhibits, tours, and community events.
- ◆ Partner with the local educational institutions and faith-based organizations to promote local events and activities.



Former Administration Building at Harbison Agricultural College

Strategy 1C: Support local preservation and recognition of historic sites.

- ◆ Collaborate with local historical or preservationist organizations to recognize local historical sites, locations, and events.
- ◆ Raise awareness of local historical sites and locations through partnerships with local educational institutions and history organizations.
- ◆ Raise awareness of local African American history through educational signage at key locations such as Moore Park and African American Cemeteries.



Example of Educational Signage

Goal 2: Continue to support local events to reinforce the identity of the Town of Irmo.

Strategy 2A: Continue to pursue event programming and promotion both locally and regionally.

- ◆ Pursue partnerships to increase the number and frequency of events at Moore Park and Prisma Health Amphitheater.
- ◆ Continue to support events at community educational institutions, including but not limited to Midlands Technical College and Irmo High school.
- ◆ Require Town of Irmo branding to be utilized for special events hosted in community facilities such as Town Park or Moore Park.

TRANSPORTATION

Existing Conditions

The transportation network is the backbone of Irmo. The Town of Irmo developed along a busy railroad corridor, is sandwiched between I-26 and Lake Murray, and is located near the crossroads of three major interstates: I-26, I-20, and I-77. Major roadways in and around Irmo generally have sufficient capacity to accommodate projected future traffic volumes or will have capacity once ongoing and planned improvements are completed. However, there are opportunities for intersection improvements, access management, streetscaping, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities throughout Irmo to enhance the existing transportation system.

ROADWAYS AND FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) defines the functional classifications that make up the roadway network. The existing roadway network in and around Irmo is comprised primarily of minor arterials, collectors, and local roads.

I-26 is the primary east-west route across South Carolina, connecting the upstate cities of Greenville and Spartanburg with Columbia and Charleston. I-26 splits Richland and Lexington counties, with most of incorporated Irmo located south of the interstate. I-26 carries heavy volumes of through traffic, including nearly 10 percent trucks, as well as commuter trips to and from Columbia and local

traffic around Irmo. Within the limits of Irmo, there are interchanges on I-26 at Lake Murray Boulevard (Exit 102), Broad River Road (US 76/176) (Exit 101), and US 176 (Exit 97). Overpasses provide local access across the interstate at Shady Grove Road and Koon Road between Exits 101 and 97. Just east of Irmo, I-26 intersects with I-20, another major east-west route that connects Columbia with Atlanta to the west and I-95 near Florence to the east, and I-77, which connects to points north including Charlotte.

Arterials, including Broad River Road (US 76/176), Lake Murray Boulevard (SC 60), St Andrews Road, Dreher Shoals Road (SC 6), and Dutch Fork Road (US 76) cross the Town, connecting to adjacent jurisdictions and providing access to commercial areas and employment centers. There is a fair amount of through traffic on these arterials, with drivers using Broad River Road (US 176) as an alternative to I-26 and traveling between Chapin and Lexington on Dutch Fork Road (US 76) and Dreher Shoals Road/N Lake Drive (SC 6). Lake Murray Boulevard is the gateway to Irmo from I-26 to the east and from SC 6 to the west, and along with St. Andrews Road, is the primary commercial corridor for the Town.

Major collectors connect residential areas and neighborhoods with arterials. Major collectors include Kennerly Road, Royal Tower Drive, Irmo Drive, Columbiana Drive, Nursery Road, and Farming Creek Road. Kennerly Road runs along the eastern edge of Irmo and connects large residential developments in unincorporated Richland County with shopping and services along Broad River Road and Lake Murray Boulevard in Irmo. Royal Tower Drive and Chadford Road serve the Friarsgate neighborhood, while Nursery Road and Nursery Hill Road provide access to the Murraywood neighborhood. Columbiana

Drive acts as a service road south of I-26 in the Harbison neighborhood.

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT) AND CAPACITY

With Irmo being located along the I-26 corridor just outside of Columbia, the interstate sees anywhere from 62,800 to 95,800 vehicles according to the annual average daily traffic rate, with an anticipated increase in number in the coming years. Other roads throughout the Town experience high traffic volumes including Lake Murray Boulevard, SC-60, St. Andrews Road and Broad River Road. All of which are also expecting to see an increase in annual average daily traffic in the coming future. SCDOT is anticipating these increases and has projects in the working stages.

Roadway capacity is determined by the number of lanes, type of median, number and type of intersections (*i.e., signalized or unsignalized*), and posted speed limit. The ability of the roadway to accommodate traffic is known as Level of Service (LOS). The LOS system uses the letters A through F to describe specific ranges of traffic volumes compared roadway capacities, with A being best and F being worst. LOS D or better is generally considered acceptable, while LOS E and F indicate that capacity or operational improvements are needed to improve mobility.

I-26 accommodates the greatest volume of traffic, with traffic counts ranging between 62,800 and 95,800 trips per day. Within Irmo area, I-26 currently has four general purpose lanes west of Exit 101 (*Broad River Road*) and six lanes to the east, but SCDOT is working to widen I-26 to six lanes west of Exit 101, with construction expected to be complete in 2024. In an urbanized area, a freeway

Average Annual Daily Traffic on Major Corridors

Road	Current AADT	Future AADT
I-26	62,800-95,800	80,750-123,200
Lake Murray Blvd/SC 60	15,500-31,000	19,950-39,850
SC 6	14,300	18,400
St Andrews Rd	14,100-21,700	18,150-27,900
Broad River Rd/US 76	16,100-24,100	20,700-31,000

Source: SCDOT

can accommodate 75,600 (*four lanes*) to 113,600 (*six lanes*) with LOS D or better.

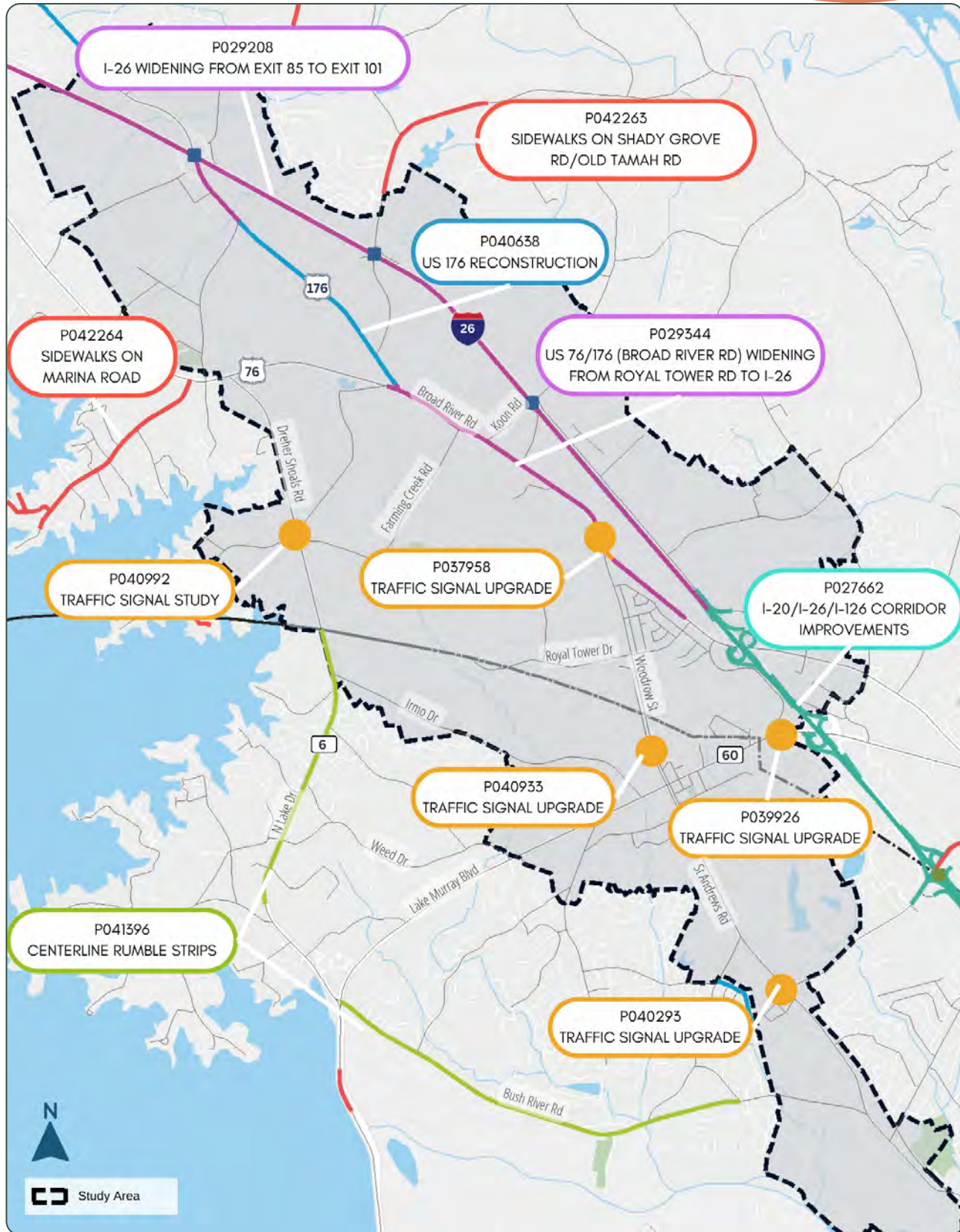
SC 6 (*Dreher Shoals Road*), Kennerly Road, and Royal Tower Road are projected to be over capacity by 2045, as is Lake Murray Boulevard (SC 60) in the vicinity of the I-26 interchange.

CRASHES

The SC Department of Public Safety Highway Safety Statistics Section maintains traffic collision data for roadways across the state. As shown on the heat map in the Appendix, the highest density of crashes are along the I-26 corridor, as well as along Broad River Road and at key intersections, including Lake Murray Boulevard/St Andrews Road/Woodrow Street, Lake Murray Boulevard/Columbiana Drive, Dutch Fork Road/Dreher Shoals Road, St Andrews Road/Bush River Road, and St Andrews Road/Harbison Boulevard. According to the COATS LRTP, the I-26 corridor between SC 60 and US 176 was the top ranked roadway corridor for crashes in the region for 2016-2020, and Broad River Road in Irmo ranked fourth. Heavy traffic, lack of access management,



PLANNED PROJECTS



roadway geometry, and poor road conditions contribute to high crash rates.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SCDOT and the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) are responsible for identifying, prioritizing, and funding roadway improvement projects within the region. CMCOG and SCDOT plans are developed with input from local governments and the public. In addition, Richland County, through its Transportation Penny Tax Program, provides funding for needed projects within the County, such as the ongoing Broad River Road widening.

SCDOT owns, operates, and maintains the state highway system, including the majority of the roads in Irmo. Planning and design of the transportation system is completed by SCDOT's central office, while operations and maintenance are managed by district offices. SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) covers all federal, state, and locally funded improvements for which funding has been approved and that are expected to be undertaken during the upcoming seven-year period. Projects in the STIP generally come up from regional long range transportation plans.

FUNDED PROJECTS

Carolina Crossroads (I-26/I-20/I-126 Improvements) (P027662)

- ◆ I-26 widening from Broad River Road to Piney Grove Road and Interchange improvements at Harbison Boulevard (estimated construction start 2026-2027)
- ◆ I-20/I-26 System to System Interchange and interchange improvements at St. Andrews Road/I-26 and Bush River Road/I-20 (estimated construction start 2028-2029)

I-26 Midlands Connection Project (P029208)

- ◆ Widen to 6-lane section from Exit 85 to Exit 97 and 8-lane section from Exit 97 to Exit 101
- ◆ Interchange modification at Exit 97
- ◆ New overpasses at Mount Vernon Church Road, Shady Grove Road, and Koon Road
- ◆ Construction on-going
- ◆ Expected completion: December 2024

Broad River Road Widening (P029344)

- ◆ Widen to 5-lane section between Royal Tower Drive and Dutch Fork Road
- ◆ On-street bike lanes and sidewalks
- ◆ Design and right of way acquisition on-going
- ◆ Expected completion: June 2028

SC 6 & SC 60 CORRIDOR STUDY

- ◆ Central Midlands Council of Government (CMCOG)
- ◆ Will evaluate potential improvements on SC 6 & SC 60 and recommend priority improvement projects
- ◆ Expected completion: 2025

TRAFFIC SIGNAL UPGRADES AND STUDIES

- ◆ St Andrews Road/Thames Valley Rd
- ◆ St Andrews Rd/Harbison Blvd
- ◆ Dreher Shoals Rd/Salem Church Rd
- ◆ Lake Murray Blvd/Columbiana Dr
- ◆ Broad River Rd/Woodrow St

SIDEWALKS AND SAFETY

- ◆ Sidewalks are proposed for Marina Road (P042264) and Shady Grove Road/Old Tamah Road (P042263)
- ◆ Centerline rumble strips are proposed for N. Lake Drive and Bush River Road (P041396)

FUTURE PROJECTS

The CMCOG is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process for the Columbia Area Transportation Study (COATS).



COATS includes all or portions of Lexington, Richland, Newberry, Fairfield, Kershaw, and Calhoun counties and municipalities in those counties. The MPO is responsible for developing a long range transportation plan (*a 25-year vision for the metropolitan area*), developing a transportation improvement program (*the list of specific projects for which federal funds are anticipated*), and developing a unified planning work program (*the annual transportation planning activities to be undertaken*). The MPO is made up of a Policy Committee (*CMCOG Board of Directors*), which is the official decision-making body that establishes policies for and adopts plans and programs for CMCOG, and a Technical Committee, which is comprised of technical representatives and staff from member governments.

COATS 2045 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

- Moving the Midlands

The COATS 2045 LRTP was adopted in December 2021 and developed with extensive input from stakeholders and the public. The LRTP is updated every 5 years and provides a fiscally constrained listing of transportation improvements to be implemented in the next 25 years.

The 2045 Prioritized List of Road Widening Projects includes the following:

- ◆ #9: Kennerly Road from Hollingshed Road to Broad River Road
- ◆ #16: Shady Grove Road from Broad River Road (US 176) to Koon Road
- ◆ #17: Broad River Road (US 176) from I-26 to Chapin Road

- ◆ #21: Rauch Metz Road from Dutch Fork Road (US 76) to on/off ramp of I-26 near Broad River Road (US 176)

The 2045 Aspirations List of Road Widening Projects includes the following:

- ◆ Broad River Road (US 76/176) from Dutch Fork Road (US 76) to Woodrow Street
- ◆ SC 6 from Bush River Road to US 76
- ◆ Koon Road from Broad River Road (US 76/176) to Old Tamah Road
- ◆ Bush River Road from N Lake Drive (SC 6) to St Andrews Road
- ◆ Broad River Road (US 76/1796) from Woodrow Street to I-26 Interchange

The 2045 Prioritized List of Intersection Projects includes the following:

- ◆ #2: SC 60 and Columbiana Drive
- ◆ #51: Nursery Road and Nursery Hill Road

Within the list of Prioritized Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects that Received Scores of High or Medium High, the “Piney Grove/St. Andrews/Bush River Bikeway” project scored second. Bikeway and sidewalk on Columbiana Drive is also noted with a Medium-High rank. The Lower Saluda Greenway is the second highest ranked greenway priority project.

COATS 2023-2033 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Approved in February 2024, the 2023-2033 TIP is the COATS’ 10-year program of transportation capital projects that are expected to use federal money. The TIP is usually approved every 3 years but can be amended at any time. The TIP is incorporated directly into the SCDOT STIP.

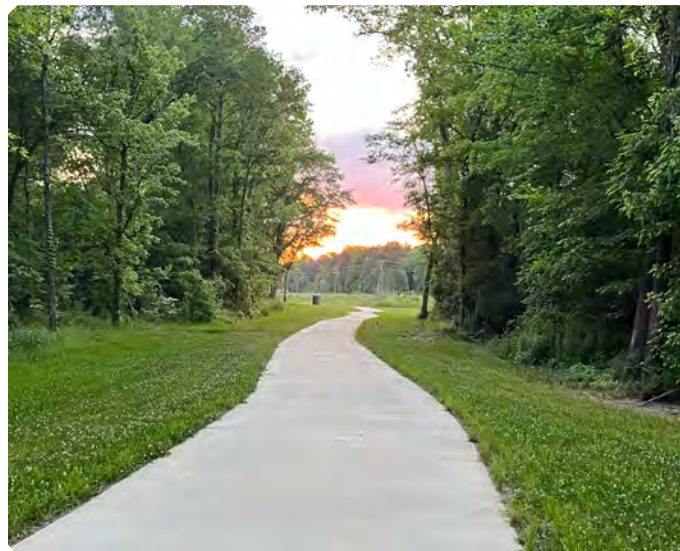
The following projects are included in the current TIP:

- ◆ SC 60 at Columbiana Drive intersection improvements (*funded for planning*)
- ◆ SC 6 Corridor Planning Feasibility Study (P042545)
- ◆ US 76/176 Corridor Planning Feasibility Study (P042460/P028102)
- ◆ Lower Saluda Greenway Phase 3 (*funded for engineering, right of way acquisition and construction*), including contributions from Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission

WALKABILITY AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

The purpose of non-motorized and active transportation facilities is to provide transportation for those who walk and bicycle out of necessity, as well as provide mobility options for those who choose to walk or bicycle instead of drive, and to provide for recreation. Irmo's non-motorized and active transportation network is made up of a combination of sidewalks, bikeways, and greenways. There are sidewalks along some arterials, including Lake Murray Boulevard and St Andrews Road and a striped bike lane on Lake Murray Boulevard between Irmo Drive and the Lake Murray dam. However, there are many roads that do not have bicycle or pedestrian accommodations, such as Broad River Road, Dutch Fork Road, Kennerly Road, and Woodrow Street. These facilities carry high volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds and are generally not conducive to non-motorized travel. In addition to the lack of a continuous sidewalk and bikeway network, there are several other barriers, including the interstate and rail corridors, frequency of curb cuts and utility poles, and large parking lots between sidewalks and commercial areas.

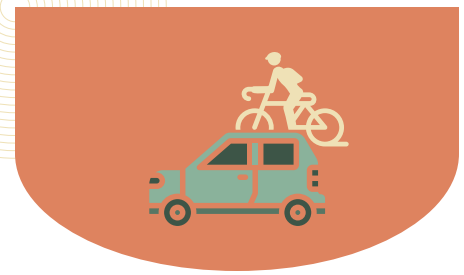
There is also a lack of connectivity between facilities in Irmo and other regional parks, trails,



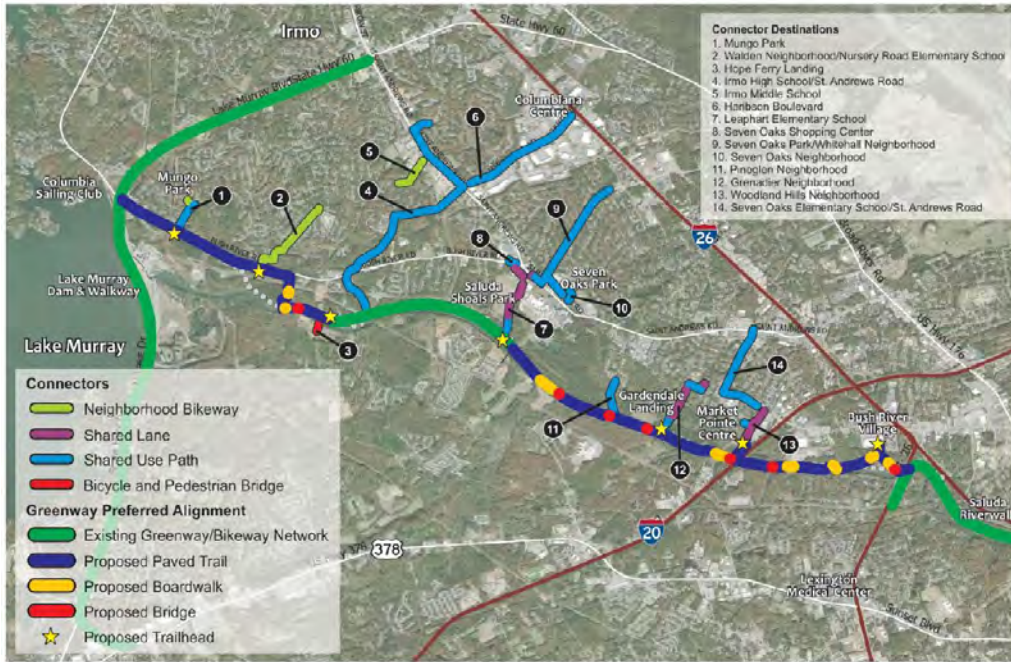
The existing greenway near Saluda Shoals Park traverses a tree-lined corridor on the banks of the Saluda River.

and greenways, including Saluda Shoals, Three Rivers Greenway, Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens, and the Riverwalk. There are approximately 12 miles of paved, multi-use trails within the Harbison neighborhood with spurs and connectors along neighborhood streets. While these trails connect within the neighborhood and access some commercial areas, they are generally used for recreation rather than transportation.

The Lower Saluda Greenway is a proposed 10.5-mile multi-use, paved pathway that would extend along the north side of the Saluda River from the Johnny W Jeffcoat Walkway at Lake Murray Dam to the Three Rivers Greenway at the Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Garden. A section of this greenway exists near Saluda Shoals Park. Phase 3, which extends between I-20 and I-26 east of Irmo, is currently programmed. A feasibility study has been completed for the remainder of the Lower Saluda Greenway. This study provided recommendations for greenway connections and trailheads south of Irmo.



Lower Saluda Greenway Feasibility Study Recommendations



An express route (93X) between Comet Central and Newberry, with stops in Irmo, Ballentine, Chapin, and Little Mountain, has been provided at times in the past but was most recently discontinued in 2022 due to low ridership.

CMRTA also operates “Dial-A-Ride Transit” (DART) on-demand service for passengers with disabilities that prevent them from using The Comet fixed route system.

TRANSIT

Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (CMRTA), also known as “The Comet,” is the regional public transit authority for the Columbia metropolitan area, including Richland County, City of Columbia, City of Forest Acres, and Lexington County. The Comet provides fixed route service on 47 routes. Routes 83L and 801 provide service to and within Irmo. Route 83L (*St. Andrews Local*) connects the Comet Superstop at Dutch Square Center with the Superstop at Harbison Walmart via Bush River Road and St Andrews Road, with stops at Parkridge Drive/Prisma Health Baptist Parkridge Hospital, Columbiana Drive/Columbiana Center, and Midlands Technical College – Harbison. Route 801 provides service between the Walmart Superstop and Comet Central via Broad River Road. Riders may transfer to a number of other routes at either the Dutch Square Center Superstop or Comet Central.

Other programs are available for seniors and people with disabilities that live outside of The Comet service area but within the Columbia Urbanized Area of Richland or Lexington County. These include the Pick Up Program, that provides a debit card for up to \$100 per month for taxi or rideshare programs, and the Volunteer Transportation Reimbursement Program, that provides reimbursement of up to 150 miles per month for those who provide rides to qualifying people.

RAIL

The Town of Irmo originally developed along the railroad, and the rail corridor still bisects the Town. CSX uses the corridor for freight service between Savannah, Charleston, and Spartanburg. The railroad tracks run between St Andrews Road and Woodrow Street with limited opportunities for crossing. Within the core of Irmo, there are many at-grade crossings of the tracks, including at Lake Murray Boulevard and Emory Lane/Harbison Boulevard.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Because Irmo is a desirable place to live and work, its transportation challenges with traffic congestion have grown. The Plan's survey reflected residents' concerns about improving traffic conditions throughout the Town. The public noted a number of concerns with respect to the transportation system, most notably road maintenance, intersection improvements, and connectivity. This element highlights key transportation recommendations to address and accommodate future growth in Irmo, including projects and policies to keep the Town's transportation network moving.

Goal 1: Provide a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system in collaboration with local, regional, and state partners.

Strategy 1A: Work with SCDOT and CMCOG to identify and prioritize funding and implementation of projects that will improve mobility within the Town.

- ◆ Actively participate in regional planning and financing initiatives to ensure that the needs of the Town are reflected in planned and programmed projects.



- ◆ Conduct traffic analyses for priority corridors to identify short- and long-term priority projects

- ◆ *SC 6 and SC 60 (Lake Murray Boulevard) [ongoing]*
- ◆ *Dutch Fork Road*
- ◆ *Irmo Drive*
- ◆ *Kennerly Road*
- ◆ *Royal Tower Drive*
- ◆ *Shady Grove Road*
- ◆ *Rauch Metz Road*
- ◆ *Broad River Road (north of I-26 Exit 97)*

Strategy 1B: Incorporate transportation network improvements that align with proposed future land use character areas

- ◆ Extend Western Lane from its current terminus at Koon Road west along the north side of I-26 to the vicinity of Exit 97.
- ◆ Advocate for addition of an interchange on I-26 at Koon Road or Shady Grove Road to provide access to the Dutch Fork and Ballentine areas, as well as relieve congestion at Exits 101 and 97.



Strategy 1C: Identify potential funding sources for transportation improvements and align projects with appropriate opportunities.

- ◆ Identify potential local funding streams for developing and funding locally needed road projects (impact fees, local hospitality tax, Lexington Penny tax, etc).

Goal 2: Work with SCDOT, Richland County, Lexington County, the City of Columbia, CMCOG, and other entities to maximize the efficiency of the existing roadway network.

Strategy 2A: Identify congestion mitigation strategies, intersection operations improvements, signalization improvements, and access management opportunities.

Strategy 2B: Evaluate congested and high crash intersections for operational and safety improvements.

- ◆ Candidate locations include:
 - ◆ *St Andrews Road/Bush River Road*
 - ◆ *St Andrews Road/Harbison Boulevard/Emory Lane*

- ◆ *St Andrews Road/Lake Murray Boulevard/Woodrow Street*
- ◆ *Woodrow Street/Royal Tower Drive*
- ◆ *Woodrow Street/Broad River Road*
- ◆ *Broad River Road/Farming Creek Road*
- ◆ *Broad River Road/Dutch Fork Road*
- ◆ *Dreher Shoals Road/Dutch Fork Road*
- ◆ *Dreher Shoals Road/Irmo Drive*
- ◆ *Lake Murray Boulevard/Columbiana Drive*

Strategy 2C: Coordinate with Richland County on the design and construction of the Broad River Road widening project to ensure the project aligns with the Town's future land use plans for the corridor, including considerations for active transportation and access management.

Strategy 2D: Incorporate and enforce traffic impact analysis requirements and access management standards in land use/zoning/development reviews.

Strategy 2E: Explore opportunities to coordinate with other jurisdictions to ensure roadways in the Town are well-maintained.

Strategy 2F: Improve pedestrian and bike access, connectivity and safety

- ◆ Prepare an active transportation master plan to develop a Town-wide bike/pedestrian/greenway network that provides connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial areas, and activity centers, and adjacent jurisdictions.

- ◆ Improve pedestrian safety and comfort in the Town Center area through the addition of sidewalks, widening of existing sidewalks, installing crosswalks and/or the addition of pedestrian signals.
- ◆ Coordinate with Lower Saluda Greenway District to convert existing railroad right-of-way to a new greenway and develop a new trailhead in vicinity of St. Andrews Road.
- ◆ Work with CSX to determine potential pedestrian improvements to the at-grade rail crossings at St Andrews Road/Lake Murray Boulevard/Woodrow Street, St Andrews Road/Harbison Boulevard/Emory Lane/Irmo High School, St Andrews Road/Piney Grove Road/Seven Oaks Park, and N Woodrow Street/Royal Tower Drive.
- ◆ Improve biking conditions by working with NCDOT to sweep roadways and incrementally widen shoulders to key roadways such as Wescott Road and Nursery Road.
- ◆ Work with local schools to implement a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) sidewalk network.
- ◆ Advocate for complete streets designs as SCDOT and the counties make improvements to priority corridors.
- ◆ Incentivize the provision of bicycle parking by allowing reduction in vehicular spaces if a minimum number of u-racks are provided.



Woodrow Street functions as a key vehicular and pedestrian corridor near the center of Irmo. Currently sidewalks are narrow and only along a portion of the roadway.

Strategy 2G: Create gateways that welcome travelers to Irmo.

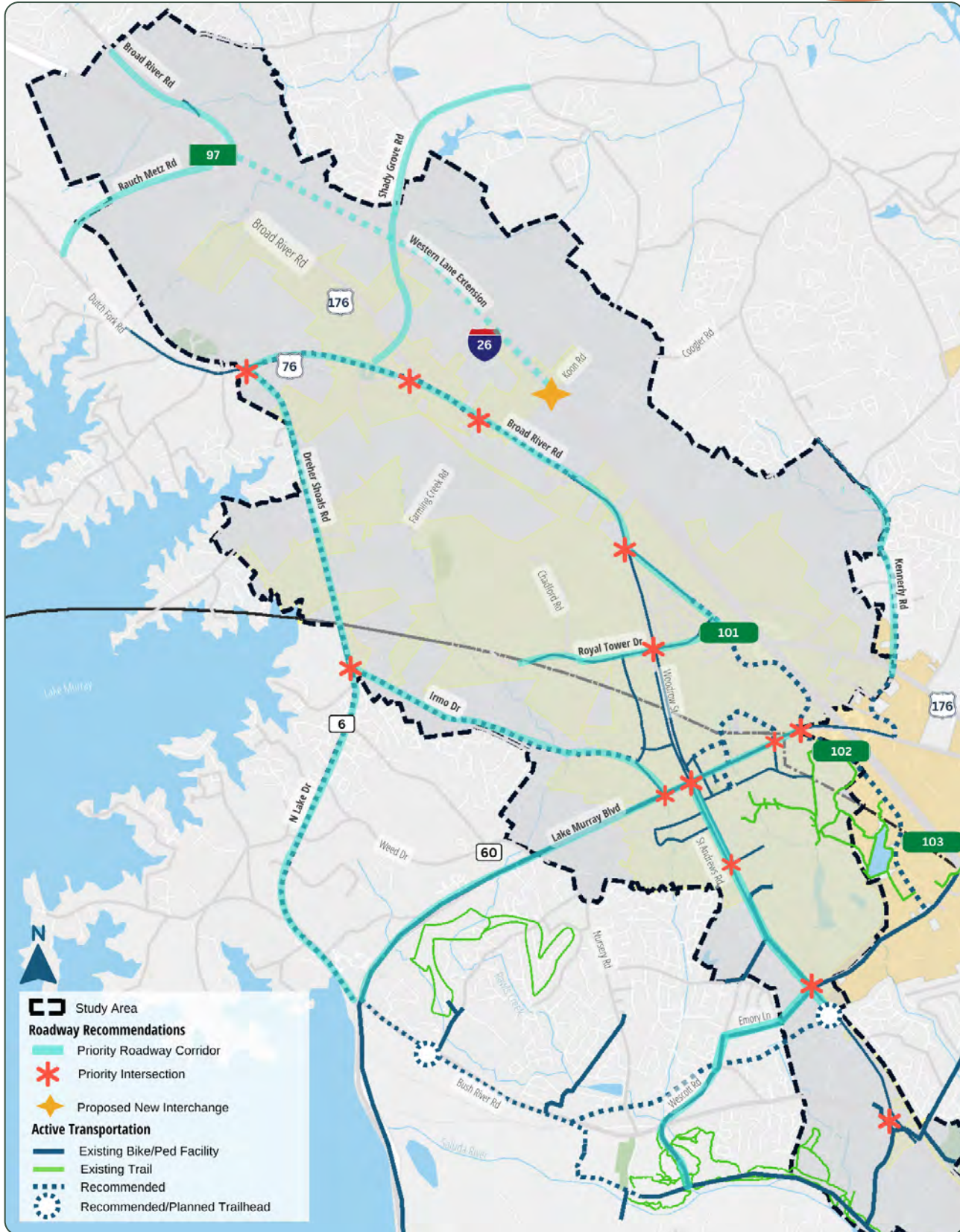
- ◆ Identify key gateways to the Town and develop plans for streetscaping and signage that consider organizational partnerships to improve, beautify, and maintain key gateways.
- ◆ Implement branded street signage to identify to travelers that they are within the Town.

Strategy 2H: Plan for the future by incorporating electric vehicle charging stations and autonomous vehicle technology into development and redevelopment plans and at key parks.

Strategy 2I: Continue working with partners to identify opportunities for park and ride facilities and/or transit enhancements.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Existing Conditions/Trends

The Town provides its citizens with quality services, highlighted by its extensive park system and the Irmo Police Department. With the assistance of community partners, Irmo has gained a reputation as a desirable place to live with high quality community amenities.

IRMO PARKS

The Town of Irmo has a number of parks and recreation facilities that they maintain and use to host a variety of events throughout the year. The Greater Irmo Area also has access to parks that are maintained by the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission to serve the local community members. The following parks are under the Town of Irmo's jurisdiction:

- ◆ Rawls Creek Park (*Recently opened*)
- ◆ Moore Park (*formerly Irmo Community Park*)
- ◆ Irmo Town Park
- ◆ Irmo Veteran's Park



REGIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION

The Greater Irmo Area also benefits from the hard work that the Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission has put in to create destination style parks and facilities that are catered to the local Irmo area as well as those who wish to travel to them. The following county and regional parks are located within the Greater Irmo Area:

- ◆ Mungo Park
- ◆ Saluda Shoals Park
- ◆ Seven Oaks Park
- ◆ Ballentine Park
- ◆ Friarsgate Park

PARKS LEVEL OF SERVICE

There are 8,261 total residential parcels within the boundaries of Irmo's study area. 4,520 of those parcels are served within a 0.5-mile service radius of parks. That equates to 54.7% of residential parcels within Irmo's study area served by one of Irmo's local parks or other parks. 3,741 of the residential parcels within Irmo's study area boundaries are not within a 0.5-mile radius of any of the existing parks (45.3%). 22.1 residential parcels are within a quarter-mile of an existing park.

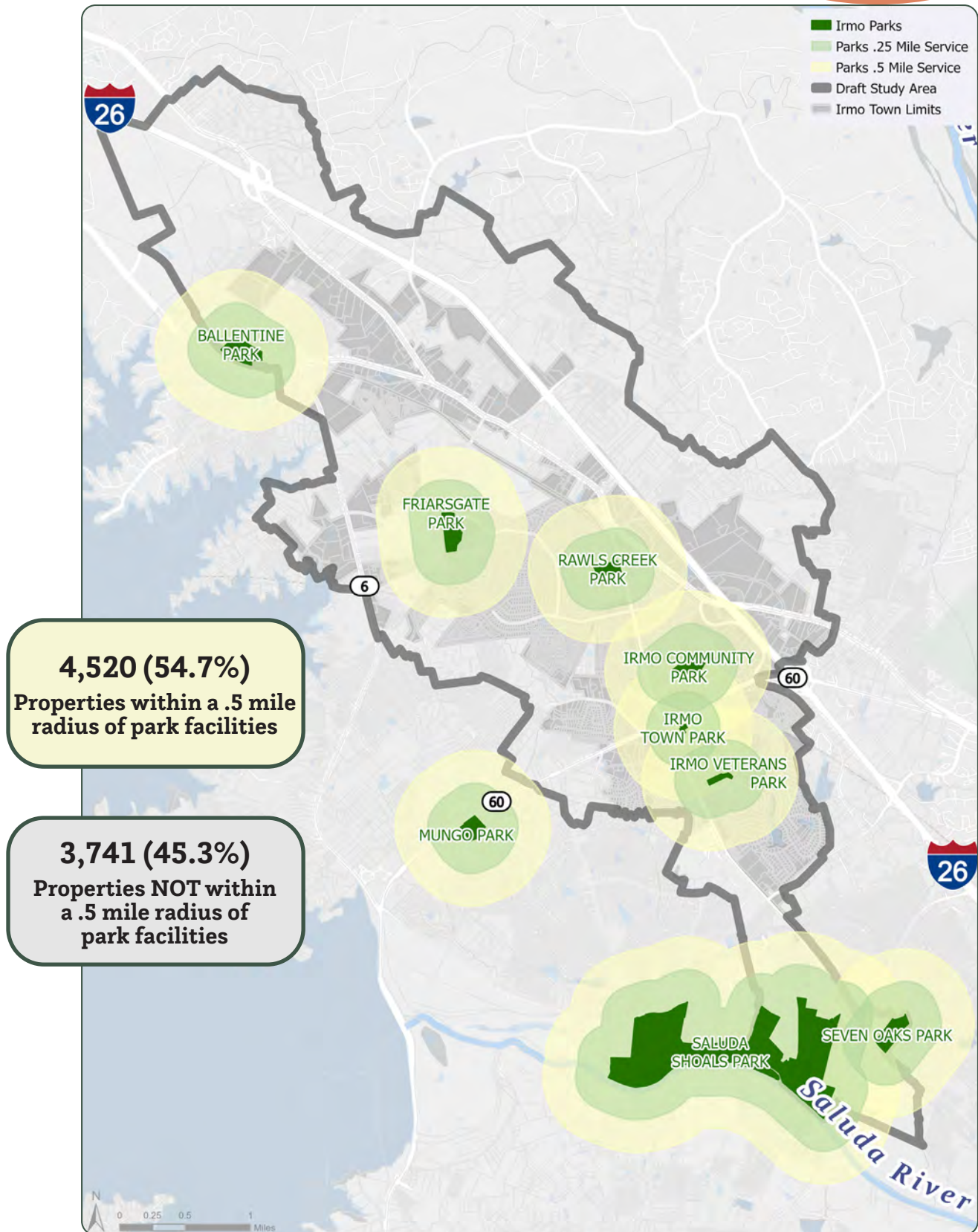
Saluda Shoals Park

Daily Park Admission
\$0 Car | \$12+ passenger van | \$12 Bus





PARKS LEVEL OF SERVICE



WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS:

The City of Columbia is the water provider for residents and businesses and is actively upgrading lines and improving water quality. The City is involved in the development review process for new development, requiring that new lines are built according to their specifications so that they can accept ownership and maintenance responsibility once the new lines are constructed. The source of the City of Columbia's water is Lake Murray and its 20 million gallon water filtration plant.

The City of Columbia and Richland County provide sewer service throughout the Town, but some subdivisions are served by Southwest Water Company.

Most electrical power and natural gas is provided by Dominion Energy, but Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative provides electricity to some residents.

SOLID WASTE COLLECTION:

The Town contracts with Tyler's Sanitation to provide weekly curbside garbage, yard trash and recycling collection. The Town provides one recycling cart and one trash cart to each residential address. Tyler's Sanitation provides pickup five days a week.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

The Irmo Police Department has 32 full-time personnel, including 29 officers. Four to five patrol officers operate per shift. The department is divided up into 3 divisions: community services, patrol and criminal investigations. The public safety building, located at 1230 Columbia Avenue, is reaching its capacity and a new public safety building is planned in the next few years.



Fire protection is provided by the Irmo Fire District, which also serves a portion of Lexington County on the fringe of the Town's limits. The Fire District has a Class 1 ISO Rating throughout its service area. The Fire District fleet includes six front line apparatus, one swiftwater rescue truck/boat, one off road 6x6 brush unit, 2 reserve apparatus, and one squad unit. The District has 43 employees, and each shift has nine firefighters, three captains and one battalion chief.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

For emergency medical services (EMS), areas west of Broad River Road and Friarsgate subdivision are served by Lexington County. The remaining portion of the Town is served by a Richland County EMS unit.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Irmo is located in the Lexington-Richland Five school district. Eight elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools serve Irmo residents:

H.E. Corley, Dutch Fork and Ballentine Elementary Schools (*Dutch Fork Middle and Dutch Fork High School*)

Harbison West, Leaphart, Nursery Road, Irmo and Seven Oaks Elementary Schools (*Irmo Middle and Irmo High School*)



The school district is currently building a new 3-story Irmo High School. It also plans to remodel Nursery Road, Harbison West and Dutch Fork elementary schools, but these plans are contingent on the passage of a bond referendum to be voted on in November 2024.

Irmo is also served by the Harbison branch of Midlands Technical College, centrally located in the Town limits. From 1911 to 1958, this site served as the Harbison Institute, a college for African Americans when educational resources were very limited. The Institute closed in 1958 and the land and buildings were donated to Midlands Tech to continue the legacy of providing a multicultural education.

LIBRARIES

Irmo has nearby libraries from Lexington County and Richland County Public Libraries. The Irmo Branch Library (*Lexington County*) is located at 6251 St. Andrews Road and Richland Library Ballentine is located at 1200 Dutch Fork Road. Richland Library St. Andrews offers a career coaching center, makerspace, teen area and community garden, as well as customary library services.

TOWN FACILITIES

Town Hall is located in the historic Mathias-Lown house at the corner of Woodrow Street and Columbia Avenue. Adjacent to Town Hall is the municipal building that houses municipal court, as well as town meetings and a variety of conferences and workshops. The Town staff is outgrowing Town Hall and has recognized the need for a new Town Hall building to better serve the community.



Irmo Elementary School is located just west of the center of Town.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Irmo recognizes the value to the community of investing in its parks and infrastructure. With limited sources of revenue, its leaders have been creative in seeking other sources of funding to plan for needed projects like a new public safety building and possibly a new Town Hall.

Goal 1: Maintain excellent public safety services.

Strategy 1A: Maintain adequate personnel and equipment for Public Safety for Irmo's growing population.

Strategy 1B: Continue community outreach activities for all populations.

Strategy 1C: Regularly evaluate coverage and response times as the Town grows geographically.

Strategy 1D: Plan for new Irmo Police Department Headquarters to ensure it will adequately meet the future needs of the Department and the Town.

Strategy 1E: Work towards obtaining State Law Enforcement Accreditation.

Strategy 1F: Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and relevant organizations to meet public infrastructure and service needs.

- ◆ Pursue joint funding opportunities, shared use, maintenance and operations agreements and mutual aid/automatic aid agreements.

Goal 2: Improve park infrastructure to ensure safety and to provide quality recreational opportunities for all ages.

Strategy 2A: Plan for priority maintenance and improvements at existing parks.

- ◆ Improve ADA compliance with existing parks.
- ◆ Consider the addition of benches at Town parks to encourage older residents to visit.
- ◆ Study opportunities for beautification, tree planting and additional programming at existing parks.
- ◆ Enhance Moore Park by updating playground equipment, providing shade structures, improving security and lighting and making better use of the amphitheater to attract regional acts.
- ◆ Consider the creation of a site-specific master plan for Moore Park.
- ◆ Improve access to Moore Park
 - ◆ *Add signage along Church Street and*



Lake Murray Boulevard directing traffic to Moore Park.

- ◆ *Add a sidewalk or multi-use path along Church Street to improve pedestrian accessibility.*
- ◆ *Seek formalized pedestrian and/or roadway connection along Moseley Avenue from Woodrow Street to Moore Park and Church Street.*

- ◆ Continue improvements to Rawls Creek Park and promote its community amenities.

Strategy 2B: Add lighting and increase police presence along all trails in the park system.

Strategy 2C: In conjunction with Irmo/Chapin Recreation Commission, develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that assesses park equipment, access, safety and future needs.



Strategy 2D: Promote usage of lesser known parks through community activities and events.

Strategy 2E: Improve wayfinding and signage for parks and greenways and other key destinations in Town.

Strategy 2F: Coordinate with school systems on opportunities to co-locate schools, community centers and/or parks when designing new campuses.

Goal 3: Ensure public utility infrastructure meets the future needs of the Town.

Strategy 3A: Working closely with utility providers, regularly assess the condition of infrastructure that serves the Town's residents and businesses.

Strategy 3B: Require that water and sewer providers review development plans to ensure that capacities exist or upgrades can be readily provided.

Strategy 3C: Ensure Town staff is included in all long-range planning for utility expansion within the vicinity of Town limits.

Survey respondents requested more events at the Moore Park Amphitheater

NATURAL RESOURCES

Trends

The majority of the land cover of Irmo is considered urban because the land within the Town limits has largely been developed as residential and commercial areas. Despite development, Irmo's long-standing appreciation of trees within its borders is evident and results in many environmental benefits including reductions in cooling costs and summer temperatures, the provision of wildlife habitat, reduced erosion and enhanced stormwater management.

TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Irmo prides itself on its long-standing status as a Tree City USA and its care for its trees, like the large white oak in Irmo Town Park. A map of the study area's tree canopy coverage shows a higher concentration of trees in the northern area compared to the more developed areas in the southern half.

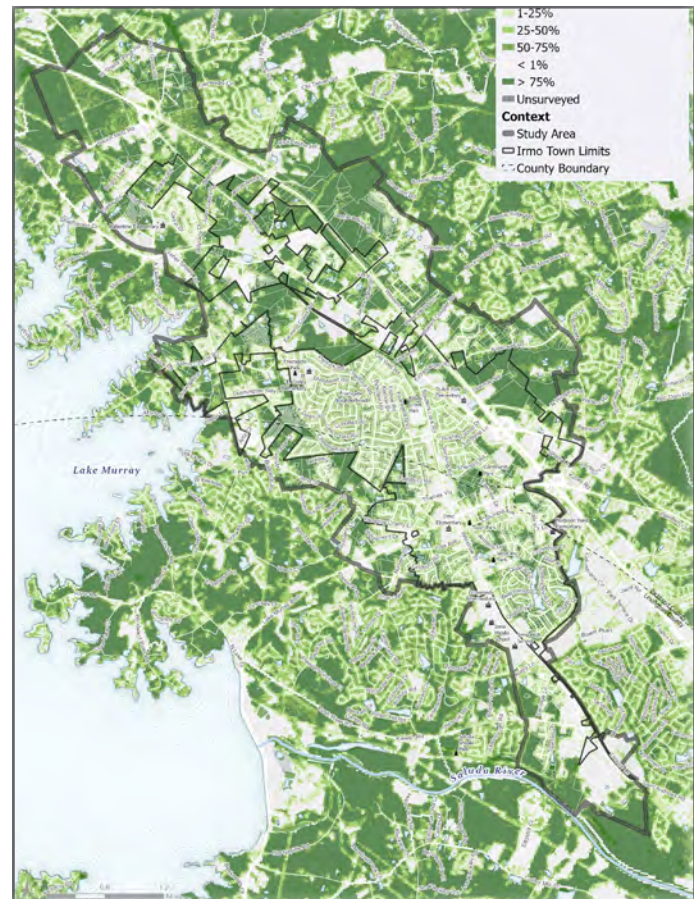
LAKE MURRAY

Often referred to as "The Jewel of South Carolina", Lake Murray sits just west of the Town of Irmo and was designed and built in the 1920's along with a dam to harness hydro-electric power. The lake has provided not only electric power, but also a location for the U.S. military for pilot trainings in the early 1940's, and is a popular recreational destination for boating, camping, and other active and passive recreation opportunities.

WATERSHEDS AND RIVER BASINS

The Town of Irmo is located in both the Broad River Basin, and the Saluda River Basin as the Saluda River runs on the southern side of Town, while the Broad

Tree Canopy Coverage

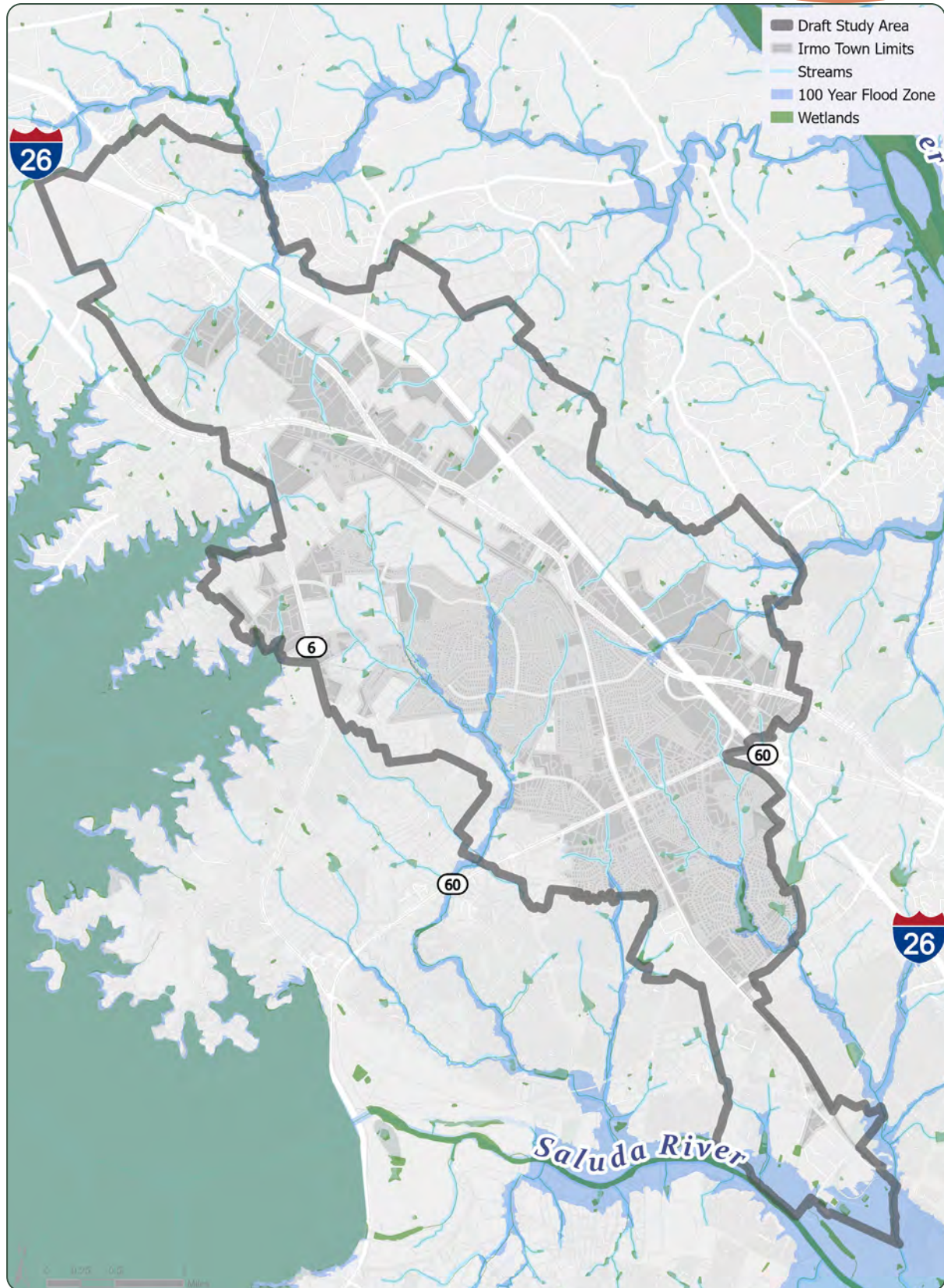


River runs along the northern section of Town before they meet in Columbia. The stormwater in Irmo runs into these respective basins before eventually draining to the Atlantic Ocean.

Four of Irmo's waterbodies are considered impaired, according to South Carolina Department of Environmental Services' 2022 list: portions of Rawls Creek (*biological-macroinvertebrates*), Saluda River (*turbidity and Mercury*), Lorick Branch (*dissolved Oxygen*), and Kinley Creek (*biological-macroinvertebrates*).



ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES



NATURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

Irmo's long history of planting and requiring trees within its neighborhoods and commercial areas is an indication of the value the Town puts on its natural resources. Irmo's proximity to water and recreational opportunities further emphasizes the critical need to protect the environment as it grows.

Goal 1: Protect and maintain natural resources, including water quality, tree canopy and connected open space in the Town and surrounding areas.

Strategy 1A: Preserve open space and key natural features in new development.

- ◆ Maintain minimum open space requirements for single family subdivisions with 10 or more lots, multi-family projects and townhouse projects.
- ◆ Prioritize the preservation of mature forests, viewsheds, stream corridors (up to to 300ft), wetlands, floodplains and adjacent forests, areas with historical significance and steep slopes.



Strategy 1B: Encourage the use of Conservation Design on larger properties in rural areas and areas with significant environmental features including mature trees, wetlands, floodplains and unique habitats.

- ◆ Consider revising the minimum open space requirements for Cluster Development (Conservation Design) from 60% to 40 or 50% in order to make the options more attractive for new development.

Strategy 1C: Maintain and increase the tree canopy coverage by conducting maintenance activities and tree plantings within the Town's rights-of-way and on public land.

Strategy 1D: Strengthen tree planting and protection requirements for new development.

Goal 2: Preserve and protect water quality.

Strategy 2A: Increase the size of required stream buffers within new development beyond the Lexington County minimum of 50 feet.



Strategy 2B: Coordinate with Lexington County to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce impact of post-development stormwater runoff.

Strategy 2C: Encourage context-sensitive development within Lake Murray Overlay area to protect the Town's water source and sensitive natural features surrounding the lake.

- ◆ New development should include environmental and open space commitments that exceed base standards.
- ◆ Standards and/or incentives should be utilized to encourage 100' riparian buffers, preservation of viewsheds, mix of active and passive open space, minimum 10% tree canopy, minimum percentage of pervious surface.

Strategy 2D: Coordinate with area residents to create and implement long-term watershed management strategies for the Rawls and Kinley Creek Watersheds and support health of the larger Lower Saluda River watershed and its impaired tributaries.

Strategy 2E: Continue to actively participate in the regional water quality initiatives, to include Lexington County Stormwater Consortium, Midlands River Coalition and Three Rivers Watershed Stakeholder Group.



Mature trees like this large white oak in Town Park provide shade and valuable ecological services.

Goal 3: Take steps to improve the air quality of the Town.

Strategy 3A: Require more trees to be planted in parking lots to help reduce the heat island effect and improve air quality.

Strategy 3B: Participate in regional clean air activities by becoming an active member of the Clean Air Midlands Air Quality Coalition.

Strategy 3C: Coordinate with the South Carolina Forestry Commission to conduct a tree canopy study of the Town and a management plan to maintain a high percentage of trees

RESILIENCY

Overview

The Disaster Relief and Resilience Act of 2020 amended Section 6-29-510(D) of the SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act to require the development of a separate resiliency element for the Comprehensive Plan. This element will consider the impacts of flooding, high water and natural hazards on individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, economic development, public infrastructure and facilities, as well as public health, safety and welfare.

HAZARDS

Flooding, winds and hail from storms, increased precipitation, extreme heat and drought are all natural hazards that Irmo has been exposed to historically and may be threatened by in the coming years. The 2021 Central Midlands Hazard Mitigation Plan outlines these hazards and prioritizes mitigation measures to reduce exposure and increase the speed of recovery in the future. This plan element delves deeper into resiliency for Irmo and addresses some of the key historical and evolving threats on a local level.

EXTREME HEAT

Irmo residents, like all South Carolinians, are very familiar with the long heat waves with prolonged high temperatures in the summer. Increased or extreme heat levels can be dangerous and lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke, sunburn or other medical conditions. Frequently informing citizens on heat safety, providing public spaces with relief from the heat, like libraries, schools and/or recreation centers, and encouraging tree planting and

maintenance of mature trees are all ways to address increasing temperatures.

SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The Census Tracts that include the majority of Irmo's municipal limits are identified as having a medium to high level of social vulnerability. This was based on the community's socioeconomic status, household characteristics, racial makeup and housing type and transportation access (*Source: CDC/ATDSR Social Vulnerability Index 2022*). This is important because under-resourced communities often have less physical infrastructure, social capital and financial means to deal with extreme heat and other hazards.

COMMUNITY LIFELINES

FEMA Community Lifelines are used to identify assets that provide fundamental services for the community. These integrated network of integrated assets, services, and capabilities provide lifeline services used to support day-to-day support for reoccurring needs of the community. When disrupted, rapid re-establishment or employment of contingency response solutions are required to stabilize the asset and aid in the recovery of the community as a whole. There are eight types of community lifelines:

- ◆ Safety and Security
- ◆ Food, Hydration, Shelter
- ◆ Health and Medical
- ◆ Energy
- ◆ Communications
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Hazardous Materials
- ◆ Water Systems

Community Lifelines



Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works, Town Hall, Highway Patrol



Kroger, Walmart, other grocery stores, churches, homes and apartments



Lexington Medical Center, Prisma Health, urgent cares



Water and sewer systems, Lake Murray



Gas stations, Dominion Energy



United States Postal Service, internet/fiber infrastructure, cell phone towers

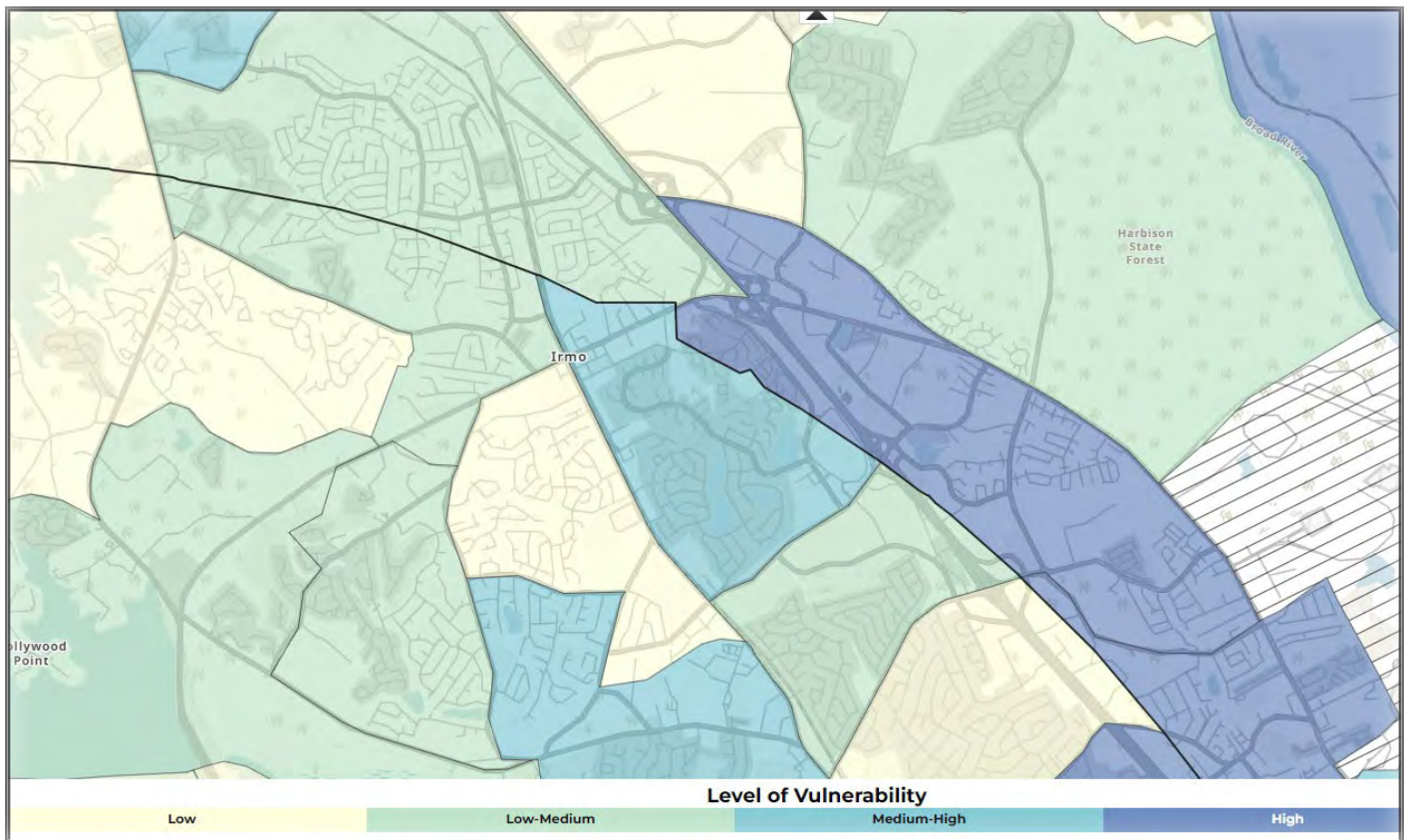


Lake Murray Boulevard, I-26, St Andrews Road, Broad River Road, Irmo Drive, Bush River Road, SC 6



Waste and recycling centers, HazMat locations

Social Vulnerability Map



RESILIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations in this element focus on mitigating risk and impacts and preparing for recovery from hazards. Identifying and protecting critical facilities, assisting vulnerable populations and supporting financial resiliency are also key to reducing the impacts from hazards.

Goal 1: Mitigate impacts of natural hazards and heat exposure.

Strategy 1A: Continue to participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and take recommended steps to reduce flood risk.

Strategy 1B: Pursue grant funding and other resources to upgrade bridges, culverts and undersized or aging drainage infrastructure.

Strategy 1C: Consider updating regulations to incentivize green stormwater infrastructure and low impact development (LID) techniques including bioswales, pervious pavement, stormwater planters, green roofs and other features.

Strategy 1D: Implement hazard mitigation strategies as referenced in the 2021 Central Midlands Hazard Mitigation Plan.



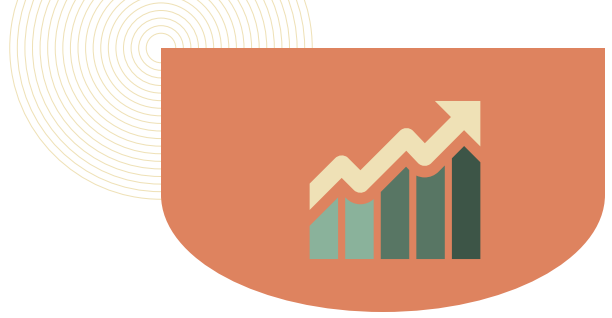
What is Low Impact Development (LID)?

LID is a land planning and engineering design approach to manage stormwater runoff. LID emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality.

- ◆ Conserve natural areas wherever possible
- ◆ Minimize the developmental impact on hydrology
- ◆ Maintain runoff rate and duration from the site
- ◆ Scatter integrated management practices throughout the site
- ◆ Implement pollution prevention, proper maintenance and public education

Strategy 1E: Increase tree canopy and diversity.

- ◆ With the assistance of the SC Forestry Commission, conduct an urban forest management plan to assess all of the Town's trees and identify future planting sites.



Goal 2: Improve critical facilities and response capabilities.

Strategy 2A: Identify and safeguard critical facilities associated with water, sewer, power and public safety within the Town.

- ◆ Consider resiliency upgrades (i.e. backup power) to existing facilities and new facilities.

Strategy 2B: Study critical infrastructure that may be at risk from High Hazard dams within the Town's jurisdiction.

Strategy 2C: Encourage alternative energy sources.

- ◆ Update the zoning ordinance to include standards for types and location of solar panels.
- ◆ Consider adding solar panels to Town-owned facilities.

Goal 3: Identify and assist vulnerable populations.

Strategy 3A: Stay in regular communication with Irmo's faith communities and other partner organizations to find ways that the Town can assist in better serving communities of color, low income residents, seniors, and youth.

Strategy 3B: Increase viable, safe transportation options through the

continued investment in sidewalks, safe crossing of busy intersections using pedestrian refuges, and expansion of greenways within and surrounding the Town.

Goal 4: Support financial resiliency.

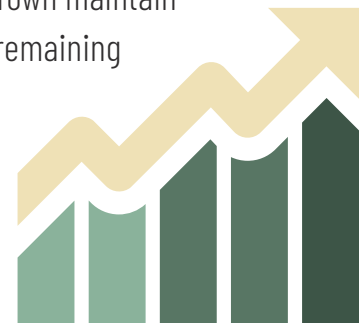
Strategy 4A: Implement land use regulations that welcome a wide range of businesses to keep business license revenue stable during economic downturns.

Strategy 4B: Participate in recruitment activities to meet local needs.

Strategy 4C: Support efforts by partner organizations like Midlands Technical College to improve training for jobs and educational opportunities for all ages.

Strategy 4D: Study ways to remain millage-free.

- ◆ The Town of Irmo is one of the few towns in South Carolina without property tax.
- ◆ Additional revenue sources, such as the adoption of a local accommodations tax could help the Town maintain services while remaining millage free.



PRIORITY INVESTMENT

Overview

To better plan for future public investments of Irmo, this plan element outlines anticipated revenues, prospective financial opportunities and priority projects, programs or positions that may assist in the implementation of this plan's recommendations.

Revenue and Expenses

The 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget was guided by goals from the Town's Strategic Plan:

- ◆ Create a long-term financial strategy
- ◆ Preserve and enhance Irmo's appearance
- ◆ Grow the Town in terms of people, businesses and geography
- ◆ Continuous improvement of Town services.

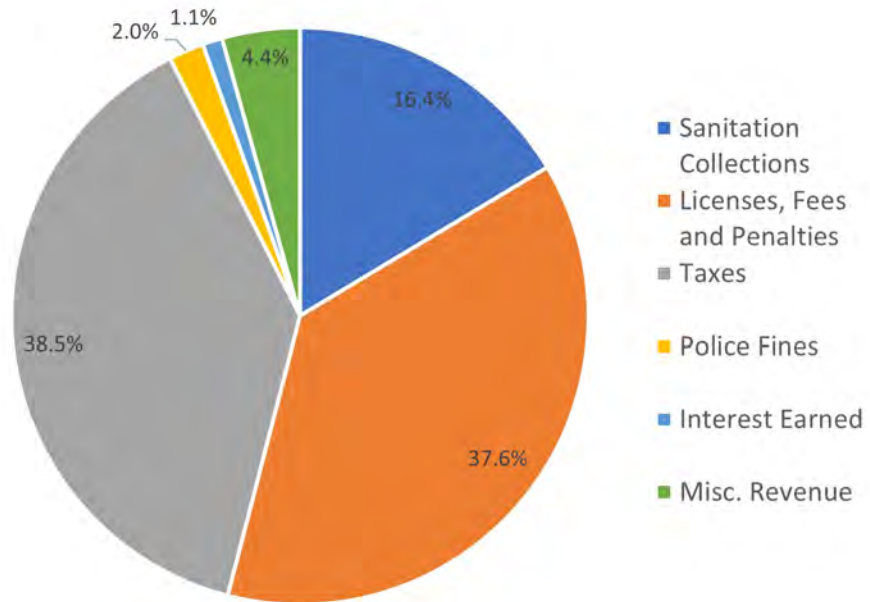
The FY2024-25 budget outlines the revenues and expenses for the year with the largest revenue contributor being taxes (*primarily Hospitality and Local Option Sales*). Licenses, fees and penalties also contribute significantly to the Town's revenue. The Town does not collect property taxes.

What is the Priority Investment Element?

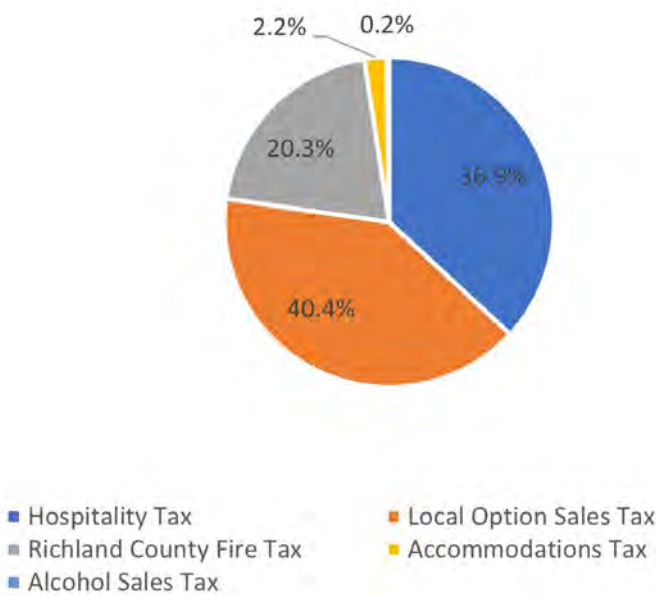
The South Carolina Planning Enabling Act defines the priority investment element. It states that the element: "analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools. The recommendation of those projects for public expenditure must be done through coordination with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies."



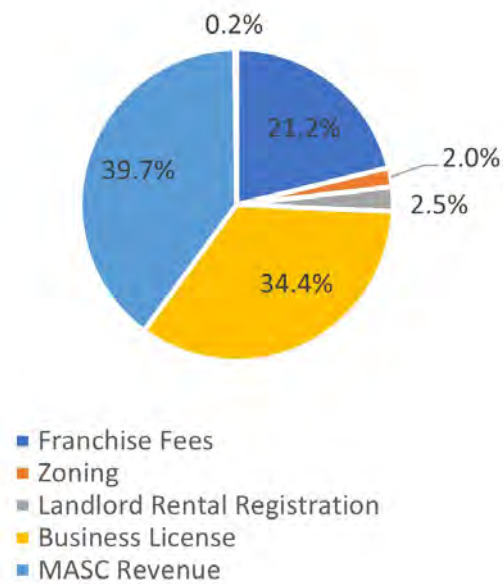
2024-25 Budget: Proposed Overall Revenues



2024-25 Budget: Tax Revenues



2024-25 Budget: License, Fee & Penalties Revenues



Existing and future needs

The 2024-2025 Budget included the purchase of four new police vehicles and the creation of a new civilian code enforcement inspector position. Also on the horizon is a new Town Hall building, which is in the early stages of planning and design.

As the population of the Town grows, there will be increasing demands for personnel and capital projects. Personnel and projects should be evaluated on an annual basis based on need. Existing funding sources and additional funding sources including local, regional, federal, and state funding or grants should be pursued.

The following table highlights local priorities that will assist in the implementation of key recommendations and make progress on identified community goals. These items are numbered for reference purposes only and are not listed in order of priority.

PRIORITIES TABLE

Plan Element/Topic		Goal/Task	Detailed Tasks	Timeframe
1	Population	Goal 1	Encourage redevelopment of underutilized properties.	Long-term
2	Population	Goal 1	Consider annexation petitions from commercial and residential areas that would benefit from Town services.	Ongoing
3	Population	Goal 1	Pursue strategic annexations along I-26 and Broad River Road	Short-term
4	Land Use	Goal 3	Pursue streetscape improvements in key areas.	Long-term
5	Land Use	Goal 3	Pursue the construction of a new Town Hall near the Town Center area designated on the Future Land Use Map and include community in design of site and facility	Short-term
6	Housing	Goal 2	Enforce property maintenance regulations to ensure the safety of neighborhoods.	Ongoing
7	Housing	Goal 2	Grow the daily presence of code enforcement officers in neighborhoods through patrolling and community interactions.	Ongoing

Timeframe Key: Short-term - 1-2 Years, Mid-term - 2-3 Years, Long-term - 3-5 Years



Plan Element/Topic		Goal/Task	Detailed Tasks	Timeframe
8	Cultural Resources	Goal 1	Town History room in the new Town Hall or existing Town Hall.	Medium-term
9	Cultural Resources	Goal 2	Require Town of Irmo branding to be utilized for special events hosted in community facilities such as Town Park or Moore Park.	Short-term
10	Transportation	Goal 2	Create gateways that welcome travelers to Irmo.	Long-term
11	Transportation	Goal 2	Plan for the future by incorporating electric vehicle charging stations and autonomous vehicle technology into development and redevelopment plans and at key parks.	Medium-term
12	Community Facilities	Goal 1	Work towards obtaining State Law Enforcement Accreditation.	Short-term
13	Community Facilities	Goal 2	Improve wayfinding and signage for parks and greenways and other key destinations in Town.	Medium-term
14	Natural Resources	Goal 1	Preserve open space and key natural features in new development.	Short-term
15	Natural Resources	Goal 2	Increase the size of required stream buffers within new development beyond the Lexington County minimum of 50 feet.	Medium-term
16	Resiliency	Goal 3	Stay in regular communication with Irmo's faith communities and other partner organizations to find ways to that the Town can assist in better serving communities of color, low income residents, seniors and youth.	Ongoing

Timeframe Key: Short-term - 1-2 Years, Mid-term - 2-3 Years, Long-term - 3-5 Years