

NEXT STEPS 2017-2022



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The City of Florence would like to thank every stakeholder person who volunteered their time, energy, and insight to the task of updating the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan. Your thoughts, direction, and input were invaluable to allow the City to find consensus regarding the focus of the City for the next five years and beyond. Neighbors, civic leaders, business leaders, and all other stakeholders were justifiably proud of the five years of progress made since each plan was adopted and were frank and optimistic about the challenges and opportunities facing the City during the next five years. We learned from you and saw the City from your perspective, which is invaluable. Your efforts provided us clear insight into the pulse and state of Florence as we look forward. On behalf of the Mayor, City Council, City Planning Commission, Downtown Development Corporation, and staff, we acknowledge and appreciate your efforts and wisdom in helping us plan the future course for Florence.

Drew Griffin, City Manager

City Council

Stephen J. Wukela - Mayor
Teresa Myers Ervin – District 1
Pat Gibson-Hye Moore – District 2
Buddy Brand – District 3
George D. Jebaily – At-Large
Octavia Williams-Blake – At Large
Glynn Willis – At-Large
Drew Griffin - City Manager

City Planning Commission

Drew Chaplin, Jr. - Chair
Derrick Owens – Vice-Chair
Jennifer Edwards
Kevin Gause
Betty Gregg
Dorothy Hines
Charles Howard, Jr.
Simon Lee
Mildred Welch

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (CONTINUED)

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Jim Brown
Terry Dingle
Elouise Frazier
Murray Garber - Treasurer
Drew Griffin
Mayor Stephen Wukela
Chip Munn
Scott Collins
Ed Hoffman
Kate Walker

City of Florence Departments

Codes Enforcement
Community Services
Downtown Development
Planning, Research, and Development
Public Works
Utilities

Kendig Keast Collaborative - Plan Consultant

Bret Keast, AICP - Owner and Chief Executive Officer
Randal Anderson, AICP - Project Manager
Greg Flisram, AICP, CEcD - Principal Associate / Urban Designer
Janis Burall, AICP - Senior Associate
Sharon Cadena - Communications Specialist

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ABOUT THIS PLAN UPDATE

Beginning in mid-2009, the citizens and leaders of the City of Florence began to address the question of how best to plan for the long-term future of the community. Over the course of the next 18 months, these groups and individuals participated in small group listening sessions and one-on-one meetings and attended Citizens' Delegation meetings and community workshops. They were asked to aid the City in contemplating a range of growth scenarios, discussing the options and strategies for addressing them, and helping to decide the strategies, actions, and initiatives to guide the City in its decision-making in the years to come. This intensive and interactive process culminated in the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan on February 14, 2011.

Each plan was designed to serve its role in the decisions that are made on a day-to-day or meeting-by-meeting basis, as well as through the capital programming and budgeting processes. To facilitate these decisions, each element (chapter) of the plan includes background information to understand the issues and to lend support to the individual planning

strategies and their rationales, as well as the actions and initiatives that are recommended to achieve the intended goals and outcomes of the plan. These action recommendations are assembled into a Priority Investments Plan, which is a requirement of the South Carolina Priority Investment Act of 2007 and complimentary to the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1994. These legislative acts established the required elements of the plan, and mandate that the plan be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission "as often as necessary, but not less than every five years", and that the plan, including all elements, "must be updated at least every 10 years."

This update of the Comprehensive Plan fulfills the state-mandated requirements, and signals the City's commitment to its long-range planning and coordinating and prioritizing its investments.

The City identified the following Principles of Progress to guide this update of the Comprehensive Plan.

PRINCIPLES OF PROGRESS

Community Health:

- Access to health, social services, and safe housing for all citizens;
- Development of complete streets that are safe, walkable, and green;
- Provision of education and training to enable good jobs and wages;
- Neighborhood revitalization to boost community and economic health; and
- Proximity to healthy food choices.

Economic Development:

- Attraction of employers that match local training and job skills;
- Fostering entrepreneurship to facilitate new business development and job creation;
- Placement of major employers in and around Downtown;
- Redevelopment of corridors to provide new business and living opportunities;



Private / Public Reinvestment Partnership, Facade Improvement and Pocket Park



State law mandates a Five-Year Update of Comprehensive Plans. Why?

- ◆ Period for assessment / reassessment of the state of the City;
- ◆ Outline progress and achievements, together with issues that may be slowing or preventing progress;
- ◆ Assess new strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and the strategies and priorities for handling them;
- ◆ Solicit regular citizen input;
- ◆ Update the recommended plans, projects, and initiatives to reflect their present status;
- ◆ Continue building planning momentum and implementation energy;
- ◆ Incorporate current growth, change, and trend information; and
- ◆ Update the Five Year Action Agenda.

- Revitalization of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors to stimulate reinvestment; and
- Retention and growth of existing employers.

Community Livability:

- Added recreational programming and parks serving all areas and neighborhoods;
- Repurposing parks and multi-use public places as anchors of neighborhood and community gatherings;
- Establishment of a flourishing arts and entertainment district;
- Eliminating the “food desert” in Central Florence through creation of a food district;
- Improved connectivity to aid local and regional mobility, including vehicular and non-vehicular improvements, e.g. transit, pedestrian trails and bikeways, circulation in Downtown, and linkage to major community assets and challenged neighborhoods; and
- Beautification of signature corridors and community and special district gateways.

Financial Stability

- Cultivation of private / public sector relationships to supplement the budget and for partnerships on major projects;
- Fair share allocation of infrastructure and service extension costs to developments that prompt such expenditures; and
- Assessment of the fiscal impacts of annexation via a fiscal impact cost-benefit model and establishment of growth and utility infrastructure policies within defined primary and secondary growth areas.

Organizational Stresses / Development

- Acknowledgment of the fiscal and capacity stresses caused by the extension of services and expansion of the City's footprint; and
- Continuing to build on the concept of neighborhood ombudsmen.

Cultural Change throughout the Community

- Engagement of neighborhood residents to stress the willingness and commitment to foster redevelopment and reinvestment in their areas; and
- Targeting "Midtown" reinvestment areas for redevelopment of vacant buildings and under-utilized properties.



Five Years of Progress on Evans Street



What are the Goals of this Plan Update Process?

- ◆ Document the successful outcomes and completion of projects and initiatives from the 2011-16 Five Year Action Plan.
- ◆ Determine the next series of projects, programs, and initiatives for a 2017-2022 Action Plan.
- ◆ Build consensus to align the policies, direction, and priorities of the City for the next five years.
- ◆ Focus the direction of the 2017-2022 Action Plan based on the previous five year accomplishments to leverage the momentum in establishing the next steps.

Who was involved in this Update Process?

Since this is an interim, five-year update of the plan, the process for receiving input into the update followed a similar strategy to that used during the preparation of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. The City identified key stakeholders comprised of civic leaders, neighborhood advocates, land and business owners and operators, and downtown merchants, as well as department managers and staff and members of the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Through two days of back-to-back listening sessions and engaging conversations, the stakeholders voiced opinions and thoughts about the progress the City has made in the last five years, what has yet to be accomplished, and the needed next steps in planning for the future of the City.

To supplement the interviews, reconnaissance was performed by the consultant team via walking and driving tours of the community. These tours were to observe and document the places in the community that were the focus of stakeholder and public official discussions and were cited as being exemplary of the work that has done to date and the early success stories of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

In Retrospect and Prospect; Where is the Community and what are its Areas of Focus through the Year 2022?

In all, much was learned about Florence through the engagement exercises, review of socioeconomic and demographic indicators and analyses, study of related plans, understanding of state and federal legislative action (or non-action), and through observation of the physical environs. Through this work, it is most apparent that the community has strong leadership and that they're proactive and progressive in pursuit of their vision, which is unveiling itself in the form of optimism, excitement, and a willingness to work toward common goals. Through community conversations, from direct stakeholders to resident laypersons, the community is proud of its accomplishments and bullish about what the next five years will bring. In summary, the common themes that emerged as to the areas of need and priority for the next five years are as follows:

1. **Continuing to Change the “Florence Brand”.** Florence is no different in that each community is known for something, or nothing. Fair or not, communities are branded by outsiders based on their impressions from having visited or lived there, or through those who have. Florence has long been known for being a stopping-off point for those on their way to Myrtle Beach. Slowly though, and with a concerted effort and commitment to change and improvement, Florence is readily emerging as a place known for its progressiveness and good planning. This has not been without much work or leadership nor will it be in the next five years. Instead, it is a mark of great success in a relatively short period of time, and one that is getting attention in the Pee Dee Region, throughout the Carolinas, and across the Eastern Seaboard. Thus, a purpose of this Plan Update is to maintain and grow this momentum through good planning and sound management of the plan implementation efforts.
2. **Fiscally Sustainable Growth and Development.** Each annexation and new development warrants close examination as to the costs and benefits on the City and its fiscal balance. To do so, each individual development must be viewed in the context of the broader City as each creates added burden on the City's facilities and services, but also contributes to the municipal tax base and its influence in



On-going “rebranding” through reinvestment and redevelopment

managing the timing, pattern, and character of development. Therefore, annexation must be strategically considered in light of its benefits and in comparison to the benefits of infill development and redevelopment.

While much attention tends to be on new development on the edges and in the rural fringes, there are significant opportunities for development within the current City limits where there are already adequate facilities and

services. While this is the most efficient form of development, these properties tend to be more difficult and costly to develop by reason of their inherited constraints. The benefits of new investment or reinvestment in older, well-established areas cannot be understated or overlooked. While infill and redevelopment is among the roles of the City's neighborhood planning program, its own focus is also required.

Of course, the City recognizes that there are several avenues for implementing their plans, many of which have been put to use or are being considered for their relevance and applicability to achieve the plan's recommendations. A significant opportunity though, is for the City to reform their zoning and land development regulations to be more contemporary and on-the-cutting edge to catch up to the expectations of quality development. At the same time, there have been state and federal laws affecting the community and its environmental provisions, together with other external decisions that have a direct bearing on the City and its implementing regulations. Adoption and implementation of the Unified Development Code

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(UDC) is a priority for achieving the intended development outcomes while, at the same time, streamlining process, preserving open space, protecting resources, and generally achieving a desirable community character.

- 3. Growing the Economy.** All of the aspirations and initiatives outlined in the original plan and this update are not possible without a prospering



Redevelopment along Dargan Street is a sign of planning success and progress

economy, growing tax base, and available employment for residents. Economic development must always be among the priorities for the community to retain and grow current and attract new employers to the community. Florence must compete with other cities to bring good paying jobs to the area, which depends not only on available land parcels and infrastructure, but on its attractiveness as a place to live and work, and a quality of life desired by companies and their employees and families. Being amidst a growing Pee Dee Region and in relatively near proximity to places like Charlotte, Columbia, and Charleston requires good strategy and effective partnerships.

At a more micro-scale, market decisions are made based on demographics and local economics irrespective of "need." As a result, some areas of the City are better served by retailers and service providers than others. Not uncommon is the availability of healthy, fresh food

"This year represents the first time in the current expansion (2010–present) that we've seen the creation of high wage jobs accompanied simultaneously by significant wage growth across multiple industries," Joseph Von Nessen, economist in the Moore School Division of Research, says. "This means that more South Carolinians are feeling the effects of the expansion."

choices in the central city and its surrounding neighborhoods. With the renaissance of Downtown Florence and the astounding progress that has been made in its redevelopment as a vital urban center, together with the current focus and unfolding redevelopment and reinvestment in the near - downtown neighborhoods, the availability of and access to fresh food choices and other basic services is among the priorities in these currently underserved areas. This too, is among the economic development objectives of the City.



New residents will place increased demands on services downtown

- 4. Quality Integrity of Housing and Neighborhoods.** The safety, affordability, and livability of homes and neighborhoods are the lifeblood of the community. After all, these fulfill the basic needs of residents and are among the obligations of the City and its provision of infrastructure and services. In tired or at-risk neighborhoods, the conditions and standards of development warrant focus, to make sure that they too, offer safe, secure, and affordable living environments for residents. Among many strategies, a life safety code for older neighborhoods and structures and specifically, rental properties, is an essential mechanism used by cities to meet these expectations and

obligations. Such a code would provide for basic life safety standards, including operational utilities, smoke detectors, secure hand rails, and general habitability.

“Housing demand in 2015 has been primarily fueled by new construction, rather than by remodeling. This represents a transition from previous years when the reverse was true,” Von Nessen says. “Because of increases in disposable income, more consumers are making new home purchases instead of remodeling their existing homes.”

Since the 2001 Plan, the City has organized and set in motion a neighborhood planning process. This process has the full intention of bringing comprehensive planning to the neighborhood level, engaging and organizing residents, identifying projects and priorities, and coordinating capital and other improvements. In some cases, intervening in the market is necessary to acquire and raze properties, assemble them into development tracts, improve infrastructure and services, and return them to the tax rolls either through sale or hands-on participation in their development. While this process is inherently slow, its return on investment may be great by changing the environs,



The City and Florence ISD partner to make school, housing, and infrastructure improvements on Vista Street

conditions, and attitudes and lives of those who live there. Commitment to this program is essential toward its ultimate successes and will require “stick-to-it-edness”. Of course, in its infancy, the capacities of the program to foster significant change are limited but with growth in programming, neighborhood planning should become more comprehensive and holistic over time. The City is on course with the experience of other cities in their development of such a new program.

- 5. Desire for Improved and Attractive Connectivity.** Major highways and railroad lines through the community currently act as barriers – both literal and figuratively - between downtown and the surrounding and near-downtown neighborhoods. Instead, improved connectivity by way of walkability improvements and routes for bicycles and vehicles would help to better integrate the neighborhoods and downtown into one community, each benefitting the other. The same applies in many other areas throughout the community, not only in Downtown. An example of one such improvement would be the rerouting of truck traffic on U.S. 52 around downtown so as not to create a barrier to free and safe movements in the area.



Major gateway into downtown from the airport lacks character

Furthermore, gateways into the City create opportunities to cast a positive – and lasting – first impression. The economic life and attractiveness contribute to the zeal and vibe of the community, making it a place to be, not just to stop by or pass through. Routes from the Florence Regional Airport and from I-95, I-20, U.S. 76, U.S. 52, and other county highways all provide these opportunities to

attract passers-by off the freeways and into the community. However, given that many of these rights-of-way are not yet within the City limits, the level of influence on their appearance emphasizes an essential need for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.



Small Neighborhood Greenspaces with Modest Improvements Create Inviting Places

6. Leveraging the Value of Parks and Recreation Areas and Facilities as “Public Places and Spaces”. Thinking of parks, recreation areas, greenways, and other natural conservation areas as centroids that anchor well-defined neighborhoods and help to create community, changes the value proposition of parks as true places of public gathering. Florence is emerging increasingly as a regional destination for which the City wishes to be similarly viewed as a recreational destination. The City’s relationship with Florence School District One is exemplary of the types of partnerships needed to achieve this goal. In so doing, older facilities warrant re-examination as to needed updates and neighborhoods void of parks or recreational programming warrant added focus and investment. In certain areas, a lack of park facilities and programming limits the opportunities for achieving neighborhood livability and sustained reinvestment. Other objectives may similarly be achieved by razing dilapidated structures; assembling vacant land; creating safe green zones; and removing blight, health hazards, and crime. In the context of neighborhood redevelopment, parks as “first-in” improvements go a long way toward viability as creating livable places that will strengthen and sustain over time.

7. Downtown Renaissance. The most significant glimpse of the City’s success in implementing its 2011 plans lies in Downtown. Great things have and are happening, which has earned the confidence of investors, businesses, and entrepreneurs. The City’s \$191 million in public investments has leveraged \$69 million in new private investment. However, such great success has led to limitations as to the number and location of opportunity sites, thereby causing the plan to expand its geographic limits to identify opportunities for improvement and investment to the south and southwest, as well as toward the north and northeast of the current Downtown boundaries. These areas present vacant or underutilized parcels that may be assembled into sizeable development tracts of a half- or full-block (or more). As the redevelopment program matures, added residents, retail and service uses, and employment will be needed for Downtown to maximize its economic potential and to form a synergy of uses that will create a self-sustaining and recognizable place within the community.



Center for Health and Sciences

Comments from those who participated in the plan update process are in alignment with the “Principles of Progress” (see page 2). It’s encouraging that the stakeholders and City leadership both have similar viewpoints of Florence. They agree on what makes the City great and what issues need to be addressed to make the City better and to build on its recent and ongoing successes.

THEN AND NOW, CONTEXT AND CHANGE

Patterns and Trends

This section of the Plan Update is for the purpose of identifying key data that reflect substantive trends or deviations from the data and analyses used in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. When the plan was prepared in 2010, the best and most current data available was the 2008 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate. The 2010 Census data was not yet available and the 2000 Census was dated.

In brief, the 2010 Census revealed that:

- The 2010 population was 37,056 persons, in contrast to the ACS estimate of 31,500 persons, meaning that the population increased by 22.5 percent (2.25% annually) between 2000 and 2010 (see **Table 1, Population Change**, below).
- As shown in **Table 2, Household and Income Change**, while the median household income grew by 1.2 percent from 2010 to 2014, the latest available data, the per capita income decreased over the same period by 3.9 percent.
- Also displayed in Table 2, the per capita income and median home value were moving in opposite directions, as income dropped by 3.9 percent while the median home value increased by 6.2% percent, a difference of over 2.3 percent in just four years.

Census Statistic	2010	2014	% Change
Median Household Income	\$42,500	\$43,007	1.2%
Per Capita Income	\$26,445	\$25,420	(3.9)%
Median Home Value	\$142,600	\$151,500	6.2%
Total Housing Units	16,261	17,026	4.7%
- Vacant	1,669	2,156	29.2%
- Occupied	14,592	14,870	1.9%

- Although the total number of housing units increased by 4.7 percent between 2010 and 2014, vacant housing units increased by 29.2 percent while occupied housing only rose by 1.9 percent.
- In 2010, Florence had a median age of 37.4 years, with 25 percent of the population younger than 18 years and less than 14 percent older than 65 years.
- Persons of Hispanic descent comprised 5.1 percent of the South Carolina population, an increase of 1.4 percent from 2000.

The ACS data shows a 2015 population estimate of 38,228 persons. Using the same 2.25 percent growth rate, a more accurate population estimate may be 41,417 persons.

Jurisdiction	2000 Census	Est. 2008 (ACS)	2010 Census	% Change 2000-2010	Est. 2015 (ACS)	Est. 2016 (2000-10 Trend)	% Change 2010-16
City of Florence	30,248	31,500	37,056	+22.50% 2.25% annual	38,228	41,417	+11.70% 2.25% annual
Florence County	125,761	133,000	136,885	+8.90% 0.89% annual	139,231	143,086	+4.4% 0.90% annual
Florence MSA	193,155	200,350	206,202	+6.76% 0.68% annual	209,736	213,309	+3.4% 0.69% annual

Planning Implications

It's important to understand the context in which the 2011 Comprehensive Plan was completed. The times of The Great Recession were challenging yet the community, as expressed by the Comprehensive Plan, was optimistic. The optimism was proven correct by the great successes of the City in turning plans and aspirations into reality of growth and reinvestment. The planning outcome is that the City should continue to dream and plan big because the upward growth trends continue to favor expansion and a momentum of economic activity.

More specifically:

- A 2.25 annual growth rate is quite healthy for a community of its size. This steady growth will continue to place pressure on annexation and peripheral development, as well as growing demands for services and quality of life amenities. While the City must continue to meet these demands, it must do so with an eye toward a responsible and sustainable pattern of growth and development, balancing development at the edge with infill and redevelopment, particularly in and around downtown and the center city neighborhoods that appear to want for such investment. With growth in population comes growth in employment and increasing economic activity, which must be seized but again, with a focus on the types of employers and jobs that will advance the City and the general health and wealth of the community and its residents.
- The City's population as a percentage of the Florence County population increased by three percent between 2010 and 2014, from 24 to 27 percent. This is due, in part, to the annexations during the time, but also that residents are opting to live in the City rather than the unincorporated county.
- The median household income increased while the per capital income decreased, meaning the single head of households were more affected by the downturn than were two headed households. While a decrease in per capital income is a concern, it is positive that the median household income held its own during the recent recession.

- Of greatest concern for affordability is the five-fold increase in median home value over the increase in income. A continuation of this trend will further burden households thereby resulting in increased pressures on affordable units, and placing downward pressure on retail sales and consumption of goods due to a loss in disposable income.
- The significant increase in housing vacancy is concerning as the total rate of vacancy (now 12.6 percent) is well above the recommended average vacancy of five to eight percent. While this is positive for the availability and choice of units for those moving into the community, it is unhealthy for the local housing market.



Road, sidewalk, and curb improvements with school project and housing redevelopment

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Tapping the momentum garnered through the first five years of implementing the 2011 Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan, these years have seen the City on the move on nearly every front; from public policy formulation to proactive short- and long-term planning; fostering partnerships with civic groups, neighborhood leaders, and other public bodies; and facilitating "on the ground" changes in neighborhoods through public investments and redevelopment, extensions and connections of the trail and greenway system, and development of new parks and major community facilities. The City

Council and management has actively engaged its directors and staff, as well as the broader community in visioning and critical thinking. The result has been the successful initiation and implementation of a large share of the implementation strategies, and accomplishment of a significant number of the Community Investment Action Items.

The five-year action plan was bold and aggressive, and embraced by the community. The management philosophy of the City is to empower each Department to think big and out-of-the-box, and to be proactive in engaging the public. The move of designating a staff ombudsman for “at risk” neighborhoods to discuss the problems, issues, and opportunities affecting them is a reflection of a government that genuinely cares about its constituents. The constituents recognize this effort and thus, are appreciative and supportive. This in itself is a major achievement!

Completed Planning Achievements

In addition to the number of capital projects that are underway or completed, the City has also continued to plan. Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the following plans have been developed to refine and drill-down on the elements of the Comprehensive Plan focusing on multi-modal transportation, neighborhood integrity and redevelopment, hazard mitigation, and downtown redevelopment and functional planning. These plans include:

- Florence Awarded Neighborhood Initiative Program Grant (2015)
- Florence Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2014)
- Florence Area Transportation Study (2014)
- Florence Neighborhood Action Plan (2013)
- Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2013)
- Florence Area Transportation Study, 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (2012)
- Florence Pedestrian Master Plan (Pending Adoption)
- Florence Unified Development Ordinance (Pending Adoption)
- Florence Downtown Parking Study (Pending Adoption)

These planning achievements involved reaching out to and coordinating with other governmental partners, neighborhoods, and the proactive pursuit of funding partners. In recognition of these – and many other - accomplishments, the City has been honored with **Achievement Awards** by the Municipal Association of South Carolina in each of the last four years. The awards recognize Florence as a statewide leader in proactive planning that creates tangible results. These accomplishments have “raised the bar” for community expectations, which is reflected in a high level of community optimism and demonstrates the implementation of the “Principles of Progress”.



Achievement Awards

The Municipal Association of South Carolina recognizes and encourages innovations and excellence in local government through its Achievement Awards. Started in 1987, the program provides local government officials and employees the opportunity to receive deserved recognition for superior and innovative efforts in local government. The program also provides a forum for sharing the best public service ideas in South Carolina. Florence has been recognized in 2013 (Economic Development), 2014 (Public Works), 2015 (Public Works) and 2016 (Public Service).

Just Do It: On-Going Programs and Completed Projects and Physical Improvements

Florence is to be credited for an astounding record of accomplishment in five short years. The City has maintained a broad and diverse focus, offering recognizable improvements in nearly all areas of the community and acting on the strategies and actions outlined in each element of its Plan. Of course, the elected and appointed officials deserve much credit for their vision and commitment of funding, but enough cannot



Another sign of progress is the ongoing development of the Judicial Center

be said about the management and staff of the City for their hands-on work in getting it done. The statewide recognition is much deserved.

Following is a summary of the significant programs, projects, and initiatives that the City has commenced or completed over the course of the last five years. In one form or fashion, each has resulted in physical improvements to the City. Most of these tasks are on-going and an everyday part of the City's work program. The accomplishments include:

◆ **Downtown:**

- » Continued implementation of the downtown façade improvement program.
- » Implemented the Irby / Palmetto professional services district.
- » Implemented and expanded the design plan for the Lower Dargan Street Corridor.
- » Expedited development of the Judicial Center and approved

plans that provide greenspace and public amenities around the new center.

- » Successfully recruited Francis Marion University (FMU) to locate a nurse practitioner facility Downtown.
- » Created Downtown housing opportunities, combined with drainage and public amenity improvements.
- » Initiated streetscape, parking, sidewalks, safety, and pocket park improvements.
- » Successfully recruited a name-brand hotel to locate a first-class facility Downtown.



Lower Dargan Street is underway in its transformation

◆ **Neighborhoods:**

- » Took action to establish a first-ever neighborhood planning program.
- » Successfully pursued alternative funding and was awarded a housing grant in 2015.
- » Targeted \$7 million in street, curb, and sidewalk improvements simultaneous with Florence School District One improvements.
- » Started new programs and invested \$3 million to "jump start" the housing reinvestment market in high-need neighborhoods.

- » Dedicated \$500,000 to \$700,000 for infrastructure projects.
- » Implemented programs to become catalysts for change to improve the fabric of the community including, but not limited to:
 - Neighborhood reinvestment programs, such as “gap” financing;
 - Purchased and razed distressed properties; and
 - Created a staff ombudsman program for cooperating with distressed neighborhoods.

◆ **Parks and Recreation:**

- » The City and Florence School District One are targeting regional-scale recreational and athletic facility improvements that will be completed in the coming five-year action cycle.
- » Major improvements to the Civic Center and the development of a Downtown gymnasium are underway.
- » Opened a new soccer complex.
- » Successfully completed a 22+ mile trail system on the south side of the City, with opportunities to expand and integrate these improvements with others in the City.

◆ **Utilities:**

- » Acquired ownership of the Timmonsville Water & Sewer Utility.
- » Extended a 12-inch water main on East Palmetto Street between FMU and the Fairgrounds to eliminate dead-end lines and to create loops.
- » Extended a 12-inch water main along Paper Mill Road to eliminate dead-end lines and to create loops.
- » Extended an 18-inch water main along Pisgah Road to expand the service areas in West Florence.
- » Completed a new wastewater treatment facility in 2014, increasing wastewater treatment capacity from 15 MGD to 22 MGD.
- » Planning for the construction of a new gravity sewer / force main within the Jeffries Creek Basin.
- » Kicking off a Wastewater Master Plan to efficiently and effectively serve future growth within the franchise service area of the City.



Older Neighborhoods Offer Recreational Opportunities

◆ **Transportation and Regional Planning:**

- » Cooperative work of the FLATS MPO, Florence County, and City of Florence to target critical regional and City transportation improvements Identified in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- » Cooperated in the development of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Each of these achievements can be traced back to the “Principles of Progress” and tie directly to safety, livability, public health, livability, economic development, financial stability, and cultural change.

LOOKING AHEAD; OUR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the City has made substantial progress in completing or initiating a majority of the five-year tasks identified in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, there remains much to do to plan, program, budget, and initiate the next series of action items. These must be taken in the context of both new and ongoing challenges, as well as the emerging opportunities

“The City is engaging its citizens and translating visions into plans and plans into tangible improvements.”

**-Bret C. Keast,
Owner | CEO, Kendig Keast Collaborative**

– some known and others not yet known. Below is an outline of the anticipated challenges and possible opportunities confronting and available to Florence at this midpoint in the 10-year planning horizon. The strategies for addressing these challenges and seizing the opportunities are summarized in Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22), on page 23.

➤ **Capitalizing on the Momentum.** Although still early in the implementation of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, the City has made significant tangible progress. However, while residents are seeing these physical changes and improvements, and reacting positively, they do not yet know the rest of the story about the City and its Plan. An essential next step is to educate residents about the plan and this update so they understand that the changes and enhancements are in following a long-range plan. The Plan is on course in its accomplishments and will soon be underway in the second phase of its 10-year planning horizon. Communicating this message will be an important part of building consensus and a constituency of support for the City and its planning agenda. The challenges may include:



Repurpose property and bridge barriers from downtown to neighborhoods

message will be an important part of building consensus and a constituency of support for the City and its planning agenda. The challenges may include:

- » Maintaining the momentum gained to date over an extended period of time due to common interruptions and the demands of implementation requiring constant focus and the continuous support of leadership.
- » Garnering the long-term commitment of resources by the City

Council, especially through election cycles and changes in Council leadership, to continue supporting the Comprehensive Plan and prioritizing and providing funding for its projects and initiatives.

- » Effectively promoting the plan to citizens, business leaders, and investors in ways that relate well and are meaningful to their areas of interest, and then soliciting their partnership and ongoing support.
- » Changing long-standing perceptions of the City and establishing credibility as a progressive, well-planned community.



Utilize greenfields as parks and recreation

➤ **Outward or Inward Development?** Due in part to the annexation laws in South Carolina, together with the economic growth of the Pee Dee Region and the varying City and County roles in land use planning and regulation, the City will continue to be confronted by the following challenges that, if not well-planned, may stress the City and its fiscal resources:

- » *Public Safety:*
 - Demands and needs for fully manned and equipped fire and emergency medical stations;

- The ability to maintain the rare ISO 1 rating due to a potential threat of diminished response times and other rating factors;
- Increased responsibility for Interstate Highway safety and patrol of a larger area; and
- Potential for diminished resource availability for existing underserved areas.
- » *Public Works:*
 - Stretching the functional capacity and efficiency of the existing utility systems and their ability to keep pace with demands;
 - Requiring focus of utility improvements on the periphery of the City and planning area rather than on existing problem areas with aging infrastructure and needs; and
 - Requirements for plant expansions and extensions of collection and distribution systems that outstrip the revenues and benefits of development.
- » *Land Use and Environment:*
 - Loss of forest cover with new development and its implications on stormwater management, water quality, and flooding;
 - Land use compatibility as urban development encroaches further into the rural landscape and threatens existing homesteads, agricultural operations, and nature areas; and
 - Shifting character of the long-standing rural areas.
- » *Perceptions:*
 - The City is supporting and subsidizing new development on the urban fringe with new infrastructure investments; and
 - There is less emphasis of planning priority for redevelopment and reinvestment in the older, well-established areas.

The ordinary course of development is an outward progression into the vacant, rural areas on the community's fringe. This has been the case in Florence as it has been elsewhere. This is not bad provided it is done sustainably and there is a concentrated effort to renew and revive areas where disinvestment has occurred, or where strains are beginning to appear by way of vacancies, empty storefronts or homes, and limited or poor maintenance. These all affect the economic vitality and integrity and character of neighborhoods, corridors, districts, or areas. This



Integrate drainage improvements as a community amenity

focus began with the renaissance of Downtown for which the know-how, success, and momentum may now be extended elsewhere in the community. The challenges of inward development include:

- » Adopting a property maintenance code paired with a rental inspection program to ensure basic health and life safety standards.
- » Creating a Livability Court to handle code enforcement violations more readily than Municipal Court thereby allowing separation of code enforcement and criminal issues.
- » Establishing a program to provide incentives for infill development and redevelopment, which may come with expedited review, grants, or other benefits like density or floor area bonuses.
- » Adopting redevelopment standards and amending them to the UDC to address development constraints and issues that burden and make redevelopment unnecessarily difficult, such as lot areas and widths, setbacks, parking, drainage retention, etc.
- » Establishing a means for encouraging conversion of renter-to-owner occupied dwellings.

- » Developing small area plans and taking proactive steps to assemble, raze, and rezone parcels suitable for redevelopment so as not to impede infill development.



Underutilized buildings and spaces provide opportunities for infill

- **Building and Strengthening the Economy.** The local economy is a constant challenge and at the same time, an opportunity. Commensurate with a growth in population must be an equal or greater growth in employment. Not just any growth in employment is good but instead, the types of jobs that fit well with the workforce, the curricula and graduates of both technical and secondary and higher education institutes, and those that generate added synergies and contribute positively to the tax base and household income. These challenges include:
 - » Improving the jobs-to-housing balance to draw and keep the income within the community and to avoid leakage to other areas.
 - » Providing necessary support to growing and attracting new business and industry in the provision of suitable land and adequate infrastructure.
 - » Coordination with Florence County and other intergovernmental

partnerships to think regionally while acting locally, meaning joint planning and decisions that are of mutual benefit to all. This is particularly relevant to the management and guidance of growth and its character as it influences the community's brand and its perception as a good place to live, do business, and recreate.

- » Ensuring that development pays its fair share of costs to underwrite growth and development and the extension and expansion of City facilities, services, and infrastructure.
 - » Positioning the City to attract, grow, and retain the "right kind of jobs" to provide good wages and career growth and opportunities for residents through business and industry that are good neighbors.
 - » Recruiting employers to locate in or near Downtown to anchor and promote continued reinvestment and expansion of residential and other economic opportunities.
- **Building Planning Capacity for Housing and Neighborhood Development.** The City has done well to initiate a neighborhood planning program. Of course, during the start-up phase, additional planning was required to build on the objectives and general directions of the Comprehensive Plan. This began with the preparation and adoption of a Florence Neighborhood Action Plan for East, North, Northwest and Downtown Florence, which was followed by the development of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. These plans were three years in the making, meaning that the initiatives of the program have only recently been underway. As the program matures and builds on its successes, the lessons learned may be transferred to other parts of the community. Within the next five year period, this program should evolve to include a more comprehensive strategy that extends beyond the East, North, Northwest, and Downtown neighborhoods and compliments housing redevelopment / rehabilitation with social and educational programming. Among the challenges may be:
 - » Maintaining a flow of sufficient funding from the City and through grants and other outside funding partners to grow and staff new and expanded programs;



Vacant lots punctuate the need of "spreading the seeds for success"

- » Spreading the seeds for success to more neighborhoods within the target areas and throughout the City to have a more significant city-wide impact;
 - » Coordinating the host of improvements needed to support redevelopment, including street and sidewalk improvements, resolution of drainage issues, community policing, transit routing, etc.
 - » Leveraging private investment through the public projects so the program can reach of point of being self-sustaining; and
 - » Planning for permanence to ensure that investments in these neighborhoods will be long-lasting and have ongoing, positive impacts.
- **Corridor Enhancements.** Florence is settled in a beautiful natural environment that offers highly livable neighborhoods and a pleasant and attractive character. These areas are inviting as places to live and hence, create interest for locating employers. As in any place, Florence has a wealth of long-standing buildings along its corridors that were built at a time when the standards and expectations were different, principally when it was a consolidated government. As the City has matured in it's planning, with it has come higher expectations for the quality of development. Of course, this

influences perceptions and thus, decisions about visiting, living, or investing in Florence. Among the challenges may be:

- » Facilitating the process of planning and implementation for design enhancements to the corridors – and the properties abutting them - leading into and away from Downtown as means to extend the energy and optimism of this emerging destination and "place to be" throughout the whole community.
- » Extending corridor enhancements to I-20 and I-95 and other well-traveled regional roadways to act as a catalyst for reinvestment, particularly in the most distressed neighborhoods and radiating outward along these corridors to encompass other business areas.
- » Extending pedestrian avenues and walkable connections between Downtown and McLeod Health Hospital, as well as to and from the nearby neighborhoods and business areas.
- » Improving city-wide connectivity by building on the growing framework of greenways and off-street connections, together with complete street improvements that provide improved mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as cars, trucks, and buses.
- » Working with transportation funding partners to receive sufficient allocations of improvement dollars and projects to improve local mobility through new and expanded roadways, public transit, non-motorized transportation improvements, and better traffic management.
- » Re-envisioning the possibilities for corridor redevelopment and improvement to design and build gateway entrances to defined areas, which may include traffic circles, broader rights-of-way to incorporate pocket or linear parks, wayfinding signage, public artwork, or other cultural enhancements to identify the unique character and create "signature" gateways and corridors.
- » Facilitating redevelopment of smaller, individual and auto-oriented developments along the City's main corridors to assemble land and development tracts for mixed use centers that anchor and act as a center of goods, services, and activity for surrounding neighborhoods.



Pocket parks create private spaces and greenscape

- **Parks and Recreation Planning:** The City has a notable parks and recreation system that largely serves the interests of its resident users. With the pace of growth though, the challenge is to keep pace with the growing demands for added and new types of facilities while, at the same time, maintaining and rehabilitating older parks that warrant substantial reinvestment. To do so, a recurring stream of funding must be identified to sustain the quality of the system, and to meet – or exceed - the growing demands. Parks are perhaps among the most recognized public amenities that contribute substantially to quality of life. The challenges include:
 - » Developing and then maintaining a balanced system of neighborhood, community, and regional parks within a convenient distance of all residentially developed areas of the community.
 - » Meeting acreage and facility standards as a measure of acres per 1,000 persons, such as those of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and other sources.

- » Acquiring land in advance of ensuing development prior to increasing costs and lost opportunities.
- » Working through the UDC to have land dedicated as open space along linear ways for the continuing development of the city-wide trail and greenway system.
- » Reinvesting and in some cases, re-establishing parks as actors in the neighborhood revitalization process to provide an amenity and central focus to the area.
- » Identifying a reliable, ongoing source of funding for the acquisition and development of new parks and the operations and maintenance of the parks and trail systems and recreational programming.
- » Strengthening relationships to build and operate jointly funded and used properties, like that presently occurring with School District One.
- » Preparing a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan to guide decisions as to the location, timing, and methods of funding new facilities and improvements, and outlining a five year capital program to qualify for recreation and tourism grants through the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.



Downtown redevelopment in full motion

- **Double Down(town).** The Downtown has begun to transform itself and is well on its way to completing its first phase of redevelopment. What's developing now was among the lowest hanging fruit, meaning there were many opportunities with which to choose

to get started. With a significant commitment of publicly-funded projects and the good fortune of private partners and investors, the work has not been without challenge but has occurred readily. The next stage and each step thereafter becomes more difficult as there are fewer properties available, each at higher prices, and more constraints to redevelopment. These will challenge downtown redevelopment, as will:

- » The difficulty in assembling larger development tracts to attract sizeable employers and other anchor uses;
- » Land use conflicts that can sometimes occur in mixed use environments, particularly for downtown residents and the impacts of major retailers or entertainment venues;
- » Managing the by-products of success, such as traffic congestion and parking; and
- » Adapting and gaining tolerance for more development intensity to generate a walkable destination, including taller building heights, structured in lieu of surface parking, and the environment impacts that come with them.



Looking forward (and back)

STEPS FORWARD; IN SUMMARY

Chapter 6, *Implementation*, of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan, included **Table 6.1, Community Investment Action Items**. Projects were divided into major categories - such as Downtown Redevelopment, Transportation, Land Use and Management of Future Development, and Economic Development - and laid out specific implementation tasks to be completed in one to three, four to six, or seven to 10 years. In an assessment of implementation progress, a review of this table makes clear that the City has acknowledged its opportunities and challenges and taken concrete steps of action. Before “Stepping Forward” into the 2017-22 timeframe, to gain perspective and benchmarks, it is prudent to look back to 2011 and what the City had hoped to accomplish by 2016.

The Five-Year Community Investment Action items adopted in the 2011 Plan were aggressive and bold, especially considering the nation had another year before the end of a prolonged recession. Since 2011, the City has completed or taken significant steps on most of the five year tasks, and even a few others slated for later years. Given this progress and since the Plan is now midway through its 10-year planning cycle, the purpose of this Plan Update is to document the progress and then refocus the City for the next five years to optimize the positive impacts of the planning program.

Implementation Methodology

Reflected in **Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)**, is both a revisit and fresh look at the Community Investment Action Items from 2011. The major categories and tasks identified in 2011 remain the same. The “2011-16” column indicates whether (or not) the action item was included in the 2011 Community Investment Plan. The “Status” column denotes whether the tasks are complete (C), pending (P), ongoing (O), or whether no progress (NP) has been made to date. Of the 43 projects, programs, or initiatives identified in 2011, 74 percent are complete, underway, or ongoing. This is astounding progress! Also shown in Table 3 are also several new tasks identified as priorities for the next five years and beyond.

- Tasks in Table 3 that are **highlighted in light blue** are projects that were programmed to occur within the 2011-2016 timeframe that are complete, have experienced substantial progress, or that are on-going and will enter subsequent phases as opportunities arise in the future. These projects are indicated as "on-going (O)".
- Tasks that are **highlighted in grey** were set for action during 2011-2016 but saw no substantive progress. In all cases, progress was not made principally for one of three reasons:
 1. Required coordination with an implementation or funding partner;
 2. Delays warranted for timing or sequencing considerations; or
 3. Time needed to complete other major tasks.

Each of these tasks are not in the 2017-2020 timeframe:

- Tasks that are **not highlighted (white)** include those pending or already complete and those programmed for 2022 and beyond. Most of these are transportation related projects and are driven by the timing or availability of funds.
- Tasks **highlighted in light red** are recommended new tasks, which are assigned as "ongoing (O)" or "project start (X)". Tasks that be tackled immediately are assigned an "X". Tasks that require initial planning, programming, sequencing, or capital budgeting, or may be a long term projects accomplished over many years, are denoted with an "O".

This Plan Update focuses on the 2017-20 and 2021-22 tasks as the "Next Steps" Five Year Action Plan. These recommended actions will help to implement the "Principles of Progress" and continue the 10-year implementation program laid out in the original plan.



What will Florence look like in 2022?

Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
General Actions						
1	Conduct Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council training on the Comprehensive Plan and its implementation	N	--	X	O	A training course should include an annual refresher for incumbents and a multi-part departmental training series for newly elected members
2	Include articles about implementation projects in the City newsletter on a quarterly basis	N	--	X	O	Drafted by the Comprehensive Plan Administrator
3	Partner with a local journalist to write a newspaper series about the Comprehensive Plan and the implementation projects	N	--	X	O	This series should be updated and republished annually
4	Host an annual Planning Symposium for the community and its residents, organizations, and businesses	N	--	X	O	This may be in concert with the State of the City address where residents can be made aware of implementation activities and provide input to new priorities
5	Arrange a joint meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council on a semi-annual basis	N	--	X	O	The purpose is to coordinate the plan implementation priorities and annual program of work and capital budgeting
Land Use and Management of Future Development						
6	Update/Amend Zoning Ordinance, including big-box design standards	Y	P	O	O	A Unified Development Code (UDC) is complete and pending adoption. The UDC includes updated sign regulations and provisions to address the NPDES requirements. Periodic amendments will be required.
7	Update Sign Ordinance	Y	P			
8	Regulatory provisions for State-mandated NPDES Phase 2 Stormwater Management requirements	Y	P			
9	Review and amend, as needed, the Subdivision Ordinance	Y	P			
10	Establish a long-term annexation strategy and municipal service plan for feasible areas, including the identification of primary (five year) and secondary (10 year) growth areas	Y	NP	X	O	A service plan is warranted first to determine the feasibility of providing services
11	Develop a "Fiscal Impact" model to assess annexation costs and benefits	N	--	O	O	The mode must account for the ratio of projected revenues over the costs for provision of infrastructure and services
12	Conduct a feasibility study for new public facilities to support growth beyond the current service area, e.g. addition of new fire station(s)	N	--	X		Maintaining the ISO #1 rating is of high priority

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Land Use and Management of Future Development						
13	Amend the UDC to include infill and redevelopment standards	N	--		X	These standards include exemptions or waivers to remove impediments to redevelopment
14	Conduct an infill development study to identify vacant and underutilized parcels and priority infill sites	N	--	X	O	Up to 10 target infill sites should be identified, together with their infrastructure needs and incentives program
15	Develop an infill incentive program	N	--		X	This may include pre-zoning, infill development grants, or density / floor area bonuses
16	Conduct corridor studies and develop land use and redevelopment master plans (e.g., Irby from W. Lucas Street to Cherokee Road; E. Palmetto Street from Irby to the Florence Regional Airport; and Cashua Drive)	N	--	X	O	One corridor master plan is recommended every two or three years
17	Create a "Livability Court" to expedite code enforcement	N	--	X		
Utility Systems						
18	Prepare a municipal service plan for feasible annexations within the primary growth areas	Y	NP	X	O	See Action 10
19	Prepare infrastructure master plans in coordination with the Neighborhood Action Plan and Revitalization Strategy	N	--	O	O	Coordinated with the annual capital improvement program
20	Prepare infrastructure master plans for the infill target areas	N	--	O	O	See Action 14
21	Downtown area stormwater management improvements	Y	P	O	O	Study potential for a broader Downtown area solution that may serve as a public amenity
22	Wastewater treatment plant expansion	Y	O	O	O	These improvements must be coordinated with the municipal service plan and "primary" growth areas - See Action 10
23	Water distribution system line extensions and improvements	Y	O	O	O	
24	30-inch water transmission main along 301 Bypass to Pamplico Highway	Y			X	
25	Continuing sanitary sewer system inflow/infiltration corrections	Y	O	O	O	These improvements may be coordinated with other redevelopment activities - See Action 27
26	Modify the rural utility extension terms of the City/ County "Consolidation Agreement"	N		X		See Action 10
27	Improve capital infrastructure systems simultaneous with targeted redevelopment projects	N	--	X		

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Parks, Trails, and Beautification						
28	Prepare a Park, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, including a Programmatic Assessment and Plan	Y	NP	X		Coordinate with the Pedestrian System Master Plan
29	Adopt a parkland dedication and fee in-lieu ordinance	N	--	X		The dedicated land or fees collected should help fund parkland acquisition and development
30	Formalize a joint acquisition, development, and maintenance agreement with Florence County, Florence School District One, and other local partners	N	--	X	O	Leverage the existence of other publicly-owned facilities to fulfill programmatic gaps and park need areas
31	Develop a pocket park and community garden program for vacant lots in the target redevelopment neighborhoods	N	--	X	O	Repurpose vacant, overgrown lots as neighborhood assets
32	Add pavement markings and signage for designated on-street bicycle routes	Y	NP		X	Coordinate with the identified street improvements below
33	Continue city-wide trail system expansion (e.g., along Lucas Street)	Y	--	O	O	Coordinate with open space dedications via the new Unified Development Code (UDC)
34	Using the system plan developed in the Master Plan, acquire parcels of land in the identified need areas	N	--	O	O	Fee in-lieu of dedication may be used in these acquisitions - See Action 29
35	Establish a new neighborhood park on the vacated West High School site	Y	NP		X	See Action 28
36	Develop landscape and open space plans for redesigned corridors	Y	NP	O	O	See Action 16
37	Develop a city-wide way-finding program to sign locations of parks, trailheads, and other public buildings and attractions	N	--	X	O	The way-finding program is to be coordinated with the Economic Development program.
38	Upgrade existing and build new parks in revitalized neighborhoods	N	--	O	O	See Actions 19 and 27
39	Redirect the rollover of the local options sales tax for funding parks and recreation operations and maintenance	N	--	X	O	Generate funds for a Parks-to-Standards program
40	Develop a three court gymnasium and accessible playground for Downtown residents and employees	N	--	X	O	Leverage public/private partnerships

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Downtown Redevelopment						
41	Recruit a Director for the FDDC	Y	C			
42	Establish a Downtown façade grant/loan program	Y	C	O	O	
43	Adopt a property maintenance code	Y	NP	X	O	May be extended city-wide
44	Amend the zoning map to denote the Downtown subdistricts	Y	P			
45	Formalize a Downtown mixed media marketing campaign	Y	C	O	O	
46	Update the design guidelines for Downtown to reflect the current standards of development	Y	--	X		
47	Amend TIF project plans to include property acquisition and developer financing	Y	C	O	O	
48	Hold a design competition for a cultural campus	Y	O	X	O	
49	Assemble and redevelop land in the Irby/Palmetto area and the "triangle" site	Y	NP		X	
50	Capitalize the downtown development revolving fund	N	--	O	O	
51	Relocate downtown farmers market to Baroody "Food Corridor"	N	--		X	
52	Expand Coit Village	N	--		X	
53	Conduct a study and recruitment strategy for a Downtown grocer and major employer(s)	N	--	X	O	
54	Develop a dog park and outdoor living room for Downtown residents	N	--		X	See Actions 28 and 34
55	Extend streetscape to 100 block of West Evans	N	--	X		
56	Formalize the establishment of an organized downtown business association	N	--	X	O	
57	Negotiate MOU with SCDOT for design control over Irby Street corridor	N	--	X		
58	Identify catalytic location and funding source for new public parking structure	Y	P	O	O	
59	Goal of 350 new downtown housing units by 2021	N	--	X	O	

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					Comments
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	
Transportation						
60	Develop a Downtown transportation center	Y	--	O	O	The actual date for all transportation projects is subject to project design, permitting, interagency approvals, and scheduling and coordination between SCDOT, FLATS, Florence County, and the City of Florence. All start dates are subject to change.
61	Widen Pine Needles Road from Southborough Road to South Ebenezer Road	N	--		10+	
62	Widen U.S. 378 from U.S. 52 near Lake City to S.C. 41 in Kingsburg	Y	--	X		
63	Widen TV Road to four lanes from Wilson Road to I-95	N	--	X		
64	Widen Pamplico Highway SC. 51 from Claussen Road to U.S. 378 in Kingsburg	N	--	X		
65	Complete the U.S. 301 Bypass from U.S. 76 near Timmonsville to the intersection of U.S. 52 / U.S. 301 and Howe Springs Road	N	--	X		
66	Widen Cashua Drive between Second Loop Road (SC. 51) and S. Parker Drive to 5-lanes with a two-way left-turn lane	N	--	X		
67	Widen Claussen Road between SC. 327 and just past SC. 51 / Pamplico Highway to a 3-lane facility with a two-way left-turn lane	N	--		X	
68	Widen W. Darlington Street between N Cashua Drive and Irby Street (U.S. 52) to 5 lanes	N	--		X	
69	Widen Ebenezer Road between Pine Needles Road and W. Palmetto Street (U.S. 76) to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
70	Widen Ebenezer Road/Pisgah Road between Industry Boulevard and Pine Needles Road to 5 lanes with a two-way left-turn lane	N	--		X	
71	Widen Ebenezer Road/Radio Drive between David H McLeod Boulevard (I-20 Business) and near Industry Boulevard to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
72	Widen Freedom Boulevard between Freedom Florence Recreational Facility and National Cemetery Road to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
73	Widen Hoffmeyer Road between Anderson Farm Road and Tivoli Drive to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
74	Widen I-95 between David H McLeod Boulevard (Bus. I-20) to W. Palmetto Street (U.S. 76) to 6 lanes	N	--		X	

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

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	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Transportation						
75	Widen National Cemetery Road between S. Church Street and Stockade Drive to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	The actual date for all transportation projects is subject to project design, permitting, interagency approvals, and scheduling and coordination between SCDOT, FLATS, Florence County, and the City of Florence. All start dates are subject to change.
76	Widen Oakland Avenue between E. Lucas Street and Wilson Road to 3 lanes with a two-way left-turn lane	N	--		X	
77	Widen Southborough Road between N. Sally Hill Road and Pine Needles Road to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
78	Widen Third Loop Road between S. Marsh Avenue to S. Irby Street to 3 lanes with a two-way left-turn lane	N	--		X	
79	Widen U.S. 301 Bypass Extension/Alligator Road between Palmetto Street (U.S. 76) and Irby Street to 4 lanes with a median	N	--		X	
80	Construct a half cloverleaf interchange at I-95 and McIver Road	N	--		X	
81	Construct 2-lane roundabout at the Five Points intersection	N	--		X	
82	Construct access management improvements to Palmetto Street (U.S. 76 / U.S. 301) corridor—Ballard Street to Williston Road / McCurdy Road	N	--	X		
83	Construct access management improvements to Pamplico Highway (SC. 51) Corridor – Irby Street to How Springs Road / Claussen Road	N	--		10+	
84	Construct access management improvements to Lucas Street (U.S. 52) corridor I-95 to Irby Street	N	--	X		
Economic Development						
85	Establish and staff an Economic Development Department	Y	O	O	O	To complement and work collaboratively with the Florence County Economic Development Partnership
86	Initiate a Foreign Trade Zone at the airport or proposed industrial/logistics park	Y	NP		X	
87	Construct additional CSX industrial rail sidings	Y	NP		X	
88	Designate a truck route from I-95 to the industrial park	Y	NP		X	
89	Establish a business development revolving loan fund	Y	NP		X	
90	Establish a Downtown business incubator	Y	O	O	O	

TABLE COLOR KEY:

Completed projects

Pending and ongoing projects

High priority 2017-20 projects

Second priority 2021-22 projects

Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Economic Development						
91	Establish a "Welcoming Committee" for new businesses	Y	O	O	O	Coordinated through the Economic Development Department and Director
92	Establish a Downtown hotel	Y	P	O	O	Hotel Florence is complete and another is in the planning phase
93	Prepare an Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Master Plan	N	--		X	City-wide plan with a focus on Downtown
94	Establish an arts incubator facility	Y	O	O	O	See Action 90
95	Establish an urban business park along Baroody Street	N	--		X	
96	Expand Downtown boundaries to the south and southwest by acquiring under-utilized buildings and parcels	N	--	O	O	Rezoning may be necessary
97	Recruit uses that attract Downtown residents and employees	N	--	X	O	Restaurants, entertainment venues, fitness gym, after-hours programming, etc.
98	Connect landmark buildings with amenities to create plazas and venues for Downtown events	N	--	X	O	See Action 48
99	Recruit major employers to locate Downtown	N	--	X	O	
100	Provide a multi-purpose facility to handle downtown drainage, greenspace, recreation, and an event venue	N	--	O	O	See Action 21
101	Coordinate with SCDOT to redesignate the U.S. 52 truck route around downtown	N	--	X		
102	Realign Evans Street at Dargan to facilitate additional development	N	--	X		
Housing and Neighborhoods						
103	Prepare redevelopment plans for new neighborhoods	Y	C	O	O	Expand the neighborhood planning program beyond the central neighborhoods
104	Adopt duplex and multi-family residence design standards	Y	P			See Action 6
105	Develop an annual program to seize and raze dilapidated structures	Y	O	O	O	See Municipal Code Division 2, Dwellings Unfit for Human Habitation
106	Establish a rental housing inspection program for conformance with a life safety code	Y	NP	X		Fees may be used to hire inspectors
107	Establish a rental to owner-occupied grant program	Y	O	O	O	

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Table 3, Community Investment Action Items (2017-22)

Action No.	Y/N = Original Five-Year Project C = Complete P = Pending NP = No Progress O = On-Going X = Project Start					
	Action Recommendations / Years	2011-16	Status	2017-20	2021-22	Comments
Housing and Neighborhoods						
108	Establish an infill development grant program	Y	O	O	O	
109	Form a home buyer education program	Y	O	O	O	
110	Add a narrow lot housing type to the UDC to facilitate infill development of affordable dwellings	N	--	X		Amend to the UDC
111	Develop a matching grant program for the conversion of upper floors of existing commercial structures to loft condominium and rental units in Downtown	N	--		X	

TABLE COLOR KEY:	Completed projects	Pending and ongoing projects	High priority 2017-20 projects	Second priority 2021-22 projects
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Summary of Next Steps

Completed Projects

Projects that were included in years one through six of the 2011 Plan that are pending or have been substantially completed include:

1. Update/amend zoning ordinance, including big-box design standards (Action 6)
2. Update sign ordinance (Action 7)
3. Regulatory provisions for state-mandated NPDES Phase 2 Stormwater Management requirements (Action 8)
4. Review and amend, as needed, the Subdivision Ordinance (Action 9)
5. Recruit a Director for the FDDC (Action 41)
6. Establish a Downtown façade grant/loan program (Action 42)
7. Formalize a Downtown mixed media marketing campaign (Action 45)
8. Amend TIF project plans to include property acquisition and developer financing (Action 47)
9. Prepare redevelopment plans for new neighborhoods (Action 98)

Carry-Over Projects

In the 2011 Plan were nine action items for which no substantial progress was made. Among all the projects and initiatives identified, these were not of priority such that they were initiated. These are identified for implementation in this Plan Update in the 2021-22 timeframe.

Recommended New Action Items

There are several recommended actions that supplement and are in addition to those in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. These actions are divided into the 2017-20 or 2021-22 timeframes based on their relative priority. Of course, these too, may adjust over the course of the next five years yet they remain priority implementation tasks. These include such tasks as:

- Informing, educating, and training the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and residents about the Comprehensive Plan and its implementation.
- Evaluating the costs and benefits of annexation and the provision of facilities and infrastructure.
- Gauging the priority of infill and redevelopment in the context of overall community growth.
- Planning for and then implementing park, trail, and recreational facility improvement projects.
- Building on the Downtown Master Plan to include expansion of its boundaries, recruitment of employers and retailers, and other infrastructure-related improvements.
- Comments were added to cross-reference related recommendations for project coordination and sequencing and to elaborate on the action items.