



RIDGELAND AREA MASTER PLAN

2008



First Edition

prepared for the
City of Ridgeland,
Mississippi



MOORE PLANNING GROUP, LLC
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS • SITE PLANNERS



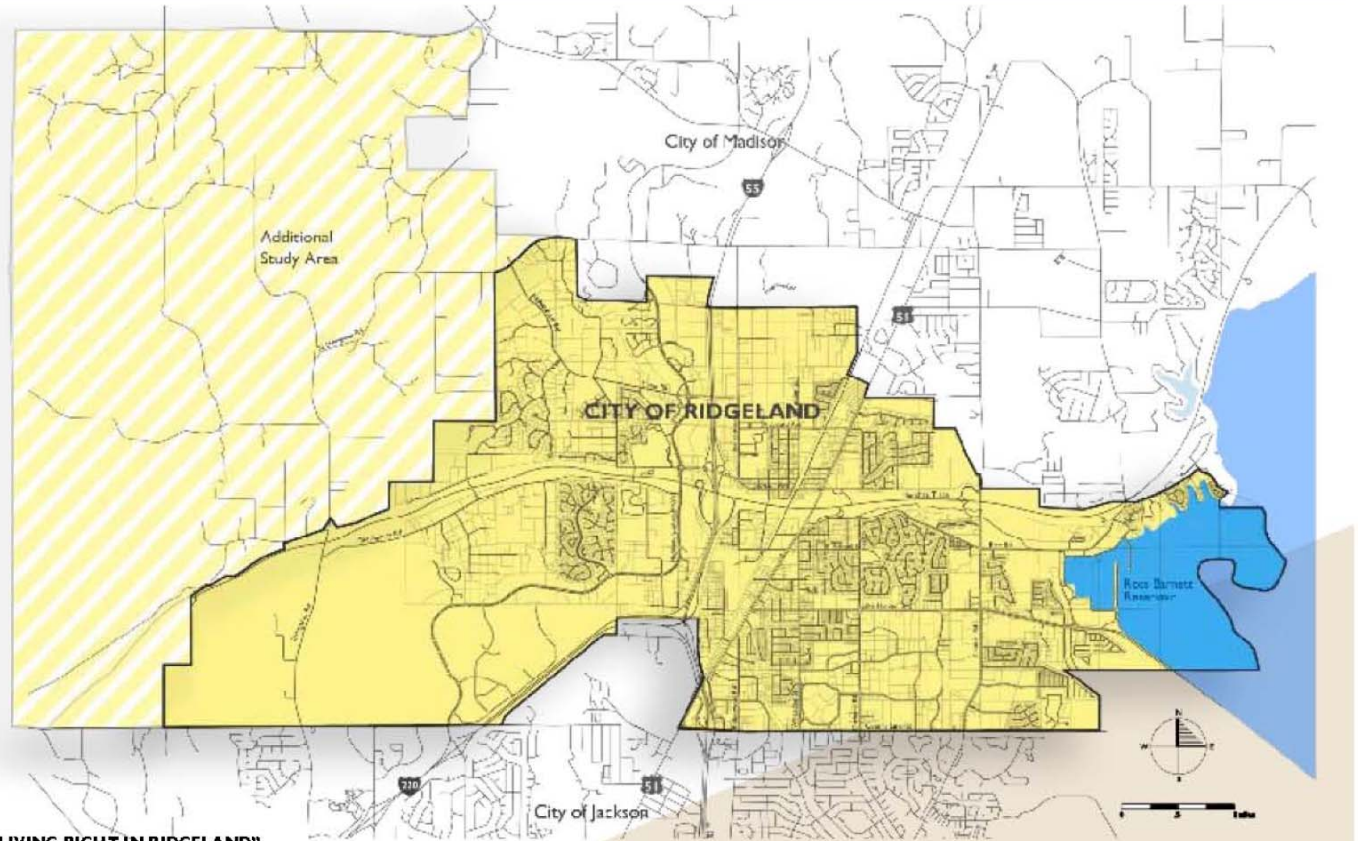


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Ridgeland has come a long way from its origins as a sleepy settlement at the intersection of the railroad and the Natchez Trace. In its early years, Ridgeland was little more than a staging platform for agricultural products and raw materials that would be transported to Mississippi's Capital City and to the more distant cities of New Orleans and Memphis. It is doubtful that the early settlers imagined that Jackson would swell in size to one day share a boundary with its little neighbor to the north. A less determined community might have eventually succumbed to the pressure and been engulfed by Jackson.

Fortunately, due to strong and confident leadership, Ridgeland established itself as an important participant in the economic life of the region on its own terms and has become a refuge of well-tended neighborhoods, quality schools, robust shopping areas and thriving small businesses. Taking full advantage of the access afforded by the Interstate Highways, the proximity of the growing market of Jackson, and an abundance of developable land, Ridgeland has grown to a city of over 20,000 with a bright future.

However, the growth and prosperity enjoyed by Ridgeland has not come without challenges. Through its success, Ridgeland has attracted the attention of residents and businesses that want to escape the hectic pace of Jackson while continuing to enjoy its assets. The continuing growth of Jackson, its suburbs to the east and second-tier suburbs to the north, along with the associated sprawl and traffic pose a threat to Ridgeland's quality of life. Never known to shrink from a challenge, the community convened to chart a positive course into the future.



"LIVING RIGHT IN RIDGELAND"

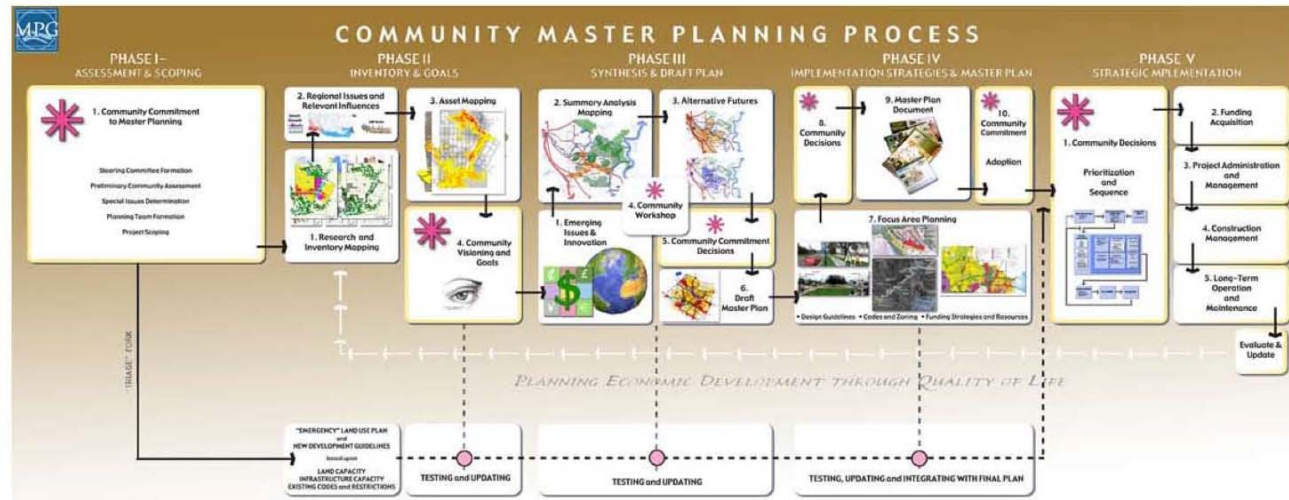
In August of 2006, the City of Ridgeland initiated work on the Ridgeland Area Master Plan (RAMP). The project area includes all areas within the city limits and a large area to the west designated as the Additional Study Area. The intent of the plan is threefold:

- To engage Ridgeland residents in an asset-based planning process that will identify opportunities to further strengthen the quality of life.
- To provide a tool that enables City leaders to adopt a proactive approach to future growth.
- To provide a means for prioritizing improvements and implementation strategies.

The Ridgeland Area Master Plan also represents the weaving together of a variety of other planning efforts previously initiated by the City of Ridgeland including the City's Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, and Recreation and Parks Master Plan. As such, it provides an integrated and balanced approach to both the planning and management of City resources toward a more sustainable community.

This plan represents the hard work and dedication of many people who participated in community meetings and workshops and offered their ideas and concerns via the Master Plan Web Site. It was crafted with the guidance of the members of the Master Plan Steering Committee whose diligence and wisdom is reflected herein.





COMMUNITY MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Simply stated, the master planning process involves performing an assessment of existing conditions in the community, which are then compared against the community's expressed vision and goals for the future of their city. The juxtaposition of these two elements then leads to the identification of opportunities for accomplishing community goals. It is a very user-intensive process wherein the planner serves as a conduit through which community goals are transformed into concrete and achievable projects, programs and policies.

A fundamental assumption imbedded within the process is the commitment of the local community or user group to participate in the planning process. In essence, the master plan process requires that a partnership of trust and honesty be established between the planners and the community.

Participants generally fall into one of three important categories:

1. The citizenry or members of the community.
2. The project "owner" or community leadership, typically an elected Mayor and Council.
3. The professional consulting entity or planner.

Each entity has a vital role to play, and actions by one partner are often required so that the other may proceed to subsequent steps in the process.

The Master Planning Process proceeds through five phases. Although distinct, the phases occasionally overlap. These phases are:

Phase I - Needs Assessment

The first phase requires the acknowledgement of the need to develop a plan and a commitment to the time and resources needed to formulate it. During this phase, the owner and its chosen planner have an opportunity to assess the existing data available, to begin framing critical issues of concern, and to establish the management structure which will be employed to support the process. The end product is a well-defined scope of work and resource allocation.



Phase II - Inventory and Goals

In this phase, the existing conditions are inventoried, mapped and assessed to establish a starting point. In essence, the planners construct a portrait of the community as it exists today so that realistic decisions can be made about the future. The assessment provides an evaluation of the existing conditions when compared to other successful



communities, best planning practices, regional influences, and future trends. Visioning and Goal setting requires meaningful community participation. Community ideas are gathered at open community meetings, interviews, and via an interactive web site established for this purpose. Of vital importance, the identified vision and goals will be used to guide the direction and emphasis of the rest of the master planning process.

Phase III - Analysis, Synthesis, and Preliminary Plan

In this phase, the vision and goals are combined with the assessment of existing conditions to identify opportunities, problem areas, and issues that need to be addressed in the master plan. This leads to summary mapping and delineation of alternative futures for the community. When community consensus is achieved, a draft master plan is mapped for review.



Phase IV - Implementation Strategies and Final Plan

In the end, a plan is only as good as its execution. This phase is focused upon identifying strategies for implementing plan recommendations. Areas of focus that are broadly applicable to community needs are identified. Design schematics and graphics are developed to illustrate desired outcomes, attract funding opportunities and inspire community investment. Recommended design guidelines and community standards are tested and reviewed for community approval before

being incorporated into the final master plan.

Phase V - Strategic Implementation and Evaluation

In the final phase, the planner's work decreases while the community's work must increase. Getting organized, setting priorities and sequences, and managing the implementation are assisted by consultants but must be driven by community commitment and supported by allocation of community resources.



In the RAMP process, this phase will also be enhanced by the RAMP web site, which will provide ongoing monitoring of the implementation process. Through this web site, citizens, leaders, and prospective investors will be able to keep abreast with improvements and coordinate their strategies with Ridgeland's progress and with the goals and priorities of the community.



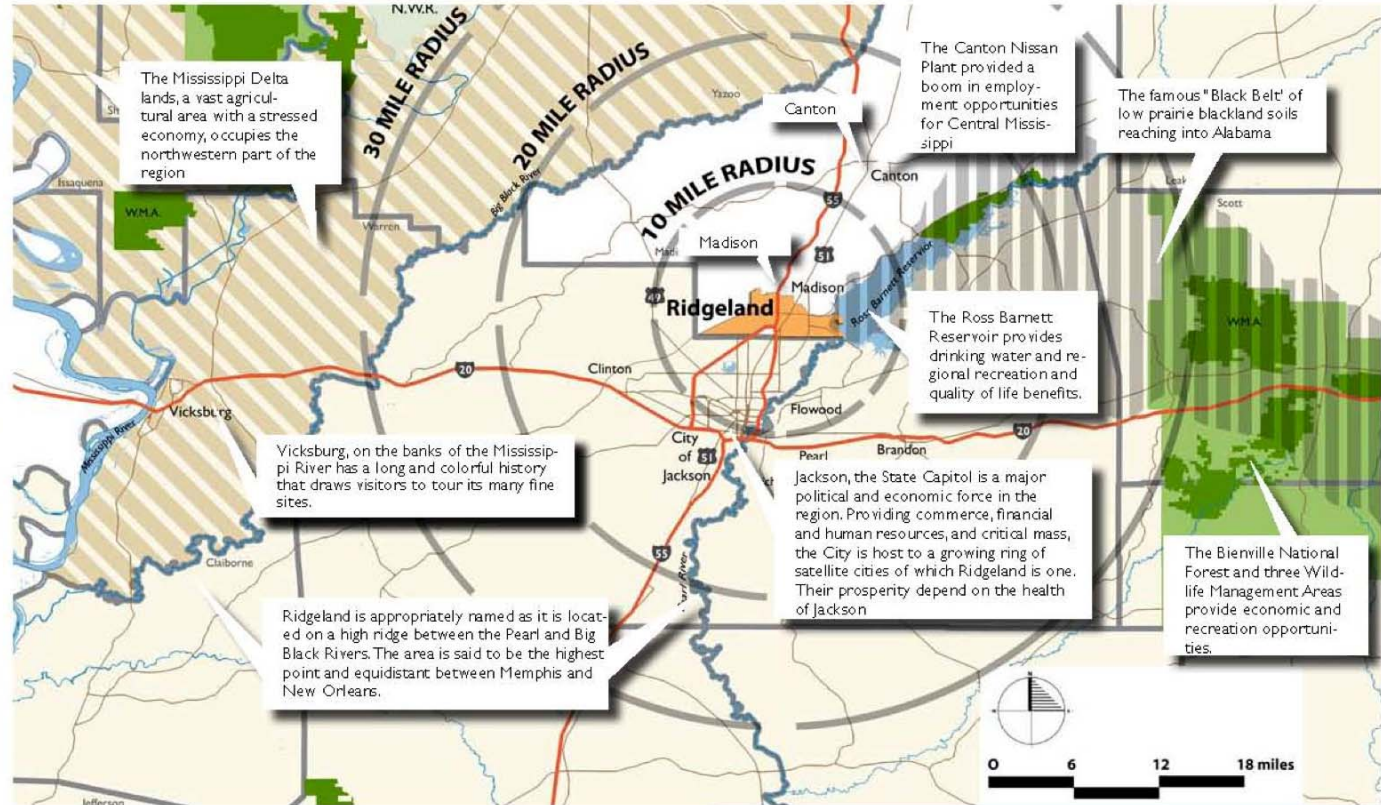
REGIONAL NATURAL RESOURCES

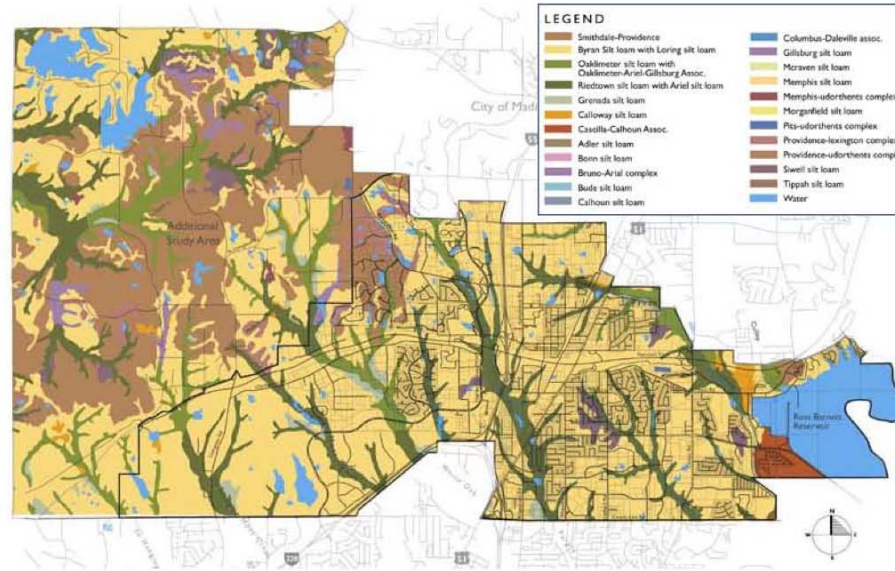
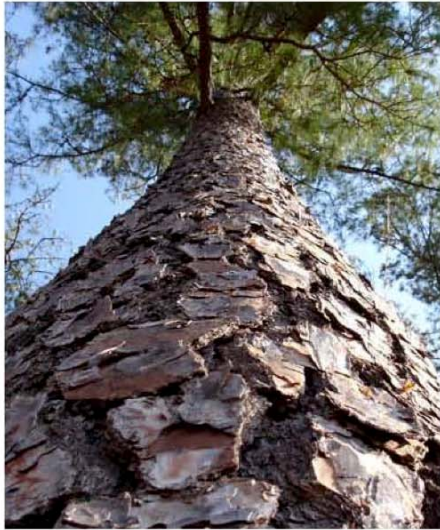
From a broader perspective, the Ridgeland region is approximately 50 miles east of the Mississippi River and the port city of Vicksburg (see map at right). Fifteen miles to the east and north lay the vast agricultural "Delta" lands that span three states. The rest of the region is surrounded predominantly by forestlands.

The region boasts many quality transportation advantages including: Interstates (I-20, I-220, and I-55); Kansas City Southern and Illinois Central Railroads, Jackson International Airport.

Several other key regional considerations include:

- The Canton Nissan Plant and associated supplier businesses have significantly increased the employment base for the region. It is located less than ten miles north of Ridgeland
- The Pearl River and Ross Barnett Reservoir provide water, recreation and invaluable atmosphere to the region.
- The Natchez Trace Parkway National Park provides one of the finest driving experiences in the U.S. and brings travelers and heritage tourism right into the heart of Ridgeland.
- Forestry is and has always been a critical industry in central Mississippi.
- Evidence of Ridgeland's agricultural past is disappearing but can still be seen in rural areas beyond the incorporated areas.





SOILS

The soils in the Ridgeland area fall into four main groups:

Cascilla-Calhoun - Nearly level, well-drained and poorly drained silty soils on flood plains and stream terraces.

Byram Silt Loams - Gently sloping to strongly sloping, moderately well-drained silty soils on uplands and stream terraces.

Loring Silt Loams - Gently sloping to moderately steep, moderately well-drained silty soils on uplands and stream terraces.

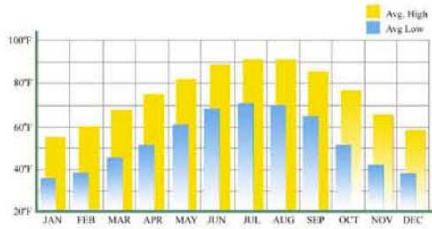
Smithdale-Providence - Gently sloping to steep, well-drained loamy on upland ridge tops and side slopes.

Riedtown-Oaklitters - Gently sloping, deep, moderately well-drained, moderately permeable soils in silty alluvium on flood plains and low terraces along streams.

The Loring and Byram soils are the most stable for continued development, followed by the Smithdale-Providence. The Cascilla-Calhoun is the least desirable soils for further development stability.

As can be seen in the state map below, Ridgeland rests on a narrow band of thin Loess soils on high land between the Delta and the Upper Coastal Plain. Immediately to the east and currently covered by the Ross Barnett Reservoir is a band of Blackland Soils that stretch across the state into Alabama. It is interesting to note that early railroad engineers selected this same strip of land upon which to construct the main line between Memphis and new Orleans.

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURE



AVERAGE MONTHLY PRECIPITATION



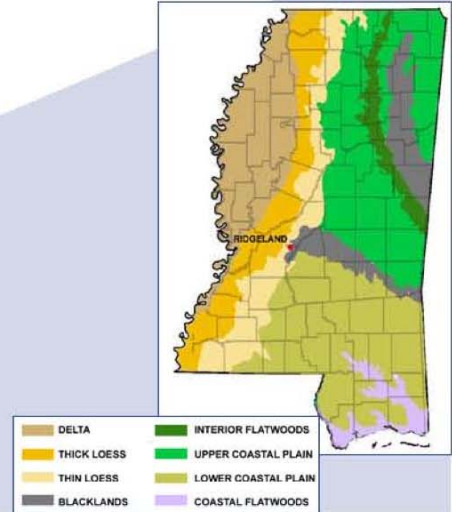
CLIMATE

The climate in Ridgeland, Mississippi is typically warm and moderately humid in the summer, and mild in the winter. July is the average warmest month with an average temperature of 91 degrees, and the maximum average precipitation of 5.98 inches occurs in April. Rainfall is fairly high, approximately 55 inches per year, compared to the U.S. average of only 35.9 inches per year. Ridgeland is located in Plant Hardiness Zone 7b and 8a. Zone 7b has an average minimum temperature range of 5 to 10° F while Zone 8a is milder with an average 10 to 15° F as depicted on the map. The soils in the region are not suited for large crop production, which led early settlers to turn to production of pears and strawberries as two of the main crops.

PLANT HARDINESS ZONES



SOIL ZONES





THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The quality and quantity of open spaces in a community are indicators of several things including:

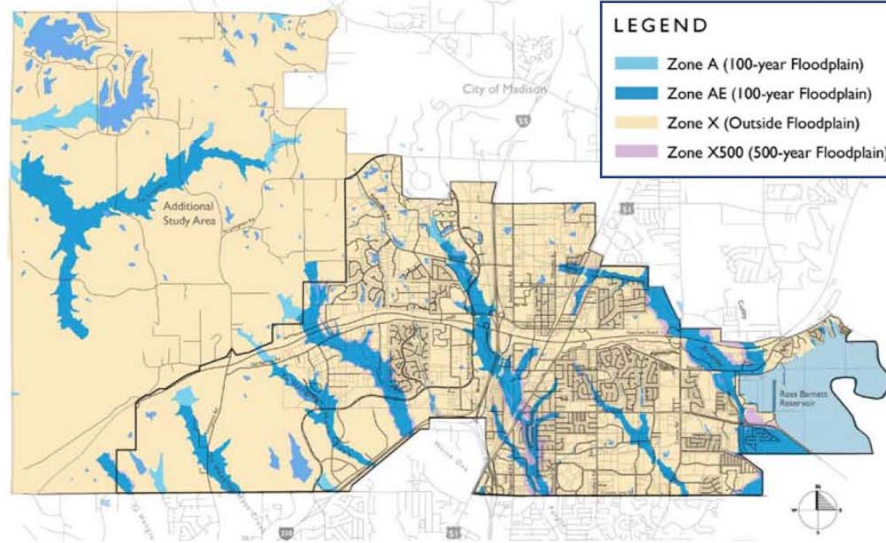
- Amount of park and recreation space
- Amount of space available for future development
- Scenic quality of the community
- Amount of buffer space between developments and noisy highways

As the City of Ridgeland has grown, it has managed to maintain a considerable amount of open space. Much of it, as can be seen on the map, is a result of highway right-of-way along the Natchez Trace Parkway and Interstate 55. The parkway is a beautiful asset with its forested boundaries while the Interstate, being devoid of trees, leaves much to be desired.

The City operates three beautifully maintained parks that are supplemented by two parks at the reservoir and several miles of bike trails. While park acreage per population is low, the quality of active recreational facilities is exceptional. Passive recreation space is lacking.

Another source of open space within Ridgeland is a series of creek basins that provide storm drainage for the City. These areas, which lie within the flood zone or in designated floodways, provide opportunities for linear green space throughout the City.

Several utility right of ways that traverse the City provide a similar opportunity.



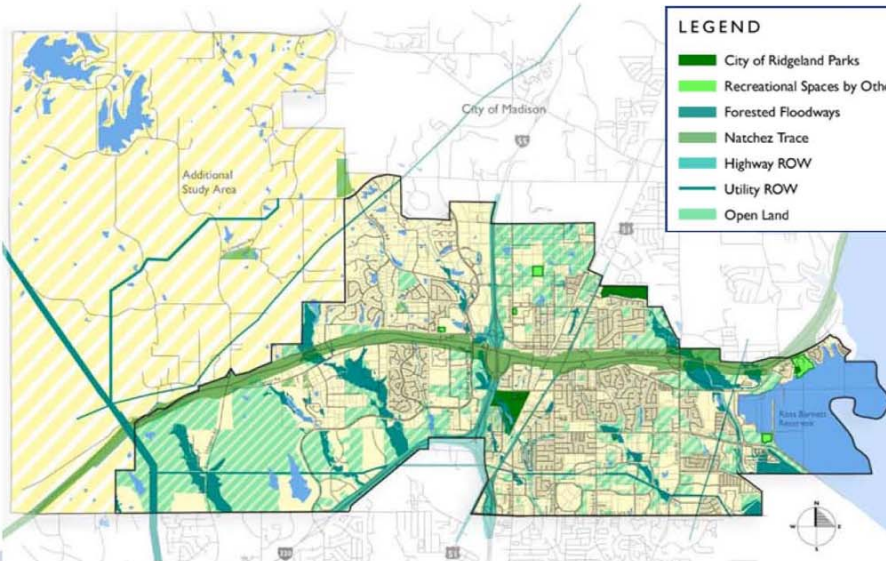
FLOOD ZONES

The City of Ridgeland, being mostly developed on high lands, is relatively safe from major flooding. However, as can be seen on the Flood Zone Map, there are several linear areas associated with major creeks that are included in the 100-Year Flood Zone determination. Most of these creeks, including Brashear, White Oak, and Purple Creeks, and tributaries of Hanging Moss Creek flow to the southeast into the Pearl River Basin. In the Additional Study Area, a major tributary of Limekiln Creek flows to the west, then on to the Black River.

Zones A and AE - Area subject to inundation by a typical 100-year flood event. These areas are at greatest risk for inundation during heavy rain events that occur within the watershed area. Note that flooding may occur during less intense rainstorms depending upon rainfall concentrations and on capacity conditions downstream.

Zone X500 - Area between the 100 and 500-year flood. These areas are less likely to become inundated but may still experience problems with backwater flooding and slow drainage after significant rainfall events.

Zone X - Area of moderate or minimal hazard from the principal source of flooding in the area. These are areas that have never experienced significant flooding. It should be understood, however, that significant changes in grades and/or increases in runoff due to increased hard surface construction can increase risks to all areas.



OPEN SPACE

There remains an ample amount of open, undeveloped land within the city. In some areas (southwest and northeast Ridgeland), open land constitutes approximately 50% of the area. These spaces should be carefully considered in future development plans so that the current forested quality of the community can be preserved. They represent good opportunities for increasing park space and pedestrian and bicycle trails in preparation for future development. There are several potential strategies currently being used by other communities to conserve and protect green spaces. They include:

- Establishing or working with Open Space Conservation organizations who purchase land for conservation purposes.
- Adopting Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) policies which create mutually beneficial economic incentives for developers and property owners to preserve green space.
- Adopting Conservation Development Ordinances which provide density, set-back, and reduced parking requirements as incentives to conserve green space.





DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the movements of people within and through the City of Ridgeland can help with the planning of needed facilities and anticipating future infrastructure needs. Employment, housing and education complete the portrait of Ridgeland citizens.

Commuter Patterns - Area

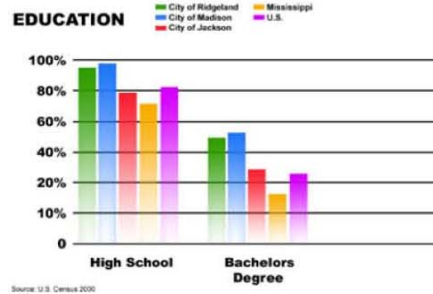
The pie charts (right) show an interesting area phenomenon regarding the relationship between where people live and where they work. While the figures were only available at a county level, they reflect a general tendency within the Ridgeland workforce and reveal important considerations for the master planning.

Of the county's 34,360 workers, over half commute to outside the county for work. Of the 28,697 jobs provided in the county, almost half of them are occupied by workers from outside the county. This means that on a typical day, more than 19,000 people who live in Madison County cross the county line on their way to work. On their drive, they cross, going the opposite direction, more than 13,000 people commuting from other counties to their jobs in Madison County. This has major implications for the street and highway system in the area.

Commuter Patterns - City of Ridgeland

In keeping with the data at the county level, of the 11,455 employed residents of Ridgeland, almost 9,000 of them commute to outside the city to their jobs. That's a whopping 78% of the workforce crossing the city limits each day going to and from work.

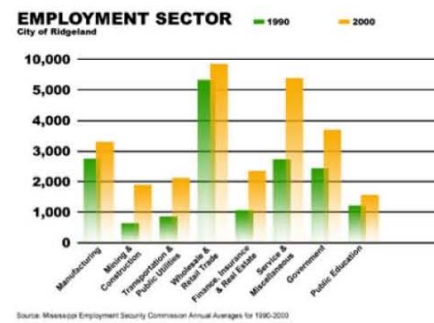
EDUCATION



Education Attainment - Area

The data shows that Ridgeland is doing extremely well in terms of the educational attainment of its citizens when compared to regional, state, and U.S. averages. It attests to the quality of the school system and serves to attract employers seeking a well-educated workforce. These jobs usually pay higher than average salaries and bode well for Ridgeland workforce income earnings. Quality schools also act as a powerful attractant to families with school-age children who will often choose to live in a community with good schools despite housing costs and commute length.

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR



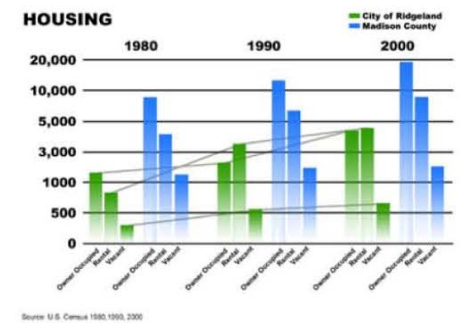
Employment Sector - City of Ridgeland

Several significant changes have occurred in the employment sector of Ridgeland over the ten years between 1990 and 2000. In terms of the change in percentage of jobs provided in Ridgeland by sector, please notice that:

Manufacturing	-----	decreased by 6%
Mining & Construction	-----	increased by 4%
Transportation & Utilities	-----	increased by 4%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	-----	decreased by 7%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	-----	increased by 3%
Service & Miscellaneous	-----	increased by 6%
Government	-----	decreased by 3%
Public Education	-----	decreased by 2%

These changes demonstrate that Ridgeland is gaining ground in the service and professional sector and has begun to lose in some of its traditional employment sectors of wholesale/retail trade and manufacturing.

HOUSING

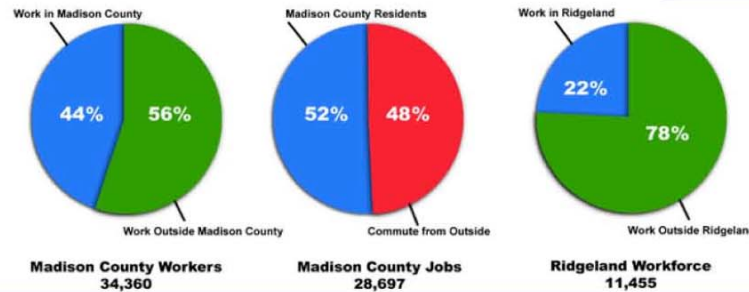


Housing - Area

The housing data shows a comparison over the past twenty years between the City of Ridgeland and Madison County in three categories: Owner Occupied Housing, Rental Housing and Vacant Housing.

Notice that during the first ten years, while Madison County housing categories increased proportionally, Ridgeland saw a flattening of Owner Occupied Housing and a steep increase in Rental Housing. This occurred due to the annexation of County Areas that already contained apartments, and to residents moving into new housing situations and renting their previous domicile.

This trend has moderated somewhat during the last ten years. However, Ridgeland still has a proportionately lower percentage of Owner Occupied Housing than the county average. This indicates either a deficiency in moderately priced housing or a high percentage of rental units, or both.





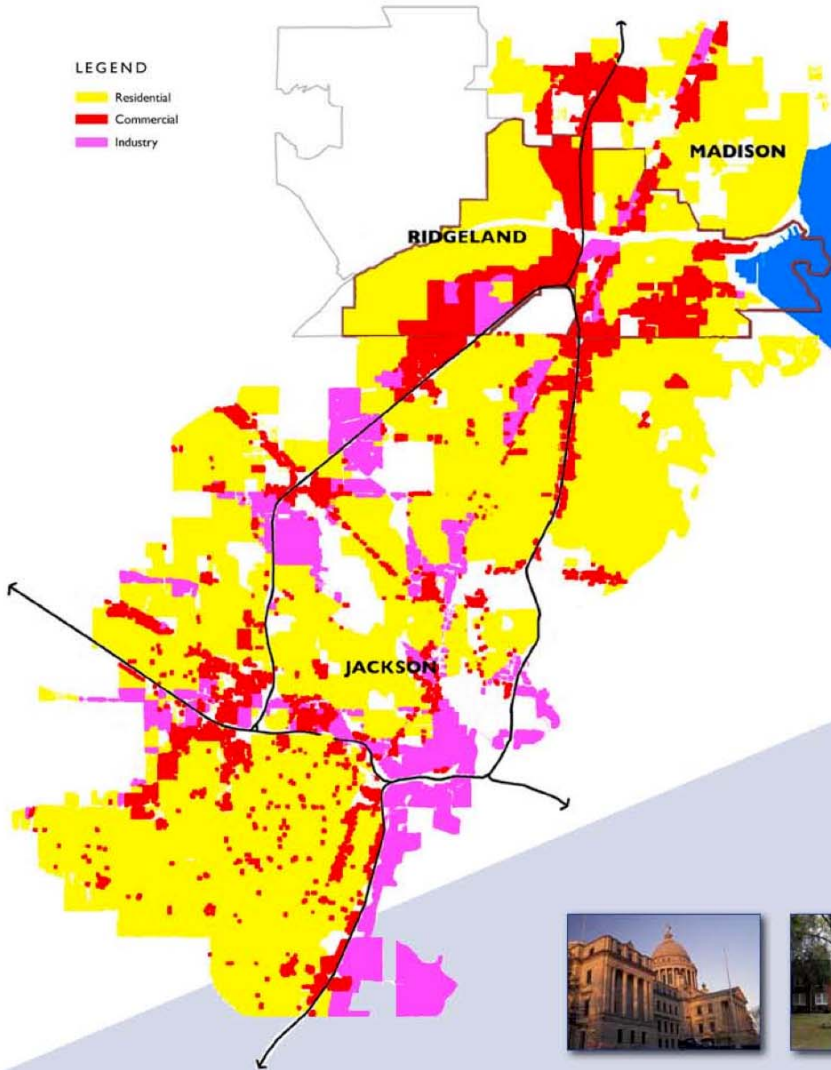
ECONOMIC REGION

Planning for the City of Ridgeland must take into consideration the influence of its surroundings. To an ever-increasing extent, our mobile society allows us to take advantage of natural, human and economic resources well beyond the City Limits. Conversely, Ridgeland can be adversely affected by economic downturns that may have their root at the regional level.

The City of Ridgeland is located on the southern border of Madison County. Immediately to the south lay Jackson, Mississippi, the State Capital, with a population of nearly 180,000. The Jackson Metropolitan Area, which includes Madison County and Ridgeland, has a combined population of over 500,000.

Ridgeland, while originally a country town outside the big city, has evolved into a "first ring suburb" of Jackson. Its growth and prosperity have been due in part to the economic opportunities offered by the past stability and growth of Jackson. The population pool and businesses of the Metro Area have formed a strong regional economic base while Ridgeland has provided welcome relief from crowding and traffic of the larger city.

As can be seen in most modern American cities, this phenomenon is often repeated in a "second ring". The City of Madison is emerging as a second ring element. This development deserves serious consideration in planning Ridgeland's future. Any reduction in quality within Ridgeland could precipitate a flight into the second ring by residents and businesses. In addition, the health of the Jackson community is of vital concern to Ridgeland since deterioration in that community will have ripple effects in Ridgeland.



The diagram above illustrates Ridgeland's position within the metro area. It includes the Core Area of Jackson along with First and Second Ring suburb/cities like Clinton, Pearl, Brandon, Flowood, Madison and Ridgeland.

REGIONAL LAND USE

The map at left provides a good analysis of the generalized land use patterns in the metro area. Note the high ratio of residential and industrial uses in Jackson contrasted with the high levels of commercial uses in Ridgeland. It appears that over the past decade, Ridgeland has developed into the commercial center of the region. This has had positive implications on the city's financial status. It is also a gamble for any community to become unbalanced and to invest too much of its territory into one pursuit, especially if it is done without an eye on the negative impact upon city image and quality of life. For example, some of the crowding on Ridgeland's roads is, no doubt, due to its success as a regional shopping venue.

On the positive side, if the City of Ridgeland should be fortunate to eventually annex the Additional Study Area, it could certainly do so in a well-balanced way that would help alleviate pressures in existing areas.





CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM

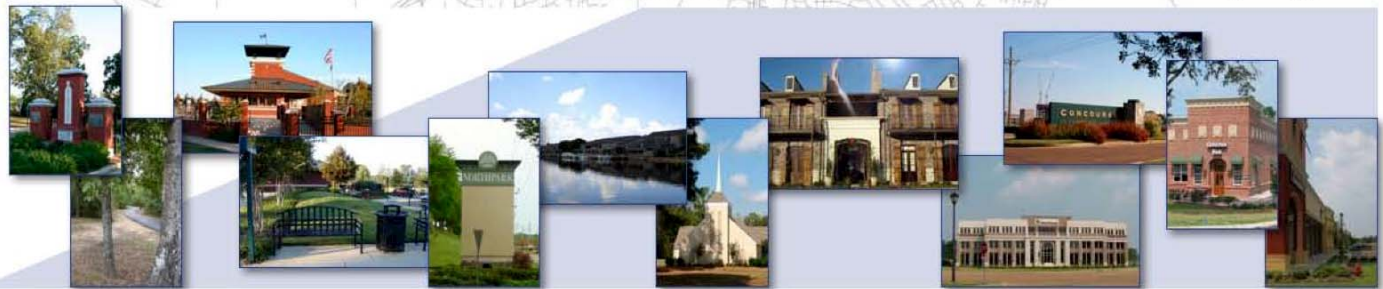
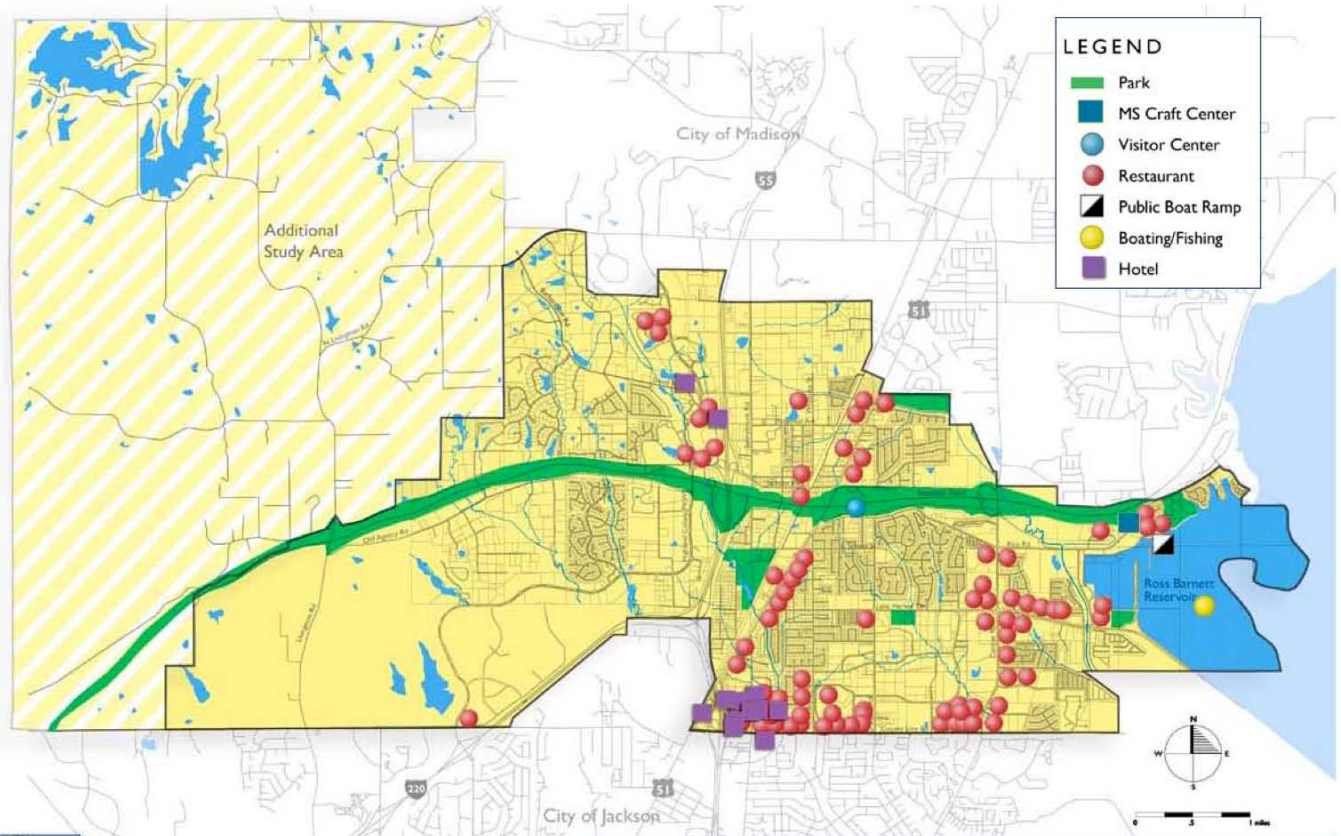
This element of the community's economic equation is particularly attractive as it represents a "clean industry" that provides jobs, expanded educational opportunities and, most importantly, a sense of life and excitement to the community.

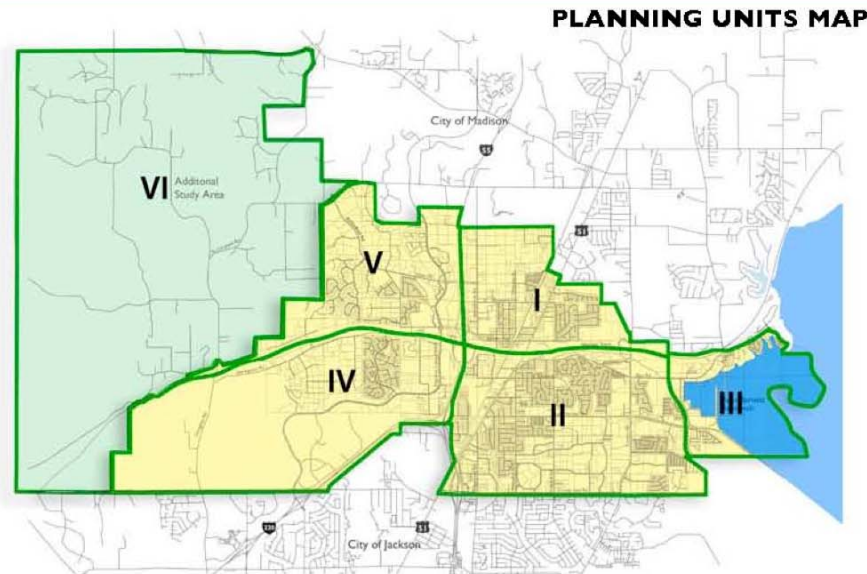
As can be seen on the map, Ridgeland has considerable hospitality resources (hotels and restaurants) as well as ample shopping opportunities. The Natchez Trace Parkway and Ross Barnett Reservoir combine to attract and "capture" travelers with their combination of heritage tourism and outdoor recreational assets.

Ridgeland parks, especially the tennis center and ball fields, also offer powerful attractions to visitors and residents alike. There are several parks and recreational facilities around the reservoir within Ridgeland. These facilities, however, are operated by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District and do not have the advantage of Ridgeland's rigorous maintenance standards and recreational programming. There are no golf courses in Ridgeland.

An important area in which Ridgeland is lacking is in the cultural arena. The city lacks museums, performing arts facilities, art galleries, and a true "sense of place" environment in which to host these activities. While it is true that Jackson currently serves as host for many cultural offerings, some presence in Ridgeland would be a welcome addition to community life.

The historic business district of the City has been lost to railroad and highway expansion and is only now in the process of being re-developed along Jackson Street just north of the Natchez Trace.





ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

In order to achieve sustainable growth, communities should strive for a balance of these four Essential Elements:

- Education
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Livability

This analysis of the Planning Units of Ridgeland will identify assets in each category as a way of identifying concentrations that can be built upon, or areas lacking one or more essential element for strengthening.

PLANNING UNIT ANALYSIS

The City of Ridgeland and the Additional Study Area consist of approximately thirty square miles. Analysis of the inventory of Natural, Human and Economic Resources represented in the area will be facilitated by the establishment of Planning Units.

Planning Units are parts of the city defined by natural and man-made, physical and psychological borders. They do not consider political borders because the basis is the underlying land forms and real barriers. By disregarding political boundaries, the analysis can also proceed without prejudice. Planning Units allow for a more detailed analysis of the assets and liabilities within their confines.

The study area, as shown in the map at right, was divided into six Planning Units. They are:

- Planning Unit I - Northeast Ridgeland**
- Planning Unit II - Southeast Ridgeland**
- Planning Unit III - Reservoir Area**
- Planning Unit IV - Southwest Ridgeland**
- Planning Unit V - Northwest Ridgeland**
- Planning Unit VI - Additional Study Area**

The units were defined primarily by the intersection of Interstate 55 and the Natchez Trace Parkway which divide the city at its center. The Reservoir was carved out due to its strong connection to the Ross Barnett Reservoir and the division created by Brashear's Creek.

The Additional Study Area was separated out due to the fact that it is not a part of the City and because of the natural topographic break that occurs along the ridge.

Each of the Planning Units will be analyzed according to three critical areas in order to develop a basic understanding of its relationship with the other parts and then to the whole. The three areas to be analyzed are:

Composition - The approximated percentage of land uses within the Planning Unit will be determined.

Opportunities and Constraints - General potentials and potential problem areas are identified and recommendations made.

Balance - The presence of the Four Essential Elements (see top right) for sustainability are identified as a preliminary step to achieving city-wide balance.

This analysis will create a "snapshot" of each planning unit and help to identify general strengths and weaknesses that may require more attention as the planning process continues.



Rolling meadows constitute large parts of Planning Unit VI



A retention pond with new residential development in Planning Unit V



Residential neighborhood in Planning Unit I



Major utility corridor slices through Planning Unit IV



New apartment complex in Planning Unit II



Boat houses at the lake in Planning Unit III

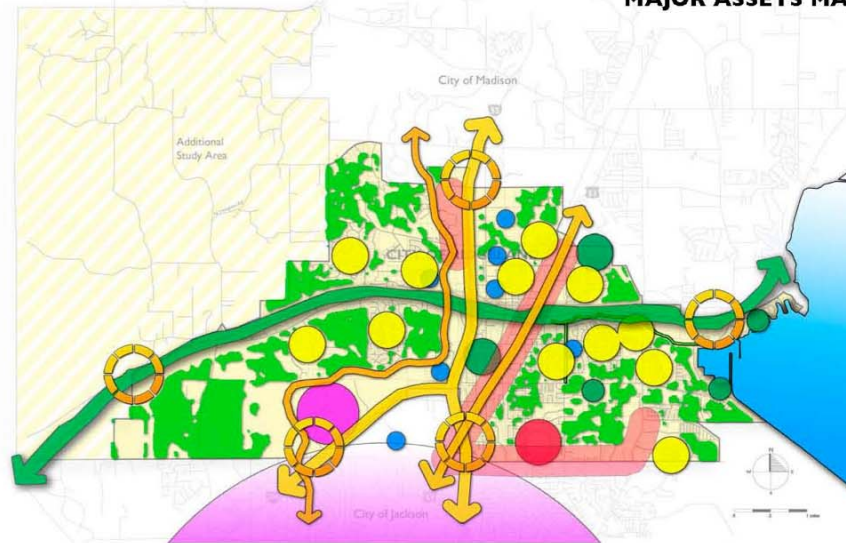


COMMUNITY ASSETS AND ISSUES

The analysis of the Inventory Mapping and the Planning Units reveals important assets and issues which should receive special consideration in the planning process. Fortunately for Ridgeland, the assets outnumber the issues.

The assets include City Gateways which offer opportunities to establish the image of the City to visitors and create a positive first impression. The Natchez Trace Parkway is a treasure to the entire state, and its path through Ridgeland is a great opportunity to entice travelers to experience the City's offerings. Good transportation access is provided by the Interstate and US Highways as well as by Highland Colony Parkway which all have the capacity to support strenuous economic activity. The Technical Industrial Park in southwest Ridgeland provides an opportunity to broaden the economic base into research and high technology, high value business. Northpark Mall and the commercial corridors, while aging are still vital and capable of providing good business opportunities. Strong schools and residential neighborhoods offer stability and community character. Open space, bike trails, the reservoir and City parks provide a pleasant setting for City activities and the City of Jackson remains a steady source of jobs and market for Ridgeland businesses. Troublesome issues include several declining neighborhoods in southeast Ridgeland that threaten the quality of life of the community. Northpark Mall and the schools are susceptible to decline as well, if measures are not taken to ensure their continued strength. The City, while being clean and well maintained, has no discernible identity around which to rally and no "heart" - no central identifiable place that communicates the character of its people. Future growth of the city, hemmed in on three sides must be addressed. And, while well served by major roadways, inter-connectedness is still a challenge.

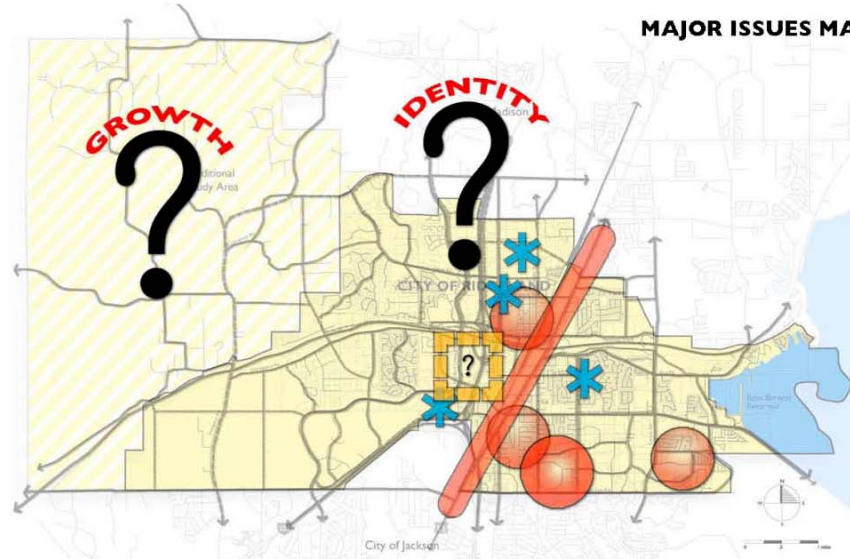
MAJOR ASSETS MAP



MAJOR ASSETS LEGEND

- City Gateways
- Natchez Trace Parkway
- Highland Colony Parkway
- Interstate Highways
- Highway 51
- Technical Industrial Park
- Northpark Mall
- Commercial Districts
- Residential Neighborhoods
- Schools
- Open Space
- Bike Trails
- City Parks
- City of Jackson
- Reservoir

MAJOR ISSUES MAP



MAJOR ISSUES LEGEND

- Declining Neighborhoods
- Northpark Mall
- Aging Commercial
- Schools
- City Center
- City Identity
- Future Growth
- Connectivity



INTRODUCTION

Community commitment to the planning process is tested in the visioning and goals-setting step. Community participation is crucial to the success of this part of the planning process. It requires that community members dedicate some part of their busy lives to gathering at meetings and working together to express common desires.

In essence, the planners construct a portrait of the community, as it exists so that realistic decisions can be made about the future. The assessment provides an evaluation of the existing conditions when compared to:

- Other Successful Communities
- Best Planning Practices
- Regional Influences
- Future Trends

Visioning and goal setting requires meaningful community participation. Community ideas are gathered at open community meetings, interviews, and via an interactive web site established for this purpose. Of vital importance, the identified vision and goals will be used to guide the direction and emphasis of the rest of the master planning process.

COMMUNITY VISIONING MEETINGS

A series of community visioning meetings were held in the City of Ridgeland during the week of February 26 through March 2, 2007. The purpose of the meetings was to allow residents and business owners an opportunity to offer their thoughts about issues under consideration in the Ridgeland Area Master Plan. The meetings were open to the public and were held in the new facilities of Ridgeland High School on Sunnybrook Road.

Open meetings were held on Tuesday and Thursday evening and Thursday morning. A special meeting was held on Friday with the eleventh grade Ridgeland High School Ambassadors. In addition, two roundtable meetings were held, one on Wednesday with area bankers, and one on Thursday with area developers to hear their thoughts and to solicit their financial and civic support for the planning process.

In addition to the visioning meetings, input data was also retrieved from the ramp.ridgeland.com web site.

During the community meetings, participants were asked to review the inventory and analysis presented by the planners and then respond to a series of inquiries. Four break out groups were organized around the four essential elements of sustainable communities - Education, Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Livability - and were asked to join in a conversation to discuss three topics:

- The adequacy of current City efforts to provide a balanced community with high quality of life.
- Investment priorities within the Economic Development, Education, Infrastructure and Livability elements.
- Respond to a series of questions about the positive and negative elements of their City.

A spokesperson from each break-out group was then tasked with reporting the results of their discussion. Many common issues and concerns were reported and recorded and, combined with the results from the online survey, which formed the basis for the Community Goals for the Master Plan.

After all the data was collected and analyzed, the planners prepared a summary of findings and proposed planning goals derived from the results. These were presented to the RAMP Steering Committee for review, revision and approval. The Steering Committee then presented the goals to the Mayor & Board of Aldermen for adoption.

The following pages provide a summary of this process and an analysis of the adopted Community Goals.



INVESTMENT

Participants in the community sessions and the web survey were asked to divide a symbolic sum of \$400.00 between the four elements (\$100.00 each), and to indicate where within the elements they would invest. This exercise adds specificity by showing what parts of each element need the most improvements according to participants. The summary (right) is recorded by element and then by amount of overall investment.

The greatest total investments were made in the **Livability** element with the other three closely following.

Livability	\$10,305.00
Infrastructure	\$10,270.00
Education	\$10,190.00
Economic Development	\$10,160.00

The closeness can be explained by the fact that most people allocated exactly \$100.00 to each element. The disparity can be explained by the fact that some allocated more funds to some elements and less to others.

When listed and ranked by individual components, the results list the top 15 components in terms of investment priority. They include:

Five **Infrastructure** components including the top investment category: Roads.

Four **Education** components including the second most valued investment: Public Schools.

Five **Economic Development** components, the top one being: Business Environment.

Five **Livability** components, the top one being: Image

Some notes of interest:

1. Roads and public schools, by far, attracted the most investment. It should be noted that city and county leaders have already begun responding to this call with major street, sewer and educational facility investments.

2. One question for consideration is: Understanding the current investment levels, should the community continue to invest heavily in these categories?

3. According to other information included in web and community session comments, the high investment total in the business environment category may express a concern about image rather than a concern about the city having an anti-business environment. Adding just half of this investment total to the image category would raise the image component to the highest ranking. This would also drop economic development out of the top ten investing categories, confirming the opinion that the city is already seen as being very pro-business.

4. Affordable housing, or more accurately, starter homes for young families, ranked higher in investment than was anticipated. This may indicate the need to develop a better understanding of this terminology before planning concepts are developed.

Handout 2
RAMP COMMUNITY VISIONING March 29, 2007
INVESTING SUMMARY

Infrastructure Investments		10,270
1. Roads	4,923	
2. Drainage	1,894	
3. Water and Sewer	1,558	
4. Communications	1,580	
5. Handicaps, Landscaps, Irrigation and Lighting	100	
6. Keep things in top shape	50	
7. Better Drainage	50	
8. Community center	25	
9. Green Space	30	
10. Other unspecified	30	
11. Need park on west side of 55	10	
Education Investments		10,190
1. Public Schools	4,660	
2. Libraries	2,730	
3. Continuing Education	1,490	
4. Workforce Training	1,135	
5. Scholarship opportunities to top students	1,110	
6. Police & Fire	25	
7. Other unspecified	5	
8. Physical education/fitness	5	
9. Promotions	5	
Economic Development Investments		10,160
1. Business Environment	3,155	
2. Affordable Housing	2,105	
3. Job Creation	1,280	
4. Marketing and Promotion	1,160	
5. Entrepreneurship Opportunities	1,640	
6. Parking	670	
7. Youth Center for teens	100	
8. Hey ST Redevelopment	10	
9. Other unspecified	30	
10. Preservation of trees and green space	5	
Livability Investments		10,305
1. Image	2,705	
2. Public Safety	2,405	
3. Environmental	1,670	
4. Cultural Arts	1,515	
5. Parks and Recreation	1,515	
6. Overlay development and planning enforcement of plan	130	
7. Enforce litter control	50	
8. Change to underground powerlines	50	
9. Other unspecified	25	
10. Public Affairs	15	
11. Preservation of historical importance, Old Agency Reservoir	25	



Overall Investment Priorities - Top 20

Roads	INFRA	4923
Public Schools	EDU	4660
Business Environment	ECODEV	3155
Libraries	EDU	2730
Image	LIVABILITY	2705
Public Safety	LIVABILITY	2405
Affordable Housing	INFRA	2105
Drainage	INFRA	1894
Environment	LIVABILITY	1870
Entrepreneurship Opportunities	ECODEV	1640
Communications	INFRA	1580
Water and Sewer	INFRA	1558
Cultural Arts	LIVABILITY	1515
Parks and Recreation	LIVABILITY	1515
Continuing Education	EDU	1490
Job Creation	ECODEV	1280
Marketing and Promotion	ECODEV	1160
Workforce Training	EDU	1135
Parking	ECODEV	670
Overlay development and enforcement of plan.	INFRA	130



Goal 1

To improve the relaxed, small-town atmosphere of Ridgeland with an emphasis on conservation, and expansion of parks, trails and open space.



Map of Ridgeland showing existing and potential greenspace assets. Includes existing parks, floodways, Natchez Trace and undeveloped wooded areas, parts of which could be preserved to create green linkages.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

Ridgeland residents expressed a deep appreciation for the "small-town atmosphere" of their City that they experience through the friendliness of the people, close-knit neighborhoods, strong faith communities, easy access to city leaders, schools and amenities, safety, and the abundance of wooded, natural areas and wildlife. They stated that this feeling was reinforced by the presence and easy access to the Natchez Trace Parkway, the Ross Barnett Reservoir, and the City's high-quality parks and trails.

They feel that this atmosphere is an important asset that attracts people from surrounding communities and provides a high quality of life to residents. It also attracts investment in high-quality residential, business and retail development. Some fears were expressed that too much development could, and to some degree already has, endangered the small town feeling as experienced through traffic problems and loss of open space.

REALITY RESPONSE

Ridgeland is no longer the sleepy little country town it was fifty years ago. The northward growth of Jackson has met the southern boundary of Ridgeland. While this has a positive impact on commerce and the economy, it also brings a taste of some big-city problems like increases in traffic and crime. Ridgeland will have to be ever vigilant to avoid being engulfed by the pressures of the capital city and must manage the form and quality of continued growth in order to preserve its character.

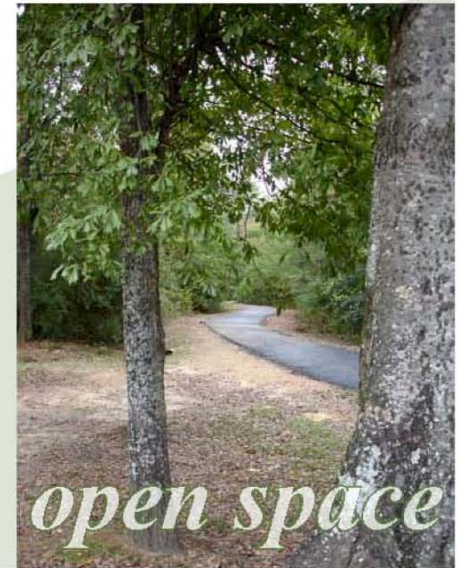
While the City of Ridgeland is somewhat visitor-friendly --boasting many hotels, restaurants, and shopping opportunities-- the small-town feeling is not so easy to find. Clustered along busy commercial corridors, these facilities offer few amenities even though they are generally much tidier and better-maintained than one might see in other cities. The absence of sidewalks and trails in visitor areas leads to a reliance on the automobile, which tends to dilute the small-town character and adds to traffic congestion.

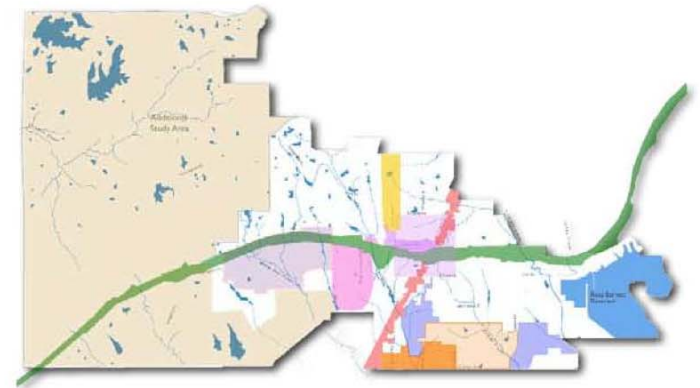
Fortunately, the City still has an ample amount of open space and wooded areas which compliment the parks and protected natural areas nicely. They are, however, disappearing fast as residential and commercial developers hustle to take advantage of market opportunities and the desirable demographic offered by the Ridgeland area.

OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE

What are the opportunities to accomplish this Goal that can be identified in the Master Plan?

- 1.1 Protect existing neighborhoods from "commercial creep" and associated traffic problems.
- 1.2 Require that open space considerations be a factor in evaluating all new developments within the city and in annexed areas and strengthen the existing Tree Ordinance designed to protect existing vegetation.
- 1.3 Develop recommended conservation easement areas within the city and in the Additional Study Area designed to protect remaining open space/wooded areas as recreation spaces, wildlife habitat, and flood control.
- 1.4 Explore opportunities to create strong connections between community education assets and infrastructure, economic development and livability assets.





Map of Ridgeland depicting areas where quality issues - both positive and negative have been identified. Poor quality that negatively affects the City is concentrated in Southeast Ridgeland and along Highway 51.

Goal 2

To insist only on high-quality residential and commercial development reinforced by stringent code enforcement and redevelopment initiatives for declining areas.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

Ridgeland residents are very proud of those parts of their city that display high-quality development. This includes residential neighborhoods, shopping venues, parks and public spaces of all kinds (examples mentioned include Highland Colony Parkway, Northpark Mall, Olde Towne area, city parks and numerous residential neighborhoods). Residents realize that property values are very sensitive to the quality of surrounding development and wish to maintain high standards.

They also understand that poor-quality development, both old and new, can have an adverse affect on property values. They worry that declining areas project a poor image of the city and generate a variety of social problems such as high crime rates and resultant negative impact on public schools. There is a perception, due to the deteriorating conditions in some parts of the city, that stronger codes and code enforcement are required to bring declining areas back to current standards. The greatest concern seems to be on the negative impact of rental properties that include apartments and single-family dwellings. There is considerable suspicion that smaller, moderately priced housing units will attract a host of problems with little benefit.

REALITY RESPONSE

In most cases, the perception of the residents is accurate. Some isolated parts of the city are in a state of decline and are having a negative impact on the quality of life overall. Other areas, along the edges of the declining parts, could be said to be in transition. They could easily join the declining areas due to negative influences and diminishing property values. It is critically important to stop the decline before the transition areas are affected. However, in reality, the City of Ridgeland has recently placed an increased emphasis on code enforcement that will require some time to show results.

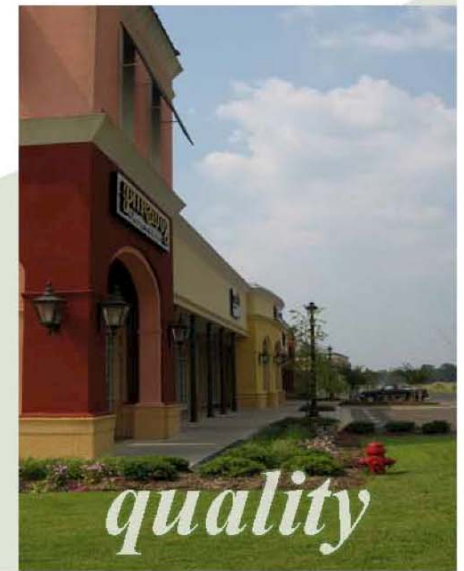
Broad renovation and revitalization of older development, both residential and commercial, is a complex issue. Its viability is dependent upon market forces, property costs, and the willingness of property owners to participate. The City has also been proactive in this regard. An attorney may need to be retained to begin investigating the establishment of a redevelopment authority that could connect the City's plans for the future with interested developers and investment vehicles.

Analysis of the region along with input from the development community points to the concern that Ridgeland's brisk commercial growth may soon surpass its market unless new areas are opened to residential development. The tendency for residential property owners to seek commercial zoning status makes sense from an investment point of view. Ridgeland must, however, carefully weigh the consequences of impact to adjacent residential areas and market forces. High-quality residential growth should be considered as a priority, including medium-priced housing for first-time home buyers and new families.

OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE

What are the opportunities to accomplish this Goal that can be identified in the Master Plan?

- II.1 Expand Jackson Street Overlay District to expand the high quality development emerging on Jackson Street to other areas.
- II.2 Create I-55 Overlay District to establish high quality standards to guide development along the east side of the I-55 corridor.
- II.3 Create redevelopment overlay districts for declining areas, especially in Southeast Ridgeland apartment complexes and in shopping areas.
- II.4 Review and revise existing code and code enforcement tools, as necessary.
- II.5 Review and make recommendations for proposed Northpark Shopping District overlay.
- II.6 Prevent rezoning that negatively affects property values of surrounding properties.





Goal 3 - To preserve, improve and take advantage of Ridgeland's convenient access to the surrounding communities while improving internal connectivity and ease of movement.



Map of Ridgeland's primary connectivity assets. Depicted are interstates, primary and secondary arterials and suggested pathways for future roads.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

Ridgeland residents have a great appreciation for the easy access they have to community assets within the city as well as in surrounding communities. Many work in Jackson while others frequent the social and cultural offerings of the Capitol City. Ridgeland's location on I-55 provides a short commute to Jackson, Madison, Canton as well as more distant points north and south. I-220 provides easy access to destinations to the east. The Natchez Trace Parkway offers an appealing alternative to those who choose a more leisurely drive northwest and southeast.

Residents expressed, however, some concerns about the difficulty of moving around within their own city. Commuters contribute to considerable traffic delays in the morning and afternoon hours especially on County Line Road, Lake Harbour Drive and Jackson Street. Residents also complained about the shortage of east-west connections across the interstate that could link the growing residential areas with existing shopping and services.

Finally, with regard to non-vehicular connectivity, citizens applauded the City's commitment to bicycle trails and strongly support efforts to expand the existing trail system. A desire for more sidewalks was also expressed both within the neighborhood setting as well as within shopping areas especially in more densely developed areas.

REALITY RESPONSE

Ridgeland has excellent access to many areas via the interstate. Until recently, the interstate has offered all of the advantages with few problems. This is subject to change in the near future. The addition of service roads from Jackson Street north will impact the way Ridgeland relates to the freeway. Development guidelines should be adopted to preserve the quality of experience within the City.

Internal transportation connectivity, including the east-west issue, are well understood by City transportation officials. Work is currently underway on a variety of road widening and upgrade projects in accordance with the City's Transportation Plan - East County Line Road, Highway 51, Lake Harbour Drive and others. The plan includes two new east-west connections. In north Ridgeland, Colony Park Blvd will be an extension of McClellan from Highway 51 across the interstate to Highland Colony Parkway. In south Ridgeland, plans call for extending Lake Harbour Drive from Highway 51 across the interstate to Highland Colony Parkway. These projects are long-term efforts requiring considerable time and resources. The good news is that many are currently underway and the improvements will result in major advances in the near future.

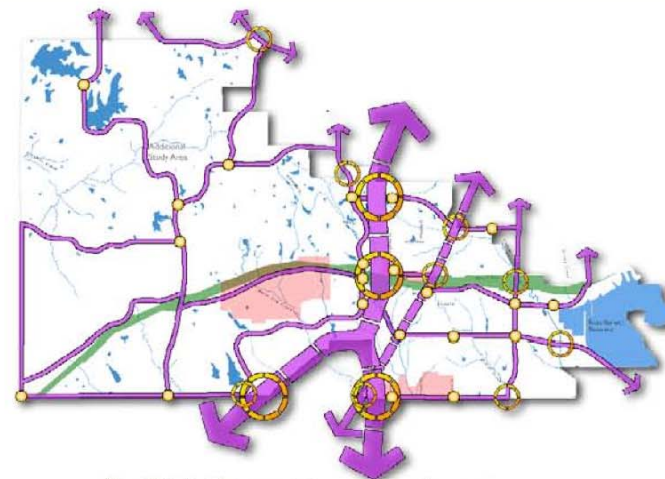
Non-vehicular connectivity is also planned in conjunction with many of these roadway improvements through the addition of bicycle trails along Lake Harbour Drive and sidewalks along Highway 51. Expanding trails and sidewalk connectivity within the city, between parks, recreational areas, schools and neighborhoods should be included in any new planning and development projects to strengthen this component.

OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE

What are the opportunities to accomplish this Goal that can be identified in the Master Plan?

- III.1 Recommend additions to the transportation plan that improve connectivity within the city, especially road extensions in the Northeast Unit, through streets in the Northwest and Southwest Units, and a comprehensive street plan for the Additional Study Area.
- III.2 Identify opportunities to expand trail systems and linkages to and through open space corridors. Priorities should be on linking existing and proposed destinations such as parks, schools, shopping areas, and densely populated neighborhoods.
- III.3 Develop a sidewalk plan for retrofitting older neighborhood with sidewalks with connections to trails and other community facilities.
- III.4 Adopt a policy to acquire additional R.O.W. for all new road and utility projects which will permit additions to pedestrian and bicycle trails.
- III.5 Investigate the potential for a public/private Ridgeland inner-transit system to reduce pressure from roadways and provide transportation options to destinations within the City.





Map of Ridgeland depicting major image corridors and gateways

Goal 4

To establish a strong identity through the development and implementation of a city-center complex and a positive image that communicates the true character of our city.

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION

According to residents, Ridgeland seems to be suffering from the condition cited below:

"With the advent of strip and regional centers in the past half century, the habitat for community functions—a mix of retail and public spaces that created a setting for repetitive chance encounters—was lost. Especially in the suburbs, people are beginning to feel that their communities suffer from the "Tin Man" syndrome—they have no heart." Charles Lockwood, "Retrofitting Suburbia", Urban Land, (July, 1998), 50-55.

Individual neighborhoods have a distinct character and quality that is appreciated by residents. Schools and parks serve as important gathering places, but the consensus seems to be that the city-at-large lacks an identifiable image or identity. Furthermore, residents expressed a desire to see the establishment of public space that can serve as the "core" or heart of the community -- a place that serves as the primary gathering place for community events while expressing the quality of the community to the outside world.

The area most frequently mentioned as needing image enhancement was the Highway 51 corridor. Older developments in disrepair, industrial development, and a general lack of continuity were the most serious concerns. Being a principal artery of the city, residents are concerned with the image that is presented to travelers and visitors to Ridgeland who travel Highway 51.

REALITY RESPONSE

The lack of identity problem is not unique to Ridgeland. Like many other communities that grew as suburbs to large metro areas, it faces significant challenges to establishing a unique identity and image. Even without an intact historic core for precedence, the city does have a number of unique assets from which to draw inspiration -- the heritage of the Natchez Trace, the beauty of the Ross Barnett Reservoir, the vibrancy of the commercial and shopping sector, the quality and capacity of its parks and recreation programs, its family orientation, to name a few.

Establishing a recognizable identity will require attention to two main areas -- image and content. Image enhancement can be accomplished through adoption and enforcement of codes that can affect the desired identity, and through the physical form of public works (streetscapes and the general public realm, gateways, public buildings, parks, drainage features, etc.). The content should be closely aligned with the existing assets, skills, and character of the community. It will require public-private cooperation and the active support of the community.

Regarding the "city center" idea, Ridgeland does seem to be like the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz. The city functions well and is charming and friendly, but it lacks that certain something. Creating a "city center" for Ridgeland could be the catalyst for establishing the all-important "sense of place" required for successful image and identity formation.

OPPORTUNITY RESPONSE

What are the opportunities to accomplish this Goal that can be identified in the Master Plan?

IV.1 Identify enhancement opportunities at all city gateways and corridors and initiate improvement program.

IV.2 Explore opportunities to develop a City Center which should include a city services complex, community meeting space, cultural center, community open space and other amenities and services. This facility should set the tone for other public and private development in the City with regard to "image making" and the branding of Ridgeland.

IV.3 Develop recommendations for design guidelines for the Highway 51 corridor.

IV.4 Explore possibilities to do enhancements along the I-55 corridor including tree plantings and other low-maintenance plantings.

IV.5 Implement revisions to the sign ordinance restricting placement of billboards and other forms of intrusive outdoor advertising.





HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

Wikipedia begins its article on "Quality of Life" as follows:
 "The well-being or quality of life of a population is an important concern in economics and political science. It is measured by many social and economic factors. A large part is standard of living, the amount of money and access to goods and services that a person has; these numbers are fairly easily measured. Others like freedom, happiness, art, environmental health, and innovation are far harder to measure. This has created an inevitable imbalance as programs and policies are created to fit the easily available economic numbers while ignoring the other measures, that are very difficult to plan for or assess.
 Debate on quality of life is millennia-old, with Aristotle giving it much thought in his Nicomachean Ethics and eventually settling on the notion of eudaimonia, a Greek term often translated as happiness, as central."
 "One might otherwise look to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and determine that the higher the population is on the pyramid, the higher their quality of life could be said to be.
 Another description of communities with high quality of life comes from the United Kingdom, "...places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all."
 Regardless of the interpretation, quality of life should be understood to occur on a continuum - from good to poor, high to low - and it is the responsibility of leadership to create the conditions that elevate the quality of life.

SUSTAINABILITY

Community sustainability is a simple concept that seeks equilibrium between production and consumption. Whenever consumption outpaces production, the community must import production, thus making it dependent, which is inherently unsustainable. Therefore, a sustainable community is one that practices good stewardship of resources and good fiscal management so that it can provide for itself the basic needs of its members. Maintaining a balance between the four essential elements improves the community sustainability through careful management of natural, human and economic resources.

KEEPING IN BALANCE

As communities work toward a prosperous future for their citizens, it is essential to maintain a proper balance between the four essential elements of community sustainability: Education, Livability, Infrastructure and Economic Development. Often scant resources must be invested so that these four areas maintain an equilibrium. Over-investment in one area will inevitably require cuts in others and will hinder a community's ability to be self-sustaining.

The nature of the four elements is that they are interlocking and some blending inevitably occurs. An educated population is required to stimulate high quality economic development while transportation and communications infrastructure make economic development possible. Finally, livability assets provide quality places within which families flourish and with which businesses can recruit high quality employees.

Each element is composed of a variety of components which must be assessed and evaluated for quality, balance and service to the other elements. Investment in any element should always seek to also satisfy some requirements in other elements.

Once a balance is achieved, communities can then focus upon looking forward. The old adage - "If you're standing still, you're going backwards" - holds true for communities faced with ever changing markets, population shifts, and community interests. Anticipating future trends becomes an important consideration in city planning. Being aware of and planning for innovations in education, livability, infrastructure and economic development can help position a community at the forefront of emerging initiatives and attract positive investments.

An enterprise in which all citizens, businesses, and institutions are actively engaged in the life-long pursuit of knowledge.



EDUCATION

- Pre-K through 12 (Public and Private)
- Libraries, Programs, Remote Learning
- Community Colleges
- Vocational-Trade School
- Universities/Advanced Degrees
- Continuing Education
- Workforce Training
- Enrichment Education

The neologism livability, from the adjective liv(e)able, is an abstract noun often applied to the built environment and its contribution to the quality of life of inhabitants.



LIVABILITY

- Environment
- Recycling/Garbage/Solid Waste
- Public Safety
- Health Care
- Open Space/Parks and Recreation
- Land Use
- Historic/Cultural Amenities
- Community Character
- Convenience/Access
- Cost of Living

Referring to the built structures and systems which form the skeletal connections and support for social and economic activities in a community.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Transportation
- Housing
- Storm Water Drainage
- Sewer
- Water
- Energy/Utilities
- Communications

Economic development can be seen as a complex multi-dimensional concept involving improvements in human well-being -- however defined.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Natural Resources
- Community Development
- Business Retention and Growth
- Local Business Support
- Marketing
- Entrepreneurship Development
- Job Creation
- Market Access
- Tax Structure
- Labor Market
- Recruiting Strategy



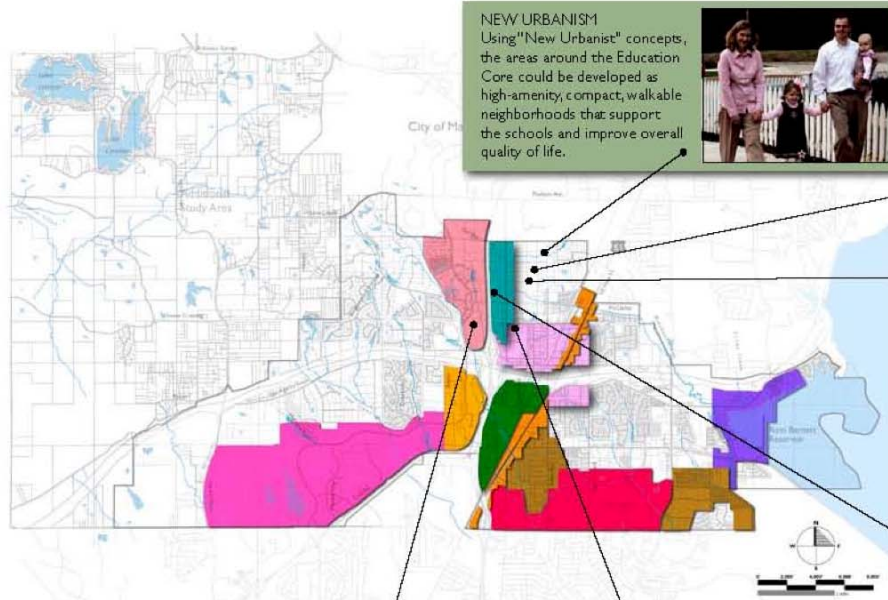
FOCUS AREA INNOVATION

This section looks at how some of the suggested innovation might be used to forward the thinking on enhancements, projects, programs and policies in the individual Focus Areas.

SUNNYBROOK FOCUS AREA

The Sunnybrook area holds several key assets. With major development occurring across the interstate, development is soon to follow in this Focus Area adding to the burden of the current systems. Several innovations could make future growth in Sunnybrook a promising area.

The high profile presence of educational facilities along Sunnybrook suggests a strong education orientation in the concepts for this Focus Area. Orienting new development of infrastructure, business, and livability assets should serve to strengthen the quality and scope of the educational enterprise in Ridgeland. Special care should be taken to prevent any development that would compromise this important asset.



NEW URBANISM
Using "New Urbanist" concepts, the areas around the Education Core could be developed as high-amenity, compact, walk-able neighborhoods that support the schools and improve overall quality of life.



PARTNERSHIPS
Continuing partnerships with schools and parks provides additional recreational space while offering taxpayers more opportunities to utilize public facilities. This often facilitates fund-raising efforts by schools and needed facilities.



PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships with schools and local business could provide students with hands on learning and after school hours activities. Attracting good business development with good connectivity will promote education and business.



INTEGRATED DESIGN
New development along the Sunnybrook and I-55 corridor should reflect the quality of current development occurring across the freeway such as Renaissance in Colony Park (shown below). In stark contrast to the type of development that typically occurs without strong design guidelines, access is controlled and high quality design and continuity present an orderly, well-landscaped, integrated design that is safe, functional and beautiful. Interior circulation replaces individual driveways and "parcelization" is reduced to a minimum.



CONNECTIVITY
Building trails to increase connectivity between new and existing development will increase pedestrian access and promote a healthier lifestyle.



AVOID NEGATIVE TRENDS
The neighboring town of Jackson has influenced Ridgeland's growth patterns in many ways, but one that should not be repeated is the development along the highway. Service roads with too many turnoffs to street-side parking and feeder roads can create bottlenecks and unsightly development. Limiting curb cuts along the new I-55 service road system will be difficult but necessary in promoting development facing the roadway, not backing up to it.





HIGHWAY 51 FOCUS AREA

Main Streets are very important to the identity of a community. They serve a multitude of roles both functional and emotional, social and economic. Highway 51 is the "Main Street" of Ridgeland. It carries the life blood of commerce to and through the City. Unfortunately, this is the only role for which it is currently suited. In order to fully utilize this artery to its fullest extent, a complete rethinking of its structure will be needed. It is a daunting task but not impossible. Other communities over the years have done the same - Route 66 is a prime example.

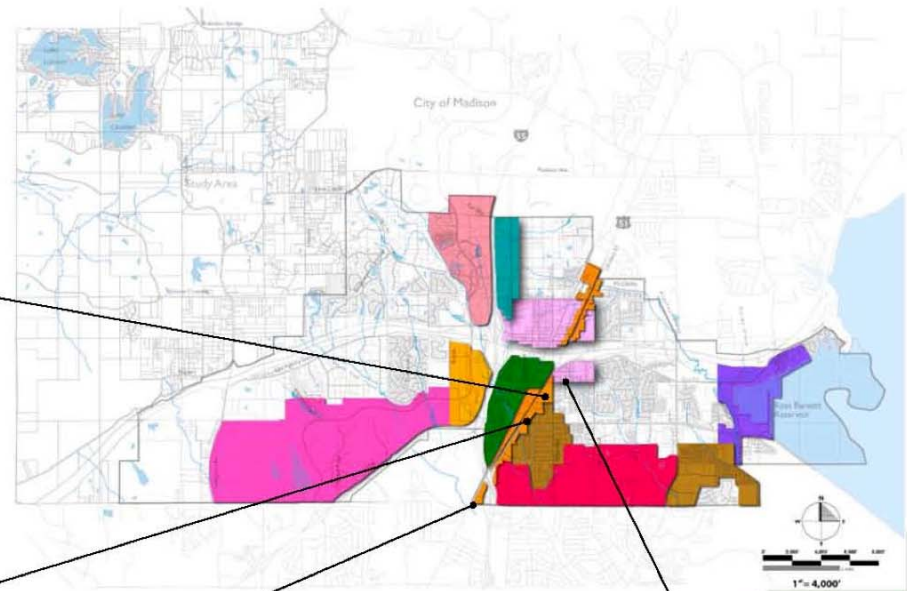
Some key elements can be addressed in the near term while others will require years of work to accomplish. Rethinking major roadways as image corridors with appropriate proportions for pedestrians is often a simple matter of adding scaling elements and restricting unlimited access. It is also important to make alternative routes available so that community events do not cause undue disturbance to travelers.



COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Main Street is the heart of the community. It is where they display their affection, faith, and honor the things they admire in a very public fashion. A common expression of this is a parade. Marching bands of school students, teams, community organizations, politicians and assorted odd-balls, make parades one of the most popular community activities a community can sponsor. Providing a space with appropriate scale where people can watch, cheer and enjoy from the sidelines is essential for a successful parade.

It is important to provide alternate routes for these times to allow emergency and essential traffic to flow around the parade route. Highway 51 has many such options.



GREAT AVENUES

Many cities around the world have accepted the challenge to utilize the full potential of their major roadways. Harnessing the transportation and character reinforcing potential requires persistence and vision.

One such example is Camp Bowie Boulevard in Fort Worth, Texas.

This great avenue begins in the Cultural District and transitions through neighborhoods, neighborhood commercial, general commercial, office and mixed use areas and continues into the suburbs while maintaining its character imparting abilities. Street trees, lighting sidewalks and controlled access are the common threads that follow it throughout its course.

There are many other examples that could be imitated to transform Highway 51 into Ridgeland's great avenue.



MAJOR GATEWAYS

Participants in the planning process frequently mentioned that Ridgeland would benefit from positive "branding". They even suggested renaming Highway 51 as a way of differentiating the City from the seemingly endless string of faceless communities that cling to its edges.

One important way to simply address this is to develop an image statement at the City's major gateways. Doing so sets the tone and establishes a standard for the rest of the corridor. From extreme artistic statements, to subdued quality landscaping, gateways can provide quick branding for any community.

MINOR GATEWAYS

Most major roadways only have two major gateways where they enter and depart a community. Often overlooked are the minor gateways at intersections between the two - especially signaled intersections where people form up in cues and wait for the signal to change. What they experience during that wait can create enduring impressions.

Transforming the entire length of Highway 51 will be a long, drawn out process. Transforming several key intersections so that they convey the image and character of the community can have a very positive effect in a much shorter time period as plans for the major renovations proceed.





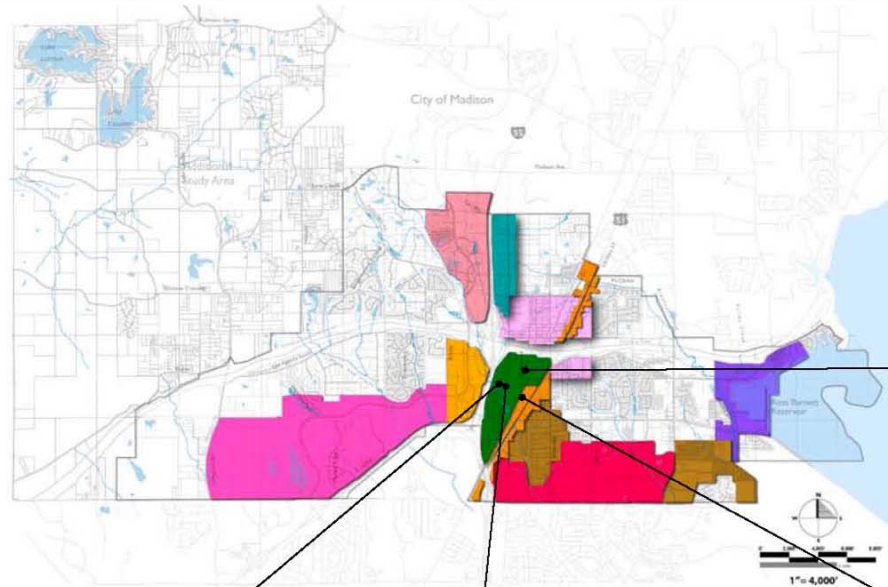
CITY CENTER/FREEDOM RIDGE FOCUS AREA

School Street is a portal into Ridgeland from Highway 51. To the east lay some of the finest residential neighborhoods in the region terminated by the beloved Ann E. Smith Elementary School. To the west are the library, police station, and across the railroad tracks, Freedom Ridge Park, the City's signature public space.

Freedom Ridge Park is an important gathering place in the City. Unfortunately, it is tucked beyond the railroad and its high quality offerings are not communicated to the rest of the City.

A large piece of property on Highway 51 between School Street and the Natchez Trace is a desirable location for the City for the purpose of building a new City Complex. A more fitting location would be hard to imagine - Highway 51 "Main Street" frontage, linked to Freedom Ridge Park, adjacent to the Natchez Trace and across from the West Jackson Street Overlay District.

The opportunity to give the City a discernible "heart" here must be seriously considered. Beyond the perceptual, it is an opportunity to bring into higher purpose a beautifully located piece of prime real estate. Win-win!



HEART TRANSPLANT

Creating a new heart for an existing community is tricky but not impossible. Location is important. Achieving the right mixture of services, facilities and commerce is crucial. Insisting on high quality design of structures and open space is critical. With the right combination, Ridgeland could enjoy the fruits of a first class community gathering space and all the benefits it offers to the life of the community.

The example above was created from "scratch" to give identity to a sprawling suburb north of Dallas, Texas. Many similar examples can be found throughout the country and in new developments as well.



ACCESS AND CONNECTION

City Hall is a public space more often associated with taxes, water bills, politics and contentious board meetings. One way many communities have found to polish the image of city government is to provide examples of all the good things they accomplish in the community. Placing City Hall in a quality setting that is intimately connected with the life of the community can go a long way to improve the relationship.

The platform can also be used to create much needed passive recreational space in Ridgeland. Combining the city complex with an expansive open space with highway frontage will provide an opportunity to display the image and character of the City. A visible example of "Living right in Ridgeland".

LIVELY SPACES

Great city centers have several things in common. The most important is a lively mixture of uses that extend active hours beyond the 8 to 5, Monday through Friday schedule. The surest way to facilitate life beyond traditional working hours is to integrate residential uses within the framing uses. Mixed-use residential, office and retail provide for a lively, active environment on weekends and after hours when most people will have an opportunity to use and experience the space.

Fortunately for Ridgeland, the recommended property is large enough to accommodate such a mixture along with City offices, community facilities and common open space. Great care will be required in recruiting private development into the space. The City can insist on compatible uses and stringent design criteria while offering access to value-enhanced proximity to public open spaces of the highest quality. This combination has proved its value in countless places around the world.



COMMUNITY EXPRESSION

A key component in creating a city center is providing spaces that allow the community to gather and enjoy music, arts, and each other. Community building opportunities abound when quality spaces are provided where residents can come together to celebrate victories, work together on important community initiatives, and demonstrate their respect for those who have suffered and sacrificed.



COSTAS LAKE FOCUS AREA

Costas Lake has tremendous opportunity and enormous responsibility. This property, in concert with the existing Technical Industrial Park, will be tasked with stimulating the positive development of southwest Ridgeland and the newly annexed area. Blessed with ample developable property and needing a significant investment in infrastructure, the future for this area is bright.

The key challenge is one of image. The looming presence of one of Jackson's sluggish areas across County Line Road is a problem that can only be solved jointly by the two cities.


The area's major asset is a beautiful small lake on gently rolling land accessible to Highland Colony Parkway and very close to I-220. A success in this development will expand Ridgeland's economic and population base to a significant extent while providing positive ripple effects to northwest Jackson.




SPORTING LIFE
A major retail anchor will be required to make this area a success. Parlaying northern Mississippi's tradition of the outdoor sporting life could be a perfect fit. Attracting a Cabela's or Bass Pro Shop outlet would add an educational and tourism element to the mix in this wooded lake side development.



LAKE SIDE LIVING
Integrating an alternative residential component to the mix may also be beneficial to the success of the development. Maximum use of the waterfront could be achieved with condo development.

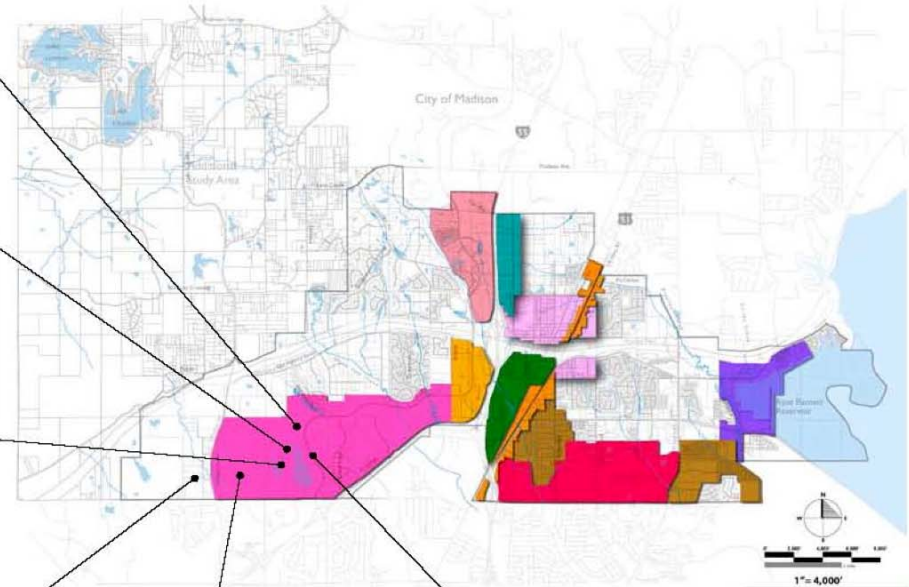


TRAILS
Density of development will create a higher demand for outdoor recreational spaces than in traditional subdivision developments. Lake side trails will offer ample opportunities for public open space. With interpretive elements they could offer educational and healthy lifestyle experiences while providing alternative transportation opportunities and reduce the need for driving and parking.



CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS
Conservation subdivisions are a good way to develop traditional subdivision products at higher densities while preserving greenspace as value adding atmosphere.

The photo at top shows how conservation techniques take full advantage of water and wooded areas in a single-family development. The photo at bottom demonstrates the sterile, lifeless result to traditional lot size restricted developments.



MULTIPLYING THE VALUE OF GREEN SPACE
Conservation development is not limited to residential development. It also applies to commercial development and allows developers to multiply property values by affording more properties the benefit of green edges. Doing so also allows for more diverse mixtures of land use since green buffers provide separation between normally incompatible uses. Meanwhile, everyone enjoys the green space.



LAKESIDE DENSITY
Waterfronts are inherently hot real estate properties. Unfortunately, they are limited by the length of lake shore. The best way to take full advantage of every foot of waterfront is to increase densities. Many innovative developers are learning that private ownership of lake front property severely limits its impact and so are finding ways to work with municipalities and cooperatives toward creating publicly accessible waterfronts.

CHANGES TO EXISTING LAND USE PLAN

A preliminary step in the master planning process is the delineation of a Land Use Plan for the City and expanded study area. While not as detailed as a Zoning Plan, the Land Use Plan identifies preferred land use patterns based upon land suitability (topography, waterways, etc.), the capacity of existing and proposed infrastructure, economic and spatial considerations, location, and, most importantly, the expressed goals of the community which define the kind of community they want to live in. The Land Use Plan is then used to create the City Zoning Map as well as to help define Overlay and other special Districts. The current Ridgeland Land Use Plan (below center) which is a part of the legally mandated Comprehensive Plan, was drafted before the RAMP process was initiated. Based upon the inventory of resources, issues and RAMP Goals, several changes are recommended in order to more accurately reflect current goals and realities.

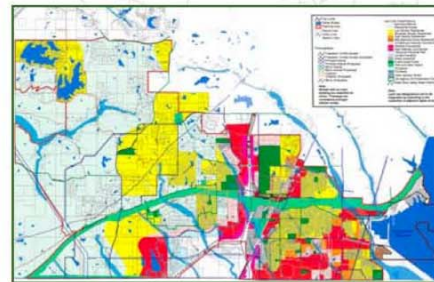
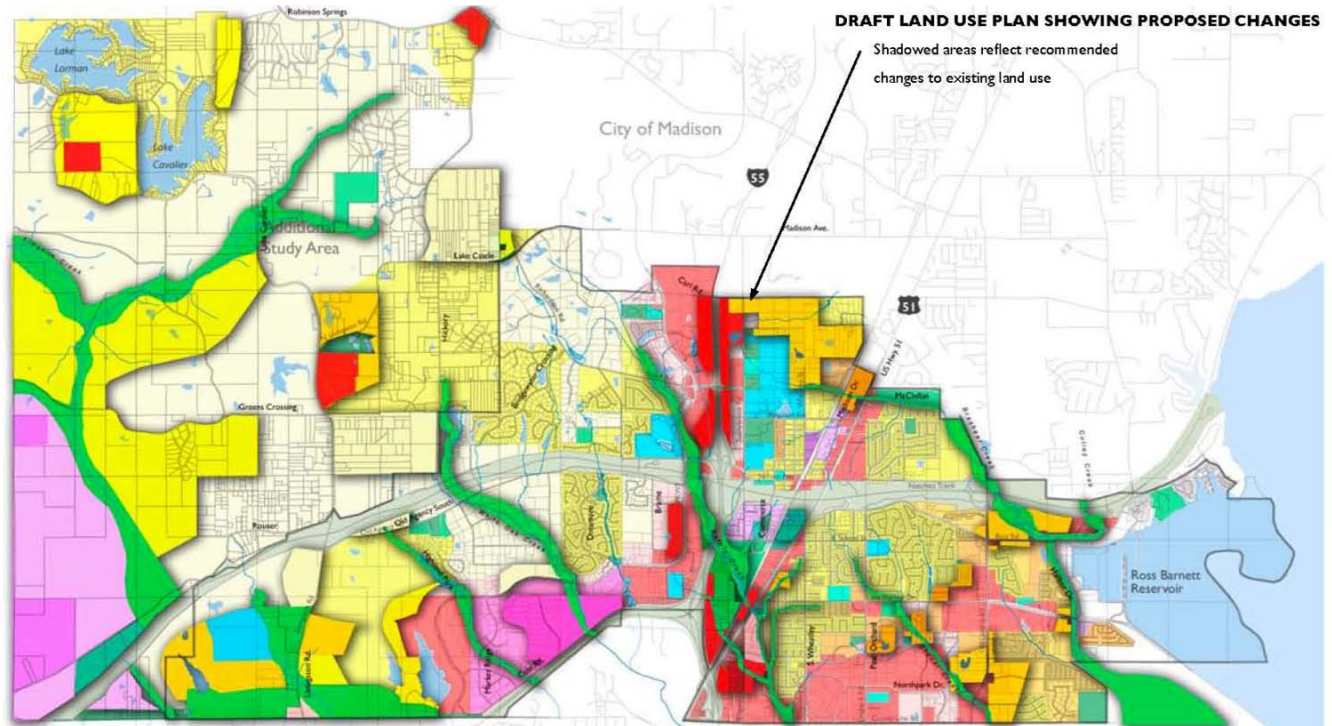
The map at right, using the existing Land Use Plan as a base, shows some of the changes which should be considered. The changes are shown as raised areas with new land use designations. Areas that remain flat reflect the same land uses as before.

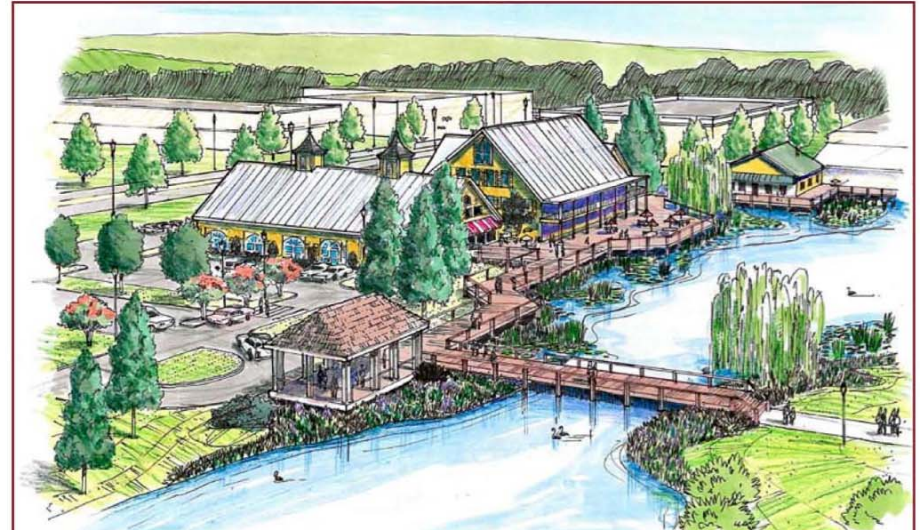
Most of the areas being recommended for changes fall into two categories:

- areas that are undeveloped or only sparsely developed
- areas that have been identified in the RAMP process as needing to be changed

Some of the key changes include the following:

- There is more commercial use shown in the western part of the study area. These areas are very compact and are intended to serve the local needs of future residential development.
- East of Interstate 55, the amount of commercial land use is slightly reduced reflecting the current saturation level and the need to provide additional residential area as in-fill and redevelopment.
- Several areas of high density residential have been eliminated as a response to growing concerns expressed by citizens.
- The amount of moderate density residential is increased in all areas to offset the loss of multi-family density, and to provide more opportunities for moderately priced housing for young families and moderate-income families.
- Large new areas of industrial land use are included in the far western portions of the study area. This was prompted by existing uses in that area coupled with industrial access potential and natural and man-made buffer elements which could be brought into service. Additionally, by providing industrial development space here, some relocation of inappropriately located facilities in the heart of Ridgeland may be considered.
- Open space is elevated to a land use classification in order to protect important open space assets within the study area. Typically these areas follow the flood ways in drainage corridors and can be used to connect bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the city.
- New park space and school uses are shown in the new annex area in anticipation of increased development in these areas.
- The TIP use is expanded into the Tougaloo College property to encourage a beneficial connection between these research facilities and the advanced education programs at the college.





STEED RD EXTENSION BUSINESS

SUNNYBROOK / I-55 CORRIDOR

The plan diagram and section (right) illustrate several important concepts which must be integrated into the Overlay District in order to achieve the desired results. The concept will require allowing density bonuses to developers in order to preserve existing quality open spaces. Doing so will benefit non-auto connectivity, the environment, and the visual quality of the area. Increasing the density will also have a positive effect on the development of commercial properties in the area by offering a larger market for goods and services. It concentrates users around high quality infrastructure and provides moderately priced housing for families with school age children, as well as for school and retail employees. Living in close proximity to schools, parks, workplace and shopping will reduce the number of vehicles using the roadways and thus reduce traffic.

As shown in the diagram, there are several stormwater drainageways that are captured as a framework for open space and trails systems while preserving wildlife habitat and tree cover.

A major gateway statement is shown at the intersection of Sunnybrook and Colony Park Boulevard. This feature incorporates an existing stormwater pond and transforms it into a beautiful visual asset which will add great value to the surrounding properties.

Providing interior circulation within the Overlay District will be essential to protection of the image quality along the new service roads (see section right). Providing convenient access to properties via shared driveways will improve their marketability while forging a strong and integral development framework. The section also illustrates how employing maximum setbacks and buffering will improve the image presence from the interstate.

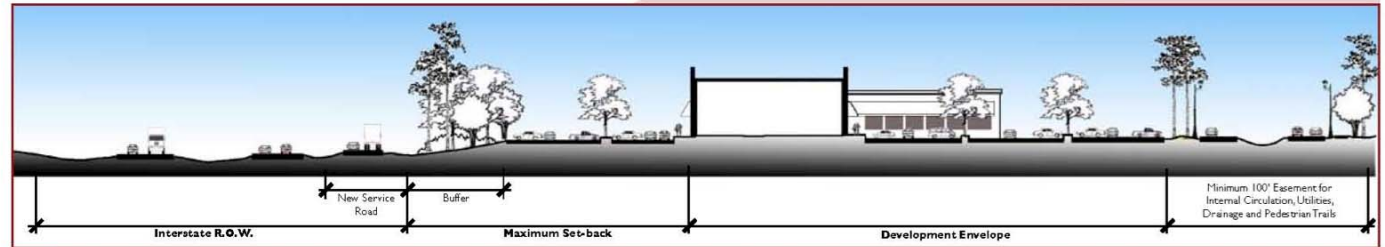
	P.U.D. Medium and Low Density Residential and Commercial		Existing Development
	Mixed-Use Residential/Commercial		Major Gateway Integrated with New Development
	P.U.D. High Density Residential and Commercial		Preserved Open Space and Stormwater Retention Areas
	Enhanced Roadways		Medium Density Residential near school campus and shopping

STEED ROAD EXTENSION

The illustration above shows the potential impact of integrating roadway infrastructure, drainage, connectivity and education to create a high value environment for new business and community interaction. The view is across a retention pond between the high school athletic fields and the recommended Steed Road extension. A pedestrian link is created between the community college and the high school through the new business area and across the pond making a fine setting for restaurants and shopping venues that would benefit greatly from high school athletic activities, community college events and normal daily

traffic through the area. Filtering runoff through wetland areas could provide interesting student monitoring activities and species identification opportunities for science students at all levels. In addition, trails linked to area neighborhoods mean that students can walk or bike to school through conserved open spaces rather than along busy roadways.

This concept would require considerable cooperation between the various school entities, the city and prospective business developers to ensure development that is appropriate for the setting, and that responsibilities for maintenance and security can be maintained at high levels.



PROPOSED SECTION



Ridgeland West Jackson Street Overlay District

The strategy complies with the Master Plan Goals as follows:
 Goal 1 - Protecting the character of the historic places and restoring some of the feeling of historic Ridgeland by calming traffic and encouraging historic architectural style and volumes on Jackson Street will reinstate some of the atmosphere of when Ridgeland was indeed a small town.

Goal 2 - By expanding the building codes, restrictions and incentives currently in place in the Jackson Street Historic Overlay over the entire West Jackson Street Overlay District, commercial, industrial and residential quality will be elevated by encouraging new, context-sensitive development along Highway 51, Jackson Street, and in the residential neighborhoods and industrial areas.

Goal 3 - Connectivity is improved through the tie-in of a new trail with the Natchez Trace trail via the Gateway Park on Jackson Street south of the intersection with Sunnybrook (see graphic above right). Also, the new trail along Sunnybrook will create direct connections from the schools along Sunnybrook to the West Jackson Street Overlay District.

The creation of sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks along Jackson Street will also help enliven the businesses there as well as the addition of street-side parking. From Jackson Street, restoring sidewalks that reach into the Heritage neighborhood will also greatly improve non-vehicular connectivity to the area.

Goal 4 - Along with the new development codes for the entire West Jackson Street Overlay District, a gateway green space is created at the intersection of Sunnybrook and Jackson (see graphic above right). This little passive-use park will essentially serve as the gateway into the West Jackson Street Overlay District and as a trail head for the trail system in this part of the City.



GATEWAY PARK CONCEPT



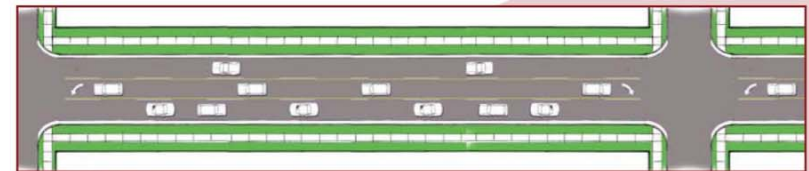
Traffic Calming

Several new developments have been undertaken in the past year on Jackson Street in the Overlay District. These fine new buildings replaced dilapidated structures and have already had a positive impact on the image of the area. Along with stringent building codes and architectural standards, the City has offered several incentives to encourage this new development. Among them are reductions to parking requirements. Unfortunately, the developments are now experiencing a lack of parking for patrons. As a result, the City has been working with the railroad to build additional parking along the railroad right-of-way as a way of compensating for reduced parking area. This will be a great asset to the area and will also work favorably with the proposed concept of redevelopment of Jackson Street.

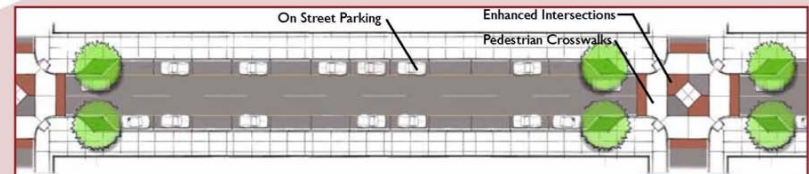
Many cities are having success with a similar approach. New buildings have zero setback requirements with parking to the rear. Multi-story structures create opportunities for a variety of shops and professional offices in an environment more appropriate to a West Jackson Street Overlay District. The concept is to create a place with emphasis on human scale rather than automobile scale to promote activity and community interaction (see graphics at right).



JACKSON STREET ENHANCEMENT



CURRENT ROADWAY



PROPOSED ROADWAY ENHANCEMENTS



FOCUS AREA 5 - HIGHWAY 51 CORRIDOR and CITY GATEWAYS

Analysis

From a functional standpoint, Highway 51 is perceived as a single corridor that carries traffic north and south through Ridgeland and provides access to a variety of east-west connectors throughout the City. From a perceptual standpoint, it can be divided into five separate transition areas as shown in the graphic (right). At each end are tremendous gateway opportunities as users enter the city limits. These gateways are currently unimpressive and, except for a small sign, a traveler would not know they had entered Ridgeland.

Between the gateways are intense commercial and industrial land uses that are likewise indistinguishable from areas along the length of the highway. The roadway is characterized by overhead utility lines, sign-cluttered right-of-way, multiple driveways and property entry access, and views of parking lots. The highway is currently configured as a five-lane roadway with a continuous turn lane in the center. Recent improvements to the northern segment have included sidewalk construction, but the southern half has no pedestrian amenities.

Response

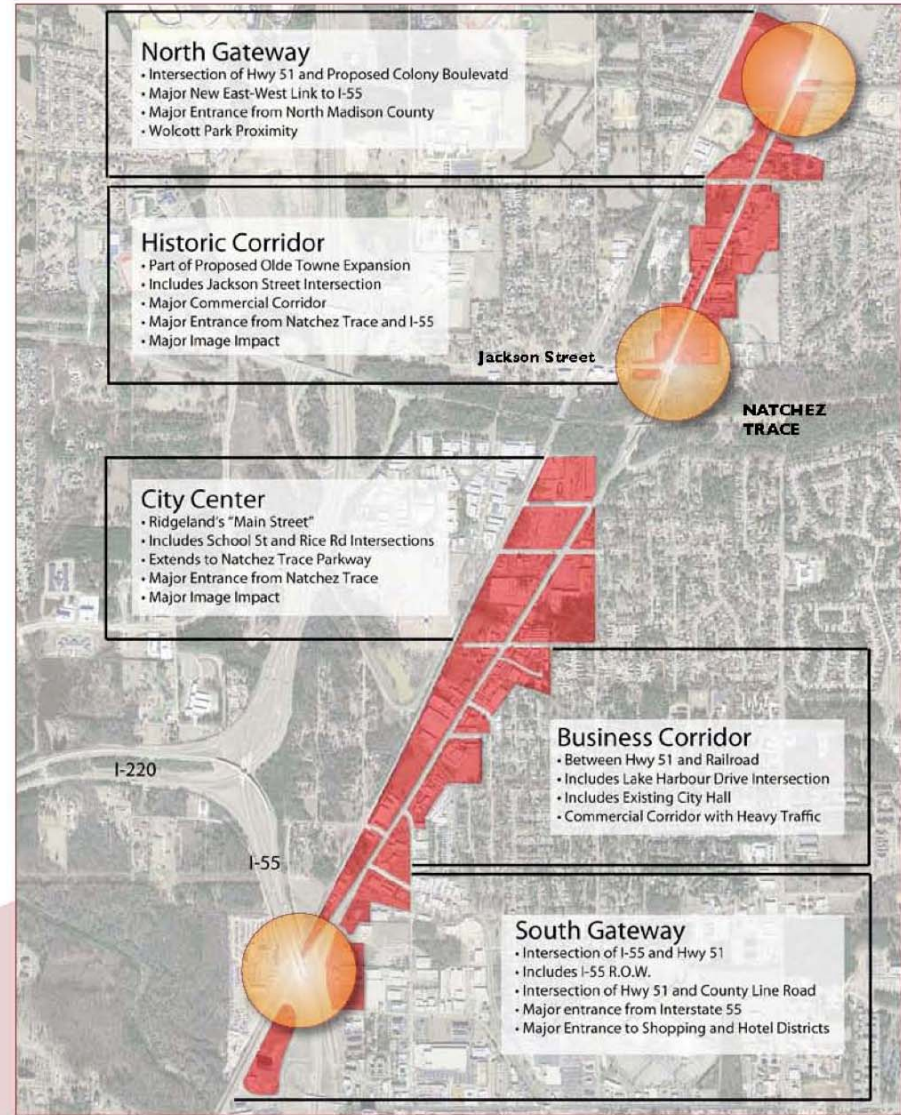
The Master Plan recommends development of design guidelines that respond to the five segments in order to respect the functional requirements of the roadway while creating a discernible character that unifies the corridor. The gateways should be enhanced to create bold quality statements while the Business, City Center and Historic segments should take their cues from the character of proposed development in those areas. For example, in the Historic and City Center Corridors, sidewalks, a median, and street trees should be introduced to help reinforce the historic and small town character desired by the community. The business corridor should continue to provide easy access to important commerce while new setbacks, building codes, and signage requirements could help improve the overall experience along the highway. These concepts comply with Master Plan Goals as follows:

Goal 1 - By using medians, sidewalks and street trees, Highway 51 will be brought closer to the human scale thus communicating a more small town atmosphere. Some traffic calming will result which when combined with the vegetation will create a more appealing environment and encourage more non-vehicular use. Claiming R.O.W. areas for additional landscaping will add to the open-space feel of the entire corridor.

Goal 2 - The proposed improvements will dramatically raise the quality level of the roadway corridor and new, more specific design guidelines for frontage properties will encourage more context sensitive design and development/redevelopment along this highly visible corridor.

Goal 3 - By providing sidewalks and bicycle trails along the corridor and reconfiguring the highway as more "pedestrian friendly", non-vehicular connectivity will be greatly enhanced. Addition of medians along certain stretches of the corridor will make non life-threatening crossings a possibility while preserving most of the auto connectivity currently provided.

Goal 4 - The image goal is clearly served as the highway is transformed from a nondescript stretch of asphalt into Ridgeland's "Main Street".



SCORECARD

1. CONSERVATION GOAL

To improve the relaxed, small-town atmosphere of Ridgeland with an emphasis on conservation, and expansion of parks, trails and open space.



2. QUALITY GOAL

To insist only on high-quality residential and commercial development reinforced by stringent code enforcement and redevelopment initiatives for declining areas.



3. CONNECTIVITY GOAL

To preserve, improve and take advantage of Ridgeland's convenient access to the surrounding communities while improving internal connectivity and ease of movement.



4. IMAGE GOAL

To establish a strong identity through the development and implementation of a city-center complex and a positive image that communicates the true character of our city.





GATEWAY ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT



EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED

MEDIAN ENHANCEMENT



EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED



SCORECARD

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City Center & Freedom Ridge Park Expansion

Analysis

The closest thing to a town center in Ridgeland is Freedom Ridge Park. Unfortunately, the park is tucked invisibly between the railroad tracks and the interstate. Fortunately, the City has been accumulating property south of Purple Creek and desires to purchase the property between School Street and the Natchez Trace (Concrete Plant Site). Combined and properly developed, these properties could form the basis for a truly fine city center and expanded park and recreation site.

Response:

The proposed City Center site is ideally located on Hwy. 51 across School Street from the existing Library and other City offices. Its northern edge is nicely adjacent to the Natchez Trace Parkway providing connections to travelers and existing bicycle trails.

The park expansion area is currently occupied by a deteriorated neighborhood which was negatively affected by the construction of the interstate. This forested area should be brought back into use through the development of expanded recreational facilities, new park-oriented retail and industrial development that respects existing trees and drainage ways. The strategy complies with the Master Plan Goals as follows:

Goal 1 - The creation of a Town Center with greenway links to the Trace and areas to the south and west of the interstate will create a dramatic impact on the livability of the community while Freedom Ridge Park will essentially be doubled in size. New development will have to comply with conservation guidelines to protect existing trees and waterways. Retention ponds are created along the drainage ways to create attractive ponds as well as provide storm water relief for neighborhoods to the south.

Goal 2 - Currently, Freedom Ridge Park is the embodiment of quality. The expanded park and City Center development will expand this high quality out to Hwy. 51 and over to the interstate providing highly visible examples to future developers of the quality demanded in Ridgeland. Conservation guidelines for development within these areas will further reinforce development standards.

Goal 3 - The proposed improvements focus on pedestrian/ bicycle connectivity indicating connecting trails from the Natchez Trace through the Focus Area and southward along the proposed Purple Creek Trail. Furthermore, taking advantage of the proposed Lake Harbour Drive across the interstate, trails further connect the site to areas west of I-55 and on up into the Renaissance development. Auto connectivity is also provided through a new roadway connecting the existing park area across the Lake Harbour extension and into the expanded park area connecting back to Hwy. 51 at Holmes Street.

Goal 4 - Replacing the highly visible and unattractive concrete plant site with a City Center Complex will provide an instant image uplift for Ridgeland. High quality architecture and public green space will provide a strong statement for all travelers on Hwy 51. Transforming the deteriorating area between the interstate and the railroad into a signature park expansion coupled with quality retail development visible from the interstate will also immeasurably help improve Ridgeland's image.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



- EXISTING DRAINAGE WAYS
- PROPOSED CITY CENTER SITE
- COMMERCIAL USE (RED) NEIGHBORHOODS (YELLOW)
- NATCHEZ TRACE (GREEN) INDUSTRIAL (PURPLE)
- CITY FACILITIES

PROPOSED STRATEGY



- CITY FACILITIES
- PARK EXPANSION
- CONSERVATION RETAIL
- TRAIL SYSTEM & RETENTION PONDS
- ENHANCED ROADWAYS (not part of park property)
- CONSERVATION INDUSTRIAL



FOCUS AREA 3 - City Center Concept

The City Center concept as shown in the graphics (right) demonstrates how the "Concrete Plant Site" could be transformed into an expanded City Hall Complex with space for community meeting rooms, library expansion, city offices along with educational, retail and even residential components. It would become a 24 hour space with people living, working and recreating all within a five-minute walk. Trails connecting to other parts of Ridgeland would connect this "heart" of the City to all areas.

Some of the key elements include:

- School Street enhancements which would help to merge the Library and other City offices south of School Street into the complex while adding a quality gateway to the campus and to Freedom Ridge Park. Highway 51 improvements are also indicated with a landscaped median and special street lighting.

- City Hall sits back from the highway, creating long views across the Community Green. A multi-story building with strong historical styling becomes the backdrop against which city festival gatherings are held and community events are celebrated. Parking is tucked away behind the building.

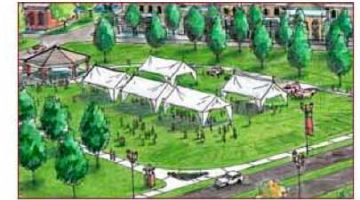
- The Community Green is large enough to make a strong statement from H 51 and provide ample space for festivals, gathering or leisurely walks. A large gazebo can become the site for community theater, music, and presentations. This green becomes Ridgeland's "front yard".

- Across Highway 51 is one of the few old structures still standing in the City. Appropriately, it was a filling station. This site could be captured, restored and serve as a connection with the city's past while being an important educational and enrichment opportunity.



CONCEPT PLAN

FESTIVAL GREEN



CITY HALL



MIXED-USE



- A combination retention pond and ecological education facility is located within the campus. It could serve as an important outreach component through which Ridgeland can sponsor good stewardship of natural resources, recycling, and healthy living.

- The civic complex is also complimented by a mixed-use development which could provide a constant energizing presence to the complex. Office and retail facilities on the ground floor with residential above provides a live-work-shop street life which could take advantage of the many amenities offered at the City Center Complex while injecting a healthy dose of cash flow. Working closely with a quality developer, the City could leverage the old concrete plant site into a high quality development with great connections to all parts of the city.



BEFORE

PURPLE CREEK TRAIL

With the Natchez Trace running through the town, Ridgeland is already familiar with the many benefits of having greenway trail systems. Introducing a greenway solely dedicated to pedestrians/ bicycles through the heart of the city would satisfy many of the Master Plan goals while providing many other additional benefits such as: protecting natural resources, providing economic opportunities, protecting rural legacy, providing opportunities for public recreation, health and fitness, enabling outdoor educational opportunities and providing alternative and safer modes of transportation.

The existing Purple Creek drainage corridor provides a great opportunity for such a greenway trail. A Purple Creek trail system would run from Freedom Ridge Park through several existing neighborhoods (with proposed bikeways) and end at County Line Road between the shopping and hotel district. Currently the creek is used as a utility to drain the surrounding areas when it could also be an important open space amenity.

While this trail provides a new mode of transportation, it is also protecting natural resources. Diverse plantings create habitat, absorb contaminants from surface runoff and buffers neighborhoods from the negative effects of adjacent development. It could also provide reductions in noise, water, thermal and air pollution which are some of the effects that can be accomplished while not impeding the corridors important function as flood control.

The trail would preserve open space and scenic views while adding value to surrounding developments. A greenway gives residents of surrounding neighborhoods an opportunity to enjoy nature while in close proximity to their home. Enjoying nature through direct contact creates opportunities for groups to use the greenway as an "outdoor classroom". Educating the public about historic sites, protection on natural resources, environmental and scientific topics and health benefits promote the interaction of people and nature.

Greenways not only provide green surroundings, but also offer the public fitness opportunities. Providing recreational opportunities for families and individuals of all ages and abilities are a core component of strategies to foster health and wellness. They provide safe, accessible and attractive places to bike, run, hike or



AFTER

- 1 PEDESTRIAN WALK AND BIKE TRAIL
- 2 LIGHTING TO MATCH CITY PATTERN BOOK
- 3 INCREASED BANK STABILIZATION -Sediment/ Erosion Control
- 4 LANDSCAPE PROVIDING SHADE

skate while encouraging community interaction. With the state of Mississippi ranking first in recent obesity statistics, physical exercise should be high priority.

Greenways enhance the sense of place and pride in a community. The planning and development of greenways naturally lead to the formation of broad-based partnerships, bringing together groups, leaders and businesses. As popularity for recreational greenways increase, the tourism industry will continue to grow providing new marketing opportunities and increased employment around trails.

KEY FINDINGS FROM A GREENWAY PROXIMITY STUDY
<http://atfile.s.org/files/pdf/grnwypro>BC.pdf>

Urban land adjacent to a privately owned greenbelt (actually rural farm land) in Salem, Oregon was worth \$1,200 more per acre than land more than 1,000 feet away.

The total value of the neighborhood near a greenbelt in Boulder, Colorado was \$5.4 million more than if there hadn't been a green belt.

Houses that faced the park sold for 7 to 23 percent more than homes one block from the park. Homes that backed up onto the park sold at prices similar to houses one block away.



SOUTHEAST RIDGELAND REDEVELOPMENT - EAST

Analysis

The difficulties in this area stem from its fractured nature. Despite the roadways, it is divided into a number of small pieces by drainage ways and utility corridors. The disconnection between parcels limits the sense of community and ability to implement community-wide enhancing amenities. Apartment complexes were built focusing on interior function and not community integration. This lack of integration has evolved into substandard care, negatively affecting surrounding property values. Another asset not integrated into the community was the drainage system. Treated as a utility and not a resource, the drainage system was deemed wasted property when it could have been creatively integrated to provide an amenity and functional service. The area does contain several large undeveloped tracts which can be used as catalysts for a more integrated redevelopment of the area.

Response

The proposed strategy stresses redevelopment of aging apartments and development of new properties with innovative cottage clusters. Using conservation practices and incorporating greenways in drainage areas, much of the area can be redeveloped into high-value moderately-priced housing that compliments existing quality development and provides community amenities and high connectivity to surrounding assets. The strategy complies with the Master Plan Goals as follows:

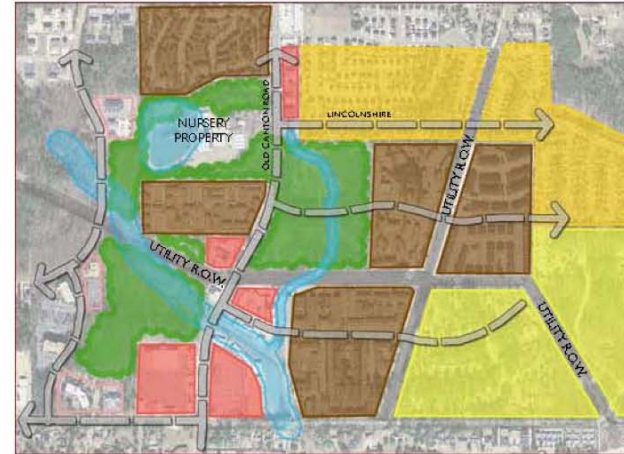
Goal 1 - Designation of undeveloped land and drainageways as Conservation Areas and public open space combined with rezoning the area for Cottage Cluster development provides maximum density with minimum impact on the land. Trees are preserved to provide shade, natural beauty, wildlife habitat and to filter runoff and preserve water quality. Road infrastructure is reduced through shared driveways.

Goal 2 - Aging apartments are replaced by new single-family residential developments as extensions of existing stable neighborhoods or as cottage clusters. A new category for Cottage Clusters will need to be added to the Zoning Code and will specify quality and design requirements.

Goal 3 - Connectivity is improved through the creation of pedestrian/bike trails along drainage corridors as well as extension of the existing Old Canton Road bikeway. These trails will then connect to other trails to the Shopping District to the west. Auto connectivity is improved via a loop connection between Lincolnshire and Pine Knoll west of Old Canton and a connection to Northpark Drive. These improvements will provide direct access to these neighborhoods to major arterials as well as to interior roads west of Old Canton.

Goal 4 - Image is greatly improved through the removal of deteriorating apartment properties and replacing them with new medium density residential properties. Open space is preserved and proposed improvements to streetscape amenities (street lighting, underground utilities, street tree plantings, sidewalks and, where possible, median plantings) will greatly enhance the image quality of the area while adding to property values and revitalizing the entire southeastern corner of the City.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



- APARTMENTS
- RETAIL
- OFFICE
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MED. DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- FLOODWAY
- UNDEVELOPED

PROPOSED STRATEGY



- RE-CONFIGURED STREETS
 - With Median & Landscaping
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- GREEN WAY/TRAILS
 - Protected Watershed
 - Value added to residential
- COTTAGE RESIDENTIAL
 - Clustered to preserve trees and natural features
 - High density small units
 - Retirement / Small family

SCORECARD

1. CONSERVATION GOAL

To improve the relaxed, small-town atmosphere of Ridgeland with an emphasis on conservation, and expansion of parks, trails and open space.



2. QUALITY GOAL

To insist only on high-quality residential and commercial development reinforced by stringent code enforcement and redevelopment initiatives for declining areas.



3. CONNECTIVITY GOAL

To preserve, improve and take advantage of Ridgeland's convenient access to the surrounding communities while improving internal connectivity and ease of movement.



4. IMAGE GOAL

To establish a strong identity through the development and implementation of a city-center complex and a positive image that communicates the true character of our city.





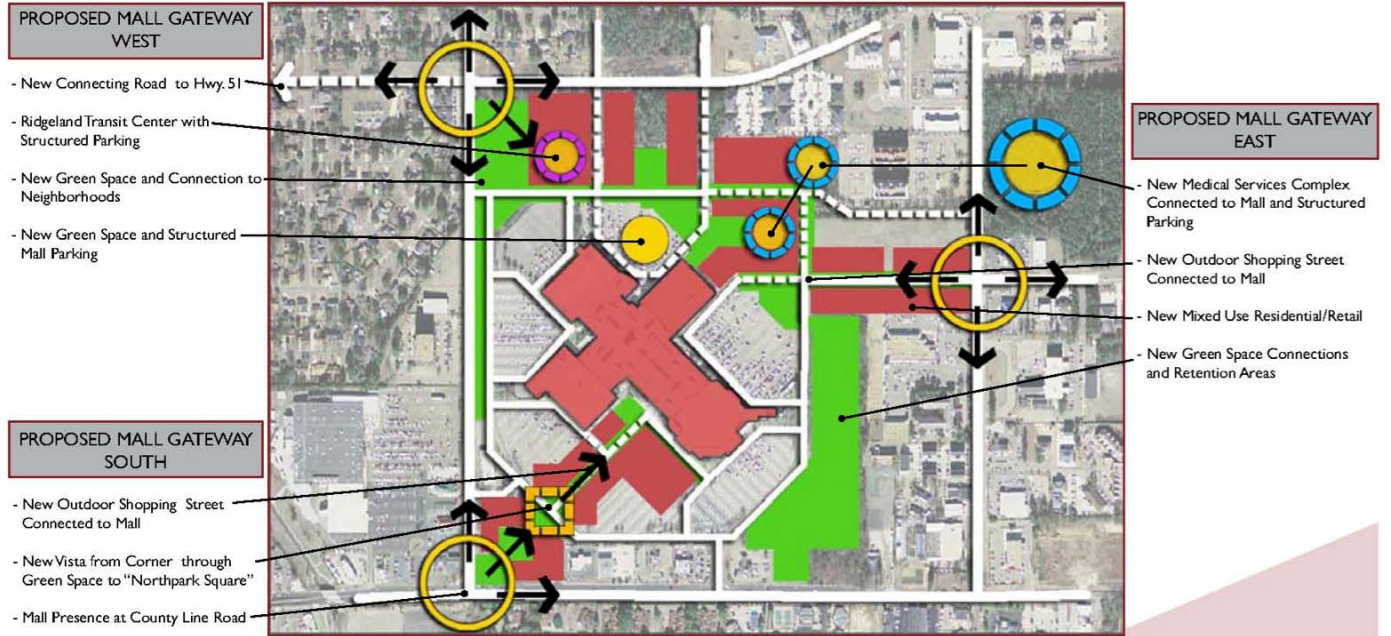
Northpark Mall

Northpark Mall has fallen victim to many of the problems that afflict similar indoor shopping malls around the country - changes in the neighborhoods surrounding it, stressed connecting infrastructure, and the changing tastes of American shoppers. In order to avoid a costly decline in the vitality of the Northpark District, considerable public and private investment will have to be made. A major advantage in the case of Northpark Mall is the fact that it is part of a larger retail-focused area that creates a "critical mass" that attracts further investment.

The approach of the Master Plan has been to seek opportunities to continue building upon this advantage through diversification and through transformation of the mall area into a more connected, more modern and more community oriented shopping experience.

Northpark Mall will always be a regional shopping hub. The Master Plan concepts seek to increase its share of the local shopping market by creating stronger connections to the neighborhoods, streets and adjacent areas. By creating outdoor shopping streets within and extending from the Mall several things are accomplished:

- Better connections to surrounding supporting residential development, retail and services.
- Offering both indoor shopping comfort with an outdoor shopping experience.
- Energy is created to stimulate other complimentary development in the area to keep the Northpark District vital.



As shown in the diagram above, this concept is accomplished through the implementation of three new Mall Gateways. Done in phases, these new gateways will firmly tie the Mall to the community while providing an exciting, state of the art shopping venue. A new street connection to Hwy. 51 will relieve some of the pressure from the over-burdened County Line Road and creates a new entrance and a new development envelope for the Northpark District.

Other new infrastructure connections create opportunities for complimentary development and ease of movement, along with a more aesthetically appealing experience. Considerable investment will have to be made for structured parking which can double as ground level retail in some cases. Green space in the form of enhanced storm water retention areas soften the environmental impact while adding educational and recreational opportunities.



An integral part of the concept is a transit center. Providing people with safe, easy to use, efficient transportation options is critical as Ridgeland grows into a mature city. This service does not have to be the tired city bus concept but could and should be something innovative. A local shuttle service between Core Areas would be an appropriate response to Ridgeland's needs while providing ready access to many of the City's most popular areas - Freedom Ridge Park, Renaissance Center, Harbor Walk, the Natchez Trace Craft Center, and others. Locating a hub facility in between the Shopping and Hotel Districts will draw shoppers and create shared parking opportunities.



Finally, diversification is achieved by the inclusion of medical services. Ridgeland's aging population is an embedded market for medical services. Combined with shopping, transit, and open space these facilities would add yet another way to attract people into the Northpark District while creating good jobs in the area (see next page).



Medical Complex

As can be seen in the Land Use Plan component of the Master Plan, one of the strategies for keeping southeast Ridgeland vital is through a combination of three things:

- Sustain the density of development to take advantage of the area's accessibility by introducing mixed use residential component into the large retail/office component
- Provide more amenities for residents in this densely populated area
- Provide a wider range of services to the population

One of the most glaring gaps in Ridgeland's economic and service profile is the lack of medical care facilities. The growing age of the population, accessibility issues, a bulging national retirement population and rapid changes in the health care delivery system seem to be a perfect fit for Ridgeland (not to mention the large number of medical professionals who currently live in the City).

The Master Plan sees enormous opportunities in working cooperatively with healthcare service providers, private developers, and City offices to provide this critical component in an integrated fashion within the Northpark District. Its proximity to other services, residential areas, the Hotel District, existing critical infrastructure, education facilities and an abundance of available property all combine to create the potential for a dynamic stimulus for southeast Ridgeland.





ANALYSIS

Since its recent annexation, this key area has been unnecessarily hampered by lingering issues from its time as part of the City of Jackson. While it has very good access to Interstate 220 and via Highland Colony Parkway, it has image challenges. Ridgeland's Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan each call for the addition of an east-west artery from Highland Colony to Livingston Road which would add important connectivity to the area. The Comprehensive Plan also indicates a green buffer immediately north of County Line Road as a scenic separation between Ridgeland and Jackson. Finally, the Costas Lakes property provides an appealing setting for significant new development and could be the catalyst for initiating and modeling positive development in this sector of the City.

RESPONSE

The concept for this focus area places great emphasis upon creating a value added edge along County Line Road. Due to persistent perception problems and the fact that County Line Road is a major access to the landfill for garbage trucks, it will be difficult to attract quality development along this corridor. Responding to the Comprehensive Plan this concept shows the creation of articulated green space along this boundary in the form of a public/private golf course. While expensive to build, a golf course provides several important functions as:

- A buffer between Ridgeland and Jackson
- A statement of quality on County Line Road
- A new recreational offering for Ridgeland citizens
- A high-value edge for properties to the north and south
- A positive integration of wooded areas and drainage ways

New residential development could then be encouraged along the golf course edges and along the waterways and lakes on the Costas properties in a secure and very scenic environment.

A major retail node is envisioned at the northern end of the large lake with access to Highland Colony Parkway and the new east/west connector to Livingston (see schematic sketch next page). Accompanied by office and mixed-use commercial and residential development along the lake edge and across the parkway and a compact and relatively dense core of activity and commerce could effectively anchor southwest Ridgeland and stimulate other positive development in the area. Potential for interconnecting all these features with bicycle trails, future schools and regional park space to the west would create a truly walkable community within the city with access to jobs, shopping, schools and recreational opportunities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



	TECHNICAL INDUSTRIAL PARK
	FORESTED
	UTILITY R.O.W.
	NEW ROAD

PROPOSED COSTAS LAKES



	NEW REGIONAL PARK		HIGH INTENSITY COMMERCIAL		RESIDENTIAL		GOLF COURSE
	GOLF CLUB HOUSE		MEDIUM INTENSITY COMMERCIAL		HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL		CITY GATEWAY
	NEW EAST/WEST ROAD		ESTATE RESIDENTIAL		MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL / COMMERCIAL		CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT
	EXISTING TIP						

SCORECARD

1. CONSERVATION GOAL

To improve the relaxed, small-town atmosphere of Ridgeland with an emphasis on conservation, and expansion of parks, trails and open space.

2. QUALITY GOAL

To insist only on high-quality residential and commercial development reinforced by stringent code enforcement and redevelopment initiatives for declining areas.

3. CONNECTIVITY GOAL

To preserve, improve and take advantage of Ridgeland's convenient access to the surrounding communities while improving internal connectivity and ease of movement.

4. IMAGE GOAL

To establish a strong identity through the development and implementation of a city-center complex and a positive image that communicates the true character of our city.



COSTAS LAKE CORE

Ridgeland has a firmly established reputation as a regional shopping destination. For the past twenty years, Northpark Mall has served the area as the premier indoor shopping mall. With new owners and potentials, Northpark Mall will continue to thrive. The soon to open Renaissance at Colony Park and proposed HarborWalk will compliment the regional shopping offerings and serve north, south and east Ridgeland with great shopping opportunities and important job-creating commerce. To complete the picture, the Master Plan proposes a major commercial node on the southwestern border of Ridgeland.

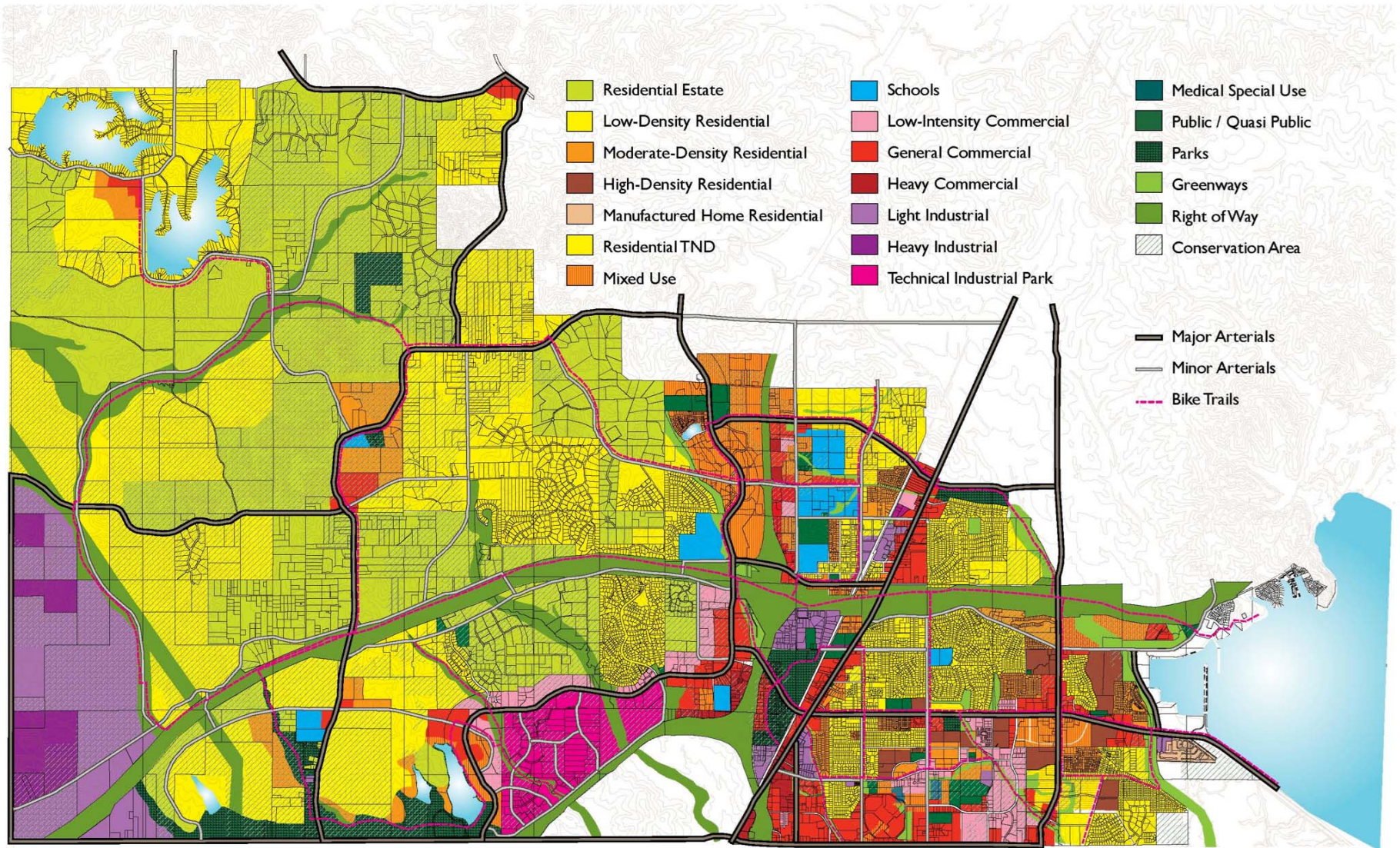
Drawing upon access to Interstate 220, Highland Colony Parkway and the high potential expansion area west of Ridgeland, the creation of a major retail node north of Costas Lake will provide the City with another great opportunity to capture regional commerce. Furthermore, with careful planning and execution, this development will have several advantages. Like HarborWalk, this development will have a waterfront appeal. Like Renaissance, it will have the opportunity to include mixed-use and new shopping design that is in great demand. Like Northpark Mall, it will have plenty of space and easy access for regional shoppers. All these assets along with proximity to a new golf course and high-end golf course residential development and connecting trails to regional parks, schools and neighborhoods nestled in forested hills combine to create great potential for a high quality of life centered community in southwest Ridgeland.

The scheme calls for intense development around the commercial core and expansion of office commerce across Highland Colony Parkway. The lake edge is featured as common green space allowing for linkage with recreation and residential areas.



LAKE EDGE SHOPPING AND RECREATION







02.03.2010



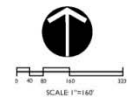
LEGEND

- Commercial/Retail
- Light Commercial/Retail
- Dense Single Family Residential
- Medium Density Single Family Residential

- C** Neighborhood Designations
- Landscaped Buffer
- Williams Blvd./ Pine Knoll Redevelopment
- School Creek Floodway
- School Creek 100 YR. Flood Plain

DESIGN ELEMENTS:

- Protect existing drainage patterns and watersheds throughout the site.
- Preserve stands of mature trees.
- Maintain existing pine trees along Old Canton Rd., to serve as a visual and auditory buffer between the roadway and residential development.
- Focus denser development in areas of previous disturbance (apartment complexes).
- Create a hierarchy of open space and parks to allow for easy accessibility by residents and visitors.
- Create spaces that promote or provide opportunities for an active, healthy, lifestyle.
- Utilize the utility line easement as a passive recreation corridor.
- Create distinctive neighborhood identities by focusing on natural assets, including land form, open spaces, vegetation, or views.
- Site roads so they respond to the natural drainage patterns of the site.
- Locate roads so that they create a public edge between the roadway experience and allow for views into open space.
- Terminate roads at parks or open spaces, at view corridors, or focused on iconic architecture.
- Provide for a diversity of housing products.
- Protect the value of every address by considering distances from residences to parks.
- ROW's are to be expanded large enough along major connectors, as to provide for passive park space along the length of the roadway.
- All roads to be pedestrian in scale, with sidewalks safely set back from the roadway, and providing space for street trees and vegetative treatments.



SOUTHEAST RIDGELAND REDEVELOPMENT - SCHEMATIC MASTER PLAN



Ridgeland City Center
City Center Master Plan
 Highway 51 ~ Ridgeland, Mississippi





Ridgeland City Center
Proposed Performing Arts Center
Highway 51 ~ Ridgeland, Mississippi





Ridgeland City Center
Proposed City Hall
Highway 51 ~ Ridgeland, Mississippi



R·A·M·P PROJECT EVALUATION SCORECARD

CITY OF RIDGELAND

Community Sustainability

Evaluation Criteria	Range	Score
Education	0 - 1	
Economic Development	0 - 1	
Livability	0 - 1	
Infrastructure	0 - 1	

RAMP Goals

Conservation Goal	0 - 1	
Quality Goal	0 - 1	
Connectivity Goal	0 - 1	
Image Goal	0 - 1	

Innovation Factor

Innovation	0 - 10	
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Essential Criteria

Safety	0 - 8	
Function	0 - 5	
Aesthetics	0 - 3	

THE CITY OF
RIDGELAND

TOTAL		
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Evaluation Criteria Description

The purpose of every project is to contribute to community sustainability. Community sustainability results in a high quality of life for our Citizens. The intent of evaluating a project through the four essential elements of a Sustainable Community (Education, Economic Development, Livability, and Infrastructure) is to determine if the project will lead to an improvement in one or more of the categories. Higher priority projects will positively impact every element. Our challenge is to investigate possible ways to expand a project to meet every category.

The community is the driving force behind the goals of the Master Plan. These goals were established to ensure that decisions are consistent with the wishes of the citizens and business leaders. Although every project may not impact every goal of the Master Plan, a higher priority project will positively impact each of the following Goals: Conservation Goal, Quality Goal, Connectivity Goal, and Image Goal.

This category can potentially carry a very high weight through evaluating a multitude of criteria. Obviously, weight can be given to traditional definition of innovation, but there are also many other factors that may impact this category. Some of these factors may include the following: can the project be significantly funded by an outside source of funding, is the project in response to an emergency factor, is the project a "once-in-a-lifetime project", etc. Any other unique project factor may contribute to the evaluation of this category.

Obviously, every project that gets approved should be safe, function well, and be aesthetically pleasing, if applicable. Evaluating the essential criteria should be scored on the basis of improving these categories. In other words, does the project improve an existing safety problem? Does the project fix a function-related problem, or does the project contribute further to the beauty of our City?

GOAL 1

To improve the relaxed, small-town atmosphere of Ridgeland with an emphasis on conservation, and expansion of parks, trails and open space.

GOAL 2

To insist only on high-quality residential and commercial development reinforced by stringent code enforcement and redevelopment initiatives for declining areas.

GOAL 3

To preserve, improve and take advantage of Ridgeland's convenient access to the surrounding communities while improving internal connectivity and ease of movement.

GOAL 4

To establish a strong identity through the development and implementation of a city-center complex and a positive image that communicates the true character of our city.









02.03.2010







