



DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

September 2024

BOUDREAUX





Introduction

Acknowledgements

The master plan and the master plan charrette were successful due to the vision, passion and hard work of the Town of Ridgeville’s leaders – elected, staff and community. We are grateful for this opportunity and for the collaborative effort that made this master planning process possible.

Mayor CLARENCE HUGHES

Mayor Pro Tempore/Council Member LORRAINE GRANT

Council Member ELAINE DOCTOR

Council Member PHAEHLER GRANT

Council Member JACQUELYN HILL

Acting Town Administrator REBECCA VANCE

Acting Police Chief THOMAS MUCKELVANEY

Planning Team

Thomas & Hutton

John Winters, PLA

Chris Magaldi, PE

Samantha Mizell, PLA

BOUDREAUX

Irene Dumas Tyson, AICP, Associate AIA

Jess Rosko, Associate AIA, Associate IIDA

Rachel John

“This is a magnificent opportunity to shape the community with smart ideas rather than reacting.

Design the preferred future now!”

-Participant in the master plan community meetings

Master Plan Purpose

Growth is happening around the Town of Ridgeville. Development is moving in, expanding the town limits and creating fertile ground for population expansion. How can this town of 1, 500 residents prepare for this growth, revitalize the downtown and encourage investments to meet the needs of the current and future residents?

The downtown master plan engaged residents, business owners and land owners to share their ideas for Ridgeville’s future and their understanding of the town’s challenges and assets. Over two days in February, the planning team met with the community and conducting site analysis. This informed the initial master plan recommendations that were presented to town leadership.

The master plan identifies key investments areas to sustain downtown revitalization and placemaking. The master plan recommends a vision and guiding principles to guide redevelopment efforts of the town. Also, the master plan presents a phased implementation framework to address infrastructure needs, opportunities to elevate economic development and to reclaim and rebuild the town center. The master plan illustrates the potential of this town center, building on the charming, small town spirit of the Town of Ridgeville.

Project Schedule

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

9:00 am – 1:30 pm Master Plan Kick-off Meeting and Town Tour

Tuesday, February 27

9:30 am Team arrives and sets up workspace
10:30 am – 12:00 pm PAC and Small Business/Property Owners Focus Group 1
12:00 – 2:30 pm Team Lunch and Work Session (in team workspace)
3:00 – 4:45 pm Stakeholder Interviews: Focus on downtown business and property owners, arts, history and culture
3:00 – 4:00: Focus Group 2
4:15 – 5:15: Focus Group 3
5:30 – 6:30 pm Public Input Session
6:45 – 10:00 pm Team Working Session

Wednesday, February 28

8:30 am – 12:00 pm Team Work Session
9:00 am – 11:45 am Interviews with Partners
12:00 – 3:30 pm Team Work Session
3:30 – 4:30 pm Plan review with Rebecca Vance and PAC

Thursday, February 29

9:00 am – 2:00 pm Team Work Session, Thomas & Hutton Office



“The best way to predict the future is to create it yourself.”

-Abraham Lincoln

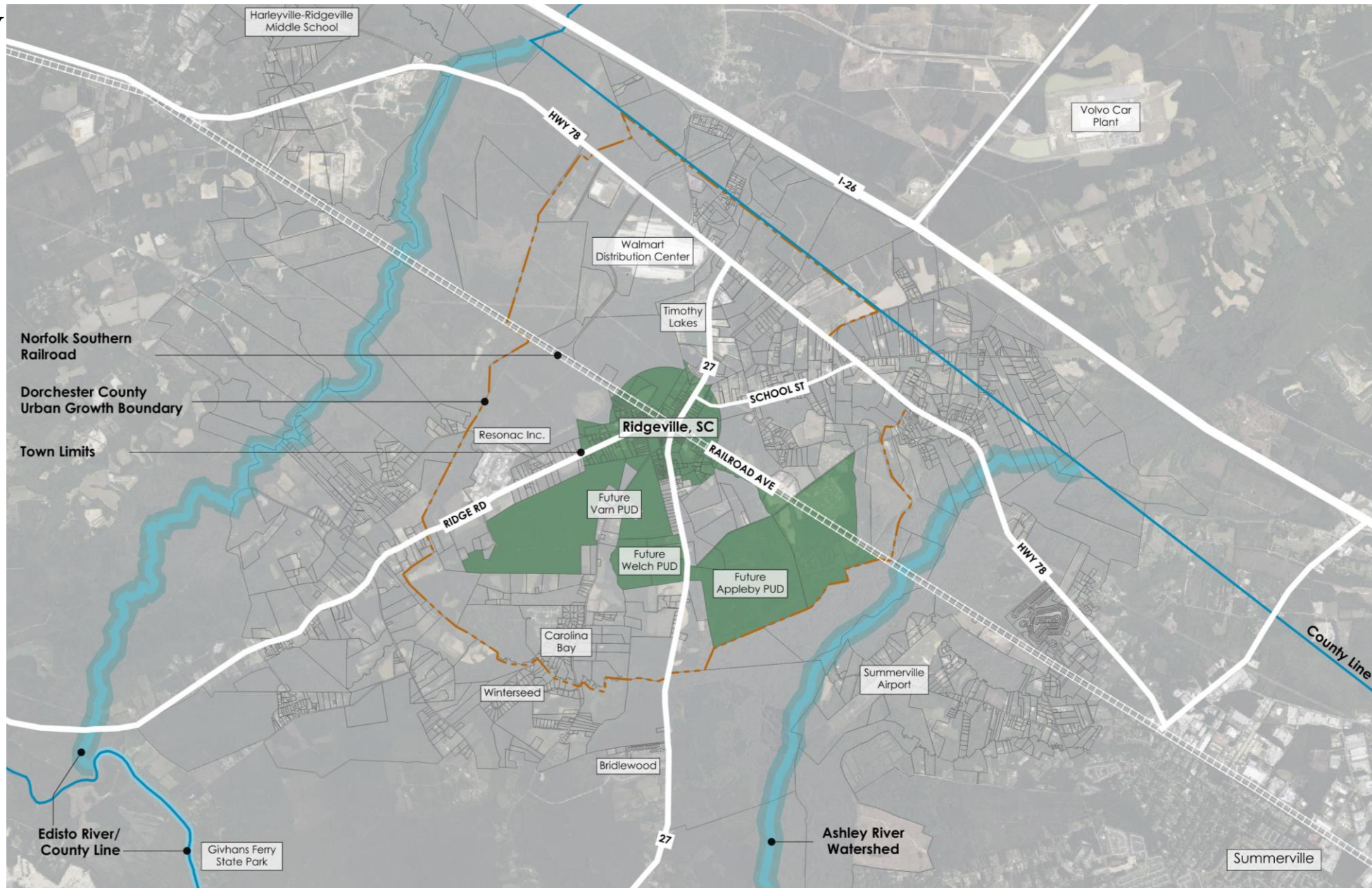


Analysis

Ridgeville Overview

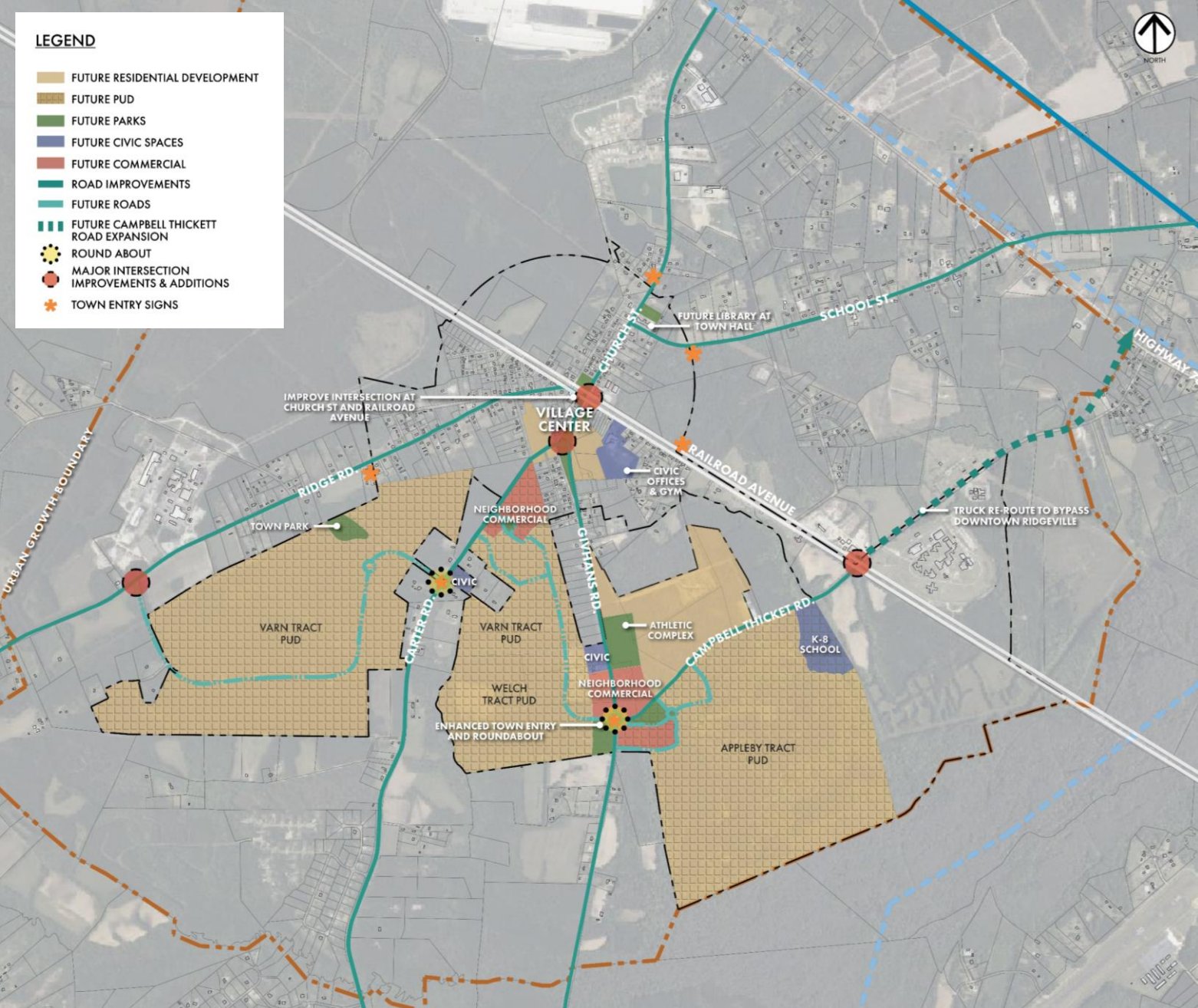
Ridgeville is located on a ridge between two major watersheds, Edisto River and Cypress Swamp. The City of Charleston is 35 miles south of highway I-26 and Summerville's suburbs are as close as 10 miles south of Railroad Avenue which is Ridgeville main street running parallel to Norfolk South Railroad. The towns proximity to Charleston and Summerville's growing metropolis, economy, and industries along with its key access to main highways and interstates makes it naturally the next town ripe for growth and development along the I-26 corridor.

The downtown area sits between two large industries Showa Denko (southwest) and a Walmart Distribution Center (northwest). Another adjacent industry worth noting is the Volvo Car Plant, 5 miles northeast of I-26. These places have an impact on the future activity, population, and overall growth of the Ridgeville area. Future residential development that is set to expand the town limits are the Varn, Appleby, and Welch Planned developments. The success of these two communities alone will make the existing population but a fraction of its future ones.



LEGEND

- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- FUTURE PUD
- FUTURE PARKS
- FUTURE CIVIC SPACES
- FUTURE COMMERCIAL
- ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
- FUTURE ROADS
- FUTURE CAMPBELL THICKETT ROAD EXPANSION
- ROUND ABOUT
- MAJOR INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS & ADDITIONS
- TOWN ENTRY SIGNS



The Master Plan Objectives

Master Plan objectives were established after meeting with the community and analyzing their feedback and comments. These objectives will serve as the framework and guide for the areas of focus within this master plan.

● Creating a Village Center

Study Area – Key Elements

Masterplan

Placemaking

● Preparing for Growth

Future Planned Developments

Calming Traffic

Diverting Traffic

● Pedestrian Connectivity

● Streetscape Improvements

Trails and Pedestrian Connectivity Masterplan

Welcome and Gateway Monument Signage

Improved and Future Intersections and Streetscapes

Downtown Analysis: DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

The architectural and landscape character of downtown Ridgeville is mostly a conglomeration of tired, suburban buildings. Several of the buildings are empty and numerous buildings have not been maintained. There is no defining or unifying character.

The downtown streets and public rights-of-way bleed from grass to street to sidewalk. There is no delineation between parking and the street, which creates blurry boundaries of where pedestrians should walk.

The railroad is the defining and dominating feature. This can be celebrated with improved landscaping, signage and defined crossings and parking.

The streets are wide. Making the streets narrower (street diet) will encourage vehicles to drive slower and create safer places for pedestrians and cyclists (traffic calming).

There is tremendous opportunities to define a unique architectural and landscape character and qualities that will create a more welcoming and vibrant downtown.



Church Street/South Railroad Avenue



South Railroad Avenue



Church Street



Church Street/South Railroad Avenue

Downtown Analysis: DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

The water tower is another defining feature of downtown and can be celebrated as a town icon. Church Street/Givhans Road is an excellent opportunity to use landscaping and marked parking to separate the pedestrian realm from the vehicular realm. The proposed Village Center will start at the Y of Givhans Road and County Road South 18-174.

There are opportunities for infill development and a park in the Village Center, which can promote the new downtown Ridgeville character.



Givhans Road



Givhans Road/Water Street



South Railroad Avenue



South Railroad Avenue

Downtown Analysis: RAILROAD CROSSING

Improving the railroad crossing in the center of town (Church Street/Railroad Avenue) is a key investment area of the master plan. The elevation of the tracks along with no traffic signals creates limited views and dangerous interactions between vehicles and with pedestrians.

This intersection is the heart of town. Redesign can make the intersection safer and establish a sense of place, a sense of 'being there'. Signage, lights, banners, landscaping, and well-defined pedestrian crossings will improve this crossing.



Church Street/North Railroad Avenue



Church Street/North Railroad Avenue



North Railroad Avenue



Church Street/South Railroad Avenue



South Railroad Avenue

Assets: HISTORIC HOMES

Ridgeville is home to numerous beautiful historic houses, all of which represent an array of architectural styles. From a brief analysis, these styles range from Victorian and Queen Anne to craftsman, mill village vernacular, and bungalow to low country cottages. Most of these homes continue to serve as residences, however, many are in need of renovation.

The town should commission an historic survey to inventory and identify the different styles, the histories associated with each home and the potential for listing on the National Register.



Assets: HISTORIC HOMES

These homes can provide a tourism base for the town. By working with the SC Department of Archives and History, Ridgeville's historic homes can become an authentic economic engine.



Assets: HISTORY

Founded in 1897, the Town of Ridgeville has a rich and storied history from the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe to the natural history of the Edisto River and Francis Beidler Forest, from the railroad and the characters it brought to town to the diverse stock of unique and beautiful historic homes, the Town of Ridgeville is sitting on a gold mine of historic resources that should be shared. These resources can serve as the singular most impactful economic development driver for the town.



Former Depot



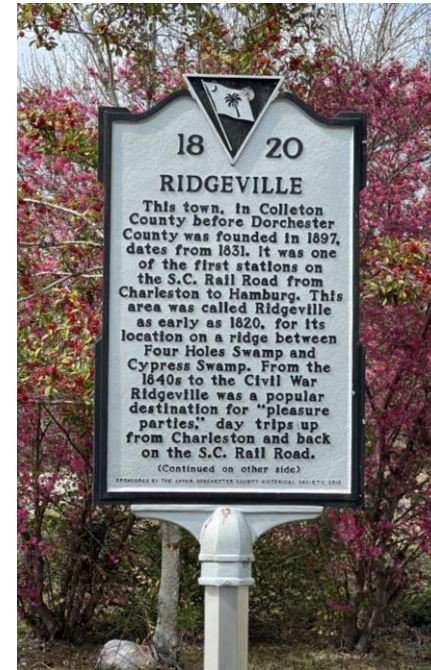
Town Hall



Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center & Sanctuary
Photo Credits: Mac Stone



Edisto River; Photo Credits: John D. Smoak, III



Railroad History



Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe

Assets: GATHERING PLACES

Ridgeville has a few iconic and well-established places where residents and visitors can gather: the Town Park, the weekly Farmers Market, Duke's BBQ, and Christina's Pizza & Subs. These provide welcoming places, however, residents want and need more places, particularly places where families with young children can get together, places that are open at night and accessible places to enjoy recreation. Community gathering places are part of the foundation of vibrant downtowns.



Duke's BBQ



Ridgeville Farmers Market



Ridgeville Town Park



Christina's Pizza & Subs

Downtown Analysis: GATEWAYS

The existing entrances into town do not announce the Town of Ridgeville, direct people into town or direct people to the unique places in town. Gateways are relatively simple to improve the Ridgeville experience, particularly for visitors. Gateways can be a source of pride, communicating the values and commitments of a community. The Town of Ridgeville should improve signage and gateways as a first step to master plan implementation.



Intersection of Church Street and Highway 78: Main Entrance into Ridgeville

Highway 27/Church Street Entrance into Ridgeville

Highway 27/Church Street Entrance into Ridgeville



Community Input

One Word... the Spirit of Ridgeville



What is Sacred to Ridgeville?

Residents shared the places and qualities that define the Town of Ridgeville... those things that cannot be taken away from the community.

- Tree Canopy
- People know each other
- Duke's BBQ
- Schools
- Churches
- Farmers Market
- Small Town Atmosphere
- Banks
- Fire Department
- Farming the land
- Post Office
- Sidewalks
- Railroad
- Small hometown feeling where people know each other

What is Missing Downtown

Residents shared over and over again the challenges of living in Ridgeville: They have to go out of town, drive a while to get the basics such as groceries, a doctor, childcare, pharmacy, hardware supplies.

Residents want to shop and spend their money in their community. They want and need access to health care and childcare in their community. They want to support businesses in their community. And they realize all of the people who are moving into the new developments over the next few years should be able to shop for groceries and see a doctor, support businesses in their community.

Ridgeville is a desert for food, healthcare and active recreation for youth. Ridgeville is an opportunity for strategic economic development that will elevate the quality of life in concert with the future planned development. Residents were unanimous in what is missing in town.



Ridgeville Residents Want...

“Ridgeville has too much of nothing!”

-Councilwoman Doctor

- Better roads
- Playgrounds for all
- Grocery Store
- Jobs
- New businesses
- Community and economic development department for town
- Bike/walking trails
- Traffic lights
- Fitness center
- Library
- Senior citizens center
- Parks and playgrounds
- Housing: affordable and market rate
- Hardware and general supply stores
- Sidewalks fully connected
- Youth recreation
- Widen roads
- High speed internet, better cell towers/service
- Basic infrastructure to support existing and future development
- Childcare
- Community health center
- Full-time and fully funded police department
- More and better streetlights
- Government funding to support and attract local businesses and improve existing buildings
- Things you don't have to go down the road to get

Challenges to Revitalizing Downtown

Residents acknowledged the town faces many challenges to becoming a vibrant and prosperous community again. These challenges can be summed up in comments heard during the community meetings.

“Everything is dwindling down. Residents need a grocery and pharmacy here and not have to drive to Summerville.”

“We want to do things locally.”

“We need a come-together-place to sit and chat and talk with one another and get to know one another.”

The Town of Ridgeville has significant challenges in attracting and sustaining economic growth, particularly small businesses and basic services. Current investors in the community are taking a leap of faith; however, the exponential growth in Dorchester County, particularly Summerville, Summers Corner and the Camp Hall/Volvo industrial area in Berkeley County, is a testament to the growth that is already reaching into Ridgeville.

“Ridgeville is a hidden gem – a lot of potential and a lot of capacity but unknown until you get here.”

Residents want new businesses, new housing, new and better community services, but they want it in a way that maintains the small town, natural environment they enjoy now. They want people coming to Ridgeville, stopping and shopping – not driving through, but they do not want the unrestrained traffic and congestion that defines the towns around them. There is a feeling of ‘we don’t matter because we’re so small,’ so they worry new businesses – quality businesses – will not come. Development is knocking at the doors. Residents want to welcome it and manage it on their terms: a strategic balance between rural and progressive mixed-use development.

Lack of available land downtown is a challenge to new investors and new businesses opening. Leaders have focused on what is *not* available but should focus on what *is* available south of Railroad Avenue.

Truck traffic through town negatively impacts the viability of a walkable downtown, creating unsafe and noisy conditions and challenging interactions with trains. Town and county leaders are working to resolve this with a planned truck route on Campbell Thicket Road. This will be more efficient for trucks and other industrial traffic and will prompt Complete Streets improvements in downtown and throughout the town.

The Church Street, Railroad Avenue and the railroad tracks intersection is dangerous. The road elevation at the tracks limits sight lines, and the lack of traffic signaling creates unsafe navigation of the intersection, particularly during school hours and when a train is stopped, blocking Church Street.

“We don’t want to lose our identity but nothing is happening in town. It’s going down, not up.”

“Don’t want others to decide what our spirit is but nothing is coming. There’s nothing here.”

Downtown Analysis: REALITIES

What the planning team learned from community input.

- There is little evidence of young families, youth or young professionals living in or involved with the town. Ridgeville appears to be an aging community with no plan for attracting new residents, ensuring the life and prosperity of the town. The town is reacting to others from the outside.
- There is no evidence of active civic organizations that volunteer to improve the quality of life.
- There is no defined sense of place or acknowledged community spirit that speaks to what Ridgeville is.
- There are numerous newcomers in town but little to no effort to welcome them and engage them with the community.
- There are numerous historic buildings, many that are unique to Ridgeville's past as a mill town. However, there is no effort to recognize these buildings or capture and share their stories.
- Residents are not able, in their hometown, to shop for or attend to basic needs and services such as health care, childcare, groceries, hardware and supplies.
- Downtown Ridgeville is a pass through (cut through), not a place.
- There is no concerted effort to focus economic development and attract small, local businesses to downtown.
- There are no places in the public realm for the community to meet and come together on a daily basis, other than the park behind town hall.



- The town has an incomplete network of sidewalks (selective sidewalks), therefore there are few places for residents to safely walk or ride bikes.
- A lot of home schooled. Very little for youth to do and lack of safe walkways
- There are adult baseball leagues but are segregated - white and black teams
- Population: 1,548 (600 are inmates at Lieber Correctional Institute)*

- Median age: 37.8 (due to Lieber Correctional Institute)*
- 60% of the population is black.*
- 1% of populations is 9 years of age or younger; 3% are between the ages of 10-19.*
- 85% male (due to Lieber Correctional Institute)*
- No youth live north of the tracks
- The Preserve at Ridgeville development (outside of the town limits) has young families with children.

* Source: Censusreporter.org



What Residents of Ridgeville WANT in Downtown

- Start with a grocery store downtown, walkable
- Walkable village center with a pavilion or gazebo, restaurants, shops, arts, ice cream shop, antique stores, old storefronts fixed up, a hub, parks, places to visit with people, sit, read, listen to music; village becomes the destination (like Park Circle in North Charleston)
- Hardware store/feed & seed
- Sense of community with family-oriented and locally-owned businesses
- Organized recreation (like Moncks Corner), particularly for the youth - sports complex for all sports, a pool
- Senior citizens center
- Community health center with doctors
- Connected community where all streets have sidewalks with landscaping, beautification, benches, and lighting – put Complete Streets into action!
- Bike paths along Campbell Thicket Road
- Move truck traffic
- Improved and safer railroad crossings
- Do greenways and preserve the corridors now! Growth will follow the greenways (like Shelby Farms Greenline in Memphis)
- McDonalds
- Enhanced police and fire protection
- New library in Town Hall will bring people downtown and people, especially children, can walk or ride their bikes there.
- Something for young children to do such as a water park or splash pad – need to engage the children. This will bring parents.
- Connect the natural areas outside of town to downtown
- Walmart superstore or neighborhood market
- Golfcart paths and parking
- Innovation in the schools, technology business incubator



What Residents of Ridgeville DO NOT WANT in Downtown

- No more warehouses! They need new industry and new jobs.
- Don't push people to Highway 78 – need to force people downtown. Downtown Summerville is fighting Nexton.
- Another prison
- Junk yard/scrap yard/auto yard
- Junky yards or dilapidated houses
- High density housing such as apartments, overly developed like Cane Bay and Summers Corner
- Tax increase
- Trailer park
- Traffic jams
- No fast food before grocery store - no food deserts

The background of the slide is a topographic map with light gray contour lines on a white background. A dark blue horizontal bar is positioned across the middle of the slide, containing the word "Recommendations" in a white, italicized serif font.

Recommendations



**Strong leadership is essential.
Success requires vision and planning.
You're all in it together now.
Place matters—take advantage of it.**

Restoring Prosperity
2008, Brookings Institute Report

**Downtown is the most democratic place
in our communities.**

Downtown is personal.

Downtown is the community table.

**Downtown is meant for civic and
cultural collisions and celebrations.**

Downtown is an inclusive experience.



VISION 2030

The Village Center in the historic Town of Ridgeville is a beautiful and vibrant gathering place for residents and visitors alike. The Ridge Pavilion is the front porch to the community, providing a shaded place for listening to music, enjoying conversations with neighbors, reconnecting with families, and celebrating local arts and agriculture at the weekly market. A variety of housing options with co-working spaces, studios and new offices within a few blocks walking distance have attracted a new generation of families and entrepreneurs to live, work and play in Ridgeville.

The Village Center is not only a place for community gatherings but a place of commerce and community services for the surrounding area. With a new grocery store, a hardware store, a medical clinic that provides all ages with holistic health and wellness services, and a senior center with an adjoining childcare center, the quality of life truly makes the Town of Ridgeville a great place to live.

Visitors enjoy spending time in the Village Center eating at the local restaurants, shopping in the local stores and discovering new stories in the Heritage Center about the Natchez Indians, the Party Train on the Charleston-Hamburg Line, the sawmill industry, the Edisto River, and the historic architecture. From the Village Center, people explore the historic architecture by walking around town and listening to stories on the “Life on the Ridge” app. Some visitors just enjoy a few moments to slow down in the beautiful parks with shaded benches and swings, funded and maintained by the Ridgeville Garden Club and other civic groups.

Residents in town and from the surrounding area leave their cars at home and enjoy walking, biking or taking a golf cart ride along the wide trails to the Village Center. Determined to create a well-connected and safe community, the Town of Ridgeville committed in 2024 to building a completely connected multi-use path system first, knowing future growth and development was on the way. With this infrastructure in place and well-used, the town’s real estate values have increased while honoring the small-town atmosphere residents treasure.

There is still work to be done – there always is in a progressive town. Newcomers love the spirit of community they have found in Ridgeville. All residents seem to spend more time getting together in the Village Center, rather than indoors. The Ridge Pavilion is a popular place for the old timers and newcomers to get to know each other. The old timers share their memories of growing up in Ridgeville with those who are new to town. The newcomers smile, knowing they will be around for a long time, making their own memories to share with the next generations.

Life on the Ridge is all right.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These Guiding Principles, developed in response to the hope shared by the community and the potential of the place observed in downtown Ridgeville, provide the framework for master plan implementation, ensuring all revitalization efforts and projects reflect the town’s values and community spirit. The Guiding Principles will keep the Town of Ridgeville on the path to its Vision 2030.

Sustain downtown as the heart of Ridgeville by investing in the physical, economic and cultural infrastructure that makes downtown a desirable, prosperous, beautiful, creative, safe and accessible place to live, work and play.

Create a safe and well-connected downtown with increased pedestrian and bike connectivity through partnerships and with SC DOT, Norfolk Southern and local industries. With steadfast conviction and commitment, build the roads and trails/sidewalk network that supports residential, retail, cultural, recreational, entrepreneurial and entertainment activities, all of which are paramount to creating and retaining an authentic small-town appeal and vibrant downtown.

Capture and promote the history and stories of Ridgeville to connect more people to the place, distinguishing Ridgeville from other communities and spurring entrepreneurship through unique, local economic development efforts.

Create an entrepreneurial culture that supports existing local businesses and cultivates new home-grown businesses that provide necessary services, opportunities for sustained prosperity, differentiates Ridgeville, and contributes to the vibrancy of downtown.

Encourage and support a historic preservation ethic to preserve the unique history of Ridgeville while contributing to an authentic economy of place for future generations.

Elevate the sense of community and level of community engagement through consistent and intentional communications with residents, business owners, property owners and local organizations and by inviting all residents to serve as stewards for the long-term revitalization of downtown.

Require the highest quality design and development in all projects, new and redevelopments, to reflect the town’s values, to increase the sense of place, to ensure the iconic tree canopy lives in perpetuity, to advance complete pedestrian connectivity, to inspire hope for the future and to establish Ridgeville as a progressive rural town committed to developing its potential and increasing prosperity for all residents.

Continue to strengthen county and regional partnerships to continually improve and to sustain the town’s quality of life through leveraged resources and planning, collaborative marketing and promotions, improved infrastructure, multi-modal accessibility and connectivity, cultural and recreational opportunities, place-based economic development, and collective stewardship of the natural environment.

Strengthen the qualities that define the spirit of Ridgeville, which are exemplified through family values, friendly people, authentic hometown feeling, a welcoming and safe atmosphere, the ability to see the potential and opportunities for the future, and the resolve to work for this future.

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

This master plan addresses the physical environment of downtown Ridgeville: how can the landscape, the buildings, new development be improved to create a vibrant and prosperous downtown? However, revitalization cannot rely solely on the physical environment. A vibrant downtown is one in which the town's leaders commit to establishing a vision, creating a plan to achieve the vision, committing public funds to support projects, inviting residents and business owners to help shape the future, and encouraging private investments through partnerships, incentives and leveraged public funding.

Physical improvements to the downtown require a sustainable economic base and a civic leadership framework to shepherd improvements and build community support and participation. This master plan proposes bold, long-term projects that require immediate first steps. These projects are illustrated on the following pages.

In addition, the master plan recommends the Town of Ridgeville also commits to long-term actions to build the economic and civic base for the physical projects. This is a holistic approach to downtown revitalization and will require keen vision and strong leadership. The Key Investments Areas, described below, are building blocks to a vibrant and prosperous Ridgeville, each requiring attention, intention and commitment.

- A** Plan and develop the Ridgeville Village Center to new design and development standards.
- B** Fully integrate Complete Streets throughout the Town of Ridgeville. Dedicate and acquire the rights-of way needed to preserve property for future sidewalks and multi-use paths.
- C** Update land use zoning regulations to support and allow appropriate and desired development.
- D** Create and adopt Development and Design Standards for all construction (buildings and landscape). The Cook's Crossroads design guidelines are a good benchmark and example. Commission an Architectural Review Board to manage compliance to the standards.
- E** Conduct a feasibility study for rail crossing improvements at Church Street and Campbell Thicket Road with the goals of elevating pedestrian safety and connections and creating a more cohesive downtown.
- F** Elevate Ridgeville Tourism opportunities through the Chamber of Commerce, the Heritage Center, identification and promotion of historic districts and resources through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and celebration of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe of SC.
- G** Continue to nurture and leverage regional and county partnerships.
- H** Continue to build and improve the civic infrastructure through parks and recreation, community organizations and moving the library to the Community Center.
- I** Ensure neighborhood commercial development mirrors the town's existing character and scale to protect the small-town appeal.
- J** Implement a branding and promotion campaign for the town.

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

A Ridgeville Village Center

The heart of the master plan recommendations is the proposed Village Center. Residents were unanimous in their desire for a Village Center: ***a place for the community to come together.*** The Village Center, illustrated on the following pages, provides a connected center, civic open spaces and places for commerce, art and community events. The location of the Village Center is where the historic downtown meets the new planned developments. This creates energy, opportunities for creative, community collisions and collaborations and a place one can put a finger on: This is the heart of the community.



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

B Complete Streets Fully Integrated throughout the Town of Ridgeville

Dorchester County is working to adopt a Complete Streets based on a smart growth analysis. A fully-connected town is a key part of the town’s vision. This is a long-term project that requires immediate action to establish the plan and get ahead of the development that has and is coming. This will take a few years to be fully implemented, but the vision and the commitment to this vision, as well as yearly success in completing parts of the sidewalk and pathways network, will set the Town of Ridgeville apart as a community dedicated to its residents, to wellness, to safety, and to an excellent quality of life. The town should continue to partner with Dorchester County on projects such as the Greenbelt plan, pursue grants and explore how to connect the town to the broader statewide network of trails. The town’s trails and sidewalks will elevate tourism opportunities by making the town more accessible and welcoming and by connecting the town with area assets such as Francis Beidler Forest Audubon Center & Sanctuary.



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

C Development and Design Standards

With new residential development coming and vast potential for redevelopment in downtown, the town needs to create, adopt and enforce design and development standards to protect the scale, character and beauty of the town. There are existing and appropriate residential architectural styles, details and scale to incorporate into the standards. The existing commercial buildings in downtown are not architecturally significant; therefore, commercial standards should consider the small-town scale of downtown and the quality of the architectural features found on the historic homes. This is an opportunity for the town to determine what is appropriate for new development. The town should engage an architect to work with the town to establish these standards.

The town should explore options for leveraging development investments such as Transferable Development Rights (TDR) to ensure development works in concert with the town's Vision and Guiding Principles.



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

D Improve the rail crossings at Church Street and Campbell Thicket Road on North Railroad Avenue to improve pedestrian safety and connections and create more cohesive downtown.

This can be accomplished by lowering the elevation of the Church Street crossing, improving all existing crossings in town and creating a safe crossing at the proposed improvements for Campbell Thicket Road.

These improvements are illustrated on the following pages and are supported by the SC Ports, as shared by their leadership.

The South Carolina Ports recommends the following as priorities for the Town of Ridgeville.

- Engage with Norfolk Southern directly regarding their non-port-related growth projections: With the port's significant investments in rail infrastructure and terminal capacity, rail activity will continue to grow, which will impact the planned growth of the Ridgeville Industrial Campus.
- As stated by the Ports in a letter dated April 2, 2024, "The proposed road improvements for Campbell Thicket Road, diverting truck traffic through the town, are a welcomed component of the proposal. Establishing Campbell Thicket Road as a preferred routes to connect to Highway 78 rather than traveling through town will minimize traffic backup in town when a train is present and provide a safer alternative for truck traffic connecting to I-26 and Highway 78 from the south. The improvement should include an overpass to reduce road and rail traffic interaction."



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

E Ridgeville Tourism

The history of Ridgeville is interesting, important and quite colorful. There are amazing stories to tell, significant historic architecture to recognize and share, diverse cultures that have lived and flourished there, and natural resources to experience. Ridgeville’s history sets it apart from other communities and is the town’s best hope for building an authentic and sustainable economy of place. Heritage and nature-based tourism are major contributors to the South Carolina economy. Ridgeville has an enormous amount to gain by celebrating and sharing its history. This is more than a heritage center and historical markers – all important. This is about capturing stories, protecting resources and getting the message out to the world.

A few starting points to building this important foundation for building a new, sustainable local economy include, but are not limited to, the following.

- **Gateway and signage:** direct people to Historic Ridgeville, welcome them at the town limits with well-designed and maintained gateway signage, then direct them to the historic places.
- **The railroad is significant:** Ridgeville was a key stop on the Underground Railroad where slaves would hide in the Four Holes Swamp and the Cypress Swamp. The town could build a strong partnership with the International Museum of African American History to tell this story.
- **The Charleston to Hamburg Line** is the second oldest line in the US with Ridgeville as one of its first stops. From the 1840s to the Civil War, Ridgeville was a destination for “pleasure parties,” which were day trips from Charleston and back on the train.
- **Natural Resources:** Audubon’s Beidler Forest Sanctuary, the Edisto River, hunting, the swamps
- **The stories of the Edisto Natchez-Kusso Tribe** need to be told and their culture shared with 300 members of the tribe living on the ridge now.
- **Historic Preservation:** Ridgeville has an abundance of historic and significant architecture, particularly homes. The architectural styles are unique and diverse and need to be protected and celebrated. Preservation is a worthy economic development tool as well as one of the most impactful factors in revitalizing towns. The town should pursue an historic survey with SC Department of Archives and History to inventory historic properties, determine eligibility to individually list properties and to possibly create historic districts.



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

F Continue to Nurture and Leverage Regional and County Partnerships

The town has a positive and productive relationship with Dorchester County and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. There are several plans underway that address improvements for growth management, community needs assessments, infrastructure, particularly water and sewer and public safety, Complete Streets, and blueway corridors. Town leadership can put Ridgeville at the forefront of implementation to advance the vision for a village center.



KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

G Civic Infrastructure

The Town of Ridgeville does not have active civic groups or a volunteer base to assist with community planning or projects. Vibrant towns rely on and prosper through active civic organizations. Although the population is aging (excluding the Leiber population), new residents moving into town need a way to connect, to belong, to contribute to elevating the sense of community. With the number of new people moving in now and in the next few years, the town should have an active Welcome Wagon program. Even though there are no organized youth sports in town, civic organizations can provide programming and support for the youth. The town should consider joining Main Street South Carolina. This will provide the organizational and volunteer framework to engage residents in the revitalization process. At the very least, the town should commission a Revitalization Committee to shepherd master plan projects and community programming.



Creating a Village Center

STUDY AREA

The 'Village Study Area' approximates the potential limits for the village center. This area may expand, or contract based on a variety of factors during the planning and development process.

The map illustrates the existing downtown streets, parks, restaurants, schools, and commercial areas to provide an overview of the current downtown framework.



Key Elements

Those that attended the Ridgeville Masterplan Charrette expressed a strong desire for a **community gathering space, walkable streets, and access to daily goods**. The idea of a 'Village Center' that accomplishes the aforesaid aspirations, was an idea captured during this process and will serve as an anchor for the Ridgeville area.

The items listed below are the key aspects that will make the Ridgeville Village the center of town in which people with shop, meet, and enjoy daily.



1 Central pavilion and public park for citizens to gather and be in community



2 Connectivity and walkability to and throughout the village to create safe and accessible means of experiencing the downtown area

3 Streetscape beautification to establish a sense of arrival into Ridgeville



4 Create a center for business, commerce, and attainable and/or accessible housing.

Creating a Village Center Master Plan

Key

1. Central Pavilion
2. Civic Building
3. Neighborhood Commercial Infill
4. Townhome Village 1
5. Detention Pond (typical)
6. Bufferyard from Single Family area
7. Downtown Entrance
8. Live/Work Units
9. Plaza Spaces for Seating and Activities
10. Carter Road Realignment
11. Townhome Village 2
12. Town Gym and Offices



Existing Intersection at Church/Water Street and Carter Road



Recent Traffic Impact Analysis reports have identified the need to improve the intersection at Church and Carter Streets. The existing intersection of Church and Carter meets at slanted angles, causing major blind spots for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians when approaching the intersection. The proposed Carter Road will bisect the future park and intersect perpendicular to Givhans Road.



* Road additions, improvements and realignments are conceptual and subject to review of various government agencies.

Creating a Village Center PLACEMAKING

“All Roads Lead to Downtown”

A common theme shared among locals that attended the Master Planning Charrette is the need for a central community gathering place. They want a gathering place that reflects the small-town appeal, incorporates art, shade and ways to tell the town’s story.

Placemaking is designing public spaces to strengthen connections between people and a place by capitalizing on the local assets.

The proposed pavilion and green space will become the heart of the community for generations to come.



Perspective View Key Map

A Conceptual Rendering of Ridgeville Village Center

Preparing for Growth

Planned Developments

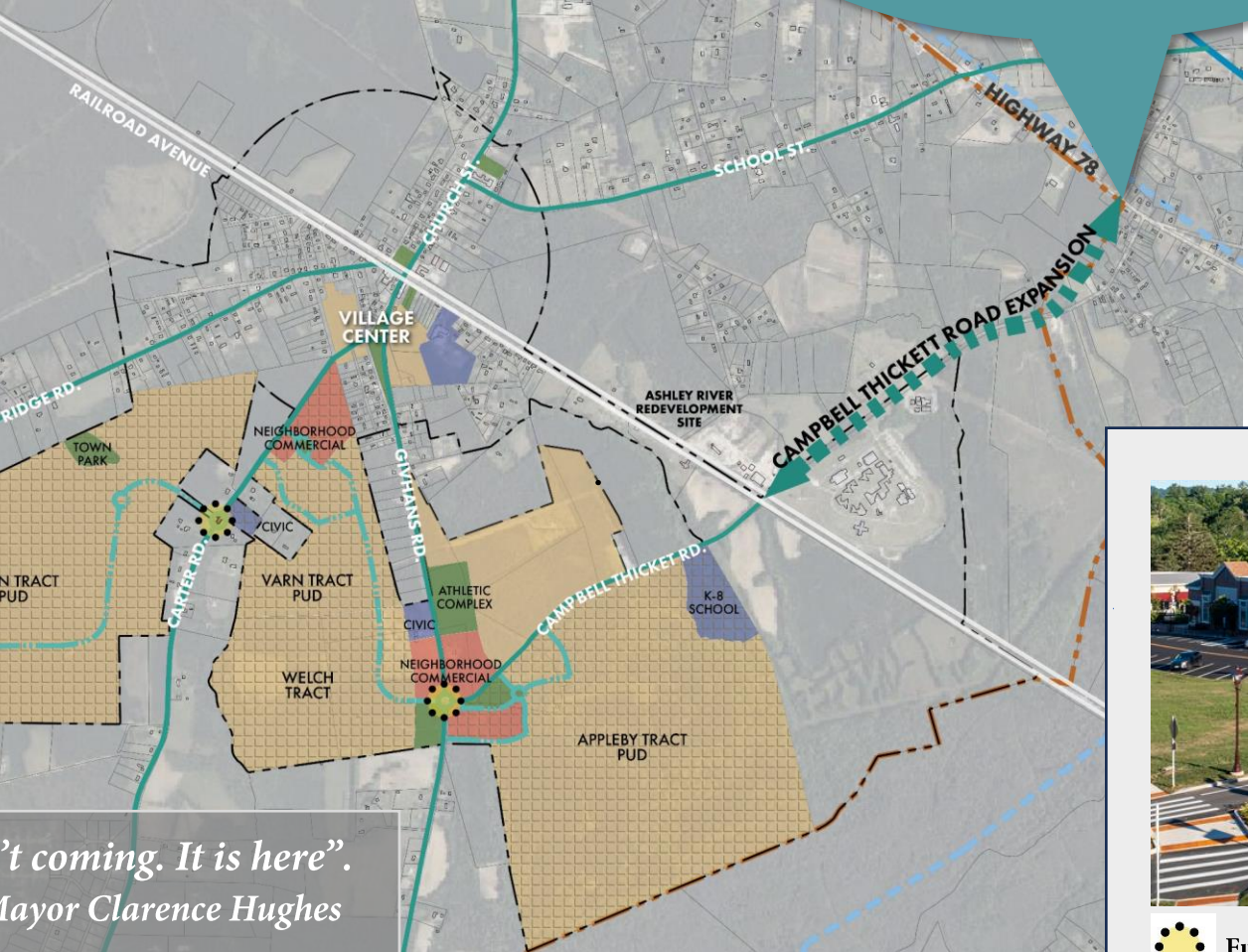
Ridgeville is experiencing an increasing demand for residential growth, presenting an opportunity to transform the town into a safe, accessible, healthy, and vibrant place for the entire community.

Campbell Thicket Road Expansion
 The future Campbell Thicket Road Expansion will serve as the path for trucks and service vehicles as they travel to and from industrial properties in the Ridgeville area. This will reduce the overall traffic along collector and residential roads within the downtown area as well as future and existing neighborhoods of Ridgeville.

- 3,150 UNITS** To house potentially 7,875 future residents
- 34 ACRES** Commercial Property to stimulate Ridgeville's economy, support business owners and meet locals' daily needs
- 19 ACRES** Public Park Space to serve residents of all ages, abilities and economic status
- 31 ACRES** Civic lands to support Ridgeville in its future education, athletics, arts, local government, and cultural assets
- 220 ACRES** Preserved Wetlands

LEGEND

- FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- FUTURE PUD
- FUTURE PARKS
- FUTURE CIVIC SPACES
- FUTURE COMMERCIAL
- ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
- FUTURE ROADS
- FUTURE CAMPBELL THICKET ROAD EXPANSION
- ROUND ABOUT



- Planned Developments**
1. **Varn Tract** (1,400 max allowed units)
 2. **Welch Tract** (550 max allowed units)
 3. **Appleby Tract** (1,200 max allowed units)

"The growth isn't coming. It is here".
 -Mayor Clarence Hughes



Streetscape Improvements

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Railroad Avenue Study – Ridgeville’s Main Street

The Railroad Avenue Study is an example that will be used as a catalyst for Ridgeville’s existing and future active intersections and streetscapes. The improvements depicted below are meant to serve as a template, with the exception of the railroad crossing, for the existing and future intersections within Ridgeville.

Railroad Avenue is Ridgeville’s most active street with restaurants, small businesses, open spaces, and convenient stores. It is also a heavily trafficked street with trains, trucks, locals, and passersby. Citizens have expressed concern about the amount of truck traffic along Railroad Avenue in the downtown area, the lack of visibility over the railroad at the crossing (see image 1), and the absence of pedestrian connectivity at all crossings along the main street. The proposed Railroad Avenue Streetscape elements exhibited will active the public realm to create a vibrant main street, while allowing people to feel comfortable on the street, and eliminate safety hazards at crossings.



Image 1: Existing Crossing at Railroad Avenue and Church Street

Streetscape Elements Imagery - The assembly of streetscape elements, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, light posts, site furniture, and street trees, will help create a cohesive and defining downtown core for Ridgeville.



Vibrant crosswalk precedents for intersections



Accessible and adequate seating areas



Street lighting with signage



Inviting Store Frontages and walkways



Wayfinding signage

Streetscape Improvements

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Streetscape Improvements/Elements

- 1. On-Street Parking
- 2. Active Public Realm with outdoor seating
- 3. Vibrant Crosswalks
- 4. Sidewalk Crossing over railroad tracks
- 5. ADA Crossing across railroad tracks
- 6. Street Lighting
- 7. Street Trees
- 8. Enhanced Landscaping
- 9. Potential for Norfolk Southern to work with the Town of Ridgeville, Dorchester County and SC DOT to level/lower rail tracks for increased visibility and safety along Railroad Avenue and seek support from SC Port Authority for the same goal. Any rail project in the area shall be tied to future rail crossing improvements.



Diagram of Railroad Avenue Streetscape Treatments

Pedestrian Connectivity

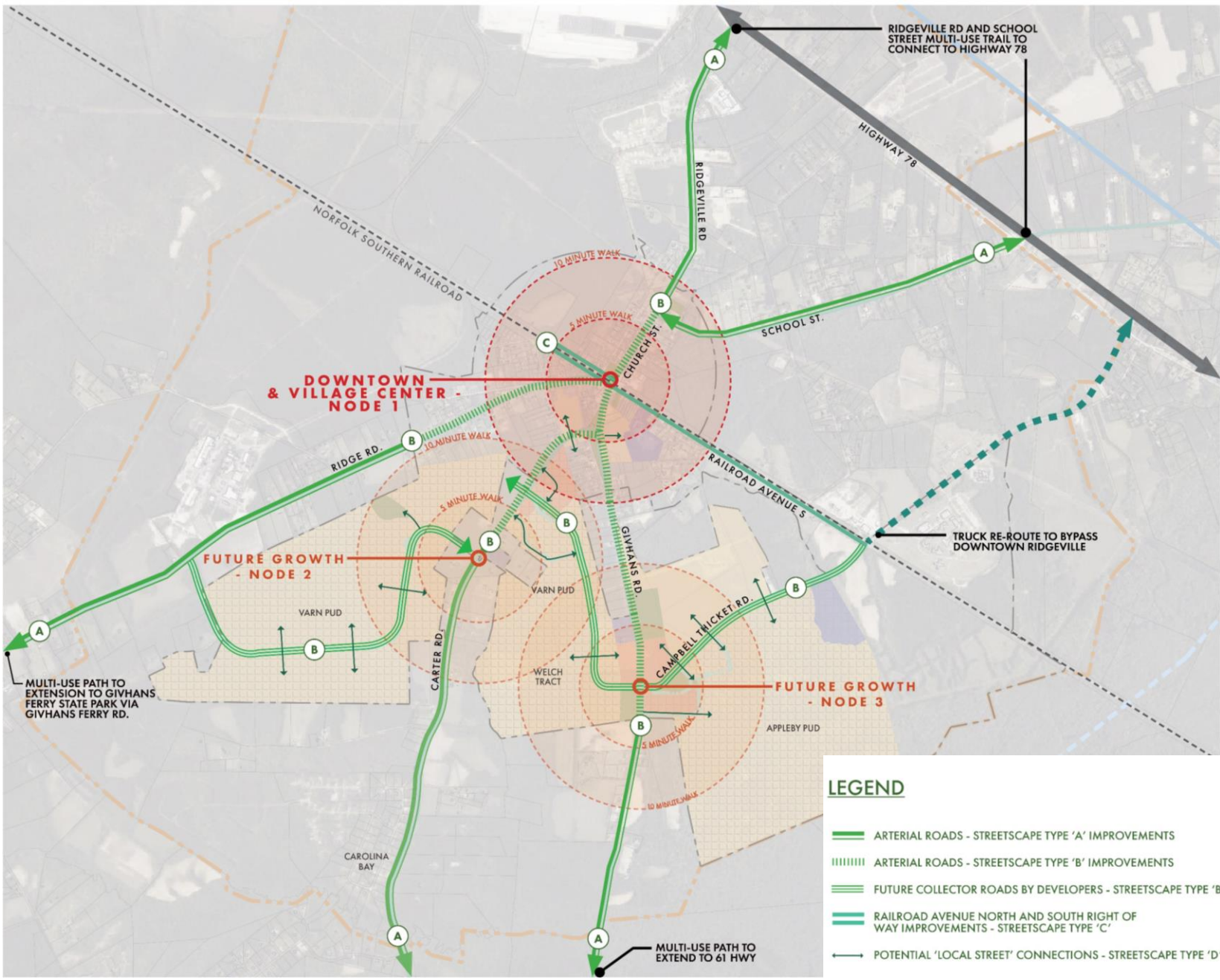
Master Plan

The existing and future arterial, collector, and local roads, running through and to Ridgeville will be designed and redesigned to accommodate for pedestrians and cyclist. Design and implementation should be focused on the following:

- Connecting all people to important and desirable places safely and efficiently
- Providing equal access for travel with the use of multi-use paths and sidewalks
- Gravitating those within the town to the downtown area

- A** Arterial Roads
- B** Downtown Streetscape & Collector Roads
 - Streetscape transitions from type 'A' to type 'B' along arterial roads at Town Limits at time of Construction
 - Future collector roads within new developments (by developers)
- C** Railroad Avenue Improvements
 - *Railroad Avenue S & Railroad Avenue N*
- D** Local Streets
 - Commercial Local Streets
 - Neighborhood Local Streets

* Road additions, improvements, & realignments are conceptual and subject to review of various government agencies

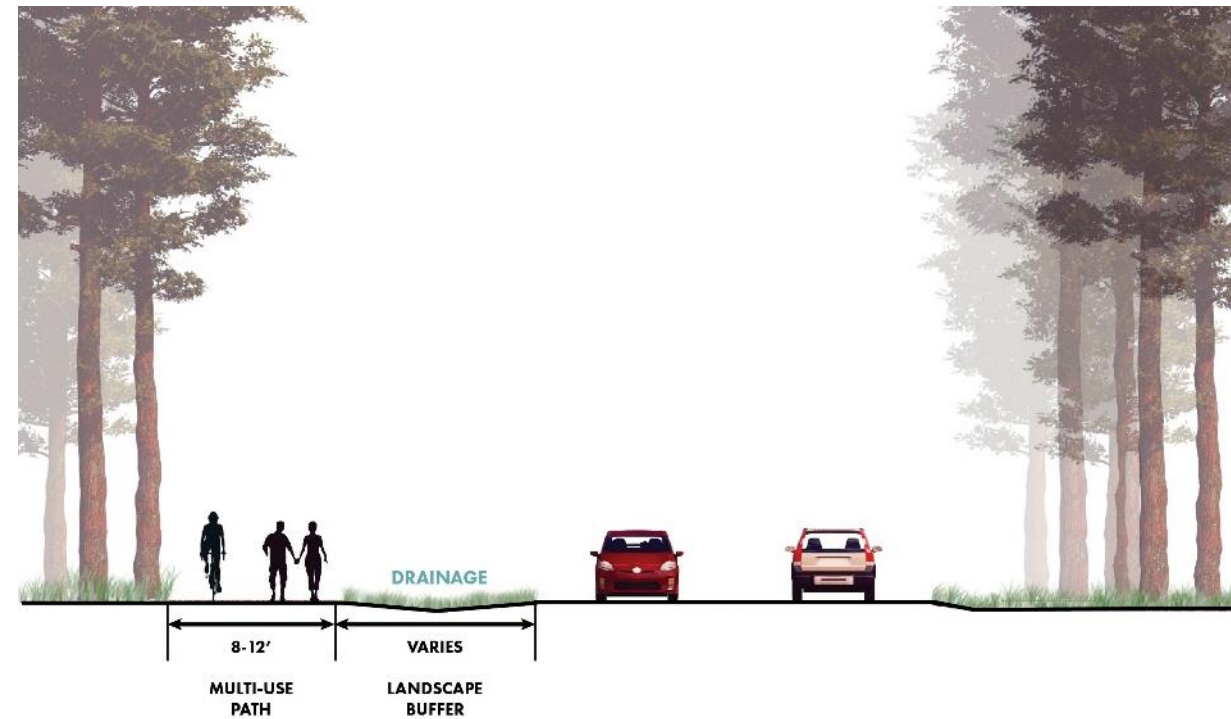


Pedestrian Connectivity

Master Plan

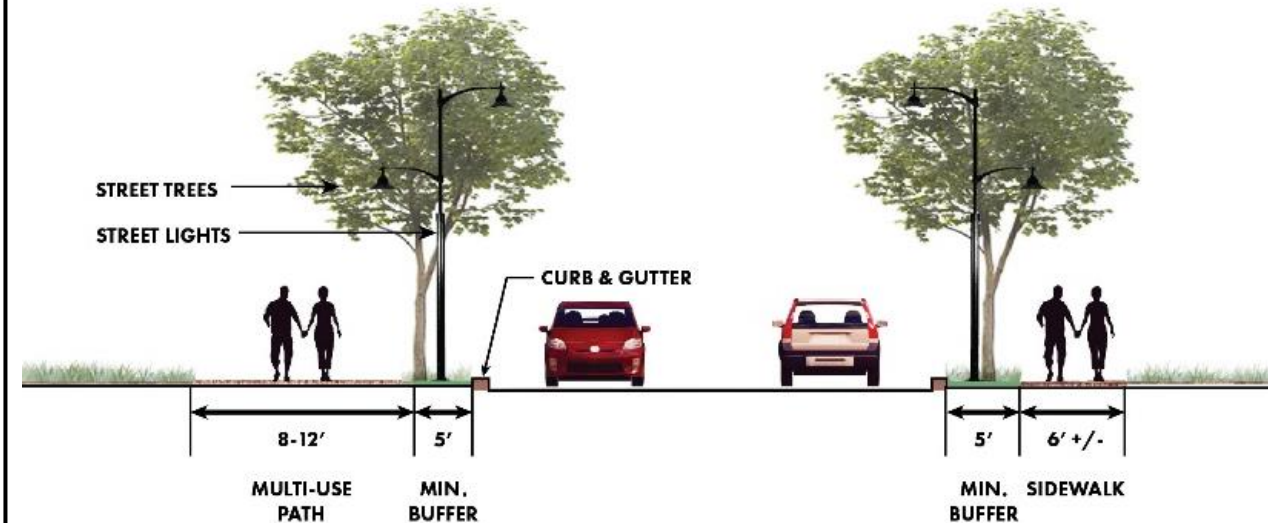
A Arterial Roads

- 8-12' multi-use path on one side of the street. Varies based off right-of-way limitations
- buffer/drainage area between vehicular road and multi-use path



B Downtown Streetscape along Arterial Roads and Future Collector Roads by Developers

- 8-12' multi-use path on one side and 6' sidewalk on the other side of the street. Minimums are based off right-of-way limitations.
- Street trees planted at +/- 55' on center
- Street lighting encouraged along existing and future right of ways
- *Sidewalks installed along existing roadways shall maintain a minimum 5-foot width where site conditions allow



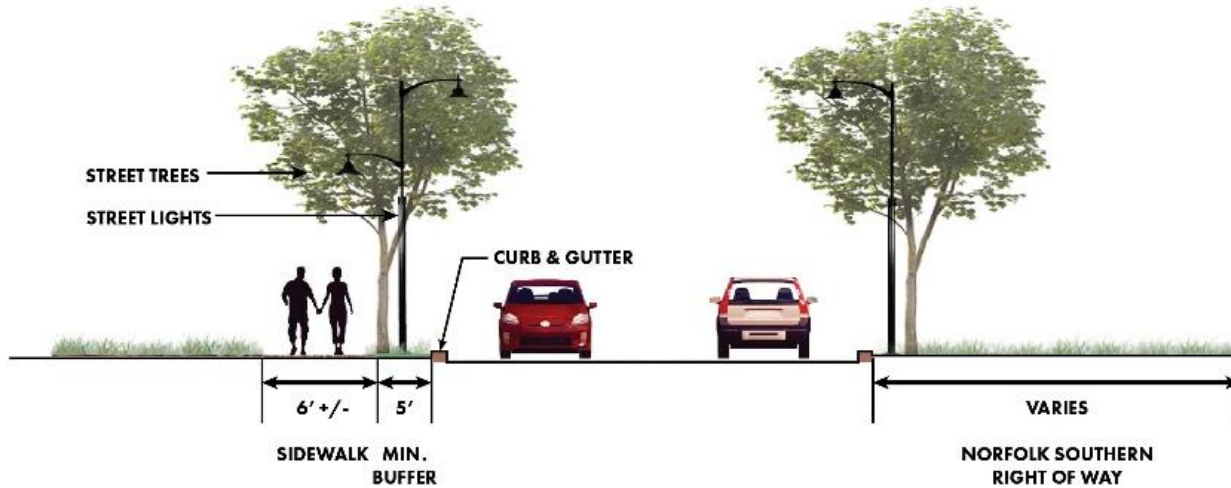
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Pedestrian Connectivity

Master Plan

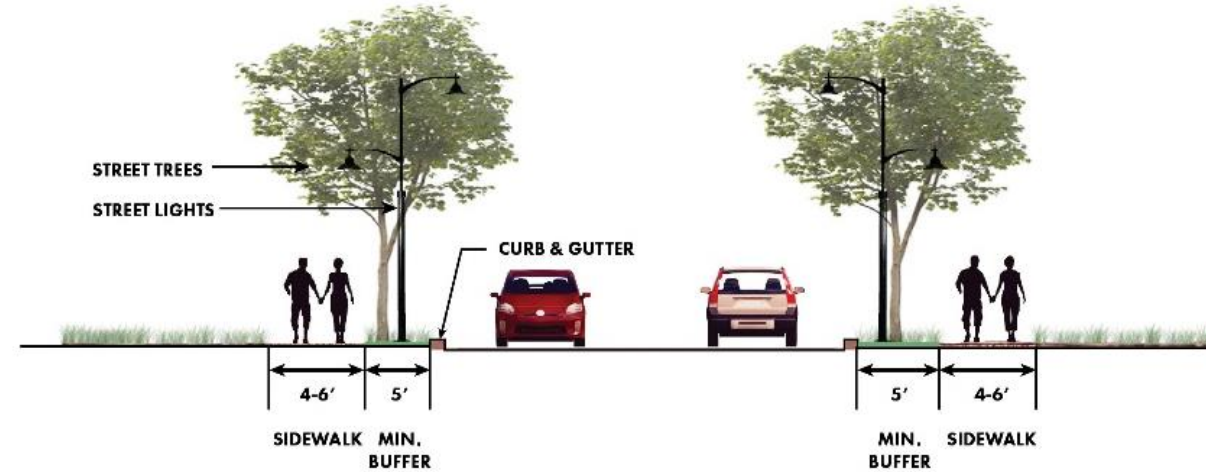
C Railroad Avenue Improvements

- Contiguous 6' sidewalk along *Railroad Avenue S and Railroad Avenue N*
- Street trees planted at +/- 55' on center
- Street lighting encouraged along existing and future right of ways
- *Sidewalks installed along existing roadways shall maintain a minimum 5-foot width where site conditions allow.



D Neighborhood Local Streets

1. Commercial Streets: Minimum of 6' sidewalk on both sides of the street
 2. Neighborhood Streets: Minimum of 4' sidewalk on both sides of the street
- Street trees planted at +/- 55' on center
 - Street lighting encouraged along existing and future right of ways
 - *Sidewalks installed along existing roadways shall maintain a minimum 5-foot width where site conditions allow.



* Road additions, improvements and realignments are conceptual and subject to review of various government agencies.

Streetscape Improvements

EXISTING CONDITIONS

During the Master planning Charrette, there was a desire for walkable streets within the downtown area and throughout their own neighborhoods. One local and charrette attendee said it best: “There are *selective* sidewalks throughout Ridgeville.” Pedestrian access and paths appear and then stop without any purpose or roadblock.

The collection of images below show examples of existing streets where sidewalks and/or crossings:

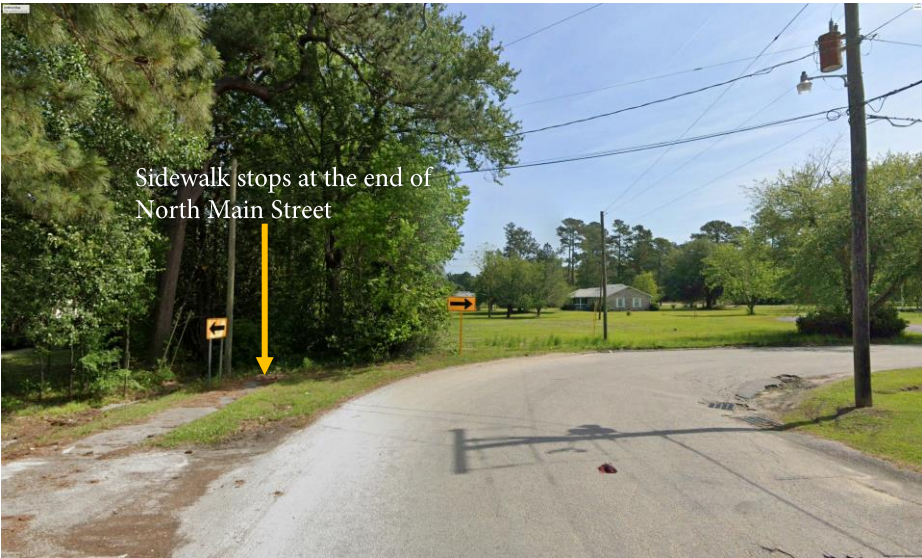
- Stop abruptly with no roadblock or reason
- Are completely absent from the streetscape
- Not conducive or efficient



Givhans Road and Church Street – no sidewalk along Church Street. Sidewalk stops at Church/Givhans intersection. This is one block from Ridgeville's main street.



Railroad Avenue and Church Street



North Main Street and School Street – One block west of Town Hall coming from Rail Avenue




Railroad Avenue crossing at North Main Street

Streetscape Improvements

Welcome and Gateway Signage

The Town of Ridgeville lacks visible signage that stands out to those who drive through and into the town limits. Establishing town entry gateways along major roads into the town will create a sense of pride and arrival into Ridgeville.



 Symbolizes entry gate locations that provide signage along the side of the road or archways that extrapolate over the entry road.



 Symbolizes entry gate locations that are located at proposed round-a-bouts and can support monuments like towers and/or enhanced landscaping in the center.



Existing Ridgeville Entry Sign

Village Center: Bird's Eye View





The Athenian Oath

We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of dishonesty or cowardice. We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City both alone and with many. We will reverence and obey the City's laws and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive increasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways we will transmit this City, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

