

## Small City, Big Dreams!

Planning the Village Center at Simpsonville

2009 KAPA Spring Conference



## Small City, Big Dreams!

- Planning Process
  - Forming the Dream
  - Initiating the Planning Process
  - Creating the Plan



## Forming the Dream



## Forming the Dream

### Who's Simpsonville?

- Background
- Demographic Overview
- Existing Conditions



## Forming the Dream

Initial Idea with Local Support:

- Grassroots
- Private / Developer
- Political (including appropriation of funds)



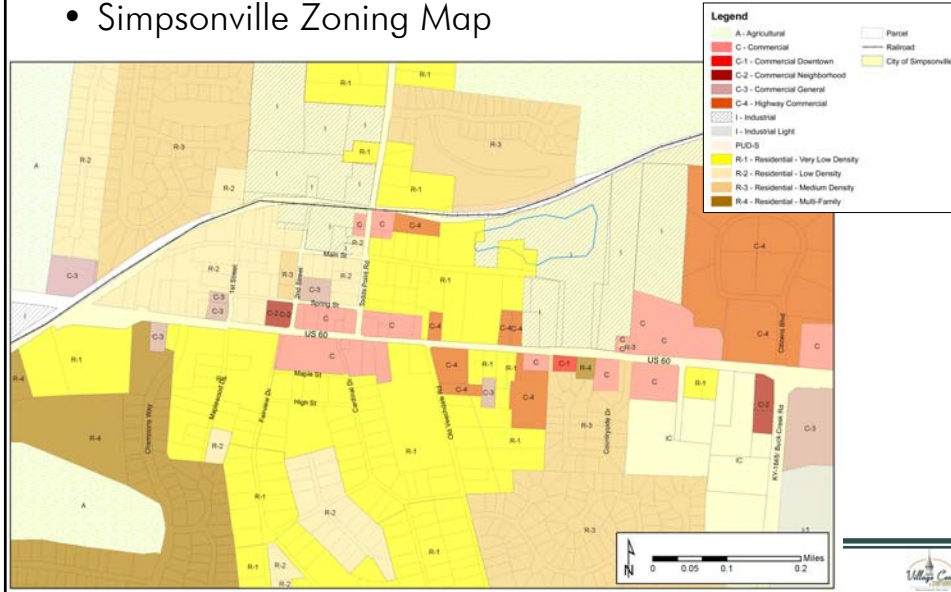
## Forming the Dream

- Shelby County Comprehensive Plan (2005)
  - US 60 corridor
    - Very low density single family residential, churches, etc
    - Highway and general commercial
    - Greater setbacks from the road, two story maximum
    - Consistent landscaping standards
    - Minimize entrances on US 60
    - Widen US 60 from the RR to the school (three traffic lanes, sidewalks, curbing, drainage, lighting and landscaping)



# Forming the Dream

- Simpsonville Zoning Map



## Initiating the Planning Process



## Initiating the Planning Process

- Steps for a Small Community to Take...
  - Process
    - RFQ / RFP that corresponds to project size
    - Selection committee that represents various interests
    - Selection based on qualifications



## Initiating the Planning Process

- Issues to address with the plan
  - Creation of a “sense of place”
  - Identification and evaluation of future land uses
  - Improvements to transportation
  - Sustainable infill development
  - Context sensitive revitalization
  - Recommendations and implementation strategies



## Creating the Plan



## Creating the Plan

- The Plan Must Focus on...
  - Involving the public - the plan must come from the public, not from public officials or the consultant.
  - Creating a unique brand - every community has unique needs and needs a plan that shows Simpsonville's character.
  - Realistic implementation steps that are clear and realistic - small communities have limited financial and personnel resources; implementation must realize this.



## Creating the Plan

- Involving the Public
  - Public Visioning Workshop
  - Public Open House



## Involving the Public

- Public Visioning Workshop
  - Downtown Elements Exercise
  - Image Preference Survey
  - Small Group Visioning Exercise
  - Defining District Boundaries



## Involving the Public

Downtown Elements Exercise: What three things make a place a downtown?

- Walkability
  - *“Making a safe and healthy environment”*
  - *“Sidewalks”*
- Streetscape Design
  - *“Historic landscape to let visitors know who we are”*
  - *“Something that draws your attention to your city”*
  - *“Focal point - town clock - roundabout - art – statue”*



## Involving the Public

- Land Use and Development
  - *“Things to draw people to the city, downtown”*
  - *“Encouraging businesses to come (retail)”*
- Public Space
  - *“Community building / gathering place / great lawn”*
  - *“Meeting, socialize, network”*
- Vehicular Access and Parking
  - *“Easy access”*
  - *“Well thought out layout and construction”*



# Involving the Public

## Image Preference Survey: Highest Rated Images



"Welcoming, gathering space good"



"Like median, slows down traffic"



"Quaint, small town"



"Like this model"



# Involving the Public

## Image Preference Survey: Lowest Rated Images



"Don't need it"



"Too themed"



"Scale is bad"



"Plastic Signs / signs no good"



## Involving the Public

Imagine Simpsonville 20 years from now...

- *Mixed uses*
- *Library*
- *Town square*
- *Building standards*
- *Street lights*
- *Inviting sidewalks*
- *Limited number of parking lots*
- *Common areas with outdoor tables*
- *Maintain architectural aesthetics*



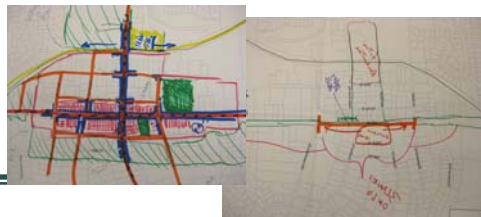
## Involving the Public

District Boundaries...

- *The "core" district of each group was from Maplewood Drive to just east of Old Veechdale Road.*
- *Three of the four groups identified a less intense or "transitional zone."*
- *Two of the four groups identified a road realignment at Cardinal and US 60.*

Infrastructure Improvements Identified...

- *Sidewalks*
- *On-Street Parking*
- *Lighting*



## Involving the Public

- Public Open House
  - Feedback Stations
    - Vision, Goals and Objectives
    - Plan Elements



## Involving the Public

*Vision - Inspiring, Inclusive, Memorable*

*Simpsonville's town center will create a **sense of identity and community pride** by cultivating a diversity of uses and activities that reflect its small town character. It will preserve Simpsonville's distinct character of a **safe, involved community** while creating a setting where residents can easily walk to locally owned cafes, visit with neighbors or attend local events. It will be a place for hosting outdoor gatherings and festivals that **define the community**. Simpsonville's town center will respect its **equine culture** and past while allowing for a new community-focused destination for residents, visitors and small businesses.*



# Involving the Public

*Goals - Lofty, but Achievable*

## Simpsonville's Town Center Will...

### 1. Provide Unified Infrastructure Expansion

*Create a community focal point with businesses, residences, and public spaces that offer a safe and attractive environment for residents and visitors.*



# Involving the Public

*Goals - Lofty, but Achievable*

## Simpsonville's Town Center Will...

### 2. Promote Economic Development

*Create an identity that preserves Simpsonville's small town charm and unique history.*



## Involving the Public

*Goals - Lofty, but Achievable*

### Simpsonville's Town Center Will...

#### 3. Provide Community Accessibility and Development

*Ensure adequate accessibility for all users and ages and connectivity within and to the district.*



## Involving the Public

*Goals - Lofty, but Achievable*

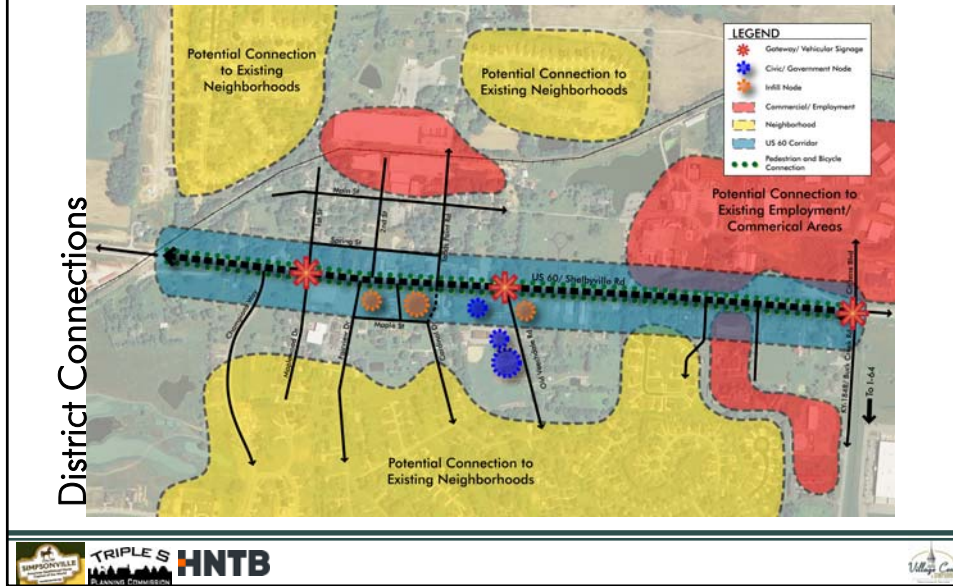
### Simpsonville's Town Center Will...

#### 4. Promote Programming Activities

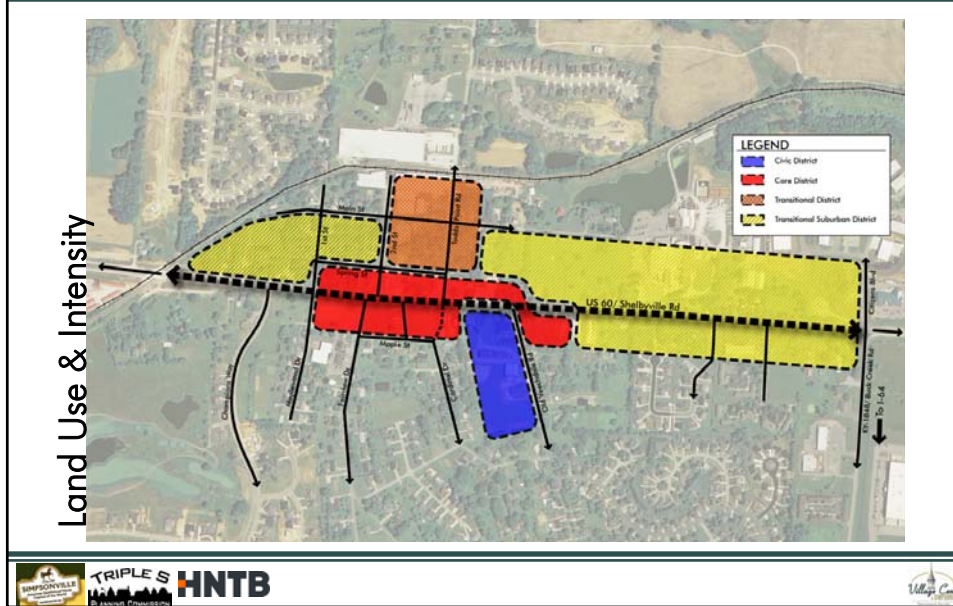
*Encourage active street life through events, public spaces and a diversity of uses.*



# Involving the Public

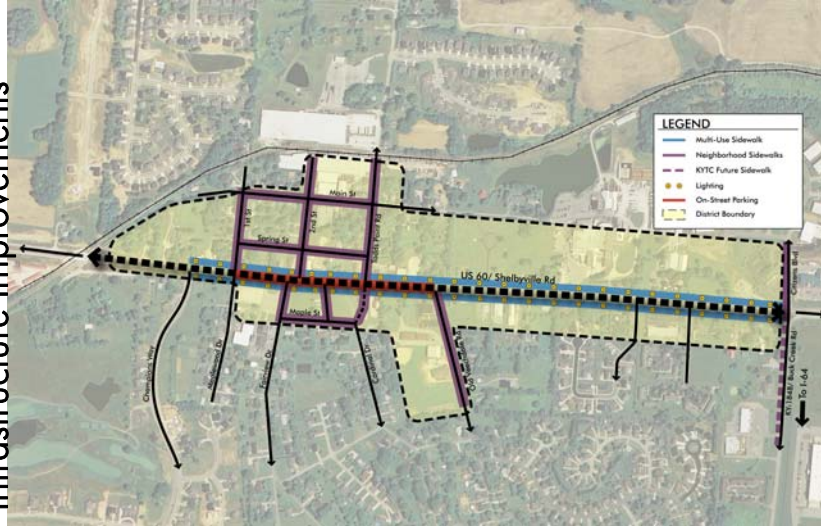


# Involving the Public



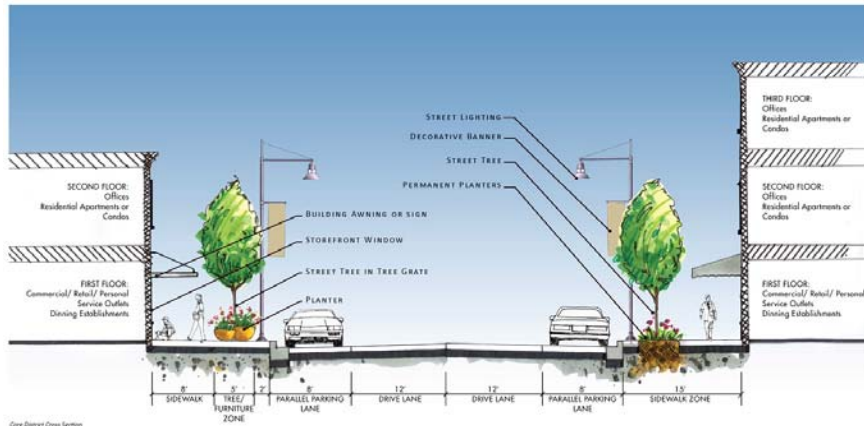
# Involving the Public

Infrastructure Improvements



# Involving the Public

## Core District Cross Section

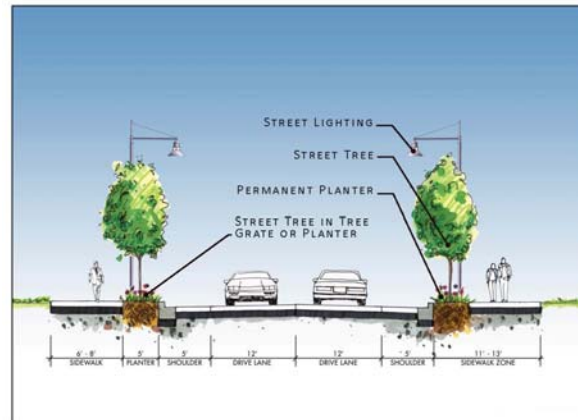


Core District Cross Section



## Involving the Public

### Transitional Suburban District Cross Section



## Involving the Public

### What Did We Hear?

- #1 Priority: Provide Unified Infrastructure Expansion
- High Percentage Agreeing with Plan Elements
  - Development intensity and location
  - Location of gateways and connections to the Village Center
  - Infrastructure improvements

## Involving the Public

### What Did We Hear?

- All Preferred District Identity to be a Village or Town Center
- District Branding (Amenities) Should be Simple and Traditional
  - Highest priority amenities are benches, permanent landscaping (trees), and accent landscaping (planters)



## Creating the Plan

- Creating a Unique Brand
  - District Name
  - Physical Elements
  - Amenities



## Creating a Unique Brand

- **Village** 'vil-ij (noun): a small group of uses concentrated in an area; an incorporated community smaller in population.
- **Town Center** 'taun 'sen-ter (noun): the commercial center of an area of a few thousand that are typically associated with civic uses.
- **Downtown** daun-'taun (noun): the city's core or central business district, usually more urban in nature.



## Creating a Unique Brand

### Defining the District's Name



# Creating a Unique Brand

## Defining the Physical Elements

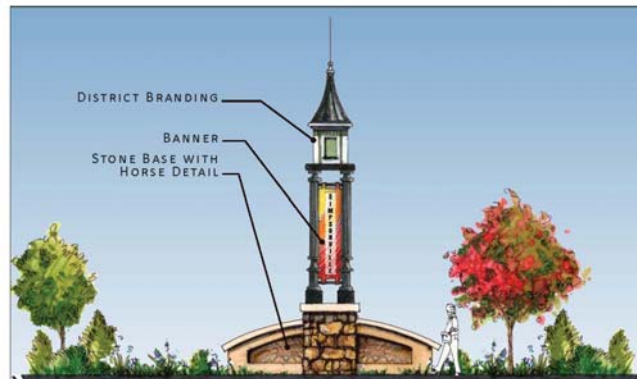


“American Saddlebred Horse Capital  
of the World”



# Creating a Unique Brand

## Defining the Physical Elements



Village Center Gateway



# Creating a Unique Brand

## First Priority Amenities

- Lighting
- Permanent Landscaping (Trees)
- Benches
- Accent Landscaping (Planters)
- Street Banners
- Trash Receptacles



# Creating a Unique Brand

## Second Priority Amenities

- Gateways
- Public Art
- Pedestrian Signage
- Bicycle Racks
- Vehicular Signage



# Creating the Plan

- Realistic Implementation Steps
  - Focused on Simpsonville’s Resources



# Implementation Steps

- Realistic Implementation Steps
  - Type of Action (Construction or Policy)
  - Description of Action
  - Responsible Party(ies)
  - Potential Funding Source(s)
  - Other Resources
  - Prerequisites
  - Start Up & Completion Timelines
  - Goals & Objectives Referenced

**Action Step 9.3: Review and refine the zoning districts to ensure accuracy between the zoning regulations and this plan including policies for use of the public right-of-way for sidewalk cafes and special events.**

**Description:**

- Identify any barriers that exist within the zoning regulations that would affect the development of a Village Center including the inclusion of sidewalk activities (such as cafes or dining).
- Create and adopt local policy (in terms of new zoning districts or overlay zones) that will permit the implementation of this plan.

**Responsible Party(ies):**

- Triple S Planning Commission
- City Commission

**Potential Funding (Source(s)):**

- General Fund (City Commission / Triple S Planning Commission) if not done internally by staff.

**Other Resources:**

- Planning consultant (if not done internally)

**Prerequisites:**

- Adoption of the Small Area Plan

**Start-up:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2009-2011	<input type="checkbox"/> 2012-2015	<input type="checkbox"/> 2016-2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
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**Target Completion Timeline:**

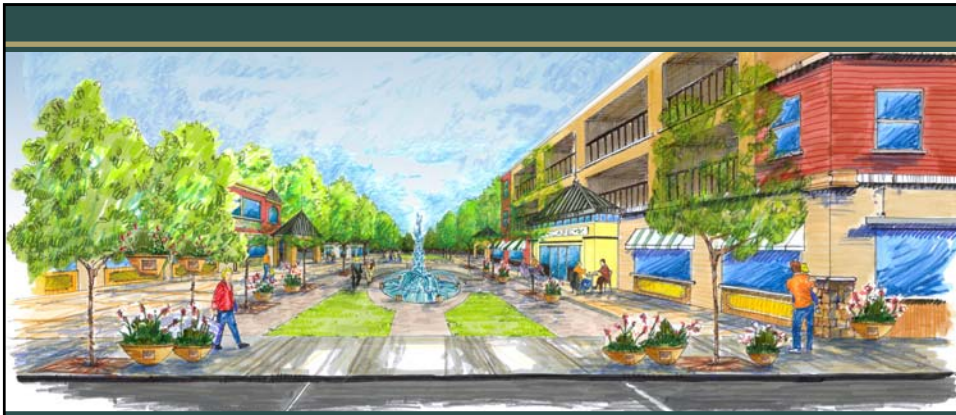
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> On-going
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**Related Goals:**

- Goal #1: Provide Unified Infrastructure Expansion
- Goal #2: Promote Economic Development
- Goal #3: Provide Community Accessibility and Development
- Goal #4: Promote Programming Activities



# Questions



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