Land Use Policies, Sprawl and Equity in Lower Richland

Technical Memorandum
Prepared for the Center for Social Inclusion

Prepared by:
Jason Reece
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
The Ohio State University
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Overview:
The following memorandum assesses the proposed land use policies designed to implement the town and country plan in Richland County. The policies are assessed in respect to their impact on sprawl and equity in Lower Richland. The key findings of this memorandum are:

1. The inefficient and costly development patterns associated with “sprawl” have negative impacts for most Richland County residents and in particular are detrimental to the African American community.
2. The primary land use policies to implement the “Town and Country” plan in Lower Richland will not impede sprawl nor improve environmental protection.
3. The proposed land use policies will not significantly impede developers financially but will increase the cost of housing.
4. The development of villages in Lower Richland may not be financially feasible without additional public subsidy. Villages developed without sufficient employment opportunities may further isolate Lower Richland residents and concentrate poverty.
5. Significant inequity exists in Lower Richland County in respect to infrastructure, employment and tax base (critical for schools). The land use policies associated with “Town and Country” will have a disproportionate impact on Lower Richland. These policies will not improve (and may increase) the disparities found in Lower Richland.
6. Due to cost, the housing market is restricted for both Lower Richland residents and African Americans in Richland County. This excludes Lower Richland residents and the African American community from key opportunities in Richland County. The proposed land use policies do not address this problem.

Sprawl and Inequity in Richland County:
As addressed in the “Race and Space” report produced by CSI in May 2004. Sprawl is rampant in Richland County, but only in certain areas. Growth in housing and employment is primarily heading toward the Northeastern portion of the County. The African American rural portion of the County “Lower Richland” is not experiencing the same degree of growth as the Northeast. Historically, policies have worked to slow investment in Lower Richland (due to lack of infrastructure) and contemporary growth is following this historical trend. This disinvestment is maintaining or in some cases exasperating the long-standing racial disparity found in the County and in Lower Richland.

Proposed Land Use Policies:
Sprawl is a byproduct of poor land use policy and inefficient growth. Sprawl has been proven to have detrimental effects on a community’s economic, fiscal, social and environmental health. Sprawl creates “winners and losers”, some benefit from growth while others are surrounded by disinvestment. The comprehensive plan for Richland County is an attempt to find solutions to the problems associated with sprawl. One strategy identified in the plan is to keep development away from the rural portions of the County (particularly Lower Richland) except for development focused in new small villages.

The proposed zoning ordinance revision in Richland County works to turn the solutions identified in the “town and country” comprehensive plan into policy. Two fundamental principles of the “Town and Country” plan are being incorporated into the zoning ordinance revision in Richland County.
1) An increase in lot size (down-zoning or large lot zoning) to decrease development in the rural portions of the County.

2) Establishment of an additional zoning category to enable the development of dense, multi-use villages in the rural areas.

These principles are being applied through several zoning changes. Although the zoning revision includes a large number of changes, the following modifications are the most relevant in relation to implementing the town and country strategy.

1) **The implementation of large lot zoning (or down-zoning).** An increase in lot size in the D1 and RU zoning districts. The D1 district was converted to the RU zoning designation, increasing the minimum lot size from 20,000 square feet to 43,560 square feet (approximately ½ an acre to 1 acre). The RU zoning districts minimum lot size was increased from 33,000 square feet to 43,560 square feet (approximately ¾ acre to 1 acre lots). In addition, a residential single-family estate district was created. This district (RS-E) also applies the larger lot strategy for development, with a 20,000 square foot minimum lot size. The largest minimum lot size for a single family residential zoning category before this revision was 12,000 square feet.

2) **Districts for “Small Town” Development.** The “town and country” zoning district was established for large tracts of land in order to develop dense multi-use villages in rural areas. These villages are to be developed as recommended in the “Town and Country” plan. Some general site standards are provided for the town and country district, and considerable flexibility exists in the zoning in order to promote the high density, new urbanist villages proposed in the plan.

**Why Care About Sprawl?**

The inefficient growth patterns categorized as sprawl produce many detrimental side effects for lower income residents (particularly the African American community) and for communities as a whole. As stated earlier, sprawl creates winners and losers within metropolitan regions. Sprawl moves opportunity (investment, jobs, housing, public services and infrastructure) away from urban areas and into the rural-fringe. As a result, higher income residents follow opportunity out of disinvested areas creating increased poverty and often neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.

Statistics relating to growth patterns in the Columbia metropolitan area illustrate these trends. The City of Columbia has experienced population growth of just over 2% between 1970 and 2000. In contrast, the surrounding suburbs in the Columbia metropolitan area grew by 83%. During this same time period residential vacancy rates increased by 11% in the City of Columbia, while the suburbs experienced a decline in vacancy rates of 25%. Poverty rates increased in Columbia by 25% during this time period while they decreased by 50% in the surrounding suburbs.¹

In Richland County, this movement is not impacting all rural areas equally. Sprawl is following historical patterns of investment and disinvestment in the rural portions of the County. The Northeast is the primary beneficiary of growth while Lower Richland experiences marginal investment (after decades of disinvestment in respect to infrastructure). Similarly, the inner city neighborhoods of Columbia also experience disinvestment as growth moves toward the Northeast (See Map 1 highlighting growth and development patterns in Richland County). Also the concentration of poverty in Richland represents trends of investment and disinvestment. As seen

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¹ Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development. State of the Cities Database System.
in Map 2 poverty remains concentrated in Columbia’s inner city neighborhoods and Lower Richland.

**Racial Impact of Sprawl**

Sprawl produces distinctive racial disparities in respect to “winner” and “loser” communities. The communities receiving the majority of the negative impacts from sprawl are predominately African American (nationally and in Richland County). The racial and spatial dynamics of sprawl have been referred to as the most significant civil rights challenge for the 21st century. In Richland County the slowest growing communities are predominately African American. (See Map 3 illustrating the connection between growth and race in Richland County). Today the two largest areas of Richland County with the largest African American populations (inner city Columbia and Lower Richland) also experience the slowest growth.

African American residents trapped in declining communities (and all residents in declining communities) face extensive challenges. These communities, who do not benefit from sprawl, face-declining employment and are not accessible to new job growth. They are also more likely to have declining school districts with slow growing or shrinking tax bases and poor city services. These communities are also more likely to see property values that do not appreciate or decline in value and conditions associated with concentrated poverty. Evidence of this can be seen in the disparity in home values of African Americans and White homeowners in Richland County. In 2000, the median value for White homeowners was 49% greater than there African American counterparts.  

In addition, the limited income and wealth of many African American household impede access too much of the regional housing market. More importantly, African Americans are more likely to be denied access to the “winner” communities in the region. This impediment blocks much of the African American population from communities with new investments, new housing, job growth and better educational opportunities.

**Community Wide Impact of Sprawl**

Not only do Lower Richland and the inner city find their development potential limited by sprawl, these communities (and the County as a whole) pay much of the expense of growth in the Northeast. Sprawl is defined as inefficient, requiring extensive new investments (subsidies) in roads, schools, water lines and sewer lines. This sprawl subsidy comes in respect to infrastructure costs, which are paid in local and state taxes needed to fund the growth of new schools, roads and other key infrastructure.

How much does sprawl cost communities and regions? Extensive research across the nation has found this cost to be substantial. Recent research by the Brookings Institute found a cost of $70,000 top pay for new public infrastructure for every new household in the Columbus Metropolitan Area. Research by the Urban Land Institute in the early 1990’s found the public investment needed for new growth to be 80% higher for sprawling 1-acre lot development than more compact traditional development patterns. Nationwide research conducted in 2002

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3 Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2000 Census of Population and Housing
4 Source: Brookings Institute. 2004
projected that a 20% increase in development density would save at least $125 billion in state road and water/sewer investments over the next twenty-five years.\(^6\)

Research conducted by the State of South Carolina illustrates the public cost of inefficient growth patterns for South Carolina residents. The groundbreaking study conducted in 1997 by the State of South Carolina identified the potential savings in public infrastructure costs associated with higher density more compact development. The state study found that new population growth projected to 2015 would require an additional $33 billion in new infrastructure investment such as roads, water systems, sewer systems, educational resources and other key community infrastructure.\(^7\)

The Central Midlands region was expected to need an additional $5 billion investment to pay for new growth (and an additional $3.5 billion to rehab existing infrastructure) by 2015.\(^8\) On a per capita basis each new resident moving to the region is expected to require an investment of $42,500 in infrastructure.\(^9\) At 2.5 residents per household that figure equals $106,000 for every new household in the Central Midlands region. The cost of this growth is paid for by the entire region (or county), so both growing and non-growing areas pay new growth.

The South Carolina Study projected the potential cost savings of applying new technologies, regionalizing infrastructure and changing land use patterns (to more dense development) to this infrastructure cost. Statewide the study found that $250 million in infrastructure cost could be saved annually by developing at higher densities (the antithesis to sprawling development). This would result in savings of over $5 billion for new infrastructure over a twenty-year period. In the Central Midlands Region this estimated savings totaled over $400 million over a twenty-year period for growth management that increased development density.\(^10\) Thus, higher density development would create significant cost savings for all residents of the Central Midlands Region.

Sprawl also has other less fiscal and quantitative impacts on a community’s health. Low-density sprawling development removes productive farmland and destroys critical wildlife habitat. Low-density development (sprawl) creates a more geographically fragmented labor force, keeping more people away from their jobs and driving up commuting times. Social isolation is increased and some research now indicates physical health impacts due to the inability to walk in sprawling areas.

**Will Policies Address Sprawl:**

As addressed in the preceding sections, sprawl is detrimental to both the African American community and the community as a whole. Measures to offset the negative impacts of sprawl to the African American community and all of Richland County are important. The smart growth policies identified in the Town and Country plan must be assessed in respect to their ability to slow sprawl and counteract the negative implications of sprawl for the community. The following

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\(^7\) Source: South Carolina Infrastructure Study 1997. State of South Carolina, State Budget and Control Board. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

\(^8\) Source: South Carolina Infrastructure Study 1997. State of South Carolina, State Budget and Control Board. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

\(^9\) This calculation is based on the projected population growth between 1995 and 2015 of 117,000 new residents in the Central Midlands and the $5 billion cost needed to pay for new infrastructure growth.

section analyzes the two primary policies identified by the County to manage growth in respect to their ability to offset sprawling development trends in the County.

This analysis finds:

1. That the large lot strategy identified for the rural portions of Richland County (particularly Lower Richland) will not stop sprawl and will most likely increase the negative side effects associated with sprawl.

2. The village development concept for Lower Richland is sufficient in theory but impractical (infeasible) to have an impact on growth trends in Lower Richland. Village development also has the potential to further concentrate poverty in Lower Richland if housing is not developed to serve a mixed income population and job growth does not accompany housing growth in villages.

**Will Larger Lots Stop Sprawl?**

There are multiple policy solutions to address sprawl. The strategy applied in Richland County is a version of down-zoning in order to utilize larger lot sizes to slow growth. This regulatory technique is referred to as “large lot” zoning. The “large lot” zoning strategy of growth management advocated in Lower Richland is intended to work by increasing minimum lot sizes in rural areas. The theory behind large lot development is that the increased cost to develop on larger lots makes housing growth less economically feasible. The 1997 comprehensive plan for the county explicitly identifies this strategy.

“The planning team recommends that for those areas not designated for development or preservation as part of a village, and not deemed environmentally sensitive, a new large lot zoning designation be introduced.”

-Richland County Comprehensive Plan section 7.3.4

The county’s zoning changes (increasing minimum lot size) is a direct attempt to implement this strategy. Although large lot zoning is one of the most utilized regulatory tools to stop sprawl in rural areas, a growing body of research is building a fairly solid critique of large lot zoning as poor growth management tool. For example, in Ohio rural townships have been implementing large lot (5 acre) zoning to slow growth. Despite this increased lot size, rural Ohio townships added an additional quarter of a million residents in the 1990’s. This type of low density sprawl is often addressed as exurban sprawl and is characterized as costly, inefficient and a threat to farmland as well as the natural environment.¹¹

**Large Lot Zoning and Sprawl**

Large lot zoning has traditionally been employed as an attempt to slow or discourage development in communities concerned about unregulated growth. Large lot zoning is simple to implement, is expected to maintain rural character, and intended to restrict the number of new residents.¹² Unfortunately, most references to “large lot” zoning indicate lots of 3, 5, 10, or even 20-40 acres, even 1-acre lot zoning is criticized as exacerbating, not slowing, sprawl.

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¹¹ The Ohio State University Exurban Change Program at: [http://www.agecon.ag.osiho-state.edu/programs/exurbs/](http://www.agecon.ag.osiho-state.edu/programs/exurbs/)

Researchers, planners, and farmland specialists report that large lot zoning creates more sprawl by spreading out development. ¹³

Instead of protecting open space and rural character, large lots often consume more land for houses, resulting in less open space. Open space is fragmented, unusable for farming, forestry, wildlife habitat or recreational trails.¹⁴ This pattern of sprawling subdivisions with fragmented open space permanently alters the rural character of a community. This can result in lower long-term land values, compared with the increase in land values associated with open space created through purchase of development rights or conservancy zoning.¹⁵

Large lots are often more expensive, driving up home prices and requiring significant public expenditures for services. Restricting the supply of housing can result in a lack of affordable housing, a need often overlooked by smart-growth advocates.¹⁶

Large lot zoning, while occasionally appearing to work on a local, short-term basis, often results in “spillover” effects, pushing development into neighboring counties. Therefore, regionally, more rural land is lost to housing development. Further, when large-lot zoning does discourage sprawl, it does so only in concert with measures that successfully channel development into higher-density cities instead of the outlying rural areas.¹⁷ Whether or not the incentives for village development given in the Richland County plan will prove enough to discourage large-lot development remains to be seen.

Because conventional zoning has been ineffective in reducing sprawl, a variety of alternative measures have been created: cluster or “open space” development, planned unit development, overlay districts, performance zoning, transfer of development rights, open space purchases, adequate-public-facilities requirements, development permitting caps, development phasing programs, density requirements, and development impact fees. These provide growth management options without the negative consequences of large lot zoning, such as dispersed sprawl, increased costs, and loss of open space.

How will Larger Lots Impact Lower Richland-

With larger lots planned for new growth in Lower Richland, several potential impacts can be expected. Land consumption for new growth will increase and larger lots will be more environmentally detrimental to Lower Richland. Developers will likely “pass through” the increased cost of housing and the pace of development will likely not be impacted significantly. Conversely, consumers will be impacted by this “pass through” cost and housing prices will increase.

Increased Land Consumption-


Ironically, increasing lot size to slow growth can increase the negative impacts of growth and development on the environment. Larger lots result in a larger “footprint” for development; more land must be consumed to address the need for new housing. As a result of large lot zoning, more farmland is converted to development and additional natural habitat destroyed to accommodate larger lots. Ironically, these policies prove more environmentally detrimental than traditional development.

In Lower Richland, the additional ¼ acre needed for each residential RU zoned housing unit, would result in a 25% increase in land converted to development. For example, if Lower Richland’s conservative growth rate of 5% continues into the next decade the area would see an increase in population of approximately 2,100 by 2010.18 This population growth would require an additional 840 housing units. Based on the previous zoning for rural land in Lower Richland these new housing units would only consume 630 acres of land. Under the new large lot zoning strategy these new housing units would occupy at least 840 acres of land and consume a minimum of an additional 210 acres of undeveloped land because of the larger lot size.19

Impact on Developers-

One rationale for larger lot development is the theory that larger lots will prove financially burdensome to developers and slow the pace of development. Although this theory has informed large lot zoning policies across the nation, evidence of these policies slowing development has not been significant. Although larger lot sizes provide an additional financial impediment to developers, they are not insurmountable and have not proven to slow the pace of sprawl.

Developers have multiple strategies to counteract the rising development costs from larger size lots. These include passing through increased housing cost to consumers, using dedications to offset the density requirements or input optimization (reducing the cost of materials, construction, site improvements etc.). (See Appendix A for a detailed description of these varying strategies and an analysis of the financial impact of larger lot sizes in Lower Richland).

The most likely scenario is that developers will pass through the increased costs from larger lot policies to consumers. This strategy is a means to secure the most of the real returns from rent or sale, by passing through all or part of the costs to the consumer as part of the total costs for each unit.

In the case of residential units, a pass through of costs is not uncommon. In fact residential development occurring in northeast Richland County requires developers to pay a fee for water/sewer line “hook-up.” The fee, approximately $1,500 dollars per unit, is an example of a pass thru to homebuyers. Given the popularity of this strategy, which in effect directly shifts the cost burden from supplier to demander, it is plausible to conclude this is a viable option given any increase in costs to the developer. Nor has this increased cost associated with development in northeast Richland County slowed the pace of development.

Our analysis of land prices in Lower Richland for RU and D1 zoned properties indicates that the low cost of land in Lower Richland will further counteract the impact of larger lot sizes on development. A ¼ acre lot size change will increase the cost per housing unit by approximately $350-500 for RU zoned land and by $1,500 to $2,300 for D1 zoned land. (See Appendix A providing an analysis of land prices for RU and D1 land in Lower Richland).

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18 Based on the growth rate of the 1990’s applied to the 2000 population for Lower Richland.
19 Estimates based on minimum lot sizes identified per zoning category. Housing demand estimated based on population change and the average housing unit size for Richland County (approximately 2.5 persons).
Impact on Consumers-

Larger lots will increase the cost of development but these costs will most likely be passed on to consumers via increased home prices. Large lot strategies have a net effect of increasing the cost of housing but not to the point of decreasing the demand for new development. An increase in price of $500 to $2,000 per housing unit would have limited impact on the majority homebuyers in the Richland County housing market. But, low-income residents (of which disproportionately include African Americans and residents of Lower Richland) will face further difficulty accessing affordable housing. In particular, low-income residents already locked out of the housing market due to price will be further impeded from finding suitable home ownership opportunities.

Rural Village Development as an Anecdote to Sprawl-

As discussed in the preceding sections, the development of dense villages in Lower Richland is designed to help curb sprawl in this predominately rural area. The addition of the “town and country” zoning designation to the zoning ordinance is the direct policy application of this concept. The villages are intended to curb sprawl by:

- Allowing denser development, thus relieving the development pressure on the rural zoned areas of Lower Richland.
- Being easier to service with infrastructure due to their density. Thus, mitigating the high public infrastructure costs associated with sprawl.

Will the Villages Work?

Other than the village of Eastover, no large established villages exist in Lower Richland. The comprehensive plan calls for the establishment of seven rural villages in Lower Richland. In addition, the comprehensive plan recommends strategies to redevelop the Town of Eastover, which is designated as distressed. The zoning ordinance revision allows the flexibility to designate these new villages with the new “Town and Country” zoning category.

Although the concept of rural village development has many positive attributes, significant concerns exist in respect to the feasibility of this strategy. Although the town and country zoning designation provides flexibility to encourage village development, no real tangible measures have been taken to promote village development. More importantly, no subsidies have been identified to promote village development.

Questions Concerning Funding-

Funding village development is a critical issue due to the potential high cost of establishing a dense village development in a rural area. Using the general requirements for village development identified in the zoning ordinance and the comprehensive plan, our financial analysis finds that a very conservative cost estimate for just the residential component of a single village development would be at least $40 million. (See Appendix B for detailed financial cost estimate.) In comparison, the between 1999 and 2004 the total single family residential investment in all of Southern Richland County totaled only $174 million for a four year period. Most of this development was located on the southern outskirts of Columbia and not in the rural portion of Lower Richland. The necessary investment needed to fund multiple village developments in Lower Richland would seem infeasible based on historic patterns of investment.

Questions Concerning Infrastructure-

In addition, tremendous infrastructure costs would accompany this private investment (infrastructure costs were not included in this estimate). Roadways and intersections would have to be upgraded to handle additional traffic burdens. In addition, water and sewer systems would have to be extended or developed exclusively for the dense villages. Currently, limited water and sewer line infrastructure exists in Lower Richland (See Map 4). (Village development would be at a density unacceptable for septic system development).

This infrastructure problem is identified as the primary impediment to home building and development in Lower Richland.

“The primary problem restricting growth in the Southeast is the lack of water and sewer in the more rural portions of the region. Homebuyers and businesses are reluctant, for the most part, to build where infrastructure is lacking.”

Southeast Area State of the Region Report – Central Midlands Council of Governments 2004

As seen in Maps 4 the water and sewer infrastructure does not adequately serve Lower Richland. Although the system has expanded significantly into the NE, Lower Richland still does not have adequate service. The County’s Consolidated Housing Plan for HUD identified sewer infrastructure as a high priority need for low income areas of the county. Additionally, almost 70% of county residents also identified sewer system expansion as a “high priority” need for the County. Thus, village development would require an investment (or multiple investments for additional villages) that would be unprecedented in rural Lower Richland. In addition, critical infrastructure is lacking for village development.

What about Eastover?

Eastover, the one existing large village in Lower Richland is provided as an example of potential village redevelopment. In some respects Eastover provides an example of what village development could look. Also, if the market existed for denser village development in Lower Richland, Eastover would be an outlet for that investment. Eastover is also the only existing village in Lower Richland with sewer infrastructure to sustain additional high-density development.

Eastover has provided as an opportunity for rural village development since the late 1990’s, but this redevelopment or new investment has not been forthcoming. Five years later Eastover is still a distressed community that has received limited investment. In fact, according to recent Census Bureau data, no residential building permits were issues for Eastover between 2001 and 2004.

Also little public investment is being targeted at Eastover to encourage village growth in Lower Richland, although many specific measures were identified in the Comprehensive Plan to redevelop Eastover. Our research has found little public improvement projects targeted toward Eastover (with the exception being a $252,000 grant for streetscape improvements). Although these grants are beneficial to improve Eastover, they are not sufficient to cover the scope of the improvements identified in the comprehensive plan.

In summary, Eastover is the best potential site to implement village development (or redevelopment in this case) but the market has not invested in the village since the comprehensive

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22 Source: Fair Housing Plan for the Columbia Metropolitan Housing Authority.
24 Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation. We also identified a $225,000 grant for infrastructure improvements in the 2003 South Carolina Senate session, but could not verify if this was funded and approved.
plan was passed. Public support to redevelop Eastover is also not sufficient to support the extent of steps identified in the comprehensive plan. The lack of reinvestment in Eastover speaks to both the infeasibility of the private market to encourage village development and the need for significant public investment if rural village development is going to succeed.

**Could Villages Concentrate Poverty?**

Another concern exists in respect to the impact of village development in Lower Richland. Village development poses a threat to Lower Richland if development does not contain a sufficient base of employment and does not provide mixed income housing opportunities. Lower Richland is already a region of high poverty (See Map 2). There is the potential for village development to further cluster low-income households in Lower Richland.

The current plan for village development includes villages with both residential development and commercial development, thus villages would have a strong employment base to support new residents. The initial plan called for “employment” and “non-employment” villages, with non-employment villages containing only residential land uses and no significant employment base.

As documented by significant research, concentrated poverty exasperates the despair in low-income communities. Concentrated poverty has been shown to have adverse effects on many facets of life including employment opportunity, educational opportunity, physical and mental health as well as crime and safety. Village development in Lower Richland without mixed income housing and a strong employment base this growth will be detrimental to both Lower Richland and its residents.

Village will become pockets of poverty in a rural area inaccessible to most of the region’s opportunities. In particular, these villages would be disconnected from most of the job market in Richland County and contains higher unemployment rates (see Map 5 and Map 6). Currently no significant public transportation options are available in Lower Richland, so low-income villages would become permanent traps for low-income residents isolating them from the rest of the region’s opportunities (primarily employment).

**Will Policies Address Inequity:**

Substantial disparity exists in Lower Richland in respect to infrastructure, investment and housing opportunity. These cumulative disparities result in Lower Richland residents being isolated from the critical opportunity structures such as employment, well performing schools and adequate infrastructure. These isolated opportunity deprived communities also have limited wealth building potential for homeowners (due to slow growing property values).

**Inequity in Lower Richland—**

**Infrastructure—**

As seen in Map 4 key water and sewer infrastructure is missing in most of Lower Richland. As addressed earlier in this memo, this infrastructure is a critical impediment to fostering community development in Lower Richland. As seen in Map 7, sewer infrastructure is very limited in all Lower Richland tax districts. Limited sewer line access is available in most of Lower Richland except for the small system found in the Town of Eastover. The majority of sewer infrastructure is located in and around Columbia and extending into the East and Northeastern portions of the County. When overlaid with household tax capacity (tax base), a positive relationship between sewer infrastructure access and tax capacity (tax base) is evident (Map 7).

**Tax Base and Investment—**
Tax base is a critical asset to local communities, providing the basis for funding essential public services. A measure of tax base is household tax capacity, which averages out differences in size between the various tax districts. This measure is calculated by dividing the total taxable value of all property by the number of households. It generates a figure measuring the current disparity in tax base, picking up both the disparity in property values for residential land as well as the disparity in commercial tax base between districts.

Based on this measure of disparity, the entire Lower Richland area (comprising three tax districts) has the weakest tax base in the entire county (See Map 8). All three districts (1LR: Lower Richland, IHF: Horrell Hill, ITE: Town of Eastover) have a per household taxable value of under $68,000, indicating both depressed residential values and inequity in commercial tax base. In contrast, the districts with the highest household tax capacity are all concentrated in the northern half of the County. The primary Northeastern district (2DP) has a household tax capacity of $126,000, almost double the value found in all of Lower Richland. Also, extremely high household tax capacities are found in the Northwestern portion of the County, primarily in the districts sharing a school district with Lexington County.

Growth in tax base is another critical indicator of community health and investment. Recent growth patterns indicate that the growth wave impacting Richland County has not expanded the tax base in Lower Richland as much as other portions of the County (Map 9). Estimates of housing unit growth in Richland County between 1980 and 2000 found housing unit growth to be focused in Northeast Richland County. The Dentsville/Pontiac district (2DP) experienced a growth in housing units of more than 260% during this twenty-year period. In contrast, housing unit growth in the Lower Richland tax district was 27% during this time.

The estimated growth of aggregate home value (owner occupied homes only) is also highly skewed to the Northeastern portion of the County (Map 10). After adjusting values for inflation our analysis found a growth in housing value of more than 275% in the primary Northeastern tax district (2DP). This represents an additional $1.4 billion in owner occupied home value during this twenty-year time span. In contrast, home values increased by just under $175 million from 1980 to 2000 in the primary Lower Richland tax district (1LR). (All values adjusted to 2000 inflation-adjusted dollars).

**Housing Opportunity and Need**

Significant housing need is evident for Lower Richland residents and the African American population in Richland County. Consequently the limited income of Lower Richland residents (and African Americans in Richland County) blocks them from accessing the many growing higher cost housing in more opportunity rich areas of the County. These phenomena present dual challenges for both Lower Richland and African Americans in Richland County.

Our analysis finds extensive housing need in Lower Richland and among Richland County’s entire African American community. As seen in Map 11 and 12, the greatest proportion of homeowners and renter households burdened by housing costs in Richland County are found in Columbia’s inner city neighborhoods and Lower Richland. Consequently this is where the largest proportion of African Americans in Richland County reside (See Map 3).

Data form the 2000 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Database illustrates the racial aspect of housing need in Richland County. In 2000, 37% of African American households faced a housing problem (being in an overcrowded unit or facing excessive housing cost). For

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25 Household tax capacity is calculated by assessing the average taxable value per household in a given tax district.
white households only 21% faced housing problems in 2000. Data from the 2000 Census further supports this observation. In 2000, 42% of African American renters in Richland County were burdened by housing cost (paying more than 30% of income for housing).  

**Access to the Regional Housing Market**

The income disparity for African Americans (and many lower Richland residents) makes access to the housing market difficult. In 2003, the median household income for all Richland County residents was $37,106. For African American households this figure is $28,766. The average cost of new residential construction and is out of reach for virtually all residents of Lower Richland, especially African Americans. The average sales price for a single-family home was $118,000 in 2003. The high cost of homeownership has the effect of removing approximately 65% percent of all African American households from the possibility of affordable homeownership. In comparison, 31% of white households in Richland County could not afford the average home sold in 2003. In the Southeastern portion of Richland County approximately 47% of households could not afford the average sale price in 2003.

Access to the rental market is also more difficult for African American residents. Almost 1/3 of households in Southeastern Richland County could not afford the cost of the average fair market 2 bedroom-housing unit in 2004. Over 40% of African American households in Richland County could not afford the average 2-bedroom rental. In contrast, only 20% of white households were priced out of rental market for the average 2-bedroom unit in 2004.

Access to the housing market has a spatial element as well, with most of the affordable housing opportunities being clustered in less desirable parts of the County. As seen in Map 13, Lower Richland residents and African Americans do not have full access to housing opportunities throughout Richland County. Based on the low incomes found in Lower Richland, some portions of the County (most notably the Northeast) remain unaffordable to Lower Richland residents and most African American households.

**Financing Need**

Financing is another key element to homeownership and wealth building. Data from the federal government identifies a significant disparity in Lower Richland based on financing denials for home ownership opportunities. As identified in Map 14, Lower Richland Census Tracts recorded denial rates in excess of 40%. The significant denial rates recorded in Lower Richland can be correlated with the large number of manufactured housing found in this region (See Map 15). Manufactured housing can be easier to access for residents denied loans for conventional housing. Unfortunately, manufactured housing does not appreciate in value like conventional home ownership opportunities. Thus, manufactured housing does not enable the same wealth building opportunities for Lower Richland residents who cannot access the conventional housing market.

**Job Opportunities**

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27 Accessed from ACS 2003 Richland.
29 Estimate based on federal 30 dollars per 100 dollars of income maximum for housing cost
30 Source: Calculations based on American Community Survey data and the Southeast Area Profile from the Central Midlands Council of Government.
31 Source: Based on the “2004 Housing Wage” data from the National Coalition for Low Income Housing and 2003 Census American Community Survey data.
Job opportunities are also severely limited in Lower Richland, as seen in Map 5. Job opportunities are primarily clustered in the City of Columbia and Northeast Richland County. International paper is the only major employer existing in Lower Richland. Job growth has occurred in Lower Richland in recent years, but growth is not keeping pace with other high growth areas of the County. As seen in Map 16, between 1998 and 2001 the largest net increases in jobs have been found in areas outside of Lower Richland (particularly West of Columbia). Much of the growth found in Lower Richland, could also be attributable to the growth of International Paper employment in the region.

_Opportunity Isolation_

In summary, Lower Richland has become isolated from much of the investment and growth impacting Richland County. Lower Richland residents live in a community isolated from much of the County’s growth and investment as well as a poorer quality school district and fewer job opportunities. This isolation is compounded by the lack of housing opportunities for Lower Richland residents in Richland County (particularly in growing areas of opportunity). Map 17 illustrates this disconnect between job opportunities and housing affordable to Lower Richland residents in the County.

**Impact of Town and Country:**

In the context of the existing disparities existing in Lower Richland and for Lower Richland residents, the policy changes to implement “Town and Country” were analyzed. Analysis of the location of parcels impacted by the downzoning in Richland County finds that Lower Richland will feel a disproportionate impact from the downzoning.

Larger lot zoning is being applied to two primary zoning districts. An increase from ¾ acre minimum lot size to 1-acre minimum lot size in the RU (rural) zoning district and an increase from a minimum lot size of 20,000 (approximately ½ acre) square feet in the D1 district to a 1-acre minimum lot size.

Using the parcel data we analyzed the number of parcels impacted in each of the tax districts and estimated the total acreage of land impacting by the zoning change in each district. This acreage calculation was difficult due to the small parcels with no acreage data, but the larger parcels (where development would mostly likely occur) were sufficient to gauge the impact.

**Burden on Lower Richland**

Upon analyzing the parcel data, it is very evident that the Lower Richland district (1LR) will feel a disproportionate impact from the “down zoning” (See Maps 18 and 19). Sixty eight percent of all parcels in the Lower Richland district will be impacting from the zoning change. The next largest impact will be in the Horrell Hill tax district where 44% of parcels will be impacted.

Based on total acreage impacted, Lower Richland also has the largest amount of land impacted by the zoning change. Over 143,000 acres of land in the Lower Richland district will be impacted by the zoning change (representing more than 90% of the total land area). In comparison the 2DP district (representing the Northeast) will have 58,000 acres impacted from the zoning change.

**Impact on Housing and Affordability**

Our assessment of the zoning changes in Lower Richland conclude that the zoning change will definitely increase the cost of housing (to offset the increased land purchase needed). This increased cost will be “passed through” from developers to consumers accessing the housing market. Our analysis indicates the increased cost will probably not be significant enough to impact the pace of housing development in Lower Richland.
But, the increased cost will worsen the existing housing hardships faced by low incomes residents of Lower Richland. Although affordable housing could potentially be provided through the village developments proposed for Lower Richland, the feasibility of these village developments proceeding is questionable. Also, there is a distinct possibility of increased concentrated poverty within Lower Richland if village development does proceed but employment growth does not follow in the newly established villages.

**Impact on Tax Base and Investment**-

As identified by numerous studies, infrastructure is one of the key elements missing in Lower Richland that impedes community development. The lack of infrastructure helps explain the limited pace of investment found in Lower Richland. Our assessment of the zoning changes planned for Lower Richland concludes the larger lot zoning will only make infrastructure more difficult to develop. The larger lot sizes will almost certainly increase the cost of providing water and sewer service to the rural portions of Lower Richland. Although village development would be more ideal to service with water and sewer infrastructure, the feasibility of village development occurring is questionable.

The increased cost of infrastructure development will only further limit investment and expansion of the tax base in Lower Richland. Also larger lot zoning will limit the possibility of higher density development in Lower Richland and thus only continue the existing disparity in investment and tax base. Another issue is the connection between infrastructure and commercial investments. Most large commercial investments are not feasible without appropriate infrastructure. (See Map 20 illustrating employment and infrastructure). Thus, the continued disparity in infrastructure in Lower Richland will only continue to slow job growth and growth of the commercial tax base in the community. This tax base disparity has significant community impact, as property taxes are the primary source of local school funding for the Richland One school district (and in funding other key community services).

**Impact on Opportunity Isolation**-

Our analysis finds significant opportunity isolation for Lower Richland. Lower Richland residents do not have equitable access to the Columbia housing market and critical resources are missing from Lower Richland (employment opportunity, equal access to financing, appreciating property values, equal educational resources). From the assessment of the town and country plan and corresponding land use policies, we feel that the proposed zoning changes will not improve access to opportunity for Lower Richland residents and may exasperate some of the community disparities found in Lower Richland.

In summary, the larger lot sizes planned for Lower Richland will impose a burden on property owners and will potentially produce community wide impacts:

1. Increased difficulty developing water and sewer infrastructure due to lower densities.
2. Slower commercial investment and job growth due to lower densities (and the consequent lack of infrastructure).
3. Slower growth in the tax base due to the lower densities (and lack of infrastructure).
4. More land use consumption from development due to the lower densities.
5. Increased housing costs for new development due to larger lot sizes.
The net effect of these potential impacts would further enhance the isolation from opportunity experienced by Lower Richland residents and continue the disparities in investment between Lower Richland and the other rapidly developing portions of the County.
Map 1: Growth in Richland County 1980 to 2000
Estimated Change in Housing Units by Census Tract
Map 2: Poverty Rates in Richland County Region in 2000
(Note Concentrations in Columbia and Lower Richland)
Map 3: Growth Trends and the African American Population in Richland County in 2000

Housing Unit Growth and 2000 African American Population Distribution in Richland County

African American Population
- 1 Dot = 25
Change in Housing Units 80-00
-516 - 0
0 - 1,000
1,000 - 2,000
2,000 - 5,000
5,000 - 8,278
Richland County Tax Districts and Sewer Line Infrastructure

Legend:
1cc1w: City of Columbia
1er1fa: East Richland PSD and City of Forest Acres
1hf: Horrell Hill Fire District
1lr: Lower Richland
1te: Town of Eastover
1ur: Urban & Rural Areas
2cc: City of Columbia
2dp: Dentsville/Pontiac Area
2er: East Richland Public Service District
2tb: Town of Blythewood
6cc: City of Columbia
6tl: Town of Irmo
6ud: Upper Dutch Fork

Map 4: Sewer Line Infrastructure in Richland County (Overlaid with Tax Districts)
Map 5: Distribution of Major Employers (Employing 10 or More) in Richland County (Overlaid with Tax Districts)
Map 6: Unemployment Rates in Richland County Census Tracts 2000
(Note Concentration in Lower Richland and Inner City Columbia)
Map 7: Sewer Line Infrastructure Distribution and Estimated 2000 Tax Base (Household Tax Capacity) in Richland County
Richland County
Tax Capacity: Taxable Value per Household

Legend:
Taxable Value per Household ($'s)
- 29K to 68K
- 74K to 80K
- 90K to 93K
- 106K to 119K
- 122K to 127K
- 152K to 619K

Map 8: Tax Base in Richland County (Household Tax Capacity in 2000)
Map 9: Estimated Housing Growth by Tax District in Richland County 1980-2000

Estimated Housing Unit Growth by Tax District 1980-2000

Legend:
Housing Unit Growth 80-00

- 7 to 23%
- 23 to 34%
- 34 to 47%
- 47 to 76%
- 76 to 228%
- 228 to 365%

Source:
Tax District Map & Census Data
Map 10: Growth in Tax Base (Home Owner Values) by Tax District 1980-2000
Map 11: Cost Burdened Home Owners (Percent Paying More than 30% of Income for Housing) in Richland County 2000 (Note Concentration in Lower Richland and Columbia)
Map 12: Cost Burdened Renters (Percent Paying More than 30% for Housing Cost) in Lower Richland in 2000 (Note Concentration in Columbia and Lower Richland)
Map 13: Areas Where Median Income Housing is Unaffordable to the Median Income African American and/or Median Income Lower Richland Resident in 2000
Map 14: Aggregate Mortgage Denial Rates in Richland County by Census Tract
Map 16: Recent Job Change Trends in the Columbia Region 1997 to 2001
Map 17: Unaffordable Areas and Job Distribution in Richland County
Proportion of Parcels Impacted by Downzoning
Richland County

Legend:
Reprojecttaxdist.shp

- Less than 6%
- 6 to 13%
- 13 to 16%
- 16 to 44%
- 44 to 68%

Source:
Tax District Map & Parcel Data

Map 18: Impact of Downzoning in Richland County by Tax District
Map 19: Distribution of Impact of Downzoning (Acres Impacted) in Richland County

Estimated Acreage Impacted by Downzoning
Richland County

Legend:
- 0 - 42 Acres
- 43 - 1,128 Acres
- 1,129 - 2,028 Acres
- 2,029 - 22,132 Acres
- 22,133 - 58,718 Acres
- 143,916 Acres

Source:
Tax District Map & Parcel Tax Data
Employment Distribution and Sewer Infrastructure in Richland County

Map 20: Distribution of Employment Opportunity and Infrastructure in Richland County