RACE AND PLACE:

A

PRELIMINARY LOOK AT

LAND USE PLANNING IN RICHLAND COUNTY, S.C.

A Report Prepared by

The Center for Social Inclusion:

A Project of the Tides Center
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The Center for Social Inclusion: A Project of the Tides Center
50 Broad Street, suite 1820
New York, NY 10004
(212) 248-2785
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like so many metropolitan areas in the country with important urban centers, Richland County is growing rapidly both in population and development of once vacant land. Known as “sprawl,” this type of new development is costly, inefficient and inequitable. In response to sprawl, the Richland County Council adopted a comprehensive land use plan to advance the following goals over the next twenty years: 1) ensure efficient growth to control infrastructure costs; 2) improve the quality of life; and 3) preserve environmentally sensitive lands, special historic and cultural sites and open spaces. The County Council attempts to support development, while also engaging in preservation planning. It recently drafted zoning ordinance revisions to advance its comprehensive land use plan.

This report reviews the land use plan, the demographic data upon which it was based and updates the demographic data. Based on these data, the report identifies some implications of sprawl in Richland County and the likely ramifications of the County Council’s response to it.

Both the historic and current data demonstrate that the need for sprawl control differs greatly across the County. The Plan describes the County by “planning area” and demonstrates that the areas with the most serious sprawl are the Northeast, I-77 Corridor and the Northwest planning areas. It also makes clear that Lower Richland, the North Central and I-20 Corridor planning areas are economically depressed and are experiencing significantly less sprawl. Therefore, based on the data presented by the Plan, these areas appear to need development. Further, residents in these areas need access to the benefits of growth in other parts of the County.

An examination of more recent demographic profiles of the planning areas shows that the difference in development patterns across planning areas continues today. For example, while the actual rate of housing construction in Lower Richland has been slowing, it has been increasing rapidly in the Northeast. Moreover, Lower Richland, the North Central and I-20 Corridor planning areas have the lowest median household incomes, the highest percentages of people on public assistance and social security, or with no reported earnings. The County Council’s land use planning, however, does not address the different growth needs in different parts of the County.

The County’s land use plan focuses on: greater densities in new and existing communities; walkable neighborhoods; some mixed-use development; and preservation of open spaces. The County Council attempts to achieve its goals through redevelopment of some existing communities and development of new “villages” in designated sites in various parts of the County. Its draft zoning ordinance, currently under consideration, would reduce maximum densities and establish a zoning framework to accomplish the vision described by the Plan.

This report finds that the Plan is not likely to meet stated goals and may well harm vulnerable communities. Specifically:
1) The incentives for growth in the Northeast and Northwest planning areas of the County remain undiminished by the new zoning ordinance. It contains incentives for higher density “villages,” but does not sufficiently reduce the attractiveness of or create sufficient disincentives for growth outside of the “villages.”

2) It does not sufficiently consider the need for development in some portions of the County. For example, there are few incentives for growth and development in Lower Richland or the North Central planning areas, which have high unemployment. Blacks in these parts of the County have a high percentage of land/property ownership. It is unclear what the impact of development disincentives will have on the value of Black-owned land. The only incentives for new development in these areas – “Non-employment villages” – would ensure the concentration of poverty in predominantly Black townships. Blacks, already finding it difficult to access quality education, credit, and jobs, may find it even more difficult to do so.

The Report recommends that:

1. The County Council postpone consideration of any zoning ordinance revisions pending further study of the racial impact of the Comprehensive Plan; and

2. After receiving important impact findings, the County Council invite community input based on the racial impact analysis and revise its Comprehensive Plan and draft zoning ordinance to address inequities which exist in current land use planning practices.

Additional research is necessary to determine whether and to what extent the draft zoning ordinance may further impoverish poor communities by serving to reduce land values. There are also important questions related to the extent to which the Plan and the draft zoning ordinance may serve to reinforce racial segregation and isolate Blacks from meaningful opportunities, including affordable housing, transportation, jobs and a quality education. Only by answering these questions may the County Council and the communities it serves identify opportunities for equitable sprawl control and promotion of meaningful growth opportunities for those who need them.
“IMAGINE RICHLAND 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN”

In response to sprawl – the costly, low-density development at the outskirts of metropolitan areas – and the infrastructure and preservation costs associated with it, the Richland County Council developed a vision for land use. This vision is contained in the 1999 “Imagine Richland 2020 Comprehensive Plan” (The Plan). The Plan is non-binding, but represents the County Council’s intent with regard to land use regulation. It identifies important principles for land use planning, as well as some of the important data and information necessary to inform such planning. Unfortunately, there is often little connection between identified principles and goals and the expressed vision for land use.

The County Council’s stated mission “is to provide essential services, efficiently and effectively to improve the quality of life for its citizens.”

Principles expressly stated include, “sustained economic viability,” “needs and preferences [of developers and the community],” and “adequate and timely infrastructure.” The County Council, in its introduction to the Plan, states that “it has undertaken a comprehensive planning process to develop the plans and guidelines critical to taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by growth, while preserving the unique quality of life within the county [emphasis added].” As a result, it is not the intent of the Plan to stem growth, but to direct and control it with incentives and disincentives.

The two dominant characteristics of the Plan are: 1) its permission of development while, 2) assuring preservation of open green space and the rural character of parts of the county. It adopts a “town and country” approach to growth planning: a planning design concept accomplished through development incentives and disincentives. As with all land use planning, important questions arise around who benefits from growth and who is harmed by its control. The County Council’s mission and goals make clear that this fundamental question must be answered and that equity in sharing the benefits and burdens of growth and preservation must be a specific goal of the planning process.

The Plan is based on certain assumptions about the County’s demographic characteristics. It assumes that by 2015 the population will increase by approximately 28,700 persons, and by 2020 the County will add 22,167 residential units and the job base will increase by 62,400. The Plan is based on “planning areas,” identified by the County Planning Commission, as a way to understand and respond to demographic growth patterns. It states that “planning areas were created as a means of coordinating growth of the County’s population in a more sustainable, effective and strategic manner.” It also allows a “rational method for collecting and analyzing data…[which would] contribute to a more systematic approach for providing services to its citizenry.”

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2 Ibid. 1-7-8.
3 Ibid. 1-5.
4 Ibid. 4-4.
5 Ibid. 3C-11.
6 Ibid. 2-1.
Planning Areas

The Plan describes the Northeast planning area (Figure 1) as the fastest growing of the six planning areas, with the highest per capita income and the most expensive housing. It is majority White, although Blacks who can afford to are migrating to the Northeast. As a result, the population has been fast approaching racial parity. Due to this rapid growth, a segment of the Northeast planning area is endangering the primary aquifer recharge areas for the wells and streams flowing to the lower portion of the County. The Interstate 77 (I-77) Corridor, which borders the Northeast planning area (Figure 1), has traditionally been the center of industrial development due to the interstate and public infrastructure investment there. Residential growth in the Northeast, according to the Plan, is fueling commercial and industrial development in the I-77 corridor. The Plan states that it is the “Northeast planning area, along with the I-77 Corridor, [which] has been the subject of considerable concern as rapid development changed its once rural character.”

It is also the planning area projected to have the greatest employment growth between 2000 and 2020 – 60% of the employment growth in the county.

Figure 1. Planning Areas in Richland County

The Northwest planning area (Figure 1) is predominantly low-density, residential and has been experiencing an influx of young families and retirees. It is an attractive area because of its concentration of moderately priced homes, a decent school district and scenic Lake Murray. With three major urban areas, the County states that it anticipates city annexations to improve service delivery. However, the County also predicts that the planning area’s service needs will

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8 Ibid. 3C-11, Table 19.
remain largely a County burden. It does not state whether city annexations are actually planned or what service burdens the County would carry in the event of such annexations. The Northwest planning area is projected to have the second greatest employment growth in the County – 15% between 2000 and 2020.

The Lower Richland planning area is largely rural, Black and poor with a large portion of the land area covered by flood plains and riparian corridors (Figure 1). The Plan states that most of the 211,000 acres of Lower Richland are “rural and undeveloped with occasional low-density development scattered throughout the landscape.” This part of the County has had little infrastructure development and lacks adequate sewer and water services. As a result of these infrastructure constraints, development has been limited. As would be expected based on the rate of development, there appear to be few job opportunities in this part of the County. Furthermore, school district one, which includes Lower Richland, the City of Columbia, and the North Central planning area, has lower per pupil funding and poorer educational outcomes than school district two, which includes the Northeast. To the extent that there are development pressures, the Plan states that they have resulted from “large industrial firms [moving] in to take advantage of cheap lands and the existing rail line.” Nonetheless, it describes Lower Richland as “slow growing” in both population and development, in sharp contrast to its description of the “rapid[ly] growing” Northeast. Lower Richland is projected to have the smallest share of employment growth in the County between 2000 and 2020 – just 4%.

The North Central planning area (Figure 1) is now racially mixed. Like Lower Richland, it is largely rural but the southern portion along Interstate 20 (I-20) is more urbanized. Improvements in infrastructure, mining operations and land development, according to the Plan, are occurring. Because it has a concentration of manufacturing, construction and service employment, the Plan predicts continued development pressures. The North Central planning area is projected to have the second smallest share of employment growth in the County between 2000 and 2020 – 5%.

In sum, according to the Plan, the planning areas which pose the most significant sprawl control concerns are in the Northeast, I-77 Corridor and the Northwest. Lower Richland and the North Central planning areas have some growth pressures, but Lower Richland in particular, appears to be a less desirable area for growth than the other areas. Regarding economic and population growth, the Comprehensive Plan comes to an interesting conclusion. “The Northeast and Northwest are the fastest growing planning areas in Richland County in employment and population. This trend is expected to continue unless incentives can be provided to developers

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10 Ibid. 3C-11, Table 19.
11 Ibid. 2-7.
12 Ibid. 2-7.
13 Ibid. 2-7.
14 Ibid. 4-20.
15 Ibid. 3C-11, Table 19.
16 Ibid. 2-4-5.
17 Ibid. 3C-11, Table 19.
and employers to undertake a share of development activities in a more southerly [sic] direction of the county, along with making it cost prohibitive to develop in the north.”18

**Transportation**

Regarding transportation, the Plan’s discussion demonstrates how the unique character of population and housing growth in the various planning areas necessitates distinct transportation planning. It identifies the need for “transportation connectivity,” as well as the need to “provide all people with the option of using transit.”19 Poor areas, such as Lower and North Central Richland are not served by the public transit system. Currently, only the city of Columbia and close-in areas are served by a public bus system. The Plan, however, describes the public bus service as old and inadequate, having experienced service cutbacks.20

“Plans” for new transit services to currently underserved areas are unformed, unfunded and unlikely to occur, based on the information provided. While the Plan locates new development – “villages” – on old railway lines, there is no stated commitment by necessary state and regional authorities to produce a light rail public transit system. The Plan notes that there may be inadequate ridership to support an expanded system, suggesting a lack of commitment to it.21 The Plan does not discuss the relationship between transit needs, transportation infrastructure and the need to connect areas with high unemployment rates to existing job growth centers.22

Many of the transportation solutions in the Plan relate to the creation of roadways to foster the town and country design in existing suburbs.23 It notes a need to expand highways, but also recognizes community opposition to such expansion.24 Most of these concerns are in the Northeast and Northwest portions of the County, where population growth and sprawl have been the most significant. The Plan does not discuss location of job growth centers in relation to communities experiencing high rates of unemployment. As a result, it does not consider transportation needs in context with job growth and work force proximity.

**Environment**

Because preservation of open space and concerns relating to water are significant themes in the Plan’s land use design for the County, it is important to understand the implications for the various planning areas. Under the environmental element, the Plan states that water quality is

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19 Ibid. Appendix A: 67.
20 Ibid. 3G-9.
21 Ibid. Appendix A: 67-68.
22 Ibid. Appendix A: 67.
23 Ibid. 3G-7-8. Most highway development is through the State Department of Transportation, and private developers construct the local roads that connect to those main arteries. This means that many transportation planning decisions are not made locally and are generally driven by federally designated planning areas, leaving out most rural areas
“considerably good, despite limited problems stemming from municipal point-source discharges and urban run-off. Current projections imply that industrial needs for water are going to increase for the Congaree sub-basin, partially determining the suitability of other uses along the rivers.”\textsuperscript{25} Importantly, it also notes that the aquifer recharge areas, which supply wells with water and keep streams flowing, are largely in the Northeast and Fort Jackson areas.\textsuperscript{26} Therefore, growth in these areas could be detrimental to the water supply. The Plan assumes that development will be characterized by detached homes on .5 to 1 acre lots and suggests that development should encourage “best storm management practices.”\textsuperscript{27} This discussion suggests that water pollution may be more of a concern based on urban uses and that water replacement is more of a concern related to suburban sprawl in the Northeast. Thus, while the Plan attempts to reduce growth in economically depressed areas of the county to protect green space, it appears that at least one significant area of environmental concern is not fully addressed.

\textbf{Infrastructure/Facilities}

Both growth and sprawl are spurred by the presence of quality infrastructure and facilities in a given location, such as good schools, libraries, recreation facilities, water and sewer lines, transit and transportation systems and emergency services. Based on information provided in the Plan, the Northeast and Northwest planning areas have more and desirable infrastructure and facilities, compared to Lower and North Central Richland.

There are two school districts wholly contained in the County; school districts one and two. Lower Richland, the City of Columbia, and North Central Richland share school district one. Its students have lower educational outcomes than the other school district. The Northeast is served by school district two -- a district with higher per pupil expenditures and greater educational outcomes than school district one.

Under the Community Facilities Element of the Plan, it notes that Lower Richland has “several significant gaps in [water] service…As a result, a number of households are served by private water systems.” Like Lower Richland, the North Central region is also underserved by water treatment systems, with homeowners having to use their own private septic tanks.\textsuperscript{28} The City of Columbia, which provides sewer services, has no plans to expand to areas which are not currently served due to the small size of the customer base.\textsuperscript{29} Therefore, as rural areas, Lower and North Central Richland will remain relatively underserved by such municipal services, except for planned villages.

According to the Plan, outside of the City of Columbia, the North Central and Lower Richland planning areas had the highest demand for emergency services. The North Central planning area had 12.2\% of the County demand for emergency services, while Lower Richland had 11.2\% of the demand for emergency services.\textsuperscript{30} From the Plan’s map of emergency

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid. Appendix A: 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid. Appendix A: 27.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid. 3G-2.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid. 3G-4.
  \item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid. 3G-12, Table 37.
\end{itemize}
services, it appears that North Central and Lower Richland have few emergency service facilities.\(^{31}\)

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES BETWEEN 1990 and 2000**

The Plan relies largely on 1990 census data to describe the demographic character of the County in general and the planning areas in particular. To demonstrate the need to revisit the Plan to control sprawl in light of issues of equity and access to opportunity, it is useful to examine updated Census data by planning area.

**Population Growth**

In part, the Plan bases the need for future growth control on projected population growth trends to 2020. It predicts dramatically different population growth trends in the planning areas, with the greatest growth expected to occur in the Northeast planning area and I-77 Corridor (71.03%) and in the North Central planning area (64.05%). The plan also predicts 27.89% growth in Lower Richland, which would make it the second largest planning area by population (56,131). Lower Richland is, however, the largest planning area by acreage, significantly larger than the Northeast. Nonetheless, the Plan projects that Lower Richland’s population will be substantially smaller than that of the Northeast (71,030).\(^{32}\) Based on population trends in the County, the Comprehensive Plan predicts “that the racial composition of Richland County will continue to increase in diversity, with the White population remaining almost constant while the minority population continues to increase.”\(^{33}\)

According to 2000 census data, population growth in the Northeast, I-77 and Northwest planning areas have been the most rapid and those populations are the largest (Figure 2). Since 1990, Northeast Richland’s population increased by 71.8% - approximately 23,000 new residents (56,504 total residents in 2000). Between 1990 and 2000, population in the Northwest and I-77 planning areas grew by 28.9% and 11.9%, respectively. In contrast, Lower Richland’s population increased by a relatively low 4.95% between 1990 and 2000 – approximately 1,100 new residents (41,694 total residents in 2000). The North Central planning area grew by 2.8%, while the total population of the I-20 Corridor actually dropped 3.4% during the same time period.


\(^{32}\) Ibid. 3B-11.

\(^{33}\) Ibid. 3B-12.
As the Plan predicted, the population increase in Richland County has been racially identifiable. The Plan notes that the Black population of the county grew from 31.4% of the population in 1970 to 41.8% of the population in 1990. During this same time period, the White population decreased from 68% to 56% of the county population. The actual numbers of Whites increased almost imperceptibly (from 159,092 to 160,063). Therefore, the percent change in racial make-up of the county resulted not from a net loss of White population, but from the dramatic growth of the Black population.34

This racial demographic trend has continued, but with some notable differences when examined by planning area. The Black population in both Lower Richland and the Northeast has increased dramatically over the last ten years (Figure 3). That increase, however, has been significantly more dramatic in the Northeast. In Lower Richland the Black population grew by 20%, while it grew by an astounding 152% in the Northeast. The White population in Lower Richland, however, decreased by almost 19%, but increased by over 38% in the Northeast.

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Figure 3. Black population as percent of total population in 1990 and 2000.
When the population of the County is examined by age and race, it shows that the county’s Black population has increased across age groups (Figure 4). For Whites, the only age groups which experienced growth between 1990 and 2000 were 5 to 17 and over 65 years of age (Figure 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less than 5</th>
<th>5 to 17</th>
<th>18 to 64</th>
<th>65 and older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>-40.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>-34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>183.4</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>-41.5</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-77</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>-21.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20</td>
<td>-35.9</td>
<td>-12.5</td>
<td>-27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Richland</td>
<td>-12.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. White and Black percent population change between 1990 and 2000 by age and planning area.

These data further illustrate the dramatic difference in population across the planning areas. They suggest that the reduction in White population in Lower Richland has resulted from migration out of the planning area. In Lower Richland the White population decline was dramatic for ages less than 5 through age 64 (Figure 4). It only increased in the percentage of White population over 65 years of age. Thus, it appears that Whites of working age are moving, while retirees are remaining. The Black population, on the other hand, experienced the largest growth in the 18 to 64 age group, which suggests that the Black population growth in Lower Richland is due in significant part to in-migration (Figure 4).

Similarly, Whites appear to be migrating out of the North Central planning area, while Blacks are migrating in. Between 1990 and 2000, the White population of the North Central planning area decreased across almost all age groups, with the exception of a marginal increase in the 5 to 17 age group (Figure 4). The Black population, however, increased in the 18 to 64 age group and increased dramatically in the over 65 age group, suggesting in-migration of older Blacks (Figure 4). There was a decrease in the young Black population – those less than 5 years of age to 17 years of age (Figure 4). The I-20 Corridor planning area has also experienced in-migration of Blacks, evidenced by a reduction in the size of the less than 5 and 5 to 17 age groups, while the population has grown substantially for those aged 18 to 64 and over 65 (Figure 4). The picture is very different in the Northeast and I-77 Corridor planning areas, where the population, both Black and White, increased substantially across age groups (Figure 4).

**Income**

In Richland County, Blacks had significantly lower incomes than their White counterparts. Based on 1990 data, the Plan stated that Blacks and other minorities on average earned under $8,400 per year, while Whites earned $17,032 per year.\(^{35}\) While all groups experienced an increase in per capita income between 1990 and 2000, Blacks continue to earn significantly less than whites (Figure 5).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Percent Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Richland</td>
<td>$14,396</td>
<td>$8,015</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>$18,821</td>
<td>$10,313</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>$12,416</td>
<td>$8,837</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>$16,031</td>
<td>$9,774</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-77</td>
<td>$12,003</td>
<td>$8,467</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20</td>
<td>$18,276</td>
<td>$9,154</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Richland</td>
<td>$17,032</td>
<td>$8,334</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Per capita income in 1990 and 2000 by race and planning area

In 1999, the average household income for Whites in Lower Richland was $50,416 and $40,099 for Blacks – a 22.8% difference (Figure 6). The racial income disparity was worse among Northerners. In the Northeast, Whites had an average household income of $79,942, and Blacks had an average household income of $56,181 – a 34.9% disparity (Figure 6). The average household income disparities in the North Central and Northwest Planning Areas were the highest in the County at 40.1% and 40.5%, respectively (Figure 6). The I-77 Corridor had the lowest disparity between Black and White at 13%.

Figure 6. Average household income in 2000 by race and planning area

Planning areas differ greatly in terms of various poverty indicators, including the size of the population receiving public assistance or social security benefits or with no earnings. Not surprisingly, the planning areas with the lowest median household incomes are also the planning areas with the highest percentages of population on public assistance, social security or with no reported earnings: Lower Richland, the North Central and the I-20 Corridor planning areas (Figure 7).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Area</th>
<th>Percent Households Receiving Public Assistance Income</th>
<th>Percent Households Receiving Social Security Income</th>
<th>Percent Households with no Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Richland</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-77</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Richland</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Households receiving public assistance, social security or reporting no earnings in 2000 as a percent of the total number of households by planning area.

While the County unemployment rate was relatively low in 2000 (5.1%), Black unemployment was significantly higher than that of Whites. Black females were unemployed at a rate of 9.3%, while White females were unemployed at a rate of 4.6%. Similarly, Black men were unemployed at a rate of 10.5%, while their White counterparts were unemployed at a rate of 3.8%.

**Housing**

*Ownership*

Income alone is an insufficient measure of wealth or poverty of a particular individual or family. Making a living and adequately supporting a family requires asset accumulation, not just income. If a person stops receiving a paycheck because of layoffs or illness, he or she may not have the assets to support himself or herself and his or her family. In fact, a large number of Americans would be unable to support themselves or their families in the event of illness or job loss. Further, Blacks are more likely to be asset-poor than their White counterparts. According to the Center for Enterprise Development, South Carolina ranked third in the nation in terms of the race gap in asset wealth. This raises a serious question: what are the asset accumulation mechanisms for poor people, particularly Blacks, in Richland County and how should they be protected and promoted? Land and home ownership are common avenues by which people accumulate wealth.

Overall, Richland County has a very high level of homeownership (Figure 8). As Figure 8 demonstrates, Lower Richland and North Central residents enjoy an astounding rate of home ownership – 72.4% and 76.6% respectively.

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Center for Enterprise Development State Asset Development Report Card, [www.sadrc.cfed.org/states/ms.php](http://www.sadrc.cfed.org/states/ms.php) In 1998, 25.5% of all American households had insufficient net worth to sustain living at the federal poverty level for three months if they stopped receiving their paychecks. Few of these Americans -- less than 13% of households -- were identified as poor in 1998, based on income alone. In the South, the number is probably higher, particularly for African Americans.
**Housing Values**

Housing values are significantly higher in the Northeast, with slightly more than 75% of the housing valued at over $90,000 (Figure 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Area</th>
<th>Less than $29,999</th>
<th>$30,000 to $89,999</th>
<th>$90,000-$200,000</th>
<th>$200,000 or more</th>
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<td>8.4</td>
<td>61.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
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<td>20.4</td>
<td>54.8</td>
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<td>I-77</td>
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<td>41.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite their relatively high rates of poverty, residents of Lower Richland own land and homes. As Figure 10 demonstrates, over 60% of Lower Richland home/land owners had property values of between $30,000 and $99,000.
Figure 10. Value of housing units in 2000 as percent of total housing units compared between the Northeast and Lower Richland planning areas

New Construction

Not only has the population increased across the County, the number of housing units and households have also increased. Nonetheless, growth has been substantially greater in the Northeast, I-77 and Northwest planning areas than in the Lower, North Central and I-20 planning areas. The Plan predicted that between 2000 and 2020 about 11,000 housing units would be built in the Northeast/I-77 Corridor planning areas, mostly in the form of single family detached housing. It also predicted a 50% increase in the number of households. Between 1990 and 2000, the Northeast added 10,087 new units of housing and experienced an 82% increase in the number of households (Figure 11). The I-77 Corridor added just over 1,100 units of housing and experienced a 30% increase in households. In the Northwest, during the same time period, the number of households increased 32.7% as opposed to the 20% increase predicted.

The Plan projected that households in Lower Richland would increase by 2200 between 2000 and 2020. Most of that growth would be in rural (832) and urban (588) single-family detached housing. Between 1990 and 2000, Lower Richland experienced a 13.5% growth in households. In North Central Richland, a similarly rural area, the number of households was predicted to increase by 2,200. Assuming a uniform rate of growth over each ten year period, the actual rate of growth in Lower Richland (1,961) is slightly higher than predicted, but the growth rate in North Central (413) was considerably lower than predicted.

38 Ibid. 3D-7.
Not surprisingly, as Figure 12 demonstrates, housing has been built much more rapidly in the Northeast than in Lower Richland. In fact, the rate of new housing construction has been slowing in Lower Richland, while it has been increasing rapidly in the Northeast.
Since 1970, there has also been a steady increase in new housing units in the Northwest. While the number of new housing units increased in the North Central planning area between 1990 and March 2000, the overall number of new housing units added to that area between 1970 and March 2000 (1,724) is significantly less than that of Lower Richland (11,293), Northeast Richland (20,055), and Northwest Richland (11,019).

Furthermore, there are important differences in the types of homes being built across planning areas. The housing trends in the rural planning areas indicate that development is not a function of large lot subdivision development, but rather single-family home ownership. It also suggests that Blacks are not as able to convert their land value into real improvements, like built housing, which would increase the asset value of their property. Between 1990 and 2000, Lower Richland experienced a slight increase across all housing types. The rate of increase for mobile homes, however, was significantly larger than other housing types (Figure 13). Generally, the same is true for housing in the North Central planning area. There was an increase in all housing types, but there was also a small decrease in duplex or multi-family housing units. It experienced, however, a larger increase in the number of mobile homes (Figure 13).

Residents have complained that they have had difficulty accessing financing for housing other than mobile homes, which may account for the growth in mobile homes over single-family detached housing. Because mobile homes are considered personal and not real property, the inability to secure financing for built housing negatively impacts the asset accumulation of Lower and North Central Richland families.

The opposite has been true in the Northeast and Northwest planning areas, where single and multi-family housing has increased at almost double the rate of mobile home units (Figure 13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single Family, Detached</th>
<th>Duplex or Multi-Family</th>
<th>Mobile Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-77</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>-8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Richland</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 13. Percent change in the number of housing units by type from 1990 to 2000 by planning area

RESPONSE TO SPRAWL

The County Council enacted a vision for land use and growth within the County. That vision, embodied in the Plan, describes rampant and inefficient development (sprawl) in the Northeast, I-77 Corridor, and Northwest planning areas of the County. Those planning areas are described as well-to-do with good infrastructure and services. It further describes the Lower, I-20 and North Central planning areas as slow growing, economically depressed and populated
disproportionately by Black County residents. These planning areas are described as having much less infrastructure and services as compared to the other planning areas. The County Council’s plan for growth seeks to respond to some of the consequences of sprawl – its infrastructure costs and loss of open space. It does so, however, without any recognition of the vast differences in growth and development patterns as they are described in the Plan.

The Plan focuses largely on neighborhood and village design (i.e., how to configure streets to ensure a more urban design in existing towns and where and how new “villages” should be constructed). These existing and new villages would be denser and less sprawling, have walkable neighborhoods and mixed uses (residential, retail, etc.). To help accomplish its land development vision, the County Council has developed a draft zoning ordinance.

Development Incentives and Disincentives

The draft zoning ordinance is directed at land developers. It would enact a loose system of incentives and disincentives – a carrot and stick approach – for land development. As a result, it would accept a purely market driven strategy to reduce the occurrence of sprawl and preserve open spaces. The incentive scheme would make development easier and more profitable in “villages” – the geographic places identified in the Plan for development. The draft zoning ordinance includes relaxation of maximum density requirements. But to promote denser, less sprawling developments, the draft zoning ordinance would codify more stringent design guidelines (i.e., zero lot line development to keep parking behind buildings). The disincentives to sprawling development include an increase in the minimum lot size in rural areas, outside of designated villages, from ¾ acre to 1 acre. There would also be a small lot size increase in the low-density single-family residential zoning category.

To protect green space (to keep rural areas rural), the zoning ordinance disallows specific actions – structure and vegetation removal immediately adjacent to the waters edge. To help preserve some open space, it requires a small set aside for open space for large developments. Not discussed in the zoning ordinance, but discussed in the Plan, is infrastructure development in “villages” and traffic calming.

Of particular note with regard to these incentives and disincentives is that they do not appear to specifically address the extent of sprawl in the Northeast, I-77 Corridor or the Northwest. While they provide incentives to direct development to identified villages, they do not limit development to villages. As long as there is a market for sprawling development, developers are free to create subdivisions, although it might cost them more to do so. As long as the Northeast, I-77 Corridor and Northwest planning areas are attractive to county residents, they are also attractive to developers. Sprawl can and will continue with its attendant costs and inefficiencies.

39 Of the existing villages prioritized two are in Lower Richland – Eastover and Hopkins. These are both designated “non-employment villages.” Eastover is an incorporated area within Lower Richland. Eastover has already received new public housing development with residents relocated from a demolished housing project in Columbia. The Plan uses Eastover as an example of town and country planning. It aptly describes Eastover as a depressed area and focuses on how it might benefit from the development of a “trail system” to attract people to the town to foster economic growth.
As long as the Lower, I-20 Corridor and North Central planning areas are less attractive to County residents, they will see less development. The Plan does not describe any commitments to the development of infrastructure or services to make the depressed parts of the County more desirable for positive growth activity. Nor does the draft zoning ordinance contain any significant incentives for such development in depressed areas.

Furthermore, neither the Plan nor the draft zoning ordinance suggest a recognition of some of the inequities of sprawl in terms of its impact and costs and the need to engage in land use planning that reverses these inequities. They do not identify either the need for or strategies to connect unemployed Richlandites to jobs, to ensure that County services are equitably provided and that the costs of sprawl are not inequitably borne by those with the fewest resources.

The Plan provides no analysis of the impact of the proposed village development incentives in poor, depressed parts of the County. Remembering that Lower Richland is predominantly Black, has few jobs and only slow development, it appears unlikely that the new villages proposed for Lower Richland will be built. If they are built, what will the impact of village development be on residential and school segregation and access to opportunities, such as jobs and infrastructure needs? Based on the lack of services, jobs and transit, in addition to a poorly performing school system, there appear to be few market incentives for Whites and businesses to relocate to these villages. Therefore, these villages may become pockets of Black concentrated poverty. It is also unclear how the Plan and draft zoning ordinance will impact the asset wealth of otherwise low-income Black property and land owners. For example, it does not specifically analyze how the changes in minimum lot sizes or riparian corridor protections will affect poor rural landowners’ asset values.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The County Council has identified the reduction of sprawl as a policy goal. Sprawl, however, is not a natural process. State and national policies including tax, development, transportation policies, and governmental and service delivery structures have all helped to create the ideal environment for sprawl. Due to the relationship between policies that have denied Blacks mobility in housing, quality schools and good jobs, they are disproportionately isolated from opportunities in communities of concentrated poverty. These conditions are a root cause of White and business flight from urban areas and, therefore, a major contributing factor to sprawl. Because existing policies which cause sprawl lead to conditions that encourage more sprawl, it cannot be stemmed without confronting access to opportunities for Blacks and the de-concentration of poverty. Ignoring the policy choices which created these conditions, as well as their severity, the Plan currently exacerbates current racial and economic inequities and fails to impact sprawl.

Overall, the Plan discusses the infrastructure needs and attractive qualities of the planning areas, including schools, water and sewer services, affordable, quality housing and highway construction and roadway improvements. While these elements impact the occurrence of sprawl and development, neither the Plan nor the draft zoning ordinance appear to impact these realities sufficiently to impact sprawl and development.

Funneling growth to specific nodes (“villages”) may improve the County’s ability to provide services and infrastructure to those villages. It is, however, unclear whether density limits will result in substantially less development in areas currently suffering from the consequences of sprawl, such as the Northeast. Moreover, it does not appear that the Plan will improve services and infrastructure for poor communities or those poor communities will be free of the financial and opportunity costs of sprawl. It is equally important to examine the extent to which development might be planned in a way that may benefit residents who require it.

Even assuming the town and country approach would benefit some rural poor residents of the County by creating conditions for improved infrastructure and services in villages, it is unclear whether the conditions are sufficient to attract new development. In addition, the Plan relies heavily on private investment to be implemented. Whether private investment is likely to flow to poor, predominantly Black parts of the County is far from clear. Private investment is more likely in parts of the county already experiencing rapid growth. It may be that the only housing developed in poor rural areas and the ultimate impact of such policies is the further isolation and impoverishment of Black rural and urban residents and the continuation of sprawl.

The County Council is embarking on a policy reform strategy that has the effect of denying Black and poor people access to the opportunities of growth in the County. The County Council should examine these questions before adopting its draft zoning ordinance or otherwise beginning to implement the Plan. Once it has a better grasp of the impact of sprawl on all communities in Richland County, including areas of concentrated poverty, it can then consider how best to ensure that the benefits of growth and the responses to sprawl are equitably shared by all county residents.

The County Council should revisit the Plan and the draft zoning ordinance in light of these considerations. It should study the impact of the Plan’s vision and draft zoning ordinance on communities in need of access to opportunities and development. It should identify policy alternatives to promote development for communities which need it and to reduce the impact of the costs of sprawl on low-income communities. To accomplish these tasks, it should invite the active and meaningful participation of impacted communities. By doing so, the County Council is more likely to develop a vision and policies that will reduce sprawl and promote positive development for the County, benefiting all county residents.