

Lynchburg, South Carolina

Community Profile

At-A-Glance

Type of Govt.:
Council

City population:
559 (2,000 vicinity)

County: Lee

County Population: 20,119

City Land Area:
1.13 square miles

Median Household Income: \$19,250
(South Carolina Average: \$43,329)

Median House Value: \$65,600
(South Carolina Average: \$133,900)

Unemployment Rate:
10.2% (08Q3)

National Register Resources:
Lynchburg Presbyterian Church
Tanglewood Plantation

Natural Resources:
Lynches River

Community Resources:
Lynchburg Community Development Corporation
Lynchburg Teen Center

Website:
www.lyncburgsc.com

MAYOR:
ISAAC THOMPSON

TOWN REP:
DOROTHY MILLS

ARTS COORDINATOR:
JULIANNE CARROLL



CITY LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Town of Lynchburg in Lee County, South Carolina is located at the intersection of Highways 341 and 76 in close proximity to Interstate 20 and the Lynches River, for which the town is named. Neighboring communities include Bishopville (county seat), Mayesville, Timmonsville, Olanta, Sardis, Shiloh, and Lamar. Lynchburg is approximately half way between the larger cities of Sumter and Florence along Highway 76, and is considered a transitional community between the Midlands and Pee Dee regions of the state, with its cultural and geographical features being closely aligned with both.

Lynchburg is a small farming village organized around the railroad line that once provided the means for getting goods to larger markets. The railroad was removed several years ago and the railbed converted into a green-space with beautification. Within the town limits, there are a number of agricultural lands still in use or lying fallow. There are very

few businesses within the town limits and Lynchburg does not have a local school or health facility, although it does have an active U.S. Post Office and is the site for the county's alternative school. There are many vacant buildings on Main Street and houses throughout the town that have burned or are deteriorated beyond repair.

HISTORY

Lynchburg was first chartered as a community by the South Carolina Legislature in 1859, and subsequently incorporated as a town in 1905. Its history is closely tied to the history of Hwy 341, which was a dirt road as late as 1934. Originally known as the "Mecklenburg Road," it was the primary north-south route running from Charleston, SC to Charlotte, NC by way of Georgetown, Kingstree, Lynchburg, Bishopville, and Cheraw. Lynchburg grew up around the crossroads of the old "Mecklenburg Road" and the flourishing east-west rail line established in 1854 running from Sumter to Florence. The communi-

Lynchburg, SC

Community Profile

ty's history is also associated with the Lynches River and it is widely known that much activity took place along the river during the Revolutionary War. Early settlers in the area were Methodists and Presbyterians. One of the earliest known ministers in Lynchburg was Rev. W.W. Wilson from the County Kerry, Ireland.

Several prominent South Carolinians are associated with the Lynchburg community including "Cotton Ed" Smith who served as United States Senator from 1908 to 1944 and Alexander Coke Smith, a "brilliant preacher and leader of men," who served as Bishop of the United Methodist Conference from 1902 to 1906. "Cotton Ed's" proper name was Ellison Durant Smith and he helped to establish both the Farmer's Progressive Association and the Southern Cotton Association. He also sponsored the Muscle Shoals project, a forerunner of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and served as chairman of the Senate's Interstate Commerce Committee. Perhaps most importantly, while in the Senate, he authored the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 which established the county cooperative extension system through land-grant universities providing an agricultural and home economics agent to every county in the United States. Clemson University in South Carolina continues to operate one of the most innovative cooperative extension programs in the country today.

Lynchburg also has a rich history associated with African-American heritage, especially during the 20th century. Though little documentation is currently available describing this history, when asked what Lynchburg was like fifty years ago, elderly black residents recall that it was a thriving town with commercial businesses, merchant stores, a grocery store, a drug store, a doctors office, and restaurants owned by both the black and white communities. People came from miles away to visit, shop, and eat in Lynchburg. In the black community there was a theater, night clubs, a baseball team, and several small transportation businesses that took people to Sumter, Columbia, and Myrtle Beach for work and recreation. The SC Mayors Institute staff have recommended that Lynchburg conduct an oral history project to formally document some of their stories while creating a series of African-American heritage resources that can be passed down for generations to come.



The Lynchburg Presbyterian Church, circa 1850s, is one of the oldest standing structures in the Lynchburg vicinity.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CLIMATE

Lynchburg is a diverse community comprised demographically of 73.6% African-American, 17.2% Caucasian, and 8.5% Hispanic residents who lack many of the basic needs for survival such as access to food, health care, and jobs. The average commute time to work or shop for people living in Lynchburg is 35-40 minutes by car. As a result, the community suffers from a high degree of poverty. In recent years, the Lynchburg Community Development Corporation has been working to reverse these trends by creating better living standards, educational resources, and new businesses in the local area. Unfortunately, the few small businesses that do exist in Lynchburg (4 or 5) employee less than 15 full time workers, most of whom are not from the Lynchburg area.



This image illustrates a home that has been burned in Lynchburg and needs to be replaced.

Lynchburg, SC

Making Downtown User-Friendly

Many of the businesses that once operated in Lynchburg were “mom and pop” operations with a single proprietor. As the people aged, they were no longer able to keep their businesses running. Their children moved away to be near shopping centers, medical care, recreation, and more. Lynchburg now has little to offer for encouraging the younger generations to move back home. As a result of the loss in population, the Lynchburg schools were closed and many houses in town were abandoned. Today, Lynchburg youth must travel out of town to school where they attend with students from Bishopville and other surrounding areas. Elderly residents are also at a disadvantage. When the time comes for them to require around-the-clock nursing care, they must go to Sumter or Summerton to find the nearest nursing home. A small facility in or near Lynchburg would be a great opportunity to provide local jobs and care closer to home.

Despite adverse conditions, the people of Lynchburg are friendly and committed to caring for each other. During a SC Mayors Institute public input session in early January the citizens said that Lynchburg could be characterized as being a place filled with “lots of love.” Moreover, the people have worked hard to take advantage of any opportunities they can to improve their quality of life. They recently received more than \$275,000 from the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority to rehabilitate 18 homes for low-income senior citizens. However, more is needed. It is estimated that more than half of their population currently lives in homes that need repair and/or mobile homes. Many of these structures do not even meet the basic requirements to be eligible for insurance.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Beginning in April 2008, the town of Lynchburg has actively been working on community and economic development issues and has sought out meetings with various organizations and government agencies who may be able to help them achieve their goals. In April, they met with the South Carolina Office of Rural Health and Clarendon Memorial Hospital to begin discussions about developing a health clinic in Lynchburg. A suitable location and funding have not yet been acquired, but once these are in place, Lynchburg is confident that these organizations will help them move forward with the project.

They have also met with the Rural Crossroads program leaders from the SC Department of Commerce, the SC Association of Community Development Corporations, Care South Medical Services out of Bishopville, and the Francis Marion Trail Commission among others. The SC Dept. of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism recently assisted the community with a new design for a park with baseball fields, basketball courts, picnic shelter, playground, and restroom facilities to be located near the edge of town. The US Department of Agriculture came to Lynchburg in July 2008 to conduct a Community Awareness Day which assisted residents in learning how to qualify for available loan programs for affordable housing. It is evident that Lynchburg is eager to find assistance wherever they may be able to get it.

All of these efforts have grown out of a community needs assessment and rural development plan that the Mayors Assistant, Dorothy Mills, organized several months prior to the first meeting with outside entities in April. Major initiatives outlined in the plan include the following:

- 1. Improve county and city services available within the Lynchburg area.**
 - a. Create local government jobs that would employ at least 50% Lynchburg residents and provide health insurance and other important benefits
 - b. Improve emergency services including police and fire protection, while also developing Disaster Relief resources.
 - c. Provide environmental services that would include landscaping, cleaning, and sanitation to help create a more attractive and safe community.
- 2. Establish a local health clinic**
 - a. Create local jobs that would employ at least 50% Lynchburg residents and provide health insurance and other important benefits
 - b. Provide 24-hour healthcare with physicians and certified medical staff
 - c. Offer internal medicine, pediatric, dental, vision, x-ray, and diabetic services
 - d. Include a health and fitness center with opportunities for community wellness education
 - e. Acquire ambulance and facility van to be used for medical care

Lynchburg, SC

Community Profile

3. Build a strip mall shopping center to accommodate basic needs in the local community. Services should include:

- a. Grocery store
- b. Drug store
- c. Dry goods store (department)
- d. Dry cleaners
- e. Laundry (with on-site attendant)
- f. Florist (full service with delivery)
- g. Transportation (bus and taxi service)

4. Develop affordable single-family housing with the following guidelines:

- a. One story dwellings- 1,400-1,500 sq. ft.
- b. 1 to 4 bedrooms to accommodate 1-8 persons per family
- c. Central HVAC, phone, cable, electric utilities
- d. Energy efficient- double-pane windows
- e. Smoke detectors and water sprinklers
- f. Neutral color floor coverings- carpet and vinyl
- g. Cemented sidewalks and driveways

5. Develop multi-family housing (apartments) with the following guidelines:

- a. Four two level buildings with 4-8 units per building
- b. 2-4 bedrooms per unit
- c. Fire rated walls and floors
- d. Central HVAC, phone, cable, electric utilities
- e. Energy efficient- double-pane windows
- f. Smoke detectors and water sprinklers
- g. Neutral color floor coverings- carpet and vinyl

6. Establish a community library

- a. Employ local residents
- b. Provide computer access to residents

7. Establish recreational opportunities

- a. Create town recreation department to employ local residents
- b. Develop park with picnic ground
- c. Develop tennis courts, swimming pool, basketball courts, baseball fields etc.

8. Develop an assisted living/nursing care facility

9. Recruit hotel franchise to build in-town

10. Develop concert hall and/or multiplex theatre.

CURRENT DESIGN ISSUES

As indicated in the aforementioned rural development plan, Lynchburg has many needs. One strategy they have developed for beginning work towards their goals is to first establish a small multi-use demonstration project that would provide a sampling of the affordable housing, healthcare, retail, and community facilities required to meet the pressing basic needs of the citizenry. It is their hope that a project of this nature could effectively illustrate what is possible in Lynchburg while becoming a catalyst for broader revitalization and investment throughout the entire community. The SC Department of Commerce has agreed to help the Town of Lynchburg try to recruit new jobs and businesses to the town if they can establish a plan for development and begin to secure funding.

During the SC Mayors Institute public input session in early January, residents were asked what strengths the community had to build upon. Many responded by saying that Lynchburg had a significant culinary tradition centered around “home-cooking” and baked goods. In fact, the town has sold chicken dinners, barbecue, fish dinners and more in the past to help raise funds for community projects and even to pay-off town debt at one-point in time. One gentleman in the audience suggested that establishing a bakery in town could provide an opportunity for jobs while supplying breads and other goods to a regional market. This idea was combined with another identified need to have job-training and leadership development opportunities for youth. One little girl in the audience said that she would like to participate in a youth leadership program focused on the culinary arts. One idea that has already been explored and which the residents of Lynchburg seemed highly interested in was for the multi-use demonstration project to include a community kitchen whereby older residents could train younger residents in their culinary traditions.

Additional Info.

During the Community Awareness Day hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in July 2008, 59 community members responded by applying for help. Some could not apply due to poor credit, land and home ownership problems, etc.

Questions for the Mayors Institute

Lynchburg: Creative Design for Basic Needs

This is believed to be a major opportunity for Lynchburg to build upon its existing strengths. Lynchburg even has a famous former citizen, Cake Man Raven, who has made it big on the Food Network from his local Lynchburg culinary roots. If a Lynchburg bakery could be established in town, it is possible that he could be contacted and convinced to serve as the spokesperson for this worthy effort.



1. What would be the most appropriate site for development of a mixed-use demonstration project that could meet some of Lynchburg's basic needs?

2. What would a project of this nature actually look like in plan and elevation? How can we incorporate elements of local vernacular architecture to create a "homegrown" design?

3. How could this project be employed as a way to help Lynchburg begin capitalizing on their rich culinary traditions?

4. What are other ways Lynchburg could capitalize on the culinary arts?

5. What would be the most appropriate section of town to begin concentrating additional development in and then building out from there?

6. What features of our community should we seek to protect or preserve as development occurs?

7. How can we go about documenting and celebrating more of Lynchburg's African-American heritage in a significant way?

Illustrations



Downtown business space



Downtown business space



Downtown business space

Lynchburg, SC

Creative Design for Basic Needs

Illustrations



Lynchburg's Jefferson Memorial Park on Main Street



Lynchburg Teen and Senior Center on Magnolia Street



Vacant business space on Magnolia Street

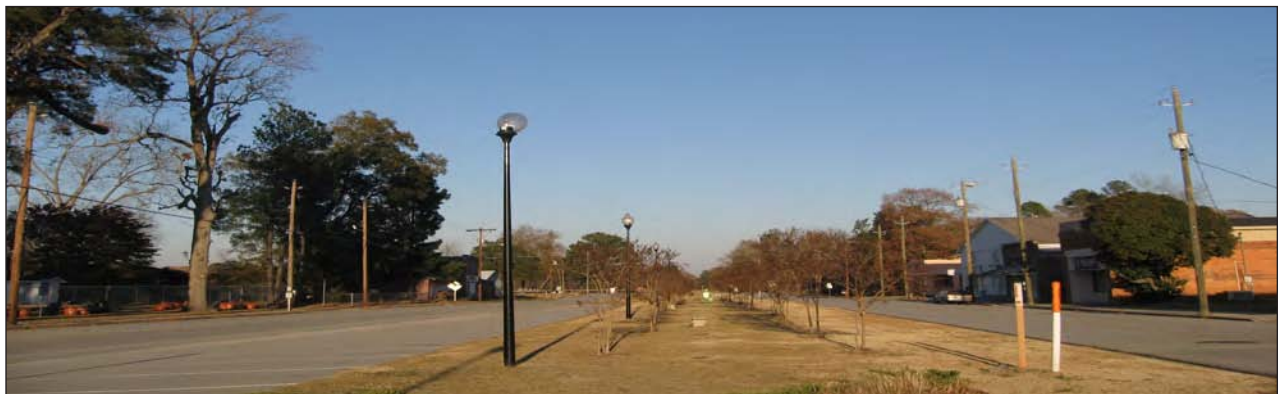
Lynchburg, SC

Creative Design for Basic Needs

Illustrations



Main Street looking west



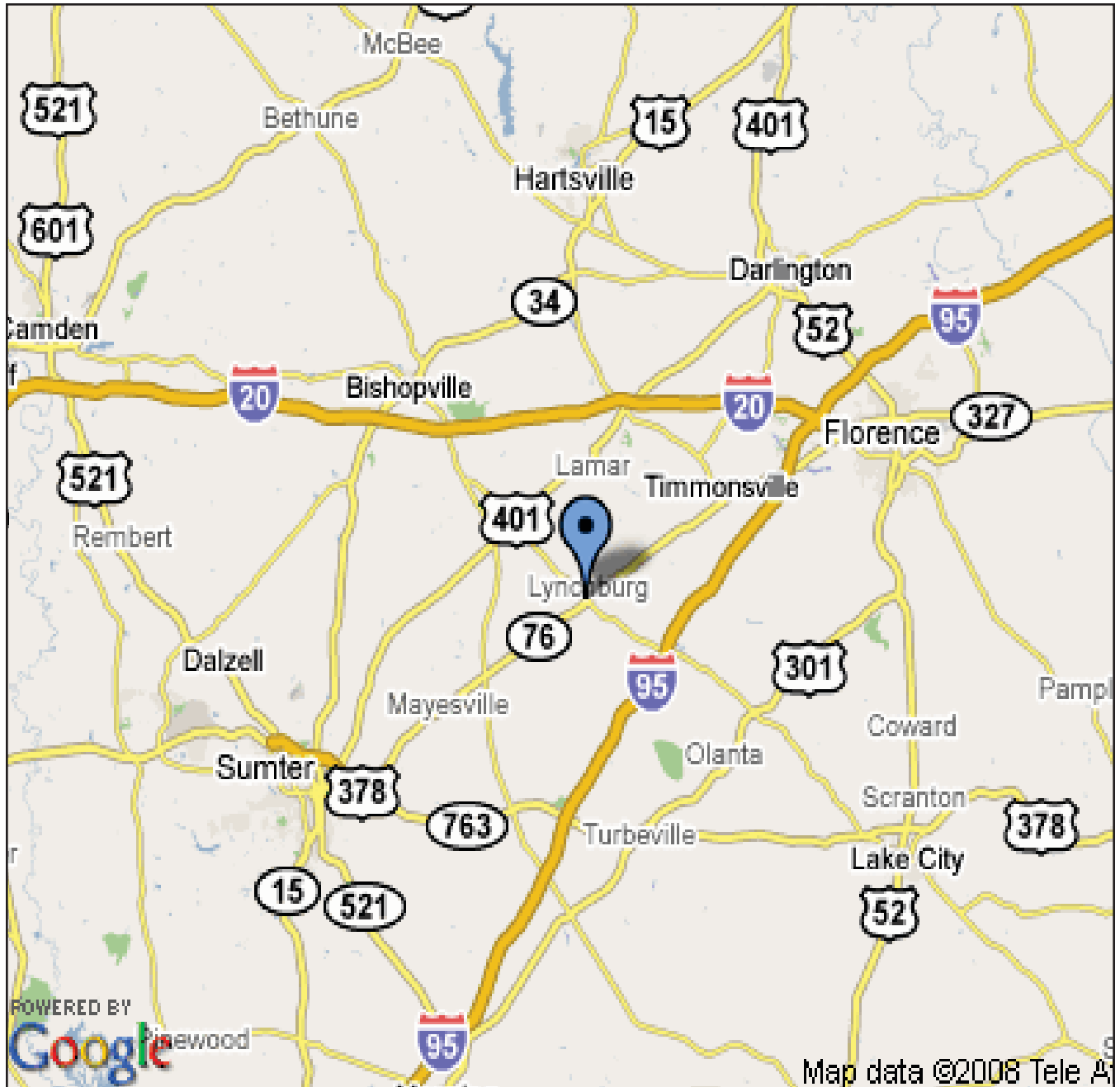
Downtown at Main and Magnolia Street looking east



Business located on Main Street

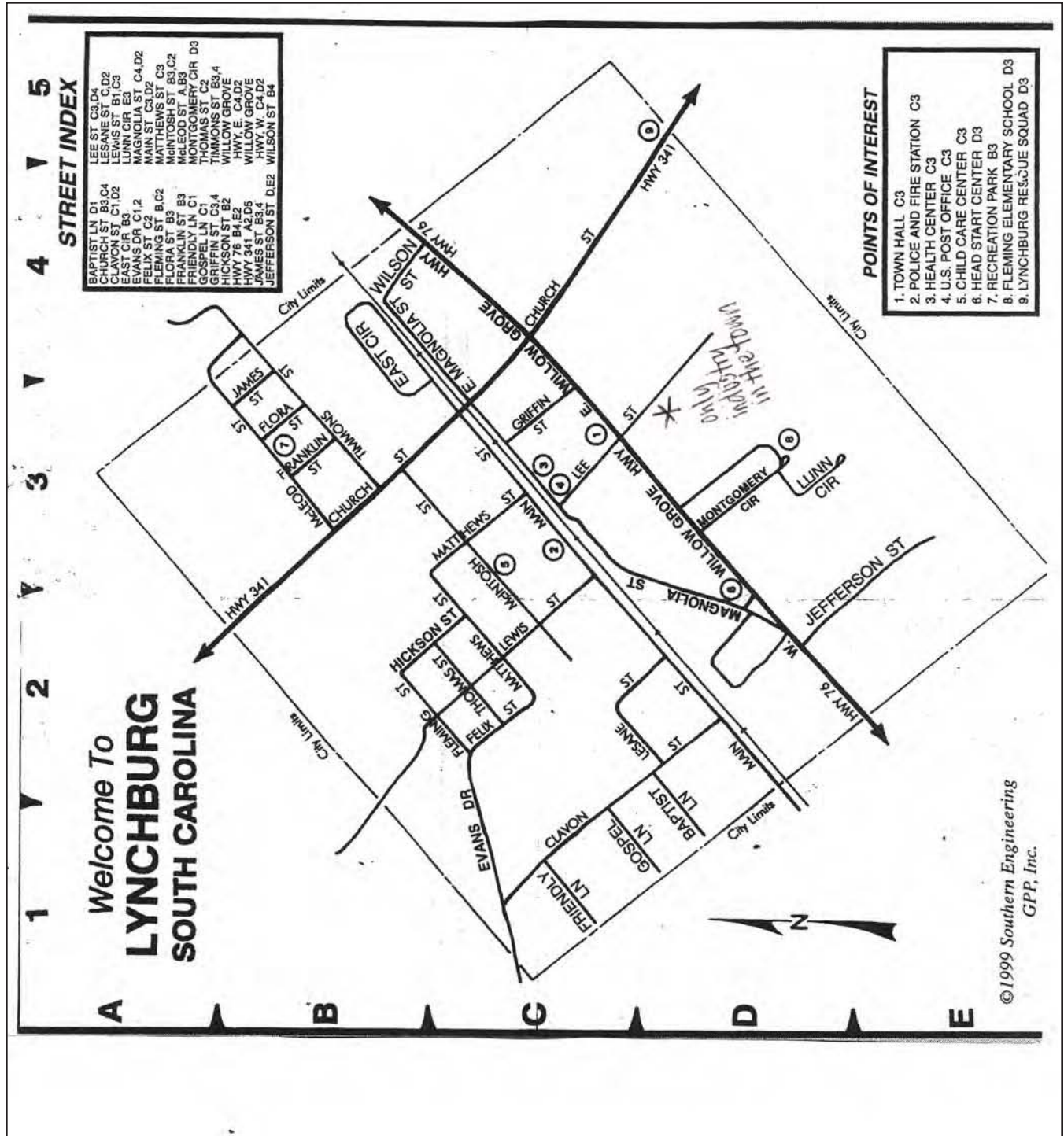
Lynchburg, SC

Regional Map



Lynchburg, SC

Street Map



Lynchburg, SC

Overview Aerial Map



Lynchburg, SC

Detail Aerial Map



Lynchburg, South Carolina

Record of Public Input

SCMI Meeting, Jan.6, 2008

What 3 things about Lynchburg are you most proud of?

- history
- great diversity, a melting pot of a community
- the new park
- the beautification committee
- safe and secure community
- the potential for development
 - eco tourism
 - fishing hole, historical significance because of President Roosevelt
- *there is potential to develop partnerships with surrounding communities to develop eco tourism for the entire county
- the location; it's an area primed for growth
- it's a quiet, safe town with lots of great potential
- already has roads and great public infrastructure
- a very strong sense of faith and community; a very strong social component

What would you tell an outsider about Lynchburg?

- Great place to visit
- Welcome visitors
- Low crime rates
- Small, but close to everything
- Quiet
- A beautiful place to live
- In the middle of everything
- Lack of recreation-outdoor and indoor
- No shopping
- No transportation
- Nothing for the youth to do
- Once had an incredible and very talented baseball team

- Need: a library, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, gymnasium, baseball, a large meeting space for people to come and continue their education
- Great, secure community for retirees
- "We might not have lots of places to shop, but we have lots of love in Lynchburg. And in time, it will grow."
- Have no places to circulate the money within Lynchburg and we need to find ways to do this
- In the past, Lynchburg had strong community leaders that were available to guide, teach and lead the youth of the community, there doesn't seem to be any sort of center for youth and place for them to go for guidance.
- The people of Lynchburg really care and have concern for each other and that is one of the greatest things about this community.
- "Lee County is its own worst enemy."
- "We must always work together."
- "The devil travels at night."

What businesses do the people in Lynchburg want? How could we make businesses more affluent?

- Great need for a supermarket/grocery store
- A fast food restaurant
- 3 restaurants in Lynchburg: Pot Belly, Luncheonette, Carrie's Corner

- Establish a pharmacy- maybe the supermarket could incorporate it
- Lynchburg in need of new buildings for businesses; development along HWY 76 and HWY 341 and downtown areas
- Recreation buildings for seniors and youth

What's something that could happen downtown that would make you want to spend time downtown more often?

- Recreation
- Shopping
- Housing- income level in this area is not conducive to home ownership...start off with affordable rental housing units.
- Intersection of HWY 76 and HWY 341 is a major crossroads and has great potential for development
- Consider building the town UP! w/ beautiful architecture and a variety of retail and business
- "When things look good, you feel better about yourself and your community."

What buildings in other communities do you find beautiful?

- A nice town hall
- The opera house in Sumter
- Angel Restaurant in Sumter
- Jim Clyburn's Wateree RGA Building
- Older, historic buildings and structures
- Maybe the town needs to consider a theme for the downtown development. You don't want the town, buildings and architecture to have

Lynchburg, South Carolina

Record of Public Input

SCMI Meeting, Dec. 1, 2008

an inconsistent look. Take into consideration the way historic Lynchburg used to look ex. Re furnished train depots, trains, etc. If we want to honor Lynchburg's history- the buildings should be similar looking- have a cohesive appearance

- WHAT LYNCHBURG NEEDS IS INDUSTRY

What are the physical features of the community should the people of Lynchburg be concerned about?

- The dilapidated and abandoned housing
- With regards to future development and the town looking to expand the city limits, there is a concern over the need for new roads.
- There are no sidewalks in residential areas or on HWY 341
- Limited sidewalks on HWY 76
- No safe areas to ride a bike. If you ride a bike, you have to ride in the street
- No chance for children to ride their bikes to school
- People would use bike paths
- There is a major concern over the need for alternative transportation infrastructure

What areas of land or environmental areas need to be protected?

- "None"
- Lynchburg not interested in protecting farmlands within the town limits
- The town needs development so bad that the community

is willing to give up vacant, open land space

- The town seems to be eager to develop almost every square inch within the town limits

What would be one catalyst for revitalization that people in Lynchburg would like to see?

- A shopping center; strip mall
- A grocery store
- Industry
- A school
- A library
- Housing
- Recreation

If Lynchburg had a mixed use development project, where would the people like to see it go?

- Main Street or Magnolia Street, across from Town Hall and the Teen Center
- HWY 341 or HWY 76 corridor
- Some place with enough parking spaces and available land for a parking lot

What are the strengths of Lynchburg that could be built upon?

- The love
- Strong social networks that exist
- A franchised business, a smaller chain, a locally owned business- maybe a Bojangles
- A bakery- could provide jobs around the clock (24 hours); could provide baked goods-

pastries and breads- to local businesses and local citizens

- Several types of bread: sour, rye, sliced, texas toast!
- Cake Man Raven's Lynchburg connection
- Creating a youth leadership development program in Lynchburg
- A culinary arts program

Final Thoughts:

- There is a desire for both blacks and whites to come together in this community. All citizens should want betterment for the town of Lynchburg; everyone should want the vision
- There are still strong racial divisions that are preventing this
- There is a desire for something within the town so that the citizens don't have drive 20 miles to take their kids to do something. Ex. Movie theater, roller rink or a bowling alley
- need more recreation opportunities. Ex. New baseball field, new basketball field, a swimming pool, a YMCA facility
- First things first, start circulating the money with the town
- Need a shopping center with a grocery store and jobs and housing first and THEN you get the other things.
- The need for another gas station in Lynchburg- more than one is desperately needed and wanted so that there is no longer a monopoly and there is the opportunity for competitive pricing.

Lynchburg Historic Resources

Lynchburg Presbyterian Church

Lynchburg Presbyterian Church, built in 1855, is significant as an excellent example of late antebellum Greek Revival ecclesiastical architecture. It is one of the few antebellum buildings still extant in the original community of Lynchburg (now South Lynchburg). The sanctuary was built by members of the congregation, with the assistance of members of the Lynchburg Methodist Church and several slaves and free blacks as well. The church is a two-story temple-form Greek Revival style building with an engaged tetrastyle portico featuring four massive stuccoed solid brick columns. Set upon an open pier brick foundation and sheathed in six-inch wide weatherboard, the building is a local interpretation of the Tuscan order of architecture. A small trian-

gular-shaped, bifurcated and louvered ventilator interrupts the wide expanse of the portico's pediment. Corner and wall pilasters adorn each side elevation. The interior is primarily a single room with plaster walls and twenty-one foot high ceiling, undecorated except for a large circular plaster medallion in the center. Paneled wainscoting surrounds the interior space along the outer walls, while a paneled balustraded gallery supported by square pillars with capitals extends along the sides of the interior space. The back half of the church's three-acre lot is the church cemetery, with randomly placed plots and monuments of various designs and dates from the mid-nineteenth through the late twentieth century. Listed in the National Register October 1, 2004.

Ellison Durant Smith House, Tanglewood Plantation

(Ellison Durant Smith House) Tanglewood Plantation was built by the Rev. William H. Smith (1819-1882) c. 1850. A two-story clapboard structure, Tanglewood was the home of several outstanding South Carolinians who were involved in both religious and political affairs. Among these were Ellison Durant "Cotton Ed" Smith, United States Senator from 1908 to 1944, and Alexander Coke Smith, Bishop of the Methodist Conference from 1902 until 1906. The house is typically Greek Revival in style, featuring a two-story pedimented front portico with symmetrical bays on either side, double entrance on both floors, and interior decorative motifs. The

portico is supported by four square columns on freestanding brick piers and is divided into an upper and lower gallery. The house is supported by brick piers, the spaces between which have been filled in with new brick construction. Twin interior chimneys with corbeled caps protrude through the roof at its crest. There are also two exterior chimneys. A two-story projecting wing was added to the west façade in 1915, as well as a kitchen ell alteration to the south (rear) façade. Outbuildings include a pine clapboard kitchen building, a round-cut log constructed smokehouse, and a one-room schoolhouse. Listed in the National Register September 22, 1977.