The Business Workshop, held at Cuthbert Community Center, had over 20 business stakeholders in attendance to help identify issues, potential actions, and assets to businesses in Summerville. The following sections summarize the received feedback. Please note that the following are summaries of feedback provided by attendees and in no way represent ideas or recommendations from the consultant.

Issues & Concerns

Land Use & Development
The participants noted a current lack of density downtown including the amount of office, event, restaurant, and retail options available. Additionally, the lack of a healthy commercial tax base downtown was a concern. Participants also voiced their desire for a set of design standards for future development.

Housing & Economic Development
The most-discussed issue related to economic development was that the Town is not attracting enough new businesses and jobs. Additionally, participants voiced an underutilized Oakbrook area and concern whether existing local businesses will survive changes to downtown. Housing concerns of the participants included the shortage of affordable housing.

Parks and Open Space
The key issue among participants was the Sawmill Branch Trail and their desire for it to be expanded and better connected to town amenities. Additionally, participants voiced their desire for better utilization of the Ashley River while preserving it as a natural resource.

Community Character & Services
The most-discussed community issues among the participants were overcrowded schools and the need for a recycling and garbage plan. Additionally, residents feel a lack of cooperation among communities and that regional policies have not been consistent with the town’s growth. Desire for the preservation of the historical district was also voiced.

Transportation & Mobility
The most-discussed issue among participants was traffic congestion. Additional key issues were the town’s limited public transit, the desire for improved pedestrian/bike networks, and the improvement and/or repair of road infrastructure.

Priority Actions
When asked what specific actions should be taken to improve the Town, participants suggested ideas about development, parks and recreation, arts, culture, and more. Ideas included:
Land Use & Development
- Incentives for high-density mixed use and multi-family residential (3)
- Downtown hotel (2)
- Pass the UDO (2)

Parks and Open Space
- Expand Sawmill Branch Trail connectivity (6)

Housing & Economic Development
- Small business incubator (2)
- Create mechanism to fund economic development
- Expand ecotourism

Community Character & Services
- Cooperation and planning between municipalities (2)
- Development design standards
- Recycling program

Transportation & Mobility
- Complete Nexton/Maple St. extension (6)
- Complete Berlin G. Myers Parkway (4)
- Widen Hwy 78 (4)

Strengths & Assets
When asked what is best about Summerville, participants focused on the character, the people, and opportunity. Participants mentioned:

Land Use & Development
- Hutchinson Square
- Retail
- Low vacancy in Central Business District
- Solid infrastructure
- Wastewater capacity

Parks and Open Space
- Natural Beauty (11)
- Ashley River (4)
- Sawmill Branch Trail (3)
- Azalea Park (2)

Housing & Economic Development
- Affordability (2)
- Homes

Community Character & Services
- People and Community (9)
• Historical district (9)
• Location (6)
• Local business (5)
• Schools (3)
• History (3)
• Sense of place (2)
• Community events (2)
• Health care
• Police and fire
• Local sports and recreation
• Municipal transparency with residents