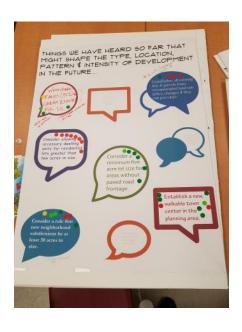# *Sandy Run Area Plan*

Summary of Input from Community Planning Workshop
January 10, 2019

A planning workshop was held at the Sandy Run EMS Training Room from noon to 4:00 p.m., and was attended by 32 people, including members of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the Sandy Run Area Plan (SRAP). The workshop was organized around three stations: one that focused on population and employment forecasts, demographics, and potential quality of life improvement for the community; one focused on transportation, with future traffic projections for two different land use scenarios, crash data and maps for 2013 through first half of 2018, and potential transportation improvements; and the last station focused on the two land use scenarios developed to illustrate the different impacts of future growth in the current dispersed low-density pattern compared to a compact town-center pattern, with information about potential land use policy changes.

At each station, participants "voted" on the lists of potential improvements and policies listed by the consultants and could add additional items to each list and vote on those items as well. Colored dots were used vote on improvements or policy ideas, with green dots for items the participant liked, red for disliked and blue for "maybe" votes. The lists for each station are summarized in Tables 1 through 3.   Exhibit 1 lists specific written comments added to maps and comment charts provided.

Many residents have said they moved to Sandy Run to "get away" from the chaotic activity of urban areas. They describe coming home to Sandy run as like "going back in time" to a slower, more restful lifestyle. Residents love the area's rural character, agricultural lands, and mature trees, and they want to preserve these assets.

Generally, growth is viewed with skepticism by most of the community members engaged in the public input process to date. Many commenters have pointed to other parts of the Columbia metropolitan area that have experienced rapid suburban growth, such as Columbia Avenue in Lexington County and Two Notch Road in northeast Richland County, as examples of what they do not want to occur in their community. Residents of Sandy Run love the solitude they find in their community; appreciate the beauty of the Congaree River, woodlands, creeks, and wetlands; and are dismayed at the prospect of cheaply-built, poorly-planned, clear-cut and mass-graded subdivisions and commercial development encroaching on their homes. Most residents accept that the area is likely to grow significantly in the coming decades, but they want that growth to improve rather than destroy the lifestyle they enjoy, and they want any new development to be something of which they will be proud.

Transportation

Traffic concerns are an important factor in the community's opposition to unplanned growth.   Again, they point to several traffic-clogged suburban highways around Columbia as examples of undesirable growth. Currently, incidents along I-26 frequently cause major GPS-

directed detours of Interstate traffic to US Highway 21 through Sandy Run, making local travel difficult for area residents. This concern is reflected in strong support for adding lanes to I-26 south toward Orangeburg to reduce congestion- and crash-related detours of traffic. Residents liked the idea of installing a roundabout (or rotary intersection, sometimes incorrectly called a traffic circle) at the current "Y" intersection of US 21 and US 76, just south of the Sandy Run EMS station.

While residents are concern about traffic, they do not generally support widening the highways and secondary roads in the community as a solution to traffic problems. While there is some support for safety improvements at key intersections, paved shoulders on the major routes for safety of motorists and cyclists, and extension and connection of dead-end frontage roads, the workshop participants were strongly opposed to widening US 21-176 to four lanes, and also were entirely opposed to widening Old Sandy Run Road to three lanes (by adding a continuous median lane for left turns).

Non-automotive travel is not seen as an important need by workshop participants. Express bus service to Columbia was the most disliked improvement idea for transportation, and a sidewalk on Old Swamp Road to Sandy Run K-8 School did not rate well, presumably due to a belief that low density and long distance makes it unlikely for students to walk to school.

Quality of Life

Quality of life improvements that received strong support were a weekly farmer's market, a local grocery store, and more local restaurants (although "chain" restaurants were the least supported idea in this area). A local high school has been a frequent topic of discussion, and is widely supported; currently, area high school students endure long bus rides to St. Matthews or long car rides to attend school.

A greenway trail along Sandy Run Creek was supported by more than opposed it, but a number of comments were made regarding private property ownership and some existing trespassing along the creek. For this idea to be pursued, it would be necessary to find a property owner willing to sell a strip of land or grant a public access easement for a trail along a section of the creek.

Land Use

More effective regulation of land use and development was generally but cautiously supported by workshop participants. Protecting rural character, screening storm water ponds, and requiring landscaped buffers around new developments were strongly supported. Where property has no paved road frontage, a five acre minimum lot size was generally supported for

any newly subdivided lots. Accessory dwelling units, new rental housing for area workers, and suburban-density (4 units per acre) neighborhoods were generally disliked.

<u>Visual Preference Survey</u>

Forty images of various types and densities of development were posted on a board for participants to vote on using red, green, and blue dots respectively for "dislike," "like" and "maybe." Appendix A contains the images that received all positive or neutral responses, Appendix B contains the images that got mixed reviews, and Appendix C contains the images that received all negative votes.

Appendix A contains images that received all positive comments were ones that illustrated low density rural agricultural scenes, rural residential vistas, and low-density single family neighborhoods. Trails, open space, parks, and playground scenes also were rated entirely positive.

In Appendix B, mixed results were seen for images of urban neighborhoods with on-street parking, large ballfield recreational areas, low intensity village-style development of one to one-and-a-half stories, and images containing sidewalks (presumably because these seem to be more urban places).

Appendix C contains images that received all negative responses were those depicting densely developed urban areas, images with many cars (parked or in motion) on the streets, urban neighborhood sidewalk scenes, large urban parks, and large parking lots.

All of the input received suggests that intense residential and commercial development is not desired by most Sandy Run residents. Commercial growth ideally should be directed toward low-intensity village-style architecture, and should include landscaping and green space. Residential development should be on large lots, should preserve existing trees, and should include landscaped buffers with existing trees preserved along road frontages.

Table 1

What Would Make Sandy Run a Better Place to Live?

Like	Dislike	Maybe	Potential Improvements	% Like	Like - Dislike	Support Index*
12	0	0	Weekly Farmers Market	100%	12	24
11	0	1	More businesses: Local restaurants	92%	11	23
11	1	0	More businesses: Grocery Store	92%	10	20
10	1	0	A high school in Sandy Run	91%	9	18
7	1	5	More businesses: Medical clinic	54%	6	17
6	0	0	Post Office (write-in)	100%	6	12
4	0	0	Charter School (write-in)	100%	4	8
3	0	2	More businesses: Expanded hardware/landscape/farm supply store	60%	3	8
6	4	2	A Greenway Trail on Sandy Run creek	50%	2	6
5	3	0	Encourage more businesses in Sandy Run (see specific businesses)	63%	2	4
3	2	2	More recreation park space (ball fields, courts)	43%	1	4
1	0	0	Truck Stop (write-in)	100%	1	2
2	2	2	Artists Co-op (pottery, glass blowing, sculpture, etc.)	33%	0	2
1	4	2	A public park with gardens, picnic area, trails	14%	-3	-4
2	6	1	Access to Congaree River for canoeing and kayaking	22%	-4	-7
3	10	2	More businesses: Hotel	20%	-7	-12
1	8	1	More businesses: Chain restaurants	10%	-7	-13

* Index Points:	Like	2
	Dislike	-2
	Maybe	1

Table 2

What Transportation Improvements Are Needed Most?

Like	Dislike	Maybe	Potential Improvements	% Like	Like - Dislike	Support Index*
14	0	0	Widen I-26 towards Orangeburg	100%	14	28
8	0	1	Extend the frontage roads on I-26	89%	8	17
8	0	0	Intersection improvement: Old State Road at Old Sandy Run Road	100%	8	16
8	2	0	A roundabout (traffic circle) at US 21/US 176 intersection	80%	6	12
5	0	1	Paved shoulders to Old State Road for safety and cyclists	83%	5	11
1	0	0	School Zone Signs on Old State Road (write-in)	100%	1	2
2	1	0	Bike path on Old State Road (write-in)	67%	1	2
3	2	0	Intersection improvement: Old State Road at Old Swamp Road	60%	1	2
3	2	0	Traffic Signal at Old Sandy Run and Old State Road (write-in)	60%	1	2
3	4	0	Improve the I-26 Interchange at Old Sandy Run Road	43%	-1	-2
1	2	0	Intersection improvement: Old State Road at Savany Hunt Creek Road	33%	-1	-2
1	2	0	Intersection improvement: Old Sandy Run Rd at Valley Ridge Road	33%	-1	-2
1	2	0	Intersection improvement: Valley Ridge Road at Sonntag Lane	33%	-1	-2
1	4	0	A sidewalk on Old Swamp Road to Sandy Run School	20%	-3	-6
0	3	0	Intersection improvement: Old State Road at Livingston Road	0%	-3	-6
1	6	3	Widen Old State Road to 4 lanes	10%	-5	-7
0	7	0	Widen Old Sandy Run Road to 3 lanes	0%	-7	-14
0	10	0	Express Bus to Columbia	0%	-10	-20

* Index Points:	Like	2
	Dislike	-2
	Maybe	1

Table 3

What Land Use Changes Should Be Considered?

Like	Dislike	Maybe	Potential Improvements	% Like	Like - Dislike	Support Index*
13	0	1	Stormwater Ponds should be discouraged within 100 feet of roads	93%	13	27
10	0	0	Make protecting rural character a priority in land use policy	100%	10	20
9	0	1	Require Landscape Buffers between adjacent development	90%	9	19
7	0	0	Leave the rivers and swamp alone	100%	7	14
6	0	0	Minimum five acre lot size for areas without paved road frontage	100%	6	12
6	2	0	Establish a new, walkable town center within Sandy Run area	75%	4	8
3	0	1	Woodcreek Farms, Phase 1 vs 2, examples of good vs bad development {1}	75%	3	7
5	2	1	Require new neighborhood subdivisions to be a minimum of 30 acres	63%	3	7
1	3	0	Grandfather all exisiting lots and parcels from changes in regulation	25%	-2	-4
2	6	0	Provide high quality rental housing for nearby workers	25%	-4	-8
1	5	0	Protect Sandy Run Creek swimming area and improve for public use	17%	-4	-8
0	8	0	Allow accessory dwelling units for lots of two acres or more	0%	-8	-16
0	11	0	Allow new neighborhoods up to 4 houses per acre if on sewer	0%	-11	-22

* Index Points: Like   2
                 Dislike -2
                 Maybe   1

{1} Subdivision on Spears Creek Church Road in NE Richland County; Secret Cove Lexington County cited as another good example

Exhibit 1

Sandy Run Planning Workshop Comments

Comments written on Land Use Boards:

Grandfather commercial property from zoning and land use changes.

No new subdivisions at all!

No mobile homes. No HUD homes. Limits on lot size reduction.

Sandy Run Creek areas are privately owned.   No trespassing for swimming.

Comments written on Sandy Run Area Map:

Old State Road at Columbia Road needs improvement

Old Sandy Run Road at Old State Road needs improvement

Minimize impact on roads thru zoning for new development

Limit secondary accesses thru shared access roads for residential development

Extend 3 lanes on I-26 towards Orangeburg
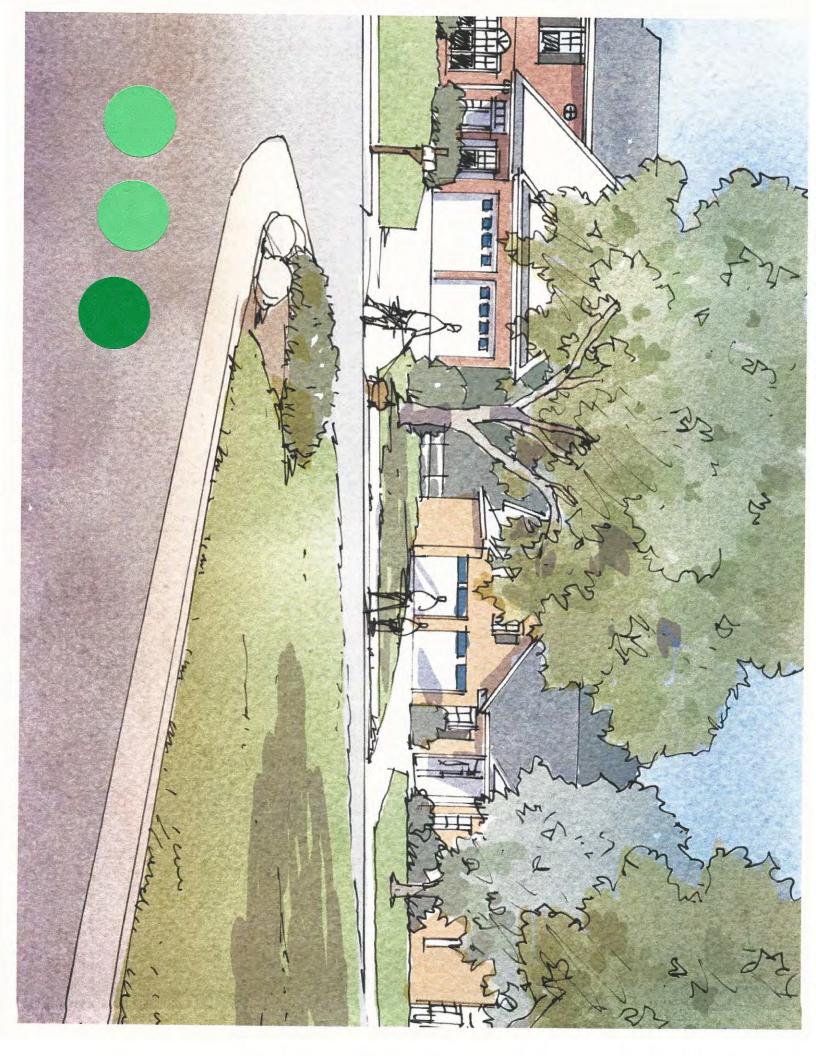
Need turn lane (right turn lane) onto Old Swamp from St. Matthews (northbound)

Add left turn lane on Old Swamp Road at Old State Road
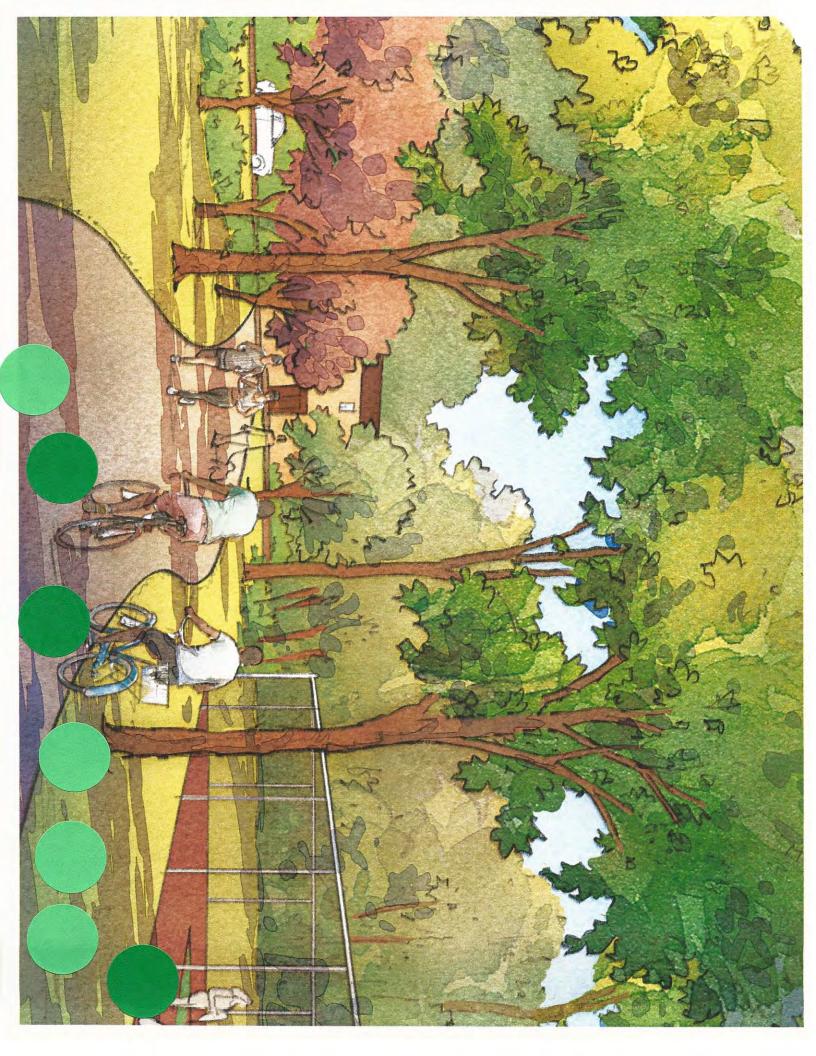
Cars parked on right of way at gas station at Old Sandy Run Rd create sight distance hazard
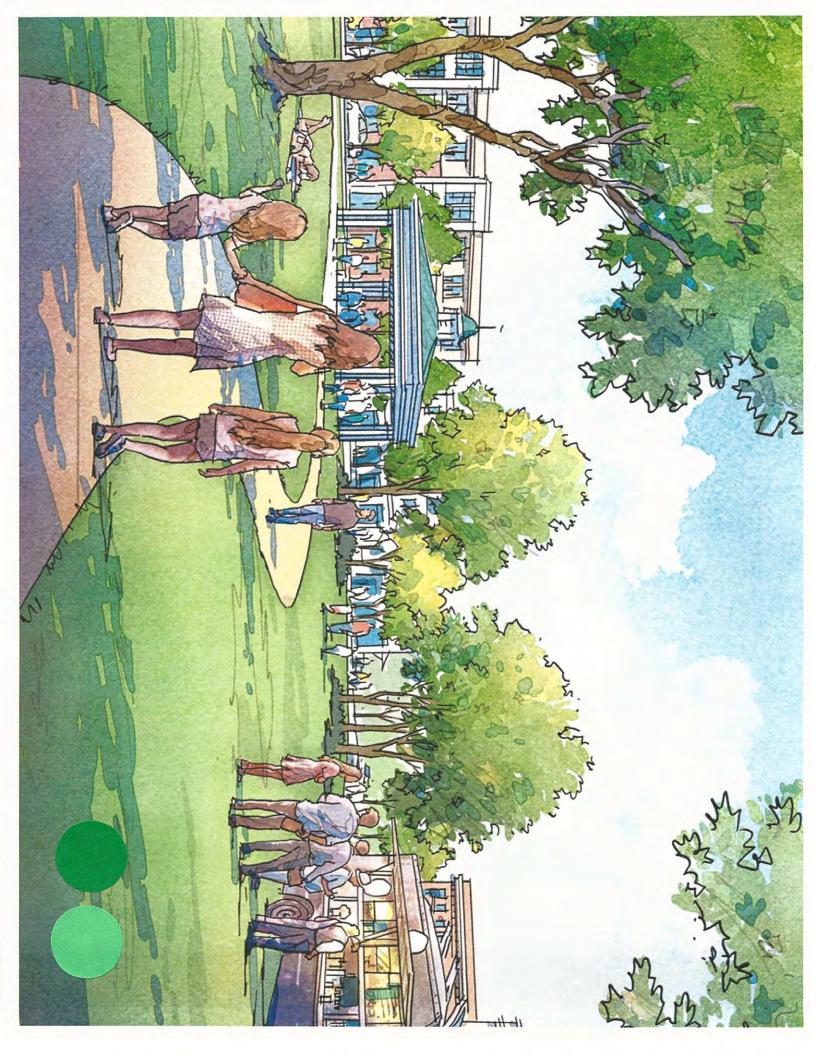
Appendix A
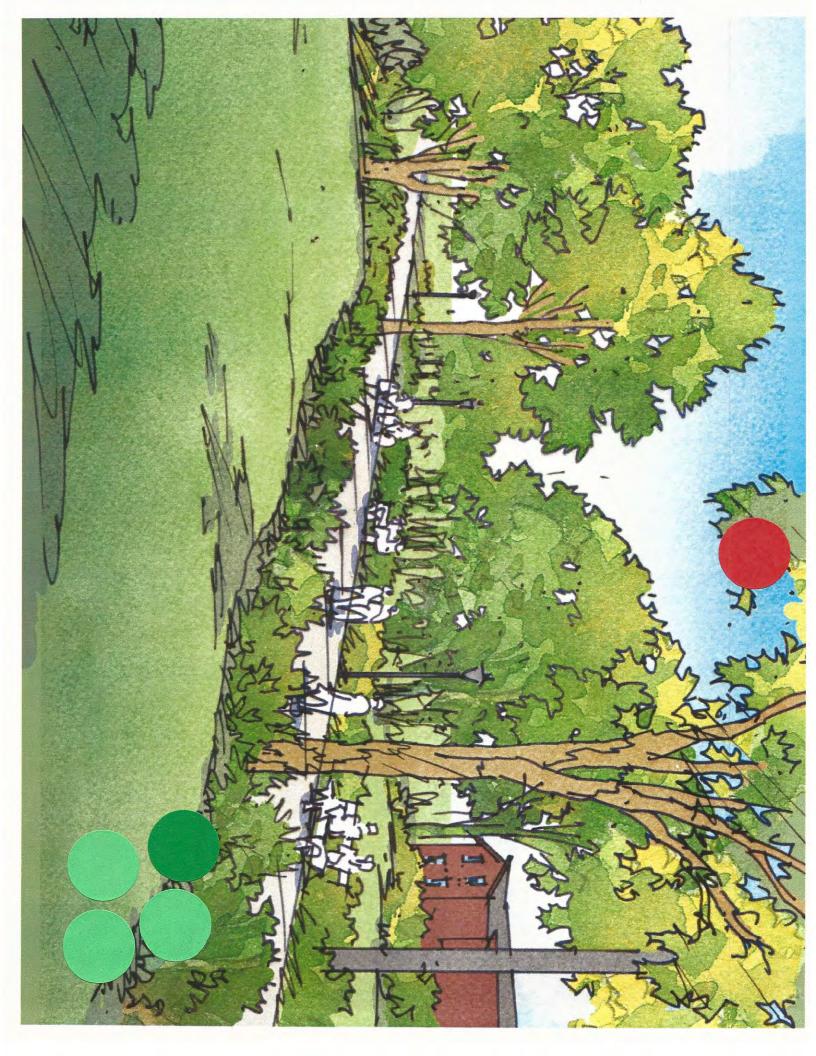
Visual Preference Survey

Positive Images
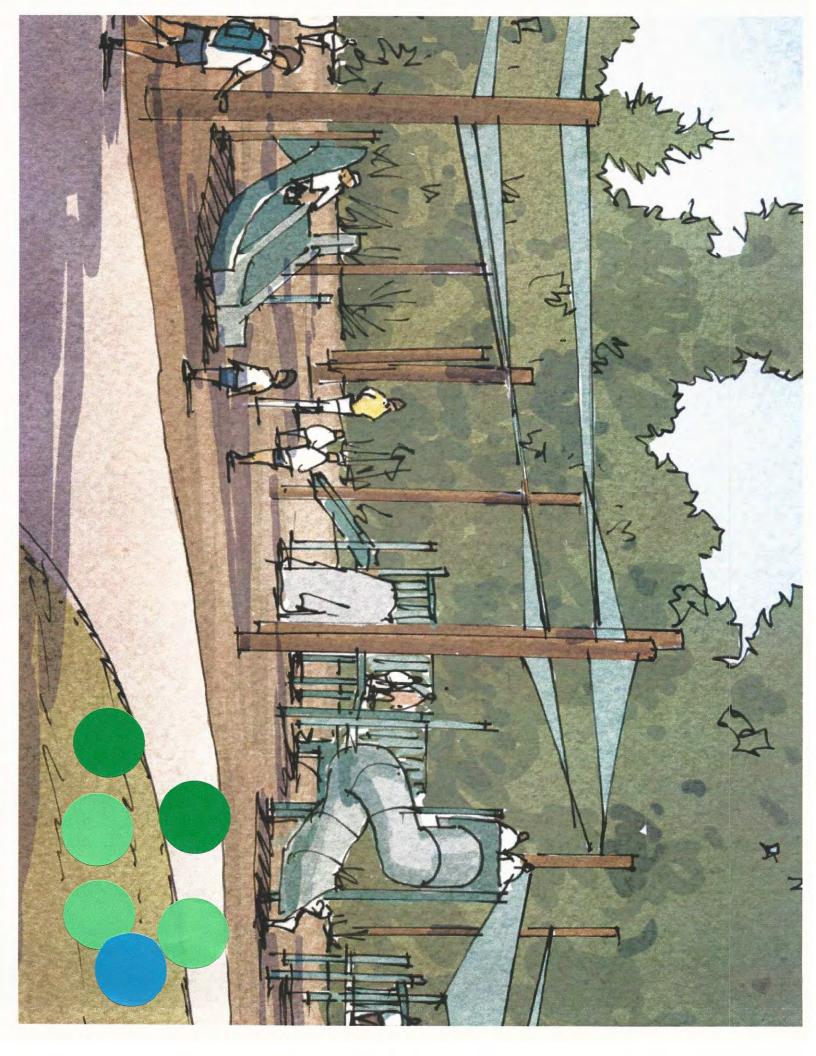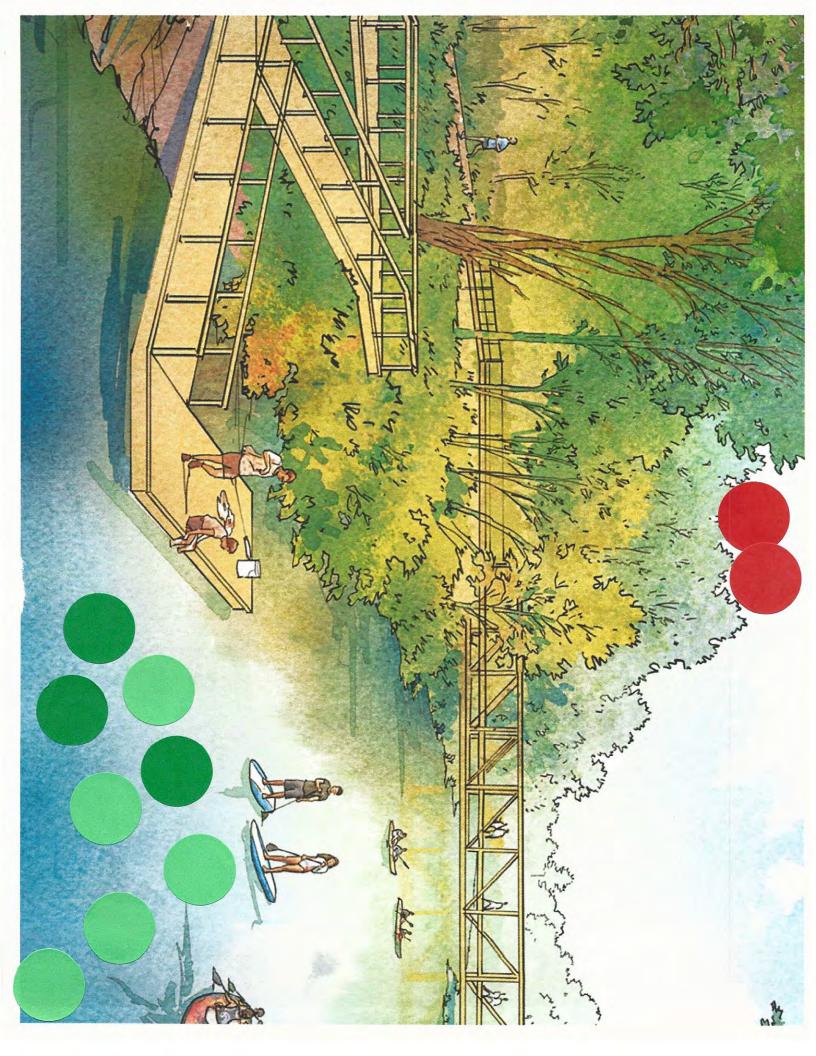
Appendix B

Visual Preference Survey
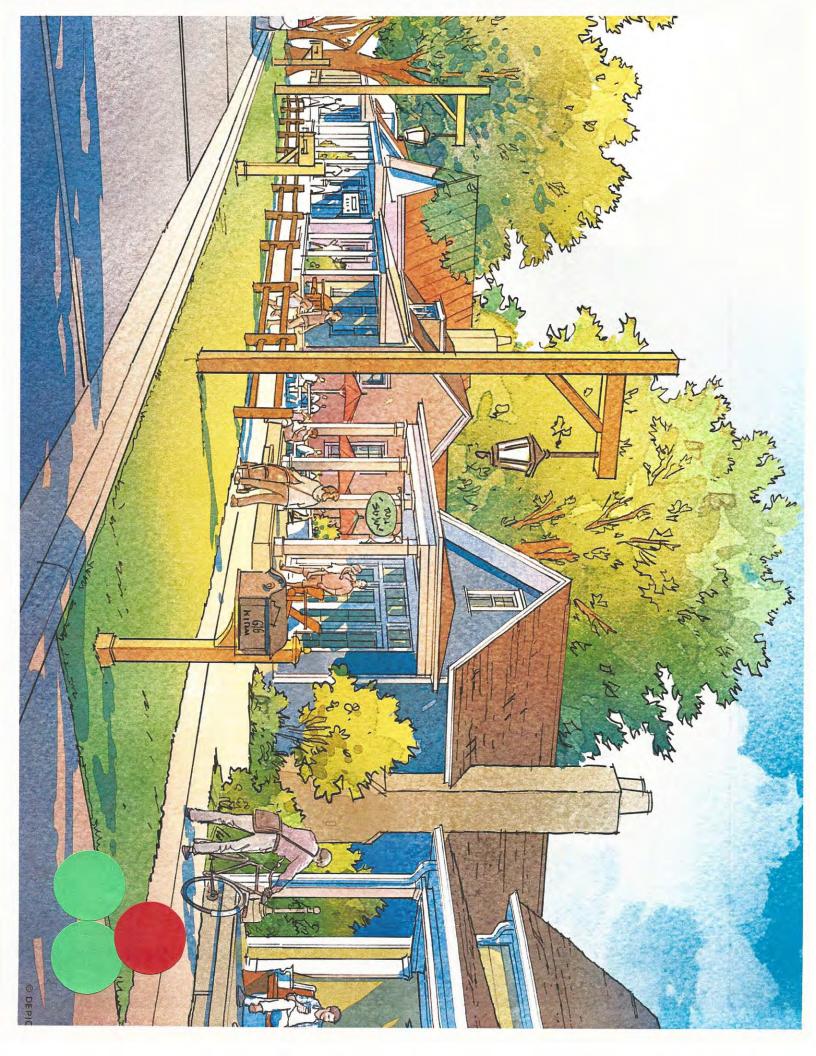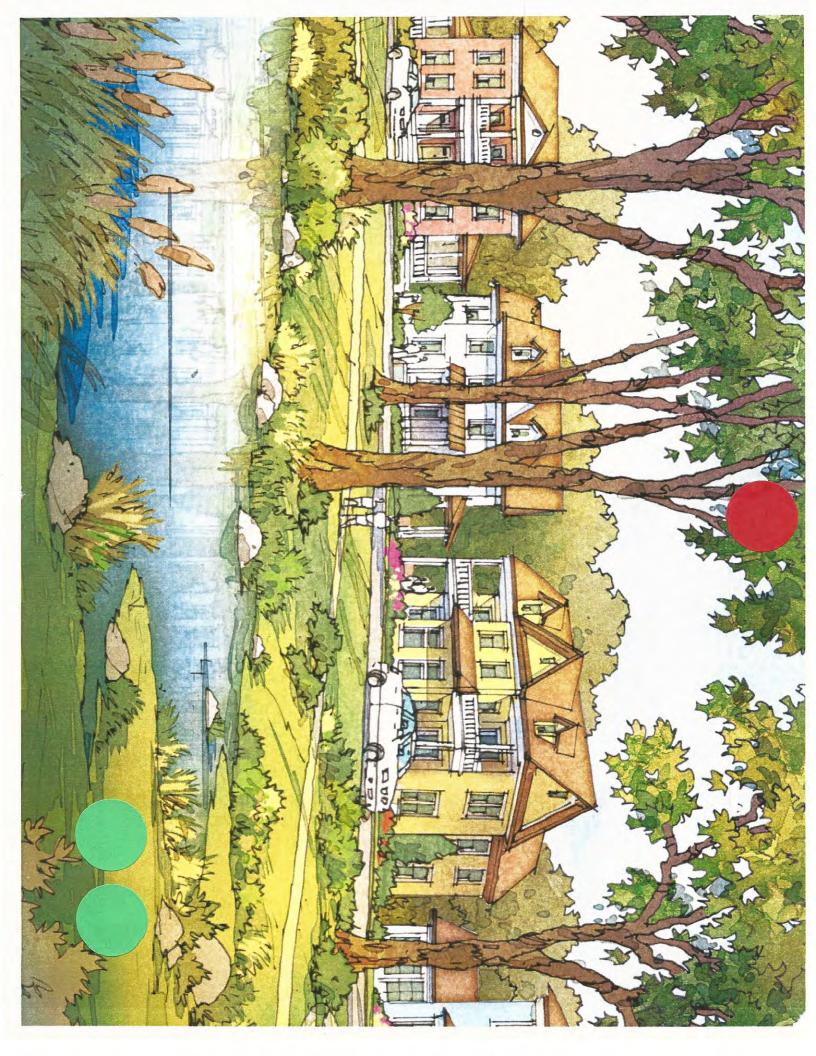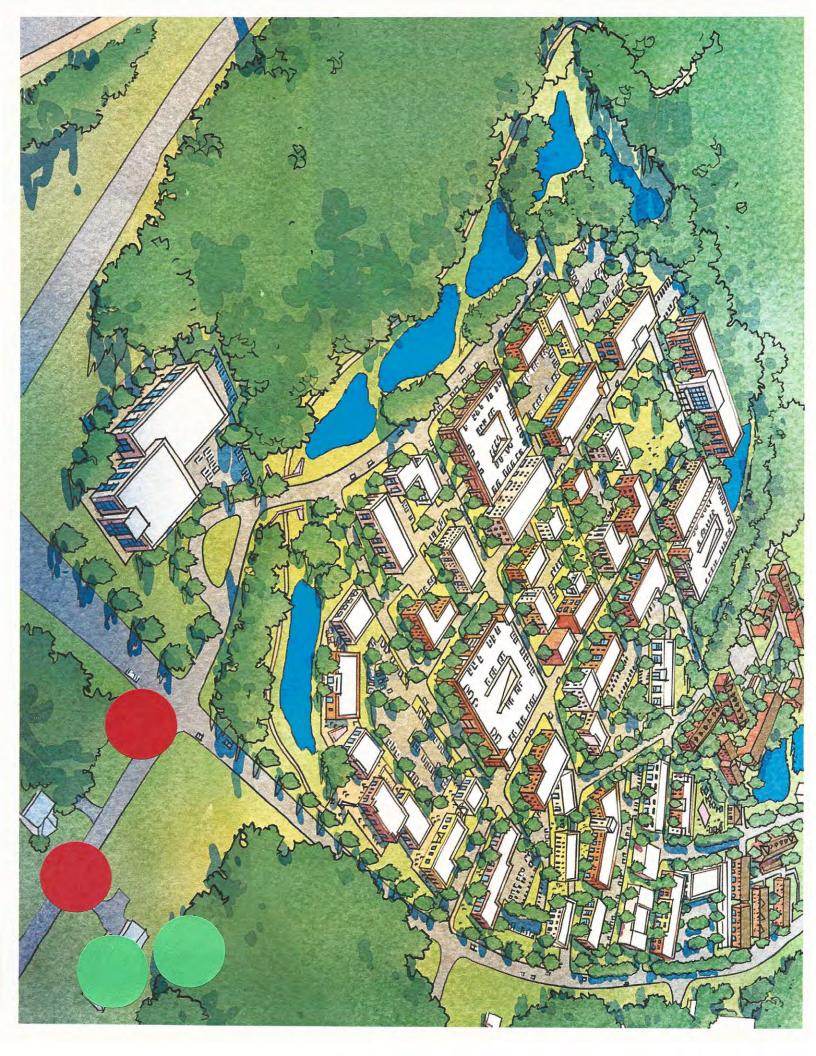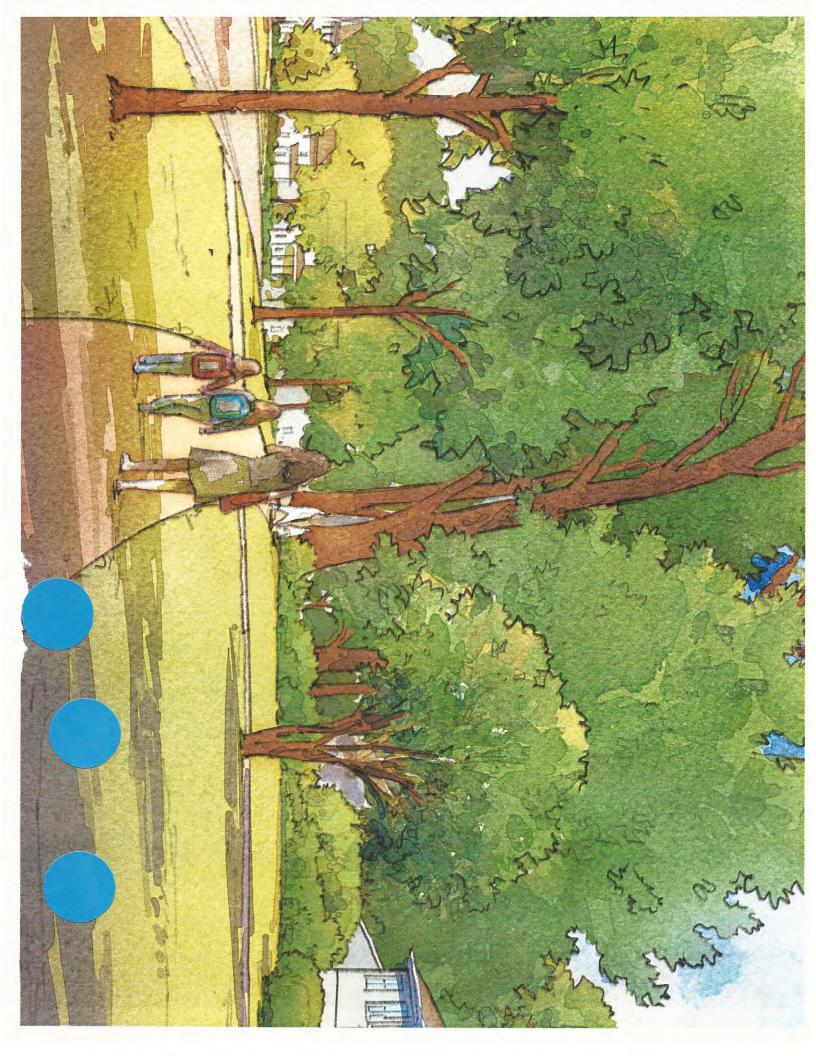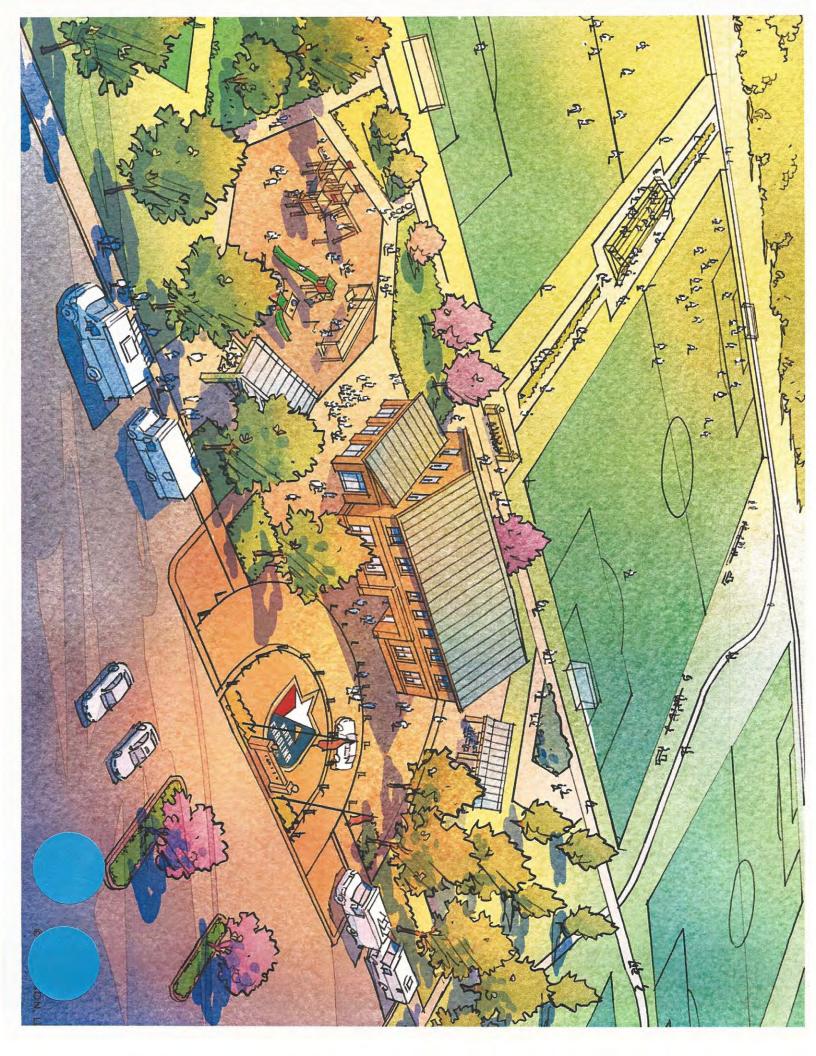
Mixed Positive and Negative Images

Appendix C

Visual Preference Survey

Negative Images