



FORT MILL
SOUTH CAROLINA

Town of Fort Mill

Project Proposals

JANUARY 20, 2023

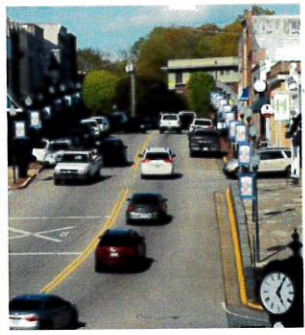
Guyonn Savage – Mayor

William D. Broom, II – Town Manager



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Introduction

January 20, 2023

Rep. R. Raye Felder
402C Blatt Bldg.
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Rep. Felder,

The Town of Fort Mill is excited to present our plans for three of our top projects we anticipate will fulfill critical needs for the residents of our growing community. During the last 10 years, our population has grown dramatically as residents are drawn by a variety of factors, including the Town's quality-of-life amenities, low taxes, strong mix of residential and commercial properties, availability of green space, proximity to I-77 and excellent school district. Of course, with this continued growth comes the challenge of maintaining services for our residents and business owners.

The Town has identified three projects which we believe will enhance the safety of our community, provide economic development opportunities, and provide better service to the needs of our population. These projects include enhancing our Main Street and downtown area with parking solutions, the creation of a new Operations Center for our Public Works and Utilities departments, and improvements to the Fort Mill Community Center. These projects demonstrate our priorities for the future of Fort Mill, by supporting local economic development, increasing safety for residents, and strengthening Town facilities to help us continue providing essential services to our community.

As part of this project summary, we will present the existing conditions in all three projects, the benefits of each project for our residents, and the estimated cost and timelines associated with each. Please let us know should you have any questions relating to these projects.

Sincerely,

William D. Broom II
Town of Fort Mill Manager

About the Town of Fort Mill

Established in 1873, the Town of Fort Mill is located just south of the North Carolina state line and close to the neighboring areas of Rock Hill, SC to the south and Charlotte, NC to the north. Take a walk through our historic downtown and you'll find some of the buildings on Main Street date back to the 1800s, providing evidence of the growth of the Town's business district during that time. Our Main Street continues to boast a robust array of restaurants and businesses offering local options for the residents of Fort Mill.

Steeped in history, the Town takes its name from a colonial-era fort built by the British and a grist mill on nearby Steele Creek. The Catawba Indians made their home here for many years. Scotch-Irish settlers began arriving in the 1750s and 1760s and a small settlement soon developed. In the mid-1700s Thomas Spratt and his wife Elizabeth became some of the first settlers in the area and their descendants still live here.

Fort Mill grew rapidly in the late 1800s as textile mills were established. After the establishment of the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company in 1887, Fort Mill grew into a major center for textile manufacturing. For more than 100 years, the company (later called Springs Industries) expanded. In 2006, Springs Industries merged with a Brazilian textile manufacturer to form Springs Global and eventually moved their office HQ facilities away from Fort Mill. While textiles are no longer the predominant industry in Fort Mill, the region's economy has continued to grow and diversify. Today, the Fort Mill area is home to major employers such as Piedmont Medical Center, Black and Decker, Daimler, Domtar, Lash Group, LPL Financial and Atrium Health.

Fort Mill has long benefitted from its geographic location and access to major transportation routes, from Nation Ford Road and the Catawba River to the Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta Railroad (now Norfolk Southern), U.S. Highway 21, and Interstate 77.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2021, more than 27,000 people now live within the Town's limits. This represents a 136% increase in the last decade.

Parking Solutions

Historic Downtown Fort Mill

In the last two years, more than 25 downtown commercial properties have exchanged hands. This includes several properties along Main Street that are undergoing significant renovations to feature new restaurants, retail, and office space in addition to including the former Springs Company headquarters, which features almost 80k square feet of commercial space and provides current leasable space and/or future redevelopment opportunities to the new investment owner.

As investments breathe new life into an already thriving downtown area, the number of cars and pedestrians is steadily increasing. This has led to a number of issues primarily surrounding safety. Parking spaces along the sides of Main Street create safety hazards as the street is too narrow to accommodate opening of car doors, too narrow to give proper visibility to people



moving among the parked vehicles or trying to enter one of the several pedestrian crossings across Main Street. The Town has taken several steps to try and enhance the safety of Main Street, including attempts to take over the street from SCDOT in order to remove and reconfigure vehicular areas on the street, projects to enhance the visibility of the crosswalks, as well as projects in conjunction with SCDOT to increase the pedestrian friendliness of the signalized intersection at the head of Main Street. While these projects have made some level of improvement, without additional significant enhancements to parking, the Town's downtown area will struggle to continue its

momentum as difficulties to safely navigate the area, along with difficulties to find appropriate parking, will deter visitors to downtown.

The Town has multiple projects, both short- and long-term, to address safety and encourage continued economic development by making improvements to parking in the downtown area. In the short-term, the Town is developing plans to remove parking from Main Street, expand the pedestrian and merchant realm along Main Street with widened sidewalk, which will result in both providing additional room for active space as well as result in a narrowed Main Street that forces vehicular traffic to slow down. This short-term improvement will greatly enhance the safety in the immediate area surrounding Main Street. In conjunction with the removal of parking on Main Street, the Town will undertake a streetscape enhancement project to provide a more accessible and enjoyable walk to existing parking areas just beyond Main Street. By creating a more inviting atmosphere and by including wayfinding signage (both vehicular and pedestrian scale), pedestrians will not be discouraged from having to walk the additional distance. These short-term enhancements are in the planning stages and will be implemented at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million.



Existing Parking Near Downtown

To provide long-term vitality to the downtown area, additional parking will be required. The Town has obtained a proposal to develop a three-story, precast concrete parking deck that will add approximately 100 new parking spaces to the downtown area at a cost of approximately \$10.5 million.

Timeframe

Short-term: Parking removal and streetscape enhancements

Long-term: Parking deck

Project Total

Cost

\$2,500,000

\$10,500,000

\$13,000,000

Town of Fort Mill Operations Center

New Town Facility for Public Works and Utilities

Prior to 2011, the Town of Fort Mill's Public Works and Utilities Departments operated from a joint site located at 307 E. Hill Street in Downtown Fort Mill. The site, which is 4.15 acres in total with an approximate usable area of only 2.5 acres, housed all of the Town's equipment and personnel for those departments. In 2011, the Town purchased an additional 1.9 acre site nearby at 131 E. Elliott Street to serve as an expansion and allow for the Public Works Department to utilize the 2.5 acre site and give the Utilities Department room to operate from the 1.9 acre site.



131 E. Elliott Street

In 2011, the Town of Fort Mill's population was estimated by the US Census Bureau to be 11,817. As of 2021, the date of the latest US Census Bureau population estimate, the Town of Fort

Mill's population is estimated at just shy of 28,000, which represents an increase of 136%. Personnel and equipment necessary to serve the Town has increased significantly since 2011 and, therefore, the Town is in the process of expanding to a new, joint Town of Fort Mill Operations Center.

The Town of Fort Mill Operations Center will be located on a soon to be acquired +/- 32 acre parcel outside of downtown. Locationally, this allows our staff and equipment to much more easily reach the various areas in Town without having to maneuver through the traffic and congestion found nearest to downtown. The new property will provide

the Town with a permanent home to its Public Works and Utilities Department, with room to expand as necessary with continued growth in the Town.

A new facility will offer the Town an opportunity to modernize equipment, provide ample space for the variety of functions served by the facility, both of which will result in a safer environment for the Town’s employees. Additional efficiencies are anticipated by recombining the two departments, which often work together to accomplish the Town’s goals and objectives.

The facility will also feature a larger enclosed warehouse for storage of materials and equipment as well as covered shelters for parking of large, expensive pieces of machinery and equipment that currently sit outside in the elements. This improvement will greatly extend the lifespan of our assets, which will come at a benefit to the Town’s taxpayers.

In addition to the previously mentioned benefits, the move of the Town’s Utility Department will open up the 131 E. Elliott Street property for redevelopment. The property is a former armory and is included on the National Register of Historic Places. The site is prime for an economic redevelopment opportunity that will expand the Town’s tax base as well as serve as a catalyst to expand the Town’s downtown area to the northeast.

The Town has procured the services of an architecture and design firm to begin the development of plans for the new facility. A site plan along with renderings of the proposed new facility are included on the subsequent pages. The new facility will initially encompass approximately 8.5 acres, include 10,000 square feet of office space, 20,000 square feet of warehouse space, and 20,000 square feet of covered, outdoor storage. The cost for the facility is currently estimated at \$17.5 million.

Timeframe

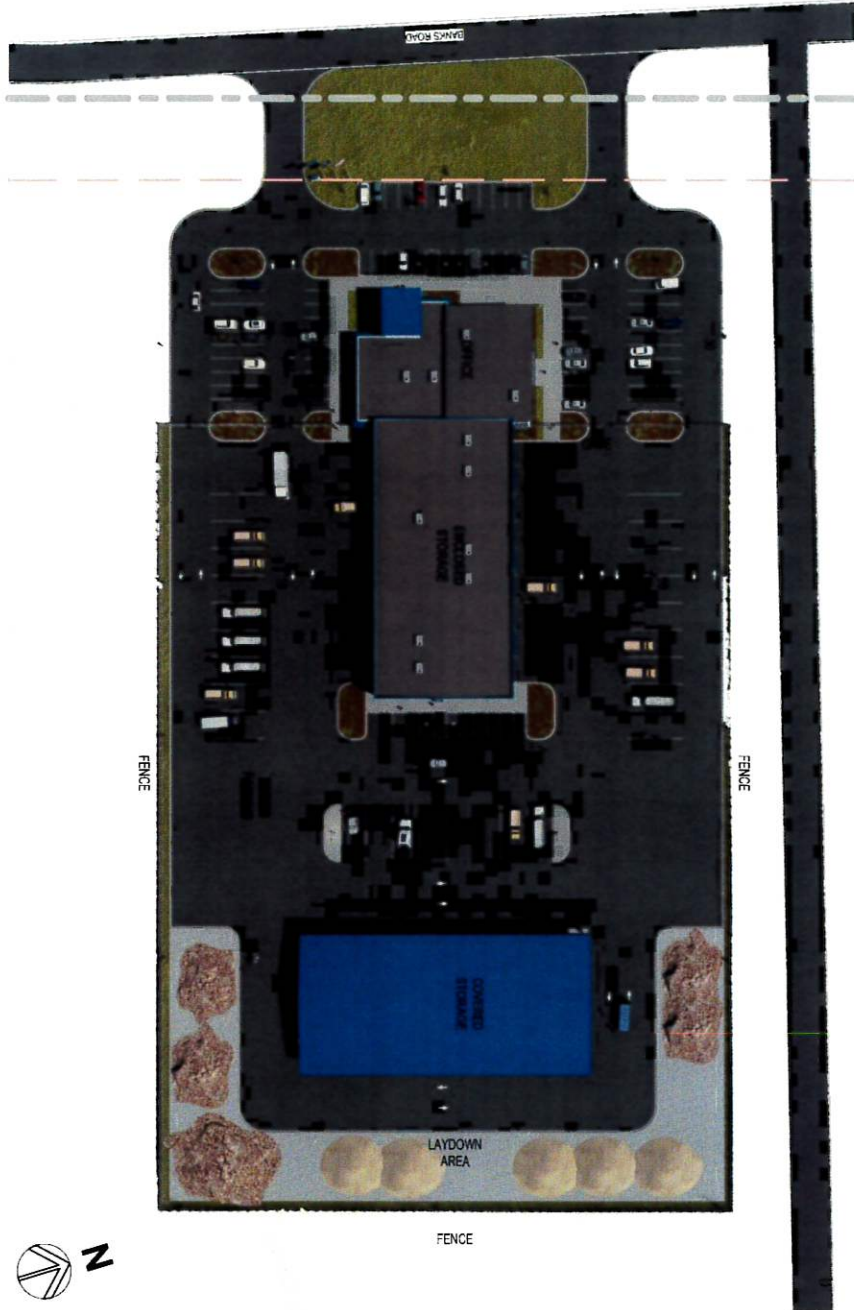
Underway: Planning and Design
Medium-Term: Construction of Facility

Project Total

Cost

\$1,250,000
\$16,250,000
\$17,500,000

**TOWN OF FORT MILL
OPERATIONS CENTER**
BANKS ROAD - FORT MILL, SOUTH CAROLINA





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**TOWN OF FORT MILL
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BANKS ROAD - FORT MILL, SOUTH CAROLINA**



Fort Mill Community Center

A Community Space for the Town of Fort Mill

The Fort Mill Community Center, previously known as Banks Street Gym, was constructed by the Fort Mill School District and opened on September 4, 1952. The gym was used by the Fort Mill School District until 2010 when the Town of Fort Mill began leasing the facility for sports programs. The property the building sits on was sold along with the remainder of the former 1952 Fort Mill High School site to a residential developer in 2012 for the purpose of building an age-restricted community called Millbank. As a part of that land deal, the Town negotiated with the developer and entered into an agreement to continue to lease the building and portion of property for the continued use in athletic programming for a period of time until, by no later than 2024, the developer would donate the property and the building to the Town. In 2022, the town was provided the deed to the building and a portion of land that included a 67-space parking lot.

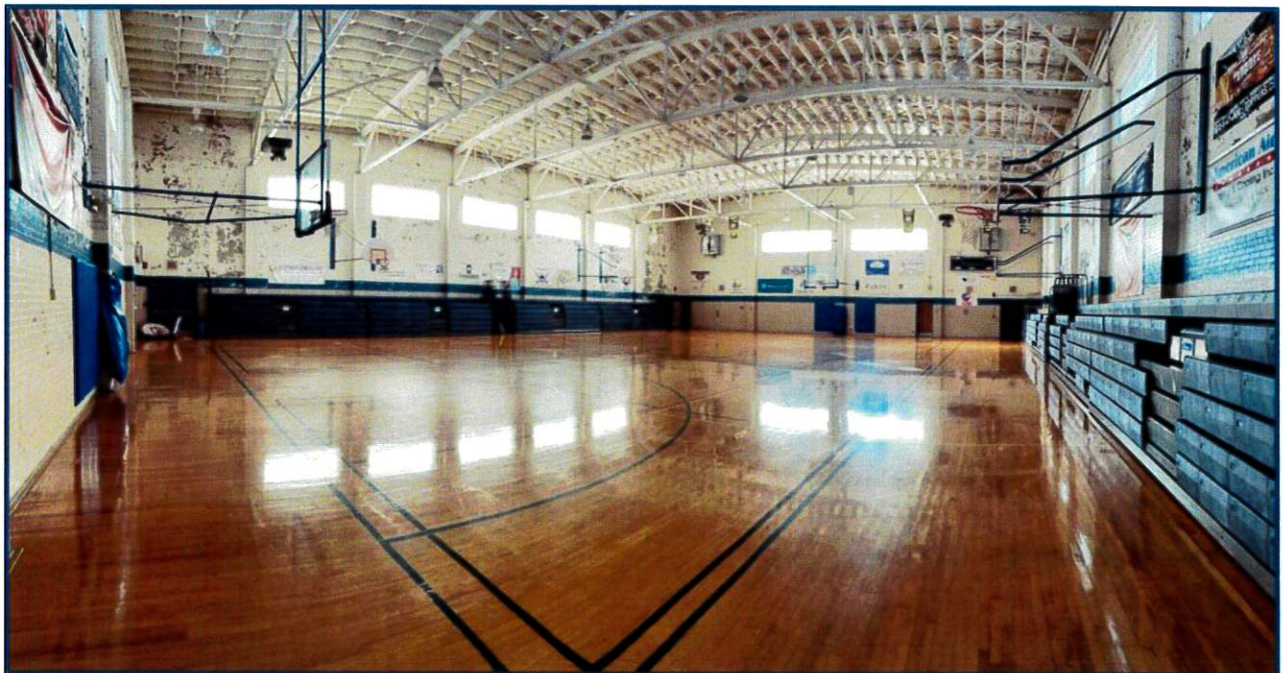


Existing Facade - Fort Mill Community Center

In the past few years, The Town of Fort Mill has altered its use for the facility to be used not only for sports programs but also as a true community center. Some early community center type uses of the facility have included using the facility as an immunization site during COVID-19 as well as an early voting location for use by York County's Voter Registration and Elections Office. Both programs were immensely successful and have generated excitement throughout the community for other potential community center uses of the facility.

The facility currently consists of a full-size regulation basketball court, four offices in the front of the building, multiple locker rooms, storage areas, and restroom facilities. The Town is planning a variety of interior improvements and renovations to further convert the facility into a true community center. These interior improvements consist of:

- Addition of climate control technologies such as air conditioning and adequate heating to give the facility year-round use capabilities;
- Removal of existing paint, which due to age will require some level of environmental inspection due to potential abatement needs;
- Conversion of existing spaces into new meeting rooms and a preparation kitchen;
- Addition of enhanced technologies, including Wi-Fi internet, video projection, and sound equipment, to support public programs.



Existing Interior - Fort Mill Community Center



Proposed Interior - Fort Mill Community Center

The exterior of the building is in need of a new roof for the gymnasium and surrounding portions of the building. A portion of roof along the rear of the facility had structural failures, which caused extensive water leaks deteriorating the wall structure in this area of the facility. It has been recommended that this portion of the facility be demolished, which would make room for new construction at the rear of the building for new uses. Additional exterior improvements include enhancing the aesthetic of the building with new painting and landscaping to create an attractive facility that our citizens are proud to visit and utilize. A rendering of the proposed exterior aesthetic is included on the next page. Finally, the parking lot, while completed, is in need of parking lot lighting to provide a safe environment for nighttime activities at the community center.



Proposed Exterior Aesthetic Improvements - Fort Mill Community Center

Timeframe

Short-term: Replace Roof

Short-term: Add HVAC

Short-term: Exterior Aesthetic Enhancements and Lighting

Short-term: Demolish Structurally Compromised Area

Short-term: Interior Painting

Medium-term: Building Addition and Interior Renovations

Project Total

Cost

\$400,000

\$500,000

\$190,000

\$75,000

\$56,400

\$5,278,600

\$6,500,000