SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
OF CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 27, 2025 — 5:00 PM
MUNICIPAL COURTROOM
2222 HIGHMARKET STREET
GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA
AND LIVESTREAM:
https://www.facebook.com/cityofgtown/

Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws as amended.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

3. **FINANCE**
   - **A. Motion to approve second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 2, Article IV, Section 2-187 "Professional and Construction Management Services, Design-Build Services, Turnkey Management" for the City of Georgetown Code of Ordinances.**

4. **PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
   - **A. Zoning Ordinance Revisions Discussion**

5. **PUBLIC WORKS**
   - **A. Conceptual Plans for Constitution Park**

6. **ADMINISTRATION**
   - **A. City of Georgetown Harbor Dredging Update**
   - **B. Compensation Review and Benchmarking City Council Summary presentation**

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
   - **A. Motion to adjourn Special Meeting and enter into Executive Session pursuant to Section 30-4-70(a)(1) to discuss the compensation review study for the City of Georgetown employees.**
   - **B. Motion to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene Special Meeting.**
   - **C. NO FORMAL ACTION WAS TAKEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

D. City Council may take action on items discussed in Executive Session.

8. ADJOURNMENT

A. Motion to Adjourn the Special Meeting of City Council.

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	February 27, 2025
Department:	Finance
Issue Under Consideration:	Motion to approve second reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 2, Article IV, Section 2-187 "Professional and Construction Management Services, Design-Build Services, Turnkey Management" for the City of Georgetown Code of Ordinances.
Amount Requested:	N/A
In Current Budget?:	N/A
If not, please explain:	N/A
Financial Impact:	N/A
Points to Consider:	Section 2-187 requires an independent monitor from an agency of government for this method of construction contracting. An independent third-party monitor that has been used in the past for these projects have recently declined to serve in this role.
Options:	Approve/Not Approve
Staff Recommendation:	Approve

Reviews:

Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Created/Initiated

Attachments:

1. Purchasing Ordinance Amendment 2-187 Relined
2. Purchasing Ordinance Amendment 2-187

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 2-187 "PROFESSIONAL AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES, DESIGN-BUILD SERVICES, TURNKEY MANAGEMENT" OF THE CITY OF GEORGETOWN CODE OF ORDINANCES

WHEREAS, Section 1-9 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Georgetown allows for the amendment of the Code of Ordinances from time to time; and

WHEREAS, Article IV "Purchasing" of Chapter 2 of the City of Georgetown Code of Ordinances is the Purchasing Ordinance adopted by City Council;

WHEREAS, The Mayor and City Council recognize the importance of reviewing and updating the City's Purchasing Ordinance on a regular basis, for openness, clarity and ease of implementation in facilitating public purchasing, compliance with best practices in public purchasing, and in the best interests of the City of Georgetown; and

WHEREAS, The City Council of the City of Georgetown, with the recommendations of staff, desires to amend certain provisions of Division 3 "City of Georgetown Procurement Policy" of Article IV of Chapter 2;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Georgetown, South Carolina, duly assembled, that Section 2-187 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Georgetown be amended by deleting language shown in strikethrough, as follows:

Sec. 2-187. Professional and construction management services, design-build services, turnkey management.

When in the best interest of the city, a request for proposal (RFP) or a request for qualifications (RFQ) may be solicited for professional services. A RFP or RFQ will be issued efficiently and expeditiously to at least three (3) top-ranked vendors considered qualified and appropriate for the particular procurement. The RFP or RFQ must include specifications and all contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement. The city must receive at least two (2) responsive, bona fide quotes in response to its solicitation. If one or more vendor declines to provide a quote, the city must document that fact in the procurement file. The city must award to the lowest responsive and responsible vendor. The submittal listing shall be open to public inspection only after the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier.

The city administrator or designee shall have the discretion to use construction management services, design-build services, or turnkey management services as alternatives for construction contracting administration. In exercising such discretion, the city administrator or designee shall consider the method which in the administrator or designee's discretion is the most advantageous to the city and will result in the timeliest, economical, and successful completion of the construction project.

The determination of the method of source selection utilized shall be stated in writing and included as part of the contract file. As a part of this determination, the city administrator shall determine if the city should prepare the request for proposals for providing such method of construction contracting

administration or if the city should retain outside consulting services to prepare such requests for proposals.

If the city administrator or designee determines that the use of construction management services, design-build services, or turnkey management services is the most advantageous means of securing the construction contracting administration set forth in this section, the selection of the method of construction contracting administration used by the city shall be submitted for review to city council at a regular meeting.

Within fifteen (15) days after notice of such review by city council, an interested party shall submit to the city administrator written comments which set forth the position of the party with respect to the decision as to which construction contracting method to use. At the next meeting of the city council, those who submitted comments may address the council. Following the council meeting, if city council does not reject the selection of this method, the construction contracting administration shall be secured in the manner set forth.

~~If the method of construction contracting administration is determined under this section, the mayor shall select an independent monitor from an agency of government who does not report directly or indirectly to the city administrator or city council to observe the source selection process to determine if the process was fair, open and competitive at the time of source selection. The monitor shall give a written report to the mayor which sets forth those findings.~~

If the competitive sealed proposal method of construction contracting administration is determined to be the most advantageous to the city, the city shall use such method set forth in section 2-185.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

ATTEST:

_____	_____
Stephanie Buccione, City Clerk	Carol Jayroe, Mayor
First Reading: _____	Approved as to Form:
Second Reading: _____	_____
	Elise F. Crosby, City Attorney

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE IV, SECTION 2-187 "PROFESSIONAL AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES, DESIGN-BUILD SERVICES, TURNKEY MANAGEMENT" OF THE CITY OF GEORGETOWN CODE OF ORDINANCES

WHEREAS, Section 1-9 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Georgetown allows for the amendment of the Code of Ordinances from time to time; and

WHEREAS, Article IV "Purchasing" of Chapter 2 of the City of Georgetown Code of Ordinances is the Purchasing Ordinance adopted by City Council;

WHEREAS, The Mayor and City Council recognize the importance of reviewing and updating the City's Purchasing Ordinance on a regular basis, for openness, clarity and ease of implementation in facilitating public purchasing, compliance with best practices in public purchasing, and in the best interests of the City of Georgetown; and

WHEREAS, The City Council of the City of Georgetown, with the recommendations of staff, desires to amend certain provisions of Division 3 "City of Georgetown Procurement Policy" of Article IV of Chapter 2;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Georgetown, South Carolina, duly assembled, that Section 2-187 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Georgetown be amended by deleting language shown in strikethrough, as follows:

Sec. 2-187. Professional and construction management services, design-build services, turnkey management.

When in the best interest of the city, a request for proposal (RFP) or a request for qualifications (RFQ) may be solicited for professional services. A RFP or RFQ will be issued efficiently and expeditiously to at least three (3) top-ranked vendors considered qualified and appropriate for the particular procurement. The RFP or RFQ must include specifications and all contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement. The city must receive at least two (2) responsive, bona fide quotes in response to its solicitation. If one or more vendor declines to provide a quote, the city must document that fact in the procurement file. The city must award to the lowest responsive and responsible vendor. The submittal listing shall be open to public inspection only after the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier.

The city administrator or designee shall have the discretion to use construction management services, design-build services, or turnkey management services as alternatives for construction contracting administration. In exercising such discretion, the city administrator or designee shall consider the method which in the administrator or designee's discretion is the most advantageous to the city and will result in the timeliest, economical, and successful completion of the construction project.

The determination of the method of source selection utilized shall be stated in writing and included as part of the contract file. As a part of this determination, the city administrator shall determine if the city should prepare the request for proposals for providing such method of construction contracting

administration or if the city should retain outside consulting services to prepare such requests for proposals.

If the city administrator or designee determines that the use of construction management services, design-build services, or turnkey management services is the most advantageous means of securing the construction contracting administration set forth in this section, the selection of the method of construction contracting administration used by the city shall be submitted for review to city council at a regular meeting.

Within fifteen (15) days after notice of such review by city council, an interested party shall submit to the city administrator written comments which set forth the position of the party with respect to the decision as to which construction contracting method to use. At the next meeting of the city council, those who submitted comments may address the council. Following the council meeting, if city council does not reject the selection of this method, the construction contracting administration shall be secured in the manner set forth.

If the competitive sealed proposal method of construction contracting administration is determined to be the most advantageous to the city, the city shall use such method set forth in section 2-185.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

ATTEST:

_____	_____
Stephanie Buccione, City Clerk	Carol Jayroe, Mayor
First Reading: _____	Approved as to Form:
Second Reading: _____	_____
	Elise F. Crosby, City Attorney

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	February 27, 2025
Department:	Planning & Community Development
Issue Under Consideration:	Zoning Ordinance Revisions Discussion
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Brittany Powell	Approver	Created/Initiated
Ryan Call	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. Zoning Ordinance Revisions

Zoning Ordinance Revisions

All pictures within this presentation are from google image results and are not of any business around or within the City of Georgetown

Topics to discuss

Sign Ordinance

Definitions

Tree Ordinance

Accessory Structures

Yard Sales

Mobile Home/ Manufactured Home

Quick Facts

- The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance is to regulate land use within the City of Georgetown:
  - Promote orderly development
  - Protect public health, safety and welfare
  - Ensure compatible uses of land
  - Maintain aesthetic standards and character

Sign Ordinance

Examples of “Prohibited Signage”

Ordinance needs to be reviewed to determine appropriateness

Each business is allowed either 2 or 3 signs dependent upon zoning district

The maximum allowable size of signage is calculated individually based on varying metrics, resulting in no consistent standard for sign sizes

Concerns about freedom of speech and expression

Enforcement

All signage is required to be permitted through the City of Georgetown Building and Planning Department

Non-conforming signs are only confiscated if they are located within the city right-of-way

No repercussions associated with lack of proper permitting

Sign Ordinance Key Takeaways

1. Lack of proper enforcement
2. Excess amount of non-conforming signs
   - Predominantly Core Commercial and General Commercial Zoning Districts
3. Portions of the ordinance regarding content of signs may not be legal
4. Many businesses are not acquiring the proper permits
   - Sign permit, building permit, electrical permit
5. Ordinance is very strict
6. Lack of enforcement/repercussions

Definitions

Quick Facts

- The definitions within the Zoning Ordinance exist to define what uses are and what they are not
- If a use is not defined or mentioned within the Zoning Ordinance, it is not allowed to operate within our jurisdictional boundaries
- Zoning Ordinance includes many “umbrella terms” which allows for incompatible uses to exist within the same zoning district

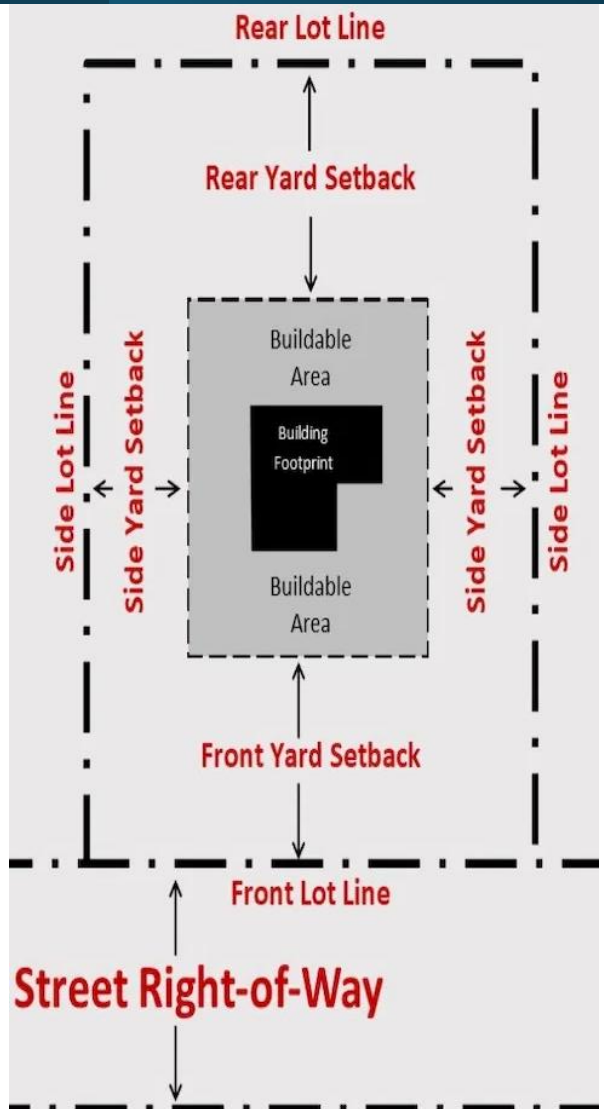
Definitions Key Takeaways

- Majority of terms and uses are not defined in the ordinance
- Beneficial uses, such as electric charging stations, are technically not allowed to be established within the City as they are not defined
- Expansion of definitions help improve community planning
    - For example, the term “multi-family” encompasses everything from duplexes to condominiums. By refining the definitions of various multi-family residence types, we can better ensure compatibility of new construction with the character of each zoning district.

Tree Ordinance

Quick Facts

- The “Building Envelope” refers to the portion of a lot remaining for construction after applying all setback
- Setbacks are the required minimum distances a building must be located from property lines, streets, or other structures



Tree Ordinance Key Takeaways

- Current Tree ordinance does not protect many of the large live oaks our city is known for
  - Lack of protection for all protected tree species
  - Many trees that should be “protected” are currently excluded
- Allows for any tree, protected or not, to be removed if located within the building envelope, with no required replanting
- Need to establish mitigation standards

Accessory Structures

Quick Facts

- Accessory structures are defined as sheds, detached garages, garage apartments, etc.
- Accessory structures are only allowed in R1 (Low Density Residential)
  - One of five residential zoning districts
- Accessory structures are limited to 3 total with a maximum 600 square feet combined, whichever is less
  - Regardless of lot size (.5 acres or 10 acres)

Concerns

- Lack of proper permitting
- Individuals using sheds as residential structures or for business purposes
- Improper placement of sheds
  - Must be located in the rear or to the side of homes
  - Must be located 6 ft from any other structure, 5 ft from property line
- Size limits need to be reconsidered
  - We believe a more beneficial size would be 10% of the total lot area, with required setbacks being 6ft from the property line and any other structure
    - Would be consistent with existing commercial standards
- Accessory structures should be allowed in all residential and commercial zoning districts

Yard Sales

Concerns

- City maintains a yard sale permit - $3 fee
- Lack of proper permitting
- Lack of enforcement
  - Yard sales take place after-hours
- Necessity?

Manufactured/Mobile Homes

Concerns

- Ordinance needs to be updated to provide more clear guidance in enforcement / removal of any interpretation of a “grey area”
- Lack of proper permitting
- Ordinance needs to be re-evaluated for appropriateness

419 Manufactured Homes

Manufactured Homes are subject to the following requirements:

419.1 No more than one manufactured home shall be located on a given lot;

419.2 Such uses shall be occupied as permanent dwellings; and,

419.3 All towing devices, wheels, axles, and hitches must be removed.

419.4 Structures must be placed on a foundation consisting of footings and piers which meet the requirements of the Manufacturers Installation Manual or Section 19-425.39 of the South Carolina Manufactured Housing Board.

419.5 Permanent landing and steps with handrails are required at all exterior doorways,

419.6 Skirting or a curtain wall, not pierced except for required ventilation and access doors must be installed and must consist of brick masonry, vinyl, or similar materials designed and manufactured for permanent outdoor installation.

419.7 Existing Manufactured Homes in the R5 Zoning District. Any mobile home or manufactured home, as those terms are defined in Art. III, 334, 335 of the Zoning Ordinance, that is located within any R5 District may be subsequently replaced with a new manufactured home provided the replacement is permitted within **six months** from the date of removal of the existing unit. A new manufactured home is defined as one that is purchased from a dealer and has never been titled before. (Ord. of 3-20-14)

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

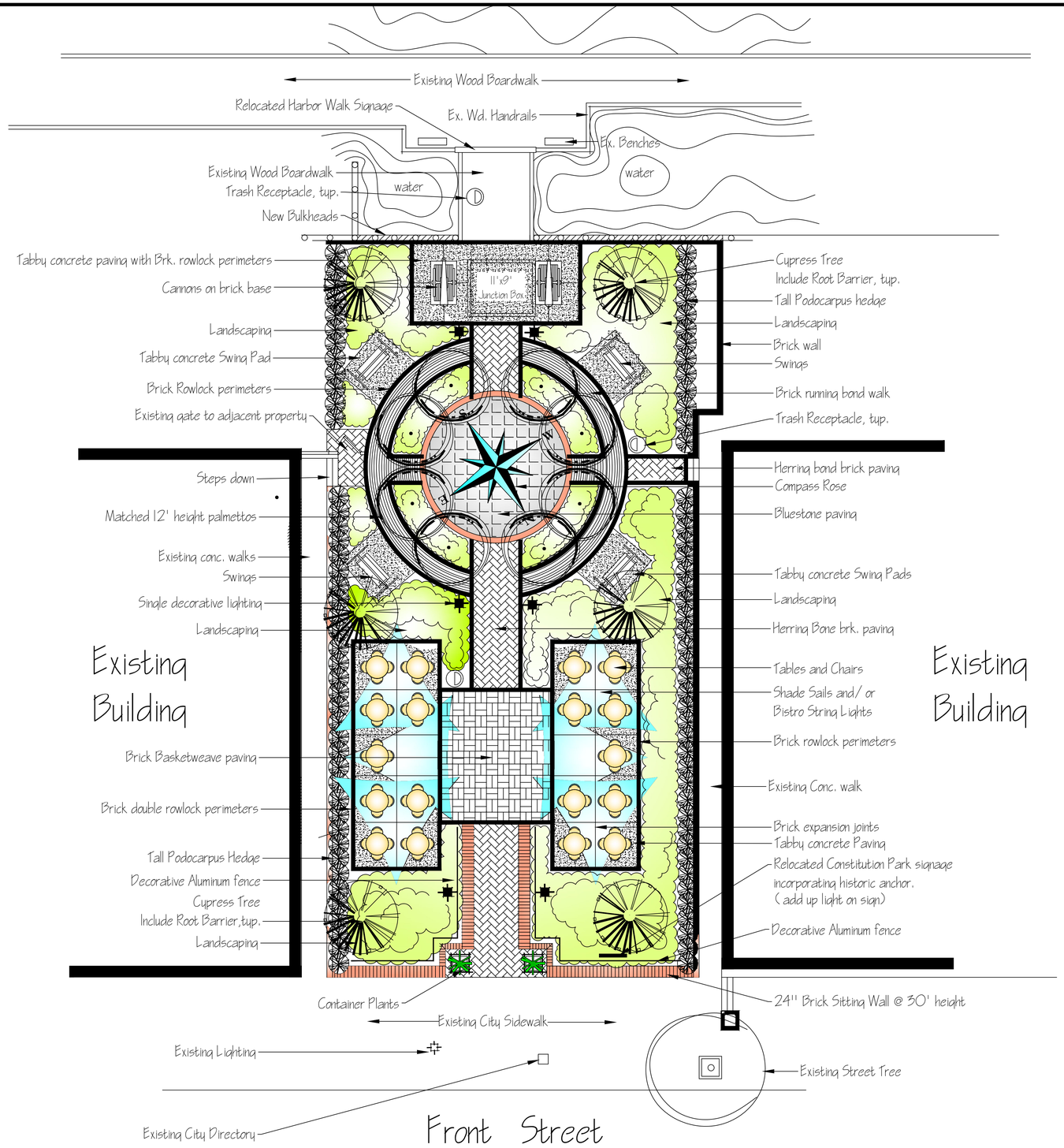
Council Meeting Date:	February 27, 2025
Department:	Public Works
Issue Under Consideration:	Conceptual Plans for Constitution Park
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	Presentation by Waccamaw Landscaping to discuss upcoming renovations of Constitution Park located in the Downtown District of Front Street during fiscal year 2026.
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Natrona Simmons	Approver	Created/Initiated
Natrona Simmons	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. Constitution Park_11-13-24



A Preliminary Site and Landscaping Plan for Constitution Park

GRAPHIC SCALE
10 0 5 10 20 40
(IN FEET)
1 inch = 10 ft.

NORTH

WACCAMAW LANDSCAPING
AND CONSTRUCTION
PAWLEYS ISLAND, S.C.

NOTE: THIS PLAN IS THE PROPERTY OF WACCAMAW LANDSCAPING AND CONSTRUCTION CO. INC., PAWLEYS ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA.

P.O. Box 213
1066 Petigru Dr.
Pawleys Island, SC 29585
843-237-2224
843-237-1116 fax

CONSTITUTION PARK
FRONT STREET
GEORGETOWN, SC

SHEET TITLE:
LANDSCAPE PLAN

DRAWN BY:
MM,JR

DATE:
03/04/22

REVISIONS:
11/07/24
11/13/24

SHEET NUMBER
1
OF 1

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	February 27, 2025
Department:	Administration
Issue Under Consideration:	City of Georgetown Harbor Dredging Update
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Scott Whittier	Approver	Created/Initiated
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. City of Georgetown Harbor

City of Georgetown-Harbor

Scott Whittier
City Administrator

City Council meeting February 27, 2025

Harbor Dredging

Funding Received From Federal Government

- March 9, 2024: Senator Graham announces FY 2024 spending package, which included funding for the City of Georgetown harbor dredging. In the amount of $6.5 Million.
- Funding goes directly to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- The dredging is restricted to the Federal Channel.
- Army Corps of Engineers need to go through permitting like anyone else, which takes time.

City of Georgetown's Option to Dredge Outside Federal Channel

Tag on with USACE Dredging Project

City will have to develop a soil sampling and analysis plan

Contractor to take the sampling and provide the analysis

Work with the USACE to sync with permit submission

Utilize the USACE dredging contractor for dredging for the City.

Benefit: Potentially will not have to pay for full mobilization fees, which are estimated at $1,250,000.00 for USACE's project

Mooring Fields and Harbor Master

Previously Discussed Plan

- Dredge the inner harbor including area for mooring fields
- Install mooring buoys- 29 anticipated
- Current Ordinance: Chapter 20, Article X, Sec 20-140 to 20-152- City Maritime Mooring Field, Boats, and Abandoned Vessels.
  - Appoint Harbor Master to manage harbor with funding from the mooring permits.
  - Harbor Master to administer and enforce the article.

Center of Mooring Buoys		
#	N	E
1	562397.4	2522621.1
2	562376.28	2522759.5
3	562327.01	2522891.41
4	562274.59	2523021.14
5	562221.78	2523150.88
6	562157.54	2523275.47
7	562063.48	2523379.17
8	561969.43	2523482.87
9	561875.37	2523586.57
10	561781.32	2523690.27
11	561687.26	2523793.97
12	561593.21	2523897.67
13	561490.62	2523993.88
14	561385.22	2524086.03
15	561279.83	2524178.19
16	561174.43	2524270.34
17	561069.04	2524362.49
18	560963.65	2524454.65
19	560858.25	2524546.8
20	560752.86	2524638.95
21	560626.15	2524700.26
22	560516.83	2524610.02
23	560496.04	2524751.96

Engineering Services

Task #	Task	Units	Cost/Unit	Cost Estimate
1	Sampling and Analysis Plan			
	[redacted]	6	$105	**$630**
	[redacted]	14	$140	**$1,960**
				$2,590
2	Permitting Services			
	[redacted]	102	$105	**$10,710**
	[redacted]	60	$140	**$8,400**
	Senior Technician	24	$100	**$2,400**
	USACE Permit Processing Fee	1	$100	**$100**
	SDES-BCM Permit Application Fee	1	$250	**$250**
				$21,860
	TOTAL			**$24,450**

Estimated cost for a Contractor to implement sampling and analysis plan: **$50,000**

Mooring Field Dredge Cost Estimate
Georgetown, South Carolina

No. of Mooring Buoys	Area of Each (SF)*	Total Area (SF)	Volume (3' of dredging) CY	Volume (5' of dredging) CY	Volume (7' of dredging) CY
29	19600	568,400	63156	105,259	147363

* Each Buoy has 'area of moorage' of 140' (140x140 = 19,600 SF)

Volume (CY)	Cost/CY**	Cost***
63156	$12	$757,867
105,259	$12	$1,263,111
147363	$12	$1,768,356

** $12/CY is based on the USACE's estimates

*** Does not include mobilization cost. The USACE's estimates include a mobilization of $1,250,000. Unsure if dredger would charge additional mobilization to dredge the mooring field

Cost Estimate Summary

Engineering Services
$25,000.00

- Sampling and Analysis plan
- Permit Services

Marine Contractor
$50,000.00

- Sampling and Analysis

Dredging Contractor
$1,300,000.00

- Dredging depth of 5’

Rounded up Estimated Total:
$1,400,000.00

Options

Proceed with the dredging project

- Estimated Cost for FY24/25 :$75,000.00
  - Will need to amend Ordinance budget (two readings)
- Estimated Dredging FY25/26: $1,300,000.00
  - Total: approximately $1,400,000.00 for 5’ of dredging

Focus on other efforts

- Public docks
- Other

Discussion/Questions?

120 North Fraser Street • Georgetown, SC 29440 • (843) 545-4000

ACTION ITEM

Council Meeting Date:	February 27, 2025
Department:	Administration
Issue Under Consideration:	Compensation Review and Benchmarking City Council Summary presentation
Amount Requested:	
In Current Budget?:	
If not, please explain:	
Financial Impact:	
Points to Consider:	
Options:	
Staff Recommendation:	

Reviews:

Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Created/Initiated
Scott Whittier	Approver	Approved
Stephanie Buccione	Approver	Final Approval

Attachments:

1. City of Georgetown Executive Summary 02.17.25

Compensation Review and Benchmarking
City Council Summary

February 2025

Prepared by:
Carrie Cavanaugh, SPHR, SHRM- SCP, CCP
FGP HR Consulting

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND SCOPE

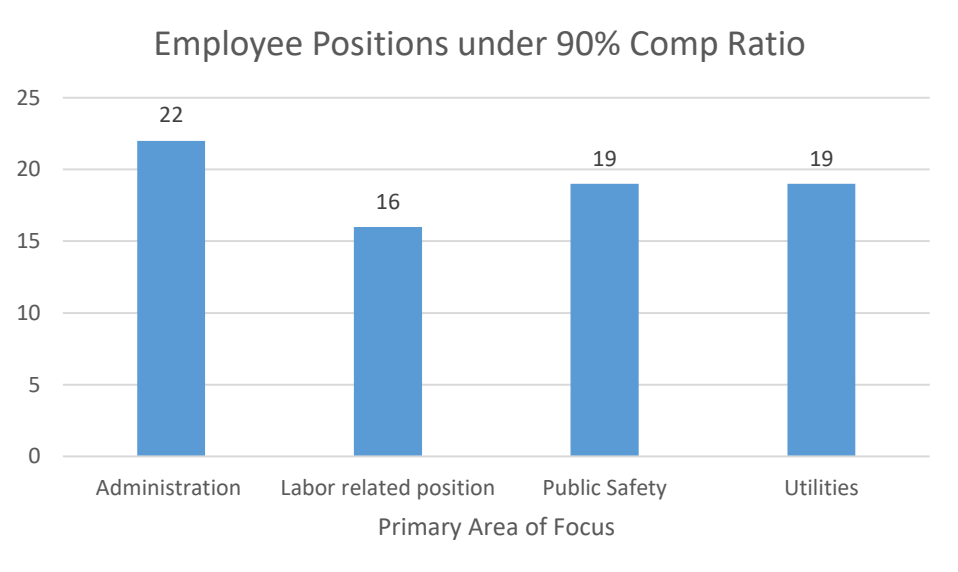
FGP HR Consulting was retained by the City of Georgetown to benchmark positions and provide market compensation data for positions within the organization. The approach used by FGP HR Consulting to conduct this review involved:

- The collection of data relating to the present job functions within the current organization. This included current job descriptions, incumbent information, and current compensation amounts. 100 unique jobs were reviewed which encompassed 151 employees.
- A review of the current compensation program including current position pay assignments.
- A review of market data for the preferred geographic area where positions exist using the following sources:
    - ERI (Economic Research Institute)
- A comparison to existing salary bands and pay ranges for the following cities, counties, organizations and municipalities:
    - City of Conway
    - City of North Myrtle Beach
    - City of Mt. Pleasant
    - City of Myrtle Beach
    - City of Surfside
    - Georgetown County
    - Horry County
    - Georgetown Water & Sewer
- An analysis of the current incumbent compensation information against the market averages, inclusive of review of the compa-ratio and any identifiable inequities between incumbents in the same pay assignment.

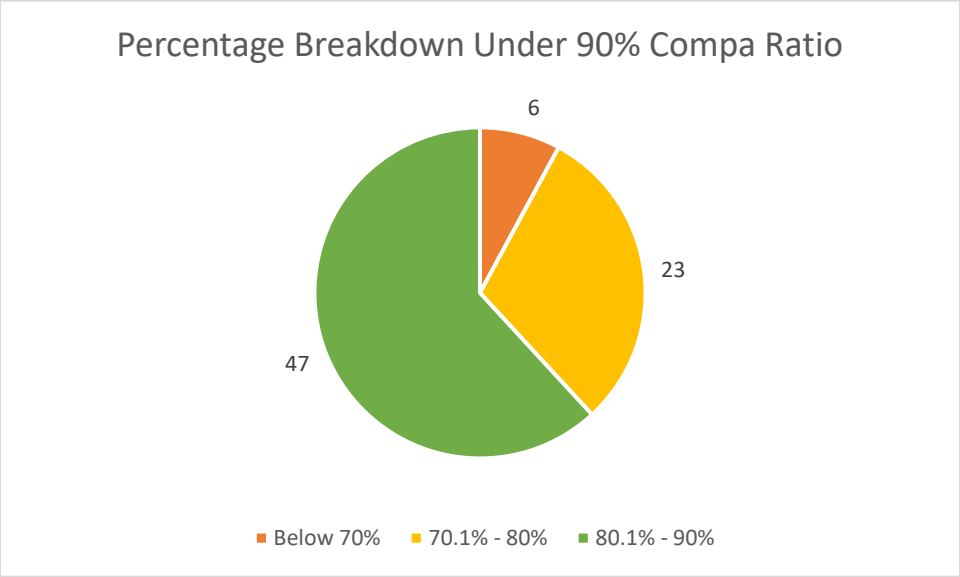
FINDINGS

- Of the 151 employees who were compared to the market median (middle of the market) 76 employees had compa ratios below 90%. A 90% compa ratio is considered to be competitive (see Compa Ratio section).

    A low compa-ratio (the ratio of an employee's salary to the market midpoint for their role) indicates that employees are being paid below market rates. This can make hiring more difficult, as potential candidates are likely to choose competitors offering higher compensation. Additionally, existing employees may feel undervalued and seek better-paying opportunities elsewhere, increasing turnover risk. Low pay can also lead to decreased morale, lower engagement, and reduced productivity, further impacting business performance. To remain competitive in attracting and retaining top talent, organizations must regularly assess their compensation strategy and ensure salaries align with industry benchmarks.



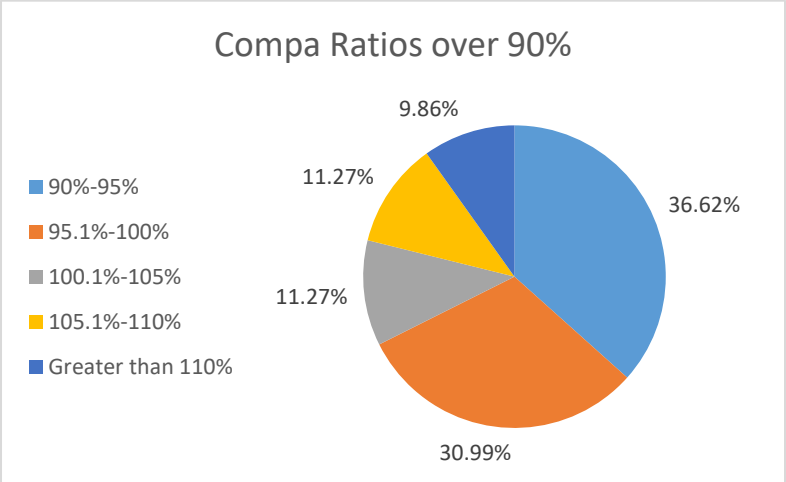
The City may desire to make salary changes /increase in phases to help minimize the impact to the budget. Below is a breakdown of employees (of the 76 with Compa Ratios below 90%) by Compa Ratio amounts.



The remaining employees were either at or above a 90% compa ratio.

A higher compa-ratio indicates that employees are being paid above the market midpoint for their roles. This may result from factors such as a competitive compensation strategy to attract and retain top talent, a strong internal pay philosophy rewarding tenure or performance, or a tight labor market where higher salaries are necessary to secure skilled workers. Additionally, it could stem from pay compression, where long-tenured employees receive consistent raises while new hires enter at higher salaries due to market shifts. While a high compa-ratio can enhance retention and job satisfaction, it may also increase labor costs and require careful budget management to sustain long-term financial stability.

With the breakdown as follows:



Recommendations

It is recommended that the City take action to increase wages for those individuals below market. However, a multi-step process must be considered to avoid salary compression.

Salary compression occurs when there is a minimal pay difference between employees despite differences in experience, tenure, skills, or performance. This often happens when market rates for new hires rise due to labor shortages or industry demand, while existing employees receive only modest annual raises. As a result, newer employees may earn salaries comparable to or even higher than long-tenured employees in similar roles. This can lead to dissatisfaction, lower morale, and retention challenges among experienced staff who feel undervalued. To address salary compression, organizations should regularly review pay structures, adjust compensation for existing employees as needed, and implement clear policies for merit-based increases.

If the City increases only those below a 90% compa ratio or only those below the minimum there is a risk of salary compression. It is recommended that the City consider a multi-year program that increases wages for the majority of employees with the exception of those with very high comp ratios. Often an organization will increase all employees by a set percentage up to a maximum compa ratio.

Ultimately it will be for the City to make the decision but ensuring that increases minimize the effect of compression will be essential.

OUR APPROACH TO SECURING MARKET DATA

FGP HR Consulting partners with the Economic Research Institute (ERI), which specializes in collecting and analyzing survey data on jobs and the cost of living. ERI ensures data validity and reliability by compiling compensation figures based on mean and median salaries for positions with similar duties, responsibilities, skills, and functions. Their cost-of-living data is geographically specific, providing managers, advisors, and Boards of Directors with accurate information for decision-making.

ERI's software and databases analyze pay for over 5,000 positions across the U.S. and Canada, supporting market pricing, wage competitiveness assessments, and internal pay equity evaluations. Their platform uniquely consolidates data from multiple sources, including surveys, publicly available records, job boards, and leased datasets. Compensation figures undergo rigorous verification against industry benchmarks to ensure accuracy, with industry-specific data playing a crucial role in shaping market rate assessments. When gaps exist, ERI supplements analysis with alternative reliable sources and consistent methodologies to maintain transparency.

Founded over 30 years ago, ERI is dedicated to providing robust salary, cost-of-living, and executive compensation data across 1,100 industries. Their research-driven approach is independent, leveraging Ph.D.-level data scientists and advanced analytics, such as machine learning and longitudinal analysis, to ensure precision. ERI's data is widely used by businesses, consultants, researchers, government entities, and legal professionals. Their proprietary methodologies, including convergent validation, have demonstrated a 99% agreement between survey responses and their Salary Assessor tool.

ERI calculates salary means as weighted averages from all relevant data, updating figures to align with a consistent benchmark date. Medians represent the midpoint of salaries, offering a more accurate reflection of compensation trends. Their extensive data collection process includes internal and third-party salary surveys, digitized public records, and Freedom of Information Act requests. Unlike consulting firms, ERI solely focuses on delivering unbiased, data-driven insights to its subscribers.