

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

AGENDA

6:00 PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes
 - a. November 20th, 2017
5. Public Comment for Agenda and Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes)
6. Staff Update
7. Election of Chairman

To include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required.

 - a. Discussion by Commission
 - b. Commission Recommendation
8. Discussion on the Comprehensive Plan Review

To include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required.

 - a. Discussion by Commission
 - b. Commission Recommendation
9. Discussion on the Vegetative Buffer

[To include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required.]

 - a. Discussion by Commission
 - b. Commission Recommendation
10. Old Business [*to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required*]
11. New Business [*to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required*]
12. Adjourn

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at: achapman@oconeesc.com.

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

6:00 PM, MONDAY, 11/20/2017
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCONEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLEX

Members Present:

Mr. Kisker
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Vassey
Mr. Pearson
Ms. McPhail
Mr. Gramling

Staff Present:

David Root, County Attorney
Adam Chapman, Planner I – Community Development

1. Call to Order

Mr. Kisker called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain

Mr. Root gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes

a. October 16, 2017

Mr. Pearson – Motion

Mr. Vassey – Second

5. Public Comment for Agenda and Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes)

Mr. Smith stated that he didn't receive his updated Vegetative Buffer information until today. Asked if there is a time frame of providing the information to the public and commission. Mr. Smith wants item 10 tabled until the public and commission has enough time to look at what's proposed.

Mr. Marovich Traditional Residential District (TRD) stated that he has never heard of a TRD not having some retail or that the roads and alleyways are private. Mr. Marovich

stated that school buses aren't allowed on private roads. Mr. Marovich stated that the builder's permits should not be held up because of a vegetative buffer violation.

Mr. Turetzky stated that we need to sink together with what we require and Duke Energy requires. What might be a thing to think about is a grading permit so everyone is on the same page.

6. Staff Updates

Mr. Chapman stated that 36 zoning approvals had come through Community Development in the last two weeks. The Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) meet and approved a slogan of "Oconee Grown" along with a mission statement. They also would like to meet with the Planning Commission about the future.

7. Election of Chairman

Mr. Root stated that a motion was made at the November 6th meeting that until all the board members are present, so it can't be decided until all members are present. Tabled

8. Discussion on Planning Commission Schedule for 2018

The two dates scheduled are on holidays and staff want be available. Look at January 9th and 23rd Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the schedule except for in January 9th and 23rd will be the meeting dates with a second by Ms. McPhail.

9. Discussion on the addition of the Traditional Neighborhood Development Zoning District

Mr. Johnson asked if the mom and pop retail businesses would be allowed. Staff stated that the PDD is the zoning classification that allows a mixed use of residential and retail. The PDD was used in other places in order to circumvent the residential ordinance. The Commission had several other questions about what would be allowed and what would not be allowed. Staff suggested taking the Commission concerns back the Economic Development Board for more discussion.

10. Discussion on amending the Vegetative Buffer

Mr. Kisker stated that this is discussion only on amending the Vegetative Buffer requirements in the Lake Overlay District. Ms. McPhail stated that if the changes could help the staffs job easier, give the Commission more time to look over in more depth. Mr. Johnson stated that 5.3 needs to be changed to invasive or poisonous and otherwise protected by law. There are 25 endangered plant species in South Carolina that are usually around the lake, 5.4 is in conflict with 5.9. Mr. Kisker asked who would contact the SCDHEC, Duke Energy, and SCDNR. Staff stated that the Planning and Zoning Department would contact the agencies. Suggested that 5.2 should state shall start at the 800 mark. Mr. Gramaling asked what is Duke Energy's stance on the silt in the lake and how do they manage it. Mr. Kisker stated he wants the ordinance scaled back. Mrs.

McPhail stated it needs to return it to staff for adjustments, motion made with a second by Mr. Gramling.

11. Discussion on the Comprehensive Plan review

Goals Element: The only things that have been changed have been done or haven't been done. Everything in blue is complete everything in red is ongoing. Mr. Chapman went thru each section in the Goals Element and explained what is and isn't complete also whats' ongoing.

Mr. Root stated that a Resolution needs to be sent forward to County Council when all Elements have been reviewed.

12. Old Business

None

13. New Business

Staff needs to know who will be here in December so Finance can get the Commission's compenstation for serving.

12. Adjourn

Mr. Pearson made the motion to adjourn at 7:37 PM

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at: achapman@oconeesc.com.



Housing Element

Overview

This element examines current and projected housing conditions, needs, and availability in Oconee County. The chapter begins with an analysis in terms of the age, condition, occupancy, location, type, and affordability of the current inventory of housing available to county citizens. Next, projections of future housing needs in terms of anticipated population levels and economic conditions are explored. The element concludes with goals and policy recommendations based on the expressed wishes of the citizens of Oconee County. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update focused on changes reflected in the 2000 Census.

Housing Inventory

Oconee County's housing stock is comprised of a broad mix of housing types, ranging from both stick-built and manufactured single-family units to various types of multi-family housing units. Included among these multi-family types are conventional, public, government subsidized, and assisted-living units. While both stick-built and manufactured single-family units can be found throughout the county, most multi-family housing units, with a few exceptions, can be found in and around the towns of Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster, where there is existing infrastructure, particularly public water and sewer. The lakes located in the county are driving forces behind the location of new houses, with this trend expected to continue over the next decade. See Table H-1 (below) for a comparison of households located in some of the counties in Upstate South Carolina.

Table H-1

Number of Housing Units in Region by County, 1950-2000									
County	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	
Oconee	9,314	10,445	12,764	17,373	22,358	27,283	37,713	39,020	
Anderson	23,573	27,855	33,277	46,944	55,481	65,649	83,752	85,296	
Greenville	45,066	58,916	74,191	101,579	122,878	149,556	191,000	199,369	
Pickens	10,092	12,854	17,274	25,986	33,422	41,306	50,854	51,731	
Spartanburg	38,130	43,314	53,172	69,934	84,503	97,735	121,137	123,931	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Office of Research & Statistics

Table H-1 shows that, while Oconee lagged behind all other counties in the growth of the number of households between 1950 and 1980, it surpassed the rest of the counties between 1980 and 2000. This increase may be attributed to increased economic activity in Oconee spurred on by the development of the county sewer system, the creation of Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee, and organized economic development activities. It was also during this period that a significant increase in the number of retirees moving from other regions began to settle around the county's lakes. **Between 2010 and 2015 Oconee County Gained 1,307 new houses units. The other counties in the upstate built new housing at greater rates during this same period.**

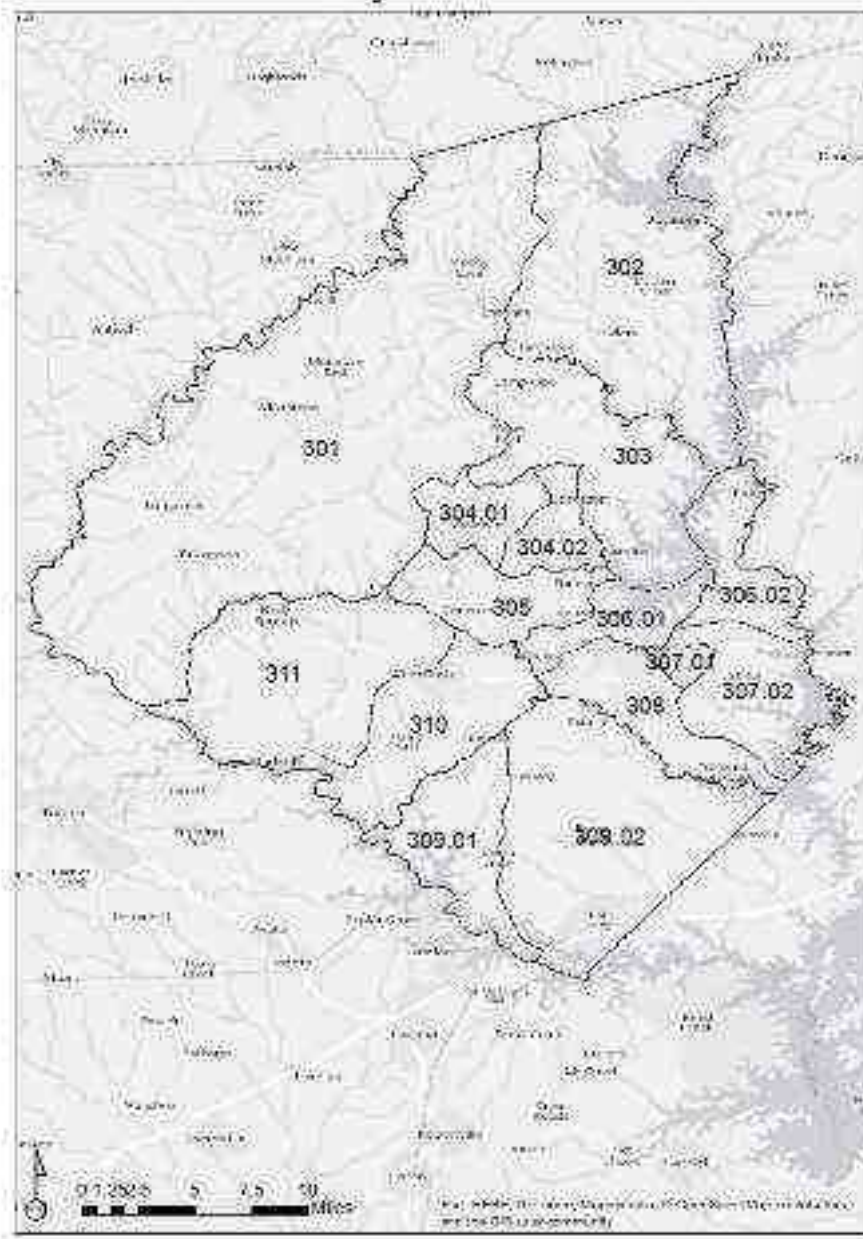
At the time of **the 2010** writing, Oconee County had experienced a significant decline in building activity due to a nationwide economic downturn. Even though our region had suffered, it has withstood the crisis better than other parts of the country. The scope of the impact of the decline will only be revealed over time, but there is little doubt that there will be long-term implications resulting from this period. As a result, there may be impacts on our housing stock, particularly as some sources indicate that people, heretofore seeking to maximize their homes in terms of size and quality, may begin to 'downsize' in an effort to be prepared for future crises. **Oconee County issued 2156 residential building permits during the 2015-2017 timeframe, which encompasses new home construction as well as additions of livable and non-livable space.** ~~This remains to be seen; either way, our natural resources and relaxed lifestyle are almost sure to continue to attract a large number of newcomers for decades to come, which means that home construction will again become a major component of the Oconee County economy.~~

Households by Census Tract

The U.S. Census Bureau divides Oconee County into ~~eleven~~ **fifteen** separate census tracts. See Figure H-1 below.

Oconee County Census Tracts 2015

**Figure
H-1**



The table below shows the number of households in each census tract in Oconee.

Table H-2

Census Tract	1980	1990	1999	2000	2004	2015 Estimate	% Change from 1990 to 2015
301	1,053	1421	1601	1704	1694	4352	20
302	839	1734	2154	2487	2343	5764	43
303	1,308	1576	1709	2056	1783	6145	30
304.01	2,320	2896	3218	3159	3380	6989	9
304.02	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1779	
305	1,044	1265	1372	1606	1430	4375	27
306.01	2059	2597	2861	2978	2993	4443	15
306.02	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	4447	
307.01	2635	3328	3681	-----	3862	3733	8
307.02	---	---	---	1623	-----	6086	
308	---	---	---	1968	-----	7214	
309.01	1747	2040	2205	2301	2301	2454	25
309.02	1604	2238	2542	2692	2692	7526	54
310	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	5267	
311	1681	2002	3371	3974	3974	3699	10
	1083	1261	1349	1399	1399	74273	19

Source: 2000 Oconee County Economic Profile (ACOG) and the 2000 Census

The data indicates that all areas of the county experienced significant growth between 1980 and 1999. Census Tract 302, which encompasses much of the fast developing Lake Keowee area, has experienced the greatest increase in the number of households since 1980, having increased 157%. Census Tract 310, which is located near Westminster, also experienced tremendous growth during the 1990's, posting an increase of 68%. Overall, the 1990 Census revealed that there were 17,361 households in the county, with a homeownership rate of 76.9%. **Census tract 302, from 2004 to 2015 gained 3421 new homes.**

The 2000 Census data provides us with a glimpse of what may be the beginning of a transition of growth. The largest percentage of growth during the last decade occurred in Census tract 309, which encompasses I-85 interstate and the village of Fair Play. ~~The second largest increase in households was found in tract 302, which includes a large part of the Lake Keowee area.~~

Housing Units

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a housing unit as a habitable dwelling that includes individual single-family dwellings, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, and other habitable dwelling components, whether currently occupied or vacant.

The following table illustrates the number of housing units in Oconee and other upstate counties.

Table H-3

Housing Units in Upstate South Carolina, 1950-2015								
County	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2015	2007 estimates
Oconee	9,999	11,757	14,032	20,226	25,983	32,383	39,020	37,029
Abbeville	6,329	6,262	7,099	8,547	9,846	11,658	12,009	unavailable
Anderson	24,890	30,083	35,981	51,359	60,753	73,213	86,078	82,303
Cherokee	9,051	10,060	11,605	14,955	17,610	22,400	24,052	unavailable
Greenville	47,857	64,140	79,939	108,172	131,645	162,803	203,415	186,106
Greenwood	11,560	13,980	16,524	21,017	24,735	28,243	31,206	unavailable
Laurens	12,423	14,082	15,810	19,628	23,201	30,239	30,611	unavailable
Pickens	10,898	13,799	18,673	28,469	35,865	46,000	52,410	51,075
Spartanburg	39,699	45,971	56,801	75,833	89,927	106,986	47,179	120,682
Union	7,990	8,396	9,499	11,393	12,230	13,351	13,984	unavailable

Source: South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office

The number of housing units in Oconee County has undergone rapid growth since 1950, having increased approximately 224% during the period. This places Oconee in the top 3 counties in the upstate, along with its neighboring mountain counties of Pickens and Greenville (they increased 322% and 240% respectively). It should be noted that during the last several decades, the number of units in Oconee increased at least 25% per decade, with the greatest growth occurring during the 1970's. Currently, census estimates show the number of housing units has increased roughly **21.21 percent** since 2000.

Table H-4 (below) breaks down the housing units by both municipality and unincorporated areas.

Table H-4

		1980-2015 Housing Unit Totals for Oconee County and Municipalities				
Jurisdiction	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	2015	% Change 2000-2015
Salem	90	92	2.2	72	77	6.94
Seneca	3005	3367	12.0	3677	4,076	10.85
Walhalla	1649	1726	4.7	1705	1,852	8.62
Westminster	1303	1367	4.9	1333	1,227	-7.95
West Union	128	131	2.3	145	150	3.44
Unincorporated Areas	14,051	19300	37.0	25451	39,020	21.21
Total	20,226	25,983	28.5	32383	46,618	43.95

Source: 2000 Oconee County Profile (ACOG); 2006-2007 Oconee County Profile (ACOG)

The table shows that Seneca experienced the greatest growth of all the municipalities with a 12.0% increase between 1980 and 1990 and a 9% increase from 1990 through 2000. West Union and Salem experienced the least growth from 1980 to 1990 with almost identical levels, 2.3% and 2.2% respectively; however, during the 1990's, Salem experienced a sharp decrease in overall numbers during the period. **The unincorporated areas of the county matched the total of the municipalities' growth.**

Occupancy Status

The South Carolina Statistical Abstract '99 and 2010 shows that in 1990 there were 25,983 housing units in Oconee County, with 22,358 of the units occupied, and 3,625 vacant at the time the data was collected. Of these, 17,196 units were owner occupied, and 5,162 were rented. Table H-5 (below) illustrates some of the characteristics of unit occupancy, and the extent of change between 1980 and 2015.

Table H-5

Oconee County Housing Occupancy Characteristics, 1980-1990						
	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	2015	% Change 2000-2015
Total Persons	48,611	57,494	18.27	66,215	74,949	13.19
Total Housing Units	20,226	25,983	28.46	32,383	39,020	20.49
Total Vacant Units	1,665	3,625	54	5,100	8,087	58.56
Households	17,373	22,358	28.69	27,283	30,676	12.43
Persons per Household	2.8	2.6	-7.7	2.4	2.4	0
Families	13,723	16,875	22.97	19,589	21,118	7.81
Persons per Family	3.2	3.0	-6.7	2.9	2.86	-1.37

Source: US Census Bureau

As the table illustrates, the total number of households has undergone a tremendous increase since 1980; at the same time, the number of persons per household has declined.

The 1990 Census showed that there was a 76.9% homeownership rate in Oconee County, while the rest of the state had a 69.8% rate. This 7.1% difference may be at least partially attributed to the traditionally rural, self-sufficient lifestyle of Oconee residents. Added to this, of course, is the fact that in recent decades the county has undergone a tremendous growth in population led by retirees from other regions. Having finished their working years, with pensions, investments, and other sources of wealth, a large portion of the group comes to Oconee County looking to purchase land and build a home, thereby further expanding the area's rate of homeownership.

Rural versus Urban

Although there is a fast growing urban cluster inside Oconee County, the vast majority of county residents still live in rural areas. In 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 70.1% of Oconee residents lived in rural areas; by 1990, this number had increased to 74.6%. By 2000, however, this trend has reversed, with the percentage of rural residents falling to 70.9%. **The rural population continued to fall over the next ten years to 64.92% based on the 2010 Census of Population. This may be due, in part, to an addition of four Census tracts and the annexation of land by municipalities.** Table H-6 (below) illustrates the division between rural and urban in 2000.

Table H-6 – Urban and Rural Population: Census 2010

	Total Population	Urban	Rural	Urban % Change from 2000	Rural % Change from 2000
Oconee County	74243	26054	48219	+33.7	+3.2

Source: United States Census Bureau

Type and Value of Housing Stock

Oconee County’s housing stock is comprised of a mix of housing types, age, and affordability levels. In 1990, there were a median number of 5.3 rooms per housing unit. A mean of 2.6 persons lived in owner-occupied housing units, while a mean of 2.3 persons lived in renter-occupied housing. The median year of construction of the structure was 1972. (State Data Center, Div. of Research & Statistical Services)

Many individuals in Oconee County rely on manufactured housing, particularly for low-cost dwellings. In 2000, the Oconee County Council adopted an ordinance that banned the importation of any manufactured home into the county if it was constructed before June 1976. While the ban did not immediately impact any structure that was already located in the county at the time of adoption (such units were exempted), the regulation will remove, over time, those potentially hazardous manufactured homes constructed before federally mandated minimum standards were adopted. In 1990 there were 6,444 manufactured homes registered in Oconee County, of which 5,218 were occupied. **As of 2013, there were 8,396 manufactured homes, which represented 21.7% of Oconee County’s housing stock.** (State Data Center, Div. of Research & Statistical Services).

An examination of the value of Oconee’s single-family housing stock reveals structures ranging from extremely low-value (sometimes substandard) to custom luxury homes situated in exclusive lakefront communities. While the exact number of homes not meeting minimum occupancy standards established by adopted building codes is unknown, 1990 census figures indicate that the amount is relatively small. **As of 2010,** only 1.1 % of households (249 of the 25,983 households in the county) are known to have incomplete plumbing systems, and all but 35 units were shown in census data to have a steady fuel source for heat (Note: While plumbing and heating are only two of a variety of factors used in determining if a structure is safe to occupy, no other reliable data was available at the time of writing). While many in the 21st Century may deem the existence of any substandard housing units unacceptable, the presence of such dwellings may be expected in any traditionally rural agrarian area. This is particularly true in Oconee since the county only began enforcing building codes in 1999.

As noted above, multi-family housing units are predominantly located in or near the municipalities. According to the **2010 Census**, few such units had been constructed in unincorporated areas. Due to the limitations imposed on obtaining sewer service for projects outside town boundaries, however, few units are being constructed in unincorporated areas. As a result, the multi-family housing stock is aging. In addition, rents on a significant number of units in the county are subsidized by governmental funds, expanding low-cost housing options for many people. U.S. Census data indicates that in 1994 there was a 98.9% occupancy rate (636 units) for subsidized rent units.

There was a 9% vacancy rate for the 554 conventional units available in the county. As of 2017, the County is home to 20 low-income housing apartment complexes containing 1,189 affordable apartments for rent. Many of these rental apartments are income based housing with about 846 apartments that set rent based on income. Often referred to as "HUD apartments", there are 285 Project-Based Section 8 subsidized apartments in Oconee County. There are 792 other low-income apartments that do not have rental assistance but are still considered to be affordable housing for low income families (South Carolina Regional Housing Authority 1).

The estimated median value of owner-occupied housing in 1999 ranged from \$58,424 in Census Tract 307 (east of Seneca) to \$227,551 in Census Tract 302 (near Lake Keowee). County wide the median home value stood at \$91,300, in 1999. This table shows the value of housing distributed by census tract.

Table H-7

Estimated Value of Owner-Occupied Housing by Census Tract, 1999								
Tracts	Median Value	Number of Units Per Value Range						
		<\$75K	\$75K-\$100K	\$100K-\$150K	\$150K-\$200K	\$200K-\$300K	\$300K-\$400K	>\$400K
301	60,403	396	103	79	24	8	1	0
302	227,551	252	112	94	66	252	165	217
303	84,186	323	132	125	57	71	26	9
304	65,326	995	303	211	59	21	3	2
305	74,897	325	207	91	19	5	1	0
306	107,551	525	300	417	164	258	88	46
307	58,424	1219	292	220	48	17	1	4
308	70,524	568	212	162	47	29	4	0
309	67,697	545	179	130	52	26	6	4
310	71,267	797	329	260	46	40	5	4
311	63,846	325	96	96	16	1	0	0

Source: 2000 Oconee County Profile (ACOG)

Tracts 302 and 306, which lie adjacent to Lake Keowee, are the location of the greatest number of homes valued over \$400,000, with 92% of all such units in the county lying within the two tracts.

The figures in Table H-8 were updated according to the data released by the 2000 Census. Census track 302, on the shores of Lake Keowee, continues to have the highest median value home; although the updated table shows a slight decrease in value it is insignificant. The two next highest tracks are 303 and 306, which are also located on the shores of Lake Keowee. Census Track 306 saw an increase of roughly 300 percent in the number of homes valued over \$400,000.

Table H-8

Estimated Value of Owner-Occupied Housing by Census Tract, 2000 Census										
Census Tract	Total:	Median Home Value	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to 99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$249,999	\$250,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$399,999	Greater than \$400,000
301	735	82,700	139	351	115	83	21	14	7	5
302	1,493	210,100	126	237	178	159	231	122	209	231
303	999	134,500	93	280	227	168	44	54	69	64
304	1,683	86,300	297	745	387	189	39	2	15	9
305	785	86,200	94	452	162	33	5	0	21	18
306	1,990	131,500	190	497	466	204	193	132	128	180
307.01	724	60,300	244	388	85	7	0	0	0	0
307.02	1,015	96,300	95	435	185	194	71	14	7	14
308	1,278	99,600	57	588	380	112	41	74	8	18
309	1,382	99,200	73	626	343	183	60	35	50	12
310	989	78,600	248	406	224	87	0	8	16	0
311	523	75,300	105	307	80	25	6	0	0	0
U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census										

2015 Owner Occupied Home-Unit Value	
Value in Dollars	Number of Units
Owner-occupied units	22,644
Less than \$50,000	3,883
\$50,000 to \$99,999	4,260
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,370
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,230
\$200,000 to \$299,999	2,939
\$300,000 to \$499,999	2,939
\$500,000 to \$999,999	1,654
\$1,000,000 or more	369
Median (dollars)	147,000

Seasonal/Temporary Housing

Many homes surrounding Oconee's lakes are second homes, used primarily on weekends and for vacations (and occasionally as rentals). The number of seasonal housing units, as defined by the Census Bureau, is significant **as shown in H-9 and H-9A.**

Table H-9

Seasonal Housing Units in Selected Upstate Counties, 1950-2000				
County	Seasonal Units 1950	Seasonal Units 1970	Seasonal Units 1990	Seasonal Units 2000
Oconee	90	110	1,703	2634
Pickens	181	92	333	800
Anderson	102	165	1,347	1811
Greenville	404	56	722	1550

Source: State Data Center, Office of Research & Statistics 2000 Census

The number of seasonal housing units in Oconee County has grown tremendously since 1950. The table above shows that growth in seasonal units was slow between 1950 and 1970, but was subject to a tremendous increase between 1970 and 2000. The 2000 Census reveals that the number of seasonal units in Oconee rose another 36% to 2,634 **.As of the 2010 Census the Seasonal Units made up 48.6% of the vacant housing stock, see H-9A below.**

Table H-9A

2010 Housing Units for sale, rent or seasonal, recreational or occasional use

Geographic area			Vacant housing units			
			Total	Percent		
	Total housing units	Occupied housing units		For sale only	For rent	Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use
Oconee County	38,763	30,676	8,087	9.2	15.7	48.6
Census Tract 301	2,645	1,821	824	4.1	3.9	64.3
Census Tract 302	3,889	2,688	1,201	10.1	11.5	64.8
Census Tract 303	3,423	2,575	848	7.5	9.9	62.5
Census Tract 304.01	3,044	2,683	361	9.1	33.2	9.7
Census Tract 304.02	892	711	181	9.9	9.4	58.6
Census Tract 305	2,177	1,835	342	10.2	21.9	38.3
Census Tract 306.01	2,323	1,900	423	12.5	25.3	44.2
Census Tract 306.02	2,151	1,851	300	12.0	27.7	27.3
Census Tract 307.01	1,867	1,570	297	13.5	38.0	5.1
Census Tract 307.02	2,928	2,408	520	11.3	26.0	38.5
Census Tract 308	3,463	3,005	458	12.2	28.2	24.0
Census Tract 309.01	1,921	1,079	842	6.4	3.0	82.7
Census Tract 309.02	3,601	2,912	689	8.3	10.9	46.0
Census Tract 310	2,634	2,168	466	14.4	18.0	29.6
Census Tract 311	1,805	1,470	335	6.3	16.1	21.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

This growth in seasonal housing during the 1990’s reflects the impact of the development of Lakes Keowee and Jocassee, which resulted in a great increase in second homes. **As of 2015, almost half of the County’s housing stock is seasonal, recreational, or occasional use**

Oconee County is the location of the Duke Energy’s Oconee Nuclear Station, one of the premier nuclear facilities in the nation. While there is no doubt that the county has reaped many benefits from having the facility within its borders, the plant’s activities often influence the lives of Oconee’s citizens in unforeseen ways. This is particularly true regarding the effect that both regular and unscheduled maintenance and repair work has on the local demand for temporary housing (both single-family units and multi-family units). The nuclear station’s utilization of large numbers of subcontractors and temporary workers occasionally results in full capacity situations in available temporary housing in the surrounding region. To take advantage of the short housing supply, some property owners offer rental units traditionally leased by the year for shorter terms, typically for higher rents than would be received for a standard lease. To this point, Oconee County’s available housing stock, along with that in adjoining counties, has proven to be sufficient to provide for temporary workers for limited periods. Any comprehensive examination and plan for future housing in the county, however, should not ignore these occasional drastic changes in demand.

Affordable Housing

In 2007, the State of South Carolina passed the Priority Investment Act, which expanded the requirements of the Housing Element to include a detailed discussion of affordable housing. In Oconee County, housing prices have risen faster than family income, thereby creating a significant deficit for many individuals or families trying to pay for a home. According to one source, the value of a median priced house in Oconee County rose by 71.4 percent between 1990 and 2000; at the same time, the median income of the county increased by only 39.5 percent.¹ **Median home value in 1999 for the County was \$91,300 and in 2015 was \$147,035.** So, what is considered “affordable” housing, and why is it important?

Affordable housing is plagued with misconceptions in public perception that may be the biggest barrier to overcome. The Campaign for Affordable Housing² has identified five of the most common myths surrounding affordable housing.

Table H-10

Five Common Myths Regarding Affordable Housing³	
MYTH	TRUTH
Affordable housing is ugly.	Affordable housing is designed to fit into the community character in size and style. It is typically privately owned, designed, and developed. Like everything else, the cost of a home has little to do with whether or not it is ugly.
Affordable housing increases traffic.	All types of development impact traffic volume.

¹ Eldridge, Diane. “Affordable Housing in the Upstate.” The Upstate Advocate. December 2003.

² www.tcah.org

³ ibid

		<p>Affordable housing is best suited near employment centers, which would decrease dependency on the automobile.</p> <p>The National Personal Transportation Survey found that low-income households make 40% fewer trips than other households.</p> <p>Studies indicate that the average resident in a compact neighborhood will drive 20-30% less than residents of a neighborhood half as dense.”</p>
Affordable housing increases crime.		<p>There is no correlation between safe, decent, and affordable housing and crime. In fact, studies show that a major cause of crime and a host of other socio-economic ills is community disinvestment, overcrowding, lack of jobs and community services.</p>
Affordable housing over-burdens schools and infrastructure.		<p>Studies show that the traditional single-family home neighborhood has 2 to 3 times the number of school aged children than those living in apartments.</p> <p>U.S. Office of Technology Assessment found that it costs 10,000 dollars per unit more to provide infrastructure to a lower density/urban development than a more compact urban development (OTA-E11-643, 1995. Infrastructure costs significantly decline as density increases.</p>
Affordable housing lowers property values.		<p>Academic studies and market analyses prove otherwise. A Study by Wayne State Univ. found that affordable housing often has an insignificant or positive effect on property values in higher value neighborhood and improves values in lower-valued neighborhoods.</p>

Most people agree that safe, decent, and affordable housing is an important component of a good society; but beyond just providing people a place to stay that they can afford, some contend that it positively influences the economy, and even improves the quality of our environment. As stated by one planning expert, “The housing problem that affects the most Americans today is cost burden, which happens when families spend so much for housing that their ability to pay for the other necessities of life is compromised.”⁴ Of course, the dollar amount considered affordable varies widely from region to region, depending upon the amount of wealth that flows throughout the local economy. To deal with this variability, the federal government has adopted the standard that households spending 30% or more of their gross household income for housing are burdened, and those spending 50% or more for housing are severely burdened.⁵ As more and more individuals find themselves in this situation, the broader economy suffers from the lack of discretionary income. In addition, with less money available, normal and routine maintenance of housing also decreases, which in turn expands the amount of substandard housing in a community. There is also the fact that, as housing becomes less affordable in an area, development moves away from higher cost areas to lower ones, increasing the need for infrastructure in rural lands, which itself fuels more sprawl.

⁴ Mallach, Alan, FAICP. “The Case for Affordable Housing.” Planning. March 2009. pg. 33

⁵ Ibid.

Finally, affordability also influences industry recruitment, for companies want their employees to live close by their workplace. When the average worker cannot afford to live in a given area, employers will naturally look elsewhere.

Affordable housing also engenders a sense of community, for by placing housing within the price range of those that form ‘the backbone’ of our society and economy, neighborhoods are stabilized by the presence of those groups that tend to support and sustain those activities that establish an identity. Further, “stable housing boosts the educational performance of children, induces higher participation in civic and volunteer activity, improves health care outcomes, and lowers crime rates, and lessens welfare dependency.”⁶ One of the keys to beginning a discussion on any issue is to define the terms involved in order to ensure that there is a minimum of confusion. The South Carolina Priority Investment Act defines Affordable Housing, in the case of dwelling units for sale, as

“housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance, and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than twenty eight percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than eighty percent of the areas median income, by household size for the metropolitan statistical area as published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) and, in cases of dwelling units for rent, housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than thirty percent of the annual household income for a household earning no more than eight percent of the area median income, by household size for the metropolitan statistical area as published from time to time by HUD.”

Distilled to a formula, the definition is:

$$\text{Affordability} = 28\% \times (80\% \times \text{Areas Annual Household Income (per HUD)})$$

Table H-11 (below) contains the 2009 income limits for 80% of median income for most upstate counties.

Table H-11
2017 Adjusted Home Income Limits for affordable housing

	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people	8 people
30% LIMITS	11000	12550	14100	15650	16950	18200	19450	20700
VERY LOW INCOME	18250	20850	23450	26050	28150	30250	32350	34400
60% LIMITS	21900	25020	28140	31260	33780	36300	38820	41280

⁶ *South Carolina Priority Investment Act: Implementation Guide for Local Governments*. American Planning Association South Carolina Chapter: Making Great Communities Happen. First Edition. October 15, 2008. pg. 29

LOWER INCOME	29200	33400	37550	41700	45050	48400	51750	55050
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Source: U.S. Department of HUD 04/11/2017

Table H-11

2009 Maximum Income Limits for 80 % of Median Income									
-	-	Number of Persons in Family							
COUNTY	MEDIAN INCOME	1 PERSON	2 PERSON	3 PERSON	4 PERSON	5 PERSON	6 PERSON	7 PERSON	8 PERSON
ANDERSON	53,800	\$30,750	\$35,150	\$39,550	\$43,900	\$47,450	\$50,950	\$54,450	\$57,950
CHEROKEE	47,700	\$30,750	\$35,150	\$39,550	\$43,900	\$47,450	\$50,950	\$54,450	\$57,950
GREENVILLE	57,200	\$32,050	\$36,600	\$41,200	\$45,750	\$49,400	\$53,050	\$56,750	\$60,400
GREENWOOD	53,400	\$29,900	\$34,150	\$38,450	\$42,700	\$46,100	\$49,550	\$52,950	\$56,350
OCONEE	55,100	\$30,850	\$35,300	\$39,700	\$44,100	\$47,650	\$51,150	\$54,700	\$58,200
PICKENS	57,200	\$32,050	\$36,600	\$41,200	\$45,750	\$49,400	\$53,050	\$56,750	\$60,400

Income limits are based on actual County Median Income Limits or State Non Metro Median Income limits, as computed, income limits are rounded to the nearest whole number

Source: www.sha.state.sc.us/Housing_Partners/Income_Limits

Based on Table H-11, for a family of four in Oconee County the income at the 80% limit is \$44,100, which multiplied by 28% equals \$12,342, an annual total. Therefore, expenditures for an affordable housing in Oconee County should be no more than approximately \$1,000 per month.

Rental units are also a critical component of affordable housing in a community. According to a U.S. Census Bureau Report, down payment assistance would do more to improve the affordability of a modestly priced home for renters than lower down payment requirements (which would increase monthly mortgage payments) or major reduction in interest rates. Financial assistance would, however, require funding from another source, ideally from a party that has no financial gain from the transaction, such as employers, nonprofit groups, or a governmental agency.⁷

Affordability standards for rental units were also established by the Priority Investment Act, and are determined by the following formula:

$$\text{Affordability (Rental)} = 30\% \times (80\% \times \text{Areas Annual Household Income (per HUD)})$$

Table H-12 (below) shows what HUD considers be within acceptable rental limits for most upstate counties. All figures include an estimated allowance for utilities.

⁷Savage, Howard A. "Who Could Afford to Buy a Home in 2004?" United States Census Bureau. Issued May 2009.

Table H-12

2009 Maximum Gross Rent Limits for 80 % of Median Income						
		Maximum Monthly Gross Rent* (utilities included)				
COUNTY	MEDIAN INCOME	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
ANDERSON	52,400	768	823	988	1,141	1,273
CHEROKEE	46,700	768	823	988	1,141	1,273
GREENVILLE	57,200	791	847	1,017	1,175	1,311
GREENWOOD	53,400	747	800	961	1,110	1,238
OCONEE	55,100	771	826	992	1,146	1,278
PICKENS	57,200	801	858	1,030	1,189	1,326
* Gross Rent includes contract rent plus tenant paid utilities						
Rent limits are based on actual County Median Income Limits or State Non Metro Median Income limits, as computed, gross rent limits are rounded to the nearest whole number						

As shown in Table H-10, a two-bedroom rental unit for a family in Oconee County should cost no more than \$992 dollars a month for rent and utilities (water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, etc). It should be noted that the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey has estimated that the median gross rent in Oconee County is approximately 26.5% of the household income in the past 12 months. Therefore, the median rent in Oconee County actually falls within the State’s definition of affordability, with the caveat that utilities are not included in the Census estimates. (Often renters pay more for utilities than owners do because rental units are typically more inefficient).

Barriers to Affordability

The lack of affordable housing can result from a variety of reasons. In 2004, the United States Census Bureau published a brief report entitled: “Who Could Afford to Buy a Home in 2004”⁸, which looked at some of the trends in housing affordability in 2004. According to this report, 58 % of all American families could afford to buy a modestly priced home in the state where they resided, provided the home was valued in the bottom 25 % of the regions home value distribution. Estimating the bottom 25% range of housing values (see table: “Estimated Value of Owner-Occupied Housing by Census Tract, 2000 Census”) for Oconee County shows that 58% of residents could indeed afford a home that cost less than 100,000 dollars, provided there were no external limiting factors. According to the U.S. Census Bureau report, among barriers that prevented people from purchasing a home were generally: excessive debt, lack of down payment, poor credit, and interest rates that took the home out of the affordability range. Naturally, government is very limited in what it can do to change the personal choice of an individual to acquire excessive debt or create a bad credit history. Therefore, other avenues must be pursued to assist with making housing affordable.

⁸ Savage, Howard A. “Who Could Afford to Buy a Home in 2004?” United States Census Bureau. Issued May 2009.

The South Carolina Priority Investment Act Implementation Guide for Local Governments identifies some of the non-essential regulations that may become possible barriers to affordable housing. Of those identified, very few apply to the current regulatory climate of Oconee. Table H-13 (below) identifies various regulations that may influence the affordability of housing in Oconee County, and evaluates the strengths and possible areas of concern.

Table H-13

Oconee County’s Land and Housing Ordinances		
Code of Ordinances	Strengths	Areas to look at in light of affordable housing issue
Chapter 6: <i>Building Code Regulation</i>	Protects homeowners from poor construction that can devastate a new home owner Ensures health and safety of residential and multi-family construction	“One Stop” permitting Analysis could be undertaken to identify barriers unrelated to health and safety that may prevent affordability but change would have to come from the State level, as building codes is a mandate for local governments Examine fee structure and permitting cost for projects meeting affordability requirements
Chapter 16: <i>Flood Ordinance</i>	Prevents loss in cases of catastrophic flood events	
Chapter 26: <i>Roads and Bridges</i>	Provides for gravel roads, that meet fire code for those developments of ten units or less Provides a mechanism to reimburse a developer who is required to upgrade a county road and also encourages developers to provide affordable housing (see section 26-5)	Road pavement widths for private road developments Sidewalks
Chapter 32: <i>Unified Performance Standards</i>		
Article V: <i>Group Homes</i>		Ordinance should be reviewed and adjusted 1,000 feet separation from nearest residence
Article VI: <i>Land Development and Subdivision Regulations</i>	Administrative Review for all development Clearly defined review process	Setback standards for residences Security in Lieu of Completion of

	<p>Lot sizes vary with type of sewage treatment, with most restrictive for traditional septic (state minimum) of .57 acres.</p> <p>Exempts Family Transfers</p> <p>One cost for review at time of preliminary application</p>	<p>125 % of total cost before final plat can be recorded</p> <p>Development where no land is subdivided but still requires a review due to definition of subdivision to include dwelling units</p>
<p>Chapter 34: <i>Utilities</i></p>		<p>Look at possible payback mechanisms for developers when they need to upgrade system</p> <p>Article V: Sewer Impact Fee</p>
<p>Chapter 38: <i>Zoning</i></p>	<p>Tool that can be used to minimize the negative impacts of incompatible land uses in community</p> <p>Citizen Initiated</p> <p>Control Free District does not regulate use</p> <p>Manufactured Housing is not treated differently than stick built housing</p>	<p>Ordinance needs to provide for both Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND's) and Planned Unit Developments (PUD's)</p> <p>New to County and issues still need to be worked out.</p>

A review of Table H-13 shows that, compared to neighboring counties, Oconee County's regulatory climate is open to affordable housing. Still, there is room for improvement, and all regulations governing development, existing and proposed, need to be examined with an eye toward increasing 'friendliness' toward affordable housing. Of more importance in the short term, however, is the need for Oconee County to partner with non-profits and other organizations that can help guide citizens in getting into a home of their own. To this end, a community housing task force should be considered the top priority. Once created, this entity could be charged with not only working to foster the development of affordable units, but also with monitoring situations that serve as potential impediments.

The Priority Investment Act also requires local governments to analyze market-based incentives that may be available for the development of affordable housing. The Priority Investment Act Implementation Guide for Local Governments identifies a number of market-based incentives that may be considered for suitability for incorporation into the development standards and practices of Oconee County.

Table H-14

Implementation Guide for Local Governments: Market Based Incentives for Developers	
Incentive	Summary
Density Bonuses	<p>“Developers who commit to allotting a certain percentage of units at below market rates may be allowed to reduce lot sizes or increase the number of houses on a lot, thereby reducing land cost per unit.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 30</p>
Relaxed Zoning Regulations	<p>“Modification to regulations such as: minimum lot area requirements, limitations on multi-family dwellings, minimum setbacks, variances, reduced parking requirements, and modified street standards are essential to the streamlined development of affordable housing.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 30</p>
Reduced or Waived Fees	<p>Counties could look at reducing or waiving fees for projects that incorporate a determined percentage of the development as affordable units. “This may include reimbursements or permit fees to developers whose developments are certified as affordable and also waiving up to 100% of the water or sewer tap fees for affordable units.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 31</p>
Fast Track Permitting	<p>Basically, streamline the permitting process with pre-approved house plans, a comprehensive pre-application review for major projects, and create central permitting location</p>
Design Flexibility	<p>“Loosening design flexibility involves creating pre-approved design standards to allow for quick and easy approval. Infill development, mixed use projects, and accessory dwellings are promoted.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 31</p>
Transfer of Development Rights	<p>“A TRD program permits landowners to shift densities from one site to another through a negotiated transaction. Under this approach, a landowner in a “sending” area could sell development rights to landowners in a “receiving area.”⁹</p> <p>“TDR programs operate through the transfer of development rights, or units, of density from one geographic area to another within the region.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 32</p>

⁹ Freilich, Robert H. and S. Mark White. *21st Century Land Development Code*. With Kate F. Murray. American Planning Association: Washington, D.C. 2008 p 110-111

Impact Fee Exemptions	<p>“Whether impact fees would be considered “nonessential housing regulatory requirement,” is unclear, but this affordable housing exemption may remove a potential barrier to the development of affordable housing and would be appropriate for consideration in a designated priority investment zone.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 34.</p> <p>If Oconee County ever chooses to look at impact fees, considerations will need to be given for affordable housing.</p>
Growth Related Public Facilities Standards	<p>This market based incentive, when affordable housing is an issue, would adjust the level of public service standards that some communities put into place so that infrastructure keeps up with demand and maintains an acceptable level of service.</p>
Urban Growth Boundaries	<p>“The PIA (<i>Priority Investment Act</i>) provides for the establishment of a priority investment zone, within which traditional neighborhood design and affordable housing must be permitted. The urban growth boundary concept, while not authorized by the PIA expressly, is consistent with the priority investment zone concept. For example, the priority investment and a “developing area” <i>boundary</i> may be one in the same.” page 37; italics mine</p>
Development Agreements	<p>“The development agreement is a local government planning and implementation tool that may be used to meet the intent of the Priority Investment Act.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page 37</p> <p>State law is very specific as to the standards and requirements of utilizing a development agreement. The specific standard can be found in “The South Carolina Government Development Act.”</p>
Tax Increment Financing	<p>This is a complex statute in State Law that basically allows for the redevelopment of an area and the increase of that revenue to be returned back for specific purposes</p>
Overlay Zoning Districts	<p>According to the SC Planning Act overlay, zones may impose or relax a set of requirements imposed by the underlying zoning district when there is a special public interest in a particular geographic area that does not coincide with the underlying zone boundaries.</p> <p>In this case, overlay zones may be used to relax a set of requirements, which would provide incentive for affordable housing in that location.</p>

Local Government Improvement Districts	Mechanism provide in State Code that allows local government to plan and implement public infrastructure improvements and to apply assessments on property within the district, with the concurrence of property owners, to pay a portion of the cost of the improvement. page 41
Special Property Tax Assessments	S.C. Code sec. 4-9-195, et seq. authorizes counties to temporarily abate property taxes for a period of up to twenty years on all or a portion of the value added to real property resulting from an approved rehabilitation. This may be used as an incentive for renovations of low to moderate-income rental property. page 44

Permitted Construction

Table H-15

	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Total Permits	1185	1333	1731	1780	2372
1&2 Family	2248	3340	4430	3906	6645
Mobile Home	0	2	4	5	3
Commercial	133	139	163	182	178
	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016
Fees Paid	\$362,991.00	\$310,000.00	\$275,149.00	\$312,593.00	\$440,933.00
Valuation	\$119,868,072.00	\$144,677,195.00	\$54,208,640.68	\$63,607,908.21	\$82,959,382.63
Budget	\$488,342.00	\$499,864.00	\$615,123.00	\$610,707.00	\$802,088.00

Table H-15 continued,

	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Total Permits	2197	2288	1667	2207	1315
1&2 Family	756	795	783	746	267
Mobile Home	306	397	217	252	255
Commercial	102	120	140	218	121
	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009
Fees Paid	\$ 745,963	\$ 976,280	\$ 876,607	\$ 808,910	\$ 505,628
Valuation	\$226,033,418	\$269,450,530	\$195,969,711	\$312,086,529	\$127,053,545
Budget	\$400,934	\$530,395	\$617,740	\$660,606	\$623,512

Source: State Data Center, Office of Research & Statistics

Construction activity increased in Oconee County during the 1990's, posting significant gains in each year from 1995 onward. It should be noted that the figures shown in Table H-8 reflect permits issued by the Oconee County Tax Assessor's Office. On July 1, 1999, the newly created Oconee County Building Codes Department began operations, assuming the responsibility of permitting all construction activity. Operation of the Building Codes Department required more money than the county had been receiving from permits sold by the Tax Assessor's Office. The county therefore turned to the fee schedule recommended by the Southern Building Codes Congress International (SBCCI) to cover the additional costs, which resulted in higher permit prices. The rates were based on a regional standard recognized throughout the south, bringing Oconee into line with other jurisdictions operating building code programs. Construction activity continued to increase through 2006 but declined in 2007. Activity for 2008 increased, primarily due to the addition of a new patient tower at Oconee Memorial Hospital. With the national financial recession of 2009, construction numbers declined dramatically.

Oconee County Building Codes has traditionally provided a surplus revenue stream into the general county budget from permit fees, the exception being in 2001 and 2009 during times of lower construction activity.

Workload Indicators

Activity	FY2011 Actual
Permits Issued	1,076
Inspections Performed	3,583
Commercial Plan Review	69
Planning	
Land Use Reviews	278
Floodplains Reviews	250
Meetings/Events	90
Projects	90
Zoning	
Zoning Permits	887
Rezoned Parcels(passed 3 rd)	3,403
Field Inspections	160
Public Inquires	1,000

Figure H-1

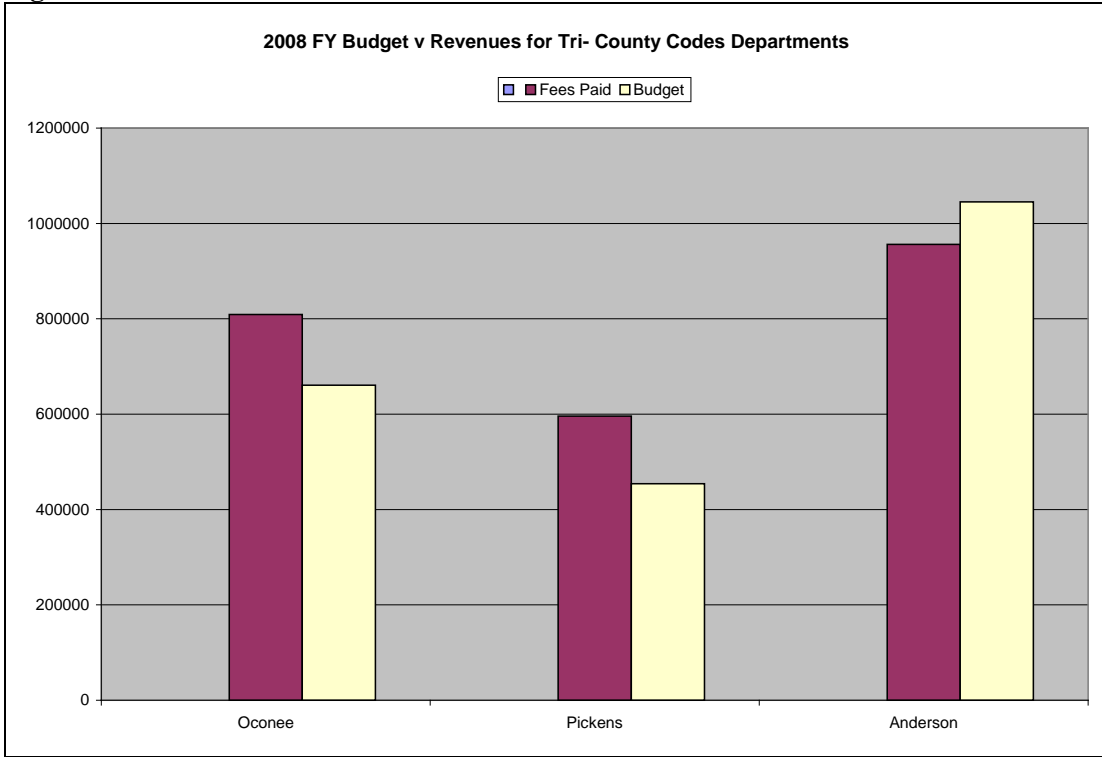


Figure H-2

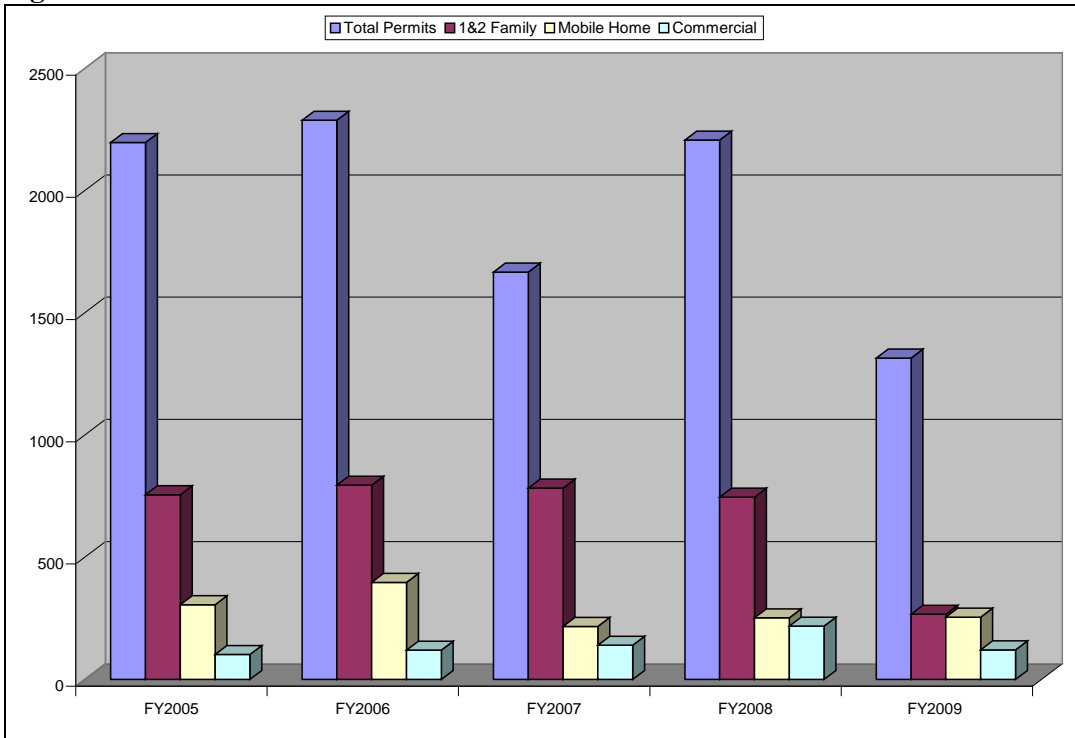
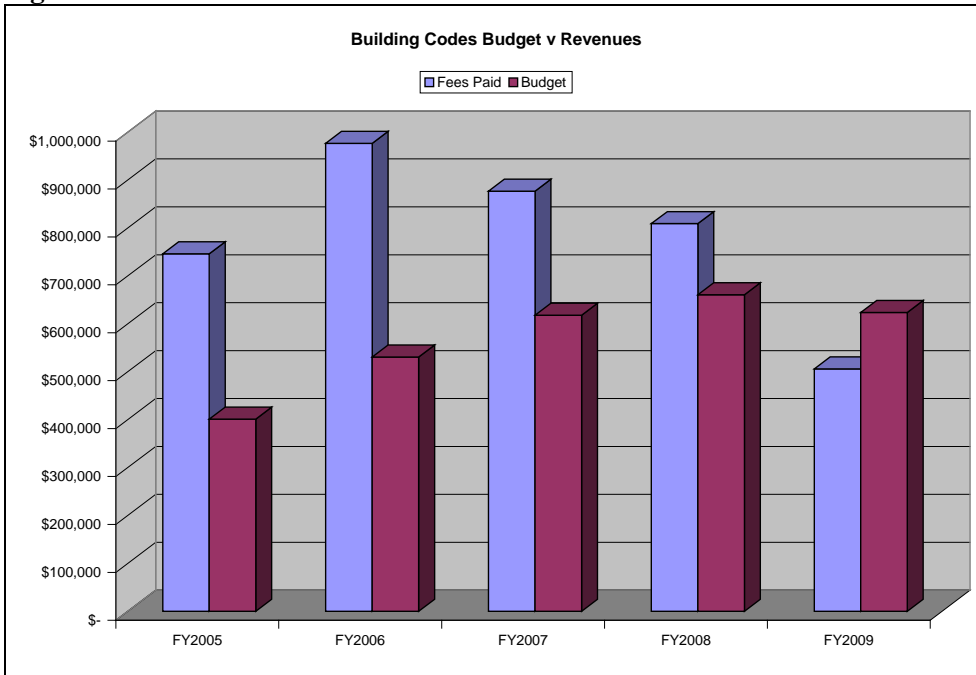


Figure H-3



Construction and Development Standards

As stated above, the Oconee County Building Codes Department began operation in July of 1999. It was at this time that Oconee County began enforcement of the state approved codes. Manufactured homes, which are constructed to federally mandated standards, are only inspected during setup, at which time state regulations governing various aspects of the process are enforced. All inspectors employed by the department are certified by the South Carolina Building Codes Council, and are required to pass a series of certification exams conducted by the International Code Council (ICC). In addition, all contractors working in Oconee County must be licensed or registered (depending on the particular project) by the state of South Carolina. As a result of the actions of the Building Codes Department, overall quality in construction activity in Oconee County has increased significantly. While Oconee County has traditionally been fortunate to have a pool of good builders to provide safe, high-quality structures for the public, there have been instances when less-scrupulous individuals have taken advantage of Oconee's citizens. Active code enforcement, therefore, offers Oconee's citizens a much higher level of protection than was available to them before. New efforts were promoted to ensure cooperation with other departments and agencies to safeguard the public and ease the permitting process. In 2006, the County added a Fire Marshal position to Building codes to facilitate fire inspections. Also the 911 addressing coordinator was moved from the GIS map room to Building Codes to smooth the progress of both construction permitting and zoning. In 2008 staff obtained certification as floodplain managers to help with FEMA mandated flood management. Although having a smaller staff, by 2008, Oconee Building Codes provided similar or better service than surrounding counties in services provided.

Analysis

An examination of Oconee County's housing reveals much strength. The county is blessed with a wide variety of housing options; however, there is a need for more affordable housing not only in Oconee but also in the region. In addition, the median year of construction for housing stock is 1972, which is either roughly similar to, or in some cases, younger than the housing stock in other counties of the region. While it is true that most of the newest high-cost single-family units are being located near the county's lakes, it is still possible to find units representing all price levels throughout the county; although they are becoming harder to find. Except for lakefront units, which are typically among the most expensive locations, it is still possible for individuals to find at least some housing suitable to their economic situation in most areas of the county, although this trend is changing. Another positive aspect of Oconee's housing is the high ownership rate, which can be seen as an indicator of stability at the community level. In spite of a large inflow of people, which in some circumstances may prove to be a detriment, newcomers to Oconee have helped to raise the level of ownership. Many recent arrivals, particularly retirees, have purchased or built homes before they move into the county. Overall, the county has reaped many benefits from the effects of the large numbers of newcomers.

One apparent weakness in the current housing stock is the low number of available mid-level housing units. Low-cost housing needs are generally being met by a mix of subsidized multi-family dwellings, older single-family units (both rented and owned), and a rapidly increasing manufactured home supply. At the other end of the economic scale is high-cost housing, which is easily attained by those that can afford it. The supply of good quality mid-level housing units, however, is restricted. Part of the problem stems from the attractiveness of the county itself, for as long as Oconee continues to draw a large number of retirees desiring higher-cost housing, many of the area's developers will continue to develop profitable communities of higher-cost custom homes. Another factor lies in the limited development of the sewer system, which is currently restricted to areas near the municipalities. Land prices also contribute to the problem and, in Oconee, they are climbing faster than the average person can afford, which increases the problem of providing good quality, mid-level affordable housing. Still, with an average cost per housing unit that is significantly higher than neighboring counties, and is in fact more than twice the average of some upstate counties, upper-end housing is dominating the housing scene.

Some of the problems affecting housing in Oconee County, that continue to be of concern, include: the persistence of substandard housing; locating homes with septic systems in environmentally sensitive areas; losing prime agricultural land to development; and dealing with the effects of incompatible land-uses located next to residential areas. (Most of these issues are dealt with in detail in the Land Use Element.)

Housing Objectives for the Future

The following objectives are intended to address those needs and desires established within the Housing Element. See the 'Goals' section of this plan for specific strategies and timelines for implementation.

1. Continue to monitor closely Oconee County's compliance with state and federal air-quality standards, adopting and maintaining reduction strategies as necessary.
2. Create and/or update plans for specific priorities.
3. Complete and properly maintain Oconee County's Geographic Information System (GIS).
4. Encourage development in a way that protects and preserves our natural resources.
5. Promote and enhance access to affordable housing through both public and private cooperation.
6. Continue support of a comprehensive planning process to insure that the citizens of Oconee County possess accurate inventories and analyses of existing county conditions, as well as the opportunity to better manage anticipated conditions.

Community Facilities Element

Overview

This element focuses on the activities and entities that are essential to maintaining Oconee County's health, safety, growth and quality lifestyle. These include government facilities and infrastructure, fire protection, health and emergency medical services, education, and libraries and cultural facilities. This element will also include statements of goals and policy recommendations based on the expressed wishes of the citizens of Oconee County.

Since 2004, Oconee County has continued in her rapid population growth and development. Continued growth has resulted in increased demands on community facilities throughout the County. Governmental facilities have been expanded to provide much needed space for the Department on Health and Social Services for example. Continued renovations and maintenance of existing facilities has continued to be a part of the ongoing work of the County. Several changes have occurred in the area of Emergency Management and Fire Service throughout the County, which will serve the County well in the years to come. As Oconee County looks toward the future, she must continue to look for opportunities which will improve the overall government facilities and infrastructure, fire protection, health and emergency medical services, education, libraries, and cultural facilities.

Form of Government

Oconee County is governed under the Council-Administrator form of government. Oconee County Council, which is composed of five members elected by voters in respective districts, acts as the county's legislative body. The Council's responsibilities include establishing policies, setting taxation levels, and guiding the county's growth within the limits of state and federal law. To execute adopted policies, directives and legislative actions, the Council employs an Administrator, the county's chief administrative officer. The Administrator's duties include directing and coordinating activities of county agencies, preparation of budgets, supervision of expenditures, enforcement of personnel policies, and the responsibility for employment and discharge of personnel. ~~(Home Rule Handbook for County Government [2000 Edition], South Carolina Association of Counties).~~-(Home Rule Handbook for County Government [2013-2016 Supplement], South Carolina Association of Counties).

Governmental Facilities

Table CF-1 lists governmental facilities owned or maintained by Oconee County.

Table CF-1

Governmental Office Facilities Owned or Maintained by Oconee County		
Facility	Location	Usage
Oconee County Court House	Walhalla	Courts, Offices
Pine Street Administrative Complex	Walhalla	Administrative Offices
Oconee County Economic Development	Walhalla	Office
Agricultural Building	Walhalla	Offices
Department of Social Services Building	Walhalla	Offices
Oconee County Health Department	Walhalla	Health and Environmental Offices, Clinic
The Rock Building	Walhalla	Offices
Westminster Magistrate's Office (County Maintained)	Westminster	Court, Office
Seneca Magistrate's Office (County Maintained)	Seneca	Court, Office
Public Works Facilities	Seneca	Road and Bridges
Solid Waste Facility	Seneca	Waste Management
Vehicle Maintenance Facility	Seneca	Vehicle Service and Repair
Brown Square	Walhalla	Office Space or Storage
DSS Building (previously Next Day Apparel)	Walhalla	Social Services

Source: Oconee County Planning Department

As Table CF-1 shows, most of Oconee County's governmental office facilities are county owned, with only the magistrate's offices in Westminster and Seneca leased. While the majority of all governmental offices in Oconee County have traditionally been located in the town of Walhalla, the county seat, until the late 1990's they were scattered in various buildings near the courthouse. In 1999, however, most governmental offices were relocated to the Pine Street Administrative Complex. As a result, the citizens of Oconee County are able to conduct most governmental business in one location. Soon after relocation of the county governmental offices, the Oconee County School District began planning to construct their new administrative facility across the street from the Pine Street Complex, further centralizing governmental offices.

Since 2004, Oconee County has continued to improve the location and efficiency of government offices. Several departments have relocated to more efficient locations and buildings. The County's Road and Bridges Department, Solid Waste, and the Vehicle Maintenance Facilities are now all located on Wells Highway in the Seneca area. The County also acquired and renovated the former Next Day Apparel building on Kenneth Street in Walhalla. The project was completed for less than three million dollars and increased the available space for the Department of Social Services by 39,000 square feet! Ms. Elaine Bailey, the director of South Carolina Department of Social Services

In the summer of 2001, ground was broken to construct a new courthouse facility in Walhalla. Situated adjacent to the existing structure, the new facility offers much needed space for both judicial and administrative operations. Also, the new structure, planned in

a different era than the old courthouse, reflects the requirements of dealing with the potential dangers of life in the 21st Century. As a result, the new structure will include both well-designed passive protective measures and state-of-the-art security systems.

The new Courthouse was completed in 2003 but today issues regarding the construction are still being resolved. The Justice Department has cited the facility for not complying with the American with Disabilities Act. Efforts to correct this problem are currently underway and the improvements made to the facility will benefit all citizens.

Great changes have come with the expansion and modernization of governmental facilities. Among the most notable has been the greater reliance on computers and other associated information technology. To coordinate and facilitate this upgrade, an Information Technology Department was created in 2000. Under the direction of this department, county government is using state of the art technology to become more efficient and accessible to the citizens of Oconee through improved existing facilities, as well as newly created ones. Chief among these new tools is the Internet, which allows the public not only to access information 24 hours a day, but increasingly to conduct necessary business without leaving their homes. In addition, the county's geographical information system (GIS), begun soon after the move to Pine Street, will provide both county government and the public with information about Oconee that was never before available, allowing for better planning and operation in all aspects of county life.

Municipal government facilities are not included in Table CF-1. These are typically located within the jurisdictional limits of the various municipalities.

Libraries

Oconee County boasts a modern library system that has, since 1948, grown to include not only the main library in Walhalla, but also branches in Seneca, Westminster and Salem. The main library in Walhalla, open seven days a week, served 228,615 visitors during 2008. Of those, 32,941 are registered card holders who checked out 293,999 books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, and books-on-tape. A total of 44,556 people signed in to use the 36 public internet computer terminals at the library during 2008. It was a recent recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities *Picturing America* grant. The Oconee County Friends of the Library was organized in 1986 to provide services in the areas of financial and volunteer support to supplement the libraries' resources and to stimulate community awareness, use, and involvement with the libraries.

Oconee's libraries utilize an internet-based catalog system, enabling them to take advantage of the latest information technology. Users of the library system can log in to the library websites to search, view, and request library materials online. Computers are now available to the public for access to the Internet. Establishing wireless internet access for the public is currently underway and will be available in the near future.





The system also operates a bookmobile service to offer materials to residents in rural areas of the county. Along with the bookmobile service, the library offers a summer reading program for youth and adults alike. The program includes creative reading activities designed for specific age groups, as well as events such as Family Movie Night for the whole family at the main library. In addition to its regular holdings, the library system maintains a

collection of area maps dating from the early 1700's, microfilm copies of local newspapers and census records, and genealogical and historical materials from the county. The main library is also a depository for public records related to the Oconee Nuclear Station.

The Oconee County Library Board has been working to update the library facilities in Seneca for a number of years. The Oconee County School District has volunteered to donate land adjacent to the newly build Blue Ridge Elementary School in Seneca. Under the proposal several new staff would need to be added to adequately serve the new library. The Library Plan has also stressed the need for an additional County library in the Fair Play area and they are continuing to work to make that facility a reality.

Other area libraries include the Cooper Library at Clemson University, which houses over 1.5 million books, periodicals and microforms; and the Tri-County Technical College Library, which contains over 35,000 volumes.

Public Safety

The Emergency Management Agency was created in 1980 by the Oconee County Council to insure the complete and efficient utilization of all county facilities to combat disaster from enemy attack or natural disaster. Then in 2007, County Council consolidated the various agencies and created the Emergency Services Protection Department to coordinate Emergency Management, Rescue, Fire and Hazmat. The mission of Emergency Management is to protect the people and resources in the County by minimizing damage, injury, and loss of life that results from any type of disaster, provide for the continuity of government, and provide damage assessment in the event of emergencies.

Fire Protection

There are currently seventeen fire districts in Oconee County, with the county providing equipment for fire protection in the unincorporated areas of the districts. Table CF-2 shows the fire stations located in Oconee County, the type of service offered, and the fire insurance classification issued by the Insurance Service Office (ISO Rating) for areas within the various districts.

Table CF-2

Oconee County Fire Stations				
Station Number	Location (See Map CF-1)	Type of Service (Volunteer or Full-Time)	ISO Rating (April, 2002)	
			Areas within 1000' of hydrant/not over 5 miles road travel from station	All other
1	Oakway	Volunteer	7	9
2	Salem	Volunteer	7	9
3	Corinth-Shiloh	Volunteer	7	9
4	Mt. Rest	Volunteer	7	9
5	Walhalla	Full-Time	4	9
6	Westminster	Full-Time	5	9
7	Seneca	Full-Time	3	9
8	Fair Play	Volunteer	9	6
9	Long Creek	Volunteer	9	9
10	Cleveland	Volunteer	9	9
11	Keowee-Ebenezer	Volunteer	7	9
12	Friendship	Volunteer	5	9
13	Cross Roads	Volunteer	8	9
14	Pickett Post-Camp Oak	Volunteer	7	9
15	South Union	Volunteer	7	9
16	West Union	Volunteer	5	9
17	Keowee Key	Full Time	4	4
21	Bountyland	Full Time	4	4
22	Salem	Volunteer	4	4
23	Foxwood Hill	Volunteer	4	4
24	Holly Springs	Volunteer	4	4
25	Whetstone	Volunteer	4	4
26	Village Creek	Volunteer	4	4
27	Shilo	Volunteer	4	4

Source: Oconee County Fire Marshal's Office

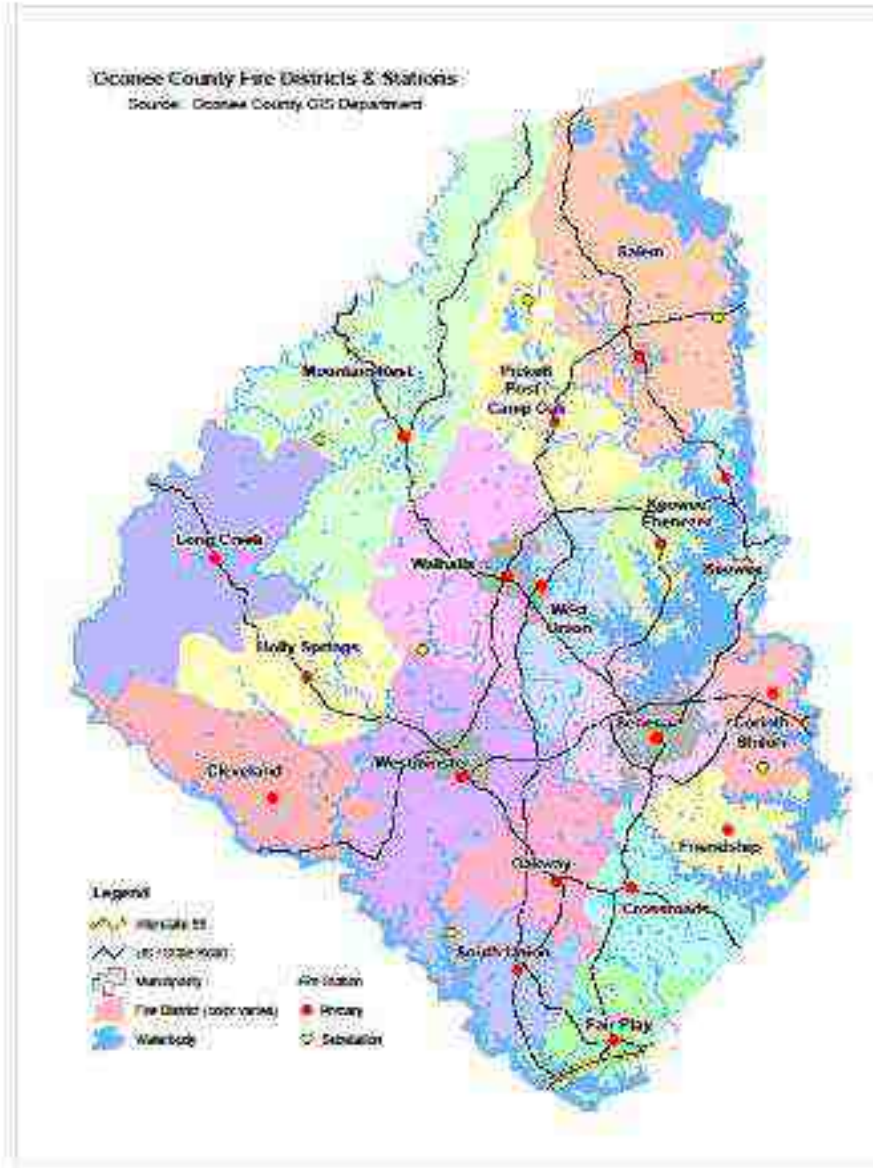
Table CF-2 shows that there are ~~four~~ five full-time fire departments in Oconee County, with the personnel paid for by the various municipalities or, in the case of Keowee Key,

by fees collected from property owners. The county established county wide Emergency Service Response in June 2007. Station #21 is a paid county station that responds back-up to all volunteer stations on structure fires. A relative measure of the success of the fire protection system is shown in the ISO ratings, which vary from 4 to 9, with the lowest found in Seneca, and the highest found in the rural areas farthest from hydrants and a fire station. The ratings, which are periodically updated, are used as factors in determining the cost of fire insurance for homeowners residing in the districts.

Map CF-1 illustrates the approximate location of each fire station. The numbers shown on the map correspond to the individual station number.

Updated(2017) Map CF-1

Source: Oconee County Planning Department



Law Enforcement

The unincorporated areas of Oconee County are under the protection of the Oconee County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff, who serves as an elected official, manages a staff of deputies and administrative personnel headquartered at the Oconee County Law Enforcement Center on South Church Street, in Walhalla. Although the majority of deputies are focused on patrol duties, a number of different specialties exist within the department. Among these are investigators, narcotics officers, courthouse security, family

court officer, civil processors, community services, and beginning in 2001, traffic enforcement.

Oconee County municipalities, with the exception of Salem, maintain their own police departments to provide law enforcement within their jurisdictions. The Oconee County Sheriff's Department serves the town of Salem.

Currently the Sheriff's Department is working on establishing a quick link on it's website to show criminal activity in Oconee County and Municipalities.

Table CF-3 provides a breakdown of Oconee County crime statistics for selected years.

Table CF-3

Reported Crime in Oconee County								
Agency	Year	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Breaking & Entering	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft
Oconee Sheriff's Office	2001	0	12	7	191	278	572	78
	2002	4	22	13	211	344	700	102
	2005	1	24	7	209	483	877	114
	2006	3	24	10	216	321	729	83
	2007		27	16	253	388	752	105
Seneca Police	2001	1	3	7	43	64	494	22
	2002	0	3	6	55	57	381	21
	2005	0	5	14	79	96	416	34
	2006	0	6	13	77	118	325	27
	2007	0	4	8	59	69	444	29
Walhalla Police	2001	0	1	0	69	18	97	14
	2002	1	0	0	30	22	72	3
	2005	0	2	3	22	21	98	9
	2006	0	1	2	14	30	77	5
	2007	0	2	7	23	26	103	4
Westminster Police	2001	0	0	0	23	9	22	3
	2002	0	0	0	29	39	124	7
	2005	0	0	0	12	12	57	3
	2006	0	3	3	8	9	41	1
	2007	0	0	9	18	25	67	3
West Union Police	2001	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
	2002	0	0	0	2	4	0	0
	2005	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
	2006	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
	2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Salem Police	2001	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	2002	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	2005	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
	2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Comparison of Reported Crime by Agency								
Agency	Year	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Breaking & Entering	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft
Oconee County Totals	2001	1	16	14	326	370	1187	117
	2002	5	25	19	327	466	1277	133
	2005	1	31	24	323	612	1453	114
	2006	3	31	28	315	479	1174	83
	2007	0	33	40	353	508	1367	141
Pickens County Totals	2001	6	35	46	306	631	1896	190
	2002	1	37	34	301	760	1943	253
	2005	2	36	26	324	955	2789	316
	2006	6	36	33	280	772	2401	307
	2007	1	45	46	343	886	2671	326
Anderson County Totals	2001	15	71	172	857	1917	4970	520
	2002	14	80	163	960	1810	5235	732
	2005	16	72	157	839	1912	5843	805
	2006	18	91	162	890	1860	5426	767
	2007	5	63	140	971	2585	5855	895
Greenville County Totals	2001	35	150	575	2193	3402	11236	1152
	2002	30	197	576	2261	3470	10652	1232
	2005	30	187	635	2427	4131	11484	1629
	2006	26	147	633	2368	4525	11008	1733
	2007	30	151	761	2357	4529	11617	1822

Source: South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division

*no data available

The tables above show that Oconee County is blessed with a great police force that is keeping the number of crimes in the County to a minimum. As one would expect the rural nature of the County also contributes to the relatively low number of crimes. Criminal activity tends to increase as one move's from a rural setting to a more urbanized setting. As urbanization continues to increase in the county the effects on the law enforcement will need further study. Questions such as: what is the optimal ratio of officers to population, what additional funding will be needed to maintain and then improve services, how much space is needed, is there a need for an additional command center in the county, and are ways to achieve our goals by using tools like intergovernmental agreements?

One of the major issues facing law enforcement throughout the county is jail space. Currently the Oconee County jail does not have enough beds to house the number of inmates residing there. An upgrade to the County jail has been proposed which will ensure the space available to inmates is sufficient to meet state housing requirements. An inmate housing analysis should be conducted to establish the most cost effective method of keeping inmates in a safe and secure environment. Alternative programs for those awaiting trial and have not been found guilty of non-violent crimes should be analyzed. Once convicted, the State of South Carolina has developed a number of alternative housing options which works to reserve precious jail space for those criminals who truly need it.

One of the programs the State of South Carolina utilizes is called the *Shock Incarceration Program*. This program was established to provide an alternative to traditional incarceration. Young offenders ranging in age between seventeen (17) and twenty-nine (29) years old are eligible for the program. Designed to build discipline, work ethic, strenuous physical activity, and education among other things this program provides the necessary tools for the offender to learn self-discipline, gain a positive attitude, and learn good values and behavior. Programs such have to potential to be adapted in certain circumstance with the inmate population in Oconee County. However, the majority of inmates in the County system are either awaiting trial or under family court penalties.

Emergency Medical

Emergency medical service in Oconee County is provided in conjunction with the ~~Oconee Medical Center~~, Greenville Hospital System whose ambulance fleet and paramedics are available 24 hours per day. In addition, mutual aid is provided to Anderson and Pickens Counties in South Carolina, and Rabun and Stephens Counties in Georgia.

Six rescue squad divisions are located throughout Oconee County to provide support to the primary emergency service. These units are located in the following communities:

- Mountain Rest
- Oakway
- Salem
- Seneca
- Walhalla
- Westminster

Three additional sub-stations are located at Keowee Key, Fair Play School, and the Long Creek Fire Department. Oconee County provides vehicles, training, and supplies for the units, which are staffed by approximately 150 volunteers. Among these are special squads trained for diving, swiftwater rescues, high angle rescues, and rappelling.

Because of the proximity to Lakes Hartwell, Keowee, and Jocassee and scenic rivers and waterfalls that increases public use and access to recreational waters, the Oconee County Emergency Rescue staff encounter unique situations that require special training and skills. In addition to providing fire safety coverage on the lakes during the 4th of July weekend, the staff also provide lake safety patrol coverage throughout the year. During 2008, the staff responded to 4 drownings, 3 medical responses with transport on the lakes, 2 boat recoveries, 1 cardiac emergency, and 30 search and rescues. The rescue squad was dispatched to 4,305 calls during 2008.

(Oconee County Community Facilities Plan 1997). and www.oconeesc.com/emprep/rescue_squads.htm).

Health Services

~~The cornerstone of Oconee County's healthcare system is the recently renovated 155-bed patient tower and new hospice house at the Oconee Medical Center, located near Seneca. The hospital has ten centers of service, which include the Outpatient Infusion Center, Clemson Health Center, Women's Services, Surgical Services, Rehabilitation Services, Emergency Services, Pain Management, Diagnostic Services, the Lila Doyle Long Term Care Facility, and Inpatient Services. In addition, the hospital is involved in several community outreach programs that include Oconee Kids Health, NurseFirst Family Health Center, Occupational Health, OMH HomeCare Network, and Medication Access. (2003-2004 Oconee County Profile, Appalachian Council of Governments)~~



The GHS Oconee Medical Campus includes 169-bed Oconee Memorial Hospital; 120-bed Lila Doyle skills nursing facility and rehabilitation center; GHE Hospice of the Foothills and Cottingham House for hospice care; the GHS Cancer Institute-Seneca; as well as an Outpatient Infusion Center, birthing center, surgical surgical services, outpatient rehabilitation, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), pain management, radiology and lab, and home health. Oconee County is also home to a wide variety of other healthcare related operations, including various residential and nursing care facilities, a dialysis clinic, a blood donation facility, a sports medicine practice, and a number of other medical specialists.

The Division of Health Licensing of the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control licenses a number of health facilities located across Oconee County.

Table CF-4 provides information about these facilities.

Table CF-4

Health Facilities in Oconee County			
Facility	Type of Care	Operator	Number of Beds/Stations/Participants
Oconee Adult Day Care Center	Adult Day Care	Anderson-Oconee Council on Aging	50
Blue Ridge Surgery Center	Ambulatory Surgery	Blue Ridge/Clemson Orthopaedic Assn, LLC	4
Oconee Community Residence I	Intermediate Care for Mentally Retarded	S.C. Dept. of Disabilities and Special Needs	8
Oconee Community Residence 2	Intermediate Care for Mentally Retarded	S. C. Dept. of Disabilities and Special Needs	8
Oconee GHS Home Health	Home Health	Oconee Medical Center GHS	3
Oconee GHS Hospice of the Foothills Cottingham House	Hospice	Oconee Medical Center GHS	15
Oconee GHS Hospice of the Foothills	Hospice	Oconee Medical Center GHS	3
Oconee Medical Center -Memorial Hospital	Hospital	Oconee Medical Center GHS	160-169
Lila Doyle Nursing Care Facility	Nursing Care	Oconee Medical Center GHS	120
Seneca Health & Rehabilitation Center	Nursing Care	SSC Seneca Operating Co., LLC	132
Oconee Dialysis Clinic	Renal Dialysis	Bio-Medical Applications of South Carolina, Inc.	14
Country Christian Care, Inc.	Alzheimers Care	Country Christian Care, Inc.	14
Foothills Assisted Living	Alzheimers Care	Cite Health Mgmt. Services, Inc.	76
	Alzheimers	Seneca Senior	62

Benton Village of Seneca	Care	Living LLC	
For A Season Assisted Living	Residential Care	James Arnold Stevens, Inc.	5
The Inn at Seneca	Alzheimers Care	ALC TISSC, LLC	50
Lakeview Assisted Living	Alzheimers Care	Lakeview Assisted Living, Inc.	19
Morningside of Seneca	Residential Care	Morningside of Seneca, L.P.	59
Seneca Residential Care Center	Alzheimers Care	Wilburn Hammers	33

Source: SC DHEC Division of Health Licensing

Infrastructure

Roads

Over 2,000 miles of roads run through Oconee County. Included in this total are approximately 220 miles of state primary roads, and over 600 miles of state secondary roads. In addition, slightly over 4 miles of Interstate 85 cross the southern tip of the county. Of the remaining 1, 200 or so miles of Oconee roads, about half are owned by the county, and half are private. Approximately 1/3 of the county roads are unpaved. (South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics; Oconee County Community Facilities Plan 1997). **Table Map CF-5** lists the Oconee County locations having the heaviest traffic volume.

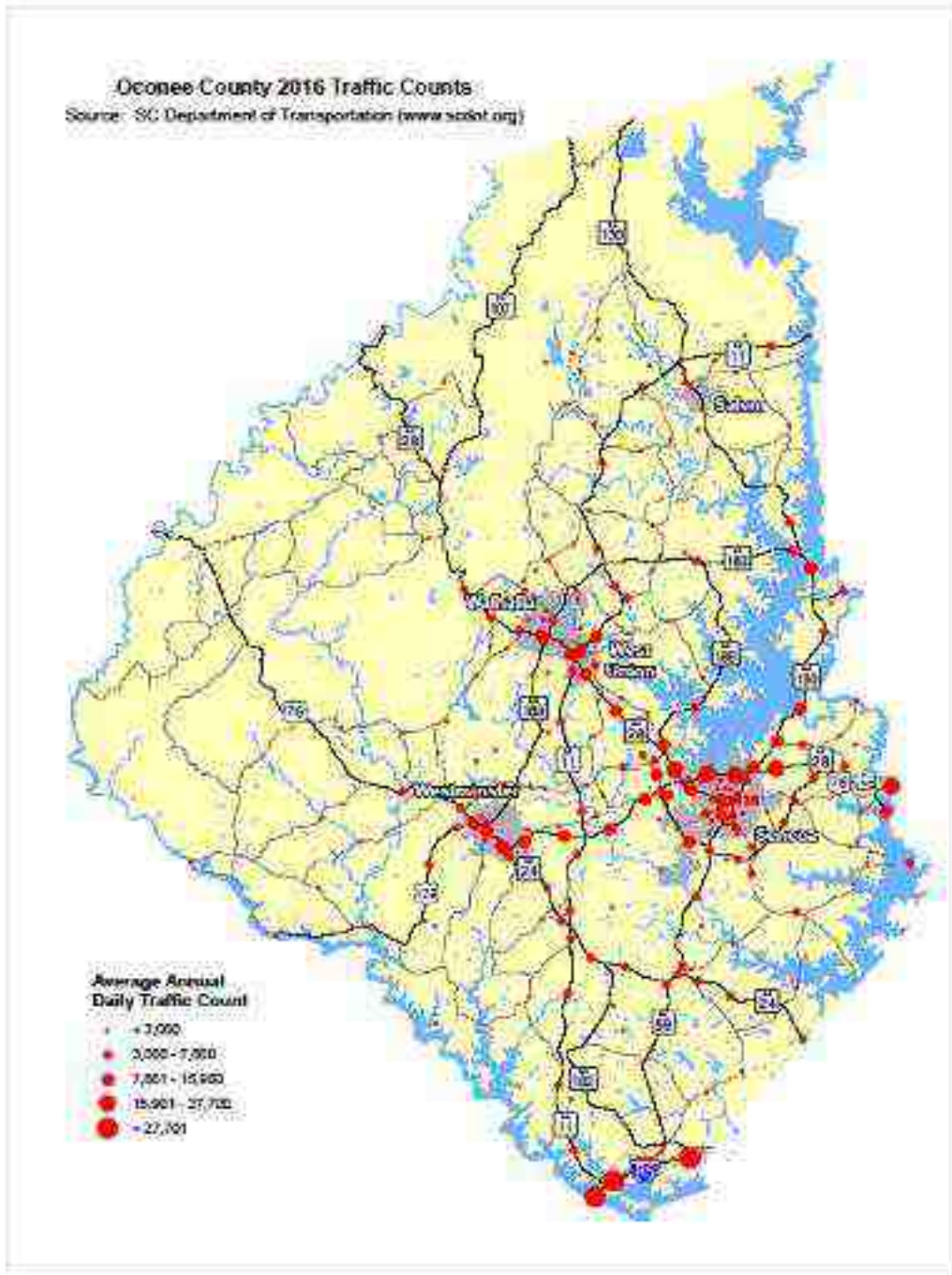
Table CF-5

Traffic Counts (Locations With An Average Daily Traffic Volume of at Least 5,000 Vehicles Per Day, Oconee County)					
Rank	Road	Location	Average Daily Traffic Volume		
			1996	2007	2008
1	I-85	At SC 11	36,900	43,100	40,500
2	I-85	Between SC 11 and SC 59	33,800	40,800	38,500
3	I-85	Between SC 59 and SC 243	32,000	39,500	37,100
4	US 123	At SC 28	24,400	25,700	25,900
5	US 123	At Pickens County Line	20,500	23,000	21,300
6	US 123	At SC 59	18,600	22,600	22,300
7	SC 28	At US 123	16,100	25,700	25,900
8	US 123	Between SC 11 and Westminster Town Limit	12,000	14,100	12,000
9	SC 28	At SC 11	12,300	14,300	13,700
10	SC 130	At SC US 123	6,600	11,300	11,000

11	SC 59	At Southern Seneca City Limit	5,800	7,600	7,200
12	SC 130	SC 183	5,100	8,300	8,100

Source: Oconee County Community Facilities Plan 1997

CF-5 (This map replaces the previous table)



Airport

Another key transportation resource in Oconee County is the Oconee Regional Airport, a county owned and operated facility located east of Seneca, lying just across Lake Hartwell from Clemson University. The airport, which has undergone a great many upgrades and expansions over the last decade, is utilized by a number of area businesses and recreation interests. Not only is the facility popular with a growing number of Clemson University football fans that



prefer to fly in for home games, but it also provides a convenient a way for corporate executives to easily visit their facilities in the Oconee area. In ~~2008-2011, 65-75~~ aircraft, ranging from corporate turbine planes to personal single engine planes, were based at the airport. The airport has 40 T-hangars for indoor storage, a private 15,000 square foot corporate hangar, and 40 outdoor tie-down spaces for aircraft. ~~Currently, efforts are underway to expand the runway to five thousand feet with a full parallel taxiway, enabling larger corporate jets to utilize the airport.~~ In the realm of AIRPORT DATA, the airport's 5000' long runway has precision GPS, non-precision GPS, NDB instrument approaches, and is home for 75-based aircraft. It also hosts the Clemson University Flight Dept. and the Clemson University Flying Club and The Flying Tigers Skydiving Club. ~~A 2006 SC Department of Commerce study stated a \$6.3 million annual economic output generated by the airport with only 16 on-airport jobs.~~ As of fiscal year 2017 there are 4 full-time employees and 1 part time employee.

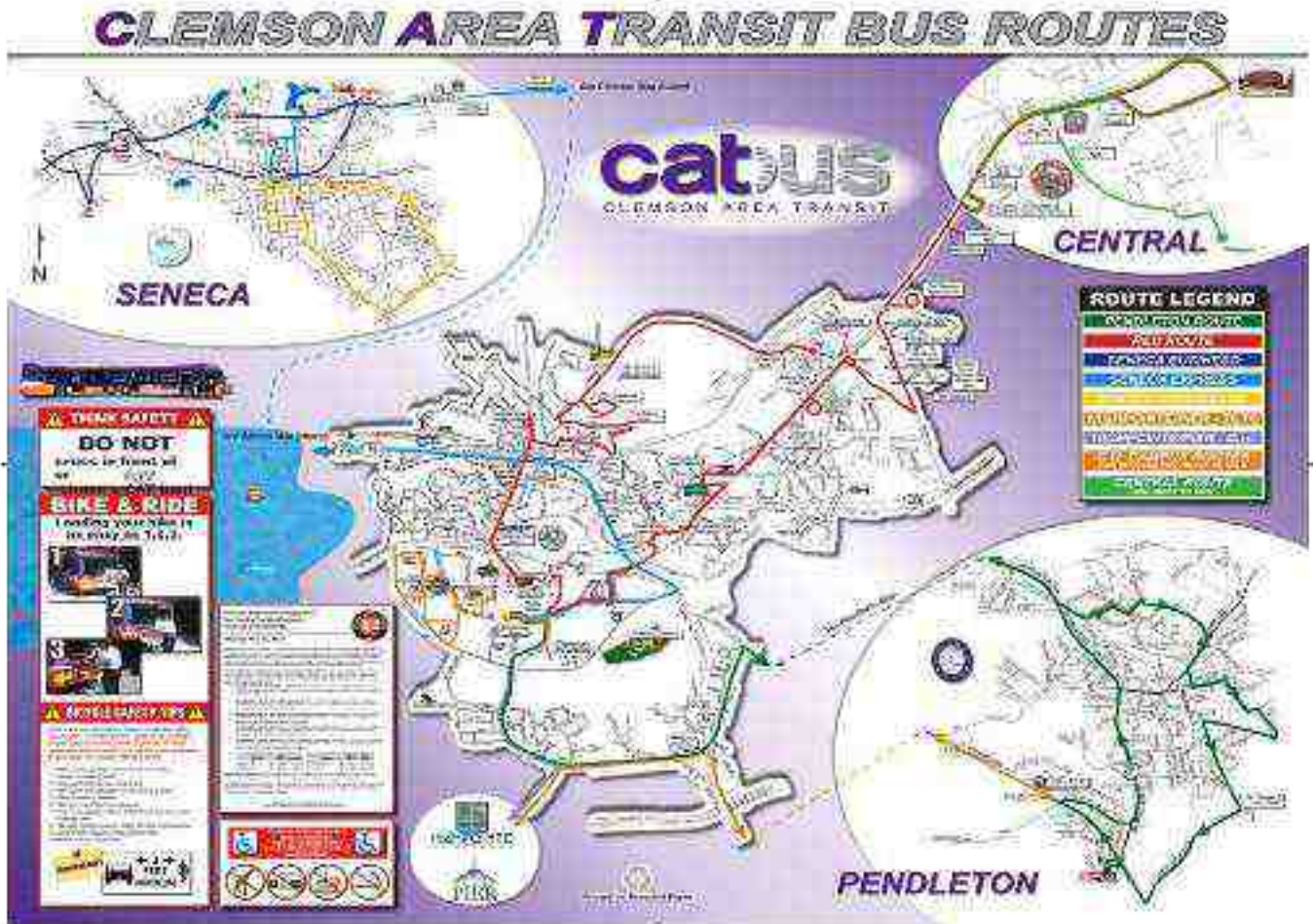
Railways

Oconee County is served by the Norfolk Southern Railway system, which provides freight service to a number of area industries. Entering the county from the east near Clemson, the railroad travels through Seneca and Westminster, and on to Toccoa, Georgia. In addition, passenger service is available in nearby Clemson.

Public Transit

~~Currently, there are no public transportation systems in Oconee County. At the time of writing, however, consideration is being given to extending Clemson's highly touted CATS bus service into Seneca. If completed, the new link would provide~~ Oconee

County residents have free transportation from Seneca in the west, to Anderson in the east via Clemson Area Transportation (CAT).



Water Treatment

There are five major public water providers located in Oconee County, which in 1997 supplied more than 10 million gallons of water per day. The overall capacity exceeds 14 million gallons, with recent upgrades in some systems greatly increasing the volume. The major providers include:

Salem Water Department
Owner: Town of Salem
Primary Source: Wells
Service Area: City limits, with expansion along Highway 130

Seneca Light and Water
Owner: City of Seneca
Primary Source: Lake Keowee

Service Area: City limits and adjacent areas extending approximately 10 miles north and south

Walhalla Water Department

Owner: City of Walhalla

Primary Source: Coneross Creek

Service Area: City limits, Town of West Union, and adjacent areas

Westminster Commission of Public Works

Owner: Town of Westminster and private investors

Primary Source: Chauga River

Service Area: City limits and adjacent areas

Pioneer Water System

Owner: Customers within system

Primary Source: Purchased water from Seneca and Westminster water systems

Service Area: Southern Oconee County extending into western Anderson County

In addition to the major providers listed above, a number of private suppliers offer service to residents living in developments across Oconee County. (Oconee County Community Facilities Plan 1997)

Sewage Treatment

Public sewage treatment is provided by the Oconee County Sewer Commission, which operates a treatment facility that primarily serves the municipal wastewater collection systems of Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster. These individual systems combine to create a service area focused on the “triangle” region between the cities. In addition, lines have been constructed to serve the US 76/123 corridor east of Seneca, establishing southeastern Oconee County as one of the most attractive areas for development in the region. Future plans include the establishment of sewer service to Oconee County’s I-85 corridor, an effort anticipated to dramatically expand the area’s ability to attract new businesses.

The existing sewer treatment facility is located at 623 Return Church Road, south of Seneca on the banks of Coneross Creek. ~~The facility treats in excess of 1 billion gallons of wastewater per year, as well as processing more than 3,000 tons of sludge annually. treated approximately 869 million gallons of wastewater and processed 3179 tons of dewatered sludge in 2016. In the late 1990’s, the facility’s capacity was expanded from its original 4.5 million gallons per day (MGD) to 7.8 (MGD). While the plant is currently operating far below its maximum volume, restrictions placed on the system by outside factors, not the least of which being the flow rate in Coneross Creek, preclude utilization of much of the excess capacity. As of August 2017, the facility has allocated 4.378 MGD to residential, commercial, and industrial users in Oconee County, which is 56 percent of the facility’s total design flow.~~

As well as the public sewer system, several private providers offer service to some of the larger residential developments in the county. Among these are Chickasaw Point and Foxwood Hills on Lake Hartwell, and Keowee Key on Lake Keowee. (Oconee County Community Facilities Plan 1997) In 2000, the village of Newry, previously served by a failed private system, was connected to the public sewer system in a joint effort by Oconee County and the City of Seneca.

Solid Waste

The Oconee County Solid Waste Department is located on Wells' Highway, near Seneca, SC. As Oconee County does not operate a countywide solid waste collection program, it provides residents with eleven manned and **two unmanned (1 City of Westminster, 1 City of Walhalla)** convenience centers located across the county. Currently, all of the county's solid waste is hauled to landfill facilities in Homer, Georgia. The county does, however, maintain a Construction and Demolition (C&D) Landfill near Seneca.

Education

Elementary and Secondary Education

Oconee County is home to **16** public educational facilities. The majority of the elementary and secondary facilities are public schools, which are owned and operated by the School District of Oconee County. Table CF-6 lists the public schools in Oconee County.

Table CF-6

Oconee County Public Schools	
School	Location
James M. Brown Elementary	Walhalla
Blue Ridge Elementary	Seneca
Fair Oak Elementary	Westminster
Keowee Elementary	Seneca
Northside Elementary	Seneca
Orchard Park Elementary	Westminster
Ravenel Elementary	Seneca
Tamassee Elementary	Tamassee
Walhalla Elementary	Walhalla
Westminster Elementary	Westminster
West-Oak Middle School	Westminster
Seneca Middle School	Seneca
Walhalla Middle School	Walhalla
Seneca High School	Seneca
Tamassee-Salem High School	Salem

Walhalla High School	Walhalla
West-Oak High School	Westminster

Source: Oconee County School District

In addition to the traditional schools listed in Table CF-6, the Oconee County School District operates an adult education program, an alternative school program, and the Hamilton Career Center, all located in Seneca.

The School District of Oconee County currently operates seventeen elementary, middle, and high schools under the direction of the Superintendent of Education. The Superintendent, the school district's chief administrative officer, is hired by the Oconee County School Board, a body comprised of 5 members representing Oconee's voting districts. The district's total student enrollment in 2008 was 10,716. (SC Annual School District Report Card Summary, SC Department of Education)

Table CF-7 provides an overview of Oconee County student's results of the ~~2001~~ 2016 Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Table CF-7

SAT Results for School District of Oconee County					
School Year	Total Number of Seniors	Number Taking SAT	Percent Tested	Composite Scores	Comparison to 2000 score of 1029
2001	516	280	45	1002	-27
2007	604	254	42	1040	+11
2016	707	155		1112	

Source: South Carolina Department of Education and <http://www.ed.sc.gov/topics/assessment/scores>

ACT Results for School District of Oconee County							
School Year	Total Number of Seniors	Number Taking ACT	Composite Scores	Verbal Average Score	Math Average Score	Reading Average Score	Science Average Score
2016	707	674	18.2	564	18.3	18.3	18.5

The Education Foundation is a non-profit organization that operates as a collaborative effort between local civic groups, community boards, and city and county departments to enhance the teaching of science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, and service learning (STEAMS). The Foundation has awarded over \$95,000 during the past two years for this purpose. (Superintendent's Report, SC Annual School District Report Card Summary, SC Department of Education) ~~(By 2010 this had happened)~~

~~District-wide implementation of the John Collins' Writing Program is now complete, providing structure and focus to this extremely important communication skill. The program also stresses strategies that improve reading and critical thinking skills.~~

The district has also made improvements in foreign language instruction. During the 2016-17 school year, the district added a second Chinese teacher, two elementary schools were able to provide Spanish programs, and one piloted Rosetta Stone software giving students the option of learning French, German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, or Japanese. Beginning in fall 2017-18, all ten elementary schools will have access to Rosetta Stone, making Oconee one of the first in the nation to implement this district-wide.

The district consistently provides STEM trainings and experiences to teachers to better provide quality instruction for students. District grants have been obtained to provide 3-D technology to classes to assist instruction of abstract concepts. The Duke Energy Foundation also provided grants to support district STEM initiatives through intensive professional development.

While schools teach STEM topics to students almost daily, many elementary schools have also given parents the opportunity to learn more. Several schools hosted STEM nights this year with large numbers in attendance. These activities give students a chance to demonstrate what they are learning as well as keep parents informed about school activities and career options for their children.

In addition to public schools, several private schools are located in Oconee County. Among these are the Oconee Christian Academy, the Faith Center Academy, and the Tamassee DAR School. Other private institutions, typically church supported, may also be found in and near the county. Also, the Clemson Montessori School, in nearby Clemson, is an option for some Oconeeans. The Wilderness Camp School in Westminster, as well as the Wilderness Way Girls Camp School in Fair Play, offers alternative educational options for at risk teens.

Higher Education

Although there are no colleges or universities located within the county, a number of institutions of higher learning are within easy commuting distance for Oconee residents. Included among these is Clemson University, one of the leading land grant universities in the nation. Also nearby is Anderson College University and Southern Wesleyan University, both private Christian-oriented schools; and Tri-County Technical College, part of South Carolina's world-class technical education system that offers students industrial, business, technological and university transfer programs. In addition, a number of private institutions offer various business and trade programs for Oconee residents.

Analysis

On the whole, Oconee County is served by modern, relatively efficient community facilities. In fact, compared to those living in other areas of similar size and population, Oconee's residents are fortunate in many ways. The challenge facing the county, however, is not to simply maintain what exists now, but to provide for the expansions and upgrades that will be necessary in the coming years. Most sources indicate that the population of Oconee County will continue to grow rapidly in the foreseeable future; and

given the proximity of both metropolitan Atlanta and Greenville, there is little doubt that it will. For citizens to maintain control of how their community develops, therefore, it will require planning years in advance- if the county is not adequately prepared to manage future challenges, it will be run over by them. The area's community facilities, which play a major role in establishing and maintaining the county's lifestyle, are therefore of vital interest.

Maintaining a system of good roads will be a major issue for Oconee County. As the area's population grows, existing roads will naturally become more crowded, entailing either the improvement of current routes, as well as the construction of new ones. However, as much of Oconee County's appeal is directly tied to its natural assets, planning and developing new thoroughfares in a manner that least impacts these resources is vital. Issues such as the negative effects of impervious surfaces on groundwater, and the impact of additional roads in sensitive areas must be closely looked at to avoid negating the benefits of adding new roads. Also, a viable system of regular road maintenance should be adopted and adhered to if waste is to be avoided.

Oconee County's water supply is an item of vital interest to all area residents. Currently, a handful of public water suppliers provide the more developed areas of the county with water, with a number of smaller private suppliers offering service to individual communities. There is, however, no overall plan for developing water service across the county, leaving many areas without access to a public water system. In years of normal rainfall, most residents in such areas are able to fill their needs from private wells. But during periods of drought, such as Oconee County experienced during the past decade, groundwater levels can become dangerously low. Further compounding the problem is the number of wells that now experience the inflow of pollutants during dry weather, forcing even some of those with sufficient volume to seek an alternative supply of safe drinking water. Also, there is another reason the lack of planning for future water needs impacts Oconee County residents, for, as never before, water supplies are tied directly to economic prosperity. With water a vital component for many high-tech industries, the lack of a comprehensive plan for supplying water to prime industrial areas leaves Oconee County without a major tool to use in attracting new jobs. Therefore, to meet both the physical and economic needs of the county, it is vital to establish a planning process that provides for the expansion of water supplies into any area requiring it.

The lack of sufficient sewer capacity is a serious impediment to any community's economic development, and Oconee County is no exception. Currently, Oconee County has a single sewer treatment facility that primarily serves the municipalities. As the county becomes more urbanized and developed, however, limitations placed on the facility will act as a bottleneck to growing the county's economy, eventually threatening the area's quality of life. A solution must be found that allows for an expansion of sewer service to all developing areas of the county. This could come in the form of upgrading the present facility, or the construction of new facilities. While the existing facility has the potential to significantly expand operations, various factors, such as the volume of flow in Coneross Creek, threaten to limit the utilization of the capacity. And, even if such problems are overcome, using the existing plant may not be the most efficient

answer for servicing distant areas of the county, such as the I-85 corridor in southern Oconee County. In any event, such efforts will require a new countywide focus by those directing the planning for sewer operations.

Oconee County's solid waste situation remains tenuous at best, with the question of how to handle the area's future solid waste an issue of much debate. A long-range plan that delineates the way in which the county will handle its solid waste over the next several decades is greatly needed. Whether by a joint effort with other jurisdictions to create a regional landfill, or the establishment of a new facility within the county, or simply to reach a long-term agreement with a facility in another area, a decision on the handling of solid waste in the future is critical if the county is to be able to move onto other issues. In addition, efforts to decrease the volume of waste produced, such as promoting an increase in recycling, should be considered. One possible solution may be the establishment of a "pay as you throw" program, which has been used effectively by other jurisdictions to more fairly charge system users for the amount of solid waste they generate. Finally, as expansion and upgrading the system of recycling centers will likely be an ongoing effort for the foreseeable future, new facilities should be planned strictly on the basis of population growth and development.

Oconee County is fortunate to have access to a number of quality educational institutions. The School District of Oconee County has created a system of public education that consistently ranks well in the state, sending a significant number of graduates on to higher education. And, although there are no colleges located within the county, Oconee is surrounded by a number of schools of higher education, providing area residents with easy access to a wide variety of educational choices. To insure that Oconee County's residents have the best opportunities possible, therefore, the county should look to establishing closer bonds with these institutions, utilizing all available talent, and carefully considering the impact of future county actions on the overall quality of education. Closely connected to this is the direction taken by the county library system. Currently, improvements and upgrades planned for the system should provide Oconee County with excellent facilities that can easily meet the needs of county residents. As with so many other items considered in this element, however, the focus needs to be on continued planning for the growth expected in the county's future. Areas that in the past were thinly populated farming communities, for example, are undergoing rapid growth that will require more services than simply providing a bookmobile stop. Planning for such growth is crucial if these new needs are to be properly met.

Oconee County is undergoing changes never before experienced. As the population grows, areas of the county that were formerly fields and pastures are fast becoming residential developments, shifting the population distribution from the traditionally "built up" areas into other places, and necessitating the creation of facilities to service the new residents. In the past, simply providing well maintained roads may have been all that a local government needed to offer a population, but in today's increasingly urban world, a wide range of facilities and services that were once mere conveniences have become necessities. Therefore, to insure that it lives up to these new responsibilities, Oconee County must carefully plan all of its actions, avoiding waste and inefficiency where

possible. If this is accomplished, the disruption resulting from future changes can be minimized, allowing for continued service to current residents, while preparing to meet the needs of those still to come.

Sec. 38-11.1. - Lake overlay district.

- (a) *Title:* Lake overlay district.
- (b) *Definition:* The lake overlay is not intended to be a separate zoning district, but shall be assigned to the shoreline areas of Oconee County lakes that are considered by county council to be vital to the economic prosperity and general well-being of all county citizens.
- (c) *Intent:* This overlay is intended to protect water quality, maintain natural beauty, and limit secondary impacts of new development that may negatively affect the lifestyles of those living near the lakeshore and the general enjoyment of the lakes by all citizens.
- (d) *Boundary:* The boundaries of the lake overlay district are shown on the Official Oconee County Zoning Map, and are divided into the following sub-districts:
 - (1) Keowee/Jocassee Overlay (Lakes Keowee and Jocassee). The following standards shall apply within 750 feet of the full pond contour of Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee, to be measured along a perpendicular line from the full-pond contour.
 - a. *Standards.*
 - 1. No single-family or multi-family development shall have a net density greater than two dwelling units per acre within the boundary of the overlay.
 - 2. No structure constructed in the overlay shall have a building height greater than 65 feet above finished grade. In no circumstance shall the grade elevation be altered beyond that necessary to provide for structural soundness. For the purposes of this section, unless otherwise stated, all dimensions, heights, elevations and other specifications related to structures shall be measured in accordance with adopted building codes.
 - 3. Marinas and commercial boat storage shall comply with Duke Energy's regulations and shall not be located within a mile radius of an existing platted and properly recorded subdivision.
 - 4. All non-residential projects that have a proposed developed area fully or partially located within the boundaries of the Lake Keowee/Jocassee Overlay shall be subject to a special exception hearing by the board of zoning appeals. The board of zoning appeals shall use Appendix A as a guide and for good cause shown they may waive the strict application of any standard therein.
 - 5. Natural vegetative buffer.
 - (i) A natural vegetative buffer shall be established on all waterfront parcels whose property line is located within 25 feet from the full pond contour. Those parcels not meeting this criteria shall be exempt from this standard.
 - (ii) The buffer shall extend to a depth of 25 feet measured along a perpendicular line from the full-pond contour; in the event permanent shoreline stabilization, such as rip-rap, retaining walls, is located at the full-pond contour, the buffer may begin at the back of the stabilization, provided the minimum required area is achieved. Right-of-way maintenance activities by all utilities shall be exempt.
 - (iii) All structures and landscaping existing at the time of adoption of this chapter shall be considered as permitted and shall not be considered impediments to the buffer. Any new structures or any other new objects that are impediments to the establishment of the required buffer shall be placed outside the natural buffer areas unless the total square footage occupied by the structure, not to exceed 20 percent of the required buffer area, is added to the buffer at another location on the same parcel, provided the resulting buffer area is equal to the required buffer area, and the effectiveness of the buffer is not compromised.

- (iv) In order to ensure that the natural buffer is maintained during the development of property a properly installed and maintained silt fence shall be installed 25 feet from the full pond elevation, separating the buffer from the developed area, until the completion of construction. No construction or disturbance shall occur below the silt fence unless it is deemed necessary by a certified arborist to remove diseased trees. Dead trees may be removed with the approval of the zoning administrator. No trees larger than six-inch caliber at four feet from the ground shall be removed unless certified to be a hazard by a registered forester or arborist. Trees may be limbed up to 50 percent of their height. A removal plan shall be submitted for approval.
- (v) No development activity or soil disturbance shall occur in the buffer area, unless permitted by the zoning administrator.
- (vi) Shoreline stabilization shall be permitted provided any soil disturbance or other stabilization activities are supervised and approved by the appropriate licensed design professional and submitted to the zoning administrator.
- (vii) A map indicating those parcels to which the standards of this section apply, as well as the status of the establishment of the required buffer, shall be created and maintained as a layer in the county's Geographic Information System (GIS), and shall be available to the public.
- (viii) Natural, existing vegetation is encouraged; however, the following mix of plants shall be required for every 2,500 square feet of vegetative buffer area that is established by planting:
 - (1) The following mixture of plants for every 2,500 square feet of natural vegetative buffer shall be required when existing:
 - a. Three large maturing shade trees, equally spaced, four-inch or greater caliper at four feet.
 - b. Three understory trees, equally spaced, two-inch or greater caliper at four feet.
 - c. Six small evergreen trees.
 - d. Twenty shrubs; or
 - (2) A diverse mix of native plants and unmanaged (uncut below 12 inches and untreated) native grasses where available and suited to the site.
- (ix) A view lane of no more than 15 percent of the buffer area shall be permitted in the natural buffer area. Impervious surface no greater than 20 percent of the allowed view lane area is permitted. All impervious surfaces shall be considered part of the view lane. Other structures must be temporary.
- (x) No new manicured lawns or other managed grasses shall be established within the buffer area. Additionally, no clear cutting or mowing, cultivation activities, fertilization, use of herbicides, fungicides, or pesticides shall occur within the buffer area.
- (xi) In the event that a property owner is unable to establish the said buffer they may request a variance, to be considered at a hearing before the board of zoning appeals, stating the reasons why a buffer cannot be established. The board of zoning appeals of zoning appeals may, in its sole discretion, grant or not grant such variance, for good cause shown.

(Ord. No. 2012-14, § 1, 5-15-2012)

Sec. 38-11.1. - Lake overlay district.

- (a) *Title:* Lake overlay district.
- (b) *Definition:* The lake overlay is not intended to be a separate zoning district, but shall be assigned to the shoreline areas of Oconee County lakes that are considered by county council to be vital to the economic prosperity and general well-being of all county citizens.
- (c) *Intent:* This overlay is intended to protect water quality, maintain natural beauty, and limit secondary impacts of new development that may negatively affect the lifestyles of those living near the lakeshore and the general enjoyment of the lakes by all citizens.
- (d) *Boundary:* The boundaries of the lake overlay district are shown on the Official Oconee County Zoning Map, and are divided into the following sub-districts:
 - (1) Keowee/Jocassee Overlay (Lakes Keowee and Jocassee). The following standards shall apply within 750 feet of the full pond contour of Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee, to be measured along a perpendicular line from the full-pond contour.

a. *Standards.*

- 1. No single-family or multi-family development shall have a net density greater than two dwelling units per acre within the boundary of the overlay.
- 2. No structure constructed in the overlay shall have a building height greater than 65 feet above finished grade. In no circumstance shall the grade elevation be altered beyond that necessary to provide for structural soundness. For the purposes of this section, unless otherwise stated, all dimensions, heights, elevations and other specifications related to structures shall be measured in accordance with adopted building codes.
- 3. Marinas and commercial boat storage shall comply with Duke Energy's regulations and shall not be located within a mile radius of an existing platted and properly recorded subdivision.
- 4. All non-residential projects that have a proposed developed area fully or partially located within the boundaries of the Lake Keowee/Jocassee Overlay shall be subject to a special exception hearing by the board of zoning appeals. The board of zoning appeals shall use Appendix A as a guide and for good cause shown they may waive the strict application of any standard therein.

5. Natural Vegetative Buffer.

- (i) **The** Natural Vegetative buffer shall be established on all waterfront parcels whose property line is located within 25 feet from the full pond contour. Those parcels not meeting these criteria shall be exempt from this standard. A map indicating those parcels to which the standards of this section apply, as well as the status of the establishment of the required buffer, shall be created and maintained as a layer in the county's Geographic Information System (GIS), and shall be available to the public.
- (ii) The Buffer shall extend to a depth of 25 feet measured along a perpendicular line from the full-pond contour (800 feet above MSL for Keowee and 1100 feet above MSL for Jocassee). Shoreline stabilization shall be permitted provided any soil disturbance or other stabilization activities are supervised and approved by the appropriate licensed design

professional and submitted to the zoning administrator. Right-of-way maintenance activities by all utilities shall be exempt.

- (iii) Motorized equipment will not be permitted inside the Vegetative Buffer unless required to remove dead or dying trees, as confirmed by a certified arborist, forester or Zoning Administrator, or if required for remediation purposes, as permitted by the Zoning Administrator.
- (iv) All structures and landscaping existing at the time of adoption of this chapter shall be considered as permitted and shall not be considered impediments to the buffer.
- (v) **Silt Fences:** In order to ensure that the Natural Vegetative Buffer is maintained during the development of property, properly installed and maintained silt fences are required, before a Zoning inspection will take place. The silt fences must begin at or above the Vegetative Buffer line. Wire backed silt fences are highly recommended and J-hooks, hay bales, grass mats and seeding shall be installed, as needed, at least 25 feet from the full pond contour (800 feet above MSL for Keowee and 1100 feet above MSL for Jocassee), separating the Buffer from the developed area, until the completion of construction. The County may mandate additions of any or all of these options at any point during construction.

If the silt fences and other measures, listed above, fail to prevent an accumulation of silt and other debris in the Natural Vegetative Buffer, the County shall require the responsible parties to install additional control measures. These measures shall be installed in a timely manner to prevent any further accumulation.

Silt that has entered the Natural Vegetative Buffer shall be removed if possible and then the area within the Natural Vegetative Buffer shall be stabilized with pine straw, mulch and/or other planted vegetation.

See section "e" for Penalties.

- (vi) **View Lanes:** View Lane means the portion of a natural buffer utilized and maintained by the property owner to enhance observation and access of the lake and surrounding landscapes. Typically, the vegetation in the view lane is lower in height and/or smaller in diameter than that found in the rest of the buffer. The View Lane may be up to 15% of the Vegetative Buffer either as one contiguous lane or multiple smaller lanes.
- (vii) **Allowed Development within the Vegetative Buffer:** Paths of permeable or impermeable construction are permitted within the Natural Vegetative Buffer provided they are no wider than six (6) feet. Turnarounds are permitted within the 15% View Lane. Any path is considered a part of the allowed 15% View Lane. Patios or decks, without permanent vertical features other than those required for safety or building code standards, are permitted but may not be more than 100 square feet and must be part of a contiguous 15% View Lane. Electrical and Water lines may be installed through the Natural Vegetative Buffer provided they run within the permitted 15% View Lane and meet all applicable building codes.

- (viii) **Vegetation Removal:** No trees larger than six-inch caliber at four feet from the ground shall be removed unless certified to be a hazard by a registered forester or arborist. Trees may be limbed up to 50 percent of their height. A removal plan shall be submitted for approval. Invasive species may be removed in such a manner that does minimal damage to surrounding native vegetation. Trees that are clearly dead or dying may be removed with the permission of the Zoning Administrator. Existing vegetation, outside of the allowed 15% View Lane, may be under-brushed. This under-brushing may not utilize herbicides, fertilizers or other chemicals and may not increase run-off throughout the Natural Vegetative Buffer. Vegetation within the allowed 15% View Lane may be maintained to the property owner's standards provided it does not create or contribute to runoff entering the Lake or adjacent properties and the maintenance does not utilize herbicides, fertilizers or other chemicals.
- (ix) **Vegetation Mitigation :** The following mixture of plants for every 2500 square feet of the Natural Vegetative Buffer shall be required if reestablishing the native vegetation or for mitigation purposes:
- a. Three large maturing shade trees, equally spaced, four-inch or greater caliper at four feet.
 - b. Three understory trees, equally spaced, two-inch or greater caliper at four feet.
 - c. Six small evergreen trees.
 - d. Twenty shrubs or a diverse mix of native plants and unmanaged (uncut below 12 inches and untreated) native grasses where available and suited to the site.
- (x) No new manicured lawns or other managed grasses shall be established within the buffer area. Additionally, no clear cutting or mowing, cultivation activities, fertilization, use of herbicides, fungicides, or pesticides shall occur within the buffer area.
- (xi) In the event that a property owner is unable to establish the said buffer they may request a variance, to be considered at a hearing before the board of zoning appeals, stating the reasons why a buffer cannot be established. The board of zoning appeals ~~of zoning appeals~~ may, in its sole discretion, grant or not grant such variance, for good cause shown.

(e) **PENALTIES:**

The intent of the Natural Vegetative Buffer is to protect the natural and built environment within and surrounding Lakes Keowee and Jocassee. All parties owning, renting, or inhabiting property or working on property within the Lake Overlay are required to work within the intent and the letter of this and all

applicable ordinances and standards to protect and enhance the natural and built environments.

A violation of this Article is punishable by fine and/or imprisonment in an amount not to exceed the jurisdictional limits granted to a magistrate's court in Oconee County under South Carolina law. Additionally, building and zoning permits may be revoked, stop work orders issued, and civil fines levied as appropriate under the circumstances. Further, the provisions, including prescriptions, proscriptions, and penalties contained within the International Property Maintenance Code may apply.

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