

OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

AGENDA

6:00 pm, Monday, November 5th, 2018

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Minutes – 10/23/2018
5. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes per person)
6. Staff Update
7. 2020 Comprehensive Plan
 - a. **Public Comment for Agenda Item (2 minutes per person)**
 - b. **Discussion / Vote**
8. Public Hearing on amendments to Chapter 32, Article 6, in relation to survey standards.
 - a. **Public Comment for Agenda Item Discussion / Vote**
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. 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

MINUTES

6:00 pm, Tuesday, October 23rd, 2018

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

Members Present:

Frankie Pearson
Alex Vassey
Gwen McPhail
Andrew Gramling
Mike Johnson
Brad Kisker
Stacy Lyles

1. **Call to Order**- Mr. Pearson called the meeting to order at 6PM
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Minutes** – 10/01/2018 - Motion by Mr. Vassey, seconded by Mr. Kisker, 7-0 approved
4. **2020 Comprehensive Plan presentation to the Planning Commission**
Carol Rhea, a consultant from Orion Planning + Design, a sub-contractor of Alta Planning + Design, introduced herself and other colleagues, Cheryl Methany and Allison Mouch, all who would be working on the comprehensive plan for Oconee County. Mrs. Rhea outlined why we need a comprehensive plan and the steps that will be taken to update the current plan. Mrs. Methany spoke on the different metrics and data being collected as well as ways of implementing the plan.
5. **2020 Comprehensive Plan presentation to the Public**
Carol Rhea gave a similar presentation to the public but added four additional questions for the public to answer
 - a. What are you most proud of in Oconee County? What do you love the most about your county?
 - b. What are you most concerned about in Oconee County?
 - c. What new land uses are most needed in Oconee County?
 - d. What are your top three hopes or wishes for the future of Oconee County?The public was invited to answer these questions in written format at several stations set up throughout the room. The members of the Planning Commission joined the public in answering these questions.
6. Old Business / New Business - None
7. Adjourn - Mr. Kisker made the motion to adjourn, Mrs. Lyles seconded the motion, 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:20

Sec. 32-213. - Requirements and standards.

- (a) *Unapproved plat prohibition.* No plat of the subdivision of any land within the unincorporated areas of the county as now or hereafter established, and any incorporated municipality which contracts with the county for these regulations to be administered within such municipality, shall be filed with or recorded by the county Register of Deeds until such plat shall have been submitted to and approved by the county planning commission, planning director, or designee according to the procedures set forth in this article. No road or other way shall be accepted or maintained, nor shall any water line, sewerage, road lighting or similar improvements extended or connected, nor shall any permit be issued by any department of the county for any or other improvements in any subdivision established hereafter which has not been approved by the county planning department and met such requirements as prescribed by the county council.
- (b) *Survey standards.* Plats shall be prepared and survey data entered thereon in accordance with the most recent adopted version of the "Minimum Standards Manual of the Practice of Surveying in South Carolina" established by the South Carolina Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors provided that all elevations information shall refer to Mean Sea Level Datum or other establish datum (a minimum of [Z] assumed elevation with two benchmarks). Accuracy of plats and attendant data shall be no less than that required in said manual for Class B Suburban Land Surveys.
- (c) *Subdivision name*
1. All subdivision names must be submitted to the Addressing Office. Names must be easy to read and pronounce. Proposed names may be rejected by the Addressing Office if in the opinion of Emergency Response officials, pronunciation may impair an efficient response.
 2. Subdivision names that may be confused as homonyms (having the same or similar pronunciation) of existing subdivision names shall not be approved.
 3. Names that are vulgar, ethnically offensive, or otherwise problematic shall not be approved.
 4. Subdivision names spelled in an unconventional, complex, or potentially confusing manner shall not be approved.
 5. A subdivision shall be designated by only one name.
 6. Special characters, including numbers, are not allowed.
 7. No duplicates of existing subdivision names are allowed.
- (d) *Utilities.* When utilizing a road right-of-way, all utility lines shall be buried at a depth of at least 36 inches. Such lines shall be located a minimum of two feet outside the portion of the road to be surfaced to prevent having to cut into the paved surface or reconstruct drainage structures to serve abutting properties. In order to prevent future road cuts, utility stub-outs shall be added to all utility lines extending beyond the roadway to each property line.
- (e) *Road signs.* Road name signs shall be installed at all intersections with a subdivision. All other signs shall be installed as required by and at the direction of the county engineer or his/her designee. All signage will be in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control. The developer shall be responsible for all costs of road signage for private drives, private roads, and proposed county roads (at a cost determined by resolution of county council from time to time) prior to acceptance of road by the county. Any person who shall

willfully or maliciously damage, deface, remove or otherwise tamper with a sign erected by a subdivider or the county designating the name of any county road shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition thereto, such person shall be liable to the county for the cost incurred by the county as a result of said criminal acts.

- (f) *Family transfers.* When no consideration, other than a nominal monetary amount and love and affection, is paid to the grantor of subdivisions resulting from family transfers as defined by this section of this article, the following shall apply:
 - (1) Subdivision of parcels that results from the conveyance of parcels deeded by parents to children, children to parent, sibling to sibling, grandparents to grandchildren or grandchild to grandparent, and does not involve the construction or extension of any road, bridge, or drainage structure to provide access to interior lots, and does not involve the creation of any new drainage easement, shall be received as information only and approved administratively by the planning director.
- (g) *Minor subdivision.* (Reserved).
- (h) *Compliance with road standards.* Road plans and supporting documentation needed to comply with all adopted the county road standards shall be included with the submission of subdivision plans. Approval of the subdivision shall not be granted unless all applicable road standards are met.

(Ord. No. 2008-20, Art. 3(3.1[a.], 3.1[b.], 3.2—3.7), 12-16-2008)

10.23.18 Public Meeting Summary

Question 1: What are you most proud of in Oconee County? What do you love the most about your county?

- Business opportunity
- Outdoor recreation
- County parks
- 4 state parks
- History (Salem)
- Rural atmosphere
- I moved here because of the lake. I want to see it develop as a residential oasis with little commercial development
- Enjoy all 4 seasons
- Natural resources—lakes and waterfalls
- Open spaces in southern Oconee
- Lake Keowee
- Varied natural resources
- Western areas agriculture and rural lifestyle
- Beautiful scenery/open views/natural scenes both in mountains/rivers and farms
- Lakes
- Mountains
- Trails/nature
- Small town feel
- Beauty
- Recreation departments
- Schools
- Natural resources
- Natural beauty and small town feel

Questions 2: What are you most concerned about in Oconee County?

- More political consensus (unclear, but believe this was stated as a need and not a problem)
- Uncontrolled growth
- Traffic congestion
- Lack of services
- Protection of cultural resources
- Traffic
- Aging population
- Libraries falling behind

- Lack of art support
- Lack of transportation (public)
- Overdevelopment/sprawl
- Lack of specific plans to protect both the lake and the scenic corridors of Oconee County
- More comprehensive plan to manage “development corridors”
- Need specific plans to control development along high-use corridors to avoid ugly/haphazard conditions
- Organized economic development
- Maintaining the natural beauty and small town feel
- Over regulation of housing and land use
- Lack of planned development—Oconee will grow and we need to plan for that now
- Keep the rural and natural resources rural and natural
- Organize development away from the natural resources

Question 3: What new land uses are most needed in Oconee County?

- Reasonable cost housing
- Workforce housing
- Walk and bike access to cities
- Better non-boater access to the lakes
- Corridor planning
- More housing and neighborhood development
- More parks or recreation areas for young families
- Affordable housing (2 comments)
- Use of “old” areas repurposed or revitalized
- Recreational parks—strengthen what we have in place and possibly expand
- Expand other areas
- Preserve the residential-only nature of the lake overlay
- Walkable neighborhoods for young professionals
- Organized growth
- More tourism based economy
- Reasonable mass transit
- Reasonable land use (not specified)
- County-wide youth recreation oversight
- Expand infrastructure: sewer and water

Question 4: What are your top three hopes or wishes for the future of Oconee County?

- Stay rural
- Cities concentrate populations with ease of movement (multipurpose/bike paths/houses above business below)

- Protect farming/farms
- Controlled traffic and controlled growth to retain the beauty of OC
- Attract more young families
- Support art, music, culture, libraries, and history
- Continue to improve parks and recreation

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element

Oconee County, S.C.

Population

- Sheriff – historically much of the growth has been retirees
 - Vulnerable adults – need assisted living options
 - Accommodations needed for older residents – signs, lighting, transportation options
- How can we get Oconee County natives to stay in the County, particularly professionals? At present the population is older, how can we bring median age down? Focus on young families – there is a demand for \$150,000 homes. Need more options for middle of the road housing. Currently families and those looking for affordable housing compete with Clemson students.
- United Way – just completed a 3-year strategic plan and can email it
 - Issues identified – need affordable housing (<\$200,000), have lots of old mobile homes that need upgrades or replacement
 - Alternatives to old mobile homes as affordable housing needed. Options for disposing of old mobile homes also needed.
- There is a need for forms, instructions, etc. for persons with language barriers to access to services in the County
- Growing Hispanic population – there is a language barrier for services. Need website access, access to healthcare, law enforcement
- FQHC website in Greenville is an example, perhaps software/app such as “New Horizon” can be used to translate
- Growing segment of population is of two or more races
- Ethnicity also should be considered – Hispanic, etc.

Strengths

- Attract people at all stages of their lives

Concerns

- Median age is rising—need to attract younger, workforce people and not just be a retirement community
- Retention of graduates—want city centers, living downtown, more vibrant community
- Lack of existing, educated labor force in the county; the jobs are there but potential employees don’t have the skillsets to fill them
- Drug problem
- Education; fairly high dropout rate
- Lack of good quality housing for middle class/middle income residents

Opportunities

- Influx of new people
- Working families
- Capitalize on the young and elderly wanting some of the same things such as active elements like trails, smaller homes, mobility

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

Other Issues

- You are not going to attract young people until you have planned communities with density, green space, amenities, mobility
- Homeless epidemic is driven by Seneca and the CAT bus. There is a significant drug problem. Need a countywide drug enforcement/ solutions task force to address the problem.
- Population is aging
- Growth in region
- Young people don't want to stay; those that stay aren't always trained/educated for jobs available
- People don't want to change and young people don't want to live where there aren't the amenities they want
- Don't want it to be an old folk's county
- Lack of services for veterans; rural character contributes to access problems, e.g. nearest VA hospital is in Asheville or Augusta
- Groups don't want outsiders—gave away Clemson because they didn't want outsiders
- Groups don't want change
- Growth is mostly retiree
- Increase in homeless...living in woods, tent cities behind Lowe's and Walmart...want to use old jail for emergency housing in the next year or two (Christ central ministries)

Housing

- Workforce development housing (affordable) – from Economic Development Director
- New student condo/mixed use development (Epoch) – one main access is across railroad tracks
- Epoch project stopped – no water at this time, addition of water service planned but 3-6 months out. This is in the area of the old JP Stevens plant and is a brownfield site
- Increasing homeless population, mostly in Seneca, tent cities (2) on private properties. One housing shelter, but need emergency housing center. Plan to convert old jail to emergency housing next year – Christ Central Ministries.
- Lakes – primary residents get great tax rate but those with 2nd homes pay a lot more taxes (3x) – need support for 2nd homeowners
- Address issues in Utica neighborhood – dilapidated housing, crime, etc.
- Mobile homes – help supplement to renovate mobile homes in Tugaloo St./Church St. area
- Multi-family (high density residential) is in the area between Seneca and Clemson
- Clemson Epoch projects is at a dead stop now, but will resume
- Infill needed outside of Seneca
- Industrial Park
- Need more development between Walhalla and Seneca to expand residential. A lot of that area has water and sewer along Mountain Road. Agricultural land was logged and is now for sale.

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

- Current sewer capacity vs. planned capacity – Clemson had stopped all development until 2020, a lot of development is coming into Oconee County because they can't build in Clemson
- Thrift area needs sewer
- Westminster – if homes repaired have to comply with IBC standards
- County grants next year (Sharon), planning to do CDBG for Utica Mill Hill areas – needs money for planning and to set priorities, new substation, structure repair

Strengths

- Highly value the lake and its residential nature

Concerns

- Struggle with housing
- No reasonable middle-income housing available
- No section 8 housing; there is one housing authority and they said they don't want to direct more
- Don't have proper housing for homeless veterans or disabled veterans; no retirement home for veterans

Opportunities

- Need more small lots, planned development, mixed-use developments
- Growth in Keowee Key
- Patrick Square is an example of how the interests in housing, amenities, mobility, etc. are the same among the older and younger generations
- Finding a way to broaden the positive impact of student housing
- Need senior housing; housing and facilities for homeless veterans
- Reduce the impact of blighted housing; need mechanism for building new homes on sites where houses have been removed
 - Vacated due to deaths of residents, too many liens on the property due to medical bills, other debt
 - Housing is available, need mechanism for rehabbing existing housing or offsetting redevelopment costs
- Municipal improvement districts, TIFs – need to look into
- Maximize population growth around existing centers; protecting resources, protecting land – driving development toward where infrastructure and resources already existing.
- Priority investment areas – define these
- Mill villages adjacent to Seneca (in the County) that are ripe for redevelopment

Other Issues

- Residential desirability is northeast Oconee County
- University growth—Clemson is basically built out
- Hard to find mid-range housing—affordable housing; wish there was a mechanism to replace blighted housing with affordable housing in the cities as well as pockets in the

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

- county including Utica and Walhalla Mill Village—community land bank—a number of redevelopment improvement authorities exist in SC—mostly city authority
- Short-term rentals—need to address in the codes; Keowee Key and other HOAs address rentals
- Need affordable housing for young—middle housing
- Topo is the single-most important factor in housing (some also said single most important factor was also access to/lack of sewer)
- There should be home price-points at all income levels
- The banking environment for homebuilders is hard. Banks want personal guarantees.
- Primary residences get a much higher tax break than secondary residences. Second homes are disproportionately affected by tax burden
- House/building numbers not posted well; not enforced
- Student housing and Clemson development near Seneca
- Increase in homeless...living in woods, tent cities behind Lowe's and Walmart...want to use old jail for emergency housing in the next year or two (Christ central ministries)
- Housing vs. agriculture – regulations that steer development in a way that negatively impacts one or both

Community Facilities

- Electric
 - Blue Ridge Electric Company (Mark) has a shapefile that show the service areas for all electric providers in the County and will provide it.
 - There is a need for better coordination between the electric providers and emergency management in the event of major events such as the recent storms
 - Duke Energy Carolinas is the Duke company that serves Oconee County
 - Duke Oconee Nuclear Plant – one of largest nuclear producers in U.S.
- Water/Sewer
 - Lisa (County GIS) can provide service areas for water and sewer – providers in attendance met with her and gave their permission.
 - Recent and upcoming grants for sewer – ask Sharon for more info
 - Bonding – can be effected by response to climate change
 - Water and sewer needs – county does not own utilities but can act as a pass through for grants – one rural water district, 2 (3?) private providers, municipalities
 - Lots of newcomers that want infrastructure and services not yet available in County
 - Infrastructure is not adequate
 - The service model is adequate when focused around population centers, but thinner in less populated areas
 - Keowee Key has their own package plant; all other properties on well/septic (true for all areas on Lake Hartwell?)

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element

Oconee County, S.C.

- Public Safety
 - EMS – most services focused on population centers and is adequate for those areas but other areas of the county suffer. Service cannot handle needs for all of the county
 - Communications – need for better/more locations, currently most are co-located, but cell phone towers are limited in County
 - The service model is adequate when focused around population centers, but thinner in less populated areas
- Solid Waste
 - Need to expand landfill – C&D, no class 3 landfill in County
 - Recycling centers need to expand in size to accommodate need
 - Recycling of block brick and asphalt is done at the landfill
- Emergency Services
 - EMS – 20-30 minute response time in rural areas
- Recreation
 - Wayfinding signs at parks and hiking venues is bad, need to improve. Provide more parking spaces and bathrooms. Should be more welcoming (Station Cove?).
 - There is a need for recreation for kids and families – indoor/outdoor soccer. Some parks are neglected. Skateboard park is needed. Pools other than the one in Walhalla are needed. YMCA in Seneca under construction. Recreation in County is often geared to older residents rather than young families.
 - Recreation needed in places that will serve everyone, not just in population centers in Walhalla and Seneca areas
 - Parks – park overcrowding. PRT has a long range plan. Need to maintain existing parks and expand, need for greenway to connect parks for safe cycling
- Schools/Education
 - District has facilities and strategic plans online
 - They can send enrollment and school info
 - Growth – southern area of the County. While County population grew, student population has been steady at 9,000 to 10,000 students each year. Probably due to older population, home schools, charter school, private school.
 - Able to keep taxes for schools low while serving steady stream for students
 - Tri County Tech campus – County helped to obtain land for campus
 - New 100,000 sq. ft. career center planned to open August 2020. Matches industrial needs within the County. Cooperative effort between businesses, industries, Tri County Tech, Oconee County, School District.
 - Also cooperate with YMCA – they will provide swim lessons for all 2nd graders, host swim team for high school, and provide after school care for students at schools
 - Adam to meet with student group in November – representatives from two high schools – about comprehensive plan
 - Sharon has data about the \$1.5 grant for career center, Tri County Tech campus

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element

Oconee County, S.C.

- District and County have other cooperative efforts, they share courier route, talked about sharing employees in other areas, bids are inclusive between them – work well together

Strengths

- County parks are fabulous

Concerns

- Lack of sewer; No long-term plan for sewer
- Undersized lines up 130 to the Duke plant (6"); 59 extension down to Fairplay for industrial development
- Fiber optics in the ground but can't get access—some issue with cell tower
- Landfill space – all cities utilize the C&D facility as well as the transfer station at no charge; currently going through the process for an expansion
 - Increased waste stream and decreased permit capacity
 - Impact fee/solid waste fee per parcel; structuring the fee structure for service (curbside or otherwise)
- Jail may need to be increased in size in the next 15-20 years (old jail to be used as transitional housing, recent release and counseling)
- Two different expectations with regards to land use – especially along the lake(s); east side of lake is nearly fully developed, not a lot of future capacity (so extension of sewer line not crucial)

Opportunities

- Right now there are some applications for grants for sewer with EDA—need to prioritize where sewer goes
- Human resources available in Keowee Key
- Municipal aid agreements for increasing elderly populations – law enforcement and health care (EMS is part of a private health care system, only four ambulances serve the entire county)
- Unified recycling system across the county
- Expansion of public transportation
- Improved mental health services, facilities

Other Issues

- Need to prioritize infrastructure like sewer. There is money.
- Litter
- Need public sewer around the lakes; septic systems are going to pollute the lakes; need septic tank maintenance education
- Need a sewer line in the southern part of the county around Fairplay and golden corners
- Internet is a problem; the south end of the county may get fiber
- Lack of sewer—mostly exists in and around Seneca. Cities zoning codes don't have zoning to allow smaller lots and setbacks. Sewer was run down Hwy 52—worried about residential taking industrial.

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

- (Is there the possibility of getting grants for services to residential uses as economic development?)
- Landfill space—all of the cities use the C&D and transfer station at no charge. The landfill needs to operate as an enterprise.
- Currently going through the permitting process at the C&D landfill
- Intergovernmental agreements to aid in law enforcement
- Only 4 ambulances in the county owned and operated by private healthcare
- The county doesn't have a sewer department and relies on others to plan and develop; there are some failures around the lake
- No planning for infrastructure. The Duke line was not oversized for future tie-ons.
- Schools are no longer growing
- Nobody on the lake is from the area, generally, but they demand a lot of services
- Infrastructure such as internet is insufficient for lake residents and others trying to run businesses
- Landfill expansion—c&d landfill takes out of county waste
- Recycling centers need to be expanded...don't need more...they are in the right areas
- Recycling block, brick, and asphalt now
- Need for drinking water and firefighting
- County's capacity to help assist in rebuilding in the wake of disaster
 - Need road standard leniency in areas that weren't built adequately
 - Bonds to upgrade
- Communication facilities—usually look for co-location opportunities
- Jail may need to be expanded
- Parks long range plan is available
- E911 established in mid-90s, but fine tuning of duplicate names is still needed. No avenue to remove duplicates.
- The service model is adequate when focused around population centers, but thinner in less populated areas
- ADA compliance for public/private infrastructure is severely lacking

If you could change one thing:

- There needs to be more harmony with council and politics; effective intergovernmental coordination is lacking
- County council
- Need professional council leadership; appointments to planning commission of leaders who can navigate the politics and provide good guidance to staff; need county manager who sees planning as a priority
- All water and sewer authorities unify
- Bonding capacity - climate resiliency impacting future bonding capacity

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

Natural Resources

- Chauga River/Ramsey Creek (Cha Ram Park – County), flows to Lake Hartwell
- Sumter National Forest – lots of land in northwest area of the County
- Long term destination
- Sumter National Forest – there is a plan for SNF on the website, they also have park use data, also plan for obtaining adjacent lands
- Wildwater has 30 years of use data. There are three major rafting companies in the County.
- Protect and conserve resources for leisure use
- Develop new opportunities for access to recreation
- SNF – areas they would like to protect – lands adjacent to Forest
- Land conservancy – Upstate Forever, Oconee Forever, Natural Land Trust
- Clemson – uses Oconee County as research lab for agriculture. Clemson Extension has research mission
- Litter cleanup needed, something beyond volunteers
- Lake Jocassee and Chattooga River – control/discourage growth in pristine areas
- Chattooga River – protected until it intersects with Tugaloo River
- Lake Toxaway and golf courses in Georgia – runoff negatively impacts water quality in Oconee County
- Regional coordination/cooperation needed to protect water resources, coordination with upstream areas
- Chattooga Conservancy – has best water quality data
- Chauga River – lot of sedimentation
- Trying to conserve/protect 200 more miles
- Protect “gems” such as spectacular access – Little River in Salem, needs to be protected.
- Upstate Forever has a paddling map
- Educate kids about litter, conservation, protection
- Soil and Water conservation group
- Creeks that run through farms should be protected
- Streamline process to provide easements to conservation banks such as Upstate Forever. Green grants.
- All kids should be able to get on the River – Wildwater trades work days for access for kids
- Hwy 11 corridor plan needed if sewer is added in area
- Foothills Trail

Strengths

- Natural resources
- Natural beauty
- The lake
- The climate
- Outdoors and proximity to nature
- Pristine lakes

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

- Beautiful views, vineyards, mountains, etc.
- Beauty and cleanliness
- Natural resources
- Natural resources
- Fairly significantly protected (lakes)—Duke and HOAs
- Current lake overlay zoning seen as a strength, a win, viewed very positively by residents around the lake

Opportunities

- The preservation of farmland and natural resources, viewsheds
- Leading with preservation – esp. the protection of farmland, viewshed, agriculture economy
- Develop a master plan for preserve Lake Keowee watershed

Other Issues

- Don't want to destroy the lake
- Lake health
- Lake issues
 - Over use
 - Don't want water quality to deteriorate
 - Water quality could be an issue with over-development; high-density development like high-rise condos are not desirable
- Location and number of docks; voltage in/around docks, electrocution hazard
- Duke won't address the deaths
- Aren't checking enough for e-coli. Interested in keeping lakes "pristine" and safe for human contact
- Concerned about invasives. No inspection stations for boats.
- Biggest economic draw is the lakes
- Duke Power dams created the most change and that change has framed and focused the future
- Except for Keowee Key, all other lake development is on septic. FOLKS (Friends of Lake Keowee Society) monitors water quality
- Increased traffic/use of natural resources

Cultural

- Arts should be integrated and equitably supported
- Foothills Farmstead – a working 1900s farm, should be supported
- Buy old mill in Utica and turn it into an event space.

Strengths

- History of cultural resources

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element Oconee County, S.C.

Economic Development

- Yoder (building supplies) is a major employer (maybe one of largest independent building supplier in county – ask Sharon)
- Oakway school is old and abandoned, needs to be redeveloped
- Economic Development – not enough qualified people to fill available jobs – low unemployment rate, workforce development (training) needed
- County capacity to assist with rebuilding in specifically designated tax districts (Economic Development Dir.)
- Food deserts – a lot of problems with that, options needed in many areas. Farmers markets are seasonal, SNAP can be used at some of them.
- Tourism – need more options to bring people into the County. Perhaps soccer complex would provide soccer fields from local residents, bring in tourists for tournaments, be a draw for young families to live in the area
- Jobs – too many to fill, need education and job training for local residents
- Seneca is retail hub, more retail options needed in other areas of the County
- “Just Aircraft” business in Walhalla that manufactures airplane/parts

Strengths

- Economic diversity—800 farms, industry, large and small business
- Diversity in economy is strength; agricultural (800 farms), industry base (employers as large as 900 in manufacturing down to welding shop with 5+ employees); attract a diverse group of stages of life, from workforce, young families to retirees
- Tourism—doing a pretty good job making tourism an industry
- Are we a destination, a retirement area, a bedroom for Clemson? Yes to all.
- Empty storefronts in core cities; lack of momentum. Mike feels that enhancements elsewhere will help cities, too.
- Lake—economic growth and stability

Concerns

- Low unemployment
- Workforce housing supply—industry wants data detail
- Lack of labor force
- Rejuvenate downtown Seneca and other cities?
- Financing – banking mechanisms that currently make things very difficult for developers. Personal guarantee on a multi-million-dollar loan; most people don't have the desire or ability to do this
- Empty storefronts – how do we increase momentum in cities as part of this plan?
- Difficulty of bonding developments through local governments

Opportunities

Trip 1 - Meeting Summary by Comprehensive Plan Element

Oconee County, S.C.

- Implement Destination Oconee actions
- Business—live in one of the last areas that is primarily ag, but it is changing
- Tourism, technology
- Industry/jobs
- Economic opportunity zones—new rules coming out soon? Check in with the Economic Alliance
- Tourism
- Residential improvement districts
- Impact fees
- Location on edge of state allows use of other areas in labor-shed; price point, days on market, home sales
- Get Oconee Young Professionals involved
- Merged Chamber of Commerce

Other Issues

- The lack of control is a problem for economic development, but zoning is a bad word and the leadership hasn't been willing to tackle it
- Workforce development training and a training center (Seneca)
- Need to work with cities to focus on infill development
- Low unemployment
- Income is leaking out because people who work here don't live here
- Workforce development/affordable housing
- Very low unemployment...getting workers and educating workers
- "You're not going to attract the younger generations until you get planned communities and control (to some extent) what those look like"

If you could change one thing:

- Commercial overlay around the lakes (corridor) to protect subdivisions
- Don't have enough dry cleaners and other services
- Enhance supporting tourism which will bring in services such as restaurants and affect the cities positively
- Require a design component to commercial growth in the county

Transportation

- Transportation needs – limited within County, need to get to services in Walhalla from outlying areas. Options needed to get to services. Seek funding to enhance access
- Transportation options needed to locations within the County, now many go to neighboring states for goods and services
- Expand bus services to more of the County
- Alternative transportation needed – pedestrian, bike facilities, sidewalks, bus

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- Get with Greenville MPO, County Roads and Bridges for info
- Transit – get contact info from Adam
- County takes care of roads in Salem, Westminster
- Need more transportation options – bikes, pedestrian, bus
- Airport is extending runway
- Electric vehicle charging station needed near I-85
- I-85 – three exists
- Addressing issues – fine tuning of duplicate street names needed, fix existing issues, named driveways are a big headache in terms of addressing and road names – translate to E911 issues
- Road maintenance – poor alignment on farm to market roads, poorly constructed roads in subdivisions. 160 miles of dirt roads, County's rock quarry helps to keep prices for maintenance reasonable. Will take private roads if they meet County standards.
- Clemson became urbanized area in 2010, expect Seneca to become added to urbanized area in 2020 Census – Greater Greenville MPO
- Seneca bus depot/train depot – park and ride, designed to accommodate stop for high speed rail, but regional project is in limbo at this time. Currently used as town park.
- Seneca bus routes throughout, serves Seneca to Clemson corridor. Seneca has own bus route with 6 buses and 2 in the works.
- Need bus service countywide, perhaps allocate 2 additional buses. Trying to figure out where to service. Tri-County Tech is one option for service.
- Prior to standards, many subdivisions built with bad infrastructure (roads), need to figure out how to deal with improvements needed.
- Bike lanes along some corridors – safety issues (one realtor lost husband to a bike accident); select roads may be appropriate for this infrastructure.
- Need comprehensive plan for bus/transit stops

Strengths

- Relative lack of density and ability to get around without a lot of traffic
- Proximity to Clemson, Atlanta, Charlotte, airports
- Bike routes/lanes on certain roads are important
- Easy access to interstate and airports

Concerns

- Potential for congestion
- Walhalla doesn't want the CAT bus in their city. There is a fear of low income. There are also no identified stops for the CAT bus—you just have to flag it down. It only stops at limited places.
- Grants are tough due to staffing and politics—the match is hard to get support for
- Lack of transportation for veterans and other citizens—bus will go into Westminster in April

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Opportunities

- Improve traffic flow and safety
- Transit
- Highway corridor development standards

Other Issues

- Traffic coming from Clemson
- Growth; there are now traffic jams
- Expansion of public transportation
- ADA compliance and overall accessibility issues

Agricultural

- Timber is the #1 crop, poultry the #1 agricultural product
- There are concerns from agriculture community about encroachment of non-agricultural uses on existing agriculture
- Chattooga Belle Farms – 200 acres working farm, event venue, restaurant, vineyards
- 100 century farms (Sharon)
- Need protection for farms and farmland – zoning mechanism such as setbacks. Need disclosure notice so that prospective buyers are aware of adjacent/nearby agriculture uses.
- Factory farms – smell is an issue
- I-85 area – former agricultural lands being sold as other development
- Encourage farmers to continue to farm, help them thrive
- Encourages/maintain family farms
- Communication/education on the business of farming needed – Clemson Farming Cooperative
- Agritourism – vineyards, venues, etc. is great opportunity for small farmers, but animal farmers are often leery of criticism/problems from outside groups
- Protect land and water while encouraging small farms
- Zoning – transition from farms
- More public education needed about agriculture.

Strengths

- Chatuga Bell—owned by Groucho Marx at one time
- Farm protection

Opportunities

- Farm disclosure notice is required in Pickens County; don't want to have to do a title search every time you pull a building permit

Other Issues

- Farm loss (potential)
- Housing versus agriculture—1000' buffer for agriculture? Makes no sense.

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If you could change one thing:

- Mechanisms to protect farms; disclosures/buffers—he doesn't think there is an appetite for buffers, but is interested in disclosures

Priority Investment

Concerns

- Cities still at war with each other instead of in partnership or looking for efficiencies and economies
- Staffing issues
- Lack of intergovernmental coordination
- Lack of intergovernmental coordination
- Lack of Priority investment

Opportunities

- Intergovernmental coordination and cooperation
- Intergovernmental coordination
- Implement impact fees
- Intergovernmental coordination desired on lakefront development issues
- Infrastructure??? Priority investment, decision from elected officials to increase (and pay) for infrastructure

Issues

- Lake - lack of intergovernmental coordination (possibility for a plan?)

If you could change one thing:

- Jurisdictions need to work together
- Intergovernmental coordination: counties, Duke, State, Corps

Land Use

- Utica neighborhood - mill on the "mill hill," within Seneca but in the County. Possible SCAD type of artist colony proposed – there may be a web site
- Utica – is in the "control free" zoning area
- County does not have a manufactured home park ordinance and does not regulate RV parks
- Manufactured homes treated as any other single-family residential
- Lake overlay district – all proposed nonresidential uses greater than 4 du/acre go through the BZA as special exceptions
- Lots of RVs on Lake Hartwell
- New areas of growth:
 - Area from Clemson to Seneca
 - I-85 corridor – will develop as a mixture of uses
 - Hwy 59 corridor – will develop as residential with some commercial/industrial

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- Hwy 123 interchange
- Hwy 11 is a travel corridor – residents use the route to avoid traffic issues related to I-85 construction
- Area near the airport
- Near Richland area (between Seneca and Walhalla on Hwy 11)
- People have discovered that they can live at the Lake and work in Atlanta
- Between Clemson and Seneca – unchecked development
- Old timers vs. newcomers – area has been held back because some longtime residents don't like change, however change is inevitable
- What does “keeping it like it is” look like?
- Keep rural, natural beauty while having state of the art infrastructure
- In “no zoning” areas, nothing prevents land use conflicts
- Lake corridor – need appearance requirements that make commercial fit in “rural look”. Create corridor overlay that will require new commercial to fit in
- Special exceptions in the “no zoning” area are mostly negotiations rather than adhering to specific requirements and are a deterrent to uses other than residential, too much liberty on part of BZA. Review requirements to reduce subjectivity and make more quantifiable – would make County more attractive for commercial development
- Development is expanding off of the I-85 corridor because sewer is going that way and growth is expanding from Anderson County.
- Will use Assessor's data to first provide map of single-family and multi-family residential, manufactured home parks, and vacant properties
- Will use Assessor's data to further identify National Forest lands, industrial and commercial properties, then recreation (public - county and state, major private such as golf courses), and public/institutional uses (churches, schools, government, libraries, hospitals, utilities, etc.)
- County's Assessor's office uses different GIS software than ESRI's ArcGIS, but indicates that with some translation it should be able to produce the land use data needed for the project.
- Sheep Farm Road – there are vacant tracks ripe for development
- Redevelopment should be encouraged in towns, walkability should be improved in towns
- How do we spread growth beyond Seneca?
- 30% of county in national forest, % of county in lake, never going to get tax value from this land → can be a good thing but can also limit growth, development
- All parks see peak overcrowding, have a master plan to seek additional parks and resources
- Aging population will place unique demand on parks and recreation resources – all depends on financial capacity moving forward, annual budgeting/priorities
- GREENWAY possibility between communities – discuss further, what would this look like, where and how? They liked the Swamp Rabbit.

Strengths

- Aesthetics—design control; 130 and 188 HWYS are a mess; areas are a mishmash; conditional uses in certain areas and corridors

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- Oconee County has changed a lot
- The differences between the affluent and higher density parts of the county and the low density rural parts
- The difference between long-range vision and short-term politics
- Small but not too small
- All invested and emotionally involved in Oconee County

Concerns

- Lack of planning; corridors
- How will the plan be used? Leadership has no interest or commitment.
- No planning (little planning)
- Need to control billboards
- Need appearance and design criteria
- Need to tighten sign control
- County is reactive rather than proactive
- No enforcement of lake overlay zone buffer; need agreement between Duke and county
- % of the county is untaxable national forest; but it is an asset too
- Home rule took effect – this has had an impact on development
- Lack of downtown housing a concern; makes attracting a younger workforce challenging

Opportunities

- Good managed growth
- Get ahead of the growth and manage it
- Commissions/committees to help investigate issues
- Did pass zoning; lake overlay zoning
- Finding a way to communicate the good things that are happening in the county
- ETJ? Is it possible?
- City-county planning, staff, and PC
- Apply zoning and increase zoning districts
- Early enough in growth that there can be a significant change in how the future unfolds
- Extraterritorial zoning option, municipal zoning district that extends outside the cities into the county – what are the statutory requirements
- Corridor plans
- Coordination with Pickens County, growth of Clemson, currently built out so growth associated with Clemson has to go somewhere that is outside municipal limits
- Joint area planning/plans – authority permitted by statute

Other Issues

- Spill over from larger, growing cities
- If sewer goes up 11, there is concern about the integrity of the scenic road

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- Control has been reactionary
- Lake issues
 - Overdevelopment
 - Don't want a lot of density
- Corridor planning is needed; if the county doesn't do it, it is going to get ugly
- Design standards need to be adopted
- Development around the lakes needs to be done correctly—right setback from the lake and the kind of development/use that can occur within that setback—the counties aren't regulating it. A lot of properties are grandfathered. 25' is not enough for a buffer.
- There needs to be coordinated communication (plan?) around the lakes
- Architectural identity
- Private property rights—respect
- Need corridor plans for major corridors
- May need to be increased in size to address growth
- Need managed growth. Know what lack of planning means
- Need corridor plans—very, very important
- Inappropriate development (Monty Lago)
- Clemson sprawl
- Growth along I-85 area is going to become a suburban growth area and there needs to be a strategy for dealing with the pressure

If you could change one thing:

- Identity—there needs to be a clear physical identity
- Better planning
- Resistance to change
- Opposition to “others”
- Wants commercial corridor standards to be applied to uses as by-right conditions
- Getting ahead of growth as opposed to just letting things happen