

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## AGENDA

6:00 pm, Monday, April 15th, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Public Comment for *Non-Agenda Items* (3 minutes per person)
5. Approval of minutes from 04012019
6. Public Hearing for 2019-11
  - a. Public Comment
  - b. Discussion/Vote
7. Public Hearing for 2019-12
  - a. Public Comment
  - b. Discussion/Vote
8. Comprehensive Plan 2030
  - a. Executive Summary
  - b. Visioning
  - c. Natural Resources
    - i. Content challenges/solutions
    - ii. Goals/Objectives/Strategies/Implementation
  - d. Public Outreach
    - i. District meetings
    - ii. Survey for Population/Housing results
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](mailto:achapman@oconeesc.com).

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

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# Minutes

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## MINUTES

6:00 pm, Monday, April 1st, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

### Members Present

Gwen McPhail

Alex Vassey

Mike Johnson

Frankie Pearson

Mike Smith

Andrew Gramling

Stacy Lyles

### Staff Present

David Root, County Attorney

Adam Chapman, Planning Director

### Media Present

The Journal

1. **Call to Order - Mr. Pearson called the meeting to order at 6PM**
2. **Invocation by County Council Chaplain**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. **Public Comment for *Non-Agenda Items* (3 minutes per person)**
  - i. Bob Ewing: Mr Ewing spoke about the need for added bicycle infrastructure in the County as well as the need for additional programming at the County Parks for organized recreation.
5. **Approval of minutes from 03182019**

Mrs. McPhail made a motion to approve, Mr. Gramling seconded the motion. The vote was 7-0 in favor to approve.
6. **Census Mapping**
  - a. Public Comment (3 minutes per person): No comment
  - b. Discussion/Vote: Mr. Chapman noted that during the Census's decennial survey process that the Census Bureau remaps each County, as such they ask the County to ground-truth their maps. Staff, Lisa Simmering, Bill Huggins, and Adam Chapman went through the Census's map and made some suggested edits. Those edits were shown to the Planning Commission for approval. Mr. Gramling made the motion to approve, Mrs. Lyles seconded the motion, and the vote was 7-0 in favor.
7. **Discussion by County Attorney regarding procedure**
  - a. Public Comment (3 minutes per person) : No comment
  - b. Discussion/Vote: Mr. Root went over topics including the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) and how it relates the Planning Commission's communications. Mr. Root went over quorum and public comments by the Planning Commission members as well as adding items to an existing agenda. Mr. Root also noted the relationship between Planning staff, the Planning Commission, Council, and administration. Mr. Smith asked about the possibility

of getting the Planning Commission county email address. Mr. Root and Mr. Chapman noted they would work on it.

## 8. Comprehensive Plan / Corridor Plan

Public Comment:

- i. Tom Markovich: Mr. Markovich stated that the Natural Resources element was more commentary than fact. He took issue with the Air Quality issues statement, with focus on Ozone as opposed to other gasses. Soils, Mr. Markovich took issues with the slope and soils portion in regards to development.
  - a. Natural Resources Element

Mr. Johnson noted that he was surprised at some incorrect information. Mr. Johnson asked that we find DHEC's language regarding slope and septic field viability. Mr. Johnson noted that he would like to see more information on the state vs federal protections for plants around the lake. Mr. Smith Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement program, is a funded program from Duke, and should be included in the Natural Resources Element. Mr. Smith noted we should create a goal or strategy related to septic tank education re: placement, replacement, and maintenance. Mr. Pearson noted that *Table 6-1: Temperature summary for Oconee County* should use local data instead of data from the sources listed. Mrs. Lyles noted that the National Weather Service should have the local data, as well. Mrs. McPhail noted that if the language regarding soil is coming from reliable sources then we should not just rely on DHEC's standards. Mrs. McPhail also noted she would be bringing up riparian protections during the goals discussion. Mrs. McPhail noted letting soils wash away just because a property owner wants to build in a high slope area, does not make that the best way to develop. Mrs. McPhail stated that it will be a challenge balancing reality and development wishes as our technology and ability often goes before ascertaining what is right and wrong.

    - ii. Mr. Markovich noted that protection of species is species specific.  
(*Staff note: Please see goals section, attached, for line-by-line edits.*)
  - b. Executive summary discussion

Mr. Smith recommended one page for each element, that the consultants write, and the Planning Commission come up with the most important strategies on the back side of that page. Mr. Johnson noted that putting goals make work as well. A discussion was held with Planning Commission deferring to the next meeting to make any final decisions about the executive summary.
  - c. Public Outreach

Mr. Chapman noted the public outreach activities that had been occurring and are planned in relation to getting community input.
  - d. District meetings

Mr. Chapman noted that there would be meetings held in order to get input in the individual voting districts. Mr. Johnson made a motion for staff to publically notice the meetings in order that a quorum may be formed. Mrs. Lyles seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0 in favor.
  - e. Corridor Plan discussion

Mr. Chapman discussed the outcomes and plans related to the highway 123 corridor study.

9. Old Business - None

10. New Business - Mr. Smith requested he be permitted to speak on behalf of the Planning Commission in order to update County Council about the Corridor Plan. Mr. Gramling made the motion, Mr. Pearson seconded the motion, and the vote was 7-0.



## 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](mailto:achapman@oconeesc.com).

Plan reports a relatively low 14% probability that the region will suffer a notable drought within a one-year time frame.

**Note: GOIS on the next page are coded for ease of review**

- **Black text is directly from the current comprehensive plan**
- **Blue text was developed per input from focus group meetings**
- **Red text was developed by consultants to address issues in background data**
- **Time frames in yellow cells should be added by staff and PC**



### G. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Natural Resources Element.

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies   | Time Frame for Completion                               | Motion/Second Vote  |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Goal 6.1. Protect and improve air quality in Oconee County.</b>   |  |   |   |
| <b>Objective 6.1.1. Continue to support local, regional, and state plans and initiatives related to air quality.</b>   |  |   |   |
| <del>Strategy 6.1.1.1. Continue coordination and partnership in the S.C. Early Action Ozone Reduction Compact with other jurisdictions in the Appalachian COG Region, adopting and maintaining ozone-reducing reduction strategies as necessary.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Appalachian COG (ACOG)</li> <li>ACOG Counties</li> <li>SCDHEC and EPA</li> </ul>   | On-going  | <a href="#">McPhail/Lyles 7-0</a>   |
| <del>Strategy 6.1.1.2. Amend and adopt standards as necessary to maintain compliance with the Clean Air Act.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-going  | <a href="#">Smith / Vassey 7-0</a>  |
| <b>Goal 6.2. Preserve, protect, and enhance Oconee County's land resources.</b>  |  |   |   |
| <b>Objective 6.2.1. Promote partnerships and voluntary conservation easements to preserve significant lands, habitats, and scenic areas under development pressure.</b>  |  |   |   |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.1.1. Support existing land conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve and protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources and transfer of development rights and conservation easements to protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources.</del> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District</li> <li>Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>                          | On-going  | <a href="#">Pearson / Vassey 7-0 (Combining 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2)</a>  |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.1.2. Continue to support the Oconee County Conservation Bank in its mission and efforts to provide for the transfer of development rights and conservation easements to protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>  | On-going  |   |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.1.23. Provide appropriate assistance from County departments and agencies in efforts to identify and preserve historic structures, significant lands, and scenic areas.</del>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | <del>On-Going</del> <a href="#">Vassey/Gramling 7-0</a> | <a href="#">Gramling / McPhail 7-0 (delete historic structures)</a>   |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.1.3. Support efforts of public and private organizations to protect critical habitats in Oconee County through conservation easements and other measures as appropriate.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property/Business Owners</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program</li> </ul> | On-Going  | <a href="#">Lyles / Vassey 7-0 (Removing objective 6.2.2, and moving 6.2.2.2 to 6.2) Smith/McPhail 7-0 Adding KTHEP</a> |
| <b>Objective 6.2.2. Protect rare and endangered species habitat within the County.</b>   |  |   |   |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.2.1. Identify opportunities to protect rare and endangered species habitat such as development of greenways and protection of floodplains.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>  | On-going  | <a href="#">Lyles / Vassey 7-0 (Removing objective 6.2.2, and moving 6.2.2.2 to 6.2)</a>                                |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.2.2. Support efforts of public and private organizations to protect critical habitats in Oconee County through conservation easements and other measures as appropriate.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property/Business Owners</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> <li>SCDNR</li> </ul>   | On-going  |   |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion | Motion/Second Vote                    |
|--|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective 6.2.3. Manage natural assets to ensure natural resources enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and increase economic opportunities.</b>  |   |                           |                                       |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.3.1.</u> <del>Continue to protect and conserve</del> <u>preserve</u> natural resources for recreational use and develop new opportunities for recreational access.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>             | xxxx                      | <a href="#">McPhail /Gramling 7-0</a> |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.3.2.</u> Work with public conservation partners to identify additional significant natural resources including viewsheds and habitats that warrant protection.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul> | xxxx                      |                                       |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.3.3.</u> <del>Continue to expand and promote</del> <u>promote</u> parks and recreation facilities, <u>both public and private</u> , as part of a comprehensive countywide parks and recreation system. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>             | On-going                  | <a href="#">McPhail/Lyles 7-0</a>     |

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies   | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |                                   |
|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Strategy 6.2.3.4.</u> <del>Continue to Expand and maintain</del> public parks and recreation spaces to a uniform standard of excellence.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>   | On-going                  | <a href="#">McPhail/Smith 7-0</a> |
| <b>Objective 6.2.4. Continue to promote reasonable access to Oconee County's public natural amenities for residents and visitors.</b>   |   |                           |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.4.1.</u> Encourage compatible land use adjacent to National and State Forests, wildlife management area, and County, State and municipal parks to protect such lands from incompatible uses.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>   | xxxx                      |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.4.2.</u> Review existing regulations and policies to identify barriers and additional opportunities to protecting current natural areas and open space.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>   | xxxx                      |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.4.3.</u> Encourage and support efforts by public and private organizations to provide public access when conserving open space, natural areas and scenic vistas in Oconee County.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property Owners</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.4.4.</u> Work with community partners to promote programs for residents of all ages to discourage littering and encourage participation in litter pickup programs and initiatives.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Keep Oconee Beautiful Assn.</li> <li>School District of Oconee County</li> <li>Local Civic Groups</li> </ul>                      | xxxx                      |                                   |
| <b>Goal 6.3. Preserve, protect, and enhance the quality and quantity of the water resources of Oconee County.</b>   |   |                           |                                   |
| <b>Objective 6.3.1. Continue expansion of sewer service to additional areas as feasible to reduce dependence on septic systems and reduce risk of contamination of surface and groundwater sources.</b>   |   |                           |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.1.1.</u> Support wastewater treatment providers in the extension of sewer service to currently unserved or underserved areas to minimize the need for septic tanks where conditions are not suitable or water sources may be compromised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> <li>Municipal Providers</li> <li>Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul> | On-going                  |                                   |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.1.2.</u> Support wastewater treatment providers in the upgrade and expansion of existing treatment facilities to accommodate the expansion of sewer service.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |                                   |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |  |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Providers</li> <li>Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul>   |                           |  |
| <b>Objective 6.3.2. Monitor, maintain and improve water quality and quantity to meet the needs of County residents, employers, and institutions.</b>   |   |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.1.</u> Partner with adjacent jurisdictions on comprehensive water studies detailing availability of all water sources, usage, and outflow.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Adjacent Jurisdictions</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.2.</u> Explore local and regional strategies to minimize non-point source pollution and institute Best Management Practices for the protection of water resources.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Utility Providers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.3.</u> Support and coordinate with SCDHEC to mitigate identified water quality impairments.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Utility Providers</li> <li>NPDES Permitted Dischargers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul> | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.4.</u> Utilize incentives, technical assistance, and regulations to promote sustainable environmental best practices by individuals, businesses, and developers to maintain and improve water quality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property Owners and Developers</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.5.</u> Study the potential water quality impact of higher-density residential development near the lakes and explore options for mitigating any negative impacts.                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Developers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE)</li> <li>Duke Energy</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies   | Time Frame for Completion |  |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Objective 6.3.3. Encourage development practices that protect and preserve water resources.</b>   |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.3.1.</u> Establish strategies and adopt measures necessary to create a framework for the efficient implementation of erosion and sediment control regulations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.3.2.</u> Develop a County stormwater management program to prepare for efficient and cost-effective implementation in the event of Federal designation.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |
| <b>Objective 6.3.4. Manage water quantity and quality to ensure efficient utilization and appropriate conservation of the County's water resources.</b>                        |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.1.</u> Participate in and support regional efforts to protect watersheds.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> <li>Public and Non-profit Organizations</li> </ul> | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.2.</u> Explore partnerships to develop a master plan for preserving the Lake Keowee watershed.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul>        | xxxx                      |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.3.</u> Identify and explore ways to protect the water quality of lesser known waterways and "hidden gems" such as the Little River in Salem.                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.4.</u> Explore and promote best practices to protect waterways in agricultural and developing areas.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.5.</u> Support regulatory authorities in their efforts to preserve water quality and habitat through shoreline management policies and regulation.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Duke Energy</li> <li>USCOE</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>            | On-going                  |  |
| <b>Objective 6.3.5. Minimize flooding risk to County residents and business owners through the protection of floodplains and floodways.</b>                                    |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.5.1.</u> Periodically review floodplain regulations and procedures to  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |  |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies   | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| ensure protection per FEMA requirements and to evaluate conditions that may require more stringent standards.   |   |                           |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.5.2.</u> Review and update the Oconee County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance as needed.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |
| <b>Goal 6.4. Enhance and promote access to natural resources and associated recreational activities for residents and visitors.</b>   |   |                           |
| <b>Objective 6.4.1. Encourage coordination among County and municipal recreation and natural resource managers.</b>   |   |                           |
| <u>Strategy 6.4.1.1.</u> Explore opportunities for coordination and cooperation in Oconee County to include planning for and implementing public and private recreation and natural resource programs and activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• Duke Energy</li> <li>• USFS</li> <li>• USCOE</li> </ul> | On-going                  |



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### G. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Natural Resources Element.

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies   | Time Frame for Completion       | Motion/Second Vote  |
|--|--|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Goal 6.1. Protect and improve air quality in Oconee County.</b>   |  |                                 |   |
| <b>Objective 6.1.1. Continue to support local, regional, and state plans and initiatives related to air quality.</b>   |  |                                 |   |
| <u>Strategy 6.1.1.1.</u> Continue coordination and partnership in the S.C. Early Action Ozone Reduction Compact with other jurisdictions in the Appalachian COG Region, adopting and maintaining ozone- reduction strategies as necessary.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Appalachian COG (ACOG)</li> <li>ACOG Counties</li> <li>SCDHEC and EPA</li> </ul>   | On-going                        | McPhail/Lyles<br>7-0  |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>   |                                 | Smith / Vassey<br>7-0   |
| <b>Goal 6.2. Preserve, protect, and enhance Oconee County's land resources.</b>  |  |                                 |   |
| <b>Objective 6.2.1. Promote partnerships and voluntary conservation easements to preserve significant lands, habitats, and scenic areas under development pressure.</b>  |  |                                 |   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.1.1.</u> Support existing land conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve and protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources and transfer of development rights and conservation easements to protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District</li> <li>Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>                          | On-going                        | Pearson / Vassey<br>7-0<br>(Combining 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2)  |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.1.2.</u> Provide appropriate assistance from County departments and agencies in efforts to identify and preserve significant lands, and scenic areas.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-Going<br>Vassey/Gramling 7-0 | Gramling / McPhail<br>7-0<br>(delete historic structures)   |
| <u>Strategy 6.2.1.3.</u> Support efforts of public and private organizations to protect critical habitats in Oconee County through conservation easements and other measures as appropriate.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property/Business Owners</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program</li> </ul> | On-Going                        | Lyles / Vassey<br>7-0<br>(Removing objective 6.2.2. and moving 6.2.2.2 to 6.2.)<br>Smith/McPhail<br>7-0<br>Adding KTHEP |
|  |  |                                 | Lyles / Vassey<br>7-0<br>(Removing objective 6.2.2. and moving 6.2.2.2 to 6.2.)   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>   |                                 |   |
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>   |                                 |   |
| <b>Objective 6.2.3. Manage natural assets to ensure natural resources enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and increase economic opportunities.</b>  |  |                                 |   |





| Goals/Objectives/Strategies   | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion | Motion/Second Vote    |
|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.3.1.</a> Protect and preserve natural resources for recreational use and develop new opportunities for recreational access.                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>             | xxxx                      | McPhail /Gramling 7-0 |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.3.2.</a> Work with public conservation partners to identify additional significant natural resources including viewsheds and habitats that warrant protection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul> | xxxx                      |                       |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.3.3.</a> Promote remote parks and recreation facilities, both public and private, as part of a comprehensive countywide recreation system.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>             | On-going                  | McPhail/Lyles 7-0     |

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |                   |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.3.4.</a> Expand and maintain public parks and recreation spaces to a uniform standard of excellence.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCDNR</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>   | On-going                  | McPhail/Smith 7-0 |
| <b>Objective 6.2.4. Continue to promote reasonable access to Oconee County's public natural amenities for residents and visitors.</b>  |   |                           |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.4.1.</a> Encourage compatible land use adjacent to National and State Forests, wildlife management area, and County, State and municipal parks to protect such lands from incompatible uses.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>   | xxxx                      |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.4.2.</a> Review existing regulations and policies to identify barriers and additional opportunities to protecting current natural areas and open space.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>   | xxxx                      |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.4.3.</a> Encourage and support efforts by public and private organizations to provide public access when conserving open space, natural areas and scenic vistas in Oconee County.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property Owners</li> <li>Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.2.4.4.</a> Work with community partners to promote programs for residents of all ages to discourage littering and encourage participation in litter pickup programs and initiatives.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Keep Oconee Beautiful Assn.</li> <li>School District of Oconee County</li> <li>Local Civic Groups</li> </ul>                      | xxxx                      |                   |
| <b>Goal 6.3. Preserve, protect, and enhance the quality and quantity of the water resources of Oconee County.</b>  |   |                           |                   |
| <b>Objective 6.3.1. Continue expansion of sewer service to additional areas as feasible to reduce dependence on septic systems and reduce risk of contamination of surface and groundwater sources.</b>  |   |                           |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.3.1.1.</a> Support wastewater treatment providers in the extension of sewer service to currently unserved or underserved areas to minimize the need for septic tanks where conditions are not suitable or water sources may be compromised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> <li>Municipal Providers</li> <li>Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul> | On-going                  |                   |
| <a href="#">Strategy 6.3.1.2.</a> Support wastewater treatment providers in the upgrade and expansion of existing treatment facilities to accommodate the expansion of sewer service.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> <li>Municipal Providers</li> <li>Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul> | On-going                  |                   |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |  |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Objective 6.3.2. Monitor, maintain and improve water quality and quantity to meet the needs of County residents, employers, and institutions.</b>   |   |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.1.</u> Partner with adjacent jurisdictions on comprehensive water studies detailing availability of all water sources, usage, and outflow.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Adjacent Jurisdictions</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.2.</u> Explore local and regional strategies to minimize non-point source pollution and institute Best Management Practices for the protection of water resources.                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Utility Providers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.3.</u> Support and coordinate with SCDHEC to mitigate identified water quality impairments.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Utility Providers</li> <li>NPDES Permitted Dischargers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul> | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.4.</u> Utilize incentives, technical assistance, and regulations to promote sustainable environmental best practices by individuals, businesses, and developers to maintain and improve water quality. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Property Owners and Developers</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.2.5.</u> Study the potential water quality impact of higher-density residential development near the lakes and explore options for mitigating any negative impacts.                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Developers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE)</li> <li>Duke Energy</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies   | Accountable Agencies   | Time Frame for Completion |  |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Objective 6.3.3. Encourage development practices that protect and preserve water resources.</b>  |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.3.1.</u> Establish strategies and adopt measures necessary to create a framework for the efficient implementation of erosion and sediment control regulations.                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.3.2.</u> Develop a County stormwater management program to prepare for efficient and cost-effective implementation in the event of Federal designation.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |  |
| <b>Objective 6.3.4. Manage water quantity and quality to ensure efficient utilization and appropriate conservation of the County's water resources.</b>   |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.1.</u> Participate in and support regional efforts to protect watersheds.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> <li>Public and Non-profit Organizations</li> </ul> | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.2.</u> Explore partnerships to develop a master plan for preserving the Lake Keowee watershed.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> <li>SCDHEC</li> </ul>        | xxxx                      |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.3.</u> Identify and explore ways to protect the water quality of lesser known waterways and "hidden gems" such as the Little River in Salem.                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.4.</u> Explore and promote best practices to protect waterways in agricultural and developing areas.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>                                      | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.4.5.</u> Support regulatory authorities in their efforts to preserve water quality and habitat through shoreline management policies and regulation.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Duke Energy</li> <li>USCOE</li> <li>USFS</li> </ul>            | On-going                  |  |
| <b>Objective 6.3.5. Minimize flooding risk to County residents and business owners through the protection of floodplains and floodways.</b>   |  |                           |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.5.1.</u> Periodically review floodplain regulations and procedures to ensure protection per FEMA requirements and to evaluate conditions that may require more stringent standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |  |
| <u>Strategy 6.3.5.2.</u> Review and update the Oconee County Flood Damage   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |  |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| <i>Prevention Ordinance as needed.</i>   |   |                           |
| <b>Goal 6.4. Enhance and promote access to natural resources and associated recreational activities for residents and visitors.</b>  |   |                           |
| <b>Objective 6.4.1. Encourage coordination among County and municipal recreation and natural resource managers.</b>  |   |                           |
| <p><i>Strategy 6.4.1.1. Explore opportunities for coordination and cooperation in Oconee County to include planning for and implementing public and private recreation and natural resource programs and activities.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• Duke Energy</li> <li>• USFS</li> <li>• USCOE</li> </ul> | <p>On-going</p>           |



# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

# Public Hearing

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF OCONEE  
ORDINANCE 2019-11**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 32 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY REVISING CERTAIN TERMS CONTAINED THEREIN, IN ORDER TO PROPERLY DESCRIBE NEW DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENTAL POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RESULTING FROM COUNTY COUNCIL'S DIRECTIVE TO DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT INTO BUILDING CODES AND PLANNING DEPARTMENTS.

**WHEREAS**, consistent with the powers granted county governments by S.C. Code § 4-9-25 and S.C. Code § 4-9-30, Oconee County ("County"), a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of South Carolina, acting by and through its governing body, the Oconee County Council (the "County Council"), has the authority to enact regulations, resolutions, and ordinances, not inconsistent with the Constitution and the general law of the State of South Carolina, including the exercise of such powers in relation to health and order within its boundaries and respecting any subject as appears to it necessary and proper for the security, general welfare, and convenience of the County or for preserving health, peace, order, and good government therein; and,

**WHEREAS**, the County has adopted multiple ordinances for the effective, efficient governance of the County, which, subsequent to adoption, are codified in the Oconee County Code of Ordinances (the "Code of Ordinances"), as amended; and,

**WHEREAS**, on November 20, 2018, County Council elected to modify and reorganize the Community Development Department, so as to establish the Building Codes Division and the Planning Division as separate departments for administrative purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, County Council recognizes that there is a need to amend Chapter 32 of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances by revising certain terms contained therein in order to properly describe new departments and department heads resulting from County Council's directive to divide the Community Development Department and establish Building codes and Planning Departments; and,

**WHEREAS**, County Council has therefore determined to modify certain provisions of Chapter 32 of the Code of Ordinances, in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, and to affirm and preserve all other provisions of the Code of Ordinances not specifically, or by implication, amended hereby.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is hereby ordained by the Oconee County Council, in meeting duly assembled, that:

1. Chapter 32 of the Code of Ordinances is hereby revised, rewritten, and amended to read as set forth in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a version of Chapter 32 showing the changes made to the existing ordinance; it is for illustrative purposes only, and shall not be codified.

2. Should any part or provision of this Ordinance be deemed unconstitutional or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such determination shall not affect the rest and remainder of this Ordinance, all of which is hereby deemed separable.

3. All ordinances, orders, resolutions, and actions of County Council inconsistent herewith are, to the extent of such inconsistency only, hereby repealed, revoked, and rescinded. Nothing contained herein, however, or in the attachment hereto shall cancel, void, or revoke, or shall be interpreted as cancelling, voiding, or revoking, *ex post facto*, in any regard any prior performance standard, zoning or rezoning acts, actions, or decisions of the County or County Council based thereon, which were valid and legal at the time in effect and undertaken pursuant thereto, in any regard.

4. All other terms, provisions, and parts of the Code of Ordinances, not amended hereby, directly or by implication, shall remain in full force and effect.

5. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force and effect from and after third reading and enactment by County Council.

**ORDAINED** in meeting, duly assembled, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katie D. Smith  
Clerk to Oconee County Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julian Davis, III  
Chair, Oconee County Council

First Reading: February 5, 2019  
Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Reading: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exhibit A**

Sec 32-44. - Certificate of nonconformity means a certificate issued by the Planning Department to any sexually oriented business which is operating at the time of the enactment of this chapter, and is not in compliance with one of more of its provisions.

Sec. 32-44. - Designated county employee means the Planning Director or other employee of the county who is designated by the county administrator for the administration of this article.

Sec. 32-46. - Enumeration of permit requirements. (b) Applications for a permit shall be made to the Planning Director.

Sec. 32-46. - (d) An application for a permit shall be made to the Planning Director on a form provided by the county.

Sec. 32-47. - Issuance of permit. The Planning Director shall approve the issuance of a sexually oriented business permit within 30 days after receiving an application, unless he finds one or more of the conditions listed as follows to be present:

Sec. 32-48. - Administration and display of permits. (a) The Planning Director shall maintain a copy of all permits issued, and shall maintain a record of permit issuances, to include the name of the business, the name of the owner, the date of permit issuance, and the date of permit expiration.

Sec. 32-50. - Expiration and renewal of permit. Applications for renewal shall be submitted to the Planning Director.

Sec. 32-51. - Suspension of a permit. The Planning Director shall suspend a sexually oriented business permit for a period not to exceed 30 days, if it is determined that a permit holder or employee of a permit holder commits one or more of the acts listed as follows.

Sec. 32-52. - Revocation of a permit. The Planning Director shall revoke a sexually oriented business permit if a cause for suspension as specified in section 32-51 has occurred at least one time during the preceding 12 months. In addition, Planning Director shall revoke a sexually oriented business permit if it is determined that any of the acts listed as follows have occurred:

Sec. 32-54. - Appeals of designation as a sexually oriented business; denial of permit; suspension or revocation of permit. (a) Any aggrieved person or entity may appeal the Planning Director's designation of a business as a sexually oriented business, the denial of a permit, or the suspension or revocation of a permit to the board (as established in section 32-51 and 32-52 of this chapter). Such appeal must be submitted on a form developed by the county and maintained by the Planning Department director.

Sec. 32-54.- (d) Notice of the public hearing must also be displayed in the office of the Planning Director.

Sec. 32-58. - Sexually oriented businesses, designated as a nonconforming use. (a) Generally. Such business shall be permitted to remain in operation without a permit during the 120-day period, as specified in section 32-56 and shall be eligible to be issued a permit. Upon issuance of the permit, the Planning Director, shall make a notation on the permit that the use is designated as nonconforming.

Sec. 32-133. - Communications tower and antenna permitted. (a) Determination by Planning Director or his designated staff representative (collectively "Director").

Sec. 32-141. - Annual report required. All companies that operate or maintain ownership of communication towers in the county shall submit an annual report to the county Planning Department no later than January 15 of each year.

Sec. 32-174. - Group residential facilities permitted only by special exception. Persons desiring to build or expand a group residential facility as defined by this article shall make an application through the Planning Director, or designee, to the board providing information required by this article.

Sec. 32-175. - Review of application by Planning Director, or designee. All applications for development or expansion of residential group facilities must be submitted to the county Planning Director, or designee for review. Applications must be complete and shall include all of the materials and information required by this article (application requirements and sketch plan and preliminary development plans) and must meet all applicable requirements and/or conditions in this article before an application will be processed. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. The Planning Department director or designee shall refer completed applications to the board for final review and approval as a special exception. The Planning Director or designee shall act upon applications within 30 days of receipt, returning them for cause, or forwarding them to the board for further action.

Sec. 32-177. - Appeals. Whenever there is an alleged error by the Planning Director, or designee in an order, requirement, decision, or determination, an applicant may request a hearing before the board in accordance with the provisions of section 32-5.

Sec. 32-179. - Sketch plan and preliminary development plans. The Planning Director or designee may waive some of the following sketch plan elements on applications for minor modifications and additions to existing facilities; otherwise, all sketch plan submittals shall

Sec. 32-182. - Building permits and certificate of occupancy. Building permits and certificate of occupancy shall not be issued until or unless authorized by the Building Codes Director, or their designee and the proposed development is in compliance with the requirements of this article and the standard building codes as adopted by the county.

Sec. 32-219. - Security in lieu of completion of improvement.

In lieu of the completion of the physical development and installation of the required improvements prior to the final plat approval, the county may accept a financial guarantee in the form of cash, bond, or escrow letter of credit with an approved financial institution, in an amount and with conditions satisfactory to it, securing to the county the actual construction and installation of such improvements and utilities within a period specified by the Building Codes Director, or their designee.

(1) The bond shall guarantee the completion of all improvements within a time prescribed by the Building Codes Director, or their designee. (2) If the subdivider wishes to have a final plat approved prior to the installation, inspection and approval of all required improvements, he may establish an escrow account with the county into which the subdivider shall place, prior to the sale of any lot in the subdivision, an amount equal to 125 percent of the owner's engineer (verified by the Building Codes Director, or their designee) estimated cost to complete the improvements. Funds in such escrow account shall be returned to the subdivider following completion of all improvements within time limits prescribed by the Building Codes Director, or their designee. The final determination for returning the escrowed money to the developer shall be made by the Building Codes Director, or their designee. (3) In the event that required improvements are not completed, inspected and approved within the required time, the county may expend escrowed funds, securities, or performance bond funds to complete the required improvements. The Building Codes Director, or their designee, may also, at their discretion, withhold building permits or occupancy permits in such subdivision until such improvements are completed. In which case, it shall then be unlawful to sell any further lots in the subdivision until all improvements are completed. No occupancy permits shall be issued within the subdivision, unless street improvements are at least adequate for vehicular access by the prospective occupant(s) and by the emergency vehicles and personnel. (4) No building permit shall be issued for the final ten percent of lots in a subdivision, or if ten percent be less than two, for the final two lots of a subdivision, until all public improvements required by the Building



Codes Director, or their designee for the subdivision have been fully completed and the county has accepted all as-built drawings. (5) The developer shall be required to maintain all required public improvements on the individual subdivided lots, if required by the Building Codes Director, or their designee, until acceptance of the improvements by the appropriate utility or government entity. If there are any certificates of occupancy on a street not dedicated to the county, the county may on 12 hours notice effect emergency repairs and charge those costs to the developer. (6) Surety bonds will be returned to the developer following delivery of all as-built drawings to the Building Codes Director, or their designee, and after acceptance of all improvements by the county.

Sec. 32-421. - Request for a letter of compliance. (a) The owner shall request in writing that the Planning Director, or designee, review the location of the tattooing facility and issue a letter of compliance. (c) The owner shall submit the following items to the Planning Director, or designee, at the time a formal request for a letter of compliance is made:

Sec. 32-422. - Issuance of letter of compliance. (a) The Planning Director, or designee, shall issue a letter of compliance when all requirements of this article have been met.

Sec. 32-526. - Billboard and sign submittal process. As such, the following materials shall be submitted to the Planning Director or his/her designee at the time of application:

Sec. 32-528. - Permits. Upon satisfactory completion of all requirements set forth in this article, the owner/agent shall be issued a land use permit by the Planning Director or his/her designee for construction of the billboard or sign.

## Exhibit B

Sec 32-44. - Certificate of nonconformity means a certificate issued by the ~~community development department~~ **Planning Department** to any sexually oriented business which is operating at the time of the enactment of this chapter, and is not in compliance with one of more of its provisions.

Sec. 32-44. - Designated county employee means the ~~community development~~ **Planning Director** or other employee of the county who is designated by the county administrator for the administration of this article.

Sec. 32-46. - Enumeration of permit requirements. (b) Applications for a permit shall be made to the ~~community development~~ **Planning Director**.

Sec. 32-46. - Enumeration of permit requirements. (d) An application for a permit shall be made to the ~~community development director~~ **Planning Director** on a form provided by the county.

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Sec. 32-48. - Administration and display of permits. (a) The ~~community development director~~ **Planning Director** shall maintain a copy of all permits issued, and shall maintain a record of permit issuances, to include the name of the business, the name of the owner, the date of permit issuance, and the date of permit expiration.

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Sec. 32-52. - Revocation of a permit. The ~~community development director~~ **Planning Director** shall revoke a sexually oriented business permit if a cause for suspension as specified in section 32-51 has occurred at least one time during the preceding 12 months. In addition, ~~community development director~~ **Planning Director** shall revoke a sexually oriented business permit if it is determined that any of the acts listed as follows have occurred:

Sec. 32-54. - Appeals of designation as a sexually oriented business; denial of permit; suspension or revocation of permit. (a) Any aggrieved person or entity may appeal the ~~community development director's~~ **Planning Director's** designation of a business as a sexually oriented business, the denial of a permit, or the suspension or revocation of a permit to the board (as established in section 32-51 and 32-52 of this chapter). Such appeal must be submitted on a form developed by the county and maintained by the ~~community director director~~ **Planning Director**.

Sec. 32-54.- (d) Notice of the public hearing must also be displayed in the office of the ~~community director director~~ **Planning Director**.

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Sec. 32-141. - Annual report required. All companies that operate or maintain ownership of communication towers in the county shall submit an annual report to the county ~~community development department~~ Planning Department no later than January 15 of each year.

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Sec. 32-175. - Review of application by ~~community director director~~ Planning Director, or designee. All applications for development or expansion of residential group facilities must be submitted to the county ~~community director director~~ Planning Director, or designee for review. Applications must be complete and shall include all of the materials and information required by this article (application requirements and sketch plan and preliminary development plans) and must meet all applicable requirements and/or conditions in this article before an application will be processed. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. The ~~community director director~~ Planning Director or designee shall refer completed applications to the board for final review and approval as a special exception. The ~~community director director~~ Planning Director or designee shall act upon applications within 30 days of receipt, returning them for cause, or forwarding them to the board for further action.

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Sec. 32-179. - Sketch plan and preliminary development plans. The ~~community director director~~ Planning Director or designee may waive some of the following sketch plan elements on applications for minor modifications and additions to existing facilities; otherwise, all sketch plan submittals shall include the following in sketch and narrative form.

Sec. 32-182. - Building permits and certificate of occupancy. Building permits and certificate of occupancy shall not be issued until or unless authorized by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee and the proposed development is in compliance with the requirements of this article and the standard building codes as adopted by the county.

Sec. 32-219. - Security in lieu of completion of improvement.

In lieu of the completion of the physical development and installation of the required improvements prior to the final plat approval, the county may accept a financial guarantee in the form of cash, bond, or escrow letter of credit with an approved financial institution, in an amount and with conditions satisfactory to it, securing to the county the actual construction and installation of such improvements and utilities within a period specified by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee.

(1) The bond shall guarantee the completion of all improvements within a time prescribed by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee. (2) If the subdivider wishes to have a final plat approved prior to the installation, inspection and approval of all required improvements, he may establish an escrow account with the county into which the subdivider shall place, prior to the sale of any lot in the subdivision, an amount equal to 125 percent of the owner's engineer (verified by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee) estimated cost to complete the improvements. Funds in such escrow account shall be returned to the subdivider following completion of all improvements within time limits prescribed by the

~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee. The final determination for returning the escrowed money to the developer shall be made by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee. (3) In the event that required improvements are not completed, inspected and approved within the required time, the county may expend escrowed funds, securities, or performance bond funds to complete the required improvements. The ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee, may also, at their discretion, withhold building permits or occupancy permits in such subdivision until such improvements are completed. In which case, it shall then be unlawful to sell any further lots in the subdivision until all improvements are completed. No occupancy permits shall be issued within the subdivision, unless street improvements are at least adequate for vehicular access by the prospective occupant(s) and by the emergency vehicles and personnel. (4) No building permit shall be issued for the final ten percent of lots in a subdivision, or if ten percent be less than two, for the final two lots of a subdivision, until all public improvements required by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee for the subdivision have been fully completed and the county has accepted all as-built drawings. (5) The developer shall be required to maintain all required public improvements on the individual subdivided lots, if required by the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee, until acceptance of the improvements by the appropriate utility or government entity. If there are any certificates of occupancy on a street not dedicated to the county, the county may on 12 hours notice effect emergency repairs and charge those costs to the developer. (6) Surety bonds will be returned to the developer following delivery of all as-built drawings to the ~~community development director~~ Building Codes Director, or their designee, and after acceptance of all improvements by the county.

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Sec. 32-528. - Permits. Upon satisfactory completion of all requirements set forth in this article, the owner/agent shall be issued a land use permit by the ~~community director director~~ Planning Director or his/her designee for construction of the billboard or sign.

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF OCONEE  
ORDINANCE 2019-12**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 38 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY REVISING CERTAIN TERMS CONTAINED THEREIN, IN ORDER TO PROPERLY DESCRIBE NEW DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENTAL POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RESULTING FROM COUNTY COUNCIL'S DIRECTIVE TO DIVIDE THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT INTO BUILDING CODES AND PLANNING DEPARTMENTS.

**WHEREAS**, consistent with the powers granted county governments by S.C. Code § 4-9-25 and S.C. Code § 4-9-30, Oconee County ("County"), a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of South Carolina, acting by and through its governing body, the Oconee County Council (the "County Council"), has the authority to enact regulations, resolutions, and ordinances, not inconsistent with the Constitution and the general law of the State of South Carolina, including the exercise of such powers in relation to health and order within its boundaries and respecting any subject as appears to it necessary and proper for the security, general welfare, and convenience of the County or for preserving health, peace, order, and good government therein; and,

**WHEREAS**, the County has adopted multiple ordinances for the effective, efficient governance of the County, which, subsequent to adoption, are codified in the Oconee County Code of Ordinances (the "Code of Ordinances"), as amended; and,

**WHEREAS**, on November 20, 2018, County Council elected to modify and reorganize the Community Development Department, so as to establish the Building Codes Division and the Planning Division as separate departments for administrative purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, County Council recognizes that there is a need to amend Chapter 38 of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances by revising certain terms contained therein in order to properly describe new departments and department heads resulting from County Council's directive to divide the Community Development Department and establish Building codes and Planning Departments; and,

**WHEREAS**, County Council has therefore determined to modify certain provisions of Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances, in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, and to affirm and preserve all other provisions of the Code of Ordinances not specifically, or by implication, amended hereby.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is hereby ordained by the Oconee County Council, in meeting duly assembled, that:

1. Chapter 38 of the Code of Ordinances is hereby revised, rewritten, and amended to read as set forth in Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a version of Chapter 38 showing the changes made to the existing ordinance; it is for illustrative purposes only, and shall not be codified.

2. Should any part or provision of this Ordinance be deemed unconstitutional or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such determination shall not affect the rest and remainder of this Ordinance, all of which is hereby deemed separable.

3. All ordinances, orders, resolutions, and actions of County Council inconsistent herewith are, to the extent of such inconsistency only, hereby repealed, revoked, and rescinded. Nothing contained herein, however, or in the attachment hereto shall cancel, void, or revoke, or shall be interpreted as cancelling, voiding, or revoking, *ex post facto*, in any regard any prior performance standard, zoning or rezoning acts, actions, or decisions of the County or County Council based thereon, which were valid and legal at the time in effect and undertaken pursuant thereto, in any regard.

4. All other terms, provisions, and parts of the Code of Ordinances, not amended hereby, directly or by implication, shall remain in full force and effect.

5. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in full force and effect from and after third reading and enactment by County Council.

**ORDAINED** in meeting, duly assembled, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katie D. Smith  
Clerk to Oconee County Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julian Davis, III  
Chair, Oconee County Council

First Reading: February 5, 2019  
Second Reading: \_\_\_\_\_  
Third Reading: \_\_\_\_\_  
Public Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exhibit A**

Sec. 38-8.5 Methods of initial rezoning. 3. Presentation to county council. Presentation to county council. If county council finds the petition is within the parameters of this chapter, they may direct the planning commission and Planning Department to proceed with amending the zoning chapter and map.

Sec. 38-8.5 Methods of initial rezoning. 5. Initial zoning meeting in district. Following the review of the future land use map, the Planning Department will schedule a public meeting to begin working with citizens to develop a proposed zoning map.

Sec. 38-8.5 Methods of initial rezoning. 8. Planning commission review of proposed zoning map. When completed, the committee shall present their draft map to the planning commission for review. The planning commission shall review the changes to ensure that they are compatible with the comprehensive plan. During this time, the Planning Department shall mail a survey to all district property owners soliciting their opinion of the proposed changes, with a deadline to respond of 30 days. At the end of the survey period, the commission shall forward a recommendation regarding the proposed changes to county council. A positive recommendation of the commission shall require both a finding of compliance with the comprehensive plan, and a minimum of 51 percent of the returned responses to the survey favoring the proposed changes.

## Exhibit B

Sec. 38-8.5 Methods of initial rezoning. 3. Presentation to county council. Presentation to county council. If county council finds the petition is within the parameters of this chapter, they may direct the planning commission and ~~community development department~~ **Planning Department** to proceed with amending the zoning chapter and map.

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# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

# Comprehensive Plan

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

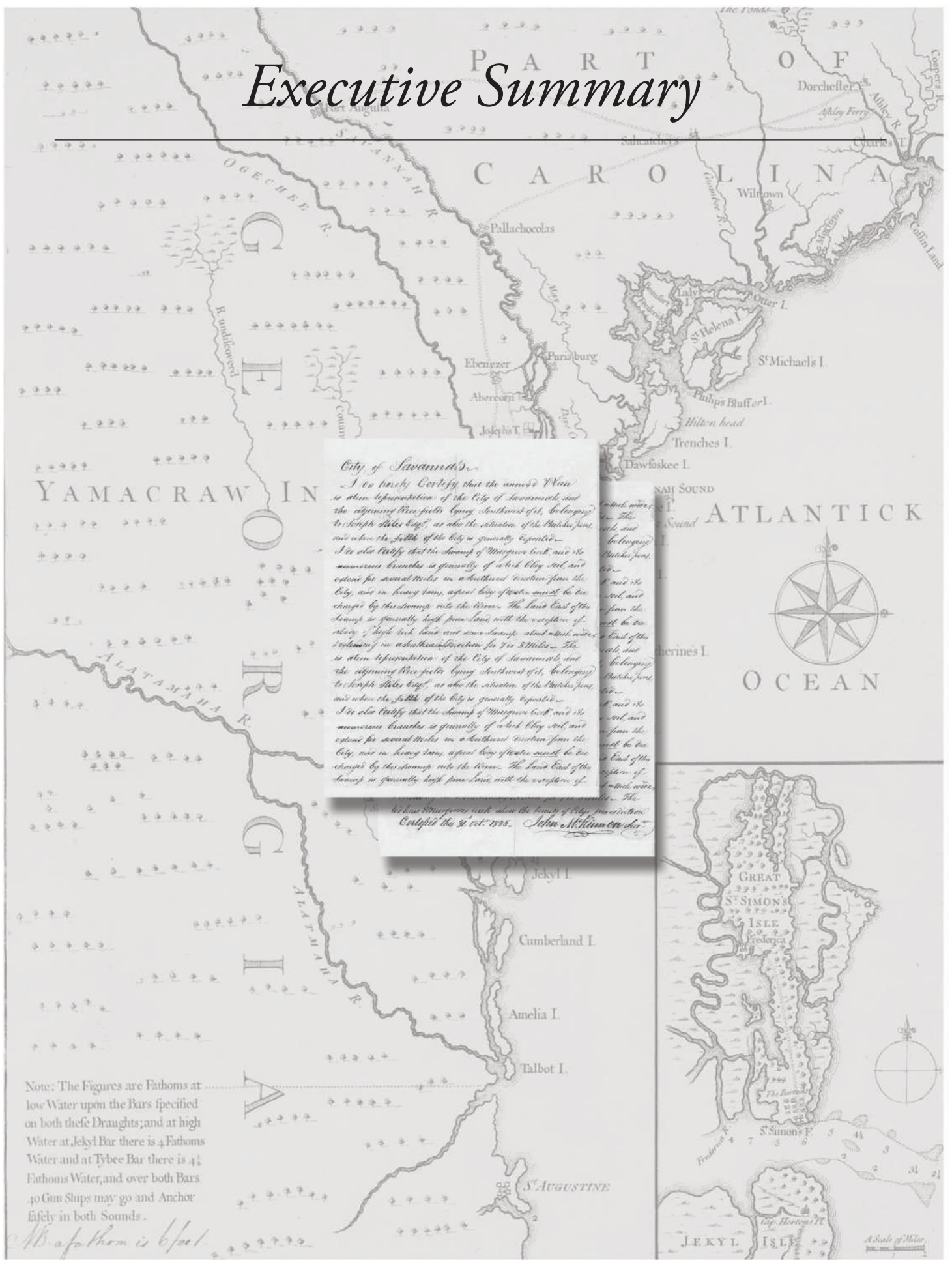
415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## Executive Summary

# Executive Summary



*City of Savannah's.*  
 I do hereby Certify that the annex'd View is a true Representation of the City of Savannah, and the adjoining River, lying Southward of it, belonging to His Majesty's King, as also the situation of the British Fort, and where the falls of the City is generally reported.  
 I do also Certify that the Shallow of Matogue Creek, and its numerous Branches is generally of a hard Clay Soil, and extends for several Miles in a Southern Direction from the City, and in heavy tides, great Body of Water must be discharged by this Shallow into the River. The Land East of the Shallow is generally high firm Land, with the exception of a strip of high bank land and some Swamps, about about water, extending in a Southern Direction for 7 or 8 Miles. The same is also a Representation of the City of Savannah, and the adjoining River, lying Southward of it, belonging to His Majesty's King, as also the situation of the British Fort, and where the falls of the City is generally reported.  
 I do also Certify that the Shallow of Matogue Creek, and its numerous Branches is generally of a hard Clay Soil, and extends for several Miles in a Southern Direction from the City, and in heavy tides, great Body of Water must be discharged by this Shallow into the River. The Land East of the Shallow is generally high firm Land, with the exception of a strip of high bank land and some Swamps, about about water, extending in a Southern Direction for 7 or 8 Miles. The same is also a Representation of the City of Savannah, and the adjoining River, lying Southward of it, belonging to His Majesty's King, as also the situation of the British Fort, and where the falls of the City is generally reported.  
 Witness My Hand and Seal at the City of Savannah, this 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1735. John M. Mendenhall

Note: The Figures are Fathoms at low Water upon the Bars specified on both these Draughts; and at high Water at Jekyl Bar there is 4 Fathoms Water, and at Tybee Bar there is 4 1/2 Fathoms Water, and over both Bars 40 Gun Ships may go and Anchor safely in both Sounds.

1/2 fathom is 6 feet

A Scale of Miles

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chatham County and the city of Savannah, Georgia, have prepared a new comprehensive plan document that guides the communities' collective growth and development decisions over the course of the next 20 years. The *Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan* serves both participating communities as a general statement of intent regarding actions that will be taken, or policies which will be observed, to promote locally generated and preferred goals related to economic development, land use, transportation, housing, quality of life and other interrelated topics.

The *Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan* is the community's principal guiding or "vision" document - designed to formulate a coordinated, long-term planning program to maintain and enhance the health and viability of the jurisdictions. The Comprehensive Plan lays out the desired future for Chatham - Savannah, and relates how that future is to be achieved. The plan serves as a resource to both the public and private sector by projecting how land will develop, how housing will be made available, how jobs will be attracted and retained, how open space and the environment will be protected, how public services and facilities will be provided, and how transportation facilities will be improved. In short, the *Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan* is intended to provide for consistent policy direction.

The Chatham County Commission, City of Savannah City Council and local community leaders will use the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan in the following ways:

***The Future Land Use Map shall be referenced in making rezoning and capital investment decisions:*** It provides a representation of the community's vision helping to guide development based on community preferences and also indicates character areas where various types of land uses should be permitted.

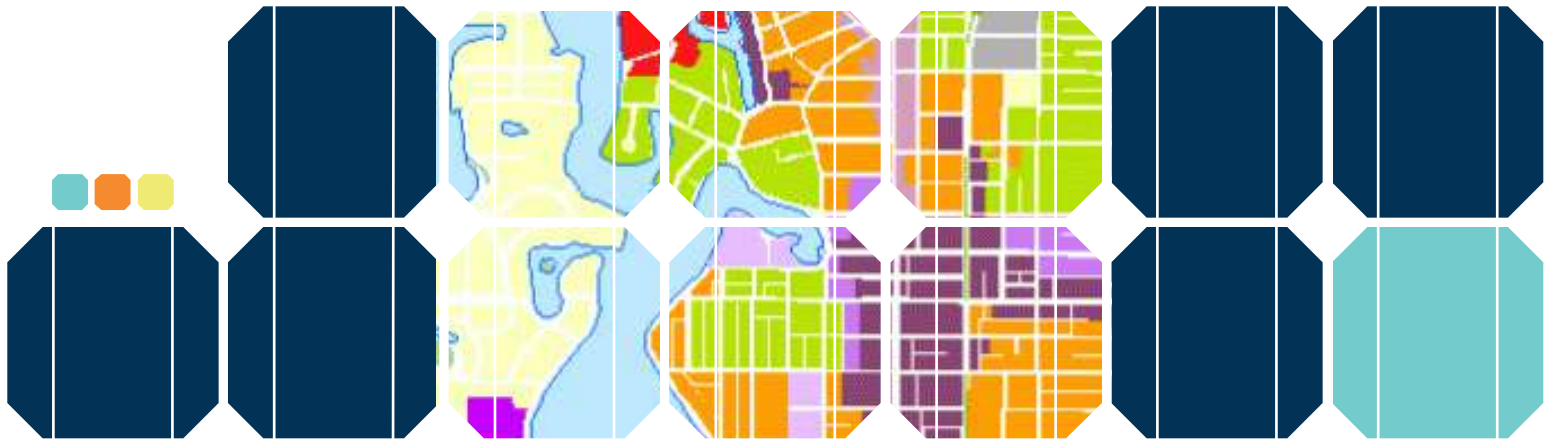
***The Comprehensive Plan provides policies that help guide day-to-day decisions:*** These policies are reflections of community values identified through public outreach efforts. These policies will be used as guidelines in the analysis of rezoning decisions and other capital investment decisions.

***The Comprehensive Plan includes an Implementation Program that will direct public investment and private initiative:*** Plan implementation is carried out through the adoption and revision of regulations, including zoning and development codes, and through the completion of projects and programs outlined in the Community Goals and Community Strategic Plan and Work Program. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document and should be updated regularly as conditions change and shifts occur in public policy.

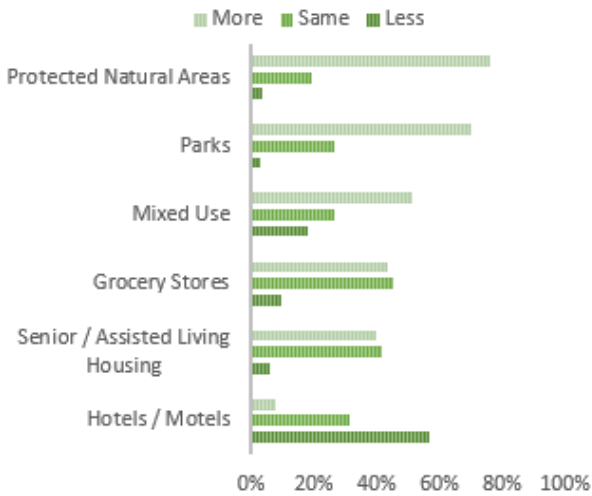
The following pages describe the results of public participation that informed and guided the this planning document.







# Land Use



### Parks and Natural Lands

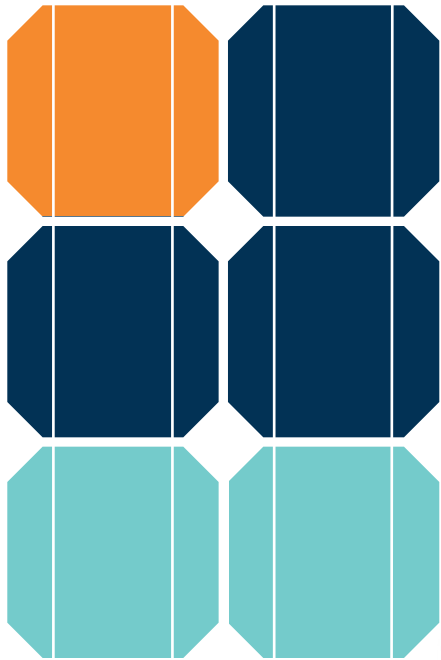
70% and 76% of respondents support increasing the amount of land for "Parks" and "Protected Natural Areas"

### Mixed Use and Grocery Stores

51% and 43% of respondents support Mixed Use land development and Grocery Stores

### Hotels and Motels

57% of respondents want less Hotel and Motel development.



70%

76%

51%

43%

57%

# Community Goals

“New development should be required to protect environmentally critical areas.”

“Long range policies should focus on natural resource sustainability.”

“Roads should be designed for pedestrians and bicyclist as well as cars.”

## Transportation Networks

60% of respondents feel the current transportation system is inadequate.

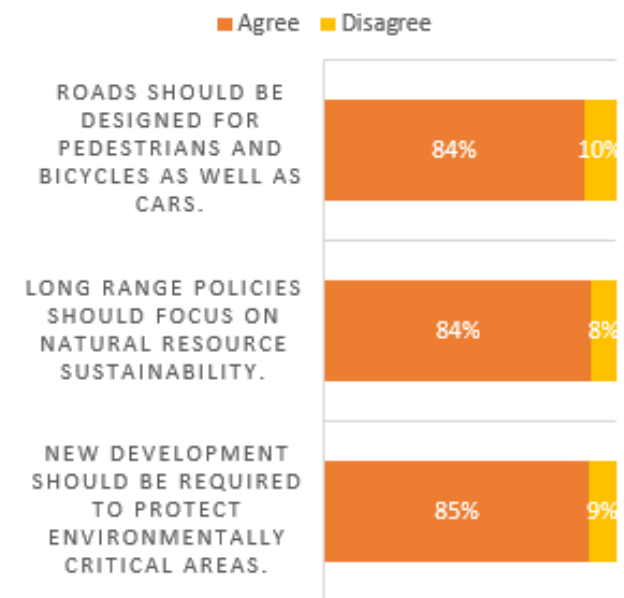
## Employment and Education

74% and 60% of respondents feel the availability of high paying jobs and educational opportunities are not adequate within the community.

## Housing

69% of respondents feel housing should be created to accommodate all segments of the population.

### COMMUNITY GOALS



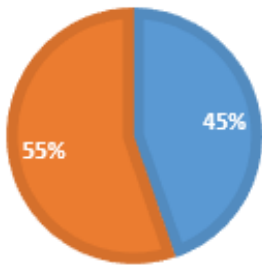




# Housing

DO YOU BELIEVE THE EXISTING HOUSING OPTIONS MEET THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS?

■ Yes ■ No

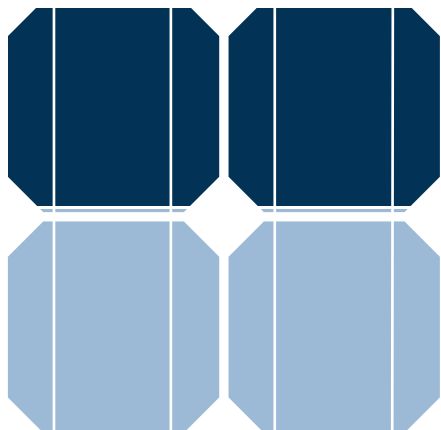


Does current housing meets the community's needs?

55% NO / 45% YES

Is affordable housing "very important"?

25% NO / 75% YES



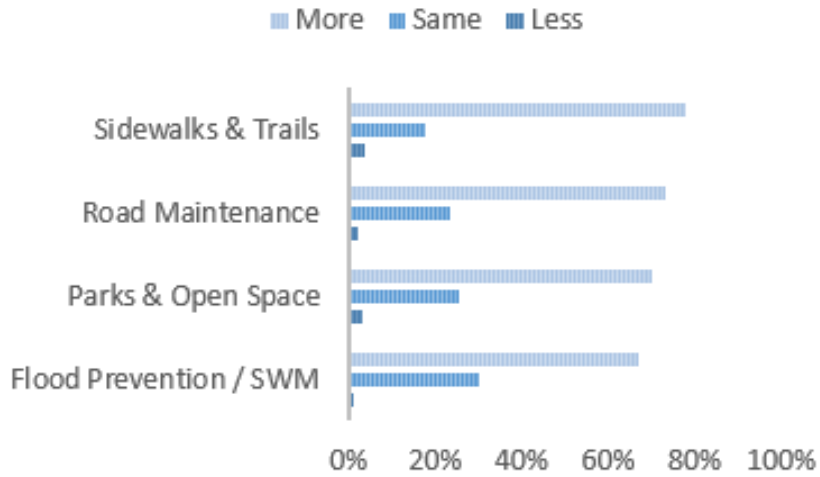
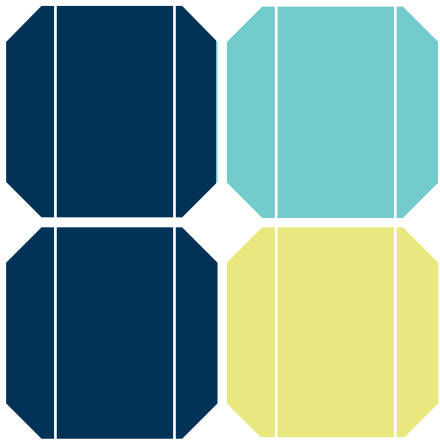
"The needs of low income families and the homeless are not being met."

"Would prefer that low income families be blended into average neighborhoods rather than separated in public housing zones"

"There is not enough affordable and safe housing for working folks in downtown Savannah."



# Infrastructure



## Sidewalks, Road Maintenance, and Open Space

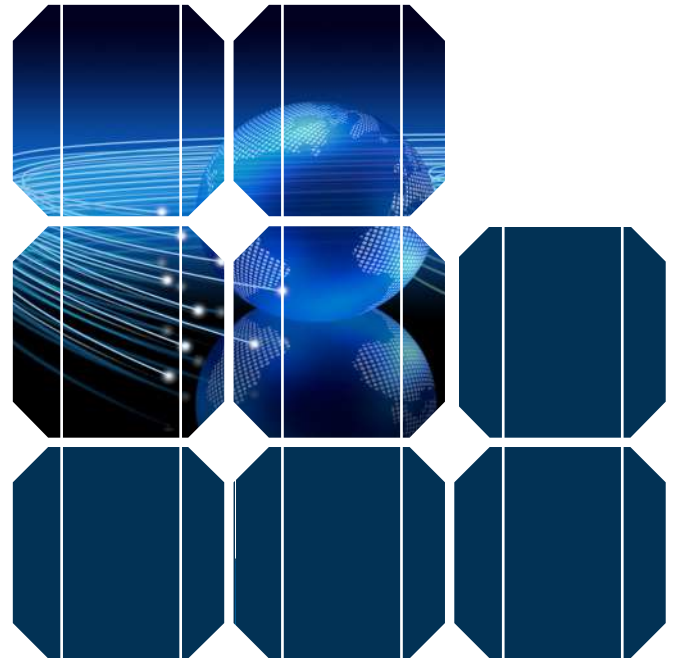
Over 70% of respondents feel their should be a significant increase of investment in Sidewalks and Trails, Road Maintenance and Parks and Open Space.

## Road Expansion

A mere 37% of respondents felt their should be an increase in road expansion

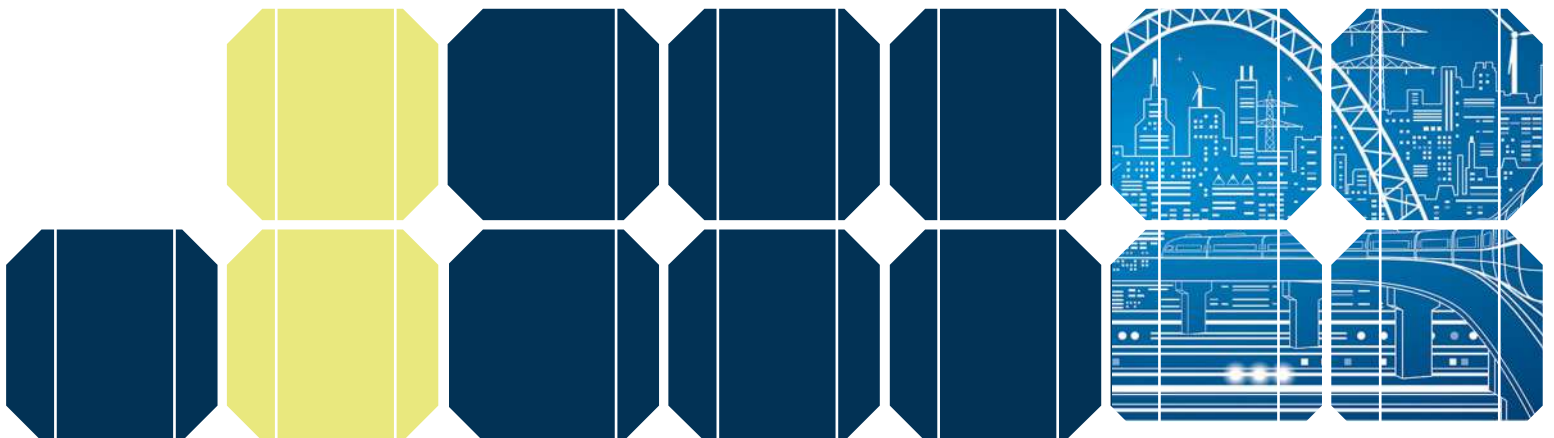
## Internet Access

48% of respondents feel there should be an increase in investment for public access to internet.



## No Change

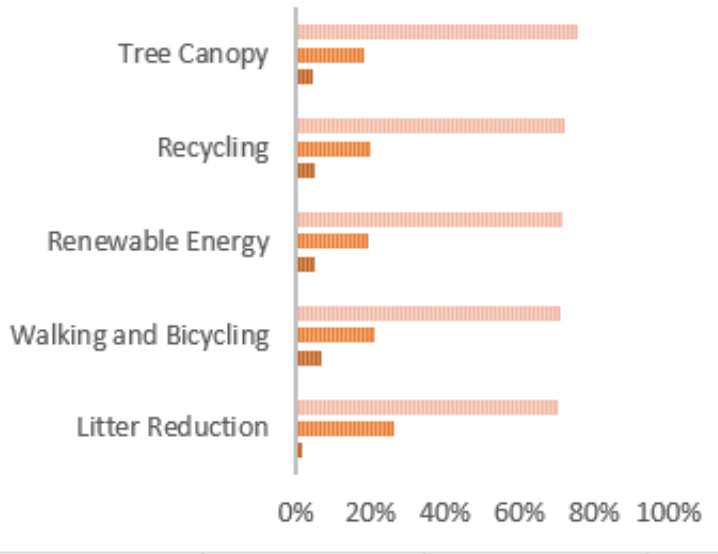
While the majority of respondents felt their should be increased investment in various types of infrastructure, nearly a third of all respondents felt the current infrastructure investments should remain the same.





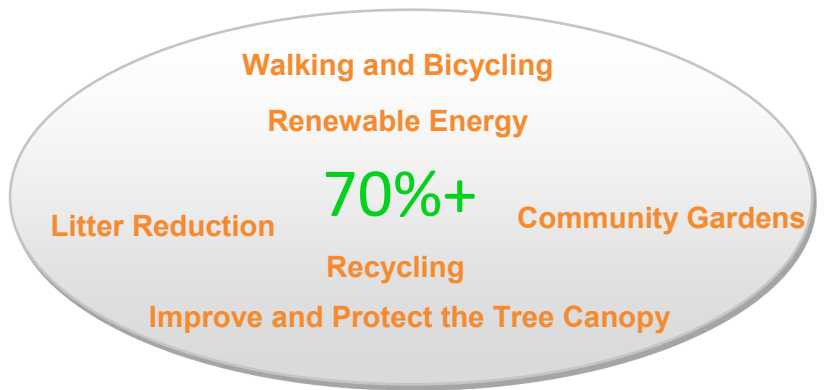
## Quality of Life

More Same Less



### Programs

Respondents were asked whether they would favor more or less public backing for a range of programs. The most popular programs were...



# Land Use

## Purpose

The chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides a history of the development of Savannah and Chatham County. It provides an existing and future development patterns intended for the City of Savannah and Chatham County.

## Growth

Chatham County is the most urbanized and populous county in the 200 mile coastal area between Charleston, South Carolina and Jacksonville, Florida. The County serves as an economic, cultural, and governmental hub, as well as an international focal point for trade.

The region has experienced a high rate of growth over the past 20 years, and this is expected to continue at or slightly above this level.

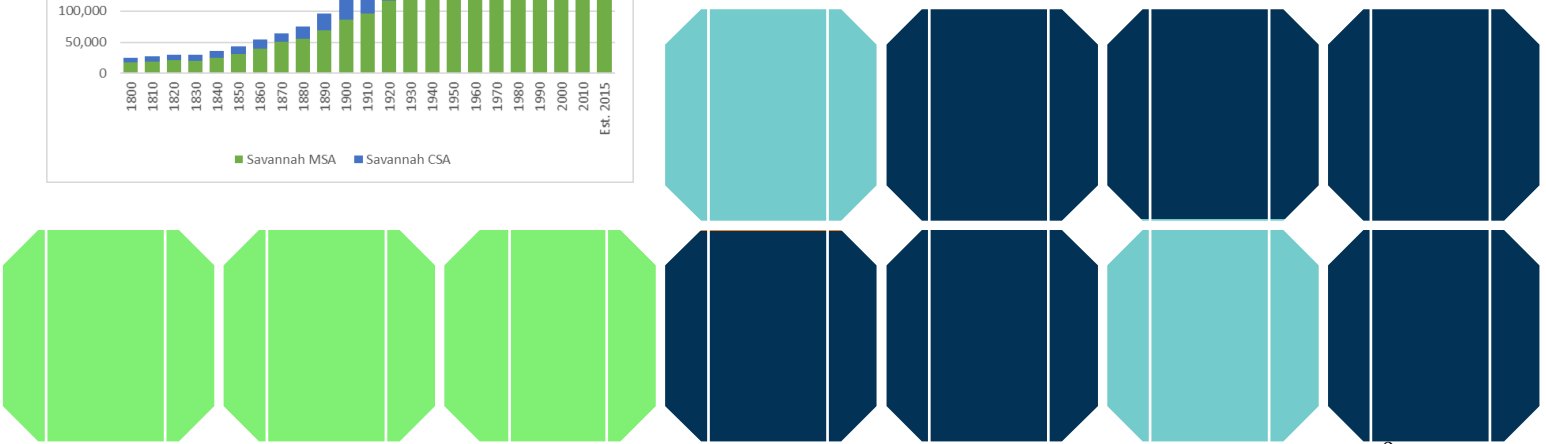
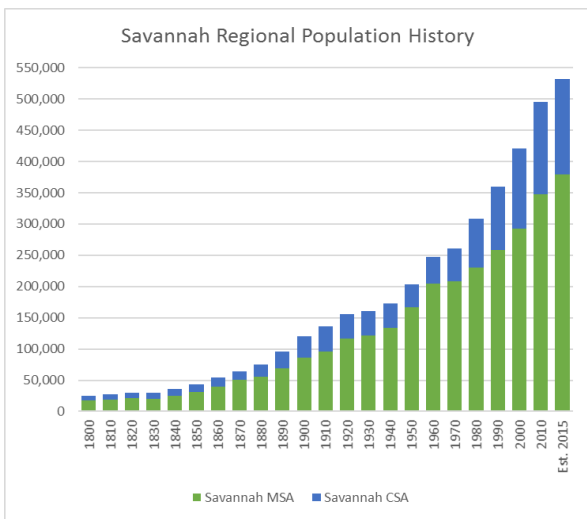
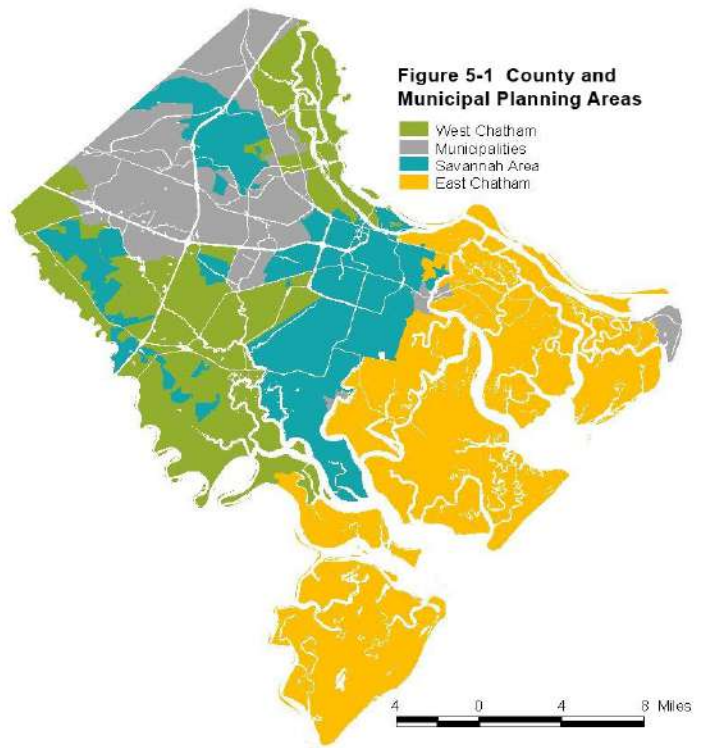
## Existing Land Use

The City of Savannah is highly urbanized with large areas of mixed use development. The City is largely built-out and growing predominantly through annexation.

East Chatham is developed at low densities. This development pattern is influenced by its setting amid marshes and tidal creeks. West Chatham contains a high proportion of agricultural, forested, and otherwise undeveloped area. As the City of Savannah and unincorporated East Chatham have built out, West Chatham has emerged as a high growth area.

## Historical Patterns

The city's original development patterns, established by James Oglethorpe in 1733, have been remarkably resilient and adaptable. As a result, Savannah enjoys international recognition as a planned city with an enduring legacy.



# Housing

## Purpose

The chapter attempts to identify major housing problems, determine future housing needs, and develop a plan for managing housing development in the future. Housing strategies presented in this chapter promote coordination of housing policies and programs at the local, state, and federal levels. We have determined that affordable housing opportunities must be available throughout the County to achieve a socio-economically diverse community.

## Housing Market

Zoning, which specifies the types of units developers are allowed to build, and market demand, which dictates the types of housing units people want to buy, are the primary factors that determine housing units built in Chatham County. There is a great need for multi-family, affordable, and special needs housing, in Chatham County and the City of Savannah.

| Housing Types as a Percent of Total Housing Units, 2000-2014 |                |         |          |        |
|--|----------------|---------|----------|--------|
| Units in Structure   | CHATHAM COUNTY |         | SAVANNAH |        |
|  | 2009           | 2014    | 2009     | 2014   |
| Total Units  | 98,528         | 103,807 | 53,526   | 52,264 |
| 1 (detached)   | 65.2%          | 63.8%   | 60.6%    | 57.3%  |
| 1 (attached)   | 5.4%           | 5.9%    | 6.3%     | 7.3%   |
| 2  | 3.5%           | 3.3%    | 5.6%     | 5.6%   |
| 3 to 4   | 6.5%           | 5.7%    | 9.1%     | 8.5%   |
| 5 to 9   | 7.1%           | 7.0%    | 8.4%     | 9.4%   |
| 10 or More   | 7.9%           | 9.6%    | 8.3%     | 10.4%  |
| Manufactured Home  | 4.6%           | 4.8%    | 1.7%     | 1.5%   |

## Homelessness

The Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless (CSAH) has gradually shifted away from a shelter-based approach and toward a system of providing care for the homeless by establish safe, clean and sustainable, non-traditional housing options. The Authority offers a “shelter plus care” approach where the homeless are provided with skills training and other services in addition to shelter.

## Assessment of Housing

70% of the housing units in both Chatham County and the City of Savannah were constructed between 1940 and 2000. The majority of the units that are 50 years old or older are concentrated in Savannah’s various historic neighborhoods. Median home prices have increased nearly 80% from \$95,000 in the year 2000 to \$171,000 in 2014. During the same time frame, contract rent has increased 96% from \$475 to \$935.

## Needs & Opportunities

In order to promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community, the comprehensive plan encourages the development of various housing types, promotes programs that provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds, and institute sustainable programs to address the issue of homelessness in the City an County.





# Transportation

## Purpose

Transportation policy decisions and transportation project designs can have a profound effect on things like mode choice, land uses, economic development, the natural environment, health, and general quality of life.

This chapter draws information from the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CORE MPO's) 2040 Total Mobility Plan (TMP), which is the long range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Chatham County. Based on information from the MTP, issues and opportunities are identified along with quality growth objectives.

## Investment

Comprised of local governments in the metropolitan area, The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization is the federally designated organization responsible for cooperatively planning for transportation in the region. The goals adopted for the Total Mobility Plan (TMP) focus on ensuring safety and security, maintenance and preservation, economic vitality, and mobility and sustainability of our road ways.

## The Thoroughfare Plan

The CORE MPO, in conjunction with local jurisdictions, developed a Thoroughfare Plan for the region. The Thoroughfare Plan ensures accessibility, mobility, and connectivity for people and freight. It promotes safe and efficient travel for all users and creates a effective trade off between automobile capacity and multimodal design elements. Support for on-street parking, bike travel, land access, and pedestrian friendly intersections are discussed in the plan.

## Public Transportation

The Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) is the agency responsible for transit services to the Savannah area. The federal and state required Transit Development Plan (TDP), maintained by CAT, provides a 5-year/10-year guide and planning tools outlining the most effective and efficient transit services for residents. According to the recently adopted TDP, CAT has identified a "Family of Services" designed to enhance ridership, the appeal of services to additional markets, and improve existing services.

## Parking Matters

In 2015 and 2016, CORE MPO and the City of Savannah developed a strategic plan for parking and mobility in Savannah, called Parking Matters. To encourage a "park once" behavior and generally reduce auto trips and parking demand within downtown, the study looked at the potential needs for capital investment (such as additional garages), the possible transit service revisions, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The study found that existing parking capacity is greater than perceived by the public.

## CAT's Prioritized 5-year Program



# Quality of Life

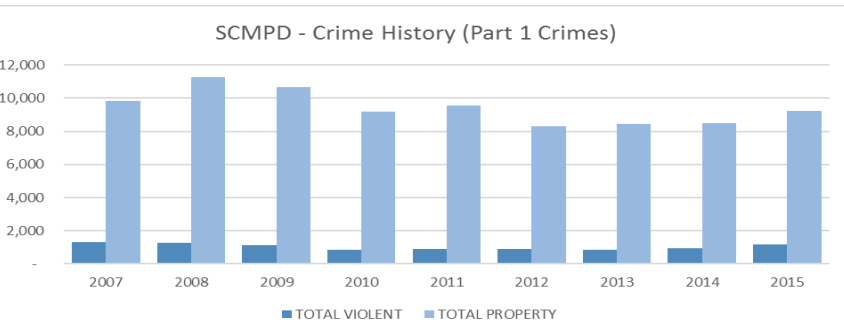
## Purpose

Chatham County has a responsibility to promote and support programs and regulations that positively impact quality of life for its citizens. This chapter includes an assessment of the following quality of life issues, Public Safety, Health, Education, Natural Resources, and Historic and Cultural Resources.

This chapter incorporates several items from the *Chatham Community Blueprint* – a strategic plan adopted by both the City of Savannah and Chatham County.

## Community Health

The City of Savannah and Chatham County are aware of the interconnectedness between land use and public health. Both have instituted programs and policy changes to improve the public health of their citizens. Healthy Savannah was an initiative launched in 2007 for the purpose of bringing healthy living programs and resources to the community.



## Public Safety

It is a primary responsibility of a municipality to ensure public safety that protects and serves its residents. Chatham County and the City of Savannah coordinate efforts to ensure that police, fire, and emergency management services are provided for all residents. A unanimous focus amongst

the City and County is the desire to reduce crime so that all residents feel safe. Data from the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD) show that crime incidence are lower than the 2008's peak, but the rate of both property and violent crime has increased since 2013. Programs such as "Citizens Police Academy," and "Coffee with a Cop" have been enacted to build relationships between residents and law enforcement.

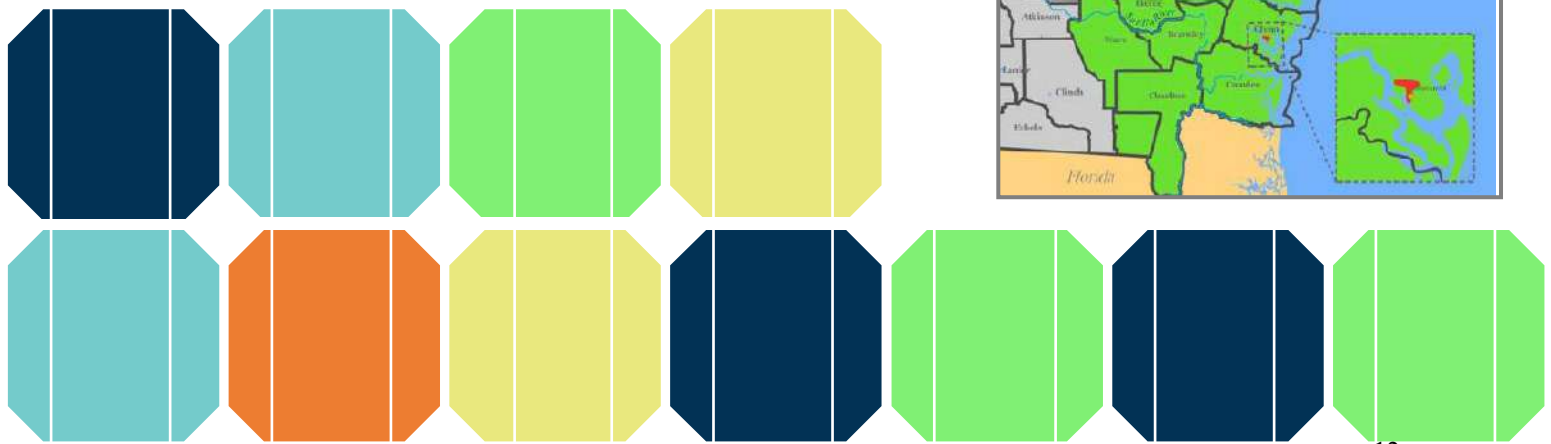
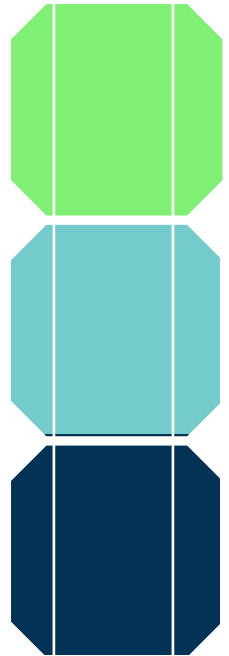
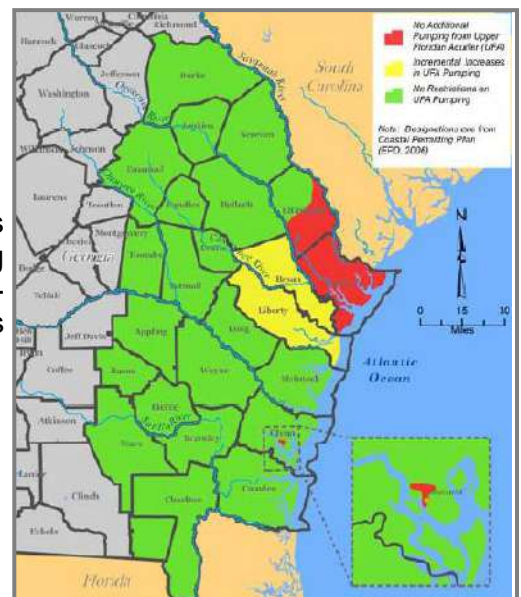
## Education

Savannah Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS), strives to improve the education system for all students in the County. Initiatives are in place to develop financial, social and conflict resolution skills, improving upward mobility, and enhancing parental involvement amongst the community's students.

## Natural Resources

Due to the City and County's proximity to natural coastal resources and various floodplains and marshes, specific initiatives involving state and local agencies have been implemented in an effort to preserve these natural areas. Also discussed in the chapter are efforts for addressing effective storm water and solid waste management.

## Zone Boundary Map



# Economic Development

## Purpose

The economic development policies and activities of the County and City are to encourage development and expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is an inventory and assessment of the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, and economic development opportunities and resources.



## Regional Economy

Chatham County and Savannah are the hub of an 11-county region that features a diversified workforce and growing economy. The region is not only a top tourist destination but also an ideal place for businesses and families. The Region has an available workforce including more than 50,000 college students, all within an hour's drive of the coast and exceptional training opportunities. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate in the region is higher than the national average.

## Manufacturing

Some of the largest employers and highest wage earning workers are within the manufacturing segment. Chatham County and Savannah enjoys a diversified manufacturing base ranging from paper and forest products, chemicals, construction equipment, and food processing.

## Port

The Port of Savannah is the largest single terminal container facility in North America and the busiest container port in the U.S. Southeast. The port contributes to over 369,000 jobs throughout the State annually and contribute \$20.4 billion in income, \$84.1 billion in sales and \$1.3 billion in state and local taxes to Georgia's economy. The port serves as a major distribution hub due to its access to two major interstate highways. As the Savannah Harbor deepening gets underway, the harbor will soon allow Savannah to better accommodate today's mega-ships.



## Military & Government

Together, Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Air Field (HAAF) are one of Coastal Georgia's largest employers. The ratio of military to civilian employees is approximately six to one, with 22,422 officers and enlisted military and 3,891 civilians employed at both installations. Total payroll for both bases is estimated at well over one billion dollars with an annual financial impact of four to five billion dollars.

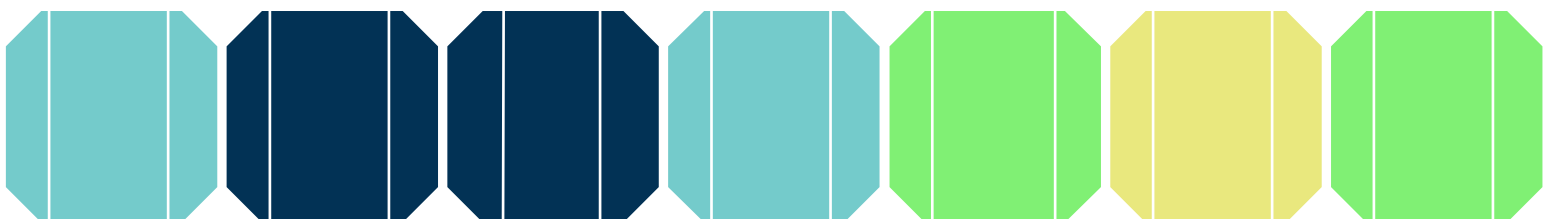
## Tourism

The Savannah National Landmark Historic District is the largest of its kind in the United States. Savannah with its historic architecture, monuments and the coastal area's natural beauty, drew over 13 million tourists in 2014.



## Economic Base

The City of Savannah and Chatham County has a diverse economic base similar to that of many coastal cities. Employment is highest in the service, retail trade, and manufacturing sectors. The largest manufacturing facilities in the City and County produce textiles, paper products, chemicals, transportation equipment, and food products. Major employers in the service sector include health care, hospitality, and educational institutions. Candler, St. Joseph's and Memorial Hospitals are the most visible component of the City's health care industry. The City and County's major educational institutions include Savannah State University, South University, Armstrong State University, Savannah Technical College, Savannah College of Art and Design, and the Chatham County Board of Education.

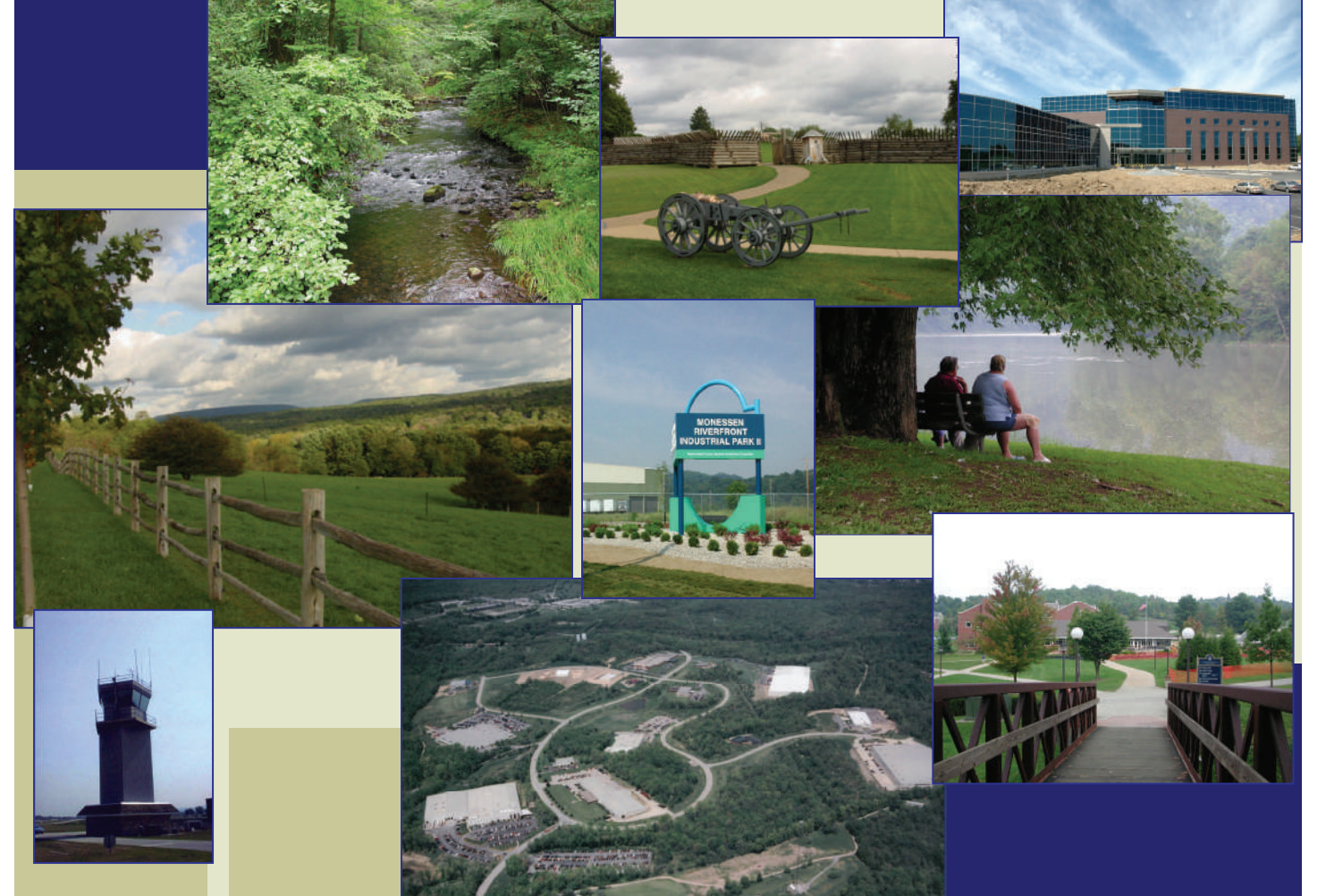






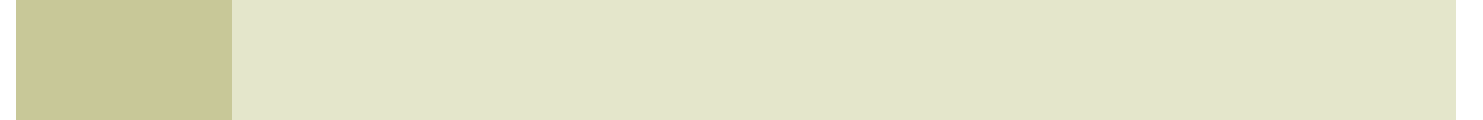
**WESTMORELAND COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

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wcidc@wpa.net



A 2004-2005  
Report  
of the

# Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan





## Comprehensive Plan Report Executive Summary May, 2006

The following is a brief summary of the various individual reports on the progress achieved during the years 2004 and 2005 on the goals and objectives of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in December 2004. These goals and objectives reflect the desire of the county to provide balance, quality and choice to the residents of the county in relationship to the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Housing

In Westmoreland County various public and quasi-public agencies have provided valuable housing assets that have been utilized by the residents. These assets include the following: 102 owner-occupied housing units that have been rehabilitated; the development and/or retention of 167 rental housing units; and the provision of homeownership activities that include both housing unit development and counseling.

An estimated 900 single family units were constructed in Westmoreland County in 2005 at an approximate cost of \$164,550,000 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census report also listed the construction of 26 units in the form of duplexes at an approximate cost of \$2,250,000.

Municipalities have undertaken or are in the process of undertaking refinement of regulations; downtown revitalization; re-use or removal of structures; revisiting permitting and inspection requirements, etc.

It appears that the units developed were well distributed throughout the county and are accessible to a wide range of income levels.

### Community Facilities/Services

Over the past two years there has been improvements made to the community facilities/services provided in the county. In the area of police and fire protection discussions have taken place between municipalities concerning the consolidation of police and fire services in order to deliver a more efficient product. Most municipalities believe that there would be a benefit realized from the sharing, consolidating or merging of municipal services. There was reported several instances of sharing facilities, especially among school districts, colleges, universities and municipalities. In the area of public parks it appears that there have been fairly constant improvements being undertaken. Some involve expansions, infrastructure development, renovations or other capital or program modifications.

Improvements to the airport facilities have continued. A 1,224 foot extension to the main runway at the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport was completed bringing the total length of the runway to 8,224 feet. Navigational aid improvements and the installation of 16 new T-hangers were also completed during the reporting period.

### Transportation

The comprehensive plan outlines several modes of transportation that impact the residents of the county. Surface transportation, especially vehicular transportation, is the system that can be most influenced by local efforts. Because of this ability to exert some impact the county through the years has attempted to bring a balanced approach to highway improvements. During the last two years several projects or studies that have been planned or implemented reflect the county's adherence to this commitment.

One of the goals outlined in the comprehensive plan was the completion of the remaining sections of the Route 22 corridor. The last two(2) portions of that corridor are nearly complete. The reconstruction of the Route 30 and Route 981 intersection near Latrobe will, according to PennDot, begin in 2006 with a tentative completion expected in 2008. In the northwest quadrant of the county the reconfiguration and upgrades at the Parnassus Triangle are continuing with the phase II section being scheduled for construction in 2007. In the same area the Tarentum Bridge Road construction project is underway with completion anticipated in 2006. In the southwest a Route 51 Land Use Initiative study has been completed and will now be reviewed for implementation consideration. Central Westmoreland has seen activity under the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's Needs Assessment Study for the Sony Connector project. A report is due sometime in 2006. That study will determine the feasibility of an interchange that would connect Route 119 to the proposed connector and to the Turnpike itself in the vicinity of Carpentertown. An interchange on Route 119 is in final design and bidding is scheduled for late 2006.

These continued efforts to provide quality improvements throughout the county will further efforts to provide the residents of the county a wide range of surface transportation alternatives.

### Land Use

Westmoreland County is blessed with a unique blend of the rural, suburban and urban environments. This provides the residents of the county with a wide variety of choices when it comes to where to live, work and recreate. By developing a comprehensive plan that considers land use as an integral element the leaders of the county intended to preserve the county's blended character for the benefit of future generations.

**SPACE AVAILABLE**

35,250 SF  
CC Inc. Speculative Building  
Westmoreland Technology Park, New Stanton

32,800 SF  
EFR Speculative Building  
Westmoreland County Airport, Unity Twp.

18,000 - 100,000 SF  
Mount Pleasant Glass Centre,  
Mount Pleasant Twp.

16,500 SF  
RBI Speculative Building/Kacin Companies  
Westmoreland Business & Research Park,  
Upper Burrell Twp.

**Now offering newly constructed and renovated space available for lease or sale!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE NEW LOCATIONS, CALL JOE SISLEY OR JASON RIGONE AT (724) 830-3061  
Email: WCIDC@wpa.net Website: westmorelandcountyidc.org

Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Tom Balya, Thomas C. Ceraso, Philip B. Light

Access **Westmoreland County** ... where our boundaries could fit your needs!

economic development organizations along with the Pittsburgh office of the Governor's Action Team.

### Workforce Training and Education

Without a trained and competent labor force no region can be competitive in the global economy. In Westmoreland County there are organizations whose mission is to provide training at the high school and beyond high school levels in addition to continuing education and training programs. Retraining of workforces is a fact of life in today's economy. Those persons and firms that do not recognize this fact are destined to be left behind. Organizations in Westmoreland County such as the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Career Link-Westmoreland and the Westmoreland County Community College and other workforce training and education programs are determined to keep the workforce of the county up to date and competitive: Some of the ac-

complishments of the previous year are listed below:

- Computer Numerical Control (CNC) training was provided to workers through Workforce Investment Board funds.
- Several local plants utilized the services and recommendations of the Pennsylvania Technical Assistance Program (PennTAP) to reduce waste and lower energy costs.
- Penn State's Center of Excellence (COE) and Innovation Works (IW) partnered in research and development undertakings in order to provide investments in new product development.
- Lean Manufacturing Services (defined as speed, high quality and cost containment) principles were shared with member companies of the St. Vincent College Center for Operational Excellence.

Recognizing the importance of workforce development to meet the needs of existing and new businesses, Westmoreland County has also partnered with the Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland in an outreach strategy of site visits. This initiative, the Workforce Training Assessment Program (WTAP), will address the current and future workforce needs of 10 manufacturers through a project to identify and ultimately upgrade skills of their current employees.



Career Link—Westmoreland—  
Affiliate of the year 2005





of print and electronic media and having “shovel-ready” sites available for marketing, the economic development practitioners effectively present the county to potential prospects. Information is shared directly with the prospects and this same material that promotes the attributes of the county is provided to regional eco-

Pictured left to right—John Skiavo-EGC, Dennis Yablonsky-Secretary of DCED, Robert Levin-Levin Furniture, State Representative Jess M. Stairs, Governor Edward G. Rendell, County Commissioner Chairman Tom Balya, State Representative R. Ted Harhai



of the costs of the project are recognized and understood. By working closely with banking and economic development resources the EGC is involved with business financing activities in the county. The EGC provided assistance, both financial and technical, that resulted in the creation of more than 700 job opportunities in 2005. Examples include assistance to Levin Furniture resulting in 44 jobs and 40 jobs at the Santelli Tempered Glass project.

**Market the County and Work in Collaboration with Regional Agencies**

The utilization of a hands-on, proactive approach by the economic development practitioners has assisted in the growth and maintenance of the economic base of local communities. This is the result of a collaborative effort on the part of the local, regional and state agencies dedicated to the continued prosperity enjoyed throughout Westmoreland County.

During the last two (2) years the newly created Economic Development Council has prepared an annual marketing strategy that is based on the products that are currently available and anticipated output that will come online. By utilizing the various forms

**20+ ACRES**

**Pad Ready!**

**FOR SALE**

**Developed Industrial Site**

Westmoreland Technology Park  
located just off U.S. Route 119  
adjacent to Sony Technology Center  
New Stanton

**CONTACT: WCIDC 724.830.3061**

Board of Directors: Tom Balya, Tom Ceraso, Phil Light  
**PENNSYLVANIA come invent the future**

Projects that further the attainment of those goals include an aerial photography comparison between 1967 and 2003. In 1967 there were 52,104 acres of land considered developed in the county while the amount of developed land in 2003 amounted to 77,066 acres. That means that only 693.39 acres are being developed yearly or slightly more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of the county is being developed yearly. It appears that the generally perceived rural character of the county will remain for the foreseeable future. Another recent study also indicated that the county is developing most rapidly in an area known as the “Growth Triangle”. This encompasses a triangular area from New Kensington to Monessen to Latrobe. Out of 2849 new lots formulated from 2003 to 2005 2188 or 77% of the new lots were located in that triangle.

Progress is also being made by the municipalities of the county when it comes to preserving the character of the area. There have been 13 municipalities or combination of municipalities that have undertaken various land use plans in the last two years. Some of the individual undertakings include the Penn Township Comprehensive Plan; the development of a business overlay zoning district by Hempfield Township; a Route 30 (Beatty Road intersection) visioning project by Unity Township in cooperation with the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County; the development of compliance ordinances for the Environmental Protection Agency’s storm sewer regulations by several Westmoreland County municipalities in cooperation with the Westmoreland Conservation District.

A new study is about to begin with numerous municipalities that have a stake in the Route 30 corridor area in conjunction with the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County that will investigate possible improvements that could mitigate the results of negative impacts that have occurred on that much traveled transportation artery.

**Open Space/Natural Resources**

Westmoreland County possess’ an abundance of open space along with numerous natural resource assets that contribute to the overall livability and quality of life that the residents of the county enjoy.

Some of the recent projects and programs that relate to the goals enumerated in the comprehensive plan enhance this livability factor in the county. These include an Open Space and Greenways Plan that the county is undertaking; the Five Star Trail Spur that will provide further trail connections; the acquisition of Loyalhanna Gorge properties by the county and other preservation of open space activities lead by the Westmoreland Conservation District; creation of timber harvesting regulations; and, assistance to agricultural undertakings. All these projects and programs are contributing to the positive quality of life factors that make Westmoreland County the place to live, work and play in the region.

**Economic Development**

Stimulating job creation in economic sectors such as manufacturing, information services, healthcare and education is a primary goal cited in the Westmoreland County Comprehen-

sive Plan. Development in those and other areas will lead to economic growth and provide increases in the standard of living for the residents of the county.

The expansion of the industrial park system that exists in the county is one method of continuing the growth pattern. Progress has been made during the last two (2) years through the development of “ready to go” sites at the Westmoreland Technology Park, Westmoreland Distribution Park II and the Westmoreland Business & Research Park.

Promoting and developing brownfield sites as well as greenfield sites is also a goal of the comprehensive plan. The revitalization of brownfield sites in the City of Jeannette, the City of Monessen, the Borough of South Greensburg and the Township of Mt. Pleasant are indicative of the strides made by the economic development practitioners during 2004 and 2005. Jeannette has developed a comprehensive revitalization plan that includes brownfield redevelopment, commercial redevelopment, housing development and rehabilitation near its existing business district. The City of Monessen has been developing the former Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel plant in partnership with the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation (WCIDC). In South Greensburg the WCIDC is revitalizing the former Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) facility. And in the Township of Mt. Pleasant the Economic Growth Connection (EGC) and the WCIDC have collaborated on the reuse of the former Lenox Crystal property.

With more than 100 visits in 2005 the Business & Expansion Program (BREP) has assisted local companies with hiring, training, marketing, financing and other business related needs. This public/private interaction continues to build relationships that help companies achieve lasting economic stability.

The EGC created the Defense Procurement Assistance Center (DPAC) in order to assist companies obtain federal government contracts.

The EGC provided assistance, both financial and technical, that resulted in the creation of more than 700 employment opportunities in 2005.

The utilization of a hands-on, proactive approach by the economic development practitioners has assisted in the growth and maintenance of the economic base of local communities. This is the result of a collaborative effort on the part of the local, regional and state agencies dedicated to the continued prosperity enjoyed throughout Westmoreland County. During the last two (2) years the newly created Economic Development Council has prepared an annual marketing strategy that reflects the above mentioned philosophy.

Without a trained and competent labor force no region can be competitive in the global economy. In Westmoreland County there are organizations whose mission is to provide training at the high school and beyond high school levels in addition to continuing education and training programs. Retraining of workforces is a fact of life in today’s economy. Those persons and firms that do not recognize this fact are destined to be left behind.



**Housing**

The County of Westmoreland and its various partners have moved forward with several activities and programs that have assisted in the development and retention of housing in the county. These include Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation; Rental Housing Assistance; Homeownership Assistance; and Other Housing Related Achievements that impact market rate housing, affordable housing and renter/owner-occupied housing.

**Housing Rehabilitation**

The county assisted a total of 102 households at a cost of over \$1,000,000. The Redevelopment Authority of New Kensington (RANK) assisted 18 households at a cost of over \$360,000 for a total of 120 units assisted.

**Rental Housing**

The following are the rental housing projects undertaken through public/non-profit and private enterprise collaboration:

**Lloyd Avenue Revitalization – City of Latrobe**



Homes Build Hope (HBH), a non-profit provider of affordable housing, completed 18 rental units utilizing approximately \$1,470,000 of public financing, \$1,750,000 of private equity financing and \$67,000 in donations. The effort was an integral part of the overall Lloyd Avenue revitalization project.



**Windsor Heights – Mt. Pleasant Township**

HBH, in cooperation with S&A Homes, Inc. developed 24 new town homes in Mt. Pleasant Township. Approximately \$900,000 of public funding and \$2,640,000 of private equity funding were required to bring the project to a successful conclusion.



Windsor Heights—Mt. Pleasant Township

**Markhaven Apartments – North Huntingdon Township**

ACTION Housing, a non-profit provider of affordable housing, is still in the process of renovating 80 units of affordable rental housing in North Huntingdon Township. Project costs include about \$1,920,000 of public financing and \$1,100,000 of private assistance.



Markhaven Apartments—North Huntingdon

**Weldon Street Senior Housing – City of Latrobe**

National Church Residences, Inc., a non-profit provider of affordable housing, is developing 45 units of senior rental housing in the City of Latrobe. The

Westmoreland County is supported by a strong network of agencies known as the Westmoreland Affiliates. The coordinated efforts with these agencies provide a streamlined approach to economic development, namely the Business Retention & Expansion Program.

**WESTMORELAND AFFILIATES**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Area Career and Technology Schools                        | Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette                      |
| Area Chambers of Commerce                                 | Saint Vincent College—SBDC & Center for Operational Excellence (COE)  |
| Area Lending Institutions                                 | Seton Hill University—National Education Center for Women in Business |
| California University of Pennsylvania                     | Small Business Administration   |
| Careerlink—Westmoreland; Alle-Kiski; Donora               | Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County                       |
| Catalyst Connection                                       | Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission                                  |
| Governor’s Action Team—Pittsburgh Region                  | University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg                                |
| Innovation Works  | University of Pittsburgh Manufacturing Assistance Center              |
| Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau                          | Westmoreland—Fayette Workforce Investment Board (WIB)                 |
| Local Redevelopment and City Community Development Groups | Westmoreland County Community College                                 |
| Penn State—New Kensington                                 | Westmoreland Conservation District                                    |
| PennTAP   | Westmoreland County Area Labor Management Committee                   |
| Pittsburgh Regional Alliance                              | Westmoreland County Industrial Development Authority                  |

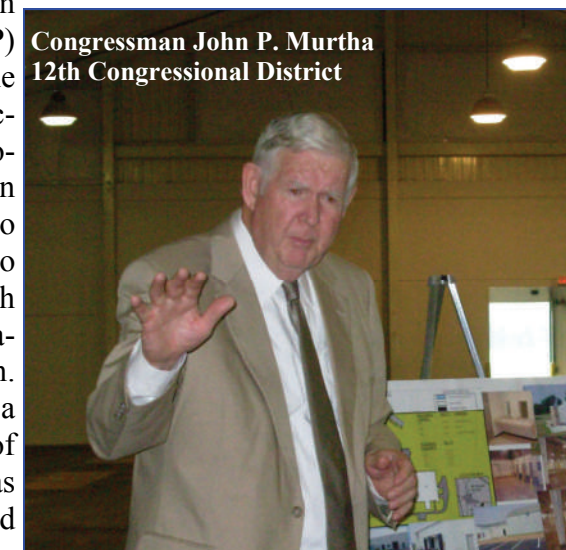
**Continuation of Westmoreland County’s Business Retention & Expansion Program**

Sometimes the biggest challenge for small business is not finding a program that provides financial or technical assistance, but rather knowing where to locate that assistance. Working through the system to get the support without interrupting business operations can be just as difficult. Through the Business & Expansion Program (BREP) operated by the WCIDC, manufacturers have an advocate whose mission is to know how to leverage resources to encourage growth and provide workable information. Partnering with a strong network of agencies known as the Westmoreland Affiliates, this free business assistance program can address hiring, training, marketing, financing and other business needs. Westmoreland County’s program has pro-

vided assistance to over 750 firms since its inception in 1998 with more than 100 contacts made during 2005.

**Provide Technical and Financial Assistance to Expanding Companies**

With funding support provided in 2005 by Congressman John Murtha, the EGC created the Defense Procurement Assistance Center (DPAC). The DPAC assists companies in Westmoreland and Fayette counties seeking access to or increasing opportunities for obtaining federal government contracts. Through a user friendly, web-based collection of business information, companies are able to search targeted opportunities unique to the region. The information highlights a company’s specific qualifications, business profile and related certifications, and provides a link to a company’s website and contact information.



Congressman John P. Murtha  
12th Congressional District

Utilizing a combination of state, federal and private funding programs, EGC has assisted companies throughout Westmoreland County with business expansion or relocation financing. EGC assesses each project individually to insure that all



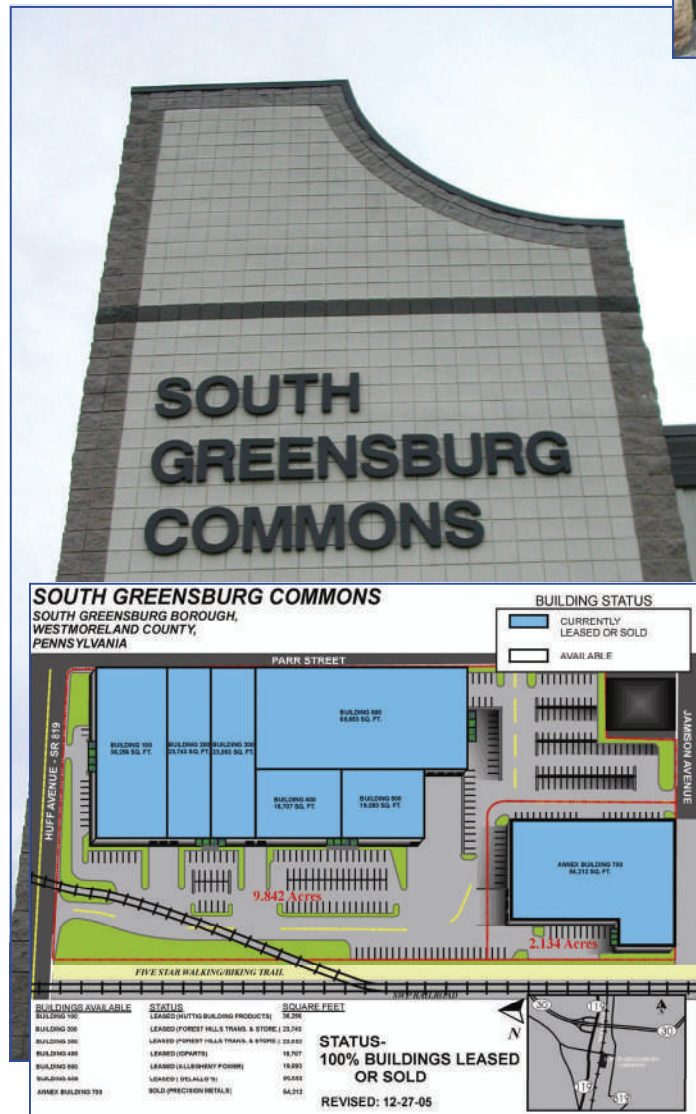
full operations commence. At the entrance to Phase II is a 7,800-square foot multi-purpose building housing the Monessen area food distribution program, servicing over 600 families. That building also serves as a community center.

Also located on the site is the Herman Mihalich Memorial River Launch that was developed in cooperation with the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Westmoreland and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission for the purpose of providing recreational access to the Monongahela River.



but steady. A local company bought the 54,000-square foot building in order to expand their business and the main building has been marketed as a multi-tenant facility. As of the end of 2005 six (6) companies employing 85 workers occupy both of the above mentioned structures.

The public/private partnership of the Economic Growth Connection (EGC) and the WCIDC purchased the former Lenox facility in Mt. Pleasant Township in 2002. Since that time the 153,000-square foot building has been renovated in phases with the latest renovation of 53,000-square feet available for occupancy since the end of 2005. Four companies occupy the previously renovated space. Forty employees work on the premises with the expectation that additional jobs will be forthcoming in the near future.



Another of the WCIDC's brownfield sites is the former Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) facility in the Borough of South Greensburg. Progress at that site has been slow,



project will utilize approximately \$4,850,000 of various forms of public financing.

**Homeownership Activities**

Westmoreland County has continued providing funds for homeownership assistance programs. These activities include the acquisition, rehabilitation/new construction and resale of properties to income eligible homebuyers, as well as various counseling and financing assistance. Two(2) non-profits have participated in the program as developers and/or providers of homebuyer services.

The following activities were undertaken to further opportunities for the extension of homeownership of residential housing in the county (it should be noted that these activities continue to be provided):

A down payment and closing cost program funded under HUD's American Dream Downpayment Initiative and administered by WHO assisted eight(8) families at a cost of approximately \$61,000. WHO also operated a homeownership program that renovated or reconstructed homes in the cities of Greensburg and Jeannette, the boroughs of Mt. Pleasant and Export and the village of Claridge. Four(4) homes currently are for sale and the cost of these projects was approximately \$580,000. WHO also operates a Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) Comprehensive Homeownership Counseling Initiative. During the report period WHO provided 110 individuals (81 families) pre-purchase counseling, 13 participants purchased houses, 13 homebuyers were provided homebuyer education classes and 12 participants completed credit enhancement workshops.

RANK and WHO collaborated on the renovation of two(2) homes at a cost of approximately \$161,000 that are currently for sale.

The Westmoreland County Housing Authority (WCHA) has pursued and developed programs that assist individuals and families reach a goal of home-

ownership. Families have been assisted in the cities of New Kensington, Monessen, Greensburg and Latrobe. WCHA offers assistance with mortgage payments through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. WCHA works in collaboration with Westmoreland County and WHO, Inc.

WHO also provided transitional housing for the homeless and also operated a mortgage assistance program with the goal of preventing homelessness.

**Other Achievements**

At the time of this writing 42 municipalities have responded to a comprehensive plan achievement survey with 11 municipalities listing progress on various action steps. Three(3) municipalities are taking measures to improve their land use plans or regulations. Four(4) municipalities are involved in downtown revitalization efforts that include housing components. Two(2) municipalities have worked on new land subdivisions that will positively impact housing development. Two(2) municipalities have undertaken programs that involve the reuse and/or removal of older less desirable buildings so that housing development can occur. One(1) municipality has worked to develop the necessary infrastructure to enhance the creation of housing opportunities.

The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County (SGPWC) has assisted residential development in the county's more urban areas by providing municipalities with urban design products that help eliminate blight and improve vital infrastructure. The Boroughs of Irwin, Scottdale and Vandergrift have received technical assistance along with the cities of Greensburg and Latrobe.

SGPWC has promoted better developer/municipality communication and has assisted in the simplification of permitting and inspection activities. The partnership has sponsored two(2) Uniform Construction Code (UCC), Act 43, workshops. One workshop





focused on attorneys and municipal officials and the other on code enforcement staff and builders.

**General Information**

Residential Costs

According to the National Association of Realtors the average sale price of a single family detached unit in western Pennsylvania in 2004 was \$143,930 and in 2005 the average sale price was \$147,064. This compares to the national average sale price in 2004 of \$219,700 and \$245,000 in 2005.

Construction Information

An estimated 900 single family units were constructed in Westmoreland County in 2005 with a total estimated construction cost of \$164,550,906. Duplexes totaled 26 units with an approximate cost of \$2,250,881. There were no three and four family units constructed and there were 11 buildings constructed that contained 66 units. This information was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

**A Glimpse Ahead**

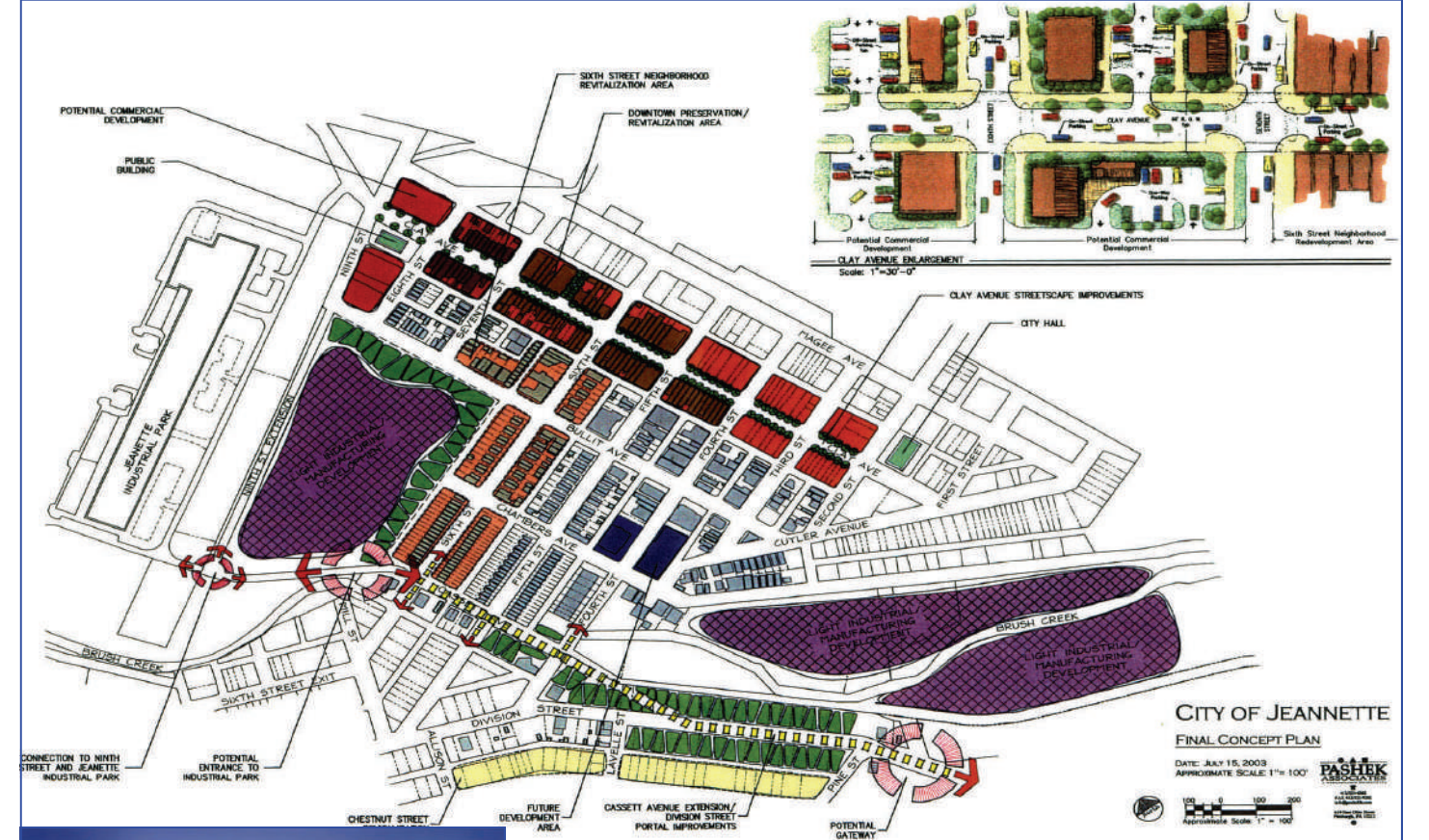
Westmoreland County intends to move forward with its non-profit partners and other public agencies with additional housing programs and projects that will add to the availability of affordable housing choices. Some of the future programs and projects include:

WHO is partnering with the City of Jeannette to package a large scale, major impact project in the center area of the community. Up to 25 homes will be completed that will be for sale to qualified families.

RANK has partnered with a private for-profit in a new development that will construct 40 senior citizen apartments that will be located on the site of the former Ridge Avenue School. Already 23 persons have made inquiries about being placed on the list for consideration to rent these, as yet to be built, units.

The City of Monessen, in conjunction with a non-profit, is in the process of developing a homeownership project within the city that could provide a mixed-income approach to housing. It is hoped that the project will move forward in the near future.

The WCHA is working on a project in the north central portion of the county that will consist of 35 to 40 units of senior housing.



of a new highway access connecting Route 30 and downtown Jeannette. This ambitious revitalization effort is expected to be completed in approximately seven (7) years.

housing the bar mill, blooming mill and blast furnaces. Internal roads and utilities were installed to complete the development of the site.

A private developer, Farnham & Pfile, invested over \$5 million during the last year for the construction of a 240,000-square foot manufacturing facility. This investment by the private sector attracted Maronda Homes. Maronda Homes is one of the largest privately owned home developers in the United States and expects to employ several hundred people when

The City of Monessen has been developing the former Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel plant in partnership with the WCIDC. The WCIDC acquired the site in 1994 with the intent of preserving buildings that could be renovated. In order to proceed with the revitalization plan an extensive program of demolition and environmental remediation was undertaken.

Phase I involved the complete renovation of 250,000-square feet of building space. This is marketed as a multi-tenant facility. Phase II involved a massive demolition project and environmental site remediation on property formerly







Westmoreland Technology Park  
—Phase II 20 Acre Pad Site

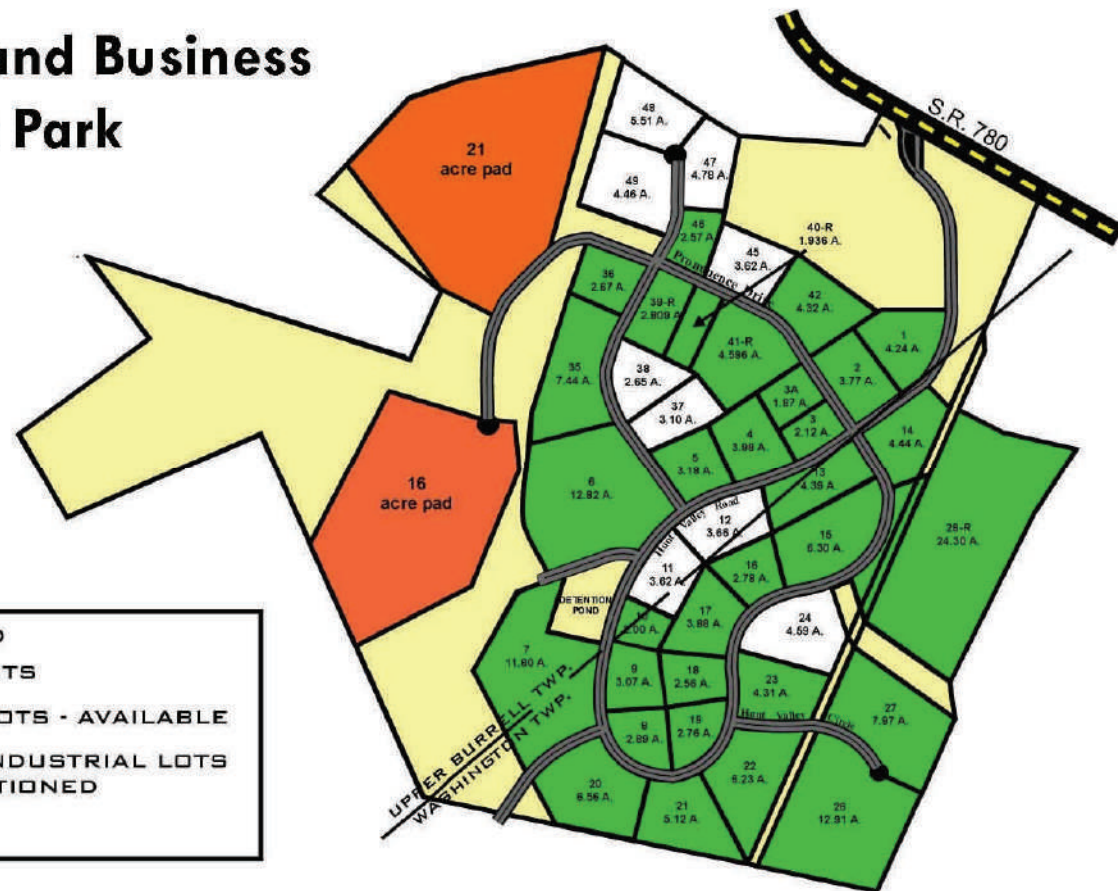
ing two (2) sites are part of the fourth phase of development in the Westmoreland Business & Research Park in New Kensington. With a finished grade of 3% or less these pads will range from 5—31 acres and will be marketed at a price range of \$50,000—\$60,000 per acre. These sites will be available in the spring/summer of 2007.

**Promoting and Developing Brownfield Sites for Reuse**

The City of Jeannette, in conjunction with other partners, has developed a comprehensive revitalization plan. The components of the plan include brown-field redevelopment, commercial redevelopment, housing rehabilitation and new construction adjacent to the business district. The redevelopment of the former General Glass facility into the Jeannette Industrial Park by the WCIDC was the first major investment in this process. Additional funding has been secured for both the commercial redevelopment and a portion of the housing component. \$500,000 has been earmarked for engineering

plans for development of eight (8) additional pads. Six (6) of these sites will be located near the county's major transportation hub in New Stanton in the Westmoreland Distribution Park II. The remain-

**Westmoreland Business & Research Park**



Progress in housing has been made and it appears that that spirit of achievement will be continuing. The future looks bright for the residents of the county.

**Community Facilities/Services**

**Police / Fire Protection**

As mentioned in the comprehensive plan, Westmoreland County is comprised of 65 municipalities that provide varying levels of police and fire protection. Fire protection is provided by each municipality through resources generated by the individual fire companies and the municipalities. In those municipalities that do not provide municipal police services the Pennsylvania State Police is responsible for police protection.

lice for this service to continue. Again, this is only a proposal and no legislative action has occurred.

The county has 140 operational fire companies. A vast majority of these are volunteer organizations and rely on local funding and contributions. The larger municipalities have more than one company to provide service, the smaller municipalities only one.



Modernization of communication systems and shared communication doubles the coverage, increases reliability, and decreases response time. Currently, there are 30 emergency medical service providers in the county. In

terms of public safety, each municipality appears to be well served by police, fire and other emergency services. Perhaps some county municipalities would benefit by investigating the feasibility of sharing, consolidating, or merging municipal services.

Community facilities can include public buildings, community centers, public and private clubs, schools, health facilities, libraries, profit and non-profit institutions and organizations used for social, educational, and recreational purposes. The recent survey has indicated that there is a considerable amount of sharing of facilities that is occurring in the county. School districts are sharing their facilities with municipalities. Colleges/universities are sharing library and

other facilities with the community at large and providing educational services through adult education and early learning experiences for the young.

**Other activities**

Some evidence of downtown revitalization and reinvestment is occurring. Greensburg along with the



Although there have been discussions between municipalities to consolidate their police and fire services to perhaps make it more affordable, no consolidations have occurred in the last two years. There has also been proposed state legislation to require those municipalities that do not have a police force to be assessed a fee to be paid to the state po-





county and Seton Hill University has embarked on an aggressive plan to extend the campus in the cultural district of the city. A new office building housing economic development and county planning and

community development professionals will be constructed and is scheduled for opening in early 2007.



**Airports**

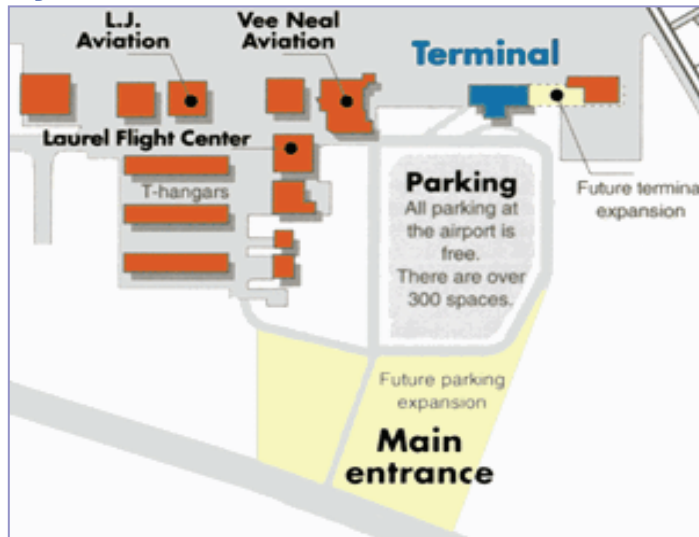
There are four (4) airports in the county. Arnold Palmer Regional Airport located in Unity Township near the City of Latrobe and Rostraver Airport located in Rostraver Township are the largest airports



serving the county. At the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport, Northwest Airlines currently provides daily flights to Detroit Metropolitan Airport through its airlink partner, Mesaba Airlines. Two fixed base operators – L. J. Aviation and Vee Neal Aviation offer fueling, training, charter and aircraft management services at the airport.



The authority completed a 1,224 ft. extension on Runway 5/23 at the Arnold Palmer Re-



gional Airport, providing a runway length of 8,224 feet. Also, completed were navigational aids and the installation of 16 new T-hangers. Presently, there are 138 based aircraft: 59 single engine, 55 multi-engine, 18 jet, and 6 helicopters. Aircraft operations totaled 45,550 in 2005.

At the Rostraver Airport no commercial service is offered. The authority currently leases 46 T-hangers, with more being built. 127 aircraft are based here.

**State, County and Municipal**



**Economic Development**

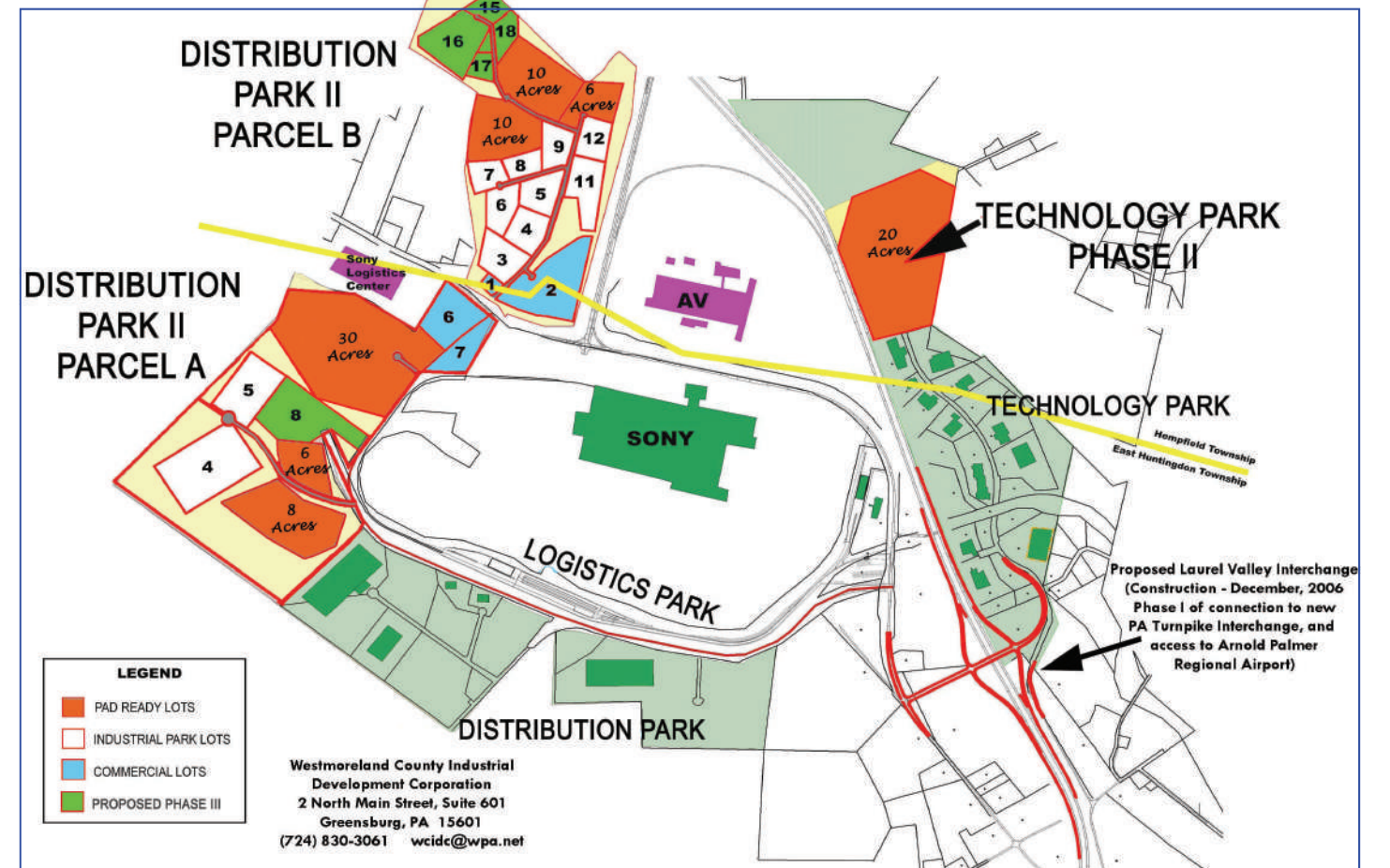
The business of attracting high wage employers and nurturing the growth of existing high wage employers is extremely competitive. This attraction and nurturing technique is an industry unto itself. Over the last decade, Westmoreland County has worked diligently to utilize its assets and attributes in order to remain competitive in the global economy. The county's existing industrial park system offers a wide selection of resources for business development. In order to maintain its competitiveness the county will need to expand its inventory of planned business sites and real estate resources. Based on build out projections of existing development sites and the lag time required to bring additional sites on line, there is an immediate need to expand the county's inventory. As a result of this immediate need, coupled with an effort to fill a regional gap for larger sites, the county offers viable products to manufacturing and distribution companies seeking pad-ready industrial sites. In order to meet the present demands and be prepared for the forecastable future Westmoreland County has been working to maintain a balance of economic development activities on not only green-field, but brown-field sites as well. Activity has been concentrated in areas already served by existing infrastructure. All of the economic development agencies operating in the county strive to be providers of competitive financial and technical assistance resources and not just be pass-through shells that do not reflect the commitment to progress that is indicative of the residents of the county.

**Expansion of Industrial Park System and Preparing Ready to Go Sites**

The first 20 acre pad was completed in June 2006 at Westmoreland Technology Park in New Stanton.

This site is located adjacent to the Sony Technology Center and has access to US Route 119, I-70, PA Turnpike (I-76) and Toll Road 66.

In addition to this site, the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation (WCIDC) has





palities have a desire to preserve key land parcels of open space through a county land trust. The assistance of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA) has been requested and various local stakeholders have been encouraged to attend PALTA courses and seminars. The utilization of the talents of several additional volunteers has been undertaken in order to assist in the formation of the county land trust. Use of county allocated Growing Greener funds for the initial land acquisitions is also a possibility.



Westmoreland Conservation District's Loyalhanna Gorge



Surveys of farmers and "Farmer Let's Talk" listening sessions gathered useful information relative to needs that confront farmers in general and it also acted as a forum for the discussion of different opportunities that farmers could pursue. Based on the listening sessions and the responses to the surveys the Future of Westmoreland Agriculture plans to implement projects that will support local agricultural interests. Some of these projects include: farmer education, public/consumer education and the marketing and promotion of Westmoreland County farms and agricultural products.

**A Look Ahead**

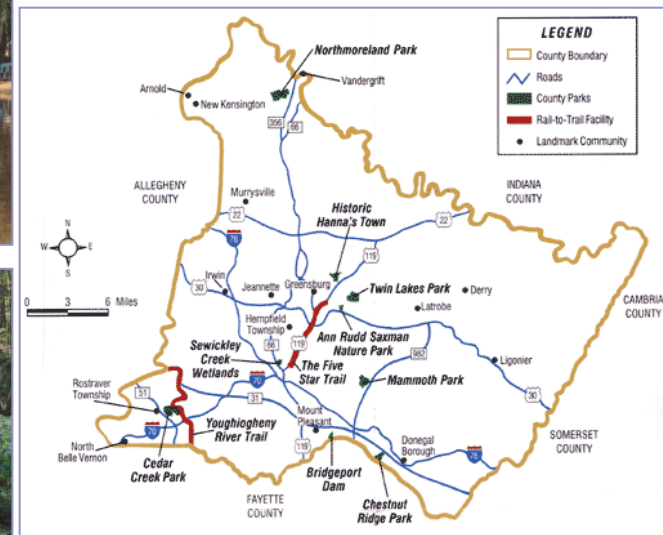
Based on the activity of the last couple of years the positive future of open space and natural resources in the county appears to be a subject that the residents of the county intend to support and pursue. With the assistance of the WCD, the WCDPD, the SGPWC and the Future of Westmoreland Agriculture new and innovative ideas, programs and projects will, undoubtedly, continue to be developed. The county residents will, in the future, have a plethora of quality choices when it comes to the resources available.

Hempfield Township, with the assistance of the WCD, has developed a timber harvesting ordinance. This ordinance regulates timber harvesting and provides conservation control requirements. At the end of the day there will be less resource loss and a more acceptable end land result for the residents of the township.

Since January 2004 the Future of Westmoreland Agriculture has been assisting agricultural enterprises in a number of different ways. The Future of Westmoreland Agriculture is a task force of community volunteers that represent both farm and non-farm interests. The group is led by a community development educator whose position is funded jointly by the Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County.

**Parks**

These community facilities are constantly undergoing some phase of improvement. Some involve expansion, infrastructure improvement, renovations, or other capital or program modifications. There continues to be an abundance of community parks in the county. These facilities are seeing more use and sharing of facilities and programs between the communities and school districts.



**Transportation**

As mentioned in the comprehensive plan, an efficient transportation network moves people, goods and services safely and expeditiously through a variety of modes. Most of the transportation issues the county reviews and can influence involves roadways. The transportation system is a vital element in the comprehensive plan since it determines economic development and land use.

The roadway system in the county is a critical element in the overall transportation network. Vehicular traffic is the main existing mode of transportation in this region and the road system will continually be scrutinized in order to improve its efficiency.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) is the 10 county region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and as such guides the region's transportation planning process. The result of that process is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Here, projects can be identified and prioritized. Westmoreland County has input into this process by submitting funding requests to SPC's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC). This committee is charged with developing, along with PennDOT, the TIP. The TIP is then reviewed and formally adopted by the commission, which is made up of county commissioners from the 10 county region.

Without going into detail concerning the entire process, it can be said that the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development (WCDPD)

monitors, advises, seeks input, supports and lobby's for projects on the TIP.



Last summer Westmoreland County and SPC hosted a public participation panel, where citizens, business leaders, municipal officials, and other community leaders provided testimony to the panel on their concerns. These comments were further refined and presented to the State Transportation Commission hearings in Pittsburgh along with the WCDPD's testimony. Appeals to the State Transportation Commission were made by both entities on transportation issues facing the county.

## 2005 TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR COMPLETED

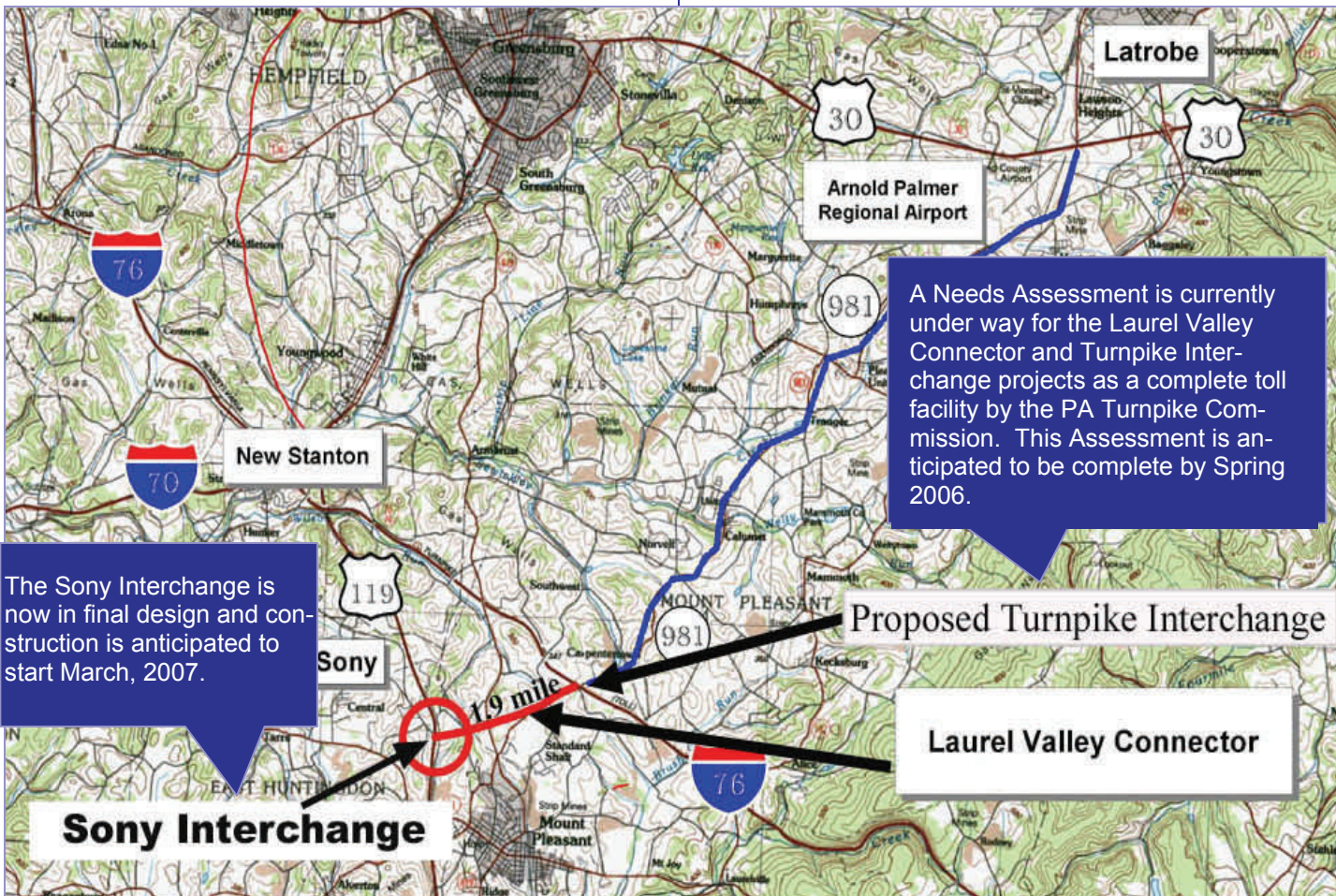
- SR 22 Section BO2, Export to Delmont
- SR 366 Parnassus Triangle, Phase I
- SR 3093 Completion of Sony Loop Road
- SR 366 Tarentum Bridge Road

The transportation element in the comprehensive plan has 79 policies, goals and action steps. A cursory review reveals success in several areas. One of the goals was to complete the remaining sections of the Rt. 22 corridor. The last (2) portions of the corridor are nearly complete.

The Export to Delmont section was contracted at a cost of \$84 million and the New Alexandria to Rt.

982 section was contracted for \$35 million. Both sections are currently under construction and scheduled for completion in 2007.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) Needs Assessment Study for the Sony Connector is progressing with a report due in 2006. The study will determine the feasibility of an interchange that will connect Rt. 119 to the proposed connector and



tion to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PADCNR) in order to procure funding for an Open Space and Greenways Plan. This application was successful and the county hired a consulting firm, Environmental Planning and Design (EPD), to undertake the development of the plan. Once this plan is completed it will become an integral part of the Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan. It will provide guidance as well provide vital information concerning open space and greenways areas within the county. It is anticipated that the plan will be completed by the end of 2006.

During the last year efforts have been underway that will lead to the creation of a county land trust. The Westmoreland Conservation District (WCD) as the lead agency with the assistance of the WCDPD has received confirmation that the Schwarz Family Trust, a local foundation dedicated to the conservation of land and open space, desires to donate a \$1,000,000 endowment and 100 acres of farmland north of the City of



Five Star Trail Extension

Greensburg in an effort to begin the local land trust. A memorandum of understanding is being created that would provide the funding for conservation projects on the land to be donated. This would be the beginning of the land trust. The project

### Projects

In 2004 the Westmoreland County Department of Planning and Development (WCDPD), acting in concert with the Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County (SGPWC), submitted an applica-

would be the model for other properties that could be obtained by the as yet to be created local land trust. The municipalities of Unity Township, North Huntingdon Township and Hempfield Township have indicated that they would be interested in the development of the county land trust. Those municipi-



municipal land use planning undertakings, but that does not really matter because the fact is there are 13 municipalities or combination of municipalities that have undertaken or completed various land use plans. These are→

**Individual Undertakings**

Penn Township

Penn Township recently completed a comprehensive plan and that plan includes models that are intended to create a sense of place when implemented. These models include such designations as village, hamlet, large lot rural, etc. Providing such designations will enhance the municipality's ability to provide land use options that the residents of the township desire.

Hempfield Township

The township planning commission has been evaluating the use of a business overlay zoning district along a portion of Route 136. This area currently supports mixed uses. The potential result of the implementation of such an overlay could allow future business development while at the same time controlling access to the highway and creating landscaped buffer areas.

Unity Township

The Smart Growth Partnership of Westmoreland County (SGPWC) along with Unity Township undertook a visioning project. That project developed build-out scenarios utilizing the current land use

regulations and build-outs utilizing land use regulations that followed various smart growth principles. The area under study was the Route 30 corridor from the township boundary to Ligonier with particular emphasis on the Beatty Crossroads area. The results of this study are available through the SGPWC.

Westmoreland Conservation District

The Westmoreland Conservation District (WCD) staff has assisted North Huntingdon Township, East Huntingdon Township, Hempfield Township, Mt. Pleasant Township and Penn Township in the development of ordinances that meet the requirements of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System(MS4) regulations.

**A Look Ahead**

There are a few more municipalities that are contemplating undertaking land use plans in the future and some of these include municipalities that believe multi-jurisdictional plans are the answer to some of their mutual problems.

The SGPWC, along with numerous municipalities, has obtained funding from a variety of sources in order to study the Route 30 corridor in order to alleviate the results of negative impacts that have occurred on that much traveled transportation artery. The study will include transportation based points of interest and land use alternatives that could be implemented by the municipalities that are directly served by Route 30.

**Open Space/Natural Resources**

As stated in the Land Use portion of this report, Westmoreland County possess' an abundance of open space areas along with numerous natural resource assets that contribute to the overall livability and quality of life that the residents of the county enjoy. According to the Comprehensive Plan these factors drive market prices in real estate and make a community more attractive to both developers and potential homebuyers or renters.

Some of the recent projects and programs enhance this livability factor in the county. These include an Open Space and Greenways Plan that the county is undertaking; the Five Star Trail Spur that will provide further trail connections; preservation of open space activities led by the Westmoreland Conservation District; creation of timber harvesting regulations; and, assistance to agricultural undertakings. All these projects and programs are contributing to the positive quality of life factors that make Westmoreland County the place to live, work and play in the region.

**2006  
TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS  
LET OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

- SR 22 Section BO8, New Alexandria to SR 982 – Let 12/05
- Depot Street Bridge – Let 12/05
- SR 119/Westmoreland Manor – Let 12/05
- SR 56 at SR 4048 Hyde Park, Allegheny Township – Let 1/06
- SR 31 Three Mile Hill at Laurelville – Let 01/06
- SR 3111 Center Avenue in New Stanton – Let 01/06
- SR 30/981 Intersection near Latrobe – Let 03/06
- SR 30 Barnes Lake Road Improvements, Irwin – Let 05/06
- SR 119 Youngwood – Let 05/06
- Finley Road in Rostraver Township – Let 12/06
- SR 22 Section BO9, SR 982 to Westinghouse – Let 12/06
- SR 119 Sony Interchange – Let 12/06
- St. Vincent Relocation and Connector – Let 12/06



eventually to the PA Turnpike in the vicinity of Carpentertown. An interchange on Rt 119 is in final design and bidding is scheduled for December 2006.

Dot, will begin in 2006 with a tentative completion in 2008.

Enhancements, Hometown Streets/Safe Routes to School Program

2005

|                                    |                |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Greensburg Hometown Streets        | \$ 529,000     |
| Crest Avenue Sidewalks (Rostraver) | 161,000        |
| West Newton Hometown Streets       | <u>200,100</u> |
| TOTAL                              | \$ 890,100     |

APPROVED FOR 2006

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Westmoreland Heritage Trail (Slickville)    | \$ 552,000       |
| Five Star Trail (Youngwood-Scottdale)       | 776,250          |
| Train Station Visitors Center (West Newton) | 138,000          |
| Latrobe Safe Routes to School               | 390,540          |
| Lincoln Highway Welcome Center (Ligonier)   | 272,500          |
| Murrysville Streetscape Project             | 618,667          |
| Greensburg Hometown Streets                 | 1,207,000        |
| Irwin Borough Streetscape                   | <u>1,963,750</u> |
| TOTAL                                       | \$5,918,707      |

A Rt. 51 Land Use Initiative study in Rostraver Township has been completed and will be reviewed for implementation. A study committee will be formed that will recommend improvements to the highway infrastructure and land use regulatory upgrades.

The reconfiguration and upgrades at the Parnassus Triangle in Lower Burrell are continuing with the phase II section being scheduled for construction in 2007. The Tarentum Bridge Road construction project is underway with completion anticipated in summer 2006.

The reconstruction of the Rt.30/981 intersection near Latrobe, according to Penn-

**Enhancements, Hometown Streets/Safe Routes to School Program**

This program was open to any federal, state, county or municipal government, school district or non-profit organization. Projects fell within any one of 12 different categories. Information defining these categories can be obtained by contacting the WCDPD. Some examples might involve bicycle/pedestrian facilities, safety features, scenic easements, historic and/or beautification proposals, rehabilitation/preservation activities, etc. The program was very competitive. In 2005 Westmoreland County communities received \$890,100 and in 2006 projects have been approved for \$5.9 million (see listing).



**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)**

This program provides funding for those projects and programs that will reduce emissions in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas. Eligibility for this category is determined through an assessment that quantifies a project's potential to reduce

emissions. Projects are selected for the 10 county region and recommended to the TTC and forwarded to the full SPC Commission for placement on the TIP. The intersections scheduled for signal improvements in Westmoreland County have been forwarded to the TTC for ratification, this year. Some 20 intersections in the county have been proposed.

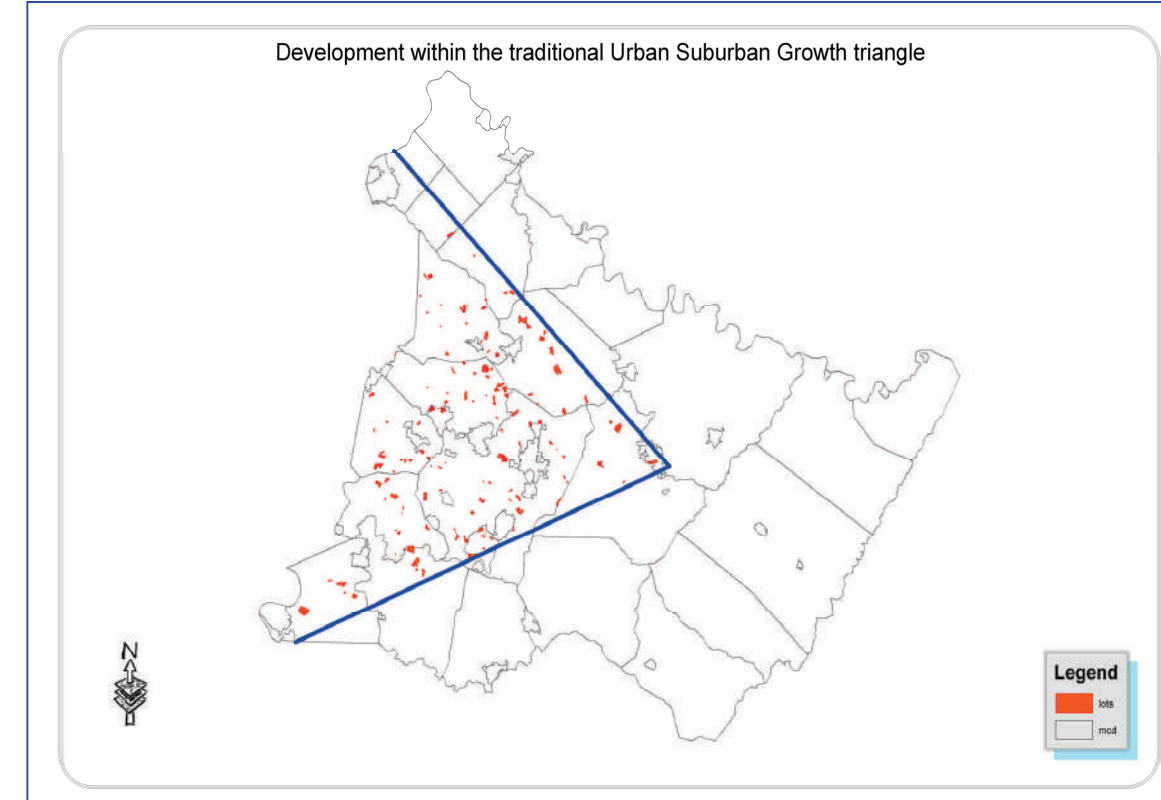
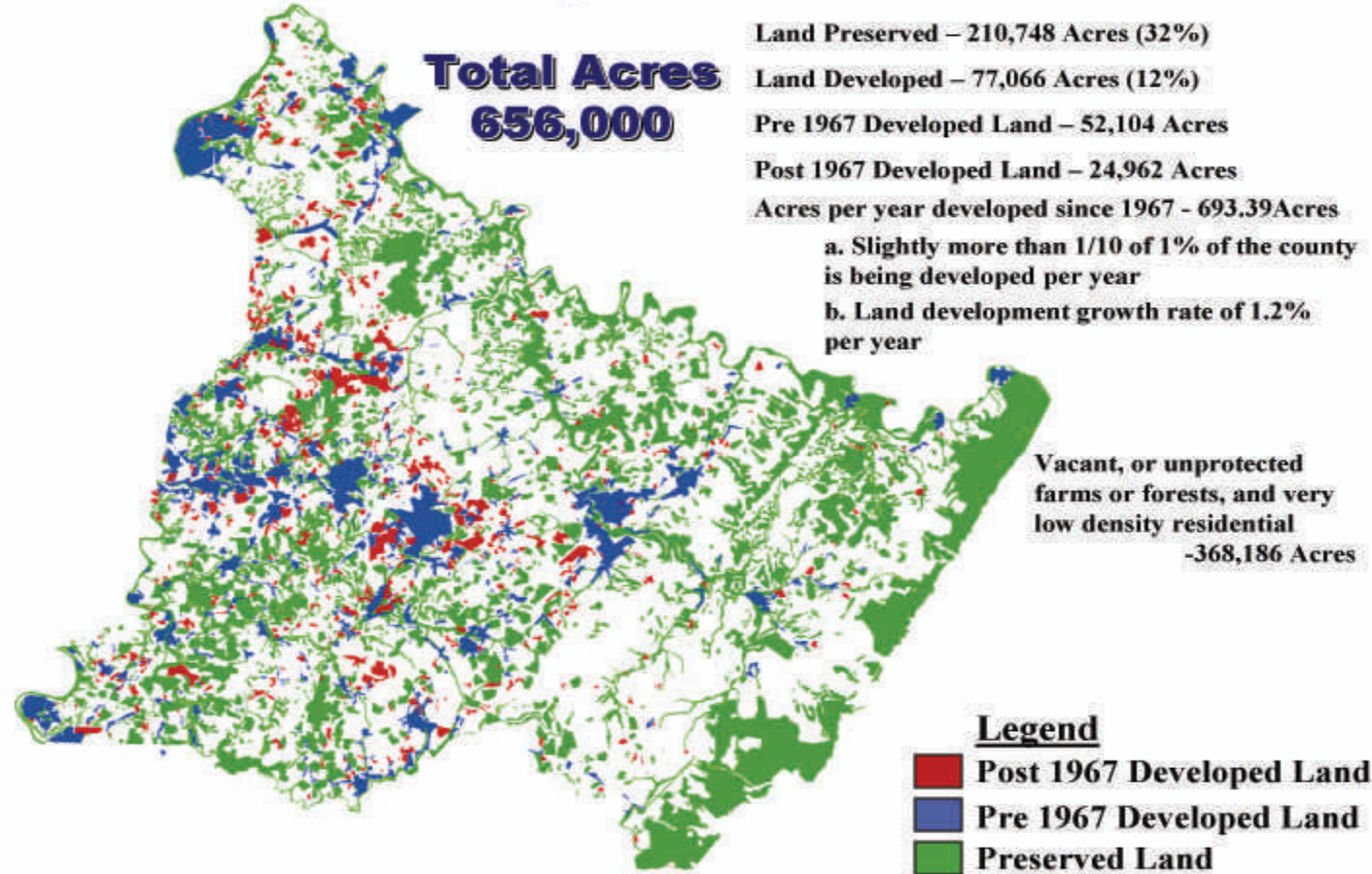
**Land Use**



Westmoreland County is blessed with a diversity of land utilization options. There is a seemingly unique blend between the rural, suburban and urban environments. Naturally, this provides the residents of the county with a wide variety of choices when it comes to where to live, work and recreate. By developing a comprehensive plan the leaders of the county intended to preserve that blended character for the benefit of future generations.

Several studies done in conjunction with the comprehensive plan provided insights into the composition of the land use characteristics of the county and how those characteristics affect most of the decision-making of individuals, groups, companies, governments, etc. Listed below are some the activities that have occurred in the county in the last two(2) years that further that commitment to continued livability.

**Westmoreland County Selected Land Use Statistics**



county is 3.8 acres. The urban/suburban lot size is approximately 1.8 acres while the rural size average is 8.78 acres. This is another indication of the rural character of the county.

The studies conducted also indicated that the county is developing an area known as the "Growth Triangle". This encompasses a triangular area from New Kensington to Monessen to Latrobe. Out of

**County Activities**

Part of the comprehensive plan undertaking involved the use of aerial photography. A comparison was done between the 1967 aerial study and a study completed in 2003. The comparison yielded some interesting information. For example, in 1967 there were 52,104 acres of land considered developed in the county while the amount of developed land in 2003 amounted to 77,066 acres. That is a 3.8% increase in the amount of developed land in the last 36 years. That means that only 693.39 acres are being developed yearly or slightly more than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of the county is being developed yearly. It appears that the generally perceived rural character of the county will remain for the foreseeable future.

2849 new lots formulated from 2003 to 2005 2188 or 77% of the new lots were located in that triangle. New land development followed the path of existing public infrastructure improvements. This reflects one of the primary goals of the comprehensive plan; infill development maximizes public investment in infrastructure and furthers the effort to limit what is known as sprawl.

**Municipal Activities**

The institution of the county comprehensive plan may or may not have been instrumental in many mu-

A Global Information System (GIS) study was conducted that provided more revealing information relating to the character of the county. This study involved land parcel identification in the years 2003 and 2005. The overall lot size in the

| <b>MUNICIPALITIES THAT HAVE UNDERTAKEN A LAND USE PLAN</b> |                                |                   |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Municipality</b>  | <b>Activity</b>                | <b>Status</b>     |
| Allegheny Twp.   | Comprehensive Plan             | Under development |
| Penn Twp.  | Comprehensive Plan             | Adopted           |
| Irwin Borough  | Comprehensive Plan             | Under development |
| Greensburg-Hempfield                                       | Joint Comp. Plan               | Adopted           |
| SW Greensburg-S. Greensburg                                |                                |                   |
| Ligonier Twp.-Ligonier Boro.                               | Joint Sewage Facilities Plan   | Under development |
| Rostraver Twp.   | Sewage Facilities Plan         | Under development |
| Rostraver Twp.   | Route 51 Corridor Study        | Under development |
| Unity-Hempfield  | Joint Sewage Facilities Plan   | Adopted           |
| S. Huntingdon Twp.   | Community Facilities Plan      | Under development |
| N. Huntingdon-Irwin  | Abandoned Mine Discharge Study | Completed         |



# Comprehensive Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decatur, Alabama

FEBRUARY, 2018



*"Thank you ONE Decatur for striving to make our City a great place to live! I am proud of our City."*

— Participant



**For questions regarding this plan, contact:**

Planning Department

(256) 341-4720

Karen Smith, Planner: [kjsmith@decatur-al.gov](mailto:kjsmith@decatur-al.gov)

# A MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

*November 4, 2017*

To the Decatur Community:

Over 15 months ago, a 40-member Steering Committee was empowered by you, fellow community members of Decatur, to chart a course for the future of our City. Through many workshops, focus groups, and online tools, over 800 people provided more than 2,000 data points for One Decatur. Additionally, thousands more people were aware of the effort through community events, social media, newspaper, and other marketing material. Our community was thoughtful, provocative, considerate, passionate and forward-thinking.

The Decatur we know today is a vibrant community spread along the beautiful Tennessee River and one of the only cities in America to be nationally recognized as a top destination for both active adults and STEM graduates. Our City's list of assets is extensive and enviable: the Alabama Center for the Arts, multiple hiking/biking trails, a growing Downtown, burgeoning arts and entertainment scene, \$20 million+ Cook Museum of Natural Science, and much more. Good news abounds as 2017 draws to a close.

However, rather than a celebration of past achievement and current momentum, the One Decatur comprehensive plan is a call to action. In order to build the city that our children and grandchildren desire to call "home" as we do, Decatur must grow its population and average household income. Inability to achieve such growth over the next decade poses a grave threat to the City's current progress as well as its long-term viability. As such, City officials have sought to navigate this crossroads moment in the City's history by seeking the community's insight as expressed in the One Decatur plan and implementing community priorities.

In addition, One Decatur encourages a new era of cooperation and coordination among local governmental and quasi-governmental entities — at both the city and the county level. As demands increase for scarce public funds, these entities must seek new and better ways to deliver essential services as efficiently as possible. Furthermore, our City leaders must ensure that Decatur's interests are represented at a level commensurate with funding provided.

Assembling the One Decatur plan has been exhilaratingly hard and fun work. Now, our community must turn its focus to action — the opportunity to build a city to which future generations can be enthused to move and call "home".

On behalf of the Steering Committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve our community. We could not be more excited to see our City reach its full potential in the days ahead, and we respectfully submit the comprehensive plan detailed in this document as a roadmap for achieving this potential.

Best regards,

Jelisa Thompson  
Co-Chair

Juanita Healy  
Co-Chair

Stratton Orr  
Co-Chair



# WHAT IS ONE DECATUR?

One Decatur is the name of a effort launched in 2016 to create a new comprehensive plan for Decatur that is rooted in community values and aspirations. This planning process identified critical needs, defined a long-term vision and goals, and identified strategies to achieve the vision. The plan serves as a guide for decision makers and the community for future development and many aspects of our City's quality of life. It is both comprehensive—taking a long-term view of a broad range of topics—and strategic—serving as a call-to-action to move the community forward. But beyond the plan itself, One Decatur marked the beginning of a movement to collectively work to address community needs.

## What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is the broadest public policy document for the City and sets forth the long-range vision for physical development, housing, economic development, transportation, community facilities and related topics. This plan is a tool to address community needs, prepare for change and protect what we treasure. It serves as both a business plan and guidebook for decision-makers. The Comprehensive Plan also serves as a marketing tool for the City to clearly convey the community's values and priorities.

To achieve the vision and goals, the plan includes specific actions (policies, projects and programs) and identifies timing and responsibilities for undertaking those actions. It also contains map-based recommendations that indicate the City's intent for where and how it will use land resources and design infrastructure improvements.

The plan serves as the foundation for the City's budgeting process, zoning ordinance, land development regulations, and other ordinances. It is implemented over time through many distinct decisions including annual budgeting, departmental work programs, rezoning, and subdivision of land.

## The need for a new plan.

Everyone wants Decatur to grow and thrive. The City is fortunate that our leaders have embraced proactive planning and have followed through on past plans. This plan is a continuation of that legacy.

To be effective, a comprehensive plan must be periodically updated to account for current conditions, data and new technologies. Decatur's previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1999. Over the last 18 years, many of that plan's recommendations have been completed, while others are no longer supported or relevant. Recent plans have been limited to a geography or topic. This Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to consider the City's policies and priorities in light of current needs, opportunities, and best practices.

The plan process was also an opportunity to engage our community at a new level and develop a strong sense of public ownership of the plan outcomes.



# A CALL TO ACTION

Today is a dynamic time. Rapidly changing technology, national demographic shifts, and changing market preferences are reshaping our cities. Many of the changes Decatur has experienced over the last decade present daunting challenges. But at the same time, the City has had successes addressing needs and cultivating its unique assets. This plan's actions include many small bets and a few larger, more visionary efforts to address our challenges and build upon our assets.

## Challenges to overcome

- > **Stagnant population growth.** The City's population over the past few decades has been mostly stagnant and likely has declined since the last Census. Meanwhile, demographics are changing as are community needs and preferences.
- > **Limited housing choices.** The City has relatively few options in both for-sale or rental housing, which is a major obstacle to economic development. There has been very little new housing constructed in the past 15 years.
- > **Underutilized land and weak aesthetics.** Like many cities, inefficient growth patterns have created long-term challenges to maintenance and provision of services. Further, there is valuable land that is underutilized including on the riverfront and in Limestone County. There are also several declining or vacant commercial centers located at community gateways do not convey a positive first impression of the City.
- > **Physical divisions, limited connectivity.** Physical divisions created by railways, highways and natural features makes it difficult for residents in some areas of the City to access community resources and contributes to perceptions of inequality. An incomplete sidewalk and path network restricts mobility choices and limited regional connectivity creates traffic challenges.
- > **Funding.** Changing State and Federal policies have led to have shifted many costs to cities. In Decatur, slow growth in jobs and population has contributed to funding challenges. Like many cities, Decatur must be creative to continue to provide quality services, maintain and improve infrastructure, and make smart investments.
- > **Weak image (internal and external).** Decatur is not alone in facing many of these and many other challenges, but they have contributed to creating a weak image of the City both within the community and the region.

## Assets to build upon

- > **Strategic riverfront location.** Decatur's location along one of the nation's great rivers is a tremendous asset. A number of cities, such as Chattanooga, TN, and Greenville, SC, and Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, and Florence, AL have benefitted from creating development opportunities on their riverfronts for recreational, civic, and other uses, and particularly improving the connection between their downtowns and waterfront.
- > **Part of a growing region.** Decatur is fortunate to be part of a region that is growing in population and jobs. The city has been successful in attracting a wide range of industrial employers, but there are many opportunities for Decatur to expand the number and types of industries and economic activity in the city. Further, the City can capture a larger amount of residential growth from people working in Decatur or elsewhere in the region.
- > **Revitalizing Downtown.** Downtown Decatur is increasingly attractive and vibrant. As the historic core of the City, the Downtown has received significant attention and revitalization efforts over the past 15 years. Downtown offers a unique setting that other cities in the region cannot reproduce.
- > **Historic neighborhoods.** Like Downtown, the City's historic neighborhoods are unique and attractive. There is growing demand nationally for these types of neighborhoods.
- > **Refuge and outstanding parks system.** The City offers a wide range of parks and recreational assets, ranging from small neighborhood parks to regionally competitive recreational facilities. The Wheeler Wildlife Refuge is a unique natural amenity.
- > **Growing cultural institutions.** Decatur has a wealth of arts and cultural assets for a city of its size, including programs that are entirely unique in the State of Alabama. These assets include the Princess Theatre, Carnegie Visual Arts Center, Alabama Center for the Arts, Calhoun Community College (CCC) and Athens State University (ASU), and Cook Museum.



# PROCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The planning process was both intuitive and informed, shaped by quantitative research and input from the community. To ensure that the process was open, inclusive and transparent, a robust public engagement process was implemented with the help of a 40-member citizen steering committee. There were three rounds of public input opportunities throughout the 17-month planning process.

## Steering Committee

A 40-member citizen steering committee guided the public process and helped to shape the plan's recommendations. The group was formed through a public selection process that received nearly 200 applicants. Members were selected to represent the City's diverse interests. The committee acted as spokespersons for the planning effort, officially represented citizens in the planning process, and provided direction and feedback to the planning team at crucial steps. The committee held 10 official meetings, several small informal meetings and participated in community outreach events during the process.

The name One Decatur arose from the committee's early work to develop an identity and messages for the process that would appeal to the community.

## Listening and Learning Workshops (November 2016)

During the first week of November 2016, four public workshops were held at different locations throughout the City to gather input that will help to inform the direction of the plan. In an hour-and-a-half program, participants worked in small groups on two activities with trained volunteer facilitators. Following these workshops, additional input was collected through the project website. Visitors could submit ideas and identify locations on an interactive map.

Over 375 people attended the three initial workshops and more than 120 additional people contributed by means of the online activity. Based on the demographics of participants, additional small group sessions were conducted in December to obtain input from groups who were underrepresented in the initial sessions.





## Stakeholders

At several stages in the process, the planning team interviewed stakeholders in small group sessions. The stakeholders included the Metropolitan Planning Organization, elected officials, local realtors, Decatur City Schools, neighborhood organizations, economic development entities, businesses, developers, transportation professionals, and various special interests such as advocates for environmental causes, biking, and historic preservation (among others). The interviews were designed to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and gain insight on local knowledge.

## Summit on the Future

On April 4, 2017 over 250 participants attended the Summit on the Future at Ingalls Harbor Pavilion. The event marked roughly the mid-point of the planning process. In a two-hour workshop, participants learned about conditions that are shaping the City and its future, evaluated draft vision and goals that the steering committee developed based on previous community input, provided input on key questions to guide the plan, and worked in groups to review a conceptual map for the City's future development. During the activities, participants used their personal smartphones to engage in real-time polling and saw live results at the workshop.

## Open House

On October 3, 2017 the draft plan was presented to the community for the first time at the Princess Theater. Approximately 250 people attended. After a brief presentation that shared the basic organization of the plan and provided a brief background to the planning process, attendees viewed the display boards containing the specific actions in the plan. Each participant was given a set of sticker dots to vote for their top priority actions.

Participants also used comment cards to share feedback on any of the specific actions and indicated which actions they were interested in helping to implement.

Like the previous two rounds, feedback was collected through the OneDecatur.org website for three weeks following the open house. During that time, the presentation boards appeared in five locations throughout the City.

*"Thank you for conducting these meetings and for carrying out the tasks of developing our City's vision. This process is overdue."*

— participant at Listening and Learning Workshop



# VISION

The vision statement captures the broadest aspirations for Decatur and serves as the overall direction for the plan.

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***Thriving, unique, confident.***

*The vision for Decatur is a thriving community where everyone has opportunities to prosper, where distinct, vibrant places are enjoyed, where investment and visitors are attracted, and where pride and confidence is widespread.*

# PLAN STRUCTURE

The plan is organized into five topic areas, which reflect themes from community input. Each topic area is supported by a goal and several objectives that serve to organize the 140 specific actions detailed in the plan.

## Goals

Intended outcomes expressed in simple terms for the plan's five topic areas.

## Objectives

Subthemes within the goal that serve to organize actions.

## Actions

A project, policy, or program. The plan contains 140 actions.

## **Creating a Quality Place (QP)**

*GOAL: Efficient use of land resources that offers distinctive and desirable places to live, work and play, includes strategic revitalization throughout the community, maintains historic and natural assets, and supports a high level of community pride.*

### Objectives:

1. Promote desirable and financially beneficial development patterns
2. Improve the appearance of public and private property throughout the City (particularly gateways)
3. Encourage redevelopment along the Riverfront (and other areas)
4. Stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods
5. Establish standards to ensure that new residential areas exhibit strong neighborhood qualities including walkable blocks, integrated open space (parks), and a variety of housing options.
6. Continue to support current revitalization efforts downtown
7. Improve code enforcement tools
8. Maintain our historical assets
9. Protect our watersheds and conserve sensitive habitat

## **Improving our Mobility (MO)**

*GOAL: A well-maintained, smart and sustainable transportation system that offers strong regional and internal connectivity, provides attractive and safe options for cycling, walking and public transportation, and supports desirable development.*

### Objectives:

1. Design street improvements to balance mobility, accessibility, land use, and desired development character.
2. Improve the appearance and condition of the City's streets.
3. Increase efforts to make City more walkable and bike friendly.
4. Expand access to shared-ride transit options.
5. Improve Downtown mobility.
6. Support strategic efforts to improve regional connectivity.

## **Advancing our Prosperity (PR)**

*GOAL: A thriving economy that offers a variety of jobs, attracts new businesses and residents, and provides a diversity of retail, entertainment, and housing options.*

### Objectives:

1. Expand the number, diversity, and wage level of employment opportunities.
2. Strengthen the existing labor force.
3. Encourage entrepreneurship and expand support for small businesses.
4. Encourage a variety of housing options that are competitive and serve the needs of a diverse population.
5. Enhance infrastructure to leverage economic growth.
6. Promote a collaborative brand/image.

## Enhancing our Amenities (AM)

**GOAL:** A wide variety of modern city services, outstanding parks and recreational facilities, well-supported cultural institutions, and access to health services that support the needs of our community.

### Objectives:

1. Expand the range of public services.
2. Continue to improve the effectiveness of the City's safety services (police and fire).
3. Provide parks and recreational facilities that meet the needs of residents.
4. Maintain competitive facilities that attract tourism.
5. Improve recreational access to the river and Wildlife Refuge.
6. Strengthen support for community and cultural institutions.
7. Improve access to quality healthcare and social services.

## Strengthening our Community (CO)

**GOAL:** A united, proud, and confident community that embraces everyone, has highly competitive schools that prepare youth for success in life, and where residents and institutions are meaningfully engaged.

### Objectives:

1. Strive to make Decatur City Schools a highly competitive school system that is competitive on a state and national level.
2. Celebrate our community's diversity.
3. Encourage civic participation, mentoring and volunteerism.
4. Improve communication and cooperation between citizens, institutions, and government.
5. Improve inter-governmental coordination and cooperation.

### Achieving our Vision (VI)

The plan's final chapter describes how to use the plan and summarizes all the actions into a concise table that assigns recommended timing and primary responsibility to each.

## Other Strategies

In addition to the actions within each chapter, the comprehensive plan contains a few additional policy components and strategic recommendations:

### > Future Land Use and Character Map.

(within Creating a Quality Place) Expresses the intent for how Decatur should use its land resources in the future. This map identifies character areas which integrate attributes of urban form and function with land uses. Like a traditional future land use map, this map should serve as the basis for zoning changes and land use decisions.

### > Street typology. (within Improving our Mobility)

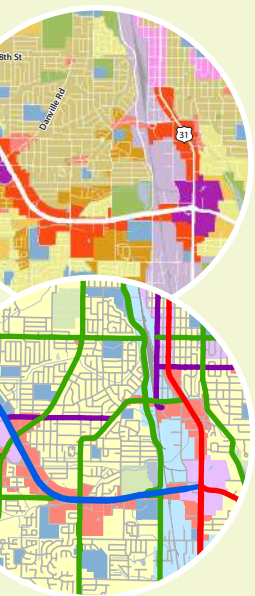
This map integrates transportation and land use by classifying existing and future streets based on context and the needs of various users. This section of the plan should be used to evaluate the design of future street improvements.



> **Demonstration Corridors.** Five corridors representing various conditions throughout the City illustrate how improvements can address broader goals and objectives for transportation. These corridors are: 6th Avenue SE, 8th Street SE, Beltline Road SW, Moulton Street W, and Wilson Street.

> **Target Industries.** (within Advancing our Prosperity) A list of industries for recruitment and/or development in Decatur based on the City's competitive advantages, analysis, community priorities and stakeholder input.

> **Housing Market Opportunities.** (within Advancing our Prosperity) Development and marketing concepts to capture a larger share of the regional housing market based on a market study conducted for the plan.





# PRIORITIES

While all of the actions described in the plan are important, the One Decatur steering committee chose to emphasize several actions as priorities. These priorities were identified based on community input and include a mix of easily achievable steps to move the City forward as well as more ambitious efforts that would have a significant impact. The priorities are grouped into nine themes and are not intended to be in a ranked order. The numbered actions within each theme are described in detail within the plan.

## Aesthetics

Improve the appearance of public and private property throughout the City.

- > QP 1.1 Reform the City's zoning and land development codes. (also QP 2.5)
- > QP 2.1 Redefine the 6th Avenue gateway.
- > MO 2.3 Establish corridor appearance standards or guidelines.

## Downtown

Continue to support current revitalization efforts Downtown.

- > QP 6.1 Facilitate downtown development.

## Economic Diversification and Workforce Development

Strengthen the existing labor force and diversify the local economy.

- > PR 2.1 Target workforce development efforts on "skills for the future"
- > PR 2.2 Collaborate with public schools to expand vocational programming
- > PR 1.2 Diversify Decatur's Industry Recruitment Targets

## Health, Poverty, and Social Services

Improve access to quality healthcare and social services.

- > AM 7.1 Coordinate social services.
- > AM 7.4 Establish a task force on poverty.

## Housing and Neighborhoods

Encourage a variety of new housing options (including quality apartment and single family development) and maintain existing neighborhoods.

- > PR 4.1 Recruit high-value housing/mixed-use development.
- > PR 4.2 Facilitate north-of-the river development.

## Lifestyle and Cultural Amenities

Continue to develop unique community features and events that enhance the City's appeal.

- > CO 2.1 Create new arts and cultural events.
- > AM 6.4 Create a public art initiative.
- > MO 3.2 Update and formalize a plan to connect the urban trail system. (bikeways)
- > MO 6.3 Establish a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over the Tennessee River.
- > AM 5.3 Develop the trail network within the Refuge.

## Marketing and Branding

Promote a positive and coordinated brand/image to internal and external audiences.

- > PR 6.1 Conduct a summit on collaborative branding.

## Riverfront Development

Maximize the riverfront for recreation, living, entertainment, and civic functions. Improve connections between the riverfront and Downtown.

- > QP 3.2 Create a riverfront redevelopment task force.
- > QP 4.3 Create developer packages to market sites. (also PR 4.1)
- > MO 2.1 Undertake strategic improvements in demonstration corridors. (Wilson Street)

## Schools

Strive to make Decatur City Schools a highly competitive school system on a state and national level.

- > CO 1.1 Establish an education advisory group.
- > CO 1.3 Conduct a coordinated and long-term marketing effort to improve Decatur school's image.
- > CO 1.7 Conduct city-schools joint work sessions.

# HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting Decatur. The implementation chapter includes guidance on managing and using the plan and a summary of its actions that assigns anticipated timing and responsibilities to each. While much care has been given to the plan's actions, the City should be opportunistic in pursuing other actions that would support its vision and goals. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the goals and actions of the plan.

## Annual Work Programs and Budgets

Individual departments, administrators, boards and commissions should be cognizant of the recommendations of the plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets.

## Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the plan. Decisions by the Planning Commission and City Council should reference relevant Comprehensive Plan recommendations and policies.

## Regulations

Development regulations including zoning, subdivision regulations, building codes and related ordinances should be updated to reflect the plan's recommendations. At least 14 specific actions in the plan involve regulatory reform.

## Capital Improvement Plan

The City should prepare a formal capital improvement plan (CIP) that is consistent with the plan's recommendations. A CIP is a fundamental management document that outlines projected capital needs, priorities, funding estimates and sources, and time-frames for completion.

## Economic Incentives

Economic incentives should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the plan.

## Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the goals and strategies of the plan in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of and compliment the plan's recommendations.

## Consistent Interpretation

City Council should collaborate with the Planning Commission to ensure clear and consistent interpretation of major items in the plan.





*A large share of implementation of the Comprehensive Plan rightfully falls to the City. However, it is not intended to be solely implemented by government. Many actions will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. An active citizenry will help to ensure those actions are included and pursued as part of the public agenda.*







**For questions regarding this plan, contact:**

Planning Department

(256) 341-4720

Karen Smith, Planner: [kjsmith@decatur-al.gov](mailto:kjsmith@decatur-al.gov)

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## Visioning

## PC Work Session on the Vision Statement

**Step 1:** The year is 2040. You click on South Carolina Living and see an article about Oconee County. What do you want that article to say? What characteristics define Oconee County? What do you want people to think about when they hear “Oconee County?”

**Step 2:** Work individually for 3-5 minutes to jot down the key adjectives or phrases they used to describe the county in 2040.

**Step 3:** Write down one or two statements in response to the question “What is important to Oconee County? What beliefs or tenets describe what we value?”

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

# Natural Resources Element

**From:** [USA Support](#)  
**To:** [Adam Chapman](#)  
**Subject:** Re: usa.com Contact Us (040820191104471289)  
**Date:** Monday, April 08, 2019 3:22:58 PM

---

Greetings,

Thank you for your query to USA.com.

The data for USA.com is sourced from multiple public databases and government agencies.

We have determined in your case that the original data comes from NOAA and we calculated the index from the NOAA data.

If you have any further questions for us regarding our directory service please let me know.

Regards,

USA.com Customer Support

Name: Adam Chapman

Email: [achapman@oconeesc.com](mailto:achapman@oconeesc.com)

Topic: Data Question

Message:

Good morning,

Where does your climate/weather data for South Carolina come from?

Thanks

## Analysis

Oconee County's natural resources have played a major role in shaping the lives of area residents. Too often, however, these assets have been ignored, taken for granted, or carelessly wasted and destroyed. In spite of this, recent social and economic changes have brought about an increased awareness and appreciation of these natural blessings. More and more, attention is being paid to efforts to protect, preserve and enhance these precious resources. To date, most local action has been on behalf of the private sector, for county government has taken little action to sustain the benefits received from the resources. While state and federal regulations do help, without complimentary local controls specifically crafted to fit the needs of Oconee County, the resources that area residents deem to be invaluable will continue to be unnecessarily threatened.

The protection of both the quantity and quality of the area's water is a vital issue for Oconee County's future success. First, as the available water supply is allotted to additional users, particularly the large municipalities surrounding our region, the amount available for use in Oconee County will shrink, limiting not only Oconee's ability to attract and manage new development, but also to maintain the lifestyle that the county is known for. To avoid this, Oconee must work to insure that any future division of the resource allows for our own future needs. Also, even if sufficient supplies are guaranteed, the county must work to protect the quality of its waters, for poor agricultural and forestry practices, residential and commercial runoff, and a number of other sources of pollution continue to threaten the resource. Of course, we cannot do this alone, for much of Oconee County's water is shared with other jurisdictions possessing legitimate claims to an allotment; therefore, future plans will likely require at least some compromise to succeed.

It should not be forgotten that, in spite of the many benefits Oconee County receives from its natural assets, some potential dangers do exist. The most obvious of these include tornados, floods, and earthquakes, all of which have struck Oconee County in the past, and will likely revisit the area in the future. Yet, though these threats may be initially devastating, the physical damage they bring is typically short-lived, for proper planning and training, combined with improvements in technology, have greatly lessened the overall impact of such natural disasters. Other recently recognized threats, however, have not been yet been satisfactorily addressed. Radon, for example, has received little attention on the local level. Although some studies have indicated that Oconee County's geology favors the production of the carcinogen, the exact level of the threat has not been established. As a result, few residents have chosen to install protective measures against the invisible menace. As more information becomes available on the topic, however, Oconee County leaders may have to consider implementing more stringent codes to protect county residents.

Also of recent concern is ground-level ozone, a dangerous pollutant that causes a number of breathing-related ailments. The problem occurs when two types of chemicals, volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, are exposed to warm temperatures. As such, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established standards limiting these emissions under the Clean Air Act. Currently, Oconee County has been declared to be in attainment of this standard, but we need to remember that this may change in the future; for, not only will the level of our own growth potentially raise emission levels, but also the continued development of other regions. The fact is that political borders do not



affect air pollution, so pollutants emitted in one region of the country are often carried long distances in the atmosphere, impacting air quality far from the source. That is generally seen to be the case in our area, for recent computer modeling has shown that much of Oconee County's ozone originates elsewhere. Therefore, only a coordinated, regional approach offers hope for a real solution. To this end, Oconee County has become a partner in the South Carolina Early Action Compact to reduce ozone-causing emissions. As a partner in this effort, Oconee County has been allowed to create its own plan of action in concert with other South Carolina counties. Because this is an ongoing effort with obligations extending at least into the next decade, county leaders need to remain cognizant that, if current efforts fail to achieve the needed reductions, additional actions may be necessary to avoid potentially burdensome federal and state mandates.

Another problematic issue related to Oconee County's natural resources involves development in steep terrain. Given proper engineering and best management practices, most projects in steep areas can be done safely. As these items are often expensive, however, safeguards are sometimes ignored, resulting in the loss of valuable topsoil and vegetation, sedimentation of streams and lakes, and increased downstream flooding. Additionally, the steep areas of Oconee County typically have thinner soils, a condition which makes the installation and proper operation of septic tanks more complicated. Yet, in some areas, public sewer service will likely not be available for decades- if ever- meaning that septic tanks are going to be a fact of life in Oconee County for a long time into the future. Currently, regulation of such problems in Oconee County primarily falls on states authorities. As development increases, however, county leaders will be forced to weigh the Oconee County's options for increasing protections of our natural resources on the local level.

Agriculture has traditionally played a large role in the economy of Oconee County, and continues to be seen as an invaluable part of the area's lifestyle. In recent years, however, rapid development has led to the loss of many acres of the prime farmlands. While some such change is to be expected as the number of agricultural operations shrinks, unmanaged growth will likely result in an ever-increasing conflict between our remaining farmers and new residential development. The fact is, an increase in population density in farming areas increases the opportunity for incompatible land usage, for normal agricultural operations often result in smells, noise and dust that many people find offensive. Although it is not known if the solution will be found in working with individual communities to designate agricultural areas, or some other type of land use regulation, it is likely that unless local leaders take action, Oconee County will likely lose a cherished institution.

Natural resources are valuable to all Oconee citizens. Wise stewardship will be required in not only our generation but also in the generations that follow us. Conservation practices and policies will need to be look at often to ensure the best results. Conservation policies work best when all of the various stakeholders are present in the critiquing and establishing of the policies that protect our resources. Oconee County has a chance to take a leading role in protecting water quantity and quality by developing its own water plan and using this plan as a step toward developing a complete guide to conserving Oconee's natural resources. The goals established by the Comprehensive Plan when acted upon will help preserve what we have been given for years to come.

## Natural Resource Objectives for the Future

- (1) Preserve, protect and enhance the quality and quantity of Oconee County's groundwater and surface water.
- (2) Preserve, protect and enhance Oconee County's environmentally sensitive lands, unique scenic views, agrarian landscapes, and topographic features.
- (3) Manage natural assets in a manner that ensures the resources continue to enhance Oconee County's lifestyle and provide increased economic opportunities.
- (4) Continue to ensure reasonable access to and use of Oconee County's natural amenities for both residents and visitors.
- (5) Work to expand the utilization of accepted best management practices in all agricultural and forestry activity in Oconee County.
- (6) Complete and properly maintain Oconee County's Geographic Information System (GIS).
- (7) Evaluate and address the threat of radon across Oconee County as necessary.
- (8) Evaluate the need for the county to begin a program to control storm water runoff and sediment.
- (9) Explore and evaluate the need for a program of development fees. This would involve the paying of upfront fees by developers to offset the impact of the new development on schools and infrastructure.
- (10) Continue as an active partner in the South Carolina Early Action Ozone Reduction Compact, adopting and maintaining ozone-causing emission reductions strategies as necessary.

Located ~~at~~ between the Blue Ridge Mountains and lakes Jocassee, Keowee, and Hartwell, Oconee County has abundant natural resources. Residents and visitors have access to lakes, parks and trails, rivers, streams, waterfalls, and forests. These natural resources provide land for development with scenic and environmental amenities, while offering an opportunity for sustainable development. Sustainable development “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development). The aesthetic and recreational appeal of natural resources can also increase land development pressures to accommodate both new residents and tourists. The resulting challenge is to achieve a balance in natural resources planning that promotes productive use of land and resources, maintenance of critical ecological functions, and protection of residents and property from natural hazards.

The Natural Resources Element includes information on local geographic and geologic conditions, climate, agricultural and forest lands, plant and animal habitats, unique parks and open space, scenic areas, water resources, wetlands and floodplains, and other factors that significantly impact the natural environment and shape the future development of Oconee County. A thorough assessment of the County natural resources base and incorporation of this information into planning efforts is necessary to avoid depletion or destruction of sensitive, and often irreplaceable, assets. Valuing and investing in efforts to protect and improve the natural resource base supports the quality of life for all County residents.

## A. CLIMATE

As part of the South Carolina Upstate, Oconee County enjoys a warm and temperate climate, with an average annual temperature of 55.8 degrees (Table 6-1). Winters are mild, with the earliest freeze or frost occurring between late October and early November and the latest freeze in early April (*S.C. State Climatology Office, 2019*). While local summers are considerably cooler than in southern areas of the State, they can still be quite warm. When combined with an average humidity of 72.64%, the heat index can rise substantially in mid-to-late summer. Winters are also comparatively cooler in Oconee County, with an average low temperature of 67.9 degrees and average snowfall of 3.3 inches – the fourth highest annual snowfall statewide. Moderate temperatures and an average yearly precipitation of 67.4 inches make the County ideal for agriculture, with a growing season that spans more than two-thirds of the year.

**Table 6-1. Temperature Summary for Oconee County**

| Type                                | Data and State Ranking   |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Type</b>                         | <b>Data and State Ranking</b>  |
| <b>Average Temperatures</b>         | Annual: 55.8° F (3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest) <sup>1</sup><br>Annual Average Low: 43.64° F (2 <sup>nd</sup> lowest) <sup>1</sup><br>Annual Average High: 67.91° F (3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest) <sup>1</sup> |
| <b>Average Humidity</b>             | 72.64% (12 <sup>th</sup> lowest) <sup>1</sup>  |
| <b>Average Annual Precipitation</b> | 67.44 inches (4 <sup>th</sup> highest) <sup>1</sup>  |
| <b>Average Annual Snowfall</b>      | 3.29 inches <sup>1</sup>   |

Sources: <sup>1</sup>World Media Group - USA.com, 2019; <sup>2</sup>Weatherspark.com, 2019



## B. AIR QUALITY

Air quality affects the public health, weather, quality of life, and economic potential of a community. Air pollution can have adverse economic effects such as damage to vegetation, reduced crop yields, increased corrosion of metals, and deterioration of stone and paint on buildings, cars and cultural landmarks. These potential impacts are of particular concern in Oconee County where agriculture is an important economic sector and the success of the tourism sector is largely dependent on the preservation of scenic natural resources. Also, air quality problems can impede recruitment of new industries and businesses to the area, resulting in reduced investment and employment opportunities.

One of the primary air quality concerns in South Carolina is ozone. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed and periodically updates the *National Ambient Air Quality Standard* (NAAQS) for Ozone. The EPA designates geographic areas as attainment (meeting the air quality standard) or nonattainment (not meeting the standard) using long-term air quality monitoring data. For areas designated as nonattainment, the State and local governments must prescribe specific actions for reaching attainment within a specified time period. These requirements can significantly impact existing industry, economic recruitment efforts, and transportation in nonattainment and surrounding areas. For instance, the *Nonattainment New Source Review* requirement for areas lapsing into nonattainment status mandates a required level of emission reductions for new and modified industrial facilities. The expansion or improvement of local transportation infrastructure to support development can also be impacted under the Clean Air Act requirement that transportation plans, programs, and projects cannot create new violations to air quality standards, increase the severity or frequency of existing violations, or delay attainment of standards.

SCDHEC maintains a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that outlines the State's strategies for meeting NAAQS standards for six common pollutants as set forth by the Clean Air Act. SCDHEC has operated an air quality monitoring station in Oconee County as part of its air quality monitoring network since 1983. The station is located in the Longcreek area on Round Mountain Tower Road. The location offers a unique vantage point for the continuous monitoring of transported pollutants including ozone, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter.

As of February 2019, all counties in the State are within the threshold for ambient air quality and are designated as attainment. However, increased urbanization in the nearby Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin metropolitan area may have future impacts on the air quality in Oconee County. As part of the broader region, it is important that local leaders analyze and monitor the factors that contribute to higher ozone levels and develop local solutions to maintain acceptable levels that ensure the health of residents, as well as the economic health of the County.

Oconee County joined SCDHEC, the EPA, and the counties of the Appalachian Council of Governments Region in an 8-hour **Ozone Early Action Compact** (EAC) in 2002. The regional EAC



was part of a statewide effort that included all ten council of government regions and resulted in an early action State Implementation Plan. Under the terms of the EAC, participants worked together to develop and implement local, regional, and state action plans to attain the EPA's 8-hour ozone standard by the end of 2007. The EAC was a success, with all counties in the region meeting attainment status by the target date.

Oconee County was also a participant with nine other counties, the U.S. EPA, and SCDHEC in a collaborative effort to develop a multi-pollutant, risk-based air management strategy for the Upstate South Carolina region that began in 2013 (*U.S. EPA, 2016*). The goals of the plan were to identify local emission reduction measures, maintain compliance with NAAQS, demonstrate selected strategies to reduce population risk from exposure to pollutants, transition to a multi-pollutant air quality management strategy, and foster greater collaboration. The project results were published in 2016 and demonstrate that improving air quality in areas already attaining air quality standards can yield significant health benefits.

## C. LAND RESOURCES

Oconee County is bordered by Pickens County to the northeast, Anderson County to the southeast, the state of North Carolina to the north, and the state of Georgia to the west. The County covers more than 626 square miles, ranking 26<sup>th</sup> largest among the State's 46 counties. More than 47 square miles of the County are comprised of water, primarily Lake Jocassee, Lake Keowee, and Lake Hartwell, along with numerous rivers, streams, and ponds. The Chattooga and Tugaloo Rivers form the County's northwestern and southwestern borders, respectively.

### 1. Soils

Local soil conditions are an important consideration in planning for future development. Soil properties directly influence building construction and costs, roads and other improvements, prevalence of prime agricultural lands and activities, and the location and design of septic tanks and drain fields. Both soil suitability and stability should be examined when considering the feasibility of new development or significant redevelopment of a site. Soils on individual sites also determine suitability for specific types of development such as low density residential (single-family), high density residential (multi-family), commercial, and industrial. Although this level of detail must be determined by an individual soil survey for the particular site, large-scale soils data from the ~~S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR)~~ [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Data Mart](#) may be useful in an examination of future development potential for broader areas and districts within a community.

Oconee County general soil series primarily consist of well-drained soils of varying slope (*USDA, Soil Data Mart, 2019*). These soils are profiled in Table 6-2, with distribution illustrated in Map 6-1.



**Table 6-2. General Soil Series within Oconee County**

| Soil Name                                   | Slope Range | Percentage (Acres) | Characteristics  |
|---|-------------|--------------------|--|
| Pacolet-Hiwassee-Cecil                      | 30-45%      | 28.9%<br>(122,263) | Well drained, moderately permeable soils                                       |
| Tusquitee-Tallapoosa-Saluda-Evard-Edneytown | 60-95%      | 14.2%<br>(60,067)  | Well drained, moderately to moderately rapidly permeable soils                 |
| Hiwassee-Cecil                              | 0-5%        | 13.8%<br>(58,137)  | Well drained, moderately permeable soils                                       |
| Cecil                                       | 0-5%        | 13.6%<br>(57,567)  | Well drained, moderately permeable soils                                       |
| Saluda-Hayesville-Evard-Brevard-Bradson     | 15-30%      | 9.3%<br>(39,367)   | Well drained, moderately to moderately rapidly permeable soils                 |
| Pacolet-Madison-Davidson-Cecil              | 15-30%      | 7.1%<br>(29,938)   | Well drained, moderately permeable soils                                       |
| Chester-Ashe                                | 45-60%      | 4.7%<br>(20,072)   | Somewhat excessively drained, moderately to moderately rapidly permeable soils |
| Wilkes-Hiwassee-Cecil                       | 5-15%       | 3.4%<br>(14,444)   | Well drained, slow to moderately slow to moderately permeable soils            |

Sources: USDA NRCS Soil Data Access, 2019; USDA NRCS Official Soil Series Descriptions, 2019

Five of the general soil series in Oconee County include Cecil soils. Cecil soils are very deep, well drained, and moderately permeable soils found on ridges and side slopes in the uplands of the Piedmont. Pacolet-Hiwassee-Cecil is the dominant soil series in the County, comprising nearly 29% of County soils (122,263 acres). The Wilkes-Hiwassee-Cecil series is the smallest group, found in the southeastern corner of the County near Lake Hartwell. Although well-drained, these soils can have slower permeability. Soils with slow permeability ~~have limitations affecting~~ may impact septic tank absorption fields, ~~though other factors such as slope may impact septic tank suitability.~~ While permeability in the County generally ranges from moderate to rapidly permeable, other factors such as slope may also impact septic tank suitability.

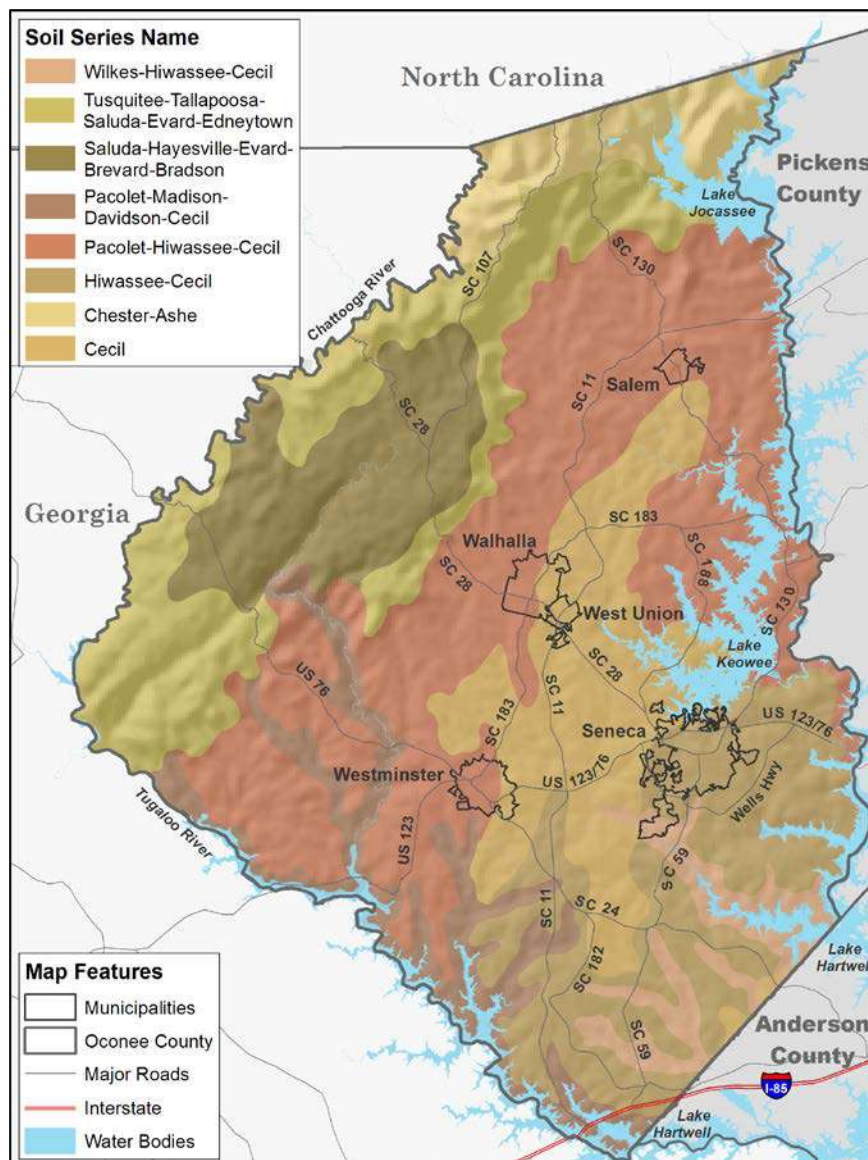
The general soil series map at 6-1 shows broad areas that have a distinctive pattern of soils, relief and drainage. While the depicted soils data is valuable in assessing the suitability of large areas for general land uses, it reflects only general limitations on urban development and should only be used for broad planning analysis. A detailed soil analysis should accompany site-specific development decisions.

Soil erosion is a concern for more than 60% of the County (*USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, 2019*). Less than half (45%) of the County's land is considered to be at moderate risk of erosion, indicating that some erosion is likely and control measures may be needed. Risk of erosion is severe or very severe for 15.4% of the County. A rating of severe (10.6% of the County or 45,416 acres) indicates that erosion is very likely and that erosion control measures such as replanting of bare areas is advised. Erosion is expected in areas considered to have a very severe risk (4.8% of the County or 20,741 acres). All of the soils at very severe risk of erosion and most at severe risk are in the western area of the County in the Sumter National Forest.



Loss of soil productivity and off-site damage is more likely on these lands where erosion control measures are typically costly and impractical to employ.

**Map 6-1. General Soil Series**



Source: USDA NRCS Soil Data Access, 2019

## 2. Slope

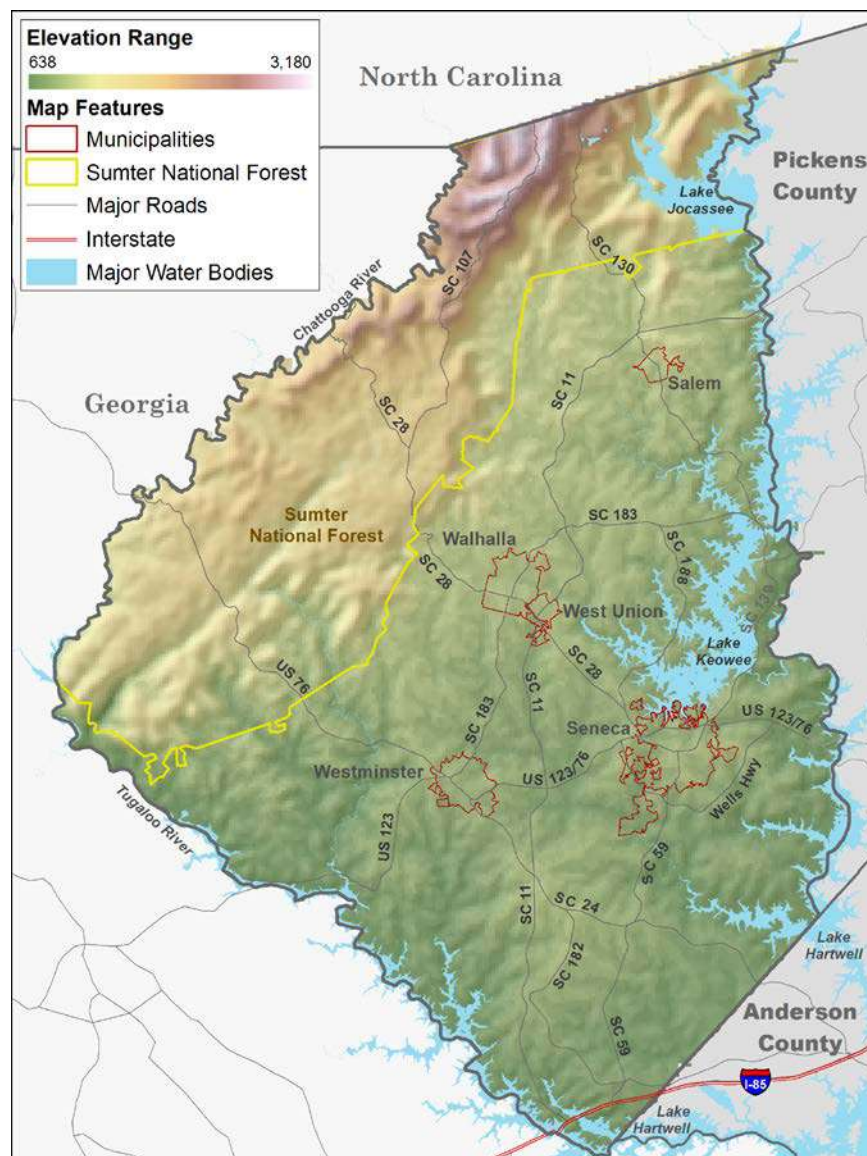
Slope characteristics have a direct impact on the types of land uses that have developed or may be developed in the future. Sites with slopes of less than 8% are typically most easily and cost-effectively developed, and are appropriate for most types of land uses. An increase in the slope makes a site more difficult and expensive to develop, with increased limitations on the types of land uses that are appropriate. Table 6-3 provides a general listing of land uses and their



associated slope limitations. In addition to slope, other factors that determine development suitability include soil limitations such as wetness, permeability, drainage, and flooding. These conditions may be difficult and expensive to mitigate, and can fall under regulatory limitations.

Elevation in Oconee County ranges from 638 feet above sea level to 3,180 feet. The County’s lowest elevations are found along the river and creek beds and the lakes. The highest elevations are in the northern area of the County in the Sumter National Forest. Map 6-2 illustrates the topography of Oconee County using 2017 contour data.

**Map 6-2. Elevation**



Source: Oconee County GIS Department, 2019

The topography of Oconee County is largely conducive to many types of development, with some limitations in higher elevations and low-lying areas. Representative slope data is available



from the USDA Soil Survey for most of Oconee County, with the exception of 79,297 acres in the Sumter National Forest. Based on the general slope range characteristics and data provided in Table 6-3, one-third of the land area in Oconee County outside of the National Forest (115,717 acres) has a slope of 8% or less and is suitable for all types of land uses. However, ~~it is important to note that~~ soils with no slope (0%) primarily include rivers and drainage basins and may be subject to flood plain regulations. Development suitability is only slightly more limited for 13.5% of the County (47,245 acres), where a slope range of 9% to 16% readily accommodates residential and light commercial development and is suitable for heavier commercial and industrial development with appropriate site work.

Areas at the higher end of the slope range may not be as suitable for all types of development. The slope range for 26.5% (92,595 acres) of the County’s land area is between 17% and 24%. Much of this land is generally suitable for low density residential uses, but site work is usually needed~~not~~ for commercial or industrial development. The slope range for more than a quarter (27%) of the County’s land (94,415 acres) is 25% or greater. These lands are generally not suitable for ~~any type of~~ intense development such as higher density subdivisions or commercial or industrial developments though such development may be possible with appropriate site work.

**Table 6-3. Slope Percentage and Use in Oconee County**

| Slope Range and Associated Land Uses   | Acres             | Percentage    |
|--|-------------------|---------------|
| <del>Slope 8% or less—All types of land use where there is no danger of periodic flooding</del>          | 115,717.34        | 33.1%         |
| <del>Slope 9% to 16%—Residential and light commercial development</del>                                  | 47,245.24         | 13.5%         |
| <del>Slope 17% to 24%—Low density residential, not suited for commercial or industrial development</del> | 92,594.83         | 26.5%         |
| <del>Slope 25% and Greater—Not suitable for any type of intense development</del>                        | 94,415.37         | 27.0%         |
| Data not Available (areas within the Sumter National Forest)   | 79,297.20         | 18.5%         |
| <b>Total Acres</b>   | <b>429,269.98</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

Source: USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, 2019

### 3. Mineral Deposits and Mines

The identification and location of mineral deposits can be important to the local economy. In South Carolina, mineral resources range from limestone, crushed stone, clay, and sand to granite, marble, and vermiculite. According to the U.S. Geological Survey’s *2013 Minerals Yearbook for South Carolina*, a large majority of South Carolina’s nonfuel mineral production results from the mining and production of construction minerals and materials. SCDHEC records indicate that there are two active mining operations in Oconee County as of 2019. One is a gold mining operation in the northern area of the County, and the other is the Oconee County Rock Quarry, a granite mining operation on Rock Crusher Road near Walhalla.



#### 4. Residential Development Limitations

Access to wastewater treatment is limited in Oconee County. Wastewater treatment is provided by three municipalities through Seneca Light and Water and the Cities of Walhalla and Westminster. Public sewer treatment for wastewater collected by the municipalities is provided by the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority. Wastewater collection and treatment is available within the Cities of Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster, and in the Town of West Union. Also included are a few unincorporated areas of the County near these municipalities and along major corridors that connect these communities. Service also extends north from Seneca along S.C. Highway 130 near Lake Keowee, south from Seneca along S.C. Highway 59, east from Seneca along U.S. Highway 123, and north from Walhalla along S.C. Highway 11. Private authorities provide wastewater service to several of the County's larger residential developments including Chickasaw Point and Foxwood Hills on Lake Hartwell and Keowee Key on Lake Keowee.

Due to limited access to sewer service, residential development in much of Oconee County must rely on septic tanks. The use of septic systems for sewage disposal places additional limitations on residential development, impacting both location and lot sizes. State law, enforced by SCDHEC, requires that a parcel of land proposed for septic service is capable of allowing proper operation of the individual system, including a drain field. Suitability criteria are based on factors including soil type, ~~and parcel size, and slope. Excessive slope is also a factor and may cause seepage in down-slope areas. Percolation tests are conducted by SCDHEC on individual properties to evaluate the suitability of soil for septic tank absorption fields as part of the permitting process for residential construction in areas where public sewer is not available.~~

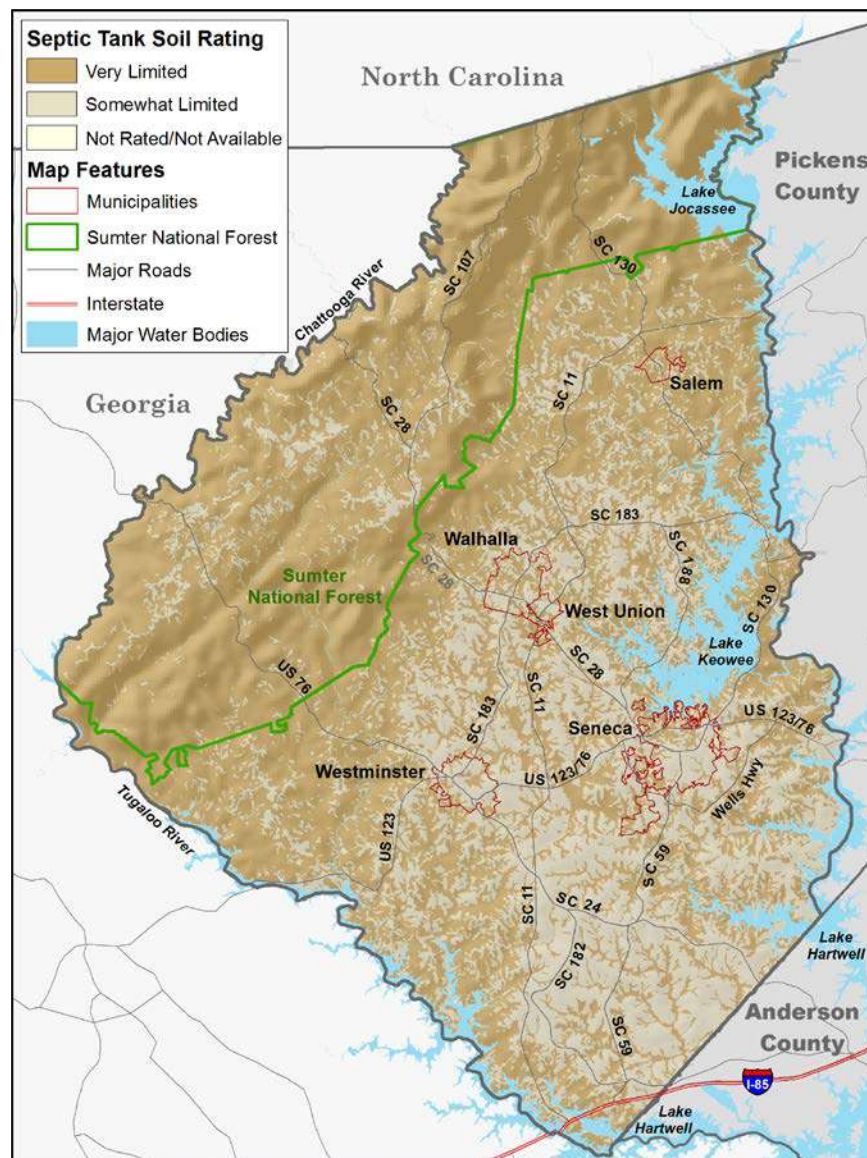
Map 6-3 illustrates areas in the County with soils rated as "very limited" or "somewhat limited" under the *Septic Tank Soil Absorption Field Ratings* of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These ratings are used to guide site selection for safe disposal of household effluent based on soil properties that affect absorption of the effluent and impact construction and maintenance of the system. Public health impact is also a consideration. While the ratings provide general information on soil suitability for septic tanks, onsite evaluation by SCDHEC is required before ~~final site selection, development and construction~~. Also, the USDA ratings apply to the soils in their present condition and do not consider potential impacts on soil quality by current and future land uses.

More than two-thirds (67.3%), or 288,903 acres, of land for which detailed soil data is available in Oconee County has been rated as "very limited" for septic tank soil absorption. The soils in much of the Sumter National Forest are included in this soil rating, in large part due to the steeper slope of the land in the northwestern area of Oconee County. This rating indicates that the soil has one or more features that ~~are may be~~ unfavorable for use as a septic system absorption field, ~~and could result in P~~poor performance and high maintenance ~~if not properly installed~~. An additional 30.2% of County soils (129,787 acres) are rated as "somewhat limited,"



indicating that the soils have features that are moderately favorable for use as a septic system absorption field, but does not limit the use of such systems in these areas.

**Map 6-3. Septic Tank Soil Absorption Ratings**



Source: USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, 2019

**5. Plant and Animal Habitats**

Wildlife habitat is an interrelated and often complex combination of land and soil properties, food sources and vegetative cover, water, and other physical factors that contribute to the survival of a species population. The number, quality and scope of animal and plant species are directly dependent on the quality and size of their habitat. In turn, habitats are affected directly by natural and man-made factors that include agricultural, residential, industrial, and commercial development, as well as fires and other natural disasters. Habitats declared critical



to species identified as endangered or threatened are protected under Federal and State laws to safeguard and promote recovery of the species. Endangered species are those for which there is a danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, while threatened species are those identified to likely become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Protective measures for endangered plant and animal species include the development of recovery plans, the acquisition of habitat, and protection from disturbance for listed species. The definition of protection from disturbance differs between endangered plant and animal species. No penalties are incurred if endangered plant species are harmed in the course of legal land management practices. However, the intentional or negligent taking of an endangered animal species or destruction of its critical habitat is subject to prosecution under the *Endangered Species Act*. Destruction of an endangered plant is subject to prosecution under the *Act* if the plant is on federal lands including private land under management practices that require federal permits, or if the destruction occurs during the course of another illegal act such as trespassing.

All states must maintain lists of rare, threatened and endangered species under the National Heritage program. Species can be included on state lists, while not appearing on the national list, due to declining species populations in certain regions. The South Carolina Heritage Trust program of the SCDNR has identified plant and animal species at risk in South Carolina. The rare, threatened and endangered species inventory for Oconee County includes 34 animal species and 118 plant species.

Federal and State status denote those species that have formal protections in place by a Federal or State agency or Act, or that are under review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. *Endangered* species are those in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. *Threatened* species are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The *At Risk Species, Priority* classification is given to either a former candidate species or an emerging conservation priority species that is under review or on the agenda for review for designation as endangered or threatened. While a full and current list is available on the SCDNR website, a listing of the animal and plant species most at risk based on Federal and State designation is provided in Table 6-4.



**Table 6-4. Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Inventory for Oconee County, 2019**

| Scientific Name                                  | Common Name                    | State Status   |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>ANIMALS</b>                                   |                                |  |
| <b>Federal Status: Endangered</b>                |                                |  |
| Myotis sodalis                                   | Indiana Myotis                 | <i>Endangered</i> - species whose prospects of survival or recruitment within the State are in jeopardy or likely within the foreseeable future to become so |
| <b>Federal Status: Threatened</b>                |                                |  |
| Myotis septentrionalis                           | Northern Long-eared Bat        | No state status  |
| <b>Federal Status: At Risk Species, Priority</b> |                                |  |
| Alasmidonta varicosa                             | Brook Floater                  | No state status  |
| Aneides aeneus                                   | Green Salamander               | No state status  |
| Cryptobranchus alleganiensis                     | Hellbender                     | No state status  |
| Danaus plexippus                                 | Monarch Butterfly              | No state status  |
| Eurycea chamberlaini                             | Chamberlain's Dwarf Salamander | No state status  |
| Megaleuctra williamsae                           | Smokies Needlefly              | No state status  |
| Myotis leibii                                    | Eastern Small-footed Myotis    | <i>Threatened</i> - Species likely to become endangered and in need of management  |
| Ophiogomphus edmundo                             | Edmund's Snaketail             | No state status  |
| Perimyotis subflavus                             | Tricolored Bat                 | No state status  |
| Vermivora chrysoptera                            | Golden-winged Warbler          | No state status  |
| <b>PLANTS</b>                                    |                                |  |
| <b>Federal Status: Endangered</b>                |                                |  |
| Echinacea laevigata                              | Smooth Coneflower              | No state status  |
| Trillium persistens                              | Persistent Trillium            | No state status  |
| <b>Federal Status: Threatened</b>                |                                |  |
| Isotria medeoloides                              | Small Whorled Pogonia          | No state status  |
| <b>Federal Status: At Risk Species, Priority</b> |                                |  |
| Rudbeckia heliopsisidis                          | Sun-facing Coneflower          | No state status  |
| Symphyotrichum georgianum                        | Georgia Aster                  | No state status  |
| Tsuga caroliniana                                | Carolina Hemlock               | No state status  |
| <b>Federal Status: Species of Concern</b>        |                                |  |
| Shortia Galacifolia                              | Oconee Bell                    | No state status  |

Sources: S.C. Department of Natural Resources, January 2019; Oconee County Planning & Zoning, March 2019

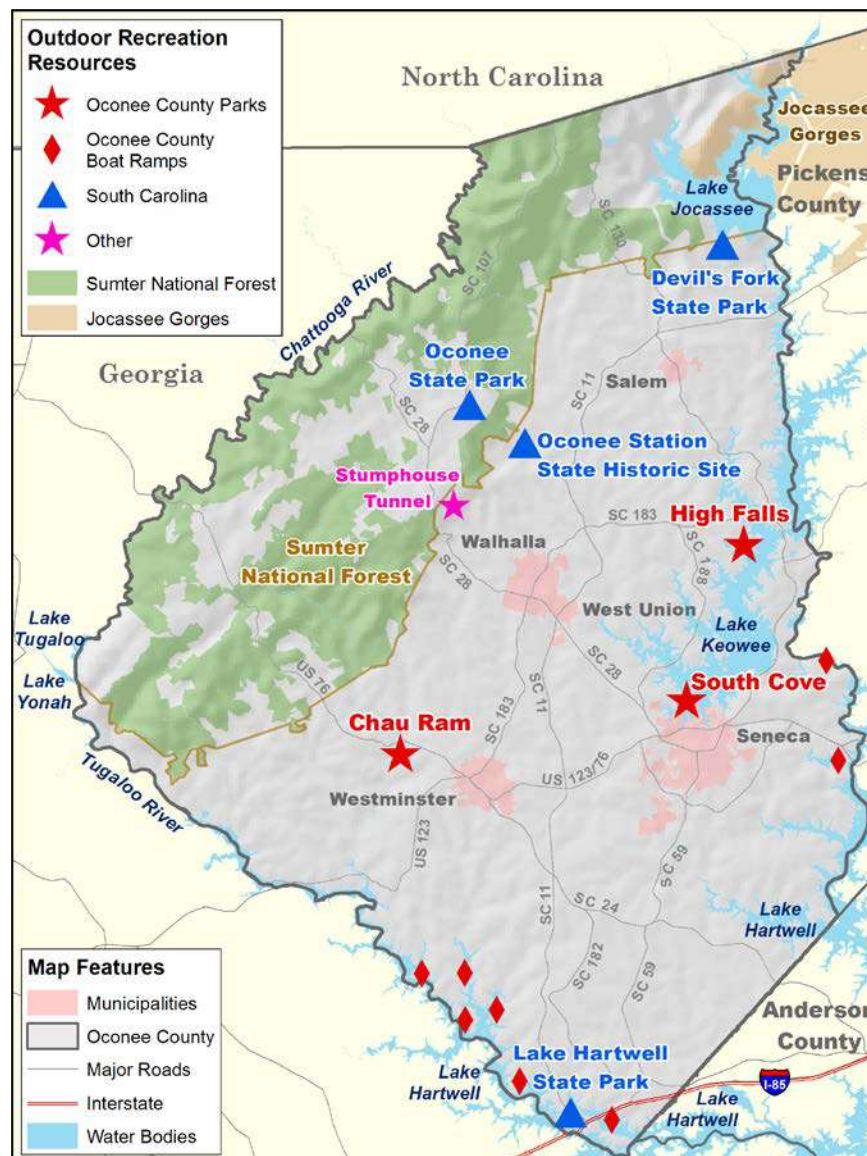
**6. Outdoor Recreation and Scenic Areas**

Oconee County residents and visitors are fortunate to have access to numerous and diverse land and water opportunities for outdoor recreation. These resources include the Sumter National Forest, four State parks, three County parks, eight County boat ramps, nature and hiking trails, multiple camping areas, and some smaller parks and recreation facilities. Water resources include three major lakes, the Chattooga, Chauga and Tugaloo Rivers, and numerous



waterfalls. Locations of the County’s major outdoor recreation resources are shown on Map 6-4.

**Map 6-4. Major Outdoor Recreation Resources**



Sources: Oconee County GIS Dept., December 2018; SCDNR, January 2019

**a. Sumter National Forest**

Located within the northwestern portion of Oconee County are almost 84,000 acres of the nearly 371,000 acre **Sumter National Forest** – one of only two national forests in South Carolina. The Forest was established in 1936 and is managed by the USDA Forest Service for multiple uses including watershed protection and improvement, timber and wood production, habitat for wildlife and fish species, wilderness area management, and recreation. The **Andrew**



**Pickens Ranger District** in Oconee County is one of three ranger districts that comprise the Sumter National Forest. Management of the District emphasizes habitat restoration and enhancement for a diverse range of wildlife and plant species, particularly rare, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. Popular attractions in the District include hunting, fishing, hiking, fall color sightseeing, camping, horseback riding, and whitewater rafting and kayaking on the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. The District includes numerous waterfalls and hiking trails. The Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area offers opportunities for off-trail hiking and primitive camping. Map 6-4 illustrates the extent of Sumter National Forest (SNF) lands in Oconee County, including lands owned by the USDA Forest Service.

#### **b. State Parks**

**Devils Fork State Park** is located on Lake Jocassee near S.C. Highway 11 (Map 6-4). The 644-acre park provides the only public access to the Lake, with four boat ramps and a courtesy dock. The Park also provides 20 lakeside villas, 59 campsites with water and electricity, 25 tent camping sites, two picnic shelters, two playgrounds, an indoor meeting room, a two-mile hiking trail, a one-mile nature trail, and a campground that is accessible only by boat. Devils Fork is located in the middle of the Jocassee Gorges and includes several waterfalls accessible only by boat. One of South Carolina's unique and rare wildflowers can be found blooming from mid-March to early April on the Oconee Bell Nature Trail in the Park.

**Lake Hartwell State Park** is located in the southern area of the County in the Fair Play community near Highway 11 (Map 6-4). The 680-acre park includes 14 miles of Lake Hartwell shoreline. The park provides two boat ramps, a courtesy dock, and a 140-foot fishing pier. Also provided are 115 campsites with water and electricity, 13 walk-in tent sites, two camper cabins, a 0.75 mile nature trail, two playgrounds, and a picnic shelter.

**Oconee State Park** is located in the Mountain Rest community near S.C. Highway 107 (Map 6-4). The 1,165-acre park was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The park offers 139 standard campsites with water and electricity, 15 designated rustic tent sites, 19 historic cabins, four picnic shelters, three playgrounds, two lakes that can be used for fishing and boating, a swimming area with lifeguards, and an 18-hole miniature golf course. Oconee State Park includes six trails ranging from easy to strenuous in difficulty and serves as the southern trailhead for the Foothills Trail, the State's 77-mile wilderness hike on the Blue Ridge Escarpment.

The **Oconee Station State Historic Site** is located north of Walhalla near S.C. Highway 11 on Oconee Station Road. Originally used as a military compound and later a trading post, the 210-acre Historic Site provides a unique representation of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century South Carolina. The site includes two buildings on the National Register of Historic Places - a stone blockhouse built in 1792 as an outpost for the S.C. State Militia and the William Richards House, built in 1805. The Site also includes a four-acre fishing pond, a 1.5-mile nature trail, the four-mile Oconee





Connector trail that joins Oconee Station with Oconee State Park, and the 60-foot Station Cove Falls waterfall at the end of the nature trail.

### ***c. County Parks and Recreation Facilities***

There are 32 County and municipal outdoor park and recreation facilities encompassing nearly 553 acres in Oconee County. Eleven of the parks and facilities are owned and maintained by Oconee County, eight by the City of Seneca, seven by the City of Walhalla, five by the City of Westminster, and one by the Town of West Union. The new 14-acre Foothills YMCA is also currently under construction just outside of Seneca.

These resources highlight the abundance of natural resources in the County and accommodate a wide range of outdoor activities. Visitors to these parks enjoy access to hiking trails, boating, fishing, camping, and swimming. Active opportunities include a disc golf course, public pool, baseball, softball and soccer fields, and courts for basketball, tennis, pickleball, horseshoes, and volleyball. Major County parks, including the Stumphouse Tunnel/Issaqueena Falls Park, are described below and shown on Map 6-4. Additional parks and recreation resources in Oconee County are described in more detail in the Community Facilities Element.

***Chau Ram County Park*** is located at the confluence of Ramsey Creek and the Chauga River, west of Westminster off of U.S. Highway 76. The 198-acre County Park offers 26 campsites with water and electricity, additional tent sites, five picnic shelters, a recreational building, a playground, and shower facilities. Main attractions of the Park include over a mile of the Chauga River, a handicap accessible 40-foot waterfall, a 160-foot suspension bridge spanning the River, and more than three miles of hiking trails. Guests enjoy tubing, hiking, fishing, picnicking, camping, and enjoying the Park's unique and spectacular vistas. Oconee County is working with Upstate Forever on an option to purchase an available 218-acre parcel of land adjacent to Chau Ram County Park. This addition would enable the County to plan for expansion of camping and hiking opportunities, as well as mountain biking.

***High Falls County Park*** is on Lake Keowee, located east of Walhalla off of S.C. Highway 183. The 46-acre County Park provides 91 campsites with water and electricity (10 waterfront), shower and restroom facilities, two shelters, a recreational building, miniature golf course, a tennis/basketball court, horseshoe and volleyball courts, picnic areas, and a playground. Two boat ramps, a swimming area, and a fishing pier offer access to Lake Keowee for water sports and fishing. Oconee County is working with Duke Energy on the possibility of utilizing what is currently referred to as the Keowee-Toxaway project as an addition to the High Falls County Park. The potential expansion, known as High Falls II, would add 36 acres and provide additional amenities for park visitors. A master plan for High Falls II has been completed in partnership with Duke Energy and is awaiting funding availability.

***South Cove County Park*** is located on a peninsula of Lake Keowee just north of Seneca on South Cove Road. The location combines proximity to restaurants and other amenities in the City of

Seneca with prime access to Lake Keowee and nearby Clemson University. The 48-acre County Park offers 86 campsites with water and electricity, including 46 waterfront sites, and shower and restroom facilities. Also provided are four pickleball courts, three tennis courts, basketball and horseshoe courts, a playground, picnic areas, and a recreational building and shelter for gatherings. Three boat ramps, a handicapped accessible fishing pier and a waterfront sand beach provide access to Lake Keowee for boating and fishing.

Oconee County also maintains eight public boat ramps on Lake Hartwell (Map 6-4). The **Fair Play, Mullins Ford** and **Lawrence Bridge Recreation Areas** all provide a boat ramp, a courtesy dock, picnic areas, and restrooms. The Fair Play Recreation Area also provides a playground and swimming area. The **Choestoea, Mountain Bay, Port Bass, Seneca Creek,** and **South Union** boat access areas are leased to the County by the Corp of Engineers. The Mountain Bay access area also offers a courtesy dock. Upgrades are planned for the Seneca Creek facility that will include restrooms, a trail, bank fishing, picnic area, kayak launch, fishing pier, and a courtesy dock.

The City of Walhalla's 7.13-acre **Stumphouse Tunnel/Issaqueena Falls Park** is home to two unique features. The 1,617-foot Stumphouse Tunnel was started in 1852 to allow connection from Charleston to Knoxville. However, the Civil War and lack of funding brought construction to a halt before completion. Clemson University purchased the tunnel in 1951 and originally used it to cure their signature blue cheese. While the tunnel is still owned by the University, it is managed by the City of Walhalla. Down a short path from the tunnel is Issaqueena Falls, a 100-foot cascade waterfall that can be viewed from several points including a lookout platform. In addition to the tunnel and falls, the Park includes a hiking trail, picnic shelter, and picnic areas.

Oconee County is among several partners working closely with the City on development of the new **Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park**. The Park is a state-of-the-art facility with multi-purpose trails that will total more than 20 miles when completed. Phase one of the project opened the 1.5-mile Stumphouse Passage of the Palmetto Trail and 2.5 miles of loop trails that accommodate mountain biking and hiking. Phase two will add six additional miles when completed in late 2019. Phase three is in the planning stages and is expected to complete the trail over the next several years.

### **c. Lake and River Recreation Resources**

There are many access points for residents and visitors to enjoy Oconee County's water resources. Major lake and river recreation resources are described below and shown on Map 6-4.

**Lake Keowee** covers 18,372 acres, with 387 miles of shoreline that includes access from Oconee County's High Falls and South Cove Parks. The Lake is managed by Duke Energy. There are nine public boat ramps on the Lake, including six in Oconee County. In addition to three marinas with pumpouts, there are several fishing access locations, including the pier and boat

dock at the Duke World of Energy at Oconee Nuclear Station, piers at the two County parks, and Stamp Creek Access Pier (*SCDNR, 2019*).

**Lake Hartwell** is 56,000 acres in size, with a 962-mile shoreline that includes access from Lake Hartwell State Park in Oconee County. The Lake is managed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. There are 45 boat ramps on Lake Hartwell, with 14 in Oconee County. Eight of the boat ramps are managed by the County. The Corp manages eight campgrounds on the Lake, with two in Oconee County. The *Coneross Campground* on Coneross Creek Road provides 106 camp sites, of which 94 have water and electricity. Also included are a boat ramp and courtesy dock, shower and restroom facilities, a playground, and a swimming beach. The *Oconee Point Campground* is located off of South Friendship Road and provides 70 campsites with water and electricity, shower and restroom facilities, boat ramp and courtesy dock, and a playground. Oconee County manages several areas for day use only (no camping allowed) including the Fair Play Recreation Area, Lawrence Bridge Recreation Area, and Mullins Ford Recreation Area. All recreation areas provide boat ramps, courtesy docks, restrooms, and picnic areas. The Fair Play recreation area also provides a swimming beach and playground.

**Lake Jocassee** is 7,565 acres in size, with 75 miles of mostly undeveloped shoreline that includes access from Devil's Fork State Park. The Lake is owned and managed by Duke Energy. Lake Jocassee is the deepest lake in the State, with a maximum depth of approximately 351 feet and an average depth of 157 feet. The mountain rivers that feed the Lake keep it cool and clear year-round, making it popular for fishing, diving, swimming, paddling, and other water sports. There are four boat ramps on the Lake, with two in the State Park. One of the State Park's campgrounds can only be accessed by boat.

The **Chauga River** is a 31.3-mile long tributary of the Tugaloo River that flows from the north in the western area of Oconee County before joining with Ramsey Creek in the Chau Ram County Park. The River includes Class IV rapids ideal for whitewater kayaking near the Cassidy Bridge but slows before flowing into Lake Hartwell to provide paddling opportunities. As a hatchery-supported trout stream, the Chauga is also a very popular fishing destination. Access to the River from Oconee County and is available at the Cassidy Bridge access and parking area.

The **Chattooga River** has been protected since 1974 as a National Wild and Scenic River. Nearly 40 miles of the River have been designated as "wild," 2.5 miles as "scenic," and 14.6 miles as "recreational." Known as the "Crown Jewel" of the southeast, the Chattooga was the first river east of the Mississippi to be granted the Wild and Scenic designation and is still the only one where commercial rafting is allowed. The area surrounding the River is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. On commercially rafted sections (III and IV) there is a quarter-mile long protected corridor of the National Forest on both sides of the River that allows no roads to the river or development of any kind. The segment above the S.C. Highway 28 bridge is generally reserved for fishing for trout or redeye bass, while below the bridge is the 26-mile stretch of what is considered some of the best whitewater rafting available in the east, with class II, III, IV,





and V rapids available. However, the number of trips and people per trip is strictly regulated to protect the River.

The **Tugaloo River** is a 45.9-mile long river that serves as a portion of the western border of Oconee County and South Carolina with Georgia. The River is fed by the Tallulah and Chattooga Rivers and ends as an arm of Lake Hartwell. The River is popular for boating, sailing, fishing, and other water sports. **Lake Yonah** is a 525-acre lake on the Tugaloo River in the westernmost area of Oconee County, with over nine miles of shoreline. The Lake provides opportunities for paddling and other water sports and fishing, with access available at the Yonah Boat Ramp in Tallulah Falls, Georgia. **Lake Tugaloo** is a 597-acre lake with 18 miles of shoreline. The Lake is fed by the Tallulah and Chattooga Rivers and is known as the perfect place to paddle and fish. Access to Lake Tugaloo for Oconee County residents is available at the boat ramp on Bull Sluice Road in the Long Creek community.

#### **d. Hiking Trails and Waterfalls**

Oconee County is known as the “Golden Corner” of South Carolina because of its temperate climate, beautiful lakes and rivers, and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Adventurers, backpackers, hikers, photographers, campers, nature lovers, and families are drawn to the County’s natural and recreational resources. Chief among the draws for visitors and residents are the 193 miles of trails in Oconee County, ranging in size from small spurs of less than a mile to the 77-mile Foothills Trail. Many of these trails lead hikers to the County’s nearly 150 waterfalls, to the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River, and to County and State parks. Table 6-6 lists the trails in Oconee County and describes the waterfalls and other destinations accessed along these trails. More detailed descriptions and photos of some of the County’s spectacular waterfalls are provided at <http://scmountainlakes.com/play/waterfalls-in-sc/>.

Of particular note are two larger trail systems that include passages within Oconee County. The 77-mile **Foothills Trail** extends from Oconee State Park to Table Rock State Park in Pickens County. The first 28 miles of the Trail from Oconee State Park to Upper Whitewater Falls was designated a *National Recreation Trail* in 1979. While numerous trailheads offer opportunities for day hikes, the full trek can take more than a week for backpackers who wish to hike the entire trail and include some of the many spur trails and connectors. Rated as “one of the best long trails (50 miles or more) in the Country” by Backpacker magazine, hiking difficulty on the Foothills Trail varies from moderate to strenuous. Primitive camping is allowed at various places along the trail and campsites are available at Burrell’s Ford Campground, Cherry Hill Recreation Area, and Oconee State Park in Oconee County and Table Rock State Park in Pickens County.

The **Palmetto Trail** is South Carolina’s longest pedestrian and bicycle trail, with 27 passages totaling 350 miles through 14 counties completed to date. Trails range from 1.3 miles to 47 miles in length. When completed, the route will extend 500 continuous miles from Oconee County to the Intracoastal Waterway. The trail was established in 1994 to provide free access to trails of all levels of difficulty and varying length. The entire Trail is open to hiking and

backpacking, with designated passages available for mountain biking, horseback riding, and camping. One of only 16 cross-state trails in the United States, the Palmetto Trail is a federally designated Millennium Legacy Trail. Two passages of the Palmetto Trail are in Oconee County – the Oconee Passage that connects Oconee State Park to the Oconee Station State Historical Site, and the new Stumphouse Passage that is the first phase of the planned 20-mile Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park (Table 6-6).

**Table 6-6. Hiking Trails and Water Falls**

| Trail and Water Falls    | Length (miles) | Description   |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|
| Bad Creek Spur           | 0.6            | Moderately difficult hike in Lake Hartwell State Park connecting with Coon Branch, Foothills, and Lower Whitewater Falls Trails       |
| Bee Cove Falls           | 2.1            | Difficult 2-3 hour hike to multi-tiered Bee Cove Falls  |
| Beech Bluff              | 0.8            | Easy natural trail in Lake Hartwell State Park with scenic views  |
| Big Bend                 | 3.3            | Moderately easy hike to the Chattooga River and 30' Big Bend Falls  |
| Blue Hole Falls          | 0.5            | Moderately difficult hike into pristine wilderness and to 75' Blue Hole Falls and the pool that gives the area its name               |
| Blue Ridge Railroad      | 2.5            | Moderately difficult walk that follows incomplete 19 <sup>th</sup> century Blue Ridge Railroad rail bed, includes 3 abandoned tunnels |
| Brasstown Falls          | 0.3            | Short but moderately difficult hike to 120' Brasstown Falls and the calm swimming hole at the base of the upper falls                 |
| Bruce Hill-Shaver        | 0.7            | Easy walking trail that links the Shaver Complex with the Bruce Hill community, part of the Seneca Greenway system                    |
| Bull Sluice              | 0.2            | Moderately steep paved access to Chattooga River flat water or moderately difficult gravel path to Bull Sluice                        |
| Chauga Narrows           | 0.6            | Easy walk to the Chauga Narrows that includes both turbulent whitewater (Class IV rapid) and nearby flatwater                         |
| Chau Ram County Park     | 4.0            | Easy to moderate hike along Chauga River that includes the 40' Ramsey Creek Falls waterfall   |
| Choestoea                | 0.8            | Easy hike along old road bed on Lake Hartwell peninsula   |
| Coon Branch Natural Area | 6.0            | Moderate hike along Coon Branch, intersects with Lower Whitewater Trail to Lower Whitewater Falls waterfall                           |
| Ellicott Rock Trail      | 6.8            | Easy hike the follows the Chattooga River to Ellicott Rock, part of the greater Chattooga River Trail                                 |
| Foothills Access         | 1.2            | Moderate hike as an access trail to the Foothills Trail   |
| Hidden Falls             | 2.1            | Moderate hike to 50' Hidden Falls   |
| Issaqueena Falls         | 0.2            | Easy hike beginning at Stumphouse Tunnel to platform to view the 100' cascade of Issaqueena Falls                                     |
| Keowee Elementary        | 0.2            | Easy scenic walking trail that circles a multi-purpose field  |
| Oconee State Park Lake   | 1.2            | Easy hike around the State Park's lake  |
| Lee Falls                | 1.5            | Difficult hike with no official trail to 75' Lee Falls, provides opportunities to view Oconee Bell flowers                            |
| Licklog and Pigpen Falls | 0.9            | Easy hike to 25' Pigpen Falls and two-tiered 80' Licklog Falls  |

**Table 6-6. Hiking Trails and Water Falls**

| <b>Trail and Water Falls</b>   | <b>Length (miles)</b>       | <b>Description</b>  |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Long Creek Falls   | 3.3                         | Moderately difficult hike to 50' Long Creek Falls that cascades into the Chattooga River  |
| Lower Whitewater Falls   | 2.0                         | Moderately difficult hike to an observation platform for the dramatic 200' drop of Lower Whitewater Falls   |
| Miuka Falls  | 1.2                         | Easy hike to 75' Miuka Falls, a spur trail off Winding Stairs Trail   |
| Moss Mill Creek  | 0.4                         | Hike to Moss Mill Creek, a hatchery-supported trout fishing stream  |
| Mountain Rest Community  | 0.4                         | Easy hike to the Mountain Rest Community Club   |
| Oconee   | 2.3                         | Moderately difficult trail around Oconee State Park lake  |
| Oconee Bells Nature  | 1.5                         | Easy hike within Devils Fork State Park offering sightings of Oconee Bell wildflowers   |
| Oconee Station   | 1.5                         | Easy nature hike circling the pond in Oconee Station State Historical Site  |
| Old Waterwheel   | 1.4                         | Moderately difficult, occasionally steep trail leading to stone remnants of a former waterwheel   |
| Sandy Ford   | 0.3                         | Easy, moderately steep hike to gentle rapids of the Chattooga River   |
| Secret Falls   | 3.5                         | Easy downhill hike to 60' Secret Falls  |
| Stumphouse Passage of the Palmetto Trail/Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park | 4.0                         | Recently opened Phase I includes 1.5-mile passage of the Palmetto Trail and 2.5 miles of loop trails for both mountain biking and hiking  |
| Tamassee Knob  | 2.2                         | Strenuous hike to the top of Tamassee Knob  |
| Thrift's Ferry   | 0.4                         | Easy hike to flat shoals of Chattooga River, ideal for canoe/kayak launching  |
| Westminster Elementary   | 0.6                         | Walking trail   |
| Woodall Shoals   | 0.2                         | Moderately difficult, steep hike to Woodall shoals on the Chattooga River   |
| <b>Sumter National Forest</b>  |                             |   |
| Big Bend Falls   | 3.4                         | Strenuous hike to the 30' Big Bend Falls hydraulic, the largest drop on the Chattooga River; primitive camping allowed  |
| Chattooga River Trail  | 15.5                        | Primitive hiking/backpacking trail ranging from moderately to extremely difficult along the Chattooga River; shared sections with the Foothills and Bartram Trails; primitive camping allowed   |
| Earls Ford   | 0.3                         | Easy hike to Chattooga River  |
| East Fork  | 2.5                         | Easy hike along the north bank of the Chattooga River with two trailheads – one at Chattooga Picnic Area and the other at Burrells Ford, primitive camping allowed  |
| Fall Creek Falls   | 2.0                         | Strenuous primitive hike along Fall Creek to the Chattooga River that includes 3 waterfalls, each 30-50' high   |
| Foothills Trail  | 76.0<br>(16.6 miles in SNF) | Moderate to strenuous hike from Oconee State Park to Table Rock State Park in Pickens County (28-mile section from Oconee State Park to Upper Whitewater Falls in N.C. is designated as a National Recreation Trail); primitive camping allowed |



**Table 6-6. Hiking Trails and Water Falls**

| Trail and Water Falls                | Length (miles) | Description  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Fork Mountain                        | 6.4            | Moderately difficult remote hike from Sloan Bridge Picnic Area to Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area (N.C.) joining Bad Creek Trail and leading to Chattooga Trail; primitive camping allowed                                     |
| King Creek Falls                     | 0.5            | Moderately difficult hike to 70' King Creek Falls  |
| Oconee Passage of the Palmetto Trail | 3.2            | Moderately difficult hiking/difficult mountain biking section of the Palmetto Trail that begins in Oconee State Park and ends at Oconee Station State Historical Site  |
| Opossum Creek Falls                  | 2.0            | Difficult hike past the Chattooga River to the base of the 50' Opossum Creek Falls; primitive camping allowed  |
| Riley Moore Falls                    | 0.7            | Moderately difficult hike to the 12' Riley Moore Falls, with a 100' wide cascade, on the Chauga River; primitive camping allowed   |
| Rocky Gap/Willis Knob                | 12.4           | Difficult but scenic trail for hikers and horses – known as Rocky Gap in S.C. and Willis Knob in N.C. (15 miles) – that descends into the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River corridor and loops back and forth across the River |
| Spoonhauger Falls                    | 0.5            | Easy hike to 50' multi-tiered Spoonhauger Falls; primitive camping allowed   |
| Station Cove Falls                   | 0.5            | Easy hike into the Sumter National Forest and ending at 60' stepped Station Cove Falls, intersects with the Oconee Passage of the Palmetto Trail   |
| Winding Stairs                       | 3.5            | Easy hike, mostly along Townes Creek, that includes access to 75' Miuka Falls via a spur trail   |
| Yellow Branch Falls                  | 1.3            | Moderately difficult hike to the base of the spectacular 50' cascade of Yellow Branch Falls  |
| Yellow Branch Nature                 | 0.4            | Moderately difficult nature trail along Yellow Branch Creek, connects to Yellow Branch Falls trail   |
| <b>Total Miles</b>                   | <b>192.8</b>   |  |

Sources: Oconee County Parks and Recreation Dept., SCtrails.net, USDA Forest Service, February 2019

### ***e. Scenic Views and Sites***

Beautiful vistas and scenic sites are so abundant in Oconee County that it is not feasible to list them all. Amazing views of pristine forests, dramatic gorges, pastoral lakes, rushing rivers, and picturesque waterfalls are available, whether by car along the scenic byways, by boat from the lakes and rivers, or on foot, horseback, or mountain bike via the area's many trails. Many of these sites are found in the Sumter National Forest and the State and County Parks, and have been described in the preceding sections of this Element. Other notable sites and views are summarized in the following paragraphs.

A series of steep sided gorges carrying eight major mountain streams down to the Piedmont have carved a generally uniform sloping face of an escarpment with dramatic elevation

changes. These gorges together are known as the **Jocassee Gorges**. Defining the end of the South Carolina Piedmont, the Jocassee Gorges run parallel to the North Carolina border and climb 2,000 vertical feet in elevation in just one to two miles. In the creation of the gorges, the mountain streams produced a spectacular concentration of waterfalls, one of the primary reasons why National Geographic named the Jocassee Gorges region as a “Destination of a Lifetime” in a special edition highlighting “50 of the World’s Last Great Places.” The region has benefitted from major conservation and land preservation in recent decades that involved federal and state agencies, land trusts, conservations groups, and corporations.

Cooperative acquisition efforts between the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), Duke Energy, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Conservation Fund have ensured the continued protection of the natural and recreational resources of the 43,500 Jocassee Gorges tract. SCDNR owns most of the Gorges, with activities governed by a management plan. The primary consideration in the plan is to maintain the natural character of the area, with the secondary objective of providing public recreation that is compatible with the area’s natural character. Recreational activities accommodated in the Plan include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, and hiking. The Jocassee Gorges is largely wild and forested, with access limited to managed areas through gateways that include State Parks and other established locations for day use and overnight ventures. The management plan also recognizes that Jocassee Gorges provides tremendous opportunity for scientific study and education. The area is home to rare plant and animal species and has been the site of important wildlife and fisheries restoration projects.

The Jocassee Gorges is home to more than 60 species of rare and endangered plants. One of South Carolina’s unique and rare plants is the **Oconee Bell flower**, a white and yellow blossom with red stem and red-tinged leaves found in only a few locations in the mountains of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia (Figure 6-1). The flower grows in humid, rocky outcrops around rugged gorges and cool, shady woods along streams and waterfalls. Among the best places to see the Oconee Bell is along the Oconee Bell Trail in Devils Fork State Park. The plant blooms annually from mid-March to early April.

### Oconee Bell Flower



Source: South Carolina State Parks, 2019

The **Old Highway 123 Fishing Pier (Old Tugaloo River Bridge)** is an historic truss bridge that once connected South Carolina to Georgia along U.S. Highway 123 over Lake Hartwell in the Madison community near Westminster. The bridge was replaced in the 1950s and disconnected and is now known as the “Broken Bridges.” The separate ends of the bridge now serve as peaceful and scenic fishing piers. The Pier is managed by the U.S. Corp of Engineers, with parking provided.

The **Oscar B. Wigington Scenic Byway** is only 20 miles long, but it leads to one of the most spectacular overlooks in the State. The **Oscar Wigington Overlook** offers stunning views of Lake Jocassee and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Byway is lined on both sides by remote forestland and is especially beautiful during the fall color season and in early summer when the rhododendron are blooming. Along the Byway are access roads to several waterfalls, the Walhalla Fish Hatchery, the Chattooga River, state and national forest campgrounds, and miles of hiking trails.

The **Walhalla State Fish Hatchery (WSFH)**, located off of S.C. Highway 107 in the Sumter National Forest, was built by the Work Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Originally managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, management of the Fish Hatchery has since been transferred to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. The WSFH is SCDNR’s only cold water fish hatchery, raising brown, brook, and rainbow trout to stock the State’s public waters, including Oconee County. Approximately 500,000 trout are produced and stocked annually by WSFH in support of recreational fishing. Very large trout are also kept at the hatchery on display for the public. Visitors are welcome to tour the hatchery, to fish in the East Fork of the Chattooga River that runs through the Hatchery grounds, and to picnic in designated areas.



## 7. Land Conservation

The preservation and conservation of Oconee County's abundant and unique land resources continues to be a high priority for County residents. While conservation and protection of much of the County's resources is carried out by Federal, State and local agencies, non-profit organizations continue to conserve and preserve land through outright purchase and conservation easements. A conservation easement is a voluntary contract between a landowner and a qualified land trust or public entity that allows the landowner to legally restrict certain land uses such as subdivisions, commercial or industrial operations, or mining from occurring on their property while allowing traditional rural uses such as farming, grazing, hunting, and timbering to continue. The easement is permanent and remains with the land after it has been sold or conveyed to heirs. There are a number of additional organizations that are working to conserve and preserve land in Oconee County including the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, the U.S. Forest Service, and county and municipal governments.

The mission of the **South Carolina Conservation Bank** is "to improve the quality of life in South Carolina through the conservation of significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties, archeological sites, and urban parks." The Bank is considered one of the State's most important land protection tools and a key funding source for land conservation statewide. Since its inception in 2002, the Bank has protected nearly 250,000 acres in 42 counties. Funding for the Bank is provided by a portion of the real estate transfer fee. The Bank provides grants for woodlands/wetlands, farmlands, urban parks, and historical and archaeological sites through a competitive grant application process. Funding from the Bank has been used to conserve more than 5,000 acres in Oconee County, including farmland and tracts adjoining lakes, rivers and creeks. Other tracts adjoin Sumter National Forest, State Parks and Chau Ram County Park, as well as Stumphouse Mountain, which is now in use as Stumphouse Tunnel/Issaqueena Falls Park. The Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District, Upstate Forever, and Naturaland Trust have been awarded grants to conserve these tracts.

The **Heritage Trust Program** of SCDNR has preserved and protected natural and cultural properties throughout the State since 1974. Heritage Trust staff work with related agencies to identify and document rare plants, animals, archaeological sites, and other significant features of South Carolina's heritage. This information is used to determine the locations that have the most conservation potential. One of the program goals is to permanently protect the best examples of these features through a system of heritage preserves. These preserves are managed to sustain or improve habitat for species that are already on the property, those that may return to the area, and species that may colonize the area following improvement. There are four Heritage Preserves in Oconee County, including the Brasstown Creek, Buzzard Roost, and Stumphouse Mountain Heritage Preserves/Wildlife Management Areas. SCDNR sets and regulates the methods of harvest, bag limits, and other hunting requirements in wildlife management areas. While the Sumter National Forest is owned by the U.S. Forest Service, it is managed in a cooperative partnership with SCDNR and is considered a Heritage Preserve.



The **Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District** is “dedicated to the preservation and protection of the natural resources of Oconee County and all of South Carolina.” The District’s conservation easement program is designed to protect the County’s “precious resources and productive farmland.” Through the program, the Soil and Water Conservation District has secured 19 conservation easements that protect approximately 2,200 acres. The District is currently working to secure protections on an additional 450 acres.

The **Oconee County Conservation Bank (OCCB)** was established by the Oconee County Council in 2011 as an independent body whose mission is to leverage available funds to protect significant natural, cultural, and historic resources in the County (*OCCB Press Release, 2012*). The OCCB provides financial incentives to willing landowners of properties that meet specific criteria to convey either a conservation easement or fee simple title to eligible recipients such as non-profits managed to hold conservation lands or government bodies. Oconee County Council must approve all projects. Through this process, the program seeks to simultaneously protect valuable natural resources and private property rights. The Board has protected three properties totaling 174.04 acres since 2011, through private donations from corporations, non-profits, and citizens.

A number of private conservation groups are also working towards protecting critical lands and water through the creation of voluntary conservation easements and other conservation and preservation work.

## E. WATER RESOURCES

The quality and availability of water have played a key role in the development of Oconee County, and will continue to shape its future development. This influence is reflected in the County’s name, derived from the Cherokee word “Aconnee” that means “land beside the water.” Oconee County relies on both surface and ground water from local sources to accommodate residential, commercial, and industrial need.

### 1. Surface Water

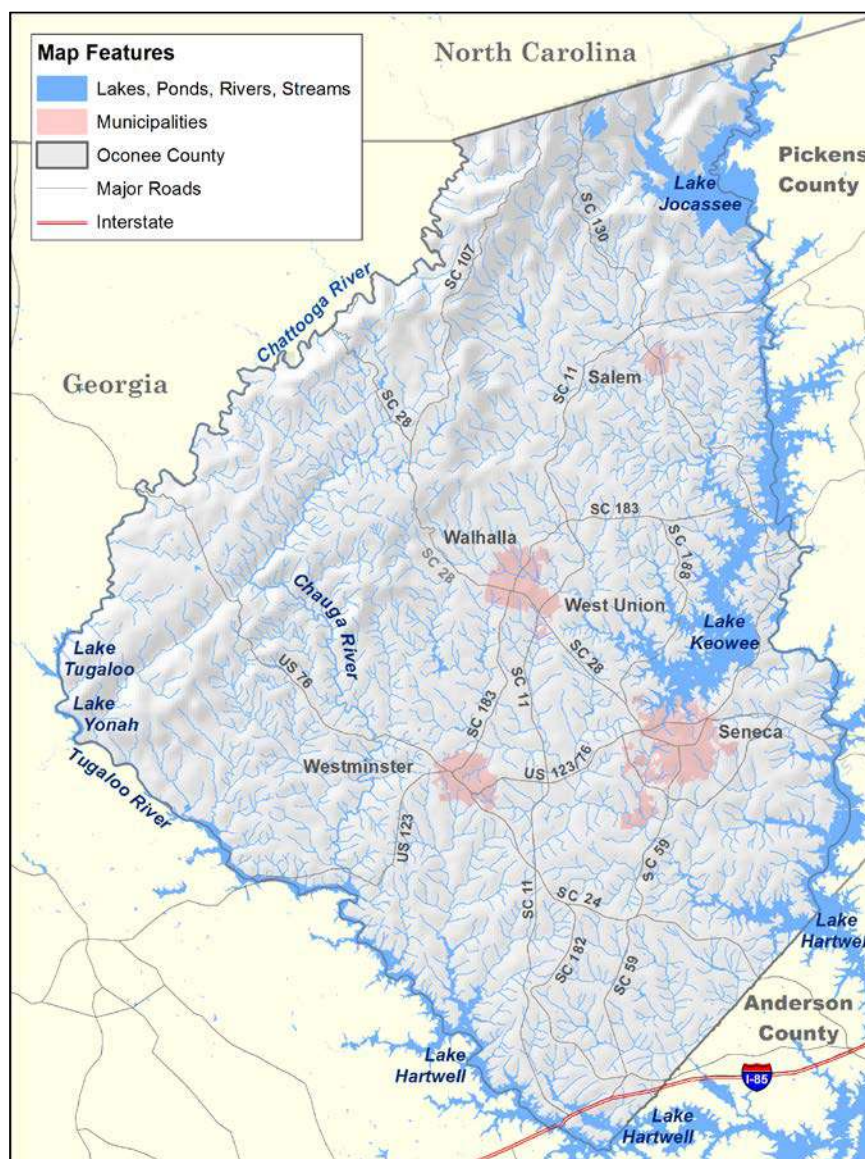
Oconee County has an abundance of surface water, generally sustained by ample rainfall, that includes several major water bodies as well as numerous rivers, creeks, ponds and streams. Surface water accounts for nearly all (99.2%) of the public water supply in Oconee County, with 4,099.88 million gallons withdrawn in 2016 (*SCDHEC, 2016 Reported Water Use in South Carolina, 2017*). An additional 45.9 million gallons of the County’s groundwater were withdrawn for irrigation use and 30.49 million gallons for golf course use. Map 6-5 illustrates the surface water resources in Oconee County.

At 56,000 acres, **Lake Hartwell** is the largest water body that extends into Oconee County. The Lake borders the County on the west, south, and east, and is fed by the Tugaloo and Seneca Rivers. The largest portion of the Lake is within Anderson County, with branches also reaching



into Pickens County and three Georgia counties. The Lake was created between 1955 and 1963 through the damming of the Savannah River by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the purposes of flood risk management, water quality, water supply, downstream navigation, hydropower production, fish and wildlife protection, and recreation (*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2019*). Full pool elevation for Lake Hartwell is 660 feet above mean sea level, with a maximum depth of 185 feet and an average depth of 45 feet (*SCDNR, 2019*). The Lake and the Hartwell Power Plant are under the management of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps’ Shoreline Management Program for Lake Hartwell provides guidelines for general uses of the Lake’s public lands, including the types of permitted private uses and activities such as the construction of boat docks and underbrushing.

**Map 6-5. Surface Water**



Source: USGS National Hydrography Dataset, December 2018





Duke Power, now Duke Energy, developed the **Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project** to generate electricity. The project includes the Keowee Hydro and Jocassee Pumped Storage facilities. Duke Energy is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensee for the Keowee-Toxaway Project that includes management of Lakes Keowee and Jocassee. Duke Energy's Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) was developed to assist in guiding responsible construction, shoreline stabilization, and excavation activities within the lake boundaries of both lakes. The goal of the SMP is to provide continued public and private access to the lakes while protecting their natural resource value.

**Lake Keowee** was formed in 1970 by the construction of dams across the Keowee River and the Little River, creating a reservoir with two distinct halves, connected by an excavated canal. Much of 18,372-acre Lake is in Oconee County, with a northern portion also extending into Pickens County. In addition to providing hydroelectric power at the Keowee Hydro station, the Lake is a crucial source of water for cooling for the Oconee Nuclear Station. Full pool elevation at Lake Keowee is 800 feet above mean sea level (*Duke Energy, 2019*), with a maximum depth of 297 feet and average depth of 53 feet (*SCDNR, 2019*).

**Lake Jocassee** was created in 1973 with the construction of the Jocassee Dam and is the second lake developed as part of the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project. Much of the 7,565-acre Lake is in the northeastern area of Oconee County, with a portion in Pickens County. A confluence of four rivers supplies Lake Jocassee - the Whitewater, Thompson, Horsepasture, and Toxaway Rivers. The Jocassee Hydro Station in the southeast corner of the Lake separates it from the beginning of Lake Keowee. When generating electricity, the Jocassee Pumped Storage Facility serves as a conventional hydroelectric station. However, the facility can also reverse its turbines and pump previously used water from Lake Keowee into Lake Jocassee. The Lake also serves as the lower reservoir for the Bad Creek Pumped Storage Facility. Full pool elevation for Lake Jocassee is 1,110 feet above mean sea level (*Duke Energy, 2019*). Average Lake dept is 157 feet, with a maximum depth of 351 feet (*SCDNR, 2019*).

**Lake Tugaloo** is a 597-acre lake that is fed by the Tallulah and Chattooga Rivers. The Lake was created in 1923 with the completion of the Tugaloo Dam and is the fifth lake in a six-lake series created by hydroelectric dams operated by Georgia Power that follows the original course of the Tallulah River. The Lake stretches along South Carolina's border with Georgia from the Chattooga River to its confluence with the Tallulah River and provides a portion of the western Oconee County border. The Lake is owned and operated by Georgia Power. Full pool elevation for Lake Tugaloo is 891.5 feet above mean sea level.

**Lake Yonah** is a 525-acre lake that was created in 1925 with the completion of the Yonah Dam and is the sixth and last lake in a series created by Georgia Power that follows the original course of the Tallulah River. Lake Yonah forms a portion of South Carolina's border with Georgia, as well as the western Oconee County border. The Tugaloo River flows through Lake Yonah and continues through Lake Hartwell before joining the Savannah River. The Lake is

owned and operated by Georgia Power. Full pool elevation for Lake Yonah is 744.2 feet above mean sea level.

The **Chattooga River** forms the northwest border of Oconee County. The Chattooga is the main tributary of the Tugaloo River, flowing 57 miles from its headwaters in North Carolina to its confluence with the Tallulah River in Lake Tugaloo. The River drops nearly half a mile in elevation along the way. The Chattooga has been protected since 1974 as a National Wild and Scenic River, including the surrounding 15,432-acre corridor. Nearly 40 miles of the River are considered “wild,” meaning that these segments are relatively inaccessible. Most of the area surrounding the River is managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

The 31.3-mile **Chauga River** is a long tributary of the Tugaloo River that begins near Mountain Rest and flows to Chau Ram County Park where it merges with Ramsey Creek before flowing south to Lake Hartwell. The 45.9-mile **Tugaloo River** serves as a portion of the southwestern border of Oconee County. Formed by the Tallulah and Chattooga Rivers, the Tugaloo flows along South Carolina’s border with Georgia and through the impoundments at Lake Tugaloo, Lake Yonah, and Lake Hartwell to the Savannah River.

There are also a number of smaller lakes of various sizes throughout Oconee County. Smaller lakes include **Lake Becky** below Oconee State Park, **Lake Chattooga** near Mountain Rest, **Lake Cheohee** and **Lake Cherokee** in the northwest area of the County, **Crystal Lake** near S.C. Highway 28 above Stumphouse Tunnel, **Lake Jemiki** west of Walhalla, **Mountain Rest Lake** in Mountain Rest, and **Whitewater Lake** northwest of Salem. Many of these lakes include associated residential communities.

Several rivers and creeks of note are the **Thompson River** north of Lake Jocassee, **Brasstown Creek** that flows through the westernmost area of the County through the Sumter National Forest to the Tugaloo River, and **Coneross Creek** that begins near Stumphouse Tunnel and flows southeast to Lake Hartwell. Additional smaller rivers and streams include **Whitewater River** that flows into Lake Jocassee, **Little River** that begins above Salem and flows to Lake Keowee, **Choestoea Creek** that originates west of Westminster and flows to Lake Hartwell, **Cheohee Creek** west of Salem, **Tamassee Creek** in the Sumter National Forest west of Salem, and **Station Creek** that flows from the Sumter National Forest north of Walhalla.

## 2. Groundwater

Groundwater is a significant source of drinking water, particularly in rural areas, and an important source of water for manufacturing, irrigation, and power generation. Groundwater is also vital for maintaining aquatic ecosystems by recharging streams, lakes, and wetlands and sustaining surface water supplies during droughts. It is estimated that about 60% of the water in South Carolina streams originates as groundwater (*S.C. Water Plan, 2004*). However, groundwater accounts for less than one percent (0.8%) of the public water supply in Oconee County, with fewer than 35 million gallons withdrawn in 2016 (*SCDHEC, 2016 Reported Water Use in South Carolina, 2017*).



Groundwater supplies are subject to seasonal variation and decline due to prolonged drought, but usually to a lesser degree than surface water supplies. Groundwater levels are lower during the summer due to increased pumping and reduced recharge, but usually recover during the winter and spring because of increased aquifer recharge and reduced pumping. Multi-year droughts lower aquifer water levels by limiting the recharge that normally occurs during the wet winter and spring months.

SCDHEC, SCDNR, and the South Carolina Water Science Center (SCWSC) of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have cooperatively developed and are maintaining groundwater level monitoring networks within the major aquifers of the State. SCDNR routinely collects groundwater level data for 85 wells statewide. While there are no monitored wells in Oconee County, there are several nearby in Anderson and Greenville counties (*SCDNR, South Carolina Groundwater Data, 2019*).

### **3. Public Water Supply**

More than 10.8 million gallons of water are withdrawn in Oconee County each day by water suppliers. This water is conveyed for uses including domestic, commercial, industrial and public water use. Of the water withdrawn, 0.24 million gallons were drawn from surface water sources such as lakes, rivers, and streams and 10.58 million gallons from groundwater sources located beneath the earth's surface (*USGS National Water Information System, 2015*).

Water is provided to Oconee County residents by 21 *community water systems* (Table 6-7). Community water systems serve the same customers in residences or businesses year-round. Six of these systems are public systems that serve nearly 75,700 residents and 15 are private systems serving more than 8,100 residents.

Additional water systems serving Oconee County residents include one *non-transient, non-community water system* and 35 *transient, non-community water systems* (*US EPA Envirofacts, SDWIS, 2019*). Non-transient, non-community water systems provide water for uses that serve the same people, but not year-round, such as schools that have their own water systems. Transient, non-community water systems provide water for uses that do not consistently serve the same users year-round such as rest stops, campgrounds, and gas stations.





Table 6-7. Community Water Systems in Oconee County

| Water System Name                      | Primary Water Source Type                     | Population Served |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <b>Public Community Water Systems</b>  |   |                   |
| City of Seneca                         | Surface water (Lake Keowee)                   | 33,374            |
| City of Walhalla                       | Surface water (tributaries of Coneross Creek) | 15,740            |
| City of Westminster                    | Surface water (Chauga River)                  | 7,582             |
| Pioneer Rural Water District           | Surface water purchased                       | 16,236            |
| Town of Salem                          | Surface water purchased                       | 2,278             |
| Town of West Union                     | Surface water purchased                       | 468               |
| <b>Private Community Water Systems</b> |   |                   |
| Bay Ridge Subdivision                  | Ground water                                  | 62                |
| Camp Ghigau                            | Ground water                                  | 35                |
| Cherokee Creek Boys School             | Ground water                                  | 26                |
| Chickasaw Point                        | Surface water purchased                       | 490               |
| Harts Cove and Tory Pointe             | Surface water purchased                       | 560               |
| Highpointe at Clemson                  | Surface water purchased                       | 864               |
| Isaqueena Point Utility System         | Surface water purchased                       | 36                |
| Keowee Bay Subdivision                 | Ground water                                  | 115               |
| Keowee Key Utility System Inc.         | Surface water purchased                       | 3,602             |
| Port Bass I                            | Ground water                                  | 590               |
| Port Bass II                           | Ground water                                  | 178               |
| Tesi-Foxwood Hills                     | Surface water purchased                       | 1,226             |
| Timber Lake I                          | Ground water                                  | 202               |
| Timber Lake II                         | Ground water                                  | 96                |
| Turtlehead Subdivision                 | Ground water                                  | 32                |

Source: U.S. EPA, Envirofacts, Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS), January 2019

#### 4. River Basins and Sub-basins

The precipitation that falls in South Carolina is drained by four major river systems – the Pee Dee, Santee, Ashley-Combahee-Edisto, and Savannah River Basins. The streams and rivers that drain each region are collectively called drainage basins. These basins generally traverse the State from the northwest to the southeast. The distribution of these systems is a key factor in the geographic disparity in water supply and demand that exists among regions.

Oconee County is located within the **Savannah River Basin**. The basin includes a small portion of North Carolina and all of the land in South Carolina and Georgia that drains to the Savannah River. In South Carolina, the Savannah River Basin is described in two sections – the Upper Savannah River Basin that includes Oconee County and the Lower Savannah River Basin. The Upper Savannah River Basin encompasses seven watersheds and 1,164 square miles (744.8 acres). There are approximately 1,341 stream miles and 43,677 acres of lake waters in the basin.

In Oconee County, the Savannah River Basin is further divided into the **Tugaloo River** and **Seneca River** sub-basins. SCDHEC describes the two eight-digit sub-basins as the Tugaloo/Seneca River Basin (hydrologic units 03060102 and 03050101). The Tugaloo/Seneca River Basin is located in Oconee, Anderson, and Pickens Counties and encompasses 12 watersheds and 1,269 square miles, extending into Georgia and North Carolina. There are approximately 3,832 stream miles and 67,532 acres of lake waters in the two sub-basins. Map 6-6 depicts the sub-basins and watersheds in Oconee County.

**Map 6-6. River Sub-basins and Watersheds**



Source: USDA, Geo Spatial Data Gateway, February 2019

A watershed is a geographic area into which the surrounding waters, precipitation, sediments, and dissolved materials drain and flow to a single outlet. Watershed resources include both groundwater and surface water, making watershed protection vital to preserving water quality. As water flows across or under a watershed on its way to a lake, river, or stream, it is exposed



to potential contaminants in the form of stormwater runoff and other pollutants. Development of natural areas can adversely impact water quality through the replacement of vegetation and forests with impervious surfaces.

Oconee County is impacted by nine watersheds – five located in the Seneca River Sub-basin and four in the Tugaloo River Sub-basin (Map 6-6). The Chauga, Coneross, and Little River-Lake Keowee watersheds cover substantial areas within the County. Detailed watershed data including the impacted counties, primary water bodies, and coverage area is included in Table 6-8.

**Table 6-8. Watersheds in Oconee County**

| Watershed   | Counties;<br>State        | Primary Waterbodies   | Area<br>(acres)           | Stream<br>Miles | Lake/Pond<br>Waters<br>(acres) |
|---|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Seneca River Sub-basin (03060101)</b>                  |                           |   |                           |                 |                                |
| <b>Keowee River-Lake Jocassee</b><br>(03060101-01)        | Oconee, Pickens and NC    | Keowee River and its tributaries flowing through and forming Lake Jocassee                | 93,945<br>(31,875 in SC)  | 229.7           | 8,490.2                        |
| <b>Keowee River-Lake Keowee</b><br>(03060101-02)          | Oconee, Pickens and NC    | Keowee River and its tributaries from Lake Jocassee Dam to Keowee Dam forming Lake Keowee | 79,952<br>(78,837 in SC)  | 309.8           | 7,598.2                        |
| <b>Little River-Lake Keowee</b><br>(03060101-03)          | Oconee                    | Little River and its tributaries as is flows through Lake Keowee                          | 104,996                   | 339.5           | 9,758.4                        |
| <b>Coneross Creek</b><br>(03060101-05)                    | Oconee                    | Coneross Creek and its tributaries, which form an arm of Lake Hartwell                    | 68,125                    | 236.4           | 2,304.2                        |
| <b>Hartwell Lake-Seneca River</b><br>(03060101-08)        | Oconee, Pickens, Anderson | Seneca River arm of Lake Hartwell   | 68,085                    | 170.6           | 13,028.6                       |
| <b>Tugaloo River Sub-basin (03060102)</b>                 |                           |   |                           |                 |                                |
| <b>Chattooga River</b><br>(03060102-02)                   | Oconee and NC/Georgia     | Chattooga River and its tributaries   | 178,648<br>(34,895 in SC) | 570.6           | 629.3                          |
| <b>Chauga River</b><br>(03060102-03)                      | Oconee                    | Chauga River and its tributaries  | 70,770                    | 323.4           | 456.3                          |
| <b>Hartwell Lake-Upper Tugaloo River</b><br>(03060102-04) | Oconee and Georgia        | Upper Tugaloo River and its tributaries from its origin in the Chauga River               | 83,089<br>(27,005 in SC)  | 259.7           | 2,288.6                        |
| <b>Hartwell Lake-Lower Tugaloo River</b><br>(03060102-05) | Oconee, Anderson          | Lower Tugaloo River and its tributaries from Chauga River through Lake Hartwell           | 179,670<br>(84,992 in SC) | 544.1           | 17,041.2                       |

Source: SCDHEC, Watersheds, February 2019

**5. Water Quality**

South Carolina’s abundant water supply has been a key resource in the development and growth of the State’s economy. The quantity of this water supply is integral to future





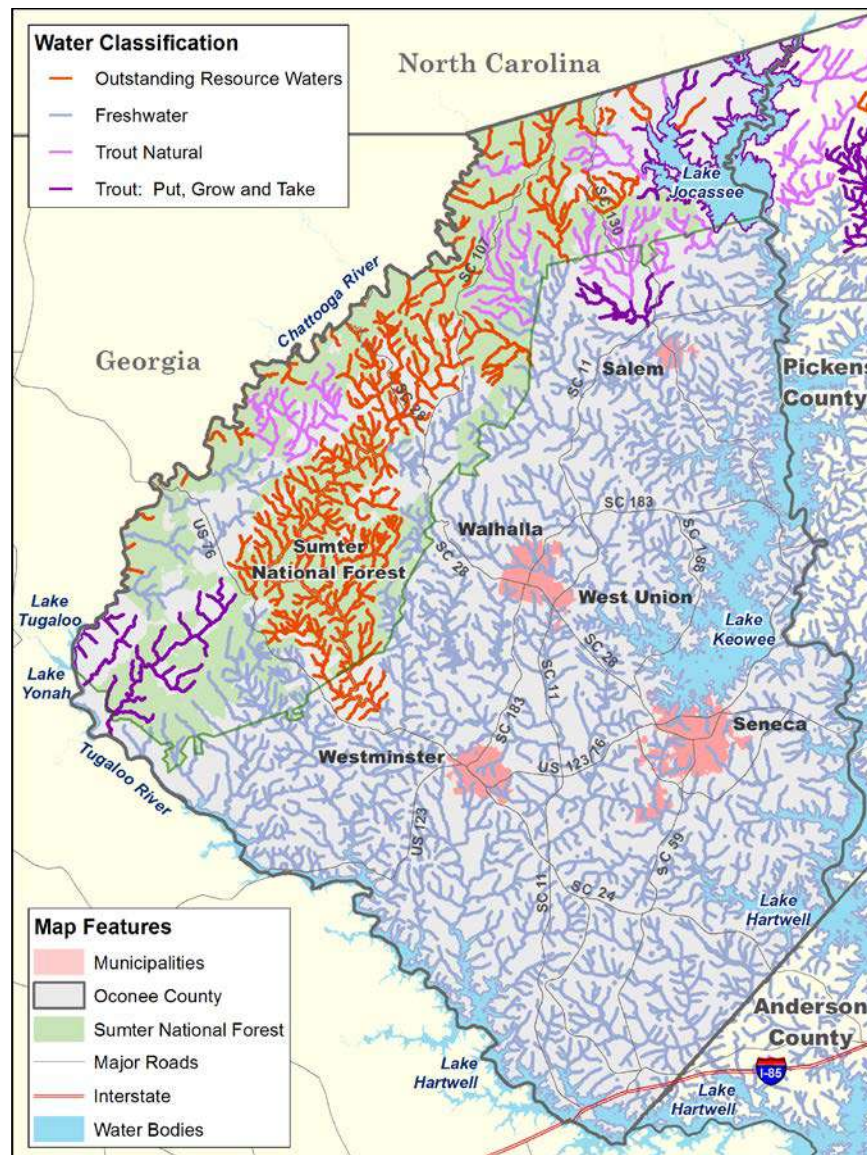
community and regional development efforts, while the health and safety of residents depends on the quality of these resources. Although overall water quality is good in most parts of the State, increased urbanization and a growing population have contributed to rising levels of point source and non-point source pollution. Sustained growth will place greater demand on the water supply and make the protection of water resources a long-term priority.

*Section 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act*, as passed in 1972 and amended in 1987, established criteria for a regionally integrated approach to addressing surface water quality protection. The State of South Carolina continues to use regional planning agencies throughout much of the State as a means of administering these requirements. In 1978, the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) was designated as the water quality management planning agency for a six-county region that includes Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson County. As the designated planning agency, the ACOG is responsible for updating and amending the *Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP)* that identifies policy priorities and recommendations for water quality management across the region. The most recent update of the *Appalachian Regional Water Quality Plan* was adopted by Council in 2011.

The SCDHEC Bureau of Water has developed a *Watershed Water Quality Assessment* for each major river basin in the State. Included in each assessment is an in-depth description of the watershed and its resources; an analysis of surface water quality, an analysis of groundwater quality; a listing of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits; the Nonpoint Source (NPS) pollution management, water quantity and usage, growth potential within each watershed related to wastewater needs; watershed protection and restoration strategies; and available state and citizen-based watershed stewardship programs. Updates to Watershed Water Quality Assessments for South Carolina river basins can be found online in the SCDHEC *SC Watershed Atlas*. While more complete assessments of local water quality are included in the SCDHEC data, pertinent findings for Oconee County water quality are summarized in this section.

Statewide standards have been established to protect the suitable uses indicated in each classification and to maintain and improve water quality. The standards determine permit limits for treated wastewater dischargers and any other activities that may impact water quality. As illustrated in Map 6-7, most waters in Oconee County are classified as *Fresh Water* by SCDHEC. Per SCDHEC *Regulation 61-68 – Water Classification and Standards*, fresh waters are suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation (swimming, water skiing, boating, and wading), for industrial and agricultural uses, and as sources of drinking water supply after conventional treatment. Fresh waters are also suitable for fishing and provide a suitable environment for the survival and propagation of a balanced aquatic community of flora and fauna.

Map 6-7. Water Classification in Oconee County



Source: SCDHEC, S.C. Watershed Atlas, 2019

Many of the waters in the Sumter National Forest, as well a portion of the Chauga River and some of its tributaries that extend beyond SNF, are classified as *Outstanding Resource Waters*. Outstanding Resource Waters are “of exceptional recreational or ecological importance or of unusual value.” Such waters may include, but are not limited to, “waters in national or state parks or wildlife refuges; waters supporting threatened or endangered species; waters under the *National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* or *South Carolina Scenic Rivers Act*; waters known to be significant nursery areas for commercially important species or known to contain significant commercial or public shellfish resources; or waters used for or having significant value for scientific research and study.”



Some waters in the Sumter National Forest, as well as a few outside of the SNF just above Salem, are freshwaters that have also been recognized by SCDHEC as trout waters. *Trout Natural* waters are suitable for supporting reproducing trout populations. The waters are also suitable for primary and secondary contact recreation and fishing, as a source of drinking water supply after conventional treatment, and industrial and agricultural uses. The criteria for *Trout: Put, Grow, and Take* waters are similar to those of the Trout Natural Waters, however these waters are also suitable for supporting the growth of stocked trout populations.

#### **a. NPDES Permitted Activities**

As authorized by the *Clean Water Act of 1972*, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program reduces water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches. Individual homes that are connected to a municipal system, use a septic system, or do not have a surface discharge are exempt from NPDES permitting. However, industrial, municipal, and other facilities must obtain permits to discharge directly into surface waters. Accordingly, discharges from wastewater treatment systems owned by governments, private utilities, and industries are required to obtain NPDES permits.

Wastewater facilities are monitored by SCDHEC regional offices of Environmental Quality Control for compliance with NPDES permits. SCDHEC issues permits for *municipal* facilities (municipal utilities), *domestic* facilities (private utilities), and *industrial* facilities (industrial pump and haul operations that generate non-hazardous process wastewater and domestic wastewater generated at industrial facilities). Table 6-9 lists permitted NPDES facilities in Oconee County, sorted by type of activity.

**Table 6-9. NPDES Permitted Facilities in Oconee County, 2019**

| Facility Name  | Watershed    | Description (SIC)                                     |
|--|--------------|---|
| <b>Municipal</b>                                       |              |   |
| City of Seneca WTP                                     | 030601010305 | Water Supply  |
| City of Walhalla Coneross Creek WTP                    | 030601010502 | Water Supply  |
| Oconee County Coneross Creek WWTF                      | 030601010502 | Sewerage System                                       |
| <b>Domestic</b>  |              |   |
| Chickasaw Association Inc/Chickasaw Pointe Subdivision | 030601020507 | Operator of Dwellings other than Apartment Buildings  |
| Chickasaw Utilities/Chickasaw Point                    | 030601020502 | Combination Utilities, NEC                            |
| Clemson University WWTF                                | 030601010803 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools      |
| SCPRT I-85 Info and Rest Area                          | 030601020507 | Miscellaneous Personal Services, NEC                  |
| Keowee Key Utility Systems Inc                         | 030601010304 | Operators of Dwellings Other Than Apartment Buildings |
| SCPRT Oconee State Park                                | 030601020301 | Amusement and Recreation Services, NEC                |
| Tamassee DAR School                                    | 030601010301 | Elementary and Secondary Schools                      |

**Table 6-9. NPDES Permitted Facilities in Oconee County, 2019**

| Facility Name                                      | Watershed    | Description (SIC)  |
|--|--------------|--|
| Total Environ/Foxwood Hills Subdivision            | 030601020502 | Operators of Dwellings Other Than Apartment Buildings        |
| West-Oak High School/Oconee County School District | 030601020502 | Elementary and Secondary Schools                             |
| <b>Industrial</b>                                  |              |  |
| Clemson University/Central Energy                  | 030601010803 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools             |
| Duke Energy/Oconee Nuclear                         | 030601010802 | Electric Services  |
| Duke Energy/Oconee Nuclear                         | 030601010802 | Electric Services  |
| Duke Energy/Oconee Nuclear                         | 030601010802 | Electric Services  |
| Duke Energy/Oconee Nuclear                         | 030601010204 | Electric Services  |
| Greenfield Industries Inc. Seneca                  | 030601010803 | Metal Sanitary ware  |
| Koyo Bearings USA                                  | 030601010305 | Ball and roller bearings                                     |
| Oconee County Rock Quarry                          | 030601010501 | ---  |
| Sandvick, Inc.                                     | 030601010502 | Cutting Tools, Machine Tool Accessories                      |
| SCDNR Walhalla Fish Hatchery                       | 030601020204 | Fish Hatcheries and Preserves                                |
| Thrift Group/Thrift Brothers Mine                  | 030601010803 | Miscellaneous Nonmetallic Minerals                           |
| Tyco Healthcare/Kendall                            | 030601010305 | Orthopedic, Prosthetic, and Surgical Appliances and Supplies |
| WP Prop Clemson/Clemson Finishing Plant            | 030601010803 | Finishers of Textiles, NEC                                   |

Source: SCDHEC GIS Clearinghouse, February 2019

### ***b. Water Quality Monitoring***

SCDHEC evaluates water quality through the collection of data from a statewide network of primary and secondary ambient monitoring stations supplemented by rotating watershed monitoring stations. Network data is used to determine long-term water quality trends and attainment of water quality standards, identify locations that warrant attention, and plan and evaluate stream classifications and standards. Data is also used to formulate permit limits for wastewater discharges in accordance with State and Federal water quality standards and the goals of the *Clean Water Act*. Assessments of water quality monitoring data for watersheds are regularly updated and published on the Department's *SC Watershed Atlas* website.

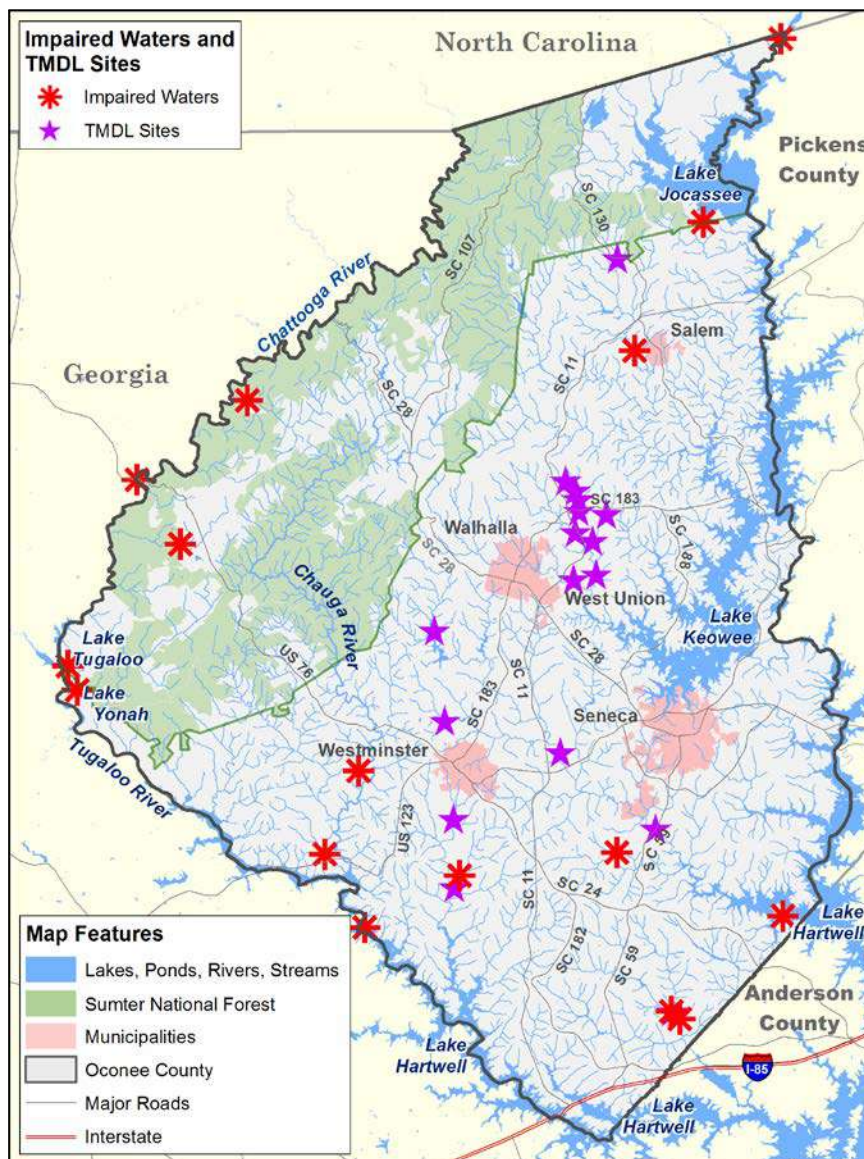
SCDHEC prepares a bi-annual list of impaired waters in compliance with *Section 303(d)* of the U.S. EPA *Clean Water Act*. The list is based on a five-year data compilation from multiple water quality monitoring stations in major and secondary waterbodies in Oconee County, along with data gathered from other qualified sources. Impaired waterbodies appearing on the 303(d) list do not meet water quality standards. The most recent list in *The State of South Carolina's 2018 Integrated Report* includes 16 locations in Oconee County (Map 6-8). Once a site is included in the 303(d) list of impaired waters, a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) must be developed by SCDHEC and approved by the EPA. TMDL refers both to the amount of a single pollutant





entering a waterbody on a daily basis and to an associated document and implementation plan with specific measures to improve water quality and attain water quality standards. TMDL implementation has the potential to reduce pollution sources within a watershed and restore full use of the waterbody. Sites covered under an approved TMDL are also shown in Map 6-8.

**Map 6-8. Impaired Waters and TMDL Sites in Oconee County**



Source: SCDHEC GIS Clearinghouse, February 2019

**c. Nonpoint Source Pollution**

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution is untraceable to a single origin or source. Such pollution includes fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, animal waste, sediment, pathogens, household wastewater from failing septic systems, and contaminants such as street litter carried into water sources by urban runoff. Runoff occurring after a rain event transports pollutants to the



nearest waterbody or storm drain where they can impact water quality in creeks, rivers, lakes, estuaries, and wetlands. NPS pollution can also impact groundwater when it seeps into aquifers. Adverse effects of NPS pollution include physical destruction of aquatic habitat, fish kills and closure of fishing areas, limitations on recreational use, reduced water supply, taste and odor problems in drinking water, and increased potential for flooding when waterbodies become choked with sediment.

To comply with the Federal *Clean Water Act*, the State of South Carolina manages several programs to reduce the impact of non-point source pollution. The State's Non-point Source Management Program provides a framework for addressing the major causes and sources of nonpoint source pollution. SCDHEC is the responsible agency for nonpoint source monitoring as part of its biannual assessment of the condition of the State's waters. Nonpoint sources monitored by SCDHEC include mining operations, livestock operations, agriculture, landfills, and land applications of effluent from wastewater treatment facilities. Multiple facilities are monitored under the SCDHEC Nonpoint Source Management Program within Oconee County watersheds. Up-to-date mapping and information for these facilities are found online in the *SC Watershed Atlas*.

SCDHEC also regulates stormwater activity in Oconee County. The County has adopted complimentary drainage and stormwater requirements that require review of proposed developments to ensure that all stormwater runoff is removed to perpetually maintained drainage systems, stormwater drainage systems are separated from sanitary sewer systems, there is adequate provision for storm or floodwater channels or basins, and other provisions designed to protect properties.

Local and regional water quality management efforts recognize that the quality of the water supply is directly linked to development activities, demand, and land use practices within the watershed. When considering water quality in the comprehensive planning process, it is important to incorporate measures that protect valuable water resources from excessive runoff and discharge that may create unsafe levels of dangerous chemicals or bacteria. Attention to stormwater retention, percentage of impervious surfaces within developments, and industrial discharge are critical to ensuring water quality in Oconee County.

## **6. Lake and River Protection**

A number of public and private entities are involved in shoreline and river corridor management in Oconee County.

### ***a. Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee Shoreline Management***

Duke Energy is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensee for the Keowee-Toxaway Hydroelectric Project that includes the Jocassee and Keowee development in Upstate South Carolina and Western North Carolina. FERC licensees must supervise and manage



shoreline development to ensure consistency with project purposes, including protection and enhancement of scenic, recreational, cultural and other environmental values. Duke Energy developed a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) to assist in guiding responsible construction, shoreline stabilization, and excavation activities within the lake boundaries of Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee. The goal of the SMP is to provide continued public and private access to these reservoirs while protecting and enhancing their natural resource values.

Any occupancy or use of land and waters within the project boundaries of Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee requires prior written authorization by Duke Energy's Lake Services department. The project boundary for Lake Keowee follows the 800-to-810 foot contour elevation around the Lake. The Lake Jocassee project boundary follows the 1,110-to-1,120 foot contour elevation around the Lake (*FERC, Duke Energy License Renewal, 2016*).

Duke Energy manages uses within the project boundary, including marinas, piers, residential access from lots adjacent to the Lake boundary, clearing or cutting trees or other vegetation, shoreline stabilization measures (rip-rap, seawalls), excavation, bridges, and line crossings. Miscellaneous uses such as fish attractors and water ski courses must also apply for a permit. A number of activities are not allowed within the project boundaries of the Lakes such as the planting of non-native species, septic tanks and fields, stormwater pipes, littering, washing and painting of watercraft (except with biodegradable detergents), any part of a permanent dwelling, swimming pools, camping, kennels and pens for pets, fences, and aquaculture operations.

Protection of the riparian zone, or vegetated area adjacent to the Lakes, is required by Duke Energy. The riparian zone provides critical habitat for fish and wildlife, helps reduce erosion of soils into the water, and serves as a filter for runoff of fertilizers and other chemicals. Removal of vegetation from the project boundary is allowed only by prior written authorization.

#### **[b. Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program](#)**

[The Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program \(KTHEP\) provides funding to enhance, create, and protect fish and wildlife habitats within the watersheds and along Lake Keowee and Lake Jocassee. Established in accordance with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license for the Keowee-Toxaway Hydro Project and as part of its Shoreline Management Plan, the program is a cooperative effort by Duke Energy and stakeholders including Oconee County, SCDNR, and the S.C. Wildlife Federation. KTHERP is funded through the Habitat Enhancement Fund with fees paid by property owners and developers who apply for lake use permits. Funds are awarded through a competitive grant application process to government agencies and nonprofit organizations, with awards typically ranging from \\$10,000 to \\$50,000. Recent recipients include Oconee County, the Friends of Lake Keowee Society, Keep Oconee Beautiful, Clemson University, SCDNR, and the Nature Conservancy of South Carolina. In 2019, KTHERP funding totaled more than \\$1.4 million \(Duke Energy, Lake Services, April 2019\). Since 2015, the program has provided more than \\$450,000 to support fish and avian habitat improvements.](#)



Recent awards include shoreline restoration projects in the South Cove County Park and on Lake Keowee, construction of walkways to reduce erosion and install native plants at Devils Fork State Park, an elementary school curriculum that focuses on protection of land and water resources, restoration of fire-dependent habitats in the Jocassee Gorges, habitat and stock enhancement for native fishes in a headwater tributary of Lake Keowee, and prescribed fire implementation in the Keowee and Jocassee watersheds.

### ***b. Lake Hartwell Shoreline Management***

The Lake Hartwell shoreline is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to promote safe and healthful use while maintaining environmental safeguards that will ensure a quality resource for future generations. The primary objective of the Hartwell Project Shoreline Management Program is the preservation of public access and use while maintaining a balance between permitted private uses and the long-term protection of lake resources. The prescribed boundary for Lake Hartwell shoreline is the 670-foot contour elevation. While the Corps maintains identifying markers for the boundary line, it is the responsibility of landowners to identify the boundary location on their specific property.

The SMP includes shoreline allocations that are intended to manage the type, number, and location of private facilities and activities on public land and water. Approximately 50% of the shoreline is in Limited Development Areas, which allow private docks and certain land-based activities. Approximately 26% of the shoreline is in Protected Shoreline Areas intended to reduce conflicts between public and private use and maintain aesthetics, fish and wildlife habitat, cultural, or other environmental values. Docks, improved walkways, and utility rights-of-way are generally prohibited in these areas. Approximately 24% of the shoreline is in Public Recreation Areas that are designated for Federal, State, and other public use, including commercial concessions. No private use facilities or activities are allowed in these areas. Less than one percent of the shoreline is in Prohibited Access Areas, where public boating, pedestrian access, and private use facilities and activities are either not allowed or restricted for safety and security reasons.

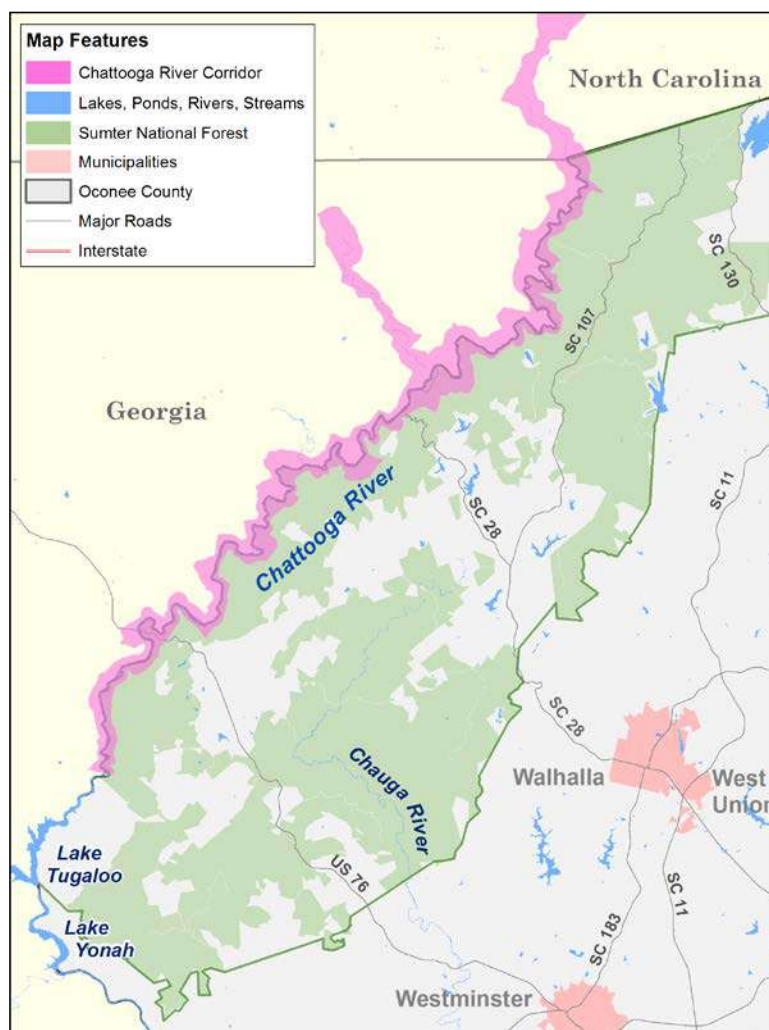
Shoreline use permits/licenses, also known as consolidated permits, must be obtained before the installation or use of any facility or the implementation of any action on project land or water. Permits can be considered for boat docks, underbrushing, utility rights-of-way, improved walkways, and bank stabilization. Shoreline use permits/licenses are issued for a five-year term and do not convey if the property is sold or transferred to a new owner. The construction of new roads, ramps, turnarounds, land-based boathouses, marine ways, fixed gangwalks, pump houses, picnic shelters, and patios within the Lake boundary is prohibited, though repairs may be made on existing facilities. The Corps also maintains a list of approved plants that may be used within the Lake boundary area.



**c. Chattooga River Land and Resource Management**

Designated as one of the Nation’s first Wild and Scenic Rivers in 1974, the 57-mile Chattooga River is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the southeast. The River is bordered by three National Forests – the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina, the Nantahala in North Carolina, and the Chattahoochee-Oconee in Georgia. The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for the management of the 15,432-acre Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor, of which 4,544 acres are in South Carolina (Map 6-9). Sumter National Forest is the lead authority for all boating and floating use on the Chattooga River on the main channel from Burrel’s Ford to Lake Tugaloo, as well as the West Fork.

**Table 6-9. Chattooga River Corridor**



Source: USDA National Forest Service, FSGeodata Clearinghouse, 2019

The *Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for Sumter National Forest* includes a number of standards for the Chattooga River Corridor that provide direction for on-river and in-corridor recreation capacity and address water quality issues within the watershed. The Plan



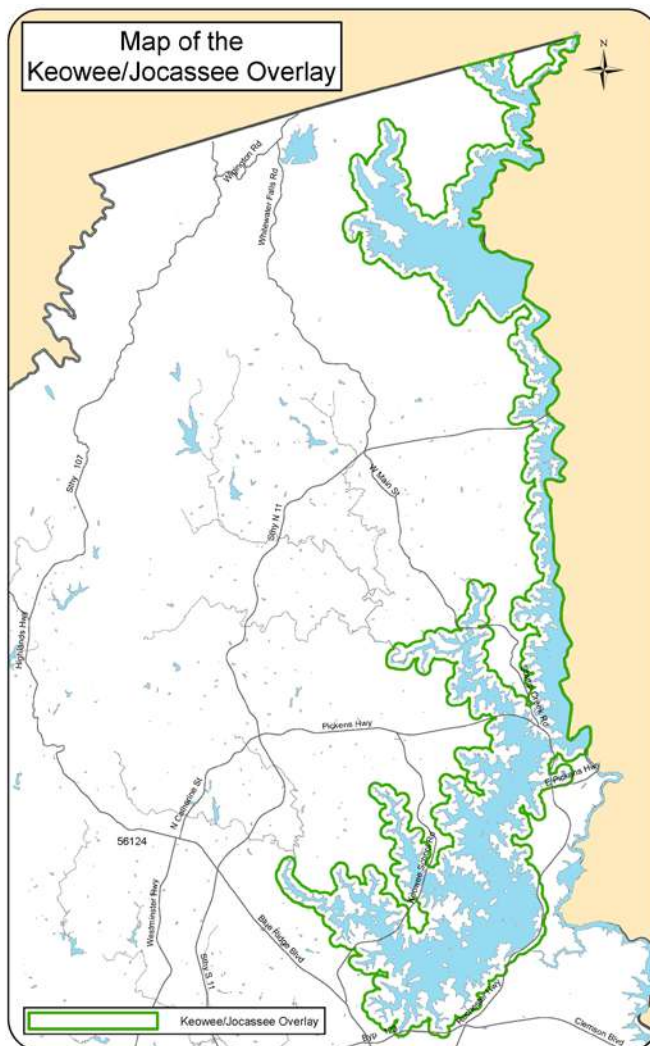
does not allow motorized watercraft on the River or floating upstream of S.C. Highway 28. Trip size (persons and watercraft) and frequency is also regulated. Only three companies are commercially licensed by the U.S. Forest Service to operate on the two more difficult and dangerous sections of the Chattooga River.

Access to the 3,290 acres of the Chattooga designated as *Wild* in South Carolina is limited to non-motorized trails. This is considered to be the most primitive and remote segment, with restrictions that protect and preserve the natural environment and processes from human influences. While the 224 acres of the River in South Carolina designated as *Scenic* are slightly more developed than the *Wild* segments, the River's shorelines are undeveloped with limited road or bridge crossings, parking areas, and trailheads. A range of recreational opportunities that complement the natural setting are provided in the 1,030 acres along the River designated as *Recreational*. The River is readily accessible by road in these areas with parking areas, signage, restrooms, boat launches, fishing platforms, and picnic sites. Camping is permitted at any location within the Chattooga River Corridor that is at least 50 feet from the River or any stream or trail and at least one-quarter mile from any road. Several designated campsites with fire rings are located at sites along the Chattooga Trail.

#### ***d. Oconee County Lake Overlay District***

Oconee County created a *Lake Overlay District* as an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance in 2012 to protect water quality, maintain natural beauty, and limit secondary impacts of new development on residents living near lakeshores. The Overlay is also intended to ensure the enjoyment of the Lakes by all residents. Lake Overlay District boundaries are applied to Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee as shown in Map 6-10. Measurements for lake boundaries used in conjunction with the Overlay District are based on full pond levels of 800 feet above mean sea level on Lake Keowee and 1,110 feet above mean sea level on Lake Jocassee.

A natural vegetative buffer of 25 feet from full pond level is required from the lakeshore. Within the buffer, no trees larger than six-inch caliber can be removed unless certified to be a hazard, and new manicured lawns or managed spaces cannot be established. A view lane of no more than 15% of the natural buffer area is allowed and trees may be limbed up to 50% of their height. No development activity or soil disturbance can occur in buffer areas, with buffer protection required during construction or development. The preservation of existing natural vegetation is encouraged. The Lake Overlay District prohibits a net density of greater than two dwelling units per acre in both single-family and multi-family development, and building height for structures must be no greater than 65 feet above finished grade. Marinas and commercial boat storage cannot be located within a mile radius of an existing subdivision. Proposed non-residential projects must be reviewed as a Special Exception by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

**Map 6-10. Oconee County Keowee/Jocassee Lake Overlay**

Source: Oconee County, 2019

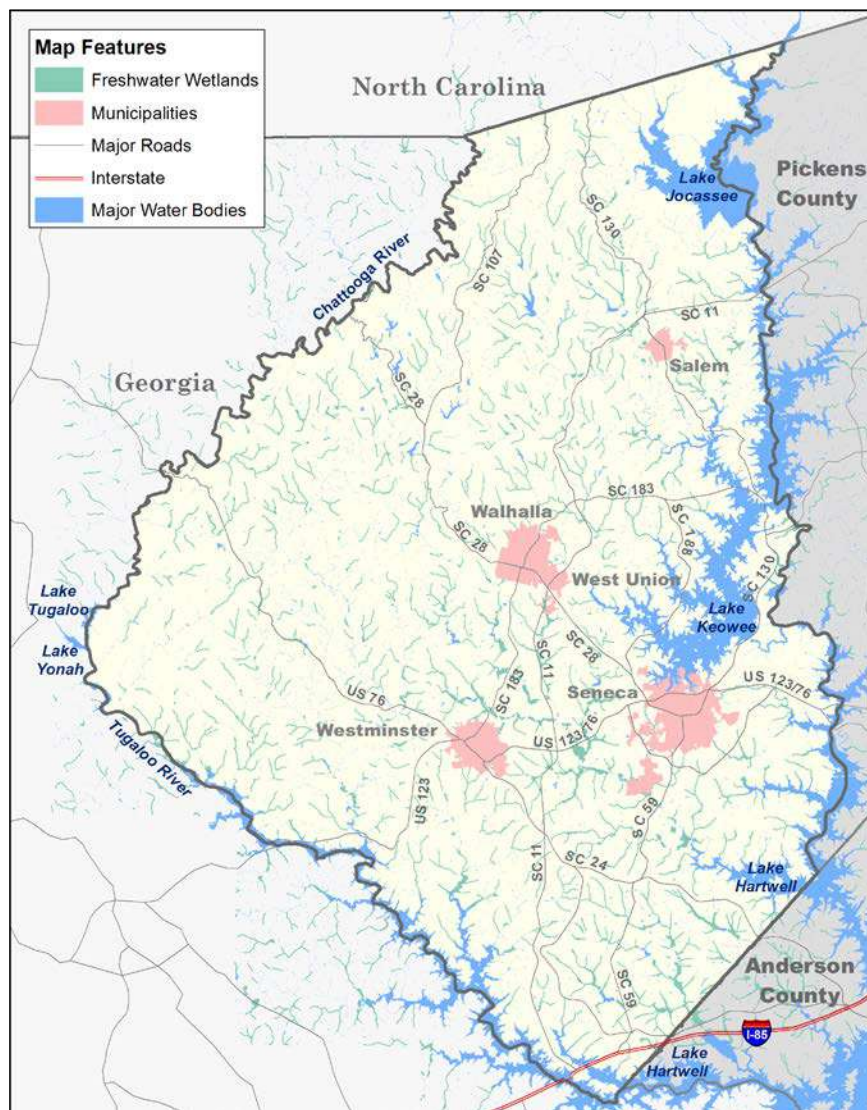
## 7. Wetlands

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs, with profound ecological, aesthetic, and economic value. Wetlands provide a natural filtration system for sediment and pollution, while serving as critical habitat for numerous species. Socio-economic benefits of wetlands include flood protection, erosion control, groundwater recharge, pollution abatement, sediment filtering, and the provision of a variety of harvestable natural products. There are also recreational values in wetlands for boating, fishing, hunting, and nature watching.

Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. All Oconee County wetlands are classified as *freshwater*. Freshwater wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and

under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Freshwater wetlands store excess stormwater, mitigating the impact of flooding, purifying water by holding and breaking down pollutants, and trapping silt and soil to reduce clogging of nearby streams. Some wetlands store water in the rainy season and release the water later into nearby aquifers or underground streams, recharging the groundwater that supplies many South Carolinians with drinking water.

**Map 6-11. Wetlands in Oconee County**



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory, 2019

Wetlands are susceptible to naturally occurring changes and the negative human impacts of urban development. Development activities such as pond construction, filling, draining of lands for farming, and pollution have resulted in wetland loss or degradation. The loss of wetlands, especially through filling, increases runoff and impairs beneficial functions of flood control, groundwater recharge, and water quality improvement. Total wetlands acreage in South





Carolina has declined by one-quarter since the late 1700s, primarily as a result of human activities (*USGS National Water Summary on Wetlands Resources, 2016*).

Freshwater, forested wetlands now comprise approximately 80% of the State's wetlands. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data indicates the presence of wetlands in the vicinity of creeks and streams throughout Oconee County (Map 6-11). Factors considered in wetlands designation include the presence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydrological conditions that involve a temporary or permanent source of water that can cause soil saturation. However, NWI data is generated on a large scale, necessitating that the exact location of any wetlands be determined on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

## F. NATURAL HAZARDS

Natural hazards endanger the health and safety of community residents, jeopardize economic vitality and imperil environmental quality. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages local governments to initiate mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate the risks to humans and property from natural hazards. The *Anderson and Oconee Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan* was most recently updated and adopted in August 2018. The Plan identifies the hazards that threaten the two counties and provides estimates of the relative risks posed to each community by these hazards. This is supported by a set of goals, objectives, strategies, and actions that guide mitigation activities, with a detailed plan for implementation and monitoring.

While Oconee County is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards, it ranks 14<sup>th</sup> lowest among the State's 46 counties in terms of both the number of past natural hazards and future probability of natural hazards (*South Carolina Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). The Plan identifies winter storms as the top hazard faced by Oconee County in recent decades, followed by lightning and severe storms, tornados and high winds, floods, drought and heat wave, hail, and thunderstorms.

### 1. Winter Storms

Winter storms include snow, sleet, ice, and cold temperatures, and can range from moderate precipitation lasting only a few hours to blizzard conditions. Many winter storms are accompanied by low temperatures, some resulting in temperatures below freezing. Agricultural production can be seriously impacted when temperatures remain below the freezing point for an extended period of time.

These storms are often accompanied by sleet and freezing rain. Ice storms occur when freezing rain falls and freezes immediately upon impact forming a glaze of ice. Even small accumulations of ice cause a significant hazard, especially on sidewalks and roads, power lines, and trees, that can disrupt transportation, communications, and power for days. A winter weather event is considered notable when it causes \$50,000 or more in combined property and crop damages.

The County's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan reports a 50% probability of one or more winter weather events in any one-year time frame, resulting in a moderate level of vulnerability for these storms. The Plan lists 28 notable winter storm events that impacted Oconee County from 1960 through 2015, with the most costly events in terms of property damage occurring in 1973 and 1979. The *NOAA Storm Events Database* also reports two winter storms in 2016 and two in 2017. Past events indicate that winter storms can cause significant property damage and disruption of daily life and commercial operations.

## **2. Severe Thunderstorms with Lightning and Hail**

A thunderstorm is a rainstorm event that is classified as severe when at least one of the following occurs: wind speeds exceed 58 miles per hour, tornadoes develop, or hail exceeds 0.75 inches in diameter (*S.C. Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). Accompanying lightning can cause injury and death, as well as structural and equipment damage.

Oconee County has a moderate level of vulnerability to lightning and severe thunderstorms, with a 41.8% probability of occurrence of these events within any one-year time frame (*Anderson and Oconee County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). There were 23 notable lightning severe storms/thunderstorms (causing \$50,000 or more in damage) recorded in Oconee County from 1960 through 2015. These storms caused more than \$8.2 million in property damage and \$2 million in crop damage, cumulatively. Since 2015 there has one recorded lightning event - in Westminster in 2017 (*NOAA Storm Events Database, February 2019*).

One of the three criteria of a severe thunderstorm is that it includes hail larger than 0.75 inches in diameter. Because of its association with severe storms, hail can occur year-round and in any location. While hail can be very small, it can also be as large as a grapefruit or softball and capable of damaging property and injuring or killing animals and people (*S.C. Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). The County's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan predicts a 12.7% probability that more than one hail producing storm will occur in the County in a one-year time frame.

There were seven notable hail storms/thunderstorms (with \$50,000 or more in damage) reported from 1960 through 2015 in Oconee County. These storms caused \$1.06 million in property damage and more than \$480,000 in crop damage. The largest recorded hail size in Oconee County was three inches in April 2002 (*Anderson and Oconee County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). This hail and thunderstorm event was also the most costly to date in Oconee County, resulting in \$658,747 in property damage. Hail two inches in size was reported in Oconee County in June 2014. Fourteen additional hail events have been reported in Oconee from 2016 to the present (*NOAA Storm Events Database, February 2019*).

### **3. Tornadoes and High Winds**

Tornadoes are violent windstorms characterized by a twisting, funnel shaped cloud that extends to the ground. They are often generated by thunderstorm activity, but are also associated with hurricanes and tropical storms. Tornadoes are more likely to occur during the spring and early summer months of March through May. They are most likely to form in the late afternoon and early evening. Although most tornadoes are a few dozen yards wide and touch down briefly, some can carve a path more than a mile wide and several miles long.

The National Weather Service reports that tornado wind speeds range from 40 miles per hour to more than 300 miles per hour. While tornado damage is generally the result of high winds and wind-blown debris, tornadoes are often accompanied by potentially damaging lightning or large hail. The destruction caused by tornadoes depends on the intensity, size, and duration of the storm. The most significant damage is typically to structures of light construction such as manufactured homes, with generally localized impacts. Since 1950, there have been 47 casualties and 1,057 persons have been injured by tornadoes in South Carolina, with an average of eleven tornadoes a year (*S.C. Emergency Management Division, 2019*).

Eighteen notable tornadoes (with \$50,000 or more in damage) were reported in Oconee County from 1960 through 2015, resulting in more than \$7 million in property damage, \$5.1 in crop damage, 15 injuries, and one death (*Anderson and Oconee County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*). NOAA data indicates no recorded tornadoes since 2015 in the County. The strongest tornado to impact Oconee County to date was on March 27, 1994 when an F3 tornado touched down in the Long Creek area, causing 12 injuries, \$4.8 million in property damage, and nearly \$4 million in crop damage. The most recent tornado event was reported on October 10, 2014, when an EF0 tornado briefly touched down near Westminster, with damage limited to a number of uprooted trees (*NOAA Storm Events Database, February 2019*). A high wind event was recorded on September 11, 2017 when prolonged winds gusting up to 50 mph associated with Tropical Storm Irma moved through the County, causing downed trees and power lines and multi-day power outages.

The probability of one or more tornadoes touching down in Oconee County in any given year is 14.5% and the probability for one or more high wind events is 18%. The County's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan notes that, although this is a relatively low level vulnerability to these events, the data shows that tornadoes and high wind events have the potential to do significant damage in the County.

### **4. Flooding**

Floods are broadly classified as either general floods that are usually long-term events or flash floods caused by locally heavy rains in areas where water runs off quickly, moving at very high speeds. While flooding can occur almost anywhere given atmospheric conditions or lack of proper maintenance to flood control and drainage systems, flooding typically occurs in



floodplains. Floodplains are areas that consist of a stream or river (floodway) and the adjacent areas that have been or can be covered by water (floodway fringe). Floodplains perform a critical function by temporarily storing and carrying floodwaters, reducing potential flood peaks, recharging groundwater supplies, and providing plant and animal habitats. Development within a floodplain expands the floodplain boundary and increases the volume of runoff, making more areas and properties susceptible to flooding. Local development review processes should ensure that new construction and activity will not increase flooding on adjacent and nearby properties.

Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) with passage of the *National Flood Insurance Act* in 1968. The Act called for identification and publication of all floodplain areas that have special flood hazards and the establishment of flood-risk zones in all such areas. Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) are prepared and updated by FEMA to delineate the boundaries of each community's special flood hazard areas using available data or other approximation methods. FIRMs denote the portion of the floodplain that is subject to inundation by the base flood and flood-related erosion hazards. The maps are intended to assist communities in managing floodplain development and to assist insurance agencies and property owners in identifying areas where the purchase of flood insurance is advisable.

The goal of the NFIP is to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures by providing affordable insurance for property owners. Recognizing that local planning is a crucial tool for minimizing future flood damage, the program encourages communities to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations to mitigate the effects of flooding on new and improved structures. The ability to determine and supervise the use of land within their jurisdictions makes local governments the frontline agent of comprehensive floodplain management. The primary requirement for community participation in the NFIP is the adoption and enforcement of floodplain management regulations that meet the minimum NFIP regulatory standards. The impetus for obtaining financial and technical assistance from the state and federal levels also originates with the local community. Managing development can reduce losses by avoiding encroachment into flood-prone areas, protecting floodplain resources, and building with flood-resistant measures.

Floodplain management minimizes the potential for flood damages to new construction and avoids aggravating existing flood hazard conditions that could increase potential flood damage to existing structures. NFIP regulations require that the lowest floor of all new construction and substantial improvements of existing residential structures be elevated to or above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) to protect structures in flood-prone areas. Figure 6-1 illustrates the various aspects of a 100-year floodplain.

Oconee County is bordered on all but its northernmost border by rivers and lakes. While these water bodies and their tributaries are the primary drainage outlets for water flowing into and through the County, they can overflow when inundated by heavy rains, causing flooding in low lying areas. Based on data provided in the *Anderson and Oconee County Natural Hazard*



*Mitigation Plan*, Oconee County has a low level of vulnerability to notable flooding events, with an 18% probability of such an event in any year. However, the Plan notes that the southeastern area of the County has a high potential for flash flooding.

The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan lists 13 notable flood events that caused \$50,000 or more in combined property and crop damages in Oconee County from 1960 through 2015. These events caused nearly \$7.89 million in property damage and \$452,522 in crop damage. The most recent notable flood event was recorded in September 2004, when widespread flooding of creeks and streams resulted in more than \$1.6 million in property damage. The only flood event listed in the *NOAA Storm Events Database* since 2015 occurred in 2018 in the northern area of the County, resulting in \$300,000 in property damage.

Flood hazard areas identified on FIRMs are denoted as *Special Flood Hazard Areas* (SFHA). The SFHA is an area that will be inundated by flood events having a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year – also known as the base flood or 100-year flood. Considered as high risk areas for flooding, SFHAs are denoted on Oconee County FIRMs as Zone A and Zone AE. These areas are found along the shores of Lakes Hartwell, Keowee, and Jocassee; along the Chattooga, Chauga, and Tugaloo Rivers; and along other creeks and tributaries.

Moderate risk flood hazard areas are those between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2% annual chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year – also known as a 500-year flood. The only area with this designation on the FIRM is found along a Coneross Creek tributary that generally flows from just south of North 1<sup>st</sup> Street to Cross Creek Drive in Seneca. This hazard area totals less than 13 acres. All other areas outside of the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2% annual chance of flood are considered to have minimal chance of flood hazard and are denoted on the Oconee County FIRMs as Zone X.

Regulatory floodways are also delineated on FIRMs. A floodway consists of a channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation over a designated height. Communities are required to regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. As with the 500-year flood zone, the only area in the County with this FIRM designation is located along the Coneross Creek tributary in Seneca and totals less than 25.38 acres.

Oconee County [is a participant in the Federal Flood Insurance Program and](#) adopted a *Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance* in 2009. The Ordinance applies to all areas of special flood hazard as identified by the FEMA maps for Oconee County. The Oconee County Floodplains Manager is responsible for implementing the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance in the unincorporated area of the County. No structure may be located, extended, converted, structurally altered, or developed in the County without full compliance with the regulations. The Cities of Seneca, Walhalla, and Westminster have all adopted flood ordinances and administer and enforce those regulations.



Specific flood zone determinations must be made by the Oconee County Floodplains Manager in consultation with FEMA map data. The Manager reviews all development permits to determine if a proposed development is located within a Special Flood Hazard Area. A floodplain development permit is required for all developments identified as within, or including, a SFHA. Such development is required to meet all elevation and flood proofing requirements. For new construction, the lowest floor must be elevated at least three feet above the base flood elevation, with no basements permitted. Non-residential construction in SFHA Zone A may be flood proofed in lieu of elevation provided specific requirements are met, as certified by a professional engineer or architect. Variances may be considered for the wet-proofing of agricultural structures. No fill, new construction, substantial improvements or additions, manufactured homes outside of existing manufactured home parks or subdivisions, or other developments are allowed within designated floodways.

## 5. Drought and Heat Wave

Drought is caused by a lack of precipitation over an extended period of time, often resulting in water shortages. Unlike other environmental hazards, droughts develop slowly over a period of weeks, months, or years. Periodic droughts are documented throughout South Carolina's climate history, with every decade since 1900 including three or more years of below normal rainfall (*SCDNR, 2016*). Recent droughts have impacted agriculture, forestry, tourism, power generation, public water supplies, fisheries, and ecosystems. Drought conditions can also impact water and air quality and contribute to public health and safety risks (*S.C. Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2018*).

There were eight notable drought or heat wave events (with \$50,000 or more in damage) recorded in Oconee County from 1960 through 2015, causing a collective \$9.65 million in property damage and \$16.6 million in crop damage. The 1993 drought and associated heat wave hit at the height of the growing season in May and June, costing \$22.5 million in crop damage statewide and \$11 million in Oconee County. Property damage associated with the 1993 drought reached \$9.4 million.

In 2015, all South Carolina counties were in an incipient or moderate drought. By 2016, lack of rainfall caused the State's westernmost counties including Anderson, Pickens, and Oconee to be declared in severe drought status – just one step below the highest designation of extreme drought. Lake Hartwell was down to eight feet below normal level, Lake Jocassee was down 10 feet, and Lake Keowee was down four feet (*Greenville News, 2016*). The drought status of the three counties was finally downgraded to normal in June 2017 (*SCETV, 2017*). The extended period of abnormally dry weather brought rain deficits of 15 to 20 inches that significantly impacted agricultural production and prompted voluntary water restrictions in most communities (*NOAA Storm Events Database, 2019*). As of February 2019, all counties in the State were back to normal drought-free status (*S.C. State Climatology Office, 2019*). Despite this recent experience with a lengthy and costly drought, the County's Natural Hazard Mitigation

Plan reports a relatively low 14% probability that the region will suffer a notable drought within a one-year time frame.

**Note: GOIS on the next page are coded for ease of review**

- **Black text is directly from the current comprehensive plan**
- **Blue text was developed per input from focus group meetings**
- **Red text was developed by consultants to address issues in background data**
- **Green text added per the Planning Commission**
- **Time frames in yellow cells should be added by staff and PC**



## G. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Natural Resources Element.

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies   | Time Frame for Completion |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Goal 6.1. Protect and improve air quality in Oconee County.</b>   |  |                           |
| <b>Objective 6.1.1. Continue to support local, regional, and state plans and initiatives related to air quality.</b>   |  |                           |
| Strategy 6.1.1.1. Continue coordination and partnership in the S.C. Early Action Ozone Reduction Compact with other jurisdictions in the Appalachian COG Region, adopting and maintaining ozone-reducing reduction strategies as necessary.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Appalachian COG (ACOG)</li> <li>• ACOG Counties</li> <li>• SCDHEC and EPA</li> </ul>   | On-going                  |
| <del>Strategy 6.1.1.2. Amend and adopt standards as necessary to maintain compliance with the Clean Air Act.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Oconee County</del></li> </ul>   | On-going                  |
| <b>Goal 6.2. Preserve, protect, and enhance Oconee County's land resources.</b>  |  |                           |
| <b>Objective 6.2.1. Promote partnerships and voluntary conservation easements to preserve significant lands, habitats, and scenic areas under development pressure.</b>  |  |                           |
| Strategy 6.2.1.1. Support existing land conservation organizations in their efforts to preserve and protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources, and transfer of development rights and conservation easements to protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District</li> <li>• Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>                              | On-going                  |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.1.2. Continue to support the Oconee County Conservation Bank in its mission and efforts to provide for the transfer of development rights and conservation easements to protect rural lands, sensitive areas, and significant natural resources.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Oconee County</del></li> <li>• <del>Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations</del></li> </ul>  | On-going                  |
| Strategy 6.2.1.2. Provide appropriate assistance from County departments and agencies in efforts to identify and preserve historic structures, significant lands, and scenic areas.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |
| Strategy 6.2.1.3. Support efforts of public and private organizations to protect critical habitats in Oconee County through conservation easements and other measures as appropriate.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Property/Business Owners</li> <li>• Conservation Organizations</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• Keowee-Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program</li> </ul> | On-going                  |
| <b>Objective 6.2.2. Protect rare and endangered species habitat within the County.</b>   |  |                           |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.2.1. Identify opportunities to protect rare and endangered species habitat such as development of greenways and protection of floodplains.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Oconee County</del></li> <li>• <del>Municipalities</del></li> </ul>  | On-going                  |
| <del>Strategy 6.2.2.2. Support efforts of public and private organizations to protect critical habitats in Oconee County through conservation easements and other measures as appropriate.</del>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Oconee County</del></li> <li>• <del>Property/Business Owners</del></li> <li>• <del>Conservation Organizations</del></li> <li>• <del>SCDNR</del></li> </ul>           | On-going                  |
| <b>Objective 6.2.3. Manage natural assets to ensure natural resources enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and increase economic opportunities.</b>  |  |                           |
| Strategy 6.2.3.1. Continue to protect and conserve preservenatural resources for recreational use and develop new opportunities for recreational access.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• USFS</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |
| Strategy 6.2.3.2. Work with public conservation partners to identify additional significant natural resources including viewsheds and habitats that warrant protection.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Conservation Organizations</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• USFS</li> </ul>  | xxxx                      |
| Strategy 6.2.3.3. Continue to expand and Promote parks and recreation facilities, both public and private, as part of a comprehensive countywide parks and recreation system.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• USFS</li> </ul>  | On-going                  |





| Goals/Objectives/Strategies  | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| <p><u>Strategy 6.2.3.4.</u> <del>Continue to</del> Expand and maintain public parks and recreation spaces to a uniform standard of excellence.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• USFS</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><b>Objective 6.2.4. Continue to promote reasonable access to Oconee County’s public natural amenities for residents and visitors.</b></p>   |   |                           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.2.4.1.</u> Encourage compatible land use adjacent to National and State Forests, wildlife management area, and County, State and municipal parks to protect such lands from incompatible uses.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | <p>XXXX</p>               |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.2.4.2.</u> Review existing regulations and policies to identify barriers and additional opportunities to protecting current natural areas and open space.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>   | <p>XXXX</p>               |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.2.4.3.</u> Encourage and support efforts by public and private organizations to provide public access when conserving open space, natural areas and scenic vistas in Oconee County.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Property Owners</li> <li>• Conservation Organizations</li> </ul>  | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.2.4.4.</u> Work with community partners to promote programs for residents of all ages to discourage littering and encourage participation in litter pickup programs and initiatives.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Keep Oconee Beautiful Assn.</li> <li>• School District of Oconee County</li> <li>• Local Civic Groups</li> </ul>                      | <p>XXXX</p>               |
| <p><b>Goal 6.3. Preserve, protect, and enhance the quality and quantity of the water resources of Oconee County.</b></p>   |   |                           |
| <p><b>Objective 6.3.1. Continue expansion of sewer service to additional areas as feasible to reduce dependence on septic systems and reduce risk of contamination of surface and groundwater sources.</b></p>   |   |                           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.1.1.</u> Support wastewater treatment providers in the extension of sewer service to currently unserved or underserved areas to minimize the need for septic tanks where conditions are not suitable or water sources may be compromised.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> <li>• Municipal Providers</li> <li>• Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul> | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.1.2.</u> Support wastewater treatment providers in the upgrade and expansion of existing treatment facilities to accommodate the expansion of sewer service.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (OJRSA)</li> <li>• Municipal Providers</li> <li>• Other Public and Private Providers</li> </ul> | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><b>Objective 6.3.2. Monitor, maintain and improve water quality and quantity to meet the needs of County residents, employers, and institutions.</b></p>  |   |                           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.2.1.</u> Partner with adjacent jurisdictions on comprehensive water studies detailing availability of all water sources, usage, and outflow.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• Adjacent Jurisdictions</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.2.2.</u> Explore local and regional strategies to minimize non-point source pollution and institute Best Management Practices for the protection of water resources.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• Utility Providers</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> </ul>  | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.2.3.</u> Support and coordinate with SCDHEC to mitigate identified water quality impairments.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• Utility Providers</li> <li>• NPDES Permitted Dischargers</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> </ul>                       | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><u>Strategy 6.3.2.4.</u> Utilize incentives, technical assistance, and regulations to promote sustainable environmental best practices by individuals, businesses, and developers to maintain and improve water quality.</p>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Property Owners and Developers</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies   | Accountable Agencies  | Time Frame for Completion |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.2.5.</a> Study the potential water quality impact of higher-density residential development near the lakes and explore options for mitigating any negative impacts.</p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> <li>• U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE)</li> <li>• Duke Energy</li> </ul>      | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><b>Objective 6.3.3. Encourage development practices that protect and preserve water resources.</b></p>   |   |                           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.3.1.</a> Establish strategies and adopt measures necessary to create a framework for the efficient implementation of erosion and sediment control regulations.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.3.2.</a> Develop a County stormwater management program to prepare for efficient and cost-effective implementation in the event of Federal designation.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><b>Objective 6.3.4. Manage water quantity and quality to ensure efficient utilization and appropriate conservation of the County's water resources.</b></p>  |   |                           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.1.</a> Participate in and support regional efforts to protect watersheds.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> <li>• Public and Non-profit Organizations</li> </ul>  | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.2.</a> Explore partnerships to develop a master plan for preserving the Lake Keowee watershed.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> </ul>   | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.3.</a> Identify and explore ways to protect the water quality of lesser known waterways and "hidden gems" such as the Little River in Salem.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.4.</a> Explore and promote best practices to protect waterways in agricultural and developing areas.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.5.</a> Support regulatory authorities in their efforts to preserve water quality and habitat through shoreline management policies and regulation.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Duke Energy</li> <li>• USCOE</li> <li>• USFS</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.6.</a> Work with community partners to provide educational materials on best practices for septic tank maintenance.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• SCDHEC</li> <li>• Public and Non-profit organizations</li> </ul>  | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.4.7.</a> Explore options for establishing and protecting riparian buffers and identify waterbodies in need of such protection.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>   | <p>xxxx</p>               |
| <p><b>Objective 6.3.5. Minimize flooding risk to County residents and business owners through the protection of floodplains and floodways.</b></p>  |   |                           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.5.1.</a> Periodically review floodplain regulations and procedures to ensure protection per FEMA requirements and to evaluate conditions that may require more stringent standards.</p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.3.5.2.</a> Review and update the Oconee County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance as needed.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>   | <p>On-going</p>           |
| <p><b>Goal 6.4. Enhance and promote access to natural resources and associated recreational activities for residents and visitors.</b></p>  |   |                           |
| <p><b>Objective 6.4.1. Encourage coordination among County and municipal recreation and natural resource managers.</b></p>  |   |                           |
| <p><a href="#">Strategy 6.4.1.1.</a> Explore opportunities for coordination and cooperation in Oconee County to include planning for and implementing public and private recreation and natural resource programs and activities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• SCDNR</li> <li>• SCPRT</li> <li>• Duke Energy</li> <li>• USFS</li> <li>• USCOE</li> </ul> | <p>On-going</p>           |

